Change and Transition on Crete

Interpreting the Evidence from the Hellenistic through to the Early Byzantine Period

Papers Presented in Honour of G. W. M. Harrison

Edited by

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Contents

Acknowledgements iii

About the Authors iv

Abstracts vii

1. Foreword: G. W. M. Harrison and the Study of Roman Crete 1
Jane E. Francis

2. Introduction 3
Michael J. Curtis

3. The Export of Whetstones from Hellenistic Crete 11
Nicholas Victor Sekunda

4. La dernière ligne droite dans la rivalité acharnée et séculaire entre Phaistos et Gortyne 26
Adam Pałuchowski

5. *Onomasticon* and Social Identity on the Cretan Coins in the Late-Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Case Study 38
Vassiliki E. Stefanaki

6. Τάφοι και Ταφικές Πρακτικές στο Αρχαίο Ρύτιο 58
Καλλιόπη Γκαλανάκη, Χριστίνα Παπαδάκη, Κλέανθης Σιδηρόπουλος

7. Did Rome Really Change Anything? Settlement Patterns of Far Eastern Crete in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods 79
Nadia Coutsinas

8. Beside the Sea: Unravelling the Maritime Landscape of Hellenistic and Roman Crete 102
Michael J. Curtis

9. Becoming Roman: The Cretan Evidence of Augustan Stamps on Italian Sigillata 123
Martha W. Baldwin Bowsky

10. *Origanum dictamnus* (Dittany of Crete): Testaments, Uses, and Trade of a Sacred Plant in Antiquity 133
Anna Kouremenos

11. The Fabrics of Roman to Early Byzantine Cretan Amphorae from the Sphakia Survey 147
Jane Francis, Eleni Nodarou, Jennifer Moody

12. Health, Diet and Lifeways at Knossos during the Hellenistic, Roman and Late-Antique Periods 168
Anna Moles

13. Hazard, Risk, Vulnerability and the AD 365 Earthquake on Crete 181
Scott Gallimore

14. Afterword 200
Jane E. Francis

List of Scholarship on Crete by George W. M. Harrison 203

Index 205

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During the course of assembling this volume we have seen the arrival of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which rapidly escalated into a global pandemic. As a result of this, contributors faced new challenges in environments where lockdowns and library closures suddenly became commonplace. Sadly, some of our planned contributions had to be put on hold and others changed to suit the circumstances and the limited access to reference material. We would like to express our thanks to our contributors for their dedication and persistence with their articles in these difficult times.

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About the Authors

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Christina Papadaki studied archeology at the University of Crete, where she completed postgraduate studies specializing in Prehistoric Archeology. She completed her doctoral dissertation at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Since 2019, she has been a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean. She has worked at the Archaeological Museum and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Heraklion as well as at the Directorate of the National Archive of Monuments. She has taken part in systematic and salvage excavations, research programs and surface research in Crete (Eleftherna, Monastiraki Amari, Malevizi Monastery, Krousonas, Tylissos, Knossos, Poros - Katsambas, ancient Eltina, Sampas, Galfios, Galatas, Galatios, Galatas, Galatas Silla, Agia Pelagia, city of Heraklion, Gournes Pediados, Kastelli Pediados, Hersonissos, Zakros), Gavdos, the Cyclades and mainland Greece. Her scientific works concerns the Cretan culture of the Minoan, Archaic, and Hellenistic–Roman times and are published in the proceedings of international conferences, collective volumes and in foreign and Greek archaeological journals. She is currently part of a research team studying Egypt and Egyptian scarabs in the Aegean (8th–6th centuries BC).

Kleanthis Sidiropoulos is a graduate of the University of Crete (1980–1984 BA, Classics and Archaeology) and he carried out postgraduate studies on Numismatics at the University of Cologne, Germany (1992–1996). He worked in the university's excavation of ancient Eleutherna (Sector I), Crete (1985–2003) and at the same time in the Program of Excavation and Restoration at Ancient Messene, Peloponnese (1988–2015). He is currently a curator at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (Crete). He has participated in excavations and surveys in Southern Greece, the Cyclades and Crete, with a focus on the study and publication of finds related to monetary and wider economic history from Archaic to modern times, architecture and the restoration of Hellenistic and Roman monuments. He has prepared and realized the numismatic exhibitions of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion and the Historical Museum of Crete, as well as related educational programs. He is present in scientific events with lectures and participation in conferences on topics related to his research interests, which extend from antiquity to modern history.

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Martha W. Baldwin Bowsky is a Professor Emerita of Classical Studies, retired from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Throughout her career she has been active in epigraphical research on the archaeological sites and in the storerooms and museums of Crete, with a particular interest in the Roman period on the island. She has authored a number of articles both publishing new inscriptions — on stone and on pottery — and also setting these and other Cretan inscriptions into their historical and archaeological contexts.

Anna Kouremenos is Macricostas Endowed Teaching Fellow in Hellenic and Modern Greek Studies at Western Connecticut State University, and Lecturer in Ancient History at Quinnipiac University. She specializes in Roman Greece and her research explores aspects of social, cultural, and island identities from an interdisciplinary perspective. Currently she is conducting research on southern Greece in the 2nd century CE, migration in the Greek and Roman worlds, and on the subject of national narratives. She is also interested in Greek and Roman art, ancient history in film, and the reception of antiquity from the Renaissance to the present.

Eleni Nodarou received her BA from the University of Athens and her MSc and PhD from the University of Sheffield. Since 2003 she has been the Head of the W.A. McDonald laboratory of petrography of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete. Her research interests include pottery analysis, ceramics technology and experimental archaeology. She is currently participating in archaeological projects involving the analysis of Cretan pottery from the Neolithic to the Byzantine periods.

Jennifer Moody is an Aegean archaeologist, specializing in ceramic fabric analysis, and landscape and paleo-climate reconstruction. She has worked on the island of Crete for over 40 years, where she has directed four archaeological surveys (Khania, Vrokastro, Sphakia, Ag. Vasilios). She also helped establish the William A. McDonald Ceramic Petrography Laboratory at the INSTAP Study Center East Crete in Pachyammos Crete in 2002. In addition to Crete, Moody has worked on the Greek mainland (Messenia and Grevena), the Cyclades (Melos and Kea) and Kythera. She is an advocate for landscape conservation and preservation of cultural heritage in Greece and elsewhere. In 1989 she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship for her research. She has taught at Baylor University and since 2006 has been a Research Fellow in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1996 she and Oliver Rackham co-authored *The Making of the Cretan Landscape*, for which they won the Runciman prize. A translation of their book was published in Greek in 2004.

