

HYBRIDITY AND IDENTITY ON LATE PTOLEMAIC YERONISOS

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Résumé. Les fouilles de l'île de Yeronisos, près de la côte sud-ouest de Chypre, permettent de mieux comprendre le bilinguisme et la bi-culturalité des communautés qui habitaient la région de Paphos à la fin de l'époque hellénistique. Un ensemble d'amulettes en pierre décorées découvertes sur ce site, ainsi que des monnaies, des *ostraka*, des céramiques, des lampes et des éléments architecturaux montrent comment l'art, la culture et les pratiques chypriotes traditionnels ont été préservés et mis en valeur dans le cadre importé de l'Égypte ptolémaïque. Un groupe unique de pendentifs en pierre témoigne d'une double iconographie dans laquelle des motifs chypriotes traditionnels ont été associés à des motifs égyptiens. Ce remarquable cas d'hybridité permet d'avoir une « double vision » dans le cadre d'un petit sanctuaire rural regardant vers Alexandrie. Le nouveau sanctuaire de Yeronisos permettait aux familles locales de pratiquer leurs anciennes traditions ; en même temps, le sanctuaire devenait un lieu de séjour pour les divinités égyptiennes, dans lequel Cléopâtre, son jeune fils Césarion, Isis et Horus devaient être représentés.

The island we call Yeronisos, “*Hiera Nissos*” or “Holy Island,” rises dramatically 21m up from the sea just off the headlands at Cape Drepanum, opposite Agios Georgios-tis-Peyias (Fig. 1). In antiquity, as today, this was a place of pilgrimage, a destination for those who travelled out from the urban center of Paphos to the symbolically charged terrain of the rugged seaside landscape. Yeronisos lies just 18km north of Paphos, an easy day's walk from the city center to this place of liminality, half way up the coast to the wilds of the Akamas Peninsula. Worshippers who made the journey during the first century B.C. would have experienced a kind of ritual purification as they crossed the waters to Holy Island, leaving behind the world of the profane.

Ancient place name survive across millennia on Cyprus and the island called “Hiera” is no exception. In listing Cyprus's offshore islands, Pliny (*Natural History* 5.129-131) speaks of the four Cleides “off the cape facing Syria” and two islands toward Paphos, one named “Hiera,” and the other called “Cepia.” Strabo (*Geography* 14.6.4) also knows the place, but combines Pliny's two islands into one that he calls “Hierocepis.” He corrects Demastes of Sigeum and Eratosthenes when he measures the longest axis of Cyprus along

a diagonal from the Cleides Islands at the east, to “Hierocepis” at the west, “where are,” he tells us, “Paphos and Akamas.”



Figure 1. Aerial view of Yeronisos Island, from West.

The dual character of the intriguing finds recovered by the New York University Yeronisos Island Expedition over the past eighteen years reflects the hybridity that is typical of art and worship in late Ptolemaic Cyprus.¹ Two limestone stamp-seal amulets

1. Connelly 2002, p. 245-268; 2005, p. 149-82; 2007, p. 35-51; 2009a, p. 194-209; 2009b. I thank the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and the Directors under whom we have been licensed to excavate for their generosity in facilitating our work. We are indebted to the Friends of Yeronisos who have made our fieldwork possible, especially James Ottaway, Jr., Salvatore S. Ranieri, Bill Murray, Carl S. Forsythe III and the de Coizart Perpetual Charitable Trust, the A.G.

neatly demonstrate the integration of native Cypriot and imported Egyptian motifs. One shows the Cypriot free field bird, a design that enjoyed great popularity from the Cypro-Geometric period on (*Fig. 2*).² Another shows a corpulent Hellenistic ruler crowned with a diadem (*Fig. 3*), an image drawn straight from Ptolemaic Egyptian portraiture.³ This mixing of explicitly Cypriot and explicitly Egyptian iconographies in the material record of Yeronisos, sometimes upon a single object, bears witness to the bilingual and bi-cultural realities of the communities that inhabited the greater Paphos region during late Hellenistic times.



Figure 2. Limestone amulet with free field bird, A.92.01.



Figure 3. Limestone amulet with Ptolemaic ruler portrait, A.93.07.

Yeronisos provides a rare window into the ways in which Cypriot art, culture, and ritual practice were preserved and promoted within the context of an imported Ptolemaic Egyptian framework. What emerges is a fascinating case study of hybridity and identity that enables us to “see double” within a small rural sanctuary that looks south towards the great metropolis of Alexandria.⁴ The discovery of the Yeronisos amulets prompts the

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2. A.92.01, Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 264, Cat. 2, p. 277; Connelly 2007, p. 47, fig. 16.

3. A.93.07, Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 264, Cat.1, p. 270-73; Connelly 2009a, p. 202.

4. A term coined by Susan Stephens in her important book, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2003, p. xi.

question: just who were the people who made and wore these talismans? Why did they favor a dual iconography and what was their identity: Cypriot, Egyptian, or some fusion of the two?

Following a robust period of occupation during the Early Chalcolithic period, Yeronisos stood uninhabited for the next 3700 years.⁵ This is, in no small part, owing to the lack of a water source. Following millennia of inactivity, someone or group of individuals committed substantial resources to a large scale building program during the middle of the first century. Construction was intense over a short number of years sometime between 80 and 30 BC. An even shorter time frame is likely, and it is during the third quarter of the first century that the island enjoyed its most vibrant period of activity. Hellenistic Yeronisos was clearly a “single use” site, built with a very specific purpose in mind. The transformation of a rugged, uninhabited island into an elegant sanctuary of Apollo was completed with great speed. No expense was spared.



