



CYPRUS IN THE ACHAEMENID PERIOD

CYPRUS, ISLAND OF, in the Achaemenid period. The kings of the southeastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus reportedly submitted willingly to Cyrus II (see [CYRUS iii](#)) and offered military assistance to the Persians in their campaigns against Caria and Babylon (539 BCE) (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.4.2 and 8.6.8, with the comments of Stylianou, 1989, p. 413 n. 229). The island remained more or less continuously within the Achaemenid sphere of influence until the defeat of Darius III at Issus (333 BCE), after which Cypriot allegiance was transferred to Alexander of Macedon (Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.20-22; Plutarch, *Alexander* 24.4).

Achaemenid rule did not efface the basic form of political organization of the island into separate city kingdoms, whose number, recorded as nine in the mid-fourth century (Diodorus, 16.42.4), apparently fluctuated depending on the vicissitudes of inter-island conflict (below; cf. Duris of Samos, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 76, frag. 4). The history, however, of these kingdoms from the late eighth century, when they are first securely attested in the Neo-Assyrian record (Saporetti, pp. 83-88; Reyes, pp. 49-60), until the end of the fourth century, when they were abolished by the Ptolemies (see Mehl, pp. 619-40) is poorly documented. Information about their existence is confined in most instances to a few dynasts' names and the still visible remains that their ruling cities and dependent towns (cf. Diodorus, 16.42.4) left on the ground (see, among others, Hill, 1940; Gjerstad, 1948; Antoniadès; Watkin, pp. 1-45;



Stylianou, 1989; Collombier; Zournatzi, 1996; *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 308; Iacovou). Taken together, Achaemenid, Cypriot, and Greek sources only provide a sketchy and uneven outline of the history of the island under Achaemenid rule.

Darius I's inclusion of three late Archaic Cypriot silver staters (including one tentatively ascribed to the mint at Paphus and another from the mint at Lapethus) among the coins in one of the foundation deposits of the Apadana at Persepolis (Schmidt, pp. 110, 113-14, pl. 84, nos. 27-39; Kagan, pp. 36-38) may allude to an Achaemenid perception of Cyprus as an important holding (Zournatzi, 2003). References to the island remain difficult to identify in either Achaemenid monumental inscriptions or imperial chancery documents (see below).

A Cypro-syllabic inscription mentioning a siege of the important inland Cypriot city of Idalium by the “Medes” (i.e., the Persians) and troops from Citium, the Phoenician center *par excellence* on the island, represents the only direct reference, from the Cypriot side, to the island's dealings with the Achaemenid regime (Masson, pp. 235-44, no. 217 [“Idalium tablet”], variously dated to sometime between the Cypriot revolt in the 490s and the last third of the fifth century). A Phoenician trophy inscription, dated to the first regnal year (ca. 392/391 BCE) of Milkiathon of Citium, and commemorating a victory of the Citians over their “enemies and their auxiliaries, the Paphians,” has been ascribed to the conflict between Citium and Salamis at the time of Evagoras I's wars of expansion on Cyprus (Diodorus, 14.98.3-4) and would thus supply evidence for a then current, formerly unattested collaboration of Salamis with Paphus (Yon and Sznycer). Herodotus's (5.104-5, 108-16) account of the Cypriot revolt—a valuable source for the political situation on the island in the 490s—further sets the historical background for the identification of a siege mound located just outside the Northwest Gate of the Palaepaphus city wall as a direct reflection of the Persian investiture and capture of the city at that time (Maier and Karageorghis, pp. 192-203, 219, n. 14, with references to pertinent excavation reports). The legitimacy of earlier hypotheses that a monumental building at Palaepaphus (Schäfer; Maier 1989) and a palatial complex on the hilltop of Vouni near the city of Soli on the northern coast of the island (Gjerstad et al., 1937, pp. 111-290) were established as imperial control points in recalcitrant areas in the aftermath of the same revolt remains a moot question (Herodotus 5.115 describes a dramatic five-month siege of Soli; see also below). Clay and stone statuettes of individuals in Iranian



costume, seemingly all of local manufacture, and certain iconographic and stylistic elements in Cypriot stone sculpture of the period, as well as in a limited number of seals and in various items of metalwork from the island, each appear to speak for interactions with the imperial environment (see esp. Markoe; Petit; Tuplin, 1996, pp. 48-56; Zournatzi, 2008), even if evidence of this kind cannot be used in definitive terms to substantiate a local Persian presence.