Anna C. Moles is Assistant Professor of Mediterranean Archaeology and Osteoarchaeology at the University of Groningen, having worked previously as the Assistant Director of the Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies at Athens. She completed her PhD, entitled *Urbanism and its impact on human health: a long-term study at Knossos, Crete*, at University College London, with MA and MSc degrees from the Universities of St Andrews and Edinburgh respectively. She conducted the skeletal data collection for this work at the Knossos Research Centre of the British School at Athens and has held studentships from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, British School at Athens and Onassis

Foundation. Her research uses both the study of human skeletal remains and stable isotope analysis to investigate the impact of large-scale social, economic and political changes on past health and lifeways.

Scott Gallimore is Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. His research examines the economic history of the Greek world under Roman rule, with particular emphasis on the island of Crete and the northeast Peloponnese. He is currently co-director of the Western Argolid Regional Project in Greece.

Abstracts

The Export of Whetstones from Hellenistic Crete

Nicholas Victor Sekunda

This article is divided into three parts. Its first, and most important aim is to demonstrate that whetstones were exported from Crete to Italy in the Hellenistic period. In the second part of the article, I hope to demonstrate that at least part of this trade was in the hands of an Italian *negotiator* of the *gens Anii*, based in Olous. I will finally attempt to gather the evidence for other members of the *gens Anii* active in trade in the Greek east in the second century BC and will suggest a possible pattern of trade between the Aegean and Campania. In an appendix, a further inscription from Olous containing the name Annios is published.

La dernière ligne droite dans la rivalité acharnée et séculaire entre Phaistos et Gortyne

Adam Pałuchowski

The main aim of the paper will be to sketch the outline of transformations in the status of Phaistos from Hellenistic to early Roman Imperial times, with respect to Gortyn and the extension of its territory on the plain of Mesara, all that against a background of forms of dependence and subsequent reorganizations of urban and rural areas. A diversified evidence will be used: mainly epigraphic (*IC*, *SEG*) and numismatic (Svoronos, Le Rider, Sheedy, Carbone), included onomastic, but also archaeological (chiefly Watrous *et al.*, Baldwin Bowsky, Francis) and narrative (Polybius, Strabo). The departure point will be set at the beginning of the early 3rd century BC when Phaistos is still an entirely sovereign *polis* (*IC* I.xxiii.1*,$_{51–67}$); however, in order to provide a good deal of historical context, the previous developments in more and more conflictual relationships between Phaistos and Gortyn fighting hard against each other for the control of the plain of Mesara since about the middle Archaic period will be taken into account (Perlman, Lefèvre-Novaro, Lippolis). The next step will be a transitional status resulting from the sympolity treaty concluded with Gortyn in *c.* 240–222 BC (Chaniotis no 71), followed (or maybe preceded) by a dependent *polis*/community status (*IC* IV.229 and 330; *SEG* XXIII 1968 563 = Chaniotis no 13,$_{1–7}$), the latter being a problematic issue which should be deeply analysed. At the final stage, after the destruction of Phaistos and incorporation of its territory into the Gortynian *chora* in the middle of the 2nd century BC (Str. 10.479), the crucial question will be that of the new functional redistribution among integrated populations – it means citizens, free people, dependent cities and communities (of course aside from communal slaves, in other words serfs who disappeared from the Cretan servile landscape in the late-2nd or in the early 1st century BC) – within the framework of the functional reorganisation of urban and rural areas in late-Hellenistic to early Imperial times, with regard to new opportunities provided by the access to the large Mediterranean commercial network, stabilised and unified under the Roman rule.

Onomasticon and Social Identity on the Cretan Coins in the Late-Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Case Study

Vassiliki E. Stefanaki

The purpose of the paper is to examine the function and the social identity of the individuals whose names are inscribed on certain late-Hellenistic and Roman issues of the Cretan cities of Hierapytna, Knossos and Kydonia, minted during periods of transition and change in local and regional politics, economy and society. Apart from the poor epigraphic testimonies of the few cases of complete personal names on Cretan coins, the numismatic material may confirm the opinion that the local magistracies and offices were probably the exclusive privilege of some families of the upper classes. It seems that a mutation of the ruling class with the integration of other social classes into the local ruling circle did not occur in Hellenistic and maybe in Roman times as well.

Τάφοι και Ταφικές Πρακτικές στο Αρχαίο Ρύτιο

Kalliope Galanaki, Christina Papadaki, Kleanthis Sidiropoulos

On the occasion of a small-scale rescue excavation that took place about a decade ago, in a cemetery section of the early Historical to late-Roman period in *Embassos*, on the outskirts of the acropolis of Rytion, the monumental topography, its findings and burial practices are presented. The excavation data of older rescue excavations are reconstructed and their correlation with the adjacent settlement takes place, utilizing, at the same time, the few epigraphic and philological testimonies. Particular emphasis is given to the Hellenistic to Roman and late-Roman phase of the necropolis through their comparison with other published burial assemblages of central Crete of the same period. In conclusion, it seems that Rytion follows the common burial practices in the Cretan Hellenistic and Greco-Roman cities without, however, reflecting the glamour and wealth of metropolises such as Knossos in the north and Gortyna in the south of the island. Although the limitations of the archaeological material do not allow us to draw clear conclusions, it seems that the economic prosperity and possibly the social organization of ancient Rytion, as reflected in the hitherto known excavation data, are recorded at a different, obviously lower, level than other large Cretan cities, possibly due to the peculiarity of the landscape and especially the possibilities that it provided over time to the inhabitants of the area.

Did Rome Really Change Anything? Settlement Patterns of Far Eastern Crete in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods

Nadia Coutsinas

The field of Roman studies for Crete has been flourishing in the past decade. The publication of several surveys, excavations, and other studies brings to our knowledge new archaeological data that can already be put together to give us a more complete image of Roman Crete. In this paper, I decided to look at the settlement patterns at the turn of the Hellenistic and Roman periods to see what differences could be identified and if there is indeed a specificity of the early Roman period. I chose to focus specifically in far eastern Crete, from the plain of the Ierapetra isthmus to the eastern shores of the island. Four geographical zones can be distinguished: the north-eastern peninsula and Itanos, the basin of Zakros, the Praisos corridor, the Ierapetra isthmus and plain, as well as two islands, Kouphonisi and Chrysi. Since the middle of the 2nd century BC, the main urban centres are Itanos and Hierapytna, at both ends of the region studied. The countryside is slowly filling up with villages, hamlets and farmsteads. A new feature, a few villas, have been identified, which reveal a pattern of agricultural exploitation, if we consider that they were the centre of estates. The existence of amphora workshops and warehouses reveals the agricultural industry and the patterns of trade, as well as the very special role of the isthmus.

Beside the Sea: Unravelling the Maritime Landscape of Hellenistic and Roman Crete

Michael J. Curtis

Our perspective on Hellenistic and Roman Crete is largely based on research and investigation on inland sites. This article seeks to begin to address this situation by presenting an overview of the maritime landscape from the 3rd century BC through to the 2nd century AD, considering the island in the context of the developing trade networks and shipping routes as, over time, Crete became an exporter in its own right. The article offers an initial perspective on the development of harbours, considering their functionality and discussing some of the logistics of maritime trade on the island. It also offers a view on the strategic and economic importance of the island in the eyes of Rome, adding food for thought and another dimension to the reasoning behind the military interventions and eventual conquest in 67 BC.

