

FORMULAIC PATTERNS IN PHOENICIAN-PUNIC VOTIVE INSCRIPTIONS: PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS ON EPIGRAPHIC STRUCTURE AND SYNTAX

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Abstract: We apply methodologies from the study of Greek poetry – theories about performance on the one hand and about the re-enactment of epigraphic poetry on the other – in order to better understand poetry on Phoenician inscriptions. We define formulae as semantic units that can change position within a poetic expression, using the metaphor of dovetail joinery, with some units that can even be omitted while still permitting comprehension. A limited range of formulaic units can combine into expression of certain lengths and rhythms, a syntax that pertains to inscriptions over a broad geographical and chronological range, found on dedications both public and private. In particular, names for the types of offerings poetically parallel each other, with this parallelism excluding interpretations that fall outside of their shared syntax.

Keywords: Greek/Phoenician Poetic Composition; Votive Formula; Epigraphic Reperformance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of the Phoenician-Punic epigraphic corpus consists of brief and enigmatic votive dedications that provide few details about the character of ritual performance.¹ Despite their reticence, the conservative inscriptional formulae remained consistent both across the entire Mediterranean and over the centuries, employing a conservative formulaic syntax. The redundancy of this system and the enormity of the dataset allow for comprehension even when individual artifacts have no context, or when individual fragmentary inscriptions have letters or words missing. When terms are intentionally omitted, more common and more generic formulaic terms can, by extrapolation, apply to the unspecified dedications due to standardization and repetition. When specific rare and enigmatic terms are used, they must follow this same formulaic system since they serve the same semantic function. Analysis of this system has focused on vocabulary rather than on syntax, on a limited range of specific cases rather than on generic patterns, and on the particular context of so-called *tophet* precincts of the Central Mediterranean rather than on the broader category of dedications.

In addition, analyses have been more concerned with describing formulae rather than on explaining how they function or on comparing to other similar systems, particularly Greek formulaic dedications. By understanding how formulaic systems function and by recognizing general patterns, we can interpret the unknown by extrapolating from the known, we can also exclude explanations that fall outside of standard sacrificial syntax, and we can recognize remnants of otherwise lost creative expressions. A descriptive approach privileges the display of Phoenician-Punic inscriptions line by line, yet formulaic systems apply to the composition of poetry in hexameter (in the case of Greek and Latin) and to poetic parallelism (in the

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case of Ugaritic and Hebrew), so we miss an opportunity to view inscriptions through a poetic stichometry. How we define formula relates directly to the composition of poetry.

Phoenician poetic traditions have disappeared along with their libraries. One might take this disappearance to an extreme, taking the lack of surviving texts as evidence for an absence of literature. Instead, we take the patterns within formulaic epigraphic dedications as evidence of patterns and formulae, as fragments of literature otherwise lost. We also take the centuries long stability and Mediterranean wide consistency of the formulaic system as evidence of cultural continuity. Finally, instead of making distinctions based upon aesthetic qualities of poetic expression, judging how poetic they are, we look at underlying function and syntax, analyzing how they are poetic.

2. THE FORMULA

The fieldwork of Parry and Lord has provided a comparative and widely applicable understanding of oral-formulaic composition. They took their specific experience, derived from recording tales among contemporary *guslars* in the Balkans, and applied it more generally to ancient Greece, which in turn led to a paradigm shift in Homeric studies. But their theories have also proven useful for understanding oral composition more generally, across languages and literatures.² Parry offered a standard, generic definition of the formula as «a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea».³ These formulae had utility when there was «a certain space of verse to fill and a certain idea to express»,⁴ a utility assessed simply by the number of times the phrase appeared. Their hypotheses referred only to the dynamic use of formulae in performance rather than static and repetitive quotation in writing, which they specifically excluded.

Before Parry, others had noted the use of stock expressions, but these studies put greater emphasis on aesthetics and ornament.⁵ Parry shifted the discussion to function, the utility of formulae, and their necessity in improvisational composition. Despite the eventual orthodoxy of their theses about oral formulae, some had reservations about applying general observations of vulgar composition by *guslars* to the elevated art of Homer.⁶ Their analyses also excluded formulae found in later hexameter poetry or, more pertinent in our case, those verses found on early inscriptional epigrams. While the process of written composition may diverge from the oral, our earliest surviving Greek inscriptions preserve hexameter verse, namely the Dipylon Vase (*CEG* I.454) and Nestor's Cup (*CEG* I.432). The latter refers to but does not directly quote Homeric epic (*Il.* 1.632-637), at least not from the canonical received versions. Besides these archaic examples, a significant number of votive inscriptions in hexameter verse (sometimes paired with pentameter in elegiac couplets) appear carved in stone or incised on clay throughout the Archaic Period (e.g. "Apollo" of Mantichus *CEG* I.326). In any case, these inscribed dedications still had to fit the same metrical conditions and still had to express essential ideas.

Also before Parry, scholars had recognized that Greek epic poetry fit predictable rhythmical patterns, lines of six feet with certain word clusters that, on the one hand, regularly bridged certain feet and, on the other hand, were set off by *caesura*, or regular rhythmical pauses that words rarely spanned. Fränkel described

2 Parry 1971 and Lord 1960. For the influence of oral-formulaic theory on Homeric studies, see among others Foley 1985; Edwards 1986, 1988; and Russo 1997; for its relation to Northwest Semitic poetry, see O'Connor 1980, pp. 104-106.

3 Parry 1930, p. 80.

4 Parry 1930, p. 83.

5 E.g. Hartel 1873.

6 Alexander 1998.

how three junctures tended to divide the line into segments, or rhythmical *cola*.⁷ Due to constraints of meter, with its regular junctures (e.g. a central masculine/feminine *caesura*) and bridges (when such junctures are avoided), certain expressions could appear only in specific *cola* (FIG. 1). While the first break (A) might be arbitrary, the central *caesura* regularly divides the line into two parts (*hemistiches*). The name of Odysseus with epithet tends to fall in the colometric segment at the end of the verse (after the bucolic diaresis), but without epithet often falls at the first half of the verse, between junctures A and B:

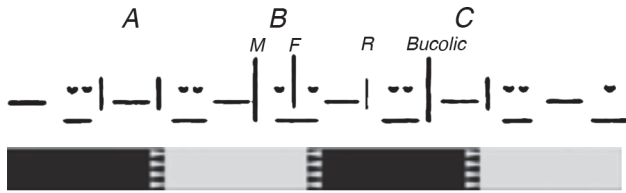


FIG. 1. Line with four (two pairs) rhythmical *cola* / dovetail semantic units.

ἦδη γὰρ ^{A2} καὶ δεῦρό ^F ποτ' ἤλυθε ^B δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς	«brilliant Odysseus» <i>Il.</i> 3. 205, etc.
οἷος Ὀδυσσεύς ἔσκεν ^F ἀρῆν ἀπὸ ^B οἴκου ἀμῦναι	«such as Odysseus» <i>Od.</i> 2. 59, etc.
οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεύς οἷος ^F ἀπώλεσε ^B νόστιμον ἧμαρ	«for Odysseus not» <i>Od.</i> 1. 354, etc.
τοῖσιν γὰρ ^{A2} μέγα πῆμα ^F κυλίνδεται ^B οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεύς	<i>Od.</i> 2. 163, etc.

With his patronymic, the name still falls at the same, precise positions (between junctures A and B, or after C). but the patronymic itself bridges the central masculine/feminine *caesura* (M/F), dividing the line into three (FIG. 2). With this bridge, the pause instead falls at (R), an example of what Kirk has called the «rising threefolder»:⁸

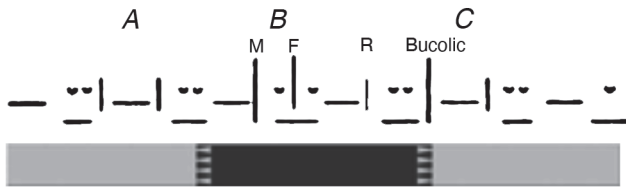


FIG. 2. Line with three rhythmical *cola* / dovetail semantic units.

εἶμ' Ὀδυσσεύς ^{A2} Λαερτιάδης ^R ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν	«I am Odysseus, son of Laertes»	<i>Od.</i> 9. 19, etc.
διογενὲς ^{A2} Λαερτιάδης ^R πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ	«Zeus-ordained, son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus»	<i>Od.</i> 5. 203; <i>Il.</i> 4. 358, etc.

Parry had limited himself to designating clusters of four or more words and five or more syllables as formulae,⁹ but he made exceptions for proper names plus descriptor (divine or personal with epithet or patronym) and for common nouns plus descriptor.¹⁰ As we will see, this definition and the formulaic use of nouns with descriptive terms or phrases pertains directly to Phoenician-Punic inscriptional formulae.

7 Fränkel 1926; cfr. O'Neill 1942; Kirk 1966; 1985.

8 Kirk 1966; 1985, pp. 19-20.

9 Parry 1930, p. 84 note 3.

10 Edwards (§ 6) distinguishes certain categories of formula consisting of (1) names plus descriptive epithets, (2) epithets alone, (3) common nouns plus descriptive epithets, and (6) verbs (1988, pp. 11-21), with bibliography 21-24).

To explain how such metrical units were linked, Maas used the metaphor of dovetail joinery derived from carpentry.¹¹ Thus a personal name – like Odysseus, with his patronym and/or his epithets – could move from one line segment to another so long as the expression still fit within metrical constraints. Besides their metrical unity, such word clusters normally had a semantic unity and, by themselves, might be called formulae, or at least the building blocks of formulae. Each dovetailed block could move to other parts of the verse just so long as it fit into that rhythmical-semantic slot. As Fränkel noted,¹² such colometry applies equally well to later literary epic, written compositions (i.e. by Callimachus), rather than traditional oral composition. In addition, note here that the same colometry applies to Greek votive dedications in hexameter (or in elegiac couplets).

In the case of Northwest Semitic literature more generally, Ugaritic and Hebrew specifically, parallelism serves as the “principle structural device” of poetic composition.¹³ When making a comparison to hexameter, however, we encounter terminological overlap in the case of *cola*. As we have seen, Greek hexameter inscriptions can be divided into short cojoined metrical *cola*, in two at the *caesura* or in three “rising” parts, meanwhile poetic parallelism applies the same term to longer and repeating lines or segments, either doubled (*bicola*) or tripled (*tricola*), which can be subdivided into shorter segments, called half-lines¹⁴ or *hemistiches*¹⁵ or constituents.¹⁶ These paired and repeating segments have structural similarities and semantic constraints similar to the Greek, but without discernable meter.

Attempts have been made to distinguish meter in Hebrew and Ugaritic through word or syllable counts, but no standard verse length has yet been found. Paired segments can share a certain rhythm, assonance and alliteration, as in the following:

² <i>im-²essaq šāmmayim šām ²attāh</i>	if I ascend to heaven (<i>above</i>), there you are
<i>wə ²aššī^c‘āh šā²ōl hinnekā.</i>	if I make my bed in hell (<i>below</i>), behold you are there
² <i>esšā² kanpē-šāhar</i>	if I take the wings of the morning (<i>in the East</i>)
² <i>eškənāh, bə²aḥārīt yām</i>	and dwell at the farthest limits of the sea (<i>in the West</i>)
Ps 139: 8-9	

The lines or half-lines can share thematic and semantic parallels – here a sort of directional antitheses, above vs below, East vs West – and we can find a similarly paired pattern in Phoenician:

<i>pny mb² hšmš</i>	before is the setting of the Sun (i.e. West)
<i>wšd² mš² hšmš</i>	and behind is the rising of the Sun (i.e. East)
CIS I.3778.5-6 (Tunis Cb – 366)	

Within the epigraphic corpus, one very rarely finds such a clear example of poetic parallelism. We do, however, find multiple instances of words derived from the same root (possible repetitive parallelism), of synonyms and antonyms (possibly semantic parallelism), of repetitive sound clusters (phonetic parallelism), and of syntactic elements in similar positions or sequences (grammatical parallelism). Here we focus on the position of nominal, adverbial, and prepositional clauses and phrases, as well as their repetition. In terms of distribution, we find epigraphic examples of parallelism distributed within a single *colon* (internal), between *cola* (regular), in adjacent verses (near), or separated by a verse or more (distant). On Phoenician inscriptions,

11 Maas 1962, p. 44.

12 Fränkel 1926.

13 This characteristic Lowth 1753 first described as *parallelismus membrorum*; on poetry and parallelism, see Greenfield 1971; Craigie 1973; Watters 1976; Collins 1978; O’Connor 1980; Pardee 1988a; pp. 168-201, and Holladay 1999a; 1999b.