Heavily colored though they may be with a pro-Hellenic, and more specifically a pro-Athenian, bias, Greek accounts of the activities of the ruler of Salamis, Evagoras I (the only Cypriot ruler whose activities are extensively documented in the available sources) offer precious information about Cypro-Persian encounters in the late fifth century and in the early decades of the fourth century (see, in particular, *Inscriptiones graecae* I³/1, no. 113, and II², no. 20 [with Lewis and Stroud]; Euripides, *Helen* [Grégoire and Goossens; Zournatzi, 1993]; Isocrates, 9; Theopompus, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 115, frag. 103; Diodorus, 14.98 and 110, 15.2-4 and 8-9.2). The extensive Greek interest in the events of the reign of Evagoras, combined with Herodotus's earlier detailed account of the Cypriot revolt, constitute clear exceptions, however, to the customary terse references and passing remarks that make up the balance of Greek testimonia on Cypro-Persian relations (largely collected by Hadjiioannou; for a succinct, chronological presentation of recorded events, see also Weiskopf, 2002, pp. 508-10). The extent to which the Greek sources concentrate on military incidents involving Cyprus and Persia underscores the naval and strategic significance of the island. In contrast, direct references to the island's political and administrative relations with the empire are rare—a circumstance that has invited conflicting speculations about Cyprus's place in the imperial system.

The strategic significance of Cyprus to the Achaemenids. It was probably the Cypriots' nautical expertise that was most welcome to the Persians in the Carian campaign of Cyrus II (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.4.2), as may also have been the case with reference to Cambyses' Egyptian expedition in ca. 525 BCE (Herodotus, 3.19.3). Henceforth, the Cypriots are regularly featured as contributors of ships and crews to Persia's Mediterranean fleets (e.g., Herodotus, 6.6, 7.90; Diodorus, 14.39). In 480 their contingent of 150 ships (and commanders of repute: Herodotus, 7.98, 8.11.2) was the third largest in size in Xerxes' fleet after those of the Phoenicians/Syro-Palestinians and the Egyptians (Herodotus, 7.98; cf. Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.20.3-7, who records that some 120



Cypriot ships were placed at Alexander's service in 332 BCE).

Located on the maritime route from the southeastern Mediterranean to the Aegean—at points at a distance of less than 70 km from the adjacent Levantine and Cilician coasts—and naturally endowed with an abundance of copper, timber and “all kinds of materials for shipbuilding” (Strabo, 14.6.5; Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.8.14) as well as a sinuous coastline that provided safe anchorages (cf. Strabo, 14.6.3), the island of Cyprus could also be used as a supply base and a staging point for operations along the entire western seaboard of the Achaemenid empire (e.g., Diodorus, 14.39). When attested, the wider historical context of military incidents involving the island amply hints at the central place of Cyprus in the ongoing efforts of the Achaemenids to maintain their influence and naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean against competing Cypriot, Greek, and Egyptian interests.

In the 490s a dynastic dispute in Salamis—sparked by Onesilus's seizure of the throne from his brother Gorgus—escalated into an island-wide revolt (Herodotus, 5.104-5, 108-16). Persian troops dispatched to the island wiped out the uprising by defeating the Cypriot rebels on the plain of Salamis and by then capturing by siege, one by one, the cities that had defied Persian authority. Herodotus (5.115) describes a dramatic five-month siege of Soli, and the still substantial remains of a siege mound, dated to the time of the Cypriot revolt, have been excavated at Palaepaphus. The uprising is causally connected in Herodotus with the contemporary [Ionian revolt](#) and with the assistance provided by an Ionian naval force, which came to Cyprus with express orders from the Ionian *koinon* to “guard the sea” (Herodotus, 5.109). Darius I's rapid (cf. Herodotus, 5.116: Cypriot freedom only lasted one year) and thorough elimination of Cypriot resistance may have been driven, at least in part, by a perception that a rebellious Cyprus could do much to reduce the effectiveness of Persia's predominantly Phoenician fleet in its operations against the Ionians.

