

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF DEITIES AND DEMONS IN CYPRUS

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1. Introduction

Iconographic studies of Cypriot deities traditionally depend on external perspectives. In these studies divinities and demons of the island are seen not as Cypriot, but as iconographic adjuncts to neighboring cultures in Greece, Egypt, Phoenicia, and Mesopotamia (HILL 1940 for a classic analysis of Cypriot archaeology and history; TATTON–BROWN 1997: 62–69 for an overview of Cypriot religion; SOPHOCLEOUS 1985 and KARAGEORGHIS 1998a for standard iconographic studies). From this perspective, Cypriot religion essentially becomes a syncretic system which has assimilated, even if it has sometimes misunderstood, religious figures from elsewhere, a process determined by the geographic position of Cyprus between Anatolia, the coast of Syria and Palestine, the Aegean, and the Nile delta. But to look at Cypriot religious iconography only in this way is to see the subject imperfectly. No one can deny the presence of Near Eastern, Egyptian, or Greek elements within Cypriot religion, since representations and symbols of gods and goddesses from these areas appear locally with no attempt at adaptation. The 8th cent. Sargon stela, for example, the most obviously Assyrian object found on the island, is carved with symbols of different Mesopotamian deities unadapted for their appearance in Cyprus (**fig. 1**). But the indigenous Cypriot population presumably read these images as political rather than religious symbols, and the stela is more a tangible representation of a political relationship with the Assyrian king than evidence of local cult practice (REYES 1994: 50–56).

Accordingly, this essay surveys the religious iconography of Cyprus from prehistoric times until the Classical Period with this local perspective at the forefront, asking in particular:

- (1) In what unique ways did the Cypriots represent their own deities and demons, and what terms did they themselves use to address their divinities?
- (2) Within the local system, how was divinity and hierarchy conveyed to the indigenous worshipper, and how did Cypriots represent themselves in their interactions with the divine?
- (3) When and where did particular modes of representation achieve prominence?

In other words, we need to consider why Cypriots used particular symbols, and why they chose the representations that they did.

This essay thus examines three chronological horizons crucial to the development of Cypriot religious iconography: the millennia prior to the Late Bronze Age (from the 11th to the middle of the 2nd mill.); the Late Bronze Age itself (essentially the Late Cypriot III Period, from 1200–1050); and finally, the early Iron Age, comprising the Cypro–Geometric (1050–750), Cypro–Archaic (750–475), and the early Cypro–Classical (475 to the early 4th cent.) Periods. Absolute dates used here for Cypriot prehistory through the Bronze Age follow those set out by STEEL (2004: 11–18); the Iron Age chronology follows absolute dates traditionally assigned to the different historical periods (REYES 1994: 5–7; NEWTON et al. 2005 for further discussion).

2. Before the Late Bronze Age

Figural representation of deities in Cyprus in the millennia before the Late Bronze Age cannot be established from the material record with certainty. Anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, or “fantastic” representations are part of Cypriot culture from the aceramic Neolithic Period through the Chalcolithic, but archaeologists have been unable to unequivocally establish divine, demonic, or cultic identities for any of these objects. When it is possible to examine archaeological contexts closely, such figures are found to come from cemeteries or domestic assemblages, not religious or ritualistic ones.

In the aceramic and ceramic Neolithic (9th to early 4th mill.), representations are so scarce that there is disagreement over what the few stone and clay anthropomorphic figures represent or whether they are in fact male or female. The different types are best attested at Khirokitia in Southern Cyprus (DIKAIOS 1953: 296–298, pls. 95–98; LE BRUN 1994: 291–298; STEEL 2004: 58f; **fig. 2**). Some have seen potentially phallic symbolism in the execution of the figures; others prefer to view them as representations of birth, as they are found in domestic habitations and settlement sites (A CAMPO 1994: 46–50). At this time, however, the differentiation between religious and domestic centers is yet to be established.

In the Chalcolithic era (from the 4th to the first half of the 3rd mill.) and Early Bronze Age (second half of the 3rd to the first half of the 2nd mill.), there is a burgeoning of representational art, but the identification of figures as deities or demons remains equally insecure. Figurines are largely female (SOUTH 1985: 65–79; GORING 1991: 153–161; VAGNETTI 1991: 139–151; A CAMPO 1994: 51–60; STEEL 2004: 99–103). Cruciform figurines of picrolite (**fig. 3**) are the most famous examples of Chalcolithic representational art (MORRIS 1985: 122–132), but terracotta figures, largely of Red Polished Ware with plank-like bodies (MORRIS 1985: 135–162; **fig. 4**), are equally well attested from the Early Bronze Age.

Some have seen the picrolite figures as images of a “mother goddess” (BOLGER 1996: 365–373; HAMILTON 1996: 282–285). A cruder but similarly positioned limestone female statue from Lemba in Western Cyprus, known as the “Lemba Lady,” has been considered particularly representative of this mother goddess type (BOLGER 1992: 155; **fig. 5**). But that term is anachronistic when applied to this period of Cypriot prehistory and presupposes an Anatolian connection not consonant with the archaeological evidence (WESTENHOLZ 1998: 63–81; MOOREY 2003: 6f). On the contrary, the use of picrolite is distinctively Cypriot, and many have interpreted these figurines and similar ones in terracotta as representations of childbirth, perhaps offered to a propitiatory force (MORRIS 1985: 122; PELTENBURG 1992: 27–36).

The identification of the Red Polished Ware plank figurines is problematic due to their descriptions in the archaeological literature as idols or *xoana*, terms which in ancient Greek suggest divine images (ORPHANIDES 1983 for examples; note also KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 19). Such figurines are normally found in cemeteries or settlements, and nothing in their appearance suggests specifically ritualistic or religious iconography. While some plank figures seem fantastic and have more than one head, this practice of representation may be an artistic convention to indicate multiple people or a family, with no allusion to myth (MORRIS 1985: 145; A CAMPO 1994: 164f; WASHBOURNE 2000: 67–113).

