Sidon’s chief temple of Eshmun stood beside the el-Awali river four kilometers north of the city, “Eshmun by the ydl spring”, as he is often called in the Phoenician inscriptions. The architectural and epigraphical finds of the recent excavations have now been published, and R. Wachter has provided a valuable gathering of most of the Greek inscriptions from the site, some already known and some new. One of the new texts is a dedication to Dionysus by one Democles:

No. Gr5 (year 53 = 59/8 B.C.)

Διονύσῳ Καδμείῳ Δημοκλῆς Δημοκλέους τοῦ Ἀπολλοφάνους ἱερέως ἱεραφόρων ἐν τῷ πενταετηρικῷ ἀστικῷ ἄγοιν τοῦ γν’ (ἴτους).

Wachter includes in his collection a similar plaque, one of several dedications to the “holy god” (Eshmun), which was first published by C. Clermont-Ganneau:

No. Gr1 (year 64 = 48/7 B.C.)

("ἴτους) δὲ Ἡλιόδωρος Ἀπολλονίου τοῦ Ἀπολλοφάνους ἅρχοντος μαχαιροποιών θεωὶ ἄγιοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ(ῦ) κοινοῦ.

Departing from Clermont-Ganneau’s explication of Gr1, Wachter takes τοῦ Ἀπολλοφάνους in both these texts to introduce a genitive absolute indicating an eponymous magistrate (“in the time when Apollophon was priest/archon”); he writes, incorrectly, that an attributive use would have to be Ἀπολλοφάνους τοῦ ἅρχοντος. In fact the sequence δεῖνα δεῖνος τοῦ δεῖνος is normal usage when naming one’s father and grandfather, as Clermont-Ganneau understood (also Haussoulier and Ingholt,

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1 Perhaps to distinguish this from a lesser urban temple, “in Sidon by the sea”. So the famous dedication of Eshmunazar (fifth century B.C.) is often taken: CIS I 3 (Gibson, Textbook III no. 28; ANET 3 662); cf. P. Xella, Eschmun von Sidon, in: M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, Mesopotamica – Ugaritica – Biblica, Darmstadt 1993, 490.


One of the Greek texts omitted is the tantalizing SEG VII 265. In no. Gr4, a dedication of Seleucid date, delete the restored second θεοῖς; it is otiose, and this line visibly was centered. In Gr11 the date is not ZYP but Zypern = 196 = A.D. 85/6.

3 Études d’archéologie orientale I, Paris 1880, 100–104, and Inscription grecque de Sidon, CRAI (1890) 460–462.
below). Moreover, two different offices separated by a decade are not likely to be eponymous of anything. The eponymous magistrate of the Sidonians is unknown; their inscriptions and coins are dated by a civic era from 111/0 B.C., as here. So in each text, an Apollonophanes is the grandfather. One father (so I would construe, rather than grandfather) was a priest, the other was head of the guild that made the ritual swords and likely other tools needed in cult.4

Wachter rightly leaves open the question whether the grandfather Apollonophanes was the same man in both dedications, citing (pp. 323, 325) another Apollonophanes (no. 4 below) in a Sidonian dedication invoked also by Clermont-Ganneau. In fact a good number of Sidonians bore this name, and on this basis P.-L. Gatier has convincingly attributed a monument to Sidon or its vicinity (no. 2 below). It will be useful to list these men chronologically:

