A Cypriote Inscription from Keryneia

Author(s): J. C. Peristianes

Source: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 34 (1914), pp. 119-121

Published by: [The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/624483>

Accessed: 30/01/2015 06:06

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

A CYPRIOTE INSCRIPTION FROM KERYNEIA.

THE town of Keryneia is situate on the northern coast of the Island of Cyprus, between the ancient city of Lapethos and the town of Macaria. It was founded by Kepheus, the leader of an Achaean colony in Cyprus, simultaneously with Lapethos, which was founded by Praxandros of Therapnae in Laconia.¹ Keryneia figured as one of the nine kingdoms of Cyprus during her naval supremacy about the tenth-ninth century B.C. The last king or tyrannus of Keryneia was Themison, who was taken prisoner and deposed by Ptolemaeus Soter I. in 312 B.C., together with the last king of Lapethos, Praxippus, on the ground that they made alliance with Antigonos against him. By the seashore at the western end of the town there is an extensive necropolis of rock-cut tombs, some containing more than one chamber, which were rifled in ancient times; these the inhabitants of the small modern town, following ancient tradition, call 'the Tombs of the Greeks,' Τάφους τῶν Ἑλλήνων.² The ancient town obviously extended southwards, on the plateau overlooking the coast, and included the present quarter of 'Ρηγάτικον or 'Ρηγάτικον (*Royal Residence*), a word handed down from the Frankish period. Keryneia played a prominent part in mediaeval history from the deposition of Isaac Comnenus, the last Byzantine King of Cyprus, by Richard the Lion-Hearted in 1191, until 1570.³

Cesnola published in *Salaminia*, pp. 84-5, two inscriptions in the Cypriote syllabary found at Keryneia mentioning the name of Paphia (Aphrodite). These inscriptions were reproduced in the *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften* (1883), Nos. 15-16, where the name of the dedicator appearing in No. 15 is restored from *Kestothemis* to *Akestothemis*. In the year 1910 a site in the quarter of *Reaticon* mentioned above, about 500 yards south of the coast, had been dug with a view to being cultivated. The digging unexpectedly brought to light extensive ruins of ancient buildings with concrete floor of Roman period, which having been broken and removed, another stratum of ruins, more ancient, appeared beneath. The

¹ Lycophr. 586. Strabo III. xiv. 682.

προν, pp. 14, 26.

² Peristianes, *Γενική Ἱστορία τῆς Νήσου Κύ-*

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 7-158, 495-505.

lines of foundations of both periods had, unfortunately, been totally destroyed before any ground plan was prepared. I inspected the site in December, 1910, and saw a huge heap of mostly cut stones removed from these foundations. Further, I noticed on the spot the following antiquities unearthed from the same site: a large red-ware jar (found fixed in the ground by means of concrete and full of ashes); a piece of coarse mosaic; several fragments of clay figurines of archaic and Hellenistic styles; fragments of glass vases and of thick window-panes; terracotta lamps of Graeco-Roman period; various marble capitals of the Corinthian order and other elegantly worked architectural objects, one of which retains traces of red colour; one fragment of a white marble tablet bearing a cross in relief, of fine Byzantine work; and a plastered stone slab 44 by 21 cm., bearing an effaced Greek inscription painted in red. A large number of copper coins has also been discovered, with which I will deal later. By the extant tradition, supported by the finding of the architectural marble object bearing a cross, it would seem that on this site stood an early Byzantine church, which must have been pillaged and demolished during the Arab invasions from 644 to 964 A.D.

In 1911 the horticultural operations were extended to another site adjacent to the one described above, and separated from it by a street. The two sites, however, obviously formed one large square block of public buildings. This digging, too, has unearthed extensive and very interesting remains of buildings, such as a temple, a bath, etc., and three pits or wells at the western end, close by the temple site. Also a large area was found with thick concrete floor, under which foundations of older buildings were discovered. Within the enclosure of the temple there were found several terracotta and stone statuettes, of the sixth to third century B.C. A pedestal of hewn sandstone was also found *in situ*, bearing on the upper surface a shallow basin in which the lower portion of a stone statuette was found actually erected, and on the front an inscription in Cypriote writing, a full reading of which is given below. Among the statuettes there are some wreathed with laurel, representing priests and priestesses of the deity or deities worshipped in the temple. The floor of the bath consisted of stone slabs and baked bricks, and a heap of ashes and charcoal was still in place. Between the temple and this building, but nearer to the latter, over a hundred copper coins were found in one place. Most of these are badly corroded. Among them, however, and those found on site I., I was able to identify one of Vespasian bearing the inscription ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΚΥΠΡΙΩΝ, and some of Antoninus Pius and M. Aurelius, as well as others of the Byzantine period. On site I. were found also some small bronze objects of Roman date, including an implement which in ancient times was doubtless used, as it is nowadays used in certain parts of the island, for dressing hemp.

The inscribed pedestal is 35 cm. long and 33 cm. broad, and the basin measures 28 by 27 cm. The height of the characters varies from 10 cm. to 7 cm. The inscription consists of eleven letters in three lines and reads from right to left.

[From Squeeze: Scale $\frac{1}{3}$.]

1. a . ke . se . ka.	"Ακης (or "Αγης) κα-
2. te . te . ke . i . tu . ka.	τέθηκε ἰ[ν] τύχα
3. i .	ι

We saw above that in both the inscriptions published by Cesnola and Deecke the name of Paphia (Aphrodite) is mentioned, and probably these inscriptions came from the same site where the inscription under review was found. This may be assigned to the fifth to fourth century B.C. from the form of the characters and the style of the portion of the statuette found on the pedestal. The right foot of the statue is broken, the left entire and elegantly sandalled.

We may therefore conclude that on these sites once stood the royal palace, the temple and shrines of Aphrodite, and other public buildings. It is greatly to be regretted that all the lines of foundations of the various buildings have been destroyed.

On the south of sites I. and II., and not very far from them, there must have existed the *agora* of the town. This is established by the fact that a square pedestal of grey dark stone, bearing four holes on the upper surface for bronze statuettes and a Greek inscription on the narrow front, was discovered in 1898 in the excavation of the foundation of a house.⁴ The inscribed pedestal in question is now built into the wall of a dilapidated vaulted chamber in the courtyard of the Keryneia Fort. The inscription refers to a dedication made in honour of Tiberius Claudius Aeneias of the Quirina tribe by the Κερυννητῶν δῆμος, and was set up in the agora in the first or second century after Christ.

J. C. PERISTIANES.

⁴ This inscription was copied at the Castle of Keryneia by Bishop Wordsworth, and was published by him in the Gazette of his diocese in

1890. It is reproduced in my *General History of the Island of Cyprus*, pp. 24-5.