THE PHOENICIAN PRESENCE IN THE AEGEAN DURING THE EARLY IRON AGE: TRADE, SETTLEMENT AND CULTURAL INTERACTION

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Abstract: Phoenician activity forms an integral part of every discussion about trade, contacts and cultural interaction in the Early Iron Age Aegean. This is largely the outcome of Phoenician involvement in major aspects of the cultural transformation of Greece in the early first millennium BCE: the restoration of maritime contacts with the eastern Mediterranean, the expression of an orientalising artistic style and the introduction of the alphabetic script. Although extensively examined, all these issues have gained new momentum in recent years, also thanks to new archaeological discoveries that reinvigorated our interest in cultural and economic interaction between Greece and the rest of the Mediterranean. Based on archaeological and textual evidence, the article explores the nature of Phoenician presence and activity in the Aegean between the late 11th and the early 7th century BCE, with due consideration also of questions about terminology, the historical setting in Phoenicia and its possible reflection on Near Eastern evidence from the Aegean, and the role played by other agents of maritime contacts, primarily the Cypriots.

Keywords: Phoenicians; Aegean; Greece; Archaeological Evidence; Trade; Early Iron Age; Textual Evidence; Alphabet.

1. Introduction

The Phoenician presence in the Aegean is embedded in every discussion of Early Iron Age Greece, as it is closely linked to questions about overseas contacts, cultural interaction, trade and communication. The collapse of the Aegean Bronze Age civilization in the 12th century BCE[1] was followed by a period of instability and paucity of evidence often identified as the "Dark Ages".[2] More recently, however, the term has been used to describe the "disturbed social and economic conditions resulting from the breakdown of an existing political structure" rather than an unmitigated disaster.[3] Recent developments in the archaeology of the Aegean tend to revise the negative symbolic burden of the so-called Dark Ages – less popular today than a few decades ago – and also to reduce its chronological span to the 11th and early 10th centuries BCE.[4] Transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, closely monitored and dated through fresh finds from the whole of Greece[5] is therefore viewed as a long process of ultimately successful socioeconomic transformations that shaped the main cultural features of early Greece.[6]

Such transformations, as is becoming increasingly clear from the fresh study of Early Iron Age material and textual evidence, were accomplished also thanks to the reinvigorated contacts between the Aegean and

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1 Dickinson 2006, pp. 24-57; Kourou 2009, p. 361.

2 Snodgrass 1971; Desborough 1972; Whitley 1991.

3 Muhly 2011, p. 48.

4 Lemos 200; Kourou 2008a, pp. 14-15; Mazarakis Ainian 2011.

5 Deger-Jalkotzy – Bächle 2009.

6 Papadopoulos 2015.

the eastern Mediterranean. The decline in communications at the end of the Bronze Age had also affected the Aegean prosperity. Moreover, the comparative shortage of evidence from the period immediately after the Aegean Late Bronze Age socio-economic system collapsed suggests a discontinuous pattern of maritime connections with the East, at least for the earliest part of the Early Iron Age. Given the importance of overseas connections, the restoration of maritime contacts, particularly with the eastern Mediterranean, was a key-factor for the developments that took place in the Early Iron Age Aegean.[7] This composite issue cannot be understood without considering the Phoenicians, a term to be further explored below, their presence in the Aegean and its archaeological visibility. Nicolas Coldstream, a pioneer in the study of interaction between the Aegean and the East during the Early Iron Age, produced the first comprehensive article on Greeks and Phoenicians in the Aegean.[8] By so doing, he also tackled questions that had hitherto been neglected: the quest for metals, the Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean and the hypothesis of resident Phoenician craftsmen in the Aegean.

The Phoenicians certainly played a prominent role in major achievements that occurred in the Early Iron Age Aegean. These developments involve the recovery of contacts with the eastern Mediterranean, the adoption of the alphabet, and the Orientalising dimension in Greek art and culture.[9] Admittedly, the definition of the term "Orientalising" is less ambivalent when used to define an artistic style. It is currently understood as an expression of a phenomenon that is not restricted to Greece but embraces a large part of the Mediterranean, referring to the Near Eastern origins of artistic trends or innovations that took place mostly during the seventh century BCE,[10] a multi-centric processing of an effectively pan-Mediterranean cultural language.[11]

As a consequence, Phoenician involvement in such important aspects of the Greek culture explains why Phoenician presence and activity in the Aegean have been examined in numerous occasions, not only in their details but also collectively.[12] This contribution aims to treat the broad topic of the Phoenician presence and activity in the Aegean during the Early Iron Age, based on the current stage of research. The goal is not to present an exhaustive catalogue of every Phoenician or Near Eastern object from Aegean contexts, as this has been done in other occasions.[13] Instead, it is to produce an outline of how Phoenician presence in the Aegean is defined by modern scholarship, based on specific categories of evidence. Discussion is organised geographically and focuses on the areas that have produced the most compelling evidence of Phoenician activity. Methodological questions that have often tantalised our understanding of the Phoenicians in the Aegean will be considered as part of this investigation. The time span is set between the 11th and early 7th century BCE, which largely coincides with chronological length of the Greek Early Iron Age.

2. Phoenicians versus "Phoinikes" of the Greeks: Issues of Terminology in the Past and in the Present

Any discussion of the Levantine presence in the Aegean has to deal with the problematic definition of the term "Phoenician". Although archaeological evidence of contacts between the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age is abundant, thoroughly studied and, in most cases, well-understood,

7 Eckert 2015, pp. 52-58.

8 Coldstream 1982; see Iacovou 2012.

9 Burkert 1992; Morris 2006; Gunter 2009.

10 Riva – Vella 2006; Brisart 2011.

11 Pedrazzi 2016, p. 18.

12 Kourou 2007; Stampolidis 2012; Ioannou 2017.

13 Kourou 2008b; Kourou 2012a.

what is labelled Phoenician in Aegean contexts has often been ambiguous, contradictory and thus confusing. There are two main reasons behind this long-lasting intricacy. The first reason goes back in time and is related to the use of the term Phoenician in antiquity. The name "Phoenician" is not what the Phoenicians – that is the inhabitants of the area that largely coincides with the north half of the Syro-Palestinian littoral – actually called themselves. The name was a Greek invention, first met clearly in the Homeric epics. As such, it was applied to the "Phoenicians" externally as a collective allusion to Phoenicians, Syrians, Arameans and other Near Eastern ethnic groups.[14] The term had an idiosyncratic, often contradictory and rather composite use, already after its creation by the historical Greek speakers of the Aegean. Largely due to the Homeric epics, these subjective and rather fluid ancient Greek views of the Phoenicians also shaped or perhaps even tantalised our own perceptions of who should and who should not be called Phoenician. Contrary to such complexities, the Phoenicians probably felt no need for a collective identification and instead they identified themselves through individual cities, primarily as the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos.[15]

The second reason behind the often doubtful definition of the term "Phoenician" is closely related to how confident archaeologists are about the exact origin of Near Eastern imports in the Aegean. This difficulty is perhaps greater during the earliest part of the Early Iron Age, when «the harvest of Phoenician finds in Greece is hardly more copious and difficult to judge».[16] Moreover, the firm belief in a Phoenician mercantile supremacy, thanks to which the Phoenicians are often viewed as the primary if not the only "vectors for the transfer of objects and styles" in the Mediterranean[17] is an interpretative simplification that has tantalised our understanding of the Phoenicians. The same interpretative shortcut can be found in the Aegean, where Near Eastern products, regardless of their exact place of manufacture,[18] have been viewed through Phoenician spectacles, resulting in the rather fluid application of the Phoenician label in Greek contexts.

The origin and etymology of the Phoenicians (Φοίνικες) has been the source of much controversy. The history of the term has been discussed extensively and was thoroughly studied anew recently.[19] The word in the form of the adjective *po-ni-ki-jo* / *po-ni-ki-ja* is attested in Linear B tablets from Knossos of the later second millennium BCE.[20] Those Late Bronze Age attestations, however, referred to red colour or to the dye plant from which colour was extracted. They served no ethnic designation and they probably had no particular geographic reference.[21] When looking at the use of the term in the Homeric epics, it becomes evident that there are multiple meanings, including the first use of Phoenician as a group designation.[22] However, the Homeric word φοῖνιξ (*phoinix*) that may refer not just to people but also to a dark hue in the red or purple range (as do the related terms φοίνιος/φοινός), was later used to designate the Phoenicians, either as a reference to their red complexion, or, less likely, as an allusion to the purple dye produced from *murex* sea-snails at the coastal cities of the Levant.[23] By extension, Φοινίκη/*Phoinike* became the name of the land where Φοίνικες/*Phoinikes*, the "men of red complexion", lived, even though the limits of this land were never precise. The etymology of the word *Phoinix* is far from clear. Apart from the aforementioned association between φοῖνιξ and φοινός, other, non-Greek linguistic origins have also been suggested. An Egyptian

14 Bartoloni 2017, p. 33; Quinn 2018, pp. 48-56.

15 Sherratt 2005, pp. 35-36.

16 Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, p. 145.

17 See discussion in Pedrazzi 2016, p. 19.

18 See discussion in Kourou 2008b, pp. 307-308.

19 Ercolani 2015.

20 Melena 1973; Murray – Warren 1976; Godart 1991.

21 Sherratt 2005, p. 35; Ercolani 2015, p. 171.

22 Ercolani 2015, pp. 171-172.

23 Prag 2014.

derivation of the term Phoenician as an ethnonym has been postulated based on affinities with the word *fnḫw*, attested in a number of Egyptian texts already in the 16th century BCE.[24] *Fnḫw* probably refers to the wood-choppers from an Asian country close to Egypt hence it designates an activity rather than an ethnic group. This land may indeed be Canaan or Phoenicia, renowned for the cedars of Mount Lebanon. However, this interpretation remains hypothetical since there is no sound proof that the Egyptian term alludes to the Syro-Palestinian littoral.[25] A Semitic derivation of the term Phoenician has also been suggested based on the association between Canaan/Canaanite and the Akkadian term *kinaḫḫu*, meaning the red or purple colour.[26] However, this relationship is also linguistically dubious.[27]

The Homeric epics are credited with the first textual attestation of the term *Phoinikes* as a group designation. The use of "Phoenician" in the Homeric epics was alternating with the more specific "Sidonian", with the city standing for the people as a whole. The latter seems to be a Bronze Age reflection still preserved when the epics were written down, since at the end of the eighth century BCE Tyre and not Sidon was the most powerful Phoenician city.[28] The first use of "Phoenician" as an ethnonym may have originated anytime between the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial system in the 12th century BCE, and the first Homeric testimony of the term around 700 BCE.[29] The adoption of Sidon and the Sidonians into the Greek language on the other hand has been dated later than that of the Phoenicians, sometime between 900 and 700 BCE. This must have been the approximate time also for the adoption of Tyre.[30] This later assumption of Tyre into the Greek language may also account for the puzzling absence of any mention to Tyre or Tyrians in the Homeric epics.

The Homeric portrayal of the Phoenicians, more frequent in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*, has been discussed extensively.[31] In some passages the Phoenicians are regarded as the same as the Sidonians (*Od.* XIII 273-286, XV 417-425), whereas in other passages a clear distinction is drawn between them (*Od.* IV 83-84; *Il.* XXIII 743-744). The accounts of Phoenicians in the poetic narrative are marked by the fluctuation of the characteristics ascribed to them: avid seafarers (*Od*. XIII 272; XV 415-416), skilful craftsmen (*Il.* XXIII 741-743; *Od.* IV 615-619), hawkers of trinkets (*Od.* XV 415-416), traders of various commodities (*Od.* XV 446, 455-456), weavers of elaborate garments (*Il.* VI 289-292; *Od.* XV 417-418), fine sailors but greedy and deceitful (*Od.* XIV 288-289; XV 415-416), notorious kidnappers, enslavers and traffickers of people (*Od*. XIV 287-298; XV 450-453; XV 461-483). Homeric Phoenicians operate almost everywhere in the Mediterranean, from the Levantine coast and the Nile Delta to Crete, the Peloponnese, in the north Aegean and as far west as Libya (*Od.* XIII 272-285; XIV 285-301; *Il.* XXIII 744-745). Although Homeric views oscillate between admiration and hostility, Phoenicians are the most regularly attested representatives of the eastern Mediterranean in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the trading people *par excellence*. This seems to reflect the conditions in the late 8th-early 7th century BCE, when the Phoenicians were plying the Aegean Sea as part of their Mediterranean ventures. Sherratt[32] has convincingly argued that the idiosyncratic features of the Phoenicians in the Homeric epics imply that the Greeks first encountered them «primarily and probably exclusively in Aegean waters» rather than in the east Mediterranean, and that their perceptions

24 Vandersleyen 1987; Tsirkin 2001.

25 Ercolani 2015, pp. 172-173.

26 Speiser 1936; cfr. Ercolani 2015, pp. 174-175.

27 Doak 2015, p. 10.

28 Khreich 2018.

29 Sherratt 2005, p. 35; Sherratt 2010, p. 122.

30 Woodhouse 2004, p. 238; Sherratt 2005, p. 36.

31 Muhly 1970; Bunnens 1979, pp. 92-99; Wathelet 1983, pp. 238-243; Crielaard 1995, pp. 227-228; Winter 1995; Aubet 2001, pp. 127-132; Sherratt 2005, pp. 35-36; Sommer 2014, pp. 119-132; Ercolani 2015, pp. 175-179.

32 Sherratt 2005, p. 35.

of Phoenicians were shaped on the basis of the maritime activities in the Aegean of easterners rather than from any precise knowledge of where these people originated. Consequently, the term Phoenician could be applied to any mariners sailing to the Aegean from the eastern Mediterranean. The designation "Phoenician" for the Greeks therefore becomes a cumulative and flexible name for eastern merchants and seamen, showing little concern about the specification of geographic origin, ethnic, linguistic or cultural groups,[33] and this is true even in subsequent periods.[34] This fluid designation has caused numerous Greek misconceptions about the Phoenicians, as in the case of Herodotus (I 1; VII 89) and his erroneous placement of the Phoenician homeland in the Red Sea, although the latter may refer to the Persian Gulf rather than what is currently called the Red Sea.[35]

3. From Objects to People: Some Considerations about the Phoenician Presence in the Aegean

A similar ambiguity is found in the archaeological literature of the Aegean, where the term "Phoenician" has often been used to define almost every object originating in the area along, or close to the east Mediterranean coast. Under this generic use, Phoenician has in essence been synonymous to Near Eastern, Levantine or Oriental.[36] However, the remarkable progress in the Phoenician studies during the past decades, the outcome of new excavations, international conferences and publications, has produced much finer pictures of the Phoenician material culture, thus more accurate definitions for Near Eastern imports are no longer in short supply. Furthermore, the organization of international exhibitions in which the Phoenician element featured prominently[37] resulted in a greater familiarity with the Phoenician material culture from sites around the Mediterranean.

