A NEWLY DISCOVERED TANIT PENDANT FROM MARESHA

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Abstract: Recent excavations of Subterranean Complex 89 at Maresha yielded, among other items, a bronze pendant in the shape of the Phoenician-Punic goddess Tanit. The pendant was discovered in a room with ships graffiti and nearby a *loculi* tomb that was later dismantled. Exact parallels to this pendant are known from Tel Ashkelon and Tel Michal in Israel and Tall Sukas in Syria, while similar examples were identified at Sidon, Tel Ashkelon, Megiddo and Motya (Sicily). With the exception of the anomalous example from Megiddo, which dates to the eleventh century BCE, all of these pendants date to the Persian and/or Hellenistic period. Phoenician (especially Sidonian) influences on the Idumaean town of Maresha are reviewed, perhaps testifying to a Sidonian presence at the town, as is also attested by the Apollophanes inscription from the so-called Sidonian tomb.

Keywords: Phoenicians; Tanit; Maresha; Bronze; Pendant.

1. Introduction

The ancient site of Maresha is situated at Tell Sandahannah in the Judean foothills, about 40 km southwest of Jerusalem and 35 km east of Ashkelon. The first to identify Tell Sandahannah with Maresha was E. Robinson, based on primary sources.[1] This identification was later verified with the discovery of a tomb inscription that mentioned the Sidonian community "residing at Maresha,"[2] and by two Aramaic ostraca discovered in the subterranean complexes of Maresha that mention the site's name.[3]

The city, located within the borders of the Kingdom of Judah, was founded in Iron Age II. Later, in the Persian period, the Judean foothills became the region known as Idumea, and was resettled by inhabitants of Idumean origin alongside other groups.[4] During the Hellenistic period, Maresha flourished and became the central city of Idumaea, and was inhabited by mixed population, people with names of Greek, Idumean, Arab, Phoenician and Jewish origins.[5] Maresha was occupied by the Hasmoneans in the late second century BCE; according to historical sources the Idumeans were forced to convert to Judaism.[6]

Maresha consists of an Upper City in the shape of a tell with phases from Iron Age II to Hellenistic, surrounded by a Lower City that was inhabited in the Hellenistic period that covers some 32 hectares (Figs. 1, 2). The Upper City was excavated by F. Bliss and R.A.S. Macalister in 1900.[7] The Lower City was exca-

1   Robinson 1856, vol. 2, p. 67.
2   Peters – Thiersch 1905.
3   Eshel 2010, p. 82.
4   Eshel 2007; Eshel 2010; Kloner – Stern 2007.
5   Peters – Thiersch 1905; Kloner – Stern 2007; Kloner 2010b, pp. 218-219.
6   For the history of Maresha see Kloner 2003, pp. 5-8; Kloner – Zissu 2013, pp. 46-48.
7   Bliss – Macalister 1902.

Fɪɢ. 1. Aerial view of Maresha looking southeast. Photograph by Abraham Gracier. Courtesy of Amos Kloner.

vated by A. Kloner from 1988-2000, and from 2000 until the present by I. Stern and B. Alpert.[8] The many houses of the lower city are connected to hundreds of underground rooms quarried in the local soft chalk for various purposes, cisterns, industries, quarries, and more.[9] The underground rooms later were connected to complexes; so far 169 subterranean complexes have been recorded at the site, composed of thousands of units. The necropolis was also excavated throughout the years. The Lower City is encircled by concentrations of loculi tombs, marking the town's edge.[10]

At some point, towards the end of the city's life in the late second century BCE or shortly after, the subterranean complexes were filled with debris rich in artifacts. A minority of the finds are Iron Age II and Persian in date, whereas the vast majority, approximately 85%, are dated to the Hellenistic period, no later than the end of the second century BCE.

One of the caves that has been excavated recently, Subterranean Complex 89 (hereafter SC 89), is located 150 m southeast of the upper city in a heavily populated area.[11] The underground complex consists of

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8   For an overview of the excavations of the site see Kloner 2003, pp. 9-30; Kloner 2010a; Kloner 2010b; Stern 2014, pp. 1-8.

