

THE CYPRIOT KINGS: DESPOTS OR DEMOCRATS OR...? REMARKS ON CYPRIOT KINGSHIP ESPECIALLY IN THE TIME OF PERSIAN SUZERAINTY

Andreas Mehl

Halle/Berlin

Abstract: In the first part of the contribution current interpretations of Cypriot kingship are critically discussed. In the second part, as far as epigraphical and literary evidence allows, some features of Cypriot royal rule, especially those regarding the kings' power, are expounded with more or less certainty, and without trying to give a complete picture of Cypriot kingship.

Key words: Cyprus, Cypriot kingship.

This article and that of Christian Körner in the same volume of *Electrum* go back to papers delivered at the conference “Kleinkönige und starke Verwalter: Macht und Bedeutung lokaler und regionaler Herrschaft im östlichen Mittelmeer und dem Vorderen Orient von der assyrischen bis sasanidischen Zeit,” which was organised by Stefan Hauser and Henning Börm and held in Konstanz on 30 September and 1 October, 2013. Both articles refer to each other. Christian Körner has written a book dealing exhaustively with the Cypriot city kingdoms and Cypriot kingship which will appear in this year, while I have written several articles on Hellenistic Cyprus reverting more or less to the period of the city kings, and a few articles on the Cypriot city kingdoms and the transition from Cyprus of the city kingdoms to Ptolemaic Cyprus. For my present topic, I refer explicitly to my own publications and my articles in press.¹ Since in Körner's future book both the historical Cypriot kingdoms and Cypriot city kingship form the central topic, I deliver – in close cooperation with Körner, whom I thank for much advice – only a sketch of what may have been Cypriot city kingship.

I must start by giving two hints important for understanding the topic of this paper: in the period of the ancient Cypriot city kingdoms, as far as we have written evidence at our disposal, the island was under foreign suzerainty, i.e. indirect rule, for a long time that of

¹ Cf. Mehl 1995b; Mehl, forthcoming a.

the Middle Eastern empires of the Assyrians and Persians respectively their kings, and for a short time that of Alexander the Great and some of his first successors.² Therefore, in describing and discussing the internal conditions of Cyprus during this period, one has to refer to the influence of the suzerain.³ Furthermore, the geographical position of Cyprus, which was settled by people from outside and its role in overseas trade, will raise the question of whether or to what extent Cyprus was influenced from outside or had its own development. Research has answered this question in different ways.⁴

1. Research based on meagre evidence and ideological catchwords

Reading Herodotus' report on Xerxes' war against Greece, one becomes aware of Cypriot city kings doing service in the Persian fleet. They command the ships, their crews and the soldiers on board the ships, which are from their respective city kingdoms. Also outside this war one encounters Cypriot city kings or their sons in military actions in Cyprus and in the nearby sea, as well as far from the island. They always appear as the commanders of the troops of the city state which they reign themselves. One may think that this stereotypical situation tells us something about a king's position in his kingdom. In particular, one may deduce that the Cypriot city kings were also responsible for the political side of a war and that the seamen and soldiers were their subjects and were levied on their responsibility and authority. All this may have been true. However, the relationship between a king and his realm may have been different: the king may not have been competent in decisions on peace and war and on levying troops, but the city may have made such decisions – though it is not at all clear what “city” (πόλις) in Greek or “people” in some Phoenician inscriptions really means: if there was an assembly of the people and/or a council or only an informal meeting of the leading families or something else. If one assumes that these institutions or groups did not only give the king advice, but made decisions, the king would have been but a representative of his city.

I have argued in this hypothetical way because on the one hand there is not much written evidence either from Cyprus or from outside, literary texts as well as inscriptions, about the relationship between king and city and about the position of the king, and on the other hand some modern scholars have made very decisive, even rigid general statements about Cypriot city kingship.⁵ The problem of Cypriot kingship begins even with

² Cf. Mehl 2009b and 2011b, also for the terms “suzerain” and “indirect rule,” and of course, for this particular topic abundantly Christian Körner's future book as well as his article both quoted above. For Cyprus being under direct Antigonid and Ptolemaic rule, cf. Mehl 1995b; 1996c.

³ For historical events and situations the author refers to the following books: Hill 1940; Stylianou 1992; Collombier 1995; Iacovou 2002; Zournatzi 2005.

⁴ E.g. Mehl 1996a, 140–141, and 2009b, esp. 207–208. Iacovou 2002 argue in favour of a peculiar Cypriot kingship, whereas Zournatzi 1996 sees influence from the Levant.

⁵ Coins do not help either, especially because their legends are abbreviated so that the grammatical endings are missing, and so one does not know if they say “X king of Y” or “X king citizen of Y”; nor do the monuments of the kings etc. help. For the authors mentioned above cf. below.

the royal title: authors like Herodotus and Isocrates use βασιλεύς and τύραννος interchangeably, to which Diodorus adds δυνάστης in the same indiscriminate way.⁶

