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.

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Neo-Punic Text

1. l'dn b'l ħmn b'lbrš ndr '§ ndr b'd mlqr̲t k nš bn kns n'nw
2. m'ryš/s bn tbrsn wšt̲mn bn yksltn wmshb' bn ly'l'y wggm bn șsy't w
3. m'gm' bn tbrsn w>y'smzgr bn sbg w'dnb't bn yll wgzc bn knzrmn w'm'ryš/s
4. bn lbw' wz'Igm bn ștw'n w>y'st'n bn mshb' w.tblrm hmzrh w
5. nsm m b'n tw 'yspn 'l mtqdšm byrh krr șt bll hzbh bn șt t'b
6. șpt'm mshb' bn yzrm w'zrb't bn brk w's[ks ln bn z'r zbl wmbm wšsp 's
7. 'l krmn y'tmn wkhn lb'l ħmn wrwsn bn 'rš k' šm' qlm brkm
8. 's h't{ [k]} 'l w m[n]ht bmqdš
9. 's ... 

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 sttmn son of ykslt̲n and mshb' son of ly'l'y and ggm son of șsyrt, and (3) m'gm' son of tbrsn and y'smzgr son of sbg and 'dnb't son of yll and gzc son of knzrmn and Marius (4) son of lbw' and z'Igm son of ștw'n and y'st'n son of mshb' and their friends the mw̲z̲rh 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 Ziczebul 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 Arix. 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) l'dn b'l ħmn b'lbrš ndr '§ ndr b'd mlqr̲t k nš bn kns n'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. /nadr̲/ '(they) vowed'.

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7 This is the text's designation in Jongeling, HNPI 155.
8 Concerning Late Punic orthography employing ș for /š/, see Kerr (2010: 47-48).
The Large Neo-punic Inscription KAI 159...

k  adv. 'when' (DNWSI 482); cf. EpHeb, BH kî 'when' (HALOT 471); Ug. k 'when' (DUL 422-423; CLUC 180 s.v. ky 3).

nṣ (n-ṣ-ṣ) G 3m.sing. 'lend, loan'; cf. BH nṣ' b- 'lend out' (HALOT 728 s.v. nṣ' i).

bn /bōnu/ prep. b - 1csing. suffix 'to' us10.

kns' (kns) n. m.s. + 3m.sing. suffix: 'kinnusîl 'his assembly'. Note the Punic name kns1 (Benz 1970: 132)10. Compare MHeb kûnnûs n.m. 'gathering; retirement for prayer' (Jastrow 1985: 633); cf. kûnîsa? n. f. 'gathering, assembly' (ibid., 649). Kerr (2010: 48) discusses examples of the spelling of the third-person masculine pronominal suffix (lu/) with ulœp11. The word's semantic range possibly includes the group assembled and the place of assembly.

'nw ('nw) adj. 'ânaw/ 'humble, bowing, pious'. Compare BH 'ânaw 'bowing, humble' (HALOT 855)12; MHeb 'ânâ(y)w 'submissive, meek, kind, patient' (Jastrow 1985: 1094).

One of the innovations of the present interpretation is the word division 'bd mlqrt 'servants of Melqart' instead of the generally followed interpretation of 'bdmlqrt 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 ndr' in line 1 is best construed as plural, giving ndr' ʿndr' 'the vow that they vowed' (so Jongeling, HNPI 398 s.v. ndr)14.

