

Crete and Cyprus: contrasting political configurations

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The absence of obvious palaces in Cyprus during the MBA and LBA presents a striking contrast with Crete and its imposing ‘palaces’. To the extent that palatial organisations characterise virtually all societies in the eastern Mediterranean, the Cypriot situation is often presented as generally anomalous. This has led to interpretations of its socio-political structure as one of chiefdoms or oligarchies, for example. Yet integration of textual analyses with archaeological studies means that we must consider the fact that Cyprus, referred to with the toponym *Alašiya* in Near Eastern, Egyptian and Anatolian state archives of the 2nd millennium, was treated as a state with, in the later 13th century BC, a king, *Kušmešuša*. As many have pointed out, there is a poor fit between the existence of a state and material correlates for statehood in the archaeological evidence of Bronze Age Cyprus. Few, however, have noted that the situation is not much different in the Iron Age. We owe the identification of Cypriote kings (*sharru*, *basileus*, *mlk*) to inscriptions in different languages and different scripts (cuneiform, Cypriot syllabary, Phoenician and Greek alphabets) of the late 8th to 4th centuries BC; not to state archives, nor to edifices that conform to a single architectural plan — an identifiable palatial model.

In our papers, we propose:

- first, that re-assessment of the variety of contemporary Bronze Age states indicates that expectations are based on imposed neo-evolutionary models that overlook the existence of a much greater diversity of Ancient Near Eastern state structures, whose political leaders were acknowledged (epigraphically) as kings;
- second, that a re-configuration of LC statehood recognises de-centralising tensions, ones that were resolved at the end of the Bronze Age in favour of economically independent and politically autonomous territorial authorities.

In Crete, a fundamental change occurred, one that wiped out its indigenous Bronze Age palatial organisation (as well as its pre-Hellenic language) and substituted it with a new Iron Age model, which was peculiar to Crete: the oligarchic polis state. In Cyprus,

the 1st millennium city-kingdoms developed smoothly from the island’s own idiosyncratic state model. Irrespective of the state language that was fostered within each kingdom’s boundaries, the royal families — Greek, Phoenician or Eteocypriot in terms of their linguistic identity — continued to support with fervour the same intractable tradition of political segmentation. They would probably have continued to do so even after the end of the 4th century, had they not been brutally exterminated for this very reason. They were the living representation of the island’s indigenous political configuration. They had to die with it if the people of Cyprus were to redirect their allegiance from their small polities to the Ptolemaic empire.

KING KUŠMEŠUŠA AND THE DECENTRALISED POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF LATE BRONZE AGE CYPRUS

Edgar Peltenburg

The well-known contrast between the elaborate palaces of Bronze Age Crete and the lack of obvious palaces in contemporary Cyprus highlights major structural disparities in the socio-political organisation of the two islands. With its palaces, or ‘court-centred buildings’, and administrative archives, Crete shares key features with many other East Mediterranean palace-based civilisations. Since Cyprus was fully engaged with neighbouring countries during the LBA, its ostensibly anomalous organisation should provide significant insights into robust island identity.

All or part of the island is usually identified with *Alašiya* in the MBA to LBA, a term normally written with the determinative for country/territory, KUR, rather than city determinative in Akkadian texts in Near Eastern archives.¹ Unfortunately, western scribes used

¹ Na’aman 2005, 156–9. Special abbreviations in this paper: CAD: I. Gelb *et al.*, *The Assyrian Dictionary*. Chicago, 1956–; EA: Amarna letter number in Moran 1992; RS: field number for tablets and other finds recovered by the Mission archéologique française de Ras Shamra–Ougarit.

the determinatives in an inconsistent manner. By the 14th century BC it had a king ranked with the kings of the greatest states of the ancient Near East. Those states possessed governmental institutions and bureaucracies that epitomise most definitions of states. Cyprus not only lacks direct evidence for such organisations, but it also stubbornly refuses to yield the economic, architectural, iconographic, bureaucratic and settlement hierarchy evidence unequivocally consistent with conventional states.² As Alison South notes: ‘The conflict between the archaeological evidence and the historical picture of the king of Alashia . . . remains unresolved.’³

Scholars have offered numerous reconstructions to deal with this clash between expectation and archaeological reality, between textual evidence and material culture patterning. Space does not allow considered treatment of interpretations favouring autonomous settlements, chiefdoms, heterarchies, oligarchies, centralised authority in the mountains, *primus inter pares* or overlord, small regional polities with one rising to prominence, and statehood.⁴ In spite of such invigorating multi-vocality, it is generally assumed that we are dealing with a dynamic situation and that a greater degree of regional heterogeneity and architectural sophistication indicative of autonomous local polities are evident on the island from the 14th century.⁵ However, with the exception of A. Bernard Knapp, long an advocate for systematically incorporating *Alašiya* references in the interpretation of the material record of 2nd millennium Cyprus, most analyses focus almost exclusively on either the archaeological or the textual evidence.⁶ This strikes me as methodologically too constrained. It is much more fruitful and challenging to integrate documentary sources with archaeological data, ‘to see whether claims to power by centralised authorities in states or chiefdoms match up with behavioural (archaeological) evidence for the actual exercise of such power.’⁷ One of the most significant recent major additions to this inclusive approach is the discovery of an archive in the house of an Ugaritian magnate, Urtenu. It furnishes us with the earliest reference to a named king of *Alašiya*. The kingdom is no longer a ‘faceless polity’.

KUŠMEŠUŠA AND CYPRUS IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES BC

King *Kušmešuša*, possibly Mycenaean Greek *Ko-sa-ma-to* according to Kitchen, was in power during the reign of Niqmaddu III of Ugarit, at the very end of the 13th century BC.⁸ Archaeological evidence suggests that this was the time of multiple regional polities on the island, if not actual destructions and abandonments of some sites. In other words, it was a time when we might expect a reduction in the power of the king of *Alašiya* from the period when there is less evidence for political competitors. But this does not seem to be the case. As

in earlier texts, *Kušmešuša* addresses the king of Ugarit as ‘son’, normally a clear signal of superior status (RS 94.2475). So, there is no sign of diminution of the standing of *Alašiya* within recognised Near Eastern greeting formulae. He promises to send 33 copper ingots (c. 900 kg), suggesting continuation of *Alašiya*’s infrastructure for mining, processing and distribution.

Among the five letters from *Alašiya* in the Urtenu archive there are two from officials of *Alašiya*, namely *Šinama* (RS 94.2173) and *Šangiwa* (RS 94.2447+), the latter addressed to king Niqmaddu.⁹ Their titles are frequently translated as Grand Vizier, governor or representative. Unusually, here and in several other letters from *Alašiya* reference is made to them as MAŠKIM.GAL, that is ‘great’ or ‘senior’ governor/representative.¹⁰ Repeated use of this ‘great’ title serves to distinguish *Alašiyān* political organisation, one that probably implies the existence of more junior governors on the island, that is, a structured organisational hierarchy (see below). In any case, these appointed officials together with the presence of an Ugaritic scribe on the island indicate the likelihood that *Alašiya* possessed a bureaucratic hierarchy for international correspondence and perhaps for the control of territory.¹¹ Accordingly, Itmar Singer describes the organisation of all or most of the island as ‘ruled by

2 Manning and de Mita 1997, 108–9.

3 South 2002, 68.

4 Merrillees 1992, 310; Sherratt 1998, 297 (small contact units); Smith 1994; Keswani 1996; for LC I heterarchy: Crewe 2007, 158; Keswani 2004, 155; Goren *et al.* 2003, 251–2; Keswani 2004, 84–5; Steel 2004, 186; and for states: Knapp 1997; Peltenburg 1996; Webb 1999, 307. Several scholars claim that in 1996 I argued for Enkomi or *Alašiya* as a state that achieved island-wide control: e.g. Cadogan 2005, 314, n. 7; Goren *et al.* 2003, 247; Iacovou 2006b, 31, n. 15; Keswani 2004, 84; Webb 1999, 305. In fact, I tried to avoid such a sweeping characterisation and referred to ‘regional control of its resource base’, ‘a period of centralized control, if not necessarily of the whole island’ and that ‘forts represent a conscious effort by Enkomi, and perhaps other island polities, to control . . . copper’ (Peltenburg 1996, 36–7).

5 Bunimovitz 1998, 104; Iacovou 2007, 16–17; Keswani 2004, 84–5, 120; Knapp 1997, 66; 2006, 52; Manning 1998; Steel 2004, 181–6; Webb 1999, 4, 305; 2005, 177.

6 Knapp 1986, 83–4.

7 Stein 2001, 369. Reluctance to adopt an integrated approach is often based on lingering reservations concerning the identification of all or part of Cyprus with *Alašiya* (e.g. Smith 1994, 22) or to ‘the disproportionate material expectations that arise from the *Alašiya* textual . . . corpus’ (Iacovou 2007, 16).

8 Kitchen 2009; Malbran-Labat 1999, 122.

9 Yon 2007, 18–19 and n. 12.

10 CAD 14 (1999), 20–3 notes how *rābišu* = MAŠKIM is a high-ranking official commissioned by a higher authority.

11 Malbran-Labat 1999 for the scribe who requests furniture.

the traditional leadership: a king and governors'.¹² It is a view supported by earlier texts.

