Sturt W. MANNING (ed.), *Critical Approaches to Cypriot and Wider Mediterranean Archaeology*

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Bernard Knapp has had a very significant impact on archaeological practice in the Mediterranean region and beyond. While much of his work has concentrated on Cyprus, his contributions to this and other areas are more than matched by his drive to transform the ways in which we should understand the past. This volume – despite the editor’s reluctance to identify it as such – is a Festschrift in his honour, with contributions which generally reflect his critical approach and self-conscious consideration of analysis and argument and the explicit development and application of theory.

Following Sturt Manning’s editorial ‘explicandum’ and introduction which briefly outline Bernard Knapp’s contributions and the structure of the book there are 17 chapters, beginning with John Cherry’s review of the Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology, which he has edited with Bernard Knapp for 30 years. This is a personal tribute to his colleague and friend which emphasises an important aspect of Knapp’s broader mission of encouraging new approaches by accepting only articles which take on the challenges of applying new methods, ideas and theory and rejecting any which simply report material. In the spirit of self-conscious critique Cherry explains and justifies this policy and provides some analysis of the journal’s contents: perhaps, in addition to the consideration of regional coverage, a more challenging one would be the varied themes and approaches espoused over the years as a better measure of its importance.

The remainder of the volume has 16 papers which are divided into five broad sections: Cypriot pre- and proto-history and economy; Cyprus and metallurgy; Cypriot landscapes; the wider Mediterranean prehistory, society and context; and maritime archaeology of Cyprus and the Levant. Cyprus naturally dominates, but many of these contributions also deal with the relationships between the island and the wider Mediterranean world.

“Part I: Cypriot pre- and proto-history and economy” (the area of Knapp’s main research) includes three papers. Jennifer Webb builds on a careful review of older studies coupled with new analyses of metals and metalwork from Early and Middle Bronze Age Cyprus, much of it the result of her research on “legacy data” from previously unpublished century-old excavations at Lapithos. This allows a re-assessment of the extent and nature of the movement of raw materials through Cyprus’ relationships with other areas with implications for internal social and economic structures. While naturally of immediate relevance for Cypriot specialists it is a reminder for those working elsewhere of the significance of the changing nature and scale of inter-connections and their varied impacts – or stimuli – both regionally and locally. The second study, which deals with Late Bronze Age Cypriot “things” by Kevin Fisher is also of more than local interest, as he takes up some current debates on materiality and agency. These provide the theoretical underpinning of his assessment of the social significance of the built environment (especially of “elite” buildings and particular assemblages at Kalavasos-Agios Dimitrios). Catherine Kearns
addresses the vexed issue of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age (a problem perhaps more of archaeological approach and definition than one of ancient processes). Using evidence from surveys she considers the shifting patterns of regional settlement and landscape use in the Amathus area of south coastal Cyprus in a context of changing social, political and environmental circumstances, recognising the need for a serious evaluation of the quality of evidence – and especially of chronology (something dealt with in detail in a later paper by Sturt Manning).

“Part II: Cyprus and metallurgy” includes only two papers, both of which deal with specific sites. Vasiliki Kassianidou provides a brief historical review of the development of approaches to ancient copper production in Cyprus to frame a discussion of the small, perhaps short-lived, Late Bronze Age smelting workshop at Politiko-Phorades that she and Bernard Knapp excavated some 25 years ago. The discussion of techniques and their socio-economic implications should be read in conjunction with Webb’s discussion of metallurgy earlier in the Bronze Age. The second paper in this section, by Sophocles Hadjisavvas, is a brief preliminary account of rescue excavations at a largely destroyed Archaic period sanctuary associated with mining at Mathiatis-Mavrovouni.

