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PHOENICIAN IDENTITIES IN CYPRUS IN THE CLASSICAL AND EARLY HELLENISTIC PERIODS

SABINE FOURRIER*

Abstract: Since Gjerstad's pioneer study (Gjerstad 1979), the Classical period in Cyprus has been considered a period of strong Phoenician expansion in the island. Following the crisis of the Ionian revolt at the beginning of the 5th century, which was joined by most Cypriot kingdoms, the renewed Persian takeover is supposed to have heavily relied on Phoenician allies, especially in the supposed Phoenician "stronghold" of Kition. Conversely, after the abolishment of Persian rule and the rapid disappearance of Cypriot independent kingdoms towards the end of the 4th century, one generally postulates a quick process of Hellenization, leading to the disappearance of local ("Eteocypriot") and Phoenician identities. This contribution aims at a reappraisal of Phoenician presence(s) in Cyprus during the 5th to 3rd centuries BCE, a period of great political turmoil and transformations that offers a relevant frame for a case study. The concept of Phoenician expansion itself has to be addressed. Archaeological and historical data demonstrating a Phoenician presence do multiply in the Classical period, indeed. But this presence is varied and often deeply rooted in various regional traditions. Kition was certainly not a Phoenician enclave in Cyprus and Phoenician "expansion" did not spread solely from there into other parts of the island. One has to reckon with various multifaceted Phoenician identities in Cyprus that reflect various regional trajectories. Moreover, towards the end of the 4th century, Phoenician elites were active actors in the political and cultural negotiations that led to the integration of Cyprus in the Ptolemaic kingdom. As such, Phoenician elites were also responsible for the promotion and adaptation of a Cypriot political and cultural identity that had its part in the shaping of Hellenistic kingship in the island and beyond.

Keywords: Cultural Identity; Cyprus; Inscriptions; Material Culture; Phoenician.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a seminal article published in 1979, Gjerstad set the foundation for the study of Phoenician presence in Cyprus.¹ He developed two central ideas that were often resumed as established facts in subsequent publications. First idea: the "Phoenician" history of Cyprus starts with the Phoenician colonization of Kition. First a Phoenician colony, Kition then became a Phoenician stronghold from where Phoenician influence spread into the island. Second central idea: the Persian repression of the Ionian revolt in 498 BCE relied heavily on Phoenicians, which led to the subsequent Persian-backed Phoenician expansion in Cyprus in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE.² These ideas are based

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¹ Gjerstad 1979.

² Gjerstad insisted on the fact that the opposition against Persia during the Ionian revolt was not determined on an ethnical basis (1979, p. 251). But one of the effects of the Persian repression was the installation of Phoenician medophile dynasties on the throne (at Lapethos and Marion). Interestingly enough, he suggested that the Persians also replaced the former ruling dynasty of Kition (although Phoenician, the predecessors of Baalmilk I were not medophile...). He then went on by adopting an extreme view of a supposed ethnical-based antagonism in Classical Cyprus: «The alliance of the Persians and Phoenicians against the Cypro-Greek cities, inaugurated by the conquest of Idalion in c. 470 B.C., was intensified into a systematic action intended to turn Cyprus into a Persian country administered by Phoenicians» (p. 253).

on undisputable observations: Kition is a special case with Phoenician traits permeating all cultural aspects (from ceramic techniques to cultic practices);³ Phoenician presence becomes more and more visible and widespread in the Classical period (this visibility reaching its climax in the 4th and the first half of the 3rd centuries BCE). However, from the archaeological observation to the proposed historical interpretation, there is a gap, and alternative narratives are possible.

In the same article, Gjerstad coined the expression “pre-Phoenician Kition”,⁴ that was subsequently used as a formulary in the title of the *Excavations at Kition* series (whose volumes pertain respectively to “pre-Phoenician” and “Phoenician and later” levels), giving the somehow erroneous impression that the archaeology (and history) of Kition can be sliced into neatly distinct phases. Moreover, it gives the erroneous impression that the “Phoenician period” of Kition was a limited timespan, characterized by a foreign presence, which appeared some time in the Iron Age and vanished (or was absorbed) at the end of the 4th century BCE. It implies that “Phoenician” remained an alien element that never became an integral part of a local Cypriot culture.

This article stems from the hypothesis that Phoenician presence in Cyprus was not restricted to a limited timespan or to a limited geographical area (FIG. 1). Phoenician presence in Cyprus was embedded in a long local history that spanned from the Late Bronze Age and lasted for the whole age of the Cypriot kingdoms (and beyond). As such, Phoenician identity is likely to have experienced, like other Cypriot identities that similarly developed in a segmented landscape, regional evolutions. The working hypothesis is that we have to reckon not with a Phoenician identity, but with Phoenician identities in Cyprus (or Cypro-Phoenician identities).