1. In late III B.C. the Boeotian League honored Stratton son of Apollonophanes.5
2. In mid II B.C. Apollonophanes son of Apollonophanes dedicated an altar to Aphrodite.6
3. In 69/8 (?) an Apollonophanes of Sidon made a dedication at Hammara in the Beqan.7
4. A wrestler’s dedication, late Hellenistic to judge from the script, from Sidon but exact find-spot not reported: ἐπ’ ἀγωνοθέτου Ἀπολλοφάνου τοῦ Ἀμυνόου Διότιμος Ἀμφιμάντης πᾶλη νικήσος Ἀπόλλωνι Δελφίκῳ.8
5. A statue base (late Hellenistic?) found in the gardens of the modern city: ὁ δήμος Ἀπολλοφάννη Ἄπολ[λα] - [ ] - [ ] τοῦ Νίκωνος τῶν αί[ ] - [ ] καὶ ἀρέσαντα τὴν β’ ἐξ[άμηνον] καὶ ἀγορασμῆσαντα [ - - - ]. In the second lacuna Haussoulier and Ingholt restored τῶν ἀρξάντων, as the office of both father and grandfather.9

Robert proposed instead a court rank in one of the Hellenistic kingdoms, τῶν α’

4 So Clermont-Ganneau (n. 3) explained the term; it occurs also in a grave monument at Roman Eueneia: Th. Drew-Bear, Nouvelles inscriptions de Phrygie (Studia Amsteldamensis 16), Zutphen 1978, 102 no. 39 (Τρύγων μαχεροποιός). The new text Gr2 shows a platform built for the fifth guild, that of the couch-makers, from their common fund: ἕκτισθη ἢ ἀκτή τῇ Ε τέχνῃ κλεινοποιής-γράφει τύχ’ ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ (A.D. 98; the guild recurs in Gr14). Feasting in a temple required couches.
5 B. X. Petrúsko, Ὁι εἰγιγείρες τοῦ Ωρόπου (Βιβλιοθήκη τῆς ἐν Ἀθηναῖς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας 170), Αθήναι 1997, 37.
7 C. Ghabdan, Monuments de Hammara, Ktema 10 (1985) 300–301 [SEG XXXVII 1446].
9 G. Contenau, Deuxième mission archéologique à Sidon, Syria 4 (1923) 281 [SEG II 842]; from a better copy, B. Haussoulier, H. Ingholt, Inscriptions grecques de Sidon, Syria 5 (1924) 323 no. 4.
10 Contenau (n. 9) had read here τομνα- - - - , which M. N. Tod (SEG II 842) emended to γυμνα[σιαρχήςαντα] (too long).
[φίλων]¹¹; but he later doubted this idea¹² and later still chose not to reprint the note in his Opera Minora Selecta. Robert evidently was troubled by the plural ὀ[ρξάντων] characterizing both ancestors. But the texts quoted here illustrate a Sidonian habit of citing ancestors’ offices; this supports Haussoullier and Ingholt’s τῶν ὀ[ρξάντων], not present tense as in the other dedications (“currently”), but father and grandfather both “formerly archons”, like the son.

(6) A statue base found on the south side of town, early Imperial¹³: Μαρθαν Ἀπολλοφόνων ἱερέως Διός τοῦ Δημοστάτου πεμπτοστάτου Διὸς Ιωσήφι καὶ Δομνίον ἐν τῇ ἱδίᾳ ὑγρῇ ἑυχαριστίᾳ χάριν. The father Apolloniates was priest of Zeus, while the grandfather Demostratos was his subordinate, a “fifth-tier” attendant of the god. It is ambiguous whether the “archonship” of Iasies was cultic (as in Gr1 above) or civic (no. 5).

(7) A funerary plaque, late Hellenistic or Imperial: Πολλοφόνης χρηστέ¹⁴.

(8) Funerary cippus, Imperial: Πολλοφόνης χρηστὲ καὶ ἀληθεία¹⁵.

(9) Funerary monument dated A.D. 205/6: Πολλόφανος Βοῆθος¹⁶.

