



FROM 'LUGAL.GAL' TO 'WANAX'

KINGSHIP AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION
IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE AEGEAN

edited by

Jorrit M. Kelder & Willemijn J. I. Waal



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A Great King of Alašiya? The archaeological and textual evidence

Eleni Mantzourani, Konstantinos Kopanias
and Ioannis Voskos

Introduction

Alašiya's king is mentioned as an equal to the Egyptian king in the Amarna letters, despite the fact that this kingdom was no match to Egypt from a political and military point of view. It seems that Alašiya's significance as a trade partner, as well as the fact that it was beyond Egypt's reach, were sufficient reasons to pretend that its ruler(s) belonged to the 'big league'. In this paper, we offer a brief overview of various texts from Egypt, Ḫatti and Ugarit concerning the political status of the king of Alašiya, as well as a summary of the available archaeological evidence on Cyprus. It seems that there is no major site, which could be considered as the capital of a Great Kingdom. However, one of these sites was apparently viewed as such by Egypt for its own reasons. The same could apply also in the case of Ahḫiyawa. Although we have no undeniable archaeological evidence to prove the 'supremacy' of a single Mycenaean centre over the whole of the Aegean, one of these centres seems to have been considered by the Hittites as the capital of a Great King.

1. The Identification of Alašiya as Cyprus

The evidence from the Hittite, Ugaritic and Egyptian texts (Kitchen 2009: 8-10), as well as the recent petrographic analysis of tablets originating from Cyprus (Goren et al. 2003; 2004: 57-70; 2011: 696) leaves no doubt about the identification of Alašiya with the latter island.¹ Previous attempts to locate Alašiya outside Cyprus, either in Cilicia or Syria, proved unrewarding.² If Alašiya is not to be identified with Cyprus, then we are confronted with two insurmountable problems: firstly, this would mean that Cyprus, a copper producing and trade centre with exports in all of the eastern Mediterranean, was never mentioned in any of the existing Bronze Age Near Eastern texts (Catling 1975: 205). Secondly, we would

1 Goren et al. 2003; 2004: 57-70; 2011: 696. Merrilllees' (2011) insistence on his earlier position is inexplicable; on that, e.g., Cline 2005: 41. For a more detailed discussion, see Knapp 2008: 300-3.

2 See, e.g., Merrilllees 1987; but see also the book review of Van den Hout 1994.

have to assume that a copper producing centre, with a king who at times was considered to be an equal to the Egyptian king and superior to the king of Ugarit, was based somewhere on the mainland, but somehow managed to escape the attention of the Hittite, the Mitanni and the Egyptian armies (Kitchen 2009: 6).

In the extant cuneiform texts Alašiya is always determined as either a land (KUR) or a land-city (KUR + URU). Merrilllees understood the combination KUR + URU as city-state and proposed that Alašiya was nothing more than a minor centre like Ugarit (Merrilllees 1987: 42). However, in the Hittite texts this combination of determinatives is not only used to describe minor states, but also, for example, the Hittite empire itself (KUR ^{URU}Ḫattuša, see Van den Hout 1994: 139.) Thus, the use of the combination KUR + URU in the case of Alašiya offers no indication for the size of the kingdom.

2. Textual evidence from the Middle Bronze Age Near East and Egypt (KK)

2.1. Mesopotamia and Syria

The earliest references to Alašiya come from Mari and Babylonia. Three are dated to the reign of Yaḥdun-Lim or Sûmû-Yamam of Mari³ and three to the time of Zimri-Lim of Mari.⁴ They all mention various quantities of Alašiyān copper imported to the city. Of particular interest is an additional fragmentary text from Mari dated to the 18th c. BCE which mentions URU^{KI} *a-la-ši-ia* (i.e. in the city-land of Alašiya) probably in connection to bronze.⁵ The determinative URU^{KI} shows that Alašiya was also a city, which had the same name as the land.⁶

Most of these texts refer to significant quantities of Alašiyān copper that were imported to Mari. No further details are presented as to whether Alašiyān merchants reached the city or if the actual exchange took place somewhere else by the coast.⁷ This

3 Dossin 1965: 402; Charpin 1990: 125 n. 2: 1) 14 GÚ 50 MA.NA URUDU KUR-i 50 MA.NA URUDU KUR-i *a-la-si-um* (T.361), 2) 1 MA.NA 14 SU URUDU LUḪ *a-la-s[u-u]m* [S]AG (T.370), 3) 50 MA.NA URUDU *a-la-ši-ia* (T.505).

4 Dossin 1939: 111; Charpin 1990: 125: 1) *erû misû* (LUḪ-ḪA) *a-la-šu-û*, 2) [x] *manû erê a-la-ši-i*, 3) *siparru a-la-šu-û*.

5 M.5572 + M.14742; Charpin 1990: 127; Knapp 2008: 307.

6 Charpin 1990: 126; Marcus 2007: 148. Note that one of the texts differentiates between URUDU KUR-i and URUDU KUR-i *a-la-si-um*, i.e. 'mountain copper' and 'Alašiyān mountain copper' respectively (see n. 3 no. 1. Dossin 1965: 402). This has been interpreted as a direct reference to the copper ore deposits of the Troodos Mountains of Cyprus (Knapp 1996: 18; Knapp and Kassianidou 2008: 135). However, this could not have been the case. In the Mari texts two different qualities of copper are generally defined, namely 'copper of the mountains' (i.e. unrefined, unpurified) and 'washed copper' (i.e. refined, purified), see Limet 1985; Winter 2010: 353 n. 16. This implies that this particular quantity of Alašiyān copper was imported unrefined to Mari, which is quite puzzling; it would make more sense to assume that this copper was already refined somewhere in Alašiya, in order to reduce its size and thus facilitate its transportation. Taking into consideration the aforementioned assumption, it can be suggested that a second, finer purification of this particular shipment of Alašiyān copper would have been necessary upon its arrival at Mari (Muhly and Wertime 1973: 121-2; Limet 1985: 203).

7 Zimri-Lim reportedly sold tin to the chief merchant from Kaptara (i.e. Kaphtor/Keftiu/Crete: for the equation, see, e.g., Kitchen 2009: 9) and gave also 20 shekels of tin to a translator who assisted with the transaction (A.1270): Heimpel 2003: 12 n. 27; Podany 2010: 108. It is indeed implied that the merchants from Kaptara came to Mari, although the transaction could have taken place in a coastal site. The price of 20 shekels of tin paid to the translator seems unreasonably high, a fact probably meaning that additional service must have been offered.

place could have been the port of Ugarit from which then the copper may have been transported to Mari through the territory of the kingdom of Yamḥad.⁸ A tablet from Tell Sianu (Bretschneider et al. 2004: 219 n. 12; Aruz 2008: cat. no. 17), near the Syrian coast, mentions objects imported from Alašiya and another 18th c. BCE tablet from Alalakh also mentions silver received from Alašiya, probably as payment for something else.⁹

Some of the Alašiyian copper seems to have been further exported to Babylonia. A tablet dated to ca. 1745/4 BCE from an unknown Babylonian site, mentions 12 minas of refined copper from Alašiya and Dilmun.¹⁰ It seems that Ḥammurabi's diplomatic and military successes made it possible to also import goods from the Mediterranean. It has been suggested that Alašiya became the main copper supplier for Mesopotamia by the Old Babylonian Period, replacing its older trading partners from Oman/Bahrain (Heimpel 2003: 38). The copper quantities mentioned in the Mari texts are significant, even though the texts are indeed very restricted in number. It seems plausible that some Syrian and perhaps some Mesopotamian kings found a new copper supplier in Alašiya, allowing them not to rely exclusively on their previous suppliers.

2.2. Egypt

In Egyptian texts two terms are used which could be linked with Cyprus: *Irs*, i.e. Alas(i)a, and *Isy*, i.e. Asiya (Kitchen 2009: 1).¹¹ The oldest reference to Alas(i)a comes from an inscription of Amenemhat II at Memphis dating to ca. 1900 BCE (Altenmüller and Moussa 1991; Marcus 2007: 139-42; Kitchen 2009: 2). Military expeditions have been sent against Lebanon (M7) and Sinai (M13-4). A naval expedition was conducted against Asia (*Št*), and in particular the foreign countries *Twʿ* (M8, M16, M25) and *Tʿsi* (M16, M25).¹² According to this inscription '[the] fighting army, which was sent to cut up the fortifications of *Twʿ* and of *Tʿsi* brought back a bounty: among other things, 1554 Asiatics, 646 deben (= 17.64 kg) of copper scrap, 125 deben (= 3.41 kg) of new copper, 1734 deben (= 47.34 kg) of malachite and 375 deben (= 5.1 kg) of lead (M16-8)'.¹³

The terms *Tʿsi* and *Twʿ* can be identified with Alašiya and (possibly) Ura on the Cilician coast respectively (see also below §4.1).¹⁴ Alašiya is here referred to as a land but it was probably also a fortified centre, since its name is written enclosed in a fortified oval (Kitchen 2009: 3), reminding us of the above mentioned Mari text with the reference to URI^{KI} *a-la-ši-ia*, i.e. the city-land of Alašiya.¹⁵ The copper as well as the malachite¹⁶ were

8 Zimri-Lim personally visited Yamḥad and also Ugarit (Podany 2010: 107-9), which means that he had excellent relations with them.

9 AT 385.2. Wiseman 1953: 8, 154; Catling 1975: 203; Knapp 2008: 307-8. For an overview of the archaeological evidence, see Yener 2012.

10 Birmingham City Museum inv. no. WHM 114046. Millard 1973: 12 MA.NA URUDU *mi-si a-la-ši-im*; Knapp 2008: 308. Dilmun was probably located in Bahrain.

11 Kitchen 2009: 1. The identification of the *Irs* with Alašiya is secured through a docket in the Amarna letter EA 39 by the king of Alašiya, which mentions in Egyptian hieratic script 'Ruler of Alaš(i)a': Moran 1992: 112 n. 2.

12 Note that the ship determinative has been used: Marcus 2007: 144; Kitchen 2009: 2. The terms are written in the Middle Kingdom spelling.

13 For a detailed calculation of the weight of the transported objects, see Marcus 2007: 151.

14 Helck 1989; Marcus 2007: 144; Kitchen 2009: 2; contra Altenmüller and Moussa 1991: 35 n. 24.

15 See n. 5 and also Marcus 2007: 148.

16 Both Pliny and Theophrastus mention that copper malachite (chalcosmaragdus) was abundant in the copper mines of Cyprus. For a brief discussion, see Scott 2002: 105.

most probably been obtained from Alašiya, whereas the lead in all likelihood came either from Anatolia (through Ura) or the Aegean (Gill 2010; Kopanias 2015b; Kelder 2016).

The account of such a large number of prisoners (1554) implies that the size of the Egyptian flotilla must have been quite significant.¹⁷ The text only refers to the expeditions against the above targets and not necessarily to their conquest.¹⁸ It is possible that (at least) the last expedition was in fact a commercial one (Podany 2010: 111), or simply a raid to the Alašīyan coastline targeting the rural population. The city of Alašiya did not necessarily have to be located directly by the coast, as the similar case of Ugarit and its port Minet el-Beida indicates. If this hypothesis is correct, then the population of Alašiya would have enough time to prepare its defences against any attacks from the sea, like the one mounted by Amenemhat II. This attack resulted in a rather disappointing bounty, taking into consideration the size of the naval and military forces involved.

