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# Cypriot Society and Identity in Hellenistic Times: some Observations on the Epigraphic Evidence

Anaïs Michel

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ANCIENT CYPRUS, AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

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of Postgraduate Cypriote Archaeology  
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ANCIENT CYPRUS,  
AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY  
COMMUNITIES IN CONTINUITY AND TRANSITION

Edited by  
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## Introduction

Luca Bombardieri, Marialucia Amadio, Francesca Dolcetti

### *Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology in Continuity and Transition: 10 years later*

The first Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology (PoCA) conference took place in Cambridge in 2001, thanks to an initiative by Kirsi Lorentz. Since then, the PoCA meetings have been held annually in various cities throughout Europe, in the UK initially, then in Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, France and Italy. While the original idea of informal meetings addressed to postgraduate students has been maintained through time, PoCA was gradually transformed to a wider international gathering of young scholars involved in the study of all aspects of Cypriot archaeology, history, anthropology, ethnography and folk studies, architecture and art history, from the Prehistory to the modern era. Since 2005, proceedings volumes of Annual PoCA Meetings were quite regularly published, thus providing the youngest researchers with an established arena for the discussion of their ongoing research initiatives, a stimulating chance to share their ideas and a possibility to publish their results, either preliminary or in a more definite form.

For that reason, PoCA meetings always involved a long-term diachronic view on Cypriot Archaeology and promoted original approaches. Likewise the more recent *Young Researchers' Conference in Aegean Archaeology* – with an analogous inspiration – or the established *International Conference in the Archaeology of Ancient Near East* or *International Cretological Congress*, PoCA meetings benefit from a large array of diverse papers mostly data-driven and focused on a single site or class of objects. In this perspective, while PoCA conferences and volumes never turned into thematic issues and rarely engaged with wider theoretical diversions (Knapp 2016: 240), they still offer a real gaze to the practice of Cypriot archaeology today, with an updated repertoire of ongoing research projects and interpretative trends.

The 15th Annual PoCA Meeting took place in Torino and the conferences were hosted in the Aula Magna of the University between November 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 2015. The meeting was open by a successful and well attended keynote lecture delivered by Lindy Crewe, entitled “*Community, continuity and change at the transition to the Late Cypriot Bronze Age: Brewing and building at Kissonerga-Skalia*”.

The conference encompassed 24 presentations, chronologically organized in seven sessions, by postgraduate students and young researchers from various research institutions in Cyprus, UK, Austria, Poland, Belgium, France, Germany,

Italy and the United States. An interesting discussion followed most of the papers and during the lively morning and afternoon breaks. The following submission and peer-review processes benefited from several scholars, leading experts in their field, who kindly acted as anonymous referees for the submitted papers.

Before presenting a brief synopsis of the three themes and thirteen papers included in the 15th PoCA Proceedings, we like to explain the choice and significance of the main topic of this volume, by briefly examining the specific meaning of ‘Continuity and Transition’ in ancient Cypriot society.

*A Cypriot affair. Continuity and Transition in socio-cultural forms, practices and identities*

Island communities generally exhibit special socio-cultural and economic features that set them apart from continental ones. Among the Mediterranean islands, Cyprus has always been at the centre of intense cultural and social relationships. Its position on major routes of interaction and commerce fostered both intense cultural exchanges with the surrounding regions and, at the same time, promoted a local enterprise, which impacted on the islanders’ social identity, ideology and economy (Knapp 2008: 3-10).

This particular geo-cultural condition furthered a dual attitude in Cypriot ancient communities: the continuity in preserving original cultural forms and social identities, and the transition to new practices and ideas, accepting and integrating external input.

To understand this characteristic phenomenon of adopting/adapting exogenous elements and thus to set the basis for presenting the duality of Cypriot society it is important to examine the concept of insularity (Knapp 2008: 16; 2013: 34-35) and islandscape (Broodbank 2000: 21). The former has been specifically analysed by scholars mostly interested in island archaeology (see Cherry 2004: 235; Broodbank 2000: 16-18 with references) and described as the attitude of “*being somewhat detached in outlook and experiences*” (Knapp 2013: 34; 2008: 18). The concept of islandscape, instead, has been efficaciously defined by Broodbank (2000: 21) as “*the condition that enables people to define their surroundings in ways that were meaningful to them*”.

The condition of insularity in Cyprus contributed to create a polarity between isolation and interaction (Renfrew 2004: 276; Knapp 2008: 19-22). Whilst the isolation supported the flourishing of singular cultural traits and local traditions, the opening to wide networks promoted the exchange of ideas and the integration of new forms and practices in the local substratum. This polarity is peculiar of the Cypriot social identity, which is formed and fostered within the island rather than imposed from the outside (Parker Pearson 2004: 129; see also Knapp 2008: 110-130; Voskos and Knapp 2008; Frankel and Webb 1998; Webb and Frankel 1999; Peltenburg *et al.* 1998).

In this framework, the unquestionable signs of development relevant to this polarity were interpreted following a flexible hybridization model (Van Dommen and Knapp 2010: 4). This model provided with an alternative interpretation that differs from the traditional diffusionist and migrationist models, according to which “*the world has been represented as inhabited by homogenous, isolated, well-delimited and discontinuous peoples and groups, whose history, expansion and movements could be traced through the analysis of a distinctive culture and material culture, whilst cultural changes found an explanation in the movement or in the expansion of said groups*” (Cuozzo and Guidi 2013: 73).

In selecting this main topic, we have imagined the development of Cypriot society and the dichotomy between conservatism and transformation as a *long journey*. This journey, from the deepest Prehistory onward, has always produced unexpected yet fascinating results; some of these are presented and analysed in this volume.

#### *An Unexpected Journey. Cypriot ancient communities in Continuity and Transition*

The 13 essays included in this volume cover a variety of themes, involving a large chronological horizon from the Bronze Age to the Byzantine, Late Antique and Medieval periods. Different approaches to aspects of art history and history of collections are discussed, along with technological and social aspects related to specific productions, as well as wider approaches to the use of landscape, the economy and social organization of Cypriot communities. They have been grouped according to particular issues they address. Papers of Part 1 examine cultural forms and social practices of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cypriot communities, by taking in consideration productive, economic and ritual aspects. Papers in Part 2 investigate the ritual and materiality in Archaic Cyprus and analyse aspects of social transformations in Hellenistic and Late Antique Cyprus. Papers in the final section, Part 3, deal with methodological issues concerning conservation and valorisation strategies and geo-archaeological methods applied to the analysis of ancient islandscapes.