Clearly the name Apolloniates was much loved at Sidon¹⁷, and no two of these men can be confidently equated. Other names derived from Apollo were also popular among Sidonians, and from earliest times: Apollonides son of Demetrius, honored by Athens for aiding Athenian merchants, was born before 350 B.C.¹⁸

In the new inscription Gr5, an Apolloniates was one of the hieraphoroi and also their chosen priest. With a priest one expects a genitive to state the object of cult. But it is common enough to say “priest of” when one means a priest chosen from among a group: so a priest of the ephesans at several cities¹⁹, of the paides at Claros²⁰; of the Technitai of Dionysus²¹; a high priest of the Ionians²². Temples with multiple

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¹¹ Inscription grecque de Sidon, Syria 6 (1925) 364–365.
¹² Une epitaphe d’Olympos, Hellenica 10 (1955) 174 n. 1.
¹⁴ L. Jalabert, Inscriptions grecques et latines de Syrie, Mélanges de la Fac. Orientale 2 (1907) 305 no. 6.
¹⁵ G. Contenau, Mission archéologique à Sidon (1914), Syria 1 (1920) 288 no. 11.
¹⁷ Apolloniates the agent of Zenon in Palestine in the mid-third century B.C. (cf. P. W. Pestman, Guide to the Zenon Archive, Leiden 1981, 291) was on one occasion sent on a mission to Sidon (P.Cair.Zen. I 59093); possibly he was a native.
¹⁹ 1.Ephesos 836, SEG XV 718 (Teos), MAMA V 205 (Nacoleia, statue erected by the neoI).
hieraphroi are recorded at cities as diverse as Paros, Thessalonica, and Anazarbus; a solemn procession is implied. At a great Phoenician shrine it is not surprising to find a priestly hierarchy with specialized groups of the sort mentioned here — like that of Zeus in no. 6 above, and the guardian of the door who made the Phoenician dedication Ph4 (Mathys, p. 281).

In Gr5 Democles makes a dedication to Dionysus with the epithet Kadmeios. Thanks to a single inscription at Delphi, we know that this was the cult title of Dionysus at Thebes, a fact not signalled by the many authors who mention the worship of Dionysus at his birthplace. In literature, the adjective means “descended from Cadmus/Theban”, much used in tragedy and elsewhere. Occasionally we see it applied to Dionysus in that spirit, but given the frequent usage Cadmean = Theban, this need not prove knowledge of the formal cult title at Thebes. An epigram of the third-century B.C. names Δοῦνας[οι] Καδμεῖοι in what certainly is a reference to Dionysus of Thebes. An epigram of Antistius addresses Dionysus simply as Καδμεῖο; thus the unmetrical Κάδμε of the Palatine ms. was long ago emended, in the knowledge of the poets’ use of Kadmeios for the Thebans, descendants of Cadmus. But the most likely evocation of the official cult title by an author might be Pausanias 9.12.4 on the primitive statue at Thebes called “Dionysus Cadmus”: Πολύςφυς δὲ τὸ ξύλον τοῦτο χωλκῷ λέγουσιν ἔπικοσμήσαντα Δίόνυσον καλέσατε Κάδμον, where the same emendation Καδμεῖον as in the Palatines is possible.

On balance, then, Democles’ language looks to be mythic rather than cultic. His dedication was a private and individual gesture and not proof of an established cult of “Dionysus Kadmeios” at Sidon, and the epithet is a literary and personal affectation rather than official usage that might suggest an ancient cultic link between Sidon and Thebes. That is, Democles learned the epithet from a book. The Sidonians held that Cadmus came from Sidon, and we should reckon that Democles chose Kadmeios on the basis of local patriotism and a classical education — perhaps too in order to spite the Tyrians, who also claimed Cadmus.

