

The Cypriot Kingdoms in the Archaic Age: a Multicultural Experience in the Eastern Mediterranean

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The Cypriot Kingdoms in the Archaic Age: A Multicultural Experience in the Eastern Mediterranean

Publishing in 1984 his masterwork about kingship in Greece before the Hellenistic age Pierre Carlier wrote¹ in his introduction: “Le cas des royautes chypristes est très différent [*i.e.* par rapport à celui des royautes grecques antérieures à la conquête d'Alexandre]: leur étude systématique n'a jamais été tentée à ma connaissance. La plupart des documents épigraphiques en écriture syllabique ont été réunis et analysés par O. Masson²] et les *testimonia* relatifs à Salamine ont été rassemblés par M. Yon³], mais les données archéologiques et numismatiques, en rapide augmentation, sont extrêmement dispersées. En outre, il est difficile de séparer complètement l'examen des royautes chypristes, qu'elles soient grecques, phéniciennes ou étéochypristes, de celui des royautes syrophéniciennes. En d'autres termes, la royauté chypriste serait un excellent sujet ... pour une autre thèse”.

Almost twenty-five years later, a comprehensive study about Cypriot kingship is still waiting to be made. Masson's collection of Cypriot syllabic inscriptions would now need an updating⁴, the Phoenician inscriptions found on the island have never been systematically collected⁵, and the *corpora* of literary and epigraphic *testimonia* about the major ancient cities of Cyprus have multiplied (with the publication of the *testimonia* about Amathus and Kition⁶), but are still not enough to give a complete survey of the textual sources about the ancient history of the island.

Nevertheless, in the last decades interest in this crucial theme in the history of Archaic and Classical Cyprus has grown. A certain number of studies have focused on some basic aspects: the origins, characters and evolution of Cypriot kingship have been alternatively taken into account and different theories have been proposed, stimulating a debate that is going to increase thanks also to the impressive vitality of Cypriot

¹ CARLIER 1984, vi.

² MASSON 1961, 1983².

³ CHAVANE, YON 1978.

⁴ The editing project of the 14th volume of the *Inscriptiones Graecae*, devoted to Cyprus and including both the syllabic and alphabetic inscriptions, has been recently recovered and should give some results in the next times: I would thank Markus Egetmeyer for this information.

⁵ After the most interesting study of MASSON, SZNYCER 1972 and the publication of the Phoenician inscriptions coming from Karageorghis' excavations in Kition-*Kathari* (AMADASI, KARAGEORGHIS 1977), the last review of the evidence is in the fifth volume of the Kition-*Bamboula* series (YON 2004), presenting all the Phoenician inscriptions coming from Kition - that are the large majority of all the island's Phoenician inscriptions, but still not the only ones. The Idalion *corpus* of administrative Phoenician *ostraca* dating from the Classical age, which should give great information about the political and economic organization of the Idalion and Kition kingdoms during the 5th and 6th c. BC, is still unpublished (see on this SZNYCER 2004).

⁶ AUPERT, HELLMANN 1984, YON 2004.

archaeology and its results⁷. I shall try to give here a brief outline of the elements introduced in the debate up to now, before advancing some observations about our documents and what we can infer from them on the form and character of the archaic Cypriot kingdoms. I will not advance here any new interpretative model about the origin of the Cypriot kingdoms, deferring this task to the conclusion of my research, which will take into account the textual evidence about Iron Age and Archaic Cyprus to face some key questions about its political and cultural structure.

I shall start by presenting David Rupp's theory, exposed in a number of studies since 1985⁸, not because of its chronological priority, but because of the impact it has had on successive studies about the political organization of Archaic Cyprus. The maps he published in the *SIMA 77* volume, showing the hypothetical division of the island in from ten up to fifteen kingdoms during the Cypro-Archaic (CA) period⁹ are still frequently reproduced in a number of studies about Iron Age Cyprus without consideration of their declaredly theoretical and unhistorical character. This is due in my opinion not only to the innovative character of this theory, but also to the general need for a systematization of our knowledge about the political structure of the island in the Archaic Age, to which Rupp's maps give a provisional, hypothetical, but clear answer. Without any pretension to completeness I shall summarize the key points of his theory, stressing the elements that I am interested in debating here.