Whether or not any of the cities of Cyprus were actually included initially in the Delian League (Meiggs, pp. 56-65 and 486; cf. Stylianos, 1989, pp. 443-52), Pausanias' expedition to the island in 478 (Thucydides, 1.94.2; cf. Diodorus, 11.44.1-2, Nepos, *Pausanias* 2.1) and subsequent Greek naval expeditions in the southeastern Mediterranean, notably under the Athenian general Cimon (Callisthenes, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 124, frag. 15 [= Plutarch, *Cimon* 12.4]; Diodorus, 11.60.6-62; Thucydides, 1.112.1-4; Diodorus, 12.3-4; Plutarch, *Cimon* 18-19.2; Suda, *Kimon*), each indicate that the Cypriot domain was one of



the main theaters of Greek-Persian military confrontation from the immediate aftermath of the Persian wars (490-480/79 BCE) until the middle of the fifth century. Greek cultural ties and commercial interests (e.g., Meiggs, pp. 483, 486) supplied a strong motivation for Aegean Greek interventions in Cypriot affairs. These interventions were simultaneously central to a wider Greek effort, which only came to an end with Cimon's death, to curb Persian naval power and influence in the eastern Mediterranean as a whole (see, e.g., Diodorus, 12.4.2, implying that Greek conquest of Cyprus would decide the outcome of the whole war between Greeks and Persians). Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Levant are implicated in this scheme through references to the Eurymedon campaign (Thucydides, 1.100.1 [cf. Diodorus, 11.60.5]; Callisthenes, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 124, frag. 15 [= Plutarch, *Cimon* 12.4]; Diodorus, 11.60.1-6; Plutarch, *Cimon* 13.2) in 466 BCE ((Badian, pp. 6-10), the use of Cyprus by the Athenians as a base for operations in support of the rebel King Inarus in Egypt in ca. 460 BCE (e.g., Thucydides, 1.104.1-2; Plato, *Menexenus* 241e-2a), and later to Amyrtaeus (Thucydides, 1.112.2; cf. Plutarch, *Cimon* 18.1, 5), and contemporaneous Athenian war casualties in, among other places, Cyprus, Egypt, and Phoenicia (*Inscriptiones graecae* I³/2, no. 1147, dated to "460?" BCE). There are no explicit provisions that relate to Cyprus in the surviving terms of the so-called Peace of Callias (see [CALLIAS, PEACE OF](#)) of ca. 449 BCE. Nonetheless the treaty, which was reportedly negotiated from the Persian side by "the chiefs and satraps active around [or connected with] Cyprus" (Diodorus, 12.4.4: τοῖς περὶ τὴν Κύπρον ἡγεμόσι καὶ σατράπαις) and was concluded after Cimon's death while campaigning in Cyprus, is thought to have been one which "forced Athens to renounce her military ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean" (Meiggs, p. 483)—and it may well have left the entire island within the Persian sphere. (On the modern debate on the Peace, see conveniently Meiggs, pp. 487-95 [Appendix 8]; Badian offers a convincing defense of the reality of the Peace.)

In the 390s Evagoras I's amicable relations with Athens (e.g., *Inscriptiones graecae* I³/1, no. 113; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.1.29; Isocrates, 9.52; Diodorus, 13.106.6) and simultaneous expressions of fealty to the Persian regime reportedly enabled him to mediate in the appointment of the Athenian general Conon as a commander in the Persian fleet that defeated the Spartans at Cnidus (394 BCE) (Ctesias, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 688, frag. 30; Isocrates, 9.53-57, 67-68; *Inscriptiones graecae* II², no. 20 [Lewis and Stroud]; Pausanias, 1.3.2). Evagoras's activities in this instance fell in with Artaxerxes II's efforts to destroy Spartan sea power and to regain control of Asia Minor with Athenian