14 Pardee 1988a, pp. 6, 65.

15 Watson 1984, pp. 11-15.

16 O’Connor 1980, p. 68; Holladay 1999a, pp. 23-24.

we chiefly track examples of near and distant distribution patterns,¹⁷ while our line breaks (stichometry) and half-line breaks (*hemistiches*) at semantic boundaries may indicate a certain rhythm.

Rather than contrast, we compare cultures across a connected Mediterranean. The differences between Greek and Northwest Semitic poetry might appear obvious (hexameter verse as opposed to the rhythms of parallelism), and the parameters of the terms “formula” or “colon” might vary, nevertheless both traditions employed formulaic composition and divided verse into semantic units. Our preliminary proposal here should underline the need for better definitions and both broader and more refined application of theoretical models. Along these lines, we would not only apply theories of performance but also theories of the anthropology of reading.¹⁸ Epigraphic dedications are written, carefully inscribed on stone or metal, yet we would still argue that their poetry would have been performed, not only attendant on the dedicatory ritual but re-enacted whenever the poems were read.¹⁹ These poetic dedications implicitly assume a literate audience. Our claims here are general and anthropological, and they run against claims of cultural superiority or exceptionalism or even cultural specificity. Nor do we assume that alphabetic literacy was somehow limited in the Near East while expansive in Greece, instead we assume a parallel basic knowledge of poetic conventions among Northwest Semitic speakers, specifically those trained in writing Phoenician and Aramaic, just as we assume a basic knowledge of Homeric epic conventions as demonstrated by early inscriptions. Our methodology presumes a common Mediterranean-wide competitive expansion of trade networks, urbanism and alphabetic writing, as well as a common desire among the various elites to memorialize ritual dedications, both to gain divine favor and to publicly display generosity.

A single pair of inscriptions might demonstrate the viability of our approach, comparing typical dedications and setting Greek epic hexameter formulaic composition alongside Phoenician poetic parallelism:

Μάντικλος^{A2} μ' ἀνέθηκε^F φεκαβόλοι^B ἀργυρτόξοι
 τὰς δεκάτας,^{A2} τὸ δὲ Φοῖβε δίδοι^R χαρίετταν ἄμοβ[άν]

Mantichlus set me up to the Far Shooter, to the Silver-Bowed,
 as a tithe. And you, Phoebus (Apollo) grant *charis*-filled²⁰ recompense.
 CEG I.326 (Boston, MFA 03.997), 700-675 BCE – PLATE 1²¹

This hexameter inscription follows the standard core four-part “narrative pattern” of subject (dedicator), verb (dedicating), indirect object (divine recipient), and direct object (dedication), although each part need not fall in that order.²² Here that core pattern has appended a *do ut des* expression – “I give so that you might give” – seeking divine beneficence.²³ As on Greek dedications, Phoenician inscriptions contain quite similar core elements – i.e. object dedicated, act of dedicating, dedicator, and divine recipient:²⁴

17 Pardee proposes these four types of parallelism and four distributions in his comparison of Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry (1988a, pp. xv, 64-66, 193-201).

18 E.g. Svenbro 1993.

19 Depew 1997, p. 237.

20 Not only “graceful” (LSJ s.v. χάρις), but also encompassing the sense of beauty and of pleasure derived from both the image and the poem (Day 2000).

21 Jeffery 1990, Boiotia n. 1, pl. 7; Day 2010, pp. 33-48.

22 Day 1994, pp. 39-43; Day 2000, p. 37; 2010, pp. 6, 122-123; Kaczko 2016, p. 56, n. 12.

23 Cfr. Kaczko 2016, pp. 360-364.

24 For longer in-text citations, we mark epigraphic breaks with subscript numbers in order to avoid confusion with footnote citations, but with superscript in TABS. 1-3. For this inscription, we also use a superscript vertical line to indicate epigraphic word- and clause-dividing punctuation. Here we commonly display in-text Phoenician inscriptions with line breaks (stichometry, Gk. *stichos* “row”) or half-line breaks (*hemistiches*) that correspond to semantic units, without marking line numbers.

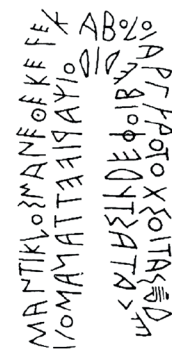
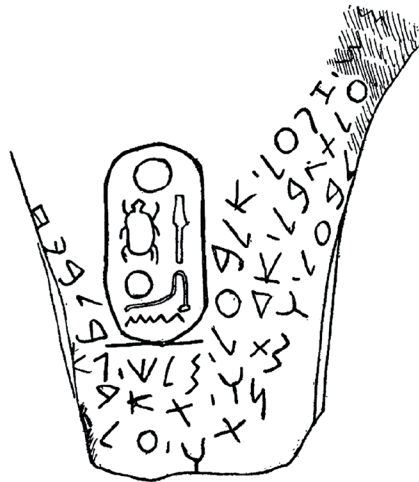
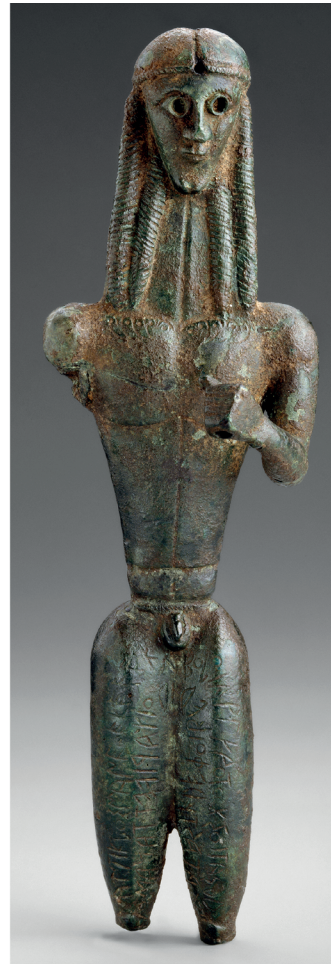


PLATE 1. Top left: dedication of LB^cL on statue with cartouche of Osorkon, ca. 900 BCE (Louvre AO 9502, photograph © 2008 RMN-Grand Palais [Musée du Louvre] / Franck Raux – collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010120348). Bottom left: transcription by Montet (1928, pp. 49-57, fig. 16). Top right: dedication by Manticlus on statue of a warrior (“Apollo”), 700-675 BCE (MFA 03.997, photograph © 2023 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). Bottom right: transcription by Jeffrey (1990, Boiotia n. 1, pl. 7).

Scribal traditions maintained conservative literary forms in the administration of city magistrates and kings, from the Levant to the western edge of the Mediterranean. From the Neo-Assyrian Empire through their Persian and Hellenistic successors, alphabetic literacy elevated Aramaic to an administrative standard (cfr. *sepiru*),³⁰ akin to Phoenician not only in their script but also in the near total loss of their literary corpus. However, Greeks did not consider alphabetic characters as Aramaic but rather Phoenician things (φοινικῆα, Hdt. 5.58) and the scribal role as Phoenician acts (ποινικάζεν, London BM 1969.0402.1). Greeks and Phoenicians (and Aramaeans) used these characters, these acts, their traditions and rhythms, to preserve poetry on some of their earliest alphabetic inscriptions.

At geographic and cultural extremes, we find Citium in Cyprus and Cirta in North Africa – the former a city-kingdom near metropolitan Phoenicia with civic dedications; the latter a native Libyan kingdom with individual votive offerings in the Phoenician language. Nevertheless, both had royal courts that followed similar rigid scribal traditions. Both used royal calendars to date their inscriptions (see below, e.g. *KAI* 288 – TAB. 1; *EH* 57 PUN – TAB. 3) and both were bilingual (or trilingual) in Phoenician and Greek (and Libyan), following the standard four-part epigraphic dedicatory structure, either on the same inscription (e.g. *KAI* 39, 41, 42; *RÉS* 1213),³¹ or on adjacent monuments (e.g. *EH* 2-4 GR). Both contexts, royal-civic and communal-private, had dedications competing for the viewer’s attention, with inscriptions to be read by the passer-by fluent in either Phoenician or Greek.³²

On the one hand, poetic dedications mark mutual benefit between dedicator and deity; on the other, they mark the relationship between dedicator and the community. In reference to Greek epigrams, Keesling³³ calls the former their religious or *agalma*-function, the latter their social or *mnēma*-function.³⁴ The religious function presents the offering as an adornment (*agalma*) pleasing to the deity, a mediation between god and worshipper; the social function creates competitive display, with conspicuous placement of a memorial (*mnēma*) that engages the viewers’ attention. Reading the inscription aloud would reinforce both functions. While the terms Keesling uses may be specifically Greek, this dual function remains broadly applicable to Phoenician votive dedications. Whether prominently displayed to demonstrate individual royal patronage or grouped together in accessible open-air precincts alongside other elite monuments, these dedications adhered to a precise literary structure that was legible to the deity, on the one hand, and to the community, on the other. An isolated Palmyrene inscription supports the cross-cultural applicability of the *mnēma* function regarding dedications:

<i>wdkyr kl m^cyd^c lw^t ʔln</i>	So remembered be anyone who frequents these altars
<i>wʔmr dkyryn [b]^ʔ ʔln klhwn bt^b</i>	and says, Remembered be all these for good.

The individual dedication offered remembrance to someone remembering, someone who would have passed among the inscribed altars, set up for the community, and would have spoken aloud.³⁶

30 Burkert 1992, p. 31, note 23.

31 Bonnet – Minunno – Porzia 2021, pp. 57-63. Compare bilingual dedications on Malta (*KAI* 47), trilinguals at Pauli Gerrei (*KAI* 66) and Henchir el-Aouin (*RÉS* I.79).

32 Note how the position of scribe fits the communal-private context – e.g. a dedicant at Carthage might claim the elite position of *spr* (“scribe” *CIS* I.240, 3749, 3786, etc.); the scribal archive of Carthage, along with their literary traditions, transferred to the Numidian court (*libri punici*: Sal. Jug. XVII-XIX; cfr. Plin. *Nat.* XVIII 2, *FGrHist* 275 F38, 764 F19); finally, even a modest or remote sanctuary might have a scribal school, as at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Schniedewind 2014; Mandell 2012). On scribal training generally, see Schniedewind 2019.

33 Keesling 2003.

34 Cfr. Keesling 2003, pp. 199-200; Day 2010, pp. 7, 185, note 20.

35 Hillers – Cussini 1996, n. 0319.9-11.

36 de Hemmer Gudme 2017, pp. 99-100; cfr. Licciardello 2022; Hahn 2012; Bing 2002.

