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Munuscula amicitiae phoenicia et punica

Mélanges d'épigraphie et de philologie phénico-puniques
offerts à
Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo

édités par

Riccardo Contini et Felice Israel

**The inscription from the first year of King Bodashtart
of Sidon's reign: *CIS I, 4***

(TAB. XII)

José Á. ZAMORA¹

The inscriptions of King Bodashtart of Sidon constitute a famous epigraphic group, in many aspects still the object of disagreement. The publication of new readings, the discovery of new information about a lost inscription of the king, and the application of new techniques to the old documentation enable us to review the epigraphic group and study the history of his reign anew. In this first work, we have undertaken to study the Bodashtart inscription known as *CIS I, 4* and by so doing wish to pay tribute to Prof. Amadasi, to whom the specialists in Phoenician epigraphy shall be eternally indebted.

1. The *CIS I, 4* inscription

The *CIS I, 4* inscription, engraved on the surface of an architectonic limestone block², was found in 1858, seemingly in a wall near the Lebanese town of Saida (the former Sidon). Although the inscription was well made, the block was damaged on three of its sides (affecting, above all, the top and bottom of the text, as well as its left side). Donated by Melchior de Vogüé, it is now kept in the Louvre (AO 4838).

The first publication regarding the document is one by Vogüé himself in 1860³. The inscription was among the first of those catalogued by the *CIS* (with an extremely good quality reproduction⁴, fig. 1a) and is, in fact,

¹ The author is a "Ramón y Cajal" researcher (CSIC). This paper is part of the ongoing research project HUM2005-03852 of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science.

² Recent description in P. Bordreuil, "Dédicace du roi de Sidon Bodashtart", in: E. Gubel (et al.), *Art phénicien. La sculpture de tradition phénicienne* (Département des antiquités orientales du Musée du Louvre: Catalogue; Paris 2002) 80-81.

³ M. de Vogüé, *Mémoire sur une nouvelle inscription phénicienne* (Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, t. VI, 1^{re} partie; Paris 1860).

⁴ *CIS I, 4 (Sidoniensis secunda)*, Tab. III 4. Given its age (it belongs to a moment not too far removed from when the piece was discovered) we shall use the reproduction — together with the rest of the documentation provided by the old editions — as an added aid to assessment; given its quality, we shall use it as the main base for the digital process and graphic study.

included in the main epigraphic repertoires and anthologies⁵. It has been studied by several different authors⁶, who have been faced with various problems of reading and interpretation. A recent re-edition⁷ includes new results contrasting with the most common readings and interpretations.

2. The palaeography

Despite the damage to the sides of the block, the surface of the epigraphic field appeared to be in relatively good condition when it was discovered. Where the stone was not broken the text was clearly legible, maintaining great internal coherence (fig. 1). It is possible to observe certain singular palaeographic characteristics in the inscription which would appear to distinguish it from the other remaining ones from the time of Bodashtart's reign⁸. We shall therefore study the palaeography of the whole in a future work, after having studied the rest of the documents.

3. The legible parts

Much of the text was thus clearly legible practically from the moment it was first unearthed. This was, for example, the (integrated) reading of the *CIS*: 1) *byrḥ* [-]mp['] *bšṯ m[lk]* 2) *y mlk hd'štrt mlk* 3) *šdnm kbn bd'štrt* 4) *mlk šdnm 'yt šrn 'r[s]* 5) *[z] l[*]ly l'štrt*.

⁵ In addition to *CIS* I, 4, see M. Lidzbarski, *KI* n° 10, 20-21 and *ESE* II 53; or G. A. Cooke, *TNSI* 40-42. Not present e.g. in *KAI* 17 ss., Gibson, *TSSI* III 101 ss. or P. Magnanini, *Le iscrizioni fenicie dell'Oriente* (Roma 1973) 3 ss.

⁶ *CIS* quotes almost a dozen works. After those early contributions, see e.g. G. Hoffmann, *Über einige phönikische Inschriften* (Abhand. der König. Gesell. der Wissen. zu Göttingen 36; Göttingen 1889) 58-59; A. Poebel, *Das appositionell bestimmte Pronomen der 1. Pers. Sing. in den westsemitischen Inschriften und im Alten Testament* (AS 3; Chicago 1932) 21 n. 1; A. van den Branden, "Notes phéniciennes", *BMB* 13 (1956) 90; G. Garbini, "Analisi di iscrizioni fenicie", *AION* 37 (1977) 409. See also N. Jidejian, *Sidon through the ages* (Beirut 1971) 58. During the last two decades, the articles by J. Elayi, *Sidon, cité autonome de l'empire perse* (Paris 1989) 41, 57-60 and by P. Bordreuil, "Bulletin d'antiquités archéologiques du Levant inédites ou méconnues, VI", *Syria* 67 (1990) 500-502, fig. 18 should be pointed out, as well as M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, "Varia Phoenicia", *RSF* 20 (1992) 98-101; C. Bonnet, "Phénicien *šrn* = accadien *šurinnu*? À propos de l'inscription de Bodashtart *CIS* I 4", *Or* 64 (1995) 214-222 (and C. Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* [Roma 1995] 33-34); E. Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (OLA 64; Louvain 1995) 135-136; M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, "Astarte fenicia e la sua diffusione in base alla documentazione epigrafica", in: A. González - G. Matilla - A. Egea (eds.), *El Mundo Púnico: Religión, antropología y cultura material* (Estudios Orientales 6; Murcia 2004) 48-49.