#### *Part 1: Cultural forms and practices in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus*

In the opening chapter, Giulia Muti explores economic, social and symbolic aspects of textile dyeing in Bronze Age Cyprus. Muti investigates the value of dyed textiles as prestige goods and the social importance of dyeing as a working activity to Middle and Late Cypriot communities. Archaeological evidence from Pyrgos-Mavroraki, Erimi-Laonin tou Porakou, Hala Sultan Tekke, Enkomi and Kition are thoroughly analysed in this chapter in order to identify which raw materials and techniques were used for dyeing as well as which pigments and colours were obtained. In addition, two funerary contexts from

Erimi *Laonin tou Porakou* and Hala Sultan Tekke are examined to highlight the socio-economic implications and the possible symbolic aspects of textile dyeing and dyed textiles.

Mari Yamasaki's chapter focuses on the relationship between Cypriot prehistoric communities and the marine environment and resources. More specifically, her study aims at analyzing whether the rise and fall in transmarine contacts mirrors that of the higher or lower incidence of locally procured sea-related goods in the archaeological record of coastal settlements. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data pertaining to maritime resources in coastal sites, including food remains, tools, ornament and symbols, were conducted in order to ascertain the occurrence of economic activities related the sea, to evaluate possible changes in dietary habits, and to identify evidence of interregional exchanges. According to Yamasaki's argument "the two aspects of the sea, as means of contact with the mainland and as economic resource, are intimately connected as the exploitation of one, also implies to some extent the use of the other and the different approaches to the sea contributed to the construction of the Cypriot identity".

Alessandra Saggio's chapter emphasizes the ritual function connected with the practice of gaming in Bronze Age Cyprus, focusing upon the two well-known types of gaming boards of Egyptian origin (Senet and Mehen). Saggio explores the peculiar relevance of gaming in the funerary sphere, successfully discussing the association between specific game activities and the mortuary ritual either in Egypt and Cyprus. The wider evidence of figurative representations from Egyptian tombs paintings, with scenes of game boards and *post-mortem* table games, is compared with fewer evidence of gaming stones and gaming activities in Cypriote Bronze Age funerary context. Finally, the additional case-study of the EC-MC cemetery at Dhenia-*Kafkalla* is analyzed, re-contextualizing the presence of bedrock game-stones, on the basis of a new survey of the funerary area.

The chapter by Peter Cosyns examines the glass production and consumption in the Late Bronze Age, in a wider Mediterranean perspective. A starting point for the discussion is the apparent contrast between the potential relevance of Cyprus in the international glass trade market and its striking absence in the traditional scholarly debate. After providing us with a complete overview of the available LBA core-formed glass vessels repertoire, Cosyns discusses some aspects more directly connected with the contexts of use and consumption of glass in Cyprus during the 15<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

An additional joint chapter by Elena Scarsella and Stefano Ruzza is devoted to Cypriote Late Bronze Age, with a focus upon the largely debated topic of social interactions in the LC IIC-LC IIIB period. Mortuary data coming from selected major urban Cypriote centres, namely at Paleopaphos, Kition and Enkomi were discussed in this chapter, in order to investigate regional features and general trends in the development of interaction networks.

*Part 2: Materiality, rituality and social identities from the Archaic period to Hellenistic and Late Antique Cyprus*

Anna Paule's chapter presents a detailed study of major aspects connected with jewellery in the transition between Late Bronze Age and the Cypro-Geometric and Cypro-Archaic periods. Selected objects of parure from both the Cypriote collections in the Louvre Museum at Paris and in the Museum of Cycladic Art at Athens are extensively discussed in this chapter. Paule explores stylistic and technical aspects to distinguish Cypriot productions from imported objects, proposing newly assessed dates for some specific objects.

Alicia Dissinger's chapter explores the significance of waterfowl iconography in Cypro-Archaic art and its relation to mortuary beliefs. Dissinger analyses painted and sculpted representations of waterfowl in CA funerary contexts and compares the Cypriot evidence to avian imagery and symbolism from contemporary cultures in eastern Mediterranean. Finally, she discusses the connection between the use of waterfowl depictions in funerary rituals and the concepts of death and afterlife during the CA period.

Anaïs Michel's chapter examines a selected corpus of inscriptions dated back to the Hellenistic period, proposing some reinterpretation of the nature of Ptolemaic rule and its impact upon Cypriot society. Michel's proposes a different approach to the study of Hellenistic Cyprus, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the Ptolemies and the cities of Cyprus. The epigraphical evidence is analysed and contextualised, focusing on questions related to social transformation and adaptation during the Ptolemaic rule.

In his contribute Richard Maguire analyses the evidence for Constantinopolitan influence in Cyprus during the Late Antique period. By examining three apse mosaics at Lythrankomi, Kiti and Livadia in Cyprus, he raises objections to a model of empire dominated by a single, all-powerful centre and argue in favour of a polycentric empire. Maguire argues that the very survival of figurative mosaics on Cyprus suggests a doctrinal divergence between island iconodules and metropolitan iconoclasts.

Stavros Panayiotou's chapter presents a new examination of sources concerning two Arab expeditions in Cyprus during the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, focusing on the political status of Cyprus established by the Muslims, the Byzantines and the local government. On the basis of Arab sources reporting an agreement of neutrality, the hypothesis of an Arabic-Byzantine condominium on the island is refused. Lastly, Panayiotou contests sources depicting the Muslims' behaviour as merciless, suggesting that they opted instead for a negotiation with Cypriot authorities.

*Part 3: Conservation strategies and geoarchaeological methods to the analysis of is-landscapes*

Valentina Vassallo's chapter focuses on the development of a 3D digital approach to the study, analysis and interpretation of archaeological collections, in particular a group of small terracotta figurines from Ayia Irini. Vassallo presents the preliminary results of her research aimed to deepen the understanding of stylistic, typological and technological aspects of the Ayia Irini collection. Currently, a group of fifty-two statuettes conserved at the Historical Museum of Lund University and at the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia have been digitally acquired in order to obtain 3D digital replicas and conduct metric analysis and geometrical comparison of the 3D models.

Moving to geoarchaeological contributes, Marialaura Di Giovanni and Chiara Santarelli's chapter presents the preliminary results of an archaeological survey conducted in the area of Pyrgos-*Agia Marina*, within the Moni-Pentakomo-Monagrouli (MPM) project (Chieti University, Italy). The methodological approach applied to this study included intensive field surveys, geomorphological analyses and geophysical surveys. The collected data, as well as the chronological distribution of diagnostic pottery, suggest a occupation of the area from the Hellenistic period to the Roman and Post-Roman period. Furthermore, some architectural elements belonging to an Early Christian church, could be considered as hints of an unknown early ecclesiastical building in the area of Pyrgos-*Agia Marina*.

