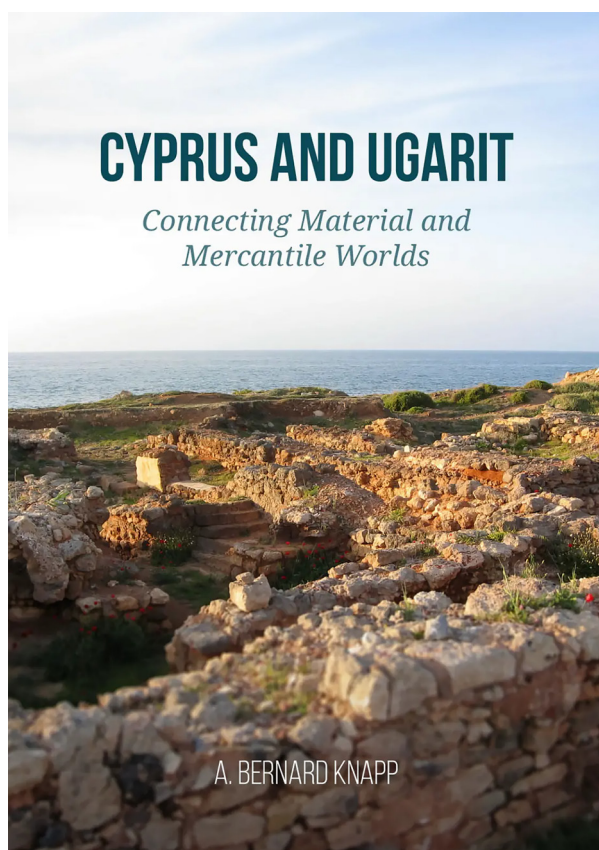




A. Bernard Knapp, 2024, *Cyprus and Ugarit, Connecting Material and Mercantile Worlds*, Sidestone Press, ISBN: 9789464263046, pp 118, 6 b/w illus, 5 c illus, EUR 30.

Reviewed by Caroline Sauvage

This short book aims to provide new insights into the long-term relations between the Levant – especially Ugarit – and Cyprus through a detailed study of the archaeological and textual sources. The author's goal is to discuss all of the available evidence regarding three specific factors: people, politics and professions, while targeting connectivity and the mercantile spheres of interactions. In conclusion, the author argues 'that although Ugarit and Cyprus were two very different kind of society, they shared a vital, commercial link, one that – over time – had a transformative impact on Cyprus' (p. 9). The following review will summarize and discuss each chapter of the book.

In a short introduction (chapter one) Knapp introduces the concept of his book, which aims to engage with several topics: maritime space and modes of interaction, merchants and mercantilism, agents and actors. His aim is to further our knowledge of the long-term relationship between Ugarit and Cyprus and to move away from the traditional material or stylistic analysis, and the primary lens of textual evidence.

Chapter two is a prelude to the book and reviews the scholarship on the relations between Cyprus and Ugarit,

including the many contributions by M. Yon, but also by G. Cadogan. This chapter also touches upon maritime connectivity studies regarding long distance trade and cabotage (Arnaud 2005), as well as documentary evidence (such as Monroe 2011). A quick overview of the tell of Ugarit and its surrounding sites (Minet el-Beida and Ras Ibn Hani) is presented. It introduces the main merchants known through textual evidence (Yabninu, Urtenu, Rap'anu and Rashap-Abu), as well as their associated houses. Finally, the reader is introduced to Cyprus, its geographical setting as well as the natural resources and main sites. A broad overview of the town-centred and industrial economy of the Late Cypriot period is then discussed. Knapp notes that the people and merchants of Cyprus were engaged in diverse networks of exchange involving the Levantine coast, Egypt, Anatolia and the Aegean. Material culture, and especially prestige items such as gold, ivory and faience, attest to the numerous imports received on the island in exchange for copper, pottery and other goods such as timber and textiles. Oil is not mentioned by the author in this chapter but should very much be included in the list of exports (and probably imports) from and to Cyprus, especially since it is later mentioned in the book.

Chapter three examines the common material culture and architectural features between Ugarit and Cyprus (mostly Enkomi), and focusses on ashlar masonry, composite stone anchors and Cypro-Minoan script. Knapp reminds the reader that the appearance of ashlar masonry in Cyprus is not associated with any real changes in the ceramic repertoire (p. 27). A comparison of the urban mortuary practices at both Ugarit and Cyprus as assessed by Keswani (1989, 2004, 2012) is presented, with an emphasis on the similarities and differences between the ashlar tombs in both locations. Most notably, the private aspects of the Ugarit tombs accessible from within houses, while built at the same time as their surrounding building, is highlighted. By contrast, the Enkomi tombs were more public in nature as they could be accessed from the outside of the buildings. The timing of their construction and relationship to their building is not discussed. Knapp proposes to follow Keswani's suggestion that these tombs were those of international merchant kin groups which were linked by marriage and alliances (p. 31). Although this is certainly a tempting possibility, it can neither be inferred nor disproved with the available evidence, because although they share key characteristics, both tomb groups differed in the way they were conceived and used/accessed, and one cannot identify merchant groups through their material culture or built environment. Moreover, this proposal is problematic because it seems to imply that the built tombs in Ugarit only belonged to merchant groups and that only merchants could have settled in Enkomi. Sources show that movement of people between Ugarit and Cyprus was frequent, with for instance high-ranking Ugaritans who 'moved' (were exiled) to Cyprus (RS 17.35, RS 17.352 detailed in chapter six). That the tombs reflect a