3. Prehistoric Bronze Age Cyprus from an archaeological perspective (EM, IV)

3.1. Late Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age

Any research attempting to explain the socio-political situation in Bronze Age Cyprus should take into consideration a complex set of archaeological data, textual evidence and a number of long-debated subjects such as the Alašiya-Cyprus equation (see §1), the conditions that led to socio-economic complexity and social stratification, the development of interregional/international trade and the matters of settlement hierarchy, central administration and/or heterarchy on the island. Most of these issues have been analysed at length and will therefore not be addressed here.¹⁹

Cyprus apparently entered a period of major socio-economic transformations during the Late Chalcolithic (ca. 2700-2400 BCE), notably during the formative period of the so-called 'Philia phenomenon' (ca. 2400-2300 BCE). Alongside other developments, the various communities of the island also started to expel their insularity and isolation. In order to explain this change, Frankel and Webb have argued for a migration of Anatolian peoples (see, e.g., Webb and Frankel 1999, 2007, 2011; Frankel 2000, 2005), whereas other scholars (see, e.g., Peltenburg 1996, 2007; Bolger 2007; Knapp 2013: 260-77) have discussed the possibility of local evolution via intensified contacts between Cyprus and its neighbours.

Whichever of the two interpretations is accepted, the basic incentive for this change was the discovery of the Troodos sulphide copper ore bodies (see, e.g., Knapp 1990) and – after a period of internal metallurgical development (Manning 1993: 35) – the attempt of certain emerging power groups to control them. This process, possibly stemming from the increasing competition between households and the subsequent unequal access to wealth and power, led to a gradual break with the egalitarian past (Voskos 2018). The concomitant influx of 'foreign' elements and practices rapidly transformed the Cypriot material culture

17 For a calculation, see Marcus 2007: 157.

18 As proposed by, e.g., Schneider 2008: 61.

19 For recent discussions on sociopolitical organisation, settlement hierarchy, heterarchy, archaeological evidence and textual data on Cyprus, see, for example, Knapp 2008: 134-53, 298-341; 2013: 432-47. For the development of social complexity and stratified society on Cyprus, see, for example, Keswani 1993, Manning 1993 and various other papers in BASOR 292. For a recent brief review of available archaeological and textual data concerning the copper production industry and trade, see Kassianidou 2013.

and society. Similarly, while broadly discussing the issue of socio-economic transformation and the growth of political economy during the Bronze Age, Knapp (1985: 245) has pointed out that ‘...increased foreign demand for Cypriote copper most likely led to administrative formalization of internal copper production and in turn to the economic transformation of a village-based culture into an international urban-oriented complex society’.

Indeed, the few excavated Early Bronze Age settlements such as Marki *Alonia* (Frankel and Webb 1996, 2006), Sotira *Kaminoudhia* (Swiny et al. 2003) and notably the cemeteries of Cyprus²⁰ witness an explosion in the amount of copper artifacts, which is a clear contrast with the previous period. Alongside with the advances in metallurgical production there is an increasing presence of imported goods²¹ such as pottery, bronze items and jewellery.²² The most relevant examples of ‘foreign’ products are the abundant faience beads recovered at many sites, a few gypsum vessels from Vasilia *Kilistra* (Merrillees 2009) and also the Egyptian alabaster vessels from Vasilia *Kafkallia* (Hennesy et al. 1988: 25-39). It thus seems that Cypriot social groups were already participating in the rising interregional trade networks of the eastern Mediterranean area.

However, the economic basis of Cypriot communities largely remained agropastoral and there are few signs of economic intensification, surplus manipulation and craft specialisation. Generally speaking, the social groups of the island managed to adapt to the new situation by continuing for the most part their traditional way of life within the sphere of simple socio-economic structures.

3.2. Middle Bronze Age

A quick look at the Middle Bronze Age architecture, topography, social and burial practices provides a view of increasing complexity, albeit with little if any differentiations from the previous period. The excavated sites of Alambra *Mouttes* (Coleman et al. 1996), Politiko *Troullia* (Falconer et al. 2005, 2010) and Episkopi *Phaneromeni* (Swiny 1986) with an estimated size between ca. 2-3 and 10-15 hectares (Manning 1993: 40, Fig. 3) are still far from being considered as urban centres.²³ Material culture, social practices and ritual also seem to resemble the EC data. Economic practices remained largely agropastoral, despite the increasing engagement with copper production. Likewise, other craft activities, such as pottery-making, seem to have remained within household-level production (see, e.g., Frankel and Webb 1996: 111; cf. Barlow in Coleman et al. 1996: 266).

Regarding mortuary architecture, the EC type of chamber tomb remained popular and most of the EC cemeteries were utilised in the Middle Bronze Age without any discontinuity. Only burial customs stand out as the basic field of social display and renegotiation of individual and collective identities. The growing numbers of mortuary goods including large quantities of copper artifacts, imported items and pottery with complex shapes and decoration, reflect a tendency towards social differentiation, extended copper production for internal/external consumption and increasing contacts with Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt. The latter is attested by the MC White Painted jugs found in the Levant (see, for example, Maguire 2009). What is more, a few grave offerings from north coast cemeteries

20 See, for example, Philia *Vasiliko*, Karmi *Palealona*, Vasilia *Kafkallia*, Lapithos *Vrysi tou Barba*, Bellapais *Vounoi* etc.

21 For a recent summary of imported goods during the Early-Middle Cypriot period, see Knapp 2013: 307-11.

22 Swiny (1989: 27) refers to Syro-Palestinian vessels and Minoan bronzes.

23 For the size estimation of several LC sites, see Knapp 2013: 355, Fig. 95.

provide sufficient proofs for sporadic direct or indirect contacts with Crete and the Aegean in general. The most famous among them are a Middle Minoan II Kamares ware cup, which was discovered in the so-called ‘seafarer’s tomb’ at Karmi *Palealona* (Stewart 1963) and an Early Minoan III-Middle Minoan IA bridge-spouted jar coming from tomb 806A at Lapithos *Vrysi tou Barba* (Grace 1940: 24-7; Herscher 1978). Important as they may be, these exotic goods as well as the increasing numbers of metal artifacts are not enough to alter the picture of a village-based society.

3.3. Summary

It follows that, until at least the end of the Middle Cypriot period (i.e. 1700-1600 BCE) the available archaeological data are insufficient to support the view of a well-organised copper production and consumption industry, nor the appearance of élites that exclusively controlled the entrepreneurial activities. Concerning social complexity, Swiny (1989: 25) argued that ‘no single prehistoric Bronze Age settlement, either excavated or surveyed, stands out by its size, complexity and lavishness of architectural fixtures or number of foreign imports. None shows signs of extensive trading connections’, concluding that ‘all the settlement data suggests that Cypriot society was unstratified’.

Indeed, the current archaeological record and the extended excavations at Marki *Alonia*, Sotira *Kaminoudhia*, Alambra *Mouttes*, Pyrgos *Mavrorachi* (see, e.g., Belgiorno 2004) and other EC-MC sites reveal a village-based society (Manning 1993: 40) lacking any sign of urban orientation and institutionalised social inequalities. Even though the Cypriot social groups seem to have realised the potential of long-distance trade, their participation on available exchange networks is characterised at best as opportunistic. Moreover, it is doubtful whether local Cypriotes acted directly as traders or there were foreign middlemen and private entrepreneurs for this task.²⁴

3.4. An alternative reading of the Middle Cypriot and Late Cypriot I archaeological data

3.4.1. Contradicting textual and archaeological evidence

Taking for granted that *Alašiya* was the Bronze Age name for Cyprus or at least part of it, we are confronted with a major discrepancy between the archaeological and textual data.²⁵ On the one hand, from an archaeological perspective, the available material data reveal a village-based society with few albeit increasing signs of social complexity and a number of local copper ore deposits utilised by various settlements at the outskirts of

24 This might be true only for the early stages of the Cypriot copper industry and not for the late MC and LC period; see for example Kassianidou 2013: 144. Recent research suggests the existence of metal trade networks and interaction spheres already in the Early Bronze Age, highlighting, among others, the pioneer role of the Minoans. The leading role of the Minoans and other foreign merchants until 1600-1500 BCE and the indirect participation of Cypriotes is also suggested by the nearly complete absence of models depicting boats in Cyprus and the primarily agropastoral orientation of the Cypriot economy. Early contacts between Cyprus and Crete are also proved by the identification of Cypriot copper in Crete (Webb et al. 2006). This fact might explain why the Cypriotes chose to adopt a variation of Linear A (i.e. the Cypro-Minoan script) instead of a script originating from Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia (hieroglyphic, cuneiform etc.).

25 This has also been noted by other scholars, see, e.g., Manning and DeMita 1997: 110; South 2002: 68. Knapp (2013: 441) also refers to a ‘disjuncture’ between textual and material evidence.

the Troodos Mountains. This fact led some researchers like Kassianidou to the conclusion that even though the foundations of Cypriot copper industry lie in the Middle Bronze Age (Kassianidou 2008), it was only in the LC I period (i.e. from 1650/1600 BCE onwards) that the copper producing and exporting industry was truly developed (Kassianidou 2013: 133). Similarly, Knapp sets MC III-LC I period (i.e. ProBA I) as the starting point of urban expansion and politico-economic development (see for example Knapp 2013: 432; also Negbi 2005: 4, Table 2).

On the other hand, given the existence of the early textual references on Alašiya, we know that, by the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1900 BCE), Cyprus was acknowledged as a major copper-producing area and that the island had already gained an important position in the intensifying trade transactions of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Which scenario is closest to the truth? If we accept the view from the archaeological perspective, then it is difficult to explain the existence of considerable quantities of Alašīyan copper to Mesopotamia and Egypt during the 19th-18th c. BCE. By contrast, if we take the textual references at face value, this would mean that we have an extraordinary gap in our archaeological knowledge concerning the processes of urbanisation and socio-economic development between ca. 2000-1600 BCE.

3.4.2. Possible evidence for a rising elite

Unfortunately, the available explanations of socio-economic organisation are largely confined to LC IIC-LC III period (see, e.g., Peltenburg 1996: 28; Webb 1999: 305), due to the lack of sufficient archaeological data before ca. 1400 BCE. Nevertheless, a careful reconsideration of available Middle Cypriot data might offer a different view, providing a possible explanation for this discrepancy. Firstly, concerning metallurgical production in Cyprus, the appearance of tin, alloyed with native copper in order to produce bronze, dates to approximately 2000 BCE. This coincides with evidence for the existence of sites with an exclusively metallurgical orientation. More specifically, the MC I site of Ambelikou *Aletri* (Merrillees 1984) offers some of the earliest evidence for systematic copper extraction and mining on the island (Knapp 1985: 240, 2013: 302).

