



The Political Occupation of Sacred Space The Ptolemaic Royal Household on Cyprus

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the royal household, i.e. the administrative elite, of the Ptolemaic empire in Palaioaphos on Cyprus, from the reigns of Ptolemy VIII to Ptolemy X. It argues more specifically that the dedication of statues by the Ptolemaic and local elite in the sanctuary of Aphrodite reveals a social network between the king and his administrative elites. These statues, of which only the bases remain, could either be consecrated to Aphrodite herself, or lack any direct reference to the goddess. Consequently, through the process of dedicating statues, the sanctuary of Aphrodite should be thought of as being used by different groups to advertise their social ties with the royal household. This is an example of the political occupation of the sacred space, which in turn served as an interface between local elites, the Ptolemaic royal household and the royal family itself.

Résumé

L'occupation politique de l'espace sacré. La cour royale ptolémaïque à Chypre

Cet article se propose d'analyser la cour royale, autrement dit, l'élite administrative, de l'empire Ptolémaïque à Palaioaphos de Chypre, depuis le règne de Ptolémée VIII jusqu'à celui de Ptolémée X. Plus spécifiquement, on propose d'interpréter les statues dédiées dans le sanctuaire d'Aphrodite par les élites ptolémaïques et locales comme l'expression d'un réseau social entre le roi et l'élite administrative. Ces statues, dont seules les bases sont conservées, étaient consacrées à Aphrodite elle-même ou, au contraire, évitaient toute référence directe à la déesse. Par conséquent, le sanctuaire d'Aphrodite peut être perçu comme un moyen pour plusieurs groupes d'affirmer publiquement leurs relations sociales avec la cour, à travers la dédicace de statues. Il s'agit là d'un exemple d'occupation politique de l'espace sacré, espace qui servait ainsi d'interface entre les élites locales, la cour royale ptolémaïque, et la famille royale elle-même.

Keywords

Ptolemies • Palaioaphos • Cyprus • Ruler cult • Administrative elites

Mots-clés

Ptolémées • Palaioaphos • Chypre • Culte des souverains • Élites administratives

The representations of kings, local and administrative elites and ruler cult were closely interrelated in the whole Hellenistic world as well as in the Greek orient of imperial times. A special case in this respect is the Ptolemaic kingdom, which provides an enormous amount of textual and non-textual sources relating to these topics. We will focus on the special case of administrative elites, which we call the royal household, and their self-representation and ruler cult on Cyprus. Before we come to this case study, we would first like to illustrate our understanding of ruler cult and ruler representation. Our concept of ruler cult is based on the presupposition that this cult is a form of dialogue between subjects, dependent states, cities and associations as well as formally free cities and allies on the one side with the

Ptolemaic court and its representatives on the other side. We therefore adopt the statement of the German archaeologist Paul Zanker, who argued in the context of imperial representation in Augustan Rome: “What appears in retrospect as a subtle program *resulted* in fact from the interplay of the image that the emperor himself projected and the honours bestowed on him more or less spontaneously, a process that evolved naturally over long periods of time.”¹

As such, the top-down impetus of ruler cult should be questioned. With respect to ruler cult, we can even go a step further regarding its political functionality. Some researchers contend that ruler cult was merely a way of legitimizing the ruler’s power and call it a cult of loyalty. From this perspective, the communicative intention of cult, which is fundamental to every cult act in form of the *do ut des* principle, is disregarded. Every subject, autonomous city, or *koinon* that equates the ruler with a god and deems him worthy of divine honours can also insist on the fact that the one who is honoured like a god *has to behave like a god* – he is obliged to show, for example, his euergetism towards the worshippers. The communication between ruler and worshipper was not always a topdown communication, then, but a more complex form of dialogue. As Gregor Weber puts it for the case of Ptolemaic Egypt: “The praxis of different cults for the ruler is to be considered in a broader context of communication between king and the population of his kingdom. It was not one-sided topdown but a dialectical arrangement.”² We think that this assumption is equally valid for the function of ruler cult in the Ptolemaic possessions outside of Egypt.

Aside from the political functionality of ruler cult one should consider its cultural function, as well, especially in non-Greek cultural contexts. Like in Egypt, on Cyprus, on which we will focus from now on, the Ptolemies ruled over a heterogeneous territory with an Eteo-Cypriac, Ionian and Phoenician culture.³ Ruler cult seems to have played a key part in the Hellenization of the island after the 290s BCE.⁴ Indeed, Hans Volkmann argued to this effect over 50 years ago. This is of great importance, because in Egypt the indigenous priests developed a special Egyptian form of ruler cult and aside from some minor Greek elements no deeper Hellenization of Egyptian religion and culture can be observed. On Cyprus, by contrast, ruler cult seems to have functioned as something like a promoter of Hellenization.⁵ We may trace this Hellenization on Cyprus, for example, in the institution of the eponymous priestess of Arsinoe Philadelphos: in the Cyprian city of Idalion this priestess was not the one of the Alexandrian cult – as was the case in the whole of Egypt and also in Koile-Syria – but rather an indigenous woman. This shows that we do not know if only in the city of Idalion or throughout Cyprus