The verb phrase nṣ 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-ṣ-) 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 kns 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 'ânîwîm for 'humble, devout'. Concerning the occurrence of 'ânîw in Num 12:3, see Pleins (1992; 2001: 405).
13 The name ʿzreb (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 kns 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., kns a title? (Röllig in KAI vol. 2, pp. 148-149); a cognomen? (Jongeling, HNPI 156); an altered reading knz? (introduced by Berger [ibid.] and noted by Röllig [ibid.] and Jongeling [ibid.]), do not resolve the difficulty.
14 Note the orthography of 3 pl.: ndr' '(they) vowed' (Ellès N 1.2; Hr. el-Blida N 1.1; Hr. Meded N 13.1-2; 21.1).
15 Arabic nasâ' 'a '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 ns 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 b²sr 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 ns 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’ry/s bn tbrsn wstmn bn yksltln wmsb> bn lyl’y wggm bn ssyt w (3) m’gm’ bn tbrsn wy’smzgr bn sbg w’dnb’1 bn yll wger bn kznrrn wn’ry/s (4) bn lbw’ wz’lgm bn s’tw’n wy’s’t’n bn mshb’ wbrnm hmzr h w(5)nsm

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

(2) Marius son of tbrsn and s’tmn son of yksltln and mshb’ son of lyl’y and ggm son of ssyt and (3) m’gm’ son of tbrsn and y’smzgr son of sbg and ’dnb’1 son of yll and gzr son of kznrrn and Marius (4) son of lbw’ and z’lgm son of s’tw’n and y’s’t’n son of mshb’ and their friends the mzr’h and (5) their standard.

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

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

16 Krahmalkov reads and translates kyln b²sr 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 ‘str ‘s bdy “because Astarte requested (this) from him” (KAl 277.6 [Pyrgi]) and k b’tl wرش sprm s lstm lbnt “because Baal and Reshep sprm sent me to build” (KAI 26 A II 11; see Schmitz 1995: 566).
The Large Neo-punic Inscription KAI 159...

mzrh (zrh) n. Halévy (1901: 265) analyzed Punic mzrh with reference to Biblical Hebrew 'ezrāh 'indigene', translated in LXX as αὐτῶν θεωρον (cf. HALOT 28 s.v. 'ezrāh). 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 /nissim/ 'their standard'.18 Compare BH nēs, pl. nissim 'standards' (HALOT 701-702); Arm nēs, nissā(ʾ) (DJP A 352a; DJBA 752a; Jastrow 1985: 915; DNWSI 760; LS 427). Probably also nasm (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 vexillum19.

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 ns (n-š-y̱) '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.

S 2 (5) r:n bn
tw ʾyspn ʾlt mqdšm byh krr
The builders of the cella that we adjoined to the sanctuaries rejoiced in the month of Krr.

m v. (r-n-n) G 3pl. /ran(n)ū/ '(they) rejoiced'. The verb m 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, nissi (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).
bnv. (b-n-y) G part. pl. constr. /bune/ ‘builders (of)’22.
tw n. ‘cella, chamber’ (KAI 277.5; DNWSI 1204; PPD 488 s.v.; 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. /yasapnūl ‘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’. 
ît prep. ‘to, onto’ (PPD 375 s.v. ‘lt iii.8). Note the parallel phrase wyspnīm /ît gbl ?ṣ
‘we added them to the boundaries of the land’ (KAI 14). The construction ysp /ît
seems to imply an addition that increases the size, area, or complexity of a thing;
hence my translation, ‘adjointed’.
mdsšm (qdš) n. pl. /miqdašm/ ‘sanctuaries’24.
yrḥ 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 hzbḥ 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.
l n. ‘night’ (DNWSI 577-578; also Amadasi Guzzo 2007: 206).
bn prep. + 3sing. suffix /binnu/ ‘in it’ (PPG3 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 byrḥ 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 /ît mdsšm ‘And we added his [Baal Hamon’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 159.5) and HNPI (155). Both sources just cited divide
the words bnr 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, PPG3 67 §112; 155 §234; Kerr 2010: 140-41).
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 *byrl) b(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 s-y-t with a locative complement introduced by b-. In prose, the locative complement normally follows the verb, as in these examples: in Phoenician, ySt bmqds mlqrt ‘I placed it [a statue] in the sanctuary of Melqart’ (KA1 43:7); in Biblical Hebrew, wattôšîtêhô bôhêqâ ‘and she placed it [her infant] in her bosom’ (Ruth 4:16)27. In the following example of Biblical Hebrew verse, tāšîmîd lîšâtîm bîkîl-hâ’êres “you will appoint them as princes in all the land” (Ps 45:17), note that the locative complement (bô-) follows the adverbial complement (lô-), 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) hîg f’n b (6) špîm mshb’ bn yzrm w’zrb’l bn brk
They bore a feast in behalf of the suffetes Masebo son of yzrm and Azrubal son of Barik.

