

## A note on the inscription H. Maktar N 39

K. Jongeling

### 1. Introduction

A short while ago M. Szyner<sup>1</sup> published a study of the inscription known in scholarly literature as NP 7, and in our overview of Neo-Punic texts styled Henchir Maktar N 39<sup>2</sup>. He not only provides a good photograph of the stela as a whole (p. 48), and of the inscription (p. 49), but also a drawing of the enigmatic smaller signs in the left hand lower corner of the text (p. 54). The reading of the first four lines has never really been in doubt since the value of the Neo-Punic characters was established in the last century<sup>3</sup>, and even the reading of the smaller signs has been secured since the beginning of this century when Chabot<sup>4</sup> correctly read the names. For the first word in these smaller signs Chabot gives the possible readings: *b/d/r t* or *b/d/r b/d/r t/n*. From the photograph presented by Szyner it seems quite clear that only a reading *b/d/r b/d/r* is acceptable. The sign for *n* coming up from below (part of the word *bn*) is probably written higher than normal because the scribe, or the stonemason, wanted to leave enough room below to complete his text.

So the only remaining problem is the interpretation of the first two signs, preceding the name. Chabot suggested that a signature of some sort was meant. This solution is taken up again by Szyner<sup>5</sup> who supposes, following Chabot, that the name is preceded by the verbal form *br*, a perf. 3 sg. m. of the root *br*<sup>2</sup>, here with the meaning *to engrave*. A comparable solution has been proposed by Février<sup>6</sup> based on the erroneous reading *bt*, which he explained as a perf. 3 s. qal of *btt*, meaning *to engrave*.

---

<sup>1</sup>Szyner 1998; for the older literature, cf. Szyner 1998, pp. 44-45, Jongeling 1999, p. 79; thanks are due to mr. R. Kerr, who mentioned Szyner 1998 to me.

<sup>2</sup>Jongeling 1984, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup>Already Schröder 1869, p. 264, gave a more or less correct reading, his main problem being the reading of *s*, *ʃ* and *š*.

<sup>4</sup>Chabot 1916, pp. 88-89.

<sup>5</sup>Szyner 1998, pp. 56-57.

<sup>6</sup>Février 1971, pp. 193-194.

Our opinion is still the same as in 1986<sup>7</sup>, when we opted for a different reading, accepted as possible by Sznycer, viz. *rb*. The complete inscription then reads:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>lʔdn b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup></i>   | <i>ladūn bal amūn ka šamō</i>         |
| 2. <i>qlm brkm b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmkt<sup>c</sup>rm</i>             | <i>qulōm barakōm balē hamaktarīm</i>  |
| 3. <i><sup>c</sup>t r ʔršm bn msyr<sup>c</sup>n w</i>            | <i>ēt r(..) arišim bən masiran wə</i> |
| 4. <i>y<sup>l</sup>sktn bn msygr<sup>c</sup>n</i>                | <i>yasuktan bən masigran</i>          |
| 5. <i>rb m<sup>c</sup>rw/z<sup>ʔ</sup> bn b<sup>cl</sup>/šlk</i> | <i>rab maruzo bən balšillek</i>       |
1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened
  2. to their voice, blessed them, the citizens of Maktar,
  3. in the time of the officials Arishim the son of Masiran and
  4. Yasuctan the son of Masigran,
  5. the president Maruzo the son of Balshillek.

For this reading compare the other inscriptions from Maktar containing the expression *<sup>c</sup>t r*. H. Maktar N 11<sup>8</sup> reads:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>lʔdn b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qlm</i>     | <i>ladūn bal amūn ka šamō qulom</i>        |
| 2. <i>brkm b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmkt<sup>c</sup>rm <sup>c</sup>t r</i>       | <i>barakom balē hamaktarīm ēt r</i>        |
| 3. <i>ʔzrm<sup>c</sup>n bn yst<sup>c</sup>tn wyšdb<sup>c</sup>y bn</i> | <i>ozerman bən yastatan wəyašdabay bən</i> |
| 4. <i>msql<sup>c</sup>t rb b<sup>c</sup>šlk bn ypšr</i>                | <i>masqulat rab balšillek bən yapšar</i>   |
1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened to their voice
  2. blessed them, the citizens of Maktar, in the time of the officials
  3. Azruman the son of Yastatan and Yashdabay the son of
  4. Masqelat, the president Balshillek the son of Ipshar.

