



# Portraits from the Hellenistic City of Amathus: the Contribution of Epigraphy to the Understanding of a Heterogeneous Identity

Anaïs Michel

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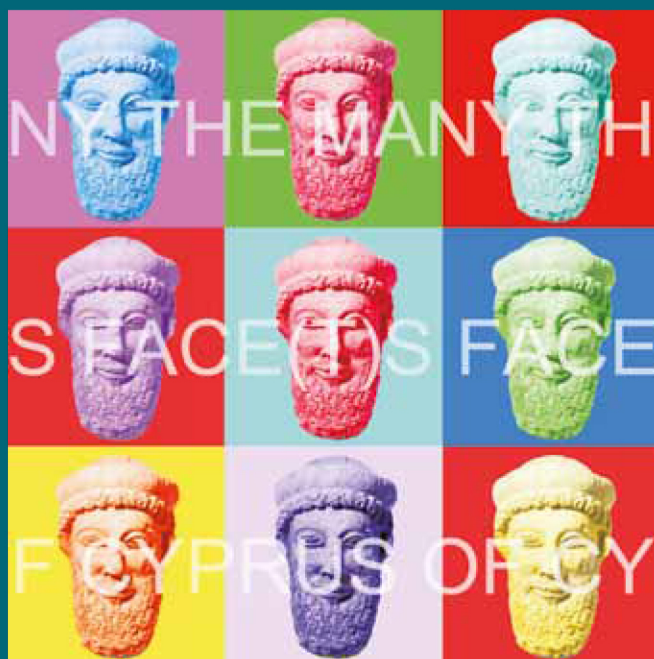
# UNIVERSITÄTSFORSCHUNGEN ZUR PRÄHISTORISCHEN ARCHÄOLOGIE

Aus dem Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften der Universität Bochum,  
Fach Ur- und Frühgeschichte

Band 324

## The Many Face(t)s of Cyprus

14th Meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology



2019

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14th Meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology

edited by

Dorina Glörfeld, Kim Kittig, Bärbel Morstadt and  
Constance von Rüden



2019

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## Preface

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The Meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology (POCA) has offered now for many years an excellent opportunity for postgraduate students and early career professionals from various backgrounds and disciplines to present their work, exchange ideas and meet colleagues with similar research interests in Cypriot culture. For the 14th Meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology at the Ruhr-University Bochum it was our special interest to trace and emphasize the island's cultural diversity throughout the different periods, a characteristic, which makes the island (but not only the island) particular rich and interesting. Moreover, we welcomed not only the traditional POCA contributors of archaeology and history, but also studies of a wider chronological, contextual and multidisciplinary approach to Cypriot cultures and beyond, including for instance cultural anthropology, as well as social and political sciences. With such an approach we hoped to widen our disciplinary and theoretical horizons and to open the possibility of reciprocal inspirations beyond the more traditional partners of archaeology in natural sciences and history.

Regarding the organization of the POCA conferences on the 15th–16th November 2014 in Bochum, we are first of all indebted to the Institute for Archaeological Studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum, which has provided us with all the facilities, and especially the students and the students council, who have supported us with great enthusiasm in all points during the realisation of the event. Furthermore, we wanted to thank Jan-Marc Henke, who was during this period part of the team and supported the general organization, planned the conference dinner and designed the final version of our conference poster. Our sincerest thanks go to the colleagues and friends in Bochum and Münster who kindly fulfilled the important task of chairing a session: Patric Kreutz, Anne Riedel, Stefan Riedel, Sabine Rogge, Thomas Stöllner and Christian Vonhoff. We are of course especially thankful to Susan Sherratt, who not only provided us with a key-note lecture on the many facets of Cypriote archaeology, but also accompanied the conference with inspiring and always warm and supportive comments and questions.

Most of the contributions resulting from this 14th Meeting of Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology are now presented in this volume. They cover a time span of about 4000 years, reaching from the Middle Bronze Age until the 20th Century C.E. We decided to not organize the papers according to the chronology of their themes but corresponding to their general topic or approach. The first section, *Constructing Spaces: Landscapes and Architecture*, comprises papers on palaeodietry and architecture from the Middle Bronze Age until the Ottoman period, while the second section on *Negotiating Identity through Material Culture* deals with a very wide spectrum of approaches and genres from iconography, techniques, the distribution of pottery, portraits, writing and the use of postcards to construct diverse Cypriote identities. Under the topic *Materialized Practices and their Context* three papers examine the materialized remains of work, the use and distribution of figurines. For the realization of this volume we are indebted to the editor of the series *Universitätsforschung zur Prähistorischen Archäologie* and Hans-Jörg Lauffer for the support and advice regarding the general lay-out. We are very grateful to Anna Galeano-Arque for helping out in the editorial work as well as Roselyn Campbell for the language corrections.

Altogether, it is of course the first aim of the volume to present the work of early career researchers to a wider audience and thus to mirror fresh ideas and approaches on Cypriote studies. At the same time it invites archaeologists, historians, art historians, anthropologists and everyone else who is interested in the history and material culture of Cyprus to actively engage with the different presented chapters and articles in order to enrich the discussion on the diversity of Cypriote culture and its research and, thus, the many inspiring facets of the island.