Regardless of whether sites such as *Aletri* appeared for reasons of internal consumption or increasing external demand – or both (see for example Knapp 1990: 159-60, 2013: 310), the fact that a number of people were consciously cut off from the productive force and turned into specialised miners and metal producers, suggests a major re-orientation of local economic programmes. In fact, this development implies that there was sufficient agricultural surplus to support the specialised workers and that a group of people was authorised to organise the process of import the necessary amounts of tin and possibly to redistribute and/or export the outcome. Ultimately, this could be one of the earliest evidence of a rising élite group.

3.4.3 Explanations for the paucity of MC material

If we now turn to the topography of MC period, it seems that there are several under-investigated areas on the island, as well as regions with continuous occupation between

the prehistoric and protohistoric Bronze Age periods, a fact that in the long run might be possibly linked with the gradual creation of broader regional political entities.²⁶

For instance, even though a settlement related to the wealthy EC-MC cemeteries of the north coast has yet to be discovered, many researchers suggest the possibility of a major site in the area actively involved in the metals trade²⁷ and probably participating in wider trade networks including south-southeast Aegean, coastal Anatolia and other regions (see, for example, Webb et al. 2006). There is a comparable dearth of data to support the existence of a large town that preceded *Ayios Dhimitrios* in the Kalavassos valley.²⁸ However, Cline (2005: 42) is right to point out the continuous activity in the area, whereas a large MC cemetery with chamber tombs (Todd 1986) indicates an important settlement in direct proximity to it. MC tombs and a settlement are also reported in the vicinity of Kouklia *Palaepaphos* (Maier and Karageorghis 1984: 46-7; Rupp et al. 1992: 290), another area with long and continuous history of occupation.

Similarly, the MC tombs and settlement of Episkopi *Phaneromeni* (see, e.g., Carpenter 1981; Swiny 1986; see also Mantzourani 2001: 158-9) precede and partly overlap with LC Kourion/Episkopi *Bamboula* (Weinberg 1983) and there is also evidence for PreBA activity in the area around the large LC harbour town of Kition *Kathari* (Karageorghis 1974).²⁹ If we add to the above data the initial settlement³⁰ of Morphou *Toumba tou Skourou* (Vermeule and Wolsky 1990), Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos* (Schaeffer 1952; Dikaïos 1969-1971; Courtois et al. 1986), Hala Sultan Tekke *Vyzakia* (Åstrom 1989, 1996), Athienou *Bamboulari tis Koukounninas* (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983), Kalopsidha³¹ and other sites, then it becomes apparent that Cypriot society had undergone important socio-economic realignments already before the Late Bronze Age. Possibly, several power groups resided in long-inhabited inland areas and the newly established coastal sites somehow managed to control the copper industry and participate in the metals trade.

Ultimately, it seems that the paucity of excavated MC sites is both an outcome of insufficient archaeological research as well as the result of LC layers overlying MC settlements. Especially the latter largely obscures the reality and complicates any attempt to approach socio-economic development and the exact mode of growth of the copper industry.

3.4.4. Additional evidence for socio-economic developments

There are some further facts that suggest a missing link of socio-economic development within the MC period and support this interpretation. Firstly, a series of inland fortified sites³² appear late in the MC III and early in the LC I period, which point to a period of unrest. Peltenburg (1996) in particular links these forts with the rise of Enkomi and its attempt to secure a steady flow of copper from the Troodos sources to the harbour town of

26 Peltenburg (2012: 2), for instance, refers to 'territories' (i.e. 'an urban core that mobilised its resource-rich hinterland').

27 For example, Swiny (1989: 28) refers to this possibility while discussing the extraordinary wealth of Lapithos *Vrysi tou Barba*.

28 Except perhaps for Kalavassos *Laroumena* (see Todd 1993).

29 MC tombs are also reported at Larnaca *Ayios Prodromos* (Herscher 1988).

30 Seemingly not before MC III (i.e. around 1700-650 BCE).

31 Åstrom 1966. Kalopsidha might have existed since MC II period.

32 For a full catalogue of the fortified sites, see Fortin 1981; also Mantzourani 2001: 121.

Famagusta bay. This interesting argument takes for granted the leading role of Enkomi, but the explanation for the existence of several contemporary forts in the Karpas peninsula and the northwestern coast as part of Enkomi's hinterland strategy is not very convincing. Instead of attributing the control of more than 20 forts – many of which seem to be quite far away – to Enkomi's defensive and procurement strategy, we might alternatively assume that a similar regional infrastructure was also valid in the case of other coastal/near coastal centres such as Morphou *Toumba tou Skourou*. In any case, Peltenburg is right to connect the unprecedented phenomenon of defensive outposts with the attempt of local élite groups to control copper ore transportation and to secure the precious metal against any possible internal competitors and external opponents.³³

Secondly, the copper industry and technology appear to have been 'full-blown' (Muhly 1989: 299) by the time Enkomi was established. The parallel appearance of copper extraction and primary smelting sites such as Politiko *Phorades* may also be linked with this phenomenon, since Enkomi provides ample evidence mainly for the final stages of copper refinement and casting copper into ingots. Consequently, as Manning has noted many years ago, the 'sophisticated and knowledgeable external demand' (Manning 1993: 35) would have been impossible without a preceding stage of internal socio-economic development and growth of the copper industry. The subsequent uninterrupted expansion of many MC III/LC I-II sites³⁴ reveals an apparent view of prosperity and economic growth, proving the successful integration of the island into the wider eastern Mediterranean trade networks. Interestingly, the formative era of the Cypriot copper industry coincides with a dramatic paucity of textual information, preceding the abrupt development after the beginning of the New Kingdom period.

4. Late Bronze Age textual evidence (KK)

In the period between the 17th and the 16th century BCE, an era of upheavals and military clashes throughout the Near East, Alašiya is not mentioned in any of the surviving texts. After the 15th c. BCE the political situation in the Near East seems to have gradually become more stable and Alašiya is again mentioned in the texts.³⁵

4.1. Textual evidence from Egypt

The Annals of Tuthmosis III mention diplomatic gifts sent by the Ruler of *Isy* (Asiya) three times. Assyria, Ḫatti and Babylon also are said to have sent respective diplomatic presents. In another text of Tuthmosis III *Asiya* seems to have been placed in the west, grouped together with Keftiu/Crete.³⁶ The inclusion of *Isy* (Asiya) in this list shows that it entertained diplomatic relations with Egypt at that time, and that it was seen as an important agent in the international political stage. Unfortunately, however, it is uncertain whether *Asiya* is an abbreviated version of the term Alašiya and refers to Cyprus.³⁷

33 Such as the Lukka raiders (Peltenburg 1996: 34) or other military expeditions like the one described in S2.2.

34 For a summary of the most important LC I-II remnants, see Knapp 2008: 147-51.

35 From the reign of Hatshepsut an official called 'the Alasian' is mentioned (Kitchen 2009: 3), but it is not clear if he was somehow connected with Alašiya. Neither diplomatic nor commercial endeavour is mentioned concerning Alašiya.

36 Kitchen 2009: 7: Year 34 = ca. 1445 BCE, Year 38 = ca. 1441 BCE, Year 39 = ca. 1440 BCE.

37 Quack 1996: 75-8; Kitchen 2009: 8; Gander 2015: 446. An important indication that the term *Isy* indeed referred to Cyprus, is offered by the Hellenistic decree of Kanopos (238 BCE): Osing 1980.

In several topographical lists both the term *Irs* (Alas(i)a), and *Isy* (Asiya) appear as if they referred to different countries, while the abbreviated form *Isy* resembles the term *j-s-y-w*, probably pointing to *Assuwa/Asia*, which was located in west Anatolia (Helck 1983). As Kitchen (2009: 7) argued the simultaneous occurrence of the terms *Asiya* and *Alašiya* does not prove that these are related to two different places. Some later sources suggest that the term *Isy* referred to a completely different country, perhaps *j-s-y-w* (= *Assuwa/Asia*). This would explain the fact that in the *List of Mineral Regions* in Luxor (dated to the reign of Ramses II) we read about a ‘Mount of *Asiya*’ as well as another ‘Mount of *Alasia*’, which offered to the Egyptian king silver and copper respectively (Kitchen 2009: 7). Cyprus had no silver reserves (Karageorghis et al. 1983) while *j-s-y-w* in west Anatolia did.

A more certain reference to *Alašiya* in the New Kingdom appears in the corpus of the Amarna letters. The first letter (EA 33) was sent by the ruler of *Alašiya* to an Egyptian king recently ascended to the throne, probably Akhenaten.³⁸ Recent petrographic analysis of tablets has shown that their clay originates from the region near the southeastern coast of Cyprus (Goren et al. 2004: 48-75). All the letters mentioning *Alašiya* seem to be dated to a rather short period of time.

The king of the Land of *Alašiya* (LUGAL KUR *A-la-ši-ia*) bears the same title as the king of the Land of Egypt (LUGAL KUR *Mi-iš-ri*) and has the same status, since the king of Egypt calls him ‘brother’ (ŠEŠ).³⁹ However, the king of *Alašiya* never uses the title LUGAL.GAL (Great King) in his letters, neither for himself nor for his Egyptian counterpart. Should we thus conclude that he did not consider himself to be a Great King (Helft 2010: 99 n. 165; Podany 2010: 254) and that, accordingly, the term ‘brother’ was used in the sense of ‘business partner’? (Artzi 1978: 29 n. 5).

Mynářová (2007: 130-1) pointed out that the Assyrian king in his first letter (EA 15) to the Egyptian king – in which he cautiously initiated diplomatic relations – also used the title LUGAL, while in the second one (EA 16), obviously after his recognition by his Egyptian counterpart, he used the title LUGAL.GAL. This is a valid argument and we would expect the royal scribes to adhere to very strict and well-defined rules concerning the terminology they used for their kings. Surprisingly, however, this is not the case. All the Great Kings (i.e. the king of Ḫatti, Karaduniaš (= Babylonia) and Mitanni) never used exclusively the term LUGAL.GAL for themselves. Instead, they often used in their correspondence with the Egyptian king the ‘inferior’ title LUGAL (Mynářová 2007: 126-30). It is as if sometimes they felt like Great Kings, while, in other instances, they preferred to present themselves like simple kings.

The only profound consistency is that they had always used the same title for themselves as well as for their counterparts. What is more, they never called themselves LUGAL when they called their colleague LUGAL.GAL or the other way around. What seems to be more important is the use of the terms ‘brother’ or ‘father’ in their correspondence. In his first, cautious, letter, the Assyrian king avoids addressing the Egyptian king ‘brother’, although he does so in his second letter, after the latter accepted him as his equal. The status of a ‘brother’ was not offered easily and could be revoked

38 For the identification of the recipient of the letter with Akhenaten, see Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 17.