Founding his argument on the results of the Canadian Palaepaphos Survey Project, Rupp presents an evolutionary pattern of the occupation of the island with its turning point at the end of the Cypro-Geometric (CG) Period, characterized by a sharp increase in the number of settlements during the CG III phase and their organization on a three-level structure (one large fortified urban settlement, a limited number of town-like centres and numerous rural settlements)¹⁰. Analysis of the architectural remains would confirm this sketch: monumental architecture in the public as well as in the private (funerary) sphere is particularly evident for the CG III and CA periods, indicating the emergence of a ruling class with the related phenomena of luxury and ostentation as means of legitimization¹¹. The increasing diffusion of literacy especially in the 7th c. BC is another clear sign of growing social and political complexity¹²; comparably, an outstanding increase in the number of rural sanctuaries during the CA period is taken as a sign of more stratified and organized religious activity¹³. Finally, the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions are taken as evidence of the ongoing process of state formation in Cyprus between the end of the 8th and the mid 7th c. BC: the fact that in the Sargon stele dating from 707 BC seven kingdoms are mentioned, but in the Esarhaddon prism dating from 673/2 BC their number has grown to ten is in Rupp's opinion a sign of a varying, evolving situation¹⁴. If the Sargon stele can be considered a *terminus ante quem* for the origin of the Cypriot kingdoms, a *terminus post quem* is assumed to be the foundation of the Phoenician colony of Kition at the mid 9th c. BC, since in Rupp's theory it was through the stimulus of the Phoenicians (spurred by the Neo-Assyrian Empire) that Cyprus left its "Dark Age" and entered a secondary state formation process¹⁵.

It is to this last point that I would like to dedicate some more attention¹⁶. The need for an external influence on the origin of the Cypriot kingdoms is ultimately based on the theoretical assumption that "Iron Age Cyprus ... is a classic example of the formation of secondary states under the pressure of economic contacts and exploitation from an existing state in a nearby region"¹⁷. The validity of the application of this

⁷ See for example the most recent debate between IACOVOU 2008 and VOSKOS, KNAPP 2008; cf. also the contribution of M. Iacovou presented at the AIAC Congress 2008, "Interpreting the Cyprus Phenomenon: Ten Kingdoms, Three Languages, One Cultural Identity".

⁸ RUPP 1987, 1988, 1989, 1998, 2005.

⁹ RUPP 1987, 166 and 168, Maps 4 and 6.

¹⁰ RUPP 1987, 149–151.

¹¹ A key argument here is provided by the interpretation of the Salamis 'royal tombs': RUPP 1988.

¹² RUPP 1987, 151.

¹³ RUPP 1987, 152.

¹⁴ RUPP 1987, 152–153.

¹⁵ RUPP 1987, 153–156.

¹⁶ For a critical examination of the archaeological arguments in Rupp's theory (which it is impossible to treat here in detail) see STEEL 1993.

¹⁷ RUPP 1987, 155.

general pattern to Iron Age Cyprus is however far from being demonstrated. The originality of Rupp's thesis, and also what opened his theory to the most criticism, lies in its interpretation of the Phoenician influx as primary and indispensable, overshadowing another fundamental component of Cypriot kingship, the Mycenaean element, which in Rupp's hypothesis is reduced to a matter of propaganda and ideological building on the past. The proposition of the Levantine model as the prototype of Cypriot political organization, and of a late chronology for the formation of the kingdoms in Cyprus, are two aspects that sharply contrast with the traditional view of the origin and characters of Cypriot kingdoms, and have therefore given the first impulse to the debate.