The final chapter of this volume includes a methodological paper by Veronica Petraccia and Clara Tamburrino which is focused on the use of non-invasive investigations in the reconstruction of ancient Cypriot landscape. Intensive surveys and geo-morphological analyses have been integrated with trench excavations and archaeometric analyses on selected artefacts in order to examine the Moni Valley area. Although the analyses are still ongoing and further data and interpretations are needed to accomplish a definitive reconstruction of the surveyed territory, the methodological approach adopted, permitted to acquire new and interesting evidence about changes in landscape organization.

*Annual PoCA meetings 2005-2015*

Annual PoCA Meeting 2005

held at: Dublin, Ireland (Department of Classics, Trinity College)

Proceedings published as:

G. Papantoniou (ed.), 2008. *PoCA 2005: Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology*, Oxford: Archaeopress

Annual PoCA Meeting 2006

held at: Edinburgh, Scotland (University of Edinburgh)

Unpublished.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2007

held at: Nicosia, Cyprus (University of Cyprus, Department of History and Archaeology)

Proceedings published as:

S. Christodoulou & A. Satraki (eds.), 2010. *PoCA 2007: Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology Conference*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2008

held at: Brussel, Belgium (Vrije Universiteit)

Proceedings published as:

A. Jacobs & P. Cosyns (eds.), 2015. *Cypriot Material Culture Studies from Picorite Carving to Proskynitaria Analysis. Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Cypriote Archaeology Conference held in Honour of the Memory of Paul Åström*, Brussel: VUB Press.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2009

held at: Oxford, United Kingdom (Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine studies)

Proceedings published as:

A. Georgiou (ed.), 2012. *Cyprus: an Island Culture. Society and Social Relations from the Chalcolithic to the Venetian Periods*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2010

held at: Venice, Italy (Università Ca' Foscari)

Proceedings published as:

Iosif Hadjikyriako & Mia Gaia Trentin (eds.), 2015. *Cypriot Cultural Details*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2011

held at: Lyon, France (Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée)

Proceedings published as:

A. Cannavò & A. Carbillet (eds.), 2011. *Actes du colloque Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology 2011* [Cahier du Centre d'Études Chypriotes 41].

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2012

held at: Erlangen, Germany (Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

Proceedings published as:

H. Matthäus, B. Morstadt & C. Vonhoff (eds.), 2015. *POCA (Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology) 2012*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

## Annual PoCA Meeting 2013

held at: Norwich, United Kingdom (University of East Anglia)

Proceedings published as:

R. Maguire & J. Chick (eds.), 2016. *Approaching Cyprus: proceedings of the*

*Post-Graduate Conference of Cypriot Archaeology (PoCA)*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Annual PoCA Meeting 2014

held at: Bochum, Germany (Institute of Archaeology, Ruhr-Universität)  
Unpublished.

Annual PoCA Meeting 2015

held at: Turin, Italy (Dipartimento Studi Umanistici, Università di Torino)

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# Cypriot Society and Identity in Hellenistic Times: some Observations on the Epigraphic Evidence

Anais Michel

## ABSTRACT

*At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC, following the abolition of the city-kingdoms, we observe in Cyprus a series of deep and crucial changes that will affect the history of the island in the long term. Ptolemaic rule leads to the installation in Cyprus of an Alexandrian-like hierarchy (on the top of which stands the strategos, first official of the island) and a military occupation, embodied by the presence of garrisons. However, the study of Cypriot society through the reading of Hellenistic inscriptions tends to emphasize, in many respects, the notion of continuity. It appears that the processes of adaptation at work during this period of transition and throughout the Hellenistic era prove to be the results of reciprocal relations between the Ptolemies and the cities of Cyprus, and not that of a one-way imposition of power. This paper, based on an on-going doctoral research on the Hellenistic society of Cyprus, aims to illustrate a new approach (formulated most recently by G. Papanтониου) of the relationship established between the Ptolemies and Cyprus by putting forward the epigraphic evidence from Hellenistic Cyprus.*

*In my PhD thesis I offer, indeed, a general synthesis on Cypriot history and society under Ptolemaic rule, based on a new reading of a selected corpus of inscriptions dating from the Hellenistic period. Thus, I propose some new clarifications on the interactions between the Ptolemies and Cypriot society, and on the nature of Ptolemaic rule over the island.*

In the beginning of the Hellenistic period, Cyprus reaches a turning point of its history. Scholars used to underline the importance of the gap between the Classical and Hellenistic periods for Cyprus' economical, cultural and, of course, political system. This long and quite stable period stretching between the deaths of Alexander the Great (323 BC) and Cleopatra the Great (31 BC), represents an ideal case of study for anyone focusing on the relation between continuity and transition in ancient societies. While scholars formerly used to suggest that the arrival of the Ptolemies in Cyprus and the installation of Alexandrian-like administrative structures on the island led the local elements near paralysis<sup>1</sup>, recent studies – among

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: 24. Bagnall (Bagnall 1976) and Mooren (Mooren 1977) maintained a balanced approach by highlighting the original position of Cyprus in the

which many were presented at PoCA meetings<sup>2</sup> – have started to redefine our understanding of the Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus. Lately, Papantoniou theorized a new approach to Hellenistic Cyprus which tends to emphasize deep social transformations and leads to a new understanding of Cypriot Hellenistic history (Papantoniou 2012). One can assume that investigating identities is a sensitive but necessary challenge throughout Cyprus' history<sup>3</sup>, and a true methodological key for the study of the Hellenistic period. Cyprus indeed has always been well known for its specificities and traditions (noteworthy in cult matters) linked to the multi-cultural aspects of its multi-faced society<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, we traditionally consider the dramatic death of the local city-kingdoms as a fatal process leading to the general acculturation of the Cypriot features into a Hellenistic *koinè*.

The assumption of this study is not to deny the importance of this major historical rupture<sup>5</sup>, but to determine to what extent the Ptolemaic occupation and the integration into a wide, Hellenistic empire transformed Cypriot society and contributed to shape its identity. Of course, this could be the starting point of a long and “unexpected journey” that would not fit into the time limits of this contribution. Based on a brief evocation of epigraphical texts this paper will present a wide and synthetic report of the consequences of the Ptolemaic conquest on Cypriot society, stressing the question of transition and adaptation in the Hellenistic society of Cyprus.

