

Phoenician Mortuary Practice in the Iron Age I – III (ca. 1200 – ca. 300 BCE)
Levantine “Homeland”

by

Helen M. Dixon

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Doctoral Committee

Associate Professor Brian B. Schmidt, Co-Chair
Professor Janet E. Richards, Co-Chair
Associate Professor J.P. Dessel, University of Tennessee
Professor Margaret C. Root
Professor Philip C. Schmitz, Eastern Michigan University

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List of Abbreviations

Abbr.	Work	Edited
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i> , Paris: e Reipublicae Typographeo.	Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (1881)
CoS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> , three volumes, New York: Brill.	W.W. Hallo and K.L. Younger (1997-2002)
CSAI	Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions project: Corpus of Phoenician Inscriptions from the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut (with other collections planned for cataloging; online database available at csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai/html/index.html)	Università di Pisa, American University of Beirut, the British Museum, and other institutions (begun in 1999)
FGrH	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , fifteen volumes, Berlin: Weidmann.	Felix Jacoby (1923-1958, parts 1-3; parts 4-5 published posthumously through 1998)
Gibson	<i>A Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, Vol. 3: Phoenician Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect of Arslan Tash</i> , Oxford: Clarendon Press.	John C.L. Gibson (1982)
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> , Vol. 1, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz [5th edition]	H. Donner and W. Röllig (1962-63 [2002])
RÉS	<i>Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique</i> .	Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (1900-1950)

Abstract

This dissertation examines the mortuary practices of the Iron I through Iron III / Persian period Levantine Phoenicians to document and analyze material expressions of social identity. Previous scholarship on Iron I-II Phoenicians has emphasized their city-based political allegiances on the one hand, and relatively uniform material culture on the other. But political or cultural affiliation with a particular city does not seem to be consistently signaled in the mortuary record of the central coastal Levant in these early periods.

The history of the Phoenicians, or inhabitants of the Iron Age central coastal Levant, has long been told from the perspective of their neighbors – via the texts of the Hebrew Bible, Greek and Roman authors, and inscriptions from Western Phoenician and Punic “colonies.” This has been the case in part because the most significant Phoenician cities (e.g. Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre) have been continually inhabited since the Iron Age (or earlier), and extensive excavation in these urban centers is not fully possible. However, a significant number of Iron Age burials found outside settlement boundaries – in the form of isolated tombs, clusters of graves, and extensive cemeteries – have been explored or excavated since the 1850s throughout coastal southern Syria, Lebanon, and northern Israel. This project catalogs the more than 1400 burials known from the Phoenician “homeland” to date, offering a substantive contribution to a social history of the Levantine Phoenicians in the earliest periods of their cultural distinctiveness.

The study begins with a reassessment of all inscriptions relating to Phoenician mortuary practice thought to date to the Iron I-II (Chapter II) and Persian – Hellenistic (Chapter III) periods. The literary sources for Phoenician mortuary practice are then analyzed, first addressing the Biblical texts (Chapter IV), and then classical sources (Chapter V). This newly evaluated textual corpus is finally supplemented with a discussion of the burial database and mortuary landscapes of the Iron I through Iron III / Persian period central coastal Levant (Chapter VI). All of this material is incorporated into a discussion of the treatment of the dead as a stage for Phoenician meaning-making in the Iron I through Persian periods, and a reassessment of Phoenician social identity fluctuating across this era, spanning multiple shifts in political power (Chapter VII).

An examination of the Phoenician mortuary record indicates no sharp regional distinctions in material culture reflective of an expected city-based model of Phoenician identity. Instead, a significant degree of variation is evident in individual cemeteries, indicating that Iron I-II period Phoenicians wished to “signal” not political allegiance or ethnic identity, but other aspects of their social identities in death. Contrasting the burial data from these early centuries with the innovative mortuary practices which arose in the better-documented Iron III / Persian period illustrates how the Achaemenid Persian imperial presence in the region seems to have significantly altered these early Phoenician concepts of social status and affiliation.

Chapter I.

Introduction and Literature Review

A. Goals of the Present Study

This study will provide an examination and analysis of the Iron Age I-III (ca. 1200 – ca. 300 BCE) evidence for Levantine Phoenician mortuary practice – textual and archaeological – known to date. A better grasp of the beliefs, practices, and social identities expressed in the mortuary record will be used to lay the foundations for a new social history of Phoenicia in the Iron I-III periods, exploring the varieties of Phoenician treatments of their dead as a unique perspective on the world of the living. As part of this source inventory, I have constructed a database of all known burials (along with a catalog of all burial sites) from the Phoenician “homeland” (coastal areas located in what is today southern Syria, Lebanon, and northern Israel)¹ dating to this period.² Although Phoenician burials have been known, explored, and documented since the 1850s, a complete corpus of these burials has not until now been attempted, nor has any consistent set of variables been used to organize previously published burials.

¹ I refer to the “Phoenician homeland” interchangeably with the “central coastal Levant;” both terms are intended to refer to Phoenician-inhabited or –associated territories in the modern territories of southern coastal Syria, Lebanon, and northern coastal Israel. While the term “Levant” can be used generally to refer to the entire Mediterranean littoral from Egypt to Anatolia, I use it in this study in a much more circumscribed manner to refer to that region in which Northwest Semitic dialects characterized the primary linguistic communities during the Iron Age (i.e. southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria southward to southern Israel).

² The catalog of Phoenician burial sites was mapped using ArcGIS to examine regional distribution; the database of individual burials was built and queried in FileMaker Pro to allow maximum flexibility with this corpus (see chapter VI).

This project is also unique in attempting to identify and isolate Iron I-III Levantine Phoenician burial evidence both chronologically (separating it from Hellenistic evidence) and geographically (analyzing it distinct from Carthaginian or other Mediterranean Phoenician or Punic practices). The chronological parameters of this study are outlined broadly in archaeological parlance (i.e. Iron Age I-III), to allow comparison between the collected burial data and other archaeological evidence. This practice can constrain the analysis at times (as in the case of discussion of inscribed stelae from a cemetery in continuous use over the course of the Iron II – III periods), requiring a division of the inscriptional corpus in ways that may seem arbitrary or awkward. The use of these archaeologically-centered terms is intended to (a) allow quick comparison and integration between inscriptional, literary textual, and archaeological evidence; (b) provide parameters for situating the Phoenician mortuary practices these texts and burials witness within the larger historical context of the region; and (c) reflect some meaningful changes in social and political changes in the region under consideration. The Iron Age I period (ca. 1200 - ca. 1000 BCE)³ marks the beginning of our application of the (admittedly anachronistic) term “Phoenician” to the materially distinct culture of the people of the central coastal Levant (see also below, on the origins of the Phoenicians, for the difficulty of greater precision on this issue). In the Levant, the Iron Age I period is marked by New Kingdom Egyptian political involvement and cultural exchange. The onset of the Iron II period (ca. 1000 – ca. 500 BCE) coincides with our earliest information about Phoenician political structures, and the appearance of extensive texts in the Phoenician

³ My dates for the Iron I period are meant to correlate with (but cannot be exact as) the dates obtained by Gilboa and Stern (2003). In their monumental study, they cross-dated the ceramic repertoires in the principal stratigraphic sequences for the Late Bronze - Iron Age transitions at Tell Dor, Tell Mevorakh, ‘En Hagit, Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Keisan, Tyre, Sarepta (II/Y), and Megiddo. Throughout I have used rounded designations for the Iron I (1200-1000 BCE), Iron II (1000-500 BCE), Iron III (500-300 BCE) and other periods. This is intended to flag my own designations as necessarily imprecise; identifications of the inscriptional and archaeological evidenced used in this study have been based on excavator’s designations, as opposed to a reanalysis of ceramic finds.

language. It is perhaps no coincidence that this happened during the age of Assyrian expansion into the Levant; the formation of secondary states at the edges of empires is well documented and studied. The Iron III period (ca. 500 – ca. 300 BCE)⁴ is marked by Achaemenid Persian rule in the Levant, and ensuing economic prosperity for some Phoenician city-states. Finally, the first centuries of the Hellenistic and Roman periods (ca. 300 BCE – ca. 300 CE) represent on the one hand an explosion in textual material relating to the Phoenicians, and on the other hand the eventual loss of Phoenician cultural distinctiveness as such in the central coastal Levant. Phoenician-ness is especially in flux during these later periods, as it is re-negotiated and transformed through increasing international engagement.

There is a significant gulf between the number, length, and pertinence of extant textual sources for Phoenician mortuary practice dating to the earlier periods considered by this study (Iron I-II) and the later Achaemenid (Iron III) period. Classical or Hellenistic sources represent an even larger corpus. This study began as an attempt to isolate information for mortuary practices in the earliest periods of Phoenician cultural distinctiveness (therefore assessing later sources in terms of what they might tell us about these earliest periods of Phoenician cultural distinctiveness). But it is difficult to talk about Phoenician identity or social norms in the Iron II, for example, without referencing the larger and more nuanced corpus of textual, iconographical, and archaeological material available from the Persian period. On the other hand, it is difficult to examine the variety of Persian period Phoenician evidence without noting the large-scale and wide-ranging shift in mortuary practices that seems to have occurred during the Iron II-III transition. This tension between continuity and change will be

⁴ Phoenicia came under Achaemenid Persian control sometime between Cyrus the Great's conquest of Sippar and Babylon in 539 BCE, and the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 BCE (see for example Markoe 2000, 49).

present at each stage of this study; the chronological parameters I offer to structure this work will no doubt shape its results in many ways.

Geographically speaking, I have for brevity's sake adopted the term Phoenician "homeland," defined as the territories of the central coastal Levant (i.e. modern southern Syria, Lebanon, and northern Israel). The homeland is designated as distinct from the Phoenician "diaspora": sites outside the homeland territory that show clear ties to the Phoenician homeland through their use of Levantine ceramic styles, forms, and technologies, building techniques, and written language; as well as their distinctiveness from nearby regional ceramic styles, language, or other cultural features (as well as references in non-Phoenician sources to Phoenician settlements). Textual and archaeological evidence will further be organized and presented in regional terms, either within the Levantine territories of the Phoenician homeland or those further afield. The designation of the Phoenician homeland is not intended to imply that material culture, political structures, ritual practices, or other meaning-making traditions were homogenous within its boundaries; in fact, quite the opposite. Isolating the Levantine Phoenician evidence is intended to allow closer examination of variation in mortuary practice within this territory.

The database of burials will therefore be limited to those located in coastal Levantine sites identified by their excavators as distinctly "Phoenician" in their material culture (usually based on ceramic repertoire⁵), and dating to the Iron Age I-III periods. The mortuary analysis undertaken in this study will therefore allow diachronic observations regarding societal, political, or religious changes introduced or affected by interaction and engagement with other cultures (especially Assyrian / Babylonian imperial pressure), and changes in

⁵ Namely, the presence of Phoenician or Cypro-Phoenician bichrome pottery styles (see below), or the "mushroom-lipped jug" that has been called the Phoenician "calling card," identifiable from sites from the Levant to Morocco (see Fletcher 2006).

expressions of social status arising from the changing political structures introduced under Achaemenid Persian rule. The varieties of Phoenician mortuary practice evince complicated, changing, and subtle expressions of many kinds of social identity – beyond either an homogenous “Phoenician” cultural identity or a simple city-based political identity.

I first offer a reassessment of all Phoenician (and other relevant Semitic) inscriptions which represent Phoenician mortuary practice in their inscriptional content, iconographical resonance, or archaeological context. I begin with those inscriptions which date to the Iron Age I-II periods (Chapter II), and then explore inscriptions created in the Persian – Hellenistic (Chapter III) periods. The subsequent two chapters assess literary texts which bear on issues in Phoenician mortuary practice, namely Biblical texts from Israel and Judah (Chapter IV), and classical or Greco-Roman writings (Chapter V). This freshly evaluated textual corpus is then enriched with a discussion of the newly constructed database of over 1300 Phoenician burials, and a site-by-site investigation of the mortuary landscape of the Iron Age I-III periods in the central coastal Levant (Chapter VI). All of this material is then incorporated into a discussion of the treatment of the dead as a stage for Phoenician meaning-making in the Iron I-III periods, and a reassessment of Phoenician social identity in these periods (Chapter VII).

B. Histories of Phoenicia since 1988

The historical study of Phoenician civilization has made breathtaking progress in the last quarter century. A number of factors have contributed to this growth – the explosion of archaeological projects around the Mediterranean basin, improvements in both technology and funding for ceramic ware study, advancements in maritime archaeology, the stabilization of Lebanon’s political climate after its fifteen year civil war, enthusiastic collaboration between international academic institutions, and even the influence of changes in other, related

academic fields (for example, the reexamination of neighboring Iron Age Levantine cultures like Israel/Judah,⁶ Ammon,⁷ Moab,⁸ Edom,⁹ Aram,¹⁰ and Sam'al¹¹ in light of new chronological considerations). The expanding field of Empire Studies (and Achaemenid Studies in particular) has contributed to new thinking on Phoenician topics, as has an increasingly nuanced exploration of materiality and visual culture within and under the influence of empire building.¹²

The last quarter-century of Phoenician scholarship can be framed by the appearance of the monumental work¹³ edited by Sabatino Moscati, *I Fenici*, released in Italian and English translation (as *The Phoenicians*) in 1988. This volume contained both a catalogue of the 1988 Palazzo Grassi exhibit in Venice (including nine hundred sixty-six objects gathered from more than twenty-five Mediterranean museums,¹⁴ all photographed and described) and a collection of forty-seven articles on Phoenician culture, history, sites and settlements, as well as eighteen articles devoted to different types of artifacts. Moscati's compilation not only provided a comprehensive overview of Phoenician studies to this point, it also served as a kind of *de facto* source book – with archaeological drawings and photographs, as well as color renderings of many Phoenician inscriptions, most previously unavailable. In the first of the volume's articles, "A Civilization Rediscovered," Moscati assesses the field as it stood in the late 1980s,

⁶ Liverani 2005; Finkelstein & Silberman 2006; Miller & Hayes 2006; Grabbe 2007; Finkelstein, Mazar, & Schmidt 2007; etc.

⁷ Tyson 2011.

⁸ Routledge 2004

⁹ Finkelstein 1992; Bienkowski 1992; Crowell 2004.

¹⁰ Lipiński 2000; Hafhorsson 2006.

¹¹ Most relevantly, Younger 2009; Struble and Herrmann 2009.

¹² For example, Root 1979; Dusinberre 2003; Feldman 2006. Jigoulov 2010 offers a good example of the growing trend to treat the Persian Period as a serious phenomenon in its own right (in this case, with respect to Phoenicia), rather than to gloss it as an afterthought.

¹³ Called "stupendous" by Joffe 2003, 42.

¹⁴ As pointed out by Segert (1991, 812-813), only one museum from Lebanon (The Archaeology Museum of the American University of Beirut) and none from Libya was represented, due to the political situation at the time. In particular, the Lebanese National Museum's placement on the Green Line in Beirut precluded any access to its collections.

writing that “...it is not difficult to understand how, until about 25 years ago, the very existence of Phoenician studies constituted a subject for debate.”¹⁵ This watershed edited volume represented one of the first attempts at a synthetic history of Phoenicia that incorporated archaeology and text, Mediterranean sites and Levantine “homeland.” Moscati went on to assert that:

At last, a number of questions are being answered. How can we define Phoenician civilization? What are the essential features of its history? How, why and when did the Phoenician colonization of the Mediterranean begin? How can we successfully integrate our former and present knowledge of their culture, religion and art?¹⁶

The questions Moscati’s volume set out to answer are still in large part the questions being pursued by scholars of the Phoenician world; and the troubles of the field implied by Moscati’s first chapter – the widely disparate training of those who study Phoenicians in various ways and places, the specialization of the different sub-literatures, and the paucity of hard data coupled with the looseness of interpretation – are criticisms still being leveled today (though at different scales, to be sure). For both the overwhelming value of its contribution, and the continued viability of the debates it chronicled, Moscati’s 1988 work remains a defining moment in the historiography of Phoenician studies (a fact reaffirmed by its re-release in paperback in 2001, although without the exhibition catalog and introduction).

I count no fewer than thirty-five published works (articles, edited volumes, and monographs)¹⁷ published since 1988 offering a synthetic or comprehensive history of the

¹⁵ Moscati 1989, 11. Further: “On one side, the specialists in epigraphy dealt with inscriptions with an eye to the language, literature and history of the Semitic peoples, showing no interest or competence in archaeology; on the other side, archaeologists excavating in the Punic world were more interested in classical evidence, for that was all they were competent in. Those who knew about language knew nothing about archaeology; those who knew about archaeology knew nothing of language” (Moscati 1989, 11).

¹⁶ Moscati 1989, 16.

¹⁷ From oldest to newest, the histories of Phoenicia produced since 1988, and known to me, include: Moscati 1988; Wagner 1989; Moscati 1989; Gras, Rouillard, and Teixidor 1989; Grainger 1991; Peckham 1992; Lipiński, Baurain, Bonnet, Debergh, Gubel, and Krings 1992; Amadasi Guzzo 1992; Baurain and Bonnet 1992; Briquel-Chatonnet 1993;

Phoenicians. Composed in French, English, Italian, German, and Spanish, they reflect the swelling volume of archaeological data, new developments in ceramic typology and other chronological markers, and the changing tides of scholarly emphasis and interest. These histories include several that focus on Western colonies and sites,¹⁸ or on the later periods of Phoenician history,¹⁹ as well as a number of research guides or dictionaries.²⁰ All of this inspired Joffe to write, in 2003, that “the Phoenician heartland is beginning to stand on its own again.”²¹

This proliferation of data and historical narratives has further underlined several points of contention or divergence among scholars of Phoenicia. Since the present study aims to contribute to a refinement of our understanding of expressions of cultural identity in the central coastal Levant (and therefore to a reevaluation of markers of “Phoenician-ness”), a brief exploration of these controversial issues in the field is in order.

C. Points of Divergence in Phoenician Scholarship

In the sections that follow, I will identify and summarize some of the most notable points of divergence in the above-mentioned histories and their sources in the 1970s and 1980s. The purpose of this section is to illustrate some of the topics in which scholarly disagreement might be located in the historical narrative as it is currently understood and where this dissertation hopes to contribute. By identifying these divergent points – where

Ward 1994; Krings 1995; Lipiński 1995; Ward 1997a; Pietschmann 1997; Markoe 1997; Herm and Colombo 1997; Fantar 1997; Acquario 1999; Niemeyer 2000; Markoe 2000; Krahmalkov 2000; Wagners 2001; Aubet 2001; Lipiński 2004; Doumet-Serhal, Rabaste, and Resek 2004; Briquel-Chatonnet and Gubel 2004; Bonnet 2004; Fontan 2007; Witte and Diehl 2008; Sommer 2008; Sagona 2008; Doumet-Serhal 2009; Acquario and de Vita 2010; Woolmer 2011; Schmitz 2012; Elayi 2013; Peckham 2013. My sincere gratitude to Schmitz for his assistance in compiling this list. Any omissions or errors are my own.

¹⁸ Fantar 1997, Aubet 2001, Sagona 2008, and Schmitz 2012.

¹⁹ Grainger 1991 and Jigoulov 2010.

²⁰ Lipiński et al. 1992, Amadasi-Guzzo 1992, Krings 1995.

²¹ Joffe 2003, 42; in his review of Markoe 2000.

interpretations of the source materials may vary extensively – the gaps in our current understanding of Phoenician history can be better isolated and further investigated. In even the most recent histories, significant differences arise based on which types of available textual and material evidence is privileged or how disparate data points are connected and interpreted as part of a narrative framework.

1. Boundaries of the Phoenician “Homeland”

The geographical limits of the Phoenician Homeland are, in general outline, agreed upon not only within available Iron II period ancient sources²² but also in modern histories of Phoenicia. A coastal strip ranging from modern-day northern Israel, north through Lebanon and into southern Syria (approximately 200 miles in length) is broadly understood to be the territory in which the Iron I-III Phoenician cities first arose or distinguished themselves culturally. The Lebanon mountain range is thought to have been a fairly stable eastern border, as a formidable physical obstacle²³ to cultural and political expansion.

²² Note especially references made to “Tyre, Byblos, and Aradus” by Assyrian and Babylonian kings, “possibly a cliché meaning all of Phoenicia” (Ward 1994b, 188).

²³ The Lebanon mountain range averages over 2200 m in height along its 170 km extent, running parallel to the Mediterranean coast along the extent of the modern boundaries of Lebanon.

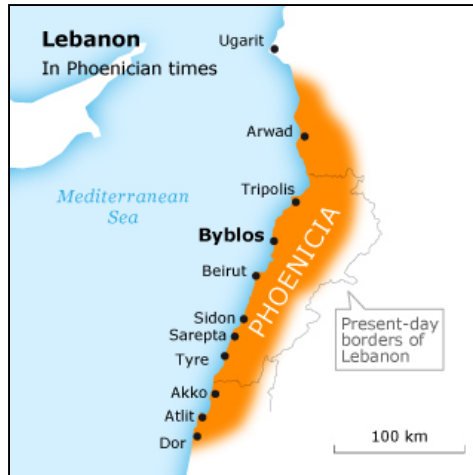


Figure I.1: A Typical Map of the Phoenician Homeland
 (<http://fanack.com/countries/lebanon/history/phoenicians-or-canaanites/>)

But at a smaller scale, discrepancies arise as to the limits of the sphere of Phoenician cultural influence. As with all boundaries, the lines we draw between “Phoenician” and “non-Phoenician” material culture on the periphery of this area on a site-by-site basis will necessarily be relatively unreliable, determined by a kind of implicit or explicit trait list (detailing specific ceramic forms and types, styles of building construction, the presence or absence of imports and luxury goods, and so on) which may reflect modern conceptions of “significance” more than past concepts of social or political identities. With this in mind, a brief survey of the geographical boundaries drawn around the “Phoenician Homeland” by some of the more recent Phoenician histories offers a useful indication of the variation involved:

- “Syrian littoral north of Palestine,”²⁴
- “Phoenicia lies along a narrow coastal strip for roughly two hundred miles, from the island of Aradus (modern Arwad) in the north to Tyre in the south. The Lebanon mountain range to the east has throughout history created a political and cultural barrier between the coast and inland Syria.”²⁵

²⁴ Peckham 1992, 349.

²⁵ Ward 1994b, 183.

- “coastal region of the eastern Mediterranean, where the land faces west between the outlet of the Orontes River in the north and Mount Carmel in the south. ...encompassed between the sea and the Ansariya, Lebanon, and Galilee ranges....”²⁶
- “the narrow strip of land between the Lebanon mountains and the Mediterranean coast from southern Syria to northern Palestine.”²⁷
- “the coastal region of southern Syria-Lebanon-Israel. Extending roughly from the city of Arwad (Aradus) in the north to Ascalon in the south....”²⁸
- “According to the ancient classical authors, they occupied the entire Levantine coast between the Suez and the Gulf of Alexandretta. In actuality, however, their heartland was considerably smaller, consisting of a narrow coastal strip between the Lebanon Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea stretching from northern Palestine to southern Syria – a slightly extended version of modern Lebanon.”²⁹
- “The territory of Phoenicia lies between the mountains of Lebanon to the east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west with a surface area that varied between 7 to 30 miles wide. The northern boundary was the isle of Arvad, ancient Aradus, with the southern frontier in northern Palestine at Akko (Acre) and the promontory of Mount Carmel.”³⁰

Most of these histories place the northern boundary at or just north of the island of Arad, off the coast of southern Syria; while the southern limits of Phoenician territory vary widely – from Tyre (in southern Lebanon) to Akko/Acre and Mount Carmel (in northern Israel, near Haifa) and even further south to Ashkelon (in southern Israel, near the northern boundary of the Gaza Strip). This variation results both from how “Phoenician-ness” in the archaeological record is determined, and from whether textual evidence, or archaeological evidence is favored.

For the purposes of the present study, I will accept the identification of homeland sites (and burials) as “Phoenician” when the dominant ceramic traditions, building techniques, and other aspects of material culture at the site have been determined by the excavators to be “Phoenician” in nature. Because the scope of this study precludes any reanalysis of the

²⁶ Lipiński 1995b, 1321.

²⁷ Ward 1997a, 313.

²⁸ Krahmalkov 2000, 1053.

²⁹ Markoe 2000, 10-11.

³⁰ Doumet-Serhal 2009, 517.

ceramics affiliated with individual burials, this is a necessary (although at times frustrating) limitation of the current analysis.

2. Phoenician “Ethnicity” and the Origins of the Phoenicians

“Usually it is difficult enough just trying to figure out what people ate and how long they lived, much less who they thought they were and why.”³¹

The history of definition and discussion surrounding the term “ethnicity” is notoriously dense. For my present purposes I utilize a synthetic definition derived from Barth (1969) and the survey of ethnographic studies put forth in Finkelstein (1997): Ethnicity is created through both self-ascription and ascription by others, and is marked by cultural characteristics (chief among them are language, script, ritual behavior, physical features, dietary choices, and aspects of material culture, including architectural forms, clothing style, mortuary practices, and style of artifacts made for both every day and special occasions).

Phoenician ethnicity has long been determined by outsiders. The earliest appearance of a term akin to “Phoenicians” (Greek Φοινίκη; Phoiníkē) occurs in Homer’s *Odyssey*,³² and it is perhaps telling that the Greek term, despite its anachronistic associations, is still employed today. In 1983, Röllig criticized the “rather imprecise concept of the Phoenicians” employed by most scholars, but argued that “this need not surprise us unduly since the nation itself never developed an idea of ‘Phoenician’ as a national concept.”³³ Most of our inscriptional

³¹ Joffe 2001, 212.

³² All dates associated with Homer are highly controversial – the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is estimated by various scholars anywhere from the 8th – 6th centuries BCE, although the text was not stabilized until the 2nd century BCE (in Alexandria). Because the term was also used by Herodotus (ca. 484 BCE – ca. 425 BCE) in his *Histories*, it is safe to say this nomenclature was in common use by the 5th century, although the semantic range of the term seems imprecise.

³³ Röllig 1983, 79; that is, “In contexts where we might expect such an ethnonym to occur we find only the term ‘Canaanite’ used.” Moscati went even further, arguing that “there is no such thing as a clear-cut, broadly

evidence indicates that the populations others referred to as “Phoenicians” self-identified in terms of city-based affiliations or family ties during the Iron II-III periods; the tendency in presentations of Phoenician history from the past twenty-five years has been to emphasize these city-based allegiances, or to describe them politically in terms of a working confederacy.³⁴ These kinds of descriptions further underscore the tentative nature of any strict boundary-drawing in determining the limits of the “Phoenician homeland,” while still emphasizing a specific territory as the point of origin for Phoenician trade and cultural influence.

The Iron I period is generally thought to mark the emergence of the Phoenicians as a politically, religiously, and perhaps even ethnically distinct entity on the Levantine coast. That said, it may be a more accurate characterization of many scholars’³⁵ historiographical view to say that it was at the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200 BCE³⁶) that certain city states or regional polities appeared thereafter to be differentiated from the relatively homogenous Canaanite material culture of the Levant that preceded it. In other words, the early Iron I period did not witness a sudden “appearance” of something others would come to call Phoenicia or Phoenician city-states; instead the transition was one of a general disruption of other sites and regional cultures in the Levant.

accepted definition of the Phoenicians as a people with an acknowledged territory of their own, a sufficiently homogeneous language, and a common historical and cultural background” (Moscati 1989, 24).

³⁴ For example, Markoe’s (2000, 10-11) characterization: “Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Arwad were all fiercely independent, rival cities who rarely worked in concert with one another, except under common threat.... Unlike their Syrian or Palestinian neighbours, the Phoenicians were a confederation of traders rather than a country defined by territorial boundaries. Their empire was less a stretch of land than a patchwork of widely scattered merchant communities. Maritime trade, not territory, defined their sphere.”

³⁵Cf., for example, Moscati (1989, 24) who characterizes the Late Bronze culture as “Syrian” or “Syro-Palestinian,” of which Iron I “Phoenician” civilization was the direct successor.

³⁶ I use this date as an index rather than to indicate a specific event. As Dever explains: “The Bronze Age does not end in a single, sudden cataclysm around 1200 B.C., as conventional portraits sometimes suggest, but rather in a series of gradual, often subtle changes, over a century or more between ca. 1350 and 1250 B.C. The cumulative effect of these changes was to bring the centuries-old Bronze Age city-states and the Canaanite culture and civilization that they characterized to a virtual end in the Levant, to be replaced by new emergent peoples who would soon be in rapid ascendancy” (Dever 1992, 101).

Phoenician pottery is often described as conservative or utilitarian in the earlier centuries of the Iron Age. The Phoenician bichrome decorative scheme – a paradigmatic marker of Phoenician material culture in the Iron I-II periods – appears on many vessel types. Bichrome consists of broad red bands outlined by narrower black lines; sometimes these are arranged in concentric circles, other times they encircle a globular vessel, or can be used in a few geometric patterns or shapes. Most scholars have argued that the Phoenician bichrome style must have a Late Bronze Age antecedent, although consensus says its beginning as a distinct ceramic repertoire cannot be earlier than the second half of the 11th century BCE.³⁷ Even more conservative ceramic analysts argue that although there may not be a precise Late Bronze antecedent, the bichrome style may have been derived from Late Bronze decorative tendencies or stylistic flourishes.³⁸ Anderson places the transition from Late Bronze ceramic technology and forms to Iron Age forms in the mid-12th to mid-11th centuries BCE.³⁹ Gilboa and Sharon, on the other hand, coined the term “Phoenician Monochrome” to refer to a subgroup of the late Canaanite decorative traditions that they see as representing a kind of missing link in the development of Phoenician bichrome.⁴⁰

What began as a kind of “negative” differentiation of Phoenicia from Canaan at the close of the Late Bronze Age grew in distinctiveness as the area we now call Phoenicia began to be viewed by ancient outsiders (e.g. Israelites/Judahites in the south, Assyrians and Aramaeans to the east, and the various peoples of the Aegean and western Mediterranean world) as culturally and economically distinct. The characterization of “Phoenician-ness” has today

³⁷ See for example Birmingham 1963, 36-40.

³⁸ See for example Anderson (1990, 36), who writes that the bichrome style “may have arisen from a tendency toward the end of the Bronze Age to fill more solidly the interiors of monochrome patterns. A natural step would be to enhance that effect with bichrome paint or multiple coloring.”

³⁹ Anderson 1990, 48.

⁴⁰ Gilboa and Sharon 2003, 27.

become associated with a number of co-occurring features of material culture,⁴¹ the appearance of one of the variations of Phoenician script and language, and a maritime-oriented trading culture. But the lack of Phoenician literary, political, legal, or philosophical texts (as were preserved from Mesopotamia and Israel/Judah) make a nuanced “emic” view of Phoenician identity elusive. In other words, a cohesive assemblage of material culture or pattern of behaviors which is identified in the archaeological record across a number of sites does not *necessarily* indicate that the inhabitants of those sites saw themselves as a distinct cultural or ethnic identity.

A more detailed look at the question of “when did the Phoenicians become ‘Phoenician?’” illustrates just how complicated interpretation of the material culture and textual sources can be. Scholarly positions on this issue can be summarized in five major hypotheses regarding the origin of the Phoenicians and the nature of the Late Bronze –Early Iron Age transition in the central coastal Levant:

- A) Social Stability / Ethnic Continuity [Moscatti (1988), Heltzer (1988), Stieglitz (1990b),⁴² Redford (1992), Yon (1992), Ward (1994), Markoe (2000), Doumet-Serhal (2009)]: This model proposes that while other cities suffered destabilizing social disintegration at the end of the Late Bronze Age, cities in what would become the Phoenician homeland preserved their social structures and avoided this outcome. Thus Phoenician culture is the result primarily of continuity of Late Bronze Age cultural elements; it is distinctive precisely because it did not change significantly, whereas other regional cultures showed swifter and more dramatic cultural innovation vis-à-vis their Canaanite origins.⁴³

⁴¹ Particularly a ceramic repertoire including the bichrome ceramic decorative style (from the 11th century BCE onward), the red-burnished slip style (from the 9th-6th centuries BCE), black-on-red style (with distinct Cypriot and Phoenician homeland traditions), and certain ceramic forms, including the strainer-spouted jar, the mushroom-lipped jug, and the trefoil-spouted pitcher or jug. This ceramic repertoire is found at Carthage until the late 7th century BCE, when a distinct Punic tradition can be said to have developed.

⁴² In particular, Stieglitz argues that the “Four Phoenician city-states, the ports of Arwad, Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre, were all active between 1200-1000 B.C., heirs to a long maritime history in the Bronze Age” (Stieglitz 1990, 27).

⁴³ Moscatti’s position is typical: “Paradoxical though it may seem, Phoenician civilization was the result of continuation, and not of the innovation that took place around it. It is in these terms that we may assess the complex phenomenon of the continuity and innovation from which the Phoenician nation emerged with total

- B) Swift Recuperation after Destruction. Phoenicians as a kind of Canaanite revival, with Sea Peoples admixture [Katzenstein (1973), Salles (1980, writing about Byblos), Singer (1988), Stieglitz (1990b), Dever (1992), Aubet (1993, although by 2001 she had changed her position, see below), Stager (1995)]: Rather than arguing that Phoenician culture arose from a lack of change following the collapse of the Late Bronze Age polities, proponents of this model see Phoenician culture as resulting from a quick adaptation to the newly emergent political and social conditions. In particular, Singer (1988) offered the explanation that northern Sea Peoples may have been culturally “assimilated” into the Phoenician populations (thus accounting for the fact that the Biblical texts preserve no memory of Aegean “Sea Peoples” as such).
- C) Phoenicians as competitors with the Sea Peoples [Stern (1990), Negbi (1992), Machinist (2000), Markoe (2000), Aubet (2001)]: Stern (1990) first argued that north of Philistia, only the Carmel coast and the ‘Akko Plain were invaded by the *śkl* and *šrdn* groups of Sea Peoples in the 12th century BCE, although by the mid-11th century BCE the cities of Dor, ^ʿAkko, and possibly others (like Akhziv, Tell Abu Hawam, and Tell Keisan) were (re-?)conquered by a commercially-motivated expansion of southern Phoenicians (i.e. from Tyre or Sidon).⁴⁴ This hypothesis was based in part on the fact that destruction levels at these sites post-date the appearance of Phoenician bichrome ware.
- D) Phoenicians as allies of the Sea Peoples [Bikai 1992]: Bikai (1992) offered this modification of Stern’s (1990) position, which proposes that the Phoenicians may have organized a kind of coalition with various groups of Sea Peoples, arising in the Late Bronze Age and surviving the transition to the Iron I period. She writes:

Such a coalition provides a mechanism to explain how these various people came to be ‘lands united’ (as Ramesses III calls them) and might contain the beginnings of an historical framework to explain the obvious cultural connections between Phoenicia and the west both earlier and later. At the minimum, it gets us beyond viewing the Phoenicians of the era as either victims or by-standers, interpretations that are now inadequate.⁴⁵

Much of the variation in these models is attributable to differences in interpretations of destruction layers datable to the Iron I period (ca. 1200 –ca. 1000 BCE), that could be signs of conflict with the Sea Peoples. The archaeological evidence for destruction or disruption of this kind is particularly debated in the “core” of the Phoenician homeland – from Aradus / Arwad

autonomy, though the people clung to the city-state structure and continued to prefer it to actual unity” (Moscatti 1989, 25). See also Stern (1990, 30); Redford (1992, 299); and Markoe (2000, 12).

⁴⁴Stern 1990, 30; Stern 2000b, 201.

⁴⁵Bikai 1992, 137.

in the north to Tyre in the south. Although archaeologists agree that evidence for some conflict is evident along the Phoenician coast,⁴⁶ interpretation varies as to whether this should be construed as a devastating “trail of destruction,”⁴⁷ or whether those disruptions seem more likely to have been short-lived, or of low overall impact,⁴⁸ and not indicative of anything we might meaningfully call a conquest.⁴⁹

A more specific and subtle comparison of various scholars’ articulation of Phoenician Origins may be made using the table, below:

Table I.1: Theories of Phoenician Origin

Scholar (Date)	Theory of Phoenician Origin
G. Contenau (1949)	The beginnings of Phoenician history can be dated between 2600-2100 BCE (on the basis of ceramics and the “influx of Semites” to the Levant)
W.F. Albright (1949)	“The Canaanites... after a long eclipse and a fresh transfusion of blood they were to emerge as a vital new people, the Phoenicians,” ca. 1100 BCE.
O. Eissfeldt (1950)	The history of the Phoenicians began ca. 3000 BCE
D. Baramki (1961b)	Canaanites, when mixed with the new populations of the Levant, could be called Phoenicians ca. 1100
D. Harden (1961)	The history of the Phoenicians began in the 3 rd millennium BCE
S. Moscati (1963)	Since there is no Phoenician nation per se, it is useless to propose an origin for the Phoenicians, whose culture should rather be understood as the conglomerate of a certain homogeneity of different city-states. ⁵⁰

⁴⁶ See for instance Gilboa (2005, 50): “In general, the end of the Late Bronze Age in the region investigated here [the Southern Phoenician Coast] does indicate some signs of trauma, as in extensive regions of the eastern Mediterranean.”

⁴⁷ Katzenstein (1973, 59): The “trail of destruction wrought by the Sea-Peoples can be traced along the entire eastern Mediterranean coast, from Ugarit... through Arvad, Sidon, Tyre(?), Tell Abu Hawâm....”

⁴⁸ “...the Phoenician city-states in the Levant, i.e. the core region between Arwad and Tyre, seem to have been spared from severe destruction found elsewhere” (Niemeyer 2002, 245); “...the disruptions (if any) that may have occurred along the Phoenician coast appear to have had no lasting impact. The archaeological record, rather, bespeaks a continuity of occupation on the mainland, although at a clearly reduced level of economic prosperity” (Markoe 2000, 25).

⁴⁹ “...neither Phoenicia nor any of its main centers—Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, or Arvad—was ever conquered by the Sea Peoples” (Stern 1990, 30).

⁵⁰ In 1988, Moscati was willing to go a little further. From the 1989 English translation: “...one cannot underestimate the profound change that took place in the Syro-Palestinian area around 1200 B.C., one result of which was that the Phoenician cities emerged as quite independent entities. ...the cities on the coasts were “negatively differentiated, in that they played no part [in the invasion of the “Sea Peoples” and the involvement of Mesopotamia and Egypt in the region].... For the very reason that they were isolated and concentrated

M. Dunand (1965a)	The original inhabitants of the Syro-Lebanese coast come to be called Phoenicians.
W. Culican (1966)	“The origin of [Sidon and Tyre]..., and indeed the origin of the Phoenician civilization generally, is lost, for neither excavations nor written documents throw much light on the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C. It is indeed possible that the birth of ‘Phoenicia’ was brought about by the formation of a new population group composed mainly of sea-raider settlers and coastal Canaanites.”
G. Garbini (1980)	A common history for the Phoenician-Palestinian area (that is, a common Canaanite history) should be postulated after the year 2000 BCE.
W. Röllig (1983)	Phoenicia was plundered by the “pirates of the ‘Sea Peoples,’ and was re-settled by immigrants from the Canaanite area. The only regions which were not affected were those belonging to the fortified and defended cities.” Phoenicians may thus be called Phoenicians ca. 1000.
J.B. Peckham (1992)	The 14 th century BCE Amarna letters, coupled with the 11 th century Wen-Amun Papyrus “suggest continuity rather than great change and anticipate the characteristic features of the principal Phoenician cities in the 1 st millennium.”
W. Ward (1994b)	“The Iron Age Phoenicians represent a later phase of the general Canaanite culture that goes back into the third millennium and beyond. They were still Canaanite, but are distinguished from their ancestors and neighbors by their own unique culture.”
S. Sherratt (2003 [1998])	The Sea People should be understood as a structural, socioeconomic phenomenon (possibly accompanied by population movements), that offered an alternative commercial model to that of the 2 nd millennium state-administered elite-controlled overseas trade business. This new political and economic model is one that we come to define as “Phoenician” in the Iron Age.
G. Markoe (2000)	Emphasizes “the continuity in tradition that characterized Phoenician history” from the beginning of the LB (ca. 1550 BCE) to the start of the Hellenistic period (ca. 300 BCE).
M. E. Aubet (2001)	The division between Canaanites and Phoenicians should be placed in the year 1200 BCE (on the basis of geo-political changes), “thus establishing an artificial barrier between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age and conferring chronological implications on the two terms.” She concludes that these changes, “in no way justify a change of nomenclature in the history of the Canaanite territory.”
A. Joffe (2002)	“Previously the Syrian and Lebanese coasts had been part of the generalized province and concept of ‘Canaan,’ but after 1200 BCE an area of some 200 km from Arvad on the Nahr el-Kebir in the north to the Plain of Akko in the south, was differentiated into ‘Phoenicia.’”
A. Gilboa (2005)	Adopts Sherratt’s theory of the socioeconomic basis for the new Phoenician identity, but makes more distinctions between N. and S. Canaan (traditionally Phoenician and Philistine culture)
C. Doumet-Serhal (2009)	“...it is now a widely held view that the Phoenicians were the Iron Age descendants of the coastal Late Bronze Age Canaanites.”
M. Woolmer (2011)	“Over time the groups of Canaanites dwelling along the coastline of modern Lebanon were seen to be different from the tribes further inland, and thus these coastal inhabitants became known as Phoenicians.”

This presentation of variation illustrates vividly the fact that the questions of “when and how did Phoenicians become ‘Phoenicians?’” hinges on one’s definition of the term. The designation, especially in the Iron Age II through Iron Age III / Achaemenid Persian periods, is not an arbitrary one – most archaeologists of the central coastal Levant would argue that there

together along the coastline, the cities that we can now rightly call Phoenician strengthened the links among themselves and worked more closely together in reciprocal affairs” (Moscatti 1989, 18-19).

is an identifiable pattern of material culture that can usefully be called “Phoenician” in the Iron II-III periods.⁵¹ And most scholars agree that the cultural distinction of “Phoenicianness” dies out or is subsumed during the Hellenistic period in the Levant, although Punic culture continues to evolve and be re-negotiated into the Roman period. But a separate question is becoming increasingly urgent, namely: “in what sense was ‘Phoenicia’ an ethnic identity (i.e. a homogenous cultural and political entity) in the Iron I-II and Persian Periods?” In 1997, Ward concluded that:

Iron Age Phoenicia was not a nation, but rather a collection of cities built around natural harbors along the coast. While they shared a common culture, these small states remained independent, competing with each other in the international marketplace. A true history of Phoenicia would thus be that of the individual cities; however, it is a history that cannot be written because there are insufficient textual and archaeological data.⁵²

Because of the continuous and ongoing modern occupation of Saida / Sidon and Şur / Tyre in particular, this analysis is in some senses still true.⁵³ But the excavation of sites like Tell Keisan in the Phoenician homeland, as well as the systemization of long-published burials from this territory, make the beginnings of a regional history of the territories ascribed to the Phoenician homeland a workable possibility. Refining an understanding of self-ascribed identities (ethnic or otherwise) among inhabitants of this coastal region requires a more detailed local comparison of the extant remains of communities of both the “living” and the dead.

⁵¹ In particular, a Phoenician ceramic chronology and typology based on excavations at Sarepta, Tyre, Tell Dor, Abu Hawam, and Tell Keisan, as well as correlations with numerous sites on Cyprus, has been established and is being refined (See for example: Hamilton 1935, Bikai 1978a, 1978b, and 1987, Briand and Humbert 1980, Culican 1982a, Anderson 1988, Gilboa 1999, and Schreiber 2003).

⁵² Ward 1997a, 313-314.

⁵³ Although several small-scale excavations, like that of the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities / British Museum at Sidon (on three plots purchased in the 1960s by the Department of Antiquities; http://www.sidonexavation.org/ht/ht_excavation.html), are ongoing.

3. Phoenician Religion

Phoenician religion is always treated in the recent general histories, although the picture painted by these works varies widely. Depending on how evidence is weighed, Phoenician religion might be presented on the one hand as inclusive and diverse – a “conservatively” polytheistic society easily able to incorporate or syncretize new deities, customs and traditions;⁵⁴ or on the other hand as highly place-specific – a model in which Phoenicians were devoted to city-gods only, with little shared pantheon above the local or regional scale. In still other examples, Phoenician religion is presented as simply impossible to know given the current state of evidence.⁵⁵

Most discussions of the Phoenician pantheon begin with a statement about the “head god” or gods of the Phoenician universe. Some scholars have argued that El (as “creator of the earth”) holds this privileged position.⁵⁶ Others argue that Baal (either as epithet or divine name) should be considered the highest of gods when assessing the Phoenician pantheon.⁵⁷ A third position insists upon “types” of gods, rather than a particular head god. This model sees

⁵⁴ A good example of this is Krahmalkov’s description: “The religion of the Phoenicians was a conservative expression of the ancient religion of Canaan, preserving forms, traditions, and practices that Israelite religion had long rejected and abolished. Phoenician religion remained polytheistic and iconic and, to the end, tolerant and accommodating of diversity. Possessing no central or coherent doctrine or ‘truth,’ it was always ready to absorb the gods and practices of other religions, including those of the Israelites” (Krahmalkov 2000, 1054).

⁵⁵ E.g. “We know the major deities, but have little idea of their nature. There are temples in the homeland and colonies, but the cultus practiced there is practically unknown. Without appropriate native written sources, then, Phoenician religious practice can only be described in the broadest terms” (Ward 1994, 201).

⁵⁶ A position usually defended through reference to Ugaritic texts on the one hand, or the occurrence of the phrase *ʾl qn ʾrš* in a Neo-Punic inscription from Leptis Magna dating to the 2nd c. CE, on the other (see Miller 1980 for a full discussion of the epithet’s occurrence in other regions and scripts).

⁵⁷ Markoe (2000, 118-119), for example: “The many textual references to the regional manifestations of Baal underscore his character both as supreme storm deity and as functional head of the Phoenician hierarchy. Epigraphically, he rarely appears without an epithet (i.e. Marqod, Malagê, Addir...) or toponymic qualifier (e.g. Baal Sidon)... As storm deities, Baal Shamem and Baal Saphon posed threats to coastal navigation...”

Schmitz surveys the evidence for *bʾl* as follows: “8 generic occurrences of *bʾl* without epithet: *hbrk bʾl* (Čineköy line 3); *bʾl* without further specification Karatepe [KAI 26], lines AI3, 8, II6, 7, 10, 12, III 11 (although from context, these all probably intend *bʾl krntryš*); and a significant number of uses of the expression *tnt pn bʾl* (*passim*), always intending *bʾl ḥmn*. I think it fair to say that, although *bʾl* is a generic label in Semitic, it is not used as such in Phoenician as it was in Ugaritic (although there also the intended deity is always Haddad)” (Schmitz, personal correspondence, 23 June 2013).

each major urban Phoenician center as having its own independent pantheon, which nevertheless shares certain features. The “triad” approach to Phoenician pantheons is common, although variously construed: father, mother, and male offspring;⁵⁸ high god, great goddess, and dying and reviving god;⁵⁹ or a “protective god of the city, a goddess companion symbolizing the fertile earth, and a young god rising annually with the vegetation.”⁶⁰

Although the triad formulation does still appear in some general introductions to Phoenician religion, the past twenty years have witnessed a kind of “straw man” rejection of the construct in scholarship.⁶¹

Despite having very few emic sources for the presence or development of Phoenician mythology in the homeland from ca. 1200 – ca. 500 BCE, many treatments of Phoenician religion in the Iron I-II devote a large percentage of space to the retelling or summarization of creation stories, etiological myths, and other components of purportedly Phoenician belief systems. This is mostly a reflection of the content of available Ugaritic texts, on the one hand, and classical sources, on the other. The variety of interpretive stances possible on each of these corpora are also responsible for the wide range of discussions on religious ritual, the annual calendar of festivals or religious occasions in Phoenicia, and on afterlife belief.

⁵⁸ As described by Markoe 2000, 116.

⁵⁹ As characterized by Cooper 1987, 7130.

⁶⁰ Clifford 1990, 62.

⁶¹ “It has often been suggested that the divine triad described above—high god, great goddess, and dying and reviving god—constituted the basis of all Phoenician pantheons. Attractive as that suggestion is, it must be considered no more than tentative in light of the evidence. The cult of Beirut, for example, seems only to possess a divine couple (Poseidon and Aphrodite/Astarte), and the Tyrian Melqart seems to be both a high god and a dying and reviving god. In addition, the precise relationship between the goddess and the dying and reviving god is often uncertain” (Cooper 1987, 7130); “Given the uncertainty of much of the evidence, conclusions about the pantheons of the major cities must be tentative. The treaties give the official hierarchy of two cities at a particular period, different from dynastic patrons and popular religion. The triad often proposed for Phoenician cities—a protective god of the city, a goddess companion symbolizing the fertile earth, and a young god rising annually with the vegetation—does not rest on good evidence” (Clifford 1990, 62).

Mortuary practice bears on all three of these issues: the culturally significant boundaries of the Phoenician homeland, markers of ethnicity in this territory, and our understanding of Phoenician religious practice. Several smaller scale synthetic discussions of Phoenician mortuary data have been published within the last twenty five years.⁶² Despite these more informative summaries, discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice in general histories of Phoenicia seem often either to gloss this evidence—with only a cursory description of the two major corpse treatments (i.e. inhumation and cremation) and a superficial treatment of grave good distribution,⁶³—or to take an extremely tentative stance, wary of drawing any conclusions at all because of the varied nature of the published evidence.⁶⁴ These tendencies are understandable given the burial data's current status, but the first inclination obscures the inter-site variability present in the Levantine Phoenician mortuary record, and the second approach minimizes the vast number of burials presently known (even if these burials have been, more often than not, under-studied, under-published, or in isolated locations). This study aims to make a substantive contribution to each of these facets of Phoenician homeland identity in the Iron I – Persian periods.

To reconstruct a model of the Phoenician mortuary system, I will be taking a “bottom up” approach to the available evidence. This approach involves surveying the textual and archaeological evidence for mortuary practice, to construct a model of the variety of funerary

⁶² Most notably (from oldest to most recent): Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991; Doumet 1992; Sader 1995; Wolff 2002; Sader 2005.

⁶³ Ward's (1994, 204) summary is typical: “Burial in Phoenicia was generally by inhumation with the usual grave goods: pottery, amulets, beads and other small objects. Royal and upper-class tombs probably contained richer grave goods, though these were largely plundered in antiquity. Cremation was practiced alongside inhumation in both the homeland and in the west. At present, we cannot define the beliefs that lay behind the use of these two forms of burial, which sometimes occur at the same time and in the same (family?) tomb.”

⁶⁴ For example, Aubet's (2004, 55) conclusion that: “The data at our disposal concerning the Iron Age necropolises [*sic*] in Phoenicia are quite disjointed and relatively rare, so much so that at present it is still too soon to establish typologies and general tendencies in the morphology of the burials... not to mention the debate, based on very limited archaeological evidence, concerning the relationship between the rites of cremation and of inhumation, which is founded mainly on chronological criteria....”

practices in use during the various periods in question.⁶⁵ From this picture of mortuary practices, a more nuanced model of Phoenician society can be reconstructed.

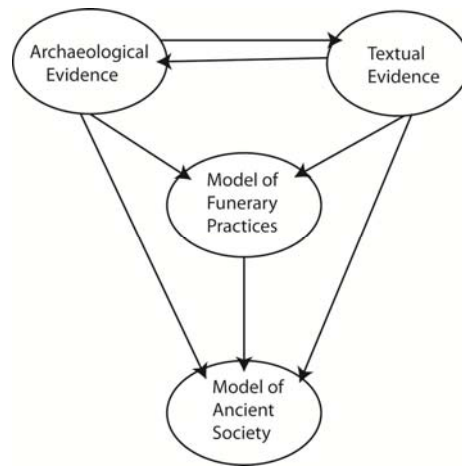


Figure 1.2: "Bottom Up" Approach to the Archaeological Study of Mortuary Practice (O'Shea 2010)

Chapters II through V survey the textual evidence that has been brought to bear on Phoenician mortuary practice and belief by previous scholars. I address the entire corpus of material in this manner for the sake of completeness, but in some cases I conclude that certain types of evidence are extremely limited in their value for the reconstruction of the Phoenician mortuary system. Chapter VI addresses the entire corpus of archaeological evidence for funerary practices in the central coastal Levant. Separating the evidence in this way allows for a clear and careful examination of the total data available, as well as enabling the “weighing” of a particular corpus of evidence in proportion to its relative historical value. But there are also limitations to this method of addressing the evidence. This division of evidence into “textual” and “archaeological” categories requires subjective delimitation (or exclusion) of potentially relevant objects. In particular, the description of inscribed objects buried as grave goods (like the bronze or silver bowls discussed in Chapters II and III) begs discussion of other,

⁶⁵ As opposed to what anthropologists refer to as “top down” approaches, which rely on models built on the basis of either social theory or on accounts of funerary customs to establish a series of expectations, which are then overlaid on the archaeological evidence.

uninscribed objects of similar make and deposition – though an indepth study of these extensive collections of objects is beyond the scope of the present work. On the other hand, I have chosen to include brief mention of anepigraphic stelae among discussions of inscribed stelae, due to the similarity of carved motifs within the corpora. In general, overall mortuary patterns and trends will be given precedence over more detailed exploration of object materiality or gift-giving systems. Iconographical, material, and exchange-network studies are an incredibly valuable and integral feature of the understanding of mortuary practice; the size and scope of this study simply preclude my aspiring to treat these features of the material record as thoroughly as I hope to in future studies.

Chapter II.

Inscriptional Evidence for Phoenician Mortuary Practice from the Iron Age I - II

Textual sources have long been the sole basis for any understanding of the Phoenicians' relationship to death, dying, and the afterlife. Primary sources in the form of inscriptions from the Iron I period onward, as well as secondary sources in the form of long-transmitted texts like the Biblical books and writings of classical authors and early church fathers have been put to this service. Because of the specialized training needed for working in each of the languages in which information relating to the Phoenicians of the Iron I - Persian periods was preserved, modern surveys and research manuals¹ tend to treat each of these linguistic corpora separately when analyzing textual sources for the history of Phoenicia,² evaluating the entire repertoire of Phoenician inscriptions, followed by other Near Eastern and Mediterranean textual evidence in turn.

¹ From Moscati 1988 onward, but see especially Krings (ed.) 1995.

² On the other hand, many of the more recent dictionary articles and histories of Phoenicia utilize the content of this vast body of textual material as data points that can be extracted and recombined to fill in information about one time or place with information from another. There are drawbacks to both these methods. Segregating the information by language of authorship gives the impression that we have an emic "Phoenician perspective" on the Phoenicians, to be compared to the etic "Hebrew perspective" available in Biblical texts, and further a "Graeco-Roman perspective" to be added to the mix – an impression that obscures the geographic, diachronic, and cultural variety present in each of these corpora. Failing to separate and evaluate sources by linguistic / ethnic background creates the impression that all information available in these sources is of equal merit – in effect weighing the Biblical and classical evidence more heavily due to its greater quantity and availability to us. I have tried to avoid this outcome by addressing the corpora individually, weighting their respective historical value in an analysis of mortuary practice, and highlighting their internal variation.

This chapter surveys the Iron I-II inscripational record relevant for a study of Phoenician mortuary practice. Inscriptions are deemed relevant for the reconstruction of the Phoenician mortuary system when they meet one of the following criteria:

- The inscription refers to death or burial in an explicit way.
- The inscription contains indirect reference to beliefs about death (for example, in the form of blessings or curses which relate to lifespan)
- The inscription is on an object which was buried as a grave good.
- In a few select cases, the inscription is on an object which bears close and significant similarity to other, uninscribed objects buried as grave goods.

In each case, I include a material description of the inscribed object and the story of its discovery, as well as brief explanation of its archaeological context (where possible). This approach is intended to be maximally inclusive, allowing further sifting or weighing of the evidence in the conclusions to each chapter.

What follows is a catalog and discussion of those inscriptions which were found in burial contexts, or which in some other way relate to Phoenician mortuary practice and beliefs in these early periods:

- a. Inscriptions in Phoenician from the Phoenician homeland
- b. Inscriptions in Phoenician from outside the Phoenician homeland
- c. Inscriptions in other ancient Near Eastern languages
- d. Summary and Conclusions

Here and in the following chapter (which examines inscriptions from the Iron III to Hellenistic periods), I aim to follow Ribichini who urged scholars of Phoenician texts to “to keep to the chronological, typological and geographical distinctions provided by the documentation itself.”³ Finally, I examine the evidence derived from this material as a whole, “weighing” the evidence according to its cultural relevance and historical value, and paying close attention to

³ Ribichini in Moscati 1989 (2001 edition), 124.

chronological, geographic, and other cultural differences that might have affected how particular “reports” (explicit or implicit) of Phoenician mortuary practices were construed.

A Note on “Tophets”

In the chapters which follow, several cemeteries or precincts containing the cremated or incinerated remains of infants (in Tunisia, Sardinia, Malta, and elsewhere) will be discussed. The purpose or use of these sites is still widely disputed – are they evidence of a cult which required a form of child sacrifice involving the immolation of the victims? Or are they cemeteries for miscarried or stillborn fetuses and those who died in infancy, before they were incorporated into society? Because the inscriptions which sometimes accompany the burials on stelae are so sparse and formulaic (see below), the human bones are sometimes accompanied by animal bones, and the already fragile infant remains have been subjected to cremation and deposition in wet, sandy soil (often near the coast), there is much room for debate.

These sites are commonly referred to as “tophets,” after the Biblical term תופת (explored in Chapter IV, below). The term “tophet” was first applied to the human remains and inscribed stelae found at Carthage, and it is now used with reference to similar burial sites elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Other sites have produced large numbers of inscribed or carved stelae which look very similar to those found at “tophet” sites, but these sites seem to contain no associated human remains. In some cases (as in Roman North Africa), the latter sites are called “stelae fields” or “votive stelae fields.” In other cases they are referred to as “tophets” or “sacred precincts,” with the assumption that the human remains are as yet

undiscovered, perhaps buried separately from the stelae. Sites containing incinerated infant remains but no carved stelae are also known.

More recently, some scholars have re-claimed the term “tophet” to “neutrally” signify a Punic-affiliated precinct for cremated infant remains, without taking a stance as to whether or not child sacrifice was practiced.⁴ While I applaud this use of the term, the long history of its association with child sacrifice and its original Judaeian context lead me to seek a more explicit use of terminology. In the pages that follow, I will refer to sites featuring both stelae and infant remains of this kind as an “Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet”” to offer explicit reminders to the reader that the use or purpose of these sites is still debated.

A. Inscriptions in Phoenician from the Phoenician Homeland

1. Introduction to the Corpus of Phoenician Inscriptions

The published corpus of Phoenician inscriptions has been scattered throughout hundreds of individual publications, some but not all of which have been gathered and collated into the handful of available collections of transcriptions and translations.⁵ While some of these volumes attempt to aggregate past contributions, many do not – the 1960s KAI volumes arguably remain the collection in widest use despite recent additions to the list.

Several factors have contributed to the lack of a comprehensive edition of Phoenician inscriptions. The most telling factors include the size of the corpus, the obscurity of many single-inscription publications, the number of languages in which they are published and discussed (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, and English), the variety of media exhibiting textual material (monumental carvings, seals and other small artifacts, papyri,

⁴ See for example Stone and Stirling 2007 and Quinn 2011.

⁵ These include (from oldest to most recent): CIS (1881), Lidzbarski 1898; Cooke 1903; RÉS (1900-1950); Lidzbarski 1907; Pritchard 1955 (1969); KAI (1962-63 et al.); Amadasi Guzzo 1967; Magnanini 1973; Delavault and Lemaire 1979; Gibson 1982; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a; CoS (1997-2002); CSAI (1999-present).

ostraca, incised or painted ceramics, etc.) and the decentralized nature of the academic study of Phoenicians (scattered throughout Classical Studies, Near Eastern Studies, Ancient History, Anthropology and Archaeology programs, and other departments). But another key obstacle is the very nature of the Phoenician contribution to the history of writing, owing to the fact that the alphabet developed and spread by the Phoenicians⁶ was so quick to learn (relative to cuneiform, for example), it was adapted to the needs of many other languages.⁷ Thus any compilation of Phoenician inscriptions must make decisions about what to include; the question becomes one of distinguishing consistently between script and language. In the case of one-word or very short inscriptions of Northwest Semitic origin, there is frequently not enough grammatical information to determine the precise dialect of composition.⁸ The dialect of Samalian, which shares features of both Aramaic and Phoenician, was used in the Iron II period in South Eastern Anatolia and represents a complicated chapter of northern Levantine linguistic history. As the Phoenician language grew in status, Levantine elites outside of the

⁶ While the Phoenicians are frequently celebrated for introducing the “world’s first alphabet” to the ancient Mediterranean, Phoenicia’s contribution was less in its “first-ness” (a prize which might instead be awarded to the users of the Proto-Sinaitic script—arguments for its inception range from the 19th-15th centuries BCE—or those of the Ugaritic cuneiform, in use from the 15th – 12th centuries BCE in coastal Syria) or even to the Phoenician alphabet’s completeness (it was the Greeks who would add a full retinue of signs to indicate vowel sounds), but to its quick spread and relatively “universal” appeal. Easily learned and adaptable to many different media, the script facilitated long-distance communication (as in merchant / trade contexts) without the necessity of involvement of an elite scribal class in all transactions.

⁷ “Phoenician script was spreading then [in the 10th-9th centuries] among the Aramaeans, the Hebrews, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Phrygians, and the Greeks. Alphabetic writing appears to have been in use in the Assyrian Empire from the ninth century BCE, in addition to the cuneiform script for the recording of official documents, as is shown by the bilingual inscription on a statue discovered at Tell al-Fakhariya (ancient Sikan) in Syria... [which] indicates earlier Aramaic use of Phoenician script” (Lipiński 1995b, 1325).

⁸ See, for example, Delavault and Lemaire’s catalog of Phoenician inscriptions from Palestine: “Il est parfois difficile, à haute époque, de distinguer une inscription phénicienne d’une inscription araméenne ou paléo-hébraïque; pour la constitution de ce catalogue nous avons essentiellement utilisé le critère paléographique et secondairement le critère linguistique (en fait, surtout onomastique), le critère du lieu de la découverte ne nous semblant pas déterminant” (1979, 1-2). Lemaire 2013 also explores the relationship between these dialects and their scripts.

Phoenician homeland used it selectively⁹ – but as non-Native speakers (or writers), they contributed idiosyncrasies of their own to grammatically Phoenician texts.

Most compilations of Phoenician inscriptions thus aim to present a kind of representative sample of available material, including all the multi-line inscriptions, which have been well-published and thoroughly discussed, but not aiming for an exhaustive catalog of Phoenician onomastics, single-word inscriptions, or poorly preserved specimens. Despite this selectivity, even in the 1881 first volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, 437 Phoenician inscriptions were listed, and subsequent volumes brought the total up to 6068¹⁰ by 1962. The known corpus of material has expanded significantly since then (though a conclusive total count has not been undertaken to my knowledge).

2. Variation within the Corpus of Phoenician Inscriptions

Despite the seemingly impressive size of the corpus of known Phoenician inscriptions, the data provided by these texts are affected appreciably when the vast scales of time, place, and purposes of these writings are considered. Variation along a number of vectors (here I'll briefly discuss the implications of chronology, geography, the inscription's genre or function, and its archaeological context) contributes to the difficulties involved in weighing and

⁹ “Not only the Phoenician script but even the Phoenician language was in fashion at the courts of the petty Aramaean and Syro-Hittite kingdoms. The oldest known royal inscription from Zincirli..., the site of the ancient capital of the Aramaean kingdom of Sam'al in southeastern Anatolia, was written in Phoenician language and script about 825 BCE. A hieroglyphic Luwian inscription set up by Yariris, the ruler of Karkamish (Carchemish) in the mid eighth century, mentions among the twelve tongues he claimed to read the 'local' hieroglyphs in which his Luwian text was recorded and also the 'Tyrian script.' A bit later in date is the stela erected near Aleppo about 800 BCE by Bar-Hadad, son of 'Atar-Shumki, inscribed with an Aramaic dedication to Melqart, the chief deity of Tyre. This dedication, like Yariris's designation of Phoenician script as 'Tyrian,' indicates the importance of Tyre in the affairs of southeastern Anatolia during this period” (Lipiński 1995, 1325-1326).

¹⁰ As Schmitz points out, two numbers (5260 and 6000) were used twice, and two inscriptions were inadvertently published twice with different numbers, “so the count of 6068, while strictly speaking inaccurate, turns out to be correct!” (Schmitz 2011, Personal Communication).

interpreting the relevance of this information for any consideration of Phoenician mortuary belief or practice in a particular place and time.

- Chronological Range: The first Phoenician writing appeared perhaps as early as the 12th century BCE,¹¹ and the Punic dialect of Phoenician (written in the Phoenician alphabet)¹² was in use until the 6th century CE.¹³ As may be expected, this nearly 1600 years of known usage created ample time and space for linguistic, epigraphic, and cultural variability. Attempts to describe these changes have led scholars to suggest a number of dialectal classificatory systems, none of which has been conclusively or universally adopted in the field (but which share certain general contours).¹⁴

While Phoenician grammar books have historically drawn distinctions based on dialect boundaries or diachronic “phases” of the language, the corpus of Phoenician inscriptions has elsewhere (in histories, dictionary articles, and other scholarship) often been described using the archaeological periodization of the Iron I (ca. 1200 – ca. 1000 BCE), Iron II (ca. 1000 – ca. 500 BCE), Iron III: Persian (ca. 500 – ca. 300 BCE), Hellenistic or Hellenistic-Roman (ca. 300 BCE – ca.

¹¹ Although inscriptions dating before 1050 BCE are sometimes considered “Proto-Canaanite,” the inscribed bronze arrowheads (see below) are considered the earliest known Phoenician inscriptions by many scholars.

¹² “Western Phoenician (called Punic, so to differentiate it from Phoenician) was a world-class language as significant as Greek and Latin. Although Carthage was defeated and destroyed by Rome in 146, Western Phoenician language, religion, and culture continued to flourish in Africa and elsewhere well into the 5th century C.E. In this period the Punic language counted among its native speakers the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, the poet Appuleius, and the church father Augustine” (Krahmalkov 2000, 1053).

¹³ The Lybian Altar Inscription is written in a dialect called “Late Punic” by Jongeling and Kerr (2005, 2-9); See below.

¹⁴ See Vance (1994a, 4) for a particularly detailed suggestion: “Phoenician developed through several phases and into several dialects: Old Byblian (11th / 10th cent. BCE inscriptions from Byblos; e.g., Ahiiram); Byblian (6th/4th cent. BCE inscriptions from Byblos; e.g. Yehaumilk); North Phoenician (9th-7th cent. BCE inscriptions from Syria, Cilicia, and Ur; e.g., Karatepe); Middle Phoenician (6th/4th cent. BCE inscriptions mainly from Tyre and Sidon; e.g. Eshmunazar); Late Phoenician (3rd – 1st cent. BCE inscriptions mostly from Umm el’Amed – ancient Hammon – south of Tyre, e.g. Umm el-’Amed iv); the dialects of Cyprus (9th-2nd cent. BCE inscriptions from Cyprus, e.g., Temple Tariff A, B); the Western Mediterranean (9th-5th cent. BCE inscriptions, e.g., Golden Sheet of Pyrgi); Punic (Western Mediterranean texts 5th cent. BCE to the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE, e.g., Carthage Sacrifice Tariff); and Late Punic (Western Mediterranean texts from 146 BCE to the 6th cent. CE, e.g., Lybian alter inscription).”

Though more typical is Markoe (2000, 108; who excludes later Punic developments since his study ends at the 4th century BCE): “Linguistically, [Phoenician] may be divided into two main phases: an archaic (tenth to seventh centuries BC) and a classical one (sixth to fourth centuries BC). The classical phase may be further subdivided into Middle (sixth to fourth centuries BC) and Late Phoenician (third to first centuries BC).”

300 CE), and early Byzantine (ca. 300 – 600 CE) periods. I adopt this chronological terminology here, in order to facilitate the comparison and integration of textual material with archaeological material presented in Chapter VI.

- Geographical Variation: Discussing the Phoenician textual material as a single corpus also risks obscuring the immense geographical range of its provenance. In the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* mentioned above, of the 6058 Phoenician inscriptions listed, only about one hundred of these had been found in the Phoenician Levantine homeland.¹⁵ Since then, numerous examples of Phoenician writing have been found throughout the Mediterranean basin (as far afield as Spain), North Africa, and Anatolia.

- Variation in Genre or Use: As with any widely-used written language, the corpus of Phoenician inscriptions includes a wide range of functional genres:

Most of the texts are funerary (e.g., Ahiiram's coffin) and/or votive (e.g., Umm el-'Amed xii), but there are some building (e.g., Yehimilk) and royal (e.g., Kilamuwa) inscriptions. The overwhelming majority of texts are the dedicatory formulae on the stelae associated with the burials in the Tanit precinct of Carthage (e.g., *KAI 88*). There are a few inscriptions listing payments (e.g., the Temple Tariff). There are two private letters on papyri (*KAI #50-51*) and many examples of noncontiguous texts (i.e., isolated words and phrases) such as personal names in seals and graffiti (Phoenician names have been found on Egyptian monuments).¹⁶

Each of these contexts or purposes for writing affects the length, medium, and vocabulary of the inscriptions, as well as the quality of data that can be extracted from them. Of course, the type of data obtainable from each type of inscription will also be to some degree dependent on the type of research question one asks¹⁷ – the present study of mortuary practice and belief will

¹⁵ Cyprus provided another hundred or so inscriptions, but the vast majority of texts (numbering in the thousands) are from the city of Carthage in Tunisia. Several hundred more come from the rest of Tunisia and Western Algeria.

¹⁶ Vance 1994a, 6.

¹⁷ For example, Ward's conclusion that "most Iron Age texts from the Phoenician homeland are funerary in nature or treat the building and repair of temples and the dedication of objects to various deities. They yield very little

attempt to extract information from multiple genres of Phoenician texts to explore this possibility.

- Archaeological Context: A fourth factor worth considering as we begin this survey of textual sources relating to Iron I-II Phoenicia is the archaeological context of a particular inscription. The most crucial setback to the study of Phoenician history has been the lack of extensive controlled excavation, especially in Lebanon and Syria where the major Phoenician centers (in many cases) correspond to modern cities with extensive suburban development. Much of what constitutes the collections of the major museums' collections in the region (i.e. the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, the American University of Beirut's Archaeological Museum, the Beiteddine Museum, and the Damascus National Museum as well as several other regional collections) was obtained by purchase from antiquities dealers in the early decades of the 20th century, and private collections are still from time to time the source of new inscriptions as heirs reach out to the scholarly or museum communities.

Further, archaeology in this region has been undertaken since the 1860s, when methods of recording, collection, and the acquisition of antiquities for western or even regional museums (many of which were run by the French or British colonial bureaucracies of the time) means a great deal of contextual data relating to those early explorations has been lost. Archaeologically obtained, *in situ* evidence must be given greater weight (and offers more potential information) than that obtained through less well provenanced sources. But ultimately, the fine points of what types or quality of evidence might or should be considered useful data for an investigation of Phoenician practices and beliefs will constitute a subjective set of choices made by each researcher. Throughout, details of each inscription's discovery,

of political import beyond the names of several kings of Byblos and Sidon," (1994b, 184) illustrates only the paucity of data available when searching mortuary or building inscriptions for political data, not the total lack of social information potentially available from a different sort of inquiry with regard to these inscriptions.

publication history, and archaeological context are included; each of these is relevant to determining how much weight the inscriptional evidence should be given. My intention is to make my subjective choices in this regard explicit, and my reasons for each choice apparent.¹⁸

3. Iron Age I-II Phoenician Homeland Inscriptions

This corpus contains the earliest texts produced in the Phoenician language in the cities and villages of the Levantine coast. Because of the moist conditions of the region, and the fact that many Phoenician cities were located at natural harbors on the Mediterranean coast, the survival rate of Phoenician writing is probably not high, and the existing specimens are almost all inscribed on stone, metal, or ceramic.¹⁹ During the Iron I-II periods we have evidence that multiple dynasties ruled in Phoenicia from Byblos (modern Jbeil), Sidon (modern Saida) and Tyre (modern Şur). In surveying the inscriptional homeland evidence, a geographical organization of the relevant sources has been adopted to preserve potential evidence of regional variation along these lines.

The inscriptions listed below do not represent every known inscription from the Iron Age I-II homeland. For the purposes of this chapter only those with some relevance for Phoenician mortuary practice (that is, explicitly referencing death or dying, inscribed grave goods, or objects relating to burial in some other way) during the Iron I-II will be discussed. The presentation of the inscriptions will follow a generally geographic organization, discussing

¹⁸ Since the decisions I make regarding date, language of origin, and relevance will all be open to debate, my goal is to make these areas of interpretation as transparent and retraceable as possible.

¹⁹ Hence Lipinski's conclusions: "The Phoenician alphabetic script was easy to write on papyrus or parchment sheets, and the use of these materials explains why virtually no Phoenician writings – no history, no trading records – have come down to us. In their cities by the sea, the air and soil were damp, and papyrus and leather moldered and rotted away. Thus disappeared the literature of the people who taught a large portion of the earth's population to write. The only written documents of Phoenicians and Carthaginians are monumental inscriptions on stone, a few ephemeral letters or notes on pieces of broken pottery, and three fragmentary papyri. Thus, no Tyrian primary sources dating from Hiram I's time are available" (Lipiński 1995, 1321-1322).

inscriptions located in or around urban centers from north to south, down the coast of Lebanon from Byblos to Tyre (including the inland Beqaa Valley) and further south, addressing the corpus of Iron I-II Phoenician inscriptions according to provenance as follows:



Moving generally from north to south down the Levantine coast:

- a. ARWAD and Vicinity (north of pictured region of map)
- b. BYBLOS and Vicinity
- c. BEIRUT and Vicinity
- d. SIDON and Vicinity
- e. BEQAA VALLEY (and al-Biqa)
- f. TYRE and Vicinity (including Northern Israel)

a. Arwad and Vicinity

To my knowledge, there are no Phoenician inscriptions relating to mortuary practice in the Phoenician homeland from southern Syria or the far north of Lebanon dating to this period.

b. Byblos and Vicinity

Ahram Sarcophagus and Tomb Shaft Graffito

Loc. / Num.	<u>Sarcophagus:</u> KAI 1; Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 2086; Gibson 4; CSAI - Phoe ²⁰ 1; CoS 2.55 <u>Tomb Shaft:</u> KAI 2; Gibson 5
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²⁰ CSAI - Phoe = Numbering system developed by the Corpus of Phoenician Inscriptions (as part of the CSAI project), a database of all known Phoenician inscriptions, ongoing (Phoe 1-37, from the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, are available here: <http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai/html/>).

Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered by Pierre Montet in 1923 in the royal necropolis of Byblos
Studies	Dussaud 1924, 135-45; Montet 1928, 238; Harris 1936, 158; Dunand 1945; Albright 1947, 155f.; Galling 1950b, 421-25; Greenfield 1971, 254-257; Donner 1953-54; Pritchard 1955, 661; van den Branden 1960, 732-36; Martin 1961, 70-75; Chéhab 1970-71, 107-17; Tawil 1970-71, 33-36; Teixidor 1973, no. 113; Tombback 1978; Teixidor 1987, 139; CoS, vol. 2, 2003, 181; Teixidor 1997; Lehmann, 2005, pl. 1-12.
Date	10 th century BCE (sarcophagus possibly 13 th century BCE)

From Byblos comes the most impressive single inscribed mortuary object of the Phoenician Iron I-II periods in size and iconographical complexity of the artifact, length of inscription, association with an elite (namely, royal) social stratum, and early date. The 11th century BCE Ahirom Sarcophagus and an associated tomb graffito were discovered in 1923 by Pierre Montet.²¹ The short (sixteen character²²) tomb shaft inscription, while debated in its finer grammatical points, is clearly a warning to those who would disturb the tomb of King Ahirom below – an echo of the Ahirom sarcophagus inscription itself.

The longer (six line²³) inscription on the burial vessel has been recently reexamined,²⁴ but its interpretation remains generally that of its earliest translators. Teixidor reads:

²¹ “While M. Pierre Montet was exploring in 1923 a series of tombs the dates of which extend backward as far as the twelfth Egyptian dynasty, in opening a tomb of the time of Rameses II he came upon a most important find. Halfway down the shaft was found a brief inscription in archaic Phoenician characters cut in the wall; half a dozen words only.... The tomb-chamber at the bottom contained a large sarcophagus, which proved to be that of a king of Byblos named Ahirom. It bears a Phoenician inscription of some length, composed by the king’s son...” (Torrey 1925, 269). The tomb described would come to be known as Tomb V of the royal necropolis of Byblos.

²² Two word dividers break this three line inscription into three words.

²³ Thirty-four word dividers occur in the 135-character inscription. As Schmitz has pointed out, they seem to represent “phrasal segmentation, phonologically described. Thus conjoined, relative, prepositional, and construct phrases are represented between dividers with no internal spacing. The units are, roughly speaking, stress-groups. Inscriptions that do not use segment dividers also represent segmentation this way, if it is represented at all” (Schmitz, personal communication, June 29, 2013).

²⁴ The inscription was rephotographed with raked lighting by Lehmann, who published these vastly improved images and a new translation in 2005:

A coffin made it [It]tobaal, son of Ahirom, king of Byblos, for Ahirom, his father, lo, thus he put him in seclusion. Now, if a king among kings and a governor among governors and a commander of an army should come up against Byblos; and when he then uncovers this coffin – ... may strip off the sceptre of his judiciary, may be overturned the throne of his kingdom, and peace and quiet may flee from Byblos. And as for him, one should cancel his registration concerning the libation tube of the memorial sacrifice.

Coffin which Itthobaal son of Ahiram, king of Byblos [*gb*], made [*pʿ*ʿ] for Ahiram, his father, when he placed him in eternity [*kšth b ʿlm*]: if a king from among kings or a governor from among governors, or commander (of an army), should come up against Byblos and uncover this coffin, may the scepter of his rule be broken, may the throne of his kingship be overturned, and may peace flee Byblos, and (as for) him, may his writings [*sprh*] be effaced (from) before Byblos.²⁶

The inscription first describes the maker or commissioner²⁷ of the sarcophagus as the son of Ahiram, king of Byblos. The act of burying the king is conveyed through a prepositional phrase – *k + šth b + ʿlm*, rendered variously as “as his home for eternity,”²⁸ “when he laid him away forever,”²⁹ “when he placed / set him in eternity,” “as his abode in eternity.”³⁰ The permanence of the burial or resting place is again emphasized through a series of curses against “any king among kings, or governor among governors” who might uncover or disturb the sarcophagus. In fact the final injunction of the curse calls not only for the “scepter of his rule” to be broken or removed, but also for his inscriptions or writings – perhaps intended to refer to a potential future inscription commissioned by the intruder – to be erased or effaced from before Byblos.³¹ Disturbing the sarcophagus of Ahiram will, further, lead to the loss of the intruder’s power according to the final lines of the inscription. The connection drawn between the importance of leaving the dead undisturbed and the disruption of a potential intruder’s position in life is made succinctly but powerfully.

(Lehmann 2005, 38). Although this translation offers many intriguing new suggestions, it has not as yet been adopted by the field.

²⁵ Schmitz reads this verb as a 3ms D-stem (with a factitive sense), “he got (it) made,” to be vocalized /pīʿl/. See note below.

²⁶ Teixidor 1997, 31.

²⁷ “The verb *pʿ* is probably D-stem factitive, indicating that the narrator was the motivating agent who initiated the process that produced the sarcophagus, not that he was the actual artisan. The manufacture may have been out-sourced to Egypt, but I prefer to think that it was produced locally—whether by Phoenician craft workers or Egyptian metic workers” (Schmitz, personal correspondence, 26 May 2013).

²⁸ “...comme sa demeure pour l’éternité” (Dussaud 1924, 136).

²⁹ Torrey 1925, 270.

³⁰ Albright 1947, 155.

³¹ These translations follow Teixidor (1987, 139)’s rereading after new photographs were taken. See also Albright 1947, 156 who read: “let a vagabond(?) efface his inscription(s)!”



Figure II.1: Ahiram Sarcophagus (Lebanese National Museum, Beirut)

The connection between the Egyptian iconography of the Ahiram sarcophagus' relief decorations (the presentation scene and peripheral images of mourning) and the inscription itself (carved along the sides of the lid of the stone vessel and on the right-hand end of the sarcophagus) has been debated extensively since its discovery. The carved sarcophagus probably dates to the 13th century,³² although as other paleographic evidence came to light in

³² This date was determined on the basis of two fragments of alabaster vases, found in the debris of Tomb V, that bear the name of the 19th Dynasty pharaoh Ramesses II (1303-1213 BCE). To my knowledge, the date of the sarcophagus itself has not been independently determined to be 13th century through convincing Egyptian parallels (although Gubel 1987, 52-53 points to similarities in iconography with the Megiddo ivories to support a date in the mid-13th through mid-12th centuries BCE), and in fact Porada produced several art-historical parallels for features of the sarcophagus (the fringe, table, footstool, and banquet food) that suggest "a date of 1000 BCE or slightly later" (1973, 363). In 1942, Albright argued that certain Iron Age Cypriot ceramic sherds also found in the debris in the entrance shaft of Tomb V had a *terminus a quo* in the 11th century BCE, establishing that the final use of the tomb fit with a date ca.1000 BCE date. The debate then became whether or not both the sarcophagus and the tomb had been reused / reopened, and whether the sherds represented later contamination. See Hachmann 1967, Porada 1973, 356-57, and Garbini 1977b, 81-85.

It is interesting to note Garbini's complaint, registered in 1988, that "...one cannot ignore the decidedly biased attitude shown by epigraphists in dating the most ancient documents of Phoenician script: these are invariably assigned to a more recent period than analogous objects of Palestinian origin. The brief texts inscribed on arrowheads are a typical example: all the Lebanese inscriptions are considered more recent than the Palestinian ones. Even more significant is the dating of an inscription on the sarcophagus of Ahiram, king of Byblos, discovered in the twenties and ascribed to the 13th century B.C. Twenty years later, for reasons that are now not worth recalling, the date was moved forward to the beginning of the 10th century B.C. Although arguments of various kinds support the earlier dating, most scholars still incline to the more recent date. When Byblos inscriptions were found which were graphically more archaic than the Ahiram inscription, and therefore datable to the 11th century B.C., these were unhesitatingly called non-Phoenician, i.e. 'Canaanite.' It is therefore clear that the stated lack of Phoenician documents relating to the 14th and 13th centuries B.C. could be the result of a simple error in dating on the part of the scholars" (Garbini in Moscati 1989 [2001 edition], 111). The re-use of the sarcophagus is a hypothesis suggested to explain the paleographic dating offered by Albright, Cross, and others.

the decades since Ahiram's discovery, many scholars suggested the script appeared more similar to 10th-century examples.³³ Whether or not the sarcophagus came from an earlier time period, its selection for use by the son of Ahiram to honor the dead king of Byblos must be seen as a meaningful choice – presumably the iconography of the sarcophagus had symbolic currency in the context of a royal burial.

The sarcophagus itself is rectangular, with four lions carved at its corners, arranged as if supporting it. Along the short sides of the base are reliefs depicting four women holding their hands upward in lamentation.³⁴ One of the long sides displays a presentation scene involving a seated figure at left, facing right, portrayed as if a god or king on a throne flanked with sphinxes. In front of him is an Egyptian-style table heaped with food and drink. Further right, seven figures face him – perhaps ready to make offerings or to worship. On the opposite long side, eight figures stand similarly in a procession. The convex lid shows two opposed male figures (perhaps the deceased king and his son, Itthobaal) cut in bas relief. One of the figures, that thought to be king Ahiram, holds a drooping lotus flower in his lowered left hand, perhaps indicating that he is deceased.³⁵ Seated lions are depicted between the two figures. The significance of the lotus flower has been explored by Markoe, who interprets the two male figures on the lid as Ahiram and his son, Ithobaal:

The iconography of the lotus figures prominently on the sarcophagus of Ahiram. There the flower appears three times: once on the side wall, in the hand of the king who sits enthroned before a procession of votaries; and twice on the sarcophagus lid, held by Ahiram himself and his son Ithobaal; the latter lifts the upright flower to his face as though to inhale its fragrance. By contrast, the lotus held by Ahiram in the processional scene droops distinctly. As the

³³ Dussaud's 1924 publication included a discussion of the epigraph of Abibaal, another king of Byblos/Gebal, which had been inscribed on a statue of the 22nd dynasty pharaoh Shishak (ca. 935-915 BCE). The parallels between these two scripts were said to be "nearly identical" (Albright 1947, 153), and debate has continued since that time.

³⁴ Described by Moscati (1989 [2001 edition], 355) as "beating their breasts or tearing their hair."

³⁵ Porada 1973, 359-360 and figures 4-5.

lotus's vital, life-giving powers are embodied in the living flower, the wilted plant should signify that the king is deceased. In Egyptian tomb depictions, the lotus flower is sniffed by the deceased and his family members in a gesture aimed at ensuring the symbolic rebirth of his soul in the afterlife. On the Byblian sarcophagus lid, Ithobaal's lotus-smelling gesture should embody the same meaning; as the ritual dedicant of the sarcophagus, his symbolic actions are meant to ensure the safe passage of his father's soul to the afterlife.³⁶

Though it is tempting to draw these kinds of direct connections between symbols and their meaning according to New Kingdom Egyptian conceptions, and the adoption of those symbols by Levantine Phoenicians, caution is warranted. We can say that the lotus, as utilized in the scenes chosen to decorate a royal sarcophagus, had some resonance for the Byblian royal family in connection with death. All these individual elements – the sphinxes, lions, lotus flower, banquet scene, and processional figures – begin to establish the iconographic repertoire that may correspond to a semantic web of Phoenician conceptions of death; however, their explicit interconnections may not yet be clear.

In particular, it is not clear whether the sarcophagus was produced in Egypt or in Phoenician territory, a detail that would affect an interpretation of the sarcophagus' iconography in the Phoenician sphere in which it was (re-)inscribed and eventually discovered. Schmitz's interpretation of the verb *pʿl* as a factitive verb, namely "he got (it) made" (see note, above), would seem to support the view that in either case the sarcophagus was purpose-made. The subject of the verb (in this case, Ittobaal) would seem to be speaking with the authority of one who commissioned the creation of the sarcophagus (whether abroad or locally).

Byblian Royal Building Inscriptions:

³⁶ Markoe 2000, 137-138.

Yehimilk

Loc. / Num.	KAI 4; Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 2043; Gibson 6; CSAI - Phoe 23; CoS 2.29
Dimensions	35 x 70 x 45 cm stone block, broken off of a larger stone formerly inscribed with a Pseudo-Hieroglyphic inscription.
Discovery	Found in the ruins of the Crusader Castle in Byblos in 1929.
Studies	Montet 1929, 250; Dunand 1930, 321-31; Dunand 1939, 1141; Dunand 1954, 30; Driver 1954 pl. 48, 1.7; Pritchard 1955, 499a; Martin 1961, 63ss; Donner and Röllig 1973, 7; Magnanini 1973, 30-31, n. 7; Gibson 1982, 17-19; CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 146.
Date	950-940 BCE

Abibaal

Loc. / Num.	KAI 5; Gibson 7
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Inscribed on a fragment of a statue of Shoshenq I (945-924 BCE; Dynasty 22) at Byblos
Studies	Clermont-Ganneau, 1905, 74-78; Dussaud 1924, 145 ff.; Maisler 1946, 174 ff.; Albright 1947, 157 f.; Yeivin 1959-1960, 214; Teixidor 1968, 371, no. 66; Donner and Röllig 1973, 7-8. See also Chéhab 1969, 38-40.
Date	ca. 940 BCE or ca. 925-920 BCE

Elibaal

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum, AO 9502; KAI 6; Gibson 8
Dimensions	60 cm high x 36 cm long x 37.5 cm wide
Discovery	Inscribed on a fragment of a statue of Osorkon I (924-889 BCE; Dynasty 22) at Byblos. Discovered before 1881 at the Temple of Ba'alat Gubeil, and held by private collectors until acquired by the Louvre in 1925.
Studies	Dussaud 1925, 101-17; Montet 1928, 54; Harris 1936, 159; Dunand 1939, 18 and fig. 7; Albright 1947, 158; Donner and Röllig 1973, 7-8. See also Chéhab 1969, 38-40; Gubel 2002, 61-62.
Date	ca. 920 BCE or ca. 900 BCE



Figure II.2: Elibaal Inscription on a Fragment of a Statue of Osorkon I (Gubel 2002, 61)

Shipitbaal I

Loc. / Num.	KAI 7; Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 2044; Gibson 9; CSAI - Phoe 30.
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found by Dunand in 1935, carved into a limestone block among the remains of a wall in the temple of Hathor and Herishef, Byblos
Studies	Dunand 1945, 146-51; Albright 1946, 14-18 and 1947, 158; Magnanini 1973, 35, n. 16; Gibson 1982, 23-24, n. 9; Maisler 1946, 165-81; Donner and Röellig 1973, 7-8.
Date	ca. 900 BCE

Though not intended for mortuary contexts, a series of four 10th century building inscriptions attributed to various kings of Byblos (Yehimilk, Abibaal, Elibaal, Shipitbaal I) contribute a small but repeatedly established datum to the picture of the Phoenician conceptions of death. Each of these four inscriptions ends with the same formulaic request for blessing:

tʿrk bʿlt jbl ymt [PN] wšntw ʿl gbl

May Baalath-Gebal prolong the days of [PN] and his years [of reign] over Byblos.

With the slightly lengthened variant of Yehimilk’s inscription:

ʿl yʿrk bʿlšmm wbʿl[t] gbl wmpht ʿl gbl qdšm ymt yhmlk wšntw ʿl gbl kmlk šdq wmlk yšr lpn ʿl gbl qdšm

May Baal-Shamem and Baal[ath]-Gebal and the assembly of the holy gods of Byblos prolong the days of Yehimilk and his years [of reign] over Byblos as a rightful³⁷ / righteous king and a true king before the holy gods of Byblos.

³⁷ Arguments have been made that Yehimilk, whose inscription does not include a genealogy as do the others in this series, might be using the term *šdq* to indicate his right to the throne (where his legitimacy might have been threatened due to succession problems). See Vance 1994a, 8 for summary and comparanda.

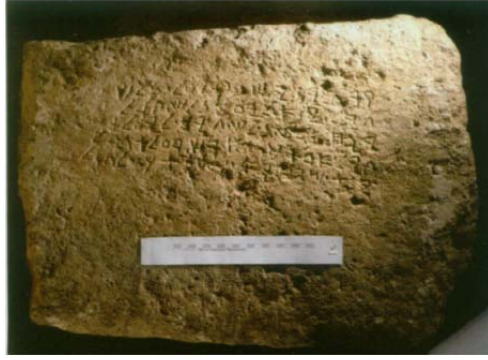


Figure II.3: Building Inscription of Shipit-Baal (Demsky 2007)

Though not directly bearing on the treatment of the dead, these inscriptions help us form a clearer picture of what a king of Byblos wanted in exchange for rebuilding a temple or dedicating a statue to a particular deity – as long a life as possible, and continued sovereignty over the years of this long life. We can also presume that Baalath-Gebal, literally “the Lady of Byblos” (which may be the goddesses name, or an epithet), had the power to grant such a request – to determine, in some way, how long a king should live. The latest of these royal inscriptions belongs to Shipitbaal I (who lists Elibaal as his father and Yehimilk as his grandfather), inscribed ca. 900 BCE, still early in the period under consideration.

c. Beirut and Vicinity

Khaldé Stele

Loc. / Num.	Lebanese Dept. of Antiquities (DGA ³⁸ ; current location unknown)
Dimensions	[dimensions not recorded; stele now lost]
Discovery	Found during Roger Saidah’s 1966 excavations at the Khaldé cemetery (Tomb 121)
Studies	Bordreuil 1982b; Saidah 1966; Saidah 1971; Saidah 1979; Sader 2005, 25
Date	850-800 BCE

³⁸ The acronym is based on the French name for the department, Direction Générale des Antiquités, which is a technical unit of the Lebanese Ministry of Culture.

Of the four hundred twenty-two Iron I-II graves excavated by Roger Saidah on behalf of the Lebanese Department of Antiquities (DGA) at the site of Khaldé (about 12 km south of Beirut) from 1961-1966, only one was associated with an inscribed stele. That grave was actually a group grave or family tomb labeled “Tomb 121” by the excavators. Tomb 121, discovered during the summer of 1962, consisted of a rectangular enclosure about 3 m long and 1.7 m wide, built of rough-hewn sandstone blocks. The tomb had been reused several times, and featured a single articulated skeleton along the west wall, and a collection of bones in the NW corner of the tomb.³⁹ Three amphorae were also found within the tomb, containing a mixture of charred and uncharred bones – the largest of them contained two unburnt skulls along with other human bones (showing that in at least one case, a single amphora could be used for multiple adult burials). Thirty-six items were catalogued as grave goods, including two scarab seals, five *oenochóe* (single-handled jugs with spouts), two flasks, and an assortment of other pottery.

The inscribed stele itself, discovered four years later in the final year of excavation, “is cut in the local beach-rock and it has a trapezoidal shape.”⁴⁰ The inscription consists of four letters written length-wise down the middle of the stone. The letters form a horizontal line starting near the foot of the stele and ending near the top “in such a way as to suggest that the stone was lying on its long side.”⁴¹ Bordreuil has dated this text on paleographic grounds to the second half of the 9th century BCE, and reads:

³⁹ “Nous procédâmes ensuite à l'enlèvement des dalles de couverture, ce qui nous permit de découvrir une tombe collective dont un seul squelette était en place, le long de la paroi ouest, couché sur le ventre, le crâne posé au nord. Il était en assez mauvais état de conservation et mesurait environ 150 cm. De nombreux ossements humains dépareillés étaient dans le coin nord-ouest, comme s'ils avaient été entassés et repoussés là pour faire de la place. Le mobilier funéraire occupait une grande partie de la tombe” (Saidah 1966, 64).

⁴⁰ Sader 2005, 25.

⁴¹ Sader 2005, 25.

gty (a personal name⁴²)

Schmitz, on the other hand, reads the first letter as a *p* rather than a *g*;⁴³ and dates the inscription slightly later (perhaps to the early 8th century BCE) on the basis of the script.



Figure II.4: Khaldé Inscribed Stele (adapted from Bordreuil 1982b)

The stele itself is unfortunately now missing; Bordreuil’s 1982 publication was read from a photograph taken by Saidah,⁴⁴ and Sader was also unable to locate the stele in preparation for her 2005 volume.⁴⁵

d. Sidon and Vicinity

Tambourit Cinerary Amphora

Loc. / Num.	Tamb. 71-28
Dimensions	[dimensions of the amphora unavailable] The average height of the Phoenician characters is 7-8 mm.
Discovery	Found in a tomb at Tambourit (modern Tanbourit)
Studies	Starcky and Bordreuil 1975, 106; Bordreuil 1977
Date	850-800 BCE

⁴² Bordreuil suggests the name may be interpreted as either a gentilic or the name of a musical instrument (on the basis of Biblical parallels); 1982b, 190-191.

⁴³ Schmitz’s reading derives the name from the root *pty*, either “I persuaded/enticed him/her” or “she persuaded/enticed him/her.” Schmitz notes further that “it is also less likely, but possible, that we have an archaic Italian name *Potitia*. According to Livy [Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, i. 6, 7], the *gens Potitia* had exclusive right to conduct the sacrificial rites of Herakles at Rome; in the fourth century BC the family attempted to sell their monopoly for profit, and all members of the gens died in mysterious ways” (personal correspondence, June 2011).

⁴⁴ Bordreuil remarks in his publication of the inscription that “la localisation actuelle de cette Pierre m’est inconnue” (1982b, 191, n. 10).

⁴⁵ “Since it was not stored in the DGA storage in Beirut, it was impossible to have a closer look at the stele in order to complete the documentation. It is probably in the DGA storage in Sidon, which has not been inventorized since the end of the war” (Sader 2005, 25).

In 1971, an Iron Age Phoenician tomb was unearthed by a bulldozer attempting to level a field for agricultural use in Tambourit, a village about six kilometers southeast of Sidon. Eleven objects⁴⁶ were collected by the owner of the field and brought to the attention of Roger Saidah, who published them in 1977. Although the damage to the tomb itself was significant,⁴⁷ the collection of objects was remarkably well preserved owing to their having been buried lower than other areas of the tomb in a kind of trench at the southern end of the grave. The collection was thus datable on the basis of ceramic typology (dependent on the Geometric Pyxis to pin the date range more precisely), indicating that the tomb was in use from 850/825 to 800/775 BCE.

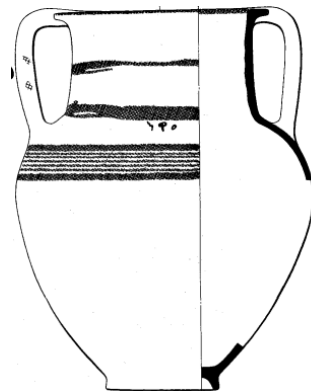


Figure II.5: Tambourit Cinerary Urn (adapted from Saidah 1977)

The four amphorae and the pyxis had all been used as cinerary urns; the five urns buried together in the same tomb indicate that it may have been reused for members of the same family. One of these amphorae bore an inked inscription, added after firing. Bordreuil read the three characters as *ʿqm*, and interpreted the noun as a toponym, a hypothesis

⁴⁶ Four amphorae, three dishes (used to cover three of the amphorae), three flasks, and a pyxis, published in Saidah 1977.

⁴⁷ “Rendu sur les lieux, nous vîmes, à flanc de coteau, une cavité béante, plus ou moins circulaire, creusée dans la roche crayeuse qui forme le substrat habituel des hauteurs surplombant la plaine côtière des environs de Sidon. Le fond, encombré de gravats, se situait à près de deux mètres de la surface. La tombe ayant été bouleversée par la chute de l'engin, nous ne fûmes pas en mesure d'en déterminer les dimensions exactes ni d'en découvrir l'entrée” (Saidah 1977, 135).

supported by the cognate place name ‘Aqmata, about 15 km from Tambourit. Bordreuil added that “le toponyme *ʿqm* désignait ainsi probablement l’origine géographique du contenu primitif de cette amphore,”⁴⁸ indicating that this particular amphora would have been initially used to store an agricultural product of some kind, and was only later reused for this burial. This may have implications for understanding the context of other inscribed amphorae in this study (see below).

Tell el-Burak Stele

Loc. / Num.	[unavailable]
Dimensions	50 x 24 x 19 cm
Discovery	Found during the 2002 excavation season at Tel el-Burak, in secondary use as part of the construction or repair of a 6 th century fortification wall.
Studies	Kamlah and Sader 2003; Sader 2005, 22-24
Date	mid-7 th -mid-6 th centuries BCE

One inscribed funerary stele was found by the American University of Beirut’s excavations at the site of Tell el-Burak just south of Sidon. Cut in local beach rock, it was discovered in the collapsed stones of a 6th century fortification wall where it had been reused, “probably brought from a nearby cemetery which has not been yet located.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Bordreuil 1977, 161.

⁴⁹ Sader 2005, 23.



Figure II.6: Tell el Burak Funerary Stele and Inscription Detail
(adapted from Kamlah and Sader 2003)

A six-letter inscription was carved in a curving pattern underneath a partially broken circular or sun-disk motif:⁵⁰

l'bb'l = *l* + “Abibaal” (a personal name meaning “[the god] Baal is my father”)

This inscription introduces the question of the use of the preposition *l*- in the context of Phoenician funerary stelae. The preposition *l*- is a Semitic preposition with a range of uses, including motion “to” or “toward” something or some place; the recipient of a gift or an action (i.e. “for” someone); or the owner of an object (i.e. “belonging to” someone). Teixidor (1982) and others have (for the most part) agreed that in the case of modifying simple personal names in funerary stelae contexts, the preposition *l*- indicates ownership or benefit in the sense of signifying the individual whose burial is being commemorated; forming a construction something like “[the stele / grave] belonging to/for [personal name].”

First published in 2003,⁵¹ the stele has been dated on the basis of script style to the 7th-6th centuries BCE. It is currently located in the Lebanese Department of Antiquities (DGA) storage facility in Sidon.

⁵⁰ “A partly preserved circular depression is all that remains of what might have been a sun-disc symbol” (Sader 2005, 23).

Sidon Stele

Loc. / Num.	Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 19206; CSAI - Phoe 22.
Dimensions	[unknown]
Discovery	Found during Roger Saidah's 1969 excavations at Sidon-Dakerman
Studies	Teixidor 1982, 233-235; Sader 2005, 25-26
Date	ca. 600 BCE (Sader 2005 – “slightly lower date”)

Teixidor offered the first publication of the inscribed stone stele which “se trouvait en 1973 dans le jardin du Musée National de Beyrouth,”⁵² but had been excavated by Roger Saidah (director of the Lebanese DGA) at the site of Sidon-Dakerman.⁵³ Although the object's specific archaeological context had been lost by the time of publication,⁵⁴ Teixidor dated the inscription to the early 6th century (“peut-être même des alentours de 600 avant J.-C.”) on the basis of its script style, while Sader argued for a “slightly lower dating”⁵⁵ that would place this inscription in the Persian Period. The inscription itself, arranged in two lines, reads:

l ʔbhʔ bn mrʔ l+ ʔbhʔ son of mrʔ⁵⁶

⁵¹ Kamlah and Sader 2003.

⁵² Teixidor 1982, 233.

⁵³ Saidah writes that “this is the first time we have uncovered such a number of Late Iron Age and Late Bronze Age burials” (1969, 122), although no exact count of the burials is given. In his 1979 publication (p. 38) he offers a more precise date for these burials: “l'implantation profonde de tombes de l'âge du fer (6e siècle avant J.-C.)”

⁵⁴ The stele was published in a volume (*Archéologie au Levant, Recueil R. Saidah*, CMO 12, Arch. 9, Lyon) honoring the memory of Dr. Saidah after his untimely death. The Lebanese civil war, which began in 1975 and continued through 1990, meant the loss of much of the collection of unpublished excavation notes held by the Department of Antiquities (housed in the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, which sat directly on the green line). Teixidor goes on to write: “Cette note épigraphique, bien que tragiquement privée aujourd'hui d'un contexte archéologique qui aurait été précieux, représente pour moi un souvenir personnel de l'ami disparu” (Teixidor 1982, 233).

⁵⁵ On the basis of the *he* shape, which parallels those of the Sidonian Eshmunazar and Tabnit inscriptions dated to the Persian period; Sader 2005, 26.

⁵⁶ Compare Teixidor 1982, who attempts to dissect the names into hypocoristic onomastic constellations (that is, missing their theophoric elements). Sader (2005, 25-26) calls some of his interpretations “highly hypothetical,” but “because [the stele] lies under other very heavy stone monuments [in the Directorate General of Antiquities Storage facility], which were very difficult to move, it was impossible to have a better photograph and to draw the tombstone.”



Figure II.7: Sidon Funerary Stele with Inscription Detail
(adapted from Teixidor 1982)

Like the funerary stele from Khaldé, it is curious that this was the only stele found at Sidon-Dakerman, although “the fact that such tombstones may have been re-used in later buildings or may have been overlooked could account for their absence.”⁵⁷ No measurements of this stele had been taken by the time of Sader’s 2005 publication.

e. Beqaa Valley

Ruweiseh Arrowhead

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum AO18849; KAI 20
Dimensions	11 cm x 4.4 cm
Discovery	1925 excavation of disturbed burial cave at Ruweiseh / Rouisseh / Rouisseseh / Ruweisseh in the Beq’aa (Biq’a) Valley
Studies	Guigues and Ronzevalle 1921; Dussaud 1927, 185; Gras, Rouillard, and Teixidor 1989
Date	1050 BCE

⁵⁷ Sader 2005, 25.

Only one inscription of the Iron I-II comes from inland Lebanon, in the Beqaa Valley. A 1920s investigation of two shaft tombs at Ruweiseh near Nabatiyeh el-fôqa turned up two bronze arrowheads, one of which was inscribed on both faces:

Obverse:	<i>ḥṣ ʿdʿ</i>	Arrow of 'Addo'
Reverse:	<i>bn ʿky</i>	son of 'Akki

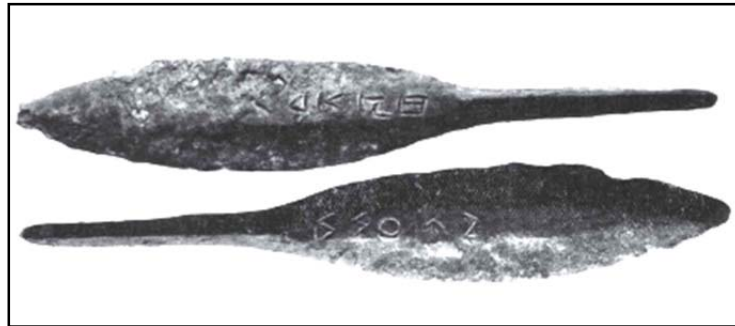


Figure II.8: Ruweiseh Arrowhead
(the reverse side is upside down; adapted from Dussaud 1927)

The first element, *ḥṣ* is to be vocalized *ḥiṣṣ* (*ḥizz*, Akkadian *uṣṣu*),⁵⁸ and seems to act to label the object in question with a genitive construction indicating ownership.

To date, sixty-one inscribed bronze arrowheads have come to light, although the other sixty all come from the antiquities market.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the archaeological context of the inscribed Ruweiseh Arrowhead (and its sister arrowhead, from the same tomb but with no inscription) is limited by the fact that the tomb was heavily reused, at least into the Hellenistic period,⁶⁰ “rendant impossible toute étude stratigraphique.”⁶¹ The paleographic style of the Ruweiseh arrowhead inscription has nevertheless led to scholarly consensus that the piece was

⁵⁸ Milik and Cross 1954, 6.

⁵⁹ See Elayi 2005 for a summary of the known inscribed arrowheads to date.

⁶⁰ From Guigues' 1926 report: “C'est ainsi que j'ai recueilli, avec des débris d'un mobilier funéraire d'époque gréco-romaine, deux pointes de flèches en bronze d'âge divers, dont l'une porte une inscription phénicienne sur chacune de ses faces (pl. III, 1-2), l'autre, beaucoup plus petite et de forme lancéolée, a perdu son pédoncule. Recueillies toutes deux dans la tombe α, au point F (fig. 1), elles n'étaient accompagnées d'aucune pièce ou fragment céramique de la même époque. Elles se trouvaient au milieu de terres passées au crible et entassées dans un coin de la grotte” (1926, 326).

⁶¹ Guigues 1926, 326.

probably produced during the 10th century BCE or perhaps slightly earlier, and the other unprovenanced arrowheads have been similarly dated in the 12th-10th century range. Although much of the potential for these arrowheads to inform our understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice in the Iron I-II is lost due to their lack of traceable provenance, a few are worth highlighting for their indirect implications and bearing on this study. In particular, three inscribed arrowheads from the El-Khadr hoard (Table II.1, nos. 2-4) have been celebrated as significant epigraphic finds – a transitional stage between early Iron Age Phoenician scripts and what came before.⁶²

Table II.1: A Selection of Inscribed Arrowheads

<i>No.</i>	<i>Current Location</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Publication</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Inscription</i>	<i>Inscription Translation</i>
1 = KAI 20	Louvre Museum AO 18849	Ruweiseh burial cave excavations (near Nabatiyeh, in the Beqaa Valley of Southern Lebanon)	Guigues 1921; Ronzevalle 1926; Dussaud 1927; Martin 1962 (<i>Ruw</i>)	11 th - 10 th centuries BCE	<i>ḥṣ ʿdʿ bn ʿky</i>	Arrow of 'Addo', son of 'Akki
2	Private collection – Abbé Milik	Bethlehem – Antiquities Market (El Khadr ⁶³ I); Part of a hoard of twenty-six javelin and arrowheads.	Milik and Cross 1954; Cross and Milik 1956; Martin 1962 (<i>EK 1</i>)	ca. 1100 BCE	[written vertically; letters written left-to-right] <i>ḥṣ ʿbdbʿt</i>	Arrow of 'Ablabī't
3	Private Collection – Frank Moore Cross, Jr.	Bethlehem – Antiquities Market (El Khadr II); Part of a hoard of twenty-six javelin and arrowheads.	Cross and Milik 1956; Martin 1962 (<i>EK 2</i>)	ca. 1100 BCE	[written vertically; letters written left-to-right] <i>ḥṣ ʿbdbt</i>	Arrow of 'Ablabi[']t

⁶² “The el-Khadr javelin-heads provide the missing link between the latest of the Proto-Canaanite epigraphs, and the earliest of the Phoenician inscriptions” (Milik and Cross 1954, 11).

⁶³ The village of El Khadr ('El Khadr) is located 5 km west of Bethlehem. The large hoard of both inscribed and uninscribed arrowheads was discovered in 1953 by a local farmer, and subsequently scattered among antiquities shops in Jerusalem and 'Amman. J.T. Milik, F.M. Cross and G.L. Harding slowly collected and published nineteen pieces (three inscribed) in total, published in Cross and Milik 1956. Six other uninscribed arrowheads in private collections were also noted (Cross 1980, 4) but not purchased. Cross tracked down another two inscribed arrowheads in 1979, publishing them in Cross 1980. The total number of known arrowheads belonging to the El Khadr hoard is thus 26, five of which are inscribed and included above.

4	Amman Museum, Jordan no. J. 5137	Bethlehem – Antiquities Market (El Khadr III); Part of a hoard of twenty-six javelin and arrowheads (gift of G. Lankester Harding)	Cross and Milik 1956; Martin 1962 (EK 3)	ca. 1100 BCE	[written vertically; letters written left-to-right] <i>ḥš bdlbʔ</i>	Arrow of 'Ablabīt
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Their vertical writing and left-to-right letter forms are archaic features: the practice of writing vertically seems to have flourished in the 15th century, but produced few surviving examples other than these arrowheads that appear to date to the Iron Age.⁶⁴ While dextrograde writing in North West Semitic dialects (today all written in sinistrograde scripts) may be known as late as the 10th century Khirbet Qeiyafa ostrakon (perhaps the oldest Hebrew inscription now known⁶⁵),⁶⁶ this is the latest example of Phoenician writing in the dextrograde manner yet discovered.

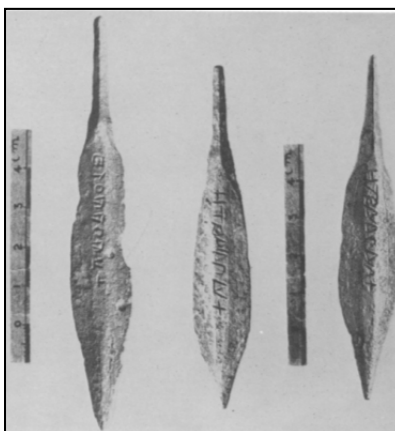


Figure II.9: Three of the el-Khadr Inscribed Arrowheads (Cross and Milik 1954, 7)

The el-Khadr hoard is also notable for its find spot. Although they are reported to have been discovered by a *fellâh* of the village of el-Khadr 5 km west of Bethlehem, no evidence for

⁶⁴ Cf. Cross and Milik 1954, 15.

⁶⁵ It should be noted that Rollston has argued that the Khirbet Qeiyafa inscription may well be “Proto-Phoenician” or “Early Alphabetic,” rather than Old Hebrew (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=56>; 12 January 2010).

⁶⁶ But note that Demsky recently argued that “the scribe wanted to create a text in which at least the first line was written vertically. ...He would have done so either because he had an older model in mind or with the intention of challenging the student to read or write in different directions” (Demsky 2012, 190). This ingenious suggestion is based in part on the presence of five drawn lines running through the inscription, which seem to have been drawn after the letters.

the occupation of this village site earlier than the Roman period has been discovered, leading the epigraphers to conclude “the cache may have been lost or buried with its owner, during or after a battle.”⁶⁷ Unfortunately no more could be said about the state of the hoard when it was found, or whether any skeletal material was uncovered nearby.

The name mentioned in the three inscriptions is the same (with one epigraphic variant), *ʿbdlb(?)t*. This name in fact appears along with the name of the owner of the Ruweiseh Arrowhead, *ʿdʿ*, and his patronymic or gentilic, *ʿky*, in an Ugaritic census-list of bowmen.⁶⁸ Cross and Milik state that “if it is not pure coincidence, this may be an indication that a hereditary and/or mercenary archer class existed. Compare the earlier *piṭatu* in the Amarna Age, *tnn* in Ugarit, *šâbê šanannu* in Alalakh or even the *naʿarûma* of the Egyptian texts.”⁶⁹ While these suggestions are enticing, they remain only speculations without better archaeological context.

Because of the rarity of inscribed objects in this early time frame, the function of the arrowheads has been widely debated. Three hypotheses have been put forth regarding the purpose of the inscriptions and the high value they seem to accord the bronze weapons:

As to the significance of inscribing arrowheads, scholars have put forth three possibilities. First, they may have been inscribed so that the archer could retrieve them after battle. Second, because in several Semitic languages the words for arrow and good luck are very similar..., some have suggested that inscribed arrowheads were used in divination (see Ezek 21:26). The third hypothesis is that the arrowheads represent gifts to deities, the name inscribed on the arrowhead being the donor.⁷⁰

In these models, the difference between hypotheses two and three is that in the second, the arrows would have been kept with the owner in life, and used on numerous occasions; whereas

⁶⁷ Cross and Milik 1954, 5.

⁶⁸ *Ugaritic Handbook* 321: III, 38 (Gordon 1947); RA 1940-1941 106-107.

⁶⁹ Cross and Milik 1954, 7.

⁷⁰ Vance 1994b, 110.

in the third scenario, the arrows would have been dedicated to a deity – presumably not inscribed until needed for votive purposes. Elayi has argued that an ancient break in the extremity of one of the most recently published arrowheads “proves that it was used and therefore was a true weapon and not only a votive object,”⁷¹ because it had been resharpened after the break occurred; presumably a votive arrow, or one used in divination, would not need to be sharp to be functional or valued. Further, the fact that the break obscures part of the inscription may well indicate that these arrowheads were not inscribed in order to transform them into grave goods, but were rather inscribed earlier, and only subsequently employed as grave goods (probably after the death of their owners), at least in the case of our only arrowhead with reliable archaeological provenance.

The fact that the inscribed Ruweiseh arrowhead was found in a burial setting (and accompanied by an uninscribed specimen) shows that whatever the function of these arrowheads in the lives of those who owned them, they were considered meaningful as grave goods. Also of interest is the fact that in the inscriptions, ownership of the arrows is indicated linguistically not with a preposition (*-l-*) or solely by a patronymic formula (such as “*x* son of *y*”), but with a construct phrase stating the very type of the inscribed object: *ḥṣ* ‘arrow.’ Why should this seemingly obvious label be applied? Could naming the type of object be significant for the function of the object or the intention of its inscription in some way? Or is it perhaps a novel convention of those who carved the inscriptions on small metal pieces at Roueisseh (or some other point of origin)? This datum must be taken into consideration as we continue to compile evidence for the labeling of funerary stelae and amphorae or cinerary urns, and these inscriptions’ possible significance.

⁷¹ Elayi 2005, 36.

f. Tyre and Vicinity

Thirty-nine Stelae from Tyre al-Bass (purchased)

Loc. / Num.	1) <u>Beirut Collection</u> : Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, TT 91.S1-3 and S7-10; CSAI - Phoe 31-37 2) <u>Beiteddin Collection</u> 3) <u>Haifa, Israel Collection</u> : Hecht Museum
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	1-2) Illicitly dug at Tyre al-Bass ca. 1990 and acquired by the Lebanese DGA. 3) Illicitly dug at Tyre al-Bass ca. 1990 and acquired by the Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel.
Studies	Sader 1991, 109-120 and Sader 1992b, 54-60; Moscati 1993, 147-151; Bartoloni 1993, 153-156; Amadasi Guzzo 1993, 157-163; Garbini 1993, 3-6; Sader 1991, 101-126; Lemaire 2001; Sader 2005.
Date	Range from 10 th – late 6 th centuries BCE

The most significant contribution to our understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice in the Levant during the Iron I-II periods was the discovery of a cremation cemetery at Tyre in 1990. Although the location of the burial grounds came to light as a result of illicit digging, black market sales of funerary stelae, and subsequent rescue operations, the cemetery was eventually excavated in 1997, 2002, 2005, and 2008. The excavations have now been backfilled and are no longer accessible.

Of the hundreds of stelae thought to have been illegally removed from the cemetery at Tyre in the last twenty-five years (before controlled excavation began in 1997), only one hundred five can be traced⁷² – the rest having been lost to the antiquities market. Thirty-nine of these have been published, and will be discussed below. Twenty-seven of these are now in the possession of the Lebanese DGA, stored in Beirut and in Beiteddin.

⁷² Thirty nine are discussed below; sixty-six more (recovered from the antiquities market or now held in private collections) will be published by Abousamra and Lemaire in the forthcoming Festschrift for Francois Bron.

- 1) During the initial stage of the rescue operations, undertaken in 1990,⁷³ twelve stelae were saved and studied through Lebanese efforts⁷⁴ (another six inscribed and one uninscribed stelae were viewed by Sader’s team, but could not be collected nor published). These twelve are now in DGA storage in Beirut.
- 2) Another fifteen stelae (eleven with inscriptions), also thought to have been illicitly dug at Tyre al-Bass and eventually acquired by the Lebanese DGA, were subsequently added to the collection of twelve published by Sader in 1991. These fifteen are now on display in the Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon.
- 3) The final group of twelve inscribed stelae illicitly dug from the Tyre al-Bass cemetery (before regular excavations were begun in 1997) were collected and donated to the Hecht Museum in Haifa, Israel, where they are currently on display as part of a permanent exhibit on Phoenician culture, trade, and religion. This corpus was published in 2001 by Lemaire.

Table II.2: Tyre al-Bass Stelae Obtained via Rescue Efforts

No. ⁷⁵	Location	Phoenician Text	Inscription Interpretation	Motif	Date ⁷⁶
S1; *12	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>grḥ</i> <i>mn</i>	Personal name: “client of [the god Baal] Hammon” or “client of the <i>ḥmn</i> ”	Crescent turned downward containing small circle (interpreted as solar disk); four vertical parallel lines on top (interpreted as uraei ⁷⁷)	8 th – 7 th c. BCE
S2; *13	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>tnt</i> <i>šb</i> ⁷⁷ <i>štʿl</i> <i>m</i>	Personal name: “Tanit- <i>šb</i> ” wife of <i>ʿlm</i> ”	---	End of 7 th – end of 6 th c. BCE
S3; *4	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>bn tn</i> <i>t ʿlʿ</i>	Personal name: “son of Tanit, the high one”	---	Late 7 th – 6 th c. BCE

⁷³ Helen Sader, Professor of Archaeology at the American University of Beirut, describes the rescue in her 1991 report: “illicit digging in the area of the probable site of the first Tyrian *tophet* yielded some 200 stone stelae according to local information. We were able to see 60 but were not able to photograph them. Only twelve of the stelae could be saved. These now form part of the National Museum collection.... Having offered the rescued material to the Lebanese Department of Antiquities, we were granted permission to publish this exceptional find. When the publication of the twelve stelae was already in preparation, we were able to see and photograph six other inscribed and one uninscribed stelae. Two of them had been cut with an electric saw! The clandestine diggers had started cutting the stones still in their possession to preserve only the part bearing the inscription, because the heavy weight and the cumbersome size of the stones had prevented the sale on the antiquities market! Next to the above-mentioned 19 stelae, several inscribed, complete, and some mutilated stelae are now in the Beiteddin Museum” (1991, 101).

⁷⁴ “All stelae, with the exception of S6, are cut in the local Tyrian beach-rock. They differ in shape and size. Two are L-shaped (S1 and S4), two are tall and narrow rectangular stones (S10 and S3), two have a rounded top (S2 and S9), two are squarish (S7 and S8), three are trapezoidal in shape (S11, S6, and S5), and one is a small rectangular stone (S12). The tallest stele measures 76 cm and the smallest does not exceed 41 cm in height. Most of them are extremely heavy and cannot be carried by one person” (Sader 1992, 60)

⁷⁵ The numbers S1-S12 were used to distinguish the stelae in their initial publication, but a more comprehensive collection of Phoenician homeland stelae was put forth in Sader 2005 where a new numbering system was designed. I have included these numbers from the 2005 publication with an asterisk so that they might be correlated with the earlier publications as well.

⁷⁶ Determined by Sader (1991 and 1992) on the basis of paleography.

⁷⁷ Sader 2005, 36.

S4; *5	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>l</i> <i>b?</i> <i>y</i>	Personal name (hypocoristic): “[DN] is a lion”	Miniature circle (interpreted as solar disk ⁷⁸)	7 th c. BCE
S5; *6	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>ʿbd</i> [–] <i>bn</i> <i>bʿl</i> <i>y</i>	Personal name with genealogy: “Servant of [DN], son of Baal-y”	T-shaped cross topped by circle (interpreted as <i>ankh</i> or Tanit sign ⁷⁹)	6 th c. BCE
S6; *9	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	---	---	Frontal view of human head and neck in relief, with stylized face	n.d.
S7; *14	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>mlqrt</i> <i>ʿb</i>	Personal name: “Melqart is (my) father”	Crescent turned downward containing small circle	8 th c. BCE
S8; *7	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>štrt</i> <i>ʿl</i> <i>ʿ</i> <i>t</i>	Personal name: “Astarte the Mighty One”	Rectangular shape cut into the stele (variously interpreted as a <i>Naos</i> , shrine, or empty niche)	9 th – 8 th c. BCE
S9; *15	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>grgš</i>	Personal name meaning “client of <i>gš</i> ” or perhaps a profession relating to “clay/mud” ⁸⁰	Horseshoe-shape (interpreted as betyl or altar) cut by horizontal line	Not later than the 7 th c. BCE
S10; *8	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	<i>lʿmt</i> <i>šmn</i>	“belonging to ‘Female servant of Eshmun”	---	8 th -7 th c. BCE
S11; *10	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	---	---	Two horizontal parallel lines at top; upturned U-shape with rounded appendage coming off the bottom (interpreted as aedicula or shrine ⁸¹)	n.d.
S12; *11	Lebanese DGA (1991 rescue efforts)	---	---	Oval shape with short vertical base and two short diagonal lines coming off the upper portion of the oval (interpreted as a plant ⁸²)	n.d.
*16 ⁸³	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	<i>lšm^c</i>	<i>l</i> + personal name: <i>šm^c</i> [(DN) has heard]	-	10 th c. BCE
*17	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	<i>mlq</i> <i>rt[?]</i> <i>b</i>	Personal name: “Melqart is [my] father”	T-shaped cross topped by circle (interpreted as <i>ankh</i> or Tanit sign ⁸⁴)	9 th -early 8 th c. BCE

⁷⁸ Sader 2005, 28.

⁷⁹ Sader 2005, 28.

⁸⁰ This personal name is attested at Ugarit at in Punic onomastics, although its meaning remains uncertain. See Sader 1991, 118-120 for discussion.

⁸¹ “The top of the shrine consists of two parallel horizontal grooves surmounted by a small rectangular platform 10 cm wide, bearing a round symbol, most probably a sun disc with a vertical line attached to its bottom.... The sides of the shrine are very deeply hewn forming a right angle on top, possibly representing two columns. Inside the shrine, in the middle of its lower section, there is a hole, which looks like a navel. It is possible that the stonecutter intended to carve a niche or any other symbol but did not complete his work but it is also possible that it is indeed a navel for below this hole there is another enigmatic representation. It consists of a long vertical proturbance with a rounded lower end resembling a phallus...” (Sader 2005, 34-35).

⁸² “The symbol... is ovoid in shape with a short vertical stem at its bottom and two horns or leaves at the top” (Sader 2005, 35).

⁸³ The Beiteddin Museum stelae numbers correspond to those assigned in Sader 2005, for which I have used the asterisk convention, above.

⁸⁴ Sader 2005, 44.

*18	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$\text{ʕt } \Gamma \text{y} \Gamma \text{ m}$ $m \text{ bt } g$ mr	Personal name with genealogy: “ <i>ʕtymmm</i> daughter of <i>gmr</i> ”	-	late 8 th -early 7 th c. BCE
*19	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$hd^?$	Personal name: hypocoristic formed with the divine name <i>hd</i> / <i>hdd</i>	-	7 th c. BCE
*20	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$lš$ $p\text{ʕ}b$ $n^{\text{c}}z$ r	<i>l</i> + Personal name with genealogy: “Belonging to <i>špṭ</i> son of <i>ʕzr</i> ”	Damaged figure topped by circle (interpreted as an <i>ankh</i> sign ⁸⁵)	End of the 7 th c. BCE
*21	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$m \Gamma \text{ʕ} \Gamma \text{ry}$ $bn \text{ b}^{\text{c}}$ $ly\text{t}b$	Personal name with genealogy: “ <i>mšry</i> son of <i>bʕlyṭb</i> ”	-	late 8 th -early 7 th c. BCE
*22	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$[xxx]h$? ⁸⁶	-	-
*23	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$y\text{sp}$ $ʕmy$ $ʕh$	Personal name with relational construct: “ <i>yṣp</i> mother of <i>yʕh</i> ” OR <i>yṣp</i> [son of] <i>ʕmyʕh</i>	-	late 8 th c. BCE
*24	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$btšh$ r $btgrt$ $b^{\text{c}}l$	Personal name with genealogy: “ <i>btšhr</i> daughter of <i>grtbʕr</i> ”	Horizontal line cutting a horseshoe-shaped motif (interpreted as a <i>betyl</i> ⁸⁷)	8 th -early 7 th c. BCE
*25	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$lšmn$ $y[l]?$	<i>l</i> + Personal name: “Belonging to <i>šmny[l]?</i> ”	Very rough circle atop a short horizontal line ⁸⁸	late 7 th -6 th c. BCE
*26	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	-	-	Cross with arms of equal length; two circles in the upper quadrants, two smaller crosses topped by circles in the lower quadrants	
*27	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	-	-	Cross with longer vertical piece; a crescent rests on its horizontal arm with a circle within the crescent	
*28	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	-	-	Long vertical cross whose vertical line is interrupted by a U-shaped symbol beneath the horizontal cross-piece	
*29	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	-	-	An irregularly cut U-shaped symbol; two rough circular depressions underneath	
*30	Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon	$ʕmt$ spr	Personal name: “slave of the scribe”	-	8 th c. BCE
*31 ⁸⁹ ; H-3017	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	$mhyr$ $bn \text{ ys}$ $p \text{ bn } ʕm$ $yʕh$	Personal name with genealogy: “Maharay, son of Yasop, son of Immiah”	-	second half of 7 th c. BCE

⁸⁵ Sader 2005, 46.

⁸⁶ “Clandestine diggers sawed it length- and widthwise leaving only the one line inscription. The breaks, which are visible on the right side of the stele, seem to suggest that the beginning of the inscription may have been damaged in the process. The signs, except for the last one, which is clearly a *het*, are very badly preserved and difficult to read” (Sader 2005, 48).

⁸⁷ Sader 2005, 51.

⁸⁸ Sader 2005, 51. She goes on: “There is however no sign of an incision for the line under the circular depression. The red paint, well preserved in this area, may be responsible for this impression. If the line were drawn on purpose under the disc we may be in the presence of a badly preserved *ankh* sign... or of a *shen*-ring sign meaning eternity or protection.... It may also simply be a symbol for the sun-disc represented by a circular cavity....”

⁸⁹ The Hecht Museum stela numbers correspond to those assigned in Sader 2005.

*32; H- 3016	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>mšbt mlk bn ʿ štrtg</i>	“Stele of Milk, son of ‘Ashtartga”	Above Inscription: Uprturned crescent shape Below Inscription: Large ovoid atop a horizontal line and inverted V-shaped base (interpreted as an <i>ankh</i> sign ⁹⁰). Inside the ovoid shape, a circle with four vertical strokes on its top, and long vertical line as a base (interpreted as a flower ⁹¹).	ca. 700 BCE
*33; H- 3008	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>grʷ šmn</i>	Personal name: “Client of (the god) Eshmun”	-	late 8 th – early 7 th c. BCE
*34; H- 3005	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>ʷmtm skr</i>	Personal name: “Female servant of Maskir [divine herald]”	-	late 8 th – early 7 th c. BCE
*35; H- 3011	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>hrb</i>	Personal name: “the master”	Deeply cut U-shaped symbol	7 th c. BCE
*36; H- 3013	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>lʷ mn</i>	<i>l</i> + Personal name: ⁹² “Belonging to (the god) Amon”	-	ca. 700 BCE
*37; H- 3015	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>tmʷ ʷ[ʌ]</i>	Personal name with genealogy: “Tammâ [(a god) is perfect] (son of?) E[ʌ]” ⁹³	-	late 7 th c. BCE
*38; H- 3014	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>lgr tʷ</i>	<i>l</i> + personal name: “Belonging to Geratâ [client of [DN]]”	Cross with arms of equal length	ca. 700 BCE
*39; H- 3010	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>šbʿ t bt ʿz bʷ</i>	Personal name with genealogy: “Shebaʿt [abundance] daughter of ‘Azbaal [(the god) Baal is (my) strength”	- [the stele itself was originally T-shaped, but was cut by clandestine diggers]	ca. 600 BCE
*40; H- 3009	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>lmlkʷ bt pdn</i>	<i>l</i> + personal name with genealogy: “Belonging to Milkâ [(DN) is king] daughter of Padôn [(DN) has redeemed]”	-	ca. 600 BCE
*41; H- 3007	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>lklb t bt ʷbsk n</i>	<i>l</i> + personal name with genealogy: “Belonging to Kalbat [female dog / servant (of DN) daughter of ‘Absakkon [(servant of (the god) skʷ)]”	-	late 7 th c. BCE
*42; H- 3006	Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel	<i>ʷštr t ʷsp</i>	Personal name: “Ashtart has assembled”	Large ovoid atop a horizontal line and inverted V-shaped base (interpreted as a pseudo- <i>ankh</i> sign ⁹⁴)	late 7 th c. BCE

⁹⁰ Sader 2005, 57.

⁹¹ Lemaire 2001, 9; Sader differs in her interpretation: “this symbol clearly represents a pomegranate, a fruit often used on Phoenician and Punic monuments” (Sader 2005, 57).

⁹² This reading is Lemaire’s (2001, 14) interpretation, although Sader (2005, 60) points out the preposition *l*- might just as well precede a hypocoristic name.

⁹³ Lemaire’s reading (2001, 15); Sader (2005, 60) states “the regular distance between the letters as well as the fact that they are all very clear casts some doubt about the possible existence of a fifth sign of which no traces can be seen. Irregularities due to the erosion of the stone might account for Lemaire’s suggestion but his reading *lamed* remains highly hypothetical.”

⁹⁴ Sader 2005, 63.

In 1991, the initial collection of twelve funerary stelae represented “the longest and oldest series of south Phoenician inscriptions”⁹⁵ in terms of number of inscriptions of similar genre or use. Although not as significant as the finds from Byblos in terms of grammatical complexity or extensive Phoenician vocabulary, the fact that these stelae come from a non-royal cemetery, were numerous enough to establish an acceptable range of practice, and are associated with some iconographic data make them extremely useful for our understanding of Phoenician homeland mortuary practice in the Iron I-II.

In the initial 1991 publication of these stelae, Sader made note of the absence of an initial preposition *l-* anticipated by analogy to later evidence from Carthage and other Western Mediterranean examples:

It is to be remembered here that all the personal names written on the Tyrian stelae [i.e. the original twelve published stelae] are not preceded by *l-* except for one (S10), although personal names are usually preceded by this preposition in funerary inscriptions.... No satisfactory explanation can be offered to account for this unusual feature of Tyrian inscriptions: Could it be explained as a local characteristic of the Tyrian funerary and votive formulas?⁹⁶

This speculation, a function of taking the later, more abundant evidence as typical of all periods of Phoenician practice, and struggling to contend with the earlier evidence as a manifestation of local idiom, might be more productively reversed – the earlier, regionally and incidentally varied (even the same cemetery) ways of indicating the “proper” way to

⁹⁵ Sader 1991, 122.

⁹⁶ Sader 1991, 115; she goes on to grapple with this apparent discontinuity with the Carthage evidence in her 1992 publication: “The presence of *l-* on S10 would be problematic if the burial ground from where our material comes is, as we assume, a child cemetery. The personal name following *l-* is understood to refer to a deceased adult because personal names in funerary inscriptions are usually preceded by this preposition (Cooke 1903:60). Since the occurrence of *l-* on S10 remains the only exception, all the Tyrian stelae we saw having only the personal name without the preposition, one logical conclusion would be that S10 is intrusive. Another explanation would be that the general observation established by Cooke does not necessarily apply to Tyrian inscriptions of the 8th-6th cent. The use or absence of *l-* will also have to be raised if this burial ground turns out to be a regular [i.e. adult] cemetery: how to explain then the absence of the preposition on all the remaining stelae?” (Sader 1992, 59).

commemorate the dead should be considered complete systems (though perhaps attested only incompletely in the archaeological record), which gradually evolved as Phoenicians moved outward from the homeland, interacted with other cultures, and developed new local idioms specific to those times and places.

This corpus of rescued or purchased stelae from the Tyre al-Bass cemetery indicates a wide range of carved motifs and inscriptional content. The inscriptions show an array of characters that could be used to commemorate the deceased: personal names alone, personal names preceded by the preposition *l-*, and either of these with a relational or genealogical construction. One stele, number 32 above, is the first homeland Phoenician stele of pre-Hellenistic date that includes the noun *mšbt*, “stele” in its inscription⁹⁷ (i.e. “stele belonging to [PN]”), perhaps giving a hint as to the implied object of the *l-*prepositions used in other stelae inscriptions. The range of variation indicated in this sample indicates the flexibility of the acceptable mortuary “grammar” at play in these Phoenician Levantine funerary stelae.

Ten Excavated Stelae from Tyre al-Bass (1997 - 2002 seasons)

Loc. / Num.	TT97 and TT02 [Inventory numbers given in Sader 2004 and 2005]
Dimensions	[range; sizes given in Sader 2004 and 2005]
Discovery	Excavated at Tyre al-Bass 1997 - 2002 (excavations continued 1997, 2002, 2005, 2008) by Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona
Studies	Sader 2004, 2005
Date	8 th -7 th centuries BCE

Maria Eugenia Aubet of the Pompeu Fabra University was eventually given permission to begin rescue excavations at the site in 1997 in cooperation with the Lebanese DGA. That first season of excavation eventually produced eight *in situ* funerary stelae (numbers 43-50,

⁹⁷ Sader 2005, 57. I count eleven other attestations of the singular absolute form in Phoenician, all from Cyprus; and seven additional attestations of the construct form: four from Cyprus, and two from the Hellenistic period at Oumm El-‘Amed near Tyre, Lebanon; (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, Vol. 2, 676).

below), published by Sader (2004). Unfortunately none of these eight was inscribed with Phoenician characters, although each featured a carved motif (see below). A second season of excavation was authorized in 2002, which produced one inscribed and one uninscribed stele, numbers 51 (“the first inscribed Tyrian funerary stele found in a regular excavation”⁹⁸) and 52 below. Stele number 51 was discovered equidistant from Urns 68 and 69, two cinerary urns from the 8th century BCE, and has been dated to the 8th-7th centuries BCE as a result of this context and its paleographic features. The complicated stratigraphy of the rest of the cemetery site (in use from the 11th-6th centuries BCE) has prevented the more precise dating of any of the uninscribed stelae from the excavations.

Table II.3: Stelae from the Tyre al-Bass Excavations (1997 and 2002)

No. ⁹⁹	Phoenician Text	Inscription Interpretation	Motif	Date ¹⁰⁰
*43	-	-	Rectangular shape (interpreted as a Naos ¹⁰¹)	
*44	-	-	Stylized human face; beneath this, a circle atop a horizontal line, with two vertical lines underneath (interpreted as a pseudo- <i>ankh</i> sign ¹⁰²)	
*45	-	-	A pattern featuring four isosceles triangles arranged vertically in two pairs (with summits of each pair touching), with short horizontal lines separating each pair along the summit. ¹⁰³	
*46	-	-	Stele itself carved with a rough human head (interpreted as a human figure ¹⁰⁴)	
*47	-	-	Front view of a human head with stylized face, carved in relief	
*48	-	-	Broken stele featuring four small triangular	

⁹⁸ Sader 2005, 16.

⁹⁹ The excavated stelae numbers correspond to those assigned in Sader 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Determined by Sader (1991 and 1992) on the basis of paleography.

¹⁰¹ Sader 2005, 64.

¹⁰² Sader 2005, 66.

¹⁰³ The end result looks like two hour glasses, one standing on the other, with short horizontal lines running through the narrow “waist” of each hour glass. Sader notes only Renan’s conclusion that the symbol is characteristic of the land of Tyre (Renan 1864, 662; Sader 2005, 68).