In spite of this progress, certain questions about Near Eastern imports in the Aegean are in need of further elaboration, while not all groups of imported items are sharply defined in terms of their place of manufacture. The origin of small objects made in faience, glass and Egyptian blue for example is usually traced to the Near East without much precision. Similarly, distinguishing between Phoenician, north Syrian and Aegean production of ivory artefacts, the latter being often viewed as the result of training by Phoenician craftsmen settled in certain Greek areas, is also hard to assess.[38] The eclecticism of Phoenician art, marked by the adoption of elements from neighbouring cultures such as Egypt, Syria and Assyria, resulted in diverse Phoenician styles ("egyptianising", "syrianising", "assyrianising" etc.) that also hamper distinction between different Near Eastern production centres.[39] This explains why the term "Near Eastern" is still applied by modern scholars.[40] Moreover, the rather disparate number and distribution of Levantine evidence in Early Iron Age Greece may also be the cause of ambiguities, since certain groups of Phoenician evidence, such as pottery and writing, are easier to identify than others. As a result, some fluidity may still be useful when approaching Phoenicians presence overseas, in order to avoid unnecessary artificial constructs about provenance.[41]

33 Hodos 2006, p. 23.

34 Doak 2015, p. 8.

35 Lipiński 2015, pp. 95-97.

36 Kourou 2008b, pp. 307-308.

37 Stampolidis – Karetsou – Kanta 1998; Stampolidis – Karageorghis 2003; Fontan – Le Meaux 2007; Adam-Veleni – Stefani 2012.

38 Sakellarakis 1992; Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, pp. 343-346.

39 Woolmer 2011, pp. 112-113.

40 Lemos 2002, pp. 226-227; Antoniadis 2017, pp. 91-93.

41 Fletcher 2006, p. 187.

Defining Phoenician presence and activity in the Early Iron Age Aegean is therefore a composite matter that requires the comparative study of archaeological, textual and epigraphic evidence. Approaching the Phoenicians in the Aegean through artefacts from the eastern Mediterranean largely rests on the premise that the Phoenicians acted as carriers not only of their own products, but also for most Near Eastern artefacts found in Greece. Clearly, this is a questionable equation given the composite character of ancient trade, often based on the plurality of instigators that sometimes operated in cooperation, rather than on exclusiveness. Fresh studies are making clear that the Phoenicians were not the only carriers of oriental imports in the Aegean and that instead multiple agents were active in the East-West maritime networks.[42]

An additional impediment regarding the Phoenician presence in the Aegean during the early Iron Age is set by the discrepancy between archaeology and ancient sources. In spite of numerous allusions to permanent Phoenician settlements on Aegean islands, excavations have hitherto failed to yield any compelling evidence of such legends. The subject has been discussed extensively[43] but some examples are useful. In his History of the Peloponnesian War (I 8,1), Thucydides states explicitly that Phoenicians and Carians had in the remote past colonised the greatest part of the islands (τὰς πλείστας τῶν νήσων ᾤκησαν), even though when he records the purification of Delos by the Athenians in 426 BCE, he only mentions exhumed Carian and not Phoenician graves. Herodotus (I 105) ascribed to the Phoenicians the foundation of the sanctuary of Aphrodite Urania on the island of Cythera (οὐρανίης Ἀφροδίτης τὸ ἱρόν…τὸ ἐν Κυθήροισι Φοίνικές εἰσὶ οἱ ἱδρυσάμενοι) but the excavations produced no trace of Phoenician presence there. Similarly, he (II 44; VI 47) claimed that the Phoenicians had settled on Thasos way before the island was colonised by the Parians around 650 BCE. Phoenicians were seen as the founders of the famous temple of Herakles (ἐς Θάσον…εὗρον ἱρὸν Ἡρακλέος ὑπὸ Φοινίκων ἱδρυμένον), as well as those who first exploited the Thracian rich gold mines. However, excavations at the sanctuary of Herakles on Thasos produced nothing anterior to the late 7th century BCE.[44] It is probable that Herodotus substituted the Phoenicians for the Thracians, also renowned for their skilful work with gold.[45] Therefore, the archaeological evidence disputes the information provided by ancient sources about the nature of the Phoenician presence in the Aegean during the Early Iron Age and points towards a different pattern: not permanent settlements or colonies of Phoenicians dwelt separately from local population, but visiting traders and craftsmen working away from their homeland, occasionally settled in small enclaves within central Greek settlements.[46] Unsurprisingly, most evidence for Phoenician residents derives from sites easily accessed by sea such as Euboea, Crete and the Dodecanese.

Consequently, in order to understand Phoenician presence in the Aegean during the Early Iron Age, evidence needs to be drawn from relatively well-identified Phoenician objects that help to form a rudimentary seriation of Phoenician imports. For the period here examined, sanctuaries and funerary contexts are the main sources of information, although the almost complete absence of votive deposits with a good stratigraphy in the Early Iron Age Aegean should be noted.[47] Discussion about the nature of Phoenician presence and activity also has to take into consideration objects of Phoenician typology though not necessarily of Phoenician provenance. Imitations of Phoenician pottery types for example are particularly telling as they reflect production, distribution and consumption patterns.[48] For reasons of consistency, the term "Phoenician" in the present contribution refers primarily to people and objects originating in metropolitan

42 Kourou 2000; Lemos 2005; Boardman 2006; Huber 2017.

43 Bunnens 1979; Mazza – Ribichini – Xella 1988; Lipiński 2004; Stampolidis 2012, pp. 55-56.

44 Bonnet 1995, p. 655.

45 Lipiński 2004, pp. 160-161.

46 Kourou 2012c, pp. 40-41.

47 Kourou 2008b, p. 308.

48 Boardman 2004; Kotsonas 2013.

Phoenicia. Less frequently, it is also used in relation to the immediately adjacent areas, such as north Syria, especially for categories of material where distinction between Phoenician and north Syrian is too intricate,[49] or to Phoenicians originating in Cyprus. Discussion is arranged geographically and is selective rather than exhaustive. Although faience vases and figurines, glass beads, seals and scarabs, amulets, ivory objects, jewelry manufactured in sophisticated techniques, pottery and bronze vessels, graffiti, grave markers, funerary practices and cultic rituals have all been examined as evidence of Phoenicians in the Aegean,[50] current examination is largely based on evidence with a more secure Phoenician identification, such as pottery and the occurrence of Phoenician writing.

4. The "Cypro-Phoenician" Dimension in the Aegean: Seeing Phoenicians through Cypriot Spectacles

An additional element to be considered when trying to define Phoenician presence in Early Iron Age Greece is the origin of the Phoenicians sailing in Aegean waters. The latter usually oscillates between metropolitan Phoenicia and Cyprus, the island with a strong presence of a thriving Phoenician-speaking community in antiquity. Geographic proximity and similarities in political and economic structures have defined the relationship between Cyprus and Phoenicia in the Early Iron Age. Both regions feature a fairly limited geographic area that favoured the creation of small-scale independent polities, often rivalling each other. Restricted arable land forced the inhabitants to build economic structures that were based on mercantile exchange of metals and luxury items rather than on agricultural surplus. Timber from the Lebanon and Troodos Mountains provided abundant ship-building material that was necessary for the operation of long-distance maritime trade. This in turn gave an advantage to Phoenician and Cypriot coastal cities, all of which faced outwards towards the sea.

A remarkable feature shared by both Phoenicia and Cyprus is that their polities managed to benefit from the vacuum of power at the end of the Late Bronze Age and therefore to avoid (or promptly recover from) the dramatic consequences that followed the collapse of the palace-centred political and economic systems in the eastern Mediterranean.[51] This led to a more or less smooth Early Iron Age transition in Cyprus and Phoenicia. Byblos and Sidon dominated the political and economic life of Phoenicia during the initial stages of this period, long before Tyre emerged as the trading and seafaring Phoenician city par excellence.[52] This is reflected also by ancient literary sources, of which the tale of Wenamun, dated from around 1075 BCE, is a distinguished example.[53] The Wenamun tale evokes the pre-eminence of Byblos among the Phoenician cities and the existence of trade between the city and the Nile Delta. The position of Cyprus in the narrative suggests that the island was also involved in those trade transactions. This pattern of interaction is perhaps further verified by textual evidence from Cyprus itself. A recently published alphabetic inscription from Alassa-Pano Mandilaris, dated to the Late Cypriot IIIA period (1200-1100 BCE) and mentioning Semitic anthroponym (*Šm'*) and the naming of turquoise (*npk*) as an exchange product, has been viewed as evidence for trade between Byblos and Cyprus in the final Late Bronze Age.[54] Allusion to the most eminent Phoenician cities of the late second and early first millennium BCE is also provided by Assyrian inscriptions

49 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 337, note 1.

50 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006; Kourou 2008b; Kourou 2012a.

51 Smith 2008, p. 264; Oggiano 2009, p. 69.

52 Aubet 2001, pp. 29-31.

53 Goedicke 1975; Egberts 1991.

54 Puech 2018.

from the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE). These evoke the existence of trade between Byblos and the Nile Delta and mention the tribute received by the Assyrian monarch from Byblos, Arwad and Sidon, the chief Phoenician cities of his time.[55] Tyre is barely mentioned before the 10th century BCE. The city's earliest political and economic eminence is linked to the reign of king Hiram I (circa 970-936 BCE) who transformed Tyre into a regional power. By the reign of Ithobaal I (887-856 BCE) and his dynasty, Tyre had become a prime political and commercial power in a wider Mediterranean sphere and played a leading role in the Phoenician expansion to the west.[56]

Yet what is the emerging picture of the relationship between mainland Phoenicia and its first major landmass to the west, Cyprus? According to the current state of research, contacts between East and West Mediterranean were not entirely interrupted after the Late Bronze Age.[57] Cypriots in particular remained active in the old maritime networks – albeit at a reduced scale – and continued to operate successfully in the trade of metals and other commodities not only in the eastern but also in the central Mediterranean.[58] Cypriot maritime and commercial expertise alongside the island's geographic proximity to mainland Phoenicia made interaction between the two areas almost unavoidable. Pottery finds from Palaepaphos-Skales have set the beginning of the Iron Age connections between these geographic entities as far back as the second half of the 11th century BCE.[59] This date is further supported by the presence during the same period of Cypriot ceramics in Phoenicia that indicate very strong reciprocal influence and cross-cultural interaction between the two regions, exceeding the sphere of mere commerce.[60] This interaction is reflected also by the aforementioned tale of Wenamun that has been viewed as indicative of a shared "Cypro-Levantine" cultural milieu shaped in the late second-early first millennium BCE.[61] Noticeably, evidence for Phoenician ceramic interchange with areas west of Cyprus is extremely rare in the 11th century BCE, suggesting that Phoenician maritime ventures at that stage went no further than Cyprus.[62] Nevertheless, defining the nature of this early occurrence of Phoenician pottery on Cyprus remains an open question as no Phoenician residents on the island before circa 800 BCE can be accepted uncritically.[63]

A focal point for the archaeological visualisation of the Phoenicians on Cyprus is provided by their settlement at Kition-Kathari, in the late 9th century BCE.[64] Phoenicians, perhaps from Tyre, settled atop Late Bronze Age foundations at the northernmost part of Kition (Area II). Prior to their arrival, that area had been abandoned for almost 150 years, although the chronological length of this hiatus was recently questioned.[65] Phoenician presence at Kition was consecrated through the construction of a magnificent temple dedicated to Astarte, the Phoenician deity par excellence, whereas more evidence for Phoenician cult is found at Kition-Bamboula.[66] The veneration of Astarte at Kition set the foundations for the adoption of Phoenician cultic traits on the island, a phenomenon that continued to develop gradually over the following few centuries. Associations between Phoenician and indigenous deities, evidenced both through iconogra-

55 Aubet 2001, pp. 30-31; Aubet 2008, p. 250.

56 Aubet 2008, pp. 250-251.

57 Aubet 2008, p. 248.

58 Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, pp. 190-191; Kourou 2012c, p. 38.

59 Bikai 1983; Bikai 1987, p. 70; Bikai 1994; Aubet 2001, p. 51.

60 Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, pp. 144-145 and p. 190.

61 Oggiano 2009, p. 70.

62 Bikai 1983, p. 405; Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, p. 145.

63 Aubet 2001, pp. 80-81; Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, p. 191.

64 Yon 2004, p. 20; Karageorghis 2005, p. 104.

65 Smith 2009, p. 10.

66 Caubet – Fourrier – Yon 2015 with previous bibliography.

phy and epigraphically, ultimately resulted in multiple divine and cultic identities that were often shared on a “pan-Cypriot” level.[67] Phoenician Astarte is the most commonly cited example, presenting similar qualities with the Great Goddess of Cyprus.

Phoenician presence at Kition from the 9th century BCE displays a wonderful archaeological manifestation that includes material evidence, cult practices and a very extensive corpus of Phoenician textual data.[68] The new Phoenician establishment at Kition, which facilitated access to the rich copper ores of Cyprus, is perhaps reflected by the mention of Qart-hadasht (New City) on a pair of bronze bowls purchased at Limassol in 1877.[69] These inscriptions mention a governor of Qart-hadasht who acknowledges himself to be servant of Hiram and therefore of the royal house of Tyre, offering a dedication to Ba’al Labnan, that is to the Baal of Lebanon. Presumably, the “New City” mentioned on the two bowls from Limassol is the same city as one of the Cypriot kingdoms attested on the prism of Esarhaddon, dated to 673/672 BCE.[70] Esarhaddon received tribute of luxury goods from ten Cypriot kings to furnish his new palace at Nimrud. The Esarhaddon prism is therefore a list that documents, for the first time in detail, the political geography of the island.[71] A few years later Ashurbanipal claimed to have had Cypriote forces on his side during his campaign against the Nubian kings of Egypt in 664 BCE, and listed exactly the same kings and kingdoms that supported the building activities of his father Esarhaddon in Nineveh nine years before.[72] The exact identification of the Cypriot Qart-hadasht remains dubious and oscillates between Kition and Amathus,[73] the latter being a major centre of Cyprus that was, however, not mentioned by its familiar name in either of the two aforementioned lists. Regardless of its precise location on Cyprus, the use of the term Qart-hadasht, the primary attestation of which is of course Carthage on the north coast of Africa, seems to go hand in hand with the Phoenician expansion to the west and is a synonym for the establishment of “a new Tyre”.[74]

The outcome of the Phoenician establishment at Kition was multiple: it solidified Phoenician presence on Cyprus and intensified cultural interaction between the island and Phoenicia. Furthermore, it is thought to have been accompanied by the first major impetus of systematic Phoenician commercial exchanges with the Mediterranean,[75] although views of Kition as a major stepping stone for Phoenician expansion to the west should not be exaggerated for a number of reasons.[76] Through Kition, Cyprus became increasingly enveloped in the economic and political manoeuvres of the Phoenicians, both those settled on the island and those of the major mainland Phoenician trading cities, particularly of Tyre.[77] A particular aspect of this enhanced connection is Cyprus’ decisive contribution to the Phoenician commercial, cultural and political expansion in the central and western Mediterranean from the late 9th century BCE onwards.[78] This Cypriot involvement may have been the result also of an expansionist Phoenician policy in Cyprus, although the

67 Ulbrich 2016.

68 Amadasi Guzzo – Karageorghis 1977; Karageorghis 2003; Karageorghis 2005; Yon 2004; Caubet – Fourrier – Yon 2015; Smith 2008; Smith 2009.

