

### **Philosophical Transactions**

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production before you; but it came from the East Indies. There is likewise from the West Indies, in its perfect or winged state, the insect, of which this production is believed to be the nympha. [Vid. TAB. XXIII.]

I am with all possible regard,

### Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant, Lincoln's-Inn Fields, Nov. 15, 1763.

William Watson.

XLV. An Attempt to explain a Punic Infcription, lately discovered in the Island of Malta. In a Letter to the Reverend Thomas Birch, D. D. Secret. R. S. from the Reverend John Swinton, B. D. of Christ-Church, Oxon. F. R. S. and Member of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona in Tuscany.

Good Sir,

Read Nov. 24, Received some months since from the Honourable Mr. Lyttelton of Christ-Church, son to the Right Honourable the Lord Lyttelton, a copy of a Punic inscription, lately discovered in the island of Malta, sent me from Rome by Sig. Abate Venuti, antiquary to the Pope, and a gentleman of prosound erudition. This copy was inclosed in a letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Carlisle,

Carlifle, who was so good as to transmit it to me at Oxford. The inscription has been mentioned, but not explained, by M. l'Abbé Barthelemy', in the 'Journal des Sçavans, who has deduced a new Phœnician alphabet from it; though he feems to doubt whether any of the transcripts that had appeared, at least any of those he had seen, agreed perfectly in all particulars with the autograph itself. However, from the known accuracy of Sig. Abate Venuti, I think we may venture to suppose the copy now fent you to be in the main fufficiently exact. I shall therefore, at the request of several friends, submit to the consideration of the Royal Society a few cursory remarks upon this curious monument of antiquity; especially, as it has not yet in a proper manner been communicated to the learned world.

I.

The three first letters undoubtedly form the Hebrew word חדר, PENETRALE, CONCLAVE, INTI-MVS RECESSVS, &c. for a farther account of which, recourse may be had to the <sup>2</sup> Hebrew lexicographers.

The next two elements feem to be Beth and Thau, of which is composed the Phænician word בת, probably the same with the Hebrew בים, domys; as the Phænicians not seldom omitted, or suppressed, the letter Jod. This most evidently appears from ברם, צרום, צרום, צירום, ציר

84. A Amsterdam, 1761.

Val. Schind. Jo. Buxtorf. Christian. Stock. Jo. Leonhard. Reckenberg. aliique plur. lexicograph. Hebr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Journal des Sçavans, Suite de Decembre 1761. p. 82, 83, 84. A Amsterdam, 1761.

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hibited by the Tyrian and Sidonian coins. The form of the *Thau* here feems to indicate the infcription to be of a later date. This character bears some resemblance to the figure of *Tzade*, preserved on certain medals of Tyre and Sidon; though these two, whatever may have been infinuated to the contrary by a writer of considerable note, are sufficiently distinguishable from each other.

The three following letters present to our view the Hebrew word by, seculum, æternitas, perpetuitas, duratio hominibus abscondita,

&c. Not the least difficulty occurs here.

The three preceding letters are succeeded by Koph, Beth, and Resch, forming the noun קבר, SEPVL-CHRVM; which, with the introduction just explained, sufficiently points out to us the nature of the inscription I am now upon.

The four next Phænician elements answer to the Hebrew , DEPOSITVS. The true fignification of the term, as used here, is preserved in the <sup>3</sup> Syriac.

With regard to the following word ACLARVS, INNOCENS, IVSTVS, &c. I shall only beg leave to obferve, that it cannot well be misunderstood. It will be almost superfluous to remark, that both this and the preceding word assume the nature of substantives here; the term www, vir, by a most common ellipsis, being suppressed.

The four following characters combined produce the Hebrew מבכלת, consymmationies, omnino, penitys, &c. The reality of this word, from what

has

<sup>3</sup> Buxtorf. Lex. Chaldaic. & Syriae. p. 97. Basileæ, 1622.

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has been laid down by the Hebrew 4 lexicographers, may be most clearly evinced.