## 1. *Hellenistic times: Cyprus in a new era*

### 1.1. Integration into the Ptolemaic empire

The period following the end of the city-kingdoms (around 310 BC) is affected by the military occupation of the island and from 294 BC<sup>6</sup> by its integration into the

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Ptolemaic empire and the importance of the island in Ptolemaic policy. See Bagnall 1976: 38-80 especially p. 46, and Mooren 1977: 181-182, 208-209.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Papantoniou 2008 (PoCA 2005); Marquaille-Telliez 2008 (PoCA 2005). Other scholars have underlined this process of transition, starting with Collombier: Collombier 1993: 141-147. Hellenistic Cyprus in transition has also been at the core of recent doctoral researches: Keen 2012, Gordon 2012, and international conferences: “From Evagoras to the Ptolemies: The Transition from the Classical to the Hellenistic Period in Cyprus” held in Nicosia in 2002 (Flourentzos 2007); “Chypre à l'époque hellénistique et impériale : recherches récentes et nouvelles découvertes” organized in Nanterre and Paris by A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets and D. Michaelides in 2009 (Guimier-Sorbets and Michaelides 2009); see also Scherrer *et al.* 2012.

<sup>3</sup> See Collombier 2003 for a study of identity in Cyprus' city-kingdoms.

<sup>4</sup> A feature emphasized at the 14<sup>th</sup> PoCA (2014) meeting in Bochum, entitled “The many face(t)s of Cyprus”. Papantoniou uses the term “multifaced identity” to describe the Ptolemaic policy towards local populations: Papantoniou 2012: 39.

<sup>5</sup> As highlighted by Iacovou describing the Ptolemaic seizure of Cyprus in terms of « radical break » and « trauma »: Iacovou 2007: 464-465. See also for a more balanced and long-term approach of the Cypriot Iron Age polities: Iacovou 2013.

<sup>6</sup> We can describe the takeover of Cyprus by the Ptolemies as a two-step process postponed by a

Ptolemaic empire. This integration represents a unique case in many respects and tends to underline the special position of Cyprus in the foreign policy of the Ptolemies<sup>7</sup>. Regarding Cyprus' position among the Ptolemaic territories<sup>8</sup>, the use of the term "foreign policy" may even be, for reasons we shall discuss here, inaccurate.

The first reason for considering Cyprus as an integrated province may be the very long duration of Ptolemaic control. From at least 294 BC until at least<sup>9</sup> 58 or even 31 BC (Bicknell 1977; Will 2003: 522; Muccioli 2004; Thonemann 2008), Ptolemaic control over Cyprus covers the whole Hellenistic period<sup>10</sup>. This long-term occupation is well attested by the Cypriot documentation and makes the island the most tightly bound Ptolemaic territory outside Egypt.

A corollary aspect of this occupation must be found in the control by Alexandria of the main resources of the island. Indeed, Ptolemaic power affects a wide range of activities from administration and economy to cults and, of course, the military sector.

For each of these fields, epigraphy under Ptolemaic control gives a related prosopography of Ptolemaic agents, sometimes with their status and functions, attesting the global domination of the Ptolemies (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976 [see Index III, 158-161]).

## 1.2. New local settings

The main piece of evidence concerning the special position of Cyprus in the Ptolemaic system consists in the role of the *strategos* of the island (Papantoniou 2012; Bagnall 1976: 46; Mehl 1996: 237-25; Fischer-Bovet 2014: 157). First official in charge, both regarding the administration and the defense of the island from at least 217<sup>11</sup>, the *strategos* of Cyprus gathers many powers and the expansion of his

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decade of Antigonid occupation (306-294).

<sup>7</sup> See: Bagnall 1976: 38-49; Mooren 1977: 208-209; Fischer-Bovet 2014: p. 157; Mehl 2016.

<sup>8</sup> We must keep in mind that Cyprus is, after, Egypt, the best documented area of the Ptolemaic empire. For the general situation of Cyprus in the Ptolemaic territories, see Bagnall 1976. Marquaille emphasises the special status of Cyprus as an integrated province: Marquaille 2008: 45. See also the recent study by Keen of the Ptolemaic imperial domination on Cyprus: Keen 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Considering the brief period of Antigonid domination (306-295/4) following the first takeover of the island by Ptolemy (312), we choose to take the date of the Ptolemaic re-establishment as the absolute starting-point of Ptolemaic occupation on Cyprus. Another possibility is to consider the years 320 as the beginning of Ptolemaic power in Cyprus, considering that, at that time, Ptolemy already started to influence dramatically Cypriot politics and fate. For a synthetic report on the Ptolemaic installation in Cyprus, see: Hatzopoulos 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Despite the brief Seleucid incursion of 168 (Will 2003: 322). It is interesting to note that the fate of Cyprus in the beginning of the Hellenistic Period is directly linked with the birth of the Hellenistic kingship: Collombier 1993: 127; Fourrier 2015: 73.

<sup>11</sup> Pelops son of Pelops is the first known holder of the *strategia* of Cyprus (217-203): see *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* n.15064 and Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: [I].18. He first appears as *strategos* of the island on an inscribed statue-base dedicated, by the city of Paphos, to his wife Myrsine (*Prosopo-*

authority throughout the Hellenistic period is characteristic of Ptolemaic strategic policy. All Ptolemaic officials appointed in Cyprus, including the *strategos*, belong to the Alexandrian court. Mooren (Mooren 1977: 180-182, 208-209) pointed out in his study of the Ptolemaic court hierarchy that the *strategos* of Cyprus enjoyed a noteworthy position in the Alexandrian hierarchy, being most often referred to as συγγενής (“Kinsman”) of the king. The *sungeneis* class is indeed the first rank of the Ptolemaic court, before that of τῶν πρώτων φίλων (“the First Friends”), the ἀρχισωματοφύλακες, the rank of τῶν φίλων (“the Friends”) and finally the τῶν διαδόχων<sup>12</sup> (“the Successors”). In charge of the administrative and military powers, as from 203 being the chief priest of all the cults of the island<sup>13</sup>, the *strategos* is the leader of a strong Alexandrian-like local court. As the official representative of the king on the island, he is the main beneficiary (alone or with his family) of numerous honours, known primarily from the many statue-bases found in the most frequented religious and civic centres of the island, such as the sanctuary of the Paphian Aphrodite<sup>14</sup>. From 143 onwards, and due to the decreasing influence of the Ptolemies in the Aegean world, Cyprus becomes the headquarters of the royal military fleet. Consequently, the powers of the *strategos* of the island reach a pick since he then assumes, in addition to his full authority on Cyprus, the strategic rank of *navarchos*<sup>15</sup> of the whole Ptolemaic navy. Therefore, Cyprus becomes the headquarter of the royal military fleet.

