

TRANSPLANTING KINGSHIP: ALEXANDER'S VISIT TO CYPRUS AND PTOLEMAIC POWER LEGITIMATION IN THE EARLY HELLENISTIC PERIOD*

ABSTRACT

This article analyses a passage of Plutarch which relates that Alexander the Great visited Cyprus and appointed the gardener Abdalonymus, descendant of the Cinyrads, as king of Paphos. While historical records attest to a king Abdalonymus in Sidon, Plutarch's account is clearly ahistorical. Alexander never set foot in Cyprus, and Abdalonymus never ruled over Paphos. The transfer of the story from Sidon to Cyprus was not a simple factual mistake, however, but a deliberate political and propagandistic device, created by an unknown author with strong Ptolemaic interests, most likely in conjunction with the establishment of Ptolemaic dominion over Cyprus by Ptolemy I. Through the long-standing Ancient Near Eastern tradition of royal gardening symbolism, which significantly influenced the island and the Levant, the story aims to legitimize the new Ptolemaic rule in Paphos, the capital of Ptolemaic Cyprus. By lending a venerable air to the new order, the story offers an alternative narrative to the dramatic death of Nicocles, the last king of Paphos and priest of the local great-goddess, who claimed descent from Cinyras and eventually committed suicide under pressure from Ptolemy I.

Keywords: Abdalonymus; Alexander the Great; Ptolemaic Cyprus; Paphian Cinyrads; Nicocles of Paphos

In his declamation *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*, Plutarch narrates a startling anecdote regarding Alexander's presence and activities on Cyprus (8.2 = *Mor.* 340D; translation by the authors):

πάλιν ἐν Πάφῳ, τοῦ βασιλεύοντος ἀδίκου καὶ πονηροῦ φανέντος, ἐκβαλὼν τοῦτον Ἀλέξανδρος ἕτερον ἐζήτει, τοῦ Κινυραδῶν γένους ἤδη φθίνειν καὶ ἀπολείπειν δοκούντος, ἕνα δ' οὖν ἔφασαν περιεῖναι πένητα καὶ ἄδοξον ἄνθρωπον ἐν κήπῳ τινὶ παρημελημένως διατρεφόμενον. ἐπὶ τοῦτον οἱ πεμφθέντες ἦκον, εὐρέθη δὲ πρασιαῖς ὕδωρ ἐπαντλῶν· καὶ διεταράχθη τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐπιλαβανομένων αὐτοῦ καὶ βαδίζειν κελευόντων. ἀχθεῖς δὲ πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ἐν εὐτελεῖ σινδονίσκῃ βασιλεὺς ἀνηγορεύθη καὶ πορφύραν ἔλαβε καὶ εἰς ἧν τῶν ἐταίρων προσαγορευομένων· ἐκαλεῖτο δ' Ἀβδαλῶνμος.

Once upon a time in Paphos when the reigning king appeared to be unjust and wicked, Alexander expelled him and looked for another, since the family of the Cinyradai was thought to have died off already and become extinct. But they said that there was still one poor and unknown person, spending his life disregarded in a garden. And when those sent to him arrived, he was found drawing water in the garden beds. And he was perturbed when the soldiers took him and ordered

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him to follow. And he was led to Alexander clothed in linen garments, and was then proclaimed king and took the purple, and was also proclaimed one of the *hetairoi*. His name was Abdalonymus.

The startling aspect of the story is, of course, that Alexander never visited Cyprus. Admittedly, even in his *Life of Alexander* (1.2) Plutarch declared that by choosing to write biography, rather than history, he was also taking the liberty to focus on small details and anecdotes rather than on famous battles; all the more so, then, in a rhetorical exercise such as *De fortuna Alexandri*. Still, as the story is given, it might well lead the innocent reader to think that Alexander actually visited the island, and replaced the Paphian king. The knowledgeable reader will recognize the story's historical context. Curtius (4.1.15–26) relates that Alexander removed Sidon's monarch, Straton, and replaced him with a scion of the royal family, ingloriously employed as a gardener. A shorter version appears in Justin's *Epitome* of Trogus (11.10.8–9). Straton's replacement, Abdalonymus, was historically king of Sidon during and after Alexander's reign.¹ Diodorus (17.46.6–47.6) repeats the story, but mistakenly locates it in Tyre.² Yet while Diodorus' mistake looks accidental, confusing two Phoenician cities that Alexander did engage with on his campaign, Plutarch's version introduces an ahistorical chapter in Alexander's campaign.³ When and why did the story migrate to Cyprus? Who was its intended audience? What did it aim to achieve?

Abdalonymus was indeed king of Sidon, but the rags to riches motif has caused just suspicion in scholarship, and gave rise to various rationalizations.⁴ The cultural framework that inspired his story will be discussed presently. First, we turn to the political landscape at its place of birth. In the generation before Alexander's arrival on the scene much of Phoenicia revolted against Artaxerxes III, under the leadership of Tennes,

¹ His name is attested in both Phoenician ('*bd'Inm*, עבדאלנם) and Greek (ΑΒΔΑΛΩΝΥΜΟΣ) in an inscription from Kos, discovered in 1982. See C. Kantzia, '... ΤΙΜΟΣ ΑΒΔΑΛΩΝΥΜΟΥ [ΣΙΔ]ΩΝΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ: Μία διγλωσση ελληνική-φοινικική επιγραφή από την Κω', *AD 35* (1980), 1–16; M. Szymer, 'La partie phénicienne de l'inscription bilingue greco-phénicienne de Cos', *AD 35* (1980), 17–30 (both articles are signed March 1986, but backdated to 1980). For the Greek, *SEG* 36.758. See also D. Sohlberg, 'Zu Kleitarch', *Historia* 24 (1972), 758–9, n. 2 (with earlier bibliography); E. Lipiński, *Itineraria Phoenicia* (Leuven, 2004), 149–55; C. Bonnet, *Les enfants de Cadmos: le paysage religieux de la Phénicie hellénistique* (Paris, 2015), 252–3, with figures 58–9.

² The Tyrian king was actually Azemilcus (Arr. *Anab.* 2.15.7; 2.24.5).

³ It seems impossible to tell through what channels the story reached Plutarch, nor how aware he was of its fictive aspects. Our interest in this article is not in Plutarch *per se*, but rather with the origin of the story's Cypriot version.

⁴ W. Fauth, 'Der königliche Gärtner und Jäger im Paradeisos. Beobachtungen zur Rolle des Herrschers in der vorderasiatischen Hortikultur', *Persica* 8 (1979), 1–53, at 13; A.B. Bosworth, 'Plus ça change ... ancient historians and their sources', *ClAnt* 22 (2003), 167–98, at 182; S.M. Burstein, 'The gardener became a king—or did he? The case of Abdalonymus of Sidon', in W. Heckel, A.L. Trittle and P. Wheatley (edd.), *Alexander's Empire: Formulation to Decay* (Claremont, 2007), 139–49, at 143, 145; E.M. Anson, *Alexander the Great: Themes and Issues* (London, 2013), 150; Bonnet (n. 1), 63–6; W. Heckel, *Alexander's Marshals: A Study of the Makedonian Aristocracy and the Politics of Military Leadership* (London, 2016²), 79–80, n. 25; B. Morstadt and S. Riedel, 'Cultivating kingship? The remarkable career change of Abdalonymus from gardener to king of Sidon', in W. Held (ed.), *The Transition from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic Period in the Levant, Cyprus and Cilicia: Cultural Interruption or Continuity?* (Marburg, 2020), 191–208, at 192–3; R.A. Stucky, 'Le "prince jardinier": l'avènement d'Abdalonymus de Sidon. Valeurs cosmiques de la royauté orientale, méconnues par les Grecs', in H. Dridi et al. (edd.), *Phéniciens et Puniques en Méditerranée: l'apport de la recherche suisse/Phönizier und Punier im Mittelmeerraum* (Rome, 2017), 15–26, at 22.

