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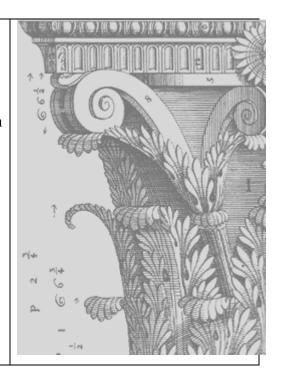
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Political Power and the Decline of Epichoric Languages and Writing Systems in Hellenistic Cyprus

Paul Keen

The goal of this paper is to explore the ways in which power relations and issues of cultural and group identity interacted to form the epigraphic record in Hellenistic Cyprus. Cyprus has long been known for the diversity of writing systems among the city-kingdoms of the island and the rapid decline of local epichoric languages and writing systems at the outset of the Hellenistic period is still poorly understood. Greek, the most frequently attested epigraphic language, was written in the Cypro-Syllabic script and, increasingly from the end of the fifth century BC, the Greek alphabet; Eteo-Cypriot, recently confirmed as a separate language group by Steele, was exclusively inscribed using the syllabic script and is primarily attested in the southwest of the island in Amathous; and Phoenician, using its own alphabet, is attested primarily in Kition and Idalion but also in small volumes throughout the island. Following the Ptolemaic conquest and the elimination of the city-kings at the hands of Ptolemy I in 312 BC, however, this diversity of scripts and languages quickly came to an end.² To date, there are no public inscriptions known using the syllabic script that can be clearly dated after 300 BC, and the last dated Phoenician inscription is firmly dated on internal evidence to 254 BC. In place of the diversity that had characterized Cypriot writing systems since the Cypro-Archaic period, the public epigraphy of Hellenistic Cyprus makes near exclusive use of Koine Greek in the Greek alphabet throughout the island.

While there has been a considerable amount of scholarship on the epigraphy of Cyprus during the period of the city-kings, these studies have generally taken 300 BC as their terminus and approach Hellenistic epigraphy only as a sort of coda to Cypriot epigraphic life.³ Two interconnected approaches have prevailed, both focusing on the Cypro-Classical period (c. 480-300 BC) and on the agency of the city-kings themselves. The first approach focuses on the increasing use of alphabetic Koine Greek by the city-kings beginning in the fifth century BC and understands the loss of epichoric scripts and languages as a result of the island's increasing involvement with the Greek, and then Hellenistic, world.⁴ The second approach,

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¹ On writing systems and languages in Cyprus before 300 BC, see most recently: Smith 2002, Egetmeyer 2010, Steele 2013a, Iacovou 2013, and Steele 2013b. Masson 1961 (henceforth, *ICS*) remains the standard corpus of Cypriot syllabic inscriptions though should be consulted alongside the répertoire of inscriptions collected as volume 2 of Egetmeyer 2010. Steele 2013b, 120 and 185 provides distribution maps of the finds of the Eteo-Cypriot and Phoenician inscriptions in Cyprus, respectively.

² See Collombier 1993 and Papantoniou 2013 on the divide between the Classical and Hellenistic period on Cyprus; for an overview of recent scholarship on the Cypriot city-kingdoms, see Counts and Iacovou 2013 and the essays in BASOR volume 370. The violent demise of the Cypriot city-kings is described by Diodorus 19.79.4, 20.21.2-3.

³ For an overview of Cypriot history during the period of the city-kings, see Stylianou 1989; on the Hellenistic period, see Mehl 2000.

⁴ Collombier 1991; Palaima 1991. See Raptou 1999 on Athenian and Cypriot relations in the fifth and fourth centuries and Pouilloux 1975, esp. pp. 118-119 on Athenians in Salamis in the fourth century.

exemplified by the work of Maria Iacovou, examines the persistence of local scripts and languages in the face of the Greek alphabet to 300 BC and argues that this persistence was a result of the division of the island into the city-kingdoms themselves, with the city-kings using languages and scripts as a form of "royal signature." For Iacovou, the elimination of the city-kings at Ptolemy's hands politically unified the island, putting an end to the need for the expression of intra-island differentiation via language and script between what had previously been separate kingdoms in contention with each other.

By focusing exclusively on the epigraphy of the Cypro-Classical period, however, such studies tend to present the exclusive use of Greek as an inevitability stemming from the introduction of the Greek alphabet to the island and as a result, leave aside issues of Cypriot agency in the Hellenistic period itself, as well as the role played by the Ptolemaic military-administration in forming the new epigraphic culture. There is also reason to believe that the use of Koine Greek in the alphabet as a prestige language and script on the island in the Cypro-Classical period may be slightly overstated: as Bazemore has noted, although the increasing use of the Koine dialect of Greek and the Greek alphabet by the city-kings in the fourth century is clear, there is little sign of decline in the use of the syllabic script or Phoenician during this century. Instead, within Cyprus itself, the Greek alphabet was employed primarily in digraphic and bilingual inscriptions and is perhaps best considered a new option, rather than replacement, simply layered among the old. Only in the Hellenistic period did the use of Koine Greek and the Greek alphabet finally drive out their epichoric rivals.

