A R T Y K U Ł Y

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CYPRIOT PHOENICIANS
AND THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cypryjscy Fenicjanie i ich tożsamość kulturowa
Abstrakt

Tożsamość fenicka wiąże się z silnym poczuciem przynależności do miasta-państwa, w przypadku Cypru jest to zwłaszcza Kition, gdzie można rozpoznać „fenicką" dynastię panującą. Innym wyróżnikiem jest język fenicki i pismo alfabetyczne, z licznymi przykładami inskrypcji znalezionych na wyspie. Trzecim jest religia i kult, z bóstwami noszącymi imiona fenickie, ale wyraźnie zsynkretyzowanymi zarówno z ich helleńskimi odpowiednikami, jak i lokalnymi tradycjami. Przez około sto lat po śmierci ostatniego króla Kitionu ślady społeczności, którą identyfikuje się jako Cypryjscy Fenicjanie, wciąż można odnaleźć w materiale archeologicznym, a zwłaszcza w inskrypcjach. Jednak wraz z upływem pokoleń pozbawionych opieki „fenickiego państwa-miasta" na Cyprze i nadzorowanego przez nie kultu zachowane pozostaną tylko niektóre stare tradycje rodzinne, takie jak imiona i szacunek dla przodków.

Słowa kluczowe: Cypr, Fenicjanie, Cypryjscy Fenicjanie, Kition, Astarte, tożsamość

Abstract

Phoenician identity is associated with a strong sense of belonging to the city-state; in the case of Cyprus, it is especially Kition, where the "Phoenician" ruling dynasty can be recognised. Another distinctive feature is the Phoenician language and alphabetic writing, with numerous examples of inscriptions found on the island. The third one is religion and cult, with deities bearing Phoenician names, but apparently syncretised with both their Hellenic counterparts and local traditions. For about a century after the death of the last king of Kition, the community which we identify as Cypriot Phoenicians can still be found within the archaeological material, and especially through inscriptions. However, as generations pass, and a new order grows without the 'Phoenician city-state' in Cyprus and the cult

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overseen by it, only some old family traditions are carried on, such as personal names, and regard towards ancestors.

Keywords: Cyprus, Phoenicians, Cypriot Phoenicians, Kition, Astarte, identity

Introduction

Phoenicians did not identify themselves with this very name, which was invented and used by Greek authors, at least since Homer. Those who lived in city-states on the Levantine coast called themselves Knaʿani (Caananites), or generally, after their place of origin/ home (i.e., Sidonians, Tyrians). Interestingly, ancient authors followed that manner and predominantly called the inhabitants of Cypriot Kition – Kitians and did not put them in the same box as 'Phoenicians' from the Levant but rather saw them as Kyproi – Cypriots.[2] This clearly indicates that ancient "Cypriot Phoenicians" were not the same as "Phoenicians", just as "Cypriot Greeks" were not the same as "Greeks," even though they had a strong sense of belonging to their city-state. "Phoenicians" lived also in other Cypriot kingdoms of the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical periods (fig. 1). However, after the advent of the Hellenistic period and unification of the island under the rule of the Ptolemaic dynasty it is difficult to find evidence for the further whereabouts of the "Phoenician" community in Cyprus. An attempt to discuss this matter must involve the question of what is understood by identity and ethnicity and how the proposed definitions might facilitate the indication of the "Cypriot Phoenicians" group characteristics that could be traceable in different periods.

There are many definitions of identity, the most basic one being offered by Hogg and Abrams:[3] "it is people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others", and by Jenkins:[4] "[identity] refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities." Identity is based on a difference from the "other" rather than on unity. In archaeology, it has often been associated with the concept of "ethnicity," although social identity is a broader category that encapsulates also this one. In archaeology, ethnicity is a controversial concept because of its connection with modern nationalisms, and it is still widely discussed whether it is a universal idea or simply a culture-specific notion.[5] Archaeological cultures are increasingly regarded as an amalgamation of different patterns in material culture, which might have developed due to numerous factors, rather than a simple image of a particular ethnic group. The complex notion of social identity is very well illustrated by Astuti[6] in her paper on the Vezo people of western Madagascar, "The Vezo maintain that they are not what they are because they were born to be so. Their alternative model of identity and difference stresses instead that Vezo become what they are through what they do; both

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[2]   M. Iacovou, *'Greeks', 'Phoenicians' and 'Eteocypriots'. Ethnic identities in the Cypriot kingdoms*, in*: "Sweet Land…" Lectures on history and culture of Cyprus*, ed. J. Chrysostomides, C. Dendrinos, Camberley 2006, p. 56.

