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NOTE E DISCUSSIONI

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THE ROLE OF CYPRUS IN THE NEO-ASSYRIAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE★

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WHEN studying the history of Cyprus in the Iron Age it is impossible, if we consider the textual evidence, not to pay the greatest attention to the Neo-Assyrian documents concerning the island and its autonomous kingdoms. Everyone knows the stele of Sargon II (found at Larnaka in 1844 and now in Berlin)¹ and its inscription, at least its final part where the conquest and subjection of Cyprus to the Assyrian empire is concerned. Also well-known is the Esarhaddon inscription with a list of ten kings and kingdoms of Cyprus, mentioned together with twelve kings and kingdoms of the Syro-Palestinian coast in the act of paying tribute to their powerful Assyrian lord.

Such documents (with others that are superfluous to recall here) are not only our best sources about the history of the Cypriot kingdoms in the 8th and 7th c. BCE: they also offer some collateral information that is in any case essential to the reconstruction and analysis of the history of Archaic Cyprus. In this short

contribution I shall try and find the elements which bear witness to the Assyrian economic interest on the island, and the channels which were used to insert this far, western territory in the structure of the empire. We shall find that the Assyrian domination on Cyprus was not only a matter of propaganda and military supremacy, but also (and above all) a matter of circulation of goods and of economic interest.²

The first document to consider among the few that make direct mention of the island of Cyprus is the most ancient and famous of all: the Sargon stele (709/707 BCE). It was discovered in Larnaca, on the little hill of *Bamboula* (as has finally been demonstrated by Marguerite Yon);³ the text of the inscription, which starts on the front and occupies entirely the right and left sides, has since a long time been read and translated. A new edition, however, has been furnished by Florence Malbran-Labat in the last volume of the "Kition-Bamboula" series,⁴ with a complete transliter-

* This paper has been presented at the 7th annual meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology (POCA) held on the 19th and 20th October 2007 in Nicosia, Cyprus. I would like to thank the organizing committee for giving me the opportunity to discuss this part of my work in progress about the history of Cyprus in the Iron Age; particularly useful have been in this occasion the observations of Sabine Fourrier, Maria Iacovou, James D. Muhly and Jean-Claude Decourt. I would also like to thank Carmine Ampolo and Ida Oggiano for encouraging and helping me all along the research activity.

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¹ Vorderasiatisches Museum, VA 968.

² About the general problem of explaining Assyrian empire not only through military expansionism but also through political and economical mechanisms see LANFRANCHI 1997.

³ YON 1995.

⁴ F. MALBRAN-LABAT: YON 2004, n. 4001.

ation after collation and translation. Here I give my translation from Malbran-Labat's

text: we are interested only in a small section of the left side, ll. 28-53:

28. [ù 7 lugal.meš]-ni ša kur Ia-'a na-gi-i [And seven kings] of the land of Ia 'a, a district
 29. [ša kur (Ia-)a]d-na-na ša ma-lak 7 u₄-mi [of the land of (Ia)]dnana – a seven-day journey away
 30. [i-na murub] tam-tim e-reb ^dutu-ši [in the middle] of the sea of the Setting Sun
 31. [šit-ku-nu]-ma né-sa-at šu-bat-sún [they have residence] – their seats (are so) far away
 32. [ša ul-tu] u₄.meš sud.meš ši-bit kur Aš-šur [(that) since the] far-off days of the taking possession
 of the land of Assur
 33. [...]na ina man.meš-ni ad.meš-ia [...]... the gods my fathers
 34. [a-li-kut] mah-ri ma-am-man that [came] before (me)
 35. [la iš-m]u-ú zi-kir kur-šú-un [they did not he]ar the name of their land -
 36. [ep-šet ina q]é-reb kur Kal-di u kur Hat-ti [the deeds that in the (mid)dle of) the land of Chaldea
 and in the land of Hatti
 37. [e-tep-pu]-šú i-na murub tam-tim [I achieved], in the middle of the sea
 38. [ru-qiš iš]-mu-ma lib-bu-šú-un it-ru-ku [from afar they hea]rd: their hearts throbbed,
 39. [hat-tu ' ik-šu]-da-šú-un kù.gi kù.babbar [the terror seiz]ed them; gold, silver,
 40. [ú-nu-ut ^{giš}esig ^{giš}ku ni-šir-ti kur-šú-un [objects made of] ebony and box wood, treasures of
 their land,
 41. [a-na qé-reb k]á.dingir.ra^{ki} a-di mah-ri-ia [to B]abylon, in front of me
 42. [ú-bi-lu-nim-ma] ú-na-ši-qu gir¹¹-ia [they brought, and] kissed my feet.
 43. [ina u₄-me-šú-m]a^{na}na.rú.a ú-še-piš-ma [That day] I had a stele made:
 44. [ša-lam dingir].meš gal.meš en.meš-ia [the images of the] great [god]s, my lords,
 45. [ab-ta-ni '] qé-reb-šú ša-lam man-ti-ia [I sculpted;] the image of my kingship on it,
 46. [šur-ba-a a-n]a² ti.la-ia ma-har-šú-un ul-zi² [powerful fo]r my life, in front of them I had set.
 47. [kur.meš ' dü-ši-n]a² ša iš-tu ši-it ^dutu-ši [All the land]s that from east
 48. [a-di e-reb] ^dutu-ši ina tukul-ti ^dAš-šur [to we]st, with the help of Aššur
 49. [^dag ^damar.utu dingir.meš tik-li-ia [Nabû and] Marduk, gods my supports,
 50. [a-na ni-i]r be-lu-ti-ia ú-šak-ni-šú [under the yok]e of my rule I subdued,
 51. [aš-tu-r]a še-ru-uš-šú [I wrot]e; up
 52. [ina ' KUR²] Ba-il-Har-ri kur-i [on the mount] Ba'il-Ḫarri, mountain
 53. [...] EŠ kur Ad-na-na ul-zi² [...]... of the land of Iadnana I had it erected.

