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Robert S. Merrillees

NICOSIA before NICOSIA

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A lecture with the title "Nicosia Before Nicosia" enables me to talk of many things the history of the studies about this capital city, the origins and significance of the place names associated with it, and above all the remains of Nicosia's own past. Nicosia to-day epitomises the capital of all modern, sovereign, independent nation states. It is the seat of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus; the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Cyprus has his residence here; and national institutions such as the Cyprus Museum and the new University are also located in this centre. In conformity with near universal practice elsewhere, all diplomatic missions are based in Nicosia; the only foreign academic body, the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute, has its headquarters here and has just moved into superlative new premises; and the offices of many foreign companies in Cyprus are to be found in Nicosia. What makes this capital city abnormal in comparison with its equivalents around the world is that it remains physically divided and unable to exercise its authority over the whole of the country. This anomalous situation is the result of external circumstances over which Nicosia and indeed all Cyprus had no control and to which they still remain hostage. It is to be hoped that one day Nicosia will follow the example of Berlin and be reunited to fulfil the leading role it has had for the last 1000 years.

I paid my first visit to Nicosia in 1961, and as an archae ologist and an Australian I am delighted to have this oppor tunity of addressing you on the thirtieth anniversary of my arrival in this capital city The man responsible for my presence here tonight was the same person who greeted me, the late Professor J.R. Stewart, and Mrs Eve Stewart, in the port of Famagusta just over thirty years ago. It is a source of much regret and a certain irony that Dr Vassos Karageorghis should be visiting Australia's part of the world at the same time as I am returning to his. I must warmly thank him in absentia for arranging this invitation and hope that one day he will actually get to Australia. To Mrs Loukia Louizou Hadjigavriel I am most grateful for the organisation of this visit, the typically Cypriote hospitality which has been extended to me and my wife, and for the assistance I have received in many ways with the preparation of this lecture. Having visited for the first time the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, I wish to compliment all concerned with this fitting tribute to a

history of habitation that spans over 5000 years. It richly deserved the recent honour of receiving the European Museum of the Year award for 1991. To you, Mr. Christophides, I am indebted for your kind words of introduction, and I trust you will not find this lecture too undiplomatic.

I must also express my deep thanks to many inside and outside Cyprus who have helped me compile this address.

The staff of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and of the Cyprus Museum have kindly made it possible for me to finalise this paper and its illutions on time, and I wish to single out for special mention in this regard Mr Michael Loulloupis, Dr Pavlos Flourentzos and Mr Sophocles Hadjisavvas. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Loulloupis on his recent appointment as Director of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus. Dr Stuart Swiny has put his great knowledge and goodwill at my disposal, and our High Commissioner in Cyprus, Mr Eddy Stevens, has been generous with his time, resources and hospitality.

I also owe a particular debt of gratitude to Mrs Eve Stewart Australia, Mme Annie Caubet of the Louvre, Professor Olivier Masson of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, and to Professor and Dr Coldstream in London, for the invaluable contributions they made to the research that went into this paper. They are none of them, of course, in any way responsible for what I am about to say this evening.

It is especially gratifying to find that an Australian archaeological expedition is returning to Cyprus next month. Though Dr David Frankel and Dr Jenny Webb are not excavating in the neighbourhood of Nicosia, they represent the latest in a long series of Australian links with the island and in particular with this city. Some of you may not be aware that one of the first acts of the new British High Commissioner of Cyprus in 1878, Sir Garnet Wolseley, was to order from Tasmania seeds of the well known gum tree, or eucalyptus, and to have ten thousand of them planted in and around Nicosia and Larnaca. They have flourished in this soil and climate and sometimes lend to the Cypriote landscape a touch of the Australian bush. Another Governor of Cyprus, Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, was Governor of the State of Queensland in Australia from 1914 to 1920 and left his mark on Australian politics by unusually recommending to the Colonial Office at the time the appointment of an Australian instead of a British Lieutenant-Governor to replace him on his departure. The latter was indirectly responsible for the abolition of the upper house of Queensland's Parliament.

Undoubtedly the most memorable link between Nicosia and Australia was forged by the 2/7th Australian Division Cavalry Regiment, which spent several months camped at Athalassa in 1941. These troops were sent to Cyprus to help reinforce the local defenses against the possibility of a German airborne attack. The feared invasion never took place because of the losses suffered by the German forces in Crete, and the Australians took full advantage of everything the island and its people

had to offer. None of the veterans of this campaign has ever forgotten their enchantment with the beauty of Cyprus, the intoxicating effect of its brandies and wines, and the friendliness they everywhere encountered. The Chanteclair was more their scene than the Cyprus Museum, and there are few souvenirs of their passage through Nicosia. I did once dis cover some ancient and unopened tins of Australian bully beef in a kapheneion at Koutsovendis, and the Regiment was given as its mascot the toy koala which belonged to Jane, the daughter of the then Governor of Cyprus, Sir William Battershill. His wife was an Australian from Tasmania, and Jane Battershill, now d'Arcy, who presently lives in Canberra, our own capital city has never forgotten the loss of her favourite toy animal.