Furthermore, one has to ask how far the hypothetical statements given above have been influenced by anticipations that are determined by an ideology. The abstraction of Cypriot city kings as a general type for the whole island from concrete and very often unique historical events and situations is open to discussion because before Hellenism in Cyprus there lived three groups different in language, religion, and manners: Greeks, Phoenicians, and the so-called Eteo-Cypriots, about whom we have only tiny bits of information. However, boundaries of nations and of culture are not necessarily limits of forms of political organisations. Therefore, a unique form of kingship in pre-Hellenistic Cyprus would not be impossible in theory. On the other hand, the hypothetical division of the Cypriot kingdoms into three forms of kingship following the three groups of inhabitants is very problematic, if not erroneous, because of some simple historical facts: the ethnic and cultural groups did not live separated from each other, but the populations in the city kingdoms were mixed, of course with different distributions of the three groups from kingdom to kingdom. And some individuals will have changed village, town and kingdom, so that the distribution of the population in a given kingdom will have changed over the course of time. Moreover, there was cultural exchange within Cyprus. In consequence, the construction of three types of kingship according to the three groups in the population of the island and differing from each other so that they can be distinguished has a weak foundation and much can be argued against it. A new point of view in the archaeology of Cyprus (and not only there) is a sophisticated distinction of evidence by small regional or even local units.⁷ If one applies this principle to the Cypriot city kingdoms, the result will be that the condition of each of them must have been different from each other, and one has to abandon any generalisation that could help to find common features in the structure of the city kingdoms. Altogether, the idea of as many types of kingship as there were city kingdoms is the total antithesis of the idea of one single type of kingship, which is based on far-reaching generalisation and abstraction.

The title of this paper might lead the reader to assume that modern research attributes different principal forms of government to Cypriot kingship, the latter understood as only one type for the whole island. Indeed, this is the case. Furthermore, these positions in the last instance are based on theories of forms of government or political constitutions, but their authors do not pay attention to that theory and the historical meaning of the terms they take from it. For example, the terms “despotism,” “autocracy,” and “absolutism” are used interchangeably by the same author.⁸ In consequence, political theory is applied unconsciously, and thus in an extremely trivialised manner. Furthermore, these terms are not only removed from any political theory, but they may be or even are interpreted on the basis of an ideological framework that consists of very simple formulas. In the end, some opinions about Cypriot kingship seem to be nothing else than a game of catchwords, unfortunately of catchwords that may have dangerous effects on readers.

⁶ In his book quoted above, Körner gives the complete evidence for the titles of Cyprus’s city kings in monuments and literature. Cf. in general Carlier 1984, 234–239 for the archaic and later times, although in his book he does not deal with the title of δυνάστης in the sense of “king.”

⁷ Papantoniou 2012 with the review Mehl 2013b.

⁸ Stylianos 1992, 401–402; cf. below in the following sections.

Nonetheless, these authors are obviously convinced that they describe the situation in Cyprus of the city kings in a correct and even self-evident way, and so one has to dwell on these scholars and their ideas about Cypriot kingship.

The relevant authors are divided into two groups. On the one hand, about 80 years ago Konstantinos Spyridakis, a Greek from Cyprus, hypothesised a civic constitution with a monarch at the top for the city kingdom of Idalion in the centre of Cyprus. He was convinced that this type of constitution had been more or less the same in all Cypriot kingdoms.⁹ Spyridakis traced this constitution back to Athenian influence. As a result, this constitution would be Athenian democracy: of course, not with archontes and strategoi as in the original, but with a king as leading executive personal. This hypothesis is open to the question of which phase in the development of the Athenian democracy would have been copied in Idalion or in all of Cyprus. As city kings reigned in Cyprus at the latest in the eighth century BCE under Neo-Assyrian dominion and presumably already before it, Cypriot kingship within a democratic constitution following the Athenian pattern would mean that there was a development in Cypriot kingship with two different stages: one before the Athenian influence, and the other after it had worked in the fifth to fourth century BCE.¹⁰ On the one hand, to assume such a development or a development at all in Cypriot kingship of the early and middle first millennium BCE is not self-evident; on the other, Cyprus was in continuous contact with both the “Orient” and Greece, and these contacts, as well as changing economic conditions on the island, may have induced changes in the society as well as in the political organisation of the city kingdoms. Indeed, Spyridakis presupposed without any hesitation a development towards a special type of democracy in Cyprus.

Other scholars saw or see still today the city king as governing with absolute power.¹¹ However, there is some differentiation between these scholars in explaining the king’s rule as using absolute power: It may be the notorious “oriental despotism” as it is cited not only for ancient conditions of rule, or tyranny as an autocracy not of oriental, but of Greek offspring, absolutism which seems to refer to something like the Roman *princeps legibus absolutus* or early modern absolutism as it is best known from the French king Louis XIV, and finally a special absolutism originating in Cyprus itself. Though the position that explains the way Cypriot city kings ruled, by oriental despotism, will include that there was in Cyprus – as it was thought to be under “oriental” conditions in general – no development at all, some scholars who postulated the Cypriot city kings being autocratic and absolute rulers saw development in the island. More precisely, for them ancient Cypriot autocracy or absolutism resulted from a historical development. Nonetheless, the developments they describe differ from each other, because these authors see differences in the situations or conditions that produced the developments, as well as in their results.

⁹ Spyridakis 1937, 69ff.; cf. Hill 1940, 115 and Stylianou 1992, 402. Spyridakis’ reference to Idalion is due to an inscription which is not dated by itself. Cf. below Chapter 2, the section with footnotes 30–32.

¹⁰ For Cyprus under Neo-Assyrian and later-on Persian dominion, cf. Stylianou 1992; Mehl 2009a, 2009b, 2011b.

¹¹ In the following critical discussion of modern research on ancient Cypriot kingship I of course use the terms (e.g. “absolute power”) found in the literature on which I comment.