Figure 4. Limestone lion's head water spout, StA.94.01.

There was careful planning in the use of space. The interior of the island was reserved for the collection of two very necessary resources: building materials and water. A great quarry, measuring 27.5m in diameter, was dug at the west.⁶ This supplied calcarenite stone for building blocks and soft marl for making mortars. A cistern with broad fan-shaped *impluvium* measuring 13.2m in diameter was built at the east end of the island for the collection of water. Over one hundred carefully cut blocks were laid to form its concave basin, smoothed over with waterproof cement to funnel rainwater down into the carafe-shaped tank.⁷

5. Connelly, McCartney 2004, p. 19-50.

6. Connelly 2002, p. 255.

7. Connelly, Wilson 2002, p. 284-85, 274, figs. 12, 13.

The periphery of Yeronisos was reserved for the sitting of buildings: a temple-like structure was constructed on the western cliffs, while pilgrimage facilities for dining and sleeping were located along the island's southern edge. The temple building has mostly fallen into the sea, along with the general collapse of the western end of Yeronisos, probably during the great earthquakes of the fourth century A.D.⁸ In size and plan, this structure is comparable to the Hellenistic temple of Aphrodite on *Fabrika* Hill in Nea Paphos and that of Apollo Hylates at Kourion.⁹ Limestone cornice blocks, egg and dart mouldings, and engaged Ionic column fragments retrieved from the western cliffs give some idea of the building's original decoration.¹⁰ A lion's head waterspout with a highly expressive face was originally plastered and painted to resemble marble (*Fig. 4*).¹¹ Recovered from the very northwestern edge of the island, this waterspout further attests to the opulent nature of the little temple that once looked out over the western cliffs toward Alexandria. Fragments of a Cypriot *Sigillata* cup were recovered from the foundation trench at the southeast corner of the building, providing evidence for a construction date in the first century B.C.¹²

The ritual nature of activity on Holy Island is confirmed by the discovery of stone offering trays and limestone votive plaques (*pinakes*), as well as miniature votive cups, and ostraka.¹³ Indeed, Yeronisos has yielded the only Ptolemaic *ostraka* found to date in all of Cyprus. These show both incised and painted script, mostly very difficult to make out. One *ostrakon* shows painted cursive script preserving the words “ὑπερ του” and, perhaps, “νιζου” meaning to “wash or cleanse, and “τις των”.¹⁴ Another *ostrakon* shows incised script preserving the male names Chariton, Thrasayes, Nikkon and Xaireas, and what appears to be the word “Τρυφε”.¹⁵ Importantly, some sherds are inscribed with children's writing exercises, perhaps, giving evidence that boys received educational instruction here within Apollo's precinct.¹⁶

8. Connelly 2002, p. 264-266, fig. 18.

9. Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos: Młynarczyk 1985, p. 286-92; Młynarczyk, 1990, p. 217-220; Wright 1992, p. 263, fig. 123. Temple of Apollo Hylates at Kourion: D. Soren, *The Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion*, 1987, Chapter 6, p. 117-212; Buitron-Oliver 1996, p. 20; S. Sinos, *The Temple of Apollo Hylates at Kourion and the Restoration of its South-West Corner*, Athens, 1990.

10. Connelly 2002, p. 245-268, figs. 23-25.

11. StA.94.01: Connelly 2002, p. 261, fig. 24, p. 265; 2007, p. 39, fig. 6.

12. P.41.01: Connelly 2002, p. 261, fig. 20.

13. Offering trays: Yer 82/34, St.0404: Connelly 2005, p. 170-71, fig. 35; stone pinakes: ST.96.33 and ST.96.17: Connelly 2005, p. 170, fig. 36; 2009b, fig. 13; miniature cup: P.93.08, Connelly, Młynarczyk 2002, p. 303, fig. 19; Connelly 2009a, p. 200-201, fig. 19.15; ostraka: Connelly 2005, p. 169-170; 2009a, p. 198-99, figs. 19.9, 19.10.

14. Yer.82/18. I thank Andrew Monson for this reading.

15. Yer.82/16. I thank Roger Bagnall for this reading.

16. O.92.02. I thank Roger Bagnall for this identification.

One amphora fragment is inscribed with large block letters spelling the word: “ΑΠΟΛΛΩ.”¹⁷ Born on Delos, Apollo would be very much at home at an island sanctuary like Yeronisos. By far the most popular male divinity on Cyprus, Apollo was a god who especially looked after boys during their time of transition, as celebrated at any number of old Cypriot sanctuaries, including Kourion, Golgoi (Athienou), Chytroi (Voni), Idalion, Lefkoniko, Tamassos, and others.¹⁸

But the sanctuary of Apollo on Yeronisos was unique in that it was entirely new, without archaic, classical, or Bronze Age precedents. As George Papantoniou has shown, *ex novo* cult foundations were relatively rare on Hellenistic Cyprus.¹⁹ Just two other examples stand out: the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Soli-*Cholades* and the sanctuary of the Nymph at Kafizin.²⁰ With the impetus for its foundation clearly coming out of the Ptolemaic Alexandrian *milieu*, Yeronisos and its Apollo were different from those of traditional Cypriot sanctuaries. Not one terracotta or stone votive figurine has been unearthed to date on Yeronisos, a phenomenon that is extraordinary by the standards of Cypriot votive practice. Instead, small hand- and mould-made lamps abound, many based on Alexandrian prototypes.²¹ These seem to represent the most popular votive offering dedicated on Holy Island, a practice that may well derive from an Alexandrian, rather than a Cypriot, origin.