However, two clay plank-like models from the Early Bronze Age at Kotchati, west of Idalion, show a woman with a large jar positioned in front of an edifice represented by three pillars, each with a bucranium above, complete with horns (KARAGEORGHIS 1970: 10–13; FRANKEL/TAMRAKI 1973: 39–44; ÅSTRÖM 1988: 15–11; STEEL 2004: 146, pl. 20; **fig. 6**). These representations are evidence for what may be the earliest sanctuaries on Cyprus, since interpretations of contemporary terracotta models found inside a bowl from Vounous in the north of Cyprus disagree on whether those figures comprise a tableau of daily life or a

specifically religious scene (DIKAIOS 1940: 118–125; STEEL 2004: 145f for a summary of interpretations; **fig. 7**). The Kotchati models suggest the importance of bucrania as religious symbols and iconographic elements in the late 3rd and early 2nd mill. The use of bucrania with outstretched horns becomes more widespread in Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age.

The depiction of the “fantastic” also has a place in the artistic repertoire of Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Cyprus, but we need not identify such figures as deities or demons. A clay figurine with a grotesque grimace, one of many terracottas from a house model discovered at Kissonerga–Mosphilia, may be associated more with the realities of birthing than the symbolism of religion (PELTENBURG 2001: 123–141; STEEL 2004: 103–106 for a summary of interpretations; **fig. 8**). Similarly, a grotesque ithyphallic seated figure of clay (**fig. 9**), perhaps from Souskiou near Paphos, has been interpreted as a general representation of fertility (MORRIS 1985: 134f; STEEL 2004: 102f for a summary of views), and any symbolic reading of the “fantastic” animal figures, also from Souskiou, remains speculative (MAIER/KARAGEORGHIS 1984: 26, figs. 3; 30; **fig. 10**).

In all, therefore, we can conclude that by the end of the Early Bronze Age, a tradition of anthropomorphic divine representation had not yet taken hold in Cyprus. But had there been an earlier tradition of aniconic representation? Tacitus and other late authors indicate that this was so and record an aniconic tradition at Paphos that persisted into historical periods from an unspecified earlier time (Tacitus, *Histories* 2.2.3; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 3.58). Depictions of the temple of Aphrodite on Paphian coinage show the baetyl to which these passages refer (MAIER/KARAGEORGHIS 1984: 84, figs. 65–67; **fig. 11**). Polycharmos of Naukratis (Athenaios, *Deipnosophistae* 15.675f) mentions the purchase of a small statuette of Aphrodite from the temple at Paphos at an uncertain date, but he gives no indication that the figure was anything other than anthropomorphic. Conical or spherical objects found in Iron Age sanctuaries at Golgoi and Meniko in central Cyprus and Ayia Irini in the north have been thought to have had similar religious significance as the baetyl at Paphos (SOPHOCLEOUS 1985: 5–9; WEBB 1999: 182–184 for a Late Bronze Age example from Enkomi and a limestone block from Hala Sultan Tekke).

3. The Late Bronze Age

Only in the Late Bronze Age do we have the earliest certain examples of figures that clearly represent the divine and are part of a local pantheon. Recent work suggests that the internationalism of the island’s economy was well underway by the beginning of the Late Cypriot Period (KARAGEORGHIS 1995a: 73–79; HAIDER 1996: 137–156; ÅSTRÖM 2006: 73–76). Seals, traditionally considered an archaeological indicator of the expanding Cypriot trading network, proliferate only in the Late Cypriot III Period, but firm connections had been established even earlier with Egypt and the Levant.

It is premature to conclude, however, that an anthropomorphic tradition of religious iconography arose as a result of foreign influence. Social upheavals characterize the transition from the Early to the Late Cypriot Periods, but this does not necessarily mean that invasions from outside prompted a shift in religious culture, since the trend toward anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representation within Cyprus was already present in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages (above and STEEL 2004: 119–121 for a historical summary). That trend seems to have flourished in the Late Cypriot Periods.

Moreover, Cyprus was at this time an independent political and presumably cultural entity, not a vassal state or colony of foreign empires. Acceptance of this presumption rests on the identification of Cyprus or part of it as the kingdom of Alashiya found in cuneiform sources (MERRILLEES 1987 for an overview of the problem). The identification of place names within the orbits of the Hittite and Mycenaean worlds is now more secure (LATACZ 2004). Furthermore, clay analysis of cuneiform tablets allegedly from Alashiya confirms Cypriot

composition, particularly when the clay is compared to deposits along the southeast of the Troodos (GOREN et al. 2004: 71).

The first certain depictions of deities come from the southeast. These are bronze statuettes known as the Ingot God (SCHAEFFER 1971: 505–510; KASSIANIDOU 2005: 127–132; **fig. 12**) and the Horned God (DIKAIOS 1969–71: 196–199; **fig. 13**), both from Enkomi. Both date to around the 12th cent. What is most striking is that these early representations are crafted in metal. In Cyprus, far more than in any other area of the Near East or Mediterranean, terracotta is the traditional medium for religious expression from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The anthropomorphic representation of gods in metal is new, an innovation inspired by the growing metals trade from which the island acquired its name and reputation.

The Ingot God is, in fact, literally shown standing on an ingot. Discovered in a metals-producing complex that included the sanctuary in which it was found, the figure is conventionally understood as presiding over an economically valuable industry (e.g., CATLING 1971: 15–17). Additional iconographic details support this argument. The figure is relatively tall, 35 cm in height, and its arms are in the smiting position common to divine representations, also in metal, from the Near East and Egypt (SEEDEN 1980 on the smiting position; also COLLON 1986: 165; REYES 1992: 250f; NEGBI 1976 on Near Eastern gods in metal). The conical helmet is horned, an attribute typical of Near Eastern gods; this instance is probably a characteristic locally adopted as a result of increased contact with the island's neighbors. Even so, the adoption of this iconographic element may have been encouraged by the already established use of horned bucrania as religious symbols within Cyprus.