¹⁰⁴ “Cut in sandy, granulated beach-rock, this L-shaped stele is largely eroded and in a bad state of preservation. It represents a person whose head only was sculpted in a three-dimensional way while the rest of the body seems to be in a seated position, an impression created obviously by the L-shape of the stele. The 15cm long and 19cm wide (maximal width) vertical part of the body forms a more or less regular trapezium and still preserves the traces of the cutting tools. These give at first sight the impression that the body is wrapped with bands of cloth. In fact, a careful observation of the stele shows that the two oblique traces of a chisel on the chest could represent the bent left arm of the person” (Sader 2005, 68).

			proturbances at the top; corner of a frame-like relief indicating a rectangular shape; a fragment of a pillar-like shape within the rectangle (interpreted as shrine lintel and <i>betyl</i> ¹⁰⁵)	
*49	-	-	Entirely blank except for two rough circular cavities, arranged vertically	
*50	-	-	Broken circular protuberance from the top of a stele (now lost), carved with a human face (holes for eyes and mouth; semi-circular protuberance on the left side, indicating an ear)	
*51	<i>ʿbd pʿm bn ʿnʿ</i>	Personal name with genealogy: “[Servant of (the god) <i>pʿm</i>] son of <i>ʿnʿ</i> ”	-	8 th – 7 th c. BCE
*52	-	-	Circle beneath a short T-shape (interpreted as the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign <i>nfr</i> ; meaning “good, perfect” ¹⁰⁶)	

Together with the other thirty-nine stelae not found within proper archaeological context, this makes forty-nine known Phoenician funerary stelae from the Tyre al-Bass cemetery. The degree of variation in their commemorative carving may be tallied as follows:

Table II.4: Variation in the Inscription Formula of the Tyre al-Bass Stelae

	Inscription Only	Inscription + Motif	Motif Only
PN	8	5	
PN + Genealogy	9	1	
L + PN	2	3	
L + PN + Genealogy	2	1	
<i>Other (mšbt)</i>	0	1	
<i>Unknown</i>	1	0	
TOTAL STELAE:	22	11	16¹⁰⁷

The carved motifs are enigmatic, not least because there does not seem to be any direct correlation between the individual symbols and the nature of (or presence of) an accompanying inscription. Analysis of the range of symbols that appear on the Tyre al-Bass

¹⁰⁵ Sader 2005, 71.

¹⁰⁶ Sader 2005, 75. But note that the stele “was found *in situ*, in a vertical position, with the upper edge of the stone broken. This suggests that the stele may have fallen in antiquity and may have been eventually re-erected since it is indeed difficult to assume that it was originally used with a broken upper edge” (Sader 2005, 75). However, when viewed upside down, the figure looks like a variation of the *ankh*-sign or sign of Tanit.

¹⁰⁷ The motifs which appear without inscriptions are briefly described in the corpus-based, itemized tables of stelae from Tyre al-Bass above.

stelae varies significantly; for example, a simple rectangular shape may be interpreted as a schematic depiction of a shrines, a *naos*, an empty niche ready for an offering, a doorway, and so on. The cross topped with an oval is sometimes interpreted as a precursor or variation of the “sign of Tanit” – a similar symbol with a triangle (or inverted V-shape) for a base instead of a simple vertical line; but the two may signify different concepts, deities, or family lines. Finally, it is difficult to decipher the significance of variations of combinations of these symbols; by way of illustration, Stelae 26-29¹⁰⁸ from the Beiteddin Museum in Lebanon contain different permutations of horizontal and vertical lines (sometimes crossed), circles, crescents, and horseshoe- or U-shapes. None of these four stelae features inscriptions, and none bears much similarity to the others in terms of scale, execution, or patterning of the individual elements:

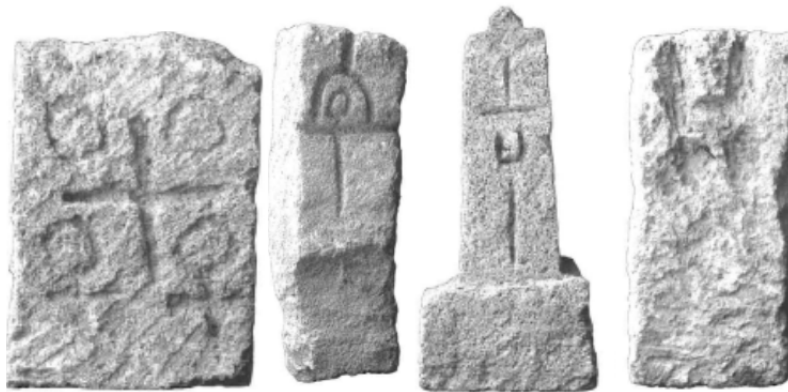


Figure II.10: Tyre al-Bass Stelae Numbers 26-29 in the Beiteddin Museum, Lebanon (Sader 2005, 53-55)

With these caveats in mind, a general accounting of the range of carved motifs can be made:

Table II.5: Carved Motif Occurrence on Iron I-II Period Tyre al-Bass Stelae

Carved Motif	Motif Interpretations	Number with inscriptions	Number without inscriptions	Stelae Numbers (Sader 2005)

¹⁰⁸ Numbers are from the Sader 2005 publication; they are retained in the tables above, for reference.

Downward-facing crescent containing small circle	Lunar / Solar symbols	2	1	12, 14, 27
Small circle(s)	Solar disk	1	3	5, 26, 29, 49
Cross with longer vertical piece bisected or interrupted by another symbol		-	2	27, 28
Cross with arms of equal lengths		1	1	26, 38
Circular shape atop a horizontal line	ankh-sign, shen-ring, solar disk	1	-	25
Crossed lines (with longer vertical than horizontal lines) topped by oval / circle	<i>Ankh</i> sign / sign of Tanit	3	2	6, 17, 20(?), 26, 52 (upside down?)
Inverted-V topped by horizontal line and oval / circle	<i>Ankh</i> sign or pseudo- <i>ankh</i> sign / sign of Tanit	1	-	32
Two parallel vertical lines topped by horizontal line and oval / circle	<i>Ankh</i> sign or pseudo- <i>ankh</i> sign / sign of Tanit	-	1	44
Short vertical lines	Uraei	1	-	12
Human head with face	Image of the dead / image of a worshipper / image of a priest	-	4	9, 44, 47, 50
Rectangular shape	Naos, shrine, empty niche	1	2	7, 43, 48
Upturned crescent		1	-	32
Upturned horseshoe- or U-shape	aedicule or shrine	1	2	10, 29, 35
Downturned horseshoe- or U-shape cut by horizontal line	betyl or altar	2	-	15, 24
Oval shape with short vertical line beneath, and two short horizontal lines at the top	Aedicula or shrine	-	1	10
Oval shape with short vertical line beneath, and two short diagonal lines at the top	Plant	-	1	11
Triangles and horizontal lines arranged like two stacked hourglass figures	[characteristic of Tyre ¹⁰⁹]	-	1	45

As can be seen, many stelae utilize multiple symbols in a variety of combinations. It may be significant that the stelae carved with human faces never appear with carved inscriptions. Perhaps this was an alternate way of indicating the identity of the buried adult individual, although the stylized nature of the faces (sometimes with only holes for eyes and mouth, others with strong vertical lines to indicate the nose) does not seem intended to

¹⁰⁹ Renan 1864, 662; Sader 2005, 68.

convey individualized portraits. On the other hand, what seem to be simple holes or lines in many of the designs may have once served as anchoring points for overlays in metal or other materials.¹¹⁰ In cases where one symbol seems to be used to bisect or interrupt another (stelae 27, 28, and 32 offer examples of this), this may represent a kind of symbolic innovation or creativity at play, or it may point to the multivalent semantic range of the common repertoire (i.e. crosses, crescents, circles, and U-shapes).

Stele 25 “was entirely covered with red paint,” an interpretation made by Sader on the basis of the traces still visible on the circular disk, the horizontal line below it, and the lower portion of the stone.¹¹¹ Although we should not make too much of this in terms of extrapolating to the entire corpus, Stele 25 offers evidence that carving was not the only decorative technique available to those who patronized the Tyre al-Bass stela shops.

Because of the disturbed state of the Tyre al-Bass Iron I-II cemetery and the large proportion of stelae acquired without proper archaeological context, we cannot be sure how representative this sample is of Phoenician mortuary practice in general, or even how representative it is of burial practices at Tyre al-Bass over the five centuries the cemetery was in use. But these data do give us a sense of the range of acceptable formulations for stela carvings during the period in question.

Five Amphorae from Tell Rachidieh

Bey Excavation

Loc. / Num.	Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 24165; CSAI - Phoe 6
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Excavations at Tell Rachidieh by Théodore Macridy-Bey (the only one

¹¹⁰ My thanks to Schmitz for this intriguing suggestion (personal correspondence, 29 June 2013).

¹¹¹ Sader 2005, 51.

	of fifteen urns uncovered to have been inscribed)
Studies	Culican 1982a, 45-82; Bordreuil and Gubel 1985, 171-73;
Date	750-700 BCE

1975 DGA Excavation

Loc. / Num.	Tomb IV nos. 22 and 48
Dimensions	Amphora no. 22: 38.9 cm high x 32.9 cm in diameter (max) x 24.5 cm wide at the mouth. Amphora no. 48: 39 cm high x 33.3 cm in diameter (max) x 23.9 cm wide at the mouth.
Discovery	1975 excavation at Tell Rachidieh (in Southern Lebanon) by the Lebanese Dept. of Antiquities; found in tomb IV
Studies	Bordreuil 1982b; Bordreuil 2003
Date	750-700 BCE

Antiquities Market

Loc. / Num.	“S.B. Private Collection”
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Obtained from the antiquities market, privately held by a collector.
Studies	Bordreuil 2003
Date	750-700 BCE

Two inscribed amphorae from the 1970s Lebanese Department of Antiquities excavations at Tell Rachidieh (south of Tyre, near Ras el-Ain) were found in Tomb IV, associated with two separate burials. The inscription on the first (called inscription number 22 by excavators, and found with burial number 6) was incised into the wet clay before the vessel was fired; the inscription on the second (inscription number 48, with burial number 7) was incised after firing, scratched into the finished surface of the amphora. They read:

No. 22: *bt lb*?

No. 48: *bt ḥbr*

Although difficult to date on the basis of paleography alone, their archaeological context suggests a setting within the 9th-7th centuries BCE; Bordreuil assigned a tentative date of the end of the 8th century, seeing some paleographic parallels with the 8th century Karatepe and

Panamuwa inscriptions from southeast Anatolia (see below, Iron I-II Phoenician Inscriptions from outside the Levantine homeland).

The letters *bt* can be interpreted as either “daughter” (a strange construction without a preceding feminine name, i.e. “x daughter of y”) or “house,” the translation deemed most likely by Bordreuil.¹¹² If these amphorae are both labeled “house of x,” the question remains what the inscriptions indicate:

- a) That the jars belong to a particular family – where the second element in each case is an anthroponym (citing a common ancestor or head of a household).
- b) That the amphorae were in some way affiliated with a particular region or location, and the words represent toponyms (along the lines of the Biblical place name *bet leba’ot* in Jos. 19:16), perhaps places close to Rachidieh or Tyre.¹¹³
- c) In the case of *bt hbr*, the meaning might indicate metaphorical “house of *hbr* [grain]” in the sense of a location where grain is preserved or processed – “une telle amphore pourrait avoir fait partie du matériel d’un magasin ou d’une brasserie.”¹¹⁴
- d) That the morpheme *bt* may refer to the measure of capacity called *bat*, a volume of approximately twenty-two liters.¹¹⁵

Bordreuil ultimately concludes that the first possibility is the most likely, and that the amphorae in question are labeled as belonging to two different families – another case of objects labeled to indicate ownership, but without the *l-* preposition.¹¹⁶

A third inscribed amphora from one of seven tombs¹¹⁷ discovered during Bey’s turn-of-the-century excavations at Tell Rachideieh might also be included in this group. The two-handled white painted piriform amphora bears five incised characters: *lmlht*, interpreted by

¹¹² Bordreuil 1982b.

¹¹³ See Bordreuil 1982b, 138 for this and other parallels.

¹¹⁴ Bordreuil 1982a, 139.

¹¹⁵ This was proven untenable by subsequent study of the volume of the amphorae. It is refuted in Bordreuil 2003.

¹¹⁶ Bordreuil confirms this hypothesis in his 2003 article on the subject.

¹¹⁷ Bordreuil and Gubel (1985, 171) mention fifteen urns produced by Macridy-Bey’s excavations at Tell Rachidieh and held by the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut (only one of which was inscribed), but Macridy-Bey’s excavation report (1904, 565-68) describes nine cinerary urns originating from tomb A, six from tomb B, and three from tomb C, in addition to an uncounted number of urns from four other undisturbed tombs (a photograph is provided of “quelques specimens des objets recueillis,” 567). Bey does not mention the inscribed urn, nor does he discuss decoration or any other features of the pottery (aside from a range of measurements) to assist reconstruction of the inscribed urn’s location.

Bordreuil and Gubel as the preposition *l*+ *mlht*, an otherwise unattested personal name.¹¹⁸

Although the name may be of Aramaic origin,¹¹⁹ the style of script and origin of the amphora have led to this inscription being identified as Phoenician. The inclusion of the preposition *l*- contrasts with the later excavated amphorae (see below).

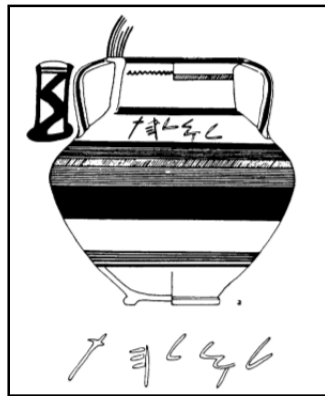


Figure II.11: Tell Rachidieh Inscribed Amphora (Culican 1982a)

Unfortunately it is unclear from Bey's notes whether this amphorae was used (or re-used) as a cinerary urn (that is, to contain the cremated remains of a dead individual), or whether it was included among the grave goods, either as a valuable container in its own right, or as the vessel for some food or beverage intended to be buried within the tomb. Thus more cannot be said about its relevance for Phoenician mortuary practice.

Another three amphorae from Tell Rachidieh were obtained via the antiquities market, and are now held in a private collection.¹²⁰ The first of the amphorae was dated to the mid-8th

¹¹⁸ They make two suggestions for the etymology of this unparalleled anthroponym: a theophoric name related to the goddess Mylitta attested in Herodotus (I.131), or (“plus prosaïquement”) a verbal noun related to the trilateral root *mlh* / *ml* “to fill” (though the retained *h* would be surprising, since it is never attested in Phoenician); Bordreuil and Gubel 1985, 173.

¹¹⁹ Schmitz considers it more likely that the name derives from the *ʾaph^hel* participle of the Aramaic root *lht*, meaning “to pant / bend,” probably cognate to Akkadian *lādu*, “to bend.” Schmitz notes in particular the reflections of Jastrow (1985, 694) on the Targum to 2 Kings 4:34, in which the Aramaic supplies this verbal root as a gloss for MT גהר, “to bow oneself down.” This may well indicate the Aramaic origin of the name in this instance, as this verbal root is unattested in extant Phoenician inscriptions and not found in Hebrew. My thanks to Schmitz for this observation (personal correspondence, 3 March, 2013).

¹²⁰ Designated “Collection Privée S. B.” in Bordreuil 2003.

century (having typological similarities to Cypro-Geometric III or Cypro-Archaic I style amphorae¹²¹), a date that seemed consistent with epigraphic parallels observed by Bordreuil.¹²² The inked inscription reads *lšwʿt*, interpreted as the preposition *l-* plus a feminine form of the previously unknown name *šwʿ*. Bordreuil suggests interpreting the name as an abstract noun, semantically akin to “dignity” or “nobility.”¹²³ The name may also be hypocoristic, preserving only the verbal element of a theophoric name “[DN] saves / delivers.”¹²⁴ The second purchased amphora bears six inscribed letters *ydʿmlk* (“[the god] *mlk* knows”), and is to be dated to the second half of the 8th century BCE.¹²⁵ The third inscribed amphora from this private collection was interpreted by Bordreuil as reading: *ʔgn rmt*, consisting of the two words *ʔgn* and *rmt*. In Bordreuil’s view, “le phénicien *ʔGN* désigne en phénicien un recipient et cette épigraphe constitue la première mention de ce mot incise sur un objet intact qui peut être assimilé à une amphore.”¹²⁶ The element *rmt* may be variously interpreted as an abstract noun derived from the root *r-[w]-m*, possibly “elevation” or “height,” or as the feminine form of the adjective from the same root, hypocoristically “[a feminine deity] is high.”¹²⁷ In either event, Bordreuil interprets both this and the *lšwʿt* amphora as having had female recipients. More cannot be said due to their lack of archaeological provenance.

Six Stelae from Akhziv

¹²¹ Bordreuil 2003, 52.

¹²² Who noted similarities to the 7th century BCE Ur box and the Carthage stele (KAI 50) scripts, some early 8th century BCE Hebrew stamp seals, and some mid-8th century BCE seals from Karatepe (Bordreuil 2003, 53).

¹²³ Bordreuil 2003, 53-54.

¹²⁴ If Zadok’s suggestion that the Phoenician names *šʿbʿl* and *ʿdnšʿ* (Benz 1972, 423) derive from the hollow root *šwʿ*, meaning “deliver, save” (1988, 182, no. 56) is correct. My thanks to Schmitz for drawing this connection (personal correspondence, 29 June 2013).

¹²⁵ Bordreuil dates the amphora itself to the second half of the 8th century BCE, and notes paleographic similarities to the Carthage Medallion (end of the 8th century BCE), the Seville Inscription and Hassan Beyli (second half of the 8th century BCE), and the Azor jar (“qui est plus tardive”); Bordreuil 2003, 54.

¹²⁶ Bordreuil 2003, 56.

¹²⁷ Bordreuil 2003, 56.

Ben-Dor Excavations

Loc. / Num.	Israel Department of Antiquities and Museum numbers 42 251 (a); 42 252 (b); 44 323 (c); and 42 253 (d)
Dimensions	a) 78 x 36 x 35 cm; b) 73 x 43 x 26 cm; c) 76 x 38 x 22 cm; d) 78 x 38 x 25 cm
Discovery	Ben-Dor Excavations: a) 1942 discovery at the er-Ras cemetery; b) 1941 discovery at the er-Ras cemetery; c) discovered in Tomb 16 in the er-Ras cemetery; d) discovered in Tomb 1 of the el-Baqbaq cemetery.
Studies	Johns 1948, 88-89; Driver 1953, 63-65; Peckham 1968, 104-109 and 130, n. 78; Prausnitz 1969, 85-89; Hestrin et al. 1973, nos. 118 and 142-143; Stern 1973, 2-17; Müller 1975, 104-132; Delevault and Lemaire 1979, 3-5.
Date	a) 7 th century BCE; b) 600-550 BCE; c) 650-600 BCE; d) ca. 600 BCE

Prausnitz Excavations

Loc. / Num.	Tomb 645, Prausnitz excavation.
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in 1960 during the Prausnitz excavations at Akhziv.
Studies	Cross 2002
Date	8 th -7 th centuries BCE

Antiquities Market

Loc. / Num.	[unavailable]
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	From the collection of an antiquities dealer local to Akhziv.
Studies	Cross 2002
Date	7 th -5 th centuries BCE

Six funerary stelae come from early excavations at Akhziv, a site along Israel's coast near the modern border with Lebanon. Four of these come from the er-Ras and el-Babaq cemeteries, excavated in the early 1940s by I. Ben-Dor. The fifth was discovered by the team led by Prausnitz in the 1960s, and the sixth and last was acquired via the antiquities market, although its seller reports Akhziv as its source, as well.¹²⁸

Table II.6: Funerary Stelae from Akhziv / Achziv

Registration Numbers	Inscription	Translation	Find Spot	Date	Carved Motif
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¹²⁸ Cross 2002, 169.

42.251 (Ben-Dor excavations)	<i>l'msk // r</i>	Belonging to Amiskar	In the shaft of tomb ZR VI	mid-7 th - early 6 th c. BCE	
42.252 (Ben-Dor excavations)	<i>l'bdšm // š bn šy</i>	Belonging to Abdshamash, son of Ishay	Outside of tomb Z I	mid-7 th - early 6 th c. BCE	A large cross with arms of equal length, topped by a roughly circular carved area ¹²⁹
42.253 (Ben-Dor excavations)	<i>lzkrm // lk</i>	Belonging to Zakarmilk	Outside of tomb Z I	ca. 600 BCE	
44.323 (Ben-Dor excavations)	<i>l'm' // hnsk</i>	Belonging to Ama, the smith	In tomb ZR XVI	mid-7 th - early 6 th c. BCE	Vertical line topped by short horizontal line and circle (interpreted as an <i>ankh</i> sign ¹³⁰)
(Prausnitz Excavations, 1960)	<i>ltb</i>	Belonging to Tab[nit?]	Above tomb 645	8 th -7 th c. BCE	Rectangle (raised in relief) with a small cross with arms of equal length inside
-	<i>bdy</i>	Boday(?)	Unknown - Antiquities Market	6 th -5 th c. BCE	Deeply outlined frontal view of human head with stylized face ¹³¹

Though the unprovenanced stele listed above does not, the five stelae from excavations at Akhziv all utilize the preposition *l-* to indicate the person being commemorated, and show a range of methods for identifying the deceased: a simple personal name, a personal name with genealogical relationship, or a personal name with some kind of title or epithet, in the case of number 42.253.

The carved motifs fit well within the repertoire established by the Tyre al-Bass stela, discussed above. Although Cross suggests that the human face carved on the unprovenanced stele may be a modern addition to increase the value of the piece,¹³² this suggestion seems

¹²⁹ “At the top of the cross in No. 2 there is a gouged out area, roughly circular, which could be regarded as the vestigial circle of the *'ankh*,” (Cross 2002, 170).

¹³⁰ Cross 2002, 171.

¹³¹ “The stele appears broken at the top... It is not out of the question that the face is carved secondarily, i.e., in modern times, to enhance the value of the monument, despite the fact that the break in the stone runs just above the eyes of the face. I know of no good parallel to the relief among Phoenician monuments” (Cross 2002, 172).

¹³² Cross 2002, 172.

based solely on the lack of parallels in the existing corpus. The deeply carved U-shaped outline of the face suggests some of the upturned horseshoe- or U-shaped figures seen in the Tyre al-Bass stelae. Without overstating the fluidity of these motifs, the cross, circle, crescent, upturned U-shape, and triangle do seem to be used in an intriguingly complex series of figures across the corpora of stelae from the Iron I-II periods.

4. Homeland Iron Age I-II Phoenician Textual Evidence in Sum

a. **ARWAD:** Archaeology in southern coastal Syria in the vicinity of Arwad has not yet to my knowledge produced inscriptional data in Phoenician that would shed light on mortuary practice during this early period.

b. **BYBLOS:** As discussed above, from Byblos come the only examples of inscriptions relating to Phoenician royal burials or afterlife conceptions in the Iron I-II Levantine homeland. At Byblos in the 11th-10th centuries BCE, we have evidence for a series of kings, who were concerned with obtaining long life and stable rule from “The Lady of Byblos,” a goddess who seems to have been conceived as controlling kingship – or perhaps life and death as well – at Byblos.

Egyptian iconography was appealing to these kings, and was used extensively in the burials of the Byblian necropolis. Ahiram’s sarcophagus, although (seemingly later) inscribed with the Phoenician language in a regionally adapted alphabetic script, first bore a hieroglyphic inscription dedicated to a man with an Egyptian name. It is unclear whether the sarcophagus was manufactured in Egypt, and later brought to the Levant, or whether it was carved locally by Phoenician or Egyptian workers. The use of the lotus and *ankh* sign is notable – although we cannot determine on the basis of this sarcophagus alone whether or not

these symbols signified the same concepts (i.e. the afterlife or the cyclical nature of life and death) as they did for Egyptian audiences.

The inscriptions on the sarcophagi of these kings were primarily concerned with protecting their resting places from intrusion – with keeping the burial intact in perpetuity. This may well indicate an afterlife belief centered on the integrity of the remains, although the nature of that concern is still undetailed. A curse is laid on anyone (imagined on the Ahiiram sarcophagus as another office-holder of high social standing) who would disturb the sarcophagus, threatening him with the disruption of exactly those things which Byblian kings hold dear – long life and stable reign.

c. **BEIRUT:** From near Beirut, at the 10th-8th century cemetery at Khaldé, comes the most extensive Phoenician cemetery known from the Levantine homeland, containing both inhumations and cremations (buried in urns). Although the full extent of the cemetery was not uncovered (and the excavated portions now lie beneath the expanded Beirut airport runways), four hundred twenty-two graves evidence the cemetery's use during the Iron II period, with a range of burial practices in play (including single inhumations in unlined cist burials, multiple inhumations and cremations in a single built tomb, and so on; see Chapter VI). But of the four hundred twenty-two excavated burials, only one funerary stele, datable to the 9th century BCE, was discovered. The text, carved length-wise along the stele, constituted a single personal name – in this single case, emphasizing the importance of marking individual identity (as well as a particular location within the cemetery) in the commemoration of the dead. Perhaps this stele marked the grave of someone (or some family) whose social standing made it an outlier in some way; regardless, it seems that on the whole, the use of inscribed

stelae (or perhaps writing in general) was not considered crucial for commemorating the dead at Khaldé.

d. **SIDON:** From Sidon's vicinity comes an inscribed amphora used as a cinerary urn, as well as two funerary stelae (from Tell el-Burak and Sidon-Dakerman). The first of these objects, the inked amphora, seems to mark the re-use in burial contexts of vessels originally created for the storage or transportation of agricultural products. Bordreuil's interpretation of *ʿqm* as the local toponym 'Aqmata is a convincing hypothesis, and although other conclusions may be drawn from this label, it seems likely that in any case the inscription does not relate directly to the individual buried within (unlike those inscriptions placed on funerary stelae). The other four vessels used as cinerary urns in that same tomb were unmarked, suggesting the identification of cremated remains within the tomb may not have been as important as the marking of the family tomb itself. Unfortunately the destructive circumstances of the discovery of this tomb preclude further speculation.

The funerary stelae from Tell el-Burak (mid-7th to mid-6th centuries BCE) and Sidon-Dakerman (early 6th century BCE), differ in three notable features from that stele found at the Khaldé cemetery outside Beirut. First, the inscriptions of both of these run width-wise across the wider dimension of the stelae (despite, in the case of the Sidon-Dakerman stele, this causing the inscription to run across one line and onto a second). Second, the preposition *l-* is used preceding the personal name, which in the Sidon-Dakerman stele (a third difference from the Khaldé stele) is accompanied by a short patronymic genealogy: *x* son of *y*. There can be no doubt, therefore, that both of these two stelae commemorate a single individual. The preposition seems to indicate pertinence to the stele or grave (perhaps marking the spot as "belonging to" the person mentioned by the inscription), although other interpretations are

possible. Like the Khaldé inscribed stele, these markers seem to signify the importance of individual identity when commemorating the dead in and around Sidon in the Iron II period.

e. **BEQAA VALLEY:** Although very little Iron I-II inscribed material originates from the Beqaa Valley, the inscribed bronze arrowhead (and its uninscribed mate) originates from a reused shaft tomb at the site of Ruweish. The text on this artifact and those on the sixty other (archaeologically unprovenanced) known inscribed arrowheads was probably intended to identify the owner of the arrow – to aid in either retrieval or identification (if they were used as weapons), or for association with a particular worshipper (if they were used as votive or ceremonial items), or both, perhaps. The fact that at least one of these inscribed arrowheads was buried (with its owner?) indicates their value as meaningful grave goods for Beqaa Valley Phoenicians. Little else can be made of this inscription as a textual source, although the use of the “*x* son of *y*” formula in identifying an individual associated with an item’s ownership is notable in light of the same formula’s use on mortuary stelae.

f. **TYRE:** The forty-nine stelae rescued or excavated from the cremation cemetery at Tyre al-Bass offer another, slightly larger snapshot of Phoenician mortuary practice in the Iron I-II. Of the thirty-three inscribed stelae, twenty-three of these consist of personal names (with or without genealogical constructions), while eight are inscribed with the preposition *l-* + personal names. Does this variation indicate a difference in meaning? In other words, are the constructions in complementary distribution? Or are the two uses of the preposition *l-* among the Tyre al-Bass stelae in free variation - indicating that there is no meaningful difference between the two constructions?

The sole stele that deviates from this pattern is from the Hecht Museum collection; it uses a genitive construction, with *mšbt* as the noun in construct with a personal name,

signifying the individual buried beneath (or near) the stele so marked. This may well be a clue to the meaning behind all constructions of “ownership” or “belonging” on a southern Phoenician funerary stele. In other words, it might be said that the “maximal” commemoration of an Iron I or II Phoenician using an inscribed funerary stele includes the following four conceptual elements:

$$[Stele] + [belonging\ to] + [PN] + [kinship\ ties / social\ role]^{133}$$

which could then be represented by the following six permutations:

Table II.7: Permutations of Inscribed Formulae on the Tyre al-Bass Stelae

-	+	-	+	[PN]	+	-
-	+	-	+	[PN]	+	[genealogy]
-	+	/	+	[PN]	+	-
-	+	/	+	[PN]	+	[genealogy]
<i>mšbt</i>	+	[construct]	+	[PN]	+	-
<i>mšbt</i>	+	[construct]	+	[PN]	+	[genealogy]

In thirteen cases, the personal names on the Tyre stelae are accompanied by relational constructions (“genealogy,” above), further specifying the important social roles (as sons, wives, or as participating in a particular profession) that the dead held in life – or that the living saw fit to commemorate.

Regarding the deity names indicated in the onomastics, the contribution of this corpus to our understanding of the pantheon at Tyre in the Iron II period might be hinted at by Sader’s 1992 discussion of the personal names in the first twelve stelae to have been rescued by the Lebanese DGA:

Nine or possibly all of these personal names (if *ʿbd*[–] [S5] is included and if the name on S2 is to be read *tntšb*¹³³ are theophorous. The attested divine elements are: *h.mn*, *ʿl*, *mlqrt*, *gš*, *tnt*, *lb*[?], *bʿl*, *štrt* and *šmn*. *Gš* is the only divine name

¹³³ In most, but not all, cases, this kinship tie is only the named individual’s patronym. I have therefore chosen the term “genealogy” for the sake of brevity.

that occurs in Phoenician for the first time. If our reading of S3 is correct and if our restitution [sic] of the second element of the name on S8 is accepted, we would be in the presence of two new divine epithets: *ʿlʿ* = “The High One” and *lʿt* = “The Mighty One,” respectively epithets of Tanit and Astarte.¹³⁴

Though perhaps not of direct bearing on mortuary practice, this information might be useful in beginning to understand the carved motifs on nine of the stelae (six of which also bear inscriptions). At the Tyre cremation cemetery, the images deemed meaningful to commemorate the dead include: celestial images like crescents and solar disks, the image of a plant, a human head and face, an *ankh*-like symbol, and three shapes interpreted by Sader as representing features of sacred spaces (a *naos* or shrine, a horseshoe-shaped betyl or altar, and an aedicule or small shrine).¹³⁵

It is notable that within this same corpus of stelae, a carved motif (16 stelae), an inscription (22 stelae), or both together (11 stelae) were each apparently considered acceptable methods of marking the location of a grave. The relationship between carved motif and inscription is not, at the time and place in question, entirely clear. Did the inscriptions relate solely to the identity of the individual, and the carved motif to some deity or aspect of belief? Did the carved motifs indicate familial affiliation, or in some other way convey information about the deceased’s identity in life? Does the presence of either motif carving or inscribed writing indicate larger expenditure on the burial? Would the combination of both inscription and carved motif have marked the burial place of a person whose family had higher social standing? Or perhaps this double-marking would have been intended to preserve the identity of the dead not just in the minds of his/her family, but in the eyes of passers-by as well. Certainly, the loss of the dead person’s identity in the minds of the living (or perhaps even in

¹³⁴ Sader 1992, 61.

¹³⁵ Sader 1991 and 1992b.

some kind of afterlife) was to be avoided. The Tyre stelae cannot answer these questions alone, but the data represented by these stelae paint an intriguing picture of single-cemetery variation in this period.

What seems clear from this survey is that all the known funerary stelae come from the southern part of the Phoenician homeland, as Sader has pointed out:

...all the discovered stelae come from South Lebanon and north Palestine. Khalde is so far the northernmost site to have yielded funerary stelae of the Iron Age. Not one was found in or north of Beirut in spite of extensive excavations at Byblos and recent intensive excavations in the capital. Even the northern Phoenician kingdom of Arwad did not yield any stele in spite of the fact that hundreds of Iron Age tombs were uncovered on its former territory. Is the absence of funerary stelae in North Phoenicia a mere coincidence due to the haphazards of archaeological discovery or are we in the presence of regional differences in burial traditions?¹³⁶

Though it will take more extensive excavations and surveys to know for sure we have a representative sample, this tentative correlation between geography and burial practice is worth noting as we move into later periods (see below).

Two of the five Iron II inscribed amphorae from Tell Rachidieh, just south of Tyre, indicate that grave goods (most likely belonging to two different families) could be labeled to identify ownership, just as funerary stelae could. But beyond this (and the implications for the significance of the presence or absence of the preposition *l-*), little can be confidently said about these five inscriptions. They could have been inscribed in order to label the vessels during their everyday use during the life of the owners, or specifically to mark grave goods (either the vessels themselves or their contents) to commemorate the dead. On the other hand, the third amphora (from Bey's excavation) may also have been reused to contain the cremated remains of the dead – although this detail of the amphora's contents has been lost.

¹³⁶ Sader 2005, 16.

5. Conclusions – Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice and Beliefs

Despite the overall paucity of textual data relating to death and dying from the Levantine homeland in the Iron I-II, the impression a survey of this material gives is of substantial variation in burial practices – regionally, between the major Phoenician urban centers and their surrounding regions; locally, between two known burial places within a close range (the Tyre al-Bass cremation cemetery and the shaft tombs at Tell Rachidieh); and even within the same cemetery or burial area.

In some instances this variation can be confidently attributed to variation in social status and wealth – the few impressive tomb and building inscriptions from Byblos owe their length, state of preservation, and elaborate iconography to their affiliation with the wealth and status of the early Iron I – early Iron II royal family, for example; while the Tyre al-Bass funerary stelae were found “in cemeteries where common people were buried,”¹³⁷ although even in the latter case the variation between inscribed and uninscribed stelae may point to further variation in economic expenditure (an idea which will be returned to, below). But in other cases – the use or non-use of an introductory preposition in the inscriptions on funerary stelae or cinerary containers, the use or non-use of genealogical statements to further specify individual identity, or the variation in image and inscription on the stelae of Tyre – we can only guess at the significance of the variation presented by these data. These, too, may have been choices motivated by economic factors (e.g. having to pay a stone cutter “by the letter”¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Sader 2005, 16.

¹³⁸ As Schmitz has pointed out, there is one possible inscriptional attestation of letter-counting, probably for cost estimation: *wktbt msprm rb'm wšlš* “(as for) the letters, their number is forty-three” (RÉS 1543.4-5). Krahmalkov (2000, 246 s.v. *ktbt* ii) comments: “Forty-three is the number of letters in the ex-voto portion of the inscription.” Schmitz concludes: “Clearly the scribe who wrote the text also appended the account for later billing (at the cost of forty-three letters). The mason ineptly carved the bill onto the stele!” (personal correspondence, 26 May 2013).

in addition to the cost of the stone itself), or they may have been made on the basis of religious affiliation, the social status of the dead, the social roles of those family members who survive and who are responsible for memorializing the dead, geographical differences, cultural trends, or other reasons entirely.

The funerary stelae in particular offer difficult-to-interpret variation not only within a single cemetery corpus, but also with regard to where they *do not* appear in the Phoenician homeland archaeologically speaking:

While two very large cemeteries, Khalde and Sidon-Dakerman, yielded only one stele each, the Tyrian cemetery of al-Bass yielded large numbers. There is no obvious reason for this discrepancy: all three necropolises have the same character: they were large popular Iron Age cemeteries. Khalde and Dakerman were even longer and more extensively excavated than al-Bass and one cannot ascribe the absence of finds to limited excavations. Tell Rashidiyye yielded several Iron Age tombs but no stelae while Akhziv was very rich with those finds. ...the hewn stones may... have been re-used in later buildings. Another reason may be that most stelae were probably roughly hewn blank stones given the modest condition of those buried in these cemeteries.¹³⁹

This suggestion of Sader's that most funerary stelae were, in fact, entirely blank (and thus undatable and mostly unpublished), seems reflected by the excavation work done by Aubet and the DGA at Tyre al-Bass in recent years. Nine of the ten excavated and published stelae from those two seasons of controlled digging were uninscribed (but carved with motifs), although other entirely blank stelae were alluded to in the excavation reports.¹⁴⁰ The fact that the other thirty-nine stelae were acquired through the antiquities market makes a strong case that they were selected for preservation specifically because of their decorative and inscribed elements, and are therefore perhaps the exceptions rather than the rule. If most funerary

¹³⁹ Sader 2005, 16.

¹⁴⁰ Though again, not independently published due to the lack of paleographic or iconographic information they can provide.

stelae were in fact undecorated slabs of stone, the question arises as to the function of these stelae. Several suggestions have been put forth, namely:¹⁴¹

1. To indicate the location of the tomb
2. To represent the dead, as the receptacle of the deceased's soul
3. To commemorate the dead, in order to be remembered by the living
4. To serve some other religious or cultic function

But it is difficult to imagine any of these functions being served by a blank slab of stone, identical to several hundred others in a single cemetery. We know that at least one of the stelae from Tyre al-Bass was both carved and painted with a red paint;¹⁴² others may also have been painted or otherwise marked in a way that was not preserved. On the other hand, perhaps the purpose of these markers was not always (or only) to mark the identity of the deceased individual buried there. Perhaps these stelae were intentionally designed to be non-permanent or perishable indications of the identity of the deceased, or to create a visual reminder for commemorating the dead whose identity is preserved only in the minds of his/her family. In this case, individualized or personalized marking of the grave may not have been as important as a marker which pointed to or relied upon the collective memory of a kin-group.¹⁴³

In other words, perhaps the indication of individuality through inscriptional identification was not as important to Phoenicians of the Iron I-II as those that have survived might indicate (or as we might imagine based on our own conventions of commemoration).

On the other hand, perhaps the price of carving a stele determined what a family could afford

¹⁴¹Cf. a summary of this literature in Sader 2005, 20-21.

¹⁴² I.e. Tyre al-Bass stele number 25 (Sader 2005, 51). There is further support for the hypothesis that other stelae might also have been painted in the forty inscribed stelae from the mid-6th century BCE cremation cemetery (or "tophet") at Motya; several featured inscriptions either decorated with or written entirely in red paint. These will be discussed below.

¹⁴³ My thanks to Margaret Root for her discussion on this point. She offers by way of example the road-side crosses currently employed in the United States to mark the site of the death of an unnamed individual. The purpose of the cross in this case may be intended to serve as a reminder for the family of the dead, but not to preserve the specific name or other aspects of identity of the deceased for passers-by.

to include on it,¹⁴⁴ or that other media for decoration, adornment, or representation were employed which left a less permanent trace in the archaeological record (as traces of red paint on stelae at Tyre al-Bass and Motya would seem to indicate). The evidence is simply too absent to be decisive.

The major threads of evidence for homeland mortuary belief and practice arising from the Phoenician inscriptional corpus assessed above can be summarized briefly as follows:

BYBLOS:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for leaving the dead undisturbed [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE; Ahiram tomb graffito, 10th c. BCE]
- concern for indicating the kinship ties / social role of the deceased [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE]
- curses against those who would disturb the dead [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE]
- curses that entail loss of power for living antagonists or opponents [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE]
- presence of Egyptian iconography [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE]
- importance of a long life and long rule [Yehimilk's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Abibaal's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Elibaal's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Shipitbaal I's building inscription, 10th c. BCE]
- importance of being a "righteous king" [Yehimilk's building inscription, 10th c. BCE]
- importance of favor from the "lady of Byblos" [Yehimilk's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Abibaal's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Elibaal's building inscription, 10th c. BCE; Shipitbaal I's building inscription, 10th c. BCE]
- importance of favor from the "holy gods of Byblos" [Yehimilk's building inscription, 10th c. BCE]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- use of Egyptian-style sarcophagus in Phoenician royal context [Ahiram sarcophagus, 10th c. BCE]

BEIRUT:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for marking / conveyance of the name of the deceased [Khaldé stele, 9th c. BCE]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- use of an inscribed stele [Khaldé stele, 9th c. BCE]

¹⁴⁴ As discussed above, there is one possible inscriptional attestation of letter-counting, probably for cost estimation: *wktbt msprm 'rb'm wšlš* "(as for) the letters, their number is forty-three" (RÉS 1543.4-5). See n. 132, above.

SIDON:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for marking the name of the deceased [Tell el-Burak stele, 7th-6th c. BCE]
- concern for indicating the kinship ties / social role of the deceased [Sidon stele, 7th-6th c. BCE]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- Reuse of vessels for cinerary urns [Tambourit cinerary urn, 9th c. BCE]

TYRE:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for marking the name of the deceased [Tyre al-Bass stelae, 10th-6th c. BCE; Akhziv stelae]
- concern for indicating the kinship ties / social role of the deceased [Tyre al-Bass stelae, 10th-6th c. BCE; Akhziv stelae, 7th-5th c. BCE]
- concern for indicating the profession of the deceased [Akhziv stele, 7th-5th c. BCE]
- importance of a range of symbols (discs, crescents, ankhs, etc.) in marking the stelae to commemorate the dead [Tyre al-Bass stelae, 10th-6th c. BCE; Akhziv stele, 7th-5th c. BCE]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- Reuse of vessels as cinerary urns [Tambourit cinerary urn, 9th c. BCE]

Similarities in inscriptional or iconographical conventions across Phoenician locations from the Iron I-II are also ambiguous. Are the appearances of the *ankh* symbol on an 11th century royal sarcophagus from Byblos and on a 6th century funerary stele from Tyre (a distance of 130 km and five hundred years) to be interpreted as indicating the same symbolic meaning? Does this apparent continuity of symbol use indicate continuity of Phoenician beliefs about death and burial? Likewise, does the tendency toward labeling funerary stelae, amphorae, and other personal objects – like arrowheads – with the names of individuals (and with the same range of variation in the use of the *l-* preposition, and inclusion of additional information pertaining to the individual's social roles or kinship ties) actually indicate the same intention in each case? Or might some of these objects have belonged to the buried individual in life, and others have been produced especially for commemorating the dead? Finally, do the carved iconographic symbols and inscribed objects present in or near these

graves convey different afterlife beliefs when in various combinations? And do these beliefs vary within the communities or families represented within each cemetery?

This survey of the texts, inscribed objects, and affiliated finds produced by the Iron I-II Phoenicians themselves has painted a complicated and ambiguous picture of how the inhabitants of the central coastal Levant conceived of death, burial, and the commemoration of the dead. The range of symbols used in conjunction with funerary stelae is variable, but not infinite – a limited grammar of crosses, circles, crescents, triangles, and U-shaped figures seem to dominate the arrangements and combinations that make up the total repertoire. Although a correspondence between Phoenician personal names, their theophoric elements, and the symbols carved on particular stelae does not seem present, other patterns suggest themselves. For example, the lack of inscriptions on any of the Tyre al-Bass stelae featuring human faces may be significant. The dominance of the variations of the symbol interpreted as an *ankh* sign, sign of Tanit, pseudo-*ankh*, *nfr*-sign (when upside down), shen-ring, or solar disk on the horizon, is especially notable. The fact that it can appear with other symbols inside it (as in the case of Tyre al-Bass stele number 32), and in such a wide range of proportions and scales, makes it seem an abstract symbolic expression of a variety of concepts (or a fluid semantic range). This symbol was vividly adaptable, and its use at Tyre and Akhziv illustrates the ways in which it was put to use in the service of commemoration of the dead.

Having identified the dramatic variability of the data from textual sources most relevant to this question, we can begin to build on this information with Phoenician textual sources from outside the Phoenician homeland.

B. Inscriptions in Phoenician from Outside the Phoenician Homeland

Phoenician inscriptions from outside the central coastal Levant offer a more complicated testimony regarding homeland mortuary practices. Some of the Phoenician-language evidence from the broader Mediterranean world was surely produced by Levantine Phoenicians either newly arrived abroad or continuing to follow homeland traditions in their trading towns and cities throughout the region. But other inscriptional evidence from this corpus may reflect new mortuary beliefs, practices, or rituals adapted to or with local traditions; or may have been written by individuals versed in the Phoenician language, but not themselves culturally connected to the Phoenician homeland in any significant way. The degree to which a particular inscription from outside the Phoenician homeland represents coastal northern Levantine beliefs or practices will not always be possible to ascertain; these inscriptions must therefore be weighed less heavily than the primary evidence discussed above, in the present study.

1. Historical Context: Iron Age I-II Phoenician Diaspora

There is by far more evidence – archaeological, ceramic, iconographic and epigraphic – attributed to Phoenicians travelling, trading, or settled outside the Levantine homeland than those remaining in it. Evidence of Phoenician communities has been found north into southeast Turkey, south into the southern Levant, and westward across the Mediterranean to the nearby shores of Cyprus, and onwards to the far reaches of North Africa, Spain, and the southern shores of the British Isles.

Classical sources place the beginning of Phoenician commercial or colonial expansion in the 12th-11th centuries BCE. For a long time archaeologists found little substantial evidence of permanent Phoenician settlements abroad before about 800 BCE; some argued in favor of the

classical interpretations by positing a period of “precolonial” mercantile activity for which archaeological evidence would be scarce.¹⁴⁵ However, increasingly, more and more evidence of Phoenician presence abroad in these early periods is emerging.

Evidence seems to indicate that the new Phoenician settlements were not true colonies in the Greek or Roman sense, but instead represented commercial or industrial facilities of limited size and purpose. The North African site of Carthage, however, seems to stand apart from settlements elsewhere in that its large urban form and extensive agricultural hinterland give the appearance of a colony more typical of the rest of the Aegean world. Traditionally said (i.e. in the writings of Timeus and Flavius Josephus) to have been founded in 814 BCE by Phoenicians from Tyre, archaeological excavation has confirmed that the city seems to have been founded in the late 9th century,¹⁴⁶ and that the site had a dense population in the early 8th century BCE.

Phoenician expansion may actually be divided into three stages: the first via Cyprus to N. Syria, Cilicia, and Anatolia, through the Aegean to Greece, Italy, North Africa, and Spain (as early as the 11th century, led by Sidon); the second through Philistia to Egypt, the Libyan coast, Malta, and North Africa (probably led by Tyre beginning in the 8th century); and the third originating from Carthage itself after the crippling of Tyre (in the late 6th century BCE).

By the late 8th century BCE, Assyrian military intervention had led to the political and economic reduction of Sidon and Tyre under Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, representing a low point in the independence of the Phoenician city-states. In the late 7th century, Assyrian control lapsed (under the reign of Ashurbanipal and in the face of Assyria’s internal and external conflicts), and political and commercial independence in Phoenicia allowed for

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Bunnens 1979, Negbi, 1992; Niemeyer 1993, and others.

¹⁴⁶ Aubet 2008, 179.

several new developments. At the very end of the century, Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre (585 – 572 BCE) marked the beginning of the short-lived period of Babylonian control in Phoenicia.

Although it has been argued that the transition from Assyrian to Neo-Babylonian rule, if viewed from an imperial administrative standpoint, was relatively gradual, with loose administrative control exerted over the northern coastal city-states,¹⁴⁷ Sidon's conquest by Esarhaddon in the 7th century as well as Tyre's submission to Nebuchadnezzar in 585 BCE must have affected the inter-Phoenician balance of power. Most significantly, Tyre's relative diminishing seems to have catapulted Carthage to take expansionist or commercial steps of its own toward establishing itself in the Mediterranean world—the birth of an autonomous Punic World (with its own colonial and commercial ventures in North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain) might be placed during this period. The Persian conquest of the Levant (Cyrus the Great is said to have conquered Phoenicia in 539 BCE) marked the beginning of a new era of Phoenician autonomy and prosperity.

Because the presence of Phoenician inscriptions has long been associated with the presence of Phoenicians in the Mediterranean world, many of the Phoenician inscriptions under consideration in this chapter have been extensively discussed in the context of Phoenician culture. Although a one-to-one correspondence between the use of the Phoenician language and the presence of Phoenicians is no longer unanimously accepted, it is difficult to shake off entirely the long history of interpretation of these inscriptions. The corpus of Phoenician texts found outside Phoenicia, but dating to the Iron I-II periods may have been

¹⁴⁷ Cf., for example, Markoe 2000, 48.

produced under a wide range or combination of circumstances, including (but not limited to) having been:

- Written or commissioned by individuals with ancestral ties to the Phoenician homeland, but who have settled in non-homeland ports or cities (and perhaps have been settled for several generations).
- Written or commissioned by individuals with current, ongoing familial ties to the Phoenician homeland, staying or stopping temporarily in non-homeland ports or cities (e.g. itinerant merchants or artists).
- Written or commissioned by individuals with no familial ties to the Phoenician homeland, who nevertheless speak, write, or use the Phoenician language for some practical reason.
- Written or commissioned by someone who spoke, wrote, or used the Phoenician language in any of the above circumstances, but then transferred the inscription or inscribed item to someone else (e.g. a luxury item inscribed with a personal name or short inscription), with whom it was buried or otherwise preserved.
- In cases where vessels or other objects are labeled with only a name (or /-preposition + personal name), the record of a name of Phoenician origin / association / form which was borne by an individual of any cultural association (that is, not necessarily someone affiliated directly or indirectly with the Phoenician homeland; perhaps someone who did not speak or use the Phoenician language).
- A transliteration of a name of Greek or other linguistic origin, whose bearer may or may not be related to Phoenicia in any meaningful way.

During the Iron I-II, where an inscription is found in a location or site that is well-established as a Phoenician “colony” (that is, where this identification is corroborated by evidence other than the presence of the Phoenician inscription under review), I accept the assumption that the inscription probably represents some degree of cultural ties (direct or indirect) between the population at the site in question and populations living in the Phoenician homeland.

Where this has not been established, or where individuals with diverse cultural ties are buried near one another, I am more skeptical of the inscription’s value for the present study.

In the following discussion of Phoenician inscriptions from outside the Levantine homeland (referred to for practical, if anachronistic, reasons as the “diaspora”; see above, Chapter I), my aim is to present and discuss those inscriptions that speak to mortuary practice and belief in the Phoenician cultural sphere, with an eye to what – if anything – these

inscriptions might be able to tell us about mortuary practice in the Phoenician homeland itself. Rather than assuming each inscription represents part of an homogenous Phoenician portrait of mortuary beliefs, I will stay attuned to patterns, variation, and detail that arise from examining this inscripational corpus with these specific questions of identity, practice, and belief in mind.

2. Iron Age I-II Phoenician Diaspora Inscriptions

In the discussion which follows, the presentation of the inscriptions will be geographically organized as in the previous section, arranged generally from east to west – first to the north and south of the Phoenician homeland in the Levant, and then westward across the Mediterranean – addressing the corpus of Iron I-II Phoenician inscriptions with some relevance for Phoenician mortuary practice according to provenance as follows:



Moving generally from east to west across the Mediterranean:

- a. Northern Levant (Northern Syria and Southwest Turkey)
- b. Southern Levant (Southern Israel/Palestine and Jordan)
- c. Cyprus
- d. Crete
- e. Greece
- f. Italy
- g. Sicily and Malta
- h. Sardinia
- i. Tunisia
- j. Western Mediterranean (France, Spain, etc.)

a. Northern Levant (Northern Syria, Southwest Turkey)

Southeastern Anatolia excavations at Iron II sites have produced several inscriptions bearing close similarities with Phoenician, but sharing some dialectical features of Aramaic, as well. Most famous in the context of mortuary practice and belief is the recent discovery of the *ktmw* (perhaps vocalized Katumuwa¹⁴⁸) inscription at the site of Zinjirli. Pardee's critical edition, published in 2009, declared the inscription to be written in a "previously unattested dialect of Aramaic."¹⁴⁹ The KTMW inscription will thus be below, in the section of the present chapter on Iron I-II in other ancient Near Eastern languages. I know of no other Iron I-II inscriptions from the northern Levant that are relevant for the present study.

b. Southern Levant (Southern Israel/Palestine, Jordan)

Beth Shemesh Bowl

Loc. / Num.	Israel Department of Antiquities and Museum, no. 469 B.; Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, n. 469b; Bet-Šemeš tomb VIII, no. 13
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¹⁴⁸ "...either Katamuwa / Katimuwa or Katumuwa (with Katumuwa being the more likely of these)" (Younger 2009, 170)

¹⁴⁹ Pardee 2009, 52-53.

Dimensions	19.5 cm diameter
Discovery	North-West Necropolis at Ain-Shems (Beth-Shemesh)
Studies	Mackenzie 1912-1913, 87, fig. 10, pl. LIV, 3; Volz 1914, 409, n. 4; Richmond 1927, 10, no. 7; Diringer 1934, 300, no. 11; Hestrin et al. 1973, 54 and 117 (no. 105); Delevault and Lemaire 1979, 23-24.
Date	8 th century BCE

A 19.5 cm diameter bowl was discovered in Tomb 8 of the North-West Necropolis at Ain-Shems (Beth-Shemesh), incised or “chiseled”¹⁵⁰ on its interior wall after firing with a three character inscription: *ʔhk*; it was identified paleographically as 8th century Phoenician script due to the shapes of the *aleph* and *kaph*.¹⁵¹ This inscription has been interpreted by Delevault and Lemaire (1979) as a personal name.¹⁵²



Figure II.12: Inscribed Bowl from Beth-Shemesh Necropolis (Hestrin et al. 1972, 117)

A summary of the corpus of inscribed pottery vessels from Israel was put forth in the 1972 catalog to the exhibit “Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud” exhibit organized by the Israel Museum, Jerusalem:

¹⁵⁰ Hestrin et al. 1972, 53-54, numbers 105 and 103.

¹⁵¹ “On considère généralement cette inscription comme hébraïque à cause de son lieu de découverte, mais la forme du *aleph* avec un angle arrondi et non pointu ainsi que la hamper verticale du ‘*kaph*’ rattachent plutôt cette inscription à l’épigraphie phénicienne du milieu du VIII^e siècle av. J.C. environ” (Delevault and Lemaire 1979, 23-24).

¹⁵² The personal name would be vocalized something like *Aʔik*, and they argue it is a kind of abbreviation (or elision) for *ʔmllk*, “the brother is king,” known from the Bible, Samaria ostraca, and from inscribed seals (Delevault and Lemaire 1979, 23-24).

The relatively large number of inscriptions of this category found to date – more than a hundred – and the fact that they are from all parts of the country, indicate that the practice of marking ownership and contents was quite common.... Most of the inscriptions are incised, some before firing the pottery and some after; a few were written in ink or paint. Some of the inscriptions, interestingly, appear to have been written by persons barely literate.¹⁵³

c. Cyprus

Tomb Inscription of Unknown Provenance

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Ins. Ph. 6; KAI 30; Gibson 12
Dimensions	0.4m x 0.44 – 0.47m x 0.2m thick
Discovery	Unknown provenance, Cyprus
Studies	Honeyman 1939; Albright 1941, 14-17; Dupont-Sommer 1947, 201-11; Masson and Szyner 1972, 13-20, pl. II and III; Teixidor 1975, 121-28; Puech 1979, no. 1; Gibson 1982, no. 12; Cannavò 2011, 322-323.
Date	Early to mid-9 th century BCE

A rectangular stone (0.4m x 0.44 – 0.47m x 0.2m thick in its cut form) of unknown provenance, “discovered in the Cyprus museum at Nicosia,”¹⁵⁴ was published by Honeyman in 1939. The seven line inscription, “which was probably built into the entrance to a tomb”¹⁵⁵ and represents the last seven lines of a longer inscription,¹⁵⁶ is not well preserved (lines 6-7 are “almost totally illegible”¹⁵⁷). Honeyman and Albright read the first five lines as more or less complete,¹⁵⁸ although subsequent interpretations based on re-examination of the stone and its inscription in the 1970s concluded there was text missing on the right side (i.e. the beginning)

¹⁵³ Hestrin et al. 1972, 53.

¹⁵⁴ Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 28.

¹⁵⁵ Honeyman 1939, 107.

¹⁵⁶ Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 28: “...a portion containing the name and lineage of the deceased and perhaps more details about him is missing from the top.”

¹⁵⁷ Honeyman 1939, 107.

¹⁵⁸ Albright reads: (1) this is no magistrate/dignitary [*mpt*; cf. Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, “mpt,” 674] or ruler/noble [*rʔš* – here in the sense of “head man” or chief; cf. Exodus 6:25, Judges 10:18, Hosea 2:2] who is (2) [pla]ced(?) in this tomb which is over this man [*hgbr zʔ*]. (3) He who [de]files [this] sar[cophagus will be for]gotten and will perish (4) whether by the hand of Ba’al or by the hand of man or by (5) [the hand of the as]sembly of the gods [*hbr ʔlm*]....

of each line, and that the left edge was broken as well.¹⁵⁹ Notably, each of the words in this inscription is separated by a vertical word divider. This feature, along with the “somewhat large and ungeometrical appearance of the letters,”¹⁶⁰ led Albright to write “I would hesitate to date the inscription after the beginning of the ninth century and would suggest 900 B.C. as a good round number (though I should prefer the more general date in the first half of the ninth century, for safety).”¹⁶¹ Gibson eventually downdated the inscription to the early or mid-9th century, but noted that “it is too incomplete to be used for dialectal study.”¹⁶²

While each new translation (e.g. Albright 1941, Masson and Sznycer 1972, Puech 1979, Gibson 1982) offers significant differences in lines 1-3 and 6-7, lines 4-5 have remained relatively stable in interpretation. Gibson (1982) translates:

- 1) ...there is nothing of note. And as for the man who...
- 2) ...(and comes upon) this grave, if (he should open what is) over this man
- 3) (and)...his..., and should destroy this [inscription], (that) man
- 4) ...(be it) by the hand of Baal or by the hand of man or by (the hand)
- 5) ...(the whole) company of the gods...



Figure II.13: Cypriot Tomb Inscription of Unknown Provenance (Masson and Sznycer 1972, pl. II)

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Masson and Sznycer 1972, 13-20; Puech 1979, 19-20.

¹⁶⁰ Honeyman 1939, 108.

¹⁶¹ Personal correspondence with Honeyman after reading the inscription from a squeeze; published in Honeyman 1939, 108.

¹⁶² Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 28.

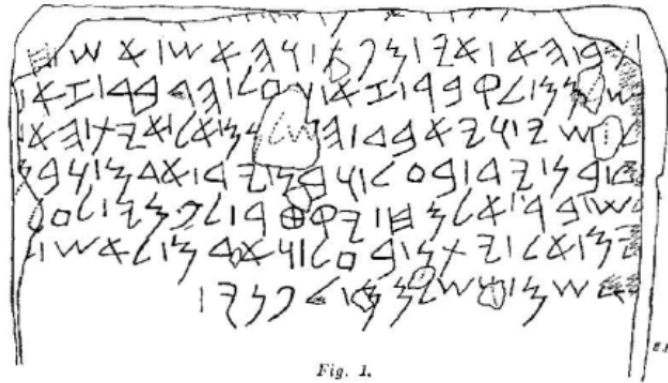


Figure II.14: Cypriot Tomb Inscription Drawing (Puech 1979, 20)

Unlike the extant homeland examples from the Iron I-II, the curse invoked on this Cypriot tomb inscription to ensure that the grave is protected is not written according to a formula that guarantees it by the authority of a specific god or set of gods. Instead, the rhetoric here conveys conviction that any violator will be punished, but it does not stipulate the power through which this will happen (e.g., direct intervention by a single specific deity such as Ba'al; through the involvement of the entire assembly [?] of the gods; or through the act of an unspecified human agent).

Most previous translators of this inscription agree that lines 1-3 serve in some way as a deterrence strategy that advises potential tomb robbers of the paucity of grave goods contained in the burial. Rather than appealing to curses to threaten a potential tomb robber with punishment by the gods, a more practical or economic argument is put forth to convince a literate robber not to go to the trouble of disturbing the burial. A new (forthcoming) edition by Schmitz and Holmsteadt, however, may offer substantive reinterpretation of this complicated inscription.

Bichrome Bowl Fragment from a Child's Burial at Salamis

Loc. / Num.	Sal. 5395
Dimensions	2.8 cm high
Discovery	University of Lyon excavations at Salamis
Studies	Yon 1976, 96; Calvet 1980, 115-121; Sznycer 1980, 126-127; Lipinski 2004, 45; Cannavò 2011, 318-319.
Date	Ca. 950-850 BCE

At the site of Salamis, in an area south-east of the Basilica of Campanopetra, “a certain number of children's graves, the [uncremated] bodies placed in Phoenician jars, were found in clearly defined areas of the town of the geometric period.”¹⁶³ One of these deposits was buried in a house near the rampart on the east side of these areas, closer to the sea.¹⁶⁴ It was the only infant burial to contain a Phoenician inscription, on a sherd of bichrome II pottery (datable to 950-850 BCE) and inscribed in black ink.¹⁶⁵ Sznycer determined that the script style of this inscription fits well within those of the 9th century BCE; the grave itself, with the rest of the pottery it contained, could not be dated later than the 8th century BCE. Calvet writes of the Salamis burials that:

...ces sépultures ne semblent pas liées à des sacrifices humains, comme on pourrait en avoir l'idée en les rapprochant des *tophet* puniques; premièrement, les enfants ne sont pas incinérés, comme ils le sont habituellement après les sacrifices; en second lieu, les jarres ne sont pas disposées autour d'un espace sacré limité, mais sur les bords de la ville elle-même, sous des maisons ou le long du rempart. ...on peut rappeler que nous sommes près du port, lieu d'activité des marchands et des navigateurs et que souvent il s'agissait à l'époque géométrique de Phéniciens; ceux-ci ont pu apporter avec eux leurs coutumes funéraires en se servant des multitudes de jarres qui avaient servi à transporter diverses denrées à Salamine et qui n'étaient pas nécessairement réutilisées pour des fins commerciales.¹⁶⁶

There are so few non-cremated infants from Phoenician mortuary sites (see Chapter VI), that the Salamis burials are indeed notable, offering clear evidence of a different burial practice.

But diagnosing the difference as one between child-sacrifice (indicated by the cremated

¹⁶³ Calvet 1980, 115.

¹⁶⁴ Calvet 1980, 119.

¹⁶⁵ Calvet 1980, 119.

¹⁶⁶ Calvet 1980, 120.

remains) and natural burial (indicated by the non-cremated burials, as evidenced here) seems a broad leap to make. Certainly, the burial vessels seem to have been commercial in origin, reused in these burials (as well as, possibly, the cremation burials).



Figure II.15: Bichrome Bowl Fragment Inscription from Salamis (Sznycer 1980, 126, fig. 1).

The Phoenician inscription in the burial in question consists of four letters, cut off on the right side, painted in black ink on the exterior face of a Bichrome II period bowl. The existing text reads: ...*tšm*^ϕ, where the *mem* is written directly underneath the *šin*, perhaps as a correction for a scribal error. The text has been interpreted by Sznycer¹⁶⁷ as being a theophoric name (perhaps *štrtšm*^ϕ or *mlqrtšm*^ϕ) meaning “[DN] has heard.” The name may have been preceded by a *l-* preposition, although there is no way to be certain.

Jug from Kition

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 1524; Metropolitan Museum, New York, 74.51.1401; Myres Catalog no. 479; Cesnola no. 26
Dimensions	15.7 cm high
Discovery	Discovered in 1866 by L. Palma di Cesnola in a tomb at Kition, near modern Larnaca.
Studies	Cesnola 1877, 442, no. 26; Birch 1876, 23; Hall 1885-1886, 7-8; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 114-115, fig. 4, pl. XV, no. 1; Teixidor 1976, 67, no. 25; Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, 134-135, no. D6; Garbini 1980a, 121; Bikai 1987, 27, no. 322; Karageorghis 2000, 88, no. 140; Lipiński 2004, 58; Amadasi Guzzo 2007, 198; Cannavò 2011, 308-309.
Date	8 th century BCE

¹⁶⁷ Sznycer 1980, 126-127.

A Bichrome jug with red slip, dated to the end of the Cypro-Geometric era (8th century BCE), was discovered by L. Palma di Cesnola in a tomb at Kition, “sans plus de détails.”¹⁶⁸ The jug was incised after firing with five letters on the shoulder of the vessel, just to the left of the handle. Paleographically, the letters are consistent with the 8th century BCE date obtained on the basis of the ceramic typology. The inscription reads:

lʹntš

belonging to / for *ʹntš*

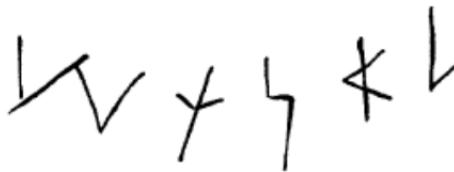


Figure II.16: Kition Jug (left, Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, pl. XXV, D6) and Detail of Inscription (right, Masson and Sznycer 1972, 115)

The personal name is previously unattested in Semitic characters; Cannavo, with Masson and Sznycer,¹⁶⁹ suggests the name is most likely non-Semitic, and goes further to suggest it may be Anatolian in origin.¹⁷⁰ Schmitz points out that the Greek name variants *Antas* / *Antis* / *Antos* are attested in about a dozen epigraphic cases, indicating the name is Indo-European in origin.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Cannavò 2011, 308.

¹⁶⁹ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 115; they call the representation of Greek *sigma* with a *shin* “certinement anachronique.” Karageorghis 1977 agrees, and says “elle est insoutenable dans un texte du VIIe siècle” (1972, 135). *Pace* both Hall (1885-1886, 7-8, n. 23), who suggests the transcription represents the Greek name Ἄνθος; and Lipiński (2004, 58-59), who suggests the represented name is also Greek (Onatas). Cannavo rejects this latter hypothesis on the same basis as Masson and Sznycer reject Hall’s (1885-1886) proposal

¹⁷⁰ Cannavò (2011, 309), citing Amadasi Guzzo 2007, 198.

¹⁷¹ Personal correspondence, 26 May 2013; citing Fraser and Matthews 1987-2005.

Fragment of a Ceramic Sarcophagus from Chytri

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 922 and 1928; Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (no. 395); Insc. Ph. 4
Dimensions	15.7 cm long x 17 cm high x 7.7 cm thick
Discovery	Discovered by Charalambos Emilianidis in 1908 on the site of Skali / Chytri / Kythrea.
Studies	Euting 1908, 230-231; Ronzevalle 1908-1909, 802-803; Ronzevalle 1909; Lidzbarski 1909, 54; Honeyman 1939, 106, no. 5; Masson and Szzymer 1972, 104-107 and pl. VIII, no. 2; Lipiński 2004, 58-59; Cannavò 2011, 301-302.
Date	8 th -7 th centuries BCE

A small fragment of an inscribed ceramic sarcophagus also comes from Cyprus, from the necropolis at Chytri (at the site called “Skali”) and was first published by Ronzevalle in Arabic. The inscription consists of portions of four lines, although the inscription is cut off on the right, left, and top. The words are separated by points, rather than vertical strokes as in the unprovenanced Cypriot inscription, above. It seems likely that the nature of the text is funerary,¹⁷² although only a few words can be read (on the left, the transcription by Masson and Szzymer 1972; on the right, the emendation by Lipinski 2004):

- 1) ...] š . my[. h? ... or ...mlk . ktr]š . my[. h? ...
- 2) ...]m . mlk . h? . ?m . [?dm ...
- 3) ... ?yp]th . hqbr . [z ...
- 4) ...]- . k . ?y[.] ?[...

“...Whoever is [*or ...King of Chytri.*¹⁷³ Whoever is]... / ...whether he is a king or an ordinary man... / ... he must not open this tomb... / ...because there is no...”

¹⁷² “Das Fragment zeigt auffallende Berührungen mit der Grabschrift des Tabnit, scheint aber doch echt zu sein,” writes Lidzbarski (1909, 54).

¹⁷³ The proposal assumes this term is equivalent to Akkadian “*Kitrusi*.” See Cannavò (2011, 302) for discussion of Lipiński’s suggestion.



Figure II.17: Fragment of a Ceramic Sarcophagus from Idalion
(Masson and Sznycer 1972, pl. VII, no. 2)

As early as 1909, a date of the 8th-7th centuries BCE had been offered for this inscription;¹⁷⁴ Lipinski attributes the sarcophagus and its inscription to the king of Chytri / Chytroi, the same kingdom as that mentioned in the contemporary Asarhaddon Prism (I D 8, l. 64). Although it is true that the formulaic fragment in line 2 of this inscription seems associated with royalty, so much of this inscription is based on reconstruction and conjecture that little can be concluded with certainty.

Small Jug from the Necropolis at Ayia Irini

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, no. 1961 x-18 2; Ins. Ph. 15
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	1960s clandestine excavations at the Archaic-Classical period necropolis
Studies	Honeyman 1962, 371, fig. 59 a and b; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 94-95, pl. IX, no. 1.
Date	8 th -7 th centuries BCE

On the north-west part of Cyprus, in the region of Ayia Irini, north of Morphou, the 1929 Swedish Expedition uncovered a temple containing hundreds of votive figurines. Years

¹⁷⁴ “Der Schriftduktus ist, wie Ronz[evalle] mit Recht hervorhebt, alt, doch darf die Inschrift nach der Form des nicht auf eine Stufe mit CIS, I, 5 [the Baal Lebanon inscription from Cyprus, dated to the 8th century BCE] gestellt werden” (Lidzbarski 1909, 54).

later, beginning in 1960, clandestine diggers opened a number of Iron II – Hellenistic period tombs in a nearby area between the village and the sea.¹⁷⁵ The Cyprus Museum, Nicosia was able to recover a number of vessels, including one small inscribed jug dating to the Iron II period (i.e. “Cypro-Archaic I” ceramic types; 750-600 BCE).



Figure II.18: Inscribed Jug from Ayia Irini (Masson and Sznycer 1972, pl. IX, no. 1)

Made of White Painted IV ware, it featured nine or ten Phoenician characters incised after firing across its shoulder:

[*l*] *r/d* - [?] - - - *ʿd/r ṣ/s m*

Though Honeyman (1962) suggested the reconstruction *r[št] . . . ʿrsm*, Masson and Sznycer (1972) argued that “une telle restitution, que rien ne peut appuyer, relève de l’imagination et est à rejeter d’une façon catégorique.”¹⁷⁶ From a photograph of the inscription, they read:

- - - *ʿrsm*

but add “il nous semble imprudent de vouloir interpreter ce groupe de lettres avant que soient identifies les signes qui precedent.”¹⁷⁷ This hesitancy to interpret the inscription is perhaps

¹⁷⁵ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 94. In the terminology of the authors, these tombs were Archaic and Classical period tombs (ca. 700-300 BCE)

¹⁷⁶ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 95.

¹⁷⁷ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 95.

wise, although parallels throughout the corpus examined in this study suggest a personal name may be the most likely content.

Limestone plaque from Soloi

Loc. / Num.	Current location unknown (inv. Tomb 43, no. 5)
Dimensions	46 cm long x 81 cm high x 24.5 cm thick
Discovery	Found in Tomb 43 of the necropolis of Agia Eirini-Palaiokastro
Studies	Amadasi Guzzo and Rocchetti 1978, 114-116; Rocchetti 1978, 72-75, 112-114, and fig. 43:5, 64; Lipiński 2004, 56-58; Cannavò 2011, 320-321.
Date	First half of the 7 th century BCE

A plaque carved from pink limestone, damaged on the bottom, with a single line of inscription (slightly angled to the left) engraved at the top, was discovered during the excavation of the Agia Eirini-Palaiokastro necropolis near Soloi. Although most of the tombs in the necropolis had been looted, Tomb 43 was in very good condition. Although it contained very few ceramics (mostly Bichrome jugs), these were used to confirm the paleographically dated inscription to the first half of the 7th century BCE. The inscription reads:

[*l*?] *'bd' bn kmr/dr/d* [belonging to ?] 'Abdo, son of *kmr/dr/d*¹⁷⁸

The scratches on the stone obscure whether or not the *l*-preposition was originally present, although the personal names with genealogical relationship are relatively clear (with some confusion between *r* and *d* for both of the last two characters).

Limestone Block from Episkopi

Loc. / Num.	Regional Museum ("Curium House") in the village of Episkopi, no. 143.
Dimensions	83 cm long x 80 cm high x 32 cm thick.
Discovery	Discovered in 1972 by residents of Episkopi who were working in a field south of a church in Ayios Ermoyenis.

¹⁷⁸ Schmitz (personal correspondence, 29 June 2013) tentatively suggests that the personal name may be *Kymodros*, the only attested letter/vowel combination that matches this range of characters.

Studies	Karageorghis 1970, 226 and 230, fig. 80a-b; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 89-91
Date	7 th century BCE

The stone unearthed by workers in a field near Episkopi shows a window supported by two pilasters. The portion above the balustrade or railing is empty, and a double frame surrounds the scene. A bilingual inscription was carved into the bottom of the stone – one line of Cypriot syllabic script on the top, and two lines of Phoenician underneath. Unfortunately, the stone was very damaged by the process of uncovering and extracting it.¹⁷⁹

Though the object was found in secondary context, Masson and Sznycer note its similarity to another block of similar dimensions (79 x 69.5 x 32 cm) found in 1919 in a built tomb near Kourion, in the same area of Ayios Ermoyenis, and published by Dikaios.¹⁸⁰ The two blocks differ in that (a) the carved balustrades/railings are of different types, (b) the 1919 block has no inscription, and (c) the 1919 block features “une silhouette humaine au centre, levant les têtes de deux grands serpents qui déroulent leurs anneaux de manière symétrique;”¹⁸¹ this man with serpents is located in the same register as the inscription on the later-found block. Masson and Sznycer consider it probable that the two blocks (the inscribed version discovered in 1969 and its uninscribed counterpart discovered fifty years prior) may have come from the same tomb.

¹⁷⁹ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 89.

¹⁸⁰ Dikaios (1940, 122, n. 5) describes the block as “a stone slab... which was found in a built tomb near Curium, where it must have been placed above a doorway into an inner chamber in a similar way as is seen in the Tamasos tombs excavated by O. Richter. This slab represents a kind of ‘window’ similar in form to those found in ivory in Nimrud, Arslan Tash, and other sites.... On the lower part of the outer frame appears in relief a small human figure lifting towards his head, with either hand, the heads of two enormous snakes.”

¹⁸¹ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 89-90.

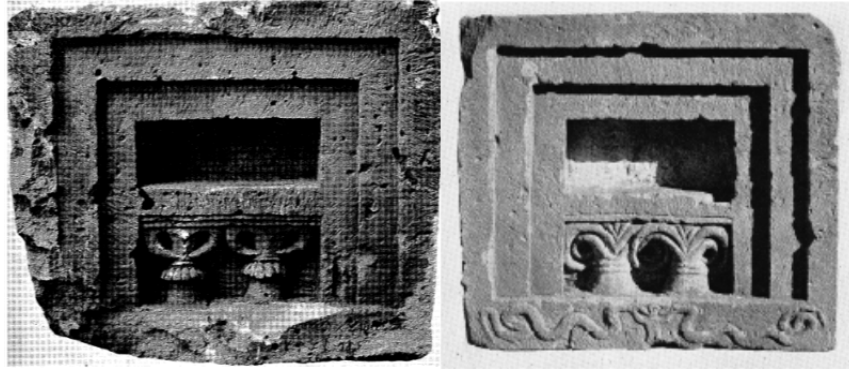


Figure II.19: Inscribed Limestone Block from Episkopi (left, Masson and Szynger 1972, pl. VII) and Its Uninscribed Counterpart Discovered Fifty Years Earlier (right, Dikaios 1940, pl. XLIII, c)

Though the Cypriot inscription was all but obscured by the damage to the limestone block, the two line Phoenician inscription can be partially read. The first line is missing its beginning and end, and only two signs are visible on line 2.

(1) ...*m wbkry hšd[ny...]* (2) ...*t z[...]*
 “...*m* and *bkry*¹⁸² the Sid[onian]... ...*th[is]...*”

Masson and Szynger date the inscribed block to the 7th century BCE on the basis of the paleography. The inscriptions seems to refer to two individuals, one of which seems to be identified by the Phoenician gentilic (modified by the definite article) as a “Sidonian.” But it is unclear who the individuals named are, relative to the missing content of the inscription.

The association between this inscription and mortuary practice has been made based on the block’s iconographical similarities to another *uninscribed* limestone block found fifty years earlier in a tomb nearby. The pieces share many iconographic similarities – the two “layers” or levels of rectangular setting outlining the piece, the long horizontal rectangular niche, and the two short pillars which seem to support it. But the differences between the two

¹⁸² For a discussion of this term (possibly a personal name), including the possibility that it refers to the city of Kourion, see Masson and Szynger 1972, 91. Schmitz suggests a more likely solution would be the translation “in Caria” (personal correspondence, 29 June 2013).

pieces are equally intriguing. The style of the column or pillar capitals is different; the inscribed version features upturned arms branching off a central pillar, while the uninscribed piece includes downward-turned fronds or decorative swirls evocative of proto-Aeolic capitals known throughout the Iron I-II period Levant. The pillars on the two stone blocks are also carved with different levels of relief detail: the inscribed version is constructed as if “in the round,” with negative space carved out between the upward-turned arms and central pillars of each; the uninscribed specimen is carved in relief, with flat pillar bases and less detail in the decorative elements below the capitals. The small figure holding two serpents in relief on the bottom of the uninscribed piece occupies the equivalent space used for the bilingual inscription on its counterpart.

On its own, the inscribed block testifies to an Iron II inscription which mentions (or was perhaps commissioned by) an individual who identified himself as a Sidonian. However, its connection with mortuary practice and belief is dependent on the context offered by the uninscribed block. Using only the photographs for comparison, I agree that the motifs are strikingly similar, but cannot concur the workmanship is the same. Perhaps the two blocks do indeed come from the same tomb, where more than one stone cutter was involved in producing the individual components. Perhaps they come from different tombs constructed during a short period of time, one in imitation or homage to the other (or both in imitation of a third exemplar in some other place or medium). But the possibility that the motif was used in both a tomb context (where the uninscribed block was found *in situ*), and in some other, non-mortuary context that cannot be reconstructed, must be kept in mind.

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 1520; Metropolitan Museum, New York, 74.51.2300; Cesnola no. 8
Dimensions	58 cm high
Discovery	Discovered in 1866 by L. Palma di Cesnola in a tomb at Kition
Studies	Cesnola 1877, 441, no. 8, pl. XI; Ward 1874, LXXXV, fig. 5; Hall 1885, 8, no. XXV; Clermont-Ganneau 1898, 525; Masson and Szynger 1972, pl. XIII, no. 3, cf. 119, n. 6; Teixidor 1976, 66, no. 23; Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, 131-132, no. D3 and pl. XX no. 1; Lipiński 1983, 141; Cannavò 2011, 309-310.
Date	First half of the 7 th century BCE

Another inscribed vessel from a tomb at Kition is this Canaanite jar, with three lines of painted text across its widest point, between the two handles. The second line of text, separated from the first line by a noticeable space, is written in larger characters. Lipinski and Cannavo read:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1) <i>b^šlpls</i> | Baalpilles. |
| 2) <i>ytn</i> | Yaton |
| 3) <i>šmry</i> | has inspected. |

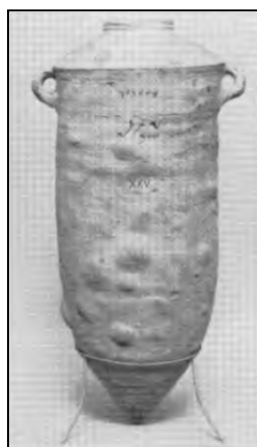


Figure II.20: Inscribed Amphora from Kition
(Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, pl. XX, D3)

The first line contains a single personal name, although the relationship between this name and the rest of the inscription is not entirely obvious, given the space that separates them and the change in size of the letters. The second line probably contains a hypocoristic personal name from the verb *ytn* “to give,” functioning as the subject of line 3 – interpreted as either a

verbal form, or as the title *šmr*, “inspector,” followed by an abbreviation, *y*.¹⁸³ Peckham paleographically dated the text to the first half of the 7th century BCE.¹⁸⁴

Kition Amphora II

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 1521; Metropolitan Museum, New York, 74.51.2298, A and B; Cesnola no. 7
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in 1866 by L. Palma di Cesnola in a tomb at Kition
Studies	Cesnola 1877, 441, no. 7; Ward 1874, LXXXV, fig. 4; Hall 1885, 8, no. XXVI; Clermont-Ganneau 1898, 525; Teixidor 1969, 337; Masson and Szynger 1972, pl. XIII, no. 4, cf. 119, n. 6; Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, 132-133, no. D4, pl. XX, 2; Peckham 1968, 17, pl. X, 2
Date	Second half of the 7 th century BCE

Another amphora, similar to the previous entry, was found by Cesnola at Kition, “probablement dans une tombe.”¹⁸⁵ The inscription is short and small relative to the size of the vessel:

bʿly a hypocoristic personal name formed from the god’s name *bʿl*

Peckham dated the inscription to the second half of the 7th century BCE on the basis of its paleography.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ See Cannavò 2011, 310 for a succinct discussion of the various proposals.

¹⁸⁴ Peckham 1968, 16-17, pl. X, 1.

¹⁸⁵ Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, 132.

¹⁸⁶ Peckham 1968, 17, pl. X, 2.



Figure II.21: Inscribed Amphora from Kition
(Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1977, pl. XXV, D4)

Salamis Amphora

Loc. / Num.	Formerly held in the regional museum of Famagusta, current location unknown (Tomb 79 inv. no. 812)
Dimensions	40 cm high
Discovery	From the large “royal” Tomb (no. 79) in the necropolis of Salamis
Studies	Karageorghis 1973, 54, no. 812; Amadasi Guzzo and Karageorghis 1973, 229; Puech 1979, 41-42, fig. 5; Szyner 1980, 127-128; Peckham 1968, 16-17, pl. X, 1; Cannavò 2011, 319.
Date	7 th century BCE

A Canaanite jar (of the “torpedo” type, in Plain White ware), partially reconstructed from many fragments, bearing a partially legible black-ink inscription across its widest dimension, was found in the large “royal” tomb (tomb number 79) in the necropolis at Salamis. While Puech (1979) interpreted the text as the beginnings of an abecedar: *ʔbgd[hwz]*, Szyner (1980) reads here only a single personal name, *ʔbdb[ʔ]*.

Geometric Vessel from the Necropolis of Idalion

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 1522; Metropolitan Museum, New York (Cesnola Collection), no. 74.51.1001
Dimensions	33 cm high

Discovery	Discovered by L. Palma di Cesnola in the necropolis at Idalion (near modern Dhali)
Studies	Hall 1885-1886, 7; Peckham 1968, 17; Masson and Szyner 1972, 112-113, pl. XIV, nos. 1 and 2
Date	7 th century BCE

An inscribed Bichrome IV (7th century BCE) amphora with geometric motifs between the handles was found by L. Palma di Cesnola in one of the “Phoenician Tombs” uncovered during the excavations of the cemeteries surrounding the site of Idalion (modern Dhali).¹⁸⁷

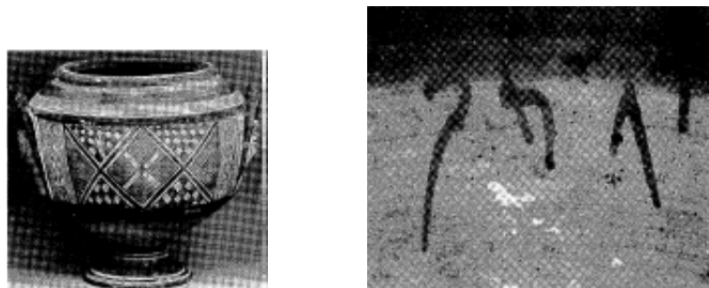


Figure II.22: Geometric Vessel from Idalion and Detail of Inscription (Masson and Szyner 1972, pl. XIV, nos. 1 and 2)

The vessel features the four Phoenician characters *rgmn*, painted in black slip before firing, on the body of the vessel below the band of Geometric decoration. The characters probably represent a personal name, from the root *r-g-m*.¹⁸⁸ Masson and Szyner called this inscription “probablement le plus ancien témoignage de la présence phénicienne à Idalion.”¹⁸⁹

Horse Blinders from Idalion

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 1209 A and B; Idalion inventory nos. 2026 and 2027; Acquired by the Duke of Luynes who eventually donated them to the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
Dimensions	16 cm wide x 8.5 cm high

¹⁸⁷ “...le consul des États-Unis, le célèbre Luigi Palma di Cesnola, fait ouvrir pas ses ouvriers des centaines de tombes dans les diverses necropolis de Dhali. Le détail de ces trouvailles est perdu à jamais; cependant, on peut attribuer avec certitude à cette région des pièces qui ont tout de suite attiré l’attention des érudits” (Masson and Szyner 1972, 112).

¹⁸⁸ As in the Hebrew names *regem* (1 Chron. 2:47) and *regem-melek* (Zach. 7:2).

¹⁸⁹ Masson and Szyner 1972, 113. See also Heltzer 1978; Zadok 1988, 79, 211, 71131: 76)

Discovery	Unearthed by farmers at Idalion (near modern Dhali) around 1850; described as coming from the top of the western acropolis of the site (interpreted as the ruins of a sanctuary of Athena)
Studies	Masson and Szyner 1972, 108-113 and pl. XII, 1-2; Puech 1979, 30-31.
Date	600 BCE

A pair of inscribed horse blinders (the right and left blinders are RÉS 1209 A and B, respectively) were unearthed by farmers in the early 1850s at the site of Idalion (modern Dhali). The objects were described as coming from the top of a high point on the west of the tell, a feature eventually interpreted as the western acropolis, home to a sanctuary of Athena. The pieces are therefore not themselves explicitly relevant for a study of Phoenician mortuary practice, but like the inscribed limestone block from Episkopi (discussed above), the Dhali horse blinders bear significant similarities to uninscribed objects which do come from mortuary contexts. The inscribed horse blinders from Dhali are very similar to a pair of horse blinders found in an elaborate (probably royal) 8th century tomb in the Necropolis at Salamis,¹⁹⁰ although the latter were decorated but uninscribed.

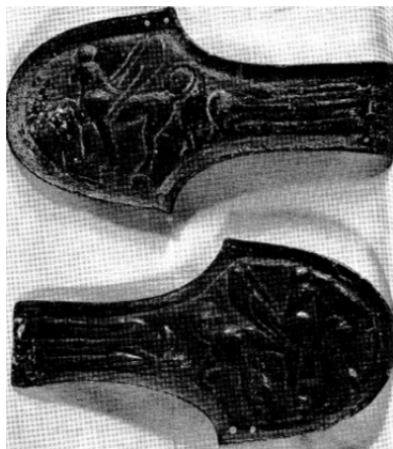


Figure II.23: Inscribed Horse Blinders from Idalion (Masson and Szyner 1972, pl. XII, nos. 1-2)

¹⁹⁰ Kargeorghis 1967 (vol. I) and 1973 (vol. III)

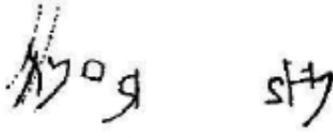


Figure II.24: Horse Blinder Inscription (Puech 1979, 31)

The difficulty of the inscriptions on both the left and right blinders is evidenced by the range of interpretations thus far offered:

Table II.8: Translations of Horse Blinder Inscriptions from Idalion

Source	Left blinder	Right blinder	Translation
RÉS	<i>nt</i>	<i>b^hnt</i>	"[...A]nat // for Anat"
H. de Luynes 1852, 39	<i>gd</i>	<i>b^hnt</i>	"Good fortune for Anat"
Masson and Sznycer 1972	<i>p[?]</i>	<i>b^hnt</i>	"? for Anat"
Puech 1979	<i>ph</i>	<i>b^hnm</i>	"Metal plates over the eyes"

It seems most likely that the left blinder reads *ph*, "plate" or "plaque," while the right blinder may read *b^hnt*, indicating that the blinders were dedicated to the goddess 'Anat. If this is the case, the *b* preposition which precedes the goddess's name is unexpected and difficult to reckon with; one might expect the *l* preposition in the case of a dedication. Puech has suggested that the right blinder instead be read *b^hnm*,¹⁹¹ i.e. "on / over the eyes," in order to produce the sense "metal plates / over the eyes" when the two inscriptions are read together. Puech considers these objects to have been votive objects, "...provenant du temple d'Anat, assimilée à Athéna, situé au sommet de l'acropole."¹⁹² The inscription has been dated on paleographic grounds to approximately 600 BCE.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Puech 1979, 30.

¹⁹² Puech 1979, 31.

¹⁹³ Puech 1979, 31.

The pair of decorated horse blinders found at Salamis as uninscribed, but bear similar decorative elements (referred to by the excavators as reminiscent of Assyrian motifs¹⁹⁴). They were found in a pile of other iron and bronze objects (including horse breastplates, ornaments, and front pieces), which seem to have been intended for one of two horses, buried complete with two chariots. A number of the metal objects associated with this burial were determined by the excavator to have been produced on Cyprus, but “sous une forte influence de la Syrie du Nord.”¹⁹⁵ This burial was dated on the basis of its accompanying pottery to the end of the 8th century.

Though the Salamis blinders were part of a full horse burial to accompany the (royal?) dead, the horse blinders from Dhali may indicate that in this case, the same type of object could be appropriate for both a votive context (at Dhali) and a mortuary one (at Salamis). Whatever this gift symbolized, or however it might have functioned in the minds of those who gave it, these purposes seem to have been considered applicable to either a deity or a deceased human. Was this simply a question of the value of an object indicating the degree of “feeling” or commitment on the part of its giver? Or do these horse blinders point to some more concrete connections between the divine sphere and the world of the dead (at least at Salamis)?

Pot from the Necropolis of Turabi

Loc. / Num.	Location not currently known; photograph in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. Excavation inventory no. Tomb 37/7.
Dimensions	(taken from the photograph): approximately 9 cm high x 12 cm wide
Discovery	Excavated in 1953 by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities; from Tomb 37 in the necropolis of Turabi (Turabi Tekke; French <i>Tourabi</i> /

¹⁹⁴ Karageorghis 1967, 343.

¹⁹⁵ Karageorghis 1967, 346.

	<i>Tourapi</i>) near Kition (modern Larnaca).
Studies	Megaw 1954, 173; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 119-121 and pl. XXII, 1; Teixidor 1973, 425, no. 136.
Date	Early 6 th – 5 th centuries BCE

During the 1953 excavation of foundations for a new Turkish elementary school NW of the Turabi Tekke, near Kition (modern Larnaca), forty-one “tightly-packed tombs”¹⁹⁶ were found of which ten were fully excavated, and objects were collected from eight others (probably disturbed as part of the construction). The necropolis was dated on the basis of its ceramic contents, although Tomb 37 in particular proved a lynchpin in pinning the date of the cemetery:

With one exception the excavated tombs range from the seventh to the fifth centuries, plain bottle-jugs and flat-necked jars of Syro-Palestinian form being their standard furniture. A fixed point in the sixth century is provided by a Fikelloura lekythos.... The same tomb contained a plain pot with a short Phoenician inscription, and a black glaze Attic kylix.¹⁹⁷

The tombs at this necropolis thus straddle the Iron II-Iron III (Persian) period; the site was in use for nearly two hundred years.

The inscribed object uncovered from Tomb 37 was a small, wide-mouthed vessel with two handles, mentioned briefly in a 1954 excavation report, and subsequently lost.¹⁹⁸ The original publication of the piece, without accompanying photograph, records that there was a short Phoenician inscription painted just below the flanged rim of the vessel. The inscription, consisting of four letters, reads:

lʿms belonging to *ʿms*

¹⁹⁶ Megaw 1954, 173.

¹⁹⁷ Megaw 1954, 173.

¹⁹⁸ Masson and Sznycer describe the situation in 1972 as follows: “Des fouilles exécutées en 1953 par le Département des Antiquités, mais non encore publiées, ont livré une petite inscription qui était demeurée inédite, et n’est plus accessible depuis les événements qui ont soustrait le vieux musée de Larnaca au contrôle de l’administration central” (Masson and Sznycer 1972, 119).



Figure II.25: Inscribed Pot from Kition at Turabi (Masson and Sznycer 1972, pl. XXII, 1)

Masson and Sznycer date the form of the *samech* to the early 6th century BCE, but note that the angular *lamed* finds similarities with both early forms and Elephantine cursive of the 5th century BCE.¹⁹⁹ The personal name is well known in both Phoenician / Punic and in Hebrew – a hypocoristic name from the verb *ʿms*, “to lift/bear/carry.”

Stele Fragment from Kouklia-*Marchello*

Loc. / Num.	Kouklia, Musée archéologique, KA 94
Dimensions	16 cm long x 29 cm high
Discovery	Discovered in secondary context on the site of the Persian ramp at Kouklia- <i>Marchello</i> .
Studies	Sznycer 1996; Cannavò 2011, 317-318.
Date	6 th century BCE

A fragment of a stele, broken on the right side, preserves five legible lines of an inscription of indeterminate length. The object was found in secondary context, on the site of a Persian-period ramp at Kouklia-*Marchello* where it was used as fill, and its inscription went long unnoticed – it does not appear among the publications of the materials from Kouklia-

¹⁹⁹ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 120.

Paphos. The inscription on the stele was only re-discovered in preparation for a 1990s volume on the sculpture from the site of *Marchello*.²⁰⁰ Highly damaged, the remaining text reads:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1)]zr bn ς | ...]zr, son of... |
| 2)]... bʿl. |]...bʿl |
| 3)]wkl ʿš t |]and everything / anyone ... |
| 4)]... ʿš[?]. | ... |
| 5)]wkl ʿš |]and everything / anyone ... |

The fragmentary nature of the text prevents any concrete interpretation of the stele – it could be a funerary inscription,²⁰¹ but could perhaps also be a dedicatory inscription. Without its primary context or the rest of the inscription, more cannot be said about the purpose of this inscribed stele.

d. Crete

Bronze Bowl from the Tekke Cemetery

Loc. / Num.	[unavailable]
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in tomb J (excavated by Roger Howell) during 1975-1976 excavations of the Protogeometric – Geometric cemetery at Teke / Tekke / Ambelokipi north-west of the acropolis at Knossos.
Studies	Catling 1976-77, 3-13, figs. 22-31; Szyner 1979, 89-93; Cross 1980, 15-16; Coldstream 1982, 263; Coldstream, 1983; Puech 1983; Puech 1986.
Date	Late 11 th or late 10 th century BCE

An extensive Iron Age burial ground was found to the south-east of the modern site of Tekke, itself north-west of the Minoan palace of Knossos. In excavations in 1975 and 1976, fifteen “complete or damaged”²⁰² chamber tombs (numbered A-Q) dating to the 10th – 7th

²⁰⁰ Prepared by V. Tatton-Brown; see Cannavò 2011, 317 for summary.

²⁰¹ “L’état extrêmement fragmentaire du texte empêche d’en tirer une interprétation d’ensemble; on peut juste remarquer la répétition de la séquence WKL ʿš, fréquente dans les inscriptions funéraires” (Cannavò 2011, 318).

²⁰² Catling 1976-77, 11.

centuries BCE were explored.²⁰³ An inscribed bronze bowl was found in the undisturbed tomb J (“probably the earliest and certainly the most important” tomb²⁰⁴) of this cemetery,²⁰⁵ along with sixty Protogeometric pots²⁰⁶ placed near a single cinerary urn (containing the remains of two people) in an area measuring 2 m x 1 m.²⁰⁷ Although differing in his interpretation of the contents of tomb J from that of the excavators, Coldstream argued that the two burials should be dated to the mid-10th and early ninth centuries, respectively, separated by at least a generation.²⁰⁸ The inscribed bowl was found in association with the 9th century burial. Puech reads:

ks . šm^ʿ[] bn l'mn bowl / cup of Šama‘ son of l'mir²⁰⁹

The inscription has been described as a “formula of private ownership,” and compared to the 11th century inscribed arrowheads from the Phoenician homeland (discussed below).²¹⁰

²⁰³ Puech 1983, 374; See Catling 1976-77, 11-13 for summary and plans.

²⁰⁴ Catling 1976-77, 12.

²⁰⁵ See Negbi 1992, 607, note 47, for the suggestion (and citation) of another inscribed bowl that may have the same provenance and date. She notes it was located in a Sotheby’s Sale Catalogue.

²⁰⁶ Coldstream 1982, 263.

²⁰⁷ Szynger 1979, 89. Catling 1976-77, 12: “The urn contained the remains of two people; in the lower part were cremated bones, on top of which were found what appeared to be part of an unburnt skeleton.”

²⁰⁸ Coldstream 1982, 271: “The use of the tomb must go back into the tenth century, since nearly half the pots on the chamber floor are of Attic imports of Late Protogeometric, twenty-six in all. But the two burials in the tomb must have been separated by about a generation, since about twelve of the local pots take us into the early ninth century, including three bowls with pendent-semicircle decoration. It was among a group of these later pots that the bronze bowl came to light.” Catling (1976-77, 14) argued “Tomb J should be dated Early Protogeometric in Cretan terms, equivalent to the Late Protogeometric of Attica.” The Protogeometric Greek period is usually defined to be ca. 1050-950 BCE; but see Waldbaum and Carter 1997 for the problems associated with Coldstream’s dating.

²⁰⁹ For discussion of this personal name, see Puech 1986, 168-169. Cross feels less certain about the letters of the name, and transcribes only the word-initial *l* (1980, 15).

²¹⁰ See Negbi 1992, 608, with further citations.

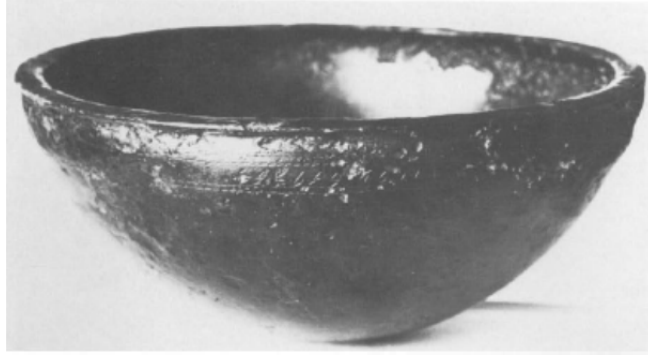


Figure II.26: Bronze Bowl from Tomb J, Tekke Cemetery (Coldstream 1982, taf. 27d)



Figure II.27: Tracing of Inscription from the Tekke Bronze Bowl (Cross 1980, 15)

Since Cross first suggested the presence of the archaic “pupil” or stroke within the circle of the *ʿayin*,²¹¹ dates for the inscription have ranged from the 11th – late 10th century BCE:²¹²

Palaeographic considerations led several scholars to assume that the Tekke bowl was contemporaneous with the Lebanese arrowheads. Whereas the ninth century [archaeological] context of the bowl is well established, however, most of the arrowheads are of unknown provenance and therefore their 11th-century date is inconclusive. In any event, if the palaeographic criteria are valid, the bowl must have been placed in the Tekke tomb at least a century and a half after being made. Acceptance of Coldstream’s proposal that the owner of the bowl was a descendant of the deceased entombed in the early burial of the Tekke tomb may contribute toward narrowing the chronological gap between the palaeographic and archaeological data. In that case, the bowl could not have been brought from Phoenicia to Crete before the second half of the 10th century B.C..²¹³

The bowl may thus have been an “heirloom” piece whose inscription has little to explicitly tell us about the individual or burial with which it was found. But the inclusion of this heirloom

²¹¹ Cross 1980, 15. The intentionality of the strokes is sometimes difficult to make out due to corrosion.

²¹² “Szynger suggests that the inscription dates to about 900 B.C. but does not exclude a higher date in the 10th century. There is, however, not a typological feature of the script which requires or even suggests a date lower than 1000 B.C. (when the ’Ahiiram Inscription must be dated), either on the basis of his reading or mine” (Cross 1980, 17).

²¹³ Negbi 1992, 608.

piece as a burial good does offer evidence for the internment of objects not just valuable for their sumptuous craftsmanship, or their inscribed messages, but also for their “sentimental” value as an object with a long history, perhaps even a long history within a particular family or along a particular kinship line. The object’s service as a burial offering was not dependent on its form, its function, or its inscription, but on a more complicated level of value. In fact, the fact that an object like this one – which had been passed down for many generations – was taken out of commission and placed in a grave for use only by this dead individual, may be an especially significant indication of the social importance this person held in his/her family.

e. Greece

I know of no extant Iron Age I-II period Phoenician inscriptions from Greece that relate to mortuary contexts or afterlife beliefs.

f. Italy

Praeneste Silver Bowl from the Bernardini Tomb

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 164; Gibson 19; Museo archeologico di Villa Giulia in Rome
Dimensions	19.5 cm diameter
Discovery	Discovered in 1876 in the Bernardini tomb at Praeneste (Palestrina) in Etruria, Italy
Studies	Amadasi Guzzo, 1967, Appendix, 157-158; Moscati 1968, fig. 23; Gibson 1982, 71
Date	Ca. 700 BCE

A luxuriously decorated silver bowl, 19 cm in diameter and featuring a short Phoenician inscription, was one of two bowls found in 1876 in the Bernardini tomb at

Praeneste (Palestrina) in Etruria.²¹⁴ Along with two rings of mock Egyptian hieroglyphs, one around the outer edge of the bowl, the other encircling the central decorative frieze, is a series of Egyptian-style scenes.²¹⁵ The Phoenician inscription is tucked between the central frieze and the first ring of mock Egyptian hieroglyphs, and consists of only a proper name of Phoenician origin:

ʕšmnyʕd bn ʕštʔ

'Eshmunya'ad, son of 'Ashto²¹⁶

ⲕ ⲧ ⲱ ⲟ ⲛ ⲛ ⲁ ⲟ ⲙ ⲛ ⲛ ⲕ

Figure II.28: Praeneste Bowl Inscription (Amadasi Guzzo 1967, tav. LXVII)



Figure II.29: Image of the Inscribed Praeneste Bowl (Moscatti 1989 [2001 Edition], 498)

Because of this subtle and inconspicuous placement within the larger constellation of decorative features, Gibson argues that this name “may be either of the artisan or of the owner.”²¹⁷ It has been dated to approximately 700 BCE on the basis of paleography.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Moscatti 1968, 74.

²¹⁵ “[It]...shows in the centre the familiar motif of the pharaoh slaying his enemies and round it four papyrus boats carrying deities and winged scarabs; other figures, among lotus leaves, stand between the boats while above and below the frieze is bordered by inscriptions in imitation hieroglyphs making no sense...” (Moscatti 1968, 74).

²¹⁶ On the vocalization of these names, including the date of the $a^? > \bar{o}$ shift this assumes, see Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 71.

²¹⁷ Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 71.

Though beyond the scope of the present study to pursue in detail, the Praeneste bowl should be viewed in light of the corpus of other silver inscribed bowls known from the Mediterranean region. Markoe’s 1985 catalog of bowls includes five with Cypriot inscriptions, two with Aramaic inscriptions, and three with Phoenician inscriptions (including the Praeneste specimen); each inscription consists of a proper name indicating the bowl’s owner or artisan.²¹⁹ In the two cases thought to indicate the bowl’s manufacturer, the inscribed name appears “inconspicuously within the medallion [central element] of the bowl.”²²⁰ This is in sharp contrast to those instances in which the *l-* preposition (in one Aramaic inscription) or the verb *εἶμι* (in three Cypriot inscriptions) is used, as well as when the inscription is located “in full view”²²¹ below the rim or at the base of the object.

Perhaps most notably, all the known silver bowls of Phoenician style studied by Markoe come from either votive or mortuary contexts.²²² That is, all were either buried as grave goods or dedicated in a temple or sanctuary setting to a divine recipient. Like the horse blinders, discussed above, the Praeneste bowl represents another type of object which was valuable to both the gods and to deceased humans of high social standing.

g. Sicily and Malta

Two Stelae from Malta

Loc. / Num.	A) KAI 61 A; CIS i 123; Gibson 21 B) KAI 61 B; CIS i 123 <i>bis</i> ; Gibson 22
Dimensions	A) 23.5 cm high x 8 cm broad B) Unknown (stela now lost)
Discovery	Discovered in a field near Rabat Mdina in Malta in 1820.

²¹⁸ Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 71 and 42.

²¹⁹ Markoe 1985, 72.

²²⁰ Markoe 1985, 72.

²²¹ Markoe 1985, 72.

²²² Markoe 1985, 75-76.

Studies	Gesenius 1837, 107-11; Dussaud 1946, 371-87; Amadasi Guzzo 1967, 19-23; Sznycer 1974-75, 199-203; Cross 1994, 100-101.
Date	Late 8 th – early 7 th centuries BCE

Two controversial votive stelae dating to the early 7th century BCE²²³ come from a field near Rabat Mdina in Malta, where they were discovered in 1820.²²⁴ Gibson wrote in 1982 of their convoluted history:

The first stele (*CISI 123*), of which a photograph and several sketches were taken last century, was thought to have been lost, but it has recently been found intact in the National Museum in Valletta; it measures 23.5 cm. in height by 8 cm. in breadth. The second stele (*CISI 123 bis*), apparently in a much worse state of preservation, was jealously guarded by the local family into whose possession it came, and eventually disappeared; it was never photographed and is known now only from a single copy [i.e. a drawing of the artifact].²²⁵

The stelae are undecorated aside from their inscriptions, which read:

- A) Stele [*nšb*] of *mlk bʿl* which Nahum erected for Baal Hamon, lord, because he heard the voice of his words
- B) Stele [*nšb*] of *mlk ʿmr* which [Ar]sh erec[ted] for Baal [Hammon], lord, [because he] heard the voice of his w[ords]



Figure II.30: The Surviving Malta Stele, KAI 61 A
(Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 160)

²²³ Peckham 1974, 106; Sznycer 1974-1975; Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 73.

²²⁴ The inscriptions are now held in the Museum of La Valette; Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 160.

²²⁵ Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 72-73.

The two terms *mlk bʿl* and *mlk ʿmr* have been the subject of a long-standing and spirited scholarly debate that attempts to reconcile the appearance of the same or similar terms at Carthage in Tunisia (see below) and at N’gaous in Algeria, albeit in texts from a wide date range. Although many scholars have framed the debate by asserting the term *mlk* in these contexts necessarily refers to some kind of sacrifice, others see in these arguments the influence of much later classical texts and reject the identification of *mlk* with sacrificial vocabulary on the basis of a lack of other certain Northwest Semitic parallels. An overview of some of the more influential arguments in the debate shows the wide range of referents for the Phoenician vocabulary under consideration:

Table II.9: Interpretations of the Malta Stelae Inscriptions

Scholar	<i>mlk</i>	<i>mlk bʿl</i>	<i>mlk ʿmr</i>
Cooke (1903, 103)	-	Name of a deity: “Pillar of Milk-Ba’al,” namely “a deity formed out of the attributes of Milk and Ba’al in combination” ²²⁶	
von Soden (1936, col. 46)	a <i>maktēb</i> noun formed from the root <i>hlk</i> / <i>ylk</i> (but “taking its meaning from the causative stem” as in Hebrew <i>qrbn</i> and <i>ʿwlh</i>): “a bringing, offering, sacrifice”		
Février (1953, 8-18)	Sacrifice	<i>bʿl</i> = the <i>b</i> preposition + the noun <i>ʿūl</i> “infant”; thus “(a sacrifice) in exchange for an infant”	
Donner and Röllig (1966; KAI)	Sacrifice	<i>bʿl</i> = the <i>b</i> preposition + the noun <i>ʿūl</i> “infant”; thus “(a sacrifice) in exchange for an infant”	Sacrifice of a human
Weinfeld (1972)	Epithet or title of a god (“king”)	Baal, king	The king [as epithet for a deity] sees / says
Mosca (1975)	Sacrifice	“sacrifice of a citizen”	“sacrifice of a commoner”

²²⁶ Cooke goes on: “It is curious that the pillar of one deity should be dedicated to another; but Milk-ba’al and Ba’al-ḥammān were prob[ably] only different aspects of the same god” (Cooke 1903, 104).

Gibson (1982, vol. 3, 74-76) ²²⁷	[accepts von Soden's proposal]	“(human) sacrifice of one making (it)”	“(human) sacrifice of one promising (it)”
Stager (1982, 161)	Sacrifice		The sacrifice of an animal in place of a child ²²⁸
Day (1989, 8)	[accepts von Soden's proposal]		
Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor (1991, 160)	[not translated]	Vocalized <i>mlk baal</i>	Disagrees with Mosca et al., but does not suggest an alternative – not enough information to know.
Cross (1994, 100-101)	“mulk-sacrifice”: “The etymology of the term <i>mlk</i> is not clear. There can be no doubt now that a divine epithet Mulk existed.... It may be that the sacrificial term is denominative from the divine epithet. Compare Biblical <i>šrt</i> , ‘fertility,’ <i>dgn</i> ‘grain,’ and <i>šrh</i> , ‘stylized tree of life.’” ²²⁹	Interprets the term <i>bʿl</i> as a combination of the preposition <i>b</i> + <i>ʿl</i> , vocalized <i>ʿūl</i> or “infant.” Thus Cross translates: “mulk-sacrifice consisting of an infant”	“mulk sacrifice of a lamb”

Though more will be said on this in Chapter III, Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor warn against the practice of using disparate occurrences of these unknown terms to play a kind of connect-the-dots with the historical record:

In the context of such a complex sacrificial terminology, it is easy to understand why it is hard to make a decision. Nevertheless it seems difficult to admit that the formula *mlk ʿmr* in Malta and the term *molchomor* at N’gaous could have the same meaning, given the fact that almost one thousand years separate the one from the other. Moreover, a literal translation of *mlk baal* and *mlk adam* by ‘sacrifice of a citizen’ and ‘sacrifice of a commoner’ suggests a social distinction (which Diodorus’ text does not collaborate), and eliminates any reference to the liturgical context of the (alleged) child sacrifice. Furthermore, these children vowed to be sacrificed could not be referred to with terms such as *baal* or *adam* in a society where they had no status as yet. The question the historian faces

²²⁷ “The distinction between בעל and אִמֵר may then be that between a parent who actually carries through the sacrifice of his child and one who merely ‘promises’ (perhaps in his wife’s early pregnancy or at the birth) to sacrifice him or her in the future; or perhaps between a parent who is present at or takes part in the sacrifice and one who ‘instructs’ others to make it for him; or even (reading a passive partic. [of the verb “to say”]) between one who willingly undertakes the sacrifice and one who has to be ‘commanded’ to perform the task. These suggestions may sound naïve, but we should not forget the poignancy of the dilemma in which this distressing custom placed those whose religion commended it as a duty” (Gibson 1982, 76-77).

²²⁸ Notably, the term *mlk ʿmr* does not appear in the inscriptions of Carthage until the 3rd century BCE; Stager 1982, 61.

²²⁹ Cross 1994, 104.

therefore, is the following: has the formula *mlk baal* kept the same meaning throughout nine centuries? Can one interpret the texts of the 8th or 7th century in the same way as those of the end of the first millennium?²³⁰

Malta's unique historical and geographical situation during the Iron II period should also inform our interpretation of these two stelae and their enigmatic inscriptions, as the same authors go on to emphasize:

The Phoenician inscriptions on the stelae from Malta are among the oldest known in the Western Mediterranean. During the 7th century, the island must have had close ties with Tyre which did not weaken with the beginning of the 6th, when Carthage took over the Mediterranean. Rather, the great popularity of the cult of Ashtarte in [*sic*] the island and the fact that the Phoenician script was used until the 2nd cent. B.C., testify to the independence of Malta from Carthage, Sicily, and Sardinia.... Why would the formula *mlk baal* have signified a ritual of child sacrifice in the 8th cent. in Malta, if not a single literary or archaeological indication informs us of the existence of this ritual at Tyre?²³¹

Because the stelae were not found associated with any human remains, but instead were in secondary context in an agricultural field, we may never be able to define conclusively the Phoenician terms in question without further archaeological finds in that region of the island. But it may be possible to focus the range of possibilities for these terms using contemporary and related texts and data.

Stelae from the Motya Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet”

Loc. / Num.	a) Amadasi Guzzo no. 14 b) Amadasi Guzzo no. 36
Dimensions	a) 30 cm x 16 cm x 6 cm b) 27.5 cm x 21.5 cm x 11.5 cm
Discovery	Found at the infant cremation cemetery or “tophet” at Motya: 1875: Excavations by Schliemann 1906-1919: Excavations by Whitaker 1930: Excavations by Marconi

²³⁰ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 161.

²³¹ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 161.

	1955, 1958, 1961: Excavations by Isserlin and Cintas 1964-1974: Excavations by the Italian Mission (directed by Moscati)
Studies	Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 116 and 433; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 24-25 and 39-40; Amadasi Guzzo 1986b
Date	Middle of the 6 th century BCE

The small island of Motya/Mozia, off the coast of Sicily, is the site of the next set of stelae under consideration. The infant cremation cemetery located about 200m west of the adult cremation cemetery (discussed below) was first identified as “A Burial-Ground for the Remains of Sacrificed Offerings”²³² by its excavator, since the two trenches dug in the 1920s revealed approximately 150 urns, very few of which contained human (infant) remains:

Of these about one-third have been examined by competent anatomists, with the result that, although the contents of many of them are quite indeterminable, a certain number have been found to belong to human infants of a very tender age, though the greater part are those of young domestic and other animals, such as lambs and kids, calves, dogs and cats, and, in one case, of a monkey.^[233] The remains of ruminants would appear to predominate.²³⁴

Subsequent excavation, especially the decade-long project led by Moscati, identified the cemetery as a “tophet,” or infant cremation cemetery, and established the outlines of a datable sequence for its urns and stelae.

More than 1000 stelae were found at the cremation cemetery at Motya. Although not associated with the earliest urn burials (from strata VII – VI), they begin to be erected in conjunction with burials in stratum V, dating to the first half of the 6th century BCE. However,

²³² Whitaker 1921, 257.

²³³ Today there is one wild population of Barbary macaques (also known as Barbary apes or rock apes) living in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve in Gibraltar. This population is thought to have introduced by the Moors who kept them as pets (Jackson 1987, 28); this theory puts the establishment of the macaques colony sometime after 700 CE. As far as I know, this is the only documented community of monkeys in Europe, and it antedates the period in question.

²³⁴ Whitaker 1921, 257. His earlier 1920 summary stated that, “An analysis of about a score of these burials would show that one only contains human remains, those of an infant, while the others all contain the remains of inferior animals, among them those of ruminants somewhat predominating, though those of dogs, cats, and even of a monkey, are represented” (Whitaker 1920, 180).

only forty out of the more than 1000 total stelae feature an inscription.²³⁵ Some of these inscribed characters feature traces of red paint,²³⁶ indicating that further emphasis or adornment was sometimes added even to inscribed stelae, and implying that carved inscriptions may not have been the only vehicle for marking, decorating, or identifying these stelae. The largest number of stelae with inscriptions date to the second half of the 6th – first decades of the 5th century BCE (strata IV – III), and will be discussed below, in Chapter III. In fact, only two inscriptions can be dated to the earliest period (stratum V, the mid-late 6th century BCE; no. 14 and 36²³⁷):

No.	Phoenician Inscription	English Translation
14	<i>lʿdn // bʿl // ḥmn // mtnt // ʿš nd // r ʿzr</i>	For the lord, Baal Ḥammon, a <i>mtnt</i> which ʿzr vowed / gave
36	<i>lʿdn l // bʿl ḥm // n mtn // t ʿš nd // [r ...</i>	For the lord, for Baal Ḥammon, a <i>mtnt</i> which PN vowed / gave

Both of these inscribed stelae are painted (using red pigment) on the front of the stelae, and utilize one of a discrete number of formulae, as identified by Amadasi Guzzo.²³⁸ Amadasi Guzzo identifies the variations of type I/1 as follows (though one can see that the second *l*- is not always present):

lʿdn lbʿl ḥmn mtnt ʿš ndr + PN (+ genealogical formula) (+ k šmʿ ql dbr)

For the lord, for Baal Ḥammon, *mtnt* which PN vow / promised
(because he heard the sound / voice of his *dbr*)

²³⁵ Moscati and Uberti 1981 provides plates of one thousand one hundred sixty-one total stelae (some numbers are not pictured), although those numbered above one thousand sixteen are very fragmentary.

²³⁶ Amadasi Guzzo 1986b, 193.

²³⁷ Number scheme according to Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.

²³⁸ Amadasi Guzzo 1986b, 194. In addition to stelae numbers 14 and 36, this basic formula is featured in fifteen other stelae (numbers 11-13, 16, 19-23, 26, 28, 29, 32, 35 and 39), or 37.5% of the total inscribed stelae from the tophet at Mozia / Motya. Amadasi Guzzo labels this type I/1 (where type “I” has three subtypes); see Chapter III for further analysis.

An alternate form of this formula, which utilizes the term *mlkt* in the same word-position as the term *mntnt* (usually translated “gift”) in the examples above, appears on only four of the forty total inscribed stelae from the site. An alternate verb is also sometimes used – *ytn*, “to give,” in place of *ndr*, “to vow / promise.” Since the bulk of the Motya infant cremation cemetery or tophet stelae date to the Iron III period, the vocabulary of the later stelae will be examined in more detail in Chapter III.

The fact that so many of the early burials at the Motya cinerary cemetery were unmarked by stelae, or marked by uninscribed stelae (certainly without a carved inscription, and perhaps without any markings in some cases), points to a change in practice in the Iron II period.²³⁹ It seems to have become important to some of those utilizing this burial site to specify, via one of a small number of formulae, something about the purpose, intent, or meaning of the burial. If some of the “gifts” or deposits at this site were therefore anonymous, this makes the referent of terms like *mntnt* all the more intriguing.

Motya Adult Cremation Cemetery stelae

Loc. / Num.	[unavailable]
Dimensions	25-35 cm high x 15-25 cm wide x 15-25 cm thick
Discovery	1907 by Whitaker’s excavations
Studies	Whitaker 1920, 180; Whitaker 1921; Jeffrey 1990, 272; Griffio 1997, 915-916.
Date	In use until 650-600 BCE

An adult cremation cemetery was also found on the island of Motya, dating to the earliest period of Phoenician settlement (thought to have taken place in the 8th century BCE). The cemetery was discovered by Whitaker in 1907, while excavating along the line of

²³⁹ “Thus, at the outset, the urns were not surmounted by an inscribed stone. They were anonymous, and it is the stele, and only the inscribed stele, which can inform us about the purpose of the offering” (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 159).

fortifications to the west of the northern gate of the city.²⁴⁰ In 1921 Whitaker reported having found approximately two hundred cremation burials and seven sarcophagi,²⁴¹ but in the early 1980s the total cremations would be counted as “...114 tombs in the archaic necropolis, all cremation burials of the 7th and early 6th cents apart from a couple of later inhumations.”²⁴² The cemetery was identified as Phoenician on the basis of its ceramic contents.²⁴³

All but one of the burials in this cemetery were of adults, consisting of large cinerary urns “containing the cremated remains of the dead, with the usual accompaniment of smaller subsidiary vases around them.”²⁴⁴ The vast majority of tombs in the cemetery were reported to have been lacking stelae or other markers altogether. The excavator speculated that this might have been due to their having been removed for reuse over time, as he had noticed several dressed stones being used in the low walls used to separate nearby fields.²⁴⁵ Of those stelae still standing *in situ*, none was inscribed. A few are described as bearing the disk and crescent, although it is unclear how many stelae were decorated thus, as well as in what size, arrangement, or combination these shapes appear.

²⁴⁰ Whitaker 1920, 180.

²⁴¹ “The cremations tombs that have so far been discovered and examined in the Motya necropolis are about two hundred in number. The sarcophagi are only seven in number, and are to be found all near one another at the western extremity of the burial-ground. These sarcophagi are all of sandstone, roughly worked and unornamented. To judge from their condition when discovered, and from their contents, there is no doubt that they must have been previously visited and their contents rifled, either entirely or in part” (Whitaker 1921, 229).

In an earlier publication, Whitaker described the sarcophagi as dating to the most recent period of usage at the cemetery: “Unlike the Birgi necropolis, which is almost entirely on the principle of inhumation, this recently-discovered island cemetery is one of the basis of incineration, though a few sarcophagi, with inhumated remains, have been found in one part of the ground. They are probably the latest burials effected in the old cemetery, dating from, or just before the time of, the change to the new necropolis on the mainland” (Whitaker 1920, 180).

²⁴² Wilson 1981-1982, 102; as of the 1978 (*Mozia IX*) publication.

²⁴³ Whitaker already considered it Phoenician in his 1920 and 1921 publications, but Wilson would quantify the ceramic profile at the cemetery as follows: “The grave goods contain few surprises, being mostly ‘Phoenician-Punic’ with less than 10% imported pottery (esp. Corinthian or imitation Corinthian)” (Wilson 1981-1982, 102).

²⁴⁴ Whitaker 1920, 180. The one exception to this was an infant inhumation burial: “A solitary case has been met with in this cemetery of the uncremated remains of an infant being found in a vase” (Whitaker 1921, 218-219).

²⁴⁵ Whitaker 1921, 217.



Figure II.31: Uninscribed, Carved Stelae from the Adult Cremation Cemetery at Motya (Whitaker 1921, 271, fig. 50)

Almost all the excavated stelae were of irregular rectangular shape, sometimes curved at the top, and carved with simple shapes or lines.²⁴⁶ In most cases the carved motif outlines the face of the stone, perhaps a figural representation (Whitaker interpreted the shapes as representing sacred buildings or stone-icons, i.e. “baetyls”²⁴⁷), or perhaps demarcating a zone for some painted decoration or text, now lost. Whitaker frequently noticed traces of red paint on other stelae and cippi²⁴⁸ on the island, some of which dated to the Iron II period as well.²⁴⁹ While the adult cremation cemetery at Motya does not offer direct epigraphic evidence relevant for the present study, the appearance of stae carved with simple, non-figural shapes or lines at this site is nevertheless noteworthy. These stelae may preserve indirect evidence for written text, if the carved spaces represent vestiges of delineated registers for painted texts.

²⁴⁶ Whitaker’s description reads: “With but few exceptions the stelae found here are extremely rude and simple, being formed by small upright blocks of roughly hewn sandstone, measuring, as a rule, from 25 to 35 cm. in height, 15 to 25 cm. in width, and about the same in depth, and with lines engraved or scratched upon them – a linear representation, perhaps, of the aedes or sacred building” (Whitaker 1921, 217-218). He goes on to note that some bear the “emblem of the disk and crescent.” Note that his description here differs from that on page 272 in the same volume: “These are formed by small upright blocks of sandstone, as a rule measuring from 0.25 m. to 0.35 m. in height by from 0.15 m. to 0.20 m. in breadth, and about the same in thickness....”

²⁴⁷ Whitaker 1921, 218.

²⁴⁸ A “cippus” is distinguished from a stele in that it is constructed in the round – usually in the form of a cylindrical or rectangular pyramidal pillar.

²⁴⁹ See for example the description of the cippus which “shows slight traces of a red pigment on the upper part” (Whitaker 1921, 271).

h. Sardinia

Sulcis Lamina

Loc. / Num.	Soprintendenza alle Antichita di Cagliari
Dimensions	1.4 cm high x 1.5 cm wide x 0.05 cm thick
Discovery	Discovered in the earliest stratum of the Sulcis “tophet” or infant cremation cemetery.
Studies	Barreca 1965
Date	8 th -7 th centuries BCE

A fragment of an inscription engraved on thin gold leaf “lamina” (a thin plaque or panel intended to be affixed to some other surface) was found in the earliest stratum of the Sulcis tophet or infant cremation cemetery. Only 1.4 cm x 1.5 cm x 0.05 cm in size, the lamina seems to have been once attached to an iron object, which has partially damaged the surface²⁵⁰ such that the inscription is significantly obscured. The surviving text reads:

<i>bʿl ʿšy...</i>	Baal, who...
<i>ʿš...</i>	father ²⁵¹ ...
<i>w...</i>	and...

The text has been dated to the 8th-7th centuries BCE on the basis of its paleographic features.²⁵²

Although the text is too small and fragmentary to provide much material for interpretation, the fact that this gold lamina was affixed to an iron object in a tophet setting seems significant.

The Sulcis lamina was not placed inside a cinerary urn, where other small amulets and metal objects have been found at other cinerary cemeteries, but was deposited or buried among the urns. It may have been placed in affiliation with a particular urn or burial – we have certain evidence that ceramic vessels sometimes accompanied urn burials in this manner. But it may

²⁵⁰ Barreca 1965, 55-56.

²⁵¹ Barreca suggests this may be an epithet of Baal, as in the commonly occurring Phoenician personal name ʿAbibaal (Barreca 1965, 57).

²⁵² Barreca, 1965, 56.

also have been deposited in the tophet site for some other purpose, or as part of a ritual unrelated to an urn burial.

i. Tunisia

Carthage Medallion

Loc. / Num.	RÉS 5; KAI 73; Gibson 18; CIS i 6057. Currently housed in the Musée Lavigerie.
Dimensions	2 in. in diameter
Discovery	Found at Carthage in 1894 by A.L. Delattre in a 7 th -6 th centuries grave in the cemetery of Douimès, Carthage.
Studies	Berger 1894, 421 and 453-458; Delattre 1897, 721-722; Medina 1897; Moore 1905, 28-32; Ferron 1958-59, 45-56; Garbini 1967, 6-8; Ferron 1968, 255-261; Peckham 1968, 119-124; Donner and Röllig 1973, 91; Teixidor 1973, item 137; Krahmalkov 1981; Gibson 1982, 69; Gras, Rouillard, and Teixidor 1989, 164-165; Schmitz 2008.
Date	Ca. 800-775 BCE ²⁵³

This very small gold pendant was found in 1894 in the sifted debris from an elaborate tomb in the Douimès cemetery at Carthage. It is inscribed in Phoenician script, carved or punched into the surface and arrayed around a central boss. The meaning of the inscription is still debated, although the Phoenician letters are clear; the primary difficulties of interpretation concern the complicated relationship between Ashtarte and Pygmalion, and the meaning of the two orthographically identical verbal forms (*hlš*). Leading interpretations of the inscription have involved small variants on the following:

(1) *l'str* (2) *t lpgmlyn* (3) *yd^c mlk bn* (4) *pdy hlš* (5) *?š hlš* (6) *pgmlyn*

To Ashtarte, to Pygmalion. [A gift of] Yadamilk son of Padai. She has delivered²⁵⁴ the one whom Pygmalion has delivered.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Based on Schmitz's (2008, 5-7) reanalysis of the *kap* of this medallion, and other well-dated *kap* forms.

²⁵⁴ Here the Piel feminine verbal form is to be vocalized *hillēšā*; Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 69-70. Alternate interpretations treat the first verbal form as an imperative: "deliver, Ashtarte...." The meaning of the root *hlš* "is probably deliverance from a mortal illness; cp. in Hebr. Ps. XVIII 20 xci 15 cxvi 8, etc." (Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 71).

²⁵⁵ Gibson 1982.

Schmitz recently examined the inscription in light of other Northwest Semitic inscriptions that seem to utilize the double dedication formula *l*-[DN] (*w*)/[PN]. Generally following Krahmalkov (1981), he reads:

For Astarte; for Pygmalion! Yada'milk son of Pa/idî, a soldier whom Pygmalion armed.

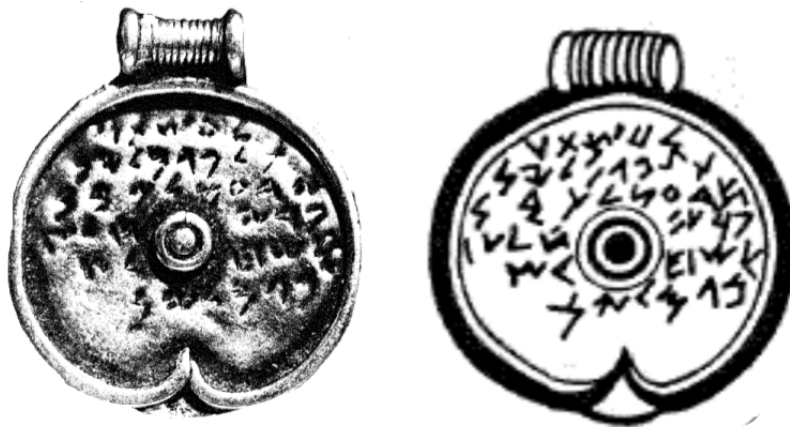


Figure II.32: The Carthage Medallion, Photograph and Drawing (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 140 and 143, respectively)

The excavation of the tomb in which the medallion was found is very well documented. The tomb contained two adults, identified as most likely a man and a woman (still wearing a bronze bracelet and a gold ring).²⁵⁶ The medallion was only one of many burial goods that included a large assortment of ceramics, metal goods, a painted ostrich egg, and other luxury goods.²⁵⁷ The medallion was found in the process of sifting the debris material from the tomb floor, along with several beads, a small gold box decorated with a rosette, an ivory scarab, and other small finds.

The tomb has been dated on the basis of its ceramic grave goods to the early 7th through 6th century BCE. But it has been argued that the Phoenician script of the medallion fits better

²⁵⁶ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 144.

²⁵⁷ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 142-144.

in the mid-8th through early 7th century BCE repertoire,²⁵⁸ or in light of more recently excavated evidence, perhaps the turn of the 8th century BCE,²⁵⁹ many scholars have suggested that the pendant was therefore most likely a family heirloom, handed down for generations before being placed to rest with the dead. Alternatively, Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor argued that the man buried in the tomb might himself be Yada'milk,²⁶⁰ since the time span separating the two burials is unknown. Certainly, the size and medium of the medallion, along with the brevity of the inscription, make dating the script especially difficult. This particularly sumptuous tomb is replete with objects of special craftsmanship and value, among which is this small inscribed pendant; perhaps a votive that was kept on the dedicant's person, perhaps a votive taken from a temple context; perhaps not a votive at all in the sense we usually consider this category of offering. Again the connection between gifts for the dead and gifts for a deity is tantalizingly suggestive.

Carthage Infant Cremation Cemetery / "Tophet" Stelae

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 5684 and 5685; Other stelae are located in the Carthage Museum, Carthage Annibal, the Bardo Museum, Tunis, as well as a handful of museums in England and France.
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	1817: First discovery of Punic votive stelae at Carthage 1921: François Icard excavation 1922: Louis Poinssot and Raymond Lantier excavation 1925: Francis Kelsey excavation 1934-36: Pere Lapeyre excavation 1944-47: Pierre Cintas excavation 1976-79: Lawrence Stager excavation, "Punic Project"
Studies	Teixidor 1986, 298
Date	7 th century BCE

²⁵⁸ Gibson 1982, Vol. 3, 68.

²⁵⁹ Schmitz 2008, 5-7.

²⁶⁰ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 144.

At Carthage is the largest and most widely known of the “tophets” or infant cremation cemeteries attributed to the Phoenicians. Stager, head of the 1970s excavations at the site, describes its complicated excavation history as follows:²⁶¹

In the closing weeks of 1921, François Icard uncovered evidence of a Punic sanctuary some fifty meters west of a shallow lagoon (now known to be the site of the Punic Commercial Port). These remains consisted primarily of layers of stelae and urns, the latter containing the bones “probably of animals.” Icard’s initial impression was soon corrected by Dr. P. Pallary, who examined the contents of more than eighty urns and found the bones to be those of children, with some sheep-goat and birds also represented.

By early 1922, Louis Poinssot and Raymond Lantier had assumed, or usurped, control of these early excavations, although Icard and his partner Gielly remained in charge of day-to-day operations. In 1925 a joint Franco-American expedition under the direction of Francis Kelsey of the University of Michigan continued excavations begun in the previous year by the Count de Prorok. Kelsey’s death in 1926 brought that expedition to a halt.... Between 1934 and 1936 Pere Lapeyre directed further digging in the precinct. And Pierre Cintas directed yet another round of excavation in the mid-1940s.

The problem of the precinct has not been lack of digging (thousands of urns and monuments have been removed), but rather the failure to publish the results fully and systematically.²⁶²

Stager’s subsequent excavations identified “at least eight phases of urn burials”²⁶³ ranging in date from the 8th – 2nd centuries BCE, and have mapped these onto the three major strata identified by Harden.²⁶⁴ Inscribed limestone stelae (as opposed to sandstone cippi used in the earlier Tanit I period, ca. 750-600 BCE) do not appear until the middle phase, Tanit II

²⁶¹ An even more complete discussion of the history of excavation and publication of the tophet site at Carthage is available in Benichou-Safar 1995.

²⁶² Stager 1980, 1.

²⁶³ Stager 1980, 2.

²⁶⁴ In 1980, Stager wrote: “Icard (1922) detected four strata in the precinct: A (700-500 B.C.), B (500-400 B.C.), C (400-300 B.C.), and D (300-146 B.C.). Yet Harden, after Kelsey’s work in almost the same area, was willing to isolate only three strata: Tanit I (800 to early seventh century B.C.), Tanit II (early seventh to late fourth century B.C.), and Tanit III (late fourth century to 146 B.C.). Our excavations have produced stratigraphic evidence for suggesting at least eight phases of urn burials. Each phase represents a new level from which urn pits were dug. However, only in area 1 were all eight phases found superimposed. Phases I through IV have Tanit 1-type urns.... Phases V through VIII belong to the Tanit II period.... The Romans left practically nothing in situ from the Tanit III horizon. Except for a general phase IX, we have no clear indication of how many additional phases of urn burial there might have been in Tanit III. I would tentatively date the urn sequence from about 700 B.C. to 146 B.C.”

(600-300 BCE),²⁶⁵ but continue into the final phase of the cemetery (Tanit III, 300-146 BCE).²⁶⁶ At the height of the tophet's popularity in the 4th-3rd centuries BCE, the excavators estimate it was 54,000-64,000 square feet "at the minimum.... Using the density of urns in our excavated area as a standard, we estimate that as many as 20,000 urns may have been deposited there between 400 and 200 B.C."²⁶⁷ All the known inscriptions from the Carthaginian tophet are written in the Punic dialect of Phoenician, and many are accompanied by carved symbols.²⁶⁸

In 1995, Benichou-Safar summed up the most recent excavation campaign to the Carthage tophet as follows: "Cette nouvelle campagne de fouille a été très fructueuse, et encore plus prometteuse: 1,100 urnes ont été dégagées ainsi que de nombreuses stèles, nues ou inscrites, et plus de trois cents cippes dont quelques dizaines sont encore visibles sur le terrain."²⁶⁹ Because of the huge number of stelae produced from this site over the decades of exploration, it is exceedingly difficult to get a sense of how many stelae may be attributed to the earlier, Iron II strata, as opposed to the later levels of the site – let alone any kind of "final count" of stelae in general, or those which were inscribed in particular. Azize wrote in 2007:

I cannot locate any attempt by Stager to estimate how many of the monuments bore inscriptions. I am unaware of any statistical study of the Carthaginian inscriptions which might provide data on how often each formulaic phrase appears, or the provenance in time and geography of the various phrases. Such a study would be difficult due to the diffusion of the inscriptions, and because many cannot be securely attributed to any particular period. Brown's book length study [1991] makes a start, in that Appendix A tabulates whether stelae have an "inscription panel," an "inscription" and the "location of inscription." This shows that of 612 stelae, 77% had an inscription panel, but only 62%

²⁶⁵ Stager and Wolff 1984, 38; specifically in phases VII through VIII (see previous note), Stager 1980, 2.

²⁶⁶ Stager and Wolff 1984, 46.

²⁶⁷ Stager and Wolff 1984, 32; elsewhere Stager calculates that "this would average out at 100 urn deposits per year, or slightly fewer than 1 every three days" (Stager 1980, 3).

²⁶⁸ "Carved on the front are inscriptions and symbols, for example, upraised hands symbolizing Ba'al Hammon. ...These Tanit II stelae inscriptions include the first appearance of the actual name of the goddess Tanit" (Stager and Wolff 1984, 38).

²⁶⁹ Benichou-Safar 1995, 110.

actually bore inscriptions. However, Brown neither tabulates the contents of the inscriptions nor analyzes them.²⁷⁰

He goes on to conclude:

I can find in Stager no reference either to how many urns were marked by monuments bearing inscriptions, or any overall view of the contents of the inscriptions. I think it is fair to say that Stager proceeds upon the basis that the intention expressed in the two Ngaous stelae [from Algeria, 2nd-3rd centuries CE, containing the phrase *animo agnum pro vika(rio)*] held for all inscriptions, and also for all urn burials, i.e. that it is a human which is sacrificed or else an animal instead of the more "regular" human.

Thus we must take Stager's general comments on the contents of the stelae with caution. In

1980 he writes:

At Carthage only two types of mulk-sacrifice are attested in the stelae inscriptions: **mulk ʔimmor*, the sacrifice of a lamb or a kid, and **mulk ba'al*, the sacrifice of a "ba'al," namely the child of a wealthy mercantile or estate-owning family.... These two terms may reflect a basic social stratification in Punic society between the upper class (estate-owners and merchants) and the proletariat (peasants, for example).²⁷¹

Notably, the term *mlk ʔmr* seems not to appear on a stele at Carthage until the 3rd century BCE – the inscriptional data at Carthage do not paint a clear-cut picture of a two-tier system of offerings (let alone sacrifice in an explicit sense) until four or five hundred years after the term's first use.

Because of the extreme difficulties presented by this corpus of inscriptions – the disparate publication of stelae over decades of study, the incomplete publication of excavation results, and the impossibility of separating the stelae conclusively and exhaustively into their period of origin (on the basis of archaeological strata), little can be said conclusively about this corpus.²⁷² And because the bulk of the stelae date to the 4th-3rd centuries BCE, I will address

²⁷⁰ Azize 2007, 188.

²⁷¹ Stager 1980, 6. The asterisk refers to the fact that the given vocalization of *mlk ʔmr* is not attested on any extant stelae.

²⁷² Although paleographical sequences have been convincingly described by Peckham (1968).

further details of the relevant Punic vocabulary in Chapter III. But one feature, shared with the two stelae from 7th century BCE Malta discussed above, is worthy of mention here:

...[the terms] *mlkt* and *mlk* both followed by *baal*, are attested on two stelae of the 7th cent. found in the *tophet* of Carthage (*CISI* 5684 and 5685; see Teixidor 1986:298), one beginning with ‘stele *mlk-baal*,’ the other with ‘stele *mlkt baal*.’²⁷³

It seems as though the noun *mlk*, whatever it may have meant, has a masculine and a feminine form and could be modified by the term *bʿl*. This kind of detail offers both an enticing and indeterminate datum in our understanding of the mortuary practices developed by the culturally Phoenician Carthaginian community of the 8th century BCE.

j. Western Mediterranean (France, Spain, etc.)

