

Judith Muñoz Sogas. *Thirsty Seafarers at Temple B of Kommos: Commercial Districts and the Role of Crete in Phoenician Trading Networks in the Aegean* (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2022, 170pp, 173 colour & b/w figs, 2 tables, pbk, ISBN: 9781803273228)

This book represents the publication of a PhD thesis and deals primarily with the vexed issue of the movement of goods in the eastern Mediterranean during the late second and early first millennia BC. It favours the view that such movement is attributed to Phoenician commercial activity. In a connected train of thought, it reintroduces the ideas of itinerant merchants and artisans circulating and settling in the Aegean and Cyprus during the Early Iron Age, as well as the multi-functionality of early Greek religious spaces. The material used to address these issues are selected Near Eastern and Egyptian imports from Greek and Cypriot sanctuaries dating to the Early Iron Age.

The combination of ideas presented in this book seems quite novel, even though its constituent parts are not uncommon in previous research, which is not always cited in this work. The hypothesis of a Phoenician preponderance in the maritime networks of the early first millennium has often been stated (e.g. Sherratt & Sherratt, 1993; Papadopoulos, 1997; Aubet, 2001). It contrasts with theories of Cypriot commercial dominance during the postpalatial period, or an active role of the Euboeans since the tenth century BC. Early Iron Age Crete and Rhodes have often been considered places of residence of Near Eastern immigrants or more neutrally, receivers of imported objects and practices (e.g. Shaw, 1989; Hoffmann, 1997; Jones, 2000; Stampolidis & Kotsonas, 2006).

The book begins with an introduction outlining the author's aims, methodology (pp. 3–5), and a description of the location and layout of the early Greek coastal sanctuary of Kommos on south-central Crete

(pp. 5–10). The main part consists of a more detailed section dedicated to Kommos (pp. 11–28), followed by a gazetteer of sites found on Crete, which are briefly discussed (pp. 29–84), and then an agglomeration of sites from Cyprus, Rhodes, Samos, Euboea, the Peloponnese, and smaller Aegean islands (pp. 85–135) which have yielded Near Eastern or Egyptian imports. The presence of imports at these Aegean and Cypriot sites attests, in Muñoz Sogas' view, to the presence of Phoenicians in almost every one of them.

Most sites are analysed by analogy to Kommos, which is argued to be a 'commercial district' that fitted the 'needs of a permanent Phoenician population' (pp. 26–27). Phoenicians are thought to have pursued commercial, metallurgical, and other artisanal activities, along with religious ones at such sanctuaries, which are understood as meeting places of locals and foreigners (pp. 1, 85, 91, 107, 114–15, 121, 124, 126–27, 129, 142). Hence, one of the objectives of the book is to answer the question of how many of the discussed sanctuaries fit that model and can be added as nodal points on a map of Phoenician routes in the Aegean and Cyprus (p. 137, fig. 5.1). In the conclusion (pp. 134–44), the author reviews the aforementioned points and discusses the hybridization of Greek and Near Eastern practices, at the same time providing useful tables summarizing types of foreign objects present at each site, unfortunately without a measure of quantities (pp. 80, 135).

In her search for parallels for the tripillar stone feature of Kommos' temple B (pp. 14–15), as well as for the possible anthropomorphic grave stelae or *cippi* from Knossos (pp. 31–33) and Eleutherna

(pp. 48–52) the author fulfils her methodological promise to trace similarities between Phoenician and Aegean objects in the course of this book. The presence of stone stelae resembling *cippi* is used throughout the text as the strongest argument in favour of permanent residence of Phoenicians at Aegean and Cypriot sites (pp. 31–33, 44, 48–52, 57–58, 136).

The choice of sites and the space devoted to their individual discussion raise some questions about the criteria applied to the selection of adequate contexts capable of proving Near Eastern contacts. For instance, in the section on Cretan sites beyond Kommos (pp. 29–84), the Psycho and Patso caves, with one Syrianizing bronze statuette each (pp. 66–67, 74) and Phaistos, with a handful of Phoenician sherds (p. 71), receive equal or lengthier treatment than the Eileithya cave at ancient Inatos (pp. 73–74), where thirty-nine Egyptian or Egyptianizing faience and ivory figurines, thirty-eight scarabs, and a few Egyptian vases were recovered (Hölbl, 2022). If a stronger stylistic affiliation of finds with the Levant constituted a selection criterion, then the omission from the third part of the book of the finds from the ash altar at the sanctuary of Apollo at Thermon is surprising. Coastal sites are clearly favoured, even in cases where imported material is limited (pp. 124–25). Sanctuaries in which ‘prostitution’ is said to have been practiced (p. 126) or metallurgical activities are attested (p. 115) feature prominently as ‘commercial temples’.