The image of the Horned God bears comparison with the Ingot God. At about one-half meter in height, it is taller than the Ingot God and was discovered in a context identified as a sanctuary. As with the Ingot God, the figure wears a horned helmet; its identification as a deity is therefore certain. The position of the arms—one outstretched with the palm down, the other held to the chest—indicates benediction rather than supplication.

It is impossible to name either the Ingot God or the Horned God of Enkomi. Previous discussions have identified one or the other as Apollo, adducing as evidence a 4th cent. bilingual inscription in Cypro-syllabic and Phoenician from Tamassos which attaches the enigmatic epithet Alasiotas, perhaps cognate with Alashiya, to Apollo (MASSON 1983: 226–228, no. 216; HADJIANNOU 1971: 33–42). Others think the smiting pose indicates that the Ingot God is Resheph, shown in Near Eastern art in precisely this pose. The Tamassos inscription also equates Apollo Alasiotas with Resheph (SCHAEFFER 1971: 508–510).

But the physical modeling of the Ingot God nor the Horned God does not specifically recall artistic traditions in any of the neighboring cultures, and identification as Apollo or Resheph looks at these deities from the external perspectives of Classical and Near Eastern archaeology. Moreover, recent investigations suggest the name Alashiya designated not just Enkomi but other sites along the Southern coast as well (KNAPP 1996: 1–15), and so we cannot assume that the Alasiotas inscription alludes to a deity specifically from Enkomi. It is clear from texts that Cyprus housed local Alashiyan gods and need not simply have adopted names that were part of a Mycenaean or Near Eastern religious vocabulary, although the Alashiyan king does mention the Mesopotamian god Nergal in his letters (KNAPP 1996: 22). The Cypro-Minoan script in use at this time remains undeciphered; the one known name of an Alashiyan king, a certain Kushmesusha, remains philologically problematic since it is not obviously Semitic or Greek (MALBRAN-LABAT 1999: 121–123; KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 69).

The Horned God and the Ingot God represent firm evidence for local religious iconography. Other evidence is less secure. With the discovery of the Ingot God, it was reasonably maintained that the appearance of a copper ingot as a base was sufficient to identify a figure as divine. Consequently, a naked female bronze figurine shown standing on an ingot was identified as a deity attributed to Cypriot origin, and named the Ingot Goddess

(CATLING 1971: 15–32; **fig. 14**). Two other bronze figurines similar in appearance and stance to the Ingot Goddess but damaged at the legs and therefore missing their bases have also been considered representative of the same deity (KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 96, fig. 193f). One of these was recovered from a tomb at Kouklia–*Teratsoudhia* in Paphos (KARAGEORGHIS 1990: 29, no. 5; 59f, pl. 21:52; **fig. 14**). The figures are all roughly 10 cm tall, naked, with their hands looped beneath the breasts. The pendant worn by the Ingot Goddess has been taken as a reference to the *kestos himas*, a garment of desire, worn by Aphrodite (Homer, *Iliad* 14.214; KARAGEORGHIS 1977: 104). The figure has accordingly been seen as a prefiguring of the Classical goddess of love, said to have been generated from the foam off the Paphian coast (WEBB 1999: 232–235). From a Near Eastern perspective, she is also seen as a personification of desire and fertility and identified as Astarte, Inanna, or Ishtar (WEBB 2003: 16; DALLEY 1987 for other theories). Because of the ingot base, she is usually considered as the divine consort of the Ingot God; the pair thus corresponds to the pattern of male divinity and female counterpart common in Near Eastern mythology (see KENYON/MOOREY 1987: 122, 125 on the Kuntillet Ajrud drawings of Yahweh and his Asherah).

The ingot base and the bronze material aside, the Ingot Goddess and her associates actually belong to the artistic tradition of nude female statuary in the Near East, a type already adopted into the Cypriot terracotta repertoire of the Early Bronze Age (e.g., ORPHANIDES 1983: 45–48; KARAGEORGHIS 1993: 1–5; pls. 1–3). Though commonly called “Astarte figures,” the identities of the Near Eastern counterparts to these Cypriot terracottas have never been ascertained, and their identification as goddesses is increasingly questioned (MOOREY 2003: 28–34; MOOREY 2005: 185–187; see KEEL/UEHLINGER 1998: 97–100). The use of bronze as a representational material does not automatically show divine status at the end of the Bronze Age or in later periods since votaries or priests may also be shown in metal (MOOREY/FLEMING 1984: 78–80; REYES 1992: 78–80; WEBB 1999: 231). Nor do nakedness or the position of the hands indicate divinity, since a Late Bronze Age metals hoard from Pyla, near Kition, brought to light a naked figurine, apparently male, its arms in a similar position to the female ones, with no obvious attributes indicative of divinity (KARAGEORGHIS/DEMAS 1984: 38, 55, 63, no. 62; pls. 25, 44; WEBB 1999: 235, fig. 80.3 identifies the figure as female). The only reason to identify the Ingot Goddess as a goddess is thus the ingot base itself, but that does not seem to be sufficient to justify the title “divine consort”. As with the terracotta counterparts, these figures may simply be votaries of the god.

Other local bronze figurines have been identified as gods on the basis of their appearance in metal: seated and robed male figures from Enkomi (**fig. 15**), and a plaque also from Enkomi that shows the familiar “Astarte” type of nude female on each side (WEBB 1999: 229–232; **fig. 16**). The latter has been considered a divine consort of the Horned God and is sometimes called the Double Goddess. There is also an unprovenanced seated figure in the Pierides Collection in Larnaka (KARAGEORGHIS 1985: 130f, no. 113). However, in none of these instances can divinity be established from the appearances of the figurines or their archaeological contexts. It is not even certain that the figurines represent different gods, since cultic objects have a multiplicity of uses within a single ritual and may therefore be shown in different positions. The Double Goddess is subject to the same cautions as other nude female figurines from the Levant.