assistance (Costa, pp. 48-49; cf. Lewis and Stroud, p. 191). Peaceful relations with Artaxerxes' regime were soon followed, however, by a drawn-out conflict, which ended with Evagoras's capitulation to Artaxerxes' generals. The available sources speak of a ten-year war, presumably from ca. 390 to ca. 380 BCE (Isocrates, 9.64; Diodorus, 15.9.2 calls it the "Cypriot War"), but these same sources are less than clear about its cause(s). (For the chronology of events, see, most recently, Stylianos, 1998, pp. 143-54, with an overview of earlier arguments.) A first, seemingly ineffectual, campaign by the satrap of Lydia, [Autophradates](#), and the dynast of Caria, Hecatomnus, in 391 or 390 BCE (Theopompus, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 115, frag. 103[4]) was motivated, according to Diodorus (14.98.3-4; cf. Ephorus, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 70, frag. 76 [Reid]), by an appeal of the cities of Amathus, Soli, and Citium to Artaxerxes II for help against Evagoras's expansionist activities on Cyprus. A more concerted effort to subdue Evagoras was then undertaken ca. 386/5 BCE. A measure of the scale and complexity of the war is offered by references to Evagoras's extensive resources (Diodorus, 15.2), which included, in addition to his extended holdings on Cyprus, control of Tyre and "other cities" on the opposite Phoenician coast (Diodorus, 14.2.4); by his alliance (probably before 386 [Stylianos, 1998, p. 159, comment *ad* 2.3] and perhaps as early as 389 [Kienitz, p. 83]) with the rebel king of Egypt, Acoris (Diodorus, 15.3, 15.8); and by the ultimate inability of the Persians to achieve a total victory. Despite the naval defeat (Diodorus, 15.3; cf. Polybius, *Historiae* 12.25.1-2) and lengthy siege of Salamis by Persian forces, protracted, and partially secret, negotiations of Evagoras with the Persians opened the way for a settlement that left untouched his royal authority in Salamis (Diodorus, 15.4, 15.8-9.2).

Despite the "local" motives cited by Diodorus for the about-face of Artaxerxes II's policy towards Evagoras in ca. 390, more cogent reasons for the Cypriot campaign of Autophradates and Hecatomnus and the ensuing drawn-out conflict between Salamis and the empire arguably emerge, once again, in connection with Artaxerxes' larger strategic concerns (cf. Diodorus, 14.98.3). In the Aegean, the dissolution of Sparta's supremacy and the rise of Athenian influence as a result of Conon's successes had created prospects for a recreation of Athens' fifth-century naval hegemony. Earlier useful to Artaxerxes, Evagoras's Athenian connections were presumably no longer seen to be in harmony with Persian interests when his continuing friendship with Athens (*Inscriptiones graecae* II², no. 20 [Lewis and Stroud]) and a contemplated triple alliance between Salamis, Athens, and the powerful naval city of Syracuse (Lysias, 19.19-20) could only serve to strengthen the odds in



favor of an Athenian naval revival (Zournatzi, 1991, pp. 128-64, with an overview of earlier arguments). Further reasons for Achaemenid concern over Evagoras's activities during his ten-year conflict with the empire become apparent from his participation in the network of alliances of Acoris, who was the leading opponent of Persia in the southeastern Mediterranean at the time (Theopompus, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 115, frag. 103[1]; Diodorus, 15.3, 8). Our sources do not offer a clear view of the place of Evagoras and Cyprus in the context of Persian efforts to deal with the destabilization in the southeastern Mediterranean related to the revolt of Egypt. That Cyprus was an integral part of the strained relations between Greece and Persia until the early 380s, just as it had been in the first half of the fifth century, is borne out by Artaxerxes II's express claim of Cyprus as a Persian possession in the recorded terms of his treaty regulating problems on the Greek frontier in 387/6 BCE, during the time of his hostilities against Evagoras I (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.31; Isocrates, 4.141; cf. Diodorus, 14.110).