Let us point out some elements:

a) Cyprus is presented as a distant unknown land (ll. 31-35): this is not just literary emphasis. As Roberto Gelio has demonstrated in his study about the well-known episode of Gyges of Lydia offering tribute to Assurbanipal,⁵ this is a formulation of so-called "heroic priority", giving the Assyrian king a status of heroic predominance over all his predecessors. It was a key-point in the Assyrian royal inscription, having its own evolution from an epic, military connotation to a purely political and ideological one.

b) The Cypriot kings are described offering their tribute *spontaneously*, moved by fear and

terror of the powerful Assyrian army. We do not know exactly how frequently such a thing happened: what is sure is that we can insert this kind of submission (attested in various cases) in a clear typology of "(forced) circulation dynamics", which granted a various and continuous flux of goods from the different areas of Assyrian influence to the centre of the empire.⁶ I shall speak again about this, because it is a point of particular interest. Let me now just emphasize: it is not sure *at all* that really the Cypriot kings feared the Assyrian army *and consequently* offered their tribute – this is of course a stereotype representation. What is sure is that there was not an (or sev-

⁵ GELIO 1981.

⁶ ZACCAGNINI 1984.

eral) actual concrete military operation on the island: in a different case, it would not have been omitted in the stele.

c) The submission of the Cypriot kings to the Assyrian empire, occasional and indirect as it could be, had however as a result the erection of the stele in the territory of one of the island's most important cities, Kition. Such a fact should not be underestimated. We know from similar evidence⁷ that such monuments, erected in far countries and sometimes in locations difficult to reach (like mountains, or along a river's course) had principally a symbolic aim: they represented the power and the universal character of the Assyrian empire. No one was necessarily supposed to read the inscription they exhibited, and to verify their reliability: they just stood to symbolize to everyone that the Assyrian king owned that country, that it was part of the domain of Assur⁸ – but that it was really so is another problem, that I shall consider again later. The presence of such a monument in the area of Kition was in any case full of political, if not practical, implications.

We can now consider the goods mentioned in the stele as offered to Sargon by the Cypriots. They are of two types: metals (gold and silver) and wood (ebony and boxwood).

It has been frequently observed that the absence of copper, speaking of metals coming from Cyprus, is curious if not suspicious. I do not think so. In a still interesting study about the goods obtained by the Assyrian empire through tribute and forced donations, N. B. Jankowska observed that according to our sources «the reserves of copper in Muṣaṣir and Damascus by far surpassed those of all other treasuries».⁹ That the Urartian region (Muṣaṣir) was very rich in metals is well known; as for Damascus, it is intended as the transit centre of the metal extracted in the Taurus region. It should not be forgotten that great amounts of copper and other metals

were taken as booty by Sargon not long before the submission of Cyprus, in 714 BCE, during a victorious campaign against Urartu; we should also consider that Urartu and the Taurus region were much better known and controlled, in 709/707 BCE, than Cyprus. It is not then surprising that they represented the usual source for the Assyrian demand on metals.¹⁰

Speaking about gold and above all silver is something different. Silver, and to a lesser extent gold, were the standard circulating metals in the premonetary ancient Near East. The greatest amounts of these metals came to Assyria from the West, in particular from the Syro-Palestinian area and from south-eastern Asia Minor, through the trading routes of Carchemish and Damascus. Phoenicia specialized in the production of one of the most appreciated media for the conservation and the circulation of metals (silver, gold and also bronze), that is the famous bowls sometimes also called “cypro-phoenician bowls”.¹¹ This is not the appropriate place to discuss such a well-known class of material, about its production areas and its various styles.¹² It should just be remembered that a certain number of these objects has been found also in Assyria: I am speaking about the so called “Nimrud bowls”, a large group of bronze bowls found in Nimrud in 1849, and surely coming from the West – whether from Northern Syria, Phoenicia or other Levantine areas is still under discussion.¹³ The diffusion and value of such artefacts find confirmation in the textual evidence in the expression *kappē madattu/e*, “tribute bowls”, frequently used in Neo-Assyrian administrative texts and royal inscriptions to indicate a particular class of objects, made of silver, bronze, copper or gold, and normally computed in tribute lists separately from raw metals, computed by weight.¹⁴

It is certain that the Phoenician bowls were for the Assyrian king among the most appre-

⁷ MORANDI 1988.