[3]   M. Hogg, D. Abrams, *Social identifications: a social psychology and intergroup relations and group processes*, London 1988, p. 2.

[4]   R. Jenkins, *Social Identity*, London 199, p. 4.

[5]   A.B. Knapp, *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus. Identity, Insularity and Connectivity*, Oxford 2009, p. 36.

[6]   R. Astuti, *The Vezo are not a kind of people: identity, differences and "ethnicity" among a fishing people of Western Madagascar*, "American Ethnologist", 1995, vol. 22/3, p. 465.

identity and difference result from activities that people perform in the present rather than from a common or distinct origin they acquired at some point in the past."

Social and cultural identity is often "imprinted" in the material culture, including everyday objects, but also in a shared assemblage of symbols or ornamentation, like a cross for Christians or crescent for modern Muslims.[7] Modern scholarship acknowledges also that identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed and that no culture remains unchanged. Personal identity includes many elements of social identity, and negotiating it is especially illustrated in the changing character of representations, e.g., figurines.[8] Change in the construction of social identity can come about due to the forces at work within a society, contact between societies, and/or changes in the natural environment. Of special interest here are possible choices of immigrants' cultural identity: assimilation, separation/isolation, and hyphenation. The latter is an in-between position, which is a spectrum of choices, here of different kinds of combination of the two cultures and different degrees of participation/integration in the host-society. Acculturation is what happens to an entire culture when alien traits diffuse on a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns, and transculturation is what happens to individuals when they move to another society and adopt its culture. Beside the cultural identity, there are many different group and individual identities, like those connected with gender, age, class, kinship, or faith, usually intersecting each other.

Fig. 1. Limestone head of a bearded man, with a conical Levantine-style hat, dated to early 6th cent. BC, from the sanctuary of Golgoi-Ayios Photios, h. 88.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Arts no. 74.51.2857

As mentioned above, the first and most noticeable element of the "Cypriot Phoenician" identity is connected with a strong sense of belonging to the city-state; in the case of Cyprus

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[7]   A.B. Knapp, op.cit., p. 31-32.

[8]   R. Handler, *Is 'identity' a useful cross-cultural concept?*, in: *Commemorations: the politics of national identity*, ed. J.R. Gillis, Princeton 1994, p. 27-40.

it is especially Kition, where a "Phoenician" ruling dynasty can be identified. Another distinctive feature is the Phoenician language and alphabetic writing, with numerous examples of inscriptions found on the island (and beyond it, with mention of Cyprus or Cypriots). The third is the religion and cult, with deities bearing Phoenician names, but visibly syncretised with both their Hellenic counterparts and with local traditions. How the elements that characterise a community which we label "Cypriot Phoenicians" were constructed, reconstructed, and deconstructed over time is briefly discussed below.

Earliest Phoenicians in Cyprus

The earliest Phoenician inscription from Cyprus dates back to the 11th cent. BC; it remains untranslated and is part of the Cesnola collection (currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York); it is located on the base of an amphoriskos (a small, stone unguent jar) and consists of just three letters (fig. 2).[9] Another early inscription of Phoenician provenance was found in Salamis, on a White Painted II bowl, dated to the late 10th or early 9th cent. BC, and was probably a personal name of which only four letters are preserved.[10] Other early examples are a grave stele dated to the 9th cent. BC (of unknown provenance; now in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia), and a 9th cent. inscription from Kition, mentioning the goddess Astarte and her devotee from Tamassos.[11] However, inscriptions from the 8th cent. BC, or earlier, known from e.g., Salamis, Kition, Palaepaphos, or Khirokitia are predominantly short writings on sherds (two-three letters), with an interesting exception from Palaepaphos, which looks like an attempt to learn the Phoenician alphabet.[12] As Iacovou[13] points out, Greeks reached Cyprus as illiterates and adopted an existing local scripture, while Phoenicians came to Cyprus already equipped with their alphabetic writing.