king of Sidon.⁵ After Sidon's defeat, the Great King replaced Tennes with Evagoras II of Salamis, previously deposed by a popular revolt in his own city. Apparently an unpopular ruler, he was deposed in Sidon as well.⁶ In his place came a descendant of the royal line, Abdashtart II, Straton in Greek and Latin sources. When Alexander arrived in Sidon, he removed Straton, probably because of his close connection with Darius, and appointed Abdalonymus in his stead.⁷

Why, then, was there a need for Abdalonymus' tall tale? Despite the lack of direct evidence, we can infer an immense degree of tension in Sidonian politics and society. The rebellion and its aftermath must have aggravated existing social ruptures, and it certainly left a deep hatred of Persian rule.⁸ The quick succession of kings must have shaken trust in the institution as a whole. The insistence of Curtius (4.1.18) and Diodorus (17.47.3) on Abdalonymus' royal lineage may reflect a patriotic reaction to the kingship of the Cypriot Evagoras; but it may also have aimed to create a legitimizing pedigree for Abdalonymus himself. Whatever the particular reasons for the story's creation, its overall purpose was probably to take over the public narrative. To establish a new path for Sidon, painful memories of historical reality should be replaced with a wholesome political myth.

The particular myth chosen for Abdalonymus also requires interpretation. Bosworth suggested that Abdalonymus was not a poor labourer but rather a high-ranking official in charge of the royal *paradeisos* near Sidon.⁹ Given that this *paradeisos* was badly damaged during the revolt (Diod. Sic. 16.41.5), and the status of *paradeisoi* as symbols of royal Achaemenid power, it is logical that the person appointed to its restoration was a man of note. If indeed so (the question remains open), the demotion of Abdalonymus from *paradeisos* overseer to simple gardener not only enhances the dramatic effect, but also blurs his former position in the service of hated Persia.

Additionally, we should consider the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) traditions connecting gardening with kingship.¹⁰ The origins of the gardener-king motif go back to the early strata of irrigation-based settlements in Mesopotamia.¹¹ A version of a

⁵ Diod. Sic. 16.43–5. The exact chronology of the rebellion has been hotly debated. For a history of the discussion and a convincing solution see J. Elayi, 'An updated chronology of the reigns of Phoenician kings during the Persian period (539–333 BCE)', *Transeuphratène* 32 (2006), 11–43.

⁶ Theopomp. *FGrHist* 115 F 114; Diod. Sic. 16.42; 16.46.1–4.

⁷ Curt. 4.1.16; Diod. Sic. 17.47.1; despite Diodorus' confused geography, nevertheless both preserve Straton's name and relate his friendship with Darius as the cause of his removal. Accepted by P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 857; Morstadt and Riedel (n. 4), 192.

⁸ Arr. *Anab.* 2.15.6.

⁹ As a *comparandum* Bosworth (n. 4), 182–3, cites the Persian official Asaph, overseer of the royal *paradeisos* in the Transeuphratene satrapy (Nehemiah 2:8). Another *comparandum* appears in a letter by Darius I, where he praises the satrap of Ionia for his diligence in transplanting plants from Mesopotamia into Asia Minor; see R. Meiggs and D.M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC* (Oxford, 1969/1988), no. 12; S.F. Bondi, 'Istituzioni e politica a Sidone dal 351 al 332 av. Cr.', *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 2 (1974), 149–60; P. Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Leiden, 1996), 507–9; M. Edrey, *Phoenician Identity in Context: Material Cultural Koiné in the Iron Age Levant* (Mainz, 2019), 78 suggests that the Sidonian *paradeisos* was located in modern Bostan el-Sheik, the putative 'official seat of the Achaemenid governor' in Phoenicia, three kilometers from Sidon.

¹⁰ *ANET*³, 558–60; Xen. *An.* 1.9.5–6; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.15; 1.4.7–15; Ctes. *FGrHist* 1 F 40; Plut. *Mor.* 173D; Plut. *Alc.* 24.7; Briant (n. 9), 242–52.

¹¹ Fauth (n. 4).

garden-related rags-to-riches story was told already of Sargon I of Akkad.¹² The *Chronicles of Early Kings* tell of King Erra-imittī, who installed Bēl-ibni (Enlil-bāni), a gardener, on his throne as a substitute king, placing his own royal crown on his head.¹³ Moving from cuneiform to Greek, we are told by Bion and Alexander Polyhistor (preserved by Agathias) how a certain Beletaras, an overseer of the royal gardens, unexpectedly became king of the realm, grafting the royal line into his own house.¹⁴ In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (4.20–5) we find Cyrus the Younger planning his garden and planting trees by himself.¹⁵ Read against this background, Abdalonymus' story appears as a latter-day example of a millennia-old tradition. The venerability of the gardener-king symbolism could be counted upon to bolster Abdalonymus' standing.

As the evidence stands, we cannot say when the story was first told, and by whom. Scholarship usually points to Clitarchus,¹⁶ yet despite his importance, there is no particular reason to postulate him as the source here. Schachermeyr suggested Onesicritus as the original teller.¹⁷ Callisthenes is another worthy candidate, as are many other first-generation Alexander historians. Yet another possibility is that Abdalonymus' story does not derive from any Alexander history, but was rather an independent Sidonian narrative, which found its way into the secondary sources. If so, it would be easier to understand why Diodorus mistakenly moved the story to Tyre. This would be harder to understand, had he found it in a straightforward linear history. Be that as it may, Diodorus' transportation of the story to Tyre demonstrates that it had a life and a potency all of its own.

The vitality of our story is even clearer in its Cypriot version, to which we now return. The most obvious mutation in this telling is its adherence to a new dynasty, the Cinyradai. According to existing sources, Cinyras was a mythical king of Cyprus, who was the 'cherished priest of Aphrodite', the 'beloved by Apollo'.¹⁸ By Alexander's time, the Cinyras myth had already been in service for centuries as a cultural bridge between

¹² A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC* (London, 1995), 48–9. According to this legend, Sargon had been exposed as a baby, then saved and raised by Akki, the drawer of water. Diodorus (17.47.4), Plutarch (*Mor.* 340D) and Justin (11.10.9) all emphasize Abdalonymus' efforts in watering his garden.

¹³ A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (New York, 1975), 155, no. 20, A 31–9; J.J. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (Leiden, 2004), 271.

¹⁴ Alex. Polyh. *FGrHist* 273 F 81a 4 (also George Syncellus, *Extract of Chronography* 676, 15 [ed. Dindorf], *FGrHist* 273 F 81b); Bion *FGrHist* 89 F 1a.

¹⁵ S.B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1994), 238; C. Attack, *The Discourse of Kingship in Classical Greece* (London, 2020), 105. On Xerxes' attitude to plants: Hdt. 7.31; Plin. *HN* 17.42. On Artaxerxes II and the *paradeisoi*: Plut. *Artax.* 24.25; Curt. 8.1.13; Polyb. 31.29. On garden royal ideology under the Achaemenids: A. Uchitel, 'Persian paradise: agricultural texts in the fortification archive', *IA* 32 (1997), 137–44; C. Tuplin, 'Paradise revisited', in S. Gondet and E. Haerincx (edd.), *L'Orient est son jardin (Hommages à R. Boucharlat)* (Leuven, 2019), 477–501; G. Caneva, A. Lazzara and Z. Hosseini, 'Plants as symbols of power in the Achaemenid iconography of ancient Persian monuments', *Plants* 12 (2023), 3991, 3–25.

