CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ROMAN AFRICA:

THE 'LA GHORFA' STELAE

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THE 'LA GHORFA' STELAE

By

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ABSTRACT

The 'La Ghorfa' stelae from Roman Africa offer a unique opportunity to study the social and cultural identity of an unusual cult, one that combined aspects of the Punic, Roman, and indigenous cultures. The context and origins of the votive stelae were not recorded upon excavation, but stylistic and iconographic parallels suggest that they come from a part of central Africa Proconsularis known as the *pagus Thuscae* (Chapter IV), and that they date between the second half of the first century and the first part of the second century A.C. (Chapter V).

The *pagus Thuscae* was a geographic contact point for various cultures in Antiquity, and the 'La Ghorfa' stelae demonstrate that these cultures each contributed to the language, artistry, and religion of the region's inhabitants. Punic, Roman, and indigenous elements appear in the sculptural and epigraphic zones of the stelae, including in the depictions and names of the dedicants (Chapters II and III).

Unlike their Punic and Roman predecessors, the dedicants of these ex-votos did not place much significance upon inscriptions; only about one-quarter of the stelae are inscribed, as preserved. Some dedicants portray themselves in the guise of a togate Roman, although only in one instance does the nomenclature in the inscriptions clearly belong to a Roman citizen. In addition, the inscriptions do not name the god or gods to whom these stelae were dedicated, although the sculptural reliefs show a complex combination of gods. The dedicants and their cult come from a stratum of society not normally attested in the archaeological or written record.

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Introduction

Ancient North Africa was a scene of constantly shifting and diverse identities, from perhaps as early as the end of the twelfth century B.C., when Phoenician colonists settled at Utica, according to legend.¹ In the following centuries, Punic settlements spread along the North African coast and, centred on Carthage, established a territory that also extended inland. Ancient sources do not record how indigenous North Africans reacted to the Punic civilization;² archaeological remains and inscriptions belonging to the former date mostly to the third century or later, when the cultures had more or less integrated in many towns.³ After the end of the first Punic War, Carthage's territory covered most of what is now northern Tunisia; its western neighbours were relatively disparate, indigenous, land-based tribes. Following the second Punic War, Massinissa united these tribes into a Numidian kingdom,⁴ but, even then, the inlanders remained mostly agrarian, with stronger kinship ties than state ones.⁵

¹Pliny *NH* 16,40.

²The term "indigenous" is preferable to "Libyan", "Berber", or "Numidian", each of which have confusing connotations. The pre-Punic inhabitants across North Africa were extremely diverse in culture; the term "indigenous" here refers particularly to the culture local to central Africa Proconsularis, the geographic area of interest for this thesis.

³Ennaïfer (1976), 15-16.

⁴Bouchenaki (1983), 536. The term "Numidian" here and throughout this text refers to the pre-Roman culture, not to the later Roman province.

⁵Brett and Fentress (1996), 33.

After the defeat of Carthage in 146 B.C., the Romans made the Carthaginian territory into a Roman province; a century later, after the defeat of Juba, part of the Numidian territory was joined to this province to form what would shortly become known as Africa Proconsularis (see map, fig.55).⁶ In addition to establishing new colonies, the Romans often moved into pre-existing towns. In such cases, their influence is not clear even in major coastal towns like Sousse (ancient *Hadrumetum*) until the later first century A.C.⁷ Until that time, Punic traditions continued to dominate most coastal communities in such aspects as language, art, and religion; Roman practices became more prominent during the second century.

In the hinterland, where Punic and indigenous practices had already mixed, locals saw more variable degrees of Roman intervention. Varying military needs, political situations, and economic opportunities attracted different types and numbers of people.⁸ When Romans moved into a given area, the practices of their homeland were not always practical or even feasible locally; they had to adapt their technologies and lifestyles to local conditions. At the same time, the indigenous inhabitants became exposed to Roman culture. Acculturation therefore saw natives and Roman immigrants alike adapting their ways to suit local circumstances in central Proconsularis. Both groups related to their environment and neighbours by accommodating and adapting each other's practices, so that the two became practically indistinguishable in many aspects of their lives. The physical record from Africa

⁶Fentress (1979), 64-65, summarizes the Roman-Numidian military interactions.

⁷Foucher (1964), 33-39.

⁸Cf. Greene (1992).

Proconsularis shows little in the way of anti-Roman sentiments, which tended to arise only in more remote areas where the Roman presence was neither as consistent nor as accepting.⁹

In central Proconsularis, the Roman presence did not alter life in any sudden way. The Punic language persevered in some areas until the late second or third century.¹⁰ Communities like Dougga (ancient *Thugga*), with its early Roman-style dedications,¹¹ are rare here, where towns more commonly lacked Roman civic architecture until the Trajanic period or later. Punic-style town magistrates, called *suffetes*, are still attested in the first century A.C. at Dougga, Maktar (ancient *Mactaris*), and other major centres.¹²

These indices of life in central Africa Proconsularis indicate that communities adopted Roman practices gradually, but they tend to reflect only a minority of the population, those who could afford to donate public edifices or who were in the municipal government. These were the people who, according to several scholars, were targeted and then courted by Rome, under the theory that municipal leaders controlled the local population.¹³ The wealthy and the town officials were therefore given more incentive to adopt Roman practices than most of their neighbours. The latter, the majority of the population of Africa Proconsularis, are harder to gauge. They did not participate in civic life

⁹M. Bénabou's *Résistance à la romanisation africaine* (1976) has provoked the greatest response in terms of academic discussions. For discussions of acculturation and Romanization, cf. especially Cherry (1998); Wells (1998), esp. 126-128; Woolf (1998).

¹⁰Picard CivMact (1957), 67-68.

¹¹*ILS* 6797 may come from a shrine to the Imperial cult (48 A.D.); the forum was paved in 36 A.D., with monumental arches dedicated under Claudius and Caligula: Poinssot (1983), 38-39.

¹²For Maktar, cf. Picard *CivMact* (1957), 39-40. Fantar (1974), 2, assumed that both Dougga and its neighbour, Teboursouk, were ruled by *suffetes*, while, according to Brett and Fentress (1996), 40, this position existed in most Numidian towns.

¹³E.g. Brett and Fentress (1996), 51; Brunt (1976), 161.

in such prominent or archaeologically impressive ways. Whether they lived in the towns or in the countryside, they have left few traces expressing how they viewed themselves and their environment. This is especially the case in the period when Roman influence becomes obvious, in the late first and second centuries.

One striking testimonial to the attitudes and socio-economic environments of these people is the votive stele, a stone carved and inscribed to commemorate that its dedicant had fulfilled a vow to his or her god. Thousands of these stelae have been found across North Africa in sanctuaries belonging to indigenous, Punic, or Roman populaces, or a combination thereof. Most of those from the Roman period are collected in M. Le Glay's important volumes on *Saturne africain*, which overwhelmingly demonstrated the impact of pre-Roman traditions upon Roman Africans.¹⁴

These stelae document a sector of society not usually heard from in ancient literature or through urban archaeology, since most are found just outside of towns. The dedicants were mostly indigenous¹⁵ and almost never recorded a position of notable administrative or military rank.¹⁶ At some sanctuaries, votive dedications appear to have been the prerogative, or at least primarily the act, of local priests;¹⁷ elsewhere, anyone from a soldier¹⁸ to a beast-

¹⁴Le Glay SAM I (1961), SAM II (1966), and SAH (1966).

¹⁵Le Glay SAH (1966), 404.

¹⁶Le Glay SAH (1966), 402-403.

¹⁷At Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*), 152 out of 297 dedicants (51%) identified themselves as priests, and may have dedicated the stele due to professional obligation; no other profession is attested from the sanctuary: Berger and Cagnat (1889), 248 and 257.

¹⁸The professions most commonly attested in the votive inscriptions from North Africa are those of military personnel and priests, although no tallies for these careers have been made.

fighter in the amphitheatre¹⁹ could set up a stele commemorating his or her act of devotion. However, most dedicants left little information about themselves.

While the inscriptions identify the dedicants, the sculptural sections express the beliefs of the dedicants and craftsmen. Although the stelae were sacred objects, they were not intrinsically conservative; even in the Punic period, when craftsmen had a very basic repertoire of symbols upon which to draw, they still managed to make each stele individual. Votive stelae could therefore reflect community beliefs, rather than necessarily state ones; especially in the Roman period, their iconography and religious sentiments were less restricted than those of official religious architecture and art.²⁰

Le Glay's *Saturne africain* volumes catalogued Roman stelae from across North Africa and highlighted this variety, but they overlooked how variable religious beliefs could be. As a successor to the Punic god Baal, Saturn was the pre-eminent deity in many parts of Roman Africa. However, he was neither the only god to receive votive stelae, nor even an important god in all areas. Each group of stelae attests a unique and accommodating attitude towards worship, with many so unofficial and distinctive that they could only have come from one region or locality, and, even then, probably within a specific time period.

Such is the case with the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, a group of at least 43 limestone stelae that appear to have been dedicated to a god or gods other than Saturn. They are in the form of a tall rectangle with a triangular summit, probably the most common shape for North African votive stelae; yet their size sets them apart. When fully-preserved, they average

¹⁹CIL 8,24532 and CIL 8,24533, both from Carthage. All entries from CIL 8 will hereafter be abbreviated as C., for example C.24532.

²⁰Le Glay SAH (1966), 14.

over 1.5 metres tall, at least double the height of the average stele in western North Africa.²¹ On average, they measure approximately 0.38m wide, and 0.15m thick. With the exception of Cat.23,²² only one face of the stone is sculpted, but this carving is intricate and covers approximately four-fifths of the surface; only about 0.30m remains rough-carved and presumably was intended to be buried in the ground or set into a base. A small portion of the stelae bear brief inscriptions in Neopunic, Latin, or both.

The stelae are now split between at least four museum collections in Tunisia, Europe, and England (Catalogue A).²³ Most of these groups can be traced back to larger, 19th century collections containing other 'La Ghorfa' stelae. However, no excavation records survive and other documentation is inconsistent and sometimes erroneous.²⁴ Although the stelae were indisputably found in Tunisia by the mid-19th century, shortly thereafter their specific provenance was already confused.

In 1905, L. Poinssot declared that the stelae came from La Ghorfa, a plain situated between Dougga and Maktar; the stelae thus conventionally became known as the 'La Ghorfa' group. Other convoluted records caused the stelae to be attributed to Carthage.²⁵

²⁴The Appendix, "History of the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae", details these records (pp.214-224).

²¹The best-preserved 'La Ghorfa' stele, Cat.38, stands over 2.0m high and 0.50m wide. The calculation for comparative North African stelae is based on the heights of fully preserved stelae listed in Le Glay *SAM* I (1961).

²²The illustration numbers for stelae from Catalogue A correspond to the Cat. number for each stelae; that is, fig.1 illustrates Cat.1, fig.2 illustrates Cat.2, and so on.

²³Twenty-four are in the British Museum (London), twelve in the Musée du Bardo (Tunis), three in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna), and two in the Louvre (Paris); cf. Catalogue A, *infra* p.225. The current location of at least two stelae, Cat.39 and 43, is unknown.

²⁵Carthage was the provenance for Cat.33, according to C. 1011, and for Cat.40, according to Noll (1986), 44. Curiously, *The Phoenicians* (1988), 619 nos. 208 and 209, ascribed an origin of "La Ghorfa (Carthage)" to its two examples, Cat.6 and 41 respectively. Several museum records also list Carthage as the origin of the stelae; cf. pp.214-224.

Picard's 1957 publication of excavations at Maktar revealed strikingly similar stelae;²⁶ however, this new evidence was nonetheless largely ignored until A.M. Bisi connected them to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae again in 1978.²⁷ In the last decade, C. Mendleson²⁸ and A. M'Charek²⁹ have proposed alternate origins within Tunisia, based upon recovered records and stelae. Mendleson suggested the stelae come from at least one of three sites in central Tunisia, while M'Charek's arguments provided strong evidence that the stelae come not from La Ghorfa, but from the Maktar area, especially Maghrawa.³⁰

This origin places the group within the grain belt that was so integral to the province's economy. Not coincidentally, votive stelae are especially common within this zone,³¹ where the gods' benevolence was crucial to a good harvest. Especially in the western part of the grain belt, this zone marks a contact point for different cultures: the eastern extent of the Numidian realm, the western border of what had been Punic territory until 146 B.C., and the evolving boundaries of the Roman provinces. When these cultures intersected, some remarkable by-products resulted, including the distinctive 'La Ghorfa' stelae.

While these stelae form a congruous group, details of their style, iconography, and epigraphy suggest different local craftsmen or workshops, if not different dates. These

²⁶Picard *CivMact* (1957), 46 n.163 and 45, pl.XV,g; the stelae appear in Catalogue B, *infra* p.265, as Cat.B7 and B14 respectively.

²⁷Bisi (1978), 80 *et passim*. Bisi's study was the most comprehensive for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae to this point, although some stelae were unknown to her in 1978 (my Cat.20, 23, 35, 37, and 43), and I have discarded one of her examples as being only superficially related (inv.no.WA 125180).

²⁸Mendleson (forthcoming) and personal communication.

²⁹M'Charek (1988).

³⁰M'Charek (1995), 247, stated that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae come from one of six sanctuaries in the region.

³¹Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 403.

aspects have not been emphasized enough by previous scholars, who have not been able to study the entire group personally, as this study does.³² Furthermore, these scholars have missed one other inconsistency, in the stone material. For instance, the limestone used for the British Museum examples alone is not uniform and consistent; it ranges from a hard grey, almost clay-like material, to a very soft, sandy stone.³³ Such a range in material contradicts previous assertions that this group is consistently made of a single limestone, and that this uniform limestone is characteristic of much of central Tunisia.³⁴

Instead, these distinctions suggest that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae need not be limited to Maktar, a factor almost never considered.³⁵ They probably come from several towns in Maktar's region, which was known in antiquity as the *pagus Thuscae* (fig.56, map). This *pagus* may have existed as early as the second century B.C., and, by Trajan's time, consisted of 64 stipendiary towns, including their administrative centre at Maktar.³⁶ From the Republican period, Roman *conventus* existed in this region, probably as much to take advantage of the agricultural riches as to establish a Roman presence at the province's western borders. In addition, Rome bestowed citizenship upon some prominent Numidians,

³²Catalogue A presents, for the first time, a comprehensive treatment of all known 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae; the supplement, Catalogue B, adds stelae that are surely related, though their recent histories cannot be linked to that reconstructed for the original 'La Ghorfa' group in the Appendix.

³³The Louvre registry *Livre d'entrée Antiques et Monuments MNB (1870 à 1881)* identified the stone used for MNB 898 and 899 (Cat.41 and 42) as white marble, but they are clearly of limestone.

³⁴Poinssot (1905), 398 and 398 n.3, referring to G. le Mesle, *Mission archéologique en Tunisie, avrilmai-juin 1888* (1899); M'Charek (1988), 751; Mendleson (1995), 258 (referring to the entire collection of stelae from North Africa in the British Museum).

³⁵Lancel (1992), 432, is apparently the only person to have thought otherwise; he described the 'La Ghorfa' stelae as "a rich collection gleaned from several sites in Central Tunisia", but did not explain why he opposed all previous scholarship in this matter.

³⁶Gascou (1972), 148. The geographic boundaries of the *pagus* remain unknown, although a Punic inscription found 25km north of Maktar, at Djebel Massouge, may mark the northern boundary, which meets the Phoenician *fossae*: Ennaiter (1976), 16; Picard *CivMact* (1957), 19-21.

likely recognizing that their authority over their neighbours could work to Rome's benefit.³⁷ Nonetheless, elevated status came late to the important towns in this border zone; for instance, *Zama Regia*, Juba's residence, became a colony in the Hadrianic period,³⁸ when *Althiburos* (mod. Medeïna) was elevated to *municipium* status;³⁹ Maktar only became a colony between 176 and 180.⁴⁰

Though 'La Ghorfa' stelae surely come from *Thusca*, their specific contexts -- and therefore extrinsic dating evidence -- have been lost. In order to reconstruct what these details may have included, Chapter I investigates evidence for "Sanctuaries, Stelae, and Gods" in Roman Africa. Known sanctuaries number in the hundreds and extend from the Punic into the Roman period, at least to the fourth century A.C. Over many centuries, the essential character of the stelae did not change greatly, in terms of what they signified and how they functioned; even the type of people who dedicated them did not change so much; however, the appearance of the stelae and that of their divine symbols did, not only chronologically, but also geographically. Chapter II therefore lays the groundwork to narrow down questions of the dates and origins of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, independently of M'Charek's findings. Some caution is necessary, however, since both the stelae and the sanctuaries have often been dated rather precariously in the absence of firm archaeological contexts.

³⁷Brett and Fentress (1996), 51.

³⁸CIL 6,1686. Zama's location is disputed, but is most likely Henchir Jâma, located about 30km north of Maktar: Gascou (1972), 133.

³⁹Gascou (1972), 133-134.

⁴⁰Gascou (1972), 147.

Past scholarship on Roman African ex-votos, and the 'La Ghorfa' stelae in particular, has moved in two different directions, one that regarded the stones as odd conflations of Roman religion,⁴¹ and another that viewed them as curious art objects exemplifying North Africa's flirtation with Graeco-Roman art and philosophy.⁴² Especially in the absence of good contexts, these extremes have resulted in rather sweeping generalizations and sometimes purely subjective dating. For instance, estimates have dated the same 'La Ghorfa' stele to the end of the first century A.C. and to the third quarter of the second century, without clear explanations for either.⁴³ Others have conservatively proposed a more general date for the stelae, but even then there are major discrepancies: do the stelae date from the late first through the third or fourth centuries,⁴⁴ or to only one of those centuries?⁴⁵ The ensuing chapters will examine individual components of the stelae in order to address this question.

The 'La Ghorfa' stelae are best known for their unusual sculpted reliefs (Chapter II).

These are fairly shallow, often relying upon incision for details. They most commonly separate into three zones, each drawing upon motifs or styles of different cultures. In the top zone (Chapter II.1), Graeco-Roman gods like Dionysus and Eros flank the Punic 'sign of

44Bisi (1978), 80.

⁴¹E.g. La Blanchère (1897).

⁴²E.g. Picard (1962), 30. Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 48-49, criticized scholars who had studied stelae as religious documents alone, and praised Picard for generating interest in their artistic expression and influence; unfortunately, Le Glay sometimes lost sight of the objects' sacred value in pursuing quirks of their artistry; for example, cf. Le Glay (1963), 243.

⁴³Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 265, and Bisi (1978), 80, respectively.

⁴⁵First and early second century: Ghedini (1990). Second century: Gsell *HAAN* IV (repr. 1972), 201 n.2; Bayet (1957), 241; Lézine *ArchPun* (1959), 25 n.90; and Hanoune (1986), 150. *C.* mid-second century: Picard (1962), 30. 100-150 A.C.: Picard (1963), 240-241. Third century: Soren *et al.* (1990), 237.

Tanit', a symbol that the artists here have uniquely transformed into an anthropomorphic figure carrying fruit. These figures stand below a Punic disc-and-crescent motif, while astral, faunal, and vegetal motifs often fill in the spaces around them, far more energetically than is typical for either Punic or Roman reliefs. Some of these same motifs may appear in other zones, but never in the same profusion (Chapter II.2). The second zone (Chapter II.3) contains a full-length portrait of the dedicant, whose dress, hairstyle, and accessories may look indigenous, Roman, or a mixture of the two. The dedicant appears within one of two types of architectural facade, sometimes flanked by Punic *caducei* and tall palms. In the lowest zone (Chapter II.4), whether in Graeco-Roman-style bull sacrifices or in scenes of more mysterious meaning, figures whose torsos face the viewer have feet pointing to the side in a style more indigenous than Punic or Roman.

The sculpting style, from facial features to the exuberant decoration, sets this group apart and emphasizes its cohesiveness (Chapter II.5). It is far more intricate and extensive than most North African stelae, while bright and colourful paint traces, especially preserved on Cat.39, suggest that these stelae involved detailed work beyond carving. The subject of the reliefs are themselves remarkable, for they uniquely combine the trappings at least three separate cultures: Punic, Roman, and indigenous African. All three cultures also manifest themselves in both the languages and nomenclature of the few formulaic inscriptions that survive (Chapter III).

Both the reliefs and the inscriptions help to narrow down the group's origin (Chapter IV), and to identify stelae that likely derive from the same sculptural traditions (Catalogue B). They also rule out some of the dates that past scholars have assigned to the stelae;

however, since they are so removed from 'official' Roman art and epigraphy, they allow only general dates to be suggested, probably between the late first and second centuries (Chapter V).

The Conclusion tackles problems of identity. Two main parties are involved in any dedication, the donor and the recipient deity; yet the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are cryptic in both respects. All but perhaps one of the inscriptions lacks a divine name; the exception is a Neopunic inscription that may name Baal (Cat.29). However, Saturn-Baal does not appear in the reliefs of any 'La Ghorfa' stele, while many other divine figures and symbols do, drawn from both the Punic and Graeco-Roman repertoires.⁴⁶ Furthermore, while Baal had many followers in the Maktar area, Saturn did not;⁴⁷ within Roman *Thusca*, Saturn apparently did not replace or succeed Baal as popularly as he did elsewhere in Roman Africa. If Saturn did not receive the 'La Ghorfa' ex-votos, who did: Baal, under some other guise?⁴⁸ Saturn-Baal's female counterpart, Tanit-Caelestis?⁴⁹ A mystery cult figure like Cybele?⁵⁰ Though the iconography is obscure, the figures and symbols seem to form a more abstract expression of success and fertility.

⁴⁶Even so, the stelae have been attributed to Saturn: e.g. Lancel (1992), 432; Carthage (1995), 30 no.32.

⁴⁷For instance, at Maktar, only one Severan inscription names Saturn (C.23403), while a single sculptural bust of the god, probably contemporary, is known: so Picard *CivMact* (1957), 47. In contrast, Maktar's sanctuary to Baal contained over 100 dedications to that god, mostly inscribed in Neopunic: cf. Picard *CivMact* (1957), 43f. and Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 273-292 and pls.CVIII-CXXIII.

⁴⁸Picard "Ba'al Hammon" (1990), 90.

⁴⁹Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 264; Foucher (1962), 104; Yacoub (1970), 16; Yacoub *Chefs d'oeuvre* (1978), 31-34; Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, *et al.* (1998), 42.

⁵⁰La Blanchère (1897), 38, 47 et passim.

Even more importantly, the stelae contain important clues about their dedicants. Astonishingly, despite the fact that these people are represented in the reliefs and sometimes even named in the inscriptions, few scholars have bothered to research their ethnic backgrounds, their place within the Roman system, or even to remark on their socio-economic status. These people were able to dedicate stelae far larger and more intricately decorated than the majority of their peers. In addition, their stelae recorded the fact that they had fulfilled a vow, which presumably implies that they had initially made an offering like the bovine sacrifice depicted on several of the stelae.⁵¹

The stelae therefore suggest that the 'La Ghorfa' dedicants had some disposable wealth; yet details of the inscriptions and reliefs suggest that the dedicants sit somewhere outside of the political and economic circles that scholars envisage Roman policy as courting in order to control the province.⁵² Between two and three centuries after the fall of Carthage, these people still could not be considered 'Roman', and clearly took only what appealed to them from the Roman model, as they understood it. This description applies to many inhabitants of Africa Proconsularis, where local variables affected such choices.

In attempting to capture the multicultural essence of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, scholars have labelled them in a variety of ways: "puniques",⁵³ "*interpretatio graeca* della teologia punica",⁵⁴ "Roman influence but still retaining an essential Phoenician core",⁵⁵ "berbéro-

⁵¹Other financial considerations may have been involved; for instance, the dedicant may also have had to buy a plot for the stelae, pay for its maintenance or subsequent rituals, and so on.

⁵²Brunt (1976), 161.

⁵³Bayet (1957), 241.

⁵⁴Bisi StelePun (1967), 116.

⁵⁵Mendleson (1995), 262.

puniques",⁵⁶ "punico-numides",⁵⁷ "numides",⁵⁸ "très africaines",⁵⁹ "art populaire nordafricaine",⁶⁰ in "very slightly Romanized native tradition"⁶¹ and, finally, "de style caractéristique de l'art populaire", the result of the mixing, "en milieu berbère", of Punic and Graeco-Roman beliefs.⁶² The last of these labels most accurately describes the context in which the stelae were conceived, one where the local inhabitants drew on Punic, Roman, and indigenous traditions to express their beliefs. As a result, the stelae uniquely use and combine motifs, sometimes to the point of being almost inaccessible to outsiders.

Evidently the stelae pose many questions that the ensuing chapters must address. In the meantime, little justification exists for continuing to uphold La Ghorfa as a provenance. Nevertheless, after a century of having the group famed as the 'stelae of La Ghorfa', it will be difficult to replace that name with a more appropriate one.⁶³ M'Charek used the term "stèles punico-numides dites de la Ghorfa" as he was introducing his Maghrawa findings.⁶⁴ But subsequent scholars such as Ghedini and Lipinski have continued to refer to them as the stelae of La Ghorfa, though acknowledging the validity of M'Charek's theory.⁶⁵ Following

⁵⁷M'Charek (1988).

⁵⁹Le Glay (1975), 134.

⁶⁰Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 265; Le Glay SAH (1966), 14, referring to Romano-African stelae in general.

⁶¹Rives (1995), 130.

⁶²Yacoub MusBardo (1970), 16, and Chefs-d'oeuvre (1978), 32.

⁶³Since M'Charek's article was published, several sources have continued to name La Ghorfa as the place of origin for the stelae, without any recognition of M'Charek's contribution: cf., for example, Picard "Ba'al Hammon" (1990), 90; Soren *et al.*, (1990), 237.

64M'Charek (1988).

⁵⁶Bénabou La résistance (1976), 353.

⁵⁸Le Glay SAH (1966), 36.

⁶⁵Ghedini (1990), 233; Lipinski Dieux (1995), 215 n.140 and 385 n.236.

M'Charek's lead, the stele group will here be referred to, in single quotation marks, as the 'La Ghorfa' type, in recognition only of their most familiar and conventional name, and with no implication whatsoever of La Ghorfa being their true place of discovery.

A Note on Geographic References

Geographic references are problematic, since ancient or modern place names are more appropriate in some situations than others. Unfortunately, artifacts within Tunisian national and site museums frequently lack labels or records confirming the artifact's origin; site museums often serve as collection points for finds from the entire region, and, in some cases, for finds being transported from distant sites to the national museums at Tunis and Carthage. References to provenance will therefore employ modern place names, to avoid implying that the artifact was found on the ancient site. However, some modern names are quite obscure and unfamiliar to most readers. For instance, *Thuburnica* is much more familiar than its modern counterpart, Sidi-Ali-ben-Kassem, and is therefore preferable here. Italics will identify ancient site names.

Chapter I Sanctuaries and Stelae in North Africa: Setting, Date, and Gods

Reconstructing the Setting of the 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae

While the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are unprovenanced, numerous North African sanctuaries exemplify the type of setting in which the ex-votos likely stood. Of over one hundred such sanctuaries, by far the most are within the borders of modern Tunisia, but even those in remote Tripolitania or Mauretania share the same general characteristics, which changed little over several centuries of use.¹

Sanctuaries are plentiful in inland Tunisia, the probable source of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae (fig.55). The finds from this area are intriguing, for they mark both geographic and cultural crossroads of the native, Punic, and Roman cultures. The general area where Tunisia's grain belt intersects the *fossa regia* of 146 B.C. had long been a border zone between the Carthaginians and the Numidians,² and it continued to play an important territorial role until at least the Vespasianic period.³ This region understandably fostered important centres of administration, military control, and commerce, but it also allowed

¹Le Glay SAM I and II (1961 and 1966) catalogued most of these sanctuaries. Since his entries present a complete bibliography for each site, references to sanctuaries in the ensuing footnotes will often cite Le Glay rather than a site publication.

²From the second half of the third century on, the Punic culture was influential within this zone at Numidian cities like *Althiburos* (modern Medeïna) and *Mactaris* (Maktar), according to Ennaïfer (1976), 15.

³Ferchiou (1986), 362-364.

residents to create for themselves a cross-cultural identity, evident in their architectural, sculptural, and epigraphic forms, which blend Near Eastern and Western Mediterranean traditions.

The locals were also unusually demonstrative in their worship; the density of sanctuaries at the juncture of the grain belt and the *fossa regia* is remarkable.⁴ This is particularly the case in the ancient territory of *Thusca*, which was under the regional administrative control of *Mactaris* (present-day Maktar) (fig.56). Sanctuaries proliferated around both the major centres and the small towns in this territory,⁵ and, as the ensuing chapters will demonstrate, one or more of them was likely the source of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Unfortunately, all of the Thuscan sites lack either proper publication or *in situ* finds. In fact, at many of these sites, only displaced stelae, often re-used as construction materials in the modern villages, indicate that there was a sanctuary nearby. While the stones are unquestionably local and still useful for discussions of epigraphic and sculptural practices, they obviously cannot demonstrate the layout and operation of sanctuaries in the area. Therefore, in order to reconstruct the setting for these and for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, one must look to evidence from other parts of North Africa.

In antiquity, North Africans placed their votive sanctuaries outside the town, as they did their *necropoleis*,⁶ most often on a mountain, hill, or ravine edge, and preferably near

⁴According to Ferchiou (1992-1993), 346, stelae and stelae sanctuaries are more common along the *fossa regia* and to the west of it in Tunisia.

⁵According to M'Charek (1995), 243, sixteen sanctuaries are now known to locals and excavators in the region of *Thusca*'s three major centres of *Mactaris, Zama Regia*, and *Althiburos*.

⁶The distinction between cemeteries and sanctuaries is often unclear: funerary and votive stelae occur together at Henchir Touchine (*Lambafundi*), Cherchel (*Caesarea*), Kesra (*Chusira*), and possibly at Djebel Djelloud: cf. respectively Le Glay SAM II (1966), 115, 315; Ferjaoui (1992-1993), 145; and Le Glay SAM

a water source. From the Punic period on, the most basic type of sanctuary was an open area containing votive stelae, usually made from local stone,⁷ and offerings, perhaps surrounded by an enclosure wall.⁸ Evidence for nearby religious buildings is lacking, although surviving altars testify that sacrifices took place here.⁹

In the second and third centuries A.C., at large towns and cities in particular, a larger and more intricate type of sanctuary appeared, in many cases replacing or incorporating an existing open-air *temenos*.¹⁰ This new complex boasted a Roman-style temple, preceded by a great open court reminiscent of the open, Punic-type sanctuary; sacrifices took place in this court, at altars sometimes of the monumental dimensions known from Timgad (*Thamugadi*), *Hippo Regius*, and *Thuburnica*.¹¹ Stelae no longer flanked the altar, for they now had their own separate court, subordinate to the temple and great court in placement and sometimes also in elevation, as at Haïdra (*Ammaedara*) and Siagu (*Thinissut*) respectively (fig.57).¹²

¹¹Le Glay SAM II (1966), 126; Le Glay SAM I (1961), 275, 433.

I (1961), 26. Even in those sanctuaries not associated with *necropoleis*, the extra-mural location was clearly important: at Khamissa (*Thubursicu Numidarum*), urban encroachment forced the town to close its original votive area and to build a new one further outside the town's boundaries: cf. Le Glay SAMI (1961), 366-367.

⁷Le Glay SAH (1966), 15-16.

⁸Enclosure walls may exist at Djebel Bou Kournein and Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*): Le Glay SAM I (1961), 32 and 126.

⁹At Aïn Tebernok (*Tubernuc*), Sousse (*Hadrumetum*), Mdaourouch (*Madauros*), and Henchir Touchine, and perhaps at Périgotville (*Satafis*) in Mauretania: cf. respectively Le Glay SAM I (1961), 93, 255, 361; SAM II (1966), 114, 240. In the east, as Lipinski (1995), 427-432, observed, the Semitic sanctuary model consisted of a vast court surrounded by porticoes; within this court was a sacrificial altar before a small *aedicula* containing a representation of the divinity. In North Africa, such structures may only occur in suspected cult complexes at Carthage and Kerkouane; cf. Lipinski (1995), 430-432.

¹⁰Temple complexes likely replaced open-air sanctuaries at such sites as Dougga (*Thugga*), Guelma (*Calama*), and *Hippo Regius*. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 210, 386, and 434, uses this direct succession as proof that the Roman god Saturn easily succeeded the Punic god Baal in North Africa.

¹²Le Glay SAM I (1961), 323-324 and 97-98. This segregation is also evident at El-Kenissia, Ksiba (Civitas Popthensis), and Hippo Regius: cf. Lipinski (1995), 443, and Le Glay SAM I (1961), 421, 433-434.

Within the courts of both Punic- and Roman-type sanctuaries, the ex-votos faced east, normally arrayed in single or multiple rows.¹³ In most cases, the stelae probably stood partially buried in the ground; at other sites, rock-cut bases had holes into which the stelae fit for anchorage,¹⁴ possibly necessary in the case of the tall 'La Ghorfa' stelae, which are double the height of the average North African stele. The means of anchoring a stele also determined the method of depositing offerings at its foot, either buried in the ground, or set into natural or carved cavities in the rock. The surviving evidence for dedication deposits is almost completely ceramic, most of it locally made: vases, plates, lamps, *paterae*, *unguentaria*, jars, and amphorae.¹⁵ Other offerings sometimes included imported pottery,¹⁶ coins,¹⁷ and, once at *Thuburnica*, a vase containing nails.¹⁸

Though quantitatively more important, these offerings were secondary in significance to cinerary urns containing the ashes and calcinated bones of sacrificial victims. Most sanctuaries offer nothing to compare to that at Sousse, where the earliest sacrificial victims, human infants, gradually gave way to animals, which were then replaced by simple

¹³At, for example, Henchir-R'Cass (Hilaire [1898], 178), and at Aïn Tounga, *Thuburnica*, and Henchir Touchine: cf., respectively, Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 126 and 276, and Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), 114. In the later levels at Sousse, a strict and close-set alignment of stelae replaced the earlier haphazard arrangement of stelae; Foucher (1964), 39, thought that this progression indicated a change from individual to collective sacrifices, but no evidence supports this view.

¹⁴Some stelae had insertion prongs on the bottom for this purpose, such as certain examples from Lambaesis, in Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 5, no.16780.

¹⁵No obvious geographic, cultural, or chronological correlation exists between the site and what type of pottery was offered.

¹⁶For example, Black Slip, Italian Terra Sigillata, and Hellenistic lamps at Sabratha: cf. Brouquier-Reddé (1992), 27-29.

¹⁷At Thuburnica and Sidi-el-Hani: Le Glay SAM I (1961), 276 and 258.

¹⁸Le Glay SAM I (1961), 276.

libations.¹⁹ Human victims are not common at most other sites.²⁰ Instead, analysis of the remains has usually identified the victims as birds;²¹ other small animals occur less often.²² Although some stele reliefs show a bull,²³ the priests likely sacrificed a smaller animal for the votive deposit and used the bull's remains for a celebratory banquet; stele votive deposits never include bovine remains.

Offering tables (*mensae sacrae*) sometimes replace the buried deposits at the foot of both funerary and votive stelae.²⁴ Since they sat exposed on the ground, *mensae* offered an advantage over burials in that they could receive offerings many times. Although the cavities in these tables were often simple round hollows,²⁵ there are also many examples of more elaborate settings, with fish plates, flanged dishes, and *paterae* with handles.

One further possibility remains for the setting in which excavators found the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Most sanctuaries served their communities for two or more centuries,

¹⁹The sanctuary at Sousse operated from the seventh or sixth century B.C. to the beginning of the second century A.C.: cf. Foucher (1964), 33-39. Carthage's *tophet* does not show this distinct progression from human to animal to liquid sacrifices; infants and animal remains occur together in several levels of this sanctuary, which had been in use for some five centuries before the fall of Carthage in 146 B.C., according to Lipinski (1995), 440.

²⁰Human sacrifices, especially of infants, continued in North Africa after the fall of Punic Carthage (cf. Wypustek [1993]), although at most sites it is impossible to tell whether the infant died of natural causes or in the child sacrifices associated with the so-called *tophet* at Carthage. At the Roman-period sanctuary at Henchir Touchine, cremated remains of two human infants in cinerary urns accompanied votive stelae, although by far the majority of sacrifices were of small animals (Le Glay *SAM* II [1966], 114).

²¹Djebel Bou Kournein, *Hippo Regius*, and *Thuburnica*: cf. Le Glay SAMI (1961), 34, 434, 276; also at Hr-R'Cass: cf. Hilaire (1898), 178.

²²For example, cf. Brecciaroli-Taborelli (1983), 544, and Brouquier-Reddé (1992), 27-29 (Sabratha); Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), 115 (Henchir Touchine); Lipinski (1995), 437 (Volubilis).

²³For example, *CMA* (1897), p.XVI, no.104, and pl.XVII, *passim*; fig.103 *infra* (from Ellès). The bottom registers of several 'La Ghorfa' stelae show bull sacrifices; cf. Chapter II.4, p.95*f*.

²⁴Cf. Le Glay SAH (1966), 305-308, for further discussion of the origin and use of the offering tables and a preliminary bibliography of African mensae.

²⁵For example, offering tables with simple hollows occur at Kesra, near Maktar: cf. Ferjaoui (1992-1993), 136-137 no.16 and pl.IV, 16.

accumulating an enormous amount of votive material. For the sake of space or renovations, old material occasionally had to be moved to deposits beneath the temple²⁶ or even to nearby cisterns or caves. At *Hippo Regius* and Henchir Rohban (*Theveste*), such *favissae* contain a jumble of broken architectural and sculptural bits, as well as fragments of stelae and altars, lamps, and votive pottery;²⁷ those at Dougga and El-Hofra (at Constantine) preserved some 249 and 700 stelae respectively. The haphazard mix of materials within a *favissa* indicates that the deposit was not a temple treasury, so to speak, but it was not a refuse pit either; the materials still held some sacred value and did not usually leave the bounds of the precinct. The Romans were apparently less likely than the Christians to destroy stelae or to re-use them as building materials in new constructions. For example, in order to make room for a Christian basilica at Maktar, the builders probably demolished a Roman temple complex, broke its stelae, and threw the fragments into a nearby ravine.²⁸

Chronology and North African Stelae

Since the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are unprovenanced, they lack any external evidence that might have assigned them a specific date. As a result, only their sculptural and epigraphic components can indicate when they were made. However, as the following chapters indicate, neither the reliefs nor the inscriptions are particulary helpful in this regard; while

²⁶Poinssot (1955) (Dougga).

²⁷Le Glay SAM I (1961), 433 (Hippo Regius) and 333 (Tebessa).

²⁸Cf. Picard (1984), 1328 and M'Charek (1995), 246 and 256 n.15. Christian sacking is probably to blame for the destruction of the sanctuaries at Dougga and Djebel Bou Kournein (both near the end of the fourth century A.C.) and at Tebessa (at the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth century A.C.): cf. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 212, 35, and 333, respectively.

both unquestionably belong to the Imperial period, more specific dates are problematic and subjective.

By necessity, chronological proposals for the reliefs are based on comparisons with hair and clothing fashions, as well as developments in art and architecture, both at Rome and in Roman Africa. Primarily, however, scholars have sought parallels with other stelae. The latter are mostly from sanctuaries that operated for at least two centuries and that often overlap the periods of Punic and Roman domination in western North Africa. At such sites, the basic manner of commemorating a votive dedication remained the same -- that is, erecting a stele in an open area and placing or burying offerings before it. Nevertheless, the decorative style of the stelae underwent some changes. Unfortunately, modern scholars have had to judge these changes subjectively, as precise contextual information has been lacking for most stelae found in situ. Providing dates for sculptural reliefs in Punic or Roman Africa is extremely difficult. Thousands of sculpted funerary and votive stelae exist, but very few of them have epigraphy or iconography that points to an absolute date or range of dates. In addition, reliefs on stone objects other than stelae are not common.²⁹ Therefore, artistic composition and technique form the basis for determining the evolution of almost all North African stelae, and, by extension, the use of entire sanctuaries.³⁰

Nevertheless, scholars use absolute dates to group stelae into distinct "periods". They give these divisions cultural labels and chronologies, based primarily on the stele's

²⁹Picard stated that, in North Africa, sculpting in stone occurs mostly on stelae until the end of the second century A.C.: Picard "Un bas relief" (1988), 98.

³⁰Votive dedications rarely indicate dates, while inscriptions commemorating construction or repair of sanctuaries are uncommon.

shape, carving technique, iconography, and layout; the culture that seems to have contributed most to the sculpting and epigraphy of a stele apparently also played a role. These are subjective groupings without external support, especially since datable inscriptions are rare; as a result, the distinctions are often unclear and sometimes even contradictary, as will become evident below.³¹ Still, these stylistic "periods" -- actually styles -- attempt to deal with hundreds of stelae for which no other dating information is known, and therefore should be given due attention.