Becoming Roman: The Cretan Evidence of Augustan Stamps on Italian Sigillata

Martha W. Baldwin Bowsky

This study presents some of the material evidence for how Crete became Roman, that is, involvement in the wider economic system of the Roman Empire as heralded by the presence of imported pottery and other goods. The mid- to late-Augustan stamps on Italian Sigillata found at four cities on the north coast of Crete date to a midpoint in the transformation of Crete from Hellenistic to Roman, between the mid-1st century BC to the mid-1st century AD. Participation in trade networks that stretched across the island and the Mediterranean is likely to have been an important element in the development of the island's economy, particularly its primary large-scale export industry, the Cretan wine trade.

The mid- to late-Augustan stamps on Italian Sigillata found on Crete provide concrete, physical evidence for a number of aspects of the economic transformation of Crete from Hellenistic to Roman and the island's role as a transshipment point. On Crete itself, Augustan stamps have been found and published not from the provincial capital of Gortyn but from cities along the north coast of Crete, not only at the colony of Knossos or the free city of Lappa but also the polities of Eleutherna and Aptera. At the same time, the Italian provenience of the Augustan stamps neatly reflects the history of the Italian Sigillata industry in the late-1st century BC and the early 1st century AD, beginning with stamps from Arezzo followed by Pisa and other locations in Etruria, the Po Valley, Puteoli, and central Italy. The concrete evidence provided by these stamps is significant for understanding Crete's trade relations in the Augustan period, as an island at a crossroads and transshipment point between north-south (or south-north) and west-east (or east-west) routes. These stamps document a critical stage in Cretan integration into the Roman economy, between Late Hellenistic and Early Roman. Cretan consumers took advantage of the availability of these distinctive red-gloss wares and Crete's strategic position amid Mediterranean routes of transit and exchange, to eat and drink from the fashionable wares we find in the material record today.

Origanum dictamnus (Dittany of Crete): Testaments, Uses, and Trade of a Sacred Plant in Antiquity

Anna Kouremenos

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book 12, the goddess Venus rushes to heal her wounded son Aeneas with a stalk of the plant *dictamus*, known today as dittany of Crete. This passage is depicted in a wall painting from the House of Sirico at Pompeii, where Aeneas is shown being attended by a physician and his mother Venus rushing to his side carrying a few stalks of the sacred plant. This image suggests that to the Greeks and Romans, *dictamus*, a plant that is endemic to Crete, was associated with divinities and with healing. Indeed, in antiquity, it was considered a 'panacea', a drug against every illness. No less than twenty-four ancient writers have praised its healing properties and it was traded across the Greek and Roman worlds. My paper focuses on these ancient testaments about the plant´s healing properties, its presence in archaeological and artistic contexts, and its role in the Cretan economy from the Minoan period to Late Antiquity.

The Fabrics of Roman to Early Byzantine Cretan Amphorae from the Sphakia Survey

Jane Francis, Eleni Nodarou, Jennifer Moody

The identification of Hellenistic and Roman amphora production centers on Crete is ongoing, and the original list of 17 kiln sites (Marangou-Lerat 1995) has increased to 22 in recent decades. The Sphakia Survey Project, in southwest Crete, has not found evidence of kilns, but petrographic and macroscopic fabric analysis, coupled with studies of amphora shapes and distribution, suggests a heretofore unidentified production center possibly located somewhere in southwest Crete.

Preliminary research identified several Cretan fabrics among Sphakiote 'Cretan' amphorae and a group of late-Roman to early Byzantine combed amphorae. The latter are the predominant amphora type in Sphakia in this later period, and fabric similarities to earlier amphorae raised questions about the continuity of production and interaction with Sphakia. The multidisciplinary program we developed to investigate these questions distinguished distinctive fabric recipes that are, so far, unique to our study area, perhaps indicating the existence of an additional amphora production center. We are confident that further applications of this combined methodology will continue to improve our understanding of the complex issues surrounding the production and circulation of Cretan transport amphorae.

Health, Diet and Lifeways at Knossos during the Hellenistic, Roman and Late-Antique Periods

Anna Moles

This paper aims to investigate the impact of social and environmental changes at the major urban centre of Knossos on human health and diet, and to study how demographic and economic growth (Hellenistic and early Roman) and decline (late antique) can affect individual lifeways.

Knossos, during the late-Hellenistic to Roman period, was an urban centre of a large enough scale that it suffered from the effects of dense, unhygienic living conditions and infectious disease. This is demonstrated by the low life expectancy and large numbers of deaths in the older sub-adult and young adult age categories. The impact of disease would have been supplemented by warfare, known throughout Crete in the Hellenistic period, and its secondary impacts, such as resource deficits and famine. Population growth at Knossos during the Hellenistic period, and the establishment of the *Colonia Iulia Nobilis Cnosus* in the Roman period represent new and increased contacts through trade and migration. Changes in political administration as well as climate change in the 3rd century, could have had significant ramifications for agriculture and productivity. These factors are likely to have had an impact on the prosperity, diet, health and longevity of the population. With the introduction of Christianity and lessening of population pressures in the late-antique period, differences can be observed in diet and labour patterns.

This paper demonstrates the potential research questions that can be addressed by fragmentary assemblages from rescue excavations. Human skeletal remains are an under-studied resource for this time period in Crete, and they give greater insight and a new perspective into the lives of individuals at Knossos from the Hellenistic to late-antique periods.

Hazard, Risk, Vulnerability and the AD 365 Earthquake on Crete

Scott Gallimore

This paper provides a critical assessment of the transformative potential of the AD 365 earthquake and tsunami on Crete by applying the framework of hazard, risk, and vulnerability to evaluate the character of the island's society before and after. This framework is regularly used to analyse modern populations threatened by various disasters in an attempt to develop mitigation strategies. For an ancient disaster, it can offer a more refined picture of response and resilience to events like the AD 365 earthquake and can contextualize the degree of material and social transformation evident in its aftermath.

1.