The aim of this paper is to complement previous studies by focusing on precisely these questions of agency and interaction in Hellenistic Cyprus through an examination of the epigraphic habit after the elimination of the city-kings. As is now well established in sociolinguistics and studies of script obsolescence and language death more broadly, the establishment of a new prestige language can quickly herald the demise of languages without prestige status. Similarly, the degree to which a script or language is associated with specific contexts or institutions—e.g. sanctuaries and/or political institutions—can drive the shift of a language or writing system away from prestige status when the prestige of the associated institution declines within the greater socio-political setting. By focusing on the shifting cultures of public epigraphy in Hellenistic Cyprus, my goal here is to provide a more focused reading of the connection between writing systems and political power in terms of strategies of communication and the adaptation of Cypriot elites and political institutions to the new representational environment of the Ptolemaic dominated island.

⁵ Iacovou 2013

⁶ Bazemore 2002, 156.

⁷I employ here the definition of epigraphic habit of Chaniotis 2004 as the "position occupied by inscriptions in the public and private life of a particular period and area."

⁸ See the essays in Baines, Bennet, and Houston 2008 for an overview of the problem of script obsolescence, with particularly relevant essays by Hawkins on hieroglyphic Luwian, Lomas on pre-Roman languages, and Stadler on the demise of Egyptian. Houston, Baines, and Cooper 2003 provide a useful overview of the problem from a linguistic perspective. In a modern linguistics context, Fishman 1964 remains essential on language shift.

The Epigraphic Habit and the Culture of Honors in Hellenistic Cyprus

As a whole, the most characteristic trend in the epigraphy of Hellenistic Cyprus is its overwhelmingly honorific character and the predominance of honorific statue bases in contrast with other genres of inscribed texts. At Salamis, for example, the corpus collected as *Testimonia Salaminia* 2 in 1987 includes 37 honorific statues bases but only 5 dedications and 11 funerary inscriptions. At Kition, the Hellenistic corpus includes only 4 inscribed dedications but 17 honorary statue bases and 12 inscribed funerary monuments. While it would be hasty to place too much value on these numbers in the current absence of a comprehensive corpus of the alphabetic inscriptions of the island, similar proportions prevail throughout the corpora of Paphos and Kourion. Outside of the major coastal cities, inscriptions are far fewer in number but inscriptions published by Mitford in his extensive articles on the epigraphy of the island present a generally similar picture. In itself, such a pattern is not unexpected and matches well with the general patterns of epigraphic corpora found across much of the Hellenistic world in cities with low survival rates of inscriptions. Nonetheless, the surviving corpus shows Cyprus to have been assimilated into wider Hellenistic patterns of epigraphically monumentalizing honors characteristic of Greek poleis.

Although the volume of honorific inscriptions in Cypriot cities and sanctuaries is unremarkable in itself, it does represent an important shift in the epigraphic habit of the island. Despite the connection between writing systems and the political identity of the city-kings rightly argued for by Iacovou, Cypro-Classical epigraphy includes almost no examples of what might be termed political texts such as honorific inscriptions, decrees, or public laws. ¹³ Instead, as noted by Bazemore, the corpus of Cypro-Classical syllabic texts consists overwhelmingly of short owner's marks, votive inscriptions, and funerary monuments, and are usually very brief texts offering little more than a name and, if votive in genre, the name of the deity to whom the dedication is offered. ¹⁴ A similar picture is also presented by the Phoenician corpus. ¹⁵ Bazemore further notes that the vast majority of the syllabic corpus comes from only a limited number of sanctuaries and necropoleis, further highlighting the limited nature of the

⁹ This study is based primarily on the corpora of Salamis (Pouilloux et al. 1987), Kition (Yon 2004), Kourion (Mitford 1971), and Paphos (Cayla 2003, though citations are provided here with reference to Mitford 1961a as the dissertation is unpublished to date). Inscriptions outside of these corpora are published primarily by T.B. Mitford in his wide ranging surveys, especially Mitford 1937, 1938, 1939, 1961a, and 1961b, as well as in the reports of new alphabetic Cypriot inscriptions published by Ino Nicolaou in the *RDAC*. The publication of *IG* XV, currently in progress, will do much to rectify this situation and to allow a more comprehensive examination of the post-classical epigraphy of the island.

¹⁰ Pouilloux et al. 1987.

¹¹ Yon 2004.

¹² See Ma 2013 on the practice of setting up honorific statues in the Hellenistic period.

¹³ Detienne 1989, 56-57, also cited by Collombier 1991, 425-426. Palaima 1991, 465-466 also notes the absence of such documents.

¹⁴ Bazemore 2002, 196.

