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Cypriot ritual and cult from the Bronze to the Iron Age: a *longue-durée* approach¹

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Introduction

In two recent studies on Early Iron Age Cypriot sanctuaries and religion—the first dedicated to the memory of John N. Coldstream, the second to the memory of James R.B. Stewart—I attempted to show that looking at Cypriot ritual places (and practices) ‘before and after’ can be a stimulating and valuable methodological tool for understanding Cypriot ritual and cult diachronically.² A drastic transformation imprinted upon the physical and socio-political landscape of the island during the Early Iron Age relates to the establishment—for the first time in the history of the island—of the extra-urban *temenos* sanctuary, related to the territorial formation of the Cypriot polities.³ After a careful analysis of Early Iron Age sacred topography and material culture assemblages,⁴ the next step would be a meticulous examination of their associated rituals, cults, and iconography in order to illustrate better the transplantation and transformation of Late Cypriot ideas (and ideals) into the Iron Age.⁵ In using the terms ‘transplantation’ and ‘transformation’, I refer to the transfer of earlier ideas (and ideals)—as read in ritual practices, cult and iconography—within an Iron Age sacred landscape, functioning within the context of a newly emerged political topography. Thus, my claim for long-term continuity is based exclusively on the evidence provided by rituals, cults, and iconography; I am not implying direct continuity in other critical facets of the transition from the Late Cypriot to the Iron Age. Although we are far from understanding the details of this transition, seemingly it was not an episode which took place at one specific moment in time and in the same way across the island.⁶ As this contribution aims to show, however, the interrelation between ritual, cult, iconography and the politico-economic sphere had a significant impact on the diachronic development of Cypriot religion and society.

Ritual remains a key issue in the creation and maintenance of forms of both personal and communal identities.⁷ Thus, understanding ritualization as a process that involves various culturally specific strategies for communicating certain activities between people is of particular importance. In this respect, following T. Insoll, ritual is often a facet of religion but certainly not its whole.⁸ This concept

¹ I am immensely grateful to Jennifer M. Webb and Maria Iacovou, who read with interest an earlier draft of this paper, making valuable comments. Any remaining errors are my own. This research was conducted within the framework of the *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes* Project (for further information see <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/unsala/>, accessed on 26 August 2016), originally funded by an Irish Research Council/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, and currently funded by the Research Training Group ‘Archaeology of Pre-Modern Economies’, a joint research Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) program of the Universities of Bonn and Cologne.

² Papantoniou 2012a; 2013a; cf. Kourou 2002; Hermay in D’Agata and Hermay 2012; Fourrier in Papasavvas and Fourrier 2012.

³ This is a change that has received little attention by modern scholarship to date: Papantoniou 2012a; for a literature review and employment of new interpretations related to the territoriality of the Iron Age Cypriot sanctuaries see Papantoniou 2012a; 2012b; 2013b; Papantoniou *et al.* 2015.

⁴ Papantoniou 2012a.

⁵ For a preliminary attempt with regards to a specific cult, i.e. that of the so-called ‘Cypriot Goddess’ see Papantoniou 2013a.

⁶ Iacovou 2013a: 28–29.

⁷ Edwards 2005: 116.

⁸ Insoll 2004: 10–12.

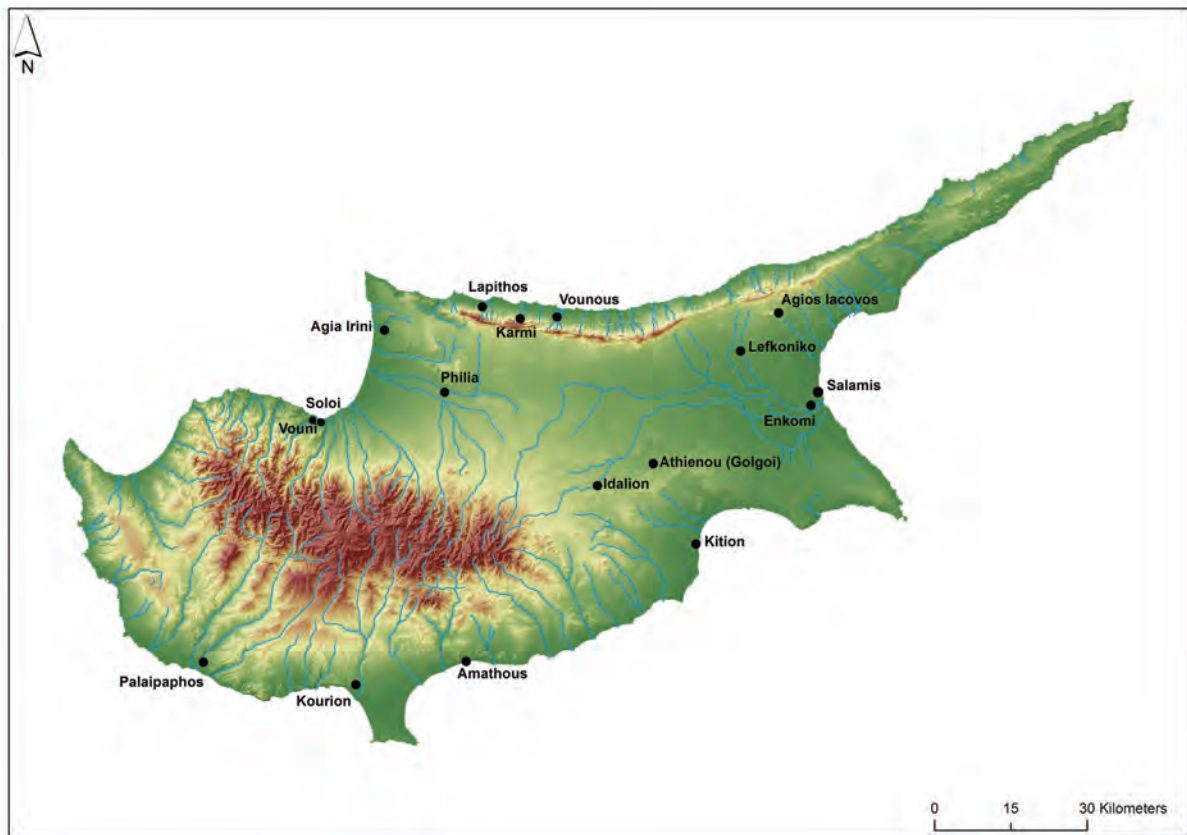


Figure 1. Map of Cyprus with the sites mentioned in the text, produced by V. Trigas. Digital geological data courtesy of the Geological Survey Department, Republic of Cyprus

generates his central thesis: religion is more than ritual alone. In other words, ritual can also be part of a secular system. In this study, the term ‘ritual’ with respect to the Late Cypriot period is used to bridge the much debated existence and function of a ‘religious system’ in Late Cypriot society.⁹ The debate is related to the attempt to separate ‘public’ or ‘secular’ from ‘cultic’ or ‘religious’ space.¹⁰ In my view, usually there is nothing really being debated; rather, the debate is simply a matter of contemporary perception or terminology.¹¹

The Early Iron Age will serve as the point of departure for the discussion that follows. I will first try to identify evidence of ritual and cult at the ‘extra-urban’ sanctuary site of Agia Irini (Figure 1) before attempting to establish their connections with the Late Cypriot ritual system of the urban center of Enkomi. I will then focus on the transformations that the cult of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’ underwent from the Late Cypriot to the Early Iron Age in an effort to emphasize the importance that this cult acquired in the later Iron Age, that is, the Cypro-Archaic and the Cypro-Classical periods. I will finally turn to the Iron Age polity of Amathous, endeavoring to detect connections with (and embodiments of) an indigenous Late Cypriot past. Before engaging in this discussion, let us first briefly examine the historical context of the transition from the Late Cypriot period to the Iron Age.¹²

⁹ Cf. Papantoniou 2012a: 306; 2013a: 161–162.

¹⁰ For the most recent discussion, see Knapp 2008: 206–211.

¹¹ Papantoniou 2012a: 306.

¹² The best account has been given by Iacovou 2013a; I therefore simply summarize below. One should, however, consult Iacovou’s publication to understand the convoluted long history of the island’s urbanization, ‘hellenization’, and formation of cultural as well as ‘ethnic’ identities; cf. Kiely 2005.

Setting an interpretative framework: the emergence of a politico-economic landscape and its ritual ‘archetypes’

Traditionally, scholarship has presented Cyprus, almost to the end of the Middle Bronze Age (that is, to c. 1700 BC), as an introverted rural society though it was by that time completely surrounded by Mediterranean urban states, palatial cultures, and empires. The increased quantity and quality of new data, however, force us to reassess previous interpretations regarding the Early and Middle Bronze Age, exploring in greater depth the emergence of regionalism and the significance of varied levels of social complexity.¹³ During the first phase of the Early Bronze Age in Cyprus, the so-called Philia Early Cypriot (that is, from c. 2450/2400–2300/2250 BC), there is evidence for some international contacts, particularly active on the north coast of the island. Cyprus, however, became more ‘isolated’ during the later phases of the Early Bronze Age. Nonetheless, this is the time when we observe the rise of a more complex iconography and ritual complexity in the mortuary domain on the north coast, particularly at Vounous and Karimi. Towards the end of the Early Cypriot and through the Middle Cypriot period, when an internal copper procurement and management system must have been in place, the island seems to re-open to the world, and north coast sites once again actively participated in broader Mediterranean economic networks.¹⁴ Emerging social hierarchies in this region seem to have been supported by an elaborated ritual system, recognizable already in the Early Bronze Age and evolving further at Lapithos during the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁵ Ritual practice prior to the onset of the Late Bronze Age has primarily been identified in the mortuary domain, which seems to have functioned as a key setting for the origin of cosmological systems and discourse.¹⁶ As J.M. Webb has convincingly argued, the institutionalization of ritual and the development of related ideologies and iconographies in the Late Bronze Age seem to derive from earlier, more socially integrative practices, and should be seen as a response to emerging urbanization and economic intensification.¹⁷ In the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean, ‘internationalism’ reached its climax. During this period, the island proved susceptible to a range of economic and socio-political refinements that led to the creation of a stronger social hierarchy, the development of urbanization, and involvement in a more organized and higher level of international trade than in earlier periods.¹⁸

The triad of religion, production (copper and agriculture) and ports of export worked as a catalyst for the generation of a successful indigenous polity system.¹⁹ In particular, the relation between copper production, ritual, and divine protection should be seen as instrumental to the following discussion. While we are far from understanding the exact mechanisms behind the management of the economy of metals in the Late Cypriot (c. 1700–1050 BC) period (and beyond), it is clear that some kind of connection between ritual, copper production, and trade did exist.²⁰ Webb, therefore, is right in suggesting that during the Late Bronze Age at Kition-Kathari there existed ‘a conceptual relation between cult and maritime trade of at least equal importance to that between cult and metallurgy.’²¹ This is the context within which we may explain the marine iconography and the huge number of anchors found there, the latter frequently directly related to ritual action: a large stone anchor in Room 12 of the Northern copper workshops, for example, stood upright before a wall in association with three bucrania, five horns, several bovine bones, and a Bes-like terracotta mask.²² At both Kition and Enkomi skulls of oxen and terracotta masks appear to have been worn during ritual performances. The importance of horned animal skulls is almost certainly derived from earlier, indigenous practices,

¹³ Webb and Frankel 2013a.

¹⁴ Webb and Frankel 2013a: 76; 2013b: 223–225.

¹⁵ Webb and Frankel 2010; 2013a; Webb 2015.

¹⁶ Webb and Frankel 2010; Papantoniou 2013a: 167–168; Webb 2014; 2015.

¹⁷ Webb 2014.

¹⁸ Keswani and Knapp 2003; Webb and Frankel 2013b: 224.

¹⁹ Iacovou 2007a: 18 and 2012a; Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 357–358; 2013a; Kassianidou 2013.

²⁰ For further discussion and bibliography, see Knapp 1986 and 1996; Webb 1999: 297–304; Kassianidou 2005; Iacovou 2012a; 2013a; Papantoniou 2012a: 290–291.

²¹ Webb 1999: 302.

²² Webb 1999: 74–75 fig. 27, 184–186, 221, fig. 77.5, and 302; cf. Papantoniou 2012a: 289–292.

evident in the Early and Middle Bronze Age in the form of ‘sanctuary models’ depicting tripartite façades topped by horned animal heads.²³

It is generally accepted that the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age is a period that comes after general disorder and movements of people and ideas in the broader Mediterranean. Towards the end of the 12th century BC, the island began to witness major transformations, which should, at least in part, be related to newcomers from the Aegean post-palatial world, possibly also from the Levant, who arrived as immigrants (rather than colonists) in the island’s Late Cypriot urban centers. During the last phase of the Late Cypriot and during the Cypro-Geometric (c. 1050–750 BC) period, negotiations of individual, societal, and political identities took place, instigating the establishment of a new political geography on the island.²⁴ Nonetheless, despite the major transformations that the island’s socio-economic landscapes experienced during the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age, the archaeological record indicates strong continuities of indigenous elements, particularly when it comes to the ritual sphere, as shown below.