Other Late Bronze Age artifacts represent gods known from neighboring Near Eastern cultures, but whether the local populations recognized them as such is open to debate. A Hittite statuette of silver in the standard iconography of the storm god, in smiting position, atop an animal was found in a 13th cent. tomb from Kalavassos (SOUTH 1997: 163, pl. 15:1; KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 34, fig. 56). On both local and imported cylinder seals motifs and devices show mythological figures that are dependent on Near Eastern prototypes. Among significant glyptic motifs catalogued by WEBB are a robed, crowned god; a deity or hero in

the pose of the master-of-animals; a robed, crowned goddess; a robed female figure as mistress-of-animals; a goddess associated with goats and with animal-headed “ministrants”; a nude goddess; and an anthropomorphic “ministrant” associated with a bull-man, lion-man, or griffin-man (WEBB 1999: 262–283). The figure known as the Mycenaean genie also appears (KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 58f, no. 95 on an amphoroid krater; REYES 2001: 13f). Cuneiform texts reflect an understanding that Near Eastern deities are part of the Alashiyan world (KNAPP 1996), but it cannot be shown that Cypriots were always aware of the religious symbolism used on cylinder seals, even if individual iconographic elements such as bucrania and ingot shapes show that some glyptic iconography was of indigenous significance. These seals may also be indicative of foreigners practicing their own rituals within Cyprus.

WEBB has pointed to the significant use of the plural when reference is made to the gods of Alashiya in Late Bronze Age textual evidence (WEBB 1999: 280), and Steel has amply demonstrated the increase in archaeological sites identified as sanctuaries at this time (STEEL 2004: 201–206). It is thus not surprising that there is an increase in the use of religious iconography within Cyprus in the Late Cypriot III Period. Iconographically, the architecture of local sanctuaries emphasizes the importance of bucrania and raised “horns of consecration” as symbols of religious value, as they had been elsewhere in the Aegean (D’AGATA 2005: 4f). On Cyprus, however, the ends of the “horns of consecration” are flat and squared off rather than pointed inward (WEBB 1999: 176–179; STEEL 2004: 203; **fig. 17**). A Mycenaean krater from Kalavassos–*Ayios Dhimitrios*, showing a building with horns on top and perhaps a woman inside, has been taken as a depiction of a goddess and her shrine (**fig. 18**). But since the scene is on a Mycenaean vase, it is unclear how much significance this image held for Cypriots (STEEL 1994: 201–211). Terracotta bull images and actual bucrania have also been noted among material assemblages in the sanctuaries (KARAGEORGHIS 1993: 19–21).

The Late Bronze Age also sees the first appearance of terracotta ritual masks (CAUBET/COURTOIS 1975: 43–49; KARAGEORGHIS 1993: 33–35; NYS 1995: 19–34; WEBB 1999: 219–222; **fig. 19**). Of the small number known, the majority may be described as anthropomorphic. A few are demonic, with deep grooves incised onto the face. These have been tentatively identified as either the Egyptian god Bes or the Mesopotamian demon Humbaba (WEBB 1999: 220–222). However, recent studies see them within an indigenous iconographic framework, either as part of a ritual involving the transition from childhood to adulthood, or as props for the reenactment of local myth (NYS 1995: 30f; WEBB 1999: 222).

The Late Bronze Age on Cyprus was clearly characterized by an increased sophistication in the use of religious symbolism, but our evidence has largely been limited to the central, eastern, and southern parts of the island. Apart from an early aniconic tradition, we can point definitively only to the Horned God and the Ingot God, both from Enkomi, as local deities with a particular iconography. It is apparent that Cypriots viewed these warrior figures as presiding over themselves and a metals industry crucial to their local and international economy. Terracotta votives in animal or anthropomorphic shape would likely have been offered to these representations in the same way that we find ministrants and other supplicants approaching divine figures on cylinder seals.

4. The Iron Age

The transition from the end of the Late Bronze Age to the beginning of the Iron Age was as much a time of disruption and confusion in Cyprus as it was elsewhere in the Aegean, the Near East, and Egypt (KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 115–141). From archaeological evidence, it is easier to identify trends in Cypriot religious iconography that arose from the latter half of the 11th cent. than it is to establish continuities from the 12th. A significant number of large wheel-made terracotta female figurines from Enkomi in the first half of the 11th cent. have been identified as goddesses. Known as “the goddess with upraised arms,” this type was

apparently adopted from Late Bronze Age Crete, with use continuing in Cyprus into the 11th cent. (WEBB 1999: 213–215; STEEL 2004: 211; D'AGATA 2005: 8f, fig. 7; **fig. 20**). The gesture has been interpreted differently, however, and although certain figures may reach 30 cm in height, nearly the size of the Ingot God, the type may have more to do with “mourning, benediction, or invocation, a manifestation of divine presence or an evocation of horns of consecration” (WEBB 1999: 215; note TATTON–BROWN 1997: 64 on the gesture of upraised arms in the Archaic Period).

There is also potential mythological representation in two vases from the sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi (**fig. 21**). Both vases represent two-headed creatures and are often called centaurs (WEBB 1999: 218; KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 114, 121; STEEL 2004: 211f; D'AGATA 2005: 7f, fig. 5). WEBB suggests identification as a sphinx, citing comparable figures in Late Cypriot glyptic and decorative bronze work (WEBB 1999: 218; D'ALBIAC 1992: 285–290 on the Cypriot sphinx). Because each of the vases has two heads, the interpretation seems unlikely. The identification of painted scenes on a small number of pots as depictions of Homeric epic is also insecure (WEBB 1999: 259–261 for a summary of the evidence).

From the second half of the 11th cent., there is better evidence for the different iconographic types of deities and demons within Cyprus. There are three prevalent strands:

(a) a Phoenician tradition established early in the Iron Age, which closely reflects the idioms and hierarchies from the coast of Phoenicia;

(b) a Greek tradition evident from the second half of the 6th cent., emulating the artistic conventions of the Hellenic world; and

(c) an independent, indigenous tradition, by far the least studied and most difficult strand to isolate from the material culture (MYRES 1914: 124–129 though dates are still suggestive).

The exact delineation between each of these is not distinct, and additional elements from other geographical areas such as Egypt and Mesopotamia are sometimes subsumed.