hîg (hag) n.m. /hag/ ‘feast’ (cf. HALOT 289-290)28. Nabatean hgh (CIS II 2158), if it means ‘pilgrimage’, might be related (DNWSI 348).

f’n (t’-n) ‘load, carry’, G 3pl. f’ta’nâ/ Compare BH f’t-n1 ‘load’ (HALOT 378)29.

b prep. In BH the syntagm legg b- ‘celebrate a feast for’ specifies the occasion or purpose of the celebration (1 Sam 30:16; HALOT 290 s.v. hgg). 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 wmby
And Zi’zebul and those brought by him built a tabernacle [and] a canopy for us.

sk (skk) n.m. /sük/ ‘tabernacle, hut’ (cf. BH sôk ‘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: astn 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 h is based on my examination of the photograph. The traces in Lidzbarski’s hand copy (1898: 2, tab. xvi) are also compatible with this reading. Bron gives no reading of this letter.
29 The reading f’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).
Ph. C. Schmitz

[kw] conjectural restoration.

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

ln prep. with 1clp. pron. suffix /λνθμ ‘for us’.

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

z'zbl This personal name is probably Punic (Schmitz 2007).

mby (b-w-') yup'al part. with 3ms. suffix /μβαυ/ ‘(those) brought (by) him’ (cf. BH μβαυμ, HALOT 114 s.v. bw’hof).

The architectural and ritual components of the installation described in sentences 2-5 call to mind biblical parallels. The mqds (itself probably comprising hsr ‘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 z'zbl and mby. The person named z'zbl is the only agent mentioned in the inscription without a patronym. The reason for this omission is not readily apparent, but z'zbl 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- 'go', cognate to Biblical Hebrew mūbā’ ‘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 z'zbl wmby 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.

S 6 (6) ṣwp ṣ(7) ṣ kmrn yt mn
And the cloak that was upon our kmr-priest concealed him from us.

ṣp n.f. ‘cloak, tunic, toga’. The pl. ṣp’t (Labdah N 19 [HNPI 27-28 = KAI 126].9) corresponds to latō clavō (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; ṖES 891.1; Slouschz 1942: 162, no. 140.1; CIS 6061.1) is a verb (so PPD 237 s.v.): [hprk]t ‘3 kst [the veil] 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 mxzn, 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 ṣ arises from his acceptance of the argument by Clermont-Ganneau (1990: 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 'alep that follows, and this may have been interpreted as the head of a Ṛēš.
The Large Neo-punici Inscription KAI 159...

KS rel. ‘which, that’.

cl prep. ‘upon, over’ (DNWSI 844-846; HALOT 825-826; cf. Ug. cl DUL 155-156; CLUC 78).

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

y’t (y-k-t) v. K 3sing. + 3ms sfx. /yatu/ i /yθatû/ (with loss of laryngeal) ‘it covered him’ (BH y’t, HALOT 420; cf. 813-814 s.v. ˚θ i)34. Kerr (2010: 25-38) discusses the loss of laryngeals in Late Punic.

