

ANAÏS MICHEL, *Chypre à l'épreuve de la domination Lagide: testimonia épigraphiques sur la société et les institutions chypriotes à l'époque hellénistique*. Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 393. Athènes: Ecole française d'Athènes, 2020. ISBN 978-2-86958-464-8.

*Chypre à l'épreuve de la domination Lagide* is a book that explores the conditions under which the Ptolemaic dynasty embedded its administration into the Cypriot political, social and religious structure, traditionally marked by its coexistence of kings and cities. Following the most recent works on the political and institutional life in the Greek cities in Hellenistic times, this study by Anaïs Michel, a member of the French School in Athens and a specialist in Greek epigraphy, attempts to present the complex relations between the Cypriot cities and the Ptolemies, as well as offer an original interpretation of the dialogue between the *poleis* and the kings.

The first part of the book explains the modalities and consequences of the integration of Cyprus into the Hellenistic world (19–84). Consisting of three chapters, it provides an overview of the political and administrative history of Cyprus from Classical times to the Ptolemaic period. The approach is reasonable, as the Hellenistic period does not constitute an isolated unit, independent of the continuous course of the history of the island of Cyprus between the end of the Bronze Age and the end of Antiquity; on the contrary, certain aspects of the history of the Cypriot kingdoms (ca. 1050–ca. 310) are essential for the study of the island in Hellenistic times, as well.

In order to understand the particularities of the situation of Cyprus in the Hellenistic period, one should take into account the heterogeneous dynamics of (1) inserting the Hellenistic developments in the long timeline of local history, and conversely, (2) integrating Cyprus in a wider system that functions contrary to previous administrative and political practices. The first chapter – fittingly titled “Changing the perspective” (19–40) begins with a historical account of the Cypriot city-kingdoms and re-examines the main events that marked the Ptolemaic occupation of Cyprus, as well as the nature of the Cypriot city-kingdoms as opposed to the usual image of a Greek *polis*. After depicting the Cypriot kingdoms before the death of Alexander, Michel presents the events from the time of Alexander's death up to the full establishment of Ptolemaic rule; finally, she offers a historical overview of Ptolemaic Cyprus, as well as an analysis of the political system of the city-kingdoms and the nature of the Hellenistic political break as it manifested itself in Cyprus. The author appropriately suggests that we should move beyond the theoretical debates concerning the position of Cyprus in the wider world of the Greek city, and leave behind the narrative of a complete break between the Classical and the Hellenistic period. The model of Cypriot kingship was based almost exclusively on local parameters, so all attempts to describe the pre-Hellenistic political system on the basis of external criteria are destined to be wrong. In Cyprus, the monarchy and the city were not mutually exclusive – and this should very well serve as a starting point for a better understanding of the integration of Cyprus into the Hellenistic world.

The next chapter deals with the strategic purpose of the Ptolemaic conquest of Cyprus (41–62). Based on the epigraphic sources, Hellenistic Cyprus is most often likened to an external dependency of the Ptolemies; Michel goes on to re-examine the place of the island in Ptolemaic policy precisely on the basis of the epigraphic evidence regarding the administration of the Ptolemies. The documents presented pertain not only to the military occupation (hierarchy, garrisons, command posts, mercenaries), but also to several other aspects of the Ptolemaic administration, including the financial and commercial activity of the cities, as well as the kingdom.

In the third chapter (63–84) Michel explores the changes that affected the cities and their institutions during the transition from pre-Hellenistic to Hellenistic times. These changes were the result of the intensified international contacts and the growth of public and private networks in a wider Mediterranean context (especially the latter display subtleties that are usually overlooked). During this time, different degrees of power were simultaneously expressed in Cyprus: that of the Hellenistic kingdoms, of the kingdom of the Ptolemies, of Cyprus as a territorial division, as well as that of the cities and their local administration. The author goes on to evaluate Cypriot activities outside the island, the relations between Cypriot cities, the Greek islands and mainland Greece, as well as the civic practices of the cities, with the aim of exploring the degree of change in civic and religious life. Michel notes that the nature of the evidence prevents her from offering a complete picture of the institutions in all cities; a commendable sign of restraint, as speculating on the basis of fragmentary information – especially when dealing with such intricate cases – can lead to all kinds of incorrect reconstructions.

The second part of the work (85–120) is largely aimed at exploring identity and cultural practice, with the purpose of tracing the emergence and evolution of Cypriot identity in the wide new world of Hellenistic kingdoms and cities. The first chapter in this part (85–92) tries to define the term *Kypros charakter* and its traits and peculiarities, only to show that its use may not be exactly commendable, as it inaccurately marks the entirety of its traits as something strange and marginal; it does away with all nuance and diversity within a supposed Cypriot identity, thus isolating and distancing Cypriot culture from the other great peripheral cultural areas. After putting forward the notion of a plurality of Cypriot identities, Michel goes on to focus on the different ways these different Cypriot identities integrated into the Hellenistic world.

