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Kinyras: The Divine Lyre. Hellenic studies, 70

John C. Franklin, *Kinyras: The Divine Lyre. Hellenic studies, 70*. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, trustees for Harvard University, 2015. xxxviii, 794. ISBN 9780674088306 \$39.95.

Review by

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eText

The myth of Kinyras had a long and intricate life in Greek and Latin texts. From Homer to Eustathius, literary sources do not agree with each other about the origin of this ancient hero, but they usually establish a link between him and music. The starting point of Franklin's research is the etymology of the name Kinyras, which Eustathius related to that of a Greek lyre, called *kinýra*: it corresponds to Hebrew *kinnor* and the king of Cyprus may look like King David,¹ but « J. P. Brown [...] asserted that Eustathios' derivation was anachronistic, an obvious conjecture for a Christian scholar steeped in scripture » (p. 4). Franklin doesn't agree with Brown on this claim: so his aim is to show that « *kinýra* [...] enjoyed a life in the Byzantine world independent of the Biblical exegesis » and « the etymology of Kinyras from *kinýra* was no anachronistic Christian construction, but went back into the pagan past, and was long recalled by some in Cyprus and the Syro-Levantine home range of the *knr* » (pp. 216-217).

This research on the myth of Kinyras is aimed to be a « detailed case-study of cultural interactions in the eastern Mediterranean » (p. xx); it is addressed to scholars of Classics, Near Eastern Studies and Ethnomusicology, and the main text is intended to be as accessible as possible. Franklin's book is divided into an introduction, three parts, and seven appendices, with a final study on "Balang-Gods" by Wolfgang Heimpel. Glynnis Fawkes is the author of 48 figures, which embellish and integrate the text.

In the "Introduction," Franklin sums up the main features of Kinyras' question and offers a plan of this study with some preliminary conclusions.

Part one deals with the cult of Kinnaru in the Near Eastern World: it focuses on the relationship among divinized instruments, musicians, kings and gods in Early Mesopotamia and Israel, at Ebla and Mari, in the Hittite Kingdom, in the Syro-Hurrian Sphere, in Egypt and at Ugarit, and finally analyses the figure of King David. Inscriptions and texts, containing the words *knr/kinnaru/kinnor*, and paintings,

representing lyres or musical instruments like these, attest « the widespread and deeply rooted indigenous lyre-cultures » (p. 184) of the ancient Near Eastern World, which enlighten the origin of the myth of Kinyras.

Part two deals with the features of the mythological figure of Kinyras on Cyprus, according to Greek, Byzantine and Roman sources, and Franklin tries to reconnect the content of these texts to the lyre-cultures of the Near Eastern World and to the typical musical culture of the island. Textual analysis is again supported by some consideration of the iconography. Many aspects of this mythical figure suggest a relationship between Kinyras and pre-Greek populations of Cyprus throughout the age of Alashiya: later, in the ninth-eighth centuries. Greek colonization of Cyprus « caused some of the early Cypriot legends to be reinterpreted in more mainstream epic terms » (p. 368), but the original features of Kinyras survived at Paphos thanks to his heirs, the Kinyradai.

Part three focuses on the presence of Kinyras out of Cyprus: at Pylos, Byblos, Sidon, and in Cilicia or Syria. Here Franklin develops the usually accepted position that « Kinyras was productively implicated in a syncretic relationship with the West Semitic craftsman god Kothar » (p. 443).

Appendices go deep into some aspects that have been already mentioned in the main text but are not really useful to the aim of the author. Finally Wolfgang Heimpel's study describes the phenomenon of divinized instruments (harps or lyres) in Mesopotamia: it is an appropriate complement to Franklin's work.

At the end of the book we find a rich bibliography, an index locorum divided into four groups (Near Eastern sources, Cypriot inscriptions, Greek and Latin sources, Medieval and Early Modern sources), and a general index.

In 1982 Sergio Ribichini² underlined the lack of a complete study on the morphology of Kinyras' myth: his paper and those written by Claude Baurain (1980) and John Pairman Brown (1965)³ were still limited to some aspects of the story (religious, historical or literary matters). This book is the solution: it sets the myth of Kinyras in its own framework, in order to let the reader better understand it. Starting his analysis from the lyre-cultures of the Near Eastern World and offering a comparative analysis, Franklin gives his most original contribution to this aim, and he now challenges classical scholars to enlarge the horizon of their research, when it can be useful: « Classicists can no longer afford to ignore the Ancient Near East where relevant » (p. xxi). Franklin is also able to handle several kinds of material: literary and archeological, religious and historical, linguistic and musical.

Notes

¹. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion. Part IV. Adonis Attis Osiris*, London 1914, vol. 1, pp. 52-55.

². Sergio Ribichini, "Kinyras di Cipro", in Vittorio Lanternari, Marcello Massenzio, Dario Sabbatucci, *Religioni e civiltà. Scritti in memoria di Angelo Brelich*, Bari 1982, pp. 479-500, at p. 482.

3. Claude Baurain, “Kinyras”, *Bulletin de correspondance Hellénique* 104, 1980, pp. 277-308; John Pairman Brown, “Kothar, Kinyras, and Kythereia”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 10, 1965, pp. 197-219.