

“LET NO ONE WONDER AT THIS IMAGE” A PHOENICIAN FUNERARY STELE IN ATHENS

ABSTRACT

An autopsy of the Hellenistic grave stele of ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος, discovered in the 19th century in the Kerameikos in Athens, reveals that its textual (Phoenician and Greek) and visual components differ significantly from previously published descriptions. The author reexamines the morphology of the monument, also considering its sacred address and the force that such a monument exerted on its context. This single monument to a Phoenician buried in Athens engages issues of bilingualism, religious symbolism, and, most importantly, self-definition, which structured the complex social interactions in Athens in the late 4th–2nd centuries B.C.

An enigmatic grave stele found in the Athenian Kerameikos in the 19th century commemorates the death of an Ashkelonite seafarer, ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος.¹ The stele consists of three components: a Graeco-Phoenician bilingual epitaph, a sculpted relief, and a six-line Greek epigram (Figs. 1, 2). On the basis of the Phoenician letter forms, Frank Cross dates the stele to the late 4th–3rd centuries B.C., and on the basis of the Greek letter forms,

1. *IG* II 2836; *IG* II² 8388; *CIS* I 115, pl. 21:23, no. 120; *SEG* XXXIII 217, XL 223, XLI 1543, XLII 203; *KAI* 54; *GVI* 1601; *CEG* 596; Henzen 1861; Sybel 1881. For a longer bibliography, see Conze 1893, no. 1175, pl. 258; Kaltsas 2002, no. 376, p. 190. The stele (H. 1.42, W. 0.48 m) is now in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (NM 1488). For the circumstances of its discovery, see Clairmont 1993–1995, vol. 3, p. 314.

The bilingual epitaph on the stele refers to the deceased as ŠM[.] in Phoenician and as Ἀντίπατρος in Greek. Most scholars, including those analyzing only the Phoenician elements, have referred to the gravestone

as “the stele of Ἀντίπατρος.” I refer to the deceased as ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος in order to retain the relevant duality of both the deceased and the stele that memorializes the circumstances of his death. I have, however, transliterated the Phoenician in the interest of clarity. Damage to the right side of the stele obstructs a reading of the Phoenician text. If there was a letter after the *mem* of ŠM, this letter is no longer preserved. Names compounded with ŠM- are common in Phoenician, and allow for the reconstruction of a longer name (F. M. Cross, pers. comm.; Bonnet 1990, p. 42; Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, pp. 1157–1158; Palmer and Sandys 1872, pp. 49–50). Scholars do not

agree, however, on how to reconstruct the name, and some, notably in *KAI* 54, take ŠM (Shem) as the full name of the deceased. A distinct space after the *mem* and before the *bet* of the next word BN may support reading ŠM as one name, separating his name from his patronym. Cross notes the space after the *mem* as significant, but cautions that the name ŠM without a compound is uncommon. The only known example of Shem as a personal name is the name of the first son of Noah in the Hebrew Bible. Whether the name of the deceased should be read as ŠM or ŠM[.] cannot yet be determined, but this ambiguity does not affect the interpretation presented here.



Figure 1. Stele of ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος, full view. NM 1488. Photo M. Mauzy

Stephen Tracy dates it to the late 3rd–2nd centuries; Tracy also notes that the epitaph and epigram were carved by different hands.²

The grave marker was created toward the end of a millennium of mutually beneficial and culturally formative competition and exchange among Phoenicians and Greeks. The historiography of the stele itself is fragmented by academic specialization and often driven to excessive literalism in an effort to rationalize the sacred. In the following reexamination, I parse the stele’s visual and verbal components as they collectively narrate the life and death of one individual and relate to the socioreligious history of the eastern Mediterranean maritime economy. In particular, the role of the goddess Astarte in Graeco-Phoenician religion and in the iconography of the stele is examined. Finally, I explore the layers of cultural legibility built into the monument and the ways in which these layers worked to create and delineate various cultural groups.

Read in its entirety, this bilingual monument belies the reified cultural categories active in the broader Mediterranean at this time. Its hybrid nature simultaneously establishes and undermines accepted modes of social demarcation. In what follows, I take up these broader issues of bilingual address, religious symbolism, and cultural definition in conjunction with the reexamination and explication of the memorial.

2. F. M. Cross (pers. comm.); S. V. Tracy (pers. comm.); see also Bonnet 1990, p. 40.



Figure 2. Stele, three-quarter-length view. Photo M. Mauzy

3. My translation. The absence of a dative object for ἀνέθηκε is unusual. On the disappearance of the expected case markings in the secondary languages of bilingual or multilingual stelai, see Adams 2003. The unaspirated Greek Ἄσκ cannot reproduce the internal /š/ sound of the Phoenician place-name, Ashkelon. I thank David M. Goldstein for this observation.

4. Trans. J. Hackett. Although the *aleph* suggests the vocalization of *d'mḥn*³ as Domhana, by the 4th century B.C., the Phoenician *aleph* in the terminal position was pronounced as a mid-back vowel, i.e., /o:/. Numerous examples from Carthage of Hannō in both Greek and Phoenician demonstrate this change (F. M. Cross, pers. comm.).

5. S. V. Tracy (pers. comm.).

THE EPITAPH

The two Greek lines of the epitaph (Fig. 3) read:

Ἀντίπατρος Ἀφροδισίου Ἀσκαλ[ωνίτης]
Δομσαλῶς Δομανῶ Σιδώνιος ἀνέθηκε

Antipatros, son of Aphrodisios, the Ashkel(onite).
Domsalōs, son of Domanō, the Sidonian, dedicated (this stele).³

The two Phoenician lines directly below the Greek read:

ʾNK ŠM[.] BN ʿBDŠTRT ʾŠQLNY
ʾŠ YṬNʾT ʾNK DʿMŠLḤ BN DʿMḤNʾ ŠDNY

I (am) Shem[.], son of ʿBDŠTRT (Abdashtart), the Ashkelonite.
(This is the stele) which I, DʿMŠLḤ (Domseleh), the son of
DʿMḤNʾ (Domhanō) the Sidonian, erected.⁴

Tracy notes the curving strokes of the sigmas and the suggestion of serifs in the Greek lettering of the epitaph.⁵ Scholars have ascribed various dates from the 4th century B.C. onward to the stele, with prior consensus



Figure 3. Stele, epitaph. Photo M. Mauzy

centering on the mid-4th century.⁶ Cross notes that although the small right tail of the *shin* and the curve of the *kaph* of the Phoenician inscription first appear in the 4th century, the *yod* “looks peculiar” and may indicate the 3rd century B.C.⁷ Tracy also suggests the 3rd century (see above).

Comparison of the two texts brings to light the degrees to which the Phoenician names were modified in the Greek text. ŠM[.] (*Shem*, lit. “name”) became Ἀντίπατρος, D^cMŠLH⁸ became Δομσαλώς, D^cMḤN⁹ became Δομανώ, and ʾBD^cŠTRT became Ἀφροδισίου. The translation from Astarte to Ἀφροδίτη conforms to the tradition linking these two goddesses and indicates that this equation was a conventional one. ʾBD^cŠTRT, a common Phoenician name, literally means “the servant of Astarte.” ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος, the deceased son of this “servant of Astarte/Ἀφροδίτη,” hailed from Ashkelon, the Phoenician city in which Herodotos (1.105) asserts there was a cult center for the worship of Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία, known in Semitic as Astarte Shemayim (lit. “heaven”) and sometimes called “Syrian Ἀφροδίτη.”

