

**THE LARGE NEO-PUNIC INSCRIPTION (KAI 159) FROM HENCHIR
MEDEINE (ALTHIBURUS)
TRANSLATED AND INTERPRETED**

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The present study* concerns one of the Neo-Punic inscriptions of which Gustavus Wilmanns¹ took squeezes at Hr. Medeine (Althiburus)² in Tunisia in 1873-74. Announced by the elder Derenbourg in 1874, the text quickly became the subject of a study by Halévy (1874). Julius Euting (1875) published a reading with his partial hand copy as Neopunica 124³. Philippe Berger's studies (1887; 1891) advanced the material reading further. Not much later, Lidzbarski published his transliteration of the text (1898: 1: 437) with an excellent hand copy (1898: 2, pl. xvii). Cooke (*NSI* 144 no. 55) reproduced this version of the consonantal text. Slightly but significantly altered in the editions of *KAI*, the consonantal text has reached near stasis with the significant study by Jongeling (*HNPI* 155)⁴, although Bron (2009) has recently proposed several new readings, one of which is accepted below.

The process of interpreting and translating a text such as this one is partly intuitive. The word *ndr* in the first line implies that the inscription is dedicatory, but not all of the expected elements of the form are readily apparent. Word division has been a persistent challenge to interpreters, with lexical and syntactic analysis posing additional perplexities. Largely as a result of such difficult qualities, the text in its entirety continues to escape full comprehension⁵. Presented below is my translation and interpretation of lines 1-7⁶.

* Bibliographic abbreviations appear in the reference list. Abbreviations of periodical titles and series follow *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, ed. P. H. Alexander, J. F. Kutsko, J. D. Ernest, S. Decker-Lucke, and D. L. Petersen (Peabody, Mass, 1999). The following grammatical abbreviations also appear in the text and notes: adj. = adjective; adv. = adverb; c. = common (gender); def. art. = definite article; f. = feminine; m. = masculine; n. = noun; part. = participle; perf. = perfect; pl. = plural; prep. = preposition; pron. = pronoun; sing. = singular; v. = verb. Language names are abbreviated Arm (Aramaic); BH (Biblical Hebrew); EpHeb (Epigraphic Hebrew); Gk (Greek); Lat (Latin); MHeb (Middle Hebrew). The verb stems are referred to with G, N, D and K in linguistic contexts.

¹ Lidzbarski (1898: 437 n2) corrected Berger's attribution (1887: 1) of this find to M. de Sainte-Marie, who was actually instrumental in conveying the inscribed stone to the Louvre, where it remains.

² On the occupational history of the site, see Kallala et al. (2008).

³ J. F. Healey (2004: 317) situates this publication in Euting's fascinating career.

⁴ The text transcription was earlier published by K. Jongeling and R. M. Kerr (2005: 39).

⁵ R. M. Kerr graciously commented at some length on an early draft of this study. Our views concerning the long Maktar texts remain distinct, but his helpful criticism sharpened my analysis. Responsibility for the views expressed here remains entirely my own.

⁶ I will not discuss lines 8 and 9 in the present context. The letters are worn and very difficult to interpret. There is considerable variation among published readings.

Hr. Medicine N 1 (Althiburus)⁷

Neo-Punic Text

1. P'dn b'ł ħmn b'łtbrš ndr ʔš ndr' 'bd mlqrt k nš bn kns' 'nw
2. m'ryš/s bn tbrsn wštmn bn yksltn wmsbh' bn lyl'y wggm bn šsy't w
3. m'gm' bn tbrsn wy'smzgr bn sbg w'dnb'ł bn yll wgzr bn knzrmn wm'ryš/s
4. bn lbw' wz'lgm bn štw'n wy'st'n bn mshb' wħbrnm ħmzrħ w
5. nsm rn bn' tw ʔyspn 'lt mqdšm byrħ krr št bll hzbħ bn ħg ʔ't b
6. šp̄tm mshb' bn yzrm w'zrb'ł bn brk wšk [w]ks ln bn z'zbl wmbly whšp ʔš
7. 'ł kmrn y'ʔmn wkhn lb'ł ħmn wrwsn bn ʔrš k' šm' qlm brkm
8. ʔš h'ł' [k] ʔ't ʔw m[n]ħt bmqdš
9. ʔš ...

Translation

(1) To the Lord Bal (H)amon in Althiburus, a vow that the servants of Melqart vowed when his humble assembly loaned (to) us (2) Marius son of *tbrsn* and *štmn* son of *yksltn* and *mshb'* son of *lyl'y* and *ggm* son of *šsy't* and (3) *m'gm'* son of *tbrsn* and *y'smzgr* son of *sbg* and *'dnb'ł* son of *yll* and *gzr* son of *knzrmn* and Marius (4) son of *lbw'* and *z'lgm* son of *štw'n* and *y'st'n* son of *mshb'* and their friends the *mzrħ* and (5) their *standard*. The builders of the cella that we adjoined to the sanctuaries rejoiced in the month of *Krr*. At night they held this sacrifice in it. They bore a feast in behalf of (6) the suffetes *Masebo* son of *yzrm* and *Azrubal* son of *Barik*. (6-7) And *Zi'zebul* and those brought by him built a tabernacle [and] a canopy for us. And the cloak that was upon our *kmr*-priest concealed him from us. And the priest of Bal (H)amon was *Urusan* son of *Ariš*. Because he listened to their voice. He blessed them.

(8-9) 'The man that offers here burnt offerings or oblations in the sanctuary—the man'

Commentary

Below is the Punic text, analyzed by sentence with translation and philological commentary. A complete glossary of lines 1 and 5-7, listed in Phoenician alphabetic order, appears in table 1. The personal names in lines 2-4, 6, and 7 appear in table 2.