69 CIS I, 5; Masson 1985; Aubet 2001, p. 52; Smith 2008, pp. 272-273.

70 Pritchard 1969, pp. 290-291; Reyes 1994, pp. 24-25; Yon 2004, pp. 54-55; Leichty 2011, n. 1, vv. 63-72, also n. 60; Cannavò 2015, pp. 4-5.

71 Smith 2008, p. 273; Kiely 2018, pp. 141-142.

72 Pritchard 1969, p. 294; Cannavò 2015, p. 5.

73 Smith 2008, p. 273.

74 Aubet 2001, p. 52.

75 Aubet 2001, p. 54.

76 Schreiber 2003, pp. 281-306 and 310-312.

77 Kiely 2018, p. 140.

78 Botto 2017.

relationships between individual Phoenician cities and their Cypriot neighbours during the first centuries of the first millennium BCE are hard to assess with precision due to the lack or fragmentation of precise historical details. [79]

Noticeably, the potential involvement of Cyprus in Phoenician expansion to the West is evidenced also at the Phoenician colony *par excellence*, Carthage, where Cypriot elements have been identified among the earliest material record of the site.[80] Cypriot connections with Carthage also penetrated the city's foundation legend. God-king Pygmalion (Pumai/Pumayatton), a member of the house of king of Tyre Ithobaal I, was indirectly responsible for the foundation of the New City in 814/813 BCE. According to classical literary tradition,[81] on the seventh year of his reign, his sister Elissa (Dido) together with a group of Tyrians was forced to flee to the west after a crisis between her brother and the aristocracy of Tyre. Elissa first went to Cyprus (at Kition?), where she was joined by the high priest of Astarte. There the Tyrians accompanying Elissa took 80 young girls as wives (or destined for sacred prostitution) and then headed straight to the north coast of Africa, where the new city, Qart-hadasht, was founded. Certain elements in this legendary narrative, namely the high priest of Astarte who was perhaps linked to the temple of Kition, the stopover of Elissa on Cyprus and the name of the king of Tyre Pygmalion/Pumayatton that contains the Cypriot form of the god Pumai (*Pmy*), all emphasise the mixed nature of the founding population of Carthage, in which Tyre and Cyprus held an eminent position. [82] The name itself of Elissa has a direct connection to Alashiya, the Phoenician name for Cyprus.[83] Therefore, it stresses the existence of a Cypriot element in the foundation of Carthage by outlining Elissa as the personification of the island as a whole.[84] Other historical incidents also evoke the strong links between Cyprus and coastal Phoenician sites during the first centuries of the first millennium BCE. According to Assyrian sources, when in 701 BCE king Luli of Tyre got defeated by the military forces of Sennacherib as a consequence of his anti-Assyrian policy, he took refuge to Iadnana that is to Cyprus, where he would die in exile.[85]

For the period that coincides with early Cypro-Geometric III, several different specialised spheres of interaction, commercial or other, between Cyprus and the Levant have been dictated.[86] It seems reasonable to postulate that the intensification of cultural and economic interaction between Phoenicians and Cypriots after the Phoenician establishment at Kition in the late 9th century BCE involved multiple agents. These included the Phoenicians who had settled on Cyprus, metropolitan Phoenicians and of course the Cypriots. Joined Phoenician and Cypriot ventures must have been an integral part of this new reality, as archaeological and textual evidence suggests (for example in the aforementioned case of Carthage) although the details and chief instigators of such ventures are very difficult to restore. Aegean sites also feature an increase or more regular flow of Phoenician and Cypriot evidence from the 9th century BCE onwards.[87]

A rather intricate expression of this increased interplay between Phoenicia and Cyprus during the early first millennium BCE is the term "Cypro-Phoenician", an ambiguous label used both as a geographic content, to denote Phoenicia and Cyprus, and as an ethnic indicator that embraces the Phoenicians and the Cypriots or, more specifically, the Phoenicians of Cyprus. Less frequently, the term designates a particular

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79 Kiely 2018, p. 141.

80 Kourou 2002.

81 Aubet 2001, pp. 215-216.

82 Aubet 2001, pp. 207-208 and pp. 214-218.

83 Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2018.

84 Aubet 2001, p. 208.

85 Aubet 2001, pp. 57-59; Oggiano 2009, p. 73; Cannavò 2015, p. 5.

86 Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, pp. 167-168.

87 Kourou 2012c, p. 40.

artistic style found on Cyprus, «distinguished from the main body of Phoenician art because it draws from Assyrian traditions».[88] Noticeably, "Cypro-Phoenician" phenomena have been identified also on the Phoenician mainland,[89] whereas in the Aegean the term has been in most cases applied to a specific pottery class, Black-on-Red ware.[90] Its use has instead been minimal on Cyprus, where the distinction between Cypriot and Phoenician material evidence is in most cases clear and well understood.[91] When looked from an Aegean angle, the use of "Cypro-Phoenician" in relation to the archaeology of interaction between the Aegean, Cyprus and Phoenicia in the Early Iron Age is also becoming less popular in recent years. This is largely due to the term's ambivalence that raises more questions than answers.[92] Given that Black-on-Red pottery, at least in its technically accomplished form, is now viewed as a ceramic product of Cyprus,[93] "Cypro-Phoenician" intricacies and the Black-on-Red ware may be left out of the discussion of the Phoenician presence and activity in the Early Iron Age Aegean.[94] As a result, the term will not be further explored in the present discussion whereas "Phoenician" (rather than "Cypro-Phoenician") is considered an appropriate label also for the Phoenicians originating in Cyprus.

5. Tracing the Phoenicians in the Aegean: Objects, Geography, Chronology and Interpretations

5.1. *Euboea*

Stretching along the coast of south Thessaly, Locris, Boeotia and Attica, the island of Euboea, has produced the earliest imports from the Near East. Tomb 46 of the Skoubris cemetery at Lefkandi yielded a small Syro-Palestinian dipper juglet.[95] The chronology of its deposition in the grave to the end of 11th century BCE is sharply defined by local Early Protogeometric (EPG) pottery. The dipper juglet is an isolated Levantine import hence its use as an indicator for Phoenician activity in the Aegean during the 11th century BCE cannot be accepted uncritically. The presence of an almost identical fragmentary jug in a Cypro-Geometric I tomb at Kition[96] has been viewed as indicative of a Cypriot involvement in the transfer of Levantine imports to Lefkandi in the 11th century BCE.[97] Middlemen originating in Cyprus must have maintained an important position in the pattern of contacts between the Aegean and the Levant during the 11th and early 10th century BCE. A similar Cypriot connection has been postulated also to explain the presence of the earliest Greek import in the Iron Age Levant, the fragment of a sub-Mycenaean/early Protogeometric Argive bowl from Tell es-Safi/Gath in Israel.[98] Regardless of who were the instigators, contacts with the east Mediterranean were in operation already in the 11th century BCE, even though at a rather small scale and less frequently than in the preceding and succeeding periods.

88 Woolmer 2011, p. 113.
89 Gilboa – Sharon – Boaretto 2008, p. 145 and pp. 190-191.
90 Bourogiannis 2012, pp. 188-195.
91 Iacovou 2004.
92 Bourogiannis 2012; Kotsonas 2012.
93 Schreiber 2003.
94 Kourou 2008b, p. 308.
95 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 126, n. 3.
96 Georgiou 2003, pl. V, 33.
97 Kourou 2009, p. 365; Kourou 2012a, p. 216.
98 Maeir – Fantalkin – Zukerman 2009.

This interaction becomes more regular in the 10th century BCE, during the Late Protogeometric (LPG) and Early Geometric (EG) periods. Funerary finds from the famous apsidal building known as the Heroon at Lefkandi and from the rich Toumba cemetery adjacent to the Heroon indicate close contacts with the Near East during the second half of the 10th century BCE. The archaeological record outlines the presence of well-established local elites, possibly a ruling class that was able to acquire and display wealth, with easy access to Near Eastern imports.[99] One may refer to the rich LPG tomb 39[100] of the Toumba cemetery, perhaps a double burial that contained numerous Near Eastern imports including faience vessels and amulets. These were found together with jewelry, bronze vessels, among which a possibly Phoenician jug with lotus-bud handle, a Cypriot wheeled bronze stand and local wares, all of which provide a glimpse of the rich Lefkandian burials of the second half of the 10th century BCE. Cypriot imports at Lefkandi during the same period display a broader variety including pottery but also luxury items,[101] such as the bronze amphoroid krater used as an urn at the Heroon.[102] Outside Lefkandi, Near Eastern objects from contexts dated to the 10th century are rather sporadic and consist mainly of small trinkets and glass or faience beads. They occur mostly at coastal sites or at sites within a short distance from the coast, such as Athens, Skyros, Atalanti and Argos.[103] Such items have rightly been viewed as indications for casual exchange instead of systematic trade.[104] Euboea possibly stands out as the main exception to this scheme, since by the late 10th century Euboean pottery appears on Cyprus and at numerous Levantine sites such as Tyre and Dor.[105] Even though Euboean mercantile activity has been seriously questioned,[106] the presence of Euboean pottery as the main Aegean pottery ware in the eastern Mediterranean during the late 10th and 9th centuries BCE does provide a hint for a more reciprocal pattern of exchange. Furthermore, the abundance of luxury items at the rich burials of Lefkandi indicates that gift exchange was perhaps part of this interaction between Euboea and the Levant during the aforementioned period. The presence of a local elite at Lefkandi, engaged in trade ventures, as will be further shown below, makes this suggestion plausible.

Later in date but equally important is the Sub-Protogeometric (SPG) II "warrior-trader" tomb 79 at the Toumba cemetery.[107] This secondary cremation of a high status male is securely dated to the second quarter of the 9th century BCE, by the presence of two Attic Early Geometric (EG) II *oinochoai*. The remains of the cremated body were deposited in a bronze cauldron of Cypriot type, covered by a second bowl and placed in the shaft. The grave contained two Phoenician Bichrome jugs and a North Syrian cylinder seal, together with Cypriot imports of the White Painted and Black-on-Red wares. The grave also contained Euboean SPG II pottery. The presence in the burial of a bronze grater that may relate to the funerary feast and is reminiscent of Homeric practices (*Il.* XI 639-640; *Od.* XX 234) is noteworthy. Many of the grave offerings, such as the iron arrowheads, a spearhead, two iron knives and a killed iron sword placed beside the bronze urn, had a clear military association. However, the presence of sixteen stone weights in haematite was thought to indicate a merchant of a highly-ranked warrior status, who became rich thanks to his trade ventures. Different identifications of the deceased have been suggested based on the intermixed character of the grave offerings. These include a *proxenos* assisting

99 Lemos 2001; Lemos – Mitchell 2011.

100 Popham – Lemos 1996, pls. 42-43.

101 Kourou 2012a, p. 217, n. 13.

102 Popham – Calligas – Sackett 1993, pl. 16.

103 Lemos 2002, pp. 226-227.

104 Kourou 2012a, p. 217.

105 Kourou 2012b, p. 164, note 21.

106 Papadopoulos 1997.

107 Popham – Lemos 1995.

the interest of eastern merchants[108] or a Phoenician individual based and buried in Greek lands.[109] All these are valid hypotheses although their verification is not straightforward. Furthermore, the remarkable resemblance between the funerary gifts of tomb 79 at Lefkandi and its contemporary assemblages from family tomb 1 at Akhziv and tomb 67 at Palaepaphos-Skales has been viewed as illustration of close relations and cross-cultural contacts between the late 10th/early 9th century BCE elites in these areas.[110] Archaeological evidence seems to indicate that high-status individuals in the Levant, Cyprus and Euboea had an intimate knowledge of different social and economic cultures and could function in more than one cultural and ideological setting.[111] Similarly, the infusion of the funerary ritual of tomb 79 with Phoenician details has been explained as aspect of an orientalising phenomenon that was active in the Aegean already from circa 900 BCE.[112] Regardless of who first took the initiative for such interaction, the island of Euboea was actively involved in cross-cultural interconnections with Phoenicia and Cyprus in the early first millennium BCE.

Phoenician connotations have also been suggested in the case of bronze bowls from Euboea, featuring sophisticated pictorial decoration.[113] Perhaps the most interesting albeit fragmentary example comes from tomb 70 at Lefkandi.[114] It is decorated with sphinxes flanking a sacred tree and a procession of worshippers facing towards a seated deity. The burial is dated to the second half of the 10th century BCE by the presence of three LPG vases, two of them Euboean and one Attic.[115] A typologically close example, also decorated with sphinxes, was found in Lefkandi tomb 55,[116] accompanied by large numbers of local LPG pottery types. Undecorated bronze bowls possibly of Phoenician origin also occur at Lefkandi, as in the case of the *phiale mesomphalos* from tomb 31[117], accompanied by Attic Middle Geometric (MG) II and Euboean SPG III pottery, hence indicating a date to the first quarter of the 8th century BCE. The number of Phoenician (or possibly Phoenician) bronzes from Lefkandi is therefore considerable.[118]

Faience objects constitute another important group of material with Near Eastern associations. Despite the difficulty in defining faience workshops, Phoenician involvement in the production and distribution of faience objects remains a valid hypothesis.[119] The most popular class consists of simple faience beads, with the earliest examples coming from the EPG tomb S16 at Lefkandi.[120] Faience objects become more common from the Late Protogeometric period onwards. The already mentioned tomb 39, of the second half of the 10th century BCE, contained numerous faience imports of various types, among which a recumbent lion, a duck *askos*, four small unguent containers and numerous beads.[121] A noteworthy faience find was produced in tomb 22 at Lefkandi,[122] dated to the SPG I, around 900-875 BCE: a necklace of 53 faience beads in the shape of a seated lion-headed goddess with high pointed crown holding an infant that were viewed

108 Antonaccio 2002, pp. 28-29.
109 Papadopoulos 1997, p. 192; Niemeyer 2006, p. 149.
110 Crielaard 2018.
111 Crielaard 2018, pp. 198-199.
112 Nijboer 2008, pp. 367-369.
113 Matthäus 1985, pp. 163-166; Markoe 2000, pp. 148-149.
114 Popham – Lemos 1996, pl. 70.
115 Kourou 2008b, p. 321.
116 Popham – Lemos 1996, pls. 62-63.
117 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 186, n. 20.
118 Kourou 2008b, pp. 320-349.
119 Caubet – Pierrat-Bonnefois 2005, p. 15.
120 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 114, n. 13.
121 Popham – Lemos 1996, pl. 43.
122 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, pp. 179-180, n. 28.

as a Phoenician conflation of different Egyptian types.[123] The beads were accompanied by a main pendant, of the same fabric but different iconographic details, representing Isis nursing Horus. The occurrence of a feeder in the grave[124] suggests that this was a child burial. The presence of Isis, the ultimate divine mother, and her son Horus, with his great protective power, in an infant's burial seems to outline the familiarization of the Euboeans with cultic notions originating in the east Mediterranean.