To reiterate, our preliminary proposal relies upon comparison rather than contrast, with a geographic span across the Mediterranean Sea that demonstrates similarities between cultures, and a wide chronological range that demonstrates similarities within one language. The proposal explores continuity rather than change, studying a large sample set and broad patterns rather than individual historical complexities. Despite our necessary brevity and superficiality, from this survey of formulaic composition and parallel structures, on performance theory and pragmatics, we draw certain conclusions. Although not orally composed, Greek epigraphic poetry follows formulaic conventions; not extemporaneous themselves, these votive expressions had to meet certain expectations of ritual “reperformance” whenever they might be read in the votive precinct.³⁷ Phoenician votive dedication also had to meet very similar contextual, semantic and rhetorical expectations whenever their epigraphic texts reenacted performance of the original offering. Repetition of an occasion with strict contextual and ritual constraints led to repetitive language, even on bilingual or multi-lingual dedications. Nevertheless, despite adhering to grammatical and syntactical limits, clauses might be moved and elements might be omitted in ways that allowed for flexibility and variety while still maintaining predictability and permitting comprehension. While Northwest Semitic poetry did not follow metrical patterns like hexameter, they did consistently follow the standard types and distributions of poetic parallelism.

Phoenician inscriptions memorialize an interaction between named dedicator and named god through the mediation of a ritual offering, a pattern analogous to Greek epigrams.³⁸ Certain inscriptions that preserve more numerous and more complete formulae by extrapolation can provide the omitted and resolve the incomplete, recovering details missing from those adjacent markers with terms elided, those without inscriptions, and those lacking even iconographic decoration. Despite minor individual, local, and chronological variations, these votive dedications prove consistently formulaic and demonstrate remarkable continuity.

3. TYPICAL FORMULAIC PATTERNS

In Phoenician inscriptions word-groups cluster in regular patterns, more semantic than metric, but we do not exclude the possibility that they had a certain rhythm. These patterns provide clear evidence of poetic parallelism. Formulaic phrases regularly fall into a set unit where they perform specific semantic functions. One will note the common absence of a key syntactical unit, the main clause of the sentence, a noun phrase that names the object devoted (see TAB. 3). This approach corresponds tolerably well with the formulaic systems previously described by others, but it differs significantly in treating these semantic units as formulae rather than taking the entire inscription as the formula. We also segment these semantic units differently, in particular treating the relative pronoun, verb and personal name of the dedicator as a single unit, a subordinate relative clause, rather than three separate elements. The validity of treating semantic units as formulae derives from the possibility of their transfer to other rhythmical-poetic positions within the votive expression, from their repetition in the same position (near parallelism) or varied positions (distant parallelism), and from their omission that must still allow for comprehension due to context. In our analysis, both complete and abbreviated expressions, even elided formulae, form part of this coherent system.

Previous proposals have distinguished inscriptional formulae based upon the observed order of enumerated elements – e.g. name the object dedicated > relative pronoun > verb of dedicating > name of the dedicator > deity,³⁹ sometimes including > final blessing.⁴⁰ Different combinations would designate

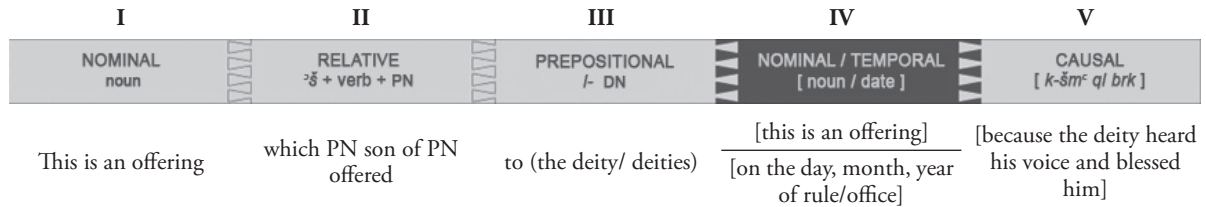
37 Day 2010, pp. 21-23.

38 Day 2010, p. 7 has suggested that this Greek pattern derived from the Phoenician.

39 Mazza 1976.

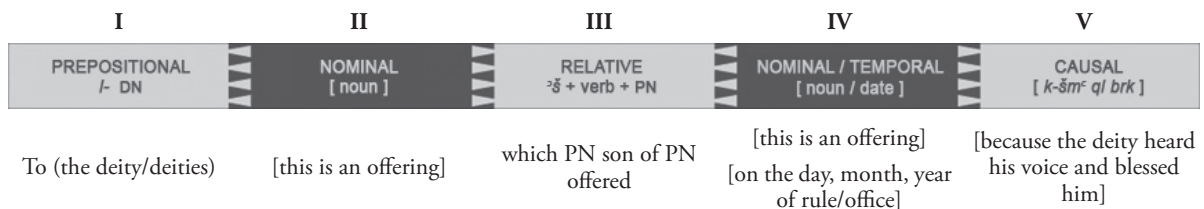
40 Coacci Polselli 1976.

different formulae, with the five (or six) elements each given a number or letter.⁴¹ In close comparison, Greek hexameter verse formulae on inscriptions also fall into similar set patterns – e.g. dedicator as subject > verb of dedicating > dedication as direct object > god as indirect object – a basic pattern constituting more than 70% of Greek inscriptions in verse.⁴² This simple narrative pattern can fit shorter dedications (in Greek and Phoenician) or serves as the syntactical core of longer inscriptions, with various elements expanded or repeated. Rather than contradiction, our proposed formulaic system builds upon these previous proposals.⁴³



SCHEMA 1. Formulaic/semantic dovetail units of Phoenician-Punic dedicatory inscriptions.

Phoenician/Punic dedicatory inscriptions follow two basic schemas. The more archaic pattern (SCHEMA 1), common in metropolitan Phoenicia and on Cyprus, gives priority to the adornment that pleases the deity. Its first semantic unit (I) has a main noun clause containing the subject (i.e. naming the dedication), sometimes with the demonstrative pronoun, but in all cases with the verb “to be” omitted but understood. This noun phrase serves as antecedent to the second semantic unit (II), a relative clause describing the action performed and the name of the dedicant, with his/her patronym, sometimes giving further genealogy and sometimes giving their title or occupation. The optional fourth unit either (IVa) has a temporal clause with dating formula (as found in Cirta) or (IVb) repeats the nominal clause. Then, in the final unit (V), we find a causal formula with a recognition of (or a request for) divine intervention to fulfill a vow. On Cyprus variations of this pattern permit the temporal clause with regnal date to occupy varied positions, including before the first dovetail juncture (e.g. *RÉS* 1213),⁴⁴ demonstrating its formulaic nature:



SCHEMA 2. Formulaic/semantic dovetail units of Phoenician-Punic dedicatory inscriptions.

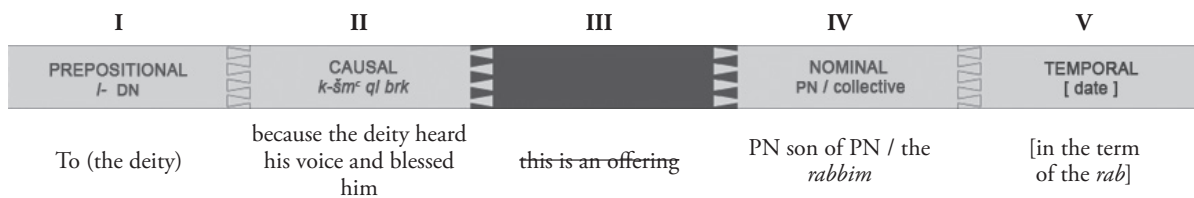
41 See also Amadasi Guzzo 1986; 1989-1990; 2021; and *SMI*; Stucky 2005, pp. 275-276; Ruiz Cabrero 2007, p. 628.

42 Day 2010, p. 6. The pattern of these elements also fits non-metrical votive inscriptions, e.g. EH 3 GR.

43 Descriptive lists of basic formulaic elements by themselves do not accommodate elaborations and repetition of formulae – see TABS. 1-2, cfr. the objections and corrections of Zamora 2016 and Mosca 2006.

44 Again, certain exceptions demonstrate dovetail interchangeability, e.g. EH 15 PUN, 63 PUN; *CIS* 1.147, see TAB. 3.

The most common pattern (SCHEMA 2) seems to have developed later but runs parallel to the previous.⁴⁵ This schema predominates in the Central Mediterranean (and Umm al-^cAwamid) and reorders the first three dovetail units, giving priority to the deity or deities that reciprocate grace. In the first position we now find (I) the prepositional phrase of the dedicatory formula. In the second unit (II), the main noun clause always omits the verb “to be” (as expected), but quite commonly omits even the named dedication, yet both can still be understood by the force of the verb in following relative clause (e.g. “[this is a votive] which he vowed did PN son of PN”). In the third unit (III), that relative clause describes the action performed and names the dedicant, with his/her patronym (and title/occupation). In the optional fourth unit, again we have either (IVa) a temporal clause with dating formula or (IVb) a main noun clause, here delayed or repeated. In the final unit (V), we find the causal formula.



SCHEMA 3. Formulaic/semantic dovetail units of Punic dedicatory inscriptions from Mactar.

A third pattern (SCHEMA 3), late and common in Mactar⁴⁶, again reorders units but not only elides the main noun clause, which might have named the dedication, but also omits the verb from the relative clause. This pattern, like the previous, begins with the prepositional dedication in first unit (I), now followed by the subordinate causal formula (II), but the elided noun clause cannot be recovered from the context of verb in the relative clause because the verb, too, is omitted; followed by a verbless clause (IV), consisting either of individual names with patronym or consisting of a collective noun, e.g. PN son of PN”. This schema concludes with an optional temporal dating formula (V). With only subordinate clauses – prepositional phrase, causal and temporal clauses – widespread votive inscriptional syntax still expects that reader could supply some noun and/or verb of devotion to the bare list of names or to the collective noun (e.g. *SINM* 22).

4. SEMANTIC UNITS

4.1. Prepositional (Dedicatory) Formulae

Dedication to a divinity or divinities can occupy various positions within the votive expression. This moveable votive semantic dovetail unit marks the indirect object of the dedication and consists of a formula in subordinate prepositional phrases of dedication “to” (*l-*) the deity,⁴⁷ with additional formulae for other deities cojoined by *w-* (Heb. *waw*):

45 Mazza 1976 recognized that this schema (his third case study, or *terzo caso*, occurred generally around the 5th-3rd BCE, generally in the Central Mediterranean, generally in private rather than civic dedications. Note that we consider his first and second case studies as variations of our SCHEMA 1.

46 The schema is also found on NP 8 and 9, for example, both from somewhere near Sicca Veneria (el-Kef) or Vacca (Béja).

47 The prepositional *l-* can signify direction toward, thus a dedication “to” the deity, *DNWSI s.v. l₃ 1* or can signify possession (*s.v. l₃ 5*, cfr. *PPG* § 251, § 282), with the dedication “for” or “belonging to” the deity and, since we understand the object dedicated and the verb “to be”, even if not expressed, this construction resembles the *dativus possessivus*.