The well-known archaeologist and historian of antiquity, Einar Gjerstad, who was – in the volumes of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition of the years around 1930 – the first to postulate the Cypriot city kings’ oriental despotism, hypothesised a development that had led to this peculiar situation in Cyprus’s city kingdoms. He made Middle Eastern influence responsible for the Cypriot development towards oriental despotism.¹² This influence may have originated in the empires and their kings that were suzerains of Cyprus, but according to Gjerstad also Cypriot city kings, eager to imitate the mighty rulers of the Neo-Assyrian and Persian empires, may have led Cyprus into oriental despotism. As a consequence of Gjerstad’s hypothesis, Cyprus’s kingdoms would have been ruled in a more liberal way, so to speak, up to the time when Middle Eastern influence started to work.

Indeed, following a hypothesis established about 1990 by Panayotis Stylianou, another Greek Cypriot, with criticism of both Spyridakis and Gjerstad, kingship in Cyprus would have developed from Homeric “heroic monarchy,” understood as “‘liberal’ government,” to “autocracy” and “absolute rule.”¹³ The outstanding example for this development was according to Stylianou Euagoras I, who reigned over Salamis in the late fifth and early fourth century. Altogether, Stylianou described a development that would have led to tyranny as it existed at the same time in the Greek world, especially in Sicily.¹⁴ Stylianou’s first phase is similar to Gjerstad’s, but the second stage, although as a type of autocracy similar or equal to Gjerstad’s, is of different provenance: not “oriental,” but Greek. Nonetheless, Stylianou assumed Persian impact, which he called “aid,” on the Cypriot development away from “liberal’ government” towards autocracy. In this way, he postulated Middle Eastern or “oriental” influence, as Gjerstad had also done. As a result, Stylianou’s Cypriot tyranny is of western derivation and type, but it also has features of “oriental despotism.”¹⁵

If one focuses on the two ethnic groups in Cyprus which formed the main body of the Cypriot population at that time, one might assign the Cypriot Phoenicians the role of conveying Middle Eastern political principles, and with them “oriental despotism,” to regions west of the Middle East, because they were in close contact with Phoenicians in the Levant and in Cilicia – though the Phoenicians living in Phoenicia may have practised a political system that was far from anything like autocracy or absolutism, and the role of the Cypriot Phoenicians as the agents of the Persians was at least extremely overestimated, if it is not wrong at all.¹⁶ On the other side, the Greeks of Cyprus would have been responsible for influence from the Greek sphere, regarding both tyranny and democracy. If one thinks of Spyridakis’, Gjerstad’s, and Stylianou’s ideas of political development

¹² Gjerstad 1948, esp. 226ff. and 452ff., quoted by Stylianou 1992, 399ff. with disapproval, but cf. below on Stylianou’s own hypothesis.

¹³ Stylianou 1992, 400–408.

¹⁴ It will not be surprising that for Stylianou “Homeric kingship” is far from any autocratic regime. Cf. Carlier 1984, 128–130 for the Mycenaean and 178–194 for the Homeric kingship with a well-balanced argument.

¹⁵ In view of this result it is astonishing that Stylianou, as stated above, criticises Gjerstad.

¹⁶ For the – because of the very modest evidence in the last instance hypothetical – development of the political constitution in Phoenicia cf. Gschnitzer 1993 and Günther 1997, also Mehl 1998, 143–160. The hypothesised role of the Phoenicians in Cyprus can be read in Stylianou 1992 as quoted above. Against his position, see Maier 1985; Mehl 2013a, 147–148; 2013c, 335–336.

on a general level, one will find that all three construct a development of two stages. And although they postulate different developments, there is a common principle in their constructions: influence from the “Orient” in any case produces autocratic monarchy, and so for the people lack of freedom, or even servitude, whereas Greek influence may produce either democracy or tyranny and for the people either freedom or lack of freedom and servitude. The latter could also be the result of a combined influence of both spheres. If this were the case, as Stylianou has argued, it would be directed against the stereotypical conflict between East and West. Nonetheless, this peculiar co-operation of Orient and Occident would have to be explained in a very detailed and sophisticated way.

2. Some reflections on Cypriot kingship

I will now discuss some historical situations which are reported in literary and/or epigraphical evidence, with regard to Cypriot kingship. A few features are not open to doubt. Cyprus’s city kingdoms were ruled by kings, not queens. Cypriot kingship was hereditary. In consequence, dynasties ruled. But certain details are uncertain: we do not know if it was always the first son who became his father’s successor. On the other hand, we know that a king and his family could be dethroned by a usurper without any hostile reaction from the suzerain towards the new king, as numismatic evidence may tell us about such events at Marion in the West and indeed, literary evidence does at Salamis in the East of the island. However, we do not know if the usurper as the new king needed the suzerain’s recognition. Some modern authors, such as Stylianou, as quoted above in Chapter 1, have written about the population’s participation in the turbulences of a dynastic change: they write that at Marion and Salamis usurpations were accompanied or even caused by bloody confrontations between Cypriot Greeks and Phoenicians (the latter playing an aggressive role) and that the Persian Great King supported the latter. However, this interpretation is caused by ideological prejudices, and in particular by an arbitrary but seductive conscious or sometimes unconscious analogy of the relations between the Ottoman Empire or modern Turkey and the Cypriot Greeks on the one side, and those of the ancient Persian Empire together with some of its nations, explicitly the Phoenicians, and again the Cypriot Greeks, on the other.