You will do doubt be surprised to learn that few books have been written about the topography and history of Nicosia. The most complete description of the city last century was con tained in a book published in English under the title *Levkosia. The Capital of Cyprus.* This edition appeared in London in 1881. It was, however, originally published in German in 1873, and the author, who chose to remain anonymous, was known to have been the Archduke Louis Salvator of Austria, a member of the Hapsburg Royal family This aristocrat led an unusual life of travel, research and publication and visited Cyprus in 1873. His account was reprinted in 1983 by Trigraph Limited, with a valuable appendix on the life of the author by Sir David Hunt, a former British High Commissioner in Cyprus.

The Archduke's preface evokes the impact of Nicosia before the British occupation. "When, after passing a pleasant range of hills, Levkosia first bursts upon the sight, with her slender palms and minarets, seated in a desert plain, a chain of picturesque mountains as the background, it is like a dream of the Arabian Nights realised a bouquet of orange gardens and palm trees in a country without verdure, an oasis encircled with walls framed by human hands. Great is the contrast between the town and its surroundings, and greater still between the objects within the city. There are Venetian fortifications by the side of Gothic edifices surmounted by Crescent, on antique Classic soil .... These contrasts form the principal charm of Levkosia." By a co-incidence the same Archduke some years later wrote a companion volume on Hobart, the capital of Tasmania.

It was another German speaker, Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, who first attempted a systematic survey of the evidence for ancient Nicosia. His report in *Kypros, the Bible and Homer* published in London in 1893 (pp. 464-468), was unfortunately spoilt by the same determination to make the facts fit the theory that has become commonplace in contemporary studies of Cypriote prehistory. Visitors arriving in Nicosia from the south-east have long been struck by the prominent plateau known locally as Leondari Vouno or Lion's Mount, six kilometers from the centre. Its resemblance to the acropolises of Mycenae and Tiryns, which had been justly made famous by Schliemann's excavations, inspired Ohnefalsch-Richter to see in Leondari Vouno the acropolis for the ancient city of Le-

droi, which preceded Levkosia as the main settlement in the Nicosia region. Soundings conducted by the Cyprus Exploration Fund in 1888 and by Ohnefalsch-Richter himself turned up remains of houses and graves on top of Leondari Vouno, but unfortunately none of their finds was sufficiently well published to confirm the excavators' date of the Bronze Age. Nevertheless the British archaeologist responsible, Mr James, was able to demonstrate that the remains of well dressed stone walls on the hill belonged not to prehistoric times but to the Mediaeval period, but could not establish any connection between the ancient finds from Leondari Vouno and the Bronze Age cemetery at Ayia Paraskevi further to the north. I myself surveyed the remains on top of Leondari Vouno in January 1961 and found some Red Polished and Black Slip sherds of the Early and/or Middle Cypriote Bronze Age. What was left of the Mediaeval building, which was a castle built by the Lusignan King James I and known as La Cava, was still impressive, the best preserved room having two staircases to an upper floor. On the grounds that the distance between the alleged acropolis of Leondari Vouno and the centre of Nicosia is too great, and that the ancient remains on the hill do not seem to have been very substantial, Professor Masson, supporting Mitford and other scholars, has rejected any historical link between Leondari Vouno, Ayia Paraskevi and Ledroi. I agree with him.

In 1894 appeared the first volume of *Lacrimae Nicossienses,* or Tears of Nicosia, written by Major Tankerville James Chamberlayne. It is subtitled in French "A Collection of Funerary Inscriptions, Mostly French, Still Existing in the Island of Cyprus, Followed by a Cypriote Armorial and a Topographical and Archaeological Description of the City of Nicosia" The work was inspired by a visit which the author made to the Omeriyeh Mosque in Nicosia on 16 April 1887 in the company of Sir Henry Bulwer, then High Commissioner in Cyprus. Chamberlayne had a great interest in the Mediaeval period of Cyprus, especially the coins and seals of the Lusignan kingdom.

Between 1901 and 1908 he corresponded with Gustave Schlumberger, the eminent French expert on the Crusades, and informed him in a letter of 2 December 1901 from London, now in the archives of the Institut de France in Paris, that he was occupied with the final distribution of his book, *Lacrimae Nicossienses,* before withdrawing it from circulation. The copies that remained, he said, would clutter up the stores of the Maison Quantin, which had published it in Paris. He offered a copy to Schlumberger, which is now in the library of the Institut de France, but gave no reasons for his decision to terminate its circulation. The second volume of *Lacrimae Nicossienses* never appeared, and his correspondence with Schlumberger indicates that he subsequently became involved with the preparation of a catalogue on the hoard of Lusignan coins found on 7 September 1904 in the Chiflik at Morphou. He had evidently begun compiling this work in 1905 while Commissioner for Kyrenia in the Colonial Service, and was still writing up the catalogue in 1908 when his letters to Schlum berger cease. A copy of the published work entitled *Le trésor dou Morf* and annatated by Schlumberger has been reprinted in *Cyprus Numismatic Society. The Numismatic Report* (vol. XIII

1982), pp. 15-100.