39 EA 33:1-2, EA 34:1-2, EA 37:1-, EA 39:1-2. In EA 35:1-2 the title of king of Egypt is written in Akkadian (*[š]ār-ri KUR Mi-iš-ri*), while for the title of the king of *Alašiya* with the corresponding Sumerogram (LUGAL KUR *A-la-ši-ia*). In EA 38: 1-2 both kings have the title *šarru*. In EA 36 the greeting formula is not preserved, but the king of *Alašiya* again calls the king of Egypt his brother (EA 36: 6, 8, 12).

at any time.⁴⁰ In Tušratta's first letter to the Pharaoh (EA 17), his agony regarding his acceptance as a 'brother' or not by the Pharaoh, is quite evident. His 'love' declarations in this as well as in some of his other letters reveal his weak position. Thus, when the king of Alašiya does not make any assertions of devotion or friendship to the Egyptian king, this was not due to the fact that he did not like him, as suggested by, for example, Podany (2010: 254). On the contrary, it may indicate that he had a firm grip of his own state, allowing him to adopt a self-confident attitude.

The Alašiya letters in the Amarna archive offer us some indications regarding the organisation of the court of the king of Alašiya. First, all letters are written in Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the time, which means that in his court resided scribes who could write in Akkadian.⁴¹ Moreover, the various Alašiya letters seem to have been written by different scribes, which implies that a group of scribes was in the service of the king of Alašiya.⁴² It should not be taken for granted that any king could afford such a service. The king of Arzawa, who wished to upgrade his position in the 'great league', did not have scribes who were able to speak and write in Akkadian or Egyptian in his court. Thus, he was obliged (quite embarrassingly) to request from the Egyptian king to communicate with him in the Hittite language (E A32: 24-5, see Hawkins 2015; Kopanias 2015a).

4.1.1. The relations between Alašiya and Egypt

As the following passage from EA 35 inform us, there existed long-standing diplomatic relations between Alašiya and Egypt: 'Furthermore, **which of your fathers did this thing to my fathers in the past?** So now, my brother, don't take it to heart (EA 35: 49-53). Additionally, a treaty was being prepared between the two kings with no further details recorded: 'So may a treaty [be ma]de between us and my ambassad[or] will go to you and your envoy will come to me. (EA 34: 42-6)'.

The confidence of the king of Alašiya was further based on the fact that he also entertained diplomatic relations with two more major powers of that time, namely the king of Ḫatti and the king of Mitanni (interestingly, not with Babylonia as far as we know): 'You have not been ranked with the king of Ḫatti or with the king of Shanhar. As for me, whatever greeting gift they send to me, then I send double the amount to you (EA 35: 49-53).' It is implied that not only the king of Egypt but also the kings of Ḫatti and Mitanni recognised the king of Alašiya as their equal.

The correspondence and the exchange of greeting gifts between the kings of Egypt and Alašiya must have been quite regular. When the king of Alašiya detained the Egyptian messenger for three years, he felt obliged to apologise by stating that, not only did the

40 Kopanias 2015a: 215. Even major kingdoms were in danger of losing this status; Ramses II, for instance, was apparently unconvinced of the right of the Babylonian king to be considered his brother, as he remarked: '[...] the king of Babylonia is not a great king [...]' (Edel 1994: no. 105 obv. 56). See also the contribution of Waal in this volume.

41 Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1376: 'EA 33, 34, 39, 40 are written in the hybrid dialect used by scribes from Canaan who wrote letters in the Amarna collection.'

42 Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 11: 'The Amarna tablets from Alašiya include examples in Canaanite-Akkadian besides Hurro-Akkadian though two of them (EA 36, 37) seem to come from a scribe trained in the true Middle Babylonian tradition.'

'hand of Nergal'⁴³ (= a plague) befell his land, but also that one of his young wives had died.⁴⁴ In another case the Egyptian king complained that the king of Alašiya missed one of his celebrations and did not send him an envoy (together with a greeting gift), a common complaint in the Amarna correspondence.⁴⁵ The detainment of a messenger, a very common practice, occurred in order to postpone the sending of a greeting gift and it did not necessarily mean that during that particular period of time there were no trade contacts between the lands.

The correspondence between Egypt and Alašiya also refers to the exchange of copper for silver and grain (Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1376). In these eight letters, it is mentioned that the king of Alašiya sent a total of 113 talents and 934 ingots of copper to the king of Egypt, an amount that approximately corresponds to 29 tons (Knapp and Kassianidou 2008: 135). From the Amarna corpus we know that all the other kings wished to present themselves as being able to send greetings gifts including a variety of exotic and luxury objects, showing off their ability to obtain whatever they wished from distant lands.

However, this was not the case with the king of Alašiya. His first greeting gift to the newly enthroned king of Egypt consisted solely of copper,⁴⁶ although on other occasions he also included several luxury goods (see, e.g., EA 34: 16-31). Since we know from other letters that the kings did not hesitate to ask for special gifts or to complain about the quality of the gifts received, we can assume that the king of Alašiya mainly sent copper, for this is what was expected of him. The king of Alašiya, however, did not ask the king of Egypt to send him gold in return, a commodity which everybody knew that in Egypt was 'plentiful like dirt', but silver, which was not mined in Egypt.⁴⁷

He did not specify the amount and only speaks of a 'very great amount of silver' (EA 35: 19-22, 43-48; EA 37: 13-20). It seems that the equivalent proportion of silver to copper was standardised and taken for granted. Silver was used as a currency since the 3rd millennium BCE throughout the Near East, consequently this particular exchange of gifts resembles a commercial transaction (Kopaniyas 2015b). This is further illuminated by a request of the king of Alašiya to also receive 'grain [in ships from] the province of Canaan [send to me as in] former [days], [so that I] may [make] bread' (EA 36: 12-7), something that no other king in the Amarna correspondence has ever asked.⁴⁸ Maybe

43 The Mesopotamian god Nergal was equated with Resheph (Teixidor 1976: 65; Ulanowski 2013: 158; Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1380) and the latter with Apollo in later Greek texts (Hellbing 1979: 22). In the letter EA 35: 37 the Summerogram ⁴MAŠ.MAŠ could also directly refer to Resheph (Lipiński 2009: 117-8). Both Resheph and Apollo are arrow shooting gods, who were thought to send plagues (Ulanowski 2013: 160). The requested expert in vulture divination, which the king of Alašiya requests from the Egyptian king in the same letter (EA 35: 26, most probably is needed in order to fight the plague (Hellbing 1979: 23; Ulanowski 2013: 160).

44 EA 35: 35-9. In another case, the king of Egypt detained the messenger of Alašiya for two years: EA 36: 18-9.

45 EA 34: 7-5. We find such complaints very often in the Amarna correspondence. Their aim was to increase the value of the greeting gift that they should receive (Kopaniyas 2015b).

46 EA 33: 16, 18: 200 talents of copper (URUDU.MEŠ) and 10 talents of fine copper (URUDU DÜG).

47 There is no reason to assume, that the word silver was used here to mean generally 'wealth', as Podany (2010: 255) proposed. All the kings in the Amarna correspondence always made it quite clear what they wanted to receive in return to their own gifts. Tušratta went even as far as to request solid cast gold statues of himself and his daughter (EA 27: 19-7) and he complained intensely when he received plated ones of wood (EA 27: 32-3). The king of Alašiya would not have been the sole exception to this rule. When he asked for silver, he meant exactly that.

48 Nevertheless, Egypt sent several shipments of grain to Ḫatti and other Syrian states: Singer 1999: 707.

this is indeed an indication for a three way channel of trade: copper went from Alašiya to Egypt in return for shipments of grain from Canaan and silver from Egypt (Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 17-8).

The trade between Alašiya and Egypt was not only conducted in the form of greeting gifts. In another letter from the king of Alašiya we are informed that ‘the men of my country are talking about my lumber which they delivered to the king of the land of Eg[yp]t, so, my brother, [pay] the sums that are due.’⁴⁹ These men were not directly in the service of the king. That is why the payment was to be given directly to them. Moreover, the letters EA 39 and EA 40, sent by the king and the ‘commissioner of the land of Alašiya’ respectively, refer to merchants: ‘These men are my merchants. My brother, send them safely (and) quick[ly]. As for my merchant(s) (and) my ship, may your customs’ inspector not draw near to them’ (EA 39: 14-20, Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 355).

Apparently, an agreement was in effect enabling at least some of the Alašiyān merchants to conduct tax-free trade in the realm of Egypt (Moran 1992: 113 n. 1; Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1384). In the fragmentary letter regarding a transaction between Alašiya and Egypt which involved the exchange of copper and grain, the king of Alašiya mentions that one business agent participated from his side, while twenty business agents were involved from Egypt’s side.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, we have no information concerning the role of those business agents.

From a letter sent by Rib-Ḥadda, the ruler of Byblos to the Egyptian king, we can deduce that ships could travel directly from Alašiya to Egypt and not necessarily along the Levantine coast (EA 114: Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 307-9). In that particular letter, Rib-Ḥadda complained to the Egyptian king that the ships of Tyre, Beirut and Sidon blocked the direct route to Egypt, forcing him to return an Egyptian official via Alašiya (Knapp 2008: 316-7).

4.1.2. Topographical lists

Later references of Alašiya in the Egyptian texts mainly derive from topographical lists. Interestingly, Alašiya has never been included in the *Nine Bows*, i.e. the enemies of Egypt. In the topographical list from the reign of Sethos I at the Kanais temple Alašiya is mentioned after the *Nine Bows*, along with the kingdoms of Ḫatti and Naharin (= Mitanni). Then, the list continues with minor centres in Phoenicia and Canaan, where Asiya is also included (Kitchen 2009: 5, 11 n. 12 with further references). The place names of such topographical lists are often copied from older inscriptions and, consequently, they do not offer us a reliable picture of the political status of the mentioned kingdoms.

For instance, at that time Naharin (= Mitanni) was no longer a Great Kingdom. Another topographical list from the reign of Ramses II at Aksha (Serra West), possibly mentions Naharina, Ḫatti, Al[āšia?], Babylonia and then several Levantine places (Kitchen 2009: 11 n. 12), but the reading of Alašiya is not certain. Finally, a scribal training text of the late 13th/early 12th c. BCE mentioning oil and copper from Alašiya offered as a gift to the

49 EA 35: 27-9. This is indeed a private affair, because in the same section the case of an Alašiyān person who died in Egypt is presented, and the king of Alašiya asks for his possession to be returned to his wife in Alašiya (EA 35: 30-4).

50 EA34: 32-41: ‘[...] grain [...] So [...] my [ambassa]dor wi[th...] his [...] sen[d with haste] and as for [your] ambassa[dor, send to] my [lan]d and [may they come] with haste [to the land of A]l[ā]shia, my business agent [and tw]enty [busin]ess agents of yours and [...] with them’ (Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 339).

Egyptian king could have been a copy from an earlier inscription (Papyrus Anastasi IV: Caminos 1954: 200-1; Kitchen 2009: 5).

4.2. Hittite textual evidence

4.2.1. The Madduwatta text

The oldest reference to Alašiya in the Hittite texts is found in a tablet from the reign of Arnuwanda I, which partly refers to events that occurred during the reign of his predecessor Tudḫaliya I/II (early 14th c. BCE). The text, that is usually called ‘Indictment of Madduwatta’, mentions that both kings complained to the Hittite vassal king Madduwatta about his behaviour in Alašiya, which they considered to be Hittite territory. Apparently Madduwatta, in collaboration with Attariššiya of Aḫḫiya (= Achaia) and a certain Piggaya, often raided the land of Alašiya and captured civilians there.⁵¹ We emphasise that this text does not mention an actual conquest of the island by Madduwatta and his allies. It only mentions that they conducted raids, captured some inhabitants of Alašiya and subsequently the Hittite king requested their release. Such raids were apparently not so rare. In one of his letters in the Amarna corpus the king of Alašiya mentions that ‘men of the land of Lukka, year by year, are taking small towns in my land’ (EA 38: 10-2, Rainey and Schniedewind 2015: 351). Men from Lukka, joined by men from Alašiya, also raided the realm of the Egyptian king, provoking the latter to issue a strict complaint.