TABLE 1⁴⁸

SEMANTIC DOVETAIL	Citium (<i>Larnaka/Bamboula</i>) 392 BCE KAI 288 (Larnaka MAA 1513)	Hammon (<i>Umm al-ʿAwamid</i>) 132 BCE KAI 18, CIS 1.7 (Paris Louvre AO 4831)
PREPOSITIONAL		¹ [Pdn l]bʿl šmm To the Lord, to Baʿl Shamem
NOMINAL (SUBJECT)	¹ trpy ʿz This is a trophy	(<i>this is the votive</i>)
RELATIVE	ʿš ytnʿ mlk mlkytn mlk kty wʿdyl bn bʿlrm wkl ʿm kty which they erected, did King MLKYTN, king of Citium and Idalium, son of BʿLRM, and the whole populace of Citium	ʿš ndr ʿbdʿlm ʿbn mtn bn ʿbdʿlm bn bʿlšmr ʿbplg Pdk which he vowed, did ʿBDʿLM, son of MTN, son of ʿBDʿLM, son of BʿLSMR, from the district of Laodicea
PREPOSITIONAL	Pdnnm lbʿl ʿz to their Lord, to Baʿl ʿOz,	
ADVERBIAL (TEMPORAL / CONDITIONAL)	bmsʿnm ʿzbn wʿzrnm hppym Pgd ln mlhmt in the place where our enemies and their allies, the Paphians, came forth to wage war against us, b[ym]m [] lyrh zyb št 1 lmlky ʿl kty wʿdyl on the day ... in the month of ZYB, in year one of his reign over Citium and Idalium; wysʿ ʿl n[m mh]nt ʿš kty Pgd lm mlhmt bmqm ʿz bym hʿ bnty when the host of the people of Citium came forth to battle against them in this place, on that very day, wytn ly wkl ʿm kty ʿbʿl ʿz ʿz wnsht bkl ʿbn wbʿzrnm hppym then Baʿl ʿOz gave to me and all the people of Citium power and victory over all our enemies and their allies the Paphians; wytn ʿt nk wkl ʿm kty so I and all the people of Citium erected	
NOMINAL (OBJECT)	ʿyt htrpy ʿz this as the trophy	ʿyt hšʿr z whdlht this as the gate and the doors
RELATIVE	(<i>which they gave/vowed</i>)	ʿz l pʿlt btklty bnty which I made for it, built at my own expense
ADVERBIAL (TEMPORAL)		bšt 1 ⁵ 80 Pdn mlkm 143 št lʿm ʿsr In the year 180 of the Lord of Kings, year 143 of the people of Tyre
ADVERBIAL (CONDITIONAL)		lkny ly lskr wšm nʿm to remain for me as a memorial and a good name
PREPOSITIONAL	lb[ʿl] ʿz ʿdny to Baʿl ʿOz, his Lord,	ʿt ht pʿm ʿdny bʿl-šmm under the feet of my Lord Baʿl Shamem,
ADVERBIAL (CAUSAL)	ksmʿ qlm ybrkm because (<i>the deity</i>) heard their voice may he bless them	ʿl m ybrkn (<i>because the deity heard my voice</i>) may he bless me for eternity

48 Larnaka MAA 1513: Mosca 2006; Yon – Sznycer 1991; Xella 1993; Sznycer 2001; Yon 2004, n. 1144, fig. 19. Louvre AO 4831: OEA 1; Gubel 2002, n. 144.

TABLE 2⁴⁹

SEMANTIC DOVETAIL	Tamassus (Phrangissa), 375 BCE <i>RÉS 1213 (London BM 125322)</i>		Idalium (Dhali), 254 BCE <i>KAI 40; CIS I.93 (London BM 125327)</i>
ADVERBIAL (TEMPORAL)	<i>¹bymm 16 lyrḥ p^clt</i> <i>bš[n]²t 17 lmlk</i> <i>mlky[tn mlk k]³ty w²dyl</i> On day 16 of the month of P ^c LT, in year 17 of the king MLKYTN, king of Citium and Idalium,		<i>¹bymm 7 lyrḥ ḥyr bšnt 31 lmlk mlkm</i> <i>ptlmys bn ptlmy[s]</i> <i>^{2,3}š h² š^t 57 P^š kty</i> <i>knprm ²rsn²s pldlp ²mt²sr</i> <i>bt mk[] ³bn ^cbdssm bn g^dt</i> On day 7 of the month H _{YR} , in year 31 of the reign of the kings Ptolemy son of Ptolemy [and] which is year 57 of the men of Citium (when) the canephorus to Arsinöe Philadelphus was ² M ² SR the daughter of MK[], son of ^c B ^D SSM, son of G ^D T
NOMINAL	<i>sml²z</i> this is a statue	<i>1a-ti-ri-a-se 'o-nu-to-ne-to 2ke-ne 'a-pa-sa-so-mo-se 'o-sa-3ma-wo-se '2š ytn ^cb⁴dssm bn [. . .]s</i>	<i>hsmllm h²l</i> these are the statues
RELATIVE	which he gave, did ^c B ^D SSM son of []	A statue (<i>andrias</i>) was given by Apsasomus son of Sama(w)us	<i>²š yṭn² btšlm</i> <i>bt mryḥy bn ²šmn²dn</i> which she set up, did BTŠLM, daughter of MRYḤY, son of ² ŠMN ² DN
PREPOSITIONAL	<i>Pdny lršp ²lhyts</i> to his Lord, to Reshep of ² LHYTS	<i>to-i-a-[po-lo]-ni 4a-la-si-o-ta-i '2š yṭn² btšlm</i> to Apollo Alasiotas	<i>^{4c}l bn bny</i> <i>^cl ²šmn²dn wšlm w^cbdršp</i> <i>šlšt bn mryḥy bn ²šmn²dn bn nḥmy ⁵bn glb</i> for her grandsons for ² ŠMN ² DN, ŠLM and ^c BDRŠP, the three sons of MRYḤY, son of ² ŠMN ² DM, son of NḤMY, son of GLB
NOMINAL	<i>hndr</i> (this is) the votive		<i>hndr</i> (this is) the votive
RELATIVE	<i>²š ndr</i> which he vowed		<i>²š kn ndr ²bnm</i> <i>mryḥy bḥyy</i> which he had vowed, their father MRYḤY, during his lifetime
PREPOSITIONAL	<i>(to Reshep)</i>		<i>Pdnnm lršp mkl</i> to their Lord, to Reshep-MKL
ADVERBIAL (CAUSAL)	<i>kšm^c ⁶h² q^l</i> <i>ybrk</i> because (<i>the deity</i>) heard his voice may he bless him!	<i>i-tu-ka-i</i> for (<i>his good</i>) fortune	<i>ybrkm</i> (because the deity heard her voice) may he bless her

49 BM 125327 (1872,0816.81): Senff 1993, n. 4.

TABLE 3 (NB shaded sections indicate non-schematic distribution of semantic units)

	SCHEMA 1		NOMINAL	RELATIVE	PREPOSITIONAL	NOMINAL / TEMPORAL	CAUSAL
KAI 294	¹ ks ² z This is a throne		¹ ks ² z This is a throne	p ¹ l b ¹ lytn ² bn d ¹ mlk w ² bd ¹ b ¹ l b ³ n d ¹ mlk bn yš ¹ (which) he made did B ¹ LYTN son of D ¹ MLK and ¹ Bdb ¹ l son of D ¹ MLK son of YŠ ¹	¹ š ¹ štr ¹ hr rbt ¹ for ¹ Ashtart-Hr, our Lady		k ² šm ¹ q ¹ dbrmm because she heard the voice of their words
KAI 6	¹ mš		¹ z p ¹ l ¹ ² b ¹ l ¹ mlk ¹ gbl ¹ ¹ byh ¹ [mlk ¹ mlk ¹ gbl]	² [b]š ¹ t ¹ [gbl ¹ ¹ dtw		t ¹ rk ¹ l b ¹ l ¹ [gbl] ³ lymt ¹ ² [b ¹ l wš ¹ rtw ¹ l ¹ [gbl]	
Stucky 2005: Ph1	¹ hndr		² š ytn ¹ šštr ¹ yt ¹ bn ¹ bd ¹ šmn	¹ dny ¹ ² šmn		ybrk	
KAI 281	¹ hsm ¹ z		² š ytn ¹ b ¹ šlm bn mlk b ¹ n ¹ mlk šdnm bn mlk ¹ bd ¹ mn mlk šdnm bn mlk b ¹ ššim mlk šdnm	¹ dny ¹ ² šmn b ¹ n yd ¹		ybrk	
EH 57 PUN	¹ ndr		² š ndr bd ¹ štrt bn ¹ kbr	l b ¹ l	³ [b]h ¹ mš lyrb p ¹ l t b ¹ l ¹ mš ¹ t ² rb ¹ m š ¹ l m ¹ ky		
EH 106 PUN	¹ bn		² š ndr mt ¹ ² b ¹ l bn y ¹ rb ¹ mn	³ p ¹ dn l b ¹ l hmn ⁴ wlt ¹ p ¹ n ¹ b ¹ l		⁵ šm ¹ q ¹ brk ²	
CIS 1.123bis KAI 61B	¹ nšb mlk ¹ ² mr		² š š ¹ [m ¹ ² š ³ bn mlq ¹ rtgd	l b ¹ l ⁴ [hmn] ² dn		⁵ [k š]m ¹ q ¹ [db]ry	
CIS 1.5684	¹ nšb mlk ¹ b ¹ l		² š p ¹ l bšy ³ bn mlq ¹ rtgd bn ššp	l b ¹ l ⁴ [hmn] ² dn			
CIS 1.194	¹ nšb mlk ¹ b ¹ l		² š ndr m ¹ tn ¹ lm bn ššp	lrbt lnt pn ³ [b ¹ l] [w][¹ dn] l [b ¹ l] [¹ mn		k šm ¹ q ¹ P	
CIS 1.380	¹ nšb mlk ¹ b ¹ l		² š ndr b ¹ štrt bn bdm ¹ lq ¹ rt <bn> ³ bd ¹ štrt bn bdm ¹ lq ¹ rt ⁴ šrbm	Pm lrbt lnt pn b ¹ l w ¹ dn l b ¹ l hmn		yšm ¹ ⁶ [q ¹ P yb]l[k ²]	
EH 63 PUN KAI 112	¹ mtnt		² š tn ¹ b ¹ l ¹ yt ¹ n bn šnk	l b ¹ l ² šr	šm ¹ q ¹	b ¹ sr w ¹ m ¹ š lyrb p ¹ l t bšš ¹ h ¹ mš ⁵ š ¹ l mlk ¹ m mkwsn wglsn w ¹ m ¹ str ¹ b ¹ ² mm ¹ lkt	
SMI 37	¹ < >mtnt		² š ytn	l b ¹ l hmn	² ytrb ¹ l bn ² nš	k šm ¹ q ¹ brk ²	
EH 15 PUN	¹ mtnt		P ¹ dn l b ¹ l ² dr	² š ndr lay bn ² [mtr]l n bn ² rš			
CIS 1.147	¹ [n]šb mlk ¹ b ¹ l ¹ ² z		P ¹ d ¹ [n] l b ¹ l h ¹ m ¹ [n	⁴ š ytn ² [r]š bn l b ¹ l ⁶ bn ² r ¹ m		⁷ k šm ¹ q ¹ ⁸ [db]l[y]	

NP 74/105	¹ F ^{dn} b ^l l ^{mn}	z ² b bmlk ² zrm ² z ^t	š ² db ² t bn [y ³ nš]d			⁴ wš ² m ² ² t qwly
RÉS 337	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	ndr	³ š ndr ² mtnb ^l bn ² zr	tšmh qP ³ brk ²		bhmš lmlky
RÉS 332	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} w ^l nt p ⁿ b ^l	² ndr	³ š ndr ² š hmyštr ³ bn kn ²			šm ² qP ⁴ brk ²
CIS I.3745	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}	ndr	³ š ndr ² hmlkt bn ² zrb ^l bn ⁴ mhrb ^l	bšrm		tšm ² ³ qP
EH 49 PUN	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	ndr	³ š ² ndr ² kbrs bn ² m ³ ywš	bšrm btm		k ³ šm ² qP brk ²
CIS I.4872	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}	hmtnt	³ š ³ ndr ² š bn ⁴ kbr š ² bd ⁴ šmn mqm ² lm	bš ² rm		tšm ² qP tbrk
CIS I.3731	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}	hmtnt z		bš ² rm		
EH 87 PUN	¹ [F ^{dn}] lb ^l h ^{mn}	mtnt	³ š ndr ² [...] bn mhrb ^l	nš ² Plm ³ [bšrm b]tm		kšm ² qP brk ²
CIS I.4935	¹ [F ^{dn}] lb ^l h ^{mn} ² w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}	³ mtnt	<š> ndr pd[^l] ⁴ bt ² dnb ^l			
SMI 23	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	mtnt< ² >	³ š ndr yknšlm b ³ n ² bdmlqrt			k šm ² qP dbr ² y
SMI 39	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	³ mtnt	³ š ndr ² b ^l lmlk bn b ^l lysp bn šly			
KAI 105	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	² ndr	³ š ndr hmlkt bn b ^l štrt ² bn nbl	milk ² dm bš ² rm btm		⁴ k šm ² qP brky ²
RÉS 334	w ^l rbt lb ^l h ^{mn}	² ndr	³ š ndr mtn bn ³ bd ³ šmn	milk ² dm bš ² rm btm		⁵ m ² qP brk ²
EH 34 PUN	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	nd ² r	³ š ndr mgn bn ² bd ³ šmn			
RÉS 335	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}	mtnt ² ndr	n ² š ² pntr ² bn mgnm	milk ² dm bš ² rm [...]		⁴ wš ² m ² qly
KAI 167 NP 21	¹ F ^{dn} b ^l l ^{mn}		zb mtnt ² bn yg	bmlk ² <?>m ² š		w ³ šm ² ² t qP
Punica XI.34	¹ F ^{dn} b ^l l ^{mn}		³ š ndr ² št bt ⁴ bd ³ štrt			
CIS I.307	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} ² w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}		ndr ² š ² bn hmlkt hmsštr	³ milk ² dm		šm ² qP
EH 87 PUN	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn}		³ š ndr mgn	nšb mlkt ⁵ bms ² rm		
CIS I.198	¹ F ^{dn} lb ^l h ^{mn} ² w ^l dn ² lb ^l h ^{mn}					

