Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens · III

Edited by Signe Isager and Inge Nielsen

The cover illustration depicts the theatre of Delphi.
Photo by R. Frederiksen, see p. 135, Fig. 1.

The Foundation of Nea Paphos

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The founder-myth is a phenomenon found in many Greek city-states. The story of how a hero had established the city was cherished by its citizens and passed on from generation to generation. No doubt many founder-myths had a historical core: the first inhabitants of the city came from a certain region of Greece, personified in the person of the founder. In the course of time, new layers were added around the historical core. The self-perception of the citizens or the ruling élite came to be projected on to the founder-hero, and the foundation story was embellished and fictionalized.

The city-states of Cyprus, too, have their founder-myths. Lapithos on the north coast is said to have been founded by Parxander, a Spartan; Kourion on the south coast was supposedly founded by the Argives.[1] Another founder-myth concerns the famous city of Salamis, near modern Famagusta in the eastern part of the island. It begins with Telamon from Aigina: he was one of the Argonauts and became king of the neighbouring island of Salamis. Telamon fought at Troy alongside his sons Teukros and the famous Aias. Because Teukros had failed to avenge the death of his brother Aias, his father would not let him return home to Salamis. Instead, Teukros travelled far and wide before coming to Cyprus, where he founded a city in the eastern part of the island and called it Salamis in remembrance of his father's kingdom.

A modern reader will dismiss this story about the foundation of Salamis in Cyprus as an etymological myth, invented to explain the similarity in name with the island-state of Salamis near Athens. Ancient readers were apparently less skeptic, and the Teukros myth in turn provided the background to other stories. For example, Ovid relates how a boy in Salamis was passionately in love with a princess of the local dynasty, Anaxarete.[2] Another variant is given by the Roman mythographer Antoninus Liberalis, who lived in the late second or third century AD; here, the girl is called Arsinoë.[3] A very short summary is given by Plutarch, who calls the girl Paracyptousa.[4] In Ovid's story, the princess is inordinately proud of her lineage, of having the hero Teukros among her ancestors – too proud to consider the suitor's offer. According to Antoninus, the suitor was attracted not only by the beauty of the princess but by the fact that she was descended from the famous Teukros. Both versions of the story have a sad ending: the boy dies, and as punishment for her insufferable pride and callous behaviour, the princess is turned into stone.

Without doubt, the most famous of all the myths set in Cyprus was the tale of how the goddess Aphrodite was born from the sea, on the coast a short distance from the city of Palaipaphos. Old Paphos, Palaipaphos, was the original capital of the Paphian kingdom. According to legend, it was founded by Agapenor, son of Ankaios, from the Arkadian city of Tegea. He, too, fought at Troy (as one of those who had courted Helena, he was obliged to do so). In the Catalogue of Ships, he is named as a leader of the Arcadians, commanding a force of sixty ships.[5] Later, he founded the kingdom of Paphos and, according to Pausanias,[6] built the sanctuary of Aphrodite in the city of Palaipaphos. It is interesting to note that there was a temple of the Paphian Aphrodite in Tegea: this could

indicate a historical connection between Agapenor, Paphos and Arcadia. Another possibility is that the story of Agapenor's foundation of Old Paphos, or part of it, was invented to explain the existence of the temple at Tegea.

There is another mythical personage linked to the origins of Palaipaphos: Kinyras, the ancestor of the Kinyrad dynasty, which for centuries held the dual office as kings of Paphos and high priests of Aphrodite. As late as in the *Histories* of Tacitus,[7] i.e., in the late first century AD, it is stated that only a descendant of Kinyras can serve as priest in the sanctuary at Palaipaphos.[8]

What about the origins of Nea Paphos? According to the standard works on the history of Cyprus, the city of New Paphos was founded by a historical person, Nikokles, the last ruler of the independent kingdom of Paphos. The city was not established on virgin soil: a small settlement at the southwestern corner of the island was renamed and promoted to be the new capital of the Paphian kingdom. Nikokles' accession to the throne of the Paphian kingdom took place before 321 BC and he died in 310, which would place the foundation of Nea Paphos in the penultimate decade of the fourth century BC.