Ešuwara, who wrote to Ugarit in the late 13th century (RS 20.18), and an unnamed official who communicated directly with Egypt some 150 years earlier (EA 40), both held the same title of MAŠKIM.GAL, and so there is a measure of real consistency within the political structure of *Alašiya* during the 14th–13th centuries BC.¹³ This enduring organisation makes uncomfortable reading for current reconstructions that visualise a diminished *Alašiya*, confronted by upstart polities especially later in this period. Yuval Goren and his petrographic colleagues challenge the devolutionists when they write: 'the picture of political fragmentation in 13th-century BC Cyprus is exaggerated, if not completely wrong'.¹⁴ The tension between these reconstructions may be due to our perceptions about how an ancient kingdom actually functioned. As Joanna Smith puts it, in trying to reconcile historical and archaeological-based interpretations: 'It may be our own rigid interpretation of what constitutes a powerful LBA society that hinders our understanding'.¹⁵

KINGSHIP IN CORPORATE STATES OF SYRIA

Because *Alašiya* was treated the equal of several ancient Near East states in the Amarna correspondence, it is often thought of as organisationally similar. But similar to what? As Lindy Crewe emphasises, use of the 'state' label can create confusion.¹⁶ The traditional model for such states was forged in the seminal works of Henry Wright, Greg Johnson and others who extrapolated general, systemic characteristics of states from the highly bureaucratic organisations of southwestern Iran, so emphasising the increased hierarchical structure of control systems for the processing of information.¹⁷ The ecology of the southern alluvium was pivotal to state formation there since irrigation could and did generate enormous surpluses that required management and were politically manipulated. Such circumstances favoured administrative hierarchies embedded in particular pathways to power that led to the eventual creation of the Great Mesopotamian Organisations of temple and palace.

Recent state discourse has increasingly questioned this monolithic, neo-evolutionary paradigm as views shift to the recognition of locally empowered households and more corporate forms of political action and agency, especially on the fringes of Mesopotamia, but also within Mesopotamia itself.¹⁸ Similarly, the recognition of dispersed architectural features and artefact patterns suggesting decentralised production undermines reconstructions that favour the palace or temple as the focus of all economic and political activity. As a consequence, the recognition of a mis-match between models and archaeological data at many Near Eastern sites prompts Gil Stein to claim that:

The state concept itself needs fundamental rethinking Instead of exaggerating the degree of centralization and its importance in defining a state, we should recognize that the centralizing strategies of the ruling class are constrained by the existence of other, opposing sectors of society.¹⁹

A. Smith, who rejects the use of the term 'state' in favour of 'early complex polities' as an analytical concept, also stresses the need for 'studies that investigate the active construction of political authority'.²⁰ Such misgivings have also spread to Crete where the centralised political role of MM 'palaces' has been called into question.²¹

Since the traditional Mesopotamian state model is losing its hegemonic status, it seems worthwhile to evaluate some of the evidence for organisational variation in ancient Near Eastern states, rather than assuming that *Alašiya* conformed to an historically normative model of the 'state', a word that did not even exist at that time. While this is warranted because of Near Eastern influence on secondary state formation on Cyprus, it should be stressed that my purpose here is not to search for a diffusionary blueprint for the structure of power on the island but to overcome assumptions that restrict thinking to earlier evolutionary typologies.

The 2nd millennium city states of Emar, Tuttul and Urkesh in northern and western Syria highlight the role of the elders as alternative centres of authority that limit the exercise of royal power in what are recognised as corporate states. According to textual evidence, each of these had vigorous, collective decision-making structures, none more so than Emar.²² Although it was ruled by a king in the 3rd millennium, there were no recorded kings there in the early 2nd millennium, and actions then were taken by elders and an assembly or council meeting at its own initiative. The assembly may have consisted of merchants and other leading people of the town, showing the multitude of power bases that especially included kin groups. A dynasty re-appeared in the LBA, but its authority was restricted and, as at other cities such as Azu and Ekalte, corporate bodies, that is a community of city elders, the temple priesthood and the 'Brothers', exercised much of the real power.²³

12 Singer 1999, 721.

13 Singer 1999, 721; Moran 1992, 113.

14 Goren *et al.* 2003, 252.

15 Smith 1994, 318.

16 Crewe 2007, 159.

17 See Smith 1994, 28–33 for the use of such models; Blanton 1998, 136–9 for critique.

18 E.g. Yoffee 2005.

19 Stein 2001, 369.

20 Smith 2003, 80.

21 E.g. Schoep 2002.

22 Fleming 2004, 211–12.

23 Adamthwaite 2001, 193.

There were communal and royal seals, indicative of distinct and possibly competing bases of control.²⁴ In many places in Syro-Mesopotamia, therefore, elders constituted independent governing authorities pursuing their own agendas within an unstable equilibrium of powers.²⁵ Power-sharing was flexible, and elders sometimes appear to have had equal power to the king, in one case removing him.²⁶ Even at Ugarit, with its celebrated grand palace, the king's power was tempered by administrative nuclei headed by the prefect (*sākinu*), queen, elders and the great ones with devolved centres dealing with affairs of state and private administration.²⁷ At least in the 13th century, state and private business had become so intertwined that it is difficult to disentangle which of the c. 600 tablets from the House of Urtenu, located well outside the palace, belong to a royal archive, which private.²⁸

The internal organisation of newly formed states may be particularly relevant to *Alašiya*, but little is known of their political structures. One case where we do have some information is Ebla, a state that arose in north Syria in the mid-3rd millennium. Its government, as well as others in Syria, possessed a bewildering variety of power-holders in addition to the king.²⁹ The elders ranked with the king as the highest authority of state, particularly in terms of the quantities of regular gifts/tribute to Ebla. Some argue that the king was elected from among the elders who may have acted as a pre-state institution in a state administration.³⁰ There were numerous 'chiefs' in the city, while the prime minister and other ministers of independent standing acting as warlords seem to have exercised considerable power soon before the destruction of the palace. The elders of Ebla sat 'near the throne', resided in outlying cities, had their own 'house' which was once serviced by 37 women; and in one instance 172 of them were lodged in administrative headquarters.³¹ This plural structure of governance was widespread in northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia in the later 3rd millennium. As shown by Emar's evolutionary trajectory (above), power shifted between stakeholders, so that some places such as Luwatum were controlled by a council of elders without mention of a monarch.³² The prevailing political system in western Syria opposite Cyprus, therefore, conforms to models of corporate government in which institutions were in place to resist or modify monopolistic tendencies.³³ On Cyprus, there is some evidence for multiple centres of power reminiscent of the Eblaite situation, with officials counter-balancing the authority of the king.

POWER BROKERS IN LATE BRONZE AGE CYPRUS

The long-lived prominence of the office of *rābišu* (=MAŠKIM) in *Alašiya* on Cyprus, discussed above, is noteworthy in this regard. In an arrangement unusual for the ancient Near East, the *rābišu* was treated as the

equal of the king in a treaty with Hatti and both the king and the *rābišu* (^{LU}*pidduri* in the Hittite texts) are held responsible for paying the tribute to the sun god of Arinna.³⁴ In the same correspondence with Hatti, the great *rābišu* is noted as living in a separate city from the king, in '.....umma'. Was this in the mountains, the location of another great *rābišu*, *Ešuwara*?³⁵ In another distinctive instance, the *rābišu* corresponds with his opposite number in Egypt about the return of messengers and a ship belonging to his king (EA 40).³⁶ Later, *Ešuwara* wrote separately to Ugarit (RS 20.18), followed by the two other senior governors in the Urtenu archive who wrote directly to the king of Ugarit. For some 150 years, therefore, this *Alašīyan* office is conspicuous in international texts, and it suggests multiple levels and dispersed centres of power in that kingdom.

Even within the Amarna letters, which otherwise tend to be ruler-focussed, we obtain glimpses of the influence of other sectors of *Alašīyan* society when the king candidly admits to his Egyptian colleague that 'the people of the land murmur against me' (EA 35).³⁷ The context suggests that these were aggrieved timber merchants who had not received payment from the king of *Alašiya* for the supply of timber that is then transported abroad as the king's timber. In this way, public-private partnerships were advertised abroad as royal trade. No doubt such mercantile groups existed in other regions of the Near East and eastern Mediterranean, but the revealing inclusion of this statement in royal correspondence is exceptional, one that emphasises the distinctive structure of the *Alašīyan* political system. It seems to share with some Mesopotamian states the characteristics of confederations, not wholly centralised or authoritative except in the pursuit of state-level foreign affairs.³⁸

OTHER EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE STATES

In his *Myths of the Archaic States*, Norman Yoffee notes the scarcity of palaces in early Mesopotamia and he