¹⁶ L.I.C. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (London, 1960), 238; F. Schachermeyr, *Alexander der Grosse. Das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens* (Wien, 1973), 214, n. 234; J.E. Atkinson, *A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus' Historiae Alexandri Magni Books 3 and 4* (Amsterdam, 1980), 283; N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1983), 43; Bosworth (n. 4), 176, 181–5 (inferring 'Greek informers' as Clitarchus' putative source); Burstein (n. 4), 143 n. 14, 146; J.C. Franklin, *Kinyras: The Divine Lyre* (Washington, DC, 2016 [page number cited according to the online open-access edition]), 489 n. 5; Morstadt and Riedel (n. 4), 191.

¹⁷ Schachermeyr (n. 16), 214, n. 234.

¹⁸ Hom. *Il.* 11.19–22; Tyrt. fr. 12.6; Pind. *Pyth.* 2.15–7 ἱερέα κίλων Ἀφροδίτας; *Nem.* 8.17–8; Franklin (n. 16), 30–1, specifically for the connections between Cinyras' and Apollo's lyres.

Greece and Cyprus.¹⁹ It was not the only one. From the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries onwards, we see a growing tendency in the various Cypriot city-kingdoms to find for themselves a place in the Greek world through various uses of Greek myth.²⁰ The first known Cypriot statesman to use Cinyras as a source of legitimization was Evagoras I, king of Salamis at the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries.²¹

The first known attestation of Cinyrad claims in Paphos comes a century later, in the reign of king Nicocles (before 321–310/309). An inscription from the turn of the fourth and third centuries, found in ancient Ledra (central modern Nicosia) in the sacred precinct of (Aphrodite) Paphia, styles Nicocles son of Timarchos of the Paphians ‘of Cinyras’. The text reads Λεδρίῳ ἐ[ν] τεμένει Π[αφίας ~ ~ ~ ~ ~] | ἄρχαῖος πατέρων ἐστ[(-) ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ (-)] | υἱὸν Τιμάρχου Παφίων [Βασιλῆα ~ ~ ~] | Νικοκλέα Κινύρου θε[(((~))~) ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ (-)], whose last words, according to Boskos’s and Cayla’s respective reconstructions may be read as θε[ισιότου γενεᾶς] or θε[ῖου ἐκ προγόνου (or ἐκ γενεᾶς)], ‘in the temple of the Paphian goddess . . . Archaïos/ancient (?) of the fathers . . . , son of Timarchos, king of the Paphians, Nicocles [of the divine lineage] of Cinyras’.²²

During the struggles of the *Diadochi* for control of Cyprus, Nicocles legitimized his political authority by proclaiming himself a descendant of Cinyras. This legitimacy extended to religious authority due to the connection of Cinyras with Apollo and Aphrodite.²³ According to one late scholiast, Cinyras was even Apollo’s son.²⁴ These connections, with their political and charismatic implications, will have been universally clear in the Greek speaking world. At the same time, Nicocles formally addressed his fellow Cypriots as *i-je-re-u-se ta-se wa-na-sa-se*, ‘priest of the *wanassa*’, the Cypriot great goddess, according to a long-standing tradition ascribed to the Paphian kings.²⁵

¹⁹ On Cinyras and Cyprus: C. Baurain, ‘Un autre nom pour Amathonte de Chypre?’, *CCEC* 105 (1981), 361–72; A. Hermay, ‘Les fonctions sacerdotales des souverains chypriotes’, *CCEC* 44 (2014), 137–52; P. Christodoulou, ‘La refondation de Salamine de Chypre par Évagoras Ier (415–374/3 av. J.-C.)’, in S. Rogge, C. Ioannou and T. Mavrogiannis (edd.), *Salamis of Cyprus, History and Archaeology from the Earliest Times to Late Antiquity* (Münster, 2019), 265–88; P. Christodoulou, ‘Aphrodite and imperialistic politics in classical years. From Cimon to Evagoras’, in E. Koulakiotis and C. Dunn (edd.), *Political Religions in the Greco-Roman World: Discourses, Practices and Images* (Cambridge, 2019), 150–79. This is one of the main points in Franklin’s voluminous book (n. 16).

²⁰ Mostly through ascription of the city foundations to Greek heroes: P. Christodoulou, ‘Les mythes fondateurs des royaumes chypriotes. Le nostos de Teukros’, *CCEC* 44 (2014), 191–216; A. Cannavò, ‘Les Teucrides de Chypre au miroir d’Isocrate’, in P. Giovannelli-Jouanna and C. Bouchet (edd.), *Isocrate, entre jeu rhétorique et enjeux politiques* (Lyon, 2015), 235–47; E. Bianco, ‘Isocrate e Teucro: alcune riflessioni sull’uso del mito’, in P. Giovannelli-Jouanna and C. Bouchet (edd.), *Isocrate, entre jeu rhétorique et enjeux politiques* (Lyon, 2015), 225–37; P.J. Finglass, ‘Stesichorus, Cyprus, and the heroes of Athens’, in K. Carvounis, A. Gavrielatos, G. Karla and A. Papatthomas (edd.), *Cyprus in Texts from Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Leiden, 2023), 91–103.

²¹ Paus. 1.3.2, with J.L. Shear, *Polis and Revolution. Responding to Oligarchy in Classical Athens* (Oxford, 2011), 277; Christodoulou (n. 20), 210–1, suggesting plausibly that Pausanias learned this from an inscription on the base of Evagoras’ statue. See also M. Giuffrida, ‘Le fonti sull’ascesa di Evagora al trono’, *ASNP* 4 (1996), 589–627, at 602; Christodoulou (‘Aphrodite’, n. 19), 162–6.

²² *CEG* 2.871; A. Voskos, ‘Κριτικά καὶ ἐρμηνευτικά στο Κυπριακὸ Ἐπιγράμμα’, in G.K. Ioannides and S.A. Hadjistylles (edd.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Cypriot Studies* (Nicosia, 2000), 171–81, at 178; J.B. Cayla, *Les inscriptions de Paphos* (Lyon, 2018), 124. A heavily reconstructed inscription from Palaipaphos (Cayla, 126–7) may also reflect this connection in real time. Later epigraphical attestations of Cinyrads in Paphos (Cayla, 62–5; no. 81; 108; 166; 204).

²³ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.15–7; *Nem.* 8.17–8; Theoc. *Id.* 1.109; Franklin (n. 16), 716–41.

²⁴ Σ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.27, ed. A.B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina: scholia in Pithionicas*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1915), 35–6.

²⁵ M. Egetmeyer, *Le dialecte grec ancien de Chypre, Tome 1, Grammaire; Tome 2, Répertoire des inscriptions en syllabaire chypre-grec* (Berlin, 2010), vol. 2, Ayia Moni no. 1–2 = O. Masson, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques. Recueil critique et commenté* (Paris, 1983), no. 90–1 (henceforth,

This goddess was venerated in the sanctuary of Old Paphos (Palaipaphos/Kouklia), and her cult had merged with that of Aphrodite from the end of the fourth century onwards.²⁶

This age-old overlap of political and religious power is clearly documented in Cyprus, where kings typically served as the chief priests of the city-kingdoms.²⁷ However, the Paphian kings were the first known Cypriot rulers to identify themselves explicitly as king-priests in official inscriptions. Furthermore, to strengthen his influence over peripheral territories, especially those near Nea Paphos, Nicocles established places of worship for Apollo (Hylates), whom he also depicted on the reverse of his coins, seated on an *omphalos*.²⁸ These symbolic measures served to integrate the Paphian royal line into a broader Panhellenic framework. All in all, the political-religious tradition linked to Cinyras was well established in Paphos, particularly because of Nicocles' propaganda. Based on information from epigraphic sources, this tradition likely continued thereafter.