If we turn to the sources for this period, however, we find that not a single one of them makes the connection between the person of Nikokles and the founda-tion of Nea Paphos. This is surely surprising, considering the interest of the ancients in founder-myths. It makes one wonder whether Nikokles the founder of Nea Paphos is a historical reality; or whether this is a founder-myth created by a combination of local tradition and modern historical scholarship?[9]

An inscription found in the temple of Aphrodite in Palaipaphos names Nikokles and records how he has "surrounded the widespread (*eurychoros*) city with a wreath (*stefanos*) of towers".[10] We also have coins struck in the name of Nikokles showing Aphrodite with a mural crown (Fig.1). The date of these coins has been debated, but Otto Mørkholm has argued for a date around 317 BC.[11] The mural crown – a "wreath of towers", as the inscription expressed it – is generally taken to refer to the fortification of a city.

At the time when this evidence was first recorded, little was known about the fortifications of Old Paphos. On the other hand, New Paphos was known to have had walls, large parts of which were still visible; and it was natural that both inscription and coin were interpreted to mean that Nikokles was the driving force behind the fortification of New Paphos. Today, we know that those sections of the walls surrounding Nea Paphos which have been found so far are from a date much later than the reign of Nikokles – while, on the other hand, pottery dated to the period 350-325 BC has been found in the
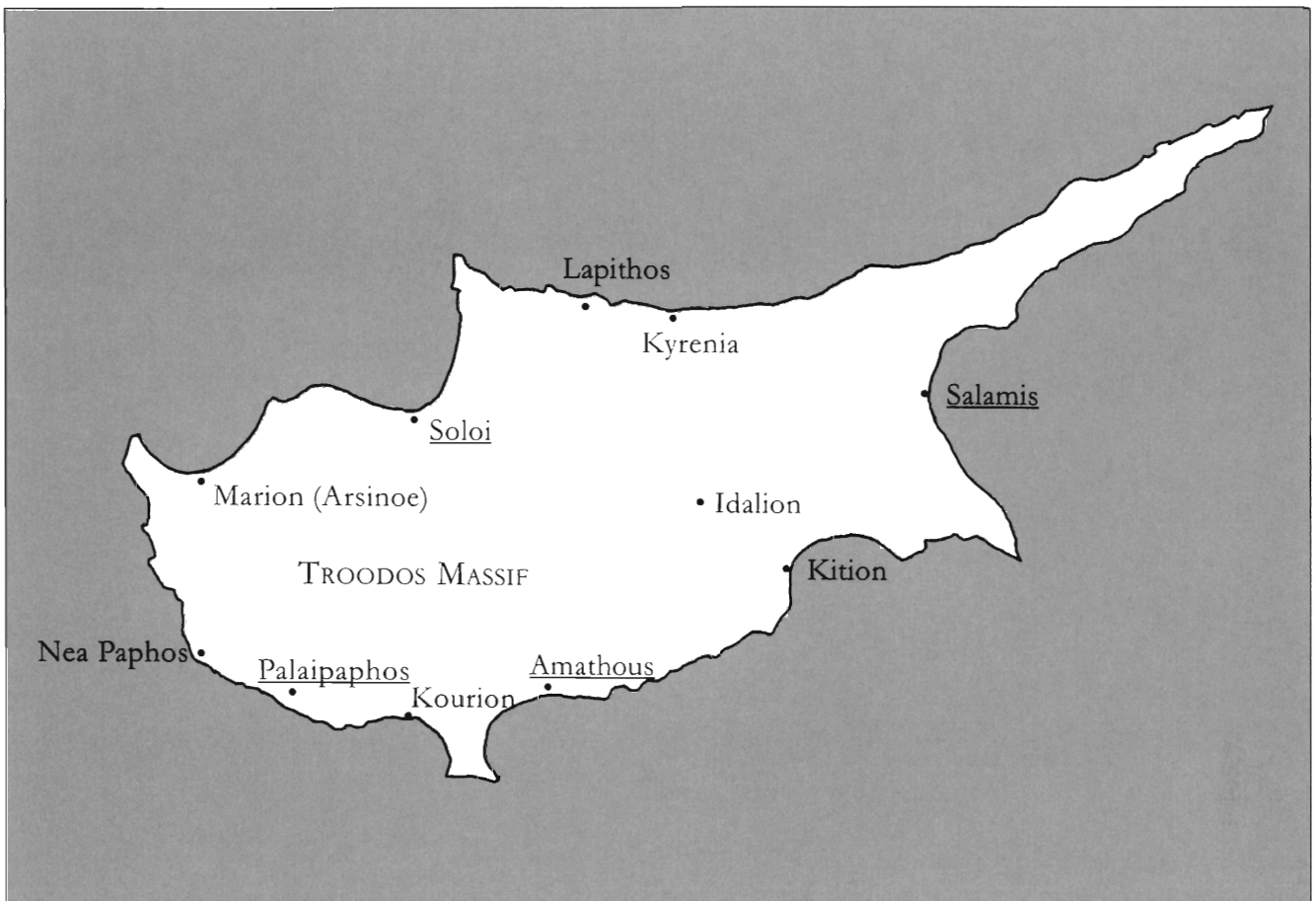
Fig. 2. Map of Cyprus c. 290 BC. Underlining indicates the cities which were allied with Ptolemy I in 321 BC.