Democles’ father was “priest of the hieraphroi at the quadrennial urban competition of year 53” — that is, he probably led these “bearers of the holy things” in a procession for the god. That the son makes a dedication to Dionysus suggests that this festival included a musical competition or performance, dithyrambic or dramatic, and perhaps we have the result of a vow that Democles made to Dionysus before the event. We learn from Gr5 that by the mid-first century B.C. Sidon had a quadrennial

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23 IG XII.5 291; IG X.2.58, 222, 258; I.Anazarbos (I.K. 56) 4.
24 F. Lefèvre, CID IV 70-71 (= Rigsby, Asyria, Berkeley 1996, 4), III B.C.
27 In a Hellenistic epigram the Sidonians are the children of Cadmus’ father Agenor and the “mother city of Cadmeian Thebes”: L. Moretti, Iscrizioni agonistiche greche, Roma 1953, 41.6-7.
28 Shown on Tyrian coins as well as Sidonian: BMC Phoenicia p. 318.
29 The remains of the theater by Castle Hill in the city are thought to be of Roman date.
festival. In the Hellenistic age this typically was the mark of a contest of more than local importance and patronage, honored on a par with the Olympia and the other national Greek games of ancient tradition — "crowned/sacred", our "panhellenic". Which god of Sidon was so honored?

The dedication is to Dionysus, but its location is the temple of Eshmun. A "city contest" of Dionysus is readily paralleled in other cities, most famously Athens. But festivals of Dionysus were commonly every two years — and so in fact were the games of Dionysus Cadmeius at Thebes. If it is right to take Gr5 as a private dedication and the god and epithet as a personal choice of Democles, then the location of the stone should outweigh that choice: the contest in which Democles was victorious belonged not to Dionysus but to Eshmun.

About festivals at Sidon the testimonia are few:

(a) In the temple of Eshmun, Democles' victory dedication to Dionysus in 59/8 B.C. (Gr5).

(b) Also in the temple, a series of dedicated urns; three are inscribed and show that at least these commemorated victories in a contest. Perhaps all represent urns given as prizes. The text that has been published in full, dated to 44/3 B.C., dedicates the urn to Asclepius, the earliest mention of his name on the site: (τοῦ) δεξίων Σωσάς

(c) A victory list from Rhodes, early Imperial period, but not before Vespasian, includes the sacred Apollonia at Sidon, a victory in the long race: ἐν Σειδῶνι Ἀπολλόνεια [- - -] ἔνα παῖς δόλιχον.

(d) A boxer's victory list from Laodicea, early III A.D., includes a lesser ("monied") contest at Sidon, but with no name for the contest or its god: Σειδώνα τρίς.

(e) From Elegabalus on, documents mention a sacred contest called cryptically ό περιπόρφυρος (τήγάνη)35.

Modern dictionary-knowledge is that the Greeks called Eshmun "Asclepius". This is occasionally said explicitly: by a Sardinian inscription in the second century B.C.

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31 B. Soyez, Le bêtyle dans le culte de l'Astarte, MUSJ 47 (1972) 147–169, publishing the inscriptions in part: 164–168 no. 1 quoting νικήσας and ἄνεθηκεν, no. 2 ανα and νι[ξή]σο[ξ], and one in full, no. 14 (SEG XXVI 1646; a better photograph at R. A. Stucky, Die Skulpturen aus dem Eschmun-Heiligtum [Antike Kunst Beiheft. 17], Basel 1993, pl. 64.1).
32 B. Soyez (n. 31) 163 doubts this and sees in the urns a more general iconography related to healing and the sacred spring.
34 IGLSyrie IV 1265.20 [L. Moretti, Iscrizioni agonistiche greche (n. 27) 85].
35 IG II.2 3169/70.30 [L. Moretti, Iscrizioni agonistiche greche (n. 27) 90], ca. A.D. 250, τόν περιπόρφυρον ἐν Σειδῶνι; Sel.Pap. II 306, A.D. 267, ἵρον εἰσελαστικοῦ οἰκο[μενικοῦ] περιπο[φύρου] ἱσολυπίου; restored in SPP V 81.11. On the coins, IER(os) PERI(φοριος) OECU(μενικος) ISE(λιστικος) and variants. See L. Robert, OMS II 1029–33, VII 703.
(Aescolapio in' Ἀσκληπιόν in' Eshmun)\(^{36}\), and by Damascius in the fifth century A.D. ('Εσμούνος, ὁν Ἀσκληπιόν ἐρμηνεύονν, the only extant author who mentions Eshmun)\(^{37}\). But he was widely called Apollo, especially in the western colonies (founded in archaic times) and at an early date (fifth and fourth centuries)\(^{38}\). The great tribute at Sidon’s Eshmun temple exhibits in its two friezes Apollo as the central figure with musicians and dancers that are appropriate variously to Apollo or to Dionysus (cithara and flute), as R. A. Stucky has stressed\(^{39}\). Personal names derived from Apollo are frequent at Sidon, and from a date earlier than the wide proliferation of the worship of Asclepius. Names based on Asclepius, by contrast, are few\(^{40}\). Of the contests listed above, only one reveals by its name the official honorand of the cult, the Apolloneia.