The Cypriot kingdoms are traditionally viewed as a Mycenaean-type institution, introduced on the island by Greek-speaking people who arrived in Cyprus after fleeing the collapsing Mycenaean world during the 12th c. BC. This thesis is substantiated by a number of elements: the introduction on the island of the Greek language, with the adoption of a modified form of the second millennium Cypriot syllabic script to write it, goes together with a process of hellenization of Cyprus which took place during the 12th and 11th c. BC, at the very delicate phase of transition between the Late Bronze and the Iron Age¹⁸. This is what the archaeological and epigraphic data seem to demonstrate, and even with some uncertainties in the interpretation¹⁹ the key fact of the introduction on the island of a post-Mycenaean civilisation with some of its basic features (like the language) is hard to question²⁰. The inclusion of a political organization among these basic features is something more delicate that needs to be confirmed by some more evidence. Here the textual sources apparently meet the archaeological record: the Greek legends, variously attested in classical authors and in some cases (as for Salamis) of a certain antiquity, ascribe the foundation of some of the Cypriot kingdom capitals to Greek heroes coming back from the Trojan war²¹. Some more elements are often adduced to complete the picture:

- The preservation and reinterpretation of the Mycenaean-origin figure of the *basileús* as the head of the Cypriot kingdoms - with very original characters that have been variously analyzed²² - is considered the best evidence of a Mycenaean influx in the formation of the Cypriot kingdoms; the epigraphic and numismatic evidence provides a sure proof of the continuous local use of the name *basileús* (in the Greek syllabic script *pa-si-le-wo-se* as a genitive form) by the Cypriot kings themselves.
- In the lost work of the Aristotelian school *Kypríōn politeía* we find some information about the use of the archaic term of Mycenaean origin *wánax* in the historical context of the royal families in Cyprus²³. A study of the epigraphic evidence confirms that the term *wánax* (with some more problems for the feminine *wánassa*, which have well-known divine connotations in relation to the cult of Aphrodite) was historically used in Cyprus for aristocrats and nobles close to the royal family²⁴.
- The introduction to the island of the Greek language in the form of the Arcadocypriot dialect is proved as early as the 11th c. BC by the Opheltes *obelós*, which attests the Greek name *Opheltēs* written in a very archaic syllabic script and in the Arcado-cypriot genitive form *Opheltau*²⁵. This famous document,

¹⁸ See IACOVOU 1999a, 2003.

¹⁹ The transition from Bronze to Iron Age (what is effectively called by Maria Iacovou 'the protohistoric interim', IACOVOU 2001) is one of the most debated subjects of Cyprus archaeology, and has been the main theme of a number of symposia and essays: see *inter alia* KARAGEORGHIS 1994, IACOVOU, MICHAELIDIS 1999, and most recently IACOVOU 2007a. The first known Greek syllabic inscription, the famous Opheltes *obelos* from Palaepaphos-Skales dating from the 11th c. BC, has been recently questioned by OLIVIER 2007, 243 ## 170, as it is included (without explication) in his corpus of Cypro-Minoan inscriptions (s. p. 38 of the same volume, where Frieda Vandenaabeele writes: "Les éléments les plus discutés pour la fin du CM sont les trois *obeloi* de la tombe 49 de Palaepaphos-Skales dont le texte est en langue grecque, mais l'écriture en CM").

²⁰ IACOVOU 2005, 127.

²¹ VANSCHOONWINKEL 1994, especially 121–124.

²² Most recently IACOVOU 2006, with previous bibliography.

²³ Aristot. frg. 532 Gigon: Harpokration, *Lexicon* ed. BEKKER P. 18,4-6. "Ἀνακτες και; ἄνασσαί. οἱ μεν υἱοί; τοῦ βασιλέως και; οἱ ἀδελφοί; καλοῦνται ἄνακτες, αἱ δε; ἀδελφαί; και; γυναῖκες ἄνασσαί. Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῇ Κυπρίων πολιτείᾳ. See also Isocr. *Ev.* 9. 72.

²⁴ See all the references in POLDRUGO 2001.

²⁵ MASSON, MASSON 1983, MASSON 1994. See also *supra* n. 18.

found in the necropolis of Palaepaphos-Skales, seems to fit perfectly the Greek legend attributing the foundation of Paphos in the 12th c. BC to the Arcadian king Agapenor and his followers²⁶.