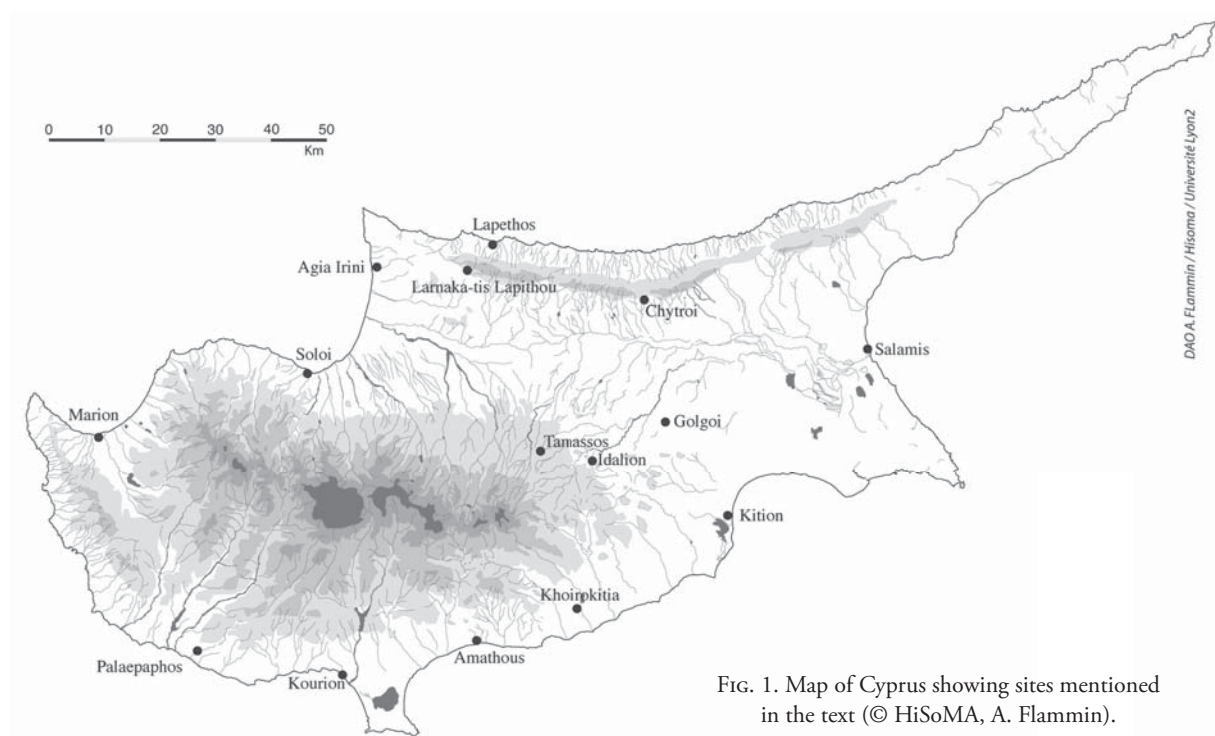


FIG. 1. Map of Cyprus showing sites mentioned in the text (© HiSoMA, A. Flammin).

³ Yon 2006, pp. 42-53.

⁴ Gjerstad 1979, p. 230.

This is in no way an essentialist position: working on identities is not a quest for origins, and cultural (as well as political) identities constitute a stock that can be mobilized according to the needs of time. This is especially true in times of crisis, when the ages-old Cypriot kingdoms entered the new Hellenistic era and progressively disappeared. The brutality of the political interruption does not match with continuities and adaptations that are notably apparent in the religious sphere,⁵ a sphere in which Phoenicians of Cyprus were particularly active.

2. PHOENICIAN PRESENCES IN CYPRUS IN THE GEOMETRIC AND ARCHAIC PERIODS: A SHORT REAPPRAISAL

A Phoenician presence, or to put it more accurately if not more simply, a presence of North-West Semitic language speaking peoples, was attested in Cyprus already on the eve of the Iron Age, well before the “Phoenicization” of Kition, which cannot antedate the 8th century BCE.⁶ When studying the two more ancient Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus known at the time, Teixidor already raised the point that the people responsible for these inscriptions were not Phoenician newcomers but Levantines established in Cyprus.⁷ This meagre corpus was subsequently enlarged with the discovery in a 9th century BCE tomb of Palaepaphos-*Skales* of a local Plain White jug, which bears on its body an inscription engraved after firing. According to Sznycer, this long inscription (at least 23 signs) is comprised of signs that might be compared to Phoenician signs, others that can be considered as of Phoenician aspect («allure phénicienne»), others still that are completely “strange” («tout à fait étranges»)⁸ As pointed out by Egetmeyer,⁹ this enigmatic inscription is perhaps best labelled as “pre-Phoenician” or “post-*proto* Canaanite”: it documents a transitional stage of a cursive Semitic script. Conversely, the painted inscription on a fragmentary Bichrome bowl found at Salamis (presumably also of the 9th century BCE) appears to be written in Phoenician script and it transcribes a usual Phoenician name.¹⁰

Remarkably, the Palaepaphos-*Skales* inscription takes place in a series of Geometric inscriptions found in the same necropolis, which also document a transitional stage of another script, from the local “Cypro-Minoan” to the local “Cypro-syllabic”. The same corpus also testifies to the use of the Greek as well as to the possible use of a local indigenous language. Three languages, two scripts in a transitional form that are to become the two main local scripts of Cyprus from the Archaic period onwards (Phoenician alphabet and Cypriot syllabary): we thus find at Palaepaphos, among the elite burials of the 11th to 9th centuries BCE, an already cosmopolitan society.