The first, 'Punic' style, refers to the Punic occupation of North Africa before the fall of Carthage in 146 B.C. After that date, the 'Neopunic' style arises; its extent varies by location, but endures past the colonization of Carthage a century later, generally until the end of the first century A.C. From that time until the end of the third or early fourth century A.C., most stelae belong to the full 'Roman' style. Still, these styles do not strictly adhere to the chronological periods whose names they employ; the fall of Carthage, for instance, did not eradicate all Punic artisans.

Punic Style (before 146 B.C.)

When the Phoenicians arrived in North Africa in the very late second and early first millennia, they encountered natives whom modern scholars variously call Libyans, Numidians, or Berbers.³² This culture has left traces of its art, architecture, and language, including a distinct alphabet.³³ Nevertheless, the culture's beliefs remain elusive. In particular, evidence for native gods is sparse and confusing, potentially because the natives

³¹Cf. pp.39*f*., below.

³²Cf. Millar (1968).

³³For bibliography, cf. Picard Civilisation (1990), 297, and Cherry (1998), 10-12.

did not personify their gods before encountering the Punic and Greek civilizations.³⁴ Herodotus stated that the 'Libyans' worshipped only the sun and moon;³⁵ support for his statement comes from Cicero's "Dream of Scipio", in which Massinissa greeted Scipio Aemilianus by invoking *Summus Sol.*³⁶

However, when the natives came to give their gods anthropomorphic forms, they did not emphasize gods with recognizably solar or lunar traits.³⁷ Seven gods and one goddess appear on a stele from Borj Hellal, near Chemtou (figs.58 and 59);³⁸ in terms of position and size, they have equal status and have no attributes to identify them. From the third century A.C., a relief found at Béja³⁹ shows seven gods, each accompanied by an inscription providing his or her native-sounding name. Though some are more prominent than others and several have attributes, none of them seem solar or lunar.⁴⁰ The artistic evidence therefore differs from the written; by way of explanation, Picard suggested that native Africans had no universal divine hierarchy.⁴¹ More likely, scholars simply do not have enough evidence to clarify indigenous beliefs, or even to know that all natives shared the same theology or pantheon.

³⁶Cicero de Rep. IV,9. Piganiol (1957), 89, considered the details of the speech accurate.

³⁹Yacoub Chefs d'oeuvre (1978), 35-39.

⁴⁰Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 303. Le Glay *SAM*II (1966), 211-213, identified other reliefs representing sizeable groups of gods, but concluded that these were different, Roman divinities.

⁴¹Cf. Picard RAA (1954), 1-25, and Picard Civilisation (1990), 273.

³⁴Desanges (1978), 655.

³⁵Herodotus IV, 188.

³⁷In addition to the following examples, cf. more recent discoveries of reliefs depicting native gods, as reported by Khanoussi and Ghaki (1995).

³⁸The black limestone relief belongs to the second or first century B.C.: cf. Fantar *Le Bardo* (1989), 40 and 45. Native art is relatively unattested before the third century B.C. or so.

More is known about the Punic culture, the name given to that of Phoenician settlements in the West. Most artifacts from pre-Roman North Africa are Punic, with inscribed and decorated stelae among the most plentiful remains from the late fifth and beginning of the fourth centuries B.C. onwards.⁴² The ex-votos almost exclusively address two main gods, Lord Baal Hammon and Lady Tanit Pene-Baal.⁴³ Both are Semitic deities, although neither was very prominent outside North Africa and Sicily. There, they both enjoyed fairly encompassing powers as both sky and chthonic gods, with nourishing and protective forces.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, neither god appears in art very frequently. Baal Hammon is probably the bearded figure on a fifth century B.C. stele from the tophet at Sousse; he sits on a throne flanked by sphinxes, wears a high conical hat, holds a sceptre, and raises his right hand.⁴⁵ On rare occasions, the same image appears in other media, such as jewellery⁴⁶ or a statuette.⁴⁷ Evidence for Tanit's appearance, on the other hand, is less certain. While the Greeks assimilated her consort to Kronos, Tanit may have been assimilated to the Phoenician Ashtart; Greek Aphrodite, Artemis, and Hera; Egyptian Isis, and others.⁴⁸

⁴²Prior ex-votos had been large cippi of sandstone, carved in the shape of a throne, block, or an Egyptianizing *naiskos*: cf. Picard (1963), 238.

⁴³Harris (1936), 137, translated Tanit's name as "Tanit of the face of Baal"; Fantar (1993), 253, suggested that Pene-Baal means "in the face of [or facing] Baal".

⁴⁴Cf. Lipinski DCPP (1992), 438-439.

⁴⁵Lancel (1997), 198 fig. 104 (left).

⁴⁶On a gold ring, from a fifth century tomb at Utica: cf. Karthago II (1951), 54, fig.20.

⁴⁷Lancel (1997), 198 fig. 104 (right).

⁴⁸Cf. Lipinski DCPP (1992), 438-439, for references.

From c. 400 B.C., Punics dedicated limestone stelae to Baal and Tanit, decorating the anterior face of the stone with various symbols, which were rendered in clean, linear incisions. The signs are fairly abstract and do not follow any hierarchical placement, except that a disc-and-crescent motif often appears at the top; it is usually interpreted as a sun and crescent moon.⁴⁹ Below, the symbols are more elusive in meaning, including the 'sign of Tanit', *caduceus*, the 'bottle sign', palms and palmettes, birds, fish and dolphins, and others. The first two merit further investigation.

In its most basic form, the 'sign of Tanit' consists of a circle on a horizontal bar, which itself sits on top of a triangle or trapezoid;⁵⁰ crudely put, it often resembles the figure of a woman on a washroom door sign.⁵¹ Since Tanit is the first name on many Carthaginian stelae, and the symbol may look slightly feminine, the sign has long been taken to represent the goddess. However, nothing unequivocably links the goddess to the sign; the two appear independently of one another. The 'sign of Tanit' almost certainly does not represent Tanit, although some scholars still assume their equivalence today.⁵²

The 'sign' is unquestionably important, but interpreting it is nearly impossible. According to Piganiol, the 'sign of Tanit' represented the spirit of the deceased person that

⁴⁹External support for the disc as a solar symbol comes from such evidence as coins of Juba II, which depict temple pediments with a star and crescent; cf. Mazard (1955), 79 no. 144 *f*. Contra Gsell HAAN IV (repr. 1972), 249, who suggested that the motif represented different phases of the moon.

⁵⁰A Phoenician symbol, the 'sign of Tanit' traveled with Punic traders and emigrants and came to appear on coins, mosaics, jewellery, and wall decorations, at sites across the Mediterranean. It appears most frequently on stelae set up in North African sanctuaries like the famous *tophet* at Carthage. For more information, cf. Lipinski *DCPP* (1992), 416-417.

⁵¹Cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], table 2, for the various forms the 'sign of Tanit' takes on Punic and Neopunic stelae.

⁵²E.g. Fantar (1993), 351-352.

the stele commemorated.⁵³ This interpretation would only hold up if the 'sign' appeared in funerary contexts alone. Instead, it also occurs on coins, mosaics, jewellery, trade pottery, and other contexts foreign to a funerary setting. The *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique* stated that the 'sign of Tanit' is the intermediary between the terrestrial and celestial worlds and, more generally, stands for life and fecundity.⁵⁴

Another Punic symbol of particular relevance here is the *caduceus*, a symbol just as poorly understood. Mounting evidence segregates the Punic *caduceus* from the Graeco-Roman wand carried by Hermes/Mercury, since the Punic version never shows the interlaced serpents and is never paired with Graeco-Roman divinities or symbols. Instead, the basic Punic symbol has a circle and crescent sitting atop a staff, which may be decorated with rippling ribbons; the bottom of the rod often swells out, or is set into a base, making it more like a standard than a portable staff.⁵⁵ In this form, it may have Phoenician origins from the ninth century B.C.⁵⁶

On Punic stelae, a *caduceus* is never solitary or dominant. Several interpretations see it as a symbol of, or closely connected with, Tanit. First, since it often accompanies a 'sign of Tanit', the *caduceus* has been identified as a motif belonging to Tanit;⁵⁷ however, beyond the problem that the 'sign of Tanit' may not belong to Tanit, the *caduceus* and the 'sign of Tanit' do not always appear together. Second, a crescent sometimes replaced the

⁵³Piganiol (1957), 91.

⁵⁴Lipinski DCPP (1992), 417.

⁵⁵Cf., for example, Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XII; Bertrandy and Sznycer (1987), 60.

⁵⁶Lipinski "Le caducée" (1995), 204.

⁵⁷Brown (1991), 133.

top circle of the Carthaginian *caduceus*,⁵⁸ an indication to some that the form first belonged to a lunar deity, hence Tanit.⁵⁹ This interpretation only works so long as a crescent tops the *caduceus*; otherwise, the sign is not visibly lunar.⁶⁰ Such representations form a very small minority.

In Punic contexts, the *caduceus* is most common on stelae commemorating child sacrifices. To Brown, the Carthaginians had unquestionably understood and borrowed Hermes' symbol, since it was an attribute of a psychopompic god; in this context, the *caduceus* should be associated with "the divinity receiving the offering (the Tanit motif)".⁶¹ This interpretation does not explain what the *caduceus* signifies in contexts outside the tophet and the realm of child sacrifices; it also depends heavily on the 'sign of Tanit', which is not always on the same stelae.

Other scholars have preferred to see the *caduceus* as a physical object belonging to the sanctuary, a staff or wand used in ceremonies.⁶² Lipinski has recently extended this idea, proposing that the *caduceus* itself formed the basis of a cult at the Temple of Hoter Miskar, Maktar. Lipinski translated the name Hoter Miskar as "sceptre of the herald", which indicated to him that the Eastern cult sceptre had become confused with the *caduceus* of the

⁵⁸Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XII b, d, e, f, h, and i.

⁵⁹Gsell HAAN IV (repr. 1972), 367.

⁶⁰E.g. Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XII, a and g.

⁶¹Brown (1991), 134.

⁶²Gsell HAAN IV (repr. 1972), 367, thought that the *caduceus* was "a symbol exhibited in sanctuaries and playing a role in the cult" [my translation].

herald Mercury.⁶³ Nevertheless, the nature of the cult still remains obscure, and its link to the *caduceus* is hypothetical at present.

Many Punic *caducei* look like staffs with thickened bottoms or socles, suggesting that they should be seen as accessories of the sanctuary. They could be stylized *thymiateria*, nothing more than incense burners,⁶⁴ or perhaps simply ceremonial standards that have not survived in the archaeological record. They do not necessarily indicate a certain god; Trell has suggested that the various Punic symbols on coins are more important for symbolizing a Punic cultural identity than evoking certain deities or rituals.⁶⁵ Whether the same principle applies to stelae is less clear.

Between the latter half of the fourth century and the early third century, Punic artisans added Greek friezes and mouldings to their stelae, rendering the decoration both static and yet abstract, since the traditional Punic motifs continued to hang in space between the architectural features. Over the course of the third century, they added more Greek-influenced motifs, such as Hermes or a satyr.⁶⁶ Sculptors began to experiment more with reliefwork.

Before the fall of Carthage, many Punic stelae had developed into two-dimensional representations of a temple or *aedicula*, divided up into several registers. The stone was tall, narrow, and rectangular, with a triangular summit that conveniently formed the pediment of the building. An entablature separated the summit from the middle register, which was

⁶³Lipinski (1995).

⁶⁴Foucher (1964), 44 and n.90.

⁶⁵Trell (1981), 480.

⁶⁶Picard (1963), 239-240.

framed by columns. This zone most commonly contained the dedication.⁶⁷ Another band distinguished the lowest register, which generally contained more symbols or votive objects.

The architectural elements, represented in two dimensions, indicate that Punic artisans were turning to more Greek formats. Functional examples of such temples or *aediculae* are not common or well-preserved. However, a limestone cippus model of a *naos*, found at Thuburbo Majus, gives a good impression of the state of architecture in the early second century B.C. (fig.60).⁶⁸ It presents the porch of a *naos*, leading to a niche within a pedimented doorway. The *naos* has a heavy entablature with mouldings of bead-and-reel, egg-and-dart, leaf-and-dart, and dentils. The entablature is supported at the front by two Ionic columns, then two engaged columns, then the two Aeolic pilasters that flank the doorway. The entire structure rests upon a large platform, decorated with a pig, and base. Each component reveals not only that the sculptor took meticulous care in proportions and measurements, but also that he incorporated architectural details proper to Phoenicia and Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and even North Africa. This layout and mixture of influences would prove fundamental to later African temples.⁶⁹

'Neopunic Style' (146 B.C. to c. end of the first century A.C.)

After the fall of Carthage, dedicants continued to erect stelae in the Punic style; the stones were inscribed in an evolved form of Punic script, called Neopunic. However, to call all stelae from this period 'Neopunic' is misleading, since the Numidian territories became

⁶⁷Picard (1962), 31.

⁶⁸Lézine (1959), 7-26. On p.19, Lézine suggested that, as in Lebanon and Sardinia, the cippus may be modelled after a real structure.

⁶⁹For example, the Temple of Mercury at Gigthis, in southeastern Tunisia; cf. Lézine (1959), 25, for illustration and references.

more prominent at this stage; they had largely dropped their native language in favour of the evolving Punic one, but their artistry drew them apart from that of the previously important Punic centres.

For example, Numidian artists reinterpreted the 'sign of Tanit'. In the 'Neopunic' and 'Roman' styles, this symbol continued to appear on stelae in certain districts of Punic tradition, but each enclave used the symbol in a very different way. At Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*), for instance, the circular 'head' of the symbol is absent and a sacrificial bull stands within the triangular body, which may represent an altar.⁷⁰ At sites like Medeïna and nearby Henchir-el-Ksour, the sign is also headless (although there is a crescent above), but it has no sacrificial victims around it.⁷¹ Elsewhere, the symbol gains human features. At Aïn Tebernok, the top circle becomes a bearded face,⁷² while at Constantine, a few examples may have male genitalia;⁷³ both instances contradict opinions that the 'sign' is a female silhouette. Finally, in many areas, the dedicant looks like an anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit'; it holds its arms out at a similar angle, holding offerings.⁷⁴

In general, stelae of the 'Neopunic' style employ a fairly limited repertoire of abstract symbols, placed symmetrically.⁷⁵ They are exemplified by a series of stelae from

⁷⁰CMA (1897), pl.XVII, no.116.

⁷¹Medeïna: Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], no. Cb-1068; Ennaïfer (1976), pl.VII (top). Henchir el Ksour: Bardo, Punic gallery, inv.no. unknown.

 $^{^{72}}$ At Aïn Tebernok, the 'sign of Tanit' took the form of a triangle with a bearded head and two raised arms: cf. Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 76.

⁷³Berthier and Charlier (1955), 183. More Constantine examples turn take the horizontal bar and turn it into arms with hands that often hold objects; cf. Bertrandy (1993), 24-28.

⁷⁴Cf. stelae from *Hippo Regius* illustrated in Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.XVII: the 'sign of Tanit' in figure 1 is equally significant in size and position to the dedicants on figs.2-6.

⁷⁵Picard Civilisation (1990), 304.

Maktar, according to Le Glay.⁷⁶ These examples use an architectural frame formed of a pediment, two columns, and a carved-out niche containing the dedicant; these features are sculpted in relief. The upper register remains abstract, with birds, dolphins and fish, and other animals floating around; most of these figures are incised.

According to the generally-accepted theory, increasing emphasis was placed on the dedicant as the second century A.C. approached. One stele often put forth to exemplify this trend is that of the priestess of Ceres from Sidi Ali Madiouni, near Maktar (fig.61).⁷⁷ This rectangular stele is divided into strict horizontal registers in shallow relief. In the top register, a woman stands under a garland, flanked by torches. She looks out at the viewer, holding out a *caduceus* wand and a sheaf of wheat, which has led to her association with Ceres. In the next register, two snakes flank a tall basket, which presumably contains cult items. In the third register are a pig, a sacrificial knife, and another container with a domed lid. Finally, the last register contains a shovel, tongs, and a pan. The bottom three registers reflect a growing taste for showing the sacrificial animal and cult items.

The stele of the priestess of Ceres contains several elements that presage the 'Roman' style. The Flavian period, in Le Glay's opinion, marked the preliminary step to this phase, for at that time, sculptors began to replace engraved details with sculpted ones, and local dress and architecture with Roman styles.⁷⁸ The sculptors never completely adopted Graeco-Roman sculptural conventions, however, with the result that modern scholars have cited Roman North African stelae as examples of "peripheral", "popular", or "provincial"

⁷⁶Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 37.

⁷⁷Picard (1951), 308 and 307 (top illustration).

⁷⁸Le Glay (1963).

art.⁷⁹ Up until that time, stelae had retained Punic influences, with geometric layout and figures, and often fairly abstract concepts.⁸⁰ Now, however, the style became more natural and decorative, with identifiably Roman characteristics. The proportions and anatomy of human figures were more correct, people wore Roman clothing, and they stood inside an architectural frame approximating a temple or niche. The stelae themselves became shorter and wider. Flat relief replaced engraving. The stelae had compartments and a strict layout,⁸¹ reminiscent of certain Punic stelae, but perhaps simply echoing similar developments throughout the Mediterranean at this time.⁸²

'Roman' Style (second century A.C. on)

The Punic tophets had not been cemeteries; their stelae were not so much grave stones as votive stelae. Outside of the Punic culture, votive stelae were not common during Antiquity. The iconography on the Punic stelae was therefore fairly culturally centred and difficult for a foreigner to comprehend. After the fall of Carthage, African stelae slowly came to draw more upon Roman styles and motifs, dropping most Punic symbols in favour of more Graeco-Roman types with wholly natural and anthropomorphic figures. However, the repertoire was limited, since Roman votive stelae were uncommon. Roman African exvotos often therefore looked like gravestones with votive inscriptions. Sculptors also tended to divide the stelae up into consistent registers commemorating the vow.

⁷⁹For example, Picard (1963), 237 and 241; Le Glay (1963), 243; Bianchi Bandinelli (1971), 216 (in a chapter on provincial art).

⁸⁰Le Glay (1968), 243 and 245. ⁸¹Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 36.

⁸²Picard (1962), 31-32.

Picard called the first half of the second century A.C. a "renaissance" in the territory of the old Numidian kingdom.⁸³ Reliefs became more plastic and naturalistic than their 'Neopunic' style predecessors. In Picard's view, the epitome of this 'Numidian' period's artistry was the 'La Ghorfa' group, which made their reliefs more natural and their figures more anthropomorphic. However, they remained distinct from Graeco-Roman art by blurring the distinction between the real and the supernatural, using flat relief, frontality, symmetry, miniaturism, and by showing little concern for space and proportions.⁸⁴

By the mid-century, according to Picard's chronology, North African stelae showed traits that were much more 'Roman'. At the top, the recipient god appeared. The dedicant stood in the central register, sometimes framed by a niche, columns, or architectural moulding; he or she often held offerings or made a sacrifice at an altar. The bottom register was usually reserved for the sacrificial victim, a ram or bull.

The stelae themselves continued to have the shape of a rectangle topped by a triangle, which was still often used as a temple-type pediment above the dedicant's niche. In terms of technique, raised relief replaced engraving, although the carving never became sophisticated and incision was still used for details. While the entire presentation was fairly linear and formal, the figures themselves became more natural and had better proportions. Artists still retained some traditional aspects, such as making all figures frontal and motionless and keeping the relief symmetrical. Overall, the reliefs remained somewhat stiff and schematic throughout the 'Roman' style.⁸⁵

⁸³Picard (1963), 240.

⁸⁴Picard (1963), 240.

⁸⁵Picard (1963), 242.

Graeco-Roman gods became prominent in Roman Africa in temple dedications and in art forms such as mosaics. However, votive stelae still mainly belonged to a single cult; the Latin dedications most often named not Baal, but his Roman equivalent, Saturn. Whittaker has suggested that Saturn's cult appealed largely to the poor until the urban elites adopted it around the mid-second century A.C.,⁸⁶ but the urban elite may instead have been responsible for transforming aspects of Baal's cult into that of a more Roman-sounding god. Baal's consort Tanit became Caelestis, a goddess of some prominence in terms of dedications and art, where she often resembles Cybele.⁸⁷ However, she no longer received votive stelae in conjunction with her male consort. In terms of dedications, Saturn had become the unchallenged divine authority, attaining far greater importance in North Africa than in any other part of the Empire. The dedications, addressed *Saturno Augusto sacrum*, give the god Imperial might.

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In art, Saturn is perhaps middle-aged or older, with a thick, full beard. Both full views and busts normally show him bare-chested, though part of his garment covers his head, lower torso, and legs. In full views, he either sits enthroned or reclines. His attributes include a hooked knife, a pinecone, and sometimes a lion. This representation may have first appeared under the Flavians in Roman Africa,⁸⁸ although no securely-dated examples date from before the second quarter of the second century A.C.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Whittaker (1997), 156.

⁸⁷Halsberghe (1984); Lipinski DCPP (1992), 86.

⁸⁸Le Glay SAH (1966), 500.

⁸⁹Poinssot (1955), 36f.

On stelae, Saturn usually appears at or near the summit, often flanked by two companions, either Sol and Luna⁹⁰ or a pair of youths who each stand with a horse. These horsemen have differing dress and attributes from stele to stele, but an ex-voto from Djemila gives them each a spear and Phrygian cap, which identify them as the Dioscuri.⁹¹ As traditional native gods, the sun and moon understandably deserve a respectable place on the stelae, but the Dioscuri are more difficult to explain.⁹² Numismatic evidence indicates that the twins were familiar to North Africans from the second century B.C. at least,⁹³ yet the two gods do not recognizably occur in any other medium until the late first or second century A.C., when they appear on stelae from central Tunisia.⁹⁴ They may personify local gods, not necessarily the same ones as Sol and Luna.⁹⁵ On stelae, the Dioscuri and Sol-Luna pairs seem interchangeable and almost never occur on the same relief;⁹⁶ both are popular in the second and third centuries A.C.

⁹⁰Sol and Luna appear on stelae from Tunisia, such as Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.IV,3 (from Bou Kournein), and in Algeria, cf. Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXIII,2 (from Lambaesis), pl.XXV,4-6 (from Henchir Touchine), and pl.XXVIII, 2-3 (from Timgad).

⁹¹Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), pl.XXXIV,6.

⁹²According to Le Glay, when the Dioscuri accompany Saturn, they emphasize his role as the supreme *cosmocrator*; when Sol and Luna do so, they represent his mastery over time: Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 229 and 226, respectively.

⁹³The twins appear on a coin at Utica, sometime during the second century B.C.: Lipinski *Dieux* (1995), 399-400.

⁹⁴Lipinski *Dieux* (1995), 403, citing the Aïn Barchouch and 'La Ghorfa' stelae, published by Picard as *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], nos.Cb-939 and Cb-964 (Cat.2) respectively. Quoting the same stelae, Le Glay, *SAH* (1966), 231, stated that the Dioscuri did not appear until the second century.

⁹⁵They may have been assimilated to indigenous gods, whether the gods named Macurtam and Iunam on the Béja relief (above, 24 n.39), twin horsemen on a stele from Henchir Gounifida (near Tebessa), or the *Dii Mauri Castori Augusti*, named in a Severan dedication at Henchir Mest: cf. Lipinski *Dieux* (1995), 401.

⁹⁶Le Glay SAH (1966), 228-229. Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXVIII,6, a stele from Timgad, uniquely shows the Dioscuri with the crowning attributes of Sol and Luna, perhaps conflating indigenous and Graeco-Roman concepts.

These gods all appear in the stele's top register. In the next register, the dedicant appears, sometimes in a niche hollowed out of the surface or framed by columns at the sides of the stele. They usually stand like statues, holding offerings or making sacrifices at an altar. Depending upon the person being portrayed and the artist's skill, dedicants may still wear local dress, but increasingly the men wear the toga and the women a tunic and mantle. Finally, a third register often succeeds the dedicant's level; it is usually reserved for a ram or bull, the animal sacrificed in fulfilment of the vow.

Not all Roman Africans translated Baal into Saturn. At Medeïna (*Althiburos*), no document names or depicts Saturn in the 'Roman' style, despite the fact that cult items continue well into that time.⁹⁷ In the region of Maktar as a whole, Saturn apparently did not succeed Baal Hammon, who had received hundreds of Neopunic inscriptions there. The only evidence for Saturn at Maktar comes from an inscription and a small sculptural bust, both probably Severan in date.⁹⁸ Typically of Roman Africa, local cults continued to prosper, without necessarily giving their beliefs Roman form.⁹⁹

While sanctuaries continued to thrive across North Africa throughout the first century, the picture changed around the mid-second century A.C. From that point, Proconsularis had almost no stelae, except in central Tunisia.¹⁰⁰ However, their popularity increased in Numidia, even in cities like Lambaesis or Timgad, which were relatively new

⁹⁷Ennaïfer (1976), 26 n.80.

⁹⁸Inscription: C.23403; bust: Picard CivMact (1957), 47. For the sanctuary of Baal, cf. Picard CivMact (1957), 43f., and Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 273-292 and pls.CVIII-CXXIII.

⁹⁹Whittaker (1997), 156.

¹⁰⁰E.g. at Medeïna: Ennaïfer (1976), 25.

and which presumably lacked pre-Roman sanctuaries.¹⁰¹ The local inhabitants set up stelae in large numbers, although resorting to Roman characteristics for their decoration. According to Le Glay, these features -- the architectural frame, superposed registers, composed scenes, figures who are frontal and in flat or low relief -- began their evolution where the Proconsularis stelae had left off.¹⁰² The chronological difference between the two regions could be explained by either increased exposure to Roman influences or an emerging middle class further inland.¹⁰³ Both theories have been used to explain why the sanctuary at Sousse had gone out of use by the end of the first century A.C., while others, particularly at inland sites, continued much longer.

Several stelae from the third or fourth centuries are well-known. A man named *Cuttinus* dedicated one such stele at Siliana, near Maktar. Often called the 'Boglio' stele, this relief is rich in iconography, broken up into five registers (fig.62).¹⁰⁴ At the top, in the pediment, is an eagle. Next, Saturn sits on a bull, raising a hand to his covered head. Two military horsemen flank him, probably the Dioscuri. This entire scene is contained within an apsed niche supported by two palmiform capitals. Above, Victories hold palm branches and a banner inscribed with the dedication to Saturn. In the next register, *Cuttinus* and his wife make offerings at an altar, while a ram and bull lie nearby. At either end of this scene, smaller figures hold baskets over their heads; the one at the right also holds an amphora. The fourth register contains a man at the plow with two oxen, before two figures harvesting

¹⁰¹Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 186.

¹⁰²Le Glay (1968), 244

¹⁰³Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 186.

¹⁰⁴Yacoub Chefs d'oeuvre (1978), 40-45.

wheat. Finally, the last register shows a procession of carts energetically carrying the harvested wheat away. Artistically, this stele is assumed to belong to the Tetrarchic period.¹⁰⁵

One of the few stelae with an absolute date is surely also one of the last votive stelae in Roman Africa (fig.63). Found at El Ayaida, near Béja, the consular dates contained in its inscription attribute it to November 8, 323 A.D. Like *Cuttinus*,¹⁰⁶ the dedicant, *M. Gargilius Zabo*, has a local name. Again, separate registers divide the relief into two different scenes. In the top register, Saturn holds a staff and his typical hooked knife. He sits on a box, which may figuratively contain the riches of the dedicant's family.¹⁰⁷ The radiant face of Sol hovers nearby. In the second register, a man sacrifices a ram by an altar.

These chronological divisions are problematic. First, while the names of these divisions relate to specific chronological periods, the examples themselves reflect a much more complicated situation than simply what the dominant culture was at a given time. For example, as Le Glay himself has argued, local artistic schools arose to meet the needs of their communities.¹⁰⁸ The sculptors and products from these schools apparently remained

¹⁰⁵Le Glay SAMI (1961), 227-228; Yacoub Chefs d'oeuvre (1978), 44; Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 186.

¹⁰⁶Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 187.

¹⁰⁷Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 187, who is surely right in rejecting this object's identification as a throne, as claimed by Le Glay (1988), 209.

¹⁰⁸Cf. Le Glay (1963), 243 and Le Glay (1968), 244.

local¹⁰⁹ and had little influence upon other regions, despite the workshops' longevity.¹¹⁰ Even during the 'Punic' period, when the repertoire of symbols is limited, the ex-votos of sites like Carthage, Sousse, Bulla Regia, and Constantine are clearly distinct technically and stylistically. The same is true of the Roman period in western North Africa.

Secondly, when artistic traditions are so localized, the general definitions for the chronological phases do not bear scrutiny. Why did Le Glay cite Maktar stelae as the basis for his 'Neopunic' period when they combine engraving and sculpting techniques and show the dedicant standing in Classical fashion in a Classical architectural setting, details that belong to his 'Roman' period? Picard, on the other hand, dated most of the Maktar stelae to the second century A.C.¹¹¹ In contrast, some of the central Tunisian stelae that Le Glay dated to the third centuries A.C. have progressed little beyond incising a flat surface: although the background is deeply carved out, the people and objects themselves are absolutely flat, with clumsy incised features and non-canonical proportions (fig.64).¹¹²

However, in his Saturne africain catalogues, Le Glay seems to have based his dates more upon how 'primitive' -- meaning 'un-Roman' -- the reliefs looked, than upon his own definitions. As his study concerned only Roman stelae, he did not include any with Punic or Neopunic inscriptions, or anepigraphic stelae with purely Punic iconography. For sites

¹⁰⁹Gsell HAAN IV (repr.1972), 244, thought that some ex-votos found in Sicily actually came from Carthage, but he made this statement based on general iconographic parallels rather than by analyzing the strict composition and technique or the material itself.

¹¹⁰Despite the number of schools that therefore must have existed, evidence for an actual stele workshop survives at only one site, at the Ras Almunfakh sanctuary just outside of Sabratha: cf. Brecciaroli-Taborelli (1983), 543.

¹¹¹Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], nos. Cb-984 to Cb-1035.

¹¹²Le Glay SAM I (1961), 225-226 nos. 5-7.

in Africa Proconsularis, he identified stelae of Punic or Neopunic influence as not later than the first century A.C., while 'Romanized' or 'Roman' stelae generally belonged to the second and third centuries.¹¹³ He did not allow for overlap, for inhabitants of Punic settlements to retain their artistic traditions, or for locals to express individual preferences. Instead, solid evidence should support claims that each distinctive artistic type at a given site occupied a block of time as large as a century or more.

In some cases, details of hairstyle or dress parallel styles at Rome, and may suggest more precise dates within the 'Roman' period. On many stelae, however, these details are often too stylized or stereotypical to relate to fashion trends at Rome; furthermore, one may question how relevant, immediate, or even accessible these trends were to most inhabitants of North African towns.

Obviously one would like to see general trends that could at least distinguish first century stelae from ones of the third century. Given the distinct artistic traditions of different sites, however, seriation is only valid within regional, if not even more local, groups of stelae. The benefits of such specific study are evident in Benichou-Safar's recent study of Punic stelae from Carthage.¹¹⁴ She used a statistical analysis of the stelae's size as well as of their symbols and composition not only to determine a relative chronology, but also to establish whether a group of stelae found at some distance from the tophet actually belonged to the tophet group. Few other sites have hundreds of stelae and fairly well-documented excavation reports to make a comparable analysis possible. Nevertheless,

¹¹³Le Glay SAMI (1966): cf. Guelma, Ksiba, Hippo Regius, Ain Nechma (Thabarbusis), Thala, Ain-Tounga, Khamissa, and Dougga.

¹¹⁴Benichou-Safar (1989).

Benichou-Safar's study exemplifies the need now to compare all aspects of each stele to those of others from the same site; comparisons among stelae from different sites sometimes only prove that they are different, not necessarily that one precedes the other in date.

Since assigning dates to Roman North African stelae is so precarious, this thesis will not attempt to establish precise dates for the individual 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae. Specific comparanda may suggest or rule out certain periods, but the evidence is simply too disparate to go beyond proposing a very basic date range for most members of the group (Chapter V). Instead, this study is more concerned with other information that the stelae reveal about their dedicants, who were so willing to incorporate features of the Punic, Roman, and native repertoires into their votive offerings.

Identifying the Deities on the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

In 1961 and 1966, Le Glay published his *Saturne africain* volumes, which highlighted the supremacy of the Romano-African god Saturn, successor to the Punic god Baal. According to these volumes, every North African sanctuary with stelae of Roman date belonged to Saturn. Le Glay was following a common assumption that continues to this day.¹¹⁵ However, it is questionable to assign a sanctuary to Saturn at sites where stelae do

¹¹⁵E.g. M'Charek (1995), 243.

not clearly name or represent him, or where at least some of the dedications are to gods other than Baal or Saturn;¹¹⁶ stele sanctuaries to other gods surely existed, too.

Le Glay did not catalogue the 'La Ghorfa' group in his volumes, for two main reasons: none of the inscriptions name Saturn, and the divine symbol that dominates the reliefs is not a bearded male god, but a humanized version of an ancient Punic symbol, the 'sign of Tanit'. At Carthage, Constantine, and elsewhere, a geometric 'sign of Tanit' often appeared on stelae addressed to Baal and his consort Tanit; scholars assumed that the geometric shape, which looks something like the silhouette of a woman in a dress, represented the goddess Tanit. Just as Saturn replaced Baal, the goddess Caelestis replaced Tanit in the Roman period; thus on the Roman 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the theory goes, the 'sign of Tanit' that presides over the reliefs is Caelestis, who must have had her own sanctuary where all of the stelae from this group were set up. Punic dedicants worshipped Baal and Tanit together at a number of sites, while the Romans had temples to Caelestis alone, as at Dougga and Carthage. Nevertheless, the 'La Ghorfa' stelae would mark the goddess' only Roman sanctuary with stelae.

Since the 1960s, however, new evidence has suggested that the so-called 'sign of Tanit' was not the inherent attribute of that Punic goddess; in fact, the ways in which the symbol appears on various Punic and Roman stelae call into question whether it represents any divinity. On the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the figure is anthropomorphic and clearly divine, but what it represents is unclear. In addition, several other gods and symbols of a more

¹¹⁶This situation may be largely due to the habit of past scholars to take whatever deity is named in an inscription and identify him as a subset of Saturn; too often, gods are not allowed to have an identity independent of that god in North Africa.

Graeco-Roman type flank the 'sign of Tanit', further complicating the issue. Chapter II.2 will address these divine figures and symbols in more detail, but indications already suggest that neither Saturn nor Caelestis received these dedications.

The 'La Ghorfa' stelae therefore bring with them several questions. Their origin and date remain in question, while the god who received these ex-votos is unknown. Chapters II (The Sculptural Reliefs) and III (The Inscriptions) will address these questions, as well as investigate the stelae's dedicants and the environment and manner in which the stelae were made.

Chapter II The Sculptural Reliefs

Normally, only one face of the 'La Ghorfa' stones is carved, but it teems with decorations, segregated most often into a tripartite composition. The three main zones contain fairly consistent iconographic themes, conforming to one of two compositional schemes that are most easily identified by the type of niche in the middle zone. The niche, which frames a full-length representation of the dedicant, generally has an arched top and is framed by two columns; Type 1 stelae add a rectangular doorframe, ornate capitals, entablature with mouldings, and a pediment. Type 2 stelae are simpler, with only an arcuated lintel over the niche, supported by columns or pilasters usually with simple capitals. Type 1 stelae tend to contain more complex and more numerous elements in all zones.

In both Type 1 and Type 2 stelae, each of the three zones has a distinct but consistent theme. The top zone is devoted to divine symbols and figures. The dominant and central element is the so-called 'sign of Tanit', an anthropomorphic version of the ancient Punic symbol. Above this figure is usually a motif also descended from the Punic tradition, the disc-and-crescent, which surely represents the sun and moon. Other probable astral symbols, from simple discs to rosettes, flank the central motifs, appearing to float in space like the symbols on many Punic and Neopunic stelae. Type 1 stelae may add several other components. Sun and moon gods also appear, floating in the upper zone on either side of the 'sign of Tanit'. Small animals, winding vines, and other attributes fill the spaces between these elements. Graeco-Roman motifs join the Punic ones, most often in the form of figures probably to be identified as Liber Pater, Venus, and sometimes Eros, who stand on top of the next zone. Rarely, this trio is replaced by another, also Graeco-Roman in appearance, featuring the Dioscuri flanking a bearded male god, in a separate, formal register.

The middle zone of both Types 1 and 2 contains the male or female dedicant, who stands or sits within the niche. If there is an inscription, it usually lies immediately below the niche.¹ Two burly nude males, Atlantes, sometimes hold up either the inscription's frame or the floor of the niche, from their position below the architecture or in the lowest zone.

Finally, the lowest zone varies most in terms of content. Most often, it contains a bull or a bull sacrifice scene, which may commemorate a real sacrifice that was performed for the donor of the stele as part of his or her vow. In other instances, somewhat obscure mythological or religious allusions fill this zone.

In the past, many scholars have interpreted these zones very literally, claiming that the top zones represent the upper world or heavens where the gods reside; the middle zones represent the middle world or domain of humans; and the bottom zones, the lower world, the region of subterranean gods and monsters, and, somewhat incongruously, of sacrifices to (presumably) non-chthonic gods.² True, the upper zones undeniably contain gods and celestial symbols, while the middle zone invariably contains the human dedicant. However,

¹Chapter III (pp.131f) discusses the epigraphy.

²For example, Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 262; Picard (1962), 30; Le Glay SAH (1966), 293; Soren et al. (1990), 237.

the lowest zones are more difficult to classify; they contain a number of different scenes and themes, few of which belong to the lower world.

The first sections of this chapter will examine the characteristic features of each zone by explaining their cultural background and meaning; any primary indicators of date will be included. In order to evaluate how the different zones operate, individual components require attention:

II.1 Top Zone Disc-and-Crescent Sol and Luna 'Sign of Tanit' Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros Dioscuri Register
II.2 Mobile Elements Animals Drilled Circles and Holes
II.2 Middle Zana

- II.3 Middle Zone The Architecture The Dedicants
- II.4 Bottom Zone Bull Sacrifice Scenes Secondary Niches and Atlantes Hercules and the Nemean Lion Lion-Bull Combat

These observations will culminate in Section II.5, which will examine the stelae

collectively, in order to identify overall trends of the compositions.

II.1 The Top Zone

Disc-and-Crescent

The motif that characteristically caps the top zone is a disc surmounting a crescent,

or variants thereof. This was one of the most typical motifs on Punic stelae, where it usually

hovered over the 'sign of Tanit', as it does in these examples. As in the Punic context, the 'La Ghorfa' crescent-and-disc motif likely represents the sun and moon, since personifications of Sol and Luna replace it on Cat.15. On 11 other stelae, Sol and Luna flank the discand-crescent.³

While Cat.3 and 25 have the basic disc-and-crescent combination, most others substitute another object for the disc. On nine stelae, a star-petalled rosette appears instead.⁴ Elsewhere in the top zone, smaller discs and rosettes interchangeably flank the disc-and-crescent motif, presumably as subordinate stars.⁵

Another substitute for the disc is a wreath or knotted circular frame containing a human face,⁶ which Picard identified as the head of Caelestis, Tanit's Roman equivalent.⁷ However, linking these stelae to Caelestis is questionable;⁸ furthermore, the enwreathed face is fairly androgynous and is not necessarily female, since the face on Cat.32 seems masculine in contrast to the feminine example with earrings on Cat.6. Like the small rosettes and discs, snaked-framed framed faces also flank the central disc-and-crescent motif on Cat.15.

⁴Cat.4, 8, 13, 16, 28, 38, 42, and 43; the rosette occurs once without a crescent, on Cat.5.

³Cf. p.49 below.

⁵Rosettes: Cat.2, 12, 15, 22, 23, 30, 34, 42. Discs: Cat.5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 25(?), 35. On Cat.26, the discs have become a pair of ansate *paterae*, while those on Cat.28 are hollowed out like receptacles on an offering table.

⁶Wreath: Cat.2 (?), 9, 10, 23, 26, 30, 32, 34 (?); knotted enclosure: Cat.5 and 6. The summits of Cat.7, 25, 35, and 40 may also have had wreathed faces, usually found above crescents, but the tops of these stelae are now damaged. On Cat.24, a wreathed face appears below the 'sign of Tanit', to one side of the pediment.

⁷E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [c.1954-1955], 269 no.Cb-968, 271 no.Cb-972.

⁸Cf. discussion of the 'sign of Tanit', below p.50.