24 Yamada 1994.

25 Seri 2005, 109.

26 Astour 1992, 151.

27 Heltzer 2004; Vita 1999, 468–71.

28 Malbran-Labat 2004.

29 Archi 1995.

30 Seri 2005, 101.

31 Astour 1992, 150.

32 Archi 1989; Klengel 1992, 27.

33 Cf. Blanton 1998; Feinman 2000.

34 Steiner 1962, 135–6; Otten 1963, 15.

35 See Goren *et al.* 2003, 251.

36 Moran 1992, 113.

37 Liverani 1979, 29, n. 42.

38 Cf. Fleming 2004, 111.

minimises the dominance of kings.³⁹ In attempting to understand these polities, he is not so much concerned with neo-evolutionary categories as with how groups constructed their lives, with the nature of inequality and with the distribution of power. Scholars increasingly emphasise the abiding multi-polar nature of Mesopotamian political power, with authority divided between the king, the *ensi* as chief judge or governor, council of elders, assembly of the young and the old, as well as mayors.⁴⁰ Survey and excavation of 2nd millennium Mashkan-shapir have provided a robust archaeological dimension to these issues.⁴¹ This was a 72 ha city state in southern Mesopotamia which was the co-capital of the Larsa kingdom, where both the father and brother of kings of Larsa ruled. It ranked level with other key Mesopotamian cities such as Ur and Uruk. The planned city housed a court but not as far as we know a palace. Elite and other residences were broadly scattered, administrative and religious institutions were dispersed, and access to high value goods was similarly dispersed. Stone and Zimansky conclude that what was ostensibly a hierarchical centre can be heterarchical, since royal power over many aspects of society was tenuous at best. In other words, conventional material correlates for states such as unmistakable palaces, centralised administrative offices and iconographic projection of a ruling authority need not exist if it were organised along decentralised lines like the cases cited here. Systematic work at Mashkan-shapir provides solid evidence for much greater structural variability amongst early complex societies than expected from neo-evolutionary constructs. The co-existence of royalty with quite varied degrees of political integration is also abundantly evident from well-documented pre-industrial societies. Priscilla Keswani looked at one of these, the Yoruba, in seeking to understand better the emergence of urbanisation on Cyprus.⁴² There are other aspects of the Yoruba that are also relevant in the present context.

In this widespread and diversely organised society, the king was often selected by city councils.⁴³ These were frequently gerontocratic groups that guarded against the monopolisation of power by a monarch. Even in the most centralised of the pre-colonial kingdoms, the *Alaafin* or king consulted on all political decisions with a prime minister and the council of leading nobles. The monarchy of any city state was usually limited to a number of royal lineages. In some city states, it was open to the election of any free-born male citizen. In other city states and communities, equally high status female leaders existed and, although these were comparatively rare, it does recall the unusual reference to a queen of *Alašiya* in the Wen-Amun text. The king carried out his circumscribed but important functions including mediation in disputes between factions, representing the polity in external relations and titular leader in times of war. He resided in premises detached from factions within urban centres,

and from religious institutions. The latter were dispersed within the city and under the control of local elites who held the main religious offices. They wielded considerable economic and political power, so constraining royal agendas for aggrandisement and exclusion. As in the case of Mesopotamian cities with their discrete residential *babtu*s, the city itself was organised into districts containing both elites and commoners, with their own holy places, manufacturing zones and markets.⁴⁴

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM ON CYPRUS TOWARDS THE END OF THE BRONZE AGE

As Keswani points out, much of this fits material culture patterning at Enkomi during the later LBA, but here I wish to emphasise that such patterns are consistent with decentralised royal authority within archaic states. Rather than treat the elite residences and scattered rich tombs at Enkomi exclusively as evidence for heterarchical organisation, we need to factor in the existence of kingship in our interpretive frameworks at least for the 14th–13th centuries.⁴⁵ In the absence of signs for highly personalised leadership, it seems corporate strategies for social and political cohesion prevailed. Elite residences suggest that significant authority was vested in more self-governing households, and that these semi-autonomous subsystems consequently constrained the range of centralised action.⁴⁶ Social fragmentation is averted by the development of cognitive codes enacted and reinforced through widespread, similar expressions of ritual as ideology or as religion, or the mobilisation of labour for the construction of kindred monumental ashlar buildings.⁴⁷ As in Keswani's heterarchy model, semi-autonomy assumes the presence of competing elite groups, and intermittent periods of segmentation and centralisation.⁴⁸ In other words, our seemingly intractable conflict between archaeology and text in LBA Cyprus may be self-inflicted.

Richard Blanton and others give further examples of royal states that lack material indicators of centralised control, but perhaps enough has been said here to document plausible alternative scenarios that

39 Yoffee 2005, 214, 228.

40 Postgate 1992, 80–1, 83, 276–8.

41 Stone and Zimansky 2004.

42 Keswani 1996.

43 Lloyd 1974; Smith 1988.

44 Cf. Postgate 1992, 81, 310.

45 Keswani 1996, 237, notes the similarity of the Enkomi pattern to the royal cities of Ugarit and Alalakh, but suggests that it was more unstable and/or oligarchic.

46 Cf. Blanton 1998, 166–70.

47 Knapp 1986; Keswani 2004, 157; Webb 1999.

48 Keswani 1996; 2004, 85.

may better fit the Cypriot evidence.⁴⁹ These cases suggest that discussion of the organisation of power in LBA Cyprus may often be too circumscribed. For example, one of the most stimulating and influential analyses polarises the debate between 'a single tightly integrated island-wide polity' and 'a number of regional polities'.⁵⁰ As shown above, centrist interpretations of complex societies are unlikely for many ancient Near East polities and a model of a decentralised *Alašīyan* kingdom is more consistent with material culture patterning on LBA Cyprus. To test this, we should reinforce investigations of the island that evaluate identity, economy, distribution of power and the materialisation of strategically cohesive ideologies in ceremonies, symbolic objects, gift-giving and monuments rather than search for hierarchy, bureaucracy and integration as have traditionally characterised studies of archaic states.

Let me finish by returning to *Kušmešuša*. It could be argued that his title, *šarru*, king, may not refer to a globalised version of kingship, but to a local ruler masquerading for outside consumption as a 'pretence version' of a king. After all, earlier in the 2nd millennium, the term pertained to leaders of different kinds of entities in the absence of the term for chiefs.⁵¹ During the Amarna period, Meier cautions that '*šarru* in the international milieu meant something different to the various kings who used it', and that such terms, stripped of their cultural moorings to attain more generic utility, were affected by 'semantic enrichment'.⁵² But this essentially refers to petty rulers, not to those who, like the king of *Alašiya*, claimed brotherhood with the great kings. The king, moreover, pressed for diplomatic rectitude: 'let what is correct among us be done' (EA 34).⁵³ At this level, the title *šarru* was part of the formal rules, it was 'not a void etiquette, but meaningful message'.⁵⁴ The terminological status was not lightly achieved as witnessed by Assyria's attempt to gain recognition by Egypt (EA15). However, while there is no reason to doubt its continuing validity in the following century, the texts provide few clues to the internal arrangements attending the use of the title *šarru*. Sherratt feels that it is 'no more than a product of the need by Near Eastern powers to make Cypriot political structures conform, at least on paper, to their own norms of diplomatic perception and convention'.⁵⁵ But such a view leaves little scope for agency on the part of islanders. Adaptation and emulation are widely seen as part of the process of secondary state formation on Cyprus.⁵⁶ While most narratives concerning emulation focus on luxury objects and visual imagery, I suggest that appropriations also included ideological concepts such as the role of kingship adapted to evolving insular socio-political systems, but still sufficiently similar to mainland traditions to allow scribes to fit them to customary categories. In sum, the consistent use of the title *šarru* for *Alašīyan* rulers during the 14th and

13th centuries, and the familiarity of relations between rulers, implies that some aspects of eastern meanings were accommodated within the insular socio-political system.

With his superior status vis-à-vis the king of Ugarit, with governors, and his ability to ship ingots, it would seem that the king of *Alašiya* retained considerable power and territory in the late 13th century. This has implications for the political economy of the kingdom. To possess such prominent status involved continued production of desirable greeting gifts, copper, timber and other value-laden goods for export, and this inflationary spiral to ensure brotherhood demanded sustained control over production. Yet all this would seem to have occurred when archaeological data suggest greater degrees of regional autonomy. The existence of sophisticated elite residences as strong central places at Maroni, Kalavassos and Alassa prompts Manning to ask who was the king of *Alašiya* and where was he based.⁵⁷ In particular, the appearance of defences around sites like Kition, Sinda and Maa points to regional segregation and the rise of more independent entities that might exclusively control resources at least during the 13th century.⁵⁸ Taken into consideration with the devolution of copper production within Enkomi, there seems to have been a dynamic for economic and political fragmentation that may have played a part in the destruction and abandonment of LC IIC sites even during the reign of *Kušmešuša*, who ruled some time c. 1210–1200 BC as a contemporary of Niqmaddu III.⁵⁹

Such fragmentation is not unique to Cyprus in the 13th century. Although its society and insular developments are often regarded as fundamentally different from its neighbours, this devolution resonates with the situation in contemporary Ugarit, and elsewhere. In that city, the temporal power of the king was being undermined by the growing independence

49 Blanton 1998; in arguing for segmentary political organisation that encompassed kin and community in Moab, Routledge (2000, 241–6) outlines features of many other decentralised states amongst which the mediaeval south India Chola kingdom had a central power, the 'king', who oversees semi-autonomous peripheral units that duplicate higher order powers at a reduced scale. For further examples of weakly centralised states, see Junker 2004.