Phoenician views of Egyptian traits are clearly marked on a small group of imported seals from Lefkandi, with inscriptions in nonsense hieroglyphs.[125] Two of them, made of faience and steatite, were found in tomb 36 dated to the SPG I-II (EG I-II) period, first half of the 9th century BCE.[126] The third one, also made in steatite and decorated with couchant lions, was deposited in tomb 27 [127] and dates to the SPG II-III (EG II-MG I) period. A similar object is known from an Early Geometric tomb at Ialysos.[128]

Eretria is the second major source of Near Eastern imports in Euboea. Most evidence comes from the sanctuary of Apollo *Daphnephoros* and dates to the 9th, 8th and early 7th centuries BCE.[129] Residential and burial contexts have also produced imported artefacts albeit in smaller numbers.[130] Various groups of objects have been included in the discussion about Phoenician presence at Eretria: beads, lyre-player seals, scarabs, amulets portraying a wide range of Egyptian and Egyptianising deities (Bes, Hathor, Ptah, Sekhmet), bronze trinkets and inscriptions. These objects offer a picture of close contacts with the east Mediterranean, although it is not always possible to define the identity of their carriers or of the worshippers who dedicated them to the sanctuary.[131]

One of the most eloquent and at the same time intriguing Levantine attestations from Eretria is a graffito in Semitic alphabet.[132] It consists of four letters coarsely written on the upper body sherd of a Middle Geometric II cup, today stored at the Archaeological Museum of Eretria (ME inv. 20156). The cup was found in a trench located northwest of Late Geometric I building 17. It was found in a context that was not later than Middle Geometric II (800-750 BCE). The morphology of the letters seems to confirm a date in the late 9th-early 8th century BCE.

The inscription consists of four signs. The last three are securely identified: a *pē*, followed by a *lāmed* and a *šin*. The first sign at the far right where the fragment is broken off is more dubious. A *kaf* is the most likely reading, although its long tail and two strokes are unusually tilted. Given the fragmentary state of the sherd it is possible that the inscription continued further to the left, although letter *kaf* on the right could hardly have been preceded by another letter. The graffito therefore reads KPLŠ, which does not correspond to any known Semitic word. However, it probably associates with the Semitic root *kpl* meaning double, in which case the inscription could refer to the vessel's capacity. The closest comparandum is a graffito on a Greek amphora from a Late Geometric I funerary context at Pithekoussai that reads KPLN, combining the root *kpl* with the Aramaic suffix *–n*.[133] What remains unexplained on the graffito from Eretria is the final let-

123 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 224.

124 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 178, n. 2.

125 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 224.

126 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 191, nn. 20-21.

127 Popham – Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 184, n. 15.

128 Laurenzi 1936, p. 164.

129 Huber 2003, pp. 169-172.

130 Bérard 1970, pp. 34-45; Blandin 2007, p. 90, pls 101-102.

131 Verdan 2010.

132 Amadasi Guzzo 1987, pp. 17-20; Bron – Lemaire 1989; Kenzelmann Pfyffer – Theurillat – Verdan 2005, pp. 76-77; Boffa 2013.

133 Garbini 1978.

ter *šin*. Although Greek final -ς is usually transliterated into Phoenician as -*š* [134] the possibility that that KPLŠ is the Semitic transliteration of a Greek personal name, e.g. Κάπιλλος, or of a Greek word, e.g. κάπηλος-merchant[135] is inconclusive. Despite its dubious verification, the presumed association of KPLŠ with a Greek word has been viewed as an adaptation of Phoenician script to the Greek language during the early stages of alphabetic transmission, or as a phase of experimentation during which the semantic value of alphabetic signs was not yet fully established.[136] An alternative explanation interpreted KPLŠ as the transcription of an Anatolian, perhaps Cilician name, implying that a Cilician visited Euboea and wrote his name on a locally made cup by using the Semitic script.[137] This explanation would support the notion of a land-route via Asia Minor for the adoption of the Greek alphabet[138] but it is a theory with no sound corroborative evidence in the Aegean. Whatever the case, the graffito from Eretria offers one of the earliest attestations of Semitic writing in the Aegean.

A far more secure Aramaic association at Eretria is provided by the Aramaic dedicatory inscription on a north Syrian bronze blinker from the temple of Apollo, stored at the National Museum of Athens (inv. 15070). It mentions the name of King Hazael of Damascus, who reigned between 843 and 796 BCE.[139] The inscription and iconography identify the blinker from Eretria as product of a Syrian workshop that was active during the late 9th century BCE.[140] It mentions that the horse gear was donated by (god?) Hadad as a gift or taken as booty, probably from the ʿAmuq Plain (*Umq* or *Unqi*) in north Syria, «to our lord Hazael in the year that he crossed the river».[141] Neither the divine nature of Hadad nor the identification of the river mentioned in the inscription is entirely unproblematic.[142] The dedication of the inscribed blinker – together with a second bronze blinker that had no inscription – to the *hekatompedos* of Apollo *Daphnephoros* at Eretria must have occurred around the middle of the 8th century BCE, soon after the construction of the temple. It probably reflects the visit of a Euboean worshipper, who brought home this exotic item as a reminder of his maritime ventures and who either could not read or was not bothered by the inscription on it .[143] A *terminus ante quem* for its dedication is provided by the destruction of the Late Geometric *hekatompedos* of Eretria around 700 BCE.[144] The fact that both blinkers found at Eretria were meant to cover the right eye of the horse further stresses their purely votive character. A duplicate Aramaic inscription documenting King Hazael is engraved on a bronze horse frontlet from the Heraion at Samos,[145] showing that both items were part of the same horse harness. How these related pieces found their way to Greece is worthy of consideration, as it outlines alternative ways of circulation for Near Eastern objects found in the Aegean. The blinkers from Eretria and the frontlet from Samos were probably originated in Syria and were perhaps removed from the temple of Hadad in Damascus, when the city was conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE and the Hazael's treasury was looted. Many of the items were then distributed as booty over a number of Assyrian

134 Schmitz 2009; Janko 2015, p. 12.

135 Kenzelmann Pfyffer – Theurillat – Verdan 2005, p. 77

136 Boffa 2013, pp. 39-40.

137 Theurillat 2007, p. 334.

138 Sass 2005, pp. 146-149.

139 Charbonnet 1986; Amadasi Guzzo 1987, pp. 17-20; Amadasi Guzzo 2018; Lawson Younger 2005, pp. 257-260; Kenzelmann Pfyffer – Theurillat – Verdan 2005, p. 80.

140 Crielaard 2015, p. 361.

141 Lawson Younger 2005, p. 258.

142 Lawson Younger 2005, pp. 258-260.

143 See also Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988, pp. 55-59 and p. 71.

144 Charbonnet 1986, pp. 119-122 and p. 144.

145 Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988.

cities and some of them reached the coast from where they found their way to Greece after having passed through several hands.[146] The fact that some pieces ended up at Eretria and others on Samos suggests that the plundered items were further circulated within the Aegean.[147] Although the Syrian horse furnishings may have indeed reached the Aegean in the hands of Greek mariners, it has also been suggested that they were dedicated by Greek mercenaries who fought in the army of Tiglath-Pileser during the conquest of Damascus in 732 BCE.[148] All these possibilities are valid although none of them is easy to prove. The fact that the dedicators of the inscribed objects showed little or no concern about the content of the Aramaic inscriptions on them points indeed to a Greek rather than a Near Eastern worshipper.

Clearly, Euboea displays a wide range of Near Eastern objects that have been viewed as Phoenician or have been associated with Phoenician activity in the Aegean. The abundance of imports at Lefkandi already in the late 10th century BCE, is unparalleled at other places of the central Aegean and suggests that Lefkandi was the destination rather than a stopover of maritime routes originating in the eastern Mediterranean. The chief instigator of this maritime connection is hard to define. Although Cypriot evidence, mostly from 11th and 10th century BCE contexts outlines the multitude of agents, the Phoenicians must have been actively involved in this process. Those early Phoenician visits at the thriving settlement of Lefkandi may lay behind the tradition of a Semitic element introduced by Cadmus in the population of Euboea (Strab. X 1,8). This predilection for Euboea on behalf of the Phoenicians was not fortuitous since the island had a lot to offer them in return for their artefacts; agricultural products, livestock, pottery and most importantly raw materials, if we trust Strabo's allusions to Euboean iron and copper ores (Strab. X 1,9: καὶ μέταλλον δ᾿ ὑπῆρχε θαυμαστὸν χαλκοῦ καὶ σιδήρου κοινόν). Funerary evidence from Lefkandi outlines a pattern of interaction with the Levant in which the local elite was also engaged. Evidence from Eretria comes primarily from cultic contexts, showing that that contacts with the eastern Mediterranean remained vigorous during MG II and primarily during LG, and that *orientalia* reached the sanctuary of Apollo in significant numbers, dedicated by Greeks as well as by foreign (including Levantine) visitors. Furthermore, the presence of Euboean LPG and SPG pottery at Levantine sites as well as on Cyprus makes a case for an active Euboean involvement in those contact networks, already in the second half of the 10th century BCE.[149] Tyre was one of the main receivers of Euboean wares.[150] Inland Levantine sites were also integrated in the distribution of Euboean pottery, as in the case of Tell Rehov that produced *krater*, *skyphos* and *pyxis* fragments of LPG or SPG types, dated between the second half of the 10th and the early 9th century BCE, whereas MG I Attic pottery was also produced at the site.[151]

5.2. *Attica*

When moving to Attica, across the sea from Euboea, Phoenician or Near Eastern evidence is traced chiefly through luxurious artefacts contained in rich female burials. Such evidence, however, is more complex in its interpretation.[152]

The best-known example is the tomb of the "rich Athenian Lady" at Kerameikos.[153] Dated to the beginning of MG I, around 850 BCE, the tomb contained a wide range of Near Eastern imports: over 1,000

146 Lawson Younger 2005, pp. 257-259.

147 Crielaard 2015, p. 362.

148 Luraghi 2006, pp. 39-40; cfr. Fales 2006, pp. 240-243.

149 Lemos 2005.

150 Coldstream – Bikai 1988.

151 Coldstream – Mazar 2003.

152 Lipiński 2004, p. 169.

153 Smithson 1968; Stampolidis – Giannopoulou 2012, pp. 89-103.

faience disc-beads, beads made of glass and rock crystal, ivory seals and a plaque. These items were found together with a pair of gold earrings, perhaps the work of a Phoenician jeweller settled in Athens, as is suggested by the elaborate designs in granulation and filigree.[154] These sophisticated techniques were forgotten in Greece after the fall of the Mycenaean culture. Since they were «too difficult to learn without a teacher»,[155] their reappearance in the 9th century BCE together with the cloisonné technique argues for a strong Levantine impact in local metalwork and more specifically in gold working. Despite the use of Levantine techniques, the earrings from the "rich Athenian Lady" tomb at Kerameikos are decorated according to the local geometric style, outlining an "orientalising" rather than oriental character. The preliminary, clumsy stages of this Levantine impact in Aegean gold-working can be traced on a slightly earlier pair of gold earrings from tomb 5 at Lefkandi, dated to the second quarter of the 9th century BCE (SPG II). Possibly the work of a local beginner following a Phoenician model (or instructor), these earrings are characterised by large and coarse granules that have fused into each other.[156] Noticeably, the examination of the anthropological remains from the tomb of the "rich Athenian Lady" has demonstrated that this was the burial of a woman and a new-born or full-term fetus,[157] a fact that included the tomb in the discussion of maternal death rates in the ancient Mediterranean, with due consideration also to Phoenician and Punic communities.[158]

Dated around 800 BCE (MG II), the so-called Isis tomb at Eleusis also contained a pair of gold earrings in the granulation and filigree techniques, adorned with cloisonné for rocky crystal and amber inlays.[159] Despite the Eastern origin of the technique, the earrings have been viewed as the work of Attic smiths taught by Levantine teachers.[160] The tomb also contained an Egyptianising faience figurine of Isis or Hathor,[161] as well as four scarabs in faience and glass, possibly brought to the Aegean by Phoenicians. An almost identical pair of earrings was produced at Anavyssos grave LI, in southeast Attica.[162] Although the aforementioned jewels were probably manufactured in Athens, they carry strong Levantine, if not specifically Phoenician connotations, mainly through their new highly sophisticated and fully accomplished techniques of granulation, filigree and cloisonné. The absence of maladroit products in Attica (unlike the earrings from Lefkandi tomb 5), may indicate that a few skilful immigrant jewellers resided in Athens, passing their skills to Attic smiths. Higgins[163] in particular had seen in these jewels the products of a school founded by Phoenicians and continued by their Greek pupils. The development of this imitative style of jewellery in 9th century BCE Attica has been viewed as an indication of close interaction between Levantine and Greek craftsmen.[164] An additional Oriental/orientalising expression is provided by a small group of gold diadems from Attic MG II and LG I contexts that carry figured scenes impressed from a matrix.[165] Clumsiness in execution suggests that these matrices were originally made for some other purpose and had a different primary function. Moreover, their style is totally alien to the local aniconic geometric tradition, suggesting that its appearance in Attica

154 Higgins 1969.

155 Coldstream 1982, p. 266.

156 Popham –Sackett – Themelis 1980, p. 171, nn. 10-11.

157 Liston – Papadopoulos 2004.

158 Deglado Hervás – Rivera Hernández 2018, pp. 55-58.

159 Higgins 1969, p. 145; Stampolidis – Giannopoulou 2012, pp. 105-115.

160 Coldstream 1982, pp. 266-267.

161 Xagorari 1996, p. 50.

162 Verdelis – Davaras 1966, p. 98, pl. 95a.

163 Higgins 1969, p. 146.

164 Kourou 2012a, p. 220.

165 Coldstream 2003, pp. 123-124 and fig. 38a-b.

must be due to Levantine imports.[166] It possibly reflects the work of some "semi-hellenised" guild established somewhere in Attica and catering for a rich local clientele. [167]

Equally interesting are the faience objects from Dipylon grave 13, dating to 735-720 BCE (LG I): two Egyptian or Egyptianising figurines of recumbent lions, with illegible hieroglyphic inscriptions underneath were found together with four ivory figurines of naked females.[168] All items were placed under the head of the deceased. The two recumbent lions represent the best specimen of faience objects from LG I Athenian contexts.[169] The presence of ivory artefacts in 9th and 8th centuries BCE Attic contexts provides an additional element of contacts with the eastern Mediterranean. This precious material, the colour of which resembles that of human – primarily of female – skin, was imported from Egypt and Syria possibly through Phoenician initiative. To this early Levantine evidence from Attica one may add the richly decorated north-Syrian bronze bowl from Kerameikos grave 42, decorated with an embossed figural scene, dated to the third quarter of the 9th century BCE, the earliest bronze bowl found in Attica so far.[170]