For the chronology of the formation of the Cypriot Iron Age polities (known as kingdoms or city-kingdoms in the modern literature) in the 1st millennium BC, we have a definite terminus *ante quem* in the year 709 BC (alternatively 707 BC), when Sargon II of Assyria declared upon a stele erected at Kition that seven Cypriot kings had offered their submission. In 673/2 BC, during the reign of Sargon’s successor Essarhaddon, the Assyrian royal scribes record ten Cypriot city-kingdoms by name. In addition, by the early Cypro-Archaic period, the first intra-island epigraphic testimony, which identifies the eponymous state leaders of these city-kingdoms, is encountered.²⁵ Two 7th/6th century BC syllabic Greek inscriptions, one on a silver plate, the other on a pair of gold arm bracelets, identify two individuals as the kings of Paphos (Palaipaphos). Their office is denoted by the Greek term *basileus*. It may be objected that during the Cypro-Archaic (c. 750–480 BC) and Cypro-Classical (c. 480–310 BC) periods, Cyprus had been subject, respectively, to Assyrian, Egyptian, and Persian rule. While the political relationship of Cyprus and Egypt during the Cypro-Archaic period is highly debatable and rests primarily on scant and problematic textual evidence,²⁶ we should also consider that Assyria, Egypt, and Persia were essentially tributary empires, that is, with little interest in exerting direct political control.²⁷

From as early as the 13th century BC (if not before) to the end of the 4th century BC, when the Cypriot *basileia* was abolished by Alexander’s successors, the island was probably organized in accordance with a segmented indigenous model of statehood.²⁸ While I will avoid discussing the debate regarding the existence of a unified Late Cypriot state and its duration²⁹ as well as the formation-horizon of the Cypriot city-states,³⁰ I will argue here that mechanisms related to the unity of these Iron Age states derive from a Late Cypriot past. As will be shown in the ensuing discussion, during the Late Cypriot period, political statements were made primarily through ritualized ideology rather than through the construction of ‘palatial structures’. The Early Iron Age political system of Cyprus is far from being well understood; however, even though many gaps and transformations are evident, both the political topography and ritual landscapes of the period seem to maintain a close association with the Late Cypriot past.³¹ ‘Palatial structures’ were constructed on Cypro-Geometric

²³ Webb and Frankel 2010: 72; Webb 2014; Averett 2015: 4.

²⁴ Iacovou 2005; 2008a; 2008b; 2012a; 2012b; 2013a; 2014; cf. Catling 1994; Voskos and Knapp 2008: 673–675; Satraki 2012: 177–179; for the Cypriot Early Iron Age see Iacovou 1999; 2002; cf. Sherratt 1992; for a conventional chronology of Cyprus and period subdivisions, see Iacovou 2008b: 626, table 1 and Counts and Iacovou 2013: 3, table 1.

²⁵ Iacovou 2006a: 47; 2006b.

²⁶ For a detailed discussion of the problem, see Reyes 1994: 69–84; Iacovou 2007b: 463; and Mehl 2009; but cf. Zournatzi 2011.

²⁷ Cadogan *et al.* 2012: 4; Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 356.

²⁸ Iacovou 2007b; 2013a; cf. Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012.

²⁹ Exemplified in Knapp 2008: 144–153, with further bibliography.

³⁰ Exemplified in Iacovou 2002: 84–85; 2013a with further bibliography.

³¹ Papantoniou 2012a: 304–307.

III/Cypro-Archaic I landscapes. Nevertheless, as in the Late Cypriot period, the state leaders of the various city-kingdoms seem to have maintained a principal role in ritual.

Nonetheless, one should mark two significant changes in the perception of ritual space that took place within the Cypro-Geometric period:³² a. the consolidation of the Cypriot urban and extra-urban Iron Age *temenos* type with specific religious and public roles/purposes. This statement, of course, does not exclude variation in the architectural structure and shape of the Cypriot Iron Age *temene*. Additionally, it is particularly interesting to note that monumental Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical sculptures are found almost exclusively in the extra-urban sanctuaries lying along ‘frontier zones’, most probably as a means to express power and ideology;³³ b. a clearer separation of ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ urban space, but still always in direct ideological relation and association. Based on the current stage of research, this suggestion cannot be applied as a model for each and every Iron Age polity; each site had its unique development and individual history, based primarily on its surrounding geography.

As elsewhere, ‘divine kingship’ in Cyprus should not be seen as a frozen entity but rather as marked by tensions between continuity and change within the attested intra- and extra-island politico-economic realities.³⁴ Although usually problematic, relational analogies with other time periods, or with other geographic contexts—particularly from the Near East—can also sometimes prove a useful and fruitful methodological tool when trying to read religious symbolism and cognition in ancient material culture and art.³⁵ Inquiry into the ritual roles of kings in ancient Cyprus cries out for cross-cultural comparison with other Mediterranean contexts. Such methodologies, however, ought to be understood within insular contexts of connectivity, interaction, and accommodation. We still lack an approach and a diachronic study, that places a traditional art historical perspective in service of a more dynamic way of examining the relationship between visual art and archaeological contexts, in the process of reconstructing ancient ceremonial performances by specific social groups and their reception (and imitation) by other groups. Put differently, we are far from understanding the phases in which transformations in the relationship between art, ritual practices, and forms of power took place.³⁶ On the other hand, we have to consider the widespread distribution of material towards the end of the Late Cypriot period that bears closely related imagery. This distribution further suggests that, while regional centers might have developed varying concepts of deities and ritual practices and iconography, they were also sustained by complex political, economic and, ideological interactions.³⁷

I summarize Webb’s conclusions here: the co-option of foreign visual imagery in the Late Cypriot period was underpinned by an indigenous belief system that derived from an indigenous past on the one hand, and from a direct response to new politico-economic orientations on the other. The outcome of this process was a conceptual and ideological framework exclusive to the island. Thus, ritual sites and iconography offer an alternative means of understanding the island’s convoluted archaeological landscapes in relation to socio-political structures and developments. The existing remains and the repertoire of ritually related motifs provided by the archaeological record ‘allow some understanding of the profound shift in material culture which marks the beginning of the period and the critical role of ideology and ritual in the development and maintenance of complex society on the island.’³⁸

³² Papantoniou 2012a: 306.

³³ Papantoniou 2013b; Satraki 2013.

³⁴ Cf. Winter 2008: 76.

³⁵ See, for example, the contributions in Brisch 2008; Ataç 2010; Woolmer 2011: 53–54 and 99–101; Gilibert 2011.

³⁶ Cf. Gilibert 2011: chapter 6.

³⁷ Webb 1999: 297–308.

³⁸ Webb 1999: 308; 2005.

The case of Agia Irini: a glance at extra-urban Iron Age ritual and cult

The extra-urban sanctuary of Agia Irini may be associated with the transformed political geography of the Early Iron Age; this extra-urban (at least from an Iron Age perspective) sanctuary has usually been regarded as the ‘classic’ rural Iron Age Cypriot sanctuary, but there are well-founded reservations about how ‘rural’ the site was in the minds of the ancient people connected with it.³⁹ The site constitutes a uniquely preserved (or excavated) example of an Iron Age *temenos*, since the votive objects were found in a primary context with many *in situ*, facing an altar and placed at different heights (Figure 2).⁴⁰ I will not attempt to explain the meaning or the origin of the Agia Irini cult, as other scholars have done so.⁴¹ Instead, what I will endeavor to show in the following sections is that the Agia Irini votive assemblage furnishes the symbolism of Cypriot Iron Age popular cosmology and rationality as well as implied symbols of social status and possibly of an emerging royal ideology.

Ritual practice in the excavated Late Cypriot structures of Agia Irini is evident as early as the late 13th or early 12th century BC.⁴² As suggested by the excavators, both the nature of the central building as well as its material equipment and function can be compared with other Late Cypriot ritual sites, where the cult of a figure associated with a bull is also present.⁴³ The architectural analysis of Webb⁴⁴ is of particular importance, as it fits well with the interpretation regarding a clearer separation of secular and sacred space within the Early Iron Age.⁴⁵ According to Webb’s interpretation, most of the Agia Irini Bronze Age architecture was purely secular. Traditionally, in accordance with the Swedish Cyprus Expedition’s suggested chronology, destruction is recorded within the Late Bronze Age, but in the early Cypro-Geometric period the place acquires a purely religious function. An Iron Age *temenos* is constructed, which—according to the excavators and some later scholars following this interpretation—experiences no interruption in cult activity until the late 6th century BC.⁴⁶ The second phase of the sanctuary has been dated from the Cypro-Geometric I to the Cypro-Geometric III period. S. Fourrier has recently challenged the unbroken continuity from the Late Cypriot to the Iron Age, based on a careful stylistic analysis of the material.⁴⁷ She suggests that the sanctuary was abandoned in the Late Bronze Age and only reoccupied in the Cypro-Geometric III period. This development is particularly important, as it would place Agia Irini in line with the establishment of other extra-urban sanctuaries with *temene* during this period, and the probable memorial patterns related to political and territorial competition by the emerging polities of the Iron Age.⁴⁸

The apogee of the sanctuary, both in architecture and votive offerings, dates to the late Cypro-Geometric and the Cypro-Archaic periods,⁴⁹ that is, to the consolidation of the Cypriot polities.⁵⁰ In the Cypro-Geometric III period, the Late Cypriot remains were leveled and a typical—yet modest—Iron Age sanctuary was built. An open *temenos* with an altar was enclosed by a *peribolos* wall.⁵¹ Nearby, a compartment was constructed during the middle Cypro-Archaic period,⁵² probably to accommodate ‘sacred trees’, another feature likely related to a common practice of Cypriot cult, as Late Bronze Age iconographic and architectural evidence suggests.⁵³ This practice, along with other

³⁹ Papantoniou 2012a: 300–301; cf. Papantoniou 2008: 2012b: 94–95; 2013b.

⁴⁰ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: 642–824; cf. Al-Radi 1983: 67–68; for new readings of the stratigraphy, see Winbladh 2003: 151–153 and Bourogiannis 2013. The flooding phenomenon at Agia Irini seems to have had an impact on the sanctuary’s layers; thus, we are eagerly anticipating the final publication of the modified stratigraphy. The present study has considered the preliminary results presented in Bourogiannis 2013.

⁴¹ For example, Sophocleous 1985a: 90–96; 1987: 37–38; Given 1991: 120–123; Mavrogiannis 1999.

⁴² Webb 1999: 57; cf. Bourogiannis 2013.

⁴³ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: 821.

⁴⁴ Webb 1999: 57.

⁴⁵ Papantoniou 2012a: 300–301.

⁴⁶ Gjerstad 1948: 1; Al-Radi 1983: 67–68; Mavrogiannis 1999: 100; Winbladh 2003: 151–156; cf. Bourogiannis 2013.

⁴⁷ Fourrier 2007a: 89, 104–106; see also Iacovou 1994: 151; Bourogiannis 2013: 38.

⁴⁸ Papantoniou 2012a.

⁴⁹ Al-Radi 1983: 68; Winbladh 2003: 153; Bourogiannis 2013: 39–41, 43; a short revival was dated to the Hellenistic period.

⁵⁰ Iacovou 2002, 80–83; cf. Fourrier 2006: 108–109 and 2007a: 108–109; Papantoniou 2012a: 301.

⁵¹ Bourogiannis 2013: 40.

⁵² Bourogiannis 2013: 41; cf. Winbladh 2003: 152–153.

⁵³ Webb 1999: 44, 164 and 272.

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Figure 2. Terracotta figures from the sanctuary at Agia Irini as exhibited, Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet, image taken by Ove Kaneberg © Medelhavsmuseet, reproduced courtesy of the Museum

related religious behaviors—such as ritual feasting and circular dances—continued well into the Iron Age, as indicated by the evidence from the Cypro-Archaic sanctuaries of Idalion and Apollo Hylates at Kourion.⁵⁴ The altar was associated with a stone interpreted as a *baetyl*, that is, an aniconic stone cult statue of the deity. Interestingly, it has been suggested that this *baetyl* (if one accepts this interpretation) might originally have been the cult-object of the Late Cypriot sanctuary, which was removed successively to the subsequent sanctuaries.⁵⁵ This suggestion cannot be further investigated, but such an interpretation is possible if we consider that such (or similar) cult objects are found in other Late Cypriot sacred contexts.⁵⁶ With the exception of the Enkomi *baetyl*, which will be described below, no other Late Cypriot example was found *in situ*. In the case of Palaipaphos in particular, it has been proposed that the cult statue of the goddess did not change from the Late Cypriot to Roman times, keeping its aniconic form.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Deitrich 1996: 29; Fourrier and Queyrel 1998: 153–154, no. 202.

⁵⁵ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: 821.