walls of Old Paphos, consistent with a date of construction in the penultimate decade of the fourth century. Against this background, there is no longer any basis for the assumption that either the inscription, or the coins, refer to Nea Paphos. The message in both cases is quite straightforward: the words *eurychoros polis* refers to the city where the inscription was set up, i.e. Palaipaphos. And when the coins show Aphrodite with a crown of walls and towers, it alludes to the walls and towers surrounding her sanctuary – at Palaipaphos.

What does the literary evidence have to tell us about the kingdom of Paphos and the biography of Nikokles? Initially, it needs to be explained that until the first century AD, our sources do not use the epithets *palaia* or *nea*, "old" or "new", to distinguish the two cities. Both Nea Paphos and Palaipaphos are simply called "Paphos", and in addition, "Paphos" can

be used to describe the entire city-state, i.,e. the former Paphian kingdom.

Nikokles was ruler of the Paphian kingdom in 321 BC. In that year, four kings on the island concluded an alliance with Ptolemy I Soter. In a fragment of Arrian we find Nikokles, king of Paphos, listed along with Nikokreon of Salamis, Pasikrates of Soli, and Androkles of Amathous.[12]

These were troubled years in the history of the island. In 315 Seleukos, later known to us as king Seleukos I Nikator, but at this time in the service of Ptolemy I, sailed along the north coast, "took Kyrenia and Lapithos, and secured the support of Stasioikos, king of Marion", according to Diodoros.[13] Seleukos also laid siege to Kition on the south coast, forcing the king, Pygmalion, to abandon Antigonos in favour of Ptolemy. When king Ptolemy himself came to the island in 312, he had Pygmalion killed. Ptolemy also had the kings of Kyre-

197

nia, Lapithos and Marion arrested, and Marion itself was destroyed. Its inhabitants were transferred to the kingdom of Paphos and the revenues from its lands given to Nikokreon, king of Salamis, who now became *strategos* of Cyprus; in other words, Ptolemy's satrap on the island.[14]

According to the account of Diodoros, Nikokles reigned until 310.[15] Then Ptolemy, fearing that Nikokles might be negotiating with Antigonos Monophtalmos, sent two of his agents to Cyprus to have him killed. Nikokles tried to convince them of his loyalty to Ptolemy, without success. Trapped in his palace, he chose to commit suicide along with his entire household; his brothers were the last to kill themselves, having locked the doors and set fire to the building.