Evidence from Attica therefore comes exclusively from burial contexts of the MG I-LG I period and is of oriental/Levantine rather than of purely Phoenician character. The presence of oriental or orientalising items characterises primarily rich burials both in Athens and in the rest of Attica. Although Attic evidence often hampers our ability to distinguish between imports and items produced locally under Near Eastern influence, the increase of Near Eastern finds coincides with a strong Levantine impact on local gold working. The latter is evidenced through the introduction of new sophisticated techniques, as well as through the appearance of new iconographic elements that were alien to the local geometric tradition. This new vigour has rightly been explained as the result of close interaction between Greek and Levantine craftsmen, leading to a "proto-orientalising" phenomenon;[171] since the transmission of sophisticated metalwork techniques is painstaking and time-consuming, some of these Near Eastern masters must have resided in Attica in order to communicate their art to their Greek apprentices. It is likely that Phoenicians were among those Levantines residing in Attica during the aforementioned period, although, admittedly, archaeological evidence fails to provide an unquestionable proof of this hypothesis.[172] Despite these difficulties, the combination of a sharp rise in Near Eastern imports and the emergence of a Levantine impact in Attic metalwork of the 9th century BCE suggest that Attica was among the Aegean regions that were incorporated in the ventures of Phoenicians. This was not only due to the prosperous local elite that facilitated economic and cultural interaction, nor merely due to Attica's vicinity to Euboea. It was also thanks to the rich silver mines at Lavrion producing a commodity that was very much in demand by Levantines sailing in central Aegean, since silver was relatively rare in the eastern Mediterranean.[173]

5.3. *Crete*

The large and fertile island of Crete dominates the south entrance to the Aegean and enjoys a favourable position along major intra-Mediterranean maritime routes. Crete is one of the Aegean areas where the gradual development of maritime trading networks with the eastern Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age can be best followed, whereas it features a large number of Near Eastern objects, including Phoenician

166 Kourou 2012a, p. 221.

167 Coldstream 2003, p. 124.

168 Stampolidis – Giannopoulou 2012, pp. 147-157.

169 Kourou 2012a, p. 220.

170 Kübler 1954, pp. 201-205 and pp. 237-238, pl. 162.

171 Kourou 2012a.

172 See also Bonnet 1995, p. 661.

173 Kourou 2012a, p. 222.

and Cypriot items. The restoration of close contacts between Crete and the eastern Mediterranean is dated to the 11th century BCE. It is related to Cypriot initiatives and reflects Crete's relatively strong continuing connections to Cyprus after 1200 BCE.[174] It can be traced through a small and rather controversial cluster of Cypriot objects, such as metal vessels and weapons from sub-Minoan burial contexts.[175] Two are the most distinguished items of this early stage of contacts between Cyprus and Crete. The first one, a bronze four-sided stand made in Cyprus in the late 13th-early 12th century BCE, was found in sub-Minoan tomb 201 at the North Cemetery of Knossos.[176] The tomb also contained other bronze objects, namely a knife and some arrow-heads, also claimed as Cypriot.[177] Due to its technology, type and style, the four-sided stand is generally recognised as a Late Bronze Age heirloom,[178] although it is hard to designate whether it was kept as such in Crete, where no Cypriot stands of this type have been found in Late Bronze Age contexts, or in Cyprus, where four-sided stands are known from sanctuaries, burials and hoards dated from the Late Cypriot IIC to the Cypro-Geometric II period.[179] Despite the dearth of Cypriot imports, Crete has produced clay tripods and four-sided clay stands that seem to imitate Cypriot prototypes from 12th and early 11th century BCE funerary and cultic contexts at Arkades, Karfi and Monastikari Chalasmeno.[180] These imitations imply a Cretan familiarisation with Late Bronze Age Cypriot originals.

The second Cypriot example is the bronze amphoroid krater from a tholos-tomb with two cremations at Pantanassa in Amari near Rethymnon.[181] The tomb dates to the late 11th century BCE. The best parallels for the Amari bronze vessel come once again from Cyprus and date between Late Cypriot IIIA2 and the Cypro-Geometric I period[182]. Among numerous pottery finds, the Amari tomb also included a locally-produced lekythos with incised decoration, clearly imitating jugs of Cypriot Black Slip I-II ware.[183] However, the example from Amari is an early, isolated occurrence of a "Creto-Cypriot" ceramic phenomenon, the numerous Cretan copies of Cypriot Black Slip, that will become very popular later on, in the 9th century BCE.[184]

Although limited and disparate, early evidence from Cretan contexts supports a Cypriot involvement in the transfer to the Aegean of objects from the eastern Mediterranean during the 11th and early 10th century BCE. In this respect, Crete appears to confirm what was indicated by previously discussed Lefkandi Skoubris tomb 46, with a Syro-Palestinian dipper juglet that finds its precise parallel to a vase from a Cypro-Geometric I tomb at Kition, as well as by the recently published rich tomb 3 at Ayia Agathe on Rhodes, also dating to the 11th century, where a Cypriot lekythos of the Proto-White Painted ware was found alongside other Near Eastern imports.[185] Evidence from Crete also seems to confirm the dominant role of Cyprus as an exporter of luxury items to the Aegean particularly during the initial stages of the Early Iron Age, a role that is further supported by the rich burials of Lefkandi.[186]

174 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 340; Wallace 2010, pp. 172-176; Kourou 2016.

175 Kourou 2016, pp. 53-54.

176 Coldstream – Catling 1996, p. 194; Papasavvas 2001, pp. 174-175.

177 Coldstream – Catling 1996, pp. 194-195.

178 Kourou 2016, p. 54.

179 Papasavvas 2014, p. 312.

180 Wallace 2010, p. 183; Karageorghis *et al.* 2014, p. 94, n. 1.

181 Tegou 2001, pp. 131-135.

182 Papasavvas 2015; Kourou 2016, p. 55.

183 Tegou 2001, p. 129, n. 6 and pp. 147-148.

184 Kotsonas 2012, pp. 160-165; Kotsonas 2013, pp. 242-244; Kourou 2016, p. 62.

185 Zervaki 2011; Zervaki 2014, p. 197, n. 28.

186 Wallace 2010, p. 180.

Early Iron Age Cretan contexts dating from the 9th century BCE onwards have produced a large number of Near Eastern (including Phoenician and Cypriot) objects, whereas the Levantine and Cypriot influence on the Early Iron Age Cretan art and pottery production is almost unmatched by any other part of the Aegean. As a result, Levantine evidence from Crete has been treated collectively by numerous scholars and in many occasions, usually approached from a broader Near Eastern rather than an exclusively Phoenician angle.[187] The diverse origin of Near Eastern imports reaching Crete and the presence of a vigorous local production or artefacts produced under Near Eastern influence hamper the determination of provenance.[188] Despite existing perplexities in the assessment of this material, Crete has produced some of the strongest evidence for Phoenician presence in the Aegean and as such it has been discussed extensively in relation to Phoenicians not just travelling but also residing in the Early Iron Age Aegean. The key-sites are Knossos, Kommos, Eleutherna and the Idaean Cave.

The Khaniale Tekke tholos tomb 2 at Knossos is renowned for the "treasure" buried with its first occupant in the late 9th century BCE. Boardman[189] noticed that the jewelry, as well as unworked gold and silver dumps, was not placed in an urn, as would have been the Cretan norm. It was placed in two plain pots, buried separately in two cavities below the floor just inside the chamber. This arrangement, initially interpreted as foundation deposits, displayed similarities with finds from the Syro-Palestinian coast. Given the alien nature of the ritual and the oriental character of the jewelry, it was assumed that the tomb belonged to a migrant north Syrian goldsmith (and his family) living in Knossos, where he taught and practiced his art by establishing a long-lived workshop. The holes were later seen as a way to protect their precious content from the attention of robbers. Although faced with reasonable scepticism,[190] Boardman's interpretation was largely accepted as it was the first time that the hypothesis of immigrant craftsmen in Crete received substantial support by the material record. Even though viewed as an indication of North Syria rather than Phoenician presence, the Tekke tomb provides evidence for the presence of Levantine jewellers, similarly to the previously discussed MG graves in Attica.

For more securely Phoenician evidence one has to look at the Tekke tomb J in Knossos that produced a bronze bowl of Cypriot type with a Phoenician inscription scored under the rim (Fig. 1).[191] The tomb contained more than one burial but its content is chronologically consistent, dating to the Early and Middle Cretan Protogeometric, 920-875 BCE. Its chronology is well defined by the presence of two Attic Late Protogeometric cups.[192] The inscribed bowl was found on the floor of the tomb. It belongs to the plain hemispherical type but it features a zone of incised chevrons on its broad lip. Although a Levantine origin has also been suggested,[193] the bowl is probably of Cypriot manufacture,[194] as it represents a type that was common on Cyprus from the Late Bronze Age down to the Cypro-Archaic period.[195] The presence of a Phoenician inscription marking a bronze bowl of Cypriot type offers an additional implication of the mixed trading networks of the Early Iron Age eastern Mediterranean, in which Phoenicians and Cypriots had an active involvement.[196]

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187 Hoffman 1997; Jones 2000; Kourou 2000; Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006; Wallace 2010, pp. 169-214; Pappalardo 2012; Antoniadis 2017.

188 Antoniadis 2017, pp. 91-103.

189 Boardman 1967.

190 Lebessi 1975; Hoffman 1997, pp. 205-213; Kotsonas 2006.

191 Coldstream – Catling 1996, p. 30, n. 1, Herakleion inv. 4346.

192 Kourou 2016, p. 58.

193 Coldstream – Catling 1996, pp. 563-564; Pappalardo 2012, p. 41, Br-CnoKT1.

194 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 346; Karageorghis *et. al.* 2014, p. 165, n. 129.

195 Matthäus 1985, pp. 71-108.

196 Kourou 2016, p. 58.

Fig. 1. Inscribed bronze bowl from Knossos-Tekke; Herakleion 4346, Heraklion Archaeological Museum (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports).

The letters of the inscription from tomb J are eroded, resulting in different readings and subsequently in different interpretations. These range from formulaic statements of ownership[197] to dedicatory declarations.[198] Regardless of the different readings of the proper names inscribed on the bowl, including the name Amon[199] or even that of Minos,[200] most scholars agree in the inscription from Knossos having the typical structure of Phoenician ownership declaration that is "bowl of x, son of z". Equally debated is the date of the inscription, pushed by some scholars as far back as the 11th century BCE, on the basis of traditional palaeographical dating.[201] Such a date would mean a 200-year hiatus between the writing of the inscription and the deposition of the bowl in the grave, the latter being securely dated to the late 10th/early 9th century BCE by context. Recent studies tend to support that the date of the inscription and that of its archaeological context are contemporary.[202] If correct, this chronological equation is of particular significance given that tomb J represents one of the chronologically secure contexts in the Early Iron Age Aegean that have produced sound Phoenician evidence. The bowl was thought to be the possession of an early Phoenician resident at Knossos, possibly a predecessor of the goldsmith buried in the Tekke tholos tomb, rather than an article of commerce or an inscribed heirloom.[203] However, the Phoenician interpretation of tomb J has been questioned due to the predominantly Cretan character of its content.[204] Perhaps the most important aspect of the inscription from tomb J at Knossos is that it provides the oldest hitherto known attestation of linear alphabetic script in the Aegean. It is hardly surprising that this attestation is written in Phoenician language and alphabet, and that it comes from Crete.

More solid evidence for Phoenicians living on Crete is provided by funerary monuments made in local limestone but following the typology of Phoenician *cippi*. Such evidence is hitherto limited to two sites in the central part of the island, both of which display a wide range of Near Eastern evidence: Knossos and Eleutherna. Despite their disturbed or incomplete contextual information, it is clear that these stone funerary monuments find no parallels in the Aegean but recall Phoenician originals. Knossos has produced two examples. One of them was found at the entrance to an Early Iron Age chamber tomb with multiple burials at the site of Atsalenio[205] and is the only Cretan *cippus* with a fairly satisfying context. Although the tomb was disturbed and its content was only partly recovered, the date of the *cippus* to the 8th century BCE can still be broadly defined

197 Sznycer 1979; Cross 1980, pp. 15-17; Puech 1983; Amadasi Guzzo 1987, pp. 13-16; Hoffman 1997, pp. 120-124.

198 Lipiński 2004.

199 Lipiński 2004, p. 182.

200 Puech 1983.

201 See Sass 2005, p. 36, note 33 for bibliography.

202 Sass 2005, pp. 34-39.

203 Coldstream 1982, p. 271.

204 Hoffman 1997, p. 123.

205 Kourou – Karetsou 1998.

by pottery. The second *cippus*, from the area of the North Cemetery of Knossos, was also found removed from its original context.[206] Its date to the early 7th century BCE is based on typological comparisons. A similar date to the 8th/7th century BCE has been suggested for the *cippus* from Eleutherna[207] that was found at the area of the Orthi Petra cemetery, though not at its original location. Despite the circumstances of their recovery and the dearth of contextual information, the presence of Phoenician *cippi* confirms that Phoenicians lived in Crete during the 8th-7th centuries BCE, and were fully integrated into local societies.[208]

On the south coast of the Messara plain, Kommos is another key-site for examining the Phoenician presence in Crete. Lying on the shipping route to the West that bypassed the Aegean, Kommos has produced a substantial amount of Phoenician pottery, albeit of a rather limited repertory. The earliest evidence, mainly Phoenician transport amphorae, dates to the late 10th century BCE but pottery imports, including jugs and juglets, increase in the 9th and early 8th centuries BCE.[209] The presence of Phoenician storage vessels at Kommos suggests that the site was a port of call for Phoenician ships sailing to the west. The most remarkable find at Kommos is the enigmatic tripillar structure inside an early Cretan temple (Temple B). It succeeded a smaller earlier temple around 800 BCE, at the time when Phoenician imports at the site reached their peak. Temple B included a hearth and a large block into which three small pillars were socketed, with faience figurines of Sekhmet and possibly Nefertum – both members of an Egyptian triad – between them. This arrangement was interpreted as a tripillar shrine of Phoenician character,[210] a hypothesis further supported by the Phoenician pottery from the temple. Although the Phoenician interpretation of the shrine has been questioned,[211] the "tripillar shrine" of Kommos is a hitherto unique structure on Greek soil and stresses the special relationship between Crete and the Near East.[212] The presence of Phoenician wares and possibly also of Phoenician cult at a coastal site on the south coast of Crete, ideally located along major intra-Mediterranean maritime routes makes Kommos one of the most intriguing cases of a Phoenician presence in the Early Iron Age Aegean. The site has also produced a possible and rather problematic attestation of Phoenician script: a post firing graffito on the handle of a Levantine storage jar found in a dump associated with Temple A.[213] The fragment is dated by context to c. 900-850 BCE. The only alphabetic symbol, to which it offers similarities, is Phoenician letter *ḥêt*. There are, however, issues with this identification since the sign has unusual proportions and it is rotated 90 degrees from the normal position of *ḥêt*.