As far as the spatial distribution is concerned, a Phoenician presence (and not only commercial relationships with the Phoenician Levant) is documented outside Kition in the Archaic period, well before the “turning-point” of the Ionian revolt. A Phoenician inscribed funerary slab found in the necropolis of Agia Irini-*Palaekastro* shows that Phoenician-speaking people used the burial

⁵ Papantoniou 2012.

⁶ Hadjisavvas 2014, p. 55; Caubet – Fourrier – Yon 2015, pp. 129-130; Cannavò – Fourrier – Rabot 2018, pp. 285-289.

⁷ Teixidor 1975. The two inscriptions are on an unprovenanced stele in the Cyprus Museum and on a Red Slip bowl from Kition-*Kathari* (Masson – Sznycer 1972, pp. 13-20 and Yon 2004, p. 188, n. 1100). The fragmentary plaque found at Khoirokitia and inscribed with two possible Phoenician letters is of uncertain interpretation: Masson – Sznycer 1972, pp. 102-104. On 10th-8th century BCE Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus: Lipiński 2004, pp. 42-51.

⁸ Sznycer 1983.

⁹ Egetmeyer 2017, pp. 187-190.

¹⁰ Sznycer 1980, pp. 126-127.

place in the first half of the 7th century BCE.¹¹ The deceased, who bore the common Phoenician hypocoristic name of ‘BD’, was son of KMRR (a name of uncertain origin). Similarly, a bilingual Cypro-syllabic (Greek?) and Phoenician inscription of similar date on a funerary slab found at Kourion testifies to a Phoenician presence in the city-kingdom.¹²

Funerary practices as well as material culture testify to a widespread but also regionally differentiated Phoenician presence in Cyprus. This cultural variability demonstrates, as of the Archaic period, possible different networks between the island and the Phoenician Levantine and colonial world, as well as different modalities of Phoenician presence in the Cypriot kingdoms. At Kition, Phoenicians were buried in the same necropoleis that were in use since the beginning of the Iron Age, in the same collective chamber tombs, following the same rites (most notably the inhumation rite).¹³ At Amathous, a Phoenician burial ground was installed on the beach, on the western outskirts of the western necropolis of the city.¹⁴ Though poorly published, it was comprised of cremations in cinerary urns, following a rite well attested in the Phoenician and Punic world but alien to local Cypriot practices. The Kitian “compound” model thus stands in sharp contrast to the Amathousian “segregated” model, which is also exemplified in the religious sphere, with several extra-urban sanctuaries whose peculiar votives are not attested in the other sanctuaries of the kingdom.¹⁵ They suggest specific rites, also a specific, perhaps exclusive Phoenician frequentation. Interestingly enough, the votives consecrated in these sanctuaries find their best parallels not in the Levantine Phoenician culture, but in the Punic culture.¹⁶ Similarly, in his exhaustive study of Phoenician Archaic oil bottles, Orsingher noted that the type was attested in Cyprus only at Agia Irini and Amathous, whereas it is well known in the Central and Western Mediterranean.¹⁷ Although patchy, the available evidence suggests different networks, with an Eastern part of Cyprus (Kition, Salamis) strongly linked to the Phoenician Levant (Tyre and Sidon) and a Western part (Agia Irini, Amathous) with Punic connections. It is perhaps no accident that this rough division echoes a general cultural division between Western and Eastern Cyprus, already noted by Gjerstad on the basis of the Archaic ceramic local production.¹⁸

3. PHOENICIAN IDENTITIES IN THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

3.1. *Scripts*

Language and script are among the most notable markers of identity. The Greek Cypriot dialect and its writing tool, the Cypriot syllabary, are the hallmark of most Cypriot kingdoms.¹⁹ Digraphic inscriptions of the late 4th century BCE exemplify the emphasis put on the local script and language, which remain exempt from interferences with the Greek *koine* (with isolated noticeable

¹¹ Guzzo Amadasi 1978.

¹² Masson – Szynger 1972, pp. 89-91. The reading HSD[NY... (“The Sidonian”) is highly speculative.

¹³ Cannavò – Fourrier – Rabot 2018.

¹⁴ Christou 1998.