S1 (1) *P'dn b'ł ħmn b'łtbrš ndr ʔš ndr' 'bd mlqrt k nš bn kns' 'nw*

To the Lord Bal (H)amon in Althiburus, a vow that the servants of Melqart vowed when his humble assembly loaned (to) us

ndr' v. G 3pl. /nadrū/ '(they) vowed'⁸.

⁷ This is the text's designation in Jongeling, *HNPI* 155.

⁸ Concerning Late Punic orthography employing ʔ for /ā/, see Kerr (2010: 47-48).

- k* adv. 'when' (*DNWSI* 482); cf. EpHeb, BH *kī* 'when' (*HALOT* 471); Ug. *k* 'when' (*DUL* 422-423; *CLUC* 180 s.v. *ky* 3).
- nš* (*n-š-ʔ/y*) G 3m.sing. 'lend, loan'; cf. BH *nšʔ b-* 'lend out' (*HALOT* 728 s.v. *nšʔ* i).
- bn* /bānu/ prep. *b-* + 1csing. suffix '(to) us'⁹.
- knsʔ* (*kns*) n. m.s. + 3m.sing. suffix: /kinnusū/ 'his assembly'. Note the Punic name *knsī* (Benz 1970: 132)¹⁰. Compare MHeb *kīnnūs* n.m. 'gathering; retirement for prayer' (Jastrow 1985: 633); cf. *kānīsāʔ* n. f. 'gathering, assembly' (*ibid.*, 649). Kerr (2010: 48) discusses examples of the spelling of the third-person masculine pronominal suffix (*u/*) with *ʔalep*¹¹. The word's semantic range possibly includes the group assembled and the place of assembly.
- nw* (*nw*) adj. /ʔānāw/ 'humble, bowing, pious'. Compare BH *ʔānāw* 'bowing, humble' (*HALOT* 855)¹²; MHeb *ʔānā(y)w* 'submissive, meek, kind, patient' (Jastrow 1985: 1094).

One of the innovations of the present interpretation is the word division *ʔbd mlqrt* 'servants of Melqart' instead of the generally followed interpretation of *ʔbdmlqrt* as a personal name. A warrant for the word division is pragmatic: the absence of a patronymic following the putative personal name¹³. Another is grammatical: the verb spelled *ndrʔ* in line 1 is best construed as plural, giving *ndrʔ š ndrʔ* 'the vow that they vowed' (so Jongeling, *HNPI* 398 s.v. *ndrʔ*)¹⁴.

The verb phrase *nš bn* '(they) loaned to us' confirms and continues the plurality of the grammatical subject. In Biblical Hebrew, the word designating the recipient of a loan (*n-š-ʔ*) is preceded by the preposition *b-* (e.g., Exod 22:25; Deut 15:2; 24:10-11)¹⁵. The character of interactions between adherents of Melqart and adherents of Bal (H)amon requires explanation, but grammatical patterns in the text have hermeneutical priority.

⁹ On the vocalization, see Kerr (2010: 148-149 §2.2.1).

¹⁰ The entry *knš* i in *PPD* (236 s.v.) involves a divergent reading. From the photograph, the reading *kns*, found in all published editions of the text, appears warranted. There is no entry for *kns* in *PPD* or *DNWSI*.

¹¹ The length of the vowel is indeterminate.

¹² Gerstenberger (2000: 242) notes the historical tendency in Hebrew to use *ʔnāwīm* for 'humble, devout'. Concerning the occurrence of *ʔānāw* in Num 12:3, see Pleins (1992; 2001: 405).

¹³ The name *zʔzbl* (line 6) has no patronymic according to my interpretation of its context. Line 1 is a votive dedication, however, which in Phoenician-Punic is formally invariant: a patronymic follows the dedicator's name, sometimes with additional genealogy as well. Some early commentators resolved this tension by interpreting the string *knš* as an unmarked patronymic (e.g., Halévy 1874: 593), but the problematic character of a two-element name in Punic (without the word *bn* 'son [of]') did not escape notice (Berger 1887: 459). Other rationalizations, e.g., *knš* a title? (Röllig in *KAI* vol. 2, pp. 148-149); a cognomen? (Jongeling, *HNPI* 156); an altered reading *knzʔ*? (introduced by Berger [*ibid.*] and noted by Röllig [*ibid.*] and Jongeling [*ibid.*]), do not resolve the difficulty.

¹⁴ Note the orthography of 3 pl.: *ndrʔ* '(they) vowed' (Ellès N 1.2; Hr. el-Blida N 1.1; Hr. Meded N 13.1-2; 21.1).

¹⁵ Arabic *nasaʔa* 'sell with delayed payment' similarly marks the recipient with the preposition *b-* (Lane 1863-1893: 2786 s.v.; Wehr 1994: 1125 s.v.).

The final letter of *‘nw* arises from Bron’s reading (2009: 142). The letter *w* is clearly visible in the published photograph (Bron 2009: 147). My translation depends on a different division of words than Bron proposes.

The verb-initial syntax of the temporal clause *k nš bn kns’ ‘nw* “when his humble assembly loaned (to) us” is usual. Another example of verb-initial constituent order in a temporal clause occurs in *k yln b’šr lb* “while they spent the night in happiness of heart” (Hr. Maktar N 64 [= *NSI* 59a; *KAI* 145].11)¹⁶.

The nature of the loan implied by the verb phrase *nš b-* ‘loan to’ is not explained in the text. If, as I advocate, *kns’* carries the third-person pronoun suffix ‘his’, the notional antecedent is Bal (H)amon, because a deity would be associated with an ‘assembly’, and *‘nw* ‘humble, pious’ is a religiously charged adjective. Hence a loan was made by the assembly of Bal (H)amon to the ‘servants of Melqart’. It appears either to have been a ‘loan’ of personnel to assist with a construction project or their contributions in cash or materials toward the same end.

From this – admittedly hypothetical – scenario, we can conclude that the purpose of the inscription was to record the circumstances of a ceremony of dedication undertaken as a gesture of good will for – and in partial repayment of – the loan itself. The names of the lenders are prominently inscribed, and the failure to name an important participant, the *kmr*-priest, is explained (line 7).