Foreword
G. W. M. Harrison and the Study of Roman Crete

Jane E. Francis

> 'Come for the Minoans; stay for the Romans'
>
> (G. W. M. Harrison, Lecture to the Archaeological Institute of America, Ottawa Chapter, Winter 2021)

George Harrison first encountered Crete the fall of 1979, when he was a graduate student at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. This trip, during which the only Roman site visited was Gortyn, did not particularly excite his attention; his PhD thesis topic, on Seneca and Lucan, did not lend itself to any aspect of the island's history. In the following year, however, he ended up staying at the British School at Knossos and was asked to provide assistance with the excavations underway at the Knossos Medical Faculty site. Perhaps because he was studying Roman literature, or perhaps simply as an extra pair of hands, he was assigned the study of one of the tombs. He later analyzed some architectural plasters from Knossos, which was presented at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in 1982, perhaps the first paper on Roman Crete at this venue in quite some time. An interest in the Roman period on the island firmly now planted, George returned to Crete for two subsequent summers and spent much time travelling around the island and looking for Roman remains, guided by the few available publications. He filled notebooks and took copious photographs, many of which reflect ruins and monuments no longer in existence. At this time, he proposed to his university, Johns Hopkins, changing his thesis topic to an investigation of Roman Crete. The response was symptomatic of the general disregard for this subject at this time: George was informed that he would never get an academic job with a thesis on Roman Crete; he should complete his topic on Roman philology and after he got a job, he could then explore Roman Crete as much as he wished. And George followed this advice.

At the same time that George was undertaking his research on Roman sites on Crete, interest in the subject was raised by the work of Ian Sanders, whose posthumous PhD thesis was being edited for publication by Peter Warren, finally appearing in 1982. This work not only put the study of Roman Crete on the map but also provided a much-needed gazetteer of sites and the first synthesis of known material from the period. The impact of this monumental work on George's research was twofold. First, it confirmed to him that he was going to the right places and in the right direction, and that the overwhelming, rich abundance of Roman remains on the ground had been largely ignored by the scholarly community. Second, his early decision not to write a gazetteer was the correct one, and that a more intensive synthetic analysis would be more beneficial.

Thus, PhD in Latin literature in hand (1984), George launched into an academic career, which allowed him to pursue research on Roman Crete. His early forays focused on the joint province of Crete and Cyrenaica, which attracted the attention of scholars working on the other side of the Libyan Sea and led to invitations to contribute to the subject as the 'Roman Crete' person. A stream of conference papers and publications continued, addressing Roman attitudes to Crete, land tenure and management, the Roman conquest, public and private architecture, food production, Romanization, and the Cretan Roman economy. Between 1988 and 1992, he was employed in the study of the Roman pottery and sites from the Vrokastro Survey project in east Crete (published in 2004, 2005), and from 1989 to 1992, participated in the survey of Pseira, with a focus on the Byzantine farms, published in 2005. This tenure in east Crete also led to the identification and publication of a hitherto unknown marble quarry. Underpinning all this research was *The Romans and Crete* (1994), the result of all George's early research from about 1980 onwards. This book built on the work of Sanders, but also integrated scholarship from a wider range of areas — e.g., epigraphical, numismatic, artistic, architectural, and historical. Some comparisons were derived from cultures and periods outside Roman Crete, but this was symptomatic of the state of scholarship at the time: there simply was no Cretan material upon which to draw. This book became the basis for so much future research by successive generations and established George as a 'foundation scholar' in the area of Roman Crete, whose work — in some aspect — often forms the first point of departure.

Change and Transition on Crete (Archaeopress 2023): 1–2

Since the appearance of *The Romans and Crete*, interest in the subject has grown. This has been due in part to an increase in large-scale, multi-year excavations of sites either predominately Roman (i.e., Gortyn, Itanos) or with substantial Roman phases (e.g., Eleutherna). The interest in survey has also benefitted the Roman period, and material from this period now forms the basis for individual chapters in final publications as well as articles and conference presentations. The now much more abundant published material and greater number of scholars addressing Roman scholarship across the island have also led to the organization and publication of workshops and colloquia on the subject, which continue to this day. The number of Roman papers offered at the Cretological Congresses has increased, and a community of scholars working in diverse parts of Crete, on varying types of material and analyses, can now be said to exist. George's love of Crete, its past and present, and his tenacious desire to see Roman Cretan history and archaeology flourish, have been instrumental in developing what had formerly been a Minoan-adjacent appendage into a subject of legitimate and worthy pursuit that now thrives and regularly attracts new scholars from around the world.

The legacy of George's work is well on display in this volume. It combines the research of new scholars, some recently out of PhD programs where Roman Cretan subjects formed the focus of their dissertations and theses. They are building on this work, and now branching out to encompass and explore increasing amounts of data, assemblages, and sources. More established scholars working in a variety of fields are represented as well. Some of these are contemporaries — or just about — of George and, like him, undertook their research in relative isolation, within a small cohort of Roman Crete scholars. The wide range of George's research, especially *The Romans and Crete*, forms the background for much of these articles but also demonstrates the many possibilities for future scholarship.

2.

Introduction

Michael J. Curtis

The inspiration for this volume came from the 1st International Conference of the Colloquium on Roman Crete that was held at the University of Nottingham between 18-19 November 2016.[1] The selected theme of the conference, which was jointly sponsored by the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies and the University of Nottingham, was '*The Enigma of Late Hellenistic and Roman Crete: Unanswered Questions*'. The conference brought together experts from five different countries, and over the two days the 14 presentations gave the audience an opportunity to hear about the new and exciting research into Hellenistic and Roman Crete.

Whilst it is correct to say that Hellenistic and Roman Crete continues to be an understudied area, this conference demonstrated that in recent years both our interpretation and perception of life on the island during these periods has begun to change as researchers have begun to look beyond the concept of Romanisation and focus more on the social and cultural identity and nature of the island's communities and their response to the challenges and opportunities of Roman rule. This was an important consideration when it came to determining the direction for this volume.

In acknowledging this change in our approach, the conference also provided an opportunity for reflection, looking back on the 34 years since the publication of I. F. Sanders' research into Roman Crete (1982), which at the time, reminded the academic world of this forgotten province and, in subtle way, threw down a challenge to do something about it! This challenge has taken a long time to be picked up and in the discussion sessions at the Nottingham conference it is fair to say that some regarded it as questionable as to whether the challenge had even been recognised.

This volume comes at an important turning point in Cretan Hellenistic and Roman Studies. As this volume marks a celebration of the career and contribution to Cretan studies by G. W. M. Harrison, it comes at a time when many of the other scholars who have also contributed to the enhancement of Sanders' vision of Roman Crete have either moved to new areas of research or have reached the point of retirement from the academic world. There is once more a need to stimulate interest and to encourage new researchers into this subject area to take forward the valuable work that has already been done. The fact that it is now possible to find undergraduate modules that explore Hellenistic and Roman Crete being taught in Universities, along with Summer Schools devoted to this topic, is testament to how much our knowledge, understanding, and confidence in the subject has grown since the 1980s. Published works such as G. W. M. Harrison's *The Romans and Crete* (1993), A. Chaniotis's *From Minoan Farmers to Roman Traders: Sidelights on the Economy of Ancient Crete* (1999a), M. Livadiotti and I. Simiakaki's *Creta romana e protobizantina: atti del convegno internazionale (Iraklion, 23–30 settembre 2000)* (2004), R. J. Sweetman's *The Mosaics of Roman Crete. Art, Archaeology and Social Change* (2013), J. E. Francis and A. Kouremenos's *Roman Crete: New Perspectives* (2016), and the papers contained in W. G. Cavanagh and M. Curtis's *Post-Minoan Crete: Proceedings of the First Colloquium* (1998) form part of an invaluable corpus of foundation material which has advanced Sanders' research. This is further enhanced by the increasing number of national and international journal articles on topics related to Hellenistic and Roman Crete, along with some of the volumes in the BAR International Series such as H. A. Raab's study into *Rural Settlement in Hellenistic and Roman Crete. The Akrotiri Peninsula* (2001), and a new generation of specialised studies as seen in N. Coutsinas's *Defenses crétoises. Fortifications urbaines et défense du territoire en Crète aux époques classique et hellénistique* (2013) and S. Gallimore's *An Island Economy. Hellenistic and Roman Pottery from Hierapytna, Crete* (2015), which all together