A third-second century inscription from Palaipaphos, dedicated by Democrates and his wife Eunice to Aphrodite Paphia, names Democrates as ΑΡΧΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΚΙΝΥΡΑΔΩΝ (chief of the Cinyrads).²⁹ A little later Ptolemaios of Megalopolis, a senior Ptolemaic statesman, ambassador to Rome, *stratēgos* of Cyprus and a writer of history, reported that Cinyras and his descendants were buried in the temple of Aphrodite in Palaipaphos.³⁰ The Cinyradai retained their priestly position in Paphos as late as the Roman Imperial period, as testified by Tacitus (*Hist.* 2.3). The Cinyrad connection with Paphos is therefore well attested in both epigraphic and literary sources, and lasted for several centuries.

The evidence, therefore, demonstrates a strong Cinyrad presence in Paphos from the time of Nicocles onwards.³¹ Admittedly, we cannot argue solely from silence that Nicocles was the first author of the Paphian Cinyrad connection; future discoveries may change the picture. Yet as things stand, the basic premise of our story is that the Cinyrad dynasty is old enough to have reached a 'last scion' situation. This runs against the evidence that presents the Paphian Cinyrad claim as a recent development, aimed to fortify Nicocles' position in the Wars of the Successors. The discrepancy between the freshness of the Cinyrad connection in Paphos and the removal of Nicocles by Ptolemy I creates a strong sense of irony. We thus suggest reading our story as directed at resolving not only this irony, but also the grief and anxieties that must have accompanied Nicocles' fall. To illustrate, let us then quickly retrace the circumstances on the island after Alexander's death.

ICS); Egetmeyer (n. 25) vol. 2, Paphos no. 2 = *ICS* no. 7. Timocharis (390–370) and Echetimos (370–350), both Kings of Paphos, styled themselves 'priest of the *wanassa*': Egetmeyer, vol. 2, Paphos no. 8 = *ICS* no. 16; Egetmeyer, vol. 2, Paphos no. 9 = *ICS* no. 17.

²⁶ M. Iacovou, 'Palaepaphos: unlocking the landscape context of the sanctuary of the Cypriot goddess', *Open Archaeology* 5 (2019), 204–34, at 204. Old Paphos as sanctuary town in the Hellenistic period: F.G. Maier, 'From regional centre to sanctuary town: Palaipaphos in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period', in P. Flourentzos (ed.), *From Evagoras I to the Ptolemies. The Transition from the Classical to the Hellenistic Period in Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2007), 17–33.

²⁷ F.G. Maier, 'Priest kings in Cyprus', in E.J. Peltenburg (ed.), *Early Society in Cyprus* (Edinburgh, 1989), 376–91; Hermayr (n. 19), 132–52.

²⁸ J. Młynarczyk, *Nea Paphos in the Hellenistic Period (Nea Paphos III)* (Warsaw, 1990), 70; Franklin (n. 16), 741; B. Pestarino, *Kypriōn Politeia, the Political and Administrative Systems of the Classical Cypriot City-Kingdoms* (Leiden, 2022), 155–75.

²⁹ Cayla (n. 22), 204, no. 81. See also A. Halczuk, *Corpus d'inscriptions paphiennes* (Lyon, 2019), AP 187, 694 = *SEG* 20.218; Pestarino (n. 28), 159 for full details.

³⁰ Clem. Alex. *Prot.* 3.45.4 = *FGrHist* 161 F 17.

³¹ For the fascinating possibility of much earlier Cinyrad roots on the island, that cannot be considered in this context, see Franklin (n. 16), particularly 709–50.

From their outbreak, the Wars of the Successors engulfed the Cypriot cities. A preliminary round was fought between Ptolemy and Perdiccas, followed by a prolonged confrontation between Ptolemy and the Antigonids.³² Unsurprisingly, the major clashes between Alexander's Successors compelled the Cypriot strongmen to choose sides, as well as to form local coalitions. The outcome was the gradual loss of local independence, and the eventual abolition of indigenous Cypriot monarchy. By the beginning of the third century Cyprus had become a Ptolemaic holding, run from Alexandria.³³

Nicocles managed to survive this destructive process more than most. The first glimpse of Paphos and its last king appears in a fragment of Arrian's *History of the Successors*.³⁴ In it Perdiccas receives information to the effect that Nicocreon of Salamis and his comrades Pasicrates of Soli, Nicocles of Paphos and Androcles of Amathus, have allied themselves with Ptolemy. Together the allies assembled a force of nearly 200 ships, and laid siege to another Cypriot city.³⁵ Upon receiving the news Perdiccas sent forces to save the beleaguered city. As the fragment breaks off, we are left uncertain concerning the outcome of the confrontation. The main takeaway is Nicocles' position alongside Ptolemy.

A few years later (315), after Antigonius had inherited Perdiccas' role in the power struggle, we once again hear of an alliance of Cypriot kings under the leadership of Nicocreon of Salamis in cooperation with Ptolemy, who was represented on the island by his brother Menelaus, and by the future king Seleucus. An opposite Cypriot alliance, working with Antigonius, comprised the kings of Citium, Lapethus, Marion and Cerynia (Diod. Sic. 19.59.1). Paphos is not mentioned, but it is safe to assume that it retained its position on the Ptolemaic side.³⁶ A couple of years later (313), when Ptolemy appeared on the island in person to take matters into his own hand, he executed or arrested the rival Cypriot kings, appointed Nicocreon of Salamis as *stratêgos* and removed the population of Marion to Paphos (Diod. Sic. 19.79.4–5). This last step assures us of the ongoing support offered to Ptolemy by Nicocles.

However, Paphos did not long enjoy its ascendant status in Cyprus. According to Diodorus (20.21.1–3), Ptolemy, by now (310) master of the cities of Cyprus, learned of an illicit secret friendship forming between Nicocles and Antigonius. Thereupon he dispatched two of his friends to the island, with orders to get rid of Nicocles. Receiving troops from Menelaus, the king's brother and *stratêgos* of Cyprus, Ptolemy's henchmen confronted Nicocles with the charges.³⁷ The king of Paphos tried to defend himself, but to no avail. Despairing from his position, Nicocles took his own life. At this point the story takes a memorable and horrific turn: when the Paphian queen Axiothea received the news of her husband's death, she killed her own daughters and exhorted other members of her family to follow her lead. A gruesome scene of mass suicide followed, capped by

³² Detailed description and analysis: A.M. Collombier, 'La fin des royaumes chypriotes: ruptures et continuités', *Transeuphratène* 6 (1993), 127–41.

³³ E. Markou, 'Menelaos, king of Salamis', in D. Michaelides (ed.), *Epigraphy, Numismatics, Prosopography and History of Ancient Cyprus. Papers in Honour of Ino Nicolaou* (Athens and Uppsala, 2003), 3–8; A. Mehl, 'Cypriot city kingdoms: no problem in the Neo-Assyrian, late Egyptian and Persian empires, but why were they abolished under Macedonian rule?', *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών* 30 (2004), 9–21.

³⁴ Vat. gr. 495, fol. 230 verso; 24.2.14–9 in Roos's Teubner edition.

³⁵ Possibly Marion, see Reitz in Roos's apparatus.

³⁶ In the Classical period Paphos was usually allied with Salamis against Citium: M. Yon and M. Szymer, 'A Phoenician trophy at Kition', *RDAC* (1992), 156–65.

³⁷ On Menelaos: Markou (n. 33), 3–8.

the incineration of the entire palace.³⁸ 'Therefore', Diodorus concludes, 'the house of the kings in Paphos, having experienced tragic calamities in the aforesaid fashion, was destroyed.'³⁹ The relevance of these dramatic events to our story is clear. They provide a context that, on the one hand, is chronologically close to Alexander and, on the other, present circumstances when the ruling house of Paphos had suddenly come close to extinction, and when royal candidates had to be sought in unlikely places.

