



# **Cyprus and the Aegean in the Early Iron Age The legacy of Nicolas Coldstream**

**An Archaeological Workshop in memory of  
Professor J.N. Coldstream (1927-2008)**



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### ***L'atelier de production céramique du Chypro-Géométrique I à Kition***

Pour l'archéologie chypriote du début de l'Age du Fer, Kition constitue un site important, puisqu'on y a mis au jour des vestiges associés à un sanctuaire, un habitat et des nécropoles. Par conséquent, Kition se différencie d'autres sites contemporains qui ne sont connus que par leurs riches nécropoles géométriques. Ce déséquilibre des sources rend difficile la compréhension de l'organisation socio-politique des sociétés chypriotes du début de l'Age du Fer. Cependant, l'étude des assemblages céramiques funéraires dans le but d'identifier des ateliers régionaux de production céramique peut constituer un nouveau moyen d'appréhender et de comprendre le processus de fondation des premières entités politiques autonomes au début de l'Age du Fer, les futurs royaumes des périodes chypro-archaïque et classique. Cet article repose sur une étude comparative du matériel céramique de la période chypro-géométrique I (XI<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> s. av. J-C.) provenant des différents contextes attestés à Kition (sanctuaire, habitat, tombes) en vue de définir et de caractériser les traits locaux de la production céramique kitiennne.

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**Setting the stage for an economically successful Early Iron Age:  
The view from the 12th century harbour towns of Cyprus**

Nicolas Coldstream's superb command of the material evidence from geographically distant and culturally varied Early Iron Age contexts in the Mediterranean meant that he had little need for theoretical approaches. The hard core quality of his writings has ensured that his work will stand the test of time, but I doubt that it will ever constitute straightforward reading for those who may not be as persistent or as meticulous as he always was in collecting every new piece of material evidence in order to incorporate it to the big picture: a Mediterranean wide picture, which he repeatedly revised and enriched with insightful nuances.

It is because of these ever changing nuances that time and again I find myself returning to his 1994 paper, "What sort of Aegean migration" - most recently when writing "Cyprus from Migration to Hellenisation" for the *Greek Colonisation: An Account of Greek Colonies and Other Settlements Overseas*, G.R. Tsetschladje (ed.) Leiden: Brill 2008. Delivered by Prof. Coldstream in the same lecture hall of the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus, where the Workshop in his memory is now to take place, that paper marked a turning point in the archaeological research of Cyprus with the replacement of the long-embedded terms colonists and colonization with the terms migrants and migration. Without using anthropological theory, Coldstream argued convincingly that Aegean people had reached the island not as refugees or colonists but as *economic migrants*.

Over the years, and as I became more conscious of the need to develop economically viable interpretations for our understanding of episodes such as the great crisis that had 'killed' the Late Bronze Age world order, Professor Coldstream's *economic migrants* made me look more closely into Cyprus's own Late Cypriot crisis. In my paper - I do not intend to return to the Aegean migration - I will attempt to show *how* and *why* the late 13<sup>th</sup>-century BC crisis did not send the entire island into a prolonged crisis but rather worked in favour of a number of 12<sup>th</sup> century harbour centres.

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### **Nicolas Coldstream: The Man, the Scholar**

This paper starts with some reminiscences relating to Nicolas Coldstream as a person with a congenial personality, loyal to Cyprus. It goes on to underline some of the highlights of his work relating to Cypriote studies and in particular to bring forth aspects of ancient Cypriote culture that illustrate the relation of the island with the Aegean world.

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### **Metals for Iron Age Cyprus**

The role of Cyprus as producer and exporter of copper in the Late Bronze Age is well known and adequately documented. We know the form in which copper was traded: the preferred type of ingot was the oxhide shape, but plano-convex ingots were also used. We also know the volumes of shipment that could be sent at any one time: the Amarna letters mention as many as 500 ingots sent to Egypt on one go, while the ship that sank at Ulu Burun was carrying 354 oxhide ingots. We even know the distance that Cypriot copper travelled within the Mediterranean and beyond: recently copper oxhide ingots whose lead isotope fingerprint is consistent with the Cypriot field were found as far west as Marseille and as far north as Oberwilingen in Germany.

At the end of the Late Bronze Age, when trading networks collapse together with the societies of the Eastern Mediterranean, all this changes. What happens, then, with the Cypriot copper industry in the Iron Age? Was copper still produced on the island, and where? How did the introduction of iron affect the copper industry and how was this metal adopted and used in Cyprus? Furthermore, where did Cypriots get other metals, namely silver and gold which, as the evidence shows, were still important to them?

The aim of this paper is to investigate and present the available evidence in an attempt to answer these questions.