50 Keswani 1993, 75.

51 Fleming 2004, 105, 193.

52 Meier 2000, 170, 260.

53 Liverani 2001, 60.

54 Liverani 1990, 70–3.

55 Sherratt 1998, 297.

56 E.g. Keswani 2004, 136–9, 157; Knapp 2006; Webb 2005, 181; cf. Webb 1999, 307–8;

57 Manning 1998, 53–4.

58 Steel 2004, 188–90; see also Iacovou below for disparate responses to economic crises.

59 Pickles and Peltenburg 1998, 86–91.

and wealth of bankers, traders and the warrior class, who were actively disengaging from palace controls, seeking to accentuate private aspects of their work and even winning exemption from service.⁶⁰ In post-Amarna Egypt, personal economic transactions, independent temple economies and Asiatic merchants trading freely grew with the decline of central palatial domination.⁶¹ While Ugarit and Egypt furnish textual evidence for this gradual dissolution of royal authority, Cyprus possesses archaeological data consistent with such processes.

In sum, I argue that for much of the LBA *Alašiya* was a decentralised polity comprising a patchwork of variably autonomous territories, loosely affiliated to the state. It had a weakly integrated political hierarchy with but tenuous or nominal control mechanisms over fluctuating territorial limits. Strong regional traditions and topographic enclaves within the island constrained efforts at provincial integration and effective sovereignty throughout the LBA, although procurement and trans-maritime dissemination of copper was a paramount concern that obviously had extensive territorial dimensions.⁶² This postulated weakness may be reflected in the inability of *Alašīyan* kingdom to prevent foreigners (the Lukka) from seizing control of villages (EA 38: 7–12), and in the admission that people of the king's land could be with pirates (EA 38:13–18).⁶³ Indeed, Sørenhagen argues that throughout the 14th and 13th centuries *Alašiya* was a vassal of the Hittites, but one allowed a long leash.⁶⁴ Outlying parts of the Hittite Empire were often only loosely attached to Hattusas, with some rulers like Karunta even claiming Great King status, so the existence of a leader accorded great king status in Cyprus should occasion little surprise. Lacking ruler-centred symbols, and dynastic iconography and other emblems of highly centralised state sentiment, it was a corporate kingdom in which hierarchical controls were masked, save in international state-level affairs. There the terminology of leadership was projected according to the norms of international protocols and impudently inflated on the basis of abundant copper and the protection of the surrounding seas. That it lasted as long as it did may be due to symbiotic relations between stakeholders in the island's corporate arrangements. But, with such weak centralising capabilities, it was an unstable entity that, in spite of brief textual appearances to the contrary, was increasingly under pressure by the reign of *Kušmešuša*. Possible settlement destructions, abandonments and regeneration during his reign and a little later must have further destabilised the structures of the political economy. Given the persistence of sites like Enkomi and Kition, it is likely that the entity persisted for some time, but the ascendent dynamic of regional autonomy won through in the Iron Age. In analogous breakdown of states elsewhere, the ensuing political organisation was commonly the proliferation of petty kingdoms and city states in which rulers continue to behave like kings but with territories no

larger than chiefdoms and with no more than two or three-tiered settlement hierarchies. 'They are *de facto* chiefdoms yet have stratification rather than ranking'.⁶⁵ Below, Maria Iacovou contextualises these developments in an overarching LBA–Iron Age economic framework that highlights essential contrasts between Cyprus and Crete.⁶⁶

CYPRUS'S POLITICAL TRAJECTORY IN ANTIQUITY: STATE FORMATION AND THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT ECONOMIC MODEL

Maria Iacovou

There are, admittedly, a number of different avenues one may decide to follow in order to study Crete's and Cyprus's political configurations in antiquity. In this paper, the avenue I shall primarily attempt to explore will focus on the economies that supported their polities in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC. This approach will be enhanced with selective references to four interrelated themes, which are not necessarily of equal significance for the two islands. These are:

- 1) Their responses to, and absorption of, the crisis at the end of the LBA.
- 2) Their reception of migration, infiltration and/or colonisation episodes — based on archaeological visibility and, possibly, epigraphical enhancement of the material evidence.
- 3) Their suffering of invasions and conquests by external forces that led to the termination of an island's own political configuration and the substitution instead of an exogenous state model.
- 4) The construction (in the Classical age), or manipulation, of legends about the mythical rulers of their 'archaic states' (e.g. Crete and Minos; Cyprus and Kinyras).

⁶⁰ Liverani 1995, 53.

⁶¹ Helck 1987.

⁶² Keswani 1996, 238–9, argues for alternating periods of integration and segmentation.

⁶³ Moran 1992, 111.

⁶⁴ Sørenhagen 2001, 257.

⁶⁵ Marcus and Feinman 1998, 9.

⁶⁶ Postscript. Two major studies that systematically integrate LBA documentary and material culture sources appeared after this paper was written. Both take a centralised view of the *Alašiya* polity: K. O. Eriksson, *The Creative Independence of Late Bronze Age Cyprus. An Account of the Archaeological Importance of White Slip Ware*. Vienna 2007; and A. B. Knapp, *Insularity, Connectivity and Identity: Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus*. Oxford 2008.

ISLAND-SPECIFIC POLITICAL CONFIGURATIONS AND THE NON-VARIABLE FACTORS

That the political configurations of the two islands in antiquity were dissimilar is obvious even to the uninitiated. An observant tourist, or (should I say?) cultured visitor, is bound to comment on the different scale of monumentality exhibited by the ruins of pre-Roman secular, sacred and mortuary structures in the two islands. To the question ‘why’ my initial reaction is, that the material record underscores an array of idiosyncratic behaviours in each of the two *megalonisoï*, behaviours that never find their exact match in the other. These attitudes support the belief that Crete and Cyprus had tailored conspicuously indigenous, island-born systems. Crete’s in the Bronze Age is likened to a *Hochkulturen* palace state; Cyprus’s is portrayed as a delayed and cautious secondary state formation. These systems (on the definition of which we sometimes invest more than the necessary amount of theory and, then, end up getting lost in a labyrinth of our own making) are, in effect, synonymous with, or the result of, economic systems; and to them I now turn my attention.

The development of a pre-modern management system on an island is determined by two non-variable factors: the island’s geological and geographical properties and its position, in this case, in the Mediterranean. The time and scale of the exploitation of these non-variable assets remain a decision of its human stock. When, if, and how they decide to break loose of their self-contained island destiny is primarily their own choice, and not necessarily, or only, a *carpe diem*, a matter of grasping favourable historical circumstances.

Few pairs of islands exemplify better than Crete and Cyprus how outlandishly different these island choices can be as regards the timing and the method with which they exploit their given natural assets. Crete became a manager of agricultural surpluses in the Bronze Age and it remained such in the Iron Age. To the extent that it did not have metals worth exploiting on a large scale, the agro-pastoralist basis of its economy was not subject to change when the 2nd millennium gave way to the 1st. An outstanding definition of what I am labouring to express as regards the primary ingredient of Crete’s economic model comes in the preface to the volume *From Minoan Farmers to Roman Traders*: ‘The words “farmers” and “traders”, point to central activities which characterize the economy of Crete both in the Bronze Age and in the Imperial period, and they should not be misunderstood as indicating a gradual progress from primitive farming to advanced trade’.⁶⁷

Cyprus, on the other hand, did not make agriculture the centrepiece of its economic system. Its EBA and MBA farming communities exemplify no urban characteristics and no discernible hierarchical structure until the day a copper economy was established. Cyprus became a manager of a metal’s export economy

in the LBA and the same economic basis, not another, dictated its socio-political trajectory in the Iron Age. We should not allow, however, the term Iron Age to manipulate our interpretation of state economies as it does not denote a period during which states measured their economic vitality on a metal as base and as common as iron — iron is not kept in state treasuries. The silver imported to Cyprus from the 6th century BC for striking the independent coinage of a number of different Iron Age kingdoms (e.g. Salamis, Paphos, Idalion) could not have been exchanged for iron but for Cypriot copper.⁶⁸

To what ends did Crete and Cyprus apply their respective economies? By the MBA the management of Crete’s economy gave rise to the complex state-system of the Minoan palaces. Of all the peculiar phenomena with which island-continents such as Crete and Cyprus seem able to surprise their historians, nothing can ever be a match to this worldwide *hapax*. Islands and complex states do not go together. The complexity requirements of palace-based economies are considered to be too much for the land resources and the human dynamics of islands the size of Crete. Irrespective of many insightful interpretative attempts, what happened in Crete during the 2nd millennium will remain the Minoan miracle. In fact, I would argue that the ‘anomalous organisation’ to which Peltenburg refers with respect to Cyprus applies better to the Minoan palace system.⁶⁹ Cyprus could hardly be considered anomalous when compared to other big Mediterranean islands, which as late as the 1st millennium BC exhibit no indigenous state formation processes (e.g. Sicily); but it becomes anomalous when compared to its neighbouring continental masses to north, east, south, and in particular to the Mesopotamian region, the cradle of primary state formation. Trying to define Cyprus’s development by comparing it to the continental city states of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC is an archaeological approach that has served its purpose well but has persisted for too long. Nowadays, it achieves little other than to underestimate the island by continuing to focus on what has come to be considered as Cypriot shortcomings. The time is ripe for the development of alternative approaches that attempt to understand Cyprus from inside and define its ‘robust island identity’.⁷⁰

67 Chaniotis 1999, viii.

68 Cf. Masson 1983; Picard 1994; Kagan 1999, on coins issued by the Cypriot kingdoms since the 6th century BC. On the Larnaca hoard which contained some 700 coins of the Archaic period, Destrooper-Georgiades 1984.