On Cat. 12 and 22, the face above the crescent is replaced by the head and upper torso of a bearded male figure, who clutches a winged thunderbolt to his chest with both hands (figs.66 and 67). His appearance and attributes belong to Jupiter; they are distinct from those of Saturn, who appears on most North African stelae.⁹ As a sky god, Jupiter does not negate the theory that the disc is solar; he could be related to a Phoenician deity with similar powers.¹⁰

Finally, instead of a face or rosette, Cat.41 has a wreath containing a *triskeles*, a human face with three projecting legs. Not a Punic sign, the *triskeles* is most familiar as a symbol of Sicily, used from the time of Agathokles into the first century B.C., particularly on coins.¹¹ It rarely occurs outside Sicily in the Hellenistic or Roman period, making its presence on this stele curious. While it may be solar, like the other disc motifs, it also recalls gorgons and other ancient apotropaic devices. As Chapter IV will demonstrate, the *triskeles* seems to have had limited but special meaning in certain parts of pre-Roman and Roman Africa.¹²

Sol and Luna

Sol and Luna appear in the top zone of at least twelve stelae.¹³ Only once, on Cat.22, do they appear as they do on most other Roman or Roman African stelae, as busts with a

⁹As discussed in Chapter I (p.35), Saturn's head is often veiled, he sometimes raises a hand to touch his head, and his attributes include a hooked knife.

¹⁰Picard RAA (1954), 113; Barré (1983), 41 and 51-52.

¹¹Cook (1914), 304-307.

¹²Cf. Chapter IV, p.165.

¹³Cat.4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 22, and 38. Only Sol is preserved on Cat.12, 19, and 40. A face in a wreath appears to the side of the pediment on Cat.24, but it is not obviously Sol.

radiant or crescent crown.¹⁴ The other examples depict them as human-like heads, complete with hair, floating in the top zone. Sol's face is surrounded by triangular rays, while Luna's crescent either appears behind her head or crowning it. In one strange case, Luna has cow-like ears below the crescent (fig.68). These images seem to be duplicating the ideas represented by the disc-and-crescent motif.¹⁵

The 'Sign of Tanit'

Probably the best known symbol on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae is the 'sign of Tanit', present on all examples with undamaged top zones.¹⁶ Derived from the Punic symbol,¹⁷ it has become more anthropomorphic: even the most conservative examples have made the geometric 'sign' into a figure with two arms, holding branches or horns with grapes and pomegranates.¹⁸ More stelae give the 'sign of Tanit' some human-like details; it has facial features, hair or a wreath, and hands, while its rigid rectangular body has become a flaring robe. Finally, in three cases, the 'sign' has become fully anthropomorphic. It still holds the pomegranate and grape branches or horns, and now has a nude, human-like body.¹⁹ Most

¹⁴During the Roman period, Sol and Luna are common on stelae from Proconsularis to *Mauretania*, e.g. Le Glay *SAH* (1966), pl.I,5; Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.IV,3 and pl.XII,6; Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), pl.XXIII,2-3, pl.XXIV,1, pl.XXV,5, pl.XXXVIII,3 and 5, etc.

¹⁵Somewhat illogically, Picard *RAA* (1954), 113, stated that Sol and Luna here symbolize eternity, which explains why they can appear twice on one stele.

¹⁶The upper zone of sculpting is partially or fully gone, leaving no trace of the 'sign of Tanit', from Cat.14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 27, 29, 36, and 37.

¹⁷Cf. Chapter I, p.26.

¹⁸Cat.3, 30, 35, and 42.

¹⁹Cat.8, 16, 24.

examples -- more than three-quarters -- fall between these geometric and anthropomorphic extremes.

Even with more than forty examples of a semi- or fully anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', controversies about how to interpret the figure remain. For one, its very name, 'sign of Tanit', is misleading, for no evidence connects the Punic symbol specifically with Baal's female counterpart, Tanit.²⁰ However, that idea continues to circulate, with corollary assumptions. For example, since the 'sign' appears on the stelae of the Roman period, several scholars have assumed that it now represents Caelestis, Tanit's Roman successor.²¹ Yet while Caelestis assumed Tanit's identity in many cases, her appearance is purely in the Graeco-Roman tradition of goddesses, especially Cybele.²² The so-called 'sign of Tanit' still has no links with these goddesses.

Significantly, most 'signs of Tanit' on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae do not look feminine at all. In every case, those with hair have a very short, masculine cut, although none have beards like examples from Aïn Tebernok (*Tubernuc*).²³ On Cat.22, a slight incision on the 'sign of Tanit' indicates its chest, which is more like that of the Eros figure below than the small round breasts of Venus beside him. While the three fully anthropomorphic 'signs' are naked, they only complicate the issue, for they are fairly androgynous. One, on Cat.16, has a feminine build with small breasts, but also has a masculine hairstyle. The one on Cat.8

²⁰Cf. Chapter I, p.26.

²¹As has been asserted by Yacoub Chefs-d'oeuvre (1978), 31-32; L.J. Balmaseda LIMC V,1 (1990), 256 no.32; and Picard Civilisation (1990), 264.

²²Halsberghe (1984), 2209-2215.

 $^{^{23}}$ At Aïn Tebernok, the 'sign of Tanit' took the form of a triangle with a bearded head and two raised arms, according to Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 76.

has a burly build like that of the Atlantes in the bottom zone of several stelae (fig.69),²⁴ but it is wearing ankle bracelets, jewellery that normally only Venus wears on these stelae.²⁵ Finally, the 'sign of Tanit' on Cat.24 lacks any distinctive sexual features.

If the 'sign of Tanit' is not Tanit/Caelestis, what is it? First, it does not clearly personify a particular god, Punic or Roman. Although two of the fully anthropomorphic 'signs' stand on pedestals like statues (Cat.8 and 16), no three-dimensional parallels are known. On the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the 'sign of Tanit' holds *cornucopiae*, grapes, and pomegranates; continuing the theme, other vegetation and small animals, such as birds and rabbits, surround it. Fauna had been common on Punic stelae,²⁶ although they did not interact with other symbols in the ways that these animals do, pecking at the fruits, nibbling at the 'skirt' of the 'sign of Tanit', or sitting on its shoulders. Here, the animals and vegetation are intrinsically linked with the 'sign', so that it may personify abundance and fertility, especially in terms of the agricultural success that was vital to the well-being of central Proconsularis. Picard's labels for the symbol, "la Providence féconde la nature" and "une Providence suprême",²⁷ seem like apt descriptions of its primary force, if not its identity, even without Picard's idea that the symbol is to be equated with Caelestis.²⁸

²⁴The chest here seems more muscular than feminine, despite the lack of male genitalia below; the Atlantes are surely male but have no genitalia, either.

²⁵Picard RAA (1954), 112, and every scholar who has discussed this particular 'sign of Tanit' since, has stated that it wears a *petasus*, has winged ankles, and therefore must be Mercury. However, the headpiece is not a hat but a wreath, and the anklets are identical to those worn by Venus on Cat.5, 6, 8, and 22.

²⁶Hours-Miédan (1951), pl. XXXIII f (birds); pl. XXIV c (rabbit); pl. XXIV d (mouse).

²⁷Picard (1962), 30, and Picard Civilisation (1990), 264, respectively.

²⁸Picard RAA (1954), 114.

Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros

On twenty stelae,²⁹ divinities also evoke fertility. In contrast to the 'sign of Tanit' and the disc-and-crescent, these gods come from the Graeco-Roman tradition. They stand subordinate in position to the Punic motifs and flank the pediment of the niche below. Normally to the viewer's left is a Hellenistic-type Dionysus figure, while the nude female on the right may be Venus. A third god, Eros, sometimes joins them, usually standing on the pediment's summit.

The Dionysus-like figure is youthful and clean-shaven. He wears a cloth hanging from his left shoulder and wrapped around his hips, leaving his chest bare. A wreath caps his head, with grape bunches dangling by either ear. His attributes are a cup or vase, which he holds before him in his right hand, and a thyrsus, held in his left hand.

While this image recalls that of a youthful Hellenistic-type Dionysus, it is probably inappropriate to identify him by that name. Although Dionysiac imagery appears in all types of artistic media in Roman Africa, Dionysus or Bacchus is almost unattested in North African epigraphy. Instead, texts refer to a minor Roman god, Liber Pater, who shared not only his appearance with Dionysus, but also some of his functions. In North Africa, the cult of Liber Pater was much more prominent than at Rome; Roman Africans apparently identified him more with civilized and proper civic behaviour. Around 100 inscriptions commemorate him or his priests, from some 45 sites, almost half of which are in Proconsularis.³⁰ Liber Pater was the patron god or *genius* of cities from Lepcis Magna³¹ to

²⁹Cat.4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 22, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, and 43.

³⁰Cf. distribution maps in Boussada (1992), 1048 and 1051.

³¹IRT 296.

Maktar.³² His followers were among the cities' elite, while his priests were sometimes also ministers of the Imperial cult.³³ In all, the epigraphy paints a picture of Liber Pater as "an essentially political divinity and the great support of official propaganda".³⁴

The inscriptions suggest that the cult flourished during the second and third centuries, then essentially vanished in the later Empire. Opinions vary as to whether Liber Pater achieved such prominence in Imperial Africa because he was imposed upon the natives by the Antonines and Severans,³⁵ or voluntarily adopted by aspiring political climbers who wished to appear 'Roman'.³⁶ In North Africa, the cult essentially died out in the later Empire,³⁷ though it continued elsewhere in the Roman world.³⁸ Dionysiac imagery remained popular much longer, from the Punic period through to Late Roman times.³⁹

In North African art, Liber Pater often appears as god of the vine, representing fertility and life.⁴⁰ He manifestly plays this role on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, where he wears a grape-laden wreath and holds a wine cup, while small animals and often lush vegetation surround him. On Cat.33 and 38, he even holds onto a rosette vine instead of his thyrsus.⁴¹

³⁸For instance, at Cosa between the fourth and fifth centuries: Collins-Clinton (1977), esp.3-6.

³⁹Dionysiac imagery first appears in North Africa in the fourth century B.C. (Picard [1979] and [1983]), following assimilation with the Punic god Shadrapha in major centres like Lepcis Magna and Carthage; cf. Bruhl (1953), 224. The imagery continued to appear on mosaics and sarcophagi into the Late Empire, but, as in the Punic period, it does not necessarily follow that people saw the imagery and connected it with the cult of Liber Pater. This is especially so in instances where Christians adopted symbols such as the *cantharus*.

⁴⁰E.g. on the fuller's column at Maktar: CMA (1897), 78 no.905 and D no.3, pl.XXV, no.905.

⁴¹Rosette vines wind their way between elements of the top zone on Cat.5, 23, 33, 34, and 38, but only crowd out Liber's thyrsus on Cat.33 and 38.

³²Picard CivMact (1957), pl. XVIa.

³³Hanoune (1986), 162.

³⁴Boussada (1992), 1064 [my translation].

³⁵Boussada (1992), 1063-1064.

³⁶Benabou La résistance (1976), 355; Benabou (1986), 327-328.

³⁷Boussada (1992), 1050.

On most of these stelae, Liber Pater has a female counterpart who probably, like him, promotes ideas of fecundity and life. Her identity is more obscure, however. She is always nude, although on occasion she wears earrings and arm and ankle bracelets.⁴² She has no particular attributes; however, the wreaths that she holds up on several stelae and the altars and incense burners⁴³ at which she sacrifices fruit or incense distinguish her from familiar divinities. The striped box that sometimes sits between her and the pediment may be another type of altar, rather than a ladder, as suggested by Bisi.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, this female's juxtaposition with Liber Pater tends to confuse, rather than clarify, the issue of her identity. While North African inscriptions often pair Liber Pater with a goddess, it is rarely the same one from text to text. In terms of iconography, the best candidates are Venus, who shared a temple with Liber Pater at Henchir Mest (*Musti*) near Dougga,⁴⁵ and Libera, who co-occurs in six North African inscriptions with the god.⁴⁶

For several reasons, scholars have preferred to identify this 'La Ghorfa' figure as Venus.⁴⁷ The first reason is the weakest, since it notes that Venus' special animal, the dove, often perches on or near her; however, similar birds interact with the rest of the figures in the top zone indiscriminately. More significantly, seven 'La Ghorfa' stelae show the

 $^{^{42}}$ E.g. Cat. 5, 6, 14, and 22. Her hairstyle varies, but is usually the same as is most popular with the female dedicants in the niche below; cf. Chapter II.3, p.90.

⁴³Altars occur on her right side on Cat. 5, 6, 32, 36; cylindrical objects that are probably incense burners are on her left side on Cat. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 19, 22, 31, 33, 34, 38, and 39. In addition, striped boxes flank the goddess on Cat. 4, 10, 11, 19, 38, 40.

⁴⁴Bisi StelePun (1967), 137.

⁴⁵Cagnat and Gauckler (1898), 57.

⁴⁶According to Hanoune (1986), 161, Liber and Libera occur together in six inscriptions, and Libera by herself in one in all of North Africa.

⁴⁷La Blanchère (1897), 35; Picard *CivMact* (1957), 48 n.171; Bisi (1978), 24*f*.; Ghedini (1990), 242; etc. Only Toutain (repr. 1967), 363, preferred Libera.

goddess with Venus' mythological son, Eros.⁴⁸ Although he normally appears on North African gravestones as a funerary symbol,⁴⁹ and then only in lower zones, Eros plays another role on these stelae, standing in the top zone between Liber Pater and the goddess and interacting with them both.⁵⁰ Here, he caters more to ideas of life and regeneration, a fitting counterpart to Venus, whom Apuleius called the "primal mother of nature's components, first origin of the elements, nourisher of the entire world".⁵¹

A third reason for identifying the goddess as Venus is that she was very popular in Proconsularis, certainly the source of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Venus had several temples beyond her sanctuary at *Sicca Veneria*.⁵² Mosaicists featured her on their floors,⁵³ and the customs collectors of the *IIII publica Africae* at Maktar adopted her for their patron goddess.⁵⁴ Her name and image are far more common in Roman Africa than those of Libera;⁵⁵ this fact, in conjunction with Eros' presence, make Venus the more attractive candidate for the identity of Liber Pater's companion on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae.

⁴⁸Cat.5, 6, 22, 32, 36, 39, and, displaced to the bottom zone, Cat.38.

⁴⁹On gravestones, Erotes often appear in pairs, either holding up a garland or leaning on down-turned torches: e.g. Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), pl.XXVII,5 and pl.XXVII,6; Ferchiou (1989), pl.50,2 and pl.53,3.

⁵⁰He grips the thrysus that Liber holds (Cat.5, 6, 32, 36), makes an offering at the same altar at which the goddess is sacrificing (Cat.5 and 6), holds up a wreath that, on other stelae, the goddess holds (Cat.32 and 36), or else Liber Pater and the goddess hold him up (Cat.39).

⁵¹Apuleius Metam. IV, 30, 1.

⁵²E.g. C.680 (Kasr bou Fatha), C.12140 (Hr. Sidi Amara), C.23405 (Maktar).

⁵³Picard (1940).

⁵⁴Picard CivMact (1957), 22 (cf. C.23404).

⁵⁵Tunisian inscriptions naming Libera include C.26477 (Dougga), C.860 (Hr. Mecherka, near Zaghouan).

Nonetheless, the primary clue to the nude goddess' identity is presumably her nudity. Libera is a fairly minor deity in the Roman pantheon; her iconography is obscure,⁵⁶ although she is presumably Liber's companion on a stele from Djemila (*Cuicul*) (fig.70).⁵⁷ More familiarly, the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans all had a nude goddess of love and fertility; Ashtart, Aphrodite, and Venus, respectively, are virtually indistinguishable in appearance. Certainly her most famous sanctuary in North Africa is that at *Sicca Veneria* (El Kef), imported from Ashtart's sanctuary at Mt. Eryx in Sicily and best known for its sacred rites of prostitution.⁵⁸ Also in Proconsularis, a few kilometers southwest of Maktar, a Neopunic inscription records that the citizens of *Mididi* (Hr. Meded) dedicated a sanctuary to Ashtart.⁵⁹

According to Picard, Liber Pater and Venus serve two purposes at once on these stelae. First, they should be taken literally in the context of the niche architecture on which they stand: they are terra-cotta *acroteria* like the ones that had adorned the roofs of Etruscan temples.⁶⁰ At the same time, they are more abstract, inhabiting the lower zone of the celestial world.⁶¹ By their relative positions, they are ministers of the great god (either Baal Hammon/Saturn or Tanit/Caelestis), through its intermediary and messenger, represented under the schematic form of the 'sign of Tanit'.⁶² Picard's overall view of the 'La Ghorfa'

⁵⁶According to Bruhl (1953), 227, North Africans may have conflated Libera with Ceres.

⁵⁷Allais (1957), 35.

 ⁵⁸Cf. especially Valerius Maximus II,6,15; for the two sanctuaries, cf. Le Glay SAH (1961), 354.
 ⁵⁹Ferjaoui (1990).

⁶⁰Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 277, proposed that use of *acroteria* may have come directly to Africa through Etruscan contact or indirectly through exposure to Greek practices in Sicily.

⁶¹E.g. Picard (1963), 241, and Picard Civilisation (1990), 277.

⁶²Picard (1962), 30; cf. Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 277: the 'sign of Tanit' "incarne la puissance vitale du dieu suprême, et la transmet, par le moyen de végétaux contenus dans des cornes d'abondance, à des divins ministres [Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros] qui représentent la fécondité de la nature".

stelae was that the Roman influence was superficial,⁶³ hardly masking an essential Punic core infused with 'Greek spiritualism' dating back to the Hellenistic period.⁶⁴

This theory has several weak points. First, there is no evidence for statue-type *acroteria* in North Africa. Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros appear above the niche architecture because the dedicant hopes to invoke their attention and benevolence, not because their statues decorate the top of a temple. These gods inhabit the upper realm, and are indeed more concrete and approachable than the 'sign of Tanit'. However, no one understands what the 'sign of Tanit' represents, much less that it symbolizes a function of Baal or Tanit. It is therefore presumptuous to identify the sign as an intermediary divinity or messenger of a "great god" who does not appear and who is not named on these stelae.

As far as the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are concerned, the 'sign of Tanit' plays a primary role in concepts associated with success and prosperity, especially in fertility and agriculture.⁶⁵ As they appear here, Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros also have powers of regeneration and revivification. In fact, Venus and Eros often hold up wreaths to emphasize victory and success.⁶⁶ These themes sometimes carry over to the middle zone. On Cat.25 and 26, Victories hold up palms and wreaths outside the dedicant's niche; on Cat.19, a single Victory stands beside the dedicant, about to crown her with a wreath.

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⁶³Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 277: "L'influence romaine demeure purement extérieure", so that while certain elements looked Roman, they merely masked non-Roman ideas, such as the anthropomorphic forms of certain gods, the togas worn by some of the dedicants, the Latin inscriptions, and parts of the Italic temple form used for the niche.

⁶⁴Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 264 and 277, thought that the relative positions of these figures implied a hierarchy stemming from Platonic philosophy and Eastern mysticism, which had combined in the Hellenistic period.

⁶⁵Cf. p.52. ⁶⁶Cat.4, 7, 10, 22, 31, 32, 36.

Finally, pre-Roman North Africa contains nothing to support a Hellenistic fusion between Eastern and Greek thought. From the fourth century, Punic artisans used certain Hellenistic motifs, such as Dionysiac ivy vines or satyr faces.⁶⁷ However, these are decorative features; in no way do they imply that the Punic culture had adopted Greek religious or philosophical beliefs. Nothing else in the culture indicates the Platonic hierarchy that Picard saw in the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. The Punic and Roman cultures are unquestionably the most important contributors to these stelae.

Dioscuri Register

In another variant of the upper zone, a different group of figures replaces Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros, in a formal frame set between the 'sign of Tanit' and the niche architecture below, on Cat.2 (fig.71) and 17.⁶⁸ In the centre, a male god sits enthroned. He holds a staff and thunderbolt, and an eagle is perched nearby; these attributes identify him as Jupiter. On either side are two youths, each wearing a mantle and holding a horse; those on Cat.17 also hold staffs. Even though they lack Phrygian caps, they immediately recall the Dioscuri. This type of scene is common on Roman African stelae, although the enthroned god is normally Saturn.⁶⁹

During the Roman period, stelae seem to use the Dioscuri and Sol and Luna interchangeably as companions for Saturn.⁷⁰ The 'La Ghorfa' stelae may do the same, since

⁶⁷Picard (1979) and Picard (1983).

⁶⁸The summit of Cat. 17 is broken off; the 'sign of Tanit' may not have appeared above.

⁶⁹Cf. the 'Boglio' stele from Siliana (fig.62), and Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.VI,5 and pl.VIII,1 and 4-6 (from central Tunisia). Chapter I discusses Saturn and the Dioscuri (p.36).

⁷⁰Le Glay SAH (1966), 228-229.

Jupiter's companions on Cat.2 and 17 are the Dioscuri, but on Cat.12 and 22 are Sol and Luna. Le Glay maintained that the artist had confused or conflated Jupiter and Saturn in such cases.⁷¹ However, two inscriptions confirm that Jupiter can be the male god between Sol and Luna; one includes a relief from Sidi Bou Rouis that depicts these three gods in guises comparable to those on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae (fig.72).⁷²

Scholars agree that the Dioscuri emphasize the cosmic significance of the god they flank.⁷³ In contrast to Sol and Luna, who usually appear on 'La Ghorfa' stelae that are charged with vegetation and diverse symbols,⁷⁴ the Dioscuri change the character of the top zones. The 'sign of Tanit' still appears with its *cornucopiae* on at least Cat.2, but the Dioscuri register eliminates any other reference to nature and fecundity. It starkly contrasts with the usual fecundity of the upper zone and is much more Roman with its strict horizontal structure and frames than the upper zones of the other stelae. It suggests a much more formal relationship between the dedicant and the gods.

II.2 Mobile Elements

The divine figures and symbols discussed above remain in the top zone almost without exception. However, certain other elements may move to other parts of the relief; these include small animals, plants, and drilled circles or holes. The generic birds, rabbits, and rosette vines that occur in the top zones are surely there to invoke fertility and

⁷¹Le Glay SAH (1966), 231.

⁷²BAC (1903), CCX (from Tocqueville).

⁷³Le Glay SAH (1966), 228-229; Lipinski Dieux (1995), 404.

⁷⁴Sol and Luna appear on at least ten 'La Ghorfa' stelae (Cat.4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, 22, 38, and 40), with or without Jupiter, and rarely in such formal registers as those of the Dioscuri.

abundance. However, other objects are more complex, since they can be the pedimental sculpture, *acroteria*, or even the focus of an entire zone. In still other cases, they may fill in empty spaces or make provisions for external decorations. Since they are so mobile, such elements are best defined early on.

Roosters. In North Africa, the rooster is fairly ambiguous in religious contexts, and only seems to retain its Graeco-Roman association with the god Mercury on small objects.⁷⁵ On the few Punic and Roman stelae it graces,⁷⁶ the rooster normally represents the sacrificial victim; therefore normally only one rooster appears.⁷⁷ However, it clearly plays another role on seven 'La Ghorfa' stelae. It may appear in any zone, never once identifiably as an offering.⁷⁸ Like the generic birds in the top zone, the rooster is prepotent and appeals to fecundity and success; however, since the rooster is mobile, it must have greater significance.

In all but one instance, the rooster stands on or inside the pediment of a temple- or *aedicula*-type niche.⁷⁹ This position is key in North Africa, for tomb paintings and poetry record roosters standing on or near pyramid-topped mausolea.⁸⁰ Neither source explains the

⁷⁵For example, a mould in the Timgad museum shows two roosters pulling a chariot driven by Mercury; cf. Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), 130.

⁷⁶For examples, cf. Hours-Miédan (1951), pl. XXII d and b (Punic stelae); Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.XV,3 and SAM II (1966), pl.XL,4 (Roman stelae).

⁷⁷An inscription from Koudiet es-Souda identifies the rooster as the specific sacrifice made to Caelestis and a hen as the sacrifice to Venus (C. 27763), while Hercules received a capon at Aziz ben Tellis (C. 8247). However, chickens and birds in general are the primary sacrificial remains identifiable at almost all sanctuaries in North Africa.

⁷⁸In the top zone of Cat.16 and 24, 39, and 40; in the niche's pediment in the middle zone of Cat.8 and 13; and in the bottom zone of Cat.29.

⁷⁹Cat.8, 13, 16 and 24, 39, and 40.

⁸⁰The motif occurs on 'Libyan' hypogea, Punic tombs, Roman mausolea, and native paintings, according to Camps (1992), 48. Cf. Camps (1992), 35-48; Peyras (1993).

rooster's significance; modern sources have identified it variously as a solar symbol,⁸¹ a spirit guide, the soul of the deceased, and a symbol of immortality.⁸² It may represent resurrection, and therefore virility and fecundity; the 'La Ghorfa' reliefs support the latter two ideas at least. Finally, Camps observed that the tomb painters had highlighted the rooster's virility and aggressive strengths, and concluded that the bird was a protector rather than a guide.⁸³ Rather than being associated with a specific god or the soul, the rooster on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae may also be apotropaic.

Dolphins. A pair of dolphins appears at the summit of Cat.2, flanking the lunar face on Cat.15, and below the niche on Cat.3. In each case, the dolphins swim toward each other. In a more complex situation on Cat.29, the bottom zone has two dolphins and two roosters surrounding a table, on which are three cups. On the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, therefore, dolphins never appear twice in the same context. Nonetheless, they may have the same significance on every occasion.

In North Africa, dolphins are popular symbols from Punic through Roman times, at both coastal and inland sites. They appear on votive and funerary stelae, mosaics, lamps, and even decorate a column socle in a house at Medeïna (*Althiburos*).⁸⁴ When dolphins

 $^{^{81}}$ In fact, several animals that appear on the stelae have been identified as solar symbols: the rooster, the eagle (pp.69-70), and dolphins (p.62). Cat.5 has a bird carrying a snake or bird in its beak, the only example of its kind in North Africa, to my knowledge. Picard RAA (1954), 114, identified this motif as a traditional Persian solar symbol, following Roes (1950), 130-134. However, by the Imperial period, the motif was certainly well ingrained within the Greek (and probably Roman) repertoire, not necessarily as a solar symbol.

⁸²Peyras (1993), 245-246.

⁸³Camps (1992), 35-48.

⁸⁴Ennabli (1976), pls.XXXVI and XXXVII; Ennaïfer (1976), 57.

appear on stelae, some scholars relate them to Baal Hammon, identifying the animal as a solar symbol.⁸⁵ However, the dolphin's appearance in various media suggests otherwise.

A dolphin is never the dominant image on a stele. Instead, as a lesser symbol, it occurs singly or in pairs on Punic stelae from Carthage.⁸⁶ On subsequent Neopunic and Roman stelae, dolphins are most often in symmetrical pairs, as in the 'La Ghorfa' reliefs.⁸⁷ They could be pedimental sculpture⁸⁸ or *acroteria*⁸⁹ in reliefs imitating temple architecture. When placed vertically, as if swimming downwards, they ideally fill other triangular spaces like the summits of stelae, as occurs on Cat.2, on a stele from Maghrawa (Cat.B8=fig.45), a stele in the Musée de Maktar (fig.93), and on another in the Musée de Salakta (*Sullecthum*), along the Tunisian coast south of Mahdia.⁹⁰

One popular theory holds that dolphins represented the human soul's means of crossing the celestial Ocean to the heavens.⁹¹ Whether this metaphysical reason applies, dolphins, as water animals, also particularly evoked nourishing water or rain in agricultural

⁹⁰This stele is presumably unpublished; it is on display, unlabelled, in the Salakta museum.

⁸⁵Picard (1941-1946), 95; Berthier and Charlier (1955), 202; Le Glay SAM I (1961), 303, no.6; Ennaïfer (1976), 26.

⁸⁶Single dolphins: Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XXIII e and g. Single dolphins also appear on the Cirtan stelae from El-Hofra; cf. Berthier and Charlier (1955), 202 for examples from El-Hofra. Two dolphins: Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XXIII f.

⁸⁷Fantar (1972) discusses dolphins in Punic and Neopunic marine iconography.

⁸⁸Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284 no.Cb-1013 (Maktar). A pair of dolphins also forms the pedimental sculpture above the doorway of the *naiskos* cippus from Thuburbo Majus; cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 300-301 no.Cb-1082, pl.CXXVII.

⁸⁹Le Glay SAM II (1966), 299, no.1, pl.XLI,3 (from Tiklat), and Le Glay SAM I (1961), 342, no.22 (from Hr. Rohban).

⁹¹Picard *RAA* (1954), 113; Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 213. This concept may explain several stelae that show men or winged Erotes riding on dolphins: in Tunisia, for example, at Aïn-Barchouch and Maktar: cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 253 no.Cb-939 and 283 no.Cb-1010 respectively. However, none of the 'La Ghorfa' examples have riders.

regions.⁹² This second interpretation seems particularly appropriate for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, which emphasize vegetation and fertility. Especially at inland sites in the cereal belt, the livelihood of the population depended on a good harvest. Votive stelae from this region sometimes stress this point by including scenes of the harvest or wheat; the best-known example is the 'Boglio' stele from Siliana (fig.62).⁹³ Given the teeming vegetation and animals on most 'La Ghorfa' stelae, dolphins surely serve a primarily agrarian function there.

Drilled Circles and Holes. While the animals and plants on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae emphasize the theme of nature and fecundity, they also serve a secondary purpose, to fill up space. They share this trait with another type of decoration, small round holes that are drilled into the surface of the relief. These holes are one of the more distinctive features of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, and may occur in any zone, though they are usually most prolific on the upper half of the relief. La Blanchère, Le Glay, and others have suggested that these apertures held shiny metallic studs or appliqués, possibly astral in theme.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, nothing fitting the description of these studs has ever been found in North Africa, although "clous" (nails or studs) were found in vases buried with stelae at Dougga.⁹⁵

⁹²Le Glay SAH (1966), 213.

⁹³Cf. also Ferchiou (1981), 165-166 no.15, pl.52,2 (from the region of Bou Arada), and Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VII,1 (from the Béja-El Kef region), which is paralleled by an unpublished stele in the Musée de Lamta (*Leptiminus*), at a coastal site. The same theme prevails in those stelae promoting the bounty of the land (farm animals, breads, baskets of fruits and vegetables), popular at several inland sites in Tunisia and Algeria; for examples, cf. Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.X,2-5 (Hr. es-Srira) and pl.XI,1 (Ousseltia); Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXIX, 1-6 (Khenchela).

⁹⁴CMA (1897), 62 nos.741-752; La Blanchère (1897), 34; Piganiol (1957), 91; Le Glay SAMI (1961), 240; Fantar (1986), 29; Picard Civilisation (1990), 278.

⁹⁵Le Glay SAM I (1961), 276.

The holes separate easily into two different types, which probably served different purposes. The first, a 'drilled circle', is quite shallow and has a small depression in its centre, made by the drill point. It is usually too wide and shallow to have held anything without the help of very strong adhesives. In fact, red paint preserved in one drilled circle on Cat.26 suggests that no inserted object covered that drilled circle; it served as decoration on its own.

On most 'La Ghorfa' stelae, these drilled circles mainly fill in empty spaces in extreme cases of *horror vacui*: the round marks occur not only between the figures, symbols, and architecture, but also on the objects themselves. They are reminiscent of the small circles used as decorative features on a variety of objects in the Near East and Mediterranean from ancient times until the present. At Punic Carthage, for instance, small concentric holes riddled the hair, veils, or beards of terra-cotta masks;⁹⁶ the same decoration was still being used to decorate the clothing of terracotta figurines in Late Antiquity.⁹⁷ Some Neopunic stelae from Maktar use drilled circles to fill space, such as Cat.B6 (fig.43) and B13 (fig.50), as do several Latin ex-votos from Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*), located about 20km northwest of Dougga.⁹⁸

The second type of hole is usually narrower in diameter and deeper, so that the bottom of the cavity is not visible; the dimensions are sufficient to secure an object. In several cases, these deep holes pierce an edge, as at the bottom corners of the triangular

⁹⁶E.g. Carthage (1995), 15 pl.13; 23 pl.22, top left.

⁹⁷Barraud, Bonifay, et al. (1998), 155, fig.14. An unlabelled terracotta figurine on display in the Musée de Maktar wears drapery extensively decorated with drilled circles.

⁹⁸According to Berger and Cagnat (1889), 242, drilled holes occur on 19 stelae found at the Aïn Tounga sanctuary; for example, cf. CMA (1897), pl.XVII, no.117.

summit, or from the top to the underside of the niche's arched roof; both places are pierced on Cat.31. In these instances, items such as ribbons or garlands may have enlivened the relief.

Other holes are simply sunk into the stone, perpendicular to the surface, with no exit; usually these line a border, such as the frame around a niche or zone. Only once do they interfere or mingle with the sculptural figures, on Cat.17, where they cut through the Dioscuri register, frame the pediment, and sporadically surround the dedicant. This type may also have held ribbons or other hanging elements, although it is well-suited to the appliqué theory. These studs need not have been metallic, but could have been more organic materials shaped like stars or flowers. Especially for the deep holes in the niche around the dedicant, the overall effect would have been like the sculpted rosettes that decorate an apsed niche in the Castrum at Lambaesis.⁹⁹

II.3 The Middle Zone

In contrast to the upper zone, the middle zone contains elements that, for the most part, are comprehensible and obey the law of gravity. It can be divided into two main features crucial for evaluating the chronology and geographic origin of the stelae, as for approaching the owners' perceptions of themselves and their surroundings. The first element is the architectural frame or niche that occupies most of the middle zone; the second is the dedicant standing within this niche.

⁹⁹Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 5, no.17151.

The Architecture

The architectural niches fall into two significant categories. Most examples belong to Type 1, which simulates the view from the front of a pedimented temple or *aedicula* through the columns and doorway to an inner niche. The Atlantes that often support this niche type blur the distinction between the middle and lower zones; however, as the architecture occupies the entire width of the stele, the top zone is clearly demarcated. In contrast, the less frequent Type 2 niche simply provides the niche with two columns and an arched lintel. This architecture does not take up the entire width of the stele, allowing for some intermingling of upper and middle zone figures and symbols, but the lowest zone is always distinct.

Type 1 niches	Type 2 niches	Type uncertain
Cat.2, 4-14, 16-19, 22-24, 31- 34, 36, 38-41, 43, and 37 (?)	Cat. 1, 3, 25-30, 35, 42	Cat.15, 20, 21
TOTAL = 30	TOTAL = 10	TOTAL = 3

Type 1: Temple or Aedicula type

For the vast majority of niches on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the facade has developed from a simple niche, typical of the Punic period,¹⁰⁰ to a complete structure, with more focus on architectural details. In addition to the niche, the structure has a pediment and pedimental sculpture, entablature mouldings, a pair of columns, and an outer doorway.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Cf. Chapter I, p.29.

¹⁰¹The temples on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae do not display a high podium, despite the claims of Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 277.

These features distinguish the 'La Ghorfa' group from other North African stelae, which are mostly content with using a pair of columns or the pediment-shaped top of the stone to suggest monumental architecture.

Pediment

The raking cornices of the pediment consist of at least two strips of plain or decorated bands; in the latter case, the outermost band is plain and the inner mouldings are most often bead-and-reel or dentils.

Acroteria on top of the pediment include two palm leaves springing from the lower corners of the pediment on Cat.9. These corner motifs are unique within this group; *acroteria* are otherwise limited to vegetation at the pediment's summit, an acanthus leaf and/or a U-shaped plant that is probably a stylized calyx.¹⁰² The acanthus leaves in particular indicate that the sculptors were not entirely comfortable with these Classical motifs. The leaf is usually shown from the underside up to the tip, which folds over to face the viewer; acanthus leaves often appear this way on Corinthian capitals.¹⁰³ The sculptural problems enter with the 'sign of Tanit', which stands directly on top of the leaf fold. The tip of the leaf becomes disproportionate to the bottom part, as an almost separate device hanging from the skirt of the 'sign of Tanit' (e.g. Cat.12 and 23). On Cat.4, the tip of the leaf still hangs below the 'sign of Tanit', but the rest of the leaf is gone. Instead, a stylized calyx is below.

¹⁰²Rosette vines grow from the pediment peaks on Cat. 12, 33, 34, and 38. These are probably filling motifs for the top zone more than literal *acroteria*, especially since similar vines grow up from Liber Pater's hand on Cat. 5 and from Venus' incense burner on Cat. 6.

¹⁰³In particular, an Aeolic-Corinthian capital at Maktar has a comparable leaf: cf. Ferchiou (1989), fig.42a.

On Cat.7, 10, and 19, the calyx is alone, but on Cat.11, 23, 38, and 40, the acanthus leaf appears to grow out of it. Evidently the sculptor of Cat.4 either forgot the bottom of the acanthus leaf or did not have room for it.

Within the pediment, the sculpture falls into general categories of birds (7 examples), male busts (10), or female busts (7).¹⁰⁴ The simple, four-petalled flower in the pediment of Cat.33 is singular within the 'La Ghorfa' group, but common on other stelae, where it may serve more as a filling ornament than a powerful symbol.¹⁰⁵ Drilled circles or discs also fill up empty spaces in the *tympana* of 11 stelae,¹⁰⁶ as do pairs of generic birds on five others.¹⁰⁷ These fillers may not have any special significance, although the birds continue the top zone's allusions to nature.

Single Birds. On Cat.4, 7, 9, and 16, an eagle stands in the pediment with its wings spread and its head turned to the right. According to Graeco-Roman tradition, the eagle is the bird of Jupiter, yet nothing else on these four stelae evokes that god. In fact, eagles appear in several different contexts in North Africa, very few of which indicate that the birds must symbolize a specific god. On coins of Juba II, for instance, an eagle appears in the pediment of a distyle temple possibly dedicated to the cult of Augustus; there, the eagle likely symbolizes Rome.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴The gender of the bust on Cat.14 is unclear due to damage.

¹⁰⁵E.g. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.V,2; XI,2-3; XXXIX,5-6; Ferchiou (1981), *passim*. Rosettes are also the pedimental sculpture on several coins from the reign of Juba II; cf. Mazard (1955), 80 nos.147-152. This motif is also common outside Roman Africa, for instance in northern Italy: cf. Pflug (1989), pl.19,1-3, pl.21,1-4, etc.

¹⁰⁶Cat.4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19, and 33.

¹⁰⁷Cat.5, 11, 19, 22, and 38.

¹⁰⁸Mazard (1955), 79-81, esp. nos.144-146 and 156.

Eagles first appear on Punic stelae from Carthage and Sousse,¹⁰⁹ and continue into the Neopunic period at Maktar (Cat.B14=fig.51).¹¹⁰ They then show up in contexts alluding to Rome and the Empire, on stelae dedicated to Saturnus Augustus (e.g. fig.62)¹¹¹ or Minerva Augusta,¹¹² and in the *apotheosis* scene in the pediment of Dougga's Capitolium.¹¹³ The eagle also occurs in more secular settings, such as on a column socle of a domestic peristyle in Medeïna (*Althiburos*); there, the series of sculpted bases have no discernible or unifying theme.¹¹⁴ On the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the eagle probably symbolizes power and authority.

On Cat.8 and 13, a rooster replaces the eagle, presumably with similar implications of strength and virility. Finally, Cat.43, which is now lost, apparently had a dove in its pediment. However, this identification is unparalleled and suspect; the bird was more likely a rooster or an eagle.

Male Bust. In ten cases, the pedimental sculpture is the upper torso and head, or just the head, of a male. On Cat.32, 36, and 41, these are curious busts with blunt bowl haircuts and a garment wrapped in horizontal folds around the shoulders; the one on Cat.41 has a gaping mouth like that of a theatre mask. Five others show a male flanked by two birds;

¹⁰⁹Hours-Miédan (1951), pl. XXII a.

¹¹⁰Cf. also CMA (1897), pl.XXII, no.856. The eagle also occurs at the bottom of two stele; the first is a Neopunic stele from Maktar, while the second is a Latin funerary stele from Henchir el-Left, south of Maktar: cf. respectively Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CX Cb-982; Picard RAA (1964), 145 fig.14.

¹¹¹Le Glay SAH (1966), 181-186, identified the eagle as a Near Eastern solar symbol that became one of Saturn's attributes in North Africa. However, the eagle may be more important for connoting the same Imperial force as the Augustus/-a epithet borne by several gods in that area.

¹¹²C.1545; Ducroux (1975), 9 no.28 (inv.no. MA 1847). The eagle also appears in the pediments of uninscribed stelae from, for example, Henchir es-Srira and Dellys in Algeria: cf. respectively, Le Glay SAM I (1961), 319 no.34 and 320 no.37, pl. X,5; Le Glay SAM II (1966), 303 no.2, pl. XXXIX,5.

¹¹³Poinssot (1983), 35.