Dorina Glörfeld, Kim Kittig, Bärbel Morstadt and Constance von Rügen



Anaïs Michel

## Portraits from the Hellenistic city of Amathous: the contribution of epigraphy to the understanding of a heterogeneous identity

### Abstract

This paper is incorporated within the framework of a PhD thesis\* devoted to the study of the Hellenistic society of Cyprus, which is based mainly on the epigraphical material. Cyprus is one of the main stages of the Ptolemaic external influence during the whole Hellenistic period. The longevity (the occupation of Cyprus reaches both edges of the Hellenistic times without significant interruption) and specificity of the Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus make it a particularly interesting case study among the Ptolemaic possessions outside Egypt (Bagnall 1976, 38–80). Different aspects of the role assigned to the island into the Ptolemaic system can be considered crucial, and the interactions between the Cypriot populations and the Alexandrian power are becoming an intensive area of research. Focusing here on the city of Amathous, we aim to emphasize the role of inscriptions in the study of identity(/ies) in ancient times. According to the specificities of the Amathousian case, the results presented here will tend to underline the coexistence of the local population and the foreigners in the particular context of the Ptolemaic rule.

\* This research (2013–2017) has been Defended PhD in December 14, 2017.

### 1. The Hellenistic Cypriot society and the epigraphical material

#### 1.1. Transition and changes

The opening of the Hellenistic period brings many changes to Cyprus, which contribute to make the island a unique case in studies of ancient societies.

Till the beginning of the Hellenistic period Cyprus kept its traditional political system, being divided into city-kingdoms. In the course of the previous centuries, the island fell successively under the supremacy of the Great King of Persia at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, then, in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Cyprus fell into the hands of Alexander, before being definitively occupied by the new rulers of Egypt in the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (from 294 BCE). This integration into the Ptolemaic Empire noticeably transformed Cyprus. Politically, it marked the end of the city-kingdoms system and coincided with the general establishment of Greek-style political and administrative institutions. Culturally, the opening of Hellenistic times matches the decrease of syllabic writing in favour of the Greek alphabet. The Ptolemaic occupation brings also

demographical effects such as internal<sup>1</sup> and external migrations with the settlement of an Alexandrian-like royal court system and the presence of garrisons with Ptolemaic mercenaries originating from various parts of the Greek world. In religious matters Hellenistic Cyprus shows evidence not only of new cults (among which we must note the remarkable development of the royal cult) but also the reinterpretation of older ones, sometimes notably integrated into the Ptolemaic ideology. These changes definitely had deep consequences on matters of identity. Among the questions we must investigate, it seems important to examine if, from a local point of view, the end of the city-kingdom's political system tends to transform the civic identity of the Classical period into a hypothetical Cypriot one.

#### 1.2. Epigraphy and the Cypriot society

We decided to base this investigation on the epigraphical material due to our special concern for

<sup>1</sup> Due for instance to the destructions of cities, such as Marion on the West-coast.

the connexion between society and epigraphy. Indeed, if taken separately from other sources inscriptions do not enable to understand every aspect of ancient societies, we believe that they can be, besides other materials, a remarkable witness of the transformations of the Cypriot cities and of their activity during the Hellenistic times.

Many various aspects of the society can indeed be approached through epigraphy, such as power and cults. Epigraphical evidence helps, for example, to grasp various aspects of the relationship between Cyprus and the Ptolemies, but also to understand how different authorities could live side by side in the Hellenistic cities of Cyprus. For cult matters, the importance of inscriptions is equally noteworthy, since they enable the readers to gather data about the deities and their worshippers, but also religious associations, cult practices and traditions. Being not merely the favoured “showcase” of the rulers and the kings, inscribed stones additionally offer evidence concerning less visible groups of the society, such as women, children or mercenaries. In this regard, the city of Amathous provides great evidence on the Cypriot Hellenistic society, including information about the significance of the military sphere during the Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus.

## 2. Investigating Hellenistic Amathous

### 2.1. Archaeological background and historical context

Before presenting and commenting on the epigraphical data of Hellenistic Amathous, we must give some general, yet essential, review of the archaeological record of the site.<sup>2</sup>

The first modern excavations at Amathous took place in 1893–1894 and were led first by A. H. Smith then J. L. Myres on behalf of the British Museum, and resulted in the discovery and the publication of more than 300 tombs; then the Swedish expedition in 1930 ended in the excavation of 26 additional tombs. In 1975 the French

School at Athens started to excavate at Amathous in three main areas: the acropolis, the port and the Northern walls. Regarding the Department of Antiquities, the Cypriot archaeologists worked mainly in the Eastern and Western necropolis and in the lower city as well.

At the beginning of the Hellenistic time the period chosen as the chronological frame of our study, Amathous was already an old city with long and strong political and cultural traditions that shaped a very original identity. Some significant historical events must be recalled in order to understand the position of the city in the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.<sup>3</sup>