Such an impressive coincidence of archaeological, epigraphic and literary data is normally adduced as the definitive proof of the Greek Mycenaean origin of the Cypriot kingdoms, with a peculiar Cypriot phenomenon of conservatism invoked to justify their survival until the early 3rd c. BC, when all the rest of the Greek world had since centuries adopted different forms of political organization²⁷.

On this basis a great authority in Cyprus historical and archaeological studies, Einar Gjerstad, advanced as early as 1948 a thesis that in its clear-cut arguments has remained as an indisputable reference for decades. Taking for granted the hellenization of Cyprus as it is described in the Greek legends²⁸ and is confirmed by the archaeological evidence, he saw in early Iron Age Cyprus “an initial union of the Eteocyprian and Mycenaean-Greek elements”, not only generally in the cultural but also specifically in the political sense²⁹. At the end of the CG III period, however, the growing influence of the Phoenicians caused “the development of Cypriote kingship into oriental autocracy”, a process that in the course of the Archaic Age gradually transformed the Mycenaean-type Cypriot kingship into a form of despotic monarchy of an oriental character³⁰. This was, in Gjerstad’s interpretation, the reason for the decadence of Cypriot culture in the Classical Age and, finally, for the disappearance of the Cypriot kingdoms at the beginning of the Hellenistic Age³¹. This thesis, which accompanied the first complete scientific archaeological survey of the Cypriot Iron Age and the best systematization (at that time) of Cypriot pottery and sculpture, has for these and still other reasons acquired the status of a demonstrated fact, and until recently has never been seriously questioned.

As Antigoni Zournatzi observed in a most interesting article, “the point remains that none of the models that have been advanced until now can securely account for the origins of Cypriot kingship”³². This is true not only for the theories we have seen just now, but also for other hypotheses advanced by different scholars - for instance, the view of Geometric Cyprus as a Big Man Society, with some sort of chiefdoms preceding the historical kingdoms of the Archaic Age³³ - that we cannot consider in detail here.

A basic reason is surely one of perspective: as Maria Iacovou has repeatedly stressed, as long as a foreign model is sought to explain and describe Cypriot kingship, every effort is bound to fail³⁴. The “uniqueness of the *basileus* phenomenon of Cyprus”³⁵ has to be taken as the starting point for any analysis of the Cypriot Iron Age political system. Only with such a perspective can we hope to give the right weight to elements ultimately of foreign origin but deeply reinterpreted and readapted to the Cypriot reality.

With this in mind, let me briefly consider the data available. It is obviously impossible to account here in detail for every piece of evidence, as a great number of our documents are still being debated. Some points can however be retained:

– It is now generally admitted that Cyprus did not suffer a cultural and political breakdown, as did Greece or the Levant, during the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age. The most recent analyses, on the contrary, insist on the continuity of occupation of some important areas of the island (Palaepaphos, Kition)³⁶ and on the perception of the state formation dynamics in Iron Age Cyprus as an ongoing process

²⁶ See e.g. Paus. 8. 5. 2: Ἀγοπήνωρ δε; ὁ Ἀγκαίου τοῦ Λυκούργου μετα; Ἐξεμον βασιλεύσας ἐς Τροίαν ἠγήσατο Ἀρκάσιν. Ἴλιου δε; ἀλούσης ὁ τοῖς Ἑλλήσι κατα; το;ν πλοῦν το;ν οἴκαδε ἐπιγενόμενος χειμω;ν Ἀγαπήνωρα και; το; Ἀρκάδων ναυτικο;ν κατήμεγκεν ἐς Κύπρον, και; Πάφου τε Ἀγαπήνωρ ἐγένετο οἰκιστής και; τῆς Ἀφροδίτης κατασκευάσατο ἐν Παλαιπάφῳ το; ἱερόν.

²⁷ A good synthesis which underlines the conservatism aspect is SNODGRASS 1988.

²⁸ Not accepted, however, without critical discussion: GJERSTAD 1944.

²⁹ GJERSTAD 1948, 431 (quotation), 445–446.

³⁰ GJERSTAD 1948, 452–455.

³¹ GJERSTAD 1948, 498–500.

³² ZOURNATZI 1996, 164.