mn prep. min + 1clpl. suffix /min(n)ul/ ‘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. bl’/‘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 b’d hl mn wrwsn bn ˚n
And the priest for Bal (H)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) k? sn̂ 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: mθÎl šqdâqâ yθâtûn ‘(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]acclIrasan (CL 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 kdmârim to make (incense?) offerings (qtr [p’t’il]) 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: wqtr lbt dq t b’ km[rm . . . ] ‘and incense, ground frankincense, seven km[r]-priests . . . ’ (cf. PPD 253 s.v. lbnl). 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. zb ), 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 ṭṣṭ tšk t (KAI 141.1), Gk. χώρα τούκου (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 (H)amon, as stated in line 1. A khn-priest of this god appears in line 7. According to the interpretation presented above, ‘ḥd 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 (H)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 ţm qbr ‘the deity’s burial day’ (lines 8-9). Scholars identify the deity in question as either Melqart or Adonis39. The reading ḫn n ‘at the

37 The tariff mentions a bt b’l spn ‘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).
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 (H)amon by devotees of Melqart, as discussed above. The explicit association of Melqart with the ritual structure (tw) and calendar date (yrh 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 Melqart.

Social and Political Observations

According to S4, which mentions šptm '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 (H)amon; a mz[ ] 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 šptm (line 6), local governors.

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 Punic.

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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 S3ß-Orion (January to March) and during its occultation (April to June); offerings to Osiris are made during the waxing period of the constellation S3ß-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).