⁷ In the aforementioned catalogue of Phoenician art in the Louvre Museum, E. Gubel, *Art phénicien*, the inscription was edited by P. Bordreuil; see note 2.

⁸ The most detailed study of the palaeography of the group is still the one by J. B. Peckham, *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts* (Cambridge Mass. 1968) 87-101.

The text commemorates the dedication to Astarte by Bodashtart, “king of the Sidonians”⁹, of a certain construction (following the basic sense of the verb *bn*¹⁰). What had been built and dedicated was called *šrn* (noun introduced by a clear accusative mark), a term that is still under discussion¹¹. As a construction, what came to mind was a wall, a part of a building or something similar¹², even a neighbourhood of the city or, of course, a temple or sanctuary¹³. Given the special presence of the toponym *šrn* in the inscription of Eshmunazar II¹⁴, it was also thought that what appeared in the epigraph might be this geographic name or, in its etymological sense, the mention of an “esplanade” or “plain”¹⁵. It has also been

⁹ The problems involved in establishing the succession and chronology of the Sidonian dynasty during the Persian age, and especially those affecting the position and history of Bodashtart’s reign, will be dealt with in a later work. Regarding the expression *mlk šdnm* and its possible difficulties (in essence, the absence of *-y-* in *šdnm*), see Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 48, n. 23; *PPG* 147.

¹⁰ The verb is introduced, as in the Awali River inscription, by the conjunction *k* (see notes 60-62). It was initially read as *wbn* (de Vogüé, *Mémoire*) and, although *CIS* had already read it correctly as *kbn* (“difficillimum ... *wbn* nec legitur nec congruum est”), from time to time, differing readings and interpretations have since been put forward — trying to find, above all, another kind of structure for the text, even in recent times: see e.g. Elayi, *Sidon* 58-59: *kbl*; P. Bordreuil, “À propos de la généalogie de Bodashtart”, *Trans* 3 (1990) 93-94 and *Syria* 67, 501: *bn*, without *k* (in order to understand a new filiation, actually following some misinterpretations by Dunand). However, the *k* and the *n* are clear in all the reproductions and are coherent with the rest of the signs in the text. Moreover, the interpretations resulting from the alternative readings are inconclusive (see A. Lemaire, “Épigraphie”, *Trans* 4 [1991] 114; Amadasi, *RSF* 20, 99-101; Bonnet, *Or* 64, 216-217). Subsequent reinterpretations of *kbn* with a syntactic or morphological base are not necessary.

¹¹ *CIS* had earlier collected the basic possibilities (“murum ... Saronem ... planities”). Other early interpretations limited themselves, without contextualising, to known Semitic terms (“notre prince”) moving among conjectures in a general manner later on. See references e.g. in Elayi, *Sidon* 59.

¹² Taking into account Hebrew *šwr* and Aramaic *šr / šwr* or ‘*šrn*’. These terms or similar words do not appear in Phoenician (see Bonnet, *Or* 64, 217, n. 20, with references; the author reminds us of the existence of the unrelated term *qr*, “wall”, in *KAI* 7) but a common root could well have given rise to related nouns in Phoenician as well, not yet attested. Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 49, n. 32 uses the same etymology to defend the possibility “enclosure” (“recinto”) and, in any case, to support the idea that it has to do with a construction.

¹³ See e.g. Lidzbarski, *KI* 20-21; *ESE* II 53, who interpreted *šrn* as part of the proper name of the sanctuary (“Saron ist unser Land!”), related to what was accomplished by the monarchs; see next note); also Garbini, *AION* 37, 409 (“edificio sacro”) or Amadasi, in: *El mundo púnico* 48 (“uno specifico tipo di costruzione dedicato ad Astarte in un quartiere preciso”).

¹⁴ *KAI* 14: 19 *bšd šrn*, the “open land” or plain of *šrn*. Dor and Joppa, “which are in the plain of Sharon”, were ceded to Sidon by the Persian King “as a reward for the striking deeds which I [= Eshmunazar] performed” (l. 18-19).

¹⁵ See e.g. *CIS* I, 4 and Cooke, *TNSI* 41 (which justified the use of *bn*, by means of biblical parallels, understanding “build the plain” in the sense of “build a city on the plain”). More recently Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses* 64, 136 directly translates *šrn* “esplanade”. Van den Branden, *BMB* 13, 90 also suggests a terrain, but by mentioning its delimiting milestones (by means of Akkadian parallels). Elayi, *Sidon* 60-61 (and now in “An Updated Chronology of the Reigns of Phoenician Kings during the Persian Period (539-333 BCE)”, *Trans* 32 [2006] 30: “he offered to Ashtart the Sharon plain”), clearly proposes the toponym.

suggested that it might refer to a commemorative object¹⁶. As there are no new data, either direct or indirect, the question must be considered to be as yet undecided, although the meaning of the so-called *šrn* as a monumental structure¹⁷ seems to be clear. The possibility of the word being qualified by the terms following it (in damaged parts of the block) will bring us back to the problem.

