

BOOK REVIEW

City of Gold: The Archaeology of Polis Chrysochous, Cyprus. Edited by WILLIAM A.P. CHILDS, JOANNA S. SMITH, and J. MICHAEL PADGETT. Princeton University Art Museum. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012. Pp. 334. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-30-017439-7.

The reviewed volume is the publication accompanying *City of Gold: Tomb and Temple in Ancient Cyprus*, an exhibition organized by the Princeton University Art Museum. The work centers on the sites of Marion and Arsinoe (modern Polis) on the northwest coast of Cyprus and is the first publication devoted to their collective archaeological remains. While focusing ostensibly on the work carried out by Princeton from 1983–2007, the volume is comprehensive, including a significant number of previously unpublished objects recovered by earlier investigations. The material is presented chronologically, with each chapter accompanied by a corresponding catalogue of objects.

Chapter 1 by Smith provides the requisite background for the reader, placing the sites within the geographical and historical context of ancient Cyprus. The focus then transitions to a comprehensive history of archaeological investigation at the site beginning with Luigi Palma di Cesnola in the latter 19th century and culminating with the Princeton excavations. The author discusses each archaeological mission in terms of the eras studied, areas excavated, and their contribution to our overall understanding of the site.

Chapter 2 by Childs builds on the discussions of Chapter 1 and places Marion (the Archaic-Classical site) within the political context of the Cypriot city-kingdoms. While the material record indicates continuous habitation of the site from the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages, significant development occurred predominantly during the Archaic Period (7th century BC). Because of its continuous occupation and intermittent destruction/rebuilding, the archaeological remains of the city itself are rather meager. Much of what is known about the site from this time period is derived from tomb assemblages previously excavated from the surrounding necropolis, and the majority of catalog objects accompanying this section originate from this material.

Chapter 3 by Smith, Weir, and Serwint continues the discussion from the previous chapter, focusing on the remains of two sanctuaries excavated by the Princeton mission dating to these periods. The authors first provide a general introduction and background for the reader on the function of cult and religion in the ancient world. From here they turn to the remains of two cult centers: Peristeries and Maratheri. While the architectural remains for both are scant, their destruction preserved a significant amount of in-situ votive material. This has permitted the authors to reconstruct how individuals used the sanctuaries and the objects they dedicated. The descriptions of both sanctuaries and their elements are not overly technical and are intended to provide an experiential account of the spaces. This narrative effectively guides the reader through these precincts, explaining how they were used and what visitors they would have encountered.

Chapter 4 by Najbjerg is divided into two sections devoted to the Hellenistic and Roman periods of the site, respectively. Each begins by exploring the impact both eras had on Cyprus as a whole, focusing on the historical events and administrative changes that occurred. Marion was sacked by Ptolemy I in 312 BC due to its Antigonid support and was subsequently refounded as Arsinoe by Ptolemy II ca. 270 BC. The Princeton excavations revealed the remains of a large structure with a double courtyard that is believed to have served as the headquarters for the Ptolemaic garrison stationed at the city. Discussion of the Roman period focuses predominantly on the history and social changes (or lack thereof) that occurred during this time. The Princeton mission was able to identify few physical changes to the site, with life at Roman Arsinoe largely illustrated by finds recovered by Princeton as well as from tombs by previous excavations.

Chapter 5 by Papalexandrou and Caraher is nearly identical in organization to the previous one, providing a historical and social background of the Late Antique and Medieval periods based on written and archaeological evidence. These indicate that Arsinoe, like many sites on Cyprus, was a thriving community at this time. The authors focus primarily on the remains of two Christian basilicas: one centrally located and the other on the settlement periphery. Discussion centers on the architectural elements and decoration of these monuments, as well as the impact they had upon visitors and the community they served. Both structures preserved a significant number of burials, indicating their funerary importance to the Late Antique population. The study of these remains and their associated will provide significant insights into the people and society of this period.

Overall, this volume is impressive, with high-quality color images of the objects and detailed architectural plans of structures discussed. Maps and aerial views of the site permit readers to easily orient themselves to the excavation areas and monuments that are referred to throughout the work. The catalog entries are ample, with detailed descriptions, comparanda (when existing), and bibliography provided for each object. Unfortunately, the artifacts included in the catalog are heavily weighted towards the earlier Archaic and Classical periods at the expense of later eras, giving the volume a somewhat unbalanced feel. The editorial issues observed in the text (run-on sentences, awkward wording) are minor and do not detract from the overall work. As any good publication of this nature, this volume strikes a balance between the knowledge limits of the layperson and the detail-driven academic, giving both a high degree of satisfaction. It is a welcome and valuable addition to the corpus of Cypriot archaeology and an excellent beginning to the formal and much-awaited publication of the excavations.

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