¹¹⁴Ennaïfer (1976) pl. XXX (bottom).

these males have short hair and twice wear summary garments, on Cat.5 and 19. None of these examples have attributes to identify them.

A male pedimental figure is an identifiable divinity only in two instances. The most obvious is Eros on Cat.22; there, instead of standing in his usual position on top of the pediment's peak, he is inside the tall pediment, flanked by two birds. His two companions, Liber Pater and Venus, stand immediately beside him on either side of the pediment. In this case, the sculptor has simply moved a common element to an unusual position, as occurs on other 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Eros' placement here indicates that the sculptor was not trying to replicate a real pediment.

The second male divinity in a pediment is on Cat.34 (fig.65). He has curly hair and a full beard and is almost identical to the head at the top of Cat.12 (fig.66); the bearded figure at the top of Cat.22 must represent the same deity, though he differs in execution (fig.67). The latter two busts both bear thunderbolts that identify them as Jupiter.

Female busts. Seven other pediments contain females, all of whom have long hair. On five, the ends of the hair fly dramatically out to the sides (fig.74).¹¹⁵ The one on Cat.17 has thick, straight hair, while that on Cat.12 has plaited hair with long tresses (fig.75).¹¹⁶ To a certain degree, these busts parallel gorgon heads that adorn pediments of funerary stelae in northern Italy and elsewhere.¹¹⁷ These more generic faces with long hair resemble certain

¹¹⁵Cat. 10, 11, 24, 31, 40.

¹¹⁶Discussed in further detail on p.90.

¹¹⁷E.g. Pflug (1989), 158 and pl.3,2 (Kat.18); 240 and pl.32,2 (Kat.212); 278 and pl.46,2 (Kat.302); and 287-288 and pl.51,1 (Kat.327). The gorgon's head in pl.50,1 (Kat.298, on p.275), with its straight hair, is like a cross between the pediment busts on Cat.12 and 17; the tritons beside it are reminiscent of ones on Cat.B8 (fig.45), found at Maghrawa, near Maktar.

female masks in Dionysiac contexts, as on a cornice of the Arch of Gordian III at Hr. Mest (Musti), southwest of Dougga.¹¹⁸ During the Imperial period, the gorgon's head and general female mask had become fairly generic; the pediment busts are comparable, without distinguishing attributes.

Noting Baal-Saturn's absence on these stelae, some scholars have identified these females as the god's consort, Tanit-Caelestis.¹¹⁹ However, the representations here do not correspond to any of Caelestis. The long hair and bare shoulders may be more reminiscent of statues of the crouching Venus, one of the rare cases in which a Graeco-Roman goddess has long, relatively straight hair. However, the Venuses standing in the upper zone do not have this hairstyle; their hair is pulled back in plaits closer to those of the pediment bust on Cat.12, although they lack her long, loose hair (fig.75).¹²⁰ Therefore, despite some comparisons with Venus types, the female pediment busts remain as elusive as the male examples.

Entablature

The pediments sit directly upon an entablature made up of moulded bands and lacking an architrave. Almost all the entablatures are variations on a 'standard' type composed of (from top to bottom) a band of egg-and-dart, one of bead-and-reel, and a band of dentils; plain bands may alternate. From example to example, minor distinctions may

¹¹⁸Ferchiou (1985).

¹¹⁹E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 263-266; Yacoub Chefs d'oeuvre (1978), 32.

¹²⁰Cf. Chapter II.3, p.90.

change the order of the first two bands,¹²¹ leave a band out,¹²² or add one.¹²³ On Cat.13, the bands are all plain and presumably incomplete.

Including this last stele, 26 of 28 examples have entablatures of the 'standard' type.¹²⁴ The final two entablatures are anomalous. The first is on Cat.17 and consists of a single band of ringed circles. These could be simulating the same decoration as the bands of drilled circles on Cat.4 and 19, or could even be a very degraded version of egg-and-dart. The second anomalous entablature is on Cat.2, which is also the only example without a pediment. There, the top moulded band alternates rings with 'V'-shapes in a very stylized version of bead-and-reel; the next is a continuous band of wolf's teeth, and the lowest is a band of dentils.

Coffers

In 13 cases, the sculptors altered normal perspective to include a double row of coffers immediately below the entablature.¹²⁵ Evidently the sculptors of five other stelae misunderstood the motif, for the panels sit below the niche's floor.¹²⁶ The coffers are quite

¹²¹Cat.19 and 24 have the egg-and-dart before the bead-and-reel.

 $^{^{122}}$ Cat.12, 22, and 23 have only one or two moulded bands. The entablatures of Cat.14 and 18 are damaged above the level of the dentils.

¹²³The top band of Cat.4 and 19 has a row of drilled circles, while that of Cat.16 has a twisted band-look.

¹²⁴Cat.43 surely bore an entablature below its pediment, but since there is no description of it, that stele is not included in this count.

¹²⁵Cat.4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, and 40.

¹²⁶Cat.6, 27, 37. Two further examples, Cat.30 and 42, belong to the category of Type 2 niches.

simple, no more than concentric recessed squares; eight of the double rows are divided in half with a central vertical strip, which contains a crescent between two rosettes or discs.¹²⁷

Columns and Capitals

A pair of columns holds up the entablature, unfluted in 18 of 28 preserved examples.¹²⁸ Above them, the most common type of column capital is dominated by a 'V'-shape with ends that curl into volutes (23 of 26 surviving examples). Summary acanthus leaves usually support the volutes, while a circle or drilled circle sits above the crevice of the 'V'.¹²⁹ Although these capitals are simple and fairly consistent, they do not belong to a familiar type. Picard and Bisi called them archaic Corinthian;¹³⁰ Ghedini, Aeolic capitals of Punic tradition;¹³¹ and Ferchiou, Aeolic-Corinthian.¹³² The last is probably the best name, since the dominant volutes are like those of Aeolic capitals,¹³³ while Corinthian capitals have leaves and other filling ornaments.

The three remaining capital types are quite different. On Cat. 17, the zigzag lines probably indicate layers of acanthus leaves on a more familiar Corinthian capital. The two

¹²⁷Cat.4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 38, 39, and 40.

¹²⁸Cat.4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 38, 40, and 41. Fluting occurs on the columns of six stelae (Cat.5, 8, 10, 20, 34, and 39), while four others have fluting on the upper part only (Cat.2, 12, 17, and 37).

¹²⁹All three components occur on Cat.4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 19, 24, 32, 34, 38, 39, 40, and 41; Cat.14 is damaged but may fit in this group. Cat.11, 13, and 36 do not have the leaves, while Cat.31 does not have the circle. Cat.16, 18, and 33 have only the 'V'-volutes.

¹³⁰Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 266ff. and Picard (1979), 184; Bisi (1978), 25ff.

¹³¹Ghedini (1990), 235.

¹³²Ferchiou (1989), 208.

¹³³Lézine ArchPun (1959), 59-62, summarized the longevity of Aeolic capitals in Punic and Roman Africa, from the fifth century B.C. on stelae until at least A.D. 49 (p.61).

other types are almost palmiform capitals: on Cat.2, the capitals have broad, almond-shaped leaves, while the trapezoid capitals of Cat.9 have close, vertically-incised lines. The palmiform examples are surely taken from Punic precedents, themselves derived from Egyptian examples.¹³⁴

Niche

The focus of these architectural details is the niche, a plain rectangular depression with an arched roof. No architectural supports or adornment mark the basic niche, save drilled circles. Seven stelae have only the niche,¹³⁵ but the other 21 provide a more intricate setting, in which the viewer looks through a doorway to the niche.¹³⁶ The doorway has a rectangular or T-shaped fasciated frame. Cat.2 and 17 contrast with the usual composition by providing the door frame, but not the niche within.

Ritual Objects

Eight 'La Ghorfa' stelae show sacred objects, set in a pedestal or square enclosure beneath the dedicant, as if in commemoration of the votive ritual. On Cat.37, the pedestal contains a square box with a slightly widened base and a domed lid. Five others include similar boxes and a two-handled vase, as on Cat.8 (fig.77) and Cat.20 (fig.78).¹³⁷ On Cat.4 (fig.76), 14, and 38, the box is cross-hatched, making it look like a woven container. Cat.14

¹³⁴Lézine ArchPun (1959), 74-76.

¹³⁵Cat.13, 14, 31, 32, 33, 36, and presumably 20.

¹³⁶Picard (1979), 184, suggested that this view was from the temple door into the cella.

¹³⁷Also on Cat.4 (fig.76), 38, and 43.

has the box, vase, and an ansate *patera*. The three objects on Cat.1 are indistinct, but are likely containers of some sort. Strangely, no real parallels from the Roman period exist for any of these items. The archaeological record would not have preserved woven containers; however, the artifacts that should have survived, like the vases and the *patera*, apparently have not.

The vases are particularly troublesome, since they have distinct forms approximating a transport amphora on Cat.20 and 38, but a flat-bottomed, wide-mouthed jar almost like a cinerary urn on Cat.4. The striations on the side of the vases on Cat.20 (fig.78) and 38 are unparalleled among ceramic vessels of the Roman period, while no version survives in metal or any perishable material. Instead, these vessels seem to be recalling striated vases on Punic stelae.¹³⁸ Overall, none of the vases relate exactly to real examples, especially of the Roman period. Since they are all round-bellied, two-handled jars, they may even be poor representations of the same vessel type; indeed, the boxlike containers vary just as much. Since the shapes are so obscure, their contents are uncertain and may have involved libation liquids or cremated sacrificial remains, depending upon the vessel type.

Latticework

Below the dedicant's pedestal on Cat.8, 12, and 38 is a rectangular item resembling a lattice screen.¹³⁹ This device makes no sense below the dedicant and must be in altered

¹³⁸Hours-Miédan (1951), pls.XIV c, XXXI d, XXXII h and j.

¹³⁹The first two are carved out, while that on Cat.38 is simply incised. In the top zone of Cat.6, the ground on which Venus stands is also cross-hatched with incised lines, as is the pedestal of the anthropomorphized 'sign of Tanit' on Cat.16.

perspective, as the coffers are; even so, what it represents is unclear. Latticework surrounds gardens and balconies in Pompeian wall paintings¹⁴⁰ and peristyle water basins at Maktar,¹⁴¹ but the 'La Ghorfa' depictions suggest that the screen was not so extensive. Since it always occurs at floor-level, below the dedicant's pedestal, it is probably not a transenna.¹⁴² Instead, it may be following the example of funerary architecture; latticework decorates the side of a plaster tomb from Lambaesis,¹⁴³ but a gravestone from northern Italy indicates that the screen also belonged to funerary decoration outside of Roman Africa.¹⁴⁴ Neither instance clarifies the screen's function, if it represents a real object.

Type 2 - Simple Niches

Eight other 'La Ghorfa' stelae have the Type 2 form, a 'simple' niche. This type consists only of the niche and architecture immediately surrounding it, without suggesting a more complex structure. The architectural features characteristic of Type 1 niches, such as the entablature and pediment, are absent. Cat.27, 30, and 42 have coffers below the niche, suggesting to Picard that they actually depict the same structure as the Type 1 niches.¹⁴⁵ However, the simple niches are not merely abbreviated versions, for the specific components are not the same.

¹⁴⁰Cerulli Irelli and Aoyagi (1990), pls.23 and 85; p.207 fig.7, and p.312, fig.120.

¹⁴¹Bourgeois (1977), especially 214 and 219, figs.5-6.

¹⁴²Such fixtures survive at Utica and the Antonine Baths at Carthage; cf. respectively Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 47, no.19584, and Lézine (1968), 53 fig.27A.

¹⁴³Le Glay (1971), fig.24.

¹⁴⁴Pflug (1989), pl.34,10 (Kat.236).

¹⁴⁵Picard (1979), 184.

The basic architectural formula consists of two columns supporting an arched lintel. The columns are more deeply inset from the edge of the stele than those of Type 1 niches. The extra space at the sides is occupied by either *caducei*¹⁴⁶ or palm leaves, or both. Based on this formula, Cat.27 and 29 must belong to this type, even though very little of their architecture remains.

Type 2 niches follow the architectural pattern of Punic funerary stelae from as early as the third and second centuries B.C., when the deceased stood in an unadorned niche.¹⁴⁷ Cat.28 is closest to the Punic type, as it has a niche with no architectural adornment whatsoever; it is simply a recess in the stone. The seven other 'La Ghorfa' Type 2 examples add two columns and a lintel to frame the niche. The arched lintel has voussoir blocks in all but one case, where the lintel is plain (Cat.26).¹⁴⁸

The column capitals supporting the lintel are the Type 1 'V'-volutes in only one case, on Cat.26. The rest of the Type 2 capitals simply consist of layered plaques that are not either Doric or Tuscan capitals;¹⁴⁹ in fact, the sculptors used the same look for column bases on Cat.25 and 30. These types may be imitating the same sort that adorned funerary stelae in Italy and elsewhere during the first century.¹⁵⁰ Half-columns or, more likely, square pilasters support the capitals, and are inset from the edge of the stelae, unlike the Type 1

¹⁴⁶Cf. below, p.79.

¹⁴⁷E.g. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], nos. Cb-22 to Cb-99 (from Carthage) and nos. Cb-1053 to Cb-1067 (from Maxula-Rades).

¹⁴⁸Cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], no.Cb-1029 (from Maktar); *CMA* (1897), pl.XXI no.777 (Aïn Barchouch); Wuilleumier (1928), pl.II,6 (from Ksiba M'raou, Algeria).

¹⁴⁹The niche on Cat.35 has no capitals.

¹⁵⁰E.g. Pflug (1989), 221-222 and pl.26,1 (Kat.166); 225 and pl.26,2 (Kat.175); 225-226 and pl.26,4 (Kat.176), 231-232 and pl.28,2 (Kat.191); 239 and pl.31,3 (Kat.209); 241-242 and pl.29,1 (Kat.216).

columns. The columns are fluted in all but two cases (Cat. 1 and 26), again contrasting with the Type 1 columns.

Type 1 and 2 Niche Accessories

Torches. On Cat. 17, the side frames of the middle zone are not the usual flat strips, but two pillars of interlocking lotus or cone shapes. The same motif occurs on a lintel of the so-called *naos* of Ceres at Thuburbo Majus,¹⁵¹ and the Maktar stele of the Priestess of Ceres (fig.61),¹⁵² giving rise to claims that the torches are special accoutrements of the *Cereres* cult.¹⁵³ However, the same torches occur in contexts apparently unrelated to Ceres, as on a sacrificial relief at Hr. Mest.¹⁵⁴ The torches also appear in funerary settings, including on a relief from the Tomb of the Haterii in Rome,¹⁵⁵ and on certain funerary stelae from ancient North Africa.¹⁵⁶

Caducei. Caducei flank almost every Type 2 niche.¹⁵⁷ They are not characteristic of Type 1 niches; Cat.41, the only exception, places two *caducei* in the lowest zone, quite divorced from the niche above.¹⁵⁸ While details vary, each *caduceus* consists of two or three

¹⁵¹This naos is a real structure, unrelated in appearance to the naos cippus from Thuburbo Majus (fig.60); cf. Lézine ArchRom [c.1961], 115 fig.43 and pl.IXa.

¹⁵²Picard (1951), 308.

¹⁵³E.g. Lézine ArchRom [c.1961], 113; Picard (1970), 133.

¹⁵⁴Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 40, no. 18880 (found near the so-called Temple of Fortuna Augusta or of Apollo).

¹⁵⁵Kleiner (1992), 196 fig. 164.

¹⁵⁶From Ain Barchouch: Bisi StelePun (1967), pl.XXXV. From Bou Arada: Ferchiou (1981), and 161-163 (no.12) and pl.51,1-2; 163-164 (no.13) and pl.52,1.

¹⁵⁷Cat.3, 25, 26, 28, 30, 35; Cat.29 probably also had a Type 2 niche.

¹⁵⁸No paint survives to indicate that *caducei* were painted directly onto the columns, as occurred on stelae from Lilybaeum: cf. Bisi, *StelePun* (1967), pls.XLIV-XLV.

superimposed circles on tall staffs, set into trapezoidal or rectangular bases. The staff never continues through the rings, clearly stopping at each circle. Constructed as standards, these *caducei* belong to the Punic tradition and are distinct from the wand carried by Hermes or Mercury in Graeco-Roman representations.¹⁵⁹ On five of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, leaves top the *caducei*, but they are not palm leaves, and the rod below is not cross-hatched to look like a palm tree.¹⁶⁰

In the Roman period, the *caduceus* is not common on stelae. North Africans had possibly forgotten its significance by this time, or felt it was no longer appropriate to their changing religious beliefs and ceremonies. Whatever the interpretation of the *caduceus*, it is not a primary element on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, and seems to do little more than add to the sense of a sacred setting. It does not appear on all of the stelae, suggesting that it does not define the cult or god(s) to whom the stelae are dedicated, although it does attest that certain non-Roman traditions are continuing in this context.

Palms. Palms stand to the outside of the columns on Cat.1 (Type 2) and 20 (Type 1) and to the inside of the columns on Cat.2 and 17 (both Type 1); they also flank the secondary niches in lowest zone of Cat.8 and 41. On Cat.3, palms arch over the apse of the niche, as they do on many Neopunic and some Roman stelae, including one in the Musée

¹⁵⁹The Punic *caduceus* may owe its popularity to the Graeco-Roman *caduceus* (cf. Brown [1991], 131-134), although mounting evidence suggests that the symbol had already existed in Eastern cultures since the ninth century B.C., according to Lipinski "Le caducée" (1995). From the fourth century B.C., *caducei* appear on stelae, coins, pottery stamps, and pavements from Punic North Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia; they even spread to the Numidian realms: cf. Lipinski "Le caducée" (1995), 203-204.

¹⁶⁰The leaves are either almond (Cat.25, 26, and 35) or palmiform (Cat.3 and 41) in shape.

de Sbeïtla (fig.100), and Cat.B7, in the Musée de Maktar (fig.44).¹⁶¹ Punic stelae had often featured palms prominently, including in a situation analogous to that on Cat.15, where palm trees -- and people standing with them -- are secondary motifs.¹⁶² There, the palms seem to have more to do with life and fecundity than with the Roman associations of victory.

Type 1 or Type 2?

Cat.20, 27 and 29 preserve the very bottom of their niches, with minimal architecture surviving to indicate the niche type. In each case, however, the column bases are well inside the width of the stone, as occurs with simple niches; in Type 1, the columns are usually set right at the edges of the stone's face. The extra space between the Type 2 columns and the edge of the stone usually received *caducei*, one of which is just visible on the left side of Cat.29. Likely, all three stelae were simple niches.

Finally, Cat.21 presents elements of both types of niche: it has the thick unfluted columns with double globular bases typical of Type 1, but immediately inside these columns is another pair, this time smooth, square pilasters with layered plaque capitals typical of Type 2. The beginnings of the arched lintel are just visible on top of the left pilaster capital, but from that point up, the stele is broken off. The outer columns may have supported an entablature and pediment. Except for Cat.26, which has Type 1 'V'-volute capitals in a Type 2 niche, Cat.21 is the only example that combines elements of both architectural types.

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¹⁶¹Cf. also Ennaïfer (1976), pl. X (top); Ferchiou (1986), pl.140,1; and M'Charek (1988), 759-760 no.4, fig.6.

¹⁶²Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XIX, esp. d.

In general, whether the niche is Type 1 or Type 2, the middle zone's architecture is clearly meant to evoke a sacred setting, either in *aediculae* of varying elaboration, or in a temple. The gods standing directly on this structure, or hovering above it, lend their sanctity to the structure. Five niches have an altar or incense burner inside them, adding to this setting.¹⁶³

However, the architecture need not replicate real structures. This type of composition was common to both funerary and votive stelae in antiquity, giving the appropriate air of reverence and proper solemnity to the stones. The Type 2 niches especially answer this need, sometimes with a minimum of effort. The niche on Cat.28, for instance, has no real architectural details; the niche is simply carved out. That on Cat.35 is more of a decorative frame than a physical possibility.

On the other hand, the Type 1 niches elaborate on the fittings of religious architecture; their artists were attentive to details of mouldings, pedimental sculpture, door frames. These features unambiguously belong to a sacred structure; the dedicants are within a credible holy precinct, as opposed to an honorific frame. As the pedimented niches fill the entire width of the stelae, they formalize the distinction between the mortal and divine relief zones. Though no 'La Ghorfa' Type 1 niche parallels any real excavated temple or *aedicula*, the details are sufficient to pinpoint the origins of the stelae (Chapter IV) and to make some observations on the chronological period to which they probably belong (ChapterV).

¹⁶³Cat.2, 17, 21, 25, and probably 29.

The Dedicants

Within the niche, the dedicants themselves continue the formal presentation and emphasize their piety by holding offerings or making sacrifices. In such an elaborate setting, they may resemble cult statues at the back wall of a temple cella;¹⁶⁴ however, they cannot be statues of gods. By far the majority of funerary and votive stelae in North Africa show the dedicant or the deceased in the middle zone. On the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, these figures lack divine attributes and wear formal municipal dress. Most hold roundish objects, presumably fruit or other offerings for the god(s), while those on Cat.2, 17, 21, 25, and probably 29, are making offerings at an altar or incense burner. These figures must represent the dedicants in a sacred setting.¹⁶⁵

The dedicants appear in formal dress, although, as in most analogous scenes in North Africa, none of those who are making sacrifices have their heads covered.¹⁶⁶ In each case, the artist has shown the dedicant's full body, rather than simply a bust. This view includes details of the dress, jewellery, and hairstyles, all factors that may contribute to establishing dates for these stelae.

One of the initial problems in this evaluation is that the dedicant's gender is indistinct in certain cases, due to over-stylization (Cat. 1, 24, 33) or damage to the stone, as on Cat. 11 (fig. 79). Even some of the more easily discernible figures are controversial: in

¹⁶⁴As suggested by Lézine ArchPun (1959), 30 n.2.

¹⁶⁵The same situation applies for other North African stelae: cf. Le Glay SAM I (1961), 224 no.2, pl.VIII, 1 (central Tunisia); 225 no.4, pl.VIII, 3 (central Tunisia); 430 no.26, pl.XVI, 8 (Ksiba, west of El Kef).

¹⁶⁶On Roman African stelae, few worshippers who stand at an altar have their heads covered; in depictions of married couples or families, one individual may wear a head covering while the next does not, e.g. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.VIII,6.

my view, the dedicants on Cat.3, 4, 25, 34 are unquestionably female, but others have identified them as male.¹⁶⁷ On Cat.1, the dedicant is the most questionable, since it has a wide, rectangular body with drastically disproportionate anatomy. Its dress follows the Numidian fashion of a fairly shapeless blob filled with countless pleats and folds, leaving the legs and arms bare;¹⁶⁸ its bare legs may indicate that it is male. The remaining dedicants wear garments identifiable as a tunic and mantle.

Men's clothing. Most of the men wear tunics that have triangular folds hanging from the neckline and elbow-length sleeves. Two main styles of mantle appear; the first covers the shoulders and upper arms, with the fold hanging down the chest in a loop and exposing the tunic below.¹⁶⁹ The second type has the mantle covering the man's left arm and shoulder, with the fold crossing the chest from his left shoulder to the right hip.¹⁷⁰

The dedicants wearing the mantle looped down their chest and holding this fold with their right hands, may recall statues wearing a *pallium*-type toga, in vogue during the first century B.C. and early Augustan period.¹⁷¹ The parallel is not exact. In most statuary togas, the chest loop is tight and small, supporting the man's right wrist; in the 'La Ghorfa'

¹⁶⁷Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 266 no.Cb-965 [=Cat.3], 266-267 no.Cb-966 [=Cat.4]; Bisi (1978), 36 no.15 and 23-24 no.1 [=Cat.25 and 34 respectively].

¹⁶⁸According to Picard *Civilisation* (1990), 199, the 'Libyans' wore such garments, while the Punics wore a heavier, floor-length robe.

¹⁶⁹Cat.7, 26, 33. The tunic of the dedicant on Cat.30 has many fine parallel lines instead of the triangular folds.

 $^{^{170}}$ Cat.8, 10, 12, 36, 39 and probably 37. The dedicants on Cat.11 (fig.79) and 40 have suffered damage, but they probably fall into this group; they are both seated, rather than standing, like the rest of the group.

¹⁷¹E.g. Goette (1989), 107-112, pls.2 and 3.

examples, the loop down the chest is much deeper and looser, not supporting the right arm. The tunic's multiple triangular folds at the neck are unparalleled among togate statues.

The others, in the same pose but with the chest fold crossing from left shoulder to right hip, could imitate a toga with diagonal *balteus*, contemporary to the previous type.¹⁷² On Cat.39, the toga is similar, but adds a *sinus*, the heavy layer falling below the *balteus*. The toga with *balteus* and *sinus* extends throughout the first century A.C., although only rarely occurring in the second half of the century.¹⁷³ None of the examples show an *umbo* above the *balteus*, part of the more familiar toga of the early to mid-Imperial period. These comparisons provide only a *terminus post quem*, however, since certain styles were revived during the Trajanic period.¹⁷⁴

In both toga styles, the dedicant's right hand is on the mantle fold on his left side. In the other hand, as many as nine of these men may be holding a *volumen*.¹⁷⁵ The pose, clothing, and *volumen* are all supposed to evoke those of municipal statues of Roman *togati*.¹⁷⁶ All three are among the trappings of Roman citizenship, yet there are indications that these people may not be citizens. Problems with the fall and design of the toga could be ascribed to awkward artistry, but doubts about the dedicants' status are unavoidable in

¹⁷²E.g. Goette (1989), 106-107 and pl.1,1-5.

¹⁷³Goette (1989), 112-113, pl.4.

¹⁷⁴For example, cf. Goette (1990), pl.15, figs.1 and 4 and pl.16, figs.1 and 2 (from Trajan's Arch at Beneventum).

¹⁷⁵The object is definitely a *volumen* on Cat.8, 10, 12, 36, and is probably one on Cat.7, 33, 37, and 39, where the dedicants hold long objects. In addition, the dedicant on Cat.43 held a *liber* [*volumen*?], according to C.1142.

¹⁷⁶Le Glay SAH (1966), 383, interpreted the volumen as a sign of cult initiation (for worshippers of Saturn?), with the scroll containing the order's regulations. However, nothing indicates that a volumen on a stele bears different meaning than one held by a statue, in Roman Africa or in any other province.

light of the inscriptions on eleven stelae. Chapter III will return to this problem as it evaluates the epigraphic evidence.

Men's hairstyles. The men are clean-shaven and have short hair, although the styles vary; some variation may be due more to the carving technique than true hairstyles. The most distinctive is probably the bowl haircut, with incised strands on dedicant of Cat.32 and woolly curls on that of Cat.30 (fig.80). *Bellicus*, the man on Cat.12, also has woolly curls,¹⁷⁷ but his hairline is more lunate; on Cat.10, the dedicant has the same lunate hairline barely visible, but damage has obliterated the hair itself.¹⁷⁸

Three males stand out as being particularly boyish, perhaps because their faces are full and round, while their long hair falls almost to their eyes: that on Cat.32, with his sharp bowl-cut, and those on Cat.13 and 31, with their slightly softer cuts. All three parallel Julio-Claudian-inspired fashions to varying degrees,¹⁷⁹ although similar cuts occur throughout the first century A.C.¹⁸⁰ and regain popularity under Trajan.¹⁸¹

The man on Cat. 16 has straight, closely cut hair that also ends abruptly above his brows, although he does not look especially young. His face has polished planes and a linear

¹⁷⁷While no other dedicant has hair with the same tight curls, certain figures in the top zones do: for example, the Venus on Cat.6, the 'sign of Tanit' on Cat.11, and the solar face on Cat.12 have hair quite like that on the dedicant of Cat.12.

¹⁷⁸On a funerary relief from northern Italy, a man also has this lunate hairline; according to Pflug (1989), 242-243 and pl.31,1 (Kat.218), the relief belongs to the mid-first century A.C.

¹⁷⁹For Cat.13 and 31, cf. Poulsen (1962), pl.CX (no.65) and pl.CLXXIII (no.97) for Neronian styles. On Cat.32, the bowlcut seems more Tiberian; cf. Poulsen (1962), pl.CXLVII, no.82; Pflug (1989), 188-189 and pl.19,1 (Kat.81, male bust) and p.246 and pl.33,1 (Kat.227).

¹⁸⁰Haircuts similar to those of the dedicants of Cat.13 and 31 appear on portraits until the end of the first century A.C.; cf. Pflug (1989), 191-192 and pl.19,4 (Kat.89), male dedicant); pp.216-217 and pl.25,2 (Kat.152); pp.237-238 and pl.27,2 (Kat.205); pp.245-246 and pl.29,3 (Kat.226, male in lower register).

¹⁸¹Cf. Poulsen (1974), 77-78, pl.LXXXIV,51 (Cat.567), 78, pl.LXXXV,52 (Cat.596), 81, pl.XCII,56 (Cat.674b).

brow ridge and nose; these distinctive features particularly resemble those of certain portraits from the Trajanic period.¹⁸² Nevertheless, he also resembles a male bust on a funerary stele from northern Italy, dated to the second or third quarter of the first century A.C..¹⁸³

These examples suggest that the 'La Ghorfa' portraits could easily belong to many points in the first and early second century.

Men's Accessories. Four men wear necklaces with amulets or pendants of uncertain material. On Cat.10 and 40,¹⁸⁴ the men wear a collar necklace intersected by square or rectangular pendant. The dedicant on Cat.30 wears a longer necklace intersected by an oval pendant with a small depression in the centre. On Cat.26, the dedicant wears a necklace with thick strands, pulled down by a different oval pendant. None of these objects resemble the disc-shaped pendant that may identify male initiates of Saturn on other North African stelae.¹⁸⁵ The men who wear them do not seem particularly young; so the pendants probably do not signify boys who have yet to take up the *toga virilis*.¹⁸⁶ The different pendants could be apotropaic, signify different religious or social memberships, or have a number of other explanations.

The dedicants on Cat.30 and 33 both wear bracelets; the latter's are twisted.

¹⁸²Cf. Poulsen (1974), 79-80, pl.LXXXIX, 54 (Cat.462 a) and 81, pl.XCI, 55 (Cat.674 a), both Trajanic; Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 130 no.130 (c. 100-120 A.C.).

¹⁸³Pflug (1989), 175-176 and pl.12,3 (Kat.53).

¹⁸⁴The gender of the dedicant on Cat.40 is uncertain, but its large butterfly ears and the lack of an underskirt below the mantle suggest that it is male.

¹⁸⁵Le Glay SAH (1966), 391-392.

¹⁸⁶Plautus Rudens, 1171; Cicero In Verrem II,1,8; Valerius Maximus II,1.4; Macrobius Saturnalia I,6,8.

Women's Clothing. The women's clothing and accessories vary more than the men's. Most wear a mantle over a tunic; both garments and pose, with the right hand in front of the chest and the left holding an object by the left hip, often resemble the men's closely, although the hem of the women's tunic normally shows beneath the mantle.¹⁸⁷ One type has a heavy mantle with a fold looping down the chest and covering both arms (Cat.3 and 41).¹⁸⁸ Another has the same looped line over a tunic with triangular folds at the neck (Cat.42 and 28). The sculptor of Cat.25 misunderstood this style, since the mantle's loop should be covering the dedicant's arms, but is not.

On eight examples, the mantle's fold crosses the chest from the left shoulder to the right hip, exposing a tunic with elbow-length sleeves and two concentric folds on the chest to indicate the woman's breasts (fig.81).¹⁸⁹ The fall of the cloth in this manner is not common in Roman Africa. A woman's dress on an Italian gravestone may parallel this style; the stele has been dated to the first half of the first century.¹⁹⁰

Cat.35 has the same loop hanging from around the neck, although the mantle that hangs down to knee-level does not end in a straight line, but in a puffy, balloon-like shape, almost as if the two strips of material that hang down from it are drawstrings pulling the material in. Something analogous is happening with the dress of the woman on Cat.2, although the other details of her garments differ considerably (fig.82). Her dress has elbow-

¹⁸⁷In addition to the following, Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 267 no.Cb-967, stated that the dedicant on Cat.5 wore a mantle.

¹⁸⁸The dedicant on Cat.3 at first appears to be wearing a toga, since no underskirt is visible. However, the person's hair is a feminine style.

¹⁸⁹Cat.4, 6, 9, 14, 19, 24, 34, 38.

¹⁹⁰Pflug (1989), 265 and pl.42,5 (Kat.273).

length, close-fitted sleeves; the robe is belted low at the hips, then hangs straight down to about knee level, where it cuts in dramatically. Below this tier, the skirt flares out; two strips of material hang down from the tier, again like drawstrings. In North Africa, priestesses of the Cereres may have worn similar garments (fig.61),¹⁹¹ although nothing else on either stele relates to the cult of Demeter or Ceres.

On Cat. 17, the dedicant wears a light tunic that creases around her breasts and belly. Overtop, a mantle falls down from her shoulders and wraps around her hips. This woman's pose and garments adhere to a Hellenistic type that appears on votive and funerary stelae across Roman Africa, from at least central Tunisia to Sétif, in the second and third centuries.¹⁹² The type also appears in the round, as a statue in the garden of the Musée de Carthage.¹⁹³

Unlike the preceding examples, the women on Cat.18 and 20 are both seated. Both wear a dress with elbow-length sleeves that is belted below the breasts, hardly different from that worn by the 'Libyan' goddess in Fig.58. No more details of the dress on Cat.18 are visible, but on Cat.20, the mantle appears under the belt on the left side and crosses down to the right hip. It hangs in heavy folds down to the mid-calf, where the tunic underneath becomes visible, hanging in triangular folds.

A 'V'-shaped band indicates footwear for only two women, those on Cat.20 and 38; the rest have plain but presumably shod feet.

¹⁹¹Cf. also Picard (1978) and Le Glay SAM II (1966), 88-89 no.16, pl.XXIII,3.

¹⁹²Cf. Le Glay SAM I, pl.VIII,1-3 (central Tunisia); Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXV,2 and 8 (Hr. Touchine), pl.XXVII,5 and 8 (Timgad), pl.XXXIII,3-6 (Djemila), pl.XXXIV,1-2 (Sétif), etc.

¹⁹³No known inventory number; the statue overlooks the Punic remains.

Women's Hair. On Cat.20, the upper part of the woman's head is broken off, but the surviving parts show that she wore her hair straight and set to approximately chin-length. It is difficult to tell if the hair then wraps around in the back, as in portraits of certain Severan women.¹⁹⁴

The remaining women wear their hair pulled back, presumably into a knot at the back of the head, as shown most simply on Cat.3 (fig.83). The styles vary. On Cat.17, for instance, the woman has a fringe of short, curly hair at her brow, but the rest of her hair is pulled back in a puffy yet stiff manner. On Cat.25, the dedicant also has her hair pulled back and possibly held in place by a fillet. On the dedicant on Cat.2, two or three thin bands of hair or fillets hold her pulled-back style in place (fig.82). Hadrian's wife Sabina wore similar hairstyles;¹⁹⁵ the similarity may suggest a date of the first half of the second century for this stele.¹⁹⁶

The most common style, however, separates the hair into waves or plaits, which are incised to look tightly braided or crimped; this same hairstyle sometimes appears on figures in the top zones, as on Cat.12 (Venus, fig.75) or Cat.4 (solar face). Among the nine or so

¹⁹⁴Poulsen (1974), 146 and pl.CCXXXVI-CCXXXVII,146 (Cat.739), 150 and CCXXXIX,148 (Cat.742).

¹⁹⁵Poulsen (1974), 71 and pl.LXXII,44 (Cat.675); cf. also *ibid.*, 94 and pl.CXIX,74 (Cat.680 b).

¹⁹⁶An Italian funerary stele has a woman with a comparable hairstyle in its top zone; it dates to the end of the first century: cf. Pflug (1989), 281 and pl.48,3 (Kat.312).

dedicant examples, the segments vary in size and fullness,¹⁹⁷ while perhaps six such styles are held in place by a 'V'-shaped hairpiece.¹⁹⁸

This "melon style" echoes hairstyles popular among late Julio-Claudian women,¹⁹⁹ except that their coiffures include corkscrew curls hanging down to the shoulders. This corkscrew style may be the type being imitated by the pediment bust on Cat.12, but the Venuses and female dedicants clearly lack the curls. In every example of the "melon style" on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the female dedicants must have their hair pulled back; no hair hangs below the ears. This description better suits portraits of Faustina Minor, especially types dating between A.D. 147 and 151;²⁰⁰ this parallel may be the basis for Le Glay's categorization of this hairstyle on stele portraits as a second century fashion.²⁰¹ It also echoes styles going back to the Hellenistic period²⁰² and perseveres into the Severan period.²⁰³

Two distinctive styles stand out. The first involves the 'crimped' look, but it is not the long-haired, pulled-back style worn by most of the women. Cat.20, 28, 35, and 42 have a chin-length bob, tucked behind the ears. Most of them have plaits at the top, although the

¹⁹⁷Cf. Cat. 4, 6, 9, 14, 18, 19, 24, and 38. As for Cat. 5, according to Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 267 no. Cb-967, the woman's hair is in undulating bands.

¹⁹⁸Cat.28, 34, 35, 41, 42, and possibly Cat.38. In the top zone of Cat.38, the lunar and solar figures wear the same sort of hairpiece. Ghedini (1990), 237, compared this accessory to ones worn in the second half of the second century B.C., but her examples do not in fact resemble these cases.

¹⁹⁹Ghedini (1990), 237.

²⁰⁰For numismatic and sculptural portraits, cf. Fittschen (1982), 34*f.* and 43*f.*, pl.1,10 and 12; pl.3,5; pl.12,2; and pl.13,3.

²⁰¹Le Glay SAH (1966), 26.

²⁰²Ghedini (1990), 237 and pl.VI, 1, also compared the 'La Ghorfa' hairstyle to that on a statue from Cyrene (50-40 B.C.).

²⁰³Poulsen (1974), 146 and pl.CCXXXIII, 144 (Cat. 733 b).

lower part of the hair falls loosely. The 'V'-shaped diadem is most common with this style. Tentatively, the best comparisons to Roman styles are Severan, which seems late for these stelae.²⁰⁴

The women's hairstyles therefore suggest later dates than do the men's. However, there is an inherent risk in comparing the crimped hairstyles in particular to those fashionable at Rome, since local styles played a major role. From the third through first centuries B.C., Numidian stelae from near Chemtou had already given crimped, segmented tresses to gods (figs.58 and 59),²⁰⁵ human, and even equine hair (fig.85).²⁰⁶ Many Neopunic stelae from Maktar give their dedicants the same look, although sometimes the crimped look gives way to tight curls (figs.86 and 87).²⁰⁷ These comparisons suggest that locals had innately curly hair that affected the look of styles that hung loosely or were tightly drawn back. The male hairstyles on certain dedicants and upper zone figures support this suggestion. However, no 'La Ghorfa' dedicant has 'Libyan locks', tiny, tight corkscrews of hair ²⁰⁸

Women's Accessories. Most of the women have roundish objects where their ears should be; these objects normally look like earrings rather than ears. The most common

²⁰⁴E.g. Poulsen (1974), 150 and pl.CCXXXIX, 148 (Cat. 742). Cf. Chapter V for more specific dating indications.

²⁰⁵Libyan gods and goddess on a black limestone relief, from the second to first century B.C.: cf. Fantar *Le Bardo* (1989), 40 and 45.

²⁰⁶Numidian cavalier relief, from near Chemtou, first century B.C.: cf. Carthage-Kairouan (1982), 104 no.149; Fantar Le Bardo (1989), 44-45; Carthage (1995), 28 no.27.

²⁰⁷Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 39, no.19062.

²⁰⁸As exemplified by an anthropomorphic vase in the Louvre: Brouillet (1994), 107 and 171 no.80.

type is a large globular earring, worn by at least ten women (fig.81).²⁰⁹ The dedicant of Cat.3 wears flat, disk-like earrings (fig.83), while the earrings on the dedicant of Cat.6 consist of double orbs. These types parallel gold earrings worn by women with Neronian hairstyles in Egyptian portraits,²¹⁰ and real examples found in a hoard in former Yugoslavia, alongside Domitianic coins.²¹¹ Because of the hairstyles and the Domitianic coins, the Egyptian portraits and other functional examples have accordingly been dated to the first century, especially in the third quarter of that century.²¹² However, similar earrings still appear on portraits from the mid- to late second century at least.²¹³

The women on Cat.28, 35, and probably 42 share an unusual type of earring, apparently consisting of a round stud above a shell, or a shell alone.