In her groundbreaking book, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Susan Stephens has explained the ways in which Greeks living at Alexandria imagined Egyptian divinities as virtual equivalents of their Greek gods.²² Cultural assimilation from the third century B.C. on meant that, for Alexandrian Greeks, Apollo was Horus and vice versa, just as Osiris was Dionysos, and Isis was Demeter, later to become Aphrodite. This allowed the local pantheon, and other aspects of Egyptian religion, to feel more familiar to the Greek immigrants. Stephens describes how the equivalency of Greek and Egyptian gods authorized a thought process that focused on similarities, rather than differences, between the two communities.²³

I believe that a similar process can be seen on Yeronisos, though here, the two communities are the native Cypriot and the Ptolemaic Egyptian. By stressing similarities rather than differences, the Ptolemies successfully integrated local Cypriot cult practice into their larger cosmopolitan framework. On Yeronisos, we see both the old and a new

17. O.94.01, Connelly, Młynarczyk 2002, p. 305; Connelly 2005, p. 169-170, fig. 34; 2009a, p. 198-99, fig. 19.9.

18. Connelly 1988, especially p. 45-33, 61-67, and 75-85.

19. Papantoniou 2008, p. 37-45.

20. Vessberg 1936; T.B. Mitford, *The Nymphaeum of Kafizin: The Inscribed Pottery*, Berlin, 1980.

21. Connelly, Młynarczyk 2002.

22. Stephens 2003, p. 7, 8.

23. Stephens 2003, p. 21.

Apollo: one, the very ancient god of Cypriot worship, and the other, the equivalent of Egyptian Horus. Importantly, the founding of the Yeronisos sanctuary coincided with a new arrival upon the royal/political stage: the baby boy Ptolemy XV Caesar, son of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar. Following the birth of “Caesarion” in 47 B.C., Cleopatra assumed the epithet and the iconography of Isis, the divine Mother. In turn, her princely son was associated with the divine Horus. Julius Caesar was easily assimilated to Osiris, the dead king, following his assassination in 44 B.C. whereupon Cleopatra tirelessly promoted Caesarion as legitimate heir, not just to Egypt, but to Rome.²⁴

It is within the framework of this allegory, and within the context of the hybridization of the Egyptian and Cypriot traditions, that we approach the complex of square rooms that stretch across the southern edge of Yeronisos. Here, we find tantalizing bits of evidence that may suggest the joint worship of Caesarion-Horus under the aegis of the local Apollo. Designated as the Central South Complex, this area was filled with fascinating material that truly speaks two languages. Clearly the setting for food preparation, distribution, and dining, the complex preserves the remains of a round oven set at the very southern edge of the island. It is made from reused amphora fragments set in mud *pisé*, once rising in a “bee-hive” roof, long since collapsed.²⁵ Just to the north and east of this kitchen zone, a series of what appear to be dining/sleeping rooms provide the focal point for our discussion of ritual activity on the island.²⁶

Quantities of roof tiles found in and around this complex suggest that its construction was fairly upscale in nature, topped off with a tiled roof. Fragments of white, black, and red wall plaster attest to a certain level of opulence for the interior spaces.²⁷ Three separate “dining rooms” can be seen to measure roughly 4.5m square. Each preserves low benches or *podia* tucked into the corners. Some of these platforms were made of stone rubble topped with mud *pisé*.²⁸ Others were made simply of flat stone slabs. Intriguingly, several blocks bear a monogram in Greek letters that read “HI”, perhaps mason’s marks or perhaps letters with greater significance.²⁹ The Central South Complex yielded great quantities of material deposited on good floors: pottery, bronze needles, fragments of moulded glass hemispherical bowls, limestone die, lamps and lamp holders, pierced stone and terracotta discs that resemble spindle whorls, and coins of Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV Caesar.³⁰

The dominant ceramic shape recovered from these rooms is the hemispherical drinking bowl or cup. These were made from what Jolanta Młynarczyk has identified

24. Bingen 2007, p. 62-79, especially p. 64 and 72.

25. Connelly 2005, p. 19-82..

26. *Ibid.*, p. 155, figs. 4-7, 9-12

27. *Ibid.*, p. 155-57.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 152-159, plan on p. 154, fig. 5.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 156, fig. 10

30. *Ibid.*, listed on p. 177-79.

as our local “Pink Powderery Ware,” as well as from Cypriot *Sigillata* and imported Eastern *Sigillata* A fabrics.³¹ A most popular form in Eastern *Sigillata* A is the footed bowl (Fig. 5),³² though hemispherical bowls, some showing relief decoration, are also numerous.³³ Cypriot *Sigillata* is very well represented and used for a diverse repertory of shapes including hemispherical bowls, many with “gouged” or “grooved” decoration, hemispherical bowls with offset flaring rims, echinus bowls with ring bases, and two handled cups (*skyphoi*) with convex offset rims.³⁴

Wonderfully, a very rare shape in Cypriot *Sigillata*, the *mastos* cup, has been recovered.³⁵ Whether or not this breast-shaped vessel is significant for the local cult is uncertain. As we shall soon see, an argument can be made that toddler boys were brought to Yeronisos to mark their transition at the time of their weaning. If this is so, then it is just possible that the breast cup had special significance within the ritual.