As with the name of the goddess, the stele’s patron, D^cMŠLH/Δομσαλώς, transliterated his Phoenician name and patronymic in the Greek text, but presented Greek versions of these names, thereby demonstrating the proficiency of these Phoenician speakers in Greek and rendering the inscription more accessible to viewers unfamiliar with Phoenician proper names. The endings in -ώς and -ώ, however, are non-Greek for masculine names and mark these men as non-Greek.¹⁰

Throughout this article, I deliberately avoid the use of the word “hellenization,” even in discussing the specific shift from a Phoenician proper name to a Greek version. Indeed, as I demonstrate in my analysis, this stele counters the term’s reductive implications about culture. The unqualified application of the term “hellenization” (colloquially, the spread of Greek culture beyond its borders) to broad cultural interaction and stylistic movement perpetuates a myth of unilateral or, at best, bilateral cultural and stylistic transfer. No matter how reflectively this expression is used, its

6. Clairmont (1970, p. 116), for example, dates the stele to the latter half of the 4th century B.C. on the basis of the pediment shape and the rounded upper corners of the sunken relief panel; Bonnet (1990, p. 42), without delving into specifics, cites a combination of epigraphic and stylistic evidence.

7. F. M. Cross (pers. comm.).

8. D^cMŠLH means “the one whom the god Dom causes to prosper”; ŠLH² means “to prosper” (Benz 1972, p. 400).

9. D^cMḤN² means “the one on whom the god Dom confers favor”; ḤN² means “to show favor” (Benz 1972, p. 312). The name Hannibal, for example, means “the one whom the god Baal favors.” The god Dom is only attested in personal names (Benz 1972, p. 301).

10. Threatte 1996, p. 25.

implication of linearity falsely simplifies the complex and multifarious nature of cultural interaction. In the context of material culture, the imputation of hellenization typically effaces the agency of the consumer and constructs the producing culture (Greek) as active agent and the receiving culture (the East) as passive recipient of ideas generated and developed in the west.

In contrast to the other Phoenicians, the deceased, ŠM[.], adopted a different name, Ἀντίπατρος, in the Greek text. A number of scholars have attempted to construct a concrete linguistic relationship between ŠM[.] and Ἀντίπατρος in order to explain this pairing of names, but no one has done so convincingly.¹¹ Although a neat transformation would be satisfying, the two names are, in fact, just that. The deceased answered to a Phoenician name among Phoenician speakers and to a Greek name among Greek speakers.¹² Unlike the other Phoenicians mentioned, who retained markedly foreign but Greek versions of their own names, the deceased appears to have used an unmarked Hellenic name when in Hellas.¹³

J. N. Adams has analyzed an example of dual naming in a bilingual neo-Punic/Latin funerary inscription from Guelat bou Sba in Numidia.¹⁴ In that inscription, the father's name, *mlt^ct*, becomes the Latinized genitive *Metatis*, while the son's name, *tsdt*, is replaced in the Latin text with an unmarked Latin name, *Rufus*, indicating that the son answered to each name in the appropriate cultural context.¹⁵ The epitaph expresses increased acculturation from one generation to the next. Adams cites several other examples of dual name use from North Africa. One stele records four generations, of which the oldest two retain African names, the third generation uses marked but Latinized names, and the fourth generation uses unmarked Latin names.¹⁶ As in these examples from North Africa, the stele of ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος stresses the deceased's cultural duality in contrast to his comrade and the previous generations, who retained versions of their Phoenician names in both languages.¹⁷

11. On ŠM[.] referring to a man who is named "after the father" (Ἀντίπατρος), see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995, pp. 1157–1158; *KAI* 54. On both names expressing the concept of genealogical descent, see Bonnet 1990, pp. 42–44. Bonnet reconstructs ŠMY, which she takes as a diminutive of the divine father ŠM. She cites as parallels hypostatic epithets of Baal, PN B³L, "face of Baal," which refers to Tanit, and ŠM B³L, "name of Baal," which refers to Astarte. On the relationship of Tanit and Astarte, see also n. 34 below. Bonnet takes Ἀντίπατρος as a translation of the theophoric ŠM compound meaning "after the father."

12. Joseph. *AJ* 1.21; Millar 1983, p. 55.

13. A common practice today in the Anglo-American context, as one of the anonymous *Hesperia* reviewers

noted, is the adoption of English names by non-native English speakers. These individuals retain both their birth names and English names, deploying them as appropriate in different situations.

14. *KAI* 165; *CIL* VIII 17467; Adams 2003, pp. 215–217.

15. Adams (2003, p. 214) notes that the Punic text includes this multi-generational record, while the Latin includes the filiation of the deceased, as was typical of Semitic and Latin funerary inscriptions.

16. *KAI* 117. See also *IRT* 229 (= *IPT* 5a), *IRT* 246 (= *IPT* 5b); *IRT* 654, *IPT* 13; *KAI* 117, as cited in Adams 2003, pp. 213–218.

17. On the prevalence of dual identity among Latin-Punic bilinguals, see Adams 2003, p. 213.

Whereas the Greek uses the third person, the Phoenician text of the epitaph begins with the first person, “I am Shem,” a convention that accentuates the Phoenician origin of the deceased.¹⁸ Leading with the Greek text, however, emphasized the deceased’s ties to Hellas and solicited members of the Greek-speaking audience, who would have been the most frequent viewers of the stele in Athens.¹⁹ The choice to render the epitaph in both Phoenician and Greek demonstrates that these Phoenicians were accustomed to bilingual thinking and that D^cMŠLḤ/Δομοσαλώς chose to display this bilingualism on his friend’s funerary stele.²⁰

The presence of two languages does not confirm true bilingualism in every context.²¹ Francophilia, for example, does not necessarily imply franco-ponia, even when a phrase or two can be readily deployed for effect. In this particular stele, however, 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.

The epitaph identifies the deceased in perpetuity as a Phoenician speaker, and more specifically as an Ashkelonite, while emphasizing the degree to which he moved in the Greek-speaking world, adopting a Greek name and, in death, a permanent home in Athens.

THE IMAGERY

In the sculpted relief of the stele, the corpse of ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος lies stretched across a bier (Fig. 4).²² A beast looms over the left side of the deathbed and lifts the corpse’s head to its mouth. The scruff of fur visible at the animal’s thick neck identifies it as a lion, and the epigram below confirms this identification. While its body is rendered in profile, the lion turns his head toward the viewer.²³

Opposite the lion, on the right side of the relief, a naked man lunges across the frame to fend off the attacking beast. This figure presumably represents one of the φίλοι who rescued the body of the deceased, as mentioned in the epigram. The figure of the man may represent D^cMŠLḤ/Δομοσαλώς himself, but it also functions as an iconic metonym for the collective φίλοι. Damage to the stele has obscured the man’s head and arms, but he appears to push against the head of the lion. The man lunges so forcefully that his left heel steps outside the boundary of the pictorial frame, a representational practice associated with vigorous move-

18. On the first person in Phoenician funerary inscriptions, see *CIS* I 46 (= *TSSI* 35); *CIS* I 157; *KAI* 57 (= *IG* II³ 3075); *KAI* 59 (= *IG* II³ 3319 = *CIS* I 119). Only one Attic inscription (*CEG* 80) employs the first person in the epitaph, although the use of the first person in the epigram is typical (*CEG* 2, p. 48). Several Greek epitaphs from Imperial Rome use the first person (*GVI* 606, 607, 610, 611).

19. For bilingual inscriptions leading with the Phoenician in the Greek-speaking world, see *KAI* 59, 60.

20. On the display of bilingualism by Phoenicians, particularly abroad, see Adams 2003, pp. 32, 212–218; Millar 1983, pp. 60–61.

21. I am grateful to one of the *Hesperia* anonymous readers for raising this point.

22. In contrast to Attic conventions,

his head rests on the left side of the scene (Baughan 2004, p. 244). On the distinction between “bier,” or bed, and *kline*, which specifies a type of couch used in banqueting (although also used in funerary contexts), see Baughan 2004, p. 247.