The Idaean Cave, the most important cave sanctuary in Iron Age Crete, is another Cretan site that features prominently in the discussion of Phoenicians in the Aegean. The cave is reputed for its impressive corpus of ivories, counting over 1,030 pieces, an astonishing quantity when compared to the dearth of ivory objects in the rest of the island.[214] Although not yet fully published, a large part of the Idaean Cave ivories were considered imported and were associated with North Syrian and, to a lesser degree, with Phoenician workshops of the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. Phoenician imports amount to only 16 pieces. They comprise mostly of carved plaques that belonged to furniture. Several pieces of the Idaean Cave ivories have been attributed to Cretan artists, trained by craftsmen who had migrated to Crete from the East.[215] The presence

206 Kourou – Grammatikaki 1998.

207 Stampolidis 1990; Stampolidis 2004, p. 238, n. 257.

208 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 352.

209 Bikai 2000; Johnston 2000, p. 197; Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, pp. 341-342.

210 Shaw 1989; Shaw – Shaw 2000.

211 Pappalardo 2002.

212 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 353.

213 Csapo – Johnston – Geagan 2000, pp. 108-109, n. 1, I 16 with discussion.

214 Sakellarakis 1992.

215 Hoffman 1997, pp. 156-160.

of Near Eastern, possibly including also Phoenician, ivory carvers at the Idaean Cave is an old hypothesis[216] that gained support after the discovery of an impressive amount of ivory finds from the site.[217] The presence of foreign craftsmen producing ivory artefacts at the sanctuary is perhaps even more appealing in the case of the Phoenician ivories, since fitting together expensive ivory plaques to produce luxurious pieces of furniture would require work *in situ*.[218] The impressive occurrence of ivory finds at the Idaean Cave, in sharp contrast with the dearth of similar evidence in the rest of the island, suggests that ivory artefacts imported to Crete were primarily directed to the Idaean Cave, while local production was also affiliated with the sanctuary. The location of the presumed Cretan ivory workshops, however, remains elusive, given that the Idaean plateau presents a rather inhospitable setting for such an activity.[219]

Equally interesting are the bronzes from the Idaean Cave, usually dated to the 8th and early 7th centuries BCE. Few of them, mostly bronze relief bowls, are possibly Phoenician imports.[220] On the other hand, bronze "shields" with lavish figural decoration[221] were probably manufactured in Crete but reflect the expertise transmitted to local apprentices by immigrant Syro-Phoenician craftsmen.[222] Similar examples are also known from other Cretan sites, such as the Orthi Petra necropolis at Eleutherna.[223] The mixture of styles of many Cretan bronzes of this period indicates an assimilation process based on direct foreign influence, in which Near Eastern, including Phoenician, residents must have played a decisive role. The Idaean Cave also produced bronze jugs with lotus-bud handle, possibly of Phoenician manufacture, similar to types known from Knossos and Lefkandi.[224] Formerly discussed evidence from the Idaean Cave confirms the role played by Greek sanctuaries during the 9th, 8th and early 7th centuries BCE, as settings for cultural interaction, economic transaction and trade with the eastern Mediterranean. It also corroborates the presence of Phoenicians settled on Crete during the Early Iron Age, engaged in profitable activities of high specialism, that were fully integrated into local economic and cultic life.

Eleutherna is the last stop on the Cretan itinerary. Situated on the north route to the Idaean Cave, Eleutherna is distinguished for the amount and variety of imports pointing to the eastern Mediterranean. Although not fully published, this material dates mostly between the 9th and 7th centuries BCE and comes predominantly from funerary contexts.[225] Finds include ivories, pottery, glass, faience vessels and figurines, scarabs, bronze vessels and jewellery. There are only a few securely identified Phoenician imports in this material, for example a Phoenician Bichrome juglet from the rich LG tomb A1K1 of the Orthi Petra cemetery.[226] The juglet was found alongside two Cypriot *oinochoai* of Black-on-Red ware.[227] The Phoenician element is also reflected on imports of a more luxurious character, such as on a well-preserved shallow bronze bowl with lavish figurative decoration on the inside, also from tomb A1K1.[228] The vessel was found covering

216 Barnett 1948, p. 6.

217 Sakellarakis 1992, p. 116.

218 Kourou 2000, p. 269.

219 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 346.

220 Markoe 1985, pp. 113-114; Hoffman 1997, pp. 34-35; Matthäus 1998.

221 Hoffman 1997, pp. 160-163.

222 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 349; Matthäus 1998, p. 137.

223 Stampolidis 2004, pp. 281-282, n. 360.

224 Kourou 2008b, pp. 335-346; Wallace 2010, p. 202, fig. 116.

225 Stampolidis 1998; Stampolidis 2004.

226 Stampolidis 2004, p. 255, n. 289; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 287-288.

227 Kotsonas 2008, pp. 284-286.

228 Stampolidis 2004, p. 277, n. 349.

a LG urn in the tomb.[229] Its type and style are defined as Phoenician and it was probably made in the same workshop as a similar *phiale* from the Idaean Cave.[230] Eleutherna and the Idaean Cave feature a remarkable overlapping and stylistic affiliation in the range of their "oriental" and "orientalising" objects, including special groups of finds such as the bronze *protome* shields but also the bronze bowls.[231] The discovery of 8th-7th century moulds supports the hypothesis that Eleutherna was an important bronze-working centre.[232]

Noteworthy is also a small faience figurine of the Egyptian deity Sekhmet from tomb A1K1 at Eleutherna, dated to the late 8th century BCE. The figurine has an inscription incised on the rear of the pillar that is not hieroglyphic and has been postulated as Phoenician or Aramaic,[233] although this hypothesis remains dubious based on the image of the *graffito*. The figurine was found in a funerary urn of the last quarter of the 8th century BCE, together with a two-handled faience juglet.[234] It offers one of the earliest, securely-dated attestations of the Egyptian deity on Crete. The popularity of similar figurines in Crete, of which the most celebrated example is the Sekhmet figurine from the tripillar shrine of Kommos, is noteworthy and it must relate to the introduction, possibly by the Phoenicians, of popular religious beliefs from Egypt and the Near East.[235] Within this framework, the discovery of the already mentioned 8th/7th century BCE Phoenician *cippus* at Eleutherna comes as no surprise.[236] Although found detached from its original context, this *cippus* is linked to the Phoenician material culture and probably marked the grave of a Phoenician settled at Eleutherna.

Previous discussion aimed at presenting an overview of archaeological data that point towards the special contacts between Crete and the eastern Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age, with a focus on the Phoenician aspect of these contacts. Evidence suggests that the island retained strong and enduring links with the eastern Mediterranean but also that the Phoenician element of these links becomes distinguishable from the late 10th century BCE, as supported by the earliest Phoenician pottery imported at Kommos and the Phoenician inscription from tomb J at Knossos. Prior to that, during the 11th and 10th centuries BCE Cypriots were the main instigators of Cretan contacts with the East. The flow of Near Eastern imports, including some securely defined Phoenician objects, increased considerably in the 9th and 8th century BCE. Although strong influence of the products of Levantine workshops on Cretan production hampers the identification of precise provenances, the Phoenicians were most possibly involved both in the transportation and in the assimilation process of such influence in Crete. The tripillar shrine at Kommos and the funerary *cippi* at Knossos and Eleutherna point towards Phoenicians residing on Crete among local population, although the dimensions of this phenomenon should not be exaggerated. Further evidence for the presence or influence of Orientals has been identified at the inland site of Arkades at central Crete[237] but dates mostly to the 7th century BCE. Phoenician activity on Crete is closely linked also to immigrant craftsmen settled on the island and influencing certain aspects of local production such as ivory carving. This theory is compelling but needs a clearer archaeological documentation. Quite surprisingly, ancient literary evidence alluding to the presence of Phoenicians on Crete is rather limited, as in the case of Itanos, the town at the north-eastern

229 Stampolidis 2004, pp. 253-254, n. 287.

230 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 347.

231 Stampolidis 1998, pp. 181-183; Kourou 2000, p. 1069; Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 347.

232 Themelis 2000, p. 31; Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 349.

233 Stampolidis 1998, p. 178, fig. 6; Stampolidis 2004, p. 294, n. 395.

234 Stampolidis 2004, p. 250, n. 282 and p. 255, no. 291.

235 Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006, p. 345.

236 Stampolidis 2004, p. 238, n. 257.

237 Bonnet 1995, p. 656.

promontory of Crete that was presumably founded by Phoenix's own son.[238] Although evidence for Levantine presence is located mostly at the central and eastern part of the island,[239] Phoenician influence may have extended to the west coast of Crete, where the closed harbour of Phalasarna displays clear associations with the structure of famous Phoenician and more particularly Punic harbours, such as Carthage and Motya.[240] Early Iron Age Crete is usually viewed as the recipient in what appears to be a unidirectional trade with the eastern Mediterranean. This assertion, however, should perhaps be reconsidered in the light of a few Cretan pottery imports from Cyprus, Al Mina and Ras el Bassit, dating to the late 8th and the first half of the 7th century BCE.[241] Although these Cretan ceramics do not overturn current understanding of exchange between Crete, the Levant and Cyprus, they yield an additional level of complexity to those Early Iron Age exchange mechanisms.

5.4. *East Aegean Islands*

5.4.1. Rhodes

Some of the most compelling Phoenician evidence in the Aegean comes from Rhodes, the island that marks the entrance to the Aegean Sea and a necessary stopover for Phoenician ships sailing west. Written sources dated to the late 4th century BCE preserve the memory of Phoenician residents on the island.[242] Ergias of Rhodes records the tricks used by the Greeks to expel the Phoenicians from Ialysos, while Polyzalos adds a mythological allure to the Phoenician presence on Rhodes, by linking it to the legend of Cadmus and his dedication of an inscribed bronze cauldron to the Lindian sanctuary of Athena.[243] The association is anything but fortuitous since Cadmus was the legendary hero who introduced literacy to Greece from Phoenicia. By so doing and by founding Thebes, one of the most prominent Greek cities, Cadmus became a distinguished figure of Phoenician wisdom, and a perpetual symbol of cultural exchange between Greece and Phoenicia, as was masterfully discussed recently by Corinne Bonnet.[244]

Yet when it comes to the archaeological visibility of the hypothesised early Phoenician presence, evidence is not easy to assess. An early 9th century BCE child burial from Ialysos produced a few faience objects, among which the lower part of a Bes figurine, probably used as an amulet.[245] However, such faint Phoenician evidence is rather inconsistent. In the second half of the 8th century the first securely identified Phoenician imports appear: mushroom-lipped jugs of Bichrome ware. These were soon followed by locally produced red-slipped or undecorated juglets with a ridged neck and a wide mushroom-shaped mouth that closely imitated Phoenician prototypes.[246] Rhodes is actually the only place in the Aegean where Phoenician pottery types have been so popular in the late 8th and 7th century BCE (Figs. 2-3). This predilection for Phoenician juglets in Rhodes appears as the following stage to the importation and local imitation of Cypriot small containers of Black-on-Red ware in the late 9th and early 8th centuries BCE[247] and suggests that the Phoenicians who were active on

238 Stampolidis 1990, p. 105.

239 Kourou 2000, p. 1072.

240 Hadjidaki 1988, p. 479.

241 Kotsonas 2012, pp. 156-157.

242 *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (*FGrHist*) IIIb, commentary 434-435; Diod. V 58; *FGrHist* III b, 523; Athen. VIII 360; *FGrHist* III b, 513.

243 Bunnens 1979, pp. 129-132.

244 Bonnet 2018.

245 Laurenzi 1936, p. 164, n. 15.

246 Bourogiannis 2013, pp. 160-164.

247 Bourogiannis 2009.

Fig. 2. Part of the content of Exochi tomb A (© National Museum of Denmark).

Fig. 3. Jugler 12241 from Exochi tomb A (© National Museum of Denmark).

Rhodes were engaged in the production and trade of unguents.[248] The special position of Rhodes in the trade of scented oils is also echoed by the abundance of small containers made in faience, found in 7th and 6th century contexts.[249] Recent chemical analyses on the residue of small closed vessels in terracotta and faience from tomb A at Kamiros, dated between the late 7th and middle 6th century BCE have confirmed their use as containers not only of perfumed oils but also of medicinal contents. The latter has been verified through trace of bile acids and dairy, used in antiquity as remedies for eye and ear infections.[250] A similar content has been confirmed for Phoenician containers, primarily pilgrim flasks and juglets dated between the 8th and 6th century BCE from various Mediterranean sites.[251] Although the content of the Kamiros Tomb A is of a slightly later date than most of the Phoenician-type small containers known from the island, it does confirm that archaic Rhodes was an important centre for the distribution and possibly also for the production of perfumed and medicinal unguents. This conclusion seems to be further supported by recent scientific analyses on the pottery from Rhodes and Kos, dated between the 8th and 6th centuries BCE, which have confirmed the local production of small containers not just of local but also of east Mediterranean typology.[252]

248 Coldstream 1982, p. 269.

249 Bourogiannis 2014.

250 Coulié *et al.* 2017.

251 Frère – Garnier – Dodinet 2016.

252 Villing – Mommsen 2017.

To the aforementioned vessels of Phoenician typology one may add numerous faience artefacts, such as scarabs, amulets and beads, from the island's burials and sanctuaries. Although their place of manufacture is not fully clarified, these objects belong to types that are widely distributed in the eastern Mediterranean – including Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian area – and their Levantine character is acknowledged.[253] The three main Athena sanctuaries of Rhodes have produced remarkable quantities of Near Eastern objects that also reflect the island's strong links to Phoenicia: ivories, faience vessels and figurines, tridacna shells, mace heads, metal bowls, seals and scarabs.[254] The principal source of such *orientalia* is the votive deposits of the sanctuary of Athena at Ialysos, which remains unpublished. Phoenician presence in Rhodes is also hinted by child burials in torpedo jars found in archaic cemeteries of Kamiros and Ialysos.[255] Moreover, the island has produced two Phoenician inscriptions: The first one comes from a fragmentary late 7th century BCE pottery cup from Ialysos tomb 37, preserving four Phoenician letters, KD Q.[K or T.[256] The first two signs read KD meaning the vase/recipient. Interestingly, part of a possessive inscription in Greek that reads]ΝΟΣ ΗΜΙ appears on another fragment that is presumably from the same vase.[257] If both graffiti were cut on the same vessel as seems to be the case, then this would imply the presence of a bilingual (Greek-Phoenician) inscription and therefore a bilingual (and digraphic) community in Rhodes in the 7th century BCE. This cultural syncretism is also reflected on a 7th century BCE Syro-Palestinian juglet from Camiros, on which a possibly Semitic name is written in Greek alphabet.[258] The second Phoenician inscription from Rhodes is cut on the wing of a late 7th century BCE Cypriote limestone statuette of a sphinx that was dedicated to the sanctuary known as "la chapelle" at Vroulia (Fig. 4).[259] The signs are eroded but the script is generously considered Phoenician. The presence of a Phoenician inscription cut on a Cypriot figurine and then dedicated to a Greek sanctuary on Rhodes provides a wonderful manifestation of the composite character or interaction between the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean in the 7th century BCE.

Fig. 4. Detail from the inscribed limestone sphinx from Vroulia; Copenhagen 11328 (photo by John Lund, © National Museum of Denmark).