³³ PETIT 2001.

³⁴ Most recently IACOVOU 2007b.

³⁵ IACOVOU 2006, 330.

³⁶ MAIER 1999, YON 1999.

having its starting point deeply set in the Bronze Age³⁷. This approach has the merit of perceiving the history of the island as a continuum, without artificial periodizations originally conceived for different contexts³⁸.

– The turbulence that surely afflicted Cyprus during the 12th-11th c. BC, causing a redefinition of the island settlement pattern³⁹, had apparently different causes and courses from the rest of the Mediterranean: in particular it was an essentially episodic and peaceful phenomenon (with some exceptions) which in some cases even left place for monumental realizations like the sanctuary areas of Kition-Kathari and Palaepaphos⁴⁰.

– Given as certain, undeniable and proven both archaeologically and epigraphically, the coming of Mycenaean Greek-speaking people to Cyprus during this transitional phase is far better defined as a process of *hellenization* rather than of *colonization*. Two essential characteristics have to be retained: 1) it was mostly a gradual peaceful process; 2) it introduced to the island some essential new cultural features, such as new burial practices or the Greek language⁴¹. Should the political system also be considered among these features? Even if some elements are surely of Mycenaean origin - the existence of *basileis* and *ánaktes* in Cyprus is unquestionable - they seem to have been deeply reinterpreted and adapted to the local context: as affirmed by Maria Iacovou "it was in Cyprus, and in Cyprus alone, that the Greek *basileus* became a hereditary king in a territorial monarchy that was a successful indigenous tradition"⁴². The Mycenaean *basileús* was something completely different than the Cypriot one, and the same can be said about the *wánax*⁴³: so the role of these figures in the political system of the island has to be defined exclusively on the basis of internal evidence, resisting the temptation of transferring to Cyprus elements coming from different contexts.

– The textual sources mentioning Cypriot kings and kingdoms in the Archaic Age are essentially Neo-Assyrian inscriptions (the Sargon stele, the Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal prisms)⁴⁴ and Cypro-syllabic inscriptions⁴⁵. They are obviously sources with important differences and very particular features. The Neo-Assyrian inscriptions are celebrative, ideologically oriented texts referring to events strictly related to the expansion of the Assyrian empire to the west. They can be very informative, but they have to be read with the greatest attention to their literary and ideological conventions. The earliest Cypro-syllabic royal inscriptions, on the contrary, are simple ownership inscriptions graven on precious objects (bowls, bracelets) and mentioning personal names in the form PN *pa-si-le-wo-se*. They are less informative, but they pose fewer problems. Only a careful combination of these different pieces of evidence can really introduce us to the problem of the effective consistency of the kingdoms in Cyprus, and of their evolution phases.

– It is very difficult to evaluate the real impact of the Phoenician presence in Cyprus, especially in political terms. We know that the Phoenicians arrived in Cyprus sometime during the 9th c. BC and occupied the centre of Kition, and that it was their first colony on the route toward the west. We do not know much more. We do not know, for example, how long Kition remained a Phoenician colony and when it acquired political autonomy, becoming the powerful Classical Age kingdom of Kition⁴⁶. We cannot say what kind of control Tyre exercised over its colony, and how this could influence the role of Cyprus in the face of Assyrian expansion in the west. Cyprus surely played a role in some political events concerning the struggle between Phoenicia and Assyria at the end of the 8th c. BC (the flight of Luli of Sidon to Cyprus in 701 BC reported in

³⁷ This is the theory strongly supported by IACOVOU 2007a, 2007b.

³⁸ IACOVOU 2002, 84–85; DEMAND 2004.

³⁹ IACOVOU 1994, 1999b.

⁴⁰ IACOVOU 2006, 325–327; 2007a, 17.

⁴¹ IACOVOU 1998.

⁴² IACOVOU 2006, 330.

⁴³ See about this CARLIER 1984, 1–134; PALAIMA 1995.

⁴⁴ For the Neo-Assyrian sources about Cyprus see in general REYES 1994, 49–60 with references.