There were a few Levantine imports dated to before the 8th cent. BC found in Kition graves; and such objects were more frequent in Amathus or Palapeaphos, which suggests a different reasons for a later Phoenician settlement in the Kition area than previous contacts. It is only from the second quarter of the 8th cent. BC when Kition burials contain more Levantine imports, including plates and ritual vessels of Phoenician origin (i.e., incense burners).[14] The influence of Phoenician craftsmanship is also visible during the Cypro-Geometric III to Cypro-Archaic II period (the 9th-5th cent. BC), mostly in bronze vessels, and in some examples of armor and horse harnesses (popular in elite burials, e.g., in Salamis).[15] However, Iacovou[16] rightly argues that homogeneity of the material culture (including funerary ritual) in Cypro-Geometric period does not provide any evidence for visible ethnic divisions within the island,

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[9]   C. Ioannou, *Cypriotes and Phoenicians*, in: *Kyprios Character. History, Archaeology & Numismatics of Ancient Cyprus*, ed. E. Markou, on-line publication 2015, kyprioscharacter.eie.gr/en/t/Ac (accessed: August 04, 2020).

[10]   S. Sherratt, *Visible Writing: Questions Of Script And Identity In Early Iron Age Greece And Cyprus*, "Oxford Journal Of Archaeology", 2003, vol. 22/3, p. 234-235.

[11]   C. Ioannou, op. cit.

[12]   Ibidem.

[13]   M. Iacovou, op. cit., p. 39.

[14]   A. Orsingher, *Kition: a long-term perspective on the cemeteries*, "Carthage Studies", 2018-2019, vol. 11, p. 42.

[15]   C. Vonhoff, *Phoenician bronzes from Cyprus reconsidered: intercultural exchange in ancient Cyprus from a pan-Mediterranean perspective*, in: *Ancient Cyprus today: Museum Collections and New Research Approaches to the Archaeology of Cyprus*, eds. G. Bourogiannis, C. Mühlenbock, Uppsala 2016, p. 273-284.

[16]   M. Iacovou, op. cit., p. 40.

although inscriptions were made in (at least) three languages (Eteocypriot, Greek and Phoenician).

Phoenician kingdom in Cyprus

What made Phoenicians interested in Cyprus, and Kition? The rise of Tyre and the necessity of paying high taxes in metal to the Assyrian empire pushed them towards securing access to the raw material, and Cyprus was, of course, the closest source of copper.[17] The inscription from Nora in Sardinia dated to the 9th cent. BC calls Tyre the "mother of Kition."[18] Demetriou[19] suggests that the name Kition predates Phoenician settlement and that when the colony became independent from Tyre,

Fig. 2. Inscribed base of a chlorite amphoroiskos from Cyprus, with three signs in a probably Archaic Phoenician alphabet, dated to 11th cent. BC, Metropolitan Museum of Arts no. 74.51.5057a

its inhabitants turned to use of the old place-name instead of *qrt-ḥdšt* – Carthage ("new city"). As Fourrier[20] points out, there was not one single episode of colonization of Kition, but rather a gradual "Phoenicisation" of the city throughout the Iron Age, with Phoenician pottery shapes and technology of manufacture, language and script used in the whole city and no separate settlement areas or burial grounds for the newcomers. A new temple (on the basis of an older one, dated to Late Bronze Age) was built; and judging by an inscription found on a Red Slip bowl (850-800 BC), it was dedicated to Astarte (fig. 3). Later, in the 7th century, a new temple for Herakles-Melqart took over as probably the most important centre of worship in the city.[21] However, the kingdom of Kition did not differ much from other Cypriot kingdoms; its temples or burial customs had parallels in other areas of the island.

Two inscriptions mark important historical events in Cyprus. The first one is the stele of Sargon II, erected in Kition in 707 BC, mentioning the conquer of seven "kingdoms

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[17]   C. Ioannou, op. cit.

[18]   A. Demetriou, *Phoenicians In Cyprus And Their Hellenisation The Case Of Kition*, "Archeologia Cypria", 2001, vol. 4, p. 136.

[19]   Ibidem, p. 136-137.

[20]   S. Fourrier, *The Iron Age topography of Kition, Kyprios Character*, in: *Kyprios Character. History, Archaeology & Numismatics of Ancient Cyprus*, op. cit.

[21]   A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 136.