From the beginning of line 2 to the end of line 4 there is a list of eleven names with patronymics, followed by an obscure three-constituent noun phrase. In my interpretation, these are the creditors being honored.

(2) *m’ryš/s bn tbrsn wštmn bn yksltn wmsb’ bn lyl’y wggm bn šsy’t w* (3) *m’gm’ bn tbrsn wy’smzgr bn sbg w’dnb’l bn yll wgzr bn knzrmn wm’ryš/s* (4) *bn lbw’ wz’lgm bn štw’n wy’st’n bn mshb’ wḥbrnm hmzrh w(5)nsm*

The list of names is barely translatable except for the common words separating names:

(2) Marius son of *tbrsn* and *štmn* son of *yksltn* and *mshb’* son of *lyl’y* and *ggm* son of *šsy’t* and (3) *m’gm’* son of *tbrsn* and *y’smzgr* son of *sbg* and *’dnb’l* son of *yll* and *gzr* son of *knzrmn* and Marius (4) son of *lbw’* and *z’lgm* son of *štw’n* and *y’st’n* son of *mshb’* and their friends the *mzrh* and (5) their *standard*.

Table 2 offers a tentative linguistic analysis of the names. The following notes concern the vocabulary that is not onomastic.

ḥbr n.m. ‘friend, ally’ (*DNWSI* 346-347; cf. *HNPI* 389 s.v. *ḥbr*; *HALOT* 287-288; *CLUC* 153).

¹⁶ Krahmalkov reads and translates *kyln b’šr lb* “all of us with happy hearts” (*PPD* s.v. *P’L*). The form *kyl* as a representation of etymological /koll/ ‘all, every’ is dubious, however (see *HNPI* 121; on the phonology, Kerr 2010: 84-85). Phoenician purpose clauses show contrasting SV order after the adverbial complementizer, as in *k štrt ’rš bdy* “because Astarte requested (this) from him” (*KAI* 277.6 [Pyrgi]) and *k b’l wršp šrm šlh lbnt* “because Baal and Reshep *šrm* sent me to build” (*KAI* 26 A II 11; see Schmitz 1995: 566).

mzrh (*zrh*) n. Halévy (1901: 265) analyzed Punic *mzrh* with reference to Biblical Hebrew *ʿezrāh* ‘indigene’, translated in LXX as αὐτόχθων (cf. HALOT 28 s.v. *ʿezrāh*). Punic *mzrh* is probably equivalent to Lat. *turma* in this instance as also in Hr. Maktar 64.1, 16¹⁷.

nsm n. (*nēs*) m. sing. + 3pl. suffix /nissom/ ‘their standard’.¹⁸ Compare BH *nēs*, pl. *nissīm* ‘standards’ (HALOT 701-702); Arm *nēs*, *nissā*(?) (DJPA 352a; DJBA 752a; Jastrow 1985: 915; DNWSI 760; LS² 427). Probably also *nsʾm* (pl.) ‘standards’ (Hr. Maktar 76.4). Detachments from a cavalry or infantry unit normally traveled with a standard for each *decurio*. In Roman military jargon, a cavalry standard was called a *vexillum*; a standard-bearer attached to a sub-unit of a cohort (such as a *turma*) was called *vexillarius*. I assume that Punic *ns* corresponds to Latin *vexillum*¹⁹.

It is not insignificant in the emergent context of this inscription that, in Roman military administration, the *signiferi* of infantry units and the *vexillarii* of cavalry units oversaw financial transactions (Vegetius, *Epitome*, 2.20). The mention of a *ns* in line 5, if its association with *vexillarius* is sound, perhaps alludes to the source of the loan mentioned in line 1²⁰.

Grammatically, the entire passage above serves as the object of the verb *nš* (*n-š-ʾy*) ‘lend, loan’ in line 1, and forms with it a single – if impractically long – sentence. The (humorous?) conceit of the opening sentence is conceivably that the parties listed had been ‘loaned’ to the ‘servants of Melqart’ (a religious sodality?), evidently to assist in or finance a construction project, some details of which emerge in the next sentence. Beyond this point the text becomes a narrative of eight sentences (S2-9) about the construction of cultic installations and the performance of a sacrifice.

S2 (5) *rn bnʾ tw ʾyspn ʿlt mqdšm byh krr*

The builders of the cella that we adjoined to the sanctuaries rejoiced in the month of *Krr*.

rn v. (*r-n-n*) G 3pl. /ran(n)ū/ ‘(they) rejoiced’. The verb *rn* occurs in CIS I 6000bis.4, a Punic inscription from Hellenistic Carthage (Schmitz 2009: 67). On BH *r-n-n*, see HALOT, 1247-48²¹.

17 Latin *turma* designates “the smallest unit of an *ala* or mounted contingent of a *cohors equitata*, commanded by a *decurio* and probably containing thirty-two men” (P. Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* [London 2001], 341). Lines 16-47 of Hr. Maktar 64 (= KAI 145) list the signatures of thirty-two men, and its narrative (lines 5-15) concerns military service; these details imply that Punic *mzrh* is an equivalent term for Lat. *turma*.

18 The vocalization follows Biblical Hebrew *nēs*, *nissī* (HALOT 701-702). On the 3pl. suffix /-om/ in Late Punic, see Kerr (2010: 143).

19 The rhetorical figure of metonymy may be in play, insofar as ‘standard’ implies ‘standard-bearer’.

20 A late Roman portrayal of a sacrificial rite on the distance slab from Bridgeness (RIB 2139) (<http://www.athenapub.com/rib2139.htm>; also available at ScotlandsPlace <http://sp2.scran.ac.uk/footer/index.php?action=view&id=4>) includes the *signifer* and the *signum* within a small aedicule.