⁴⁵ For the occurrences of *pa-si-le-wo-se* (in its different orthographic variations) and related terms in Cypro-syllabic inscriptions see Egetmeyer 1992, 128–130: only a little part of these occurrences can be dated before the end of the 6th c. BC, the most ancient being two inscription mentioning two Paphian *basileis* (MASSON 1983², 412 no. 180a, 192 no. 176).

⁴⁶ On Kition in the Archaic Age see YON 1987; on the need to maintain a distinction between the foundation of the Phoenician colony of Kition and its transformation in a Phoenician-ruled Cypriot kingdom in the Classical Age see IACOVOU 2007b, 469.

some Sennacherib inscriptions is the best known example)⁴⁷, but the sources do not allow us to have a clear perception of the situation⁴⁸. Giving the Phoenicians a propulsive role in the creation of Cypriot political organization, as in Rupp's theory, is then something absolutely hypothetical that is in no case supported by the documentation. It is not to underestimate the Phoenicians presence in Cyprus, to say that there is at the moment no specific evidence linking Cypriot kingship to the Phoenician city-state model - not lastly because of our insufficient knowledge of the political organization of the Phoenician cities themselves⁴⁹.

– Strictly related to the problem of the origin and character of Cypriot kingship is the question of the existence of the *pólis* in Cyprus. The great and still unresolved problem of a common, clear definition of *pólis* accepted by all the scientific community⁵⁰ is increased, in the case of Cyprus, by the survival and dynamic evolution in the island, still in the Classical Age, of an institution considered at least problematic for the definition of the *pólis* as it is kingship. The theoretic incompatibility of the concept of *pólis* and that of kingdom in the specific case of Cyprus has been affirmed a number of times⁵¹, and only recently the specificity of the Cypriot case has been advanced as a point worthy of analysis and discussion⁵². It is not just a question of definition and categorization: if the status of *pólis* is denied to the cities of Cyprus only on the basis of a supposed survival without changes of the Mycenaean-type kingship in the island, then a reinterpretation of Cypriot kingship automatically opens as new the problem of the existence of the *pólis* in Cyprus, and gives way to different hypotheses.

– The dynamic aspect in the history of the Cypriot kingdoms is as or even more important than the questions of origin and definition. The kingdoms in Cyprus were not statically the same for more than half a millennium: their number and extension varied with time, with some kingdoms (for example Kition or Salamis) acquiring an extra-regional importance and some others (like Tamassos or possibly Kourion) losing weight and finally independence in the course of the Classical Age⁵³. Similar differences in extension and evolution of the individual kingdoms should also be envisaged during what Maria Iacovou calls 'the foundation horizon', that is, the Cypro-Geometric period (between the 11th and 8th c. BC, before the Neo-Assyrian intervention)⁵⁴. It is in this phase that the (probably preceding) political organization of the island defined itself as a set of independent kingdoms of regional character. The emergence of the single kingdoms did not take place always at the same time: when some sites, like Palaepaphos⁵⁵ or Kourion⁵⁶, could already furnish proof of social stratification and the existence of a rich aristocracy, some others, like Amathus⁵⁷, were still at their beginnings. This is an aspect contrasting with the idea of the hellenization of Cyprus as a single simultaneous process, and suggesting on the contrary a birth-process of the kingdoms based essentially on the specificity of single sites and their preceding histories.

– There is no proof of the existence of an ethnical diversification of the Cypriot kingdoms⁵⁸. There are documents (inscriptions, literary texts) speaking of Cypro-Greeks, "Eteocyprits" (in our literary sources defined *autóchtones*)⁵⁹, Cypro-Phoenicians, and even sources stressing the existence of conflicts between

⁴⁷ See BRIQUEL-CHATONNET 1992, 194–195 with references.

⁴⁸ On the Phoenicians in Cyprus the synthesis of GJERSTAD 1979 is now partially out-to-date; see LIPIŃSKI 2004, 37–107 for more recent bibliography.

⁴⁹ See on this BONDÌ 1995.

⁵⁰ Great steps in this direction have been made thanks to the activity of the Copenhagen Polis Centre and its numerous publications (a list available on the CPC website: <http://www.teachtext.net/bn/cpc>, last updated 09/10/2008).

