

## THE PHOENICIAN LANGUAGE: REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF RESEARCH

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The topic of the present talk was suggested to me by the organizers of this congress (\*). It seems to me, that these *illustri colleghi* and we are clear what we mean when we speak of the « Phoenician language ». But is this actually the case?

Several years ago E. Ullendorff published a rather provocative article entitled « Is Biblical Hebrew a Language? » (1). This question can just as easily be asked of Phoenician. The same holds true, with slight modification, for Ullendorff's initial statement of purpose: « I am simply interested to know whether the words, forms, and constructions that happen to occur in this corpus of relatively modest size, which we call the Hebrew Bible, would be adequate to serve as a basis for the ordinary day-to-day requirements of a normal speech community ». He comes to the conclusion that it is « clearly no more than a linguistic fragment, ... scarcely a full integrated language which ... could ever have been spoken and have satisfied the needs of its speakers » (2). In view of the corpus of Phoenician and Punic inscriptions our statements must be much more modest. For, notwithstanding the welcome increase of textual material in the past decades (3), Phoenician probably remains the worst transmitted and least known of all Semitic languages. The size of the corpus, numerically so impressive, gives a misleading impression of plenty, since the inscriptions are hallmarked by a monotony of contents and a formulaic and laconic style. Thus we lack the variety required for the good grammatical and lexical understanding of a language. Only in the field of onomastics can we be said to have ample material as a glance at the collection of material by Frank L. Benz clearly shows (4). Even here, however, the variety is disappointing, for the constructions, as in Hebrew, are sharply curtailed. Sentence names are rare and « verbal

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(1) E. ULLENDORFF, *Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?*: BSOAS, 34 (1971), republished in a book to which it gave the title, Wiesbaden 1977, pp. 3-17.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

(3) This increase of textual material can be easily appreciated when one looks at the first independent grammar of Phoenician, P. SCHRÖDER's, *Die phönizische Sprache. Entwurf einer Grammatik*, Halle 1869, which appeared just over 110 years ago. There on pp. 47-72 all the texts known at the time are listed — 332 of them. Today, if we look at *CIS Pars I*, the incompleteness of which we scarcely need mention, we find 6068 texts.

(4) F. L. BENZ, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*, Roma 1972.

sentence names » are predominately formed with the predicate in the perfect (28 examples) or, less frequently in the imperfect (12 examples) <sup>(5)</sup>. The onomasticon we encounter, then, is only slightly differentiated and evidently no longer very productive <sup>(6)</sup>.

Even a very liberal perusal of the lexicon, counting conjunctions and prepositions (but excluding for the most part uncertain attentations) yields an amazing view of the vocabulary <sup>(7)</sup>. The Phoenician-Punic vocabulary attested to date amounts to some 668 words, some of which occur frequently. Among these are 321 *hapax legomena* and about 15 foreign or loan words. In comparison with Hebrew with around 7000-8000 words and 1500 *hapax legomena* <sup>(8)</sup>, the number is remarkable. To begin with we have a basic vocabulary which does not even amount to one tenth of that of Hebrew. Moreover, practically half of the words occur only once or in one inscription, which is not very helpful for semantic investigations. It should also be noted that the great majority of *hapax legomena* occur in Punic or Neo-Punic inscriptions, which are still rather enigmatic with their terminology for sacrificial practices and designations for various officials. Without the Hebrew vocabulary and comparison with other Semitic languages the interpretation of the Phoenician inscriptions would be completely impossible <sup>(9)</sup>. Still, it is clear to anyone who uses J. Hoftijzer's excellent *Dictionnaire* and reads his carefully weighted judgements of the present tentative attempts at semantic interpretations, that lexical work, especially in Punic, must receive still more emphasis. The extraction of individual terms, however, is of little value. It would be more advisable on the other hand to interpret complete problem groups in context. In this respect it is lamentable that the textual basis is not sufficient in all cases, for many inscriptions have been published without copies or with inadequate copies. The solution in these instances — I am thinking of the inscriptions from Guelma, Maktar and Tripolitania <sup>(10)</sup> for example — is a careful reedition of the texts.

Let us take up the question again which was posed at the outset: What is the « Phoenician-Punic Language » actually? On the surface and viewed formally it would not seem difficult to answer: It is the language of the monuments of the mother-country, North Africa and the Mediterranean countries written in Phoenician and Punic script <sup>(11)</sup>,

(5) References in F. L. BENZ, *cit.*, p. 206 ff.