23. On frontally facing funerary lions of the mid-4th century B.C., see Clairmont 1993–1995, vol. 3, p. 6, nos. 3a–b.



Figure 4. Stele, sculpted relief.
Photo M. Mauzy

ment.²⁴ His muscular body, nearly twice the size of the corpse, seems an adequate match for the similarly robust lion.²⁵ The man's nakedness conforms to Greek visual tradition.²⁶

Above the bent shoulders of the man arcs the reverse S-shape of part of a ship and a standard. Its S-curve resembles a stern more than a prow, but the epigram below specifically identifies it as the prow of a ship.²⁷ The prow is carved in lower relief than the three figures on the bier.

Although the earliest scholarship on the stele correctly distinguished between the prow and the man, in 1888 Ulrich Köhler interpreted the

24. On this practice, see Hurwit 1977, esp. pp. 6, 9.

25. Usener (1965, p. 447) took the size of the lunging man as evidence for his divinity. In this instance, however, the difference in size simply distinguishes between the living man and

the dead corpse.

26. On Greek nakedness, see Stewart 1997, pp. 24–34; Bonfante 1989.

27. I am grateful to C. Greenwalt for pointing out the visual ambiguity of this ship part.

man and prow as one entity.²⁸ He described the stele but provided no accompanying image. Following Köhler, Paul Wolters introduced a drawing to this effect, which circulated among the scholarly community and took on an authenticity of its own.²⁹ Marcello Barbanera, working from a cast of the stele at the Museo dell'Arte Classica in Rome, correctly separated the prow from the man and published his findings with photographs of the cast and a corrected drawing in 1992, but versions of Wolters' drawing continue to appear in scholarly publications, often without an accompanying photograph, and the majority of subsequent scholars have followed Köhler's and Wolter's reading of the prow and the man as a mixed form.³⁰

The conflation of the prow and the man is incorrect. If this interpretation were accepted, the ship's standard would protrude from the defender's back. As mentioned above, the figures in the foreground, including the man, are sculpted in higher relief than the comparatively shallow prow and standard. Given that the stele would originally have been painted, presumably further distinguishing the prow from the man, one may discard this theory of a conflated figure on purely formal grounds.³¹

Although the combination of imagery on the stele of ṢM[.]'/Avτί-πατρος does not seem to have been duplicated elsewhere,³² individual elements have parallels in Phoenician contexts. Votive stelai erected by Phoenician seafarers often included nautical imagery—in particular, depictions of ships or parts of ships.³³ The Punic sanctuary of Tanit (Astarte) at Carthage, although a highly particularized context (namely, a sanctuary of buried child sacrifices to the goddess Tanit), contained numerous stelai combining both the symbol of the goddess and the image of part of a ship.³⁴ While there is no direct functional relationship between tophet or sacrificial stelai and this funerary example, the juxtaposition of divine im-

28. *IG* II.3, p. 227: *quam a dextra homo nudus, qui pro capite rostrum Navis habet*. Henzen (1861), Lenormant (1864), Palmer and Sandys (1872, pp. 49–54), Kekulé (1869), Usener (1965), and *CIS* (I 115) all distinguish between the prow and the man.

29. Wolters 1888, p. 311.

30. Barbanera 1992. *IG* II² 8388; *GVI* 1601; *CLA* II 2836; *CEG* II 596; *KAI* 54; Kurtz and Boardman 1971, pp. 264–265, fig. 57; Woysch-Méautis 1982, p. 76; Bonnet 1990, p. 46. Clairmont (1970, pp. 114–117, no. 38, pl. 19; 1993–1995, vol. 3, pp. 314–315, no. 3.410) goes so far as to interpret the mixed form as a symbol of Phoenicia. Boardman (1994, p. 50, fig. 3.1), reproducing Wolter's drawing (from Clairmont 1993–1995), treated it as evidence of Greek and Phoenician contact, but ascribed all agency to a Greek creator and failed to mention the Phoenician text or the active participation of Phoenicians in the creation of this monument.

31. I would like to thank Marcello Barbanera for his great kindness in sending me copies of his photographs of the cast, which clearly distinguish between the man and the prow. Barbanera (1992, p. 97, fig. 9) cites as a parallel the 5th/4th-century B.C. stele of Demokleides (NM 752, *IG* II² 11114), which depicts a prow emerging from the ocean. The stele must have been painted. On polychromy in Greek art, see Brinkmann 2003; Brinkmann, Wünsche, and Wurnig 2004.

32. Phoenician burials display an eclecticism that makes it difficult to generalize about their imagery. A fragmentary bilingual funerary stele from the Piraeus (PM 5380), roughly contemporary with that of ṢM[.]'/Avτί-πατρος, depicts a man standing near a tree, holding a scroll. Fragments of the Greek and Phoenician epitaph survive. Sarcophagi, anthropoid sarcophagi, and stelai were among the choices used as Phoenician funerary monuments; for a survey, see Tore 1995.

33. Hours-Miédan 1951, pp. 67–68; Brody 1998, p. 135, figs. 18, 19.

34. On the conflation of the goddesses Tanit and Astarte through their status as consorts of Baal in the west and east, respectively, see Finkielsztejn 1992; Stager 1991; Bonnet 1990, p. 42, nos. 11–14. A number of coins minted at Ashkelon in the 2nd century A.D. depict images of an armed female with the epithet Φανέβαλος, a transliteration of the Semitic PN B²L (lit. “face of Baal”), an epithet of Tanit in the Punic world. For images of the coins, see Finkielsztejn 1992, pp. 53–58, pls. XI–XII. Meshorer (1985, p. 27) and Teixidor (1977, p. 96) both misidentify the goddess as a male deity. The inscription on the sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar at Sidon (*CIS* I 3; *TSSI* 28; *KAI* 14) refers to Astarte as ṢM B²L (lit. “name of Baal”). On an inscription from Ugarit employing the same epithet for Astarte, see Gibson in *TSSI*, p. 113.

agery (the Tanit symbol) with nautical imagery (the prow) evidently had a place in Phoenician-Punic religious iconography.³⁵

The prow had religious and cultural connotations for Phoenicians, particularly seafarers. In addition to worshipping deities associated with the sea and seafaring at port and coastal sanctuaries, Phoenician seafarers worshipped deities aboard ship.³⁶ Such worship took place at the prow, by which the deity guided the vessel and in which the deity appeared.³⁷ The inclusion of the prow of a ship on the grave stele of the seafarer ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος corresponds with Phoenician iconographic practices, and it had specific religious connotations in this funerary context.

The depiction of the deceased as a corpse differs significantly from representations of the dead in Attic grave reliefs after the late 4th century B.C. From the Middle Geometric through the Late Classical period, the deceased was shown laid out on a bier and surrounded by mourners in scenes of *πρόθεσις*, as exemplified on a well-known amphora (Athens NM 804) dating to the 8th century B.C.³⁸ Beginning in the late 5th century B.C., however, imagery shifted to scenes related to or in some way inspired by the life of the deceased.³⁹ To survey style in Attic graves roughly contemporary with the stele of ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος, one need only observe the other examples that stand next to it in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. These depict a female dancer holding castanets (NM 1896), a young huntsman with his dog (NM 829), a poetess seated with her scribal tools (NM 817), and an athlete bouncing a ball on his knee in the *παλαίστρα* (NM 873). In addition, while the Totenmahl relief depicts a person reclining on a bier, the figure is shown as active in some way.⁴⁰ After the late 5th century B.C., Greek funerary scenes rendered the deceased as animate rather than inanimate.

Phoenician anthropoid sarcophagi, in contrast, emphasize the liberation of the soul (or nonbody) from the physical body confined in the mummylike sarcophagus. A Hellenistic grave relief from Tyre depicts an anthropoid sarcophagus atop a bier flanked by two mourning women. Like the pallet on which ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος lies, a pillow cushions the head (in this case, the head of the sarcophagus). As this grave stele indicates, Phoenician burial iconography included images of the dead person as a corpse laid out for burial.⁴¹ The depiction of the corpse of ŠM[.]/Ἀντίπατρος thus corresponds to Phoenician funerary practices, albeit in an altered visual manner. The other components of the imagery, the attacking lion and the lunging man, are without known precedent in either a Greek or Phoenician burial context. Although the lion and the prow are rendered in Greek sculptural style, they had particular symbolic relevance to the Phoenician-speaking dedicator and audience of the stele.