⁵⁶ Webb 1999: 182–184.

⁵⁷ Maier and Karageorghis 1994: 182; Papantoniou 2013a; 2013b: 46.



Figure 3. Terracotta group of ring dancers, Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet A.I. 1693+2083, image taken by Ove Kaneberg © Medelhavsmuseet, reproduced courtesy of the Museum

Based on the existing published evidence, the Early Iron Age phase of the sanctuary is very problematic. The majority of the ex-votos with a probable date in the Early Iron Age comprise terracotta bulls, which originally were placed around the altar. Other votive offerings probably belonging to this phase consist of animal and ‘minotaur’ statuettes and human figures. Some of the bulls and the ‘minotaurs’ dating between the Cypro-Geometric III and Cypro-Archaic I periods have snakes writhing along the neck and back.⁵⁸ The ‘minotaur’ statuettes have their arms uplifted, a gesture clearly related with the cult of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’, as will be examined below. A recent study of animal-

human hybrid forms in other geographic contexts suggests that these images should be seen as visible reminders of possible divine aggression, but also as a form of fear-inspiring power, both alarming and reassuring.⁵⁹ A Cypro-Archaic ‘minotaur’ figurine reveals even more ‘hybrid’ features: A cylindrical human torso with male genitalia, female breasts, and animal legs,⁶⁰ probably alluding to the bicephalus (‘dual-sexed’?) image we see below in the case of Enkomi. A two-headed Cypro-Archaic terracotta figure wearing a helmet from Agia Irini might also be a personification of such a dual, ambivalent identity.⁶¹

As seen above, in the Cypro-Archaic period the sanctuary was enlarged. The continuity of cult is clearly shown by the fact that some of the ex-votos were relocated to the new level of the *temenos*. Details of the cult remain unknown due to the absence of textual evidence. Nonetheless, we are in the position to know that bulls’ masks were worn during the ceremonies as part of ritual dress. Among other finds, two figures putting on a bull-mask are preserved; similar figurines have been found both in the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion and in the necropolis of Amathous.⁶² In addition, the new reading of the stratigraphy further indicates that ritual feasting and circular dances were taking place at Agia Irini.⁶³ Apparently, Late Cypriot religious ideas seen, for example, at Kition and Enkomi survived into the Early Iron Age and continued into the Cypro-Archaic period. The discovery of a great number of figurines with tambourines and flutes and groups of ring-dancers (Figure 3) seems to indicate that music was also played during the ceremonies, in accordance with the evidence from Enkomi examined below.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXIV-CCXXVIII; Winbladh 2003: 157–166.

⁵⁹ Aston 2011: 344.

⁶⁰ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXVIII.4; Winbladh 2003: 164–166, no. 190.

⁶¹ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXXIII.9; cf. Kourou 2002: 21; Christou 2012: 53–57.

⁶² Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXXIII.8; Winbladh 2003: 162–163, no. 187.

⁶³ Bourogiannis 2013: 37 and 43.

⁶⁴ I am in agreement with Knapp 2011, especially regarding earlier periods, that in the absence of sufficient archaeological context it is wrong to assume that all the figures holding musical instruments or represented dancing should be interpreted as participants in religious ritual; based on the evidence from Agia Irini and other archaeological contexts, however, the religiosity of this practice in the Iron Age cannot be doubted; see also Papantoniou 2013a.

Most of the Cypro-Archaic ex-votos consist of terracotta human sculptures of various sizes, from small to life-size statues, figures of warriors, and chariots.⁶⁵ Several of the larger pieces possess an individual character and do not seem mass-produced.⁶⁶ The display of these statues should be seen within the ideological competition of the various city-kingdoms in ‘frontier zones’ to mark (at least symbolically) their power over their territories.⁶⁷ The sanctuary was in a ‘frontier zone’ critical for the territorial formation of Lapithos and Soloi. While several scholars have placed the sanctuary of Agia Irini within the territory of Lapithos,⁶⁸ Fourier, using more accurate criteria, that is, stylistic, reflecting politico-economic interests, assigns the sanctuary to the territory of Soloi.⁶⁹ In this context, it is pertinent to mention that comparable material culture (both in stone and terracotta), with similar symbolic associations, is found in the territorial or ‘frontier’ sanctuaries of the Mesaoria, such as that of Athienou-Malloura for example.⁷⁰

The sanctuary has been assumed to be dedicated to a male fertility god of agrarian nature. This conclusion might well be correct. However, in accordance with other Iron Age extra-urban sanctuaries of the island (such as Athienou-Malloura, Golgoi-Agios Photios, Lefkoniko, etc.), we should probably add more roles to the deity venerated at the site, related to the territorial formation of the Iron Age Cypriot polities. Instructive for the application of a methodology, which aims to recognize counterpart religious ideologies in the material culture of the Iron Age extra-urban Cypriot sanctuaries, is the study of D.B. Counts on the iconography of the ‘Master of the Animals’ encountered in many sanctuaries in the Mesaoria plain.⁷¹ A Heracles-like deity with a lion-skin headdress appears towards the end of the 7th century BC and clearly manifests elements from various Mediterranean traditions.⁷² While he displays iconography common to Near Eastern gods and heroes, he also accommodates elements related to the Greek hero Heracles. A roughly contemporary figure, an enthroned, bearded, ram-headed god, should also be seen within the sphere of animal-human deities. The figure exhibits a complex iconography that mixes Egyptian and Near Eastern traditions. In modern scholarship, the deity has conveniently been called Zeus- or Baal-Amun. Furthermore, according to epigraphic and votive evidence, other Cypriot extra-urban sanctuaries share a common preference for male divine types, such as Apollo and Reshef.⁷³ All these deities could represent an ideological conception of regional cult activity that could also be associated with political, cultural, and social boundaries. According to Counts, ‘as visual embodiment of potency, the ‘master of the animals’ claimed authority over a wide range of divine spheres: strength in combat, fertility, economic production and protection.’⁷⁴

An extra piece of information should be highlighted in the context of this discussion and seen in tandem with the evidence from Enkomi and Amathous discussed below: alongside these male figures found in the extra-urban sanctuaries of Mesaoria, the image of a Bes-like daemon figure (similar to that found in Kition-Kathari) has also been identified. A Cypro-Archaic wall bracket, for example, discovered recently during excavations at Athienou-Malloura, has been studied and well reintegrated by the excavators into its proper ideological context.⁷⁵ According to their interpretation, this item was once suspended on the exterior walls of the sanctuary to welcome the worshippers, but also to avert evil spirits and to protect the sacred space within. Remarkable parallels come from the Vouni

⁶⁵ Winbladh 2003: 168–198.

⁶⁶ Beer 2009: 37.

⁶⁷ For further analysis of this statement see Papantoniou 2008; 2012a; 2012b: chapter 2; and 2013b, which build greatly on (and modify) de Polignac’s 1984; 1994; 2005 and Fourier’s 2002 and 2007a: 111–124 influential theories and interpretations.

⁶⁸ For bibliography see Mavrogiannis 1999: 100 and Ulbrich 2008: 378.

⁶⁹ Fourier 2007a: 89–92.

⁷⁰ Averett 2011; Counts 2011.

⁷¹ Counts 2004; 2008: 18–23; 2009a; 2009b; 2010.

⁷² For a summary on the relation of lion-hunt iconography and kingship in the context of the appropriation of this Near Eastern tradition by Alexander the Great and his successors see Palagia 2000; see also the discussion below.

⁷³ Hermay 1996: 42; 1998: 266.

⁷⁴ Counts 2009b: 42.

⁷⁵ Counts and Toumazou 2006.

and probably the Amathous ‘palaces’, where Bes-like images were placed at the entrances.⁷⁶ The Malloura wall bracket depicts two lions supporting a base upon which three nude Bes-like daemons were carved. The central (and larger) figure exhibits the deity in the ‘Smiting God’ attitude. The faces of all the three figures are bearded and anthropomorphic, but with many animal-like characteristics. The three figures are depicted wearing a lion-skin headdress. The multiplicity of functions that Bes served within Egyptian and Near Eastern contexts made him an ideal manifestation of the principal male divinity in Cyprus.⁷⁷ Counts and M.K. Toumazou go further to suggest that the role of Bes as master of animals is fundamental to his reception and representation in a Cypriot context; most obvious in this respect is the lion headdress worn by the figures, as well as the ‘Smiting God’ attitude of the larger one, details which immediately recall the Cypriote type of the ‘Master of the Animals’.

The well-documented votives of the Agia Irini sanctuary might indeed be associated with a similar ideological construction. I have suggested elsewhere that the sanctuary of Agia Irini provides a nexus of ideas, admittedly ‘dark’, complex, and impenetrable to *our* eyes, that might link Late Cypriot and later city-kingdom religious traditions better than any other excavated site.⁷⁸ A preliminary study of the iconographic elements from the sanctuary identifies a male Cypriot divinity with religious ideas related to the Cypriot so-called ‘Master of the Animals’. Nonetheless, we are not yet in a position to argue that in Agia Irini we have the same male deity (deities) as that found in Mesaoria. S. Sophocleous has argued that the various representations of male gods in Cyprus should probably be viewed as visual manifestations of a ‘Great God’ who acted as consort to the island’s ‘Great Goddess’.⁷⁹ Based on the lack of contemporary textual evidence and the convoluted Cypro-Achaic divine iconography, we are far from understanding whether we should speak of one ‘Great God’ or of more male deities with similar functions on the island during the Cypro-Achaic period. Counts, opposing the idea that the various types correspond to different local or foreign divinities, suggests that the various male deities should be associated with the conception of a single, principal male divinity associated with particular sanctuaries in the Mesaoria region.⁸⁰

Even though the unification of many qualities in a single male deity worshiped throughout the island remains inconclusive, the presence of royal ideology in such extra-urban sanctuaries in association with one male deity (or more) has been implied in the archaeological literature. Yet, this subject needs further refinement.⁸¹ Interestingly, N. Serwint’s study of images linked by modern scholarship to the cult of the ‘Cypriot Great Goddess’ also proposes that the archaeological record evinces the conceptualization of a single female Astarte-like divinity who interacted with the personae of other Mediterranean goddesses, and had jurisdiction over diverse spheres; this is the goddess later to be assimilated with Aphrodite.⁸² Returning to the male ‘Cypriot God’, the smiting posture might relate this male figure to the Late Cypriot ‘smiting deities’ examined below. As Counts notes, also connecting this phenomenon to a Late Cypriot context, this might suggest that ‘the concept lingered as part of ritual practice well into the 1st millennium BC, when the statues of the ‘Master of the Lion’ became popular offerings.’⁸³ A deity or hero depicted in combat with or as master of mythical and other animals (among them lions, griffins, and caprids) in various Late Cypriot glyptics (reflecting ritual praxis) has rightly been identified by Webb as ‘Master of the Animals’.⁸⁴ We must also consider depictions of horned figures interpreted as deities, or, again, figures wearing horned crowns and helmets on glyptic art, which recall the ‘Horned’ and ‘Ingot Gods’. These figures, dressed in long robes, skirts, or trousers and wearing a horned crown with a central (celestial?) disk (later to become

⁷⁶ Hermay 2001: 15–16.

⁷⁷ Counts and Toumazou 2006: 601.

⁷⁸ Papantoniou 2012b: 267.

⁷⁹ Sophocleous 1985b: 26–28 and 216–218; for further discussion and bibliography, see Counts 2010: 140.

⁸⁰ Counts 2009b: 42–43.

⁸¹ Cf. Counts 2010; Papantoniou 2012b: 267.

⁸² Serwint 2002: 343–344; cf. Budin 2003; Karageorghis 2005; Ulbrich 2008; Papantoniou 2011 and 2013a.

⁸³ Counts 2008: 19.