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### **Nicolas Coldstream: an update on his work on Crete and Cyprus in the Early Iron Age**

The connections between Cyprus and Crete in the course of the Early Iron Age have attracted much attention in recent years. However, the contribution of Nicolas Coldstream to the study of this subject stands out among relevant works. Coldstream traced several links in the material culture of the two islands to an admirable extent, particularly as regards pottery, and he also offered an interpretative model for understanding these links. In addition to this, he produced a comparative study of the different patterns that can be identified in the settlements, cemeteries and political systems of the two islands during the period in question.

My communication revisits these topics and at the same time elaborates on a comparative approach of the different social, political and economic trajectories that Crete and Cyprus followed in the Early Iron Age. Drawing from archaeological finds and literary sources, I discuss the response of the two islands to the migrations of the Late Bronze Age and the crisis of the 12th century; language and script; state formation and economic recovery; overseas connections and the bilateral connection links between the two *megalonissoi*.

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**Phoenicia, Cyprus and the Aegean in the Early Iron Age:  
J.N. Coldstream's strolls and legacy**

J. N. Coldstream has been one of the most important scholars of our times for Early Iron Age Aegean archaeology and certainly the greatest among those dealing with Early Iron Age pottery. It is not surprising, therefore, that he found his way to Cyprus and the Near East through pottery studies. His interest for the Eastern Mediterranean seems to have started in 1969 when, while studying pottery from Rhodes, he identified “Phoenicians at Ialysos”. About a decade later he published the first systematic article on “Greeks and Phoenicians in the Aegean”. At the same time he dealt with “The Archaeology of Cyprus” distinguishing various “Footprints in Cyprus”. In practice, these pioneering articles revised our knowledge on the relations between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean and also opened a new field in Early Iron Age studies: interrelations and history.

As a result of the interest raised by Coldstream’s studies, which soon generated similar studies by other scholars in the field, we are now in a position to have a much clearer picture of the relations between the Aegean, Cyprus and the Near East. This paper will attempt, first, to reassess Coldstream’s impact in raising the interest on the interrelations between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean in the Early Iron Age and, secondly, to assess the level of our knowledge on the subject at the present time.



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**After Nicolas: the future of Iron Age studies in the  
Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean**

With the loss of the most prolific and productive scholar of Iron Age Mediterranean, there is a need, more than ever before, to focus on the future of Iron Age studies. In my paper I will discuss the range of topics which have been investigated by Nicolas Coldstream and which, in my opinion, should continue to be the centre of future research. But I will also explore areas in the discipline that the present and future generation of scholars working in both the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean could take into consideration in order to build on, and advance, the legacy of our great pioneer.

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### **East Phokis and Lokris in the light of interregional contacts across the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean in the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age**

The collapse of the Mycenaean palatial system had a serious impact on trade contacts and cultural links between mainland Greece and areas of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, but it did not cause their total interruption. As soon as they were reorganized, post-palatial communities reactivated their overseas communications. The character of these communications changed under the new conditions and adjusted to a new network of sea contacts, in which Cyprus played a very important role during the 12th century BC. However, contacts inside and outside the Aegean seem to have been seriously disturbed again during the 11th century BC, especially during its first half, but this did not last for long. Interregional contacts were revitalized before the end of the century and were carried on intensively during the 10th century BC.

In the light of this general developments of external contacts on behalf of mainland Greece, it would be interesting to study the socio-political changes in the area of East Phokis and Lokris during the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, as these are reflected on the available archaeological data, i.e. settlement patterns, burial customs and material culture. This study allows us to place the evidence from a 'peripheral' area of mainland Greece within a wider geographical and inter-cultural context. In this way, we can gain a better understanding of the impact of external contacts on the socio-political evolution of this area during the crucial period that followed the palatial collapse until the beginning of the Early Iron Age.

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**Euboean mobility in the Aegean and beyond during the Early Iron Age  
Some thoughts**

Nicolas Coldstream was a pioneer in underlining the role that the Euboeans played in the shaping of early Greek society through their long travels and overseas contacts. In this paper I will present an overview of the related data and will focus on certain questions which have been posed, especially concerning the character and motives of this “mobility”, both “at home” and in the wider Mediterranean area. In an attempt to offer answers to some of these issues, the impact that the trade for metals had in the wanderings of the Euboeans will be reassessed. The role played by the metalworking site of Oropos will be reconsidered, while new data will be presented from the recent survey at the Early Iron Age fortified settlement of Kefala on Skiathos.

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### **The “Originality of Ancient Cypriot Art” and the Individuality of Performing Practices in Early Iron Age Cyprus**

Current archaeological interpretations of ancient Cyprus emphasise the role of the island as the “melting pot” or the “crossroads” of foreign cultural traditions. Along these lines, the contribution of Nicolas Coldstream towards a better understanding of Cypriot interactions, especially with the Aegean, has been admirable, not the least because of its unwavering attention to the material evidence. Equally impressive is the way Professor Coldstream defined the “originality of ancient Cypriot art” in a well-known lecture with this title, which was delivered in the Spring 1986 and was published by the Cultural Foundation of the Bank of Cyprus as the Second Annual Lecture on the History and Archaeology of Cyprus.