(6) Cf. M. NOTH, *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, Stuttgart 1928, pp. 48 ff., 215 ff., for similar proportions in Hebrew. Unfortunately, Benz avoids any sort of evaluation of the onomasticon. Similarly, G. HALFF'S, *L'onomastique punique de Carthage: Karthago*, 12 (1965), p. 63 ff., only discusses aspects of interest for historians of religion.

(7) This is based upon C. F. JEAN - J. HOFTIJZER, *DISO*, with some — certainly not exhaustive — additions.

(8) E. ULLENDORFF, *cit.*, pp. 5 f., 14 f.

(9) A warning about method is in order here: lexical derivation should always attempt to proceed from the nearest to the more distantly related languages, rather than simply making arbitrary comparisons. Above all, the popularly adduced « pertinent » etymologies from Arabic are all too often worthless, since meanings arbitrarily arrived at for the Canaanite language of the first millennium B.C. have no intrinsic validity, as they do not take into account the age or semantic range of the word.

(10) Happily, a new edition of the texts from Maktar has been announced by M. Szynger and one of those from Tripolitania by M. G. Guzzo Amadasi.

(11) In his article M. SZYNGER, *L'emploi des termes « phénicien », « punique », « néopunique »: Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Linguistica Camito-Semítica*, Firenze 1978, pp. 261-68, M. Szynger has rightly pointed out the danger of purely external differentiations, which I do not underestimate. And I wholly agree with his statement, « un ... principe serait qu'il faudrait ... écarter le critère de l'écriture » in the classification of languages. But, since we know dead languages only through

the medium for which may be stone, metal or papyrus. Even this rather wide definition is insufficient, however, for Plautus has given us in his *Poenulus* an interesting, albeit corrupt rendering in Latin transliteration of a Punic passage<sup>(12)</sup>. And this we can no more ignore, than the Septuagint or Hexapla can be ignored in the study of the Hebrew. We may now add to that the Punic inscriptions of the Christian era from North Africa made available to us so brilliantly by G. Levi Della Vida<sup>(13)</sup>. Finally, we cannot ignore the few attestations in Greek script and the numerous Phoenician and Punic personal names in cuneiform, Greek or Latin<sup>(14)</sup>. In considering this material, ostensibly so plentiful and varied, it should be borne in mind that the language was in use over a wide area for more than a millennium<sup>(15)</sup>. Thus the search for new texts and the solidifying of the network of evidence through the reliable editions of all the material are the inescapable preconditions for further progress in our discipline. In this respect it is gratifying to note the waxing of interest in Phoenician and Punic in recent years, to which the present congress bears witness. At the time I was working on *KAI*, however, this was not even to be envisaged. And, if some of the questions which at that time appeared to have been solved or to be insolvable on the basis of the material available, have been raised again and subjected to intensive analysis, it is due

the medium of their scripts, we are required in the interest of better understanding of the language to explain all the peculiarities of the script, though naturally not in a paleographical sense.

The other basic sentence « pour qualifier une langue, on doit exclure tous les critères non-linguistiques, comme ceux du contenu des textes, de leur provenance ou de leur date » cannot, however, be so simply accepted. It is unavoidable that we take into account when a text was written or copied for all questions of linguistic classification and interpretation. The same holds true for the place, since, otherwise, local peculiarities and linguistic changes would not be taken into account. Even the content cannot be forgotten. It is indisputable, for example, that the language of poetic texts differs basically from that of purely economic documents and letters.

In his article Sznycer seems to regard the three concepts given in the title as equivalent to one another. This, however, (and here we must consider the term Phoenician-Punic) cannot be. From a certain, not yet exactly ascertainable, point in time Punic as the language of the Phoenicians of North Africa began a special development, which led to certain characteristic differences with the erstwhile mother tongue. Neo-Punic is a further development of this within the same region and probably with the same *substratum* and *superstratum* influences (e.g. Latin). It is to be considered analogous to the division between « Althönizisch » and « klassisches Phönizisch » in *PPG*. In actual fact then, Sznycer's acceptance of the three concepts is, strictly speaking, unjustified. Linguistically we can only speak of « Phoenician » and « Punic », which, because of their close relationship, are best hyphenated.

(12) The last standard edition is by M. SZNYCER, *Les passages puniques en transcription latine dans le 'Poenulus' de Plaute*, Paris 1967. Cf. also C. KRAHMALKOV, *The Punic Speech of Hanno: OrNS*, 39 (1970), pp. 52-74; A. S. GRATWICK, *Hanno's Speech in the Poenulus of Plautus: Hermes*, 99 (1971), pp. 25-45.