Fig. 3. Temple of Astarte, Kition-Kathari area, photo by K. Zeman-Wiśniewska

of Ya" (Cyprus).[22] The other is the prism-inscription of Esarhaddon, dated to 673/2 BC, which mentions twenty-two places and names of their kings, ten of which are connected with Cyprus. Kition can be identified as Carthage, ruled by king Damusi.[23] It was so at least in the 5th cent. BC, when local kings started calling themselves rulers of Kition, and they were among the first rulers to issue a coin in Cyprus. Moreover, thanks to the coinage we have a complete list of Kitian kings from ca. 480 till 312 BC, and they all bear Phoenician names:[24] Baalmelek (480-450 BC), Azbaal (450-425 BC), Baalmelek II (425-400 BC), Baalrom (400--394 BC), Melikiathon (394-361 BC), Pumation (361-312 BC).

In 499 BC, during the revolt against the Persian rule, all the Cypriot kingdoms, including Kition, but with exception of Amathus, fought together. However, in the aftermath of those events, especially after the expedition of Xerxes against Greece and after Cimon's expedition against Cyprus and the peace of Callias, Persians seemed to cooperate with Kition.[25] Ioannou[26] suggests that in the 5th cent. BC there were "new" Phoenicians coming from the Levant to Kition-Idalion-Tamassos kingdom(s). This claim is based on an inscription from Kition where the dedicator refers to himself as an inhabitant of – again – Carthage ("new city"). Hand in hand with the Persians, the Kitionians unsuccessfully besieged Idalion. After Cimon's death, they tried to conquer it again – this time alone – and succeeded in incorporating Idalion into the kingdom of Kition (c. 450-445 BC). [27]

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[22]   Ibidem.

[23]   Ibidem, p. 136-137.

[24]   S. Fourrier, op. cit.; A. Demetriou, op.cit., p. 141.

[25]   A. Demetriou, op.cit., p. 137.

[26]   C. Ioannou, op. cit., p. 7.

[27]   A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 137.

When Kition incorporated Idalion, the city no longer issued its coinage, and more than 1200 inscribed sherds, mostly with notes of economic nature bear witness to its "Phoenicisation" in terms of the language.[28] Kition was the capital of the kingdom, however Idalion quickly became its economical capital[29]. Rulers bearing Phoenician names can be found now in Lapithos and Marion as well.[30]

That the expansion of Kition remained limited was mainly due to Evagoras of Salamis (411-373 BC), politician and famous champion of Hellenism. However, the conflict between Kition and Salamis was rather of political and military nature, as confirmed by the inscription about the naval victory of the king Melikiathon of Kition, dated by Sznycer[31] to 392 BC. Kitians probably participated also in the battle of 381 BC between Persian naval forces and Salamis, which led to the defeat of Evagoras, after which he remained the king, but resigned from his pan-island ambitions or claims to the copper-rich mines in Troodos, prized so highly by the kings of Kition.[32]

It was in the mid-4th cent. BC, when the last king of Kition – Pumation – bought the kingdom of Tamassos, which finally allowed the city-state to fully control the copper production from the mines in Troodos' foothills, and transport it through the lands of Idalion to the workshops and harbour of Kition. However, soon afterwards, in 332 BC, Alexander the Great gave Tamassos to Pnytagoras of Salamis. The Kingdom of Kition's independence lasted 20 years longer than Tyre, till 312 BC, when Ptolemy I abolished kingship in Cyprus. Eventually, Pumation, who ruled for ca. 50 years, was killed because of his close contacts with Antigonus, thus on factual and symbolic levels ending the story of a "Phoenician kingdom" in Cyprus.[33] It used to be assumed that so-called destruction levels in the area of Kition-Bamboula should be associated with that event and that along with the death of the king the temple of Herakles-Melqart was demolished, probably together with the temple of Astarte. However, further research shows that Kition-Bamboula sanctuaries (Heracles-Melqart) were in use at least until the end of the 3rd cent. BC (fig. 4), although sanctuaries in the Kition-Kathari area (Astarte) were indeed abandoned at the very end of the 4th cent. BC[34] In Tamassos, the sacred precinct of Aphrodite faced some destructions and though cult activities continued, it was connected with major changes in the features of the architecture.[35] Papantoniou[36] rightly points out that those destructions should not be identified with a cultural or "ethnic", but a political conflict.

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[28] C. Ioannou, op. cit., p. 7; M. Hadjicosti, *The Kingdom of Idalion in the Light of New Evidence*, "Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research", 1997, vol. 308, p. 58-59.