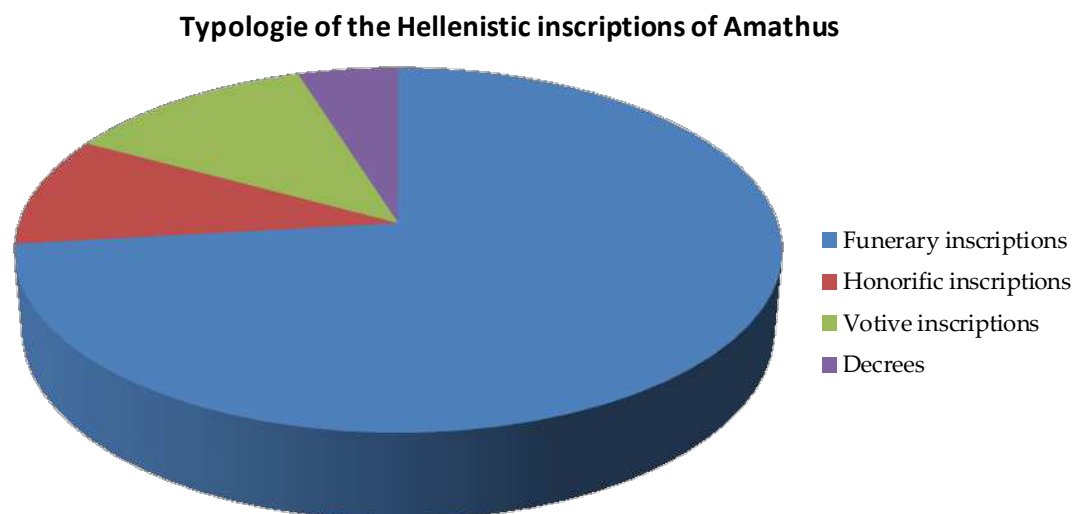
In the course of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Androkles, the last king of independent Amathous, drove the city-kingdom to the Macedonian side, joining Alexander’s forces during the siege of Tyr in 332 BCE, shortly after the defeat of the Great King, Darius, at Issos (333 BCE). This military and political support appears as a dramatic shift in the situation, the city-kingdom of Amathous being well-known for its hostile position towards the Ionian revolt in 499–498 BCE. After the death of the Macedonian king in 323, Androkles chose to ally with Ptolemy, son of Lagos, the new ruler of Egypt, upon the Diadoch’s War, and even took part in the siege of Marion when this city of the west coast chose to remain on the Macedonian side against the Lagid (in 321 BCE).

However, the diplomatic position of Amathous appears ambiguous in the period of transition between the last king Androkles and the longstanding Ptolemaic occupation starting in 294 BCE. Androkles’ policy indeed seems unclear, but we can assess that the city of Amathous was probably one of the main stages during the war between Demetrios Poliorketes and Ptolemy: some Antigonid coins were found in the last phase of the palace on the acropolis, while the destruction of the same building can be dated to the very early times of the Ptolemaic rule. Under the Antigonids’ (or the Lagids’?) authority, the port was protected by defensive walls (Aupert 2009, 26–28), while some tombs in the necropolis seem to bear Macedonian influences.<sup>4</sup> thus, Amathous seems to have received

<sup>2</sup> Murray et al. 1900, 87–126; Gjerstad 1935, 1–141; for the necropolis see for instance: Tytgat 1989. The whole historiography of the excavations (with specific bibliography) will be found in: Aupert 1996, 14–17; 195–203. For a diachronic history of the Limassol area, see now Konnari/Schabel 2015 and more specifically Alpe 2015, 49–97 for the archaeology of the area till the end of the Roman period.

<sup>3</sup> For the question of the “Hellenization” of Amathous in the previous century, see: Petit 2007a, 96–106.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance the Tomb 321 in Hermary/Karageorghis 1987, 72–75.



**Fig. 1:** Typologie of the Hellenistic inscriptions of Amathous (A. Michel).

noteworthy attention by the Diadochs in the early Hellenistic times, but their interest seems to decrease during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Only from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and the outbreak of the dynastic war between Ptolemy VI Philometor and his brother Ptolemy VIII Eurgetes II will we note a renewed attention for the city.

## 2.2. The Amathousian corpus

For this paper we counted up to around 50 inscriptions dating back to the Hellenistic period, all of them originating only from the ancient city of Amathous. We can point out three main areas: the urban area (the acropolis and its slopes, and the lower-city), the Eastern and Western necropolis, and the *chôra*, i.e. the rural territory of Amathous. This study refers to a specific corpus limited to twenty-seven inscriptions coming from the necropolis, fifteen from the urban area and four from the inland territory of the *polis*.

The nature of the documents logically follows this geographical breakdown (Fig. 1): the strong predominance of the funerary inscriptions must be underlined. This specificity (all excavated sites of Amathous included, we have collected thirty epitaphs, while there are only four honorific inscriptions, five votive texts and no more than two decrees) used to carry the false impression that Amathous was a poor case regarding epigraphy. By comparison with the epigraphic record of Paphos or Salamis, the scarcity of official and public documents emphasizes indeed

the originality of the Amathousian epigraphic corpus of the Hellenistic period. Focusing here on the question of identity(/ies), we will start by demonstrating the importance of the foreign communities encountered in Hellenistic Amathous. This distinctive feature is made obvious by the epigraphic texts.

## 3. Local people and foreigners in Hellenistic Amathous

Amathous during the Hellenistic Period can rightly be understood as an ideal case study for any scholar concerned with the question of co-existence of local people and foreigners in ancient societies, and the social interplay of these different groups within a defined political and historical context. As one of the very direct demographical consequences of the Ptolemaic military occupation over Cyprus, this aspect is very well attested in Amathous. Furthermore, Amathous has a special position in the history of the island of Cyprus concerning matters of identity. Ancient authors (Aupert/Hellmann 1984, 1–23) claim indeed that Amathous was the home town of indigenous Cypriots, i.e. the focus centre of the so-called eteocypriot identity (Aupert 1996, 18–19). According to these literary sources the population of Amathous was first constituted of people originating from the island itself, i.e. earlier inhabitants than the Greek and Phoenician migrants. Unfortunately, most of the texts focused on the history of the city are now lost.