21 For further remarks on the verb, see Schmitz (2003: 148 and n22).

bn v. (*b-n-y*) G part. pl. constr. /*bune/* ‘builders (of)’²².

tw n. ‘cella, chamber’ (*KAI* 277.5; *DNWSI* 1204; *PPD* 488 s.v.²³; cf. Ug. *tu* < *t(w)* >? *DUL* 855; *CLUC* 335-336).

’ def. art. (*HNPI* 381 s.v.; 388 s.v. *h*).

ysp (*y-s-p*) *qal* perf. 1cpl. /*yasapnū/* ‘we added’ (*DNWSI* 462; cf. *HALOT* 418). The syntax of the relative clause *’yspn* ‘that we added’, employing the definite article ’ as a relative complementizer, is matched in Hr. Maktar 64.3: *’yšb* ‘that dwells’.

’t prep. ‘to, onto’ (*PPD* 375 s.v. *’t* iii.8). Note the parallel phrase *wyspnm* *’t gbl ’rš* ‘we added them to the boundaries of the land’ (*KAI* 14). The construction *ysp ’t* seems to imply an addition that increases the size, area, or complexity of a thing; hence my translation, ‘adjoined’.

mqdšm (*qdš*) n. pl. /*miqdašim/* ‘sanctuaries’²⁴.

yrh n. ‘month’ (*DNWSI* 469-470).

krr n. name of a month in the Phoenician calendar (*KAI* 277.8). The month *krr* (line 8) probably began with the first new moon after the summer solstice, approximating the beginning of July²⁵.

S3 (5) *št bll hzbh bn*

At night they held this sacrifice in it.

št (*š-y-t*) v. 3pl. ‘place, put, establish’ (*DNWSI* 1130-31; cf. *HALOT* 1483-86; Ug. *št*, *DUL* 848-851; *CLUC* 335).

b prep. Bron (2009: 142) reads *y* here, but the received reading *b* is visible to me in the photograph.

ll n. ‘night’ (*DNWSI* 577-578; also Amadasi Guzzo 2007: 206).

bn prep. + 3sing. suffix /*binnu/* ‘in it’ (*PPG*³ 182 §254a). The antecedent of the preposition is *tw* ‘cella’ in S2. The main theme of the narrative is the dedication of the new *tw*, and that lexical item is the most salient in the immediate context.

The sequence of words *byrh krr št bll* resembles the type of month-year date formula that occurs in a number of Phoenician and Punic inscriptions, and has been interpreted as a date formula by most previous interpreters. But the string *bll* is difficult to construe as designating a year, and all interpretations of the sequence as a date

²² On the vowels, see Kerr (2010: 97-98).

²³ The text as cited reads *wtw’yspn ’t mqdšm* ‘And we added his [Bal Ḥamon’s] *cella* to his temple’ (*PPD* 488). The conjunction *w-* at the beginning of this citation does not occur in any critical edition of the text. Lidzbarski’s hand copy (1898: 2, pl. xvii) clearly reads *’alep* at this point, and the same reading is printed by Röllig (*KAI*³ 159.5) and *HNPI* (155). Both sources just cited divide the words *bn’t w’yspn*.

²⁴ The suffix *-m* could mark either a plural morpheme or the third-person pronominal suffix (so Krahmalkov, *PPD* 375; on the morphology, *PPG*³ 67 §112; 155 §234; Kerr 2010: 140-41).

²⁵ Koffmann (1966: 217); Stieglitz (1998; 2000: 695). The Phoenician month *krr* corresponds to Tammuz in the Hebrew calendar (Ribichini 1981: 150-151 and n22; Ribichini and Xella 1994: 133).

formula are vague on this point. More problematic is the faulty syntax: usually, Phoenician-Punic appositional constructions repeat the preposition, so the expected sequence would be **byrh* ... *bšl*²⁶. The analysis as two sentences presented here is more defensible.

I have placed the phrase *bn* 'in it' in S3 in view of Phoenician-Punic and Biblical Hebrew constructions involving the verb *š-y-t* with a locative complement introduced by *b-*. In prose, the locative complement normally follows the verb, as in these examples: in Phoenician, *yšt bmqdš mlqrt* 'I placed it [a statue] in the sanctuary of Melqart' (KAI 43:7); in Biblical Hebrew, *wattššitēhū bðhēqâ* 'and she placed it [her infant] in her bosom' (Ruth 4:16)²⁷. In the following example of Biblical Hebrew verse, *tššitēmō lššarīm bðkol-hā'āreš* "you will appoint them as princes in all the land" (Ps 45:17), note that the locative complement (*bð-*) follows the adverbial complement (*lð-*), which is also the case in S3 above. While this comparison is not absolutely conclusive, it demonstrates the normalcy of this Northwest Semitic syntax.

S4 (5) *ḥg ḥ'n b* (6) *špīm mshb' bn yzrm w'zrb'ī bn brk*

They bore a feast in behalf of the suffetes *Masebo* son of *yzrm* and *Azrubal* son of *Barik*.

ḥg (*ḥag*) n.m. /ḥag/ 'feast' (cf. HALOT 289-290)²⁸. Nabatean *ḥgh* (CIS II 2158), if it means 'pilgrimage', might be related (DNWSI 348).

ḥ'n (*ḥ'-n₂*) 'load, carry', G 3pl. /ḥa'nū/ Compare BH *ḥ'-n₂* 'load' (HALOT 378)²⁹.

b prep. In BH the syntagm *ḥgg b-* 'celebrate a feast for' specifies the occasion or purpose of the celebration (1 Sam 30:16; HALOT 290 s.v. *ḥgg*). In the present sentence, the prepositional complement seems to indicate that the two *suffetes* acted as sponsors, and were perhaps also guests of honor.