As far as I can ascertain, no texts in Phoenician dating to the Iron I-II periods which might shed light on mortuary practice in France, Spain, or the rest of the Western Mediterranean have yet been uncovered; texts from the Persian period will be addressed in Chapter III.

3. Diaspora Iron Age I-II Textual Evidence in Sum

a. NORTHERN LEVANT: Southeast Turkey and northern Syria have produced several Phoenician inscriptions dating to the Iron II period, but none with direct relevance for a study of mortuary practice and belief. The recently discovered KTMW inscription from Zinjirli (written in an previously unattested dialect of Aramaic) will be discussed below, in the section on Inscriptions in Other Ancient Near Eastern Languages.

²⁷³ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 160.

b. **SOUTHERN LEVANT:** The 8th century BCE inscribed bowl from the necropolis at Beth-Shemesh / Ain-Shems mirrors several examples of inscribed vessels explored in the previous section of this chapter – a personal name inscribed (before or after firing) on a vessel which is eventually interred with an individual at death. It seems likely that these names were inscribed to indicate origin or ownership, and that the vessels were probably inscribed in keeping with their use during their owners' lifetime (as opposed to being produced or inscribed specifically as burial goods), since so many have been discovered in archaeological contexts other than in cemeteries or tombs. Although the letter shapes indicate Phoenician influence, the Beth-Shemesh bowl might only indicate that the interment of inscribed vessels took place in Judah, as well as in the Phoenician homeland, and probably represents a shared expression of ownership or memorializing at death (rather than a culturally distinct Phoenician practice by Phoenicians at Bet Shemesh).

c. **CYPRUS:** By far the largest collection of Phoenician inscriptions from the Iron I-II which relate to mortuary practice come from the island of Cyprus (approximately 200 km or 125 miles from Lebanon's shore). Fourteen of these inscribed objects (portable objects and stelae) have already been explored above, including the oldest relevant inscriptions from outside the Phoenician homeland. The following eight inscribed vessels may be included with the Beth-Shemesh bowl (above) in the growing corpus of vessels bearing short Phoenician inscriptions, most featuring either a personal name alone, or a personal name together with the *l*-preposition:

- Bichrome bowl from a child's burial at Salamis (950-850 BCE)
- Jub from Kition (8th century BCE)
- Small jug from Ayia Irini (8th – 7th centuries BCE)
- Kition amphora I (Early 7th century BCE)
- Kition amphora II (Late 7th century BCE)
- Salamis amphora (7th century BCE)

- Geometric vessel from Idalion (7th century BCE)
- Pot from the Turabi (Early 6th -5th centuries BCE)

Of this list, two objects are particularly relevant to the present study:

(1) The inscription on the early 7th century BCE amphora from Kition is difficult to interpret with certainty. But it seems to be a vessel which was inscribed for one purpose (i.e. to indicate that the contents of the vessel had been inspected), and entered into secondary usage as a burial good only later on. The amphora's inscription has been plausibly interpreted as marking some stage of a transaction – probably the inspection of the contents of the vessel. The appearance of the verb *šmry* (with a semantic range indicating “guarding,” “keeping,” or “inspecting”), in conjunction with a personal name, could indicate that the vessel and its contents had come from a controlled access point (perhaps a central redistribution area, or that the quality was guaranteed). Whether or not the contents of the vessel were significant in this burial context, or whether the vessel was re-used, it is likely that this vessel was not inscribed for the sole purpose of its use as a grave good.

(2) The Bichrome bowl fragment found with the burial of an interred (not cremated) dead child indicates a significant departure in the treatment of child burials thus far surveyed – no jar burials are known from the Phoenician homeland in the Iron I-II, and no inscribed vessels have yet been discovered in the context of a child burial. But with these short Phoenician inscriptions, a note of caution may be sounded – there may not be “Phoenicians” behind every occurrence of Phoenician writing on Cyprus. These inscriptions may easily have adorned vessels valuable for their contents, origin, or fine craftsmanship that were traded and treasured (and eventually interred) by individuals outside any kind of meaningful influence from Phoenician culture (or participation of Phoenicians) in the realm of mortuary practice. The burial of inscribed vessels may have been a shared practice of preserving memory and

honoring the dead in the Phoenician homeland, in Judah, and across the island of Cyprus. On the other hand, cultural markers like the use of Phoenician versus Greek script would become more significant and politically charged during the Greco-Persian wars of 499-449 BCE. Each vessel may have had different degrees of significance to the family or friends of the deceased who chose them for burial with the deceased.

Beyond these vessels, three longer inscriptions on stone, a bilingual Cypriot-Phoenician inscribed stone, one ceramic sarcophagus fragment, and a pair of inscribed metal horse blinders round out the corpus of Phoenician inscriptions on Cyprus discussed above. The horse blinders, made around 600 BCE, were not themselves found in a mortuary context – although a pair of similar, but uninscribed, horse blinders was found in the necropolis at Salamis in a sumptuous (perhaps royal) burial. Perhaps this pair of valuable horse accessories represents the interchangeability of votive objects and grave goods – what is valuable enough to be dedicated to a god or goddess may also be buried with the dead (and vice versa).

Across the corpus of Phoenician inscribed objects, cross-cultural gifting or social exchange (as in the case of the Phoenician-made silver bowl found buried at Praeneste),²⁷⁴ as well as the passing-on of heirlooms across generations (as with the Pyrgi medallion or the bronze bowl from Tekke) mark the processes by which the grave goods under consideration were acquired. These methods of use exchange– across space and time - complicate the picture of Phoenician mortuary practice we can paint from this evidence, but enrich it as well.

The early to mid-9th century BCE tomb inscription of unknown provenance, discussed above, is extremely damaged. The surviving inscription seems to indicate a concern for the

²⁷⁴ On elite gift exchanges, see in particular Schmitz's discussion of the alabaster amphorae inscribed with cartouches of Osorkon II, Takelot II, and Shoshenq III (22nd Dynasty pharaohs) found at Phoenician sites or in association with other objects from the Phoenician milieu. "Altogether, about 50 complete jars and 20 fragments, all in contexts dated to the 7th century B.C.E., have been found in Phoenician sites in the west.... Their number... makes it implausible to suppose that all of them were recycled booty..." (Schmitz 2012, 29).

preservation of the integrity of the burial it marks, as well as (perhaps) for the inscription itself. It may further warn that there is nothing of significant value accompanying the dead, in order to discourage potential tomb robbers – an echo of the inscriptions of the Byblian kings discussed above. Finally, the last fragmentary lines may constitute a section of curses against the grave robber, although more cannot be concluded.

An inscribed fragment of an 8th-7th centuries BCE ceramic sarcophagus from Chytri is even more fragmentary, but the same concern for the integrity of the tomb is evident. The importance or social status of whoever might disrupt the burial is addressed (“whether he is a king or an ordinary man...”). Whether or not this sarcophagus once contained the body of the King of Chytri, as Lipiński proposed, cannot be determined conclusively.

The early 7th century BCE limestone plaque from Soloi seems carved with the intent of identifying the deceased adult man buried in tomb 43. Much like the labels on the inscribed vessels discussed above, the plaque offers only a personal name and a short genealogical note (it is unclear whether the *l*-preposition was present at the start of the line). Although it is tempting to conclude that this plaque served as a kind of underground or buried mortuary stele, it is unclear whether or not this plaque may have been cut or moved from some other context. I know of no other examples like it.

The 7th century BCE bilingual inscription in Cypriot syllabic and Phoenician scripts from Episkopi, Cyprus is similarly difficult to interpret conclusively. With an only very partial reading of the Phoenician possible, it seems plausible that we are dealing with a memorial or votive inscription of some kind, although two names (one of which is marked as a “Sidonian”) are extant. Our only supporting evidence that this inscription may be related to mortuary practice comes in the form of a similar uninscribed stone block found in a tomb near Kourion –

a fact which led Masson and Szzymer (1969) to suggest the two may have come from the same tomb, although their iconography differs and the inscribed block was found fifty years after the uninscribed block with the human figure on it. The connection between the Episkopi bilingual and mortuary practices is tenuous; and without the full content of the inscription, or better archaeological context, the value of this piece for the present study is low.

Finally, the 6th century BCE stele fragment from Kouklia-*Marchello* offers even less conclusive data for the present study – although it has been identified as a mortuary stele, it may also be a dedicatory inscription and unrelated to the burial of an individual. Without its primary archaeological context, or other parallels from Phoenician inscriptions elsewhere, we can speculate about the maledictions implied by the repeated references *kl ʕ*, but the full implications of this stele are out of reach.

d. CRETE: From the Tekke cemetery near Knossos on Crete comes the late 10th century inscribed bronze bowl discussed above. The formula is familiar from the list of Iron I period inscribed arrowheads from the Phoenician homeland: “bowl/cup of Šama‘ son of *lʕmn*,” described by Cross (1980) as the “formula of private ownership.” The tomb, contained burials of two individuals, accompanied not only with this inscribed metal bowl but also with sixty more Protogeometric ceramic vessels. By any standard this burial seems wealthy; the fact that the bronze bowl seems associated with the 9th century burial indicates the value of the piece as an heirloom, not to mention its likely market value as a large quantity of worked bronze, and its significance as an inscribed heirloom piece. With no further indication of Phoenician cultural influence in the burial, the vessel may be added to the growing list of inscribed vessels used in burial contexts of Phoenician or other Mediterranean cultural affiliation.

e. **GREECE:** To my knowledge, no Phoenician inscriptions from Greek Iron I-II contexts have been found that might contribute to our understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice in this period.

f. **ITALY:** The late 8th century BCE Praeneste bowl from the Bernardini Tomb in Etruria, Italy is perhaps the most opulent inscribed object of relevance for this study. Although its inscription is similar to the other inscribed vessels already analyzed in its sparse content – only a Phoenician personal name with a genealogical attribution – the bowl itself must have been of great value. Made of silver, interred as a pair with an uninscribed second bowl, and crafted with not only a series of Egyptian-style scenes but also two rings of non-sensical (but doubtless recognizable) mock-hieroglyphics. The close association between Phoenician language and Egyptian motif, decoration, and appearance echoes the other examples of this phenomenon we have seen from the Phoenician homeland.

g. **SICILY and MALTA:** Malta has produced several stelae bearing Phoenician inscriptions from the Iron I-II, which are relevant for the present study. The two oldest (late 8th – early 7th centuries BCE) have been described as “votive stelae” since they were not found in a cemetery context, but inscriptions label each of them as a “stele [*nšb*]” one of *mlk bʿl* and one of *mlk ʿmr*. Both are dedicated to *bʿl hmn ʿdn*, “Baal Hamon, lord” and seem to have been offered in gratitude for fulfillment of a request (“because he [Baal Hamon] heard the sound of his words”). These two stelae were not found in a burial context, but they feature usage very similar to stelae known from cinerary cemeteries elsewhere (including Malta). As a result we cannot say for sure whether the stelae were originally erected in non-mortuary contexts, or whether they were originally erected in a burial or urn-deposit context, and later moved to the location in which they were discovered. With that caveat, these stelae point enigmatically to

the appearance of the terms *mlk bʿl* and *mlk ʿmr* in other, more explicitly mortuary contexts (but often in much later periods).

Of the 1000 total stelae found at the cremation cemetery at Motya / Mozia, only forty are inscribed, and only two of these can be dated to the Iron II (most date to the Persian period). The two mid-6th century BCE stelae each feature an inscription that seems dedicatory in nature: “For the lord, for Baal Hammon, *mtnt* which [PN] gave because he heard the sound / voice of his *dbr*.” Does the *mtnt* of these two stelae relate at all to the *mlk* of the 8th-7th centuries BCE stelae from Malta, mentioned above? Or are they entirely different types of stelae, representing different kinds of rituals? Further, do the uninscribed but carved stelae from the adult cremation cemetery on Motya relate in a similar way to cremation of infants (and ruminants, small mammals, and even a monkey) at the Motya “tophet”? It is difficult to make any statements with confidence about the early stelae at Motya. Although the inscriptional corpus of the Iron III period is much larger (see Chapter III), even in the Iron II period the Phoenician inscriptional evidence from Malta offers a tantalizing glimpse of devotion to Baal Hammon in a mortuary context, a set of practices which share several features with dedicatory or votive texts. In particular, it may be significant that Baal Hammon is the only deity invoked in these inscriptions; there is no mention of a female cohort or goddess in connection with these stelae (as seems typical based on later inscriptions from western Phoenician / Punic sites).

h. SARDINIA: The only inscribed object from an Iron I-II cinerary cemetery (or tophet) context comes from Sardinia, in the form of the “Sulcis Lamina.” Dated to the 8th-7th centuries BCE, the tiny inscribed piece of gold leaf lamina was once affixed to an iron object – a unique grave good for a child’s burial, especially in a tophet context. The inscription itself

probably mentions the god *bʿl*, [*nota bene*] but the content of the inscription is lost, obscured by the damage done through contact with the oxidizing iron.

i. **TUNISIA:** From Carthage come two very different sources of Phoenician inscriptional evidence for Phoenician mortuary practice. First, the early 8th century BCE Carthage Medallion, a two inch diameter gold pendant found in a wealthy tomb in the Douimès cemetery. The inscription seems to be a dedication to Ashtarte and to Pygmalion in fulfillment of a vow. The tomb included a large assortment of ceramics, other metal objects, and even a painted ostrich egg, accompanying two burials (“probably a man and a woman”²⁷⁵). If the tomb indeed dates to the 7th-6th centuries BCE, the piece may have become an heirloom, passed down for several generations before being buried in the Douimès cemetery. The presence of an object dedicated to Ashtarte (which, as a single dedication, we might expect to have been deposited in a temple or other religious context) in a personal burial might be surprising in itself. But the second dedication to Pygmalion (transliterated from Greek, as opposed to the expected Phoenician name *pʿmytn*) is even more unexpected. If indeed the context of the inscription is that of a “soldier’s oath of allegiance to God and ruler,”²⁷⁶ dedicated to an historical Pygmalion, king of Carthage by around 820 BCE, the object does indeed “gain additional credibility as an artifact from the earliest phase in the history of Carthage.”²⁷⁷ Such an object must have had deep “national” or even ethnic significance to its owners over the years; its inclusion in this wealthy burial may have been an expression of the deceased’s significant political or cultural role in the Carthage of his or her own day.

Perhaps the most controversial data to be discussed in this study come from the famous Carthaginian tophet (or cinerary cemetery). Thousands of inscribed stelae have been

²⁷⁵ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 144.

²⁷⁶ Krahmalkov 1981, 185; quoted in Schmitz 2008, 8.

²⁷⁷ Schmitz 2008, 7.

excavated over almost one hundred years of exploration at the site. The difficulty of separating Iron II from Iron III and later stelae (as well as the uncertain value this kind of artificial segregation of material from a cemetery in continuous use from 800 BCE to the 2nd century BCE) necessitates analyzing the Carthaginian stelae in the following chapter. However, in the context of the Iron II period Malta stelae (also from a tophet context), it is worth mentioning the fact that two 7th century stelae at Carthage (CIS i 5684 and 5685) reference *mlk b'ʿl* and *mlkt b'ʿl*, enigmatic terms we will continue to explore in Chapter III.

j. **WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN:** No Iron I-II Phoenician inscriptions from the Western Mediterranean contribute to the present study, although Persian period inscriptions will be discussed in Chapter III.

4. Conclusions – Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice and Beliefs

The corpus of Phoenician inscriptions from the Iron I-II periods found outside the Levantine homeland contains a diverse array of writing styles, media, and genre. The occurrence of personal names written in the Phoenician script (and in some cases, in the Phoenician language) inscribed on vessels placed with the dead is geographically wide-ranging – the practice is documented at Beth-Shemesh in Judah, at several sites across the island of Cyprus (at Salamis, Kition, Ayia Irini, and Idalion), as well as in Crete and Italy, and from the 10th-9th centuries to the 6th century BCE. Although the vessels in question range from simple ceramic bowl fragments to elaborately worked silver display-pieces, the formulae range little: a simple personal name (i.e. the Salamis Bichrome bowl fragment and amphora, the Idalion Geometric vessel, and one of the inscribed amphorae from Kition), sometimes clarified with a /- preposition (i.e. the Bichrome jug from Kition or the Turabi necropolis pot), or elaborated

upon by a genealogical relationship (i.e. the bronze bowl from the Tekke cemetery on Crete, and the Praeneste silver bowl from Italy). The 10th century BCE bronze bowl from Crete includes an even longer version of the “formula of ownership” – in which the object itself is labeled or named in a genitival construction with the personal name of its owner or creator, e.g. “bowl of so-and-so.” The 11th century BCE Ruweiseh arrowhead discussed in the section above (from the Beqaa Valley, Lebanon) also features this kind of formula, labeling the arrow *ḥš* in a manner that might seem redundant. The fact that these two inscriptions – the Ruweiseh arrowhead and the Cretan bronze bowl – mark some of the earliest Phoenician inscribed objects, dating to the 11th-10th centuries BCE, may indicate that the fuller version of the ownership formula (with a common noun used as a kind of label for the inscribed object itself) is more archaic.²⁷⁸ As the practice of labeling vessels became more commonplace (or was used in less formal settings), the formula may well have shortened to simply the personal name with or without the *l*-preposition. The fact that the use of the *l*-preposition may or may not be present along with the personal name on these vessels makes it tempting to speculate about whether or not these inscriptions would have been “priced by the letter” or otherwise influenced by economic factors as may have been the case for the inscribed homeland burial stelae discussed above.

The opulent 8th century Praeneste Bowl might seem to argue against this; the purchaser of the elaborately decorated silver bowl and its mate must have spared no expense in ordering the detailed scenes, lines of false hieroglyphics, and thirteen-character Phoenician inscription

²⁷⁸ The fact that both objects are of worked metal may also have contributed to this similarity – it seems entirely plausible that craftsmen who could inscribe metal objects might have developed their own tendencies or conventions that would not have been in dialog with conventions for labeling one’s cooking pot, for example. This possibility is not, in my eyes, made less plausible by the lack of the full version of the ownership formula on the Praeneste Bowl from 8th century BCE Italy (where the vast difference in geography, chronology, and even in medium between bronze and silver may explain the variation in inscribed formula).

(featuring an additional “mark” for the word divider). But there is no *l*-preposition accompanying the inscribed personal name and its brief genealogical reference. If Gibson’s suggestion that the small size of the inscription indicates it might mark the name of the artisan (and not the purchaser)²⁷⁹ is correct, this may reflect a purposeful omission: the *l*-preposition is omitted because the bowl does not belong to the man who is named.

The early 7th century BCE Kition amphora, with the inscription reading perhaps: “Baalpilles // Yaton has inspected,”²⁸⁰ may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it may be a clear example of a vessel inscribed for use in one context and eventually re-used or re-valued as a burial good. In this case, the inscription implies that the vessel’s earlier use involved some transaction requiring inspection of the amphora’s contents – possibly shipment, sale through a middle-man of some sort, or the vessel’s reuse for further trade. In this case, its interment with a deceased adult marks its re-valuing as a burial good. On the other hand, the inscription may refer to an inspection which took place in preparation for the funeral itself – perhaps the vessel was to provide an impressive amount of some provision for the dead. The amphora bears no other decoration, and the lack of recorded archaeological context inhibits further speculation.

In the lists below, I have attempted to tease out the major threads of evidence for mortuary belief and practice that can be deduced from the Iron I-II Phoenician texts found outside the Phoenician homeland. Because the majority of the texts in this corpus come from Cyprus, I have separated this evidence from the rest of the diaspora Phoenician corpus.

CYPRUS

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

²⁷⁹ Gibson 1982, vol. 3, 71.

²⁸⁰ Lipinski 1983, 141.

- concern for leaving the dead undisturbed [9th c. tomb inscription of unknown provenance; 8th-7th c. Chytri sarcophagus fragment]
- concern for preserving the burial inscription? [9th c. tomb inscription of unknown provenance]
- emphasis on lack of burial goods as a deterrent to grave robbing? [9th c. tomb inscription of unknown provenance; 8th-7th c. Chytri sarcophagus fragment (?)]
- mention of “the (the whole) company of the gods” (perhaps as deities who will ensure curses against grave robbers / disturbers are meted out?) [9th c. tomb inscription of unknown provenance]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- burial of inscribed ceramic vessels with the dead [10th-9th c. Salamis Bichrome bowl fragment; 8th c. Kition Bichrome jug; 8th-7th c. small jug from Ayia Irini; two 7th c. Kition amphorae; 7th c. Salamis amphora; 7th c. Geometric vessel from Idalion; 6th-5th c. Turabi necropolis pot]
- burial of inscribed object with a child – not cremated [10th-9th c. Salamis Bichrome bowl fragment;]
- use of ceramic sarcophagus [8th-7th c. Chytri sarcophagus fragment]
- Reuse of vessels for cinerary urns [7th c. Kition amphora]
- use of inscribed limestone plaque in a tomb setting (as if a burial stele) [7th c. plaque from Soloi]
- use of similar items in both votive and burial contexts [7th c. Idalion horse blinders; 6th c. stele from Koukليا-Marchello (?)]

ELSEWHERE

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- mention of *mlk bʿl* [8th-7th c. Malta stele A – MALTA; 7th c. tophet stele - CARTHAGE]
- mention of *mlk ʿmr* [8th-7th c. Malta stele B - MALTA]
- mention of *mlkt* [7th c. tophet stele - CARTHAGE]
- mention of *mlkt bʿl* [7th c. tophet stele – CARTHAGE]
- mention of *mtnt* [6th c. Motya tophet stelae – MALTA]
- mention of Baal Hamon [8th-7th c. Malta stelae - MALTA; 6th c. Motya tophet stelae - MALTA]
- presence of Egyptian iconography [8th c. Praeneste Bowl - ITALY]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- burial of inscribed ceramic vessels with the dead [Beth Shemesh bowl - JUDAH]
- burial of inscribed metal vessels with the dead [10th c. Tekke bronze bowl - CRETE; 8th c. Praeneste Bowl - ITALY]
- burial of inscribed metal objects (not vessels) with the dead [8th c. Carthage Medallion - CARTHAGE]
- burial of inscribed metal objects (not vessels) with a dead child [8th-7th c. Sulcis Lamina – SARDINIA]
- stele erected “because [DN] heard the voice of his words” [8th-7th c. Malta stelae - MALTA; 6th c. Motya “tophet” stelae - MALTA]
- use of similar items in both votive and burial context [8th c. Carthage Medallion - CARTHAGE]

There are two notable similarities between the Iron I-II Phoenician homeland corpus and this one:

(1) The Iron I-II Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus seem to evince some of the same concerns over preserving the integrity of the burial (and perhaps also leaving the inscription itself intact), calling on the gods to ensure that the deceased remains protected from grave robbers or disturbers. Along these lines, an apparent allusion in two cases to a lack of expensive burial goods may plausibly have been intended as an explicit deterrent to literate potential grave robbers (or a symbolic deterrent to illiterate ones). This tactic was also employed by the kings of Byblos and Sidon in the Iron III – Hellenistic periods, as we shall see in Chapter III.

(2) Across the Mediterranean, metal and ceramic vessels (as well as metal objects of other kinds) inscribed in Phoenician characters with personal names were valued as meaningful burial goods. It is tempting to see the Praeneste Bowl with its Egyptian iconography and faux-hieroglyphs as evidence of the importance of Egyptian motifs to Iron I-II Phoenicians (or those living within a Phoenician cultural sphere) outside the homeland. The bowl's context within the larger corpus of Iron II-III period silver bowls indicates that the Egyptian iconography was a frequently employed decorative element in this medium. While we may not be certain of the implications of the Egyptian symbols for mortuary belief, all these silver bowls were found in either votive / sanctuary contexts or in sumptuous tombs – a connection with both mortuary practice and the needs of the gods seems evident.

But there are striking differences between the Phoenician-language corpora of homeland and diaspora origin. The appearance of new terminology on stone stelae – *mlk*,

mlkt, mtnt, mlk b'ʿl, mlk ʿmr and so on – (with no clear referents without reference to later texts) in both Malta and Carthage is notable, as is the fact that the language of these stelae seem to share many features with stelae carved for votive or dedicatory purposes (that is, for the fulfillment of a vow or prayer: “because [DN] heard the voice of his words”). On Malta, the primacy of the god Baal Hammon is clear, a feature that will be shared with the stelae of Carthage in the Iron III-Hellenistic periods (explored below). This connection between the vocabulary and style of the inscriptions of Malta (or nearby Motya) and Carthage is perhaps not surprising given their geographical proximity – only 375 km (or approximately 230 miles) “as the crow flies.”²⁸¹

Phoenician inscriptional sources from the Iron I-II periods relating to mortuary practice are sparse at best. Still, the non-homeland texts seem to point to two major spheres of cultural affiliation – one made up of texts from Cyprus which reflects textual tendencies and mortuary concerns known from the Phoenician homeland, and one which seems to evince a distinct set of mortuary concerns and textual terminology, centered at Motya/Malta and Carthage. The Phoenician textual evidence presented above from Italy, Sardinia, Crete and Judah is too scant to establish a single pattern of mortuary practices, although none of the extant cases suggests a major interruption of the pattern evident from traditions already known about the Phoenician homeland. These miscellaneous inscriptions from disparate locations around the Mediterranean are important—but they do not at present add significant data to our understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice in the Iron I-II homeland.

²⁸¹ As noted, this is only an artificial, linear measurement of their distance from one another (obtained using Google Maps). I do not currently know of any calculations or estimates that have been made for the actual time or distance it would have taken to sail from Carthage to Malta, or from Malta to Carthage, using Persian period or Hellenistic technology, but it seems likely that it would have been a matter of only a day or two.

C. Non-Phoenician Texts Relating to Phoenician Mortuary Practice

1. Inscriptions in other ancient Near Eastern languages

ARAMAIC:

Though two Phoenician inscriptions are known from excavations at Zincirli²⁸² (attributed to Kilamuwa; KAI 24 and 25), the text most relevant for our understanding of Levantine funerary beliefs was written in a “previously unattested dialect of Aramaic, situated typologically between Samalian and Old Aramaic.”²⁸³ The dialect shares some features with Phoenician (e.g. use of the 1cs pronoun *ʔnk*), some certainly not shared with Phoenician (e.g. the retention of diphthongs²⁸⁴), has some known only from Samalian (e.g. the particle *wt-*), but on the other hand lacks “the primary isogloss for Samalian, the marking of masculine plural substantives in the absolute state with [-w] (nominative case) or [-y] (oblique case) and without a following consonant.”²⁸⁵ Although not a Phoenician text, the KTMW inscription is of great interest for the present study.

KTMW Stele

Loc. / Num.	
Dimensions	Stele 99 cm high x 72 cm wide x 25 cm thick
Discovery	2008, Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
Studies	Pardee 2009; Struble and Hermann 2009
Date	Mid-8 th century BCE

²⁸² “...excavations in the region of Zincirli had discovered inscriptions in three Northwest Semitic languages and dialects: (1) an archaic Northwest Semitic dialect known as Samalian after the local name of the kingdom, Sam’al; (2) Old Aramaic; and (3) Phoenician” (Pardee 2009, 51).

²⁸³ Pardee 2009, 52-53.

²⁸⁴ Pardee 2009, 58.

²⁸⁵ Pardee 2009, 52. Pardee also notes that “Nothing in this inscription shows a clear trace of Aramaic consonantal phonology as distinct from Phoenician: no word containing original /d/ is attested...” (Pardee 2009, 57).

Most recently, in 2008, the discovery of the KTMW inscription at Zincirli, identified by inscriptions found at the site as ancient Sam'al, and located in what is today southeastern Turkey, represents one of the most significant contributions to Levantine mortuary studies in the past twenty-five years. The site consists of a 20-acre upper mound (thought to have been used as a royal citadel) and a lower town, occupied only during the Iron II period. The stele itself was found in Zincirli's lower town, about 50 m inside of the outer fortification wall, in situ in a small room within a seemingly domestic building.²⁸⁶ The fact that this archaeological context is preserved, and that the stele consists of both intact inscription and iconographic scene, make it an unparalleled find at the site of Zincirli.

The complete basalt stele, 99 x 72 x 25 cm in size, shows KTMW himself seated in a chair on the left, facing to the right a banquet table laden with food objects. His hands are raised, one holding a cup-like object, the other something like a pine cone or incense cone.²⁸⁷ The text of the inscription fills the space above and between the figures. Pardee's initial translation of the inscription reads:

- 1) I am KTMW, servant of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself (this) stele while
- 2) still living. I placed it in my eternal chamber [*bsyr/d 'lmy*] and established a feast (at)
- 3) this chamber [*syr/d*]: a bull for Hadad QR/DPD/RL, a ram for NGD/R
- 4) ŠWD/RN, a ram for Šamš, a ram for Hadad of the Vineyards,
- 5) a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my 'soul' [*nbšy*] that (will be) in this stele [*bnšb zn*]
- 6) Henceforth, whoever of my sons or
- 7) of the sons of anybody (else) should come into possession of
- 8) this chamber [*nsyr/d*], let him take from
- 9) the best (produce) of this vine(yard) [*krm znn*] (as) a (presentation?)-offering [*š*]

²⁸⁶ "The stele was discovered in situ in the north west corner of a small room, ca. 3.75 x 3.0 m, of Building II of Complex A, whose exterior dimensions measure 8.75 m (northwest-southeast) by at least 11.5 m (northeast-southwest), though the full extent of this building has not yet been exposed.... In the original phase of this building, the room that was later to house the stele was wider by ca. 1 m and contained two circular ovens lined with reused storage jar sherds. The room thus originally seems to have been used for food preparation, giving a possibly domestic cast to the building as a whole, and making its eventual conversion into a mortuary cult-place all the more remarkable" (Struble and Hermann 2009, 33).

²⁸⁷ The object seems similar to those held by dieties in many Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian reliefs, but the Zincirli example features a long "stem" or handle, and is pointed upwards, while the Assyrian / Neo-Babylonian examples are often held directly in the hand, are larger, and can be pointed downward.

- 10) year by year. He is also to perform the
 11) slaughter (prescribed above) in (proximity to) my ‘soul’
 12) and is to apportion [*wyšwy*]
 13) for me a leg-cut [*šq*]



Figure II.33: KTMW Stele Inscription
 (adapted from Struble and Hermann 2009, 19; original drawing by Karen Reczuch)

The non-royal but elite status of KTMW may be reflected not only by the inscription’s identification of the deceased’s status as a “servant” (*ʿbd*) of King Panamuwa, as well as by the probable cost of producing such a stele, but also by the setting in which the stele was found. The stele had been placed in a small room, which was placed so as to give the impression to excavators that it was “private.”²⁸⁸ The space seems to have been modified from a previous design to become a kind of mortuary chapel, “most likely concurrent with the erection of the stele,” and including the addition of several installations interpreted by the excavators as a stage for cultic activity.²⁸⁹ No objects were found on the floor of this room, perhaps suggesting

²⁸⁸ Struble and Hermann 2009, 36: “...a private setting, protected from the view and access of passerby...”

²⁸⁹ Struble and Hermann 2009, 33. They go on: “...a new wall was built in the south (blocking access to one of the [two previously existing] ovens) in order to make the room smaller and more enclosed or private, leaving a doorway ca. 1.35 m wide in the southeast corner, which could have been closed by a wooden door, though it is rather wide. The beaten-earth floor was raised ca. 10 cm, putting the ovens out of use, and the stele was set up with its back against the western wall of the room and its tenon inserted into the floor. Directly in front of it were laid three roughly rectangular flag stones, creating a pavement or platform 0.95 x 0.70 m in extent. On its right side, between the stele and the northern wall of the room, was a large basalt stone, 0.95 m long and 0.35 m wide,

it had been intentionally cleaned out at some point.²⁹⁰ This and the adjacent rooms were, in a later period, filled with a layer that contained a number of fragments of basalt vessels, although no connection between these vessels (or fragments) and the cultic use of the room in the Iron II period could be established.²⁹¹ The non-royal mortuary cult associated with the stele is envisioned by the excavators as part of a larger Syro-Hittite memorializing tradition (with attestations at Tall Halaf and at Carchemish), which involved the creation of an easily accessible but private chapel or sanctuary, “purpose-built for the mortuary cult of the deceased, but intimately connected with the worship of one or more deities.”²⁹² In the present case, various deities (but chiefly Hadad) were honored alongside KTMW’s *nbš*.²⁹³

Here, then, we seem to have an example of funerary beliefs represented or preserved in a hitherto unknown Aramaic dialect. While it seems clear from the KTMW stele find that the practice of an ongoing mortuary cult – associated with feasting and making offerings to deities in the name of the deceased – was not restricted to royalty but instead open to non-royal elites in service to (or perhaps simply loyal to) the king, it does not follow that we may generalize that this practice would have been similarly acceptable or desirable further south.

D. Summary and Conclusions: Textual Evidence from the Iron I-II Periods

The pattern of Phoenician-language inscriptions relating to mortuary practice or belief indicates that writing was used in burial contexts at Levantine sites typically thought of as

with a flat-smoothed top and front, which appears to have served as a low bench. Immediately to the left of the stele, set against the western wall of the room, was a “pedestal” or stack of stones, ca. 0.65 m high and 0.40 m wide, capped by a large, flat basalt stone with irregular edges.... These installations (low bench, stone pavement, and perhaps also “pedestal”) framed the stele and most likely served as the immediate setting for cultic activities performed in its presence, possibly even as the places where food and drink offerings were deposited.”

²⁹⁰ Struble and Hermann 2009, 34.

²⁹¹ Struble and Hermann 2009, 35.

²⁹² Struble and Hermann 2009, 38.

²⁹³ Struble and Hermann 2009, 38.

“Phoenician” in three main ways: in the inclusion of inscribed objects in the tomb or grave, on inscribed sarcophagi or other burial vessels, and on inscribed mortuary stelae. Other inscriptions discussed in the preceding study include the Ahiram Tomb Shaft Graffito (which warns potential tomb robbers from going farther into the tomb) and several Byblian building inscriptions (which indicate the importance of four generations of kings’ desire for long life and offspring).

Totals:	
Iron Age I-II Homeland Phoenician Inscriptions	
<u>-Inscribed objects found in tombs or graves</u>	
-Roueisseh Arrowhead (Beqaa Valley; 11 th c. BCE)	
-Five Tell Rachidieh Amphorae (Tyre; 8 th c. BCE)	
<u>-Inscribed sarcophagi or burial vessels</u>	
-Ahiram Sarcophagus (Byblos; 10 th c. BCE)	
-Tambourit Cinerary Amphora (Sidon; 9 th c. BCE)	
<u>-Inscribed mortuary stelae</u>	
-Khaldé Stele (Beirut; 9 th c. BCE)	
-Tel el-Burak Stele (Sidon; 7 th -6 th c. BCE)	
-Sidon Stele (Sidon; 7 th -6 th c. BCE)	
-Forty-nine Tyre al-Bass Stelae (Tyre; 10 th -6 th c. BCE)	
-Six Akhziv Stelae (Tyre; 7 th -5 th c. BCE)	
<u>-Other inscriptions</u>	
-Ahiram Tomb Shaft Graffito (Byblos; 10 th c. BCE)	
-Four Royal Building Inscriptions (Byblos; 10 th c. BCE)	

But this typology should emphasize – rather than obscure – the small number of extant inscriptions relating to mortuary practice produced by those living in these Levantine territories in the Iron I-II periods. These inscriptions provide a glimpse into royal burial and mortuary belief in 10th century Byblos, and offer some important information on cemetery burial in and around Tyre in the Iron II period; but they do not tell a complete story about any particular site.

Iconographic evidence also only provides hints as to Levantine Phoenician beliefs in this period. The Egyptian iconography on Ahiram's sarcophagus may indicate an understanding and adoption of some Egyptian motifs pertaining to death, but may also simply reflect the appreciation of an Egyptian-style basalt sarcophagus as an appropriately luxurious housing for the body of a king of Byblos. It is difficult to draw meaningful connections between the choice of carved motifs on individual stelae from Tyre al-Bass and Akhziv and the content of their Phoenician inscriptions. Stelae can be inscribed and not iconographically carved, or vice versa, and the majority of stelae seem to have survived with no decoration of any kind. The range of the carved symbols is small but not standardized; variation in similar motifs seems to have allowed for individual or family expression, with religious meaning or social signals difficult for us to decipher.

We can note that the same range of formulae used to mark burial stelae in this period is used to mark other inscribed objects, namely:

[Name of inscribed object] + [*l*-prep.²⁹⁴] + [PN] + [social role / kinship ties of PN]

In this formula, the only required element is the name of the individual in question (i.e. owner of the object or the deceased commemorated by the stele), but all permutations of the other elements are possible (see above, discussion of Tyre al-Bass stelae). On the other hand, it seems clear that mortuary stelae did not require an inscribed Phoenician text, and could be adorned or marked by carved motifs as well as potentially painted text or simply the vertical stele as a blank marker.

²⁹⁴ The semiotic idea here is that of a range of affiliations, from possession (“belonging to”) to notional association. The sense in which these stelae were affiliated with the deceased whose grave they marked could be indicated (as with other inscribed objects) either by the *l*-preposition or the construct form of the noun which would precede [PN].

Isolating the evidence both chronologically and geographically underscores just how little textual evidence produced by those living in the central coastal Levant we have for mortuary practice in the period in question. Consideration of textual evidence from sites outside the Phoenician homeland may clarify our picture of how Levantine Phoenician speech communities ritually commemorated the end of the life-cycle.

Perhaps the most useful etic evidence for central coastal Levantine mortuary practice in these early periods comes from contemporary textual evidence from Cyprus. There is extensive evidence for contact and exchange between the central coastal Levant and Cyprus, unsurprising given the close geographical proximity between the two. Fourteen objects and stelae inscribed in Phoenician are known from mortuary contexts, five of which may actually contribute substantively to our understanding of mortuary practice in this period. The extant Cypriot Phoenician mortuary inscriptions seem to show concern for the preservation of the integrity of the burial similar to that evidenced by the Byblian Ahirom sarcophagus inscription. Both the Byblian basalt sarcophagus and the Chytri ceramic sarcophagus indicate the practice of inhuming elite members of society in vessels which specifically protect the body of the deceased, and bear an inscription warning against disturbing the tomb. Other inscriptions indicate the close relationship between the type of object and content of the inscription on grave goods and votive objects. A single Phoenician – Cypriot syllabic bilingual inscription, although badly damaged, shows that multiple audiences were sometimes imagined for stelae and their inscriptional content. Although in some cases the corpus of Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus reinforces the data from the Levantine homeland, in other cases it is difficult to deduce whether unattested practices might be evidence of Levantine belief being

brought to or adopted by a Cypriot population, or a native Cypriot belief expressed in the Phoenician language.

Connections between Phoenician inscriptions outside Cyprus and those from the Levantine data are also possible, if tenuous. For example, the Egyptian iconography of the Praeneste bowl from Italy might echo the iconic repertoire of the Ahiram sarcophagus, but may also simply indicate an aesthetically pleasing set of motifs unrelated to an iconography of death or the afterlife. The Carthage Medallion, as an historical artifact from the early decades of Carthage's Phoenician history, was most likely cherished by later generations as a kind of political and cultural relic. As a kind of "inalienable"²⁹⁵ or symbolic item, its value may have been located not simply in its monetary value, but in its social currency and uniqueness. Its inclusion in the 7th century BCE burial at Douimès must have reflected the importance of its owner, and the close relationship between the deceased's social identity and the early history of Carthage.

What is evident is that during the Iron II period, a new kind of stone stele appears in both Malta/Motya and Carthage in mortuary contexts – one which explicitly utilizes votive language, and seems to indicate personal names not of the deceased whose grave the stele marks, but of those who erected the stelae. Both types occur in cremation cemeteries, in which the remains of young children are buried in urns. The two relevant stelae from Motya read "For the lord, [for] Baal Hammon, *mtnt* which [PN] gave...," and the two Iron II period stelae from Carthage reference *mlk b'ʿl* and *mlkt b'ʿl*. Two other stelae, from nearby Malta, which may or may not have originated in mortuary contexts, bear inscriptions referring to each as a "stele [*nšb*]," one of *mlk b'ʿl* and one of *mlk ʿmr*. Both are dedicated to *b'ʿl hmn ʿdn*,

²⁹⁵ "Whereas other alienable properties are exchanged against each other, inalienable possessions are symbolic repositories of genealogies and historical events; their unique, subjective identity gives them absolute value placing them above the exchangeability of one thing for another" (Weiner 1992, 33).

“Baal Hamon, lord” and seem to have been offered in fulfillment of a request (“because he [Baal Hamon] heard the voice of his words”). Here the connection between mortuary practice and votive language is at its most explicit. Nothing from the Iron Age I-II Levantine homeland has yet indicated a similar practice or use of Phoenician language in a stela context.

The KTMW Aramaic inscription has been used to argue that the inhabitants of Sam'al in Southeastern Turkey believed in an aspect of the individual which persisted after death, a kind of “soul” (*nbs*) which could be located in the mortuary stele itself (*bnsb*). The stele KTMW's soul would inhabit was commissioned by him during his lifetime. The inscription states his hope that his “soul” might receive regular food and drink in order to be sustained; not unlike the sacrifices made for a list of deities mentioned in the first few lines of the inscription. The accompanying iconography shows KTMW presumably enjoying such a feast as is imagined in the inscription. Again, while this evidence for Sam'alian belief is intriguing, there is no supporting evidence from the Levantine homeland to suggest this inscription may be relevant for understanding mortuary practice further south.

The corpus of inscriptional evidence from the Iron I-II periods with relevance for mortuary practice in the central coastal Levant thus consists of a small handful of royal Byblian inscriptions, a scattering of Tyrian and Sidonian mortuary stelae, and several other short inscriptions which add little of substance to our analysis. We may supplement this group of inscriptions with data from five Phoenician inscriptions found at various sites on Cyprus. We seem to have further evidence for an independent (or otherwise unattested) use of Phoenician inscribed stelae in cemetery contexts at both Carthage, in Tunisia, and the islands of Motya and Malta, both off the coast of Sicily. Continuing to weigh this contemporary

evidence more heavily than later evidence, an assessment of textual materials from the Persian – Hellenistic periods may add to our understanding of Iron Age I-II central coastal Levantine mortuary practice.

Chapter III.

Inscriptional Evidence for Phoenician Mortuary Practice from the Persian – Hellenistic Period

This chapter surveys the Persian – Hellenistic (or Hellenistic-Roman) Period (ca. 500 BCE – ca. 300 CE) inscriptional record for sources which inform our understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice and belief. What follows is a catalog and discussion of those inscriptions which were found in burial contexts, or which in some other way relate to Phoenician mortuary practice, as follows:

- A. Inscriptions in Phoenician from the Phoenician homeland
- B. Inscriptions in Phoenician (or bilingual inscriptions) from outside the Phoenician homeland
- C. Inscriptions in other ancient Near Eastern languages

A. Inscriptions in Phoenician from the Phoenician Homeland

1. Historical Context: Persian – Hellenistic Period Phoenician Homeland

The beginning of Persian control in the Phoenician homeland (often marked at 539 BCE with the fall of Babylon, but probably undergoing a more gradual bureaucratic transition throughout the last four decades of the 6th century BCE) was significant not only in terms of the altered political reality, but also because of notable changes in the material culture of the region. Ward's brief summary of the Persian period in Phoenicia illustrates the dominant historical narrative:

The Phoenician cities prospered under the Persians and the whole period (539-332 BCE) was generally a time of peace. The trade network in which the Phoenicians then played a central role stretched from Gibraltar to Persia, from

the Caucasus to Nubia. The introduction of coinage in Phoenicia greatly facilitated this international commerce – at Sidon in about 450 BCE and shortly thereafter at Tyre, Aradus, and Byblos. The material affluence of these cities under the Persians is reflected in the temples at Amrit and Sidon and in the high level of wealth among the populace at large. This prosperous and peaceful life of the Phoenician cities was interrupted several times in the fourth century BCE by local uprisings attempting to get rid of Persian rule. Although such revolts were put down, they were one sign of the unrest and divided loyalties within the Phoenician cities that eventually helped pave the way for the Macedonian conquest in 332 BCE.¹

While it has been convincingly argued that Persian rule in Phoenicia constituted little more than “managed autonomy”² of the Phoenician city-states, the cultural transition to the Achaemenid period in the region is far from negligible. The known archaeological, iconographical, and inscriptional evidence illustrates a complex interplay between local, Egyptian, Persian and Aegean “brands” of meaning-making. Unless specific political events are mentioned in an inscription, in fact, it can be difficult to mark the transition from Achaemenid to Hellenistic rule “on the ground” in Phoenician territory. New iconographic, representational, and administrative traditions appear,³ differentiating the Persian period from the Iron Age II period material culture in the region, and evolving further to eventually illustrate the “Hellenized” state of affairs that seems dominant in the by the mid-3rd century BCE. In particular, Achaemenid Persian and Greek imagery each remain evident in various ways in the material record throughout the Persian – Hellenistic periods. But these changes constituted a slow process of adoption, adaptation, and innovation in many cultural realms that was by no means suddenly imposed by the changing political situation.

¹ Ward 1997a, 314-315

² Jigoulov 2006, 226

³ See for example Root 1979, Jigoulov 2006.

2. Persian – Hellenistic Period Phoenician Homeland Inscriptions

In other words, although political rule changed infrequently and with consequence from ca. 540 BCE – 100 BCE, cultural tastes varied and showed much more fluidity. For this reason, I've elected to include all inscriptional evidence written in the Phoenician language in the Levantine homeland from ca. 530 – 100 BCE in the present chapter. While its end-date is not specifically meaningful, this timeframe includes the entire period of rule under the Achaemenid empire (defeated in 332 BCE by Alexander the Great), followed by a swift succession of Hellenistic rulers in the wake of Alexander's death,⁴ a brief (286-197 BCE) take-over by the Ptolemies ruling from Egypt,⁵ and eventually rule by the Seleucid dynasty until Tyre (in 126 BCE) and Sidon (in 111 BCE) regained their autonomy.⁶ The Phoenician territories were incorporated into the Roman province of Syria in 65 BCE,⁷ although the use of the Phoenician language in this region – and with it some of the distinctiveness of Phoenician Levantine culture – had long faded away, as Vance illustrates:

The Greek historian Arrian (2nd century CE) tells us that Byblos [and all the territories held by the king of Arados] surrendered to Alexander the Great without a fight (*Arrian* 2.13.7-8). The culture of Byblos did likewise. In the Greek period Byblos is completely Hellenized and the inscriptions are written in Greek rather than Phoenician.⁸

Ending the collection of inscriptional data in this chapter at or around the year 100 BCE is therefore not meant to provide a strict cut-off point, but rather to reflect the dynamic changes

⁴ Following Alexander the Great (332-323 BCE in Phoenicia): Laomedon (323-320 BCE), Ptolemy I (320-315 BCE), Antigonos II (315-301 BCE), Demetrius (301-296 BCE), and Seleucus (296-286 BCE, when the region fell to the Ptolemies ruling from Egypt).

⁵ Aradus was not controlled by the Ptolemies, although the other major Phoenician cities seem to have been.

⁶ A king Tigranes the Great of Armenia (who led Armenia to become the strongest state east of the Roman Republic) is also said to have gained control of the Phoenician territory from 82-69 BCE, when he was defeated by Lucullus, a Roman military commander, in the Battle of Tigranocerta. During Tigranes' rule, his control reached as far south as Akko (known at the time as Ptolemais).

⁷ By Pompey, the Roman general who succeeded Lucullus (n. 3, above) who would go on to intervene in a civil war in Judea, besieging Jerusalem with Hyrcanus II until it fell.

⁸ Vance 1994a, 10.

in the Phoenician language's use during this approximately four hundred year period: following an explosion of Phoenician inscriptions at the Iron Age II – Persian period transition, the number gradually dwindles to almost zero over the course of the Hellenistic period in the Phoenician Levantine homeland.

It is again worth remembering that the survival rate of Phoenician writing was probably very low for a number of reasons (the ephemeral nature of most probable writing materials, the moisture levels of the Phoenician coastline's soils, etc.), and therefore that all existing specimens are inscribed stone, metal, or ceramic, although this by no means offers a representative sample of Phoenician writing, as a whole during these periods. I will maintain the site-by-site method of discussion used in the previous chapter on Iron I-II period inscriptions, to preserve potential evidence of regional variation along these lines. This seems especially important for the Persian – Hellenistic periods, when most scholars agree the relationships between Phoenician cities became increasingly complicated in the political, religious, and economic sphere:

Just as they did throughout the first half of the first millennium BCE, Phoenician city-states remained independent of each other in the Achaemenid period. At the same time as they maintained mutual cooperation in pursuing their economic goals within the context of the Persian empire, they were also engaged in economic competition with each other as they each sought to gain access to new markets and spheres of economic influence.⁹

Continuing the structure of the previous chapter, the inscriptions listed below do not represent every known inscription from the Persian – Hellenistic period homeland; only those relating in some way to Phoenician mortuary practice or belief.

A Note on Persian and Hellenistic Period Seals & Coinage

⁹ Jigoulov 2006, 221

Carved stamp and scarab seals dating to the Persian and Hellenistic periods, dispersed as they are throughout private and public collections,¹⁰ will not be included in the analysis of Phoenician inscriptions from the Levant. Gubel estimates that only about 3% of known Phoenician seals are inscribed and most inscribed seals consist of only a personal name.¹¹ While it has been argued that “only the top echelons of the society such as administrative officials and wealthy merchants would have possessed seals with their names on them,”¹² it is unclear who exactly used these inscribed seals, and none is known to me as having come from an archaeologically excavated, intact burial in the Phoenician homeland.¹³ However, seals and scarabs (either anepigraphic examples, or those inscribed with hieroglyphic inscriptions) do occur frequently in burial contexts; some of these will be addressed in Chapter VI, while a full study of the patterns of seal and scarab use in known Phoenician burials await further study.¹⁴

Similarly, the field of Phoenician numismatics has suffered from a lack of exhaustive cataloguing, a small number of invested scholars (whose work is often uncritically quoted and accepted), and a high rate of unprovenanced and forged (both ancient counterfeit coinage and more recently faked) examples.¹⁵ Although numismatic evidence can inform several interesting socio-historical research questions, it has little to add to this first stage of data-gathering on Phoenician mortuary practice. As with the corpus of seals and scarabs, it is my hope that the database of burials constructed as the basis for the present study will allow future research on patterns of coin use in funerary settings in the central coastal Levant.

¹⁰ See e.g. Avigad 1970, Bordreuil 1986, and Elayi and Sapin 1998 for major seal publications.

¹¹ Gubel 1993, 104.

¹² Jigoulov 2006, 84.

¹³ One scarab with Phoenician or perhaps Aramaic letters comes from a tomb at ‘Atlit; the inscription is too short and damaged to say.

¹⁴ Boardman’s 2003 catalog of Persian period green jasper scarabs (as well as some scarabs in other materials, and contemporaneous metal “finger rings”) offers an excellent start.

¹⁵ Jigoulov 2006, 96-100 provides a summary of these difficulties.

In the discussion which follows, I will be moving north to south, down the coast of Lebanon from Arad to Tyre (including the inland Beqaa Valley) and further south, addressing the corpus of Persian – Hellenistic Phoenician inscriptions according to provenance as follows:



Moving generally from north to south down the Levantine coast:

- a. ARWAD and Vicinity (Syria)
- b. BYBLOS and Vicinity
- c. BEIRUT and Vicinity
- d. SIDON and Vicinity
- e. BEQAA VALLEY (al-Biqqa)
- f. TYRE and Vicinity (including Northern Israel)

a. Arwad and Vicinity

Tartous Marble Plaque

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum, AO 3080
Dimensions	10 x 8.3 cm (thickness ranges from 2.8-3.5 cm) marble plaque.
Discovery	Discovered by Dussaud in 1896 at the site of Tell Ghamqé near Tartous on the Syrian coast. From the necropolis south of Tartous, along the coast, facing Ruad (Aradus).
Studies	Dussaud 1897, 332-338, pl. 8; Clermont-Ganneau 1901, 196-198; Lidzbarski 1902, 283-284; Peckham 1968, 130, n. 80; Teixidor 1979a; Gubel 2002, 43.
Date	3 rd century BCE

This three line inscription was found engraved on the front of a small white marble plaque. It was damaged by a pickaxe or plough in three places, and the rest of the stone was badly discolored.¹⁶ Teixidor proposes the following reading:

(1) *hrmys* (2) *ʔš ytnʔl* (3) *dm drkt ʔšl*

“*Hrmys* – It was erected for the repose of the servant / concubine who is his.”¹⁷



Figure III.1: Tartous Marble Plaque (Gubel 2002, 43)

This involves interpreting the word *dm* in line 3 as an infinitive construct from the root *dmm* “to rest”, as the object of the preposition *l-*, from line 2; and the word *drkt* as the subject of this verb.¹⁸ The object probably constituted a part of a larger funerary monument, to be set into the base of a stele or statue of some kind. Unfortunately this object was found without secure archaeological context, but it was dated on the basis of script style to the 3rd century BCE.

b. Byblos and Vicinity

Marble Sarcophagus Fragment

¹⁶ Dussaud 1897, 333: “Tout le reste de la pierre est d’un ton rouille très prononcé dû au long séjour dans une terre ferrugineuse.”

¹⁷ “La préposition est accompagnée d’un suffixe qui se prononçait mais qu’on n’écrivait pas, phénomène attesté dans deux inscriptions phéniciennes d’époque différente, l’une de Karatepe, l’autre d’Umm el-‘Ammêd” (Teixidor 1979a, 150).

¹⁸ “Cet employ de l’infinitif nominal est déjà connu en phénicien, par exemple dans des textes de Karatepe et de Sidon où l’infinitif porte un suffixe prospectif indiquant le sujet de la proposition...” (Teixidor 1979a, 150).

Loc. / Num.	Beirut National Museum 26780 (Phoenician Inscription n. 60); Byblos 13; CSAI - Phoe 26.
Dimensions	56 cm high x 43 cm long
Discovery	Found in the courtyard of a crusader castle.
Studies	Starky 1969, 259-73, pl. I; Teixidor 1972, item 118; van den Branden 1974, 142-43; Röllig 1974, 1-15; Schiffman 1976, 171-77; Cross 1979, 40-44
Date	late 6 th – early 5 th century BCE (575-475 BCE); 500-450 according to CSAI

This sarcophagus fragment of an unnamed king of Byblos is similar both semantically and stylistically to the Shipitbaal inscription, discussed below.¹⁹ The inscription continues onto seven lines, although text is missing from both ends of each line. Because it comes from a secondary context in the courtyard of a crusader castle,²⁰ and because the material (white marble) is not found in Lebanon, the inscription must be dated on paleographic grounds and political context alone; proposed dates range from as early as 575 BCE to as late as 450 BCE, although scholars agree it should be dated to the Achaemenid period.



Figure III.2: Marble Sarcophagus Fragment (Starky 1969, 263)

Cross' 1979 transcription of the three first and most complete lines of the inscription reads as follows:

1. [?nk (PN and titulary) škb b ?rn]zn ?nk lhdy wkn hn ?nk škb b ?rn zn ?sp bmr wbdll[h

¹⁹ They are discussed in tandem in Cross 1979.

²⁰ Starky wrote in 1969 that "il a été exhumé il y a une dizaine d'années dans la cour du château franc, contre les fondations du mur oriental du donjon" (Starky 1969, 259).

2. *wʾm kl ʾdm ybqš lpth ʾ[lt ʾrn zn wlrz ʿšmy hʿgzt bqšn hʾdr wbkl dr [bn ʾlm*
 3. *mlk prs] wmdy ʾdn mlkm wdrkm {wdrkm} ylkt brbm[*

The fragmentary inscription is tantalizing – line 2 seems to invoke “[Baʿl] Addīr with all the assembly [of the gods]...,”²¹ and the first line seems to refer to methods of preserving or anointing the dead body. Cross’s interpretation of this first line is:

...]n ʾnk lhdy wkn hn ʾnk škb bʾrn zn ʾsp bmr wbbdl[h...

[I (PN and titular) lie in this sarcophagus], I alone, and here, behold I lie prepared for burial in myrrh and bdellium...²²

Myrrh, the aromatic oleoresin (blend of oil and resin) of several small, thorny tree species of the genus *Commiphora*,²³ is well known to have been harvested and used in the Ancient Near East (and into the present day in the Arabian Peninsula) for perfume, medicine, and incense. Bdellium (Hebrew *bedolach*) is another aromatic gum, very similar to myrrh (and which, under the name *guggul*, is sometimes substituted as a less expensive alternative in modern Near Eastern perfumery).²⁴ Although it’s not clear how precisely the myrrh and bdellium were used, their mention in this inscriptional fragment implies that these burial “ingredients” were important features of a properly buried king.

The emphatic first person pronoun (“I alone...”) may refer to the fact that the individual buried in this sarcophagus is not accompanied by any other body, although I know of no sarcophagus from the central coastal Levant which contained the remains of more than one individual. Alternatively, the emphatic pronoun may be emphasizing the absence of

²¹ Cross 1979, 41.

²² Cross 1979, 41.

²³ The myrrh in question in this inscription probably comes from the *Commiphora gileadensis* species, known to have been grown in ancient Judah / Israel. The myrrh of this species is sometimes known as the balsam or balm of Gilead (also the balsam or balm of Mecca), and has been linked to the references to *môr* in Genesis 37:25, Jeremiah 8:22 and 46:11.

²⁴ Bdellium was first associated with the species *Commiphora wightii* in Medieval Arabic treatises (Dalby 2000, “Gum guggul,” 109f.). *Bedolach* is mentioned in Genesis 2:12 and in Numbers 11:7 (where *manna* is compared to *bedolach* in color). In Akkadian the same resin is called *budulhu*.

luxury goods that might tempt a grave robber to disturb the king's burial – an hypothesis reinforced by the subsequent warning in line 2, broken but clearly denouncing anyone who would open the sarcophagus and disturb the king's bones.²⁵ It is notable that the bones themselves are named as the significant element of burial integrity – is this a kind of synecdoche (*pars pro toto*) for the entire body? Or some other form of poetic invocation, meant to be understood idiomatically? Or were the bones imagined as particularly significant?

Finally, and noteworthy for other reasons entirely, the third line of the marble inscription may contain a reference to the Persian Great King,²⁶ perhaps unexpected in a funerary context. It may be argued that the Byblian king's subservience, loyalty, or devotion to the Persian Great King during the Achaemenid period may have been mentioned in keeping with the concept of the "righteous" (*šdq*) king, an epithet common to both the Iron Age I-II (see Chapter II), and Persian – Hellenistic period (see below) inscriptions, and seemingly central to the Byblian royal funerary ethos. In other words, part of being a "righteous" king may have included making meaningful alliances that protected Byblos' interests. It may also imply some kind of Persian presence at the burial of the king, although this is highly speculative. Whether the audience for this inscription was intended to be the invoked deities (who would presumably view the unnamed king's subservience to Persia in a positive light) or the Achaemenid administration (who would have been gratified to see the Great King mentioned as a significant relationship in the dead king's reign), the presence of political details in a funerary context is not unique to this marble sarcophagus fragment, as we will see below.

²⁵ Starcky 1969, 262; Cross 1978, 41.

²⁶ Cross reconstructs the existing text *mdy ?dn mlkm...* to read "[...king of the Persians and] Medes, lord of kingdoms and dominions..." (Cross 1978:41), though Starcky had originally read "MDY lord of kings..." (Starcky 1969, 262), which is also plausible. Cross and Starcky's readings of the rest of lines 3-7 differ dramatically.

Son of Shipitbaal III's Sarcophagus Fragments (KAI 9)

Loc. / Num.	KAI 9; Lebanese National Museum, Beirut 2037 & 877; CSAI - Phoe 20 & 21.
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in 1929 on the terrain of the Crusader castle in Byblos.
Studies	Dunand 1939, 31; Peckham 1968, 51, n. 24; Magnanini 1973, 32-33, n. 10; Puech 1981, 153-58.
Date	ca. 500 BCE

Also from Byblos comes the royal inscription made by the son of a Shipitbaal, identified as “Shipitbaal III” by most scholars.²⁷ The inscription, found in 1929 on the grounds of the Crusader castle at Byblos, originally existed in three pieces labeled A, B, and C. Fragment C was eventually joined with fragment B²⁸ such that the content of the surviving characters may be reconstructed as follows:²⁹

- A1) ...[So]n of Šipit-Baal, king of Byblos, I made for myself this resting place [*mškb*]...
 2) ... ??? coffin on/over coffin [?*rn* ?*lt* ?*rn*]. Thus I made...
 3) ...in this resting place, (in) which I lie, and in [this] place...
 4) ...for me (?)... among the great. And I gave...
 5) ...[you should not op]en this [resting place over me(?)], to disturb my bones...
 6) ...

- B1) ...
 2) ...on the side of [this] resting place...
 3) ...QR, the resting place, which you [open...]

²⁷ This designation has been made on the basis of collations between other, earlier inscriptions that mention Shipitbaal as part of the 10th century genealogy of the kings of Byblos (see Chapter II, above), as well as on the basis of Assyrian tribute records which mention one *Si-pí-it-ti-bi-’i-il* who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III ca. 738 BCE (alongside Hiram II of Sidon/Tyre), now posited to be an otherwise unknown 8th century king, Shipitbaal II. Shipitbaal III is known from two inscriptions, one discussed here and another text inscribed on a silver roll and published by Lemaire (2003). Because the former inscription does not explicitly mention Shipitbaal ruling over Byblos, and the latter inscription features a number of textual difficulties, Elayi concludes “we shall use the mention of Shipitbaal III as a king of Byblos with caution, as this needs to be confirmed” (Elayi 2006, 16).

²⁸ This was done by Milik in Dunand 1954, and is listed as such in Donner and Röllig 1973.

²⁹ This reading is based on the text as prepared by Donner and Röllig 1973. A very thorough study was conducted by Puech (1981) in which a new drawing was made and several new reconstructions suggested, especially for the very difficult line A2. Because many of these are highly speculative (suggesting the presence of other gods in the divinity list on the basis of the Yehimilk inscription, for example), I have not included them here.

- 4) ...T coffin. And over the coffin...
- 5) ...M and Baal Addir and Baalat and all [the gods of Byblos...]
- 6) ...Baalat and all [the gods of Byblos...]



Figure III.3: Inscription of King Shipitbaal III (Dunand 1939)

The text has been dated to the end of the 6th century (ca. 500 BCE) on the basis of script style.

Despite its frustratingly fragmentary nature, this funerary inscription offers yet another iteration of themes seen elsewhere: a preoccupation by the kings of Byblos with the maintenance of the body's "resting place," a concern that the dead not be disturbed, and an invocation of several gods to ensure this outcome – probably through a typical set of curses or blessings (not explicitly preserved here). Again we see the mention of "my bones" as the significant unit of the burial which must not be disturbed.

There may also be a hint, in line A2 of this inscription, of another burial practice not yet encountered elsewhere: some type of burial which involves placing, raising, or otherwise arranging one coffin on or over another. Donner and Röllig suggested that "der Ausdruck 'Sarkophag uber Sarkophag' deutet vielleicht auf die Anlage eines Doppelgrabes hin,"³⁰ whereas Peuch interprets this line with further speculation: "La nécropole royale antérieure

³⁰ Donner and Röllig 1973, 11.

approchait du point de saturation, aussi dans sa prévoyance le fils de Siptiba'al... a fait creuser un hypogée ou construire une annexe, évitant ainsi à son fils ou successeur d'avoir à entreprendre ce travail et de s'en glorifier.”³¹ Because of the extreme difficulty of line A2, the fragmentary nature of the inscription as a whole, and the lack of archaeological context for this text, these kinds of speculations must remain tentative at best.

Yehawmilk Stele

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum, AO 22368; KAI 10; CIS i 1; CoS 2.32
Dimensions	114 cm high x 55 cm wide x 26 cm thick
Discovery	Found in 1869 by a man planting trees in the ruins of the ancient sanctuary of the Mistress of Gubal; lower right hand corner recovered in the 1920s by Dunand near the two temples of Byblos
Studies	Renan 1864, 855; Dunand 1939; Peckham 1968, 53; Gibson 1982, 93-99; Moscati 1988, 305; Vance 1994a, 9-10; Gubel 2002, 64-66; CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 151-52;
Date	Ca. 450 BCE

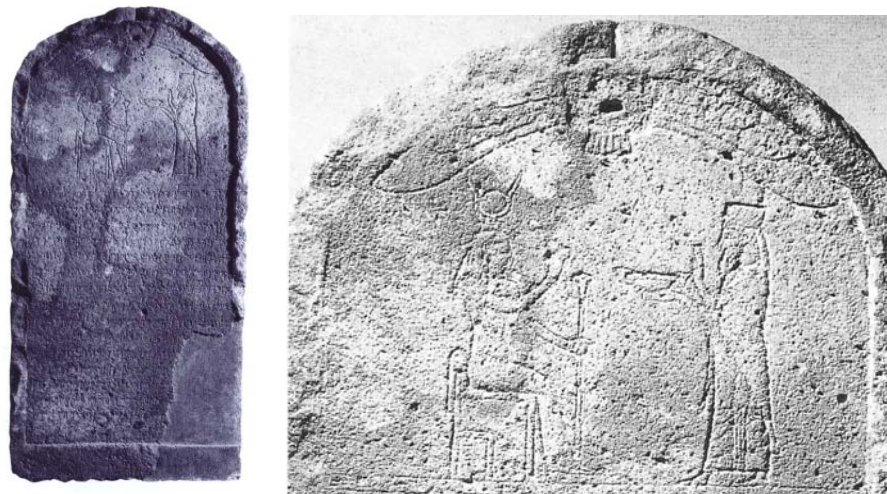


Figure III.4: Yehawmilk Stele (Vance 1994a) and Detail (Gubel 2002, 66)

³¹ Puech 1981, 156.

The limestone stele of Yehawmilk, over a meter tall, dates to the 5th century BCE (a date determined by paleographic features and confirmed by archaeological context³²). It features a bas relief of Yehawmilk, king of Byblos, in the Persian court robe and headgear and making an offering to the seated goddess Baalat Byblos (depicted with horned disk and garments of the Egyptian goddess Hathor). The goddess holds a long scepter in one hand, and seems to bless the king with the other; the king offers her a wide bowl or shallow cup. A winged solar disk hovers above the two figures, and a sixteen line inscription fills the rest of the carveable space.

Yehawmilk refers to himself as “king of Byblos, son of Yeharbaal, grandson of Urimilk king of Byblos, whom the Great One, Baalat Byblos, made ruler over Byblos,” a genealogy that leaves out the royal status of his father, as well as any reference to the king who ruled after Urimilk. With respect to the rebuilding at Byblos, the inscription lists the dedication of a “bronze altar, a gold gateway, a gold winged disk, a shrine and its columns with their capitals and its roof,”³³ and there is archaeological evidence of Persian period activity at the site of the Byblos temples – the stele itself was found near the shrine and columns in the ruin of the sanctuary of the “Lady of Gubal.” Because the stele is “only roughly finished on the back,” it may have been “set into a wall in the portico” or shrine mentioned in the sixth line of the inscription.³⁴

The winged disk at the top of the stele features a hole, which may have held a peg or other object attached to the stele. Line 5 describes the gold winged disk as *btkt ʿbn* which may be translated as “(set) within the stone” or “in the midst of the stone” implying that “perhaps

³² The stele was discovered by peasants planting trees on the tell of Byblos in 1869, at which time the lower right-hand corner was missing. The missing piece was found sixty years later by Dunand’s 1920s excavations at Byblos near the two temples. The text is now nearly complete.

³³ Vance 1994a, 10; see Gibson 1982, 93-95 who translates *ʿrpt* as “portico” rather than “shrine.”

³⁴ Gibson 1982, 93.

a gold winged disk was attached to the stela.”³⁵ This portion of the inscription (lines 3-6) contains several nouns referring to features of the building and the stelae, as follows:

I made for my Lady, Mistress of Gubal, this altar of bronze, which is in this court/courtyard [*ḥsrn*³⁶], and this engraving [*pth*]³⁷ of gold, which (is) opposite to this engraving of mine, and this winged (disk) [*ʿpt*] of gold, which (is) in the midst of the stone, which (is) above this engraving of gold, and this portico [*ʿrpt*] and its columns [*ʿmd*].

Notably, we may have here the Phoenician term for the winged sun disk, *ʿpt*,³⁸ related to the Hebrew root *ʿwp* “to fly.”

The inscription ends with a series of requests – blessings for Yehawmilk (lines 8-11) as follows:

May the Mistress of Gubal bless Yehawmilk, king of Gubal, and give life to him, and may she prolong his days and his years over Gubal, for he (is) a righteous king. And may the lady, Mistress of Byblos, give favor in the sight of the gods and favor in the sight of the people of this land.³⁹

Mirroring the language of the ca. 950 BCE Yehimilk stele, Yehawmilk shows concern for ensuring his long life and long rule over Gubal. He justifies the legitimacy of his request by pointing out his “righteousness,” just as the inscription of Yehimilk did more than four hundred years prior.

The inverse is wished on those who would remove the name of Yehawmilk or his foundation deposit from the sanctuary at Gubal – their lives shall be cut short (specifically the

³⁵ Vance 1994a, 10. See also Gibson 1982, 97, n. 5: “it is likely that a winged solar disk of gold is meant, inset in the lintel stone... of the gateway; cp. the one carved in the upper register of the inscription.” Gibson’s “gateway” is his translation for *pth*, although he considers other interpretations.

³⁶ The word is obscured after *bḥ-* and has been reconstructed on the basis of the remaining space and the stele’s context relative to the Temple of Byblos.

³⁷ This term has a semantic range including “entrance,” “door,” “gate,” and “opening,” but I find Segert’s comparison to Hebrew *pittū(a)ḥ* “engraving” or “carved ornament” tempting here (Cf. Exodus 28:11 and 36), Segert, CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 151-52.

³⁸ Although the middle letter is far from clear, see Gibson 1982, 97, n. 5.

³⁹ The last few words are repeated twice, probably an error of the mason’s (cf. Gibson 1982, 98, n. 10).

goddess is asked to *tsrh*, which has been interpreted variously⁴⁰ but surely has the sense of “to destroy”), and “his seed” will similarly be damaged.

Batnoam Sarcophagus

Loc. / Num.	Lebanese National Museum, Beirut; KAI 11
Dimensions	94 cm long line of inscribed text on the side of a white marble sarcophagus.
Discovery	Discovered in 1929 near the site of the Crusader castle at Byblos (secondary context).
Studies	Dunand 1931, 151-156; Dunand 1939, 30f; Friedrich 1935, 348-350; Dussaud 1936, 98-99.
Date	Ca. 400 - early 4 th century BCE

The fascinating funerary inscription on the white marble sarcophagus of Batnoam, mother of a king of Byblos who is thought to have ruled in the early to mid-4th century BCE, describes the manner in which the dead woman was buried, rather than concerning itself with the blessings or curses hoped for from a particular deity:

In this coffin I lie, Batnoam, mother of King Azbaal, king of Byblos, son of Paltibaal, priest of the Lady [*b'lt*], in a robe [*swt*] and with a tiara [*mr'š*]⁴¹ on my head and a gold bridle [*mḥsm ḥrs*] on my mouth, as was the custom [*km'š*] with the royal women [*mlkyt*] who were before me.

The strange reference to the “gold bridle” is explained by Gibson as “prob[ably] some kind of muzzle or clip closing the lips to prevent the entry of demons.”⁴² This specific description makes it all the more unfortunate that the sarcophagus was discovered near the site of a Crusader castle, not in its original burial context.

⁴⁰ See for example Segert, CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 152, n. 21; Gibson argues that the root relates to the Syriac Peal / Pael – “to mutilate or destroy” (1982, 99, n. 15).

⁴¹ Gibson suggest “some kind of head-dress or tiara; cp. Jerem. xiii 18” (1982, 100).

⁴² Gibson 1982, 100. A similar term, *lpy mḥswm*, is used in Psalms 39:2 (=39:1), in the context of being silent before the wicked: “I said, I will guard my ways, so that I do not sin with my tongue. I will guard my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked [*rs'*] is before me.”

From this short inscription we can deduce that there were certain regular, recognizable, and expected customs [*km ʔ*] followed by the “royal women” [*mlkyt*] of Byblos in the early 4th century BCE. They involved specific dressings for the body – a garment, an ornament for the head, and some other accessory placed on, in, or over the mouth. And the fact that these items had been procured for this particular dead woman was deemed important enough to have been carved along the side of her sarcophagus. Further, Schmitz suggests that the term *bʿlt* in the phrase *khn bʿlt*, “priest of the Lady,” may well be a shortened form of the earlier deity name or epithet *bʿlt gbl*, “Lady of Byblos.”⁴³ If this is so, some continuity of royal worship of this goddess at Byblos from the 10th century (attested in the Byblian royal building inscriptions discussed in Chapter II) to the late 5th to early 4th century BCE may be suggested.

c. Beirut and Vicinity

None of the known Persian-Hellenistic period inscriptions from Beirut is relevant for this discussion of Phoenician mortuary practice.

d. Sidon and Vicinity

Tabnit Sarcophagus

Loc. / Num.	Istanbul Archaeology Museum; RÉS 1202; KAI 13; CoS 2.56
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in 1887 during the excavation of a shaft tomb in Sidon.
Studies	Renan 1887, 182-83; Driver 1913, xxiii ff.; Poebel 1932, 15-18; Assman 1963; Greenfield 1971, 258-59; Lipiński 1974, 55-56; Hallo 1992, 382-86; Hallo 1993, 188-191; CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 181-82.
Date	475-450 BCE

⁴³ Schmitz, personal correspondence, 29 June 2013.

A black basalt sarcophagus, thought to have been produced in Egypt (and procured as plunder⁴⁴), and still bearing a hieroglyphic inscription⁴⁵ labeling its intended use by an Egyptian general named Pen-Ptah, was found in 1887 in the excavation of a shaft tomb in Sidon.⁴⁶ Re-carved for an early 5th century king of Sidon, the eight lines of Phoenician text were added to the bottom of the sarcophagus, preserving the hieroglyphic text above them.

The text seems focused on preserving the integrity of the sarcophagus and burial:

I Tabnit, priest of 'Ashtart, king of the Sidonians, son of 'Eshmun'azor, priest of 'Ashtart, king of the Sidonians, am lying in this coffin. Whoever you are, any man who comes upon this coffin, do not, do not [? ?] open my cover and disturb me, for no silver is gathered with/for me (and) no gold is gathered with/for me or any kind of riches. I alone [*blt ?nk*] am lying in this coffin. Do not, do not [? ?] open my cover and disturb me, for such a thing would be an abomination to 'Ashtart! But if you do open my cover and disturb me, may you have no seed among the living under the sun or a resting place with the shades⁴⁷ [*rp ?m*].

On the phrase “abomination to ‘Ashtart” (*t'bt 'štrt*) Hallo compares this inscription to a series of Ancient Near Eastern texts, including 2nd millennium Sumerian texts, 1st millennium

⁴⁴ Cf. McCarter, CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 181-182; Gibson also argues that “the Egyptian-style sarcophagi [of Tabnit and Eshmunazar] could not have been carried to Sidon until after the Persian invasion of Egypt in 525; the Phoenician cities were allies of Cambyses in that invasion and the coffins may indeed have been part of Sidon’s share of the booty” (1982, 102).

⁴⁵ The hieroglyphic inscription includes transcriptions from the *Book of the Dead*, as well as a reference to the former owner of the sarcophagus (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1887, 432).

⁴⁶ The description of its discovery shows the tomb was undisturbed: “A chamber was found in which at first nothing was remarked but two fine bronze candelabra, each about 5ft. in height. The flooring of this chamber, however, on examination, proved to consist of a bed of great stones laid with the utmost care. Beneath these was a second bed of stones, and then a third, and under all, thus carefully covered up and hidden away, a great monolith covering an opening in the rock. In this deep chamber was found a splendid anthropoid sarcophagus in black basalt, resembling that of King Eshmunazar, in the Louvre Museum. It contained a mummy and a golden diadem. ...To the south of the room containing this sarcophagus was found a sepulchral chamber divided into two compartments. The western one was undesecrated and contained a quantity of feminine jewelry: a gold necklace; two gold bracelets of beautiful workmanship; and a bracelet ornamented with colored stones, having in the centre a cat’s eye opal; several anklets, rings, symbolic eyes; and a bronze mirror” (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1887, 431-432).

⁴⁷ McCarter, in CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 181-182, translates “shades” as “Rephaim”: “Deified royal ancestors – a group that appears frequently in the Ug. literature and occasionally in the HB, where the term also comes to refer to certain primordial inhabitants of Syria-Palestine and, in the Deuteronomistic literature, esp. Transjordan. For literature, see Hallo 1992:382-386” (McCarter 2003, 182, n. 6).

Akkadian texts, the Egyptian “Wisdom of Amen-em-opet,” and Biblical references from the books of Deuteronomy and Proverbs, arguing:

...in neither [the Sumerian nor Akkadian] context is there any visible rationale for the invocation of a particular deity; indeed, the substitution of other divine names in variant recensions or of generic terms for this deity in other citations implies a certain indifference on this point. In the late examples, moreover, the whole concept of the ‘abomination of the deity’ seems to weaken into a mere idiom to express the idea of a sin against a given deity.⁴⁸

In other words, that disturbing this grave would involve “the infraction of ethical norms and standards of good conduct... little more than a colorful idiom, a synonym for misconduct, offense, or aberration.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, Gibson argues that *t’bt* signifies “an exceptionally strong warning,”⁵⁰ citing the prohibitions in Deuteronomy 17:1 and 25:16 as parallels. We might conclude that, rather than invoke a deity, beseeching him/her to curse those who would disturb a grave, Tabnit’s sarcophagus warns the potential disturber specifically, in the second person, that to open this burial vessel would be an “abomination” to the gods (perhaps specifically to Astarte in her role of protectress of Byblos or its royalty), and that the outcome would be the same as if formulaically cursed – the loss of offspring and a restful burial.



Figure III.5: Tabnit Sarcophagus (lessing-photo.com)

Notably, Tabnit’s “mummy” was discovered in 1887 as part of the intact burial of this king, and is currently on display at the Istanbul Archaeology Museum. Some of the skin of the

⁴⁸ Hallo 1985, 33.

⁴⁹ Hallow 1985, 38.

⁵⁰ Gibson 1982, 105, n. 6.

head, pelvic region, and legs has been preserved, and internal organs also seem to have been treated for preservation (see “Excursis on Mummification” in Chapter VI).

Eshmunazar Sarcophagus

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum, AO 4806; KAI 14; CoS 2.57
Dimensions	256 cm long x 92.5 cm wide at base, 125 cm wide at shoulders x 119 cm tall.
Discovery	Found in 1855 in excavations by A. Péretié in a shallow rock-cut tomb in the necropolis at Magharat Tabloun. Given to the Louvre in 1955 by the Duke of Luynes.
Studies	Poebel 1932, 18-23; Gallig 1963; Ginsberg 1963; Dunand 1965; Peckham 1968, 87; Lipiński 1974, 56-59; Gibson 1982, 105; Greenfield 1971, 259-265; Benz 1972; Garbini 1977c; Tomback 1978; Vance 1994a, 11; Long 1997; Gubel 2002, 101-103; CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 182-83.
Date	451 BCE



Figure III.6: Eshmunazar Sarcophagus with Inscription (lessingimages.com)

Another black basalt anthropoid sarcophagus, seemingly manufactured in Egypt and brought to Phoenicia, was found in 1855 in a rock-cut tomb in the Sidonian necropolis (at a site known as Mugharat Ablun). The sarcophagus had been buried two meters deep, protected by an entrance chamber. The carved lid features a funerary mask decoration, with striated wig, stylized beard, and falcon-headed broad collar.

The ancient stonecutter first attempted an inscription on the body of the coffin, just under the head, but moved to the lid (due to carving mistakes) where an inscription in the name of King Eshmunazar, “son of Tabnit, son of Eshmunazar” was placed. In Tabnit’s sarcophagus and this one, then, we have the burial inscriptions of a father and son. The twenty-two line lid inscription seems to be divided into three parts according to verbal subject (i.e. lines 1-13; 13-20; and 20-22), the first written in the first person by a king who died in the 14th year of his reign, reporting in lines 2-3, “I was snatched away⁵¹ before my time.” A reckoning of the generations and references in this inscription has led most to interpret this as the story of a child king: e.g. “[’Eshmunazor] was an infant at the time of his accession and lived to reign only fourteen years as a vassal ruler of the Persian Empire.

The text recounts his achievements and those of his mother, who evidently served as regent during his reign.”⁵² After a series of curses against those who might disturb King Eshmunazar’s rest (lines 4-13), the verbal forms switch to a first person plural, describing the work of Eshmunazar and his mother Amotashtart to rebuild Sidon’s temples (lines 13-20), before switching back again (lines 20-22) for a final warning to visitors to the tomb:

(lines 4-13) Whoever you are, any ruler or any commoner, do not open this resting-place and look for anything in it, for nothing has been placed in it,⁵³ and do not lift up the coffin in which I lie or carry me away from this resting-place to another resting-place! Even if men speak to you, do not listen to their talk. For any ruler or commoner who opens the cover of this resting-place or lifts up the coffin in which I lie or carries me away from this resting place, let him have no resting-place with the shades,⁵⁴ let him not be buried in a grave, and let him have no son or seed to succeed him! And may the holy gods deliver him up to a mighty ruler who shall have control over him to bring an end to him – any ruler

⁵¹ The verbal form is a Niphal of *gzl*. It has oft been pointed out that this root is cognate to the Hebrew root *gzr*, for which the Niphal can indicate premature death in a similar fashion (cf. Ps 88:6, Isa 53:8, Lam 3:54, and Ezek 37:11).

⁵² McCarter, CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 182.

⁵³ Literally “they did not place anything in it” *ʔy śm bn mnm* where *śm* is a 3rd masculine plural indefinite perfect from the hollow root *śwm*.

⁵⁴ Here again, the *rpʔm*, sometimes translated “Rephaim,” as in McCarter, CoS, Vol. 2, 2003, 182-183

or commoner who opens the cover of this resting-place or lifts up this coffin, or the seed of that ruler or those commoners! Let him have no root below or fruit above or renown [tʔr] among the living under the sun! For I deserve pity: I was snatched away before my time, the son of a limited number of days; a smitten one, an orphan, the son of a widow was I.

(lines 13-20) But I Eshmunazar, king of the Sidonians, son of king Tabnit, king of the Sidonians, grandson of Eshmunazar, king of the Sidonians, and my mother Amotashart,⁵⁵ priestess of Astarte, our lady the queen, daughter of king Eshmunazar, king of the Sidonians, we are (the ones) who built the houses of the gods – the [house of Astarte⁵⁶] in Sidon, Land-by-the-Sea [ʔrʃ ym], and we established Astarte (in) Lofty-Heavens [šmm ʔdrm]; and we who built in the mountain a home for Eshmun, the prince of the sanctuary of the ydl-spring,⁵⁷ and we established him (in) Lofty-Heavens; and we who built houses for the gods of the Sidonians in Sidon, Land-by-the-Sea, a house for Baal of Sidon and a house for Astarte, Name-of-Baal. And the Lord of Kings gave us Dor and Joppa, the rich lands of Dagon which are in the plain of Sharon, as a reward for the striking deeds [ʃmt] which I performed; and we added them to the borders of the land, that they might belong to the Sidonians forever.

(lines 20-22) Whoever you are, any ruler or any commoner, do not open my cover, and do not take off my cover and move me from this resting-place, and do not lift up the coffin in which I lie, lest these holy gods deliver him up so that he – that ruler or those commoners and their seed – perish forever!

The middle section detailing the political accomplishments of the king and his mother mentions a “Lord of Kings,” who is described as having given Eshmunazar “Dor and Joppa, the rich lands of Dagon⁵⁸ which are in the plain of Sharon,” a detail noteworthy not only because these rewards were considered worthy of inclusion on a funerary inscription, but also because they are valued because they will “belong to the Sidonians forever.” This “Lord of Kings” is thought by most scholars to be the Achaemenid Persian king (either Xerxes, 486-465 BCE, or Artaxerxes I 465-425 BCE), presumably the only official capable of making such a gift.

⁵⁵ Suggested by Gibson 1982, 109; 'Ummi'ashtart has also been offered in McCarter 2003, 182-183.

⁵⁶ Six letters are missing, probably skipped as a result of haplography – see Gibson 1982, 108.

⁵⁷ This probably refers to the Eshmun Temple on the southern bank of the Nahr-el-Awaly / Awali, just outside the modern city of Sidon. The identification was made on the basis of not only similarities to the modern place name, but also due to the appearance of the phrase “the spring of ydl,” in the Ba'lsheillem inscription from the temple of 'Eshmun at Bostan esh-Sheikh, where two inscriptions of Bod 'ashtart were also found.”

⁵⁸ Or “the rich grainlands.”

Eshmunazar’s accomplishments as king are said to benefit not just the “holy gods” (perhaps Astarte, Eshmun, and Baal of Sidon?) who will ensure his curses are meted out to any who would disturb his rest, but also the Sidonian people, in perpetuity. It is tempting to think about this laundry list of religious and economic accomplishments as a kind of testimony to Eshmunazar’s status as a “righteous” [*ṣdq*] king (a term not present but conceptually implied by these justifications) – but instead Eshmunazar’s epithets are all pitiable. His life was cut short, he was smitten too soon, he is the son of a widow, and thus a kind of orphan.

Does this rhetorical emphasis on the boy-king’s short life in this inscription serve to further deter grave robbers? Eshmunazar’s inscription certainly contains more (both numerically and with more variation) curses against potential disturbers of his burial than any other Phoenician funerary inscription analyzed thus far. Although this must remain speculative, Eshmunazar’s sarcophagus may well be an ideological outlier in terms of the mortuary beliefs it espouses – since the death of a king at the age of fourteen, as opposed to after a full and “righteous” reign, seems likely to inspire a different kind of burial or inscription.

Baalshillel Marble Statue

Loc. / Num.	Lebanese National Museum, Beirut
Dimensions	Single line of text, 50 cm long, on a base formerly attached to a statue of a child.
Discovery	The only inscribed statue out of eleven statues of children found in the canal diverted from the Nahr-el-Awaly near the Eshmun temple (about 1.7 miles from the modern city of Saida) during Dunand’s 1963-1964 excavations.
Studies	Dunand 1965; Röllig 1969-1970, 121-124; Mullen 1974; Gibson 1982, 114-115; Kaiser and Borger 1983, 594; Vance 1994a, 12.
Date	425 -350 BCE

Dunand's excavations at the temple of Eshmun at Bostan Esh-Sheikh revealed eleven small statues of male children, mostly uninscribed. The Baalshillem inscription is “the only one that is well preserved,”⁵⁹ and reveals that the statues were dedicated to Eshmun (sometimes along with other deities) on behalf of children who were ill, presumably to procure a cure. In the case of Baalshillem, it seems the sick child was in fact a royal prince:

This (is) the statue [*sm*] which Baalshillem son of King Ba'na, king of the Sidonians, son of King Abdamun, king of the Sidonians, son of King Baalshillem, king of the Sidonians, gave to his lord Eshmun at the *Ydl*-Spring. May he bless him!



Figure III.7: Baalshillim Inscription (Lebanese National Museum, Beirut)

Though this inscription does not tell us much about mortuary practice in Sidon during the Persian Period, we see confirmation of the close link between divine intervention / action and the length of human life – especially the length of royal human life.

e. Beqaa Valley (al-Biqa)

To my knowledge, no inscriptions relevant to the present study, and dating to the Persian – Hellenistic periods, have been discovered in the Beqaa Valley or at inland Lebanese sites.

⁵⁹ Gibson 1982, 114.

f. Tyre and Vicinity (including Northern Israel)

Marble Water Spout

Loc. / Num.	[unknown location] RÉS 1204; Cooke 8
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in 1885 in a rectangular tank 2.5 meters wide.
Studies	Schröder 1885; Clermont-Ganneau 1886a & 1886b; Cooke 1903, 44; Teixidor 1979, 9-17; Vance 1994a, 13.
Date	3 rd century BCE

The earliest inscription found at Tyre is a short dedication or building inscription on the side of a marble cube bearing a 14 cm diameter hole – a water spout for some kind of pool or feature. Two names are given in an incomplete nine line inscription, and each individual is called *špt*, like the Hebrew term for “judge” or “ruler.” This title probably indicates the names of the sponsors of the reservoir attached to the spout, as the inscription appears to be dedicatory in nature. This 3rd century BCE Phoenician inscription is of interest to the present study not for its short content, but for its medium – the marble spout seems to have been remade from its original context as part of a tomb stone.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, not much more can be said on the basis of this inscription as it does not directly relate to its previous context as a tomb stone, and in fact may never have been used as such (marble being a particularly expensive imported material, not available in the Levant).

Har Mizpe Yamim / Mišpe Yamim Bronze Votive Situla

Loc. / Num.	Israel Museum
Dimensions	16.7 cm in length
Discovery	Found with three other bronze items in 1986 during archaeological survey led by Y. Tepper at Mt. Mišpe Yamim, south of Mt. Meron in the Upper Galilee (and southeast of Tyre). Excavations followed in 1988-89 under the direction of R. Frankel of Hebrew University).

⁶⁰ Teixidor 1979, 9.

Studies	Wolff 1993, 148; Frankel 1993; Frankel and Ventura 1998; Berlin and Frankel 2012
Date	Late 6 th – 4 th centuries BCE



Figure III.8: Har Mişpe Yamim Bronze Votive Situla with Inscription Detail
 (left, Frankel 1993, 1063; right, Berlin and Frankel 2012, 50, fig. 30)

Though not found in a burial context, the bronze votive situla from Har Mişpe Yamim, a mountain site south of Mt. Meron in the Upper Galilee (southeast of Tyre), may be worthy of mention. Situlae are closely associated with funerary practice or cult in Egypt, and the Har Mişpe Yamim situla is decorated with Egyptian-style iconographic motifs. The situla was found in a small temple or sanctuary of the Persian – Hellenistic periods, “probably a fortified Phoenician border shrine founded in the later sixth or early fifth century B.C.E.”⁶¹ The temple is a “broadhouse structure consisting of two rooms: the main room on the west (6 by 13.7 m) and a secondary room (4.8 by 10.4 m).”⁶² Three pillar bases and two ashlar altars mark the main room.⁶³ The situla was not the only metal object found in the sanctuary:

Among the finds were bronze ornaments, a large iron circlet, and several fine bronzes: an Egyptian situla on which was engraved a Phoenician votive

⁶¹ Berlin & Frankel 2012, 28.

⁶² Frankel 1993, 1061.

⁶³ Wolff (1993, 148) citing Rafael Frankel of Hebrew University.

inscription to Ashtoreth...; a couchant ram...; a pouncing lion cub...; and an Apis bull.... These objects, together with a slate statuette of Osiris, Horus, and Isis found near the altar, were probably votive offerings and not objects of worship.⁶⁴

The ashlar altars are thought to be the location on which offerings were laid, and no sacrifices are thought to have been made in the temple structure.⁶⁵ Raised stone benches, partially shaped from the bedrock, ran the length of the southern, eastern, and northern walls of the main temple room. The usage dates of the sanctuary structure were determined on the basis of ceramic finds and coinage, including two silver Tyrian coins of the first half of the 4th century BCE.⁶⁶

Though the excavators concluded the shrine or temple was used by a Phoenician population, the nature of the offerings is perhaps curious in light of this:

Most of the more valuable offerings at Mizpe Yammim are Egyptian in origin or subject. These include the slate palette, the schist figurine, the bronze situla, the Apis bull, and the Osiris figurine. The slate palette and the schist statuette are definitely Egyptian in origin; neither slate nor green schist occur in this region. Both objects were already antiquities at the time they were brought to the site, and may well have originated in Egyptian tombs, from which they were pilfered and possibly then resold.... The remaining bronzes date to the Persian period.⁶⁷

Along with these more exotic objects were a number of “simple, small, even crude perfume juglets,” which were “probably acquired in Tyre, ‘Akko, or another coastal city,”⁶⁸ since they were all of coastal Phoenician fabric.

It is interesting to note in this context the appearance of situlae in depictions of foreign tribute from Minoan and Syrian sources in tomb paintings of New Kingdom Theban tombs

⁶⁴ Wolff 1993, 150; see photos in Frankel 1993.

⁶⁵ None of the dedicatory vessels or objects showed signs of fire, and there was no evidence of ash, fire, or burned fills. “Since the column bases indicate that the building was roofed, it is unlikely that the altars served as sacrificial platforms” (Berlin and Frankel 2012, 33).

⁶⁶ Berlin and Frankel 2012, 59.

⁶⁷ Berlin and Frankel 2012, 64.

⁶⁸ Berlin and Frankel 2012, 68.

(numbers 42, 86, 89, and 100), implying that perhaps some situlae were manufactured in Aegean and Levantine contexts. In 1947, Lichtheim wrote (in a piece that is still cited as the authoritative survey of situla types) that “...we know that the Egyptian representations of foreign peoples and their products must not be taken at their face value. It is well known that in these presentation scenes genuinely Egyptian vessels are mingled with the foreign types,”⁶⁹ although at the time she was writing no situlae had yet been found in Crete or Syria. Whether or not the Mišpe Yamim situla was locally made or imported (and perhaps later inscribed) has not, as far as I am aware, been determined. The other Egyptian-style situla bearing a Phoenician inscription (the Princeton situla discussed under “unprovenanced inscriptions,” below) is thought to come from Egypt, although any specific provenance has been lost.

The dedication to Astarte in Phoenician script on an Egyptian-style bronze votive object is noteworthy, and may be significant when viewed alongside the Unprovenanced inscribed situla discussed below. But until a systematic study of situla use in the central coastal Levant may be undertaken, the Har Mišpe Yamim situla does not add to our understanding of Phoenician homeland mortuary practice.

g. Unprovenanced Artifacts from Lebanon

Bronze Bowl or *Phiale*

Loc. / Num.	[unknown]
Dimensions	18.1-18.4 cm diameter bowl, 3.6 cm high; inscription is 17.5 cm long.
Discovery	Acquired in Switzerland by a collector. The bowl is said to originate in Lebanon.
Studies	Avigad and Greenfield 1982; Greenfield and
Date	Mid- to late 4 th century BCE

⁶⁹ Lichtheim 1947, 170.

A cast bowl made in brass with a shallow round body, carinated near the top, with slightly everted rim, was acquired by a collector in Switzerland and published in 1982. At that time, Avigad and Greenfield identified a close parallel which had been discovered in an Achaemenid coffin at Susa alongside two Phoenician coins (struck in Aradus) dated to 350-332 BCE. Although the interior is undecorated, the exterior of the inscribed bowl (said to have come from Lebanon) is decorated with a sixteen-petalled rosette on its bottom, “surrounded by 34 radial fluted leaves terminating at the carination line.”⁷⁰ The one line Phoenician inscription, encircling the exterior of the vessel’s rim, is written in dotted or stippled lettering.⁷¹

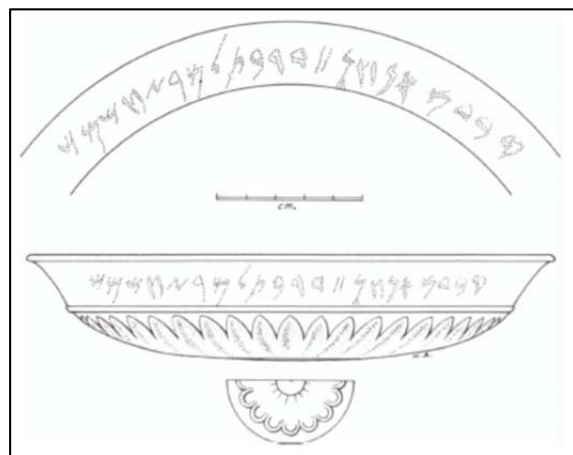


Figure III.9: Bronze Bowl with Inscription (Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 119)

The letters are written without dividing marks or spaces, but the inscription was read by Avigad and Greenfield as:

⁷⁰ Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 118. Rosettes like these are common on other Persian period *phialai* undersides, see for example Gunter and Root 1998’s exposition of the silver Freer *phiale*, which features a fourteen-petalled rosette, as well as other comparanda.

⁷¹ “Whilst the writing in general is very clear and easily legible, the individual letters are not very carefully executed. This irregularity is due to the technique of writing. The letters are not incised in continuous lines but are dotted, in a pointillé technique also found on other bowls of this kind. When the bowl was found, the dots were filled with patina; this was removed by mechanical means and the dots were filled with white paste” (Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 120). While the authors do not comment on this last remark, the white paste was presumably added by the seller or the collector to enhance the visibility of the letters.

qb ʿm ʾnḥn // ʿrbt lmrzḥ šmš

“Cups [*qubbāʿīm*] we // offer to the *marzeah* of Shamash”

Because of the strange placement of the numeral (two vertical strokes for the number “2”), the authors suggest emending the text to read “two cups we offer to the *marzeah* of Shamash,” with the term “cup” referring to the inscribed vessel itself.⁷² If this interpretation is correct, it may imply that the vessel once had an accompanying vessel making it part of a pair; a potentially authenticating feature, as Gunter and Root have convincingly demonstrated that these metal vessels were often distributed in sets by weight.⁷³ Notably, the personal pronoun *ʾnḥn* is followed by the feminine form of the verb *ʿrbt*, indicating the gender of the offerants. Avigad and Greenfield’s translation of the root *ʿrb* as “to offer” is defended on the basis of Akkadian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and a re-interpretation of Hebrew parallels.⁷⁴ The bowl has been dated to the mid- to late 4th century BCE on the basis of the comparanda of other cast metal bowls⁷⁵ and the epigraphic features of the inscription.

The bronze *phiale* in question, although itself unprovenanced, is similar to several found in Persian period burial contexts. In addition to the similar silver bowl found in an Achaemenid coffin at Susa mentioned above, another bowl made of silver was found in a luxuriously furnished tomb of the Persian period at Tell el-Far‘ah;⁷⁶ dozens of others have been found in non-mortuary contexts.⁷⁷ Despite these similarities, as of 1982 Avigad and Greenfield wrote that “among the inscribed bowls of the Persian period, ours is the only one bearing a

⁷² The authors offer support for this reading on the basis of both a Phoenician inscriptional parallel (a 4th century BCE inscription on stone found at Larnax tēs Lapethou near Larnaca) and a Biblical parallel (the term *qubbaʿat*) in Isaiah 51:17, 22; Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 121.

⁷³ Gunter and Root 1998, 8-12.

⁷⁴ Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 124-125.

⁷⁵ See for example the examples and comparanda included in Ilife 1935.

⁷⁶ Ilife 1935.

⁷⁷ In gold, silver, and bronze. See Gjerstad 1946-48 and Culican 1982b, for example.

Phoenician dedicatory inscription.”⁷⁸ The content of the inscription is perhaps startling – this is the only attestation of a “*marzeah* of Shamash.” The *Marzeah* is typically described by scholars as a “sacred feast,” sometimes associated with bacchanalian celebrations, other times with mourning rites (or both). The term has a long and complicated history of scholarly interpretation,⁷⁹ worthy of more indepth treatment than can be undertaken here.

Because of the unprovenanced nature of this inscribed vessel, and its relative uniqueness among even other cast metal bowls of this period, it is difficult to know what to make of the inscription and its implications for Phoenician mortuary practice.

3. Homeland Persian – Hellenistic Period Textual Evidence in Sum

a. **ARWAD:** Despite the relative abundance of written material from Arad in the Persian-Hellenistic periods, none of its content informs our discussion of Phoenician Levantine mortuary practice.

b. **BYBLOS:** Just as in the Iron Age I-II period, the most detailed information relating to royal burial reaches us from Byblos. The sarcophagus fragment from an unknown king of Byblos specifies that the aromatics myrrh and bdellium were used either to anoint, perfume, or preserve⁸⁰ the dead body of the king. It shows the king’s concern for his burial

⁷⁸ Avigad and Greenfield 1982, 120.

⁷⁹ Scholars who advocate for the *marzeah* as a widespread institution include Porten 1968, 179-186; Eissfeldt 1969; Miller 1971; Eissfeldt 1973; Greenfield 1974; Friedman 1979-80; Pope 1983; King 1989; Lewis 1989; Bordreuil and Pardee 1990; McLaughlin 1991; Bottéro 1993; Bietak 2003. The *marzeah* is thought to be attested in association with El at Ugarit, among the Israelites (suggested to appear in Amos 6:7 and Jeremiah 16:5 [*thiasos* in the Septuagint translation], as well as in the Elephantine papyri), and other Near Eastern cultures. However, like *mlk*, the term *mrzh* seems to have meant different things to different peoples. The rabbinic and biblical texts do not draw a connection between this ritual and mortuary associations or a funerary cult, for example. King and Stager call the *mrzh* “the Semitic equivalent of the Greek symposium,” with a “long history, attested from the fourteenth century B.C.E. through the Roman period” (King and Stager 2001, 355).

⁸⁰ For example, the 1887 discovery of the Tabnit sarcophagus in Sidon, complete with intact burial chambers, grave goods, and the royal body itself, described the human remains as a “mummy” – implying some recognizable features (perhaps, most notably, its skin) had been preserved (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1887, 431-432).

(specifically, his bones) to remain undisturbed (line 2), as well as his connection or subservience to the Persian Great King (line 3), perhaps in keeping with the changing concept of what it meant to be a king worthy of obtaining blessings or protection after death. Although fragmentary, the inscription commissioned by the son of Shipitbaal III echoes these same concerns with preserving the “resting place” of the dead king, and with ensuring the king’s bones not be disturbed. Although some further practice relating to the proximity of two coffins or sarcophagi is hinted at in this latter inscription, the line is too difficult and fragmentary to be certain of an attestation of some kind of “double burial” or related phenomenon.

Though the Yehawmilk inscription dedicates alterations to the temple at Byblos for the benefit of the “Lady of Gubal / Byblos,” and therefore is not directly relevant to mortuary practice, it nevertheless reveals the close connections between Achaemenid Persian iconography and Byblian kingship in the 5th century BCE, as well as an ongoing concern for obtaining long life and long length of reign, justified by his designation as a *šdq mlk*, a “righteous king.” Interestingly, the inscription goes on to make another request of *b’lt gbt*: to “give favor in the sight of the gods and favor in the sight of the people of this land” (lines 10-11). The idea of asking a deity to affect change in attitudes of the people of “this land” – presumably the people of Byblos and the rest of the territory ruled by this king – is a new one in extant Phoenician royal inscriptions. Does this inscription illustrate a new concern with the king’s legacy or popular reception? Or does it perhaps reflect the Achaemenid ideal (as expressed in visual form in Persepolis and elsewhere) of a benevolent king ruling over

The note is brief, but if royal bodies underwent some process of mummification (there is no need to assume a complete Egyptian ceremony or procedure here), resins like myrrh and bdellium may well have been used in conjunction with that treatment, and may be mentioned here as representative features of the ritual preparation.

compliant, accepting subjects – a royal ideology situated in direct opposition to those of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires? Regardless, this unprecedented request offers an enticing addition to the concerns evinced by royal Byblian inscriptions. Finally, the Yehawmilk stele threatens the same outcomes (lives will be cut short and offspring will be eliminated) to those who would remove or obscure his contributions to the temple at Byblos as are frequently made to those who would disturb a royal grave.

In contrast to these two inscriptions made for kings of Byblos, the Batnoam inscription – made for the mother of a king – leaves out requests for blessings or curses for those who would disturb her altogether. Instead, this white marble sarcophagus' inscription describes the adornment of the dead woman's body, "as was the custom with the royal women who were before me." It is unclear whether the *km* ʔ or custom included just the last-mentioned object or all three articles mentioned in the inscription – a garment for the body, an ornament for the head, and a "gold bridle," *mḥsm ḥrṣ*, placed on, in, or over the mouth. Because we have no other inscriptions from royal Byblian women of this period, the Batnoam inscription provides the only testament to these fragmentary traditions.

c. BEIRUT: Although a small handful of Persian – Hellenistic inscriptions have now come to light from the downtown Beirut excavations, all of these are personal or family names inscribed on Attic pottery (probably simply to indicate ownership).⁸¹ So far no inscriptional evidence from the area of Beirut in this period has been found that would shed light on Phoenician mortuary practice.

d. SIDON: From Sidon come the two Egyptian sarcophagi carved for father and son, successive kings of Sidon – those of Tabnit and Eshmunazar. Tabnit's inscription warns

⁸¹ See Sader 1998.

not only that the burial should emphatically not be disturbed (using the repeated negative, ʔ, twice), but also explains pragmatically that doing so would not be profitable as “no silver” and “no gold... or any kind of riches” have been buried with the king – not entirely true, as the king’s body was discovered intact in the sarcophagus, wearing “golden diadem.”⁸² Regardless, the inscription further emphasizes this point: “I alone [*blt ʔnk*] am lying in this coffin.” If anyone was to disturb Tabnit’s burial, the outcome would be no seed (“among the living under the sun”) and no resting place of his own (“with the *rpʔm*”), for opening the grave would be an “abomination to ʿAshtart!” While this latter phrase may well be idiomatic, Tabnit’s connections with Ashtart (as himself a “priest of ʿAshtart” as well as a “king of the Sidonians”) seem well established, and one might presume Ashtart herself is invoked to ensure the curses will be carried out on Tabnit’s behalf.

Eshmunazar’s sarcophagus was produced on behalf of a child king whose mother was heavily involved in his reign, and whose accomplishments (represented as shared successes) are listed in the middle portion of the child’s burial inscription. Like Tabnit, Eshmunazar’s inscription seems to understand the motivation of the grave robber: “do not open this resting-place and look for anything in it,” it warns, “for nothing has been placed in it.” The consequences of opening the burial are more elaborate than any Phoenician funerary inscription thus analyzed, although they cover the same basic concerns of having one’s life cut short, one’s offspring killed or prevented, and having no burial of one’s own. The inscription is thorough and detailed, such that whoever disturbs the grave of Eshmunazar will:

- have no resting-place with the *rpʔm* (line 8)
- not be buried in a grave (line 8)
- have no son or seed to succeed him (lines 8-9)

⁸² *American Journal of Archaeology*, 1887, 431.

- be delivered up by the “holy gods” to a “mighty ruler who will have control over him to bring an end to him” (lines 9-10)
- have “no root below or fruit above” (lines 11-12)
- have no “renown among the living under the sun” (line 12)
- will be delivered up by the “holy gods” “so that they... perish forever” (line 22)

Also throughout these warnings, both the possibilities that the invader will be a ruler, *mm/kt*, or a commoner, *ʔdm*, are entertained – perhaps to emphasize how powerful the curses invoked are, but perhaps to indicate how rampant grave robbing was known to be.

In any event, the author of this inscription saw no conflict between the curse that involves the potential grave robber being delivered by divine assistance to “a mighty ruler who will have control over him,” and Eshmunazar’s own dealings with the “lord of kings” (line 18), presumably the Persian king. Eshmunazar’s connection to the Persian king seems intended to demonstrate his political acumen and the territorial rewards that may have increased the value and worth of his kingdom – “that they might belong to the Sidonians forever” (line 20).

e. BEQAA VALLEY: To my knowledge, no extant inscriptions from the Persian – Hellenistic periods in the Beqaa Valley contribute to our knowledge of Phoenician mortuary practice.

f. TYRE: Although the marble water spout with dedicatory inscription seems to have been made from a reused tomb stone, very little can be said about Phoenician mortuary practice based on this find. The piece is made of marble – a material not available in Phoenicia proper but used in several Persian – Hellenistic mortuary contexts already explored, above. The 14 cm hole was carved for the water spout, and probably had nothing to do with the objects original context.

Finally, the Ḥar Miṣpe Yamim bronze votive situla illustrates an association between Egyptian iconography and Phoenician ritual contexts, although the situla was found in a small temple, and was not associated with mortuary practice in any way. The inscription dedicates the object to ‘Ashtart or Ashtoreth. Many of the other votive objects were also Egyptian in style (including statuettes of Osiris, Horus, and Isis, as well as a figure of an Apis[?] bull). This may imply that a connection was drawn between the worship of ‘Ashtart and objects associated with the cult of Isis. Not much more can be said with respect to Phoenician mortuary presence in the Persian – Hellenistic periods.

g. UNPROVENANCED ARTIFACTS: The bronze *phiale* from an unknown location in Lebanon, and now owned by a collector, features a Persian period Phoenician inscription that has been interpreted as mentioning a “*marzeah*” ritual, the only attestation of a “*marzeah* of Shamash.” The use of Persian period *phiale* in social drinking, banqueting, and libations is well established, and the inscribed indication that it might have been produced as part of a pair of vessels echos what we know about other sets of *phialai*.⁸³ But because it is the only such purported reference from the homeland, and because we do not know its original archaeological context, it seems more judicious to leave this inscription aside in our consideration of Phoenician mortuary practice in the later periods.

4. Conclusions – Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice and Beliefs

Despite the dramatic increase in the number of extant Phoenician inscriptions from the Levantine homeland dating to the Persian – Hellenistic periods as compared to the Iron Age I-II periods, the information we can glean from these inscriptions that is pertinent to mortuary

⁸³ Gunter and Root 1994.

practice in these later periods in some ways paints a less complete picture than the materials from the earlier periods. For whatever reasons – the accident of discovery, a change in burial preferences – all the relevant inscriptional material in the Phoenician language speaks to royal burial practices, and most of this material comes from the royal dynasties at Byblos and at Sidon. Thus, what we can say about Phoenician mortuary practice in the Persian – Hellenistic periods on the basis of Phoenician inscriptional evidence is limited to these particular spheres.

The handful of inscriptions from Byblos and Sidon that form the bulk of the corpus of Phoenician Persian-Hellenistic inscriptions relating to mortuary practice offer such tantalizing details that it is tempting to want to synthesize them into a narrative or even a composed “snapshot” of royal mortuary beliefs and practices in the later periods. But it is important to remember how few inscriptions we are dealing with (though this chapter covers more than four hundred years along 250 km⁸⁴ of Levantine coastline, only four funerary inscriptions and one building stele contain the bulk of our data), and the variation presented even amongst these few extant texts. Here I have attempted to dissect the major threads of evidence for belief and practice that can be extrapolated from the texts under analysis in this chapter.

BYBLOS:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for leaving the dead undisturbed [marble sarcophagus fragment, son of Shipitbaal III’s sarcophagus fragments]
- curses against those who would disturb the dead [marble sarcophagus fragment]
- curses entail short life for opponents [marble sarcophagus fragment; Yehawmilk stele]
- curses entail no offspring for opponents [marble sarcophagus fragment; Yehawmilk stele]
- emphasis on lack of burial goods as a deterrent to grave robbing [marble sarcophagus fragment?]
- emphasis on the “bones” as a unit of burial integrity [marble sarcophagus fragment, son of Shipitbaal III’s sarcophagus fragments]

⁸⁴ This number is slightly arbitrary – it represents the distance from Tartous, Syria to Haifa, Israel “as the crow flies”; it is meant to give a general sense of the north-south range of the territory included in the term “Phoenician homeland” throughout this study.

- importance of political accomplishments of the king [marble sarcophagus fragment]
- importance of shrine building by the king [Yehawmilk stele]
- presence of Persian iconography [Yehawmilk stele]
- importance of a long life and long rule [Yehawmilk stele]
- importance of being a “righteous king” [Yehawmilk stele]
- importance of favor from the gods and from the “people of this land” [Yehawmilk stele]
- importance of following the “custom” of those who came before you [Batnoam sarcophagus]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- use of imported marble sarcophagi [marble sarcophagus fragment; Batnoam sarcophagus]
- use of oleoresins (myrrh and bdellium) to anoint, perfume, or preserve the dead body [marble sarcophagus fragment]
- use of garment, head ornament, and “gold bridle” in burial of a “royal woman” (here, the mother of the king) [Batnoam sarcophagus]

SIDON:

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

- concern for leaving the dead undisturbed [Tabnit sarcophagus]
- curses against those who would disturb the dead [Tabnit sarcophagus]
- curses entail short life for opponents [Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- curses entail no offspring for opponents [Tabnit sarcophagus]
- curses entail no resting-place or burial for opponents [Tabnit sarcophagus; Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- possible mention of *rpʿm* – “shades,” “healers,” “rephaim,” [Tabnit sarcophagus; Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- emphasis on lack of burial goods as a deterrent to grave robbing [Tabnit sarcophagus; Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- importance of political accomplishments of the king [Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- importance of shrine building by the king [Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- mention of “the holy gods” as deities who will ensure curses are meted out [Eshmunazar sarcophagus]
- mention of ʿAstarte as the deity who will ensure curses are meted out [Tabnit sarcophagus?]

EVIDENCE FOR PRACTICE

- use of Egyptian-style sarcophagi [Tabnit sarcophagus, Eshmunazar sarcophagus]

This inventory is not meant to be exhaustive, but to illustrate the range of possible mortuary beliefs and practices evidenced by these few texts – alongside the evidence’s distribution both across the Byblian / Sidonian corpora and within each city’s corpus.

Certain features seem to be continuous across the 85 km divide between these two Phoenician centers – the concern with keeping royal burials intact, and the explicit mention of how few grave goods were placed in the sarcophagus with the dead king, as a deterrent to (literate) grave robbers, for example, or the general principles of the curses against those who would disturb the burials of the kings (for short life and no offspring) to be meted out by the gods. Others seem specific to a particular dynasty’s concerns (at least given the distribution of inscriptions now extant) – the treatment of the body of the dead person is only referenced in inscriptions from Byblos, and the *rpʿm* figures, with whom/which one might find a resting-place (presumably after death?), are only mentioned in inscriptions from Sidon. It is difficult to know how significant these observations may be.

Comparing this corpus of inscriptions with those from the Iron I-II periods also leads to many unanswerable questions – why the lack of inscriptions associated with lower-class (or lower energy-expenditure) burials in the Phoenician homeland during the later periods? Does the appearance of the tantalizing reference to myrrh, “golden bridles,” *rpʿm* and other specific concepts or practices in the Persian – Hellenistic periods mark innovations in mortuary practice? Or simply a desire to change the level of detail and emphasis in mortuary inscriptions? Were these customs or traditions which date back to 1000 BCE? Or were they inspired by changes in the socio-historical milieu in the Levantine homeland?

With such a small corpus of inscriptional data, how much weight should any particular inscription be given in terms of indicating innovation over time or from region-to-region? In each case, the answer must be determined by a preponderance of multiple threads of evidence, a cautious assessment of archaeological and ideological context, and some carefully informed conjecture. If, as has been implied by this evidence and will be explored in subsequent

chapters, the Iron Age II – Persian period transition represents one of dramatic innovation and elaboration of earlier mortuary practices, we must be especially wary of applying data obtained by late period inscriptions to our understanding of earlier ones.

That said, it is worth simply observing a handful of clear continuities between the earlier (Iron Age I-II) and later (Persian-Hellenistic) period royal inscriptions:

- A consistent and insistent emphasis on the integrity of the burial in the case of royal inscriptions.
- The invocation of various deities (which vary widely) to assist in procuring blessings for living kings (in the form of long life and lengthy rule) and curses for those who oppose their wishes and disturb royal burials (in the form of shortened life and a lack of offspring).
- The justification of these blessings on the basis of being a “righteous” [*sdq*] king – construed variously but sometimes including political accomplishments or the building of religious shrines.
- The continued use of Egyptian iconography (including sarcophagi with Egyptian figurations of the face and other adornments) in Phoenician mortuary and other religious contexts, although this repertoire is supplemented by Persian iconography (and rectangular marble sarcophagi, probably imported from Rhodes) in later periods.

This list is necessarily short, owing to the lack of Persian-Hellenistic inscripational material that relates to mortuary practice in non-royal contexts. But it is a starting point, to which we may add if a preponderance of other evidence allows.

B. Inscriptions in Phoenician from Outside the Phoenician Homeland

1. Historical Context: Persian – Hellenistic Period Phoenician Diaspora

Although it is sometimes said that “nothing is recorded of the political status of the Phoenician cities in the early years of the [Achaemenid Persian] empire,”⁸⁵ the Levantine homeland cities seem to have prospered under Persian rule, and Sidon would eventually

⁸⁵ Markoe 2000, 49. This is perhaps an overstatement, but his intent is to illustrate just how much of our knowledge of the transition to Achaemenid rule in the central coastal Levant is based on circumstantial and indirect evidence. See Root 1991 on the politics of meagerness.

emerge as the pre-eminent Phoenician city by the early fifth century. During this time, Cyprus was home to several kingdoms, some of whose kings (e.g. those of Kition) had Phoenician names, and whose people utilized the Phoenician script in votive, burial, and building inscriptions. Cyprus was politically involved with both Greece and Persia, and underwent a series of invasions, rebellions, and other military engagements with both sides. But perhaps most significantly, Carthage's political and economic ties to Tyre seem to have been severed at this time, leaving Carthage an independent entity.⁸⁶ Competition for commercial power in the Mediterranean increased as Greeks, Carthaginians, and others entered the colonial "market" for economic benefit and political and military influence. It was this growing trade with sites to the far west, as well as the increasing cosmopolitanism of coastal cities throughout the Mediterranean, that began the process of Hellenization usually described as responsible for the eventual end of a distinct Phoenician culture in the central coastal Levant (and for the slow disappearance of the Phoenician language and script). Although this process began long before the arrival of Alexander the Great, the increasing power and influence of the Greek empire sped the adaptation (if not quite homogenization) of Phoenician language and influence to this new system of values.

2. Persian – Hellenistic Period Phoenician Diaspora Textual Evidence

In this section, I continue the extensive survey of texts from the Persian – Hellenistic periods. First I will address the exponentially large corpus of Phoenician (and some Punic) inscriptions extant from outside the Levantine homeland. Because some of the relevant sites

⁸⁶ "Carthage's emergence as a political and military power is traditionally ascribed to the mid-sixth century BC, when the city, under the aegis of general Mago and his descendant-successors (known as the Magonids), embarked on an aggressive campaign of conquest and colonial expansion. It is around this time, or shortly before, that Carthage first intervened militarily in both Sardinia and Sicily in an effort to safeguard Phoenician holdings there" (Markoe 2000, 54).

have produced dozens or even hundreds⁸⁷ of inscriptions, in some cases my treatment will be superficial or general. Again, my goal is not to reevaluate all the material, but to review it in order to evaluate its potential contribution for an understanding of Phoenician homeland burial practice in the Iron I-III periods. As in Chapter II, I will be moving generally from east to west across the Mediterranean, beginning in Cyprus and ending in the far west of France and Spain, as follows:



⁸⁷ Or thousands, in the case of Carthage – although the state of publication of these inscriptions does not allow an accurate count of the entire corpus.

Moving generally from east to west across the Mediterranean:

- a. Northern Levant (Northern Syria and Southwest Turkey)
- b. Southern Levant (Southern Israel/Palestine and Jordan)
- c. Cyprus
- d. Egypt
- e. Crete
- f. Greece
- g. Italy
- h. Sicily and Malta
- i. Sardinia
- j. Tunisia
- k. Algeria
- l. Western Mediterranean (France, Spain, etc.)
- m. Unprovenanced Artifacts

a. Northern Levant (Northern Syria, Southwest Turkey)

Though several Phoenician inscriptions are known from sites north of the Phoenician homeland in this period, I know of none that relates directly to mortuary practice.

b. Southern Levant (Southern Israel/Palestine, Jordan)

Jar from Bat-Yam

Loc. / Num.	Israel Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in a burial cave south of Tel-Aviv-Yafo. Excavated under the supervision of J. Naveh.
Studies	Peckham 1966, 11-17, pl. 4; Peckham 1968, 130, n. 79; Teixidor 1968, 369, no. 62; Delevault and Lemaire 1979, 22.
Date	End of the 4 th century BCE

An inscribed jar was discovered in a tomb, located within a cave, just south of Tel Aviv-Yafo. The inscription is written in black ink on the body of a complete jar:

lb'šlḥ

Belonging to Baalšalah ["Ba'al succeeded"]

The inscription was identified as Phoenician on the basis of both the epigraphy and the verbal element in the personal name. This inscribed vessel follows in the long line of inscriptions thus far identified as coming from burials, where their purpose – inscribed in life and later deposited in the burial, or inscribed for the burial itself – cannot be definitely recovered.

Juglet from Jaffa

Loc. / Num.	Israel Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	The inscribed juglet was found in a burial cave of the Persian period, during the 1993-1995 IAA excavations of a cemetery south of Tell Jaffa in northern Israel. The excavation was limited to 8,600 m ² and the boundaries were still not reached.
Studies	Avner and Eshel 1996.
Date	5 th century BCE

A huge cemetery used from the Persian period into the Byzantine era, excavated as part of a salvage-dig conducted on the southern outskirts of Tell Jaffa, was explored by R. Avner on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. In a Persian period burial cave, a terracotta juglet was found featuring a Phoenician inscription. The cave itself contained the piled bones of at least five individuals in the south-eastern corner, eight skeletons in the western part of the chamber, three at the north, three at the south, and two more skeletons between the north and south groups. Each articulated skeleton had one or two juglets placed by its head, although only one of the juglets was inscribed. This inscribed vessel was “discovered beside the head of the eastern of the two parallel skeletons in the middle [between the north and south groups].”⁸⁸

Eshel reads the inscription as follows:

⁸⁸ Avner and Eshel 1996, 60.

kd hrmš

“vessel / jar of Hermes”

She interprets the name as a transcription of the Greek theophorical name Ἑρμής,⁸⁹ and adds “it is hard to know whether this man was of Greek origin, who wrote this inscription while he spent time in Jaffa, which was a Sidonian city during this period.... Another possibility is that *HRMŠ* was of Phoenician origin, who bare [*sic*] a Greek name already in the fifth century B.C.E.”⁹⁰ Regardless of speculations on the vessel bearer’s ethnic identity, the presence of inscribed vessels in burials of this period clearly continues both inside and outside the Phoenician homeland.

c. Cyprus

Fragment of a Phoenician Jar from Alassa

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Survey 2 number 1622; “Kolaouzou” cemetery, Alassa (or Khalassa)
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in 1966, 3 km northwest of Alassa, in the district of Limassol, at a site called “Kolaouzou.” The site is located on the road to Platres near the river Kouris.
Studies	Karageorghis 1967, 301-302; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 92-94; Puech 1979, 26.
Date	5 th century BCE (on the basis of the Plain White VI ware and paleographic methods)

After the discovery of a late Archaic – early Classical period cemetery at Alassa (at a place called “Kolaouzou”), an inscribed sherd of a Plain White VI ware jar was found “dans une tombe précédemment pillée.”⁹¹ A three line inscription was found on a fragment of a Phoenician jar, Cyprus Survey number 1622.⁹²

⁸⁹ Or Ἑρμίας. See discussion in Avner and Eshel 1996, 62-63.

⁹⁰ Avner and Eshel 1996, 63.

⁹¹ Karageorghis 1967, 302.

⁹² Puech 1979, 26.



Figure III.10: Inscribed Sherd from Alassa (Karageorghis 1967, 301)

Puech provides the following interpretation of the inscription:⁹³

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| (1) <i>b 20 + 10 + 6 lmlk...</i> | “in year 36 of king ...” |
| (2) <i>bnsky rqh[...]</i> | “in his libation a (perfume mixture?)” |
| (3) <i>mlkrm bn mlkr[m]</i> | “Milkiram son of Milkiro[m]” |

Karageorghis concludes “cette inscription concerne apparemment la fourniture d’un liquide à une certaine date.”⁹⁴ Puech makes more of this “libation” and writes that this inscription describes “libations funéraires des phéniciens jusque dans cette partie sud de l’île...”⁹⁵ He cites the use of the root *rqh* in 2 Chron. 16:14, with reference to the preparation of the grave of Asa in Jerusalem. I translate this verse as follows:

וּישְׁכִיבֵהוּ בַמשְׁכָּב אֲשֶׁר מָלֵא בַשְּׂמִימִים וְזָנִים מִרְקָחִים בַּמִּרְקָחַת מַעֲשָׂה

“...they laid him on the bed which was filled with perfumes/spices and many kinds [of ?] prepared/mixed by the work of the mixers ...”⁹⁶

If this is indeed an inscription directly relating to a ritual performed at the grave side, we may well have evidence of one type of liquid offering (perhaps a perfume or other aromatic oil). But the inscription is clearly broken off (that is, not a complete inscription written on an

⁹³ Puech 1979, 26.

⁹⁴ Karageorghis 1967, 302.

⁹⁵ Puech 1979, 26.

⁹⁶ For comparison, KJV reads “...and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds [of spices] prepared by the apothecaries’ art”; NRSV translates “They laid him on a bier that had been filled with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer’s art.”

ostrakon, but perhaps an inscribed vessel that has been broken at some point in the past). The unfortunate state of the burial, in a tomb already plundered, makes it impossible to know whether this vessel was broken in the 5th century BCE at the very mortuary ritual it was designed to serve, or at some point in the more recent past when the tomb was opened and rifled through.

Amphora from Ayia Irini

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, no. 1962/IX-4/3, “Phoenician Inscription 14”
Dimensions	62 cm high
Discovery	Acquired by the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, in 1962 – probably from clandestine digging, beginning in the year 1960, in the Persian period (called “Archaic and Classical period” by the excavators) necropolis located between the village of Ayia Irini (on the NW part of Cyprus, north of Morphou, in the region of Kyrenia) and the sea.
Studies	Karageorghis 1963, 333-334; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 94-96.
Date	5 th century BCE

An amphora of Plain White VII ware, with round body (“a panse protuberante”⁹⁷) and very narrow base, was acquired by the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, in 1962. On the neck between the two handles, two Phoenician letters, “pentes en couleur pourpre mat”⁹⁸ are visible.



Figure III.11: Ayia Irini Amphora and Inscription Detail (Karageorghis 1963, 333)

⁹⁷ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 95.

⁹⁸ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 95.

But the letters are extremely unclear; Honeyman read *mh*, suggesting it might indicate a measure of quantity (indicating ½) or an abbreviation for a personal name (like Νουμήνιος).⁹⁹

Masson and Sznycer write:

Cette lettre [the second one], nous l'avouons, nous laisse un peu perplexes. Si on lisait MH, on pourrait peut-être, plutôt que de penser à une assez improbable abbreviation du nom MNHM, se référer au mot MH qu'on trouve dans un fragment d'un tarif sacrificiel carthaginois avec le sens de "gras." La mention, dans ce cas, indiquerait que le vase devait contenir des matières grasses.¹⁰⁰

Jar Fragment from Salamis

Loc. / Num.	Object 116 from Tomb 77
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in Tomb 77 in the necropolis at Salamis.
Studies	Karageorghis 1973, 145; Puech 1979, 41
Date	4 th century BCE

A fragment of a Plain White Canaanite jar was found in Tomb 77 of the necropolis of Salamis, bearing a Phoenician inscription in black ink:

l'bd'šm[n] Belonging to 'Abd-Eshmun

This adds another inscribed vessel to our accumulating list of burial goods, and another exemplar of the *l-* preposition + personal name formula.

Inscribed Jar from the Turabi Necropolis

Loc. / Num.	Museum of Larnaca ¹⁰¹ ; Cyprus Survey number 1546
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in 1966 in a place called "Turapi" (French <i>Tourabi</i> / <i>Tourapi</i>) near modern Larnaca.
Studies	Karageorghis 1967, 293; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 121, pl. XV, 2-3;

⁹⁹ Honeyman in Karageorghis 1963, 333.

¹⁰⁰ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 95-96.

¹⁰¹ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 121 write that "elle est conservée à Nicosie," but Puech (a later publication) gives its location in Larnaca.

	Puech 1979, 36-37.
Date	Late 6 th -5 th centuries BCE (on the basis of the Plain White V ware and paleographic methods)

A rectangular tomb (with rounded roof and long *dromos*), accidentally discovered in the Larnaca necropolis, produced “deux jarres en forme d’obus,”¹⁰² made of Plain White V ware, one of which was inscribed with three lines of Phoenician characters (of unequal size) in black ink. Avigad¹⁰³ reads the inscription as follows:

(1) [A trademark?¹⁰⁴] (2) ʔ | (3) *ṣdq*

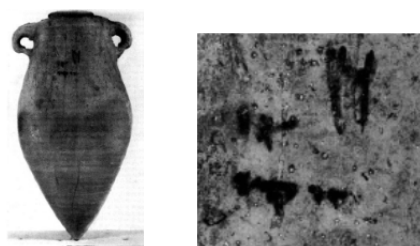


Figure III.12: Tourabi/Tourapi Jar and Inscription Detail (Karageorghis 1967, 292)

The inscription is difficult to interpret – Avigad construes the letters on line 3 as indicating a hypocoristic personal name, but does not otherwise offer an explanation for the first two lines of the inscription. Both Masson and Sznycer (1972, 121) and Puech (1979, 36) read the final line as *ṣdq*?, although still interpreting this as a personal name. Puech reads the symbol on first line as a *ḥet*, perhaps an abbreviation for *ḥmr*, “wine.”¹⁰⁵ He goes on to suggest that the *ʔaleph* on line 2, while difficult to interpret, might be read as a second abbreviation referring not to quantity (as might be expected) but to contents.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Karageorghis 1967, 293.

¹⁰³ As detailed in Karageorghis 1967, 293: “Mr Avigad (Jérusalem) nous a fourni l’interprétation suivante du texte figurant sur la première jarre.”

¹⁰⁴ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 121: “Un signe énigmatique (ou deux signes?).”

¹⁰⁵ Puech 1979, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Puech suggests: “(1) *ḥ[mr]*(2) *ʔ[d?][m]* ‘1) V[in] 2) R[ouge]” (1979, 36).

Other items found in this tomb included bronze earrings, a bronze torque, a steatite seal in the shape of a scarab, and beads of glass paste from a necklace.¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to know what to make of the inscribed vessel – did it mark the contents of a jar of wine used by the deceased in life? Or was it ordered by the family of the deceased as part of the funerary preparations? There is too little evidence to make a determination.

Pithos from Vouni

Loc. / Num.	Museum of Mediterranean Antiquities, Stockholm, no. V. 15. 2
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered at the site of Vouni on the NW coast of Cyprus, west of Soloi (name of the ancient site unknown). Excavated by Swedish archaeologists.
Studies	Gjerstad 1937, 335 and 620, fig. 324, 2; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 86-88.
Date	Early 4 th century BCE

Tomb 15 in the necropolis uncovered at the site of Vouni, on the northwest coast of Cyprus, produced a pithos with a four-character Phoenician inscription painted on the body of the vessel: *lmlk* “Belonging to the king.” Masson and Sznycer see this pithos falling within the tradition of the *lmlk*-stamped jars from Israel/Judah:

Il s’agit sans doute d’un vase du type de ceux qu’on appelle des “vases royaux”, connus depuis longtemps, et dont les spécimens ont été trouvés dans les différents sites en Palestine (à Gézer, à Tell en-Naşbeh, à Jérusalem, à Tell Beit-Mirsim, à Ramat Rahel, à Lakish, à Gabaôn, etc.), aussi bien qu’en Égypte, notamment à Éléphantine. On a discuté, et on discute encore, sur la signification exacte de ces jarres. Il s’agit, selon toute vraisemblance, d’estampilles royales, dont les témoignages s’étendent à travers plusieurs siècles, à partir du VII^e et peut-être même du VIII^e siècle. Il est donc intéressant d’en retrouver un spécimen à Vouni.¹⁰⁸

This example offers good evidence that in this case, the vessel was painted or inscribed for one use, and was reused as part of the burial goods of the deceased inhabitant of Tomb 15.

¹⁰⁷ Karageorghis 1967, 293.

¹⁰⁸ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 87.

This vessel “belonging to the king” marks it as a part of a long-standing tradition or *koiné* of gift-giving in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean regions.¹⁰⁹ Objects like this one given by royalty would have been treasured not simply for their material worth or monetary value, but for the symbolic nature of the gift and the personal connection it represented between ruler (or royal house) and recipient.¹¹⁰ Though these objects are known to have been re-gifted in some contexts, the burial of this particular vessel underscores its position as a cherished object central to the social identity of its recipient.

Pergamos Stele Fragment

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Museum, Nicosia no. 1969/XII-9/1; Phoenician Inscription 10
Dimensions	29 cm high x 19.5 cm wide x 8 cm thick
Discovery	Top right-hand corner of a marble stele found in 1969 in Pergamos (NE of Larnaca, to the north of Pyla on the road from Larnaca to Lefkoniko) in the Larnaca district.
Studies	Karageorghis 1970, 198 and 201-202; Röllig 1972, 5; Masson and Sznycer 1972, 121-123, pl. XVII, 1-2.
Date	4 th century BCE

The upper, right-hand portion of a fragmentary stele was found in 1969 in Pergamos, a small town near Larnaca. The extant piece depicts the bust of a bearded man, whose head is turned to the left. His right hand is raised in a gesture of greeting, but whomever he faces is missing. Above him an incomplete Phoenician inscription is legible:

lmhry bn pw/n/ḫ[...] “belonging to Maharay,¹¹¹ son of *pw/n/l...*”

¹⁰⁹ See Feldman 2003.

¹¹⁰ See for example Stolper 1996; Gunter and Root 1998,

¹¹¹ Vocalization of this hypocoristic name is based on occurrences in the Hebrew of 2 Sam. 23:28; 1 Chr. 11:30 and 27:15; See Masson and Sznycer 1972, 122-123 for further discussion.



Figure III.13: Pergamos Stele with Inscription Detail
(left, Karageorghis 1970, 202, fig. 12; right, Röllig 1972, 5)

Röllig dates the inscription to the 4th century BCE on the basis of its script. Masson and Szynger conclude: “L’inscription de Pergamos, qui n’est pas une inscription votive, semble rédigée en l’honneur (ou à la mémoire) de MHRY, qui est sans doute représenté sur la stele.”¹¹² It seems as though this dismissal of a votive function was made on the basis of the depiction of the adult male figure, as well as the lack of dedication to an explicitly named deity. Though the inscription is broken, this seems a plausible interpretation.

Sarcophagus from Kition

Loc. / Num.	KAI 64; Original is now missing; known only from an early reproduction.
Dimensions	80 inches long x 72 inches wide (approximately 2 m x 1.8 m)
Discovery	Described by Peristianis in a 1910 publication and photographed in the museum in Nicosia in 1917; the sarcophagus is now lost.
Studies	Masson and Szynger 1972, 69-75 and pl. VI; Dupont-Sommer 1974, 86-87; Puech 1979, 34
Date	Beginning of the 4 th century BCE

A sarcophagus (now lost) inscribed with a one line Phoenician inscription was described in a volume on the history of Cyprus published by the Cypriot scholar Peristianis in 1910. Peristianis provided only a transcription – no reproduction of the monument or the

¹¹² Masson and Szynger 1972, 123.

inscription – and said only that it came from the old museum in Nicosia.¹¹³ In 1969, Masson and Sznycer requested that staff of the museum in Nicosia attempt to locate the sarcophagus. The sarcophagus was gone, but some photos of the museum galleries taken in 1917 showed it in place,¹¹⁴ and give a clear view of the 23¹¹⁵ Phoenician characters that make up the inscription, carved “sur une des grandes faces.”¹¹⁶ The inscription seems to cover only a single line, except for in the case of the first letter, a lamed, which seems duplicated immediately below – perhaps an error or a correction of some sort. The inscription reads:

lʿšmnʿdn bn ʿšmnʿdn skn šwr Belonging to Eshmunadon, son of Eshmunadon,
minister of Tyre.¹¹⁷

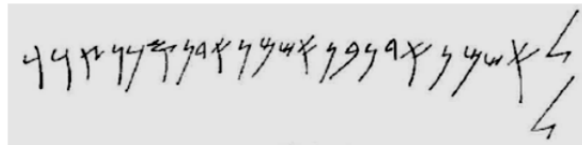


Figure III.14: Sarcophagus Inscription from Kition (Puech 1979, 35)

The sarcophagus is thought to have come from Kition on account of the gypsum from which it was made,¹¹⁸ and the close historical connections between Tyre and Kition.¹¹⁹

The notion that a “minister of Tyre” would be buried on Cyprus, but still wish his title to be inscribed on his burial vessel, is intriguing. Does this indicate that the office was some kind of diplomatic or travelling one? Does it simply show that offices in Tyre had certain

¹¹³ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 69.

¹¹⁴ Although the photos do not seem to show the entire sarcophagus body. Masson and Sznycer write, strangely, “...on peut admettre que l’on avait affaire à une simple ‘caisse’, et non pas à un sarcophage à couvercle anthropoïde, suivant une habitude phénicienne qui était connue aussi à Chypre” (1972, 69).

¹¹⁵ Although Masson and Sznycer (1972) saw only twenty-two characters, Puech indicated that a twenty-third letter was visible at the end of the line. The image I include above shows the final character.

¹¹⁶ Masson and Sznycer 1972, 70.

¹¹⁷ See Masson and Sznycer 1972, 72-75 for discussion of this title, and its implications for our understanding of the relationship between Tyre and Kition.

¹¹⁸ Known from excavations at Tourabi in 1961, and at Ayios Prodromos in 1962 – both sites near to Larnaca / Kition (Masson and Sznycer 1972, 70).

¹¹⁹ Puech 1979, 34.

social currency in Kition (or Pergamos, very nearby)? Again, we have more questions than answers from this inscription.

Kition Marble Plaque

Loc. / Num.	Now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; CIS i 46, tab. VIII; Cooke 16; KAI 35; Gibson 35;
Dimensions	30 x 10 cm white marble tablet or plaque
Discovery	Discovered by R. Pococke at Kition in 1738
Studies	Barthélemy 1758; Cooke 1903, 61-62; Gibson 1982, 133-134.
Date	3 rd century BCE

Unusually for a text this late in date, the words of this inscription from Kition are separated by dots. Gibson reads:¹²⁰

- 1) I Abdosir, son of *'bdssm*, son of Hor, set up
- 2) a pillar [*mšbt*] while I was still alive [*lmbħyy* = *lmmn* + *b* + *ħyy*] (to be) over my resting-place [*mškb . nħty*] forever; also for
- 3) my wife Amotashtart, daughter of Toam, son of Abdmilk.