⁸⁴ Webb 1999: 263–266, fig. 86.

a clear symbol of royalty and the ‘Cypriot Goddess’), appear on a number of Late Cypriot cylinders.⁸⁵ Such figures are sometimes associated with a sphinx. Later Iron Age glyptics from Agia Irini represent ‘satyrs’ or horned ‘daemons’ of an undefined identity.⁸⁶ It is interesting that, in one of them, a lion is depicted on one side, while on the other a head of a Bes-like horned daemon with a sun-disc and a wavy snake on each side of the head is carved.⁸⁷

Both infantry and warriors in chariots in various sizes are represented in the Iron Age strata at Agia Irini. Such iconographic evidence is clearly related to the reception (and imitation) of elements of royal ideology by upper societal strata and probably by other non-elite groups in order to express a prevalent cosmological system.⁸⁸ This iconography could probably be seen in tandem with the following discussion of the Metropolitan Museum sarcophagus from Amathous. The symbolism behind this iconography is also prevalent in the archaeological context of the so-called Royal Tombs of Salamis, where we can attest the sacrifice of horses in the *dromoi* of the tombs. In some cases, the horses wear breastplates with the ‘crescent and sun disc’, a symbol of an Astarte-like goddess,⁸⁹ which was possibly also related to royal iconography. Similar symbols are found on ‘Hathoric’ capitals, limestone sculpture, and Cypriot coinage, all of which are related to Cypriot Iron Age royalty.⁹⁰ Already in the Cypro-Geometric period, the archaeological record of Agia Irini contains some female representations, even if fewer in number next to the so-called *baetyl* and the altar. I refer to both the Cypro-Geometric ‘goddess with upraised arms’ and the later Cypro-Archaic ‘Astarte-plaque’ figurines associated with the veneration of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’ and found all over Cyprus during these periods.⁹¹ Additionally, next to some figures of uncertain gender, we can recognize standing sphinxes. In particular, a terracotta composition from the site represents a human figure (a female according to the excavators) seated on an armchair and resting the feet on a square stool between two winged sphinxes.⁹² The best parallel, in my opinion, is drawn with the ivory equipment of the throne discovered in the *dromos* of Tomb 79 in the royal necropolis of Salamis; one of the plaques that were attached to the side of the throne represents a sphinx wearing the crowns of Egypt.⁹³ In another piece from Agia Irini, probably one of a pair of side elements placed on either side of the throne, the sphinx is wearing an Egyptianizing pointed crown.⁹⁴ While, as further suggested by iconography and archaeological context, the sphinx is clearly a symbol of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’ also encountered in royal ‘palaces’,⁹⁵ Egyptianizing pointed crowns and elements of dress were adapted and transformed in a Cypriot context to express royal ideology.⁹⁶ Interestingly, a male statuette from Agia Irini is represented with a pointed crown and a Cypriot version of the Egyptian royal *ankh* symbol of life,⁹⁷ a symbol which was also probably appropriated by the local dynasties. In addition, the attire of these statues shows unique features, among them erect collars, bronze earrings, and turbans (similar to those described by Herodotus 7.90 when referring to the Cypriot kings?).⁹⁸

While I entirely reject interpretations which continue to fuel the complex debate on the so-called colonial episodes, which have led to the ‘Mycenaeanization’ and the ‘Phoenicianization’ narratives of Cyprus⁹⁹ (thus, I do not agree with C. Beer and other scholars regarding the Phoenician identity of the

⁸⁵ Webb 1999: 263.

⁸⁶ Reyes 2001: 132–133, no. 312, fig. 319 and 193, no. 511, fig. 512; a detailed comparative study of Late Cypriot and Iron Age iconography of glyptics in the future is likely to provide important conclusions regarding continuity and transformation of cult from the Late Cypriot to the Iron Age: Webb and Weingarten 2012; Papantoniou 2013a.

⁸⁷ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: 778, no. 2280.

⁸⁸ Cf. Papasavvas 2014.

⁸⁹ Beer 2009: 37.

⁹⁰ Cf. Carbillet 2011; Papantoniou 2012b: 268–269, 271; 2013c: 174–176.

⁹¹ Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXXII–CCXXXIII; Winbladh 2003: 166–167; cf. Ulbrich 2008: 67–77; Papantoniou 2011.

⁹² Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: pl. CCXXXIII.11.

⁹³ Karageorghis 1969: 82, fig. V.

⁹⁴ Winbladh 2003: 199–200, no. 229.

⁹⁵ Petit 2004; 2011: 79–81; Papantoniou 2013a.

⁹⁶ Faegersten 2003; Satraki 2008: 32; 2013; Papantoniou 2013c: 170–176.

⁹⁷ Winbladh 2003: 185–186, no. 213.

⁹⁸ E.g. Winbladh 2003: 168–175, nos 193–198.

⁹⁹ Cf. Iacovou 2013a.

site, and I would not name the deities venerated there ‘Astarte’ or ‘Baal’), I agree that the iconographic evidence points to the possibility that, in terms of religious personae, an Astarte-like (rather than Astarte) goddess was also venerated alongside a Baal-like (rather than Baal) god.¹⁰⁰ In the context of this discussion we have to remember that female deities can also receive offerings which seem masculine.¹⁰¹ The ‘syncretism’ between an indigenous male god (or more) with the Syro-Palestinian Baal, a deity directly related to Phoenician royalty and also originally associated with a bull figure and an Astarte-like goddess,¹⁰² could be explained within the context of growing commercial contact with the Levantine coast,¹⁰³ as well as in the context of visual communication between the Iron Age Mediterranean cultures (and states). The rather sophisticated appropriation of ‘exotic’ iconography in multiple sanctuaries across the island might suggest a more deliberate manipulation of symbolism and visual imagery; the sources may have been external, but, simultaneously, the logic and motivation of their use in a Cypriot context was entirely driven by local concerns.¹⁰⁴ The relationship between this divine couple was most probably eventually related to the Cypriot city-kingdom royal ideology. The analysis of the city-kingdom archaeological context from the Amathousian ‘palace’ will further reinforce this interpretation. Before we move to Amathous, however, we should revisit the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’ at Enkomi, in order to see more clearly how Late Cypriot ideas (and ideals) of power and cult were possibly accommodated in a later Iron Age context.

Enkomi: the transformation of a sacred place from urban to extra-urban

The idea of a divine couple in relation to the economy of metals for the Late Cypriot period has been suggested in the case of the ‘Horned God’ and the ‘Double Goddess’ at Enkomi, where a symmetrical spatial positioning of two sanctuaries within the Ashlar Building in Quarter 4 West seems to have existed.¹⁰⁵ The sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’, however, which provides some evidence of Early Iron Age cult, could be used as our case study for addressing issues of continuity from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age. In spite of the fact that in the course of the 11th century BC, the urban center of Enkomi had almost completed its move to Salamis (which was soon to become the seat of an Iron Age polity), there is clear evidence for cult continuity in the vicinity of the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’ and also in some domestic quarters.¹⁰⁶

The architectural as well as the depositional history of the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’, like that of the Ashlar building, is the subject of considerable debate.¹⁰⁷ As Iacovou and B. Kling have eloquently argued, however, the sanctuary and parts of the settlement continued to function for some years after the establishment of Salamis.¹⁰⁸ After a detailed analysis by Webb, there is little doubt that at least during the Late Cypriot IIIB two ‘*adyta*’ were incorporated into the sanctuary (Figures 4 and 5).¹⁰⁹ The west ‘*adyton*’ seems to have been associated with the cult of a female figure, and remained in use throughout the life of the building. The northeastern ‘*adyton*’, where the ‘Ingot God’ was found, was added to the original structure later on. Again, oxen played a significant role in ritual practice and iconography. Hundreds of ox skulls and horns were found on and before the benches of the building. The sacrifice of the bull or the demonstration of bovine iconography in various Mediterranean contexts is usually related to the demonstration of power.¹¹⁰ The bull in ancient Mediterranean religions

¹⁰⁰ Beer 2009.

¹⁰¹ de Polignac 2009.

¹⁰² Woolmer 2011: 98–99. In this context it is pertinent to mention that the name of Baal is attached to particular Cypro-Phoenician *basileis*; see for example Azbaal, Baalmelek and Baalram of Kition or Baalzakor of Lapithos: Satraki 2012.

¹⁰³ Swinton 1996: 68–73.

¹⁰⁴ Counts 2010: 141 and 146.

¹⁰⁵ Webb 1999: 91–101, fig. 93.

¹⁰⁶ Courtois 1971: 326–356; Lagarce 1993; Yon 1999: 17; Webb 1999: 102; 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Webb 1999: 102; 2001.

¹⁰⁸ Iacovou 1988: 8–11; Kling 1989: 83, 87, and 174; cf. Webb 1999: 102; 2001: 77.

¹⁰⁹ Webb 1999: 102–113; 2001.

¹¹⁰ For example, Azara 2003: 42–43; Godart and Tzedakis 2003: 76.

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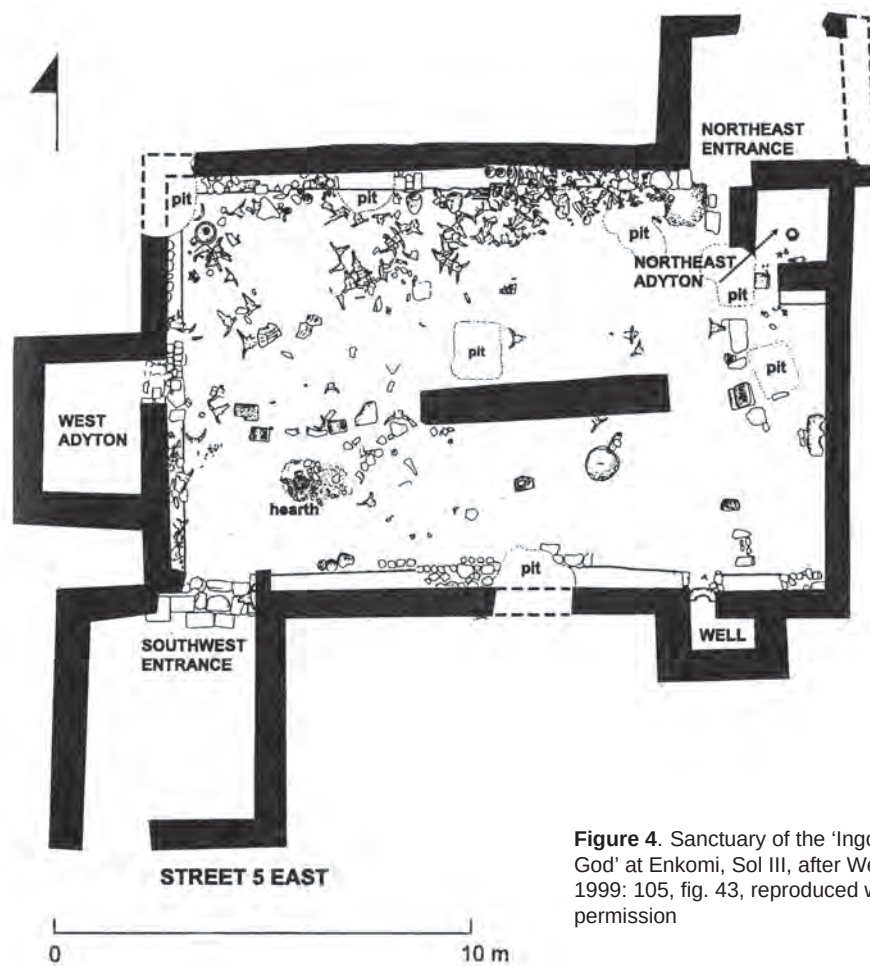


Figure 4. Sanctuary of the 'Ingot God' at Enkomi, Sol III, after Webb 1999: 105, fig. 43, reproduced with permission

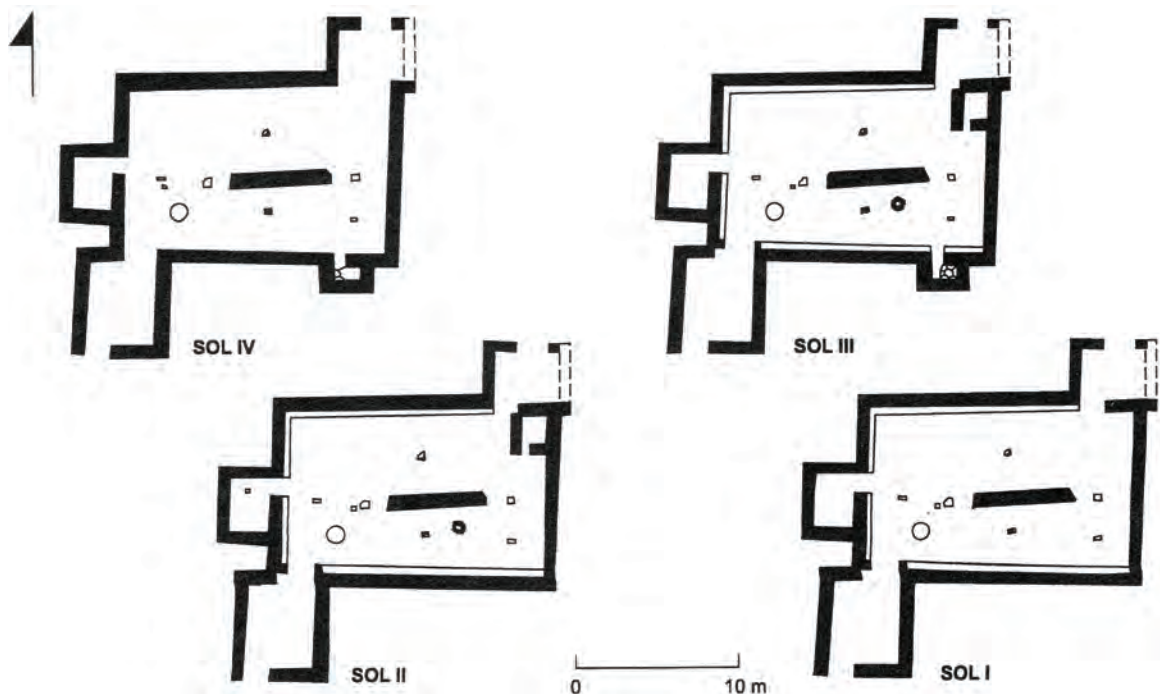


Figure 5. Sanctuary of the 'Ingot God' at Enkomi, Sols IV-I, after Webb 1999: 104, fig. 42, reproduced with permission

evokes both natural and divine power and acquires a wide diversity of symbolic uses related to cosmology, fertility, kingship, stages of life, the life of the community, and the afterlife.¹¹¹ As suggested above, similar ideas are very familiar in the Cypriot tradition since the Bronze Age, but we are far from understanding the exact content of this iconography in a Cypriot context. As in the case of Kition, several skulls from Enkomi had been cleaned of projecting bones and used as masks. This evidence, according to D. Collard, might be an indication of divination rituals.¹¹² This consideration is of particular importance, as the discussion of Amathous in the following section will demonstrate.