⁸ TADMOR 1999, p. 56.

⁹ JANKOWSKA 1969, p. 264.

¹⁰ POSTGATE 1979, pp. 199-200.

¹¹ About the general implications of the circulation of such goods see now NIEMEYER 2004.

¹² MARKOE 1985.

¹³ BARNETT 1974.

¹⁴ ZACCAGNINI 1984, *passim*.

ciated objects of tribute or gift coming from the west: this is true for all the metal artefacts produced in the Syro-Palestinian area.¹⁵ As for the bowls, we know that Cyprus was one of the principal producing areas of such objects: some of the best exemplars were also found in Cyprus. As for the decorated ones, the Cypriot style shows a clearly Assyrian influence both in the selection of subjects and in the ornamental motifs: this is due, in my opinion, not so much to the Assyrian domination of Cyprus (as is still the opinion of Glenn Markoe),¹⁶ as to the great place that the Assyrian demand occupied in the circulation of these artefacts. Coming back to our text, we can then ask a question: is it possible that gold and silver were offered by Cypriots to Sargon in the form of bowls? It is a possibility; normally, however, the texts make a distinction between raw metal and worked metal, as has already been said: this is a rule in administrative texts, and a tendency in roy-

al inscription. In our case, the list is so short and generic that we cannot find a definitive answer.

As for wood, both ebony and boxwood were appreciated not only as building materials but also for the production of luxury objects, such as utensils, handles, beds, chairs etc. As in the case of metal bowls, the production of wood artefacts was a specialization that Cyprus had in common with the Syrian coast and Phoenicia.

Let us consider now the second major document of our analysis, that is the Esarhaddon's list (673 BCE). Known from a variety of manuscripts, the text has been analyzed and edited with all the Esarhaddon's inscriptions by Rykle Borger, with a German translation.¹⁷ Our document is part of a foundation inscription relating to the construction of the new royal palace in Niniveh. Here is my translation of Borger's transliteration (*Ash. NIN A V 54 – VI 1*):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 54. <i>ad-ke-e-ma</i> lugal.meš kur <i>Ħat-ti u e-ber a.ab.ba</i> | I summoned then the kings of the land of Hatti and over the sea: |
| 55. ¹ <i>Ba-'lu</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Šur-ri</i> ¹ <i>Me-na-si-i</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Ia-ú-di</i> | Ba'al king of Tyre, Manasseh king of Judah, |
| 56. ¹ <i>Qa-uš-gab-ri</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Ú-du-me</i> ¹ <i>Mu-šur-i</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Ma-'ab</i> | Kamoš-gabri king of Edom, Mušuri king of Moab, |
| 57. ¹ <i>Šil-Bêl</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Ħa-zi-ti</i> ¹ <i>Me-ti-in-ti</i> <i>šar</i> ₄ ^{uru} <i>Is-qa-(al-)lu-na</i> | Šilbêl king of Gaza, Metinti king of Ashkelon, |
| 58. ¹ <i>I-ka-Ú-su</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Am-qar-ru-(u-)na</i> | Ikausu (?) king of Ekron, ¹⁸ |
| 59. ¹ <i>Mil-ki-a-šá-pa</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Gu-ub-li</i> | Milkiašapa king of Byblos, |
| 60. ¹ <i>Ma-ta-an-Ba-'al</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>A-ru-ad-da</i> | Matan-ba'al king of Arvad, |
| 61. ¹ <i>A-bi-Ba-'li</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Sam-si-mur-ru-na</i> | Abi-ba'al king of Samsimuruna, |
| 62. ¹ <i>Pu-du-ilu</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Bît-Am-ma-na</i> ¹ <i>Aĥi-Mil-ki</i> <i>šar</i> ₄ ^{uru} <i>As-du-di</i> | Puduilu king of Ammon, Aĥi-milki king of Ashdod, |
| 63. 12 lugal.meš <i>šá ki-šá-di tam-tim</i> ¹ <i>E-ki-iš-tu-ra</i> | 12 kings of the coast, Ekištura |
| 64. lugal ^{uru} <i>E-di-'il</i> ¹ <i>Pi-la-a-gu-ra(-a)</i> <i>šar</i> ₄ ^{uru} <i>Ki-it-ru-si</i> | king of Edi'il, Pilāgura king of Kitrusi, |
| 65. ¹ <i>Ki-(i-)su</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Si-(il-)lu-(u-)a</i> | Kisu king of Si(l)lūa, |
| 66. ¹ <i>I-tu-u-an-da-ar</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Pa-ap-pa</i> | Itūandar king of Pappa, |
| 67. ¹ <i>E-re(-e-)su</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Si-il-li</i> ¹ <i>Da-ma-su</i> <i>šar</i> ₄ ^{uru} <i>Ku-ri-i</i> | Erēsu king of Silli, Damasus king of Kurī, |
| 68. ¹ <i>Gir/Ád-me(-e-)su</i> lugal ^{uru} <i>Ta-me-si</i> | Girmēsu / Admēsu king of Tamesi, |

¹⁵ BISI 1991, especially p. 249. On Phoenician metallurgy see in general FALSONE 1988; about the bowls and their periodization *ibid.*, pp. 94-103.