At the beginning of this article something was said about Cypriot city kings in war. Indeed, only kings and princes, the latter to be understood as their father’s deputies, were commanders of troops of city states. In foreign policy, contacts with the Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries included, and in the relationship with the suzerains, ancient Greek literary sources and inscriptions do not mention the cities as acting institutions, but the kings and members of their families.¹⁷ According to the literary sources, before the outbreak of both Cypriot insurrections against the Persian Great King (498 and 350 BCE), conflicting positions regarding the question decisive for the weal and woe of subordinate structures in big empires, if one should be loyal to the suzerain or break with him, were discussed and decided and even physically held within the respective royal family. The result of these internal debates and clashes – not within the city or between city and king

¹⁷ One example among many is Diodorus’ report on the resurrection of 350 BCE: 16.42.3–9 and 46.1–3.

– decided upon loyalty or breaking away. However, we have information about these situations only in Salamis.¹⁸ In other city kingdoms it may have been different, and as a consequence, a general conclusion would be impossible.

One has to be cautious in interpreting some remarks in our literary sources as evidence for an active political role of the polis or citizens.¹⁹ Statements like “all Cypriots except for the Amathousians” as insurgents in 498 against the Persian suzerain, in Herodotus 5.104 even twice, are not only rare, but one would be misunderstanding them, as well as other statements like “the Salaminians,” if one took them as meaning activities decided by civic institutions of a polis, because they are extremely short expressions of more complicate conditions, and moreover they are due to Greek understanding of the political life in a polis. Other short reports, like that in Herodotus 5.113f. about “the Amathousians,” who, again in the Cypriot revolt against Persia, maltreated the corpse of the initiator of the rebellion, the Salaminian king Onesilos who had been killed in the battle, and hung up his head above a town-gate of Amathous, do in their context not hint at an assembly of the people or another civic institution of that polis, but at the Amathousian military units that were the only one Cypriot contingent to fight on the Persian side in the decisive battle near Salamis. Neither do reports about desertions of complete military units in a battle say anything about the political conditions of the home polis of the fighters: according to Herodotus 5.113, in the same battle near Salamis Stasanor, the “tyrant” of Kourion deserted together with his troops from the insurgents’ to the suzerain’s side, and then, becoming aware of this treason, the soldiers of the Salaminian chariots did the same. The latter, however, were authorised for their spontaneous desertion neither by their king, who continued fighting against the Persians until his death in battle, nor by an institution of their polis, which, of course, would have been unable to intervene in such a situation.

A Phoenician inscription from Kition first published about 25 years ago deals with a war, and in its context with a victory monument.²⁰ For the latter the Greek word “tropaion” is used, of course in Phoenician transcription. The inscription is dated to the year 392/91, being the first year of “Milkyaton king of Kition and Idalion.” “King and people” erect the monument together. This is mentioned twice. The text also tells us that “Baal has given me [i.e. the king who is speaking here himself] and the whole people of Kition strength.” Nonetheless, the king proclaims that he himself has won the victory over the enemy (who is not named) and his ally from Paphos. One may conclude that only the king as the sole victor had at his disposal what was gained in war.

The king’s double title in the inscription quoted above gives information on a special political constellation: a Cypriot city king could be king of a city state A and at the same time of a city state B: in modern terms he could be king of two (or more) city states in personal union, as was Milkyaton. Another king ruled not only Kition and Idalion, but also Tamassos. However, all known inscriptions of the type “X King of A and B (and

¹⁸ Herodotus 5.104ff.; Diodorus as before.

¹⁹ Cf. Mehl, forthcoming b (with another example given in Diodorus 14.98.2). The present author uses “polis” in a wide sense following the ancient use of this term. Cf. Mehl 2011a, 219–222.

²⁰ Yon/Szyncer 1991, 1992, and Yon 2004, no. 1144, for the whole section.

C)” are about kings of Kition.²¹ These epigraphical texts are written in Phoenician or in Greek (the latter in the syllabic script) or in both languages, and besides the inscription about the tropaion, they are dedications made by a king or a private person. In the latter inscriptions the title of the king together with the year of his reign is given for dating the event. Another personal union, regarding a king of Salamis also becoming king of Tamassos, was due to a special situation and is reported in a literary source:²² Alexander the Great made this decision in taking away Tamassos from the king of Kition. Another literary source may give a hint about one more personal union: Diodorus 19.79.4 tells for the year 313, when Cyprus was an object of war led by Alexander’s successors, of a king of Lapethos who may also have been “dynastes of (nearby) Keryneia.”²³ As a result, for the time before Alexander and the diadochi when Cyprus was under the suzerainty of the Persian kings, we have evidence for two or three city kingdoms ruled in personal union only about kings of Kition. One might ask which title(s) the Salaminian king Euagoras I had when he had conquered the most Cypriot city kingdoms and held them for some years in the early fourth century BCE.²⁴

The formula saying that the same person is king of A and B (and C) does not at all include that this king held exactly the same position with exactly the same rights of rule in A and B. In a conquered territory – as Idalion evidently was for the kings of Kition – the same king may have enjoyed more power than he had in the territory in which he had inherited his position. As a ruler over defeated enemies who were now his subjects, the king may have exercised even unlimited power. The chance to get more power may have induced a king to try to acquire another kingdom. In most cases, this will have happened by war. Indeed, beginning at the latest with Euagoras I of Salamis, there seems to have been a tendency to extend the territory ruled by the king.²⁵ Nonetheless, as the epigraphical royal titles and perhaps also a literary text quoted above show, the city kingdoms of Kition, Idalion, and Tamassos and perhaps also those of Lapethos and Keryneia continued to exist in their traditional form; they were not united, but got and had the same king who reigned his two or three or more kingdoms in personal union.²⁶ Unfortunately we do not know the conditions of rule of the kings of Kition over Idalion. It may be that the documents found many years ago in an administrative building in Idalion would help,