The present paper seeks to take that line of argument further in an attempt to trace elements of cultural and socio-political originality that underlie the artistic originality. Late Cypriot and Cypro-Geometric representations of lyre-playing stand out among the indicators of creativity assembled by Coldstream, and so the focus will be on the performance of music, in which the gifted scholar also took much delight as an excellent pianist. Cypriot innovations in performing practices include certain types of stringed instruments as well as the integration of music-making into the lifestyle of the elite. A closer look of these achievements reveals the Early Iron Age musical culture of Cyprus to have been at the frontiers of developments within the Eastern Mediterranean and, also, to have been extremely influential outside the island, especially in Attica. It was, therefore, crucial to the formation of the historic Greek culture of *mousikē* during the early centuries of the first millennium BC.

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### **Cypriot Sanctuaries and Religion in the Early Iron Age**

While Iron Age sanctuaries in the urban polities of Cyprus become religious communal centres, where social, cultural and political identities are affirmed, various scholars have recently argued for the probable use of extra-urban sacred space in the political setting of the various city-kingdoms. The multiplication of extra-urban sanctuaries in the early Cypro-Archaic period represents the climax of a process that began in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age. Nonetheless, the Early Iron Age sacred landscapes of Cyprus are very difficult to approach: the number of Early Iron Age sanctuary sites identified is very limited, and these are mainly dated to the end of the Cypro-Geometric period. The purpose of this paper is twofold: (a) to review the existing evidence with regard to the Late Cypriot and the Cypro-Archaic sacred landscapes in an attempt to propose some explanations for the absence of archaeological visibility during the Cypro-Geometric horizon; (b) to illustrate how Cypro-Geometric sacred space, as an intermediary between the Late Bronze Age and the Cypro-Archaic, relates to the consolidation of the power and the territories of the city-kingdoms.

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### **Cretan bronze stands of Cypriot types from sanctuaries and cemeteries**

Cypriot bronze rod tripods and four-sided stands are frequently mentioned in the archaeological bibliography as some of the most impressive bronzes produced in the ancient world in the second millennium BC. At the same time they document the role of Cypriot smiths in the dissemination of metalworking traditions outside the island, as both types of stands were incorporated into the metalworking traditions of a vast area that stretches from the Syro-Palestinian coast to the Aegean and as far west as Sardinia.

The concentration of bronze stands of these two Cypriot types on Crete is striking. Most of these, however, were undoubtedly made in Cretan workshops. Although typologically dependent on the Cypriot works, Cretan stands are distinguished by structural and stylistic peculiarities, consistently repeated and unparalleled in the examples from Cyprus. Cretan contexts, wherever available, indicate a date in the Early Iron Age, as opposed to the examples from Cyprus, most of which can be dated to the Late Bronze Age. A large number of stands from Crete occur in tombs, while other examples had a votive function and were found in several Cretan sanctuaries. The former are found in a remarkable concentration in the area of Knossos. In contrast, Cretan stands that had been dedicated to the gods are dispersed in several, distant cult places of the island, most of which had an intra-regional importance (such as the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite at Syme or the Idaean Cave). Stands of Cretan manufacture had even been dedicated at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.

This contradiction will be discussed and placed in context with regard to Early Iron Age dedication practices and the construction of civic identity of those who chose to deposit these elaborate artefacts in tombs adjoining their settlements, and at the same time to dedicate them in sanctuaries far beyond their urban centres, even beyond Crete.

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### **John Nicolas Coldstream: A personal appreciation of his legacy**

Through my recollections of Nicolas Coldstream, when as an undergraduate student at the Institute of Archaeology in London I took his course “Civilisation in Greece 2000-600 BC: The Archaeological Material” and, later on, when as my tutor he guided the research for my Ph.D. thesis at University College, London, I will attempt an appreciation of his legacy as a teacher as well as his impact on the archaeology of Cyprus.

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**“Light from the Greek Dark Age on Cyprus”  
Cypriot polities in the Early Iron Age**

The aim of the present paper is to approach the political organization of Cyprus in the Early Iron Age. This broad yet ill-defined horizon includes Late Cypriot III B and the Cypro-Geometric period. The close study of the archaeological evidence discloses the existence of a number of settlements with a leading role during the Early Iron Age. These settlements (mainly coastal but also inland sites) appear to have been the central places that managed the economic resources of their respective regions.

In my paper, the legacy bestowed to us by the late Professor Nicolas Coldstream on the interconnections of these Early Iron Age Cypriot settlements with the Aegean will be acknowledged. The diversity of their trading pattern with the Aegean leads us to understand better (a) the geopolitical configuration of the island in the Early Iron Age and (b) its contrast with the Dark Age socio-political organisation of Greece.