This was the tragic end of the independent kingdom of Paphos, as described by Diodoros. Some scholars have questioned this account, and hypothesized that Diodoros has confused Nikokles with Nikokreon of Salamis, who is known to have died in 311. On this interpretation, it is Nikokreon who is suspected of disloyalty and forced to suicide; the events take place in Salamis, not in Paphos; and Nikokles lives on as king of Paphos until c. 306. Helga Gesche, who has published a detailed survey of the sources, rejects the hypothesis that Diodoros has confused the two kings.[16]

There are, indeed, few obvious reasons why Nikokreon, who owed his position as master of the island to Ptolemy, should wish to change sides. It is more likely that Ptolemy's suspicions would be directed at Nikokles, among other things because Nikokles had fortified his capital, Palaipaphos, at the time when he was allied with Ptolemy. Perhaps Ptolemy viewed this as a provocation, perhaps as an indication that Nikokles wanted to create his own hegemony over the western part of the island. Nikokreon would surely not have wasted an opportunity to draw Ptolemy's attention to this? In his turn, Nikokles had good reason to be disaffected with Ptolemy, who had passed him over and promoted Nikokreon to master of the island.

Some have seen a connection between the forced resettlement of the population of Marion, and the foundation of Nea Paphos: in this view, the transfer of population from Marion to Paphos is a gesture of good will on the part of Ptolemy, a contribution to the success of the new city. In that case, Nikokles and Ptolemy must have been on amicable terms in 312, which makes it difficult to understand why Ptolemy should order the death of Nikokles only two years later. Does this support the theory that Diodoros has confounded Nikokles and Nikokreon? Not really. For one thing, during these years, loyalty was often short-lived; for another, Ptolemy's relations with Nikokreon must have been amicable as well, if Nikokreon received the revenues from the territory of Marion. So if there is an apparent contradiction between Ptolemy's treatment of Nikokles in 312 and 310, then there would, by the same reasoning, be an even greater contradiction between Ptolemy's treatment of Nikokreon in 312 and 311/310 (if we were to follow the hypothesis that Diodoros has got the two kings mixed up).

There is another interpretation which cannot be ignored. Ptolemy's actions in the years 312 to 310 could be elements in a larger plan to subjugate the semi-independent kinglets of Cyprus. Ptolemy deposed the kings of Kition and the north coast in 312. Had he already planned his next move against Nikokreon and Nikokles? These two kings would surely be uneasy at the fate of their royal colleagues, and dividing the spoils of Marion between them could be a ploy to reassure them.