9   Kloner – Zissu 2013; Zissu – Kloner 2015.

10   Kloner 2003, pp. 21-29; Kloner – Zissu 2015.

11   The excavation of SC89 (Permit No. A-4687; map ref. NIG 190680/611086; OIG 140680/111086) was directed by Ian Stern and Bernie Alpert on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College, and financed by funds from the Archaeological Seminars Institute. Assisting in the excavation were Sonia Shaharit and Ludmilla Laborsky (pottery restoration, registration and organization), Ben Alpern (site supervisor), Julia Filipone Erez and
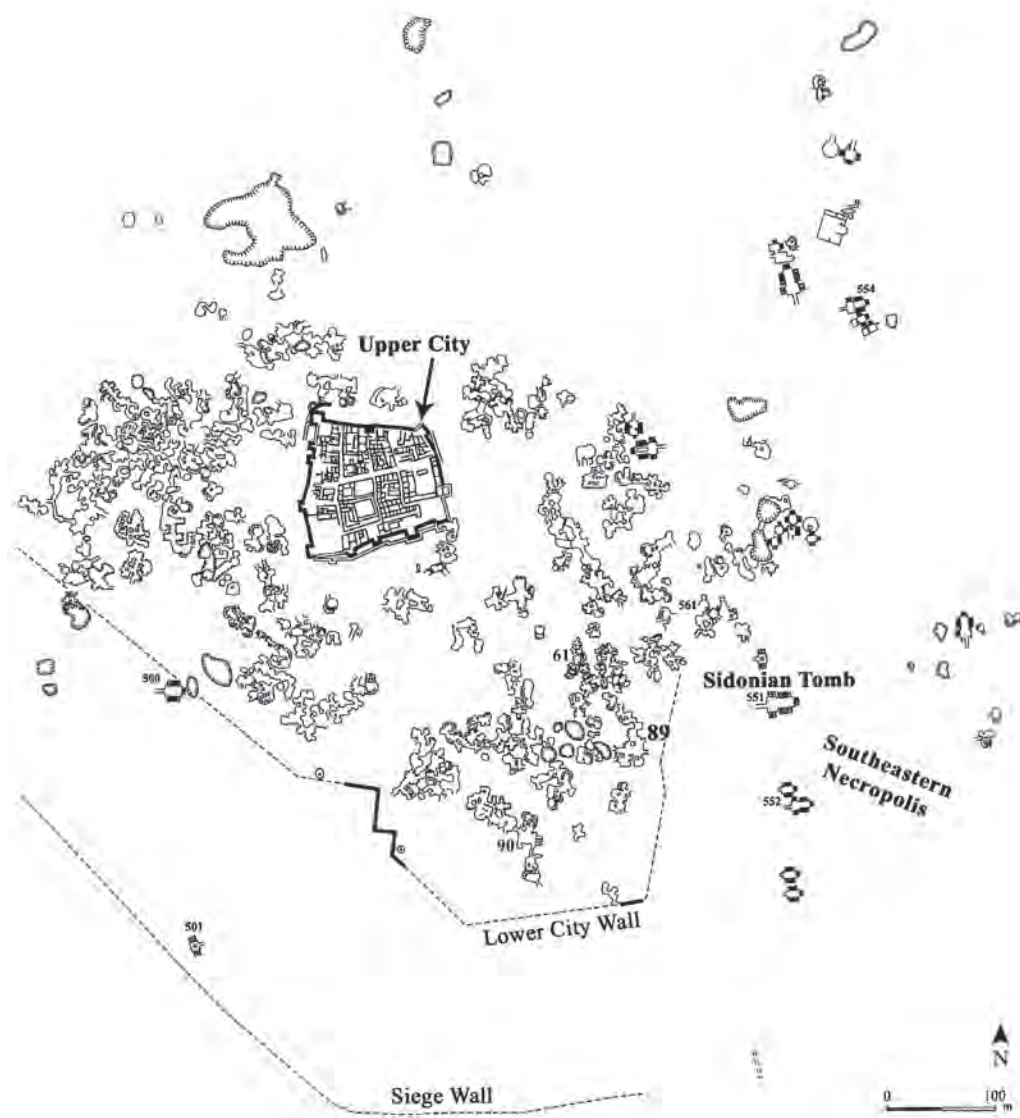
Fig. 2. City plan of Maresha. Courtesy of the Maresha expedition.