<i>ḫdn ḫḫl šmm</i>	To the Lord, to Baal Shamem
<i>wḫḫt ḫnt pn ḫḫl</i>	and to the Mistress, to Tinnit Visage-of-Baḫ
<i>wḫdn ḫḫl ḫmn</i>	and to the Lord, to Baḫ Hammon
<i>wḫdn ḫḫl mgnm</i>	and to the Lord, to Baḫ MGNM (“of protection”)
<i>KAI 78.2-4 (Tunis Cb – 366), CIS I.3778</i>	

Note that the divine titles (including ḫl “god”), placed before the name and epithet, can accept pronominal suffixes,⁵⁰ resulting in a different syllable count that would affect the rhythm of the expression and would produce formulaic variation. The list of four deities here presents a *unicum*, because votive sanctuaries and their dedications are otherwise reserved for one or two deities. Our stichometric division suggests that dedicatory formulae in paired sets (here quadrupled) match poetic invocations. This includes the single most common pairing in all of the Phoenician-Punic corpus:

<i>ḫḫt ḫnt pn ḫḫl</i>	To the Mistress, to Tinnit Visage-of-Baḫ
<i>wḫdn ḫḫl ḫmn</i>	and to the Lord, to Baḫ Hammon
<i>CIS I.180.1-2 – TAB. 3</i>	

At Carthage these divinities, when paired in dedicatory prepositional phrases, provide standard formulae in their proper order, thus a standard rhythm, with few exceptions:

<i>ḫḫt ḫštrt</i>	To the Mistress, to ḫAshtart
<i>wḫḫt ḫnt ḫḫbnn</i>	and to the Mistress, to Tinnit in Lebanon
<i>KAI 81.1 (Carthage MNC), CIS I.3914, cfr. KAI 285</i>	

<i>ḫm ḫnt pn ḫḫl</i>	To the Mother, to Tinnit Visage-of-Baḫ
<i>wḫdn ḫḫl ḫmn</i>	and to the Lord, to Baḫ Hammon
<i>CIS I.380.4-5 – TAB. 3</i>	

<i>ḫḫt ḫmḫ</i>	To the Mistress, to Amma
<i>ḫḫt ḫḫlt</i>	and to the Mistress, to Baḫlat
<i>CIS I.177.1, KAI 83</i>	

As in the first example, the position of Tinnit can be inverted, particularly outside of Carthage, with the goddess named in secondary position on the dedicatory formulae; the title rarely varies, as it does in the second example above. At Libyan-Numidian Cirta (el-Hofra), Tinnit can also appear with different manifestations of Baḫ:

<i>ḫdn ḫḫl ḫdr</i>	To the Lord, to Baḫ Addir
<i>wḫḫtm ḫnt ḫḫnḫ ḫḫl</i>	and to our Mistress, Tinnit Visage-of-Baḫ
<i>EH 4.1-2</i>	

That same precinct also once pairs both manifestations of Baḫ (one without title):

<i>ḫdn ḫḫl ḫdr</i>	To the Lord, to Baḫ Addir
<i>wḫḫl ḫmn</i>	and (to the Lord,) to Baḫ Hammon
<i>RÉS 329.1-2 (Louvre AO 5269)</i>	

⁵⁰ The title, when placed before name and epithet, can on occasion be marked with pronominal suffixes (e.g. ḫḫy “to his god”, ḫḫtm “to our lady”, ḫḫdnm “to their lord”).

Each element within these formulae (title, name, epithet) can appear alone or in combination, producing variation. Besides pairs, divinities often appear individually, and may produce variation by not repeating the preposition:

ʔdn bʿl ḥmn To the Lord, Baʿl Hammon
SINM 33.1 (Tunis Cb – 1031) – TAB. 3

ʔdnn bʿl ḥmn To our Lord, Baʿl Hammon
SIMI 39.1 – TAB. 3

These varied formulae can be truncated by elision of the title (*RÉS* 329, above), or elision of the epithet, or both, occasionally leaving just the divine name. These epithets and names vary by precinct, but the formulaic patterns remain consistent:⁵¹

ʔly ʔbršp mkl bʿdyl To his god, to Reshep MKL in Idalion
KAI 38.1-2 (London BM 125315), *CIS* I.90

As is the case here, the prepositional dedication can be followed by an adnominal prepositional phrase providing the location of cult, here “in Idalion”, above “in the Lebanon” (*CIS* I.3914).⁵² Below, the location instead appears in construct, as the god “of” a place (OEA 13).

The dedicatory formulae demonstrate close parallelism with deities named side by side, but certain inscriptions demonstrate a distant semantic parallelism, when they repeat the dedicatory formula a few lines removed – as distant as a single inscription might allow:

ʔ dnnm⁵³ lbʿl ʿz... To their Lord, to Baʿl ʿOz...
lb[ʿl] ʿz ʔdny to Baʿl ʿOz my Lord
KAI 288.1, 5 (Larnaka MAA 1513) – TAB. 1

[ʔdn l]bʿl šmm... To the Lord, to Baʿl Shamem...
ih̄t pʿm ʔdny bʿl-šmm under the feet of my Lord Baʿl Shamem
KAI 18.1, 7 (Louvre AO 4831) – TAB. 1

ʔdny lmlkʿštrt ʔl ḥmn... To his Lord, to Milkʿashtart god of Hammon...
lʔlmm mlkʿštrt wmlʔk mlkʿštrt for the gods – Milkʿashtart and Angel of Milkʿashtart
 OEA 13.1, 3 (Beirut E363) – TAB. 3

This type of distant parallelism gives a clear indication of poetry embedded within epigraphic prose. These formulae, paired or single, combining title plus name and epithet, can have the same grammatical form

51 Other manifestations of Baʿl receive dedications employing very similar formulae– e.g. *bʿl ʔdr* (“mighty”, Cirta: EH 26 PUN, 63 PUN, etc.), *bʿl šmm* (“of the heavens”, Caralis: *CIS* I.139, cfr. *KAI* 18 – TAB. 1), *bʿl ʿz* (“of strength” Larnaka: *KAI* 288 – TAB. 1; see Xella 1993) – as do other deities – e.g. Reshep MKL (Idalium: *CIS* I.89-91), Shadraba (*KAI* 77), MilkʿAshtart (OEA 13, etc.; see Pardee 1988b) and Tinnit-ʿAshtart (*KAI* 285); ʿAshtart (*KAI* 33); Eshmnun (Nebi Yunis: *RÉS* 367; Sidon: *KAI* 281), Milqart (*KAI* 43), etc. As for Tinnit, see Hvidberg-Hansen 1979. We provide here only a very limited and not necessarily representative sample for the varied manifestations and deities.

52 Mosca takes this construction as adverbial rather than adnominal (2006, p. 189, note 51).

53 Here we accept the reading of Mosca 2006, p. 178 (cfr. *PPG* § 234). This provides an example of the *pluralis maiestatis*, invoking one deity (cfr. *KAI* 40, 47A-B), while that from Umm al-ʿAwamid invokes two (OEA 13.2-3 – TAB. 3). Note that, if properly restored, an additional invocation of Baʿl ʿOz would provide a third example of distant parallelism within a single inscription (*KAI* 288.4 – TAB. 1).

repeated within or across inscriptions, as well as variant formula introduced by adding a pronominal suffix or by changing or omitting the prepositional prefix.⁵⁴ These formulaic dedicatory formulae fit into a broader system of repetition and poetic parallelism.

4.2. Relative Formulae

This semantic dovetail unit sets the dedicant as subject of a subordinate relative clause, with the pronoun *š* (“that / which”) introducing one of a limited set verbs relating to phases of the ritual.⁵⁵ Most commonly a form of the verb *ndr* (“vowed / devoted”)⁵⁶ appears, to the near exclusion of all others, but sometimes one finds *ytn* (“gave”), *p^cl* (“made”), *šym* (“placed”), *ṭn^o* or *nš^o* (“erected / raised up”), a rarely *zbh* (“sacrificed”), and poetically redundant in Cyprus (*ytn wyṭn^o* “gave and erected”, i.e. near semantic parallelism),⁵⁷ followed by the name and patronym of the dedicant. This relative clause might seem the least poetic in terms of repeated specific formulae, simply due to the variety of specific personal names, but the system of name with title (or without) and patronym (sometimes with avonym or even deeper genealogy) remains consistent within and across sites.

The system of nomenclature parallels Northwest Semitic literary and epigraphic conventions for poetry and prose,⁵⁸ as well as conventions for listing generations (*tôldôth*, e.g. Gen 10, 11:10-32). Greek epigraphic and literary genealogies also commonly provide patronyms,⁵⁹ particularly notable when they fit into rhythmical *cola* and when they provide formulaic variation on poetic epigrams. Telemachus takes his lineage back four generations – stopping when he reached his semi-divine ancestor – to Arcesius son of Zeus (named here by patronymic as son of Cronus, providing a bonus generation):

ὄδε γὰρ ἡμετέρεην γενεὴν μούνωσε Κρονίων:
 μοῦνον Λαέρτην Ἀρκείσιος υἱὸν ἔτικτε,
 μοῦνον δ' αὐτ' Ὀδυσῆα πατὴρ τέκεν: αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 μοῦνον ἔμ' ἐν μεγάροισι τεκῶν λίπεν οὐδ' ἀπόνητο.

Thus the son of Cronus made ours a single lineage:
 one son alone had Arcesius begotten, Laertes; then
 one alone did he beget, Odysseus; in turn Odysseus left behind
 one alone in the palace, me, and by begetting me he gained no benefit.
Od. 16.117-20, cfr. 14.182

In historical eras, prose lineages required greater depth to reach back to the heroic and the divine, creating impressive statements of legitimacy (Hdt. 7.204, 8.131).⁶⁰

54 Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 176, note 82; Pardee 1988a, pp. 169-170.

55 In the Byblian dialect, *z* served as the relative pronoun (e.g. *KAI* 1, 4, 6-7), with punctuation associating the relative with the following verb (see *KAI* 6.1 – Таб. 3). This has led to some confusion over the distinction between the demonstrative of the main noun phrase (*PPG* § 113, 300.3) and the relative (*PPG* § 293; e.g. Mazza 1976, p. 132; Coacci Polselli 1976, pp. 139-140). On the relative clause, see Holmstedt 2008.

56 On Cyprus, including the pluperfect (*kn ndr KAI* 40.5). For an extensive treatment of votive diction in *tophet* precincts, see Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013.