Necklaces are worn by twelve women. At least four women wear collars intersected by round or oval pendants, possibly with inset stones.²¹⁴ In the top zones of Cat.22 and 32, Venus wears the same type of necklace;²¹⁵ when she does so, the dedicant below does not wear the collar necklace. The woman on Cat.3 (fig.83) also has a pendant intersecting her necklace, which consists of two strands rather than a thick collar piece. The round pendant

²⁰⁹Cat.2, 4, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 38, and possibly Cat.24. According to Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 267 no.Cb-967, the woman on Cat.5 wore earrings "parées de boucles".

²¹⁰Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 41 no.15, 43 no.17, 44 no.18, 45 no.19, 87 no.76, etc.

²¹¹Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 162-163 no.183, referring to I. Popovic (1996), Les Bijoux romains du Musée National de Belgrade (Belgrade), nos.52-54.

²¹²Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 162-163 nos.183-185, 125 no.121.

²¹³E.g. Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 196, no.268; Zanker (1983), pl.23,2.

 $^{^{214}}$ Cat.9, 19, 25, 35; the latter's collar is incised in a herringbone pattern, and is probably the same type worn by the woman on Cat.14.

²¹⁵Venus on Cat.34 may be wearing a less elaborate necklace.

worn by the 'La Ghorfa' women contrasts with the men's square pendants, but the significance is unclear.²¹⁶

On Cat.2, the dedicant wears a wire necklace with hanging oval pendants (fig.82), slightly different from that worn by the woman on Cat.17. The former's necklace is probably of a type popular through the Imperial period.²¹⁷ Four other women wear necklaces of less distinctive or well-preserved types.²¹⁸

The dedicant on Cat.35 wears a plain bracelet on either wrist, but that on Cat.34 wears an elaborate snake bracelet. Snake bracelets enjoyed enduring popularity in the ancient world; on Egyptian portraits, they are especially popular between A.D. 50 and 100.²¹⁹

Dedicant of Indistinct Gender. The gender of the dedicant on Cat.21 is elusive. This person wears a tunic with elbow-length sleeves under a mantle. Both garments are incised with fine, somewhat irregular lines to indicate pleats, and seem to be of equal weight. A fold of the mantle hangs down the dedicant's chest in a loop from the back of the neck, under the right arm, and comes back up the outside of the right arm. Another fold seems to

²¹⁶According to Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 391-392, North African female devotees of Saturn may have worn collars with crescent pendants, unlike these round ones, while the men wore discs, unlike the 'La Ghorfa' square pendants.

²¹⁷Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 123 no. 119 (c. A.D. 180-200), 173 no.213 (first to third century); a Neronian woman wears a similar-looking band as a hairpiece: Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 42 no.16.

²¹⁸Cat.6, 24, 28, 6, and 42.

²¹⁹Walker and Bierbrier (1997), 35 no.9 (c. 50 B.C.-A.D. 50), 41-42 no.15 (A.D. 50-70), 80-81 no.58 (A.D. 40-60), 81-81 no.59 (A.D. 50-70), 88 no.77 (c. A.D. 100-120), 133 no.136 (c. A.D. 50-100).

be running along the bottom of the garment, up the dedicant's left side, and its excess hangs from behind the right arm.

In general, the male and female dedicants alike present themselves as important civic figures, although details of their appearance may only loosely follow Imperial fashion. Certainly many of the men were modelled after Roman *togati*, while most women wear clothing familiar from the Graeco-Roman tradition. More indigenous traits surface occasionally, from the non-Roman clothing on Cat.1 and 30 to the crimped or curly hairstyles of many of the men and women. While the citizenship of these dedicants cannot be assessed based on their inherent physical traits, their choice of dress and attributes gives better clues. Some of the dedicants were probably not Roman citizens, although they took care to emulate civic statuary; Chapter III, which discusses the inscriptions, will investigate this suspicion further.

II.4 The Bottom Zone

Twenty-one stelae preserve another zone of sculpting below the dedicant's register.²²⁰ In subject matter, this zone is the most variable and often more obscure. The most common scenes are of a bull sacrifice. Others involve anthropomorphic figures which may be human or divine, demi-gods in secondary niches, and Atlantes. Another scene seems to show a

²²⁰Including Atlantes, these are Cat. 1-4, 6, 8-11, 14, 17, 21, 24-25, 27, 29, 37-41.

convoluted version of Hercules and the Nemean lion. Finally, a lion-bull combat fills out the bottom zone of Cat.27.

Bull Sacrifice Scenes

Twelve of the bottom zones, a majority, present a bull sacrifice scene;²²¹ in each of these examples, the bull is moving to the left, although its head faces the viewer. Although five show only the bull,²²² the rest include at least one human escort, normally a bull-handler (fig.88). This person is male, wears a loincloth or short tunic,²²³ and holds a knife, axe, or other sacrificial instrument;²²⁴ on Cat.17, a second person brings the bull to this person.²²⁵ Altars on Cat.2, 17, and 38 provide the sacrificial setting.

The bull sacrifice scene on Cat.21 includes a flute-player, and, according to Mendleson, unusual costume. In this zone, both the flute-player and the bull-handler have rectangular chips where their noses should be, and long objects sit on top of their otherwise bare heads. Mendleson suggested that this hair and nose treatment represents skull-cups with noseguards, worn as ceremonial costume for the sacrifice.²²⁶ More likely, however, the

²²⁵Cat. 2, 6, 11, 14, 17, 21, 38, and 39.

²²⁶Mendleson (1995), 262.

²²¹Cat.1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 14, 17, 21, 24, 38, 39, 41. The count is actually thirteen bulls depicted in the lowest zone, but that on Cat.27, in a bull-lion combat, is iconographically quite different and will be studied separately.

²²²Cat.1, 6, 10, 24, and 41.

²²³The loincloth occurs on Cat.11, 14, 38 and 39. The bull-handler on Cat.17 wears a short tunic, while that on Cat.21 may wear either a short tunic or a loincloth. The costume of the bull-handler on Cat.2 is worn off.

²²⁴Two scenes, on Cat.38 and 39, involve a double-headed axe; the weapon on Cat.11 could be either an axe or a knife. On Cat.14, the sacrificer holds a wide triangular knife, similar to that on the so-called 'Stele of a Priestess of Ceres' from Maktar (fig.61), with an even closer parallel on the sacrifice scene relief of the Severan Arch at Lepcis Magna, at the left side; cf. Strocka (1972), bottom left of second foldout. The sacrificer on Cat.17 sacrificer holds a long knife or dagger.

sculptor was not comfortable at portraying profile views of the head, which are consistently awkward on other 'La Ghorfa' stelae and are usually avoided.²²⁷

Eros appears in the sacrifice scene of Cat.38, but he is out of place in this context. Unlike the bull-sacrificer on the opposite side of the altar, whose head is turned to look at the bull, Eros faces the viewer; he is quite uninvolved in the event. In North Africa, as elsewhere in the Roman world, Erotes appear on grave stelae, often in the lowest registers. In those instances, the Erotes' attributes communicate their funerary nature, namely downward-turned torches and/or garlands.²²⁸ This 'La Ghorfa' Eros, however, has no funerary attribute; his hands hang quite empty at his sides. In every other instance on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, Eros is in the top zone, between Liber Pater and Venus, but this stele leaves no room for for him there. If the sculptor considered Eros vital to the iconography, he was likely willing to add the winged figure wherever room allowed; other attributes of the stelae sometimes get displaced as well.²²⁹

These sacrifice scenes may provide important clues to problems of interpreting the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Since the top zones present such a confusing group of deities and divine symbols, do the bull sacrifice scenes clarify which god or cult received these ex-votos? Do

²²⁷On Cat.25, both victory figures flanking the niche have their hair perched awkwardly atop their heads, while the woman in the lowest zone, whose head is in profile, has the same rectangular chip for a nose and hair sitting on, rather than being a part of, her skull. On Cat.14, the sacrificer has a beard, which blends with his hair to form a shaggy fringe around his head. Note that this last stele is one of the few exceptions to the rule that on the profile heads on 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the ear is forgotten; sometimes, the only facial feature depicted is one disproportionately large eye: cf. Cat.2 and 38.

²²⁸For example, cf. Ferchiou (1981), 158-160 no.11, pl.49,1 and pl.50,1-3 *et passim*; *CMA* (1897), 73 no.873, pl.XXIII; Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), pl.XXVII,5 and pl.XXVIII,6.

²²⁹La Blanchère (1897), 43, pointed out that when the usual vegetal motifs are missing at the summit of the stelae, they appear at the bottom (e.g. Cat.11 and 39). He also suggested that on Cat.41, Liber Pater and Venus are absent at the top and occur instead below the niche; cf. below, p.107.

the scenes even record a real event, that so many dedicants sacrificed a bull as part of their vow?

To address the first question, bulls and rams are usually considered the prerogatives of Baal/Saturn;²³⁰ however, neither Baal nor Saturn appear on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, while several other gods do. Although inscriptions rarely record details of the sacrifice, a few examples suggest that cults did not dictate a specific animal for a specific god. For instance, three Latin inscriptions commemorate sacrifices made to groups of gods; two are from Aziz ben Tellis (*C*.8246 and *C*.8247), south of Djemila, and the third is from Koudiet-es-Souda, located between El Kef and Zanfour (*C*.27763). Of the various gods named, three appear in each inscription, Saturn, Jupiter, and Venus. However, only Jupiter received the same offering each time, a *berbex*, or castrated male sheep. The offering to Venus at Aziz ben Tellis was an *agna* (female lamb) in *C*.8246 and an *aedua* (kid) in *C*.8247, while that at Koudiet-es-Souda was a *gallina* (hen); for Saturn, it was a lamb and a bull at Aziz ben Tellis²³¹ but a male lamb alone at the second site.

Clearly different circumstances influenced not only the choice of gods, but also that of the sacrificial victim or victims for each divinity. Since they are dedicated to several gods, these three inscriptions may not represent the average sacrifice in Roman Africa;

²³⁰Even when no inscription or relief identifies Saturn, every stele in Le Glay *SAM* I (1961) and Le Glay *SAM* II (1966) was thought by Le Glay to be dedicated to Saturn, or to a god who was nothing more than a subset of Saturn. This sweeping identification has never challenged in print, to my knowledge, despite the fact that other gods, such as Cybele, indisputably received bull sacrifices in several North African centres (cf. below, pp.103*f*).

²³¹In both inscriptions from Aziz ben Tellis, it was actually *Dominus* who received these offerings; although North African inscriptions assign the title to a number of gods, *Dominus* is most often Saturn's epithet, probably as the literal translation of the Punic L'DNB'L, "Lord Baal": cf. Le Glay SAH (1966), 124.

nevertheless, even if general sacrificial guidelines existed, there was evidently some flexibility. The bulls on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae do not automatically belong to Saturn.

Variety in sacrificial victims is not unusual; the same situation had occurred in Greece at a much earlier date. Van Straten noted great discrepancies in the numbers of bovine, pig, and sheep sacrifices attested by Attic sacrificial calendars from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Attic vase paintings, and mainland Greek votive reliefs of the Classical period.²³² Using different types of evidence, he attempted to discern which type of record was most accurate. Despite the fact that he was investigating Classical Greece, many of his points still apply to Roman Africa.

Dedicants obviously had to consider the price of the sacrificial victim. In the Attic sacrificial calendars, an adult bull or cow cost twice as much as an adult pig, four to five times as much as an adult sheep, and four to six times as much as an adult goat; a calf cost at least five times as much as the young of any other species.²³³ A bovine victim was therefore hugely expensive in comparison, and not a common choice. The Classical votive reliefs reflect this tendency, choosing pigs almost half the time, then sheep, and finally bovine victims in only 10% of the cases.

In contrast, Attic vase paintings seem to communicate a very different situation, if taken literally. Bovine sacrifices occurred almost 55% of the time, followed by pigs and sheep at 12% and 11% respectively. This testimony is therefore suspect, but explicable. Most vase paintings were not special commissions, but pre-fabricated items with scenes

²³²Van Straten (1995), 172-175.

²³³Van Straten (1995), 176.

intended to attract buyers. In other words, vase painters intentionally painted scenes of extravagant ceremonies more often than such occasions actually took place.²³⁴

In van Straten's opinion, the Classical reliefs more accurately report the proportions of sacrificial victims. Similar conditions probably apply to most Roman African stelae, which show sacrificial sheep more often than bovines. The eleven 'La Ghorfa' stelae, however, consistently show bulls, the more expensive animal. The stelae themselves provide intrinsic evidence that the dedicants probably could afford a bull sacrifice. They are among the largest stelae in North Africa, are the most intricately sculpted, and were lavishly painted; their dedicants were not average Africans and their sculptors were not manufacturing them by the dozens without assured buyers.²³⁵

Bulls were the most prestigious and potent animal that worshippers could sacrifice to a god; Punics and Romans alike recorded the victim on their ex-voto reliefs. However, the 'La Ghorfa' sacrificial scenes are unusual in that they show the sacrifice itself, or at least the moment immediately beforehand; the sculptor has the viewer anticipating the kill, as the bull-handler is set to swing his axe or stab with his knife. Though altars and reliefs from public monuments sometimes present this moment of sacrifice,²³⁶ few stelae parallel these scenes. Other Punic or Roman stelae allude to the sacrifice by showing sacrificial

²³⁴Van Straten (1995), 178-179.

²³⁵Whether the depictions of bull sacrifices represent an event that actually took place is a question that cannot be answered, given that the context of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae is unknown. Normally at the foot of stelae found *in situ* at North African sites, vases contain the ashes and incinerated bones of sacrificial victims, but these are usually of small animals, particularly birds (cf. Chapter I, p.20). If a larger animal had originally been sacrificed, its remains went elsewhere.

²³⁶E.g. on an altar in the old forum at Djemila, cf. Einaudi (1982) Empire fiche 2, no.16941; on panels of the Arch of Septimius Severus at Lepcis Magna, cf. Strocka (1972), bottom right of second foldout.

equipment²³⁷ or the ram or bull, which usually looks relaxed and blissfully unaware of its impending doom;²³⁸ the sculptor left the act itself to the viewer's imagination. Fewer stelae show the moments after a bull sacrifice, with the bull's head upon an altar or other body parts dissected.²³⁹

The two weapons, axe and knife, may seem to indicate different rituals, but they are in fact different stages of one ritual. Ritual bovine slaughter had been a two-step process as far back as Homer's time,²⁴⁰ and apparently continued unchanged until the late second or third century, as seen on friezes of the Severan Arch at Lepcis Magna and other Roman monuments.²⁴¹ First, the bull was stunned by a blow to the head with an axe. Then, while the bull was in a weakened state, its throat was slit with a knife.

Most Punic, Neopunic, and Roman stelae clearly avoid showing the moment of sacrifice.²⁴² Even in Classical Greek art, this part of the ceremony had never been popular; scenes of the sacrifice itself account for less than 5% of sacrifice scenes on Attic red and black figure vases, and less than 1% of those on Classical Greek votive reliefs.²⁴³ The 'La

²³⁷Particularly on Punic stelae: Hours-Miédan (1951), pls.XXX d-f and XXXI a-c.

²³⁸Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XVII a (Punic). For Roman examples, cf. Le Glay SAM I (1961) and SAM II (1966), passim.

²³⁹Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XXVIII a-c (Punic stelae); on Roman stelae from Aïn Tounga, postsacrifice scenes include a bull's head, *boucrania*, or horns alone, and even, in six cases, the beheaded body of the bull: cf. Berger and Cagnat (1889), 243.

²⁴⁰van Straten (1995), 108-109. Cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 3.442-443 (bull sacrifice) and 14.418-436 (boar sacrifice).

²⁴¹Above, n.236.

²⁴²Chapter IV will address exceptions to this rule.

²⁴³Van Straten (1995), 186-187 divided the scenes into three groups: pre-kill (mostly procession scenes), kill (including the moment just before the kill), and post-kill (dissection of the victim, cooking of the meat, etc.).

Ghorfa' sculptors therefore had an unusual mindset, one that fortunately confirms for the modern viewer that the ritual itself normally followed widespread practice.

In two instances, however, the sacrifice scene diverges from this norm. On Cat.2, the person in front of the bull holds a wand topped by a circular object in one hand, perhaps an elongated *patera ansata*,²⁴⁴ and has a basket hanging from his other arm. Basket-carriers are common in North African sacrifice scenes, although usually the person balances the basket on top of his or her head, as occurs on the only comparable 'La Ghorfa' example, in a bottom corner of Cat.6.²⁴⁵ Le Glay believed that such baskets contained offerings that would accompany the principal offering, the main sacrifice; these secondary items would be buried at the foot of the stele commemorating the sacrifice.²⁴⁶

The second anomalous scene is on Cat.21. There, a flute-player stands behind the bull handler, who is thrusting a spear into the bull's chest. According to Mendleson, "the use of a spear rather than an axe indicates that this was not a dedication to Saturn".²⁴⁷ In fact a knife is the more frequent weapon in scenes from the Roman period. Nevertheless, the sacrificial spear is certainly unusual; no North African comparanda are known for it.

²⁴⁴La Blanchère (1897), 40, suggested that this instrument was a large *crepitaculum*, a sort of sistrum apparently found frequently in African tombs, but for which he gave no references.

²⁴⁵For examples of other sacrifice scenes with basket-carriers, cf. Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl. VIII, 4-6, pl.IX, 4, pl.XI, 5; Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXXIII, 5 and pl.XXXIV, 1-2.

 $^{^{246}}$ Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 349. La Blanchère (1897), 40, suggested that the basket may not have contained cult items or offerings, but may have been used to capture the gore from the sacrifice; his theory is less likely.

²⁴⁷Mendleson (1995), 262.

This scene is also remarkable for the musician playing the double flute,²⁴⁸ which itself is not of the usual type: one of the pipes is straight (a *tibia*), while the other is curved up (a Phrygian *cornu*).²⁴⁹ Although this instrument sometimes appears in Dionysiac scenes, it is one particularly associated with the cult of Cybele,²⁵⁰ a goddess popular in Roman African inscriptions, reliefs, on lamps, and other media.²⁵¹ Mendleson hesitated to identify Cybele as the divinity worshipped with the ex-voto Cat.21, but she did state that "the unusual clothing, the method of slaughter and the Phrygian pipes suggest an Eastern, not a Latin connection."²⁵²

A century earlier, La Blanchère had already drawn a connection between Cybele and 'La Ghorfa' stelae, albeit for different stelae and iconographic reasons.²⁵³ He had related several stelae to the bull and ram sacrifices associated with Cybele and Attis, the *taurobolium* and *criobolium*. Specifically, he was thinking of the type best-known through the work of the Late Roman poet Prudentius.²⁵⁴ In Prudentius' version, the *tauroboliatus*

²⁴⁸For other North African stelae bearing double flute players, cf. (e.g.) Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXV, figs.1-2, from Henchir Touchine in Algeria.

²⁴⁹Using the terminology of Vermaseren (1977), 59. A person playing a double flute and accompanied by a ram appears on the bottom register of a stele at Lambaesis (Le Glay *SAM* II (1966), 89, no.16, pl.XXIII,3), but the flute's type there is unclear.

²⁵⁰The flute-player (*tibicen*) sometimes appears in Cybele cult scenes, such as Vermaseren (1977), fig.46; however, the curved double flute can also appear on its own, as in Vermaseren (1977), fig.76. Not surprisingly, the curved double flute associated with Cybele was adopted by Dionysiac worshippers, who were encouraged to observe the rites of Magna Mater, according to Euripides (*Bacchae ll.72f.*), and Catullus (*Attis* 63.12-26). Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 345 n.4, related flute-players on Roman African stelae to the influence of eastern cults such as those of Cybele and Atargatis.

²⁵¹Cf. Vermaseren CCCA V (1986) 20-55, for extensive evidence for the cult of Cybele and Attis in North Africa.

²⁵²Mendleson (1995), 262.

²⁵³La Blanchère (1897) used only the twelve stelae in Tunis; apparently he did not know about Cat.21.

²⁵⁴Sources describing the bloodbath ritual are all late in date, probably reflecting the increased popularity of the pagan cult near the end of the fourth century, these later descriptions appear collectively in Duthoy (1969), 54-56. Prudentius (c. 400 A.D.) provided the most detailed description in his *Peristephanon* hymn

descended into a pit, over which was drawn a grate. The bull's or ram's chest was cut open directly over this grate, showering the person below with blood and gore. Before the late third century, the ritual probably did not involve this bloodbath, but must have had some features that distinguished it from normal sacrifices.²⁵⁵

In Roman Africa, this ritual was surprisingly popular, with at least fourteen *taurobolia* or *criobolia* attested by inscriptions from the third century in particular:²⁵⁶ eight or nine in Proconsularis, including five at Maktar;²⁵⁷ four in *Numidia*;²⁵⁸ and finally one at Tipasa in eastern *Mauretania*.²⁵⁹ Clearly, Saturn was not the only recipient of bull and ram sacrifices across Roman Africa.²⁶⁰

Despite this accumulation of evidence in North Africa alone, not a single depiction of a taurobolic or criobolic sacrifice is known in any form. However, La Blanchère thought that he had found a hint of the ritual on a relief from El Lehs (Ellès), not far from Maktar (fig.103). In this bull sacrifice scene, the basket-bearer appears to be buried up to his torso

²⁵⁸Announa (*Thibilis*): Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.134=C.5524 and p.963 and *ibid.*, no.135. Zana (*Diana Veteranorum*): Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.122. Mila (*Milev*): C.19981.

²⁵⁹Tipasa: Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.122.

²⁶⁰Despite the fact that a single person instigated the ceremony, all of these examples were of the public type: they were performed on behalf of the health of the Emperor(s), by vote of the local council, and with the participation of the full membership of the local cult of Cybele and Attis. In at least some of these cases, the membership and possibly even the council may have contributed towards the costs.

^{10,1006-50,} for a translation and treatment of which cf. Vermaseren (1977), 102-103, or Turcan (1996), 49.

²⁵⁵The forms and time periods of earlier versions are controversial: cp. Rutter (1968), Duthoy (1969), and Vermaseren (1977), 107. Presumably, however, depictions of the earlier types should still include the trappings of the Cybelic cult.

²⁵⁶Priests and initiates of Cybele, in addition to *dendrofori*, are also recorded in several other North African centres, but without mention of the sacrificial rituals; almost all of these attestations date from the second and, in particular, the third centuries A.C. *Dendrofori*, however, were still known at Carthage in the early fifth century (*Cod. Theod.* XVI 10,20).

²⁵⁷Maktar: Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.79=C.23400, no.80=C.23401, and nos.80d, 81, and 82. Carthage: Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.93=C.24536 and *ibid.*, no.97. Utica: Vermaseren CCCA V (1986), no.114. Possibly at Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*): C.1407=C.14907.

in the ground.²⁶¹ For La Blanchère, this was not a sculptor's error, but a representation of a *tauroboliatus* in the pit, waiting to be showered from above by the victim's blood.²⁶² La Blanchère then suggested that the basket on this stele and the one held by the 'dancing' figure on Cat.2 were used to capture the blood and gore from the *taurobolium*.²⁶³ However, the relief is clumsy enough that the sculptor more likely misjudged how much room was needed for a basket-bearer.

La Blanchère also saw the grate placed over the pit in the lattice-like screens beneath the pedestals of certain 'La Ghorfa' dedicants.²⁶⁴ The grate, he reasoned, was a horizontal element that could not easily be shown in a fairly two-dimensional relief; therefore it, like the coffers above, were shown out of perspective.²⁶⁵ The greatest flaw with this argument is that these specific stelae do not show a bull at all, surely the most important clue to commemorating a *taurobolium*. Secondly, the latticework most likely parallels that found in other sanctuary or funerary settings.²⁶⁶

The so-called 'taurobolic' elements identified by La Blanchère are therefore subject to question, especially since most 'La Ghorfa' reliefs have no other hints of Cybele or her consort Attis. However, Mendleson's stele, Cat.21, may relate to this cult. Taken in

 $^{^{261}}$ La Blanchère (1897), pl. VII = CMA (1897) C.753. The stele was dated by Le Glay SAM I (1961), 240 no.1-Ellès, to the second century.

 $^{^{262}}$ Although the same author included mention of a *taurobolium* scene in his publication of this stele for the Musée Alaoui catalogue [CMA (1897), 63, no. C.753], the idea never gained much credence as such.

²⁶³La Blanchère (1897), 40. According to modern scholarship, including Rutter (1968), 238, the blood was collected in a *cernus*, "a series of small cups joined together to form a dish": Vermaseren (1977), 149 and fig.18; the Maktar and Utica inscriptions name this instrument.

²⁶⁴La Blanchère (1897), 41, was referring to Cat. 8 and 12, to which Cat.37 may be added.

²⁶⁵La Blanchère (1897), 41; apparently no one else ever picked up on this idea.

²⁶⁶Cf. p.77.

combination, the *cornu* and *tibia* flute, the sacrificial spear otherwise unknown in North Africa, and the bovine sacrificial victim, are anomalous to every cult except that of Cybele. Furthermore, the way that the bull-handler plunges the spear into the bull's chest anticipates exactly Prudentius' description, *pectus sacrato dividunt venabulo*, "they split his chest open with the sacred spear" (*Perist.* 10, 1027).

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Prudentius' poem is too late to be relevant for this stele,²⁶⁷ but the *taurobolium* had existed in other forms in the West from the second century, and much earlier in the East, where it probably originated as a wild bull hunt. Both the curved double pipes and the hunting spear had doubtless become accoutrements of the cult long before the bloodbath version of the *taurobolium* was developed; both would be appropriate in the scene on Cat.21, if it indeed depicts a *taurobolium*. However, nothing else on the stele, as it is preserved, recalls the goddess' cult, and, following Mendleson's lead, it could only be with great trepidation that one might introduce Cybele, and especially a unique *taurobolium* depiction, into the already complex pantheon of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. As with the rest of the 'La Ghorfa' sacrifice scenes, the sacrifice's recipient or recipients remain unclear.

Human or Divine Figures

Ceremony of some kind is also the subject of the bottom zone of Cat.25; this zone is poorly preserved, but two figures are still visible. That on the right is a female, to judge by the length of her hair; she faces and holds up a wreath to the figure beside her. This second person, who faces the viewer, has closely cropped hair, squared off at the top; he is

²⁶⁷Cf. Chapter V.

bare-chested and, like his companion, any clothing he once wore is cut off by the break in the stone. He holds up in his right hand a rod that terminates in two parallel curved projections.

Although quite different in style, this pair may be related to that on Cat.41, in which a man wearing nothing but a wreath on his head holds a thyrsus in one hand and a cup in the other; he is about to receive a wreath from the nude person on his left. Both of these figures face the viewer. La Blanchère identified this couple as Dionysus [Liber Pater] and Venus, the two deities who usually stand above the temple pediment on 'La Ghorfa' stelae; on this stele, there is no room for them in that position. According to La Blanchère, the sculptor evidently thought them an important enough component of the iconography to include, even in an unusual register;²⁶⁸ as shown above, the same type of compensation had placed an Eros figure in a sacrifice scene on Cat.38.

However, the male figure on Cat.41 is not wearing the usual clothing of Liber Pater, who occurs in the top zone of other 'La Ghorfa' stelae: a cloth falling over the shoulder and wrapped around the hips. Furthermore, this same figure appears to be bearded, while Liber Pater on the other stelae is always clean-shaven. The attributes held by the male figure here, though, are those usually held by Liber Pater above, while the second person, nude and carrying a wreath, follows the usual appearance of Venus. Roman Africans did not commonly represent themselves in the nude; so the sculptor may have portrayed two people who were close to, and possibly included, the dedicant, in heroic or divine stature, as

²⁶⁸La Blanchère (1897), 42-43.

sometimes occurs on stelae and sarcophagi. Neither suggestion explains Liber Pater's nudity, however.

The liberty taken by the sculptor here to change the location and details of typical elements is also evident in the placement of two *caduceus* standards at either side of this register. These standards usually flank the columns in the niche zone above, but once again there was no room for them there, and the sculptor added these elements where he could.

The lone human face floating in space in the bottom left corner of Cat.40 is inexplicable. Although the bottom of the stone has been broken off, the head is above the bottom of the zone containing two Atlantes, and does not seem to have been attached to a body. With its large ringed eyes, sharply-pointed chin, large ears, and short haircut, it does not look like the divine busts that normally appear in the top zones of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, such as the solar face that occurs on this same stele.

Chthonic Deities and Subterranean Crypts?

In three cases, a second niche containing a human figure occupies the bottom zone of the stele. Unlike the Type 1 niches above them, these openings are not surrounded by elaborate architecture; in fact, only Cat.8 has a flat frame around the apsed niche.²⁶⁹ In both Cat.8 and 37, palm branches or palm trees flank the niche; above each of the palms on the Dougga stele (Cat.37) is a stellar rosette contained within a circle. On the other hand, a secondary niche on Cat.6 is flanked by a basket-bearer and a bull, members of a bull sacrifice scene.

²⁶⁹Both Cat. 8 and 37 have drilled holes flanking the apse, but no architectural frame.

Unfortunately, Cat.6 is broken off immediately below the head of the male figure within the secondary niche. La Blanchère assumed that this person was the same as those in the two fully-preserved secondary niches, on Cat.8 and the now-lost Dougga stele (Cat.37). In both cases, a male figure kneels awkwardly;²⁷⁰ the figure on Cat.8 is on a pedestal, but it is impossible to tell if the same was true of Cat.37.

Curiously, both figures clutch to their chests two snakes, each held by the head; the snakes' bodies drape down the chest and out over the thighs of their captors. The scene is reminiscent of the legend of the child Hercules strangling the twin serpents sent by Hera to kill him,²⁷¹ but the kneeling figure is not childlike, and its placement in this secondary niche is not explicable through the Hercules myth.²⁷² Picard thought that the figure could be the Phoenician god Eshmoun, who supposedly had two snakes as companions.²⁷³ However, no physical representation of that Punic god, with or without snakes, is known. Furthermore, serpents figure in the mythology of many Near Eastern and Classical deities; the Phoenician link here is convenient only because of the North African setting.

Theoretically, the "snake-handlers" could be a misunderstanding of terracotta Punic figures known as "orants" and best-known from Carthage, but also found in other parts of the Punic world. Some of these figures have uneven lines painted across their chests,

²⁷⁰On Cat. 8, the person's legs are uncomfortably bent to the left, while on Cat. 37, they are bent outwards, with the soles of the feet touching.

²⁷¹Carton (1895), 159; La Blanchère (1897), 39; *CMA* (1897), 62. Picard (1954), 128, was hesitant about this identification, although he stated that this myth occurs on pottery found in Punic tombs and on African mosaics (unfortunately, he gave no references for these items).

²⁷²Also to be discarded is the identification of this scene as the Hercules-hydra combat, made by Yacoub *MusBardo* (1970); there are clearly two distinct serpents, not a single beast with multiple heads.

²⁷³Picard RAA (1954), 128.

presumably to indicate dress designs, while others have worms of clay on their chests to represent arms.²⁷⁴ In either case, it is conceivable that a person could misunderstand the lines or arms to be snakes. However, while this suggestion is no less likely than those described above, it is still unsatisfying.

Based upon the common assumption that the secondary niche was actually a subterranean crypt beneath the temple,²⁷⁵ Picard proposed that the snake-handler may be a local chthonic deity.²⁷⁶ Several North African temples have underground chambers to provide possible settings for such deities.²⁷⁷ The most impressive is the temple of Liber Pater at Maktar, which has a large rock-cut cave beneath its podium.²⁷⁸ However, such subtemple structures need more study to determine if they were used as treasuries, secret chambers for initiation rites, banquets, or other rituals.²⁷⁹ The three 'La Ghorfa' stelae would also require evidence that such chambers were places of worship for a local deity other than the one to whom the temple immediately above was dedicated.

²⁷⁴Cf., for example, Ferron and Aubet (1974), pls.IV, XVIII, and XXI.

²⁷⁵E.g. CMA (1897), 62; Le Glay SAH (1966), 42 and 293. La Blanchère (1897), 34, suggested that the structure was a subterranean temple or a crypt.

²⁷⁶Picard *RAA* (1954), 128, followed by Bisi (1978), 73. In the *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 264, Picard identified the figure as a more specific chthonic deity: possibly a Libyan (i.e. native) god, Eshmoun, or the child Horus; Peyras (1993), 242, supported this connection. The *DCPP* (1992), 189 ('La Ghorfa'), identified this figure in French as a "genie" holding serpents, without further explanation.

²⁷⁷Le Glay SAH (1966), 292-293, briefly mentions mystery cults that used underground chambers outside of North Africa.

²⁷⁸Picard (1957), 49-54; the temple is perhaps to be dated to the second half of the second century. Comparanda cited by Picard (1957), 42, included another Maktar crypt beneath the Temple of Hoter Miskar, dated by Punic inscriptions to the mid-first century, with reconstruction phases, including reconstruction of the crypt, possibly as late as the third century. A crypt with cult deposits was found in a temple perhaps dedicated to Aesculapius, at Messaad (*Castellum Dimmidi*). Lipinski *Dieux* (1995), 423-424, discussed sacred grottos at Punic sites in Lebanon, Sicily, and Spain.

²⁷⁹Le Glay SAH (1966), 294, distinguished such chambers from *favissae*, underground crypts for storing statues and stelae that were broken or had fallen out of use (cf. Chapter I, p.21).

Whatever its significance, some have seen further evidence for a crypt under a temple on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Seven stelae show Atlantes holding up the middle zone's Type 1 niche (figs.89 and 90);²⁸⁰ Picard and Le Glay believed that these Atlantes were conceived as being in a chamber under the temple, supporting the structure.²⁸¹ On the one hand, Picard viewed the Atlantes in a purely architectural sense, as physical supports of the ceiling of a cave beneath the temple.²⁸² However, no North African site has yielded anything to support this theory; Atlantes are, in fact, almost completely absent from the architectural and artistic landscape, except on a few stelae.²⁸³ Le Glay, on the other hand, took a more spiritual interpretation, identifying in the Atlantes not only temple supports, but also chthonic deities devoted to protecting the treasury and the sacred force of the site itself.²⁸⁴ The testimony of the stelae themselves, however, point to a slightly different interpretation.

The Atlantes are holding up the entire structure on only one stele, Cat. 17. On Cat.6, they hold up the floor of the niche, but stand at the same level as the niche's columns. They are also flanked by the columns on Cat. 10, 11, 39, and 40, or are below them on Cat.4; in these instances, they do not actually hold up the floor of the niche, but the inscriptional cartouche below it. In none of the stelae do the Atlantes occur with cult items of any kind, making Le Glay's appointment of them as guardians of the treasury implausible.²⁸⁵ They are

²⁸⁰Cat.4, 6, 10, 11, 17, 39, 40.

²⁸¹E.g. Le Glay SAH (1966), 42.

²⁸²Picard (1957), 52.

²⁸³Cf. Chapter IV. A singular exception is a coin dated to the reign of Juba I (60-46 B.C.), which shows an entablature held up by three Atlantes and two columns: cf. Mazard (1951), 91 and Picard and Picard (1980).
²⁸⁴Le Glay SAH (1966), 294.

²⁸⁵Atlantes do not occur on any of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae where cult objects are depicted: within the dedicant's pedestal on Cat.8, 14, 37, and 38, or in a cache underneath the dedicant, on Cat.1, 4 and 20.

there to support and protect the precinct, if only spiritually and not tangibly.²⁸⁶ They never appear to be in a subterranean crypt where activities are taking place²⁸⁷ or in which the temple treasury is located; furthermore, there is no reason to understand an artificial chamber constructed for them.

In contrast, the secondary niches on Cat. 6, 8, and 37 may argue more strongly in favour of a subterranean crypt beneath the temple, one containing a mysterious deity of quite a different nature than the Atlantes. He is probably not Hercules, but a deity of more local appeal, whose pose and appearance are quite singular in the native, Punic, and Roman cultural traditions. However, the secondary niche need not be taken so literally; if it refers to a local god, the niche may simply impart sacredness to the scene, just as the architectural frames of the Type 2 dedicant niches do.

Hercules and the Nemean Lion

On Cat.9, the bottom zone also has a figure usually identified as Hercules, although the scene is different (fig.91). Here, a male figure is about to strike a lion with the club in his right hand. Understandably, scholars have usually identified this scene as the combat between Hercules and the Nemean Lion.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶On first century stelae unrelated to the 'La Ghorfa' group, a 'sign of Tanit' sometimes raises its arms to support elements above it, such as niches containing the dedicant or deceased person, or architectural elements; in these examples, the 'sign of Tanit' has taken on a role akin to that of Atlantes, but more clearly only a conceptual one. For this type of 'sign of Tanit', cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], nos.Cb-936 and Cb-937, possibly no.Cb-954, and no.Cb-978; and Wuilleumier (1928), pl.II no.1.

 $^{^{287}}$ On several of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, Atlantes stand above a scene of bull sacrifice. Le Glay SAH (1966), 294, correctly dismissed the idea that the sacrifice took place in a chamber below the temple as logistically impossible.

²⁸⁸Picard RAA (1954), 128, followed by Bisi (1978), 57; Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 270 no. Cb-971; Yacoub MusBardo (1970); DCPP (1992), 189 ('La Ghorfa').

While this identification is surely correct, a twist in the iconography has mostly escaped attention: the man already has a feline skin draped over his left arm. The skin worn by Hercules, an attribute as typical of the hero as the club, is anomalous if the scene represents the very fight that earned Hercules the skin in the first place. However, the skin does not look leonine,²⁸⁹ for it is spotted. The flecks may merely represent fur, in the way that a Herculean lion skin on a Maktar relief has deeply drilled holes to represent curls in its mane (fig.92).²⁹⁰ However, the lion below Hercules on Cat.9. has neither flecks nor spots on either its body or its mane. Furthermore, the head of the feline skin is small and maneless, in contrast to that of the lion directly below it; it looks more like an ocelot or small leopard.

The Nemean Lion combat is rarely depicted in Roman African art.²⁹¹ The sculptor of Cat.9 may have confused it with Dionysiac scenes, in which figures wearing the skin of a fawn or cat appear with a tiger or panther.²⁹² Since Hercules commonly appears in Dionysiac contexts, such confusion is conceivable. One other possibility is that it is a confused memory of a much older motif on a silver coin from Phoenicia, on which a nude god, in much the same pose as this figure, has his right hand raised behind him, swinging

²⁸⁹Contra La Blanchère (1897), 34.

²⁹⁰The architectural block, which bears a series of wrestling figures presided over by Hercules, may date to the beginning of the third century: Picard (1988), 99.

²⁹¹One of the few examples occurs on a column capital in the Musée de Maktar (unlabelled and presumably unpublished).

²⁹²This imagery, and the co-existence of lions and spotted cats in a Dionysiac setting, is most often encountered in North Africa on mosaics: for example, cf. Slim (1995), figs. 55, 57, 64. On a marble crater found in the Mahdia shipwreck, a panther stands at the feet of a satyr carrying a thyrsus and the skin of a wild cat: cf. Grassinger (1994), 266 fig.8 and 267 fig. 11.

a long object in order to club a lion he holds by the tail with his other hand.²⁹³ Neither of these suggestions is satisfying, but, given the lack of parallels for this type of scene in North Africa, confused iconography is probably the best explanation for this group.

Lion-Bull Combat

In a scene that rarely appears on North African stele, the bottom zone of Cat. 27 depicts a lion chasing a bull; unlike those in the 'La Ghorfa' bull sacrifice scenes, which consistently move to the left, the bull in this register is running to the right. The animal combat motif is an ancient Near Eastern one, linked to the coincidence of certain constellations and seasonal cycles; specifically, the lion-bull combat symbolized spring and the revival of nature.²⁹⁴ This example therefore fits in with the theme of the upper registers.

Although the lion combat continued to be employed during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, especially in Eastern-produced or -inspired works, it was not a common motif in North Africa. The motif was rare even in Punic Carthage, despite the city's Eastern origin.²⁹⁵ In the Numidian kingdom, the bull and lion especially were powerful images, but combats between the two animals were not normally represented.²⁹⁶ In fact, the closest that

²⁹³Perrot and Chipiez (1885), 417 fig.286.

²⁹⁴Hartner (1965), expanded upon by Kuzmina (1987). Other interpretations of the popularity of certain animal combats have sought totemic, magical, or mythological explanations, as summarized by Kuzmina (1987), 730-733, but the astrological interpretation is the only one supported by both literary and artistic evidence, from Mesopotamia at the end of the fourth or beginning of the third millenium B.C. down to Classical times.

²⁹⁵The lion and a bull were not a fixed motif; a lion could appear with other prey, as indicated by scarabs found in Punic tombs: cf. Vercoutter (1945), nos. 149-150, 623-625, and 713.

²⁹⁶In Punic centres, the lion belonged to Baal/Saturn, according to Picard *RAA* (1954), 11-12 and Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 132-135. In the Numidian realm, however, the lion was a prominent royal symbol, quite distinct from the Punic god. For Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 142, the motif of a lion devouring prey retained its Numidian monarchical associations and had no deeper meaning than a communication of the terrible power of the royal animal.

depictions come to a combat is on coins from the late first century B.C. to early first century A.C., where the lion and bull occur on opposite sides of the coin.²⁹⁷ African coinage outside the Numidian kingdom apparently did not continue this imagery.