The first-person voice of this inscription – from the perspective of the deceased – is notable, but not unique. The stele this inscription adorns is said to have been erected during the lifetime of the man whom it honors, whereas in other inscriptions of this sort, a secondary donor (usually the children of the deceased or a friend¹²¹) is typically named – perhaps this is because the deceased had no children.

Gibson adds, “note that the inscr[ription], which is on a tablet, says ‘a pillar,’ not ‘this pillar,’ suggesting that the monument itself may have been erected elsewhere; or perhaps a tablet was used because it was not thought proper to inscribe a pillar before the person concerned was dead.”¹²² It seems likely that the tablet or plaque on which this inscription was

¹²⁰ Gibson 1982, 133.

¹²¹ Cooke 1903, 87.

¹²² Gibson 1982, 134.

made would have been affixed or inlaid into the base of the mentioned pillar – this practice is known elsewhere in the Mediterranean.¹²³

The reference made to the deceased man’s wife is also grounds for speculation. Was the man’s wife already dead, or was he anticipating her eventual burial near him? I know of no other inscription that makes similar mention of a spouse, and is erected during the lifetime of the one being commemorated.

Kition Stele I

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 47; Cooke 17
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Cooke 1903, 63-64
Date	4 th century BCE(?)

In this stele from Kition, the *l-* preposition is used to indicate the name of the deceased being commemorated. The inscription may be read: “To [*l-*] *ṯhd*, daughter of ‘Abd-eshmun the judge, wife of Ger-melqarth, son of Ben-ḥodesh, son of Ger-melqarth, son of Eshmun-‘azar.” A woman is commemorated, and the presence of her father’s name, her father’s occupation, her husband’s name, and her husband’s genealogy for three generations may well indicate what aspects of her social persona would have been considered worthy of remembrance – or perhaps only what was deemed important by those who paid for her funerary monument.

Kition Stele II

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 58; Cooke 18
Dimensions	[unavailable]

¹²³ For another Phoenician (or Punic) example, see Ferron 1971.

Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Cooke 1903, 64
Date	4 th century BCE (?)

Cooke translates a second inscription from Kition as: “The pillar [*mšbt*] among the living [*bḥym*] which ‘Abd-osir set up to his father Arketha [*lʾrktʾ*].”¹²⁴ This inscription seems to be a memorial inscription – not marking the place of burial of the donor’s father, but in what seems like commemoration of his death. The phrase *bḥym* might be translated “in life” / “in (his) life-time,” or “among the living.” It may seem difficult to imagine the purchase of an inscription of this nature (that is, not dedicated to an identified deity or for a particular cause) for a still-living relative; in this case the translation “among the living” that Cooke originally suggested may be preferable.

The term *mšbt bḥym* will appear in other inscriptions on Cyprus, and it may be useful to bracket the phrase as a technical term, to observe under what other circumstances it appears.

Kition Stele III

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 60; Cooke 19
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Cooke 1903, 64-65
Date	4 th century BCE (?)

A third inscription from Kition is translated by Cooke as: “this is the pillar [*mšbt*] which Eshmun-šillaḥ and Mar-yehai set up [*yṭnʾ*] to their father [*lʾbnm*] Melexenos [*lmlgsns*]....”¹²⁵ The verbal form *yṭnʾ* is a *Hiphil* perfect 3mp.

¹²⁴ Cooke 1903, 89.

¹²⁵ Cooke 1903, 89.

This inscription indicates that two sons might “split” the cost and honor associated with commemorating their deceased father.

Kition Stele IV

Loc. / Num.	British Museum, Cyprus Room no. 31; Cooke 21
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Found in the necropolis of Kition outside old Larnaca in 1894.
Studies	Cooke 1903, 70-72.
Date	4 th century BCE

This inscribed white marble monolith features a gabled top and five lines of Phoenician inscription. Cooke translates:

This pillar [*mšbt ʔ*] (is that) which Arish, chief of the brokers [*rb srsrm*], erected [*ytn*] to his father, Parsi, chief of the brokers, son of Arish, chief of the brokers, son of Menaḥem, chief of the brokers, son of Mashal, chief of the brokers, son of Parsi, chief of the brokers; and to his mother, Shem-zabul, daughter of Ba'al-ram, son of Milk-yathon, son of 'Azar, chief of the prefects [*rb ḥz 'nm*], over their resting-place [*ʔ mškb nḥtnm*], forever [*l'lm*].

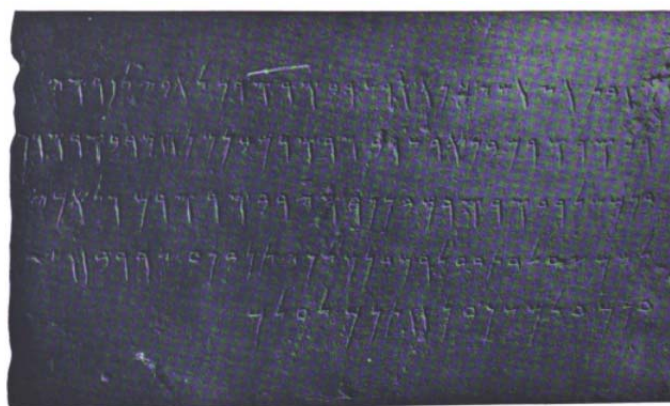


Figure III.15: Kition Stele IV (Cooke 1903, pl. II, no. 21)

This inscription was erected by a son for both his father and his mother – and seems to confirm that couples can be buried next to one another (or in the same grave) such that they

share a single “resting place.” The donor lists his father’s genealogy to four generations, and his mother’s genealogy to three generations.

The donor, his father, and all his father’s patrilineal ancestors are reported as holding the same office – that of *rb srsrm*, interpreted by Cooke as “chief of the brokers.” This heritage was so important to the donor that he paid to have the seven-letter title copied out six times over! If this was not an inherited office, the fact that this family had been so long “in the business” must have been notable, and the length of the genealogy may be explicitly designed to illustrate that claim to authority and long-standing honor. The donor’s matrilineal great-grandfather’s title is also reported: *rb ḥz ḥnm*, interpreted as “chief of the prefects” by Cooke.

Though no curses, warnings, or notices about the grave’s content are included in this stele, we may have a small indication of the importance of leaving the stele erect in the appearance of the temporal adverbial term *ʾʾm*, “forever.”

Jar Fragment from Idalion

Loc. / Num.	Idalion excavation object number 669 (Registration number M279-669. WSW 9/17 locus 001.1.11/171974).
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered during the Idalion excavations, 1974, above the destruction debris of the citadel wall.
Studies	Cross 1994
Date	Late 4 th century BCE

An inscribed body fragment of a ceramic jar, probably painted before the vessel was broken, was discovered on top of debris from the destruction of the citadel by Ptolemaic forces in 312 BCE. The inscription consists of only twelve characters distributed across lines: (1)... *l bn rp* ... (2) ...*lt ṣmḥ* ... (3) *ṣ n*. We may confidently read the first line as a personal name with

genealogical designation (perhaps “son of Rapa?”¹²⁶), but the second and third lines are more difficult.



Figure III.16: Jar Fragment from Idalion (Cross 1994, 94)

Cross reconstructs the second line of the inscription based on the inscribed urn from Memphis, Egypt (discussed below). He reads: [*ʾlt smḥ* or “holocaust of a scion,”¹²⁷ that is, “burnt offering of a legitimate heir” (or human sacrifice), taking both as technical terms. As Cross himself points out, that inscription from Memphis is also quite difficult to interpret, as “unfortunately, [*ʾlt*] is a homograph of several terms: a preposition meaning ‘on,’ a biform of *ʾt*; a word for the cover of a sarcophagus;¹²⁸ and notably, the term for a holocaust offering equivalent to Hebrew *ʾôlâ*.”¹²⁹ Drawn in part to the Hebrew parallels, and also to a series of re-interpretations of Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions, Cross concludes that the formula on the Idalion sherd indicates “a sacrificial burning of the child of the offerer, with the term *smḥ* used to stress the blood relationship of the victim to the offerer. In this case the sacrificial term *mulk* in use in Phoenician and Punic and the term *ʾlt* used in the Egyptian funerary inscription,

¹²⁶ Cross 1994, 93.

¹²⁷ Cross 1994, 93.

¹²⁸ See Février 1955a for this interpretation in the Eshmunazar and Tabnit inscriptions.

¹²⁹ Cross 1994, 97; see also Ferron 1971, 228.

at Idalion, and in the Bible are equivalents.”¹³⁰ But the problems associated with the *ʾlt* term are manifold, and with such disappointing archaeological context for this sherd, I am not willing to accept an interpretation of this term based on the heavily contested *mlk* term itself.

Cross offers an ingenious but challenging interpretation of line 3 of the inscription. He writes, “in line 3, the *šin* and *nun* are ligatured, indeed written as a virtual monogram,”¹³¹ and thus reads the last line as an abbreviation for “year fifty” or *šatt* + regnal year, surprisingly rendered in the Greek style using letters in place of numbers.¹³² If Cross is correct, the archaeological context (the citadel was destroyed in 312 BCE) and paleographic evidence (which places the script in the 350-300 BCE range) both support an interpretation of this regnal year as that of Pumayyaton, who reigned from approximately 362-312 BCE. But this would be the earliest incidence of this practice in the West Semitic alphabets yet attested.

Idalion Stele

Loc. / Num.	British Museum, Cyprus Room no. 239; CIS i 93; Cooke 26.
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Cooke 1903, 77-79
Date	254 BCE

This five line inscription is unique among extant dedicatory inscriptions in Phoenician, in that it appears to have been erected by a grandmother, in honor of a vow made by her son (deceased at the time that the inscription was made), for the benefit of her grandsons. Cooke translates:

¹³⁰ Cross 1994, 101.

¹³¹ Cross 1994, 93.

¹³² Cross 1994, 95: “If we are correct then in our analysis, we have in this little text the earliest extant evidence of the borrowing of the Greek practice of using letters of the alphabet as numbers by Phoenician or West Semitic scribes. Fittingly, it appears in Cyprus where Greek, Cypriote Syllabic, and Phoenician scribal practices overlap and intertwine.”

(1) On the 7th day of the month Ḥiyyar in the 31st year of the lord of kings Ptolemy son of Ptolemy..., (2) which is the 57th year of the men of Kition, the Kanephoros of Arsinoë Philadelphos (being) Amath-osir, daughter of Mk..., (3) son of ‘Abd-sasom, son of Gad-‘ath: --These statues (are those) which [*hsm/m hʿ* ʿ] Bath-shalom, daughter of Mar-yehai, son of Eshmun-adon, set up [*yʿn* ʿ] (4) for [ʿ] her grandsons [*bn bny ʿ*] Eshmun-adon and Shallum and ‘Abd-reshef, the three sons of Mar-yehai, son of Eshmun-adon, son of Naḥanai, (5) son of Gallab, (being) the vow [*hndr*] which their father Mar-yehai had vowed [ʿ *š kn ndr*] during his life-time [*bḥyy*] to their lord Reshef of Mukl [*ršp mk*]: may he bless them!

It is unclear whether this is simply a votive inscription, commissioned to fulfill a vow, or whether it is indeed a “memorial inscription” as Cooke labeled it. The situation is unique and complicated, but it does seem that the father had promised (i.e. he had vowed, or *ndr*) to erect a series of statues or images on behalf of his three sons, but died before being able to fulfill his vow. This man’s mother – the three sons’ grandmother – is taking up the vow, so that it might not be left unrealized. Although we know many examples of votive stele or statues being set up in fulfillment of a *ndr*, this inscription seems to indicate that these vows could be “inherited” or passed on to family members in the case of untimely death. We also note that the same verb is used of these *ndr*-images or stelae as is used of funerary or memorial stelae: *yʿn*?

Lapithos Inscription III

Loc. / Num.	Cyprus Museum, Nicosia.
Dimensions	0.81 m x 0.395 m x 0.81 m rectangular white marble stone.
Discovery	Discovered in the village school of Larnax tēs Lapēthou (Larnaca-tis-Lapithou; modern Lapithos or Lapethos) in Cyprus by Mr. T. B. Mitford in the 1930s.
Studies	Honeyman 1938; Magnanini 1973, 125-127; Greenfield 1987
Date	345-315 BCE

A white marble inscription of nine lines was found in Lapithos on the north-west coast of Cyprus. The right-hand corners have been broken away, and the lower part of the stone is badly weathered, making the inscription both incomplete and difficult to read.

Honeyman's original translation of the text read:¹³³

- (1) [I, Param,¹³⁴ son of] Ger 'aštart, cult-supervisor [*mqm ʾlm* or “establisher of the gods”] and sacrificer of the sin-offering [*wšwʾ*], who am in charge of Lapethos... in the territory of...
- (2) [offer]ed this statue-image [*sml mš z*] of bronze¹³⁵ in the presence of my lord Melqart in Narnaka [*bnrnk*] on the thirteenth (13th) day of the of the month *.rm* in the year 13 of the king...
- (3) ...ippos, king of Lapethos and royal offspring of king Demonikos, **as a memorial [*lskrn*] among the living [*bḥym*]; may Melqart bless my stock [*šrš ybrk*]**! And in the month Mattan of the 3rd year of king Berekšeme[š king of Lapethos],
- (4) I, Param, [of]fered to my lord Melqart cups of silver numbering 6 and weighing a half-*mina* or 55 and a quarter *drachmae*, $\frac{1}{2}$ *mina*, 50
- (5) and 5 $\frac{1}{4}$. In the month Karar of the same year, in his temple, I Param, offered to my lord Osiris in Lapethos a [la]mp of go[ld], weighing 10 *ṭbʾm* or 8 *liṭrae* [*lṭrm*]. [In the month]
- (6) ...of the year 15 of the same king, I Para[m], set up for my fa[th]er in the temple of the goddess 'Aštart in Lapethos an image of b[ronze]... to my [la]dy 'A[š]tar[t] as a me[morial].¹³⁶
- (7) In the month... of the year... I [g]ave to my [la]dy 'A[š]tar[t]... of gol[d] weighing fifty-three 53 ... cups of silver whose nu[m]ber was...
- (8) one [thou]sand five hun[dr]ed and fi[fty].... In the month ... of the year... I, Par[am], in Lapethos, s]et up to...
- (9) ... in La[pe]thos and the gods of Byblos [*ʾgbl*] who are [in La]pethos... temple...



Figure III.17: Lapithos Inscription III (Honeyman 1938, pl. VI)

Despite the complicated syntax, context, and epigraphic problems of this inscriptions, line 3 seems to indicate that a statue or votive image (to which the inscribed marble may well have

¹³³ Honeyman 1938, 297; Phoenician transcriptions and emphasis added.

¹³⁴ See Honeyman 1938, 286-288 for a discussion of the name *prm*.

¹³⁵ While the phrase “of bronze” was left out of Honeyman's English translation (1938, 298), he includes the reading *bnḥšt* in his transcription (1938, 286), and textual discussion (1938, 290), so I have incorporated it here.

¹³⁶ Here too, Honeyman's (1938) transcription and discussion include the line-final phrase *ls[krn]* although it is not translated on page 298.

been affixed as a base) was erected *lskrn bḥym* “as a memorial among the living” or “as a memorial during life” – using what may be a Punic variant¹³⁷ *skr* for the root rendered *zkr* in other North West Semitic dialects (compare Hebrew *zikkārôn*, “memorial”).

It is tempting to see here another indication of the close relationship between the language of votive offerings and the language of remembrance / memorialization. This man, Param, an official of the religious establishment in Lapethos in the 5th century BCE, erects a votive statue “as a memorial among the living.” The phrase echoes the language of the Kition II inscription, discussed above, which used the phrase *mṣbt bḥym* followed by the *l*-preposition and the name of the donor’s father. Do both these phrases indicate the erecting of a votive (not a funerary or memorial) stele? Or can stelae like these be dedicated to the deceased, as easily as to the living? On the other hand, might the difference between the terms *skrn* and *mṣbt* be significant (perhaps one’s semantic range is limited to the votive or commemorative realm, while the other may be used to indicate a mortuary monument)? We need more corroborating data to draw conclusions from these two Cypriot occurrences.

Lapithos Inscription II

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum; RÉS 1211; Cooke 29; KAI 43
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in 1893 of Larnax tēs Lapēthou (Larnaca-tis-Lapithou; modern Lapithos or Lapethos) on the northern coast of Cyprus
Studies	Berger 1895; Halévy 1895; Clermont-Ganneau 1896; Lidzbarski 1898, 422; Landau 1899, 46-49; Cooke 1903 82-88; Honeyman 1941; Gibson 1982, 134-141.
Date	Reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (d. 246 BCE); perhaps 275-272 BCE

¹³⁷ Honeyman 1938, 290.

Another example of the dedicatory language of Lapethos – this time in the Ptolemaic period, written about one hundred fifty years after Inscription III from Lapithos, discussed above – shows a similar relationship between the votive use of Phoenician language and the language of memorialization or commemoration.

The inscription “is incised on a semicircular pedestal, on the top of which are two holes which prob[ably] served to hold the feet of a votive statue mentioned in the opening lines.”¹³⁸ The inscription covers sixteen lines, although the end of the first few lines and the beginning of the last few are damaged. The first line of the inscription is especially short, and has been interpreted as a label for the statue, although various suggestions on the word division and meaning of the label or identification have been proposed.

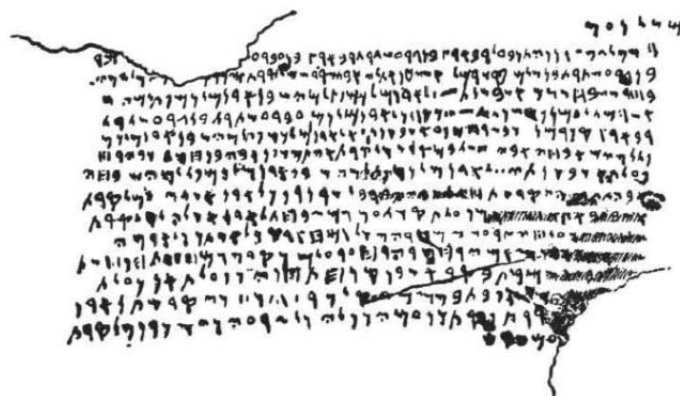


Figure III.18: Lapithos II (Berger 1895, 73)

Gibson translates as follows:

(1) Effigy for good fortune [*mš ln ʿm*]. (2) This statue is my effigy [*hsm̄l z mš̄l*], Yatanbaal’s, chief magistrate, son of Gerashtart, chief magistrate, son of Abda[start, chief magistrate, son of Abdo]sir, (3) son of Gerashtart, son of ŠLM, “fruit of Carmel” [*pr krm̄l*],¹³⁹ which I set up [*ʕ ytn ʿt̄*] for myself in the sanctuary of Melcarth [as a memorial among the living to bring good fortune to my name [*sk[r nʿm bh̄y]m lšmy*], (4) in the new-moon of the sacrifice [*zbl̄h*] of ŠŠM in the 11th year of lord of kings Ptolemy son of lord of kings Ptolemy, (5) which is in the

¹³⁸ Gibson 1982, 134.

¹³⁹ Honeyman reads *prkr̄dml*, reading this phrase as a transcription of the Greek προεχ(εις) (του) δήμων “prominent among the people, leading citizens” (Honeyman 1941, 62).

33rd year of the people of Lapethos; and the priest to lord of kings was Abdashtart son of Gerashtart, (6) chief magistrate, ‘fruit of Carmel.’ And in the month MP’ in the 4th year of lord of kings Ptolemy, son of lord of kings (7) Ptolemy, **in the lifetime of my father, I placed [yšt] in the sanctuary of Melcarth the effigy of the face of my father in bronze [mš pn ʔby bnḥšt].** And in the month (8) P’LT in the fifth year of lord of kings Ptolemy, son of lord of kings Ptolemy, in the lifetime (9) of my father, I gave and consecrated roaming beasts in the borders of the plain of Narnaka to the lord who is mine, Melcarth, (10) ... I made...¹⁴⁰ and altars for the lord who is mine, Melcarth, (11) **(to be serviced) on behalf of my life [ʔ hyy] and on behalf of the life of my seed [wʔ hy zrʔy], day by day [ym md ym], and (altars) for the legitimate shoot [wšmh šdq] and for his wife [wʔšt w] and for my folk [wʔdmy]** (12) [(to be serviced) on the new-]moons and on the full-moons, month by month **for ever, as aforesaid, in accordance with the tablet of bronze [km hdl t hnhšt]** (13) **[which] I wrote and nailed to the wall which is there as my gift of supplication [š bn mnḥt ḥny].** And I made above (14) ... of silver, weighing 102 KR, and I dedicated (it) to the lord (15) [who is mine], Melcarth. May I and my seed have profit and good fortune, and may Melcarth remember me (16) [(and grant me)] the good fortune of a stock [šrš]¹⁴¹

This is an extremely complicated text, and the breaks and other damage to the lines lead translators necessarily to conjecture. If Gibson’s translation is accurate, we see here a record of a number of different votive offerings in addition to the one marked by the inscription. Although the text was not commissioned as part of a burial, there are several features of this inscription that bare on the topics at hand. The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of Lapithos II:

- If Gibson’s reconstruction of line 3 is accurate, one can establish statues (*smḥ*) as “memorials among the living” (*skr bhym*) while one is alive (line 3).
- One can also place statues of others as votives, while they are alive (line 7).
- Concern for life, the life of one’s children, the life of one’s legal heir (*šmh*) and his heir’s wife, and for one’s *ʔdm*, are all indicated (line 11).
- Rituals may be honored or hoped for *ʔlm*, “forever” or perhaps “in perpetuity” (line 12).
- The final wish – for Melqart to give the dedicant descendants, or *šrš*, echoes the concerns details in line 11 (line 16).

¹⁴⁰ For a summary and analysis of previous attempts to read this first portion of this line, see Gibson 1982, 139-140.

¹⁴¹ Transliteration and emphasis added.

d. Egypt

Urn from Mit Rahineh, Memphis

Loc. / Num.	Cairo Museum no. 27323-3414
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Discovered in a necropolis in Memphis (Mit Rahineh)
Studies	Spiegelberg 1904, 89, no. 3414; Lidzbarski 1907, 123-125; Cross 1994, 97.
Date	5 th century BCE

A Cypro-Phoenician storage jar, reused as a funerary urn, was found in a necropolis in Memphis (Mit Rahineh), and first published in 1904. It was inscribed with two Phoenician words: *ʾlt šmḥ*. The inscription is followed by “an illegible demotic inscription.”¹⁴²

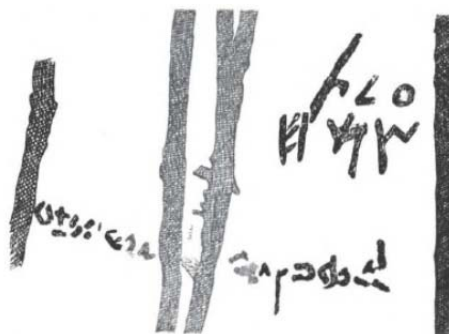


Figure III.19: Urn Inscription from Memphis Necropolis (Lidzbarski 1909, 124)

The vertical streaks running through the drawing are visible drips or stains from a liquid:

“Vom Inhalte einer harzigen Flüssigkeit sind Tropfen über den Bauch heruntergelaufen.”¹⁴³

The inscription is problematic, not least because the first term, *ʾlt*, is a homograph for many Semitic terms. The inscription could mean:

- 1) “On/over TN” – perhaps indicating the location of the vineyards from which the vessel’s contents (if they were wine) would have come.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Cross 1994, 97.

¹⁴³ Lidzbarski 1909, 124.

¹⁴⁴ Based on Spiegelberg’s (1904, 89) identification of the word for “garden” – specifically, “vineyard” – in the Demotic inscription: “Ich erkenne mit Sicherheit nur die Gruppe *kšm...* ‘Garten.’ Das Wort ist in den Weinotraka des Ramessems term. techn. Für den ‘Weingarten.’ Die aramäische Inschrift... bedeutet nach einer freundlichen Mitteilung von J. Euting ‘oberhalb *šmḥ*’ und könnte die Lage des Weingartens angeben.”

- 2) “For PN” – an unexpected variant on the usual *l*-formula¹⁴⁵ (perhaps indicating the vessel was a gift for a second party, or an offering on behalf of a second party, instead of simply owned by the person indicated)
- 3) “A burnt offering (for) PN” – indicating the Phoenician equivalent of the Hebrew term *‘ôlâ*.
- 4) “A burnt offering of a legitimate heir” – interpreting the second term as the word for “scion,” “offspring,” or “legitimate offspring,” with parallels from both the Hebrew (Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12) and Phoenician (Lapithos II from Cyprus, discussed above) corpora.¹⁴⁶

The fact that the vessel is of Cypro-Phoenician form, coupled with the Demotic and Phoenician bilingual inscription, could lead some to posit this was an ethnically Phoenician adult cremated and buried in Memphis. Others might see this as an indicator that the (Phoenician) practice of human sacrifice was kept (at least this one time) even in Memphis by devout diaspora members of the cult of *mlk*. To my knowledge, no study was done of any cremated remains still in the vessel, and the problematic nature of the term *‘lt* does not allow us to jump to these kinds of religious conclusions on the basis of so enigmatic an object.

e. Crete

To my knowledge, no Persian – Hellenistic period Phoenician inscriptions relating to burial practices have been found on Crete.

f. Greece

Athens Bilingual Lion Stele

Loc. / Num.	National Archaeological Museum, Athens NM 1488; CIS i 115; Cooke 32; KAI 54
Dimensions	1.42 m high x 0.48 m wide
Discovery	Discovered in the Kerameikos in Athens in the 19 th century (See Clairmont 1993-1995, vol. 3, 314)

¹⁴⁵ This is how Lidzbarski 1909, 124 reads the text.

¹⁴⁶ See Cross 1994.

Studies	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> II 2836; <i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> IP 8388; CIS i 115, pl. 21:23, no. 120; <i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> XXXIII 217, XL 223, XLI1543, XLII203; GKZT601; CEG 596; Henzen 1861; Sybel 1881; Conze 1893, no. 1175, pl. 258; Cooke 1903, 93-94; Kaltsas 2002, no. 376, 190; Stager 2005
Date	Late 4 th – 2 nd centuries BCE

A funerary stele found in the 19th century and restudied in 2005, “commemorates the death of an Ashkelonite seafarer, ṢM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος.”¹⁴⁷ The stele has three registers of information: a bilingual inscription on the top third of the marble, a carved illustration in the middle register, and a six line explanation of the image in Greek only across the bottom third.

The piece has been dated on the basis of the Phoenician letter forms to the late 4th-3rd centuries BCE, and independently on the basis of the Greek letter forms to the late 3rd – 2nd centuries BCE.¹⁴⁸ There is some damage to the upper right side of the stele, but two lines of Greek and two lines of Phoenician epitaph are still legible.



Figure III.20: Bilingual Phoenician and Greek Funerary Stele from Athens (Stager 2005, 429)

¹⁴⁷ Stager 2005, 427.

¹⁴⁸ Frank Moore Cross dated the Phoenician inscription and Stephen Tracy the Greek inscription, in Stager 2005.

The two lines of Greek may be translated “Antipatros [son of] Aphrodisios, the Ashkel(onite) [Ἀσκαλ]. Domsalos [son of] Domano, the Sidonian, dedicated [this stele].” The Phoenician inscription reads, in parallel:

ʔnk šm[.] bn ʔbd ʔštrt ʔšqlny / ʔš ytn ʔt ʔnk dʔmšlh bn dʔmhn ʔšdny

I [am] *šm*, son of Abdashtart, the Ashkelonite. [This is the stele] which I, Domšeleḥ, son of Domhano, the Sidonian, erected.

Stager argues that the relationship between the Phoenician name *šm* and the Greek name Antipatros is not one of linguistic equivalency:

The deceased answered to a Phoenician name among Phoenician speakers and to a Greek name among Greek speakers. Unlike the other Phoenicians mentioned, who retained markedly foreign [i.e. marked by the -ώς and -ώ endings used to designate foreign names as masculine] but Greek versions of their own names, the deceased appears to have used an unmarked Hellenic name when in Hellas.¹⁴⁹

Though the Greek text leads at the top of the monument, the Phoenician epitaph preserves the first-person appositional convention of some Levantine Phoenician funerary stelae (“I [am] PN...”). Stager also notes that while the presence of two languages in a personal inscription like this one does not always indicate “true bilingualism,” she writes that “in this particular stele... the sophistication of the name transfers, the dual naming of the deceased, and the length of the Greek epigram demonstrate sufficient linguistic proficiency to apply the term bilingual.”¹⁵⁰

The image on the stele depicts the body of the deceased lying across a bier. A lion leans over the left side of the body and lifts the head of the deceased into its mouth – the epigram below the inscription confirms all this. Across from the lion, on the right side of the image, a naked man (his head and arms obscured by damage to the stele) attempts to fend off the lion.

¹⁴⁹ Stager 2005, 431.

¹⁵⁰ Stager 2005, 432.

A reverse S-shape (identified in the epigram as a ship’s prow) is visible behind the three figures in the foreground.¹⁵¹ The image is explained via a six line epigram in Greek, which is not represented in any equivalent Phoenician text, but describes (in the first-person, as if told from the perspective of the deceased) the story of the deceased’s friends’ rescue of his body from the “hateful lion” [εἰχθηρολέων]. It ends with the pronouncement: “I left Phoenicia [φοινίκην] and I, a body, am buried in this land.”

The monument makes several observations possible. First, the monument was erected by the deceased man’s friend, a Sidonian (presumably one of the friends who had saved his body from the lion). Second, the deceased man was from Ashkelon; this is a fact illustrated not only by ethnic identification (by the gentilic *ʿšqlny*), but re-emphasized through narrative detail in the final line of the Greek epitaph. The deceased is reported to have “left Phoenicia,” presumably the land he still called home. The emphasis on his being buried “in this land,” i.e. in Athens, away from his homeland, seems designed to illustrate the tragedy of this situation. Illustrating this in the language of that foreign land might well have been designed to appeal to all those who wish to be buried at home.

This is also the first time the term “Phoenicia” or an equivalent Semitic word – that is, a term used to describe the central coastal Levant which *included* several cities thought of today as Phoenician – appears in a mortuary context. The two featured men, one from Sidon, one from Ashkelon, seem to have left “Phoenicia” together, one never to return.

Athens Bilingual Stele I

Loc. / Num.	British Museum; CIS i 116; KAI 53; Gibson 40
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¹⁵¹ Although the prow of the ship and the man fighting off the lion have been conflated for years as a single mixed form, Stager argues that the two figures should be read as separate iconographic elements (2005, 434).

Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Marble stele found in 1795 in an unknown location in Athens.
Studies	Donner and Röllig 1973, 70; Gibson 1982, 147-148
Date	ca. 400 BCE

Another Greek and Phoenician bilingual inscription was found in the late 18th century in Athens, Greece. The Greek is inscribed at the top of the stele, but the Phoenician text includes more detail:

Greek: (1) Ἀρτεμίδορος (2) Ἡλιοδώρου (3) Σιδώνιος
 “Artemidoros (son of) Heliodoros, a Sidonian

Phoenician: (1) *mšbt skr bhym l'bdnt bn* (2) *'bdšmš hšdny*
 “Pillar of remembrance among the living for Abdtannit son of Abdshemesh, the Sidonian”

In this case, the personal names of the deceased are not simply transcribed or transliterated from one language to another, but are instead translated: the Phoenician name *'Abdtanit* (“servant of Tanit”¹⁵²) is rendered *Artemidōros* in Greek (“servant of Artemis”); the same is true for the deceased’s father’s name – “servant of the sun-god” in both languages.

Again we see the deceased’s identity rendered in terms of a city name in Gentilic form – “a Sidonian” – included in both versions of the epitaph. But in the Phoenician text, the stele itself is identified as a *mšbt skr bhym*, a “pillar of remembrance among the living.” This may shed some light on the examples from Cyprus already surveyed. No vow is mentioned, and no donor indicated to mark this inscription as a votive offering; the Greek epitaph indicates only the name of the deceased, his immediate genealogical past, and his ethnic or cultural identity. Might this idiom, a “pillar of remembrance among the living,” be the *plene* form of the technical Phoenician term for a grave marker? Are we beginning to unravel some of the close linguistic and semantic similarities to terms for votive offerings?

¹⁵² This name has been used as evidence supportive of a Levantine origin for the goddess Tanit (see for example Pritchard 1978, 107).

Athens Bilingual Stele II

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum, AO 4834; CIS i 117; KAI 55
Dimensions	90 cm high x 30 cm wide
Discovery	A white marble stele discovered in the vicinity of the Academy gardens in Athens, reported by Louis François Sébastien Fauvel, consul of France. Brought to the Louvre in 1817.
Studies	Saulcy 1843, 31-45; Longpérier 1854, 140; Gubel 2002, 157.
Date	350-300 BCE



Figure III.21: Athens Bilingual Stele II (Gubel 2002, 157)

This white marble stele from Athens features a pediment decorated with leaves and other foliage carved in relief. A Phoenician inscription directly below the pediment reads:

lbnḥdš bn ʿbdmlqrt / bn ʿbdšmš bn tgnš ʾš kty
 “For Benhodesh, son of ‘Abdmilqart, son of ‘Abdshamash, son of *tgnš*, man of Kition.”

A Greek inscription follows on two lines, separated from its Phoenician counterpart by two large rosettes, carved in relief and arranged side by side.

Νουμήνιος / Κιτιεύς “Noumenios / Kition”

The inscription has been dated on the basis of its script to the second half of the fourth century. The name of the man commemorated in this stele, Benhodesh, or “son of the new

moon,” has been translated for its rendering in Greek, although the man’s patrilineal descent is included in only the Phoenician inscription. The man is described in both languages as originating from the city of Kition on Cyprus.

Demetrias Bilingual Stele I

Loc. / Num.	Museum of Volvo E 433
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	Fragments of the upper portion of a stele discovered in 1909 in Demetrias, Thessaly.
Studies	Arvanitopoulos 1909, 249; Masson 1969, 694-696, no. 4, fig. 9; Röllig 1972, 1.
Date	3 rd century BCE

A fragmented Greek and Phoenician bilingual stele was found in Thessaly at the site of Demetrias in 1909. The inscription was dated by Röllig to the 3rd century BCE on the basis of its script, which he called “recht ungelenk und provinziell.”¹⁵³ The inscription consists of three lines of Greek above a single line of Phoenician; it was found in two pieces, and the vertical break in the stone obscures both the Greek and Phoenician text. Röllig reads the extant text as follows:

Greek: (1) [Ἄ]σκληπιάδης (2) [...]κλέους (3) [Σιδ]ώνιος ἱερεὺς
 “Asklapiadas ...kleous, a Sidonian priest”

Phoenician: [ʿbd] ʿšmn [...]š[?] sydn[y]
 “Abd-Eshmun ... , a Sidonian”

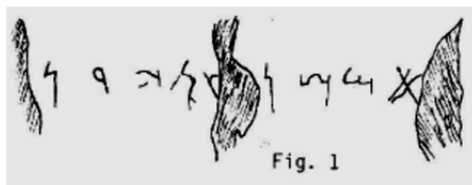


Figure III.22: Phoenician Portion of Demetrias Inscription I (Röllig 1972, 1)

¹⁵³ Röllig 1972, 2.



Figure III.23: Greek and Phoenician Portions of Demetrias Inscription I (Masson 1969, fig. 9)

The break in the middle of the Phoenician inscription prevents interpretation of the second term (following the personal name), but both Phoenician and Greek texts reinforce the identification of the deceased as a “Sidonian.”

The inclusion of the occupation or title of the deceased in the Greek inscription is notable – this is very rare among the other Greek inscriptions in the necropolis at Demetrias.¹⁵⁴ While we cannot be sure the title of “priest” was reproduced in the Phoenician text of the final line of the inscription, the Greek notation gives us a hint at what social rank this individual held in life, and that this status was important enough (either to him or to the family member who erected the monument) to include on his funerary stele. Whether or not we conclude with Masson that this represents the grave of an ethnically Phoenician priest at Demetrias,¹⁵⁵ we can say that this priest saw currency (social, ethnic, political, or some other cultural value) in representing his name for two linguistic audiences. Although Greek topped the monument, took up more of its face, and included more detail, the deceased’s identification as “a Sidonian” and the use of Phoenician language show how important this Levantine identity was to whoever erected this stele for the deceased.

¹⁵⁴ See Mason 1969, 696 for details.

¹⁵⁵ Mason 1969, 696.

Demetrias Bilingual Stele II

Loc. / Num.	Museum of Volvo A 31; Arvanitopoulos no. 31
Dimensions	99 cm high
Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Arvanitopoulos 1909, 206f; Masson 1969, 698-699, no. 5.
Date	200 BCE

A 99 cm high bilingual marble stele from Demetrias features both Greek and Phoenician inscriptions. The Greek words are separated from one another by horizontal dashes. In this case, the Phoenician inscription (which offers more detail) is situated above the Greek inscription, although both take up two lines:

Phoenician: (1) *mšbt qbry ʾnk ʾbdy* (2) *bn ʾbdʾInm ʾrwdy*
“[this is the] pillar of my grave, I, ‘Abdi son of ‘Abd-ʾInm, an Arwadite.”

Greek: (1) Δημήτριος Ἴερω (2) νύμου Ἀράδιος
“Demetrios [son of] Heironomos, the Aradian”



Figure III.24: Demetrias Bilingual Inscription II (Masson 1969, fig. 10)

While it is not clear whether the deceased mentioned in this stele translated his name or used alternative Greek and Phoenician names,¹⁵⁶ his father seems to have used two names equivalent in meaning. The mention of the deceased’s origins or ties to Arwad / Arados, a Phoenician town on the southern coast of Syria (on an island 3 km from Tartus), are also noteworthy. Three other Greek inscriptions from the Demetrias necropolis indicate an

¹⁵⁶ See discussion in Röllig 1972, 2 for his attempts to make ‘Abdi and Demetrios correlate in meaning.

Aradian ethnonym (Arvanitopoulos no. 187, 195, and 294), although their names do not indicate any evidence of Semitic influence.¹⁵⁷

In this instance, the inscription refers to the stele itself as *mšbt qbry*, “a pillar of my grave,” a phrase unique among the inscriptions from Cyprus and Greece under review. It seems that multiple terms or phrases for the grave marker were in use in the 4th-3rd centuries BCE Phoenician vocabulary, and this inscription adds another to the repertoire.

Demetrias Bilingual Stele III

Loc. / Num.	Museum of Volvo A 76; Arvanitopoulos no. 76
Dimensions	93 cm high marble stele
Discovery	[unavailable]
Studies	Arvanitopoulos 1909, 290f; Launey 1949-1950, 489; Masson 1969, 699, no. 6.
Date	4 th -3 rd centuries BCE (Masson dates the text to 225 BCE)

The one line Phoenician inscription from this marble stele sits below a two line Greek inscription of larger letter size:

Greek: (1) Σώκατρος (2) Διοδ<ι>ώρου Κιτιεύ(ς)
 “Socatros (son of) Diadoros, the Kitionite”

Phoenician: *šmʔdn bn ḥʔr hkty*
 “šm-ʾAdon son of Ḥor, the Kitionite”

¹⁵⁷ Masson writes of these three inscriptions: “mais avec une onomastique très banale” (1969, 698).



Figure III.25: Demetrias Bilingual Inscription III (Masson 1969, fig. 11)

The personal names on this stele do not seem to show any kind of correspondence between Greek and Phoenician renderings, although both indicate the deceased comes from Kition on Cyprus. This ethnonym or city of origin is not found elsewhere in the necropolis at Demetrias.¹⁵⁸

Piraeus Bilingual Stele

Loc. / Num.	CIS i 119; Cooke 35
Dimensions	[unavailable]
Discovery	From Piraeus, a port city 12 km southwest of Athens.
Studies	Cooke 1903, 100-101.
Date	3 rd century BCE

The Greek inscription reads just: Ἀσεπτῆ Εὔσελήμου Σιδωνία, while the Phoenician inscription elaborates in the first person from the perspective of the deceased:

I am Aseptā, daughter of Eshmun-shillem, a Sidonian. (This is the stele) which Yathan-bel, son of Eshmun-šilleḥ, chief-priest of the god Nergal, set up to me [yṯn ʔly].

This inscription illustrates an unclear relationship between a Sidonian woman and the man (a priest of Nergal) who erected a stele for her. No familial or marital relationship is posited

¹⁵⁸ Although Masson indicates, “mais il est assez frequent en Attique,” (1969, 699).

between the two; was she an unmarried benefactor of the cult of Nergal? Or perhaps the unmarried daughter of a family member who had also past? It is easy to speculate.

Unfortunately, the term used to describe the stele itself is omitted; only the expected verbal element *yṯn*² indicates the nature of the agency involved.

Rhodes Bilingual Marble Plaque

Loc. / Num.	Rhodes Museum no. ΠΒΕ 1233
Dimensions	0.13 m high x 0.243 m wide x 0.065 m thick
Discovery	Found on the surface in 1968 in eastern necropolis near the church of Panagia Phaneromene in Rhodes.
Studies	Fraser 1970
Date	200 CE

A dark grey marble plaque, complete in its dimensions and “rough-picked on all sides for affixing into a stele or similar object,”¹⁵⁹ was found in the area of the eastern necropolis on Rhodes. Its bilingual inscription reads:

Phoenician: *lʿbdmlqrt bn ʿbdssm bn tgnṣ*
 “For Abdemelqart, son of ‘Abdsasom, son of *tgnṣ*”

Greek: Ἡρακλείδης Κιτιεύς
 “Heraclides of Citium (Kition)”

The inscription has been dated epigraphically to ca. 200 BCE or slightly later. As in the Cypriot cases of the sarcophagus from Kition and the Pergamos inscription (both discussed above), here the Phoenician marks the final resting place of the deceased with only a *l*-preposition preceding the identification of the buried individual.

The disparity between the information contained in the Phoenician inscription (two generations of genealogical information) and that of the Greek text (the city of origin or

¹⁵⁹ Fraser 1970, 31.

ethnonym of the individual) is curious,¹⁶⁰ although it may well indicate which identifying information was thought to be of more use to members of each linguistic audience (i.e. specific kinship ties among other speakers of Phoenicians, versus foreign origin among Greek-speaking passers-by).

g. Italy

Gold Laminae from Pyrgi

Loc. / Num.	Now in the Museo archeologico di Villa Giulia in Rome; KAI 277; Gibson 42
Dimensions	9.2 cm wide x 19.3-18.7 cm high x 0.05 cm thick
Discovery	Found in 1964 along with two gold plates bearing Etruscan inscriptions at the site of Pyrgi (Santa Severa; the port of Caere / Cerveteri), about 24 miles northwest of Rome, during excavations conducted by the Istituto di Etruscologia of the University of Rome.
Studies	Colonna, Pallottino, Borelli, and L. and G. Garbini 1964; Garbini 1964; Ferron 1965; Höfner and Pfiffig 1966; Fitzmyer 1966; Rix and Fischer 1968; Lipiński 1974, 59-61; Beyerlin 1978, 243-244; Gibson 1982, 151-159; Knoppers 1992; Schmitz 1995
Date	ca. 500 BCE (not later than the 4 th century BCE)

Three small gold plates or sheets of lamina were discovered in Pyrgi in 1964; the texts would originally have been attached to another object via the small holes that were made around their edges. The three plaques or laminae were not found *in situ* – “each had been folded up, and the three of them were lying in a niche (or *favissa*) between the two temples at Pyrgi. Certain architectural fragments were found with them, and among these were gilt-

¹⁶⁰ Fraser concludes, “it is a characteristic of Semitic tombstones and dedications to record patronymics and papponymics, but in bilingual texts the practice of recording the papponymic is not found in the Greek part, in which the Hellenized Phoenician is recorded as normal Greek” (1970, 32).

headed rivets still fixed to a terracotta slab. They seem to have belonged to a part of Temple B, perhaps to the *cella*.”¹⁶¹

Two of the laminae were inscribed with Etruscan writing, and a third with nine lines of Phoenician text;¹⁶² the content of each is similar to the others, but the Phoenician and Etruscan versions do not constitute exact parallels. The Phoenician inscription is dedicated to Astarte (the Etruscan text seems to dedicate similar sentiments to Uni, the Latin goddess Juno), made for a building erected or improved by Tiberie Welianash, the Etruscan ruler of a city called *kyšry*? or “Caere” (lines 3-4), on the goddess’s behalf. Although the text has been dated as early as the second half of the 6th century,¹⁶³ the archaeological context places the inscription most likely circa 500 BCE,¹⁶⁴ and the date cannot be later than the 4th century BCE.



Figure III.26: Pyrgi Lamina with Phoenician Inscription (left, Schmitz 1995, 560; right, Knoppers 1992, 107)

Several interpretations of the Phoenician text have been offered since its discovery. Most have argued that it is a dedicatory inscription, although several linguistic difficulties

¹⁶¹ Fitzmyer 1966, 285; Knoppers 1992, 106, n. 5 suggests they were attached to a wooden door, but Knoppers does not seem aware that the “small nails with gold heads” found by the excavation team were found in a clay, not wood (according to Fitzmyer).

¹⁶² What Schmitz calls “the Mediterranean dialect of Phoenician” (1995, 562 and 571)

¹⁶³ Ferron 1965.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Knoppers 1992, 108 for a discussion of this debate.

obscure the content, circumstances, and significance of the inscription. One of these difficulties involves the meaning of the nominal clause *qbr ʾlm*, perhaps “the burial of the deity” (lines 8-9), which occurs in a larger temporal clause (lines 5-9) to mark the date of the building of a dedicated building chamber or niche. The festival or ritual being referred to in these lines is not elaborated upon nor described; instead, it is mentioned in passing as, perhaps, a commonly known calendrical date.

In 1992, Knoppers published an article drawing attention, for the first time, to the funerary character of the Pyrgi inscriptions, arguing:

Although over thirty studies have appeared analyzing this lamina, widespread disagreement remains regarding the number, types, and functions of the objects to which it refers. Nevertheless, virtually all treatments have labeled the Pyrgi text a dedicatory inscription, without recognizing the funereal character of the dedication. In my judgment, the formal elements of a dedication to Astarte are here used to convey a decidedly funerary theme. Thebariye Velinas constructs this sacred place to honor a dead and deified person, possibly the crown prince. Both dedicated to and requested by Astarte, the Pyrgi shrine commemorates the burial of the recently deceased.¹⁶⁵

Knoppers’ interpretation is an attempt to solve several linguistic oddities in the text.

Knoppers asks, “dedicatory inscriptions typically begin with a description of the object dedicated to a deity and conclude with a supplication to that deity to bless the donor.... Why does the donor of the Pyrgi shrine, Thebariye Velinas, request perpetual residence for the divine being and not long life for himself or the shrine he has built and dedicated?”¹⁶⁶ In light of this anomaly, and the strangeness of referring to a specific deity with the generic *ʾlm*, Knoppers suggests that this term refers to the deceased (plural), those who would be living on

¹⁶⁵ Knoppers 1992, 105.

¹⁶⁶ Knoppers 1992, 114.

(in some form) not in their “temple” but in their “tombs,”¹⁶⁷ a practice in keeping with Etruscan burial beliefs and customs.¹⁶⁸ Knoppers’ interpretation contributed much to the discussion, although his translation has not been universally accepted. Schmitz’s 1995 article convincingly addressed several of the linguistic problems in the inscription. He translates as follows:

For the Lady, for Astarte (is) this holy place [?šr qdš ?z] which Thefarie Velunas, king over Kaysriye [mlk ʾkysry], made, and which he put in the temple in *mtn*, the month of solar sacrifices [byrh zbh šmš]. And he built a chamber because Astarte requested (this) from him, year three – 3 – of his reign, in the month of *krr*, on the day of the deity’s interment [bym qbr ʾlm]. And (as for) the years of one who makes a gift to the deity in her temple, (may) these (be) years like the stars [km hkkbm ?].

The month names mentioned in this inscription were still in use on Cyprus in the Hellenistic period,¹⁶⁹ and the order of the year, month, and day of the date cited therein seems to be an emphatic inversion of the date formula known from Cyprus as well.¹⁷⁰ The cultural ties between this Phoenician inscription of Etruscan provenance (and with affiliated inscriptions written in Etruscan) and a Cypriot milieu are evident in several details, but the precise significance of these connections is not clear.

h. Sicily & Malta

Motya, or Mozia, is a small island (2.5 km in circumference) off the northwestern coast of Sicily (renamed “San Pantaleo” in the 11th century CE, a name it still bears today). The Phoenician city at Motya is thought to date to the second half of the 8th century BCE (and to

¹⁶⁷ The use of the term *bt* in funerary contexts (to mean “tomb” or “grave”) can be found in Isaiah 14:18, Psalm 49:12, and in several Aramaic texts; Knoppers 1992, 118. Knoppers goes on to say that “in the Pyrgi text, the deity’s tomb is located within the temple; hence, his ‘house’ comprises both temple and tomb.”

¹⁶⁸ On this point, Knoppers cites G. Dumézil (1970) *Archaic Roman Religion*, and points out that “the tombs at Care resembled houses of the living” (Knoppers 1992, 117, n. 74).

¹⁶⁹ In Larn 3.3 (Honeyman 1938, 286, 292), cited in Schmitz 1995, 564.

¹⁷⁰ Schmitz 1995, 567-568.

have covered approximately 100 acres), and was destroyed by Dionysius I of Syracuse in 397 BCE. At that time the surviving population of Motya is thought to have in large part abandoned the city for the site of Birgi, the closest point on the mainland of Sicily. First excavated by Schliemann in the late 19th century, the island was purchased by J. I. S. Whitaker in the early 20th century, and excavations were undertaken intermittently from 1906 to 1974. Several cemeteries are affiliated with the island of Motya – a cremation cemetery for adults, a cremation cemetery (or “tophet”) for infants, and a cemetery at Birgi on mainland Sicily.

Motya Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	Amadasi Guzzo no. 1-13, 15-35, 37-40 [Thirty-eight inscribed stelae from Motya; two more discussed already in Chapter II]
Dimensions	30-70 cm high x 25-40 cm wide
Discovery	1875: Excavations by Schliemann 1906-1919: Excavations by Whitaker 1930: Excavations by Marconi 1955, 1958, 1961: Excavations by Isserlin and Cintas 1961-1974: Excavations by the Italian Mission (directed by Moscati and Ciasca)
Studies	Ciasca et al. 1978; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a; Amadasi Guzzo 1986b
Date	6 th – 3 rd centuries BCE

As first addressed in Chapter II, the cremation cemetery located 200m west of the adult cremation cemetery on the island was not originally identified as a “tophet,” but as “A Burial-Ground for the Remains of Sacrificed Offerings.”¹⁷¹ Discovered by Whitaker in the spring of 1919, the cemetery is located within the city walls that encircle the island such that the wall forms the boundary of the cemetery on one side. Whitaker excavated two trial trenches to reveal approximately 150 urns containing incinerated bones, reporting in 1921 as follows:

Of these about one-third have been examined by competent anatomists, with the result that, although the contents of many of them are quite indeterminable, a certain number have been found to belong to human infants

¹⁷¹ Whitaker 1921, 257.

of a very tender age, though the greater part are those of young domestic and other animals, such as lambs and kids, calves, dogs and cats, and, in one case, of a monkey. The remains of ruminants would appear to predominate.¹⁷²

The bulk of subsequent excavation of the cremation cemetery came under the direction of Moscati, who ran a decade-long project at the site. There seems to be no evidence for a temple structure within its boundaries.

Though the urn deposits at the Motya infant cremation cemetery (or tophet site) are thought to date from the 7th century to the first half of the 3rd century BCE, stelae do not appear to have been used to mark some of the burials until the first half of the 6th century BCE (stratum V), reaching their peak in the late 6th – early 5th century BCE.¹⁷³ Of the more than 1000 stelae uncovered at the tophet / infant cremation cemetery (35 x 27 m in size) only forty feature inscriptions (or red paint that is still visible) in Phoenician, although it is not always clear from the excavations reports which stelae came from the cemetery, and which from re-use in the surrounding wall.¹⁷⁴

Dating the stelae has been accomplished on the basis of the inscriptions, the less-disturbed, earlier strata (since sand levels were put down whenever the tophet needed more space or reorganization¹⁷⁵), and the use of ceramic comparanda from Carthage and other sites on Sicily.¹⁷⁶ The general date of the burials has been confirmed on the basis of the ceramic

¹⁷² Whitaker 1921, 257. His earlier 1920 summary stated that, “An analysis of about a score of these burials would show that one only contains human remains, those of an infant, while the others all contain the remains of inferior animals, among them those of ruminants somewhat predominating, though those of dogs, cats, and even of a monkey, are represented” (Whitaker 1920, 180).

¹⁷³ Amadasi Guzzo 1986b, 192. She adds that “ogni urna non era obbligatoriamente accompagnata da una stele,” for any period.

¹⁷⁴ “At Motya the excavation of the ‘tophet’ has been carried forward. The area measures 35 x 27 m. and is surrounded by a temenos wall now dated to the first half of the sixth century B.C. Incorporated in the wall are scores of reused Punic stelae, many in a fine state of preservation and bearing Punic inscriptions...” (Holloway 1971, 80).

¹⁷⁵ Ciasca in Ciasca et al. 1970, 71-72.

¹⁷⁶ “In 1961 B.S. J. Isserlin directed further excavations at the site and Pierre Cintas worked in the tophet. ...In 1964 the Università di Roma began a decade of excavations at Motya with Sabatino Moscati in charge of the tophet....

types and a few coins included with a handful of the cremations.¹⁷⁷ The two stelae which date to the Iron Age II period were discussed in Chapter II (numbers 14 and 36, which belong to type I/1; see below), but these together with the remaining thirty-eight inscribed stelae (dating to the Iron III / Persian period) are listed in Table III.1. Approximate dates may be determined according to the following archaeological strata:

- Stratum V: early 6th century BCE
- Stratum IV: late 6th century BCE
- Stratum III: early 5th century BCE
- Stratum II: late 5th century BCE to the destruction of the site (397 BCE)

Table III.1: Inscribed Stelae from the Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” at Motya

No.	Phoenician Inscription	Context	Bibliography
1	[lʿdn lbʿl] ḥmn // [mntnt] ʿš ndr + ʿbd // [bn] ḥnn bn ḥqm	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1966, 109-114, n. 1; Teixidor 1968, 375, no. 79; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 892; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 15.
2	lbʿl ḥmn bnd ... ʿš[// qr[]k šmʿ ql dbry	Stratum III?	Ciasca et al. 1966, 115, n. 2; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 1008; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 16.
3	lʿdn lbʿl [l] ḥmn nšb // [ʿ]š ndr + bʿl [] bn ḥnn	Stratum IV	Brancoli et al. 1967, 73-76, n. 2; Teixidor 1968, 375, no. 81; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 941; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 16-17.
4	lʿdn lbʿl ḥmn // ... // bn ḥnn [b]n ḥqm	Stratum IV	Brancoli et al. 1967, 76-81, n. 3; Teixidor 1968, 375, no. 82; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 259; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 17-18.
5	lʿdn lbʿl // ndr bʿly // bn bʿlytn // bn ʿbdmlk	Stratum IV	Brancoli et al. 1967, 71-73, n. 1; Teixidor 1968, 375, no. 80; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 247; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 18.
6	lʿdn lbʿl ḥmn // ʿš ndr bʿl[]. mtn	Stratum III	Brancoli et al. 1967, 55; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 736; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 20.
7	<⤵ lʿdn bʿl ḥmn mlkt ...	Stratum III?	Ciasca et al. 1968, 98, n. 3; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 786; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 20.
8	ʿršʿ bn ḥmlkt	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1968, 98-99, n. 4; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 680; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 20-21.
9	šml bʿl n ...	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1968, 101-102, n. 6; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 946; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 21-22.

The final number of stelae excavated from Motya amounted to over 1,000. Approximately 400 were discovered in 1969 alone.... In the early years of the excavation no stelae were discovered *in situ*.... By 1970 Moscati had recognized seven phases of the tophet, levels VII-V dating from the seventh to the mid-sixth century and existing in the west, Levels IV-III dating from the mid-sixth to the fifth century and representing an extension of the sanctuary to the east” (Brown 1986, 75).

Whitaker mentions the early problems resulting from the area’s agricultural use: “Many stelae are to be found in this burial-ground, particularly in one part of it. Most of them, however, are not in an upright position, but are lying prone on the ground, as if they had been either purposely thrown down, or, as seems more probable, overturned by the plough, in the course of agricultural work” (Whitaker 1921, 258).

¹⁷⁷ “A few coins have been found in some of the vases, and, in two or three cases, small fragments of bronze and iron. None of the coins is of a date anterior to the fifth century B.C., showing that this burial-ground belongs to the later period of Motya’s history” (Whitaker 1921, 258).

10	<i>rpʔbʳ ...</i>	Stratum IV?	Ciasca et al. 1968, 100-101, n. 5; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 902; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 22.
11 ¹⁷⁸	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰm//n mt//nt ʔš ndr bʳlʳ//zr//bn ʳ//bdʳ</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1968, 96-97, n. 1; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 760; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 22-23.
12	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰ//mn mtnt ʔš nd//r ʔdy[</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1968, 97-98; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 1130; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 23-24.
13	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn m//tnt ʔš ndr[</i>	Stratum IV	Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 620; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 24.
14	<i>lʔdn // bʳl // ʰmn // mtnt // ʔš nd//r ʳzr</i>	Stratum V	Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 433; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 24-25.
15	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʲl ʰmn[</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 95-96, n. 1; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 912; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 25.
16	<i>[ʲ]ʔdn lbʳl ʰmn // [m]tnt ʔš ndr ʳbdlm ʰyʳr</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 96-97, n. 2; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 727; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 26.
17	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʲl[// bdʳ bn ...</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 97-98, n. 3; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 844; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 26.
18	<i>lʔdn bʳl ʰm//n ʔš ndr ʰm//lkt bn ʳbdy</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 98-99, n. 4; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 750; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 27.
19	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn // mtnt ʔš ndr ʳ//bdʳmn bn ʳbd // bʳl bn ʳdy bn ʳ//zbʳl</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 99-100, n. 5; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 755; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 27-28.
20	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰm//n mtnt ʔš ndr [//]kt bn ... [//]ksy</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 100-101, n. 6; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 753; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 28.
21	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn mtnt ʔš ndr</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 101-102, n. 7; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 752; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 29.
22	<i>bʳl lʔdn ʰmtnt ʔš ndr // šlm w bʳlʰnn šn bn k</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 102-104, n. 8; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 649; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 29-30.
23	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn mtr<ʳ> // t ʔš ndr yknšlm bʳl // n ʳbdmlqrt k šmʳ ql dbr // y</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 104-105, n. 9; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 920; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 30-31.
24	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn mlkt ʔš <ʳ> // ytn ʳbdmlqrt bn bdgd // bn ʔšmn ʳzr bn ʳbd // mskr k šmʳ ql dbry</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 105-106, n. 10; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 730; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 31-32.
25	<i>lʔdnn lbʳl ʰmn mt//ʲn/kt</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 106-107, n. 11; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 723; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 32.
26	<i>[ʲ]ʔdn lbʳl ʰm[ʲn] mtnt ʔš ndr[</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 107, n. 12; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 545; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 33.
27 ¹⁷⁹	<i>lʔdn bʳl ʲl ʰ//mn ʔš ndr // [b]ʲlysp // mtr bn</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 107-108, n. 13; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 808; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 33-34.
28	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn mtnt ʔš nd//r ʳbdmlqrt bn šʰrr bn bʳl // ysp</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 108-109, n. 14; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 917; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 34.
29	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰm//n mtnt ʔš ndr // [ʲ]ʲšbʳl bn bdʳ bn // [... k šmʳ ql] dbry</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 109-110, n. 15; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 731; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 34-35.
30	<i>ʔdn bʳl ʰmn ʳ//š ndr bʳlʰnn bn k/lbʳ</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 113-114, n. 19; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 749; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 35-36.
31	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn // mlkt bʳl ʔš ndr // ʰmlkt bn mtn</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1970, 110-111, n. 16; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 756; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 36.
32	<i>lʔdn lbʳl ʰmn mtnt ʔš [// .tt bn ʳbqm bn grʲ</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 112-113, n. 18; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 904; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 37.
33	<i>]ytn // ʰnbʳl bn tyn ... [</i>	Stratum IV?	Ciasca et al. 1970, 111-112, n. 17; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 916; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 37-38.
34	<i>[ʲ]ʔdn lbʳl ʰ[mn mtn/lk] // t ʔš ndr ʰmlkt</i>	Stratum IV?	Ciasca et al. 1970, 114-115, n. 20; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 685; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 38.

¹⁷⁸ Inscription number 11 wraps around the base of the stele, covering three sides.

¹⁷⁹ Inscription number 27 wraps around the base of its stele onto two sides.

35	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn // mtnt ʹš ndr . // šmnʹms bn ḥqm</i>	Stratum IV	Ciasca et al. 1970, 115-116, n. 21; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 316; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 38-39.
36	<i>lʹdn l//bʹl ḥm//n mtnt//t ʹš nd/ʹr ...</i>	Stratum V	Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 116; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 39-40.
37	<i><ʹ- mtnt ʹš ytn lbʹl ḥmn // ytnbʹl bn ʹnš</i>	Stratum IV	Coacci Polselli et al. 1978, 155-156, n. 1; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 942; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 40.
38	<i><ʹ- lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn [mtnt/lk]//t ʹš ndr .y bn šm [...]</i>	Stratum IV?	Coacci Polselli et al. 1978, 156-158, n. 2 ; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 270; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 40-41.
39	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn ʹmtnt ʹš ndr // bʹlmlk bn bʹlysp bn šʹly</i>	Stratum III?	Coacci Polselli et al. 1978, 158-159, n. 3; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 886; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 41-42.
40	<i>bʹlšlk, bn šr/dk</i>	Stratum III	Ciasca et al. 1978, 153-159; Moscati and Uberti 1981, n. 900; Amadasi Guzzo 1986a, 42.

These forty inscribed stelae include a small repertoire of formulae with some interesting variation. Amadasi Guzzo attempted to construct a typology of these divergent inscriptional formulae in her 1986 work; I have made the variations present within her typological categories explicit in the presentation in Table III.2:

Table III.2: Inscription Formulae Types in the Motya Stelae (adapted from Amadasi Guzzo 1986b)

Type ¹⁸⁰	Formula	Stelae Featuring this Formula (Iron II Stelae in square brackets)	Dir. Obj.	Verb
I/1	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn mtnt ʹš ndr + PN (+ genealogy)</i>	11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 32, 35, [36], 39	<i>mtnt</i>	<i>ndr</i>
	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn mtnt ʹš ndr + PN (+ genealogy) + k šmʹ ql dbry</i>	23, 29	<i>mtnt</i>	<i>ndr</i>
	<i>lʹdn bʹl ḥmn mtnt ʹš ndr + PN (+ genealogy)</i>	[14]	<i>mtnt</i>	<i>ndr</i>
I/2	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn mlkt ʹš ndr + PN (+ genealogy)</i>	7	<i>mlkt</i>	<i>ndr</i>
	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn mlkt bʹl ʹš ndr + PN + genealogy</i>	31	<i>mlkt</i>	<i>ndr</i>
	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn mlkt ʹš ytn + PN + genealogy + k šmʹ ql dbry</i>	24 ¹⁸¹	<i>mlkt</i>	<i>ytn</i>
	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn nšb ʹš ndr + PN + genealogy</i>	3, 4? ¹⁸²	<i>nšb</i>	<i>ndr</i>
I/3	<i>lʹdn lbʹl ḥmn ʹš ndr + PN + genealogy</i>	6	-	<i>ndr</i>
II	<i>lʹdn bʹl ḥmn ʹš ndr + PN + genealogy</i>	18, 27, 30	-	<i>ndr</i>
III	<i>lʹdn bʹl ndr + PN + genealogy</i>	5	-	<i>ndr</i>
IV	<i>mtnt ʹš ytn lbʹl ḥmn + PN</i>	37	<i>mtnt</i>	<i>ytn</i>
V	<i>PN + genealogy</i>	8, 9, 10, 40	-	-

Not included in her original schema (Amadasi Guzzo 1986b) are stelae 1, 2, 15, 17, 25, 33,¹⁸³ 34, and 38, all too illegible or damaged to allow a sure reading. Inscription 22 is listed in both I/1

¹⁸⁰ As outlined in Amadasi Guzzo 1986b. I have expanded her categories to illustrate variation.

¹⁸¹ Inscription number 24 actually features an *n-* at the end of line one, as if *ndr* was originally intended. Line two, however, begins with *ytn*.

¹⁸² “...si potrebbe forse supporlo nell’iscrizione n. 4, dove l’oggetto della dedica è abraso, ma poteva cominciare con *nšb*” (Amadasi Guzzo 1986b, 194).

and II, probably because a carving error (to which a correction was attempted)¹⁸⁴ in the original inscription allows both readings. Several features of these inscriptions account for the variability in the formulae: the deity addressed, the verbal element, and the nominal clause used to refer to the stelae or other dedicated items.

The Deity Addressed

Most who have worked with the Motya tophet stelae have read the dedication of the stelae as interchangeable (and essentially meaningless) variations of address to the single god Baal Ḥammon. Whether an epithet (*ʿdn*, “lord”) is included or not, and whether two occurrences of the preposition *l-* are used, have not been linked to substantive variations in belief or addressed deities. While *bʿl ḥmn* may appear without *ʿdn*, the reverse is not true (and inscription number 22 indicates that the qualifier *ḥmn* was also not considered sufficient to evoke the deity). The absence of a female deity in these inscriptions is perhaps surprising – only one male deity seems to be the recipient of the wishes, vows, or dedications represented by these stelae.

The Verbal Element

The choice between the verbs *ndr* and *ytn* also produces some of the variation in this corpus. Amadasi Guzzo concluded that the verb *yatōn* is attested in the earliest inscriptions,

¹⁸³ Which is described as featuring the verb *ytn*, but not otherwise placed in the typology (Amadasi Guzzo 1986b, 194, n. 15), probably because there is no stated nominal clause referring to the dedicated object(s) in this fragmentary inscription.

¹⁸⁴ Inscription number 22 is a fascinating case in which the carver commits two errors, of omission and of homeoteleuton. The inscription reads *lʿdn ḥmntnt*, a rendering which omits *bʿl* entirely (later inserting it above the line) after the second *l-*, and elides *ḥmn* with *mntnt*. One wonders whether this stele was sold at a discounted rate!

and that the verb *nadōr* seems to dominate by the end of the 5th century BCE. As Lipiński has articulated:

La question qu'il convient de se poser à ce propos est la suivante: s'agit-il d'une simple evolution du formulaire ou faut-il mettre l'emploi d'un autre verbe en relation avec la signification differente du rite accompli...? La question est d'autant plus pertinente qu'un lapicide de Motyé, qui avait commence à graver le mot *n(dr)*, s'est repris à la ligne suivante et a grave *ytn*, comme si ces deux verbes avaient, somme toute, une portée differente.¹⁸⁵

The inscription to which Lipiński refers is number 24, detailed above; a clear *nun* seems represented on the end of the first line, but line 2 begins with the verb *ytn*, as if the carver was correcting a significant mistake.

The Nominal Clause

Three different nouns serve to represent the dedicated object(s) in this corpus of inscriptions: *mtnt*, *mlkt*, and *nšb*, while a fourth variation includes no noun (with or without the resumptive relative pronoun *š*). The noun *mtnt* is feminine (the construct form of the noun *mtnh*), and indicates some kind of “gift.”¹⁸⁶ The noun *nšb* is also well understood, indicating a stele, raised stone, or statue.¹⁸⁷ But *mlkt* is less well understood; Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor write simply that “the meaning of the term is unknown.”¹⁸⁸ Iron Age II period Carthaginian evidence indicates that *mlkt* and *mlk* might be feminine and masculine forms of the same noun (a noun which, at Carthage could actually be in construct with both *nšb* and with *bʿl*, as discussed in Chapter II¹⁸⁹). All this implies that the terms *mlkt* and *mtnt* (as well as

¹⁸⁵ Lipiński 1988, 152.

¹⁸⁶ See discussion in Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, Vol. 2, 709.

¹⁸⁷ Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, Vol. 2, 750, s.v. ‘nšb₃’.

¹⁸⁸ Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 159.

¹⁸⁹ That is, perhaps “stele *mlk-bʿl*” or “stele *mlkt-bʿl*” (CIS i 5684 and 5685); 7th century BCE Carthage.

nšb) had different semantic ranges or ritual referents at Malta,¹⁹⁰ although reconstructing what those differences were is much more difficult.

The inscriptional content of these forty stelae represents a small window onto a much larger spectrum of commemoration at the infant cremation cemetery / tophet of Motya. Inscribed stelae represent only approximately 4% of the total stelae corpus.¹⁹¹ Many other stelae were carved with images or symbols;¹⁹² these were the only stelae known to Whitaker and other early excavators.¹⁹³ In fact, the range of iconography on these uninscribed stelae led Whitaker to conclude in 1921 that the cemetery was intended for the worship of goddesses (“probably Astarte or Tanit”),¹⁹⁴ a suggestion the inscriptional corpus seems to negate or challenge.

¹⁹⁰ “Even though the offering is once described as a ‘gift,’ another time as a *mlkt*, the two terms may not be synonymous” (Gras, Rouillard & Teixidor 1991, 160).

¹⁹¹ I have seen no exact counts of uninscribed stelae from Motya, but the total corpus is frequently referred to as consisting of approximately one thousand stelae. Moscati and Uberti 1981 includes images of one thousand one hundred sixty-one different stelae (some numbers are not pictured), although those numbered above one thousand sixteen are very fragmentary.

¹⁹² Although some of the inscribed stelae from Motya seem also to bear carvings; see tav. LXXXIV, 2 (“iscrizione punica n. 3”), which illustrates the feet of a figure standing between two bars or pillars, with inscription below.

¹⁹³ “Until quite recently no stelae had been found at Motya resembling the figured and ornamented stelae that have been discovered in considerable quantity at Carthage, in Sardinia, and elsewhere; but some have now been met with in the recently discovered burial-ground which we think may have served for the interment of sacrificial offerings. Among them are some bearing the representation of deities and the emblem of the disk and crescent,” (Whitaker 1921, 218).

¹⁹⁴ “Three of these [depicted stelae] bear figures on them, doubtless intended to represent deities, probably Astarte or Tanit. Three others, which have been found lately, bear the emblem of the latter goddess.... Two others show what was evidently meant for a human face, with a beard on it. Another, of smaller size, shows the globe and crescent. Most of the stelae are of sandstone or limestone, but one, a large one which, when intact, cannot have measured less than one metre in height, is of lava. This last-named stele was found in the sea, opposite the north gate” (Whitaker 1921, 272-274).

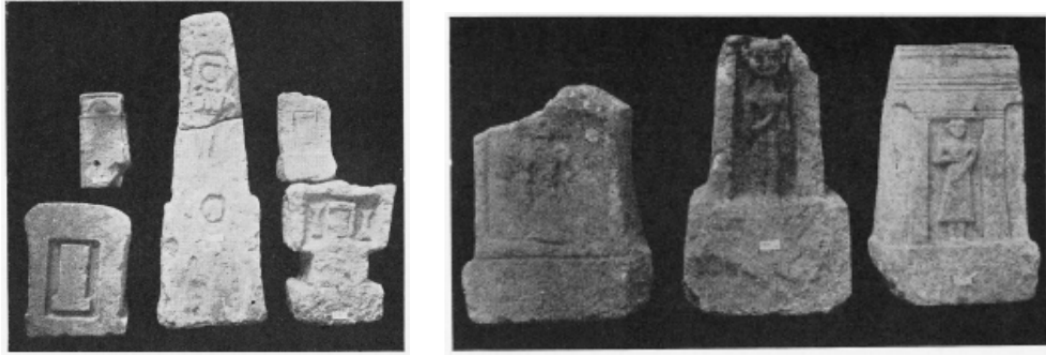


Figure III.27: Carved, Uninscribed Stelae from the Motya Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” (Whitaker 1921, 272-273, fig. 51 & 52)

Were inscriptions only considered meaningful dedications to the male deity, Baal Ḥammon, although a female deity could be addressed through iconographic messages? Or does the female figure on the uninscribed stelae represent not a deity, but a mother or worshipper? The picture is further complicated by the fact that some of these uninscribed stelae bear some resemblance to those stelae found at the adult cremation cemetery at Motya.

Finally, the uninscribed stelae from the infant cremation cemetery (or tophet site) at Motya offer extensive evidence of red painted decorations throughout the entire period the cemetery was in use.¹⁹⁵ This red coloring may have been the only pigment of a series of available colors or media to have survived.

i. Sardinia

Sulcis Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	National Museum of Cagliari; The Armeni and Biggio private collections of Sant’Antioco.
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	Excavated by Genaro Pesce (since 1959) and by Ferruccio Barreca

¹⁹⁵ Moscati (1989, 506) writes that “Stelae found in strata V-III of the *tophet* at Motya have decorations painted in red; the iconography includes baetyls and clothed female figures in frontal position. Here there is no distinction between colored areas and outline, but probably there were details that have now faded away.” I have not been able to confirm that red painted stelae were found in stratum V (early 6th century BCE).

	(since 1968).
Studies	Pesce 1961; Lilliu 1964; Bisi 1967; Moscati and Uberti 1970; Bondi 1972; Moscati 1973, 197-201; Mosca 1975, 47; Brown 1986, 78-79; Moscati 1986; Bartoloni 1986
Date	Site in use from the 8 th -7 th centuries BCE to 2 nd -1 st centuries BCE. Stelae in use from the mid-6 th century BCE to the 1 st century BCE. ¹⁹⁶

The city of Sulcis (also Solci, or Sulki) is located on the island of modern Sant ‘Antioco, off the southwest coast of Sardinia. The Phoenician city is thought to have been founded ca. 770 BCE, and the first Roman occupation of the site took place in 238/7 BCE. A precinct that seems similar to the other tophet sites was discovered north of the city, on a hill marked by several rings of enclosures (and north of the northeast necropolis of the city).¹⁹⁷ An initial collection of one hundred five stelae from the site lacked archaeological provenance,¹⁹⁸ and their identification as tophet stelae, as opposed to adult funerary monuments or votive stelae was debated. Subsequently, in 1956, more stelae were discovered via exploration of the site by the Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari. Over 2000 cinerary urns (in fact, vessels at this site vary widely, and include cooking pots, jugs, imported Aegean containers and other variants) have been found in the clefts of the volcanic rock at the site. Mosca summarizes:

As might be expected, the oldest stratum of urns (dated by Pesce to the IX-VII cents. B.C.) contains no stelae. In fact, no stelae have been found *in situ*, although some 750 have come to light. These no doubt originally served to mark the burial places of urns, but were subsequently reused for quite different purposes. The date of their first use within the sanctuary is still a matter of controversy [with advocates for the 7th, 6th, and 5th centuries BCE, respectively],

¹⁹⁶ Bartolini 1986, 13.

¹⁹⁷ Acquaro describes the site as follows: “The *tophet* lies outside the city walls, north of the northeast necropolis. The sanctuary occupies a rocky trachytic promontory and, as seen today, shows a large rectangular wall of dressed blocks of the same rock, enclosing a cistern, and another wall parallel to it. The urns holding the sacrificial ashes were deposited in the natural cracks in the ground together with the many stelae found. The size of the wall blocks, quite unusual for a sacred area of this type, suggests that this could have been a military structure to defend the northern approaches. The urban defensive line continues beyond the wall installation” (Acquaro in Moscati 1989 [2001 edition], 268).

¹⁹⁸ “...at different times and in various contexts 105 stelae have been discovered (most before 1857) in the vicinity of ancient Sulcis” (Brown 1986, 78).

but none are later than the third century B.C. The final stratum of the precinct itself dates to the second and first centuries B.C.¹⁹⁹

Moscato (1986) and Bartoloni (1986) published an exemplary catalog of the entire corpus of Motya stelae. These works described and analyzed 1575 stelae and cippi from the 6th-1st centuries BCE, and outlined a typography of the commemorative monuments according to style. Although the corpus is frequently referred to as anepigraphic, I find seven fragmentary inscribed stelae among this group:

Table III.3: Inscribed Stelae from the Sulcis Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet”

Catalog Number ²⁰⁰	Inscription	Notes (Bartoloni 1986)
78	<i>.. / l ḥmn</i> ²⁰¹	Stele without Carved Motif: “Parte di fascia indistinta con sommità triangolare (?) e di cornice semplice; nella parte alta del campo un’iscrizione mutila di una riga” ²⁰²
284	<i>ndr ᶜzrbʿl bn bʿlšlk bn ᶜzrbʿl</i> ²⁰³	Stele with Human Figure: “Sommità cuspidate; coronamento con listello e timpani con cornice; rosetta umbonata con Quattro petali, in rilievo nel timpani; figura umana femminile (?) stante frontale vestita con lunga tunica, con braccio sinistro flessa e mano al petto appoggiata su un element ellissoidale, in rilievo nel campo; capitelli ionici su semicolonne rettangolari con basi; base indistinta; sulla base una iscrizione di una riga” ²⁰⁴
1052	<i>ndr mhrbʿl bn / ..</i> ²⁰⁵	Inscribed Stele: “Parte del campo e della base; figura umana di sesso incerto (?) nel campo; sulla base rientrante una iscrizione di una riga” ²⁰⁶
1189	<i>...n ḥšpt bn q.. / ..bn grʿšmn bn / .. kšmʿ ql dbry ybrk</i>	Stele Fragment: “Parte del coronamento; coronamento con listello, gola e fascia indistinta (?), in rilievo; iscrizione di tre righe incise rovesciata nella gola” ²⁰⁷
1526	<i>...r ᶜš ndr ḥnšbʿl bn ᶜšmnʿms bn šl / ..l. bn bʿlḥʿ bn ytnmlk kšm qlʿ</i>	Stele Fragment: “Base distinta con fascia inquadrata da modanature con listello e gola, aggettante anteriormente; iscrizione di due linee sulla fascia” ²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁹ Mosca 1975, 47.

²⁰⁰ From the two volume catalog and analysis compiled by Bartoloni (1986) and Moscati (1986).

²⁰¹ The inscription is transcribed *.. / l ḥmn* (Bartoloni 1986, 40), but the photograph (Tav. XL.78) seems to feature a *ḥ* (and other transcription errors support the possibility that this was a printing error; see notes below).

²⁰² Bartoloni 1986, 40.

²⁰³ The inscription is transcribed *ndr ᶜzrbʿl bn bʿlšlk bn ᶜzrbʿl* (Bartoloni 1986, 73), but the photograph (Tav. L.284) indicates that all gutturals should be printed as *ʿayins*.

²⁰⁴ Bartoloni 1986, 73.

²⁰⁵ The inscription is transcribed *ndr mhrbʿl bn* (Bartoloni 1986, 183), but the photograph (Tav. CXXX.1052) indicates that the printed *ʿalep* should be read as an *ʿayin*.

²⁰⁶ Bartoloni 1986, 183.

²⁰⁷ Bartoloni 1986, 201.

²⁰⁸ Bartoloni 1986, 239.

1529	<i>lrbt ltnt p[n] b'l ndr ʔš / ndr grs[kn] bn ʔršt</i> ²⁰⁹	Stele Fragment: “Base distinta rientrante anteriormente; iscrizione di due line sulla base” ²¹⁰
1530	<i>...[b]n mgnb'l w šm^s ql^r</i>	Stele Fragment: “Base indistinta (?); iscrizione di una linea sulla base” ²¹¹

These inscriptions seem to use the noun *ndr* exclusively to describe the nominal clause which refers to the object(s) being dedicated or erected (numbers 284, 1052, and 1529 make this clear through context; number 1526 may also have used this construction). Interestingly, *ndr* is also used as the only verb to describe the action of the person who (presumably) commissioned the stelae (as numbers 1526 and 1529 illustrate). With regard to deities to whom the stelae are addressed, number 1529 mentions “the lady, Tanit face of Baal,” while number 78 may be addressed to Baal Ḥammon.

The one complete stele from this corpus, number 284, features no named god or goddess, but is carved with a female figure holding a disk in her hands, her right hand crossed in front of her chest.



Figure III.28: Inscribed Stele Number 284 from the Sulcis Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” (Bartoloni 1986, tav. L.284)

²⁰⁹ The inscription is transcribed *lrbt ltnt p[n] b'l ndr ʔš / ndr grs[kn] bn ʔršt* (Bartoloni 1986, 240), but the photograph (Tav. CXLVII.1529) indicates the relative pronoun *ʔš* is intended at the end of line one.

²¹⁰ Bartoloni 1986, 240.

²¹¹ Bartoloni 1986, 240.

This image is a common motif at Sulcis, and twenty-eight other stelae from this corpus share the same stele shape, form, and decoration (but without an inscription).²¹² Bartolini offers a quantified summary of carved motifs seen throughout the corpus,²¹³ although he does not correlate this with a chronological distribution of the stelae over the period of use at that site.

Nora Infant Cremation Cemetery Stelae

Loc. / Num.	National Museum in Cagliari 22075-22089, 25456 and 25518; Fifteen stelae acquired February 3, 1889; Sixty-three stelae acquired June 10, 1896 (total collection is eighty-five stelae ²¹⁴).
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	Excavations in 1889-1890 following their exposure during a storm.
Studies	Cecchini 1969, 60-64; Moscati and Uberti 1970; Pesce 1972; Mosca 1975
Date	Late 6 th – 4 th centuries BCE

A sacred precinct or cremation cemetery at Nora, located on the beach and outside the ancient city, was “brought to light by an unusually severe sea storm”²¹⁵ in 1889, and excavations were begun the following year. Most of the early finds associated with this site have been lost. Extant cinerary urns from the site date to the 4th century BCE at the latest,

²¹² Bartolini describes these stelae as follows: “...le stele con sommità cuspidate timpaniforme, le quali presentano sempre il medesimo schema del personaggio femminile stante frontale vestito con lunga tunica e mantello, con braccio sinistro flesso e mano al petto sorreggente il disco, con braccio destro flesso e mano aperta appoggiata sul disco [i.e. numbers 282-310]” (Bartolini 1986, 26).

²¹³ Bartolini 1986, 22-25.

²¹⁴ Moscati describes the manifold problems involved in trying to create a complete inventory of the Nora cremation cemetery stelae as follows: “Non mancano stele senza numero o con numero inesatto; né del resto tutte le stele risultano esposte, perché alter, sempre da Nora, si trovano nei magazzini. In somma, se è agevole farsi un’idea approssimativa del material nel suo complesso, non è possibile (o meglio non lo era prima del presente lavoro) individuarlo tutto con sicurezza. Anche l’esame degli inventari non risolve (o meglio non risolveva prima del presente lavoro) il problema, perché le indicazioni sono generiche e non specifiche: si danno come stele di Nora appunto quelle comprese entro i numeri sopra citati, ma senza individuarle singolarmente e anzi non senza vuoti e incongruenze. Quanto all’unica pubblicazione esistente, il catalogo sommario del Patroni (1904), esso omette i numeri di inventario così come molti altri dati, fornendo riproduzioni solo di trentadue su ottantatré esemplari” (Moscati and Uberti 1970, 5).

²¹⁵ Mosca 1975, 48.

although stelae seem to indicate that the site was in use from the late 6th or early 5th century to the 4rd century BCE.²¹⁶

Moscatti and Uberti cataloged eighty-five stelae from the collection of the National Museum in Cagliari in 1970. Most were anepigraphic; only five stelae bore inscriptions:

Table III.4: Inscribed Stelae from the Nora Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet”

Catalog Number ²¹⁷	Inscription	Notes (Moscatti and UbeĒti 1970)	Date
10	<i>ndr bd^c bn 'bd^c</i>	Stele with Betyl: “Scheggiature sulla faccia posteriore, sul pilastro destroy, alla sommità; manca l’angolo superior sinistro della base; moto consunta. Lisciatura su tutta la superficie in vista, ad eccezione della base su cui sono visibili tracce di lavorazione a martellina e scalpello; tracce di pittura rossa sul pilastro sinistro, sul betilo e sul fondo del campo figurative.... L’edicola, con alta base che aggetta frontalmente, ha due pilastri rettangolari, che poggiano su uno zoccolo esteso per tutta la larghezza della stele; su quest’ultimo, iscrizione di una riga...; i pilastri sono sormontati da un architrave e probabilmente da una gola egizia. Nell’interno dell’edicola è rappresentata a rilievo un betilo pilastriforme, rastremato verso l’alto, posto su una base-altare a due piedi, modanata nella parte superior da una gola egizia posta su un toro e terminante con un listello piatto aggettante.” ²¹⁸	Not earlier than the 5 th -4 th centuries BCE
14	<i>ndr pdy / bn ?rš</i>	Stele with Three Betyls: “Scheggiature su tutta la superficie; manca l’angolo inferior anterior sinistro; coperta da sedimentazioni. Lisciatura sulla faccia anterior; sbazzate le facce laterali e posteriore; tracce di lavorazione a scalpello nell’interno dell’edicola. ...L’edicola ha una inquadratura semplice con stipiti non distinti dai margini laterali; sulla parte inferior dell’edicola sono incise una serie di triangoli aperti (in quanto privy del lato di base) e convergenti e un’iscrizione di due righe...; il bordo destroy dell’edicola è decorato da una serie di linee parallele e oblique; anche la fascia superiore è decorata dallo stesso motivo di triangoli incise, aperti, convergenti, decentrati rispetto al centro della faccia. Nell’interno dell’edicola sono rappresentati a rilievo tre betili pilastriformi, privy della linea divisoria di base; i due betili laterali sono più bassi di quello central.” ²¹⁹	Not earlier than the 4 th century BCE

²¹⁶ Although previous analyses had suggested stelae may be as late as 3rd-2nd centuries BCE, Moscatti and Uberti conclude that no stele is later than the 4th century BCE (on the basis of epigraphic and iconographic data, as well as stele-form comparisons; Moscatti and Uberti 1970, 44-45).

²¹⁷ From Moscatti and Uberti 1970.

²¹⁸ Moscatti and Uberti 1970, 88.

²¹⁹ Moscatti and Uberti 1970, 90-91.

25	<i>ndr 'bd'</i>	Stele with Three Betyls: “Una rottura, con andamento quasi orizzontale, la priva della parte superior; scheggiature su tutta la superficie; alquanto consunta. Lisciatura sulle face anterior e laterali; tracce di lavorazione a scalpello sulla faccia posteriore e sulla base. Stele a sezione quadrangolare. La stele ha sulla faccia anteriore, a rilievo, una base a forma tronco-piramidale sormontata da un toro su cui poggia una gola egizia terminante con un alto listello piatto aggettante che reca incise un’iscrizione di una riga.... L’edicola, che poggia su un gradino arretrato rispetto all’iscrizione, ha duplice inquadratura rientrante e aggettante l’una sull’altra. Nell’interno dell’edicola sono rappresentati a rilievo tre betili pilastriformi, sovrastanti una base-altare a forma tronco-piramidale sormontata da un toro su cui poggia una gola egizia terminante con un listello piatto aggettante.” ²²⁰	[Too damaged to be dated on epigraphic grounds]
84	<i>ndr mgn</i>	Inscribed Stele: “Una rottura, con andamento da sinistra verso destra, la priva della parte superior. Lisciatura sulle face anterior e laterali; appena sbazzata la faccia posteriore; tracce di lavorazione a scalpello sulla faccia anterior. Sul frammento, nella parte inferior, è incise un’iscrizione di una riga.” ²²¹	4 th century BCE
85	<i>[d/n?]dr grmhr / d [d/b?]n hrr</i> ²²²	“Una rottura, con andamento quasi verticale, la priva del fianco destro; mancano gli spigoli inferiori a sinistra; scheggiature alla sommità; I tre frammenti che la compongono sono combacianti; molto consunta. Lisciatura sulla superficie ancora visibile. Sulla stele è incise un’iscrizione di due (?) righe.” ²²³	Late 6 th century BCE ²²⁴

Though badly damaged, all five of the inscriptions seem to indicate the same use of the noun *ndr* as was seen in the Sulcis stelae corpus. None utilizes a verbal construction to represent the action of the dedicant.

The three stelae with carved images all feature rectangular niches with schematic images inside, interpreted as “betyls,” or aniconic representations of a deity or deities, by Moscati and Uberti.

²²⁰ Moscati and Uberti 1970, 97-98.

²²¹ Moscati and Uberti 1970, 136-137.

²²² The inscription is confusingly transcribed as: *d / (n)dr grmhr / dd / (b)n hrr (?)* in Moscati and Uberti 1970, 137. The photograph is not clear enough to check this reading.

²²³ Moscati and Uberti 1970, 137.

²²⁴ Moscati suggests only “una datazione abbastanza antica” (Moscati and Uberti 1970, 45).

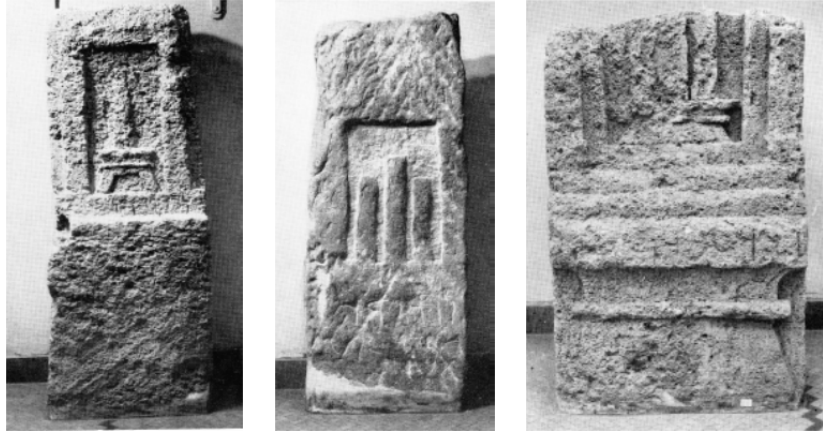


Figure III.29: The Three Inscribed Stelae from Nora with Carved Images.
 Stelae Numbers 10 (Moscati and Uberti 1970, tav. 10), 14 (Ibid, tav. VII), and 25 (Ibid, tav. XIII)

As described by the catalogers, stela number 10 still bore traces of red paint in several places throughout the carved image.²²⁵ All these stelae feature inscriptions below their carved motifs, indicating that the two fragmentary stelae with inscriptions, below, may well have been adorned with carved stela-tops at one time.



Figure III.30: Two of the Inscribed Stelae from the Nora Cremation Cemetery. Left, Stele 84 (Moscati and Uberti 1970, tav. XLII); right, Stele 85 (Moscati and Uberti 1970, tav. XLIII)

The anepigraphic stelae feature symbolic representations including the “sign of Tanit,” geometric figures (disks, crescents, rectangles), images of urns or betyls, and human figures. The largest stelae from the site are over a meter in height, although smaller stelae are more

²²⁵ “...tracce di pittura rossa sul pilastro sinistro, sul betilo e sul fondo del campo figurative...” (Moscati and Uberti 1970, 88).

common. Acquaro writes of the Nora tophet stelae that they “reveal the activity of a minor crafts center, largely dependent on Punic models,”²²⁶ but with their own aesthetic preferences and innovations.

Monte Sirai Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	[Inventory numbers available in studies, below]
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	Votive stelae were discovered by Antonio Zara in 1962; Excavations were begun in 1963, directed by Ferruccio Barreca and Giovanni Garbini. ²²⁷ Excavations of the “tophet” take place in multiple seasons from 1963-1965; 1978-1979; 1981 and 1984-1986.
Studies	Barreca & Garbini 1964, 20-36; Amadasi et al. 1965, 123-133; Cecchini 1965; Moscati 1965-1966, 65f.; Bondi 1972, 51, 55-57; Mosca 1975, 47-48; Brown 1986, 79-80.
Date	Stelae from the 5 th – 1 st centuries BCE

Monte Sirai is an inland garrison town which was dependent on Sulcis. There is evidence (including a 6th century Punic necropolis) that the site was settled by Phoenicians as early as 750 BCE, but there is no evidence for an infant cremation cemetery or tophet site before the reinforcing of the city walls (probably by Carthaginians, as at other Sardinian towns) in the mid-4th century BCE. Its sacred precinct consists of an enclosure located outside of town near a second enclosure containing a small provincial temple. An altar or surface in the NE corner of the temple was covered with a mixture of ashes and burnt bone, but to my knowledge no scientific study of this material was conducted. The use of the tophet site, thought to have been established around 360 BCE, seems to have ceased in the 2nd-1st centuries BCE (the town of Monte Sirai is thought to have been abandoned around 110 BCE), although

²²⁶ Acquaro in Moscati 1989 (2001 edition), 264.

²²⁷ See Bartoloni (1989, 11) for the story of the arrest of several clandestine diggers who used explosives to blow up Tomb 3 after excavations had identified the site of the Punic cemetery.

some Roman imperial coins found in the chapel or temple at the tophet indicate that it was visited into the 4th century CE.²²⁸

Stelae were first discovered at the site in 1962 (followed by excavations in 1963, 1964, and 1969). As of 1989, approximately four hundred cinerary urns had been uncovered at the site, dating to the 4th – 2nd centuries BCE. Most of the urns are reused cooking pots, covered by small plates. Some one hundred stelae have also thus far been uncovered.²²⁹ As of 1972, all stelae found at the site were anepigraphic, but many had been carved with motifs or niches. The stelae are exceedingly difficult to date:

Alla risoluzione del complesso problema della datazione delle stele di Monte Sirai nessun contributo può venire dalle modalità del ritrovamento: tutti gli esemplari, infatti, sono stati rinvenuti fuori strato, quando non addirittura in superficie, né peraltro la documentazione complessiva proveniente dal *tophet* di Monte Sirai è tale da poter offrire dati cronologici utilizzabili in questa sede, dal momento che la ceramica rinvenuta, invero non abbondante, manca anch'essa di una stratigrafia ordinata (il terreno archeologico nella zona del *tophet* non supera la profondità di cm. 50).²³⁰

The tophet was thus dated solely on the basis of ceramic finds, with the adjoining temple having been constructed slightly earlier, in the 6th century BCE.²³¹ Similarities in the iconography of the stelae at the Monte Sirai and Sulcis tophet sites may speak to Monte Sirai's status as a subsidiary settlement site to Sulcis, although several differences between the two corpora are also evident.²³² It may be that Monte Sirai grew more autonomous (in iconographic choice and variation) over time, especially from the 3rd century onward.²³³

²²⁸ Bartoloni 1989, 19.

²²⁹ But note that in 1965, Cecchini wrote “il numero delle stele, intere e frammentarie più o meno lavorate, appare indubbiamente elevato sia in rapporto allo spazio delimitato dal primo recinto sia in relazione al numero delle urne cinerarie” (1965, 124).

²³⁰ Bondi 1972, 38.

²³¹ Bondi 1972, 38.

²³² In particular, Acquaro calls the depictions on Monte Sirai stelae the product of “nonspecialized craftsman” (in Moscati 1989 [2001 edition], 260). Elsewhere he elaborates: “Where dependence on the coastal city [of Sulcis] is less, the local element adopts extrinsic designs creating works which demonstrate the extent of the integration between the two ethnic groups in the period lasting until Roman occupation. The artifacts which merit careful

Tharros Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	[Inventory numbers available in studies, below]
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	1956-1964: Excavated by Pesce 1973-1989: Excavations continued by the Soprintendenza archeologica di Cagliari
Studies	Uberti 1976; Moscati 1981; Acquaro 1982; Barreca 1983; Francisi 1983; Moscati and Uberti 1985; Brown 1986, 80-83.
Date	8 th – 7 th centuries BCE to 3 rd -2 nd centuries BCE

The city of Tharros is located on the western coast of Sardinia, near the village of San Giovanni di Sinis on the southern shore of the Sinis peninsula. Tharros was long thought to have been founded by the Phoenicians in the 8th century BCE (though now a proto-Sardinian settlement is thought to have been established in the Late Bronze Age) and the site was inhabited continuously until its abandonment in the 10th century CE. The tophet site at Tharros is at least 30 x 80 m large, located within the fortification walls of the ancient city (its full extent has not yet been determined). Brown summarized the complications during the (at that time incomplete) excavations of the site in 1986:

Four strata, dating from the eighth to the second/first centuries B.C. and lasting into Roman occupation of the island, have been identified.... They have produced approximately 200 stelae, none found in its original position. The oldest urns of the tophet were deposited in and among circular structures of the Nuragic²³⁴ period. When the area was eventually walled to the north and east, stelae were used as construction materials. Old urns were also collected and deposited in groups inside and outside the structures....²³⁵

analysis (the votive stelae, the bone plaques with the god Bes and sphinx, the wheel-made clay figurines) show a dependence on models all well represented in the Punic Occident, with a few novel elements as far as the female statuettes, and small bronzes are concerned. However, it is highly unlikely that these works were of local Punic craftsmanship, both because of their specific characteristics and their general context” (Acquaro in Moscati 1989 [2001 edition], 269).

²³³ Bondi 1972, 39 and 89-90.

²³⁴ The term “Nuragic / Nuraghic” refers to an indigenous Sardinian culture whose history stretches from the Late Bronze Age to the 2nd century CE. The Roman historian Justin describes an expedition by Carthage against a still Nuragic Sardinia, in 540 BCE; within forty years or so, Carthaginians had conquered most of coastal Sardinia.

²³⁵ Brown 1986, 81.

All the stelae are anepigraphic, some featuring geometric carved motifs, while others depict women (some holding tambourines), mythological scenes, and motifs like the “bottle motif” seen at Carthage and elsewhere. There is again a discrepancy between the number of extant urns (numbered in the thousands) and stelae (only in the hundreds) to be contended with.

j. Tunisia

Carthage Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	Stelae are located in the Carthage Museum, Carthage Annibal, the Bardo Museum, Tunis, as well as a handful of museums in England and France.
Dimensions	
Discovery	1817: First appearance of Punic votive stelae at Carthage 1921: François Icard excavation 1922: Louis Poinssot and Raymond Lantier excavation 1925: Francis Kelsey excavation 1934-36: Pere Lapeyre excavation 1944-47: Pierre Cintas excavation 1976-79: Lawrence Stager excavation, “Punic Project”
Studies	Harden 1927; Harden 1937; Weinfeld 1972; Stager 1980; Stager and Wolff 1984; Bonnet 2011; Quinn 2011.
Date	7 th – 2 nd centuries BCE

As discussed in Chapter II, the thousands of inscriptions on stelae found at the tophet or infant cremation cemetery at Carthage have not been quantitatively studied or brought together in any usable way at this point. As early as 1903, before the site was known to scholars,²³⁶ and before any regular excavation, more than 2000 stelae had been unearthed.²³⁷

²³⁶ The actual location of the cemetery itself was only discovered in 1921: “In December, 1921, limestone stelae with symbols associated with the cult of Tanit began to be brought to Tunis, and one of them came into the hands of a public official, M. Gielly, who was interested in antiquities. It was reported that they were dug up at La Marsa, north of Carthage, but the Arab who brought them was followed, and the place of discovery became known. This

Each subsequent excavation produced hundreds (and in some cases more than a thousand) additional stelae and urns,²³⁸ and it seems clear that the precinct extends more than 50 m south of the already-excavated areas.²³⁹ The most complete study thus far completed may be Brown (1986)'s, which includes 698 stelae from Carthage, but does not purport to offer a study of the inscriptions – only the iconography on the stelae. She describes the difficulty of studying the existing stelae from Carthage as follows:

The stelae are not all stored together and accessible in one museum. Some were removed to England and France by their excavators. The majority of those remaining in Tunisia are located in the Carthage Museum in Carthage Annibal, a suburb of Tunis, while the remainder are in the Bardo Museum in Tunis. I was permitted access to the monuments in the Carthage Museum. In this museum there is only a partial record of all the monuments stored there and no record of their location in the storeroom. There is no record of the original contexts of the catalogued monuments, and often none of their excavator. Thus it is impossible to classify the stelae according to context or chronology except in the broadest terms. The catalogue and photographic archive of stelae are incomplete, and different researchers have begun at least three numbering systems which are not finished. Some monuments have been assigned two or three numbers while others are unnumbered. ...Different types of stelae are not necessarily represented in percentages equal to their proportion in the corpus of ca. 7,000, since I could neither take a random sample nor examine all stelae.²⁴⁰

It is unclear from Brown's description whether 7,000 was an estimate of the stelae held by the Carthage Museum alone, or the total number of extant stelae from the tophet site – in either case, this gives some indication of the massive size of the corpus and the difficulty of producing a systematic catalog of either inscriptions or iconography.

official and M. Icard, the chief of police in Tunis, purchased the property where the stelae were found, and in 1922 a trial excavation was made with funds provided by the Service des Antiquités" (Kelsey 1926, 33).

²³⁷ Cooke 1903, 132: "More than 2000 votive tablets of this character have been unearthed on the site of ancient Carthage, in the neighbourhood of what was once the citadel (Byrsa). The stones are often inscribed with symbols of the two deities, and the formula of dedication is in nearly all cases the same."

²³⁸ For example, more than 2000 urns were uncovered during the three seasons of excavation conducted from 1921-1925 (Harden 1937, 59). As of 1939 Lapeyre was able to write, "Près de cinq cents stèles dont la plupart avec dessins ou inscriptions, ou avec dessins et inscriptions ont été recueillies. Le nombre des urnes renfermant des fragments d'ossements calcinés, des dents et des amulettes est plus considerable, un millier environ" (Lapeyre 1939, 294).

²³⁹ Harden 1937, 61.

²⁴⁰ Brown 1986, 9-10.

Some of the Carthaginian stelae were inscribed, while others were carved with only anepigraphic figures or scenes (see below). Many of the uninscribed stelae bore signs of having been covered by a brown stucco material,²⁴¹ probably to provide an alternative (less expensive?) medium for decoration of the stelae.²⁴² Inscriptions occur in Punic (dedicated to *bʿl ḥmn* and, beginning around 500 BCE with the Tanit II period,²⁴³ sometimes also to *tnt*), Latin (dedicated to Saturn as *Sat. Aug.*), and Greek.



Figure III.31: Stelae of Tanit II (500-300 BCE) Exposed by the Kelsey Excavation (Harden 1937, pl. IXb)

The stelae do not seem to be regularly or consistently affiliated with urn burials (at least not in a clear one-to-one arrangement), although the complicated deposition and orientation of the stelae at the cemetery make it difficult to determine even a *lack* of stele-urn

²⁴¹ I have found no analysis of the stucco used on the stelae at Carthage; stucco is traditionally an amalgam of lime, sand, and water (and convention dictates that the term “plaster” is used of indoor coatings, while “stucco” is used of substances intended for outdoor use). Sometimes an animal- or plant-based fiber of some kind is added to strengthen the mixture.

²⁴² “Amongst the stelae [in Tanit II, 550-300 BCE] hardly two duplicates exist, and much might be written about the various types; it must suffice here to note that there were two main kinds, the one of coarse limestone or tufa, and the other of a hard and compact sandstone. Those of the first type were usually in the form of altars and rough and uninscribed, though they often bore crude representations of betyls or the sign of Tanit and the like incised or in sunken relief. Many showed traces of having been covered with brown stucco; probably all had been so covered originally. Those of the second type were in the form of pointed obelisks, roughly shaped on three sides and polished on the fourth, on which side they often bore a dedicatory inscription to Tanit or an incised representation of a sign of Tanit, &c., or both.” (Harden 1937, 60; emphasis mine).

²⁴³ Stager and Wolff 1984, 38.

association with certainty.²⁴⁴ Stager addresses the range of possible explanations for this problem:

...not every urn has a marker that can be associated with it. Do these sacrifices without monuments represent those of commoners who could not afford tombstones; do they indicate instances in which monuments have been plucked and then reused in later burials (or which there are a number of examples); or were the monuments simply removed for other reasons?²⁴⁵

We know that at least one favissa was used to clear stelae for further use of the area.²⁴⁶ The sporadic and incomplete publication of the various excavations of the tophet at Carthage, coupled with the vast quantity of artifacts and texts produced at the site and the difficult nature of the site itself, conspire to make a comprehensive or systematic study of the inscriptions from Carthage impossible at this time. This must be kept in mind when utilizing reports made by the excavators – no quantification of the entire corpus of inscriptions is possible, and therefore qualitative characterizations of what formulae are “common” or “frequent” should be accepted with some reservations. For example, this formula is described as “typical” of a Carthaginian votive inscription by Stager and Wolff:

“To our lady, to Tanit, the face of Ba‘al, and to our lord, to Ba ‘al Hammon – that which was vowed (by) PN son of PN, son of PN because he [the deity] heard his [the dedicant’s] voice and blessed him.”²⁴⁷

Elsewhere, Stager writes that the Phoenician verb *ndr* for “vow” “frequently occurs on inscribed stelae.”²⁴⁸ These claims are not surprising, given the range of Phoenician / Punic

²⁴⁴ Harden 1937, 60; He goes on to say: “There was very little apparent order in the position of the urns [in Tanit II], and they were not always even buried in an upright position, but the stelae were laid in rough lines running N. to S. ...in the centre of Pl. IX b can be seen a pathway about 2 m. wide, and as the lines of stelae on either side of this were set facing it and each other, it looks as if this may have been a central avenue in the precinct.”

²⁴⁵ Stager 1982, 160.

²⁴⁶ Harden 1937, 62 and n. 2; Lapeyre 1939, 295.

²⁴⁷ Stager and Wolff 1984, 45.

²⁴⁸ Stager 1982, 162.

language already attested on stelae from Malta, Algeria, and elsewhere; but they are difficult to confirm in any precise way.

By way of example, in a 1982 publication, Stager describes the appearance of information beyond a dedicant's genealogical affiliations as follows: "In the few instances where the vocation of the offerant is actually recorded on the stelae, these also support the notion that at Carthage the élite were among the most active participants in the rite."²⁴⁹

However, two years later he writes that:

The vocations of the dedicants are often recorded on the stelae. In the fourth-century B.C. examples, Mosca has found political and military titles, like *shufet* (a "judge") and *rab* ("magistrate," literally a "great one"; compare the title *rabbi*), as well as cultic personnel titles such as priest, high priest, and "awakener of the god(s)." In the third and second centuries he finds more ordinary vocations like doctors, teachers, scribes, weavers, embroiderers, goldsmiths, iron casters, craftsmen, master craftsmen, salt-workers, sailors, surveyors, weighers, perfumers and sellers of incense, among many others.²⁵⁰

Whether the vocation of the dedicant is mentioned in a "few" cases, or "often," cannot be independently verified until a catalog of the referenced stelae is produced.

A careful assessment of Stager's claims about the stelae and the language of their inscriptions is complicated by his wholesale adoption of the hypothesis that the Carthaginian cemetery's sole purpose was as a cultic space for child sacrifice. He writes, "At Carthage only two types of *mulk*-sacrifice are attested in the stelae inscriptions: **mulk ʔimmōr* – the sacrifice of a lamb or kid; and **mulk baʿal* – the sacrifice of a 'ba'al', i.e. the child of a wealthy mercantile or estate-owning family."²⁵¹ However, it seems as though the earliest inscription bearing the term *mlk ʔmr* (i.e. CIS i 307) dates to the 3rd century BCE, approximately five hundred years

²⁴⁹ Stager 1982, 160.

²⁵⁰ Stager and Wolff 1984, 47.

²⁵¹ Stager 1982, 159. Stager goes on to observe that "This accords well with those classical authors who refer to the young sacrificial victims as 'nobles,' (1982, 160).

after the cemetery's founding.²⁵² This identification of *mlk ʾmr* as the sacrifice of a young sheep or goat is supported, in Stager's view, by the fact that "sheep are depicted on some limestone stelae from the 4th Century B.C. – 146 B.C.,"²⁵³ although I am not aware of any study which attempts to quantify the correlation between the appearance of the sheep image on stelae with those mentioning the *mlk ʾmr* term. One such stele, described by Vassel in 1918, is anepigraphic but features the following carved image (identified as a fat-tailed sheep by Vassel) along with other images:²⁵⁴

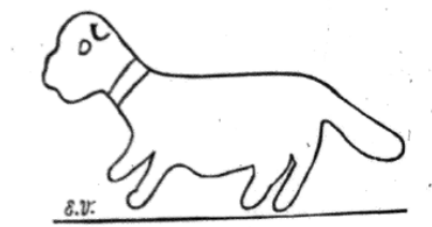


Figure III.32: Image of a "Sheep" on an Anepigraphic Stele from Carthage (Vassel 1918, 189, fig. 1)

Further, we know that some animals were depicted on stelae which could not have been sacrificed in the same manner as suggested by Stager; in one instance, an African elephant is depicted on an inscribed stele from the site.²⁵⁵ In fact, Weinfeld came to a very different conclusion about the *mlk ʾmr* stelae, writing: "The Punic inscriptions which mention *mlk ʾmr* contain neither a hint of, nor any occasion for, a sacrifice, since what is presented to the god in thanksgiving for responding to a vow and a petition is the stele itself and not a sacrifice."²⁵⁶

²⁵² Cf. Stager 1982, 161. This is implied by the language used by Stager, but is not explicitly argued.

²⁵³ Stager 1982, 161.


²⁵⁴ The stele is referred to as Anepigraphic Stele "d." It features three registers, one of which is filled with a horizontal right hand, palm up (Vassel 1918, 188-190). Vassel goes on to write: "il est à noter que les animaux, quand ils ne vont pas par paire, sont Presque invariablement tournés vers la gauche (du spectateur); je n'ai remarqué jusqu'ici qu'une exception à cette règle (dauphin d'inspirations grecque); il y a encore là, selon toute apparence, une idée superstitieuse qui nous échappe."

²⁵⁵ Lapeyre 1939, 296.

²⁵⁶ Weinfeld 1972, 135.

The iconography of these Carthaginian stelae must also be taken into consideration. A number of carved motifs appear together with – or in lieu of – a Punic inscription. I will address several of the most commonly occurring motifs here:

Table III.5: Varieties of Interpretation of Carved Motifs at the Carthage Infant Cremation Cemetery

Carved Symbol	Interpretations
<p>“Sign of Tanit”²⁵⁷</p>  <p>(A triangular base, topped by a cross bar, and featuring a disk at its apex; with variations)</p>	<p><u>Culican (1970)</u>: “This sign is a contrived expression of the Carthaginian faith in the reality of the divine milieu and the divine presence. It is a statement of belief...”²⁵⁸</p> <p><u>Linder (1973)</u>: A stylized image or symbol of the goddess Tanit.</p> <p><u>Brown (1992)</u>: “...probably depicts the goddess [Tanit] with her arms raised in greeting.”²⁵⁹</p>
Two upraised hands	<p><u>Yadin (1970)</u>: “Not only can they be regarded as representing the figure of <i>Tanit</i> herself, <i>pars pro toto</i>, but in most of the stelae of this type there is no indication of a symbol representing <i>Baʿal-Ḥamman</i>; the symbol of <i>Tanit</i> appears at the head of the stele or between the two hands.”²⁶⁰</p>
Raised right hand with palm out	<p><u>Brown (1992)</u>: Can be used in fuller depictions as a gesture of ritual greeting made by either a human or a deity; may be a symbolic shorthand for the worshipper in a tophet setting.</p>

²⁵⁷ This commonly occurring symbol was long argued to be the symbol of the goddess Tanit by excavators at Carthage. Since the 1970s, this identification has been correlated with some inscriptional and other circumstantial evidence, strengthening the case for an association between this symbol and the goddess *tnit*. The strongest evidence in support of the identification is twofold:

(a) “On some of the coins of Ashkelon, there appears the figure of a goddess accompanied by the inscription φανηβαλος and the symbol in question. There is no doubt that “phanebalos” is to be identified with פִּנְבַּעַל, the title of *Tanit*, thus further strengthening the identification of this symbol with *Tanit*” (Yadin 1970, 218).

(b) Two of the more than 250 ceramic figurines found as part of the Shave-Ziyyon / Shavei Zion shipwreck feature female figures with the “sign of Tanit” stamped on the front of their rectangular bases. These are to be dated to the late 5th – early 4th centuries BCE (on the basis of the make of the storage jars also found as part of the ship’s cargo; Linder 1973 186-87). Linder writes: “Now, for the first time, the sign appears stamped on the base of a female figure which, I strongly believe, represents Tanit herself, and which leaves little room to doubt that a direct connection exists between the goddess and the symbol. On two of the terracottas the ‘sign of Tanit’ was replaced by a beautiful representation of a dolphin. This new symbol fits well into the pattern of Carthaginian iconography where the dolphin often appears on stelae together with the ‘sign of Tanit’ and an upraised hand” (Linder 1973, 185).

²⁵⁸ Culican 1970, 48-49. He goes on: “A partial analogy is the *djed* pillar in Egyptian religion which stood for a set of forceful ideas concerning the afterlife in Osiris but which in itself suggested none of these.”

²⁵⁹ Brown 1992, 16.

²⁶⁰ Yadin 1970, 219.

Crescent Moon	<p><u>Yadin (1970)</u>: “There seems to be little doubt that the crescent is the <i>Ba’al Ḥamman</i>, for it appears not only at the head of most of stelae on which he and <i>Tanit</i> are mentioned, but also at the head of most of the stelae on which he alone is mentioned.... Moreover, it does not appear at all on many of the stelae devoted to <i>Tanit</i> alone. This is further strengthened by the fact that the crescent is the only symbol mentioning <i>Ba’al Ḥamman</i> appearing on both the Zinjirli monuments and the Punic stelae.”²⁶¹ (This despite the fact that the crescent moon sits atop the disk figure at Carthage, pointing downward, while at Zincirli and Samal the crescent sits within the disk, pointing upwards.²⁶²)</p>
Caduceus	<p><u>Leglay (1966)</u>: The caduceus appears on Carthaginian coinage and on monuments other than stelae, and is therefore unlikely to be simply a sign associated with death.</p> <p><u>Culican (1970)</u>: “...it is that type of divine instar which we have reason to believe stood by Semitic altars as the asherim stood by the baalim.”²⁶³</p> <p><u>Yadin (1970)</u>: “It is difficult to decide whether it symbolizes <i>Ba’al-Hamman</i>, <i>Tanit</i> or both of them together. Again, scholars are divided on the interpretation of the symbol proper. In spite of the great similarity between it and the caduceus of Hermes, i.e., the scepter terminating in snake-heads, there are scholars who consider it to consist of a disc surmounted by a crescent, atop a pole and tied to it by means of ribbons.”²⁶⁴</p> <p><u>Brown (1992)</u>: “...probably representing the wand of Greek Hermes as conductor of souls to the underworld.... Hermes himself is not shown, and the motif may have become more a general symbol of the passage from one world to the next than the specific attribute of the Greek god.”²⁶⁵</p>
Vase or “bottle” figure (sometimes with a human head, probably starting in the 3 rd -2 nd centuries BCE ²⁶⁶)	<p><u>Gsell (1920)</u>: Vase or urn image.</p> <p><u>Cintas (1947)</u>: Anthropomorphic betyl or idol, eventually transformed into a schematic geometric shape.</p> <p><u>Bisi (1967)</u>: Same indefinite religious idea as the <i>Tanit</i> motif.</p> <p><u>Picard (1968)</u>: A mummy-shape, indicating the swaddled infant victim, evolved to become a bottle-shape.</p> <p><u>Brown (1986)</u>: “...it must be noted that the Bottle takes many forms which need not all represent the same object or concept.”²⁶⁷</p>
A “strange object resembling a pineapple on a stand” ²⁶⁸ (e.g. CIS i 2652; CIS ii 4, 2071, 2150) ²⁶⁹	<p><u>Hours-Miedan (1950)</u>: Sacred containers of some kind.</p> <p><u>Culican (1970)</u>: Thymiaterion, a type of censer or incense burner.</p> <p><u>Picard (1968)</u>: Incense-burners.</p> <p><u>Brown (1986)</u>: “They may be altars or incense-burners mounded with incense or some other product, or they may be containers for the incense...”²⁷⁰</p>

²⁶¹ Yadin 1970, 218.

²⁶² Yadin points out that in two miniature funerary temples from Lilybeum in Sicily, not from excavated context, the crescent moon points upwards on one and downward on the other (cf. KAI 216; Yadin 1970, 205).

²⁶³ Culican 1970, 57.

²⁶⁴ Yadin 1970, 219.

²⁶⁵ Brown 1992, 16-17.

²⁶⁶ “...there appears to be some stratigraphical evidence from the *Tanit* precinct to show that it [the “bottle” symbol] acquired a face – e.g., Picard, Cb-412 – only in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. and that in this it most probably shared the contemporary anthropomorphisation of the *Tanit* symbol” (Culican 1970, 44-45).

²⁶⁷ Brown 1986, 184.

²⁶⁸ Culican 1970, 46.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Brown’s note: “I named the motif BIGMAC for the computer because of its resemblance to a hamburger with usually only a top bun” (Brown 1986, 188).

²⁷⁰ Brown 1986, 189.

The objects frequently occur grouped together, as if depicting several items associated with a ritual, or the symbols for several deities. Brown made the suggestion that “carvers of stelae copied single motifs and whole groups of motifs from the same models or pattern books,”²⁷¹ by way of explanation for the limited repertoire of iconographic elements, but striking variety in their execution and combination with one another. If this were the case, each motif might have had a particular range of cultural significance, but the individual selection of elements or combinations of elements might have had familial, personal, or even simple aesthetic significance. She goes on to posit that the large numbers of rectangular niches or outlined panels on anepigraphic stelae represent not intentional depictions, but a prepared (and unused) surface for decoration.²⁷² The prefabrication of stelae at some locations seems a likely feature of local productions.

In any case, attempts to identify and interpret the meaning or significance of the carved motifs, when accompanied by the formulaic inscriptions or not, are heavily dependent on one’s preexisting notions of the interplay of religion, ritual, and mortuary practice (or sacrifice) at the Carthaginian infant cremation cemetery.

Hadrumentum / Hadrumetum / Sousse Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae

Loc. / Num.	[Inventory numbers available in studies, below]
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	The cremation cemetery was discovered in 1863 during the excavation of the foundations of a church. Expansion of the church prevented further investigation until aerial bombing in 1942-43 destroyed portions of the buildings on the site. Excavation began in late 1943, directed by Cintas.
Studies	Cintas 1947; Fantar 1995; Garnand 2006

²⁷¹ Brown 1992, 17.

²⁷² “A number of stelae must have been prefabricated. This is suggested by the presence of blank panels on some monuments, spaces left by carvers for inscriptions which the dedicants never bothered to add” (Brown 1992, 18).

Date	6 th century BCE - 2 nd century CE
-------------	--

Hadrumentum (the Roman name of the modern Tunisian city of Sousse) is located approximately 125 km south of Tunis. The city escaped damage during the Punic Wars by allying itself with Rome. Excavations by Cintas uncovered a sacred precinct similar to the tophet or infant cremation cemetery at Carthage; the Hadrumentum site is the second largest precinct of this kind known today. Six levels were distinguished (though the earliest levels where Cintas excavated were immersed soon after excavation due to rising water levels at the site²⁷³). In the excavation areas led by Cintas, no stelae were uncovered. Later excavations produced a large corpus of stelae, detailed as follows.

Table III.6: Archaeological Strata at Hadrumentum and Affiliated Stelae

Stratum	Date	Stelae
I	6 th – late 5 th century BCE	No stelae found during Cintas’ excavations.
II	Early 4 th – early 3 rd centuries BCE	Stelae present: “rectangular slabs of conchiferous sandstone with an image (usually of an enthroned deity) in bas-relief.” ²⁷⁴ Heavily disturbed by later strata; only two stelae found <i>in situ</i> .
III	Late 3 rd – early 2 nd centuries BCE	All inscribed (and some uninscribed) stelae are of hard limestone (possibly imported from Carthage? ²⁷⁵). Most uninscribed stelae are of local stone and “native workmanship.” ²⁷⁶
IV	Middle 2 nd – middle 1 st centuries BCE	Stelae from local stone, and seem to have been carved locally.
V	Middle 1 st century BCE – late 1 st century CE	[Signs of increasing Romanization.]
VI	Late 1 st – early 2 nd centuries CE	Stelae bear representations of lambs and other animals.

The enthroned figures featured in the stelae from Sousse are quite different from carved motifs seen elsewhere. A sampling of three inscriptions from stelae in the earliest stratum

²⁷³ Cintas 1947, 4.

²⁷⁴ Mosca 1975, 43.

²⁷⁵ Cintas 1947, 32-34.

²⁷⁶ Mosca 1975, 44.

(those included in Garnand’s 2006 study) illustrates the longer, more complicated nature of these stelae inscriptions:

No. ²⁷⁷	Statum	Inscription	Bibliography
A092	II	<i>lrbt ltnt pn^c b^l // wl^odn lb^l ?bn // ?š ndr mgn bn ?ntḥn</i>	Lidzbarski 1898:432.1; Lidzbarski 1907:91; Donner and Röllig 1969-1973: <i>KAI</i> 97
A106	II	<i>l^odn lb^l ḥmn mtnt // mtnt^o mlkt b^l ?š // ndr^c zrb^l bn b^lyt // n ?š b^cm ?ytnm</i>	Donner and Röllig 1969-1973: <i>KAI</i> 99
A107	II	<i>l^odn lb^l ḥmn n[š]b // mlkt b^l ?zrm ?š nd // r b^lšlk bn^c zrb^l // bn mtr k šm^c qly b // rk^o</i>	Lidzbarski 1898:432.3; Lidzbarski 1907:92; Chabot 1916-1918: <i>RÉS</i> 1867; Donner and Röllig 1969-1973: <i>KAI</i> 98

Dedications to both Tanit and Baal Ḥammon, as well as to Baal Ḥammon alone, are present in the corpus. These three stelae still evince only one verbal action, that of “vowing” or “promising,” (*ndr*), but offer a much wider range of noun phrases to indicate the object of the verbal action: *?bn* (“stone”), *mtnt mtnt^o mlkt b^l*, and *n[š]b mlkt b^l*, respectively.

k. Algeria

Cirta / Constantine / El-Hofra Stelae

Loc. / Num.	Louvre Museum; Costa 8; Cooke 51 [One hundred eighty stelae in the Louvre Museum from this site as of 1902; four hundred forty-eight stelae as of 1993]
Dimensions	[range]
Discovery	Costa’s excavations; Excavated in 1950 by Berthier and Charlier.
Studies	Berthier and Charlier 1955; Lidzbarski 1902; Fevrier 1953; Bertrand and Szyncer 1987; Bertrand 1993
Date	3 rd -2 st centuries BCE

Cirta (modern Constantine) is located in northeastern Algeria, about 890 km from the Mediterranean coast, on the banks of the Rhumel River. The town of Cirta is thought to have

²⁷⁷ Garnand 2006 numbering scheme.

been the capital city of the Hellenistic-Roman period Libyan/Berber kingdom of Numidia (an ally of the Romans during the Punic Wars, 264-146 BCE). Brought under Roman control in 46 BCE, Cirta was eventually destroyed in 311 CE, but was soon rebuilt by the Constantine the Great (ca. 272-337 CE) to become the city of Constantine. Inscribed stelae clandestinely excavated from Punic levels at this site had been available for purchase since the late 19th century, although it was not until the construction of a Renault auto dealership in the spring of 1950 that controlled excavation began. More than 600 stelae and stela fragments were uncovered on the hill of El-Hofra, and further digging eventually revealed a structure which may be a Punic temple or sanctuary.²⁷⁸ More than three hundred of these stelae and fragments were inscribed.²⁷⁹

The collection of stelae, seemingly deposited in a fossa (but certainly *ex situ*) at the site of Cirta, inspired speculation that Cirta might have had a Punic-era tophet or cremation cemetery, although no burials were found at the site. Indeed, the construction of a favissa for the deposition of older stelae is known from the Carthage cremation cemetery,²⁸⁰ presumably to free up usable space. Four hundred forty-eight complete stelae from Cirta have been collected and studied as of 1993,²⁸¹ making it the second largest number of stelae found in North Africa after the cremation cemetery at Carthage.²⁸² All the inscriptions date from before 46 BCE and probably not before the 3rd century BCE (thought to be the date of the establishment of a colony at Cirta by Carthage). As early as 1903 (when one hundred eighty stelae from Cirta were already known), Cooke wrote that “the writing belongs to the state of

²⁷⁸ The identification of the structure is based on the elevated position of the site, the stelae nearby, and “sa disposition et les debris recueillis dans son enceinte” (Charlier 1953, 3).

²⁷⁹ And were published in Berthier and Charlier 1955.

²⁸⁰ Quinn 2011, 390; Benichou-Safar 1995, 98-99.

²⁸¹ Bertrand 1993, 3.

²⁸² Hadrumentum is the second largest excavated “tophet” site, although Cirta’s *favissa* produced more stelae.

transition from the Punic to the Neo-Punic script, and many words begin to assume forms which are characteristic of the later language.”²⁸³ Still, the proportions of Punic to Neo-Punic stelae range from 8-to-1 in the collection published by Berthier and Charlier, to 4-to-1 in the earlier collection of Costa.²⁸⁴

Two hundred forty-two of these stelae feature one of several variants of the symbol commonly referred to as the “sign of Tanit”²⁸⁵—in its most basic form, a circle atop a triangle, separated by a short cross-bar. In fact, it is the lower percentage of direct inscriptional evidence for the name “Tanit,” a name which appears on only seventy-eight of the four hundred forty-eight total stelae at Cirta, (and the low degree of correlation between dedications to Tanit and the “sign of Tanit” as a carved motif) at Cirta that led some scholars to re-think the labeling of this symbol in the first place:

...to call this symbol the “sign of Tanit” is a fundamental error. In the sanctuary at Constantine, which, judging by the number of votive inscription, was dedicated to Baal Addir and Baal Hammon, the symbol appears just as frequently. It is regularly seen on stelae dedicated to these gods alone, and on the other hand is frequently absent from stelae happening to invoke Tanit.²⁸⁶

Further, five stelae transcribe the name as *tynt*, perhaps to be read “Tinit,”²⁸⁷ a graphic rendering which, to my knowledge, does not occur on the Carthaginian stelae (but which is seemingly repeated in two Greek stelae from Cirta, which offer “Tinnit” and “Tenneit” for the goddess’ name).²⁸⁸ Early on, Cooke indicated some significant differences between the then-known corpora of stelae inscriptions at Carthage and at Cirta; at Cirta, “the formula of dedication is not so stereotyped, Ba’al-ḥammān generally takes precedence of Tanith, and often

²⁸³ Cooke 1903, 137.

²⁸⁴ Bertrandy 1993, 21.

²⁸⁵ Bertrandy 1993, 3.

²⁸⁶ Cintas 1968-1969, 10.

²⁸⁷ Bertrandy 1993, 7.

²⁸⁸ 1 GR (Berthier and Charlier 1955, 167) and 3 GR (Berthier and Charlier 1955, 169); see Bertrandy 1993, 7 for further notes.

is named alone; notices of time and place are introduced more frequently.”²⁸⁹ Those stelae that designate the year of their dedication number only thirteen of the total four hundred forty-eight stelae.²⁹⁰

It is noteworthy that at this time, no cremation burials have been discovered at Cirta,²⁹¹ and yet it is still referred to in most publications as one of several known “tophets” from the Mediterranean.

I. Western Mediterranean (France, Spain, etc.)

Bone Plaque from Ibiza Necropolis

Loc. / Num.	Inscription 014/153
Dimensions	Bone plaque 0.071 m wide x 0.05 m high x 0.08 m thick ²⁹²
Discovery	2000 and 2003 excavations at the Ibiza necropolis.
Studies	Ramon et al. 2010
Date	5 th -4 th centuries BCE (?); (referred to as dating to the “Archaic Period” by the excavators).

In 2000, the Ibiza heritage authority ordered a survey of a parcel of land at the corner of Joan Planells street and the “via Púnica,” which led to a five-month excavation of the site in 2003. A late Punic-Roman cemetery dating to the early 4th century CE was uncovered, which nevertheless contained two Phoenician inscriptions which appear to date many centuries earlier.

The first inscription is on a bone plaque (of unknown animal origin) with four round holes at the corners – the upper left-hand hole is preserved completely, while the other three are broken off but still identifiable. One side is inscribed, while the reverse is crossed or

²⁸⁹ Cooke 1903, 137.

²⁹⁰ Bertrandy 1993, 20-21; These are given in terms of years of the reigns of Massinissa, Micipsa, Gulussa, and Mastanabal, all dating to the late 3rd - mid-2nd centuries BCE.

²⁹¹ See for example Brown 1992, 15.

²⁹² These are the dimensions given in Ramon et al. 2010; the measurement of the inscription’s thickness seems unlikely, and is probably a typographical error.

transected by lightly carved lines.²⁹³ The initial publication of the inscription notes “Si l’on tient compte de sa graphie générale et surtout de la forme du shin, on pourrait la dater de l’époque archaïque,”²⁹⁴ but does not attempt to offer a closer date for the object.



Figure III.33: Inscribed Bone Plaque from Ibiza (Ramon et al. 2010, 233, fig. 4)

The inscription consists of seven lines of text, as follows:²⁹⁵

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1) <i>l'dn l'smn wlr b</i> | To the lord, to Ešmun, and to the lady |
| 2) <i>t l's' r[t?] 'z p'l 'š</i> | ʿAštarte(?), that which Ešmunʿab had made, |
| 3) <i>mnʿb bn ʿbd[ms... b]</i> | son of ʿAbd[ms...] |
| 4) <i>n ʿbd... n bn [g]y</i> | son of ʿAbd... n son of [g]yry |
| 5) <i>ry bn bdgd bn d'mlk</i> | son of <i>bdgd</i> , son of Daʿamilk |
| 6) <i>bn ʿb kšmʿ ql dbr</i> | son of ʿb, because he heard the sound of my voice. |
| 7) <i>y</i> | |

Because this inscription has been dated solely on the basis of its script, and seems to have been found in an area of reuse (or accidental redeposition) several centuries later, it may have very little to tell us about Phoenician mortuary practice in either the Iron Age I-II or Persian period.

But it does offer an early attestation of the votive formula “*kšmʿ ql dbry*” in the Western Mediterranean.

²⁹³ “...le revers est traverse de traits traces par un objet fin qui a servi pour l’écriture du texte” (Ramon et al. 2010, 233).

²⁹⁴ Ramon et al. 2010, 234. The “archaic period” is typically used to describe the period 800 – 480 BCE.

²⁹⁵ The vocalization (or lack thereof) of the names in this inscription follows that put forward by Ramon et al. (2010, 234).

Stone Pedestal from Ibiza Necropolis

Loc. / Num.	Inscription 016/284
Dimensions	Black stone pedestal fragment, 0.16m long and 0.16m high
Discovery	2000 and 2003 excavations at the Ibiza necropolis.
Studies	Ramon et al. 2010
Date	3 rd -2 nd centuries BCE

Found about 10 m west of the bone plaque inscription discussed above, and within days of that inscription's discovery, was a second Phoenician / Punic inscription from the 4th century CE necropolis at Ibiza. A cube-shaped stone pedestal of "pierre noire bleuâtre,"²⁹⁶ probably once topped by a statue, features the remains of three lines of writing, broken off on the left-hand side.



Figure III.34: Inscribed Stone Pedestal from Ibiza Necropolis (Ramon et al. 2010, 234, fig. 6)

The inscription, written in a script the excavators attribute to the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE (comparing it to scripts used at Carthage), reads as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1) <i>lʹdn lmlqrt ʹl hšr s[ml]</i> | To the lord, to Melqart of Tyre/the rock, [a statue] |
| 2) <i>hšr dl hktrt šlm[ndr]</i> | of gold with capitals, completed [a vow] |
| 3) <i>bʹm tgʹ lbn kš[mʹ qlʹ]</i> | with the people / city of <i>tgʹ lbn</i> , because he he[ard his voice]. |

Here the same problems persist as with the bone plaque inscription; the fragmentary stone pedestal was found only in secondary deposition in a late antique necropolis (and may in fact have come from the city/people of *tgʹ lbn*, an unknown location, according to the excavators).

²⁹⁶ Ramon et al. 2010, 234. The inscription was actually found split in two, and latter reassembled.

The inscription may reference a Levantine Phoenician site in the deity name “Melqart of Tyre,” although the definite article makes it plausible that the deity’s name is something akin to “Melqart of the rock,” instead. It hints at the same kind of dedicatory formula as the plaque, above; unfortunately, the breaks obscure the details. It seems unlikely that the original context for this object would have been funerary at all.

Ring from Ibiza necropolis

Loc. / Num.	Hispania 12
Dimensions	
Discovery	
Studies	Escudero 1917, 48, pl. VIII & XII; Teixidor 1968, 372, no. 71
Date	3 rd -2 nd centuries BCE

A ring bearing a short Punic inscription was found in the Ibiza necropolis, and is thought to date to the 3rd – 2nd centuries BCE. The ring features two birds, whose feathers form the hair and beard of a male figure in profile.

z l’dlb’l “that which belongs to *’dlb’l*”

The name may be vocalized “Idnibalis,” if the Greek text of a Sardinian bilingual inscription (CIS i, 149), offering the same Phoenician spelling, may be a guide.²⁹⁷

m. Unprovenanced Artifacts

Bronze Situla²⁹⁸

Loc. / Num.	Princeton University Art Museum (no. y1938-20)
Dimensions	13.5 cm high
Discovery	Unknown provenance; McCarter suggests the situla may come from a Phoenician community in Memphis (on the basis of iconographic and

²⁹⁷ Teixidor 1968, 372.

²⁹⁸ My thanks to Terry Wilfong and Philip C. Schmitz for their suggestions, advice, and guidance in dealing with the situlae evidence.

	textual parallels).
Studies	McCarter 1993; Amadasi Guzzo 1996, 1061; Bordreuil, Briquel Chatonnet, and Gubel 1999, 249
Date	Mid-6 th century BCE

A new Phoenician inscription was found in the early 1990s during the cleaning of an unprovenanced bronze situla belonging to the Princeton University Art Museum. Although there are several odd features of the Phoenician script (including a backwards *aleph*, two different forms of the *het*, and a *yod* lying ninety degrees “on its face”²⁹⁹), it has been used to date the situla to the mid-6th century BCE. McCarter reads:

ʿsy ttn ḥn wḥym lʿbdptḥ bn ʿbdʿ

“May Isis grant favor and life to ‘Abdi-Ptah son of Abdo”



Figure III.35: Bronze Situla with Partial View of Inscription (McCarter 1993, 116)

Five “panels” cover the sides of the situla, constructing a scene that seems to depict the progression of the dead man through encounters with four deities. The panels may be described as follows:³⁰⁰ (1) a kilted figure, possibly ‘Abdi-Ptah himself (the deceased) in a worshipping pose, with sun-disk in a solar bark above him; (2) the goddess Isis (with cow horns

²⁹⁹ McCarter 1993, 115.

³⁰⁰ As described in photo captions; McCarter 1993, 116-117.

and solar disk), whom the worshipper faces; (3) the goddess Nephthys (with hieroglyphs for “basket” and “palace” on her head) and *benu*-bird (symbol of rebirth) in a ship above her; (4) the goddess Neith (goddess of the city of Sais, wearing the crown of lower Egypt); and finally, (5) the goddess Selket (with scorpion on her head).³⁰¹

Situlae are common from the New Kingdom period in Egypt onwards,³⁰² and are known in bronze, silver, and gold. “Such *situlae* are typically inscribed with the names of the deities and the deceased. Sometimes they also include a libation formula, in which the deceased receives a libation from a man or god.”³⁰³ Some have suggested the situla’s shape is meant to mimic the shape of a breast, and that its function in the afterlife was to offer milk (either in the funeral procession, or in the offering of drink to the deceased).³⁰⁴ While these symbolic connections are debated (and the corpus of extant situlae await further systematic study), the connections between situlae and mortuary practice in Egypt are long established. Situlae are often depicted in tomb paintings, and the funerary iconography on the Princeton situla seem to support such a connection.

McCarter further suggests that not only the imagery but also the language of the inscription mimic Egyptian customs – that the phrase *hn wḥym* (“favor and life”) may well mimic the Egyptian offering formula in which a deity is asked to grant *ḥs[ṯ]* (“favor”) and *ʿnh* (“life”) to the petitioner.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ “These goddesses are a familiar foursome in Egyptian funeral art. They appear together often as protective deities associated with tombs and canopic jars” (McCarter 1993, 118).

³⁰² Lichtheim 1947.

³⁰³ McCarter 1993, 119.

³⁰⁴ See for example Lichtheim 1947, 172.

³⁰⁵ McCarter 1993, 116.

3. Diaspora Persian – Hellenistic Period Textual Evidence In Sum

a. **NORTHERN LEVANT:** There is no extant Phoenician-language textual evidence for mortuary practice in the period under review.

b. **SOUTHERN LEVANT:** The two Phoenician inscriptions from the southern Levant examined above both confirm, rather than add to, the existing picture of mortuary practice in the Persian – Hellenistic periods. Both are inscribed vessels found in burial contexts. One (the jar from Bat-Yam) indicates the ownership of the item with a *l-* preposition, the other (a juglet from Jaffa) refers to itself with the noun *kd*, in construct to the name of its owner. Although the latter was found in a cave containing a minimum of twenty-one individuals, it was the only inscribed item in the tomb. No more can be deduced from these two inscribed objects.

c. **CYPRUS:** The picture painted by the sixteen different Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus is much more complicated.

Two vessels can be immediately set aside, as they bare the same ownership formula we have seen before – the jar fragment from Salamis (*l+ PN*), and the Vouni pithos with the formula *l+ mlk*, “belonging to the king.” While we would like to make more of the implications for centralized trade or royal production this latter inscription suggests, it does not seem to offer additional information about mortuary practice.

Two more inscribed vessels can be bracketed as too abbreviated or ambiguous to be able to interpret with surety. The first is the amphora from Ayia Irini (with only two Phoenician characters); the second is the jar from Turabi, which may refer to a measurement and type of wine, but the abbreviations are unprecedented and other interpretations are possible.