4. The damaged parts: the dating formula and its difficulties

The damage sustained by the initial part of the inscription made it difficult to read from the time the block was first discovered. The beginning of a dating formula was clear (as in the Eshmunazar II inscription). Although the first signs of the text (*byrh*) were not free from damage, the formula made it possible to confirm the mention of a month, with an incomplete name (only the sequence *mp* was clearly legible) and the later mention of the corresponding year, also in a fragmentary context.

In 1893, a Phoenician inscription discovered in Lapethos (*KAI* 43) provided the complete attestation of a month name *mp'*¹⁸. From then on, most authors considered that the month mentioned was logically *mp'*¹⁹. In any case, the reading must be taken as a restoration: The older readings and photographs show that, even shortly after the piece was discovered, it was almost impossible to discern any clear strokes in this area of the inscription. The only thing that is clear is that there is an available space both before and after the visible signs²⁰. Less clear, but discernible, is the existence of some traces of incisions in the space following the letter *p*, which would support the existence of a grapheme in origin; the traces

¹⁶ E.g. a kind of "standard". Bonnet, *Or* 64, 214-222 (and *Astarté* 33-34 as well). See note 51.

¹⁷ In this sense, we may have to accept the relation of the term with the root of the Hebrew and Aramaic parallels; see note 12.

¹⁸ Other inscriptions (*KAI* 110, 137) attested *mp' lpyv*, probably an intercalary month added periodically to the calendar (just before *mp'*). With regard to our knowledge of the months of the Phoenician calendar, see R. R. Stieglitz, "The Phoenician-Punic Calendar", in: *Actas del IV Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos (Cádiz, 2 al 6 de Octubre de 1995)*, Vol. II (Cádiz 2000) 691-695 and "The Phoenician-Punic Menology", in: M. Lubetski - C. Gottlieb - Sh. Keller (eds.), *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World. A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon (JSOT Suppl 273; Sheffield 1998)* 211-221.

¹⁹ Among first studies, see *CIS* ("post *mp* fere certum est") and then e.g. Lidzbarski, *ESE* II 53. The reading or integration is obviously maintained in recent collations; see Elayi, *Sidon* 41 or again Bonnet, *Or* 64, 215. Bordreuil's new contribution only makes mention of the existence of an indeterminate sign preceding and another following the sequence *mp*.

²⁰ The rest of the inscription does not use spaces between letters as word-dividers. However, this does not in itself ensure the continuous presence of signs (i. e., without spaces between them) considering that we do find, from time to time, spaces between graphemes (even within the same word; see I. 3, *bd'šrt*) due, perhaps, to difficulties encountered when incising.

could be compatible with the reading', but there is actually no subsequent confirmation of this.

The mention of the year was also obscure from the time the document was unearthed. The simplest interpretation of the legible *bšt* suggested the "year one"²¹. Following this, one would expect to find, not a letter, but rather a numerical sign (as some commentators thought they saw and as Bordreuil's last reading also contemplates) and the rest of a formula parallel to those already known. As was pointed out by former readings and is also noted by the new one, it was equally possible to read a grapheme *m* following *bšt*, opening the door to the presence between the lines 1 and 2 of the noun *mlky*²², typical of these formulae. This possibility, which is not identical to the formulae known in the contemporary inscriptions, has been questioned for that reason²³.

The Sidonian epigraphy of the times provides us with the best parallels. This part of the dating formula is clearly visible in one of the recently found photographs of the inscription formerly located in the valley of the Awali river²⁴: *bšnt šb' III III I lmlky*. As can be seen, following the indication of the years (*šnt*, in plural) is the explicit numeral (*šb'*) and the equivalent numerical signs (*III III I*), followed by the mention, with a preposition, of what is usually understood to be the (suffixed) word "reign" (*l-mlk-y*). This occurrence may be considered to be the formula in its more complete form. The formula at the beginning of the Eshmunazar II inscription is almost identical to this one: *bšnt 'sr w'rb' — III I lmlky* (prep. *b* + "year" (pl.) + numeral + numerical signs + prep. *l* + *mlk-y*). In the *CIS* I, 4 inscription, we could suppose that the mention, in the singular, of *št* renders the numeral "one" unnecessary²⁵. But, what about the numerical sign, the figure, the vertical line that stands for "1"? As is clearly visible

²¹ See again *CIS* or e.g. Lidzbarski, *ESE* II 53.

²² See *CIS* ("etenim post *bšt* cifra non est; quae remanent vestigia *mlk* efficiunt"). Among modern works, see e.g. Elayi, *Sidon* 57 or Bonnet, *Or* 64, 215-216, both with direct analysis of the piece (and, in the case of Elayi, also with the help of an old *estampage* of the Académie).

²³ Even by Bordreuil himself: "Toutefois, si 'année' de règne est suivie d'un millésime on devrait avoir écrit LMLKY et pas comme ici MLKY". See *CIS*: "nota *l* deesse".

²⁴ See P. Xella - J. Á. Zamora, "Une nouvelle inscription de Bodashtart, roi de Sidon, sur la rive du Nahr al-Awwāli près de Bustān eš-Sēh", *BAAL* 8 (2004) 273-300 and now M. G. Amadasi Guzzo et al., "Prospection épigraphique et archéologique dans la région du Nahr al-Awali (Saïda/Sidon)", *BAAL* 10 (2006), in the press; P. Xella - J. Á. Zamora, "Nouveaux documents phéniciens du sanctuaire d'Eshmoun à Bustan esh-Sheikh (Sidon)", in: A. M. Arruda (ed.), *Proceedings of the VI^e International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies* (Lisbon, in the press).