In his *ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΝΗΣΟΥ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΑΤΩΝ ΧΡΟΝΩΝ ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΤΟΧΗΣ*, published in Nicosia in 1910, the well known Cypriote historian, J.K. Peristianis, who lived from 1870 to 1931, devoted a whole chapter of 150 pages to the history of Nicosia (pp. 640-789). Though based largely on printed sources available to him, he supplemented these data with explorations and soundings of his own. In September and October 1909, according to his own account, Peristianis visited a number of localities in and around Nicosia, including Leondari Vouno, Athalassa, Ayia Paraskevi, Ayii Omoloyites, Koupati, and Palouriotissa. From these areas he picked up and acquired a number of antiquities, mostly, it would seem, of the 1st millennium B.C., including statuettes or figurines, coins and even inscriptions, and deposited them at the Cyprus Museum, where they were entered in a supplement to the catalogue. At Koupati he claimed to have found the first two syllabic inscriptions from Ledroi but did not illustrate them.

Rupert Gunnis, another British Colonial officer, who is reported to have unearthed a large "prehistoric" grave in the garden of Government House, included an historical summary and architectural survey of Nicosia in his book entitled *Historic Cyprus. A Guide to its Towns and Villages, Monasteries and Castle*, the first edition of which appeared in 1936. This volume, which has been revised and reprinted on two occasions, remains the best account of its kind on the city in the English language. The most comprehensive work known to me on the capital's past was compiled by F.S. Maratheftis in the late 1950's. It was originally submitted in 1958 as a thesis by the author to the University of Bristol in England and published by the Municipality of Nicosia in 1977 under the title, *Location and Development of the Town of Leukosia (Nicosia) Cyprus*. It represents a commendable piece of research with much useful topographical, historical and bibliographical information about the settlement, including the fact that in the 19th century A.D., before the British occupation, there was a move to have the capital of the island transferred to Larnaca. Under its present Mayor, Mr Demetriades, Nicosia has acquired even more of the trappings of a modern capital city, and I look forward to reading his Preface to the next published edition of this work. And finally I must recommend to you a study of much personal and nostalgic charm, which is an eloquent testimony to the affection of one man for the city in which his children were born. I am referring, of course, to the popular book entitled *Nicosia. Capital of Cyprus Then and Now*, first published in 1978 by Kevork K. Keshishian. It was perhaps no coincidence that it appeared in the year of the hundredth anniversary of the assumption of power by Great Britain. You will of course all know that a second edition came out in 1990.

Nicosia was not always the capital of Cyprus. Nor was Nicosia always the name of the settlements which preceded the modern urban sprawl. If I were using the Greek name in this speech, the

title would have been "Levkosia before Levkosia" or the Turkish name, "Lefkosha before Lefkosha" and the historical implications of the title would have been much different. In this respect you should note that the title of my lecture on the Greek side of the invitation card is "Λευκωσία πριν την Λευκωσία" which is not linguistically at least the same as the English title. The name of Nicosia is not of Greek or Turkish origin but of French and came to be bestowed on the city by the Lusignan kings who ruled the island from Nicosia between the 12th and 15th centuries A.D. In fact all the terms I will be using in English, such as capital, city and even Cyprus were ultimately derived from Latin and reflect a Western European inheritance in the English language which already gives this address a certain inbuilt historical orientation, if not bias. To compensate for this factor I shall talk about not only Nicosia before Nicosia but Levkosia before Levkosia, and therefore start with the origins of these names so that a terminus ante quem can be given to the topic of the lecture. For this purpose I shall draw on Sir George Hill's article "Two Toponymic Puzzles" which was first published in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* Vol. 2, 1938-39 (pp. 375-381) and translated into Greek for inclusion in *Κυπριακά Γράμματα* Vol. IV No. 9, 1940, pp. 443-446.

The earliest reliable reference to Nicosia is said to have been made by Wilbrand, Count of Oldenburg, who visited Cyprus in 1211 A.D. and recorded his passage through the King's capital city, which he calls "Cossia" In subsequent Frankish texts, it is named "Nicosie" or "Nicosia" and the "s" is frequently doubled as in the Continuation of William of Tyre, who uses "Nicossie" to designate the city. European writers and map makers used Nicosia or one of the variations of this name to the exclusion of the Greek name Levkosia, which is first attested in the forms "Leukothea" or "Leukoi Theoi" or "Leuteon" in the 4th century A.D. In this respect I must refer you to an illuminating and scholarly book on *The History of the Cartography of Nicosia* edited by A. and J. Stylianou and published by the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia in 1989. Just how the Franks came to bestow the title Nicosia on the city is not known. Some have suggested that the Europeans misheard the Greek name, pronounced it Nicosia instead of Levkosia and allowed their error to pass into popular usage. Others have sought to derive Nicosia from a place of the same name in Sicily, but there is insufficient historical evidence to support this contention. It was probably due to a coincidence. The rest of my lecture will therefore concentrate on the period before the end of the Roman Empire.