If we now turn our attention to the archaeological evidence (Aupert 2009, 25–38) we note the presence of two languages used in Amathous till the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE: Greek, and on another hand an unknown language which to date has not been understood yet (even if written in the same syllabic code that we do know how to read). This enigmatic language is usually called “eteocypriot” itself and is considered as the primitive language of the island (Masson 1983).

By the end of the Classical period the Greek alphabet starts to interfere in this linguistic landscape, following the new direction of the Amathousian policy towards Greece.

The best illustration of this composite linguistic landscape may be given by the king Androkles himself, who associates both Greek and eteocypriot languages in the dedications he made to the “Kypria” on the top of the acropolis in the last years of his reign (Hermay/Masson 1982, 235–244; Hermay 1996, 120). With this offering the king could express both his claim of eteocypriot identity and the impregnation of the Greek cultural identity, the latter being doubtlessly linked with political interests in the particular context mentioned above.

### 3.1. Local people and foreigners in the funerary inscriptions

As we already noticed, epitaphs represent the main type among the Hellenistic inscriptions of Amathous. Within this category we can count twelve texts mentioning local people and eighteen bearing the names of foreigners.

So how can we explain this massive representation of non-local people in Hellenistic Amathous? A first reason for the presence of non-Cypriot people lies in the occupation of the city, and the whole island, by Ptolemaic troops, among which the high representation of mercenaries is well attested (Bagnall 1976, 56–57). Their presence is one of the first consequences of the Ptolemaic rule over Cyprus, and clearly evokes the strategic significance of the island in Hellenistic times. Being the main navy base of the whole Ptolemaic fleet from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (the first attestation of a *navarchos* in Cyprus concerns the *strategos* Seleukos in 142 BCE), Cyprus was already the

centre of the defensive plan of the Ptolemaic realm<sup>5</sup> even before to receive the headquarters of the *navarchos* (Hauben 1987, 213–226).

One epitaph (Marshall 1916, 973) belonging to this category is of special interest: it consists of an elegiac epigram inscribed on a painted stele with small pediment,<sup>6</sup> found during the British excavations in the Eastern necropolis (more precisely tomb 71). The monument is generally dated to the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Below the text a warrior holding a spear and a shield is depicted. His complete equipment consists of a helmet, armour, a short chiton and boots.

The epigram reads as follows:

ἦδε σε, [N]ικόγενες, κεύθει χθὼν τῆλε  
Καλύμν[ας]  
πατρίδος, ἀκμαίαν δ' ὤλεσα[ς ἢ]λικία[ν]

“This soil covers you Nikogenes, far from Kalymnos your homeland, you who died in the prime of life”.

Nikogenes, a native of the Aegean island of Kalymnos, may be given as a representative example of a Greek mercenary serving in Cyprus. The painted figure (unfortunately not visible on the photograph) below the text clearly refers to a soldier. The quality of this grave (regarding both the text and the stele) tends to point towards a quite wealthy character. The text, presented as an elegiac couplet, does not itself appear very informative. The mention of the “prime of life” however can let us imagine that the deceased was still a young man (certainly under forty years old), while the expression τῆλε Καλύμνας πατρίδος firmly suggests that Nikogenes was not established in Amathous, nor in Cyprus, as a permanent resident. Only his premature death (of which no cause is mentioned) sets the Amathousian ground as his definitive home.

Another Greek mercenary, Leagridas from Thessaly, was buried in the necropolis of Amathous (Nicolaou 1984, 261 n. 10) probably in the course of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. On this limestone stele with pediment and acroters<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Especially due to its noteworthy location towards Syria: see Will 2003 (1966/7), 166–167.

<sup>6</sup> British Museum, n° 1894.1101.158.

<sup>7</sup> Limassol Museum, n RR 939/1, Inscr. 209.



discovered by chance in the Northern area of the “Amathous Beach Hotel” (i.e. the Western Necropolis), only the name and the ethnicity of the deceased can be read as follows:

Λεαγρίδας  
Ταυρομένου  
Θεσσαλός

“Leagridas son of Tauromenos from Thessaly”

These two funerary inscriptions (being just a sample of an entire corpus) stand as illustrations of the diversity of origins and practices of the foreigners buried in Amathous. Their function, however, even if not explicitly given by the epitaphs, may be in both cases linked to the establishment of mercenary troops in the city.

But Greeks are not the only strangers who died in Amathous during Hellenistic times: people from Babylonia (Nicolaou 1976, B.2), Phoenicia (Nicolaou 1976, H.7, A.17, K.48, Δ.59), but also Africa (i.e. Egypt and Cyrenaica, see Nicolaou 1976, Θ.19, N.37, A.15) are known through the epitaphs of Hellenistic Amathous.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2. Local people and foreigners in the honorary documents

Another category of foreigners well attested in Hellenistic Cyprus groups together all the high-ranked Ptolemaic officials assuming various functions in the Ptolemaic hierarchy (Nicolaou 1968, 23–42). The Amathousian corpus of inscriptions offers interesting pieces of evidence regarding this second category of non-local people.

As we already pointed out, unlike Paphos or Salamis, Amathous provides very little information about the category of the Ptolemaic officials: but unlike Salamis, then Paphos, Amathous is nothing like a provincial capital for the Ptolemies. Nevertheless we can still note the presence of a Samian official, honoured in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE by the city of Amathous. Unfortunately, his statue base, which actually included a familial group displaying his statue together with the statues of his wife and children, is now lost.