4.1. The Phoenician tradition

Current evidence suggests that disruptions at the end of the Bronze Age did not last as long as was once thought (LEMONS 2002), and by the 9th cent. Phoenicians had firmly established themselves along the Southern and Eastern regions of Cyprus (REYES 1994: 18–21; MARKOE 2000: 170f; LIPÍŃSKI 2004: 43–51). Artifacts typical of Phoenician culture are well known from the island; some were manufactured locally. These include the famous series of metal bowls (MARKOE 1985) and stamp seals with Phoenician devices (REYES 2001: 85–136). Black-on-Red pottery long considered as Phoenician is probably Cypriot (SCHREIBER 2003).

The Phoenician epigraphic and material record from Cyprus alludes to deities such as Adom, Anat, Astarte, Baal, Eshmun, and Melqart (SOPHOCLEOUS 1985: 146–154; BAURAIN/DESTROOPER–GEORGIADIS 1995: 597–631; LIPÍŃSKI 2004: 43–51). A terracotta figure with a bearded face and long horns, excavated from a sanctuary at Meniko near Tamassos, has been identified as Baal–Hammon (**fig. 22**). To this figure may be added similar figures of Baal, seated and standing, in limestone and terracotta from Athienou, Idalion, Kythrea, Lefkoniko, Salamis, and Tamassos, all in the eastern half of Cyprus (KARAGEORGHIS 1995: 139f; BUCHHOLZ 1991: 85–128).

One of the few female terracotta figurines from the sanctuary at Ayia Irini shows an enthroned woman on a seat, on each side of which is molded a standing sphinx (**fig. 23**). Phoenician artistic influence on the sphinx throne is evident. The female figure has accordingly been identified as Astarte (KARAGEORGHIS 1998: 34f; HERMARY 1981: 35–37 for other Cypriot examples). The typically Phoenician image of the “woman at the window,” perhaps a priestess of Astarte rather than the goddess herself, is known from Idalion (CAUBET 1979: 97–118).

Among other Phoenician deities and demons that typically appear in Cypriot material record are fish-men (**fig. 24**), seated or recumbent griffins, striding hawk-headed figures, and seated or standing sphinxes (REYES 2001: 75–83; 85–136 for glyptic examples). In addition, there are also glyptic scenes that show seated but unknown divinities (e.g., REYES 2001: 78f, no. 110, fig. 134; 82, no. 122, fig. 144). Head pendants of glass are usually thought to identify Phoenician demons whose images served as anthropomorphic charms (TATTON-BROWN 1981: 143–155). The hierarchy of the Phoenician deities from the mainland was presumably replicated in Cypriot areas that had a strong Phoenician presence, such as Kition.

However, it is usually impossible to give a specific name to a Phoenician deity or demon or even guess its position within a hierarchy, since basic iconographic information is lacking from the mainland. MATTHÄUS has plausibly argued that a winged figure, sometimes seen holding a sun disc, was a “demon” or “genie,” a divine being of low rank (2000: 87–105; MATTHÄUS 2005: 19–39 with Cypriot examples). He may have eventually been interpreted as Helios by Greek viewers (MATTHÄUS 2005: 31–35). Iconographic representations of Egyptian gods such as Bes, Hathor, Horus, Isis, Ptah, and Thot, as well as Egyptian attributes such as the uraeus or *ankh*, were for the most part acquired via the Levant, rather than adopted directly from Egypt (e.g., WILSON 1975: 77–103 on Bes; KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 113, no. 178 on Horus; FAEGERSTEIN 2005: 265–289 on Egyptian elements on Cypriot statuary). These resemble their eastern counterparts in appearance, rather than the Egyptian models.

Cypriots could adopt particular Phoenician or Egyptianizing iconography for specific purposes. Local worship of Hathor is indicated by the common pictorial decoration of Hathor heads in a black-figure style peculiar to Amathus (**fig. 25**). Architectural capitals in the shape of Hathor heads are also attested here, but none thus far are known from Phoenicia itself (HERMARY 2000a: 144–152).

A 7th cent. Phoenician silver bowl, very likely from Kourion, shows a dining scene around its periphery that is Phoenician in appearance and conception, with figures in Egyptianizing dress and hairstyles (KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 188–193, no. 307; KARAGEORGHIS 2002: 156, fig. 322; 177f; **fig. 26**), but a female reclining on a couch has a rare identifying label written in Cypro-syllabic. The inscription has recently been deciphered as “Cypromedousa” or “she who looks over the Cypriots,” emending Mitford’s earlier reading (MITFORD 1971: 11–14). HERMARY suggests the figure on the Phoenician bowl is therefore a goddess worshipped throughout the island since the inscription presupposes a pan-Cypriot figure rather than simply the presiding queen of a particular kingdom (HERMARY 2000: 67–78). As elsewhere in the Near East, the use of the title rather than the actual name of the divinity was the more appropriate method of address in local ritual.

4.2. *The Greek tradition*

A Hellenic tradition of religious representation appeared alongside the Phoenician one, but was especially prevalent from the middle of the 6th cent. From the early 5th cent., traditional Greek religious iconography essentially dominated the island, and this congruence between Greek and Cypriot divine imagery remained true in later historical periods (KARAGEORGHIS 1998a: 294–297). The Northwest around the Cypriot kingdom of Marion became a notable center for the dissemination of the Hellenic style (SERWINT 1993: 212–214). Among Greek divine figures attested in Cypriot inscriptions, statuary, and pictorial scenes are Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, centaurs, Eros, the Gorgon, Hermes, Perseus, and Zeus (SOPHOCLEOUS 1985: 155–161; KARAGEORGHIS 1998a: 68–159).

Representations of Heracles (**fig. 27**) were especially well attested from the middle of the 6th until the 4th cent. They become less important by the end of the Cypro-Classical Period. HERMARY (1990: 192–196) has therefore suggested that the iconography of Heracles was initially assimilated to a local divinity whose vitality had lessened by Hellenistic times, when

the island adopted a more Greek veneer and more conventional ways of representing the Hellenic pantheon.