1 ZANKER 1990, 4.

2 WEBER 2010, 57.

3 SEIBERT 1976; *cf.* for the time of transition COLLOMBIER 1993.

4 GAUGER 2005, 622.

5 VOLKMANN 1956; the close connection between ruler cult and Sarapis cult must be observed; *cf.* MEHL 1996, 402: “Ließ sich die Verehrung des Sarapis wegen dessen allgemein bekannter ‘Erfindung’ durch den Dynastiegründer Ptolemaios Soter im Herrschaftsgebiet der Lagiden als indirekte Huldigung gegenüber der Herrscherfamilie verstehen, so trat im Lauf der Zeit ein direkter Kult der als göttlich bzw. als unter die Götter aufgenommen verehrten Dynastie und ihrer einzelnen Mitglieder hinzu.” This close relation of both cults is illustrated by *RICIS* 401/0101, a dedication to Sarapis, Isis, Ptolemaios III and Berenike II; for the discussion and problems of Hellenizing Cyprus *cf.* PAPANTONIOU 2012, 28-54, 357: “The involvement of a ‘uni-fying’ politico-religious ideology, practiced by the Ptolemaic officials and the various organisations on the island, such as the gymnasia, garrisons, and the various koina, has been established. The royal cult, and especially that of Arsinoe Philadelphus in a local context, played a central role in that process, articulating social relationships related to economic and political ideology.”



there was a special form of an Arsinoe-cult with such a high importance that the priestess could be mentioned in the eponymous dating formulae.⁶ Besides this, the archiereus of ruler cult on Cyprus seems to have been the Ptolemaic strategos, who was also the archiereus of all gods and of the ruler on Cyprus.⁷ Thus ruler cult was under Ptolemaic control and the city-elites instituted the Greek form of ruler cult only on a local level.⁸ Regarding those discrepancies between local forms on the one hand and state control on the other hand in the organization of ruler cult in Cyprus, one could estimate that much more research needs to be done.

We furthermore think that it is important to extend this view of ruler cult to include the administrative elites, which we call the “royal household”, and to take the self-representation of these elites into account, as we think that the implementation of ruler cult at a local level was under their control. The foreign administrative elites may even have laid out the parameters of ruler cult. Thus the foreign administrative elites surely functioned as mediators between subject and ruler – and they were mediators who could, in their form of representation, also be copied by the local elites.

In sum, we think that an overall analysis of Ptolemaic ruler cult outside Egypt, in this case on Cyprus, is not only a desideratum but also critical to a full understanding of Ptolemaic policy and legitimation of rule and can help reconstruct the dialogical patterns of Ptolemaic domination. In this way we learn more about the function of the concept of the king as living god for the communication between local and administrative elites on the one hand and between those two groups and the king himself on the other.

The sanctuary of Aphrodite in Palaioaphos

We now turn to our case study, an examination of the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Old Paphos on Cyprus. This sanctuary was held in high esteem not only on Cyprus but in the whole Mediterranean world, for it was situated at the place where Aphrodite was said to have been born from the sea.⁹ Along with her male counterpart Dionysus¹⁰ Aphrodite was a deity of central importance to the Ptolemaic dynasty; queen Arsinoe II in particular was equated with the goddess.¹¹

It is therefore unsurprising that five dedications and/or altars of Arsinoe Philadelphos can be identified in the sanctuary.¹² Indeed, there seems to have been a close interrelation between the cult of the deified Arsinoe II and the worship of Aphrodite on Cyprus in general.¹³ Because of the importance of the Aphrodite cult for the dynasty and its high significance for the

6 *KAI* 40; VOLKMANN 1956, 449-450; HUSS 1977, 132-133.

7 *I.Kition* 2022 with *SEG* 54, 1535: Εἰρήνην Πτολεμαίου τ[ο]ῦ [στρατηγοῦ] καὶ ἀρχιερέως Ἀρτέμιδος δε[σποίνης(?)] θεῶν καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τ[ῶν ἄλλων] θεῶν, ὧν τὰ ἱερά ἴδονται ἐν τῆ[ι νήσω] Ἀνδρόμαχος ὁ υἱὸς τῶν δια[δόχων καὶ] πρὸς τῆ γράμματαια τ[ῶν δυνάμεων]; cf. BAGNALL 1976, 48; MITFORD 1953, 144f., n. 26.

8 VOLKMANN 1956, 454.

9 Cf. Pomponius Mela II 7: *quo primum ex mari Venerem egressam accolae adfirmant, Palaepaphos*.

10 On Dionysos and the king: TONDRIAU 1950; TONDRIAU 1952.

11 Cf. for example BARBANTANI 2005.

12 ANASTASSIADES 1998; now see also CANEVA 2014.

13 Cf. PAPANTONIOU 2012, 117; posthumous cults of Arsinoe II are widely attested in Cyprus: NICOLAOU 1992, 223-232; ANASTASSIADES 1998.

identity of the island, it is obvious that the sanctuary of Palaiopaphos in Ptolemaic perspective should have played an important role in the self-representation of the kings and queens and in the representation of the monarchy on Cyprus. But, and this is also of some importance, besides the dedications to Arsinoe II, there is hardly any hint of ruler cult in the sanctuary at all.