S5 (6) *wsk [w]ks ln bn z'zbl wmbly*

And *Zi'zebul* and those brought by him built a tabernacle [and] a canopy for us.

sk (*skk*) n.m. /sūk/ 'tabernacle, hut' (cf. BH *sōk* 'hut, refuge' HALOT 753; Ug. *sk* 'thicket'? CLUC 295 s.v. *skk* i; cf. DUL 756 'den, cove')³⁰.

²⁶ For examples, see Schmitz (1995: 562-563).

²⁷ The same construction occurs in Ugaritic: *aštn bhrt ilm ars* 'I shall put him in the cave of the gods of the underworld' (CTU 1.5:V:5 etc.; CLUC 335 s.v. *šyt*).

²⁸ The reading *ḥ* is based on my examination of the photograph. The traces in Lidzbarski's hand copy (1898: 2, tab. xvii) are also compatible with this reading. Bron gives no reading of this letter.

²⁹ The reading *ḥ'n* originated with Berger's hand copy (1887: 460) and has been reproduced in all subsequent editions of the text.

³⁰ I restore the partly obscured letter *k* from the photograph and Lidzbarski's hand copy (1898: 2, pl. xvii).

[w]conjectural restoration.

ks (*ksy*) n.m. /kasū?/ ‘canopy’ (cf. BH *kāsūy*, Num 4:6, 14; HALOT 488; prob. also Arm *ksy* ‘cover, lid’ Assur 7.2 (Aggoula 1985; DNWSI 521)³¹).

ln prep. with 1cpl. pron. suffix /lθnū/ ‘for us’.

bn (*b-n-y*) v. G 3pl. /banū/ ‘they built’.

zʿzbl This personal name is probably Punic (Schmitz 2007).

mby (*b-w-ʿ*) *yupʿal* part. with 3m.s. suffix /muḅāyo/ ‘(those) brought (by) him’ (cf. BH *mūḅaʿim*, HALOT 114 s.v. *bwʿ* hof.).

The architectural and ritual components of the installation described in sentences 2-5 call to mind biblical parallels. The *mqdš* (itself probably comprising *ḥšrt* ‘enclosures’, as in Hr. Maktar 64 [= KAI 145].1) is augmented with a *tw*, a chamber apparently large enough for a sacrifice to take place within it, if the sentence is correctly construed. Somehow associated with the *tw* is a *sk* ‘tabernacle, pavilion’ and a *ks* ‘covering’ (probably a canopy) for the participants³². The biblical descriptions of the tabernacle (Exodus 36, 40) appear to envision a similar layout.

Credit for the construction of these latter installations goes to a certain *zʿzbl* and *mby*. The person named *zʿzbl* is the only agent mentioned in the inscription without a patronym. The reason for this omission is not readily apparent, but *zʿzbl* was possibly thought to be familiar to the intended audience of the inscription. The word *mby* is a passive causative participle of the verb *b-w-ʿ* ‘go’, cognate to Biblical Hebrew *mūḅāʿ* ‘what is brought’, a term which can specify donations to the temple (2 Kgs 12:10, 14; 22:4; 2 Chron 34:9, 14) but is also used of people who are brought somewhere (e.g., Gen 43:18; Ezek 23:42), including large groups (Ezek 30:11). The coordinate phrase *zʿzbl wmbly* serves as the subject of the verb *bn* ‘they built’; hence, the semantics of agency imply that *mby* probably signifies ‘those who were brought to/by him’, implying people, rather than ‘what was brought to/by him’, implying objects.

S6 (6) *whšp ʿš(7) ʿl kmrn yʿt mn*

And the cloak that was upon our *kmr*-priest concealed him from us.

šp n.f. ‘cloak, tunic, toga’. The pl. *špʿt* (Labdah N 19 [HNPI 27-28 = KAI 126].9) corresponds to *lato clavo* (a ‘wide purple stripe’ [DNWSI 972; PPD 419; HNPI 403]) in the Latin portion of the inscription³³.

³¹ The form *kst* (Lidzbarski 1898: 55.1; RÉS 891.1; Slouschz 1942: 162, no. 140.1; CIS 6061.1) is a verb (so PPD 237 s.v.): [*hprk*]t ʿš *kst* ‘[the vei]l that covers it’ (the conjectural restoration is Krahmalkov’s; whatever the antecedent word is, its grammatical gender is feminine). On third-person feminine verbs with affixed object suffix, see Amadasi Guzzo (1997: 1-9).

³² If, as the grammar implies, the eleven named men were not members of the *mzrh*, and assuming a single standard-bearer (*ns*), the assembly would have been smaller than fifty participants.

³³ Bron (2009: 142) reads *spr* at this point. The reading *s* rather than *š* arises from his acceptance of the argument by Clermont-Ganneau (1900: 331-332) concerning the reading. I find Clermont-Ganneau’s argument unpersuasive. I do not see the letter *r* in the photograph (Bron 2009: 147). There is a curved flaw in the stone immediately before the upper right stroke of the *ʿalep* that follows, and this may have been interpreted as the head of a *rēš*.

ʔṣ rel. 'which, that'.

ʔ prep. 'upon, over' (*DNWSI* 844-846; *HALOT* 825-826; cf. Ug. ʔ *DUL* 155-156; *CLUC* 78).

kmr n. m. sing. a type of priest (*DNWSI* 515-516; cf. *HALOT* 482).

yʕt (y-ʕ-t) v. K 3sing. + 3ms sfx. /yaʕtu/ < /yðʕaʕtu/ (with loss of laryngeal) 'it covered him' (BH *yʕt*; *HALOT* 420; cf. 813-814 s.v. ʔ*th* i)³⁴. Kerr (2010: 25-38) discusses the loss of laryngeals in Late Punic.

mn prep. *min* + 1cpl. suffix /min(n)u/ 'from us'.