(13) G. LEVI DELLA VIDA: *Libya*, 3 (1927), p. 114; *OA*, 2 (1963), pp. 65-94; *OA*, 4 (1965), pp. 59-62; *AION*, 17 (1967), pp. 257-66.

(14) This source is by no means exhausted, since F.L. Benz only indicates correspondences to the names attested in inscriptions. For the cuneiform material see F.M. FALES, *West Semitic Names from the Governor's Palace: Annali di Ca' Foscari*, 13 (1974), pp. 179-88; R. ZADOK, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldaean and Achaemenian Periods*, Jerusalem 1977; *Id.*, *Phoenicians, Philistines and Moabites in Mesopotamia: BASOR*, 230 (1978), pp. 57-65.

(15) The earliest Phoenician inscriptions, the arrows and spearheads (*KAI* 20-22) and the short Byblos inscriptions, F.M. CROSS - P.K. MCCARTER: *RSF*, 1 (1973), pp. 3-8, belong to the end of the 12th or beginning of the 11th century B. C. The latest datable Punic inscription (*KAI* 173) dates from the period between 162 and 217 A.D.

mainly to the work of three colleagues, Giovanni Garbini, Jacob Hoftijzer and Maurice Szyner, who have contributed so much impetus to the discussions. They are the ones who should be singled out for having contributed so much to our understanding of the texts by their lexical and text-critical studies and grammatical investigations, and who have never hesitated to contribute their insights on specific problems. This will undoubtedly remain the trend for the coming years, i.e. the development of individual textual and philological investigations. For we have in our discipline the preconditions at least for such further work with the second edition of the « Phönizisch-punische Grammatik » (PPG) and the « Grammar of Phoenician and Punic » by Stanislaus Segert<sup>(16)</sup>. The grammars point up our weaknesses in understanding and working through the texts, and they more or less ignore several questions which should be worked upon further.

Once more I would return to the initial question and pose it again: « What is the Phoenician language actually? » — this time however from the point of view of classification and relationship with the neighbouring languages.

A few years ago it still seemed a relatively simple matter to classify the Semitic languages and to find the place of Phoenician among them: In the Northwest Semitic group, which was divided into Aramaic and Canaanite branches, it was aside from Hebrew the chief representative of Canaanite. Even then, however, the problem of fitting Ugaritic into this scheme was evident<sup>(17)</sup>. And with the development of Amorite and now Eblaite the picture has been completely blurred, so that now we must find new criteria for arranging them — not here and now, however<sup>(18)</sup>. For the purposes of historical linguistics, we retain the view that only those inscriptions written in the alphabetic script should be called « Phoenician and Punic ». That means that the actual Phoenician tradition begins only after the upheavals caused by the Sea Peoples. This limit is not so arbitrary as it might seem at first. Rather, it is supported by the onomasticon, which clearly changes at that time and can also be justified on religious-historical ground. For Melqart and Ešmun both appear then, whereas in the second millennium they were still foreign<sup>(19)</sup>. I do not intend to pursue this too far here, especially since there are probably some who will doubt the methodological reliability of such an example. Still, I am no more able to view linguistic change as an isolated phenomenon than I am changes in the religious sphere.

Since the discovery of the earlier Byblos inscriptions it is clear that Phoenician can no longer be viewed as a uniform language. On the contrary, traces of dialects can be recognized despite the defective orthography of the inscriptions. Quite recently G. Garbini has treated the characteristics of the dialects of Byblos, Tyre (and

(16) J. FRIEDRICH - W. RÖLLIG, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik*<sup>2</sup>, Roma 1970; S. SEGERT, *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic*, München 1976. Cf. also A. VAN DEN BRANDEN, *Grammaire phénicienne*, Beyrouth 1969.

(17) Cf. the still basic work of H. GOESEKE, *Die Sprache der semitischen Texte Ugarits und ihre Stellung innerhalb des Semitischen: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin Luther- Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Ges.-Sprachwiss.*, 7 (1958), pp. 623-52.

(18) Cf. the seminal review article by W. VON SODEN, *Zur Einteilung der semitischen Sprachen: WZKM*, 56 (1960), pp. 177-91; and recently G. GARBINI, *Il semitico di nord-ovest nell'età del Bronzo: Atti del 1° Convegno Italiano sul Vicino Oriente antico*, Roma 1978, pp. 163-73; I. J. GELB, *Thoughts about Ebla: Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*, 1 (1977), pp. 3-30, and G. GARBINI, *Pensieri su Ebla (ovvero: le uova di Babilonia)*: *AION*, 38 (1978), pp. 41-52.