Utilizing the same ownership formula seen on the inscribed vessels left as grave goods, above, is the inscribed stone sarcophagus from Kition. This inscription, too, utilizes the *l-* preposition to indicate the name of the deceased within. The text gives the name of the deceased's father and his official title as *skn šwr*, "minister of Tyre." In this case, we can be fairly confident that the inscription was carved specifically for the mortuary preparations; although it is unfortunate we have so little information about the object's primary archaeological context.

The 5th century BCE jar fragment from Alassa may have come from a vessel inscribed and used specifically for a funeral ritual. If so, it might indicate that aromatic oils or perfumes were contained within, either buried whole and filled with the deceased or poured out and broken at the grave site. But the fragments of the three extant lines do not offer enough context to be sure of what is being described, and the discovery of the fragment in a robbed-out tomb does not add to the reliability of this text for indicating the details of a mortuary ritual.

The late 3rd century jar fragment from Idalion is even more frustrating. The twelve extant Phoenician characters across three fragmentary lines give little in the way of context for the few identifiable words. While the characters on line 2 (*...lt šmḥ*) may indicate another attestation of the phrase legible on the inscription from Egypt, below, I am not convinced by Cross (1994) that this phrase is a technical term for a kind of human sacrifice, namely a "whole burnt offering of a legitimate heir." The fragment's archaeological find-spot in the destruction debris of the citadel wall at Idalion add to these difficulties of interpretation.

This leaves nine Cypriot inscriptions that adorn stone or marble stelae or plaques. Some (like the Idalion example or Lapithos III) seem to indicate votive purposes, others (like

the Pergamos stele and the Kition marble plaque) were erected to honor, commemorate, or mark the burial location of a deceased person(s). But the vocabulary used to represent these purposes – the monument, its intention, its dedicant and dedicatee – creates a tangled semantic picture.

I have attempted to illustrate some of the variety of phrasing in the following chart, which is arranged in roughly chronological fashion (i.e. not in the order of location followed in the discussion above). The column on the far right represents a conservative judgment of the purpose or type of the monument, based on a holistic assessment including the inscription, archaeological context, and iconographical features,³⁰⁶ where this information is available and applicable. A question mark in this column indicates an ambiguous inscription, although in most cases translators and interpreters have labeled these as grave markers or commemorative stelae for the dead (whether or not they were intended to mark the location of an actual burial, which in most cases cannot be determined).

Table III.7: Vocabulary from Funerary and Votive Inscriptions from Cyprus

Inscrip.	Date	Donor	Verb	Noun	Prep. (³⁰⁷)	Whose behalf?	Why?	Use of <i>hy</i>	<i>l'm</i> ?	TYPE
Pergamos	4 th c. BCE	-	-	-	<i>l</i>	PN	-	-	-	DEATH
Kition I	4 th c. BCE?	-	-	-	<i>l</i>	PN ³⁰⁸	-	-	-	?
Kition II	4 th c. BCE?	son	<i>yʔnʔ</i>	<i>mʂbt</i>	<i>l</i>	father	-	<i>bhym</i>	-	?
Kition III	4 th c. BCE?	two sons	<i>yʔnʔ</i>	<i>mʂbt</i>	<i>l</i>	father	-	-	-	?
Kition IV	4 th c. BCE	son	<i>yʔnʔ</i>	<i>mʂbt</i> <i>ʔz</i>	<i>l</i>	father & mother	<i>ʔl mʂkb</i> <i>nʔtnm</i>	-	Y	DEATH
Kition Marble Plaque	3 rd c. BCE	husband	<i>yʔnʔ</i>	<i>mʂbt</i>		self & wife	<i>ʔl mʂkb</i> <i>nʔty</i>	<i>lmbhyy</i>	Y	DEATH
Idalion	254	grand-	<i>yʔnʔ</i>	<i>hsmʔm</i>	<i>ʔl</i>	grand-	<i>hndr ...</i>	<i>bhyy</i>	-	VOW

³⁰⁶ In the case of the Pergamos inscription, a carved bust of a man, head turned to the left in the style of some Hellenistic funerary portraiture, seems to indicate a portrait of the deceased.

³⁰⁷ i.e. Preposition to indicate the recipient or beneficiary of the donation

³⁰⁸ In full: PN, daughter of x; wife of y, son of a, son of b son of c.

	BCE	mother				sons	ʔš kn ndr			
Lapithos III	345-315 BCE	PN		sml mš z	-	self	lskrn	bhym	-	VOTIVE
Lapithos II, line 3	275-272 BCE	PN	yʔnʔt	hsml z mš	l	self	sk[r nʔm bhym]m lšmy	bhym (?)	-	VOTIVE
Lapithos II, line 7?	275-272 BCE	PN	yšt	mš pn ʔby bnḥšt		father				?

The longer Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus therefore indicate that the inscribed standing stone was a visual monument appropriate for many different kinds of public statements or display: the public, legible pronouncement of a fulfilled vow; a visual reminder of a lost loved one (and of one's own honorable satisfaction of a familial or social obligation toward the deceased); or the lasting record of an expensive gift to the gods. The temporal clause *lʔm*, indicating that the erected monument is intended for an indefinite, long-lasting period of time, seems limited (in this small sample) to contexts involving commemoration of the dead. But the idea that the value of the inscription, stele, or statue was to be “among the living” seems constant.

d. **EGYPT:** The only Phoenician inscription relating to mortuary practice found in Egypt is an urn or jar as intriguing as it is vexing. The Demotic portion of the bilingual is of no help, as it is obscured by drips or stains from the liquid once contained in the vessel, now reused as a burial urn. The brief Phoenician inscription reads only *ʔt smḥ*, a possible second occurrence of the phrase suggested by Cross for the Idalion jar fragment's broken second line (above). Cross' suggestion that the two inscriptions refer to a single practice – that of human sacrifice, certainly, but more specifically of a burnt offering of the first son or “legitimate heir” – is possible, but in my mind not a parsimonious solution to the textual problem when no

evidence for such practices exists outside of Carthage, Motya, and the other *tophet* sites, and when even that evidence is heavily debated by scholars.

e. **CRETE:** No Phoenician inscriptions from Crete add to our knowledge of mortuary practice in this later period.

f. **GREECE:** After Cyprus, Persian – Hellenistic period Greece produced the largest number of Phoenician-language inscriptions relating to mortuary practice. Eight inscriptions were discussed above, all of which are bilingual inscriptions indicating their contents in both Greek and Phoenician. All eight have been identified as burial stelae by their interpreters (despite, in most cases, the lack of decisive archaeological context), although only the Athens lion stele and the Demetrias II inscription make explicit the fact that they commemorate a burial.

For ease of comparison, I have collated the various linguistic indicators present in these eight Phoenician inscriptions from Greece. The Greek epitaphs add significant information in only two cases (indicated below) – otherwise they tend to provide fewer details than their Phoenician counterparts. The column on “voice” refers exclusively to the Phoenician inscription, and to whether the first person (in the case of the presence of the independent pronoun *ʔnk*) or third person (where the name of the deceased is the object of the preposition *l-*) is used. The inscriptions have been arranged in roughly chronological order (thus differing from the order in which they were discussed, above).

Table III.8: Comparison of Phoenician Funerary Inscriptions from Greece

Inscrip.	Date	Voice	Stele	Prep	Deceased	Gentilic	Donor?
Athens I	Ca. 400 BCE	Third person	<i>mšbt skr bḥm</i>	<i>l</i>	PN son of x	<i>hšdny</i>	-
Athens II	350-300 BCE	Third person	-	<i>l</i>	PN son of X son of Y son of Z	<i>kty</i>	-

Piraeus	3 rd c. BCE	First person	[omitted] 𐤏	<i>l(y)</i>	PN daughter of x	<i>šdnt</i>	PN son of x, chief priest of Nergal (<i>ytn</i>)
Demetrias I	3 rd c. BCE	-	-	-	PN...	<i>šdn[y]</i> [Greek adds “Sidonian priest”]	-
Demetrias III	225 BCE	-	-	-	PN son of x	<i>hkty</i>	-
Demetrias II	200 BCE	First person	<i>mšbt qbry</i>	-	PN son of x	<i>?rwdy</i>	-
Rhodes marble plaque	200 BCE	Third person	-	<i>l</i>	PN son of x son of y	[Kition - given only in Greek]	-
Athens lion stele	late 4 th -2 nd century BCE	First person; first as the deceased, then as his friend.	[omitted] 𐤏	-	PN son of x	<i>?šqly</i>	I, PN, son of x, <i>šdny</i> (<i>ytn</i> ?)

If indeed all eight of these inscriptions mark burial stelae, we see a wide variety of possible linguistic constructions in this corpus. Where present, the verbal element used to describe the setting up (or financing) of the stele or monument is always a Hiphil form of the verb *tn*?, and the noun used to refer to the monument itself is always *mšbt*, in construct with a descriptive word or phrase (“pillar of remembrance among the living,” or “pillar of my grave”).

In every case, the inscriptions identify the deceased with a Gentilic – three men and one woman are referred to as “Sidonians” (one with the definite article), three men come from Kition (one written with the definite article; one written without it; a third specified only in Greek), and two more are associated with Ashkelon and Arwad, respectively. In only one case is the occupation of the deceased mentioned – and then, only in the Greek epitaph (though the Phoenician text is damaged).

The corpus of Phoenician inscriptions associated with mortuary practice from Greece is small, but when coupled with the extant Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus, creates a grouping of seventeen inscriptions from which to begin to draw some conclusions about the Phoenician vocabulary for commemoration and dedication.

g. ITALY: The complicated Pyrgi lamina inscription is the only Phoenician inscription from Italy included in this study of later period texts. Again the language of this inscription has been interpreted variously as that of a votive inscription (to accompany the dedication of a shrine on the “day of the burial of the deity,” presumably a festival of some kind), or as that of an inscription with funereal character (to honor a particular deceased person and to wish the *ʔlm*, or many other dead, a peaceful and eternal rest in their “houses” or graves³⁰⁹). The linguistic difficulties of the inscription are further complicated by the close connections between votive or dedicatory vocabulary in Phoenician in this period, as well as to the possible Etruscan beliefs that underlie the commissioning of this small metal lamina. For our purposes, this piece does not make a significant contribution to our understanding of mortuary practice in the central coastal Levant.

h. SICILY AND MALTA: The Motya tophet or infant cremation cemetery is the single source on Sicily or Malta for Phoenician inscriptions relating to Phoenician mortuary practice in the period in question. The forty inscribed stelae (only a small percentage of the total corpus of stelae excavated at the cemetery) represent a limited range of formulae, all of which are dedicated to the god *bʿl ḥmn*, and no others. Two different verbs seem to indicate that not all the stelae were erected for the same reason; one indicates “giving” (*ytn*), while the other expresses “vowing” or “promising” (*ndr*). That which is given / promised is expressed variously as well – in one case a stele (*nšb*), in other cases a *mtnt* or *mlkt*. The Motya stelae (inscribed and anepigraphic) also represent the most extensive evidence that red paint (and possibly other colors) was also used for the adornment of these stelae. The stelae corpora from various Mediterranean sites will be compared below.

³⁰⁹ Knoppers 1992.

i. **SARDINIA:** Four tophets or infant cremation cemeteries from Sardinia produced stelae like those from Motya: Sulcis, Nora, Monte Sirai, and Tharros. Their inscriptions provide tantalizing variations that indicate both that the tophet sites may have been used for different types of rituals at a single location, and that there was some variation in terminology (and practice?) from site to site, even within the island of Sardinia. A full study of the iconography of the stelae across Sardinian sites (and perhaps other tophet sites as well) would be a monumental undertaking, but will ultimately be crucial to formulating a full picture of the visual grammar of the western Phoenician tophet. Their value for understanding Phoenician mortuary practice in the homeland is less clear, however, since we know no Levantine tophet or sacred precinct like those from Sardinia.

j. **TUNISIA:** The two largest tophet sites currently known were found in Tunisia, namely Carthage and Hadrumentum / Sousse. The sparse treatment given these sites above belies their overwhelming wealth of iconographic and inscriptional data. Unfortunately, the enormous number of stelae produced at these sites makes publication and systematic analysis of the corpora a serious impediment to their utilization in the present study. Because interpretation of the content of these stelae is so heavily influenced by one's interpretation of the primary use of the cemetery site (as stages for regular child sacrifice, or as special cemeteries for infants too young to have been incorporated into society), excavators' and art historians' qualitative summaries of trends or tendencies in the corpus must be evaluated cautiously.

k. **ALGERIA:** The second largest collection of stelae from a tophet site come from the *favissa* found at Cirta / Constantine; four hundred forty-eight complete stelae have been published as of 1993. This is all the more remarkable given the very tightly contained

chronological limits of this corpus; the stelae from Cirta have been dated to the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE (the shortest period of use of any tophet site³¹⁰). Unlike at any other tophet site, thirteen stelae designate the year in which the dedication or erection of the particular stele took place. Five occurrences of the name of the goddess *tnt* rendered *tynt* seems likely to evince a local pronunciation shift which is supported by Greek inscriptional evidence from Cirta as well.

l. WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN: Three inscriptions from the Ibiza necropolis in Spain offer a final chapter to this collection of provenance Phoenician inscriptions from outside the homeland. The oldest is a 5th-4th century BCE bone plaque dedicated to Ešmun and ʿAštarte. The inscription itself is a standard votive or dedicatory inscription. Although it utilizes *pʿl* as its verbal element, it is explained that the commission was made *kšmʿ ql dbry*, “because [they] heard the sound of my voice.” While the root *ndr* is not utilized, a promise is fulfilled. Unfortunately, the archaeological context of this inscription (as part of salvage excavations, in a stratigraphically disturbed area) leaves much to be desired. The same problem of context plagues the inscribed stone pedestal dedicated to Melqart of Tyre, dated to the 3rd-2nd century on the basis of its script, but without sure provenance in a cemetery context.

m. UNPROVENANCED: I have included only one unprovenanced inscription in the present study; a situla in the collection of the Princeton University Art Museum. This object was acquired sometime before 1943,³¹¹ and McCarter, in his summary of the object’s biography and evaluation of its newly revealed inscription, never once questions its authenticity or

³¹⁰ This may be because the nature of the corpus discovered at Cirta is that of a single “layer” of removed stelae; the tophet site itself (undiscovered) may well have been in use much longer.

³¹¹ Based on McCarter’s comment in 1993 that it “was acquired more than a half century ago” (1993, 115).

legitimacy,³¹² going so far as to suggest that a documented Phoenician community in Memphis “is a likely place of origin for our *situla*.”³¹³ Unfortunately, the circumstances of acquisition are not detailed in McCarter’s 1993 article.

On this object, we see the use of the Phoenician language and script to render an Egyptian-sounding request for blessings from an Egyptian goddess, on behalf of a dedicant with a name containing Egyptian divine elements. The decoration of the *situla* is taken straight from Egyptian funerary art, although the figure facing the four goddesses (a priest? the deceased dedicant of the object?) cannot be identified with certainty. Scenes similar to that on the Princeton *situla* have been found on other Egyptian *situla*, as well; the bronze *situla* from Har Mizpe Yammim, discussed above, is particularly relevant in this context.

However, the presence of an Egyptian-style object, possibly from Egypt itself, and inscribed with a Phoenician inscription, does not carry the same symbolic or semantic implications as Egyptian-style or -styled objects found inscribed with Phoenician inscriptions in the central coastal Levant itself. This object may represent an example of the importance of the Phoenician language and script to members of a community otherwise invested in an Egyptian cultural sphere. More cannot be said because of the unprovenanced nature of this object.

4. Conclusions – Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice and Beliefs

The explosion of Phoenician inscriptions known from the Persian – Hellenistic period Mediterranean is in some small way indicated by the sample of inscriptions relating to

³¹² He notes only that “the curators who first evaluated the object believed it to be an ordinary and not particularly well crafted example of an Egyptian *situla*. They relegated it to a back room in the museum where other, less than exciting, Egyptian objects were sold” (McCarter 1993, 115).

³¹³ McCarter 1993, 117.

Phoenician mortuary practice discussed above. The diversity of cultural context, iconographic repertoire, and vocabulary makes assimilating this material challenging. Despite this material's frequent use in reconstructions of Levantine Phoenician practice and belief, when viewed as a diverse and fluid corpus replete with regional and personal idiosyncracies, the relevance of any particular inscription for an understanding of Phoenician mortuary practice in the homeland territory is dubious.

That said, there is much to be considered. The personal identification of individuals as "Sidonian," "Tyrrian," "Arwadites," and so on, as well as the fascinating permutations of bilingual funerary inscriptions, bring alive the personal stories of Phoenician-speakers living outside the homeland. As Stager concludes,

The quantity of bilingual inscriptions in Athens, Delos, Rhodes, and elsewhere in the Mediterranean attests to a sizable community of Phoenicians from various city-states who were accustomed to bilingual thinking. Many of them lived and worked abroad. Some inscriptions erected by Phoenicians, particularly those of the later Hellenistic period, were written entirely in Greek. This change... may indicate increasing acculturation, but it does not reflect the substitution of Greek identity for Phoenician.³¹⁴

In fact, it may be precisely this Greek audience – unrelated community members passing by a votive or funerary monument, perhaps – that inspired expressions of "Phoenicianism" in these inscriptions.

Conspicuous in their absence from this later inscriptional corpus are any inscribed cinerary urns or amphorae (replete throughout the Iron Age I-II inscriptional record). As will be evident from the archaeological material (see Chapter VI), adult cremation all but disappears from sites in the Phoenician cultural sphere during the Persian – Hellenistic periods.

³¹⁴ Stager 2005, 445.

But perhaps the most visible corpus of Persian – Hellenistic inscriptions is that of the stelae from several tophet sites throughout the Mediterranean. Only one tophet or infant cremation burial site has produced no stelae (Su Cardulinu, Sardinia);³¹⁵ the others offer up dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of stelae. A brief comparison of these stelae and their inscriptions may be found in Table III.9.

Table III.9: Comparison of Infant Cremation Cemetery / “Tophet” Stelae Corpora

Site	Corpus Size	Dedications	Verbs	Nominal Clause	Red Paint?
Motya, Malta	40 inscribed (more than 1000 total)	<i>lʾdn lbʿl ḥmn</i> <i>lbʿl ḥmn</i> <i>ʿdn bʿl ḥmn</i>	<i>ndr</i> <i>ytn</i>	<i>mtnt</i> <i>mlkt</i> <i>nšb</i>	Y
Sulcis, Sardinia	7 inscribed (1575 total)	<i>[bʿl] ḥmn</i> <i>lrbt ltnt</i>	<i>ndr</i>	<i>ndr</i>	
Nora, Sardinia	5 inscribed (85 total)	-	-	<i>ndr</i>	Y
Monte Sirai, Sardinia	0 inscribed (ca. 120 total)	-	-	-	
Tharros, Sardinia	0 inscribed (ca. 200 total)	-	-	-	
Carthage, Tunisia	Unknown hundreds of inscribed stelae (ca. 7000 total)	[for example:] <i>lrbt ltnt wlʾdn lbʿl ḥmn</i> <i>lʾdn lbʿl ḥmn</i>	[n/a]	<i>ndr</i> <i>mlk ʿmr</i> <i>mlk bʿl</i>	?
Hadrumentum / Sousse, Tunisia	Unknown number of inscribed and total stelae	[for example:] <i>lrbt ltnt pnʿ bʿl wlʾdn</i> <i>lbʿl</i> <i>lʾdn lbʿl ḥmn</i>	<i>ndr</i>	<i>ʿbn</i> <i>mtnt mtntʿ mlkt</i> <i>bʿl</i> <i>n[š]b mlkt bʿl</i>	?
Cirta / Constantine, Algeria	448 inscribed stelae (more than 600 total)	[for example:] <i>lʾdn lbʿl ḥmn wlrbt ltnt</i> <i>lʾdn lbʿl ḥmn</i> <i>...ltynt</i>	[n/a]	?	?

The varieties of inscriptional content are only one vector across which these stelae corpora may be compared; in fact, the table above makes it clear just how small the proportion of inscribed stelae is in the overall picture of stelae use. The variety of stelae shape, stone dressing techniques, carved motifs, and density of stelae at a site vary over time in particular

³¹⁵ “To date, nine tophets have been excavated in North Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia. Most have monuments and burials. One, at Su Cardulinu in Sardinia, has produced no monuments, while two, at Cirta [Constantine] in Algeria and Lilibaenum in Sicily, have been identified not by the discovery of buried remains but only on the basis of stelae removed in antiquity from the sites” (Brown 1992, 15).

cemeteries, and from region to region.³¹⁶ “The stelae found in Sardinia and at Tharros, for instance, are unlike those found in the *tophets* of Carthage and Sousse (ancient Hadrumetum).”³¹⁷ Individual cities seem to have preferred particular iconographic tendencies over others, just as they preferred certain linguistic expressions on inscribed stelae. And yet, with no tophet sites known from the Levantine homeland, these stelae may tell another story than that of Phoenician mortuary practice in the central coastal Levant.

Many scholars have concluded that an iconographic, inscriptional, and ritual repertoire as developed (and relatively continuous) as the tophet stelae phenomenon must have been exported from the central coastal Levant. I agree that the traditions are too similar to one another (even in their local peculiarities) not to have resulted from shared parentage. But this specific range of practices and representations need not have come from one geographic or chronological “point;” it may well have been sustained by a steady flow of people and ideas from place to place.

Invoking the tenuous nature between the practices and beliefs associated with the tophet or infant cremation cemeteries of the Western Mediterranean, and the regularly occurring mortuary practices of the Phoenician central coastal Levant, I move now to literary texts which have been cited as sources for Phoenician mortuary practice and child (or human) sacrifice. With the tophet stelae, Biblical texts, and classical sources alike, care should be taken to separate the answers to several different questions:

³¹⁶ Or source to source; see Brown 1992, 16: “Some motifs were borrowed from Egypt, others were entirely local, and many, at least after the late fifth century B.C.E., were based on Greek models. Artisans in various cities preferred different shapes of monuments and favored certain motifs over others, sometimes executing the designs differently. For example, although depictions of so-called ‘pillar shrines’ (Shaw 1989) are rare at Carthage after the sixth century, they are much more frequent at Hadrumetum (Sousse) and at Phoenician sites in Italy. ...Many Carthaginian craftsmen preferred incision over relief, whereas Italian carvers worked more frequently in relief.”

³¹⁷ Fantar in Moscati 1989 (2001 edition), 199.

Does the evidence indicate one ritual or practice? Or many kinds of practices?

Does the evidence seem plausible? Does it seem likely that the practice(s) occurred as described?

Does the evidence reflect direct knowledge of or access to the Phoenician/Punic cultural sphere?

Is the evidence of specific relevance for the Phoenician populations of the central coastal Levant?

Recognizing that the answers to these questions will not always be accessible (and that others will be subjective in nature), we turn now to a discussion of relevant Biblical texts.

Chapter IV.

Literary Texts: Biblical Sources for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

Though the compilation of texts in the Hebrew Bible does not include explicit reference to Phoenician burial practices or mortuary ritual of any kind, the Biblical texts have nevertheless frequently been cited as an indirect witness to a Phoenician ritual of child sacrifice. This chapter surveys the Biblical sources used by scholars as evidence of Phoenician practices associated with death and burial. In discussing these canonical and deuterocanonical texts, my goal is not to entirely reevaluate the material, but to review it in order to assess its potential contribution for an understanding of Phoenician burial practice in the Iron Age I through Persian period homeland. Although my survey includes all the texts typically included by scholars in discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice (mostly in terms of an alleged practice of child sacrifice), in some cases I must truncate my analysis of certain elements of the texts¹ in light of my research goals.

Whatever ritual(s) is discussed in the Biblical texts, it is almost entirely described in the context of Israellite/Judahite worship, and attributed to the bad influence of the “nations” who either used to live or continued to live in the land occupied by the Israelites. This basic narrative still appears in scholarly histories of both Israel and Phoenicia, for example: “It was probably somewhere in the eighth to seventh centuries – but possibly earlier – that child

¹ For example, in the present chapter I am unable to perform extensive evaluations of each of the verbs relating to sacrifice in the Biblical texts.

sacrifice was incorporated into Yahwistic ritual, presumably by court and upper-class figures, from areas of Phoenician influence where the practice was widespread.”² Here I reexamine the texts usually identified as relevant for such a claim, addressing their historical context, history of scholarly interpretation (in brief), and their potential value as textual sources for our understanding of Iron Age I through Persian period Phoenician mortuary practice and belief.

The last fifty years have seen an explosion of scholarly reanalysis of the entire corpus of Hebrew Biblical material, focusing on when, where, and under what conditions it was composed and edited. Although consensus has not been (and most likely will not be) reached on all points, there is increasing evidence to suggest that the Hebrew Biblical canon as we know it did not reach its final form until after the return from Exile (i.e. in the early Persian period), and perhaps not until much later (in the Hellenistic period). It would perhaps be “safer,” then, for me to discuss all Biblical references to Phoenician mortuary practice as if they were Persian and Hellenistic period sources. But the fact that many of these texts were edited in the Persian and later periods does not exclude the likelihood that they contain textual material (and sometimes high proportions of textual material) that was first written down in the Iron Age II period. To what degree, then, an individual verse represents an Iron Age II pre-exilic or exilic reality, versus a Persian period or later post-exilic situation, will be an impossible puzzle to solve conclusively. But re-examining the collection of Biblical texts said to relate to Phoenician child sacrifice will allow us to survey the ways these texts have been used, to clarify certain issues and themes that arise from these passages, and to identify the interpretive questions or problems that remain.

² Here Miller cites Malta and Carthage as examples; Miller 2000, 59.

As will become clear, the relevance of the Biblical texts for this study hinges in large part on the interpretation of the Hebrew term מֹלֵךְ, sometimes in the context of a ritual involving fire, and usually vocalized “mōlech.” A brief survey of major scholarly interpretations of this enigmatic term follows:

Table IV.1: Significant Scholarly Interpretations of the Semitic Term *mlk*

Scholar	Interpretation of <i>mlk</i>
Eissfeldt (1935)	Term for a sacrifice in the Punic and Hebrew cultural spheres; related to Syriac m ^l ak, “to promise.”
Von Soden (1936)	Term for a sacrifice in the Punic and Hebrew cultural spheres; a performative-m noun from the root hlk “to go.”
Charlier (1953), Buber (1956), Cooper (1981)	“King,” used as an epithet for a deity in these contexts.
Cazelles (1957)	“Sacrificial offering” in the Punic sphere; misunderstood as a divine name or title in the Biblical texts.
Weinfeld (1971; 1972)	A god to whom children were dedicated – not sacrificed – in Judah, the cult of which was derived from Aramaean (if not Assyrian) practice. Identified with Adad (milki) and Ištar, the King (melek) and Queen of Heaven.
Cogan (1974)	Two different rituals associated with the Molek cult. One is identifiable in the Holiness Code (a divinatory fire cult which did not involve child sacrifice), and the other can be found in Deuteronomy 12:31 (a Canaanite cult of regular child sacrifice). He argues the difference is obscured by the polemics of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
Mosca (1975)	A “mulk-sacrifice,” referring to the regular sacrifice of children and animals by both Israelites and non-Israelites. Suggests the high degree of congruency between Biblical and Carthaginian or Punic evidence imply a common origin in Phoenicia.
Smith (1975)	Accepts Weinfeld’s identification of a god <i>mlk</i> with Adad, but argues that infant sacrifice was a regularly occurring feature of Israelite and Carthaginian religion.
Plataroti (1978)	The name of a purification rite of some kind (not a sacrifice), though we cannot know to which god it was addressed. Related in some way to soothsaying, or perhaps should be understood as a kind of ordeal.
Heider (1985)	The Biblical “Molek” (probably a participial form) is related to the Israelite cult of the dead (and possibly to deified royal ancestors – the malikū or rephaim). A Phoenician origin for the Israelite cult is tentatively suggested. The Punic term <i>mlk</i> should be understood as a technical term for a type of child sacrifice.
Day (1989)	A god of human sacrifice associated with the underworld.
Levenson (1993)	Agrees with Heider: “Though the evidence for this deity is not overwhelming and though <i>mlk</i> still seems to denote a type of sacrifice in Punic, the best conclusion is that the biblical Molech was a chthonic deity honored through the sacrifice of little boys and girls.” ³

Thus the issues surrounding the Semitic term *mlk* in its various contexts are manifold. The divergent opinions of these scholars underscore the fact that the term probably referred to many different practices, entities, or concepts over its long lifespan. Because the topic has

³ Levenson 1993, 19.

been the subject of several monographs,⁴ I offer only a brief review of the texts usually brought to bear on the topic of Phoenician child sacrifice in particular, and assess their relevance for the present study.

As I survey the corpus of Biblical texts cited in connection with this ritual, I will refrain from adopting a translation or interpretation of the term *mlk*, transcribing it instead.

Following the organization of the previous chapters, I will address first the Iron Age I-II period material (insofar as it can be determined), and then the remainder of the references, dating to the Persian – Hellenistic period. Assessing the Biblical corpus in this way will allow me first to examine the internal cohesiveness or consistency of the Biblical references to this ritual. I can then assess their historical and historiographical context, and finally examine the relevance and implications of this material for the present study on Phoenician Levantine burial practices.

Before beginning this review, I wish to establish the parameters of the investigation as follows. First, I (and most scholars) assume that child sacrifice was practiced in the ancient world in some form, at some times. We know of several independently attested sacrifices of royal children in particular from across the Mediterranean and Ancient Near East. As a Biblical example, the King of Moab is described as sacrificing his son to save Edom in 2 Kings 3:27 (his son is referred to as a “whole burnt offering” or עלה, said by the author of 2 Kings to have been “sacrificed” or offered explicitly, using the verb עלה), at the time of King Jehosaphat of Judah. However, the recognition of the occasional practice of child sacrifice *in extremis* is not sufficient basis for the assumption that child sacrifice should be considered part of the regular and patterned mortuary system of a particular people. A regularly occurring cultic practice,

⁴ For example, Heider 1985, Day 1989, Levenson 1993. See also Tatlock 2006.

requiring the sacrifice of families from multiple aspects of society, would require independent establishment.⁵ For the purpose of the present study, Phoenician participation in such a cult (as opposed to the participation of Levantine populations in general) must also be suggested.

In other words, the acceptance of the occasional practice of child sacrifice in the face of major disasters (such as plague, drought, or war) should be separated from other claims about child sacrifice in the Levant, which must be considered on their own merits. A specific group of claims are often made in tandem (or accepted as a group after only one has been addressed), which can be unpacked as follows:

- A cult of regularly occurring child sacrifice was practiced in the southern kingdom of Judah (and perhaps in the northern kingdom of Israel) during the Iron Age II period.
- That cult bears certain similarities in terminology (especially the occurrence of the term *mlk*, though in a variety of contexts) to a cult of regular child sacrifice thought by some scholars to have been practiced at Punic sites in the Iron Age II through Hellenistic periods.
- The cult associated with the term *mlk* must have been introduced to Israel (and then to Judah) from Levantine Phoenicia, since the geographical and cultural distance between these territories is so much smaller than between the more explicitly attested evidence arising from Judah and Punic sites.
- Therefore, the Levantine Phoenicians probably practiced a cult involving the regular sacrifice of infants (perhaps even on the level of one child per family, or per elite family).

This chain of logic (explicit or implicit) appears so frequently in discussions of the *mlk* term, it necessitates that the Biblical references to the *mlk* ritual be reviewed in the present study.

I will begin with an assessment of Biblical texts considered to have been composed during the Iron I-II periods, as with the inscriptional material considered above. This discussion will be followed by the larger corpus of Biblical references to child sacrifice thought to have been composed during the Persian – Hellenistic periods. Throughout, it will be important to recall that the Biblical texts under consideration were composed mostly in Judah

⁵ Requiring, in the words of Binford, “some regular procedure or set of procedures for the disposal of the dead” (Binford 1977, “Principle 1”).

(the southernmost of the two kingdoms, with Israel), and by individuals concerned primarily with the primacy of Yahweh as the only acceptable object of worship.

1. Iron Age I-II Biblical Texts

Although some scholars would still argue there are traces of Iron I material (usually of oral origin) preserved by the Biblical text, none of the references of relevance for the present study are widely thought to have been composed in the Iron Age I period (ca. 1200 – ca. 1000 BCE). The following texts are thought to date to the Iron Age II period (ca. 1000 – ca. 500 BCE).

a. References in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History

Scholarly consensus states that Deuteronomy 12-26 represents what has been called the “Deuteronomic Code,” the earliest core narrative in the “exilically retouched Deuteronomy.”⁶ The bulk of this narrative is attributed to some scribal and/or religious school originally imagined to have been situated at the court of the 7th century king of Judah, Josiah. It may be more accurate to say that whoever these scribes or theologians were, they saw Josiah’s reforms as a critical component of a new, stricter Yahwism that they themselves identified as the Yahwism of their forefathers (especially that of David and Solomon) which Israel had strayed from over many generations. Both references from the book of Deuteronomy included in discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice come from this core Deuteronomic Code. The first reference comes from a long section of text (12:29-17:13) seen as concerned primarily with preserving Israel’s distinctiveness among “the nations” who lived in the lands (of Canaan) which Israel is to have been given by Yahweh, according to the authors of Deuteronomy:

⁶ Carr 2011, 249.

i. **Deuteronomy 12:29-31** – *When Yahweh your god cuts off before you the nations where you will go to dispossess them, when you have dispossessed them and live in their land, take care that you are not snared into imitating them, after they have been destroyed before you. Do not ask about their gods, saying, “How did these nations worship their gods? I also want to do the same.” You will not do the same for Yahweh your god, for every abomination to Yahweh, which he hates, they have done for their gods; even their sons and their daughters they burned in the fire [ישרפו באש] to their gods.⁷*

This passage refers to a practice attributed to “the nations” of the lands which Israel is told to settle (presumably various groups of “Canaanites”), describing these people as “burning” their sons and daughters “in the fire,” a minimalist depiction of some ritual seemingly intended for “their gods.” The next reference in Deuteronomy is similar in scope and referent, but with a significant difference:

ii. **Deuteronomy 18:9-10** – *When you have come into the land which Yahweh your god gives you, you must not learn to imitate the abominations of those nations. No one will be found among you who causes a son or daughter to pass through [מעביר] the fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer.*

In this case the concern that Israel will be tempted to imitate the practices of “the nations” who inhabit the lands they will settle is repeated. This time the practice is described in the context of a prohibition with Israel as subject: “no one” from among the people of Israel should ever participate in what sounds like the same or a similar ritual as that in Deuteronomy 12:29-31, but is designated using a different verbal construction. In this case, the *hiphil* stem of the verb עבר “to pass through/over” is used in conjunction with the same prepositional phrase as in 12:29-31, ב + “the fire.” Although both fire and offspring are involved, the sparse nature of the description offered in these two passages in Deuteronomy is not enough to establish whether or not child sacrifice is being described; the text could be describing any

⁷ All Biblical translations are my own.

number of rituals including consecration, dedication, a marking of the body (as circumcision) and so on.

The “Deuteronomistic History” refers to the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, a unit thought to have been composed in large part during the late 7th – early 6th century BCE, during or shortly after the reign of king Josiah (ca. 640-610 BCE),⁸ that is, as a kind of “continuation” of the theological and political positions put forward in the book of Deuteronomy. Although this history seems to have been composed from a southern (that is, Judahite) perspective, it seems as though the Deuteronomistic Historian(s) (henceforth DH) combined both northern (i.e. Israelite / Samaritan) and southern texts into the newly fashioned narrative of the Deuteronomistic History. Today most scholars agree that the Deuteronomistic History also underwent between two and three major stages of revision during which passages throughout these six Biblical books were either altered or added to fit the exilic and post-exilic realities in which later redactors found themselves.⁹

iii. 2 Kings 16:2-3 – *Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he ruled sixteen years in Jerusalem. But he did not do what was right in the eyes of Yahweh his god, like David, his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire [העביר באש], according to the abominations [בתעבות] of the nations [הגוים] whom Yahweh drove out before the sons of Israel.*

⁸ Noth was the first to formulate this hypothesis in print, in 1943; this watershed volume was translated into English by E. W. Nicholson in 1981. See Person 2010, 2-21 for an excellent summary of the history of redactions and revisions to Noth’s original theory.

⁹ As Cross famously articulated: “We are pressed to the conclusion... that there were two editions of the Deuteronomistic history, one [Dtr1] written in the era of Josiah as a programmatic document of his reform and of his revival of the Davidic state. In this edition the themes of judgment and hope interact to provide a powerful motivation both for the return to the austere and jealous god of old Israel, and for the reunion of the alienated half-kingdoms of Israel and Judah under the aegis of Josiah. The second edition [Dtr2], completed about 550 B.C., not only updated the history by adding a chronicle of events subsequent to Josiah’s reign, it also attempted to transform the work into a sermon on history addressed to Judaeans exiles. In this revision the account of Manasseh’s reign in particular was retouched, conforming Judah’s fate to that of Samaria and Manasseh’s role to that of Jereboam,” (Cross 1973, 287).

In these two verses, King Ahaz of Judah (who ruled ca. 735 or 731-715 BCE) is denounced by the DH as not only deviating from the dictates of Yahweh, but as following the (undesirable) practices of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. To highlight the extent of Ahaz's corruption and misdirection, the DH describes his participation in a ritual involving his son, attributed to the "nations whom Yahweh drove out before the sons of Israel." Mirroring the language of Deuteronomy 18:10, the use of the causative stem of the verb עָבַר, "he caused to pass through" the fire, seems either euphemistic (i.e. for sacrifice by burning), idiomatic, or may indicate a literal movement of the child through a flame to indicate a dedication ritual of some sort.

iv. 2 Kings 17:17 – *And they [Israel] caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.*

This verse falls in a long section (2 Kings 17:7-17) denouncing the faults of the "sons of Israel." The DH includes all this by way of explanation - why Yahweh saw fit to send Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, to conquer the northern kingdom of Israel/Samaria and place into exile or relocate many of its inhabitants (2 Kings 17:6). The "sons of Israel" are described as committing all manner of incorrect worship, serving idols [הַגִּלְלִים], worshipping at "high places" [בְּמוֹת], and otherwise rejecting the statues of Yahweh. In verse 17, they are accused of something similar to what 2 Kings 16:2-3 puts forward as Ahaz's crime - "causing to pass [their offspring] through the fire." The Israelites are accused of doing this with both sons and

daughters, but again the purpose of the ritual (or to which god or goddess it is dedicated) is not explicit.¹⁰

v. 2 Kings 17:29-31 – *But every nation made gods of their own, and put [them] in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived. The people of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the people of Cuth made Nergal, the people of Hamath made Ashima, the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned [שָׂרְפִים] their sons in the fire to Adrammelech and Annammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.*

2 Kings 17:29-31 is set in the northern kingdom of Israel after its conquest by the Assyrians. 17:24 tells how “the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria in place of the people of Israel...” Despite the troubles caused by these foreign people not knowing how to worship Yahweh (and, in verse 27-28, refusing to listen to an Israelite priest sent back to Samaria by the king of Assyria to teach them), they persist (incorrectly, according to the DH) in adhering to their own traditions of worship. Verse 31 includes specific mention of a ritual said to have been practiced by the Sepharvites (thought to be former inhabitants of Sippar): “burning” their sons “in the fire.” In this case, it may be that the recipient of the ritual is explicitly mentioned – the names of two “gods of the Sepharvaim,”¹¹ introduced with a *lamed* preposition.

vi. 2 Kings 21:6 – *And he [King Manasseh] caused his son to pass through the fire, and he practiced soothsaying and augury, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. He did much evil in the eyes of Yahweh, provoking [him] to anger.*

¹⁰ The previous verse, 2 Kings 17:16, accuses the Israelites of serving the god Baal, alongside “all the host of heaven” [כל-צבא השמים], although these do not seem to have been explicitly linked to the ritual in the following verse (at least not according to the Masoretes).

¹¹ The *kethib* for this phrase reads אלה ספרים, while the *qere* is noted as אֱלֹהֵי סַפְרָיִם.

This passage comes in the midst of the seventeen-verse-long diatribe by the DH against King Manasseh of Judah, the man who “misled them [Judah] to do more evil than the nations which Yahweh destroyed before the people of Israel had done,” (2 Kings 21:9). Like Ahaz before him, Manasseh is described with that same verbal construction: “causing his son to pass through the fire,” as part of a list of practices identified by the DH as dangerous or forbidden to Yahweh (see Deuteronomy 18.9-14). But in this chapter Manasseh’s crimes aren’t simply attributed to the influence of those living in the lands before Israel; they are described as going beyond the crimes of “the nations”: “he has done things more wicked than all that the Amorites did, who were before him,” (2 Kings 21:11). It is unclear what specifically from Manasseh’s list of crimes causes the DH to demonize him in this way, but his reign between those of the righteous Hezekiah and the almost messianic (in the eyes of the DH) Josiah may be enough to make the contrast seem a necessary rhetorical move.

Our first break in this minimalist pattern of description for the ritual in question comes in 2 Kings 23, which deals with the religious reforms of King Josiah of Judah (ruled ca. 641-609 BCE), after “the book of the law” is found “in the house of Yahweh” by Hilkiah, the high priest during repairs of the temple (2 Kings 22:8).

vii. 2 Kings 23:10 – *And he [King Josiah] defiled topheth [תֹּפֶת], which is in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, so that no man would cause his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to mlk [מִלֶּךְ].*

Joshua 15:8 – *And the border [of the portion of the tribe of Judah] went up by the valley of Ben-Hinnom to the south side of the Jebusite, that is, Jerusalem. And the border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the valley of Hinnom to the west, which is at the end of the valley of the Rephaim to the north.*

In a detailed description lasting twenty-eight verses, the DH depicts Josiah as a thorough and militant reformer, destroying all sites, accessories, and (in some cases) even

priests of Yahweh's religious competition. Verse 10 uses the same verbal construction as in 2 Kings 16:2-3 and 17:17 to describe some ritual of consecration or dedication, but this time the ritual's intention is clarified as being offered "to/for Molekh"¹² (traditionally rendered "Molech" in English; the Hebrew is מִלֵּךְ, accompanied by the *lamed* preposition). Josiah is described as "defiling" (the *piel*/stem of the verbal root טמא is used) a place or site called "topheth"¹³ (rendered with the definite article), which is further located "in the valley of Ben-Hinnom." Another verse attributed to the Deuteronomistic Historian – Joshua 15:8 – describes this valley as being located south of Jerusalem.¹⁴ While it is not clear exactly what a "topheth" might have been, or how one might have "defiled" it, this verse seems to imply that damage to the "topheth" would effectively put a stop to the ritual that went on there; that as a result of its defilement, "no man" could continue to dedicate / consecrate his son or daughter in this manner. Despite this outcome, Schmitz rightly points out that "there is no mention of his [Josiah's] having destroyed the installation,"¹⁵ a hyperbolic interpretation of טמא made in several Biblical commentaries.

¹² The vocalization of the Hebrew noun (with the vowels *holem* and *sego*), has long been discussed. See Mosca 1975, 122-134 for a thorough summary of the early debates on this issue. Mosca concludes that "whatever the meaning of the term מִלֵּךְ in Lev. 18:21, etc., its revocalization to מִלֵּךְ finds no basis in: 1) the assumption of a tendentious dysphemism involving only the vowels of בִּשְׁתַּח, 2) the supposed non-existence of a word מִלֵּךְ in Biblical Hebrew, or 3) the witness of ἄρχων ["ruler" in the Old Greek]. A closer examination of all three arguments leads towards, not away from, an original vocalization of מִלֵּךְ," (1975, 134).

¹³ The Septuagint transcribes this term as Ταφεθ; Schmitz points out: "The versions are inconsistent in their representations of the word: LXX, Aquila, Symmachus give *Tapheth*; Vulg *Thopheth*," (Schmitz 1992c, VI 601).

¹⁴ Miller and Hayes (2006) have argued that this verse may describe the geographical situation during the time of Hezekiah: "The movement of Judeans into the Gaza region and the territory near the Brook of Egypt (at this time, Wadi Besor) is probably reflected in the tribal boundaries and city lists for Judah in Joshua 15:1-12, 21-62. These lists envision the Mediterranean Sea as Judah's western boundary and include the Philistine cities of Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza. Sargon may have granted Judah and Hezekiah oversight of this area. No other time in Judean history would seem to correspond to this particular geographical configuration reflected in the tribal lists. Shortly after Sargon's campaign in 720-719, Judah was probably nominally in control of the entire Philistine region, minus Ashkelon, from the Nahal Soreq at Jabneel (Yebna) to south of Gaza," (Miller and Hayes 2006, 405).

¹⁵ Schmitz 1992c, VI 601.

The mention of “Molekh”¹⁶ in this verse is also hotly debated. If this term refers to a deity, that deity is not explicitly tied (here or elsewhere by the DH) to some other neighboring nation or peoples. In fact, only three verses later, in 2 Kings 23:13, the deities of several groups are enumerated by the DH as follows: “...for Ashtoreth [עשתרת] the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh [כמש] the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom [מלכם]¹⁷ the abomination of the sons of Ammon...”. Molekh or *mlk* does not appear in any unambiguous god list in the Biblical texts, leading some scholars to see it as a reference to the *mlk* term found on Phoenician stelae (discussed in Chapters II and III), or perhaps as a corruption of the title “king” as attributed to Yahweh or other gods. It has been famously suggested that the vocalization of the consonants of this term represent a kind of polemical dysphemism – the application of the vowels of one Hebrew word to another – although this has also (I think convincingly) been rejected by Mosca et al. (see above).

In any event, this survey of texts from Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History used by Biblical scholars as evidence for *Phoenician* mortuary practice (or more specifically, a purported Phoenician practice of child sacrifice in the central coastal Levant) produces an intriguing but indirect picture of cult practice in the Iron Age II southern Levant. Seven references point to some kind of ritual, practiced in Judah, involving fire and offspring which was of concern to the DH. Two verbal constructions are used to discuss the ritual, although both identify the same object for the ritual (“sons” or “sons and daughters”) and utilize the same prepositional phrase (ב + “the fire”). Mosca identified this pattern more than thirty-five years ago, and described what he sees as specific rhetorical intention on the part of the DH:

¹⁶ The Septuagint renders this term Μολοχ.

¹⁷ The Septuagint seems to suggest this term is more closely related to the term in 23:10 by rendering Μολχολ in verse 23:10.

...the Deuteronomistic historian has consciously placed the phrases **העביר באש** and **שרף באש** in some sort of parallelism. This is clear not only from the overlapping use of **באש**, but also from the refrain, ‘the abominable acts of the nations,’ which is repeatedly associated with both ‘making to pass into the fire’ and ‘burning in the fire.’ Furthermore, it is equally clear that the historian has intentionally restricted the range of the two phrases: **שרף באש** is used only of non-Israelite idolators (Canaanites and Sepharvites), while **העביר באש** is reserved for Israelite offenders. The expressions are thus intimately connected in the mind of the historian.¹⁸

Mosca goes on to clarify this distinction further (though he interprets both as references to child sacrifice):

“The implication is obvious: the Deuteronomist uses ‘burn in fire’ when straightforward idolatry is involved, but ‘make pass into the fire’ when the same offerings are made by Israelites to *Yahweh himself*. ...the historian ...is fully conscious of the distinction between *idolatry* and the worship of Yahweh *as if he were an idol*.”¹⁹

In other words, these references in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History point to a ritual practiced by both Canaanites living in Israel/Judah and Israelites themselves during the 7th-6th centuries BCE. Although the ritual is not explicitly described, it seems to involve “the passing through the fire” of one’s children in a way that could polemically be referred to as “burning” them. The DH saw this as a ritual that could be dedicated to Yahweh (though it was not desired by Yahweh and would be punished as evil) or to other gods. If 2 Kings 23:10 is any indication, this ritual, when dedicated to Yahweh, may have taken place in Judah at a place called “Topheth” in the valley of Ben-Hinnom near to but outside the gates of Jerusalem. It may also have had something to do with the word **מִלֶּךְ**, although what that means (whether a deity name, a deity’s title, a sacrificial term, or something else altogether) we cannot yet be sure.

¹⁸ Mosca 1975, 165.

¹⁹ Mosca 1975, 173.

b. References in the Pre-Exilic and Exilic Prophetic Texts

i. Isaiah

First Isaiah (1-39) has long been viewed as the product of the Pre-Exilic southern prophet and his circle, in contrast to the Exilic Second Isaiah (40-55 and 60-62) and Post-Exilic Third Isaiah (56-59 and 65-66). But this simplistic view of the book of Isaiah as a tacking-on of new material to old has been reworked in recent decades in favor of a much more complicated view of the inter-relatedness of the sections of material, the intertextuality used by later editors to reshape earlier material, and the sometimes fortuitous (as opposed to theologically intentional) juxtapositions of certain collections.

The verse of relevance to the present study (Isaiah 30:33) comes from a group of chapters which “at least now stand at some distance removed from an oral stage of the tradition,”²⁰ having undergone significant editing, including the introduction of a new framing narrative. Chapter 30 is still widely regarded as part of the earlier, Iron Age II tradition preserved in First Isaiah, although the compositional dates of individual verses continue to be debated:

It is commonly recognized that chapters 28-33 are characterized in a formal sense by a series of woe oracles.... It is also evident from the initial unit (28:1-4) that the oracles date from a period before the fall of the Northern Kingdom and extend to those events in the reign of Hezekiah that climaxed with Sennacherib's attack in 701. Traditional interpreters drew the implication that the 'authentic' oracles of the eighth-century prophet thus comprised two main collections of oracles, the earlier in chapters 2-11 focusing on the Syro-Ephraimite war, the later in chapters 28-33 on events leading up to the Assyrian invasion of 701.²¹

²⁰ Childs 2001, 200.

²¹ Childs 2001, 199.

Isaiah 30:33 – *For taphteh has long been prepared. Yes, it is prepared for the king; he has made [it] deep [and] large: the pile is fire and much wood; the breath of Yahweh, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.*

“The sole instance of the Hebrew noun *tāp̄teh* (Isa 30:33) is found in a depiction of a crematory. Exegetes have universally linked the word and the image with the Deuteronomist’s Topheth,”²² including the King James Version’s translators, who render this verse “For Topheth [is] ordained of old...”. Was the 8th century BCE Judahite prophet Isaiah actually referring to the same “topheth” concept as is 2 Kings 23:10? The noun as given in Isaiah 30:33 does not include the definite article, nor does it make reference the same verbal notion – causing anyone or anything to pass through a fire. The context is one of a pile of wood ready for burning, but in this case it seems as if the fire has been laid out or prepared for “the king” (hence Schmitz’s interpretation of this scene as describing a “crematory”²³). While some have interpreted this vocalization as a corruption of “for/to Molekh” (“for the king” and “to Molekh” can both be read from the consonantal Hebrew למלך), verse 30:31’s subject “the Assyrian” has also been interpreted as the intended object of 30:33 (in other words, the pile of wood and the fire that will consume it are intended for an Assyrian king). At least one interpreter has argued in favor of reading this scene as a comparison between the practice of child sacrifice and the “sacrifice” of an Assyrian King.²⁴ Because the verse is so problematic, it does not in its present state offer much in the way of additional information for our understanding of the *topheth* problem with regards to Levantine Phoenicia.

²² Schmitz 1992c, VI 601.

²³ Schmitz 1992c, VI 601.

²⁴ Mosca 1975, 213: “...the exaggeration lies in seeing the mighty Assyria as infant-victim, not in any extension of the Topheth rite itself to include the sacrifice, instead of the simple dedication, or the victim. The sacrificial-destructive aspect of the rite is so normal – so evident to both Isaiah and his audience – that it need not be verbalized. Once ‘passed into the fire,’ Asshur will never again threaten Judah or Jerusalem; as with the other victims of the rite, its earthly existence will be ended.”

ii. Jeremiah

Scholars have increasingly discussed the fascinating connections, shared language, and recurring themes between the Deuteronomistic History and the book of Jeremiah. Geoghegan, in his study of the DH chronological and rhetorical phrase “until this day” explores this connection as follows:

It is noteworthy... that the phrase [“until this day”] appears nine times in the book of Jeremiah, especially in view of recent studies that have argued for a more direct relationship between the redactions of the DH (Dtr¹ and Dtr²) and this book. After all, “this day” *is* Jeremiah’s day, and the relationship between the DH and this prophetic book has long been observed. Whether Jeremiah – a northern prophet / priest with access to scribal resources and the repository of Israel’s traditions during the reigns of Josiah and subsequent kings – was involved directly in the compilation of the DH or whether we ascribe such activity to “Jeremianic” or “Deuteronomistic” circles (e.g., the Shaphanides), will likely always be a matter of debate.²⁵

The book of Jeremiah itself describes the beginning of Jeremiah’s prophetic career in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign (ca. 629/628 BCE; Jeremiah 1:1-2),²⁶ and many references seem to relate to the subsequent reign of Jehoiakim. Much like the shaping of the Deuteronomistic History, a corpus of 7th century Jeremiah material was certainly reshaped by subsequent editors, most explicitly in the form of a redaction that took place during the 6th century diaspora from Judah:

As with [Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets], this shaping was a complex and multistage process that extended to include small-scale additions in the Hellenistic period, but the main contents of the tradition appear to have been established already during the period of the Babylonian exile.²⁷

²⁵ Geoghegan 2006, 159.

²⁶ As Miller and Hayes point out, “Although some of the oracles in the early chapters of the book apparently derive from the reign of Josiah, they do not refer to Judean events very explicitly and make no overt reference to Josiah’s famous religious reform,” (Miller and Hayes 2006, 441).

²⁷ Carr 2011, 247.

Thus the historical context for individual passages / verses in Jeremiah is highly debated, and a massive secondary literature exists to support these debates. I will only minimally engage this literature, including it where it bears on the subject of the present study.

Jeremiah 7:31-33 – *And they have built the high places [במות] of Topheth, which [is] in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I did not command, nor did it come into my heart.*

Here again the site of “Topheth” is connected explicitly with the practice of passing one’s children through the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (as in 2 Kings 23:10). In this case, though, the Hebrew term “Topheth” is placed in construct with “the high places” – another of the frequently mentioned “abominations of the nations” so criticized by the DH, but never before linked in this intimate manner with the “Topheth” at Jerusalem. The Septuagint preserves a singular “high place of Topheth,” perhaps more likely as a description of a single place called “Topheth.” In either case, the equation of the “Topheth” site in a valley near Jerusalem with the *bamoth* or “high places”²⁸ of idolatrous worship seems an innovation of the authors/editors of the book of Jeremiah.

It has long been argued that this passage and its larger context in chapter 7 may have been intended to refer to the problems associated with Manasseh’s reign, and was added as an exilic commentary on the cause of Judah’s ultimate destruction,²⁹ perhaps explaining why

²⁸ The idea of a “high place” in a “valley” is not as strange as it might seem – the translation “high place” is dependent on the Septuagint translation (which uses ὑψηλόν), which is in turn probably reflecting an early Jewish tradition also preserved in the Targumim, where *bāmā* is often translated *rāmātā*, “heights.” The Hebrew term probably has a semantic range closer to “altar,” based on an etymological root referring to “level ground.” See Vaughan 1974 for a complete study of the one hundred one occurrences of the term *bāmā* in the Hebrew Bible, as well as the 1976 review of this work by Fenton.

²⁹ “...some of them [the sayings in book 7] (especially vii 29-34) may refer to the sins of Manasseh’s reign, which seem to have been regarded at least by Jeremiah’s disciples (xv 3-4), as they were by the author(s) of Kings (II Kings xxi 10-15; xxii 14-20; xxiii 26; xxiv 3f.), as the direct cause of the nation’s doom, a doom which Josiah’s efforts only succeeded in postponing,” (Bright 1965, 57).

“...the prose sections of the book... are cast in the same literary style as Deuteronomy and Joshua-2 Kings.”³⁰

Jeremiah 19:1-6– *Thus says Yahweh: “Go and get a potter’s earthen bottle, and [take] the elders of the people, and the elders of the priests; and go out to the valley of Ben-Hinnom, which [is] by the entrance of the east gate, and proclaim there the words I will tell you. And say: ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the god of Israel: Behold, I will bring evil [רעה] on this place, such that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents [נקים]. They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire [for] burnt offerings [עלות] unto Baal, which I did not command, nor did I speak [it], nor did [it] come into my mind. Therefore, behold, the days are coming.’” said Yahweh, “that this place will no longer be called Topheth, nor the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but ‘The Valley of Slaughter.’”*

Jeremiah 19:10-14 – *Then you will break the bottle in the eyes of the men that go with you, and say to them, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts: ‘Even so will I break this people and this city, as [one] breaks a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again. And they will bury [them] in Topheth, till [there is] no place to bury. Thus I will do to this place,” said Yahweh, “and to its inhabitants, and to make this city into a Topheth. And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, will be defiled as the place of Topheth, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings to other gods. Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where Yahweh had sent him to prophesize....”*

The setting of Jeremiah 19 is a speech Jeremiah gives in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (19:1), later called “Topheth” (19:14). The valley is identified as being near the east gate of the city of Jerusalem, although some have seen this explanatory note as a later expansion or interpolation.³¹ In this speech, Jeremiah makes several entirely innovative rhetorical moves:

- A close connection is drawn between Baal worship and the ritual use of Topheth
- The verbal phrase שָׂרַף בְּאֵשׁ is used with Judahites as its subject
- Sacrificial terminology is used in association with this ritual (עלות)
- Topheth is described as a burial site for the first time
- The idea of “defilement” is depicted as something Topheth does, as opposed to something done to Topheth (i.e. what Josiah does to Topheth in 2 Kings 23:10)

³⁰ Miller and Hayes 2006, 441.

³¹ “...to identify the valley of Ben-hinnom by the Potsherd Gate is unnatural; this valley, which extended along the whole south side of the city needed no such identification,” (Bright 1965, 131).

It seems that for at least one ancient author (responsible for the Jeremiah 19:1-6) passage, “passing through the fire” meant that the victim was burnt in his/her entirety (that is, an עלה), that Baal was the deity to which this ritual was dedicated, and that the *Topheth* was therefore a place of “slaughter.”

Because of the radical change between this language in Jeremiah and the more subdued, subtly distinguished phrasing of the DH, some have argued that “we can discern the hyperbole of Exilic reaction to child sacrifice.”³² In post-Josianic Yahwism, exaggerated accounts of Israel’s sins conflate worship of Yahweh in “incorrect” ways with worship of Baal,³³ a feature potentially illustrated by Jeremiah 19. Although it seems wise to be wary of “throwing out” these anomalous data as a later misinterpretation of a dedication ritual, it also seems prudent to hold off on drawing further conclusions on the basis of Jeremiah 19 until the remaining Iron Age II period prophetic evidence is surveyed.

Jeremiah 32:35 – *And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through [the fire] to mlk, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.*

This verse reiterates the connection between “the high places of Baal” and valley of Ben-Hinnom. It utilizes the *hiphil* of עבר without the prepositional phrase באש, while specifying the intent or recipient of this ritual as Molekh. The relationship between Baal and Molekh is not clarified, nor is the sacrificial term עלה resumed from chapter 19. Aside from the attribution of the “high places” to Baal worship, this sounds much more the DH (or even Jeremiah 7) than did

³² Mosca 1975, 232.

³³ Which may at one time have been an acceptable epithet for Yahweh (consider especially the five theophoric names formed with Baal-elements from the 9th-8th centuries BCE Samaria ostraca); Smith 2001, 65.

Jeremiah 19. And yet commentators have suggested that this verse and those immediately preceding it may be an interpolation as well.³⁴

All three Jeremiah passages – 7:31, 19:5, and 32:35 – deny that this ritual can be completed in the name of Yahweh, repeating that Yahweh did not command it.

iii. Ezekiel

Carr, as others before him, argues that the prophetic book of Ezekiel is heavily shaped by the experience of Exile: “the book of Ezekiel includes themes that connect with many of the... dynamics documented among contemporary peoples who have been displaced and forced to live as refugees for a prolonged period.”³⁵ Ezekiel is said to have been born in Jerusalem in the late 7th century BCE, is called to become a prophet at the age of thirty (ca. 592 BCE), and enters into exile in Babylon with the rest of the upper class deportees from Judah, where he lives and prophecizes until his death. Mark Smith argues that the book of Ezekiel was not only written in exile for exiled communities, it was probably also generated first in writing (and not based on transmitted oral material primarily, as were some of the pre-exilic prophetic texts).³⁶ It has further been suggested that Ezekiel “thinks and writes from a Priestly perspective,”³⁷ (that is, in the sense of his being in agreement or sympathy with the Holiness Code and the work of the “Holiness School,”³⁸ most notably in the form of the book of Leviticus), and that this prophetic book is in critical dialog with the DH, an idea to which I shall return below.

³⁴ “Yahweh’s answer to Jeremiah’s prayer is interrupted in vss. 28-35 (some would limit this to vss. 29b-35) by an oracle of threatening nature, which disturbs the progress of thought and seems to have been drawn in from another context,” (Bright 1965, 298).

³⁵ Carr 2011, 236.

³⁶ Smith 2001, 192-193.

³⁷ Hahn and Bergsma 2004, 202; see their summary of the history of this idea on pages 208-210.

³⁸ See Knohl 1995 for a thorough discussion of the characteristics of this circle of scholars / school of thought.

Ezekiel 16:20-21 – *And you have taken your sons and your daughters, whom you have borne to me, and you sacrificed [תזבחים] them [your children] to them [other gods] to be consumed [לאכיל]; [is this] a small matter of your whoring yourselves [מתזונתך], that you have slaughtered [שחט] my children and given/offered them [התנים] by causing them to pass over to them [i.e. other gods]?*

This passage, spoken by Yahweh through Ezekiel to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, seems to place the familiar verbal phrase found in the expression “cause your offspring to pass through the fire” (here, “cause them to pass over”³⁹) in parallel with “sacrifice your offspring,” both of which Israel is accused of having done in the name of “other gods.” But Ezekiel goes further than this, explaining that these sacrifices were made to other gods in order that they should “be consumed” or entirely devoured (presumably by fire, but this is not mentioned in the lines). The passage even uses the verb “to slaughter” (as an animal for food, or as sacrifice) to further emphasize the nature of the killing. Even Mosca, who ultimately does see the Biblical references in the DH as evidence of the practice of child sacrifice in Israel, writes of the Ezekiel passages:

Here, for the first time, we meet with the terms שחט and זבח used in connection with such sacrifices. These entirely inappropriate terms are intended to equate child sacrifice with animal sacrifice, and the tendentiousness implicit in their use is made explicit in the addition of the phrases ‘to eat’ (16:20) and ‘for food’ (23:27; cm. also Jer. 3:24, above). Such was *never* the purpose of the rite. The gods – including Yahweh, when such offerings were made to him – were no more interested in *eating* children than human beings were. Still, the use of these exaggerated and pejorative terms is understandable within the context of post-Josianic Yahwism....⁴⁰

³⁹ Here the *b-* preposition is prefixed to the infinitive construct verbal form, instead of the (expected) noun “fire.” Followed by the *l-* preposition, the expression is no longer “pass through, but “in/by causing them to pass over to....” My thanks to Schmidt for his thoughts on this point (personal correspondence, 2 May 2013).

⁴⁰ Mosca 1975, 232.

Ezekiel's treatment of Judah's sins is absolute, as if they were genetically predisposed; earlier in this same chapter, Ezekiel decries Israel as follows: "...your birth and your nativity [is] of the land of Canaan; your father [was] an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite," (Ezekiel 16:3).

Ezekiel 20:25-26 – *Thus I also gave them statutes [that were] not good, and judgments by which they could not live. And I defiled them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass over all those who open the womb, so that I might make them desolate, so that they might know that I [am] Yahweh.*

This passage is perhaps the strangest of all the references to fire-ritual in Ezekiel, as it seems to imply that Yahweh deliberately mislead his people by giving them rules and guidance they could not follow. The enigmatic "I defiled them in their own gifts" seems to be established to refer directly to the practice of "causing to pass through the fire," but in this verse the first-born offspring (the ones who "open the womb") are identified as the children singled out for this ritual. This brings to mind other references to the dedication of the first-born or first-fruits (Exodus 13:12, 22:29, 34:19-20, and so on) in Israel. While some have argued this verse "provides a theological rationale for Yahweh causing child sacrifice,"⁴¹ others see the close connection between the language of this passage and the distinction made in Exodus 13:13 between human firstborn, on the one hand, and "every opener of the womb" on the other, as specifically designating the sacrifice of *animal*, not human, first-born in the Ezekiel context.

Hahn and Bergsma (2004) go further, and read this passage in Ezekiel as dialoging with the Deuteronomistic History in a direct and critical way. Their close reading of and comparison between the laws of the Priestly texts (especially the Holiness Code material in

⁴¹ Smith 2001, 171.

Leviticus) and the Deuteronomic code, identifies several areas in which the two codes differ and which might have been problematic from Ezekiel's theological perspective.

Ezekiel refers to the Deuteronomic code as “not good laws” and “rules by which they could not live,” because, on the one hand, they degraded the pristine Priestly standards and, on the other, they were interwoven with predictions of human disobedience and inevitable divine judgment. In this defective Deuteronomic sacrificial system (“I defiled them by their very gifts”), Ezekiel singles out for special censure the distinctively Deuteronomic practice of the annual pilgrimage to present tithes and firstlings (“when they offer [only] all the firstlings”), since the Deuteronomic regulations governing firstlings were so wholly deficient. All this was “so that I might render them desolate,” a sentiment that seems quite in keeping with (at least the canonical form of) Deuteronomy, which, despite its protestations of making a well-meant offer of life to Israel (e.g. Deut 30:11-20), is filled with threats and outright promises of the inevitable actualization of the covenant curses.”⁴²

Thus, although the verbal form from the *hiphil* stem of the root עבר seems to reference the ritual of dedication, consecration, or immolation under consideration, it may well be that this passage has other concerns in mind altogether. In any case, the unclear referent and the lack of the prepositional phrase באש discourage us from drawing too sure a conclusion.

Ezekiel 20:30-31 – *Thus say to the house of Israel, “thus says the Lord Yahweh: ‘Are you polluted after the manner of your fathers? And do you commit whoredom after their abominations? For when you offer your gifts [מתנהיכם], when you cause your sons to pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols⁴³ [גלולים], even until today. And will I be consulted by you, O house of Israel? [As] I live,’ said the Lord Yahweh, ‘I will not be consulted by you.’”*

As in the earlier Ezekiel 20 reference, the term “your gifts” occurs in this passage, this time in parallel to “your sons” who are passed through the fire. The verb “defile” also recurs, although in this case Judah is both the subject and the object of the verbal phrase in question;

⁴² Hahn and Bergsma 2004, 217. This last reference is to the occurrence in this passage in Ezekiel of the verb שםם “to desolate,” which is heavily associated with covenantal curses (as in Lev. 26:22, 31-35, 43, and so on).

⁴³ The sense of גלולים is “logs” or “blocks;” hence it has a derisive and contemptuous connotation when used to refer to gods other than Yahweh (cf. Deut. 29:17); the book of Ezekiel uses it often (6:9; 16:36, 18:12, 20:7, 23:37; 30:13).

“you defile yourself,” Yahweh accuses them. These sins are not new, but have been committed by the ancestors of the Judahites that make up Ezekiel’s audience (“after the manner of your fathers”). The referent for the phrase “until today” is slightly ambiguous from context, but it seems the “passing of sons through the fire” is the cause of the “defilement” which has not stopped, either because the practice continues to taint Israel (despite having been discontinued) or because they continue to “pass their sons through the fire” in this way, even into exile in Babylon. Although Ezekiel 20:25-26 spoke of Yahweh “defiling” Israel, perhaps by means of the “not good” statutes that were given (misleadingly?) to Israel to follow, this passage describes Israel “defiling” itself by means of “all your idols.”

c. Conclusions – Iron Age II Period Biblical Texts

Thus, the passages typically cited as evidence for an Iron II tradition of child sacrifice originating in Phoenicia or northern Canaan are not as clear-cut as many modern historians make them out to be. A survey of the corpus of pre-exilic and exilic texts displays a variety of rhetorical, grammatical, and theological features of these texts:

Table IV.2: Comparison of Rituals Mentioned in Pre-Exilic and Exilic Biblical Texts

Verse	Subject	Direct Object	Purpose or Recipient (with /-preposition)	Verbal Idiom	Mention of Topheth?	Explanation/ Attribution
Deuteronomy 12:29-31	“The nations” who will be displaced by Israel	Sons and daughters	Their gods	שרף באש	-	
Deuteronomy 18:10	Israel	Son or daughter		העביר באש	-	These are the forbidden “abominations of the nations” who inhabit the lands Israel will be given
2 Kings 16:2-3	King Ahaz of Judah	Son	-	העביר באש	-	“...according to the abominations of the nations...”

2 Kings 17:17	The northern Israelites (under king Hoshea)	Sons and daughters	-	העביר באש	-	
2 Kings 17:28-29, 31	Sepharvites	Sons	Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim	שרף באש	-	
2 Kings 21:6	King Manasseh of Judah	Son	-	העביר באש	-	"...according to the abominations of the nations..."
2 Kings 23:10	"no man" (after Josiah "defiles" the Jerusalem Topheth)	Son or daughter	Molekh	העביר באש	Yes	
Isaiah 30:33	Yahweh?	Assyrian king?	-	(see discussion)	<i>taphteh</i>	
Jeremiah 7:31-33	Jerusalem (Judah)	Sons and daughters	-	שרף באש	Yes: "high places of Topheth"	
Jeremiah 19:1-6	Jerusalem (Judah)	Sons	-	שרף באש	Yes	
Jeremiah 32:35	Jerusalem (Judah)	Sons and daughters	Molekh	העביר	-	In the context of having built "the high places of Baal"
Ezekiel 16:20-21	Jerusalem ("House of Israel")	Sons	-	נתן בהעביר	-	
Ezekiel 20:25-26	Jerusalem ("House of Israel")	First-born	-	העביר	-	Attributed to Yahweh (?) – "I gave them statues [that were] not good..."
Ezekiel 20:30-31	Jerusalem ("House of Israel")	Sons	-	העביר באש	-	"polluted after the manner of your fathers..."

While in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History a pattern of meaning can be ascribed to the use of the two primary verbal idioms (wherein one is used when the ritual is intended for Yahweh, and another verbal phrase used polemically against those who perform the ritual for other gods), much more variety can be found in the descriptions of the ritual in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and in the enigmatic reference in Isaiah 30. In only two places – Jeremiah 19 and Ezekiel 16 – do terms relating to “sacrifice” occur, and only one passage

(Jeremiah 19, again) refers to Tophet explicitly as a burial place. Even the two sacrificial references are not internally consistent or reinforcing; Jeremiah 19 refers to the offspring used in this ritual as עלוה, usually a “whole burnt offering” (as in Genesis 22:3, 6; Lev. 1:4; and so on), but sometimes contracted from עולה “iniquity.”⁴⁴ Ezekiel 16, on the other hand, only utilizes the verb זבח, and then hyperbolizes that the purpose of the sacrifice is that it should “be slaughtered” as if an animal, and finally “be devoured,” although which deity is thought to do the devouring/consuming (by fire?) is not explicitly named.

The Biblical references are further complicated by the rich currents of inter-textual polemic that may underlie some of their narratives and rhetorical flourishes. As seen in the discussion of Ezekiel 20:25-26 above, the book of Ezekiel may well represent a Priestly theology in critical dialog with the Deuteronomistic Code – pitting this text in direct opposition to (or engaged in reinterpretation of) the texts containing the bulk of the references to the ritual of consecration, dedication, or immolation/sacrifice under discussion in this study. On the other hand, the canonical form of the book of Jeremiah contains what scholars have agreed are exaggerations and hyperbolic summaries of Israel’s past sins in order to justify, explain, and expound upon the destruction of Jerusalem and the theological implications of the Exile. With this in mind, how literally can we understand Jeremiah’s descriptions of the “high places of Baal” at Tophet, and what goes on there?

It also seems likely that terms such as מלך and תפת, though used by the Biblical authors, quickly became mysterious to Biblical interpreters (even as early as the Hellenistic period), a hypothesis supported by the spelling and translation variants present in the respective manuscript traditions. In their present state, the Biblical texts do not seem to present a

⁴⁴ See Strong’s Concordance number H5765 and H5766.

unified picture of what *mlk* was, or could refer to. A reading of the term “Molekh” as a deity name can be supported,⁴⁵ but this requires some reinterpretation of problematic passages. The Biblical texts describe only one place called “Topheth” (and perhaps another called “taphteh” in Isaiah 30:33, although this may also be a textual problem), located in the valley of Ben-Hinnom near Jerusalem – a place where Judahites performed some ritual involving their children that they seem to have thought would please Yahweh, but which the authors of the Biblical text are insistent would not. There are only three passages that reflect knowledge of this “Topheth” – one long narrative in Jeremiah 19, another reference in Jeremiah 7, and a third discussion in 2 Kings 23:10, which describes Josiah’s “defilement” of the Tophet location. The picture is a complicated one, which may describe several different cultic practices or cultural memories regarding such a cult. This does not mean these data have no bearing on the issues at hand, but they must be used with extreme caution and considered in light of the later (Persian and Hellenistic) Biblical texts presented below.

2. Persian - Hellenistic Period Biblical Texts

The number of Biblical texts or recensions attributed to the Persian – Hellenistic period has grown exponentially in the last few decades, although rarely has consensus been reached amongst Biblical scholars for any particular written stratum. Thus, dealing with the Biblical material in a diachronic manner requires the adoption of certain assumptions which are heavily contested – and can be misleading if not carefully bracketed by the tenuous nature of the dating process. That said, I have adopted what seems today to be a majority opinion on the Persian-Hellenistic date of the final five Biblical references associated with the (purportedly

⁴⁵ As Heider 1985, Day 1989 and Levenson 1993 have shown.

Phoenician) rite of child sacrifice. I have tried to make the strength of these dating arguments transparent in each case (e.g., the “Holiness Code” date being the most seriously disputed of the group), but I wish to further emphasize that my comments in each case will necessarily be dependent on the initial dating decision.

a. References in “The Holiness Code” (Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5)

The “Holiness Code” (or H source) refers to Leviticus 17-26, “a heterogeneous cultic-legal complex.”⁴⁶ This unit has long been seen by scholars as distinct from the rest of the book of Leviticus on the basis of its focus on the concept of “the holy” (שִׁקְיָא) and the dense, relatively terse style of its presentation of laws. The dating of this source by scholars has ranged from the 8th-5th centuries BCE, and depends greatly on the perceived relationship between H and the rest of the Priestly (P) traditions. A summary of this long-standing debate can be found in any contemporary academic commentary on Leviticus. Carr recently summarized the arguments for a 6th century BCE versus a 5th century BCE dating as follows:

...despite the trend among some scholars to date much of the Holiness code to the post-exilic period, I have become convinced that an exilic dating makes more sense. To be sure, since such diasporic concerns are documented as continuing in texts created by the Persian-period diasporic community..., it is possible that part of all of H dates from the Persian period rather than earlier. Nevertheless, insofar as profile might help in dating materials, I suggest that there is much to commend an exilic, sixth-century date for H expansions of P materials and little against it.⁴⁷

Because of the lack of consensus regarding a date for the H source, as well as the organizational structure of the present study (dividing the chapters on the basis of date), I have had to make the difficult decision of placing my discussion of the two references to

⁴⁶ Mosca 1975, 135.

⁴⁷ Carr 2011, 303.

practices later associated with Phoenician mortuary concerns in the current chapter, although this may well be disputed.

The first verse in the book of Leviticus often cited as part of discussions of Phoenician child sacrifice is 18:21. The verse follows, a little abruptly, on the heels of a long list of laws concerned with sexual impropriety.

The prohibition of devoting children to Moloch (v 21) is connected only loosely to this group of [sexual] laws. The thought has strayed from personal purity to idolatrous child-sacrifice, linked to the rest by the use of *zera*⁴⁸, “seed, offspring,” in the opening expression. The connection, both in thought and vocabulary, with Lev 20:2-3 [see below]... is clear and explicit.⁴⁸

While the connection between incest and human sacrifice may well go beyond the simple use of the noun *zera*⁴⁹, an exploration of this phenomenon would go beyond the scope of the present analysis. I translate the verse in question as follows:

i. **Leviticus 18:21** – *And you should not give [תתן] your seed to pass through [להעביר] to mlk [מלך], and you should not profane [תחלל] the name of your god; I [am] Yahweh.*

Most translators assume a dropped object for the infinitive construct form of the verb עבר “to pass through”; i.e. “to pass through [the fire] to *mlk*,” although no mention of fire can be found in this verse’s parallel in Leviticus 20, the next text of relevance for this study. In fact, this particular phrasing – a form of the verb “to give” (נתן) + ל preposition + infinitive construct of the verb “to pass through” (עבר) with no direct object + an indirect object indicated by a second ל preposition – is reminiscent of the phrasing in Ezekiel 16:21. In the Leviticus verse, this indirect object indicates the act is “to/for *mlk*,” while in the Ezekiel

⁴⁸ Bigger 1979, 202.

⁴⁹ The early Christians, for example, were also often accused not just of human sacrifice, but of cannibalism and incest. “The latter was so regularly linked with human sacrifice in the stories told about the Christians that some scholars have urged that what requires explanation are not the separate charges but the whole complex. As for cannibalism, its connection with human sacrifice is so close as to be practically unavoidable, since in the type of sacrifice most commonly practiced by Greeks and Romans the celebrants cooked and ate the flesh of what they had sacrificed” (Rives 1995, 67).

example, the practice is “to/for them,” indicated by the 3mp object suffix. Connections like these between Ezekiel and Leviticus are abundant:

...one might note the close affinities of numerous parts of the H stratum with the early exilic prophecy of Ezekiel, particularly the conclusion of H in Leviticus 26. Though some have argued that this points to Ezekiel’s dependence on H, the broad way H draws in Leviticus 26 and elsewhere on Ezekiel *alongside other prior traditions* points instead toward the reverse direction of dependence.⁵⁰

Aside from this verbal parallel in Ezekiel 16:21, there are many differences between the Biblical passages discussed above, and this verse – the use of the verb “to give” (נתן) as the primary verbal force of the act, the object of the verb as “seed” (זרע) instead of as “sons” or “sons and daughters,” and the coupling of the prohibition of this practice with “profaning” (הלל) the name of Yahweh. The second verse of interest in the H source texts follows this same pattern:

ii. **Leviticus 20:2-5** – *And you should say to the sons of Israel, “He who is of the sons of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel, who gives [יתן] his seed [מזרעו] to mlk [מלך], he will surely be put to death; the people of the land will stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he gave of his seed to mlk, to defile [טמא] my sanctuary, and to profane [ולחלל] my holy name. And if the people of the land nevertheless hide their eyes from the man when he gives his seed to mlk, and don’t kill him, then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and I will cut him off, and all that go whoring after him, to commit prostitution [לזנות] with mlk, from among their people.*

The relationship between this verse and Leviticus 18:21 illustrates well the functional characterization of the chapters offered by scholars: “Leviticus 20 functions in its present context as a recapitulation of chaps. 18-19, with punishments specified....”⁵¹ The items presented in 18-19 are reiterated and expanded, sorted by severity of crime and punishment each requires.

⁵⁰ Carr 2011, 301.

⁵¹ Heider 1985, 248.

All [the references to *mlk* in Leviticus] but 20:5 describe the sacrificial act with the verb *ntn* (18:21 adds the verb which commonly occurs in D and the prophets, *hʿbyr*, as a complementary infinitive). All but 20:5 use *zrʿ* (“seed”) for the one sacrificed (rather than *bn[y]w*, “his son[s],” or the like, as elsewhere). Finally, all five verses have Molek with the definite article, shown through the vocalization and doubling of the /*m*/ following the preposition /*in* all but 20:5, which has the article with /*h*/.⁵²

The two passages from Leviticus seem to be the product of the same tradition about practices associated with the term *mlk*, and that while this tradition shares much with the text of Ezekiel, it does not seem to utilize all the same vocabulary or idioms of the Deuteronomist material. No mention is made in the Leviticus passages of any historical moment or setting for the practice (where it took place, for example), nor is the term *tophet* mentioned as part and parcel of what is forbidden.

A final note may be made on the subsequent textual context of Leviticus 20:2-5. The verses translated above are followed by a curious verse that warns against those who would seek out “spirits” (*hʿbt*) and a type of person often translated “wizards” or “magicians,” but literally “knowers” (*hydʿnym*). Heider⁵³ and others have seen this as confirmation that *mlk* was a netherworld-deity. While this seems like a possible interpretation, the passage occurs in a long list of (in some cases, seemingly unrelated) cultic or legal offenses. The fact that this particular order is similar to that in the prohibitions of Deut. 18.10-11 means that the grouping may pre-date the H text or be a conventional way of listing cultic offenses. I do not find the Leviticus “Holiness Code” references convincing evidence for such a hypothesis on their own.

⁵² Heider 1985, 233; square brackets are Heider’s notations.

⁵³ “The chthonic connection of Molek could not be clearer than it is in the roster of netherworld-entities in Lev 20:5-6. The unifying principle of vv. 1-6 is not merely ‘illegitimate cultic practices,’ but the practice of the cult of the dead,” (Heider 1985, 251).

b. References by the Chronicler (2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6)

Collectively, the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are one of the least debated books of the Bible in terms of the date of their authorship. The writings themselves mention the ascension of Cyrus of Persia (d. ca. 530 BCE), and the beginning of the process of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. On the basis of linguistic details, the book can be dated with even more precision; “Chronicles appears to date either to the very late Persian period or (more likely) the first century and a half of the Hellenistic period.”⁵⁴

The project of the books of Chronicles is to rewrite the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, using the earlier sources of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and likely a handful of other sources now lost to us. Although his writings were based on these sources, it is clear that the Chronicler had an ideological (probably both political and theological) motive in producing his narrative.⁵⁵ Thus, while the two passages of relevance for the present study each parallel passages from the book of 2 Kings, the differences between the Chronicles and Deuteronomistic History’s versions of the passage will be investigated below.

The first passage of interest parallels the already-examined 2 Kings 16:3 verse.

iii. 2 Chronicles 28:3 – *And he [Ahaz] burnt incense [הקטיר] in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and he burnt [ויבער] his sons in the fire, after the abominations [כתעבות] of the foreigners [הגוים] whom Yahweh had cast out from before the sons of Israel.*

The passage has the same general sense as that in the book of 2 Kings – Ahaz, king of Judah, participated in a ritual attributed to the Canaanites (i.e., those living in the land before Israel’s conquest, according to the text) which both historians judge as an “abomination.” But

⁵⁴ Carr 2011, 196. The *terminus ante quem* can be established as well: “Eupolemos (158 BCE) seems to know of a Greek translation of Chronicles, which would suggest a dating of Chronicles no later than the early second century, (Carr 2011, 197).

⁵⁵ Jones 1993, 71: “Although the Chronicler was dependent on sources, he is to be regarded as an author composing his own work on the basis of available sources rather than an editor producing a new version of an earlier composition. He was in many ways an independent narrator.”

the differences between the two passages are significant.⁵⁶ First, the passage about Ahaz burning incense in the valley of Ben-Hinnom seems to be an addition or alteration of the Chronicler's. 2 Kings 16:4 has Ahaz burning incense (ויקטר), but this is said to have taken place בבמת, in "the high places." It is noteworthy that the Chronicler's version both introduces the "Valley of Ben-Hinnom" to a passage in 2 Kings where the place name does not occur, and separates the location from the ritual involving Ahaz' sons, associating it instead with the incense offense.

Heider summarizes two more notable discrepancies between 2 Kings 16.3 and 2 Chronicles 28.3 as follows:

The Chronicler was clearly working from some form of the Kings text, although there are two intriguing differences: Ahaz is said to have *burned* (*wybʿr*; cf. 2 Kgs 16:3, *hʿbyr*) his *sons* (*bnyw*; cf *bnw*) in the fire. ...The pluralizing of Ahaz's victims (and also of Manasseh's, 2 Chr 33:6), if not attributable to an otherwise-unknown textual variant in Kings, appears to reflect the chronicler's animus toward Ahaz.⁵⁷

The verbal change, from העביר in 2 Kings (a 3ms Hiphil perfect from ʿbr, "to pass over/through") to היבער in the Masoretic Text of 2 Chronicles (a 3ms Hiphil imperfect from bʿr "to burn") may well be a case of scribal transcription error (metathesis of the ʿayin and bet), but the force of the change is significant. In the Hiphil stem, the verbal root bʿr means "to be consumed" or "to burn up (entirely);" quite a different sense than simply "passing something through" a fire or flame. Because of this, Smelik argued that the Chronicler made the change specifically to eliminate any remaining ambiguity about the rite,⁵⁸ although few other commentators adopted his conclusions.

⁵⁶ Japhet asserted of chapter 28 that: "...the Chronic reworking is so comprehensive, even drastic, that the resultant picture is different [from the narrative in 2 Kings] in many details," (1993, 895).

⁵⁷ Heider 1985, 290.

⁵⁸ Smelik 1998, 166, n. 73.

On the other hand, one medieval Hebrew manuscript, the Septuagint text, the Syriac version, and the Targum all preserve either the Hebrew verbal form *ויעבר*, “to pass through,” or its translated equivalent.⁵⁹ It seems likely that the verbal change extant in the Masoretic Hebrew text was not a product of the Chronicler’s pen (cf. the unchanged *העביר* in 2 Chronicles 33.6, below), but the present state of the text of 2 Chronicles 28.3 may well have influenced 20th century Biblical scholars and, perhaps, some early Jewish and Christian Biblical exegetes.

The third discrepancy between the verse in 2 Kings and the rewriting of 2 Chronicles is in the number of Ahaz’s sons subjected to the practice. The book of 2 Kings reports that Ahaz only caused a single son to “pass through the fire,” while 2 Chronicles seemingly modifies this tradition such that many (or, indeed, all) of Ahaz’s sons are put through the ritual. Most commentators on 2 Chronicles adopt Heider’s position⁶⁰ that the change was purposefully made to amplify the baseness or evilness of Ahaz’s reputation. Other commentators conclude that the Chronicler simply had a different textual tradition of 2 Kings than that which we now possess. Those who take the latter position note that the Lucianic Recension of the Septuagint translation may well preserve vestiges of this alternate Hebrew text.⁶¹

But the change is not without consequence in the text. Ahaz is described as being succeeded by his son, Hezekiah, whom both the Deuteronomistic Historian and the Chronicler view in glowing terms. Certainly Hezekiah survived whatever practice (dedicatory or otherwise) Ahaz is criticized for performing. What might this tell us about the nature of the practice the Chronicler thought he was describing? Did the Chronicler simply lapse into a

⁵⁹ Klein 2012, 390 and 296; Klein translates the verse according to this dominant manuscript tradition, concluding that the verbal form preserved by the Masoretic Text is the result of metathesis.

⁶⁰ Heider 1985.

⁶¹ See Klein 2012, 390.

moment of contradictory hyperbole? Or might this textual variant illustrate that the 4th-3rd century BCE author of the books of Chronicles did not think of the ritual practiced by Ahaz as a sacrifice at all, but as some sort of dedicatory practice? We cannot know for sure, but examining the second verse of relevance in this Biblical book with these questions in mind may be elucidating.

The second text of interest parallels 2 Kings 21.6, addressing the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah and grandson of Ahaz, discussed above.

iv. **2 Chronicles 33.6** – *And he [Manasseh] caused his sons [בניו] to pass through [העביר] the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom; and he observed times [ועונן] and used enchantments [ונוחש], and used witchcraft [וכשר], and dealt with [ועשה] a familiar spirit [אוב], and with wizards [וידעוני]. He did much evil in the eyes of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.*

In this case, 2 Chronicles 33.6 almost directly quotes the 2 Kings 21.6 passage (which itself bares significant similarities to Deut. 18:10, discussed in Chapter II, above). The Chronicler changes Manasseh's singular "son" from the 2 Kings version (or utilizes another textual tradition lost to us) to produce the plural form "sons" (*bnayw*) as in 2 Chronicles 28.3. But none of the other changes made to the verse dealing with Ahaz has been reproduced here – the Valley of Ben-Hinnom is associated with the ritual in question (a detail actually *added* to the corresponding account in 2 Kings), and no reference to burning incense there is made.

Most noteworthy in the Chronicler's treatment of the story of Manasseh (in general) is the fact that although this king of Judah is thoroughly demonized in the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kings 21.1-18), the Chronicler indicates that the king repented, was restored to the throne, and eventually celebrated for his building projects and cultic reforms (2 Chronicles 33.1-20). Of all the kings of Judah, Manasseh is "the only one who moved... from unfaithfulness

and failure to faithfulness and blessing,”⁶² under the influence of the author of the books of Chronicles. Since Ahaz received the opposite kind of treatment – an *emphasizing* or exaggeration of his negative qualities while king of Judah – at the hand of the Chronicler, the differences between the references to child sacrifice in the books of 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings seem to take on yet another layer of interpretive complication.

The context of the ritual mentioned in 2 Chronicles 33.6 and associated with child sacrifice by most scholars is that of a list of practices seen as negative by the Chronicler (just as they were by the Deuteronomistic Historian). In particular, the Chronicler adds *ksp* to the verbal pair *ʿmm* and *nhš* mentioned in the II Kings account, bringing the roster of Manasseh’s problematic behaviors into closer alignment with Deuteronomy 18.10. Johnstone sees this group of offenses as thematically connected:

The exact force of some of these terms is uncertain (...the first is associated with the Philistines, Isa. 2.6; the second with the Egyptians, Gen. 44.5; the third with the Egyptians, Exod. 7.11, and Babylonians, Dan. 2.2; the ‘witch of Endor,’ whom Saul consulted, possessed the last two in the list, 1 Sam. 28.3-9). But the point is that all of these are alternative attempts to gain knowledge from the unseen world; ...the fault in them lies in the fact that they bypass the revelation of God’s will in the Law (for this reason they are forbidden in, for example, Lev. 19.26; Deut. 18.10-14).⁶³

Whatever their similarity to one another, they seem to have had as much negative social currency in the post-exilic world of the Chronicler as they did in the narrative of the Deuteronomistic History.

If we take the alterations in 2 Chronicles 28.3 to indicate that the Chronicler did not see the ritual performed by Ahaz as a ritual of child sacrifice, we can confirm that nothing in 2 Chronicles 33.6 contradicts that view. It may also be possible to see 2 Chronicles 28.3 as the

⁶² Jones 1993, 58.

⁶³ Johnstone 1997, 224.

product of a series of transcription or transmission errors, “fixed” by subsequent scribes so that the passage makes independent sense (if not consistent with the picture painted in 2 Chronicles 33.6). But it is also worthwhile to note that three other descriptions of the ritual in question, namely those in 2 Kings 17.17, 17.31, and 23.10, are not paralleled by passages in 2 Chronicles at all. Was the author of 2 Chronicles attempting to eliminate or tone-down the mentions in his source text of a ritual he no longer understood? Or were the Chroniclers’ sources different from the version of 2 Kings we have today? Again, any answers must remain speculative.

c. References in the Psalter (Psalm 106:37-38)

The individual poems or songs that make up the Biblical book of Psalms are notoriously difficult to date. The work of relevance for the present study is Psalm 106, which has been dated to the exilic or post-exilic periods⁶⁴ based on the references in verses 46-47 to captivity and living among foreigners (*gwym*). An apparent quote of the Psalm in 1 Chronicles 16.35-36⁶⁵ may rule out a date after the 2nd century CE. Psalm 106 is a kind of companion piece to the poem that precedes it; psalm 106 consists of a kind of “recital of Israel’s rebellions, effectively in counterpoint to the recounting of Yahweh’s saving acts in Psalm 105.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Rogerson and McKay 1977, 41: “The date of the psalm, on the internal evidence of verses 27 and 47, is most likely to be the period of the exile, though we cannot be certain whether it was composed and used in Babylon or Jerusalem. Some interpreters would assign the psalm to the period after the exile; and it has been suggested that it was used as part of the liturgy of national confession at a covenant renewal ceremony.” Gerstenberger writes that “Psalm 106 gives a vivid impression of a many-voiced meeting of Judahites gathered in foreign lands to remember the wondrous assistance and care of Yahweh and the failures of the fathers to respond properly to Israel’s caring God,” (Gerstenberger 2001, 244).

⁶⁵ What Dahood called a “partial recension in 1 Chron xvi,” (1970, 67).

⁶⁶ Heider 1985, 376. Dahood described the psalm as follows: “a national confession of sins in vss. 1-6 and a prayer for help in vs. 47 frame an historical poem (vss. 7-46) which in a somber tone sets Yahweh’s deeds on Israel’s behalf against Israel’s repeated response of rebellion and ingratitude,” (Dahood 1970, 67). Hossfeld and Zenger go further still: “Psalms 105 and 106 constitute twin psalms. Both are songs of thanksgiving, and both are spoken by a we-group that worships ‘YHWH, our God’ (Pss 105:7, 106:47). The two overlap in their linear account of history,

The events in the verses of interest to this study are described as taking place after the settlement of the land (see 106.34),⁶⁷ in the past from the perspective of the psalm's author, but seemingly with great consequence for the conditions of the present.

v. **Psalm 106:37-38 (LXX 105:37-38)** – *And [the Israelites] sacrificed [ויזבחו] their sons and their daughters to idols / demons [לשדים]. And they shed [וישפכו] innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed [זבחו] to the idols [לעצבי] of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood [בדמים].*

Gerstenberger called verses 34-39 “two general examples of deviant behavior,” which differ qualitatively from the “narration of concrete Biblical episodes,” transition into “Dtr teaching or preaching.”⁶⁸ But this passage breaks entirely with the vocabulary of the other Biblical references to this ritual. The verbal root *zbh* is used for the first occurrence (106:37) in this context, a verb unambiguously associated with slaughter for the purposes of either eating or sacrificing its object. The ritual is described as being intended for *šd*, a noun which only appears (in this passage and in Deut. 32.17,⁶⁹ the “Song of Moses,”) in the plural, and is thought to come from the hollow root *šwd*, “to rule.” The Septuagint translates this term δαιμόνια; the Vulgate *daemonia*. The sense of this term can be further clarified by the second occurrence (106.38), which seems to offer a parallel account: again the verbal root is *zbh*, but the intended object of the ritual is described as “the idols of Canaan” (*šby kn'n*). Heider concludes that “the view of the Deuteronomists, Jeremiah and Ezekiel that child sacrifice was really to Canaanite

focusing on the exodus and the occupation of the land. ...In their language and theology the two psalms draw on the same strand. The Deuteronomistic terminology is here, but muted, and the Priestly diction and view take the foreground...,” (Hossfeld and Zenger 2011, 95).

⁶⁷ “Thus, despite its likely exilic or post-exilic date of composition, Psalm 106 does not bespeak a contemporary practice of cultic child sacrifice,” (Heider 1985, 376).

⁶⁸ Gerstenberger 2001, 242.

⁶⁹ What Hossfeld and Zenger call, in both instances, “a label for foreign gods” (2011, 92). See Dahood’s note that: “Another occurrence of the noun *šēd*, ‘demon,’ has been recognized in Amos ii 1..., ‘*al šorpo ‘ašmōt molek* (MT *melek*) ‘*ādām laššēd* (MT *laššīd*), ‘Because he burns the bones... of a human sacrifice to a demon,’ by W. F. Albright, YGC, p. 240,” (1970, 74, n. 37).

deities (all protests about their being to Yahweh to the contrary) is repeated....”⁷⁰ However, even in those passages, no verb as strong as *zbh* is used to describe the act.

Because of this psalm’s exilic or post-exilic date, and due to the genre of Hebrew poetry that may well have shaped the potentially hyperbolic language of this passage, we can conclude that these two verses do not offer a factual description (or at least, not *simply* a factual description) of a Levantine religious ritual. At the very least, we can conclude that those responsible for the practice, according to the author of Psalm 106, were Israelites. Any of the other details of this passage – the verbal implications, the worship intended for the gods of Canaan or for idols of other kinds – all this might be metaphor or hyperbole, emphasizing the wrongdoings of a people punished by exile from the land given to them by Yahweh.

d. References in “Wisdom of Solomon” / “The Book of Wisdom”

The deuterocanonical book of the “Wisdom of Solomon” is thought to have been composed in Greek,⁷¹ possibly by an Alexandrian Jew sometime in the 2nd or 1st century BCE. It was already considered canonical by both Jews and Christians in the 2nd century CE, according to Melito of Sardis (d. 180 CE), although today it is excluded from the canon by mainstream Jewish traditions.

The “Wisdom of Solomon” consists of two units; the first (chapters 1-9)⁷² deals with wisdom in the abstract, while the second (chapters 9-19) discusses wisdom from an historical perspective. The first reference from this book often cited in connection with child sacrifice in

⁷⁰ Heider 1985, 377.

⁷¹ Nahmanides mentions a Hebrew version of this book in the preface to his commentary on the Torah, but this is thought to be a translation of a Greek original.

⁷² Others have divided this into two literary units – books 1-6, addressing rulers of the earth and the importance of wisdom in correct rule; and books 7-9, recording an address of King Solomon on the subject of the importance of wisdom in his own life and reign.

the Levant falls in a section on the inhabitants of Egypt and Canaan, and their immoral practices.

vi. The Book of Wisdom 12.3-6 – *For it was your will to destroy by the hands of our fathers both those old inhabitants of your holy land [i.e. the Canaanites], whom you hated for doing most odious works of witchcraft, and wicked sacrifices, and also those merciless murderers of children [τέκνων τε φονέας ἀνελεήμονας⁷³], and devourers of man’s flesh, and the feasts of blood⁷⁴, with their priests out of the midst of their idolatrous crew, and the parents [γονεῖς], that killed with their own hands souls [ψυχῶν] destitute of help....*

In this passage, every unthinkable act is turned into an accusation against the Canaanites who lived in Israel before the conquest reported by the Biblical histories. Not only did the Canaanites reportedly practice witchcraft, sacrifice wrongly, and murder innocent children, they are also accused of cannibalism and (or during?) “feasts of blood.” The final reiteration, about children not just being killed, but being killed by the very hands of their parents, seems closest in verbal force to the Psalm 106 reference, in which the verbal force of *zbh*, “to slaughter” for sacrifice or for consumption, is attributed to the agency of the parents themselves. But the kit-and-caboodle nature of the denunciation of the Canaanites in this passage should produce skepticism in the modern reader.

The second reference from the book of the Wisdom of Solomon comes from a chapter on the “invention” of idolatry, and its persistence in its various forms.

vii. The Book of Wisdom 14.23 – *For while they [those who “erred in the knowledge of God”] killed their children in sacrifices [τεκνοφόνους τελετὰς], or used mystic / secret ceremonies [κρύφια μυστήρια], or made revellings of strange rites [ἐμμανεις ἐξάλλων θεσμων κώμους ἄγοντες]...*

The language of this passage is much more constrained than that in chapter 12, and in fact echoes the treatment of the Carthaginian rite in some of the Greek authors whose work is

⁷³ The text is difficult here – some have recommended amending the text to read φόνους for “slaughters of children,” rather than “slaughterers.” Cf. Gregg 1922, 116, note to verse 5.

⁷⁴ Gregg suggests reading “sacrificial banquets of men’s flesh and blood” (would be σπλαγχοφάγον in Greek – “an Aeschylean type of compound with gen.; lit. ‘the banquet gorging itself with human flesh and blood,’” Gregg 1922, 116, note on line five).

discussed in Chapter V, below. Unfortunately, the details of the passage are so vague that little can be made of this text for our purposes.

e. Conclusions: Persian – Hellenistic Period Biblical Texts

The references in the Holiness Code (H), Chronicler, Psalter, and Wisdom of Solomon present an interesting series of developments in the Biblical references to *mlk* and this ritual practice. The Leviticus passages focus on the “seed” that is given over to *mlk*, and give the ritual a sexualized context (i.e. “whoring” away from Yahweh). These images are similar to those evoked in the Ezekiel passages discussed above – this has led to an unresolved debate over the relationship between the Holiness Code and the book of Ezekiel.

Similarly, the relationship between the Chronicler’s passages and corresponding texts in 2 Kings are difficult to sort out, since we do not know if the Masoretic text of 2 Kings reflects the textual version the Chronicler was working with. But the Chronicler may have been making at least one important emendation to amplify the offensive nature of the ritual undergone by Ahaz (from one sons to many); and seems to have omitted several references to Manasseh’s participation in a similar rite. Just as in the classical texts discussed below (Chapter V), the accusation of participation in a rite resembling that of child sacrifice was a powerful moralizing tool in the hands of the Biblical authors of the Persian – Hellenistic period.

The Psalter utilizes the most explicit language of all the Biblical references in accusing the Israelites of sacrificing their sons and daughters to the idols of Canaan. The passage is unambiguous in its meaning, clarifying that blood was shed in the sacrifice being described. But the genre of the passage, and the hyperbolic poetic language and imagery used throughout

the Psalter, makes it difficult to take this unique passage as confirmation of historical fact. Finally, the author of the Wisdom of Solomon also seems to accept the reality of child sacrifice in Canaan – that it took place at the hands of the parents, and was a bloody crime committed against the innocent. These references in the Psalms and the Wisdom of Solomon begin to sound as though they belong among the accusations leveled against the Carthaginians (and other peoples) by Greek and Latin authors, to be discussed in Chapter V, below.

3. Conclusions: Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

Though individual passages are still debated and discussed, and changes in our understanding of each Biblical text's transmission history may change the way we weigh this evidence, those scholars who have studied the references to *mlk* discussed in brief, above, conclude that a deity is behind the majority of Biblical references. The overwhelming concern of these passages is that inhabitants of Israel/Judah are participating in the cult of this deity, and that whatever it involves, it does not represent “proper” Yahwistic worship. The earliest (Iron Age II period) texts present descriptions that are hard to reconcile with one another; the rituals involving “burning” or “causing to pass through the fire,” and indicate that they were performed using “sons and daughters,” “all that open womb,” or a single “son.” This same language is used to describe a ritual done *lmlk* or *lb'z*, and in one case to “other gods.” Whatever this practice might have been, it is said to have taken place most prominently in the “valley of Ben-Hinnom,” near Jerusalem, at a place in that valley called “Topheth” (also, perhaps, “Taphteh”) or “the place of Topheth” or “the high places of Baal” or “the high places of Topheth.” In one case, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are threatened with burial at Topheth.

In another instance, the connection is explicitly made between this practice and the sacrificing of children “to be devoured” by other gods.

Assuming these Biblical references originally had some basis in an Iron Age II reality, it seems as though making reference to this ritual or practice became an idiomatic way to refer to some kind of cultic transgression against the cult of Yahweh – one which eventually became obscure to Biblical translators and exegetes. The Persian – Hellenistic period Biblical references (though complex and worthy of more treatment than they are afforded here) offer an even more vitriolic and specific image of the bloody slaughter of children by their parents, and individual emendations of the stories of Ahaz and Manasseh told in 2 Kings.

The complicated Biblical semantic web surrounding this place and ritual creates a tangled picture of what seems to have been an actual Israelite practice, or series of practices. If this is the case, these texts may offer enough evidence to establish a regularly occurring and repeated sacrificial cult practiced in Israel. On the other hand, they may also be used to argue that the dominant ritual involved in this cult was a dedicatory one. Perhaps sometimes, or in some places, children were sacrificed as part of this cult. Perhaps at other times sacrifice was an accusation levied against those who practiced the cult. But for the purposes of the present study, the more important questions are: are the Biblical references sufficient to establish (a) the Levantine Phoenician origin of such a cult, and (b) the ongoing and regular practice of child sacrifice in Phoenicia as part of such a cult?

The fact that several of the Biblical texts under consideration discuss the practice as “Canaanite,” or taking place in dedication to Baal, has been used as internal evidence that the practice(s) described in these texts had a Phoenician origin. But as discussed in the introductory section of this chapter, it is typically external evidence (i.e. the Punic material

discussed in Chapters II and III) which is used by scholars to argue that a Phoenician origin for a cult of child sacrifice is likely, and the Punic material utilizes the term *mlk* in very different ways. As Azize has argued in his own study of references to Phoenician and Punic child sacrifice:

The Hebrew Bible presents, if anything, an even more complex picture, with enigmatic references to a cult of *mlk*, and to a practice relating to first fruits and first born. This evidence is controversial, even if some theories which had once held sway now seem increasingly unlikely (e.g. the view that there was no deity *Mlk* in Israel or the Levant).⁷⁵ ... **I propose to place the evidence of the Hebrew Bible to one side, a procedure which is, I think, justified by the fact that despite the movement of ideas between Phoenicia, Canaan and Israel, the Israelite and Phoenician cultures as a whole were distinct**, and were distinct in ways which are pertinent here: e.g. the letters *mlk* (in the relevant context) were almost certainly the proper name of a deity in Canaan and Israel, but in an “intra-Punic” development, they denoted, rather, a common noun for a type of sacrifice....⁷⁶

I agree with Azize that the Biblical texts attest a unique southern Levantine reality, which should be understood on their own terms, with their authors’ theological motivations in mind. While the Biblical texts may well indicate the presence of certain complicated religious rites and rituals taking place in the Iron Age II period southern Levant, this reality cannot be projected (or even elaborated) onto neighboring regions. In other words, I would argue that the Biblical texts do not offer clear testimony of regularly occurring Phoenician child sacrifice taking place in the central coastal Levant. Therefore, while establishing a context for fire-based rituals practiced by parents and involving their children in Israel and Judah, these texts do not clarify a portrait of Phoenician Levantine mortuary practice in the period under consideration.

⁷⁵ The best recent studies known to me are Day 1989 and Heider 1985.

⁷⁶ Azize 2007, 187, bolded emphasis my own.

Chapter V.

Literary Texts: Classical Sources for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

The writings of Greek and Roman authors, as well as those of early church fathers, have played a long and significant part in attempts to reconstruct Phoenicians' relationship to death, dying, and the gods. This chapter surveys the Greek and Latin narrative texts which scholars have used to reconstruct these features of Phoenician history, cult, and belief:

1. Iron Age I-II Classical Texts
2. Persian - Hellenistic Period Classical Texts
3. Conclusions: Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

As in previous chapters, my goal is not to reevaluate all the material, but to review it in order to evaluate its potential contribution for an understanding of Phoenician homeland burial practice in the Iron I-III periods. Although my survey includes all the texts typically included by scholars in discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice (mostly in terms of child sacrifice), in some cases I must truncate my analysis of certain elements of the texts¹ in light of my research goals and the limits of the texts' relevance for the present study.

1. Iron Age I-II Classical Texts

There are no Greek or Latin texts from the Iron Age I-II period that directly address Phoenician mortuary practice. But there are a handful of references to a work authored by a

¹ For example, I am unable to perform extensive evaluation of the treatment of groups like the Gauls (also accused of human sacrifice) in the classical texts.

Phoenician named Sanchuniathon (probably Phoenician Sakkūnyatōn) who is said to have lived in the Late Bronze – Iron Age I period, specifically described as around the time of the Trojan War (see below). Unfortunately, we know of this figure and his work only third- and fourth-hand. Sanchuniathon’s writings are said to have been translated into Greek by one Philo of Byblos, who lived ca. 64-141 CE. The *Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos has only been preserved in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 263-339 CE), and in a few works of Porphyry (ca. 234 – 305 CE), most of which also are preserved only in Eusebius’ work. I will here survey the “links” in this chain of transmission from earliest (Sanchuniathon) to most recent (Eusebius) in order to assess the likelihood that any significant data pertaining to the Iron Age I-II periods may be obtained from these Greek texts.

a. Sanchuniathon (Sakkūnyatōn), as “translated” by Philo of Byblos

Philo of Byblos is said to be the author of a work called *Phoinikikē Historia* (“The Phoenician History”), written during the time of Hadrian. The work is described as a translation into Greek of Sanchuniathon’s history of the Phoenicians. Eusebius of Caesarea’s early 4th century CE work *Praeparatio Evangelica* (1.9.20-21) reports that Sanchuniathon was a contemporary of Semiramus (i.e. from before or during the Trojan Wars) and had access to temple records older even than himself when preparing his text (presumably in the Phoenician language). The ten-year Trojan War was thought by the ancient Greeks to have taken place in the late 13th or early 12th century BCE;² today the archaeological evidence pushes this date to sometime between 1260-1240 BCE (that is, to the Late Bronze Age). This claim for the extreme antiquity of a Phoenician source called “Sanchuniathon” causes several problems,

² Eratosthenes of Cyrene, who lived ca. 276-195 BCE, dated the Trojan War to 1194-1184 BCE.

not least of which centers on the transcription of the author's Phoenician name: While Eusebius' transliteration Σαγχουσιάθων or Σαγχωνιάθων for an hypothesized Phoenician name סכניתן ("Skni has given") follows the pattern of transliteration of Hebrew names in the Septuagint, and the Phoenician name is known from a 3rd century BCE inscription at Hadrumetus,³ Albright pointed out as early as 1938 that the personal name Sanchuniathon seems an impossible vocalization before the first millennium BCE, due to the long vowel in the final syllable of the name.⁴ Bickerman further notes that religious works of the ancient Near East rarely named their authors.⁵ Perhaps most glaringly, we have no narrative texts in Phoenician of any kind from this early period.⁶

But Sanchuniathon, as an historian or religious authority, is never mentioned before Philo of Byblos, who would have been "translating" some 1300 years after Sanchuniathon is said to have lived and written. The detail that Sanchuniathon is from Tyre does not appear for another century or more after Philo's work, in the *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus (late-2nd – early 3rd century CE).⁷ Baumgarten surveyed the many textual references to Sanchuniathon spanning the 1st – 15th centuries CE, and summarizes:

...a fairly wide variety of works was attributed to Sanchuniathon in antiquity. Tyrian customs and history, physics, Egyptian theology and the Egyptian mysteries, all these were supposedly discussed by him. Sanchuniathon was also supposedly a native of two, if not three, major Phoenician cities: Tyre, Beirut, and perhaps Sidon. ...this suggests that many traditions about Sanchuniathon were known in antiquity.⁸

³ Baumgarten 1981, 42.

⁴ Albright 1938a, 24; this conclusion is accepted by Barr 1974-1975.

⁵ Bickerman 1973, 32-37.

⁶ This is of course an argument from absence, but one so "absent" across the Levant that scholarly consensus today places the advent of narrative composition (and the development of complex scribal culture) in all the North West Semitic dialects in the Iron II period.

⁷ *Deipnosophistai* 3, 126; see Baumgarten 1981, 45 for discussion.

⁸ Baumgarten 1981, 48.

Baumgarten goes on to conclude that “these dates [for placing Sanchuniathon during or just before the Trojan War] are unreliable and suspicious.”⁹ Some scholars have proposed “emending” the date of Sanchuniathon’s testimony – Albright has contended that “Sanchuniathon was a refugee from Tyre who settled in Berytus about the second quarter of the sixth century B.C.,”¹⁰ while Eissfeldt indicated he found it difficult to date Sanchuniathon “later than the seventh century B.C.”¹¹ These emendations were naturally made on the basis of the cultural milieu each scholar saw reflected in the words of Philo of Byblos – a circular kind of argument designed to locate the assumed “truth” of Sanchuniathon’s testimony in a time period that made more historical sense than the Late Bronze – Iron Age I period.

Independent of Sanchuniathon himself, Philo’s account has long been questioned as an accurate witness to texts of so early a date,¹² although the 1929 discovery of the narrative, mythological, and ritual tablets at Ugarit (whose stories reflected the plot and themes of several in Philo’s *Phoenician History*) were thought by many to support Philo’s own claims of the antiquity of his sources.¹³ Today scholarly consensus is divided,¹⁴ with Philo’s euhemerism a central concern of those who see his work as more a product of the 1st century CE than of the Iron Age I-II period:

Corollaries between Philo and other Hellenistic historians allow us to appreciate the force of Philo’s project: especially euhemerism (or the deification of mortals who have advanced civilization by their cultural benefactions, inventions or discoveries); ‘nationalistic’ sentiments or the impulse towards a patriotic cultural history; anti-Hellenism or anti-Judaism; and the claim to ancient and reliable sources such as temple records.¹⁵

⁹ Baumgarten 1981, 48.

¹⁰ Albright 1969, 195; and 1972, 240. See Baumgarten 1981, 48.

¹¹ Eissfeldt 1939, 69.

¹² Nautin 1949a, 1949b; Eissfeldt 1952, 1956; Barr 1974-1975; Baumgarten 1981. In fact several 19th century scholars saw the text as a Hellenistic forgery in imitation of Hesiod (Oden 1984, 581).

¹³ Albright 1972, 239.

¹⁴ See Oden’s 1984 review of Baumgarten (1981) for summary.

¹⁵ Johnson 2006, 67.

Baumgarten (1981), in the first full-scale commentary on Philo of Byblos' work, argued that there were, in fact, traces of three different cosmologies in *The Phoenician History* – one Tyrian, one Byblian, and one of unknown origin – and that this is therefore a composite text, on top of its euhemeristic coloring. Perhaps the most frustrating problem with the text of Philo of Byblos, however, is that it has been preserved only in the works of other, later polemicists whose agendas differ greatly from Philo's original purpose.

b. Porphyry

Porphyry (ca. 234-305 CE) was a native of Tyre (though he never calls himself a Phoenician) who studied in Caesarea as a young man. According to the historian Socrates, Porphyry had once been a Christian, and may even have been a student of Origen's. But eventually Porphyry composed a work, *Against the Christians*, which was so alarming to Christians that four major responses were composed to refute his arguments. This work is thought to have been written in 268-271 CE,¹⁶ although another seventy or so titles are also attributed to Porphyry.¹⁷ Since *Against the Christians* and other works of Porphyry were banned on more than one occasion by the church (and quite successfully destroyed, along with the Christian refutations of his *Against the Christians* which preserved too much of his own logic and persuasion in the eyes of the early church), Porphyry's writings are preserved only as fragments in the works of other Greek authors, philosophers, and theologians.

¹⁶ The dating of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* has undergone much debate; see Kofsky 2000, 22-23 for details. Eusebius (see below) is the only ancient author who cites a date for the composition (i.e. that Porphyry wrote the work during his stay in Sicily before his return to Rome after the death of Plotinus in 270 CE).

¹⁷ Clark 2000, 5-6: "We have the titles of approximately seventy works [of Porphyry], but only a few have survived. Debates continue on authenticity, on how many are separate works or alternative titles, and on identifying fragments in later authors who, like Porphyry himself, took over arguments from their predecessors.... The net result is that perhaps eleven of Porphyry's works survive in full, or almost complete."

One of Porphyry's most complete works to have survived is "On the Abstinence from Killing Animals," often referred to as *De Abstinentia*. "*On Abstinence* is the longest of these [Porphyry's extant works], but the end of its final book is missing, and much of it is (as Porphyry said it would be) report and discussion of other people's arguments."¹⁸ In this treatise, written to convince a friend to return to the vegetarian diet the two had long thought important to the life of a true philosopher, Porphyry surveys a large range of cultural and religious attitudes to the killing, sacrificing, and eating of animals. His citation of Philo's *Phoenician History* is thus designed to introduce an authentic and ancient source for the traditions of the Phoenicians. The following passage is quoted in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* (4.16.10):

De abstinentia 2.56.1

Translation according to Clark (2000): In great disasters, such as wars and plagues and droughts, the Phoenicians **used to choose by vote, for sacrifice** to Kronos, **one of those dearest to them**. The *Phoenician History*, which Sanchuniathon wrote in Phoenician and Philo of Byblos translated into Greek in eight books, is full of people who sacrificed.

Translation according to Baumgarten (1981): The Phoenicians, too, in great disasters, whether of wars, or droughts, or plagues, **used to sacrifice one of their dearest, dedicating him** to Kronos. And the *Phoenician History*, which Sanchuniathon wrote in Phoenician and which Philo of Byblos translated into Greek in eight books, is full of such sacrifices.

Translation according to Mosca (1975): In the major disasters of war, plague, or drought, the Phoenicians **used to choose one of their best-loved children to be sacrificed** to Kronos. The *Phoenician History* which Sanchuniathon wrote in the Phoenician language, and which Philo of Byblos translated into Greek in eight books, is full of such sacrifices.

¹⁸ Clark 2000, 6.

The difference in translations results from a difference of interpretation of one Greek word - translators have read ἐπιψηφίζοντες, “by vote,”¹⁹ or ἐπιφημίζοντες, “devoting.”²⁰ This textual problem, unfortunately, obscures the very heart of the matter for our purposes. The text is clear that the purpose of the sacrifice to Kronos is to cope with disaster - war, plague, and drought. And there is no mention of fire or any other specifics of “consecration” or ritual, as in the Biblical texts. But the translators clearly struggle to sort out whether (a) the sacrifice of τῶν φιλάτων τινὰ “one of the most beloved” refers to a beloved child, or an adult who is valuable or “dear” to the community, (b) the sacrifice is to be made by every Phoenician family, or as a single sacrifice on behalf of all the Phoenicians.

Though Porphyry makes other references to Phoenicians in the context of death (specifically as human sacrifice), these references will be examined below, since they are not attributed to a Late Bronze - Iron Age I source text.

c. Eusebius of Caesarea

The *Praeparatio Evangelica* (“Preparation for the Gospel”) serves as a kind of introduction to a second of Eusebius’ polemical works, *Demonstratio Evangelica* (“Demonstration of the Gospel”); the two seem to have been composed simultaneously by Eusebius of Caesarea between 313 -324 CE, and constitute a “single apologetic-polemical enterprise.”²¹ *Praeparatio Evangelica* consists of fifteen books, while the *Demonstratio Evangelica* contains another twenty books, together perhaps “the longest apologetic work on

¹⁹ According to the manuscripts; Bouffartigue and Patillon 1977, Clark 2000.

²⁰ An emendation suggested by Lobek and printed by Nauck 1886. Mosca 1975 uses Nauck’s edition of the text, but mis-transcribes ἐπιφημίζοντες (Mosca 1975, 34, n. 51). The Budé editors (Bouffartigue and Patillon 1977) leave out most of Nauck’s textual emendations, but all who used Nauck’s edition of the text between 1886 and 1977 would have seen this emendation.

²¹ Kofsky 2000, 74.

Christianity written in antiquity.”²² The audience for the work seems to be those familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures who also regard them as prophetic oracles or holy texts – new Christians of Gentile origin, sympathetic pagans, and the like. The purpose of the work is thus to offer a respectful critique of both Greek and Jewish practices, in order to show the superiority of Christianity as both philosophy and faith:

From a polemical standpoint, the overall structure of the *PE* [*Praeparatio Evangelica*] and the *DE* [*Demonstratio Evangelica*], taken as a single work, is roughly in the form of a reply to three major arguments against Christianity. The argument that Christians had abandoned the religion of their ancestors serves as the basis for the description and examination of these ancient traditions. The argument that they preferred the barbaric Hebrew religion creates a framework for the investigation of the ‘Hebrew’ beliefs, and a comparison with pagan concepts. The argument that the Christians appropriated Jewish scripture but rejected and deviated from their mode of life and worship, serves as the basis for a positive description of Christianity and for Eusebius’ theory of Christian history.

With this in mind, Eusebius builds the *Praeparatio Evangelica* around the texts he wishes to refute and critique – quotations account for approximately 71% of the work,²³ not counting the passages in which Eusebius summarizes an author’s words without quoting him.

Of the “pagan” (i.e. Greek²⁴) authors, those most frequently quoted are Plato and Porphyry; the former is Eusebius’ clear favorite and an exception to the general rule that Eusebius prefers “contemporary” writers to earlier ones. Eusebius’ relationship to Porphyry is a complicated one; “most scholars of Eusebius view his apologetic and polemical writing primarily as a response to the publication of Porphyry’s book against the Christians [*sic*].”²⁵ In fact, Eusebius is the author of an entire twenty-five-book work *Against Porphyry*, which was written (probably sometime before 300 CE) in direct response to Porphyry’s attack on

²² Kofsky 2000, 75.

²³ Laurin 1954, 358, as quoted in Kofsky 2000, 81.

²⁴ Latin authors are not quoted by Eusebius – it seems his understanding of Latin was minimal; see Kofsky 2000, 83 for further discussion.

²⁵ Kofsky 2000, 17.

Christianity. Like Porphyry's original work *Against the Christians*,²⁶ Eusebius' refutation in *Against Porphyry* is now almost entirely lost.²⁷ In the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Porphyry is quoted in several places (most often from Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* or *Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*), including during Eusebius' discussion of Sanchuniathon (see below).

But the goal of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* may go further than pure religious apologetics; Johnson has argued in his 2006 work that Eusebius is engaged in a kind of "ethnic argumentation" – "the concern to strategically formulate ethnic identities as the basis for an apologetic argument."²⁸ The *Praeparatio Evangelica* includes discussion of the Phoenicians (1.19.19-2.praef.3), Egyptians (2.praef.4-2.1.53), Greeks (1.6.1-1.9.18; 2.1.52-6.11.83; 9.1-15.52-17), and Hebrews (which are distinguished therein from the Jews; 7.2-8.14), all of which contribute to Eusebius' larger purpose – to show that Christians are the true heirs to the Hebrew nation, and that giving up the Greek myths is a rational choice for a pagan convert. His use of the Phoenician material is especially telling:

...there is actually much in common between what Eusebius is attempting to do in the *Praeparatio* and what Philo was attempting to do in the *Phoenician History*. Eusebius positions himself firmly within the euhemeristic approach to interpreting the polytheistic myths. Eusebius, too, claims the true benefactors of civilization to be the ancestors of one particular nation, the Hebrews. On this score, he provides a 'patriotic' narrative that stands in opposition to Hellenism. And lastly, Eusebius frames his argument upon the ancient and reliable sources, so as not to be accused of biased selection and alteration of the 'facts.' Both authors are nationalistic in Oden [1978]'s sense: the *Phoenician History* is pro-Phoenician, while the *Praeparatio* is anti-Phoenician and pro-Hebrew.²⁹

²⁶ The dozens of preserved fragments of *Against the Christians* have been reconstructed by Harnack (1916), who also included almost fifty other fragments from the apologetic work of Macarius of Magnesia. The relevance of these fragments for our understanding of Porphyry continues to be debated, but Harnack's collection remains in use.

²⁷ "The fact that two Greek catalogues mention the manuscript in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might indicate that one day the work will be recovered" (Kofsky 2000, 71).

²⁸ Johnson 2006, vii.

²⁹ Johnson 2006, 67.

Eusebius repeatedly claims that the Greeks borrowed stories from the Phoenicians and Egyptians, appropriating them for their own and in doing so, losing whatever meaning there was in these stories to begin with. Eusebius thereby seeks to “disenfranchise the Greeks from any claims to chronological, technological, or religious and philosophical superiority based on assertions of antiquity.”³⁰ This is an attack on both the character and the truth-claims made by the Greeks, but also an attack on the character of the Phoenicians, seeing (as Eusebius does of each nation he examines) the beliefs of a people as being essential to their nature. He concludes his survey of the history of Philo of Byblos as follows: “Such then is the character [*tropos*] of the theology of the Phoenicians, from which the word of salvation in the gospel teaches us to flee with averted eyes, and earnestly to seek the remedy for this madness of the ancients” (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.10.54).

Eusebius’ work *Praeparatio Evangelica* offers testimony both from Philo of Byblos’ original text (which Eusebius quotes directly) and from some of Porphyry’s own references to Philo’s translation. Eusebius’ discussion of this material can be divided into eight sections:³¹

1. Porphyry on Sanchuniathon
2. Philo on Sanchuniathon (excerpts from the introduction / preface of *The Phoenician History*)
3. The Cosmogony
4. The Discovery of the Essentials of Civilization
5. The Life of Kronos
6. Division of the World and Philo’s Conclusion
7. Child Sacrifice
8. Snakes

All of the references to Philo seem to come from the first book of the *Phoenician History*, but there are some discrepancies in the citations. Porphyry seems to preserve a tradition that says Sanchuniathon comes from Beirut, whereas Eusebius writes that he comes

³⁰ Johnson 2006, 85.

³¹ This division comes from Baumgarten 1981, 38.

from Tyre. And there is a problem with the section on child sacrifice – it is cited twice by Eusebius, once as coming from Philo’s Περὶ Ἰουδαίων (in *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.10.40), and once from the first book of the *Phoenician History* (in *Praeparatio Evangelica* 4.16.11):

***Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.10.40 and 4.16.11
(= Philo of Byblos’ *The Phoenician History* 814:6-10³²)**

Translation by Baumgarten (1981): It was the custom of the ancients, when great dangers befell [them], that, to avoid complete destruction, the rulers of the city or the people **should give over to slaughter the most beloved of their children** [τὸ ἡγαπημένον τῶν τέκνων] **as a ransom to the vengeful daimons** [ἔθρος-αίμοσι]. And those given over were slain [κατεσφάττοντο] with mystic rites [μυστικῶς].³³

Translation by Mosca (1975): In crises of great danger, it was a custom of the ancients that the rulers of a city or nation, to avert the destruction of all, **should give freely the best loved [sing.] of the(ir) children** [τὸ ἡγαπημένον τῶν τέκνων] **in sacrifice as a ransom to the avenging daemons** [ἔθρος-αίμοσι]. Those given up were slaughtered [κατεσφάττοντο] in mystic rites [μυστικῶς].³⁴

This passage (cited twice by Eusebius), seems again to cite sacrifice as a solution to great crises. While it is clear that in this case the victims of the sacrifice had to be children, the children worthy of this sacrifice are specifically described as the “most beloved” of the rulers themselves. This is not the practice of one people to one god, but a custom shared by “the ancients” and made as “a ransom.” Again, no explicit fire-based ritual is described. This passage seems not to strengthen or support either the picture painted by the Biblical texts examined above³⁵ or the inscriptional evidence from the Iron Age I-II periods. Johnson, in fact, concludes that this and other similar passages from Eusebius’ *Praeparatio Evangelica* are completely stereotyped: “the accuracy of these ethnographic reports is, of course, not at issue.

³² These numbers are those given in Baumgarten 1981, and refer to the page and line numbers of the Greek text in FGrH.

³³ Baumgarten 1981, 244 (as 814.6-9).

³⁴ Translation by Mosca 1975, 16.

³⁵ Although 2 Kings 3:21-27 tells the story of a sacrifice of the son of King Mesha of Moab that sounds very similar to the passage in Philo quoted by Eusebius in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* discussed above.

Descriptions of cannibalism (or other strange eating habits), incest (or other ‘unnatural’ sexual practices), and horrifying customs regarding death and dying were common in ancient accounts of unknown or marginalized peoples.”³⁶ Further, the religious agenda of the work again deserves mention:

Eusebius concluded that according to the Greeks and their philosophers, one could not sacrifice any living creature to the gods. Such an act was unholy, unjust, and damaging, to the point of being unclean and impure. This conclusion helps to shape his general approach to the phenomenon of sacrifices, which he views as a diabolical invention on the part of cruel demons identified with the gods of the pagan pantheon. The culmination of this demonic scheme was human sacrifice, which persisted even up to the time of Jesus. Only through him, and the subsequent promulgation of the Gospel of salvation, was mankind redeemed from the rule of demons, and human sacrifice virtually ceased, though they actually continued at least until the reign of Hadrian.³⁷

In Eusebius’ view, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the perfect sacrifice, one which Christians offered daily (in his time) in the sacrament of the Eucharist.³⁸ Thus any discussion of sacrifice in pagan populations or in early time periods is bound to be colored by this teleological view of the development of human worship.

d. Conclusions – Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice and Belief

As already indicated, the Iron Age I-II based references in Greek and Latin sources to Phoenician mortuary practice are limited in scope and value. The only glimpses we get from the sources claiming to preserve ancient testimony from the early Phoenicians themselves show us a complicatedly sparse picture of human sacrifice – no indication of a “typical burial” for any segment of Phoenician society. The references to Sanchuniathon, as a Late Bronze – Iron Age I historian, cannot be taken at face value. There are significant problems with the

³⁶ Johnson 2006, 207.

³⁷ Kofsky 2000, 119-120.

³⁸ Kofsky 2000, 123: “Thus Eusebius refutes the two major arguments concerning sacrifices: that Christians did not offer sacrifices, and that they thereby contradicted their claim to follow the patriarchs.”

name and origin of this figure as reported by the Greek authors and later manuscript traditions, as well as with the likelihood that such an extended narrative history could have been written in Phoenician at so early a date. The transmission history itself is a dubious one, with a 1300 year gap between the alleged Phoenician source and the Greek translator whose aim is to convince his contemporaries of the primacy of Phoenician stories and Greek dependency on (and distortion of) them.

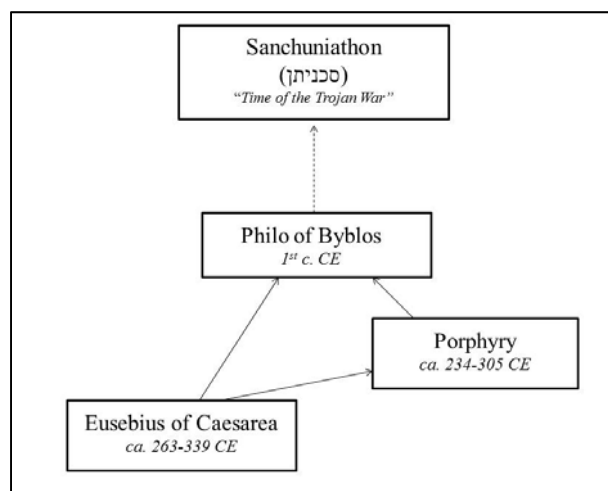


Figure V.1: Transmission History for References Attributed to the Supposed Iron Age I Period “Sanchuniathon” Source (figure created by the author)

Further, Philo of Byblos’ translation of Sanchuniathon’s supposed text owes its preservation and re-interpretation to both the anti-Phoenician Porphyry and the anti-pagan (and anti-Porphyry!) Eusebius of Caesarea, neither of whom may be relied upon to present Philo’s work sympathetically (or even neutrally) in its entirety. Philo’s translation is valuable to both Porphyry and Eusebius precisely as evidence of barbarous customs and outdated modes of thinking and worshipping.

Even if we accepted Philo’s testimony as containing information relevant for a study on Iron I-III Phoenician mortuary practice, one might conclude with Baumgarten that “child

sacrifice, as described by Philo, was practiced by Phoenicians, but this sacrifice – offered, according to Philo, only in response to fairly specific and infrequent crises – must have been relatively rare.”³⁹ But I would argue that Philo’s testimony tells us more about the world of the late 1st – early 2nd centuries CE than about the Iron I-II period Phoenician reality, and that the ethnic, religious, and philosophical agendas of the later writers who preserved Philo’s work must also discount our estimation of their presentation of Philo’s material.

2. Persian - Hellenistic Period Classical Texts

It is perhaps unsurprising that there are far more references in Greek and Latin literature, history, and polemic to what would have been considered “aberrant” Phoenician mortuary practices – child sacrifice in particular – than to general comments on death and dying in the central coastal Levant. In his 1975 Harvard doctoral dissertation under F. M. Cross, Paul Mosca assembled a comprehensive collection of Greek and Latin references to Phoenician child sacrifice, which influenced not only interpretation of the most recent excavations at Carthage,⁴⁰ but also formed the basis of many later summaries of classical evidence for sacrifice in the Phoenician and Punic worlds.⁴¹ In his own words, “Evidence from Graeco-Roman sources may often be hostile, insensitive, laconic, or difficult to evaluate; but the day has not yet arrived that we can dispense with it.”⁴²

³⁹ Baumgarten 1981, 248.

⁴⁰ “Dr. Paul Mosca, staff epigraphist [of the 1976-1979 Stager-led excavations at Carthage] from the University of British Columbia, established many of the intellectual parameters of the project with his treatment of the classical and inscriptional sources in ‘Child Sacrifice in Canaanite and Israelite Religion’ (1975)...” (Stager 1980, 9, under “notes”).

⁴¹ In particular, Susanna Shelby Brown’s 1986 Indiana University doctoral dissertation (with Thomas Jacobsen chairing, and Lawrence Stager sitting as outside reader) adopted the same corpus of text as outlined by Mosca; her 1991 volume “Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context,” is still cited by many studies which address this material (see for example Garnand 2006 and Tatlock 2006).

⁴² Mosca 1975, 1.

By simply assembling the references to Phoenician / Punic child sacrifice in one document, Mosca's contribution to the field was substantial – in many cases he was providing non-Classicists with the first (relatively) widely available English translation of a relevant Greek or Latin passage.⁴³ His dissertation was also one of the first to attempt a synthesis of archaeological, Biblical, epigraphic, and classical evidence for child sacrifice in the Phoenicio-Punic sphere, a major accomplishment and still a valuable resource for those interested in the topic. It is precisely because of the seminal nature of Mosca's work that I address it here as a framework to my own discussion – Mosca's textual analysis remains the primary source (explicit in some cases, implicitly for others) for most discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice in the context of the tophet or infant cremation cemetery produced today.

Here I re-examine the texts Mosca originally collected, and add a few other references not included in his corpus. While Mosca's presentation involved providing a translation and brief discussion of the transmission history of the text, and then collating details that recur through various authors, I hope to offer a more contextualized approach to these fragments and works. Almost no discussion of each work's genre, political or religious agenda, or even the immediate literary context of an excerpted passage was included in Mosca's analysis – features critical to an evaluation of the historical significance of this evidence. In the pages that follow, I will re-examine each of these Greek and Latin textual sources in light of the past forty years of scholarship for information on Phoenician mortuary practice. The sources will be addressed in chronological order, from most ancient to most recent; this brief discussion of each individual Greek or Latin text will be followed by an evaluation of the reliability of these same sources according to each of several criteria (see below).

⁴³ His dissertation was never published, although it is now publically available via Proquest.

a. Sophocles (ca. 497 – 405 BCE)

The earliest reference to human sacrifice typically cited as evidence for “Phoenician-Punic child sacrifice”⁴⁴ comes from a fragment of one of 123 plays attributed to Sophocles,⁴⁵ *Andromeda*, probably written sometime before 430 BCE.⁴⁶ This fragment is preserved only in Hesychius of Alexandria’s “Alphabetical Collection of All Words” (Συναγωγή Πασῶν Λεξέων κατὰ Στοιχείον; end of the 5th century CE). Hesychius’ work itself is preserved in only a single 15th century manuscript (Marc. Gr. 622), and “the Lexicon suffered substantial alterations, including abridgements and additions on its way from the author to the only surviving manuscript.”⁴⁷ Mosca offers the following interpretation of the relevant fragment:

Andromeda fragment 122:

νόμος γάρ ἐστι βαρβάροις θυηπολεῖν
βρότειον ἀρχῆθεν γέρας τῷ Κρονῷ.⁴⁸

For among foreigners, it has been the custom,
from the beginning, to require human sacrifice [θυηπολεῖν βρότειον⁴⁹] to
Kronos.

The fragment has been reconstructed with slight differences in other editions,⁵⁰ as “it is agreed that the text has undergone minor corruption and dislocation.”⁵¹

⁴⁴ Mosca 1975, 2, describing the subject of this passage attributed to Sophocles.

⁴⁵ This number was first given in the Greek text of the *Suda* (Σοῦδα), a 10th century Byzantine encyclopedic lexicon. Only seven of these plays have survived complete.

⁴⁶ An attic calyx-krater (Museo Archeologico regionale AG7) depicts the actor Euiakon as Perseus, thought to indicate a scene from *Andromeda*, has been dated ca. 430 BCE on the basis of the painting style.

⁴⁷ Hansen 1999, “Editing Hesychius Pi-Omega,” www.csad.ox.ac.uk/CSAD/Hesychius/Hansen.html.

⁴⁸ Nauck 1889, no. 122; See also Ellis 1991, 414-415 for discussion of the textual problems – there is a third line, at the beginning, which is especially difficult to read and requires emendation.

⁴⁹ Here the sense is “sacrifice of a mortal/human,” as opposed to the sacrifice of a “man” (ἄνθρωπος) in examples below.

⁵⁰ See Pearson 1917, fr. 126; Leglay 1966, 315 and n. 2.

⁵¹ Mosca 1975, 28, n. 2.

What Mosca does not address in conjunction with this text is the fact that the fragment comes from a tragic play – Sophocles’ adaptation⁵² of the myth of Andromeda. In this story (which a 5th century audience would have already known,⁵³ and which Euripides also adapted and produced in 412 BCE⁵⁴), Andromeda is the daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia, royalty of Αἰθιοπία.⁵⁵ Andromeda’s mother brags that her daughter is more beautiful than the Neirads, daughters of Poseidon. To punish her for her hubris, Poseidon sends a sea monster, Cetus, to attack the coast of Cepheus’ kingdom. After consulting the Oracle of Apollo, the king learns he must sacrifice his own daughter to the monster, by chaining her to a rock at the water’s edge. She is later saved by Perseus, returning from slaying the Gorgon Medusa, and at her death (according to Euripides) she would be placed among the constellations by Athena.

Thus the reference to this ancient custom of the βαρβάροι is not an incidental report or factual detail of a history – it is a necessary premise for the dramatized story of the terrible and tragic customs of a foreign kingdom, distinctly “other” in the eyes of Sophocles’ 5th century BCE Athenian audience. While the setting of the play is an African kingdom, it is clear by the well-known mythical subject of the play that this is not an historical Africa (or even a mythological North Africa), but one of fancy. Child sacrifice was considered appropriate subject matter for tragedy in the 5th century BCE (as Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, Euripides’ *Bacchae*, and other extant tragedies attest) – but it was always associated with a family or

⁵² Thought to have been performed around 450 BCE; Collard and Cropp 2008, 124-125.

⁵³ The subjects of the great Greek tragedies were always drawn from well-known stories, but see Phillips 1968, 1-2 for a genealogy of the Andromeda and Perseus story in vase-paintings, dramas, and historical references (e.g. Herodotus’ genealogical reference to their descendants).

⁵⁴ This play was also lost, but a number of fragments are extant. The play is thought to have begun with Andromeda already chained to the rock, and followed the love story between Perseus and Andromeda after her rescue.