74 interconnecting rooms. This paper focuses on several of the important finds discovered during the course of excavating Rooms 50 and 52 of this complex. Like most of the subterranean complexes excavated to date at Maresha, SC 89 contains unstratified fill, thus limiting our understanding of the finds to a typological discussion. One of the most significant finds was a bronze pendant symbol of the Phoenician/Punic goddess Tanit which will be discussed below.
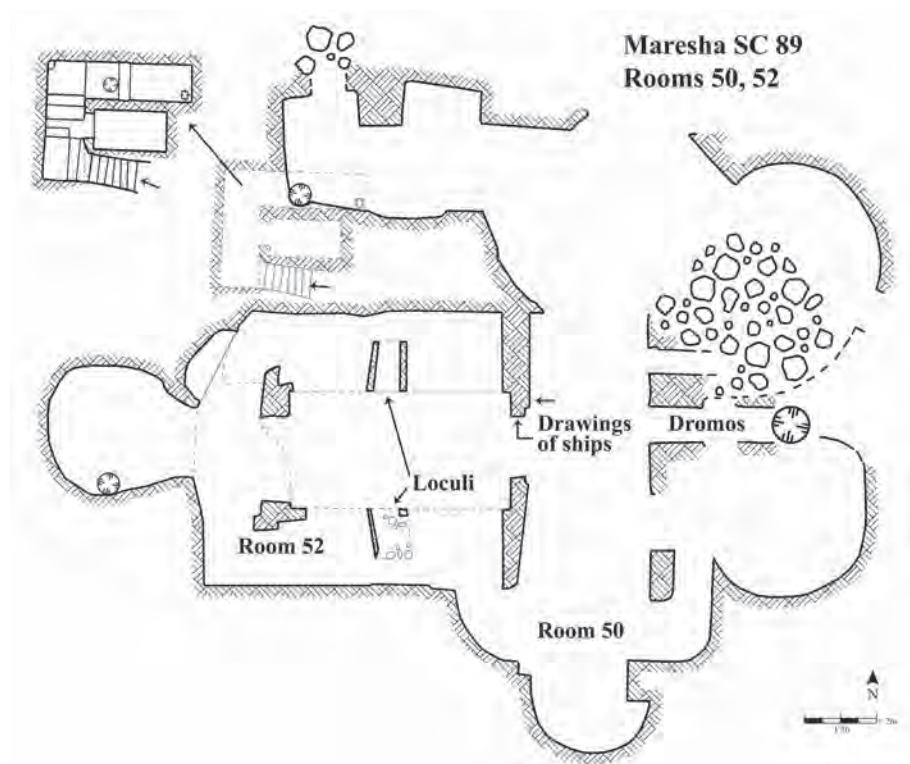
Fig. 3. Plan of SC 89 in Maresha, prepared by Amitai Stern and Anat Gisis-Regev.

2. The Excavation of SC 89

The excavation of SC 89 concentrated on three units; an entrance corridor (*dromos*) leading to a room with graffiti on its walls (Room 50), which leads to another room (Room 52), which had been formerly a loculi tomb and later transformed into a room (Fig. 3).

2.1. *Room 50*

Entrance into Room 50 is via a dromos on the eastern side, made up of an arched ceiling of finely laid chalk (*kirton*) bricks. Room 50 is rectangular in shape with a stepped niche on its southern side, measuring 12X3.5 m. Three warships, the largest measuring 1.9 m in length, as well as a profile of a face and what appears to be an inscription were found on the western wall of the room, north of the entrance to room 52. The analysis of these ships, however, suggests that these were not Phoenician ships but rather Macedonian.[12] The inscription consists of a series of marks that we have not yet been able to decipher. The sections of the wall that contain the graffiti were deliberately smoothed over before the etchings were added. On the western side of Room 50 there is a large opening that leads into an adjacent room (Room 52). On the northern door jamb, graffiti consisting of a number of merchant ships etched into the wall were discovered. The ships appear to be supported by an image of a woman or goddess. The bronze pendant of Tanit was found in this room, that connects the corridor to room 52.

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12   Hadad – Stern – Artzy 2018.

FIG. 4. Loculi in room 52 of SC 89, Maresha. Courtesy of the Maresha expedition. Photograph by Asaf Stern.

FIG. 5. Loculus in room 52 of SC 89, Maresha. Courtesy of the Maresha expedition. Photograph by Asaf Stern.