The character of Achaemenid rule. Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 7.4.1-2, 8.6.8) states that, because the Cypriots willingly offered allegiance, Cyrus II did not send a Persian satrap to the island but was content to leave the local kings in place, requiring from them only tribute and troops. In Herodotus (3.91.1), on the other hand, Cyprus is stated to have been included, together with "the whole of Phoenicia and the part of Syria called Palestine," in the fifth of the twenty Persian *nomoi*, which extended from Posidium in the north to the borders of Egypt (excluding Arabia) in the south and was assessed to pay annually a total of 350 talents (presumably of silver). The place of the list of Persian *nomoi* at the end of a narrative section, which describes Darius I's reforms, would imply a change in the island's status during the reign of Darius. Earlier on in the same section, Herodotus (3.89) mentions Darius's subdivision of the territories of the empire into twenty satrapies, each governed by a royally appointed magistrate. Tributary but ostensibly self-governed under Cyrus and presumably also under Cambyses, Cyprus, it would seem, was incorporated into the formal (satrapal) structure of the empire under Darius I as an extension of Persia's Levantine holdings and was directly placed under the authority of an imperial governor (see, e.g., Leuze, p. 27; Hill, 1940, p. 112; Spyridakis, pp. 104-105).

Up until the early 1970s, the notion of the imposition of tighter Achaemenid control over the island from the reign of Darius onward was generally taken to be consonant with the military actions of this same monarch at the time of the



Cypriot revolt of the 490s. The circumstances of Persian rule over the island also tended to be largely interpreted on the basis of comments by the Athenian orator, Isocrates—comments concerning the fifth-century fortunes of Salamis and Cyprus. As he states, before the accession of Evagoras I (ca. 412 BCE), a Phoenician usurper had seized the throne of Salamis, “reduced the city to barbarism, and brought the whole island into subservience to the Great King” (Isocrates, 9.19-20). This state of affairs, which led, as Isocrates asserts, to the severing of the island’s ties with Hellas and the debasement of Cypriot culture, prevailed under his descendants until they were displaced by Evagoras. Acting as a champion of the Greek cause, Evagoras was able to gain control of a large part of the island, restore relations with Hellas, and when Artaxerxes II eventually turned against him, Evagoras stood up heroically against the troops of the empire for ten years (Isocrates, 9.49-67). Isocrates’ description would imply that the Persians largely relied upon Cypriot Phoenician elements in order to promulgate their authority on the island, thus adhering to a policy of suppression of the Greek communities (see, e.g., Busolt, p. 344; Meyer, p. 198; Oberhummer, p. 93; Spyridakis, p. 43; Gjerstad, 1948, pp. 479-89; cf. idem, 1979, pp. 250-54).

The Idalium tablet’s reference to the joint attack by Persian and Phoenician troops against Idalium and Citium’s eventual annexation of Idalium (Honeyman, nos. 3 and 7; cf. Hadjicosti, pp. 57-60) and Tamassus (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 4.167c, d [=Duris, apud Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 76, frag. 4]; *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* I, no. 101.2 [342 BCE]) could be readily understood as reflections of such a policy. Additional indications for a Phoenician aggrandizement with Persian aid were presumed (see Gjerstad, 1946; Robinson, p. 61) to be supplied by the use of the Phoenician script and/or occurrences of Phoenician rulers’ names on the post-revolt coinages of Marium and Lapethus (Masson and Sznycer, pp. 80-81 [Marium], 97-100 [Lapethus]).

At the same time, various considerations led to the interpretation of two important edifices in the area of Soli and at Palaepaphus, respectively, as key points of control in areas of recalcitrance. The initial plan (ca. 500 – ca. 450 BCE) of the monumental hilltop complex (“palace”) of Vouni, overlooking the city of Soli, was presumed to betray the eastern leanings of its builders (Gjerstad, 1932; for the excavations, see Gjerstad et al., 1937, pp. 111-290). It was suggested that it was constructed by a persophile, Phoenician ruler, who was established by the Persians at the neighboring Greek city of Marium after



the revolt, in order to keep an eye on rebellious Soli (Gjerstad, 1946, p. 23; idem, 1948, p. 477). At Palaepaphus, where opposition against the Persians is suggested by the remains of the siege mound, a monumental building, whose fine ashlar construction and partially recovered plan were compared to late-sixth- and early-fifth-century architecture at Persepolis (Iliffe and Mitford; Schäfer, p. 174), was identified as a “*Perserbau*” (Schäfer) or “headquarters of a Persian garrison” (Meiggs, p. 481) or “Persian commander’s residence” (Karageorghis, p. 156; Tatton-Brown, p. 96) established in the wake of the revolt to ensure the loyalty of the local inhabitants.