Prior to the introduction of the name Levkosia, the site was called Ledroi, which is written in various forms, one of which is Ledra. The most authoritative and up-to-date studies on the subject have been published by Professor Masson in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique Vol. CIV* 1980, pp. 232-235, and in *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques* (Paris 1983), pp. 229-232. The last historically authenticated occasion on which it occurs is also in the 4th century A.D., when reference is made to a St Triphyllius who was elected bishop of this see and attended the Council of Sardica (Sofia) in 343/4 A.D. Ledroi is first encountered in the year 672 B.C. in a list of tributary

kingdoms drawn up by the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon. The ninth kingdom was that of U-na-sa-gu-su, ruler of Li- di-ir, which has generally been interpreted to mean Onasagoras, king of Ledroi. In the first quarter of the 4th century B.C. a number of Cypriote soldiers in Egypt engraved their names on the Chapel of Achoris in Karnak. Like those of the Australian troops who left their names on the monuments of ancient Egypt at the start of the First World War, these graffiti indicated that the Cypriotes came from Ledroi. One of them, in a burst of patriotism, even described himself as coming from Ledroi in Cyprus, and another was evidently a Hellenised Phoenician.

Towards the end of the 4th century B.C., before 309 B.C., a statue of King Nikokles of Paphos was erected in Ledroi itself in a sanctuary dedicated to the Paphian Aphrodite. The fact that the inscription recording this event was discovered in the Bedestan, the Orthodox metropolis of the Venetian period, in the heart of old Nicosia, is of particular importance because it is the only reference to Ledroi which has so far been encountered or identified in the city. Mitford, who first published this inscription in the *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 65, 1961, pp. 136-138, speculates that the stone on which it occurs may well have come from the Byzantine "castello" of Lusignan, dismantled in 1192, which in its turn could have been taken from the site of the ancient settlement. Just where Ledroi was located is still not known, but the occurrence of this name together with the forerunner of the name of Levkosia in the text mentioning St Triphyllius in the 4th century A.D. suggests that there were at this time two centres, one of which eventually replaced or absorbed the other and took the name Levkosia.

It is perhaps surprising that, despite the discovery of official clay sealings with the name of Ledroi from the 1st century B.C. at Paphos, no Greek, Hellenistic or Roman coins with this name have ever been found, and no Classical author mentions Ledroi. All the evidence seems to indicate that while Ledroi maintained its political independence until the end of the Cypro-Archaic period in the 5th century B.C. and its civic status into Hellenistic times, it had become a village during the Roman Empire and did not regain its position as an urban entity until all the city kingdoms of Cyprus were suppressed at the end of the 4th century A.D.

Archaeological remains of the Iron Age and Classical periods in Nicosia are confined to religious shrines and cemeteries. Information on these and earlier finds are to be found in the *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus and "Chronique des fouilles à Chypre"* in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*. One sanctuary dating from Cypro-Archaic II to Hellenistic times was uncovered by the Department of Antiquities in the grounds of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works in 1982. It consisted of a bothros or pit deposit containing the bronze statuette of a young man wearing a kilt and arm bands, showing Egyptian influence; a limestone temple boy with flattened headdress and traces of red painted decoration; and a lime stone incense burner. About 120 metres to the south, in a place which became known as the PASYDY building plot, a structure hous-

ing an olive oil press was excavated in 1985 by the Department of Antiquities. Either side of a stone base which originally supported the press bed were found two large vessels sunk into the ground to receive the olive oil. The oil was then transferred into two rectangular wells with plaster lining, where many olive pits were found. Adjacent to this industrial installation were located other bothroi whose contents indicated a similar religious association. In the same locality, which is opposite the new premises of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Andreas Demitriou Street, lay a Cypro-Classical cemetery of the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. In a site known as Ayios Georghios after a small modern Greek Orthodox shrine on the side of the road, the Department of Antiquities has cleared a number of graves containing typical pottery of the period, as well as a fine alabastron of alabaster with an elongated ovoid body and a tall, narrow neck. This archaeological complex in the heart of Nicosia, which includes a large, incompletely cleared cistern, is of exceptional historical interest and deserves to be better known and appreciated.

Many rock cut tombs of the Iron Age have been discovered in and around Nicosia. They range in date from the late Cypro-Geometric period down to Roman times and are located in several parts of the city and its surrounds. The earliest were excavated in 1951 at the site of the Municipal Baths within the walls of old Nicosia and date to either side of 750 B.C. They produced a substantial number of grave goods, including a unique sword of iron measuring 80 centimeters in length. The absence of any traces of habitation in Nicosia during the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, which co-incides with the arrival in Cyprus of Greek speaking people from 1200 B.C. onwards, suggests an interruption in the history of settlement in this area, matching that of certain other parts of the island. It is perhaps significant in this regard that there is no foundation legend associated with the city that became Ledroi. The fact that the newcomers arrived by ship may account for their concentration on the coast. The dead of the Cypro-Archaic, Cypro-Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods from the end of the 7th century B.C. onwards, were buried in rock cut tombs in the south western slopes of the plateau that lies to the south of the old city and includes the localities known as Acropolis, Koupati, and Ayii Omoloyites. From funerary deposits belonging to Cypro-Archaic II have been recovered such unusual finds as the clay model of a two-wheeled vehicle, supporting a large barrel no doubt intended for wine; an elegant, lustrus, well made jug with trefoil mouth, imported from Phoenicia; and a terracotta figurine representing a draped woman. Hellenistic and Roman graves were no less stylish in their contents, for they yielded such items as gold earrings; a necklace made up of a string of gold and glass beads; and a clay lamp, decorated with a large eagle with outspread wings, its body turned to the right, head to the left, resting on a hare which is still running.