So there is good reason to think that knowledge of Asclepius came late to the Sidonians and that they at first thought of Eshmun as the Greeks’ Apollo\(^{41}\). In Phoenicia we find some dedications to Asclepius already in the late Hellenistic period\(^{42}\). One is from the temple of Eshmun (b above), so some Sidonian worshippers by then had joined the emerging majority and called their god Asclepius; other mentions there (Wachter, Gr6–9 and p. 319) are later (Gr6 is dated to A.D. 140/1). This trend represents the triumph of the literary and banal over local praxis\(^{43}\). But that the panhellenic festival was the Apolloneia shows that in official Sidonian usage

\(^{36}\) M. G. Guzzo Amadasi, Le iscrizioni fenicie e puniche, Rome 1967, no. 9.


\(^{38}\) See E. Lipinsky (n. 37) 162–163.

\(^{39}\) R. A. Stucky, Tribine d’Eschmoun, Basel 1984, esp. 43–46.

\(^{40}\) The equation is made explicitly by a Sidonian who lived in Greece in the third century B.C., a priest at Demetrias, Ἀσκληπιάδας whose Phoenician name began Eshmun- : O. Masson, Recherches sur les Phéniciens dans le monde hellénistique, BCH 93 (1969) 694–696. Also at Demetrias, Asclepiades son of Nicon, ca. 200 B.C.: A. Σ. Ἀρβανιτόπουλος, Ἑσσαλικὰ Μνημεία, ΑΘήναι 1909, 164 no. 21; related to no. 5 above?

\(^{41}\) Thus J.-P. Rey-Cocquais, in Epigraphai: Miscellanea ... Gasparini, Rome 2000, 799–832, at 824, writes of Apollo as patron of Sidon. The name of Asclepius came late to Sidon: so tentatively Stucky, Tribine (n. 39) 46; Xella, Mesopotamica (n. 1) 492; Lipinsky (n. 37) 159 (and 155, “l’interpretatio grecque d’Eshmun était le dieu de la médecine, Apollo, puis Asklepios/Esclape, dont les attestations en Phénicie sont toutefois relativement rares”).

\(^{42}\) Lipinsky (n. 37) 157. Ca. 300 B.C. a Cypriot visiting Sarepta made a dedication to “Asclepius”, as he called the god whom he found there: L. Daly, A Greek-Syblacic Cypriot Inscription from Sarafand, ZPE 40 (1980) 223–225.

\(^{43}\) Earlier Strabo, a foreigner, passed a “grove of Asclepius” between Beirut and Sidon (756), which is taken to be Eshmun’s sanctuary by the river. The consensus in the second century A.D.: Apuleius, archetype of the literary and banal, described Asclepius as qui arcem nostrae Karthaginis indubitabili nomine propitius tegit (Flor. 18.38); cf. a dedication at Carthage to Aesculapio ab Epidauro by a man of Greek origin, a priest of the Mother of the Gods (ΔΕ 1968, 553). A Sidonian while visiting some temple of Asclepius expounded to Pausanias the true meaning of the father and son Apollo and Asclepius, which Pausanias recognized as a Greek cliché (7.23.7–8).
Eshmum was still called Apollo at least as late as the Flavian age. In (b) above, the god’s name was the individual dedicator’s choice.