The inscription reads as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Ἀμα[θουσίων ἡ πόλις],  
[— — — —]ον Ἀμμωνί[ου] Σά<μ>ιον,  
τῶν  
[ἀρχι]σωματοφυλάκων, τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς  
[π]όλεως, καὶ Φίλαν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ  
5 [τ]ὴν Καρπίωνος θυγατέρα, τῶν φίλων,  
[Ἀ]λεξανδρίδα, καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἀμμώνι  
ον  
[καὶ] Καρπίωνα καὶ Παγκράτην τῶν δι  
αδόχων,  
[καὶ Φίλαν(?)] τὴν θυγατέρα, ἀρετῆς  
ἐνεκεν  
[καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς β]ασιλέα Πτολε  
μαῖον καὶ βασίλισσα[ν]  
10 [— — — — — — — καὶ Ἀ]μαθουσίου.

“The city of Amathous [honours] ... son of Ammonios, Samian, among the Bodyguards in chief, commandant of the city, and his wife Phila from Alexandria, daughter of Karpion, Friend of the King, and their sons Ammonios, Karpion and Pankrates, belonging to the group of the Successors, and their daughter Phila on account of his beneficence towards the king Ptolemy and the queen ... and the Amathousians as well”.

The preserved text inscribed on the pedestal (Nicolaou 1968, 30 n. 14) evokes the anonymous son of Ammonios as *archisomatophylax*, i.e. a member of the high-ranked group of the “Bodyguards”, and ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως, which means that the Samian official was actually in charge of the military authority of the city (Bagnall 1976, 49–50). The ethnicity of his wife, Phila from Alexandria, is also interesting as are the early honours (they are mentioned as “Successors”) attached to their sons (Bagnall 1976, 64, n. 114). All these details tend to demonstrate the importance of the son of Ammonios, both in the context of the Cypriot city and in the Alexandrian hierarchy. Unexpectedly, the discovery in May 1974 of a new dedication (Pouilloux et al. 1987, n. 67) involving presumably the same Samian official’s

<sup>8</sup> For a complete study of foreign ethnicities on the funerary inscriptions of Cyprus, see Nicolaou 1967, 15–36.

<sup>9</sup> The text was amended in several occasions. We give here the main corrections: line 1. According to Strack followed by Launey (Launey 1949/50, 1150) line 1 didn’t exist and the inscription began in this way: Ἀμμώνι[ον] Σά[μ]ιον. Line 8–10. Pouilloux (Pouilloux 1975, 233) comparing with the inscription 67 in Pouilloux et al. 1987, reads: ... ἀρετῆς ἐνεκεν | [καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς β]ασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον καὶ βασίλισσα[ν] | [Κλεοπάτραν, θεοῦς φιλομήτορα, καὶ Ἀ]μαθουσίου.

son of Ammonios at Salamis enabled J. Pouilloux (Pouilloux 1975, 229–233) to connect both texts and to specify the dating of the Amathousian one in between 163 and 145 BCE, i.e. during the joint reign of Ptolemy Philometor and Cleopatra II. Unfortunately, this connexion does not help in the naming of the Samian official's son, since in both texts his identity is reduced to his ethnic and patronymic elements (due to the damaged condition of the stones). Except for this frustrating lack of information regarding his name, the function of the official mentioned both at Salamis and Amathous (where he bears the title of ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως) represents a great interest for our study: his role included undoubtedly a military part, which contributes to link this Samian official to our two strangers mentioned above. If his relations with the Ptolemaic sphere are elucidated by the honorific terms clarifying his career at the court and in the hierarchy of the Ptolemies, his connexion with the civic institutions and the people of Amathous is much more problematic and remains unclear. The dedication from Amathous emanates from “the city” and evokes the benevolence of the honoured official towards the “Amathousians”, a possible indication of the social interplay between Ptolemaic representatives and the local elites in Hellenistic Cyprus.

Besides these texts illustrating the presence of strangers, one inscription from the corpus of Amathous offers evidence about the activity of local Cypriots in the political and cultural life of the city, despite (or more exactly, within) the Ptolemaic establishment. In the lower city, where there were presumably civic buildings during the Hellenistic times (Prête 2007, 115–130), Onesikrates son of Onesikrates, gymnasiarch of Amathous, dedicated “a gate and thirteen columns for the *stoa* located in front of the double *stoa*” in honour of the King Ptolemy and the Queen Cleopatra, Gods Philometores (Mitford 1961, 112 n. 14; Hellmann 1999, 93–94).

The whole inscription<sup>10</sup> reads as follows:

- 1 [ύ]περ βασιλέως τῷ Πτολεμαίου καὶ  
 βασιλίσσης Κλεοπάτρας, θεῶν  
 φιλομητόρων, καὶ τῶν τέκνων  
 αὐτῶν τὸ θύρωμα καὶ τῆς στοᾶς  
 5 τῆς προσκευμένης τῇ διπλῇ  
 ἐπικίονας δεκατρεῖς,  
 Ὀνησικράτης τῷ Ὀνησικράτους  
 γυμνασιαρχῶν

“In honour of king Ptolemy and queen Cleopatra, Gods Philometores, and their children, Onesikrates son of Onesikrates [dedicated] a door and thirteen columns for the *stoa* located opposite the double *stoa*.”