⁵⁵ This term is used twice in Homer’s *Iliad*, three times in the *Odyssey*, and is used by Herodotus to describe all of Sub-Saharan Africa. It might be considered to encompass anything south of Egypt in Africa.

kingdom which suffered heavily as a result of participating in such an act (even when directed by the gods).

This fragment from Sophocles' *Andromeda* should not be taken out of context, even if the only context still accessible to us is the work's genre. It seems clear that among 5th century BCE Greeks, the idea that foreigners (specifically, βαρβάροι or "Barbarian" non-citizens) committed child sacrifice was current and perhaps would even have been considered "common knowledge." But it does not follow that this was based on careful observation or even clear understanding of foreign practices in a particular place.

b. Plato / Pseudo-Plato (4th-3rd centuries BCE)

The *Minos* was included in Aristophanes of Byzantium's list of thirty-five Platonic dialogues in the late 3rd century BCE, although "there is a tendency to date it to the late fourth century on the basis of style."⁵⁶ Its authorship has been debated since the early 19th century; "The main arguments can be summarized thus: the *Minos* is too stylistically crude, philosophically simplistic, and too full of just plain bad argument to be a work of Plato."⁵⁷ Lewis concluded in 2006 that "while modern scholars are largely opposed to Platonic authorship, the weight of tradition is largely on its side, and, for what it is worth, it seems to me that absent strong evidence to the contrary, the tradition deserves the utmost respect."⁵⁸

Regardless of whether this is a work of Plato's or another minor figure from the Socratic tradition, it offers a 4th-3rd centuries BCE legal-philosophical debate which attempts to define "law," and which concludes with a discussion of the legendary Cretan ruler, Minos (also

⁵⁶ Mosca 1975, 28, n. 3.

⁵⁷ Lewis 2006, 17, n. 2.

⁵⁸ Lewis 2006, 18, n.3.

thought to have practiced human sacrifice⁵⁹). Lewis convincingly shows that the structure of this work is cohesive:

The *Minos...* [fulfills its goals] by showing the aspiration of law to truth, while grappling with the obvious fact of diversity in human laws, often thought to count as evidence against natural law. But the dialogue also suggests how that diversity is compatible with an account of the human good as the object of political life and of legislation. Second, the *Minos* highlights, as the context in which law and legal authority must be understood, the concrete origins of law and political authority. This is the purpose of the discussion of Minos in the dialogue.⁶⁰

The fragment of relevance for this study is spoken by Socrates' companion, and is rendered by Mosca as follows:

Minos, 315b-c:

Why, that, Socrates, is no difficult matter to determine – that the same men do not use always the same laws, and also that different men use different ones. With us, for instance, human sacrifice [ἀνθρώπους θύειν] is not legal, but unholy, whereas the Carthaginians [Καρχηδόνιοι] perform it as a thing they account holy [ὅσιον] and legal [νόμιμον], and that too when some of them [ἔνιοι αὐτῶν] sacrifice even their own sons [καὶ τοὺς αὐτῶν υἱεῖς] to Cronos, as I daresay you yourself have heard.⁶¹

But the text goes on to indicate that the companion knows human sacrifice is not confined to the customs of non-Greeks – the Greeks of Lycaea and the descendants of Athamas⁶² are also described as participating in this rite, and Athens itself is noted to have changed its burial laws over time in various ways.⁶³ Lewis wonders:

⁵⁹ At least according to extant fragments of Euripides' lost play *Cretans*, which Lewis argues is most likely the basis for Socrates' companion's view of Minos; Lewis 2006, 42.

⁶⁰ Lewis 2006, 20.

⁶¹ Lamb 1925.

⁶² This reference probably comes from Herodotus (vii.197), who describes human sacrifices offered to atone for Athamas' killing his son Phrixus at Alus (in Achaea), as reported to Xerxes.

⁶³ 315c-d: "And not merely is it foreign peoples who use different laws from ours, but our neighbors in Lycaea and the descendants of Athamas – you know their sacrifices, Greeks though they be. And as to ourselves too, you know, or course, from what you have heard yourself, the kind of laws we formerly used in regard to our dead, when we slaughtered sacred victims before the funeral procession, and engaged urn-women to collect the bones from the ashes. Then again, a yet earlier generation used to bury the dead where they were, in the house: but we do none of these things" (Lamb 1925).

What do these examples mean? Human sacrifice always seems a reminder of the extremes of human savagery and superstition and is usually shrouded in the misty past by most cultures that have practiced it. It is often put forward as evidence of moral relativity.⁶⁴

He answers this question after a long discussion of human sacrifice in the Athenian tragic tradition, and indeed, as practiced by Attic Greeks or legendary heroes themselves:

Socrates' definition of law as "wishing to be the discovery of that which is"⁶⁵ seems to fly in the face of the obvious fact that people use different laws in different places and change their own laws. This is just as true of Athens as it is of any other city. ...While one might see the presence or absence of human sacrifice as a major index of civilization, the purpose behind it – saving the city – is never abandoned or repudiated. Indeed, if one sees human sacrifice for the purpose of saving cities in a wider context (and Attic tragedy did just that), one soon confronts the perennial human fact of war, itself a kind of human sacrifice. Where human sacrifice seems at first to separate some cities from others, it really highlights a way in which all cities are alike: they are a limit, a horizon for human moral life.⁶⁶

While I do not think, as Lewis seems to conclude, that we can generalize that Socrates' and his companion's discussion in the *Minos* assumes that all Carthaginian, Lycaean, and Athamaian sacrifices were accomplished on behalf of their cities to save them from disaster, this does illustrate a case in which we can conclude that it was well known that Carthage,⁶⁷ Lycaea, the family of Athamas, and early Greeks (as part of funeral processions) sacrificed humans as part of their acceptable religious practices. While Socrates' companion sees this as horrific, Socrates seems to argue that these practices result from a failure to understand "reality," but that the rites are basically well intentioned (since they are perceived as both holy and legal).

⁶⁴ Lewis 2006, 30.

⁶⁵ Elsewhere in the *Minos* (316a), Socrates illustrates that even in Carthage and Lycaea, people believe heavier objects weigh more than light ones, and what is "noble" or "shameful" changes only as more information is gathered about what is "real."

⁶⁶ Lewis 2006, 34.

⁶⁷ Mosca (1975, 3) admits "it is difficult to say whether the author is referring to the residents of the city [of Carthage] or to the western Phoenicians in general."

Might this, then, be a relatively sympathetic, and therefore perhaps a reliable testament to the known practice of sacrifice at Carthage – distinct from other cultures which continue to participate in rites of human sacrifice in that “some of them” must sacrifice their own sons? Again, I would argue that while this is another testament to the “common knowledge” among Athenian Greeks that some foreigners (i.e. the “Carthaginians”) and some Greeks (i.e. the Lycaeans and the family of Athamas at Alus) still practiced human sacrifice, this does not necessarily mean the story was based on fact. None of the characters in this philosophical dialogue claims to have witnessed the practice or even cite a reliable traveler or historian as a source; instead Socrates’ companion insists only that these things are known to all – “as I daresay you yourself have heard.”

In fact, Hughes’ source-analysis of the *Minos*’ “list of human sacrifices” illustrates the complicated problem we face with each of these Greek and Latin texts relating to Phoenician mortuary practice:

The author of the dialogue probably knew of the sacrifice to Zeus Lykaios from Plato’s mention in the *Republic* (8, 565d-e), and of the sacrifice of the descendants of Athamas from the confused description of Herodotus (7.197). He may have owed something to Pl. *Leg.* 6, 782c, where Plato wrote that human sacrifice was still practiced by many peoples, but without providing examples. In any case, these brief allusions add very little to our knowledge of the two rites, nor should the use of the present tense be taken as reliable evidence that either ritual was still performed in the second half of the fourth century.⁶⁸

c. Theophrastus (ca. 371-ca. 287 BCE)

Born at Eresos on the south-western coast of Lesbos, Tyrtamos of Eresos (later called Theophrastus) is said to have studied under Alcippus in Eresus and then in Athens as a student

⁶⁸ Hughes 1991, 116.

of Plato's,⁶⁹ becoming the head of the Peripatetic school of philosophy at Athens after the death of Aristotle. A list of Theophrastus' work compiled by Diogenes Laertius (3rd century CE) lists approximately 225 titles, ranging from philosophy to law to botany. Unfortunately, all of Theophrastus' works are now lost to us, and our only knowledge of his writings comes to us in fragmentary quotations and summaries from subsequent Greek and Latin scholars.

One place in which quotations of Theophrastus are preserved is in the exegetical scholia to the poems of Pindar (ca. 522-443 BCE) composed by the Greek scholar and grammarian Didymus Chalcenterus⁷⁰ (ca. 63 BCE – 10 CE). While Didymus' main contribution was as a compiler of his historian predecessors' work, in some places he also attempted to offer his own explanations, and evaluate the claims of those he quoted and compiled.⁷¹ Thus the surviving texts of the scholia to Pindar have extremely complicated composition and transmission histories:

The exegetical scholia to Pindar are more numerous than the metrical scholia and have an equally impressive pedigree, since they preserve the remains of commentaries by Aristarchus and several of his successors, incorporated into a comprehensive work by Didymus and then epitomized in the second century AD. Like the old metrical scholia, they are virtually free of late interpolations, so that almost any piece of information found in them can be assumed to come from the Alexandrians (though not necessarily without abridgement and alteration). These scholia attempt to explain the difficulties of the *Odes* and offer an interpretation of the poet's meaning. In doing so they invoke historical, biographical, and mythological data, some of which appear to derive from accurate transmission of information going back to Pindar's own time,

⁶⁹ Fortenbaugh et al. 1992, 1.

⁷⁰ Literally "brass-guts," referring to how long and hard Didymus worked, and his resulting prolificacy; "the author of between 3500 and 4000 books, it is hardly surprising that he was sometimes called *Bibliolathes*, 'Book-Forgetter'" (Russell 1948, 431). The number 3500 comes from Athenaeus (4.139); the count of 4000 is given by Seneca (*Letters* 88).

⁷¹ As early as 1931, Deas argued that "It would appear, then, that the common view of Didymus as merely a compiler must, so far as Pindar is concerned, be somewhat modified. These citations from historians reveal fresh contributions of his to the commentary, and contributions of no little value; and that such evidence should appear within the limited number of definite citations of Didymus's name gives reasonable ground for believing that he introduced a fair amount of new matter" (Deas 1931, 23).

though parts seem to be simply Alexandrian conjecture based on the poems themselves.⁷²

Theophrastus is quoted alongside Homer, Euripides, and others in the commentary to the *Pythian Odes*, a series of victory odes composed for the Panhellenic festival at Delphi (called the Pythian or Delphic Games). The second of these odes (“Pythian 2,” written in Aeolic meter) was thought to have been composed sometime between 477 – 468 BCE in honor of Hieron of Syracuse, and various arguments have been put forth to describe the circumstances which inspired its creation.⁷³ In the scholia to the second Pythian Ode, Theophrastus is quoted as the source for the story of Gelon (ca. 540-478 BCE), tyrant of Syracuse from 485-478 BCE (immediately preceding Hieron, subject of the Ode). Gelon famously defeated a Carthaginian army that tried to invade Sicily at Himera in 480 BCE, and is mentioned as being the impetus for the cessation of the practice of human sacrifice at Carthage:

Scholia to Pindar’s *Pythian Odes 2.2*⁷⁴ (Fortenbaugh 1992, no. 586):

τὸ γοῦν ἀνθρωποθυτεῖν φησὶν ὁ θεόφραστος ἐν τῷ περὶ Τυρρηνῶν⁷⁵ παύσασθαι
αὐτοὺς Γέλωνος προστάξαντος.⁷⁶

At least Theophrastus in his [work] *On Etruscans* says that on Gelon’s order they [i.e. the Carthaginians] stopped performing human sacrifice.⁷⁷

This is the only extant reference to a work called *On Etruscans*. The crux of the reference – that Gelon ordered the Carthaginians to stop sacrificing humans – is later repeated by Plutarch

⁷² Dickey 2007, 39.

⁷³ For a review of the various earlier arguments put forth, see Gantz 1978 or Carey 1981, 21-23. Dickey and Hamilton write: “Pythian 2 celebrates a chariot victory of Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse. It is not known which victory is praised, and indeed the poem may not have been written for a specific victory, or the race may have been part of Olympian or Theban, rather than Pythian, games” (1991, 29).

⁷⁴ The citations of this text are especially variable. Mosca (1975) cites “Scholia to *Pyth. 2.2*,” but the use of the Latin title “*Scholia in Pindarum*” or abbreviations like “Theophr. Ap. Schol. Pi. *P. 2.2*” are also prevalent.

⁷⁵ This ethnos is sometimes rendered Tyrseni, Tyrrheni, Etruri, or Tusci but refers to a group inhabiting the southern coast of Italy.

⁷⁶ Greek text from Drachmann 1910.

⁷⁷ Fortenbaugh et al. 1992, vol. 2, no. 586. The work *On Etruscans* has not survived, and is not otherwise known; Podlecki 1985, 249, n. 95.

(*Moralia* 175a, 552a), attributed to Darius by Pompeius Trogus (via Justin; *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum* 19.1.10), and attributed to Iphikrates (or Hadrian?) by Porphyry (*Abstinentia* 2.56.3⁷⁸). Prag interprets this scene as significant because the stereotype of the generically barbaric Carthaginians is altered:

Here we perhaps see the first signs of a portrayal of the Carthaginians that goes beyond the basic ‘othering’ of the term barbarian, more than merely an external foe, an enemy which can be presented as morally inferior.⁷⁹

In other words, this story is one of the “civilizing” of Carthage – not because of, but in spite of, the Carthaginians own moral inclinations. As the later authors who pick up this vignette and tell its story with a different hero illustrate, the important detail is that the Carthaginians were transformed from barbarians to being a part of “Hellas” as the result of intervention by a Greek agent.

Most of our knowledge of the second text of interest attributed to Theophrastus, namely *Περὶ εὐσεβείας* or *De pietate*, comes to us through quotations in the work of Porphyry (234-304 CE; see below) and Eusebius (263-339 CE). Porphyry’s interest in Theophrastus particularly concerns his work on the history of sacrifice to the gods – “Porphyry quotes or paraphrases with approval Theophrastus’ view that animal sacrifice is neither the original nor the most appropriate form in which to acknowledge and honor the gods.”⁸⁰ The following fragment compares the killing or sacrifice of murderers to the “well-known” examples of human sacrifice at Carthage and Arcadia.

⁷⁸ See Hughes 1991, 129 for discussion of Porphyry’s claim, which is textually problematic.

⁷⁹ Prag 2010, 57-58.

⁸⁰ Browning Cole 1992, 52.

Fragment from Περὶ εὐσεβείας or *De pietate* (Pötscher fragment 13.22-26⁸¹; *On Piety* fragment

584a FHSG; Porphyry, *Abstinence* 2.27.2):

And from then up to the present day they perform human sacrifices [ἀνθρωποθυτοῦσιν] with the participation of all, not only in Arcadia during the Lykaia and in Carthage to Kronos, but also periodically, in remembrance of the customary usage, they spill the blood of their own kin on the altars, even though the divine law among them bars from the rites, by means of the *perirrhantēria* [περιρραντηρίοις] and the herald's proclamation, anyone responsible for the shedding of blood in peacetime.⁸²

This listing of the Carthaginian sacrifice in conjunction with that of the Greeks of Lykaia recalls the discussion in the *Minos*, addressed above.

...in the fourth century, the author of the pseudo-Platonic *Minos* (315b-c) and Theophrastus (fr. 13.22-6 Pötscher) refer briefly to the sacrifice on Mt Lykaion, both citing it as an example of human sacrifice still practiced in Greece in their own day.... It is likely that the source for both writers was the passage in the *Republic* [of Plato].... Hence these brief references cannot be considered secure evidence that the sacrifices were being performed in the second half of the fourth century, and they add little to our knowledge of the ritual, other than the detail that the sacrifice was performed during the festival of the Lykaia.⁸³

Hughes' treatment of this mention of a human sacrifice on Mt. Lykaion is instructive. After an extensive survey and analysis of the sources for this ritual, he concludes:

It should be noted that these rites are better attested than any other Greek ritual involving the sacrifice of human victims; in fact, with a few negligible exceptions, this is the only 'historical' human sacrifice for which we have more than one authority. We have at least one contemporary reference to the ceremony (Pl. *Resp.* 8, 565d-e⁸⁴); and Plato and Theophrastus must be considered relatively reliable witnesses.... On the other hand, the multiple attestation [*sic*] may be deceptive: Plato may have been the sole source for Theophrastus and the author of the *Minos*; Pausanias, Pliny, and Augustine seem to have known of

⁸¹ Porphyry's *De abstinence* 2.26-28, 4, which is in turn quoted by Eusebius in *Praeparatio evangelica* 4.16.10.

⁸² Reading ἀρθμίον for ἀρθμείον of the MSS; Bouffartigue and Patillon 1977-79, Vol. 2, 217, n. 2.

⁸³ Hughes 1991, 97.

⁸⁴ From the Shorey 1969 translation of Plato's *Res Publica* or *Republic* (available at www.perseus.tufts.edu): [565d]... "What, then, is the starting-point of the transformation of a protector into a tyrant? Is it not obviously when the protector's acts begin to reproduce the legend that is told of the shrine of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia?" "What is that?" he said. "The story goes that he who tastes of the one bit of human entrails minced up with those of other victims [565e] is inevitably transformed into a wolf. Have you not heard the tale?" "I have."

the human sacrifices only in connection with the story of Damarchus; and quite possibly this story was Plato's source of information also.⁸⁵

While Plato's *Republic* does not mention Carthaginians in the context of the Lycaean / Lykaian human sacrifices, the discussion of this practice in a section on tyranny may well have brought Carthage to mind for Theophrastus or the author of Pseudo-Plato.

d. Cleitarchus / Clitarchus / Kleitarchos (late 4th - early 3rd century BCE)

Cleitarchus was one of the Greek historians of Alexander the Great (although “unlike the other chief historians of Alexander, [Cleitarchus] did not take part in the events he described”⁸⁶), about whom little is known. He is thought to have done his writing in Alexandria, with the help of eye-witness accounts of Alexander's exploits as well as accounts from Greek and Macedonian mercenaries. His writings are now completely lost, aside from thirty-six extant fragments preserved or summarized in Strabo (64 BCE – ca. 24 CE), Aelian (ca. 175 - ca. 235 CE), and other authors. His only attested work is his *History of Alexander*, consisting of twelve or more volumes. Baynham writes that “...discerning (although divided) ancient critical opinion suggest an author who, despite his literary ambitions, had a tendency for the rhetorical, colorful, and bizarre.”⁸⁷ He is accused by later authors of exaggerating Alexander's vices, sacrificing historical accuracy for rhetorical effect, and emphasizing the role of *Tyche* or fortune in his version of Alexander's campaigns.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, the three extant references to Cleitarchus' views on Carthaginian child sacrifice are all summaries of an unknown text, and date more than 1000 years after Cleitarchus is thought to have lived and written.

⁸⁵ Hughes 1991, 104.

⁸⁶ Heckel in Yardley 1984, 5.

⁸⁷ Baynham 1998 (2001), 78-79.

⁸⁸ Heckel in Yardley 1984, 6.

Cleitarchus is referenced in entries on Σαρδάνιος γέλως, “Sardonic laughter,” in two Byzantine lexicons. The 9th century CE lexicon of Photius (also “Fotios” or “Photios”), survives in only three manuscripts, dating to the 13th-14th centuries CE.⁸⁹ Photius I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, lived from ca. 810 – ca. 893, although the lexicon may well have been completed by his students. The entry on Σαρδάνιος γέλως reads as follows:

Lexicon of Photius (*Lexicon synagoge*), s.v. Σαρδάνιος γέλως.⁹⁰

καί φασιν ἄλλοι τε καὶ Κλείταρχος, ἐν Καρχηδόνι ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις εὐχαῖς παῖδα ταῖς χερσὶ τοῦ Κρόνου ἐπιτιθέντας (ἴδρυται δὲ χαλκοῦς, προβεβλημένης ἔχων τὰς χεῖρας ὑφ' ᾧ κρίβανος), ἔπειτα ὑποκαίειν: τὸν δὲ συνελκόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς δοκεῖν γελᾶν.⁹¹

Mosca's translation: And others, including Kleitarchos, say that at Carthage, when it is a question of important prayers [or “vows”; μεγάλαις εὐχαῖς], they place a child upon the hands of Kronos – there is a bronze statue, with its hands outstretched, under which lies a brazier – and then light the fire from below. The body, contracted by the (heat of the) fire, seems to be laughing.⁹²

Whitehead's translation: And Clitarchus and others say that in Carthage, during great prayers, they place a boy in the hands of Cronus (a bronze statue is set up, with outstretched hands, and under it a baking oven), and then put fire under; the boy shrunk by the fire seems to laugh.⁹³

Notably, the adjective that would normally indicate the topographical or ethnic term

“Sardinian,” which seems to be the basis for this etiological story, is usually “Sardonios” in

⁸⁹ a) The defective *Codex Galeanus*, ca. 1200, currently held by the library of Trinity College, Cambridge; b) A 13th-14th century manuscript from the monastery of Zavorda (*Codex Zavordensis* 95) consisting of 406 leaves, written on bombycin in two columns (this is the only complete manuscript of the text); c) In Berlin, the ms. Berolinensis graec. oct. 22, a 13th century parchment ms. of 111 leaves, mostly of miscellaneous contents. After World War II, the manuscript ended up in Krakow at the Jagellonen University Library. See Dickey 2007, 101ff.

⁹⁰ Naber 1865.

⁹¹ Greek text from Whitehead et al. 2000-2013 (http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=sardanio&field=any&num_per_page=100). Entry last vetted by Whitehead on 16 August 2012.

⁹² Translation from Mosca 1975, 23.

⁹³ Translation from Whitehead et al. 2000-2013 (http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=sardanio&field=any&num_per_page=100). Entry last vetted by Whitehead on 16 August 2012.

Greek, not “Sardanios.” The link between this adjective and the Carthaginians being described is not made explicitly, but the story attributed to Cleitarchus (and unnamed “others”) offers a gruesome and vivid picture of the connection between the Phoenician or Punic west and a brutal form of human sacrifice in the minds of the Greeks.

The 10th century CE Suda (or Souda) lexicon also includes an entry for “sardonic laughter.” This encyclopedic exploration of the derivation and meaning of approximately 30,000 Greek words, formerly attributed (in error) to an author called Suidas, is now thought to draw its name from the Byzantine Greek word *souda*, “fortress / stronghold.” It represents a relatively uncritical compilation of earlier sources, leading many to conclude that “the *Suda* is notoriously unreliable....”⁹⁴ Because of the large variety of sources and length of the articles, as well as its anonymous authorship, the best approach may be to treat the veracity of each article independently, recognizing the complicated nature of this important source.

In particular, the relationship between Photius’ Lexicon and the *Suda* has long been debated, but “the latest evidence suggests that the compiler of the *Suda* simply drew directly on Photius’ work.”⁹⁵ The *Suda* therefore does not seem to offer an independent witness to Cleitarchus; the text of the relevant portion of the entry on “sardonic laughter” is exactly the same as that of Photius’ Lexicon:

Suidae Lexicon, s.v. Σαρδάνιος [or Σαρδόνιος] γέλως;⁹⁶

καί φασιν ἄλλοι τε καὶ Κλειτάρχος, ἐν Καρχηδόνι ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις εὐχαῖς παῖδα
ταῖς χερσὶ τοῦ Κρόνου ἐπιτιθέντας (ἴδρυται δὲ χαλκοῦς, προβεβλημένας ἔχων

⁹⁴ House 1980, 231.

⁹⁵ Dickey 2007

⁹⁶ Adler 1935; FGrH, vol. 2b, 745, no. 137, fragment 9.

τὰς χεῖρας ὑφ' ᾧ κρίβανος), ἔπειτα ὑποκαίειν: τὸν δὲ συνελκόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς δοκεῖν γελᾶν.⁹⁷

Though the *Suda* is often mentioned as a reliable source for this fragment of Cleitarchus' work (often to the exclusion of Photius' Lexicon), Photius' Lexicon seems to be the original source for the anonymous author of the *Suda*. How reliably Photius (or the preserved manuscripts of Photius' lexicon, dating three hundred fifty or more years later) represents the views of Cleitarchus cannot be known.

Often cited as the authoritative version of Cleitarchus' description of child sacrifice, one of the scholia to Plato's *Republic* (337a) references the 4th-3rd century BCE Greek author. However, all five of the Platonic manuscripts whose scholia are of importance date to the 9th – 13th centuries CE, and they differ in both the passages on which they comment and the nature of the commentary they offer.⁹⁸ In 337a of Plato's text, the phrase “ἀνεκάγχασέ τε μάλα Σαρδάνιον” is used; one anonymous commentator (preserved in manuscript A) draws on Cleitarchus to elaborate on the adjective Σαρδάνιον.⁹⁹ This single manuscript is thought to preserve a 9th century copy of the Platonic text with scholia and marginalia, as well as the supplements of “two later scribes, probably of the tenth or eleventh century.”¹⁰⁰ The scholia text in question is reproduced here:

⁹⁷ Greek text and translation from Whitehead et al. 2000-2013 (http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=sardanios&field=any&num_per_page=100). Entry last vetted by Whitehead on 16 August 2012.

⁹⁸ The five manuscripts are Bodleianus (Clarkianus) B, Venetus (Marcianus) T, Vindobonensis W, Parisinus A, and Vaticanus O. Several indicate multiple hands editing the manuscripts over time. T, W, and A attest scholia to 337a in the *Republic*. See Greene 1937 for details on the various manuscripts and their contents.

⁹⁹ Three manuscripts (T, W, and A) include scholia to 337a. “...there are two scholia, one of which T preserves (with W for the most part agreeing), while A preserves the other, and is in close agreement for the most part with Photius” (Greene 1937, 190).

¹⁰⁰ Greene 1937, 186.

Scholia to Plato's *Republic*, I 337a:¹⁰¹

Κλείταρχος δέ φησι τοὺς Φοίνικας, καὶ μάλιστα Καρχηδονίους, τὸν Κρόνον τιμῶντας, ἐπὶ τινος μεγάλου κατατυχεῖν σπεύδωσιν, εὐχεσθαι καθ' ἑνὸς τῶν παίδων, εἰ περιγένοιτο τῶν ἐπιθυμηθέντων, καθαγιεῖν αὐτὸν τῷ θεῷ. τοῦ δὲ Κρόνου χαλκοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐστῶτος, τὰς χεῖρας ὑπὲρ ἐκτετακός ὑπὲρ κριβάνου χαλκοῦ, τοῦτον ἐκκαίειν τὸ παιδίον. τῆς δὲ φλογὸς τοῦ ἐκκαιομένου πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ἐπιπτώσης, συνέλκεσθαι τε τὰ μέλη, καὶ τὸ στόμα σεσηρὸς φαίνεσθαι τοῖς γελῶσι παραπλησίως, ἕως ἂν συσπασθὲν εἰς τὸν κριβανὸν παρολίσθῃ.¹⁰²

Kleitarchos says that, out of reverence for Kronos, the Phoenicians, and especially the Carthaginians, whenever they seek to obtain some great favor, vow one of their children [εὐχεσθαι καθ' ἑνὸς τῶν παίδων], burning it as a sacrifice to the deity, if they are especially eager to gain success. There stands in their midst a bronze statue of Kronos, its hands extended over a bronze brazier, the flames of which engulf the child. When the flames fall upon the body, the limbs contract and the open mouth seems almost to be laughing, until the contracted (body) slips quietly into the brazier. Thus it is that the 'grin' [σεσηρὸς¹⁰³] is known as 'sardonic laughter,' since they die laughing.¹⁰⁴

Not attested by the other two manuscripts which comment on Plato's 337a (namely manuscripts T and W), Greene concludes: "What we seem to have, therefore, is a case in which TW preserve the scholium vetus, while in A it has been crowded out by a note drawn from Photius. Moreover there are many cases in which T (often with W agreeing) reports a scholium correctly, while A reports it either erroneously or not at all."¹⁰⁵ Although appearing to be an independent source for Cleitarchus' comments, it appears likely that this Platonic scholium from the 9th-11th centuries CE simply restates information known from Photius' lexicon – either citing a more detailed entry than that preserved by the extant manuscripts of Photius, or elaborating upon Photius' entry.

¹⁰¹ FGrH, vol. 2b, 745, no. 137, fragment 9.

¹⁰² Bekker 1824, vol. 9, 68.

¹⁰³ The Greek participle σεσηρῶς refers to "grinning" or "sneering," as opposed to laughter.

¹⁰⁴ Translation from Mosca 1975, 22

¹⁰⁵ Greene 1937, 186.

Interestingly, Mosca himself discards the representation of Cleitarchus' testimony put forth in these lexica and scholia as unreliable, based on this story's lack of consistency with other, post-Cleitarchian attestations of this ritual of human sacrifice:

Assuming that these later traditions accurately reflect his views, Kleitarchos apparently believed that the victims were burnt alive. In view of the extensive evidence to the contrary, this is highly improbable.... Diodorus, Philo, and possibly Plutarch speak specifically of the slaughtering of victims; Justin Martyr and Porphyry mention libations of blood; Silius and others emphasize the bloody nature of the rite. In short, the burning alive of the infant victims seems to have been the product of Kleitarchos' (or another's?) 'sardonic' imagination.¹⁰⁶

A final point of discussion involves Cleitarchus' stated connection between the Carthaginian rite of human sacrifice and prayers or vows (εὐχαῖς, εὐχεσθαι). Mosca and others after him have argued this might be the earliest testament to the vows which seem to be indicated in the language of the stela inscriptions from Carthage, Motya, and elsewhere, although the idea of the vow is not attested by many other classical sources.

e. Ennius (ca. 239-169 BCE)

Born at Rudiae in Italy, Quintus Ennius authored his most famous work, the *Annales*, late in his career. The work is an historical epic poem (in fact, the first Latin work to adopt dactylic hexameter) in fifteen books (later expanded to eighteen), covering Roman history from the fall of Troy in 1184 BCE¹⁰⁷ to the censorship of Cato the Elder in 184 BCE. About 600 lines of this work are extant; the fragment discussed below is preserved in a work of the 2nd century CE scholar Pompeius Festus.

The fragment identified by Mosca may belong in the context of Agathocles of Syracuse's war with Carthage in 310 BCE, although others have suggested it might refer to an

¹⁰⁶ Mosca 1975, 23.

¹⁰⁷ See above, Chapter II. This date was first determined by Eratosthenes, ca. 276 BCE – ca. 195 BCE.

incident in the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE).¹⁰⁸ *Poeni* is therefore often translated as “Carthaginians,” and serves as the etymological source of the English adjective “Punic.”

Annales 7, fragment 237:

*Poeni suos soliti dis sacrificare puellos.*¹⁰⁹

Carthaginians accustomed to sacrifice their own little boys (sons) to the gods.

No more of the poem is preserved in this fragment. Aside from being unable to ascertain with surety which historical event is being referenced in this fragment of the poem, the genre of the work should also be considered. The dactylic hexameter of the Latin verse, along with the epic scope of the history being recounted, would have affected word choice (*dis* instead of a god’s name; the diminutive *puellos* in place of *pueri*) in a passage like this one.

f. Cicero (106-43 BCE)

Born in Arpinum about 100 km southeast of Rome, Cicero became arguably the most influential Roman author of the period of the Republic. Declared a “righteous pagan” by the early Catholic Church, a great number of his works were recopied or quoted and therefore preserved. *De re publica* or “On the Republic,” probably written between 54-51 BCE, was reconstructed from these scattered fragments into its original six books.¹¹⁰ It takes the form of a dialog in which Scipio Africanus Minor (a Roman general and politician who lived ca. 185-129 BCE) speaks with eight different scholars and politicians, set at Scipio’s estate over the course of three days.

¹⁰⁸ Mosca calls this suggestion “less likely” (1975, 28, n. 4).

¹⁰⁹ Warmington 1935.

¹¹⁰ Although large pieces of the text, especially from the 4th and 5th books, are missing.

Book three, most of interest for our purposes, discusses political and legal justice (including different kinds of possible constitutions). In this book, Cicero reproduces some of the arguments of Carneades (ca. 214 – 129 BCE), an Academic philosopher, in the character of L. Furius Philus.

De re publica 3.9.15:

How many peoples, such as the Taurians on the shores of the Euxine, the Egyptian king Busiris, the Gauls, and the Carthaginians [*Poeni*], have believed human sacrifice [*homines immolare*] both pious [*pium*] and most pleasing [*gratissimum*] to the immortal gods [*dis*]¹¹¹

The passage goes on to offer examples of those peoples who view robbery and conquest as honorable, and to describe how even Athenians, “the most equitable of all nations,” forbid certain peoples from cultivating certain agricultural products – “You see, then, that wisdom and policy are not always the same as equity.”¹¹² Once more we find a reference to human sacrifice in the context of legal, religious, and cultural relativity. But here the culprits are the inhabitants of the southern Crimea (Taurica), a mythical Egyptian king, the Gauls,¹¹³ and the *Poeni*, again often interpreted as inhabitants of Carthage or other western Phoenician colonies. At least two of these references are legendary – the reference to the Taurians may well evoke Euripides’ tragic play Ἰφιγένεια ἐν Αὐλίδι (“Iphigenia in Aulis” or “Iphigeneia among the Taurians”), or the story of Agamemnon’s decision to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia as his Greek fleet awaits departure for the Trojan War at Aulis, Boeotia.¹¹⁴ Gaul and

¹¹¹ Keyes 1928.

¹¹² *De re publica* 3.9.16: *ut intellegatis discrepare ab aequitate sapientiam.*

¹¹³ The Latin equivalent of “Celt;” inhabitants of modern day Western Europe (thought to encompass modern France, Luxembourg, Belgium, most of Switzerland, the western portion of northern Italy, parts of the Netherlands and much of the west bank of the Rhine in Germany). For a discussion of their particular “othered” characterization (specifically in terms of their religious practices) in Greek and Roman sources, see Rives 1995, 77.

¹¹⁴ Herodotus also describes the Taurians: “they sacrifice to the Maiden both shipwrecked men and whatever Greeks they take when they put out to sea against them” (4.103.1), around twenty years before Euripides’ play. But the popularity of Euripides’ play “Iphigeneia among the Taurians” would have been the more likely conduit for the story’s spread – Pacuvius adapted it and produced a popular version in Rome, and it is illustrated in wall

Carthage will occur frequently together in this context, as we will see in later Greek and Latin texts.

Rives argues that:

Arguments like those presented in the *Minos* and *De Re Publica* invited the audience to abstract the practice of human sacrifice from the moral context of their own culture, and see it simply as a sign of difference. Their effectiveness depended on the very fact that the meaning of human sacrifice as a marker of barbarism was so well known.¹¹⁵

Cicero further generalizes the rite as a category – *homines immolare* – and so implies that “men” are sacrificed (i.e. not children), or at least that this is the significant feature of the problematic rights. Mosca makes much of the reference in Cicero, in conjunction with that in the writings of Ennius, as reinforcing the details offered by the *Minos*, discussed above:

...they... serve to reconfirm a number of points. The *pium* and *gratissimum* of Cicero echo the ὅσιον and νόμιμον of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue [of the *Minos*], thus reinforcing the aura of sanctity attached to child sacrifice. Similarly, Ennius’ *suos...puellos* recalls the Greek τοὺς αὐτῶν υἱεῖς. Neither author mentions Saturn (i.e., Kronos-Baal Hamon) explicitly, but this is understandable. The general character of Cicero’s remarks does not require it, while Ennius no doubt preferred the vaguer *dis* for metrical reasons.¹¹⁶

But the fact remains that the two references do not reinforce the details of *one another*, and represent two very different genres of Latin writing.

g. Diodorus of Sicily / Diodorus Siculus (ca. 90-30 BCE; wrote ca.60-30 BCE)

Writing in Sicily, Alexandria, and Rome, Diodorus of Sicily authored a universal history of the world (*Bibliotheca historica* or “Library of History”) in which each *ethnos* would be represented by its own works (1.9.4), ultimately showing that the Greeks held primacy with

paintings from Pompeii (Rives 1995, 67). Tertullian, in his own examples of human sacrificers, dismisses the story as untrue for the same reasons I suggest: “I leave the Taurian tales to the theaters where they belong” (*Apol.* 9.5).

¹¹⁵ Rives 1995, 69.

¹¹⁶ Mosca 1975, 4.

regard to the most important pillars of civilization, before the various barbarian peoples who held similar claims. He devotes three books of his 40¹¹⁷ to barbarian histories, and focuses for the rest on Greek and Roman interactions.

The first relevant passage comes from a section (books 7-17) which discuss the history of the world from the Trojan War to the death of Alexander the Great. Book 13 is devoted to the Sicilian Expedition and Ionian War (415-405 BCE; two major parts of the Peloponnesian War). The fragment quoted by Mosca refers to the Carthaginian siege of Acragas (or Agrigento), a city on the southern coast of Sicily, in 406 BCE.

Bibliotheca historica 13.86.3:

Himilcar, on seeing how the throng was beset with superstitious fear [δεισιδαίμονοῦντα], first of all put a stop to the destruction of the monuments, and then he supplicated the gods after the custom of his people [τὸ κάτριον ἔθος] by sacrificing [σφαγιάσας, lit. “cutting the throat”] a child [παῖδα] to Cronus...¹¹⁸

But this sentence’s immediate context involves much more of interest to our study of Phoenician mortuary practice. The passage immediately preceding 13.86.3 (i.e. 13.86.1-3), as well as the conclusion of 13.86.3 reads:

Hannibal [Mago, commander of a Carthaginian army sent to Sicily], being eager to launch assaults in an increasing number of places, ordered the soldiers to tear down the monuments and tombs and to build mounds extending to the walls. But when these works had been quickly completed because of the united labour of many hands, a deep superstitious fear [δεισιδαίμονοῦντα] fell upon the army. For it happened that the tomb of Theron [tyrant of Acragas, 488-472 BCE], which was exceedingly large, was shaken by a stroke of lightning; consequently, when it was being torn down, certain soothsayers, presaging what might happen, forbade it, and at once a plague broke out in the army, and many died of it while not a few suffered tortures and grievous distress. Among the dead was also Hannibal the general, and among the watch guards who were sent out there were some who reported that in the night spirits of the dead were to be seen.

¹¹⁷ Books 1-5 and 11-20 are the only ones which survive in full; fragments of the others were preserved in the writings of Photius (ca. 810-893 CE) and those of the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-959 CE).

¹¹⁸ Oldfather 1950.

Himilcar, on seeing how the throng was beset with superstitious fear [δεισιδαιμονοῦντα], first of all put a stop to the destruction of the monuments, and then he supplicated the gods after the custom of his people by sacrificing a young boy to Cronus and a multitude of cattle to Poseidon by drowning them in the sea.¹¹⁹

This description of a Carthaginian army on the shores of Sicily is striking for several reasons. First, the sacrifice is two-fold; on the one hand, of a single young boy (to Kronos), and on the other, of several heads of cattle (to Poseidon). Second, the sacrifice is explicitly intended to end a plague – not to save a city or a family, but to rescue an army on foreign shores. Third, the reason for the plague is specified – the destruction and removal of the “monuments and tombs” of the Sicilians whom they wish to defeat in battle. While the use of these grave markers in the building of siege ramps may well have seemed practical to the Carthaginian leadership, the soldiers themselves are twice described as having a “superstitious fear” δεισιδαιμονοῦντα associated with the desecration of the “monuments and tombs” of their enemy – in fact, visible “spirits of the dead” were reported by the night watchmen in the camps.

One wonders about what sources Diodorus Siculus may have had for the late 5th century battlefield report. Although he reports that he was born at Agyrium (or Agira) in Sicily, only around 110 km from the site of the battle, more than three hundred years separates the historian from his subject matter in this scene. Elsewhere in book 13, Diodorus cites the universal history of Ephorus¹²⁰ (ca. 400-330 BCE), an historian from Cyme in Aeolia.

Unfortunately, Ephorus’ work has been lost outside of references in Diodorus, Strabo, Polybius and other authors. While we can be fairly confident that the bulk of the historical narrative

¹¹⁹ Emphasis is mine; Translation of Oldfather (1950) available at www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Diod.+13.86&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0084.

¹²⁰ In fact, Ephorus is said, by Polybius (ca. 200-118 BCE), to have been the first historian to have authored a universal history.

presented in book 13 of Diodorus' work likely came from Ephorus' lost work, we cannot know how much embellishment, alteration, or interpretation was added by Diodorus in the 1st century BCE.

The synchronism of Himera with any of the major battles against Xerxes... serves precisely the function of promoting the action of the Sicilian tyrants against the barbarian Carthaginians to the same level as that of the Athenians or Spartans against the barbarian Persians.... In similar vein, parallels are apparent already in the Herodotean account between the Carthaginian force and Xerxes' expedition; by the time of Ephorus' version, the Carthaginian expedition was explicitly co-ordinated with the Persian invasion, with an embassy sent by Xerxes and the Phoenicians to Carthage to match that of the Hellenes to Gelon; and in Diodorus' version, whether derived from Ephorus, Timaeus, or elsewhere, both of these aspects are expanded further. Ephorus' version even goes so far as to claim that in defeating the Carthaginians the Syracusan tyrant freed not merely the Sikeliotes, but all the Hellenes....¹²¹

The second section of importance comes from the portion of the *Bibliotheca historica* (books 17 – 40) which deals with history of the successors of Alexander to the beginning of the Gallic Wars (58-50 BCE).¹²²

Bibliotheca historica 20.14.1 and 4-7:

[On the siege of Carthage by Agathocles, 310 BCE:] Therefore the Carthaginians, believing that the misfortune had come to them from the gods, betook themselves to every manner of supplication of the divine powers.... They also alleged that Cronus had turned against them inasmuch as in former times they had been accustomed to sacrifice [θύοντες] to this god the noblest of their sons [τῶν υἱῶν τοὺς κρατίστους], but more recently, secretly buying and nurturing children, they had sent these to the sacrifice; and when an investigation was made, some of those who had been sacrificed were discovered to have been supposititious. When they had given thought to these things and saw their enemy encamped before their walls, they were filled with superstitious dread, for they believed that they had neglected the honours of the gods that had been established by their fathers [τὰς κατρίος τῶν θεῶν τιμὰς]. In their zeal to make amends for their omission, they selected two hundred of the noblest children [τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων παίδων] and sacrificed them publicly; and others who were under suspicion sacrificed themselves voluntarily, in number not less than

¹²¹ Turner et al. 2010, 58-59. FGrH 70, fragment 186 (=Epho. ap. Schol. ad Pi. P. 1.146b): “[Gelon] having fought freed not only the Sikeliotai, but all Hellas.”

¹²² Since the ending of the work is missing, it is not clear whether Diodorus finished the historical swath he promised in the beginning of the corpus.

three hundred. There was in their city a bronze image of Cronus, extending its hands, psalm up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereupon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire. It is probable that it was from this that Euripides has drawn the mythical story found in his works about the sacrifices in Tauris, in which he presents Iphigeneia being asked by Orestes:

But what tomb shall receive me when I die?

A sacred fire within, and earth's broad rift.¹²³

Also the story passed down among the Greeks from ancient myth that Cronus did away with his own children appears to have been kept in mind among the Carthaginians through this observance.¹²⁴

Diodorus' source for much of book 20 is most likely Hieronymus of Cardia (a contemporary of Alexander the Great),¹²⁵ an historian from Thrace responsible for a history of the Diadochi and their descendants, from the death of Alexander to the war against Pyrrhus (323-272 BCE). Unfortunately, no significant amount of his work has survived. Diodorus may also be drawing on the work of Duris of Samos (3rd century BCE),¹²⁶ although this is a complicated deduction to make:

The passage in Diodorus XX.14 is very probably taken by him from Duris of Samos in his history of Agathokles, written ca. 280 B.C. But a comparison of this passage with that from Kleitarchos makes it clear that the latter is the remoter source of the description which Diodorus copied; the change of Kleitarchos' κριβανον into a χάσμα πλήρες πυρός is made for the sake of bringing in the quotation from Euripides which follows.¹²⁷

Euripides' lost tragic play, Ἰφιγένεια ἐν Αὐλίδι ("Iphigenia in Aulis" or "Iphigeneia among the Taurians"), is also explicitly referenced in this passage. But since nearly all of Diodorus' possible source texts for this passage are lost to us, we must see what we can do with the details he includes without the benefit of comparanda.

¹²³ This is a quote from Euripides' play *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, l. 625-626.

¹²⁴ Greer 1954; http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/20A*.html#3.

¹²⁵ Lendering, "Diodorus of Sicily," www.livius.org/di-dn/diodorus/siculus.html; Last accessed December 28, 2012.

¹²⁶ Moore 1897, 163 and fn. 7; Norden 1913, 91.

¹²⁷ Moore 1897, 163. Moore thus argues that "Kleitarchos, then, one of the popular biographers of Alexander the Great, who wrote probably ca. 310-300 B.C., is the oldest author to whom we can trace the description of the image of Kronos."

The detail about how many children (and/or adults) were sacrificed in the story as told by Diodorus is difficult to sort out. Does the passage refer to the sacrifice of a total of five hundred individuals? Or is the final number of three hundred given as a kind of total of both selected and voluntary sacrifices? Regardless, it seems clear that the number is meant to be impressive in its size. The nature of the mass sacrifice is certainly prophylactic, intended to persuade the gods to prevent the destruction of Carthage at the hands of an invading army. But the phrases that describe the reasoning behind the extreme measures taken in this story, namely that “in former times they had been accustomed to sacrifice to this god the noblest of their sons,” and later, “they believed that they had neglected the honours of the gods that had been established by their fathers,” indicate that the practice had a long-standing but lapsed history by 310 BCE at Carthage.

Perhaps most memorable from this story is the incredible description of the bronze statue at Carthage:

There was in their city a bronze image of Cronus, extending its hands, psalm up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereupon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire.

This image stirs the imagination. Diodorus seems to have gotten this story from Cleitarchus (perhaps indirectly; see above), although he seems to leave out (?) the detail involving the gruesome curling of the child’s face into what would be called the “Sardonic grin.” The extravagant cruelty of this installation seems designed to horrify. Even those who would accept the bulk of Diodorus’ report tend to down-play the scene he paints at Carthage as more a hyperbolic travelers account than actual monument or idol.

The incredible range of detail in this story, coupled with the plausible reasoning behind such an extreme sacrifice, has made Diodorus’ account the most frequently cited classical

reference on the posited practice of child sacrifice among the Carthaginians. Mosca narrates the logic of the feared transgression of the Carthaginians as follows: “at some point prior to Agathocles’ invasion, the nobles, understandably reluctant to part with their own children, had resorted to the apparently unorthodox practice of substituting children purchased on the sly, presumably from lower-class families or even from household slaves.”¹²⁸ These passages preserved by Diodorus have also long shaped interpretation of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence from Carthage, and are frequently cited in the articles produced by the Punic Project team.¹²⁹ As such, I will return to an analysis of their contribution to the present investigation in the conclusions to this section.

h. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60-after 7 BCE)

A Greek historian who studied for twenty-two years in Rome, Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ great work, *Roman Antiquities*, covered the history of Rome in twenty books,¹³⁰ from legendary times to the beginning of the First Punic War in 264 BCE. His primary concern was to show that the Romans were the rightful heirs and genuine descendants of the ancient Greeks (1.11).

Roman Antiquities 1.38.2:

It is said also that the ancients sacrificed human victims [καὶ τὰς θυσίας ἐπιτελεῖν...τοὺς παλαιούς] to Kronos, as was done at Carthage while that city stood and as is still done to this day among the Gauls and certain other western nations...¹³¹

¹²⁸ Mosca 1975, 6.

¹²⁹ See Stager 1980, Stager 1982, and Stager and Wolff 1984.

¹³⁰ Of these, books 1-9 are extant and complete, books 10-11 are almost entirely complete, and the remaining books exist only in fragments.

¹³¹ Cary 1937.

From Dionysus' perspective, Carthaginian child sacrifice is a practice that ended with the destruction of that city at the end of the Third Punic War in 146 BCE. The grouping of Carthage and Gaul also echoes that presented in Cicero's *De re publica*. While Mosca suggests that "it may be that other Phoenician-Punic centers were among the 'certain other western nations' where the practice of human sacrifice survives 'to this day,'" ¹³² the vagueness of this reference demands we not speculate too far.

i. Pompeius Trogus (1st century BCE)

A Roman historian from the Celtic tribe of the Vocontii in Gallia Narbonensis, Pompeius Trogus' most famous work was a forty-four-book opus called *Historiae Philippicae*, about the history of the Macedonian empire (from the founding of Nineveh to about 9 CE). This work is not preserved in full, but is known through the following sources: an *epitome* of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic History (called *Historiarium Philippicarum libri XLIV*) authored by the Roman historian Justin (3rd or 2nd century CE), ¹³³ in references and citations to the *prologi* (or summaries of each book) in Pliny's (23-79 CE) *Naturalis Historica*; and in other minor fragments quoted by Vopiscus, Jerome, Augustine, and others. Much of our information on Pompeius Trogus' style (especially his *brevitas*) comes from Justin, ¹³⁴ who tells us that "Trogus criticized both Sallust and Livy for their practice – conventional in historiography from Herodotus and Thucydides – of fabricated direct orations." ¹³⁵

¹³² Mosca 1975, 7.

¹³³ This work was hugely popular in the Middle Ages – more than two hundred manuscripts of Justinus are extant. See Ruehl and Seel 1935.

¹³⁴ But note that "It is difficult to gauge the original style of Trogus, since the extant text [preserved by Justin] is anything from a seventh to a mere tenth of the original" (Baynham 1998 [2001], 31).

¹³⁵ Baynham 1998 (2001), 31. She goes on to say: "However, on this issue, Trogus differed vastly from Curtius and every other historian, including Polybius: the obsession with *oratio obliqua* appears to have been unique to Trogus himself."

Both the passages relevant for this study were preserved by Justin, who writes in his preface to the work “*cognitione quaeque dignissima excerpsi*,” “so that in Justinus we have selected statements of Trogius woven into the texture of a new narrative.”¹³⁶

Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum 18.6.11-12.¹³⁷

When amongst other misfortunes the Carthaginians were beset by a plague, they resorted to a bloodthirsty and unconscionable form of religious ceremony [*sacrorum religione*]¹³⁸ to avert it – they offered human sacrifice [*quippe homines ut victimas immolabant*] and brought to their altars children [*et inpuberes...aris admovabant*] of an age that arouses pity even in one’s enemies, seeking the indulgence of the gods by shedding the blood of those beings for whose lives the gods are most frequently invoked.¹³⁹

The passage here refers to the rite of human (or child) sacrifice by the Carthaginians as a response to plague or “other ills” – not to recurring rituals or an ongoing practice. The reference to, on the one hand “immolating human beings” and on the other “bringing children to the altars” may be two different practices, or one practice described in terms of first its general parameters, and then its special cases or particular features.

Though this story follows on the heels of the legendary tale of Elissa (or Dido), it seems it was included for explanatory purposes – not as a simple historical episode, but as a justification for the negative change in the fortunes of Carthage. Just before these lines, in 18.6.10, Trogius/Justin writes “While the valour of Carthage in warfare was much acclaimed,

¹³⁶ Steele 1915, 417-418. In 1994, Develin echoed this sentiment: “There is a widespread assumption – and it is usually taken for granted – that where Justin has long, continuous passages, these are lifted almost word for word from the text of Trogius. Thus, of course, is convenient for those who wish to study Trogius, but it is poorly grounded.... There is nothing in this [Justin’s preface] which asserts that his excerpts were taken *verbatim* from Trogius rather than reworked by himself” (Develin in Yardley 1994, 5).

¹³⁷ Seel 1972 (1935).

¹³⁸ Yardley sees the phrase “*sacrorum religione*” as a “seemingly exclusive Ciceronian phrase” (citing *Dom.* 36, *Flac.* 69, *Agr.* 2.18, and cf. also *Ver.* 2.1.7, 2.2.127), (Yardley 2003, 85). However, “the problem is that Justin also clearly knew the work of Cicero. This is what we would naturally expect of anyone who had, as Justin clearly did, a rhetoric-based education...” (Yardley 2003, 79).

¹³⁹ Translation from Yardley 1994, 158.

her domestic stability was riven by dissensions of various kinds.”¹⁴⁰ After the discussion of child sacrifice at Carthage, the history goes on to moralize as follows: “Such iniquitous behavior turned the gods against the Carthaginians,”¹⁴¹ (18.7.1). The narrative continues with a discussion of the 6th century BCE fortunes of Carthage during the Punic Wars. Although Mosca takes this passage as “apparently agreeing with Sophocles’ opinion that child sacrifice took place at Carthage ‘from the beginning,’”¹⁴² it seems likely to me that the placement of the story is expegetical, not purely historical in nature.

The second passage of interest comes from this same historical narrative. The Latin line translated and included Mosca (1975, 7) is indicated in bold, with the subsequent line (quite relevant for our purposes) has been added for context:

Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum 19.1.10-11:¹⁴³

Meanwhile, ambassadors came to Carthage from Darius [ca. 550-486 BCE], king of Persia, bearing an edict. The Carthaginians were forbidden to make human sacrifices or to eat the flesh of dogs [*Poeni humanas hostias immolare et canina vesci prohibebantur*]. Moreover, they were told by the king to burn rather than bury the bodies of their dead.¹⁴⁴

For this latter passage, Trogus’ primary source seems to have been Timaeus (ca. 345-ca. 250 BCE),¹⁴⁵ a Greek author of an approximately forty-book work *The Histories*, now lost (though Timaeus was also cited by Cicero, Diodorus of Sicily, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch, among others). The story of the edict of Darius has been heavily discussed by scholars who debate the veracity of the report since no other record of such an edict (in the Achaemenid period) exists. Mosca took the passage seriously:

¹⁴⁰ Translation from Yardley 1994, 158.

¹⁴¹ Translation from Yardley 1994, 159.

¹⁴² Mosca 1975, 7.

¹⁴³ Seel 1972 (1935).

¹⁴⁴ Translation from Yardley 1994, 161.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. De Sanctus 1916, 74, n. 205 and Pace 1935, 228, n.1; as cited in Mosca 1975, 29, n. 10.

The edict itself represents the earliest recorded attempt of some foreign ruler, perhaps understandably appalled by such sacrifices, to intervene in Carthaginian religious life. The motif will recur in other authors, though its accuracy is always impossible to verify. According to Eduard Norden, the whole Darius passage is ‘wahrscheinlich apokryph.’¹⁴⁶ He may well be correct in this assessment, but some historical basis for the story need not be excluded a priori.¹⁴⁷

Other scholars have seen in this report a mis-recording of another foreign ruler’s decree, perhaps one issued by Gelon (d. 478 BCE), ruler of Gela and Syracuse.¹⁴⁸ As far as I know, the reference to the eating of dog-meat is a unique accusation against the Carthaginians among Greek and Latin authors.¹⁴⁹

Regardless, verse 11 of Book 19, chapter 1, is an addendum worthy of our attention. Even if this anomalous description of Darius’ edict is based on some contemporary or accurate source, verse 11 gives evidence that regular burial of the dead (and perhaps of the human sacrifices as well, although this is not specified) was, at the time of Darius, accomplished by means of inhumation. Darius, in this edict, instructs the Carthaginians to change this practice and to begin cremating or burning their dead instead. This passage evinces no knowledge of cremation practices already in use in Carthage, an account which seems at least tangentially at odds with other Greek and Latin authors’ stories of the immolation of victims of Carthaginian human sacrifice.

It does seem clear that even for Pompeius Trogus, writing in the 1st century BCE, the practice of child sacrifice among the Carthaginians took place in the past, in response to calamity, but was frequent or well-known enough to have drawn the attention and censure of

¹⁴⁶ Norden 1913, 90, n. 3; See also De Sanctus 1916, 74, n. 205.

¹⁴⁷ Mosca 1975, 7-8.

¹⁴⁸ See for example Turner et al. 2010, 57-58.

¹⁴⁹ Although Sextus Empiricus (discussed below) writes in *Pyrrhōseis Hypotyposes* that “Eating dog’s flesh, too, is thought by us to be sinful, but some other Thracians are reported to be dog-eaters. Possibly this practice was customary also amongst the Greeks; and on this account Diocles, too, starting from the practices of the Asclepiadae, prescribes that hounds’ flesh should be given to certain patients” (3.225; Bury 1933 translation).

a foreign (but still more “civilized” than the Carthaginians) political leader. How much of any of the associated details is Trogus’ own reporting, as opposed to an adaptation, mis-interpretation, or mis-remembering of one of his sources (or, on the other hand, an alteration, emendation, or adaptation of Trogus’ work by Justin,¹⁵⁰ writing in the late 2nd or early 3rd century CE) is impossible to know.

j. Quintus Curtius Rufus (mid- to late 1st century CE)

“If the work of Quintus Curtius Rufus ever contained any definite statements in regard to the writer and the time at which he wrote, these must have been in the first two books which have been lost;”¹⁵¹ dating Curtius Rufus’ work has therefore been undertaken on the basis of references made in his writings to historical events (e.g. the Parthians), and his seeming dependence upon other Latin writers.¹⁵² While most scholars now agree that Curtius must have lived during the middle-late 1st century CE, more precise consensus surrounding the authorship of his individual works has not yet been reached.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Yardley used the Packard Humanities Institute database to search all Roman authors down to 200 CE for specific turns of phrase, and concludes: “I believe the results indicate, *inter alia*, that there is more of Justin in the work than is often supposed, that Trogus was enormously influenced by his contemporary Livy, and that the *Epitome* is probably to be dated to about 200 AD” (Yardley 2003, 5).

¹⁵¹ Steele 1915, 402.

¹⁵² In 1915, Steele notes passages or descriptions which match examples from Livy, Vergil, Horace, Velleius (Valerius Maximus), Lucan, Seneca, Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* (“There are a few statements common to Pliny N.H. and the work of Curtius,” Steele 1915, 416), Tacitus, Pompeius Trogus (Justinus; “The extent to which Curtius may have drawn from Pompeius Trogus is an insoluble problem,” Steele 1915, 417), and Orosius – which necessarily represent both authors on whom Curtius Rufus drew. Although Steele left open the possibility that some of these may have been using Quintus Curtius’ work, rather than being used by him, later generations of scholars would decide that despite the Medieval popularity of Curtius’ work, he was not used as a cited source in antiquity: “With the possible exception of Hegesippus, no one shows any signs of having known or used Curtius’ history until the Middle Ages” (Heckel in Yardley 1984, 1). In 1998 Baynham would argue that “no ancient commentator, critic, or historian refers to Curtius’ work,” (Baynham 1998). Certainly no ancient author explicitly quotes Quintus Curtius or names him as their source.

¹⁵³ “A survey of modern scholarship on Curtius’ date from, for example, 1959 to 1995 leaves one with an impression comparable to viewing an Escher drawing. The same internal evidence is assessed and reworked, and the same problems are approached from angles ranging from close linguistic analysis of the text to examination of the external evidence offered by the legends of imperial coins” (Baynham 1998[2001], 7).

The most famous of Quintus Curtius' works is a history of Alexander the Great in ten books, only eight of which have survived (with some missing passages). In the extant books, the life of Alexander is narrated from the year 333 BCE to his death in 323 BCE. Already by the end of the 19th century, Quintus Curtius' historical methodology was known to more that of a compiler than of a critical assessor of sources. In 1896, Humphreys analyzed the work's faults and strengths as follows:

It must be granted that Curtius is far from being a model historian. He did not always have recourse to the most trustworthy authorities in the compilation of his History; he accepted, without much critical discernment, a good deal of fable, which he gravely restates as fact; his descriptions of battles are inaccurate; his geography is faulty; and his chronology is somewhat careless. But, nevertheless, his historical work has many excellent qualities. Chief among them is his unquestionable good faith. He invents nothing, he conceals nothing; and he states nothing as fact but what he found already stated in his Greek authorities.¹⁵⁴

Still, Quintus Curtius' account of the siege of Tyre is frequently cited in conjunction with the purported Phoenician origin of the Carthaginian practice of child sacrifice. The relevant passage comes in a discussion of the reactions of the inhabitants of Tyre as they anticipate the disastrous impending effects of Alexander the Great's siege tactics in 332 BCE (namely, his building a siege ramp to the island on which Tyre was located, connecting it to the mainland in the manner it stands today). A list of tactics to avoid or mitigate the consequences of the conquest of Tyre are discussed, including sending wives and children to Carthage, and binding a cultic statue of Apollo to the altar of Hercules ("supposing the god would hold Apollo back," 4.3.22). The passage of present interest follows in this list, as if to emphasize the desperation of the Tyrians in the last moments before Alexander's military victory.

History of Alexander 4.3.23:

¹⁵⁴ Humphreys 1896, xii-xiv.

*Sacrum quoque, quod equidem dis minime cordi esse crediderim, multis saeculis intermissum repetendi auctores quidam erant, ut ingenuus puer Saturno immolaretur: quod sacrilegium verius quam sacrum Carthaginienses a conditoribus traditum usque ad excidium urbis suae fecisse dicuntur. Ac nisi seniores obstitissent, quorum consilio cuncta agebantur, humanitatem dira superstitio vicisset.*¹⁵⁵

Some also advocated the revival of a religious rite which had been discontinued for many generations and which I certainly would not have thought to be at all acceptable to the gods – namely the sacrifice of a free-born male child to Saturn. (Such sacrilege – to use a more appropriate word than sacrifice – the Carthaginians inherited from their founders, and they are said to have continued the practice right down to the time of their city’s destruction.) Had it not been vetoed by the elders, whose judgment carried weight in all matters, cruel superstition would have triumphed over civilized behaviour.¹⁵⁶

This passage is noteworthy as it is the first reference in the extant classical sources to the practice of child sacrifice by the inhabitants of mainland Phoenicia, as opposed to at Carthage. The sacrificial practice is clearly under consideration by the Tyrians because of the impending conquest and possible destruction of their island city at the hands of Alexander the Great. It is said to have been not only out of use for “many generations” by the time of the siege in 332 BCE, and is rejected by the elders of Tyre as a solution to their current troubles. Further, this is the first (and only) text to explicitly specify that the Carthaginians received the practice “from their founders,” i.e., these very mainland Phoenicians in centuries past.

The features of the ritual as here described are, perhaps, unexpected. A single “free-born” boy is mentioned, and no specifications are made as to who should offer the child or in what manner he is to be sacrificed to Saturn. In fact, in a previous passage of the *History of Alexander*, Quintus Curtius writes that the Tyrians had already:

handed over their wives and children for evacuation to Carthage [with the thirty ambassadors from Carthage who arrived during the siege¹⁵⁷], being ready

¹⁵⁵ Latin available online at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Curtius/4*.html.

¹⁵⁶ Translation from Yardley 2004.

¹⁵⁷ 4.3.19-20: “Thirty ambassadors from Carthage happened to arrive during this period, more to encourage the besieged than to help them – for the Carthaginians, they announced to the Tyrians, were handicapped by a war at

to face whatever might happen with increased fortitude if they had the most precious part of their community removed from the common peril.¹⁵⁸ (4.3.20)

The fact that some of the city's children had already been evacuated reinforces the fact that the city was not considering a large-scale sacrifice of noble children (and we can infer that it was not the Carthaginians themselves who recommended the sacrifice). The ongoing nature of the sacrifice as described by Carthage is quite vague, as well. It is asserted that the ritual was followed only until the destruction of that city (in 146 BCE). The derogatory note about this practice being a "sacrilege rather than a sacrifice" in the eyes of the Roman author will appear again in the writings of Orosius (below).

Finally, it is worth remarking on the fact that Curtius seems to be setting up a sustained comparison between Alexander and Darius throughout his history, emphasizing the strength, leadership, and moral superiority of the former over the latter. It seems clear that Curtius shaped his sources to emphasize this contrast.¹⁵⁹ Curtius uses the incident with the Tyrians to show both how difficult was the task of conquering the island, and how great the cunning and persistence of Alexander was. His mercy is also highlighted – he killed none of the Tyrians who had taken refuge in the temples at the conquest of the island (4.4.13-14) – although it is weighed against the bold and brutal punishment offered to those who would resist him.¹⁶⁰

home and were fighting not for power but simply for survival. The Syracusans were even then putting the torch to the crops in Africa, and had made camp not far from the walls of Carthage" (translation from Yardley 1984, 58).

¹⁵⁸ Translation from Yardley 1984, 58.

¹⁵⁹ Baynham 1998 (2001), 132: "Alexander is the superior king because he is the man of *vis* (force, whereas Darius is portrayed as a weak figure. Alexander is young, Darius a more mature man. Alexander is the better *dux* on the battlefield against Darius. He is also the better politician and diplomat, which is illustrated in his treatment of his own officers and staff, as well as in his correspondence with the Great King in book 4. Initially, he is the better character morally – a model of self-restraint, dignity, and excellence. Darius, although not without some merit as a strategist, cannot hold his army together, and worse, he twice proves himself, very publicly, to be a coward. In his relationship with his followers, he is at times vain and arrogant, forgetful of sound advice or the considerations of loyalty, and prey to luxurious living and *superbia*."

¹⁶⁰ 4.4.17-18: "It was a sad spectacle that the furious king then provided for the victors: 2,000 Tyrians, who had survived the rage of the tiring Macedonians, now hung nailed to crosses all along the huge expanse of the beach.

In fact, both Curtius and Diodorus of Sicily (17.64.4) mention the murder of 2000 Tyrians in punishment. “A comparison of the texts of Curtius and Diodorus’ seventeenth book reveals that, for much of their narratives, these authors followed the same primary source, and that source was long ago recognized as Cleitarchus,”¹⁶¹ who is mentioned by Curtius explicitly at 9.5.21 and 9.8.15. But in light of this shared source, it is even more significant that Diodorus does not mention the Tyrians considering child sacrifice (though he discusses sacrifice at Carthage in two other places). This may be because Diodorus, in covering more historical ground, was forced to truncate certain details of the narrative available to him,¹⁶² which (in the case of the beliefs of the citizens of Tyre), Curtius included or added to.¹⁶³ However, both Curtius and Diodorus discuss, in an immediately subsequent episode, the appearance of a sea-creature which (in the words of Quintus Curtius) “came to rest its huge body on the mole [i.e. siege ramp leading to the island of Tyre] which the Macedonians had laid. Both sides caught sight of it as it parted the water and raised itself up. Then it submerged once more at the head of the mole...”¹⁶⁴ (4.4.3). The episode is colorful, but not crucial to the story of the siege of Tyre. And it is not only Diodorus who shows no indication of having heard Curtius’ story of the Tyrians’ consideration of child sacrifice; Arrian, considered the “most reliable” of the Alexander historians by modern scholars who emphasize his consistent citation of his sources and his use of eyewitness accounts (i.e. Ptolemy and Aristobulus), also does not mention the

The Carthaginian ambassadors Alexander spared, but he subjoined a formal declaration of war (a war which the pressures of the moment postponed)” (translation from Yardley 1984, 61).

¹⁶¹ Heckel in Yardley 1984, 6.

¹⁶² Heckel writes that Diodorus reduced Cleitarchus to about “one-tenth the original” (Heckel in Yardley 1984, 7). On another story involving Diodorus’ and Curtius’ account of Alexander’s assault on an Indian fortress (probably taken by both historians from Cleitarchus), Baynham writes: “My feeling is that Diodorus has simply compacted his account, omitting much of the additional detail that Curtius supplies...” (Baynham 1998 [2001], 77).

¹⁶³ “Curtius... kept closer to Cleitarchus and added information from his own experience and other sources” (Heckel in Yardley 1984, 7).

¹⁶⁴ Translation from Yardley 1984, 59.

incident.¹⁶⁵ It is possible that the story was an invention of Curtius', inserted into the narrative for rhetorical flourish, or that the episode came from a source not reproduced by any other extant author. There is simply not enough evidence to know for certain.

k. Pliny the Elder (23 – 79 CE)

Gaius Plinius Secundus was born at Como, in Italy, and died trying to save friends from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that subsumed Pompeii. During his lifetime, he produced an elaborate work in thirty-seven books called the *Naturalis Historia*, which would become a model for encyclopedias in later periods. Pliny seems to have published the first ten books of the work himself, in 77 CE, but died two years later. After his death the remainder of his work was published by his nephew, Pliny the younger.

The goal of the work was to compile all knowledge thus far established with any connection to the natural world. He included *indices auctorum*, which in some cases (but not all; “Pliny’s carelessness in his use of sources is well known”¹⁶⁶) include the Greek and Latin sources for his material. In particular, Pliny is known to have heavily relied upon Herodotus, Thucydides, Theophrastus, and the *Bibliotheca historica* of Diodorus of Sicily. The passage relevant for our purposes falls in a section on marble sculpture.

Naturalis Historia 36.4.39:

[In a discussion of marble statues in Rome:] A work that is not without honor and stands in no temple is the Hercules before which the Carthaginians [*Poeni*¹⁶⁷] were wont to perform human sacrifices every year [*omnibus annis humana sacrificaverant victima*]. This stands at ground-level in front of the entrance to the Portico of the Nations.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Baynham 1998 (2001), 67. We might expect it in Book 2, 18-24; perhaps especially in the context of Alexander’s sacrifice to Tyrian Herakles in 2.24.6, which marks the end of the conquest of Tyre.

¹⁶⁶ Mosca 1975, 30, n. 17; citing Rackham 1938, ix and Eichholz 1970.

¹⁶⁷ This term can actually be used to refer to any Phoenician-Punic peoples in the Mediterranean world.

¹⁶⁸ Eichholz 1962.

The sacrifice made by the *Poeni* as mentioned here, is an annual one of a plural but otherwise unspecified number of victims (also of unspecified age). But there are problems with Pliny's comment – in all the previous examples examined the sacrifice was reported to be intended for Saturn or Kronos. Mosca explores this difficulty as a misidentification of either the statue or the story Pliny associates with it:

...the fact that this is the first and only time that Hercules-Melqart is directly associated with child (or at least human) sacrifice must raise some doubt in our minds. Therefore, two other possibilities should be considered. The first is that the Roman tradition which identified Pliny's statue as Hercules was mistaken and that it was in fact Kronos-Baal Hamon. The second, and more likely, possibility is that the identification of the marble statue is correct, but that Pliny, perhaps thinking of Diodorus' description of the famous bronze statue, has carelessly conflated two distinct traditions.¹⁶⁹

In either event, this is the only mention made in Pliny's work of such a practice. This may not be entirely surprising, given Pliny's goal was not to document the variety of human behavior, but that of the natural world and human knowledge associated with it.

1. Silius Italicus (ca. 28 – 103 CE)

Though his birthplace is unknown, Tiberius Catius Asconius Silius Italicus was a renowned Roman poet by the time he committed suicide in keeping with the philosophical teachings of Stoicism, starving himself to death sometime after the age of seventy-five. His only surviving work is the longest extant poem in Latin (at over 12,000 lines of dactylic hexameter), a seventeen book work called *Punica*, comprising an epic poem about the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE).

Punica 4.765-822:

¹⁶⁹ Mosca 1975, 10.

The nations which Dido founded when she landed in Libya were accustomed to appease the gods by human sacrifice and to offer up their young children [*parvos imponere natos*] – horrible to tell – upon fiery altars [*flagrantibus aris*]. Each year the lot was cast and the tragedy was repeated, recalling the sacrifice offered to Diana in the kingdom of Thoas [*Thoanteae*, i.e. Tauris]. And now [as envoys arrive from Carthage] Hanno, the ancient enemy of Hannibal, demanded the general's son, as the customary victim to suffer this doom according to the lot....

[Hannibal's wife Imilce urges resistance to their demands:]
 "...Meanwhile your first-born and only son [*prima domus atque unica proles*] is seized, alas, in the heart of his native country, for a hellish sacrifice.... Go ye to the temples and pray for things lawful, and offer incense, but eschew bloody and cruel rites. Be content with this, I pray you – to see cattle [*iuuencos*] slaughtered before the altar...." [When the envoys hesitate, the decision is left to Hannibal, who asks how he can repay Carthage's generosity:] "...I shall fight on, night and day, and many a high-born [*generosa*] victim from the people of Quirinus shall I send from this place to your temples. But the child must be spared, to carry on my career in arms.... To you also I call, gods of my country, whose shrines are propitiated with bloodshed, and who rejoice in a tribute that strikes terror to mothers' hearts, turn hither joyful looks and your whole hearts; for I am preparing a sacrifice and building for your mightier altars..."¹⁷⁰

This story is entirely unique to Silius' poem.¹⁷¹ Nowhere else is attested the practice of selecting a victim for the sacrifice by lot at Carthage,¹⁷² and the story involving Hannibal seems fully apocryphal. Mosca notes that the "overriding dramatic purpose of the incident, climaxing in Hannibal's rather histrionic reference to the Roman victims of the approaching battle, is obvious."¹⁷³ The genre of the work (as epic poetry) may well have encouraged Silius to create this story of the transmutation of a barbaric rite into a noble Roman practice.

But it is just this seemingly fluid combination of certain historical details and personages with entirely fabricated speeches, flourishes, and practices that makes

¹⁷⁰ Duff 1934.

¹⁷¹ Even Mosca concludes, "the best argument against the veracity of this incident lies in its uniqueness to Silius" (Mosca 1975, 12).

¹⁷² "...Silius mentions that the traditional victims were selected by lot: *urna...annua* (1.768), *sortique* (1.770), *sorte cruenta* (1.801); although unsubstantiated, this method of selection is certainly plausible. On the other hand, it is possible that Silius' annual drawing of lots from an urn represents a misunderstanding of the urn's original function" (Mosca 1975, 13).

¹⁷³ Mosca 1975, 12.

disentangling the Greek and Latin sources so consternating. Silius' story about Hannibal at Carthage reads like a plausible, if rather romanticized, story to the modern historian; in fact it sounds more reasonable than many of the other accounts of larger-than-life statues and fiery pits. We would do well to remember the subtle interweaving of fact in fiction provided by Silius' example, agreed by most to be his own creation.

m. Plutarch (ca. 46-120 CE)

Plutarch was born in Chaeronea, Boeotia, a town about twenty miles E of Delphi, and he served for many years as one of two priests at the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Many dialogues based on his conversations with guests from all over the empire were recorded during his lifetime, and the seventy-eight essays and transcribed speeches which now survive are known collectively as the *Moralia*.¹⁷⁴ Child sacrifice in the Punic world is mentioned in three of these essays, i.e. *De sera numinis vindicta* ("On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance"), *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* ("Sayings of Kings and Commanders"), and *De Superstitione* ("On Superstition"). The first two of these essays relay the same detail about Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse from 485-478 BCE, and his involvement in the cessation of child sacrifice at Carthage:

De sera numinis vindicta 522 a:

...Gelon was furthermore a stout champion of his country, and after defeating the Carthaginians in a great battle refused their suit for peace until he had added to the treaty the provision that they should no longer sacrifice their children to Cronus [ὅτι παύσονται τὰ τέκνα τῷ Κρόνῳ καταθύοντες].¹⁷⁵

Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata 175 a:

Gelon, the despot, after vanquishing the Carthaginians off Himera, forced them, when he made peace with them, to include in the treaty an agreement to stop

¹⁷⁴ Since the 1572 Stephanus edition of these texts, the *Moralia* have been traditionally cited according to their Latin titles, although the text was written in Greek. Stephanus also grouped the seventy-eight texts into fourteen books.

¹⁷⁵ De Lacy and Einarson 1959.

sacrificing their children to Cronos [ὅτι καὶ τὰ τέκνα παύσσονται τῷ Κρόνῳ καταθύοντες].¹⁷⁶

This condition of the peace treaty between Carthage and Gelon is not mentioned in Diodorus' listing of the treaty terms (written between 60 and 30 BCE), and it has been regarded by some as "a rhetorical insertion of later Greek historiographic tradition."¹⁷⁷ But we have already seen a similar story attributed to Theophrastus (ca. 370-ca. 285 BCE) in the scholia to Pindar's *Pythian Odes* 2.2 (compiled by Didymus Chalcenterus, ca. 63 BCE – 10 CE).

De superstitione 171 c-d:

Again, would it not have been far better for the Carthaginians to have taken Critias or Diagoras [famous atheists] to draw up their law-code at the very beginning, and so not to believe in any divine power or god, rather than to offer such sacrifices as they used to offer to Cronus [νομίζεῖν ἢ τοιαῦτα θύειν τῷ Κρόνῳ]? These were not in the manner that Empedocles describes in his attack on those who sacrifice living creatures:

Changed in form is the son beloved of his father so pious,
Who on the altar lays him and slays him. What folly!
No, but with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats [κατέσφαζον¹⁷⁸] as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless; and the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people.¹⁷⁹

Though Mosca points out the similarities between Diodorus' account and this latter reference in Plutarch, he notes the differing levels of apparent legality in the substitution of poor for noble children implied by the two authors (and suggests this may imply the two got their information from independent sources). Still, he concludes that "the two traditions are not necessarily irreconcilable; in fact, the legal substitution known to Plutarch may have suggested

¹⁷⁶ Babbitt 1931.

¹⁷⁷ Mosca 1975, 14; citing Holm 1896, 397.

¹⁷⁸ This term is textually problematic; cf. Guey 1937, 96f.

¹⁷⁹ Babbitt 1928.

to unscrupulous Carthaginian parents the illegal excesses mentioned by Diodorus. In any case, it is noteworthy that class distinctions play a significant role in both types of substitution.”¹⁸⁰

n. Philo of Byblos (64-141 CE)

Though the complicated textual history of Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History* (and its purported origins in the supposed Late Bronze – Iron Age I writings of one Sanchuniathon, a Phoenician priest) were discussed above, it is worth returning to them here in brief. Eusebius (whose *Praeparatio Evangelica* preserves much of Philo’s now extant work) describes Philo as “translating” from Sanchuniathon, but there are several passages quoted by Eusebius which seem especially likely to have originated in Philo’s day. In fact, Baumgarten himself dates all of Philo’s *Phoenician History* to the Hellenistic era,¹⁸¹ and demonstrates the ways in which it is not only colored by the values and concerns of his day, but is archetypal of this age.

The first appearance of child sacrifice in the extant writings of Philo of Byblos may be such an occurrence. This passage deals with Kronos’ own sacrifice of his son to Kronos’ father Ouranos; the characters are conceived almost as legendary heroes from the past, rather than gods:

The Phoenician History 812:6-14

(=Eusebius’ *Praeparatio evangelica* 1.10.40c and 4.16.11d)

But when there was pestilence and death Kronos gives his beloved [μνογονενης¹⁸²] son to Ouranos, his father, as a wholly burned offering. He also circumcises his [own] genitals and forced the allies with him to do the same. And not much later, when another child of his dies – a son of Rhea named Mouth¹⁸³ – he sanctified him, and the Phoenicians call this one Death and Pluto.

¹⁸⁰ Mosca 1975, 15.

¹⁸¹ Oden 1984, 582: “This date is arrived at on the basis of the most general tendencies of the text, rather than through comparing a few names here with names of a similar form from far earlier texts.”

¹⁸² This term can also mean “only”; Baumgarten translates as “beloved,” “since it is clear from both the preceding genealogy and from the following story that Kronos had many sons” (1981, 215, n. 6).

¹⁸³ “The transliteration Mouth reflects the pattern of Hebrew (and Phoenician) מ becoming θ in the Septuagint” (Baumgarten 1981, 223).

Following these [events] Kronos gives the city Byblos to the goddess Baaltis, who is also [called] Dione. And [he gives] Beirut to Poseidon and to the Kabeiroi and Agrotai and Halieis, who consecrated the remains of Pontos in Beirut.¹⁸⁴

The story is complicated, and lacks explication; Ouranos has been killed by Kronos at this point in the mythic story. “That pestilence and death should have been thought to have followed Ouranos’ murder and that the sacrifice was conceived as an atonement are likely, but not stated.¹⁸⁵ The “atonement” for patricide with a sacrifice involving infanticide seems both gruesomely symmetric and distinctly barbaric, or non-Greek. Although this story is not explicitly tied to an ongoing practice or ritual, the implication seems to be that this story is meant to justify or explain the symbolic use of the infant as offering to the gods.

Thus Philo’s telling of this story (as relayed by Eusebius) seems an almost paradigmatic example of euhemerism. The connections to real place names (i.e. Byblos and Beirut) reinforce this sense. But the final mention of the internment of the remains of Pontos at Beirut seems especially curious – an etiological tale for a memorial, practice, or belief now lost to us.

Baumgarten notes that, “It sounds very reminiscent of the myths of Osiris, but the consecrator in the Osiris story is Isis and the locale Byblos. Perhaps a similar tale involving Pontos and Poseidon was told at Beirut, but this is pure conjecture.”¹⁸⁶

Another discussion of ostensibly Phoenician beliefs that seem more fruitfully attributed to Philo’s age can be found in a passage immediately following the passage discussed above (i.e.

¹⁸⁴ Emphasis is mine.

¹⁸⁵ Baumgarten 1981, 222. Baumgarten goes on: “Although Philo does not say so, he probably understood the sacrifice of the child as a substitutionary atonement for Kronos. Rather than Kronos dying for his crime against Ouranos, the child is sacrificed. Kronos’ circumcision and his imposition of this practice on his ‘allies’ is to be similarly understood. By application of *lex talionis* Kronos should suffer castration.”

¹⁸⁶ Baumgarten 1981, 224.

PE 1.10.40 and 4.16.11; Baumgarten 814:6-9), attributed to what Eusebius calls “the first book [out of eight] of Philo’s Phoenician History”¹⁸⁷:

The Phoenician History 814:10-17

Now Kronos – whom the Phoenicians call El and who ruled the land and later, after the end of his life was deified in the star of Kronos had, by a native nymph called Anobret, an only son who was therefore called Ieoud¹⁸⁸ (for an only son is thus called even now by the Phoenicians). When on account of war, the greatest dangers seized the land, he adorned his son as if he were king and, having prepared an altar, sacrificed him.¹⁸⁹

Here again, Kronos/El is described as a legendary king who sacrificed his son – but this time to save his kingdom from war, and without any mention of Ouranos. The two accounts of child sacrifice by the same figure seem conflicting. “Perhaps Philo has combined accounts from two sources on Kronos’ sacrifice of his son, or perhaps one source contained stories of several sacrifices.”¹⁹⁰

In any case, this passage represents another example of Philo’s euhemerism – his inclination to rationalize or historicize Phoenician myth and practice.¹⁹¹ The fact that this passage directly follows the description of “the custom of the ancients [Phoenicians], when great dangers befell [them],” shows the likely progression of Philo’s thought – that the practice of sacrificing a child or children “to avoid complete destruction” had its precedent in an early Phoenician ruler, later deified and still worshipped by Phoenicians living in Philo’s time, in the 1st century CE.

¹⁸⁷ Baumgarten 1981, 244 (813:3-5).

¹⁸⁸ See Baumgarten 1981, 251: “MS. D. [a copy of either MSS. B, I, or O, themselves written in the 13th-15th centuries CE; see FGrH] reads Ieoud, while MS. A [Parisiensis 451, written in 914 CE: “the oldest and best manuscript” (Baumgarten 1981, 7)] reads Iedoud, translations of יחיד and ידד respectively. As Ieoud = יחיד is literally translated by μονογενής (814:13 & 14), it is preferable.”

¹⁸⁹ Emphasis mine; Baumgarten 1981, 245.

¹⁹⁰ Baumgarten 1981, 251.

¹⁹¹ Note that Baumgarten’s 1981 commentary was the first to show that “the text’s euhemerism is not an occasional editorial addition but is rather one of its author’s guiding principles” (Oden 1984, 582).

However, given the euhemeristic approach Philo takes to his history, it is perhaps remarkable to note what is *not* in these accounts. Unlike those summaries of Philo's translation of his supposed source text offered by Porphyry and Eusebius, these more extensively quoted (i.e., by Eusebius) mythological stories about Kronos' sacrifices do not attest to recurring sacrifices as practiced by Phoenician citizens. Even scholars like Baumgarten who accept Philo's testimony as evidence for the actual practice of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians, are obliged to conclude that "this sacrifice – offered, according to Philo, only in response to fairly specific and infrequent crises – must have been relatively rare."¹⁹²

It seems more cautious to conclude that Philo of Byblos, writing in the 1st – 2nd centuries CE, could just as easily been using stories of Kronos to explain beliefs held by his Greek audience about Phoenician religious practices as to explain actual Phoenician religious practices. The separation of accounts of the practice of human sacrifice cannot be so easily made from accounts of the belief in the practice of human sacrifice. Since Philo does not claim (in the extant fragments preserved by Porphyry and Eusebius) to have witnessed such a ritual, nor to testify as to when it supposedly took place, I see little reason to value this account as an independent witness to a Phoenician practice.

o. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165 CE)

The earliest of the Christian writers to discuss child sacrifice in conjunction with Saturn worship was Justin Martyr. Justin was born at Flavia Neapolis (modern Nablus, Palestine), and received a Greek education. He travelled to Rome and began a school,

¹⁹² Baumgarten 1981, 248.

sometime after his conversion to Christianity. After being denounced by the Cynic philosopher Crescens to Rome, he was tried and beheaded for his Christian beliefs.

Only two apologetical Christian works and the “Dialogue with Trypho” survive of his writings, in addition to fragments and titles from many of his others. The First Apology was addressed to his sons, to the Roman Senate, and to the emperor Antoninus Pius; the Second Apology in response to subsequent persecutions under Lollius Urbicus (prefect of Rome), was addressed to the Roman Senate. This latter work dealt directly with a series of propagandistic accusations being made against Christians, and the refutation of these arguments.

In the Second Apology, Justin argues that the Romans “dragged to the torture our [Christians’] domestics, either children or weak women, and by dreadful torments forced them to admit those fabulous actions which they themselves openly perpetrate; about which we are the less concerned, because none of these actions are really ours....”¹⁹³ Justin defends the practices of Christians by accepting the premises of the various accusations leveled against Christians, and showing the logical inconsistencies that result.

Apologia 2.12.5:

For why did we not even publicly profess that these were the things which we esteemed good, and prove that these are the divine philosophy, saying that the mysteries of Saturn [Κρόνιο...μυστήρια] are performed when we slay a man, and that when we drink our fill of the blood, as it is said we do, we are doing what you do before that idol [εἰδώλῳ] you honor, and on which you sprinkle the blood not only of irrational animals [ἄλόγων ζώων], but also of men, making a libation of the blood of the slain by the hand of the most illustrious and noble [ἐπισημοτάτου καὶ ἐυγενεστάτου] men among you?¹⁹⁴

It is clear from this passage that Christians were being accused of both human sacrifice and cannibalism, in the form of “drinking the blood” of the victims of secret religious rites (a

¹⁹³ Roberts and Donaldson 1867.

¹⁹⁴ Roberts and Donaldson 1867.

reference to popular beliefs about the ceremony of the Eucharist). In fact, as we will see, it is “after Justin Martyr [that] child sacrifice becomes a standard theme of the early Christian apologetic tradition.”¹⁹⁵

In this particular passage, no one group is singled out as practitioners of human sacrifice – the point is that it is common knowledge that groups of non-Christians have participated not only in the slaughter of animals, but of men, in the name of their “idols” or false gods. To use these blood libel rites as the justification for the killing and torture of Christian men, women, and children is thus logically inconsistent, according to Justin’s argumentation. If Christian worshippers *were* sacrificing men and drinking their blood, why would they not simply profess to this practice, calling it part of the “mysteries of Kronos” – a well-known and ancient rite or set of practices? The immediate context of this passage indicates that this is perhaps not meant as a wholly serious argument, but as an indirect criticism of the barbarism of even Roman religious practices and myth; Justin goes on to write, tongue-in-cheek: “And imitating Jupiter and the other gods in sodomy and shameless intercourse with woman, might we not bring as our apology the writings of Epicurus and the poets?”¹⁹⁶ Justin’s plea is not about current practitioners of religious sodomy or human sacrifice, but the long-established and diverse tropes of pagan practices. He concludes chapter 12 as follows:

But we are not concerned, since we know that God is a just observer of all. But would that even now someone would mount a lofty rostrum, and shout with a loud voice, ‘Be ashamed, be ashamed, ye who charge the guiltless with those deeds which yourselves openly commit, and ascribe things which apply to

¹⁹⁵ Mosca 1975, 17. He goes on to argue that “As in the passage from Cicero, the reference to the Punic custom has become, in general, a stereotyped commonplace, one of several stock examples used originally by the Sophists to illustrate the relativity of human morals.”

¹⁹⁶ Roberts and Donaldson 1867.

yourselves and to your gods to those who have not even the slightest sympathy with them. Be ye converted; become wise.’¹⁹⁷

Here again, the context of this reference to human sacrifice is essential to weighing its value for a study of Phoenician religious practices. Although Justin attests to the currency of the trope of human (not child) sacrifice in connection to Kronos-worship, this does not indicate a reliable testimony to a recurring historical rite.

p. Tertullian (ca. 150-225 CE)

A native of North Africa, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus spent most of his life at Carthage. He was the first Christian author to produce extensive theological works in the Latin language; thirty-one complete works and many fragments of his authorship are extant, and at least fifteen (in both Latin and Greek) are entirely lost. The three works with which we are concerned include *Ad nationes* (“To the Nations”), *Scorpiace* (“Antidote to Scorpion’s Bite”), and *Apologeticus pro Christianis* (“Apology for the Christians”).

Like Justin, the two books that make up *ad nationes* (written in 197 CE) are intended to refute the accusations and slanders made against the Christians, as justification for their persecution. Tertullian addresses the work to “the nations,” or those whose allegiance is to the Roman state (i.e. non-Christians). The passage of interest for our purposes begins with the rhetorical question, “Do you not, in fact, put faith in your poets, when it is in accordance with their rhapsodies that you have arranged in some instances your very rituals?”¹⁹⁸ A list of practices and their etiological myths then follows, the second of which refers to an unspecified story about the god Saturn’s murder or sacrifice of his own children:

¹⁹⁷ Roberts and Donaldson 1867.

¹⁹⁸ Holmes 1869.

Ad nationes 2.7.15:

*Cur Saturno alieni liberi immolantur, si ille <suis pe>percit?*¹⁹⁹

Why are the children of others [i.e. “strangers” or “foreigners”] sacrificed to Saturn, if it is not because he spared not his own?²⁰⁰

Very little detail is offered here, only the existence of a rite in which foreigners kill their children as offerings to Saturn, because Saturn himself committed infanticide. Tertullian, like Justin, attempts to point out the absurdities inherent in non-Christian religious practices and beliefs by highlighting the most extreme tropes known to his audience: the other listed examples include the rape of a priestess of Ceres and the castration of a man in honor of Cybele.

Tertullian’s most famous work is the *Apologeticus*,²⁰¹ in which he defends Christianity and demands that Christians receive legal toleration under the Roman empire as do other religious sects. This work is thought to have been published in the same year as *Ad nationes* (197 CE); entire paragraphs are shared between the *Apologeticus* and Minucius Felix’ *Octavius* dialog (see below), although it is not known which text preceded the other. The stated audience for Tertullian’s work is the provincial governors of Rome at Carthage, but in reality most of his readers were likely fellow Christians. His concern in this work is to show that Christians pose no danger to the state, and so to continue the refutation of accusations against the Christians.

¹⁹⁹ There is a problem with the manuscript tradition at the end of the line, although the missing words / syllables are not debated.

²⁰⁰ Holmes 1869. Literally the apodosis reads: “if he spared his own;” Holmes here attempts to indicate the negative sense of this conditional, but the result is an archaic-sounding double negative. The other examples in the list all take the same pattern: “How is it that the priestess of Ceres is ravished, if it is not because Ceres suffered a similar outrage?” (Holmes 1869), and so forth.

²⁰¹ Manuscripts, references, and codices give several variations on this title, including *Apologeticum*, *Apologeticum Tertulliani*, *Apologeticum Quinti Tertulliani Explicit*, and others.

In chapters 7-9 of this work, Tertullian addresses charges made against the Christians; what he calls charges “based on rumors.” His logic often moves his defense into accusation – although Christians are innocent of the complaints of incest, adultery, cannibalism, murder, and the like, Tertullian argues that Romans themselves frequently engage in these immoral and illegal acts. It is in this line of argumentation that the passage relevant for our purposes occurs.

Apologeticus pro Christianis 9.2-4

In Africa infants [*infantes penes*] used to be sacrificed [*immolabantur*] to Saturn, and quite openly [*palam usque*], down to the proconsulate of Tiberius, who took the priests themselves and on the trees of their temple [*templi sui*] – the same trees that had overshadowed their crimes [*obumbratricibus scelerem*] – hung them up, like votive offerings, on crosses [*votivis crucibus exposuit*]; and the soldiers of my own country are witness to it, who served that proconsul in that very task. Yes, and to this day that holy crime persists in secret.... Saturn did not spare his own children; so, where other people’s were concerned, he naturally persisted in not sparing them; and their own parents offered them to him [*quidem ipsi parentes sui offerebant*], were glad to respond, and fondled their children that they might not be sacrificed in tears. And between murder [*homicidio*] and sacrifice by parents [*parricidium*] – oh! The difference is great!²⁰²

Tertullian explicitly states that the purpose of listing these examples is to discredit those who would accuse the Christians of sacrificing humans (or babies) as part of their religious rituals:

I will not only refute the charges [about human sacrifice] made against us [as Christians], but also twist them back [*retorquebo*] against the very people who make them.... We will respond to the particular acts which we are said to commit in secret, but which we have found them committing openly. (*Apol.* 4.1-2)

Many of the tropes already seen are put to use in the service of this line of reasoning: the connection to the Saturn story, the emphasis on tears of the victim, and the age of the victim. But in this story, a gruesome punishment and abolishment of the practice by Tiberius is

²⁰² Glover 1931.

described, followed by the note that the ritual nevertheless persists “in secret” to the very time Tertullian is writing. Mosca grapples with this temporal assertion as follows:

Dionysius of Halicarnassus... implied that child sacrifice ended with the destruction of Punic Carthage in 146 B.C.; but it is clear from Tertullian’s remarks that the rite survived into the Christian era, at least in the African countryside. Although an attempt to suppress the practice was made in the ‘proconsulship of Tiberius,’ it continued in secret ‘to this day’ (i.e., ca. 197 A.D.). It is extremely doubtful that Carthage itself, now a *colonia* inhabited by Roman citizens, ever witnessed a resurgence of child sacrifice in imperial times; but we can at least catch a glimpse of the process which led to its elimination in the surrounding areas. Under the pressure of a hostile Roman civilization, it was forced further and further into the hinterland until, probably in the third century A.D., the actual sacrifice of infants finally disappeared completely.²⁰³

The reference is difficult to understand, but Tertullian’s authority as an inhabitant of Roman Africa inclines most scholars to try to give some credence to the statement.

In his *Scorpiace* treatise, Tertullian critiques the Gnostics (in particular, the Valentinians) and their position that martyrdom was not a necessary kind of confession. Written sometime between 203-212 CE, “in Tertullian’s view the behavior of these heretics during the heat of the persecution can be compared with the activity of scorpions in the heat of summer,”²⁰⁴ and his argument is therefore titled with the Latin transcription of the Greek term for the antidote against the scorpion’s bite. In the *Scorpiace* Tertullian would conclude that the only alternatives, under present conditions, are martyrdom and apostasy, although flight might also be legitimate response to persecution.

Chapter 7 culminates in a discussion of non-Christian behaviors held to be lawful, but which are widely considered cruel. Mosca (1975) quotes the following line:

Scorpiace 7.6:

²⁰³ Mosca 1975, 20.

²⁰⁴ Van Winden 1991, 409.

Se denim Scythiarum Dianam aut Gallorum Mercurium aut Afrorum Saturnum hominum victim placari apud saeculum licuit...

But indeed it was once permissible for the Scythians to appease Diana, the Gauls Mercury, and the Africans Saturn, with human victims.

Here again, the topic of human sacrifice at Carthage has become a stock example amongst others like it – a kind of short-hand for the terrible things men are capable of, thinking they are right or good. Despite the implications of the passage from the *Apologeticus*, above, the *Scorpiace* reference places the practice of human sacrifice in North Africa in the past. But the passage continues:

...and in Latium to this day Jupiter has human blood given him to taste in the midst of the city; and no one makes it a matter of discussion, or imagines that it does not occur for some reason, or that it occurs by the will of his God, without having value. If our God, too, to have a sacrifice of His own, had required martyrdoms for Himself, who would have reproached Him for the deadly religion, and the mournful ceremonies, and the altar-pyre, and the undertaker-priest, and not rather have counted happy the man whom God should have devoured?²⁰⁵

Tertullian seems here to imply that martyrdom is a kind of human sacrifice – the sacrifice of the self – and once which, like other instances of human sacrifice, should be valued by all those who witness it. This sacrifice is fitting, in Tertullian’s eyes, precisely because of its similarity to the sacrifice of Christ: “You see how divine Wisdom has murdered even her own proper, first-born and only Son, who is certainly about to live, nay, to bring back the others also into life. I can say with the Wisdom of God; It is Christ who gave Himself up for our offenses.”²⁰⁶

Curiously, it seems Tertullian utilizes the stock examples of human sacrificers (Carthaginians, Gauls, and Scythians) to illustrate how, without understanding, the rituals of others may seem cruel. Just like these people’s sacrifices, Christian martyrdom is not gruesome and pointless,

²⁰⁵ Thelwall 1885.

²⁰⁶ Thelwall 1885.

but a valuable practice of ritual devotion. This strange assertion (and its inherent contradictions) is reinforced by the opening lines of chapter 7:

If the scorpion, swinging his tail in the air, still reproach us with having a murderer for our God, I shall shudder at the altogether foul breath of blasphemy which comes stinking from his heretical mouth; but I will embrace even such a God, with assurance derived from reason, by which reason even He Himself has, in the person of His own Wisdom, by the lips of Solomon, proclaimed Himself to be more than a murderer: Wisdom (*Sophia*), says He has slain her own children.²⁰⁷

Despite the somewhat surprising context of this final mention of human sacrifice in Tertullian's works, it does not add to our knowledge of Carthaginian religious practice in a substantive way.

q. Sextus Empiricus (ca. 160 – 210 CE)

Traditions for this skeptic philosopher's life are varied;²⁰⁸ he has been reported to have lived at Chaeronea in Boetia, Alexandria in Egypt, at Rome, or at Athens.²⁰⁹ His writings constitute the most complete account of ancient Greek and Roman skeptic philosophy still extant. The work of relevance for this study is Πυρρῶννοι οὐποτύψεις (Latin *Pyrrhōseis Hypotyposes*) or "Outlines of Pyrrhonism," the system of skepticism endorsed by Sextus Empiricus. Pyrrhonian skepticism states that judgment about virtually every belief should be suspended; as opposed to Academic skepticism which argues knowledge does not exist at all. Sextus' goal was to attain a state of *ataraxia*, mental imperturbability or peace of mind, in which one acts by habit or instinct instead of living according to beliefs.

²⁰⁷ Thelwall 1885.

²⁰⁸ House comments with knowing irony: "[there is] one undeniable fact on Sextus' life.... Namely, it is necessary to suspend judgment on Sextus' life in almost every detail" (1980, 238).

²⁰⁹ See House 1980 for a summary of the various arguments.

Sextus' remarks in *Pyrrhōseis Hypotyposes* are directed at the Stoics, although not necessarily Stoic philosophers who were his contemporaries,²¹⁰ who believed that all knowledge comes to us through our senses, and that we may know what is “true” based on our reactions to the perceptions we have.²¹¹ Thus “right reason” (λογος) is seen as a kind of “law” which all can follow by living in conformity with necessity or the gods. Although this is a simplification, this brief summary indicates some of what Sextus Empiricus sought to critique in his *Pyrrhōseis Hypotyposes*. The relevant passages are as follows (with sections included in Mosca 1975 bolded):

Pyrrhōseis Hypotyposes 3.208 and 221:

[208] **Moreover, some sacrifice a human victim** [θύουσιν ἄνθρωπόν τινες] **to Cronos, just as the Scythians sacrifice strangers to Artemis;** whereas we deem that holy places are defiled by the slaying of a man....

[221] **To Cronos a human victim is sacrificed** [θύουσιν ἄνθρωπον] **< at Carthage**
>²¹², **although this is regarded by most as an impious act.**²¹³

Sextus' purpose in all of this is to show that “things which are in some cults accounted holy are in others accounted unholy. But this would not have been so if the holy and the unholy existed by nature,” (3.220).²¹⁴ His evidence is designed to show that the dogmatism of the

²¹⁰ “Sextus’ attack is directed against all Dogmatism for all time,” (House 1980, 229); See House 1980 for a detailed discussion of Sextus Empiricus’ audience.

²¹¹ “All knowledge comes through the senses, the mind being a *tabula rasa* upon which sense-impressions are made.... How are we to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy presentations? What is the *Criterion* of truth? Here we come to the most distinctive feature of the Stoic doctrine. The Criterion, they said, is to be found in the subjective reaction of the percipient. If the presentation is true, proceeding from a real object, it wins the ‘assent’ or approbation (συγκατάθεσις) of the percipient: such an ‘apprehensive presentation’ (καταληπτική φαντασία) constitutes the Criterion” (Bury 1933 [1980 printing], xxv).

²¹² Bury’s 1933 Loeb edition shows that this phrase is an addition not indicated in any of the extant manuscripts (see Bury 1933 [1980 printing], 472, n. 1). Mosca only indicates the addition in his Greek text, located in a footnote – not in his translation or discussion; 1975, 32-33, n. 40. Mutschmann (1912 Teubner Edition), the editor of the Greek text used by Loeb for its translation, writes: “excidet τινες δε vel nomen proprium...[citing the passage in 3.208 for comparison].” Mutschmann indicates a lacuna in the Greek text (as “<...>”) – it is unclear whether this is actually a space in the manuscript or simply the place Mutschmann wishes to see clarification. Given this notation, Bury seem to disagree with Mutschmann about where the missing phrase should be placed in the line.

²¹³ Bury 1933.

²¹⁴ Translation from Bury 1933 (1980 printing), 473.

Stoics (and others) seems to contradict the diversity of religious belief and practice in the real world. Since so many peoples interpret what is “holy” or “legal” or “right” in different ways (ways that are mutually exclusive to one another, in some extreme cases), there cannot be a natural or innate way of knowing what is right. This argument will turn up time and time again in the Greek and Latin writings surveyed here, although it is put to several different uses.

Though Sextus does not cite any particular sources for the passages quoted above, his examples are entirely rehashed material. Bury wrote of his methodology as a whole: “Probably there is but little original matter in these works. Sextus was mainly a compiler: he drew freely on the writings of his predecessors....”²¹⁵ We can see this in both the brevity of the allusions and their context within a long list of other types of religious variety and cultic oddities. Despite appearing like an independent attestation of the practice of human sacrifice (with no specification of the age or number of the victim(s), nor of the frequency or occasion of the sacrifice), Sextus offers us instead another attestation of the “common knowledge” of this “fact” among 2nd century CE Greeks.

r. Origen (184/185-253/254 CE)

The Christian theologian Origen was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and was a prolific writer in the areas of theology, homily, exegesis, and apology. *Contra Celsum* was written in 248 CE, and addressed the Platonist philosopher Celsus, a 2nd century Greek author of the earliest known comprehensive critical work on Christianity (“The True Word”). Celsus believed that all ancient religions had access to a true doctrine or set of wisdom (hence the title of his work), and that this knowledge or message has been perverted by the Jews and Christians; if unchecked, these sects would undermine the stability of Greek society. Origen’s

²¹⁵ Bury 1933 (1980 printing), xlii.

work is designed to defend Christians from these accusations, and to show the weaknesses in Celsus' arguments.

In chapter 27 of this work, Origen surveys all those laws among various peoples which would be considered impious by the Greeks, but are considered pious acts by those who practice them. The list is not limited to those who sacrifice humans, but includes people who permit the murder of parents (Scythians), who allow sons to marry their mothers and daughters to marry their fathers (Persians), and many other examples not attributed to particular places or times.

Contra Celsum 5.27:

καὶ πῶς οὐχ ὄσιον παραλύειν νόμους τοὺς φέρ' εἰπεῖν παρὰ Ταύροις περὶ τοῦ ἱερείᾳ τοὺς ξένους προσάγεσθαι τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι, ἢ παρὰ Λιβύων τισὶ περὶ τοῦ καταθύειν τὰ τέκνα τῷ Κρόνῳ.²¹⁶

And how is it impious to break laws such as those for example among the Taurians, where strangers are offered as victims to Artemis, or among some Libyans [Λιβύων], where they sacrifice children to Kronos?²¹⁷

Chadwick dismisses these references entirely: “Origen’s four instances [i.e. Scythians, Persians, Taurians, and Carthaginians] are stock examples in the traditional arguments about the relativity of moral codes and religious practices.”²¹⁸ The particulars of these stories are not of import for Origen’s purposes – only their role as “widely known” examples of terrible and barbaric practices.

It is unclear whether Origen’s reference to the Kronos-worshippers who sacrificed their children as “Libyans” is significant. During this period, the term Λιβύη can refer to non-Punic inhabitants of northern Africa (i.e. what we might refer to today as Berbers), a seeming

²¹⁶ Greek text available at http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/pgm/PG_Migne/Origenes_PG%2011-17/Contra%20Celsum.pdf; see page 162.

²¹⁷ Chadwick 1953.

²¹⁸ Chadwick 1980, 284, n. 3.

inaccuracy (if a Punic Carthaginian practice is being referenced). But Homer uses the term “Libya” to refer to the northern coast of Africa (Odyssey IX.95 and XXIII.311), and Herodotus seems to use the term to indicate the entire continent of Africa (1.46), although he referred to Africans south of Egypt as “Aethiopians.” The term Λιβύη or *Libue* also appears as both an ethnos and a toponym in the LXX and Vulgate translations of the Hebrew Biblical text, almost always alongside references to Ethiopia and/or Egypt (i.e. for פִּיט in Genesis 10:6; Jeremiah 46:9; Ezekiel 27:10, 30:5, 38:5; Nah. 3:9; Dan 11:43; and directly as Λιβύη in Acts 2:10). Any of these texts could have influenced Origen’s choice of nomenclature.

s. Marcus Minucius Felix (unknown; sometime between 150 – 270 CE)

Nothing is known about Marcus Minucius Felix’ personal life or history. The dates of his work can only be estimated based on overlapping textual references, which cannot always be determined with certainty. His only surviving work, entitled *Octavius*, is thought by many to have been written sometime between 197-258 CE. This is based on the work’s relationship with two better known texts – it seems closely related (though the direction of dependence is not clear) to Tertullian’s *Apologeticum* (written between 198-225 CE), and is itself cited in Cyprian (d. 258 CE)’s *Quod idola dei non sint*.²¹⁹ Extant in only one manuscript,²²⁰ *Octavius* consists of a dialogue on Christianity between the pagan Caecilius Natalis and the Christian Octavius Januarius, for which Minucius acts as mediator. The relevant passage as quoted by Mosca is as follows:

Octavius 30.3:

²¹⁹ For a summary of this debate, see the introduction in Clarke 1974.

²²⁰ The 9th century CE Codex Parisinus Latinus.

Such practices [i.e. infanticide and abortion] of course follow the precedents set by your gods; Saturnus did not indeed expose his sons, but devoured them. Not without reason in some parts of Africa [*Africae partibus*] infants were sacrificed to him by their parents [*a parentibus infantes immolabantur*], and their cries smothered by endearments and kisses for fear of a victim being sacrificed in tears.²²¹

But again, Mosca takes this line out of the broader context of the passage, losing or obscuring much of the relevant data. Rives summarizes the philosophical argument in which this description of child sacrifice falls as follows:

In Minucius Felix' dialogue on the value of Christianity... the character Caecilius, who presents the anti-Christian arguments, recounts a story about their initiations, 'a story as loathsome as it is well known': after the initiate has struck a baby concealed under a covering of flour, those present drink the blood from its wounds and so seal their union (*Oct.* 9.5). Later in the dialogue, Octavius, the defender of Christianity, refutes this slander. The alleged crime, he argues, is so terrible that 'no one could believe it except the sort of person who would attempt it' [*Oct.* 30.1]. He goes on to point out that pagans, not Christians, are the ones who practice actual human sacrifice. He supports his claim by citing specific examples:²²² the Africans who used to sacrifice their children to Saturn, the Taurians and the Egyptian Busiris who sacrificed foreigners, the Gauls, and lastly the Romans themselves, who in the past would bury alive two Greeks and two Gauls and who in his own day sacrifice men to Jupiter Latiaris....²²³

Again we see the grouping of Carthage (or "parts of Africa") with the Taurians, the Egyptian king Busiris, and with Gaul; one of many examples that have led scholars to conclude that Minucius Felix' work is "dependent on Tertullian's *Apology*,"²²⁴ although because of the problems associated with dating Felix' *Octavius*, the dependency may be in the opposite direction. Independent of the relationship between Tertullian and Minucius Felix, Rives has

²²¹ Rendall 1931.

²²² These examples immediately follow the verse cited by Mosca. *Octavius* 30.4 reads (quoting the same translation, Rendall 1939): "Among the Pontic Tauri and for the Egyptian Busiris, the custom was to immolate strangers; for the Gauls, to slay human – or rather inhuman – victims to Mercurius. The Romans, by way of sacrifice, burned alive a Greek man and woman, and a Gaulish man and woman; even today a human victim is offered to Jupiter Latiaris, and as becomes the son of Saturn, he battens on the blood of a criminal offender."

²²³ Rives 1995, 65.

²²⁴ Mosca 1975, 20; citing Beaujeu 1964, liv-lxvii; Rendall 1931, 307.

noted that “Minucius Felix’ list is exactly the same as that in [Cicero’s *De]Rep[ublica]* III.15, and in almost the same order. Minucius Felix knew his Cicero....”²²⁵

Christians were themselves being accused of human sacrifice and of cannibalism during this time – “virtually every Christian apologist between 150 and 200 CE refers to the charge.”²²⁶ By the time of Origen²²⁷ these accusations were reportedly no longer taken seriously, but for a while they served the very real purpose of “othering” the Christians in the Roman Empire. As Rives explains,

The use of stories about human sacrifice in a retorsion argument, as begun by Justin and developed by Tertullian and Minucius Felix, was an explicit turning of the tables. These Christian writers employed the topos of human sacrifice in exactly the same way as their non-Christian fellows, as a way of marking off civilized people from the barbarous, yet they redefined the boundary between these two groups. The important division was not between proper Greeks and Romans on the one hand and barbarians and social deviants on the other, but between Christians and non-Christians. The Romans had shown themselves by their actions to be no different from the barbarians at whom they professed to be horrified.²²⁸

A final point may be made regarding what Mosca called “the artificial joy of the ceremony which had attracted the attention of both Plutarch and Tertullian.”²²⁹ The concept of a sacrifice being nullified or lessened in worth or power if the victim cried or otherwise cursed the act of sacrifice was in common currency in the Greek world by the 5th century BCE,²³⁰ and was often illustrated through its converse – stories of sacrificial animals walking willingly to the altar, or laying down of their own accord to be given to the gods. While I do

²²⁵ Rives 1995, 75, n. 50.

²²⁶ Rives 1995, 65.

²²⁷ In *Contra celsum* 6.40, he asserts that even non-Christians no longer believe the accusations about Christians and human sacrifice. He otherwise mentions this phenomenon only to accuse the Jews of spreading the rumors (*Contra celsum* 6.27).

²²⁸ Rives 1995, 76.

²²⁹ Mosca 1975, 20.

²³⁰ See, for example, the chorus’ description of Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, l. 275-280: “They [Agamemnon’s men] gagged her lovely mouth, with force, just like a horse’s bit, to keep her speechless, to stifle any curse which she might cry against her family.”

not agree with Mosca that Minucius' description refers to "artificial joy" in this sense, the concern with crying or mourning illustrated in this passage will appear elsewhere in the texts under consideration.

t. Lactantius (ca. 240 – 320 CE)

Lactantius was raised in North Africa,²³¹ and became a teacher of rhetoric before becoming an advisor to Constantine I (the first Christian Roman emperor). His works attempt to defend Christianity against the criticisms of Greek philosophers and to explain its tenets to educated Romans.²³² The *Divinarum Institutionum*, or "Divine Institutes," was written between 303-311 CE, and illustrated the futility of pagan beliefs in sharp contrast to the reasonableness of Christianity. Book 1, chapter 21, is labeled by one 19th century English translator: "of certain gods peculiar to barbarians, and their sacred rites; and similarly, concerning the Romans."²³³

Divinarum Institutionum 1.21.9-15:

For I cannot find language to speak of the infants who were immolated to the same Saturn, on account of his hatred of Jupiter. To think that men were so barbarous, so savage, that they gave the name of sacrifice to the slaughter of their own children, that is, to a deed foul, and to be held in detestation by the human race; since, without any regard to parental affection, they destroyed tender and innocent lives, at an age which is especially pleasing to parents.... Pescennius Festus relates in the books of his History by a Satire, that the Carthaginians were accustomed to immolate human victims to Saturn; and when they were conquered by Agathocles, the king of the Sicilians [ruled ca. 361- 289/8 BCE], they imagined that the god was angry with them; and therefore, that they might more diligently offer an expiation, they immolated two hundred sons of their nobles [*ducentos nobelium filios immolasse*].... What

²³¹ He may well have taught rhetoric in Carthage, although we do not know for sure; See Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 1 for details.

²³² This led Lactantius to describe many of Christianity's principles in Platonist, Stoic, and Pythagorean terms; he was criticized or rejected by various Medieval Christian theologians as a result (though his Latin style was consistently admired).

²³³ Fletcher 1871.

advantage, then, did the men propose by that sacrifice, when they put to death so large a part of the state, as not even Agathocles had slain when victorious?²³⁴

The context for this passage is, again, a much longer section on human sacrifice. The following other examples are listed:

- On Cyprus, Teucer (legendary colonizer of Salamis) began the custom (abolished by Hadrian; 21.1)
- At Tauris, strangers were sacrificed to Diana (21.2)
- The Gauls sacrificed to Hesus and Teutas (21.3)
- In Latium, sacrifices are made “in our own day” to Jupiter Latialis (21.3)
- Also in Latium, sacrifices were made to Saturn by being thrown from the Milvian bridge into the Tiber (abolished by Hercules; 21.6)

Following all of this, Lactantius himself is aware he may be getting too fabled in his descriptions of pagan behaviors: “...let us look also at all the other practices which are not criminal, in case our enthusiasm to attack makes it look as if we are picking out the bad bits” (21.19).²³⁵ Ovid and Varro are mentioned in the long passage on sacrifice, and Pescennius Festus’ “History by a Satire” (otherwise unknown) is specifically cited in conjunction with the stories on Carthage, “but the ultimate source for his information seems to have been Diodorus [*Bibliotheca historica* 20.14.4-7].”²³⁶

Despite Lactantius’ origins in North Africa, perhaps even with connections to Carthage itself, his reference to human sacrifice is situated in the past, as part of a long list of stereotyped examples of similar kind. No additional, “local,” or exclusive information is added to that provided by his sources, and Lactantius describes the content of the stories he has heard as “barbarous,” “savage,” and almost unspeakable. Again the text provides not an eye-witness or historical account of a religious practice, but a re-telling of a trope rhetorically useful for its severity.

²³⁴ Emphasis is mine; Fletcher 1871.

²³⁵ Translation of Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 109.

²³⁶ Mosca 1975, 18.

u. Porphyry (234-304 CE)

Though the portions of Porphyry's *De abstinentia* (written in the final third of the 3rd century CE) that claim to cite Iron Age I-II Phoenician sources were discussed above, Porphyry also makes mention of human sacrifice independent of his summary of Philo of Byblos' work. The context of the first relevant passage is as follows (the sections included in Mosca's 1975 study are highlighted in bold):

De abstinentia 2.27.1-3:²³⁷

(1) Originally, then, sacrifices to the gods were made with crops. In time we came to neglect holiness, and when crops were lacking and through the dearth of lawful food people took to eating each other's flesh, then, imploring the divine power with many prayers, they first offered the gods sacrifice from among themselves, not only consecrating to the gods whatever was finest among them, but taking in addition others of the race who were not among the best [i.e. *pharmakoi*, "scapegoats"]. (2) **From then until now, it is not only in Arcadia at the Lykaia** [the sanctuary of Zeus on Mt. Lykaios] **and in Carthage for Kronos that everyone engages in public human sacrifice**, but periodically, in remembrance of the custom, they stain altars with the blood of their own kind, even though holiness, among them, excludes from the rites by lustral water [*perirrhantêria*] and by proclamation anyone responsible for the blood of a friend [reading *arthmiou* in place of MS *arithmeiou*]. (3) **Thereafter they moved on to substitute the bodies of other animals for their own bodies in sacrifice.**²³⁸

Cook dismisses this account as "two standard examples of human sacrifice,"²³⁹ sometimes in the context of stories "that human flesh was mixed with that of animal victims, and that anyone who ate it became a werewolf (cf. Plato, *Republic* 565d...)." ²⁴⁰ In fact, it is in this very reference in Plato's *Republic* in which we find the earliest mention of human sacrificed

²³⁷ Also quoted in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica*, 4.16.10.

²³⁸ Clark 2000, 65.

²³⁹ Clark 2000, 150, n. 273.

²⁴⁰ Cook 2000, 150, n. 273.

performed on Mount Lykaia; and in it Socrates expresses doubt that the werewolf transformation story is true.²⁴¹

Porphyry's reference is not only stereotyped; it is textually traceable. Mosca, following Barnes (1971), concludes that "the entire section on sacrifice [in *De abstinentia* 2.27], complete with examples, seems to have been borrowed from Theophrastus [ca. 371-ca. 287 BCE]."²⁴² Indeed, Pötscher (1964)'s identifies fragment 13 of Theophrastus' Περὶ Ευσεβείας (in which Theophrastus discusses human sacrifice) on the basis of this passage in Porphyry's *De abstinentia*.²⁴³

Most of Porphyry's other references to peoples who practiced or continue to practice human sacrifice can be found in *De abstinentia* 2.55-56, where he catalogues a great number of examples taken (and often distorted) from other historians and writers, in order to show that "...in ancient times they sacrificed people, and that does not mean that people should be eaten."²⁴⁴ The first portion of this passage in 2.56 cites the purported Phoenician priest Sanchuniathon, and was discussed above. But the passage continues into a list of others who also once sacrificed humans to their gods; Hughes has called this "the lengthiest and most interesting list of human sacrifices in the ancient world."²⁴⁵

This list is part of a larger attempt to demonstrate "that eating animals does not necessarily follow from sacrificing them."²⁴⁶ Thus the catalog of human sacrificers should be bracketed as an exercise in mustering a large quantity and variety of evidence for a practice

²⁴¹ In that he refers to the story as a *muthos*, or "myth"; See Hughes 1991, 96-107 for a full discussion of the cult of Zeus Lykaios.

²⁴² Mosca 1975, 21; citing Barnes 1971, 16.

²⁴³ See discussion in Pötscher 1964, 62-83.

²⁴⁴ 2.53.3; translation from Cook 2000, 76.

²⁴⁵ Hughes 1991, 122.

²⁴⁶ 2.57.3; translation from Cook 2000, 78.

that is almost entirely extinct or altered. Because he mentions many locations where Phoenician presence has been posited or the Phoenician language was known to have been used, a summary of the examples Porphyry cites may be instructive:²⁴⁷

Table V.1: Comparison of References to Reported Humans Sacrificers (in Porphyry's *De abstentia* 2.55-56)

Location	Citation	Who sacrificed	When sacrificed	Manner of sacrifice	To which deity	When ended
Bassarai	2.8.3	[not described]	[not described]	“in the bacchic madness of their human sacrifices, added eating to them”	Dionysus	“long ago”
Carthage, Libya	2.56.5	“this sacrifice” – also a girl, as in Laodicea, Syria?	annually	[not described]	[not described]	“Iphikrates stopped it”
Chios	2.55.3	“a human”	[not described]	“tearing him to pieces”	Dionysos Omadios ²⁴⁸	“they used to...”
Doumatenos, Arabia	2.56.6	“a child”	annually	[not described] but they would “bury him under the altar which they used as a sacred image”	[not described]	“...used to...”
Greeks (“all Greeks”)	2.56.7	“human beings”	“before setting out to war” ²⁴⁹	[not described]	[not described]	“...used to...”
Greeks (“even now”)	2.56.9	“a human being”	“in the Great City at the festival of Zeus Latiarios”	[not described]	[not described]	“even now”
Heliopolis, Egypt	2.55.2	“Three [victims] were sacrificed in a day”	[not described]	[not described] “they were inspected just like the calves which are sought out as pure ²⁵⁰ and then marked.”	Hera	“Amosis gave orders that the same number of wax figures should be substituted.”
Kourete, Crete	2.56.2	“children”	[not described]	[not described]	Kronos	[not described]
Lacedaemonia	2.55.5	a human	[not described]	[not described]	Ares	
Laodicea, Syria (present-day Turkey)	2.56.3	“a girl” ²⁵¹	annually	[not described]	Athena	“now it is a deer.”
Rhodes	2.54.2	“one of those condemned to public execution”	“on the sixth day of the month Metageitnion” at the festival of Kronos	“they gave him wine to drink and cut his throat”	Kronos	“This custom prevailed for a long time before it was changed.”

²⁴⁷ All translations of Porphyry’s *De Abstentia* quoted here are taken from Clark 2000.

²⁴⁸ *ômadios* might reference “raw meat” – *ômos*; cf. Cook 2000, 160, n. 356.

²⁴⁹ This claim is attributed to Phylarchus (3rd century BCE), FGrH 81, fragment 80; See Hughes 1991, 107-108.

²⁵⁰ i.e. “unblemished” or unmarked.

²⁵¹ Sometimes translated “a virgin.”

Salamis (Koronis)	2.54.3 – 2.55.1	“a human”	“in the month which the Cypriots call Aphrodisios”	“The victim, led by the epebes, ran three times round the altar. Then the priest struck him in the throat with a spear-point, and they burnt the entire body on the pyre which had been built.”	“Agraulos, the daughter of Kekrops and of the nymph Agraulis.”	“Diphilos king of Cypurs abolished this rite: he lived at the time of Seleukos the theologian, and changed the custom to the sacrifice of an ox.”
Scythians (“I need not mention”)	2.56.8	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]
Tenedos	2.55.4	a human	[not described]	With reference to Chios: “this also happened in Tenedos”	[not described] Dionysus?	[not described]
Thracians (“I need not mention”)	2.56.8	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]	[not described]

Porphyry’s accounts in nearly every case indicate clearly the sacrifice of a small number of individuals on the occasion of an annual festival or in preparation for war. The one exception, a reference to the practice of sacrificing children to Kronos, on Crete, is given no further explanation, time frame, or detail, although the story is attributed to Istros (“in his collection of Cretan sacrifices” 2.56.2), a 3rd century BCE Greek historian. Hughes has noted, on the question of Porphyry’s sources for 2.55-56:

...it is curious that Porphyry, who cites many sources in this passage, fails to reveal his source for his first two examples, which he describes in exceptional detail. That his source was the same for both the Rhodian and Cypriot human sacrifices is suggested by the length of the accounts, by the fact that dates are given for both rituals, and by the location of the islands in the eastern Mediterranean. In fact all of the abolished human sacrifices and several others for which no abolition is reported (Chios, Tenedos, Phoenicia, Arabia) are located in the eastern Mediterranean, the Near East, or northern Africa. It seems possible that Porphyry had a single source for many of these examples, and an obvious candidate is Pallas, who we know wrote about the abolition of human sacrifice ‘nearly among all peoples’ and who (himself possibly from the Near East [i.e. Syria²⁵²]) was probably responsible for the Syrian and Carthaginian examples which follow this general statement.²⁵³

²⁵² Cf. Turcan 1975, 41.

²⁵³ Hughes 1991, 130.

Despite Porphyry's appearance of being a careful citer of source texts, it is clear that the language of *De abstinentia* can obscure important data as we piece together the reliability of this account. Although Pallas is indeed named in 2.56.3, we know very little of Pallas' life or work (aside from the fact that he is responsible for a work on Mithraism).

Perhaps most important in evaluating Porphyry's data is the general rhetorical purpose of *De abstinentia*: "*On Abstinence* gives expression to Porphyry's negative view of sacrifices. The idea of sacrifice undergoes a familiar spiritualization in Porphyry's works. The true sacrifice was service of the heart and silent prayer."²⁵⁴ The information on human sacrifice gathered by Porphyry is not a simple anthologizing or historical enterprise, but evidence specifically mustered to prove a certain teleological point about the evolution of human spirituality.

v. Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373 CE)

Born in Alexandria in Roman Egypt, Athanasius would become the 20th bishop of Alexandria (328-373 CE²⁵⁵) and a renowned Christian theologian who defended Trinitarianism against Arianism in the 4th century CE. Athanasius wrote two apologetical treatises, which seem to have been intended as a single two-part work: *Contra gentes* consists of arguments "Against the Heathen," and is completed by *De Incarnatione Verbi*, "The Incarnation of the Word of God." Both are thought to have been authored before his conflict with Arian,

²⁵⁴ Kofsky 2000, 119.

²⁵⁵ Although seventeen years of his episcopate would be spent in five different exiles, ordered by four Roman emperors.

probably before 318 CE.²⁵⁶ Outler describes Athanasius' purpose in writing the two-part work as follows:

[Athanasius in this work is a] Christian apologist, direct successor to Justin, Clement and Origen. He writes to convince a friend of his, apparently but lately come within the orbit of Christian faith and ideas, first, that paganism is bankrupt both intellectually and morally and, second, that the Christian affirmations about the Incarnate Word are the truest and most intelligible clues to the mystery of God's redemptive love and purpose. ...With this as background, the young Christian teacher²⁵⁷ attempts to lead the Christian initiate, by easy stages, from simple faith to rational conviction.²⁵⁸

The first portion, with which we are here concerned, is explicitly designed to attack pagan practices and beliefs. Mosca quotes the relevant section as follows:

Contra gentes 25.23f:

Thus the Egyptians in time past used to make such bloody sacrifices [τοιαῦτα σφάγια] to Hera, and the Phoenicians [φοίνικες] and Cretans used to propitiate Cronos by their sacrifices of children [τεκνοθυσίαις].²⁵⁹

But in fact, all of chapter 25 is dedicated to human sacrifices, and the Egyptians, Phoenicians and Cretans appear in the company of “the Scythians who are called Taurians,” who offer “survivors from wrecks, and such Greeks as they catch” in sacrifice. Other examples include peoples who sacrifice one man to Ares from every one hundred enemy men captured in war, and “even the ancient Romans,” who sacrificed men to Jupiter Latiarius. Athanasius, in chapter 25, concludes that the practice of human sacrifice is “a special result of the evil connected with idols and false gods.” We have seen the Taurians, Romans, and Phoenicians/Carthaginians together before; the reference to the Cretans is known from Porphyry. While King Busiris has also been mentioned before, this reference – to “bloody

²⁵⁶ See Van Winden 1975 for a summary of the debate surrounding the date of these works, and for the evidence responsible for the majority opinion.

²⁵⁷ Athanasius is thought to have been twenty-one years of age when he wrote *Contra gentes*.

²⁵⁸ Outler 1946, 238.

²⁵⁹ Thomson 1971.

sacrifices” made by the Egyptians to Hera – is new, and coming from an inhabitant of Roman Egypt, it is tempting to take this more seriously. On the other hand, the details offered in connection with these examples are sparse, and the polemical context in which they are employed may well limit their value as an historical account.

w. Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348-ca. 413 CE)

Born in the province of Tarraconensis (modern northern Spain), Prudentius was a Roman Christian poet. His works include the *Libri contra Symmachum* or “Books against Symmachus,” which were written to oppose the pagan senator Symmachus’ request that the altar of Victory (Latin *Victoria*; Greek *Nike*) be restored to the *curia* or Senate house in the Forum (written in 384 CE). Interestingly, Symmachus was already deceased at the time of Prudentius’ publication.²⁶⁰ The passage of interest to this study comes in a section detailing Prudentius’ refutation of Symmachus’ original argument put forward in the latter’s work *Relatio* 3.8 (and restated in *Libri contra Symmachum* 2.69-79 and 2.370-373).²⁶¹

Libri contra Symmachum 2.296:

*Caedibus infantum fument Saturnia sacra
Flebilibusque truces resonant uagitibus arae!*

Let the rites of Saturn reek with the slaughter of infants and the cruel altars
resound with their weeping and wailing.²⁶²

The highly stylized nature of the passage highlights Prudentius’ judgment of the stories of human sacrifice he has heard or read – the weeping (of victims? Or of the families of those

²⁶⁰ Barnes explains: “The recently dead Symmachus of the *Contra Symmachum* was intended to act as a safe and dignified target, and his speech of 384 was far easier to refute and ridicule than what living pagans said when Alaric invaded Italy” (1976, 386). *Contra Symmachum* is thought to have been written and published between 402-405 CE.

²⁶¹ See Barnes 1976, 380 for a full analysis of the flow of the argument in book 2.

²⁶² Thomson 1961.

sacrificed?) associated with the rite is again emphasized. But the larger context of this passage does not involve either Carthage or some other particular historically-located practice. In fact, in the *contra Symmachum*, Prudentius is addressing that same concern that would be taken up by numerous subsequent Christian writers:

Prudentius has a clear polemical purpose in view. He interprets Alaric's invasion and the battle as manifest proof that Christianity benefits the Roman Empire (2.696ff.). Alaric was not defeated by Jupiter or his votaries, but by a Christian emperor and his Christian general.... Prudentius is arguing against the thesis that Christianity was responsible for Alaric's invasion of Italy by claiming that the Christian God deserves credit for his defeat. The *Contra Symmachum...* belongs to the genre of "historical apologetics."²⁶³

In light of this goal, it is perhaps curious that Prudentius' work follows the generic format of his other writings – poetry. We know that Prudentius was influenced not only by early Christian authors (including Tertullian), but also by the Biblical text – the imagery offered in this couplet might well be considered a pastiche of the well-trodden tropes associated with the practice of human sacrifice in worship of Saturn / Kronos.

x. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 CE)

Augustine, born in Roman Africa,²⁶⁴ was heavily influenced by Manichaeism and Neo-Platonism before converting to Christianity in 387 CE. A philosopher and theologian, Augustine eventually became bishop of Hippo Regius (modern Annaba, Algeria), and today has one of the largest surviving corpora of Latin works. His best known writing includes the twenty-two book work *De civitate dei*, "Of the City of God," which he wrote following the sack of Rome in 410 CE, to restore the faith of Christians in the Church as the "City of God" (which is

²⁶³ Barnes 1976, 384.

²⁶⁴ The province of Africa included modern coastal western Algeria, northern Tunisia, and the coast of western Libya, with its capital at Carthage. It was established after the defeat of Carthage in the Third Punic War (149-146 BCE).

in conflict with the “City of Man,” consisting of those who seek pleasure in this world as opposed to in the next).

The passage of this work most relevant for our purposes falls in a section dedicated to a critique of pagan philosophy and mores (books 6-10). In book 7, the worship of Janus, Jupiter, Saturn, and other gods (all of which he calls “Select Gods” since they are “selected” from a large pantheon for particular worship) of civil theology are discussed in order to show that eternal life cannot be obtained through these gods. Naturalistic interpretations of the gods are discussed, and the ideas of both Euhemerus (late 4th century BCE) and Marcus Terentius Varro (or “Varro,” 116-27 BCE) are given individual treatment. In the first of the two passages of interest, Augustine summarizes the report and judgment of the Roman scholar Varro,²⁶⁵ in his work *Antiquitates*, on the worship of Saturn:

De civitate dei 7.19 and 26:

[19] Next he [Varro] says that the reason why certain peoples, like the Carthaginians [*Poenis*], made a practice of sacrificing children [*pueros ei solitos immolari*] to him [i.e. Saturn], and others, like the Gauls [*Gallis*], even adults [*etiam maiores*], is because the best of all seeds is mankind. What need is there to say more about this cruelest of absurdities?...

[26] Saturn devoured his children, as the poets tell the story; and the physical philosophers make of the story what they will. As history relates it, he killed them, yet the Carthaginian practice of sacrificing their children [*Poeni suos filios sacrificanti sunt*] to him was not adopted by the Romans.²⁶⁶

The larger purpose of all these examples is to outline the absurdities in certain pagan practices, in order to defuse the argument that returning to the types of worship practiced by Rome would restore the empire’s greatness. Augustine was not the first to face this accusation about the Christian conversion of Rome’s leadership, and he would not be the last. But his

²⁶⁵ Varro was born at Reate, modern Rieti, Italy. He is estimated to have written some seventy-four works in approximately six hundred twenty books, although only *Rerum Rusticarum Libri Tres* survives complete.

²⁶⁶ Green 1963.

conclusion was that worshipping “correctly” could never guarantee a positive political, military, or social outcome; “Augustine changed the terms of the whole argument by denying that right belief inevitably issued in world success.”²⁶⁷

Setting Augustine’s pedagogical purposes aside for the moment, we may evaluate his use of the Carthaginian example for our purposes. These two passages make it clear that Augustine (probably simply reiterating Varro’s judgment) saw the sacrifice of children at Carthage as directly related to the worship of Saturn / Kronos and that god’s killing (and eating) of his own children. This might indicate how or why an annual or recurring ritual of this nature might have been practiced, although it is unclear whether Varro would have had any kind of a reliable source for this practice in the late 2nd – 1st centuries BCE. It is interesting that Augustine, with extensive ties to both Roman Africa in general and to Carthage in particular,²⁶⁸ should not add more detail, explanation, or other data to this description of Varro’s. It seems prudent to conclude that by the time of Augustine, those Romans (and especially, those Roman Christians) living in North Africa had lost all ties to those earlier Carthaginians who had been so long accused of sacrificing humans. Further, it seems that no supplemental tradition or historical data was available at Carthage itself to assist in Augustine’s reconstruction of this practice.

y. Orosius (ca. 375 – after 418 CE)

Orosius was a student of Augustine of Hippo’s (who collaborated with him on *De civitate dei* or “The City of God”), and a Christian theologian and historian in his own right.

²⁶⁷ Barnes 1976, 385.

²⁶⁸ Augustine was, born at Tagaste in Roman Africa, studied at Carthage from 370-374 and taught rhetoric there until 383, and finally was made bishop of Hippo Regius (modern Annaba, Algeria) from 396-430. See Gavigan 1945 for a detailed summary of the events of Augustine’s life.

Although he is thought to have been born in Bracara Augusta (modern Braga, Portugal), he is known to have travelled to Hippo Regius (or Hippone, modern Annaba, Algeria) and to Alexandria, in Egypt, among other cities.

The most important of his three works is the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, or “Seven Books of History against the Pagans,” written at the request of Augustine and completed in 417/418 CE.²⁶⁹ The work is basically a catalog of disasters suffered by the pagan world, so as to discredit claims that the Christians’ rejection of the old gods had caused the conquest of Rome by Alaric in 410 CE. Orosius divided history into four main periods, marked by the ascension of Babylon, Macedon, Carthage, and Rome, respectively. In the section on Carthage, Orosius quotes (almost verbatim) the passage from Justin’s *epitome* of Pompeius Trogus (18.6.11-12), discussed above. He then follows this description with his own comments, as follows:

Historiae adversum paganos 4.6.4-5:

Regarding this kind of sacrifice, nay, rather sacrilege [*sacrorum immo sacrilegiorum*], I do not find anything which should especially be discussed. For if some demons [*daemones*] have had the temerity to order rites of this kind, to satisfy the deaths of men by the slaughter of men [*ut mortibus hominum occisione hominum satisfaceret*], it must have been understood that they were employed as workers and helpers of the pestilence, that they themselves might kill those whom the pestilence had not seized, for it is the custom to offer sound and undefiled [*sanas...atque incorruptas*] victims, so that they might not allay the pestilences, but anticipate them.²⁷⁰

The detail that the victims were “sound and undefiled” (i.e. not afflicted with the plague which those who performed the sacrifice were trying to alleviate), is not to be found in the *epitome*,

²⁶⁹ “While St. Augustine was writing *De civitate Dei* he requested his young friend Paulus Orosius to compose a supplement which would furnish detailed proof of Augustine’s contention that the pagan world had suffered from more calamities than the world of his own time. The pagan enemies of Christianity were claiming that the Christians, by giving up the worship of the old gods, were responsible for the misfortunes of the epoch, notably of course the capture of Rome by Alaric in 410” (Downey 1965, 291).

²⁷⁰ Defferrari 1964.

Orosius' known source text, but may have been added as an embellishment, to strengthen his further point. Orosius' interpretation is that those who worshipped in Carthage in this manner were worshipping not gods, but demons – and that in demanding that healthy men be sacrificed, these demons ensured that the mass deaths the plague had been “designed” to achieve would be “helped along” by these supplemental deaths. While this has fascinating implications for the study of how 5th century CE historians and theologians negotiated their interpretations of the past (and how frequently the historical past was looked to for moral lessons), I see little value in Orosius' writings for our present purposes.

z. Dracontius (ca. 455-ca. 505 CE)

Blossius Aemilius Dracontius was a Christian poet who lived at Carthage in the 5th century CE. A number of his poems were found in a single 15th century manuscript,²⁷¹ and are now collectively called the *Carmina minora*. Nearly all of these poems are in hexameter verse, and cover topics as diverse as the rape of Helen, the fable of Hylas, the story of Medea, and so on.

Carmina minora 5.148-151²⁷²

*Insula delubris natorum colla secabat,
Uerticis unde comam uera pietate parentes
Inlaesa ceruice metunt. Carthago duorum
Annua nobelium praestabat funera templis
Saturnoque seni pueros mactabat ad aras,
Tristia plangentum foedabant ora parentum.*²⁷³

...Each year in (her) shrines, Carthage would carry out the death rites of two nobles, slay children on (her) altars to aged Saturn. The sad faces of weeping parents brought only dishonor.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ This manuscript was discovered at Bobbio, Italy. It is now kept in the Biblioteca Nazionale at Naples.