Phoenician presence on Rhodes therefore is predominantly a late 8th and early 7th century BCE phenomenon, evidenced through the systematic occurrence of Phoenician pottery types, juglets with a ridged neck and mushroom-shaped mouth, and the attestation of Phoenician inscriptions. The extensive local production of this Phoenician pottery class on Rhodes, and in a much lesser degree on Cos, has been attributed to Phoenician settlers setting up unguent factories on the island and bottling their unguents in locally-man-

253 Pierrat-Bonnefois – Bouquillon – Coulié 2014; Triantafyllidis 2014.

254 Kourou 2003, pp. 251-252.

255 Lipiński 2004, p. 146, n. 8.

256 Amadasi Guzzo 1987, pp. 16-17, n. 2; Kourou 2003, p. 256; Coulié – Filimonos-Tsopotou 2014, p. 238, n. 72; Bourogiannis 2015, p. 164.

257 Jacopi 1929, p. 66, fig. 56.

258 Coulié – Filimonos-Tsopotou 2014, p. 235, n. 69.

259 Riis – Moltesen – Guldager 1989, pp. 51-52, n. 34; Kourou 2003, pp. 255-256; Kourou *et al.* 2002, p. 55, VR2; Coulié – Filimonos-Tsopotou 2014, pp. 236-237, n. 71; Bourogiannis 2015, pp. 163-164.

ufactured containers.[260] This is an intriguing hypothesis even though its archaeological confirmation is not fully satisfactory. Nevertheless, the impact that Phoenician pottery had on Rhodes in the aforementioned period is both evident and unparalleled in the Aegean and therefore it must reflect the strong ties between this island and the Phoenicians. In this milieu, the presence of Phoenician potters living on Rhodes as *metoikoi* is reasonable and easily understood.[261] An additional although indirect Phoenician element that also dates to the late 8th and early 7th century BCE, is perhaps provided by a small group of cylindrical *pyxides* from Rhodes (as well as from Cos) made in clay but imitating Levantine ivory prototypes, as is implied by their shape and particular surface features such as the cable pattern, dice-eyes and dogtooth.[262] This small but well-defined class is particularly telling of the complex pattern of interaction between Rhodes and the Phoenicians that penetrated different groups of material.

5.4.2. Cos

Phoenician evidence from Cos is less abundant, largely due to our limited knowledge of the Coan final Late Geometric and Subgeometric period. This is the time when Phoenician evidence at neighbouring Rhodes reaches its peak, so the absence of adequate published data from Cos leaves a significant gap in our understanding of the presumed Phoenician presence and activity on the island. The presence of Phoenician-type pottery and of faience objects in geometric and archaic contexts on Cos is rather meagre. However, amulets and small faience figurines of oriental deities deposited in Coan tombs indicate a strong belief in their protective or apotropaic qualities on behalf of the Coans.[263] One of them in particular, a fragmentary faience amulet of Isis nursing Horus from a Coan grave of the final Middle Geometric,[264] has a nonsense hieroglyphic inscription on the back, indicating a Phoenician rather than Egyptian origin. Cos may not have hitherto yielded an extensive corpus of Phoenician-type pottery but it has produced numerous local imitations of Cypriot Black-on-Red ware from late 9th and 8th century BCE funerary contexts. This indicates that the island was involved in the trade of unguents in which Phoenicians and Cypriots were also active.[265] Moreover, the publication of a puzzling early 6th century BCE handle, inscribed in Semitic script[266] leaves the Phoenician question open for further future reconsideration.

5.4.3. Astypalaia

Faience amulets of deities known for their protective power and their role in burial customs, such as Bes,[267] were also produced in 7th century BCE *enchytrismoi* at the astonishing infant necropolis of Astypalaia.[268] Known only through short reports and dated from the Late Geometric to the Roman period, the character of the site remains unclear; it may have accommodated both burial and cultic activities. Given the unique features of the site, that are vaguely reminiscent of Phoenician *tophets*,[269] the excavators have considered the possibility of a Phoenician presence in Astypalaia. This, however, remains a tentative hypothesis in the absence of a comprehensive publication.

260 Bourogiannis 2013, pp. 172-173 with previous bibliography.

261 Kourou 2003, p. 253.

262 Bourogiannis 2013, pp. 165-168.

263 Bourogiannis 2013, pp. 144-152.

264 Morricone 1978, p. 373, figs. 812-813.

265 Bourogiannis 2000.

266 Bourogiannis – Ioannou 2012.

267 Michalaki-Kollia – Dasen 2013.

268 Michalaki-Kollia 2013.

269 Xella 2012-2013.

5.4.4. Samos

The rich and fertile island of Samos also enjoyed a special position in the maritime networks with the eastern Mediterranean. The sanctuary of Hera has produced an impressive amount of artefacts associated with the Near East,[270] including ivories[271] and bronzes[272] dated from the late 8th to the 6th century BCE. Although the producers and carriers of these artefacts cannot always be defined with certainty, these votive offerings speak of trade with the eastern Mediterranean, including Phoenicia. Noticeably, the Samians also were active sailors and traders at least during the 7th century BCE and their ventures brought them into close relations with the Phoenicians. This is echoed by Herodotus' account of Kolaios and his voyage to Tartessos in the 7th century BCE (Hdt. IV 152). Interestingly, three engraved ivory combs excavated at the Heraion but produced in a Phoenician workshop of the Lower Guadalquivir in Spain[273] date to the same period. They provide an archaeological attestation of contacts of Samos not only with the Levant but also with the western part of the Phoenician world. Particularly interesting in the milieu of contacts with the eastern Mediterranean are the bronze items of equine gear of north Syrian manufacture, including blinker and frontlet pieces.[274] The already mentioned frontlet from Samos (see discussion of Eretria) has an eloquent individual biography, reconstructed on the basis of the Aramaic inscription mentioning the name of King Hazael of Damascus.[275] The inscribed item, today stored at the Archaeological Museum of Vathy on Samos (B2579), duplicates the inscription cut on the aforementioned blinker from the temple of Apollo *Daphnephoros* at Eretria. Although the duplicate Aramaic inscription on the Eretrian blinker and the Samian frontlet leave no doubt about their Near Eastern ancestry, both items seem to display a Greek rather than Near Eastern gesture of worship to Apollo and Hera respectively. The dedication of the inscribed blinker at Eretria is firmly fixed to the second half of the 8th century by context. The Samian context is less helpful, as the frontlet was found in a *bothros* of the Heraion dated to the late 7th or early 6th century BCE.[276] Nevertheless, both inscribed objects must have entered the Aegean approximately at the same time, around the second half of the 8th century BCE, since they display the same inscription, they allude to the same historical figure and incident, they are probably part of the same equine gear and have similar archaeological biographies. Whether mariners or mercenaries, the dedicators seem to have been members of the local upper class that in the case of Euboea was identified as *hippeis* or *hippobotai*, horse riders and breakers of horses, which would make the dedication of a piece of horse equipment very appropriate. Horse-keeping was a distinguishing feature also of the Samian upper class *geomoroi*,[277] as well as a common elite cultural feature that the Aegean shared with the whole of north Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus and Assyria.[278]

5.5. *North Aegean*

Ancient written sources allude to the presence of Phoenicians in the north Aegean, mostly in the area of Thasos, yet its archaeological confirmation remains ill-defined. In the case of Thasos, 7th century BCE ivory artefacts from the island's sanctuaries have been associated with Phoenicia and North Syria.[279] More

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270 Tsakos – Viglaki-Sofianou 2012.

271 Freyer-Schauenburg 1966a.

272 Jantzen 1958; Jantzen 1972.

273 Freyer-Schauenburg 1966b.

274 Charbonnet 1986, pp. 124-125, fig. 39.2; Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988, pl. 9 and pl. 15.

275 Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988; Lawson Younger 2005, pp. 257-260; Amadasi Guzzo 2018, pp. 3-7.

276 Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988, p. 37.

277 Crielaard 2015, p. 362 and nn. 77-78.

278 Crielaard 2015, p. 360.

279 Graham 1978, p. 86, n. 249; Grandjean – Salviat 2000, pp. 297-298.

evidence that can be related to Phoenicia activity in the north Aegean has been produced during recent excavations.[280] A couple of fragmentary trefoil-rimmed jugs from Karabournaki, dated to the late 8th-early 7th century BCE, belong to jugs of Phoenician typology.[281] Similar in date are the Phoenician torpedo jars from Methoni,[282] a major harbour on the Thermaic gulf, considered one of the earliest Euboean colonies in Macedonia. However, the large quantities of Euboean pottery and the absence of other Phoenician evidence do not confirm actual Phoenician presence at Methoni and make it possible that the Phoenician amphorae reached the site on Euboean rather than Phoenician ships. The presence, even occasionally, of Phoenicians in northern Greece at a considerably later date is confirmed by an eroded Phoenician graffito,[283] marking the back of a terracotta female figurine from Stageira, today at the Museum of Polygyros in Chalcidice (ΣΤΑ 425). The figurine is dated to the 6th century BCE. Although its contextual information is incomplete, it most probably originates from the archaic sanctuary of Stageira.[284] The main word identified in the Phoenician inscription is *mṭn'* meaning offering, which confirms the votive character both of the object and of the inscription on it.

5.6. *Cyclades*

Occupying the central part of the Aegean, the Cyclades provided safe anchorages along the sailing route to the Greek mainland. The Phoenicians were familiar with the islands and their presence is referred by ancient written sources. Herodotus (IV 147) for example mentions that the earliest people of Thera were descendant of Cadmus. However, this tradition has hitherto found no archaeological confirmation. Naxos has produced some of the most interesting, albeit indirect, evidence of possible Phoenician presence in the area. A mask of a bearded man from the sanctuary of Iria, made in local clay and dated to the late 8th/early 7th century BCE[285] relates to an old tradition of terracotta masks known mostly from Phoenician and Punic sanctuaries, probably linked to the cult of a female fertility goddess and her consort. The best comparable examples in the Aegean come from the sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia in Sparta and date primarily to the 7th century BCE.[286] Grimacing masks are among the most typical artefacts of Phoenician culture. They occur in significant numbers both in the Levant and at Phoenician sites of the western Mediterranean, such as in Sardinia, Motya and Carthage, with most examples from the latter dating between the 7th and 5th century BCE.[287] Cyprus is another major source of masks used primarily in ritual performances from the Late Cypriot III down to the Cypro-Classical period, although the evidence for masking ceremonies on the island is concentrated primarily in Late Cypriot IIIA and in the Cypro-Archaic period.[288] Examples from the eastern Mediterranean are usually produced in cultic contexts as opposed to masks from the Punic west that seem to relate with funerary traditions. Iria at Naxos has also produced a locally-made anthropomorphic juglet with a female face plastically modelled on the neck, dated to the beginning of the 7th century BCE. The vase has been associated with the Syro-Palestinian area.[289]

280 Tiverios 2012.

281 Adam-Veleni – Stefani 2012, pp. 147-148, nn. 86-87.

282 Kasseri 2012.

283 Vainstub 2014.

284 Sismanidis 2003, p. 90, n. 99.

285 Simantoni-Bournia 2004-2005.

286 Burr Carter 1987.

287 Garbati 2016.

288 Averrett 2015.

289 Simantoni-Bournia 2006, pp. 675-679.

Sanctuaries at Thera,[290] Despotiko,[291] Paros[292] and elsewhere have produced numerous objects in faience, glass, amber, ivory and ostrich eggs dated mostly between the late 8th and the 6th centuries BCE. Some of these may have been brought by Phoenician merchants although the Greeks also were active traders and seafarers during this period. For this reason, the presence of *orientalia* in Greek sanctuaries from the early 7th century BCE onwards does not necessarily imply a Phoenician presence or activity but it may be viewed as an expression of a broader, Mediterranean intercultural and commercial exchange with multiple participants. The main exception to this approach is the extremely rare occurrence of Phoenician inscriptions, primarily votive, which confirm that some (coastal) sanctuaries were occasionally frequented by Phoenician seafarers.

6. Concluding Remarks: Aegean Reflections of Phoenician History?

The distribution of Phoenician or Phoenician-related evidence in the Aegean is chronologically and geographically disparate, with certain areas enjoying a privileged and more enduring connection with the Near East. The earliest Near Eastern evidence dates to the 11th century BCE and was produced in funerary contexts of Euboea (Lefkandi), Crete (Knossos, Amari) and Rhodes (Ayia Agathe). Such evidence displays a predominantly Cypriot character, suggesting that Cyprus had not ceased its maritime ventures in the Mediterranean after the end of the Late Bronze Age. Cypriot evidence from Sub-Mycenaean and Sub-Minoan contexts also implies that it was thanks to the Cypriots that the Aegean restored its contacts with the eastern Mediterranean after the demise of the Late Bronze Age socio-economic system. During the same period, metropolitan Phoenicia had already begun to recover from the crisis of c. 1200 BCE and from the consequent deterioration of international trade. Certain Phoenician cities, namely Sidon and Byblos, were more successful in this process and managed to dominate the political and economic life of Early Iron Age Phoenicia until the 10th century BCE.[293] However, this early commercial expansion was chiefly a land-based phenomenon of a Levantine scale, in which Sidon, with a relatively large and more accessible hinterland, played an important role.[294] The tale of Wenamun is the most important albeit not the only document referring to this somewhat obscure period of Phoenician history.[295] In this Byblos occupies a privileged place as the most powerful port of Phoenicia and the main exporter to Egypt of timber from the Lebanese cedar woods. That Cyprus was included in those early maritime ventures of the Phoenicians is evidenced through the occurrence of Phoenician pottery in Cypriot contexts dating to the 11th century BCE. The Aegean, however, was not within the orbit of those early Phoenician commercial affinities that were dominated by Sidon and Byblos. The two geographic entities, the Aegean and the Levant, were instead linked via Cyprus that retained its leading position in the trade and maritime exchange networks operated in the eastern Mediterranean. Cypriot merchants and mariners acted (also) as middlemen between the Aegean and the Levant,[296] a role to which they were accustomed from the Late Bronze Age.[297]

Unless the vessels reaching the Aegean from the eastern Mediterranean in the 11th century BCE had mixed crews of Cypriots and Levantines, a hypothesis that is largely based on similar assumptions about

290 Sigalas 2000.

291 Kourayos 2012.

292 Rubensohn 1962.

293 Aubet 2001, p. 29.

294 Markoe 2000, pp. 31-32.

295 Markoe 2000, p. 31.

296 Pedrazzi 2016, p. 18.

297 Knapp 2018, p. 192.

Late Bronze Age ships and seafaring,[298] archaeological evidence suggests that the Phoenicians were not really present in the Aegean prior to the 10th century BCE. This chronology coincides with a significant turning point in the history of Phoenicia: the arrival on the throne of Tyre of king Hiram I (971-939 BCE). This is the time when the balance of power between Sidon and Tyre began to shift in favour of the latter. During the reign of Hiram I and his successors Tyre occupied a position of hegemony among the Phoenician cities, to the extent that from the 10th century BCE «the history of Phoenicia merges into the history of Tyre».[299] Back then a little island «in the midst of the sea» (Ezekiel 27,32) but at a convenient distance from the Phoenician mainland, Tyre became the most important port in the Early Iron Age Mediterranean and generator of the most thriving era in Phoenician history. The prosperity of Tyre rested on the city's vigorous long-distance maritime activity that after exceeding the geographical limits of Cyprus was no longer restricted to the eastern Mediterranean. When one looks for the archaeological confirmation of those long-distance maritime ventures, the importance of the Aegean becomes obvious. Early evidence for Phoenician commercial presence in Greece can be found primarily at the archaeological record of Kommos, where Phoenician pottery starts to occur in considerable numbers as early as the second half of the 10th century BCE, and at some rich Late Protogeometric burials at Lefkandi. Phoenician and Near Eastern imports from Lefkandi reflect the privileged access of the local elite to products originating in Phoenicia and the Near East and may have been the result of trade as well as gift exchange. The presence of Euboean pottery in the eastern Mediterranean already in the 10th century BCE suggests that the networks linking the Aegean to the East were certainly active by that time and possibly included ethnically diverse agents and joint enterprises. With regard to Phoenician textual evidence, the inscribed bowl from Knossos, dating towards the end of the 10th century BCE, points to the possibility, for the first time, of a more permanent Phoenician presence on Crete. Regardless of whether the bowl belonged to a Phoenician resident or was merely an import, the attestation of a Phoenician inscription indicates that the gradual familiarisation of the Greeks with the *Phoinikeia grammata* that is with the script of the Phoenicians, had started already in the late 10th century BCE, significantly earlier than the first Greek alphabetic inscriptions occurred around the middle of the 8th century BCE. The occurrence of securely identified Phoenician evidence on Crete, both archaeological and textual, at such an early date is easily explained by the island's strategic position that facilitated access to the eastern Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Egypt and to the Greek mainland. The presence of Phoenician pottery at Kommos in particular, a site that is located along intra-Mediterranean rather than Aegean maritime routes, suggests that Phoenician commerce in the 10th century BCE had proceeded further west into the Mediterranean,[300] as evidence from metalliferous Sardinia also verifies.[301] This "pre-colonial" stage of expansion could have been carried out effectively without the assistance of permanent settlements. Noticeably, Cypriot imports continued to flow into the Aegean in the 10th century and reflect the complex pattern of exchange between the Aegean, Cyprus and the Phoenician world during that period.