### 1.3. Consequences on local identity?

The very first stage of Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus is insufficiently documented. Epigraphic records attest the development of a centralized power (exclusively embodied by foreigners, most of them Greeks), as early as the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Another major consequence of Ptolemaic rule is the installation of gar-

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*graphia Ptolemaica* n.15772 and Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: M.50), daughter of Hyperbassas (Cayla 2003, n.21). He is also known from an inscription from Salamis: J. Pouilloux, P. Roesch, J. Marcillet-Jaubert, *Salamine XIII, Testimonia Salaminia 2, Corpus épigraphique*: n. 64.

<sup>12</sup> One of the *diadochoi* is mentioned in an honorific inscription from Amathous, see Bagnall 1976: 64. For the full list of the hierarchy titles in Alexandrian court see Mooren 1977: 50.

<sup>13</sup> Polykrates son of Mnasiadas is the first known *strategos* of Cyprus bearing the title of ἀρχιερεὺς (*Prosopographia Ptolemaica* n.15065; Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: Π.34). For the religious implications of the *strategos* of Cyprus, see: Anastassiades 2013.

<sup>14</sup> J.-B. Cayla gave an extended study of the Paphian inscriptions in his PhD dissertation entitled *Corpus des inscriptions alphabétiques de Palaipaphos, de Néa Paphos et de la chôra paphienne*, Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Seleukos son of Bithys (*Prosopographia Ptolemaica* n.15078; Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: Σ.5) is the first known *strategos* of Cyprus (144-130) to bear the title of *navarchos*. For a study of the many Cypriot inscriptions referring to Seleukos and his family, see: Mitford 1953: 130-171; Młynarczyk, 1990: 128. For the role of Cyprus in the Ptolemaic navy, see: Bagnall 1976; Hauben 1987; Marquaille 2008.

rison. Except for some names and functions of the officials in charge of this military local occupation, we do not have explicit information about the everyday life and organization of these army camps<sup>16</sup>. Their role in the first stages of Ptolemaic installation starts, however, to emerge from recent archaeological excavations, especially in the area of Paphos (Balandier 2014; Vitas 2016). Regarding epigraphical records, we learn through the reading of honorific dedications that the contingent of mercenaries was divided, at least from 142 onwards (Bagnall 1976: 54-55), into ethnic *koina*. The corpus of the funerary inscriptions of Amathous may lead us to suggest that these foreigners used to live side by side with the local population throughout the Hellenistic period. The Amathousian funerary inscriptions emphasize in a remarkable way the presence of mercenaries<sup>17</sup> – if we consider that the many epitaphs bearing foreign ethnics belong to soldiers<sup>18</sup>. Traditionally, we link this unexpected result with the installation in the city (Aupert 2009) of a garrison, probably mainly occupied by mercenaries. The hypothesis of the long-term installation of veterans on the territory of the city remains in this respect an unsolved but stimulating question (Aupert and Flourentzos 2008). Bearing in mind the arguments for the identification of these foreigners as Ptolemaic mercenaries<sup>19</sup>, the lack of further archaeological evidence may, however, prevent us from concluding that all the epitaphs presenting foreign ethnics found in Amathousian epigraphy belong to soldiers<sup>20</sup>. Finally, one of the most obvious testimonies of the importance of foreigners in the military organization of the island may be found at Kition, with the funerary epigram of the Cretan commander Praxagoras (Oziol 2004: no. 2070; Voskos 1997: E22). Other, isolated texts confirm the presence of Ptolemaic troops<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> See recently Balandier 2014: 190-192, 205-206 and Balandier 2015: 76 n. 49. For a social study of the garrisons and their interactions with the local population, see Chaniotis 2002.

<sup>17</sup> The necropolis of Amathous provides mostly epitaphs bearing foreign ethnics. A very interesting case is offered by the funerary epigram for the Kalymnian Nikogenes (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: N.29), inscribed on a painted stela representing a soldier. See: F.H. Marshall, *The Collection of Greek Inscriptions in The British Museum*, vol. IV.2: 973; Hermay 1987: 73.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolaou 1967. This is not always the case, see for example the epitaph of two men and a woman (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899: 165 no. 5962) and Launey's remarks (Launey 1987: 409, n. 1).

<sup>19</sup> The ethnics found in Cypriot inscriptions match with the known areas of Ptolemaic recruitment, see: Launey 1987 and recently Fischer-Bovet 2014: 160-197.

<sup>20</sup> I am thankful to Anna Cannavò (French School at Athens) for her remarks on the identification of the foreigners known in Amathous and for sharing with me her thoughts on that matter.

<sup>21</sup> We must mention, among them, two important official documents: the amnesty decree of Ptolemy VIII found at Kition (Lenger 1956: 437-461; Oziol 2004: 246-248 n.2017 with fig. 26; Aupert and Flourentzos 2008: 342); and the fragmentary petition of soldiers, addressed to Ptolemy VI or Ptolemy VIII, found in Nea Paphos (Mitford, *American Journal of Archaeology* 65 (1961): 100-101 n. 4 c; J. et L. Robert, *Bulletin Epigraphique* 1962: 210 n.326).

The nature of Ptolemaic occupation raises the question of changes in local identity(ies). Reading the epigraphical evidence regarding the power landscape of the island, one could conclude that the Cypriot cities did not have any potential for action during the two and a half centuries of Ptolemaic domination. This statement can even be more negative for the Cypriot local identity if we consider the abandonment of the Cypriot syllabic script, which used to be considered as a major side-effect of Ptolemaic occupation. If we cannot deny the tremendous decreasing of the local syllabary in the inscriptions from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> BC, new finds and recent studies modify our interpretation of this evolution and tend to show that the Cypriot syllabary – beside the Phoenician language still visible at the beginning of the period –, was still in use in local (and maybe specific) contexts quite late<sup>22</sup> in the Hellenistic period. The most obvious example of plurilinguism in Hellenistic Cyprus may be the well-known bilingual (Greek and Phoenician) dedication of an altar to Athena *Soteira Nike* and a king Ptolemy by Praxidemios, from *Larnaka-tis-Lapithou* (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: Π.47; Bonnet 2004: 35-36; Fourrier 2015: 44-46; Amadasi-Guzzo 2015). This inscription, among other testimonies of the early connections between the Phoenician local elites and Ptolemaic power, suggests that the adherence to Ptolemaic power may not be in total contradiction with the upholding of local traditions and authority.

