

Panayiotis Panayides/Ine Jacobs (eds.): *Cyprus in the Long Late Antiquity. History and Archaeology Between the Sixth and the Eighth Centuries*. Oxford/Philadelphia, PA: Oxbow Books 2023. VI, 272 p., 157 ill. £ 50.00/\$ 80.00. ISBN: 978-1-78925-874-5.

The book begins with two overviews: the first is provided by Panayiotis Panayides and Ine Jacobs and describes the evolution of “Cyprus Between the Sixth to Eighth Centuries” (pp. 1–12); the second is made by Marcus Rautman, who outlines the increase of interest in Late Antiquity and the key role played by archeology and material culture (“Archeology and the Making of a Cypriot Late Antiquity”, pp. 13–26).

The first section entitled “Cyprus in Between Empires” (pp. 27–96) consists of five contributions that focus on the non-archeological sources in the Long Late Antiquity.

Young Richard Kim studies hagiography (“Cypriot Hagiography and the Long Late Antiquity”, pp. 27–34). He juxtaposes the lives of the most famous Cypriot bishop saints, Epiphanius (fourth century) and John the Almsgiver (seventh century). According to the author, in the *Vita* of Epiphanius, it is shown that Cyprus was interconnected with the mediterranean world and therefore crossing ‘the border’ between the Romans and the Persians was made easily. In the *Vita* of John the Almsgiver, although structures of Empire are still intact, Cyprus had become a refuge, a borderland.

Evangelos Chrysos explores the impact of the Arab invasion on Cyprus in the middle of the seventh century (“The Arab Invasions of Cyprus in the Middle of the Seventh Century: The Chronographical and Epigraphic Evidence Revisited”, pp. 35–46). Precisely, he revisits the chronological as well as the Greek and Oriental historical evidence relating to the arrival and first decades of Arab presence. He considers the ninth century Arab sources as not much reliable and outlines the validity of the inscription of the basilica at Soloi. On the basis of the epigraphic evidence Chrysos situates the second invasion in the year 650 rather than in 653, as indicated in literary sources.

Georgios Deligiannakis revisits the position of Cyprus in the Levant in Late Antiquity (“Contextualising the Tax Tribute Paid by Cypriots During the Treaty Centuries”, pp. 47–54). He gives a brief account of the island’s prosperity connected to its position on international trade and exchanges

routes. He demonstrates that the new taxation system, similar to that of the Roman Empire, strained the economic vitality of the Cypriots.

Olga Karagiorgou investigates episcopal seals, which enables her to discuss happenings following the first Arab assaults (“The Prosopography of the Cypriot Archbishops During the Long Late Antiquity: A Reappraisal of the Evidence Presented in ‘Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus’”, pp. 55–80). After an accurate re-examination of the corpus of seals gathered by David M. Metcalf in 2004 and 2014, she sheds light on the reasons for the transfer of archbishop Ioannes and his flock from Salamis to Cyzicus (seventh century) as well as on those of their return seven years later. On the basis of the total 84 seals struck by at least 34 boulloteria, she remarks on the direction and, to a certain extent, the volume of their correspondence. The article ends with an updated chronological sequence of the archbishops of the island in the Long Late Antiquity.

Luca Zavagno reviews archaeological and scillographic evidence from Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily, and Crete in order to reassess the role played by some of the larger islands at the end of the Long Late Antiquity [“Cyprus and Its Sisters: Reassessing the Role of Large Islands at the End of the Long Late Antiquity (ca. 600–ca. 800)”, pp. 81–96]. In the light of this documentation, he points out that there is continued connectivity, with islands and harbors remaining essential for the Byzantine navy as well as commercial enterprises and interactions.

The second section of the book is constituted of contributions dealing with “Urban and Rural Perspectives” (pp. 97–176). By taking into consideration archeological evidence, i.e. secular and ecclesiastical buildings, public and private, Panayiotis Panayides explores the built environment of Salamis/Constantia, Nea Paphos, Amathus, and Kourion changed in the seventh and eighth centuries (“Cypriot Cities at the End of Antiquity”, pp. 97–120). The examination of the fate of these constructions leads him to conclude that the mid-seventh century assaults caused disruption, but swift signs of recovery made disappear the factoid of an Arab holocaust. Despite of monuments destruction, the cities retained their essential administrative, economic, and religious functions. The cities still provided the necessary needs of daily life, but, once new features had been adapted to the urban life, the concept of planning became increasingly lax. According to Panayides, these interventions were, except for churches, not made on artistic purposes.

Pamela Armstrong and Guy Sanders examine the published table wares, namely African Red Slip forms and Egyptian Red Slip, from the excavations of the episcopal complex at Kourion (“Kourion in the Long Late Antiquity: A Reassessment”, pp. 121–136). In the light of the coin evidence from the Athenian Agora, Emporio on Chios, and Antioch, they review the methodology associated with coin chronologies and its concomitant effect on associated ceramics. They highlight the importance of use-wear analysis in the circulation of coins and their dating.