[29] See M. Sznycer, *Idalion, capitale économique des rois phéniciens de Kition et d'Idalion*, "Cahiers du Centre d'Etudes Chypriotes", 2004, vol. 34, p. 85-100.

[30] A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 137.

[31] M. Sznycer, M. Yon, *A Phoenician Victory Trophy at Kition*, "Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus", 1992, p. 164.

[32] A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 138.

[33] Ibidem.

[34] G. Papantoniou, *Cyprus from Basileis to Strategos: A Sacred-Landscape Approach*, "American Journal of Archaeology", 2013, vol. 117, p. 38.

[35] Ibidem.

[36] Ibidem, p. 39.

Fig. 4. Head of an early Hellenistic Heracles-Melqart from Kition-Bamboula, Medelhavsmuseet

Phoenician gods and cult in Cyprus

The cult of Astarte and Melqart in Kition is of special importance because the temples were linked with the royal court, i.e., an inscription on a gypsum plaque, dated to the 5th cent. BC mentions wages for those in service of the "temples and king's court," and the two deities named are Astarte and Melqart.[37] The other reason is that those two divine entities were highly revered by the "Phoenician" community in Cyprus. However, they both are often identified with Cypriot or Greek-Cypriot gods: Astarte with Aphrodite (or the so-called "Great Goddess of Cyprus"[38]) and Melqart with Heracles (or the local, so-called "Master of Lion"[39]) (fig. 5). In many places Cypriot Phoenicians adapted local deities, renaming them according to their religion, i.e., Athena and Apollo were worshipped as Anat and Reshef in Idalion, and probably Zeus as Keravnios-Reshepkhetz.[40] Many temples on the island might have been frequently visited by the Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Phoenicians worshipping gods from both pantheons who had different names but similar prerogatives. Those gods had also very Greek faces, as statues manufactured in Cyprus were mostly inspired by the Greek art, with just elements of Phoenician origin. In Kition temples early sculptures bear many Egyptian influences, due to the period of Egyptian rule over the island (569-545 BC), but later statues were modeled according to the Cypriot style influenced mostly by the Greek antique art.[41] More Levantine influence can be found in small mould-made terracottas, depicting naked

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[37] A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 139.

[38] See K. Zeman-Wiśniewska, *Geneza i początki kultu Afrodyty*, "Saeculum Christianum", 2020, vol. 27/2, p. 5-18.

[39] See D.B. Counts, *Master of the Lion: Representation and Hybridity in Cypriote Sanctuaries*, "American Journal of Archaeology", 2008, vol. 112/1, p. 3-27.

[40] A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 140.

[41] Ibidem, p. 138-139.

women with arms alongside the body or holding their breasts, and sometimes pregnant[42] (fig. 6). During the Ptolemaic period, the cult of rulers used to be popularized. Its example can be Arsinoëion within the temenos of Apollo-Reshef in Idalion.[43] The longevity of "Phoenician" cults can be proved not only by the 3rd cent. BC Heracles-Melqart sculptures from Kition[44] (fig. 3), but also a 3rd cent. BC dedication from the Aphrodite sanctuary made to the "Astarte from Paphos"[45] (another late example of the "Phoenician" presence in the area is a grafitto from a tomb in Nea Paphos, dated to the 300 BC).[46]

Phoenicians in Hellenistic Cyprus

Although the Cypriot Phoenician kingdom of Kition vanished from the map in 312 BC, Phoenicians of Cyprus did not disappear and for many years they probably continued their lives in the same way, gradually becoming part of a unified Hellenistic culture, in a specific process of acculturation without migration. Papantoniou[47] argues that there were no visible demographic changes connected with the annexation of Cyprus by the Ptolemys (except for the Marion area). The later population movement might be associated with urbanization, the arrival of (military) settlers, or maybe taxation. As stated above, conflicts on the island or with outside forces were of political and military and not ethnic or cultural nature. Maier[48] states that "the basic concept of sharp division and racial enmity between the two ethnic groups

Fig. 5. A limestone Heracles-Melqart, dated to ca. 530--520 BC, from sanctuary of Golgoi-Ayios Photios, h. 217.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Arts no. 74.51.2455

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[42] Ibidem, p. 140.

[43] G. Papantoniou, op. cit., p. 48.

[44] S. Fourrier, op. cit.