SOPHOCLEOUS and HERMARY have identified as important Heraklean types statuary in which he appears as an archer, in smiting position, in a simple standing position, and as master-of-lions (SOPHOCLEOUS 1985: 28–56; HERMARY 1990: 192–196). Heracles is also often seen in encounters with the Gorgon, the triple-headed Geryon, and the hydra (TATTON-BROWN 1979: 281–288; HERMARY 1990: 192–196; BUCHHOLZ 2000: 229–233). The iconography of Heracles, usually seen as associated with the Phoenician Melqart, was particularly important in central Cyprus (Golgoi, Idalion, Vouni), and he could sometimes be identified as Baal on the coinage of Kition (KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 123, no. 190; YOYOTTE 2006: 130f).

Although Heracles was shown with club and lionskin in the Greek fashion, it is not always evident why particular iconographic types were favored over others. The smiting position and the representation as master-of-animals are readily explicable because of the earlier use of the motif in Cypriot and Near Eastern iconography. Other iconographic types would have gained ascendancy because of the influence of Phoenicia or other areas of the Near East, where, for example, the myths of the battles with the hydra or Geryon may have originated. Similar images of Heracles were set up at Kition–*Bamboula* in Cyprus and Amrit in Phoenicia, confirming that the use of particular types of Heracles statues was as much a Phoenician phenomenon as a Cypriot one (JOURDAIN-ANNEQUIN 1992).

What initially appears to be Greek may also reveal something of local practice when examined more closely. Representations of composite creatures, half human and half animal, are frequent in Cyprus. Notable among these are sphinxes, griffins, and sirens, but centaurs are especially well attested (KARAGEORGHIS/DES GAGNIERS 1974: 124–141; KARAGEORGHIS 1996: 1–12; BUCHHOLZ 2000: 226–228, 233–238; also GJERSTAD et al. 1935: 785 on “minotaur statuettes”; **fig. 28**). Early centaurs simply showed the human figure with a quadruped body; the later Greek type, usually shown carrying a branch over his shoulder, became apparent only in the Archaic Period. It may be that the earlier centaur had a particular importance in local mythology.

Although Cypriot iconography based on the Greek tradition is often described as misunderstood, an iconographic reading need not rely on the assumption of local confusion. Instead, the iconographic representation may have fulfilled particular needs. The equation of certain Phoenician gods with Greek ones accounts for combinations of iconographic elements seen on some Cypriot motifs. Athena thus sometimes appears with wings in Cyprus, an attribute found on Anat with whom she is associated, as attested at Idalion (REYES 2001: 148f, no. 354, fig. 360; CORNELIUS 2004: 30f; pl. 2.2 for a winged representation of Anat). Since she was popularly thought to have emerged off the Western coast, Aphrodite was particularly revered in Paphos (MAIER/KARAGEORGHIS 1984: 81–102). According to inscriptions, she was sometimes equated with Astarte at Amathus, Golgoi, and Idalion and could be shown in eastern garb (e.g., REYES 2001: 148, no. 352, fig. 358). There were temples dedicated to Apollo, sometimes equated with Resheph, at Idalion, Kourion, and Phrangissa near Tamassos. As with Resheph, he could appear in smiting pose. There were temples of Zeus at Golgoi and Salamis (BAURAIN/DESTROOPER-GEORGIADIS 1995: 697–631; KARAGEORGHIS 1998a: 68–159; MAIER 2004: 1223–1232 for summaries of the principal cultic centers). He too could be represented in the traditional smiting position.

The devices on some stamp seals are also seen as illustrative of myths that have been misunderstood. It was characteristic of Cypriot seal cutters in the Archaic Period to express mythological narratives as seal devices, but with iconographic elements that differed from standard Greek ones (REYES 2001: 147f with examples). Thus an unprovenanced Cypriot scarab of amethyst from the 6th cent. shows a Gorgon slaying, but depicts Heracles wearing a

lionskin in the position reserved for Perseus (REYES 2001: 151, no. 364, fig. 371; **fig. 29**). Like Perseus, he wears winged sandals, his head is averted, looking backward at a female figure, perhaps Athena, dressed in Egyptianizing garb with a solar disc above her head, an indication of the Eastern origins of the tale (BURKERT 1992: 83–87). It is not necessary to see iconographic confusion here, whether of the Perseus–Gorgon myth or the Mesopotamian tale of Gilgamesh and the slaying of Humbaba, from which the Greek tale ultimately derived (DALLEY/REYES 1998: 101f). The device is part of an archaeological whole in the same way that an inscription is part of a votive statue or a frieze is part of a temple; the entirety of the stamp seal needs to be considered when reading its iconography.

As a scarab the seal had a phylactic or protective use as a charm (PETRIE 1914: 1–7); since Apollodoros records an encounter between Heracles and the Gorgon in the underworld (*Chronicle* II.5.12), the iconography may be read as protection against the forces of Hades. But the type of stone needs to be considered also. By the 5th cent. a tradition had attached itself to particular stones, and this lore was preserved in books compiled in Classical and Roman times into the Arab Period (HUDA 1998: 3–5; see BAINES 2007: 263–280). Some ancient Cypriot beliefs regarding gems have been preserved by these texts (REYES 2001: 42f; REYES 2005: 210–212). From them we learn that amethyst was particularly helpful as an aid against nightmares (HUDA 1998: 237f). The action of slaying the Gorgon may therefore be emblematic of this, and since the worlds of sleep and death are closely allied (VERMEULE 1979: 145–177), the myth outlined by Apollodoros may have been specifically chosen as the device for this Cypriot seal, given the local importance of Heracles over Perseus.

A general iconographic relationship between the Gorgon and the underworld is reflected elsewhere in Cypriot art. An underground tomb at Pyla has a plaque of the Gorgon positioned at the center above the entrance (REYES 1994: pl. 14; **fig. 30**). At the sanctuary of Apollo in Kourion an Archaic six-sided cubical seal was found, and if one reads the different facets as a unity rather than as separate devices as is commonly done, the combination of the Gorgon and Heracles appears again (REYES 2001: 174, no. 444, fig. 451). Heracles and the Gorgon also appear on a 6th cent. seal of chalcedony, unprovenanced but probably Cypriot (REYES 2001: 152, no. 366, fig. 373). Like amethyst, chalcedony is said to control fear (HUDA 1998: 222f).