“Indirect” attestations of ruler-cult in Palaiopaphos

Instead of ruler cult in the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaiopaphos we find clear examples of dedications that point to ruler cult in public contexts outside of the sanctuary of Aphrodite. Consider, for example, this dedication of a statue of a Ptolemaic official by the city of Paphos from the year 88 BC:

“To Aphrodite of Paphos. The city of the Paphians (has set up this statue) of Onesandros, son of Nausikrates, *syngenes* and priest for life of the king (*basileus*) Ptolemy, the god and saviour, and of the sanctuary (*hieron*) of Ptolemy, which he has founded, the *grammateus* of the city of the Paphians (and) supervisor of the great Library in Alexandria, because of his goodwill.”¹⁴

Though not strictly speaking a dedication of ruler cult – only a statue of Onesandros was erected, and no cult of the ruler can be directly concluded from this – the dedication is nevertheless a very important example for ruler cult in a Paphian context. The object of cult is Aphrodite and the person honoured is a high-ranking Ptolemaic official and a kinsman of the king who, judging by his function as secretary of Paphos, presumably originated from Paphos itself. He not only has the highest aulic rank, but is even the supervisor of the library in Alexandria.¹⁵ Following Peter M. Fraser we should think that he was a “supporter of Soter II during his exile in Cyprus, and was rewarded with the office of Librarian when Soter returned to Alexandria in 88 B.C.”¹⁶ He was priest of the king himself and had his office in a sanctuary which he had built in Paphos for Ptolemy – this is ruler cult at its best, organized by a member of the local elite who became a member of the royal household. But it is not ruler cult in the context of the Paphian sanctuary, because the cult was not practiced there. The official was merely honoured by the Paphians who dedicated the statue to Aphrodite.

Concerning similar “indirect” attestations of ruler cult in the sanctuary one should furthermore consider three dedications to Aphrodite honouring members of a cult association called οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ θεοὺς Εὐεργέτας τεχνίται:

“To Aphrodite of Paphos. The city of the Paphians (has erected this statue of) Kallippos, son of Kallippos, who was twice *grammateus* of the council and the *demos* and former

14 MITFORD 1961, 40,110 = *OGIS* I 172: Ἀφρο[ο]δίτη Παφίαν [ἡ π]όλις ἢ Παφίων Ὀνήσανδρον Ναυσικράτους, [τὸν σ]υγγενῆ καὶ ἱερέα διὰ βίου βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου Θεοῦ Σ]ωτήρος καὶ τοῦ ἰδρυμένου ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἱεροῦ Πτολε[μαίου, τὸν γραμματέα τῆς Παφίων πόλεως τεταγμένον δὲ [ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν] Ἀλεξανδρείαι μεγάλης βιβλιοθήκης, εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν; cf. PFEIFFER forthcoming, Inscription No. 35.

15 Cf. FRASER 1972, 322.

16 FRASER 1972, 334 with n. 222.



religious leader of the city and one of the *technitai* of Dionysus and the *theoi Euergetai*, the (actual) *grammateus* of the city, who served well as *gymnasiarch* in the 12th year.”¹⁷

Normally the *technitai* simply were an association of Dionysus’ worshippers. Nearly nothing is known of the group’s activities on Cyprus.¹⁸ In this case the cult title shows that the association has augmented the cult of Dionysus by the cult of Ptolemy VIII and his wife Cleopatra II.¹⁹ Other Cyprian inscriptions show that the cult title of the ruling couple – be it *theoi Epiphaneis*, which is also attested, or *theoi Euergetai* – does not have to be mentioned, but this should not keep us from thinking that the cult of the rulers was integrated into the cult of Dionysos.²⁰ Aneziri for example thinks that ruler cult played a major role in this association due to her belief that the Cypriot association was a branch of the Egyptian *technitai* known, for example, from Ptolemais in Upper Egypt.²¹ We simply do not know if it was a cult for the actively ruling couple or if it was a posthumous cult. The headquarters of the association on Cyprus was a *grammateion* (cf. ἐν τῷ κατὰ Πάφον/κατὰ Κύπρον γραμματεῖω).²² It is furthermore common opinion that the formulation τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ θεοὺς Εὐεργέτας τεχνιτῶν identifies an honourable member of the association.²³

Kallippos, the respectable member honoured by the city, surely was not honoured because of his membership in the ruler-cult association, but because of the offices he had occupied for the benefit of the city and especially because he had served as *gymnasiarch* in the 12th year. But membership in a Dionysiac and royal cult association was so important that it was worth mentioning by the city. Regarding the question of the royal household, we do not know if Kallippos was a member of the local elite or a Ptolemaic foreign administrator of Paphos, as is the case in the second dedication:

“To Aphrodite of Paphos. The *koinon* of the Cyprians (has erected this statue of) Potamon, son of Aigyptos, who was one of the *gymnasiarchs* in Paphos and priest of Aphrodite²⁴ and one of the *technitai* of Dionysos and the *theoi Euergetai*, because of his good will.”²⁵

17 MITFORD 1961, 36,98 = CIG 2620 = OGIS I 166 (105/104 BC): Ἀφροδίτη Παφία· ἡ πόλις ἢ Παφίων Κάλλιππον Καλλίππου, δις γραμματεύσαντα τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου καὶ ἡρχευκότα τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ θεοὺς Εὐεργέτας τεχνιτῶν, τὸν γραμματέα τῆς πόλεως, γυμ[να]σιαρχήσαντα καλῶς τὸ ἔτος (ἔτος) (ZIEBARTH 1896, 77 no. 2a; POLAND 1909, 592, 36); cf. ANEZIRI 1994, 197, no. 7; on Kallippos, who is only mentioned in this inscription: MICHAELIDOU – NICOLAOU 1976, 73, no. 16; ANEZIRI 1994, 192.

18 Cf. ANEZIRI 1994, 179: “Der kyprische Verein der dionysischen Techniten ist einer der am wenigsten bekannten Technitenvereine der hellenistischen Zeit.”; LE GUEN 2001, II, 35.

19 Cf. the discussion in ANEZIRI 1994, 181f. It seems to us not impossible that the dedication was contemporary with the *theoi Euergetai*, but MITFORD 1953, 136-137, n. 14; MITFORD 1959, 121, n. 108 and ANEZIRI 1994 date it to the independent reign of Ptolemy IX Cyprus (105-88 BC).

20 Cf. BURASELIS 2012, 247-265, who speaks of the rulers “appendices”, which easily could be added and removed.

21 OGIS I 50 and 51, where a κοινὸν τῶν περὶ Διόνυσον καὶ Θεοῦς Ἀδελφούς τεχνιτῶν is mentioned.

22 Cf. ANEZIRI 1994, 181, 183. She thinks that “das ungewöhnliche Wort ... vielleicht unter dem Einfluß des für die auf der Insel stationierten Truppen verwendeten Terminus γραμματεία τῶν (πεζικῶν καὶ ἰππικῶν) δυνάμεων übernommen worden (ist).”

23 ANEZIRI 1994, 193; MITFORD 1961, 35-37.

24 Cf. Hesychius, s.u. ἀγῆτωρ; ANEZIRI 1994, 192, n. 70: “Priester, der auf Zypern für die der Aphrodite dargebrachten Opfer verantwortlich ist.”

25 MITFORD 1961, 37,99: Ἀφροδίτη Παφία· τὸ κοινὸν τὸ Κυπρίων Ποτάμων[α] Αἰγύπτ[ου], τῶν

Potamon was from the onomastic point of view certainly not an indigenous member of the elite but a Ptolemaic official, a native Egyptian member of the royal household, sent for administrative purposes to Cyprus. From a second statue of him, dedicated by the *koinon* of the Cyprians to Aphrodite of Old Paphos, we know that he was later vice-governor of the Island and in charge of the metal mines.²⁶ Considering these two statues in the same sanctuary dedicated by the same institution, the man seems to have been held in very high esteem by the Cypriots.

To sum up, it is obvious that ruler cult in the sanctuary was not as important as one might expect due to the connection between Aphrodite and the dynasty. Not even a dedication by the *technitai* themselves is known. But the fact that the *technitai* were also officiants of ruler-cult shows that, for the island *in toto*, the ruler cult was integrated into the cult of Dionysus, the main god of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The importance of the cult of Dionysus and the dynasty,²⁷ as well as Aphrodite's, was often mentioned, so one should not be astonished to find the name of his cult guild in a sanctuary of Aphrodite.

A question of dialogue

Aside from the altars of and the dedications to Arsinoe Philadelphos we do not find ruler cult in the sanctuary of Aphrodite. Instead, we see the honouring of persons who were active in ruler cult contexts, who held high offices in both the local and regional administration, and who seem to have been members of the royal household. It is now legitimate to ask how loyalty to, as well as dialogue with, the ruling power was cultivated through these mechanisms. We think it is useful to have a look at the dedicatory and honorific habits in the sanctuary. Although there is a clear distinction between these two practices, we think that they can be combined, since the sanctuary of Aphrodite always constitutes the background and environment to these dedications.²⁸ As we have already seen, there are several examples of these honouring officials of the crown by the city or the *koinon* of Cyprus. The reason for the dedication is not always specified: Potamon and Onesandros were honoured because of their goodwill, or *eunoia* – one may think that this was done because of the goodwill towards the *koinon* and accordingly the city. But by honouring the members of the royal household, also a relationship and dialogue of the honouring corporation with the rulers can be established.