¹⁵ See Yon 2004, 162-168.

epigraphic habit of the island prior to the Hellenistic period and its ties to both the city-king and certain of the sanctuaries on the island, with particular emphasis on Paphos.¹⁶ Political power itself, as epigraphically represented, was expressed primarily through dedications of the city-kings to the deities of the island.¹⁷ Few other clearly civic officials or institutions are clearly epigraphically attested, though such figures do appear in a limited number of inscriptions increasing in relative volume through the fourth century.¹⁸

The absence of honorific inscriptions, however, need not imply that pre-Hellenistic Cyprus did not engage in the sort of euergetistic activities characteristic of Greek poleis. Most famously, the Idalion Tablet (ICS 217), a text inscribed on a bronze tablet making a land grant to an individual in return for providing free medical service to the city's military forces during a siege of the city, makes it clear that royal and civic grants did occur and were able to be commemorated in written form, perhaps on a perishable surface such as wood or clay. The tablet itself originally hung in the Temple of Athena, as mentioned in lines 27-28 of the text itself, atop the Idalian acropolis as a guarantee of the land-grant, suggesting both that the temple served as a sort of archive for such texts and that the text itself be understood within an overarching sacred context.¹⁹ Only one example of an honorific monument itself survives from the period of the city-kings, or slightly thereafter: a bilingual/digraphic (Eteo-Cypriot/alphabetic Greek) inscription from Amathous, reading (in the Greek text) "The Polis of the Amathousians < honors > Ariston, son of Aristonax, Eupatrides." The dating of the inscription remains tenuous, but likely falls in the late fourth century, either before or shortly after the fall of the city-king of the city in 312.21 The absence of honorific inscriptions more broadly, however, does suggest that the prevailing epigraphic habit did not ordinarily include commemorating such euergetistic and honorific activity via inscriptions in stone.

As a result, it is ultimately the novelty of the inscribed statue base as a marker of shifting norms of elite representation and power relations that requires further analysis as the defining characteristic of the new, Hellenistic, epigraphic habit on the island. The overwhelming use of public writing in Hellenistic Cyprus may in fact be described as a "statue habit" rather than an "epigraphic habit" per se, and much of the ideological message of these

¹⁶ Bazemore 2002, 156-157.

 $^{^{17}}$ See Satraki 2013, 133-136 on the connections between Cypriot royal ideology and the sanctuaries and deities of the island. Satraki 2012, 391-418 presents a useful collection of Cypriot royal inscriptions.

¹⁸ See Lejeune 2011 on the epigraphic attestations of civic institutions in pre-Hellenistic Cyprus. Notably, Hatzopoulos 2009 argues for a wider array of political institutions during the period of the city-kings than is represented by the surviving epigraphic evidence. Satraki 2013, 139, similarly suggests that an increasing volume of attested political actors outside the figure of the city-king himself as representing a shift towards a "new institutionalized system and that the focus of the prevailing ideology was moving from the king himself to the state."

 $^{^{19}}$ See, most recently, Georgiadou 2010 on the Idalion Tablet with pp. 162-164 on the archaeological context of the inscription.

 $^{^{20}}$ Masson 1961, no. 196: ἡ πόλις ἡ ᾿Αμαθουσίων ᾿Αρίστωνα ᾿Αριστώνακτος εὐπατρίδην. See also Steele 2013b, 105-107 on the Eteo-Cypriot portion of the text.

²¹ Mitford 1953, 87 (following by Masson in the *ICS*) dates this inscription after the demise of the city-kings in 312 on the basis of its "republican tone," though Petit 2007, 100-102 argues for an earlier dating between Cypriot forces joining Alexander in 332 and the death of Androkles, the final city-king of Amathous, in 312.

monuments was certainly conveyed by the statues, now lost, atop these bases.²² Nonetheless, the text remains highly significant and serves as a label to provide the viewer with the identity of the statue as well as by whom it had been set up and, optionally, the reasons why.²³ Above all, the honorific texts so common in Cyprus must be viewed as an essential marker of the relational power dynamics of Hellenistic euergetism and Hellenistic kingship.²⁴ As has been most clearly emphasized in recent years by the work of John Ma, inscribed honorific statue bases fundamentally stress the relationship between the two parties and served both to honor the subject of the statue itself and to assert the granting body's right to determine status and honor within a given political context.²⁵ The act of setting up a statue base, then, is a rhetorically charged moment in which the communicative act of writing is paramount to set the statue into its proper reciprocal context. By recording the recipient's name as well as the name of the granting body and the context of the relationship, the statue base publically affirms the connection between the parties and establishes both as significant within the greater political landscape.²⁶