2.2. *Room 52*

The architecture of the adjacent room clearly indicates that it was originally quarried as a loculi tomb. There may have been a connection between those originally interred in the tomb and the graffiti. If so, then the fact that the tomb faces westward, towards the sea, may not be coincidental, and may correspond to the ships graffiti. The room contains loculi typical to Maresha with gabled ceilings, whose walls were clearly smoothed, with a thin decorative red line drawn across the room just above the loculi. Each niche is approximately 0.70 m wide and 2.35 m deep, set about 33 cm one from each other. Only a few of the original loculi are visible, but enough have survived to enable a reconstruction of the original room (FIGS. 4, 5). From the architectural remains we can discern that the room contained three loculi on the western wall, and probably five on both the northern and southern walls. Most of the loculi appear to have been destroyed when the tomb went out of use. They were broken or chiseled through, some in the shape of arches, while others appear to have collapsed or were deliberately destroyed.

The location of this burial within the occupied area of the Hellenistic city suggests that this tomb was hewn in the third century BCE at the latest, before the city expanded into the immediate vicinity in the second century BCE. Its location on the southeastern slope of the lower city, and proximity to the painted tombs in the southeastern necropolis (FIG. 2), suggests that it was originally part of that cemetery. While the quarrying of the tomb may be tentatively dated to the third century BCE, the majority of the ceramic finds from the unstratified fills found in this room date to the third-second centuries BCE. The stamped amphora handles discovered within the fill date to the first half of the second century BCE, ca 180-160 BCE.[13]

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13   Gerald Finkielsztejn, personal communication.

FIG. 6. Tanit pendant from Maresha. Courtesy of the Maresha expedition, photograph by Clara Amit.

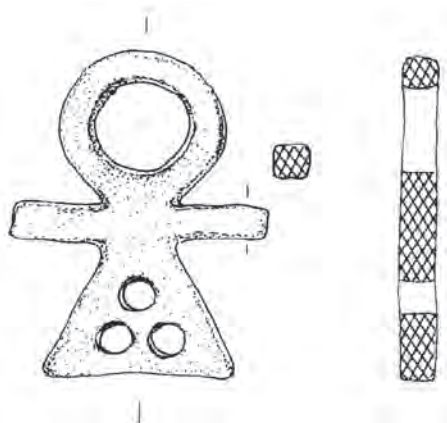FIG. 7. Tanit pendant from Ashkelon. Courtesy of Lawrence E. Stager.

FIG. 8. Tanit pendant from Tel Michal. Courtesy of Amir Gorzalczany.

3. Tanit Pendant

A bronze (= copper alloy) pendant was found in Room 50 (FIG. 6). The pendant measures 44 mm in height, 30 mm at its maximum width (arm span), and 4-5 mm in thickness. It consists of a circle (head), a horizontal bar (outstretched arms) and a triangular body with three pierced holes. Such symbols are thought by most scholars to represent the Phoenicio-Punic goddess Tanit.[14]

Three almost exact parallels exist for the pendant. The first parallel was found at Tel Ashkelon in a fifth century BCE (Persian period) context (FIG. 7).[15] This pendant measures c. 44 x 29 x 3 mm. The second parallel was found at Tel Michal, also from a Persian period context (FIG. 8).[16] It measures 41 x 29.7 x 4.8 mm. The third parallel is from Tall Sukas (FIG. 9). It was found on a floor[17] in H11 NW LXI layer 4 (Period F).[18] It measures 40 x 29 mm. The three holes in the lower part of the pendant evident in the above-mentioned examples are not apparent in the Tall Sukas pendant because of the lack of proper cleaning.[19] One hole is clear from the photograph; the other two are probably filled in with corrosion. Period F at Tall Sukas is now dated to 380-140 BCE[20] and thus the pendant from that site should be dated to that period unless it is residual, which is a possibility, given the presence of other residual finds.[21]

14   Brown 1991, pp. 123-131. A current assessment of the literary, epigraphic and iconographic sources for Tanit recently appeared in Martin 2018.

15   Reg. No. 26278 from Grid 50, Square 48, Layer 197, Basket 600; Stager 1991, p. 37, top, middle.

16   Shalev – Sari 2006, p. 99.

17   Lund 1986, p. 128, note 135.

18   Buhl 1983, p. 81.

19   The pendant was transferred to the Aleppo Museum following the completion of the excavation (John Lund, personal communication).

20   Lund 1993, p. 29.

21   Buhl's date (Buhl 1983, p. 119) was mistaken, and her suggestion to associate the Tanit pendant with the older cult terrace was pure speculation (John Lund, personal communication).