[45] M. Masson, M. Sznycer, *Recherches sur les Phéniciens à Chypre*, Paris–Geneva 1972, p. 81-86.

[46] P. Steele, *A Linguistic History of Ancient Cyprus The Non-Greek Languages, and their Relations with Greek, c. 1600-300 BC*, Cambridge 2013, p. 174.

[47] G. Papantoniou, op. cit., p. 43.

[48] F.G. Maier, *Factoids in Ancient History: The Case of Fifth-Century Cyprus*, "Journal of Hellenic Studies", 1985, vol. 105, p. 38.
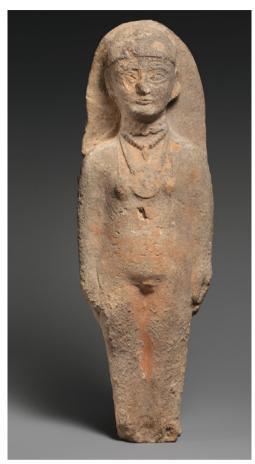
Fig. 6. A female figure, naked, with arms alongside the body, from Cyprus, dated to 600-489 BC, h. 34.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Arts no. 74.51.1580

in the population of Cyprus can hardly be proved by the evidence available. A number of testimonies point to a considerable degree of peaceful co-existence, mutual cultural exchange and even intermarriage." Demetriou[49] argues that Cypriot Phoenicians were, to a certain degree, Hellenized during that period; but what they kept for longer is what made them most visible in the archaeological material earlier – their own script and language, including personal names and the names of the deities.

Probably only five Cypro-Phoenician inscriptions can be dated to the 3rd century BC, and there are no further examples.[50] Two of them are bilingual – such inscriptions in Cyprus are much older than the advent of the Hellenistic period, with the earliest dated probably to the 7th cent. BC[51] Although bilingual inscriptions also appeared in Amathus (Etheocypriot and Greek), they are not attested in the city-kingdoms where the official language was Greek, however, digraphic texts (alphabetical and syllabic in Greek) are known.[52]

The inscription CIS I 95 from Larnax tes Lapethou is a dedication to 'nt/Athene (and king Ptolemy) made on the behalf of Ba'alšillem/Praxidemos.[53] The cult of goddess 'nt might have been present in Cyprus already in the 9th cent. BC, but first written samples come from the 5th cent. BC. It is identified with Athena on a 5th cent. BC spear spike found in the sanctuary of Athena in Lapethos, and on a somewhat later inscription of the king Baalmilk II from the same place.[54] The early decades of the 3rd cent. BC are the most probable date of the inscription, based on the historical events – rule of Ptolemy and his deification.[55] Ptolemy I lost the island to the Antigonids for a decade in

[49]   A. Demetriou, op. cit., p. 143.

[50]   P. Steel, op. cit., p. 182.

[51]   See discussion of Phoenician bilingual texts in Cyprus in P. Steel, op. cit., p. 202-213.

[52]   M. Iacovou, op. cit., p. 52.

[53]   P. Steel, op. cit., p. 207-208.

[54]   F. Giusfredi, *On Phoenicians In Ptolemaic Cyprus: A Note On Cis I 95*, "Vicino Oriente", 2018, vol. 22, p. 112--113.

[55]   Ibidem, p. 115.

306 BC and won it back in 294 BC. Interestingly, in the Greek text Ptolemy is referred to as king, but in the Phoenician one as the lord of kings.[56] Lipiński[57] suggests that Praxidemos was the priest of Poseidon mentioned in another text from Lapethos. However, Giusfredi[58] argues that this might not be the case, and even so, that he might have been active beyond 290 BC. Further, he maintains that the scribe was a native speaker of Phoenician, although he started carving the inscription with a Greek version (hence the mistakes in the Greek version). Moreover, the dedicator was rather a Cypriot Phoenician, and "Praxidemos" was an attempt at reproducing the Phoenician phonetics of the name Ba'alšillem with the usage of a similar existing Greek name.[59] The other bilingual inscription is a funerary stele found in Kition, dated to ca. 300 BC. It belonged to a Lycian man from Xantos named Smyrnos, a "maker of cups." It is clear, however, that the primary text was in Greek.[60] The third such inscription, the so-called Dhromolaxia stela, is different in nature. It bears a Phoenician text dated to the 4th cent. BC with the Greek one added in the 1st cent. BC.[61] The Phoenician part was turned upside-down before the Greek text was added, however, they both refer to funding a cult: first, probably of Eshmoun, by an unknown person, and the second of Asclepios and Hygeia, by a certain Asclepiodorus (see below).[62]

Probably the last "official" inscription in Phoenician is the one from Lapethos, dated to 274 BC, which mentions a "chief of land" named Yatonbaal son of Gerashtart, son of Abdashtart etc., including altogether six generations, who built a temple for Melqart along with many votives for the god, during the reign of the "Lord King Ptolemy."[63] Further examples of the presence of the Phoenician language in Cyprus are more elusive.