²⁵ In accordance with some external parallels in similar expressions (see note 27 below) but also in accordance with the Levantine use of the singular and dual forms of nouns as equivalent to numerals "one" or "two", already shown in the epigraphy of the Late Bronze Age (see e.g. in Ugarit J. W. Wesselius, "Some regularities in the Ugaritic administrative texts", *UF* 12 [1980] 448-450). See common dating uses in Phoenician in *PPG*³ 221 as well.

in the older photographs and as can still be recognised on the inscription²⁶, two vertical strokes (the second one joining up with the upward stroke of a *lamed* of the second line) follow *št*. Indeed, it could be supposed that the figure one (1) appears. However, it looks more as if the two strokes that follow the mention of the year correspond to an *m*.

There are several arguments for this: first of all, the perfect coherence of the strokes that can be observed in the oldest photos with the stroke of the other *m*'s of the inscription (cf. fig. 1b-c). Secondly, the morphological coherence of the reading, considering that the preposition *l* is definitely missing in this space (even reading the figure 1), an absence that can only be understood if the following word is directly joined by a *constructus* chain to the mention of the year²⁷. The expected word is, of course, *mlky*, essential to the formula. As has already been suggested, its final sense is clarified here: *bšt m[lk]y* (with the *y* in the following line), "in the year (one) of his reign", or "of his enthronement"²⁸. A bit of a stroke that still remains and that can be seen in the old photos must correspond to the bottom of the *k*, as the comparison with the different *mlk* sequences of the text allows us to suggest. The reading could therefore be *m[l]ky*²⁹ (always with the *y* in the next line).

5. Mention of the king

Special mention should be made of the absence of Bodashtart's filiation in *CIS* I, 4. In the dating, the king is named as *mlk bd'štrt mlk šdnm*; as the subject of the phrase his presence is even more brief: *bd'štrt mlk šdnm*. In the Awali inscription (both in the dating and also when mentioning the king as subject) and in the Bustān eš-Šēḥ inscriptions (only in the mention of the king as subject, given that there is no dating) the part

²⁶ As is pointed out not only by those in favour of the reading *št mlky*, but also by Bordreuil himself, in: *Art phénicienne* 80 (BŠT¹/M¹[LK]).

²⁷ *CIS* compares the absence of the numeral with the equivalent dating forms of the *Assyrian annals* ("In titulis assyriis, aiunt annum primum Regis item sine cifra notari"), a relationship accepted by some authors (see e.g. Elayi, *Sidon* 58, who also quotes a biblical parallel often related to these inscriptions: 2 Kings 25, 27: *bšnt mlkw*).

²⁸ Bonnet, *Or* 64, 216 n. 9: "On notera que, si l'on suit notre interprétation, le verbe phénicien *mlk* aurait ici le sens non pas de 'régner', mais de 'devenir roi'." See also Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 48, who translates "nell'anno della sua ascesa al trono (lett. del suo diventare re)". This is perhaps the best explanation for the absence of the numerical sign "1" (note e.g. that it is present in the dating formula of the Milkyaton inscription from Kition, *št l lmlky*, where there is a *lamed*! See M. Yon - M. Szymer, "Une inscription phénicienne royale de Kition (Chypre)", *CRAI* 1991, 805). In any case, the sense was clear almost from the beginning, see e.g. *CIS*: "*št mlky* annum videtur designare quo regnare coepit". See e.g. Cooke, *TNSI* 40, as well.

²⁹ Bonnet, *Or* 64, 215 also reads remains of the *l* from *mlky*, which may indeed make it possible to identify in the *CIS* photograph, but this is not clear.

corresponding to the filiation is included³⁰, in a peculiar fashion: no mention is made of the father, but rather of Bodashtart's grandfather, King Eshmunazar: *mlk bd'štrt mlk šdnm bn bn mlk 'šmn'zr mlk šdnm*. This fact, as has been pointed out so many times, reflects Bodashtart's secondary position in the line of Sidonian succession³¹. The absence of the sequence *bn bn mlk 'šmn'zr mlk šdnm* in *CIS* I, 4 must perhaps be explained by the fact that we are dealing with an inscription carved shortly after the enthroning of the king. Perhaps the mention of Bodashtart's grandfather was not yet necessary; perhaps it was still a daring formula. The absence, in any case, seems to match the general preference of the author or authors of this inscription for brief formulae, which is evident in the fact that the noun *mlk* is not present before the name of the king in the subject syntagma. In any case, this greater brevity and simplicity (when flaunting the official title of the king), as opposed to the rest of the inscriptions of the reign, all later ones, must be taken note of³².

In theory, it is possible to propose a more drastic solution for these peculiarities of *CIS* I, 4, supposing that the text is not complete to its left³³. However, the almost certain mounting of *mlky* between lines 1-2³⁴ proves that, at least in the first line, the text did not make use of extra space to the left of what remains. Should any attempt be made to justify this, not even the best restoration proposals could make the inscription present its formulae in a way that would be identical to the rest of the documents (given the already mentioned absence of *mlk* before Bodashtart's second appearance). Moreover, it is not likely that an inscription that has lost a significant part of its text could maintain the coherence that *CIS* I, 4 presents in its present state.