This inscription dating from the reign of Ptolemy Philometor (more precisely between 163 and 145 BCE) represents many interests for the study of Hellenistic Amathous, but also for the study of the Cypriot society under the Ptolemaic rule. According to this paper's specific investigation we intend to read this inscription as a testimony of the integration of some local people into high civic institutions, such as the gymnasium, which tends to become one of the main stages for civic life during the Hellenistic times. Onesikrates is clearly a local name and this assertion requires us to keep in mind the importance of onomastic criteria for the study of identity through the epigraphic material. In epitaphs as in other documents, the inscribed names bear marks of the origin of people: the familial origin of the individual appears through the name of the father (in most of the cases), while the geographic origin (also attested through the use of ethnicities) can be revealed through comparison and integration into prosopographical series (as for the most complete example for Hellenistic Cyprus, see Nicolaou 1976). For instance, we know (Hermay 2008, 97–100 with n. 29, 31) that names built on the prefix Ones-/Onas- are over-represented in Cyprus. Indeed, we can find at least thirty different individuals bearing names of this specific category in the *Prosopography of Ptolemaic Cyprus* (Nicolaou 1976, 91–94).

The dedication by Onesikrates can be read as a piece of evidence for the existence and the public activity of the Cypriot elites within the Ptolemaic system and beside the omnipresence of Ptolemaic officials in the cities of the island. If the strategically crucial institutions were held by Ptolemaic officials only, Cypriots could seemingly attain some civic, and definitely crucial, powers: in this regard, it shall be kept in mind that the gymnasium is one of the most favoured places for the development and the expression of the royal cult in the Hellenistic period. With his monumental dedication (one of the few known in Cyprus at this period), Onesikrates enters in direct interaction with Ptolemaic power, while the nature and the location of the *stoa* seemingly connect this local Cypriot to the public institution of the gymnasium. More than ever, this civic building appears as a key space in the social

<sup>10</sup> Limassol Museum, RR. 165. 10.

landscape and the interaction between the people and the Ptolemies.

Questioning the names can also be a source of information when we turn to more modest inscriptions, as for instance the epitaph of Nation daughter of Onesikrates.<sup>11</sup> As for her homonym (Onesikrates son of Onesikrates mentioned above), the absence of a specific ethnicity and the local tone of her name let us think that the deceased woman originated from the city of Amathous. The funerary stele, found reused in a house of the village at Aghios Tychonas, is generally dated no more precisely than belonging to the Hellenistic period.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, if the name of her father clearly evokes a Greek-Cypriot identity, the name “Nation” itself does not seem to bear any connexion with Greek. This remark tends to remind us (but this should stay in the sphere of the hypothesis) of the so-called eteocypriot identity of Amathous. The idea that a name that does not sound Greek could be understood as a remainder of the eteocypriot language has been evoked by P. Aupert and P. Flourentzos in their study of a cadastral text dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (Aupert/Flourentzos 2008, 329 n. 39).

## 4. Identity(/ies) in Hellenistic Amathous: the cultic evidence

### 4.1. Aphrodite *Kypria* and the Amathousian identity

As it has already been emphasized by many scholars, there is a very strong religious tradition in Amathous, especially concerning the cult of the goddess Aphrodite, or more precisely, “*Kypria*”, the Great Goddess to whom was dedicated the main sanctuary of the city, located on the top of the acropolis (Hermay 1996, 110–132; Fourrier/Hermay 2006). Amathous was also famous, already in ancient times, for its bizarre cult practices, but this topic arises far beyond the scope of this paper (see Aupert/Hellmann 1984, 19–23 and more recently Hermay 2014, 239–260). In

the last part of this study we aim to present a sample of inscriptions which all stress in a specific way the continuous wavering, the oscillation between indigenous and foreign components. All of them contribute to give an insight<sup>13</sup> in the religious life of Hellenistic Amathous.

One of the most interesting aspects in the investigation of the Hellenistic society lies indeed in the potential transformations observed on cult-matters and the role of the massive presence of strangers in the evolution of the religious life of the city. For this reason, and due to the original position of this city in the religious landscape of the island of Cyprus, Amathous is once again an ideal case of study. Generally speaking, the documentation<sup>14</sup> leads us to this statement: still in Hellenistic times, Amathous remains the city of Aphrodite (Hermay 2012, 13–31). The cult of the goddess, which was already associated with the Greek Aphrodite before the Ptolemaic era, appears as a solid evidence of continuity through the Hellenistic centuries and beyond.<sup>15</sup>

One decree<sup>16</sup> (Murray et al. 1900, 97 n. 7) dating probably from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE seems particularly interesting. In this relatively long inscription, the goddess appears under the problematic term of Κύπρου Ἀφροδίτη, which can be in the best case understood as “Aphrodite of Cyprus”.<sup>17</sup>

- 1 ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ. ὅ (ἔτους). [— —]  
 ἐφ’ ἱερέως Κύπρου Ἀφροδίτης  
 Χαρίνου τοῦ Χαρίνου [τῶν ἐστρα]-  
 τηγηκότων καὶ γεγυμ[ασιαρχικό]-  
 5 των καὶ ἀρξάντων ὑπὲρ [τῆς σω]-  
 τηρίας τοῦ Ἀμαθουσίου [ν δῆμου]

<sup>11</sup> Masson 1975, 144; Nicolaou 1976, N.3, O.30; Aupert/Masson 1979, 387 n. 33.

<sup>12</sup> The dating of most of the funerary inscriptions from Amathous represents a real difficulty, due to the tightness of the texts. Generally, we must resort to using only the paleographic argument to distinguish between Hellenistic and Early Roman inscriptions.

