Preface
Two Given Points, Infinite Straight Lines

Luca Bombardieri

Only one unique line passes through two given points. Far from being only geometric, elementary and basic, this simple rule sounds like an anchor. We shall be ready to free from this security to read and understand the book we are about to leaf through.

If the two given points are Cyprus and the Aegean in the Bronze Age, then from these two unique points pass infinite straight lines. As many as there are reciprocal relations, direct and indirect paths of exchange and interaction. The structure of this book and its deep analysis of materials and evidence provides us with an highly beneficial guide to this multiplicity of interactions, without giving up describing the most difficult knots to untangle and understand.

The words that Jeremy Rutter left commenting on this book may alone be sufficient to understand its significance and contribution:

> This is by far the most thorough and detailed evaluation of interactions between Cyprus and the Aegean basin during the Bronze Age that has ever been undertaken. It should be definitive for at least a generation or more of future scholarship on this topic. The findings are significantly different on a number of major issues from those of previously published research, and the magnificent list of references is in itself worthy of publication for all those who are pursuing research on Cypro-Aegean connections during the period ca. 2500-1200 BCE.

The infinite straight lines from which we started to attempt to describe the Cypro-Aegean connections are intertwined and their impact echoes far beyond time. The memory of these multiple connections is a fundamental element of our common Mediterranean identity beyond the specific case of Greeks and Cypriots. Like an echo over time, this deep memory is formed by successive distortions and adjustments that we still produce for the questionable need to adapt it to our changing identity.

The stronger the impact and the deeper the memory, the higher we can imagine the distortion and adaptation, i.e. the distorted echo effect. That is why the contribution and the use that can be made of this book is all the more important, beyond its contribution to the arena of scholars interested in Bronze Age Cyprus and the Aegean.

Do Cypriots feel Greek? And is the opposite true? Since when, for how long? Why? Archaeological analysis cannot and should not answer any of these or similar questions, least of all punctually, but it can perhaps offer a greater magnifying glass to observe a long-term phenomenon.

The gradual stepping back in time of the so-called Hellenization of Cyprus had a strong ideological and political matrix during the last decades of the twentieth Century. In more recent years out, even out of the archaeological debate, it appeared as a sort of dichotomy between those who downplay the Aegean impact on the island in the name of an original multiculturalism and those who emphasize the Aegean and Greek dimension of Cyprus' cultural development in the second and first Millennia BC (and far beyond).

These latter argue for an (almost) original Greekness of the island, based on two major set of theories: the migrations and the antecedents.

The migration theories play a key role by suggesting that at least during the eleventh century BC some groups of Aegean migrants settled in Cyprus and integrated with the island's heterogeneous population for example. Evidently, this series of events – beyond its numerical significance – remains deeply rooted in the memory of the Greeks and Cypriots, as also evidenced by the long-standing traditions concerning the foundation of new cities by Greek heroes returning from the Trojan War. Agapenor, king of Tegea in Arcadia, who is said to have founded Paphos by erecting a temple to Aphrodite at Palaepaphos, Teucer, the mythical founder of Salamis, and the Laconic hero Praxandros to whom the foundation of Lapithos is said to date.

Although it was probably not a colonization or large-scale migration that produced substantial changes in all aspects of material culture, Aegean ethnic contributions, though small, nevertheless contributed to the emergence of a new Cypriot identity over time.

Additionally, the antecedent argument is part of the same emphasis on the early Hellenization of the island, as argued for the

construction of the so-called Proto-Aphrodite theory. The modern imagination has created the island of Aphrodite from a rib of myth, with such capacity and force of impact that it has inexorably trapped the scientific debate in a veritable 'romantic conspiracy', according to a definition by Diane Bolger (2003, 93). The temptation to project Aphrodite, the erotic and fertility goddess, into the past of the island's prehistoric communities has represented the premise on which every analysis of the female representations in Prehistoric Cypriot Art has invariably been confronted and clashed. Each of these, from time to time, interpreted as a variable figure of a single Proto-Aphrodite (Karageorghis 1977). In this sense, it is very interesting to note how Vassos Karageorghis (1991, 2) embraces – and without hesitation – the definition of the Great Goddess modelled by Marija Gimbutas, stating that "her basic tenet that a common religious ideology did exist among the various regions of the 'Old World' in the Neolithic and Calcolithic periods is correct".