57 e.g. *KAI* 41.1, *CIS* I.88.2, Yon 2004, nn. 1929.2, 1030.1, and Honeyman 1960.

58 E.g. for Ugarit, see Hess 1999.

59 Day suggests that the dedicator’s family shared in the dedication, from the nobility that ancestors lent to the epigram to the role of the descendants who would continue to reenact the ritual and maintain the memorial (2010, pp. 65-67, 187-188).

60 One translator noted the “euphonic effect” that lists of names and epithets must have produced (Greene 1987, p. 542, note 62).

The use of a patronym or avonym may simply follow standard Phoenician and Greek nomenclature, yet solemnly reciting a genealogy, brief or extended, evokes the poetic. In Phoenician votive inscriptions, patronyms may have fulfilled a rhythmical purpose, and they surely conferred a dignity and nobility, with dedicators' names competing for attention beside others. In addition to the patronyms themselves, one can find appended elite positions (e.g. *spr* “scribe”), religious functions (e.g. *khn* “priest”) or civic offices held through multiple generations, whether kinship on Cyprus (*mlk*), citizen-nobility in Umm al-ʿAwamid (*bʿl*), a magistracy in Carthage (*špt* “*sufes*”) or in Mactar (*rb*). Even in these cases, the depth of the lineage and extent of magistracies would rarely extend beyond two generations, with certain exceptions (e.g. *KAI* 68, 78). Adding lineage and titles serves as a form of epigraphic “name display”,⁶¹ providing impressive evidence of one’s own suitability for holding a magistracy or an elite occupation.

In terms of parallelism, the verb of the relative clause either repeats the root of its antecedent noun (repetitive parallelism) or a synonymous verb (semantic parallelism), or the entire semantic dovetail of the relative clause repeats (e.g., *KAI* 18 – TAB. 1; *RÉS* 1213, *KAI* 40 – TAB. 2; *KAI* 10, etc.).

4.3. Temporal (Adverbial) Formulae

In this optional semantic dovetail unit, a subordinate adverbial clause gives the date of the dedication, a prepositional phrase beginning “on” (*b-*) the numbered day “of / belonging to” (*l-*) the named month, “in” (*b-*) the year “of” (*l-*) the reign of the named ruler or magistrate.⁶² The pattern of day-month-year, and the repetition of terms for reign and king (both \sqrt{mlk}) show a sort of near parallelism:

<i>bymm 16 lyrh pʿlt</i>	on day 16 of the month PʿLT,
<i>bš[n]₂t 17 mlk mlky[tn</i>	in year 17 of king Milkyaton,
<i>mlk k]₃ty wʿdyl</i>	king of Citium and Idalium
<i>RÉS 1213.1-3 (London BM 125322)⁶³</i>	

Note that the temporal clause can be repeated in parallel calendars:

<i>bymm 7 lyrh hyr</i>	on day 7 of the month HYR,
<i>bšnt 31 mlk mlkm</i>	in year 31 of the reign of the rulers,
<i>ptlmys bn ptlmy[s]</i>	Ptolemy son of Ptolemy [and
<i>2š hʿ št 57 lʿš kty</i>	which is the year 57 of the men of Citium
<i>knprn ʿrsnʿs pldlp ʿmtʿsr</i>	(when) the <i>canephorus</i> to Arsinoë Philadelphus was MTSR,
<i>bt mk[] 3bn ʿbdssm bn gdʿt</i>	the daughter of MK[], son of ʿBDSSM, son of GDʿT
<i>KAI 40.1-3 (London BM 125327), CIS I.93 – TAB. 2</i>	

<i>bšt 180 Pdn mlkm</i>	in the year 180 of the Lord of Kings,
<i>143 št lʿm šr</i>	year 143 of the people of Tyre
<i>KAI 18.4-6 (Louvre AO 4831) – TAB. 1</i>	

Lineage of a ruler, like the lineage of the *canephorus* here, can resemble the patterns of prominent naming display found in the relative clause semantic unit. The same Phoenician dating formulae was employed for the reign of Libyan/Numidian kings, with variation due to sometimes omitting the specific date or sometimes omitting the preposition, or by spelling out the date rather than enumerating:

61 Keesling 2003, pp. 22-35; Day 2010, p. 7 note 26.

62 For this and similar usage of *b-*, see *PPG* § 251, § 283, § 323, and for *l-*, see § 282.

63 Note that, in this bilingual inscription, the syllabic Greek text uses similar formulae but omits the initial temporal clause.

bʿsr wʾhd lzyb on day eleven (*of the month*) of ZYB
ʿrbʿt ʿrbʿm št lmlky in year forty of his reign
 RÉS 336.4-5 (Louvre AO 5255) – TAB. 3

In Mactar, the date formulae had its normal position fixed in the concluding semantic unit (SCHEMA 3). In addition, the expression here differed by omitting the preposition before the temporal term *ʿt* (“time”) and abbreviating the term for the magistracy:

ʿt r ʿyknʿ bn ʿdrbʿl (*in the*) time of the m(*agistracy*) of ʿYKN, son of DRBʿL
wbrk bn ʿldyʿ... and of BRK, son of SʿLDY ...
št mʿrwzʿ bn ptywʿn (*in the*) year of MʿRWZ, son of PTYWʿN
 SINM 33.3-4, 5-6 (Tunis Cb – 1031) – TAB. 3

If this interpretation of *ʿt r* is correct,⁶⁴ consistent use of abbreviation upholds the rigidly formulaic nature of votive inscriptions. In this case, a sort of distant parallelism occurs due to the repeated temporal clauses. This semantic unit proves the most mobile, commonly in first position in Cyprus, last position in Mactar, and everywhere in between, with this mobility supporting our dovetail thesis.

4.4. Casual (Adverbial) Formulae

Another optional unit records a sort of *do ut des*, explaining why the offering was made – because (*k-*) the deity or deities heard the dedicant’s voice and blessed them. The formulae for this semantic unit show the greatest variety, only occasional due to changes in diction or vocabulary, more often due to changes in pronominal suffixes or due to either omission of the blessing or due to letting the blessing stand alone. In certain cases, not quite temporal, not quite causal, parallel adverbial clauses express the circumstances before or after a votive offering:

bmqm ʿz in this place,
bym bʿ bnty on that very day
 KAI 288.3 (Larnaka MAA 1513) – TAB. 1

This poetic pairing (each phrase introduced by *b-*) summarizes two prior extended adverbial prepositional phrases (also each introduced by *b-*),⁶⁵ one describing the place and the other the time of a battle between Paphos and Citium. An inscription from Umm al-ʿAmawid has a QAL infinitive construct that explains *mnēma*-function of the votive (see note 34):

lkny ly lskr to remain for me as a memorial
wšm nʿm and a good name
 KAI 18.6 (Louvre AO 4831) – TAB. 1

These circumstantial adverbial expressions, however poetic, lie outside of the standard pattern but, within the standard adverbial formulae, we do find causal and blessing formulae in parallel.

The standard causal formulaic expression normally appears in the last position (SCHEMA 1-2). while on votives from Mactar the expression is required rather than optional and fills the second position (SCHEMA

⁶⁴ See also KAI 62.4 and SINM: 46. The abbreviation *r-* has been plausibly interpreted as representing Phoenician *rab* or *rabbim*, “important man/men” (*√rb* “to become many”) or “magistrate” (cfr. Lat. *magis* “greater” > *magister*).

⁶⁵ On this use of *b-*, see note 58; on the “resumptive” function of these clauses and on interpretation of *bnty*, see Mosca 2006, pp. 182-184.

3). Elision or mobility of the semantic unit (to positions other than final)⁶⁶ demonstrate the formulaic nature of the causal formulae and validate our dovetail thesis. In votive dedications, full expression would include one causal formula segment with recognition by the deity, i.e. *k šm^c ql dbry* “because s/he⁶⁷ heard the voice of (his) words”, more simply “because s/he heard (his) voice”, and another paired causal formula segment with a blessing having been granted or yet to be granted (e.g. *ybrkm* “may they bless him”; *tbrk* “may you bless them”).⁶⁸

<u>Hearing</u>	<u>Blessing</u>	
	<i>ʿlm ybrkn</i>	KAI 18.8 – TAB. 1
	<i>ybrkm</i>	CIS I.93.5, KAI 40 – TAB. 2
<i>k šm^c l^r ql</i>	<i>ybrk</i>	RÉS 1213.5-6 – TAB. 2
<i>k sm^c qlm</i>	<i>ybrkm</i>	KAI 288.5 – TAB. 1
<i>k šm^c ql</i>	<i>ybrk</i>	OEA 13.3 – TAB. 3
<i>k šm^c q^l</i>	<i>tbrk^c</i>	CIS I.180.3-4
<i>k šm^c qlm</i>	<i>ybrkm</i>	CIS I.5702.5
<i>k šm^c q^l</i>	<i>brk^c</i>	SINM 22.1-2
<i>k šm^c qlm</i>	<i>brkm</i>	SINM 33.1-2
<i>k šm^c ql dbrm</i>	<i>tbrk</i>	CIS I.5688.5-7
<i>k sm^c ql dbrnm</i>		KAI 294.4-5 – TAB. 3
<i>[k š]m^c ql [db]ry</i>		KAI 61B.5-6
<i>k šm^c q^l</i>		CIS I.194.3

These formulae have wide rhythmic variation derived from the inclusion or omission of terms, e.g. *dbrm* “words” (*DNWSI s.v. dbr₁*) or *ʿlm* “eternity” (*s.v. ʿlm₄*), or from omission of one or the other causal formula (hearing or blessing). The formulae also vary due to use of plural or singular forms and from the use of pronominal suffixes of the nouns in the first segment (*PPG* § 234-35) or suffixes of the verb in the second (§ 187, 190).⁶⁹ Quite commonly votive dedications omit the causal adverbial formulae entirely.

4.5. Nominal Formulae

This semantic unit forms the main clause of these votive expressions, a noun clause indicating the object dedicated. All the subordinate clauses discussed above (prepositional, relative, adverbial) depend upon this main clause, for example as the antecedent to the relative clause. Outside of the Central Mediterranean, the main noun clause tends to not only appear but also repeat, yet within the so-called *tophet* precincts of this region it tends to be omitted, thus the dedication most often remains undescribed, the main clause unexpressed. When absent, the verb of the relative clause provides some sense of the noun – if someone “vowed”, then this implies a vow (*ndr*); if someone “gave”, then a gift (*mnt*); if they “raised up” or “erected”, then something

66 E.g. RÉS 337; EH 63 PUN – TAB. 3 (light gray).

67 The rigid formula accommodates only the singular *šm^c*, even in dedications referring to more than one deity (Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 176, note 80).

68 Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 175 label these as “thanksgiving” formulae; Stucky 2005, pp. 275-276 as “blessing”; and Jongeling 1999 as “concluding”, while providing a comprehensive list of variants. Amadasi Guzzo describes the first causal formulaic segment as declaring that a request should be heard (*richiesta esaudita*) and the second segment as laying claim to a requested benefaction (*richiesta di benefici*, 1989-1990, p. 833). A thorough analysis of these formula of listening and blessing (*écoute et bénédiction*), ranging from onomastics to myth and from the Levant to the Central Mediterranean has recently appeared (Bonnet – Minunno – Porzia 2021). The arbitrary few examples we select here derive only from the sampling of inscriptions listed in TABS. 1-3.

69 On variation due the addition of a suffix, see Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 176, note 82; cfr. Pardee 1988a, p. 169-170.

raised up (*ns*^o or *nšb*); if they “sacrificed”, then a sacrifice (*zbh*).⁷⁰ Even if unexpressed, such terms can be understood due to the conservative formulae of the inscriptions.⁷¹ Still, generic verbs may not have matched the generic nominal phrase in repetitive parallelism, since we commonly have cases where a “gift” (*mnt*) was “vowed” (*ndr*, e.g. *KAI* 99), a “votive” (*ndr*) was “given” (*ytn* – *TAB.* 3).⁷² Thus certain generic terms might be supplied when the named dedication was omitted.