An illustrative example of dedicatory and honorific habits to administrative elites in combination with the honouring of administrative personnel is the following dedication of a statue of Myrsine, the daughter of Hyperbassas, the governor of Cyprus (217–209 BC):

ἐν Πάφῳ γεγυμνασιαρχηκότων καὶ ἡγητορευκότων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ Θεοῦς
Εὐεργέτας τεχνιτῶν, εὐνοίας ἡ χάρις (BENGTSON 1952, 152, n. 2); cf. furthermore the fragmentary
inscription MITFORD 1961, 37,100; cf. ANEZIRI, 1994, 197, no. 7.

26 MITFORD 1961, 39, no. 107 = *OGIS* I 165: Ἀφροδίτῃ Παφίᾳ· τὸ κοινὸν τὸ Κυπρίων Ποτάμωνα
Αἰγύπτου, τὸν ἀντιστράτηγον τῆς νήσου καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μετάλλων, τὸν γυμνασίαρχον, εὐνοίας
χάρις; BENGTSON 1952, 152-153; *PP* VI 15066, MICHAELIDOU-NICOLAOU 1976, 101, no. 44; BAGNALL 1976,
74: Potamon “served Ptolemy IX during that king’s reign in Cyprus between 105 and 88.”

27 DUNAND 1986.

28 Cf. MA 2013, 24-38 on the difference between dedicatory and honorific inscriptions.



"[The polis (of Paphos has erected the statue of) Myrsi]ne, daughter of [H]yperbass[as], son of Pelops, who was son of Pelops, the wife of the *strategos* of the island, because of the goodwill, which [Pelops has continuously shown] towards the King Ptolemy [and his] sister, the Queen Arsinoe, the *theoi Philopatores*, and towards the city of Paphos."²⁹

We can see that the cause of goodwill towards the ones who honour in this case is expanded: First it is the goodwill towards the ruling couple and second towards the city. A similar honour was later given to Ptolemy, the son of Polykrates (197–193 BC):

"(The statue of) Ptolemy, son of Polykrates, from Argos, in the aulic rank of a *archisomatophylax* (have dedicated) the members of the *gymnasion*, because of his excellence and goodwill which he had for the King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy, and Arsinoe, the *theoi Philopatores*."³⁰

In this case, the honouring body is not even mentioned in the *eunoia*-formula. The members of the *gymnasion*, which given the lack of specification should be the one of Paphos, have honoured a member of the Ptolemaic royal household originating from Argos in Greece not because of his good deeds for the *gymnasion* but because of his good behaviour towards the ruler. In both cases one should ask why the members of the local elite count the goodwill towards the king under the deeds of the one who is honoured, because normally the erection of a statue to honour a person is an act of *do ut des*: the one honoured was worthy of the honour because he had done something good for the ones who honour him or they are expecting further good deeds. In the latter case, the honour is a form of *captatio benevolentiae* – or as Gygax calls it – a "proleptic honour".³¹

We have three different solutions for this problem, but before we come to these we will first give further insights into the honour-ascribing habit in Paphos.

From sacred to political space

Let us return once again to the inscription of Ptolemy, son of Polykrates. This inscription provides us with three basic pieces of information. First Ptolemy, son of Polykrates, who is honoured with a statue, occupies the rank of *archisomatophylax*, the third-highest aulic rank.³² Second, this statue is dedicated by the members of the *gymnasion*.³³ Third, it is dedicated because of his *arete* as well as his *eunoia* towards the king. The only thing that strikes us

29 OGIS 84: [ἡ πόλις Μυρσίν]ην [Υ]περβάσσ[αντος], [Πέλοπ]ος τ[οῦ Πέλ]οπος τοῦ στρατηγοῦ [τῆς νή]σο[ν γυ]ν[αϊκα], εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν [ἧ]ς ἔχων δια[τελεῖ Πέλοψ] εἰς βασιλέ[α] [Π]τολεμαῖον καὶ τ[ὴν ἀ]δελφ[ὴν αὐτοῦ] [βασιλ]ισσαν Ἀρσινόην Θεο[ῦς Φιλο]πάτορα[ς] [ἰ]καὶ τὴν Παφίων πόλιν.

30 MITFORD 1961, 18, no. 46 = SEGXX 198: Πτολεμαῖον Πολυκράτους Ἀργεῖον τὸν ἀρχισωματοφύλακα οἱ ἀπὸ γυμνασίου ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα [κα]ὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς βασιλέα [Π]τολεμαῖον τὸν Πτολεμαίου καὶ Ἀρσινόης Θε[ῶ]ν Φιλοπατόρων.