69 ‘Since Cyprus was fully engaged with neighbouring countries during the LBA, its ostensibly anomalous organisation should provide significant insights into robust island identity’ (Peltenburg, p. 345 above).

70 Cf. n. 69; on the Cyprocentric approach, Iacovou 2007a.

CRETE: ONE ECONOMIC BASIS, TWO POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Crete had the same agro-pastoralist potentialities in the 1st as it did in the 2nd millennium BC. Its industry in the Iron Age did not become 'heavier' than, say, olive oil, but the system's managers no longer toiled to serve the socio-political organisation of the Minoan palaces. They operated in the name of the maintenance of an oligarchic state structure in *hekatompolis* Crete, the land of the one hundred *poleis*, as described in the *Iliad* (ii. 649). One could be misled into thinking that these Cretan *poleis* were city states of the kind we know in the Greek world and particularly common among Doric cities. They were not; they were peculiar and particular to Crete, and thus as indigenous as the Minoan palaces had been. 'Fiercely autonomous'⁷¹ though they were, these Cretan cities saw eye to eye on one issue: they opted to cut themselves off from the affairs of the greater Greek world. The city states of Classical Crete declined participation in the wars against Persia and showed no inclination to participate in the war between Athens and Sparta.⁷² They certainly felt no rush to take the side of Sparta out of a common ethnic identity, or a shared political ideology, which should caution us against the adoption of views that promote Iron Age Crete as a colony of staunch Dorians, or as the island equivalent of Doric Sparta.

And yet, more than a couple of these Cretan cities, whose collective decision was to remain oblivious of the earthshaking affairs that were redrafting the political geography of the Mediterranean and the Near East in the Classical period, were living among the ruins of Minoan palatial states, such as Knossos and Phaistos, whose cultural impact and cultural domination — if not on occasion actual Minoan colonisation — had been felt in mainland and Aegean Greece as well as the Nile Delta during the Bronze Age.⁷³ What changed? Not the geographical distances. The island was as close as it has always been to Greece and Egypt but the chosen socio-political system of its people had changed: it now favoured distancing. Thus, in the 1st millennium BC, the persistence of the Archaic oligarchic control over land and wealth limited 'the economic development of Crete in Classical–Hellenistic times beyond its dominant island autarchy'.⁷⁴ We may therefore take stock of the fact that two altogether different, indeed contrasting, state systems succeeded each other in Crete: a palace-based system in the 2nd millennium and an oligarchic polis system in the Iron Age, which fractured the island into many small economic units.

MIDDLE MINOAN PALACE SOCIETY — MIDDLE CYPRIOT VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

The Minoan palace system was also the first, ever, complex state structure to develop beyond the western shores of Asia and the Near East. From the Euphrates all the way to Syria, the western expanse of the continent

had been gradually urbanised as the basic city state model, which had resulted from primary state formation processes in Mesopotamia, was adopted and adapted, by the intermediate space. Did it, then, fly over Cyprus, as if the island was invisible, to be parachuted on the island of Crete? Archaeological data suggest that during that singular episode, which gave substance to the First (Old) Palace period of Minoan Crete in MM IB (at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC), close to nothing changed in Cyprus's village communities — in spite of the fact that '[c]opper objects analyzed from the Mesara tombs are consistent with a Cypriot source'.⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, the passage from EC to MC is culturally unsubstantiated. It is an artificial point of transition imposed upon the island so that its development would comply with the traditional tripartite relative chronology system.⁷⁶ In reality, no socio-political change is evident in Cyprus until MC III/LC IA (c. 1600 BC).⁷⁷ This means that, before any kind of a settlement hierarchy structure or social stratification is made sufficiently visible in the archaeological record of Cyprus, the Minoan palace world had gone through the Old and New Palace periods, and had even been overwhelmed by another control system. By that quality of assurance that archaeological evidence acquires when corroborated by written documents, the destruction of all but one of the New Palaces in LM IB is attributed to an invasion and takeover by Mycenaean Greeks, who then established their administration in the palace they had spared, Knossos, and kept their accounts in Linear B.⁷⁸ Evidently, Crete's spectacular political culture was terminated — against the will of its people — by an overseas power. Irrespective of the diachronic survival of Minoan cultural and, in particular, religious traditions, the 'Troubled Island'⁷⁹ was forcefully severed from its indigenously developed political system when the Minoan palace-based administration

71 Perlman 1992, 194.

72 Cf. Perlman 1992, 201–2, nn. 46–7.

73 'Several Aegean sites have been proposed as Minoan colonies [...]: Kythera, Ialysos and Trianda on Rhodes, Seraglio on Kos, and Miletos' (Rehak and Younger 2001, 429) and, for Minoan fresco technique and Minoanising iconography in the Delta at the end of the Neopalatial period, see Rehak and Younger 2001, 432.

74 Bintliff 1999, 9.

75 Watrous 2001, 210; but note that 'the copper at most Neopalatial sites still cannot be shown to come from Cypriot sources, and may instead be from Lavrion' (Rehak and Younger 2001, 428). See also Muhly and Kassianidou, this volume.

76 Cf. Frankel 1988.

77 Georgiou 2006, 64–70.

78 The destructions in LM IB 'signal a major disruption in Minoan culture and a rejection of many of the features we think of as characteristic of Neopalatial society and its symbolic language' (Rehak and Younger 2001, 441).

79 Driessen and Macdonald 1997.

was interrupted by an extra-island human element around the middle of the 2nd millennium BC.⁸⁰ Did this political takeover succeed in creating a *Crète mycénienne*?⁸¹ Culturally, and not many seem to disagree with this, Crete did not become an extension of ‘the Mycenaean *koine* of LH IIIA2–IIIB’.⁸² Speaking, therefore, on behalf of the other island’s archaeology that was for long injured and thrown into confusion by the misuse and overuse of the term ‘Mycenaean’, I wish to express my concern and apprehension regarding the recent presentation of *Mochlos* IIA as a Mycenaean settlement and cemetery.⁸³ Assigning to a political control, ‘of which we are extremely ignorant’, such an overpowering and long-term effect, when it did not even succeed in leaving behind in Crete the Mycenaean Greek dialect, ‘we can lose cultural identity — the basic data of archaeology’.⁸⁴

I return now to the other island. Unlike Crete, Cyprus did not have to withstand an occupier, one that took charge of its politics and its economic management, at any time before the 3rd century BC — the Ptolemies were the first to use military force to occupy the island and then establish a colonial administration. When Crete’s Neopalatial politics were abolished in LM IB, Cyprus was only beginning to develop its urban culture. Its first urban phase did not begin before MC III/LC IA, and even then it was far from spectacular by comparison to Crete’s; it did not develop in parallel, or along similar lines as, the urban city states of the Syrian coast either, despite the fact that Enkomi lies across from Ugarit.⁸⁵

CYPRUS: ONE ECONOMIC BASIS, ONE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Cyprus may have been conspicuously slow in becoming conscious of what it could achieve by exploring its geographical proximity to the continental states in combination with its much sought metallic resources. Once awareness of the far-reaching potentials of these non-variable assets had been gained they served as the cornerstones for the construction of the island’s politico-economic system. This system survived the Mediterranean-wide crisis⁸⁶ (which by the 12th century had killed off all complex economies), primarily because it did not depend on excessive bureaucratic mechanisms emanating from one central island-wide palatial authority.⁸⁷ What was, then, the Cypriot political structure like, and how did it develop in the course of plus or minus 1300 years (c. 1600–300 BC)?

Cyprus’s original management system had not been developed in the name of handling agricultural resources; it was geared towards handling copper as its major export commodity. Overseas trade in copper, however, meant the successful management at home of a heavy industry; hence, the maintenance of a work force, the redistribution of foodstuffs and the establishment of gateway communities as ports of export on the coast. Such systematised activities

require a level of management and industrial specialisation to which only a complex society can respond. Shortly before the middle of the 2nd millennium, *at least one* local authority must have responded to the need for complexity. This is suggested by the appearance in the Cypriot archaeological record of the first urban features and urban attitudes (e.g. imported exotica, the first seals, and a script peculiar to the island) and the spectacularly rapid increase and wide distribution of Cypriot ceramics abroad.⁸⁸ This conjectural first authority, which broke through the island’s protracted isolation by establishing long-distance trade relations with the east, is likely to have been an archaic state, which became known to its commercial partners with the trade name *Alasiya*.⁸⁹ Neither textual evidence (i.e. on inscribed, preponderantly, cuneiform tablets found in Egyptian, Anatolian and Near Eastern administrative archives),⁹⁰ nor material correlates from Cyprus itself can substantiate or justify the oft repeated claim that *Alasiya* had managed to become a central state with island wide authority for any length of time. Irrespective of how centralised *Alasiya* managed to feign its authority abroad to the end of the LBA and as late as the 11th century,⁹¹ archaeological data underscore separatism and support the (nearly) unanimous belief in the existence of a number of LC polities, which in the 13th century, if not earlier still, were in the process of establishing independent economic territories.⁹²

We may, therefore, observe that almost to the end of the MBA Cyprus, as an exact opposite of Crete, coveted its pre-urban *island autarchy*, and had enhanced the distance that separated the island from the urbanised

80 On Final Palatial Crete, see Rehak and Younger 2001, 441–58.

81 Farnoux and Driessen 1997.

82 Cadogan 2006, 54.

83 Soles 2008.

84 Cadogan 2006, 55.

85 On Ras Shamra/Ugarit and Cyprus, see Yon 1997, 26; 2007.

86 Cf. Ward and Joukowsky 1992, on the crisis.

87 Cf. Snodgrass 1994; Sherratt 1998.

88 Cf. Frankel and Webb 1998, 7–12; Webb 1999, 3–8; Steel 2004, 149–56, on early complexity. On Cypriot pottery abroad, Maguire 1995; on White Slip ware specifically, Karageorghis 2001. Note also that the earliest Cypriot vessel of many found in Kommos is a MC III White Painted IV juglet found with MM III and transitional MM III/LM IA pottery (Betancourt 1990, 192: 1835).