The most flourishing of all phases in Nicosia's prehistory was undoubtedly the Bronze Age from about 2500 B.C. to 1100 B.C. (cf. S. F. Kromholz, *The Bronze Age Necropolis at Ayia Para-*

skevi (Nicosia) (Göteborg 1982)). Remains of all stages, including the Philia Culture, from settlements as well as from cemeteries, attest to island wide and overseas connections and represent a continuity of habitation without parallel in the rest of Cyprus. We do not know the ancient name of the site in Bronze Age times, though we can be sure that it was not Alashia, which must have been located close to the sea.

Despite the stage set of Act V Scene 2 by Jean- Baptiste Lavastre for the late 19th century opera *"La Reine de Chypre"* by Jacques Fromenthal Halévy, which showed the square and port of Nicosia with sea-going vessels in the background, the Pedieos is not known to have been a free flowing river or linked to the Mediterranean in antiquity. A settlement belonging to the end of the Late Cypriote period, between the 14th and 13th centuries B.C., has been discovered a few metres outside the Venetian walls of Nicosia, near the Constanzo bastion to the south of the city. Rescue excavations by the Department of Antiquities in 1958 revealed several layers, associated with the remains of walls, showing the existence of superimposed buildings. The sherds recovered from the site were characteristic of the Mycenaean III "Pastoral" Style, and include the fragment of a jug decorated with a band of spirals and birds. Some metres north of the next bastion to the west, the d'Avila bastion, a remarkable find was accidentally made before the Second World War. Some workmen digging the foundations of a new building turned up six to eight feet below the surface a bronze statuette, without any accompanying objects. The figurine, which is only 10.5 centimetres tall, portrays a naked female standing upright with legs together and hands on the hips. Her hair is arranged in two plaits which come from behind the ears to hang down the front of the chest, and she wears a necklace with pendant between the breasts. The feet and base are missing. Its closest parallel is the famous Bomford bronze of a naked female figure standing on an oxhide ingot, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The example from Nicosia is without doubt Cypriote and belongs to the 13th or 12th centuries B.C.

These finds help confirm an observation made by Dr Porphyrios Dikaios, then Curator of the Cyprus Museum, in the *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus for 1937-39* (p. 125 n.1), which reads as follows: "an extensive settlement dating back to the Early Bronze Age, has recently been traced within the town of Nicosia and especially its southern perimeter, inside and outside the Venetian fortifications. In fact the digging of the moat at this point, destroyed the Bronze Age settlement to a certain extent" Dr Flourentzos has suggested to me that the bronze female figurine could have come from fill made up of material deposited during the Venetian earthworks. It is a remarkable co-incidence that the building which houses the Australian High Commission at the corner of Anni Comnini Street and Stasinou Avenue opposite the Constanzo bastion with the Bairaktar Mosque on top is almost certainly situated above the Bronze Age settlement of Nicosia. We will know what to look for if one day this building has to be demolished. It is perhaps just as well that I

am not Australia's High Commissioner in Nicosia! Contemporaneous with the Late Cypriote remains from this site are the contents of a number of graves uncovered in Kaimakli at a locality called Evre tadhes. One of these tomb groups, which represent the remains of a looted deposit, is now in the Museum of Classical Archaeology in University College London. It contains a typical range of late Base-ring I and II jugs; a miniature Base-ring II bowl with wishbone handle and the horn of a Base-ring II bull vase; White Slip I and II milk bowls; bowls of Plain White Wheel-Made ware; a Mycenaean IIIA:2 three handled jar and some Mycenaean IIIB stirrup jars and an alabastron; a number of Cypriote White Painted Wheel-Made bowls imitating Mycenaean ware; some bronze rings and a small bone showing traces of copper staining; and two spherical beads of white paste.

The main cemetery which served the inhabitants of Bronze Age Nicosia is located on the plateau one kilometre south of the old city. It is known as Ayia Paraskevi after the small church of this name situated near its north eastern edge. Its highest point is to be found in the grounds of the Hilton Hotel, and where it slopes away to the west are to be found the later burial grounds of the Iron Age, to which I have already referred. Many rock cut tombs dating from the end of the Early Cypriote period, around 2000 B.C., down to the end of Late Cypriote II, some 800 years later, have been discovered in this vicinity.

Their contents reflect influences and contacts from all parts of the island and overseas and demonstrate the peaceful and prosperous environment in which these early Nicosians lived. No better illustration can be found than the contents of a tomb excavated in 1884 by the German antiquarian, Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, to whom I have previously referred. This deposit, which has been published in *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "Cyprus between Orient and Occident"* (Nicosia 1986), pp. 114-138, and can be securely dated to the 16th century B.C., contained Base-ring I double juglets, of a kind found often in the Levant, and a Base-ring I bowl which was less commonly exported; an early Base-ring I juglet with plastic snakes wriggling across each shoulder, of a kind which never occurs outside the island; a rare Proto Base-ring horn shaped bottle with incised decoration and an unusual Black Slip II tripod pot; a unique Plain White Hand-Made beaker with incised decoration; and a Red-on-Black juglet imported from the Karpass peninsula. The most remarkable finds, however, were an Old Babylonian cylinder seal of haematite with gold caps and two periods of engraving; an engraved cylinder seal or bead of artificial whitish material, which belongs to a category of Syro-Palestinian cylinders with stylised Egyptian hieroglyphs, undoubtedly imported from the Levant; and possibly a Middle Minoan III three sided prism bead from Crete. There is no deposit to rival it in the rest of Cyprus at this time.