It can be said is that cups and bowls recovered across the island show unusually small diameters, some just 10cm across. This could reinforce the suggestion that those who drank from the bowls were also small: perhaps children? The predominance of drinking bowls and the presence of vessels with built-in strainers point to a standard diet of liquid or strained foods.³⁶ Fishplates, bronze fishhooks, and lead net-weights point to fishing activity on the island and, perhaps, to the cooking of fish stew served up in the many bowls.³⁷ Spouted strainer jugs (Fig. 6) point to the consumption of infusion drinks, perhaps some kind of herbal tea?³⁸

The *lagynos* shape, with all its Alexandrian associations, is widely represented among the jugs from Yeronisos. *Lagynoi* are mostly made from the local Pink Powderery Ware and its variants that transition into full-fledged Cypriot *Sigillata* fabric.³⁹ Miniature juglets,

31. Młynarczyk 2009b, figs. 1-3; 2009a; 2005, p. 140-42; Connelly 2005, p. 168, figs. 28-30.

32. P.93.01: Connelly 2009, p. 200, fig. 19.12. For thorough discussion of types see Młynarczyk 2009b.

33. For example, P.92.25, P.93.16, P.96.25: Młynarczyk 2009b, fig. 1:12-14.

34. Młynarczyk 2009b, fig. 2:11.

35. *Mastos* cup: P.93.11, Connelly 2002, p. 261-62, fig. 19; 2007, p. 43-45, fig. 10. See J.W. Hayes, *Paphos III: The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery*, Nicosia, 1991, p. 41, fig. 18.15 (1-2); Hayes 1985, p. 83, fig. 19, 6.

36. Connelly 2005, p. 174.

37. Connelly, Młynarczyk 2002, p. 306.

38. P.94.16: Connelly 2005, fig. 33; P.94.03: Młynarczyk 2005, p. 143-44, no. 21; Connelly 2009a, p. 200-201, fig.19.14.

39. P.92.06: Młynarczyk 2005, p. 144-145, no. 23; Connelly 2005, p. 168, fig. 31; 2009a, p. 200-201, fig. 19.13. For relationship of Yeronisos Pink Powderery Ware to Cypriot *Sigillata* see Młynarczyk 2005, p. 149, and 2009b. See also H. Meyza, “Cypriot *Sigillata* and its hypothetical predecessors”, in F. Blondé, P. Ballet, J.-F.Salles (eds), *Céramiques hellénistiques et romaines. Productions et diffusions en Méditerranée orientale (Chypre, Égypte et côte syro-palestinienne)*, Lyon, 2002, p. 23-31, and J. Lund, “On the circulation of goods in Hellenistic and Early Roman

or *choes*, are also found in high number on Yeronisos.⁴⁰ In size and shape these are reminiscent of the small *choes* from classical Athens, decorated with images of children celebrating the Anthesteria festival.⁴¹



Figure 5. Eastern Sigillata A footed bowl, P.93.01.



Figure 6. Spouted strainer, P.94.16.

Jolanta Młynarczyk has identified several Egyptian imports among the ceramic finds. One is an *echinus* bowl made in Egyptian black-slipped ware, a fabric that is common at Delta sites including Buto, Mendes, and Naukratis.⁴² Its *echinus* shape is popular among vessels made from Delta silt fabrics produced throughout the Ptolemaic period in Egypt.⁴³ Another standout is a grey slipped jar decorated with vertical grooves imitating metalwork. This represents the only mould-made Egyptian vessel found on Yeronisos. It is made from a fabric known at Tell Atrib in the southern Delta used for pots dating to the second and first centuries B.C.⁴⁴

It is significant that many vessels were found deposited in distinct assemblages, as if grouped into individual dining kits brought to the island by pilgrims. We find casserole, cup, and amphora placed deliberately together. Cooking pots sit collapsed into pot-stands, little jugs and bowls carefully set nearby.⁴⁵ Whether these assemblages represent the remains of ritual dining we cannot say, though the setting and proximity to votive materials would suggest that this is so.

Cyprus: the ceramic evidence”, in L. Wriedt Sorensen, K. Winter Jacobsen, *Panayia Ematousa II. Political, cultural, ethnic and social relations in Cyprus. Approaches to regional studies*, Athens, 2006, p. 31-49.

40. P.94.16: Connelly 2005, fig. 33.

41. Hamilton 1992, p. 63-121, figs. 1-18.

42. P.93.05: Młynarczyk, 2009a, p. 210-211, fig. 1.

43. Młynarczyk, 2009a, p. 210.

44. P.94.39: Młynarczyk 2009a, p. 211-212, figs. 3-4.

45. Connelly 2005, figs. 20 and 25.



Figure 7. Limestone amulet, A.92.02.



Figure 11. Limestone amulet with Panpipes and tree, A.92.01.



Figure 8. Limestone amulet with Panpipes and tree, A.93.01.



Figure 9. Limestone amulet with Ptolemaic eagle, A.94.01.



Figure 10. Limestone amulet with Isis crown, A.93.06.



Figure 12. Limestone amulet with Dog Star, A. 05.03.



Figure 13. Steatite scarab with Sekhmet, ST.96.44.