As far as the plastic arts are concerned, the North African repertoire simply did not perpetuate the Near Eastern lion-bull combat. However, animal combats still continue, albeit rarely, in Roman African reliefs, with only one parallel on a stele, in the Musée de Maktar (fig.93).²⁹⁸ At this time, sculptors may have been drawing upon the popular hunt or amphitheatre beast-fights that figure in so many Roman mosaics. Mosaics like those from El Djem show lions, tigers, bears, and other ferocious beasts attacking prey such as bulls, onagers, and antelopes.²⁹⁹ Many of the vignettes are reminiscent of the Near Eastern animal combat tradition, and may have been adopted by mosaicists in part, consciously or not, for the familiarity of the ancient composition. Nevertheless, though the lion-bull combat had ancient connotations of rebirth and revival, the fact that this scene is unique suggests that other sculptors and dedicants were either unaware of its meaning or found it unsatisfying on votive stelae.

²⁹⁷Coins from the beginning of the reign of Juba II (25 B.C.-23 A.C.) show a bull and lion opposed on opposite sides of the coin: cf. Mazard (1955), 101-102 no. 270. These opposed images are those seen on an earlier coin found at Cherchel and dated to the years 33 to 25 B.C.: Mazard (1955), 70 no. 124. A lion had also appeared, unopposed by a bull, on coins of Juba I (60-46 B.C.): cf. Mazard (1955), 52 no.93.

²⁹⁸In the Musée de Maktar, beast fight vignettes decorate one side of a column capital (unlabelled and presumably unpublished), including a scene in which a lion bites into the back of a bull that has been forced down onto its knees. A funerary relief from the region of Bou Arada includes *acroteria* of lions devouring prey; cf. Ferchiou (1981), 163-164 no.13, pl.52,1. Neither example parallels the 'La Ghorfa' example very closely.

²⁹⁹For example, "Dionysus and Beasts of the Amphitheatre", from the Maison de Bacchus, and the amphitheatre scene from the Cour de la Ferme Hadj Ferjani Kacem, also at El Djem: cf. Dunbabin (1978), pl.XXV no.68 and pl.XXVIII no. 72-73, respectively. Parrish (1987) provides further examples of mosaic scenes with animal combats.

Summation of the Bottom Relief Zone

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, these lower zones have made the interpretation of the overall reliefs difficult. With the exception of the dolphins on Cat.3 and 29, every ingredient of the bottom zones lacks a Punic precedent, and looks to Graeco-Roman or other Eastern influences. Even so, the imagery is often so convoluted and unusual as to obscure the meaning of the scene. With a few possible exceptions, however, the scenes in the bottom zones of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae do not represent the Underworld.

In several cases, the bottom zone is apparently a catch-basin for things that usually occur at the top of the stele, such as the Venus- and Liber Pater-type figures on Cat.41 and the Eros on Cat.38. Since dolphins occur at the top of two 'La Ghorfa' stelae and at the bottom of two others, their placement at the bottom of Cat.3 and 29 must preclude that location's identification as the Underworld. A clear reference to the lower world is also absent from the lion-bull combat on Cat.27, and the Hercules-Nemean Lion combat on Cat.9.

However, all of these themes often occur in funerary settings, where they may symbolize the voyage to and attainment of immortality, the wealth of the afterlife, and rebirth, whether of the deceased or of nature in general. One notable characteristic of North African stelae is that imagery typically funerary in nature may also occur on votive stelae, often making distinctions between the two extremely difficult.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰Piganiol (1957), 91, thought that the 'La Ghorfa' niches contained images of the deceased, rather than dedicants; the votive inscriptions (Chapter III) make this identification less likely, as does the fairly consistent composition of the upper and middle zones.

The bull sacrifice scenes are all located in the bottom zones of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, but there is not a single instance in Roman Africa of a bull sacrifice scene occupying the top zone of a stele. Wherever stelae have multiple registers, sacrifice scenes are always subordinate in position to the registers depicting the gods and that depicting the dedicant. Unless the sacrifices belong to subterranean gods, for which there is no evidence whatsoever, these scenes need not be identified with the Underworld, either. Rather, they simply depict a sacrificial act made on behalf of the dedicant who appears above; the god(s) who received the offerings cannot be identified by this scene alone, nor can any specific result desired by the dedicant. Picard, for instance, interpreted the stelae as expressing hopes for eternal life,³⁰¹ but the dedicants may instead have been praying for success in their (mortal) lifetime. If one insisted on a literal interpretation, the sacrifice could be viewed as taking place in the court in front of the temple,³⁰² a spatial relationship rendered by necessity on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae by having the niche appear above the altar. However, the scenes in the bottom zones of other stelae are so independent that none should not be placed in a literal or spatial relationship with the registers above.

Only in the instance of the 'subterranean' scenes may it be appropriate to assign strict divine and human zones to the registers of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. The Atlantes reflect the Graeco-Roman concept of divine beings who simultaneously hold up and protect their burdens, whether put into a carved physical form or not. Interpretation becomes more problematic for the so-called 'snake-handler' scenes. The secondary niches of Cat.6, 8, and

³⁰¹Picard (1962), 30.

³⁰²La Blanchère (1897), 33.

37 may be more literal than the other 'La Ghorfa' stelae; they may refer to a subterranean chamber or grotto setting, although the pattern of the other bottom zone scenes suggests otherwise. The snake-handlers, surely divinities of some sort, elude identification and add to the mysterious quality of the setting.

II.5 Stylistic Considerations

The previous sections examined the composition and details of the three typical zones on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Beyond the general layout and characteristic components, the stelae also share points of style in general, with specific mannerisms and compositional characteristics that identify different streams of workmanship within the tradition.

In terms of style, one of the best ways to illustrate typical traits is to examine the human or human-like figures. Almost all of the human and divine figures face the viewer; the few that are in profile -- mainly participants in the bull sacrifice and victories around the niche -- clumsily combine frontal and profile views, usually with major problems in proportions and anatomy. The same tendencies apply to large animals, such as the bulls in the sacrifice scenes, the lions on Cat.27 and 9, or the Dioscuri's horses on Cat.2. In contrast, the sculptors were comfortable depicting small animals in profile; none of the birds, rabbits, or dolphins face the viewer, and all are reasonable portrayals. Granted, even a skilled artist would have difficulty with a frontal relief view of any of these small animals.

Anatomically, the human and divine figures have very large heads set on thick necks and wide shoulders. Their huge eyes vary in shape from almond to round, and are usually ringed; their heavy brow ridges follow the curve of the eyes. Their cheeks are full, while their mouths tend to be small. Women tend to have round earrings instead of ears; for the men, the prominent ears are at eye level and are either round or exaggeratedly long.

Especially over the legs, the drapery barely indicates the underlying body, if at all. The reason for this becomes clear with figures who are only partially-clothed or nude: they have clumsy torsoes that are either straight or pear-shaped, with no waist. Men may have a wavy incision to delineate the chest; females may have two small nubs for the breasts.

Whether covered or not, the arms are often out of proportion to the body and to each other, with large hands; when the arms are bare, they are rubbery and lack definition. The legs are summary, usually with no indication of knees. Feet especially are problematic; in order to avoid them, the sculptors often hid them behind an object like the pediment, in the case of several Liber Pater and Venus figures,³⁰³ or simply ended the figure's legs above the ankle, as in the case of the Atlantes on Cat. 10 and 11. When no vertical or horizontal frames are nearby to provide guidance, the figures often stand on an angle. Fine details, such as strands of hair, drapery folds, or bird feathers are more often incised than carved out.

As Picard has noted, these reliefs are essentially symmetrical.³⁰⁴ Their central axis consists of an imaginary line from the stele's summit straight down through the crescent and disc, 'sign of Tanit', the peak of the pediment or lintel, the vertical strip dividing the coffers,

³⁰³E.g. Cat.33 and 34; at least one figure has hidden feet on most stelae. The fully anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' on Cat.24 also has its feet hidden behind the pediment.

³⁰⁴Picard (1963), 241.

the dedicant, and so on. On either side, pairs of objects balance each other, such as Liber Pater and Venus, solar and lunar busts, the grape and pomegranate, birds, dolphins, drilled circles, columns, palms, *caducei*, and the Atlantes. Only in the bottom zone, in the bull sacrifices and mythological allusions, is symmetry less important.³⁰⁵

Distinctive styles within the 'La Ghorfa' group betray several different artistic hands. By dividing the stelae into the following groups, I do not mean to identify Sculptor A versus Sculptor B, a process that would involve extremely minute inspection that is impossible here. Instead, these groups reflect patterns of style and presentation, distinctions that could indicate not just different artists, but also distinct time periods and places of production.³⁰⁶

The two different niche types are key to these subdivisions, as certain motifs occur only with one. For instance, Liber Pater, Venus, Eros, and the Atlantes only appear with Type 1 niches. In contrast, Victories normally flank simple niches, with the sole exception of the Victory standing beside the dedicant on Cat. 19.

Of the eight simple niches, five have a frame or horizontal element neatly segregating the triangular summit of the stone from the rectangular body below.³⁰⁷ This subgroup also tends to have the least anthropomorphic 'signs of Tanit', including those that are faceless and very geometric in shape. However, there is no clear pattern between niche type and the form that the disc and crescent above take; in other words, the two most

³⁰⁵However, lower zones with secondary niches are also symmetrical, on Cat.6, 8, and 37.

³⁰⁶Some differences could also be explained by commissioned rather than pre-produced products, different grades of limestone, and a number of other possibilities. This discussion, however, focusses upon similarities in presentation and layout, factors that should not be greatly influenced by these other considerations.

³⁰⁷Cat.1, 3, 26, 28, 35.

characteristic Punic symbols -- the 'sign of Tanit' and the two shapes above it -- take their form independently of one another.

More specific patterns fall into one of the subgroups outlined below. Twenty-eight stelae fall into these subgroups, which are presented here in no specific order beyond architectural type. The rest, 15 in total, bear some or many characteristic 'La Ghorfa' motifs, but have no close parallels within this series.³⁰⁸ They are nonetheless equally important to the next phase of the sculptural analysis, comparison to other North African stelae.

Stelae with Type 1 Niches

Group 1A	Group 1B	Group 1C	Group 1D	Unattributed
Cat.4, 5, 6, 7, 10,	Cat.12, 23, and	Cat.13 and 31	Cat.32 and 36	Cat.2, 8, 9, 14, 16,
11, 19, 38, 39, 40	34			17, 18, 22, 24, 33,
				37, 41, and 43

1A. This group is the largest, and exhibits the greatest *horror vacui*. In the top zone especially, drilled circles, flowers, discs, birds, vines, altars, astral faces, and other devices fill in the empty spaces. Furthermore, the elaborate *aedicula* facades on all of these stelae leave very little space bare, by including a double row of coffers,³⁰⁹ intricate door frames,

³⁰⁸Cat.43, a temple-type stele, is lost and has no known surviving illustrations; obviously it cannot be judged in any detail.

³⁰⁹In Cat.4, 5, 7, 11, 38, and 40, there are 12 coffers in total, divided in half by the crescent-disc or rosette-crescent strip. Cat.10 and 39 are the same but have 16 coffers instead of 12. The 16 coffers on Cat.6 are below the dedicant's niche and do not have the central strip.

and columns that extend below the floor of the niche, effectively framing the epigraphic cartouches held up by Atlantes.³¹⁰

Human or divine figures on these stelae have long, butterfly-shaped ears. The folds of the dedicant's drapery are heavy, adding to an already imposing facade.

The pediments of Cat.5, 6, 38, and 39 contain male busts. These same reliefs are the only ones within this subgroup to include Eros.³¹¹ Cat.5 and 6 are particularly close; on both, Venus and her altar stand on a large platform, another useful device to fill up space. Both stelae also have a face at the summit, depicted within a knotted, almost snake-like wreath.

Three stelae with a female bust in the pediment (Cat.10, 11, and 40) have several points of similarity. The 'signs of Tanit' are similar in shape, and hold unusual Y-shaped horns. Liber Pater's body tips slightly inward, while a small square altar sits at an improbable angle on the other side of the pediment beside Venus. On the pediment, the primary *acroterium* is a calyx flower. In the niche below, two of the three dedicants sit on chairs, and all three are immediately above a formal cartouche with a ring inside.³¹²

The bulls in the bottom zone of Cat. 10, 11, and 39 are rendered in the same way. The bottom zones of Cat. 11 and 39 are especially close, with a rosette and lotus vine hanging over the bull-handler, who holds the horn of the bull at his left.

³¹⁰The cartouches are formal, usually with a ring bisecting the epigraphic field; cf. Chapter III, p.131. ³¹¹The Eros on Cat.38 is at the bottom.

³¹²Cf. Chapter III, p.131.

Cat.8, 9, and 14 (damaged) may be outliers of this group. The person in the secondary niche of Cat.8 has the butterfly-shaped ears, and other figures on Cat.12, 13, 16, and 31 seem to have similar ears. The next group (1B) may also be related.

1B. The Jupiter head at the summit of Cat.12 is strikingly similar to that in the pediment of Cat.34. For both stelae, the pediment bust is in higher relief than the figures in the top zone. The two 'signs of Tanit' share several traits: they both wear wreaths, have wide, sharply-angled shoulders, and have 'skirts' that are sharply carved out and very linear. Rosettes with sunken centres flank the crescent, which touches the head of the 'sign of Tanit'. A rosette vine growing out of an acanthus leaf separates the 'sign of Tanit' from Liber Pater and Venus below. For lack of space, both Liber and Venus stand on an angle beside the pediment. Venus has the same hairstyle on both stelae.

In the niche zone, the bead-and-reel and egg-and-dart entablature mouldings are the same style and are above a double row of six coffers. The niche's door frame is rectangular, not T-shaped as on many of the other 'La Ghorfa' niches. While the dedicant on Cat.12 is male and that on Cat.34 female, their pose is not so different: both have their large open right hand on the twisted fold of their garments.

Overall, both stelae have a flat border framing the entire sculpted face of the stelae, and neither has any holes or drilled holes, the distinguishing marks of so many 'La Ghorfa' stelae.

Cat.23 has many of the same elements in its surviving top zone, but its style is somewhat different. It does have sunken-centred flowers flanking the crescent, but they are

not the spiky-petalled rosettes of Cat.12 and 34. The crescent is rounder in circumference and is in lower relief, so that the wreath above sits on its points, rather than lying within the curve, as on Cat.34. The crescent still sits on the head of the 'sign of Tanit', who again wears a wreath but lacks the slight smile of the other two. The grape bunches on Cat.23 and 34 have the same shape. Once again, a rosette vine separates the 'sign of Tanit' from Liber Pater and Venus, but this time it grows out of the pediment, beside a calyx flower that supports the acanthus leaf. Venus stands vertically this time and holds an apple, unlike the other two examples. While the top zone of Cat.23 contains no birds but does have drilled circles, the opposite is true for Cat.12 and 34. Finally, there is no flat frame around the register.

Cat.23 has one feature that makes it unique within this group. Along one of the side faces, to the left of the relief, the artist carved a rosette vine along the diagonal slant, and a thyrsus along the vertical face below. None of the other stelae have sculpted faces on any side but the front.

1C. Neither Cat. 13 nor Cat. 31 is particularly well-preserved, but they do share some features. The skirt of the 'sign of Tanit' is tall and narrower than most; it sits directly on the pediment peak. At the left is a grape bunch, with grapes that look more like rocks than fruit. Perhaps due to spatial problems, the objects on top of the pediments differ: Liber Pater on Cat.31, and a bird on Cat.13.

The sloping sides of the pediment consist of two plain, thick mouldings, and form a fairly tight triangle. Details of the pedimental sculpture and entablature mouldings differ, but the plain columns below have similar capitals with tight V-volutes. The sides of the arched niche extend almost to the columns themselves. The dedicant inside the niche in both cases is a young male with huge round eyes, long ears, a very round face, and short, wavy hair.

1D. Both Cat.32 and 36 have preserved the Graeco-Roman gods on the top of the pediment. At the left, Liber Pater wears a long, loose cloth doing little to disguise an anatomically improbable body; he holds a trapezoid-shaped cup in front of his chest. Liber Pater and Eros both hold onto the thyrsus between them; Eros raises a wreath in his left hand. Eros has a somewhat pear-shaped body with knock-knees and pigeon toes. A tall altar separates Eros from Venus, who also has a pear-shaped body; she stands with her legs pressed tightly together.

Below, the pedimental sculpture shares the facial features: a male bust with a bowl haircut, round ringed eyes, full cheeks, round ears, and cloth wrapped horizontally around his shoulders. Both heads look slightly to the viewer's left, an unusual feature among these stelae. In addition, these pediment busts are almost identical to the head of the dedicant on Cat.32.

On both niches, the rough and unfluted columns are slightly inset from the edge. A rough, plain wall surrounds the niche, rather than the usual door frame. Some of the stylistic details differ between the two: the entablature mouldings and coffers look quite different, and the dedicant on Cat.36 seems less plastic than even the figures on the same stele, let alone those on Cat.32.

Cat. 16 is possibly related. It exhibits a similar full-cheeked, round-eyed face for its figures. It has few other parallels, however, and may be closer to Cat. 13 from sub-group 1C above. Both these stelae indicate a heavier hand: the body of the 'sign of Tanit' is a plain, tall trapezoid; the grapes are irregular in shape and ponderous; and the architectural features are heavy and thick. On the dedicants' heads, slightly wavy hair softens the blunt haircut somewhat; both people have larger ears than on the previous two stelae. In all four cases, however, the dedicant's niche is carved quite deeply, and there is no rectangular or T-shaped frame around it.

Type 2 'Simple' Niches

Group 2A	Group 2B	Unattributed
Cat.30, 35, and 42	Cat.21, 25, and possibly 26	Cat. 1, 3, and 28

2A. Cat.30, 35, and 42 all have a very flat, faceless 'sign of Tanit' with rubbery arms; the grape bunch it holds is noticeably triangular in shape on Cat.30 and 42, while the pomegranate on the other side is particularly long and flat on Cat.30 and 35. The birds on Cat.30 are in similar positions to those on Cat.42 and have incised feathers.

Below, the simple niche has an arched lintel composed of individual blocks; the arcade rests on a pair of fluted pilasters, which on Cat.30 and 42 have thin layered plaques for capitals. All of the dedicants have a multi-fold loop hanging down their chest and over their right hands, which hold a round fruit. The dedicants on Cat.30 and 42 both stand on a concave-sided pedestal resting on a double layer of five square coffers; the break on

Cat.35 below the skirt of the dedicant makes it impossible to know if the same situation applied.

None of these stelae has a register below the dedicant, although Cat.35 is broken off at the niche's floor level.

2B. The trio of Cat.21, 25, and possibly 26 forms a loose group, with only certain points of similarity. Cat.21 and 25 are the closest. On both, the dedicant wears a robe with the chest fold hanging like a hoop around the neck. The left arm parallels the curve of the hoop, crossing in front of the body as if to place an offering on the altar that stands at the dedicant's right side. However, he or she is already placing another object on this altar with the right hand. Both dedicants stand on a pedestal, although that on Cat.21 is wide enough to support the altar as well.

The two stelae differ most in architecture. Cat.25 has a Type 2 'simple niche', while Cat.21 has perhaps a cross between the two key types.

In the bottom zone of both stelae, the ceremonial scene differs from the usual bull sacrifice of the other stelae, possibly portraying a different part of the ceremony or an altogether different ritual. Although the two scenes are different, they are similar in how the artist has handled the portrayal of the side view of a person: in both cases, the hair sits on top of the misshapen skull, the eye is large and ringed, the nose and neck are rectangles separate from the head, and the ear is missing.

The flute-player on Cat.21 and the Victories on Cat.25 have the same dress type, a short-sleeved garment with a double belt at the hip. All of the garments on these stelae have heavy, somewhat irregular incised lines indicating folds or pleats.

Cat.25 and 26 have only superficial similarities. Both have a simple niche flanked by *caducei*, above which are Victories; the left victory is in profile and holds a palm over the niche's arch, while the right victory faces the viewer and holds out a wreath. However, closer inspection reveals great differences in the details of the *caducei*, the niche's lintel, the column capitals, the capitals, and in the body proportions and garments of the figures.

Type 1 versus Type 2 Niches

These groupings confirm that Type 1 and Type 2 niches are not superficial variations on the same patterns; their style and contents are distinct. These distinctions extend beyond artistic preferences and abilities to perhaps indicate chronological and possibly even geographic divisions. Such specific considerations must be left to Chapter V.

The Manufacturing Process

The stele groupings invite the question of whether these stelae may have been prefabricated and only inscribed upon purchase, rather than being specially commissioned. Complete pre-fabrication seems alien to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, which, despite their general similarities, are so different in detail that it is hard to believe that the design process was not driven by demands of a very small market. Furthermore, the size of these stelae -- generally almost as tall as an adult person -- and the hours of technical labour required to carve and then paint such complex scenes, set the 'La Ghorfa' stelae quite apart from most others. It is not likely that the investment of materials and labour would have been made for such a product without a guaranteed buyer.

Glitches appear in the carving of the reliefs, which may be due to an interrupted deadline or inattentiveness. For instance, the lattice screen on Cat.12 is only partly carved out; score marks indicate where the work was to continue; its inscription has a rough-and-ready appearance, with the guide lines still visible, and is squeezed into a space at the bottom of the stele, as if the sculptor had not planned for it. On this stele, then, the sculpting and inscription apparently occurred simultaneously. Cat.13 may provide another forgotten element, its entablature, which was left as plain strips instead of mouldings.

Since some stelae preserve an inscription, one might question the relation of the person named in it to that depicted in the niche above it, who surely represents the dedicant who made the offering. Some factors complicate this investigative procedure. While no 'La Ghorfa' dedicant looks exactly like another, none of them are so specialized to look like portraits; no facial features suggest attention to an individual's distinctive physiognomy, while the hairstyles, dress, and attributes seem too repetitive to be evoking a specific person. Stelae commonly generalize features in this way; as a glance at the better-preserved stelae depicted in Le Glay's *Saturne africain* volumes indicates, while the style of the hair and clothing might change according to fashion, variations in facial features seem to be more related to sculpting techniques and local styles than any attempt to create a recognizable portrait.³¹³ Still, the people carved as dedicants usually reflect the gender and general age

³¹³Le Glay SAM I and II (1961 and 1966).

(child or adult) of the persons named in the inscription; a funerary epitaph from Bou Arada, for instance, names a woman and her four-year-old son, and its reliefs show an adult woman and a child.³¹⁴

The 'La Ghorfa' inscriptions should, therefore, relate to the person depicted in the relief. Unfortunately, the inscriptions provide their own difficulties in this matter. The question of pre-fabrication must be resumed after careful epigraphic evaluation, undertaken in the next chapter.

³¹⁴Ferchiou (1981), 152-155 no.8 ("Stele of Cezzonia").

Chapter III The Inscriptions

In contrast to the detailed sculptural elements, the potential for gathering information from the inscriptions on these stelae has been neglected by both the dedicants and modern scholars. From 43 stelae, only eleven brief inscriptions have been recorded: two Neopunic (III.1), eight Latin (III.2), and one bilingual (Latin-Neopunic, III.3);¹ the seven surviving examples are illustrated in the Appendix at the end of this chapter (p. 155).² As many as ten further stelae have a surface prepared to receive an inscription, but no mark remains. Of the remaining twenty-two stelae, five are uninscribed and show no prepared area suitable for being inscribed,³ while seventeen are too fragmentary to have preserved any inscription.⁴ Even the extant inscriptions record very little information, but some conclusions can be drawn from the choice of language, phrasing, nomenclature, and the presentation of the inscription.

The inscription is normally on the lower half of the stele, either above or immediately below the lowest sculpted zone. The epigraphic fields vary as follows: five are in the form of a narrow, double-framed rectangle, bisected internally by a ring or wreath in four cases (Cat.11, 10, 38, and 40) and without decoration in the last (Cat.39). This type of

¹Neopunic: Cat.29 and 30. Latin: Cat.12, 21, 33, 37, 39, and 41-43. Neopunic and Latin: Cat.11. ²No inscription is visible today on Cat.41 or 42, while Cat.39 and 43 are lost.

³Cat.1, 2, 6, 8, and 24. However, the inscription on Cat.30 has no formally-prepared field.

⁴Cat.5, 7, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, 32, and 34-36. In addition, Cat.6 is broken off above the lowest point of sculpting; as described below, this zone is the critical one for inscriptions.

cartouche is unparalleled.⁵ Cat.4 has a long single-framed cartouche, open at one end. Cat.3 and 29 have a wide, square-framed box. Cat.41 and 9 have a rectangle raised above the surrounding surface.⁶ Cat.14 and 33 have a slightly recessed rectangle, somewhat irregular in shape. Cat.20 has an unframed, slightly recessed box with concave sides.

The style of the cartouche apparently had no relation to whether it would be inscribed or not; for instance, from the first type described above, only Cat.11 and 39 have inscriptions. In fact, inscriptions do not always occur within a formal cartouche; that on Cat.42, for instance, was supposedly on the arched lintel of the niche.⁷ Since Cat.21 has its inscription on the dedicant's pedestal, the pedestals on Cat.24 and 25 could potentially have been used for the same purpose, but were not. Finally, the inscriptions on Cat.12, 30, and 37 were simply inscribed below the lowest zone, with no frame whatsoever.⁸ Any part of the front face of the stele, from the architectural zone down, was therefore suitable for an inscription.

III.1 The Neopunic Inscriptions

The two Neopunic inscriptions occur on Cat.29 and 30.⁹ Before it was damaged, Cat.29 had a multi-line inscription within a large square frame, similar to that on the uninscribed stele Cat.3. Cat.30, on the other hand, has no formally-laid out field for its

⁵The small size of the ring or wreath makes it difficult to identify with precision: the outline is that of a circle, the top of which is interrupted by a round object, which itself contains an engraved circle.

⁶Two curtain-like objects close off either side of the cartouche on Cat.9.

⁷This stele today preserves no trace of an inscription; cf. below, p.138.

⁸In the case of Cat.30 especially, the lapicide made little attempt to smooth out the area before it was inscribed. The type of epigraphic field for one further inscribed stele, Cat.43, which is now lost, is unknown.

⁹Cf. p.142 for the bilingual Latin-Neopunic inscription on Cat.11.

inscription, which simply appears in the rough area below the sculptural decoration. The latter adheres to the more frequent presentation of inscriptions on Punic stelae from Carthage and on Neopunic stelae from Maktar,¹⁰ but those cases almost invariably involve a dedication several lines in length, with fairly large letters; in other words, the dedication dominates those stelae. Cat.30, on the other hand, has quite small lettering that occupies only one line; in fact, its inscription is easy to miss. Two sanctuaries, Teboursouk (near Dougga) and El-Hofra (Constantine), have rare examples of one-line Punic inscriptions, but in those cases the lettering is large and obvious, a visually significant feature of the stone.¹¹

The inscription on Cat.29 begins with LDN; the next few letters could read L[BL], making the first two words "to lord Baal". The rest of the inscription, unfortunately, has been lost to damage; even these first two words are uncertain due to both damage and the very cursive nature of the script. If the reading is correct, the start already follows the pattern of hundreds of Punic and Neopunic texts, with an opening address to the recipient god or gods.¹² The rest of the text is now gone, but would likely have followed one of two patterns that are common to Punic-style inscriptions, as the following two Neopunic examples illustrate:

Example 1 (from Maktar; 4 lines):¹³ L'DN B'L (H.)MN K '/ ŠM 'QL 'BRK 'DB R / BN M'RWZ 'B'L / [HMKT] 'RM

¹⁰Stelae from Carthage and Maktar make up the majority of the collection published in Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955].

¹¹Teboursouk: cf. Fantar (1974), 38 nos. 28 and 29, and pl.XI,28 and 29. El-Hofra: Berthier and Charlier (1955), nos.249-PUN and 255-PUN.

¹²The dedications from Carthage, for example, have been published in a number of places, including the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, Vol.1.

¹³Transcribed into Latin letters, from the Hebraic transcription provided in Chabot *Punica* IV (1916), 96 no.B8.

"To Lord Baal, since¹⁴ he [Baal] heard his [Dabar's] voice, he [Baal] blessed him: Dabar, son of Maruza, citizen of Maktar."

Example 2 (in the British Museum, provenance unknown; 5 lines):¹⁵

LDNLBLNDRŠN/DRBLNGB/TŠP(T.) HNBLBNB/DMLQRTKLBRK'Š/M' QL

"To Lord Baal, the vow which Balonag, daughter of Šafot, (wife) of Hannibaal, son of Abdmelqart, vowed, for he [Baal] blessed her [Balonag], he [Baal] heard her [Balonag's] voice."

These two examples are typical, in that they begin by invoking the god. The next two parts can apparently be interchangeable in position: (i) the dedicants state that they are fulfilling a vow as a show of gratitude for the god's benediction,¹⁶ and (ii) the dedicants identify themselves, normally with their name and filiation, but sometimes also further familial details and their profession¹⁷ and citizenship.

Though the second Neopunic inscription, on Cat.30, is completely preserved, it provides only one of these typical traits, the votive formula: $NDR \ SNDR \ SM'QL'BRK'$, "the vow which he vowed, [since] he heard his voice, he blessed him". This message is incomplete. As Chabot observed, the names of both the god and the dedicant are missing,¹⁸ an almost unparalleled omission. In fact, it is contrary to the purpose of such a stele, which must have answered social as well as religious expectations, given its great size and elaborate carving.

¹⁴The subordinate conjunction k or $k\hat{l}$ is usually translated "for", "since", or "because", meaning that the god has already blessed the worshippers. Fantar (1992-1993), 120, argued that a better translation is "in the hope that".

¹⁵Transcribed from the Hebraic version published by Chabot Punica XVII (1917), 32 no.2.

¹⁶Alternate wordings for the Punic formula are rare; for examples, cf. Berthier and Charlier (1955), nos.27-PUN, 118-PUN and 221-PUN.

¹⁷For professions attested in such inscriptions, see, for instance, CIS 1.4873-4887.

¹⁸Chabot Punica XVII (1917), 31-32.

As the Neopunic models above demonstrated, the dedicant's name could either precede or follow the standard phrase that describes the vow being heard and the benediction. In the inscription on Cat.30, a second line, never added, could have provided the name, filiation, and potentially other information about the dedicant. However, the god's name is almost always the first element in the inscription; in this case, there is no room for a name above the inscription and it would not likely have occurred in a second line to this dedication. The epigrapher had room under the inscription to add such a name, but did not, in keeping with common practice. At El-Hofra, a few inscriptions alter the normal structure by placing the divinity's name after that of the dedicant and before the last element of the text, the phrase "for he heard his voice, he blessed him".¹⁹ However, almost no North African inscription places the god's name at the very end of the inscription.²⁰ Certainly the lack of the divinity's name is unusual; it occurs in one other instance, in a bilingual inscription commemorating the construction of a temple and the fulfilment of a vow to one or more unnamed divine recipients, at Aïn-Youssef.²¹

Instead, the inscription on Cat.30 seems to amalgamate the two models awkwardly, given the strange syntax. Could it represent late usage and breakdown of the language, at least in written form? If the dates most commonly assigned to the group, the late first and second centuries A.C., are correct, Cat.30 falls right at the beginning of a period in which

¹⁹Cf. Bertrandy and Sznycer (1987), 81

²⁰One exception is Berthier and Charlier (1955), no.228-PUN.

²¹Cf. Derenbourg (1876) = ILAlg I,1186.

Neopunic inscriptions at Maktar became "decadent", using stereotyped formulae.²² The carver of this inscription may have taken the familiar votive phrase to its extreme, making names decadent. In fact, the Latin inscriptions from the group display similar tendencies; a lack of names is symptomatic of most stelae from the group.

III.2 The Latin Inscriptions

Eight of the Latin inscriptions are based on the phrase votum solvit, "(he) fulfilled (his) vow",²³ the common Roman equivalent to the Punic votive formulae that had been in use at Carthage and elsewhere for centuries. This is not to say that the Latin votive formulae here derived from the Punic formula, for these V.S. formulae are found, for the most part, across the Empire. In this setting, however, the continuity of meaning is particularly striking.²⁴

In each case, the formula is reduced to an abbreviation. Like the inscription on Cat.30, most omit the name of the dedicant²⁵ and none name the god being venerated; there is no room to add such details. As a result, the abbreviated votive formula most frequently appears alone. It takes the following forms on the stelae:²⁶

²²Picard *CivMact* (1957), 67-68. While the formulae became stereotyped, the language itself was no longer static. Variations in spelling crept in; in this inscription, for instance, NDR has added vowels to the original spelling, *NDR*. Such vowels are characteristic "in several out of the way regions in Algeria and Tunisia" in late inscriptions, according to Jongeling (1989), 367 and n.7, 370.

²³Cat.12, 33, 37, 39, and 41-43. Cat.21 does not include a v.s. formula (cf. below, p.147).

²⁴Interestingly, the Greek votive inscriptions from El-Hofra are also close equivalents to the Punic; cf. Berthier and Charlier (1955), no. 2-GR.

²⁵Cat.11 and 12 do not. Carton (1895), 158, believed that the *V.S.L.M.* formula on the Cat.37 had probably once been preceded by a name; however, there is not enough space on the stele for a name. Given the pattern among the other 'La Ghorfa' stelae, there is no need to insist upon a lost name in this case.

²⁶For ease of comparison, only the votum solvit formulae are included here; other details provided in the inscriptions will be discussed later.

• V.S.L.A., v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo),²⁷ "(he) willingly fulfilled (his) vow": Cat.11.

• V.S.L.A.F., v(otum) s(usceptum) l(ibens) a(nimo) f(ecit), "(he) willingly made the vow (he) had undertaken" or v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo) f(eliciter),²⁸ "(he) willingly and happily fulfilled his vow": Cat.39.

• V.S.L.A.S., v(otum) s(usceptum) l(ibens) a(nimo) s(olvit),²⁹ "(he) willingly fulfilled the undertaken vow": Cat.12.

• V.S.L.M., v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito),³⁰ "(he) willingly and deservedly

fulfilled (his) vow": Cat.37.

• R.V.S.L.H, R() v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) < a(nimo)?>,³¹ "(R?) willingly fulfilled

(his) vow": Cat.33.

• V.S., v(otum) s(olvit) "(he) fulfilled (his) vow": Cat.42.

³⁰Carton (1895), 158 and (1899), 29; Poinssot (1905), 400.

³¹The inscription on Cat.33 was published in the entry C.1011 as R.V.S.L.H, with the last letter suggested to be a mistake of the lapicide and corrected to "[a(nimo)]". The top of the letter is indeed square, although the lapicide may have attempted to make the letter into an 'A' by joining the two vertical bars with hesitant horizontal bars on top of each. Cagnat (repr.1964), 471, could offer no expansion for a final 'H' in a votum solvit abbreviation. Theories on the expansion of the initial letter ('R') are discussed below.

²⁷Poinssot (1905), 402, first provided this expansion for this stele.

²⁸Cagnat (repr. 1964), 471, suggested the latter expansion for abbreviations of this type; C.2643 is an unabbreviated example. The two expansions suggested here are more elegant, but not necessarily more likely, than the dual verb reading made by Poinssot (1905), 402: *votum solvit libens animo fecit*?, "(he) willingly fulfilled his vow, he made this (?)".

²⁹CIL 8 expands this inscription variously at different points: it first appears as C.1143, v(otum) s(olvit)l(ibente) [sic] a(nimo) s(uo)?, then, on CIL 8:2, p.1107, as votum solvit libens animo suo?; Poinssot (1905), 402, and Cagnat (repr.1964), 471, followed these versions. Finally, on CIL 8:5, p.304, the expansion is votum susceptum (suum?) libens animo solvit (?). Based on other North African inscriptions, Beschaouch (1968), 259, n.12, preferred the past participle and advised the reading, v(otum) s(usceptum) l(ibens) a(nimo) s(olvit), "(he) willingly fulfilled the undertaken vow". This suggestion is attractive, since it closely parallels part of the dedication typical of Punic stelae, ND R Š NDR, "the vow which he vowed". As intermediaries, rare Latin inscriptions use a relative clause instead of the past participle, e.g. votum quod promisert [sic] libens animo ... solvit (C.4581, from Zana; cf. also C.16865, from Henchir Sidi Brahim).

• $V_{.}$, v(otum), "vow": Cat.41. Poinssot recorded the inscriptions for this and the preceding example,³² but neither of these markings are visible today.³³ Poinssot was the only person ever to note either inscription.

• L.L.V.S., *l(aetus) l(ibens) v(otum) s(olvit)*, "(he) fulfilled (his) vow happily and willingly": Cat .43, now lost.³⁴

Six of these inscriptions have only an abbreviated votive formula; they are reticent compared to other Roman African inscriptions. With one exception, all of these formulae are found throughout North Africa, and indeed throughout the Empire. Only the R.V.S.L. < A.> abbreviation has no known parallel in any Latin inscription from Africa or elsewhere; it will merit further investigation below.

Significantly, no 'La Ghorfa' stele has exactly the same votive formula as another. The variety of *votum solvit* formulae is not unusual across Roman Africa, but it is within one collection of stelae. At the sanctuary of Saturn at Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*), for example, one particular formula clearly predominated, although the degree of abbreviation and the word order sometimes varied: v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo) accounted for 85-90% of the approximately 250 cases, followed by v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) at just under 4%, v(otum)

³²Poinssot (1905) 400.

³³Poinssot reported that the inscription on Cat.42 was on the arched lintel of the niche, but such a location is anomalous for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, which consistently place the inscriptions below the niche. In fact, Cat.42 is in its style and layout most like Cat.30, which had a Neopunic inscription, located below the sculpted area altogether. Although the stone of Cat.42 was left rough-cut below the coffers (the lowest sculpted element on the stele), a section immediately below is somewhat smoother; it is here that one would expect to see an inscription, most likely in Neopunic, given how closely it resembles Cat.30. However, the stele lacks any epigraphic remains today.

³⁴Though Poinssot (1905), 402, linked this inscription with Cat.4, the two stelae are clearly different, as indicated in the Catalogue.

s(olvit) I(ibens) m(erito) at 2.5%, and well under 1% each for several other variations on the phrase.³⁵ The same situation surely applied at other North African sanctuaries. On the basis of their similar decorations, scholars have almost always attributed the 'La Ghorfa' stelae to one site, but the epigraphic evidence adds to indications that suggest otherwise.³⁶

The 'La Ghorfa' inscriptions are also remarkably brief. A name accompanies only two of the votum solvit abbreviations, in one case a single name with filiation, *Bellic(us) Max(imi?) f(ilius) V.S.L.A.S.* (Cat.12), and in the second case, only a single name, *Rogatus V.S.L.A.* (Cat.11).³⁷ Other North African inscriptions are rarely this concise. During the first centuries B.C. and A.C. at the Aïn Tebernok sanctuary (*Tubernuc*), votive dedications were minimalist; they varied from having only the name *Datus* on one stele to the comparatively verbose *A.Q. Aufidius Melior V.S.L. ani(mo)* on another.³⁸ In the second to third centuries at Aïn Tounga, dedications as short as *Caecilius Rufinus V.S.L.A.* and *Felix V.S.L.A.* formed a very small minority.³⁹ Each of these sanctuaries was located at a site that had been a Punic or Numidian settlement prior to the Roman period; like the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, their Latin ex-votos retain the pre-Roman traditions in their reliefs, using such symbols as the so-called

³⁵These calculations are based on inscriptions reported in *CIL* 8, which catalogues the sanctuary's stelae more completely than the original publication, Berger and Cagnat (1889). The percentages are approximate due to some uncertain readings.

³⁶Cf. p.8.

 $^{^{37}}$ In ex-votos to Saturn in Roman Africa, inscriptions in which the dedicant's name appeared in the nominative case, followed by a *votum solvit* phrase, as occurs with both of these examples, were popular from the first through fourth centuries (Le Glay *SAH* [1966], 28-30).

³⁸Le Glay SAM 1 (1961), 93-96.

³⁹Le Glay SAM I (1961), nos.1, 11, and 27 respectively; cf. also no.204.

'sign of Tanit' and the crescent.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the stelae bearing these dedications make their inscriptions much more prominent in size and location than do the 'La Ghorfa' exvotos.