An additional parallel is found at the Sandikli site at Sidon; it is unpublished but its photograph can be viewed on the internet.[22] Judging from that photograph, we observe that its size is more or less consistent with the other parallels mentioned here. The Sidonian pendant differs from those mentioned above in that the lower triangle is cut-out, and the lower bar of that triangle has three pierced holes. The excavator of the Sidon pendant tentatively dates it to the fourth century BCE, pending further excavation results.[23] Three parallels similar to the example from Sidon can be cited, but they lack the pierced holes entirely. The earliest one, measuring 32 x 20 x 2.5 mm, was found in an 11th century context at Megiddo, making it the earliest attestation of Tanit found in the Le-

FIG. 9. Tanit pendant from Tall Sukas. Courtesy of John Lund.

FIG. 10. Tanit pendant from Motya. Courtesy of Gioacchino Falsone.

vant.[24] The second example is from Tel Ashkelon,[25] which measures c. 41 x 23 mm. It also presumably dates to the Persian period. The third parallel, similar to the one from Ashkelon, is without specific context but derives from the early twentieth century excavations in the Archaic Cemetery at Motya (=Mozia), Sicily (FIG. 10).[26] It measures 42 x 24 mm. Falsone dated it to the fifth century BCE.[27]

For convenience we summarize the data presented above in TABLE 1.

Provenance	Height (mm.)	Width (max. mm.)	Thickness (mm.)	Approx. Date (BCE)
Maresha	44	30	4.0-5.0	Persian/Hellenistic?
Ashkelon 1	44	29	3.0	5th-4th
Tel Michal	41	29.7	4.8	5th
Tall Sukas	40	29		380-140
Sidon	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	4th?
Ashkelon 2	41	23		5th-4th
Motya	42	24		5th
Megiddo	32	20	2.5	11th

TABLE 1. Tanit pendants (authors' interpretation).

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22   http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.co.il/2014/05/phoenician-and-roman-antiquities-found.html#.VwDOmJx95ki. We are grateful to S. Rebecca Martin for bringing this pendant to our attention.

23   Claude Doumet-Serhal, personal communication.

24   Arie 2017.

25   Stager 1991, p. 37, top left.

26   Falsone 1978.

27   Based on the discovery of a cremation burial (T.210) datable to the second or even early first century BCE in the Archaic Necropolis at Motya (unpublished), a Hellenistic date for the Tanit pendant cannot be excluded (Gioacchino Falsone, personal communication). We, however, do not agree with this possible late date, which is even later than the majority of the finds from the Maresha fill debris.

It is difficult to determine whether the three holes in the Maresha, Ashkelon, Tel Michal, Tall Sukas and Sidon pendants were functional, decorative or symbolic. Context does not help in this regard. The Maresha pendant was found in a Hellenistic fill layer; the Ashkelon 1 example in Persian-period occupational debris; and the Tel Michal example from a Persian-period tabun. The only pendant possibly to be associated with a funerary context is the one from Motya. The pendant from Maresha was discovered near a room that was formerly a tomb, and perhaps it was also originally funerary in its use.

Buhl's suggestion that the three holes were used for fastening it to a garment is possible,[28] but then how were those pendants without pierced holes attached? Alternatively, it is possible that additional pendants were attached via the holes. A pendant from the Louvre Museum, similar to Tanit in shape, provides a parallel.[29] The Tanit pendants were probably hung on a necklace, either to provide protection for its owner or to identify him as a Phoenician or, more specifically, as a Phoenician of a particular class or occupation (priest, ship captain, merchant, etc.). The pierced holes, then, would either have had a functional purpose (to attach additional pendants) or a symbolic one. Unfortunately, we are clueless as to what these holes may have symbolized.

Symbols of Tanit have been found in the southern Levant in a variety of media.[30] Lead weights with Tanit symbol have been found in various sites,[31] to which recent finds from Migdal on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee[32] and Ramali, Tyre[33] should be added. As for Tanit symbol in materials other than metal, there is plenty of evidence in the southern Levant as well, spanning the Persian and Hellenistic periods. To name a few, two bone pendants with the sign of Tanit were found in the 1990 season at Ashkelon, both dating to the fifth–fourth centuries BCE.[34] A cargo of terracotta figurines dated to the fifth century BCE was discovered in an underwater excavation near Shave Ziyyon in Western Galilee. The figurines portray standing women, some of who have on their base the Tanit symbol.[35] Nine clay sealings with the sign of Tanit were found at Tel Qedesh; they date to the Hellenistic period.[36] Finally, one impression was found on the shoulder of a Punic amphora at Tel 'Akko; it dates to the Late Hellenistic period.[37]