The letters He, Zain, He, seem to constitute the participle min, dormiens, decymbers, &c. M. l'Abbé Barthelemy, unless I am deceived, takes the second of these elements for Jod. But this will neither be admitted by the form itself, nor the tenor of the inscription. The small stroke, or scratch, above this character, seems to be only an accidental blemish, occasioned by the injuries of time.

The participle DTT, VEHEMENTER AMANS, or INTIME DILIGENS, probably begins a new fentence. Some doubts may perhaps arise about the power of the first character. However, after the closest examination of the inscription, it appears to me to be certainly *Resch*.

The verb \$7, TREMVIT, or COMMOTVS EST, immediately follows. This Chaldee word may likewise be rendered MAGNO CVM AFFECTV MOTVS EST, and deduced from the Arabic, according to 5 Maius.

The substantive , POPVLVS, which immediately follows, comes in appositely enough here. The Carthaginians sometimes used the word by in the same, or at least an extremely similar, sense. This appears from some of the medals of Menæ, now called Menéo, an ancient town of Sicily, subject to the Carthaginians; on which we find py, Po-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Val. Schind. Lex. Pentaglot. p. 866. Hanoviæ, 1612. Christ. Stock. Clav. Ling. Sanct. Vet. Test. p. 528, 529. Jenæ, 1727. Jo. Leonhard. Reckenberg. Lib. Radic. sive. Lex. Hebraic. p. 777. Jenæ, 1749.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Maius, apud. Jo. Leonhard. Reckenberg. ubi sup. p. 1386. <sup>6</sup> Numism. Antiqu. &c. à Thom. Pembr. et Mont. Gomer. Com. Collect. P. 2. T. 87.

pvlvs menarum, or populus menenius, to omit others that might with equal facility be produced, as I have many years fince observed. For a farther account of T, I must beg leave to refer the curious to the Hebrew lexicographers, and particularly to Maius 7.

The next word תשא, IN PONENDO, or \* rather ovem Poneretve, (i. e. לשאול, or ארצ, IN SE-PULCHRO, or IN TERRA) occurs in the very fame fense, Psal. xlix. 15. which passage throws considerable light upon this part of the inscription. That the Punic dialect of the Phænician, the language of our inscription, was not without such ellipses as that mentioned here, must be allowed probable enough, if Bochart's Latin version of the Punic words in Plautus may be considered as not very remote from truth.

The three last words of the inscription are apparently הובער בן ברמלך, hannibal filius barmelec, barmile, bormile, or barmeleci. As the letter 'r in the conversion of Oriental words into Greek is sometimes lost, the Carthaginian name barmelec, or bormile, might have been pronounced bomile (and perhaps bomilear) both by the Greeks and the Romans. For that the genuine Carthaginian names, when either written or pronounced by the individuals of those nations, were not a little corrupted and depraved, I think we have no manner of reason to doubt.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Maius, apud Jo. Leonh. Reckenberg. ubi sup. p. 51.

<sup>\*</sup> Vid. Stock. et Reckenberg. in vocib. אשר et אות.

Boch. Chan. Lib. II. c. vi.

Id. ibid. c. vii, viii, xi.

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### II.

From the foregoing observations it most evidently appears, that the following arrangement of the words forming this inscription may be considered as not very remote from truth.

חדר כת עלם קבר נגעל נקה בכלת הזה רח־ -ם רף אם בשת חנב־ -על בן ברמלך

The Latin and English versions of which words may, as I conceive, be appositely enough drawn up in the following terms.

PENETRALE DOMVS SECVLI (five DOMVS PERPETVÆ)—SEPVLCHRVM DEPOSITI (hìc) CLARI (viri) CONSVMMATIONIBVS (i.e. OMNINO, PLANE, vel ARCTISSIME) DORMIENTIS—INTIME DILIGENS (eum) COMMOTVS (est) POPVLVS QVVM PONERETVR (scil. IN TERRA i.e. SEPELIRETVR) HANNIBAL BARMELEC (BARMILC BORMILC Vel BARMELECI) FILIVS.