²⁷² Latin text from Duhn 1873.

²⁷³ Emphasis is mine, to indicate the selection quoted by Mosca 1975; Latin from De Duhn 1873.

²⁷⁴ Translation from Mosca 1975, 22.

Dracontius is the only author to mention two victims (though others mention two hundred), and the poetic form of this piece (in dactylic hexameter) should not be underestimated in explaining the details of this three and a half line note.

3. Conclusions: Implications for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

Examining the twenty-four classical authors whose works are typically cited in conjunction with Phoenician child sacrifice illustrates how important each individual reference's context is to understanding and weighing its value as an historical source. These authors' works are not of equal value for our purposes, and they certainly do not indicate twenty-four independent witnesses to an actual religious practice. But making conclusive determinations about precisely what can or should be the value of a particular text is quite difficult, and would ideally require information that in most cases has not been preserved. Here I will attempt to offer some general conclusions on the basis of comparative criteria (below). First, I offer a summary table of the sources discussed above, for ease of reference:

Table V.2: Greek and Latin Authors Referenced in Conjunction with Phoenician Child (or Human) Sacrifice

		Dates	Lang.	Religion	Genre	Lived in N. Africa or N. Levant?	Sources Used	Human Sacrificers
a.	Sophocles (<i>Andromeda</i> , fr. 122)	Ca. 497-405 BCE	Greek	Pagan	Tragedy	No		"Barbaros"; Cepheus, King of Ethiopia
b.	Plato / Pseudo-Plato (<i>Minos</i> 315 b-c)	4 th -3 rd centuries BCE	Greek	Pagan	Socratic Dialog	[unknown author]	Plato (<i>Republic</i>)?	Carthaginians; Greeks from Arcadia (Mt. Lykaion)
c.	Theophrastus (as preserved in Scholia to Pindar's <i>Pythian Odes</i> 2.2)	Ca. 371-ca. 287 BCE	Greek	Pagan	Logic, Physics, Metaphysics, Theology, Mathematics, etc.	No	Plato (<i>Republic</i>)?	Carthaginians; Greeks from Arcadia (Mt. Lykaion)

d.	Cleitarchus / Clitarchus / Kleitarchos (as preserved in Lexicon of Photius; <i>Suidae Lexicon</i> ; Scholia to Plato's <i>Republic</i> 337A)	3 rd century BCE	Greek	Pagan	History	Unknown		Phoenicians and "especially" the Carthaginians (~"Sardinians")
e.	Ennius (<i>Annales</i> 7, fr. 237)	Ca. 239-169 BCE	Latin	Pagan	Historical Epic Poetry	No		<i>Poeni</i>
f.	Cicero (<i>De re publica</i> 3.9.15)	106-43 BCE	Latin	Pagan	Philosophical dialog	No		Taurians; Egyptian King Busiris; Gauls; <i>Poeni</i>
g.	Diodorus of Sicily / Diodorus Siculus (<i>Bibliotheca historica</i> 13.86.3; 20.14.1 and 4-7)	Ca. 90-30 BCE	Greek	Pagan	History	Unknown	Euripides (ca. 480-406 BCE); Ephorus (ca. 400-330 BCE); Timaeus (ca. 345-250 BCE); Hieronymus of Cardia (contemp. of Alexander the Great); Duris of Samos (3 rd century BCE; probably quoting Cleitarchus)	Carthaginians
h.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus (<i>Roman Antiquities</i> 1.38.2)	Ca. 60-after 7 BCE	Greek	Pagan	History	No	Timaeus (ca. 345-250 BCE)	"the ancients"; Carthaginians; Gauls and "certain other Western nations"
i.	Pompeius Trogus (as preserved in <i>Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum</i> 18.6.11-12; 19.1.10)	1 st century BCE	Latin	Pagan	History	Probably not	[mediated by Justin] Cicero? (perhaps Justin's influence here?) Timaeus (ca. 345-250 BCE)	Carthaginians
j.	Quintus Curtius Rufus (<i>History of Alexander</i> 4.3.23)	Unknown (wrote 41-54 or 69-79 CE)	Latin	Pagan	History	Unknown	Diodorus Siculus; Cleitarchus; Ptolemy	Carthaginians (and "their founders")
k.	Pliny the Elder (<i>Naturalis Historia</i> 36.4.39)	23-79 CE	Latin	Pagan	Knowledge of the natural world	Served as procurator in Africa Province	Herodotus, Thucydides, Theophrastus, Diodorus of Sicily	<i>Poeni</i>
l.	Silius Italicus (<i>Punica</i> 4.765-822)	Ca. 28-103 CE	Latin	Pagan	Epic poetry	Unknown; served as proconsul of Asia Province (Phrygia)		Inhabitants of Thoas (i.e. Taurians); Libyans
m.	Plutarch (<i>De sera numinis vindicta</i> 522 a; <i>Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata</i> 175 a; <i>De superstitione</i> 171 c-d)	Ca. 46-120 CE	Greek	Pagan	Essays and dialogs	Unknown (travelled to Sardis and Alexandria)	Timaeus (ca. 345-250 BCE); Theophrastus (? Same story about Gelon; <i>de soll. Anim.</i>); Cleitarchus	Carthaginians

n.	Philo of Byblos (<i>The Phoenician History</i> 812:6-14; 814:10-17)	Ca. 64-141 CE	Greek	Pagan	History	From Byblos, in N. Lebanon	“Sanchuniathon”	Phoenicians
o.	Justin Martyr (<i>Apologia</i> 2.12.5)	Ca. 100-165 CE	Greek	Christian	Theological polemic	From Nablus, Palestine	Cleitarchus; Pompeius Trogus; Biblical texts ²⁷⁵	non-Christians (Kronos worship)
p.	Tertullian (<i>Ad nationes</i> 2.7.15; <i>Apologeticus pro Christianis</i> 9.2-4; <i>Scorpiace</i> 7.6)	Ca. 150-225 CE	Latin	Christian	Theological polemic	Lived most of his life at Carthage	Cicero; (Minucius Felix?); Biblical texts	Saturn-worshippers; Africans; Scythians; Gauls
q.	Sextus Empiricus (<i>Hypotyposes</i> 3.208 and 221)	Ca. 160-210 CE	Greek	Pagan	Philosophical treatise	[unknown]	[unspecified, but many sources]	Kronos worshippers (Carthaginians? ²⁷⁶); Scythians
r.	Origen (<i>Contra Celsum</i> 5.27)	Ca. 184-254 CE	Greek	Christian	Theological polemic	[unknown; lived in Egypt and Palestine; travelled to Petra, Jordan]	Biblical texts	Taurians; Libyans
s.	Marcus Minucius Felix (<i>Octavius</i> 30.3)	Unknown (written ca. 200-258 CE)	Latin	Christian	Theological dialog	[unknown]	Cicero; (Tertullian?)	Africans; Taurians; Egyptian King Busiris; Gauls; Romans
t.	Lactantius (<i>Divine Institutes</i> 1.21.9-15)	Ca. 240-320 CE	Latin	Christian	Theological polemic	Lived in North Africa	Pescennius Festus (otherwise unknown); Istros (3 rd century BCE); Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BCE); Diodorus of Sicily; Ovid (43 BCE – 18 CE)	Carthaginians; Cypriots after Teucer; Taurians; Romans at Latium
u.	Porphyry (<i>De abstinentia</i> 2.27.1-3)	234-304 CE	Greek	Pagan	Theological polemic	Lived at Tyre	Istros (FGrH 334, fragment 48; 3 rd century BCE); Theophrastus’ Περὶ εὐσεβείας; Pallas; Philo of Byblos; Euelpis of Carystus (FGrH 4, fragment 1; otherwise unknown)	Arcadians; Carthaginians; Greeks; List in <i>De abstentia</i> 2.55-56 includes fourteen different groups of sacrificers.
v.	Athanasius of Alexandria (<i>Contra gentes</i> 25.23f)	Ca. 296-373 CE	Greek / Coptic	Christian	Theological polemic	Travelled throughout Egypt and Libya; visited Tyre	Biblical texts	Taurians; Egyptians; Phoenicians; Cretans; Romans
w.	Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (<i>Libri contra Symmachum</i> 2.296f)	348-ca. 413 CE	Latin	Christian	Political or polemical poetry	No	Tertullian; Biblical texts	Worshippers of Saturn

²⁷⁵ Here and elsewhere in this chapter, “Biblical texts” usually refers to the Septuagint (Greek) or Vulgate (Latin) translations of the Hebrew and Aramaic Biblical texts. Some Christian scholars (like Origen) learned to read Hebrew, but most would have encountered these texts in their translated forms.

²⁷⁶ See notation on this text, above – there is a problem with the manuscript which the various editions deal with differently. It seems reasonable to conclude that Carthaginians are intended here, but this may or may not have been explicit in the text.

x.	Augustine of Hippo (<i>De civitate dei</i> 7.19 and 26)	354-430 CE	Latin	Christian	Theological history	Lived in North Africa	Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BCE); Biblical texts	<i>Poenis</i> ; Gauls
y.	Orosius (<i>Historiae adversum paganos</i> 4.6.4-5)	Ca. 375- after 418 CE	Latin	Christian	Theological history	Travelled to North Africa	Pompeius Trogus (via Justin); Biblical texts	Carthaginians
z.	Dracontius (<i>Carmina minora</i> 5.148-151)	Ca. 455-ca. 505 CE	Latin	Christian	Poetry	Lived at Carthage	unknown; Biblical texts	Carthaginians

Using these same authors, I will offer some brief comments on the Greek and Latin sources which might seem to offer the most trustworthy, reliable, or valuable evidence, using the following criteria:

- a) Sources which claim to offer eye-witness accounts of Phoenician / Carthaginian child sacrifice.
- b) Sources composed before the fall of Carthage, in 146 BCE.
- c) Sources written by authors who lived in the central coastal Levant (Phoenician homeland).
- d) Sources written by authors who lived in Northern Africa (Punic sphere).
- e) Sources which cite historical events or individuals in conjunction with Phoenician / Punic child sacrifice.
- f) Sources which attribute child sacrifice to the Phoenicians themselves (as opposed to Carthaginians or others outside the homeland).

These criteria will each be assessed in turn, in the following pages.

a) Sources which claim to offer eye-witness accounts of Phoenician / Carthaginian child sacrifice. In short, “...no classical author claims to have actually witnessed child sacrifice, or even to quote someone who did.”²⁷⁷ It is easy to lose sight of this fact in the sea of complicated textual references discussed above, but it is worth reiterating here. All of our extant reports involve second- or third- (or further-) hand retellings, not reports from personal experience.

b) Sources composed before the fall of Carthage, in 146 BCE. Five authors writing before the fall of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War (146 BCE) reference or discuss

²⁷⁷ Azize 2007, 187.

child sacrifice in the Phoenician/Punic sphere: Sophocles, (Pseudo?-) Plato, Theophrastus, Cleitarchus, and Ennius.

Two of these references consist of isolated fragments of works designed to entertain – Sophocles’ lost play *Andromeda*, and a six-word sample from Ennius’ historical epic poem, the *Annales*. In both cases, their value as historical sources is limited by the fact that the rest of the work is missing. Demands of meter, genre, and the rhetorical or moralizing message of the piece may all have colored the choice of the few preserved words. Two further references that fit this temporal criterion – Theophrastus’ and Cleitarchus’ – are only extant in summaries provided by much later authors; all their original writings are lost to us. In Cleitarchus’ case, one summary in a lexicon entry is probably the source of the other two references to Cleitarchus (and all these references date more than 1000 years after Cleitarchus wrote). The author of the final relevant text written before the fall of Carthage (the *Minos*) cannot be determined with certainty. Perhaps these problems should not exclude these sources from our consideration, but the evidence should be weighed with these difficulties in mind. Given the propensity of classical writers to cite early sources as a way to underscore the veracity or antiquity of the matters under discussion, it would be prudent to take these references with a grain of salt. Moreover, “naming a source does not automatically ensure that the author consulted that tradition himself,”²⁷⁸ but could indicate hearing a story second-hand, having read a summary of that tradition in another source, or some other transmission process.

Though not to be over-stated, it is also worth noting that some of the classical sources dating before the fall of Carthage do not mention Phoenician / Punic child sacrifice where we

²⁷⁸ Baynham 1998 (2001), 74. She goes on to give the example that “it is evident that authors like Arrian and Strabo sometimes echo remarks made by others on particular sources, without consulting those sources for themselves” (1998[2001], 74).

might expect them to, were the ritual regularly taking place. Herodotus (ca. 484 – 425 BCE), thought to be the earliest classical source attesting to human sacrifice, makes no mention of Phoenicians or Carthaginians in conjunction with this practice. Several of the relevant passages are as follows:

1.216.2-3: The **Massegetae** kill their elderly along with animal victims; the flesh is boiled and consumed by relatives;

2.119.3: **Menelaus** makes “blood victims” (έντομά σφεα ἐποίησε) of two Egyptian children;

4.62.3-4: The **Scythians** sacrifice one of every one hundred prisoners of war to Ares;

4.103.1-2: The **Taurians** sacrifice shipwrecked sailors to “the Virgin” and impale the heads on stakes before her temple;

7.197: The eldest son of the family descended from **Athamas** is sacrificed after many elaborate ritual trials.

Despite several of these examples becoming part of the “standard set” of human sacrificers in later Greek and Latin works, Herodotus seems unaware of either a Levantine or Western Phoenician practice of child or human sacrifice. Plato (428/427 – 348/347 BCE)’s brief discussion in the *Republic* of the report or legend (μύθῳ) of sacrifices of humans at the shrine of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia (8.565d-e) makes no connections with Phoenician sacrifices. This same author writes, in *Law* (6.782c):

The custom of men sacrificing one another is, in fact, one that survives even now among many peoples; whereas amongst others we hear of how the opposite custom existed, when they were forbidden so much as to eat an ox, and their offerings to the gods consisted, not of animals, but of cakes of meal and grain steeped in honey, and other such bloodless sacrifices, and from flesh they abstained as though it were unholy to eat it or to stain with blood the altars of the gods....²⁷⁹

Plato’s second text names no examples – relying on the readily-accepted notion that foreign people practiced strange, foreign rituals “even now.” Human sacrifice is presented in this text as just as curious a practice as its opposite, the forbidding of all blood sacrifice or even the eating of meat. Thucydides (ca. 460-395 BCE), Xenophon (ca. 430 – 355 BCE), and Polybius (ca.

²⁷⁹ Bury 1967 and 1968.

200 – 118 BCE) all wrote histories of the Mediterranean, including numerous mentions of Phoenicians and/or Carthaginians, without citing the practice of child sacrifice, either as a recurring rite or as a propitiatory measure taken during extreme crisis. Polybius in particular was reportedly present at the siege of Carthage and its final destruction, but makes no mention of the “tophet” site or any affiliated sacrificial rites.

Perhaps most notable in this regard is the *Politics* of Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE), which Azize (2007) first brought to bear on the debate. Aristotle spends some lines discussing the advantages of the Carthaginian constitution, and the laws or regulations at Carthage are elaborated upon in terms of their strengths and weaknesses (see for example 1272-73, 1293, and 1320). Azize concludes:

If the Carthaginians did practice child sacrifice, I would have expected Aristotle to say so. ...I think that [this] is a fair argument, for four reasons: (a) Aristotle seems to be both knowledgeable and even-handed in his treatment of Carthage; (b) a practice of child sacrifice which was “not a casual or sporadic occurrence” would be noteworthy in such an enquiry as Aristotle’s; (c) the classical authors who attest to child sacrifice are suspect, not least because Stager’s archaeological evidence from Carthage is inconsistent with the practice of child sacrifice they describe; and (d) in *Politics* itself, Aristotle champions the exposure of deformed infants. Infanticide was therefore of some interest to Aristotle.²⁸⁰

The silences in classical sources like Aristotle are strange, and should be carefully considered in any discussion of Phoenician/Punic mortuary or sacrificial practices.

Although “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence,” this cursory examination of several historians writing before the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE should indicate that we must, at the very least, reject conclusions like Mosca’s: “It is, first of all, clear that the practice itself was unanimously regarded as a present or past reality of Phoenician-Punic religion.”²⁸¹ This

²⁸⁰ Azize 2007, 194-195.

²⁸¹ Mosca 1975, 24.

kind of argument is circular (relying only on the set of texts which attest to child-sacrifice in Phoenicia or Carthage to determine unanimity), and ignores the large number of Greek and Latin sources which indicate no such practice among the Phoenicians. To me, it seems unreasonable to expect Greek and Latin texts to have spent time attesting to the *lack* of child-sacrifice in Phoenician or Carthaginian settings. The exception to this might be expected to be found in the writings of authors who may have self-identified as Phoenicians or Carthaginians, or have lived in territories associated with these accusations. The next two criteria examine this possibility.

c) **Sources written by authors who lived in the central coastal Levant (Phoenician homeland).** Philo of Byblos (ca. 64-141 CE) and Porphyry (234 – 304 CE) are the only classical authors who claim to have lived in cities or territory traditionally ascribed to the Phoenicians during the Iron Age I-III periods. Of the two, only Philo claims to read Phoenician, and neither uses the term “Phoenician” with reference to himself. Philo assumes the authority to speak for the Phoenicians, but does so always in the third person,²⁸² never with first-person plural or possessive pronouns. Because Philo of Byblos’ work was transmitted to us through Porphyry’s (and Eusebius of Caesarea’s; see above), a brief review of their central contributions to this debate may be in order:

Philo of Byblos:

-Kronos gives his “beloved” son as a sacrifice to his father Ouranos as a “wholly burned offering.” (*The Phoenician History* 812:6-14)

-Kronos (El), a legendary king, sacrificed his son Ieoud “on account of war.” (*The Phoenician History* 814:10-17)

Porphyry of Tyre’s summary of Philo:

²⁸² Even discussing them as “the most ancient of the barbarians,” alongside the Egyptians, as if they were a people or a culture no longer extant (805.25); Baumgarten 1981, 66.

“In great disasters, such as wars and plagues and droughts, the Phoenicians used to choose by vote, for sacrifice to Kronos, one of those dearest to them. The *Phoenician History*, which Sanchuniathon wrote in Phoenician and Philo of Byblos translated into Greek in eight books, is full of people who sacrificed.”²⁸³ (*De abstinentia* 2.56.1; *Praeparatio Evangelica* 4.16.10)

Eusebius of Caesaria’s summary of Philo:

“It was the custom of the ancients, when great dangers befell [them], that, to avoid complete destruction, the rulers of the city or the people should give over to slaughter the most beloved of their children as a ransom to the vengeful daimons. And those given over were slain with mystic rites.”²⁸⁴ (*The Phoenician History* 814:6-10; *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.10.40 and 4.16.11)

Porphyry of Tyre:

- Public human sacrifice (of “their own kind,” i.e., not foreigners) takes place not only at Arcadia and Carthage (“for Kronos”), but even periodically among the Greeks. (*De abstinentia* 2.27.1-3)
- List of fourteen peoples who practice(d) human sacrifice; at Carthage, “this sacrifice” (otherwise unspecified; perhaps of a single child²⁸⁵) used to be made annually, but is no longer. (*De abstinentia* 2.8.3 and 55-56).

Assuming all of our extant quotations and summaries of Philo of Byblos’ text are accurate, he offers testimony for a Phoenician sacrifice of children (always children who were “dear” or “beloved”) offered in response to wars, plagues, or other crises. Philo also gives two accounts of mythological or legendary “explanations” for such sacrifices – all modeled on (or in response to) actions taken by Kronos/El. The earliest author from the Phoenician homeland to discuss child sacrifice does not mention any fires or immolation of the victims; nor does Philo imply the practice was a regular occurrence, or an obligation in any but the most desperate of times.

Porphyry of Tyre characterizes Philo’s *History* as “full” of stories of Phoenician child sacrifice in times of danger or crisis. However, in his longer list of those who practice human sacrifice, only Carthage (not any sites in the Phoenician homeland) is included. The sparse

²⁸³ Clark 2000.

²⁸⁴ Baumgarten 1981.

²⁸⁵ The reference to Carthage follows that of Laodicea, a city in the province of Syria (in present-day Turkey), which is described as consisting of a single girl (2.56.3), and the use of the near demonstrative may reflect a similar practice at Carthage.

details Porphyry reports are that the sacrifice used to take place annually, was dedicated to Kronos, and is no longer practiced (since, by his report, Iphikrates put an end to it; see below).

Philo and Porphyry's accounts of Phoenician/Punic child sacrifice seem as emotionally and chronologically distant as those of authors with no personal connection to the Phoenician homeland. Neither claims to have witnessed a sacrifice. Philo speaks to a Phoenician sacrifice in times of crisis, and Porphyry to an annual Carthaginian sacrifice. Each reports that the rites are no longer practiced.

While Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165 CE) and Origen (ca. 184-254 CE) are known to have lived for some of their lives in Palestine, they do not cite any personal research or experiences in conjunction with their references to child sacrifice, and in fact do not speak of Phoenicians or other Levantine peoples in conjunction with the practice at all (Justin Martyr refers only to worshippers of Saturn, while Origen attributes the practice to some "Libyans").

Finally, Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373 CE) is known to have visited Tyre, although he spent more of his time in northern Africa, travelling throughout Egypt and Libya. While he attributes child sacrifice to both Phoenicians (φοίνικες) and Cretans, his account includes no detail with regard to the nature of the practice, how often or how long ago it was carried out, or who precisely was expected to perform the sacrifice, and under what circumstances.

d) Sources written by authors who lived in North Africa. None of the classical authors in our list who lived in Carthage or elsewhere in northern Africa explicitly self-identifies as Phoenicians or culturally Punic. The Roman Province of Africa was created after the Romans defeated Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War (146 BCE), and included the territories of

coastal Tunisia and western Libya. The province became a Proconsularis sometime ca. 40 BCE.²⁸⁶

Our earliest resident of North Africa among the authors discussed above is Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE), who is thought to have served as procurator to the Africa Province from 70-72 CE. He mentions his visit to the Libyan tribe of the Psylli, and the city of Gabès (ancient Tacape), Tunisia. But his stay in the province was short, and is not firmly dated; regardless of his ties to the region, his only mention of sacrifice comes in a discussion of a statue preserved in Rome, not from personal experience or travels.

Tertullian (ca. 150-225 CE) is thought to have been born and lived his life at Carthage. Very few further details about his life have been preserved, and several of those reported by later authors contradict one another. Despite his discussing the practice of child sacrifice to Saturn in three different texts, in each case he characterizes it only as taking place “in Africa” and by “others” (*alieni*). In only one place does Tertullian make reference to his own indirect contact with the practice:

In Africa infants used to be sacrificed [*immolabantur*] to Saturn, and quite openly, down to the proconsulate of Tiberius, who took the priests themselves and on the trees of their temple – the same trees that had overshadowed their crimes – hung them up, like votive offerings, on crosses; and the soldiers of my own country²⁸⁷ are witness to it, who served that proconsul in that very task. Yes, and to this day that holy crime persists in secret....²⁸⁸ (*Apologeticus pro Christianis* 9.2-4)

Most translators interpret the act which the Roman soldiers “witnessed” to be the crucifixion of the priests of Saturn (not the sacrifices themselves), which they carried out following an order issued by one “Tiberius,” thought to have served as proconsul of Africa sometime during

²⁸⁶ “...not to 27 B.C., when the existing province was simply placed in the senatorial category, as Dio and Strabo report, but to the first year or so of Lepidus’s appointment in Africa over a decade earlier” (Fishwick and Shaw 1977, 380).

²⁸⁷ One manuscript (Codex Fuld.) reads *patris nostril*, “my father’s soldiers,” instead.

²⁸⁸ Glover 1931.

the 2nd century CE.²⁸⁹ These priests were accused of facilitating the sacrifice of infants, a practice which is said to “persist in secret” into Tertullian’s own time. This assertion is surprising, given it was made in a work thought to have been written in 197 CE, during the reign of the Roman emperor Septimus Severus (ruled 193-211 CE).

Lactantius (ca. 240-320 CE) was a native of North Africa, possibly from Cirta in Numidia.²⁹⁰ But his account in *Divinarum Institutionem* discusses Carthaginian child sacrifice only as a horrifying practice of the past, explicitly referencing an event during which two hundred sons were killed after the conquest of Agathocles (ca. 361-288 BCE). Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) was also born in North Africa, becoming bishop of Hippo Regius (modern Annaba, Algeria). He, too, discusses Carthaginian practices “as history relates” them, not from any personal investment or experience, since the sacrifice “was not adopted by the Romans” (*De civitate dei* 7.26). Finally, Dracontius (ca. 455-505 CE) lived at Carthage, but makes no mention of this heritage in his discussion of the annual sacrifice of two noble children.

Thus among the classical authors living at Carthage or elsewhere in North Africa, only one draws upon his experiences in the Roman province of Africa as a source of his own authority on the subject. Tertullian’s account in *Apologeticus* seems to contradict the language of his reference to the practice in *Scorpiace*, which states that the rite was formerly effectual or allowed (*placari apud saeculum licuit*), but like the sacrifices of the Scythians and the Gauls, seems no longer in practice. Further, if the sacrifice of infants still persists “in secret,” it seems curious that Tertullian does not further elaborate on how he knows this, who

²⁸⁹ The proconsuls of Africa are notoriously difficult to establish with certainty. In one study of the proconsuls of Africa from 115/6-142/3 CE, twenty proconsuls were identified (eight only tentatively named), with eight further years unaccounted for (Syme 1980). As far as I can ascertain, a proconsul named Tiberius is not attested outside Tertullian’s *Apologeticus*; the date of his office is assumed on the basis of Tertullian’s testimony.

²⁹⁰ Lactantius’ birthplace is not explicitly named. An inscription has been found in Cirta which mentions “L. Caecilius Firmianus,” and may refer to Lactantius. He describes his travels out of Africa at the request of Diocletian (to become a professor of rhetoric at Nicomedia) in the poem *Hodoeporicum*.

has reported this fact to him, or any other detail, especially since it would serve his polemical purposes to do so. Instead the emphasis of his story is on the crucifixion of the priests of Saturn, a story he verifies by citing its substantiation by “the soldiers of my own country, who served that proconsul in that very task.” While Tertullian’s account speaks authoritatively to the (otherwise unattested) proconsul Tiberius’ (also otherwise unattested) slaughter of North African priests of Saturn, accused of facilitating the sacrifice of infants, I am not confident it attests reliably to the sacrifice of infants, independently. In other words, if this incident did in fact occur, it might just as easily be attributable to the long-standing Roman belief that Carthaginians sacrifice their children to Saturn/Kronos.

As mentioned above, Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373 CE) travelled throughout Egypt and Libya, but attributed his passing reference to child sacrifice to the “Phoenicians and Cretans,” not to North Africans of any time or persuasion. Orosius (ca. 375-after 418 CE) also lived in North Africa for some period of his life. Orosius relies entirely on Justin’s *epitome* of Pompeius Trogus for his description of child sacrifice at Carthage, and adds nothing (aside from some moral judgment on what Pompeius Trogus reports) from his own resources or experience.

e) Sources which cite historical events or individuals in conjunction with Phoenician / Punic child sacrifice. Seven authors attribute the cessation of child/human sacrifice at Carthage or northern Africa to some unique historical personage or event in the past. The dates offered range from the late 6th-early 5th centuries BCE to the 2nd century CE:

Table V.3: Comparison of "Historic" Dates for the End of Child Sacrifice at Carthage

<i>Author (Work)</i>	<i>Individual responsible for ending sacrifices</i>	<i>Date sacrifices reportedly ended</i>
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Theophrastus (via scholia to Pindar's <i>Pythian Odes</i> 2.2)	Gelon / Gelo (tyrant of Syracuse, d. 478 BCE)	480 BCE
Dionysius of Halicarnassus (<i>Roman Antiquities</i> 1.38.2)	[the fall of Carthage]	146 BCE
Pompeius Trogus (via Justin, <i>Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum</i> 19.1.10-11)	Darius (Achaemenid King, d. 486 BCE)	522-486 BCE ²⁹¹
Quintus Curtius Rufus (<i>History of Alexander</i> 4.3.23)	[the fall of Carthage]	146 BCE
Plutarch (<i>Moralia</i> 175a, 552a)	Gelon / Gelo (tyrant of Syracuse, d. 478 BCE)	480 BCE
Tertullian (<i>Apologeticus pro Christianis</i> 9.2-4)	Tiberius, proconsul of Africa (though the rites persist in secret to 197 CE)	2 nd century CE
Porphyry (<i>De abstinentia</i> 2.56.5)	Iphikrates (Athenian general, d. 353 BCE)	ca. 390-350 BCE

Only 29% of the classical authors who mention human sacrifice in the Phoenician/Punic sphere offer an historical description of its end-date. In all but one case, the sacrifices are reported to have ended more than one hundred years before each author wrote; Tertullian is the only writer to speak with contemporary authority about the practice, but the date he gives is at least three hundred years later than all other accounts. The radical inconsistencies in the few extant accounts of this historical detail do not allow (in my mind) the acceptance of any of these references as authoritative.

Another feature included in several classical accounts is the story of a particular sacrifice undertaken under specific historical circumstances. A comparative survey of accounts of this nature follows:

Table V.4: Comparison of "Historic" Phoenician Sacrifices

Author (Work)	Sacrificer	Who Sacrificed	Why Sacrificed	Sacrifice Date
Diodorus of Sicily (<i>Bibliotheca historica</i> 13.86.1-3)	Himilcar (commander of a Carthaginian army sent to Sicily)	a young boy	To end a plague thought to have been caused by the dismantling of the tomb of Theron at Acragas, Sicily.	406 BCE

²⁹¹ Libya (Cyrenaica) was conquered under Cambyses II ca. 525 BCE; Darius (born ca. 550 BCE) ruled the Achaemenid Empire from 522-486 BCE.

Diodorus of Sicily (<i>Bibliotheca historica</i> 20.14.1 and 4-7)	Carthaginians	200 of the noblest children	To survive the siege of Carthage by Agathocles (king of Sicily 361-289/8 BCE), which they thought was caused by their ongoing substitution of non-noble children for noble ones in previous sacrifices.	310 BCE
Quintus Curtius Rufus (<i>History of Alexander</i> 4.3.23)	Some Phoenicians (though many children had already been evacuated to Carthage; vetoed by the Phoenician elders)	a free-born male child	Suggested in order to survive the siege of Tyre by Alexander.	ca. 332 BCE
Silius Italicus (<i>Punica</i> 4.765-822)	Hanno as representative of Carthage	Hannibal's "first-born and only son"; to be replaced with "many a high-born victim" from the Roman enemy	Hannibal's son's name is drawn in the annual lot for a national human sacrifice; Hannibal refuses to hand him over, and calls on him to be a soldier instead.	ca. 210 BCE
Lactantius (<i>Divinarum Institutionum</i> 1.21.9-15)	Carthaginians	200 "sons of their nobles"	To propitiate the gods they thought they had angered ("that they might more diligently offer an expiation"), as indicated by the conquest of Carthage by Agathocles (king of Sicily 361-289/8 BCE).	just after 310 BCE

As is evidenced above, only four authors (17% of the total classical authors who speak of Phoenician/Punic child sacrifice) offer a total of five stories of historical sacrifices. And only two of these stories overlap in date or circumstances. Most scholars conclude that Lactantius used Diodorus of Sicily's account in *BH* 20.14.1-7 as the basis for his reference, although Lactantius explicitly states that he has heard the story from the otherwise unattested "Pescennius Festus" (though it is possible this source summarized or utilized Diodorus' account, as we know nothing about this source). Both attest to a sacrifice of two hundred noble young men in association with the siege of Carthage by Agathocles, but the reasons given for the sacrifices in the two accounts differ.

Of the final three references, two of the stories describe the sacrifice of a single young boy to save a city or army from crisis, a trope not limited to Phoenician or Carthaginian agents

in other Greek and Latin texts. And Silius Italicus’ account is the only one to refer to an annual sacrifice of a single noble child, chosen by lot, at Carthage. Most scholars conclude his retelling is fictionalized for dramatic effect; all historians from Herodotus and Thucydides to Roman and Byzantine authors (except Pompeius Trogus, see above) used the technique of invented direct orations (*oratio obliqua*) to lend flavor to their accounts or to impart meaning on the described events, and much of Silius’ detail occurs in the speeches of Hannibal and his wife, Imilce.

f) Sources which attribute child sacrifice to the Levantine Phoenicians. Only four authors attribute the practice of child sacrifice to the Phoenicians of the Levantine homeland, as opposed to (or in addition to) the Carthaginians or other western-settled Phoenicians, when the practice is discussed.

Table V.5: Classical Sources which Reference Sacrifices in the Phoenician Levantine Homeland

Author	Sacrificer	Who Sacrificed	Why Sacrificed	Method of Sacrifice
Cleitarchus (3 rd century BCE) as cited in the scholia to Plato’s <i>Republic</i> , I 337a ²⁹²	Phoenicians and “especially” the Carthaginians (~Sardinians)	Children of any who made the vow	“to obtain some great favor”	καθαγιεῖν
Quintus Curtius Rufus (1 st century CE)	Carthaginians, inherited from “their founders”	a free-born male child	Suggested to avoid the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the Great (but vetoed by Phoenician elders)	<i>immolaretur</i>
Philo of Byblos (ca. 64-141 CE)	Phoenicians	“one of those dearest to them,” chosen by vote	To avoid great disasters (wars, plagues, droughts)	κατεσφάττοντο
Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373 CE)	Phoenicians	children	“to propitiate Cronos”	τεκνοθυσίαις

²⁹² Only one of the three references to Cleitarchus mention the Phoenicians in addition to the Carthaginians; the two lexicons record only the Carthaginians as the subject of Cleitarchus’ information.

These four sources are of very unequal value. Athanasius' text offers only a passing reference in a series of well-established stock examples of human sacrificers. Cleitarchus' original text is lost, and the detail about Phoenicians (as opposed to simply Carthaginians) having practiced child sacrifice is recorded in only one of the three extant summaries of his description. Quintus Curtius Rufus' passage indicates that child sacrifice was reportedly considered by Phoenicians in 332 BCE, but was not undertaken (even to save the city of Tyre) because the Phoenician elders agreed that it was a barbaric practice which would not endear them to the gods. And Philo of Byblos indicates only that the Phoenicians sacrificed in times of great danger to the entire city, drawing one name by lot or by vote (according to Porphyry's summary), or sacrificing the "most beloved" of the city's children (according to Eusebius of Caesaria's summary). The textual problems and probable rhetorical flourishes presented by each of the four sources should also be considered when weighing this evidence.

And yet, these few references (in conjunction with the Biblical texts discussed in Chapter IV) are often considered satisfactory to establish the fact that child sacrifice was a Levantine Phoenician practice, exported to and elaborated upon at Carthage and other western colonies. Baumgarten offers an example of this kind of missing-link deduction:

Indeed, Quintus Curtius Rufus (IV, III, 15, 23) aside, Philo is the only witness to the practice among Phoenicians. Nevertheless, the veracity and accuracy of the practices described by Philo are assured by the fact that the Punic rites can only be explained as part of their Phoenician heritage. ...As we do not know where Philo lived or traveled..., it is not absolutely certain that Philo never witnessed a child sacrifice. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely, and Philo's source(s) must derive from Phoenician tradition.²⁹³

²⁹³ Baumgarten 1981, 248.

And yet the practice as described by Philo of Byblos does match either the archaeological evidence from Carthage²⁹⁴ or the various descriptions of the *mlk*-related ritual as put forth in the Biblical texts.

After a careful assessment of the extant sources, it seems inevitable to conclude that the plurality of classical references to a Phoenician/Punic practice of child sacrifice is a kind of mirage – many of the sources play a game of textual “telephone,” reporting all kinds of legendary stories, and eventually passing on only stereotypes and stock examples. In the majority of cases, stories of human sacrifice are used as examples of the extremes of human behaviors; in many cases as incomprehensible evil or misguidedness. Rives’ extensive article on “Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians” assesses the pre-Christian Greek and Latin references to human and child sacrifice, and concludes:

In all these cases [of human sacrifice], the underlying discourse was one about civilization and barbarism. Human sacrifice functioned as a particularly efficient marker in this discourse because it combined two of the most important areas in which the Greeks distinguished themselves from barbarians: religious customs, and respect for the lives and persons of free people. Like many peoples, the Greeks, and later the Romans, considered their cultural norms to be the true and universal standards of civilization. Therefore, since the Graeco-Roman religious norms dictated the practice of animal sacrifice, human sacrifice was on the one hand an obviously deviant and perverse practice. On the other, considered simply as a type of murder that had been regularized and endowed with moral value, it exemplified the cruelty and contempt for human life that was thought to characterize barbarian mores. Through these stories of human sacrifice, then, Greeks and Romans were able to confirm their opinion of their own cultural superiority by attributing to a foreign people a practice that they considered cruel and perverse.²⁹⁵

This bifurcation of the world into civilized and uncivilized is taken up whole cloth by later Christian writers, as Rives goes on to elaborate:

²⁹⁴ See Azize 2007 for further discussion on this point.

²⁹⁵ Rives 1995, 68-69.

The manipulation of the motif of human sacrifice thus played an important role in the Christian construction of the category of ‘pagan.’ Although the use of the actual word ‘pagan’ in its modern sense did not become established until the late fourth century C.E., the lack of an accepted name does not mean that the category itself lacked definition. On the contrary, it was clearly defined by such markers as stories about human sacrifice. ...earlier Graeco-Roman writers used similar stories to define the cultural distance which they insisted separated themselves from barbarians. Christian writers, by citing examples of Graeco-Roman human sacrifice, were able to demonstrate that this vaunted cultural distance was in fact of no real significance: all those who maintained traditional beliefs and practices, whether Greeks, Romans, or barbarians, were stained with the same crimes and thus belonged to the same category. In this way the Christian writers of the second and early third centuries C.E. reworked the Graeco-Roman discourse about cultural distance to suit their own needs. The key categories were now ‘Christian,’ representing the cultural norms of humanity, and ‘pagan,’ representing deviation from those norms, yet they were marked as before by the absence or presence of human sacrifice.²⁹⁶

Given the polemic and / or moralizing agendas at play here, it is no wonder that, as Azize has pointed out:

... there is an inconsistency between the allegations [in classical sources]. Kleitarchos has the infants perish in a holocaust of fire, and provides details suggestive that living infants were cast into the flames. Ennius indicates that they were burned on altars. Plutarch has their throats cut, with no mention of flames.²⁹⁷

The classical evidence for child sacrifice in the Phoenician/Punic sphere gives the impression that there was a long-standing association between human sacrifice and the worship of Kronos/Saturn. It gives the impression that for many, it was “common knowledge” that Carthaginians (or *Poeni*, *Africani*, Λιβύων, etc.) were an example of a people for whom a horrifying practice (the sacrifice of adult or young humans) was considered acceptable under certain circumstances. The circumstances, number of sacrifices, distance in the past, and method of sacrificial killing varied from author to author – probably because, in most cases,

²⁹⁶ Rives 1995, 76.

²⁹⁷ Azize 2007, 187.

the point was not the details (horrific in any permutation), but the dramatic moment in an author's history or argument.

Those who rely on the classical sources as the lynchpin in the argument that child sacrifice was indeed a regular occurrence in Carthage or other western sites must take an homogenizing approach to the differences in descriptions. Mosca's attempt at synchronism is typical:

The situation is rather more complex when it comes to the occasions which called forth such a ritual response. Here we are faced with a multiplicity of explanations. The dominant motif is encapsulated [*sic*] in Philo of Byblos' 'crises of great danger,' which would obviously include the sieges described by Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius, as well as Pompeius Trogus' dreadful plague. On the other hand, Pliny, Silius Italicus, and Dracontius emphasize the annual recurrence of the rite. And still a third view is presented by Kleitarchos, who apparently associated it with the requests of individuals for 'great favor(s).' While these three sets of circumstances may at first glance seem mutually exclusive, it is theoretically possible that each represents a particular facet of the sacrifice's more general purpose. Thus, for example, Philo's 'crises of great danger' and Kleitarchos' 'great favor(s)' may reflect varying aspects – the one civic, the other personal – of the basic aim of the rite; their very vagueness may have been intentional.²⁹⁸

While the similarity between personal and public crisis might seem plausible, it is worth recalling the fact that no scholar of the ancient Mediterranean has argued that child sacrifice *never* took place. Historical texts from numerous times, places, and languages attest to the sacrifice of a child in times of disaster. The reason that child sacrifice in the Phoenician / Punic sphere is such a point of fascination and discussion is that it has been suggested that these sacrifices were both regularly and frequently occurring – a religious practice that went beyond crisis-management. In this way, distinctions between (a) occasional public sacrifices to avert disaster, (b) occasional personal sacrifices in fulfillment of personal vows, (c) annual religious sacrifices on behalf of a city, or (d) regularly expected sacrifices of each mother's

²⁹⁸ Mosca 1975, 24-25.

firstborn or first son, are not hair-splitting differences (nor even “particular facets” of a “more general purpose”) but very different religious rites.

To conclude, then, I will attempt an answer to Markoe’s question: “While the Greek and Latin sources display an admittedly anti-Carthaginian bias, can we justifiably dismiss their accounts as mere distortion or diatribe?”²⁹⁹ I think that many of the classical sources surveyed above can indeed be dismissed, perhaps not as “mere” distortion, but as uncritical transmitters of the classical belief that certain barbaric peoples sacrificed humans to their gods. In none of the texts surveyed is this belief questioned – it is assumed as something worthy of cataloging, in support of particular polemical or theological arguments, but hardly surprising. The author of the *Minos* even features Socrates’ companion demurely apologizing for reminding the great thinker of something so well-known: “...as I daresay you yourself have heard.” Certainly, the Greek (and subsequently, Roman³⁰⁰) tendency to caricature the Carthaginians as barbaric in other aspects is well documented among classical scholars.

However some of the texts surveyed here are less easily dismissed. Diodorus of Sicily is by far the most commonly cited as “proof” of the reality of regular child sacrifice at Carthage. His two very different accounts (*Bibliotheca historica* 13.86.1-3 and 20.14.1-7) of sacrifice at Carthage in the 5th and 4th century BCE, respectively, include a wide variety of detail put to use by the excavators of the Carthaginian child cremation cemetery. In the latter tale, the substitution of purchased, poor children for the “required” noble children is thought by Carthaginians to be the divinely-determined “reason” for the siege of Agathocles. To reenter the good graces of Kronos, they kill two hundred noble children (or three hundred, or five

²⁹⁹ Markoe 2000, 134.

³⁰⁰ “The context for the Roman adoption of the portrayal of the Carthaginian as the barbarian (the Romans had, after all, had good relations with the Carthaginians in earlier times) must be the need to persuade the Greek audience of Rome’s claim to be a (non-barbarian) liberator of Greek cities such as Syracuse from the Carthaginian barbarian...” (Prag 2010, 69-70).

hundred, depending on how you read this passage). The bronze statue of Kronos (similar to those accounts attributed to Cleitarchus) is described, and Diodorus wonders aloud about whether Euripides' story of Iphigeneia and the Taurian sacrifices is based on the Carthaginian sacrifices. Even the story of Kronos' own infanticide is brought to bear on his story.

Particularly interesting is the fact that Diodorus' description of the conquest of Tyre by Alexander (17.64.4) does not mention a Phoenician tradition of child sacrifice (while Quintus Curtius Rufus' version of the same story does). Part of what makes Diodorus' references so compelling is their complicatedness – writing in the 1st century BCE, Diodorus offers a relatively early glimpse into what various historians to that point had written about child sacrifice in Carthage. We know of a minimum of six sources used by Diodorus, but none of these (including the original text of Cleitarchus) is available to us. Scholars today often discard Diodorus' elaborate description of the bronze statue of Kronos which is said to be central to the rite, but cite with gravitas his description of the eventual trend of substituting poor children for noble ones.

A review of the twenty six authors (and their numerous works) which reference child sacrifice in the Phoenician / Punic sphere must conclude by recognizing the differences in detail, historicity, and purpose of each account. Scholars working on the particular problems of the child cremation cemeteries would do well to carefully distinguish *which* classical sources they accept as authoritative and historically accurate, and to offer some justification of those selections. Since the Greek and Latin authors contradict one another on many occasions, and since most claim to record previous textual reports without adding eye-witness testimony or independent verification, arguments for accepting the veracity of certain accounts should

be made carefully on the basis of the genre, transmission history, and historical particularities of each work.

For the purposes of the current study, I argue that the classical evidence does not offer incontrovertible, nor even strong, evidence that child sacrifice was a Levantine Phoenician practice. Although Carthage was linked in the minds of many classical authors to a Levantine Phoenician past and culture, the overwhelming evidence is that child sacrifice was attributed to the Carthaginians (or *Poeni*, *Africani*, Λιβύων, etc.) first, and only secondarily linked to Phoenicians. It seems entirely plausible that on some extreme occasions (war, plague, draught, or the like), a small number of children could have been sacrificed at Phoenicia, just as was reported to have happened in Moab (2 Kings 3:27) or in Greece itself (as mentioned in numerous Greek histories and tragedies). But the distinction between these occasional and symbolic sacrifices performed in order to save a city or a people, and a regular ritual of child sacrifice performed for population control or religious expectation, is significant.

Other details offered by the classical sources point to features of mortuary practice or belief not associated with child sacrifice. In particular, Diodorus' story of the disruption of the tomb of Theron on Sicily, first by a lightning storm, and then by the troops of Hannibal Mago (*Bibliotheca historica* 13.83.1-3), is tempting to mine for evidence of beliefs about keeping burials intact. Certainly, the story confirms the frequently attested concern of Phoenician inscriptions that burials remain intact and undisturbed. But it is worth remembering that we do not have Diodorus' sources for this late 5th century BCE scene – and it would not have been considered bad practice for Diodorus to have created much of the detail he includes. The fear of the soldiers, the warnings of the soothsayers, the subsequent plague and sightings of “spirits

of the dead” may all be 1st century BCE elaborations; it is impossible to separate the historical details from the rhetorical flourishes in this otherwise unattested Greek story.

Chapter VI.

Archaeological Evidence for Phoenician Mortuary Practice

A. Mortuary Remains in the Central Coastal Levant

Having surveyed the textual material from the Iron Age I-III central coastal Levant, as well as sources from outside this territory relevant to a study of Phoenician mortuary practice, we may now turn to the physical remains of burial practices themselves. The mortuary remains from the Phoenician homeland allow us to revisit two long-held scholarly conceptions of Phoenicia in these early centuries. On the one hand: the conception of Phoenicia as a loose confederation of politically independent city-states, competing with one another economically (both in trade and to establish and maintain control over surrounding towns and territory). On the other hand: the conception of the Phoenicians as a relatively culturally homogenous group—a population whose social systems and material culture were the same or comparable along the coast from ‘Achziv to ‘Amrit. Although both images of Phoenicia are common in the historical works surveyed in Chapter I, these conceptions about Phoenicia are rarely addressed in tandem with one another. Further, the analysis of self-ascribed aspects of identity beyond either ethnic identity or city-based political allegiance (for example, identity based on kinship-ties, professional association, gender, or regional affiliation) has rarely been undertaken. An analysis of the mortuary remains from the central coastal Levant offers a unique perspective from which to discover the ways in which individuals living in the Iron Age I, II, or Achaemenid Persian periods might have conceptualized their own political, social, or kinship-

based identities, and how they might have expressed those identities through the burial treatment of their dead.

Mortuary behavior is uniquely suited to the study of social identity and differentiation,¹ since the intentional burial of the dead is (a) culturally ubiquitous, (b) the result of deliberate actions, (c) the reflection of choices made within a limited set of societally-appropriate behaviors, and (d) consistent in some way(s) with the social roles held by the deceased during his/her lifetime. Thus patterns observed in the mortuary record are likely to reflect systematic and/or idiosyncratic elements of social identity and organization. That is, when chronological and geographic parameters are determined and understood, patterns in the mortuary record will reflect meaningful patterns in human behavior.

The limitations of mortuary data in reconstructing social organization or identity should also be noted. First, in the case of the present study, results are limited by the nature and quality of the available data. Because I am collecting materials published (in preliminary, partial, or full publications) from the 1850s to 2010s, extreme variation in the type, thoroughness, and value of preserved information on each tomb or cemetery is inevitable. This variation is not uncommon in projects of this nature; Baker's 1995 study of 1000 Neo-Babylonian graves faced similar difficulties. She warned that:

This large number masks the inevitable difficulties of variable excavation techniques, observation, recording and publication which afflict any study based on published archaeological reports. It includes almost 400 graves from Ur, for example, for which details of find-spots and stratigraphy are mostly lacking, and the pottery typology difficult to use. Constraints are imposed also by the preliminary nature of some of the reports; for example, entire grave groups are rarely illustrated.... It goes without saying that statistical evaluations are difficult to perform on data of such uneven quality.²

¹ For an analysis of the ways in which the nature of archaeological remains must inform a social analysis of mortuary practice, see O'Shea 1984 and 1996.

² Baker 1995, 209.

Systematizing the available data in the database constructed for this project makes these burials easier to use and to compare, but cannot compensate for information that has been entirely lost. Second, even with fully published or preserved burials, the archaeological record does not provide a complete record of mortuary behavior and ritual, much of which may be too ephemeral to be preserved. Aspects of ritual that occur outside the physical space of the cemetery are also lost to us, and the hazards of preservation at a particular necropolis or in certain soil matrixes cannot always be understood. Third, various facets of an individual's social identities will be represented in the archaeological mortuary record. Therefore, identifying which behaviors, adornments, grave goods, or other features of a burial represent which aspect of identity (e.g. gender, age, political affiliations, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious affiliation, and so on) can be ambiguous or multivalent. Fourth, and finally, the identities represented in a particular complex of mortuary behaviors will change over time. Renegotiation, manipulation, or re-appropriation of particular burial practices (or their correlated aspects of social identity) should be assumed to be ongoing, and are not always recoverable.

Despite these caveats, the mortuary record, like the textual record, offers an intentionally constructed picture of a particular society. Integrating the full range of Phoenician mortuary data from Levantine sites into an understanding of mortuary beliefs and practices obtained from textual (and iconographical) sources therefore provides a more nuanced view of the relationships between political and social groups and systems in Phoenicia during the period in question. The archaeological mortuary data allow a detailed look at the behavior of Iron Age I-III Phoenicians of all social classes; both chronologically, as

practices change over time and in response to new political realities, and geographically, at both the site-based and regional levels of study.

1. Parameters of the Study

To begin an analysis of the mortuary record of the Iron Age I-III Phoenician homeland, I have brought together all known graves into a database of burials, hosted in FileMaker Pro, as well as a catalog of mortuary sites (linked through Google Earth /ArcGIS). This reflects the collection of data on two levels: the level of the individual burial (which captures information on the nature of the grave structure, treatment of the body, type and number of grave goods, and skeletal information where applicable), and the level of the burial site. This system has proved necessary because of the disparate quality of preserved or published information available across the corpus. In some cases, sites with hundreds of burials are known, but none is individually studied or published (as with the site of Sidon-Dakerman³); in other cases, museum-purchased tomb contents evince detailed information about burials whose deceased inhabitants were never studied (e.g. in the cases of Qrayé and Qasmieh in southern Lebanon). This method of collecting data on both a site-by-site and burial-by-burial level allows me to use sites missing almost all excavation records in the ArcGIS site database, link burials within

³ Our record of this excavation is particularly tantalizing. The only report on the Sidon-Dakerman cemetery was made in 1969 by Roger Saidah, a prolific Lebanese archaeologist with the DGA whose untimely death in 1979 (along with the loss of records kept in the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, located directly atop the “Green Line” during the civil war in Lebanon) prevented the publication of a number of Lebanese cemetery sites explored in the 1960s. In a survey of then-ongoing archaeological work in Lebanon, Saidah mentions in passing a necropolis found at the site of Sidon-Dakerman. He first notes that “only a few hundred graves and tombs of an extensive necropolis have been uncovered since the excavations started three years ago [in 1966],” referring to tombs from the LB, Late Iron Age, and Late Hellenistic / Early Roman periods. He goes on to say, “it must be stressed that this is the first time we have uncovered such a large number of Late Iron Age and Late Bronze Age burials. The great quantity of Late Mycenaean and Cypriot pottery found together with local wares and Egyptian products is bound to be a landmark in the study of the interrelations of the Eastern Mediterranean countries...” (Saidah 1969, 122), although no final counts, description, or site plans were ever published.

reused tombs in the FileMaker Pro database, and even maintain records of ceramics associated with a group of burials where records do not indicate which items accompanied each burial.

In collecting and recording this material, I have worked in accordance with the following assumptions or principles:

1. Minimum numbers of burials should be recorded (for sites or for tombs), even when exact numbers are not known.
2. Excavators' dates, ceramic analysis, and stratigraphic analysis should be accepted unless explicitly and convincingly refuted by later scholarship.
3. Direct engagement with the material collected in this study is a valuable component of accurately recording the data.
4. Royal burials should be treated as a small subset of the full range of mortuary behaviors; not as an "apical" or otherwise paradigmatic expression of a mortuary system.

I will explore each of these principles briefly, below.

1. Minimum numbers of burials should be recorded (for sites or for tombs), even when exact numbers are not known. When minimum numbers are used in place of exact counts, I will indicate this by use of the sign: >[N]. The goal in adopting this practice is to offer some basis for size comparison across the corpus. In many cases, excavators use terms like "multiple burials" or "family tombs" without noting the nature of skeletal remains (or, when skeletal remains are not present). In recording these burials, I use the indication >2 (as the minimum number of burials still qualifying as "multiple"). This is intended to balance a conservative, accurate transcription of the available data with excavators' intentions.

2. Excavators' dates, ceramic analysis, and stratigraphic analysis should be accepted unless explicitly and convincingly refuted by later scholarship. While frequently frustrating, the scope of the database and the nature of the questions at the center of this study necessitated that I accept the conclusions and descriptions provided by excavators on questions of date or ceramic analysis. The terminology used to describe certain ceramic types, forms, decorative elements, or even slip-colors varies from excavation to excavation, as well as

among museums, university teams, and even national communities of scholars. In some instances the ceramics from a particular excavation are missing, were not kept, or are not accessible. Although I have worked with Phoenician, Cypro-Phoenician, Israelite, Transjordanian, and Aegean ceramic corpora in excavation and museum settings,⁴ it simply was not feasible to formally restudy any of the ceramic material from the burials included in this study. It is my hope that future work on Phoenician mortuary practice will be able to take this database as a starting point, as refinement of the ceramic repertoire offers even better methods of re-dating some of the long-known burial sites. The growing field of ceramic petrography (and in particular, the burgeoning collections of thin-sections being assembled at universities throughout Israel and Cyprus) will dramatically improve our ability to make the most of long-excavated, and now decontextualized, materials.

3. Direct engagement with the material collected in this study is a valuable component of accurately recording the data. Wherever possible, I have visited the sites, sarcophagi, or physical remains described in the database. Living in Beirut from May through August of 2009, while studying and working under Dr. Leila Badre at the American University of Beirut's Archaeological Museum, I was able to visit nearly all of the Lebanese and Syrian sites whose Iron Age remains are still accessible. Most recently, a research trip to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum allowed me to photograph and study the remains from Osman Hamdey Bey's early excavations in the necropoleis at Sidon, including the only surviving Phoenician "mummy" – the unevenly preserved remains of the Persian period Sidonian king, Tabnit. In this way I have attempted to work from the actual phenomena (not simply the

⁴ In particular, I cataloged the entire collection of Iron I-III period ceramics under the direction of Dr. Leila Badre at the American University in Beirut. I also trained with Dr. Pamela Gaber in Persian-period ceramics at the site of Idalion, Cyprus; in Persian and Iron II period Transjordanian ceramics under Dr. Randy Younker at Tal Jalul, Jordan; and in Iron II period ceramics from the southern Levant with Dr. Nava Panitz-Cohen at the site of Tel Rehov, Israel.

scanty publications that are available), maximizing the level of detail and precision captured by the database. Access to both the original artifacts and the sites from which these artifacts were removed has been critical to the kinds of social investigation I seek to accomplish using these data.

4. Royal burials should be treated as a small subset of the full range of mortuary behaviors; not as an “apical” or otherwise paradigmatic expression of a mortuary system.

Previous histories of Phoenicia have addressed mortuary practice primarily via a small sample of sumptuous burials which are exceptions in the broader mortuary system of the central coastal Levant. Although spectacular, monumental sarcophagi with long inscriptions (e.g. the Ahiiram sarcophagus from Byblos, or the Sidonian sarcophagus of Tabnit) have understandably been given a central place in previous discussions of Phoenician mortuary practice, this study will address royal burials as a relatively minor subset of mortuary practice in the regions under consideration. We will consider the possibility that the burials of those who claimed the title of *mlk* in the central coastal Levant were public events, or that the motifs, beliefs, or practices evinced in royal burials would have been highly desired features of burial, emulated by those of other social strata. But at the outset it seems equally possible that the burials of these kings were part of an exclusive or differently circumscribed system of appropriate mortuary behaviors. In either case, royal burials will be treated in accordance with the number of extant burials known, and not in proportion to their dominant position in public reception.

These principles, along with the construction of two databases to quantify the available mortuary data, set the present study apart from previous studies of Phoenician mortuary practice.

2. Previous Analyses of Burial Data

Phoenician burials have been excavated and published since the 1850s, and many of those early French accounts of explorations in Phoenicia were written more like travelogues than excavation reports. Pottery was often cleared from tombs to be sold as “lots” to museums and private collectors, and skeletal material was frequently discarded or lost along the way. And as is a problem in all times and places, much archaeologically-derived data was lost due to postponed or entirely lacking publication. That said, several studies of mortuary practice in the central coastal Levant are worthy of mention.

In 1989, the first edition of *L'Univers Phénicien* was released, a monumental history of the Phoenician and Punic world, written by Gras, Rouillard, and Teixidor. Chapter VI of that work was an extensive study on “Les Phéniciens et la mort.” This work examined Levantine burial practices as part of a complex system of Phoenician mortuary behavior that included all those burials attributed to Phoenician or Punic influence⁵ in Cyprus, Carthage (along with Utica, Rachgoun, and other African sites), Malta, Sardinia, Sicily, and sites further west (including Ibiza and the Andalusian coast). This study was reworked and translated into English two years later, in a 1991 article in the journal *Berytus*, entitled “The Phoenicians and Death.” The abstract for this later piece indicates its authors intended it as an update to the 1989 chapter, in light of more recent evidence from the central coastal Levant:

The book *L'Univers Phénicien* had just appeared in Paris when evidence for a ‘tophet’ was brought to light in Tyre. The authors comprehensively discuss the

⁵ “A tomb is identified as ‘Phoenician’ after taking into consideration burial custom, shape of the burial place, funerary offerings and evidence from inscriptions (in fact, very rare). Offerings, mainly consisting of pottery identified as Phoenician, are an indispensable guide, even if these are often accompanied by vessels from other Mediterranean regions. The burial custom - inhumation or incineration - is not significant in itself for these practices are characteristic of various regions of the Orient. The same holds for the shape of the tomb,” (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1991, 132).

Phoenicians and their attitudes towards death, in a fresh and sensitive account. The excavated archaeological evidence is presented first: burial places and rites, funerary offerings and cults. The death of children is dealt with next, including a re-examination of ancient and recent written sources describing human and child sacrifice. The final presentation of ‘medicine and archaeology’ [actually a discussion of the osteological study of ‘tophet’ burials] reveals that only unbiased and meticulous scientific analysis of archaeological finds can provide answers and hence correct age-old prejudices.

Notably, the “tophet” at Tyre turned out to be an adult cremation cemetery (Tyre al-Bass, discussed as a case-study below). All of the tomb case studies (in a section on “Tombs and the Aristocracy”) in the 1989 and 1991 works came from outside the Levantine homeland (i.e. at Carthage, Ghajn Ouajjed on Malta, and at Trayamar in Spain). Although both versions of the Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor study attest to an excellent and careful survey of relevant materials, the vast chronological and geographic scope of this work, along with its limited space, popular intended audience, and misidentification of the Tyre al-Bass materials limits its usefulness.

Block-Smith’s 1992 study of more than eight hundred fifty burials from over sixty Iron Age I-II sites in the Levant⁶ overlaps the present study both geographically (in part) and chronologically (in full), but was aimed at establishing a typology of Judahite burial practices in this period. She includes burials “from Khaldé in the north to Tell er-Ruqueish in the south, and from the Mediterranean shore east to Amman,”⁷ encompassing the northern and southern coast, inland areas encompassing the territory of both Israel and Judah, the Jordan River Valley, and the Transjordanian Plateau. Her study identified eight burial types: simple, cist, jar, anthropoid coffin, bathtub coffin, cave, and bench tomb burial, in addition to cremation.

⁶ Her data set is based on J. Abercrombie’s 1979 digital catalog of burials.

⁷ Bloch-Smith 1992, 22.

Simple and cist burials contained between one and three inhumations;⁸ even coffin burials could hold up to six individuals.⁹ Bloch-Smith concludes that the bathtub coffin (first appearing in the southern Levant in the 8th century BCE) was an Assyrian burial type, introduced to the region under imperial influence. Three types of cremation burials were identified: (a) pyre burials in the sand, (b) cremated bodies interred in urns, amphorae, or jars, and (c) partially cremated remains or cremation strata from inland cave tombs,¹⁰ and she concludes that the entire age range (from infant to adult) was subject to being buried in this manner. While Bloch-Smith's study was intended as a typology of Judahite burial practices, she concludes that cremation in particular was a Phoenician practice introduced to the southern Levant during the Iron Age II period.¹¹

Krings' edited handbook *La Civilisation Phénicienne et Punique* (1995) likewise attempted a systematic approach to the available data on Phoenician mortuary practice. Several chapters deal with components of the mortuary record,¹² although inscriptions, sarcophagi, and funerary architecture are addressed as separate corpora, and sometimes in as few as two pages. Also in 1995, Sader's short article on "Nécropoles et Tombes Phéniciennes du Liban" directly critiqued previous summaries of the Levantine mortuary record as insufficient. Outlining the difficulties in documentation, presentation, and analysis of the Lebanese mortuary data, she proceeded to offer an inventory of cemeteries and tombs known

⁸ "...in the case of multiple interments, one was usually an infant or child," Bloch-Smith 1992, 133.

⁹ At Deir el-Balah "coffins held from two to six inhumations, at least one of which was an adult male," Bloch-Smith 1992, 135.

¹⁰ Bloch-Smith 1992, 137-138.

¹¹ She dates these burials from 11th-7th centuries BCE: "This unusual treatment of corporeal remains, the preponderance of Phoenician and Cypro-Phoenician vessels, and the distribution of this burial type [primarily from coastal sites in the case of the first two types of cremation burials], collectively demonstrate that it was introduced into the region by the Phoenicians," (Bloch-Smith 1992, 138).

¹² Namely chapters I.A.I.1 ("Les Inscriptions" by M. G. Amadasi Guzzo), I.B.2 ("L'archéologie monumentale *partim* Orient," by M. Yon), II.14 ("Vie des cités et urbanisme *partim* Orient," by M. Yon), II.16 ("Architecture Funéraire" by E. Díes Cusí), and II.17d ("L'art. Sarcophages, relief, steles," by G. Tore).

from Lebanese Phoenician sites from the 11th-6th centuries BCE; “un premier temps de realizer un groupement des données relatives aux necropolis et tombes phéniciennes...”¹³

The last fifteen years have seen numerous mortuary-related studies on individual cemeteries, sites, ritual practices, grave good types, iconography, or stelae associated with Phoenician sites and material culture. In particular, Elayi and Haykal’s 1996 monograph,¹⁴ *Nouvelles découvertes sur les usages funéraires des Phéniciens d’Arwad*, synthesized several burial sites and sarcophagi groups from the region of Tartous, Syria (ancient Arwad) in the Persian period. Despite the fact that most of the material had been either discovered in the 19th century, or excavated in small rescue operations in the 1970s and 1980s, this study looked at the material systematically,¹⁵ at the sub-regional level, offering a more in depth look at mortuary practices in southern coastal Syria than had ever been attempted before. But beyond these encouraging developments, new attempts to analyze the burial data from the Phoenician central coastal Levant have not been attempted on a large scale. This study attempts to provide a new presentation of the old data, and begin some tentative observations on the basis of this systematized material.

3. The Structure of the Burial Database

The data collected on the level of the individual burial was designed to associate this information along as many vectors as possible. Each entry is described in terms of its burial,

¹³ Sader 1995, 15.

¹⁴ Haykal published the marble and clay sarcophagi earlier in 1996 in a publication in Arabic.

¹⁵ Some weaknesses of the presentation may be noted. Unfortunately, the small number of skeletal finds resulting from rescue excavations were studied only via photographs; it is not clear why this was done. Plans and photographs of the necropoleis, tombs, and sarcophagi were taken from previous works (like Renan 1864), rather than having been redrawn. See Sader 2000 for further comment, although she makes the mistake of assuming that Appendix B involves testing for the presence of plaster inside the sarcophagi, when Elayi and Haykal 1996, 116-117 makes it clear they are testing for evidence of resins used in mummification.

tomb chamber, and tomb number (where applicable), as well as its site of origin. Drop-down menus indicate the range of typical occurrences, and text fields allow further elaboration on the following vectors of mortuary practice:

- Burial type: Pit grave,¹⁶ cist tomb,¹⁷ built tomb,¹⁸ cave tomb,¹⁹ shaft tomb²⁰
- Treatment of the body: cremation, partial cremation,²¹ inhumation, secondary burial,²² mummification,²³ unknown
- Skeletal presence: Full skeleton, partial skeleton, cremated skeleton,²⁴ no skeletal remains.
- Sex and age of the individual: With drop-down menus for infant, subadult,²⁵ and adult; and text field for further notes or specification.
- Orientation of the body: Including orientation within the grave (on back, front, right or left side), orientation to a cardinal point (feet-to-head), and orientation of the head (facing upwards, downwards, or to the side).
- Burial vessel: none, sarcophagus,²⁶ ceramic vessel,²⁷ other²⁸
- Grave goods: tallies are provided for numbers of amphorae, plates/bowls, spouted vessels, jugs, flasks, and other vessels; as well as for scarabs, figurines, masks, amulets, weapons, jewelry, and other items. A text field is provided for further elaboration on all grave goods.
- State of Preservation: Intact, Not Intact - disrupted,²⁹ Not Intact - cleared.³⁰ A text field allows notes as to whether disruptions were due to ancient or modern activity.
- Date of Burial, as well as a text field for the reasons given for this date.
- Associated faunal and floral remains. All these include text fields for descriptions.
- Associated burial markers (i.e. stelae or other visual markers).

¹⁶ Indicates the body was placed in a pit dug directly into the soil of the cemetery or tomb area. Usually rectangular or ovoid in shape. Unlined by un-perishable material.

¹⁷ Indicates that the body was placed on a lined pit; that a "cist" has been prepared, usually through the lining of a pit with stones or other materials. Usually rectangular or ovoid in shape (roughly 2 m x 1 m for adults).

¹⁸ Indicates that the tomb enclosure was built from stones above ground.

¹⁹ Indicates the use of a natural grotto or cave for burial.

²⁰ Indicates a rock-cut tomb with a vertical, diagonal, or horizontal shaft (entry passage).

²¹ Indicates that many bones were still identifiable; this is due to a low level of heat being obtained or the fact that body was burnt in the grave and the original position of the body is still discernible.

²² An inhumation whose skeletal remains are pushed aside or placed in a vessel after decomposition, usually to make room for further burials.

²³ Indicates that there is evidence for the treatment of the soft tissue of an inhumation burial, with some desiccated soft tissue remaining.

²⁴ Any level of cremation is marked similarly, whether bones are identifiable or not. The text field is used to describe further details.

²⁵ Pre-pubescent and therefore unable to be sexed.

²⁶ A stone, clay, or marble burial vessel in the general shape of an inhumed burial. "Anthropoid sarcophagus" is used in the descriptive field when relevant to allow further searching.

²⁷ In most cases, these are "cinerary urns," a term indicating any large ceramic vessel used for the burial of cremated remains. I have used the term "ceramic vessel" due to the occurrence of a few secondary burials, in which skeletal remains were placed in an amphora or other ceramic vessel after decomposition.

²⁸ Such as wooden coffin, for which there is circumstantial evidence (the presence of iron nails) at Tell Michal.

²⁹ This indicates the burials have been disturbed, either in antiquity, by modern processes, or by natural causes, but that some burial information remains.

³⁰ This term indicates disruption that left no significant burial evidence in place.

-Evidence for ritual activity at the site of the grave (text field only).

The individual burial is linked by means of tomb number (and tomb chamber number) with other associated burials and with other burials in the same cemetery. The date of the excavation of the burial is given, when known. Bibliographical text fields are present for publication records and references to photographs or drawings of each burial.

At this stage, any quantified totals of practices or phenomena captured by the database must be interpreted only as tendencies, trends, or patterns, and the location of each burial site must be kept in mind throughout. The number of intact burials is extremely limited, and almost no cemeteries included in the database are known in their full extent. A full publication of the database entries is forthcoming; at this initial stage I will attempt only a “first pass” at analyzing and then synthesizing this large quantity of mortuary data.

4. Goals and Questions

Broadly speaking, the goals of this study are to determine the overall structure of the mortuary system in use during the Iron Age I-III period central coastal Levant, and to associate particular mortuary treatments or practices with examples of specific types of distinction. The initial querying of the database pursued by this study will therefore involve the following questions, with their attendant premises:

1. Was a “Phoenician” ethnic identity actively constructed at any time in the mortuary record of the Iron Age I-III period Phoenician homeland? To answer this question, the database will be utilized to determine whether there is evidence that Phoenicians from the Levantine homeland identified themselves as part of a community of individuals with shared cultural attributes, self-perceived kinship ties, and meaningful differences between themselves

and other nearby human groups.³¹ Because ethnic identity involves horizontal distinction, it will be marked in the burial record (where expressed) for individuals regardless of socio-economic class. Ethnic identity is distinct from, and transcends (in some ways or with some features) class status, profession, or other horizontal differentiation; the challenge is to understand which repeated actions in a particular context might be expressions of Phoenician identity, as oppose to other aspects of social identity. To function as markers of ethnic identity, the burial patterns implicated by this pattern should be distinct from mortuary behavior in nearby regions or cultures.

2. On the other hand, was a city-centered cultural identity actively constructed instead or in place of a broad-based ethnic identity? To answer this question, patterns in the mortuary record which are shared among sites known to be associated with one of the major city centers (i.e. Arwad, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre) from the Phoenician homeland, but are distinct from those associated with other city centers, will be sought. This question attempts to test the commonly accepted model of Phoenicia as a loose confederation of “fiercely independent, rival cities”³² which came together only when political, military, or economic circumstances required. If this model is accurate, we might expect a certain pattern of sub-regional identity (on the level of affiliation with one of the major Phoenician urban centers) to be signaled in the burial record.

A “Sidonian” mortuary system might be expected, for example, featuring some constellation of practices which cross-cuts socio-economic differences in the relevant populations, to find some form of expression across all burial sites associated with the Sidonian socio-political sphere. These identities might be expected to be defined in opposition

³¹ See for example, Emberling 1997.

³² Markoe 2000, 10.

to mortuary practices or signaling at other Phoenician sub-regions, although this is not necessary. One group can define itself through particular cultural markers as being distinct from another, without the second group marking their own cultural distinction in a similar manner.

3. Is it possible to identify patterns of mortuary practice that might indicate certain beliefs about death and the afterlife? This question is particularly problematic. While the structure of a system of mortuary practice will be related in significant ways to the organization of the society which produced it,³³ the particular forms of a given mortuary practice will be determined by cultural and historical context constructed by that society (often irretrievable without textual data). In other words, the particular “meaning” of a practice, image, or ritual cannot be derived on the basis of form alone. The incorporation of information from the inscriptional and textual record (in Chapter VII) will readdress this question with further detail.

In each case, patterns will be sought in terms of treatment of the corpse, orientation of the grave and body, preparation of the burial vessel or space, nature and quantity of grave goods, and evidence for ritual activity at the burial or cemetery. However, mortuary variability may indicate many features of social identity, including ethnicity, political affiliation, age, sex (or gender), social position (vertical differentiation), subgroup affiliation (horizontal differentiation), cause of death, location of death, and so on.³⁴ Thus no single variable of mortuary practice or behavior will be used in isolation to make these determinations; rather, regularly occurring and highly visible constellation of behaviors,

³³ “A priori, the archaeologist can make no assumption concerning either the temporal stability or instability of a culture’s mortuary activities, nor can it be assumed that any specific aspect of such treatment will be more or less stable. It can be assumed, however, that changes in the funerary complex will be related to other changes in the society as a whole” (O’Shea 1984, 285).

³⁴ See especially O’Shea 1984.

rituals, or objects will be sought. In all cases, the discussion will be complicated by the uneven nature of the burial data at our disposal, and by the accidents of site discovery.

Once ethnic identity is bracketed as only one of the possible identities being constructed and communicated through material culture and mortuary practice, it is possible to hold a more nuanced view of the culture of the central coastal Levant. Special attention to the Iron Age II-Achaemenid Persian period transition will also be paid, as a means of investigating the effects of this empire on the region in question, and the political and social changes that were incurred.

Because of the nature of the questions this study seeks to address, it is necessary to start not at the level of the burial, but at the level of the cemetery site. A presentation of the most significant burial sites, arranged by socio-political region (those sites affiliated with each urban center) from north to south, follows. In this way, the mortuary landscape not only of the central coastal Levant, but of the individual cemetery sites themselves (and, perhaps, the systems of mortuary practice in operation during the Iron Age I-III) may be explored.

B. Phoenician Levantine Mortuary Landscapes

The term “mortuary landscape” is often used quite loosely. Parker Pearson's exploration of the term is especially instructive:

We may consider a landscape of the dead in various ways. Firstly, the relationship of the living to the dead can be explored through their spatial and topographic separation and the extent to which the dead occupy the sacred and secular places within the landscape. Secondly, the micro-topographic and landscape setting of the places of the dead may provide further insights into the ways in which the dead were incorporated into cosmologies and social practices.... Thirdly, the architecture and spatial organization of the place of the dead may also be examined in such terms.³⁵

³⁵ Parker Pearson 1999, 124.

In other words, any scale above that of the individual burial can be considered the investigative goal of landscape studies. However, because the scale of landscape studies is not limited to the cemetery itself, but can encompass other features of the surrounding environs, including nearby settlements, natural features, and so on, this term can be surprisingly useful in drawing mortuary analysis into contact with other components of archaeological / anthropological investigation.

The present study seeks to address cemetery sites as “units” of analysis, as distinct from (and in addition to) individual burials or tombs (as many of the earliest cemetery discoveries did not record enough information to create complete entries in a database of burials). I thus first compiled a list of all known Iron Age cemetery sites associated with Phoenician material culture in the Levant, and attempted to locate them in the modern landscape using contemporary Arabic place-names, GIS databases, and satellite photos. This posed its own challenges, as the cemetery site names varied widely between excavation or travelogue publications, let alone in modern Arabic transcriptions. The following are the sites included in the Googel Earth / ArcGIS data and subsequent cemetery landscape discussions:



Figure VI.1: Total Mortuary Sites Studied
 (map created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

Because of the size of the list (forty-four sites, some with multiple cemeteries), I will address these sites regionally, following the organization utilized in Chapters II and III, i.e. moving down the central Levantine coast generally from north to south.

1. Burial Sites from the Region of Arwad
2. Burial Sites from the Region of Byblos
3. Burial Sites from the Region of Beirut
4. Burial Sites from the Region of Sidon
5. Burial Sites from the Beqaa Valley (Inland)
6. Burial Sites from the Region of Tyre
7. Burial Sites from the Carmel Region

Because of the large number of sites known from northern Israel, I have added a grouping for those sites in the Carmel region (near modern Haifa), although these sites seem to have been under Tyrian control or cultural influence for much of the Iron Age. Each group of regional

sites is listed in order of place name, excluding the modifiers *khirbet* (“ruin”), *dayr / deir* (“monastery”) or *tell / tel* (“settlement mound”) as well as expressions of the definite article such as *el-*, *es-*, or *al-*. All known site name variants will be given in the left-hand column of the grids which follow. Sites will be labeled on the accompanying maps (when possible) using the first spelling listed.

1. Burial Sites from the Region of Arwad



Figure VI.2: Database Sites from the Region of Arwad
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

Nine cemeteries or tomb locations from sites near ‘Arwad, in southern coastal Syria, attest to the Iron Age burial practices of their inhabitants. Two date to the Iron Age II period, an inhumation and cremation cemetery at Tell Sukas, and a cremation cemetery at Tell ‘Arqa.

At Sukas, the inhumation graves are found dug into pits in the sandy soil, some of them lined with clay. One primary cremation (left where it had been incinerated) was the exception; the others were buried in ceramic vessels containing both burnt and unburnt bones.

The Persian period tombs from Sukas (and the cemetery at Qarnūm, described by Renan, now lost) offer quite a glimpse of quite a different phenomenon than the three monumental hypogea still visible at ‘Amrit, and the tombs from the “zone des chalets,” Bano, Hai al-Hamarat, Al-Kaïsouneh, and Ram az-Zahab dated to the same period. The latter five sites, ranging in size from one to ten burials, all contain sarcophagi (in marble, stone, and clay).

Table VI.1: Burial Sites in the Region of Arwad

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ³⁶ (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
‘Amrit / Amrit / ‘Amrīt / Marathus / Marathos Hypogea	34.83 35.90 (Syria)	5 th -1 st c. BCE	Located 7 km south of Tartus, approx. 700 m inland from the coast; the ancient site was ca. 3 x 2 km. Served as the continental port for the island of Aradus / Arwad / Ruad. Three Persian period funerary towers remain visible (consisting of hypogea topped by funerary monuments; two are called “the spindles,” a third of cubic shape), and were restored in 1976.	>3 [no human remains found; three hypogea] / 0	1. Early visitors to the site include M. Maundrell (1967); R. Pococke (1743); and E. Renan (1860) 2. M. Dunand (1926) 3. M. Dunand and Nassib Saliby (1954, 1955, 1957, 1976)	Renan 1864; Dunand 1953; Dunand et al. 1954-55; Dunand and Saliby 1956; Saliby 1997; Dayagi-Mendels 2002
‘Amrit “zone des chalets” tomb	34.83 35.90 (Syria)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located north of ‘Amrit in the “chalets” region in the high red sand dunes about 225 m from the shore. A group tomb or dromos, half cut into the bedrock, and half built. The dromos is 3.5 m x 1 m, the tomb chamber is 2.5 m x 1.5 m, the ceiling 3 m high. Nine <i>loculi</i> cut into the walls, five of which contained sarcophagi. Each sarcophagus still contained a skeleton, lying on its back. The other four <i>loculi</i> contained bones and the remains of at least two clay sarcophagi. No grave goods in the tomb.	9 / 0	Discovered in 1996	Elayi and Haykal 1996

³⁶ All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

Tell 'Arqa / Arka / Aarka / Aarqa	34.532222 36.035556 (Lebanon)	8 th -7 th c. BCE	Located southwest of Halba, approximately 10 km from the coast. There is an Iron Age necropolis located on the periphery of the tell. A cremation area and three 8 th -7 th century BCE cremation burials (not in urns) are mentioned by Thalmann but not fully published. The possible scope of the necropolis is not described. Evidence of a cremation area.	0 / >3	Thalmann (IFAPO; 1972)	Thalmann 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Sader 1995
Bano	34.939097 35.940478 (Syria)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located 7 km south of Tartous and 3 km east of 'Amrit. A single built tomb found already looted. The anthropoid sarcophagus was opened and filled with soil and bone; the tomb had filled with water.	1 / 0	Discovered in 1995	Elayi and Haykal 1996
Hay al-Hamarat / Ḥay al-Ḥamrat	34.872016 35.884919 (Syria)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located south of Tartous, approximately 700 m from Tell Ghamqé (ancient Enhydra). Single built tomb found at a depth of 4.5m. Anthropoid sarcophagus found filled with water, but with skeleton still intact, lying on its back with head turned to the right and arms crossed over the pelvis.	1 / 0	Discovered in 1988	Elayi and Haykal 1996, Lipiński 2004
Al-Kaïsouneh	34.883333 35.883333 (Syria)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	A coastal site, located near Tell Qarnūm close to Tartous' Roman port. One marble sarcophagus fragment which may have been for a woman. Marks the northernmost anthropoid sarcophagus from Phoenician territory.	>1 / 0	Marble sarcophagus fragment discovered in 1956-57	Elayi and Haykal 1996
Carnus / Tell Qarnūm	34.923379 35.878746 (Syria)	Persian?- Byzantine periods	Located 4 km north of Tartous and 4.5 km northeast of Arwad, near the bay of al-Mina. Renan described an enormous necropolis (over four kilometers along the plain of Tartous) riddled with holes and pits (described only as ancient), which has since been extensively looted and damaged.	? / 0	E. Renan (1860)	Renan 1864, Elayi and Haykal 1996, Lipiński 2004
Ram az-Zahab / Rum az-Zahab	34.850509 35.917726 (Syria)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located 6 km south of Tartous, and about 1 km northeast of 'Amrit. A necropolis approximately 20 m x 12 m large is located about 20 m west of the Tartous-Homs highway. Seven tombs were excavated; five contained one body, two contained two. Between 2-5 m from one another. Three contained marble anthropoid sarcophagi, and one contained a marble coffin or theke. Built tombs made from <i>ramleh</i> stone. One child buried without sarcophagus.	10 / 0	R. Haykal (Syrian Department of Antiquities)	Elayi and Haykal 1996
Tall Sukas / Tell Soukas / Tell Soukass / Suksi / Shuksi	35.333333 35.916667 (Syria)	7 th -4 th c. BCE	Located on the coast of Syria, approximately 26 km from Latakia and 6 km south of Jableh / Gabla; the site is approximately 4.7 acres large. Riis uncovered an Iron Age cemetery which produced thirty-four graves including inhumations and cremations.	? / ? [34 graves]	1. Emil Forrer (Bryn Mawr College; 1934) 2. P. J. Riis (Danish Carlsberg Expedition; 1958-63)	Riis 1970-86; Riis 1979; Abou Assaf 1997; Hodos 2013

The most impressive monuments from 'Amrit are, unfortunately, some of the least well preserved in terms of tomb contents. The funerary monuments at 'Amrit are approximately

9.5 m in height. A handful of steps lead into their bases, where tomb chambers were built, with burial niches or *loculi* cut into the walls. The pyramidal hypogeum features two chambers, one of which contained evidence of its reuse from the 4th-1st centuries BCE.³⁷



Figure VI.3: Left, the Pyramidal Hypogeum at 'Amrit, With Tomb Entrance; Right, the Interior of the Tomb beneath, with Burial Niches and Modern Graffiti (photos taken by the author)

The dome hypogeum features a 5.5 m domed cylinder flanked by four lions, also with a two-chambered base. Unfortunately, the remainder of the hypogea were almost entirely cleared out, offering little context for these grand funerary monuments.

³⁷ Saliby 1997, 113.

2. Burial Sites from the Region of Byblos



Figure VI.4: Database Sites from the Region of Byblos
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

The cemeteries from the region of Byblos, famous for having produced the Ahiram sarcophagus and other monumental sarcophagi, are also difficult to compare. Three cemeteries are thought to date to the Iron Age II period: some shaft tombs in the cliffs above the city, some possible cremations attributed to Necropolis “K,” and possibly other rock-cut tombs at Yannouh. The Royal necropolis at Byblos was in use from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I period, and revealed nine rock-cut tombs containing royal burials.

Table VI.2: Burial Sites in the Region of Byblos

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ³⁸ (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications

³⁸ All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

Byblos / Gbayl / Gbeil / Jebail / Jubail / Gibelet / Gebal / Gubla	34.121111 35.648056 (Lebanon)	Iron II period (no later than 650 BCE) ³⁹	Located 60 km north of Beirut. A group of Iron Age shaft tombs (one with known 7 th c. ceramics) was found by Dunand on the cliffs near Byblos. Never published by Dunand; only one ceramic piece was ever studied (Culican 1970). ⁴⁰	? / ?	Maurice Dunand (Lebanese government and the Louvre Museum; 1928-1975)	Culican 1970; Sader 1995
Royal Necropolis of Byblos	34.121111 35.648056 (Lebanon)	19 th (? ⁴¹) - 9 th c. BCE	Located northeast of the city. A 1922 landslide revealed the presence of nine royal tombs from the LB - early IA. The tombs were buried ca. 12 m below the ground. Each featured a rock-hewn vertical square shaft and chamber containing sarcophagus and burial goods (five of the nine had been looted). Tomb V, on the western slope facing the sea, produced the Ahiram sarcophagus, along with another two sarcophagi.	>11 [nine tombs; one containing three sarcophagi] / 0	Pierre Montet (1921-1924), following a 1922 landslide.	
Necropolis "K" at Byblos	34.121111 35.648056 (Lebanon)	MB, reused in LB, used intermittently in IA II (9 th -8 th c. BCE)	Located northeast of the ancient city of Byblos. Some indications of 9 th -8 th centuries BCE urn cremations E of the city outside the walls.	0 / ?		Salles 1980, 1994
Yanouh / Dahr Yanouh / Yenouh / Yannouh	34.100583 35.884036 (Lebanon)	Iron II period (?)	Located approximately 20 km from the coast, 40 km east of Byblos / Jbeil, in the high valley of Nahr Ibrahim (the Adonis River). Tombs and sarcophagi cut into the nearby rocks	? / 0	University Saint-Joseph, the Lebanese DGA, and IFPO (1999-2005)	http://www.mom.fr/Yanouh-et-le-Nahr-Ibrahim.html#176c

The publications and dating of the materials from the Iron Age II period site make the use of this material especially difficult.

³⁹ Dated on the basis of the ceramic grave goods, "...belonging to the end of the Phoenician Red-Slip tradition," (Culican 1970, 10).

⁴⁰ "Renan (1864: 75, 410) maintained that the shaft tombs at Byblos represented the earliest examples of Phoenician tombs. He noted that the arrangement of the shafts and the way in which they opened in to the chambers seemed Egyptian in style" (Dayagi-Mendels 2002, 4).

⁴¹ Three of the intact tombs each contained an Egyptian object which could establish a *terminus post quem* (if not a precise date for the tomb contents); one featuring the cartouche of Amenemhat III and another, a cartouche of Amenemhet IV (both from the 12th dynasty; 19th century BCE). Similarly, Ahiram's tomb (V) contained an alabaster vase with the cartouche of Rameses II (reigned 1279-1213 BCE), although note that two other burials were also placed in Tomb V, "clearly shifted to one side to allow room for the next," (Moscati 1989 [2001 printing], 173). There seem to have been large numbers of these kinds of objects bearing cartouches in circulation throughout the Levant.

3. Burial Sites from the Region of Beirut

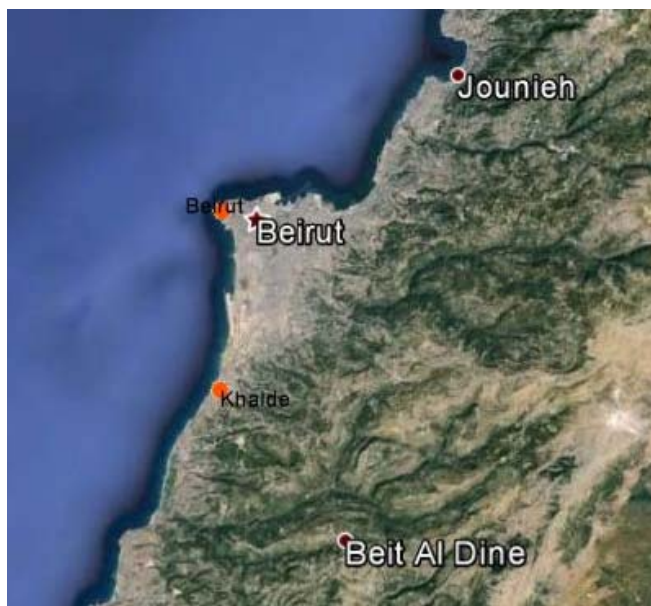


Figure VI.5: Database Sites from the Region of Beirut
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

The region of Beirut produced the largest single cemetery known from the Iron Age I-III period central coastal Levant, the Iron II period cemetery from Khaldé (discussed below, in “case studies). The Iron Age necropolis found in Beirut seems to have contained inhumation tombs and burial pits, although this site has not been published fully.

Table VI.3: Burial Sites in the Region of Beirut

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ⁴² (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
Beirut / Beyrouth / Biruta/ Berytus	33.893333 35.469167 (Lebanon)	Iron II-III(?)	Located on the coast. An Iron Age necropolis (with inhumation tombs and burial pits) was discovered in 1995 in downtown Beirut, in the neighborhood of the Avenue des Français, west of the Tawilé and Ayyas Souks.	? / 0	Downtown Beirut Excavations (Lebanese DGA with teams from the Lebanese Univ., American Univ. of Beirut, etc.; 1993, 1994, 1995)	Sader 1995; Khalifeh 1997a

⁴² All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

Khaldé / Khaldeh /Khalde / Halde	33.781389 35.480278 (Lebanon)	late 10 th c. BCE – late 8 th c. BCE	10 km south of Beirut at the site of the modern airport. A cemetery in sandy ground was found, and four hundred twenty-two Iron II burials were excavated. Both inhumations and cremations, sometimes found together in same tomb. Only thirty-one have been extensively studied via skeletal remains.	419 / 3 ⁴³	Roger Saidah (Lebanese DGA; 1961-69) after accidental discovery during expansion of the Beirut airport.	Saidah 1965, 1966, 1967, 1969 (with photos); Ward 1994a (with photo); Badre 1997e
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While the Khaldé cemetery was located on the coast within sight of the sea, the Beirut necropolis seems to have been located inland, closer to the city center.

4. Burial Sites from the Region of Sidon



Figure VI.6: Database Sites from the Region of Sidon
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

Ten burial sites are associated with the region of Sidon, either immediately in its vicinity and associated with its Iron Age population, or at sites farther afield with evidence that they were politically or economically affiliated with Sidon (as at Sarepta and Adlun). The evidence of Iron Age I burial practices at Sidon is sparse; Qrayé or Adlun might have been used in this

⁴³ Many have given the total numbers as four hundred twenty inhumations and two cremations. Saidah clearly notes two cremation burials from Tomb 121 (discovered in 1962; Saidah 1966, 64), and additionally notes one cremation burial discovered during the 1965 season (Saidah 1967, 167).

period, but excavation and publication of the material were not sufficient to say more. The cremation tomb described by Renan in the hills overlooking Sidon may also be from any time in the Iron Age. Our only secure evidence of Iron Age II mortuary practice comes from the single rock-cut tomb at Tambourit, containing five cremations buried in amphorae, and the mostly unpublished tombs from Sidon-Dakerman. The latter contained at least a few 7th century cist tombs, deposited into the sandy soil; most other sites from the Sidon region seem to have utilized rock-cut tombs or naturally-occurring grottos and caves.

Evidence from the Persian period near Sidon is much more textured. This includes rock-cut shaft tombs from Sarepta (see “case studies,” below), elite burials in sarcophagi from ‘Ain el-Halwa, Ayya’a, and Mugharat Ablun, as well as a single sarcophagus (perhaps with a more extensive burial area) described at the Temple of Eshmun. Sidon-Dakerman produced some stone-built tombs from the Persian period, although these have not to my knowledge been published.

Table VI.4: Burial Sites in the Region of Sidon

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ⁴⁴ (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
Adlun / Adloun / Aadloun	33.404722 35.274167 (Lebanon)	Iron Age – Byzantine period	A coastal site 17 km south of Sidon; Necropolis containing tombs dating from the Iron Age to Roman / Byzantine periods, dug into the rock of the hills facing the sea. Many tombs feature a small entrance leading to a door that opens on to a square room with niches on three of its walls.	? / 0		
‘Ain el-Helwe / ‘Ain el-Halwa / Ain el-Helweh	33.543611 35.378056 (Lebanon)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located southeast of Sidon; Persian period royal cemetery near Sidon, unearthed in 1901. A collection of white marble anthropoid sarcophagi (currently in the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut) were found in a series of shaft tombs.	? / 0	American school in Jerusalem (1901)	Torrey 1919-1920

⁴⁴ All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

Aya'a / Ayya'a / Qayyaa / Qayya / Qiyaa / Qiya'ah / Hlaliyye	33.565278 35.387778 (Lebanon)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Necropolis on the eastern outskirts of Sidon. Persian period necropolis with rock-cut tombs. Two chamber tombs yielded seventeen marble anthropoid sarcophagi. Including the Sarcophagus of Tabnit, the Alexander Sarcophagus, and the Sarcophagus of the Mourners.	>17 / 0	Hamdi-Bey, explored in 1887	Renan 1887
Eshmun / Temple of Eshmun at Sidon	33.58573 35.398204 (Lebanon)	6 th c. BCE – 2 nd c. BCE ⁴⁵	Located 4 km north of Sidon, on the left bank of the el-Awali River. Macridy-Bey first mentions the existence of a tomb dated to ca. 500 BCE from this site. ⁴⁶ Contenau later uncovered a funerary grotto and stone sarcophagus, in addition to three Persian period Phoenician inscriptions.	? / 0	1. Macridy Bey (Ottomon Archaeology Mission; 1901-1902) 2. Georges Contenau (Louvre Museum; 1914 and 1920) 3. Maurice Dunand (1963-68)	Macridy-Bey 1903; Culican 1975-1976; Sader 1995; Khalifeh 1997c
Mugharat Ablun / Mgāwer Ṭablūn / Magharet Tablun / Magharet Ablun / Magarat el-Abloun / Mgaret Ablun / Magharet Tabloun	33.55105 35.36947 (Lebanon)	5 th c. BCE – late Roman period	A rocky hill and grotto approximately 1 km southeast of Sidon's port. A Persian period royal necropolis produced several rock-cut tombs, including the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar. ⁴⁷ The necropolis was used into the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and included sarcophagi in stone, lead, and clay. Excavations in the 1960s produced several tombs with anthropoid sarcophagi from the 5 th -4 th c. BCE	? / 0	1. Ernest Renan (1855) 2. G. Contenau (1913) 3. M. C. Ghadbane (Lebanese DGA; 1963-1964) following the discovery of a tomb during work on the Muslim orphanage 4. (1984)	Renan 1864; Saidah 1967; Hakimian 1987; <i>As-Safir</i> 18 Sept. 1984: 5; <i>An-Nahār</i> 18 Sept. 1984: 6; <i>An-Nahār Arabe et International</i> , 11-17 Feb. 1985:71-73; Khalifeh 1997c
Qrayé / Quara-yet / Qarayeh / Qrayeh / Qrayye	unknown location (Lebanon)	MB - IA	Site located inland to the east of Sidon. Unknown number of tombs, known from published pottery only, and dated from the MB - IA. ⁴⁸ Forty-three ceramic vessels known from excavation as of 1972.	? / ?	Guigues 1930s	Guigues 1937, 1938-1939; Meurdrac and Albanese 1938-39; Chapman 1972; Sader 1995

⁴⁵ Only approximately one fourth of the area around the Temple of Eshmun site was excavated by the time Dunand left the site in 1968 (and no excavation has been undertaken since; Dunand's tracks for cart-based removal of earth and stones were still visible at the site in 2009). Some objects still in situ (e.g. the Throne of Astarte) were dated as late as the 2nd century BCE. The date estimated by Dunand (1969) as the end of the site's use is given as the 5th c. CE, based on the presence of Byzantine mosaics and coins at the site, although the funerary grotto does not seem to have been in use during the entire lifespan of the site.

⁴⁶ Macridy-Bey 1903, 53.

⁴⁷ "On 19 January 1855, workmen hired to hunt for treasure on behalf of the chancellor of the French consulate general in Beirut discovered the basalt sarcophagus [of Eshmunazar] within an ancient necropolis, a rocky knoll and grotto known as Mugharat Ablun, about a kilometer southeast of Sidon's port. The large sarcophagus... had been buried 2 m. deep in an open rock-cut grave and, in antiquity, apparently had a small stone-built entrance chamber to protect it," (Long 1997, 261).

⁴⁸ "...yielded Middle and Late Bronze Age material as well as the Iron Age groups. This would imply a continuity of occupation, but there are no records to show whether they came from the same series of tombs or not," (Chapman 1972: 55).

Sarepta /Sarafand	33.45 35.297222 (Lebanon)	6 th -5 th c. BCE	A coastal site located approximately 17 km south of Sidon. Forty rock-cut tombs were explored east of the coastal road following the discovery of clandestine excavations. Three were found intact (dating to the 6 th -5 th centuries BCE ⁴⁹). Rock cut shaft graves (of unknown number) dating to the 7 th century BCE. Grave goods include terracotta figurines, a funeral mask, scarabs, jewelry, and bronze coins. ⁵⁰	>40 / 0	1. Ernest Renan (1861) 2. Villagers discover a burial cave (1929); contents purchased by the American University of Beirut (published by Baramki 1959) 3. Roger Saidah (Lebanese DGA; 1968) 4. James Pritchard (University of Pennsylvania Museum; 1969-1973)	Baramki 1959; Saidah 1969; Pritchard 1975, 1978; Ward 1994a; Khalifeh 1997b
Cremation tombs outside of Sidon	unknown location (Lebanon)	Iron Age	Renan describes a cremation burial, placed in a pit inside a cave, found in a cave. The cave was located on the land purchased by the French mission east of the Mugharat Abloun caves. The single adult burial seems to have been burned on site. ⁵¹	0 / >1	1. Ernest Renan (1864?)	Renan 1864,464 and 485, pl. 63; Sader 1995
Sidon-Dakerman / Sheikh Abaroh	33.543611 35.378056 (Lebanon)	14 th c. BCE – early Roman period	South of Sidon along the Sidon-Tyre Road at the site identified by Renan as Sheikh Abaroh. ⁵² “A few hundred” graves explored by Saidah, out of an extensive necropolis used in the LB (laid in the sand), Late Iron Age (stone built tombs), and Late Hellenistic / Early Roman periods (clay coffins). ⁵³ In particular, several cyst tombs from the end of the 7 th century BCE were found deposited in sandy soil. Considered “the oldest necropolis in Sidon.” ⁵⁴	? / 0	Roger Saidah (Lebanese DGA; 1966-1969)	Saidah 1969, 1983; Culican 1969, 1975-76; Teixidor 1983; Sader 1995; Khalifeh 1997c

⁴⁹ Saidah (1983, 216) and Sader (1995, 20) report that the graves date to the 7th-6th centuries BCE. Khalifeh (1997b) describes the tombs as dating from the 6th-5th centuries BCE.

⁵⁰ Saidah 1969, 134-136. This assemblage seems to belong to Tomb 26 (see Culican 1970, 18, fig. 3).

⁵¹ “Au caveau IV, nous ouvrons la seconde fosse; elle était couverte aussi d’énormes dalles, au nombre de quatre. Nous enlevons deux de ces dalles, et nous laissons en place les deux autres, pour conserver un spécimen de ce mode de sepulture. Nous apercevons tout le fond de la fosse, surtout le long des parois, garni de pierres, débris du roc dans lequel le caveau est creusé : ces pierres sont noircies et recouvertes d’une assez épaisse couche de suie ou de matières carbonisées; elles ont évidemment subi l’action du feu. Une grande quantité de fragments de charbons recouvre ce lit de pierres sur toute l’étendue de la fosse; ces charbons sont pénétrés d’humidité et sécrasent très facilement. ... Nous ne rencontrons que très-peu de débris osseux, de très-petite dimension. Nous retrouvons quelques dents qui paraissent noircies et grillées par l’action du feu. Toutes ces circonstances nous font penser que le cadaver a été brûlé sur place, probablement sur un brasier allumé dehors et étendu sur le lit de pierres et de sable. ...au lieu où les pieds du cadaver devaient se trouver, était un vase en terre rouge vernissée avec des figures; il paraît avoir subi l’action du feu; il ne renfermait rien. Un peu plus haut, contre la paroi sud de la fosse, étaient les fragments d’un autre vase plus petit, de forme différente, mais de la même matière, avec des peintures en noir sur fond rouge brun,” (Renan 1864, 463-464).

⁵² As Sader (1995, 19) pointed out, Saidah only refers to the site as Sidon-Dakerman. The reference to Sheikh Abaroh is based on correlations between the 1969 article by Culican (on a clay mask found at Iron Age tombs described at Sheikh Abaroh) and the descriptions offered by Saidah. Renan first identified the site by the name Sheikh Abaroh (Renan 1864, pl. LXVIII), and its location matches up well with Saidah’s narrative.

⁵³ Saidah 1969. He goes on to write: “The skeletons as well as the funerary material were rather well preserved by the sand and the citrus gardens which have covered the area for almost 2000 years. It must be stressed that this is the first time we have uncovered such a number of Late Iron Age and Late Bronze Age burials” (Saidah 1969, 122).

⁵⁴ Khalifeh 1997c, 40.

Tambourit / Tamborit / Tamburīt / Tamburit	33.516111 35.415278 (Lebanon)	Late 9 th - early 8 th c. BCE ⁵⁵	The site is 6 km southeast of Sidon. One rock-cut tomb was found and partially destroyed by a bulldozer in 1971. It seems to have contained five cinerary amphorae (one of which was inscribed), ⁵⁶ which were accompanied by three plates, three jugs and one pyxis. Two inscribed cinerary urns from the Zurich antiquities market, possibly datable to the 8 th century BCE (Peuch 1994), may have come from this site.	0 / >5 [not including two urns from the antiquities market]	Discovered by a farmer (Boutros Khoury) trying to level a field. Salvage excavations undertaken by Roger Saidah (Lebanese DGA; 1971)	Saidah 1977, 1983; Peuch 1994; Sader 1995
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The Persian period burial sites at Sidon thus paint a picture of a highly stratified society. Some burials explicitly identify their inhabitants as *mlk* (as with Tabnit and Eshmunazar), others evince incredible energy expenditure in the preparation of body, tomb, and grave goods – and are, as a result, sometimes referred to as “royal burials.” The tombs at Sarepta from this period still utilize rock-cut superstructures for burial, but do not offer the kinds of wealth of precious metals and decorative articles found closer to Sidon.

5. Burial Sites from the Beqaa Valley (Inland)



Figure VI.7: Database Sites from the Beqaa Valley
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

⁵⁵ Dated 850/825 – 800/775 BCE on the basis of ceramic typology (esp. a Geometric Pyxis; Saidah 1977, 146).

⁵⁶ There is some confusion about the number of cinerary amphorae / urns found in the tomb. Four unbroken amphorae used as cinerary urns are discussed (Saidah 1977), although Saidah does not offer a final count of urns encountered during the salvage excavation. Five cremation urns are often cited as having come from this tomb, not including the two from the Zurich antiquities market which may or may not belong with this corpus.

Burial sites in the Beqaa Valley, inland off the coast of Lebanon, have the potential to illustrate social (and economic) realities in a more provincial or rural setting, unlike the urban centers located along the coast.⁵⁷ Four sites have been described as featuring burials from the Iron Age I-III periods, but three of them seem to indicate continued use throughout the period in question. A fourth site, the two shaft tombs from Ruweiseh, lacks clear dating criteria.

Table VI.5: Burial Sites in the Beqaa Valley (Inland)

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ⁵⁸ (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
Baalbek	34.006944 36.203889 (Lebanon)	MB – “pre-Roman”	Located 85 km inland from Beirut. During the clearing of an area of the Jupiter-Heliopolitanos Temple, “pre-Roman” houses and burials were discovered (finds going back to the MB).	? / 0	1) Schulz and Puchstein (German Archaeological Mission; 1898-1904) 2) Dussaud, Rouzevalle, Syrig, and Schlumberger (French Mandate govt.; 1922) 3) Maurice Chéhab and Haroutune Kalayan (Lebanese DGA & German DAI; 1945-1975 and 1991-present ⁵⁹)	Chéhab 1965: 111-112; Saidah 1967; Ward 1994a; Badre 1997c
Tell el-Ghassil	33.944167 36.083056 (Lebanon)	Iron Age II-III	Located at the approximate middle point of the Beqaa Valley. Baramki excavated an Iron Age town and cemetery, which was not fully published. ⁶⁰	? / 0	Dimitri Baramki (American University of Beirut Archaeological Museum; 1950s, 1968, 1969)	Baramki 1961a, 1964, 1966; Ward 1994a (with photo / illus.)
Kamed el-Loz / Kamid al-Lawz / Kamed al Laouz	33.620278 35.821389 (Lebanon)	a) Iron II – Hellenistic periods b) Iron III cemetery	Site is located at the southeastern edge of the Beqaa Valley; the settlement area is 300 x 240 m. a) A “late Iron Age cemetery” which produced graves from the Neo-Babylonian to Hellenistic period. Ninety-one burials reported as of 1969. b) The northwest portion of the tell was used as a cemetery during the Persian period. ⁶¹	91 / 0	1. Arnulf Kuschke (Universities of Johana Gutenberg of Mainz) and Rolf Hachmann (University of Saarbrücken; 1963) 2. Rolf Hachmann (University of Saarbrücken; 1963-1981) 3. Clandestine digging (1981-1997)	Hachmann & Kuschke 1966a & b; Hachmann 1989; Saidah 1969; Warda 1994; Badre 1997d

⁵⁷ Although Khamid el-Loz was located on the intersection of the north-south trade route through the Beqaa, and the east-west trade route between Sidon and Damascus.

⁵⁸ All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

⁵⁹ Documentation of remains uncovered in the 1960s and 1970s has been ongoing since 2001, with a new field survey conducted in 2004.

⁶⁰ The site is located on the Agricultural Farm of the American University of Beirut.

⁶¹ Badre 1997d, 266.

Ruweiseh / Rouisseh / Ruweiseh / Rouisseh	unknown location (Lebanon)	11 th c. BCE	Located near Nabatiyeh el-fôqa / Nabatiyeh el-Fawka / Nabatiye el-Faouqa. Two shaft tombs which had been mostly cleared; dated on the basis of an inscribed bronze arrowhead.	>2 / 0	Discovered in 1925 by Dussaud	Dussaud 1927;
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While we should not make too much of this small corpus of burials, the seeming lack of cremation burials, as well as the continuity of use between the Iron Age II and Persian periods, are notable.

6. Burial Sites from the Region of Tyre

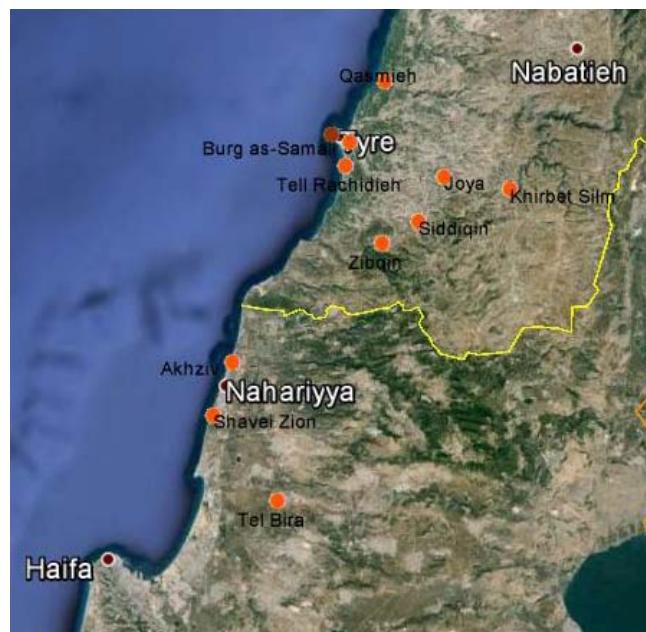


Figure VI.8: Database Sites from the Region of Tyre
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

More than fifteen burial sites are known from the region of Tyre in the Iron Age I-III. Five of these are located at the long excavated and well-studied site of Akhziv (CCA, NCA, SCA, ECA, and some extramural burials on the tell), and each of these cemeteries has a long and complicated history of use from the 11th-6th centuries BCE, with dozens or hundreds of burials. Excavators have long identified two populations living at Akhziv, on the basis of the mortuary remains: an Israelite population which practiced inhumation in family or group tombs, and a

Phoenician population which cremated their dead and buried them in ceramic urns. While the reality of life at Akhziv is not as stark as this picture implies, the Phoenician material at Akhziv and other sites in the south of the Phoenician homeland) should be studied in light of this contact and exchange with other local inhabitant communities.

On the other end of the spectrum are small sites like Yanūḥ and Zibqān, which produced single graves (probably from the Persian period and Iron Age II, respectively) too poorly published to tell us whether these tombs were actually isolated burials or part of a larger burial site. Several locations are described as featuring “Iron Age” tombs, without further detail (i.e. Khirbet Silm, Şiddiqin, and Qasmieh).

But of the remaining, datable sites, only the Central (CCA) and Southern (SCA) cemeteries of Akhziv offer evidence for Iron Age I mortuary practice. The Iron II period is illustrated in the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Akhziv cemeteries from Akhziv (as well as in Akhziv’s four extramural tell burials), the small collection from Tel Bira, forty purchased cinerary urns from Burğ aš-Şamāli, the Joya tombs, the cremation and inhumation burials at Tell Rachidieh, and the Tyre al-Bass cremation cemetery (see “case studies,” below). The only burial site to be established in the Persian period is that at Shavei-Zion; other Persian period evidence comes from the continued use of Tell Rachidieh’s necropolis site.

Table VI.6: Burial Sites in the Region of Tyre

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ⁶² (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
Akhziv ⁶³ / Achziv /	33.035556 / 35.1	10 th -9 th c. BCE	15 km north of Akko and 25 km south of Tyre; outside the city wall (sealed by	>4 / 0	Eilat Mazar (Hebrew University; 1988-1998)	Ben-Tor and Greenberg

⁶² All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

⁶³ The bibliography for this series of four overlapping cemeteries is immense. See for example, Ben-Tor and Greenberg 1992; Culican 1959-1960, 1975-1976; Dayagi-Mendels 2002; Mazar 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2004; Prausnitz 1962, 1993, 1997a. The excavation history for the entire cemetery represents four phases:

1. Immanuel Ben-Dor (1941-44)

Achzib / Accipu Extramural burials	(Israel)		Persian period occupation), four tombs of the 10 th -9 th c. BCE (cists 4 x 7 ft) were discovered.			1992; Culican 1959-1960, 1975-1976; Dayagi-Mendels 2002; Mazar 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2004; Prausnitz 1962, 1993, 1997a
Central Akhziv Cemetery (CCA)	33.035556 35.1 (Israel)	11 th c. BCE	Located at the foot of the defenses on the eastern slope of the tell. Contained cist graves dated to the Early Iron IB. Inhumed single burials, or burials in pairs. Bronze and ivory objects, as well as many locally made bichrome pilgrim flasks.			Prausnitz 1993, 1997a
Northern Akhziv Cemetery (NCA)	33.035556 35.1 (Israel)	8 th -7 th c. BCE	Located on the northern bank of the Kesib River. Four phases of activity. The earliest (IV) produced a floor of open area founded on sand and covered in layers of plaster; stelae used as an altar. Jars with ashes and kraters containing cremation burials (as well as other vessels) placed around the "high place." In the following period, (III) graves appear, including small baetyls marking each burial.			Prausnitz 1993, 1997a
Ez-Zib / el-Buqbaq / Buqbaq: South Akhziv Cemetery (SCA)	33.035556 35.1 (Israel)	11 th -6 th c. BCE	Overlooking Minat ez-Zib. Iron II period with three identifiable phases. Tombs made along a kurkar ridge covered by sand dunes. Four types of burials at the site: single inhumation burials, single cremation burials, inhumation burials associated with cremation burials (offerings placed above the grave), and rock-cut tombs. ⁶⁴ The cremations (10 th -7 th centuries BCE) include the "Tomb of the Horseman," a shaft grave dated to the 8 th -6 th centuries BCE, containing terracotta horsemen figures. Some jar burials used for secondary burial (mixed contents of adults, children, and animal bones, unburnt)		1. Looting at the site from the early 20 th century to WWII. 2. Immanuel Ben-Dor (Israel Dept. of Antiquities; 1941-44) 3. Moshe Prausnitz (1958 and 1960)	Prausnitz 1966, 1969, 1982, 1993, 1997a; Smith, Horwitz, and Zias 1990; Smith, Mazar, et al. 1993; Mazar 1993, 2000; Dayagi-Mendels 2002
Er-Ras: East Akhziv Cemetery (ECA)	33.035556 35.1 (Israel)	Late 11 th c. – 6 th c. BCE	Dug into a second <i>kurkar</i> ridge (from SCA) east of and parallel to the coastal ridge. Not covered by dunes as the southern Akhziv cemetery was, but located along a parallel kurkar ridge. Cemetery in use from Iron I – end of 8 th century BCE. The shaft tombs ⁶⁵ consist entirely of family tombs, some reused as much as three hundred years. Later excavations produced 7 th -6 th century BCE inhumations and cremations at the site.		1. Immanuel Ben-Dor (Israel Dept. of Antiquities; 1941-44) 2. Moshe Prausnitz (1963)	Delevault & Lemaire 1979; Dayagi-Mendels 2002; Mazar 1993; Prausnitz 1969, 1993, 1997a.
Tel Bira /	32.900849	8 th -7 th	9 km southeast of 'Akko; three vessels	0 / 3		Alexandre and

2. Moshe Prausnitz (Israel Department of Antiquities; 1958-80), with S. Moscati (University of Rome; 1958, 1960, 1963-64)

3. Moshe Prausnitz & Eilat Mazar (1984)

4. Eilat Mazar (Hebrew University; 1988-1990s, for eight seasons)

⁶⁴ Prausnitz 1969, 85

⁶⁵ Note that "None of the tomb ceilings in the eastern cemetery had been cut. On the contrary, deeply sunk into the rock, it appeared that every effort had been made not to attract attention" (Prausnitz 1969, 88).

Bira	35.169504 (Israel)	c. BCE	found (a whole cooking pot, a storage jar and a jug) containing incinerated human bones (not infants). Nearby, a 6x9m area was found including limited architectural remains, burnt patches, ashes, scattered calcined human bones. The total corpus of finds associated with the site is sixty-eight pottery vessels and sherds.			Stern 2001
Burğ aš-Šamāli / Burj el-Shamali / Burj al-Shamali	33.266667 35.216667 (Lebanon)	Iron II Period	A site located 3 km east of Tyre, near Tall Ma'šūq / Mashuq. At least fifty shaft tombs were looted during the Lebanese civil war. The antiquities market was flooded with an estimated 20,000 terracotta figurines from this site. Forty cinerary urns were purchased by the Museum of Beiteddine.	? / >40 [>50 total tombs]	Clandestine digging during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991)	Badre 1992; Sader 1995
Joya / Joaya / Jwaya / Jwayya / Jwaiya / Jwaiyya / Ġwayya / Jouaiya	33.237222 35.335556 (Lebanon)	7 th c. BCE	Located on the road from Tyre to Bint Gebeil, just inland from Tyre. Dunand discovered the tombs, which contained an unknown number of cremation / inhumations. Today they are known only from Dunand's preliminary remarks (the contents of one tomb are described in Dunand 1941, 92) and from published pottery (ca. one hundred pots were acquired by the DGA, and studied by Chapman). Seems to have included a cremation area.	? / ?	Dunand 1939	Dunand 1939, 1941; Chapman 1972; Sader 1995
Qasmieh / Qasmiyye / Qasmiye	33.331389 35.252778 (Lebanon)	Iron Age	Site located north of Tyre at the mouth of the Litani river. Small cemetery known only from five published pots. Chapman suggested the ceramics could be a single tomb group associated with a cremation burial (1972, 148), although this seems to be speculation.	0 / >1 (?)		Chapman 1972; Sader 1995
Tell Rachidieh / Rashidieh / Tell el-Rachidieh / Ras al-Ayn / Tell Habish Sinde / Palaetyrus / Ushu / Continental Tyre	33.242222 35.214167 (Lebanon)	9 th -5 th c. BCE	5 km south of Tyre. The 1942 excavations produced more than one hundred urns containing calcinated bones and ashes (not fully published). A necropolis containing five tombs was discovered in 1974-75. Tomb IV contains pottery dating to the IA (775-700 BCE) along with weights, scarabs, a sword, etc. Tomb V is probably Persian period (end of 5 th century BCE). Some cremations found buried inside the shaft tombs used for inhumations. ⁶⁶ During the Lebanese civil war, clandestine digging took place at this site, producing large numbers of 9 th -8 th century cinerary urns. These were placed in hypogeal or tombs carved into the rock.	>10 ⁶⁷ / >100	1. Theodore Macridy-Bey (Imperial Museum in Constantinople; 1903) ⁶⁸ 2. Maurice Chehab (Lebanese National Museum, Beirut; 1942-1943) 3. Hafez Chéhab & Ibrahim Kawkabani (Lebanese DGA; 1974-1975) ⁶⁹ 4. Clandestine digging during the Lebanese civil war. ⁷⁰	Macridy-Bey 1904; Chéhab 1942-1943; Doumet-Serhal 1982, 2003
Shavei Zion / Shavei Tzion / Shave-	32.980981 35.083306 (Israel)	4 th -2 nd c. BCE	A coastal site located 7 km north of Akko. A late Persian – early Hellenistic cemetery was excavated by Prausnitz on the southern bank of the Beth ha-	? / 0	1. Remains of an Iron III period shipwreck wash up on shore (1971)	Prausnitz 1997b

⁶⁶ Macridy-Bey 1904, 568-569; Saidah 1966, 60-67.

⁶⁷ This count includes >2 burials for five discovered tombs.

⁶⁸ Makes mention of the “caveaux de Tell Rachidieh à Tyre” (Macridy-Bey 1904, 564ff.).

⁶⁹ These salvage excavations were begun following clandestine digging at the site of a newly erected Palestinian refugee camp.

⁷⁰ Doumet-Serhal 2003, 10.

Ziyyon			'Emeq River. The cemetery was entirely filled with inhumations, topped with sculpted heads carved out of local limestone (all broken in antiquity).		2. Elisha Linder (Haifa University; 1971) conducts underwater excavation 3. Moshe W. Prausnitz (Univ. of Rome and Israel Dept. of Antiquities; 1964) excavates on land	
Şiddiqin / as-Siddiqin / Siddiqine	33.190278 35.309167 (Lebanon)	Iron Age	Village located 15 km southeast of Tyre. Several Iron Age rock-cut tombs, filled with great quantities of ceramics, were looted. Sader (1995, 25) describes the sale of a lot of two hundred forty-two ceramic vessels from a single grave. More than ten tombs are known.	? / ? [>10 total tombs]	Clandestine digging	Sader 1995
Khirbet Silm / Ĥirbet Silm / Silim / Selim / Selm	33.229167 35.416667 (Lebanon)	Iron Age	Located east of Tyre, several km inland. The site produced an unknown number of cremations / inhumations, today known only from published pottery. The site included ceramics from the MB, LB, and IA. ⁷¹ Three important lots of ceramic vessels suggest a necropolis at the site.	? / ? ⁷² [>3 burials?]	1. L. Albanese (1920s); tomb material acquired by the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut in several lots (1928-1934) 2. Chapman reports, "there have been subsequent excavations at the same place" (1972, 57).	Chapman 1972; Sader 1995
Tyre / Sur / Sour / Tyre al-Bass / Başş	33.273333 35.193889 (Lebanon)	9 th -7 th c. BCE	2 km from the Iron Age town center of Tyre, on what would have been the mainland (close to the remains of the Roman hippodrome). A cremation cemetery was found in the sandy soil, following clandestine digging in the area. More than eighty cremation burials were excavated between 1997 and 2002. The 1997 and 1999 excavations also reported a few very scattered and incomplete inhumations (perhaps intrusive Persian / Hellenistic burials). Almost all the excavated burials featured a set of ceramic grave goods. ⁷³	? / >80 ⁷⁴	1. Clandestine digging (1990) followed by rescue purchasing and salvage excavations 2. Maria Eugenia Aubet (1997, 1999, 2002)	Conheaney & Pipe 1991 (1993); Sader 1991(1993); Seeden 1991 (1993); Trelliso 2004; Ward 1991 (1993), 1994 (with photo); Ward 1997b; Aubet 1999, 2003; Aubet et al. 1988
Yanūḥ	[unable to locate] (Lebanon)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Located east of Tyre. A single Persian area shaft tomb is mentioned by Saidah (1967, 172), with no further details.	>1 / 0	Roger Saidah (Lebanese DGA; 1966)	Saidah 1967; Sader 1995
Zibqīn / Zibqeen /	33.165792 35.267473	Iron Age	Located east of Tyre. A single Iron Age tomb is mentioned by Saidah (1967,	? / ? [>1 burial]	Hajjar and Ghabbane (Lebanese DGA; 1966)	Saidah 1967; Sader 1995

⁷¹ This would imply a continuity of occupation, but there are no records to show whether they came from the same series of tombs or not," (Chapman 1972: 55).

⁷² "Khirbet Silm and Joya probably contained both inhumation and cremation as was found at Khaldé," (Chapman 1972: 57).

⁷³ "Most of the urns are accompanied by the same items of furniture: a plate or small piece of stone capping the mouth of the urn, two jugs leaning against the body of the vessel containing the ashes and a plate of Fine Ware at the foot of the urn or near it," (Aubet 2004, 29); "The ceramic offerings accompanying the urns usually adhered to the principles typical of Phoenician necropolises, both in the East and in the colonies of the West, in which the two small trefoil-rim and mushroom-rim jugs constitute the most emblematic of the Phoenician mortuary contexts," (Aubet 2004, 56).

⁷⁴ This count includes fifty-six cremations excavated during the 1997 and 1999 seasons (all from 104 m²), and twenty-three cremations from the 2002 season. Aubet (2006, 37) describes the total yield of the excavations as being more than seventy-nine cremation burials. Perhaps up to sixty cremation burials were uncovered from clandestine digging, but only nine cinerary urns were purchased and studied as part of the 1991 rescue efforts.

Zebqine / Zabqine	(Lebanon)		172). No detail on the type of grave, grave goods, or burial is provided.			
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The four large cemeteries found on the tell (CCA), and on its northern (NCA), southern (SCA), and eastern (ECA) borders are the best studied and published of any of the Phoenician mortuary sites to date. Because of the extensive publications already produced on these cemeteries, I will not be addressing them in detail in the present study. By way of example, one of the most impressive finds from the Southern cemetery, excavated in 1980, was a built tomb in use throughout the Iron Age II period. Some fifty individuals were found in this tomb⁷⁵ with a large quantity of ceramic vessels, ornaments, and jewelry. Twenty sub-adults and at least thirty adults were present, eighteen of which were complete enough to be sexed (ten male, and eight female). Primary burials were placed on stone benches, while secondary burials were swept into piles, gathered into jars (with multiple individuals ending up together), or scattered on the floor. Burnt human remains were only found among the scattered bones associated with a pit, although numerous cremation burials are known from the SCA and NCA cemeteries. The remains of fish and sheep or goats were intermingled with the disarticulated human bones. Considering the long period of use of this tomb, fifty individuals is actually too *low* for this to be a family tomb, but perhaps the tomb was closed and reopened several times.

Though I have separated the sites from the Carmel region, further south of Tyre, it is likely that many of the settlements associated with the burial sites discussed below would have been “Tyre-facing” in terms of economic, cultural, and perhaps political ties.

⁷⁵ Studied in Smith, Horwitz, and Zias 1990.

7. Burial Sites in the Carmel Region



Figure VI.9: Database Sites from the Carmel Region
(created by the author using Google Earth; satellite imagery from 4/19/2013)

Three burials sites come from further south, in the Carmel region in the region of the ancient city of Dor (modern Haifa), and beyond. Two of these are from the Iron II and Persian period levels at 'Atlit (see "case studies," below); the last is the Persian period inhumation cemetery at Tell Michal.

Table VI.7: Burial Sites in the Carmel Region of Northern Israel

Burial Site	Latitude / Longitude ⁷⁶ (Modern Territory)	Period of Use	Brief Description	Min. # of Burials: Inhumations / Cremations	Excavation	Publications
'Atlit / 'Athlith Cremation Cemetery	32.7 34.933333 (Israel)	8 th -7 th c. BCE	12 km south of Haifa; the ancient site was nearly 200 acres large. Eighteen burials from the 8 th -7 th centuries BCE were found deposited in sand south of the medieval fortification. Contained twenty-four cremations (including only one in a cinerary urn) and an inhumation of a child. Some pots placed with the dead had been warped by the fire.	1 / 24	Johns 1930s	Johns 1933, 1938, 1993; Dayagi-Mendels 2002.
'Atlit / 'Athlith	32.7 34.933333	5 th -4 th c. BCE ⁷⁷	12 km south of Haifa; the ancient site was nearly 200 acres large. Fourteen	>100 / 0	Johns 1930-1931	Johns 1933, 1938, 1993;

⁷⁶ All latitude and longitude coordinates have been converted to decimal degrees.

⁷⁷ Dated on the basis of associated Phoenician silver coins, Attic pottery, Egyptian amulets, and scarabs (one of which features a short inscription in Phoenician or Aramaic script).

Rock-cut tombs	(Israel)		Persian period tombs feature approximately one hundred inhumations in rock-hewn shaft graves. All but one of the burial chambers are located directly below a vertical shaft; slab laid horizontally over the entrance to the chamber. Presence of internments in the shafts (4-5 m in depth), which have holes to facilitate access. Burial niches commonly found.			Dayagi-Mendels 2002.
Tell Michal / Tel Mical / Mekal / Dhahrat Makmish	32.165833 34.836667 (Israel)	6 th -4 th c. BCE	Coastal site located on a <i>kurkar</i> cliff ca. 6.5 km north of the Yarkon River estuary; the site consists of five hills. The highest (the tell site ⁷⁸) is 0.75 acres large, while the northern hill (featuring a Persian period settlement on its south and cemetery on its northern edge) covers almost 10 acres. Excavated portions of the Persian period cemetery (estimated at 1/10 of the total area) produced one hundred twenty burials, including cist burials (built of stone or brick), pit graves, and infant burials in storage jars. Several graves contained iron and bronze nails (indicating the dead had been buried in wooden coffins or covered with lids)	120 / 0	1. J. Ory (1922) 2. N. Avigad (Eretz Israel Museum; 1958-1960) 3. Ze'ev Herzog and James Muhly (1977-1980 and 1982)	Herzog 1980, 1993; Herzog, Moshkowitz, Negbi, and Rainey 1978; Herzog, Negbi, and Moshkowitz 1978; Herzog, Rapp, and Negbi 1989

The use of what seem to have been wooden coffins or burial vessels in some of the burials at Tell Michal in the Persian period contrasts with the internments at 'Atlit, which were placed directly on the stone of the tomb floor (sometimes in purpose-hewn "slots," as discussed below). The appearance of infants buried in storage jars at Tell Michal also seems to differ from the treatment of small children at 'Atlit.

C. Analyzing the Data

1. The Iron Age II – Persian Period Transition: The Significance of Cremation in the Phoenician Mortuary Record

Viewing the data in this way makes the transition from Iron Age II period burial practices to Persian period mortuary behaviors clear in broad outline. Iron II period cemeteries feature a wide range of burial customs. Multiple types of tomb or burial structure,

⁷⁸ Six strata (XI-VI) of Persian period occupation on the tell site indicate its importance to Phoenician trade and to the Persian army.

burial vessel, treatment of the body, and orientation of the body, are used concurrently and in close proximity – often mixed among the same cemetery or burial space. In several cases (at Khaldé, Akhziv, ‘Atlit, and Tell Rachidieh), inhumations and cremations are found buried together in the same tomb.⁷⁹ The repertoire of ceramic vessels buried as grave goods with both inhumations and cremations are similar. At the Tyre al-Bass cremation cemetery, which seems to feature the most limited repertoire of ceramic grave goods (see “case studies,” below), the standard equipment seems to include two serving vessels (the mushroom-lip and trefoil juglets); elsewhere an assortment of common serving and dining vessels are placed on or around the burials. Evidence of ritual behavior associated with the preparation, interment of the body, funerary rituals, and the closing of the tomb vary widely from site to site and within single sites.

The change to inhumation burials in the Persian period is therefore relatively stark. Cremation seems to “fall out of fashion” across multiple sites, and throughout the region. At coastal sites, the shaft-tomb seems to predominate, with complicated patterns of reuse at many of the sites (e.g. ‘Atlit, “case studies,” below). Cemeteries of pit or cist tomb inhumations are also common (e.g. Kamid el-Loz). Incorporation within the Achaemenid empire (or perhaps other events ongoing at this time) seems to have had the effect of standardizing or limiting the mortuary repertoire in the Phoenician homeland.

The hypothesis that cremation, long associated with Phoenician cemeteries at Western coastal sites, was adopted by the Phoenician population primarily to save space can no longer be maintained. Cremations occur at sites with no “space problem” (that is, with a low density

⁷⁹ See case studies, above, as well as Macridy-Bey 104, 568-569; Saidah 1966, 60-67; Prausnitz 1969, 85-86; Mazar 1996, 91-92; Alexandre and Stern 2001, 192.

of burials), at sites where inhumation is practiced, and in full-length adult graves (as at the Iron II tombs at 'Atlit, where ashes were never collected; see "case studies," below).

In fact, the dichotomy between "cremations" and "inhumations" that has long characterized studies of Phoenician mortuary analysis should be discarded as a meaningful categorization in and of itself. This study highlights the variety of practices, ritual spaces, and equipment involved in creating a cremation burial in the Iron II central coastal Levant. Cremations cross-cut the socio-economic spectrum, in that energy expenditure associated with cremation burials varied extensively (as measured in the number, quality, and type of small finds included in the burial, the number and type of ceramic vessels buried in association, and the extent of ritual preparations either in the cremation process itself, or the burial of the remains⁸⁰). On the other hand, it may be argued that no "royal" cremation burials have been identified, a point to which I will return, below.

With Iron Age II inhumation burials, too, variation seems to have been extensive, and offered choice with regard to orientation of the body to the cardinal points, posture and orientation of the bodies, the practice of secondary burial (moving the bones to a vessel or different space to allow room for future burials), and rituals involving smashing pots on or over the body, or perhaps "feeding" the dead with prepared dishes. The binary focus on these two categories of treatment of the dead seems to be based on the assumption that the choice of cremation signals one feature of identity (both ethnic affiliation and religious beliefs have been proposed), while choosing inhumation in the Iron II period signaled an intentional distinction – a different ethnicity or set of beliefs about the afterlife. Some have already suggested that cremation and inhumation may not necessarily reflect a different concept of

⁸⁰ As in the case of Urn 8 at Tyre al-Bass.

the afterlife or constellation of beliefs.⁸¹ Some other horizontal distinction seems to lie behind the choice of which cremation or which inhumation practice was most appropriate in a given context.

The fact that the practice of cremation disappears from the mortuary record during the Persian period may similarly signal many different things. The significance of cremation may have been revalued or changed due to local historical-cultural processes or tastes, the practice may have been associated with some undesirable practice in the eyes of Phoenicia's neighbors, or it may represent the changing value of inhumation in the period of Achaemenid rule. This may not be possible to determine, although site-specific and idiosyncratic evidence from the following case studies may add to our understanding of this issue.

2. Case Studies: Khaldé, 'Atlit, Tyre al-Bass, Sarepta

Narrowing the lens through which the Phoenician homeland mortuary data is viewed, from regional to site-based, allows an examination of the mortuary system in place at a very particular time and place. Idiosyncratic practices, expressed in individual tombs or burials, may then be examined in light of the three overarching research questions with which this study began. The sites detailed in the following case studies have been chosen to illustrate several vectors across which these research questions may be applied. I have chosen the four burial sites for more in-depth consideration on the following basis:

a. The Khaldé Cemetery, located south of Beirut, is the largest of all known Iron Age cemeteries from the Phoenician homeland. Its value also lies in being used over the course of a relatively short period of time (approximately two hundred years), allowing better control of

⁸¹ See for example Bienkowski 1982 and Gasull 1993.

the variation in play during the Iron Age II period. Because the initial publications of this cemetery were piecemeal and summary, this large corpus of burials is often only discussed in passing. In the case study below, I reexamine all partial publications of burials, skeletal material, and objects from this excavation to provide a more detailed picture of mortuary practice at the Iron II site Khaldé.

b. Tyre al-Bass Cremation Cemetery: Like the Khaldé cemetery, the Tyre al-Bass site offers a (nearly⁸²) single-period Iron II site, in order to offer a closer examination of mortuary behavior and variation under tighter chronological controls. This should allow closer attention to the signaling of vertical and horizontal identities in a site dominated by cremation burials.

c. 'Atlit Cemeteries: The site of 'Atlit offers two distinct periods of burial practice and site use: an Iron Age II period cremation cemetery, very near a group of multi-chambered shaft tombs in use during the Persian period. This is one of the few burial sites from the Phoenician homeland at which the transition from the Iron II-III is so clear cut in the mortuary record. Examining the 'Atlit transition may offer some indication of the significance of that change in the mortuary system of the wider Phoenician homeland.

d. Sarepta (Sarafand): Finally, the site of Sarepta offers the rare opportunity to compare tomb contents from the Persian period with excavated settlement areas. Although the intact tombs from this site are not many, some general observations may be made about the relationship between grave goods and items found in contemporary domestic, industrial, or street contexts.

⁸² See the brief discussion of the seven intrusive inhumations found at the site (from the Persian / Hellenistic periods), below.

Following the presentation of the case studies, we will return to the three research questions with which this study began.

a. *Khaldé / Khaldeh / Khalde Cemetery*

The site of the *Khaldé*⁸³ Cemetery lies approximately 10 km to the south of Beirut, alongside the Saida-Beirut coastal highway,⁸⁴ at a place formally known as Kobbet Choueifat.⁸⁵ The site now consists of two promontories which rise 10-15 m above sea level, and are separated by about 45 m (east to west) where the modern coastal highway passes through. From north to south the area is about 500 m in length, delimited on both ends by two rocky areas that interrupt the otherwise sandy coastline.⁸⁶ A small bay is formed by these rocky areas, and may have been part of the reason the site was chosen for an Iron II cemetery.

Three Iron Age burials were first discovered by highway maintenance crews in 1960, along with some Roman-Byzantine houses with mosaic floors.⁸⁷ One year later, in early summer 1961, another crew was putting up a retaining wall nearby, just west of the runways at the Beirut International Airport – a project that unearthed large quantities of pottery dating to the Iron II.⁸⁸ Maurice Chéhab, the Director of the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA), then turned the site over to the archaeologist Roger Saidah for salvage excavation,

⁸³ The site is called *Khaldeh* or *Khalde* in Arabic, and *Khaldé* in French publications. Roger Saidah, head excavator on the project from 1966-1969, published all the excavation results in French or English. Thus I have retained the French spelling throughout this discussion. This also helps to distinguish the archaeological excavation of the cemetery site from the modern resort town of *Khalde* located nearby.

⁸⁴ Located at 33°47'13"N, 35°29'2"E, and occupying land parcels numbers 975 and 964.

⁸⁵ The name *Choueifat* is still used for a nearby suburb southeast of Beirut, and occupied primarily by a Druze and Christian population. The population of *Khalde* and the next closest suburb of Beirut, known as *Dahieh*, are occupied by a primarily Shi'ite population.

⁸⁶ "Sable blanc marin partagé par une couche de terre rouge dont l'épaisseur diminue vers le ravage marin. Le tout sur une assise rocheuse naturelle constituée par du sable consolidé appelé communément *ramleh*. En surface une couche de terre, très probablement rapportée," (Saidah 1966, 51).

⁸⁷ Saidah 1966, 53.

⁸⁸ Doumet-Serhal 2008, 45.

beginning in 1961. No epigraphic or other evidence has come to light to reveal the Iron Age name of the site. Saidah was responsible for calling the site Khaldé, writing: “Nous avons, par commodité, adopté le nom de Khaldé, mais sans plus, car aussi bien la localité modern qui porte ce nom que le Khan Khaldé de Renan ou la Mutatio Heldua de l’itinéraire de Bordeaux sont situés à plusieurs kilomètres plus au sud.”⁸⁹ The coastal town of Khaldeh is today a resort town, home to a Lebanese Air Force base in addition to the Beirut Airport’s southernmost runways.⁹⁰

The site of Kobbet Choueifat was first mentioned by Henri Guys (a French Consul who lived in Beirut from 1824-1838) in *Beyrouth et le Liban* (1850), and again by the numismatist Jules Rouvier, who describes it as the site of a forgotten Phoenician city.⁹¹ Once systematic exploration by the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) began in 1961, two seasons were given extensive treatment by Saidah in a preliminary report; the other seasons he summarized in much less detail.⁹² A series of difficulties, including the death of Saidah (in 1979) and the onset of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991), contributed to the cessation of excavations and publication of the Khaldé Cemetery. As discussed in Chapter II, Bordreuil published an epigraphic study of the only grave stele found at the site, although this publication gives no information regarding size, shape, or manufacture, and no drawing is available of the stele (which is now missing).⁹³ Culican published some otherwise unstudied pottery from the Khaldé tombs in 1982, working from the ceramics themselves. In 1983, Chéhab published a few objects excavated from the site, which he described in a talk given at

⁸⁹ Saidah 1966, 83.

⁹⁰ Dar Khalde (the “Khalde Palace”), home to the Arslan Druze family, is also located here. Khan Khalde is a few kilometers farther south.

⁹¹ Cf. Saidah 1966, 53.

⁹² Saidah 1966, 1967, 1969, and 1983.