(19) That must be somewhat qualified in the case of Ešmun, for he is also found, though very rarely, in Ugarit.

Sidon) and Cyprus again as the main manifestations of Eastern Phoenician<sup>(20)</sup>. Nevertheless, it seems to me quite possible that the phenomena which were noted may sometimes reflect local scribal traditions as in cuneiform and, consequently, need not reflect linguistic reality to the extent that we would like to think. Two examples will suffice to show how little reliability there actually is inherent in the criteria for classification.

A « Cilician » Phoenician has been thoroughly demonstrated to us by the Kilamuwa inscription and the Karatepe texts. Garbini assigns it to the Tyrian dialect<sup>(21)</sup>. Two amulets were found nearby, the provenance of which cannot be determined with certainty but which are thought to be from Arslan Taş<sup>(22)</sup>. They present several peculiar features, which betray an Aramaic influence but which also show the probability of dialectal differences and/or divergent scribal tradition for their place of origin, whose Phoenician cannot be ascribed to any of the « main dialects ».

Connexions have already been established with the Hebrew of the northern kingdom, and in this regard, Garbini's observation that the Samaria ostraca — if one leaves aside the onomasticon — can be construed orthographically as Phoenician is in some respects valid. Here as well, scribal traditions which were quite closely related, especially in the area of economy, may have us seeing similarities which don't actually exist<sup>(23)</sup>. Nevertheless, the question of the relationship of Phoenician to Hebrew requires renewed consideration (see below to the tense system).

The question becomes still more difficult when we turn to « West Phoenician » or Punic as I still prefer to call it. To begin with there are no appreciable differences with Phoenician. The language is orientated in its basic aspects toward the dialect of Tyre/Sidon. In any event it shows none of the features of the dialect of Arvad, if we discount Neo-Punic for the moment, which can sometimes be seen in Cyprus,

(20) G. GARBINI, *I dialetti del fenicio*: *AION*, 37 (1977), pp. 283-94.

(21) *Ibid.*, p. 289.

(22) For the two incantation texts from Arslan Taş see W. RÖLLIG: *NESE*, 2 (1974), pp. 17-36 and for n. 1 (*KAI* 27) A. CAQUOT, *Observations sur la Première Tablette Magique d'Arslan Tash*: *JANES*, 5 (1973), pp. 45-51; E. LIPÍŃSKI: *ATD Ergänzungband*, 1 (1975), p. 264 f. For n. 2 see now M. LIVERANI, *Proposte sul secondo incantesimo di Arslan Tash*: *RSF*, 2 (1974), pp. 50-54; F.M. CROSS, *Leaves from an Epigraphist's Notebook*: *CBQ*, 36 (1974), pp. 486-90; T. H. GASTER, *A Hang-up for Hang-ups*: *BASOR*, 209 (1973), pp. 18-26.

(23) G. GARBINI closes his article mentioned above with the sentence « Ad ogni modo, bisognerà tener presente l'eventualità che ai dialetti fenici sopra esaminati sia da aggiungere un nuovo dialetto, quello parlato dagli israeliti di Samaria — almeno nel IX secolo a.C. » (p. 294). He continues in this vein based mainly on seal inscriptions in his article *Fenici in Palestina*: *AION*, 39 (1979), pp. 325-30. Although I can appreciate the provocative cleverness of my esteemed colleague, I am convinced that the epigraphic method is insufficient for such far-reaching conclusions. The extremely defective orthography, the formulaic nature of the inscriptions and the reduction of vocabulary mentioned above do not allow us to determine with certainty affinities and differences of Canaanite ideolects. On the other hand, the repeatedly re-edited text of the Old Testament, harmonized again by the Masoretes, allows us to make statements about synchronic and diachronic differentiation within Hebrew only in a few places. Moreover, it should be remembered that S. SEGERT had already stated in *ArOr*, 29 (1961), p. 255 « Somit ergibt sich der Schluss, dass die in der Inschrift des Königs von Moab (d.h. Mesa-Stele) verwendete Sprache Hebräisch war, und zwar sein mitelpalästinensischer Dialekt ». Consequently, one could, if one wanted to develop these ideas further, construct a Phoenician — Israelite — Moabite *Koiné* for the ninth century B.C.!