The term used in the Hittite text is KUR ^{URU}A-la-ši-ia, i.e. Land-City Alašiya, which is equivalent to that used in the older Mari texts. The claim of the Hittite kings that Alašiya was under their control is not convincing, since Madduwatta’s line of defence was simply that he was not aware of this. It is more probable that the Hittite king had diplomatic (and possibly also trade) relations with the Land of Alašiya and he did not wish to offend his partner. However, in the eyes of his subjects, this partnership was presented as a submission. To compare, all Egyptian kings presented their diplomatic partners as their tributaries and their ‘greeting gifts’ as tribute in their public texts and imagery (see, e.g., Gander 2015: 444 n. 2).

As already mentioned above (§4.1.1), in one of his Amarna Letters the king of Alašiya claims that he received gifts from the kings of Ḫatti and Mitanni, which strongly implies that he was recognised as their equal.⁵²

4.2.2. Banishment to Alašiya

In two different cases the Hittite texts mention that two kings of Ḫatti banished some of their political adversaries to Alašiya. The earliest text is dated to the reign of Muršili II (1321-1295 BCE) although it describes an event that took place in the beginning of the

51 Beckman et al. 2011: 95 AhT3 §36: ‘His Majesty said thus [...]: “Because [the land] of Alasiya belongs to My Majesty, [and the people of Alasiya] pay [me tribute—why have you continually raided it?” But] Madduwatta said thus: “[When Attarissiya and] the ruler [of Piggaya] were raiding the land of Alasiya, I often raided it too. But the father of his Majesty [had never informed] me, [nor] had his Majesty ever informed [me] (thus): “The land of Alasiya is mine—recognize it as such!” if his Majesty is indeed now demanding back the civilian captives of Alasiya, I will give them back to him.”’ And given that Attarissiya and the ruler of Piggaya are rulers independent of My Majesty, while (you), Madduwatta, are a servant of My Majesty—why have you joined up with [them]?’ See for this text also the contribution of Waal in this volume.

52 De Martino (2008: 252) assumes that the term ‘KUR ^{URU}a-al-zi-ia’ in the incantation text of unknown date KUB XV 34 i 58 (CTH 483) also refers to Alašiya. Nevertheless, it is more probable that it refers to Alš/zi.

reign of his father Šuppiluliuma I (1350-1322 BCE).⁵³ The second text is dated to the reign of Ḫattušili III (1267-1237 BCE) and mentions that his predecessor Muwatalli II (1295-1272 BCE) banished the wife and son of one of his adversaries to Alašiya.⁵⁴ The initial impression from both texts is that Alašiya was at that time part of the Hittite realm and this is the reason why the Hittite king banished his opponents there (see, e.g., Edwards et al. 1973: 202). However, this was not necessarily the case. We know from an earlier text that Muwatalli II banished one of his wives to the Land of Aḫḫiyawa, not because this land belonged to him, but obviously because he considered it trustworthy enough for the task.⁵⁵ The fact that Alašiya was chosen as the place of exile for senior members of the Hittite society in the middle of the 14th c. BCE and again during the first quarter of the 13th c. BCE, shows that it entertained friendly diplomatic relations with Ḫatti and enjoyed a considerable political status (De Martino 2008: 251, 258).

4.2.3. Conflicts with Alašiya

A deterioration of the relations between Ḫatti and Alašiya probably took place during the reign of Ḫattušili III (1267-1237 BCE). A text from Ugarit mentions that several people from Alašiya fled to Ḫatti and then Ḫattušili III sent them to the king of Karkamiš.⁵⁶ It is not clear whether these persons were banished by the king of Alašiya (meaning that Ḫatti had the same obligation to host Alašiyans in exile) or if they were fugitives.

A tablet from the reign of the last Hittite king, Šuppiluliuma II, preserves two different texts which are copies or blueprints of stone inscriptions. The first one is an inscription on a statue of Tudḫaliya IV relating the latter's deeds and the second one is an inscription of his own.⁵⁷ Both texts refer to events related to Alašiya. According to this tablet, king Tudḫaliya IV attacked the land of Alašiya (KUR *A-la-ši-ia*), captured its king (LUGAL KUR *A-la-ši-ia*), his wives and children, seized his goods, silver, gold, as well as people from his land and transported all of them to Ḫattuša making the land a tributary.⁵⁸ Then, the text lists the tribute that the king of Alašiya and also a person bearing the title *pidduri* had to pay to Ḫatti. It consisted of gold, copper and *gayatum*.⁵⁹

53 KUB XIV 14 obv. 16-22 (CTH 378.I), Singer 2002: 61-4; De Martino 2008: 250.

54 'Apology of Ḫattušili' [BI], col. i 3ff and iii 14ff; Klengel 1998: 209 n. 323; Heltzer 2001; De Martino 2008: 250. It was also proposed that Urḫi-Teššub was sent (or fled) to Alašiya and that Puduḫepa's letter was addressed to the king of Alašiya (Wouters 1989: 233), but the majority of scholars believe that it was sent to Ramses II and that Urḫi-Teššub fled to Egypt (KUB 21 38: 11-2, Klengel 1998: 383 n. 224; Beckman 1999: 125-6, see also the contribution of Waal in this volume).

55 CTH 214.12.A (= Beckman et al. 2011: 159 no. Aht 12 §2). De Martino 2008: 251; Kopanias 2015a: 212.

56 RS 18.114 (see also RS 17.28; PRU IV S. 109f.). See also Del Monte and Tischler 1978: 6; RS 17.352, 4-11.

57 KBo 12.38 (CTH 121). Güterbock 1967; Klengel 1998: 302; De Martino 2008: 248-9.

58 Güterbock 1967: 77: col. i §3: '[PN (or: The king of Alašiya) with his wives, his children, [and his....] I seized; all the goods, [with silver, gold, and all the captured people I [re]moved and [brought] them home to Ḫattuša. The country of Alašiya, however, I [enslaved] and made tributary on the spot.'

59 Güterbock 1967: 77: col. i §10: '...for the king of Alašiya and for the *pidduri*, this shall be the tribute...' Singer and Gestoso Singer (2014: 321-9) argued convincingly that *gayatum* is to be identified with the Cyperus grass, which was used for the production of a certain perfumed oil. The term is also attested also in the Linear B tablets as *kuparo* and possibly also in the attestation *ku-pi-ri-jo* (Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 325-6). If the Red Lustrous Wheelmade Ware indeed originates from Cyprus, then it could have been used for the transportation of this product, as proposed by Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 329.

The success of Tudḫaliya IV must have been short-lived, since his successor Šuppiluliuma II had to fight again in Alašiya.⁶⁰ In the same tablet he mentions that he crossed (or reached) the sea and fought successfully three times against the ships from the land of Alašiya (^{GIS}MÁ.ḪI.A ŠA KUR Alašiya). When he ‘arrived on dry land(?)’, the enemies from Alašiya came in multitude against’ him and fought him.⁶¹ From the text it is not possible to conclude with certainty whether the mentioned ships were Alašiyian or simply came from Alašiya (Güterbock 1967: 80 n. 10) and if the land battle took place in Anatolia (Singer 2000: 27; Knapp 2008: 331) or in Alašiya, although the latter is more probable (De Martino 2008: 247-8). Interestingly, there is no reference to the king of Alašiya in connection to the ships from Alašiya, which gives the impression that they did not belong to a state (Otten 1963: 21).

4.2.4. A treaty between Alašiya and Ḫatti

The fragmentary draft of a vassal treaty between Alašiya and Ḫatti⁶² is dated either to the reign of Tudḫaliya IV (Güterbock 1967: 80-1; Singer 1985: 121-2; Beckman 1996: 32) or Šuppiluliuma II (De Martino 2007; Vigo 2008). The text refers to the king of Alašiya (LUGAL) and the *pidduri*,⁶³ just like the above-mentioned tablet from the reign of Šuppiluliuma II. Interestingly, in this text some of the verbs that refer to the king of Alašiya are in the second plural person (Otten 1963: 12; De Martino 2007: 483), as in the case of treaties with polities with no central organisation, such as the Kaška (Fuscagni 2014). Moreover, since the text explicitly refers to the king and also to the *pidduri* (see also §4.4 below), I agree with Otten⁶⁴ that the plural form is used because the Hittites wanted the treaty to bind both officials. It seems that they have *de facto* shared the political power in the kingdom of Alašiya.

4.2.5. Goods and copper from Alašiya

In a letter of unknown date written in Akkadian, we come across a reference to the land of Alašiya (KUR Alašiya) and the request by the sender that the recipient of the letter should send gold objects, rhyta, belts, horses and gold.⁶⁵ Knapp (1980: 44) argued that this letter was sent from Ḫatti to Alašiya, but the petrographic analysis confirms the provenance of the clay from Cyprus (Goren et al. 2011: 686 no. 3; De Martino 2008: 250; Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 317 n. 1). The fact that the king of Alašiya requests various items and

60 Bryce 2005: 332. These events are most probably connected with Šuppiluliuma II's campaign against several lands to west Anatolia (Wiyanawanda, Tamina, Maša, Lukka and Ikuna), all in the wider area of Lukka (Bryce 2005: 329; 2016: 6) and possibly also Tarḫuntašša (De Martino 2008: 249). These are recorded in the SÜDBURG inscription in Ḫattuša: Hawkins 1995: 61 ff.; Melchert 2002; Yakubovich 2009: 6 ff.; Gander 2014: 375; contra Oreshko 2016: 351. The aim of the Hittites was either to secure sea transports (Bryce 2005: 356-8) and/or to repel the ‘Sea People’ (Singer 2000; Cline 2014: 128 no. 4).

61 Güterbock 1967: 78, col. iii §5: ‘My father [...] I mobilized and I, Šuppiluliuma, the Great King, immediately [crossed reached?] the sea. The ships of Alašiya met me in the sea three times for battle, and I smote them; and I seized the ships and set fire to them in the sea. But when I arrived on dry land(?), the enemies from Alašiya came in multitude against me for battle. I f[ought] them, and [...] me[...].’

62 KBo 12.39 (CTH 141), see Otten 1963: 10-2; Klengel 1998: 301; De Martino 2007, 2008: 249; Vigo 2008.

63 LUGAL KUR ^{URU}A-la-ši-ia, ^{LU}pi-id-du-ri-ia.

64 Otten 1963: 12-5. As he points out, this would not have been a unicum; there is, for instance, a treaty of Muṣṣili II with three noblemen of a foreign country.