31 Cf. GYGAX 2009.

32 MOOREN 1975, 1-7; MOOREN 1977, 24.

33 Cf. HABERMANN 2007 for a short introduction into the cultural phenomenon of the Greek *gymnasion* in Ptolemaic Egypt.

as extraordinary is the fact that – as has been observed before – the reason for the dedication has nothing to do with the donator, at least at first sight. We will come back to this problem later, but first the situation of Ptolemy should be observed more closely. As *archisomatophylax*, Ptolemy is part of the Ptolemaic court and acts as a *philos* of the king. Ptolemy's relationship to his king as a *philos* was essential for him.³⁴ There has been an intensive debate about whether being a *philos*, a king's friend, implied equality with the king³⁵ or whether it was always the king who had supremacy and the final decision in every case.³⁶ There seems to be general agreement in the scholarly literature that the figure of the ruler occupied the central position in this social fabric; it was the king who determined an individual's access to the court and, by extension, the opportunities for advancement. Therefore it was the main endeavour of every member of the Ptolemaic elite to show his proximity to the king, whether in geographical or social terms, so that a high status in the social hierarchy could be obtained.³⁷ This becomes clear if one examines the titles that were bestowed upon the *philoï* in the Ptolemaic court stressing the nearness to the king, e. g. *syngenes*.³⁸

This social hierarchy can be understood as a social network in which the members of the Ptolemaic elite always had to define their position anew with respect to the ruler and to the other members of the ruler's court.³⁹ In order to consolidate one's status within it, this network had to be made comprehensible to everybody. Therefore, all over the Ptolemaic realm, statues were erected and monuments dedicated by and for a number of different parties: the courtiers honouring the king, the king honouring one of the courtiers, or even by a third party, e. g. local elites or cities, honouring one of the groups above. Through these dedications, the social network established between the king and his elites was visualised and eternalised for a greater audience.

Old Paphos proves especially fertile for such an analysis because of the many Ptolemaic statue bases that have been found inside the sanctuary of Aphrodite and have been studied and published from the 1950s on by Terence B. Mitford.⁴⁰ Our survey here is restricted to the time ranging from 163 BC, when the kingship was divided between Ptolemy VI and his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II⁴¹ to the year 107 BC, when the second accession to the throne for Ptolemy X Alexander I took place.⁴² Although these date to nearly one to two generations after Ptolemy, son of Polykrates, we will see that the survey provides us with some ammunition to solve our problem. For this period of time there are twenty-six statue bases which can be connected to the royal family of the Ptolemaic elite. The network connections are represented visually in Figures 1 and 2, divided into two phases. Every link equals a dedication of a statue with an inscribed base, and the direction of the link designates the honoured individual.⁴³

34 STROOTMAN 2012, 49f.

35 WEBER 1993; WEBER 1995; WEBER 1997; WINTERLING 1997.

36 MEISSNER 2000.

37 STROOTMAN 2012, 47-50.

38 MOOREN 1975; STROOTMAN 2007, 150-155; STROOTMANN 2012, 48f.

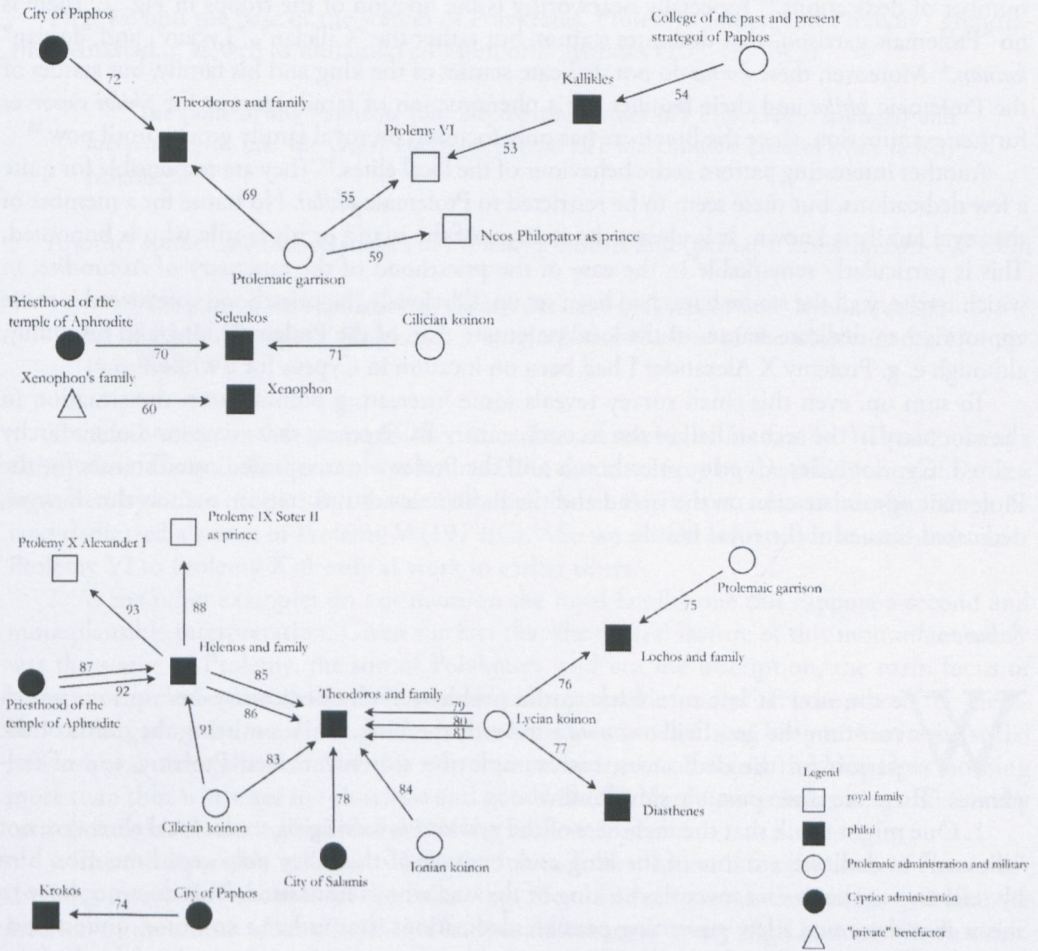
39 Cf. MALKIN *et al.* 2009, 1-11; MALKIN 2011, 3-63; ROLLINGER 2014, 367-391 for a recent discussion of the benefits and problems of applying social network analysis to ancient history.