One further inscription parallels the brevity of the 'La Ghorfa' inscriptions, apparently known only from the entry $C.1010.^{41}$ According to the description, the stone was broken across a sculptural register showing a person between two palms. Below this register was a two-line inscription, *NIGER / V.S.L.A*; for comparative purposes, the editor referred the reader to C.1142 and the entries following it, which are all 'La Ghorfa' stelae.⁴² This reference only applied to the inscription; it did not suggest that the sculptural elements or technique were comparable, despite the facts that on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, palms often flank the niche containing the supposed dedicant⁴³ and this niche zone generally sits above the inscribed cartouche. Nonetheless, this *Niger* stele could also be from the 'La Ghorfa' group, not from Carthage.⁴⁴ No other group combines this type of sculptural composition with a very brief *V.S.L.A*. inscription.⁴⁵ Unlike the *L.L.V.S.* inscription discussed above

⁴⁰Cf. p.49*f* and 46*f* for more on these symbols. Other sites with strong indigenous elements also tend to have brief votive inscriptions and Punic symbols; cf. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 106-108, 207-220, 247-231, 274-285, etc.

⁴¹This ex-voto was reputedly from Carthage and was being conserved, at least in 1881, *in aedibus Cubisolii* at La Goulette, a suburb between Tunis and Carthage; its current location is unknown.

⁴²Similarly, the entry C.1009 encouraged the reader to refer to C.1142 sq. for like inscriptions, but in this case, the sculptural and epigraphic elements, as described, do not seem closely related to the 'La Ghorfa' type.

 $^{^{43}}$ Cat. 1-3, 17, 20, 43, and by the lower niches on Cat.8 and 37. Notably, the *CIL* description of Cat.43 (C.1142) did not describe the architecture surrounding the niche, except for the pediment at the top, yet the palms flanking the central figure did merit recording.

⁴⁴As the Appendix (p.213) explains, *CIL* 8 and several other sources attributed some of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae to Carthage, but that attribution is no longer tenable.

⁴⁵According to Le Glay SAM I (1961), 23, no.22-Carthage, despite the lack of a deity's name in this inscription, the palms and the *V.S.L.A.* formula indicate that this stele belongs to the cult of Saturn. In truth, neither the palm nor the formula belongs solely to Baal-Saturn.

(Cat.43), not enough details are known about the *Niger* stele to include it in the group at this point, but it does have a place as Cat.B2 in Catalogue B, which gathers stelae related to the 'La Ghorfa' type.

III.3 Bilingual Inscription

The full Latin inscription for Cat.11 reads *Rogatus V.S.L.A.* Several different scholars published this inscription at the turn of the last century,⁴⁶ but it was not until 1978 that Bisi pointed out that supposed *hederae distinguentes* between each letter of the *V.S.L.A.* abbreviation were in fact Punic letters. She could not, however, make any sense of them.⁴⁷ Upon inspecting the inscription personally, I identified the Neopunic letters *R'DN* set between the letters *V.S.L.A.*, and then an *R* immediately after the name *Rogatus*. Read as Punic, and therefore from right to left, this is a meaningless combination of letters.

However, the Neopunic letters on Cat. 11 may have been attracted to the direction of the adjacent Latin script. When reversed, the Neopunic letters read RNDR, or "R. vowed"; in other words, they translate into Punic the stele's Latin phrase, *Rogatus v(otum) s(olvit)* l(ibens) a(nimo). The abbreviated name is striking. Other Punic inscriptions from sites like El-Hofra, Maktar, and Teboursouk do not ever abbreviate names, Roman or otherwise. While Punic-Latin bilingual inscriptions are attested in North Africa and instances of a single text employing letters from both languages are known, apparently no others demonstrate the two major points of interest about the *Rogatus* inscription: the interspersal

⁴⁶CMA (1897), no.C741 and D382; La Blanchère (1897), no.47; C.1144 and C.14273; Poinssot (1905), 402.

⁴⁷Bisi (1978), 69-70.

of the letters of two distinct phrases of the two different languages, and the backwards reading of the Punic script. Nevertheless, in order to write the same phrase in Latin as in Punic on this ex-voto, the clever lapicide, or the commissioner of the inscription, was willing to compromise the rules of the Semitic language in a unique way.

III.4 Identity of the Dedicants

Whether in Neopunic or Latin, the majority of the inscriptions omit the names of those who dedicated them. As a result, only a fraction of the inscriptions are at all helpful in identifying who the dedicants were, where they lived, and what their status was.

Proper names accompany the V.S.L.A.-type formula in only two cases, Rogatus and Bellic(us) Max(imi?) f(ilius), on Cat. 11 and 12 respectively. For the purposes of the present study, even these names are not very informative about their owners, especially in the case of Rogatus, a name ubiquitous in North Africa.⁴⁸ Rogatus may be a Latin translation of the Punic name MTNB L (Muttunbaal), "gift of Baal".⁴⁹ This theophoric name is one of several that are uniquely popular in North Africa; most of them relate to the cult of Baal-Saturn. Even so, there is no reason to infer, as did Ghedini,⁵⁰ that this stele therefore belonged to the cult of Baal-Saturn. In all likelihood, Rogatus was such a popular name that few people thought it religiously significant.

⁴⁸On the fuller's column at Maktar (see Ben Abdallah (1986), 41-41 no. 99), five out of 21 names belong to *Rogati*; their *tria nomina* distinguish them from one another.

⁴⁹Cf. Lassère (1977), 454, and Bénabou (1981), 19. Benz (1972), 356-357, collected almost 130 attestations of the name *Mutunbaal* from various sources. Lassère (1977), 451-454, listed the characteristic *cognomina* of North Africa and identified, wherever possible, Latin translations (*interpretatio Romana*) of Punic names.

⁵⁰Ghedini (1990), 239.

The brief name of *Rogatus* suggests that his family had only partially adopted Latinstyle nomenclature; furthermore, the name does not appear to be that of a Roman citizen, as it stands alone. He may have used both Latin and Punic on his stele in recognition of the linguistic restrictions of family or friends. His simple nomenclature does not necessarily indicate an early Roman date, as single names are actually most frequent at such cities as Dougga and Haïdra during the second and third centuries.⁵¹ Indeed, nothing in the name distinguishes this person from the *Rogatus*, *Cael(estis)* sac(erdos), who set up a dedication to Saturn in Djemila (*Cuicul*) during the fourth century, at a time when Roman citizenship had long been extended to all free inhabitants of the Empire.⁵²

The second name attested, $Bellic(us)^{53} Max(imi) f(ilius)$ (Cat.12), is also relatively uninformative as to when its owner lived and what his social status was. However, it does reveal that he was probably from the area of what in pre-Roman times had been Numidia, where the name *Bellicus* was uniquely popular.⁵⁴ *Bellicus*, a Latin adjective with military connotations, may translate the Punic name *MHRB* L (*Maharbaal*),⁵⁵ which some define as

⁵¹Lassère (1973), 129.

⁵²For the *Rogatus Cael. sac.* inscription, see Le Glay (1953), 61-63 no.41, who dates it based on the piece's artistic style. Kajanto (1977) studied how single names gained popularity from the time of Constantine.

 $^{^{53}}Bellic(us)$ is the most likely expansion, as longer versions are extremely rare in North Africa; for instance, *Bellicianus* occurs only once (C.1287).

⁵⁴In *CIL* 8 and *ILAlg*, over three dozen people are named *Bellicus* or one of its variants; the name does not appear in *IRT*. Only three inscriptions are not from Numidia; *CIL* 8 reported them as being at Carthage, but none of them have confirmable origins: *C*.12936; *C*.22640,76; *C*.24642a. The African examples account for approximately one-third of the attestations of the name in all *CIL* volumes; some examples in non-African inscriptions may also have been of Numidian origin.

⁵⁵The name *Maharbaal* is attested not only in more than 100 Punic texts (mostly from North Africa and Sardinia), but also in several Greek and Latin sources, from Herodotus to Appian; cf. Benz (1972),137-138, for the references.

"mon guerrier est Baal".⁵⁶ On the other hand, it may make a native African name like *Zabullica* more Latin-sounding.⁵⁷ Whether of Punic or native tradition, this single name suggests that this dedicant was both of local descent and not a Roman citizen.

Even so, Bellicus' father apparently had a Latin name: Max., most likely Maximus in this Roman African setting.⁵⁸ This person, like his son, lacked a *praenomen*, the usual name that precedes *f(ilius)* in Roman-style filiation. Rather than being Roman, Maximus was probably one of the many locals who simply had a Latin name; often, Numidians did not discern between native, Punic, and Latin names, and several local families had members with the simple names *Bellicus* and Maximus.⁵⁹

These names offer little in the way of chronological indicators. For both *Rogatus* and *Bellicus*, the names suggest that the men's families had not fully adopted Roman nomenclature, a fact which, in and of itself, does not necessarily indicate an early Roman date.⁶⁰ For instance, the Neopunic and Latin inscriptions from Maktar reverse the pattern that one might expect, that Roman-style names steadily replaced the native ones. On the late Neopunic votive dedications, Roman names -- written in Neopunic -- dominated the

⁵⁶E.g. Segert (1976), 293; Lipinski *DCPP* (1992), 269; Hoch (1994), 147-148. However, others have defined the name quite differently, without any military or protective connotations: cf. Benz (1972), 340-341, for references.

⁵⁷Less than a dozen inscriptions attest this name, often varying the spelling; cf. Jongeling (1994), 153-154, for variants of these names, and Pflaum (1977), 318, for the geographic distribution of names beginning Zab-. Comparably, native names may have independently inspired the name *Bellicus* in Roman Germany, where *Belex* and its many variants indicate a nominal root other than Latin: cf. cognomina index, CIL 13.

⁵⁸Instances of *Maximus/-a* total over 600 in *CIL* 8:5, p.100. The next most common name beginning *Max-* in the same index is *Maximianus*, recorded just over 25 times when not in reference to the emperor.

⁵⁹For instance, a funerary stone from Djebba (*Thigibba*) records the name of one *Bellicus*, son of *Maximus Namus* (C.11917), while at Henchir or Guelaa Bou Atfan, there was a *Maxima*, daughter of *Bellicus* and wife of *Maximus* (C.16999=*ILAIg* I,687).

⁶⁰Or a late Roman date, since single names increased in frequency at that time; cf. Kajanto (1977).

nomenclature. Fourteen of seventeen names published in 1890 from the site included filiation, a trait typical of both the Punic and the Roman cultures.⁶¹ What drew these cases closer to the Punic custom was that the dedicant had only one name; the phrase "son of X" acted to further identify the person, as in *Fortis*, son of *Publius*; or *Gaius*, son of *Rusticus*, son of *Aculeius*.⁶² Even when the father had a more complex name, the dedicant tended to have only one: *Marcus*, son of *Gaius Canuleius*; *Felix*, son of *Quintus Iulius*.⁶³ The single name system also predominated at other sites where, as at Maktar, Latin names were transcribed into Punic.⁶⁴

These Neopunic inscriptions suggest that those people who were likely to set up an inscription at Maktar were also likely to have adopted Roman-sounding names. However, these people were not necessarily adopting the full Roman onomastic system or Latin script at the same time.⁶⁵ Even the Latin funerary epitaphs from the site show that not all of its inhabitants uniformly and consistently adopted Roman nomenclature. Indeed, Punic or

⁶¹From the Maktar inscriptions, Berger (1890), 39-40, published 17 Latin names with their Neopunic conventions. His examples ranged from names with surviving Punic tendencies, such as *Sextus Hamilcat* (no.54), to the more Roman *Quintus Humanius Candidus* (no.23).

⁶²Berger (1890), nos. 6 and 55, respectively.

⁶³Berger (1890), nos. 3 and 12, respectively.

⁶⁴For the El-Hofra sanctuary at Constantine (supposedly third to second century B.C.), cf. Berthier and Charlier (1955), nos. 2-PUN., 15-PUN., 228-PUN., 263-NEOP.; Bertrandy and Sznycer (1987), Cat. 7, 11, 20, and 78. At El-Hofra, only single Latin names occur, the majority of them *praenomina*. Nearer to Maktar, ten out of twenty-two people recorded on ex-votos at Teboursouk had Roman names, on stelae that may date to the first and second centuries A.C.; cf. Fantar (1974), nos. 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 26.

⁶⁵The dates for these inscriptions are unknown, although Berger (1890), 42, noted that, according to A. Héron de Villefosse, some Latin names attested in this Maktar group, such as *Optatius*, *Fidus*, and *Montanus*, indicate a second or third century date. Latin epitaphs did not become common until the second century; only two from before the mid-first century A.C. have been identified: cf. M'Charek and M'Timet (1982), 12.

Numidian names are much more common in the Latin inscriptions *after*, not before, Maktar attained colonial status, *circa* 180 A.C.⁶⁶

In light of such evidence, simple nomenclature alone cannot establish that the 'La Ghorfa' *Rogatus* and *Bellicus* lived during the early Roman period. Punic and native traditions survived well into the Empire. These people's names do not suggest that they or their families, as locals, strongly wished to appear "Roman",⁶⁷ a fact that contradicts how they presented themselves in the sculptural reliefs.⁶⁸ For instance, the dedicant on Cat.12, presumably *Bellicus* himself, wears a garment resembling a toga and holds a scroll in his hand, in the typical appearance of a Roman magistrate. However, his name is a typically Numidian one and, as it appears, lacks the *tria nomina*. The Punic and Roman divinities in the upper zone of his stele echo the mixed message his nomenclature and portrait send. *Bellicus* may not have understood what the toga and scroll implied to a Roman, merely wishing to present himself as a respectable and urbane man in the manner of municipal statues he likely saw in the forum.

A different conflation of the indigenous and the Roman occurs on Cat.21, which provides one final name. Its inscription is the sole Latin example from the group without a *V.S.L.A.*-type phrase. It does not appear in a cartouche, but on the dedicant's pedestal

⁶⁶According to Khanoussi and M'Charek (1980), 56, more third century Latin inscriptions at Maktar include local *cognomina* because these people had collectively been promoted in status by then.

⁶⁷Lassère (in Pflaum (1977), 323-324) prudently pointed out that within one family, one child might have a purely Roman *cognomen* (like *Pulcher* or *Romanus*), while a second child might have a *cognomen* translated from the Punic (*Donatus, Fortunatus*, or *Rogatus*), or even a genuinely Punic or native name (*Baric* or *Namphamo*). If the name of only one such child should survive in an inscription, scholars would likely draw incorrect conclusions about him and his family.

inside the niche. This inscription provides only a name, possibly to be interpreted as that of one L(ucius) Iuli(us) Urba(nus).⁶⁹ The uncertainty stems not only from how the name is abbreviated,⁷⁰ but also from the fact that the inscription, spread over two lines, reads backwards on the first line (*i.e.* right to left) with retrograde letters, while the second line again reads backwards, but its letters face in the proper direction. Possibly the lapicide was more familiar with a language written right-to-left, such as Punic, than with Latin.

Although the abbreviation of the name is noteworthy, the inscription's format, as with the other 'La Ghorfa' examples, is particularly unusual; again, no known inscription parallels it in North Africa. However, the ex-voto *C*.1008 provides an interesting comparison to this stele, in both its epigraphic and its sculptural components;⁷¹ in fact, the composition of the two stelae's reliefs is so strikingly similar that *C*.1008 may belong to the 'La Ghorfa' series.⁷² In this context, however, its dedication is interesting since it, like the *Urbanus* and the *Rogatus* (Cat.11) inscriptions, reflects both Roman and pre-Roman traits. Two lines of Punic or Neopunic, written right-to-left, are separated by one line of Latin, supposedly written left-to-right: *L'DNLB'L NDR'S NDR* / CRES / *SM'QL'BRK'*. Following

⁶⁹The description in C.1145 was the first to suggest the expansion L. Iuli Urba(ni) for this inscription.

⁷⁰Mendleson (1995), 261, identified the name as *L. Juli(us) Urba*, but the cognomen *Urba* is unknown elsewhere in Africa, save for a potter's mark (*C.*22645,419). Both are likely abbreviated versions of *Urbanus*, a very popular name in North Africa: over 150 examples of the male version of the name alone are listed in *CIL* 8:5, p.121.

⁷¹The current location of C.1008 is unknown. It was reputedly from Carthage, but this identification was mistaken, as it was for another 'La Ghorfa' stele, Cat.33. Le Glay SAMI(1961), 15, no.4, also published this stele, but he depended entirely upon the *CIL* entry, presumably not having seen it himself.

⁷²Both stelae have at least two zones, the upper one showing a person making an offering in a temple niche, and the lower one depicting a bull sacrifice attended by a *victimarius* and a flute-player. Both stelae are characteristic of central Tunisian compositions, and are quite unlike any stele definitely from Carthage; they were probably attributed to Carthage because they were in private collections at modern Carthage and Tunis in the mid 1800s.

the *CIL* entry's suggestion that CRES abbreviates the name *Crescens*,⁷³ the inscription translates, "To Lord Baal, the vow that *Crescens* vowed, he heard his voice, he blessed him." The dedication is singular in the North African epigraphy, for no other Punic or Neopunic inscription contains a Roman name written in Latin.⁷⁴

The individual in the *Urbanus* inscription was the only 'La Ghorfa' person to record *tria nomina*, which, firstly, may indicate a date not before the late first century A.C.,⁷⁵ and, secondly, identifies him as a Roman citizen. North African inscriptions attest at least six people with the same name as this *L. Iulius Urbanus*; all of them lived in or not far from Constantine (*Cirta*).⁷⁶ Like *Bellicus*, this name therefore supports an origin for the stelae in the western part of the province. Ghedini suggested that the 'La Ghorfa' individual descended from the *Lucii Iulii* who colonized North Africa under Marius and Caesar.⁷⁷ Other explanations are also possible; for instance, freedmen took on their master's names, while Roman administrators and wealthy citizens sometimes saw their subjects or beneficiaries adopt their names on acquiring citizenship.

⁷³Cresces or Crescens appears 200 times in the index of CIL 8:5, on p.83.

⁷⁴Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 15 no.4.

⁷⁵Le Glay (1968), 235, although recognizing that *tria nomina* replaced *duo nomina* in the Claudian period, did not think the latter truly became popular until about the end of the first century A.C. in Africa Proconsularis. In his estimation, the trend occurred even later in Numidia and Mauretania, in the second century.

⁷⁶C.6304 (Aïn Fua), C.6768=*ILAlg* II,3824 (Tiddis), and C.7472=*ILAlg* II,1317 (a freedman at Constantine), *ILAlg* II,2850 (*Castellum Celtianum*, near Cirta), probably *ILAlg* II,2063 (*L.I. Urbanus L. f(ilius)*: near Constantine). Lassère assigned a date from the end of the Republic to the Trajanic period to both C.7472=*ILAlg* II,1317 (Lassère [1973], 135 and 147) and *ILAlg* II,2063 (Lassère (1973), 150). The name may also have been recorded in an inscription from Announa): *ILAlg* II,5431 (*L. Iulius Ur[---]*).

⁷⁷Ghedini (1990), 239 and n.22. *Iulii* were frequently among the colonists sent to Africa during the first centuries B.C. and A.C. (Lassère [1977], 152 and 461). From there, the name *Iulius* quickly grew to become the unchallenged leading *nomen* of Roman North Africa; for instance, at least 69 individuals with this *nomen* are attested at Maktar alone (Khanoussi and M'Charek [1980], 56). In Africa, the name *Lucius Iulius* also occurs early, in the inscriptions of Marian and Caesarian colonies, as well as in a Late Republican written source: cf. Lassère (1977), 152 and 461.

Like *Bellicus*, *Urbanus* dedicated a stele that leaves many questions. First, though he bears the *tria nomina*, suggesting that he is a Roman citizen, the clumsy script of his inscription suggests that he was not discerning when it came to choosing a stone-carver to identify him; he himself may not have been very literate. Second, the portrait above the inscription is fairly ambiguous. It may approximate the garments, and even the togas, worn by other 'La Ghorfa' dedicants, but is not very convincing, and even looks feminine. Unfortunately, the stele survives only up to just below the dedicant's head, which is normally the best clue for gender.

Within the rest of the 'La Ghorfa' group, only the *R.V.S.L.* <A> stele, on Cat.33, may contain a name. The expansion of the initial letter, 'R', is unclear, as this is the only attested instance of the abbreviation *R.V.S.L.A. C.*1011, the first publication of this inscription, supplied the best answer by supplementing the initial letter as R(ogatus?).⁷⁸ This expansion, although unexplained there, presumably resulted from comparison with another 'La Ghorfa' stele, inscribed *Rogatus V.S.L.A.* (C.1144=Cat.11), as the editors of *CIL* cross-referenced the two.⁷⁹ At the time, however, no one had recognized that Cat.11 also had a Neopunic message; the comparison was apparently based on sculptural similarities. Since one would expect this stele's dedicant to have included his or her name in the dedication, the *CIL* suggestion gained reluctant supporters.⁸⁰

⁷⁸C.1011 and CIL 8:5, p. 302.

⁷⁹C.1011, entry for the *R.V.S.L.H.* inscription, referred the reader to C.1142 sq., where most of the other 'La Ghorfa' inscriptions appeared, including C.1144, the *Rogatus V.S.L.A.* inscription. Only the description of C.1144 provided a cross-reference back to C.1011; it is this comparison that probably led to the expansion R(ogatus?) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) [a(nimo)] for the latter.

⁸⁰For instance, Poinssot (1905), 404.

Hesitation stems from the fact that the two stelae differ in technique and detail, and likely did not have the same owner. In the past, no match could be found for an inscription that abbreviates a person's name to a single letter, especially when the text does not provide the full name elsewhere. The *Rogatus V.S.L.A.* inscription, with its "R. vowed" phrase inserted in Neopunic letters, now provides that parallel, albeit in a different language.

On Cat.33, the name is a happier alternative to another version of a votive formula, such as r(eddidit) v(otum) s(usceptum) l(ibens) < a(nimo) >, "(he) willingly fulfilled the undertaken vow". Though *reddidit* occurs in Roman African votive inscriptions,⁸¹ it never occurs in this exact phrase and it was hardly ever abbreviated, presumably since it was not a common verb in these circumstances.⁸² Furthermore, a verb is never the first word in a votive formula. Thus, the expansion R(ogatus) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) < a(nimo) >, first unwittingly suggested over a century ago, remains the best choice. Nothing indicates that the two stelae belonged to the same person, for the name Rogatus was ubiquitous in North Africa. Rather, the pair of stelae exemplify how uniquely adaptable the Punic and Roman cultures were in this area of North Africa.

⁸¹The verb *reddidit* appears in various spellings on North African ex-votos: cf. C. 16865, C.20743, and C.23343, and probably C.24115; *ILAlg* II,386; C.23149, C.24348, *ILAlg* II,6348; Le Glay *SAM*1 (1961), 81 no.9; C.23151 and C.27332; C.23153; C.23149; C.23030; C.17642. The phrase *vota rev[o]lvat* occurs in C.23168=*ILT* 300, from *Tusuros* (Tozeur), but it is part of a Byzantine inscription, and apparently does not have any earlier parallels in North Africa; it is therefore an unlikely candidate.

⁸²In CIL 8, the only approximate parallel for an abbreviated votive phrase with the verb reddere is CIL 8, 24348 (cf. also CIL 8:5, p. 304); for this inscription, the abbreviation V.RED probably stands for v(otum) red(didit). Other volumes of the Corpus have expanded an 'R' in an abbreviated votive formula to reddidit: CIL 12, 1322 and 1716; CIL 13, 6572 and 8788. The unabbreviated phrase votum reddet libens merito in CIL 12, 3129, supports these expansions.

III.5 General Comments

These observations only hint at what was obviously a complex yet elastic relationship between Punic and Roman practices. In addition to using similar votive phrases, the Latin and Neopunic dedications have comparable inscription techniques. For instance, both use cursive lettering.⁸³ Though guidelines for the height of the letters remain on at least two examples -- Cat. 12 (Latin) and 30 (Neopunic) -- the inscribed markings are sometimes offcentre across the stone or cartouche. On the *R.V.S.L.H.* stele (Cat.33), the letters themselves are occasionally irregular in size or formation. In two examples, the *L. Iulius Urbanus* and *R.V.S.L.H.* stelae (Cat.21 and 33), simple round interpuncts separate the letters, while on the *Bellicus* stele (Cat.12), *hederae distinguentes* serve the same function.

Another striking feature of these stelae is that, despite their great size and elaborate reliefs, less than a quarter of them are inscribed, as preserved. However, most inscriptions on these stelae are within a cartouche below the niche or lowest zone. In the 'La Ghorfa' group, at least seventeen stelae are broken off above the niche level, or just below it.⁸⁴ Almost half of the 'La Ghorfa' pieces are therefore too fragmentary to have preserved any inscription.

On certain stelae, missing inscriptions may provide evidence for how they were produced. The epigraphic fields on some of the more complete stelae are empty: seven cartouches have no inscription.⁸⁵ On the evidence of Cat.21, the pedestals in the niches

⁸³Only the *Bellicus* stele (Cat. 12) attempts to imitate the square lettering of official inscriptions. In the Neopunic inscriptions, Cat.30 has inconsistently-formed letters, but the letters on Cat.29 are barely more than vertical scratches.

⁸⁴Cat.5-7, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, and 34-36. ⁸⁵Cat.3, 9, 10, 14, 20, 38, and 40.

could also be inscribed; so three more examples are potential candidates for an inscription.⁸⁶ Based on these examples, the manufacturing process for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae may have consisted of two separate steps. In the first, the sculptor carved the reliefs, including the frame for the inscription. It was only at a later stage that the sculptor, or a lapicide, inscribed the dedication. The exception to this theory is Cat.12, which has an unfinished latticework section below the dedicant, yet is inscribed.

Even if 'La Ghorfa' stelae did receive their reliefs first, the large number of empty cartouches is still problematic. Unless the stelae are works-in-progress from a workshop setting, rather than completed stones from a sanctuary, every detail should be complete. As they are not, the question of pre-fabrication, first posed in Chapter II, arises again. Advance manufacturing explains anomalies in certain other types of stelae from North Africa and may apply here.⁸⁷

One other possibility is that some dedications were painted, rather than inscribed, in the cartouche and no longer survive. Paint traces have revealed that the reliefs of these stelae were brightly decorated; in some cases, their dedications may have been in the form of *dipinti* rather than graffiti. Such had been the case several centuries earlier at a sanctuary at Motya; probably many "anepigraphic" stelae from other sanctuaries had been similarly

⁸⁶Cat.2, 24, and 25 all have plain pedestals, although the latter is small. Cat.42 also has a large, flatfaced pedestal ideal for receiving an inscription, but Poinssot specified that it was the arcade of the niche that was inscribed (Poinssot (1905), 400).

⁸⁷For instance, according to C. Mendleson (pers.comm.), within a group of votive stelae from Tunisia and now in the British Museum, one stelae has wording suggestive of a funerary epitaph. Based on this exception, Mendleson believed that the stelae from this votive series were pre-fabricated and were only inscribed, probably by someone other than the original sculptor, upon or after their purchase.

painted.⁸⁸ Painted inscriptions, no longer preserved, could explain Poinssot's reports of inscriptions on the two Louvre examples, which are today unmarked.

On the other hand, need there have been a marking, now lost, in the cartouches at all? The most striking fact about the inscriptions that have survived is their brevity. The stelae of *L. Iuli(us) Urba(nus)* and *Bellic(us)*, son of *Max(imus?)* (Cat.21 and 12) are the only ones that try to identify their owners, while that of *Rogatus* (Cat.11) makes no attempts to distinguish its owner from other people of the same, common name. The *Rogatus* whose name probably provides the first letter of the *R.V.S.L.* A.> abbreviation on Cat.33 was apparently content to have his name reduced to a fairly enigmatic initial. As a whole, these names appear on only a minority of the inscriptions; the one complete Neopunic example and five of the nine Latin examples do not indicate who dedicated them. Their messages merely abbreviate an already stereotyped formula; relatively few Punic or Latin texts parallel such brevity.⁸⁹

Dedicatory inscriptions lacking the god's name are rare, and may have depended upon external circumstances to identify the deity, such as iconography in the sculpture or placement within a specific god's sanctuary. Context, however, does not communicate the dedicant's name. Nevertheless, these large stone markers are highly visible and must have been expensive; they did not belong to people who wished to remain anonymous, but to

⁸⁸On ex-votos from the sanctuary at Motya (seventh century to fourth/third century B.C.), paint had been used for both decorative and inscriptional purposes: Tore (1995), 483. Stelae from the sanctuary at El-Kenissia, near Sousse, also bear traces of red paint, sometimes combined with engraving: so Ben Younes (1995), 816.

⁸⁹According to Ghedini (1990), 238, Latin inscriptions without such details as the dedicant's name and the god's name are unknown outside the first century A.C. However, since the 'La Ghorfa' inscriptions are unique in North Africa, this statement is not relevant there.

people who wished to advertise their piety -- as well as their economic well-being -- to both their god(s) and their community. In Proconsularis, the quantity of Punic and Latin votive inscriptions attest that the locals valued advertising their good fortune. This tendency did not carry over to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, whose owners evidently did not feel that written messages were a priority.⁹⁰ They were ambivalent towards the content of the inscriptions; they may even have felt little incentive to add a message to the sculpted scenes, if it meant an additional step and expense in the stelae's preparation.

This apathy towards inscriptions contradicts some of the sculptural evidence. Almost ten male dedicants present themselves as learned Roman citizens; not only do they wear the toga, but they also each hold a *volumen*. At least some of these portrayals, like that of *Bellicus* on Cat.12, likely present non-Roman locals in guises normally allotted to Roman citizens and officials. The dedicants assumed the appearance of the commemorative portraits that adorned the public areas of North African cities, with the accompanying respect but without necessarily acknowledging that such appearances normally identified Roman citizens. They also missed the irony inherent in presenting themselves as learned and educated men, via the *volumen*, when their stelae bore minimalist or confused inscriptions, empty cartouches, or no epigraphy at all.

As a whole, the inscriptions reveal little about the people who set up these votive dedications on an individual basis. Some of the problems encountered in this discussion

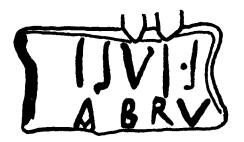
⁹⁰Illiteracy within the community could explain why so few inscriptions exist, although this explanation seems incongruent with these stelae. For several reasons, the 'La Ghorfa' stelae fit well with comparanda from the vicinity of Maktar, where most stelae were inscribed, in either Neopunic or Latin. The 'La Ghorfa' stelae were much larger and more elaborate than the average Maktar stele, and presumably more expensive; in this setting, it would be surprising if their owners were less literate.

would probably remain unanswerable even if the stelae's archaeological contexts were known. Collectively, however, the inscriptions provide insight into the communal attitudes of their dedicants, not only in terms of status and literacy. They also demonstrate common epigraphic features of both the Punic and Roman traditions, and yet, because they demonstrate traits of both cultures, they stand quite apart from other North African ex-votos.

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Appendix to Chapter III. Inscriptions on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae (not to scale).





[]'χ/ Cat.29

Cat.21

XJOOX TXXT JOIC ADXIDGI

Cat.30

R·V·S·Ŀ A· VSALF Cat.39

Chapter IV Reconstructing the Origins of the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

The previous section identified distinguishing characteristics of the 'La Ghorfa' group, but did not relate them to regional trends or the larger picture of North African stelae. This chapter addresses those problems, including one question that has plagued the 'La Ghorfa' group for over a century: what are their true origins? The answer can be found with some assurance, based on both individual features and overall composition. Through such comparisons, several stelae can be added to the 'La Ghorfa' type (Catalogue B). In addition, certain aspects of chronology arise prior to the detailed discussion in Chapter V.

The 'La Ghorfa' stelae are typical of the North African relief style.¹ Frontal views are the rule. Even when Hellenistic and Roman statue types have clearly inspired the pose and dress of some figures, the Hellenistic canon of proportions is absent; most notably, the head is too large, the neck too thick and long. The sculptor often resorts to incising details rather than sculpting them. Other traits characteristic of North African stelae include symmetry and the somewhat abstract use of space in the top zone.²

Throughout the history of ancient North Africa, stelae remained true to the local culture. Even when other sculptural types, from statues-in-the-round to sarcophagi reliefs, reflected Roman canons and tastes, stelae tended to retain more humble and regional

¹Cf. Picard (1962) and (1963).

²Picard (1963), 241.

traditions. Whether funerary or votive, the carvings emphasized pious ceremony and moderate hopes for success. They usually avoided clearly individualized portraits and the popular mythological or topical scenes that adorned contemporary mosaics, such as the marine thiasos or public games. The figures were simple, unassuming, and did not hesitate to show non-Roman traits in terms of personal appearance, iconography, or even ceremonial details.

For these reasons, the 'La Ghorfa' group should be compared primarily to other stelae, rather than works in other media. Some of the features are quite specific to certain regions, while others appear across North Africa, whether frequently or sporadically, in very specific settings or as part of a general repertoire upon which sculptors could call. The closest and most parallels, however, come from within the ancient territory of Maktar, ancient *Thusca*, a region that was one of the main intersections for the Numidian, Punic, and Roman cultures. The more recent history of the stelae, though convoluted, seems to point to an origin in central Proconsularis; in addition, Chapter III demonstrated that Maktar especially supplied some of the best comparanda for the Neopunic inscriptions on Cat.29 and 30. Different aspects of the three cultures also manifest themselves in the sculptural reliefs, from the Numidian braid-like hairstyles, to the Punic 'sign of Tanit', to the Graeco-Roman Dionysus-like figure in the upper zone. As the following discussion will demonstrate, details of the sculptural reliefs provide the most convincing evidence that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae belong to the extended territory of Maktar.

To begin with a general geographic placement (fig.56), ancient *Thusca* had for its administrative centre the city of *Mactaris* (Maktar),³ which only gained colonial status under Marcus Aurelius.⁴ In pre-Roman times, *Thusca*'s western borders had demarcated the boundary between Punic and Numidian territory, with the city of *Althiburos* (Medeïna) sitting quite near the western boundary line; Juba I's former capital, *Zama Regia* (Henchir Jama), was probably its north-eastern counterpart. *Thusca*'s exact extent is unknown, but it was certainly a large territory encompassing important political and economic towns along the bottom of the grain belt, on a large massif in Proconsularis.⁵

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Finds from several sites within *pagus Thuscae* provide comparisons for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Placed in reference to distance from Maktar, these sites are, to the northwest, Maghrawa (*Macota*) (c. 8km), Ellès (c. 13km); to the west, Aïn Barchouch (c. 33km) and Medeïna (*Althiburos*) (c. 39km); to the north, Ksar Toual Zammeul (*Vicus Maracitanus*) (c. 21km); to the east, Kesra (*Chusira*) (c. 17km); and finally, to the northnortheast, Siliana (c. 32km). Some of the 'La Ghorfa' details have parallels in the larger sphere of central Proconsularis outside of *Thusca*, such as in El Kef (*Sicca Veneria*) and Sidi bou Rouis, respectively some 60 and 40 km north of Maktar, but most of the ensuing discussion will focus on the Thuscan towns.

³The name *Thusca* is a pre-Roman one, but even in Severan times its administrative significance continued to be recognized under the name *pagus Thuscae*; furthermore, the *IIII publica Africae* was based here from the late first century and probably collected four different indirect Roman taxes: for discussion, cf. Picard *CivMact* (1957), 21-24.

⁴Gascou (1972), 147.

⁵Cf. Picard CivMact (1957), 19-21.

Some of the most distinctive features of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae occur in the top zone. Topping this list is the 'sign of Tanit', which is partially or fully anthropomorphic and holding pomegranates and grapes. While the 'sign of Tanit' is familiar at several sites across North Africa and horns of abundance occur especially on stelae from central Proconsularis,⁶ an anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' holding fruit or *cornucopiae* is not so common. The territory of *Thusca* is probably the only region to provide parallels. In the Musée de Maktar, one fragmentary stele, Cat.B6 has a featureless, geometric-type 'sign of Tanit' (fig.43); Cat.B7 and B17 from Maktar have the intermediary anthropomorphic figure (figs.44 and 54), as do at least three stelae found at nearby Maghrawa, Cat.B9, B10, and B11 (figs.46, 47, and 48). Cat.B4 from Ellès probably had the same intermediate type, but no illustration of it survives.

The fruit-bearing 'sign of Tanit' also appears on three stelae in the catalogue of the Musée Alaoui (now the Bardo), published in the mid-1950s. The catalogue attributes the stelae to bath excavations at the site of *Uthina* (modern Oudna), in northeastern Tunisia.⁷ However, one of the stones, Cb-1074, is undeniably the broken-off top to a 'La Ghorfa' stele, Cat.1. Nothing in the Bardo's records today can confirm that the trio came from Oudna;⁸ furthermore, from a stylistic and iconographic viewpoint, they do not belong to that region.

⁶Cornucopiae are less common than the 'sign of Tanit', occurring most frequently at sites in central Tunisia, such as Medeïna (Ennaïfer [1976], pl.VIIIb; Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-1067), Aïn Barchouch (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-937), and Sbeitla (on display without label in the Musée de Sbeitla).

⁷Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 297 and pl.CXXV, no.Cb-1072; 297-8 and pl.CXXV, no.Cb-1073; 298 and pl.CXXV no.Cb-1074. In a recent site publication, Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, *et al.* (1998), 42, identify the Baths as being Trajanic, but admit that the exact archaeological context of the stelae is unknown.

⁸Pers. comm. from H. Ben Younes, chief curator of the Bardo.

Along with the predefined 'La Ghorfa' group, the two remaining 'Oudna' stelae, Cat.B14 and B15, most likely come from a site in the Thuscan region that used the human-shaped, fruit-bearing 'sign of Tanit' (figs.51 and 52).

Graeco-Roman gods as companions for the 'sign of Tanit' have parallels at Maghrawa on Cat.B9 and B10 (figs.46 and 47); in each case, they are the same gods as appear on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae.⁹ In both cases, they stand on the flat entablature of the niche, rather than on top of a pediment; Cat.B10 shows them confined within a formal horizontal frame between the 'sign of Tanit' and entablature (fig.47). This composition is reminiscent of the Dioscuri panel on Cat.2 (fig.71).

In addition to these instances, Liber Pater and Venus appear without the 'sign of Tanit' on a stele from Ellès, Cat.B5, on which they stand at either side of a niche containing a bearded male head. They are also companions on two stelae from Maktar; in both cases, they stand above the dedicants' niches, as they do on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. On Cat.B12, Venus and Liber flank a Neopunic cartouche and stand over a simple niche (fig.49).¹⁰ On Cat.B13, they flank the pediment of a temple-type niche (fig.50); one line of the Neopunic inscription survives.¹¹ One further fragmentary stele, Cat.B14, now only shows Liber Pater beside a temple pediment, over an entablature inscribed in both Latin and Neopunic

⁹Le Glay SAH (1966), 241, also believed that these Graeco-Roman gods played a subsidiary role to the Punic ones on stelae from Ellès and Ksar-Toual-Zammeul.

¹⁰Though the solar disc, birds, and grape bunches appear here, the crescent and 'sign of Tanit' are missing.

¹¹The inscription is apparently unpublished.

(fig.51);¹² probably Venus originally stood on the other side of the pediment. Significantly, Cat.B13 and Cat.B14 are the only known Maktar stelae with pedimented niches.

Even when one occurs without the other, either god on stelae is mainly found in the Maktar area. Despite the fact that hopes for agricultural success figure prominently on votive stelae throughout Roman Africa, these two gods, who may seem like natural choices for such appeals, received remarkably little attention. Though Venus was popular on other media in Roman Africa, she does not commonly appear on votive or funerary stelae. The only examples outside *Thusca* are two stelae from the region between Béja and El Kef, featuring her standing amid Roman gods in a composition quite distinct from that of the 'La Ghorfa' group.¹³

Likewise, Liber Pater appears almost exclusively on stelae from the area of Maktar; in addition to those listed above, two other stelae from Ellès probably also included him (Cat.B3 and B4). One further example, also from the Maktar area, is striking. It is from Ksar Toual Zammeul, located about 20km north of Maktar, and shows Liber not on the front face of the stone, but on one of the short sides.¹⁴ Lateral reliefs are quite rare on stelae with thin sides. However, Cat.23 also has a side relief, a thyrsus and rosette vine; it is the only 'La Ghorfa' stone to do so.

The region of *Thusca* is therefore the only region to use Liber Pater, Venus, and the fruit-bearing 'sign of Tanit' on stelae. The only other Graeco-Roman gods to appear in the

¹²According to Picard *CivMact* (1957), 45, the Latin letters at the left are *QCP*, and "punique" [more likely Neopunic] letters follow. I was unable to locate this stele to ascertain the Neopunic message.

¹³Le Glay SAM I (1961), 292 no.4, pl.VII,3 and 292-293 no.7, pl.VII,5.