In contrast to the normative archaeology of the preceding papers, both of those in “Part III: Cypriot landscapes” address underlying issues of the colonial frameworks which post-modern critiques see as imposed onto the past and colonised peoples of the present. Both, too, build directly on the approaches used in Bernard Knapp’s survey work. His co-worker in these endeavours, Michael Given, reflects generally on the nature, complexities and implications of the many technical and conceptual approaches to survey and knowledge production – assuming that all others will eventually share his vision. Georgia Andreou considers the ways in which the physically dominant, but largely neglected “Troodos mountains” have been defined and constructed in archaeological (and other) discourse. Alternative concepts of both fieldwork and analysis which emphasise inter-relationships and connectivity will need to be developed to replace the more simplistic categories and concepts currently applied.

“Part IV: The wider Mediterranean: Prehistory, society and context” takes us to Sicily, Crete, the Argolid, Syria and Sardinia. Each of the six studies has a different focus and addresses a different theme, although the first five do have in common an interest in space and spatial relationships. Emma Blake, while not discounting external connections, constructs formal models of networks of relationship within Middle Bronze Age Sicily which counter standard assumptions of a culturally unified island and society. Two successive Post-Palatial Minoan architectural complexes at Petras-Kephala in eastern Crete are considered by David Rupp and Metaxia Tsipopoulou as symbols of power which draw their legitimacy from the usurpation of “invented memory landscapes” which reference earlier Pre-Palatial and Palatial activity in the area. Ann Brysbaert is also concerned with monumental construction, but in a more practical sense, where she looks at routes and the costs of moving people and material within the Argolid during the Late Bronze Age. Theoretical
Least Cost Pathways can be compared with the surviving evidence of ancient roadways, suggesting that different routes were only possible or favoured for specific purposes. Not surprisingly, she sees that the best way to understand this is through walking the landscape. Unlike other papers in this volume, Chris Munroe's study on Late Bronze Age vineyards at Emar and Ugarit is based on texts rather than material evidence, using tablets which document the transfer of ownership of vineyards. This leads on to a discussion of the economics of wine-production and distribution both locally and further afield and with changing patterns of consumption in line with price – especially when wine seems to have become surprisingly cheap. Peter van Dommelen revisits some of the issues that he and Bernard Knapp considered in their edited volume, *Material Connections*. Presenting evidence from his excavations at Iron Age S'Urachi in Sardinia he argues for a close examination of mundane activities as local responses to changing external connections and influences.

Sturt Manning's final paper in this section (“Time, consilience and climate-history associations”) deals with time rather than space – or rather questions of the varied time-scales of human and environmental history. Explanations for significant change, such as his example of the end of the Late Bronze Age in Cyprus and the Levant, need to be based on a sophisticated understanding of the accuracy and precision of radiometric dating to establish any long- or short-term effects of pene-contemporary fluctuations in climate.

“Part V: Maritime archaeology of Cyprus and the Levant” includes three contributions. Late Bronze Age cooking pots from the unique Tell Abu Hawam anchorage are examined by Michal Artzy and Jóse Martín-García. They argue that some cooking pots were made either in Cyprus or elsewhere but conforming to a Cypriot style. This leads onto a discussion of sailor’s cuisine and identity as one of many questions regarding interconnections between Cyprus and Levantine ports. Carrie Atkins has a more normal, submarine, data-set to work with in her assessment of pottery and stone anchors found through underwater surveys of the anchorage associated with Late Bronze Age Maroni-Tsaroukkas on the south coast of Cyprus. This evidence can suggest both connections within a local ‘coastscape’ and to the wider eastern Mediterranean region. In the final paper, Stella Demesticha takes a broader view of anchorages in assessing the maritime capacity of Late Roman Cyprus. She makes use of evidence from surveys of numerous ‘rural anchorages’ around the island, together with information on local winds and currents to address issues of insularity and interconnectedness which have been among the many issues of particular interest to Bernard Knapp.

In picking up many of the threads of Bernard Knapp’s long and productive career – especially where they espouse critical approaches to explanation – the authors in this volume provide a long-overdue tribute to a major scholar which not only builds on many of his interests but which also opens up important new avenues for future exploration.

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