⁵¹ See DEMAND 1996, 7–10.

⁵² DEMAND 1996; MAIER 2004; RAAFLAUB 2004, 279–280.

⁵³ See IACOVOU 2002; a synthesis of the history of the Cypriot kingdoms is to be found in STYLIANOU 1992.

⁵⁴ IACOVOU 2002, 83–85.

⁵⁵ For Palaepaphos during the CG see MAIER 1999.

⁵⁶ On Kourion: BUITRON-OLIVER 1999.

⁵⁷ On Amathous: HERMARY 1999.

⁵⁸ See lastly IACOVOU 2007b.

⁵⁹ The modern ethnonym "Eteocypriot" has been radically questioned by GIVEN 1999; the subsequent debate has shown, in the last years, the need for a more neutral, descriptive term, such as the frequently employed "Amathusian" (which does not coincide, however, with "Eteocypriot" in all its uses). More elements in PETIT 1999, AUPERT 2001, FOURRIER 2007 and WHITLEY 2008, 235–238 (with very

these different ethnic components, the best known being the Isocratean oration *Evagoras*⁶⁰: but none of these documents can be dated prior to the Cypro-Classical Age and can be referred to a situation surely antedating the Greek-Persian conflict⁶¹. On the contrary, the archaeological *facies* of the Cypro-Geometric and Cypro-Achaic periods is ethnically homogeneous in the entire island, with differences based on regional specificities and not on ethnic and cultural differences⁶². This is not to say that the distribution of the different ethnic groups was homogeneous on the island: there was surely a concentration of Phoenicians in Kition, while Amathus was possibly the *pólis tōn autochtónōn par excellence*; there is no reason, however, given this documentary situation, to think of distinct, ethnically based kingdoms: without additional evidence we are not allowed to speak about Greek or Phoenician kingdoms, even not about Cypro-Greek or Cypro-Phoenician (or 'locally Cypriot') kingdoms, but simply about Cypriot kingdoms.

Continuity, cultural and ethnic homogeneity, regional specificity, internal dynamic: these are the basic aspects to keep in mind when speaking about Cypriot archaic kingdoms. Many other factors should be taken into consideration that I cannot examine in detail here: for what concerns the external influences on the political organization of Cyprus, the control of the great Eastern empires (Assyria, Egypt, Persia) over the island should not be overlooked - even when limited and weak, as surely in the case of Egypt and probably in that of Assyria, an external control over such a flexible system as that of the Cypriot kingdoms could have always some consequences at least in term of stabilisation or redefinition of internal dynamics⁶³.

As for the structure of the kingdoms, great importance has to be given to the internal articulation of the concrete geography of the island, and to the territorial aspects of royal powers⁶⁴. Last but not least, some key functions of the Cypriot *basileía*, such as the religious role of the *basileús*, have to be analysed in relation to the similar functions of the Mycenaean *wanax*⁶⁵, but also to the similar characters of some Near Eastern parallels (in particular, Egyptian, Assyrian and Persian influences are relevant, but no concrete oriental antecedent can be detected)⁶⁶.

All these - and I have surely left something out - are the historical and methodological means that are going to guide us, hopefully, to a new, extensive history of the Cypriot kingdoms.

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interesting similarities to the situation of Praisos in Crete). I would like to thank Pierre Carlier and James Whitley for helping me to make this point clearer.

⁶⁰ See especially the description of the Phoenician-ruled Salamis as a *pólis ekbarbaróménē* (Isocr. *Ev.* 19-20, 47-50).

⁶¹ About the (discussed) existence of ethnic conflicts in Classical Cyprus see SEIBERT 1976, MAIER 1985.

⁶² On regional identities in Archaic Cyprus see FOURRIER 2007.

⁶³ ZOURNATZI 1996, 165-166; IACOVOU 2002, 80-83.

⁶⁴ On this especially FOURRIER 2002.

⁶⁵ PALAIMA 1995.

⁶⁶ MAIER 1989; cf. ZOURNATZI 1996, 168-172.

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