and H. Maktar N 110<sup>9</sup> reads:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>lʔdn b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qln brkn</i>      | <i>ladūn bal amūn ka šamō qulon barakon</i> |
| 2. <i>b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmkt<sup>c</sup>rm <sup>c</sup>t r[</i>                 | <i>balē hamaktarīm ēt r[</i>                |
| 3. <i><sup>c</sup> wmsm<sup>c</sup>kt rb <sup>c</sup>wmzg<sup>c</sup>[r]</i> | <i>-a wəmasmakat rb aumazguar</i>           |
| 4. <i>bn tt<sup>c</sup>y</i>   | <i>bən ttay</i>                             |

1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened to their voice blessed them
2. the citizens of Maktar, in the time of the officials [
3. -a and Masmakat, the president Mazguar

<sup>7</sup>Jongeling 1986, pp. 249-250; the basic idea to read *rb* in this type of text is of course to be found in Février-Fantar 1965, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup>For the reading cf. already Jongeling 1986, p. 250; Vattioni 1993, p. 333, repeats the erroneous reading *bn* pro *rb* which results in a possible but rather long and therefore improbable genealogy; H. Maktar N 11 = NP 45; for older literature, cf. Jongeling 1999, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup>H. Maktar N 110 = Alaoui cxix, Cb. 1018.

## 4. the son of Ttay.

Also in H. Maktar N 112, a photograph of which was published by Fantar in 1993<sup>10</sup>, the same construction is to be found:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>lʰdn b<sup>c</sup>l ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qlm</i>                | <i>ladūn bal amūn ka šamō qulom</i>        |
| 2. <i>brkm b<sup>c</sup>lʰ hmkt<sup>c</sup>rym c<sup>tr</sup></i>                 | <i>barakom balē hamaktarīm ēt r</i>        |
| 3. <i>yr<sup>c</sup>t<sup>c</sup>n bn mtnb<sup>c</sup>l wbrkb<sup>c</sup>l bn</i> | <i>yuratan bən mutunbal wəbarikbal bən</i> |
| 4. <i>b<sup>c</sup>lšlk rb m<sup>c</sup>syr bn</i>                                | <i>balšillek rab masir bən</i>             |
| 5. <i>p<sup>c</sup>šks<sup>c</sup>t</i>   | <i>paškasat.</i>                           |

1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened to their voice
2. blessed them, the citizens of Maktar, in the time of the officials
3. Yuratan the son of Mutunbal and Barikbal the son of
4. Balshillek, the president Masir the son of
5. Pashkasat<sup>11</sup>.

The three texts contain the same construction as H. Maktar N 39:

- a. the dedicatee,
- b. the reason for the dedication,
- c. the dedicators, the *b<sup>c</sup>lʰ hmkt<sup>c</sup>rym*,
- d. *c<sup>tr</sup>* followed by two named persons,
- e. *rb* followed by one named person.

In H. Maktar N 77<sup>12</sup> we have the same construction in the first four lines:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>lʰdn b<sup>c</sup>l ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup></i>    | <i>ladūn bal amūn ka šamō</i>        |
| 2. <i>qlm brkm b<sup>c</sup>lʰ hmkt<sup>c</sup>rym</i>            | <i>qulom barakom balē hamaktarīm</i> |
| 3. <i>c<sup>tr</sup> cykn<sup>c</sup> bn ʰdrb<sup>c</sup>l w</i>  | <i>ēt r aykna bən addirbal wə</i>    |
| 4. <i>brk bn s<sup>c</sup>ldy<sup>ʰ</sup> rb cykn<sup>c</sup></i> | <i>barik bən saldio ran aykna</i>    |

1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened to
2. their voice blessed them, the citizens of Maktar,
3. in the time of the officials Aykna the son of Adirbal and
4. Barik the son of Saldio, the president Aykna.

<sup>10</sup>Fantar 1993, vol. ii p. 403; the text was edited by Vattioni in 1995, p. 110-111 reading: 1. *lʰdn b<sup>c</sup>l ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qlm* 2. *brkm b<sup>c</sup>lʰ hmkt<sup>c</sup>rym c<sup>tr</sup> r* 3. *šb<sup>c</sup>t<sup>c</sup>n bn mtnb<sup>c</sup>l wbrkb<sup>c</sup>l bn* 4. *b<sup>c</sup>lšlk bn m<sup>c</sup>syr bn* 5. *p<sup>c</sup>šsk<sup>c</sup>k<sup>c</sup>t*. The name at the beginning of line 3, which clearly reads *yr<sup>c</sup>t<sup>c</sup>n*, was attested in neo-punic texts in the forms *ywr<sup>c</sup>t<sup>c</sup>n* and *ywrḥtn*. Vattioni reads *šb<sup>c</sup>t<sup>c</sup>n*, explained by him as Semitic, based on the root *šb<sup>c</sup>*: "Settimio".