¹⁵ Alpe 2007.

¹⁶ This observation was already made by Gjerstad 1979, p. 243 and further elaborated by Alpe 2007.

¹⁷ Orsingher 2010.

¹⁸ Gjerstad 1960, pp. 105-106.

¹⁹ Iacovou 2013.

exceptions).²⁰ This insular “pan-Cypriot” stock nevertheless experienced local variations, chiefly among them the existence of a local script specific to the region of Paphos, the Paphian syllabary.²¹

Similarly, Phoenician written in Cyprus is not exactly the same with Levantine Phoenician, even though both languages and scripts show very close affinities. Written Phoenician from Cyprus can be characterized by scribal and, tentatively, orthographic peculiarities.²² Local variants also tend to suggest the existence of dialectal traits in the Phoenician language of Cyprus.²³ In the Classical period, Phoenician inscriptions become numerous. But the corpus is unevenly distributed, most of the inscriptions being concentrated at Kition and in its dependencies (the Idalion area). A comparative analysis is thus severely handicapped by the limited corpus of inscriptions stemming from other parts of the island and by the uneven state of their publication.²⁴ Moreover, the precise dating of many inscriptions is difficult. It can be safely established when the year of the king’s reign is indicated, but most of the epitaphs found at Kition do not possess such an indication (contrary to votive inscriptions that regularly make reference to a dating system, be it royal or, for later ones, civic).²⁵ For many epitaphs, a dating to the first half of the 3rd century (that is after the abolition of the independent kingdom of Kition) is also possible on palaeographic grounds (as well as on stylistic grounds as far as the inscribed stele is concerned). A dating to the Classical period (that is to the age of the Cypriot kingdoms) appears even less compelling since some of the deceased and of their family members bear theophoric names derived from Egyptian deities.²⁶ When dealing with epigraphy as well as with other cultural and social expressions as they are reflected in the material culture, and despite the brutality of event-driven history, we have to reckon with a remarkable continuity that spans the late Classical-Early Hellenistic period (second half of the 4th-first half of the 3rd centuries BCE).

While insisting on the coherence of the evolution of the “Cyprian-Phoenician” script, which followed a generally conservative pattern of development, Peckham nevertheless underlined notable

²⁰ Consani 1990, pp. 77-79. The exception is a digraphic inscription of Stasikrates, king of Soloi (Consani 1990, p. 69). Contrary to all other royal inscriptions, the alphabetic text was inscribed first, above the Cypro-syllabic one. Moreover, the verbal form, as well as the syllabic transcription of the royal name (Stasikrates, and not Stasikretes as expected), are to be interpreted as interferences with the Greek *koine*.

²¹ Masson 1983, pp. 57-67. Masson insists on the existence of an undetermined number of local syllabaries, which can be distinguished according to specificities in the general structure and in the shape of certain signs. The incompleteness of the current evidence does not enable one to go beyond a general distinction between a “common” and a “Paphian” syllabary.

²² Peckham 1968, pp. 13-41; Krahmalkov 2001, pp. 17-18.

²³ Hackett 2004, pp. 366-367. Steele (2013, pp. 195-201), however, finds the evidence “largely inconclusive”.

²⁴ There exists no updated corpus of Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus, to the sole exception of inscriptions from Kition (Guzzo Amadasi – Karageorghis 1977, updated in Yon 2004, pp. 169-229). The Phoenician inscriptions from the “Idalion archives” are currently under study by Amadasi and Zamora. A comprehensive publication is most wanted for other series, in particular the still poorly studied Phoenician inscriptions from Larnaca-tis Lapithou.

²⁵ On the civic era of Kition, see Fourrier 2015, p. 35.

²⁶ On Egyptian theophoric names: Caquot – Masson 1968, pp. 305-306; Fourrier 2015, p. 246 (inscriptions from Idalion). At Kition, the name Abdosir (derived from the Egyptian deity’s name Osiris) is attested (Yon 2004, p. 177, n. 1027 [votive inscription dedicated to the Mother ’ZRT and probably dated to the civic era of Kition]; p. 178, n. 1031 and 1033), as well as the name Abdis, derived from the Egyptian deity’s name Isis (Guzzo Amadasi – Karageorghis 1977, pp. 90-91, n. B41 = Yon 2004, p. 183, n. 1071, tentatively dated to the 4th century BCE). The use of theophoric names derived from Osiris appears to be attested in the Classical period at Lapethos ([Abdo]sir in the LLII inscription: cfr. family stemma in Fourrier 2015, p. 45). Moreover, the god Osiris is remarkably mentioned in the LLIII inscription, which dates to the second half of the 4th century BCE (LL III, l. 5: Honeyman 1938). On the dating of Phoenician inscriptions from Kition: Amadasi Guzzo 2007, p. 197.