One important question is whether these finds should be interpreted as evidence for contact between Carthage, where Tanit was the primary deity worshipped, and the eastern Mediterranean, or whether they are to be associated with a local Phoenician population. While the stamped impression from Tel 'Akko is unequivocally Punic, the other finds are less clear. Punic ceramic finds are absent from the fifth century BCE and rare in the Hellenistic period in the eastern Mediterranean,[38] so it is more probable that these finds are to be associated with local Phoenicians. The name Tanit was known to the Phoenicians as it appears, together with `Astarte, on an inscribed ivory plaque from Sarepta, dated to the eighth century BCE[39] or to the sixth

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28   Buhl 1983, p. 81.

29   http://www.photo.rmn.fr/archive/09-517523-2C6NU09GTDWH.html. We are grateful to S. Rebecca Martin for offering this tantalizing suggestion and parallel.

30   For an overview see Stern 2006, pp. 177-179; Shenkar 2009; Arie 2017. It should be noted that with the exception of the amulet from Megiddo and the inscription from Sarepta, all of the other identifications of Tanit dated to the Iron Age are questionable (Arie 2017, pp. 63, 65).

31   Wolff – Finkielsztejn 2009.

32   Callegher 2008. While we have not been able to view it, a pyramidal weight from Beth Shean has been cited as having a Tanit symbol cut into its base, see Dar – Nagar-Hillman 2009, note 2.

33   Izumi *et al.* 2009.

34   Stager 1991, p. 37, top right; Stager 1993, p. 109, lower left and right.

35   Linder 1973; Stieglitz 1990.

36   Ariel – Naveh 2003, pp. 62-64, with additional references therein.

37   Dothan 1974.

38   Wolff 2004.

39   Pritchard 1982

century BCE.[40] With the recent discovery of the eleventh century pendant from Megiddo, it becomes clear that the earliest attestations of Tanit were from the eastern Mediterranean and were not imported from the West.

Given that the closest parallels to the Maresha Tanit pendant date to the fifth and/or fourth centuries BCE (Persian/early Hellenistic period), we propose that the pendant from Maresha also dates within this timeframe. Residual Persian period ceramic finds are often encountered in the predominantly Hellenistic fills at Maresha,[41] as are figurines,[42] so the presence of a Persian-period pendant would not be out of the ordinary. It should be noted that in Phoenicia and Palestine, cultic objects made of metal (figurines, zoomorphic weights and pendants) of the Persian period continued to be in use in Hellenistic cult, their sacredness being preserved through the generations.[43] At Maresha itself, an Egyptian bronze figurine of Horus, dated to the sixth–fifth centuries BCE, was found in a mixed debris near the entrance of Subterranean Complex 75,[44] and most probably was still in use in the city's final days in the late second century BCE. The continuity of cult practices is further attested in Subterranean Cave 57, where many terracotta figurines of Persian-period types have been found in a Hellenistic context.[45] A Hellenistic date is possible for the Maresha pendant, especially given the revised dating of the parallel from Tall Sukas and the tentative attribution of the new discovery from Sidon to the Hellenistic period. A third century BCE date is also possible since the loculi tomb is later than the Persian period but prior to the expansion of the houses of Maresha in this area during the second century BCE.

4. Influences on Maresha's Population

The finds associated with the Iron Age II settlement at Maresha are Judean in character, exhibiting very little in the way of coastal influence. These include 22 *lmlk* stamped seals from the Upper and Lower Cities of Maresha,[46] a seventh century ostracon and bulla, as well as remains of storage jars, figurine fragments, oil lamps and burnished bowls with folded rims. The proximity of Maresha to Tel Lachish, the main city in southern Judea, further supports the identification of Maresha as a Judean town.

The situation changed in the Persian period, when Maresha became a main city in the region of Idumea, a region differentiated from the coast by its inhabitants. The difference between the two regions is well represented by the ostraca; those found at Ashkelon were written in Phoenician, whereas most of the Semitic ostraca from Maresha are written in Aramaic and only two (of 72) are written in Phoenician.[47] A further testimony to the distinguished character of Maresha as an Idumean city in the Persian period is the assemblage of terracotta figurines which is almost entirely Idumean in character, with little Eastern or Greek influences.[48] The hegemony of Idumean and Arab names in the corpus of ostraca from Idumea and Maresha (above) provides further proof for the local character of the region.