This sentence seeks to explain why the name of the *kmr*-priest does not appear in the text, which identifies a number of participants by name, and specifically the *khn*-priest in the next sentence. I infer that the *kmr*-priest wore the cloak over his head, preventing observers from identifying him in the poor light of the nocturnal ceremony (cf. *bll* 'at night', line 5). It seems odd that the text's author would not have learned the priest's identity after the fact, and this oddity raises the question whether concealing the identity of officiating *kmr*-priests was an occasional or routine practice at this time.

S7 (7) *wkhn lbʕl ḥmn wrwsn bn ʔṣ*

And the priest for Bal (Ḥ)amon was *Urusan* son of *Ariš*.

khn n. 'priest' (*DNWSI* 490-492; cf. Ug. *khn*, *DUL* 433; *CLUC* 184).

wrwsn On the vocalization *Urusan*, see *HNPI* 156 concerning the frequent element /-san/ in Berber names³⁵.

S8 (7) *kʔ šmʕ qlm*

Because he listened to their voice.

S9 (7) *brkm*

He blessed them.

The sequence in which the titles of cultic office occur might have some unknown significance. The *kmr* (S6 [line 7]) is a type of priest whose duties are not clear³⁶, and

34 The verb occurs in BH only in Isa 61:10: *mðʕl šðḡāqā yðʕāʕāni* '(in) a cloak of righteousness he has covered me'.

35 The present writer counts eighteen examples of *-san* in North African names written in Latin script (Jongeling 1994: 177 [retrograde index]). Possibly related elements are *-sen* (14x), *-sin* (7x), and *-zin* (2x). The Berber name [*m*]accurasan (*CIL* viii 22660; Jongeling 1994: 76-77) begins with the element *mkr* (Jongeling 1994: xxvi-xxvii). Four names begin with the element *uru-* (*ibid.*, 149).

36 According to 2 Kgs 23:5, kings of Israel appointed *kðmārīm* to make (incense?) offerings (*qtr* [*piʕēl*]) at local shrines (see Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 285-286). The same lexical and semantic association is possible in a fragmentary ritual text from Carthage: *wqtrt lbnt dqt šbʕ km[rm . . .]* 'and incense, ground frankincense, seven *km[r]*-priests . . .]' (cf. *PPD* 253 s.v. *lbnt*). The second of

the *khn* (S7 [line 7]) is also a type of priest in ancient Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Israelite rituals. In the Marseilles tariff (*KAI* 69.3-15), a Carthaginian temple inscription³⁷, *khn*-priests are associated with sacrifice (Pun. *zbh*), as implicitly in this text. In the biblical system of sacrifice, only the *khn* officiated in the slaughtering of animals. Sentence 6 describes the attire of the *kmr*-priest but does not mention priestly ritual duties³⁸. Can we presume that the *khn*, introduced by name immediately following these lines, carried out the ritual slaughter?

Religious-Historical Observations

Althiburus is located 175km southeast of Carthage. By the mid-second century BCE, its territory formed the eastern boundary of the ʾršt tškʾt (*KAI* 141.1), Gk. χῶρα τῦσκον (Appian, *Lib.* 59), Latin *pagus Thusca*, the southeastern administrative district of Carthage (Manfredi 2003: 443-447). At some distance from Carthage, Althiburus nevertheless sustained considerable Carthaginian influence (for example, a *tophet*) despite its remote location.

The inscription studied above is dedicated to the god Bal (Ḫ)amon, as stated in line 1. A *khn*-priest of this god appears in line 7. According to the interpretation presented above, *ʿbd mlqrt* ‘servants of Melqart’ (line 1) sponsored the sacrifice that the inscription commemorates. The occasion of the sacrifice is the construction of a *tw* ‘cella’ (S2, line 5) and a ceremony that involves a sacrifice during the month *krr* (S3, line 5), apparently sponsored by or for an assembly (*kns*, line 1), apparently devoted to Bal (Ḫ)amon.

Two elements of the narrative have broader implications about the continuity of Phoenician religious practice in late-Roman period Althiburus. The construction of a *tw* ‘cella’ during the month *krr* links this narrative with the late sixth-century or early fifth-century B.C.E. Phoenician inscription from the Etruscan temple at Pyrgi, which also mentions the building of a *tw* (*KAI* 277.5-6) during the month *krr* (lines 7-8). The Pyrgi text further specifies a day as *ym qbr ʾIm* ‘the deity’s burial day’ (lines 8-9). Scholars identify the deity in question as either Melqart or Adonis³⁹. The reading *bmt n* ‘at the

two Phoenician dipinto inscriptions on a now-lost amphora said to have come from a tomb at Amathonte in Cyprus appeared to be a dedication by a *kmr*-priest: [ʾ]šbʿl *kmr bʿlšmm* ‘Eshbaal, *kmr*-priest of Bal Shamem’ (*RÉS* 1519). The recovery of de Vogüé’s hand copy by Masson (1993), however, has called this reading of the text into serious question. On the difficulties of reading this text and determining its original location, see Guzzo Amadasi (1977: 185 F2), subsequently revised (Amadasi Guzzo 2004: 213 F2). The text of *RÉS* 1519 appears in Magnanini (1973: 104) and Pisano and Travaglini (2003: 78-79 Ci Pv.i.3). Niehr’s discussion of *RÉS* 1519 (2003: 61) preceded Amadasi Guzzo’s animadversion.

37 The tariff mentions a *bt bʿl špn* ‘temple of Bal Saphon’ (*KAI* 69.1).

38 In the present context I cannot address more fundamental issues involved in determining the functions and roles of cultic operators. For methodological guidance I have consulted Xella (2006).

39 Lipinski (1970 : 34-46, 47-48); Ribichini (1984: 163, 193); Bonnet (1988: 287-288); Amadasi Guzzo (1990: 96); Ribichini and Xella (1994: 133-135); Smith (1998: 270-272 [Osiris]; 277-279 [Melqart]; 282-286 [Adonis]; 286-289 [Pyrgi]; Mettinger (2001, chap. 3 [Melqart]; chap. 4 [Adonis]; chap. 6 [Osiris]).

death of the Handsome (one)' (KAI 277.5) appears to evoke a theme from the classical myth of Adonis (Schmitz 2007a; 2009: 65-66).