Was Nicocles indeed guilty of conspiring with Antigonus? Diodorus states that Ptolemy believed he was, yet we are left wondering. Epigraphical evidence from Palaipaphos may suggest that Nicocles demanded from his brothers and sons to swear an oath of loyalty to him. The exact date and the context of this inscription remain unknown, but, although lacunose, in line 3 the text does mention a threat by an enemy, and the oath itself indicates a crisis of some sort.⁴⁰ The circumstances of Nicocles' demise, too, are murky. Did Nicocles expect an increase of his influence on the island after the death in the previous year of Nicocreon, who had been granted special powers by Ptolemy, powers which were then conferred on Menelaus (Ptolemy's brother) rather than on himself?⁴¹ Did Antigonus, in the attempt to reconsolidate his power in the Levant following his son's defeat at Gaza (312), make Nicocles an offer he could not refuse?⁴² Was Nicocles maligned by some private enemies, who used Ptolemy to settle an unrelated score? Or was Ptolemy acting cynically, bringing a trumped up charge in order to rid himself of Nicocles and finalize the process of extinguishing independent Cypriot monarchy? Think what we may, the suicide of the king and the horrific aftermath of the Paphian royal house were problematic for the future peaceful rule of the Ptolemies on the island.

There seems to be some evidence for resistance, both political and symbolic, to Ptolemaic rule, even after the end of local kingship. Pausanias recounts that Ptolemy II killed a step-brother (a son of Ptolemy I and Eurydice), who had instigated a rebellion

³⁸ Remains of the burned palace have not yet been uncovered. The palace in Palaipaphos was apparently abandoned, not burnt. The evacuation of the palace was probably connected with the move from Old Paphos/Kouklia to Nea-Paphos, in itself a likely cause of anxiety: Iacovou (n. 26), 204–34; M. Iacovou, 'Laona, the mystery mound and the Palaepaphos urban landscape project', *The European Archaeologist* 74 (2022), online; M. Iacovou and E. Markou, 'Integrating numismatic evidence into the study of the urban landscape of Paphos from Palaepaphos to Nea Paphos with the last king', *Tekmeria* 18 (2023), 67–96.

³⁹ The same story is told by Polyaeus (*Strat.* 8.48), focussing on the role of Axiothea, wife of Nicocles the 'king of the Cypriots'. For the confusion between Nicocles of Paphos and Nicocreon of Salamis: H. Gesche, 'Nikokles von Paphos und Nikokreon von Salamis', *Chiron* 4 (1974), 103–25. Her excellent analysis, arguing conclusively and convincingly in favour of Nicocles and Paphos, is accepted by R. Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions Outside Egypt* (Leiden, 1976), 40; O. Mørkholm, 'The Alexander coinage of Nicocles of Paphos', *Chiron* 8 (1978), 135–48; W. Daszewski, 'Nicocles and Ptolemy: remarks on the early history of Nea Paphos', *RDCA* (1987), 171–75, at 174; Collombier (n. 32), 139–40; T. Bekker-Nielsen, 'The foundation of Nea Paphos', *Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens* 3 (2000), 195–208, at 198; G. Papantoniou, *Religion and Social Transformations in Cyprus: From the Cypriot Basileis to the Hellenistic Strategos* (Leiden, 2012), 10; Franklin (n. 16), 416–7; I. Worthington, *Ptolemy I: King and Pharaoh of Egypt* (Oxford, 2016), 148; J.P. Sickinger, 'Marmor Parium', in *BNJ* 239 F B17. Nicocreon and Salamis still preferred by F.G. Maier and V. Karageorghis, *Paphos. History and Archaeology* (Nicosia, 1984), 224 (without discussion).

⁴⁰ Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 2, Paphos no. 3 = ICS no. 8 = Halczuk (n. 29) AP 14; O. Masson, 'Une nouvelle inscription de Paphos concernant le roi Nikoklès', *Kadmos* 19 (1980), 65–80, at 76–8; Pestarino (n. 28), 44–6.

⁴¹ Suggested by Gesche (n. 39), 111–12; accepted by Bekker-Nielsen (n. 39), 198, who adds that the fortifications built in Old Paphos by Nicocles, attested archaeologically and numismatically, raised Ptolemy's suspicion.

⁴² Diod. Sic. 19.82–4.8; P. Wheatley and C. Dunn, *Demetrius the Besieger* (Oxford, 2020), 63–72.

among the Cypriots (likely around 282).⁴³ In northern Cyprus sanctuaries such as Ayia Irini, Myrtou-Pigadhes and Phlamoudhi-Vounari experienced a revival. The return to these Iron Age worship centres, largely abandoned during the Classical period, has been interpreted as a Cypriot reaffirmation of distinct local features through the restoration of ancient cultural foci.⁴⁴ We do not know to what extent various Cypriots were ready to rebel against Ptolemy II, nor the exact contents of discussions and ritual storytelling in the revived centres of worship. They do seem, however, to testify to the stress put by the inception of the new Ptolemaic order on political-administrative structures and religious practices.⁴⁵

It is against this background that we ought to interpret the application of Abdalonymus' story to Paphos. As explained above, our point of departure is the identification of the deposed Paphian monarch with Nicocles, the only Paphian king to have reigned after Alexander's death. In the story he is left nameless, and his removal is justified without further detail by his qualification as unjust and wicked. This unsympathetic view of Nicocles points to Ptolemy as the beneficiary. If Nicocles was unjust and wicked, then Ptolemy was right in replacing him. But that is not all. The logic of our interpretation, identifying Nicocles with the anonymous wicked king, gives rise to a second identification, of Ptolemy with Alexander. In the story, it is Alexander who deposes the Cypriot monarch; in reality it was of course Ptolemy. This analogy between Alexander and Ptolemy is completely congruent with the extensive use made of Alexander in Ptolemaic propaganda as a whole.⁴⁶

⁴³ Paus. 1.7.1; C. Marquaille, 'The Foreign Policy of Ptolemy II', in P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume (edd.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World* (Leiden, 2008), 39–64, at 43–4, n. 25; 45; B.F. van Oppen de Ruiter, 'The marriage and divorce of Ptolemy I and Eurydice: an excursion in early-Hellenistic marital practice', *CE* 90 (2015), 147–73 (the Ptolemaic prince is identified as one Meleagros).

⁴⁴ G. Papantoniou, 'Cypriot autonomous polities at the crossroads of empire: the imprint of a transformed islandscape in the Classical and Hellenistic periods', *BASO* 370 (2013), 169–205.

⁴⁵ Another putative point of friction involved by the foundation of Nea Paphos, likely due to the silting-up of the old harbour. According to Bekker-Nielsen (n. 39), 195–207, D. Vitas, 'The foundation of Nea Paphos: a new Cypriot city or a Ptolemaic katoikia?', in C. Balandier (ed.), *NEA PAPHOS. Fondation et développement urbanistique d'une ville chypriote de l'Antiquité à nos jours. Études archéologiques, historiques et patrimoniales* (Bordeaux, 2016), 241–8 and A. Mehl, 'Nea Paphos et l'administration ptolémaïque de Chypre', in C. Balandier, *NEA PAPHOS. Fondation et développement urbanistique d'une ville chypriote de l'antiquité à nos jours. Études archéologiques, historiques et patrimoniales* (Bordeaux, 2016), 249–60, this operation was initiated by Ptolemy, after his takeover of Paphos. Alternatively, Młynarczyk (n. 28), 67–76, M. Iacovou, 'Paphos before Palaepaphos. New approaches to the history of the Paphian kingdom', in D. Michaelides (ed.), *Epigraphy, Numismatics, Prosopography and History of Ancient Cyprus. Studies in Honour of Ino Nicolaou* (Uppsala, 2013), 275–92, Pestarino (n. 28), 155–175 and Iacovou and Markou (n. 38), 67–96 think that the foundation of Nea-Paphos was the work of Nicocles. If so, the new foundation is less relevant here. C. Balandier, 'Des anciennes capitales de royaumes aux nouvelles villes portuaires: réflexions sur l'évolution du réseau urbain de Chypre à l'époque hellénistique', in C. Balandier and C. Chandezon (edd.), *Institutions, sociétés et cultes de la Méditerranée antique. Mélanges d'histoire ancienne rassemblés en l'honneur de Claude Vial* (Bordeaux, 2014), 179–209; C. Balandier, 'Nea Paphos (Chypre). De la fondation hellénistique au développement de la ville romaine: derniers résultats de la Mission archéologique française à Paphos (MafaP) 2014–17', *DHA* 43.2 (2017), 217–31; C. Balandier, 'Nea Paphos, fondation chypriote ou lagide? Nouvelles considérations sur la genèse du port et de la ville', in K. Jakubiak and A. Lajtar (edd.), *Ex Oriente Lux. Studies in Honour of Jolanta Młynarczyk* (Warsaw, 2020), 125–45 suggests that Nicocles allowed Ptolemy I to create a military base in Nea Paphos. Given the state of the sources, the issue remains undecided.