The second chapter (93–98) explores the changes in Cypriot society under Ptolemaic rule, including the formation of different *thiasoi*, *koina* and *politeumata*. The sources show that the integration into the kingdom failed to bring together the agents of royal power and local society, as all appointed personnel followed the hierarchical system specific to the social organization of Ptolemaic Egypt. However, epigraphic data reveals many groups and associations that were in all probability functioning on a civic model. These thriving new modes of grouping are a feature peculiar to the Hellenistic period, generally attested everywhere in the Mediterranean; in Cyprus, however, the preservation and execution of particular local groupings was an important aspect of the local identity – especially in the face of the notion of cultural unity that the Ptolemies had been promoting.

The third chapter of the second part treats the question of the royal and local elites (99–120). Having covered the Ptolemaic officials, their relations with the monarchs, the offices they held, and their attitude toward all things local, the author goes on to explore the local civic elite, particularly the holders of various local religious offices, who were treated – or tolerated – in a similar manner to their Egyptian equivalents. Regardless of its motives, this policy had a positive effect on the administration of the island, as it helped the preservation of local tradition and, in a way, paved the way for the acceptance of Ptolemaic rule. Epigraphic data shows that many members of the local elite held offices in the royal administration, being on friendly terms with the representatives of the kings. This phenomenon of social mobility and the integration of locals into the administration of the island especially gained momentum from the first century onwards; this was possibly due to a particular arrangement of Cypriot matters made by Ptolemy IX, which helped figures of local notability add to this development.

The third part of the book (121–148) explores the repertoire of royal ideology that was transferred and applied to Cyprus with the scope of consolidating the Ptole-

maic hold on the island. Cypriot epigraphy provides ample material for the examination of the evidence of the royal cult as a sum of religious expressions of attachment to the ruler and institutionalized cultic practices in his honor. Kings, queens and gods are covered in detail in the first chapter (121–134), which examines a series of dedications by officials, citizens, priests and mercenary troops – documents that demonstrate the relationship of office holders and elite citizens with the Palace. The second chapter (135–148) is dedicated to the role of Cyprus in the formation of royal Ptolemaic ideology by focusing on two particular case studies – that of Arsinoe II Philadelphus, the wife of Ptolemy II, and that of Cleopatra VII – exploring the ways their cult was carefully bred, in order to establish a public display of Ptolemaic policies and ideologies.

Michel's Conclusion (149–152) provides a well-organized summary of the main points of her analysis. It brings to our attention, once again, the particular position of Cyprus within the kingdom, the peculiarities of its diverse society in the middle of transitioning from old to new, as well as the strength of the local traditions. The epigraphic corpus that this society left us presents perfect testimony of the evolution of the Ptolemaic rule during the three centuries of its existence. Furthermore, it is transversed by two major axes of evidence: the first – the fading of the traditional political system and, with it, the local model of monarchic power, substituted by a foreign, supra-civic authority; and the second – the profound integration into a certain Hellenistic cultural unity. The inscriptions depict an extraordinary image of this aspect of the incorporation of the island of Cyprus into the Ptolemaic kingdom.

The self-defined starting aim of Michel's research may have been to use the internal corpus of epigraphic documentation in order to explore the society of Hellenistic Cyprus under Ptolemaic rule. However, this book has gone well beyond her initial goals and grown into a thorough study of Cypriot society in Hellenistic times. By means of the thorough scrutiny of epigraphic documentation and an almost flawless application of the evidence to a well-defined frame of reference, what has set out as an epigraphical and historical treatise has become – as far as the sources allow – a skilfully conceived and presented profile of a rather intricate society. It is precisely the presentation and application of the evidence that enables this book to fill a scholarly gap in a neat and unobtrusive, yet very effective way. There is no doubt that it will do well to serve as an example to be followed in exploring other regions and corpora, as well as to act as a basis for further scholarship on Cyprus and its society.

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YANNIS KALLIONTZIS, *Contribution à l'épigraphie et à l'histoire de la Béotie hellénistique: de la destruction de Thèbes à la bataille de Pydna*. Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 391. Athènes: Ecole française d'Athènes, 2020. ISBN 978-2-86958-318-4.

The main foci of this work are the organization and history of the Boeotian cities and their *koinon* in the Hellenistic period on one hand, and the epigraphic documents on the other. Based on literary and epigraphic evidence, Kallontzis takes the federal and civic organization, as well as the timeline of the federal archons, as a basis for a new factual history of Hellenistic Boeotia. He also publishes and redacts inscriptions from various Boeotian cities based on the synoptic catalogue of inscrip-