All phases of the late Early and Middle Cypriote periods are represented amongst the material recovered from tombs in this cemetery, and there is scarcely a museum in the world with a long es-

tablished collection of Cypriote antiquities that does not have objects from Ayia Paraskevi. The Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna is no exception. A sizeable proportion of their holdings come from this site and have been thoroughly published by Dr A. Bernhard-Walcher in the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Österreich* (Wien 1984). They include a White Painted Pendent Line style bottle of Middle Cypriote III; a White Painted IV bowl with wish-bone handle of Middle Cypriote II-III; a White Painted III ring vase of Middle Cypriote II; miniature Black Polished containers of Middle Cypriote I; and a wide variety of Red Polished III vases, including gourd juglets and flasks, as well as an askos in the same shape; horns, like the Proto Base-ring specimen from the Late Cypriote tomb group; pyxides in the form of baskets with lids; a condiment set, whose exact purpose is unknown; bowls; and the inevitable menagerie of animals, comprising a bovid and two bird-like figures. These Red Polished articles straddle Early Cypriote III and Middle Cypriote I, that is, the 20th and 19th centuries B.C. Even then Nicosia had connections with the world beyond Cyprus, when overseas trade and other contacts were demonstrably scarce, for in a Middle Cypriote I grave at Dhasillion Sergidhi in the same cemetery was found a Syro-Cilician jug with painted decoration of a bird, deer and butterfly triangle round the shoulder and a tree or branch motif on the handle. It was imported from north Syria and conveyed overland from its landing point on the coast. Ayia Paraskevi has even produced a Cypriote Red Polished duck vase, which copied an original from the Cyclades.

But the beginnings of human occupation in the Nicosia area go even further back into the past, for substantial evidence has been found of the Philia Culture in the cemetery at Ayia Paraskevi. In 1955 Professor Stewart excavated a number of pit graves of this period immediately below the crest of a shallow rock scarp adjacent to Stylianos Theophanides Street. Their contents are typologically distinct from the conventional sequence of late Early Cypriote and early Middle Cypriote date and suggest that the Philia Culture at Nicosia was replaced by an imported culture from the north of the island, without interruption to the pattern of settlement. These simple deposits, which have now been published in J.B. Hennessy, K.O. Eriksson and I.C. Kehrberg in *Ayia Paraskevi and Vasilia* (Göteborg 1988), yielded a striking array of pottery and other small finds, including, for example a Red Polished (Philia) juglet; a Red Polished Stroke Burnished bowl; a White Painted I (Philia) bridge spouted bowl; lead rings; strings of many coloured tiny stone beads; and picrolite fish amulets, pendants and necklace spacers. The Philia Culture deposits, which probably belonged to the second half of a third millennium B.C., were themselves preceded by a Chalcolithic settlement on the west bank of the Pedieos river between the Church of Ayios Phrodhromos and the Ayii Omoloyites bridge. Dikaios opened a trial trench there in the 1930's and uncovered parts of circular houses and the customary artifacts. Further findings were made in 1963 and recorded by Dr Kyriakos Nicolaou, who attributed the remains to the beginning of the Chalcolithic period, in the 4th millennium

B.C. Today there is nothing to be seen of this site, which appears have been completely built over, (N.P Stanley Price, *Early Prehistoric Settlement in Cyprus 6500-3000 B.C.* (Oxford 1979), p. 99 No. N. 39), and all that can be shown of its whereabouts is a view of the west bank in flood, with the ubiquitous gum trees as a back drop.

What conclusions can we draw from this potted history of "Nicosia before Nicosia"? The most important is that Nicosia is the natural capital of Cyprus. It is the oldest, continuously inhabited place in the whole island. No other site can boast of what appears to have been an almost uninterrupted succession of settlements from the Chalcolithic period in fourth millennium B.C. down to the present day. Its most remarkable phase of development was during the Bronze Age, for there is an unbroken sequence of remains from the Philia Culture at the end of the Chalcolithic and beginning of the Early Cypriote Bronze Age around 2500 B.C., down to Late Cypriote III, towards the end of the second millennium B.C. This makes Nicosia unique in the Bronze Age civilisation of Cyprus, for discontinuity is the norm in the pattern of settlement throughout the rest of the island at this time. The reasons for this are clear. Nicosia lies in the centre of the island at a crossroads leading to all other parts of the country. It had natural advantages in its elevation, water resources and agricultural land and therefore enjoyed commercial and economic advantages that remain just as valid today. Though not the capital of the island or necessarily even the leading city of the time, it was probably, like all other settlements of the Bronze Age, self-governing and so able to exploit its situation on a landbridge beside the Pedieos River to the benefit of the community. During the first millennium B.C. when city kingdoms dominated the political landscape of Cyprus, Nicosia did not have either the power or prosperity of the other centres, most of which were located, as in the Late Bronze Age, around the coast. It has been surmised that Ledroi was progressively subjected to the political will of one or more of its neighbours until by Roman times it had become little more than a village. It was only after the power of the city kingdoms was broken at the end of the 4th century A.D. that Nicosia was able to resume the active development of its own natural endowments.