It is difficult to discern ritual practice in the west ‘*adyton*’ before Sols II and I, that is, the Late Cypriot IIIB and Cypro-Geometric I periods. In this last phase, at least, the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’ was equipped with offering benches and the west ‘*adyton*’ housed a *baetyl* surrounded by many votive objects, including several figurines of the ‘goddess with upraised arms’ type (Figure 6). According

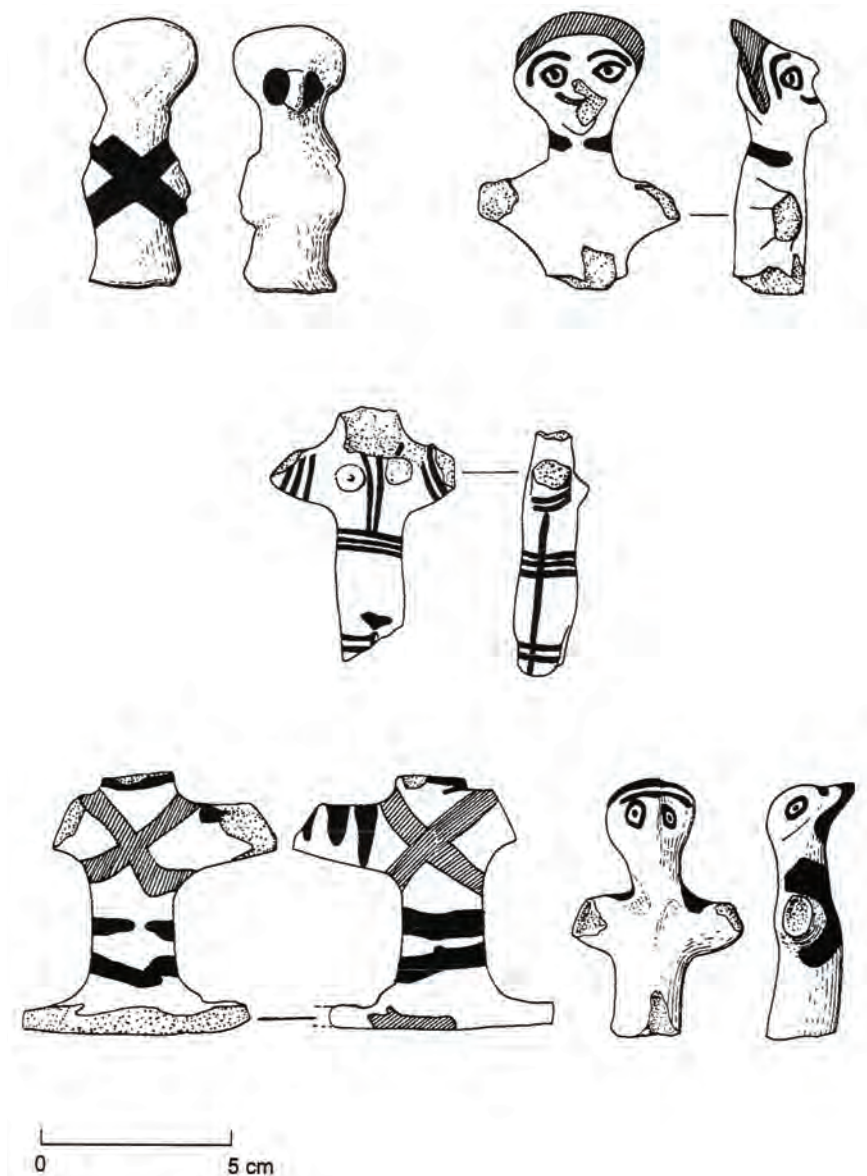


Figure 6. Terracotta figurines of the ‘goddess with upraised arms’ type from the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’ at Enkomi, after Webb 1999: 214, fig. 75, reproduced with permission

¹¹¹ Athanassopoulou *et al.* 2003.

¹¹² Collard 2011: 285.

to Webb, two bicephalous/‘dual-sexed’ centaur or sphinx figurines and double hearths found in the main hall might also be manifestations of the dedication of the building to two deities.¹¹³ This information is particularly important. It is obvious that we have clear stratigraphic evidence of a ritual context with many characteristics similar to the Agia Irini cult, that is, the probable presence of a *baetyl*, ‘goddesses with upraised arms’, and the notion of the sphinx or centaur.

The iconography and the archaeological context of the ‘Ingot God’ (Figure 7) have usually been treated within the long discussion of the relation between warlike qualities, metallurgy, and religion. In the Late Cypriot period, major additions to Cypriot representational art provide evidence for evolving social conditions. In Bronze Age societies, warrior and hunting scenes were part of a complex symbolism of prestige, signaling not only authority and status, but also probable ritual action.¹¹⁴ It has been suggested that in the Late Cypriot period, Near Eastern, Egyptian, and Aegean military iconography was assimilated into the Cypriot tradition to express the status of certain groups. A horned helmet as an indicator of the king’s divinity, for example, is presented in earlier Mesopotamian iconography.¹¹⁵ The ‘Ingot God’, therefore, should be viewed within this context. In addition, most scholars agree that this statuette should be seen as a god responsible for the protection of the bronze industry.

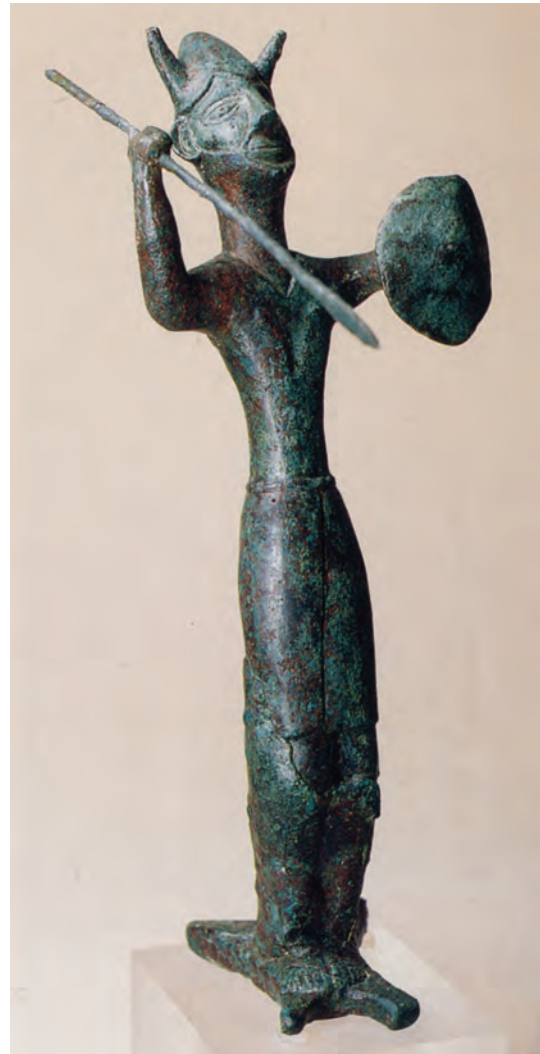


Figure 7. Bronze Statuette of the ‘Ingot God’ from Enkomi, Nikosia, Cyprus Museum 16.15 © Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, reproduced courtesy of the Museum

This last role is further supported by the proximity of the northeastern ‘*adyton*’ to metallurgical workshops. According to Webb, the goddess of the west ‘*adyton*’ may also have originally been linked with the metal industry and should probably be associated with the ‘Astarte on the ingot’ bronzes from the Bomford Collection, Bairaktar, and Teratsoudhia.¹¹⁶ Webb concludes, ‘the fact that her ‘*adyton*’ appears to be earlier, larger and closer to both altars and offering benches, may indicate that she was, at least initially, the more important of the two.’¹¹⁷ We may therefore conclude that the legitimization of the ‘Ingot God’ was dependent on his association with a female figure, the image of which is not securely identifiable. Was this male deity (probably identical to the ‘Horned God’ or at least possessing qualities identical with those of the ‘Horned God’) appropriated by competing elites¹¹⁸ in their attempt to assert ancestral ritualized authority in a destabilized environment?¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Webb 1999: 110, fig. 46 and 112; 2001: 76.

¹¹⁴ Webb 1999: 272–276.

¹¹⁵ Winter 2008: 76.

¹¹⁶ Webb 1999: 113, fig. 80.1–2; 2001: 76; cf. Papasavvas 2011a.

¹¹⁷ Webb 1999: 113; cf. Bolger 2011: 392–393.

¹¹⁸ See Webb 2001: 79–80 for a general discussion and Fisher 2009 for a new reading of elite place-making and social interaction; cf. Peltenburg in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 349–51; 2012; Knapp 2013: 438–447. For the political significance of ‘merchant elites’ and their impact on Late Bronze and Iron Age societies, see Woolmer 2011: 56–7; Peltenburg in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 347–351; cf. Iacovou 2006b: 327–328; Pantazis 2011.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Spigelman 2012: 146; Papantoniou 2013a. For a recent account of the 12th century BC history of Cyprus see Georgiou 2011; 2015.

G. Papasavvas has convincingly argued for the transformation of the image of the ‘Ingot God’ from smiting into smithing.¹²⁰ In other words, the shape of an established deity, venerated in his martial character, was modified to imply clearly his relation with metalworking. In any case, the military spirit of the god was not abandoned. On the other hand, the aforementioned ‘Astarte’ bronzes of the Bomford type had their ingot right from the beginning.¹²¹ This suggests that they played a variety of probable roles, including the protection of a metal-producing economy and the legitimization of power and also sexuality and fertility as implied (at least to modern viewers) by their sexual attributes and nudity. The fact that the ingot was added subsequently to the original manufacture of the male statuette, that his ‘*adyton*’ was abandoned in the latter strata of Enkomi (that is, prior to Sol I, which clearly falls in the Early Iron Age),¹²² and that the goddess’ one continued to be frequented in the Early Iron Age remain of particular importance.

I believe that, within the context of the confusion surrounding the relative stratigraphy of the final deposits at Enkomi, a macro-historical reading of Cypriot religion and a consideration of the beginning and development of Salamis complements Webb’s new reading of the abandonment or cessation of the Enkomi ritual sites:¹²³ the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’, when he was actively visible, ‘was in the hands of a well-established elite with access to a rich array of material and symbolic goods and cannot have been located in an impoverished or wholly abandoned town.’¹²⁴ The demise of Enkomi does not appear to have been a site-wide catastrophic event but rather a gradual process, which was pre-planned and well-organized,¹²⁵ probably because of the silting of its harbor.¹²⁶ The formal burial of the ‘Ingot God’ at the close of Sol III, and the transformation of cult during Sols II and I within the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age may reflect social transformations related to the emergence of a new city and possibly of a new politico-economic reality. The ritual of Sols II-I primarily involved participation in ring dances and veneration of a *baetyl*, that is, practices quite familiar in the later Iron Age cult of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’. Again, this type of circle dance was a common feature of many Near Eastern cults, particularly those focusing on Astarte-like goddesses.¹²⁷ At the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, a complex renegotiation of social roles and power structures seems to have taken place. The deliberate burial of the ‘Ingot God’ and the maintenance of the female cult will remain an enigma¹²⁸ as long as, due to the 1974 Turkish invasion on the island, we lack archaeological access for a re-evaluation of Enkomi’s stratigraphy.

The ‘Cypriot Goddess’ in transition: a contextual approach

Both the definition and the identification of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’ before the late Cypro-Classical period are very problematic. One should remain skeptical about attaching this term to each and every female figure or figurine. I, therefore, disagree with the idea that by the 12th and 11th centuries BC this goddess was already known as Aphrodite.¹²⁹ Such secure evidence is not known before the late Cypro-Classical period.¹³⁰ All the interpretations are based on later, problematic texts. As with the image of the ‘Cypriot Great God’, the presence of a single distinctive goddess who is specifically Cypriot, and her interaction with other Mediterranean female goddesses before the Hellenistic period are very complex issues. What I have argued elsewhere, based on the evidence from Enkomi and comparative evidence from contemporary and later Cypriot sites, is that the ‘goddess with upraised

¹²⁰ Papasavvas 2011a: 675–678; 2011b.