exceptions.²⁷ A funerary inscription from Kition shows clear affinities with the Sidonian series.²⁸ Conversely, some forms of the Larnaca-tis Lapithou inscriptions (LLII) and the dedication to Ashtar of Paphos show affinities with the Byblian series.²⁹ These scribal affinities fit nicely with other cultural affinities: Kition appears in the Classical period like a second Sidon (its elites emulating the elites of the city-capital of the fifth *nomos*, most notably in their funerary rites);³⁰ the worship of the “gods of Byblos” is attested at Larnaca-tis Lapithou.³¹

3.2. Personal Names

Phoenician names attested in Cyprus demonstrate a multi-layered identity: some names belong to the common Phoenician stock, others show a marked Cypriot character. Some regional features are noticeable. A balanced overview is made difficult due to the uneven state of the documentation. It is however remarkable that the personal names attested in the Larnaca-tis Lapithou corpus generally differ from the usual names found at Kition. PRM and BRKŠMŠ (a king’s name) are barely attested at Kition.³² They even seem to be much better known in the Punic than in the Phoenician Mediterranean.³³ ŠDQMLK is another king of Lapethos whose name is a unicum in Cyprus (and barely attested among the Phoenician and Punic anthroponyms).³⁴

Some personal names are highly popular at Kition, for example ‘ŠMN’DNY,³⁵ which derives from the otherwise well attested Phoenician divine name, Eshmun. Personal names derived from the divine name Reshef are rare, and apparently confined to Kition and Idalion.³⁶ Names derived from PMY (Pumay) are specific to Cyprus and perhaps restricted to Kition where we find ‘BDPMY, [’]MTPMY and the king’s name PMYYTN.³⁷ These theophoric names are noteworthy especially since the god Pumay, of possibly Cypriot origin, is otherwise unknown in votive inscriptions from Cyprus. The same remark applies to theophoric names derived from SSM, well attested in Cyprus.³⁸ The origin of the deity remains evasive. Moreover, contrary to theophoric names derived from Pumay that only appear in Phoenician, names derived from Sasm/Sasom are also attested in Greek (syllabary and alphabet).³⁹

²⁷ Peckham 1968, p. 40, n. 73.

²⁸ Guzzo Amadasi – Karageorghis 1977, pp. 90-91, n. B41 = Yon 2004, p. 183, n. 1071. Since the father of the deceased bore a theophoric name derived from the name of the goddess Isis, a dating to the 3rd century appears more satisfactorily than a dating to the fourth.

²⁹ Both inscriptions also date to the 3rd century BCE. LLII: Van den Branden 1964. Paphos: Masson – Szynger 1972, pp. 81-86.

³⁰ Dridi 2016, pp. 261-262 (on marble sarcophagi).

³¹ LLIII, l. 9: Honeyman 1938.

³² BRKŠMŠ is tentatively read in a funerary inscription from Kition, only known thanks to a copy made by Pococke (Yon 2004, p. 178, n. 1032).

³³ Bonnet 1990, p. 150.

³⁴ Masson – Szynger 1972, p. 99.

³⁵ Amadasi Guzzo 2007, p. 200.

³⁶ Amadasi Guzzo 2007, p. 205.

³⁷ Amadasi Guzzo 2007, pp. 200-201.

³⁸ Amadasi Guzzo 2007, pp. 202-203. On the god SSM: Caquot – Masson 1968, p. 305 and pp. 317-320.

³⁹ Masson – Szynger 1972, pp. 79-80: coins from Marion are inscribed with the king’s name Sasm in Cypro-syllabic script (*sa-sa-ma-o-se*); the name also appears in Greek alphabetic script in the bilingual inscription from Larnaca-tis Lapithou (Σεσαμῶς). Masson and Szynger consider that the name is Phoenician. Hermay (2002, pp. 279-283) considers that the name is of local “Eteocypriot” origin.

3.3. Deities

Phoenician deities are usually the same throughout the whole island. They are major deities of the Phoenician pantheon: Melqart, Eshmun,⁴⁰ Ashtart, Baal. As noticed above, most personal names are theophoric names derived from these deities' names. There are some remarkable exceptions. Mikal (more often in the double form Reshef-Mikal) is only known at Kition and Idalion.⁴¹ Its very existence has been doubted.⁴² The ongoing study of the Idalion archive definitely proves the existence of the god.⁴³ It also highlights its importance as one of the main gods of Kition, presumably intimately linked to royal power. Remarkably, this divine name does not seem to have left a strong imprint on anthroponomy.⁴⁴ We find at Larnaca-tis Lapithou, among a list of other dedications made by Param to Melqart, Osiris and Ashtart, a dedication to “the gods of Byblos that are at Lapethos”.⁴⁵ This is an isolated and surprising reference, which can be compared with linguistic affinities mentioned above.