It is significant that Nicosia's fortunes before the Byzantine ear waxed and waned according to the role of the foreign powers who darkened the shores of Cyprus. While overseas trade in the Late Bronze Age undoubtedly led to a decline in the nature and extend of inland settlement, perhaps including that of Nicosia, the arrival of invaders, colonists and refugees in the 12th century B.C. initiated a process of the concentration of political power around the perimeter of the island. The interests of succeeding foreigners, from the Phoenicians, through the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Macedonians, and finally the Romans, were not centred on Cyprus but on their respective empires and hence on the contribution which the island could make to furthering their own economic and strategic objectives. The interior of Cyprus had nothing to offer these external powers except copper and timber, and only those island cities engaged in serving overseas needs, like Tamassos and Ida-

lion, prospered in the Iron Age and Classical periods. The Byzantine era which followed the Roman empire in the 4th century A.D. saw the progressive emergence of Nicosia from obscurity and its evolution as the leading city in the island. It is one of the great ironies of Cypriote history that the most distant and foreign of the island's conquerors, the Franks, made the capital of Cyprus Nicosia. Despite their origins they became as Cypriote as the Cypriotes and showed that all those out siders who make their future in Nicosia, like Mr Demetriades, who came originally from Strovolos, will grow as attached as he is to this city.

Robert S. Merrillees

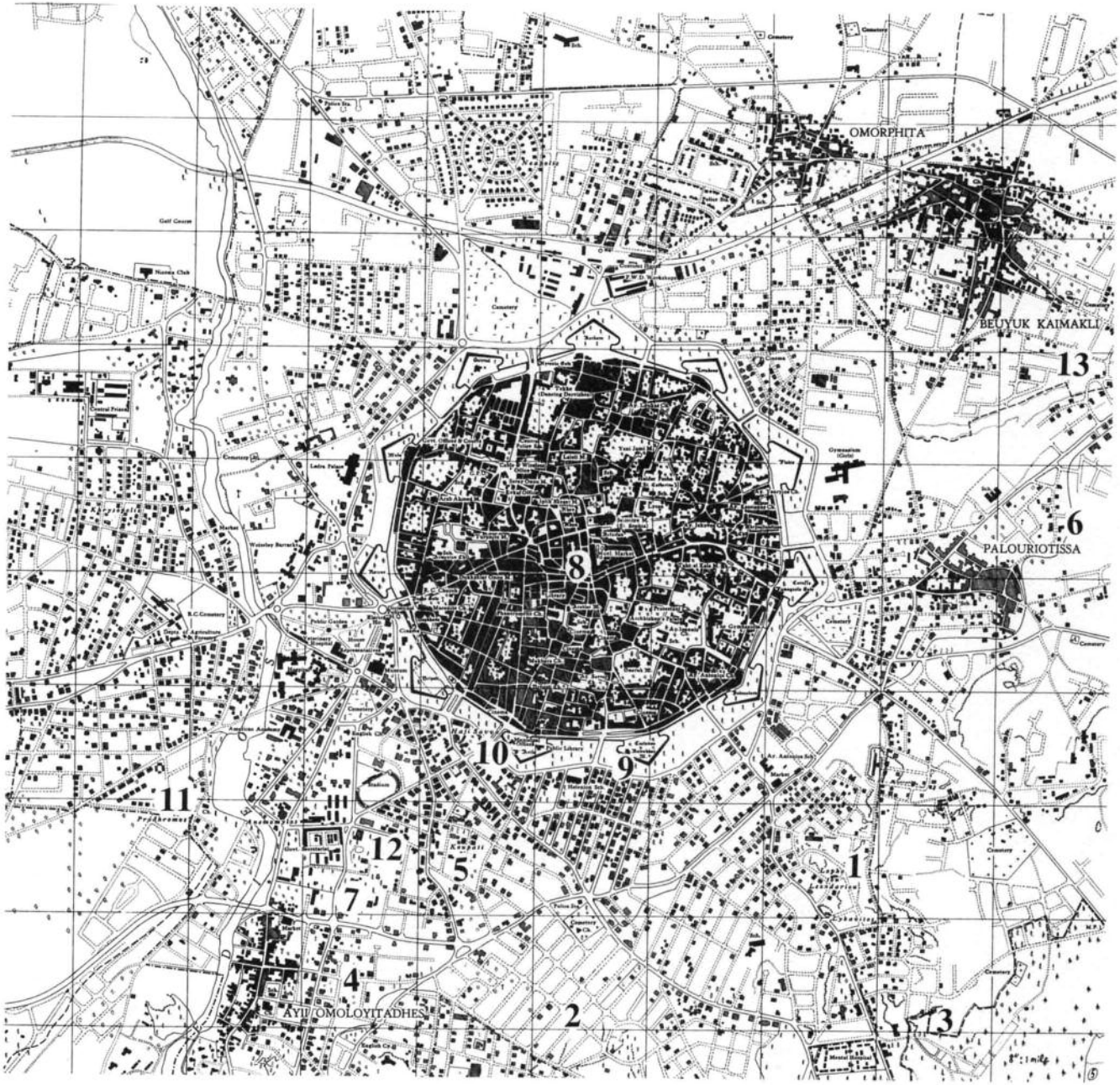

Fig. 1: Department of Lands and Surveys Topographical map of "Nicosia and Environs Eigh-inch Map" 1958, 8": 1 mile
Sites mentioned.
1. Leondari Vouno 2: Ayia Paraskevi 3: Athalassa 4. Ayii Omoloyites 5: Koupati 6: Palouriotissa 7: Pasydy 8: Municipal Baths 9: Constanzo Bastion 10: D'Avila Bastion 11. Prodromos 12:Dhasillion Sergidhi 13: Kaimakli.