⁴⁶ For similar use of Alexander as a stand-in for the reigning Ptolemaic king: O. Amitay, 'Alexander between Rome and Carthage in the Alexander Romance (A)', *Phoenix* 77 (2023), 23–42.

From the Cypriot point of view, the myth will have had a facilitatory function. The loss of political independence surely caused significant anxiety and discontent; all the more so, if we accept Diodorus' testimony about the final conflagration of the Cinyrads. The Abdalonymus story is poised to replace a tale of horror with one of wonder, diverting attention from Ptolemy's politically charged persona to a benevolent and benign Alexander. Simultaneously, the story reasserts the Paphian Cinyrad connection. As we have seen, Cinyrad claims in Paphos retained their hold even into Roman imperial times. By introducing a new chapter in the Paphian Cinyrad mythology, the Abdalonymus story grounds and justifies what appears to be the political manoeuvre of *reductio ad sacra* carried out by Ptolemy. Cinyrads would nominally continue as kings in Paphos, but the true kings reside in Alexandria.

Why, it remains to ask, was this story in particular chosen as the political spin to divert attention from the downfall of independent Paphian monarchy? In itself, the borrowing of a Sidonian story is anything but surprising, given the close *longue durée* relations between Sidon and Cyprus.⁴⁷ A more specific connection between Sidonian history and the Paphian story appears in Diodorus' (16.45.4–6) description of events at the conclusion of the aforementioned Sidonian rebellion against the Persians. After the rebellion crumbled and Sidon had come under siege, with no hope of withstanding the attack of the Persians, the Sidonians shut themselves in their houses and committed mass suicide by fire. The details in Diodorus' description—the Sidonians destroyed their entire navy; the final death count reached 40,000; the city was utterly destroyed—are likely exaggerated. Half a generation later Alexander already found Sidon in good shape, and with a navy powerful enough to form the backbone of his own naval force during the siege of Tyre. What is important, however, in the present context is not the accuracy of Diodorus' description, but rather the fact that a story about the infernal scene in Sidon was in circulation within living memory of its imitation—historical or otherwise—at Paphos.

When was the Abdalonymus story first told about Paphos? Our interpretation leaves us with two possible datings. The first is in the short span between 309, the year of Nicocles' death and 306, when Demetrius defeated Ptolemy off the Cypriot coast in the battle of Salamis, and took over the island.⁴⁸ The second date, or rather *terminus post quem*, is 294, when Ptolemy reconquered Cyprus, which then remained part of the Ptolemaic realm until the mid-first century. Given that the story's aim was a double legitimization, both of Ptolemaic rule and of the Cinyrad position as priest-kings, 294, followed by continuous Ptolemaic rule, seems like a better fit.

⁴⁷ O. Masson, 'Pélerins chypriotes en Phénicie (Sarepta et Sidon)', *Semitica* 32 (1982), 45–9; N. Na'aman, 'Sargon II and the rebellion of the Cypriot kings against Shilta of Tyre', *Orientalia* 67 (1998), 239–47; M. Yon, *Kition Bamboula V* (Paris, 2004), 52; V. Karageorghis, 'Cyprus and Sidon: Two thousand years and interconnections', *CCEC* 37 (2007), 41–52. Egetmeyer (n. 25) vol. 2, Phoenicia no. 20 = *ICS* no. 369d; P. Boyes, 'The King of the Sidonians: Phoenician ideologies and the myth of the kingdom of Tyre-Sidon', *BASO* 201 (2012), 33–44; H. Charaf, 'Disentangling the relationships between Cyprus and Lebanon during the second millennium BC. What Sidon can bring to the table', in G. Bourogiannis (ed.), *Beyond Cyprus: Investigating Cypriot Connectivity in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age to the End of the Classical Period* (Athens, 2022), 89–107.

⁴⁸ Diod. Sic. 20.46.5–53.2, 82.1; Plut. *Demetr.* 15.1–17.1; Paus. 1.6.6; Polyæn. 4.7.7; Just. *Epit.* 15.2.6–9; Trog. *Prol.* 15; App. *Syr.* 54.275; Parian Marble, *FGrHist* 239 F B21; Alexis *ap.* Ath. *Deipn.* 254a; Wheatley and Dunn (n. 42), 145–58; M.G. Amadasi and J.A. Zamora López, 'The Phoenician name of Cyprus. New evidence from early Hellenistic times', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 63 (2018), 77–97.

Whoever was responsible for the transplantation of the Abdalonymus story from Sidon to Cyprus surely realized that it would find fertile ground to strike roots. By that we mean that the Cypriot socio-political and cultural environment had long been heavily influenced by the ANE. Previous to the onset of the Hellenistic Age, Cyprus had been part of the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid empires, both of which paid particular attention to and put a high premium on royal gardens.⁴⁹ The activities routinely carried out in them included gardening and watering—clearly manifest in the various versions of the Abdalonymus story—but also hunting (discussed below).

Admittedly, we have no unequivocal evidence of a royal *paradeisos* in Cyprus. The literary sources make no such mention. Archaeologically, gardens on the whole, let alone their specific legal and religious status, are not easily definable.⁵⁰ Barring the discovery of an inscription specifically mentioning a *paradeisos* in Cyprus, we remain in the realm of conjecture. However, there is some evidence—literary, epigraphic and iconographic—which testifies to the various roles of gardens in the political and symbolic spheres on the island.

The first set of evidence comes from Byzantine lexicography. In the *Lexicon* of Hesychius (γ 150 Latte–Cunningham), the Alexandrian Greek grammarian from the fifth or sixth century A.D., an outstanding source for Cypriot vocabulary, we find an identification of *ganos*, from the western-semitic גָּן, with *paradeisos*. The *Etymologicum Magnum* (223.47 Gaisford) shows an even more detailed definition: γάνος, ὑπὸ δὲ Κυπρίων παρόδειςος, ‘*ganos*, a *paradeisos* by the Cypriots.’ In the present context the important point is that, according to *Etym. Magn.* and Hesychius, *ganos* was reserved specifically for a *paradeisos* (rather than a regular κήπος; *ka-po-se*). These glossae have been interpreted to mean that a *paradeisos* did in fact formally exist in Cyprus.⁵¹ At the very least, it demonstrates, albeit from a great chronological distance, the familiarity of Cypriot culture with this venerable ANE regal institution.

Much closer chronologically is a clay tablet from Lefkoniko, written in Cypriot-syllabic Greek and dating from the Classical period (fifth–fourth centuries). This

⁴⁹ Importance of royal gardens in Assyrian and Achaemenid contexts: M. Novák, ‘The artificial paradise: programme and ideology of royal gardens’, in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (edd.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Near East* (Helsinki, 2002), 443–60; P. Briant, ‘À propos du roi-jardinier: remarques sur l’histoire d’un dossier documentaire’, in W. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt (edd.), *A Persian Perspective. Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (Leiden, 2003), 33–49; A. Amrhein, ‘Neo-Assyrian gardens: a spectrum of artificiality, sacrality and accessibility’, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 35 (2015), 91–114; L. Farrar, *Gardens and Gardeners of the Ancient World: History, Myth and Archaeology* (Oxford, 2016), 53–68; Tuplin (n. 15), 477–501; P. Albenda, ‘Royal gardens, parks, and the architecture within: Assyrian views’, *JAOS* 138 (2021), 105–20.