More recent researches highlight the many uncertainties that are inherent in any attempt to define the character of Achaemenid rule over the island. In particular, Isocrates’ implications of fifth-century Phoenician intrusion into a historically Greek landscape and of a Persian policy of suppression of the Cypriot Greeks with the aid of local Phoenicians remain difficult to accept at face value (Costa; Maier, 1985). Far from representing a peculiarly Achaemenid phenomenon, Phoenician visibility in Cypriot affairs can be traced as far back as the foundation of Phoenician Citium in the ninth century (see, in general, Masson and Sznycer; Gjerstad, 1979; Baurain and Destrooper-Georgiades; cf. Na’aman, 1998 and 2001). Given the long symbiosis of Greek and Phoenician elements in Cyprus, the use of the Phoenician script and occurrences of Phoenician dynasts’ names on Cypriot numismatic issues can be explained as indications of mixed dynasties (cf. Herodotus, 5.104.1, on the mixed dynasty of Salamis) and, in the particular case of Lapithus, even as manifestations of a mixed community (Seibert, pp. 19-23; cf. Maier, 1985, p. 35). Evagoras’s expansionist activities, which were reportedly equally opposed by an autochthonous (Amathus), a Greek (Soli), and a Phoenician (Citium) center on the island, would also suggest that incidents of inter-island conflict were just as likely to emanate from the divided (material) interests of the different city kingdoms as they were from ethnic causes. This same Cypriot Greek ruler’s rise to prominence in Persian affairs in the 390’s is also at variance with the presumption that Persian policy was invariably determined by factors of ethnicity and relied on Phoenicians for local support (see esp. Maier 1985).

In addition, it was found that there was little else in the Cypriot archaeological record that could offer a safe index of the scale and character of Persia’s local interventions following the conquest of the island. Mentioned only twice in moments of military crisis (Diodorus, 11.44.2 [cf. Nepos, *Pausanias* 2.1], 12.4.1),



garrisons are hard to identify as instruments of Persian control, not least since evidence for permanent Persian settlement on the island, such as might have been revealed by any extensive influence of Iranian onomastics, or the presence of Iranian tombs or the representation of Iranian deities, has remained difficult to detect in Cypriot material culture during the Achaemenid period (Petit, pp. 170-77; Tuplin, 1996, pp. 48-59). By the same token, one no longer sees any overriding reason for positing the function of Vouni as a control point (Maier, 1985, pp. 36-37; Stylianou, 1989, p. 432 n. 297; Wiesehöfer, pp. 244-45; Collombier, p. 32; but see also Zournatzi, 2008, pp. 249-50, n. 9, and idem, forthcoming), and the “*Perserbau*” at Palaipahos is widely viewed as an expression of local, rather than imperial authority (Maier, 1989, p. 17; Maier and Karageorghis, p. 208; but see also Balandier, pp. 182-83).

Earlier unquestioned acceptance of Cyprus’ formal incorporation into the satrapal structure of the empire is also now placed in doubt by the vexing uncertainties that surround Herodotus’ list of *nomoi*. References in Babylonian documents of 502 and 407-401 BCE to governors of *Ebir Nari* (Across-the-River [i.e., the Euphrates]) (Stolper, 1989, pp. 289-92) would support the reality of a Persian province which encompassed the Syro-Palestinian region and would thus correspond to Herodotus’ fifth *nomos*. The Achaemenid evidence, however, does not allow straightforward conclusions about Cyprus’ affiliation with *Ebir Nari* and the status of Herodotus’ fifth *nomos*. The possibility that the Cypriots were already a part of *Ebir Nari* by the third decade of Darius’s reign emerges from an attractive interpretation of the Cypriots as the *kupirriyaš*, who are mentioned once as workmen (*kurtaš*) from *Athura* (normally interpreted as “Assyria or Syria” [Kent, p. 166] but also appearing as equivalent to *Ebir Nari* in the Babylonian version of the foundation charter of Darius I’s palace at Susa [DSf]) and, on another occasion, as travelers under authorization from Dattana (suggested by Stolper to be the governor of Across-the-River, Tattenai) in Persepolis Fortification tablets dated to the 490s (see Tuplin, 1996, pp. 42-43 and n. 89, with references). There is no agreement, however, on the significance of the term *kupirriyaš*, and evidence related to the administrative history of *Ebir Nari* raises questions about the status of Herodotus’ *nomoi* and the date of his list. Whereas Herodotus would have us believe that an independent Syro-Palestinian satrapy existed since at least the reign of Darius, Babylonian legal documents indicate that this entity might have only become a separate province sometime between the accession of Xerxes and 420 BCE (Stolper, 1989, pp. 290-98). This apparent incongruity could be resolved by assuming that Herodotus’ *nomoi* were merely fiscal