Like the Greek language, Greek cultural and cultic influences are not a Ptolemaic import to Cyprus. Of course, the question – which occupied Cypriot studies for decades<sup>23</sup> – of the Greek cultural impact over Cyprus is a large and still dynamic field of study. In the present investigation, we aim to suggest that the issue might still be significant down to Hellenistic times. In some cases, indeed, the confluence of local and external (mostly Alexandrian, but not exclusively) influences appears clearly. The dedication (Sittig 1915: 158-159) by Eubiota of a statue of her husband in Amathous, a priest of Zeus Orompatas from Aenia in south-western Thessaly, offers an interesting illustration of this issue, also evidenced by archaeology (Papantoniou 2011 and 2016; Gordon 2012; Koiner 2012). In this inscription, we cannot know, indeed, whether the mentioned cult of Orompatas refers to local practices or to a “foreign” god, imported from

<sup>22</sup> Collombier 1993: 142-143, 147; Papantoniou 2013. S. Lejeune in her PhD dissertation interpreted the date of the Kafizin corpus and dated the latest use of the site to the end of the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes or the beginning of that of Philometor (183-177 BC): see Lejeune 2014. I. Nicolaou (Nicolaou 1993) dates the stamped seals found in the so-called House of the Dionysos at Paphos in the 1st cent. BC. J.B. Connelly, inventorying the recent finds on Geronisos island, lists egyptianizing amulets bearing both syllabic signs and Egyptianizing symbols (Connelly and Plantzos 2006; Connelly 2007; Connelly 2009). The Geronisos complex is also known to be a 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BC site.

<sup>23</sup> For a general survey of this notion applied to the Cypriot case, see Papantoniou 2012: 28-51. See also: Petit 2007.

Greece (Cook 1925: 869; Masson 1972: 202; Hadjioannou 1978: 103-105). Other epigraphic testimonies strongly suggest the permanence of various features tied to local cultural identity<sup>24</sup>. This phenomenon is particularly visible through the study of personal names in Hellenistic Cyprus (Masson 1963).

To sum up, the first step of our development tends to challenge the traditional concept of the Hellenistic era as a “brand new world”. As a still Mediterranean-focused world, the Hellenistic exchequer does not differ dramatically from the previous ones for Cyprus, which remains at the core of intense cultural and social interactions. However, after the death of Alexander the Great the conflicts between the *Diadochoi* heightened the central position of the island on the political and military stages. Many of the historical issues that come into consideration for the Archaic and Classical periods prove to be still valid down into the Ptolemaic period, among which identity and external influences on the local society appear to be of the greatest interest.

## 2. *A bilateral relationship*

Zooming in on various aspects of Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus we can note that the process of adaptation at work in the Hellenistic period proves to be reciprocal instead of a one-way imposition of power. An active and intense dialogue seems indeed to be installed, which shows the limits of the interpretation of Ptolemaic policy in Cyprus as a mere occupation (Papantoniou 2012).

### 2.1. Activity of the civic offices

A look at the epigraphic evidence proves to reflect the evolution of the civic activities during the Ptolemaic period.

A first important innovation in the island’s epigraphy can be noted through the appearance of the genitive case embodying the people of the cities directly combined with the word *polis*, conveying the idea that the city literally *belongs* to its citizens. The phrasing of the inscriptions can be considered a light argument in the absence of substantiated democratic institutions – which obviously were not performing in Hellenistic Cyprus in a way comparable to our usual classical Greek standards. Nonetheless the epigraphic confirmation during the Ptolemaic period of various civic institutions provides another field of investigation. These arguments tend to highlight the development of democratic (at least, civic) structures simultaneously, or even consequently, to the abolishment of the city-kingdoms by the Ptolemies. This statement is in accordance with the well-studied policy of the Hellenistic kings towards the Greek *poleis*. Here one might assume that Cyprus became integrated into the regular political processes of the Hellenistic period, regardless of its – probably over-valued in this respect –

<sup>24</sup> This important question is the subject of my ongoing PhD dissertation.

original idiosyncrasies (Keen 2012; Hatzopoulos 2009). Indeed, this integration deserves more attention: as in other areas of the Greek world we observe in Cyprus a significant increase of civic vitality during the Hellenistic period (Gauthier 1985; Will 1988). This statement seems deeply linked to the rise, epigraphically attested, of a local elite under Ptolemaic rule, and must not be overlooked in the study of the Ptolemaic longevity on Cyprus.

The Cypriot civic institutions are known mostly from honorific decrees – a type of inscriptions the importance of which differs dramatically from site to site – and are most commonly found at Kourion (Mitford 1971; Nicolaou 1996; Nicolaou 2007; Nicolaou 2013). If the scarcity of the decrees in the Cypriot epigraphical corpus does not allow us to make any challenging statement on the status, the prerogatives nor the limits of these institutions, one of them seems to enjoy a special status in Hellenistic Cyprus: the gymnasium, known from an important corpus of inscriptions (mainly honorary dedications) and some architectural testimonies. As a public living space covering varied functions, and as the domain of the *gymnasiarch*, the gymnasium proves to be a very dynamic institution in the Hellenistic period (Młynarczyk 1990: 138). Closely linked to military activity<sup>25</sup>, *gymnasia* must have been one of the main meeting points for a local, fully “Hellenized”, population and foreigners on Cyprus. Moreover, we know that the gymnasium played in Ptolemaic Egypt a specific role in the development and the diffusion of the Royal cult (Dietze 2000; Van Minnen 2000; Burkhalter 2012). In this regard, the *gymnasiarch*, likely a man of local origin<sup>26</sup>, may be considered as one of the main mediators between the Cypriot cities and the Ptolemies.

## 2.2. The language of honours

Epigraphy records the intense relationship between the Cypriots and the Ptolemaic agents. Not surprisingly, two cities are of major importance in this respect: Paphos and Salamis. Both royal capitals before and during the Ptolemaic rule – Paphos outshines Salamis as provincial capital as early as the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC (Maier 2007; Balandier 2014; Vitas 2016) –, both assuming strategic

<sup>25</sup> Three important inscriptions from Paphos must be mentioned: two are dedications by the group of the “οἱ ἀπὸ γυμνασίου” for the sons of the strategos, one for Pelops’ son (J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin Epigraphique* 1942: n.176; Mitford 1960: 109-111), and another for Polykrates’ son (Mitford 1961: 18 n.46). The last inscription is a list of contributors for the supply of oil, bearing names of mercenaries, most of them Lycians (Mitford 1961: 6 n.8). Another dedication, from Salamis, confirms the importance of the *gymnasiarch* in the social landscape of Hellenistic Cyprus: the statue-base dedicated by the συγγενῆς Diogenes son of Noumenios (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: Δ.44) in honour of his friend, the *gymnasiarch* Stasikrates (Pouilloux 1972: 497-508; Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1976: Δ.27).