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40   Garbini 1980.

41   Stern 2005, pp. 118-140 and figs. 3.12-3.22.

42   Erlich 2006; Erlich 2014.

43   Erlich 2009, pp. 29-33.

44   Erlich forthcoming.

45   Erlich 2014.

46   Vaughn 1999, p. 191 notes 19 examples from Maresha, 17 from F.J. Bliss and R.A.S. Macalister's excavation and two from Amos Kloner's excavation. Since then, three additional examples have been excavated by Ian Stern and Bernie Alpert.

47   Eshel 2007, pp. 151-152; Eshel 2010, pp. 76-78; Kloner 2010b, pp. 217-218.

48   Erlich 2006; Erlich forthcoming.

Contacts with the coast remained significant, however. During the Persian period the Phoenicians supplied the Persians with valuable assistance in their campaigns towards Egypt and were rewarded with commercial control of a number of coastal cities, the closest to Maresha being Ashkelon. Stager has noted that the Phoenician cultural horizons at Ashkelon far overshadowed any other.[49] According to Pseudo Skylax, Ashkelon, "the city of the Tyrians", was one of the most important of these coastal cities. While Ashkelon was governed by Tyre, other cities in the region were ruled by Sidon, like Jaffa and Dor.[50] From these coastal cities the Phoenicians were able to spread their influence inland, providing new markets for goods from the coast as well as from abroad. Indeed, part of the ceramic repertoire of the Persian period at Maresha include some imported Attic black glazed ware and juglets that show clear coastal connections. They join the very few Phoenician ostraca found in Idumea.[51] Therefore, as much as the Idumean character of Maresha in the Persian period is prominent, the coastal and Phoenician connections are not completely lacking.

The Hellenistic period was more heterogeneous in its character. Due primarily to the extensive international trading connections that the Phoenicians had, they were directly and indirectly the bearers of various cultures. These influences derived from the main eastern Hellenized Phoenician coastal cities such as Tyre and Sidon, as well as cities on the Palestinian coast that were under Phoenician influence, such as Dor, Ashkelon, and Gaza. Their cultural influence was not limited to the coast, however, as has been noted in excavations such as Tel Anafa,[52] Kedesh[53] and, to the south, Maresha.

During the Hellenistic period, there is evidence for Sidonian colonies, or *politeumata* (pl. of *politeuma*, πολιτευμα, a form of government), both on the coast and inland. Sidonians who lived at Jaminia-on-the-Sea (Yavneh-Yam) received benefits from Hellenistic rulers in return for their naval services, as attested in an inscription found there.[54] Privileges were also claimed by Sidonians of Shechem, as attested by Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* XI, 344.[55] The most well-known Sidonian colony is at Maresha. Peters and Thiersch's[56] discovery in the eastern necropolis of Tomb 1 (Cave No 551; see map in Fig. 2) mentions "Apollophanes, the head of the *Sidonian* colony of Maresha". Peters and Thiersch published other Phoenician names such as the "Sidonian woman Philotion", and "Meerbaal" found in these tombs and others.[57]

Not only the names and inscriptions at Maresha point to a Phoenician origin but also the following features of tomb architecture. These tombs are subterranean but lack decoration visible from the surface; they are composed of one or more elongated rectangular rooms; they contain many gabled loculi for multiple burials; and they usually have benches around the room in front of the loculi. A few of the tombs are decorated with architectural elements (pillars, columns, dentils, cornices) and painted elements, and some are inscribed with the names of the deceased. Room 52 in SC 89 exhibits many of these characteristics. It is underground with a dromos leading to a large room that leads into a burial area with gabled loculi. The smoothed area above the loculi contains a decorative red line. The main architectural difference between Room 52 and the common burial caves at Maresha is the lack of benches in front of the loculi, but this could have been demolished when the cave changed its role later in the Hellenistic period.

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49   Stager 1993, p. 108.

50   Isaac 1991, p. 141.

51   Eshel 2010, pp. 76-78.

52   Herbert 2003.

53   Berlin – Herbert 2015.

54   Isaac 1991.

55   Isaac 1991, pp. 136-137.

56   Peters – Thiersch 1905, pp. 35-40, fig. 7.

57   Peters – Thiersch 1905, pp. 41-42, 66; see Eshel 2010, p. 81 for a summary of other Phoenician names discovered by Peters and Thiersch.