Put into this context, the domination of honorific statue bases as the defining trait of the Hellenistic epigraphic habit serves as an important indicator of the shifts in political structure, and the ways in which writing now played a different role in communicating status to a wider audience beyond Cypriots themselves. Inscriptions from the Cypro-Classical period, by contrast, most likely envisioned a primarily local audience. As Fourrier has recently stressed, no sanctuary on the island can be defined as Pan-Cypriot in the Cypro-Classical period, including the famous sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaipaphos.²⁷ Royal inscriptions using a non-local script and language—for instance, the Phoenician and Phoenician/Syllabic Greek bilingual/digraphic royal dedications at Idalion and Tamassos while under the domination of Kition—can be understood as using language and script as a marker of power.²⁸ A similar point might well be made even regarding the increasing use of alphabetic Greek in digraphic and bilingual inscriptions through the fourth century: by using the more commonly understood script to record Greek, the city-kings were able to communicate not only with a local audience but also signal their participation in the wider Hellenic world, itself increasingly involved in Cypriot affairs throughout the century.²⁹

In order for the honorific inscriptions characteristic of the Hellenistic period to be rendered effective, the text was required to be comprehensible to both the widest possible

 $^{^{22}\,\}mbox{See}$ Ma 2007 and 2013 on these terms. On Hellenistic sculpture in Cyprus, see Connelly 1988; Papantoniou 2012, 295-354; and Koiner 2012.

 $^{^{23}}$ Ma 2007. See also Ma and Tracy 2004 on the inclusion of these elements in inscribed statue bases in Attica.

 $^{^{24}}$ See Bringmann and von Steuben 1995-2000 on Hellenistic kings as the benefactors of Greek cities and sanctuaries.

²⁵ Ma 2013, especially 16-63.

²⁶ Ma 2013, 45-63.

²⁷ Fourrier 2014, 126

²⁸ e.g. Yon 2004, nos. 68-71. Fourrier 2015, 27-40 provides a useful overview and analysis of these inscriptions within the context of the shifting political context of Cyprus between the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

²⁹ See Palaima 1991 on this phenomenon from a statistical perspective.

audience and, most importantly, to the recipient of these honors. The Ptolemaic takeover of Cyprus brought with it not only the presence of the Ptolemaic administration but also a proliferation of multi-ethnic, but Greek speaking, garrisons that controlled the island.³⁰ In this light, it is particularly significant to note the overwhelming use of honorific statues with inscribed bases to honor members of the Ptolemaic royalty, military, and administration, as distinct from monuments honoring Cypriots, particularly in the major sanctuaries of Cypriot coastal cities. As befits the centrality of the King in Ptolemaic royal ideology, statues honoring the royal family are found throughout the island, though with a distinct focus on the major sanctuaries of both Salamis and Paphos as the loci of the administration itself.31 Outside of these two cities, the statue and honorific habit appears to be more directed at local interests in honoring the garrison commander (the ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως/φρουράρχος) as well as members of his family, maintaining a key focus on reifying a relationship with the Ptolemaic military administration itself.³² The emphasis in these inscriptions is thus placed on the bottom-up direction of such honors, with local entities honoring their Ptolemaic superiors as a thanks for an unnamed benefaction and as a means of monumentalizing the relationship between local organizations (including and especially, as will be discussed below, groups and individuals within the Ptolemaic administration itself) and the appropriate level of the Ptolemaic administration.

Although within a Cypriot context, the change in epigraphic habit may well have been driven by the epigraphic practices of the Ptolemaic military-administration itself rather than Cypriot individuals or institutions, particularly in the most highly visible coastal sanctuaries of the island. At Palaiaphos, the primary sanctuary of the Ptolemaic administrative center at Nea Paphos in the second century, military groups, and often the *strategos* himself, set up all but one of the statues of the King in which both the King and the body erecting the monument can be identified.³³ Similarly, of the twenty-one statues of the *strategos* in which both parties are

³⁰ On the multi-ethnic Ptolemaic garrisons in Egypt, see Fischer-Bovet 2014, 160-195, who coins the term. On the Ptolemaic garrisons in Cyprus itself, see Mehl 1996b and Bagnall 1976, 49-57, and 263-266 for an overview of the attested ethnicities of the Ptolemaic garrison. Nicolaou 1976 provides a prosopography of the island as a whole during the Hellenistic period.

³¹ Koiner 2012, 120-121 emphasizes the statue bases of the Ptolemaic royalty on the coast, citing finds at Salamis, Kition, Kourion, Palaipaphos, Nea Paphos, and Lapethos as distinct from the inland sanctuaries such as Idalion, Golgoi, Voni, and Lefkoniko where a rich tradition of limestone votive sculpture continues to be attested in the Hellenistic period. Notably, the coastal cities of the island served as the primary points of control for the Ptolemaic military-administration; as a result, these monuments might be best understood as functioning in conversation with Ptolemaic soldiers and elites. Even among the coastal cities, while Kourion and Kition together account for only six statues of the King and Queen and one of the *strategos* himself (though several more of members of the *strategos*' family), Paphos and Salamis together attest thirty-eight bases of the *strategos* and twenty-six of the Ptolemaic King and/or Queen.