¹²¹ Papasavvas 2011a: 676.

¹²² Webb 2001: 73 and 76–77.

¹²³ Webb 2001: esp. 78–80; cf. Papantoniou 2013a.

¹²⁴ Webb 2001: 80.

¹²⁵ Webb 2001: 79.

¹²⁶ Lagarde 1993: 91.

¹²⁷ Cf. Woolmer 2011: 106.

¹²⁸ Cf. Papasavvas 2011a: 677–678.

¹²⁹ Karageorghis and Karageorghis 2002: 273; Karageorghis, V. 2005: 108.

¹³⁰ Papantoniou 2011: 40; 2013a.

arms' is the one transplanted into the Iron Age, associated with royal ideology and, eventually, with Aphrodite.¹³¹ I restate and reiterate my argument below.

While the image of the goddess venerated during the Sol III phase of the west 'adyton' of the Sanctuary of the 'Ingot God' at Enkomi (the one that is definitely contemporary with the God) remains unknown, we have clear iconographic evidence for the goddess venerated in Sol II, at a time when the importance of the 'Ingot God' statuette remains problematic. In Sol II, the well annex on the south side of the sanctuary was blocked and a small stone *baetyl* and a rectangular plaster platform, most probably related to a ritual dance, were erected at the center of the west 'adyton' (Figure 5); a double hearth was also built in relation to this 'adyton'. Ritual equipment has been found in association with Sol II, along with at least 120 fragmentary figurines that were assigned to Sols II and I.¹³² During Sol I, the northeast 'adyton' of the 'Ingot God' clearly did not exist. We deal here with a structured ritual deposition¹³³ characterized by formalism involving repetitive actions and performance.

According to the excavators, the majority of these figurines were deliberately broken, an action frequently linked with specific ritual practices or with the final abandonment of ritual sites.¹³⁴ The great majority of the votives consist of human figures from ring dance compositions in which three or four votaries with upraised arms (interpreted as women) were arranged around a central musician (Figure 6). We have clearer, complete evidence for this ritual action from sanctuaries of later periods, such as Agios Iacovos, Agia Irini, Kourion and Idalion (see above).¹³⁵ A distinction between the 'image of' and 'image for' or between 'cult image' and 'votive' should be made.¹³⁶ These images (6–8cm in height) most probably represent the worshippers or the priestesses of the goddess making a ritual gesture. Several larger, more finely decorated fragments (25–30cm in height), however, could have been images of the goddess.¹³⁷ Size and archaeological context, that is, correlation with other artifacts, are important indicators when trying to separate 'images of' and 'images for'. In the west 'adyton', eleven human figurines and fragments of at least ten more surrounded the *baetyl*. Many other figurines were found in relation to this cult on the west bench and in the western courtyard.¹³⁸

The Enkomi aniconic cult of a *baetyl* within a room should probably be seen in analogy with the famous aniconic cult of the Palaipaphos sanctuary.¹³⁹ A stone interpreted as a *baetyl* and dated to the 12th century BC has also been found in Kition.¹⁴⁰ In fact, even if the last phases of Enkomi are still subject to debate, the *baetyl* cult at Enkomi corresponds to the final phase of the site and the gradual movement of the city to Salamis. As seen above, while the coastal urban centers of Kition and Palaipaphos survive the transition from the 2nd to the 1st millennium BC, most likely thanks to the function of their harbors, during the Late Cypriot IIIB period Enkomi had to relocate to Salamis probably because its harbor silted up. During the Late Cypriot IIIA period, however, after the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces and the migration of Aegean settlers to the island, at Kition and Palaipaphos we see an unprecedented (by Cypriote standards) monumental enhancement of their typically Cypriote open-air sanctuaries.¹⁴¹ According to Iacovou, this enhancement followed a uniform plan (based on the construction of *temene* with megalithic ashlar blocks), showing them in the process of developing a similar symbolic language of authority; the relocation of Enkomi to the site of Salamis towards the end of the 12th century BC possibly undermined, or left behind, a Late

¹³¹ Papantoniou 2013a.

¹³² Webb 1999; 2001.

¹³³ Richards and Thomas 1984: 214–215; cf. Collard 2011: 95–96.

¹³⁴ Cf. Webb 2001: 79.

¹³⁵ See Karageorghis 1993: 64–65 and Karageorghis 1995: 132–137 for the surviving complete (or nearly complete) examples and the difficulties in recognizing the gender of the figures.

¹³⁶ Cf. Renfrew 1985: 22–24; Goodison and Morris 1998: 15–16.

¹³⁷ Webb 1999: 112.

¹³⁸ Webb 1999: 112.

¹³⁹ For recent works on aniconism in ancient Mediterranean cult see Carstens 2008; Crooks 2012; 2013; Gaifman 2012.

¹⁴⁰ Webb 1999: 64 and 182.

¹⁴¹ Iacovou 2008a: 231–232; Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 355; Papantoniou 2013a.

Cypriot IIC–IIIA heterarchical organization, where the existence of competing groups that shared power and authority could be demonstrated (see above).¹⁴²

Many interpretations have been suggested with respect to the introduction of the aniconic cult in Cyprus. Its importance can be established only after considering the significance that the cult of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’, and especially the one from Palaipaphos, acquires when the island is under Ptolemaic and Roman administration.¹⁴³ While the Hellenistic and Roman elites are careful to provide meaningful associations with this sanctuary, the *Koinon Kypriôn*, that is, the most important bearer of a unifying political ideology in the Roman period, struck coins with the depiction of this sanctuary with its *baetyl*. Even if we lack the archaeological context of the *baetyls* at Palaipaphos (and Kition), should we resort to comparisons with Enkomi in order to identify a social and ideological context for the establishment of this cult also in Kition and Palaipaphos?

The source of inspiration and/or the initiation of the *baetyl* cult has always been regarded in relation to the exogenous, that is, the Aegean and, later, the Phoenician element.¹⁴⁴ If we consider that the *baetyl* of Enkomi (as a probable cult object and not simply as a votive ‘stele’) is the only early known example found *in situ*, along with the contemporary appearance of the ‘goddess with upraised arms’, the origin of which is also usually attributed to the ‘post-Mycenaean’ or ‘sub-Minoan’ (non-palatial) worlds, we could make a better case for an Aegean ‘origin’ of the cult. A.L. D’Agata, however, is right to suggest that comparative stylistic studies can take us no further than mere observation of the ‘migration’ of the type.¹⁴⁵ The analysis of additional archaeological evidence, however, shows that this type of figurine, along with other representations, does not seem to corroborate the argument that during the 12th and 11th centuries BC the two major islands of Crete and Cyprus were involved in a particularly noteworthy exchange at the level of cult. Rather, these relations may reflect the trade circuit at work between Cyprus and Crete as a result of wider ranging contacts with the Mediterranean world.¹⁴⁶

In addition, we have to consider that *stelai* related to cult, along with other elements found in Cypriot Iron Age religion, such as the importance of bull or snake iconography for example, are also encountered in earlier Bronze Age society.¹⁴⁷ Elements such as the Late Cypriot ‘bathtubs’ and ‘horns of consecration’ discovered in many Late Cypriot ritual contexts, originally thought to be remnants of Aegean migration, are now chronologically and ideologically inserted into an indigenous Bronze Age tradition. This is where we should probably place the origin of an indigenous ‘cosmological system’, eventually to be connected to a ‘religious system’ with the emergence of a more ‘complex society’.

‘[R]eligions are not just static systems fixed once and for all, but continually interact with changes and reshape themselves accordingly.’¹⁴⁸ It is certainly not accidental that in a pre-Late Cypriot ‘less complex’ society there is no architectural structure that, based on its archaeological context, we could clearly name (even conventionally) a ‘sanctuary’. The Late Cypriot and Iron Age more ‘complex societies’, however, were clearly interacting with and accommodating aspects of the ‘exogenous’. Nonetheless, when studying iconography and style (on artifacts found in Late Cypriot ritual spaces), a distinction between ‘cultural’ and ‘stimulus diffusion’ should be made.¹⁴⁹ It is time to move from art historical approaches that look for formal similarities among the various materials related to religious iconography towards approaches that consider the function and religious symbolism of these objects

¹⁴² Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 355; Papantoniou 2013a.

¹⁴³ Cf. Papantoniou 2012b: 159–160.

¹⁴⁴ For example, Karageorghis 2000; Zeman 2008.

¹⁴⁵ D’Agata 2005: 9.

¹⁴⁶ D’Agata 2005: 14; cf. Kourou 2002: esp. 32–33.

¹⁴⁷ For examples, see Peltenburg 1989; Webb 1999: 176–179; Steel 2004: 203–204; Collard 2008; Webb and Frankel 2010. We might also consider the Kition anchor, found standing upright in front of a wall and, as described above, in a clearly ritual context.

¹⁴⁸ Paden 1994: 55.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Cadogan *et al.* 2012: 4.

within their own local contexts.¹⁵⁰ In addition, changes in the stylistic representation of religious concepts and practices do not necessarily imply radical changes in content, but rather changes in fashions and orientations.

The function and meaning of any female figurine before the Late Cypriot IIIB period remain problematic. In particular, when it comes to the Late Cypriot nude female figurine types A and B,¹⁵¹ it remains unclear whether they stem primarily from settlements, burials, or ritual complexes. They could indeed relate to (but not necessarily be identified with) the ‘Astarte on the ingot’ statuettes and to the cosmology that these figures represent; however, further research is needed to clarify this. A.B. Knapp¹⁵² is right to note that one of the most coherent and contextual approaches is that of Webb,¹⁵³ but more focused and statistical work needs to be done before we may reach some final conclusions. Webb concludes that, prior to Late Cypriot IIIB, no terracotta female images played a significant part in public cult, and that they were only occasionally used as votives. This phenomenon should have been significant. I agree with both Webb and Knapp¹⁵⁴ that the increasing prominence of the ‘goddess with upraised arms’ in the Late Cypriot IIIB and Cypro-Geometric I periods clearly signals a change in the function of anthropomorphic female figurines.¹⁵⁵ This transformation, which is probably related to the emerging Iron Age polities, remains to be explained.

It is important, however, that this is the first time in the history of the island when a terracotta female figurine is found in a clearly religious (not just ritual) context. It is interesting that, even if there is some disagreement on the timing of their first appearance, their currency should be dated to at least as early as the last quarter of the 12th century BC.¹⁵⁶ As we have seen, most of them may not represent the goddess, but they are definitely related to her cult. Remarkably, they appear together with and at the same time as the cult of the *baetyl* in the west ‘*adyton*’ of the sanctuary of the ‘Ingot God’. If we consider the significance of the *baetyl* cult in Cyprus to the end of the Roman period, this might indeed reinforce the above interpretation: even if other goddesses coexisted with the ‘goddess with upraised arms’, this goddess is to be associated with later city-kingdom royal ideology, and eventually, at least by the end of the Cypro-Classical period, in some instances with Aphrodite. How exactly this figure relates to the goddess previously venerated alongside the ‘Ingot God’ is still an enigma. Interestingly, a woman gazing from a window on a bronze stand found in Late Cypriot Enkomi has been characterized as an ‘Astarte in the window’, a motif which is common in Assyrian and Phoenician ivories of later date than the Cypriot bronze stand; this woman, whose features resemble the ‘Astarte on the ingot’ type, is also found in later Cypro-Achaic terracotta shrine models that can clearly be associated with the cult of the ‘Cypriot goddess’.¹⁵⁷ Within the context of the ‘religious syncretism’ of the period, therefore, I would prefer to see the ‘goddess with the upraised arms’ as a development of the previous image through interaction and assimilation, rather than an altogether new and exogenous deity. Already within the Late Bronze Age, the cult of a ‘Cypriot Goddess’ seems to have been highly politicized, having functions and roles that exceed those merely concerning fertility.

Identifying cultural networks and their overlaps occupies much of the more familiar historical reconstructions.¹⁵⁸ Cultural interaction with the Aegean and the Levant, as well as Aegean and Levantine migration could better explain the complexity of the emerging Cypriot iconography. The type of the ‘goddess with upraised arms’, attested in many Early Iron Age sanctuaries,¹⁵⁹ remained

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Counts 2004: 180.

¹⁵¹ Webb 1999: 209–13, fig. 74.1–4; Knapp 2008: 176–186; 2009.

¹⁵² Knapp 2009: 141.

¹⁵³ Webb 1999: 209–215; cf. Alexandrou 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Webb 213; Knapp 2009: 141.

¹⁵⁵ For a ritual (not necessarily religious) function of the earlier Middle Bronze Age plank-shaped figurines see Webb 2015.

¹⁵⁶ Webb 1999: 213–215; 2001: 78.