Figure 14. Carnelian frog pendant. Carn.96.01.



Figure 15. Bronze coin with Cleopatra VII and Caesarion.

The most direct evidence for the cultic function of Yeronisos is found in fifteen small limestone amulets recovered from floors within the Central South Complex.⁴⁶ These objects resemble stamp seals, are pierced for suspension (*Fig. 7*),⁴⁷ and are decorated with inscribed motifs (*Figs. 2-3, 8-12*). In size and shape they resemble pendants depicted on limestone and terracotta statues of so-called “temple boys”, votive offerings dedicated at

46. Connelly, Plantzos 2006; Connelly 2005, p. 168-173, figs. 37-41.

47. A.92.02: Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 266, cat. 9, fig. 9d.

Cypriot sanctuaries of Apollo during the Classical and Hellenistic periods.⁴⁸ The toddler boys depicted in these statues sit with one leg up and wear strings of amulets, bevel rings, and other charms draped diagonally across their chests.

The vast majority of these statues come from shrines of Apollo, notably those at Kourion, Idalion, and Golgoi (Athienou).⁴⁹ Once designated as “temple boys” and believed to represent servants of the sanctuary, these images are now understood to be votives dedicated by families in commemoration of rites celebrated by their children.⁵⁰ For toddler boys, this could mark the all-important weaning from their mothers, when they would have left the women’s quarters and moved into the men’s quarters of the house. The fact that this weaning took place at around age three is supported by a papyrus from Berenike in Egypt in which a woman reproaches her son for not writing.⁵¹ She complains that, having carried him for ten months and nursed him for three years, he should at least have the courtesy to write her a letter. Departure from the *gynaikon* would have represented a major event in a young boy’s life. Now, he would formally take his place within the male community of the household. The boys depicted in the votive statues regularly lift their tunics to display their genitals, as if to explicitly identify themselves as male.

The amulets shown draped across the boys’ chests are apotropaic in function, presumably meant to protect them through the inauspicious time of transition. While representations of stamp-seal amulets, bezel rings, and other talismanic trinkets are plentiful in Cypriot votive sculpture, the actual pendants themselves have rarely been excavated and identified as such. The Yeronisos amulets thus present an exceptional opportunity for us to recognize actual talismans that were once worn within the sanctuary. The fact that unfinished, undecorated amulets have also been found on the island suggests that the objects may have been produced within the sanctuary, perhaps by resident clergy, by pilgrims, or both. As we have seen, decorative motifs scratched onto the surfaces of these pendants bear witness to the hybridization of local and foreign iconographies.

Among the most recognizable of the Cypriot motifs is the free field bird (*Fig. 2*), popular from the Cypro-Geometric period on,⁵² the Panpipes and tree of life (*Fig. 8*),⁵³ and what appears to be a Cypro-syllabic *alpha* sign known from the Cypriot Bronze

48. Beer 1994, publishes over 300 examples; Connelly 2007, p. 46-47, fig. 13; 2009a, p. 204-205, fig. 19.26.

49. Beer 1994.

50. Laffineur 1997, p. 141-48; Connelly 1988, p. 3-5; “Standing Before One’s God: Votive Sculpture and the Cypriot Religious Tradition,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 52, 1989, p. 210-18; S. Crawford-Brown, “*Temple Boys*”: A Pan-Mediterranean Approach, New York University Honors Thesis, Dept. of Classics, 2009.

51. I thank Roger Bagnall for drawing this to my attention.

52. A.92.01: Connelly, Plantzos 2006, cat. 2, p. 264, fig. 2d; Connelly 2005, fig. 38.

53. A.93.01: Connelly, Plantzos 2006, cat. 8, p. 266, 277, fig. 8.

Age.⁵⁴ One seal shows the labyrinth or “worm eaten wood” pattern that can be traced back to the Chalcolithic period.⁵⁵ Other amulets show explicitly Egyptian designs: the Ptolemaic eagle (*Fig. 9*),⁵⁶ the Isis crown (*Fig. 10*),⁵⁷ the ruler portrait, discussed at the opening of this paper (*Fig. 3*),⁵⁸ and a second royal portrait showing a thin male wearing the pharaonic double crown or *pschent* (*Fig. 11*).⁵⁹ Of special interest is the fact that motifs drawn from the two traditions can be seen combined on a single amulet (*Figs. 2, 11*).⁶⁰ The Cypriot free-field bird (*Fig. 2*), the dog, and Cypro-syllabic *alpha* character, are placed on adjacent faces of the same pendant together the Ptolemaic ruler wearing the double crown and another motif showing an Egyptian staff with feathers.

Remarkably, designs presented on the Yeronisos amulets are matched in clay seal impressions found at the sanctuary of Horus at distant Edfu in Egypt.⁶¹ Here, during the third century B.C. under Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV, a large-scale re-building program was undertaken on the site of a very ancient Horus shrine. The new sanctuary was finally consecrated by Ptolemy VIII in 142 B.C. Cleopatra put her own mark on the sanctuary which was the destination of her famous trip up the Nile with Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. Reenacting the Festival of the Reunion of Hathor and Horus, her barge sailed from Dendera to Edfu, carrying the lovers, and their unborn child, to the place where the birth of the living pharaoh was celebrated each year.⁶²