It is generally on Cypriot seals made of hard stones that Greek iconography is used, rather than on less expensive ones of serpentine. Similarly, Greek gods for the most part are shown in statues carved of local stone. This suggests that in Cyprus, preference for iconography based on the Greek tradition may have depended in part on social position.

4.3. *The local tradition*

Some iconography may have continued from the Late Bronze Age. An Archaic bronze statue from LANG's excavations at the Apollo temple in Idalion shows a kilted male figure, one hand stretched in benediction. On his head he wears a horned helmet with a uraeus (REYES 1992: 249, no. 28; pl. 17d; SENFF 1993 and TATTON–BROWN 2002: 243–256 on the site; **fig. 31**). The horns suggest the divinity of the statue, and so the older iconography for the Horned God may have been used for Apollo before the standard Classical one took over. This would not be unusual at Idalion. An inscribed 5th cent. bronze tablet from the sanctuary of Athena at Idalion shows that the area had preserved the use of Mycenaean linguistic forms (MASSON 1983: 235–244, no. 217).

The importance of Heracles to local cult has been discussed above. Many of these examples are in limestone, but it is primarily the traditions of terracotta statuary and serpentine stamp seals that reflect the indigenous iconography. CAUBET has described as a “Cypriot siren” a terracotta figure from Idalion that depicts a composite figure with a human head and a bird's body, holding a child (CAUBET 1979: 114–116). On terracottas, however, it is more usual to see figurines with the heads of animals such as goats or bulls atop human bodies

(KARAGEORGHIS 1995: 54–57; **fig. 32**). There is also a limestone male figure with a falcon head, part of the Cesnola Collection (MYRES 1914: 150f; KARAGEORGHIS 2000a: 113, no. 178). Figures with animal heads also appear as devices on a serpentine cubical stamp seal from the Limassol area (REYES 2001: 172, no. 441, fig. 448). They are usually interpreted as priests or votives wearing masks; the tradition of the use of terracotta masks in local ritual may have therefore continued from the Late Bronze Age (KARAGEORGHIS 1993a: 107–122). However, there is an ambiguity inherent in identifying these figures as humans wearing masks. That interpretation may be true from the standpoint of modern viewers, but from the perspective of ancient participants the figure may represent an actual bull–demon or goat–demon. Ancient sources report Arcadia in mainland Greece as a center of human–to–animal metamorphosis (JOST 1985: 558), and since evidence connects Arcadia and Cyprus in terms of ritual practice, animal–headed terracottas in Cypriot temples may represent genuine composite creatures in terms of ritual, not simply humans in masks (VOYATZIS 1985: 155–163; REYES 1994: 11f, n. 4).

Cypriot masks with exaggerated human features are potentially demons (SIMANTONI–BOURNIA 2004–2005: 119–132), but as with the Late Bronze Age examples, interpretative caution is necessary. Terracotta anthropomorphic masks with horns have been recovered from Amathus, recalling Ovid’s reference to inhabitants of that area as Kerastae or Horned Ones (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.223; LOUCA 2004–2005: 80–83). Use of these objects may have signified the presence of divine figures in ritual.

Clay shrine models from the Archaic Period, mostly discovered in tombs, sometimes have a male or female figure inside them (**fig. 33**). However, these figures probably represent worshippers rather than divinities (ULBRICH 2005: 198–205). But the common symbol above the entry of the disc below an inverted crescent is presumably indicative of a local divinity (e.g., REYES 1994: 29; KARAGEORGHIS 1996: 57–67, suggesting Astarte; KARAGEORGHIS 2000: 51–55). KARAGEORGHIS has also suggested that animals on Cypriot pictorial pottery, particularly those showing hunting scenes, may involve ritual and animal symbolism, but the names of the deities in question can no longer be recovered (2006: 541–543).

Devices on serpentine seals remain one of the most important vectors by which a strand of distinctively Cypriot iconography has been preserved. Many are simplified forms based on the Phoenician repertory, but a number show demons or demon–like figures, perhaps mythic or representative of local folklore. The large glyptic hoard from Ayia Irini in the north is especially instructive in showing some of what was obscured by the Hellenic and Phoenician iconographic traditions. One seal, for example, shows a standing figure with a large nose and crested hairstyle identified by GJERSTAD as a “proto–satyr” (REYES 2001: 193, no. 511, fig. 512; **fig. 34**). A bead or pendant was found in the form of a double head, each one with monkey–like features and wearing a splayed headdress (REYES 2001: 209f, no. 531, fig. 529a; **fig. 35**). The device on one end of a cylinder pinched in at the center shows a bearded frontal head with horns or high pointed ears (REYES 2001: 132f, no. 312, fig. 319; **fig. 36**). None of the identities of these figures can be established.

5. Conclusions

We now return to the questions posed at the beginning. How did Cypriots represent their deities and demons? How was divinity conveyed to worshippers? When did particular modes of representation achieve prominence?

Before the Iron Age, we can identify with certainty few deities or demons that belong to a specific Cypriot pantheon, nor can we assign a particular hierarchy among the representations that we have. Most prominent are the Ingot God and the Horned God, whose horned helmets ensure their identifications as local gods whose iconography has been borrowed to an extent from the Near Eastern mainland. It cannot be established whether animal figures were

intended to represent gods or demons. Earlier representations of divine beings were very likely aniconic, a tradition which continued into the historical periods alongside the anthropomorphic one.

In the Iron Age, gods, goddesses, and mythological creatures more readily identified as belonging to a Phoenician or Greek religious system exist side-by-side with local divinities. But Cyprus was not just a chameleon culture reflecting whatever power was in ascendancy over the Mediterranean and Levant at a particular time. There is potential continuation of some Late Bronze Age iconography. There is also evidence of a local practice of anthropomorphic representation and tradition of composite creatures, none of whom, however, can be named. Other more demon-like figures also remain unidentified.