¹⁶ MARKOE 1985, p. 8.

¹⁷ BORGER 1967, pp. 59-61.

¹⁸ On this king and his interesting name, see GITIN *et alii* 1997, especially 9-11.

69. ¹Da-mu-ú-si lugal ^{uru}Qar-ti-ḥa-da-as-ti Damusi king of Qartihadasti,
 70. ¹Ú-na-sa-gu-su lugal ^{uru}Li-di-ir Unasagusu king of Lidir,
 71. ¹P/Bu-šu-su lugal ^{uru}Nûri (zalág)-ia 10 P/Bušusu king of Nuria, 10 kings of the land of
 lugal.meš ša kur Ia-ad-na-na ladanana
 72. murub₄ tam-tim šu.nigin 22 lugal.meš in the middle of the sea, in all, 22 kings of the land of
 kur Ḥat-ti a-ḥi tam-tim Hatti, from the seaside
 73. (ú) murub₄ tam-tim ka-li-šú-nu ú-ma-'ir- (and) from the middle of the sea – I had them all
 šú-nu-ti-ma together brought
 74. ^{giš}úr.meš gal.meš ^{giš}tim-me maḥ.meš great beams, long poles, transoms ...
^{giš}a-dáp-pi šu-ḥu-(u)-ti
 75. ša ^{giš}eren ^{giš}šur.mìn tar-bit ḥur.sag Si-ra made of cedar and cypress wood, products of the
 ra (u) ḥur.sag Lab-na-na mountains of Sirara and Lebanon,
 76. ša ul-tu u₄-me pa-ni ma-gal ik-bi-ru-(u)-ma that since the most distant days have become even
 i-ši-ḥu la-a-nu greater and higher,
 77. ^dalād. ^dlamma.meš ša ^{na4}še.tir colossal androcephalous bulls made of granite
 (ašnan-stone)
 78. ^{mí}.^dlamma.meš ^{mí}áb.za.za ^{a-tí} ^{na4}kun₄.meš lamassu-sphinxes, apsastu-sphinxes, stone slabs and
 a-gír-ri building stones
 79. ša ^{na4}giš.nu₁₁.gal ^{na4}še.tir ^{na4}ku.mi.na made of alabaster, granite (ašnan-stone), breccia
 (turminû-stone)
 80. ^{na4}ku.mi.na.bàn.da ^{na4}a-lal-lum ^{na4}gi-rin- turminabandû-stone (a kind of breccia), elallu-stone,
 ḥi-li-ba girinḥilibu-stone (a precious stone)
 81. ul-tu qé-reb ḥur-šá-(a)-ni a-šar nab-ni- from the middle of the mountains, where they came
 tú-šú-nu from,
 82. a-na ḥe-šeḥ-ti é.gal-ia gig^{is} pa-áš-qí-iš for my palace's needs, with labour and toil,
 VI 1. a-na ^{uru}Nina^{ki} ál be-lu-ti-ia ú-šal-di-du-u-ni they dragged (them) to Nineveh, to my residence.

Now it is a question of a far more explicit text than the previous one: we have a precise list of names and locations, and a concrete list of materials and artefacts. The typology of exaction is quite evident: it is not a real tribute, regularly sent to the Assyrian king; it is rather a forced donation, a gift sent on demand for specific needs, here the construction of the new royal palace: the typology of the materials is consequently influenced by the request. As sometimes in these cases, there is no specific terminology applied to the donation (such as *nāmurtu*, “(forced) gift”, or *biltu*), but the action of receiving it is emphasized (here the emphasis is on “labour and toil” necessary for bringing everything to Nineveh).¹⁹

We have not the possibility, now, to analyze the list of the ten Cypriot kings and kingdoms

on the ll. 63-71, trying to identify the Greek and the Semitic names (as has frequently been done).²⁰ It is enough to observe that they are treated now as regularly subjugated kings, vassals of Assyria like the Phoenician and Palestinian ones.

As in the stele, we have to do with two types of materials: wood and stone, both in the form of raw materials and of end products. The wood is of two qualities: cypress and cedar wood, in the form of beams, poles and transoms – that is, as building material. It is clearly indicated, as the place of origin of the wood, the mountains of Lebanon and of Sirara (i.e. Mount Hermon, south of the Orontes valley).²¹ so apparently Cyprus, despite its richness in forests, provided no wood for the royal palace.