89 Cf. Peltenburg 1996; Webb 1999, 305, on the archaic state model.

90 On the *Alasiya* texts, Knapp 1996.

91 The adventurous trip of the Egyptian envoy Wenamun to Byblos and Alasiya is dated to 1076 BC (Goedicke 1975; Kitchen 2004, 251–2).

92 Often referred to as peer polities, they ‘shared a similar material culture and were involved in many of the same production activities’ (Knapp 1997, 65–6).

city states of the 3rd and early 2nd millennia. Yet, contrary to Crete, once the process of urbanisation had been set into motion in the LBA, Cyprus never again displayed such withdrawal symptoms.

STATE FORMATION AS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS: 1300–300 BC

The 13th century (LC IIC) has justifiably been defined as the climax of LC urban developments. This, however, is often unconsciously and erroneously equated with the climax of state formation. Cyprus's state formation was an ongoing process throughout the second half of the 2nd millennium, and it did not culminate until much later in the CA period.⁹³ The 13th century is simply the era in which we begin to have substantial archaeological visibility of the economic segmentation trend that was to shape the political configuration of the island for another millennium. What we need to begin to consider, therefore, are the main phases in a state formation process, which originated with a late 2nd millennium BC devolution and was abolished by an exogenous intervention at the very end of the 4th century BC. When the bitter conflict among Alexander's successors was resolved, Cyprus was incorporated into the Ptolemaic empire of Egypt and was forced to accept the first of many island-wide colonial administrations.⁹⁴ It was never again to regain the right for self-determination — not even in 1960 AD.

It is unlikely that in the 13th century BC there was a firmly established number of regional centres, each with its own consolidated economic territory. Nevertheless, the growth of regional authorities that were attempting to run independently of each other long distance trade with other Mediterranean partners is strongly suggested by their successful or unsuccessful handling of the late 13th century economic crisis.⁹⁵ The LC IIC–IIIA transition was scarred by the abandonment of thriving urban centres (e.g. at Kalavassos and Alassa) and their newly constructed ashlar buildings that were given to surplus storage and industrial activities.⁹⁶ The demise of these primary settlements, which had developed urbanism and trade in the Vasilikos and the Kouris river valleys, is attributed to a decrease in external demand for Cypriot copper that caused a production breakdown at home.⁹⁷ At the same time, however, in some other centres, which had survived (e.g. Enkomi) and had even profited from the crisis (e.g. Paphos and Kition),⁹⁸ 'the ascendant dynamic of regional autonomy' asserted itself all the more forcefully.⁹⁹

HIERARCHICAL CITY STATES

Paphos and Kition in the 12th century (LC IIIA) should be considered the island's first hierarchical city states. The labour-demanding and extravagant enhancement of their open air sanctuaries according to a uniform plan (based on the construction of *temene* with megalithic ashlar blocks) shows them in the process of

developing a similar symbolic language of authority. Their operational system was apparently based on the spatial proximity of cult, copper workshops that were hosted within the megalithic *temene*,¹⁰⁰ and a port of export that was controlled by the sanctuaries.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the investment of considerable manpower in the establishment and, before long, abandonment of two special purpose sites, Maa–Palaeokastro west of Paphos and Pyla–Kokkinokremmos east of Kition, suggest that the two polities were actively engaged in the expansion and consolidation of their state territories; they were trying to control, and had come into conflict with, neighbouring regions.¹⁰² Less than two generations since their establishment on the plateau of Kokkinokremos, its inhabitants, guardians of the Pyla pass, had to flee in the face of an imminent enemy threat, and were unable to return and claim the valuables they had hidden. If these 12th century sudden abandonment episodes were the result of confrontations between neighbouring economic regions, or imply that coveted lands were exchanging hands between territorial polities, then by virtue of this strategy of aggression, Paphos and Kition are the earliest expression of the hierarchically integrated and centralised Cypriot state, which in the 1st millennium becomes known as a city-kingdom.

Towards the end of the 12th century, the silting of Enkomi's port basin by alluvial deposits from the Pedieos river forced it to move down to Salamis nearer the coast.¹⁰³ The move appears to have left behind, or undermined, the heterarchical organisation of the LC IIC–IIIA polity, where the existence of competing groups that shared power and authority is demonstrated by the proliferation of sanctuaries of different types and the presence of metalworking units as well as *intra muros* burial chambers in different neighbourhoods.¹⁰⁴ In the 1st millennium BC, the foundation legend of the

93 Iacovou 2007b, 16.

94 Cf. Collombier 1993; Mehl 1998.

95 Iacovou 2008, 626 (LC IIIA 'nonmatching settlement histories').

96 Cadogan 1996; Hadjisavvas 1996; South 1989, 1996.

97 South 1995; Knapp 1997, 68.

98 Iacovou 2008, 631, on 'regional responses to the crisis'.

99 Peltenburg, p. 351 above.

100 On metalworking and recycling in the workshops of the sacred precinct of Kition, Karageorghis and Kassianidou 1999.

101 First observed in the 13th century, it is one of many continuities that survived the LC IIC–IIIA transition (Sherratt 1998, 300, 304; Webb 1999, 287).

102 Iacovou 2007b, 11–12, 19; forthcoming.

103 Lagarce 1993, 91. Yon (1980, 79) has suggested that the original name of the site at Enkomi was Salamis; also, Snodgrass (1994, 169) points out that the name of Salamis is on a list of cities inscribed on the temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu.

104 Courtis and Lagarce 1986. On the heterarchical organisation of Enkomi, Keswani 1996.

strongly hierarchical kingdom of Salamis served to justify the absolute and hereditary authority exercised by its Iron Age rulers, the dynasty of the *Teukridai*, whose first historically and epigraphically attested representative was Evelthon, a powerful personality of Mediterranean renown.¹⁰⁵

As I have argued a number of times in the past, the transition from the LBA to the EIA did not cause a break in the political culture of Cyprus.¹⁰⁶ Unlike the Minoan, the LC political structure was not abolished either by an exogenous incursion or by an island-wide economic failure. In Crete, the era of foreign intervention ended with the complete loss of palatial administration (first at Knossos and later at Chania) and Linear literacy, leaving Crete a stateless island.¹⁰⁷ Thus, like the rest of the Aegean world, Crete experienced a Dark Age.¹⁰⁸ The island environment of Crete, where the first syllabic script of the Aegean had developed in the MM period, should have probably been conducive to the spread and preservation of literacy outside the palace economies. Yet, in spite of its impressive Linear A and Linear B records, Crete remained as illiterate as the mainland Greek Mycenaean world.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Iron Age Crete was in need of a new scribal tool as much as the rest of the Greek-speaking Aegean. Even the indigenous Eteocretans (*Od.* xix.176) had to adopt alphabetic literacy in order to express their unknown, but probably Minoan in origin, language.¹¹⁰ Cyprus did not experience any of these cultural breaks. Nowicki's and other scholars' fascinating work on the life and economy of refugees on the Cretan mountains at the turn of the Bronze to Iron Ages finds no Cyprus equivalent.¹¹¹ Cult and settlement continuity, as well as continuity in the use of the syllabic writing of Cyprus, which survived to the end of the 1st millennium BC — even longer than the island's segmented political structure — rules against the development of a Cypriot Dark Age.

FROM LATE BRONZE *ALASIYA* TO EARLY IRON *IATNANA*

The material culture change that distinguishes the EIA from the Late Cypriot Bronze Age (especially with respect to a new wealth and status definition as suggested by the burial assemblages in the CG community-organised *necropoleis*) have to be understood in the context of a new pattern of trade: from the 12th to the 8th centuries, Cyprus was no longer involved in an institutionalised commerce with heads of states as in the international period of the LBA. Now, the regional centres of Cyprus were carrying out a decentralised economy with many different independent Mediterranean partners. This is also the reason why the trademark name *Alasiya*, no longer necessary in the absence of high level diplomatic correspondence, lost its significance. Freed from the economic rules imposed by the LBA empires, many small city states in the eastern Mediterranean and

especially on the Levantine coast developed entrepreneurial activities. In this new economic environment, the regionally managed economies of Cyprus had no reason to conceal their autonomy under the guise of a seemingly unified state.