shared – yet not identical – tradition is certain, but it is impossible to interpret it as exclusively associated with the mercantile world. It might be better understood as part of a koine/elite emulation model or as part of the movement of people, whose professions and specific identities cannot be completely assessed.

When reviewing types of anchors and their find spots, Knapp rightly reminds us that it is difficult to associate anchor types with regions or cultures. We should add that anchors can easily be lost on the seafloor and replacing them during sea-voyages would have been essential. Therefore, the type(s) of anchors found on a specific ship cannot be taken as characteristic of the ship's origin. Finally, this chapter concludes that both areas would have had intimate cultural knowledge of each other as well as commercial relations.

In chapter four, Knapp surveys the Cypriot material found in Ugarit including seal impressions, metal and pottery. The chapter starts with a brief discussion of spindle whorls and bathtubs (p. 35), and although it is possible that bathtubs in Ugarit were imports or inspired by Cypriot examples, it is not possible to say the same for spindle whorls. Parallels in the shape, weight and decoration of some objects are found both in Ugarit and Cyprus. This certainly points to similar thread production, and maybe a shared material culture as often seen in the Late Bronze Age, but it does not mean that these objects were traded. A local production of spindle-whorls is attested in Ugarit by an unfinished example (81 AO 918 – Sauvage 2013, fig. 11.2), and textile tools from several other Cypriot sites such as Kition, or Kourion-Bamboula (Penn Museum no. 54-41-83) show similarities with the Enkomi material (Sauvage and Smith 2016; Smith et al. 2015).

One must note that this chapter is remarkable because the author establishes a table of Cypriot imports compiled from several recent publications to provide an idea of the Cypriot wares and their percentage in Ugarit. Of course, this is an attempt to give an impression of the items that were exchanged, while recognizing that the actual numbers would have been much greater. Knapp rightly reminds the readers that Schaeffer did not publish nor preserve all of the ceramic material of the early excavations at Ras Shamra preventing any scholar from establishing percentages of pottery types. One should also add that in Schaeffer's early publications, a heavy emphasis was placed on imported ceramics (Mycenaean and Cypriot) as these were not only 'nicer' than the plain local ceramics but allowed the excavator to highlight the maritime connections of the site if not the presence of a Mycenaean colony (a theory that was advanced in the 1930s). It could have been a useful exercise to use the additional lists of objects from funerary contexts discussed in Sauvage & Lorre (2023), because Schaeffer seemed to have recorded all of the material found in built tombs in his inventory. The numbers of imports should also of course be replaced in their context, as imports are overall found in greater quantities in (generally looted)

tombs than in domestic contexts, and when a study of the percentage of imports was possible at Ugarit, Monchambert found that they represented only 1% of the total assemblage (Monchambert 2004).

Chapter five presents the Levantine imports in Cyprus. Here too, the author emphasizes the incomplete publication of the French material excavated at Enkomi by Schaeffer. Schaeffer had strong preconceived ideas regarding the nature of both settlements and was clearly looking for the signs of external (Mycenaean) influences during his early campaigns. As Knapp points out, it is extremely difficult to recognize Ugaritic material at Enkomi. This is of course due to the incomplete publications of the ceramic corpus at the time of excavation, but also to the fact that the bulk of the Enkomi (fragmentary?) ceramic material may still be in the Enkomi warehouses, which have been inaccessible to archaeologists since 1974. One should also point out the obvious: since Schaeffer was only selectively publishing locally-made ceramics – unless complete or unusual – in the Ugarit volumes, he probably wouldn't have published these types of ceramics at Enkomi either.

The evidence detailed in this chapter aims to demonstrate the 'widespread presence on Cyprus of objects imported from Ugarit or the wider Levant' and objects that can be linked to either Cyprus or the Levant through their iconography. As with the case for Ugarit, Knapp notes that one should not discount the invisible imports that would have included organic material such as food, or clothing.

When looking at trade and trade connections, it is always tempting to talk about overwhelming evidence and widespread evidence because of relative high number of exceptional objects (the author of the review is also guilty of this), but we need to remind ourselves that funerary material is not representative of the actual uses of imports in daily life, and we rarely know how many individuals were buried in any given tomb, making assumptions on specific numbers and percentages hard to achieve.