⁵⁰ Archaeology of *paradeisoi*: D. Stronach, ‘The royal garden at Pasargadae: evolution and legacy’, in L. de Meyer and E. Haerinck (edd.), *Archaeologica Iranica et Orientalia: Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe* (Ghent, 1989), 476–502, at 479; R. Boucharlat and C. Benech, ‘Organisation et aménagement de l’espace à Pasargades: reconnaissances archéologiques de surface, 1999–2002’, *Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology* (2002), online; R. Boucharlat, T. De Schacht and S. Gondet, ‘Surface reconnaissance in the Persepolis plain (2005–2008). New data on the city organisation and landscape management’, in G.P. Basello and A.V. Rossi (edd.), *Dariosh Studies II. Persepolis and its Settlements: Territorial System and Ideology in the Achaemenid State* (Naples, 2012), 249–90; D. Langgut, Y. Gadot, N. Porat and O. Lipschits, ‘Fossil pollen reveals the secrets of the royal Persian garden at Ramat Raḥel, Jerusalem’, *Palynology* 37 (2013), 115–29; W. Held, ‘Achämenidische Hofkunst in der hellenistischen Levante. Eine Jagdszene in Marisa, der Pavillon in Jericho und der Paradeisos von Sidon’, in W. Held (ed.), *The Transition from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic Period in the Levant, Cyprus, and Cilicia: Cultural Interruption or Continuity?* (Marburg, 2020), 209–28.

⁵¹ Tuplin (n. 15), 492, no. 137; A. Bremmen, *The Rise and Fall of the After-Life* (London, 2002), 119–20.

document is likely an account related to a festival, dedicated to Apollo Daphnephoros (Cypriot: *Daukhnaphorios*).⁵² One word in the text is of particular importance. In line 12B we read ...] *ka-no-se*.⁵³ The lacuna just before the word (the text is highly lacunose) does not allow absolute certainty, but if *ka-no-se* indeed stands alone, it may well be the syllabic form of Hesychios' *ganos*.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, we lack an archaeological context for the inscription, which would allow us to connect this *ka-no-se* with any particular landscape.

Another relevant inscription is the Idalium Bronze Tablet (c. 460), a legal document in the shape of a *tabula ansata* with just one handle.⁵⁵ This concerns the payment by the city of Idalium and King Stasicyprus to one Onasilus, a physician, and to his brothers, who had cured injured Idalians in a siege perpetrated by the Citians and the Achaemenids. Instead of allocating him silver talents, as initially stipulated, the King Stasicyprus and the city agreed to donate him plots 'from the land of the king' (*a-pu-ta-i | ga ?-i | ta-i-pa-si-le-wo-se, ἀπὸ τῆς γᾶς*?) τῆς βασιλῆος). The text is very specific when describing the typology of the plots assigned and the lands on which they border. The first plot of land, *ko-ro-ne, χῶρον*, allocated to Onasilus and his brothers is located in a wet lowland that adjoins the *a-la-wo, ἄλφω* of Oncas—perhaps a local technical term which designates a cultivated lot, such as a 'garden', a 'vineyard' or simply a 'cultivated field'.⁵⁶ Furthermore, this *χῶρον* included some *te-re-ki-ni-ja* (τέρχινια) 'young plants', which Onasilus and his brothers could now own and sell at their discretion.⁵⁷ A few lines later, the king and the *polis* assign to Onasilus alone yet another plot from the land of the king. This tract borders on the *ἄλφω* of Amenias and on the *ka-po-se, κήπος*, 'garden', in the *a-ro-u-ra, ἄρουρα*, 'arable land', of Simmis (a woman), also exploited as an *ἄλφω* by a certain Armaneus.⁵⁸ This new plot also has 'new plants' that Onasilus may own and sell as he likes. The point to be taken from all this is the existence of a detailed and complex vocabulary, indicating a notable Cypriot sensitivity towards various types of gardens and lands.⁵⁹ Simultaneously, the tablet provides us with the persona of a Cypriot king, deeply involved in the management of a royal garden, freshly planted with young trees. In that respect, King Stasicyprus of Idalium cuts a figure not dissimilar to Xenophon's Cyrus, or indeed to earlier ANE examples. Seen in this light, when taken from his own garden, Abdalonymus was already a king in training.

⁵² Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 2, Lefkoniko no. 1 = *ICS* no. 309.

⁵³ G. Neumann, 'Beiträge zum Kyprischen XXI', *Kadmos* 42 (2003/4), 109–30.

⁵⁴ Another option would be *χάνος*, mouth, which strikes us as the less likely option. Neumann (n. 53), 123, interpreted it as the ending of a name.

⁵⁵ Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 2, Idalion no. 1 = *ICS* no. 217; Pestarino (n. 28), 48–76; H. Perdicoyianni-Paleologou, 'La tablette de bronze d'Idalion', *Axon* (2021), 31–72; A. Georgiadou, 'La Tablette d'Idalion réexaminée', *CCEC* 40 (2010), 141–203.

⁵⁶ According to Hesychius (α 3251 Latte–Cunningham), this term, likely a Cypriot *hapax*, would indicate a *κήπος*, 'garden'—*ἄλουα*: *κήποι* <Κύπριοι>, '*aloua*: <Cypriot> gardens'. Egetmeyer (n. 25, vol. 1 §666), prefers an equivalent of the Attic *ὠλωή*, indicating any 'prepared ground' (orchard, vineyard or garden).

⁵⁷ Hsch. τ 565; Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 1 §§215, 348. This particular translation is suggested by a glossa in Hesychius—*τέρχινεα*: *φυτὰ νέα*, '*terchnea* : young plants'.

⁵⁸ On *a-ro-u-ra* see Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 1 §124; Hsch. α 7383.

⁵⁹ This meticulous description of various plots, belonging to or bordering on the king's lands, may suggest the presence of a cadastre, used by the local administration: Pestarino (n. 28), 60; P. Aupert and P. Flourentzos, 'Un exceptionnel document à base cadastrale de l'Amathonte hellénistique. (Inscriptions d'Amathonte vii)', *BCH* 132 (2008), 311–46.

Naturally enough, Cypriot iconography is no stranger to plants and gardens. In a recent contribution López-Ruiz and Faegersten note the proliferation of decorative vegetal patterns in Cypriot art during the Archaic and Classical periods.⁶⁰ According to their interpretation, these motifs were borrowed from contemporary Levantine art, and represent the rising prevalence and importance of gardening and horticulture. Unsurprisingly, the particular plants depicted were familiar to the artists from their own surroundings. In this light we suggest that the particular detail about Abdalonymus' clothing as made of linen (σινδονίσκη), which is not mentioned in any of the other tellings, and is therefore a distinct Cypriot addition, is meant to reflect the native flora, and industry, on the island.⁶¹

A final point involves another symbolic feature of ANE royalty: the king as a hunter of wild and dangerous animals.⁶² It is true that no variant of the Abdalonymus story includes a hunting scene of any kind. However, we do possess a finely wrought image of Abdalonymus as lion-hunter in the exquisite art of the so-called Abdalonymus sarcophagus.⁶³ While the sarcophagus bears no funerary inscription, its ascription to Abdalonymus is widely accepted, and strikes us as highly plausible. After all, it does bear the unmistakable image of Alexander, and it was found in the royal necropolis of Sidon.⁶⁴ There is every reason to think, therefore, that the historical Abdalonymus, whose rise to power was related in the language of gardening, wished to portray himself also in the figure of the royal hunter.