The hypothesis of Phoenician presence at Kommos, which has bestowed this work its title, is considered a proven fact by the conclusion of the first chapter (pp. 26–28). A triangular stone basis with three rectangular low pillars from Phases 1 and 2 of Temple B with two faience figurines wedged in the feature during the second floor phase of the temple

(pp. 12–17) are deemed as undeniable tokens of Phoenician religious practices. Phoenician sherds found in Temple B and other structures within the sanctuary are taken to corroborate Phoenician residence at the site (pp. 17–25). Nevertheless, it is important to note that other features of the Kommos temple, such as the interior hearth, the benches, the central pillar at the entrance, and the cooking and drinking vessels, as well as zoomorphic votives are completely consistent with local Cretan practices (Shaw & Shaw, 2000: 9–26, 137, 146, 156–57; Prent, 2005: 244–310, 403–05, 441–76). The possibility that selected Levantine consumption practices could have been introduced to the sanctuary during a certain period (*cf.* Foxhall, 1998), and the likelihood that the bulk of the Phoenician pottery could have arrived at Kommos in a single or a few shipments (Stampolidis & Kotsonas, 2006: 343) are not taken into serious consideration.

Great caution should be advised in the attribution of Egyptian, Phoenician, or Near Eastern theonyms to certain objects with a foreign iconography found in the Aegean. In that respect, the author is rightfully careful as the widespread identification of the lion-headed figurine from Kommos’ Temple B as a ‘Sekhmet’ (pp. 16–17) is not corroborated by an inscription, and other goddesses can also assume the shape of a woman with a lion’s head (Jackson, 2020; Matić, 2021: 28, 40–50). The bestowal of a theonym is not only uncertain, but also tells us nothing about the function of the objects in their local context. A similar caution would have been advisable with the naming of the Assyrianizing god or hero on the tympanon from the Idaean cave as a ‘Melkart’ (pp. 59–60, fig. 3.54), or the bird on another Idaean cave shield of Kunze’s (1931, 6, 139–140) *Jagdschildgruppe* as ‘Horus extending his wings’ (pp. 59–60,

fig. 3.53). It is equally preferable to not bestow an eastern theonym to naked female statuettes without attributes (pp. 68–69), especially when stylistic analysis is not present.

With regard to some faience figurines from Knossos (p. 34), one of which depicts a squatting Pataikos holding knives (not ‘sitting on a throne’ and holding ‘a lotus flower’ as the author claims) and two other statuettes of a male god, the context suggested here is mistaken. They come from tomb 78 from the south-eastern sector of Knossos North Cemetery (Coldstream & Catling, 1996: 124–25, fig. 182, pls. 297–98), not from Tomb P2 of Fortetsa, where a different Pataikos from the one described and depicted (pp. 34–35, fig. 3.13) was recovered (Brock, 1957: 83, 208, pl. 59).

I would like to make a final remark on the consideration of imports as markers of ethnic identity. Object taxonomies, such as the category of imports, are not innocuous and objective tools of archaeological analysis, but deliberate categories favouring specific interpretative possibilities and perspectives (Meskell, 2004: 39–58). When stratigraphic context and associated finds are not taken into consideration and imports are viewed as a coherent class of permanently unintegrated intrusions, the results can be biased. Similar problems arise with inferences about ethnicity made on the basis of the archaeological record. Theoretical discussions of ethnicity have demonstrated it is a dynamic and fluid process, not a static label (Jones, 1997). Thus, attempts at a ‘nationalization’ of early first millennium BC Mediterranean trade could impede our understanding of the nature, mechanics, and volume of this exchange.

To conclude, Muñoz Sogas examines the complex matter of possible Phoenician trade routes and contacts with the Aegean during the late second and early first

millennia BC. A wide range of sites, albeit mainly sanctuaries, and a vast number of finds, from pottery to faience statuettes, bronze and ivory reliefs, and jewellery are discussed. She supports permanent Phoenician residence at sites with *cippi* and introduces the notion of ‘commercial sanctuaries’, that is, shrines in the Aegean and Cyprus in which commercial activities took place along with religious ones and which served as stopping and resting places for merchants. The analysis of the sites is somewhat brief and focused more on the location of the sites, as well as the nature and iconography of the finds, rather than on detailed context. Stylistic analysis is regrettably absent.

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EIRINI PAIZI
Institute of Classics
University of Graz, Austria

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Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK, 24th February–4th June 2023, curated by Anastasia Christophilopoulou)

What does it mean to be an islander? What do island identities and cultures have in common? And have islanders through time faced inwards to their own communities, or looked outwards across the seas? These and other questions are thoughtfully and creatively addressed in the new exhibition *Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean*, held at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge from the 24th of February until the 4th of June 2023.

Focusing on three of the largest islands in the Mediterranean—Cyprus, Crete, and Sardinia—this exhibition explores cultural evolution over 4000 years of island life from the Early Bronze Age to the late Roman period and through more than 200 objects. Many of these have come to the UK for the first time and have not been displayed together before. The

exhibition therefore offers an unprecedented opportunity for a UK audience to see objects such as Iron Age bronze votive figurines from the Nuragic civilization of Sardinia and Archaic terracotta figurines from the sanctuary of Agia Eirini in Cyprus. Indeed, one of the greatest strengths of this exhibition is the remarkable variety of objects brought together through generous loans from partner organisations, most notably the Heraklion Museum, Crete, the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, and the National Archaeological Museum, Cagliari, providing a modern-day example of the cooperation and interchange between the islands it explores and celebrates.

The central theme of the exhibition is that, although fluctuating through time in intensity and degree, the archaeological evidence indicates that islanders have