Another question: was the population of Marion ever actually resettled, and if so, where? "To Paphos" may indicate their removal to either Old Paphos or New Paphos, or to any other community within the kingdom of Paphos. Or, for that matter, that their territory was placed under the dominion of the king of Paphos. We note that the revenues of their territory was supposedly given to Nikokreon. If the entire population had been forcibly displaced from the territory of
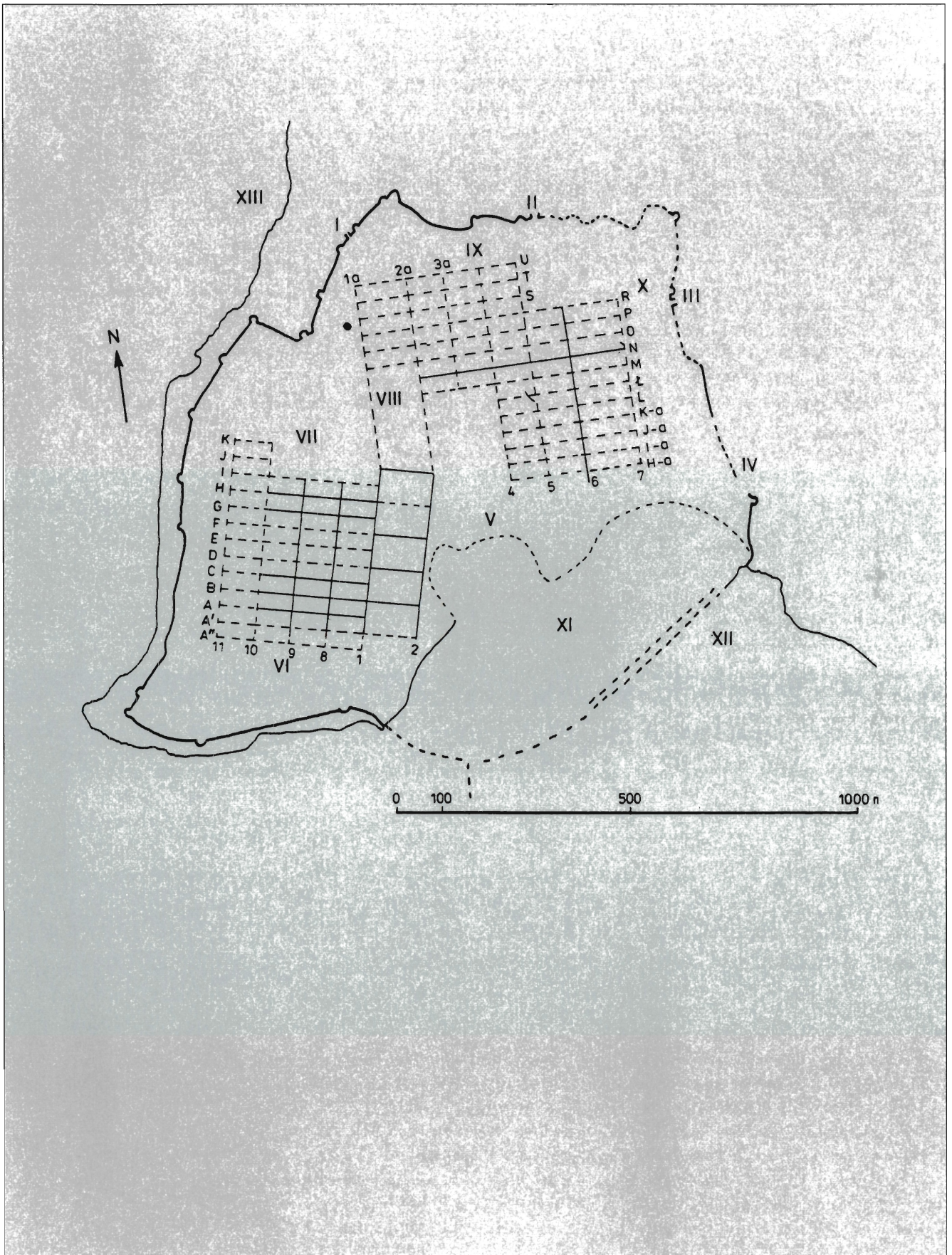
Marion, it is difficult to see where the revenues would come from.

Let us look at some of the arguments proposed in favour of Nikokles as the founder of Nea Paphos. These are summarized in the volume by Jolanta Mlynarczyk, *Nea Paphos in the Hellenistic Period*.[17] A number of points are raised, among them the account given by Diodoros of the siege of Salamis in 306. Hearing that Demetrios Poliorketes was attacking Salamis, Ptolemy sailed from Egypt with a large fleet and first mustered his naval forces at "Paphos". As mentioned earlier, this word could designate either Palaipaphos or Nea Paphos. Dr. Mlynarczyk assumes that the new harbour at Nea Paphos is meant, since the harbour at Palaipaphos was unsuitable for the purpose.[18] In that case, it would give us a *terminus ante quem* for the foundation of Nea Paphos – but this argument is inconclusive. First, we know little about the harbour conditions at Palaipaphos, but in a fragment of a poem by Sappho, she describes the city as *panormos*, that is to say, having a good harbour.[19] So we cannot *a priori* rule out the possibility that a fleet assembled at Palaipaphos, nor that the fleet anchored off the coast near the settlement that later became Nea Paphos, even if no foundation had yet taken place.

Nikokles' hypothetical rôle as founder of Nea Paphos has contemporary parallels. Seleukia and Antiochia, among many others, come to mind; but the founders of Seleukia and Antiochia gave their own names to their cities, just as Alexander gave his name to dozens of Alexandrias. So carrying this parallel through to its logical conclusion, we would expect Nikokles to found a *Nikoklia* rather than a New Paphos. There is indeed a *Nikoklia* in Cyprus; two kilometres north of Old Paphos. The foundation of this settlement is traditionally ascribed to the last of the Kinyrad kings, and it would seem natural to place a new royal residence close to the sanctuary of Old Paphos, considering the rôle of the kings as priests of Aphrodite.