65 KBo 1.26 (CTH 216). Klengel 1998: 302 no. 8; De Martino 2008: 250. For horses sent from Ugarit to Alašiya, see Singer 1999: 677.

gold from Ḫatti, obviously in return for copper, implies that this letter must be dated prior to the attack of Tudḫaliya IV against the island (see §4.2.3). If he was a Hittite vassal he could not have made such a request.

Remarkably, there are only two references to Alašīyan copper among the thousands of the surviving Hittite texts: the first is a ritual of unknown date including ‘copper and bronze from Alašīya, from Mount Taggata.’⁶⁶ The second one concerns a text referring to the tribute that Alašīya had to pay to Tudḫaliya IV (see §4.2.3). In addition, very few Hittite objects have been so far found in Cyprus, a fact indicating that trade between Ḫatti and Alašīya must have been very limited.⁶⁷ Hittites had access to copper in the Taurus region (Yener 2012: 163) as well as in north Anatolia and thus, they apparently did not need copper from Alašīya. Nevertheless, the fact that so few Hittite objects have been unearthed in Cyprus should not be conceived as an indication for the absence of diplomatic relations between Ḫatti and Alašīya. At Ugarit, also a Hittite vassal, very few Hittite objects have been excavated so far. Consequently, if our assumptions were solely based on material finds and not on textual evidence, it would have been impossible to conclude that Ugarit had such close relations with Ḫatti.

4.3. Textual evidence from Ugarit

Several tablets have been found in Ugarit, which mention either Alašīya (*altyy*) or Alašīyans, dated to the period between the middle of 14th to the early 12th c. BCE. Unfortunately, these tablets do not have a clear archaeological context so they cannot be safely dated (Singer 1999: 705). Furthermore, several Cypro-Minoan inscriptions have been unearthed in Ugarit, all coming from private archives, and so far none from the royal ones.⁶⁸ It is possible that some texts were written in Ugarit by Alašīyans for Alašīyans (Catling 1975: 206; Ferrara 2012: 136). As this script still remains undeciphered, their content is unknown to us.

An obscure ritual from Ugarit contains a description of a sacrifice offered to the gods, in order to protect the people of Ugarit from various foreign enemies, amongst them the chiefs of the Hurrians, Hittites and Alašīyans.⁶⁹ The name of king Niqmaddu is mentioned in the text, referring probably to Niqmaddu II of the 14th c. BCE. Interestingly, Alašīya seems to have been considered by the king of Ugarit as an important neighbour of similar significance as Ḫatti and Mitanni as well as a potential threat (cf. Knapp 2008: 321).

Most tablets mentioning Alašīya seem to be dated between the reign of Ammittamru II (1260-1235 BCE) and Ammurapi II (1200-1190/85 BCE). Several Alašīyans are recorded

66 KBo 4.1 obv. 40. De Martino 2008: 251; Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 317-8. For a discussion about the comparison of this term with mount *Troodos* and further references, see Vigo 2010b: 160.

67 Singer 1999: 650; Kozal 2002; Knapp 2008: 314-6; De Martino 2008: 253-4; Helft 2010: 169-78; Genz 2011. Two inventories mention ‘linen of Alašīya’ (GAD ^{URU}Alašīya; IBoT 1. 31 obv. 2-4) and ‘5 shirts of linen of Alašīya’ (5 GÚ GAD ^{URU}Alašīya; KBo 18.175 i 5); De Martino 2008: 251; Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 318. According to Vigo (2010a, 293) Alašīya imported linen from Egypt and crafted it into prestigious goods. Furthermore, a Hittite medical text mentions *maruwašḫa* from Alašīya (KUB 8.38 + KUB 44.63 iii 10-7), which probably is either azurite (Beckman 1996: 35; De Martino 2008: 252) or pulverised green malachite (Singer and Gestoso Singer 2014: 318-20).

68 Ferrara 2012: 132. Residence of Yabninu: two fragments from the same tablet (RS 19.01, 19.02) and an inscribed pithos rim (RS 27.237); Residence of Rašapabu: fragment of tablet (RS 17.06); Residence of Rap’anu: one tablet (RS 20.25); Residence of Urtenu: two labels (RS 94.2328, 99.2014). An inscribed silver bowl was also found in Ugarit (RS 3.389).

69 RS 1929.2; Knapp 1996: 39. Possibly also in RS 17.100; Knapp 1996: 39-40.

to reside in Ugarit and to participate in the activities of the palace as craftsmen, temple officials and royal personnel (Yon 1999: 114-6; Knapp 2008: 318-9). A tablet contains a list of the names of 29 men, their wives, children and servants (RS 11.857), who were somehow related to Alašiya, since the term ^{URU}*A-la-ši-ia* was written on the right edge of the tablet. However, it is uncertain if they were Alašiyans in Ugarit (Liverani 1962: 92-4; Ferrara 2012: 144-5) or Ugaritians in Alašiya (Knapp 2008: 319). In another tablet we read about an Alašayan, who asked the king of Ugarit for permission to buy ships owned by some merchants in Ugarit (RS 18.113A: Knapp 1996: 36; Singer 1999: 677-8). In a tablet of unknown date (RS 18.119, Knapp 1996: 37; 2008: 311) we are informed about a ship from Alašiya which was docked in the Ugaritian port of 'Atlg/Atalig carrying a cargo of 'fifteen talents of ...' and 'three talents of...' of an unknown commodity, probably copper (Singer 1999: 676; Knapp 2008: 311). The fact that copper from Alašiya was imported to Ugarit and was further distributed is attested on a tablet from Ugarit, mentioning that Alašayan copper was sent to Emar, a site which played an important role for the inland trade.⁷⁰ Oil and wheat were also sent from Alašiya to Ugarit (Yon 2000: 192).

4.3.1. The Urtenu archive

Two tablets found in the Urtenu archive in Ugarit were sent by a 'Great Commissioner' (*rabisu rabû*) from an unnamed country. One of them is addressed to an unnamed king of Ugarit requesting the release of some Alašiyans detained for unknown reasons in Ugarit (RS 2177 + 2491, Ferrara 2012: 143). Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that the letter was sent from Alašiya. The second one, of uncertain provenance, is addressed to the king Niqmaddu III and refers to some horses (RS 94.2173, Ferrara 2012: 143). Another letter from the Urtenu archive mentions the case of the messenger Zu-Aštarti, who traveled with an Ugaritian ship to the territory of Ušnatu, where he was held up for unknown reasons.⁷¹ This letter informs us that the king of Ugarit gave some horses to a messenger from Alašiya, although the context of this action is not clarified. If both letters refer to the same event, then it could be argued that the former letter was also sent from Alašiya (Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 346). This was probably no mere commercial transaction, since a letter from the Hittite king Tudḫaliya IV to king Ammištamru II of Ugarit (RS 17.450A; Monroe 2009: 188-9) informs us that the export of horses to Egypt – as well as to its vassals – was prohibited by the Hittites (Cline 2014: 108).

A letter from the king Kušmešuša of Alašiya to the king Niqmadu (III?) was unearthed in the Urtenu archive but unfortunately it still remains unpublished (RS 94.2475 + 94.2561). The king of Alašiya allegedly refers to his counterpart in Ugarit as 'his son', indicating that he considered himself as his superior.⁷² In his letter, the Alašayan king informs the king of Ugarit that he intends to send him 33 ingots of copper of total weight of 30 talents, i.e.

70 RS 34.153: Knapp 1996: 28. Such a role is also confirmed by another letter sent to the king of Ugarit from the commissioner of Kadeš, which mentions the shortfall in the delivery of bronze and tin (RS 20.016: Bell 2012: 182).

71 RS 34.153: Bordreuil 1991: 75-6. Monroe 2009: 188-9: 'On the sixth day I was at sea. As a wind took me, I reached the territory of Sidon. From Sidon to the territory of Ušnatu it bore me, and in Ušnatu I am held up. May my brother know this. . . Say to the king: If they have received the horses which the king gave to the messenger of the land of Alašiya, then a colleague of the messenger will come to you. May they give those horses into his hand.'

72 Kitchen 2009: 4. Kitchen also proposed the equation of the name *Kušmešuša* with Κοσμετος.

ca. 900 kgs (Kassianidou 2013: 143). On the reverse of the tablet, its scribe, apparently an Ugaritian working in the court of Alašiya, added a personal note requesting a fine table and five chairs (Knapp 2008: 319).

4.3.2. The Rap'anu archive

In a fragmentary letter in the Rap'anu archive sent from king Niqmaddu III (1210-1200 BCE) of Ugarit to the king of Alašiya, the payment of an oil shipment is discussed (RS 20.168 = Ug 5, no. 21). The king of Ugarit addresses his counterpart as 'his father', thus acknowledging his own inferior political position. Similarly, the king Ammurapi II (1200-1190/85 BCE) of Ugarit addressed the king of Alašiya as 'his father' (RS 20.238), a fact showing the political importance of the state of Alašiya (Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 346; Cline 2014: 105-6). As Singer noted, this 'should therefore reflect an acknowledged hierarchy between the two royal courts, based not only on the relative age of the correspondents' (Singer 1999: 720). We can observe similar cases in other letters from Ugarit. The king of Amurru, a kingdom mightier than Ugarit, addresses his counterpart in Ugarit as 'his son' (RS 17.152: Lackenbacher 2002: 183), while the latter refers to the former as 'his father' (RS 17.286: Lackenbacher 2002: 184). In another letter this relationship is reversed, probably reflecting a change in the correlation of power (RS 15.24 + 50, Lackenbacher 2002: 184). The king of the inferior kingdom of Ušnatu addressed the king of Ugarit as 'his father' (RS 17.83; RS 17.143, Lackenbacher 2002: 185-6). Kings, regarding themselves as equals referred to each other as 'brothers', as in the case of the king of Kadeš (RS 20.17: Lackenbacher 2002: 189-90), of Alalah/Mukiš, RS 17.315, Lackenbacher 2002: 192) and of Beirut (Vidal 2005: 292). The fact that Ugarit and Alašiya had developed good diplomatic relations is also confirmed by a letter mentioning that two of the sons of a queen from Ugarit have been exiled there.⁷³

From the Rap'anu archive come three very well-known letters which further illuminate the close relations between Alašiya and Ugarit.⁷⁴ They belong to the reign of the king Ammurapi II of Ugarit, although their precise date cannot be determined. In the first letter, king Ammurapi II not only addresses the unnamed king of Alašiya as 'his father' but also adds that he falls at his feet (RS 20.238. Nougayrol et al. 1968: 85-9 no. 24; Hoftijzer and Van Soldt 1998: 344; Huehnergard 1999: 376-7; Gander 2010: 47; Halayqa 2010: 321-2). This is generally something that a vassal king would write to his master. However, in this case, it seems that times were desperate for Ugarit and its king was ready to humiliate himself, in order to secure the much-needed support of Alašiya. The king of Ugarit informs his counterpart that, while his troops were in Ḫatti and all his ships in Lukka (i.e. Lycia), seven enemy ships appeared at his coastline and set fire to some towns of his kingdom. He also asks to be informed in case more enemy ships would appear, which indicates that the enemy was probably coming from

73 RS 24.274. These princes have also been compelled to swear their agreement before 'Ištar of the steppes', thus implying that this deity was worshipped also in Alašiya; this is also indicated by the Hittite tablet KBo XII 39 dealing with Hittite exiles on Alašiya, which was also to be kept 'before Ištar' (Knapp 2008: 320-1). In a Hurrian text in Ugarit is also mentioned 'Alašiyahḫe, the father, god of Alašiya' (RS 24.274: Knapp 1996: 41; 2008: 320).