35. On religious symbolism of Phoenician-Punic stelai, see Hours-Miédan 1951, pp. 23–38.

36. Brody 1998, p. 61.

37. Brody 1998, p. 64.

38. For *prothesis*, see Zschietzschmann 1928; Boardman 1955; Baughan 2004, pp. 242–256.

39. For a survey of image making

associated with Greek burial practices, see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, esp. pp. 219–246; Hagemajer 2003.

40. Dentzer 1982; Baughan 2004. For Totenmahle from Athens and the Piraeus, see Dentzer 1982, pls. 66–80, R 100–229.

41. Lembke 2001, p. 54; Parlasca 1982, p. 8, pl. 5:4. I am grateful to

Katja Lembke for bringing this aspect of Phoenician iconography to my attention. The traditional burial within anthropoid sarcophagi practiced in Phoenicia proper through the 4th century B.C. may have contributed to the Phoenician impetus to render the deceased as such.

THE EPIGRAM

The six-line epigram below the sculpture was carved only in Greek, offering no alternative Phoenician inscription (Fig. 5). Tracy considers the difference between the epigram's tall, ungainly sigma with short strokes and the epitaph's sigma, with slightly curving strokes and suggestion of serifs, as evidence that the two Greek inscriptions were carved by different hands.⁴² It is, unfortunately, not possible to determine whether the inscriptions were both carved at the time of the initial production (but by two different people) or whether a significant amount of time elapsed between the carvings.

The epigram reads as follows:

μηθεις ἀνθρώπων θαυμαζέτω εἰκόνα τήνδε
 ὡς περι μέν με λέων περι δὲγ πρῶιρ' ἰγκτετάνυσται
 ἦλθε γὰρ εἰ(ι)χθρολέων τάμὰ θέλων σποράσαι
 ἀλλὰ φίλοι τ' ἤμυναν καί μου κτέρισαν τάφον οὔτηι
 5 οὖς ἔθελον φιλέων ἱεράς ἀπὸ νηὸς ἰόντες
 Φοινίκην δ' ἔλιπον τεῖδε χθονὶ σῶμα κέκρυμαι

Let no man wonder at this image that on one side of me depicts a lion and on the other side of me depicts the prow of a ship. For the hateful lion came, wishing to destroy my things, but my friends warded [the lion] off and buried me here in this tomb, the [friends] whom I loved and for whom I wished, as they departed from the sacred ship. I left Phoenicia and I, a body, am buried in this land.⁴³

This narrative, cast in the voice of the dead man, presents itself as a verbal explication of the scene depicted above. The choice to render the narrative only in Greek, yet to set it in the voice of the Phoenician deceased, implies that the deceased and dedicator spoke both Greek and Phoenician, as also revealed in the epitaph, and that the Phoenician-speaking audience addressed by the stele did not require the verbal explication of the imagery that the narrative ostensibly offers.

The first line of the narrative indicates that whoever commissioned it, possibly D³M³SLH/Δομσαλώς and his companions, understood that some of the viewers would find the imagery of the lion and the prow strange. The reference to these components of the imagery in the epigram emphasizes their importance and obscurity.

At least two audiences were intended for the stele, a nucleus of individuals who understood the imagery, presumably the Phoenician community in Athens and the Piraeus, and a larger group for whom the imagery, in particular the lion and the prow, was not immediately intelligible. Despite the plea of ἸΜ[.]Ἀντίπατρος, “Let no one wonder at this image,” one wonders indeed, for the Greek text does not explain much. The epigram conceals the explicit meaning of the lion and the prow from the larger, non-Phoenician audience. Although formally Greek, the imagery stands in for an expected second Phoenician text and reveals more to those able to read it than does the Greek epigram alone.⁴⁴

42. S. V. Tracy (pers. comm.).

43. My translation. In line 2, the γ in δέγ is peculiar. Threatte (1980, p. 489) suggests that this is an intrusive nasal, or simply an error. He also (p. 143) interprets ἰγκτετάνυσται as a misrendering of ἐκτετάνυσται. In line 3, the author intended ἐχθρολέων (Threatte 1980, p. 302); no other known example of σποράσαι exists. In line 5, commenting on φιλέων, Threatte (1996, p. 510) notes that “after 400 B.C. uncontracted forms are frequent in metrical texts of all periods when they facilitate scansion.”

44. On the deliberate withholding of information from one or more of the social groups intended as the audience of a stele, see Adams 2003, p. 40.

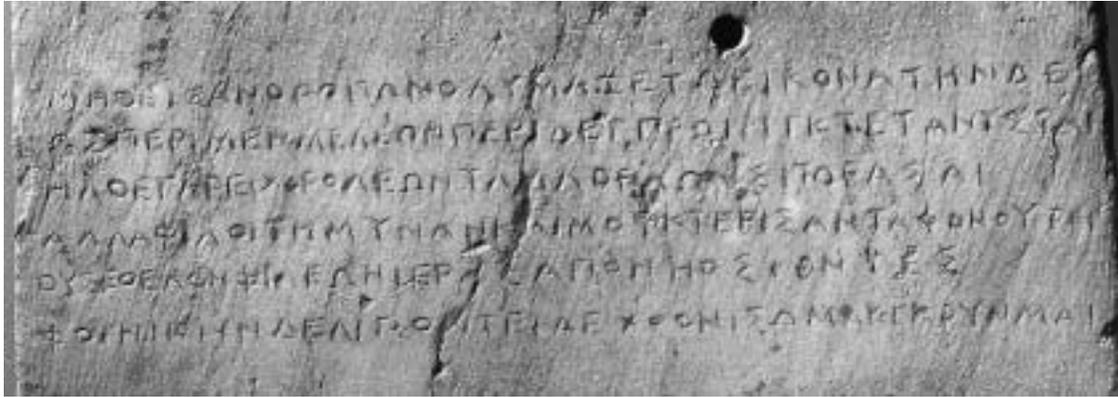


Figure 5. Stele, epigram. Photo M. Mauzy

The stele of *Μενοφιλία* from Sardis exemplifies the kind of explicit epigrammatic explanation of imagery absent from the stele of *ΣΜ[.]*/*Ἀντίπατρος*.⁴⁵ The imagery includes a basket, a bundle of papyrus rolls, a lily, an alpha, and a wreath. The epigram explains the symbolism of each image as follows:

Why are there carved on the stele a lily and an A, a book, a basket, and besides these a wreath? Wisdom is the book, the wreath worn about the head signifies public office and the number one an only child; well ordered virtue doth the basket betoken and the flower that bloom which fate filched away.⁴⁶

Although the epigram on the stele of *ΣΜ[.]*/*Ἀντίπατρος* purports to clarify the scene in this manner, the text foils a clear and precise understanding of the imagery.

LITERAL AND SACRED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE STELE

Some scholars have suggested that an actual lion attacked the deceased and attempted to rend him limb from limb.⁴⁷ The first-person narrator of the epigram describes the lion as “hateful,” using a word found in no other context, *εἰχθρολέων*, generally taken as a compound of *ἐχθρός* and *λέων*. This lion wished to scatter or destroy *τάμα*, which in this context one may read as “my limbs.” Literalist interpreters of this sentence have focused on creating possible scenarios whereby the deceased crossed paths with a lion, an animal not native to Attica.⁴⁸ In order to conjure a lion as the agent of

45. Istanbul Archaeological Museum 4033. See Hanfmann and Ramage 1978, p. 164, no. 245, fig. 425.

46. Trans. Hanfmann and Ramage 1978, p. 164, no. 245.

47. Those who interpret the action described on the stele literally include Henzen (1861), Lenormant (1864),

Palmer and Sandys (1872), Clairmont (1970, 1993–1995, vol. 3), and Bonnet (1990).