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[1] The idea of a colloquium on Roman Crete was first advanced in 2015. With an increase in the number of research projects for the post-Minoan period it was evident that the original concept of a single discussion group for the entire post-Minoan period was no longer viable and that a more effective approach would be to divide up the time span. The decision to launch a new group based on the Hellenistic, Roman and late-antique/Byzantine periods on Crete was announced in the spring of 2016 and the concept of a colloquium on Roman Crete was officially launched at the conference.

Change and Transition on Crete (Archaeopress 2023): 3–10

provide a corpus of information for both lecturers and students alike.

The passing of time has also brought changes within the research disciplines, and the Nottingham conference provided an opportunity to hear from Dr T. Theodoulou of the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities about some of the important underwater discoveries from the waters around the island, and adding a new, and perhaps tantalising, dimension to the archaeology and history of Crete. The modern researcher also has the advantage of having access to a larger tool kit, as can be well illustrated by the advances and application of geoarchaeology and other sciences in the study of archaeological sites and contexts around the island. Acknowledgement should also be given to efforts that have been made in recent years to improve the quality and sustainability of digital information and databases, with projects like the Digital Archaeological Atlas of Crete (Sarris *et al.* 2002) and Archaeology in Greece Online, which is a jointly managed venture between the École française d'Athènes and the British School at Athens, providing new online resources for researchers.

Contextualising transition and change

The theme of this publication originated out of the Nottingham conference and a discussion on the impact and evidence of the Roman subjugation of the Greek city-states in the aftermath of the 69–67 BC military campaign and the resulting social and cultural changes. The conference participants were in general agreement that there would have been a period of adjustment and some changes, but could not reach a consensus on the scale, organisation, or the evidence that might relate to this and the length of time it may have taken. Taking this away and mulling over what had been said, it was clear that this conversation merited taking further. At the time it seemed that the key questions were centred around the behavioural processes of transition and change and that a way forward could be to discuss this in a volume of contributed papers where supporting evidence could be presented and discussed. This sounded like a good idea and looked quite impressive in the initial approach to the publishers and in the briefing note sent to the contributors, but the exercise has been more challenging than first thought and not for the most obvious of reasons.

Looking back over the notes from the 2016 conference, it was evident that there was one important flaw in the deliberations, namely that the post-67 BC changes had been considered to be a one-off event and that no consideration had been made to the possibility that the changes might have been part of a longer process, the origins of which predated the Roman military invasion. Not only had the wrong questions been asked, but no consideration had been made to the disparity and conflict between the archaeological and historical evidence, and the problems of the chronological framework for the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The Cretan chronological framework, as in common with many other places, is heavily influenced by historical dates: the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC marks the commencement of the Hellenistic period; the end of hostilities and the conquest of the island under the command of Quintus Caecilius Metellus in 67 BC heralds the arrival of the Roman period on the island; and Ammianus Marcellinus's earthquake of AD 365 brings a sudden end to the Roman period and the start of the late-antique/early Byzantine period. It is of course possible to find the occasional variation in these dates according to the respective author's personal and national preferences,[2] but generally, this is the framework on which we interpret and perceive life in these past times. In some situations, chronologies can generate automatic expectations of simultaneous change in the material culture, and this is something which is certainly encountered in Cretan archaeology. This expectation can get so strong that it blurs the vision, influencing the interpretation of the evidence, encouraging things to be seen that are not there and resulting in the evidence being put in the wrong box.

It would be wrong to suggest that this chronological dilemma is a new topic of conversation and, as discussed by S. Gallimore, it is clearly a matter of concern that needs to be addressed (2017: 107–110, 2019: 595–596). It is also a situation that is not unique to Crete and has been previously discussed for other parts of Greece (Alcock 1993: 217–219), where a useful resolution has been advanced by S. E. Alcock in *Graecia Capta* with the suggested combining of the Classical and early Hellenistic as a single period, and with a similar approach for the later Hellenistic and Roman periods (1993: 218). This application of an alternative chronology makes an interesting proposition and if this approach was to be adopted on Crete it might go some way to resolving the perplexing chronological conflicts that are met in the archaeology of these periods and enable the contextualisation of the periods of transition and change. It would also open the door to a different perspective of life on the island during these times, and one which seems better matched to the material evidence (**Figure 2.1**).

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[2] As an example, the chronology in the Vrokastro survey report divides the Roman period into three parts: an early Roman period of AD 1–150, a middle Roman period between AD 150–425 and a late-Roman/early Byzantine period of AD 425–800 (Hayden *et al.* 2004: xxii), whilst at Knossos, excavated material has been set within a framework based on the ruling Roman emperors (Sackett 1992: xii–xiv).