The preceding arguments are some of those which have been advanced in favour of the view that Nikokles is the founder of Nea Paphos. In all fairness, we should also look at possible arguments against this view, of which there are several.

First, it is difficult to see Nikokles' motive for moving his capital more than fifteen kilometres away from the sanctuary of Aphrodite – the traditional locus of sacred authority within the Paphian kingdom. The cult was part and parcel of the legitimacy and power-base of the Kinyrads, a fact reflected in the inscriptions of Nikokles, where the titulature is "Nikokles, king of Paphos, priest of Anassa, son of Timarchos". *Anassa*, i.e. "lady" or "queen", is the local appellation for Aphrodite, and we note that the king's religious claim to legitimacy – his function as priest – is mentioned *before* the dynastic proof of legitimacy – the name of his father. As Dr. Mlynarczyk herself very precisely expresses it: "The qualification "priest of Anassa" in the inscriptions of Nikokles is not only evidence of his actual role in the cult of the goddess, but also proof of the legality of his secular power".[20]

One could theorize that Nikokles had been at cross purposes with the priests of the sanctuary and for this reason had wanted to move his residence, more or less for the same reasons that Akhnaton once moved his capital to Amarna. But there is no evidence in our sources to suggest such a development; and the fact that the Kinyrads continued to hold the office of high priests on a hereditary basis – as we know from Tacitus, quoted above – does not fit with the notion of a serious rift between dynasty and sanctuary.

Second, there is the question of fortifications. If Nikokles was establishing a new capital elsewhere, why fortify Palaipaphos? This behaviour is even more self-contradictory if we follow the traditional chronology, which would date the foundation of Nea Paphos around 320, and the coins with the mural crown – which, as we have seen, must refer to the fortification of Old Paphos – to *c.* 317. Why devote time and resources the old capital, right at the moment when Nikokles was preparing to

vacate it? And why did he not fortify his new capital instead?

Third, an argument which is clearly weaker than the preceding two, because it is an argument *e silentio*. If Nikokles was in fact the founder of Nea Paphos, why has no tradition to this effect been preserved in any of our sources? Perhaps Nikokles was not a charismatic leader, his foreign policy may have been ineffective and his other achievements uninspiring, but his violent death makes him a tragic hero, the stuff of which myths — including founder-myths — are made. Yet apparently the citizens of Nea Paphos did not commemorate him as their founder; or if they did, then strangely enough the story has not come down to us.

Assuming that Nikokles was not the founder of Nea Paphos, the most obvious candidate is the diadoch ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy I son of Lagos, also known as the "saviour", Ptolemy Soter. At the international archaeological congress in Athens in 1983, Wiktor A. Daszewski proposed the hypothesis that Ptolemy took the initiative for the foundation of Nea Paphos around 315 BC, that is, while king Nikokles was still *de facto* and *de jure* ruler of the Paphian kingdom. In Daszewski's view, the resources of Nikokles were insufficient to fortify Palaipaphos and establish Nea Paphos at the same time. It was Ptolemy, then, not Nikokles, who founded the new city and later forcibly resettled the population of Marion at Nea Paphos. In Daszewski's interpretation, Ptolemy is the protagonist, creating "a town-base for *his* Mediterranean fleet and a foothold for *him* on Cyprus".[21]

This hypothesis has several points in its favour: for one, it explains why Nikokles and Ptolemy eventually became enemies: Nikokles must have resented this intrusion upon his sovereign territory. It also explains why there is no tradition concerning the founder of Nea Paphos: if their city had been founded by a foreign invader, the citizens may have preferred to forget the fact.

It is difficult to see why Nikokles would want to separate capital and sanctu-ary, weakening his own position. In the case of Ptolemy, the situation is directly reversed. Ptolemy had very good reasons to separate one from the other: to break the double power, secular and religious, of the Kinyrads. In addition, he might want to locate the capital in a place which was not marked by the memory of the last priest-king and his violent death, for which Ptolemy was to blame — assuming that Nea Paphos was founded after the death of Nikokles, that is to say after 310.