Line 1 indicates that the vow being fulfilled was made to Baal (Ḥ)amon by devotees of Melqart, as discussed above. The explicit association of Melqart with the ritual structure (*tw*) and calendar date (*yrḥ krr*) that in the Pyrgi text evokes the myth of Adonis provides us with possible warrant for associating and perhaps identifying the two deities Adonis and Melqart⁴⁰.

Social and Political Observations

According to S4, which mentions *špṭm* 'suffetes', the sacrifice involved the cooperation of several social groups: a group of Melqart devotees; an assembly (*kns*, line 1) presumed to have included the eleven men named in lines 2-5, devotees of Baal (Ḥ)amon; a *mzrh* (line 4), which I suggest is probably a Roman cavalry unit called in Latin *turma*; an implied standard-bearer (see *ns*, line 5); some or all of whom sponsor a feast in conjunction with the sacrifice; and the two *špṭm* (line 6), local governors⁴¹.

Personal names communicate very limited information about social history, so deductions concerning the ethnic composition of the group of eleven dedicators in this inscription must be restrained. As can be seen from table 2, nine of the eleven members are sons of men with Libyco-Berber names. The two fathers whose names are probably Punic both have sons with Libyco-Berber names. Altogether, eight of the members have Libyco-Berber names, two have Latin names, and two (including *z'zbl*) have Punic names. The names of the two suffetes reflect the two ancestral lineages of the community, Libyco-Berber and Punic⁴².

⁴⁰ From the limited calendrical evidence of Phoenician inscriptions I have deduced that offerings were made to Melqart during the waning period of the Egyptian constellation *S3ḥ-Orion* (January to March) and during its occultation (April to June); offerings to Osiris are made during the waxing period of the constellation *S3ḥ-Orion* (July-December). The day dedicated to Melqart/Adonis during *krr* (July) in the Pyrgi text and Hr. Medeine N 1.5 raises unanswered questions about the associations of these deities with Osiris. I agree with Bonnet (1988: 103-104) that a degree of syncretism is evident. The calendrical correspondences support this inference (*ibid.*, 110).

⁴¹ Bullo (2006) interprets iconic images of private sacrifices from North Africa.

⁴² Both the bearers of Latin names are sons of fathers with Libyco-Berber names.

Table 1: Glossary of Words in Hr. Medeine (Althiburus) N I (= KAI 159)

Form	Line	Root	Definition	Philological and Linguistic Comments
ʾ	5		the	def. art. <i>HNPI</i> 381 s.v.; 388 s.v. <i>h</i>
ʾg	1,6,8,9		which, that	relative complementizer
<i>b</i>	5		in	prep. 'in, for'. In BH the syntagm <i>hgg b-</i> 'celebrate a feast for' specifies the occasion of the celebration (1 Sam 30:16; <i>HALOT</i> 290 s.v. <i>hgg</i>)
<i>bw</i> ²	6	<i>b-w</i> ²	go	<i>yup'al</i> part. with 3m.s. suffix /muḅāyo/ '(those) brought him' (cf. BH <i>mūḅā'im</i> , <i>HALOT</i> 114 s.v. <i>bw</i> ² hof.)
<i>bn</i>	5,6	<i>b-n-y</i>		(line 5) part. pl. construct 'builders'; (line 6) v. G 3pl. /ḅanū/ 'they built'
<i>bn</i>	5		in it	prep. + 3sing. suffix /binno/ 'in it' (<i>PPG</i> ³ 182 §254a)
<i>h</i>	6		the	def. art.
<i>ḥbr</i>	4	<i>ḥbr</i>	friend	n. m. (<i>DNWSI</i> 346-347; cf. <i>HNPI</i> 389 s.v. <i>ḥbr</i> , <i>HALOT</i> 287-288; <i>CLUC</i> 153)
<i>ḥg</i>	5	<i>ḥag</i>	feast	n.m. /ḥag/ 'feast' (cf. <i>HALOT</i> 289-290)
<i>ḥn</i>	5	<i>ḥ-n</i>	bear	'load, bear', G 3pl. /ḥa ^c nū/ Compare BH <i>ḥ-n</i> ₂ 'load' (<i>HALOT</i> 378)
<i>ysp</i>	5	<i>y-s-p</i>	add	<i>qal</i> perf. 1cpl. /yasapnū/ 'we added' (<i>DNWSI</i> 462; cf. <i>HALOT</i> 418)
<i>y^cḥ</i>	7	<i>y-^cḥ</i>	cover	v. K 3sing. + 3ms sfx. /yaḥḍ/ < /yḥ ^c ḥḍ/ (with loss of laryngeal) 'it covered him' (BH <i>y^cḥ</i> , <i>HALOT</i> 420; cf. 813-814 s.v. 'ḥ i). BH only in Isa 61:10: <i>mḏ^cḥl šdḏāqā yḏ^cāḥānī</i> '(in) a cloak of righteousness he has covered me'
<i>yrḥ</i>	5	<i>yrḥ</i>	month	n. 'month' (<i>DNWSI</i> 469-470)
<i>k</i>	1	<i>k(y)</i>	when	adv. 'when' (<i>DNWSI</i> 482); cf. EpHeb, BH <i>kī</i> 'when' (<i>HALOT</i> 471); Ug. <i>k</i> 'when' (<i>DUL</i> 422-423; <i>CLUC</i> 180 s.v. <i>ky</i> 3).
<i>k²</i>	7		thus	<i>k</i> adv. (<i>DNWSI</i> 497-498)
<i>khn</i>	7	<i>khn</i>	priest	n. (<i>DNWSI</i> 490-492; cf. Ug. <i>khn</i> <i>DUL</i> 433; <i>CLUC</i> 184)
<i>kmr</i>	7	<i>kmr</i>	priest	n.m. sing. a type of priest (<i>DNWSI</i> 515-516; cf. <i>HALOT</i> 482)
<i>kns</i>	1	<i>kns</i>	assembly	n. m.s. + 3 m.s. suffix: /kinnūse/ 'his assembly. Compare MHeb <i>kīnnūs</i> n.m. 'gathering; retirement for prayer' (Jastrow 1985: 633); cf. <i>kānīsā</i> n. f. 'gathering, assembly' (<i>ibid.</i> , 649).
<i>ks</i>	6	<i>ksy</i>	covering	n.m. /kas(ū) ?/ 'covering' (cf. BH <i>kāsāy</i> , Num 4:6, 14; <i>HALOT</i> 488)
<i>l</i>	6		of, for	prep. with 1cpl. pron. suffix /lānū/ 'for us'
<i>ll</i>	5	<i>ll</i>	night	<i>DNWSI</i> 577-578
<i>mby</i>		see <i>bw</i> ²		
<i>mn</i>	7	<i>mn</i>	from	prep. <i>min</i> + 1cpl. suffix /min(n)u/ 'from us'
<i>mzrḥ</i>	4	<i>z-r-ḥ</i>	<i>turma</i>	cf. <i>HALOT</i> 28 s.v. <i>ʾezrāḥ</i>
<i>nbn</i>	6	<i>b-n-y</i>		see <i>bn</i>
<i>ndr</i> ²	1	<i>n-d-r</i>	to vow	v. /nadrū/ 'they vowed'.
<i>ns</i>	5	<i>nas</i>	standard	n.m. Compare BH <i>nēs</i> , pl. <i>nissīm</i> 'standards' (<i>HALOT</i> 701-702); Arm <i>nēs</i> , <i>nissā</i> (?) (<i>DJPA</i> 352a; <i>DJBA</i> 752a; Jastrow 1985: 915; <i>DNWSI</i> 760; <i>LS</i> ² 427)
<i>nš</i>	1	<i>nš-ʾy</i>	lend, loan	G 3m.sing.; cf. BH <i>nš b-</i> 'lend out' (<i>HALOT</i> 728 s.v. <i>nš</i> ² i)