FIG. 2. Silver siglos of king Baalmilk I, Kition (courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

Interestingly enough, bilingual Phoenician/Greek (in syllabic script) inscriptions also reveal local peculiarities in the rendering of divine names.⁴⁶ Melqart is the great god of Lapethos, known as Poseidon in Greek.⁴⁷ The Greek divine name does not match the Greek iconography attested on coins: Melqart/Poseidon is constantly depicted as a smiting Heracles with a bow and a club alongside Anat/Athena on the coinage of the kings of Lapethos.⁴⁸ However, the same iconography applied, at Kition, possibly to Baal⁴⁹ (FIG. 2) and, at Idalion, certainly to Reshef/Apollo (since inscriptions ascertain the identity of the god worshipped in the sanctuary).⁵⁰ The iconographic type may have been invented at Idalion, if the most ancient sculptures of the type found to date

⁴⁰ Melqart and Eshmun also appear to have been worshiped as the “double” deity Eshmun-Melqart at *Batsalos*, on the shores of the salt lake to the South of Kition, where numerous inscriptions dating to the 4th century BCE have been found: Yon 2004, pp. 174-177, n. 1003-1025. On “double deities”: Xella 1990; on the relationship between Melqart and Eshmun: Garbati 2010 and 2018.

⁴¹ Caquot – Masson 1968, pp. 302-314.

⁴² Lipiński 1987.

⁴³ Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora López 2016, p. 191.

⁴⁴ Caquot – Masson 1968, pp. 313-314; Amadasi Guzzo 2007, p. 206.

⁴⁵ LLIII, l. 9: Honeyman 1938.

⁴⁶ For bilingual inscriptions: Steele 2019, pp. 175-193.

⁴⁷ In Phoenician: Van den Branden 1964 (inscription LLII).

⁴⁸ Markou 2015, pp. 117-119. Ashtart, and not Anat, is mentioned in the LLIII inscription among other gods honoured by Param (Honeyman 1938). Moreover, theophoric names derived from Ashtart are common at Lapethos (cfr. stemma of the family of LLII and LLIII inscriptions: Fourrier 2015, p. 45). However, Anat is the great goddess mentioned alongside Ptolemy in the bilingual rock-cut inscription (Amadasi Guzzo 2015). The equivalence Melqart/Heracles is usual in the anthroponomy: for example, Herakleides is a common equivalent of ‘BDMLQRT (Amadasi Guzzo 2007, pp. 203-204).

⁴⁹ On the cult of Baal at Kition and its importance as it is reflected in the local personal names, and especially among kings: Amadasi Guzzo 2007, pp. 198-199 and p. 204. The author suggests that the cult of B’L LBNN (Baal from Lebanon) attested on two Archaic bronze bowls dedicated by a governor of Qathadasht (CIS I 5) may account for the popularity of the theophoric names derived from Baal.

⁵⁰ Caquot – Masson 1968.

give a reliable indication. The type was also adopted at Sidon and Amrit, on the Levantine coast, where Cypriot sculptures (most probably imported from Kition) were massively consecrated in the 5th century BCE:⁵¹ this suggests that the same iconography could perhaps refer to Eshmun.

There are two outstanding exceptions: Reshef (that is constantly rendered as Apollo) and Anat (constantly rendered as Athena). The case of the two deities raises interesting remarks. Both are Canaanite deities, rather than Phoenician deities. Reshef is barely attested in the first millennium in the Levant, except as part of a toponym of Sidon.⁵² Anat (whose importance in the second millennium is highlighted in Ugaritic texts) is also conspicuously absent, except as the double deity Anat-Bethel, mentioned among other gods in the 7th century BCE treaty concluded between Tyre and Assyria.⁵³ Both are remarkably well attested in first millennium Cyprus (FIG. 3). Iacovou relies on this evidence to suggest that at least part of the Phoenician population of first millennium Cyprus are the descendant of Canaanites who settled in the island in the 12th century BCE.⁵⁴ One may perhaps also suggest that both deities were local Cypriot deities that were in an early phase of intercultural contacts translated/interpreted as Reshef and Anat in the Semitic language, as Apollo and Athena in the Greek one.



FIG. 3. Phoenician royal dedication to Anat, Idalion (courtesy of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).

3.4. Regional Trajectories

The evidence at hand is too fragmentary to draw a comprehensive picture. However, we can make some observations and suggest paths for future research. The existence of regional Phoenician identities seems indisputable. Phoenicians in Cyprus shared a common “Cypro-Phoenician” identity, which in some cultural traits (script, cults, names...) departed from the “Levantine-Phoenician” identity. Moreover, this common culture in its turn appears to have experienced local variations. Phoenicians of Kition and Idalion possessed a cultural identity that was not strictly comparable to the cultural identity of Phoenicians from Lapethos. It is hazardous to go beyond this basic observation, which roughly distinguishes between “Eastern” and “Western” Phoenicians of Cyprus. Suffice to say that “Eastern” Phoenicians of Cyprus showed close affinities with the areas of Tyre and Sidon. The cultural affinities were so close (also in the material culture: ceramics, terracottas and sculpture) that we have to reckon with continuous exchanges (of goods, skills and people). Conversely, “Western” Phoenicians from Cyprus showed closer affinities to Northern Phoenicia (Byblos) and the Punic world. However, these possible different networks cannot account alone for

⁵¹ Hermary 2007, Garbati 2010. According to Hermary, the affinity between the sculptures dedicated at Kition-*Bamboula* and at Amrit is so high that one may suppose that a community of Kitians installed at Amrit was responsible for their dedication.