48. On the absence of lions in Attica, see Welcker [1844–1867] 1973, no. 2.199, n. 2. Henzen (1861) situates the action outside of Attica on the basis of the lion. Palmer and Sandys (1872)

and Clairmont (1970, p. 116; 1993–1995, vol. 3, p. 315) attempt to circumvent this last point by suggesting that *ΣΜ[.]*/*Ἀντίπατρος* did not die immediately, but that his friends rescued him from the jaws of death and nursed him aboard ship as they journeyed to Athens. See Bonnet 1990, p. 46.

death, some have postulated a stop in North Africa, Asia Minor, Macedonia, or any other lion-infested land. Another interpreter speculates that the lion escaped from his cage at a circus menagerie in the Piraeus.⁴⁹

The monument provides no evidence for the latter explanation, and the former implies that the seafarers, having managed to save themselves and rescue the mangled body of their dead comrade from the jaws of the beast, then carried the deceased's rotting corpse back to Athens rather than burying him where he died.⁵⁰ Each literal explanation requires the addition of details to the narrative not present in the monument. Had such an attack occurred, the event could have been conveyed using more specific language. The omission of crucial details in the text augments rather than mitigates one's wonder at this image.

The epigram itself indicates that one should reject a literal interpretation, as it highlights two elements of the visual imagery: the prow and the lion. The prow had known religious significance. The additional reference in the epigram to the *ἱερὰ ναῦς* suggests that the prow not only refers to the nautical career of ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος, but possibly to a theoric or sacred component of his ship's journey.⁵¹ Köhler first introduced the idea of an ancient *theoria* in 1888 (*IG II* 2836), interpreting the conflated prow and man as the personification of the sacred ship.

A number of scholars have followed Köhler in relating the *ἱερὰ ναῦς* on the stele of ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος to a Phoenician *theoria*.⁵² Two other inscriptions include the word *ἱεροναῦται*. A 3rd-century B.C. inscription (*CIS* 114) refers to sacred sailors from Tyre who were dedicating images of Sidon and Tyre to Apollo (Phoenician Rešef) on Delos.⁵³ A 3rd-century A.D. dedication from the Black Sea refers to sacred sailors dedicating images to Isis, the Egyptian counterpart of Astarte, when launching a sacred ship.⁵⁴

If the ship described in the epigram had been engaged in sacred travel, this would certainly support a sacred reading of the grave stele's symbolism.⁵⁵ The religious association of the prow indicates that one need not accept an excessively literal explanation for the second component of the imagery.⁵⁶ The voice of ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος draws attention to both the prow and the lion because these two elements are of related importance for reading the imagery.

49. Lenormant 1864.

50. On the unlikelihood of keeping a sailor's corpse aboard ship, see Brody 1998, p. 93.

51. Palmer and Sandys (1872, p. 51) suggest that *ἱερὰ* is a revived archaism meaning "great" rather than "sacred," to which Usener aptly replies: *Esto, cur enim Domsalos negotiator non Alexandriae olim studiis Homericis vacaverit?* (1965, p. 447). If the journey during which ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος met his reward were already of a sacred nature, this would only underscore the sacred symbolism present in the monument. On *theoria* in general, see *OCD*³, p. 1506, s.v. *theoria* (J. E. Fontenrose

and A. J. S. Spawforth).

52. Wolters 1888; Woysch-Méautis 1982; Bonnet 1990; Barbanera 1992.

53. On the relationship between Apollo and Rešef, see *KAI* 34; Cooke 1903, p. 57; Stager 1991, pp. 34–35.

54. Vidman 1969, pp. 82, 304.

55. Although Bonnet (1990) discusses at length the theoric component of the stele, she interprets the action literally.

56. Those who offer a symbolic interpretation of the stele include Usener, who condemns the literalists as follows: *Habes sagacitatis specimina digna profecto eorum plausu, qui libros sacros rationaliter interpretari sibi videntur* (1965, p. 446).

He reads the lion as a Near Eastern deity of the underworld (equivalent to Hades and Orcus) battling with a *genius bonus*, the lunging nude, over the spirit of the deceased. Although his interpretation is poetic, Usener does not offer sufficient evidence for the deification of the naked man or comparanda for this struggle over the soul between good and evil. Barbanera (1992) reads the lion as the deceased's *ἄρετή*, but this seems like an overly Hellenic personification. It also leaves one to explain why ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος refers to his own *ἄρετή* as "hateful" and why the *ἄρετή* intends the deceased harm.

Figure 6. Silver coin from Byblos, 4th century B.C. Scale 1:1. M. L. DeVoe, after Moscati 1988, p. 72



ASTARTE, THE LION, AND THE PROW IN PHOENICIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Numismatic evidence provides considerable insight into the relationship between the lion and the prow. Coins from Phoenicia in the late 5th and 4th centuries B.C. often depict a ship on one face, symbolizing the maritime focus of the Phoenician economy and the religious significance of the ship in Phoenician culture. Many of the ships have theriomorphic or theomorphic prows.⁵⁷ A number of coins include images of ships with horse-headed prows, and several coins from Byblos depict Phoenician ships with lion-headed prows (e.g., Fig. 6).⁵⁸ The lion-headed prow pictured on these coins affiliates the ship and the city with a specific deity for whom the lion is an attribute. The identification of the deity to which the prow refers has significant implications for the interpretation of the stele of ΣΜ[.] / Ἀντίπατρος, for these ships incorporate two of the unexplained elements of the stele—the lion and the prow.

Astarte, the queen of the Phoenician pantheon in the 1st millennium B.C., was associated both with the sea and the lion.⁵⁹ The hundreds of Phoenician personal names that include the suffix *-āstart*, along with the many inscriptions, monuments, and temples dedicated to Astarte, confirm her popularity. Her leonine affiliation arose through her conflation with Ishtar, an Akkadian goddess prominent in Mesopotamia through the 6th century B.C. and strongly associated with the lion. To the west of Mesopotamia, Ishtar became known as Astarte.⁶⁰ The Akkadian *ištar* and the Hebrew *ʿāštārôt* are cognates.⁶¹ Ishtar's astrological symbol was the Venus star and she was called *šarrat šame* or "Queen of Heaven" in Akkadian. The "Queen of Heaven" mentioned in Jeremiah likely refers to Astarte.⁶² The cult of Astarte at Kition has also been linked with that of the "Queen of Heaven," and Apuleius (*Met.* 11.2) calls Astarte the *regina caeli*.⁶³ Astarte's astral powers made her divine favor an essential aspect of navigation.

Images of Ishtar/Astarte on a group of late-6th-century B.C. lead medallions found at Samos, Ephesos, and Chios recall images from the 7th century B.C., such as those on a silver disc from Zinjirli (ancient Sam'al) and a silver medallion from Ekron.⁶⁴ These images include a worshipper

57. See the depiction of Phoenician ships with horse-headed prows on the Balawat gates, reliefs from the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad (Botta and Flandin 1849, pl. 114), and an 8th-century seal (Avigad 1982).

58. Naster 1992; Brody 1998, p. 136, fig. 21; Moscati 1988, p. 72.

59. On the prominence of Astarte in Phoenicia, see Baurain and Bonnet 1992, p. 67; Röllig 1992. On Asherah "of the sea" as the queen of the Bronze Age Canaanite pantheon and patron goddess of seafarers and on Tinnit (= Tanit) as a Phoenician-Punic goddess with similar associations, see Brody 1998, pp. 26–33.

60. On the westward expansion of the goddess, see Paus. 1.14.7; Fitzmyer 1966, pp. 287–288; Teixidor 1977, p. 36. On the dedication of cakes to Astarte/Queen of Heaven, see Stager 2000.