 $^{^{32}}$ e.g. at Kition: Yon 2004, nos. 2021 (a statue base of Agias, son of Damethetos, as the ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως), 2022 (statue base of Eirene, daughter of the *strategos*), 2024 (Melancomas son of Philodamos as the ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως), and 2029 (Nikanor as the commander of troops). At Kourion: Mitford 1971, nos. 42 (Demetrios son of Machatos and his children, in his role as ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως), 43 (a native of Demetrias, described in the inscription as the ἐπὶ τῆς νήσου, which Mitford takes as an engraver's error for ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως), and 44 (And[romachos]). Mitford 1971, no. 32, a rare decree from the island, similarly honors the ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως. See also Bagnall and Drew-Bear 1974, 179-183 on this inscription.

³³ The sole exception, Mitford 1961b, no. 97, a statue base of Ptolemy IX Soter II, is set up by the Priests of Paphian Aphrodite.

identifiable, military groups or individuals tied to the Ptolemaic court set up all but eight.³⁴ On the other side of the island at Salamis, military groups similarly dominate the statue habit, setting up six of the ten statues of the Ptolemaic King and five of the ten statues of the *strategos*.³⁵ Outside of the two major sites of Salamis and the sanctuary of Palaipaphos, inscriptions set up by Ptolemaic agents are more rare, but still attest to the use of epigraphy by the Ptolemaic army in the sanctuaries and cities of the island.³⁶ There is little surprise that such inscriptions use the Greek alphabet and Koine Greek in place of epichoric writing systems. Rather than integrating themselves into the Cypriot epigraphic landscape as it stood in the fourth century, these monuments instead emphasize the Ptolemaic takeover of Cypriot sacred and political space and the overwhelming imperial presence on the island.³⁷

Nonetheless, the practice of setting up honorific monuments as the defining feature of the new epigraphic habit was also adopted by Cypriot cities and elites. Internally, when Cypriot cities honored Cypriots themselves, the shift represents the institutionalization of benefaction as the cities more explicitly took on the political expressions and institutions of Hellenistic poleis following the elimination of the city-kings.³⁸ Should Petit's early dating (332-312) of the Amathous bilingual/digraphic inscription honoring Ariston son of Aristonax be maintained, this practice may have been adopted even prior to the elimination of the city-kings as a form of adaptation to the island's engulfment by the Hellenic world of Alexander the Great.³⁹ The Amathous text notably retains the epichoric language and script in the primary position above the Greek alphabetic text; following this inscription, however, no further honorific texts use an epichoric language or script. In this sense, cities honored benefactors as a means both of displaying their gratitude and encouraging new benefactions as elites jockeyed for position and status in both the local political vacuum after the elimination of the city-kings and the shadow of the imperial presence.⁴⁰

³⁴ Mitford 1961b nos. 41, 52, 60, 69, 70, 76, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 91. The eight remaining monuments are Mitford 1961 nos. 39 (set up by the city of Paphos), 78 (set up by the city of Salamis), 43-45 and 15 (forming a single family monument, as discussed by the Roberts in *BE* 1949; for further discussion see Cayla 2003: 136-143), 70, 87, 92 (set up by the priests of Paphian Aphrodite), 46, and *LLindos* 139=Mitford 1960, 109-11 (set up by the members of the gymnasium). References assembled from Cayla 2003.

³⁵ Ptolemaic Kings: Pouilloux *et al.* 1987 nos. 61, 64, 67, 70, 71, and 72. *Strategos*: Pouilloux *et al.* 1987, nos. 74 75. 76, 80, and 84.

³⁶ Kition: Yon 2004, nos. 2015, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2003 (a dedication to Zeus Soter and Athena Nikephoros by the troops in Kition). Importantly, honorific monuments to Ptolemaic administrators at Kourion are rare, though Mitford 1971, no. 60 attests a dedication of Antiochos son of Nikanor, an Epirote and therefore almost certainly in Cyprus in Ptolemaic service.

 $^{^{37}}$ Ma 2013, 226, and 185 with specific reference to the Cypriot case, stresses the power dynamics involved in setting up imperial honorific statues in local political and sacred space.

 $^{^{38}}$ e.g Mitford 1971, nos. 34 and 47, 48, and Yon 2004, no. 2025. Monuments in which the Cypriot cities are clearly the grantor of honors directed at Cypriot elites are comparatively rare. See Mehl 1996a on the Cypriot cities and their constitutions during the Ptolemaic period. See also Hatzopoulos 2009, which argues for an understanding of the institutions of the Hellenistic period as adaptations of similar institutions only vaguely attested under the city-kings.

³⁹ See discussion above. Petit 2007 understands this inscription as a function of the Hellenization of the city in the later fourth century.

⁴⁰ See Domingo Gygax 2016, 26-45 on the logic of honors in the context of Greek euergetism.