<sup>13</sup> The aim of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive account of the cults in Hellenistic Amathous, but according to the main perspective of this study to point out, through inscriptions, some religious phenomena linked to the general reflexion about identities. For a more accurate approach of the Amathousian religious landscape in Hellenistic times, see for instance Papantoniou 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Inscriptions but other documents as well, such as the abundant terracotta material of the Hellenistic period: see Queyrel 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Tacitus provides information for the Roman period in *Annals*, 3, 62. See Aupert/Hellmann 1984, 19–23.

<sup>16</sup> British Museum, inv. 1894, 1102.1.

<sup>17</sup> But the male form of the adjective is quite striking in this context and leads scholars to various interpretations, see for instance: Rudhardt 1975, 139–142; Van Berchem 1975, 155.

καὶ τῶν καρπῶν. ὁ Ἀρίσ[των Εὐφρα]-  
 νορος, τῶν ἐστρατηγη[κότων καὶ]  
 γεγυμνα[σ]ιαρχηκότ[ων καὶ ἀρξάν]-  
 10 τῶν, ὁ ἡγήτωρ, τὸ εἰθισ[μένον εἶπε  
 θύεσ]-  
 θαι τῇ προδηλουμέ[νῃ ἐορτῇ καθ' ἐ]-  
 κάστην ἡμέραν ὑ[πὲρ τῶν τὴν γῆν γε]-  
 ωργούντων ἐν τημ[ελείαι κατὰ τὸ δόγ]-  
 μα τὸ λεγόμενον, ὅ[πως ἀσύφορον]  
 15 δι' ὅλου τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ [οὐ εἰς τὸ]  
 [πληθ]ος μηδὲν γ[ένηται μήτε]  
 [ἀστερ]γές· εἰ δὲ κα[ὶ] δύοι τι τοῦ εἰω]-  
 [θ]ότος ὑπὸ τῆς π[ό]λεως κατὰ τὸ  
 20 ἱερὸν δόγμα τὸ [λεγόμενον δι]-  
 δοσθαι εἰς τὸ ἱερ[ὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης, τά]-  
 δε πάντα προ[σδιδόναι διὰ τὴν εἰς]  
 τὸν δῆμον π[ροθυμίαν καὶ τὴν εἰς]  
 τὸ θεῖον εὐσέ[βειαν].

“To the Good Fortune, during the year (?), when was priest of *Kypros* Aphrodite Charinos son of Charinos, formerly strategos, gymnasiarch and magistrate, the *hegetor* Ariston son of Euphranor,<sup>18</sup> formerly strategos, gymnasiarch and magistrate has proposed for the conservation of the people and the crops of Amathous, the fulfilment of the usual sacrifices every day of the programmed celebration, for the salvation of the land-workers according to the pronounced rite, in order to avoid that anything harmful neither painful happens to the people for the whole year. Moreover, if something has to be given by the city to the sanctuary of Aphrodite according to the pronounced holy rite, may all the offerings be given by kindness towards the people and by devotion to the deity ...”

Furthermore, this decree, probably issued directly by the religious authorities of the city, evokes a priest of Aphrodite (who completed the full “cursus honorum” of the civic offices since he was previously civic strategos, gymnasiarch and magistrate), a *hegetor* responsible for the respect of the sacrifices and rituals, and a specific celebration corresponding probably to the one Hesychius (see Aupert/Hellmann 1984, 40 and n. 44) describes under the term of *karposis*. These details tend to show that the protective goddess of Amathous is still invoked by the people of Amathous as a powerful

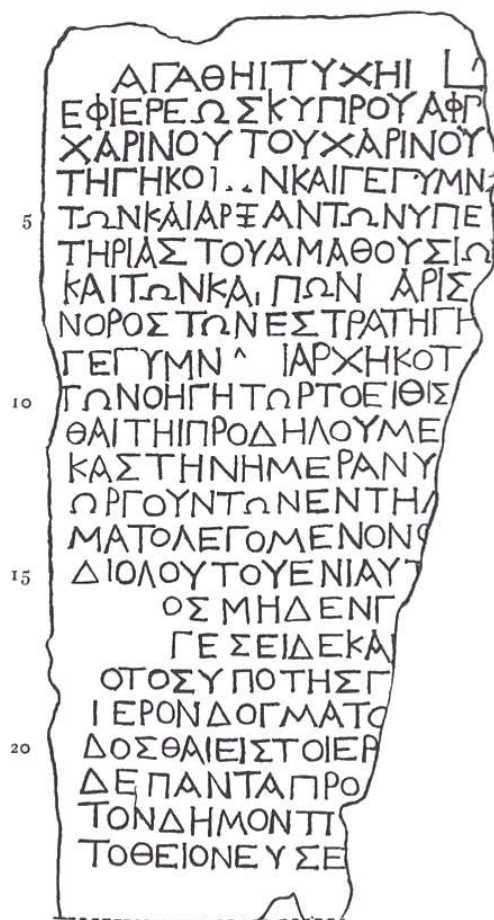


Fig. 2: Religious decree regarding the cult of Aphrodite (Fourrier/Hermay 2006, fig. 4).

provider of fertility and abundance, despite the Ptolemaic establishment.

In a private dedication<sup>19</sup> dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE discovered on the top of the acropolis in honour of an Ainian priest of Zeus Orompatas (Fourrier/Hermay 2006, 8), the goddess is simply invoked as the “*Kypria*” (Fig. 3). The origin of the priest (a region of Thessaly) does not enable us to specify if Zeus Orompatas was worshipped at Amathous but it seems more likely that this cult originates from Greece (Petit 2007b, 283–297).