¹⁹ ZACCAGNINI 1984, *passim* and *partic.* pp. 239-241. Generally on the Assyrian tribut conception BÄR 1996.

²⁰ For ex. LIPÍŃSKI 1991, with the observations of MASSON 1992; NEUMANN 1994, pp. 4-6. See again, recently, LIPÍŃSKI 2004, pp. 62-76.

²¹ KATZENSTEIN 1973, p. 267, n. 42.

As for the stone, we have an interesting list of stones and stone artefacts that we can elucidate only in part.

First of all, we have twice mentioned *ašnan*-stone, that can be translated and interpreted in a different manner: normally, it is equated with *pindû*-stone, a precious red stone. In this occurrence, however, as in similar ones, *ašnan*-stone is said to be used for large figures, as the colossal androcephalous bulls like the ones exposed in the Louvre Museum coming from Sargon's palace in Khorsabad. In this case, *ašnan*-stone would be better interpreted as a stone "whose structure is as finely granulated as mottled (?) barley":²² I translate it, following Borger's exemple, as "granite".

The *lamassu*- and *apsastu*-sphinxes are two sorts of winged mixed animal colossi used to decorate Neo-Assyrian palaces: they were also usually made of stone such as calcar or granite.²³ The transport of these colossi was in itself a deed worth being represented on the reliefs which adorned the palaces: we have some examples of it, the most famous one is on the reliefs coming from the South-Western Palace of Quyunjiq, now in the British Museum.²⁴ In a particular scene of the same reliefs we can also notice a ship transporting stone slabs.

As for the other stones mentioned in the list, apart from the already discussed *ašnan*-stone, we know that alabaster slabs were often used for the execution of the reliefs; *turminû* and *turminabandû* are two qualities of breccia or marble, also used as paving stones; for *elallu* and *girimhilibu*, which we cannot identify with certainty, the best description is given in an inscription of an unknown

Neo-Assyrian king, possibly Sennacherib:²⁵ «on Mount GN have been discovered large amounts of both *elallu*-stone, the colour/texture of which is like that of the bark of the date palm, and of *girimhilibu*-stone, the colour of which is like that of the pomegranate, beautiful and a pleasure to behold (and with the quality) of preventing plagues from affecting a person (if he wears it as a charm)».²⁶

It is evident, then, that the materials and artefacts required by the Assyrian king for his new palace are rather valuable, and they should represent a characteristic product of their place of origin. As already seen, Cyprus apparently provided no wood; if this date is correct,²⁷ we should suppose that the island provided some kind of building stones, maybe already worked in the form of slabs and transported as the reliefs already mentioned suggest.

As we have seen so far, Cyprus offered the Assyrian empire at least twice (during Sargon's reign, in 709/707 BCE, and during Esarhaddon's reign, in 673 BCE) gifts of three sorts: precious metals, wood and building stones.

We can find confirmation of this situation in another inscription of Esarhaddon, very problematic and far more generic than the last one we have seen: I shall briefly quote it. The passage we are interested in is a small section of an inscription relating to the king's building activities in Assur and Babylon; the restoration and building works are described in detail, but before are mentioned all the lands that submitted to the king, and there we read (AsBbE Vs. ll. 10-17):²⁸

²² For details s. CAD, s. v. *ašnan*; MITCHELL – MIDDLETON 2002.

²³ For details about the complex significance of such creatures in Assyrian ideology and mythology s. CAD, s. v. *lamassu* and *apsastu*; s. also REINER 1995, pp. 119-120.

²⁴ For ex. the reliefs from the Court VIth, nn. 58-60 (WA.124822-4).

²⁵ I quote from CAD, s. v. *elallu* A b).

²⁶ About all these stones s. REINER 1995, pp. 119-121.

²⁷ We can also suppose that Cyprus together with Phoenicia provided some wood, for example cypress wood, but it was registered in the inscription together with Phoenician wood under the places of origin of Lebanon and Sirara mounts, because this names were more intelligible and famous for the Assyrians.

²⁸ BORGER 1967, pp. 86-87.

10. lugal.meš šá murub₄ tam-tim dù-šú-nu ta
kur la-da-na-na kur la-man a-di kur Tar-si-si
11. a-na gir¹¹-ia ik-nu-šú gun-[šú-nu] [dugud-tú
am-ḥur dir mal-ki šá kib-rat límму^{um} li-i-tú
12. áš-tak-kan-ma ...

All the kings from the middle of the sea, from the land of Iadnana, the land of Iaman to the land of Tarsisi

threw themselves at my feet; I received their heavy tributes. Over the kings of the four sides of the world

I gained victory; ... etc.

The real problem in this passage is the identification of Iaman and Tarsisi, and eventually the identity between Iadnana and Iaman, but I shall not discuss this.²⁹ What is certain is that Cyprus is mentioned as a real tributary land, this time without ambiguity: the text speaks of *biltasunu*, that is "their tribute". In the following lines the text gives a generic list of tributes – gold, silver, properties, possessions, men, horses etc. – but it does not refer to a particular land or offer: it concerns "the four sides of the world", and it gives an idea of what kind of goods the king obtained from the tributary lands.

