The island of Cyprus, being the nearest neighbour to the Phoenician mainland, experienced the presence of the Phoenicians from a very early date during their westward expansion. The present writer and others have published brief reports on recent archaeological discoveries pertaining to the Phoenicians in Cyprus to which the reader may easily refer (e.g. Karageorghis 1995). In fact Cyprus is currently one of the few sources of information about the Eastern Phoenicians, since in Lebanon, the Phoenician homeland, archaeological research was hampered for several years due to political turmoil. It is gratifying that the situation has now changed and that archaeological research in the country has resumed. Cyprus continues, however, to be ‘productive’ and the ‘news’ which follows will hopefully be of interest to students of the Phoenician civilization as well as of Mediterranean culture in general.

Kition

Kition, whether it is to be identified with Kardikadast or not (some believe that this identification is more valid for Amathus), was the centre of the Phoenician presence in Cyprus, both administrative and cultural. Extensive archaeological research in this city (situated under the modern town of Larnaca, on the south-east coast of Cyprus) has enriched our knowledge about the role of the Phoenicians at Kition from the very beginning (ca. 800 B.C.) down to the abolition of the Phoenician dynasty in 312 B.C. For reasons beyond my control, the results of the excavations in the Phoenician levels of the area of Kathari (excavations carried out by the present writer for the Cyprus Department of Antiquities from 1959 to 1986) have not been fully published. This will soon be remedied; the volume dealing with the finds is already in press.

The French mission of the University of Lyon under the direction of M. Yon continued its excavation at the site of Bamboula (previously thought to be the acropolis of Kition), and particularly at the site of the neōría (the military harbour of the classical period). Seven ramps have been uncovered, on which the warships were drawn up to dry so as to render them lighter and hence swifter (Fig. 1).

1 View of the neōría of Kition (Courtesy of the French Mission).

2 Red Slip (Phoenician) jug from the recently excavated tomb at Kition (Courtesy of Dr. S. Hadjisavvas, Director of the Department of Antiquities).
This military harbour was established at the end of the 5th century B.C. and was abandoned at the end of the classical period (end of the 4th century B.C.). Plans have been prepared for the sheltering of the site and for its presentation.

The most sensational recent ‘Phoenician’ news from Kition, however, is the accidental discovery late in 1998 and the subsequent excavation (1999) by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities of an intact built tomb in the southern part of the town of Larnaca. The bulldozer damaged part of the roof but the chamber was found intact, with the large slab, which blocked its entrance still in situ. The tomb consists of an antechamber and a funerary chamber, each measuring 2.50 x 2.00m., communicating with a passage 0.84m. wide. It is entirely constructed of regularly hewn blocks of stone; its floor is covered with large gypsum slabs. The entrance to the antechamber is 1.00m. wide and 1.56m. high, with a large store slab blocking it, measuring 1.72m. in height and 1.46m. width. The two chambers had a vaulted roof, with a maximum height of 2.65m. Few human skeletal remains were found in the funerary chamber (probably damaged by the salty environment).

Three vases of typical Phoenician type (Fig. 2) and a number of items of fine quality gold jewellery were found in the funerary chamber, all dating to the late Cypro-Archaic period.

The dromos of the tomb, 16.44m. long, with a width varying from 2.30m. to 2.80m., was carved in the natural rock. The sides were dressed with stone. Three skeletons of ‘horses’ were found buried in the dromos, associated with bronze blinkers and iron bits.

The ceramic material and the jewellery, as well as the tomb architecture suggest that this tomb was used for the burial of a distinguished member of the Phoenician community of Kition. Although skeletons of ‘horses’ may recall some of the ‘royal’ tombs of Salamis and elsewhere, they differ in as

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1 The above description is based on information kindly provided by the excavator, Dr. S. Hadjisavvas, who also provided the photo of the vase which is reproduced in this report.
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much as they were not associ-ated with any remains of chari-ots. Furthermore it is not at all certain that these are skeletons of horses and not of donkeys, as is the case in e.g. Salamis Tomb 19 and 31, where skeletons of unyoked donkeys were found (Karageorghis 1967, 117-118). It is not surprising if this custom was adopted by some of the rich Phoenicians of Kition.

This tomb, which might be called a ‘royal’ tomb, on the analogy with the tombs of Salamis of the Cypro-Archaic period, is no doubt of considerable importance, and deserves consideration in the discussion of the controversy regarding the identifica-tion of Kardhiahast (see recently Hermary 1996).