³⁰ In fact, the king is mentioned in exactly the same way both in the Awali River inscription and in all those in the Bustān eš-Šēḥ temple (with a slight variance in some of these latter inscriptions, which we shall come back to in a later work): *mlk bd'štrt mlk šdnm bn bn mlk 'šmn'zr mlk šdnm*.

³¹ And his wish to underline his legitimacy as a direct descendant of, if not the preceding monarch, some other prestigious ancestor. See note 9.

³² See again *CIS*: "Titulum a sacerdotibus non ab ipso rege scriptum fuisse testantur et lapidis rudis aspectus et regiae genealogiae absentia et genus dicendi simplex."

³³ We may suppose that the original block was of a larger size (its left side, remember, was damaged) or, even better, that a second block existed, placed to the left of the one we know. In that case, it would seem possible to reconstruct: (2) ... *mlk bd'štrt mlk [šdnm bn bn mlk 'šmn'zr mlk]* (3) *šdnm kbn bd'štrt [mlk šdnm bn bn mlk 'šmn'zr]* (4) *mlk šdnm* ... This would also provide us with extra space to solve the problems of lines 4-5. A similar restoration was suggested by Amadasi, *RSF* 20, 101.

³⁴ It is possible to suppose a different reading of the end of line 1, which would allow for a longer dating formula (taking into account, as well, the determining factors of the *št* — not *šnt* — form). But it must be admitted that such a reading and interpretation are highly improbable.

6. The damaged parts: the final expression and its difficulties

The greatest divergence between the traditional readings and interpretations and the most recent one is found in the last line. Badly damaged, only the final mention of Astarte was certain from the moment of its discovery. The sequence that preceded Astarte could soon be reintegrated as *l[']ly*, a reference to the goddess, not surprising in Phoenician, which coincides with the formula of dedication to Eshmun in the Bodashtart inscriptions in Bustān eš-Šēḥ³⁵. In what precedes this expression, the stone, in addition to some simple superficial damage, suffers a true loss of fragments. Some authors have suggested that a *z* could be incised in this area³⁶. Interpreted as a postponed demonstrative, this grapheme finds support in the other inscriptions of the king, albeit not without some difficulties³⁷. Further back in the text, at the end of line 4, the recent reading by Bordreuil³⁸ now distinguishes only two clear characters (*'r*), ruling out the reading or integration *'rṣ*, once commonly accepted³⁹ and maintained in the latest collations and interpretations⁴⁰. We can therefore consider that the textual problems of the final expression could begin here.

These problems have given rise to proposals that, in fact, demand that the whole text of the epigraph be reinterpreted. In his recent proposal, Bordreuil felt that it was necessary to suppose that there was a second verb in the damaged end part. He resorts to a well-known term, *ndr*, present as a verbal form in common formulae in other Phoenician and Punic documental groups (though not in the Bodashtart inscriptions nor in others close to them in time or place). The author believes that it is possible to read, in the present condition of the piece, the final two signs of the verb (though incomplete)⁴¹. However, the visible marks do not seem to be

³⁵ See uses and references (without *CIS* 1, 4) in *DNWSI* 53-55.

³⁶ Among recent collations, Elayi, *Sidon* 57-60 does not propose any readings for the space before *l'ly* (for her, *l/n-ly*). However, shortly after that, Amadasi (*RSF* 20, 99-100) thought there might have been a *z* (see Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 48 as well) and Bonnet (*Or* 64, 215-217) actually reads the *z*.

³⁷ On the one hand, reconstructing or reading only one *z*, there would appear to be graphemes missing (the *lacuna* is wider than the single *z* letter); on the other, the resulting expression is not an exact parallel to the other inscriptions, because there the demonstrative has clearly been placed following the designated object, rather than following a *constructus* chain (which could, possibly, determine in this case the noun by itself, "substituting" the postponed demonstrative, typical of this group of texts).

³⁸ See again *Art phénicien* 80.

³⁹ See *CIS*, *'r[ṣ]* or Lidzbarski, *ESE* II 53, for example.

⁴⁰ See the aforementioned readings (for example, the collations quoted in note 36) and discussion presented below.

⁴¹ The author, in any case, also considers the presence of the verb *bn*, although his final preference is for *ndr* (in: *Art Phénicien* 81). The linguistic considerations seem to be the fundamental basis for his suggestion.

enough to allow for such a reading, nor do they in the old photographs, and the new reading also gives rise to interpretative difficulties. As we shall see once again in future works, the comparison between the structures of the different Bodashtart epigraphs suggests that the sole, main verb in the text is *bn* (introduced by the conjunction *k*, as in other cases where the verb follows the dating formula). There is no need to suppose the existence of another verb. Including it, on the contrary, complicates the syntax and marks the text out from the contemporary documents. The structure of the text indicates that, between the main verb *bn* and the mention of the divinity of the dedication (introduced by the preposition *l'*⁴²) the only thing that appeared was the syntagma corresponding to the object of the dedication (introduced by the accusative marker *'yft*). As can be seen in the other inscriptions, this is not the place to introduce added information nor are there any elements (prepositions, conjunctions) that would lead us to believe that that is necessary. The terms that follow the word *šrn* form, with it, the syntagma that is the direct object of the sentence.