We should also briefly consider at another document, which concerns Assurbani-pal's third campaign in 667 BCE, when he moved for the first time against Egypt. This text, available in the new edition by Rykle Borger,³⁰ is often neglected in Cyprus studies because it offers the same list of kings and kingdoms as in Esarhaddon's inscription just examined: only the names of the kings of Arvad and Ammon are different, but for the island we have no additional information. It is however of some use for my discourse to read just a few lines which contextualize the list:

37. ina me-ti-iq gir-ri-ia
38. ¹Ba-a'-lu lugal ^{uru}Šur-ri
39. ¹Mi-in-se-e lugal ^{uru}Ia-ú-di
40. ¹Qa-uš-gab-ri lugal ^{uru}Ú-du-me
41. ¹Mu-šur-i lugal ^{uru}Ma-a'-ba
42. ¹Šil-Bêl lugal ^{uru}Ḫa-zi-ti
43. ¹Mi-ti-in-ti lugal ^{uru}Is-qa-lu-na
44. ¹I-ka-Ú-su lugal ^{uru}Am-qar-u-na
45. ¹Mil-ki-a-šá-pa lugal ^{uru}Gu-ub-li
46. ¹Ia-ki-in-lu-ú lugal ^{uru}Ar-ú-a-da
47. ¹A-bi-ba-'a-al lugal ^{uru}Sa-am-si-mu-ru-na
48. ¹Am-mi-na-ad-bi lugal ^{uru}Bit-Am-ma-na
49. ¹Aḫi-Mil-ki lugal ^{uru}As-du-di
50. ¹E-ki-iš-tu-ra lugal ^{uru}E-di-i'-li
51. ¹Pi-la-a-gu-ra-a lugal ^{uru}Ki-it-ru-si
52. ¹Ki-i-su lugal ^{uru}Si-lu-u-a
53. ¹I-tu-u-an-da-ar lugal ^{uru}Pa-ap-pa
54. ¹E-re-su lugal ^{uru}Si-il-lu
55. ¹Da-ma-su lugal ^{uru}Ku-ri-i

During my campaign [against Egypt]

Ba'al king of Tyre,
Manasseh king of Judah, ... etc.
Kamoš-gabri king of Edom,
Mušuri king of Moab,
Šilbêl king of Gaza,
Metinti king of Ashkelon,
Ikausu (?) king of Ekron,
Milkiašapa king of Byblos,
Iakinlū king of Arvad,
Abi-ba'al king of Samsimuruna,
Amminadbi king of Ammon,
Aḫi-milki king of Ashdod,
Ekištura king of Edī'il,
Pīlāgura king of Kitrusi,
Kīsu king of Silūa,
Itūandar king of Pappa,
Erēsu king of Sillu,
Damasu king of Kurī,

²⁹ I am not sure at all about the interpretation of this passage as "the land of Iadnana (that is) the land of Iaman", as James D. Muhly argued during the opening lecture of POCA 2007 in Nicosia, re-proposing the brilliant hypothesis of LUCKENBILL 1914. As far as we know, Iaman and Iadnana are for the Assyrians two distinct toponyms, and the documents offer no definitive arguments for setting a par-

ticular link between them: therefore I prefer to maintain the ambiguity of the original text, where the two toponyms are simply juxtaposed. For a review of the evidence about Iaman and Iadnana in the Near Eastern documents see MAYER 1996 with references.

³⁰ BORGER 1996, prism C II 37-67: transliteration pp. 18-20, German translation p. 212 (C § 14).

56. ¹gír(Ád?)²-me-su lugal^{uru} Ta-me-su Girmēsu / Admēsu king of Tamesu,
 57. ¹Da-mu-u-su lugal^{uru} Qar-ti-ḥa-da-as-ti Damusu king of Qartihadasti,
 58. ¹Ú-na-sa-gu-su lugal^{uru} Li-di-ir ... Unasagusu king of Lidir,
 59. ¹P/Bu-ṣu-su lugal^{uru} Nu-re-e P/Bušusu king of Nuria,
 60. ṣu.nigin 22 lugal.meš ša a-ḥi tam-tim in all, 22 kings of the seaside,
 61. murub₄ tam-tim u na-ba-li of the middle of the sea and of the mainland,
 62. arad.meš da-gíl pa-ni-ia servants belonging to me,
 63. ta-mar-ta-šú-nu ka-bit-tú their heavy gifts
64. ina mah-ri-ia iš-šu-nim-ma ú-na-áš-ši-qu gír¹¹-ia brought in front of me, and kissed my feet.
 65. lugal.meš ša-a-tú-nu a-di e-mu-qí-šú-nu These kings with their armed forces (and) their ships
 ^{giš}ma.meš-šú-nu
 66. ina tam-tim u na-ba-li it-ti erim.hi.a-ia over the land and the sea, together with my army,
 67. ur-ḥu pa-da-nu ú-šá-aš-bit-su-nu-ti I made them take the way (and) the walk.

