

Antikens kultur och samhällsliv
Göteborgs universitet

IMMOVABLE OFFERTORY INSTALLATIONS IN LATE BRONZE AGE CYPRUS

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen
vid Göteborgs universitet offentligen försvaras i
sal T 307, Olof Wijksgatan 6, fredagen den 5:e september 2008, kl. 13.15

av
Yannis Pararas

ABSTRACT

Pararas, Y., 2008. *Immovable Offertory Installations in Late Bronze Age Cyprus*. 216 pp., 208 figs., 3 tables, STUDIES IN MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND LITERATURE. Pocket-book 174. Sävedalen. Written in English.

The present study addresses the question of the way divine worship was carried out in the island of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age (1600-1100 B.C.). More particularly, in the dissertation a class of built constructions is studied for which there is adequate evidence that they should be interpreted as what in later times came to be called "altars".

The catalogue and discussion of the material at our disposal divided into categories is a prerequisite of the study, but only as a convenient method of approaching the crux of the subject, which is understanding how ritual was carried out in the last centuries of the 2nd millennium B.C. in the island. The question looming in the background is whether ritual already culminated in the supreme action of later periods, the bloody animal sacrifice.

As will be apparent from this study, the relevant archaeological material covers only approximately 250 to 300 years, from c. 1300/1250 to 1000 B.C., coinciding with the great flourishing of Cypriote urban centres. It gradually becomes clear that bloody animal sacrifice had attained in Cyprus immediately after c. 1200 B.C. primary importance as the central ritual action. Around this action revolved and developed the planning and layout of shrines and temples. However, no standard spatial relationship between temple and "altar" had been attained.

The relationship of Cypriote "altars" of the period c. 1300/1250 to 1000 B.C. to those of adjacent areas is restricted to the Levant, i.e. to late Canaanite and Philistine elements, and the Aegean, i.e. late Mycenaean and Minoan elements. The eastward movement of Hellenic populations, from the Aegean to Cyprus and ultimately the Levant is indissolubly linked with this relationship. These common traits must on the other hand be evaluated against a generally similar earlier offertory substratum in the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean.

As scholars of religion had already observed, based on a late Greek testimony attributing the "invention" of sacrifice to Cyprus, this island must have witnessed during this period a syncretism of Minoan-Mycenaean and Levantine offertory elements. It is indeed archeologically obvious that what in the early 1st mill. B.C. crystallized as the defining factor of Hellenic ritual - independent temple plus sacrificial fire altar - has clearer forerunners in Cyprus during 1200-1000 B.C. than in the Aegean.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age Cyprus, Cypriote ritual practice, offertory action, temple, sanctuary, offertory installation, low stone table, hearth-altar, bench, baetylic installation, slaughtering block, Myrtou-Pigadhes, Kition, Enkomi.