Like many other aspects of the finds in Maresha, the loculi tombs reflect multiple cultures. They have parallels in Alexandrian cemeteries, especially at the Shatby cemetery.[58] Some scholars, however, stress the strong affiliation of the Maresha tombs to Phoenicia rather than Alexandria.[59] Some of the names that appear in inscriptions in the Maresha tombs are Phoenician.[60] The decoration of the Maresha painted tombs is essentially Hellenized Phoenician.[61]

The influence of the Phoenicians was not limited to burials. Ceramic remains at sites can account for at least limited economic interaction with Phoenicia. Excavations at Tel Anafa, Shiqmona, and Dor, for example, have yielded assemblages of Hellenistic Phoenician semi-fine ware.[62] An extensive repertoire of Phoenician semi-fine ware has also been uncovered in most of the subterranean complexes at Maresha, including SC 89. This includes amphoriskoi, unguentaria, table amphoras (primarily second century BCE material),[63] flasks, and cooking pots and red slipped Eastern Sigillata A pottery.[64]

Phoenician influence at Maresha is evident also in the cultic sphere. Some types of terracotta figurines at Maresha find exclusive parallels in the Tyre-Sidon region.[65] Multicolored glass beads and glass pendants with grotesque heads, typical of jewelry manufactured in Phoenicia, have been uncovered as well.[66] These colorful grotesque heads were worn around the neck, possibly for apotropaic value or to ward off evil spirits.[67] The Tanit pendant described above is another example of Phoenician influence related to the religious and apotropaic beliefs at this inland city. The schematic Herms carved on the walls of caves at Maresha and in its vicinity[68] may have been based on the Tanit shape. Moreover, the main god of Maresha and Idumaea, Qos, whose name appears in many of the inscriptions at Maresha[69] has been suggested to be identified with his Greek counterpart Apollo,[70] who is further identified with the Phoenician Reshef.[71] This could be another link between the Idumean and Phoenician components at Maresha.

It should be noted that the evidence mentioned above for coastal/Phoenician/Sidonian influence at Maresha spans both the Persian and Hellenistic period; the glass pendants and the two Phoenician ostraca and perhaps the Tanit bronze pendant are Persian in date, the painted tomb specifying a Sidonian colony is Early Hellenistic, and the pottery and figurines are Hellenistic. It should be noted that the ties between Maresha and Phoenicia are unique in such an inland site in southern Palestine. Phoenician sites in Galilee such as Mispe Yamim, Tel Anafa and Tel Kedesh are inland as well, but they belong to the Tyre hinterland and are not distant from it. Outside of the enigmatic example from Megiddo, the Maresha Tanit pendant is the only one of its kind found so far in a non-coastal site in the eastern Mediterranean. The location of two tombs with Phoenician characteristics nearby, one with the Apollophanes inscription, and the other with

58   Kloner – Zissu 2015, p. 113.

59   Berlin 2002, pp. 139-140; Tal 2003; Nitschke 2015.

60   Peters – Thiersch 1905, p. 68; Oren – Rappaport 1984, pp. 142-148.

61   Erlich 2009, p. 112; Nitschke 2015.

62   Berlin 1997, pp. 77-86.

63   Levine 2003, pp. 98-100, figs. 86, 89.

64   For a recent discussion of the role unguentaria and amphoriskoi played in Phoenician trade in the eastern Mediterranean see Frangié-Joly 2016, p. 46.

65   Erlich – Kloner 2008, pp. 5-6, 36-41.

66   Jackson-Tal 2003, pp. 49-53; Jackson-Tal 2004.

67   Stern 2001, p. 85.

68   Erlich 2009, p. 21; Erlich – Sagiv – Gera 2016.

69   Eshel 2010.

70   Teixidor 1977, pp. 89-91.

71   Lipiński 2009, pp. 228-239.

the Tanit pendant and with ship graffiti on its wall, may not be accidental, and perhaps they point to an ethnic intra-site distribution. It seems that the Phoenician/Sidonian evidence at Maresha does not consist of merely sporadic imports or general influence, but they testify to a Sidonian presence at the Idumaean town of Maresha, perhaps as early as the Persian period.

Acknowledgements

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