The reopening of the National Museum in Beirut as well as the opening of the new galleries of the Département des Antiquités Orientales in the Louvre have brought to light once again the magnificence of the marble anthropoid sarcophagi of the 5th century B.C. and later, which are known mainly from Lebanon (e.g. Doumet-Serhal 1996). The same may be said about the two such sarcophagi from Kition and Amathus respectively, now in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which have now been cleaned for exhibition in the new permanent Cypriote galleries of this Museum to be inaugurated in April 2000. The marble of the two marble sarcophagi in New York has been analysed by Norman Herz and found to be of Parian origin. The discovery of unfinished marble sarcophagi on Paros itself provides supporting evidence for the provenance of the marble of all the sarcophagi of this type found from one end of the Mediterranean to the other (this problem has been dealt with in detail in a paper read by the present writer at the International Conference “Paria Lithos” held in Paros in 1997 (Karageorghis, forthcoming).

AMATHUS

At Amathus, the largest Phoenician centre in Cyprus, the excavations by the French mission of the Ecole Française d’Athènes have been slowed down in recent years in order to prepare the material for publication. Unfortunately no progress has been made with regard to the final publication of the material from the cemetery of the Phoenician population of Amathus, a task which will need the collaboration of a number of specialists together with the excavators. A lengthy preliminary report, however, has recently appeared, which gives a first overview of this important discovery (Christou 1998 and Agelarakis et al. 1998).

It is hoped that the first final reports of the excavations at Amathus by the French mission will appear soon; they, together with the material from the necropolis, will demonstrate the importance of the Phoenician penetration in this city, especially during the Cypro-Archaic I-II periods.

The publication of the proceedings of the International Symposium held in Rethymno in 1997 (Karageorghis and Stampolidis (eds) 1998, see bibliography under Agelarakis et al.), although not relating only to Cyprus, contains important material relating to the Phoenicians in Cyprus as well as the Phoenician presence in Crete. This publication, together with the catalogue of a special exhibition held at the Heraklion Museum after the Symposium (Stampolidis et al. 1998), constitutes a new chapter on the Phoenicians in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, which has already been enhanced by the final publication of the excavations of the North Cemetery of Knossos (Coldstream and Catling 1996).

IDALION

Idalion appeared prominently in archaeological news during recent years, and the discovery of the ‘palace’ of the Cypro- Classical period, (figs. 3-4) which yielded a large number of long Phoenician inscriptions painted on gypsum slabs, constitutes a major contribution to Phoenician studies (fig. 5) (Hadjicosti 1995; eadem 1997). A preliminary study of the inscriptions by Prof. M. Sznyer has revealed that most of the texts are of an economic character. Up to now there are more than one hundred and twenty Phoenician inscribed slabs (not, of course, all of equal length). They were found mainly in three separate storerooms of the ‘palace’. Prof.
Szyncer has promised an early publication of them. The excavations by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities at Idalion are continuing. The area of the ‘palace’ excavated by the American Mission from 1973-1980 (Stager and Walker 1989) has now been joined with the adjacent area excavated by the Department of Antiquities, and a very large architectural complex emerges, which will prove to be one of the largest and most imposing palatial buildings of classical Cyprus. Particularly imposing are the two rows of storerooms along two adjacent wings of a courtyard (north and west), recalling the store-rooms of the Palace of Vouni. The inscriptions were found on the upper (Phoenician) floor of three of the store-rooms of the ‘palace’; they leave no doubt about the identity of the king who resided there, thus supporting what is already known from epigraphical evidence about the dependence of Idalion on the kingdom of Kition during the Classical period (e.g. Yon and Szyncer 1991).

The architectural remains of the ‘palace’ may be dated to the very beginning of the 5th century B.C. (the initial palace was constructed before the domination of the Phoenicians of Kition about the middle of the 5th century B.C.). It is situated on elevated ground, inside the northern part of the city wall, overlooking the Lower City. The Phoenician building with the store-rooms formed an important part of it. Coins of Pumyathon (the last Phoenician king of Kition) and of Alexander the Great are the latest among the finds from the last floor of the palace. After the death of Pumyathon in 312 B.C. and the abolition of the Phoenician dynasty of Kition, the ‘palace’ at Idalion must have been abandoned?

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2 I am grateful to Dr. Maria Hadjicosti, who took me round the excavation on several occasions and provided not only information but also the two photographs, which are reproduced in this report.

3 Idalion, the “palace”. View from the north. In the foreground the fortification wall; in the background the store-rooms of the “palace” (courtesy of Dr. M. Hadjicosti, Department of Antiquities).

4 Idalion, the “palace”. View from the south, showing the store-rooms of the “palace”. (Courtesy of Dr. M. Hadjicosti, Department of Antiquities).

5 Idalion. Some of the inscribed slabs from the store-rooms of the “palace”. (Courtesy of Dr. M. Hadjicosti, Department of Antiquities).
This short report does not cover all the ‘Phoenician news’ from Cyprus. There is much more which still waits to be revealed not only concerning the sites mentioned above, but also from elsewhere (e.g. Palaepaphos). Cypriote archaeology in recent years has suffered, unfortunately, from the ‘disease’ which has for some time been affecting many of the countries of the Mediterranean, namely the lack of final reports on excavations, a disease for which no effective remedy has yet been discovered.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