<i>sḳ</i>	6	<i>skk</i>	hut	n.m. /sūk/ 'tabernacle, hut' (cf. BH <i>sōk</i> 'hut, refuge' <i>HALOT</i> 753; Ug. <i>sk</i> 'thicket'? <i>CLUC</i> 295 s.v. <i>skk</i> i; cf. <i>DUL</i> 756 'den, cove')
<i>'bd</i>	1	<i>'b-d</i>	servant	n.m. pl. 'servants'
<i>'l</i>	7		upon, over	prep. (<i>DNWSI</i> 844-846; <i>HALOT</i> 825-826; cf. Ug. <i>'l</i> <i>DUL</i> 155-156; <i>CLUC</i> 78)
<i>'lt</i>	5	<i>'l-t</i>	to, onto	prep. 'to, onto' (<i>PPD</i> 375 s.v. <i>'lt</i> iii.8).
<i>'nw</i>	1	<i>'nw</i>	humble, devout	adj. /'ānāw/ 'humble, bowing, pious'. Compare BH <i>'ānāw</i> 'bowing, humble' (<i>HALOT</i> 855).
<i>šp</i>	6		cloak	n.f. 'a toga with a purple stripe' (Jongeling, <i>HNPI</i> 403 s.v.)
<i>m</i>	5	<i>r-n-n</i>	rejoice	G 3pl. 'they rejoiced'
<i>št</i>	5	<i>š-y-t</i>	set, place	v. 3pl. 'place, put, establish' (<i>DNWSI</i> 1130-31; cf. <i>HALOT</i> 1483-86; Ug. <i>št</i> , <i>DUL</i> 848-851; <i>CLUC</i> 335)
<i>tw</i>	5	<i>tw</i>	cella	n. 'cella, chamber' (<i>KAI</i> 277.5; <i>DNWSI</i> 1204; <i>PPD</i> 488 s.v.; cf. Ug. <i>tu</i> < <i>t(w)</i> ? <i>DUL</i> 855; <i>CLUC</i> 335-336)

Table 2: Personal Names in Hr. Medeine (Althiburus) N 1 (= KAI 159)

Line	Name	Language	Patronym	Language	Etymology	Title
3	<i>gʒr</i>	Berber	<i>knzrmn</i>	Berber		
3	<i>mʹgmʹ</i>	Berber	<i>tbrsn</i>	Berber		
2	<i>mshbʹ</i>	Berber	<i>lylʹy</i>	Berber		
6	<i>mshbʹ</i>	Berber	<i>yzrm</i>	Berber		<i>špʹ</i>
3	<i>yʹsmzgr</i>	Berber	<i>sbg</i>	Berber		
4	<i>yʹstʹn</i>	Berber	<i>mshbʹ</i>	Berber		
4	<i>zʹlgm</i>	Berber	<i>štwʹn</i>	Berber		
2	<i>mʹryš</i>	Lat	<i>tbrsn</i>	Berber		
3, 4	<i>mʹryš</i>	Lat	<i>lbwʹ</i>	Berber		
3	<i>ʹdnbʹl</i>	Pun	<i>yll</i>	Berber		
2	<i>ggm</i>	Berber	<i>šsyʹt</i>	Pun	< <i>š-s-y</i> /šōsōyatu/ 'she plunders him'	
2	<i>štmn</i>	Berber	<i>yksltm</i>	Pun	< <i>k-s-l</i> /yiksalatni/ 'she made me confident'	
7	<i>wrwsn</i>	Berber	<i>ʹrš</i>	Pun		<i>khn</i>
6	<i>ʹzrbʹl</i>	Pun	<i>brk</i>	Pun		<i>špʹ</i>
6	<i>zʹzbl</i>	Pun	none			

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