In 1905, some 700 clay seal impressions bearing portraits of Ptolemaic rulers and symbols from the Egyptian pantheon, were excavated at Edfu. Today, they are divided between museum collections in Toronto and Amsterdam.⁶³ Among the images found at both Yeronisos and Edfu is that of the corpulent, diademed ruler (*Fig. 3*). This portrait could represent Ptolemy VIII Physkon or either of his two sons, Lathyros or Alexandros,

54. A.92.01: *Ibid.*, cat. 2, p. 264, fig 2b.

55. A.05.01: *Ibid.*, cat. 11, p. 267, 277, fig. 11a.

56. A.94.01: *Ibid.*, cat. 3, p. 264-65, fig. 3a.

57. A.93.06.; *Ibid.*, cat. 4, p. 265. fig. 4a; Connelly 2009a, p. 203

58. A.92.01: A.93.07: Connelly and Plantzos, 2006, cat. 1, p. 264, fig. 1a.

59. Connelly, Plantzos 2006, cat. 2, p. 264, fig. 2c; Connelly 2009a, p. 204.

60. A.92.01: Connelly, Plantzos 2006, cat. 2, p. 264, figs. 2a-e.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 270-77, figs. 19-37.

62. Kleiner 2005, p. 80-82.

63. The sealings are divided between the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. See J. G. Milne, “Ptolemaic Seal Impressions”, *JHS* 36, 1916, p. 87-101; and A. Murray, “Ptolemaic Clay Sealings”, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptologie* 44, 1907, p. 62-70. For recent discussion and bibliography see D. Plantzos, “Female Portrait Types from the Edfu Hoard of Clay Seal-Impressions”, in M.-F. Boussac, A. Invernizzi (eds.), *Archives et sceaux du monde hellénistique*, Athens, 1996, p. 307-13 (*BCH* Suppl. 29).

who looked very much like him.⁶⁴ We also find the Isis crown motif at both sites (*Fig. 10*),⁶⁵ a design that held special meaning for Cleopatra who took on the persona of Isis upon Caesarion's birth in 47 B.C. In this year, her coins first show the epithet and headdress of the goddess. Thereafter, Cleopatra is regularly shown wearing the Isis crown.⁶⁶

The image of a male ruler wearing the Egyptian double crown is also found at Edfu and Yeronisos (*Fig. 11*). This must represent one of the very latest of the Ptolemies, perhaps one of Cleopatra's brothers, Ptolemy XIII or XIV, or even her famous son, Ptolemy XV Caesar.⁶⁷ In the forecourt of the temple of Horus at Edfu stood the "house of birth," or *mammisi*, a building in which the mystery of Horus' divine birth, and that of the reigning pharaoh, was celebrated at the end of each Egyptian spring. Cleopatra's additions to the sanctuary included two great statues of the Horus falcon standing behind the young Caesarion and flanking the gate to the Temple of Horus.⁶⁸ The association is clear: Caesarion is Horus, the "living pharaoh," and Cleopatra is the great Mother, Isis.

One additional amulet from Yeronisos presents a motif of great significance within Ptolemaic ideology. This seems to show the constellation of the Dog and its most brilliant star, Sirius (*Fig. 12*).⁶⁹ Sirius is the Hellenized form of Sothis, Egyptian Sopdet, who jetted the waters of the Nile. During the Hellenistic period Sobdet was absorbed into Isis. Upon hearing news of Osiris's death, Isis shed great tears that were understood to have caused the inundation of the Nile. It is easy to make the connection, again, with Cleopatra as Isis, weeping upon news of Caesar's death. Caesar, like Osiris, is the dead ruler whose son, Caesarion, like Horus, will renew the cycle of kingship and bring new order to the land.

Other small talismans found on Yeronisos derive directly from the Egyptian sphere. A pierced steatite scarab (*Fig. 13*) shows Sekhmet, the aggressive lion-headed goddess whose name means "she who is powerful."⁷⁰ Goddess of war, magic, medicine, and motherhood, Sekhmet is shown enthroned, wearing the sun-disk, and holding a papyrus scepter. As the consort of Ptah, Sekhmet is sometimes referred to in the Pyramid texts as "the goddess who conceives the king." Again, an association can easily be made with Cleopatra and Caesarion, mother and child. The image of Sekhmet enthroned and holding a papyrus scepter is also found among the seal impressions from Edfu.⁷¹

64. Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 271-73.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 275-76.

66. G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London, 2001, p. 290; Walker, Higgs 1992, p. 217, cat. 195, p. 176, cat. 174.

67. Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 273-74.

68. Goudchaux 1992, fig. 3.3, p. 136-139.

69. A.05.03: Connelly, Plantzos, p. 267, cat. 12, p. 267, 278, fig. 12a.

70. ST.96.44: Connelly 2005, p.164, fig. 23; Connelly, Plantzos 2006, 268, p. 275-77.

71. Connelly, Plantzos 2006, figs. 35, 36; Royal Ontario Museum inv. no. 906.12.268.

One final Alexandrian import found on Yeronisos is a frog pendant carved from carnelian and pierced with a silver pin for suspension (*Fig. 14*).⁷² As creatures of great fecundity, frogs long served as effective fertility charms within the Egyptian belief system. The presence of this pendant reinforces the general themes of fecundity, motherhood, birth, babies, nursing, and magic that dominate the iconographic record on Yeronisos.