Chapter six describes the documentary evidence found at Ugarit regarding contacts and its relationship with Cyprus. It focusses on texts in Akkadian cuneiform and alphabetic/Ugaritic cuneiform. The textual evidence shows that Cypriots (broadly speaking) were present in Ugarit, while also demonstrates that people and divinities of Cyprus were involved in aspects of the Ugaritic ceremonial life. Particularly useful in this chapter are tables 3 and 4, which conveniently gather all the texts from Ugarit dealing with Cyprus. These tables include the tablets' findspots as well as publications and incorporate the latest finds from Ugarit.

This chapter, like the others, is very descriptive and rehearses information known from texts, especially regarding the end of the kingdom of Ugarit, and the 'enemy from the Sea'. It lists the diverse goods exchanged between Ugarit and Cyprus, including horses, ships, pitchers and pots, oil, trowels, food. Knapp includes in this section texts dealing with deliveries of copper (for

instance RS 18.24) even if the text does not mention directly Cyprus or a Cypriot merchant. He also includes documents (RS 17.36 and RS 17.149) that do not mention Cypriots but bear Cypriot-style seals that were used before the tablets were inscribed. Although it is hard to identify clearly a Cypriot merchant or official just based on a seal impression, these texts are unusual as they do not bear the Ugaritic king's dynastic seal. Other documents, such as text RS 16.238+254 narrating the travel from Sinnaranu to Crete, along with texts about deliveries of grain to Ura in Cilicia (RS 20.212 and RS 26.158) are included in the table maybe because they are mentioned later in the book and not because they relate to Cypriote matters. In short, the author is here reviewing all possible evidence, including texts that may not directly relate to Cyprus or Cypriot material.

In his last chapter 'Material and Mercantile Connectivity in the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean', Knapp asks relevant questions regarding the trading system of the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean. For instance, he wonders about the role and influence of some of the well-known Ugaritic merchants (such as Urtenu) and also wonders if the picture of trade relationships between Cyprus and Ugarit as depicted in the existing modern literature is true, as the narrative has often been driven by Ugaritic textual sources.

Knapp states that 'the role of the state in maritime trade at Ugarit thus seems to have been indirect, or "symbiotic" and was typically overseen by a *sakiny* (prefect)' (p. 68). He postulates that seagoing ships would have belonged to the merchants themselves and not the state. This point raises questions and is still debated by scholars, because textual sources from Ugarit (or elsewhere) do not say who had the expertise to build and maintain these ships. It seems however, that the royal authority in Ugarit was interested in shipbuilding as is demonstrated by RS 14.001, a probable list from the royal palace mentioning 'ship makers' (*hrš' anyt*). (Virolleaud 1957, 66-68 (PRU 2 n° 40 - CAT 4.125, Dietrich, Loretz & Sanmartín 1995, 261); Ernst-Pradal 2000; 2023, 1). Although Knapp argues that RS 18.113A indicates that the harbourmaster of Ugarit sold ships to a merchant from Alashiya (but see Pardee 2012; 2023:72), the assumption that he was acting on private ground is disputable. Indeed, Pardee has argued that the harbor of Minet el-Beida was a royal possession, under royal jurisdiction, and it would therefore seem evident that the harbourmaster would have been operating as a royal agent. As Pardee (2023: 90) argues: 'Urtenu was effectively the State', and it seems that this argument can be extended to other wealthy merchants or high officials from Ugarit whose 'private' archives all contained state related documents, making it hard to draw a line between what was private and what was under the authority of the state through their official's authority. One should also note the quasi-absence of ship representations in Ugarit, which should not be neglected when looking at maritime connections. Although Knapp, in his conclusion,

refers to the recent study by Matoian (2021) of the rare ship representations from Ugarit, and notes the lack of discussion on their economic or mercantile significance, he doesn't engage in the discussion himself.

In conclusion, this book is extremely useful for anyone interested in the mercantile world of the Late Bronze Age, and the interactions between the Levant and Cyprus. It summarizes the existing evidence in one convenient place and presents tables of both texts and imported Cypriot ceramics in Ugarit that will certainly help the readers with their own inquiries. Because of its focus on the mercantile world, seen as a driving factor for Late Bronze exchanges, the book tends to overlook other possible explanations for shared ideologies, and consumption. At times, it feels that the underlying claim of the book is that all of the elites consuming imports at Ugarit were part of wealthy mercantile families. Although such a proposal is certainly a stimulating thought about the *koiné* of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean in general and can even explain the *raison d'être* of this phenomenon, it seems to be reductive, or even extreme to consider that *all* elites, including the king of Ugarit, belonged to kin groups of merchants. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in this book nicely brings to the forefront the extreme connectivity of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean, especially that of Ugarit and Enkomi, and highlights the constant travels, regional interconnections and social entanglements of the regions, while providing stimulating views of their mechanisms.

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