THE INTERIOR PART OF THE HOUSE OF LONG DURATION (OF LONG HOME i. c. THE GRAVE)—THE SEPULCHRE OF AN UPRIGHT MAN DEPOSITED (here) IN A MOST SOUND (OF DEAD) SLEEP—THE PEOPLE HAVING A GREAT AFFECTION FOR HIM WERE VASTLY CONCERNED WHEN HANNIBAL THE SON OF BARMELEC (BARMILC OF BORMILC) WAS PUT into the earth, or interred.

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It ought to be here remarked, that the word terminates the second line, and begins the third; as also that the proper name אובעל, HANNIBAL, by a similar kind of bissection, belongs both to the third and fourth lines. But this is by no means to be wondered at. The Greeks observed the same method of writing in their inscriptions 10, both of an earlier and a later date.

### III.

That the words above explained form a sepulchral inscription, will admit of no dispute. The three first of them in particular, which feem to be a fort of preface or introduction to the proper inscription, render this incontestable; and the others, either in conjunction with or exclusive of them, amount to an affertion of this in direct terms, and consequently prove it to demonstration. That the term , the fecond word of the inscription, is equivalent to the Hebrew ביה, notwithstanding the omission of Jod, is evident beyond contradiction, not only from the reason above affigned, but likewise because the expression בת עלם denotes THE HOUSE OF LONG DURATION, A MAN'S LONG HOME, OF THE GRAVE, the very sense it is used in here, Eccles. xii. 5. Nor can the Fod well be looked upon as an effential part of the noun, fince the plural of בית in the Hebrew is בית, and the Ethiopic term for a house is no, agreeing in all respects with the second word here. M. l'Abbé Bar-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Chish. Antiquitat. Asiatic. pass. Vid. etiam Tho. Reines. Syntagm. Inscript. Antiqu. pass. Lipsiæ, 1682.

thelemy "takes the third letter of the third line for Vau, and affigns it the place of that element in

11 Journal des Sçavans, ubi sup. M. l'Abbé Barthelemy a takes a very similar character for Vau, in the inscription of Carpentras; which probably induced him to affign this figure the power of that element, though the inscription of Carpentras does not appear to me to have been first discovered in the island of Malta. The letters forming the Maltese-Phœnician inscription, which the French Abbé has attempted to explain, are very different from those of the inscription I have been considering, and the two characters in particular imagined to represent Vau in these monuments bear scarce any resemblance to each other. Hence it should seem to follow, according to M. l'Abbé, who b attributes the diversity of character in the Phænician or Punic inscriptions rather to difference of place than distance of time, that the letter in question ought by no means to be looked upon as Vau. I shall not however pretend to avail myself of a notion, how hard soever it may bear upon him, that I consider at least as arbitrary and precarious, if not plainly false; but shall suspend any farther observations I may have to make on this head, 'till the publication of M. l'Abbé's famous memoir on the Phænician letters, upon the fuperior merit of which he has himself with so much complacency been pleased to dilate, and which some of his dadmirers have placed in so glorious a light. In the mean time I must beg leave to remark, that the character before me does not only refemble one of the Chaldee forms of Pe, but likewise the antient Samaritan and Greek forms of the same element; and that the word formed of Resch and Pe, 57, is consonant enough to the tenor of the inscription. This, I conceive, sufficiently authorizes me at present to ascribe to the supposed Vau the power of Pe. in this point I should happen to be wrong, M. l'Abbé will most certainly f rectify my mistake. I shall ever lye open to conviction, being determined in my refearches and inquiries to facrifice all inferior confiderations to the love of truth.

b Journal des Sçavans, ubi sup.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Guignes, De l'Orig. des Chin. p. 54. A Paris, 1760. Recueil d'Antiquit. &c. de Comte de Caylus, Tom. I. p. 73, 74. pl. XXVI. A P2-ris, 1752.

c Journal des Sçavans, Août 1760. p. 277.
M. de Guign. uhi. sup. p. 60. Journal des Sçavans, Decembre 1760.

p. 348.