⁹³ Bordreuil 1982; Sader 2005, 25.

the first congress of Phoenician studies in Rome.⁹⁴ No new data were added to the published record until Claude Doumet-Serhal (of the British Museum) published some photographs of the Khaldé excavations obtained from Saidah's widow.⁹⁵ A few objects from the Khaldé excavations are still on display in the Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, but others were presumably placed in the DGA storage facility outside Sidon / Şaida (which has not been inventoried since the end of the Lebanese Civil War). Thus the manifold problems with the Khaldé Cemetery excavations can be summarized as follows:

1. The excavation was incompletely published; only two seasons were written up in preliminary reports, the others only mentioned in brief summaries along with other ongoing excavations. Only twenty-nine of the four hundred twenty-two burials were osteologically studied.
2. The excavation site no longer exists – the work was essentially a salvage project limited by the Saida-Beirut highway and Beirut International Airport repair timelines.
3. Saidah's excavation notes are now lost (as are other portions of the DGA's archives, which were stored at the Lebanese National Museum during the Lebanese Civil War⁹⁶). Saidah passed away in 1979.
4. No further digging at the unexcavated portions of the site have been attempted since the 1960s (and are unlikely to be in the near future, as the Beirut Airport still uses the southernmost runways whose construction precipitated the find, and an extensive portion of the cemetery is under the coastal highway).
5. The storage facilities in Sidon / Saida have not been inventoried since the end of the Lebanese Civil War; many objects are feared missing or damaged.

Despite the problems associated with this site, it represents the largest Iron Age cemetery site (in terms of numbers of burials, at four hundred twenty-two) known from the Phoenician homeland.

Though some of the data from the Khaldé cemetery are permanently lost to us for these

⁹⁴ Chéhab 1983.

⁹⁵ Doumet-Serhal 2008.

⁹⁶ The Lebanese National Museum, Beirut, was located directly atop the Green Line that ran through downtown Beirut. Soldiers were stationed inside the museum building. Chéhab anticipated potential damage to the collection, and had several of the large unmovable marble and stone objects encased in wooden crates to protect them. Despite his best efforts, damage from fires lit inside the museum galleries by soldiers trying to keep warm in the Beirut winter are still visible.

reasons, other information is recoverable from a detailed analysis of the published descriptions, osteological studies, maps, photos, and objects. First, although it no longer exists, the site can be located using satellite images and published excavation photos. The site is situated between Beirut (to the north) and Khalde (to the south), between the coastal highway and the southernmost runways at the Beirut Airport:



Figure VI.10: Locating the Khaldé Cemetery Using Google Satellite Imagery

The cities of Beirut and Khalde are identified in blue; the cemetery location is highlighted in red.

A more detailed picture of the site can be obtained by surveying the coastal satellite imagery for landmarks visible from the site publications:



Figure VI.11: Published Aerial Photo of Khaldé Excavations (left; Saidah 1966), and Present-Day Location of Excavation Area (right; via Google satellite imagery taken March 2011)

The area of the Iron Age II cemetery is visible in the photo on the left (excavations were ongoing when this image was taken, probably in 1962), as are the remains of several Roman-Byzantine Houses. The history of excavations at the site must be pieced together from each of the publications listed above; I offer below a brief outline of the discovery and seven seasons of excavation at the Khaldé cemetery. Following a summary of Saidah's yearly progress and highlighted finds, I include a count of the total number of burials known from each season.

Excavation History of the Khaldé Cemetery:

0. 1960 – H. Kalayan (an archaeologist with the DGA) cleared several Roman-Byzantine houses with mosaic floors discovered during the construction of the Saida-Beirut highway. -Three isolated Iron Age graves were discovered in the process.

I. 1961 – After extensive Iron Age II pottery was uncovered during the digging of foundation trenches for a retaining wall along the west part of the runways for the Beirut International Airport, Saidah took over excavations at Khaldé with a workforce of 10-15 workers. Due to the salvage nature of the excavation and the rocky terrain, the team dug in 10 x 10 m squares.⁹⁷ It was quickly determined that the site was an Iron II period cemetery. Excavations continued from July to late September, and focused on the portion of the cemetery located between two branches of the Saida-Beirut highway. Excavation squares L 15, 16, 17, 18 produced a number of graves, and the northern limit of the cemetery was reached when square L 14 produced no burials, a different clay soil, and no sherds. Two distinct phases of use were identified:⁹⁸ Khaldé IV, dating to the 10th to 9th centuries BCE; and Khaldé III, in use

⁹⁷ Saidah 1966, 54.

⁹⁸ “La fouille stratigraphique d’un cimetière de cet ordre est certes malaisé, mais... nous avons tenté un essai de datation base surtout sur la typologie de la poterie” (Saidah 1971, 194).

from the late 9th to the early 8th century BCE.

-112 burials were uncovered, seventy-seven attributable to Level III and thirty-five to Level IV.

II. 1962 – Excavation was resumed for three months in the summer, and again focused on the portion of the cemetery located between two highway branches. The cemetery limits were pursued southwards (squares L 19, 20, 21, 22 and K 16, 17, 18). Perhaps the most impressive single tomb, Tomb 121 (containing one skeleton and the remains of three cremated individuals in cinerary urns, in addition to some scattered human and animal bones) was uncovered in the upper level of square L19.

-78 burials, including thirty-eight graves belonging to Level III and forty to Level IV.

A reconstruction of the first two seasons of excavation is possible using the grid published in the 1966 preliminary report and the narrative descriptions:

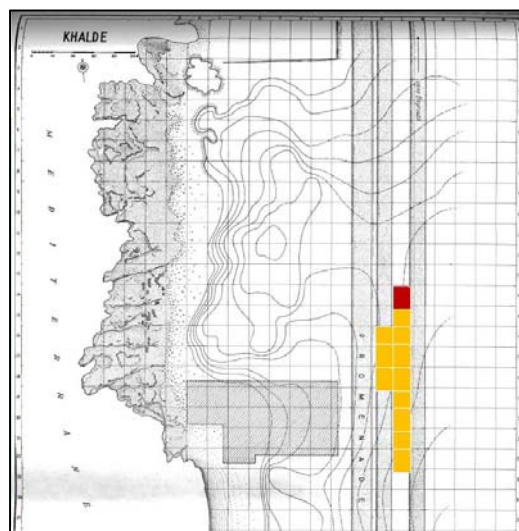


Figure VI.12: Khalde Excavation Grid, 1961-1962 Seasons, Illustrating the Northern Limit of the Cemetery (excavation grid adapted from Saidah 1966)

*Yellow squares indicate excavated areas where cemetery remains were found.
Red square represents excavated area where no cemetery remains were found.
Each square represents a 10m x 10m area.*

III. 1963 –Kalayan began excavation in a new area, between the Saida-Beirut highway

and the sea (west of the previous excavation area). He uncovered some Roman houses, a bath complex, and other Roman-Byzantine installations, whose foundations were built on an almost one meter-thick layer of fill (sealing the lower levels). Also west of the earlier finds, under a layer of white beach sand, more of the Iron Age cemetery was discovered.⁹⁹ Saidah's 1967 summary detailed three "notable finds" produced this season:¹⁰⁰

- 1) The presence of stones, sometimes surrounding the skeletons, other times covering them in part or entirely (perhaps to keep the wind from removing all the sand);
- 2) Areas of ash and carbonized wood, including burnt human and animal bones – thought to be cremation areas;
- 3) Eight dog skeletons (described as "lévriers du desert," or "desert greyhounds") were found buried near the human cemetery. Saidah notes that these dog skeletons were arranged in such a way as to suggest burial in connection with some specific ritual, but no further details were given on this find.

No burial totals were offered in Saidah's publications for this season of excavation.

IV. 1964 – Excavations continued in the areas west of highway. A new type of grave ("parois ovales" or "walled / encircled oval") was discovered. On the northwest slope of the mound, a more complete stratigraphic picture emerged: on top of the Iron II burials were several "Greco-Persian" foundation walls, where were themselves under several levels of Roman occupation. Other areas under investigation reveal finds from pre-historic periods.¹⁰¹

No burial totals from the Iron II cemetery were offered in Saidah's publications for this season of excavation.

Together, based on Saidah's count of total burials as of 1966 (given as 381, see below), the 1963-1964 seasons must have produced another 148 Iron II period burials.

V. 1965 – Three separate excavation areas were investigated by Saidah's team:

⁹⁹ Saidah 1967, 166.

¹⁰⁰ Saidah 1967, 166.

¹⁰¹ About 500 m east of the excavation (along the airport runway), resurfacing work had revealed circular structures and tombs (about 12 m in diameter). Although there were no grave goods, Saidah posited that they might date to the Mesolithic period, adding "Nous ne pûmes malheureusement pas poursuivre nos recherches à cause des règlements de sécurité aérienne," (Saidah 1967, 167).

- a. The Roman-Byzantine area closest to the sea.
- b. Two early structures described by Saidah as the “Point d’eau” (dated to the late Bronze Age),¹⁰² and two circular walls (late 4th millennium), with a child burial in a jar discovered between the walls.¹⁰³
- c. The Iron Age Cemetery: seventeen graves were uncovered, including one cremation. Most of the burials found this season were described as having no grave goods, with two notable exceptions:
 - i. A child¹⁰⁴ buried wearing a necklace, including a blue scarab and a faience amulet (perhaps representing Bes or Ptah);
 - ii. An adult “en excellent état de conservation” with a scarab on the neck, two pilgrim flasks and a bronze brooch on the chest, a bronze bracelet around his upper right arm, and an iron sword blade at his right side.¹⁰⁵

Saidah also reported that the western limits of the cemetery seem to have been located, under conditions which suggested that the first millennium BCE sea level may have been 2-3 m higher than it was at the time of his excavations.¹⁰⁶

17 burials from the Iron II cemetery, including one cremation.

VI. 1966 – This season aimed to continue the work of the 1965 season – to further explore the Late Roman installations, to study the development of the “Point d’eau,” and to continue the excavation of the Phoenician cemetery. The Roman-Byzantine area produced an industrial district with water tanks, silos, furnaces, and an entire system of pipes. Saidah writes that “il est intéressant de noter que ces installations sont construites sur l’emplacement de tombes rupestres de l’âge du fer qui ont été partiellement débitées en carrier aux époques postérieures.”¹⁰⁷ In the Iron II Phoenician cemetery itself, grave goods from the 1966 season include numerous ceramic vessels (including a zoomorphic vase), several scarabs, a stamp seal,

¹⁰² Saidah 1967, 168.

¹⁰³ Saidah 1967, 169. The circular walls were found under the Iron Age cemetery following the excavation of Tomb 234.

¹⁰⁴ Saidah uses the term “un enfant” for this burial, but does not indicate which tomb number it is affiliated with, nor does he specify what he means by “enfant.”

¹⁰⁵ Saidah 1967, 167. The sword is described as “une lame en fer très oxydée (épée).”

¹⁰⁶ The presence of large quantities of Hellenistic and Roman sherds (as wash), as well as a noticeable “smoothing” of sherds past a certain point, both support this hypothesis in Saidah’s eyes (Saidah 1967, 168).

¹⁰⁷ Saidah 1967, 169.

a fibula, and many elements of a necklace. One inscribed grave stele was uncovered near Tomb 121 (the only one found at Khaldé; see Chapter II for discussion).¹⁰⁸

23 burials are reported this season; the total excavated burials excavated during the 1960-1966 season is given as 381.¹⁰⁹

VII. 1967– The final season of excavation at the site of Khaldé was not discussed by Saidah in print. If Saidah's total reported number of burials discovered as of 1966 is to be accepted, then another forty-one burials (all inhumations) were excavated in the last year of the DGA's work. It seems clear that Saidah had hoped to continue the excavations, moving perhaps further south along the coast where he expected the settlement associated with the Khaldé cemetery to be found:

This extensive cemetery points to an equally large settlement which would be the first on Phoenician soil to bear witness to that golden era of Phoenician history [the 10th-8th centuries BCE]. Unfortunately the settlement is still to be found but the last two seasons have brought hints that we may soon uncover part of it, south of the presently excavated area, the greater part lying probably under the airport runways.¹¹⁰

In 1969, before the excavations at Sarepta or Tyre that would provide the first full stratigraphic sequences for the Lebanese coastal Iron Age, Saidah's hopes for the primacy of the Khaldé cemetery and settlement site seemed well placed. To this day, it remains the largest corpus of Iron Age burials known from the Phoenician homeland:

TOTALS – Four hundred twenty-two burials from the Iron II period (10th-8th century BCE)¹¹¹

The Khaldé cemetery seems to be an extensive burial site, in use for approximately two

¹⁰⁸ Sader 2005, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Saidah 1967, 169.

¹¹⁰ Saidah 1969, 130.

¹¹¹ Saidah 1969, 130.

hundred years by the inhabitants of an unexcavated settlement nearby, to the south of Beirut. The majority of the burials – mentioned in passing but not published – seem to have been simple inhumations, dug into the sandy soil and often covered with stones, buried either with a small repertoire of ceramic vessels or with no burial goods.¹¹²



Figure VI.13: Simple Inhumations with No Burial Goods at Khaldé (Doumet-Serhal 2008, 61)

Those tombs that were analyzed or fully published paint an incredibly diverse picture of Phoenician mortuary practice in the Iron II period. An evaluation of the published material provides a partial illustration of some of this variation.

The 1966 preliminary report, covering the 1961 and 1962 seasons of excavation, presents diagrams and descriptions of eleven graves; an osteological report was also prepared that examined thirty-one of the best preserved skeletal specimens.¹¹³ In total, one hundred seventy eight burials were evaluated in some form in the preliminary report; this most likely represents the number of fully preserved or undamaged inhumation burials known from the first two seasons of excavation.¹¹⁴

¹¹² The oft-quoted line “la majeure partie sans mobilier funéraire...” (Saidah 1967, 167) refers to those burials discovered during the 1965 season alone.

¹¹³ Shanklin and Ghantus 1966.

¹¹⁴ The total number of burials known at the end of the 1962 season was actually 193 (3 from the 1960 discovery; 112 from 1961; and 78 from 1962). It is my guess that the “missing” burials (193-178 = 15) include the three burials from the 1960 discovery (not studied by the DGA excavators), as well as the two cremation burials and one amphora burial of uncremated remains (all three from Tomb 121), as well as another nine inhumations too damaged (by being partly outside the area of excavation or some other means) to be analyzed. This is nowhere explicitly stated or explained in Saidah’s publications, as far as I can tell.

Six burials were published in detail from Khaldé IV, the earlier phase of use dating to the 10th-9th centuries BCE. These six were all inhumations in pit graves, several of which were covered in whole or in part (usually excluding the head and feet) in stones. The French term “tombe” is used throughout Saidah’s works to refer to each burial space; most “tombs” consist of only one body in a simple dug grave. Coupling the information in the 1966 preliminary report with that in the osteological study produces the following descriptions of the burials:

Table VI.8: Khaldé Level IV Tombs Published by Saidah (1966)

Tomb No.	Age	Sex ¹¹⁵	Lying on	Orientation (feet-to-head)	Head Facing	Skeletal Notes	Grave Goods
21	60	M	Right side	North	West	Covered in stones.	-Oinochoe near the top of the head. -Two bowls nested together behind the head (one complete but broken). -A bowl and plate nested together along the side. -An (incomplete) amphora below the feet. -A pitcher located behind the lower back (under the head of the skeleton associated with Tomb 22).
22	30	M	Front	West	Downward	Entirely covered in stones. Superimposed atop Tomb 23 (perpendicular to it)	[<i>Difficult to tell whether any of the grave goods from Tomb 21 were associated with this burial, instead</i>]
23	60	F	Front	North	West	Hands positioned under the pelvis; Almost entirely covered in stones.	[<i>Difficult to tell whether any of the grave goods from Tomb 21 were associated with this burial, instead</i>]
165 (no image)	Infant ¹¹⁶	-	Back	East	North	Legs bent.	An “amphorisque” behind the head.

¹¹⁵ No entry indicates the skeletal remains were not part of Shanklin and Ghantus’ 1966 study.

¹¹⁶ Saidah calls this individual: “un enfant en bas âge qui mesure moins de 45 cm...,” (1966, 76), or approximately 17.7 inches. Even accounting for the differences between skeletal height and actual body length, this indicates an infant under one year of age. Saidah also mentions that the skull was extremely fragile; “Les os de la face, encore cartilagineux, ont disparu,” (1966, 76).

166	Adolescent ¹¹⁷	-	Right side	West	South	Legs bent.	Various pottery sherds that seemed to be intentionally broken and interred on the head. ¹¹⁸ The sherds were restored to produce a spouted vessel, two pilgrim flasks, and a barrel flask.
167	Adolescent	-	Right side	North	West	Legs bent; arms brought forward in front of the pelvis.	-A bone scaraboid lying on the chest. ¹¹⁹ -A pilgrim flask located in front of the chest. -On top of the burial: two flasks with convex-bases, ¹²⁰ a spouted vessel, a zoomorphic vessel, ¹²¹ and three bowls.

Four of the published tombs were further described by means of illustrations (three with an illustration and photograph), and a fifth by a photograph alone. Three of these burials were archaeologically associated; Tombs 21 and 23 are juxtaposed, and atop these a third burial (Tomb 2) is superimposed.

¹¹⁷ This is Saidah's terminology. Since none of the individuals described as adolescents was studied in Shanklin and Ghantus' 1966 study, I assume this means they had not gone through puberty (and could therefore not easily be sexed). This may also have been determined on the basis of dental analysis, as the eruption of the second molar tends to occur between the ages of eleven and thirteen (varying according to sex, nutrition, and other factors) – the “adolescent” may thus be anyone under the age of eleven through thirteen. This is just speculation on my part; nowhere can I find a definition of “adolescent” in Saidah's work. The only other term used for subadults is the “enfant en bas âge.”

¹¹⁸ “Un amas de poteries diverses cassées indique l'emplacement de la tombe. Les poteries sont déposées sur le crâne d'un squelette d'adolescent.... Nous recueillons tous les fragments de poteries qui semble-t-il, ont été intentionnellement brisés lors de l'inhumation,” (Saidah 1966, 76).

¹¹⁹ Saidah mentions that the scaraboid is placed “du côté du cœur.” The flat side is carved: “au revers deux personnages assis, de gravure linéaire,” (Saidah 1966, 78).

¹²⁰ One of these is described as a “bichrome jug with large round body” as a parallel to a jug (T.C.3) at the southern cemetery of Achziv. At Achziv, it is dated to the late 11th – early 10th century BCE (Mazar 2000, 205).

¹²¹ The vessel is certainly in the shape of a quadruped, and may represent a ram (or bull?) given the curved nature of the horns.

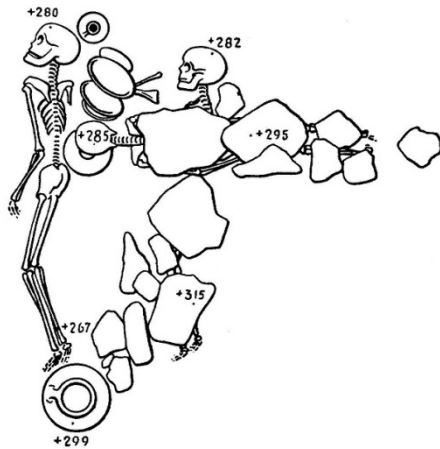


Figure VI.14: Left: Associated Tombs 21 (left), 23 (right, parallel to Tomb 21), and 22 (atop and perpendicular to Tomb 23; adapted from Saidah 1966, 72). Right: Photo of the Three Tombs *in situ*, Viewed from the North (Saidah 1966, pl. IV)

It is tempting to see the individuals associated with Tomb 21 and 23--a male and female estimated by Shanklin and Ghantus to be in their 60s--as purposely buried close to one another with parallel orientation, perhaps to represent their close relationship in life. But the superimposition of the individual associated with Tomb 22 makes the interpretation of the grave goods associated with these three internments challenging.

Tomb 166 is particularly interesting from the standpoint of ritual behavior associated with the act of burial itself. The adolescent buried in this grave is covered not by stones, but by shattered vessels, which have been placed above the individual's head and shoulders. Saidah's excavation team reconstructed the sherds to produce five complete vessels similar to those found in other graves: a spouted vessel, two pilgrim flasks, and a barrel flask.



Figure VI.15: Tomb 166 (Saidah 1966, pl. IV)

In this case, the burials goods seem more likely to represent a meal or offering made by those who were present at the interment of this adolescent than any kind of preparation of food for the deceased. Why they should be smashed and then accumulated above the head seems especially curious; other bodies covered with stones seem to have been treated with special care to leave the head uncovered.

Tomb 167 is the burial of an adolescent, interred with eight complete ceramic vessels, and a small bone scarab which seems to have been placed on the chest.

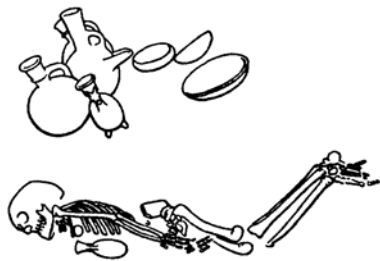


Figure VI.16: Tomb 167, Tomb Sketch (left, Saidah 1966, 78), Photograph (center, Saidah 1966, pl. IV), and Accompanying Zoomorphic Vessel (right, Doumet-Serhal 2008, 47)

The ceramic repertoire seems to represent a mixture of dining equipment (the three bowls and spouted vessel) and decorative or small storage vessels (the pilgrim flask, two larger flasks, and the zoomorphic vessel). Unfortunately I cannot ascertain whether or not the scarab was pierced through, which might imply its placement on the chest of the individual in Tomb 167

was due to having been hung on a string around the neck (as was the necklace including a blue scarab and faience amulet found in the child burial discovered in 1965,¹²² mentioned above).

Another occurrence of this placement of the scarab on the chest can be found in the subsequent level of use at Khaldé (see below, Tomb 2).

Five burials were published in Saidah’s preliminary report from Khaldé III, dating to the late 9th – early 8th century BCE.

Table VI.9: Khaldé Level III Tombs Published by Saidah (1966)

Tomb No.	Age	Sex ¹²³	Lying on	Orientation (feet-to-head)	Head Facing	Skeletal Notes	Grave Goods
1	Adolescent	-	Back	East	North	Feet pointed inwards.	-Bowl on top of left knee. -Oinochoe near head. ¹²⁴
2	Adolescent	-	Back	North	West	Legs bent slightly to the east.	-One scarab located on the chest. ¹²⁵ -One pilgrim flask behind the head. -An “amphorisque” or jug touching the back of the head. -One bowl lying parallel to the body along the left side.
3	Adult	-	Right side	South	East	Body completely covered in stones, except for the head.	Amphora, plate, oinochoe, bowl, and two flat-bottomed flasks located behind the legs.
4	Adult	-	Back(?)	north-east	Upward(?)	Body completely covered in stones, except for the head. (11 cm lower than Tomb 3)	Convex-bottomed flask, amphorisque, pilgrim flask, and bowl located on the chest and to either side of the skull.
121 [contained multiple	Adult [see “skeletal	-	Back	North	Upward	Tomb contained: -One articulated skeleton	-One amphora (not including those used as vessels for bones)

¹²² Saidah 1967, 167. The burial is unfortunately not given a tomb number in this publication.

¹²³ No entry indicates the skeletal remains were not part of Shanklin and Ghantus’ 1966 study.

¹²⁴ Described as a “red slipped jug with ‘mushroom’ rim and square body,” offering a parallel to a vessel which appears in the shaft tombs with burial benches in the southern Achziv cemetery, and the complex shaft tombs in the eastern Achziv cemetery. At Achziv, it is dated to the late 8th – 7th centuries BCE (Mazar 2000, 208).

¹²⁵ Saidah comments that the scarab was located “à la hauteur du coeur”. The scarab is made in “pâte blanche,” and bears a small hieroglyphic inscription: “la legend peut se lire *jmn* - *R*’ suivi d’un signe peu distinct qui pourrait être la plume *m*; ‘*t* (*maāt*),” (Saidah 1966, 59).

burials; see “skeletal notes”]	notes”]				(described to left) -Disarticulated bones on tomb floor -Disarticulated bones in large amphora (including two skulls) -Two amphorae, one covered by a plate, which contain partially cremated human bones. ¹²⁶	-Seven bowls -Two flasks -Five oinochoai -Two scarabs, ¹²⁷ whose placement in the tomb is not described.
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All five of the tombs from Khaldé III were published with illustrations. Tombs 1 and 2 both contained adolescent individuals with a small number of ceramic grave goods. Tomb 1 featured a bowl placed above the knee of the deceased, perhaps as if situated on the lap. The oinochoe located above the head was the only other recorded grave good.¹²⁸

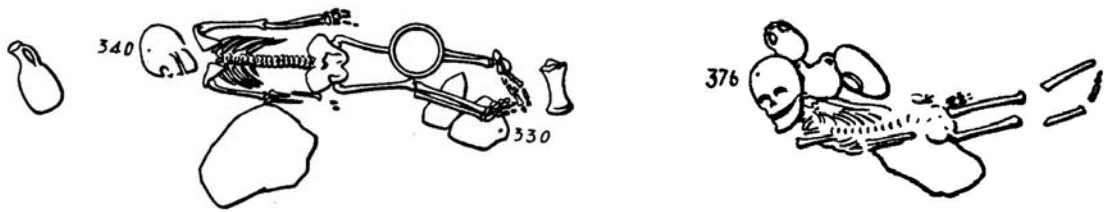


Figure VI.17: Khaldé Tomb 1 (left, Saidah 1966, 57) and Tomb 2 (right, Saidah 1966, 58)

¹²⁶ As far as I can tell, these burnt bones were never studied. Saidah writes only “Une autre amphore, fermée par un plat, contenait un grand nombre d’ossements calcinés où l’on croit reconnaître des ossements humains. Il en est de même pour une 3^e amphore, de plus petite dimension” (1966, 64). To me, this implies the bones were not entirely cremated, and that they were the bones of adult humans.

¹²⁷ Saidah describes both scarabs as being made from “pâte blanche.” Further descriptions are as follows. Scarab 1 (K. 62.42): “Oiseau solaire tenant dans ses serres le signe *nh*. Au-dessus: *ntr npr nbt*; Au-dessous, scarabée flanqué des uraei et le signe *nb*, ce qui pourrait se lire *R' - hpr nb*, nom qui ferait penser à celui d’Osorkon IV, le dernier roi de la XXII^e dynastie, c. 945-730,” (Saidah 1966, 70; thanking Dunand for his assistance). Scarab 2 (K. 62.43): “Gravé au revers d’un sphinx ailé et de l’arbre de vie. Époque de la domination assyrienne ou néo-babylonienne” (Saidah 1966, 72).

¹²⁸ The item below the feet in the illustration (by the label “330”) is not described; it may be an oddly shaped stone.

Tomb 2, like the adolescent buried in the stratum IV Tomb 167 (discussed above), featured a scarab seemingly placed on the chest, perhaps over the heart. Three ceramic vessels placed behind the head constitute the rest of the burial goods.

Tombs 3 and 4 contain closely placed adult burials that were probably not buried at the same time (due to their difference in elevation). Both were covered with stones; Tomb 3 with several medium-sized stones, while Tomb 4 is covered primarily by a single large stone.

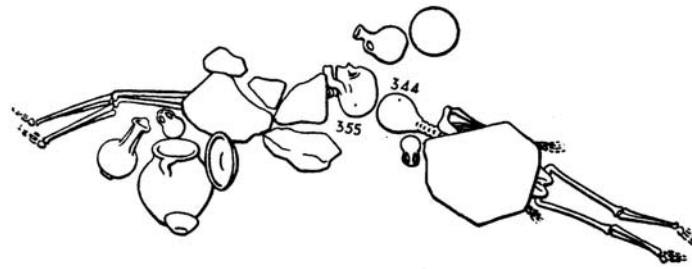


Figure VI.18: Khaldé Tombs 3 (left) and 4 (right); Tomb 4 is 11 cm deeper than Tomb 3 (Saidah 1966, 60)

The grave goods associated with each burial are similar to those of the adolescents in Tombs 1 and 2, in that they represent a small collection of dining or serving equipment.

Tomb 121 is perhaps the most intriguing tomb from the Khaldé cemetery. Discovered in 1962 in square L19, Tomb 121 consists of a built tomb, made from four courses of roughly hewn *ramleh* stones, measuring 3m x 1.7m in its exterior dimensions (2.35m x 0.95m along its interior).¹²⁹ The tomb seems to have been reused over the years, although “il n’y a pas de différence de niveau appréciable à l’intérieur de la tombe.”¹³⁰ Sand was present throughout the interior of the tomb, which contained several burials of various types:

Nous procédâmes ensuite à enlèvement des dalles de couverture, ce qui nous permit de découvrir une tombe collective dont un seul squelette était en place, le long de la paroi ouest, couché sur le ventre, le crane pose au nord. Il était en

¹²⁹ The height of the tomb was unequal; 1.27m on the east wall, and 1.35 m for the west wall “reposant à meme le sable” (Saidah 1966, 64). It seems to have been covered by slabs of stone.

¹³⁰ Saidah 1966, 64.

assez mauvais état de conservation et mesurait environ 150 cm. De nombreux ossements humains dépareillés étaient dans le coin nord-ouest, comme s'ils avaient été entassés et repoussés là pour faire de la place.

Le mobilier funéraire occupait une grande partie de la tombe.

Une grande amphore, posée dans le coin nord-est, était remplie d'ossements humains non calcinés dont deux crânes.

Une autre amphore, fermée par un plat, contenait un grand nombre d'ossements calcinés où l'on croit reconnaître des ossements humains.

Il en est de même pour une 3^e amphore, de plus petite dimension.¹³¹

Saidah does not attempt a systematic count of the minimum number of individuals buried in this tomb. The pile of bones in the northwest corner of the tomb seems likely to indicate reuse of the tomb, pushing old burials aside to prepare space for new ones. The amphora containing un-cremated bones may also be evidence of a secondary burial practice; at least two individuals (based on skull count alone) were reburied in this way. Access to the tomb seems to have been obtained through the short southern wall, according to the excavators.

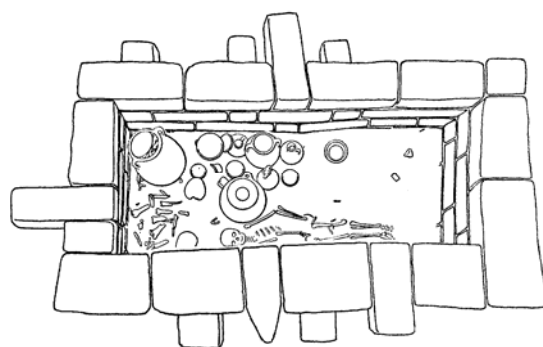


Figure VI.19: Khaldé Tomb 121 Drawing (left, Saidah 1966, 65; north is to the left) and Photograph (right, Saidah 1966, pl. III)

The two amphorae containing partially cremated bones (one covered by a plate, visible in the northeast corner of the tomb, above), may or may not have contained a single burial each, although they were counted as if this were the case in Saidah's tallies of the burials. The grave goods are comparable to repertoires from other burials, and commensurate in number with

¹³¹ Saidah 1966, 64.

the presence of a small handful of burials. Bowls, flasks, oinochoai, and other vessels make up the majority of the burial accompaniments; two white scarabs, one inscribed, one anepigraphic, are the only other grave goods (and it is not clear where in the tomb these were found). However, the one inscribed stele found at the Khaldé cemetery (discussed in Chapter II, above), comes from the immediate vicinity of this tomb,¹³² featuring four letters inscribed vertically along the length of the stone to read *gddy*, in a script no later than the 9th century BCE.¹³³ The fact that this tomb is the only published grave showing clear signs of reuse, with several burials moved aside or gathered for secondary burial, may explain the stele's use as a visual aid to those reusing the tomb (although the tomb may well have risen above the landscape of the cemetery, see above), or to claim the tomb for a particular family or other type of subgroup.

Saidah's total counts at the end of the second season of excavation yielded one hundred seventy eight burials. These inhumations were aged in broad terms (probably in the field) as follows:

- 119 adults (66.9% of total burials)
- 37 "adolescents" (20.8%)
- 22 infants or toddlers¹³⁴ (12.4%)

Though only thirty-one skeletons were removed for study by Shanklin and Ghantus, none of these bodies was determined to have died through violent means, and none showed any kind

¹³² Saidah 1983, 215.

¹³³ Saidah 1983, 215.

¹³⁴ Again called only "enfants en bas âge" (Saidah 1966, 84).

of “artificial deformities.”¹³⁵ These thirty-one skeletons included in the osteological study were analyzed as follows:¹³⁶

Table VI.10: Age Distribution of Twenty-Nine Adult Skeletons Studied by Shanklin and Ghantus (1966)¹³⁷

Sex	20 (or 25)	30 (or 35)	40	50	60	<i>Unable to Age</i>	TOTAL BURIALS	MEAN AGE
Male ¹³⁸	-	2	5	5	2	1	16	45.3
Female ¹³⁹	2	2	1	4	4	-	13	45.4

Two children (from Tombs 32 and 35) were also aged, at six and ten years old respectively. A comparison of the tomb numbers discussed by Shanklin and Ghantus reveals that at least one other tomb contained multiple burials (Tomb 9, which is said to have contained a sixty year old female and a forty year old male). Saidah concludes “Ces proportions n’ont rien d’anormal,”¹⁴⁰ representing an expected distribution of ages in a cemetery undergoing normal use.

Although Saidah did not offer correlations between the two vectors, he did total the variations in orientation of the various inhumation burials as follows:

¹³⁵ Shanklin and Ghantus 1966, 91.

¹³⁶ “Our estimate of age is based on such criteria as eruption, wear and general condition of the teeth, degree of ossification and general condition of the skeleton” (Shanklin and Ghantus 1966, 92).

¹³⁷ Shanklin and Ghantus (1966) were primarily concerned with determining the biologically-marked racial characteristics of the specimens. They took several measurements on each of the skulls, including: Maximum Length and Breadth, Auriculobregma Height, Minimum Frontal Diameter, Bizygomatic Diameter, Nasion Menton Diameter, Naso Alveolar Diameter, Nasal Height, Nasal Breadth, Orbital Breadth, Orbital Height, Palate Length, Palate Breadth, Circumference, and [brain] Capacity of the skull. The Bicondylar Breadth and Bigonial Breadth of the lower jaw were also collected, as were the lengths of the humerus, radius, ulna, femur, tibia, and fibula. Finally, the Cranial Index, Height Length Index, Cranial Module, Stature, Total Facial Index, Nasal Index, and Orbital Index were calculated.

Measurements were compared with those taken from living populations (in the 1960s), leading to conclusions like the following: “for some centuries the people dwelling along the shores of the Mediterranean in Lebanon were a rather homogeneous group all with cranial indices in the dliciocephalic and mesocephalic range. Not a single skull was observed in the brachycephalic group representative of the modern mountain dwelling Lebanese” (Shanklin and Ghantus 1966, 94).

¹³⁸ The male skeletons came from Tombs 9, 15, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 60, 64, 72, 105, 106, 127, 132, and “A” – possibly one of the three burials discovered before regular excavation began (although this is not clarified in the text of the article).

¹³⁹ The female skeletons come from Tombs 9, 12, 13, 18, 23, 26, 62, 63, 69, 71, 102, 119, and 186.

¹⁴⁰ Saidah 1966, 84.

On the Back	On the Stomach	On the Right Side	On the Left Side
72	28	58	20
(40.4%)	(15.7%)	(32.6%)	(11.2%)

With directional orientation (feet-to-head) as follows:

North	South	East	West
104	12	27	35
(58.4%)	(6.7%)	(15.2%)	(19.7%)

Saidah also characterizes the early corpus of one hundred seventy eight inhumations as being often supported by stones under the head, torso, pelvis, or knees¹⁴¹ – as if the position of the corpse in the grave was intentional and sometimes needed to be “tweaked” to establish the desired effect.

In general, while many graves at Khaldé contained no grave goods, the majority of burials contained an assortment of ceramic vessels arranged around the body of the deceased.¹⁴² The selected vessels seem to consist of ceramic pieces from the common repertoire found in central coastal Levantine settlement areas (although no settlement associated with the Khaldé cemetery has been found). Saidah concluded that “elles devaient contenir des offrandes liquides et solides.”¹⁴³ In some cases, they are definitively positioned so as to prevent the serving or eating food relative to the orientation and posture of the deceased (cf. Tomb 2; in which the bowl is positioned “vertically”¹⁴⁴ along the side of the deceased individual). But other graves contained food offerings that seemed explicitly intended for the

¹⁴¹ “Le squelette est souvent calé par des pierres de ramassage (sous la tête, le torse, le bassin ou les genoux) qui le recouvrent quelquefois entièrement,” (Saidah 1966, 84).

¹⁴² This characterization is based only on the conclusions made in the preliminary report after the first two seasons of excavation: “Quant au mobilier, il est quelquefois inexistant, mais le plus souvent il consiste en poteries diverses plus ou moins nombreuses disposées autour du défunt,” (Saidah 1966, 85).

¹⁴³ Saidah 1966, 85.

¹⁴⁴ Saidah 1966, 59. See also the photos of both Tomb 2 and 3 (Saidah 1966, pl. II) for further illustration of this phenomenon.

dead individual's benefit. The remains of at least two fish,¹⁴⁵ each found still on a flat plate ready to be eaten (one complete and one with bone remnants¹⁴⁶), were found in burials at Khaldé, although we no longer have record of the stratum or tombs with which these finds were associated.



Figure VI.20: One of Two Known Fish Offerings from a Khaldé Burial (Doumet-Serhal 2008, 50)

Throughout the cemetery, the bodies seem to have been originally clothed in garments, as evinced by a few bronze fibulae found still in place on the chests of various individual burials.¹⁴⁷ Only one horse-and-rider figurine and one small mask (5.6 cm in height) were eventually published (but not assigned to any particular tomb or stratum).



Figure VI.21: Horse-and-Rider Figurine (left, Doumet-Serhal 2008, 49) and Miniature Mask Found (right, Doumet-Serhal 2008, 45) at Unknown Khaldé Tombs

¹⁴⁵ At one point Saidah refers to “plusieurs plats contenant un squelette de poisson” which were found (1966, 85), but only two photos were retrieved from Saidah’s photo archives by Doumet-Serhal (2008, 50).

¹⁴⁶ See photos above and in Doumet-Serhal 2008, 50. Nowhere in Saidah’s published works does he discuss the fish offerings in detail (there is a passing reference at Saidah 1966, 85); the incomplete fish may have been the result of post-depositional factors, or the fish may have been butchered or prepared in some way.

¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately these burials were not specified, nor was the total number of fibulae found given: “A quelques reprises, nous trouvâmes des fibules de bronze sur la poitrine du squelette, ce qui laisse à penser que le mort était inhumé recouvert d’un suaire, ou de ses vêtements” (Saidah 1966, 84). One is mentioned in Saidah 1967 as having been discovered during the 1965 season.

Ritual behavior observed at the site took several forms. At the level of the individual grave, there is evidence for the breaking of vessels at the site of the burial – and the interment of these sherds in such a way as to cover the head of the deceased (Tomb 166). Saidah also noted what seemed like an on-site cremation area (“...aires de cendres et de bois carbonisé comprenant des ossements humains et animaux”¹⁴⁸) during the 1963 season. Finally, the presence of eight greyhounds near the human burial site is noteworthy. Saidah only mentions these in passing, and concludes that the style of burial indicates that the dogs were ritually buried.¹⁴⁹ Four other sites affiliated with Phoenician material culture have produced intentional dog burials.¹⁵⁰ At the other sites, the dogs also seem have been interred intentionally, with legs and tail carefully arranged beneath each animal, which is lying on its side. No grave goods appear with any of the dogs. If the eight Khaldé specimens represent the same phenomenon, they represent the only dog burials of this kind known to be associated with a human burial area. However, the nature of the relationship between the eight dog burials and the human cemetery area at Khaldé is not entirely clear from Saidah’s publications. If these are contemporary, the Khaldé burials represent the only Phoenician dog burials of this kind known from before the Persian period.

Given the detail available from a reanalysis of various partial publications of the Khaldé cemetery, our final assessment of this data must also take into account the size and nature of the excavated and published burials. The following questions (not necessarily answerable) must be considered:

¹⁴⁸ Saidah 1967, 166.

¹⁴⁹ Saidah 1967, 166: “...dont l’attitude semble indiquer une inhumation soigneuse en rapport avec quelque rite.”

¹⁵⁰ Total dog burials of this kind known to me include: seven excavated (10 total known) from Beirut (5th century BCE); one buried under the sherds of a broken vessel at Tell el-Burak (6th-4th centuries BCE); at least seven known from street areas at Tell Dor (4th century BCE); and 1238 dog burials from Ashkelon (ca. 500-450 BCE).

- Are the published burials (from Saidah 1966) representative in significant dimensions of the other burials at the Khaldé cemetery?
- Are the one hundred seventy-eight burials discussed but not fully published (also in Saidah 1966) representative of the total corpus of four hundred twenty-two excavated burials?
- Are the four hundred twenty-two excavated burials representative of the total population of the cemetery?

In response, it may be argued that the eleven burials published in Saidah 1966 were chosen for a mix of reasons; in part to show typical burials (possibly Tombs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 167) and in part to illustrate exceptional burials (as perhaps in the case of Tombs 121, 21-23, 165, and 166).

While not discussed explicitly in these terms, Saidah's general comments about the nature of burials at the site seem to support this conclusion. As for the one hundred seventy eight inhumation burials discussed from the 1961-1962 excavation seasons, these represent 42% of the total excavated burials from all seven seasons; a statistically representative sample by any measure. Unfortunately, the third question above cannot be answered definitively without renewed excavation at the site, not least of which because the total extent of the cemetery was not definitively established in all directions.¹⁵¹

Thus, despite its seeming homogeneity and single period of use, mortuary practice at Khaldé was significantly variable, reflecting different:

- Numbers of individuals buried concurrently or buried in close association (but separated in time)
- Levels of energy expenditure (in construction of the grave, treatment of the body, and investment in grave goods)
- Quantity and quality of imported or decorative ceramics, metal objects, and other grave goods

¹⁵¹ Saidah (1966, 83) writes that the range of the excavation area during the first two seasons did determine the north and south limitations of the cemetery, establishing them through 560 m² of excavation, consisting of a rectangle 70 m long x 8 m wide. This is puzzling, however, since he describes the excavation's methodology (1966, 54) as taking place in 10m x 10m squares. It may be that especially large baulks were retained during this excavation. Further, the total number of excavated squares (as described in Saidah 1966) producing cemetery remains is eleven (which would be 11 x 100 m² or 11,000 m² of cemetery area excavated, if the 10 x 10 m square was utilized).

-Evidence for a variety of ritual and commemorative behaviors (including many burials where no evidence of ritual behavior was indicated)

However, sorting out what aspects of identity are being signaled via each of these levels of variation is challenging and made even more so by the incomplete catalog of burials available at the site. Does the complex Tomb 121, as the only built tomb, the only tomb indicating reuse and secondary burial, and the only occurrence of an inscribed stele at the site point to this representing a tomb constructed by a wealthy elite? Or is the highly visible status of this burial to be attributed to some other type of status in the community? Were the individuals in this tomb united because of their kinship status, or because of some shared profession or social role? Because it is the only published example of such a phenomenon, it is difficult to make more of this idiosyncratic moment of mortuary practice.

b. Tyre al-Bass Cremation Cemetery

Located approximately 2 km from the Iron Age town center of Tyre on what would have been the mainland, a cremation cemetery was discovered in 1991.¹⁵² In 1990, after nearly two hundred stelae flooded the black market in Lebanon, illegal digging was traced back to the site, found near the Roman hippodrome and the former Tyre al-Bass Palestinian refugee camp. Regular excavations at the Tyre al-Bass adult cremation cemetery took place from 1997-2009 (in 1997, 1999, 2003 and). Excavations have revealed more than two hundred fifty cinerary urns (this in addition to an estimated sixty urns which were produced by clandestine digging before excavation had begun), with five distinct strata identified.¹⁵³ The total extent of the cemetery has been estimated based on site features at 40,000 m² (or approximately 10 acres),

¹⁵² Seeden 1991; Sader 1991, 1992.

¹⁵³ Aubet 2008, 74.

and the site seems to have been in use for approximately four hundred years, from the late 10th century BCE to the late 7th century BCE.

In 2004, the remains of twenty-eight cremated individuals (found in fifty-one urns) thus far excavated were analyzed by Trelliso, who aged the corpus as follows:

Foetus	Infant I (0-4)	Infant II (5-10)	Juvenile (11-20)	Adult I (21-30)	Adult II (31-40)	Mature Adult (41-60)	“Mature” (unable to specify further)
1 (3.6%)	-	-	1 (3.6%)	9 (32.1%)	9 (32.1%)	3 (10.7%)	5 (17.9%)

Although this study only included identifiable human remains, this was sufficient to indicate that this burial site was primarily used for adult burials (as opposed to infants). Most of the urns were buried by a standardized set of ceramic funerary offerings: “a plate or small piece of stone capping the mouth of the urn, two jugs leaning against the body of the vessel containing the ashes and a plate of Fine Ware at the foot of the urn or near it.”¹⁵⁴ The two jugs typically consist of one mushroom-lipped jug (possibly designed to protect a liquid from being spilt, like honey or honeyed water¹⁵⁵) and one trefoil jug (perhaps for pouring a light liquid, like wine). Those burials which utilize two cinerary urns for a single burial include not only the mushroom-lipped and trefoil jugs, but also a bowl or cup (perhaps for drinking) associated with one of the urns.¹⁵⁶ Small personal items, scarabs, or amulets were frequently placed inside the urns with the bones; as were animal bones or other faunal remains.¹⁵⁷

The urns are placed directly in the sand, making it difficult in all but a few cases to determine traces of funerary pits. Those that were uncovered were square in shape,¹⁵⁸ with the

¹⁵⁴ Aubet 2004, 56.

¹⁵⁵ “Some of the analyses performed on the inside of these jugs yielded remains of wax. We don’t know whether the wax corresponds to traces of a stopper or to the remains of the contents, which might be honey” (Aubet 2004, 23).

¹⁵⁶ Aubet 2004, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Aubet, Nunez, and Trelliso 2004, 223-235.

¹⁵⁸ Aubet 2004, 20.

cinerary urn(s) and ceramic grave goods placed inside.

Urn number 8 was one of the most spectacular burials. It was found in a pit which was almost the entire depth of its stratum (end of the 7th century BCE, making it one of the urns latest in date produced by the 1997 excavations). The pit dug for this burial encountered other urns which were removed or partially destroyed to make room for Urn 8. The shape and size of the pit was reconstructed as a 1.25m deep by 1.3 m wide square, reconstructed on the basis of carbonized remains and the placement of accompanying grave goods. The pit was covered at the top by two large stones. Aubet detected six stages of the interment process evinced by this burial:¹⁵⁹

1. The urn was placed at the bottom of its pit, on a layer of peat, with fragments of a plate and a painted Greek jar near its base. Fragments of the plate-lid were found on the mouth of the urn.
2. A fine bowl was placed upside down on the shoulder of the urn; various plates were smashed and found around the urn.
3. Before the pit was closed, a fire was lit inside. Evidence for the burning of the branches and leaves of sugar cane, white poplar, fig, vine, and olive wood is present in the traces of charcoal and charred branches which remain. The cinerary urn, plates, and bowls show evidence of burning and charring.
4. Before the fire was entirely out, a large rectangular pinewood box was deposited on top of the urn,¹⁶⁰ which contained a clay mask (of a male), and three figurines (one horseman and two “architectural models”); see below.
5. The pit was closed, with two large stones marking the mouth of the grave. The bases of the stones were slightly charred from the embers of the fire.
6. A jug was then buried above all of this, broken and upside down, along with several more plates. It showed no signs of charring or burning. “...the act of throwing the jug and several plates against the edge of the burial pit coincided with the definitive closure of the sepulchre.”¹⁶¹

Inside Urn 8 were human remains (consisting of forty tiny bone fragments¹⁶²) along with the

¹⁵⁹ Aubet 2004, 21-23; see also Aubet, Nunez, and Trelliso 1998-1999, 276 - 282.

¹⁶⁰ “...its charred outline was perfectly identifiable high up on the urn and 5 cm above the mouth of the vessel” (Aubet 2004, 22).

¹⁶¹ Aubet 2004, 22.

¹⁶² Aubet, Nunez, and Trelliso 1998-1999, 282. No more could be determined than that this individual was “older than Infant I.”

teeth and bones of bovines and ovi-caprids, as well as two claws of an owl.¹⁶³ It seems that the animal remains had been boiled or cooked before having come in contact with the fire associated with the cremation; “so these are clearly the remains of food that had been deposited on the funeral pyre and then interred in the urn with the remains of the deceased.”¹⁶⁴

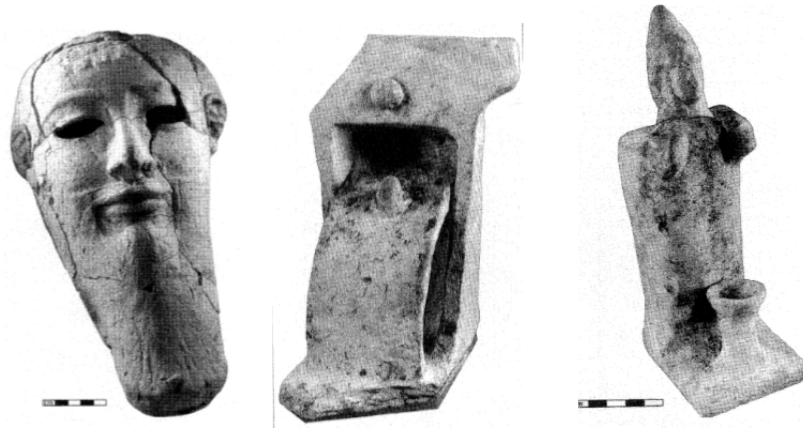


Figure VI.22: Left, Terracotta Mask from the Urn 8 Burial at Tyre al-Bass (Aubet, Nunez and Trelliso 1998-1999, 282); Center and Right, the Two “Architectural Models” from the Urn 8 burial (Aubet, Nunez and Trelliso 1998-1999, 280)

The terracotta mask found in the wooden box is one of the largest clay masks known from the Phoenician world, at 30.5 cm in height. The architectural models have been interpreted as a temple or shrine model (center, above) and an “anthropomorphic shrine-model, representing a worshipper or a deity,”¹⁶⁵ (right, above). I know of no other occurrences in the Phoenician homeland of terracottas buried in a wooden box as these were, although the accident of preservation (in this case, attributable to the elaborate cremation and tomb sealing ritual undergone at the burial) may account for this.

¹⁶³ Probably either the tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) or the little owl (*Athene noctua*), both native species to Lebanon (see Schmitz 2009, especially 71-72 for a range of possible interpretive frameworks for understanding the owl’s symbolism or utilitarian / apotropaic functions in a burial context).

¹⁶⁴ Aubet 2004, 22.

¹⁶⁵ Aubet, Nunez, and Trelliso 1998-1999, 281.

Finally, Urn 8 contained nine pieces of bone and five teeth, which showed “deliberate culinary preparation,”¹⁶⁶ and which seem to have been first cooked (perhaps boiled or stewed) and then charred (probably in the cremation event). These include calf, young sheep, and goat remains, as well as two claws belonging to an owl.¹⁶⁷ Elsewhere in the portion of the Tyre al-Bass cemetery excavated between 1997 and 1999, eight of the cremation urns were found to contain the remains of some animals (and seven of these contained at least one fishbone) along with the human remains.

Table VI.11: Faunal Remains from Cremation Burials at Tyre al-Bass (based on Rovira and Buxó 2004)

Tyre al-Bass Burial	Faunal Remains	Date of Burial
Urn 5	11 fish bones	mid-8 th century BCE
Urn 21	1 fish bone	late 8 th century BCE
Urn 38	3 gastropod shells	
Urn 42	1 reptile vertebra 2 fish bones	late 8 th century BCE
Urn 44	2 bird phalanges 2 fish bones	mid-9 th to late 9 th century BCE
Urn 46	5 fish bones	mid 8 th century BCE
Urn 56	6 gastropod shells 1 fish bone	mid 8 th century BCE

Urn 42 also contained the remains of one olive.¹⁶⁸ While the excavators admit that the presence of small remains like fragments of fish bones or reptile vertebrae may point to these having been accidentally included in the remains of cremated human corpses, finds like the bird bones found in Urn 44 seem to have been deliberately included.

Sixteen scarabs were also discovered in the Tyre al-Bass cemetery during the 1997-1999 excavations. In almost all cases, the scarabs had been placed directly on top of the ashes in

¹⁶⁶ Millán, Villate and Bernúz 2004, 229.

¹⁶⁷ See Millán, Villate and Bernúz 2004, 228-231 for the original analysis, and Schmitz 2009 for the implications and context of this find.

¹⁶⁸ Rovira and Buxó 2004, 437.

sixteen different urns, “as if on them depended the further fate of the buried.”¹⁶⁹ In most cases, they were the only non-ceramic grave good to accompany the cremation. Thirteen of these scarabs were made from steatite,¹⁷⁰ two from faience,¹⁷¹ and one from carnelian;¹⁷² several feature hieroglyphic cartouches (Amenophis III, Amenophis, Mencheperre), epithets, or single hieroglyphic characters; none are inscribed in Phoenician characters. To suggest an explanation for the number of scarabs at Tyre al-Bass, Gamer-Wallert points to the increasing importance of scarabs in Egyptian Third Intermediate Period burials, when large tombs become rare and small grave goods such as amulets, ushebtis, and small stelae grow in favor.¹⁷³ But the interesting burials from Khaldé, which feature a scarab placed over the heart of an inhumed burial (above), may point to an independent tradition of scarab signification and meaning in the Phoenician homeland.

Finally, excavators also noted (but did not publish, to my knowledge) seven modest inhumation pits, which had been dug from stratum 3 into stratum 4 of the Phoenician cemetery, occasionally disturbing or destroying an Iron Age cremation. These inhumations were identified as children and adults of the Persian – Hellenistic periods.¹⁷⁴ They seem to indicate the same Iron II-III burial-type horizon as was discussed above.

Tyre al-Bass therefore seems to represent a relatively limited repertoire of cremation burials, probably the burial place of “une population de classe moyenne,”¹⁷⁵ or perhaps even of

¹⁶⁹ Gamer-Wallert 2004, 397.

¹⁷⁰ Numbers according to Gamer-Wallert 2004: Scarab 1 (Urn 2), 2 (Urn 3), 4 (Urn 12), 6 (Urn 20), 8 (Urn 26), 9 (Urn 32), 10 (Urn 33), 11 (Urn 45), 12 (Urn 47), 13 (Urn 50), 14 (Urn 53), 15 (Urn 54), and 16 (Urn 55).

¹⁷¹ Scarab 3 (Urn 4) and Scarab 5 (Urn 16).

¹⁷² Scarab 7 (Urn 23).

¹⁷³ Gamer-Wallert 2004, 397.

¹⁷⁴ Aubet 2004, 23. Aubet goes on to suggest that this might mean that “in the pre-Roman and Roman periods, the Al Bass area might constitute the periphery of the monumental necropolis of Tyre a few metres to the south of the dig. ...[this] would reaffirm the idea that in Tyre, the city of the dead was always located on the same site.”

¹⁷⁵ Aubet 2012, 45.

“the lower classes.”¹⁷⁶ Yet variation is still frequent across multiple vectors at the site: the use of one urn or two to contain adult burials, variations in personal items or small jewelry/amulets in the cinerary urns; and the spectacular example of ritual innovations (?) in the multistage Urn 8 burial.

c. 'Atlit

The site of 'Atlit is located just south of Akhziv, along the coast of modern northern Israel approximately 30 km south of Haifa. A cemetery was found on the rocky ridge beyond the southeast end of the tell, with burials ranging in date from the 8th or 7th century BCE to Hellenistic times.¹⁷⁷ Two distinct phases of the cemetery’s use have been identified near one another in this area; an Iron II period cremation cemetery, and a series of Persian-Hellenistic period multi-chambered tombs featuring inhumations.

A cremation burial ground was found by Johns, in the 1930s, between a crusader-built retaining wall and a well, although he concluded that “...it is conceivable that the burial ground once extended farther in every direction”¹⁷⁸ than that which was extant. Eighteen burial groups (referred to as “tombs” in the database) were recorded from the tombs dating to the Iron II period, which include twenty four individual cremations (only one of which was buried in an amphora or urn), and one inhumation.

Table VI.12: Cremation Burials from 'Atlit (based on Johns 1938)

Burial No.	Notes on Remains ¹⁷⁹	Notes on Grave Goods
i.	Incinerated; apparently extended, head east, adult.	Two miniature bottles between thighs; two juglets beside right thigh; lamp to right of legs; cooking pot on chest.

¹⁷⁶ Lange 2012, 283.

¹⁷⁷ Johns 1998, 114.

¹⁷⁸ Johns 1938, 122.

¹⁷⁹ Taken directly from Johns 1938, 140-152.

ii.	<u>Inhumation of small child</u> , extended, head east.	Two bronze anklets with remains of linen cloth on ankles; two bronze bracelets on wrists; bronze ring threaded through shell, under skull; group of glass ornaments at right arm (probably strung together ¹⁸⁰).
iii.	Incinerated; apparently a child, extended, head east, the upper part of the skeleton resting on a spade-shaped bed of charcoal, probably representing a single piece of wood.	No grave goods.
iv.	a. Some calcined bones, probably a child's, were found in caked grey sand underneath a group of pots.... There were more bones and charcoal or cindery sand at the west, towards the well-head, the construction of which may account for the disappearance of the rest. b. From another patch of blackened sand and bleached bones east of burial iv <i>a</i> , but not connected with it. ¹⁸¹	a. One oenochoe, a fragmentary saucer, two miniature bottles, saucer covering the other materials. b. A bronze eye for hook; a cracked lamp; twelve assorted beads (some in carnelian, one onyx, etc.), a bronze ring, and fragments of an iron finger-ring.
v.	Incinerated; extended lying on right side, head east.	Fragmentary bottle beside head; part of top and belly of large amphora. ¹⁸²
vi.	Some calcined fragments of an adult's skull were found, covered by sherds from the jar which accompanied burial v... but representing a separate burial.	No grave goods aside from the sherds taken from the amphora associated with burial v.
vii.	Incinerated; skeleton apparently contracted between large pieces of charred fire-wood, head south.	Amphora south of head; fragments of a bowl nearer the skull; melted lead pieces beside the skull; lamp at legs; lump of unknown material. ¹⁸³
viii.	Incinerated; only part of the skeleton was found, the rest having been destroyed in the medieval excavation for the well-head; it was probably extended, head west, apparently an adult....	At east (feet?) were a jug, a bowl, and a lamp.
ix.	Incinerated; remains of the skeleton extended for nearly 1.5 m, but were most fragmentary; the remaining scraps of bones at the east appeared to belong to the legs, hence the head probably lay west.	Part of a bowl at the east end; lamp in two fragments, one at east, and other at the middle point; fragments of bronze-wire ring located near long bone (tibia?); scattered sherds of fine red-burnished ware (as with burial iv <i>a</i>); long jar (as with burial v).
x.	Incinerated; a child burial, apparently contracted, head north-west; partly disturbed at the east by a later trial-pit.	Sherds found at the legs and scattered around the skeleton produced a mortar of coarse grey ware and a highly burnished saucer. From the cindery sand east of the burial, a silver earring and silver eyelet were sifted (may or may not have been associated with this burial).
xi.	a. Incinerated, small child. b. Also incinerated, but deeper than xi <i>a</i> ; apparently head east; also a child. c. Incinerated; also an infant burial; near xi <i>b</i> , it lay in a separate patch of cindery sand.	a. Bronze earring. b. Two bottles, a goblet, an amphoriskos, and a bowl found in a group above the skull. c. No associated grave goods.
xii.	Incinerated; the skeleton appeared to have been contracted but its remains extended for 1.3 m; head south-east.	Two vases or braziers, one to west of feet, one on right of body; fragmentary amphora beside skull; fragmentary bowl east of head; bronze earring east of head; scattered sherds of an amphora above the burial.

¹⁸⁰ Including two pendant beads, a model of a ram's head (?), a stratified-eye bead, circular bicone bead, and circular bead (Johns 1938, 141).

¹⁸¹ This burial is "probably contemporary with the inhumation burial ii, and with the earliest burials in the shaft-graves" (Johns 1938, 143).

¹⁸² "Some sherds had been removed to cover remains of burial vi, and others were found above burial vii" (Johns 1938, 143).

¹⁸³ "From among the sherds of the amphora came a compact lump, shaped roughly like a brazil-nut about 7 cm. long, of a substance which looks like dirty-white plaster, with a brittle crust, underneath which is a brown deposit smelling slightly of resin" (Johns 1938, 144).

xiii.	a. Incinerated; small child. b. Incinerated; age not specified.	a. No associated grave goods? (bronze ornament may be associated with either a or b) b. Bottle beside head; fragments of bowl scattered beside the body; fragments of a saucer scattered around the body; silver earring west of the head.
xiv.	Incinerated; extended, head south.	Yellow steatite scarab ¹⁸⁴ behind back near shoulders; a carnelian barrel bead near the head; odd sherds from an oenochoe, bowl, and long jar scattered over the remains. Possibly disturbed. ¹⁸⁵
xv.	The partly incinerated remains of a small child, probably the leg bones, were found <i>in situ</i> , lying east-west. The bones were bleached and hard, as with the other incinerated burials, but the patch of sand where they lay was merely reddened, without any trace of charcoal. In this case the fire must have burnt itself completely out before the burial was covered up.	No associated grave goods.
xvi.	a. Incinerated; only the upper part of a skeleton could be traced, extending for about 60 cm, head east; but from its position in the charcoal patch marking the site of the fire, the rest of the body must have been flexed. b. Incinerated; must have been entirely consumed; earrings found at least 40 cm south of the skull of xvi a. Both burials lay in a practically continuous patch of blackened sand.	a. Fragment of bronze earring from the skull; bronze granule also from the skull (possibly from the same earring) b. Pair of earrings found 15 cm apart toward the east edge of the patch of blackened sand, one silver, one bronze. Two bronze-wire rings; 50-60 cm west of these an iron fragment (part of a knife?) and piece of bronze wire were found. Scattered over both burials were sherds of an Oenochoe and other vessels.
xvii.	a. Incinerated; higher in elevation but partly covered by the medieval wall. Scanty remains of the skeleton could not be identified. b. Incinerated; 20 cm lower (wholly in the excavation area). A few scraps of bone found in a separate patch of very black sand. c. <u>Cremation Urn-burial</u> ; inserted beside xvii b from the higher level of xvii a. Contained in an amphora and covered with an inverted saucer. ¹⁸⁶	a. Scattered sherds, also covering the cindery sand over burial xvii b. b. Iron knife found among sherds in the black sand directly covering the burial (riveted tang for a covering of bone or wood); saucer near knife at same level; bronze pendant with silver plating, hanging on a bronze ring with several links of chain still attached; juglet (may have belonged to another burial). Level with the remains: saucer underneath, jug to the west, portions of two bottles or jugs at center and to the south of the remains. From the east edge of the b-associated charcoal patch, two loops of bronze wire, one threaded through the other, ¹⁸⁷ and part of a cast bronze pin. c. Aside from the amphora and its covering, no grave goods.
xviii.	Incinerated; apparently head east; probably a child.	Part of a bronze ornament at the skull; two opaque glass beads near the skull; a few sherds found in the cindery sand (others may remain in the medieval enclosure wall).

¹⁸⁴ "Above is the Solar disc with wings and uraei and a horizontal line. In the center is *R' - hpr (Ra-kheper)*. Sheshonk IV (?). The first sign is corrupt. On either side of the name are the sacred eye and crown of Lower Egypt. Below all is *nb (neb)* 'lord.' A rope pattern encloses the signs" (Johns 1938, 149 and n. 1; quoting Rowe's *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, etc., in the Palestine Archaeological Museum*, 203, no. 865). Johns dates the burial to the 8th century BCE on the basis of this scarab (see the argument on Johns 1938, 134).

¹⁸⁵ "That some interference did take place is suggested by the separation of the scarab and bead, possibly the relics of a necklace that might have been worth stealing" (Johns 1938, 149).

¹⁸⁶ "The amphora was more than half filled with the residue of the cremation, a conglomerate of ashen grey sand and scraps of partly calcined bone" (Johns 1938, 152).

¹⁸⁷ "...possibly a pair of poorly made tweezers, broken and deformed, or a wire hinge" (Johns 1938, 152).

As this catalog indicates, cremation at 'Atlit was by no means an homogenous practice, although some tendencies can be established. Eleven of the burials appear to have had ceramic vessels associated with them as grave goods. The incinerated bodies seem to have been for the most part burned in the burial pit or grave, and not moved afterwards. Johns summarizes this practice as follows:

...the burials were all marked by traces of burning. In most cases they were first distinguished as patches of black charcoal in the cleaner sandy filling of the depression.... In other cases the burials were marked by patches of darker sand without any charcoal, but reddened by fire. The bones found in either the blackened or reddened sand were almost always white and hard, in contrast with the bones of an inhumation such as (ii), which were brown and crumbling; though bones found towards the edges of the burnt patches sometimes resembled the latter. In no case were the skeletons at all complete.... Yet the existing pieces were obviously *in situ*, and usually sufficient to show the general direction and posture of the skeleton, if not its full extent. Presumably the missing bones or fragments had been wholly reduced before the fire was damped down with sand....¹⁸⁸

The pottery buried with the bodies showed signs of having similarly been effected by the fire (blackening or other discoloration, the disintegration of polished red slip, the encrusting of the ceramic medium with lime from the calcined bones, and warping or crumbling all occur). Many missing sherds or fragments of vessels may simply have dissolved as a result of the effects of the cremation process. In several cases "it seemed as if the pots had been deliberately smashed and only the fragments farthest from the center of the fire had escaped."¹⁸⁹ The ceramic grave goods were for the most part placed at the head or feet, occasionally at the side of the body. Several of the shattered vessels seem to have been deliberately scattered around the burial (or among several burials, as with v, vi, and xvii-*b*).

¹⁸⁸ Johns 1938, 124-125.

¹⁸⁹ Johns 1938, 125.

As at Khaldé, there seems to be no uniformity either in the orientation of the buried body (to a cardinal point), or in the posture of the body within the grave. Adults, adolescents, and children are all represented in the cremation corpus.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the care with which previous burials were avoided as new ones were added to the cemetery¹⁹¹ implies that the positions of the burials were marked with stelae at one time,¹⁹² or were identified in some other way. The early phase of the cemetery seems to have been almost entirely dedicated to this particular form of cremation,¹⁹³ with only two major variations – the child inhumation and cremated urn-burial underlined above.

Nearby, at the southeast corner of the medieval town, a cemetery of shaft graves was also discovered. In many cases these shaft tombs were cut through or built upon by installations built by Crusaders at the site. In 1930-1931, fourteen multi-chambered tombs were cleared (some of which had already been disturbed), producing around one hundred burials, while eleven more tombs were identified with certainty.¹⁹⁴

The first two seasons of explored tombs were published in Johns 1938. In this publication, burials were numbered with the prefix (*a*) if they were located in the well or shaft; and by chamber number (*b*), (*c*), etc. otherwise. Each chamber seems to have been made large enough for anywhere from one to three interments, but later successions of burials often

¹⁹⁰ Burials numbered i, vi, viii, and xi-*b* were osteologically studied by the “Deputy Director of Medical Services” (Johns 1938, 126, n. 1) to make this determination with certainty.

¹⁹¹ Johns 1938, 128.

¹⁹² Johns (1938, 134) adds that “even if [stelae] once existed, they would doubtless have been removed by the Crusaders in leveling the yard.”

¹⁹³ “Although the cremated burials so far excavated form probably no more than a fraction of the whole burial-ground, yet it is clear that they were not mixed with inhumations of equal date...” (Johns 1938, 136-137).

¹⁹⁴ Johns 1933, 42.

disturbed these to add further bodies. This causes a disheveled state of affairs in most multi-chambered tomb, which cannot always be described or cataloged with accuracy.¹⁹⁵

Table VI.13: Persian-Hellenistic Multi-Chambered Shaft Tombs from 'Atlit

Tomb	Summary Description (adapted from Johns 1933)
L 7	Northwest corner of the crusader fort. A cave approached from the lower terrace or break in the wall of L2. Originally a four-chambered tomb, it was enlarged and joined with L19. Contained an “ancient burial... somewhat upset but covered up again.” ¹⁹⁶
L 12	Top 1.5 m of the shaft cut away to make a room against the town wall and belonging to the medieval fort. Heavily disturbed; a 5 th century BCE silver coin and a 2 nd -1 st century BCE bronze coin were on the floor. Nine burials found in chamber <i>c</i> , five more in chamber <i>d</i> .
L 13	On the western slope of the site; contained nothing but broken rock. Neither the shaft nor side-chamber had been completed (perhaps never used for burial).
L 14	Crossed by walls of the crusader tower. Contained nothing but an ancient arrowhead and crusader period iron trowel.
L 16	Two original Persian period burials, still intact (though disturbed by a ledge collapse). Long storage jars or amphorae (almost hole-mouthed and pointed at the base) arranged such that four are at either end of the shaft both above and below the cover stones, and in ones and twos at head and feet of the burials. ¹⁹⁷ Burial <i>a</i> -i: Silver pendant with bronze hanging ring; green-glaze sacred eye amulet; bronze finger ring; silver coin (5 th -4 rd centuries BCE ¹⁹⁸); carnelian beads. Burial <i>b</i> -i: Electrum earrings or hair ornaments (helix shape); Silver pendant in the shape of leaves; bead necklace (including silver, onyx, rock-crystal, carnelian, and a stratified eye-bead); bronze anklet; lekythos; blue glass amphora; fragments of an alabastron.
L 19	Northwest corner of the crusader fort. Shaft grave descending from the upper terrace. Enlarged and joined with L7. Swept clean except for a fragment of a “blue-glazed Egyptian amulet found in a corner near the new door” ¹⁹⁹
L 20	Crossed by walls of the crusader tower; contained a crusader coin (1198-1236 CE). Crusader digging was abandoned before the lowest burial was reached. Rock ceiling broken by enlargement of L8 (original burials undisturbed). Burial <i>a</i> -i was undisturbed, the burial of a man with a group of forty three arrowheads outside the right leg and between the legs. Eight burials found in chamber <i>b</i> .
L 21 & 21B	Early Iron Age and Hellenistic sherds in “a remarkable confusion” ²⁰⁰ in the shaft, which contained five burials. Five burials were found in chamber <i>b</i> . Tomb 21B contained five burials in chamber <i>a</i> , seventeen burials (including a mother and child buried together, with a silver pendant in the shape of an <i>ankh</i> , along with several other beads ²⁰¹) in chamber <i>b</i> , and six burials in chamber <i>c</i> .

¹⁹⁵ See Johns 1933, 58-59 for a summary of the difficulties.

¹⁹⁶ Johns 1933, 42.

¹⁹⁷ Johns 1933, 50.

¹⁹⁸ “...apparently of the so-called Philisto-Arabian class...” (Johns 1933, 60).

¹⁹⁹ Johns 1933, 42.

²⁰⁰ Johns 1933, 72.

²⁰¹ Johns 1933, 78: “With (*b*-xiii), a child buried with its mother: a silver pendant of the form [*ankh*-sign] belonging to a necklace of beads, consisting of sixty-five small carnelian disk beads, three silver beads of six granules, a hollow, spherical bead of gold and pendant amulets, e.g. papyrus scepter, on silver loops, one of which may have held a stratified eye-bead...”

L 22	Considerably disturbed; medieval cistern broke into its shaft (which has been completely cleared). The side chamber still contained traces of a child burial (<i>b-I</i> , wearing a bracelet, and buried with a coral bead and a fragment of an alabastron) and adult burial (<i>b-ii</i> , buried with flint flakes and a hole-mouth amphora at its feet). Chamber <i>c</i> featured a third burial of an adult.
L 23 & 23B	Broken into as part of the preparations for the medieval fosse; “seem to have been rummaged slightly.” ²⁰² Burial <i>c-vi</i> is one of the oldest burials in the tomb (a female), which contains the largest set of Egyptian amulets at ‘Atlit, lying in a chain between the legs, stretching from waist to ankles. Burial <i>d-ii</i> in another chamber of the same tomb contains a smaller set of amulets placed near the head. ²⁰³ The taluses running into chambers <i>b</i> and <i>c</i> contained two coins, 4 th century Sidonian, and late 5 th -early 4 th century Tyrian. ²⁰⁴
L 24	Shaft crossed by a medieval wall, but not entirely disturbed. Burial <i>a-i</i> : Contained a man with a cluster of seven iron javelin-heads on his chest (8 – 10 cm long). He wore an iron finger-ring with a flat lentoid bezel. Burial <i>a-ii</i> : burial of a woman with silver twisted earrings and bronze bracelets and pendent. Level with this burial was a late 5 th -4 th century BCE silver Tyrian coin. Other burials in this tomb include a child burial (<i>a-iv</i>), another man (<i>a-iii</i>) and a girl (<i>a-v</i>).
L 34	Broken into as part of the preparations for the medieval fosse. ²⁰⁵ Contained some early Iron Age sherds, but almost entirely disturbed and cleared. Traces of one or more burials were still discernable. ²⁰⁶
L 35	Lost its eastern chamber, as it fell in the path of the medieval fosse. Contains an early 4 th century BCE silver Sidonian coin (and a second unidentifiable silver coin). ²⁰⁷

The burial total (of around one hundred individuals) is impressive, but as is evident from the table above, this number obscures the complicated nature of these reused chamber tombs.

Johns writes of the state of the tomb corpus:

Altogether some ten of the tombs examined had not been seriously disturbed since ancient times. But, with only one exception, L 16, where the two original burials were still intact, they had all been reopened from time to time for fresh interments, over a period which, to judge from the coins, covered hardly less than four hundred years....²⁰⁸

In addition to the reuse of the tombs and their disruption during the Crusader period, the lowest burials at the bottom of the tomb chambers were often suffering from water damage.²⁰⁹

Tomb L 16 was the only burial which was almost entirely sealed and intact (there was some damage due to the collapse of a ledge, but not to human activity). It featured only two burials,

²⁰² Johns 1933, 42.

²⁰³ Johns 1933, 48.

²⁰⁴ Johns 1933, 84-85.

²⁰⁵ Johns 1933, 42.

²⁰⁶ Johns 1933, 100.

²⁰⁷ Johns 1933, 102.

²⁰⁸ “Those [Egyptian amulets] with the lowest burials were in a state of crumbling and sometimes nothing but a lump of white gypsum showed that they had existed. Probably many more would have been preserved had the deepest parts of the shafts been less near water-level and consequently less damp” (Johns 1933, 44).

²⁰⁹ Johns 1933, 48.

one in the chamber and another at the bottom of the shaft. But in other cases, 1-3 “slots” (as Johns calls them) were made in the floor to accommodate individual burials, which would sometimes be placed on a light layer of sand (as in L 21 *b*-vii and L23 *c*-vi). In many of these “slots,” a raised area of rock would be placed under the pelvis; Johns argued that “Our evidence shows that head and feet were probably supported at the same level by jars filling the trough at either end of the grave.”²¹⁰

Approximately forty inhumations were (often very briefly) described from the approximately one hundred burials said to have been excavated by Johns in 1930-31 in the Persian period – Hellenistic shaft tombs. Individual burials were dated on the basis of silver coins, Attic pottery, Egyptian amulets, and various types of scarabs,²¹¹ but it was often difficult to separate one corpus of grave goods from another, let alone debris found in the tomb shafts or connecting passages between chambers.²¹² The burial chambers of these tombs were located directly below the vertical shaft in all but one case,²¹³ but many internments were found in the shafts themselves, with evidence for provisions for the extensive reuse of these tombs.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Johns 1933, 58.

²¹¹ Johns 1993, 114.

²¹² “Whenever a new burial was made in the chambers, the shaft had to be emptied, the cover-stones lifted and afterwards replaced before the shaft was filled in again. But at ‘Atlit, in every tomb except one which contained only two burials, this tedious process seems to have been neglected after a number of interments had taken place. ...Then the shaft was hastily filled in, the fragments being left in the filling, or used to cover a recent burial, or to block the doors so as to check the talus running into the chambers from the shaft. Eventually no one bothered to clear a way into the chambers, and burials were made in the shaft filling one above the other” (Johns 1933, 58).

²¹³ Tomb L19 has a chamber which opens at a right angle to the shaft (Johns 1933, 68-69). Its doorway is not blocked, as are the other burial chambers; this may have been considered an equivalent kind of protective practice.

²¹⁴ Note Dayagi-Mendels’ comment: “Johns reports the presence of internments in the shafts. Because information is scarce, it is uncertain whether the same is true at Akhziv. The shafts are not as deep as those at ‘Atlit, which are 4-5m in depth. The ‘Atlit shafts also have holes and knobs to facilitate access. As at Akhziv, burial niches were commonly found at ‘Atlit” (Dayagi-Mendels 2002, 4).

The Persian period – Hellenistic burials were identified by the excavators as women or men on the basis of marked difference in grave goods. Those deemed to be women’s graves contained a commonly occurring repertoire of Egyptian amulets (with some variations).²¹⁵ Johns studies eighteen different varieties; “The commonest type of all is the sacred eye, usually in glazed paste but occasionally in black granite...; very few of the womens’ burials were without it.”²¹⁶ In addition to the amulets, objects such as jewelry (earrings, rings, hair ornaments and the like), glass and metal items of household use appear frequently. Thirteen bronze mirrors of flat, circular shape with a short tang for insertion into a handle were found among the graves attributed to women (L 16 *b*-I; 21B *c*-iv, *c*-v, *c*-vi, *c*-vii; 23 *d*-ii; 23B *c*-vi; 24 *c*-i, *c*-ii; 35 *b*-ii, and *b*-iv). The skeletal remains do not appear to have been independently sexed.

Several burials, belonging to males, feature arrowheads, javelins, and other metal weaponry, in collections as large as forty-three arrowheads buried with one individual. But still others are less obviously gendered according to traditionally understood categories:

Many burials, roughly a third of the total, had no objects beyond an iron finger-ring, some pottery, large nails, and other corroded fragments of metal; notably in crowded chambers such as 12 (*c*), 21B (*b*), 24 (*b*), and in the filling of the shafts. Amulets were conspicuously absent. Were these men? For very few burials were marked by distinctively masculine equipment such as arrowheads....²¹⁷

The absence of amulets in these burials is interesting; were the apotropaic function of amulets not thought to be necessary under certain conditions? Were they especially expensive to procure, or handed down as heirlooms in some families? Or perhaps, as their dominance in women’s burials suggests, amulets at ‘Atlit were more valued as decorative jewelry than as religious or protective items.

²¹⁵ “...Egyptian amulets of glazed paste which were found with a number of womens’ burials, evenly distributed through most of the tombs” (Johns 1933, 47-48).

²¹⁶ Johns 1933, 48.

²¹⁷ Johns 1933, 55.

The rich material from 'Atlit indicates a relatively sudden and consistent change in burial practices at the point of the Iron II-III transition. The cessation of cremation at the site is total; no cremation burials feature Persian period ceramics. The move to multiple inhumations in rock-cut tombs, a system which would remain in place into the Hellenistic period, makes a clear understanding of the mortuary system at any given historical moment in the Persian period irretrievable. The rock-cut tombs seemed to have been desirable locations for burial, even if this required moving other bodies to find space. There is no clear evidence that these tombs were restricted to use by certain families or other horizontal social categories, although this may have been the case.

d. Sarepta (Sarafand)

The coastal harbor city of Sarepta (Sarafand) is located approximately 12 km south of Sidon. In 1968 the Lebanese Department of Antiquities was warned about ongoing clandestine excavations in the limestone hills north of the ancient tell. Subsequently, Saidah spent eight weeks exploring forty shaft tombs found cut into these hills, located east of the coastal road.²¹⁸ Only three had been preserved un-looted in either ancient or modern times; these three tombs were dated to the 6th-5th centuries BCE on the basis of their contents. The settlement area associated with this cemetery was soon after excavated by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, led by James B. Pritchard (1969-1974, for five ten-week campaigns). These excavations produced well-stratified evidence of occupation on the tell in Area II,

²¹⁸ Pritchard 1978, 12. Saidah writes that this was done “in order to prevent the looting of the numerous rock-cut tombs” (Saidah 1969, 134).

soundings X (which contained an industrial sector) and Y (100 m² of a residential district).²¹⁹

The strata at these two excavated areas may be correlated as follows:²²⁰

Sounding X	Sounding Y	Date BCE
V	F	1275-1150
VI	E	1150-1025
VII	D	1025-800
VIIa-VIIb	C-B	800-350
VIIIb-IX?	B-A2	350-100?

A shrine built in the 8th century BCE, thought to have been dedicated to the worship of Tannit-Ashtart, was located just north of sounding X; a shrine with a different plan was built over this earlier shrine in the 5th-4th centuries BCE. The site of Sarepta is therefore unique in offering excavated settlement, cultic, and tomb contexts dating to the same period (the Persian period / Iron Age III).

The shaft tombs were multi-chambered, and seem to have been used for multiple burials, over a long span of time. A few tombs contained Roman lamps and *unguentarii*,²²¹ pointing to the continued use of some of the structures even after the Persian period intact tombs. Two tombs were drawn and published in Saidah 1969, and the contents of a third (Tomb 26)²²² and fourth (Tomb 42)²²³ were illustrated in publications by Culican.

²¹⁹ Khalifeh 1988 and Anderson 1988.

²²⁰ Khalifeh 1997, 488.

²²¹ Saidah 1969, 137.

²²² Culican 1970b.

²²³ Dated to 600 BCE; Culican 1975, 147-148.

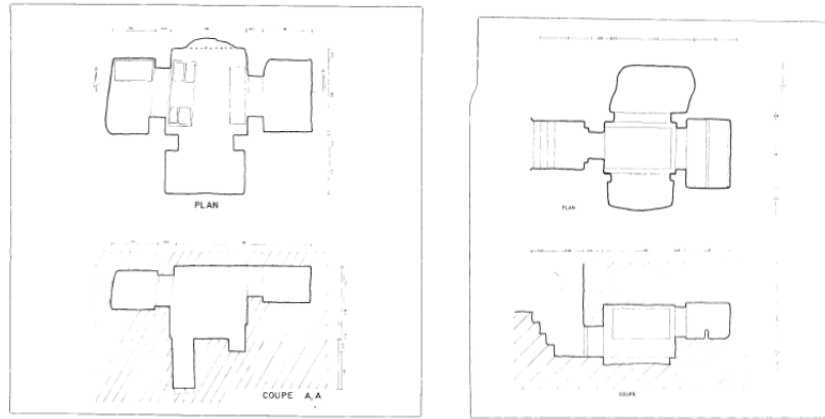


Figure VI.23: Plan (top) and Cross-Section (bottom) of Two Burial Chambers at Sarafand (left, Tomb 25; right, Tomb 32; Saidah 1969, 135-136)

Unfortunately the contents of the three intact tombs were not published individually in a catalog or other descriptive work, and it is unclear whether or not the tombs contained only one individual in each (the physical remains are nowhere described). Saidah did, however, publish a list of the contents of the total corpus of burials goods found in the three intact 6th-5th century tombs.²²⁴

- 221 pottery vessels
- 8 terracotta figurines
- 1 terracotta mask
- 4 scarabs
- 93 rings and bracelets
- 176 beads (called “necklace beads”²²⁵)
- 9 bronze coins
- 1 gold ear-ring

The nine figural ceramic objects, including the one clay mask and eight figurines, were found dispersed over each of the three intact tombs. But terracotta masks were also found in the settlement area at Sarepta, in domestic and street contexts.

More specifically, fragments of five terracotta masks were found in Area II, sounding Y, and three fragments found in sounding X.²²⁶

²²⁴ Saidah 1969, 137.

²²⁵ Saidah 1969, 134.

Table VI.14: Terracotta Masks from Sarepta Settlement Excavations

Terracotta Mask	Date ²²⁷	Face Description	Painted Adornment	Type
Y: Substratum G1 mask fragment A (Anderson 1988 pl. 29.7)	1350-1275 BCE	Right-hand portion of a mouth, slightly open.	Thin, red slip on surface; matte black paint applied around mouth and sides (to indicate moustache and beard).	Bearded male
Y: Substratum G1 mask B (Anderson 1988 pl. 29.8)	1350-1275 BCE	Face with almond-shaped cut out eyes, appliqué eyebrows and nose, and thin lines. Suspension hole in center of upper forehead.	Thin lines of dark paint below eyebrows.	Uncertain whether male or female (perhaps young male?)
Y: Stratum F mask (Anderson 1988, pl. 30.22)	1275-1150 BCE	Fragment from center of the face, featuring eyes and mouth cut out, appliqué nose.	[No attempt to indicate lips or eyebrows.]	Uncertain whether grimacing male
Y: Substratum C1 mask fragment (Anderson 1988, pl. 38.10)	ca. 750-650 BCE	Fragment of mouth, nose, cheekbone, and lower portion of eye opening.	n/a	Uncertain whether male or female
Y: Poorly stratified mask fragment (<i>not published</i>) ²²⁸ from sounding Y	?	Fragment from upper right or left side of head. Hair indicated with incisions and appliqué spirals for curls. Two suspension holes along one side.	n/a	Female
X: II-B-7, level 4 mask fragment (Pritchard 1978, fig. 86)	?	Portion of the lower right-hand corner of face, with nose, mouth, and beard. 10 cm high.	Painted beard. ²²⁹	Bearded male
X: II-C-2, level 4-2 mask fragment (Pritchard 1978, fig. 87)	?	Upper portion of a face. 11.9 cm high.	Eyebrows and hair have remains of black paint.	[too fragmentary]
X: II-C-3, level 3-1 mask fragment (Pritchard 1978, fig. 88)	?	Lower part of face with incised circles to indicate beard; highly burnished. 9.6 cm high.	n/a	[too fragmentary]

²²⁶ Anderson 1988, 564-567; a sixth fragment was found in sounding X (Pritchard 1975, pl. 62.2).

²²⁷ The masks were not dated independently; these dates simply correspond to the strata parameters given by Khalifeh (1997, 488), supplemented by more detailed discussion of Substratum C1 by Anderson (1988, 419).

²²⁸ “The context of this piece could range from Substratum G1 to Stratum E” (Anderson 1988, 567, n. 16).

²²⁹ Pritchard describes this mask as “one with a prominent nose and only a slight chin, on which a beard was indicated by black paint” (Pritchard 1978, 92), although the color photograph published in Doumet-Serhal 2008, 44 seems to indicate the mask has a dark face with white beard. It’s possible that the description offered in Pritchard 1978 was meant for a different mask fragment (though the fragment in question is pictured in fig. 86, same page).



Figure VI.24: Clay Mask Fragment from Sarepta Area II, Sounding X (II-B-7, level 4 mask fragment, above; Doumet-Serhal 2008, 44)

Elsewhere in the Levant, terracotta masks are known from Tell Sukas, Achziv, Tell es-Safi, Hazor, and Tell Sippor.²³⁰ Others have been found at 7th-3rd century BCE sites associated with Phoenician or Punic material culture in the wider Mediterranean. But the Sarepta examples represent some of the first stratified Levantine examples of the mask phenomenon.

The masks at Sarepta are found not only in one Persian period tomb context, but also in several domestic or street contexts ranging from the Late Bronze – Iron Age II period strata. This opens a new window on their potential usage at the homeland Phoenician (and perhaps other) sites. Pritchard described the masks as cultic items:

Face masks, slightly smaller than life-size, were discovered in various parts of the city. ...Where the upper part of a mask is preserved, there are oval openings for the eyes through which the wearer could see easily. Since two of the more elaborately decorated masks (Figs. 87 and 88) were found imbedded in the debris of the principal street that ran from the city to the harbor, it is not fanciful to suggest that these terracotta masks were used in processions, possibly on festival days.²³¹

If Pritchard is correct, and the masks were indeed associated with processions or festivals, the funeral procession may have called for terracotta masks for similar reasons. Or the mask may have been buried with an individual whose processional role was especially meaningful to the

²³⁰ See for example Culican 1975-1976; Stern 1976; Anderson 1988, 564.

²³¹ Pritchard 1978, 92.

community (or to the deceased). On the other hand, all the masks may be from funerary contexts, associated with a ritual that required movement through several spatial contexts.

Although the evidence from the rock-cut tombs and settlement excavations at Sarepta is sparse, this site presents evidence that even non-utilitarian grave goods were frequently found in non-mortuary contexts.

3. Marking Aspects of Identity in the Burial Record

1. Was a “Phoenician” ethnic identity actively constructed at any time in the mortuary record of the Iron I-III period Phoenician homeland?

If we may define an ethnic identity in a mortuary system as being a highly visible and distinct set or cluster of rituals and practices which are present in some form across all socio-economic segments of a mortuary population, the central coastal Levant seems to elude definitive conclusions. On the one hand, what might seem highly visible and distinct to us (for example, the presence of amulets and other items bearing what we might think of as “Egyptian” iconography) might not have seemed a cohesive set of practices or choices to the Phoenicians of the Iron Age I through Persian periods. Perhaps, in this case, the choice of a wedjet-amulet over a bes-figurine would have been more socially or religiously significant than was the general inclusion of Egyptian-looking amulets or images of any kind. Other patterns which arise are tantalizing but require further study – does the seeming importance in placement of scarabs at Khaldé (above the heart of a handful of inhumation burials) and at Tyre al-Bass (atop the cremated remains) indicate a shared belief about what the scarab “did” or signified at death? A full answer to this question would require a thorough querying of the burial database, beyond a simple presence/absence of scarabs in a burial context (a project I hope to pursue in a future publication), although the number of burials in the studied corpora

(sixteen of fifty six urns at Tyre al-Bass; two of the published burials at Khaldé) indicate that this pattern is not wide-scale.

The first pass analysis of the mortuary sites in this study indicates that a broad-based “ethnic” identity does not seem to be represented in the mortuary system of the Iron I-II period central coastal Levant. Identity seems to have been locally situated, and substantive variation seems to have occurred along horizontal vectors. It seems clear that to the inhabitants of the Phoenician homeland in this period, expressing a group identity in solidarity or participation with an overarching set of shared cultural practices, symbols, and objects was not as significant as expressing other aspects of their social identities in the mortuary record.

Elite and royal tombs seem to represent an exception to this conclusion. A more homogenous kind of elite identity is evident across many sites. However, most elite and royal tombs of the Iron I-II periods would not seem to have been visible to most passers-by, situated as many were on ridges or rocky areas overlooking the sea or an urban center. Processions of the burial equipment or container through town, commissions of mortuary objects from (local, regional, or transregional) artisans, or the presence of neighboring Phoenician elites at important burials could explain this homogeneity. A preference for being buried “twice over” in stone (in a stone sarcophagus within a rock-hewn tomb) seems to dominate the wealthiest of burials.

Persian period elite tombs in the north (i.e. the hypogeal at ‘Amrit) offer a counterexample of three highly visible tomb-*cum*-monuments. But otherwise the use of a separate, delineated, and sometimes difficult-to-access burial space by elites for burial in all periods gives some indication of the “conspicuous hiddenness” they may have sought out – not

so obvious as to have been found and disturbed by looters, but visible to those who know what might be hidden within. For this reason (or by affiliation), the reuse of rock-cut tombs may signal a higher social status than contemporary pit or cists tombs. On the other hand, this higher status may not represent simple socio-economic identity, as the burial assemblages associated with burials in reused shaft tombs can be similar to those associated with pit tombs. If this represents a horizontally differentiated identity, it may reflect some other distinction among the inhabitants of these areas.

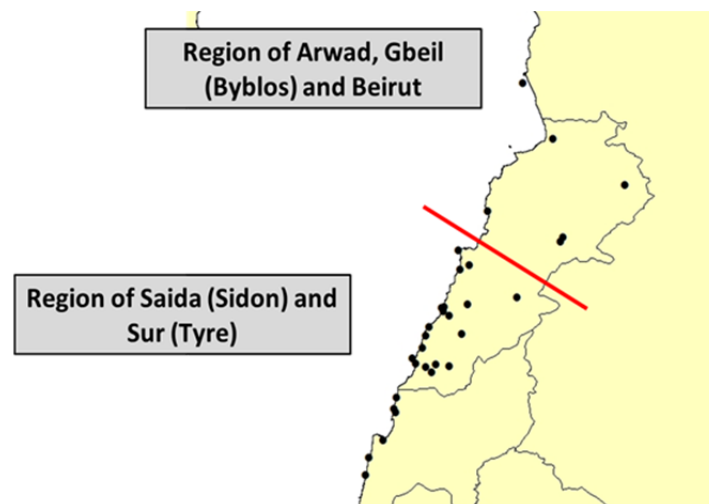
Further, if Iron I-II elite burials were associated with inhumation in rock-cut shaft tombs, and if cremation was practiced by those of all socio-economic status *except* the royal or apical elites, could the cremation burial forms of the Iron II period represent a kind of “resistance” to this centralized elite mortuary expression? This question cannot be answered definitively given the present state of evidence.

Ethnic or cultural distinctiveness may be defined by one group as distinct from another, even where the second group does not value or self-identify as a distinct cultural group. In other words, one group may choose to create an ethnic marker (a ritual, technology, set of objects, or other behavior) in order to distinguish itself from other groups, while another neighboring group chooses not to mark a cohesive ethnic identity. It seems quite likely that Phoenician neighbors viewed the practice of cremation (and perhaps other aspects of the Phoenician mortuary system) as “ethnically” Phoenician, even if the Phoenicians themselves did not.

2. Was a city-centered cultural identity actively constructed instead or in place of a broad-based ethnic identity?

While a handful of “tendencies” can be established for the various city-based sub-regional centers examined above, there is no clear evidence for the marking of a city-centered cultural identity in the mortuary record of the Iron I-III period Levant. None of the vessel types, small finds, or evidence for behaviors was found associated with only one city center, but present at more than one associated site for that period. This is perhaps remarkable, given our inscriptional evidence for Phoenicians self-ascribing as “Sidonian,” “Aradian,” and so on in bilingual or Phoenician funerary monuments found in Greece. It may well be that city-based (or sub-regional) identity became important to those living outside the homeland, but was not considered important enough to those still living in the homeland to signal in their mortuary systems.

On the other hand, phenomena like inscribed stelae and adult cremation cemeteries seem to cluster in the region of Sidon and Tyre during the Iron II period, and a closer inspection of small finds from burial sites might indicate similar trends in the style or make of ceramic vessels.



If this trend can be established with future research, it will strengthen the perception already discussed above that in the Persian period elites from Arwad southward all seem to signal their

status through the use of marble, stone, and clay sarcophagi, placed in rock-cut tombs. Because changes in mortuary practice often reflect changes in the socio-political reality, we may well be looking at the cohesion of regional Phoenician identity among elites, or on the other hand the creation of a class or group of non-Royal Phoenician elites, enjoying new status or access to resources as Phoenicia became a major Levantine player at this particular corner of the Achaemenid empire.²³²

Moving now to one final broad query of the evidence:

3. Is it possible to identify patterns of mortuary practice that might indicate certain beliefs about death and the afterlife?

Scholars have attempted to decipher the implications of the following categories of offerings or practices for indications of belief:

Terracotta masks, known from Beirut, Khaldé, Tyre al-Bass, Sarepta, and Akhziv in the homeland. Those which are close to life size (as at Tyre al-Bass) have suggested to some that they are burial masks,²³³ indicating the identity of the deceased in some form. As we have seen, however, the masks have also been found in domestic and street contexts at Sarepta, which complicates this picture, but may indicate that the masks were used in processions associated with the funeral itself or other festivals. Other suggestions have included votive or protective functions,²³⁴ representations of the face of Baal and his consort – Tannit or ‘Atarte,²³⁵ apotropaic functions,²³⁶ and so on.

²³² The Achaemenid mortuary evidence from Sardis offers an interesting comparison. Dusinger describes the Lydian elite as “an elite that was devising a new symbolic language of personal ornamentation and funerary inclusion to symbolize membership in and adherence to the new standards and ways of the wealthy and those of high status in Achaemenid-period Lydia” (Dusinger 2003, 139).

²³³ Aubet calls the terracotta masks “an eminently funerary emblem,” (Aubet 2006, 43).

²³⁴ Moscati 1968.

Terracotta figurines and terracotta architectural models of various forms have also been found in funerary contexts at Tyre al-Bass, Akhziv, and other sites. In Urn number 8 at Tyre al-Bass, there is evidence that one horseman figurine, two terracotta architectural models, and a clay mask were placed in the burial in a wooden box, as a kind of collection or set. But figurines are known in almost every archaeological context from the Levant – mortuary, domestic, cultic, and industrial settings. Agreement on the “meaning” or use of any particular figurine shape is highly debated; figurines may have represented deities (or places of worship) worshipped by the deceased, they may have placed the deceased under the protection of a particular deity, or they may have been beloved possessions or cultic items that had belonged to the dead, etc. The difficulty scholars face in identifying and understanding these figurines is probably due to the fact that the figurine repertoire from the Levant had a flexible and multivalent set of referents; the category “figurine” was, likely, without significance to the population of the Phoenician homeland, who would have seen the various types of figures and depictions as having very different purposes and connotations.

Amulets: The amulets found with inhumation and cremation tombs throughout Phoenicia have mostly been understood to serve an apotropaic function, and have been primarily viewed through the lens of their Egyptian or “Egyptianizing” iconography or antecedents. The amulets are frequently worn as jewelry or other adornment on the body, as the Persian period inhumations from ‘Atlit indicate – in one case featuring a chain of amulets strung onto a chain, and stretching from the waist to the ankles (L23 c-vi). They accompany the burials of children and adults alike, and are found at every significant burial site in this study. If they are apotropaic in function, it may be suggested that their presence indicates the

²³⁵ Yadin 1970.

²³⁶ Stern 1976.

need for protection even after death. However, if they served primarily as jewelry, and only secondarily to signal some belief or apotropaic need (as the cross-shaped necklace pendant does for some Christian populations today), they may have been buried as personal belongings, and not as expressions of an afterlife belief.

The Ceramic Repertoire associated with non-elite burials seems to have been composed of items from the common repertoire of serving and dining vessels (including bowls or plates, juglets, cooking pots, and storage jars). This has led some scholars to suggest that they were intended to represent the items conceived of as necessary for the deceased when entering the afterlife. However, a great many burials from throughout the Phoenician homeland contained no ceramic vessels, indicating that if an afterlife was an element of the belief system of these people, presumably such articles were not crucial to the continued existence of the deceased in this new realm. At Tyre al-Bass, where chemical analysis has been performed on the ceramic vessels accompanying the cremation burials, a wax has been found on the interior surface of the mushroom-rim jugs, perhaps indicating that honey or hydromel was a standard offering placed with the dead, perhaps the most valuable of all the grave goods offered in this cemetery.²³⁷ Analysis of the contents of the trefoil-rim jug and the less frequently occurring fine ware bowl were less conclusive,²³⁸ but the excavators conclude that they were probably used for pouring and drinking wine. And at Khaldé, two fish plates still containing the skeletal remains of fish were found accompanying two burials. Were these food and drink offerings

²³⁷ “In all the examples where an element of protection has been preserved, for covering or protecting these jugs inside the graves, the trefoil jugs were usually protected merely by re-used fragments of pottery or storage jars. By contrast, all those mushroom jugs whose mouths had been protected, were invariably protected by a Fine Ware bowl, considered to be the luxury ceramic of the period. From this it is inferred that the contents of the mushroom rim jug enjoyed higher social prestige than those of the trefoil jug” (Aubet 2006, 42).

²³⁸ In 2006 Aubet reports that “the physico-chemical analyses carried out so far on bowls of this type from Al-Bass have yielded no firm results and in no case have remains of food been identified inside them. Their function seems to have been that of a drinking bowl...” (Aubet 2006, 42), and it is sometimes stored over the top of the mushroom-rim jug or another vessel.

intended for the dead with whom they were buried? Or are they remains of feasting and drinking partaken by the living at the graveside?

Those burials (at Khaldé, 'Atlit, and Akhziv²³⁹ in the homeland) which featured complete vessels, shattered and scattered around or atop the dead, might indicate that whatever ceramic vessels were brought to the side of the grave were not intended for use in an afterlife, but were being used in one last meal or ritual designed to end in their destruction. Burials that featured nested bowls or other vessels, as well as pottery placed in the grave so as to preclude the presence of solid or liquid contents without their falling out, might also point to the treatment of these ceramic items as “finished” – either having completed their use as former possessions of the dead, or having fulfilled their purpose in providing one last meal to those present at the closing of a tomb. It is also possible that a range of beliefs or customs underlies the variety of selected ceramic vessels and their use or treatment just before burial.

Secondary fires in cremation burials, which were observed at several tombs in the Tyre al-Bass cemetery (including the burial of Urn 8), and are suggested by notes on other cremation cemeteries or areas. At Tyre al-Bass, this bears all the marks of ritualized behavior: “In every case, the material used as fuel is the same and reflects a careful and uniform selection of plant and tree species, generally quite light herbaceous and woody plants that burn very fast,”²⁴⁰ some of which would have produced an aromatic smoke. Looking at this ritual in light of the occurrences of broken vessels at the cemetery, Aubet concludes that “the whole of the funeral process seems to have had as its aim the destruction of personal possessions by fire,”²⁴¹ mirroring the destruction of the body in the process of cremation.

²³⁹ Prausnitz (1982, 37) notes a chambered tomb on whose roof a ceramic offering had been broken.

²⁴⁰ Aubet 2006, 43.

²⁴¹ Aubet 2006, 46.

Another aspect of Phoenician mortuary practice worthy of consideration in light of information regarding beliefs about death or an afterlife is the practice of mummification among royal and non-royal elites.

Excursus on the Phoenician Practice of Mummification:

On occasion, early western excavators of tombs near Byblos and Sidon reported evidence for bandages or resins which they thought were evidence of Egyptian-style mummification. Unfortunately, most of this evidence was not well documented or preserved. In recent years, these reports have come to be doubted; small traces of “bandages” (presumably of linen or other fabrics from plant fibers) would be difficult to tell from everyday garments used to dress the deceased. And in one case, tests done of unknown substances found in sarcophagi turned out to be natural byproducts of standing water,²⁴² not oleo-resins presumably used to preserve soft tissue.

However, there is some evidence for a Phoenician practice of mummification or preservation of the soft tissue of the body, beginning in the Persian period. Direct evidence for this comes from one royal burial from Sidon (that of King Tabnit, ca. 500 BCE), as well as from one textual source; indirect evidence is known from other sarcophagus inhumations from burial sites in the regions of ‘Amrit and Sidon.

The textual evidence for the practice of mummification in the Phoenician homeland is the white marble sarcophagus fragment from Byblos, dated to the 6th century BCE, and discussed in Chapter III, above. The first line, as interpreted by Cross,²⁴³ reads:

...]n ?nk lhdy wkn hn ?nk škb b?rn zn ?sp bmr wbbdl[h...

²⁴² Elayi and Haykal 1996, Appendix B.

²⁴³ Cross 1978, 41.

[I (PN and titular) lie in this sarcophagus], I alone, and here, behold I lie prepared for burial in myrrh and bdellium...

While we do not know to whom this sarcophagus belonged (royal or non-royal elite), the naming of two oleoresins known for their aromatic properties is significant. The preparation of the body is not only referenced, the method or means by which the body is prepared are specified.

Several of the elite sarcophagi found in the region of 'Arwad contained remains of wood and attachment rings in with the skeletal remains.²⁴⁴ The use of wooden boards under the bodies, perhaps on which the bodies were bound, seems to be indicated. In several Persian and Hellenistic period sarcophagi from Sidon, too, wooden boards with perforations in regular intervals around the perimeter were found under the skeletal remains.



Figure VI.25: Two Wooden Planks Found in Persian-Hellenistic Period Sarcophagi from Tombs near Sidon (standing vertically at far left and right of cases; Istanbul Archaeology Museum; photos taken by the author)

²⁴⁴ “Dans les sarcophages en pierre, les corps étaient vraisemblablement attachés à la manière égyptienne sur des planches de sycamore dont on a retrouvé des restes de bois et des anneaux de fixation” (Elayi and Haykal 1996, 121).

From 'Amrit, two bodies in particular, reduced to their bones but in fairly good state of preservation, were studied more closely as a result of their notable conservation and positional features.

The inhumation contained in Sarcophagus 3 of Elayi and Haykal's study, in particular, shows an extreme torsion of the body consistent with having been tightly bound.²⁴⁵ The lower half appears as though lying supine, while the upper portion of the body seems to be turned on its right side. The right arm and shoulder girdle are intact, consistent with the anatomical arrangement of the body, while the right side is broken down and disrupted, consistent with a downward force on this joint as it overhung the rest of the body. While the legs lie flat and parallel with one another, the feet are oriented opposite one another, with heels touching. All the bones are very well preserved. These observations were taken by the excavators to indicate the presence of tight wrapping, perhaps as part of a ritual of mummification.²⁴⁶

The skeletal remains of Sarcophagus 10 from this same study were examined as well. The uneven preservation of the bones may indicate the presence of restraints along the lower half of the body which were more resistant to decomposition:

L'état des articulations suggère que ce système de contention de la moitié inférieure du corps a subsisté longtemps après l'inhumation, autant de temps au moins qu'a duré la lente destruction des éléments musculaires et cartilagineux. La rotule, pourtant toujours prompte à quitter sa position instable d'origine, est en place au sommet du genou gauche. La fait témoigne également que la disparition des liens entravants correspond à une lente dissolution d'ordre chimique ou biochimique.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Elayi and Haykal 1996, 125-126.

²⁴⁶ "La position d'un des squelettes étudiés en appendice a montré qu'il était très étroitement enveloppé et donc vraisemblablement momifié, rituel bien attesté dans les nécropoles de Sidon," (Elayi and Haykal 1996, 121).

²⁴⁷ Elayi and Haykal 1996, 128. They go on to argue that the preservation may also have been due to some treatment of the soft tissue: "...ou un traitement rituel funéraire des parties molles qui a rendu la peau ou les muscles plus résistants à la décomposition" (Ibid, 128-129).

These bonds or “liens entravants” would have perhaps fastened the body to a wooden plank. A number of substances may account for the slowed decay of the body they bound: leather, oil or wax coated linen, or any medium which limited the proximal soft tissue from exposure to the air or ambient moisture.

The most startling evidence for mummification comes in the form of the burial of King Tabnit of Sidon, which might be called the only surviving Phoenician mummy. Although largely reduced to his skeletal frame, Tabnit’s body still retains traces of skin, hair, and internal organs. It is housed in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, in the same room as the Tabnit sarcophagus and other monumental sarcophagi from Sidon.



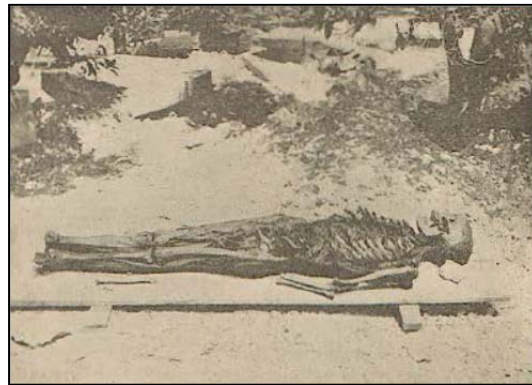
**Figure VI.26: The "Mummy" of King Tabnit
(Istanbul Archaeology Museum; photos taken by author)**

The head is still partially covered in the skin of the scalp, although the dried skin has split along the top of the cranium, causing part of the skin to fall over the eyes on the right side of the face, producing a kind of skin cap effect. Tufts of hair are still visible on the uppermost portion of the skin.



**Figure VI.27: Detail of King Tabnit's Preserved Hair and Scalp
(photos taken by the author)**

The skin of the pelvis and legs has been preserved along their length along the underside, causing the arched stance of the body as it dried; this appears not to have yet happened when the body was first removed by Hamdy Bey, as evinced by the 19th century photograph included in Hamdy Bey and Reinach 1892:



**Figure VI.28: Skeleton of King Tabnit at the Time of Its Excavation
(Hamdy Bey and Reinach 1892, 403, fig. 97)**

The skin of the buttocks and underside of the legs is especially well preserved, and other traces of dried skin and other soft tissues are visible at the joints in the shoulder and arms. Perhaps most remarkable are the remains of the internal organs, which, although blackened and shrunken with the drying process, seem surprisingly complete.



Figure VI.29: Detail of King Tabnit's Internal Organs
(photos taken by the author)

Surveying the surviving organs, it is impossible to tell what, if anything, was removed from the body cavity of these remains; this would require detailed physical study of the body which has not, to my knowledge, been performed in the years since the removal of the body in 1887.

The body has been placed on the wooden plank which accompanied it in its basalt sarcophagus (what Hamdy Bey and Reinach had described as “la planche de sycamore”²⁴⁸); only some cotton batting has been placed between it and the head, since the head no longer articulates with the remainder of the skeleton. Cotton can also be seen sticking to the shoulders, elbows, pelvis, and underside of the legs, probably from having been stored for removal to Istanbul after its discovery. There are also traces of dust or cotton on the ends of the broken ribs, which may have deteriorated in the presence of the moisture from the body cavity. They may also have broken off, either under pressure from some wrappings or the weight of objects on the chest, or during the removal of the body from its sarcophagus and its transport out of Lebanon for Istanbul.

²⁴⁸ Hamdy Bey and Reinach 1892, 372.

While the methods used by Phoenicians to preserve their dead are not well understood, this material offers strong evidence that at the very least, some Persian period kings were prepared for burial in such a way as to attempt preservation of their soft tissues. In only one case were the results of this practice successful enough to survive to modern times. Since the term “mummification” evokes images of an elaborate, multi-stage process involving taking things out and putting things in and around the body, it may be misleading to use in a Phoenician context. But the treatment of the dead body with substances known to preserve its soft tissue, accompanied by the use of wooden boards and, perhaps, wrappings or ties of some sort, were all practices sought out by the Persian period elites of Phoenician sites as disparate as ‘Amrit and Sidon.

The overall picture of social and economic differentiation that emerges from a synthesis of the mortuary behaviors and landscapes of the Iron Age I-III Phoenician homeland is complex, indicating a highly differentiated and flexible social system. Groups and individuals seem to have materialized this social system in variable burial practices, including a number of cremation and inhumation strategies. The range of resource expenditure ranged from very little (as the simple inhumations without grave goods at Khaldé indicate) to extremely high (as the royal burials at Byblos, Sidon, and Arwad attest), with most burials falling in between these extremes, including a small set of ceramic vessels, or other small finds. This flexible and complex mortuary system offers an incredible range of information useful to the reconstruction of a social history of the Phoenician homeland in the Iron Age I-III period. Some preliminary observations towards this end will be attempted in Chapter VII.

Chapter VII.

Contributions to a Social History of the Iron Age I-III Phoenician Homeland

The goal of this study has been to make a first attempt at the reconstruction of the Phoenician mortuary system in the Iron I through Persian periods. The assemblage and review of inscriptional data, literary texts, and mortuary archaeology offer the raw data for this endeavor. The archaeological and inscriptional data does not indicate that the inhabitants of the central coastal Levant wished to signal a cohesive “Phoenician” ethnicity in any meaningful way through their burial practices, nor did they seem to identify with the local urban centers we today deem so critical to an understanding of Phoenician political and cultural evolution.

And yet, organizing the material according to these sub-regional territories may perhaps allow the story of the complex society of the central coastal Levant to be better told. If mortuary variability is evident across the sites under consideration, it may be valuable to continue to circumscribe small handfuls of neighboring sites, and to be watchful for diachronic variation or change. In other words, this study has produced a plethora of material for the writing of a synthetic history of the central coastal Levant from the perspective of the dead. While future use of the database and more specific, in-depth study of grave goods, elite gift-giving, and other patterning will hone this history, its broad outlines may be considered as follows.

A. Arwad

Iron Age I-II Period

Inhabitants of Tell 'Arqa seemed to have practiced both cremation and inhumation in burying their dead, and the excavation of a cremation area shows bodies were incinerated in a central area, with ashes relocated to a ceramic vessel and buried. Another cemetery at Tell Sukas (7th-4th centuries BCE) shows evidence of inhumations, placed in pit graves (sometimes lined with clay) and cremation burials (one of which was left where it was incinerated, the rest gathered into ceramic vessels) buried side-by-side in the Iron II period.

Iron III / Persian Period

The region of 'Amrit produced a number of elite funerary monuments and tombs in the Persian period. In three cases, monumental hypogea constituted highly visible (at 9.5 meters in height) testaments to the status of their deceased inhabitants. These monuments were built close to one another and could hold nearly a dozen sarcophagi or burials; in one case it seems to have been in use for nearly three hundred years. Twenty-one other elite burials, all of them inhumations placed in anthropoid or rectangular sarcophagi, are known from eleven tombs (the "zone des chalets" tomb, and tombs at Bano, Hay ai-Hamarat, Al-Kaisouneh, and Ram az-Zahab). Men and women were buried similarly, with depictions on the anthropoid sarcophagi (and perhaps clay sarcophagi as well) reflecting the gender of their deceased inhabitants. Only one child, buried near an adult in a sarcophagus, was laid to rest without a burial container (at Ram az-Zahab); all other elite burials near 'Amrit in the Persian period were contained. These built or rock-cut tombs involved extensive energy expenditure in their construction, and in the procurement and creation of the marble, stone, or ceramic sarcophagi. Several of the sarcophagi may have been commissioned specifically for the dead men and women they

contained, offering a portrait or funerary “mask” of the deceased, and some featured decorative adornment (like earrings or thin “crowns” around the head) or depictions of clothing carved into the stone.¹

Non-elites may have buried their dead in larger cemeteries, like that explored by Renan near Tartous at Tell Qarnūm. Other forms of funerary monuments may also be suggested by the Tartous inscription on a marble plaque, which would have been fitted into some other monument (perhaps a stele or statue)

B. Byblos

Iron Age I-II Period

Some Iron I-II inhabitants of Byblos buried their dead in shaft tombs high on the cliffs overlooking the city. Others cremated their dead, burying them in urns east of the city, and outside its walls.

The kings of Byblos had a necropolis of rock-cut tombs set aside for their use which dated to the Late Bronze Age; the sarcophagus of Ahiiram, containing his inhumed body, was placed into a burial chamber here where at least ten other kings had been buried before him. The graffito inscribed in the shaft of Ahiiram’s tomb seems to warn others of the dangers of disturbing the burial, as does the Phoenician inscription on the tomb itself, which Ahiiram’s son Ittobaal commissioned on his behalf. The inscription seems very Byblos-centric, mentioning the name of the city (*gb*) in three places aside from the king’s title (*mlk gb*). If the sarcophagus lid depicts Ahiiram himself, the drooping lotus he holds may be a signal of his deceased status; the other figure may be Ittobaal or even a deity. The side of the sarcophagus

¹ See discussion in Elayi and Haykal 1996.

might also depict the king in a kind of presentation scene, seated on a throne flanked by sphinxes, with a banquet heaped in front of him, and a procession of figures reaching around the sarcophagus. Other Iron II period building inscriptions reference a goddess called the “Lady of Byblos,” and Yehimilk’s royal building inscription adds the “holy gods of Byblos” and Baal-Shamem to this list, although none of these deities is explicitly mentioned in conjunction with burials from this period.

Iron III / Persian Period

It may be that elites living in Yanouh, inland from Byblos, chose to bury their dead in rock-cut tombs, although a date for these tombs has not been secured. At least one marble sarcophagus is known from the vicinity of Byblos; unfortunately it was found out of context. This sarcophagus fragment features an inscription which seems to mention “Baal Addir and all the assembly of the gods,” although this phrase is broken on both ends. It may also mention the Achaemenid “Great King,” but this is also a tentative suggestion. The first line of the inscription mentions having been “prepared for burial in myrrh and bdellium” (*bʿrn zn ʿsp bmr wbbdl[h...]*), evoking mummification or preservation techniques (see excursus, below).

Royal funerary inscriptions from Byblos indicate a concern with avoiding the disruption of the burial or the bones of the dead king (as the Šipit-Baal III inscription) “Baal Addir” and an attendant assembly is again evoked, this time alongside “Baalat.” It is clear that the kings of Byblos in this period were aware of, and participating in, the iconographic program of the Achaemenid empire; the inscription commissioned by Yehawmilk utilizes Persian dress in self-depiction. Yehawmilk is pictured making offerings to the goddess “Baalat Byblos” who is depicted as if she is the Egyptian goddess Hathor, with horned disk atop her head. Several inscriptions from Byblos in this period indicate that long life may have been

considered the reward granted to a “righteous” king. The royal family also seems to have been concerned with following tradition in adorning the body at death with luxury items that may have had specific cultural meaning. Although we have no archaeological evidence of these Persian period royal burials from Byblos, the inscription of Batnoam, queen mother, describes her burial in breathtaking detail:

In this coffin I lie, Batnoam, mother of King Azbaal, king of Byblos, son of Paltibaal, priest of the Lady [*b'lt*], in a robe [*swt*] and with a tiara [*mr'š*]² on my head and a gold bridle [*mḥsm ḥrs*] on my mouth, as was the custom [*km'š*] with the royal women [*mlkyl*] who were before me.

The “Lady [of Byblos]” is again mentioned, this time because Paltibaal (presumably Batnoam’s husband) served her as a priest.

C. Beirut

Iron Age I-II Period

Some of the inhabitants of the city of Beirut buried their dead in inhumation tombs and burial pits located in what is today downtown Beirut. At Khaldé, nearby, an extensive cemetery, in use for two hundred years, revealed several forms of burial. Some buried their dead in this designated area without any grave goods, placing them on the ground in a pit dug to fit the body. Others placed stones on top of the dead, perhaps to seal the burial, or to keep the sandy soil from blowing away and uncovering the bodies. Most of the individuals buried here were furnished with a collection of ceramic vessels, placed near the head, feet, or sides of the body (or in several places). Some bodies were propped up or posed, with stones under their knees, pelvises, or heads, suggesting the body’s position in the grave mattered to those present at its burial. But orientation of the bodies or their faces was not regular; all cardinal

² Gibson suggest “some kind of head-dress or tiara; cp. Jerem. xiii 18” (1982, 100).

points and directions are indicated in the population, although 58% of the described burials were oriented with their heads pointing toward the north. In two documented cases, scarabs were placed on the chest, perhaps to be close to the heart of the deceased person, or perhaps because they were hung on necklaces, now disintegrated. In two other cases, fish were served – either for the dead or for the living present at the burial – and their skeletal remains, still arranged on ceramic plates, were preserved as part of the interment. One built tomb must have been highly visible in this cemetery of pit graves; it also featured an inscribed stele with the (family?) name *gty* written vertically along its length. This may have helped locate the tomb, as it was reused for at least three different burials. Or the stele may have marked the family, social group, or individual owner of the tomb, indicating to passersby who claimed this impressive mortuary space.

Iron III / Persian Period

While not affiliated with human burials, ten dog burials are known from 5th century BCE Beirut, seven of which were excavated fully. These dogs were buried in shallow pits, their legs and tails arranged underneath them. Although they seemed intentionally buried together in one place, the burials were haphazard and oriented in a mix of directions and angles, indicating they may have been buried over a period of time. No grave goods were found with these dogs; this phenomenon will be addressed in a forthcoming publication.³

D. Sidon

Iron Age I-II Period

³ The basis of which is Dixon 2013.

Renan describes one instance of a single adult burial placed in a pit inside a cave outside of Sidon. The body was burned on site, its bones and ashes left in place. Several cyst tombs, lined with stones, were dug in the sandy soil of Sidon-Dakerman, and dated to the end of the 7th century BCE. A single inscribed stele comes from this site, reading “belonging to *ʔbh*’ son of *mr*”; it is possible that other stelae once dotted this cemetery, and were removed in later periods. At Tambourit, southeast of Sidon, a rock-cut tomb contained five cinerary amphorae which were carefully buried and accompanied by seven ceramic vessels. One 9th-8th century cremation was placed in a cinerary urn inscribed with the name *ʕqm*, possibly indicating the source of the contents of this vessel which was then reused for the burial. The number of burials in the tomb at Tambourit indicates it may have been a family tomb.

Just south of Sidon at Tell el-Burak, a single broken stele was found reused in a fortification wall, reading, “belonging to Abibaal.” The stele may have been taken from a nearby cemetery which has not yet been located.

Iron III / Persian Period

The elite living at or near Sidon followed much the same practices as those at ‘Amrit, in the region of Arwad. At several burial sites (‘Ain el-Halwa), white marble anthropoid or rectangular sarcophagi were laid to rest in rock-cut shaft tombs. The burials of this kind at Ayya’a included both royal (in the case of King Tabnit) and non-royal (evinced by the Hellenistic period “Alexander Sarcophagus” and Sarcophagus of the Mourners) inhabitants, although the prestige of the Persian period royal burials may have attracted later non-royal elites to the site. The same pattern can be seen at Mugharat Ablun, where royal burials from the Iron II period (including that of Eshmunazar) are followed in later periods by non-royal elite burials in stone, lead and clay. A few inhabitants of the Sidon sub-region chose to place

their dead near the Temple of Eshmun, a cultic or religious site associated with healing. The eleven extant small statues of male children discovered at this site indicate that even the son of a king of the Sidonians utilized the site's healing properties, associated with a nearby spring.

King Tabnit's royal sarcophagus is carved from an enormous piece of black basalt. The lid features an Egyptian-style face-mask and chest decoration, as well as a hieroglyphic inscription mentioning the Egyptian general Pen-Ptah. The Phoenician inscription added to the bottom of the lid identifies Tabnit first as a "priest of 'Ashtart," and secondly as "king of the Sidonians," repeating this order of titles for his father, Eshmunazar. King Tabnit protests that there is no silver, gold or anything else of value to be found in the coffin: "I alone [*blt ʔnk*] am lying in this coffin. Do not, do not [*ʔ ʔ*] open my cover and disturb me, for such a thing would be an abomination to 'Ashtart!" Tabnit's injunctions seem to have worked, as his body survives to this day (having been excavated from the necropolis at Ayya'a in 1887). His skeletal remains lie in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, eerily arched by the tension provided by the dried skin covering his pelvis and legs (see excursus, below).

Another royal sarcophagus, that of Eshmunazar (the son, not the father, of Tabnit) is also carved in monumental basalt, with Egyptian looking facemask and chin-beard carved into the anthropoid lid. The longest extant inscription in the Phoenician language was carved on its lid. It, too, warns that nothing of value has been placed inside the sarcophagus. A long series of curses threaten those who would not only disturb this burial, but even those who would relocate Eshmunazar's remains "to another resting place." The importance of the sarcophagus and tomb in the necropolis at Mugharat Ablun are reasserted here – perhaps the place had specific importance to this branch of the royal family of Byblos. Eshmunazar's

mother, called a “priestess of Astarte” among her other titles, is also mentioned as part of the family which “built the houses of the gods,” through a series of building projects.

At Sarepta, rock-cut shaft tombs were also used, but no sarcophagi were found. The Persian period inhabitants who utilized these sites placed clay figurines, masks, scarabs, jewelry, and bronze coins with the dead; these same items were found in excavations at the settlement site. Those who utilized the cemetery at Sidon-Dakerman buried their dead in stone built tombs, but more cannot be said of their preparations.

The Persian period levels at Tell el-Burak, while not in an area of human interment as at Khaldé, revealed the intentional burial of a small dog or puppy, buried under the sherds of a broken (and incomplete) vessel. Several Persian period dog burials have been found throughout the Phoenician homeland; this phenomenon will be addressed in a forthcoming publication (see above).

E. Beqaa Valley

Iron Age I-II Period

No cremation burials are known from the Beqaa Valley sites of Baalbek, Tell el-Ghassil, Kamed el-Loz, and Ruweiseh, whose inhabitants seemed to prefer inhumation burials even in the Iron II period. Two shaft tombs from the Iron I period at Ruweiseh produced two bronze arrowheads, one of which was inscribed with a personal name. Because more than sixty inscribed bronze arrowheads of this kind are known, it is likely that the arrowhead was inscribed not for the purposes of its status as a grave good, but for use during the life of its owner.

Iron III / Persian Period

Unlike at the coastal Phoenician sites, no elite burials with sarcophagi are known from the Persian period Beqaa Valley sites of Baalbek, Tell el-Ghassil, and Kamed el-Loz. At Tell el-Ghassil, the inhumation cemetery used in the Iron II period continues to be used, with few changes outside of the ceramic vessel types. A new Persian period cemetery is designated at Kamed el-Loz, but this seems to have been done to bring the cemetery slightly closer to the settlement, as it was built in the newly abandoned northwest portion of the tell.

F. Tyre and Carmel

Iron Age I-II Period

East of Tyre, people buried their dead in fifty rock-cut shaft tombs at the site of Burğ aš-Šamāli. We know that at least forty individuals were cremated and buried in these tombs in cinerary urns; others may have been inhumed in these tombs as well, but we have no evidence for this. Their looting produced an estimated 20,000 figurines – a testament to the number of burials which might have once been present. Similarly, the rock-cut tombs of Joya were used for both cremations and inhumations, and featured an on-site cremation area. Over one hundred ceramic vessels come from this site. The small sites of Qasmieh and Khirbet Silm may represent small cremation burial sites, or sites of mixed use.

At least ten rock-cut tombs are known from Şiddiqīn, which were filled with ceramic vessels (one group of two hundred forty-two are thought to come from a single tomb). These are thought to be inhumation burials, but they may also have been a mix of cremation and inhumation burials.

Those living southeast of ‘Akko, and utilizing the cemetery at Tel Bira, cremated at least three of their dead, burying their remains in a whole cooking pot, a storage jar, and a jug

– everyday vessels large enough to contain the remains. A cremation area seems to have been located nearby, where bodies were centrally incinerated before being removed for burial. Sixty eight pottery vessels and sherds offer evidence of ceramic grave goods and perhaps other vessels associated with the cremations themselves.

South of Tyre, at Tell Rachidieh, more than one hundred cremation burials were buried in a cemetery area. A later discovery of rock-cut tombs produced an 8th century tomb containing weights, scarabs, and a sword; perhaps elites utilized this type of tomb, as evinced by the grave goods and tomb construction, requiring greater energy expenditure than the burials in cinerary urns from the large urn area excavated earlier. However, the placement of some cremations inside the shafts of the tombs indicates that factors other than elite status or wealth may have played into the choice of burial treatment at Tell Rachidieh. Two inscribed amphorae from Tomb IV, found containing burials numbered 6 and 7, were inscribed “*bt lb*” and “*bt ḥbr*” respectively. These enigmatic inscriptions may indicate that the burials belonged to two different families or “houses,” although other interpretations are possible.

The inhabitants of the region of Tyre al-Bass seemed to have exclusively cremated their dead in this period, burying them in one or two urns and usually placing one mushroom-rim and one trefoil-rim jug (sometimes accompanied by other vessels) with the burial. Some of the burials featured animal bones mixed with the human ones (bovine, ovi-caprid, and in one instance, owl talons), at least a few of which were burned or cooked before being cremated with the rest of the body. Others show evidence of elaborate burial rituals, including secondary fires lit around the cremated remains – Urn 8 was accompanied by a wooden box containing a mask and three clay figurines which was burnt by this aromatic fire. A large number of inscribed or carved stelae were used to mark some of these burials, though by no

means all. The inscriptions mention no gods other than those contained in personal names. The simple formula of affiliation or ownership, indicating the name of the deceased, dominates. In many cases, significant kinship ties (in most cases, the name of the father, but also occasionally the name of a husband) are indicated after the personal name. The range of iconographic images is limited, but they are combined and styled with significant variations: crescents, circles, crosses, faces, and horseshoe shapes are some of the most common. Red paint (probably from cinnabar or mercury sulphate⁴) was also used to decorate some of the carved stelae, and may have been used on uncarved stelae (probably the majority in the cemetery at the time of its use) as well.

Further south, at 'Atlit, eighteen graves from the Iron II period had been dug in the sandy soil, and contained twenty-four cremations. Only one of these cremations was gathered and buried in a ceramic vessel. The rest were incinerated where the bodies were laid out, their ceramic grave goods and other objects being consumed or damaged by the fire. A single inhumation from this period, a child, was also found.

Six stelae from Akhziv, five from excavations, attest the identity of a handful of burials in this enormous series of cemeteries associated with this site. One seems to indicate the deceased's profession as a metal smith (*hnsk*), the others give only personal names or add a father's name. Carved motifs on these stelae are quite similar to those at Tyre al-Bass, including crosses, circles, and faces. The four large cemeteries found on the tell (CCA), and on its northern (NCA), southern (SCA), and eastern (ECA) borders are extensive and complex mortuary sites. The built family tomb from the SCA, in use throughout the Iron II period, included the remains of fifty individuals and a large quantity of ceramic and other grave

⁴ Aubet 2004.

goods. Individuals of all ages and sexes were buried together, mostly as interments with only minimal (and ambiguous) evidence for burnt remains. Many of the remains had been repositioned into secondary burials of various kinds. Animal remains of fish and sheep/goats seem to be evidence of offerings or feasting at the burials. Some of the inhabitants of Akhziv were returning time and again (over a period of nearly four hundred years) to this built tomb, creating room for their deceased among the remains of their ancestors.

Iron III / Persian Period

At Tyre al-Bass, seven Persian (or Hellenistic) inhumations were buried in such a way as to disturb some of the earlier cremation burials, indicating the end of cremation practices at the site. Elsewhere in this region, a single Persian period shaft tomb is known from Yanūḥ, although it is not clear whether this tomb was built alone or was among other (cleared) tombs. At least one tomb at Tell Rachidieh south of Tyre was used by Persian period inhabitants in the area. The site of Shavei Zion, north of 'Akko, revealed an inhumation cemetery whose founders, at some point in the Persian – Hellenistic period of its use, innovated the use of limestone sculpted heads for the marking of the burials.

At 'Atlit, the favored burial site seems to have been moved, such that fourteen rock-cut tombs became home approximately one hundred inhumation burials throughout the 5th-4th centuries BCE. While the tombs were originally built to be closed off and protected, their continued reuse meant liberties were eventually taken with this design. Inhumations were also placed in the shafts, some were moved aside to create more room, and so on.

The most diverse burial site in this region is that of Tell Michal, where one hundred twenty Persian period burials were found. These included cist burials lined with stone or brick, pit graves, and some infants buried in storage jars. Evidence of wooden coffin use,

attested to by the presence of iron and bronze nails, shows even more variability in the burials at this site.

G. Phoenicians Outside the Homeland

Although no burial inscriptions, inscribed grave goods, or other texts from the Phoenician homeland identify a deceased person as having affiliation with a particular Levantine Phoenician site, some Persian – Hellenistic period inscriptions from outside the homeland do take pains to highlight the deceased’s city of origin. Eight Phoenician-Greek bilingual stelae from Greece make such a pronouncement; three male and one female “Sidonians,” three men from Kition, one man from Ashkelon, and a final example from Arwad. In seven of the cases, this identification is given in Phoenician as if for the benefit of those “from home” or culturally affiliated with Phoenicia, but one stele specifies the origin of the deceased only in its Greek component. In only one case, that of the “Sidonian priest” is the occupation of the deceased mentioned – and then, only in the Greek epitaph (though the Phoenician text is damaged).

The fact that these expressions of sub-regional Phoenician homeland identity are made on stelae erected in Greek cities or sites, and in some cases using the Greek language, is especially interesting. The expectation that sub-regional or city-based affiliation would be significant to one’s neighbors, that is, those affiliated with a neighboring sub-region or city-center, seems not to be the (only) explanation for these expressions of origin erected so far from the places they name. Was being from Sidon, Arwad, Ashkelon, or Kition significant only among Phoenician merchants or tradesmen? Did travelling or living abroad bring out the “town pride” in these Phoenician homelander? Or on the other hand, did the Levantine cities

which are named have different cultural reputations or trade relations with various Greek institutions? Whatever the complex of reasons for these expressions of identity in death, they remind us that the authors of the Greek, Latin, and even Hebrew texts may have encountered different degrees of culturally expressive Phoenicians than we see in the homeland mortuary record, where horizontal differentiation seems to have been more important.

H. Phoenician Mortuary Variability

Looking at the Phoenician homeland as a whole, then, we can no longer speak meaningfully about a “duality” of mortuary practices. Most inhabitants of the central coastal Levant had much more choice than simply to cremate or to inhume their dead. Those patterns in burial good distribution which are perceptible (such as the careful placement of scarabs in both inhumation and cremation burials) seem to be frequently adapted to the particular needs of the individual burial. In particular, while broken ceramics are one of the most commonly occurring grave good and evidence for ritual behavior at the burials across this territory, the breaking of ceramics (how many, where they are placed, whether before or after fires or cremation rituals, etc.) is not standard across those cremations and inhumations treated thus. And plenty of burials from both the Iron II and Persian periods contain only whole vessels (or no ceramic materials).

It is not until the Persian period that a real expression of unified or homogenous cultural features is evinced in the burial record, and then only among what seem to be elite burials. Just as elsewhere in the Achaemenid Empire, the Persian period elites of the Phoenician homeland adopted “...a fusion of cultural traditions, not differentiated on the basis

of cultural origin but serving to unite the elite as a more or less cohesive whole....”⁵ During this period, elite mortuary sites are frequently located on slightly higher ground overlooking settlement sites, and are placed in rock-cut tombs. While sarcophagi become increasingly common, individual expression (probably beyond simply the style of a particular workshop, to a presentation of individual portraiture) preserves the social identity of the deceased.

Textually speaking, the references in a handful of Phoenician inscriptions to the bones as the basic unit of burial integrity seems to fit well with the homeland evidence for a Phoenician practice of “mummification,” as well as with the encasement of elite bodies in heavy stone or metal sarcophagi. But the size and nature of our Phoenician textual corpus circumscribes our ability to understand what may be an idiomatic reference to the “self” or physical remains. Taboos associated with keeping the body separate from the living, or together in one place as it decomposes, might well be behind these references rather than a particular belief about the afterlife or the expectations of one’s deceased ancestors.

In fact, what is *not* present in the mortuary system of the Phoenicians may be just as significant as what we do see. There are no extensive preparations for a “next life,” no large quantities of food or drink on which to survive. There is no evidence for any biographical depictions or texts to accompany the dead. Nor does there seem to be much in the way of communication with or preparation for an encounter with an underworld deity or space (beyond, perhaps, the appearance of amulets or other possible apotropaic items).

The inscription on the sarcophagus of Batnoam, mother of a 4th century king of Byblos, offers one of the most expressive and poignant voices of the Phoenician dead. Her inscription speaks not of what is to come for her body, for her “soul” (or some other spiritual conception),

⁵ But with “...with different individuals probably expressing various aspects of themselves and their values to differing degrees” (Dusinberre 2003, 157).

or for her family. Instead, she asserts that she has followed the customs and traditions of those royal women who came before her. Her final concern (or that of those who commissioned her inscription) was that she was participating in a shared and significant past – not that she was ready for an expected future.

Ultimately, the changes in mortuary practice observable at the Iron Age II – Persian period horizon should be understood against the backdrop of a re-negotiation or fluid notion of Phoenician-ness itself. This becomes even more applicable in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods. The increasing degree to which the Phoenician Levant was engaged on an “international” scale may on the one hand have provided incentive for the coalescence of a certain kind of elite Phoenician identity (or an identity which was put to use in certain contexts), while on the other hand making mortuary practice all the more difficult to pin down.

I. Directions for Future Research

The present study sought to begin a systematized study of the mortuary system of the homeland Phoenicians by collecting all known burials and burial sites. This broad focus necessitated a rather superficial treatment of the complex and ambiguous data present in the mortuary and textual sources. Numerous focused studies can now be conducted on the basis of this material. Studies of figurines, architectural models, amulets, scarabs, and mask types may be pursued, either across the Phoenician central coastal Levant, or in sub-regional groupings. Further investigation of ceramic distribution is certainly needed, and could be conducted across many vectors (for example, a study of all cinerary urn types, or a distribution of the [relatively rare] cooking pots across mortuary assemblages).

Persian period sarcophagi from the region under investigation also deserve reanalysis, as Elayi and Haykal's (1996) observation that they may represent funerary portraiture is tantalizing. Were some sarcophagi purchased "ready-made," and thus without much individualizing detail, or in batches of similar-looking forms? At the very least, adornment and garment details featured in the more detailed sarcophagi would shed light on dress, jewelry use, and perhaps even some Phoenician terminology (as in the case of the Batnoam inscription, and its reference to two pieces of jewelry or other significant adornment). It is also possible that a closer examination of the style, technical work, and materiality of these sarcophagi could help to identify workshops near Sidon or 'Amrit, as Elayi and Haykal's work has begun to indicate.

Alongside the Persian period elite sarcophagi, examination of the corpus of Persian period metal worked bowls or *phialai*⁶ found in mortuary contexts is in order. These silver, gold, and bronze objects should be considered alongside other types of socially significant "heirloom" or "keepsake" objects marked by Pharaonic cartouches or Achaemenid iconography. These luxurious gifts found in the Iron I-III Phoenician homeland (and abroad) most likely represent new developments in what was a longstanding *koiné* of international exchange and gift-giving in the Near East and Mediterranean.⁷

A systemic study of the iconography of inscribed stelae from the homeland would benefit from comparison with stelae iconography from sites in the western Mediterranean, although material from sites like Carthage requires its own thorough treatment before this can

⁶ Gunter and Root 1998.

⁷ See Feldman 2006. On the Achaemenid developments and adaptations of this tradition, see Root 1994, Dussinberre 2003, and Gunter 2009.

be fully undertaken. In the meantime, the conclusions reached in Lange's recent (2012) work on the stelae from Tyre al-Bass may be compared with stelae use and decoration from other homeland sites. Ultimately, the similarities between carved motifs from adult cremation cemetery stelae and infant cremation cemeteries / "tophets" may make significant contributions to our understanding of the use of the latter sites.

The database could also be used to construct a cross-site study of known burials of women, or a study of the mortuary rites specifically applied to children during any of the periods in question, producing an even more detailed picture of the social stratification of Phoenician sites. These are just some of the avenues for further research that arise from the material collected by the present study. Of course, ongoing and new excavations in coastal northern Israel and Lebanon, along with the eventual resumption of excavation in coastal southern Syria, will add new and better documented mortuary evidence to the picture emerging in the Phoenician homeland thus far.

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