In the 8th century, when the first of the Iron Age empires, the Neo-Assyrian, reached out as far as the Mediterranean and incorporated the coastal city states of the Levant into a centrally controlled market economy, the island's regional authorities made the first move: in 707 BC, not one but as many as seven regional representatives sailed to the continent to offer gifts and allegiance to Sargon II. The cuneiform text on the royal stele, which Sargon II ordered to be erected at Kition, suggests that the Cypriot leaders returned having secured the emperor's recognition as heads of kingdoms.¹¹² They also agreed on a most profitable liaison, which appears to have given them a special status as client states and the freedom to operate as the empire's Mediterranean entrepôts.¹¹³ The primary goal of Neo-Assyrian imperialism was the control of a vast inter-regional trading network that rendered the redistribution of goods an essential operation. Militarily, however, their westward expansion had stopped short of Cyprus: the island did not suffer a military intervention.¹¹⁴

Alasiya was a term that, even if the Neo-Assyrian emperors could have remembered their forefathers using it in the distant past, no longer represented the island's state authorities. From Sargon II to Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal the royal inscriptions indicate that the empire recognised the presence of many Cypriot leaders, seven or 10, to whom they referred by the Akkadian term *sharru* — the term used to define their own emperors.¹¹⁵ The invaluable inscription on the prism of Esarhaddon (dated 673/2 BC) identifies by name 10 Cypriot kings and their capital seat but

105 Cf. Chavane and Yon 1978 for the literary sources on the foundation legend of Salamis. *Teukridai* and Salaminian Greek hierarchy: Iacovou 2008, 637, 648; Hdt. iv. 162 on Evelthon; and on his coinage: Masson 1983, 318, pl. 54; Destrooper-Georgiades 1993, 88–9, n. 7.

106 Recently, Iacovou 2007a, 2008.

107 Whitley 2001, 77–8. In LM IIIA–IIIB, Crete appears to have functioning towns that are not part of any state structure (Hatzimichael and Whitley, this volume).

108 Note, however, Coldstream's 'Knossos. An urban nucleus in the Dark Age?' (1991).

109 Cf. Olivier 1994.

110 Cf. Whitley 1998, 38, on Eteocretans, their minority language and their alphabetic inscriptions.

111 Nowicki 1994, 1999.

112 The Kition stele of Sargon II is the only royal Near Eastern decree ever found beyond the continent. On the stele and its text, Yon and Malbran Labat 1995; Yon 2004, 345.

113 Cf. Stylianou 1989, 390; Iacovou 2002.

114 Reyes 1994, 50–4; Yon and Malbran-Labat 1995.

115 Luckenbill 1927; Borger 1956, 60; Saporetti 1976.

although each had his own kingdom, they all belonged geographically to *Iatnana*.¹¹⁶ The etymological interpretation of the term as ‘the (is)land of the Danaans’ has recently been convincingly analysed by James Muhly.¹¹⁷ It confirms that the Neo-Assyrians recognised that Cyprus had become home to Greek-speaking people before the end of the 8th century. In part, this also explains why in Cyprus the same leaders bore the Greek title *basileus*, a term recorded on the Linear B tablets of the Mycenaean palaces.

Poleis-basileia, on the other hand, the term often used to describe the Cypriot Iron Age polities, is not attested in antiquity; it has been made up by modern scholarship because, from the 7th to the end of the 4th century, the rulers of the Cypriot states were invariably identified as *basileis* on local epigraphical data (preponderantly, in the Greek syllabic script of Cyprus and, additionally, in the Greek alphabet in the 4th century BC). In Kition, during the 5th and 4th centuries, they were identified in the Phoenician alphabet as *mlk*, which is the Semitic equivalent of *basileus*.¹¹⁸ *Polis* is the Greek term used to define the capital seat of a Cypriot *basileus* on the famous 5th century bronze tablet of Idalion.¹¹⁹ In the course of the CA era, the Cypriot city-kingdoms developed a symbolic system of territorial definition through the establishment of extra-urban sanctuaries; promoted a visual expression of their authority through sculpture and glyptic and developed a royal iconography; and even associated their royal dynasties with a particular state language.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, to this day there is no sign of a common architectural palace model in Iron Age Cyprus, despite the fact that administrative buildings have been identified at Vouni, Idalion, Amathous and, possibly, Palaepaphos.¹²¹

A CYPRUS ‘ANOMALY’ AND A GREEK MIGRATION

The indigenous script of Cyprus — christened Cypro-Minoan by Sir Arthur Evans — stands proof of the extraordinary choices an island culture can afford to make. It first appeared in Enkomi in the earliest phase of urban complexity and in association with the copper industry.¹²² Though stateless to the mid-2nd millennium, the island chose not to adopt the established cuneiform tool — with which Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of international diplomacy, was written — which would have certainly augmented Alasiya’s elementary experience of economic transactions and diplomatic correspondence. Thus, the expansion of the cuneiform system in the Mediterranean which, since its development by the Sumerians, had ‘conquered’ the whole expanse of the Near East and Anatolia, was halted in Cyprus. Cuneiform, the scribal tool, which served dozens of languages, including the Indo-European language of the Hittite emperors, was evidently rejected by Kushmeshusha’s LC predecessors and, equally, by his Iron Age successors. What invisible circumstances led to the island-wide use of Cypro-

Minoan, a script that nobody could possibly read outside Cyprus without help from a translator? Admittedly, this is an outstanding example of the Cyprus ‘anomaly’. Yet, no matter how anomalous this choice may seem, the Cypriot syllabary survived into the 1st millennium — unlike the prehistoric Cypriot language it served and unlike the Linear scripts of Minoan Crete — because it was not under the exclusive control of a palace elite of scribes.¹²³ In the Iron Age, it became the vehicle for a second, this time readable, language, which was, apparently, introduced to Cyprus by groups of Greek speaking immigrants before the end of the 2nd millennium.¹²⁴ In Paphos, in particular, Greek speakers began to use Cypro-Minoan to write the Arcado-Cypriot dialect from as early as the 10th century BC;¹²⁵ and before the middle of the 1st millennium, the immigrants’ language had become the island’s majority language, and the indigenous syllabary, which had been adopted and adapted to serve it, promoted Greek into a state language in most of the kingdoms. With the exception of Kition, where state business was conducted in the Phoenician alphabet, the other kingdoms, Eteocypriot Amathous included, made extensive use of the syllabary, as can be seen from the legends inscribed on their coinage and from dedicatory inscriptions issued by *basileis*.¹²⁶

THE ECONOMIC MODEL AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF COPPER

If the urban polities of LC IIC — their location, name and number remain a matter of conjecture — represent the first phase in the development of a decentralised political structure, the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical states — better known because of inscriptions and literary *testimonia* — represent the last. In the course of this thousand years’ period, the material

116 Stylianou 1989, 384–6, on the variants *Iatnana*, *Atnana*, *Iadanana*.

117 Muhly 2009.

118 The subject of the *basileus* in the kingdoms of Cyprus has been extensively analysed in Iacovou 2006a.

119 Cf. Masson 1983, 235–44: 217. The Idalion tablet, carries the longest known inscription in the Greek syllabary of Cyprus, and preserves a royal decree where the terms *basileus* and *polis* occur together.

120 Cf. Hermay 2001, 2006; Fourrier 2002, 2007a; Iacovou 2006b; Satraki 2008.

121 Cf. SCE IV. 2, 23–9; Hadjicosti 1997; Aupert 1996, 99–107; Petit 2002; Schäfer 1960; Maier 2004, 74.

122 Dikaio 1969, 22–3; 1971, 882, pl. 315: 10 for the earliest known tablet that comes from Enkomi’s metallurgical complex; also Peltenburg 1996, 26.