<sup>26</sup> For example, Onesikrates son of Onesikrates, *gymnasiarch* under the reign of Ptolemy Philometor in Amathous: Aupert 2009: 31-32.

positions for the defence of the Ptolemaic realm, Paphos and Salamis provide rich and varied *corpora* of honorary inscriptions, mostly statue-bases dedicated to Ptolemaic officials and members of the royal court<sup>27</sup>.

In this highly normalized area, one can notice the variety of the dedicators (private citizens, civic institutions when not the city itself, cultural and religious associations, athletic or military groups) as compared with the recurrence of the standardized considerations mentioned to justify the granted honours. It is interesting to mentally draw the scheme of honours: from the – quite immutable – moral virtues celebrated by the whole Hellenistic world (goodwill, reverence, benefaction<sup>28</sup>) comes the same expected reward. The phrasing of this process, bearing explicitly the global vocabulary of Hellenistic honours, contributes to connect Cypriot society to the Ptolemaic rulers. In a tacit, yet noteworthy, way, these dedications are indirect attestations of a reciprocal dialogue between Cyprus and the Ptolemaic kings. In extraordinary occasions, probably linked to very special events, this bilateral relation may reveal itself in a more explicit manner, as in the case of the naval architect [Πυρ]γοτέλης son of Zoes, who receives an honorific statue, dedicated in Paphos, by a king Ptolemy, probably Philadelphus (Hellmann, 1999: 98-99 no. 40).

### 2.3. The growth of new local elites

Archaeology contributes in revealing the development of a local elite under Ptolemaic rule. Among the most important preserved buildings of Hellenistic Cyprus we can cite the so-called “Tombs of the Kings”, which are now generally understood as the funerary monuments of a local elite influenced by Alexandrian models (Guimier-Sorbets, Michaelides 1986; Venit 2002: 175).

Epigraphy also records the expression of a local elite. For example, we know about Cypriots who managed, in times of political and dynastic turmoil in Alexandria, to reach the highest ranks of court hierarchy. Both the Salaminian Simalos (Pouilloux 1973: 399-413) and the Paphian Onesandros, among the most illustrious Cypriots of the Hellenistic period, were active in a very particular context of dynastic conflict, which fostered the individual appropriation, by the Ptolemies, of the royal power in Cyprus. This situation favoured the rise of local magistrates by giving them the opportunity to enter the closest court of the ruling king, as in the case of Onesandros who is appointed director of the Great Library of Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter II<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> For the questions regarding Hellenistic Cypriot sculpture, and the influences of Alexandrian portraits in Cyprus, see: Gordon 2012; Keen 2012; Koiner 2012; Papantoniou 2012; Papantoniou 2016.

<sup>28</sup> εὐνοία; εὐσέβεια; εὐεργεσία are among the most visible motives of honours in the Cypriot corpus.

<sup>29</sup> Młynarczyk 1990: 136-137, 141, 144, 150-151 with n. 269, 155, 159. Another Paphian

It may be of some interest to mention another local personality receiving public honours at Kition in the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BC. The dedication by [ἡ] πόλι[ς κ]αὶ ὁ δῆμος of a statue-base for Pnytarion (Oziol 2004: no. 2030; Cayla 2005: 573) tends indeed to show some deep features of Cypriot society of the Late Hellenistic period, reflecting both evolution and a certain conservatism. The woman is honoured as the wife of Asklepiodoros son of Asklepiodoros and grandson of Sillis. Her husband used to be *gymnasiarch* and *agoranomos* of the city, while he is also known as the “second founder” and the priest of a temple of Asclepius and Hygeia. This dedication sheds light on the continuation, most likely, of familial tradition until the Late Hellenistic period in a specific sphere of activity. Onomastic in one hand, and the specific evocation of the grandfather’s name lead to the interpretation of Pnytarion’s origins in a Cypro-Phoenician background. Moreover, the mention of the cult of Asclepius (associated with Hygeia) implies that the family had not only exceptional ties to the god, but also direct access to civic power. One can then assume that we have here an example of a local family belonging to the local elite and holding ancestral religious and political powers. As noted by the editors, we might date this inscription to the very late phase of Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus, at a time when the *strategos* was presumably not holding the title of “high-priest” of the island anymore<sup>30</sup>. The permanency of the family’s status and specialization is remarkable. The case of Pnytarion’s family echoes the mention of the “chief of the Kinyrads” in a dedication from Palaepaphos (Mitford 1961: 13 no. 32). One can assume that these are elements to incite a new evaluation of the co-existence of Ptolemaic dignitaries and local elites in Hellenistic Cyprus.

### 3. *Cults in transition: memory and adaptation*

#### 3.1. From the Great Goddess to Aphrodite: a long-term transition

In this last development, we will zoom in on the aspect of social practices which illustrates in the most efficient way the question of memory and adaptation in Ptolemaic Cyprus: the cults. Indeed, Cyprus is well known, already in ancient times (Aupert 1984), for its original, sometimes bizarre (Hermay 2014), religious traditions. Starting from Homeric texts, the island is given as Aphrodite’s island and tightly bound to the goddess (Karageorghis 1977; Ulbrich 2008), while there is no local epigraphical evidence of any precise assimilation of the local goddess with Aphrodite until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> BC.

A first statement can be asserted regarding the cult of the main goddess of Cyprus: the assimilation of the “Great Goddess” (or simply “Kypria”) of Cyprus

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magistrate is given the court rank of *sungenes*: Potamon son of Aigyptos, see Młynarczyk 1990: 126, 135-138, 140-141, 143.

<sup>30</sup> For the last phase of the Ptolemaic rule in Cyprus see: Cayla 2003; Cayla 2006.

with Aphrodite, which has its roots in the policy of the last independent kings of the island, and reaches its final stage from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> BC onwards. This assimilation fits into the context of the adoption of a common repertory fostered by the Ptolemies to reinforce their dynastic propaganda (Anastassiades 2007), as attested, for example, through the re-use of the goddess' iconography on Ptolemaic coins (Hermary 2015).

### 3.2. Formal royal cult and its expressions in Cyprus

As we already pointed out Cyprus held a special position in the Ptolemaic empire from a strategic and political point of view. One must not forget that Cyprus provides a remarkable corpus for the study of the Ptolemaic ruler cult. In this respect, the island is indeed the first Ptolemaic possession outside Egypt, and this cannot be considered separately from the position of the island in the dynastic and cultic ideology.