Fig. 2: Terracotta plank shaped figurine of a bearded male, Middle Bronze Age 1950-1650 B.C., Ht: 34cm From Ayia Paraskevi (map no 2), Nicosia, No. CS.2028/1.

Fig. 3: A Bronze Age statuette, 13th-12th c. B.C., Ht:10.5cm. From D'Avila bastion (map no 10) No. CS2650/1.

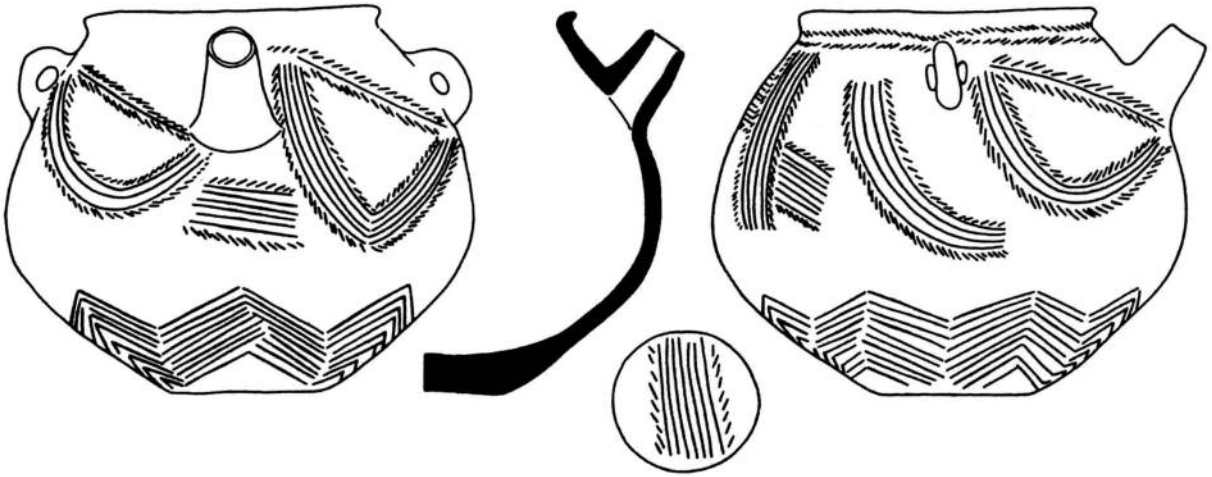

Fig. 4: Teapot of Red Polished (Philia) ware Ht: 13,5cm Stewart 1962, Type VIBe (see J. B. Hennessy et al., *Ayia Paraskevi and Vasilia* in S.I.M.A. Vol LXXXII, 1988 p. 57 fig 12.14, p.14). From Ayia Paraskevi (map no 2), Nicosia.

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Fig. 5: A White Painted III jug, Cypro-Geometric III, 850-750 B.C. Ht: 19,5cm. From Old Municipality area, (map no 8), Nicosia, No 1961/XI 17/1, T.3/3. Now in The Leventis Municipal Museum

Fig. 6: A Bichrome III bowl. Cypro-Geometric III, 850-750 B.C. Ht: 9,5cm. Form Old Municipality area, (map no 8), Nicosia, No 1951/XI 27/1, T.1/16. Now in The Leventis Municipal Museum.

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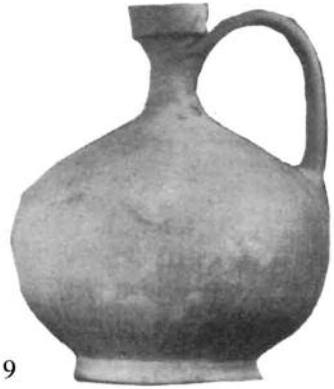

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Fig. 7: Skyphos of Stroke Polished II (VII) ware, Cypro-Classical II, 400-325 B.C.. Ht: 10,5cm. From Ayii Omoloyites (map no 4), Nicosia, No 1984/IX-10/1, T. 23/63. Now in The Leventis Municipal Museum.

Fig. 8: Jug of Stroke Polished II (VII) ware, Cypro-Classical II, 400-325 B.C.. Ht: 23,5 cm. From Ayii Omoloyites, (map no 4), Nicosia, No 1984/IX-10/1, T.25/72. Now in The Leventis Municipal Museum.

Fig. 9: Lagynos of Stroke Polished II(VII) ware Cypro-Classical 400-325 B.C.. Ht: 28cm. From Ayii Omoloyites (map no 4), Nicosia, No 1984/IX-10/1, T.25/32. Now in The Leventis Municipal Museum.

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Curator The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia

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