Here again is registered an offering of gifts, without details, and much more important the participation of the “22 kings” to the Assyrian campaign against Egypt: this participation included probably the supplying of provisions and ships, and it certified the loyalty of the Syro-Palestinian area to the new king (Assurbanipal came to the throne in 669 BCE) against Egypt, the usual enemy of Assyria, after the troubles in this area that Assurbanipal’s father Esarhaddon encountered in the last years of his life.³¹

In our last document the “gifts” offered to the Assyrian king are indicated by the term *tāmartu* (l. 63, *ta-mar-ta-šú-nu*), that is “gift” in its proper sense: with this term were usually indicated the donations of goods and artefacts offered to the Assyrian king by independent lands, wishing to attract the benevolence of Assyria and to maintain a mutual peaceful attitude (for example, the already mentioned offering of Gyges of Lydia). Sometimes, however, are indicated as *tāmartu* (or its properly Assyrian form, *nāmurtu*) also the offerings of gifts made in the face of the coming Assyrian army, through fear or with the aim of demonstrating fidelity. This was exactly the situation referred to in the Sargon stele, and this is probably the situation we should imagine in Assurbanipal’s text.

Direct textual evidence goes this far. What can we infer from it? Cyprus was surely, during a certain period, a vassal land of Assyria.

We cannot say exactly how it worked: was all the island in its entirety, since the first years, subjected to Assyria? Can we identify the “seven kings of the land of Ia’a” in the Sargon stele with the “ten kings of the land of Iadnana” in Esarhaddon’s list? What happened between 709/707 BCE and 673 BCE, in particular during Sennacherib’s reign? Is it true that Cyprus participated in Assurbanipal’s expedition against Egypt, or should the repetition of the ten Cypriot names in the last document be seen just as a propagandistic expedient? At the moment we do not have a definitive answer.

We can however infer, from the examined documents, what kind of goods the island provided to the Assyrian palaces, in almost two occasions as tribute/forced gifts: as already said, they are metals, wood, and building stones. As already noticed, these goods are of the same kind (and often of the same quality and workmanship) as the goods that Assyria obtained in a far greater amount from the Phoenician, Syrian and Palestinian cities. We should now try to understand how these goods and commodities concretely reached the Assyrian capitals, and in which proportion the Cypriot goods which entered Assyria came as tribute and not as trading goods.

It is obvious to observe that Cyprus is an island, and Assyria, on the contrary, was a terrestrial empire: this is however a key point too often neglected. Reading the Assyrian docu-

³¹ See about this BOTTO 1990, pp. 78-82.

ments concerning the imperial expansion we notice, since the IXth c. BCE, a great emphasis on the Sea of the Setting Sun (that is, the Mediterranean) given as the western limit of the world.³² From the IXth to the end of the VIIIth c. BCE the increasing familiarity of the Assyrians with the Levantine area does not obliterate the idea of the Mediterranean as a limit, better as the western limit of the empire. It is only with Sargon II and his successors that the Mediterranean is (almost theoretically) crossed and, as in the case of Cyprus, subdued. Sargon knows the Greeks (probably, the Greeks of Cilicia) and fights against them; during his reign the knowledge of far countries such as Crete gains a place in Assyrian geographical erudition, giving as a result the controversial literary compendium known as *The Geography of Sargon of Akkad*.³³

How could the Assyrians cross the sea, fight the Greeks and “drew them out of the sea ... like a fish”, and finally conquer Cyprus and erect a stele there? Probably, with the great and well-organized fleets of the coastal region. It is with the domination and subjection of the Phoenician cities that the Assyrians finally obtained the key to the unknown Mediterranean world. Their perception of this new horizon was founded on two aspects; first of all in our documents is emphasized the military aspect: we read royal and annalistic inscriptions about conquests, subjections, extension of the empire, world dominion, spoils and tributes. Much less emphasized in our sources, but probably of the same or even greater importance, was the economic aspect: with the extension of the

empire to the Levantine coast and further, the Assyrians gained access to a great variety of goods and artefacts, which were not only appreciated objects of tribute, but also valuable products imported into the central regions of the empire.³⁴

With this in mind, we should consider the textual evidence relating to the diplomatic rapports between the Assyrian kings and the Phoenician cities. Without pretension of completeness, let me mention the XIIth Nimrud Letter,³⁵ relating to the exploitation of the Lebanon forests (probably from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III), and the treaty between Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre³⁶ as the step points to a discussion of the Assyrian influence on the Phoenician economy. The interpretation of these key documents is far from uniform: they are usually regarded as proof of the particular status of the Phoenician cities within the empire, due to their special role in international trade toward the West;³⁷ someone, however (as, for example, Moshe Elat)³⁸ underlines the aspects of coercion and the one-way approach of the Assyrians to the economic potential of Phoenicia.