Ruler cult finds many ways of expression in Ptolemaic Cyprus. The first, and maybe the most formal manifestation of the royal cult, consists in the dedication of statues. This practice reaches a peak with the huge concentration of honorific statues in Palaepaphos, around the worldwide famous sanctuary of Aphrodite.

The royal cult is also attested through the inscriptions related to dynastic celebrations<sup>31</sup> and the founding of *Ptolemaia*<sup>32</sup>.

An inscription (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1968: 30 no. 14) from Amathous gives an insight on the perception of the ruler cult in Ptolemaic Cyprus. In this fragmentary dedication made by a Ptolemaic dignitary (an anonymous member of the group of the “First Friends”) on the top of the acropolis, the ruling kings (Ptolemy Evergetes II and both Cleopatra III “the wife” –and niece– and Cleopatra II “the sister”, together with the princes) appear in combination with Sarapis, Isis-Aphrodite and the *synnaoi theoi*, literally the “sharing temple gods”. In the very same text, the actual ruling kings are honoured, by means of the ὑπέρ + genitive formula (Iossif 2005), in association with the dynastic deities (in the dative). According to Egyptian documentation, these *synnaoi theoi* include the previous Ptolemaic kings in a very concrete way, since the divinized kings

<sup>31</sup> Apart from the most famous corpus related to the cult of Arsinoe Philadelphus, we may add a document to the evidence regarding the celebration in Cyprus of Ptolemaic dynastic festivals: Mitford 1971: no. 75 (*oenochoe* bearing the name in genitive case of Ptolemy Philopator).

<sup>32</sup> As in Paphos: Mitford 1961: 40 no. 110. For Arsinoe Philadelphus, see Masson 1968: 400-402 (mentioned in Anastassiades 1998:138 n. 12) and the evidence gathered by P. Flourentzos regarding the probable location of an Arsinoeion in the lower city of Amathous: Flourentzos 2004; *idem* 2007. Moreover, recent excavations by the French School at Athens in the lower city of Amathous led to the discovery, in September 2015, of an inscribed circular altar, found reused in a wall of a monumental building of the Roman period (southwest of the agora). The altar bears a dedication in the genitive case to Ptolemy X and Berenike III, “Saviour Gods”. See: Thély 2016.

are actually worshipped side by side with the Egyptian gods, as temple-sharing gods. Together with the invocation to Sarapis and Isis-Aphrodite<sup>33</sup>, this mention expresses clearly the dedicator's allegiance towards Ptolemaic ideology.

### 3.3. Cypriot cults and Ptolemaic queens: a matching combination

Beside various testimonies of a formal ruler cult (Anastassiades 2012; Keen 2012; Papantoniou 2012; Cayla 2017), Cyprus provides a slightly different corpus attesting the diffusion in the island of a more spontaneous cult. The main beneficiaries are the Ptolemaic queens among which Arsinoe Philadelphus enjoys a remarkable position. A. Anastassiades already gathered the testimonies pertaining to Arsinoe Philadelphus' cult in Cyprus (Anastassiades 1998) and we do not intend to repeat the whole documentation here again.

Cypriot evidence shows that the goddess Philadelphus was worshipped in Cyprus under various designations and, to a certain extent, in local, original ways. One group of inscriptions requires particular attention. The famous Ἀρσινόης Φιλαδέλφου inscriptions are generally inscribed on small, modest altars<sup>34</sup>. According to Louis Robert (Robert 1966) these altars evidence the existence of a domestic, private cult of the divinized queen. The geographical distribution and quantity of the documents attest the popularity of her cult, in a way that makes it distinguishable from the official ruler cult. Moreover, the testimonies of Arsinoe's cult in Cyprus considerably exceed the standard evidence concerning the rest of the Ptolemies. Beside the series of altars bearing her name in the genitiv, inscriptions also record the existence of religious personnel devoted to her individual cult and at least one text (see *supra* n. 25) explicitly refers to the existence of an Arsinoeion at Idalion. Moreover, a well-known text from Marion-Arsinoe (Bagnall 1976: 228; Clarysse and Vandorpe 1998) evokes the *apomoira*, a farming tax raised in Egypt<sup>35</sup> to support the cult of the goddess Philadelphus.

Ptolemaic queens seem gifted with the special ability to have their personal worship *merged* with the formal cults of local female deities. This phenomenon is observable in Cyprus and can be illustrated with two cases (Anastassiades 2009). Arsinoe Philadelphus is associated with local deities in at least two very specific contexts: the cult of the Nymph at Kafizin (Anastassiades, 1998: 133, 139, no. 14; Lejeune 2014: 298-299, 319) and the cult of the Naiads at Chytroi (Anastassiades, 1998: 138, no. 11). If the first example fits clearly in a local context, the second one may be connected to the Alexandrian background as implied by the origin of the dedicator of the base. Finally, at the extreme end of the Ptole-

<sup>33</sup> We follow the reading of A. Hermary and S. Fourrier emphasizing the Alexandrian dynamism of religious combination extended to Ptolemaic Cyprus: Fourrier and Hermary 2006: 163-164.

<sup>34</sup> A recently rediscovered altar of this type has been published by Schreiber (2011).

<sup>35</sup> For the *apomoira* tax in Egypt: Caneva 2012: 88; Fischer-Bovet 2014: 222. See also Lejeune 2014: 298-300 with n. 170.

maic rule over Cyprus, Cleopatra the Great seems to rely on her ancestor's expert propaganda skills, while she mints Paphian coins, subtly using the association with the iconography Aphrodite<sup>36</sup>.

#### 4. *Conclusions*

Epigraphy sheds light on the integration of Cyprus into the Ptolemaic empire but also on social issues, such as identity and religion. We do not aim to deny the abruptness of the political transition between the Classical and the Hellenistic era neither the consequences of the military occupation of the island and of its integration into a foreign centralized administrative system. However, the epigraphical evidence shows that the death of the city-kingdoms at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> BC did not lead all Cyprus' original features to paralysis. A precise study of the epigraphical data tends rather to highlight the bilateral relation between the Ptolemaic rulers and the local society. Besides, through this synthetic analysis, it emerges beyond doubt that for Cyprus religion remains the best witness of continuity and the adaptation processes throughout the Hellenistic period.

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<sup>36</sup> Connelly 2005: 177-179; Anastasiades 2009: 264-267 and Fig. 3; Papantoniou 2012: 200-201. This coinage shows Cleopatra holding her newborn son Caesarion in a way tending to connect the queen to the *kourotrophos* goddess. Isis (and)-Aphrodite serve/s here as divine model, both deities being widely represented with child: Eros in Aphrodite's case, or Horus for the Egyptian Isis. Both goddesses are well attested in Amathous: Queyrel 1988.

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