74 These have not been found in the 'baking oven' in Court V of the royal palace, as was erroneously claimed by the excavator, and do not necessarily refer to events that occurred to the very last days of Ugarit (Singer 1999: 705).

the west. Interestingly, he does not ask for any military assistance, showing that the king of Alašiya was either not willing or not able to offer it to him.

The second letter was sent by an unnamed king of Alašiya to Ammurapi.⁷⁵ It is possible that this was the response to the aforementioned letter (Halayqa 2010: 320 n. 67). The greeting formula is almost insultingly short, a detail further accentuating the higher position of Alašiya. In this letter, the king of Alašiya does not offer either help or new information regarding the enemy. He merely asks the king of Ugarit for the location of the Ugaritian troops and simply advises him to entrench himself in his fortified cities.

The third letter was sent by Ešuwara, the Great Commissioner (see also §4.4) of Alašiya to an unnamed king of Ugarit (RS 20.18. Nougayrol et al. 1968: 83-5 no. 22; Hoftijzer and Van Soldt 1998: 343; Lehmann 1996: 27; Halayqa 2010: 321). Ešuwara mentions that the men and ships from Ugarit committed some transgressions and the king of Ugarit should not be angry with him. The content of this letter could imply a naval defeat of the Ugaritian fleet somewhere in the coast of Anatolia or even in Cyprus (Vita 1999: 498; Watson and Wyatt 1999: 498) or perhaps that some Ugaritians surrendered their ships to the enemy (Astour 1965: 255-6; Catling 1975: 204). Then, Ešuwara warns the king of Ugarit that twenty enemy ships have been sighted in Alašiya and afterwards had departed to an unknown destination, possibly Ugarit.

4.4. Political structures and the role of the commissioner in Alašiya

From the Amarna Letters we are informed that the king of Alašiya had in his service a MAŠKIM. This Sumerogram corresponds to the Akkadian term *rābišu*, usually translated as commissioner/governor (Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1385), or *sākinu*, usually translated as prefect (Buccellati 1963; Rainey 1966; Van Soldt 2001; 2002; 2006). Interestingly, the commissioner of the land Alašiya (MÁŠKIM š]a KUR A-la[-ši-ia]) corresponded directly with his Egyptian counterpart (M]ÁŠKIM ša KUR Mi[-iṣ-ri) and on equal terms. Not only does he call him ‘brother’ (ŠEŠ) but they even exchanged greeting gifts just like their masters (EA 40: 1, 3). The same term MAŠKIM also occurs in the correspondence of Egypt’s vassals in Canaan with the Egyptian king. In this case, the term refers to the Egyptian officials who represented the interests of the Egyptian king in that region (Mynářová 2015: 159-61). The official with the title M]ÁŠKIM ša KUR Mi[-iṣ-ri seems to have had a high position in the administration and probably resided in the royal court. He obviously had a similar status to the ‘Great Scribe’ in the Hittite court mentioned in the letters of Šuppiluliuma II.⁷⁶ In Ugarit, the *sākinu* of Ugarit also held an important position. As Vita (1999: 469) remarks:

75 RSL 1. Nougayrol et al. 1968: 85-6 no. 23. It was disputed whether its sender was the king of Alašiya (Nougayrol et al. 1968: 85-6; Wachsmann 1998: 343; Halayqa 2010: 322; Yasur-Landau 2010: 164; Van de Mieroop 2016: 206) or the king of Karkamiš (Yamada 1992: 437-9; Singer 1999: 720 n. 394), but the petrographic analysis of the tablet showed that its clay originates in Cyprus: Goren et al. 2003; 2004: 55-7; Knapp 2008: 302.

76 For this office, see Singer 2003. The case of RS 94.2523 (Beckman et al. 2011: 258-61 no. AhT 27B) shows that this Great Scribe was authorised to send letters to vassal kings.

The ‘prefect’ (*sākinu*), at the head of a ‘House of the prefect’, complemented the king in every aspect of government, whether internal or external, political, commercial or juridical. He was also the king’s deputy when he was outside the kingdom and acted as regent if the king was a minor.⁷⁷

It is probable that the *sākinu* of Ugarit was *ex officio* also the *sākinu* of the palace MAŠKIM É.GAL (Van Soldt 2006: 685). Moreover, we know that there was also a *sākinu* of the queen’s house (Van Soldt 2006: 682-6) as well as a *sākinu* in several towns within the realm of Ugarit (Van Soldt 2006: 675-82). The *sākinu* of Ugarit held the highest position.

The commissioner of Alašiya must have had a similar position to the *sākinu* of Ugarit. His letter in the Amarna archive shows that he held a significant position in the palatial hierarchy and was also authorised to manage administrative affairs in the name of the king of Alašiya. However, he was apparently not entirely independent from the king and this may be the reason why the archivists of the correspondence in Amarna wrote on the reverse of the tablet including this letter of the commissioner of Alašiya in hieratic script: ‘Letter of the great one of Alašiya’ (i.e. the king of Alašiya).⁷⁸ As already mentioned above, some of the MAŠKIM.GAL (i.e. Great Commissioner/Governor/Prefect) of Alašiya corresponded directly with the kings of Ugarit namely Šinama,⁷⁹ Šangiwa (RS 94.2447 +2588 +2590, Lackenbacher and Malbran-Labat 2005: 229; Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 346) and Ešuwara.⁸⁰ This office most probably corresponded to the office of the ‘Commissioner of the Land of Alašiya’ (MAŠKIM š]a KUR A-la[-ši-ia]) of the Amarna letter as well as with the title *pidduri* mentioned in some Hittite texts (Otten 1963: 15; Helck 1971: 248; Moran 1992: 113 n. 1). The term ‘Great Commissioner’ indicates that junior commissioners also existed, a fact pointing at the presence of a structured bureaucratic hierarchy (Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 346).

In other cases, a commissioner was allowed to communicate directly with a foreign king, as shown for example by the letter sent by the commissioner of Kadeš to the king of Ugarit (RS 20.16, Lackenbacher 2002: 188, see also Bell 2012: 182). The kings of Ugarit and Kadeš considered each other as equals, i.e. brothers (RS 20.17, Lackenbacher 2002: 189-90). Therefore, the fact that the commissioner of the latter sent a letter directly to the king was definitely not understood as an insult. Moreover, the commissioner of Kadeš was extremely polite in his letter. In fact, such an attitude could be considered as servility. Quite on the contrary, the greeting of the commissioner of Alašiya to the king of Ugarit was very short (‘may you and your country be well’) and he does not even address him as his father. The letter leaves no doubt as to that Ugarit was more in need

77 See, e.g., in the letter RS 34.129, sent from the Hittite king to the prefect of Ugarit: ‘Thus says His Majesty, the Great King. Speak to the prefect: Now, (there) with you, the king your lord is (still too) young. He knows nothing...’ (Wachsmann 1998: 343).

78 The letter sent by the commissioner (EA 40) and the one sent by the king for the same purpose (EA 39) have been written by the same scribe (Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015: 1384) and their content overlaps to a great extent (cf. EA 39: 14-20 with EA 40: 16-20, 24-8); the fact that only the commissioners and not the kings exchange greeting gifts shows that the actual communication was between them, not the kings. Maybe because the Alašiyān administrator could not contact his Egyptian counterpart directly, he needed an accompanying, formal letter by his king and that’s why they did not have to exchange greeting gifts.

79 RS 94.2173, Ferrara 2012: 143.

80 RS 20.18. Nougayrol et al. 1968: 83-5 no. 22; Hoftijzer and Van Soldt 1998: 343; Lehmann 1996: 27; Halayqa 2010: 321.

of Alašiya than the other way around (Lambrou-Phillipson 1993: 169). The letter offers us also a hint that, maybe at the time, the Great Commissioner had a particularly strong position in Alašiya. For instance, the phrase ‘so do not be angry with me!’ implies that he himself and not the king of Alašiya, who is actually not even once mentioned in the letter, had the power. Could this be so because the king was a minor or because he was in some other way indisposed?

The elevated position of the Alašiyān Great Commissioner brings to mind the important role that the office of *pidduri* played within the framework of the treaty of Tudḫaliya IV or Šuppiluliuma II. However, this probably was a temporary situation. It is mentioned in the Hittite text that Tudḫaliya IV brought the king of Alašiya and his family to Ḫattuša after his victory.⁸¹ It is unclear whether he reinstated the same person on the throne of Alašiya, after this person had taken an oath of loyalty or if he appointed a new king. The former is more probable, since otherwise, this event would have been mentioned in the text.

As stated above, the *sākinu* of Ugarit acted as the king’s deputy when the latter was outside the kingdom. This situation may apply to Alašiya when its king was away from his country and detained in Ḫattuša. Either way, it seems the Hittite king did not trust the king of Alašiya and probably this is why he also made the *pidduri* responsible towards him. It is possible that the holder of this office kept his political power even after the aforementioned events. This may be why Ešuwara, the Great Commissioner of Alašiya, corresponded directly with the king of Ugarit and in such a confident manner.

5. The archaeological evidence: The Late Cypriot II period (EM, IV)

Even if we accept the problematic equation of Asiya with Cyprus (see above §4.1), the mighty king of Alašiya, seemingly equivalent in power with the great Pharaohs, is virtually absent from textual information before the 15th c. BCE. In fact, as it was previously noted, the Amarna letters and nearly all the Hittite/Ugarit diplomatic correspondence that prove the existence of an Alašiyān king, cover only a short time span within the 14th – 13th centuries BCE. This largely coincides with the LC II period (c. 1450-1200 BCE), an era characterised by intensive contacts between eastern Mediterranean ‘states’/polities⁸² and the notable expansion of international trade. Within the island of Cyprus there are clear signs of urbanisation, a process that peaked (Negbi 1986: 2005) during the LC IIC phase (c. 1300-1225/1200 BCE), along with the concomitant creation of social stratification and further expansion and restructuring of the copper industry. The large coastal/near coastal centres of Enkomi, Hala Sultan Tekke, Morphou, Kition and Maroni *Vournes/Tsaroukkas* served as gateway communities for the island’s exporting goods and were the focus of administrative, and perhaps craft specialist activities (see, for example, Cadogan 1989; Manning and DeMita 1997: 115-36). A few equally important inland sites like Alassa *Paleotaverna/Ano Mandilares* (Hadjisavvas 1989, 1996) and Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* (see, e.g., South 1996, 1997), possibly functioned as administrative and redistributive/industrial centres, containing facilities for olive-oil processing,⁸³ metallurgical activities and large-scale agricultural surplus storage. There were also several sites of possible

81 See n. 58.

82 On different notions of the Archaic or early ‘state’, see Peltenburg 2012: 5-8.

83 For the issue of olive-oil processing and its importance on Cyprus, see Hadjisavvas 1992.

religious/ideological character, namely 'rural sanctuaries', showing signs of ceremonial activity⁸⁴ and, lastly, a number of mining/primary smelting sites, pottery producing sites and agricultural support settlements. Based on the above, many researchers discussed the matter of settlement hierarchy (see, e.g., Catling 1962; Keswani 1993; Manning and DeMita 1997) on the island, an issue with direct repercussions on socio-political organisation.⁸⁵

The question that arises is whether Enkomi and its supposed 'ruler' had a prominent position in the settlement hierarchy of the island or it was just another large coastal centre with urban characteristics, possibly controlling a specific area of eastern and/or central Cyprus.⁸⁶ The former case, supported mainly by Muhly and Knapp⁸⁷ would mean that the king of Alashiya was actually residing there. As Manning and DeMita (1997: 110) note, there are indeed some characteristics that might ascribe to Enkomi a leading role. With the possible exception of Morphou *Toumba tou Skourou*, it is described as being the first site with extended metallurgical production already in the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (see, e.g., Muhly 1989: 299; Kassianidou 2013: 134). It also shows evidence for inter-élite contacts with other eastern Mediterranean areas, which would make Enkomi a logical candidate for the prime centre of international affairs on the island. Moreover, Enkomi provides ample evidence for foreign imports, the earliest attestation of the Cypro-Minoan script (Dikaïos 1969-1971: 23) and the largest assemblage of cylinder seals. In addition, some of the most important ashlar buildings (Negbi 2005: 9-13, Tables 4-6), characterised either as public or official, lie within its architectural remnants. Lastly, Enkomi's life-span is considerably long, covering at least six centuries of habitation before its demise and the rise of nearby Salamis.