Pyrgi and Spain<sup>(24)</sup>. This is a gratifying confirmation of the historical accounts of the foundation of Carthage. It also points out, however, that the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean was certainly no uniform phenomenon, but rather developed along several lines<sup>(25)</sup>. The later Punic inscriptions, which can scarcely be dated, show changes in the pronominal suffixes and in the prefix of the causative stem. These may perhaps only reflect orthographic variants, as the orthography gradually moved away from that of the mother-country, and which are certainly to be traced back to the *substrata* and *superstrata* (Latin). The division into Punic and Neo-Punic, made on the basis of the script<sup>(26)</sup> and arbitrarily considered to have been completed by 146 B.C. with the destruction of Carthage, brings no basic changes. The orthography, however, becomes more and more degenerate, so that Friedrich was certainly right in coining the term « Vulgärpunisch » (corresponding to vulgar Latin, such as is found in the inscriptions of North Africa), which unfortunately has not been taken up in subsequent publications.

This rather imprecise scribal tradition naturally had the consequence that dialectical differences could no longer be recognized. Still, these may be assumed for the various regions of North Africa, though they may not have been particularly uniform considering the varied substrata. Still, the adoption of Punic by the Numidian kingdom (Masinissa, raised in Carthage, had a Punic votive inscription placed in Malta<sup>(27)</sup>, the coinage used the Punic script and the grave inscription is bilingual) shows that a strong interaction may be supposed. Hiemsal, the great-grandson of Masinissa is supposed to have published in Punic himself<sup>(28)</sup>. It is by no means amazing that under Roman domination more and more foreign words and occasionally even foreign constructions are introduced. Finally, the Latino-Punic inscriptions allow us some insight as to how far the Punic phonology had diverged in the course of the centuries from that of the mother-country. Most notable are the changes in the vocalic system, which, however, can be investigated in detail only if the inscriptions have been collated and reliably edited. This is an important task for the future as well<sup>(29)</sup>, in the course of which one should not neglect the study of proper names, which can be found in large numbers in the Latin inscriptions of North Africa.

The Phoenician « dialects » are known to us in outline at least, but they still require our attention, for the precise knowledge of regional differences is of particu-

(24) Cf. G. GARBINI: *AION*, 37 (1977), p. 290. It must be stated by way of qualification, that it is this very arrangement which is problematic. In actual fact the results are *ex negativo*. Phenomena which can be observed neither in Byblos nor in Tyre nor in Sidon are attributed to the most northern, and also closest to Cyprus, coastal city. But Arvad itself has not produced any inscriptions, so that it is impossible to make any statements about its « dialect ».

(25) That is suggested not only by varying ancient reports, which undoubtedly represent different historical traditions, but also by the uneven distribution of inscriptions in particular places, also undoubtedly determined by transmission. The two very old inscriptions from Nora/Sardinia point to similar problems.

(26) For related questions see above note 11 and M. SZNYCER: *Atti del Secondo Congresso*, cit., p. 267, who differentiates three types of Neo-Punic scripts. I doubt, however, that type 1 (Carthage before 146 B.C.) can be separated from type 3 (« écriture néopunique d'Afrique »). The special position of the (monumental) script in Tripolitania must, of course, be recognized.

(27) *Cic. Verr.* 5, 103, cf. VALER. MAX. 1,1 ext. 2 and HAAN, p. 109<sup>3</sup>.

(28) HAAN, I, p. 331 f.

(29) Such a project has recently been started. See G. COACCI POLSELLI, *Per un corpus delle iscrizioni latino-puniche: Atti del 1° Convegno Italiano sul Vicino Oriente antico*, Roma 1978, pp. 231-41. I owe this reference to M. G. GUZZO AMADASI.

lar interest for the historical linguist and ultimately for the history of Phoenician expansion. Further research will also have to give more attention to other areas in which the characteristics of Phoenician which clearly contrast it to Hebrew manifest themselves. While it is true that the study of Phoenician has so developed in recent years that it may now claim an independent value, it is nevertheless also true that Phoenician is not to be understood without the help of Hebrew.

In the realm of morphology the characteristics of Phoenician have been the object of extensive discussion. Understandably, however, not all the phenomena have found satisfactory explanations. This is especially true of the pronominal suffixes, although the 3rd person singular suffix on nouns and verbs, for example, has received all the attention it merits as an indicator of dialectal differences<sup>(30)</sup>. Here we should single out the comprehensive treatment of suffixes by Segert in his « Grammar ». There he arranged them diachronically as well as in terms of syntax (the ties with the nominative/accusative or with the genitive).