61. Fitzmyer 1966, p. 287.

62. Olyan 1987.

63. For the cult of Astarte at Kition, see Peckham 1987, p. 84; for the reference in Apuleius, see Teixidor 1977, p. 36.

64. Boardman 1980, pp. 75–76, figs. 70, 71; Golani and Sass 1998, p. 71, fig. 2.

approaching the goddess, who stands on a lion; a crescent moon and the Pleiades rise in the background.

Seals from Shechem, Ashdod, Beth-Shean, Megiddo, and Dor further corroborate Ishtar/Astarte's status as "Queen of Heaven." These seals are incised with images of the goddess surrounded by her nimbus, the Pleiades, the Venus star, the moon, or some combination of the three.⁶⁵ An amethyst gemstone from Sidon, roughly contemporary with the grave stele of ΣΜ[.]/Ἀντίπατρος, depicts Astarte enthroned with the winged disc, the Pleiades, and a crescent moon above her.⁶⁶

A temple to the "Queen of Heaven" in Egypt during the 6th century B.C. associates Astarte with the lion, presumably through her Egyptian counterpart Isis.⁶⁷ A Phoenician dedication dating to the 2nd–1st centuries B.C. from the Astarteion in Memphis (*KAI* 48) reads, "To my lady the noble deity Isis, the deity Astarte."⁶⁸

An archaic cult stand from Pella portrays two naked women standing on lions' heads. These women may represent Astarte; their depictions are related to the "Astarte plaques" that worshippers probably placed on the exterior of shrines.⁶⁹ Astarte plaques, found in Corinth, Sparta, and Athens, show a naked woman who either has her arms at her sides or is cupping one breast. A graffito (*SEG* XXXVI 316) on the base of a black-glazed vase (late 5th century B.C.) from Corinth reads Ἀσάρτα in the Corinthian epichoric alphabet and confirms the presence of her cult in conjunction with that of Ἀφροδίτη at Corinth.⁷⁰

Astarte's association with navigation and marine activity expresses itself in her specific manifestation as Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim.⁷¹ Her cult center and temple were based at Ashkelon, a Philistine city destroyed in 604 B.C. and resettled by Phoenicians under the aegis of the Persians in the late 6th century B.C.⁷² Both Herodotos and Pausanias mention the cult and temple of Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim at Ashkelon.⁷³ Herodotos describes the temple at Ashkelon as the oldest in the cult of Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim. He asserts that the Cypriots derived their temple and cult from Ashkelon and that Phoenicians from the Levantine coast built her temple at Kythera.⁷⁴ Pausanias traces the westward expansion of the goddess from Assyria to Athens. Beginning in the 3rd century B.C., with the emergence of Delos as a major religious center, Phoenicians erected many dedications there to Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim.⁷⁵

Astarte Shemayim was the Phoenician goddess of maritime activity. Ashkelon, the patron city of the goddess, minted its own coins continuously from 375 B.C. to A.D. 235.⁷⁶ Ashkelon's earliest coins were decorated

65. For images of the seals, see Keel and Uehlinger 1998, pp. 292–293, figs. 286–288. Philo of Byblos also mentions that Astarte found a fallen star and dedicated it at Tyre (*FGrH* 790 F2, 31). Tyrian coins from the 3rd century B.C. include depictions of this star (Baumgarten 1981, p. 220).

66. Parrot, Chehab, and Moscati 1975, p. 110, fig. 115.

67. Jer. 44:15; Milik 1967; Barre 1983, p. 69.

68. Milik 1967, pp. 563–564; Baslez 1986, p. 302. For further confirmation of the conflation of Isis and Astarte, see *I.Délos* 2158, 2101, 2132; Plut. *Mor.* 5.104.

69. Keel and Uehlinger 1998, pp. 99–100.

70. See Williams 1986, pp. 13–14.

71. Lipiński 1992, p. 86.

72. Ps.-Scylax 104; Stager 1996.

73. Hdt. 1.105; Paus. 1.14.7.

74. Hdt. 1.105. On the cult of Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim in Boiotia, see Baslez 1986, p. 300, n. 85.

75. See *I.Délos* 1719, 2305; *IG* XI 817, 818.

76. Meshorer 1985, p. 28.

with the head of Athena on the obverse and her owl and AΘE on the reverse, but this Athenian prototype gave way to specifically Ashkelonite images and text. The crowned image of Astarte often replaced the head of Athena, and the Phoenician letters *aleph* and *nun* (the first and last letters in “Ashkelon”) often replaced AΘE, although some examples retained Athenian iconography or text on one side and Ashkelonite on the other.⁷⁷ One of the more common images on Ashkelonite coins is that of the goddess Astarte and her marine attributes; one coin, for example, shows Tyche Astarte standing on a prow, wearing a turreted crown, and holding a standard and an *ἄφλαστον*, or prow decoration.⁷⁸

A number of coins from Ashkelon portray images of lions or lions’ heads. One depicts a goddess standing atop three lions, while several others depict the lion’s head amid emblems associated with Astarte, such as the olive spray, palm branch, and crescent moon.⁷⁹ These coins from Ashkelon add to the substantial evidence linking the lion, maritime activity, the goddess, and the city. They show that the lion-headed prows depicted on Phoenician coins are images of the goddess Astarte, who was the obvious choice for worship by Phoenician sailors seeking safe passage.

A Greek inscription carved on an altar erected on Delos in the 2nd century B.C. confirms Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim’s preeminence among seafarers, in particular those from Ashkelon. The altar is inscribed as follows:

Διὶ Οὐρίῳ καὶ Ἀστάρτῃ Παλαιστίνῃ
Ἀφροδίτῃ Οὐρανίᾳ θεοῖς ἐπηκόοις
Δάμων Δημητρίου Ἀσκαλωνίτης
σωθεὶς ἀπὸ πειρατῶν
εὐχὴν
οὐ θεμιτὸν δὲ προσάγειν
αἴγειον, ὑκόν, βοὸς θηλείας

To Zeus Ourios and Astarte Palestine–Aphrodite Ourania,⁸⁰ the gods who listen to prayer,⁸¹ Damon son of Demetrius, an Ashkelonite, having been saved from pirates, (offered this) vow.

It is not right to sacrifice goats, pigs, or cows.⁸²

This altar, dedicated by an Ashkelonite seafarer in gratitude for his divine rescue, attests to Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim’s role in ensuring seafarers a safe passage.

77. Gitler 1996, pp. 2–7.

78. Finkielsztein 1992, p. 53, pl. XI, nos. 5–8. See also Meshorer 1985, p. 26, nos. 41–45. On the coins of coastal cities, the Tyche is depicted wearing a city crown and standing with one foot on the prow or rudder of a galley, or she may be shown holding a cornucopia or a rudder (Barre 1983, p. 69). In the case of Ashkelon, the Tyche is Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία/Astarte Shemayim (Meshorer 1985, p. 26, nos. 41–45).

79. Gitler 1996, pp. 8–9.

80. The relationship between Zeus Ourios and Astarte Palestine is striking. The Near Eastern counterpart of Zeus Ourios is Baal Šamēn/Šamēm, the consort of Tanit and sometimes Astarte (Teixidor 1977, pp. 36–37).

81. On Astarte as the “hearer of prayers,” see Teixidor 1977, p. 8.

82. My translation. See *LSCG*, p. 110, n. 55, on the ritual prohibitions included in this dedication. The prohibition of goats and pigs is familiar,

but the prohibition of sacrificial cows is unknown from any other Greek source. Sokolowski associates the prohibition of pigs and cows with the cult of Astarte Palestine/Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία and links these prohibitions to specific dietary restrictions in the Levant. These dietary restrictions, however, did not prohibit the sacrifice of cows, only of pigs. See the “Marseilles Tariff” (Rosenthal 1969, pp. 656–657; *CIS I* 165; Delcor 1990).