²¹ Besides the Phoenician inscription quoted in the preceding footnote – e.g. the bilingual inscription Yon 2004, no. 69 = Masson 1983, no. 220 = Egetmeyer 2010, 636–637, no. 4: according to the Phoenician version the fourth year of Milkyaton, king of Kition and Idalion (388 BCE, for this inscription see also below footnote 32) and Yon 2004, no. 1002: Pumayyaton (= Poumiathon), king of Kition, Idalion, and Tamassos (341 BCE). For the whole section above cf. Mehl 1996a, 128–130. Körner gives an exhaustive documentation of the relevant inscriptions in his book, quoted above.

²² Athenaios 4, 167c–d = Duris, *FGrH* 76 F 4; cf. Mehl 1995b, 96.

²³ This king of Lapethos was in fact also king of Keryneia, if one takes the text as it is written in the manuscripts. In this case we do not know if Keryneia before the situation described in Diodorus had her own king. However, it is argued that in Diodorus 19.79.4 before the city name “Keryneia” originally another personal name was written, and then in copying the text was lost. Cf. the editions of Diodorus.

²⁴ For the historical situation, cf. Zournatzi 1991 and in short Mehl 2004, 16.

²⁵ Cf. Mehl 2004, 19–20, also for the argument following above. That Ledroi and Chytroi disappeared as city kingdoms from the historical scene before the fifth century BCE is a further argument for the hypothesis that there was more change and development in Cyprus of the city kings than we are accustomed to assume.

²⁶ In consequence, the number of kingdoms and that of ruling kings at a given time will not have been identical. This fact, though it is plausible, is in general not taken into consideration.

but they have not yet been published.²⁷ Altogether, only a preliminary result can be given here: in archaic and classical Cyprus under foreign suzerainty, Cypriot kingship may have been shaped differently from kingdom to kingdom. These differences will have been caused by the different historical situations of the emergence and formation of royal rule, including the conquest of a city kingdom by the king of another city kingdom.

A question that has been – and indeed must be – posed is whether or in which way and to which extent the polis or its populace (understood as citizens though being subjects to the king) took part in the rule. This question includes further questions, especially those for the division of competences and rights and for the structure and organisation of the polis. The problem is again that the report of a historical situation or event very often does not help to understand the principles of rule in the given political unit, or it helps only together with information given in other sources. Since about 413/12, then, Euagoras I of Salamis, the best-known Cypriot king, established his rule as a system working with a small group of supporters and advisors.²⁸ Athenaios, 6.255f–256a, following Aristotle’s disciple Klearchos, relates that in Salamis – presumably during Euagoras’ reign – a sophisticated system of spies for sounding out the subjects was set up. One can compare these spies with similar institutions in Sicilian poleis ruled by tyrants, and the “eyes-and-ears” of the Persian Great Kings. Such a secret information system seems to have been typical of tyrants and powerful kings.

If one traces the advice given by Isocrates in *Nicoles* 54, to prevent and prohibit associations and clubs as well as meetings and assemblies, back to Euagoras’ rule, restrictions for the subjects were also an important part of the latter’s rule. However, the ban on associations etc. will have aimed precisely at subjects who may also have been citizens of a polis. If the latter were the case and the polis had cooperated with the king in this matter only if it was socially and politically organised as a strict, even extreme oligarchy which tended towards controlling the rest of the people. However, according to ancient constitutional theory as described and discussed by Aristotle, for example, a strong king ruling together with an oligarchy would be the combination of two opposing political systems and therefore be impossible. If Salamis in the time of Euagoras had been an exemption or even the only one, contemporary authors like Isocrates would have wondered much about this and therefore given much attention to it in their writings, and later authors like Aristotle and his disciples would have taken up and tried to explain this particular condition. One may conclude that a king like Euagoras would not have shared his rule with his polis but would rather have ruled exclusively in his own responsibility.²⁹

Nonetheless, a Greek inscription from Idalion, the longest text in the Cypriot syllabic script written at a time when this polis still had its own king, gives information about a cooperation between king and polis.³⁰ “King Stasikypros and the ptolis (sic) of

²⁷ Cf. the short remark made 20 (!) years ago by Maria Hadjicosti (1996, 345).

²⁸ Cf. also for the argument following above Mehl, forthcoming b.

²⁹ One could use for this peculiar type of rule the term “autocracy” in a general way, not bound to the regime of the Russian tsars.