⁵² Lipiński 2009; Bonnet – Niehr 2014, pp. 80-81.

⁵³ Amadasi Guzzo 2007, pp. 201-202; Bonnet – Niehr 2014, pp. 95-96; Amadasi Guzzo 2015, p. 33.

⁵⁴ Iacovou 2018, pp. 25-26.

their marked cultural discrepancy. As noted above, Gjerstad already distinguished between Eastern and Western Cyprus on the basis of the material culture.⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, Phoenician regional identities were embedded in regional Cypriot trajectories; they were integral parts of the Cypriot regional identities.

4. CONCLUSION

Phoenicians become highly visible in the epigraphy of Cyprus at the end of the Classical – beginning of the Hellenistic period (4th and 3rd centuries BCE). The differentiated conservation of documentary sources and the somehow random nature of archaeological discoveries are not sufficient explanations for this significant increase in visibility. Phoenician inscriptions of the period pertain to two main spheres: the administrative/political and the religious spheres. Intersections exist of course between the two, as documented by the early involvement of Phoenicians in the promotion of the royal cult of the Lagids.⁵⁶ Remarkably, Phoenicians were equally involved in the promotion of local Cypriot cults.

This is apparent in the use of divine epithets of a topical nature, which stress the local origin of the cult and its profound regional rooting. Baal KTY (from Kition) is apparently attested for the first time on a fragmentary Plain White jug found in the sanctuaries of Kition-*Kathari*,⁵⁷ and again on a 4th century *ostrakon* from the Idalion archive.⁵⁸ During the same period, Melqart is BNRNK (in Narnaka) at Larnaka-tis Lapithou,⁵⁹ and dedications are made at Idalion to Reshef Mikal B'DYL (in Idalion).⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, the divine topical epithet PP (from Paphos) appears to be used for the first time in the Paphos area in a 3rd century BCE Phoenician inscription:⁶¹ Ashtart PP is the Phoenician translation of Aphrodite Paphia, which was known outside Paphos in the Classical period but unknown at Paphos itself.⁶² There, nor the divine name (Aphrodite) or the epithet (*Paphia*) was documented before the Hellenistic period: as the royal formula used in Cypro-syllabic inscriptions notably attests, the Paphian goddess is at Paphos the *Wanassa*, the Queen.⁶³ The divine name Aphrodite *Paphia* is known at a later date in numerous Greek alphabetical inscriptions, none of which apparently antedates the late 3rd century BCE.⁶⁴ The most telling example is provided

⁵⁵ Gjerstad 1960, pp. 105-106.

⁵⁶ Fourrier 2015.

⁵⁷ Guzzo Amadasi – Karageorghis 1977, pp. 170-171 (D 37). The fragment is tentatively dated to the 5th-4th centuries BCE on the basis of the palaeographic evidence.

⁵⁸ Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora López 2016, p. 191.

⁵⁹ The divine epithet is attested in a Greek inscription of the 4th century BCE, where it qualifies the god Poseidon: Poseidon *Narnakios* (LBW 2779). It is certainly the local Greek translation of Phoenician MLQRT BNRNK attested in LLIII (Honeyman 1938, l. 2). On the Phoenician toponym NRNK: Masson 1977, pp. 323-327.

⁶⁰ Caquot – Masson 1968, pp. 304-305; Yon 2004, p. 78, n. 68. Lipiński (2004, pp. 64-65) considers, to my opinion wrongly, that the expression indicates that the god's worship was transplanted from Amyclae (in Greece). No known topical epithet qualifies Anat at Idalion in Phoenician inscriptions, but Athena is addressed as "the one from Idalion" or "around Idalion" in Cypro-syllabic Greek inscriptions: cfr. Bianco – Bonnet 2016, pp. 168-169.

⁶¹ Masson – Szynger 1972, pp. 81-86.

⁶² The epithet *Paphia* is attested in various Cypro-syllabic inscriptions from Chytroi (contrary to what was previously published, the "priest with dove" from Golgoi-*Agios Photios* does not belong to the series: cfr. Hermary 2014); a unique inscription from Chytroi testifies to the use of the whole divine name Aphrodite *Paphia*: Karageorghis 1997, pp. 110-114.

⁶³ Karageorghis 1997, pp. 115-118.