Some of those who studied the inscription proposed this kind of solution⁴³. For example Krahmalkov supposed that, following *šrn*, there should be a nominal complement to characterise the matter of the object of the dedication⁴⁴. Lipiński restored the graphemes *ym* at the beginning of line 5 in order to form *'rš ym*, “land-by-the-sea”, the name of one of the city districts⁴⁵. Closely similar is Amadasi’s proposal⁴⁶, which prefers to maintain, nonetheless, the *z* reading in line 5. She translates *šrn 'rš [ym] ž*⁴⁷ “questo *šrn* del paese / [del mare?]”⁴⁸. Indeed, the integration of *ym* at the be-

⁴² In the other Bodashtart inscriptions, the final dedication formulae (to Eshmun) place only *l'lv* before the theonym with no other titles of respect. This was likely the same with Astarte in *CIS I*, 4.

⁴³ Even in the abstract, see e.g. Bonnet, *Or* 64, 217: “cette lacune contenait sans doute une précision relative au *šrn 'rš* ou plus particulièrement à l’un des deux termes qui le composent, un adjectif ou un substantif génitif, impossible à déterminer.”

⁴⁴ He suggested reconstructing *šrn 'r[ž z]*, where *šrn* would be an object or construction made of cedar, ‘rz. Ch. R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (OLA 90; Leuven 2000) 481 (s.v. *šrn* I “restoration and translation problematic”, sic). However, see shortly after, Ch. R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Grammar* (HOS 54; Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001) 287: *šrn 'r[s dgn]* “the Sharon, the reg[ion] of grain”.

⁴⁵ Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses* 64, 135-136, with no supporting argument, though obviously based on *KAI* 14: 16. See now Lipiński, *Itineraria* 127, 294 (“the harbour district bears the name *šdn 'rš ym* or *šdn ym*, “Sidon-(Land-)by-the-Sea”). According to the author, Bodashtart must have enlarged a sanctuary to Astarte built by his ancestors in the area, as proved by the Eshmunazar inscription.

⁴⁶ Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 48-49.

⁴⁷ The transcription of Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 48 apparently contains a typographical error (in the use of the “/” character), but the author’s opinion is clear.

⁴⁸ Amadasi suggests that it has to do with a specific cultic place, basing this idea as well on the information provided by the inscription of Eshmunazar’s sarcophagus. She even proposes reinterpreting this text, restoring *KAI* 14: 16 [*šrn 'štr]t b'rš ym* (sic; actually, the text presents *bšdn 'rš ym*) “the *šrn* of Astarte in the Land-by-the-Sea”, where what is normally restored is

ginning of the last line had already been proposed by Levy and Schlottmann in the 19th cent., but was rejected by *CIS* shortly after and subsequently almost forgotten (only Torrey seemed to defend it) until recent times⁴⁹. It would therefore be advisable to follow this path.

7. Epigraphic possibilities and textual parallels

Let us study, then, the material possibilities of this part of the piece through the old photographs and let us look at the different possibilities for reading and interpretation in the light of the content of the other Sidonian epigraphs of the time. Strictly speaking, the gap commences at the end of line 4. Following 'r, a part of a possible y is clearly visible in the oldest photographs (and even partially in the most recent ones). The sign, as it appears in other parts of the text (first sign in l. 3, fourth sign in l. 4), fits well with the strokes that have been preserved (cf. fig. 1b). The reading of 'ry would thus seem to be still valid⁵⁰. We must therefore be dealing with the term "land", "country" (or related senses). As we said, the absence of a preposition must link it (given that there are no arguments in favour of a change of phrase) to the syntagma introduced by the accusative marker⁵¹ and the successive term must be understood together with it.

At the beginning of l. 5, and considering the size of the signs in the rest of the inscription, the damaged space must have contained three letters

[*br 'str*]t... "the temple of Astarte...". Thus, the same term would appear in two diverse documents referring to the same cultic place with a specific name. The author believes that the term *šrn* may also be present in the inscription of the so-called "throne of Astarte" (*KAI* 17), a later document (2nd century BCE) from Tyre; see Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 49. There, some of the possible objections to her restitution of *KAI* 14 are already anticipated (and rejected; *ibid.* n. 26): "le costruzioni sacre effettuate dal re e da sua madre sono sempre chiamate BT."

⁴⁹ *CIS* (with references): "Levy et Schlottmann: *ym*, quod vestigia in lapide adhuc remanentia non permittunt." Indeed, the opinions of Torrey ("the traces of the *mem* [of 'ry *ym*] can be seen in the *CIS* heliograph"; see Ch. C. Torrey, "A New Phoenician Grammar" (*Z. S. Harris' Grammar Review*), *JAOS* 57 [1937] 406-407) cannot be confirmed, despite the different treatments of digitalisation, enlargement and enhancement of the reproduction now possible.

⁵⁰ The visible vertical stroke is just a bit shorter than the one of the other *y* in the text, but not too much. This reading would invalidate Krahmalkov's first hypothesis, which, aside from its meaning, also raises questions in the last line. See next paragraphs.