123 Smith 1994, 2002.

124 On the chronological parameters and the reception of the migration episode, Iacovou 2008.

125 Morpurgo-Davies and Olivier, this volume.

126 Cf. Aupert 1996, 44, 119.

culture speaks of affluence and economic success. Consequently, one key factor is self-evident as regards the economic model that supported this multitude of island states: it did not require control of the entire island by any one of them. Hence, political unification was never expressed as an island-wide aspiration but only as the ambition of a particular regional authority, primarily Salamis or Kition, to place neighbouring economic regions and, more specifically, mining territories (e.g. Tamassos) under their control.¹²⁷ A second factor is also evident: the decentralised political system was eventually terminated by Ptolemy I Soter, not because it had experienced an economic decline or had reached a political stalemate but in the name of exclusively external reasons that had to do with the consolidation of the Ptolemaic empire.¹²⁸

Taken together, these factors suggest that we should probably seek a common denominator and a minimum requirement that had to be met before a territory could rise to statehood. Granted that copper remained Cyprus's primary export commodity from the LBA to the end of antiquity,¹²⁹ it is apparent that this minimum requirement has to be sought in the non-variable co-ordinates of the island's geography and geology. Had the copper ores been isolated in one of the peninsulas, the Akamas or the Karpass, or been concentrated, for instance, on one side only of the Troodos mountain range, Cyprus would have not been able to develop this particular politico-economic system. However, the precious copper ores are found in a circle all around the foothills of the Troodos massif, which occupies the heart of the island. Based on the non-variable geography of the ore bodies, the Cypriot polities also grew in a star-like pattern around the Troodos. Nevertheless, a mining station on its own could not become a polity, no matter how many tons of copper it could produce and, likewise, a harbour installation on its own was not a gateway community, unless the island's mineral wealth found its way to its docks and was exported with the stamp of a recognised authority. Together, mining stations and harbour installations, could not have survived as special function areas unless a third party had undertaken the systematic collection and distribution of foodstuffs to the labour forces applying mining and seafaring expertise. Farmers received, in exchange for their labour and surplus production, their share of imported status objects and exotica and could, in fact, emulate urban behaviours; but a farming community on its own could not become a polity. Only the triad could produce a Cypriot state (take one away and the state falters) and, in each set of three, only one could function as the triad's administrative capital. The state's centre did not have to be located on the cupriferous foothills of the Troodos but it had to be in command of a copper mining area; it did not have to be on the coast but it had to be in command of a harbour; it did not have to be in the centre of the Mesaoria plain, but it had to be in

command of a rich agricultural region. Thus, the economic model that generated state formation in Cyprus appears to have been dependent on a minimum requirement: control over a geographically unified territory that had copper sources, agricultural wealth and access to a port of export.

This triadic model made the Greek-, Phoenician- and Eteocypriot-speaking kings of the Archaic and Classical states of Cyprus heirs to, and managers of, the most long-lived politico-economic system that had ever been developed on a Mediterranean island in antiquity. It could not have been imported, since it was based on the island's own invariable assets, but the Greeks and Phoenicians who enriched the island's human environment were astute enough to understand its long term potentials. They adopted and protected it, as much as they adopted and sustained the ritual architecture, which was inseparably associated with it.

KINYRAS AND MINOS: POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF AUTOCHTHONOUS LEGENDARY RULERS

An impressive but underestimated piece of evidence that stresses the continuity of Cyprus's politico-economic system from the 2nd to the 1st millennium comes from the mythical realm. Kinyras, the autochthonous pre-Greek king of Cyprus, and beloved priest of the Cypriot Goddess (later Aphrodite), was vested with dual authority: he was a priest-king and personified the royal manager of the lucrative metals' economy, whose administrative centres were not secular palaces but open-air *temene*.¹³⁰ At Paphos, where the Greek migration acquires linguistic visibility since the 10th century, and Greek-named *basileis* are epigraphically recorded since the 7th century, the Greek kings forfeited their lineage from the legendary Greek hero Agapenor, and began claiming descent from Kinyras. By identifying themselves as *Kinyrades*, they monopolised their association with a legendary personality who was the manager of the sacred and the industrial environments. Thus, they legitimised their own dual authority as *iereis* and *basileis* of the *wanassa* (Lady), whose sacred abode was the megalithic *temenos* built at the end of the 13th century.¹³¹

Kinyras, the mighty legendary ruler of the archaic state of Cyprus, and acknowledged inventor of *metalla aeris* (Plin. vii. 195), remained a proverbially wealthy (Pl. *Leg.* ii. 660e) king to the end of antiquity, thanks to

127 Cf. Collombier 1991a; Iacovou 2002, 79; 2007a, 464; Fourrier 2007b.

128 Cf. Mehl 2004.

129 Cf. Kassianidou 2000; large-scale exploitation of the copper mines of Cyprus was resumed in the 20th century (Constantinou 1992).

130 Baurain 1980.

131 Cf. Maier 1989; Iacovou 2008.

copper. According to the legend, he even gave his daughter to Teukros to marry, so that the Greek *Teukridai* of Salamis would also have a stake to being indigenous. Likewise, the Amathousians were described as *autochthones* by virtue of the fact that they were descendants of Kinyras's followers, who had been expelled by the Greeks when Agamemnon took Cyprus.¹³²

In Iron Age Crete, on the other hand, an autochthonous identity had no value — neither the Greeks nor the *Eteocretans* tried to maintain or construct relations with the founders of the palatial politico-economic system. On the contrary, Minos, the legendary representative of the island's autochthonous culture before its *hellenisation*, was forced to acquire a new identity to justify Crete's Iron Age political configuration. In the hands of the Greek-speaking law maniacs of oligarchic Crete, king Minos became a lawgiver to justify the power of laws written by the aristocratic clans on monumental sacred buildings all over Crete.¹³³ Through these laws they managed to defend the oligarchic institutions of the Cretan *poleis* passed the Hellenistic era and until the island was made a Roman colony. For that matter, Crete 'is notoriously a region where democracy never developed'.¹³⁴

IRON AGE SCRIPTS AND LANGUAGES IN CRETE AND CYPRUS

A collection of unreadable syllabic inscriptions from Amathous records the third Iron Age language that was in use in Cyprus besides Greek and Phoenician: the Eteocypriot.¹³⁵ This unidentified language, which was written with the same syllabary as Arcado-Cypriot Greek, was more than likely — and despite the fact that to this day proof has not been forthcoming — the survivor of an unknown Bronze Age language of Cyprus. Nevertheless, the term Eteocypriot is a modern one that was fabricated by linguists on analogy with the ancient term *Eteocretan*.¹³⁶ Like *Eteocretan*, which was written in the Greek alphabet, Eteocypriot was a minority language. Nevertheless, they both survived, and were used for public purposes in their respective polities, to the end of the 4th century BC.¹³⁷ It would appear, therefore, that the 4th century marks a terminal point beyond which, Greek, already a majority language in both islands since the beginning of Iron Age literacy (syllabic in Cyprus, alphabetic in Crete), becomes the only language, at least in the textual records. This may be one of the rarely observed convergences between the two islands.

The second minority language of Cyprus, Phoenician, also died out in the 3rd century BC together with the Phoenician alphabet. The Cypriot syllabary, which had become inseparable from the written expression of the Arcado-Cypriot dialect continued to be used well after the abolition of the Cypriot kingdoms — especially as craftsmen's literacy during the Hellenistic period — and as late as the Roman era, to

the end of the millennium.¹³⁸ In Cyprus, therefore, the Greek *koiné* and the Greek alphabet were able to predominate only after the extermination of the millennium-old political structure of the island as tools of a colonial administration.

EXTERMINATING THE SYSTEM

Irrespective of the state language that was fostered within each kingdom's boundaries, the royal families continued to support with fervour the same intractable tradition of political segmentation until they were all in turn exterminated by Alexander's successors.¹³⁹ The identity of the exterminators does not rest, as in the case of Minoan Crete, on assumptions or the interpretation of material and textual data, which suggest that the perpetrators must have been Greek speakers. In the case of Cyprus, we know them to have been Macedonian Greeks.

I have suggested elsewhere that the atrociously cruel obliteration of all the Cypriot royal families requires a new reading that will take into account the fact that they stood for the autonomous rule of segmented Cypriot polities for more than a thousand years.¹⁴⁰ They were the living representation of the island's indigenous political configuration and had to die with this tradition, if the people of Cyprus were to be asked to redirect their allegiance from their small polities to the Ptolemaic empire. And they did, irrespective of their Greek, Phoenician or Eteocypriot identity.

Shortly before he met his destiny, Nikokreon, the last of the *Teukridai* of Salamis, had been honoured at Argos with a statue and an inscription which, fortunately, survives to remind us that Salamis flourished, just as its predecessor Enkomi, on copper,

132 On the origin of the Amathousians, Baurain 1984, 109–17. The term *autochthones* is used by Skylax of Caryanda in his description of the Amathousians.

133 Perlman 2005, on the *Cretan Politeia* and *Minos* as an artificial construct of the political philosophers of the late Classical period. Also: 'The majority of the Archaic laws from Crete were inscribed on the walls of public buildings rather than on free-standing monuments' (Perlman 2000, 73).

134 'Crete possesses the best epigraphic evidence for the development of written law in Archaic Greece. Numerous inscriptions of legal character are found on most of the major cities of the island. But signs of informal or widespread literacy in Crete are slight, and it is notoriously a region where democracy never developed' (Whitley 1997, 635).

135 Cf. Bazemore 2002, 155.

136 'Une heureuse suggestion de J. Friedrich [1932]' (Masson 1983, 85, n. 3).

137 Cf. Whitley 1998, 38; Iacovou 2006b.

138 Cf. Collombier 1991b; Palaima 1991; Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993.

139 Recently, Papantoniou 2008, on Cyprus's transition to Ptolemaic rule.

140 Iacovou 2006a.

which had to come to its port all the way from the region of Tamassos. The only difference was that now in the 1st millennium BC the Salaminian managers of this successful metals economy were descendants of Greek-speaking people who had come to the island shortly before the end of the LBA. *Basileus*, and the son of another, whose royal genealogy was traced back to Aiakos, Nikokreon was being honoured for having sent to Argos the copper with which to cast the prizes to be given to the young athletes in the Games of Hera.¹⁴¹

... χάριν χαλκοῖο τῖοντες,
Ἥραι δὲν εἰς ἔροτιν πέμπο[ν ἄε]θλα νέοις.

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