Parallel to the practices of Ptolemaic groups, monuments set up by the Cypriot cities themselves frequently honor the Ptolemaic royalty, administration, and their families, emphasizing the ways in which Cypriot institutions used Greek alphabetic epigraphic writing as a means of monumentalizing links between local institutions, elites, and the Ptolemaic imperial presence. 41 Other local institutions, notably the members of the gymnasium (oi $\alpha\pi$) γυμνασίου)—a key location for the practice of the royal cult, the performance of Hellenic cultural identity, and interaction with the Ptolemaic military garrisons in the cities—similarly erected a number of such monuments. 42 Even the priests at the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Palaipaphos, who might have been expected to serve as guardians of epichoric writing systems in the sanctuary itself, set up statues of Seleukos as the strategos of the island between 144 and 130, two statues of Helenos, the strategos from 114 to 106, and a statue of Ptolemy IX Soter II.⁴³ None of these statue bases employ the syllabic script; instead, all use Greek in the Greek alphabet as the administrative and prestige language and writing system of the island. In this light, it is particularly significant that the monuments erected by the cities in honor of the Ptolemaic King and strategos are attested primarily in the second century with key concentrations in the periods of succession struggles between Ptolemies VI and VIII, and then again between Ptolemies IX and X at the end of the century, during which Cyprus played a crucial role as the refuge for the king in exile from Alexandria. 44 During these periods of imperial strain, statements of loyalty were particularly valuable to the Ptolemaic kings and allowed cites and other groups to stake a claim on future loyalty from the king in return for a present statement of loyalty during the struggle and thus re-engaged the reciprocal cycle of royal euergetism.45

The Cypriot adoption of the Hellenistic epigraphic habit and the near immediate decline of epichoric languages might then be understood as an active adaption to the political economy of Hellenistic kingship and empire. Whereas the fourth century use of alphabetically written Greek had done little to displace epigraphic languages, the advent of Ptolemaic rule brought with it a new, Hellenic, audience for public inscriptions. Moreover, the very sanctuaries that had previously served as the context of monumental syllabic and Phoenician dedications and royal inscriptions were now firmly under Ptolemaic control—the *strategos* of

⁴¹ Most clearly, Paphos: Mitford 1961b nos. 39, 43-45 (four inscribed blocks of a family monument of Polykrates as argued by Robert in the *Bulletin épigraphique* 1949, 202; see Cayla 2003, 136-143 for discussion), 110, and Nicolaou *RDAC* 1991, 200, no. 21; Kition: Yon 2003, nos. 2021, 2025; Kourion: Mitford 1971, nos. 42, 43, 44, 45, and 32 (an honorific decree in honor of a former garrison commander in the city); Salamis: Pouilloux et al. 1987, nos. 69, 78.

⁴² E.g. Cayla 2003, no. 22 (=Blinkenberg, *I*.Lindos no. 139), Mitford 1961b, no. 46, Yon 2003, no. 2014, Pouilloux et al. 1971, nos. 62 and 88. The involvement of Ptolemaic soldiers in the gymnasium of Nea Paphos is attested by Mitford 1961b, no. 8, an inscription documenting contributions made by men from Lycia and Mytilene. See the essays in Kah and Scholz 2004 on the Hellenistic gymnasium.

⁴³ Palaipaphos: Mitford 1961b, nos. 32 (Seleukos), 87, 92 (Helenos), and 93 (Ptolemy IX). Mitford 1971 no. 41 presents a very fragmentary inscription as a third monument erected by local priests in honor of a Ptolemaic *strategos* but the restorations are likely to be overly ambitious.

⁴⁴ On the succession struggles between Ptolemaic kings in the second century and the role of Cyprus, see Hölbl 2001, 183-221.

⁴⁵ Kossmann 2012 similarly stresses the timing of local interventions in Asia Minor with the Ptolemaic monarchy and administration during periods of imperial weakness.

the island assumed the title of the high-priest of the sanctuaries of the island beginning with the *strategeia* of Polykrates between 203 and 197—and awash with Ptolemaic-dominated honorific statues. In this sea of imperial power, the use of Koine Greek and the Greek alphabet as the new, island-wide, prestige language allowed Cypriots to participate in the greater political culture of reciprocal honors characteristic of the Hellenistic period more broadly. This type of adaptation towards Hellenistic forms of expression, moreover, can also be detected in other forms of material culture, including sculpture and architecture, as emphasized in recent work by Gordon and Papantoniou. By monumentalizing relationships with the Ptolemaic administration and stressing the common Hellenic culture between the multi-ethnic military-administration and Cypriot structures, Cypriots represented themselves as political entities not only worthy of euergetistic activity but also as players on the stage of reciprocal Hellenistic kingship.