Soan. Baptist. Biancon. De Antiqu. Litter. Hebræor. et Græcor. p. 31,

<sup>32.</sup> Bononiæ, 1748.

f Recucil des Medailles de Peuples et de Villes, &c. Tom. III. p. 140. A
Paris, 1763.

his alphabet. But the form of this character is totally different from that of the Phænician Vau, especially as it is exhibited by the other Maltese inscription, of which he pretends to have given us fo accurate a copy. Nor will the sense of that part of the inscription in which this letter appears afford the least countenance to fuch a supposition. On the contrary, the figure of this element well enough correfponds with that of the final square or Chaldee Pe, and the verb formed of Resch and Pe seems consonant enough to the tenor of the inscription. To what has been observed of the letter Zain, in the second line, we may add, that this character sufficiently refembles the Hebrew and Palmyrene Zain; and that the word הזה, DORMIENTIS, very naturally concludes the fentence, of which it is a constituent part. All which if we admit, and allow Sig. Abate Venuti's copy to be in the main exact, as I cannot help thinking it is; the following alphabet, plainly deducible from that copy, will be found to contain seventeen of the Punic literary characters used in Malta, when our inscription first appeared.

The Maltese-Punic alphabet

The Waitele-Funic alphabet.	
Aleph %	Lamed //
Beth 444	Mem
Ghimel 2	Nun { }
Daleth 4	
He 7	
Vau	Pe 7
Zain )	Tzade
Heth	Koph ヤヤ
Teth	Resch 47
Jod	Resch 47 Schin Ψ
Caph	Thau pp

hu1(4) 7, 4/Upa B7 minphay 7 41 BM49487,4 7h49919h

A Llate of Sig: Abate Venuti's copy of the Punic Infoription lately discovered in

bilof. Tranf. Vol. LIII. TAB. XVII. p. 283.



ered in Malta.

The Maltefe-Punic infer ption. [TAB. XVII.]

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Hence 'tis obvious at first fight, that the forms of some of these letters differ from those of the correspondent elements in M. l'Abbé Barthelemy's alphabet; and that the characters he takes for Vau and Jod, which has indeed been already remarked, I suppose to be Pe and Zain. Which of us is in the right, after a more accurate copy of the inscription can be procured, perhaps the learned may be able to decide.

IV.

Who Hannibal the fon of Barmelec, Barmele, or Bormile, was, or when he lived, for want of sufficient light from ancient history, I cannot take upon me precisely to determine. We may however, I think, rest assured, that he died a considerable time (perhaps several centuries) after the Citiean inscriptions, or at least the earliest of them, first appeared. The forms of several of the letters, particularly of Pp 2

the Aleph, Ghimel, He, Heth, Caph, Ajin, Koph, Schin, and Thau, so considerably differing from those of the same elements in the earlier Phænician times, seem to render this incontestably clear. I know, indeed, that M. l'Abbé Barthelemy would be thought to infinuate, if he does not directly affert this, that such variations are 12 always to be attributed to difference of place,

12 Journ. des Sçav. Suite de Decembre 1761. p. 83. The character representing Koph in our inscription was not the original, nor even the earlier, form of that element. One somewhat resembling it was however used by the Carthaginians in Sicily, before they were dispossessed of that island by the Romans. This plainly enough appears from the Punic coin in Tab. XVII. now in my fmall cabinet, and never before published. This piece feems to exhibit the word NTITT, CARTHADA, the very Punic name of Carthage, according to a Solinus, in Punic characters; the first of which bears some resemblance to the later figure of Koph, as preferved on the monument under confideration. The letters on the reverse are not so legible. They nevertheless appear to me to form the names of two Carthaginian cities in Sicily. The first of these was perhaps NDD, мота, or rather мотуа; the Vau and Jod having been not unfrequently omitted in Phœnician, and therefore probably in Punic, words. The name of the other town, as originally imprest on the medal, being in a great measure defaced; I shall not venture at a communication of it to the learned world, but leave it to be cleared up by some other coin or inscription that may possibly hereafter occur.