Strung together with the limestone amulets, these talismans may well have been worn by boys brought to the island for special rites. Not only do they look like the pendants worn by the so-called “temple boys”, they also resemble the amulets shown on toddler boys depicted on the Athenian *choes*. Over 1 000 of these red figure juglets have been discovered in Attica, many decorated with images of naked, chubby boys wearing strings of talismans diagonally across their chests.⁷³ Associated with Athenian festival of the Anthesteria, the jugs may have had something to do with the second day of this feast, which was known as the “*Choes*”.⁷⁴ We also hear of a special ritual associated with the Anthesteria in which three years old children were crowned with flowers (T72 [23, lxxxii] *Philostratos Heroicus* 12.2 [720]).⁷⁵ It is tempting to imagine some sort of similar rite on Yeronisos, one involving young children as well as pouring and drinking from small vessels.

Singing and dancing were central to Greek ritual and also to the education of the young.⁷⁶ Local myths and legends, heroes and landscapes, history and traditions, all were learned through the memorization of words and repeated movements manifest in song-dance. Wonderfully, Yeronisos may preserve the setting in which the education of local youths took place. At the north side of the island, a low rubble retaining wall defines a circle some 13m in diameter. Beyond this and at a slightly lower level, lies a concentric ring wall measuring 21m in diameter. Within these two ring walls, imported pale yellow marine sediment was poured, creating a circular bed of sandy earth.⁷⁷ In size, the inner circle is exactly comparable to the platform discovered at the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion, a feature measuring 13m in diameter and identified as a dance floor.⁷⁸ To be sure, the sanctuary of Apollo at Kourion was extensively rebuilt during the Neronian and later periods, but its core features were established much earlier on. Already in the Hellenistic period, there was a small temple to Apollo, a complex of rooms for sleeping and dining, and a circular platform, apparently, for dancing.

72. Carn.96.01: Connelly, Plantzos 2006, p. 270, fig. 18; Connelly, Wilson 2002, p. 274, figs. 12, 13, and p. 284-85; Connelly 2009a, pp. 200-201.

73. Hamilton 1992, p. 63-146, figs. 3, 4, 7, 8, and 14.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 15-33.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

76. Plato (Laws 672c) maintained that “choral dancing constituted the entirety of education.”

77. Connelly 2009b, figs. 7-9.

78. Swiny 1982, p. 63-64; D. Christou, *Kourion: Its Monuments and Local Museums*, Nicosia, 1996, p. 73; D. Buitron-Oliver (1996, p. 29) refers to the structure as a *tholos*.

The very place name “Kourion” signals the presence of male youths, *kouroi*, who would have traveled out from the urban center to the rustic sanctuary of Apollo Hylates, Apollo “of the Woodlands.” Here, numbers of limestone and terracotta votive statues have been found, including many of the so-called “temple boy” type boys whose families may have brought them to the shrine for special rites.⁷⁹ Indeed, all across Cyprus, statues of temple boys have been found dedicated at the venerable sanctuaries of Apollo. This suggests a pattern through which each community had a local shrine to which boys were brought for special rites.

Cyprus is well known for the longevity and continuity of its traditional cults. The Ptolemies of Egypt are equally well known for their policies of respect for and promotion of indigenous religious practice.⁸⁰ During the reign of Cleopatra VII, a small and elegant sanctuary was introduced on Yeronisos where the indigenous Cypriot tradition of placing boys under the care of Apollo seems to have merged with Ptolemaic cult interests. Can the foundation of this sanctuary be linked to the birth of one very special boy, Caesarion himself? Cleopatra is known to have erected birth temples all across Egypt in celebration of her son, using the traditional framework of the *mammisi* in which the divine birth of Horus was traditionally commemorated.⁸¹ The grand *mammisi* dedicated to Caesarion at Hermanthis has long since been destroyed.⁸² But other monuments preserve some idea of the well-orchestrated program through which Cleopatra VII promoted her son. She can still be seen standing beside him, carved in relief figures on the south pylon of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera.⁸³ Cleopatra wears the Isis crown and Caesarion the double crown of the living pharaoh, headdresses that we have seen scratched on the tiny amulets found up on Yeronisos. We cannot know if the establishment of the sanctuary at Yeronisos was motivated, like the building of the *mammisi*, by the birth of Caesarion. But we cannot deny the special relationship of Yeronisos to the iconographies of the very last of the Ptolemies, mother and child.

Of the fourteen bronze coins found to date on Yeronisos, one belongs to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-164/3 and sole reign 146/5-117/6 B.C.), and two to the reign of Ptolemy King of Cyprus (80-50 B.C.). The majority of coins recovered date to the time of Cleopatra, nine to her joint reign with Caesarion (47-44 B.C.) and two to her sole reign (44-30 B.C.).⁸⁴ Stamped amphora handles, ceramics, lamps, moulded glass

79. Beer 1994.

80. Wright 1992, p. 536.

81. A. Badawy, “The Architectural Symbolism of the *Mammisi*-Chapels in Egypt”, *Chronique d'Égypte* 38, 1963, p. 78-90; F. Daumas, “Les *Mammisi* des temples égyptiens”, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 47, 1961, p. 169-170.