³⁰ Masson 1983, no. 217 = Egetmeyer 2010, 629ff., no. 1. For the text, its transcription in the Greek alphabet, philological comments, and an interpretation of this document cf. also Georgiadou 2010. The inscription, and consequently also the events reported in it, are mostly dated about 470 BCE or a few years earlier, in any case some years after the end of the Cypriot resurrection of 498 BCE. But this as well as other details of the current interpretation of the inscription have to be challenged. I follow and complete here

the Idalians” give a physician who has treated the Idalians when they were confronted with a war waged by Persian and Kitian troops, and his brothers a real estate and some privileges. Differentiation is made between the royal treasure and that of the polis. The king has his real estate not at his own disposal without the assent of the polis. However, the text does not say what “the polis” is, who represents it and in what way and to which extent it administers and rules itself. This is really astonishing: though the inscription reports a public procedure, it does not mention any advisory or deciding institution of the polis like a βουλή or an ἐκκλησία, which one would suppose to have taken part in the decision making. In fact, one finds evidence for a council in Cypriot poleis only in Ptolemaic times.³¹ On the other hand the inscription from Idalion mentions an eponymic magistrate. As a result, this inscription gives only a vague impression of what may have been Idalion’s political system. Therefore, the idea that there were politically active citizens in Cyprus’s city kingdoms before Hellenism remains hypothetical.

Several literary and Greek as well as Phoenician epigraphical texts say that the royal family was a separate group in the polis with its own name ἄνακτες or ἄνασσαί, in Greek and *adonim* (here the sources give only the male form) in Phoenician.³² Following Klearchos/Athenaios as quoted above, the spies at Salamis gave their reports to the ἄνακτες, i.e. to male members of the king’s family. At least to this extent, but presumably in more matters, the latter took part in the administration of the city kingdom. One may ask if in addition to this group there was an upper class of citizens. Unfortunately no ancient text gives an answer beyond any doubt: in a completely preserved Greek syllabic as well as alphabetic inscription from Amathous, “the polis of the Amathousians (honors) Ariston, son of Aristonax, the εὐπατρίδην.”³³ However, the inscription is dated

hypothetically the argument of Jan Köster given in his paper delivered on 12 April 2016 in the colloquium of ancient history at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. Köster follows partially older authors (for them cf. Körner’s book quoted above): the siege of Idalion by Persian and Kitian troops may have been part of the Persian reconquest of Cyprus after the Persian victory in the battle of Salamis, which was accomplished by treason on the Cypriot side. After at Salamis the former king Gorgos had been re-installed (Herodotus 5.115), the Persians will have first re-established their rule over Kition, Salamis’ neighbour to the south-west. As a consequence of her return under Persian suzerainty, Kition (i.e. her king) will have been obliged to support the suzerain in war. This, and not the enmity of Cypriot Phoenicians against Cypriot Greeks, would be the obvious explanation for Kition taking part in the siege of Idalion. The inscription from Idalion does not say that the Idalians and their king had defeated their enemies. Of course, they would not have been tacit about a glorious victory. The fact that there was still a king and the city and that both can dispose of a real estate shows that the city was not destroyed and that the city kingdom still existed. So, as one would suppose also in the case of Kition, Idalion will have returned under Persian suzerainty by treaty, as was the case about a hundred years later with the Salaminian king Euagoras I. We only do not know if the same person was king of Idalion before, during and after the war against Persian domination. That the king and the city changed their mind to give the physician and his brother not an amount in silver, as was decided at first, but a real estate, may be due to Idalion’s return under the Great King’s suzerainty: the treaty may have provided that Idalion had to pay a big amount in silver (coined or in works of art) to the Great King’s treasury (for the payment of tribute in silver to the Great King, cf. Zournatzi, forthcoming).

³¹ Mehl 1996a 140–142.

³² Aristotle, fr. 526 Rose = Harpocration Lex. s. v.; Isocrates, *Euagoras* 72; Masson 1983, no. 211 = Egetmeyer 2010, 806, no. 1 from Soloi; bilingual inscription (quoted already above in footnote 21) from Idalion with the equation *adon* = ἄναξ; inscription from Nikosia/Ledroi (this city may have been at that time under the king of Salamis) in Pilides — Olivier 2008, 337–352. Cf. Mehl, forthcoming b.

³³ Masson 1983, no. 196b = Egetmeyer 2010, 582, no. 7 (II.); text written in the Greek alphabet.

only approximately in the second half of the fourth century. Consequently, it is not clear if this man was an εὐπατρίδης still under a king of Amathous or after the kingdom had been abolished in the wars of the successors.³⁴ So we do not know if at least in one of the Cypriot city kingdoms there was a social and perhaps also political stratification among its subjects or citizens.

3. Conclusions

Kings ruled Cyprus' city states in hereditary monarchies. They were supported in peace and war by their sons and other members of their families. The exact conditions of their rule, especially whether and to which extent their subjects were regarded as citizens, or a group of citizens shared in the government, remain uncertain. Contrary to the constructions of some modern authors, the meagre evidence at our disposal does not allow us to answer the question of whether there was a development in Cypriot city kingship either in the direction of less power of the kings and more rights for the subjects or in the opposite direction, and which influence worked in these changes. Euagoras I of Salamis may have changed the political conditions in his realm. However, we do not know either exactly the changes brought about by him, or the conditions of royal power during the reigns of the Salaminian kings before him.

More confidently we can ascertain that the inner conditions of Cyprus's city kingdoms were not decided by the suzerains who reigned over Cyprus. They were only influenced in an indirect way, and the influence was limited to special situations. This is no wonder, because not to interfere in the inner conditions of the ruled nations and territories is the normal practice of indirect rule. It is questioned only in the case of resurrections, and even then in general only persons are replaced; the system itself is not changed. In consequence, the inner conditions of the Cypriot city kingdoms, even the question (if it was ever posed) of whether there should be a king or if the constitution should be changed in a principal way, was a matter which had to be decided in each city state itself: by the king, his family, and eventually the subjects or citizens. Our evidence, however modest it is, allows the conclusion that Cyprus's city states did not develop from monarchy to aristocracy, oligarchy, or democracy. Whatever happened, for about four – or more – centuries (late eighth to late fourth century), the city states remained monarchies and any possible change was made within the system.