In cases outside of the Central Mediterranean, the specific object named need not depend on the verb, for example one might commonly give and erect a “statue” (*sml*, e.g. *KAI* 41), or one might rarely give a “plate of gold” (*mrq^c hrš*, *KAI* 38) or a “trophy” (*trpy*, *KAI* 288). The specific offering would also have been clear by context, with the inscription upon or adjacent to the object dedicated. In these and other cases, the verbal roots used in the relative clauses might not have been reliable predictors of the specific dedication in the main nominal phrase, e.g. while they may elsewhere consecrate ($\sqrt{qdš}$), they would “make” ($\sqrt{p^cl}$) a sacred structure (*mqdš*, e.g. *KAI* 62, 172), and while they may elsewhere sacrifice (\sqrt{zbh}), they would “build” (\sqrt{bny}) an altar (*mzbh*, e.g. *KAI* 77). Such generic terms provide synonyms (semantic parallelism) even if not describing a specific dedication.

Repetition of the main noun clause evokes the poetic. A dedication from Ḥammon (Umm al-^cAwa-mid) provides an example of near parallelism, with two noun phrases antecedent to the relative clause where the dedicant generically “gave” (*ytn*) the specific offering:

<i>k[p]rt</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a propitiatory offering
<i>hrš mtm</i>	(<i>as</i>) a complete sculpture
OEA 13.1 (Beirut E363) – <i>TAB.</i> 3	

We have translated here in apposition (in parallel), based upon other formulae in similar semantic units, although it might be translated as an “offering of a complete sculpture” (in construct). Besides near parallelism, formulae from Cyprus display distant parallelism, two independent main noun clauses. The following example specifically names (three) statues with by the plural demonstrative (^o*l*) and all marked by the article (*b-*), then in parallel these are collectively named a generic votive which their father had “vowed” (*ndr*), also marked by the article:

<i>hsmlm b^ol...</i>	these are the statues...
<i>bndr</i>	(<i>this is / these are</i>) the votive
<i>KAI</i> 40.3, 5 (BM 125327) – <i>TAB.</i> 2	

In the following example, the initial noun clause names a specific statue with the demonstrative pronoun, which the dedicant “gave” (*ytn*), then in distant parallel named as a generic votive “vowed” (*ndr*), marked with the article:

<i>sml^oz...</i>	this is the statue...
<i>bndr</i>	(<i>this is</i>) the votive
<i>RÉS</i> 1213.3, 5 (BM 125322) – <i>TAB.</i> 2	

70 Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013 have surveyed sacrificial vocabulary in isolation, vocabulary that we treat here in parallel, but there they restrict themselves to terms from *tophet* precincts.

71 Segert 1976, § 71.34.

72 e.g. Stucky 2005, pp. 275-276, Ph1.

In both of these cases, the second iteration not only serves as a distant parallel but also as repetitive parallel, where the root of the verb in the relative clause (*ndr*) matches the antecedent generic noun.

In other cases we have specific clauses marked by demonstratives in distant parallel, the initial (once omitted) as an independent predicate nominative and the following repeated as direct object (and by the article):

<i>trpy</i> ^z ^ʔ ^ʕ <i>yt</i> n ² ...	this is a trophy which he erected...
... ^ʔ <i>yt</i> <i>htrpy</i> ^z	...this as the trophy
(<i>elision of relative clause</i>)	(<i>which he vowed/gave</i>)
KAI 288.1, 4-5 (Larnaka MAA 1513) – TAB. 1	

(<i>elision of noun clause</i>) ^ʔ <i>ʕ</i> <i>ndr</i> ...	(<i>this is a votive</i>) which he vowed...
... ^ʔ <i>yt</i> <i>hʕr</i> <i>z</i> <i>whdlb</i>	...this as the gate and the doors
^ʔ <i>l</i> <i>p</i> ^ʔ <i>lt</i>	which I made for it
KAI 18.1, 3-4 (Louvre AO 4831) – TAB. 1	

These examples demonstrate, on the one hand, how additional semantic dovetail units can combine at various rhythmical junctures and, on the other, how elided semantic units can be supplied from context – the former lacks the relative clause, the latter its main clause, yet both clauses can be understood. All four examples (TABS. 1-2) demonstrate distant poetic parallelism through repetition of the noun clauses and clauses dependent upon them. These full repetitions, with demonstrative pronouns and articles, provide the full syntax and vocabulary for the elided examples.

In the Central Mediterranean, whether the noun clause fills the first semantic dovetail unit (SCHEMA 1), or the second semantic dovetail (SCHEMA 2), both are antecedent to the relative clause.⁷³ In both schemas, the noun phrase can repeat, albeit rarely, in a distant parallel immediately before the final adverbial dovetail unit. The dedications in this region normally elide both the demonstrative pronoun and the article, with few exceptions (e.g. *CIS* I.3731, 4872), but even with elision the demonstrative is understood in the main noun clause. The poetic repetition of these noun phrases sets generic terms in near or internal parallel to specific terms within the same dovetail unit, or in distant parallel in different units. When in near parallel, the terms can be taken in apposition rather than as multiple terms in construct (NB examples in the remainder of this section can be found in TAB. 3):

<i>mtnt</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a gift
<i>ndr</i> ⁷⁴ ...	(<i>as/of</i>) a votive...
<i>mlk</i> ^o <i>dm</i> ⁷⁵	(<i>this is</i>) a MLK-offering of an ^o DM

73 As mentioned in the introduction, the overwhelming majority of the Phoenician-Punic epigraphic corpus derives from the solitary precinct of Tinnit and Ba^l in Carthage. Nearly all of its inscriptions have been published without their precise stratigraphic context, and only an exceedingly limited range of stelae from this reticent and redundant corpus have received attention. For the vast bibliography concerning this and similar open-air votive sanctuaries, so-called *tophet* precincts, see Melchiorri 2013; for general surveys with bibliography see, for example, Garnand 2022, D’Andrea 2018 and Ruiz Cabrero 2007.

74 In this semantic dovetail unit, generic terms appear most commonly (e.g. *mtnt* “gift”, *ndr* “votive”, *zḥ* “sacrifice”, *nʕ* “something raised”), sometimes in near or distant synonymous parallel to other such terms (e.g. *RÉS* 332; Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, pp. 171-173, § 3.5)

75 The rare term *mlk* (also *mlkt*) appears only on inscriptions in sanctuaries dedicated to Tinnit and Ba^l, i.e. *tophet* precincts, either by itself as an “offering” (literally “a causing to go forth”, from $\sqrt{h}lk$) or as part of the syntagms *mlk* ^o *mr*, *mlk* ^o *dm*, or *mlk* *b*^l, rarely marked by demonstrative pronouns (e.g. *CIS* I.147). The former syntagm signifies the offering of a sheep, while the latter two remain enigmatic but follow the same pattern (Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, pp. 169-171, § 3.2-4; cfr. *DNWSI s.v.* *mlk*₃). In any case, all three syntagms should be treated as closely parallel, part of the same semantic system, for example as the *mlk*-offering of a “sheep” (^o*mr*) or “commoner” (^o*dm*) in substitution, or of a “noble” (*b*^l, Mosca 1975). Treating these syntagms systematically renders ingenious interpretations of individual terms improbable (e.g. Bénichou Safar 1993; Ribichini 2020).

<i>bš^crm</i> ⁷⁶ <i>RÉS 335.1-2, 3</i>	(<i>as his</i>) BŠ ^c RM
<i>ndr...</i> <i>...mlk^odm</i> <i>bš^crm btm</i> <i>KAI 105.2, 3, cfr. EH 32 PUN, 87 PUN, NP 34, RÉS 336</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a votive... (<i>this is</i>) a MLK-offering of an ^o DM (<i>as his</i>) BŠ ^c RM BTM
<i>mlk^odm</i> <i>bš^crm btm</i> <i>ndr</i> <i>EH 29.1-2 PUN</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a MLK-offering of an ^o DM (<i>as his</i>) BŠ ^c RM BTM (<i>as</i>) a votive
<i>mlk^omr</i> <i>ndr</i> <i>KAI 110.1</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a MLK-offering of a sheep (<i>as</i>) a votive

The mobility of generic terms supports treating these as nouns in apposition. If we were to take the generic term *ndr* as part of a construct chain, it should not occupy both *regens* and *rectum* position in relation to specific terms. We also find repetitive near parallelism of terms from the same root (*nytn*), clearly in apposition:

<i>mtnt</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a gift
<i>mtnt^o</i>	(<i>as/of</i>) his gift
<i>mlkt b^cl</i> <i>KAI 99.1-2</i>	(<i>as</i>) a MLK-offering of a B ^c L

A key value of this type of semantic dovetail analysis derives from discovering synonymous parallelism, set in apposition, within and across semantic dovetail units.

Certain terms appear with some but not other terms, known terms paired with enigmatic terms, limiting their semantic range. For example, the term for stela (*nšb*) sits parallel only to *mlk*-offerings (*KAI 61A-B, CIS I.147, 194, 198, 380, 5684*), and only once additionally to the parallel term *bmšrm* (*CIS I.198*).⁷⁷ Certain rare generic terms for the marker may appear alone – e.g. *bn* (“stone” *KAI 97, EH 106 PUN*)⁷⁸ and *nš^o* (“something raised” *KAI 6*)⁷⁹ – or combination with other rare or enigmatic terms in semantic parallelism:

<i>bmlk</i>	(<i>this is</i>) as a MLK-offering
<i>š^orm š^ošt</i> ⁸⁰	(<i>as/of</i>) a female before her time
<i>nš^o</i> <i>KAI 167.2-3, cfr. NP 19</i>	(<i>as</i>) a raised offering

76 This synonymous parallel term *bš^cr* has wide orthographic variation and a range of interpretations (e.g. from *š^cr* “blood”, or *š^cr* “flesh”), appearing alone or as part of the syntagm *bš^crm btm*, perhaps “his own flesh (and/or blood) unblemished”; Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, pp. 173-175, § 3.6; cfr. *DNWSI ss.vv. bš^cr₂, mlk₅ § 6*).

77 The term occurs only here, in the same segment that *bš^crm btm* occupies, either in error or as a phonetic match, perhaps signifying “in his need” (Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 175 and fig. 8).

78 This generic term has orthographic variations *bn* (*KAI 97*) and *bbn* (*EH 106 PUN*) – the latter less probably rendered as *bn* with the article (“the son”).

79 Cross 1971 reads *nš^o* (cfr. Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 173, § 3.5), while Donner and Röllig suggest *mš* (“statue” *KAI 6*), in either case a rare term fits the syntax of the main noun clause in this dovetail unit.

80 The term *š^orm* is normally modified as either male or female (*š^o/š^ošt CIS I.5702*; Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, p. 175, § 3.6; cfr. *DNWSI ss.vv. š^ozr₂, mlk₅ § 4*).

<i>mtnt...</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a gift
<i>ns^o ʔlm⁸¹</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a raised offering of the god
<i>bšrm btm</i>	(<i>as his</i>) BŠ ^c RM BTM
EH 87.1, 2-3 PUN	

<i>z^ob</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a sacrifice
<i>bmlk</i>	as a MLK-offering
<i>ʔzrm ʔzt</i>	(<i>as/of</i>) a female before her time
NP 74/105.1-2, cfr. <i>Punica</i> XI.34	

While the properties of parallel expressions may transfer from the specific to the generic – an *ʔzrm* can be a *mlk*-offering, can be a *zbh* (“sacrifice”) – this may not hold when moving from generic to specific – a *zbh* may not necessarily be a *mlk*-offering. The equation may or may not be transitive across expressions – if a *mlk*-offering can be an *ʔzrm*, can be a *ns^o*, and if *mtnt* (“gift”) can be a *ns^o*, can be *bšrm*, then perhaps an *ʔzrm* can be a *bšrm*:

<i>ʔzrm ʔst</i>	(<i>this is</i>) a female before her time
<i>bšm bntm</i>	(<i>as his</i>) BŠ ^c RM BTM
CIS I.5741.6-8	

While scholars have focused on specific but enigmatic and rare terms, these parallel associations and the range and distribution of generic terms (both nouns and verbs) have received less attention and offer a productive avenue for future research. Scholar have also noted that the nouns found this semantic unit somehow *qualify*, *specify* or *justify* the dedication,⁸² to this list we might add that they somehow *versify* when set in parallel, as a reenactment of rhythmical ritual expression.