Richard Maguire studies “Cypriot Church Architecture of the Long Late Antiquity” (pp. 137–150). He shows that the Annona ceased and the Proconnesian quarries closed before the Arab conquests. He also demonstrates that the gypsum provided a more economical and versatile alternative and that the first post-invasion pier basilicas returned to the use of timber roofs. Finally, he reveals that piers were not the obligatory adjuncts of vaults and domes because, as supports, columns, and piers were interchangeable.

William Caraher and R. Scott Moore consider evidence from two areas in the polis Chrysochou, which provided an example of the Long Late Antiquity (“Long Late Antiquity in the Chrysochou Valley”, pp. 151–160). They inquire into the development of the area known as EF2 in the Princeton Grid and examine how it developed from the second century through the construction and modification of the South Basilica. A comparative analysis of the areas of EF2 and EF1 enables them to show that changes in the area EF2 took place in the century after a possible second-century earthquake and, subsequently, predate the traditional beginning of Late Antiquity. Also, the comparison of various ceramic assemblages explains how fuzzy the boundaries of Late Antiquity remain, which represents a key element to our concept of Long Late Antiquity.

Athanasios K. Vionis examines the transition from Antiquity to the Byzantine empire in the Xeros River Valley on the southern coast of Cyprus (“A Boom-Bust Cycle in Cyprus at the End of Antiquity: Landscape Perspectives for Settlement Transformation”, pp. 161–176). A comparative approach to the expansion of settlements from coastal valleys to inland plains and hills in Late Antiquity enables him to evaluate settlement transformation. Moreover, he puts the stress on the crystallization of this settlement pattern into the Byzantine early Middle Ages as well as the continuous presence of the Church and its role in settlement formation.

The third section is devoted to “Production and Objects in Use” (pp. 177–264) in Long Late Antiquity. Doria Nicolaou focuses on a “Local Sculptural Production in Cyprus at the End of Antiquity: a Challenging Dating?”, pp. 177–188). By using new evidence provided by a re-examination of the sculptural material, she re-dates a group of limestone furnishings mainly connected with ecclesiastical contexts and dated of the fifth or sixth centuries, to the seventh or eighth centuries.

Through the analysis of variant objects inscribed with texts illustrating the fears, hopes, and expectations of people, Paweł Nowakowski studies the activities of these people in late antique and Byzantine Cyprus (“Fighting the Demons and Invoking the Saints: Prolegomenon to a Study of Christian Ritual Texts in Late Antique Cyprus”, pp. 189–210). The Polish historian and epigraphist presents the evidence of important finds of these ritual objects called ‘phylacteries’ and found in Trikorno, Lythrodontas, Paphos, Salamis, and Amathus. He then examines problems of establishing reliable dates of these finds. He discusses the tendency of archaeologists to date Cypriot material culture to the mid-seventh century at the latest. He finally explores the purchasers and makers of those objects, that can be placed in a wider context of Late antique and Byzantine religious practice.

Vasiliki Kassianidou provides the first synthesis of copper production in Cyprus between the fourth and the eight centuries (“Mining and Smelting Copper in Cyprus in Late Antiquity”, pp. 211–226). She argues that the increase of economic wealth in Late Antiquity was due to the extensive exploitation of the rich copper ore deposits of the Troodos foothills. She also discusses evidence, which shows that copper extraction survived the Arab raids and even continued into the eight century in northwest Cyprus.

Eftychia Zachariou-Kaila provides a comprehensive view of metal everyday objects, i.e. table wares, lightning devices, weighing equipment, and weights, items of personal adornment, ritual utensils, and church implements, used in the Late Long Antiquity on the island and currently conserved in the collection of the Department of Antiquities (“The Material Culture of Daily Living in Late Antique Cyprus: a View From the Metal Collections of the Department of Antiquities”, pp. 227–242).

Jody Michael Gordon presents a summary chapter (“The ‘Fuzzy’ World of Cypriot Long Late Antiquity: Continuity and Disruption Betwixt the Global and Local”, pp. 243–264) in which he sheds new light on the Long

Late Antiquity “by muddying water” (p. 245). By studying the binary forces that formed Cypriot society in the Long Late Antiquity from a “fuzzy” logic perspective and by analyzing how long-term, permanent features of Cypriot history continued to form society, he shows in what extent Cypriots were actively engaged in (re)forming their cities, landscapes, and identities in the face of wide-spread geopolitical change and societal uncertainty.

The present volume is the positive and valuable outcome achieved through hard work of historians and archaeologists working in diverse aspects of Cyprus between the sixth and eighth centuries. They shed light and bring new ideas on various topics of Cypriot society in the Long Late Antiquity, such as rural prosperity, urban endurance, artisanal production, maritime connection and activities, civic and private religion. The book presents a very useful tool for those scholars who are interested in the way and quality of life in Cyprus as well as in its connection with the broader eastern Mediterranean in the Long Late Antiquity.

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