³⁴ Masson 1983, comment on no. 196b and Watkin 1988, 129 argue that to be honoured by the polis was possible only after the end of the kingdom. They are followed by Mehl 1995b, 102–103, note 20. However, now I see in this conclusion something like a *petitio principii*. The εὐπατρίδαι are known as the group of the most distinguished men especially in Athens.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carlier, P. (1984), *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre*, Strasbourg.
- Collombier, A.-M. (1995), *Recherches sur l'histoire de Chypre à l'époque des royaumes autonomes (VIII^e–IV^e siècles av. J. C.)*, Diss. (microfiche) Paris-Nanterre.
- Egetmeyer, M. (2010), *Le dialecte grec ancien de Chypre*, t. I: *Grammaire* ; t. II: *Répertoire des inscriptions en syllabaire chypro-grec*, Berlin–New York 2010.
- Georgiadou, A. (2010), La tablette d'Idalion réexaminée, *Centre d'Études Chypriotes, Cahier* 40, 141–203.
- Gjerstad, E. (1948), *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, vol. 4, part 2: *The Cypro-Geometric, Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical Periods*, Stockholm.
- Gschntzer, F. (1993), Phoinikisch-karthagisches Verfassungsdenken, in: K. Raaflaub (ed.), *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike. Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*, München: 187–198.
- Günther, L.-M. (1997), Die Phönizier und die Entstehung der griechischen ‚Polis‘, in: E. Acquaro (ed.), *Alle soglie della classicità. Il Mediterraneo tra tradizione e innovazione. Studi in onore di Sabatino Moscati*, Pisa–Roma: 789–799.
- Hadjicosti, M. (1996), The City Kingdom of Idalion, *AJA* 100: 345–346.
- Hill, G. (1940), *A History of Cyprus*, vol. I: *To the Conquest by Richard Lion Heart*, Cambridge.
- Iacovou, M. (2002), From Ten to Naught: Formation, Consolidation and Abolition of Cyprus' Iron age Politics, *Centre d'Études Chypriotes, Cahier* 32: 73–87.
- Maier, F.G. (1985), Factoids in Ancient History. The Case of Fifth-Century Cyprus, *JHS* 105: 32–39.
- Masson, O. (1983), *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques. Recueil critique et commenté*, Paris (1st ed. 1961).
- Mehl, A. (1995a), Zyperns Wirtschaft in hellenistischer Zeit, *Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte* 14(2): 27–50.
- Mehl, A. (1995b), Zypern und die großen Mächte im Hellenismus, *Ancient Society* 26: 93–132.
- Mehl, A. (1996a), Zyperns Städte im Hellenismus: Verfassung, Verwaltung und führende Gesellschaft, in: W. Leschhorn, A. Miron (eds.), *Hellas und der griechische Osten. Studien zur Geschichte und Numismatik der griechischen Welt. Festschrift für Peter Robert Franke zum 70. Geburtstag*, Saarbrücken: 127–152.
- Mehl, A. (1996b), Griechen und Phoiniker im hellenistischen Zypern – ein Nationalitätenproblem?, in: B. Funck (ed.), *Hellenismus. Beiträge zur Erforschung von Akkulturation und politischer Ordnung in den Staaten des hellenistischen Zeitalters*, Tübingen: 377–414.
- Mehl, A. (1996c), Militärwesen und Verwaltung der Ptolemäer in Zypern, *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale* 38: 215–260.
- Mehl, A. (1998), Stadt – Staat – Begegnung von Kulturen. Grundsätzliche Gedanken, ausgehend vom hellenistischen Zypern, in: U. Fellmeth, H. Sonnabend (eds.), *Alte Geschichte: Wege – Einsichten – Horizonte. Festschrift für Eckart Olshausen zum 60. Geburtstag*, Hildesheim: 143–167.
- Mehl, A. (2000) [2001], Ελληνιστική Κύπρος, in: T. Papadopoullos (ed.), *ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ*, vol. B', Nikosia: 619–761.³⁵
- Mehl, A. (2004), Cypriot City Kingdoms. No Problem in the Neo-Assyrian, Late Egyptian and Persian Empires, but Why Were They Abolished under Macedonian Rule?, *ΕΠΙΕΤΕΡΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΕΝΤΡΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ* 20: 9–21.³⁶

³⁵ The publications Mehl 1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b, and 1996c are slightly reworked versions of Mehl 2000 in the original language of its manuscript.