Another case for a suggested antecedent theory is related to the foundation of the Iron Age City Kingdoms in Cyprus. Hence, one may look at these political entities either as triggered by a political and monarchical system introduced by Aegean settlers in the twelfth-eleventh centuries BC, or as locally based phenomenon the with no connection with the supposed Achaean migration or colonization of the last centuries of the second millennium BC. As such, this is one of the most common field of battle in archaeology, where archaeologists who love foreign-induced phenomena will eternally fight against those who love locally-produced dynamics.

From this perspective, while the dichotomy of Hellenization/Multiculturalism is still a debated phenomenon with rather vague limits, the memory of the Cypro-Aegean connections has a long history and different echoes well before the actual scientific debate.

With the handover of Cyprus from Ottoman authority under British rule in 1878, Greek Cypriot intellectuals began to use the growing Western interest in the Classical Past as a strong political tool in the strategy of asserting the island's Hellenic identity and its long-standing aspirations for *enosis* with Greece. This produced two apparently divergent needs. The first is the need to promote local collections and establish museums on the island where archaeological objects may be exhibited, emphasizing this link with Greece and 'educate' the Cypriot audience. In 1882, the Cyprus Museum – Greek in its architecture – with marble imported from Greece for the construction of the entrance *pronaos*, was promoted on the strong initiative of the Greek Cypriot intellectual élite. The second parallel need is to encourage foreign expeditions to the island, stimulating the acquisition of collections of Cypriot antiquities by major Western museums, to keep European interest in Cyprus' classical past and Hellenism alive.

From this brief journey across dichotomies, we can see how essential a guide to the origins of the Cypro-Aegean connections is and how relevant an analysis of the interactions between these two cultural areas during the Bronze Age can be. Giampaolo Graziadio's book fully represents this rich and analytical guide, as necessary as it is. Necessary to find the centre of gravity and balance between the two poles of mutual attraction described by Graziadio. In analyzing the individual lines and routes of exchange involving raw materials, products and ideas, a real two-way relationship between the Aegean and Cyprus through the Bronze Age is reconstructed. This character of reciprocity in the overall balance of relations between the two cultural areas has never been so clearly described in the scientific debate and, perhaps, the reason is to be found in the distortion and echo effects mentioned above.

I hope I am not being out of tune by leaving here a small personal note that I believe I can share with all those who know Giampaolo, over and above the merits of his research, which here appear to be entirely evident. This scholar's ability to listen others' viewpoints, his natural modesty and overview have produced a book that is incomparable in terms of its potential, and yet – if you were to ask Giampaolo – he would tell you: "I have been working on it for a while", or "something finally came out of it".

The result of a large part of his research life thus takes on the dimension of a handicraft and daily work, of a constant and long-lasting commitment, of a capacity for involvement – it should not be forgotten that the appendix and co-authored chapters in this volume are all by young researchers, many of them his students – and of a passion that programmatically deviates from the current trend of scientific production measured in quantity of easy-to-consume results in favour of slow food for thought.

Bibliography

Bolger, D. (2003). *Gender in Ancient Cyprus: narratives of social change on a Mediterranean island*. Walnut Creek (CA): Altamira.

Karageorghis, J. (1977). *La grande déesse de Chypre et son culte: a travers l'iconographie, de l'époque néolithique au VIème s. a.C*. Lyon: Maison de l'Orient.

Karageorghis, V. (1991). *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus*. Vol. I, *Chalcolithic – Late Cypriote I*. Nicosia: A.G. Leventis Foundation.