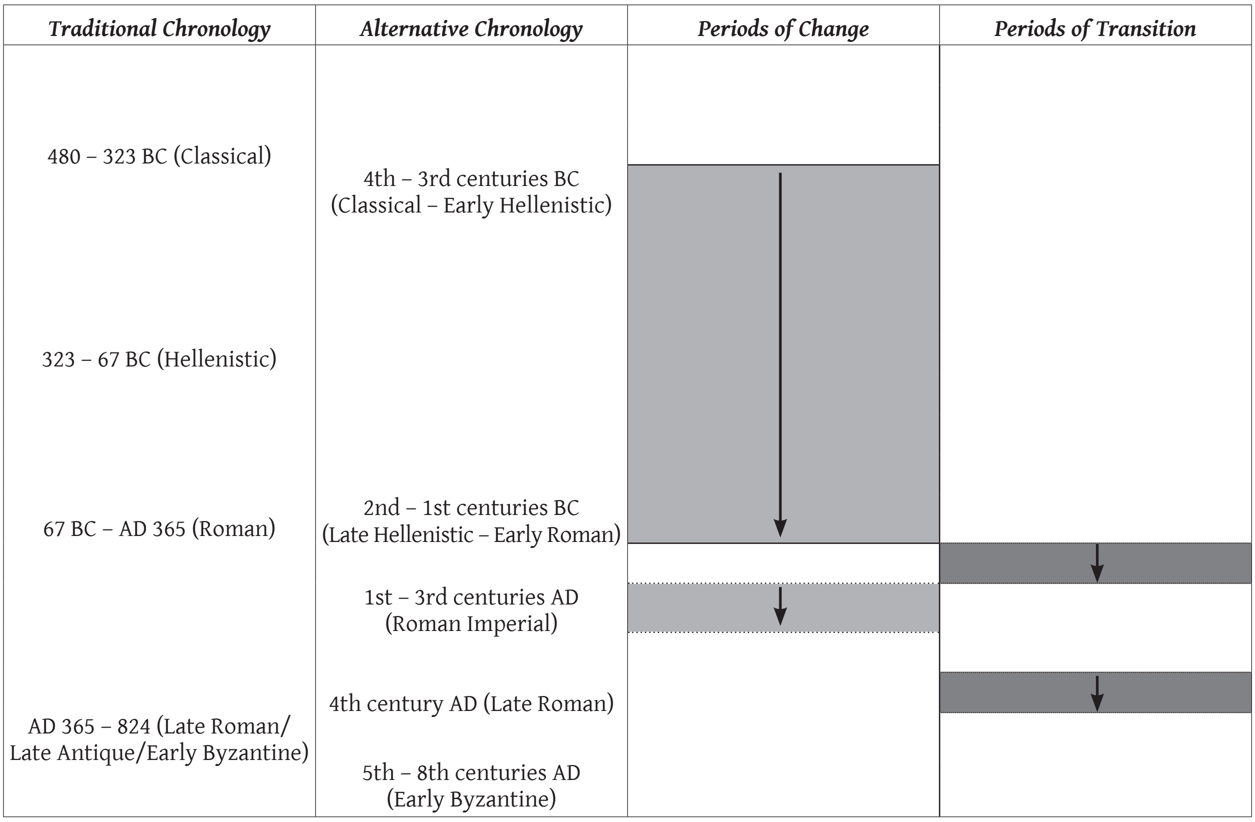
Traditional Chronology
Alternative Chronology
Periods of Change
Periods of Transition
480 – 323 BC (Classical)
4th – 3rd centuries BC (Classical – Early Hellenistic)
323 – 67 BC (Hellenistic)
67 BC – AD 365 (Roman)
2nd – 1st centuries BC (Late Hellenistic – Early Roman)
1st – 3rd centuries AD (Roman Imperial)
4th century AD (Late Roman)
AD 365 – 824 (Late Roman/ Late Antique/Early Byzantine)
5th – 8th centuries AD (Early Byzantine)

Figure 2.1. The traditional and alternative chronologies and periods of change and transition.

Appraising transition and change in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC (late Hellenistic/early Roman)

With more research data now becoming available it is perhaps time to reconsider our perspective of life on the island during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. Traditionally Cretan society, culture, and life on the island during these times has come to be regarded negatively; 'a failure, both primitive and pirate-infested, aristocratic, Dorian ghetto, with nothing to recommend it beyond its ability to produce very effective mercenaries' (de Souza 1998: 112). If this was a true picture, then it is intriguing as to why Rome should have been so interested in Cretan affairs as far back as the 2nd century BC (Sanders 1982: 3). The availability of new data enables a more detailed examination of the economic and social changes that were taking place, and a closer look into the possibility that there was Roman involvement or influence in other areas of Cretan life beyond that of the political interventions that attracted the interest of the Roman historians prior to 69 BC.

The start of the 2nd century BC saw the continuation of a change process that had begun in the previous century. It was a complex change process affecting the political, economic, social, and cultural elements of Cretan society and was made up several phases, each of which were important in taking the overall process forward. The 2nd–1st centuries BC saw important changes as the micro-economies of the Cretan *poleis* became stronger and the importance of island-based currencies and social status increased (Stefanakis 1999). An important component in this economic development was the well-established market for the export of mercenaries to fight in foreign armies,[3] which by the 2nd century BC had developed into a sustainable service sector that not only generated regular revenue for the Cretans but which also resulted in new trading partnerships and political alliances.[4]

The opening of the 2nd century BC also saw important external changes with an increase in maritime activities throughout the Mediterranean world. With more ships sailing longer distances, new trading networks began to emerge, bringing new contacts that were both commercially and politically advantageous. Geographically, Crete was ideally located to benefit from this increase in cross-Mediterranean and inter-regional shipping, with the evidence showing that it brought the islanders new opportunities for trade, commerce, and of course, piracy. The island was set to become, as R. J. Sweetman describes, an *entrepôt* (2013: 12). Coincidentally at this time, more harbours and landing places emerge along the Cretan coastline as access to the sea became increasingly important for the *poleis*. New seaborne travellers came and went, spreading information about the island and making the presence of Roman officials, whether of a diplomatic or commercial nature, early in the 2nd century B.C. perhaps less conspicuous than it may seem when reading the narratives today.

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[3] P. Themelis makes the point that mercenaries from Eleutherna who had fought in the wars against Sparta in 222 BC returned with enough money to buy lands and acquire both economic and political status within their communities (2003: 17).

[4] During the Hellenistic period Cretan mercenaries were engaged to fight in Egypt, Syria, Sparta, the Achaian League, Pergamon, Macedonia, Syracuse, and Rome (Willetts 1965: 145–147). In Livy's account of Perseus' army in 171 BC, there is mention of a contingent of about 3000 Cretans and, whilst this may well be an overestimation, it gives a useful indication of the number of men leaving the island to fight overseas (Liv. 42.51).

The changes seen in the 2nd century continued into the 1st century BC, but with some notable differences. Whilst there was still demand for Cretan mercenaries, the market was slowing and less economically reliable as it had been in the past, driving a need to find alternative sources of revenue and silver coinage that could be overstruck. Whilst there is evidence to suggest that the Cretans were beginning to export more goods and materials,[5] this would have taken time to build up to a significant level, and this point may not have been reached until after the Roman conquest of the island when Roman and foreign expertise and investment was more readily available to help take this process to its next level (Marangou 1999: 270; Stefanakis 1999: 248–289; Sunderland 1942: 15; Tsatsaki and Nodarou 2014: 309–311; Viviers 1999: 229). Another reason that might account for the slowness in developing export capability relates to a problem of logistics and taxes in relation to the movement of goods across territorial boundaries in order to reach suitable harbours and a question of suitable berthing space around the coast as the quantity and size of the shipping orders got larger.

Nonetheless, these obstacles did not prevent Crete from quickly developing a reputation as a marketplace for goods and slaves (de Souza 2002: 61), and the island would have offered traders and merchants an opportunity for the exploitation of multiple trading marketplaces. Epigraphical evidence indicates the presence of resident migrant Italian traders and their families in cities such as Gortyn from the first half of the 1st century BC onwards (Bowsky 2002: 33), and their knowledge, skills, and expertise in the logistics of sourcing products and arranging their onwards sale would have been important assets within the community, perhaps even helping to locally progress or influence the development of the island's wine and olive oil industries. Even so, a commercial voyage to or past Crete must have come with risks, not least that of being boarded or attacked by pirates, a practice that may well have been more opportunist than strategic and reflective of the increasing impact of lost revenue from the mercenary sector as this decreased in size with the expansion of the Roman Empire.