82. Goudchaux 1992, p. 136-37, fig. 3.1.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 137, fig. 3.2.

84. As identified by Anne Destrooper Georgiades to whom I am greatly indebted for her work with the Yeronisos coins.

bowls, and the letterforms of inscriptions and ostraka, all rest comfortably within this narrow time frame.⁸⁵

Sometime after the birth of Caesarion, a series of bronze coins was minted at Paphos showing Cleopatra as Aphrodite or Isis and holding the infant Caesarion, as Eros or Harpocrates (*Fig. 15*).⁸⁶ On the obverse we see the bust of the queen with a scepter over her shoulder and the head of her son at lower right. The reverse shows a double cornucopia, the monogram of Cyprus, and an inscription that reads: ΚΛΕΟΠΤΡΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ. The scepter and double *cornucopia* were devices closely associated with one of Cleopatra's famous ancestors, Queen Arsinoe II (316-270 B.C.). Indeed, the double *cornucopia* appears on the reverse of gold and silver coins showing Arsinoe, struck by her husband Ptolemy II and by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. Arsinoe II enjoyed very widespread popularity on Cyprus where she was worshipped as Arsinoe-Isis-Aphrodite.⁸⁷ No less than three Cypriot cities were named for her.⁸⁸ I believe that Cleopatra intentionally channeled associations with Arsinoe, thus effectively positioning herself as the new Isis-Aphrodite.

In issuing these coins at Paphos, Cleopatra would have linked the birthplace of Aphrodite with the birth of her son, Caesarion. The boy's father, Julius Caesar, was a direct descendant of Venus, making Caesarion an issue of the distinguished line of the *Gens Venetrix*. Upon the arrival of mother and child at Rome, Caesar dedicated a golden statue of Cleopatra in the new temple of Venus Genetrix, establishing her as the New Aphrodite.⁸⁹ Indeed, it has been argued that this statue showed Cleopatra holding the baby Caesarion upon her shoulder.⁹⁰ By playing up the association with Paphos, Cleopatra, in turn, would have made brilliant use of myth, allegory, and political propaganda to promote Caesarion as the legitimate heir, not just to Egypt, but to Rome.⁹¹

85. Connelly 2005, p. 166.

86. *BMC Cleopatra VII 3*. Walker, Higgs 1992, p. 178, cat. 186; J. Svoronos, *Ta Nomismata tou Kratous ton Polemaion*, vol. 2, Athens, 1904, p. 312, no. 1874, and vol. 3, pl. LXII, p. 26; I. Nicolaou, *The Coins from the House of Dionysos*, Nicosia, 1990, p. 57, no. 462; E. Zapiti, L. Michaelidou, *Coins of Cyprus: From the Collection of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation*, Nicosia, 2008, p. 137, no. 71.

87. Westholm 1936, p. 189-194.

88. Marion-Arsinoe at modern Polis-tis-Chrysochou in northwestern Cyprus; Arsinoe between Old and New Paphos; and a third city near Salamis.

89. Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.102; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 51.22.3.

90. First advanced by L. Curtius, *Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt der römischen Republik und der julisch-claudischen Familie*. IV. Kleopatra VII Philopator," *Römische Mitteilungen* 48, 1933, p. 182-192. For excellent discussion of evidence see Kleiner 2005, p. 149-54.

91. Bingen 2007, p. 62-79, especially p. 64 and 72. Bingen shows that in official texts, Caesarion was referred to as "Ptolemy also called Caesar, god who loves his father and loves his mother," deliberately invoking his distinguished heritage and hereditary rights, on both sides of his family. Dio Cassius (47.31.5) states that Dolabella "granted [Cleopatra] the right to have her son called King of Egypt", indicating that Caesarion was recognized as co-regent with Cleopatra by the consul Dolabella (who died in the summer of 43).

But this was not to be. With the defeat at Actium and the subsequent deaths of Cleopatra and Mark Antony in 30 B.C., the boy Caesarion was deemed to dangerous to be allowed to live. With his murder and the end of Ptolemaic rule in Cyprus, interest in Yeronisos and the availability of resources to maintain it vanished. In 15 B.C., an earthquake toppled the ornate structures that had been built with such care and effort.⁹² They were never to be re-erected again.

Precious few literary sources give any hint of ritual behavior on late Hellenistic Cyprus. But we do have material culture, rich with the objects that the actors left behind. The written sources are equally silent on the interaction of the last of the Ptolemies with this remote cultural outback of western Cyprus, far removed from the Alexandrian court and its grand administrative center. Yet Ptolemaic imagery preserved in the finds from Yeronisos attests to a very real connection with Ptolemaic ideology. It provides us with a rare glimpse of the bi-cultural stage on which the identities of indigenous Cypriots met and mingled with their Ptolemaic Egyptian neighbors.

Did local elites bring their toddlers up the cliffs of Yeronisos to mark their weaning through consecration to Apollo? Did transplanted Ptolemaic priests teach local boys to write Greek letters upon broken sherds within the sanctuary? Did a generation of youths join hands on the Yeronisos dance floor, learning the steps and words and music that brought pleasure to Apollo? Did they wonder at tales of Egyptian Horus, and Isis, and Osiris? Did fantasies of a distant and cosmopolitan Alexandria, its vibrant queen, and her promising son, inspire priests or pilgrims to scratch royal images on tiny limestone pendants? These things we may never know. But the little objects and their bilingual iconographies bear witness to a world in which individuals could, indeed, “see double,” and look beyond their own landscapes to a wider and grander world.

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Photos J.B. Connelly (Fig. 1); S. Mavrommatis (Figs. 2-14); copyright British Museum (Fig. 15).

92. Recorded by Dio Cassius 54.23.7 (late 3rd cent. A.D.) and Eusebius, *Hieron. Chronicon* 166c.

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