Survivals of Epichoric Languages and Writing Systems in Hellenistic Cyprus

It is in this light that it is necessary to return to the survivals of epichoric writing systems and languages in the new political environment. The use of alphabetic Greek as the prestige language in Cypriot sanctuaries and cities quickly drove epichoric scripts out of monumental use in these contexts. Nonetheless, it is possible that the emphasis on public inscriptions may mask certain continuities of epigraphic self-representation in the use of both Phoenician and the syllabic script. Such continuity cannot be understood as signifying that the uses of local scripts continued as it had prior to the Ptolemaic conquest: the use of alphabetic Greek in dedications and funerary inscriptions of Cypriots themselves during the Hellenistic period attests the degree to which the use of the syllabic and Phoenician writing systems had ceased to be effective forms of epigraphic communication. What these limited attestations do stress, however, is the degree to which the use of alphabetic Greek served as a deliberate expression of identity in the new political environment and the ways in which local writing systems continued to hold significance outside of the highly visible political contexts of the coastal Cypriot cities and major sanctuaries. By altering the power structures of the Cypriot political economy and imposing a supra-local administration, the Ptolemies similarly required a Cypriot renegotiation of the expression of political power in publically, if not necessarily privately, written form.

Only five Phoenician inscriptions are attested in Cyprus dated after 300 BC.⁴⁷ As stressed recently by Steele, however, the lack of inscriptions does not necessarily imply the disappearance of Phoenician as a linguistic group.⁴⁸ Instead, the use of Greek in cities in which Phoenician had previously dominated the epigraphic record must be considered as a deliberate use of the prestige language. The ability of Phoenician speakers to move between both the Greek and Phoenician linguistic worlds is most clear in a bilingual inscription marking a rupestral altar near Larnakas-tis-Lapethou on the north coast of the island which has been

⁴⁶ Gordon 2012; Papantoniou 2012.

 $^{^{47}}$ See Steele 2013b, 178-184 on the chronological distribution of Phoenician inscriptions in Cyprus.

⁴⁸ Steele 2013b, 184.

argued by Teixidor to celebrate the victory of Ptolemy over Demetrius Poliorcetes in 295/4.⁴⁹ The text in Greek reads as a dedication to Athena Soteira by Praxidemos son of Sesmaos, and in the Phoenician text as a dedication to Anat and the "Lord of Kings" Ptolemy by Baalshillem son of [S]SMY.⁵⁰ The awkwardness of the Greek text, as well as the name and patronymic of the dedicant, suggest that the primary language of the inscriber was Phoenician.⁵¹ While the text most likely dates to early in the third century—only a few years after the Ptolemaic conquest—the inscription nonetheless signals both the continued desire to write in Phoenician and the need to write in Greek in order to communicate with the Ptolemaic forces that were, in some sense, a necessary audience for the inscription. In a more private sense, the use of two names by the dedicant himelf—Praxidemos in Greek but Baalshillem in Phoenician—similarly emphasizes the ability and desire of the dedicant to operate in both linguistic worlds though without necessarily disguising the Phoenician nature of his father's onomastic identity.⁵²

Although the latest datable Phoenician inscription, from Idalion, marks the end of Phoenician epigraphy in Cyprus at 254 BC, there is also some indication that the use of the language continued by Kitians outside of the island itself until at least 200 BC. A bilingual inscription (Greek-Phoenician) found at Lindos in Rhodes attests a certain Herakleides who describes himself as "Kitieúç" (Kitian) using a Greek inscription above a Phoenician text giving his name as Abdmelqart son of Abdsamon son of TGNS, in a fashion similar to that seen in the bilingual inscription marking the rupestral altar from Larnakas-tis-Lapethou. Similarly, too, a bilingual inscription on a painted stele from Demetrias in Thessaly attests a Sopatros son of Diodoros, Kitieú(ς) (Kitian) in Greek, and Shemadon son of Ḥ'R, the Kitian (HKTY) in Phoenician, and dates ca. 225 BC. Although Greek dominated the epigraphic record in Cyprus, there is little clear sign that there was a similar effect on Phoenician naming practices, religious life, or even—though with caution—the use of Phoenician for an additional hundred years with particular durability outside of the island itself.

The situation of the syllabic script is more straightforward as the writing system recorded Greek itself and again indicates that the use of the script did continue, albeit only in limited contexts outside of public monumental epigraphy. Most significantly, the Kafizin graffiti attests a corpus of 309 inscriptions—primarily Koine Greek texts using the alphabet but also 34

⁴⁹ Teixidor 1988.

 $^{^{50}}$ Greek=OGIS 17: Άθηνᾶι | Σωτείρᾳ Νίκῃ | καὶ βασιλέως | Πτολεμαίου | Πραξίδημος Σέσμαος |τὸν βω[μὸ]ν ἀνέθ[η]κεν | ἀγα[θ]ῆι τύχηι." Phoenician=CIS I.95, KAI 42: "L'NT M'Z ḤYM | WL'DMLKM PTLMYŠ | B'LŠLM BN [S]SMY | YQDŠ [']T MZBḤ | [L]MZL N'M." See Teixidor 1988 on the chronology of the inscription and Masson 1977 on Larnakas-tis-Lapethou and its sanctuaries. It should be allowed that the text might date instead to c. 312 and refer to the victory of Ptolemy over the Cypriot city-kings.