¹⁵⁷ Washbourne 1999; cf. Papasavvas 2011a: 668.

¹⁵⁸ Malkin 2011: 16.

¹⁵⁹ Karageorghis 1977; Papantoniou 2012a; 2013a.

popular up to the Cypro-Archaic period, when an Astarte-like type of ‘goddess’ re-emerges. A study of the development of the image of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’, along with its ritual affiliations (for example, the importance of music and dance in her cult), in a more coherent Iron Age city-kingdom context can indeed reinforce the interpretation advanced here.¹⁶⁰

Ritual and royal ideology in Amathous: a view from an urban city-kingdom environment

The excavation at the Amathousian ‘palace’ has supplied evidence for large-scale storage, industrial activity (slag and metallurgical tools), and archival work (including clay sealings and bronze styluses).¹⁶¹ At the north part of the Amathous ‘palace’ a small shrine with a circular altar has been uncovered.¹⁶² Along with other symbols of the ‘Cypriot goddess’, that is, some *thymiateria* with sphinxes, a T-shaped stone was found in a very coherent stratigraphy and in a ritual context.¹⁶³ Its archaeological context and a comparison with parallels from elsewhere in the Mediterranean permit its identification as a *cippus* (if it represents an ex-voto), or a *baetyl* (if it represents a cult idol). T. Petit, therefore, has argued in detail for the association of this object with the cult of the local goddess.¹⁶⁴ Drawing an analogy with the cult of Astarte at Byblos and Sidon, where the king seems to have been assimilated with a companion god of the goddess, Petit also suggests that the same element might be present at Amathous.¹⁶⁵

While this interpretation in the case of Cyprus should remain hypothetical in the absence of more concrete contemporary textual evidence, it has also been suggested that the figure of a Bes-like deity in Amathous, also present in other Cypriot ritual contexts as discussed above, was associated through a syncretistic process with many other male divinities that were linked to protection and the renewal of life, and eventually with royal ideology.¹⁶⁶ While the vital force of ‘Bes’ and his relation to Heracles in Amathous might be evinced by the colossal statue (however, of problematic date) that represented him as the ‘Master of the Lion’,¹⁶⁷ his chthonic element can be attested by an architectural relief where the god is presented as ‘Master of the Serpents’.¹⁶⁸ In this context, it is particularly important to emphasize that similar grotesque or leonine Bes-like masks to those found in Enkomi and Kition,¹⁶⁹ have also been found in Amathous, for instance in Tomb 83, the ‘palace’, and the main sanctuary of the city kingdom on the ‘acropolis’.¹⁷⁰

Although particularly popular in Cyprus, a horned ‘Bes’ or ‘daemon’, such as those presented on the material from Agia Irini or on the Metropolitan sarcophagus from Amathous presented below (Figure 11a–c), is almost unknown outside the island.¹⁷¹ In ancient religion the horn is usually a divine symbol of power.¹⁷² As examined above, in religious iconography this Cypriot ‘daemon’ is usually found in association with forces of nature symbolized, for instance, by lions or snakes. There seems to be a nexus of ideas in operation, which might indeed relate to the aforementioned discussion of the figure of the ‘Master of the Animals’. Nonetheless, in default of contemporary textual evidence from the island, which would describe the myth,¹⁷³ we are far from understanding the ‘religious syncretism’ and its exact content in a local context.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Papantoniou 2011; 2012b: 235–245.

¹⁶¹ Petit 1996; 2002; for the role of the Amathousian polity in the Iron Age metals-producing economy see Papantoniou 2012b: 208–290; 2013a: 169; Kassianidou 2013: 66–68.

¹⁶² Petit 2002: 321, fig. 6.

¹⁶³ For a detailed analysis and interpretation of this context see Petit 2002 and Papantoniou 2012b: 209–214, 262–282.

¹⁶⁴ Petit 2002: 299–304.

¹⁶⁵ Petit 2002: 304–308; 2004; 2006.

¹⁶⁶ Petit 2004: 60–69; 2006: 65–69; Counts and Toumazou 2006; Tassignon 2009; 2013; Papantoniou 2012b: 265–267; cf. Ioannou 2009; Garbati 2010; Vernet 2011: 262.

¹⁶⁷ Hermay 1981: 28–31; cf. Tassignon 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Hermay 1981: 67–69.

¹⁶⁹ Webb 1999: 219–222.

¹⁷⁰ For example, Karageorghis 1990: 3–6, no. A148; Hermay 2000a: 78–79 and 81, no. 510 and 526.

¹⁷¹ Wilson 1975: 97.

¹⁷² Azara 2003: 29 and 36.

¹⁷³ On the conflict between the celestial forces of the bull and the earthly power of the lion in the myth of other Mediterranean contexts, see Azara 2003: 27–28.

It is of great interest that in the same context as the T-shaped stone interpreted as a *baetyl*, a limestone head wearing the *mitra*—a royal headdress of Cypriot *basileis* according to Herodotus (7.90)—and a limestone statuette wearing a bull’s mask (Figure 8) have been found. The central religious role of the *basileus* in the era of the Cypriot city-kingdoms in the case of Palaipaphos is without question. Unambiguous evidence for sacral kingship and divination is represented by a number of fourth-century BC Cypro-syllabic inscriptions and textual evidence in which the *basileus* (of the *Kinyrades* dynasty) is called *archiereus* (chief-priest).¹⁷⁴ Such clear epigraphic and textual evidence is lacking for the other city-kingdoms. Nevertheless, Iacovou is probably right when noting that this fourth-century BC phenomenon, that is, the written formula assigning priestly duties to the Paphos *basileis*, should be situated within broader historical events (the movement of the city to Nea Paphos and, thus, the disassociation of the royal house with the mythical Palaipaphos sanctuary?) that forced them to secure this undivided authority.¹⁷⁵ If we accept this interpretation we could also understand why such epigraphic evidence is lacking not only from pre-fourth century BC Paphos, but also from the rest of the islands’ city-kingdoms. It is true that iconography, individualities of cult, and later (and therefore problematic) textual evidence clearly relate Amathous to the mythical past of the island, especially when it comes to the establishment of the city by ‘Eteo-cypriots’, who were expelled from the land of Kinyras (see below).

The statuette wearing the bull’s mask, found in the ‘*Baetyl*’ sanctuary (Figure 8), is the key feature that might suggest a sacral status for the *basileus* (or a subordinate of the *basileus*) of Amathous. Based on iconographic and textual parallels from Cyprus and other areas of the Mediterranean, it has been suggested that this statuette represents a priest, or even probably the *basileus* himself.¹⁷⁶ Drawing together literary and visual material, the study of human-animal figures in other geographic contexts has shown that such images should be understood within the fabric of ancient religious practice; transformation through the act of wearing a mask is not just a feature of myth, but is also influential in the realities of worship and its settings.¹⁷⁷ In the passage from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age an increased ‘taurocentricity’ in Cypriot religion can be noted.¹⁷⁸

According to Counts, such theriomorphic displays on the part of the kings or their subordinates should probably be seen as a manipulation of the cult of the ‘Master of the Animals’, and its incorporation into a mechanism providing a ritualized narrative that complemented their power.¹⁷⁹ Similarly to Neo-



Figure 8. Limestone statuette interpreted as ‘priest with the mask’, from the ‘*Baetyl*’ ‘palatial’ sanctuary, Amathous, Limassol District Museum AM 11, after Hermary 2000a: pl. 71, no. 877, reproduced with permission

¹⁷⁴ Masson 1961: 113–115, no. 16–17.

¹⁷⁵ Iacovou 2012a: 66–67; 2013b: 287–288.

¹⁷⁶ Hermary 1979; 2000a: 133, no. 877; Petit 1996: 109.

¹⁷⁷ Aston 2011: 298.

¹⁷⁸ Swinton 1996.

¹⁷⁹ Counts 2010: 146. The incorporation of the ‘Master of the Animals’ and other zoomorphic iconography into Cypriot royal coinage

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Figure 9. A Bull-man on Late Cypriot glyptic art, after Webb 1999: 268, fig. 85.3, reproduced with permission



Figure 10. Terracotta mask from Amathous representing a horned and bearded male, London, British Museum, GR 1894.1101.202 © The Trustees of the British Museum, Free Image Service

Assyrian kings, who are usually portrayed in the guise of a Master of Animals and often exhibited their power through hunting, the Cypro-Archaic *basileis* might have promoted (and identified with) a similar cult. However, this cult was rooted in the Late Cypriot tradition, if we consider the Late Cypriot glyptic portraying hunting scenes, ‘masters of the animals’, and bovine iconography.¹⁸⁰ In addition, Late Cypriot glyptic art depicts a bull-man in association with various animals and bucrania (Figure 9).¹⁸¹

Another interpretation could relate this statuette with the myth of the *Kerastai* as described in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (10. 220–242). The *Kerastai* belonged to a family from Amathous in which the men’s foreheads were disfigured by horns. They were punished by the goddess for offering human sacrifices. According to the myth, the goddess decided to transform their bodies into savage bulls. The answers supplied by religious belief systems, particularly those of origin, are often provided in mythological forms, which take the form of historical narrative through ritual and iconography.¹⁸² An interpretation that associates the Amathous statuette with this myth is supported by anthropological theory about ritual drama and the re-enactment of foundation myths; ancient cultures were usually founded on the collective murder of a surrogate victim, the sacrifice of which restored peace and order.¹⁸³ The growth of bovine sacrifices in the main sanctuary of the Amathousian city during the 5th and 4th centuries BC¹⁸⁴ might be related to such foundation myths. I, therefore, believe that the sacrifice of bulls and their importance in ancient Cypriot religion since the Early Bronze Age, and the association of a male deity (the cult of which involved bull imagery) with Zeus at Salamis,¹⁸⁵ for example, could possibly be explored within the context of an indigenous myth.

It is significant that a unique terracotta mask from Amathous, discovered in a burial context, represents a horned and bearded male (Figure 10).¹⁸⁶ The horns appear to be bovine and recall the horned cap or helmet worn by the ‘Horned’ and ‘Ingot Gods’ of Enkomi. In both cases (the terracotta mask from Amathous and the Late Cypriot statuettes) the iconography might suggest a version of a myth that was probably later associated with the *Kerastai* in an Amathousian city-kingdom environment.¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, it has been suggested that the Enkomi ‘Horned god’ should probably be associated with Kinyras, the only autochthonous male deity/hero preserved in the Iron Age memory, who was likely later syncretized with other Aegean and Near Eastern male deities.¹⁸⁸ It would indeed be dangerous to attempt further to name any of the Late Cypriot statuettes, but it would not be daring at all to say that, most probably, they represented mythical figures or divinities who endured in the Iron Age memory. The zoomorphic iconography and its associated ideology should be related with a local tradition that traced its routes back to an indigenous ‘prehistory’, interacting with other Mediterranean and Near Eastern contexts.¹⁸⁹

Following the above discussion on Enkomi and the probable connection of the ‘Ingot God’ and the Bomford type ‘goddess’ with the metals-producing economy, we should also reconsider whether and how a Late Cypriot divine couple was transplanted into an Iron Age royal ideology. An impressive but underestimated piece of evidence that stresses continuities of Cyprus’ politico-economic system from the Late Cypriot to the mature Iron Age comes from the mythical realm:¹⁹⁰ Kinyras, the autochthonous pre-Greek king of Cyprus was also the beloved priest of the ‘Cypriot Goddess’ (later to be identified with Aphrodite). Beyond his secular and ritual duties, according to the myth (Plin.,

might be a major proof of the employment of this ideology, see Counts 2010: 144–145.

¹⁸⁰ Counts 2010: 143–144.

¹⁸¹ Webb 1999: 270–271.

¹⁸² Renfrew 1994: 48.

¹⁸³ For foundation rites and sacrifice in other cultures, see Azara 2003: 40–41.

¹⁸⁴ Hermay 2000b.

¹⁸⁵ Yon 1980; 1981.

¹⁸⁶ Karageorghis 1990: 9–10; Karageorghis 1993: 117, no. 33.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Hermay 1979: 738.

¹⁸⁸ Dussaud 1950: 72–3; Webb 1999: 228; Fourrier 2007b: 6; Tsavli 2009.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Counts 2009: 113.

¹⁹⁰ Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 358–359.