The power of Tyre increased and the commercial empire of the city was further expanded under king Ithobaal I (887-856 BCE) and his dynasty. It was during his reign that a second artificial port, called Egyptian, was constructed to the south of the city, alongside the pre-existing natural port to the north, called Sidonian. It was also within the reign of Ithobaal I that Sidon fell within the political orbit of Tyre for the first time, creating a confederation that would last until the end of the 8th century BCE. Through Ithobaal I, Tyre's initial efforts at colonisation found a clear expression. The king is credited with the establishment of two colonies, one at Auza in Libya and one at Batroun, north of Byblos. From that

298 Knapp 2018, pp. 193-194.

299 Aubet 2001, p. 31.

300 Markoe 2000, p. 33.

301 Botto 2009.

point onwards, Tyre was the source of nearly all subsequent Phoenician overseas foundations. The bulk of Tyre's colonial activity does not appear to antedate the first half of the 8th century BCE.[302] However the Phoenician settlement at Kition and the foundation of Carthage, both of which took place in the late 9th century BCE, demonstrate that the colonisation movement of Tyre was vigorous even before 800 BCE. Tyrian interest in Cyprus, that will reach its ultimate expression through the Phoenician establishment at Kition, stemmed from Tyre's wish to secure control over Cypriot copper. Yet it also favoured Phoenician trade activity with Greece, since from the 9th century BCE Phoenician imports in the Aegean, primarily at Crete, Euboea and the Dodecanese, started to increase. Such imports have been viewed as indicative of a rather sporadic activity of Phoenician merchants that recalls Homeric allusions to the Phoenicians (*Od.* XIII 272-277) and not as a centrally-orchestrated trade.[303] However, archaeological finds from Euboea, Attica, Knossos and the Idaean Cave indicate the presence of immigrant craftsmen from the Near East. These craftsmen, engaged mainly in the production of jewelry and ivory artefacts, taught their expertise to local apprentices. The transmission of new sophisticated techniques that were hitherto unknown in the Aegean, used for the production of luxury items is an expression of more composite patterns of economic transaction. This transmission could not be achieved through occasional trade only. It presupposes steadier interaction between people from the Levant and the Greeks. What Phoenicians obtained in exchange for their jewels, bronzes and trinkets is hard to designate although metals, for example silver from the mines of Lavrion, must have played a significant role in attracting them to the Aegean. In the 9th century BCE there was an additional dimension that made Phoenician presence in the Aegean worthy and profitable: the presence of an affluent local aristocracy with a high demand for luxury and prestige items. In the course of the 9th century people from the Levant had also started to frequent certain Greek sanctuaries, where objects associated with oriental deities indicate a Near Eastern contribution to Aegean religious beliefs. The same can be said about the presence of faience amulets and figurines in Greek burials of the Geometric period, for example at Middle Geometric Cos that outlines a Greek belief in the protective and apotropaic capacities of oriental divine figures. This transition of simple religious notions, in which the Phoenicians must have played an important role, was the result of regular contacts rather than a formal introduction of theology.[304] Those Levantine mariners visiting the Greek sanctuaries occasionally left written attestations of their visits, as the late 9th/early 8th century Semitic graffito from the temple of Apollo at Eretria that reads KPLŠ demonstrates. Furthermore, if the Phoenician interpretation of the tripillar shrine at Kommos is accepted, then by 800 BCE Phoenician cultic activity in the Aegean had assumed a more formal arrangement. The presence of Greek, mostly Euboean and Attic pottery in the Levant and Cyprus in the 9th and 8th century BCE, and the occurrence in the Aegean of Cypriote imports, often found in association with Near Eastern objects, suggest composite patterns of exchange between the aforementioned areas and indicate that the Phoenicians were not the only operators of long maritime ventures.

The most extraordinary outcome of cultural interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians in the Early Iron Age was the adoption of the Phoenician script and the subsequent creation of the Greek alphabet (Fig. 5). The reappearance of writing centuries after it had fallen into oblivion in Greece was a major step towards the Greek "renaissance" of the 8th century BCE. It has been thoroughly discussed by numerous scholars with due consideration of how, when and where this transmission took place.[305] The recent discovery of an extensive corpus of early alphabetic *graffiti* at Methone in northern Greece has further rein-

302 Bondì 2009, p. 89.

303 Aubet 2001, p. 54.

304 Shaw – Shaw 2000, pp. 167-170.

305 Bourguignon 2018; Mazarakis-Ainian 2000, pp. 119-132; Woodard 2010; Janko 2015; Bourogiannis 2018; Waal 2018.

PHOENICIAN — Shipitbaal inscription (c 925–900 B.C.); Mesha inscription (c. 830 B.C.); Kition inscription (c. 850–800 B.C.); Kara Tepe inscriptions (8th cent. B.C.); Cyprus, bronze bowl (c. 730 B.C.)

GREEK, 8th CENTURY B.C. — CRETAN (Herpetidamos); ATTIC (Dipylon oinochoe); EUBOEAN (Pithecusae, Lefkandi)

Phoenician	Greek
'Alep	Alpha
Bēt	Beta
Gimel	Gamma
Dalet	Delta
Hē'	Epsilon
Wāw	Digamma
	Upsilon
Zayn	Zeta
Ḥēt	(H)eta
Tēt	Theta
Yōd	Iota
Kapp	Kappa
Lamed	Lambda
Mēm	Mu
Nūn	Nu
Samek	Xi
'Ayin	Omicron
Pē	Pi
Ṣadē	San
Qop	Qoppa
Resh	Rho
Šin	Sigma
Tau	Tau
	Phi
	Chi

ALL LETTERS SHOWN IN RETROGRADE FORM

Fig. 5. Comparative table of Phoenician and earliest Greek alphabetical scripts (after Coldstream 2003, p. 297, fig. 94; © Routledge).

vigorated scholar interest in early alphabetic writing.[306] Although certain scholars date the introduction of the alphabet in the Greece as early as the 11th century BCE,[307] archaeological and textual evidence indicate that this introduction occurred around 800 BCE. The precise place of transmission remains elusive but it must coincide with an area where interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians was systematic, either in the Aegean or in the eastern Mediterranean.

306 Besios – Tzifopoulos – Kotsonas 2012; Straus Clay – Malkin – Tzifopoulos 2017.

307 Waal 2018.

Phoenician evidence in the Aegean increased further in the 8th and early 7th centuries BCE. This was a period of major political evolution and cultural vitality for the Greek world, epitomised in the formation of the *polis*. The new political ambience affected positively the Aegean economy and facilitated more reciprocal forms of interaction between the Phoenicians and the Greeks. At the same time, Greek sanctuaries thrived not just as centres of cult but also of economic transaction and cultural interaction, the use of writing spread rapidly, the Homeric epics were written down, Greek seafaring was intensified and the first colonisation initiatives on behalf of the Greeks were in full bloom.[308] Transition to the LG period in the middle of the 8th century BCE is marked by the abundance of objects imported from the Near East and dedicated to Greek sanctuaries, indicating that contacts between the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean were further intensified. At the same time, Near Eastern imports continued to be deposited in Greek burials. When looking at the Levant, the 8th century was a period of growing power for the Assyrian Empire that favoured the coastal cities of Phoenicia. The interest of the Assyrian monarchs in controlling the Phoenician ports was closely related to the strategic and commercial importance of the latter, since it was through the Phoenician cities that Assyria gained access to Mediterranean commercial networks and could counterbalance the power of its greatest rival, Egypt. Until the middle of the 8th century, the mercantile cities of Phoenicia, especially Tyre, enjoyed a tributary autonomous state, unaffected by Assyrian military aggression. This era of relative political independence for the Phoenician cities came to an abrupt end with the ascension of Tiglat-Pileser III (744-727 BCE) to the throne of Assyria. He quickly launched military campaigns aiming at the total conquest of the Levant. Although the cities of the northern Phoenician coast were fully annexed, Tyre was left intact. Tiglat-Pileser's leniency toward Tyre was the result of the city's commercial importance to the Assyrian empire.[309] From 734 BCE Assyrian inspectors and custom officials were present in the port of Tyre whereas at the end of Tiglat-Pileser's III reign, king Matan II (730-729 BCE) of Tyre was forced to pay tribute of 150 gold talents to Assyria, a sum that no tributary state had ever assessed so far. Assyria's active interest in Tyrian overseas trade is further stressed by the actions taken by Sargon II (722-705 BCE) in order to expand Assyrian control over Iadnana (Cyprus) and the copper-trade of Kition. This historic incident dating to 707 BCE is attested by the stele of Sargon II, found and probably also erected at Kition.[310]

Noticeably, none of the aforementioned incidents that took place in the second half of the 8th century seem to have had a negative effect on Phoenician presence and activity in the Aegean. On the contrary, evidence suggesting that Phoenicians, whether traders or craftsmen were not simply visiting but that some of them actually dwelled among Greeks in certain parts of the Aegean, becomes clearer around the end of the 8th and in the early 7th century BCE. The two most convincing cases are the numerous Phoenician-type juglets from Rhodian funerary and cultic contexts of the final 8th and early 7th century BCE, that possibly relate to Phoenicians living on Rhodes and engaging in the production and trade of unguents, as well as the three cippi from Crete dated to approximately the same period, that seem to confirm the presence of Phoenician *metoikoi* and subsequently of their distinguishable funerary customs on the island. Seventh century has also produced sound written attestations of Phoenicians visiting the Greek sanctuaries, evidenced through the presence of Semitic inscriptions on votive offerings, particularly on Rhodes. In the 8th and 7th centuries, sanctuaries, especially those situated along major maritime routes, provided an ideal setting for contacts and favoured consumption and cultural interaction between peoples of different ethnic backgrounds, not only in the Aegean but in the whole of ancient Mediterranean.[311] Moreover, the Greek (.ΝΟΣ ΗΜΙ) and Phoenician (KD Q.[K or T]) graffiti on fragments of the same vessel from Ialysos on Rhodes, dated to the late 7th

308 For a different approach to Greek colonisation, see Donnellan 2016.

309 Markoe 2000, p. 42; Aubet 2001, pp. 55-57.

310 Cannavò 2015, pp. 3-4.

311 Kistler *et al.* 2015; Russo Tagliente – Guarneri 2016.

century BCE, could indicate the presence of a bilingual community on this strategically located island. The presence in burials and sanctuaries of faience figurines and amulets portraying eastern deities continued in the 7th century and shows that the Greeks had become familiar with popular religious beliefs originating in Egypt and the Near East. This is evidenced also by the occurrence in some Greek sanctuaries of clay masks that refer to religious rites originating in Phoenicia.

This enhanced Phoenician presence in the Aegean from ca. 700 BCE onwards is not simply the result of a more affluent and cosmopolitan 7th century Aegean. It may relate also to the actions by Assyrian king Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) in the Syro-Palestinian littoral. For reasons that may relate to the anti-Assyrian policy of king Luli of Tyre (729-694 BCE), Sennacherib invaded Tyre in 701 BCE, depriving the city of at least part of its territory and forcing the city's king Luli (729-694 BCE) to escape to Cyprus. Luli's flee marked the termination of a long Assyrian relationship with Tyre, which combined the city's autonomous state with Assyrian management of its resources. By isolating Tyre by its mainland dependencies, Sennacherib cut off a significant element of the city's power base. Tyre was now fully dependent on its overseas possessions for economic growth and support. The Aegean was certainly within the orbit of Tyre's overseas activity and therefore it must have been affected by the rearrangement of the city's economic life after 701 BCE and during the first decades of the 7th century. This is exactly the time when the Aegean seems to produce some of its most compelling archaeological evidence not just for Phoenician activity but also for a more permanent Phoenician presence (though never of any real colonies).

Admittedly, during the 7th century multiple trade networks linked the Aegean to the eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, the presence of Near Eastern artefacts in the increasingly orientalising setting of 7th century Greece makes their Phoenician interpretation less straightforward. Phoenician evidence in the Aegean reduces in the second half of the 7th BCE.[312] This change may once again reflect the historical circumstances in metropolitan Phoenicia. A severe land blockade of Tyre by Ashurbanipal (668-631 BCE) in 663/662 BCE, left the city isolated and her mainland possessions were stripped. By 640 BCE the entire mainland territory of Tyre was annexed by Assyria prompting Tyre's King Baal (680-640 BCE) surrender and submission.[313] If previously suggested associations between Phoenician evidence in the Aegean and the political setting in the Levant are justified, then Phoenician presence in Early Iron Age Greece, especially between the late 9th and the middle of the 7th century BCE, seems to reflect the historical and political conditions of Tyre and most probably also of Kition.

When Phoenician evidence in the Aegean becomes abundant again in the Late Classical and Hellenistic period, Phoenician presence will reflect a completely different political and economic setting compared to that of the Early Iron Age.

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312 Ioannou 2017, p. 441.

313 Auber 2001, p. 59.

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