40 MITFORD 1953, 1959, 1961.

41 HUSS 2001, 567-571.

42 HUSS 2001, 635.

43 Fig. 1 comprises the following statue bases (numbers according to MITFORD 1961): 53, 54, 55, 59, 60, 69, 70, 71, 72; Fig. 2 statue bases (numbers according to MITFORD 1961): 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 93.



Even at first sight one can perceive the network's relative complexity. The position of the royal family is conspicuous as it does not receive the majority of dedications as one might have thought, especially with the current research stressing the preeminent position of the king.⁴⁴ Although the reigning king and his designated heir do receive dedications, the larger part of the dedications is addressed to the highest ranking officials after the king on the island, namely to the *strategos* and *archiereus* of Cyprus, who is called the king's *syngenes* and therefore belongs to the highest circles of the Ptolemaic court. And it is he who dedicates the statues of the king. Apart from the *strategos*, the Ptolemaic garrison can also dedicate statues of the royal family (at least in two examples)⁴⁵, but this is never done by the local elites. No Cypriot city or priesthood ever dedicates a statue of a Ptolemaic king or queen.

The Ptolemaic troops seem to have played an important role, because they provide the largest

44 STROOTMAN 2007, 139-148.

45 MITFORD 1961, no. 55 and 59.

number of dedications.⁴⁶ Especially noteworthy is the division of the troops in Fig. 2. There is no “Ptolemaic garrison” that dedicates statues, but rather the “Cilician”, “Lycian”, and “Ionian” *koinon*.⁴⁷ Moreover, these *koina* do not dedicate statues of the king and his family, but statues of the Ptolemaic *philo*i and their families. This phenomenon of family groups for *philo*i deserves further examination, since the literature has only focussed on royal family groups until now.⁴⁸

Another interesting pattern is the behaviour of the local elites.⁴⁹ They are responsible for quite a few dedications, but these seem to be restricted to Ptolemaic *philo*i. No statue for a member of the royal family is known. It is always the *strategos* of the island or his family who is honoured. This is particularly remarkable in the case of the priesthood of the sanctuary of Aphrodite, in which territory all the statue bases had been set up. Obviously the priesthood considered it more appropriate to dedicate statues of the local potentate than of the Ptolemaic king and his family, although e. g. Ptolemy X Alexander I had been on location in Cyprus for a while.⁵⁰

To sum up, even this small survey reveals some interesting points. From the situation in the sanctuary in the second half of the second century BC it seems that some kind of hierarchy existed. Cypriot cities, Cypriot priesthoods and the Ptolemaic troops dedicated statues for the Ptolemaic administration on the island and the Ptolemaic administration, namely the *strategos*, dedicated statues of the royal family.

Solutions?

We can now at last turn back to the problem of the dedicatory inscriptions which mention the goodwill - *eunoia* - towards the king, while omitting the deeds of the person for the dedicators; for example the aforementioned Ptolemy, son of Polyrates. There are three possible solutions:

1. One might think that the members of the *gymnasion* belonging to the local elite were not “allowed” to dedicate a statue of the king and, because of this, they only could mention him by referring to the *eunoia* towards the king of the one who is honoured. This does not have to mean that there was a law governing possible dedications, but rather a common understanding of different responsibilities. Local elites could only participate on the local level of the social network of the Ptolemaic dynasty because they had to respect the hierarchy. If this was the case, there was a monopoly of honouring the king with a statue for members of the royal household. They expressed their close relationship to the king by the erection of statues of him. The local elites as well as the military stationed in Cyprus only had the possibility of honouring one of the Ptolemaic *philo*i. The naming of his *arete* and *eunoia* for the king might in this way have been the only way to include the king in this dedication.

The problem with this solution is that there are also other examples in which Ptolemaic *philo*i get dedications in the sanctuary where the royal family is not mentioned. Ptolemy’s family is one obvious example since the statue of Ptolemy did not stand on its own, but was part of a group of statues honouring his family.