districts or that Herodotus derived his information from a document or account that postdated Darius (see Debord, pp. 79-82, with relevant bibliography). For the moment, however, his report can no longer be said to offer any definitive indications about the date or duration of Cyprus' administrative affiliation with Persia's Syro-Palestinian possessions or about the nature of the island's political relationship with the empire.

Recent views place an emphasis on the absence of references to a satrap of Cyprus in the textual record, on the lack of vestiges of Achaemenid bureaucracy on the island, and on evidence which might imply that Cypriot kings enjoyed an exceptional degree of autonomy (as attested, among other things, by their right to mint their own coinages [see, e.g., Hill, 1904], to date official documents by their own regnal years [see, e.g., Masson, pp. 246-48, no. 220; Guzzo Amadasi and Karageorghis, pp. 11-15, nos. A1, A2], and by their considerable control over local natural resources [e.g., Strabo, 14.684.65; Theophrastus, 5.8.1]).

The lack of a clear picture of administrative relationships within the western satrapies has also given rise to a number of alternative and not always reconcilable suggestions. The diversity of political relationships within the provinces of the empire would still leave open, for instance, the possibility that the island was a part of the formal satrapal structure of the empire (e.g., Cook, pp. 174-75) (even if a *nomos* was a fiscal district [Petit, p. 161]) or the possibility that Cypriot kings acted as satraps (Weiskopf, 1982, p. 22; cf. Debord, pp. 27-28). At the same time the lack of evidence for the suppression of local political authority (i.e., the preservation of the city kingdoms) after the Cypriot revolt, and Evagoras's success in maintaining his royal authority in Salamis despite his ten-year long conflict with the empire have been held by others to imply that revolt had no impact on the authority of local kings and that there was no change in the status of the island from the time of Cyrus II onwards. In this interpretation the island's kingdoms were "autonomous" (Costa, p. 55) or "client states" (Stylianou, 1989, pp. 411-17; cf. Tuplin, 1996, pp. 40-47) throughout the Achaemenid period.

In the absence of clear affirmative evidence that Cyprus was a part of a satrapy, the current popular belief in the island's special autonomy is difficult to refute. However, the paucity of evidence concerning the modes of Persian control and the challenges inherent in detecting a Persian presence in the archeological record are not confined to Cyprus but plagues the study of the subject provinces of the Persian empire as a whole (see, e.g., Briant and



Boucharlat; Stolper, 1999). Imperial garrisons, for instance, remain difficult to identify on the ground without specific written testimony (Tuplin, 1987, pp. 198-208).

At the same time the relative autonomy of the Cypriots cannot be unquestionably demonstrated, either on the basis of the preservation of the Cypriot kingdoms or on the basis of the extensive prerogatives of Cypriot kings or even with reference to Evagoras's success in retaining his throne at the end of the Cypriot war (Zournatzi, 2005, pp. 65-70). The place of the island in the progress of Persia's aims and concerns in the west and its place in the stipulations of the 'King's Peace' in particular (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.31, wherein it is expressly stated that the Aegean Greek states would be left autonomous but that Clazomenae and Cyprus, among the islands, would belong to the Persian King) each have to be weighed with care against the tenor of the just mentioned considerations that appear to speak for the island's unusual degree of autonomy. As is the case elsewhere in the far-flung Achaemenid empire, the paucity of written evidence makes it difficult to define the exact boundaries between central power and local authority. Still, it would seem reasonable to view the preservation of the Cypriot kingdoms and the prerogatives of the individual rulers of such polities as manifestations of the well-attested Achaemenid tolerance towards the political, social, and religious institutions of their subjects. (On the issues presented in this section and for a review of earlier discussions, see more extensively Zournatzi, 2005.)

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