That the names of two Sicilian cities in Punic characters were fometimes imprest upon the reverse of one coin, may be fairly inferred from a Carthaginian medal now in my possession; of which I may probably, in a future paper, give a particular account. A form of Koph pretty similar to that visible on the monument I am considering likewise appears on a coin of ACHOLA, ACHOLLA, or ACHVLLA, as the medal presents the word to our view, struck in the Augustan age. From what has been here observed, as well as from the resemblance both these figures of Koph bear to the square or Chaldee form of the same element, we may collect the remains of antiquity that exhibit them not to have been the produce of the earlier Phoenician times.

J. Solin. Polyhift, cap. xxvii, Traject, ad Rhen. 1689.

rather than distance of time. But besides that such a notion runs counter to what he had before 33 advanced, this by no means feems agreeable to truth, or the natural course of things. For the Punic and Phænician alphabets were originally the very fame, and continued fo, or nearly fo, I make not the least doubt, long after the foundation of Carthage. And this is rendered highly probable by the letters preserved on many Carthaginian coins. To what then can we fo properly ascribe the aforesaid variations as to distance of time, fince the letters fo varied in the Carthaginian territories had undoubtedly the same forms with those of the correspondent elements in the more antient Phænician alphabet, (used both there and at Tyre, Sidon, Citium, &c.) feveral ages before? In fine, the same characters at first prevailed both at Carthage and in Phœnicia; though these, or at least feveral of them, in after ages, assumed pretty different So that the more any Punic or Phænician literary characters, in whatever country found, recede from those that formed the Samaritan or earliest Phænician alphabet, the later they ought undoubtedly to be deemed, as I have elsewhere observed. Nor will M. l'Abbé, I flatter myself, notwithstanding the infinuation hinted at here, be displeased with me, if on this occasion I should adopt another 14 of his opinions.

After the Carthaginian provinces had been subdued by the Romans, the people still retained the use of their antient proper names, and spoke the Punic

<sup>13</sup> De l'Orig. des Chin. par M. de Guignes, p. 39. A Paris, 1760. 14 M. de Guign, ubi sup. p. 39.

tongue. The former of these points is abundantly clear from coins and inscriptions, published by the <sup>15</sup> authors here referred to; and the latter of them is no less clear from writers, of the best and most undoubted authority. Nay, we have good reason to believe, that the Phænician or Punic language was spoken and understood in some of those provinces even to the days of St. <sup>16</sup> Austin.

With regard to the island of Malta in particular, which was to long subject to the Carthaginians, it may not be improper to remark, that the intire reduction of it feems scarce to have been effected before the time of Julius Cæsar by the Romans. although the people of that island were obliged to fubmit to the Roman power, after the destruction of Carthage; yet they found means afterwards to affert their independency, and shake off the Roman yoke. But notwithstanding they had been rendered a formidable maritime power, by the extensive commerce which they enjoyed, they were finally " fubjugated by Cæfar, though with no small difficulty, about forty-five years before the birth of CHRIST. justly therefore be questioned whether the Latin tongue was ever much used in Malta before the death of that conqueror, or rather before the commencement of the Christian æra, which was but little posterior to it. Be that however as it will, that

<sup>16</sup> Christoph. Hendreich, in Carthag. p. 8, 9. Francofurti ad Oderam, 1664.

Percus. &c. p. 8. Lipsiæ, 1742. Numism. Antiqu. Thom. Pembroch. et Montis Gomeric. Com. P. 2. T. 89. Sam. Bochart. Chan. Lib. II. c. xxiv. Tho. Reines. ubi sup. p. 487, 488.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Appian. Alexandrin. apud Burchard. Nidersted. in Malta Vet. et Nov. lib. II. c. vi. p. 69. Helmestadii, 1660.

the use of the Punic language and the Punic proper names was retained in Malta, as an antient part of the Carthaginian territories, at least three or sour centuries after the last mentioned period, if not much longer, from what has been here advanced, is abundantly clear. Nay, that the Punic tongue is even at this day the vernacular language of the lower part of the Maltese, though deformed by many corruptions, and disguised by the accession of various foreign words, after perusing what has been communicated on that head to the learned world by 18 Canonico

Agius, I am strongly inclined to believe.