⁵¹ In particular, note the imperfect Greek syntax in the use of the genitive for βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου in parallel with the dative for $A\theta\eta\nu\tilde{\alpha}$ Σωτείρα Νίκη as divided by the καί).

 $^{^{52}}$ For interesting parallels of the use of polyonymy in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, see Coussement 2016 and Broux 2015.

⁵³ See Briquel-Chatonnet 1991 on the latest attestations of Phoenician inscriptions.

⁵⁴ Yon 2004, no. 172; Fraser 1970, no. 1. See also the discussion of Steele 2013, 182-183. Amadasi-Guzzo 2007 suggests that the inscription should be dated earlier, perhaps in the third century on the basis of the name TGNS, but this argument is rejected by Steele 2013b, 182, note 42.

⁵⁵ Yon 2004, no. 171.

using the Cypriot dialect and the syllabic script, as well as an additional 32 digraphic inscriptions using both—from a small rural sanctuary outside Nicosia. The limited number of names in the corpus, as well as the recurrent references to the "House of Androklos," make it clear that the inscriptions were the dedications of a small script community. Despite the clear influence of both the alphabet and the Koine dialect in the corpus, the inscriptions provide crucial evidence of the syllabic script in use into the second century BC outside of the public epigraphic contexts of the major coastal and urban sanctuaries. Although the use of the script here is generally regarded as demonstrating the continuity of the syllabic writing system in a conservative religious setting or as part of an exceptional use of the script by the "non-elite" maintaining local traditions in the Mesaoria, the inscriptions nonetheless show that the script did retain value in this community. 88

In a less isolated context, however, the use of Cypro-syllabic signs is also attested on seals in what are believed to be the official Ptolemaic state archives at Nea Paphos, dating to the beginning of the first century. The use of the script is extremely limited—only approximately 20 of the 11,334 seals have signs able to be interpreted as the syllabic script—but still shows the use of the script in an official context to record either an abbreviation of names or a simple signature. Despite the limited use of the signs, however, the use of the syllabic for signatures on the seals does suggest that the syllabic retained a meaningful value as a marker of Cypriot identity even in cities with a major Ptolemaic presence, and even among the Cypriot or Ptolemaic elite. For public use in the relational dynamics of Hellenistic honors, however, inscribing bodies needed to use more a communicable script and language in order to render an inscribed statement effective.

Conclusion

The elimination of the city-kings and evolving forms of civic institutions in the Greek *polis* brought with it not only shifts in the uses of scripts and language in Cyprus, but also in the uses of public writing itself. In eliminating the institution of Cypriot kingship, the Ptolemies

⁵⁶ See Mitford 1980, Masson 1981, and Hermary 2006 on the texts of the inscriptions. On the sanctuary itself and religious practices, see Lejeune 2009 and her comprehensive re-analysis of the epigraphic corpus now published as Lejeune 2014.

⁵⁷ Brixhe 1988 notes that the interactions of the Koine and dialectical forms of Greek in the inscriptions show the influence of Koine in the dialect forms and argues that the mastery of the script does not necessarily imply the mastery of the dialect itself.

⁵⁸ A point nicely made by Lejeune 2014, 270-275. A useful parallel here may be found in the survival of local traditions of limestone sculpture in Cypriot interior sanctuaries contrasted with the use of bronze sculpture in the monuments found in the major coastal sanctuaries. On this phenomenon, see Papantoniou 2012 and Koiner 2012, 120-121.

⁵⁹ The seals depicting Ptolemaic rulers have recently been published by Kyrieleis 2015; see Nicolaou 1993 on the seals employing the syllabic script.

⁶⁰ Nicolaou 1993, 345 allows that only 10 of the 20 are clearly ("incontestablement") with the remaining 10 only probable or (possibly) interpreted as decorative motifs. The limited use of signs corresponds, too, with the syllabic signs etched into third century Ptolemaic coins in the Meydancıkkale hoard: see Davesne and LeRider 1989, 306-313.

also changed the relational aspects of power as epigraphically commemorated on the island. Deprived of the driving force behind the public epigraphy of the fourth century (i.e., the citykings), and under control of the multi-ethnic Ptolemaic military-administration, Cypriots appear in many ways to have adopted the manner of commemorating power relationships employed by the imperial agents, and abandoned local writing systems in favor of a more communicable script and language to do so. While script and language communities were maintained outside of the contexts in which elite representation needed to speak to the wider audiences created by the Ptolemaic presence, the use of Greek as the prestige language quickly rendered the use of Phoenician and the syllabic script ineffective as a form of public self-expression. Long used to autocratic rule, Cypriot cities and elites sought not to replicate the forms of expression used in their past, but instead adapted themselves to the new imperial situation brought on by the court culture and relational power dynamics of Hellenistic Kingship.

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