5. EXPANDED FORMULAE

The basic dovetail segments in Phoenician-Punic dedications – main noun clause with object dedicated, prepositional phrase with divine recipient, relative clause with dedicator – can be expanded with adverbial clauses, temporal or causal. Yet this basic structure most often does not expand, rather it may even contract with dovetail segments elided. In all cases, this basic structure serves as the core of longer expressions, as is the case with Greek verse dedications.⁸³

Poetic expansion could be achieved by iteration of dovetail segments, through semantic or repetitive parallelism of the noun clauses and/or relative clauses (e.g. *RÉS* 1213, *KAI* 40 – TAB. 2), of prepositional phrases (e.g. *KAI* 18 and 288 – TAB. 2), or of adverbial clauses (e.g. *SINM* 33 – TAB. 3; *KAI* 288 – TAB. 2). The latter example, the trophy inscription from Citium, has four adverbial clauses – the first locative and the second temporal (prepositional phrases marked by *b-*), giving the place and time of a battle, followed by a third iteration joined by *w-* and a “resumptive” clause (again with segments marked by *b-*);⁸⁴ these in turn are followed by a fourth, joined by *w-*, that expands the causal hearing/blessing formula, explaining how the deity responded to their prayer; finally this section concludes with iterations of the relative and nominal

81 The syntagm *ns^o ʔlm* appears only here in Phoenician (*DNWSI s.v. ns^o*), but does appear in Latin inscriptions from North Africa as *nasililim* (*CIL* 8.14950, 8.14987, 8.15072, 8.15075, 8.15098, 8.15115).

82 Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora 2013, § 3.6.

83 Day 2010, p. 6.

84 Mosca 2006, pp. 182-183.

clauses. Note that we translate *w-* adverbially – “when”, “then”, “so”, rather than “and” – in order to highlight the consecutive sequence. While one may have expected the temporal clause dovetail segment, these other iterative clauses provide “narrative expansions”.⁸⁵ Such poetic expansion may have served, in part, to elevate and legitimize the reign of Milkyaton.

The structures of these semantic dovetail units apply across Phoenician-Punic dedications. Here we review the applicability of such units to the bi-lingual Pyrgi Tablet,⁸⁶ which provides multiple examples of narrative expansion. This inscription has been the focus of studies not only of its meter⁸⁷ and its formulaic structure,⁸⁸ but also edited volumes and conference proceedings that marked the fiftieth anniversary of its discovery.⁸⁹ The inscription begins with a standard sequence (SCHEMA 2), with divine recipients (prepositional / indirect object), the generic “place” dedicated (^ʿ*šr*) in a noun clause marked by the demonstrative, the dedicator and his acts of dedication, and a date formula that includes a semantic parallel of the noun clause (*mtn* “gift”):

SEMANTIC DOVETAIL		
PREPOSITIONAL	¹ <i>lrbt l'šrt</i>	For the Mistress, for ʿAshtart
NOMINAL	² <i>šr qdš ʿz</i>	this is the holy place
RELATIVE	³ <i>p'l w'š ytn</i> ³ <i>tbryʿ • wlnš</i> <i>mlk ʿl ʿkyšryʿ</i>	which he made and which he gave did Tiberias • Velianas, king over Caere
ADVERBIAL (TEMPORAL)	<i>byrh • zbḥ ʿšmš</i> <i>bmtnʿ • bbt</i>	• in the month • of Sacrifice of the Sun as his gift • in the temple
MAIN	<i>wbn ʿtw</i>	since he built the shrine
ADVERBIAL	<i>k'šrt • ʿrš • bdy</i>	• because ʿAshtart • required it • by his hand
ADVERBIAL (TEMPORAL)	⁷ <i>mlky šnt šlš III</i> <i>by ʿrh krr</i> <i>bym qbr ʿlm</i>	during year three (3) of his reign in the month of KRR on the day of Burial of the Deity
ADVERBIAL (CONDITIONAL)	<i>wšnt lm'š ʿlm ʿbbty</i> <i>šnt km hkkbm ʿl</i>	as for the years of the statue of the deity in her temple (<i>may they be</i>) years like these stars.

Our division into semantic units precisely matches the stichometry of Fecht’s proposed metrical divisions, save for the transition between the basic initial sequence and the following section (lines 5-6). Instead we prefer the semantic division of Zamora, who noticed how the conjunction *w-* here marks a significant change in sequential order, transitioning to background information about a prior act,⁹⁰ thus we translate “since” instead of “and”. As we have noted previously, Phoenician-Punic inscriptions mark semantic divisions with

85 Mosca 2006, pp. 191-192.

86 *KAI* 277; Gibson 1982, pp. 151-159, n. 42; for the Etruscan text, see *ETIX* Cr 4.4.

87 Fecht 1990, pp. 208-210, § 3.2.5.

88 Zamora 2016.

89 Michetti – Baglione 2015; Bellelli – Xella 2016.

90 Zamora 2016, p. 70.

the prepositions *l-* and *b-*, with the relative *š*, and with the conjunction *w-* (e.g. *KAI* 288).⁹¹ At this section break, the near parallelism of the repeated \sqrt{bny} (“to build”) does bridge the transition, and finds a distant parallel in the final section (again *bt* “temple”).

This second section records a separate but parallel act of the dedicator and a parallel temporal clause records the date of that act, while in between a dovetail segment offers a variation of the typical causal formula. The third and final section repeats in close parallel a hope of many “years” (*šnt*) for the endurance of the deity’s statue – perhaps synecdoche for the previously mentioned “place”, “shrine”, or “temple”. This section, whether expressing a desire (“volitive”) or a good omen (“augural”),⁹² whether based on a Phoenician original or Etruscan, takes the expected pattern of the final formulaic clause and expands upon and inverts the dedicator’s request. In addition to reflecting desire for a long reign (*KAI* 18.6 – TAB. 1; *KAI* 6.2-3 – TAB. 3), the inversion here has the *goddess*, or her statue, gain the blessing of extended dominion (lines 9-11), because the king had heeded *her* request (line 6). This lone example seems to demonstrate a mutual expectation of beneficence, which Day describes as reciprocal *charis* (see note 20). This holy place, this gift in the temple, has served its religious purpose by offering grace both to ʿAshtart and to the king, and has served its social function as a memorial of beneficence. The narrative expansion of this final section⁹³ utilizes repetitive parallelism and provides exceptionally poetic imagery, not only in Phoenician but also in the parallel Etruscan text. Such literary allusions, therefore, may be culturally specific yet simultaneously take part in a Mediterranean-wide trend to inscribe poetry on memorial inscriptions.

6. CONCLUSION

Very few inscribed *stelae* have been recorded *in situ*, having been robbed out in antiquity for re-use in other constructions, or else were robbed out in the 19th and 20th centuries by illicit or amateur excavations. Some dedications had a simple stone marker; some an unscribed rough sandstone *cippus*, with or without iconography, possibly inserted into an architectural shrine; finally a few had fine limestone *stelae*, and even fewer of these were inscribed. Yet even within these limits and despite lost contexts, we nevertheless have thousands of Phoenician dedications, data points that allow us to extrapolate and understand the fragmentary and the elided. Although few inscriptions expand beyond abbreviated expression, formulaic composition of even the most basic dedications preserve the rhythms of re-performance or re-enactment.

While one may be hard pressed to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of terse dedications, they do evoke the poetic. Their formulaic expressions employ similar words in the same context and the same rhythmical conditions. Beyond the divine names of recipient, they preserve epithets and divine titles. Beyond the mere name of the dedicant, they include patronyms and elite occupations. Every word or phrase or structural feature, every hint at parallelism, elevate the ritual language to poetic prayer. The synonymous repetition and mobility of the terms used for the objects dedicated, the reasons for and the benefits of the dedication, all together preserve an incantation, a prayer, a poetic hymn. While we may recognize and identify formulaic language, such expressions had a utility and meaning in context, read aloud as a reactivation of the initial act.

91 In one exceptional instance, the conjunction superfluously combines with the relative ($w^2\text{-}\check{s}$, line 2). Besides division into semantic units, this inscription marks individual word boundaries by punctuation, including *bmtn?* • *bbt* at line 6 (following Amadasi Guzzo 2016), and it consistently respects word division at line breaks, thus we read two words *wbn tw* at line 5-6 (*contra* Zamora 2016, p. 76). Regarding semantic division into *hemistiches*, marked by conjunctions and relatives, compare the dedicatory stela of Yehawmilk (*KAI* 10; Fecht 1990, pp. 194-197 § 3.2.3).

92 Zamora 2016, pp. 73-74.

93 While the final clause in dedications commonly includes an adverbial causal/blessing formula, one might find appended an additional and rare final curse formulae, both on dedications and on funerary inscriptions.

ABBREVIATIONS

- CEG I = P.A. Hansen, *Carmina epigraphica graeca saeculorum VIII-V a. Chr., nos. 1-465*, Berlin 1983 («Texte und Kommentare», 12).
- CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin 1862–.
- CIS I = E. Renan – P. Berger – J.-B. Chabot – J.-G. Février (edd.) *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum, Pars prima: Inscriptiones phoenicias continens, Tomus I-III*, Paris 1881-1962.
- DNWSI = J. Hoftijzer – K. Jongeling. *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, Leiden 1995 («Handbuch der Orientalistik, Erste Abteilung: Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten», 21.1-2).
- EH = A. Berthier – R. Charlier, *Le sanctuaire punique d'el-Hofra à Constantine*, I-II, Paris 1952-1955.
- ET = G. Meiser, *Etruskische Texte*, Hamburg 2014².
- KAI = H. Donner – W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, I-III, Wiesbaden 1962-2002⁵.
- NP = P. Schröder, *Die phönizische Sprache*, Halle 1869, pp. 63-72 (cfr. Harris 1936, pp. 160-61).
- OEA = M. Dunand – R. Duru, *Oumm el-'Amed: Une ville de l'époque hellénistique aux échelles de Tyr*, Paris 1962 («Etudes et documents d'archéologie», 4).
- PPG = J. Friedrich – W. Röllig – M.G. Amadasi Guzzo, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, Rome 1999³ («Analecta Orientalia», 55).
- Punica XI* = J.-B. Chabot, *Punica XI: Les inscriptions néopuniques de Guelma (Calama)*, in «Journal asiatique» 11 (8), 1916, pp. 483-520.
- RÉS = J.-B. Chabot – C. S. Clermont-Ganneau – G. Ryckmans (edd.), *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*, Tome I-VII: Liv. 1-7, Paris 1900-1950.
- SINM = M.H. Fantar – M. Szynger – F. Bron, *Stèles à inscriptions néopuniques de Maktar*, I, Paris 2015 («Corpus des antiquités phéniciennes et puniques», France 3 / Tunisie 1; «Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres», 51.).
- SMI = M.G. Amadasi Guzzo, *Scavi a Mozia: le iscrizioni*, Rome 1986 («Collezione di Studi Fenici», 22).
- SPC = F. Bertrand – M. Szynger, *Les stèles puniques de Constantine*. Paris 1987 («Notes et documents des musées de France», 14.).

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