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Figure 11a. Amathous sarcophagus, long side a, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription, 74.51.2453. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Images for Academic Publishing



Figure 11b. Amathous sarcophagus, short side a, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription, 74.51.2453. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Images for Academic Publishing

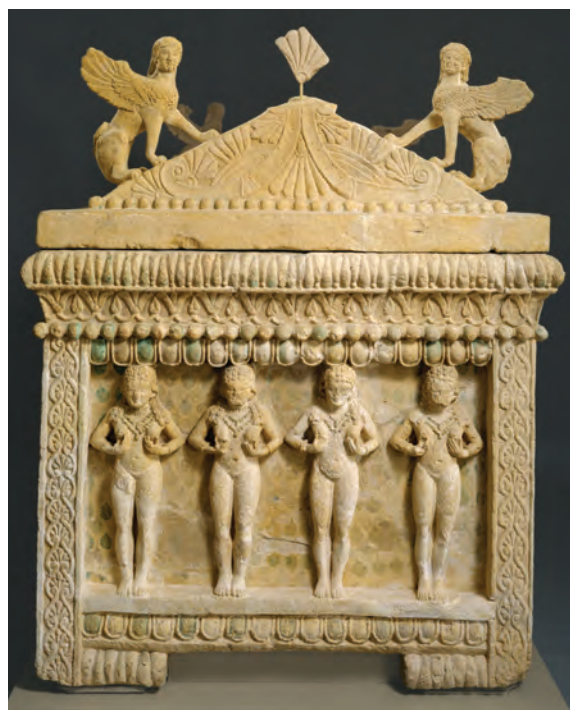


Figure 11c. Amathous sarcophagus, short side b, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription, 74.51.2453. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Images for Academic Publishing

HN 7.195), he also invented the art of mining. The Greek-speaking *basileis* of the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical kingdom of Paphos insist on their descent from the legendary ruler of the archaic state of Cyprus. Suffice it to recall epigraphic evidence that identifies Nikokles, the last *basileus* of Palaipaphos, as the final descendant of Kinyras.¹⁹¹ In addition to epigraphic evidence, iconographic elements also strongly suggest that the descendants of the god-like Kinyras, that is, the *basileis* of Palaipaphos, had a special connection with the ‘Great Goddess’.¹⁹²

Moving from the context of Paphos to other city-kingdom environments, we should mention that other Cypriot *basileis* aspire to establish a special connection with the island’s mythical king, Kinyras, therefore, gave his daughter to Teukros to marry, so that the Greek *Teukridai* of Salamis would also have a stake in being indigenous.¹⁹³ The Greek *nostoi* (epic sources for the return of the heroes from the Trojan War) do not credit Homeric heroes with establishing totally new colonies, but they do justify the take-over of existing centers of power.¹⁹⁴ According to a later source (Theopomp. *FHG* 115.F.103.3), the companions of Kinyras (the indigenous population) took refuge in Amathous after being chased out by the Greeks of Agamemnon. It is even possible that Kinyria was another name for Amathous.¹⁹⁵ Such a legend of autochthony could reinforce the anteriority of the Amathousians in Cyprus and the mythological precedence of the local dynasty over the other city-kingdoms.¹⁹⁶

The direct relationship of the Amathousian *basileis* with the local goddess is established primarily by the famous Cypro-Classical sarcophagus, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 11a–c).¹⁹⁷ The sarcophagus’ unique iconography and the context of its discovery, that is, a monumental built tomb, support the idea of the inhumation of an individual of important social rank or even of the *basileus* himself. As has recently been argued in detail by Petit, all the symbols and royal ideological connotations of the Amathousian dynasty can be seen on this sarcophagus.¹⁹⁸ The lid is decorated with sculpted vegetal motifs and sphinxes, which allude to a symbolism related to the cult of the goddess. On one short side, four Bes-like gods are depicted; its counterpart features four ‘Astarte’-type goddesses like those depicted on the figurines from many Iron Age Cypriot sanctuaries and tombs. On its long sides, flanked by ‘trees of life’ or ‘sacred trees’, soldiers, horsemen and chariots drawn by plumed horses are arranged in procession, perhaps depicting a royal parade that took place during the life of the deceased, or most probably the funeral itself (that is, a cortege like that in real life).

Based on comparative studies with other Mediterranean areas, Petit, in analyzing the iconography of the sarcophagus and the implications of a probable functional mythology, perceives an ideological message in the scene: ‘une circonstance *unique* du devenir du roi: son héroïsation.’¹⁹⁹ ‘Bes’ constitutes the consort of ‘Astarte’, and a functional dialogue between these deities, the vegetal symbols, and the processional scenes constructed this ideological message. If textual evidence, especially contemporaneous with the sarcophagus, revealed more details of Amathousian mythology, these scenes would perhaps indeed have been much more tangible to the contemporary interpreter.

Conclusions

As a reaction to biased interpretations on ancient Cyprus which continued to fuel the ‘Mycenaeanization’ and the ‘Phoenicianization’ narratives of Cyprus, a ‘Cypro-centric’ approach to the past of the island has recently been employed by several scholars.²⁰⁰ A ‘Cypro-centric’ approach remains consistently

¹⁹¹ Mitford 1961: 137.

¹⁹² Młynarczyk 2011.

¹⁹³ Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 358–359.

¹⁹⁴ Iacovou 2008a: 269–271.

¹⁹⁵ Baurain 1981; 1984.

¹⁹⁶ Petit 1995: 61–64; 2007: 95–96.

¹⁹⁷ Tatton-Brown 1981: 74–83.

¹⁹⁸ Petit 2004; 2006. Similar royal sarcophagi, influenced by Egyptian culture, can be found in ancient Phoenicia; see, for example, Woolmer 2011: 118–119.

¹⁹⁹ Petit 2004a: 58; 2006b: 80–94; cf. Papantoniou 2012b: 263–269.

²⁰⁰ See particularly Iacovou 2007b (where she first refers to this approach under this terminology); Papantoniou 2012b: particularly 372,

macrohistoric, considering the 2nd and 1st millennia BC as a continuum. Without denying complex processes of transmission and transformation of culture, a Cypro-centric approach aims to deeply and actively situate external influences within a *local context*, acknowledging the capacity of the Cypriot insular habitual systems to accommodate and transform. This approach is particularly pertinent in the study of ancient Cypriot ritual and cult.

The approach taken here reconfirms Iacovou's argument that, most probably, Late Cypriot cult practice was transplanted into the Iron Age because of its association with a successful indigenous political and economic model based on the production and circulation of metals.²⁰¹ The finds from the Amathous 'palace' clearly support this idea. Despite strong cultural influences and innovations related to contacts with the Aegean and the Syro-Palestinian coast, we can credit neither the Mycenaean palatial system nor the post-Mycenaean and Phoenician migration with the formation of the Cypriot religious system,²⁰² which seems to have gone through several internal transformations from the Late Cypriot to the end of the Cypro-Classical period. Although landscape variation should be taken into account, one should probably start considering more seriously the proposition that from the Late Cypriot to the Iron Age ritual activities were incorporated into (or maintained by) the state authorities. Within the Early Iron Age the boundaries between 'secular' and 'religious' spaces started to become less blurred and, eventually, the 'palace' probably began taking over the administrative role of the 'sanctuary'; nonetheless, the excavated record suggests that the 'palace' remained in direct association with the main city-sanctuary.²⁰³

The case of Agia Irini has clearly shown that binary concepts such as 'urban' and 'rural' in the case of Iron Age Cypriot sanctuaries are not always helpful in understanding the significance of some 'extra-urban' sanctuaries lying in 'frontier' zones. The monumental terracotta sculptures found there are not only related to identity and status, but they also implicate the ideological aspect of royal power in the formation of mini-state territories. Additionally, we have been able to detect in the 'minor arts' from this extra-urban sanctuary symbols central to popular cosmology and rationality that were similar to those found in both Late Cypriot and subsequent city-kingdom urban contexts. The manipulation of a religious system by the *basileis* and their appointed subordinates (the impact of which has been highly neglected in the case of Cyprus due to the lack of relevant textual evidence) can provide not only a link between royal aspirations and popular cosmology, but also between urban and extra-urban space. The comprehension of the territorial significance of the extra-urban space in the Iron Age is a key factor in understanding how a number of 'frontier' sanctuaries and their associated artifacts were principal features in the formation of a landscape filled with many polities. Public extra-urban sanctuaries are clearly a feature of the Iron Age, totally absent from the Late Cypriot landscape.

Nonetheless, I suspect that it is on an indigenous 'prehistoric', 'pre-Greek', or 'pre-Phoenician' religious model, in which the dominance of a divine couple was of particular importance, that the Cypriot city-kingdom ideology was based;²⁰⁴ already in the Late Bronze Age when Cyprus opened to the world on a greater scale than before, the Cypriot elite started to interact with powerful Mediterranean and Near Eastern politics and modes in order to participate actively in the prevailing imperial languages and *koine*. The transformation of the 'Ingot God' of Enkomi from a Smiting—a very common and prevalent figure among many Late Bronze Age Mediterranean societies—to a Smithing God is probably the best illustration of the diachronic island modes of adaptation and emulation. When the economy and the political system that this god represented collapsed, he was soon to be associated with the emerging Iron Age society, the transformation of which started around Late Cypriot IIIB.

note 8; 2013a; Counts and Iacovou 2013a.

²⁰¹ Iacovou 2008a: 249 and 272.

²⁰² On problems related to post-Mycenaean and Phoenician migration narratives see Iacovou 2013.

²⁰³ Cf. Iacovou 2010: 127; 2012a; Iacovou in Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 358; Papantoniou 2012a: 306–307; see also Knapp 1996; 2008: 207–209.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Iacovou 2008a: 272–273. For divine couples in the Syro-Palestinian coast, see Woolmer 2011: 98–99.

The incorporation of Cyprus into the Neo-Assyrian ‘sphere of influence’ in the 8th century BC was drastic for the reformation of Cypriot political space.²⁰⁵ This is clearly reflected in the iconographic expression of the city-kingdoms, that is, the creation of monumental art and the adaptation of oriental iconography. The ‘divine kingship’ of the Neo-Assyrian (and later the Persian) kings was extremely complex, and their god-like, or better their hero-like properties, were largely a political tool of Assyrian imperial strategies.²⁰⁶ The iconography related to these strategies should be explored further in an attempt to comprehend better its reception and transformation in a Cypriot context. Nonetheless, when studying the past we cannot forget that myth and history are usually culturally and conceptually synonymous; as argued in this contribution, the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical iconographic, textual, and epigraphic evidence suggests that the Cypriot dynasties identified themselves with the mythical past of the island, and perhaps this manipulation of the past was the best way to legitimate their power.

In addition, the relationship between ritual and community should be singled out. Materials used in everyday life and ritual practice (for example, the bull-man and ‘Astarte’ figurines deposited in burials and sanctuaries) express the reception of these ideas by the broader community. Power and knowledge are closely linked, and the interaction between the population and political structures needs to be re-evaluated. One, therefore, should reflect on theories of social practice, that is, the desire, from the lower echelons of society, to follow and emulate.²⁰⁷ This concern is closely bound to issues of the interaction between popular and politico-religious identities. The audience must take ownership of the reception of any interaction, otherwise the message will be lost. Modes and iconography, therefore, were always translated into and reworked within Cypriot island traditions in order to express both elite ideology and popular cosmology.

The question of whether the same system of beliefs and symbols were in operation in the various Iron Age polities of the island should be posed. A categorical answer is not possible, and some variation from site to site is definitely to be expected. However, following C. Renfrew’s methodology,²⁰⁸ a considerable range of specific symbols and iconography is found in each location, with a good degree of overlap between them; it is reasonable to infer that a similar system was in operation in all the city-kingdoms. Therefore, the city-kingdom ‘pantheon’, if such a thing ever existed, should be considered as part of a somewhat shared system, stemming from a common ideology but with specific particularities in each site. Within the Cypro-Classical period and its strong ‘hellenized’ aspects, the way in which Cypriots perceived themselves was seriously transformed.²⁰⁹ Due to the abundance of epigraphic evidence relating the ‘Cypriot Great Goddess’ with Aphrodite in Amathous, for example, to *our eyes*, the complexity of the symbolic composition with which they constructed the world was becoming less ‘complicated’.

I hope that future research will manage to offer not only a more complete picture of the transplantation of Late Cypriot ritual, cult, and iconography into the Iron Age, but also to identify the political status of the Early Iron Age in Cyprus, which seems to be a key-factor in comprehending the island’s long history. In the absence of satisfactory textual evidence and standardized or coherent (from a modern perspective) Cypriot ritual scenes, it is usually based on external formal imagery that we attempt to understand and interpret Cypriot ritual, cult, and iconography. The reception of external imagery within a local context however, should carefully be inserted within the framework of network analysis, currently employed by scholars of the ancient world. Such a careful analysis can show that a number of ‘pre-historic’, specifically Cypriot characteristics, can be identified. I therefore argue for more methodological flexibility when studying ancient Cypriot ritual space, taking note of what may be very different ways of acting, perceiving, and transforming ideas with respect to neighboring cultures.

²⁰⁵ Iacovou 2002: 80–83; cf. Fourrier 2006: 108–09; 2007a: 108–109; Papantoniou 2012a: 307.

²⁰⁶ Winter 2008: 86–87.

²⁰⁷ Shanks 2005: 241; cf. Papantoniou 2011: 45.

²⁰⁸ Renfrew 1994: 54.

²⁰⁹ Papantoniou 2013c: 170–178.

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