I shall not discuss now the very complex problem of the Assyrian presence and influence in the West, particularly in Phoenicia. I would just remark that the insertion of Cyprus in this context seems very reasonable.³⁹ Apart from the political and historical links between Cyprus and Phoenicia (the Phoenician colony of Kition, the relevant Phoenician presence in the Amathous region, the still partially unexplored connections between Salamis and Phoenicia, etc.), Cyprus is

³² ELAYI 1984.

³³ VILLARD 2000, TADMOR 1999. On the “Geography of Sargon of Akkad” see HOROWITZ 1998, pp. 67-95.

³⁴ The economic, tributary and diplomatic aspects of the circulation of goods in the ancient Near East are normally strictly interrelated, and their presentation in the documents is often ideologically oriented: see about this LIVERANI 1979 and LIVERANI 1990, pp. 240-266, with a focus on the Late Bronze Age situation, but with general observations that are fully valuable for the Iron Age as well. For a

presentation of the Neo-Assyrian tributary system as an antecedent of the Achaemenid fiscal organization, with a particular attention on the association of tributes and gifts, see ZACCAGNINI 1989.

³⁵ SAGGS 2001, pp. 155-158: ND 2715 = NL 12.

³⁶ PARPOLA – WATANABE 1988, pp. 24-27: n. 5.

³⁷ For ex. FRANKENSTEIN 1979, KESTEMONT 1983, BISI 1991. The best synthesis at time in RADNER 2004; see also, in the same volume, SOMMER 2004.

³⁸ ELAT 1991; see also LAMPRICHS 1995, pp. 216-223.

³⁹ POSTGATE 1979, pp. 198-199.

presented in our sources as a commercial partner of Phoenicia (in particular, in this period, Tyre), providing the Phoenicians with exactly the same goods the Assyrians were interested in, metals and wood (for ex., the well-known Ezekiel's Lamentation on Tyre mentions cypress wood coming from Cyprus: Ez. 27. 6).⁴⁰ If Cyprus really participated in Assurbanipal's expedition against Egypt in 667 BCE, we should also consider the military and strategical links that joined the two areas, in particular as regards Egypt. In this field it is evident that the goods the Assyrians were most interested in were ships, and eventually the related skill workers (sailors, ship builders, etc., as a passage in Sennacherib's Annals reminds us).⁴¹

It is then through Phoenicia that the Assyrians reached Cyprus, and it is through the same way that they continued to receive the donations and eventually the support of the Cypriot kings for their military enterprises. I would not say that every contact between Cyprus and Assyria passed necessarily through Phoenicia, but it is evident that the two areas were clearly joined in the imperial view of the western limits: all our textual evidence mentions together the Phoenician, Syrian and Palestinian kings with the Cypriot ones. Also a particular monument such the Sargon stele, which should give us a particular view of the Assyrian perception of Cyprus, links strictly the submission of the island to Sargon's campaigns in the west – without considering that it is in the area of the Phoenician colony of Kition that the stele was erected. Given this evidence, and the hypothetical reconstruction of the situation that I have proposed, we could assume that the Cypriot subjection to Assyria, sealed by the occasional sending of gifts and (maybe) co-operation in Assyrian military activity, had

as a result the authorized insertion of Cyprus in a specific area, whose strategic value was based for the Assyrians on its economic vitality. Cyprus surely contributed, with its forests and its copper ores, to the continuous flux of raw materials directed to the Assyrian capitals; the production of artefacts like silver decorated bowls or wood and ivory luxury goods was another speciality of the Cypriot economy well appreciated by the Assyrians.

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- na-ai ki-šit-ti šu¹¹-ia ú-ša-ḫi-sú-nu-ti ⁶¹ ur-tum qé-reb ⁶² maš.gú.qar... (⁵⁷ People from the land of Hatti, plunder ⁵⁸ of my bow, I settled in Nineveh. Mighty ships ⁵⁹ after the workmanship of their land, they built dexterously. Sailors from Tyre, ⁶⁰ Sidon and Cyprus, captives of my hand, I ordered ⁶¹ [to descend] the Tigris...)

⁴⁰ About this point and other evidence see LIVE-RANI 1991, ZACCAGNINI 1996. See also BISI 1991, p. 253.

⁴¹ FRAHM 1997, pp. 116-118 T29; LUCKENBILL 1924, p. 73 ll. 57-61: ⁵⁷...lú.meš kur Ḫat-ti ḫu-bu-ut ⁵⁸ giš.ban-ia i-na ^{uru}Nina^{ki} ú-še-šib-ma giš.má.meš ši-ra-a-ti ⁵⁹ e-piš-ti kur-šu-un ib-nu-ú nak-liš lú.má.laḫ₄.meš ^{uru}Šur-ra-ai ⁶⁰ ^{uru}Ši-du-un-na-ai kur Ia-ad-na-

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