For all that, the problem of the derivation and phonetic realization of the vulgar Punic suffixes in *-m* remains unsolved. The « Phönizisch-punische Grammatik » simply registers it without attempting an explanation. I.J. Gelb suggests, referring to Hamite, the introduction of a « consonantal glide », though this has been sharply dismissed by G. Garbini<sup>(31)</sup>. Segert opines that the suffix « can perhaps be explained by secondary nasalization of the final vowel or by analogy with the 3. pl. forms ». He would seem then to be none too certain about this, and this is perhaps the reason why the paragraph in his grammar to which he refers in his discussion of nasalization, does not even occur<sup>(32)</sup>. Still, Garbini seems to hold this view as well, arguing: « che la forma *-m* sia soltanto una variante fonetica di *-y* viene reso probabile dalla presenza dei due suffissi nella medesima iscrizione, Hofra 121 »<sup>(33)</sup>. Well, I cannot find an explanation for the remarkable fact that different suffix forms occur together in the same inscription, but I am still unhappy with a reconstruction which posits a suffix form *m̄*<sup>(34)</sup>, for which I can find no attestation, as well as the well attested form *-ō* (*qūlō* in El-Hofra). Indeed, in his reconstruction of the pronominal suffixes Segert goes so far as to interpret a writing *-y'* as a rendering of *-ay(y)a*<sup>(35)</sup>. He places (to be sure!) a question mark afterwards, but I would not shrink from reconstructing */-iyu/* here. In other words, a suffix in *-ī* which could somehow be nasalized does not exist in Punic. That would have been absurd, for it would have led to a hopeless confusion with the suffix of the 1st person singular. Moreover, the Latino-Punic inscriptions and the Poenulus prove beyond doubt that the *-m* suffix was pronounced *-im/-em*. I still cannot provide an explanation, however. The problem here, as in several other instan-

(30) F. M. CROSS - D. N. FREEDMAN, *The Pronominal Suffixes of the Third Person Singular in Phoenician*: JNES, 10 (1951), pp. 228-30; C. KRAHMALKOV, *Studies in Phoenician and Punic Grammar*: JSS, 15 (1970), p. 181 f., especially pp. 185-88; Id.: RSF, 2 (1974), pp. 39-43; recently G. GARBINI, *I dialetti del fenicio*: AION, 37 (1977), p. 286 ff. The scolding in note 9 is not applicable, since some of the hypotheses of Cross-Freedman were not taken up in PPG<sup>2</sup> with good reason, cf. provisionally BiOr, 27 (1970), p. 378.

(31) J. FRIEDRICH - W. RÖLLIG, PPG<sup>2</sup>, § 112, II c; I. J. GELB, *Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian*: AS, 18 (1969), p. 229 f., see G. GARBINI: AION, 33 (1973), p. 264.

(32) S. SEGERT, *Grammar*, § 51.25 refers to a non-existent § 35.54.

(33) G. GARBINI: AION, 37 (1977), p. 291, nota 28.

(34) Nowhere an alternative writing *-n*, which should be supposed, can be found.

(35) S. SEGERT, *Grammar*, § 41.222.

ces, can only be satisfactorily resolved when we have more material at our disposal, just as this form of the pronoun was actually recognized only with the appearance of the texts from El-Hofra.

Further investigation in the fields of syntax and stylistics can be carried out, however, even without new material. Encouraging starts have already been made in these areas.

François Bron rightly notes in his recent book<sup>(36)</sup>, that « L'existence même des temps convertis en phénico-punique est un problème qui mériterait une étude approfondie ». It is certainly remarkable that the use of the waw-consecutive, which is so characteristic of Hebrew, seems to have no real analogue in Phoenician<sup>(37)</sup>. This presents difficulties, since many attempts at explanation start with the premise that this is a phenomenon of later Canaanite, whereby a syntactic opposition developed after the disappearance of the suffix conjugation, which corresponds to tenses and aspects. It is not necessary to enter into this discussion here, since in this point Phoenician is basically different from Hebrew. Up to now, a perfect consecutive has been posited only for the Karatepe inscription, although with differing passages given as proof. Most recently F. Bron has cited the curse formula in *KAI* 26 III 12-14: « But if a king ... erases (*ymt* – imperfect) the name of Azitawadda from this gate and sets (*wšt* – perfect) another name on it ... ». He notes that the passage is not recorded in *PPG*<sup>2</sup>, although the commentary in *KAI* explains the form *wšt* as a perfect with waw-consecutive<sup>(38)</sup>. The same formula, « and sets (his) name on it » occurs again in line 16 of column III of the gate inscription and in col. IV 16 of the statue inscription. There, however, it reads, (line 17f.): « He speaks 'I will make (*p'l* – imperfect) an other statue and set (*wšt*) my name (*šmy*) on it... », although here, as usual, it can be divided in another way and read: « He speaks 'I will make another statue' and he set his name on it ». In each case the « Phönizisch-punische Grammatik » understands *št* as a participle, which is a formal possibility and which thus makes it unsuitable as an example of the waw-consecutive. Other examples which are sometimes adduced should be interpreted as the perfect used as optative, which I shall discuss directly. The only remaining example are the very homogeneous ones on the sacrificial table from Marseille, which are probably to be explained as the perfect with waw-consecutive after an imperfect. In this regard the remark in *PPG*<sup>2</sup> § 266.2, « Vielleicht liegt hier Erhaltung altertümlicher Formeln der juristischen bzw. religiösen Sprechweise vor, die der lebenden Sprache fremd geworden war », deserved more attention. This is supported by the possible occurrences of the imperfect with the waw-consecutive in Old-Phoenician inscriptions. An attestation in the *Aḥirōm* inscription<sup>(39)</sup> and a rather uncertain one on the archaic offering bowl from Kition<sup>(40)</sup> may perhaps be cited here, even if one cannot exclude the possibility