Diotimus’ victory in wrestling (no. 4), roughly contemporary with Democles’ dedication, is dated by an agonothete and is dedicated to a god with an equally literary by-name. For “Delphic” seems not to be applied to Apollo in other documents; it is found occasionally in an ornate Greek author, and is frequent only in Latin: Pl. *Leg.* 686A (“many oracles, both others and the Delphic Apollo”); Philos. *V.Apol.* 3.42 (“Apollo the Delphic”); *Hymn.Orph.* 34.4 (*Δελφικός* among a string of fancy epithets). These two features, a contest and an affected divine epithet, invite us to link this dedication with that of Democles to Cadmeian Dionysus, and attribute no. 4 as well to the temple of Eshmum/Apollo and to the great contest. Perhaps it is relevant that the father of the agonothete Apollophanes in no. 4 has a name meaning “servant of Eshmum”.

On the (not inevitable) assumption that Sidon had only one panhellenic festival, I propose that we now have four references to Sidon’s festival of Eshmum/Apollo, three of which are explicitly panhellenic and one (b above) unspecified. The “quadrennial city contest” of Gr5, the Apolloniae, and the Periporphuros were the same festival. The competitions included both musical performance, as Gr5 now attests, and athletic, in at least wrestling and the long race. The altered name in Severan times may have been a concession to the growing consensus about the equation Eshmum/Asclepius.

The age of the great games of Eshmum remains to seek. The terminus ante quem is 59/8 B.C., given now by Democles’ dedication. A stray allusion reveals that by 172 B.C., Tyre’s games of Heracles/Melqart had a quadrennial period (*πεντάετηρικό ταύτου*), to which some other cities sent *theoroi* (2 Macc. 4.18). At archrival Sidon, the quadrennial Apolloniae are likely to be roughly as old.

Thinking of Athena’s peplos, we can imagine of this ceremony that every fourth year the god was presented with a new “purple-bordered cloth”. The goods of Apollo Didymeus at Miletus in the second century B.C. included a *ιμάτιον περιπόρφυρον* (SEG *XXVIII* 1210.6). The murex industry of the region is familiar, as is Murex Hill in the city. This ceremony and the competitions in his honor took place not at the rural temple by the river but in the city proper, at the *αετικοί αγώνι — at an urban temple or perhaps in the theater at Castle Hill. The competitions likely included

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44 Robert, OMS VII 702–704, equated this festival with the Apolloniae but noted that no. 4 does not indicate whether it was as yet panhellenic.

45 Another agonothete is now attested at the temple by the fragmentary Gr10, of Imperial date.

46 The “moneyed” games (d above) attested a few years before the Periporphuros, in which the boxer won three times, were either a different festival, or else still the Periporphuros (as Robert thought, before the Apolloniae became known), but only the “local” episodes, the off-years from the quadrennium.

47 Robert however suggested that the purple garment was a prize (OMS VII 703 n. 8); followed by Lipinski (n. 37) 167, who takes the contest mentioned on the urns to be the Periporphuros.
some music that was felt to be inspired by Dionysus, hence Democles' dedication\(^{48}\). At the end of the festival a procession carried the god and his equipage back to the temple in the country — the task of the ἱεροφόροι led by Democles' father.

\(^{48}\) So in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, the paian of Philodamus was sung to Dionysus (W. D. Furley, J. M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns* II, Tübingen 2001, 52–84), and hymns to Apollo were performed by the Technitai of Dionysus (A. Béris, CID III). For ritual associations of Dionysus and Apollo in Greek contexts see N. Robertson, *The Religious Criterion in Greek Ethnicity*, AJAH 1.2 (2002) 32 n. 72.