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 1 (= KAI 159)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Philological and Linguistic Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ary</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>def. art. HNPI 381 s.v.; 388 s.v. h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>relative complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bwy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>b-w-3</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>prep. ‘in, for’. In BH the syntagm bwy-‘celebrate a feast for’ specifies the occasion of the celebration (1 Sam 30:16; HALOT 290 s.v. bwy) yup’sal part. with 3m.s. suffix /muḫyṯ-yu/ ‘(those) brought him’ (cf. BH mḏbṯ ‘m, HALOT 114 s.v. bwy hof.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn</td>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>b-n-y</td>
<td>in it</td>
<td>prep. + 3sing. suffix /binu/ ‘in it’ (PPG 182 §254a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>def. art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bbr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>bbr</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>n. m. (DNWSI 346-347; cf. HNPI 389 s.v. hbr, HALOT 287-288; CLUC 153)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḫg</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ḫg</td>
<td>feast</td>
<td>n.m. /ḥag/ ‘feast’ (cf. HALOT 289-290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṭa‘n</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ṭ-‘m</td>
<td>bear</td>
<td>‘load, bear’, G 3pl. ṭa‘nū/ Compare BH ṭ-‘mū ‘load’ (HALOT 378) qal perf. 1clpl. ḫyasapnū ‘we added’ (DNWSI 462; cf. HALOT 418)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ysp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>y-s-p</td>
<td>add</td>
<td>v. K 3sing. + 3ms sfx. ḫyṯāl (with loss of laryngeal) ‘it covered him’ (BH yṯ, HALOT 420; cf. 813-814 s.v. ḫṯ). BH only in Isa 61:10: ṣwṯ ḫṣḏḏḏ yḏḏḏnī ‘(in) a cloak of righteousness he has covered me’ n. ‘month’ (DNWSI 469-470)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yrḥ</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>yrḥ</td>
<td>month</td>
<td>adv. ‘when’ (DNWSI 482); cf. EpHeb, BH ki ‘when’ (HALOT 471); Ug. k ‘when’ (DUL 422-423; CLUC 180 s.v. ky 3). k adv. (DNWSI 497-498)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>k(y)</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>n. m. (DNWSI 349-350; cf. HNPI 389 s.v. hbr, HALOT 287-288; CLUC 153) k adv. (DNWSI 497-498)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>knh</td>
<td>priest</td>
<td>n. (DNWSI 349-350; cf. Ug. khn DUL 433; CLUC 184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knr</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>knr</td>
<td>priest</td>
<td>n.m. sing. a type of priest (DNWSI 515-516; cf. HALOT 482)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>kns</td>
<td>assembly</td>
<td>n. m.s. + 3 m.s. suffix: /kinnuše/ ‘his assembly. Compare MHeb khnnde n.m. ‘gathering; retirement for prayer’ (Jastrow 1985: 633); cf. khnnde n.f. ‘gathering, assembly’ (ibid., 649). n.m. /kns(i) ‘covering’ (cf. BH ḫnsû, Num 4:6, 14; HALOT 488)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>kṣy</td>
<td>covering</td>
<td>prep. with 1clpl. pron. suffix /lāndī/ ‘for us’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>of, for</td>
<td>DNWSI 577-578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lḥh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>lḥh</td>
<td>night</td>
<td>see bwy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mn</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>mn</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>DNWSI 577-578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>z-r-h</td>
<td>iurma</td>
<td>cf. HALOT 28 s.v. ‘ezrāh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nbn</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>b-n-y</td>
<td>v. /nymu/ ‘they vowed’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n-h-</td>
<td>to vow</td>
<td>n.m. Compare BH nēš, pl. nissīm ‘standards’ (HALOT 701-702); Arm nēš, nissīm (DIPA 352a; DBA 752a; Jastrow 1985: 915; DNWSI 760; LS’ 427)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ns</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>nas</td>
<td>standard</td>
<td>G 3m. sing.; cf. BH nš b- ‘lend out’ (HALOT 728 s.v. nš²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nš</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>nš-²y</td>
<td>lend, loan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**: The table entries include both the form and the line number, followed by the root, definition, and comments. The comments are in parentheses and provide additional context or explanations for the definitions.
| sk  | 6   | skk  | hut  | n.m. /sōk/ 'tabernacle, hut' (cf. BH sōk 'hut, refuge' HALOT 753; Ug. sk 'thicket'? CLUC 295 s.v. skk i; cf. DUL 756 'den, cove') |
| 'bd | 1   | 'b-d | servant | n.m. pl. 'servants' |
| 7   | 7   | upon, over | prep. (DNWSI 844-846; HALOT 825-826; cf. Ug. 'I DUL 155-156; CLUC 78) |
| 'lt | 5   | 'l-t | to, onto | prep. 'to, onto' (PPD 375 s.v. 'lt iii.8). |
| 'nw | 1   | 'nw | humble, devout | adj. /ānāw/ 'humble, bowing, pious'. Compare BH /ānāw 'bowing, humble' (HALOT 855). |
| sp  | 6   |  | cloak | n.f. 'a toga with a purple stripe' (Jongeling, HNPI 403 s.v.) |
| m   | 5   | r-n-n | rejoice | G 3pl. 'they rejoiced' |
| st  | 5   | s-y-t | set, place | v. 3pl. 'place, put, establish' (DNWSI 1130-31; cf. HALOT 1483-86; Ug. st. DUL 848-851; CLUC 335) |
| tw  | 5   | tw  | cella | n. 'cella, chamber' (KAI 277.5; DNWSI 1204; PPD 488 s.v.; cf. Ug. tu < t(w)? DUL 855; CLUC 335-336) |
Table 2: Personal Names in Hr. Medeine (Althiburus) N 1 (= KAI 159)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Patronym</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Etymology</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>gzr</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>knzrmn</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>m'gm'</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>trbrsn</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mshb'</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>lyf'y</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mshb'</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>yzrm</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td>$pt$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>y'smzgr</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>sbg</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>y'st'n</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>mshb'</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>zg'm</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>stw'n</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m'ry$</td>
<td>Lat</td>
<td>trbrsn</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>m'ry$</td>
<td>Lat</td>
<td>lbw'</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>'dnb't</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>yll</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ggm</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>$sy't$</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>&lt; $s-s-y \beta\alpha\kappa\nu\upsilon\tau\omega \upsilon$ 'she plunders him'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>stmn</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>yksItn</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>&lt; $k-s-l \gamma\kappa\chi\mu\upsilon\kappa\alpha$ 'she made me confident'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>wrwsn</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>'r$\varsigma$</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>khn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'zrb't</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>brk</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>$pt$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'zbl</td>
<td>Pun</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
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