(36) F. BRON, *Recherches sur les inscriptions phéniciennes de Karatepe*, Genève/Paris 1979, p. 114 f.

(37) That is still valid despite the efforts of J.-G. FÉVRIER, *Le waw conversif en punique: Homages à A. Dupont-Sommer*, Paris 1971, pp. 191-84 dealing with some still not completely clear Punic inscriptions.

(38) F. BRON, *Recherches...*, cit., pp. 114, 113-17.

(39) *w'l mlk ... 'ly gbl wygl 'rn zn* « and if a king came to Byblos and uncovered this sarcophagus... » *KAI* 1,2. See also W. GROSS, *Verbalform und Funktion «wayyitqol»*, 1976, p. 23, nota 20.

(40) *ml š'r z glb wyppg[']* « ML cut this hair and pray[ed ... Astarte ...] ». See most recently, M. G. GUZZO AMADASI, *Fouilles de Kition III. Inscriptions phéniciennes*, Nicosia 1977, p. 149 ff., line 1, with a discussion of various other reading suggestions.



of other interpretations. In general, however, it must be maintained, that this construction, which was so popular and productive in Hebrew, certainly did not have the same importance in Phoenician-Punic. It can thus be doubted that this played any decisive role in the Phoenician tense system.

Another complex which needs a comprehensive analysis is the usage of expressions for wish and prohibition in Phoenician-Punic. PPG<sup>2</sup> noted four types of expression of this nature, though there are more, the nuances of which still need to be better understood.

1. The wish can be expressed by a nominal sentence. This occurs in the Pyrgi inscription: « and the years for the votive image ... may the years be (so numerous) as these stars! » (41). The normal use of the nominal sentence as an expression of duration is the decisive factor here for the choice of construction. Parallels in Hebrew are well known, so that in this instance we are not faced with a peculiarity of Phoenician.

2. The wish is expressed relatively frequently by the perfect in the sense of a precative: « May Baal bless (*brk*) ... Azitawadda... » « and may this city enjoy a satiety of wine (*wkn hqrt z...*) »; or in the common formula « may he hear his call, bless him, etc... (*šm' gly brky* or the like). In these instances the nuance was obviously that of durative effect in the future. This emerges from the fact that the twice attested formula: « and may Tinnit be the judge (*špt*) of the spirit of this man » (42) is replaced once by the comparable formula « that man ... Tinnit will strangle (*nkst*) » (43), where the participle is found in place of the usual finite verbal form.

3. Furthermore, the wish can be expressed by the simple imperfect (jussive): « may the mistress of Byblos bless (*tbrk*) Jeḥaumilk » (44) or — the normal blessing formula in the dedication inscriptions — may they (the gods) bless (*ybrk'*) him »; or — analogous to the curse formula in the inscription cited above — « may Baal Ḥamon extirpate (*yqsy'*) him » (45). How the nuance here differs from that of the perfect, however, is difficult to say. One might imagine that the intention was to give the nuance of a longer stretch in the future, which fits with the use of 'l for the negative: « may the Muškabim not honour the Ba'ririm (*'l ykbd*) » (46) or « may they not be buried in a grave (*'l yqbr*) » (47).

4. The cohortative with the suffix *-n* (corresponding to Hebrew *-nā'*) is attested at least once: « may I get the silver (*'pqn hksp*) » (48). It is thus clear that it was not unknown in Phoenician, although it never found true expression there due to the uniformity of the inscriptions.