⁵¹ This was one of the points in favour of Bonnet's argument (*Or* 64, 214-222); she understood that we were dealing with a *šrn 'ry*, equivalent to the Akkadian *šurinnū māti*, "les emblèmes du pays", an expression present in Assyrian documents from the 7th cent. BCE (see references and discussion *ibid.* 218-220). It must be pointed out, however, that the author's interpretation has been criticised, especially regarding linguistic bases (the loan should have given rise to a diverse form, see *PPG*' 25); the use of the verb *bn*, though justified by Bonnet (*ibid.* 221-222, with references), was also a difficulty (unless the "monumentality" of the "standard" were truly constructive); nor is the use of this type of Mesopotamian emblem in Phoenicia unanimously accepted.

or only two if they corresponded to wide graphemes⁵². The *z* reading⁵³ seems, rather, to be due to the edges of the break, and no stroke truly compatible with the sign can actually be distinguished. Its hypothetical isolated appearance does not seem to be able to fill the available surface⁵⁴, while the presence of the *z* following a chain formed by two wide signs (as *ym z* in Amadasi's proposal) is, on the contrary, difficult (without seriously modifying the starting point of the line) given the lack of space⁵⁵. No stroke truly attributable to a grapheme can be observed in the gap. Although several marks in the area at the top of the break could correspond to the very top part of the lost signs, they seem to be mostly a product of the breakage. The starting points of the rest of the lines and the inclinations of the last ones (which indicate the most likely starting point and the disposition of the first letters in line 5) point to an important conclusion: the lost letters were probably incised completely or almost completely under the edge of the damaged area, in the lost part of the stone (see fig. 1).

Starting from this material base (reading *šrn 'rš -(-)-*) we must turn to the inscriptions of the Sidonian group. Phoenician epigraphy does not provide us with many parallels for this kind of expression⁵⁶, but the closest ones are revealing. On the one hand, the Eshmunazar II inscription (*KAI* 14) lists the works performed in Sidon by the king and his mother: various temples (*bt 'lm*), the first of which was built for Astarte⁵⁷ in *šdn 'rš ym*, "Sidon land of the sea" or "by the sea". Further on, the inscription again speaks of the temples built in *šdn 'rš ym* for the Baal of Sidon and Astarte *šm b'l*. Without entering into the interesting problems that the exact interpretation of the Eshmunazar texts raises with regard to the temples and their divinities, it seems clear that one part or district of the city was called *šdn 'rš ym* and that the Sidonian monarchs had started up an important building programme there. So, in that district, in Bodashtart's time, there was at least one recently built temple dedicated to the goddess.

⁵² *CIS* disagrees: "... ita ut una vel duae litterae duntaxat evanuerint". But see the following paragraphs and fig. 1b-c below.

⁵³ Proposed by Renan; see *CIS* (with references).

⁵⁴ Even taking into account what has already been said about the use of the spaces in the inscription (see note 20). This surplus space is once again in opposition to Krahmalkov's proposal. Note that the author does not read the *z*, but rather restores it.

⁵⁵ Amadasi, who proposes the integration *ym z*, seems to have already recognised this difficulty; Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 53, n. 24 ("A l. 4 [sic; leg. 5] lo spazio per restituire YM [i. e. YM Z] è di fatto forse un po' troppo stretto"). However, the proposal should not be totally rejected.

⁵⁶ See a list of uses in the general panorama of Northwestern Semitic epigraphy in *DNWSI* 110-113, esp. 112.

⁵⁷ See the suggestion by Amadasi, in: *El Mundo Púnico* 49; and note 48 in this text. As the author states, *bt 'lm* must be understood to mean cultic places in the broadest sense.

On the other hand, in one of the series of inscriptions of Bodashtart himself in Bustān eš-Šēḥ and in the king's inscription at the Awali River, in a famous long syntagma (perhaps not yet properly interpreted) we see again *šdn ym*, "Sidon of the sea" or "by the sea"⁵⁸. This name could be the short version (in keeping with the rhythm of bimember chains presented by the syntagma) of *šdn 'rṣ ym*, "Sidon-land-by-the-sea", from Eshmunazar's sarcophagus. *CIS* I, 4 — a text that is characterised, as we have seen, by freely omitting parts of the formulae and official nomenclatures even when they refer to the king himself — could easily have included a second short form of the name, *'rṣ ym*, "land of the sea"⁵⁹.

Is this reading *'rṣ ym* compatible with the available space? The answer is yes, and definitely so. In the light of the shape and sizes of the graphemes *y* and *m* in the rest of the text, both letters fit well into the gap, even considering the starting point of the line and the probable inclination of the signs. It is even possible that some of the top-ends of the letters coincide with some of the marks that are visible in the line of breakage (although, as we have said, this detail is difficult to make out, and the visible traces of strokes could easily be just a result of the damage). Restoration, therefore, can make use of a possible material base, good textual parallels and a coherent final sense: whatever was built or rebuilt, perhaps a temple, part of a temple or a special kind of cultic structure or place, was located in the part of the city called "Sidon land of the sea", "Sidon of the sea" or "land of the sea".

From an historical point of view, the presence of this toponymic reference in the text is not at all strange. Qualifying, identifying or naming a building after its location — after the name of a district, one of the parts that make up the city, which is also part of its official nomenclature — even seems to be intentional. Nor does it seem strange that this should be present in an inscription related to the rise to power of the king himself and his reaffirmation as the legitimate monarch by means of his service to the dynastic and civic divinities, because Sidon itself is introduced in the text in a none too indirect manner. In fact, the references to the territory of the city-state and to the extension of its domain, or to the splendour (thanks to the action of the king) of the city itself, of its parts and territo-

⁵⁸ With some interesting differences between the documents, as we shall see in future works. See meanwhile the provisional reading and interpretation of the Awali inscription in Xella-Zamora, *BAAL* 8 (2004) 273-300.