The Meydancikkale hoard, discovered in 1980 in a Ptolemaic mercenary outpost in Rough Cilicia (near the modern city of Gülnar), consisted of about 5000 silver coins (from Alexander to Ptolemy III), hidden in three pots. Some of the coins were inscribed with several names, in the Greek alphabet, Cypriot syllabic scripture, and Egyptian demotic. One of the coins was inscribed with a Phoenician name – Raphael – but in a Cypriot syllabic scripture.[64] More examples are known from Rhodes, were a bilingual inscription in Greek and Phoenician, dated to ca. 200 BC, reads in Greek, "Herakleides the Kitian," and in Phoenician, "For Abdelmerqat son of Abdsasom son of TGNŞ." It gives us proof of the existence of a person from Kition in Cyprus with a Phoenician name, continuing Phoenician traditions, as the Greek text gives us only the name; but the Phoenician one includes a patronym and a papponym.[65] Two other similar, bilingual inscriptions from Rhodes are also dated to the same time: however, their link with Kition is far more disputable, as it is based only on onomastic

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[56] Ibidem, p. 113.

[57] E. Lipiński, *Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium BC*, Leuven 1987, p. 405.

[58] F. Giusfredi, op. cit., p. 115.

[59] Ibidem, p. 117-118.

[60] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 207.

[61] M. Yon, *Kition dans les textes*, Paris 2004, p. 274.

[62] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 183.

[63] Ibidem, p. 189-190.

[64] J.M. Gordon, *Between Alexandria and Rome: a postcolonial archaeology of cultural identity in Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cincinnati 2012, p. 142-143.

[65] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 212.

data.[66] Kitians were present abroad also further to the West and in 333/2 BC Phoenician merchants from Kition were allowed to build a temple for Aphrodite in Pireus, just "as Egyptians build one for Isis." A dedication to Aphrodite Ourania from a woman named Aristoklea who called herself Kittian was similarly dated.[67] Three other dedications found in Pireus were bilingual, and mentioned men from Kition, giving – as in Rhodes – a longer ancestry in Phoenician.[68] These inscriptions show also that Cypriot Phoenicians of the early Hellenistic period would use double names, choosing a Greek one based on its resemblance to their Phoenician name in sound or meaning, i.e., Herakleides – descendent of Heracles, Abdmelqart – servant of Melqart.[69]

A different, but also interesting example is a loanword in a Greek inscription, which can be found on an ostracon from Idalion, dated to ca. 300 BC, where one of the city gates is named with a Phoenician name – "pulai esakkei[m]" (gates of sacks). Steel[70] argues that it was a word adopted by Greek speaking people of Idalion.

Mitford[71] arsserts that Phoenician was spoken in Cyprus till the Republican period, and maybe some remnants of Phoenician formulae and syntax can be traced in Greek alphabetic inscriptions from the 3rd to 1st centuries BC. It is entirely possible that although the Phoenician language disappeared from official inscriptions, it was still spoken and written (on more perishable materials) in domestic or everyday circumstances. Very symbolic in this context is the Greek part of the Dhromolaxia stela inscription (mentioned above), which is dated to the 1st cent. BC, and mentions a certain Asclepiodorus along with his patronym and papponim (as in the Phoenician tradition) – his grandfather bears a Phoenician name – Syllis.[72]

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[66] M. Yon, op. cit., p. 139-40.

[67] J. Quinn, *In search of the Phoenicians*, Princeton 2018, p. 39.

[68] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 212; M. Yon, op. cit., p. 139-140.

[69] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 215-216.

[70] Ibidem, p. 214.

[71] T.B. Mitford, *The Cults of Roman Cyprus*, "ANRW II", 1990, vol. 18/3, p. 2187.

[72] P. Steel, op. cit., p. 223.

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