5. Finally, the wish was expressed by the proclitic *l-* with the imperfect (precative). This is attested several times in Punic, though not, as was supposed in PPG<sup>2</sup>

(41) *wšnt lm'š ... šnt km hkkbm 'l* KAI 277, 9-11.

(42) CIS I 3785 = KAI 79, 10f.; 4937,3ff. cf. 5632,6 f. (subject Baal-Ḥamon).

(43) CIS I 3783,6 f.

(44) KAI 10,8.

(45) CIS I 3784,2 f.

(46) KAI 24,14.

(47) KAI 14,8.

(48) KAI 50,3.

in the Old Phoenician of the first incantation text from Arslan Taş<sup>(49)</sup>. In Punic it is found in the blessing formula « may he hear (*lyšm'*) », and here it would seem to me that several writings which might be interpreted as perfects are simply orthographically inexact or incorrect renderings of the imperfect. Which nuance this form was supposed to express remains unclear at present.

6. The potentialis, i.e. the use of a non-proclitic *li/lu* with the imperfect is known from Plautus: « *li phocaneth yth bynuthi* » — « If I would just find my daughter! »<sup>(50)</sup>.

It should be clear from these few sketches that, despite the paucity of material, quite a few constructions can be isolated, which would repay a broader comparative study, possibly in connexion with a study of interrogatives, interjections and negations.

In the use of the infinitive a significant difference can now be seen in comparison to Hebrew, especially after the discovery of the Karatepe inscription. That is the substitution of an infinitive absolute with following 1st person singular independent pronoun for a finite verbal form at the beginning of a sentence. The long, heated discussion about this form need not be recapitulated here, especially since it has just been comprehensively treated by F. Bron<sup>(51)</sup>. As S. Segert emphasizes, it should be noted that the appending of a suffix on the infinitive absolute brings with it the syntactically unusual feature, that a suffix can thus be attached to a noun used adverbially<sup>(52)</sup>. This phenomenon is of special interest for historical linguistics in that analogous usages can be found in the Canaanite of the Amarna period as well as in Ugarit, though not in « classical » Hebrew. There it appears first in Qoheleth and in the book of Esther. Thus the Phoenician tradition which stretches from the ninth to fifth century B.C., provides a connecting link of sorts. This construction has not yet been attested in Punic. The reason may be that there we lack the inscriptions with declarative historical phrases, where this construction was specially preferred.

Moreover, it is interesting that in some instances Phoenician uses a different propositional government than the Hebrew, examples of which can again be found in the Karatepe inscription, among others. For the future the further lexical and grammatical development of Ugaritic may provide an aid in letting the deviating usages of Phoenician stand out more clearly. In principle, however, the differences are so great no direct comparisons are possible.

Still, there is one area which can profit from a future elucidation of Ugaritic and that is Phoenician stylistics. It goes without saying that style and syntax cannot be viewed separately from one another. Moreover, it is obvious that the laconic dedicatory inscriptions with their formulaic contents can contribute little to a study of Phoenician and Punic stylistics. On the other hand, the historical inscriptions in Phoenician, especially those of Aḥirōm, Kilamuwa and Azitawadda, of Jeḥaumilk and Ešmunazar

(49) KAI 27,22 f in PPG<sup>2</sup> § 317,2b, see W. RÖLLIG: *NESE*, 2 1976), p. 25 f.

(50) *Poen.* 932, see M. SZNYCER, *cit.*, p. 61 f.

(51) F. BRON, *cit.*, pp. 143-46.

(52) S. SEGERT, *Grammar*, § 64.611.1.

have just recently been the object of increased interest, which has brought about various interesting interpretations with regard to composition and language<sup>(53)</sup>.

I am sure, that the systematic observation of stylistic peculiarities, the composition of the inscriptions — and this is true especially for Punic and Neo-Punic — will advance our understanding of both, grammar and content. And so sometime in the future — and I hope in the not so distant future — our *illustri colleghi* and we shall be clear what we mean when we speak of the « Phoenician language ».

(53) Cf. e.g. J. C. GREENFIELD, *Scripture and Inscription: The Literary and Rhetorical Element in Some Early Phoenician Inscriptions: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of W. F. Albright*, Baltimore/London 1971, pp. 253-68; Id., *The Zakir Inscription and the Danklied: Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, 1 (1971), pp. 174-91; T. COLLINS, *The Kilamuwa Inscription — a Phoenician Poem*: *WO*, 6 (1971-72), pp. 181-88; G. GARBINI, *Analisi di iscrizioni fenicie*: *AION*, 37 (1977), pp. 403-16.