A REINTERPRETATION OF THE STELE

ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος hailed from the city of which Astarte Shemayim is the patron goddess. The imagery on his stele depicts both a prow (the sacred portion of the ship) and a lion (a symbol of Astarte). As discussed above, Astarte, in particular Astarte Shemayim, embodies both the nautical and the leonine elements pictured in the stele of ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος, and I suggest that the imagery of the stele therefore refers to the goddess. In this context, even the epitaph with its reference to ʾBDŠTRT, the father of the deceased, takes on new significance.

The prow depicted on the stele perhaps refers to the nautical life of ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος and perhaps to the theoric nature of his journey, but it may also refer to the way in which he died. A safe passage and landing occurred only with proper navigation. Phoenician seafarers solicited divine favor for sea travel with the divine prows of their ships, the apotropaic eyes painted on their prows, and the rituals that they performed aboard ship and at coastal sanctuaries throughout the Mediterranean. Divine refusal to grant safe passage could manifest itself through a storm, unclear skies, or any other impediment to proper navigation. The prow, the fulcrum of a ship's navigation and the place in which the deity made himself or herself manifest, played a decisive part in a failed voyage. The prow, therefore, may refer to ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος's death while traveling or at sea.

Astarte was the primary goddess to whom Phoenician seafarers prayed for safe passage, and she refused to grant it to these Phoenicians. The attacking lion may constitute a metaphor for divine malevolence. The deceased suffered the displeasure of the "Queen of Heaven," who did not protect ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος. A storm or accident, the manifestation of Astarte's wrath, may have killed him. ŠM[.]'/Αντίπατρος's friends, so the epigram tells us, rescued his body, buried him in Athens, and preserved the episode in perpetuity on his grave stele.

Phoenicians worshipped Astarte in order to procure a long life, yet she had equal jurisdiction over death.⁸³ Just as deities have benevolent aspects, they also have capacity to inflict harm.⁸⁴ This duality is a fundamental aspect of religion and motivates religious worship.⁸⁵ Although a seafarer may have prayed to Astarte for safe passage, she need not have granted it to him. A 7th-century B.C. Akkadian text, the Treaty of Esarhaddon with Baal of Tyre, captures the power of Baal (Zeus) and Astarte to inflict harm on seafarers. Those who break the treaty are threatened as follows:

May Baal-sameme, Baal-malage, and Baal-saphon raise an evil wind against your ships, to undo their moorings, tear out their mooring pole, may a strong wind sink them in the sea. . . . May Astarte break your bow in the thick of battle, and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy, may a foreign enemy divide your belongings.⁸⁶

Herodotos, Pausanias, and Jeremiah each discuss the wrath of Astarte Shemayim/Αφροδίτη Οὐρανία. Herodotos (1.105) describes how the goddess punished Scythians (and their descendants) who looted her temple at Ashkelon with the "female disease." Pausanias (1.14.7) refers to the wrath of Αφροδίτη Οὐρανία as the perceived cause of childlessness. Israelite women in Jeremiah 44:17–19 believe that failure to worship the "Queen

83. On the accrual of life years through the worship of Astarte and on life as one of her attributes, see Peckham 1987, p. 86.

84. On afflictions as an expression of divine wrath, see Versnel 1990, p. 202.

85. On the polarities of the divine, see Carman 1994.

86. Reiner 1969. The Akkadian Baal-sameme is the Phoenician Baal Šamēn, the Greek Zeus Ourios; see above, n. 80.

of Heaven” properly caused the Israelites to suffer as exiles in Egypt. A bilingual inscription on a funerary stele from Rhodes (*KAI* 44, *TSSI* 39) refers to the deceased as the bridegroom of Astarte and points to Astarte’s role in the Phoenician conception of death.

Greek religion often captured the sinister, death-oriented aspects of the divine in the form of negative epithets.⁸⁷ Hades, for example, seems to be an epithet meaning the “invisible one.”⁸⁸ *Ειχθρολέων* may be an epithet-like circumlocution used to capture the dire aspect of Astarte. Instead of associating the goddess directly with evil, an epithet, *ειχθρολέων*, was deployed to distance Astarte from the manifestation of her wrath. This explains both the unusual use of *ειχθρολέων*, which is not found elsewhere, and the fact that the text never explicitly names Astarte. Those dedications that refer to the benevolent mercy of the goddess, such as the Delian altar, freely name her, whereas those that refer to her malevolent aspect sometimes employ negative epithets.⁸⁹

RELIGION, BILINGUALISM, AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN 4TH–2ND CENTURY ATHENS

Within increasingly cosmopolitan Athens, the metaphorical conventions for addressing divine wrath demarcate communities of interpreters, each with differential access to the stele’s meaning.⁹⁰ Xenophon (*Vect.* 2.3) recounts, and inscriptions corroborate, that the resident alien community in Athens included many Levantines who formed a thriving, multilingual, acculturated population.⁹¹ Although foreigners remained marked, openness to their religions and cultures seems to have reached new heights from the 4th century B.C. onward. Phoenicians inhabiting the Piraeus and Athens retained aspects of their political and cultural organization, yet they also obtained the economic rights of Athenian citizens.⁹² Those seeking to build a temple to a foreign god could do so with permission from the state to buy the land and a grant of *ἐγκτησις* to build the temple.

An Athenian inscription from 333/2 B.C. (*IG* II² 337) records that the orator Lykourgos supported the request of Phoenician merchants from Kition for permission to acquire a piece of land in order to build a temple to Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία in Athens.⁹³ The *ἐκκλησία* granted the request on the grounds that they had previously allowed the Egyptians to build the sanctuary of Isis, Astarte’s Egyptian counterpart. In the 3rd century B.C., *Σαραπιασταί*, worshippers of Sarapis and Isis, applied for permission to build a temple at Rhamnous, and the deme gave them the land in recognition of their piety. The cultic group set up a stele detailing this gift in front of the entrance to their temple.⁹⁴

The Lykourgos inscription demonstrates that the Athenian state considered the temple to Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία foreign, yet there are at least six known dedications to Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία in Athens.⁹⁵ The ordinary Ἀφροδίτη certainly occupied an established position in the Greek pantheon, whatever her eastern connections.⁹⁶ Her manifestation as Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία may have been less conventional, but there were apparently no grounds for restricting her worship. Pausanias does not imply that only foreigners used her temple in Athens or that there was any stigma attached to her

87. Henrichs 1991.

88. *Weid*, from **wid* (Watkins 2000, p. 96).

89. Henrichs 1991.

90. On interpretive communities, see Fish 1980. On the heterogeneity of Greek culture, see Dougherty and Kurke 2003.

91. See Garland 1987, pp. 64–66.

92. On the retention of Phoenician political organization while living in Athens, see *TSSI*, p. 147.

93. See also Versnel 1990, p. 122, n. 108; p. 128, n. 140.

94. *SEG* XL 199. I am grateful to Ronald S. Stroud for bringing this inscription to my attention.

95. See *IG* II² 1261, 1290, 1337, 4586, 4636, 4637.

96. Plato (*Symp.* 180c–181b) distinguishes between Ἀφροδίτη and Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία without referring to the eastern origins of either goddess.

cult. The status of Ἀφροδίτη and Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία in the Greek pantheon blurred the boundaries of “foreignness” and the extent to which individuals drew such distinctions in religious practice and daily life.