³⁶ This publication is a paper delivered in the conference “From Evagoras I to the Ptolemies. The Transition from the Classical to the Hellenistic Period in Cyprus. International Conference Nicosia,

- Mehl, A. (2009a), The Relations between Egypt and Cyprus from Neo-Assyrian to Achaemenid rule (7/6th Cent. B.C.), in: D. Michalides, V. Kassianidou, R.S. Merillees (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference "Egypt and Cyprus in Antiquity," Nicosia, 3–6 April 2003*, Oxford: 60–66.
- Mehl, A. (2009b) [2010], Zyperns Stadtkönige bis um 500 v. Chr. Zwischen wechselnden Oberherrschaften und Unabhängigkeit, zwischen Eigenentwicklung und Import, in: R. Bol, K. Kleibl, S. Rogge (eds.), *Zypern – Insel im Schnittpunkt interkultureller Kontakte. Adaption und Abgrenzung von der Spätbronzezeit bis zum 5. Jahrhundert. Symposium, Mainz 7.–8. Dezember 2006*, Münster: 191–212.
- Mehl, A. (2009c), Ein zyprischer Stadtkönig hilft vertriebenen Samiern bei ihrer Rückkehr in die Heimat, in: R. Einicke *et al.* (eds.), *Zurück zum Gegenstand. Festschrift für Andreas E. Furtwängler*, Langenweißbach: 509–514.
- Mehl, A. (2011a), Hellenistische Kolonisation, *Ancient West and East* 10: 209–226.
- Mehl, A. (2011b), Zyperns Einordnung in die politische Welt Vorderasiens im späten 2. und frühen 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr., in: C. Ulf, R. Rollinger (eds.), *Lag Troia in Kilikien? Der aktuelle Streit um Homers Ilias*, Darmstadt: 207–224.
- Mehl, A. (2013a), Zyperns Rolle im Überseehandel mit dem Ägäisraum (5./4. Jh. v. Chr.), in: A. Slawisch (ed.), *Handels- und Finanzgebaren in der Ägäis im 5. Jh. v. Chr. / Trade and Finance in the 5th c. BC Aegean World*, Istanbul: 135–153.
- Mehl, A. (2013b), Review of Papantoniou 2012, *Sehepunkte* 13, Nr. 7/8, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2013/07/22800.html> (access: 15.07.2013).
- Mehl, A. (2013c), Handel zwischen dem achaimenidischen Zypern und dem Ägäisraum, in: N. Zenzen, T. Hölscher, K. Trampedach (eds.), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung. Wechselnde Perspektiven auf die Antithese von ‚Ost‘ und ‚West‘ in der griechischen Antike*, Heidelberg: 292–294, 321–340, 355–366.³⁷
- Mehl, A. (forthcoming a), Under Persian Rule. Cyprus and the Mediterranean, in: B. Jacobs, R. Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Empire*, Chichester.
- Mehl, A. (forthcoming b), Veränderungen in Zyperns Städten im Übergang von der Stadtkönigszeit in die Epoche der ptolemäischen Herrschaft: einige Gedanken, in: *Volume in Memory of Pierre Carlier*.
- Papantoniou, G. (2012), *Religion and Social Transformations in Cyprus. From the Cypriot Basileis to the Hellenistic Strategos*, Leiden–Boston.
- Pilides, D., Oliver, J.P. (2008), A Black Glazed Cup from the Hill of Agios Georgios, Lefkosia, belonging to a “wanax”, *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus*: 337–352.
- Spyridakis, K. (1937), Συμβολή εις τήν ιστορίαν τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ ἀρχαίου Ἰδαλίου (5 αἰ. π. Χ.), *Κυπριακαὶ Σπουδαὶ* 1: 61–78.
- Stylianou, P. (1992), The Age of the Kingdoms. A Political History of Cyprus in the Archaic and Classical Periods, in: *ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ Γ΄. ΤΜΗΜΑ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ. ΜΕΛΕΤΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΥΠΟΜΝΗΜΑΤΑ*, vol. II, Nicosia: 373–530.³⁸
- Watkin, H. (1988), *The Development of Cities in Cyprus from the Archaic to the Roman Period*, Diss. Columbia University, New York.
- Yon, M. (2004), *Kition dans les textes. Testimonia littéraires et épigraphiques et Corpus des inscriptions (Kition–Bamboula*, vol. 5), Paris.

29–30 November 2002.” In the conference volume, published in 2007, one will find only a short and misleading remark about the publication of this paper in the *Επετερίς*.

³⁷ The argument of Mehl 2013c is nearly the same as Mehl 2013a, but Mehl 2013c does not contain the overview on relevant publications given in Mehl 2013a, whereas in Mehl 2013c more general considerations are expounded than in Mehl 2013a.

³⁸ This treatise was published as a separate book already in 1989. Later on it was translated into Greek and published under the title *ΤΑ ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ*, in *ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ*, vol. B’, ed. by T. Papadopoulos, Nicosia 2000, 465–618. In the same volume Mehl 2000 was printed.

- Yon, M., Sznycer, M. (1991), Une inscription phénicienne royale de Kition, *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*: 791–821.
- Yon, M., Sznycer, M. (1992), A Phoenician Victory Trophy at Kition, *Report of the Department of Antiquity Cyprus 1992*: 157–175.
- Zournatzi, A. (1991), *Euagoras I., Athens, and Persia: ca. 412–387/6 B.C.*, Ph.D. Thesis University of California, Berkeley.
- Zournatzi, A. (1996), Cypriot Kingship. Perspectives in the Classical Period, *Tekmeria* 2: 154–179.
- Zournatzi, A. (2005), *Persian Rule in Cyprus. Sources, Problems, Perspectives*, Athens.
- Zournatzi, A. (forthcoming), The Vouni Treasure and Monetary Practices in Cyprus in the Persian Period, in: K. Liampi, D. Plantzos (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference Coinage / Jewellery. Uses – Interactions – Symbolisms. From Antiquity to the Present, Ios, 26–28 June 2009*, forthcoming. There is a publication of the article in the internet: http://www.achemenet.com/document/ZOURNATZI_Vouni_Treasure_31-7-2010.pdf.