Since therefore the ducts of feveral of the letters indicate this inscription to be of a later date, we cannot but suppose it to have been many years (perhaps feveral centuries) posterior to the conclusion of the first Punic war. And fince Hannibal Ben Barmelec, or Bormilc, is mentioned therein as a person of confideration, whose death was greatly lamented by the people; perhaps he was either a popular fenator of Malta, or one of the suffetes there, (the Punic form of government not improbably prevailing in that island, even when dependent on the Romans, as it did in other 19 places that had been subject to the Carthaginian state) a century at least after Julius Cæsar had given the finishing stroke to the liberties of the Maltese. This, I say, appears to me by no means improbable; but that he really sustained either of the characters here mentioned, or lived at the time here supposed, I must not presume positively to affirm. The forms of some of the letters will not permit us however, I

Hendreich, ubi sup. p. 316. Reines. ubi sup.

<sup>18</sup> Gio. Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis, Della Lingua Punica presentamente usata da Maltesi, &c. In Roma, 1750.

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think, to affign this inscription a higher age. They-rather announce a later than an earlier date.

### V.

The words forming this inscription are for the most part either Hebrew or Punic. Of the former sort are חבר , בשח, אם, בשח, כבח, קבר , הוח, קבר , בשח, יכל , כבלת ; of the latter , בתל , בתל , besides the proper names and קבר , ברכלך, וועל , so that only נגעל and קבר , ברכלך eem to bear any relation to the Chaldee and Syriac. Hence we may plainly see, as well as from what I have formerly observed, that neither the Punic nor Phænician was almost intirely Syriac; and consequently, that the opposite notion, advanced by M. l'Abbé Barthelemy and M. de Guignes, together with the superstructure they have erected upon it, must necessarily fall to the ground.

"Tis worthy observation here, that we have not met with the proper name of a Carthaginian in Punic characters, on any of the remains of antiquity, before the monument whose inscription I have been considering occurred; and it likewise ought to be remarked, that the word HANNIBAL is formed of the very same Punic letters in this inscription that it has been supposed to have antiently consisted of by the 21 learned.

With regard to the ellipses pointed out to us in the Latin and English versions of this inscription, they are such as have ever been common in the eastern world; and similar ones will present themselves to

<sup>21</sup> Boch. Chan. Lib. II. c. xii. Hendr. ubi sup. p. 149. Ad. Littlet. Ling. Latin. Dict.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> M. de Guign. ubi sup. p. 60. Journal des Sçav. Decembre 1760. p. 348.

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our view in passages of scripture, too numerous, as well as too obvious, to be cited here 22.

The length of the inscription, as it seems to have only a fingle person for it's object, as well as the forms of it's letters, will undoubtedly evince it to be the produce of a later age; though the precise time of it's first appearance, for want of sufficient light from antient history, I cannot take upon me to ascertain. shall I be so vain as to pronounce the explication now fubmitted to the judgment of the Royal Society in all points true, as I have not yet met with a copy of the inscription absolutely to be depended upon. However, I hope it will not be found very remote from truth. If hereafter, by means of a more accurate transcript, I should discover any errours in what has been here advanced, I shall most readily retract them, and ever with great pleasure listen to better information. farther remarks on this curious monument of antiquity, so highly meriting the attention of the learned, I must at present supersede; having now only time to beg you would believe me to be, with the most perfect confideration and regard,

SIR,

Your much obliged,

and most obedient servant,

Christ-Church, Oxon. May 20th, 1763.

John Swinton.

<sup>22</sup> Vid. Johan. Buxtorf. The faur. Grammat. Ling. Sanct. Hebr. & Christian. Nold. Concordant. Particular. Ebræo-Chaldaic. pass. Vid. etiam Boch. Chan. Lib. I. c. xxxv. p. 705. Francosurti ad Mænum, 1681.

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A Plate of Sig. Abate Venuti's copy of the Punic Infoription lately discovered in Malta.