In fact, what is most striking in the representation of ritual worship in Cyprus, particularly from the 7th cent., is the large number of votive figures. Such votaries are usually shown in terracotta, though there are also examples in limestone and bronze (but see LUBSEN-ADMIRAAL 2002: 257–274 on a female terracotta argued to represent a goddess). Of the terracottas many are life-size or greater than life-size, a phenomenon unparalleled elsewhere in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds. Such terracotta figures stand with hands to the sides; with one arm to the side, the other to the chest; or with one arm raised and the other by the chest. There are both male and female figures, and excavations at Ayia Irini revealed that these statues were positioned around an altar or sacred object within a cult building (GJERSTAD et al. 1935: 797–810). Certainly by the end of the Cypro-Archaic Period, then, the iconographic emphasis in the island is on the visualization of the worshipper, shown standing before the divine in eternal supplication.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1 The stela of Sargon II, 2.09 m (Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, VA 968)
- Fig. 2 A selection of figurines from Khirokitia: the figure on the left (19 cm) and the head on the top right (75 mm) are made of andesite, and the head on the bottom right (10.5 cm) is made of clay (after STEEL 2004: 58)
- Fig. 3 Chalcolithic cruciform figurine of picrolite from Lemba–Lakkous, 58 mm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 4 Plank figure of Red Polished Ware, 20.3 cm (Morris Collection, DM–IRP–79)
- Fig. 5 Limestone figurine of a nude female from Lemba–Lakkous, 36 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 6 Early Bronze Age clay model of a sanctuary from Kotchati, 19 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 7 Clay bowl with human and animal figures, from a tomb 22 at Vounous, 37 x 8 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 8 Clay figurines from Kissonerga–Mosphilia with a grotesque anthropomorphic vase on the bottom right, 16 cm; 16.4 cm; 20.8 cm; 20.8 cm; 18 cm (after STEEL 2004: 105)
- Fig. 9 Clay ithyphallic figure seated on a stool in the Pierides Collection, Larnaka, 36 cm (after MORRIS 1985: 134)
- Fig. 10 Vase in the shape of a composite creature from a Chalcolithic cemetery at Souskiou, 22 x 13.5 cm (Famagusta, Hadjiprodromou Collection)
- Fig. 11 Paphian coin of the Roman emperor Caracalla, showing the baetyl of the temple of Aphrodite (London, British Museum; after Tatton–Brown 1997: 63)
- Fig. 12 Late Cypriot bronze statue of the Ingot God from Enkomi, 35 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 13 Late Cypriot bronze statue of the Horned God of Enkomi, 54.2 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 14 Left: bronze statuette of the Ingot Goddess (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Bomford Collection), 9.9 cm; right: bronze statue of a naked female figure from a tomb in Paphos–Teratsoudhia, 9.5 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 15 Bronze seated figures from Enkomi (after WEBB 1999: 230)
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- Fig. 17 Reconstructed ashlar blocks of the sanctuary at Myrtou–Pigadhes in southwest Cyprus, showing the “horns of consecration.” The sanctuary dates to around 1200 (after KARAGEORGHIS 1982: 100)
- Fig. 18 Mycenaean krater from Kalavassos–Ayios Dhimitrios showing a building with horns and a female figure, 37.4 cm (after STEEL 1994: 203).
- Fig. 19 Ritual mask from Enkomi, 16 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 20 Wheel made figures representing “the goddess with uplifted arms,” left: 24 cm, right: 22.5 cm (Limassol, District Museum)
- Fig. 21 Double headed clay composite creature from Enkomi, 31 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 22 Clay figure representing Baal–Hammon from the sanctuary of Meniko–Litharkes, 18.5 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 23 Clay figurine of a female figure on a sphinx throne from Ayia Irini, 35.2 cm (Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet)
- Fig. 24 Scarab of dark green serpentine showing a fish–man (Cypro–syllabic inscription: *pi-lo-i*), 21 x 12 mm (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, E. 97. 1955)
- Fig. 25 Black–figure vase in the style of Amathus showing a Hathor head dated to the 6th cent., 24.4 cm (Larnaka, Pierides Collection)
- Fig. 26 Fragment of a late 8th or early 7th cent. silver bowl, probably from Kourion (Cypro–syllabic inscription above female head: *Cypromedousa*, “she who watches over Cyprus”), 17.5 cm (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cesnola Collection, no. 74. 51. 4557)
- Fig. 27 Cypro–Archaic and Cypro–Classical limestone statues of Heracles in different poses: from left to right: from Kition, 12.3 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum); from Idalion, 56 cm (Paris, Louvre Museum, AM 641); from Kitio, 31.8 cm (Stockholm Medelhavsmuseet.); from Kition, 77 mm (Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet) (after SOPHOCLEOUS 1985: pl. 7)
- Fig. 28 Cypro–archaic clay centaur figure from Ayia Irini, 63.9 cm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum)
- Fig. 29 Cypriot scarab of amethyst showing Heracles slaying the Gorgon, 14 mm (Nicosia, Cyprus Museum, D. 15)

- Fig. 30 Entrance to a tomb at Pyla showing a Gorgon at the center between two sphinxes. (after REYES 1994: pl. 14)
- Fig. 31 Archaic bronze statuette of a figure wearing a horned helmet from the temple of Apollo at Idalion, 14.4 cm (London, British Museum, 1872. 8–16. 96)
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- Fig. 33 Archaic shrine model of terracotta from Amathus showing a disc and inverted crescent above the entrance, 11.4 cm (London, British Museum)
- Fig. 34 Cypro–Archaic black serpentine scarab from Ayia Irini showing a striding ithyphallic figure, 14 mm (Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet)
- Fig. 35 Double-headed figure of black serpentine, probably from Ayia Irini, with a high headdress splaying outward, 14 mm (Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet)
- Fig. 36 Cylinder of black serpentine found at Ayia Irini showing at one end a seated lion and, on the other end, a horned figure with a serpent on each side, 12 mm

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