<sup>11</sup>We are not completely sure about this name. Vattioni, o.c., reads *p<sup>c</sup>šsk<sup>c</sup>k<sup>c</sup>t*. However, the first and third *c* in this name look like the other instances of this sign in the text, but the second *c* seems to be nothing more than a dot. This type of *c* has been attested, but this text has only the normal o-shape for this sign. Therefore we suppose that a small line was intended between this "abnormal *c*" and the following sign.

<sup>12</sup>H. Maktar N 77 = Février and Fantar 1965, p. 48.

The following lines are either partly a repetition of lines 1-2, or they are taken from some other text by mistake:

5. *k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qlm brkm št*

6. [*]*

Only H. Maktar N 105<sup>13</sup> seems to differ. However, it is not impossible that the second *bn* in line 3, preceding *mtnb<sup>cl</sup>* should be read *rb*:

1. *Pdn b<sup>cl</sup> ḥmn k<sup>c</sup> šm<sup>c</sup> qlm brkm b<sup>cl</sup>*

*ladūn bal amūn šamō qulom barakom balē*

2. *hmkt<sup>c</sup>rym c<sub>t</sub> r ḥmlkt bn b<sup>c</sup>wt wm<sup>c</sup>s*

*hamaktarīm ēt r imilkot bən baut wəmas*

3. [*]* *jyw<sup>c</sup>n bn ṛš lm<sup>ṛ</sup>t bn mtnb<sup>cl</sup> bn m<sup>c</sup>s*

*[ ]iuan bən ariš ... .. mutunbal bən mas*

4. [*]*

1. To the lord Bal Hamon because he listened to their voice blessed them, the citizens

2. of Maktar, in the time of the officials Himilkat the son of Bawt and Mas-

3. jiw the son of Arish ....., the president Mutunbal the son of Mas-

4. [ .

We suppose that in votive texts donated by the *b<sup>cl</sup>* *hmkt<sup>rm</sup>* the year of the donation was indicated by means of the names of three officials, two following *c<sub>t</sub> r*, one preceded by *rb*<sup>14</sup>. Another possibility is that the date was represented by the expression *c<sub>t</sub> r* followed by two names, whereas the *rb* mentioned was the one presiding over the *b<sup>cl</sup>* *hmkt<sup>rm</sup>*. In that case we might suppose that the stonemason forgot the last few words of the text, or did not find enough room for the last line and, anxious not to leave out the name of the most important of his patrons, added it in the way it is found in the lower corner on the left of the text.

<sup>13</sup>H. Maktar N 105 = Alaoui cviii, Cb 976.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Février-Fantar 1965, pp. 48-49.

## Bibliography

## Alaoui

C. Gilbert Picard, *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui (Collections Puniques)*  
t. 1, id., planches, s.l., s.a.

## Chabot 1916

J.B. Chabot, *Punica iv*, Les inscriptions néopuniques de Maktar, *Journal Asiatique* xi-vii, pp. 87-103.

## Fantar 1993

Mh. H. Fantar, *Carthage, approche d'une civilisation*, 2 vols., Tunis.

## Février 1971

J. G. Février, Le *WAW* conversif en Punique, in: *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer*, Paris, pp. 191-194.

## Février &amp; Fantar 1965

J. G. Février & Mh. Fantar, Les nouvelles inscriptions monumentales néopuniques de Mactar, *Karthago* xii, 1963-1964, pp. 45-59.

## Jongeling 1986

K. Jongeling, Remarks on some Punic Texts, *Vicino Oriente* vi, pp. 249-254.

## Jongeling 1999

K. Jongeling, The Concluding Formulae in Punic Votive Inscriptions, *DS-NELL* iv, 1999, p. 39-79.

## Schröder 1869

Schröder, *Die Phönizische Sprache. Entwurf einer Grammatik nebst Sprach- und Schriftproben. Mit einem Anhang, enthaltend eine Erklärung der Punischen Stellen im Pönulus des Plautus*, Halle (reprinted: Wiesbaden - Nendeln, 1979).

## Sznycer 1998

M. Sznycer, Une Inscription Néopunique de la Région de Maktar conservée au British Museum de Londres, *Semitica* xlvi, pp. 41-59.

## Vattioni 1993

F. Vattioni, Un Antroponimo di Mactar, *AION* liii, pp. 331-333.

## Vattioni 1995

F. Vattioni, *Varia Semitica* xxvi, Un altro testo neopunico da Maktar, *AION* lv, pp. 110-111.