The motif of the lion hunt, traditionally associated with the ideology of human control over natural forces, and particularly with *paradeisoi*, was featured in the iconography of the island from the Late Bronze Age onwards. Among the various depictions, noteworthy examples include silver bowls from Curium (725–675) and Idalion (eighth–seventh

⁶⁰ F. Faegersten and C. López-Ruiz, 'New insights on the "volute capital" motif: its materials, meaning, and contexts in the Phoenician world and beyond', *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 11 (2023), 229–55.

⁶¹ According to *TLG* and *LSJ* the word σινδονίσκη is extremely rare. For the linen industry on Cyprus in the early Hellenistic period: *IG XV* 2.1, nos. 474–779 = Egetmeyer (n. 25), vol. 2, Kafizin nos. 1–66. Also T.B. Mitford, *The Nymphaeum of Kafizin* (Berlin, 1980), 252–66; C. Consani, *Persistenza dialettale e diffusione della koiné a Cipro: il caso di Kafizin* (Pisa, 1986), *passim*; S. Lejeune, 'Le sanctuaire de Kafizin, nouvelles perspectives', *BCH* 138 (2014), 275–307; A. Cannavò, 'Le vocabulaire du textile à Chypre dans l'Antiquité d'après les sources épigraphiques, littéraires et lexicographiques', *CCEC* 49 (2019), 155–66. Specific Cypriot linen vocabulary: Hsch. λ 529.

⁶² A. Poggio, *Dynastic Deeds: Hunt Scenes in the Funerary Imagery of the Achaemenid Eastern Mediterranean* (London, 2020); S. Anthonioz, 'The lion, the shepherd, and the master of animals: metaphorical interactions and governance representations in Mesopotamian and Levantine sources', in M. Pallavidini and L. Portuese (edd.), *Researching Metaphor in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden, 2020), 15–28.

⁶³ Poggio (n. 62), 31.

⁶⁴ W. Heckel, 'Mazaeus, Callisthenes and the Alexander sarcophagus', *Historia* 55 (2006), 385–96 suggests the sarcophagus belonged to the Persian satrap Mazaeus. However, this requires us to believe that 'the scenes depicted on the sarcophagus relate to events in the life of the occupant'. But sarcophagi are natural media for symbolic representation. Furthermore, Mazaeus passed away in Babylon, and there is no indication that he requested to be buried in Sidon. For the similarity of Sidonian and Persian costumes in an adjacent funerary context see J. Elayi, 'Les sarcophages phéniciens d'époque perse', *JA* 23 (1988), 275–322, at 315, as well as O. Palagia, 'Alexander's battles against Persians in the art of the Successors', in T. Howe, S. Müller and R. Stoneman (edd.), *Ancient Historiography on War and Empire* (Oxford, 2017), 177–87, at 182, who disagrees with Heckel. The identification with Abdalonymus is reasserted by A. Stewart, *Art in the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge, 2014), 258 n. 2, who sees no reason why 'Mazaeus, a Persian noble of considerably higher rank than the Sidonian kings, wanted to be buried in their private mausoleum, and it leaves poor Abdalonymus, Sidon's last king, with no final resting place'.

century), bearing different scenes of lion hunts, including an Assyrian winged deity battling a rampant lion with a sword; somewhat later (fifth century) we find Cypriot figurines of horseback riders capturing lions.⁶⁵ Another iconographical example of the ideology that connects lion-hunting with the guaranteeing of security and prosperity is the so-called ‘master of the lion’, a local version of the ANE ‘master of the animals’.⁶⁶ The Cypriot ‘master of the lion’ was portrayed in the fifth century as a male deity, manifested in statuettes found in the Mesaoria plain and on coins from Citium.⁶⁷ This representation often shows him adorned with a lion skin, holding a club in his right hand, and grasping a smallish lion by its hind legs and tail in his left hand. In Amathus the ‘master of the lion’—with whom the local king identified—coalesced with the figure of the Egyptian deity Bes, similarly adorned with a lion skin or depicted holding a small lion.⁶⁸ Finally at Paphos, a late sixth- or early fifth-century male statue, discovered at Marchello (the Archaic Paphian citadel), is depicted holding a lion by its hind legs and tail.⁶⁹

The epigraphic and iconographic data gathered from the various Cypriot contexts, regarding both gardening and lion-hunting, demonstrates the practical and symbolic importance of these two aspects of life on the island. That the Cypriot situation reflects the deep ANE influence is natural enough. The gardener, and the hunter, were perceived as guarantors and preservers of prosperity and security, portrayed symbolically through these complementary methods of nature control.⁷⁰ It is for these reasons that the Abdalonymus story proved particularly fertile as a source of legitimation for the political and religious power of the newly-installed Ptolemies.

The story about Alexander the Great in Cyprus—so clearly ahistorical—demands an interpretation. Our interpretation sees the story as a useful political myth with a strong Ptolemaic interest. The identity of the story’s original author remains unknown; nor do we know how the story reached Plutarch. Of the two viable datings, 309–306 or shortly after 294, we prefer the latter. This preference is based on the assumption that the story fits better at some distance from the actual events, and deeper into the process of Ptolemaic entrenchment on the island. The story creates a double analogy: between the literary figures of Alexander and that of the deposed Paphian king on the one hand, and on the other the historical Ptolemy and Nicocles, respectively. The aim of the story was both to offer an alternative narrative for the demise of Paphian independence and the

⁶⁵ G. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (Berkeley, 1985), 256 Cy8; 170–1 Cy2; A. Caubet, A. Hermay and V. Karageorghis, *Art antique de Chypre au musée du Louvre, du chalcolithique à l’époque romaine* (Paris, 1992), 82; A. Satraki, ‘The iconography of basileis in archaic and classical Cyprus: manifestations of royal power in the visual record, *BASO* 370 (2013), 123–44, at 128–29; 134; A. Hermay and J.R. Mertens, *The Cesnola Collection of Cypriot Art Stone Sculptures* (New Haven-London, 2014), no. 283, 190. On the iconographic motif of Achaemenid royal lion hunts see Poggio (n. 62), 55–62.

⁶⁶ D.B. Counts, ‘Master of the lion: representation and hybridity in Cypriote sanctuaries’, *AJA* 112 (2008), 3–27.

⁶⁷ D.B. Counts, ‘Divine symbols and royal aspirations: the master of animals in iron age Cypriote religion’, in D.B. Counts and B. Arnold (edd.), *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography* (Budapest, 2010), 135–46; Satraki (n. 65), 136.

⁶⁸ T. Petit, ‘Images de la royauté amathousienne: le sarcophage d’Amathonte’, in Y. Perrin and T. Petit (edd.), *Iconographie impériale, iconographie royale, iconographie des élites dans l’antiquité* (Saint-Etienne, 2004), 49–96; I. Tassignon, *Le seigneur aux lions d’Amathonte: étude d’iconographie et d’histoire des religions des statues trouvées sur l’agora* (Athens, 2013), 5–52.

⁶⁹ D. Leibundgut Wieland and V. Tatton-Brown, *Nordost-Tor und persische Belagerungsrampe in Alt-Paphos IV. Skulpturen, Votivmonumente und Bauteile in der Belagerungsrampe* (Berlin, 2019), 80–1, no. 3.

⁷⁰ D. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2650 BC* (Cambridge, 2006), 115.

painful scenes that accompanied it, and to lend a venerable air to the new order, in which Paphian priesthood persisted in its royal claims for centuries thereafter. This venerability was achieved by invoking the age-old ANE tradition of royal gardening symbolism, clearly present also on the island. The act of borrowing a Sidonian myth and its adaptation to Cyprus is a testimony both to the *longue durée* influence of the Levant on the island, and to the vitality and usefulness of Alexander's myth in the decades after his death, particularly in the Ptolemaic political and cultural sphere.

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