Κυπρ[ία].  
 Πολυξένου : Αἰνιᾶν[ος θυ]γάτηρ :  
 Εὐβιότα  
 Παναίτιον Πολυξένου Αἰνιᾶνα,  
 Διὸς Ὀρομπάτα ἱερέα, τὸν αὐτῆς ἄνδρα,  
 αὐτὴ καὶ τὰ παιδία.

“To the *Kypria*. Eubiota daughter of Polyxenos, Ainian [honours] Panaitios son of Polyxenos Ain-

<sup>18</sup> We follow the emendation proposed by Hermay: Hermay 1999, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Cyprus Museum, inv. Inscr. 125.





Fig. 3: Dedication in honour of Polyxenos: from Fourrier/Hermay 2006, pl. 1 n. 3.

ian, priest of Zeus Orompatas, her husband. She with their children [made the dedication].”

#### 4.2. On some innovations in religious matters

If continuity can be observed regarding the cult of Aphrodite, another female deity contributes significantly to a regeneration of the religious landscape of Amathous: the Egyptian goddess Isis. Far from being unknown in Cyprus before the Ptolemaic rule, Egyptian deities seem, however, to enjoy an unequalled popularity in the Hellenistic times. Hathor (Aupert 1996, 36–39; 116–118; 186), for instance, was previously worshipped in Amathous, but her cult was no longer visible in the city during the Ptolemaic period. On the contrary, Isis seems to be established, beside Aphrodite, as the main deity of the city.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, the votive inscription<sup>21</sup> (Fourrier/Hermay 2006, 163–164) offered in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE by a Ptolemaic official on the top of the acropolis of the city appears as a crucial witness of this composite religious landscape (Fig. 4).

- 1 [Σαρ]άπιδι ὡς Ἰσιδ[ι] Ἀφροδίτῃ[ι καὶ]  
[συννάοις] θεοῖς, ὑπὲρ βασιλέως  
[Πτολεμ]αίου καὶ βασιλίσσης  
Κλε[οπάτρας τῆς]  
[ἀδελφ]ῆς καὶ βασιλίσσης Κλεοπ.

- [ἀτραστῆς]  
5 [γυναικό]ς, θεῶν [Εὐεργετῶν, καὶ τῶν]  
[τέκνων αὐ]τῶν, ὡς Σ[...]  
[τῶν πρώτῳ]ν φίλων [...]  
[— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —]

“To Sarapis, Isis-Aphrodite<sup>22</sup> and the *Synnaoi Theoi*, in honour of king Ptolemy, queen Cleopatra the sister and Cleopatra the wife, Gods Evergetes, and their children, S ... among the «First Friends» [made the dedication] ...”

The identity of the goddess (or the goddesses) remains ambiguous. Nevertheless, the association (or quasi-assimilation into a unique deity) of both the Greek and the Egyptian avatars of the Great Goddess of Amathous is remarkable.

Moreover, this inscription conveys a new interrogation regarding the penetration of the Ptolemaic royal cult in Cyprus. Besides the female deities and Sarapis (the main god of the Alexandrian pantheon), the dedication is also addressed to the *Synnaoi Theoi*. The dynastic deities, literally “sitting side by side” with the gods, share here the same aura as the traditional ones. Among them, a very special cult is the one of Arsinoe Philadelphos, the sister-wife of Ptolemy II, which is attested by numerous documents all around the Ptolemaic realm and particularly all over Cyprus (Anastassiades 1998, 129–140). At Amathous, six documents (Anas-

<sup>20</sup> This statement is reinforced by the terracotta votive material: see Queyrel 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Limassol Museum, inv. 77.515.47 and 86.251.9.

<sup>22</sup> Due to the absence of vacat between the names of the two goddesses Antoine Hermay suggests translating as “Isis-Aphrodite” instead of “Isis and Aphrodite” (Fourrier/Hermay 2006, 163–164).



Fig. 4: Dedication in honour of the Theoi Synnaoi: Fourrier/Hermay 2006, pl. 47.4.

tassiades 1998, 139; Flourentzos 2007, 299–301; Aupert/Flourentzos 2013, 366–368) attest the worship of the deified queen, among which one was found in the lower-city in a remarkable archaeological context. The extremely rare findings of this area, connected with the dedication to the dynastic goddess, led the former Director of Cypriot Antiquities to suggest the existence of a sanctuary dedicated to Arsinoe in the lower city of Amathous (Flourentzos 2007, 299–306).

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was not to give an exhaustive report of the epigraphical evidence of Hellenistic Amathous, although we tried to emphasize the importance of this source, which seemingly deserves more attention than what was generally admitted in the historiography of the site. Although Amathous does not provide a range of honorific and royal inscriptions as large as Salamis and Paphos (both cities were directly invested by the Ptolemaic power and administration), the epigraphical data from this secondary city provide an interesting insight into the multi-faced and multi-faceted society of Hellenistic Cyprus. With its large and varied corpus of epitaphs, Amathousian epigraphy witnesses in a unique way the heterogeneous identities of a Cypriot city, previously a flourishing city-kingdom, which seems to have successfully performed its integration into the new political system of the Ptolemaic empire. This statement appears also through the reading of the religious texts, which tend to reveal

that Amathous remained attached to some specific features that connected the city to its traditional identity, while receiving and adopting ideological elements originating from the new Hellenistic social, political and cultural world.

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