⁵⁹ It is even possible that the omission of the city name could be due to or influenced by the immediate presence of the term *šrn*. Regarding the districts and their names, see, however, Elayi, *Sidon* 81 ss., who proposes distinguishing *šdn 'rṣ ym* and *šdn ym* as two different parts of the city.

ries, with their most sonorous denominations (as proved by the set of epigraphs from the dynasty) fit perfectly into the historical context.

8. The structure of the inscription

We can establish a structure for the text that will be useful for us in making comparisons. As we have seen, the inscription is made up of one sole phrase. It first presents the initial dating (month and year), actually a temporal circumstantial object; then, when specifically mentioning the work carried out by the king, it presents the verb (in this case “build”) followed by the subject (the king) and the direct object (the work carried out); finally, it indicates the recipient or beneficiary of the action (the divinity the work is dedicated to, the “dedicatee”), a prepositional syntagma functioning as an indirect object:

Temp. circum. obj.:	<i>byrḥ mp['] bštm m[l]k̄y mlk bd'štrt mlk ṣdnm</i>	(Dating)
Verb	<i>k bn</i>	(Action, promoter and work)
Subject	<i>bd'štrt mlk ṣdnm</i>	
Direct object	<i>'yt šrn 'rṣ [ym]</i>	
Indirect Object	<i>l[*]ly l'štrt</i>	(Dedicatee)

As we said, the initial dating formula seems to be a reason for or factor in introducing the verb by means of a particle⁶⁰. Although the value of the particle and its insertion in the text has been the object of much disagreement⁶¹, both the adverbial solution (“here”) and the more commonly accepted conjunctive one (with consecutive or declarative value) are good solutions not only as regards the syntax but also as regards the sense of the text without having to fall back on more verbs. One might even wonder if it would not be better to opt for a temporal value, given that the conjunction comes immediately after the dating formula (in other words, as we have said, after a temporal, circumstantial object)⁶². Following this periphrasis

⁶⁰ The king's inscriptions where no dating is present do not introduce the verb using *k-*. In any case, the introduction of *k-* after the dating formula does not seem to be grammatically compulsory – the presence of the dating is not followed by the conjunction, for example, in *KAI* 14 – but quite suitable in a formula.

⁶¹ See e.g. proposals by Cooke (*TNSI* 40-42), Lidzbarski (*ESE* II 53) or Amadasi (*RSF* 20, 100), as well as *PPG*³ § 257, 321, 322, 323 (“fürwahr”); some more references in Elayi, *Sidon* 73, n. 49.

⁶² Thus acquiring its significant intensifying value: “in the month ... (was) when Bodashtart built...”. See another interpretation of *k* with a temporal value e.g. in Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses* 64, 135-136; again *PPG*³ 185-186.

— caused or favoured by the initial location of the dating or because of the formulary use — the order is normalised and the subject is placed after the verb, which is then followed by the direct and indirect objects.

We will compare this structure, the formulae used and the actual content of the inscription, with the rest of the king's inscriptions in a further essay. For the moment, note the general "orthodoxy" of *CIS* I, 4 with regard to the known parallels.

9. Conclusions

The inscription thus commemorates one of the king's first public works, carried out in the year he succeeded to the throne. It could have been a building (maybe a specific cultic place, or a part of it, possibly added on to, or an extension of pre-existing cultic constructions) located in a part of the city of Sidon (the "land of the sea") and dedicated to the main civic and dynastic goddess. The text presents, in comparison with the rest of the king's texts, a greater brevity and simplicity, which affects, above all — and perhaps not simply by chance — the royal title. But the inscription and the other Bodashtart epigraphs seem to match the same structures and formulae. *CIS* I, 4 falls within the framework of a particular ideological programme and within the framework of a characteristic historical context.

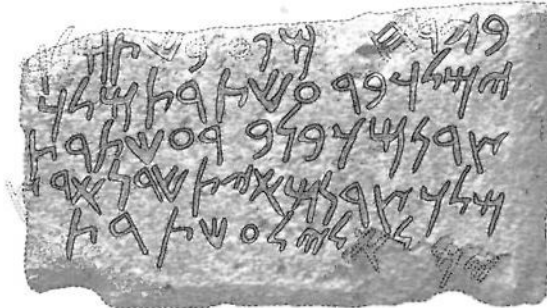
Abbreviations

- DNWSI* J. Hoftijzer - K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, I-II (HOS I 21; Leiden 1995).
ESE M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, I-III (Giessen 1902, 1908, 1915).
KAI H. Donner - W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*², I-III (Wiesbaden 1966-69).
KI M. Lidzbarski, *Kanaanäische Inschriften* (Giessen 1907).
*PPG*³ J. Friedrich - W. Röllig, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik*, 3. Auflage, neu bearbeitet von M. G. Amadasi Guzzo (Analecta Orientalia 55; Roma 1999).
TNSI G. A. Cooke, *A Text-book of the North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford 1903).
TSSI J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of the Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, I-III (Oxford 1971, 1975, 1982).

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Fig. 1

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