Why did Ptolemy not name the city for himself — why was *Nea Paphos* not named *Ptolemais*, a name befitting the capital of Ptolemaic Cyprus? A possible explanation is that the foundation of the new city carried unpleasant memories, which one did not want associated with the new régime; and that on the other hand, retention of the old name (and the consequent association with the Paphian Aphrodite) gave the new capital a legitimacy which the Ptolemaic rulers needed to bolster their position in the island.

The prime concern of Ptolemy was not the local political geography of western Cyprus. His was a far broader view, concerned with the need to defend Egypt against aggression from the sea. Here, Daszewski correctly emphasizes that the importance of Cyprus to Ptolemy was not primarily its function as a naval base. The decisive strategic importance of the island lay in its timber resources. Without timber, there could be no ships; and without ships, no thalassocracy — which meant leaving the shores of Egypt open to invaders. According to Diodoros, Antigonos ordered the invasion of Cyprus after a discussion concerned with the supply of shipbuilding timber.[22] And many centuries later, when the Cypriot forests were already showing signs of overexploitation, Ammianus Marcellinus could still record that Cyprus was the only island which could outfit a complete ship from its own indigenous resources.[23] There were no tall forests in the African provinces of the Ptolemaic kingdom, nor in Coele-Syria. Phoenicia, Cilicia and Rhodes had good forests, but access to these was controlled

by Antigonos. So the nearest, perhaps the only, certainly the safest option available to Ptolemy were the Troodos forests of Cyprus.

Unfortunately, from an Egyptian point of view, the resources of the Troodos were difficult to exploit, since there were few good harbours on the south coast of the island. This we know, since shortly before the year 300 great expense and great effort were put into the construction of a harbour at Amathous. 5,000 stone blocks weighing several tons each were used for breakwaters and moles, yet within a few years the port silted up and was useless.[24]

It is reasonable to assume that Ptolemy wanted a bridgehead on Cyprus and access to the timber resources of the island.[25] He may well have felt uneasy about the loyalty of the Cypriot cities in general. Four cities, however, had been on his side since the treaty of 321 and were presumably more reliable than the others (Fig. 2). Of these, Soloi was on the North coast, facing away from Egypt, while Salamis was too far from the forests of the Troodos. This left Paphos and Amathous, with Amathous enjoying a more central location and in addition, being *gravida metallis*, as Ovid expresses it:[26] having metal as well as timber resources to offer.

Jean-Yves Empéreur proposes a different interpretation.[27] In his view, the harbour at Amathous was the work of Demetrios Poliorketes. The scale of the project indeed makes one think of Demetrios, the location, however, less so. Empéreur sees Amathous as an Antigonid naval base, "pour menacer les autres possessions de son ennemi". While it is true that Amathous is close to Egypt, it would be a very exposed base. And for timber exports to Greece, which seem to have been a concern of Antigonos, it would be very inconveniently located. As far as the dating evidence is concerned, a date either shortly before or shortly after 306 is possible, leaving both interpretations open.

Allow me to suggest a scenario for the events of 321 to 294. Ptolemy gained control of Cyprus through a series of alle-giances with local kings: first the four cities of Soloi, Salamis, Amathous and Paphos, then the kings of Kition and the north coast. His position grew stronger, and from 312 onwards, he systematically eliminated his allies one by one, deposing them or forcing them to suicide. We have seen how, in turn, he dealt with the kings of Lapithos and Kyrenia, Stasioikos of Marion, Pygmalion of Kition, Nikokreon of Salamis, and, the last but not the least, king Nikokles of Paphos.

Having secured his control of Cyprus, Ptolemy needed a port for timber exports and shipbuilding, perhaps also a residence for his *strategos*. His first choice was Amathous, but the building project was unsuccesful; in any case, Antigonos and Demetrios seized control of Cyprus soon after. When Ptolemy regained the island in 294, he founded a new city in the former kingdom of Paphos. Palaipaphos had been devastated by an earthquake around 300 BC, and its functions were all transferred to the new Paphos – all, that is to say, except the functions associated with the great sanctuary of Aphrodite. These remained in Palaipaphos, in the hands of the Kinyrad dynasty, at a suitable distance from the seat of political power. To retain the link between the sanctuary and the capital, a ritual procession was instituted.[28]