The arrival of military forces on Crete in 69 BC and the subsequent couple of years of campaigning across the island still seems relatively invisible in island archaeology, and our understanding is dependent on the surviving accounts of elite Roman writers for their presentation of the historical facts (for example, the account of Cassius Dio [36. 17–19] of the military attacks on Eleutherna and Lappa). Whilst there is evidence of fire damage at Eleutherna which has been associated to the Roman attack (Cass. Dio. 36.18; Themelis 2009: 58), thus far there is little other evidence elsewhere and the obvious features that we would associate with a Roman military campaign, such as encampments, funerary monuments, and weaponry, have yet to be found, with perhaps the exception a few debatable instances where a direct association to the military campaign has been advanced (Gallimore 2019: 595–596). This is not to say that this evidence is not there, just that it has not really been sought. Whilst the evidence of the military intervention is rather thin on the ground, it was clearly of some significance at the time by the awarding Metellus a triumph in Rome in 62 BC, and these were not easy to obtain. Many of the smaller *poleis* and rural settlements seem to have been unaffected by the campaign, though undoubtedly they were aware of the fighting, but life in these areas seems to have continued much as usual at the time and beyond. With the lack of a significant change in the material evidence the grounds for determining the year of conquest as the start of new chronological period seems questionable. Instead, it is more appropriate to consider the chronological marker of 67 BC as the commencement of a phase of transition that would eventually deliver changes in the governance and administration of the island, in the economy, and influence society and culture throughout the island.

In the case of Crete, this transitional phase was drawn out and prolonged by the preoccupation of Rome with their Civil Wars. In the meantime, to all intents and purposes, life on the island seems to have remained the same for most people. Crete was certainly not ignored though, and the cities seem to have busied themselves engaging in fostering allegiances to the different sides as the island was looked upon as source of fighting men (Bowsky 2002: 26). The foundation of the *Colonia Iulia Nobilis Cnossus* around 27 BC (Paton 2004: 451) is an indication that Roman ambitions for the island were once more firmly engaged, and if M. W. Baldwin Bowsky is correct in her analysis of the political situation, it seems likely that initial efforts were concentrated on creating stability and control throughout central Crete before turning to sort out the other parts of the island (Bowsky 2002: 44).

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[5] A. Chaniotis observes cypress wood for specific building projects, wine, 'Hadra vases', honey and herbs were amongst the exports from Crete during the Hellenistic period (1999b: 184, 207–210; Gallimore 2019: 602–606).

With the transitional phase being firmly traceable in the material evidence through the establishment of the *Colonia*, the question arises as to whether the last quarter of the 1st century, i.e., *c.* 27 BC onwards, when we also feel more assured of the administrative joining together of Crete and Cyrenaica as a senatorial province (Chevrollier 2016: 14), is better justified as the start of the Roman period? Whilst it is tempting to suggest this, there is an argument that the evidence to support this change is too localised and is not island-wide, and that there is a stronger case to be made for the commencement of the Roman period at the opening of the 1st century AD where there is widespread evidence of significant change of the type and scale which we would expect to see with the arrival of a new chronological episode across the island.

Build, build, build (Roman imperial)

For those readers living in the United Kingdom the phrase 'build, build, build' will be very familiar as a modern political statement used when there is a need to stimulate and grow the economy. The choice of this subtitle here is quite intentional as such a statement could have applied to Crete in the 1st century AD as new building and construction work sprang up everywhere. The Roman Imperial period had commenced with a bang, and the Cretan urban landscape saw systematic transformation and upgrading of its buildings and public services. It is possible that in parts of the island, particularly along the coast in western and central Crete, the commencement of the building programme was influenced by tectonic activity *c.* AD 66–100 (Di Vita 1986: 435–437, 1996: 49; Pirazzoli *et al.* 1992: 386), but this was a change process on an enormous scale, lasting for well over a century, as it fused together Greek and Roman culture and society. A good indicator of how much more cosmopolitan Crete quickly became over the course of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD can be seen in the variety of imported marble used in buildings, monuments, statutes, and sarcophagi, originating from quarries in countries such as Egypt, Africa, Asia Minor, mainland Greece and other Greek islands (Paton and Schneider 1999: 298–299). The shipment of this material was far less speculative than is seen with ceramics and it is reasonably safe to consider the presence of imported marble on Crete, as in other provinces in the Roman Empire, as being a response to a specific demand, delivered as part of a structured and organised process (Russell 2013: 5). In the context of an island such as Crete, from the point that the stonework arrived offshore there was a requirement for a working infrastructure to be in place so the stonework could be offloaded from the ship or barge and transported to either a stone yard or to its final destination, and this could mean a long haul over unfriendly terrain. This may seem like a simple, and rather obvious, statement, but changes were needed on the island so that all of this could happen. More work is needed on chronological mapping of this industry across the island, but it would have taken time to build the necessary supporting infrastructure