46 For the importance of the Ptolemaic garrisons see BAGNALL 1976.

47 Cf. the discussion in BAGNALL 1976, 54-57 regarding the different *koina*.

48 Cf. HINTZEN-BOHLEN 1990; KOSMETATOU 2004.

49 Cf. BLASIUS 2011.

50 HUSS 2001, 627f.



First we find the base of the statues of Polykrates, Ptolemy's father, and Ptolemy's grandfather Mnasiadas, as well as unnamed children of Polykrates (203-197 BC):

"The polis of the Paphians (has erected the statues of) P[olykrates, *strategos*] and *archiereus*, [it's (i.e. the city's) *euergetes*?], (and of) the children (and of) [his father] Mnasiadas."⁵¹

Another statue base carried statues of Ptolemy's mother and (perhaps) himself (203-197 BC):

"[The polis of the Paphians (has erected the statues of) Zeuxo from Kyre]ne, daughter of A[riston], wife of [Polykrates *strategos* and *archier*]eus of the island, (and of) Ptolemy (?)."⁵²

There are some further examples of dedications of statues of his family.⁵³ Thus Ptolemy's family, from his grandfather on, was honoured in the sanctuary by the inhabitants of Paphos as well as by other people. But it was Ptolemy's father Polykrates, who as *strategos* of the island dedicated a statue of Ptolemy V (197 BC).⁵⁴ So we see the scheme we have found under Ptolemy VI to Ptolemy X already at work in earlier times.

2. As the other examples do not mention the royal family, one can suppose a second and more plausible interpretation. Given the fact that the central feature of this monument surely was the statue of Ptolemy, the son of Polykrates, and not the inscription, the main focus of attention should be directed to the figure of Ptolemy and his family.⁵⁵ It is he whom the members of the *gymnasion* wanted to honour. By erecting a statue of him, his position in the social network was strengthened. And the reference to his *eunoia* towards the king does nothing more than this: it stresses the closeness and goodwill of Ptolemy towards his king and thereby consolidates his status in the hierarchy of the Ptolemaic *philoï*.

3. The third possible solution, which doesn't exclude solution 2 for the cases of *eunoia*-to-the-king inscriptions, would be the following: First, one may think that an honour like the erection of the statue of an official in a famous sanctuary is a very high honour, which could put the one who is honoured in the same position as the king and queen because the statues of the officials stood side by side with the statues of kings and queens. The local elites therefore put the name of the king into the dedication formula and thereby showed the dependence of the officials as subjects of the king. In this way the distinction between ruler and his officials on the spot was obeyed. On the other hand the ones who dedicated the statue communicated by means of their inscriptions symbolically with the king and directly with the members of the royal household who came for administrative purposes to Cyprus. By rewarding the dedicatee's good behaviour towards the king with the erection of a statue, the Cypriotes equated

51 MITFORD 1961, no. 43: Παφίων ἡ πόλις Π[ολυκράτην, τὸν στρατηγὸν] καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῶν ἑαυτῆς εὐεργέτην] καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τῶν πατέρα αὐτοῦ] Μνασσιάδα.

52 MITFORD 1961, no. 44: [Παφίων ἡ πόλις Ζευξοῦν] Α[ριστωνος] [Κυρη]να[ίαν, τὴν γυν]αῖκα [Πολυκράτους τοῦ] [στρα]τηγ[οῦ καὶ ἀρ]χιε[ρέως τῆς νήσου]. [Πτ]ολ[ε]μ[αῖος].

53 MITFORD 1961, no. 41, 42, 45(?).

54 MITFORD 1961, no. 40: Βασιλέ[α Πτολεμαῖον] Θεὸν Ἐπιφανῆ καὶ Εὐχά[ριστον Θεῶν] Φιλοπατρῶων Πολυκράτης Μνασιάδου Ἀργεῖος ὁ στ[ρα]τηγός καὶ ἀρχιερέυς τῆς νήσου.

55 Cf. MA 2013, 15-17 for a general discussion of this matter.

eunoia towards the king with benevolent treatment of the subject community. The official was therefore obliged to follow the example of his predecessor and tend to the well being of the Cypriotes, because this constituted *eunoia* towards the king.

In sum we can state that a direct form of cult for the living king in the sanctuary of Aphrodite on Cyprus cannot be attested. The cult of Arsinoe, which was practiced there according to the altars and dedications of the dynastic goddess, played a separate role as it was only a cult for the possibly already deceased queen. What is to be observed is that ruler cult was practiced on Cyprus and that this ruler cult in other contexts found its way into the sanctuary in terms of references to the agents of this cult in inscriptions. Moreover, the ruler himself is represented in the form of statues before which a cult could be practiced – although we have no evidence for this – and he is mentioned in dedicatory as well as donatory inscriptions.

On another level it can be observed that the sanctuary of Aphrodite was used by different groups to advertise their social ties with the royal household by means of dedicating statues. This could be done by dedicating these statues to Aphrodite or by avoiding direct reference to the goddess. Whatever the dedicant's decision, her sanctuary still provided the setting and therefore the framework for the interaction. The sacred space became politically occupied and served as an interface between local elites, the Ptolemaic royal household and the royal family itself.

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