To summarize: the traditional dating of the foundation of Nea Paphos to 320, as well as the traditional identification of Nikokles as the founder, are in conflict with most of the evidence now available. The alternative theory of Daszewski, dating the foundation to 315 and identifying Ptolemy as the founder, solves some problems but creates others, and does not accord well with the chronology of the harbour at Amathous. But accepting a date for the foundation of Nea Paphos in or soon after 294, with Ptolemy I Soter as the founder, provides a scenario which is straightforward, both in terms of chronology and motives, and which is not contradicted by any of our sources.

Antoninus Liberalis, the mythographer, was quoted at the beginning of this article. A mythographer's vocation is writing

about myths, just as the historian's vocation is writing about history. In the case of Nea Paphos it would seem that mythography and historiography have been confounded, producing not a foundation history but a foundation myth, complete with a mythical founder in the person of the tragic king Nikokles. It is a beautiful myth, but it is too good to be true.

Notes

A preliminary version of this paper, in Danish, was presented to a meeting of Scandinavian historians in Kungälv, Sweden, May 1998. I am grateful for the comments received on this and subsequent occasions, and especially to Anne Destrooper-Georgiades, Jane Fejfer, Vincent Gabrielsen, John Hayes, John Leonard and Jørgen Christian Meyer.

NOTE 1
Strabo, 14.6.3.

NOTE 2
Met. 14.698-764.

NOTE 3
Arkeophon, 39.1-6.

NOTE 4
Mor., 766 C-D.

NOTE 5
Iliad, 2.609.

NOTE 6
8.5.2; also Strabo, 14.6.3.

NOTE 7
Hist., 2.2-3

NOTE 8
Tacitus, *Hist.* (previous note) and also *Ann.* 3.62, mentions a third founder of Palaipaphos, Aërias. He is not mentioned in any other source.

NOTE 9
A necropolis along the road leading from Nea Paphos to the north is known locally as "the tombs of the kings". This identification goes back at least as far as 1878, when

it is quoted by a German traveller, F. von Löher. The tombs are not royal, however, they belong to high-ranking functionaries within the Ptolemaic administration of Cyprus, and date from the third and second centuries BC.

NOTE 10
Mitford 1961, 2.

NOTE 11
Morkholm 1978.

NOTE 12
FGrH IIB, 10.6 (p. 848).

NOTE 13
Diod. 19.62.

NOTE 14
Diod. 19.79

NOTE 15
Diod. 20.21.

NOTE 16
Gesche 1974, 122-23.

NOTE 17
Mlynarczyk 1990, 67ff.

NOTE 18
Mlynarczyk 1990, 27.

NOTE 19
Sappho et Alcaeus Fragmenta, ed. Eva-Maria Voigt, Amsterdam 1971, 35, with critical notes and additional references. The fragment is found in Strabo's description of Cyprus, *Geo.* 1.2.33. Voigt prefers to interpret *Panormos* as a place-name, not an adjective; either interpretation is possible,

but the first reading – *panormos* as an adjective – is more likely in the context of Strabo's text. Wallace and Orphanides, *Sources for the History of Cyprus*, 1, 124, follow H.L. Jones' translation (Loeb Classical Library): "Paphos of the spacious harbour".

NOTE 20
Mlynarczyk 1990, 70.

NOTE 21
Daszewski 1987, 174. Hohlfelder & Leonard (1993) suggest that the town was established in 315 BC, but the harbour some years later, 310/309 BC.

NOTE 22
Diod. 20.46.4-5.

NOTE 23
Ammianus, 14.8.14. Pliny, *NH* 16.203, reports that the tallest cedar tree ever recorded was felled in Cyprus, adding that it was used by Demetrios Poliorketes for the mast of a giant warship.

NOTE 24
Empéreur 1996, 164ff. The results of the harbour excavations have not yet been published in more detail.

NOTE 25
See also Hauben 1987, 217-19.

NOTE 26
Met. 10.220.

NOTE 27
Empéreur 1996, 168.

NOTE 28
Strabo, 14.6.3.

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