⁶⁴ Cayla 2016, pp. 144-152.

by the epithet 'LHYTS/*Alasiotas* (in Cypro-syllabic Greek), which characterizes Reshef/Apollo on a marble base with a bilingual inscription found in the sanctuary of Tamassos-*Phrangissa*.⁶⁵ The epithet refers to the Bronze Age name of the island, Alasia (that is the name that the Cypriots, and most notably the king, used to refer to their place of origin). The formulary is different from the above-mentioned examples: the epithet is an adjective and not a noun (“Alasian” and not “from Alasia”). Besides, as Amadasi and Zamora remark,⁶⁶ the Phoenician form is a transcription of the Greek form (and not the opposite): this is obvious in the nominative ending and in the loss of the sibilant (replaced by H), which is typical of the Greek dialect of Cyprus. The name of the votary of the Tamassos statue is unquestionably Phoenician, and the Phoenician text is inscribed first, above the Cypro-syllabic and Greek one.⁶⁷ The badly preserved dating formulary (that was not translated into Greek) suggests a dating to the reign of king Milkyaton, king of Kition and Idalion (around 375 BCE). A later document, that postdates the abolition of the Cypriot autonomous kingdoms, shows that the geographic noun 'LSY (the sibilant was this time remarkably transcribed, and not rendered by H as was the case in the divine epithet) was the Phoenician name of Cyprus in the Early Hellenistic period.⁶⁸

How shall we interpret this late Phoenician religiouscape, as it is shaped through the use of topical divine epithets? Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Phoenician inscriptions insist on the local dimension of Cypriot cults and on their rooting in the segmented cultural landscape inherited from the city-kingdoms. It happens at a time when Cypriot kingdoms get more and more embedded in the political history of 4th century Greece, and before the island becomes unified as a Ptolemaic province. As rightly outlined by Cayla,⁶⁹ the use of topical epithets (also attested in Greek) echoes practices of Greek cities: this makes royal Cypriot divinities easily identifiable with Greek poliad deities. Shall we thus interpret this religiouscape as “hellenized”?⁷⁰ This would be far too simplistic. Translations and adaptations did not fundamentally change the nature of the deities. To the contrary, topical epithets insisted on the local nature of the deities and on the local dimension of their cult.

It is perhaps no accident if the Phoenician milieu of Cyprus and the Eteocypriot kingdom of Amathous yielded the sole topical divine epithets that refer, not to confined territories or singular cult places, but to the island as a whole: Reshef 'LHYTS/Apollo *Alasiotas* at Tamassos-*Phrangissa*, Aphrodite *Kypria* at Amathous⁷¹ (and not in her renowned sanctuary of Paphos!). At a time of

⁶⁵ Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2018, pp. 81-85.

⁶⁶ Also noted by Masson 1983, pp. 227-228.

⁶⁷ The same remark applies to the second inscribed marble base of same provenance and of roughly similar date, which supported a statue dedicated to Reshef 'LYYT (Apollo *Heleitas* in Greek): Masson 1983, pp. 225-226. The votary was unquestionably Phoenician and the divine epithet is a probable transcription into Phoenician of the Greek one.

⁶⁸ Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2018, pp. 86-88. The name appears on an *ostrakon* from the Idalion archive, in a dating formulary that refers to the first year of Antigonos and Demetrios over Alasia.

⁶⁹ Cayla 2016, pp. 146, 152.

⁷⁰ On the multifaceted and complex processes that are simplified and subsumed under the practical but inefficient concept of “Hellenization”: Bonnet 2015.

⁷¹ Fourrier – Hermary 2006, p. 9. The epithet, documented by Roman inscriptions of the imperial period, is first attested in bilingual (Eteocypriot/Greek) inscriptions dated to the reign of the last king of Amathous, Androkles (Hellmann – Hermary 1980, pp. 259-266; Hermary – Masson 1982, pp. 235-242). The epithet *Kypria* is a cultic epithet that is not attested outside Amathous and that is unquestionably of Cypriot origin (Cayla 2016, p. 152). It offers a striking parallel to the *Phrangissa* inscription. The only other “global” topical epithet attested before in Cyprus was found on two 8th century BCE inscribed bowls that were dedicated to B'L LBNN (Baal of Lebanon), a remarkable divine epithet that made reference to the Phoenician Levant as a whole and not to a specific location (Matthäus 2010, with references). This is the unique attestation of the epithet applied to Baal. The same epithet was

transformations and crisis, minorities from Cyprus were conservatory milieus of a local insular history; they were also particularly innovative in order to transform, adapt and, in doing so, promote their local Cypriot identities.

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used to characterize Tanit at Carthage (Matthäus 2010, p. 129, n. 21). But the difference is obvious: these dedications were made to gods of Lebanon outside of Lebanon, whereas the *Alasiotas* and *Kypria* inscriptions refer to gods of Cyprus in Cyprus.

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