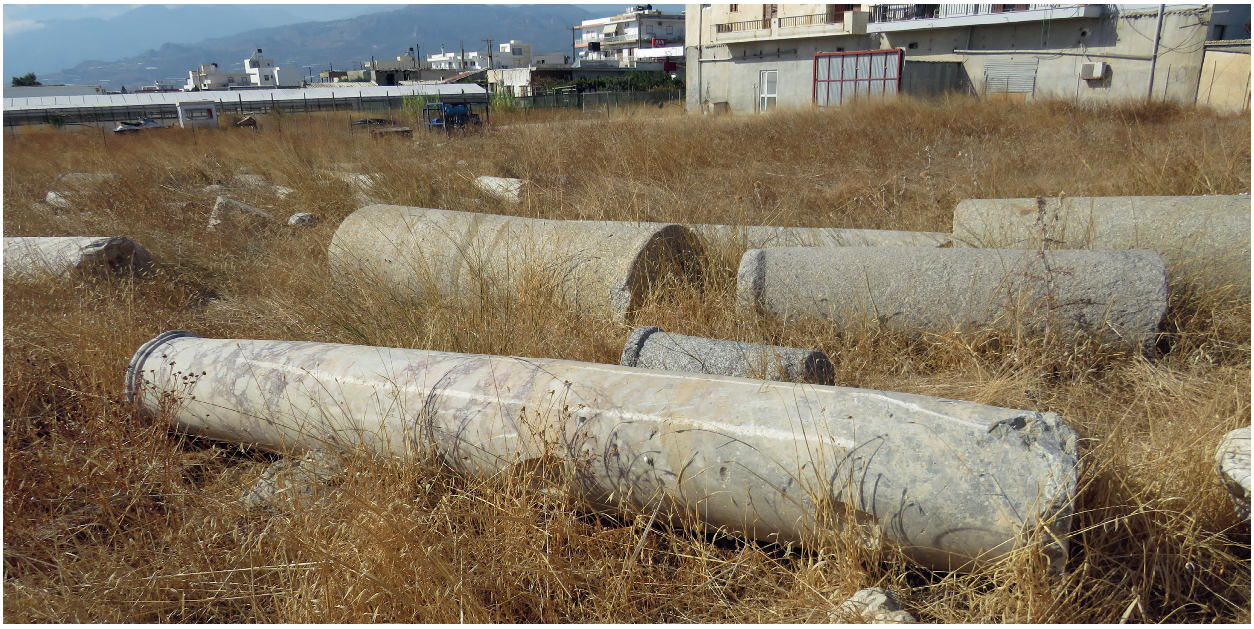

Figure 2.2. One of the challenges of chronological mapping for the stone industry is the vast amount of unstratified material, as seen here at Ierapetra in eastern Crete (photo by M. J. Curtis, 2019). The rights of the illustrated monuments belong to the Ministry of Culture and Sports (Law 4858/2021) and this deposition of stonework falls under the jurisdiction of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi. Ministry of Culture and Sports - Organisation for Management and Development of Cultural Resources (Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Hellenic Organisation of Cultural Development) (N.4858/2021).

and to have the resources in the right place, which makes it unlikely that this was feasible until the latter part of the 1st century AD, if not later (Paton and Schneider 1999: 290–291) (**Figure 2.2**). This is a good indication that the transformation of the urban areas was not something that was hurried and that it was spread over the best part of a century.

When did the Roman period actually come to an end?

In recent years there has been more interest over when and how the Roman period came to an end on the island. The earthquake of AD 365 is still linked in many people's minds as bringing the Roman period on the island to an abrupt end, but this interpretation, and indeed the dating of the attributed earthquake evidence on Crete, is open to interpretation (see S. Gallimore's article in this volume).[6]

On the basis of current knowledge, the 2nd and 3rd centuries were relatively stable and prosperous times on the island. The diverse population had become more nucleated and focussed on the main cities, especially those on the coast, and within these urban conurbations there were paved roads, single and double storey town house and villas, bath houses, theatres, piped fresh running water and drainage, and even fountains. It is not possible at present to say how far this level of prosperity extended across the social classes and our perspective is weighted in favour of the evidence of the wealthier citizens and residents. Towards the end of the 3rd century AD, and seventy years before the AD 365 earthquake, various changes began which would have eventually impacted on the islanders. Politically, for instance, between AD 295–297 Crete was separated from Cyrene and became an independent province within the diocese of Moesia (Gallimore 2017: 108; Sanders 1982: 6) as part of a much broader process of change that was to culminate in the division of the Roman Empire into two halves. To the islanders the impact of this political and administrative change, whilst not immediate, may well have been felt economically as, in the course of time, the trading networks and shipping routes changed (Gallimore 2015: 296–297). This resulted in different sailing patterns, a change in the demand for Cretan goods and a decline in business for some, but not all, of the island's harbours, particularly along the southern coast (Gallimore 2015: 296–297; Marangou 1999: 278). However, whilst it is possible to view the latter part of the 3rd century and the opening of the 4th century AD as a period of transition, evidence from the cities and towns themselves shows little difference in the way of life (Sweetman 2013: 13), and the distribution of Cretan amphorae shows that the island was still a significant exporter, even if the focus of trading had shifted more towards the eastern Mediterranean (Gallimore 2016: 178–180).[7] Could the Roman Imperial period have ended during the latter part of the 3rd century–early 4th century without any major drama and without us really noticing? The answer could well be yes, and if this is the case then it allows us to look differently on the disaster that was to strike the island in AD 365.

The archaeological record shows that the traumatic event that we know as the AD 365 earthquake was certainly destructive and disruptive. Evidence from Kissamos, Eleutherna and Gortyn suggests that it may well have cause some displacement of the population as urban areas were abandoned, at least in western and central Crete (Harrison 1993: 319–321; Stiros 2010: 59; Stiros and Papageorgiou 2001; Themelis 2009: 69–71). The impact of the event is heightened in our minds by the discovery of human remains buried in the collapsed debris, such as the two groups of individuals found huddled together in a vain attempt to seek shelter as the buildings collapsed around them at Eleutherna (Themelis 2009: 69–70). The reality of the situation though is that our overall record of the number of deaths is currently suspiciously low, suggesting perhaps that the majority of the population had time to seek open ground and, if there had been a high death toll, then members of the community returned at some point after the secondary shocks had subsided and gathered the bodies that they knew of at the time and buried them in line with normal customs, as we might expect and in a similar fashion to what happens in instances of similar natural disasters today. The question arises though as whether proposing an earlier start date for the late-Roman period affects past archaeological interpretation, particularly in the case of previously classified late-Roman/late-antique burials. Only a reassessment of these burial groups can answer this, but could the solution for some our missing earthquake victims now lie within this group? It is an intriguing thought.

Whilst the scale of the damage was extensive, we must remember that the Cretans were used to living with tremors and earthquakes and it is no surprise that, as seen at Kissamos, communities were rebuilt, albeit away from the worst affected areas, and in a more restrained and conservative manner (Stiros and Papageorgiou 2001: 387–388; Sweetman 2013: 98–99). At Eleutherna, for instance, the rebuilding programme utilised what it could of the surviving buildings, levelled the ground over badly damaged areas and constructed new houses (Themelis 2009: 80), as daily life returned to a degree of normality with the recovery period lasting into the beginning of the 5th century AD.

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[6] The advancement of scientific research has provided us with greater insight into the AD 365 earthquake and has raised questions as to whether the relative sea-level uplift in western Crete, and other changes in the coastal landscape, are actually later than has previously been thought (Mourtzas 2012; Mourtzas *et al.* 2016; Price *et al.* 2002; Stiros 2001 and 2010).

[7] Sanders suggested that Crete entered a period of decline in the late-3rd century AD (Sanders 1982: 30); however, there is now more evidence available which seems to show that there was sustained economic activity throughout this period and into the 4th and 5th centuries AD, with renewed interest in agriculture in some parts of the island (Sweetman 2013: 22).

The end of the 4th century and the opening of the 5th century on the island sees more social and cultural change on the horizon, and with the vestiges of the Roman period left behind this is another distinctive chronological change as the early Byzantine era comes into view.

In summary, it is increasing evident that there are times when the material evidence just does not fit in with the traditional Cretan chronology. This is especially prevalent in the 3rd–1st centuries BC and again in 4th century AD. The proposal of an alternative chronology which recognises and accommodates the processes of transition and change offers a new, and different, perspective and one which is more in line with the material evidence. Whilst this is a personal vison, I hope it offers the basis for further discussion and something which other researchers can build on and take forward.

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