On the other hand, there are many researchers that promote a heterarchical (Keswani 1993) or decentralised model⁸⁸ of LBA Cypriot society, based on a few signs of regionalism⁸⁹ and also on geographical, topographical, ecological and other factors.⁹⁰ For instance, Manning and DeMita argued for '...at best nominal control over what seem to be largely independent élite groupings elsewhere on the island'. Similarly, Peltenburg refers to 'strong regional traditions' and 'topographic enclaves' that '...constrained efforts at provincial integration and effective sovereignty throughout the LBA' (Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 351). Iacovou in the same paper notes the evolution of '...a number of LC polities, which in the 13th century, if not earlier still, were in the process of establishing independent economic territories' (Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 354). Keswani (1993, 1996) also argued against a central administration, promoting a model of highly autonomous regional entities

84 Knapp (1986) has linked the manipulation of ideological symbols with the rise of élite groups and their attempt to control rural populations and the copper industry in order to maintain their status.

85 For a recent argument of a four-tiered settlement hierarchy, see Knapp 2013: 354-9. Keswani (1993), on the other hand, proposed a two-three tiered model of settlement hierarchy. For another three-tiered model, see also Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 357-8.

86 Goren et al. (2003), for example, suggested that either Alassa or Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* was the administrative centre of the kingdom of Alashiya.

87 Knapp 2008: 324-41; 2013: 443-7. Muhly (1989: 299) even suggested that Enkomi was actually the city-state of Alashiya, whereas Peltenburg (1996) argued for a secondary state formation during the MC III-LC I period with a prominent role for Enkomi (although he dismissed that claim later; see, e.g., Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 346, n. 4). See also Kassianidou 2013: 144.

88 Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 350. Also, the 'networked households' model; see Peltenburg 2012.

89 There are, e.g., distinct pottery traditions that possibly mirror regional identities (Steel 2004: 150-2).

90 Manning and DeMita (1997: 107), for example, suggest that it would be almost impossible for Enkomi or any other polity to control the large and resource-rich island of Cyprus.

competing with each other and maintaining their own economic programmes and trade relations.⁹¹ More specifically, she supported a model of heterarchy in the eastern part and a simultaneous model of settlement hierarchy⁹² in the southern part of the island. Keswani dismissed the idea of Enkomi's prominence (see also Crewe 2007) based on the notable absence of symbolic and iconographic evidence of subordination to a central authority (cf. Webb 1999: 307) and the fact that the town of Enkomi was far from the largest LC centre of the island.⁹³ What is more, she sees no stylistic/functional consistencies between the official buildings at Enkomi and equivalent buildings on other, seemingly subordinate, sites. Lastly, the élite burials and the included prized tomb offerings are evenly distributed in Cyprus and there are no signs of concentration at any site.

The same view of wide distribution is also clear for the metallurgical activities, ubiquitous among the excavated LC sites all over the island, and also for the luxury goods manufactured by specialised producers that seem to be scattered in all urban centres. Craft specialists were normally depended on centrally-controlled institutions based on palatial complexes. However, there are no palaces in Bronze Age Cyprus (Manning and DeMita 1997: 110; Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 345; Peltenburg 2012: 4) and the few objects with Cypro-Minoan symbols are largely insufficient to prove the existence of bureaucrats and a record-keeping system (see, e.g., Manning and DeMita 1997: 107), similar to contemporary states/polities of the eastern Mediterranean. It seems that the highly influential prestige goods that were used to shape local élite identities and to mark their superior status were not the exclusive privilege of a king and its court.⁹⁴

6. Concluding remarks (EM, KK, IV)

In the cuneiform texts, there is not the slightest indication that Alašiya was in any way different from the rest of the kingdoms of the MBA and LBA Eastern Mediterranean. It had a king who entertained diplomatic and trade relations with the major powers of the time, Ḫatti, Mitanni and Egypt. He was considered to have a higher status than the king of Ugarit and was equal to the Egyptian king, and probably to those of Mitanni and Ḫatti. Alašiya also had trade and diplomatic contacts with the Aegean.⁹⁵ The 'court' of the king of Alašiya included scribes who were able to communicate in Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of the period, as well as in Ugaritic.

The administration was headed by a MAŠKIM (.GAL), as other major political entities of the time (Singer 1999: 721). The fact that the same office appears in the Amarna and in later Ugaritic correspondence is a strong indication that 'the Cypriot partner of, respectively, Egypt, Ḫatti and Ugarit was the same political entity, which existed between the second half of the 14th c. and the end of the 13th c.' (De Martino 2008: 256, also Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 347). We know that in the MBA and LBA Near East the palatial economy

91 This is very much alike the subsequent polities of Iron Age Cyprus.

92 Based on staple and wealth finance exchange models, see Keswani 1993: 76-9.

93 See, for example, the four points of argument in Keswani 1993: 74-5. For the site distribution, see Knapp 2013: 355 fig. 95.

94 On the manipulation of foreign luxury goods and symbols and also the limited access to them by élite groups, see for example Webb 1999: 307-8; 2005: 181.

95 The use of the terms *Ku-pi-ri-jo* and *A-ra-si-jo* in the Linear B tablets (Knapp 2008: 303-7), and also the similarity of the shapes of the Cypro-Minoan signs with the ones of the Linear A (Smith 2012: 84) make this assumption very probable.

did not control all aspects of economic life. The texts from Ugarit clearly demonstrate the important role played by various merchant houses, which in fact seem to have controlled more or less the economic life (Monroe 2009: 275; Bell 2012). A similarly decentralised economic system may have existed also in Alašiya.

Based on both the archaeological and the textual evidence, we conclude that Cyprus/Alašiya was most probably politically fragmented (cf. Goren et al. 2003: 252) and that local powerful élite groups controlled specific territories, including at least one copper producing area and a coastal centre for their international transactions. In fact, the absence of palatial complexes and their infrastructure with the concomitant direct dependence on bureaucrats, craft specialists, miners and other subordinate people, could be the main reason why Cyprus was never faced with any ‘dark ages’ following the eastern Mediterranean-wide crisis and collapse of nearly all the contemporary ‘states’/polities, i.e. Mycenaean Greece, Ḫatti, Ugarit etc. (see, for example, Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 354, 356).

Whether Enkomi once had the exclusive privilege of exporting copper via royal gifts or inter-island relations is not clear, but this was certainly not the case after about 1400 BCE. This view of political fragmentation created by the parallel presence of several competing entities is not necessarily incompatible with the existence of a king. As Peltenburg has argued, the title ‘king’ could be understood in quite different ways in various parts of Mesopotamia and Syria (Peltenburg 2012: 5-8, Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012: 347-9) and it should not be indispensably related with a person that controls all the political, ideological and entrepreneurial activity.⁹⁶ Even if Enkomi was indeed the prime centre of inter-island transactions (see, e.g., Keswani 1996: 222), or even if its rulers were able to control partly the metals trade,⁹⁷ it is still doubtful that any king of Alašiya could claim authority over the whole island and its scattered natural resources. From this point of view, Sherratt was right to note that the king (and the kingdom) of Alašiya is ‘no more than a product of the need of Near Eastern powers to make Cypriot political structures conform, at least on paper, to their own norms of diplomatic perception and convention’ (Sherratt 1998: 297). Conversely, we might assume that the ‘king of Alašiya’ was the local response to the international norms, apparently adopted in order to participate in the ‘big league’ and not necessarily mirroring the exact socio-political reality on Cyprus.

In our opinion, a model with a commonly accepted representative of Alašiya, a *primus inter pares*, possibly residing at Enkomi or another major site of Cyprus, such as Alassa or Kalavassos, would be the most probable according to current data. This person, apparently the head of the most powerful local household, having been acknowledged as an equal by the king of Egypt and even as a superior to the king of Ugarit, would be responsible for the island’s diplomatic correspondence and the necessary international contacts, thus securing the importing/exporting activities. His historical privilege to communicate with other overseas powers would ensure the ‘loyalty’ of other local power groups, which sought to secure their social rank via the restricted access to luxury goods, foreign symbolic insignia and the uninterrupted expansion of long distance trade. It is suggested that in order to moderate internal reaction, the title of the ‘king of Alašiya’ might have been awarded from time to time to a commonly accepted representative, perhaps coming

96 For a more detailed discussion and further bibliography: Bell 2012; Kopanias 2015b.

97 I.e. the import-export of gold, silver, tin etc., see Kassianidou 2013: 252.

from different urban centres. Nevertheless, the possibility of conflict between powerful élite groups in order to promote their candidate should not be excluded.

In addition to this, it seems that different parts of the island followed different socio-political trajectories based on the logic of reciprocal benefit from international trade. Thus, regional élite groups cooperated with each other creating wider, albeit fragile, politico-economic entities maintaining trade relations with selected areas of the eastern Mediterranean. For example, Morphou *Toumba tou Skourou* and Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos* might show closer ties with the Aegean and Ugarit/Northern Syria respectively, whereas, if Goren et al. are right concerning the provenance of the Amarna letters (Goren et al. 2003), southern Cyprus would be the most suitable candidate for close trade transactions with Egypt and southern Levant. Even if some or all of these trade transactions were carried out under the aegis of the king of Alašiya, the parallel active participation of private entrepreneurs or cooperative élite groups, often competing with the state's formal policy, should not be excluded,⁹⁸ a fact that in the long term promoted regional identities and ultimately led to the Iron Age 'kingdoms' of Cyprus.

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98 On the 'mercantile perspective' and its possible consequences, see for example Voskos and Knapp 2008: 677.

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