The decree of Stratōn (*IG II² 141*) exempted Sidonian (often a metonym for Phoenician) metics from the official Athenian metic tax, indicating that the Athenian state not only tolerated but also accepted the Phoenician-speaking community in Athens.⁹⁷ A 3rd-century B.C. bilingual inscription from the Piraeus (*KAI 60*, *TSSI 41*) includes a lengthy Phoenician text that details Sidonian civic service in Athens.⁹⁸ The inscription highlights a community of self-governing Sidonian property owners who lived in the Piraeus and participated in Athenian civic life, but retained the political organization of the Phoenician city-state and a distinct non-Greek identity.⁹⁹

The last line of the Greek epigram on ὩΜ[.]’Αντίπατρος’s stele contrasts his homeland of Phoenicia with the land in which he was buried, Athens. Here the epigram elides his specific city-state identity, Ashkelonite, maintained in both the Phoenician and Greek texts of the epitaph, with the broader label “Phoenician,” one that he would not have applied to himself in the Levant.¹⁰⁰ The label transforms the deceased and, by extension, his comrades from members of a subculture determined by city-state boundaries (e.g., Sidon, Ashkelon) to members of a unified cultural group.

Although the city-states along the Levantine coast were interdependent and shared a common language and pantheon, they seem to have remained relatively autonomous, despite one city-state (e.g. Sidon) or another (e.g., Tyre) holding political sway. For the people of these city-states residing as a cultural minority in Athens, individual city-state identity gave way, at times, to an externally determined collective identity, “Phoenician.”

ὩΜ[.]’Αντίπατρος identified himself foremost as an Ashkelonite, an identity that implied, but did not necessarily stress, that he shared a language and a pantheon with individuals from neighboring city-states along the Levantine coast. The label “Ashkelonite,” used in both the Phoenician

97. Stratōn is the Greek version of the Sidonian king’s Semitic name, ʿBDʿŠTRT (Abdashtart), and recalls the element ʿŠTRT (Astarte). For metonymic references to the Phoenicians as “Sidonians,” see, e.g., *Il.* 22.743; *Od.* 4.618, 15.118, 425. On the status of Sidon versus Tyre in the Iron Age, see Aubet 1993, p. 25.

98. Although this portion of the inscription is written in Phoenician, it follows a Greek model for such dedications (*TSSI*, pp. 148–149). The inscription identifies a Sidonian, named in the one-line Greek inscription Διοπειθης (lit. “obeying Zeus”), which may correspond to the Semitic name *šmʿbl* (lit. “Baal has heard”); see *TSSI*, p. 150.

99. The Sidonian assembly mentioned in *KAI 60* and *TSSI 41* refers to

“the decision-making body of Sidonians living in the Piraeus probably comprised of Sidonian property owners” (*TSSI*, p. 150). On the preservation of Sidonian political structure, see Garland 1987, p. 66; *TSSI*, p. 147. On acculturation by Sidonians living in the Piraeus, see Baslez and Briquel-Chattonnet 1991.

100. The cultural label “Phoenician” comes to us from Homer (*Il.* 6.288, 23.740; *Od.* 4.617, 13.272, 14.287, 15.415) and corresponds with the later “Canaanites” of the Levantine coast. The Canaanites shared a language and a pantheon, but generally referred to themselves by their particular city-state of origin, as on this stele, rather than as part of a larger cultural group. On the continuity between Bronze and Iron

Age Canaanites, see Kuhrt 1995, p. 401. On the political organization of coastal Phoenicia, see Maier 1994, p. 319. On the persistence of Canaanite identity in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Matt. 15:22; August. *Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio* 13; Teixidor 1977, p. 22, n. 10; Millar 1983, p. 58. On the relationship between the term Phoenician in Homer and the coastal Canaanities to whom the label refers, see Muhly 1970. On the reductive depiction of Phoenicians in Homer, see Winter 1995. On alternatives to the common “red-dye” (from φοῖνιξ) explanation of the label, see Aubet 1993, pp. 5–16. For direct opposition to the “red-dye” explanation, see Paraske- naidou 1991.

and the Greek of the epitaph, marked him as non-Greek, but overparticularized his cultural affiliation to a Greek-speaking audience. In the clarifying epigram, however, his Ashkelonite identity gave way to and merged with the broader cultural category, from “Phoenicia.” Φοινίκην facilitated epigrammatic (scansion) and cultural legibility to the Greek-speaking audience.

Those who understood the religious symbolism of the imagery, the city-state identities of the epitaph, and the Phoenician language were linked by this shared understanding. By deploying the Greek term “Phoenicia,” they assumed this broader, unified collective identity for the benefit of their non-Phoenician audience. Culture as structure thus generated a shift in culture as practice.¹⁰¹ If the epigram was commissioned by the same Phoenicians who commissioned the rest of the stele, they were the agents of their own cultural metamorphosis. If, however, the epigram was a later addition, this assertion of cultural collectivity was one subsequently imposed by others.

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.¹⁰² This change, foreshadowed by the adoption of Greek names by seafarers like ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος, may indicate increasing acculturation, but it does not reflect the substitution of Greek identity for Phoenician.

THE STELE IN ITS CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The monument of ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος fits within a history of competition, interaction, and acculturation among Phoenicians and Greeks. Religious exchange was a significant component of this interaction. The migration of divine cults and the conflation of various deities characterized the religious developments of the 1st millennium B.C. The cult of Astarte Shemayim/Αφροδίτη Ούρανία moved from Ashkelon throughout the Phoenician and the Greek worlds. Astarte’s role as a patron goddess of seafarers ensured that dedications to her traversed the Mediterranean.

The complex reference to Astarte Shemayim/Αφροδίτη Ούρανία on the stele of ŠM[.]’Αντίπατρος points to conventions for addressing divine wrath and for soliciting yet demarcating cultural groups within an increasingly heterogeneous urban space. The deity to whom the stele refers remains unnamed. D’MŠLH/Δομσαλώς used an epithet, εἰχθρολέων, in place of the divine name. The Phoenician text is spare and the Greek dedication modified the Phoenician names to varying degrees. The visual language of the imagery stands in for a longer Phoenician text. The cryptic Greek epigram recalls traditional Greek verse. As noted above, although the epigram purports to explain the non-Greek elements of the stele to a Greek audience, it provides little straightforward information.

101. On the system/practice debate, see Sewell 1999; Dougherty and Kurke 2003, esp. Ober 2003.

102. There are at least 29 Greek inscriptions erected on Delos by Ashkelonites. These refer to Apollo, Asklepios, Artemis, Astarte/Aphrodite, Athena, Dionysos, and Poseidon.

This verbal obfuscation served as both a delineation of access and a convention for addressing divine wrath. Although Athens seems to have absorbed the influx of non-Greeks and their languages and religions, these cultures remained marked as non-Greek. If D^ϛMϚLH/Δομοσάλως commissioned the epigram along with the rest of the monument, he may have exercised particular caution in explicitly recounting the negative power of the goddess to a Greek-speaking audience, thereby protecting her reputation for the future. The imagery and epigram, both explanatory components of the stele, reveal different amounts of information to different viewers. The monument constitutes a kind of unequal bilingual, weighted not toward the Greek reader, despite the greater abundance of Greek text, but toward the Phoenician reader, to whom the full message of the imagery was directed.¹⁰³

The stele of ΣΜ[.]’Αντίπατρος is a material expression of the culturally heterogeneous context in which it was produced. The stele conveys this heterogeneity as it simultaneously marks, solicits, and defines various subcultures, allowing some only partial penetration. The stele characterizes the deceased, his comrades, his divinities, and his viewers with descriptively bounded terms and implications: Ashkelonite, Phoenician speaker, Greek speaker, ΣΜ[.], ’Αντίπατρος, Astarte, ’Αφροδίτη, bilingual, bicultural, and those who read the iconography and texts fully, partially, or minimally. Each party, however, constantly slips the bonds of these terms, weaving in and out of categories and communities, and in doing so, partially effaces the very boundaries the terms construct. While memorializing one man, this monument unifies the diverse cultural vectors across which he moved. The words cast in the voice of the deceased, “Let no one wonder at this image,” when read along with rest of the stele, create the very grounds for this wonder.

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103. On unequal bilinguals in purely textual terms, see Adams 2003, pp. 36–40.

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