¹⁴Le Glay SAMI (1961), 235 no.4; the stele was illustrated in C. Saumagne RT (1941), p.252f., figs.3 b and a.

top registers of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are the Dioscuri, on Cat.2 and 17;¹⁵ they stand with their horses, framing a bearded male god. This scene is popular on Saturn stelae across Roman Africa between the second and fourth centuries, with the earliest examples on stelae from central Proconsularis.¹⁶ However, only one stele closely parallels Cat.17; it is from "central Tunisia" and currently in the collection of the British Museum.¹⁷ Both it and Cat.17 are missing their summit, but preserve the familiar Dioscuri scene at the top. The middle zone has the female dedicant dropping incense onto an altar at her right side, within a temple setting. Two Atlantes support this register from below; between them is a bull sacrifice scene. Enough differences exist to set the British Museum stele apart: it is much more plastic, includes architectural decoration unparalleled in the 'La Ghorfa' group, the Atlantes face each other instead of the viewer, and the costume and positions of the bull-handler and bull are different. Nevertheless, it is another reminder that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae belong firmly in the context of central Proconsularis.

At the very summit of each 'La Ghorfa' stele is the disc-and-crescent motif. Though the basic motif is like that found on Punic stelae, the round object above the crescent is rarely a simple circle, tending to take the form of a rosette or even a face. When the disc

¹⁵The twins appear on a coin at Utica, sometime during the second century B.C. (Lipinski *Dieux* [1995], 399-400). They may have been assimilated to indigenous gods, whether the gods named Macurtam and Iunam on a relief from Béja, the twin cavaliers on a stele from Henchir Gounifida (near Tébessa), or the *Dii Mauri Castori Augusti*, named in a Severan dedication at Henchir Mest (Lipinski *Dieux* [1995], 401).

¹⁶Numismatic evidence indicates that the Dioscuri were familiar to North Africans from the second century B.C. at least. However, the two gods do not recognizably occur on any other medium until the first or second century, according to Lipinski *Dieux* (1995), 403 and Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 231, quoting the same stelae, which were published as Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], nos.Cb-939 and Cb-964 [=Cat.2].

¹⁷British Museum WA 125115; exact provenance unknown. Cf. Le Glay SAM I (1961), 224 no.2 and pl.VIII, 1.

takes on facial features, it generally lacks attributes to identify it. The orb is probably a sun, to contrast with the lunar crescent below it, but whether locals chose to interpret it as a solar symbol or solar deity is not clear. The same is true of the wreathed faces at the summits of Cat.B9 and B11 from Maghrawa (figs.46 and 48).

Neighbouring Maktar and Aïn Barchouch (fig.94)¹⁸ have a similar large face dominating some of their stelae, including Cat.B12, which shares the 'La Ghorfa' ingredients of Liber, Venus, grape bunches, and birds (fig.49).¹⁹ These stelae have indisputably made the motif into a radiant solar face. It could represent Apollo Helios, since Apollo was one of the patron gods of Maktar,²⁰ but the radiant discs lack attributes or inscriptions to make this relationship certain. Anthropomorphic busts of a solar god also dominate stelae from nearby *Althiburos*, suggesting that he had a significant following in this region.

These depictions are surely related to the heads of Sol and Luna that also appear in the top zones. The lunar face has no known parallels, but a radiant solar orb with facial features is common on stelae from Maktar, most often occurring in the place where the disc-and-crescent might otherwise occur.²¹ In central Proconsularis, the disc-and-crescent often takes the form of a star above a crescent.²² Conceivably, Thuscans separated the motif into

¹⁸Cf. also from Aïn Barchouch CMA (1897), pl. XXI nos.780 and 781.

¹⁹Maktar stelae show a radiant sun in a wreath above the crescent: cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], no.Cb-1015 and compare nos.Cb-1018 and Cb-1021, Cb-1034 to Cb-1035; on others, the sun is below the crescent: cf. Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], nos.Cb-1019, Cb-1020, Cb-1023 to Cb-1025.

²⁰Picard CivMact (1957), 36.

²¹E.g. Cat.B12 (fig.49); Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pls.CXVIII-CXXIII. They are less human-like than the 'La Ghorfa' examples, but are nevertheless the closest parallels.

²²Maktar: Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], pl.CXI nos.Cb-987 to Cb-989, pl.CXIV nos. Cb-998 to Cb-1001, etc. *Althiburos*: Ennaïfer (1976), pl.IV, bottom.

two faces with more Graeco-Roman attributes. The motif in the pediment of Cat.B8 may represent the middle ground for this development; it contains a solar face contained within a large crescent (fig.45).²³

One other perplexing form that the disc takes on a 'La Ghorfa' stele is the *triskeles* (Cat.41), a symbol most commonly associated with the Syracusan tyrant Agathocles.²⁴ In North Africa, it appears less than a dozen times, always on stelae and found within perhaps a 60 km radius of Maktar, most much closer. In addition to Cat.41, the *triskeles* appears on stelae from Sidi bou Rouis (fig.72),²⁵ Béja or El Kef (fig.73),²⁶ Sidi Ahmed,²⁷ near Siliana (two stelae),²⁸ Henchir Meded,²⁹ and Aïn-Barchouch.³⁰ The latter five stelae come from within a 40km radius of Maktar. One further stele in the British Museum has no provenance beyond "Tunisia", although it distinctly resembles the last stele, making Aïn-Barchouch an attractive candidate for its origin.³¹

²³In the summit of the same stele, two enwreathed faces appear in the positions often occupied by Sol and Luna on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae; cf. the two encircled faces that flank Luna on Cat.15.

²⁴Apparently the most recent treatment of the *triskeles* in ancient art is the discussion in Cook (1914), 304-307. In both Punic and Roman times, artistic expression often linked Sicily and Tunisia, in several cases probably as a result of military manoeuvres: cf. Picard (1972-1973).

²⁵Carton (1905).

²⁶Cook (1914), 307-308 and fig.246, quoting W. Gesenius (1837), *Scripturae linguaque Phoeniciae momumenta* (Lipsiae), 204ff., pl.23; Cook may have been the last to comment upon this stele, which, at the time of his writing, was in the Lyons museum, but is now apparently no longer there; its current location is unknown (R.J.A. Wilson, pers. comm.).

²⁷M'Charek (1995), 252 and pl.II, 3 and 3a.

²⁸Unpublished beyond mention in a footnote: Fantar (1986), 29 n.6. Thanks to R.J.A. Wilson for bringing these stelae and that from Sidi-bou-Rouis to my attention.

²⁹Fantar (1986), esp. 28-31 no.4.

³⁰Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-939.

³¹British Museum WA 125180. Bisi (1978), 43-44, counted this stele among the 'La Ghorfa' stele (her no.22), but I have removed it from the group because the size and cut of the stone, the sculpting technique, and the imagery do not correspond closely those of any 'La Ghorfa' stele.

On coins, the *triskeles* may have a solar significance.³² Those on Cat.41 and the stelae from Béja or El Kef³³ and Aïn-Barchouch are at the top of the stone, perhaps serving the same purpose. On the stelae from Sidi Ahmed and Sidi bou Rouis, the *triskeles* is within a pediment. In the case of the latter, two *cornucopiae* surround the pediment; below the pediment, only the right side of an inscription survives, FORTVNA. These elements could identify the *triskeles* as a symbol of luck and abundance,³⁴ although the missing left side of the inscription and the broken-off register below leave some doubt. The solar and more conceptual aspects may both apply, since the two are intrinsically linked.

Other components of the upper zone, like the astral symbols, rosettes, and other such devices, are typical of Maktar stelae and, to a lesser extent, of Aïn Barchouch; both fill their upper registers to capacity with attributes. Like the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, Maktar stelae such as Cat.B6 (fig.43) and B13 (fig.50) and, to a lesser extent, some from Aïn Tounga,³⁵ make use of drilled holes to fill in empty spaces. The other type of hole on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the deep hole, has some parallels at Maktar, such as on Cat.B7 and B12 (figs.44 and 49). However, this type of cavity tends to accompany stelae with strictly regimented registers, most notably a distinctive series of stelae from central Tunisia, from the second and third

³²Cook (1914), 299ff.

³³For this stele, Cook (1914), 308, suggested that the *triskeles*, which stands over the sacrificial bull, was a "sign and token of Baal" the sky-god or sun-god, which had blessed the sacrificial victim.

³⁴Carton (1905), 209; Ferjaoui (1986), 41.

³⁵According to Berger and Cagnat (1889), drilled holes occur 19 times on the stelae found at the sanctuary at *Thignica*; cf. *CMA* (1897), pl.XVII, no.117.

centuries (figs.64 and 103).³⁶ On these stelae, the sculptors carved out the background of each register and left the objects in the foreground flat. The frames around each register have deep holes, well suited to support garlands, ribbons, or other appliquées. Outside central Proconsularis, drilled circles and holes do not occur nearly as frequently or predictably.

The architectural components of the middle zone are critical for geographic and chronological placement. On late Punic stelae from Carthage and Maxula-Rades, the dedicant stood in a niche, under a pediment and between two columns.³⁷ Type 1 niches add *acroteria* and pedimental sculpture, entablature, coffers, and doorways. These features distinguish the 'La Ghorfa' group from most other Roman stelae. Taken collectively, these architectural details are not those of any known temple. Taken individually, however, they are detailed enough to parallel real examples from a relatively small geographic area, that of central Proconsularis.

Pedimental sculpture rarely survives for monuments in Tunisia; always in relief, the design is usually much simpler than in the 'La Ghorfa' pediments; for example, a basic wreath sometimes sufficed.³⁸ The *apotheosis* scene on the Dougga Capitolium is unusually

 $^{{}^{36}}CMA$ (1897), pl.XX no.753 = Le Glay SAM I (1961), 240 no.1-Ellès, and Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VIII,5. Cf. also Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VIII nos.4 and 6. Other regimented stelae with higher and more plastic relief also have holes in their edges or register borders: Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VII nos.3, 4, and 5, all purportedly from the regions of Béja and El Kef, but cf. Picard (1990), 91 n.11.

³⁷E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], nos.Cb-51 to Cb-54, Cb-57, Cb-58, Cb-92.

³⁸A wreath in relief decorated the pediment on a mausoleum located on the present-day Oueslatia-Siliana road (unpublished).

complex.³⁹ The closest comparable pediment to any 'La Ghorfa' example is a bearded male bust in a functional pediment at *Apisa Minus*; he is identifiable as Saturn because of his veiled head.⁴⁰ None of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae have a veiled male god for their pediment decoration, though Cat.34 has a bearded Jupiter head. Within Maktar's archaeological site is another pediment from a small monument (fig.84); a female head is sculpted inside, but, like the *Apisa* example, it does not closely resemble any 'La Ghorfa' pediment bust.⁴¹ Still, the *Apisa* and Maktar examples indicate that themes of the 'La Ghorfa' pediments are in keeping with ornamentation of central Tunisian monuments.

Unlike the rest of the group, Cat.2 has no pediment, sacrificing that space to two formal horizontal registers containing the 'sign of Tanit' above and the Dioscuri and Jupiter below. Other stelae from central Proconsularis also lack a pediment above their moulded entablatures; of these, Cat.B9 and B10 from Maghrawa are closest to Cat.2 in overall appearance across the zones (figs.46 and 47).⁴² The creators of Cat.B9, B10, and Cat.2 were surely working in the same artistic setting.

In this context, the *Urbanus* stele, Cat.21, may also be related. Its artistic style and technique is again quite different, but it shares the features of a dedicant making an offering at an altar above a register containing a bull sacrifice. Its architectural schema, with an outer pair of columns leading to the inner pair that supports the dedicant's niche, is only paralleled by the architecture of Cat.B10 (fig.47).

³⁹Poinssot (1983), 35.

⁴⁰Ferchiou (1989), 21, dated the pediment to the second century (no.XVIII.I.B.2.9, pl.LXXXIII,c).

⁴¹The pediment is a stray piece on the grounds, obviously removed from its original setting; it is unpublished and unlabelled.

⁴²Cf. also Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VI,5 and pl.VIII,1 and 3.

The majority of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae display a standard type of entablature mouldings, consisting of egg-and-dart, bead-and-reel, and dentils. This choice and sequence of moulded bands had been used in the Punic period,⁴³ but during the Roman period, they occur mostly in central Tunisia, especially around Maktar. Cat.B14, a Maktar example approximating the 'La Ghorfa' type, shows a temple with mouldings that include egg-and-dart above bead-and-reel (fig.51).⁴⁴ Two other Maktar stelae have the standard entablature, although the stelae themselves are not of the 'La Ghorfa' type.⁴⁵ Parallels among real architecture include the Temple of Hoter Miskar at Maktar, which most closely echoes the relative sizes and shapes of the moulding elements.⁴⁶

Comparative material for the coffers of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae is extremely difficult to find. Coffered ceilings have not survived for North African temples, although they occur on the Punic *naos* from Thuburbo Majus, a limestone model from the first half of the second century B.C.⁴⁷ Among stelae, the best parallel is one from Aïn Barchouch with a row of three coffers under its entablature (fig.94). Elsewhere, potential parallels are both dubious and rare.⁴⁸ Central Tunisia therefore provides the only coffer parallels on stelae.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Ferchiou (1989), pl.LXXX d. Cf. Chapter V, p.190, for chronological indicators of the cornice.

⁴⁷Lézine ArchPun (1959), 7-26.

⁴⁸For example, the squares on a stele from Hippone (*Hippo Regius*) are probably components of a sanctuary door rather than ceiling coffers; cf. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), 437 no. 4 and pl.XVII,2. A stele from Bou Arada probably uses ornate rectangular mouldings as decorative elements rather than ceiling coffers; cf. Ferchiou (1981), pl.54,1 and 3.

⁴⁹The central strip that divides the coffers, either crescent-disc-crescent or crescent-rosette-crescent, has no parallels other than an arch soffit at Gigthis, which itself has no surviving remains of coffers: cf. Einaudi (1982), Empire fiche 37, no.14941 L, "arco della via del Porto".

⁴³Hours-Miédan (1951), pl.XVI,g; Rakob (1979), 141 fig.64. Picard (1982), 184-185, discussed the sources of the 'La Ghorfa' mouldings in more detail.

⁴⁴Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 284 no.Cb-1014.

⁴⁵Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CIX no.Cb-978 and pl.CXIX no.Cb-1018.

The column capitals of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are also distinctive, with their Vshaped volutes. The only functional Aeolic-Corinthian capitals in Proconsularis occur at Chemtou, Dougga, Utica, Zanfour, Maktar, and Henchir Mest; those at Dougga and Maktar are the closest to the 'La Ghorfa' type.⁵⁰ The capitals on Cat.33 look a bit more Ionic, comparable to functional examples found at El Kef, near Bir-Magra, near *Thizica*, at Gigthis, and in the Musée du Bardo.⁵¹ The capital on Cat.16, which has only a shallow, incised Vvolute, is more like an Aeolic-Ionic capital from Henchir Belbel, south of Bou Arada.⁵²

The majority of real examples therefore come from central Tunisia. On sculptural reliefs, the Aeolic-Corinthian type is even more site-specific. Besides the 'La Ghorfa' examples, it may only occur otherwise on stelae from Maktar and Maghrawa, such as Cat.B14 and B8 (figs.51 and 45), and on a funerary panel of Julio-Claudian date at Medeïna.⁵³ The somewhat Ionic-looking capitals on Cat.33 also appear on a Neopunic stele from Maktar.⁵⁴

The palmiform capitals on Cat.2 have their closest parallel in those of the 'Boglio' stele from Siliana, located approximately 30 km northeast of Maktar (fig.62).⁵⁵

⁵⁰Cf. Ferchiou (1989), 201-210. Most examples date between the second century B.C. and first century A.C. The 'La Ghorfa' stelae in the Bardo are her no.VIII.1.6.

⁵¹Ferchiou (1989), pl.XIX d (El Kef); pl.XVII a-b (near Bir-Magra); pl.XIX c (near *Thizica*); pl.XXI b (Gigthis); pl.XXXIII b (Musée du Bardo). Cf. also Ferchiou (1989), pl.XXXIII d, for a capital from Maktar similar to the Bardo example.

⁵²Ferchiou (1989), pls.XLVIII a-b and XLIX a.

⁵³Ferchiou (1986), 337-339 and pl. 140,4.

⁵⁴Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-990.

⁵⁵Cf. above p.38.

The architecture of the temple-type niches also points to the region of Maktar. In North Africa, the T-shaped door frame marked the entrance to temple cellae and mausolea;⁵⁶ fragments of this kind of frame are common at Maktar, although unfortunately no longer *in situ.*⁵⁷ On stelae, this type of door frame occurs at Aïn Barchouch⁵⁸ and Maghrawa (Cat.B8=fig.45) in central Tunisia, and very rarely elsewhere.⁵⁹ However, these two examples lack the inner niche typical of most 'La Ghorfa' stelae; as on Cat.2 and 17, the dedicants merely stand inside the door frame.

One feature of the niche that is not clearly an architectural element is the pedestal or box containing boxes, vases, and other items. Comparable stelae that give a place of honour to presumably ritual items are not extremely common. Nonetheless, they have a long tradition in North Africa. For instance, certain Punic stelae from Carthage include depictions of sacrificial animals, incense-burners, containers, and ritual vases.⁶⁰ Examples from after the fall of Carthage belong to central Tunisia. During the first century at Maktar, a stele of a priestess of Ceres had its bottom registers filled with animals and instruments associated with cult rituals and sacrifice (fig.61).⁶¹ Several of the same instruments appear on a Severan gravestone from near Bou Arada, as well as a box-like container and ritual vase

⁶¹Cf. Chapter 1, p.32.

⁵⁶E.g. Temple of the *Gens Septimia* at Djemila (Einaudi [1982], Empire fiche 2, no.17015); mausolea at Kbor Klib, Tipasa, and Maktar; cf. Rakob (1979), 130 fig.44, 141 figs.63-64, and 170 fig.108.

⁵⁷The fragments are unpublished, but common around the site.

⁵⁸CMA (1897), no.780; Bisi StelePun (1967), pl.XXXV,1, misidentified this stele as being from Maktar. The Bardo Museum holds at least one other stele that is surely by the same atelier (inv.no. unknown).

⁵⁹E.g. at Dellys on the Algerian coast: cf. Le Glay SAM II (1966), 303 no.2, pl.XXXIX,5.

⁶⁰Hours-Miédan (1951), pls.XVII a; XIV c; XVIII d; XXXI b, c, d, e; and XXXII.

that hardly differ from the Punic precedents.⁶² Four ritual items appear on two stelae from Ksar Toual Zammeul: a pair of sandals, a stool, a fine comb, and a mirror, all items that belonged to the "toilette sacrée" that the dedicant supposedly had to perform before participating in the sacrificial ritual.⁶³ The examples of 'caches' within the 'La Ghorfa' series fit well within this group.

Some of the features characteristic of Type 1 niches are significant for indicating the origin of the stelae. The coffers on the Type 1 niches probably indicate that the niche structure is to be seen as including a coffered roof or as being preceded by a porch with one; porches had not appeared in previous North African depictions of religious structures. Lézine placed special emphasis upon them, going so far as to see these reliefs as the first representations of a prostyle distyle temple in North Africa.⁶⁴ Picard agreed, adding that the temple clearly draws upon Italian styles, with its pitched roof, niche axial and opposite the entry, and crypt.⁶⁵ This interpretation may exaggerate the situation, since the architectural elements do not necessarily belong to a temple as opposed to an elaborate aedicula. Since most stelae do not show so many architectural details, the temptation to read too much into them certainly exists.

Like the coffers, the pedimental sculpture is remarkable. Between the eagles, roosters, and diverse, presumably divine busts, they show much greater range and variation

⁶²Ferchiou (1981), 163-164 no.13, and pl.52,1.

⁶³Le Glay SAM I (1961), 232-233 and 236. A relief from Kesra preserves similar items: cf. Ferjaoui (1992-1993), pl.IV,15.

⁶⁴Lézine ArchPun (1959), 27.

⁶⁵Picard (1982), 184.

than most relief or functional pediments. Two interpretations are possible: 1) despite the other architectural similarities, the sculptors were not reproducing the same temple, or 2) the sculptors were not trying to reproduce a real temple at all. The second choice is more likely, making the 'La Ghorfa' temples a product of the carvers' imaginations, albeit within the framework of local architectural styles.

The sculptors probably approached these representations as die-cutters did temples on coins. For instance, several coins of Juba II show a temple inscribed AVGVSTI,⁶⁶ but the number of columns and the pedimental sculpture vary. The die-cutters fashioned a structure identifiable as a temple and let the inscription clarify the building's identity; architectural and sculptural details were not as important. Similarly, the 'La Ghorfa' carvers may not have intended that the viewer see their structures as necessarily distyle, or having a female bust in the pediment. The architectural features are there to provide setting, but are probably not to be taken literally.

In addition to placing the stelae in the context of central Proconsularis traditions, the architectural elements also provide important dating information. According to Picard, the 'La Ghorfa' Type 1 niches were inspired by a mix of Punic precedents and Augustan architecture from Italy, a combination not extant at Maktar after the mid-second century.⁶⁷ This date is therefore a preliminary and approximate *terminus ante quem* for the group, barring revivals of old styles.

⁶⁶Mazard (1955), 79-81; he believed the depictions represented a temple dedicated to Augustus.

⁶⁷Picard (1982), 185, citing the different techniques used to reconstruct the temples of Apollo and Liber Pater under Marcus Aurelius.

While few stelae outside the group are as elaborate as the 'La Ghorfa' Type 1 examples, more parallels exist for the Type 2, simple, niches. These follow the architectural pattern of most Punic funerary stelae from as early as the third and second centuries B.C., when the deceased stood in an unadorned niche.⁶⁸ Cat.28 is closest to the Punic type, as it has a niche with no architectural adornment whatsoever. It is comparable to stelae from Maktar, such as Cat.B12 (fig.49) and B17 (fig.54),⁶⁹ Aïn Barchouch (fig.94) and to one of the so-called 'Oudna' stelae, Cat.B16 (fig.53).

In the Maktar area, sculptors had their choice of using either this unadorned niche or one with some architectural features. While the voussoir blocks are unusual, rougher versions of the plain lintel appear on Cat.B15 from 'Oudna' (fig.52), on Cat.B7 from Maktar (fig.44), and on Cat.B10 and B11, both from Maghrawa (figs.47 and 48).

Cat.25 and 26 give their scenes a sense of monumental architecture by adding victory figures outside the arched niches. This combination also occurs on the 'Boglio' stele from Siliana (fig.62), a stele from Henchir el-Ksour near Medeïna,⁷⁰ another from Sidi Ahmed,⁷¹ and two from Maghrawa, Cat.B10 (fig.47) and Cat.B11 (fig.48).⁷² All of these sites are within the ancient territory of *Thusca*.

⁶⁸E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], nos. Cb-22 to Cb-99 (from Carthage) and nos. Cb-1053 to Cb-1067 (from Maxula-Rades).

⁶⁹Cf. various other Neopunic Maktar stelae: Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], nos.Cb-991, Cb-1008, Cb-1011, etc.; and a funerary stele from Maktar with Latin inscription (C.11832) in CMA (1897), pl.XXIV, no.882.

⁷⁰In the Bardo Punic gallery (inv.no. unknown).

⁷¹M'Charek (1995), 252 and pl.II, figs.3 and 3a.

⁷²Sometimes Erotes fulfill the same function, as on a fragmentary example from central Proconsularis: cf. Le Glay *SAM* I (1961), pl.VII,4.

The dedicants on the 'La Ghorfa' and Maktar stelae share physical attributes: they have huge ringed eyes, large heads set on thick, trapezoidal necks, disproportionate and sometimes rubbery arms, fairly shapeless bodies, and summary feet. Men and women alike stand, facing the viewer, with right hand holding an object in front of the chest⁷³ or resting on a loop of the mantle,⁷⁴ while the left hand hangs by the left hip. One important distinction from the 'La Ghorfa' dedicants is that very few of the Maktar men appear to be wearing a toga or holding a *volumen*.⁷⁵

The dedicant on Cat. 1 least resembles its 'La Ghorfa' counterparts, but is stylistically similar to a woman named *Arruntia Sperata*, who is depicted on a gravestone from Maktar (fig.97).⁷⁶ In each case, the hair is finely incised in a crescent-shaped cap on the person's rounded head, which has a blunt chin. The neck is more columnar than in most Maktar and 'La Ghorfa' examples. The body is unusually wide and blocky, covered by a formless robe with thick incision marks to indicate multi-directional pleats. The arms are tiny, almost vestigial in appearance, and are held in front of the person's chest. The portraits of both *Arruntia Sperata* and the dedicant on Cat. 1 are less plastic in appearance than those on their fellow stelae.

⁷³E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CX no.Cb-983.

⁷⁴E.g. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CX no.Cb-985.

⁷⁵According to Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], the men on nos.Cb-981 and Cb-984 wear a toga (p.277), while the one on Cb-995 is togate and holds a *volumen* (p.280). At nearby Kesra, two men may be togate: cf. Ferjaoui (1992-1993), pl.VII,33 and 36.

⁷⁶M'Charek (1982), 19 no.3 and pl.I,1. M'Charek (1982), 31 no.26 and pl.V,9, can also be compared: the deceased's head also has the same shape and features, but the over-incising is missing and the person's neck is more thick and trapezoidal.

On the latter, most Maktar men have hair indicated simply by incisions; one example is particularly close to the head of the dedicant on Cat.33.⁷⁷ More elaborate examples set a cap of hair on the man's head, with deep grooves to indicate the strands (fig.95); this is probably the source of the sharp bowl-cut look of certain 'La Ghorfa' dedicants, rather than any Imperial fashion. For example, on his gravestone at Maktar (fig.96),⁷⁸ *M. Aufidius Rogatus* has a bowl-cut, high tiny ears, and facial features that echo those of the male and female dedicants on Cat.30 and 35 respectively, as well as some of the upper register figures on Cat.4. However, his awkward and disproportionate body is less naturalistic than those on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae.⁷⁹

The Maktar women's hair is most often pulled back in segments indicated by either deep grooves or modelling;⁸⁰ these techniques strive for the same "melon" look as that of the 'La Ghorfa' dedicants. This same hairstyle also appears on a stele from nearby Kesra.⁸¹ One Maktar example adds the V-shaped part worn by 'La Ghorfa' dedicants.⁸² Unlike these women, the dedicant on Cat.2 wears fillets or wrapped hair (fig.98), evocative of Sabina's fashions; this hairstyle has parallels at Maktar (fig.99), Sbeïtla (figs.100 and 101), and at *Vicus Augusti* near Sousse.⁸³

⁷⁷Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-1010.

⁷⁸M'Charek (1982), 20 no.5 and pl.I,2.

⁷⁹Cf. also M'Charek (1982), 46 no.1 and pl.VII, 12, stele of C. Licinius C.f. Horatia [sic] Felix and Staberia L. fil. Saturnina.

⁸⁰Deep grooves: Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CXVI no.Cb-1008; modelling: *ibid.*, pl.CX no.Cb-983.

⁸¹Cf. Ferjaoui (1992-1993), 157, pl.II,6.

⁸²Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CXIII no.Cb-997.

⁸³de Chaisemartin (1987), 121 no.179.

On the 'La Ghorfa' dedicants, the most notable accessory is the collar necklace with a central pendant. No parallels are known for the men's square pendant, but several Maktar women wear the circular pendant (e.g. fig.99),⁸⁴ as does another from Aïn Barchouch (fig.94). The women's pendants, at any rate, are not accessories particular to the 'La Ghorfa' cult.

In the lowest zone, the bull sacrifice scenes depict an action unusual on private reliefs, that of the moments in which the bull-handler prepares to kill or kills the bull. In North Africa, comparanda for such scenes come almost entirely from central Proconsularis reliefs. Reliefs from El Kef⁸⁵ and Maghrawa (Cat.B11=fig.48) show the bull-handler in mid-swing, about to stun the bull with his axe, as on Cat.38 and 39.⁸⁶ Even in scenes where a knife or spear is used, the image is not one in which the bull's head is forced up to expose the jugular; in fact, on Cat.21, the spear is being thrust directly into the bull's chest (fig.102). This positioning of the weapon is similar to that in a scene depicting the sacrifice of a ram on a stele to Saturn found near Béjà (ancient *Vaga*) (fig.63). In that scene, however, the weapon is not a spear, but a wide-bladed knife comparable to that used for the slaughter of a bull on both Cat.14 and a stele from Ellès (fig.103).

⁸⁴Cf. also Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], pl.CX nos.Cb-983 and Cb-985.

⁸⁵CMA (1897), C.104. The principle of steadying the beast's head is the same as that seen on a relief from Echinus (c. 300 B.C.), in which the sacrificer holds one of the bull's horns as he is about to thrust a knife into the animal: cf. van Straten (1995), fig.88.

⁸⁶The weapon on Cat.11 could be either an axe or a knife.

Six 'La Ghorfa' stelae bear a pair of Atlantes, depicted as two nude male figures with a short, blunt haircut, huge round eyes, and a burly build.⁸⁷ The physiognomic type is exactly that of a sculpted head found in the old ("Punic") forum at Maktar (fig. 104),⁸⁸ and is not far removed from the telamon who single-handedly holds up the upper register of a stele from near Bou Arada (fig. 105).⁸⁹ These 'La Ghorfa' and Bou Arada Atlantes diverge from the usual Graeco-Roman (and Romano-African) type in that they are clean-shaven. Atlantes on North African stelae generally are bearded, with the exception of one example from a site somewhere in central Proconsularis (fig.64).⁹⁰ In keeping with the more normal appearance, the Atlantes on Cat.17 are bearded; they are also distinct because they do not stand side-by-side, but are separated by a bull sacrifice scene.

The Atlantes on Cat. 17 stand with their feet in full view, as do those on a stele from Henchir Touchine, near Lambaesis.⁹¹ Those on the other 'La Ghorfa' stelae are also standing, but their feet are cut off by lower registers or hanging vegetal vines.⁹² The cut-off at this point of the leg is quite marked, and may indicate a conscious decision to avoid a trap into which other sculptors fell. The normal image of Atlas is a figure bent under the weight of his burden; it is a challenging position to render in low relief, even in profile view. Squeezed into the corner and facing each other, backs slumped, heads down, and hands on

⁹²The exception is Cat.39, on which the feet of the Atlas on the right are visible above the lotus vegetal garland, but those of his partner are hidden by the vegetal motif.

⁸⁷Cat.4, 6, 10, 11, 17, 39, 40.

⁸⁸Picard (1957), 68, pl.XXIII,b.

⁸⁹Ferchiou (1981), 177-8 no.25, pl.59,2.

⁹⁰Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl. VIII, 5.

⁹¹Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXV,2.

their knees, the Atlantes on two central Tunisian stelae seem more like dejected old men than divine upholders of the earth.⁹³ In one Lambaesis example, the Atlantes are in threequarter profile, facing outward; their upper bodies are well-rendered, but their legs are thin, rubbery, and balanced on the tips of their toes.⁹⁴

Even greater difficulty with the pose comes when the Atlantes are turned to face the viewer, for the lower legs splay up and out from the bent knees, rather than being hidden behind the upper leg, as on a stele from Ellès (fig.103).⁹⁵ The artisans sometimes resorted to making the Atlantes Tritons with serpent tails, as on capitals of the Antonine Baths at Carthage,⁹⁶ a painted mural from south of Sousse,⁹⁷ and on an Algerian stele (fig.106).⁹⁸

What these examples make clear is that the Atlantes are not to be viewed as mere physical, visible architectural components. Only on Cat.17 and two stelae from central Proconsularis⁹⁹ do they actually hold up the floor of an entire temple-like complex, columns included; on the other 'La Ghorfa' examples, they hold up the niche floor or the epigraphic cartouche.

⁹³Le Glay *SAM* I, pl.VIII,1; Le Glay *SAM* I, pl.IX,5 (from *Mididi*/Henchir Meded). The British Museum possesses a stele fragment of uncertain (but surely Tunisian) origin, WA 125200, which contains two similar Atlantes in its lowest register; the one on the viewer's right may be sitting on a stool.

⁹⁴Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXIII,2.

⁹⁵Cf. also Le Glay SAM I (1961), 226 no.6, pl.VIII,5 (from central Proconsularis); Le Glay SAM II (1966), pl.XXV,3 (from Lambafundi).

⁹⁶Picard (1962), 34-35 and pl. 14, 3-4.

⁹⁷Bailly and Dubos (1905). This painting, which may have decorated an altar, was excavated near M'saken; the authors published a sketch of the Triton, but did not indicate a date.

⁹⁸Le Glay SAM II (1966), 116-118 and pl.XXV,1. Le Glay identified this stele as being from Henchir Touchine (*Lambafundi*); R.J.A. Wilson saw the stele in Timgad (pers.comm.).

⁹⁹Le Glay SAM I (1961), pl.VIII,1 (from central Proconsularis) and pl.IX,5 (from Henchir Meded).

The combination of a pair of dolphins and a drinking vessel, seen on Cat.29, is one used in the upper register of a stele in the Musée de Maktar (fig.92) and in the lower registers of stelae from Medeïna (*Althiburos*)¹⁰⁰ and nearby Henchir el-Ksour,¹⁰¹ on which the two dolphins swim down towards a larger crater. While the theme of these stelae may be similar, the Henchir el-Ksour and Medeïna stelae exhibit flat, smooth relief and precisely-orchestrated positions for the objects in their scenes, while the animals on the Maktar stele are barely recognizable as specific species. In contrast, the 'La Ghorfa' example is almost incised, more sketch-like and informal, yet still well-formed.

While no reliefs parallel the 'La Ghorfa' scene exactly, the stele is closest to the upper zone of the stele in the Musée de Maktar (fig.92) for combining dolphins, roosters, and drinking vessels. In general spirit and technique, the animal scene on Cat.29 as a whole resembles the upper zones of second century Maktar stelae, which often combine roosters, other birds, and fish or dolphins;¹⁰² in those examples, the fish and animals are dispersed around the zone with more of a view to filling space than to creating a symmetrical, controlled picture. On another stele from Maktar, a pair of birds and another of dolphins or fish surround a single cup comparable to those on the table on the 'La Ghorfa' stele,¹⁰³ and on three more Maktar examples, though they are of a more plastic carving, the animals are

¹⁰⁰Ennaïfer (1976), 22, pl.VII.

¹⁰¹On display in the Punic gallery of the Musée du Bardo.

¹⁰²Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 275 no.Cb-976; 278 no.Cb-988 and 278 no.Cb-989; 280 no.Cb-998, 280-281 no.Cb-999, 281 no.Cb-1000, and 281 no.Cb-1001. According to Picard *RAA* (1954), 146, birds fulfilled the same role as fish or dolphins in carrying the deceased to the heavens.

¹⁰³Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], no.Cb-1002.

again in accompaniment with offerings and offering vessels.¹⁰⁴ More than any other stele from the 'La Ghorfa' series, Cat.29, which also bears the remnants of a Neopunic inscription to Baal, has its closest parallels in subject and style in the Neopunic stelae from Maktar.

Few Catalogue B entries are completely-preserved; it is therefore unknown just how closely they originally resembled 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Cat.B10 is an exception; its zones follow the themes of the Type 1 stelae fairly closely, although its style is less naturalistic than that of most 'La Ghorfa' stelae (fig.47). It also places the group of Liber Pater, Eros, and Venus in a formal register like that of the Dioscuri; like the architecture on Cat.2, its niche lacks a pediment and is flanked by Victories, usually elements of Type 2 niches.

One other stele may parallel another 'La Ghorfa' stele, Cat.21. In Chapter III, the Neopunic-Latin inscription on C.1008 was compared to those of the 'La Ghorfa' group. The CIL entry describes the stele as having two registers. In the first, a dedicant is making a sacrifice. In the lower register, a musician plays the flute while a bull-handler ropes a bull. The flute-player is rare on Roman African stelae, while not many artists actively showed the bull's impending demise. Both are part of the *Urbanus* stele's bottom zone, which sits below the image of the dedicant making a sacrifice. The similarities seem too great for these two stelae not to be from the same workshop; however, the fate of C.1008 since its CIL publication is unknown.

¹⁰⁴Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], nos.Cb-1004, Cb-1005, and Cb-1007. For Picard, the combination of birds, fish, and a crater was particularly evoked the upper Ocean and paradise (CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 274).

The sculptural comparisons clearly point to the *Pagus Thuscae* as the source of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. A regional artistic tradition with stock iconographic figures and compositions served the territory's needs for votive and funerary stelae. Stelae from Maghrawa and Maktar provide the closest parallels for the most characteristic features of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae; where they fall short in certain details, another site within *Thusca* usually provides a good comparison.

Eighteen stelae in all share certain similarities in general style and content; they are listed in more detail in Catalogue B. While these parallels are as close as could be desired, none duplicates features of all three typical zones of sculpting, and some 'La Ghorfa' stelae, like Cat.20, have no close parallels at all. The comparisons also lack the degree of Roman elements seen in the 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Nothing can parallel the Group 1A, with their Type 1 niches, pseudo-*togati* dedicants holding *volumina*, the teeming upper zones, formal epigraphic cartouches, and Atlantes. Second, the 'signs of Tanit' never become nearly as anthropomorphic as they do on 'La Ghorfa' examples, and body proportions for all of the figures remain clumsy and squat. Third, the comparisons break some of the rules that distinguish Type 1 from Type 2 niches; for example, Cat.B11 and B12 couple Liber Pater and/or Venus with a simple niche (figs.49 and 50).

The eighteen entries of Catalogue B are few compared to the hundreds found at other sites or within the scope of Roman Africa as a whole. The 'La Ghorfa' sculptors were working in a particular tradition that did not extend far beyond Thusca, with features like the *triskeles* or the Liber-Venus pair, both of which seem to be confined to a radius of 60km or less from Maktar.

In sum, while the comparisons place the 'La Ghorfa' stelae firmly in the region of Maktar, they cannot parallel them closely enough to identify the milieu in which specific 'La Ghorfa' stelae were made. The 'La Ghorfa' stelae show greater aptitude with carving tools and better use of space; they are more elaborately decorated and are much larger than the average Maktar or Maghrawa stele.¹⁰⁵ While they were certainly Thuscan in origin, they remain unique in the North African repertoire.

¹⁰⁵The largest Maghrawa stele that is almost completely preserved is 1.23m high, still probably about 0.25m shorter than the average fully-preserved 'La Ghorfa' stele.

Chapter V Chronological Considerations

The craftsmen of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae drew upon different cultural influences to identify the dedicants and their beliefs. This mixture, combined with the lack of archaeological context for the stelae, has unfortunately made it difficult for scholars to date the stelae with any consensus, as the Appendix to this Chapter illustrates on pp.197-199. Still, the most popular dates attributed to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae have fallen between the late first and second centuries A.C., even though the methods used to arrive at this range have differed greatly and have not previously been based upon an examination of the entire group. The comparisons to other North African stelae in Chapter IV were useful for localizing the origins of the group, but are less helpful for chronology, since most parallels are either undated or need to have their dates re-evaluated.¹ Alternate means of dating the stelae are desirable. In most cases, it is probably dangerous to assign specific dates; suggesting a general range, even for the stylistic groupings identified in Chapter II.5, is safer.² Unfortunately, several of the key dating features are found on stelae belonging to Group 1 "unattributed" (hereafter Group 1 u/a), meaning stelae that belong to Type 1, but which have no close stylistic or compositional relatives within the 'La Ghorfa' family.

¹Cf. the discussion of the chronology of North African stelae in Chapter 1, p.21*f*. ²Cf. pp.121 and 126.

Chronological considerations must include the presentation and content of the inscriptions in addition to details of the sculptural reliefs. Since the 'La Ghorfa' stelae clearly belong in the Thuscan repertoire, additional dating indicators for the area can also be employed. Both Picard and M'Charek have devised chronologies for sculpted and inscribed gravestones from Maktar, starting in the Augustan period and lasting through the Severan period.³ After that time, local artists turned from stelae to cippi-altars, with decreasing interest in figural representations.⁴ Picard's findings are based on style, without any anchors for date beyond parallels to Imperial hair fashion. M'Charek, however, examined the sculpture, epigraphy, and the material and size of the stone to arrive at his conclusions. The most relevant of these findings will be discussed further on. First, it is useful to review past suggestions for the dates of the 'La Ghorfa' group and the approaches used to arrive at those dates.

C. G. Picard was the first to assign specific dates to a group of 'La Ghorfa' stelae, those in the Musée du Bardo (Cat. 1 to 12). In 1954 or 1955, Picard's *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui* listed those stelae as belonging between the late first and late second centuries A.C. However, beyond comparing the hairstyles of the dedicants on Cat. 5 and 6 to Imperial fashion, Picard offered nothing in support of these dates.

Already in the early 1960s, G.-Ch. Picard had revised this chronology in order to make the 'La Ghorfa' stelae epitomize his 'Numidian' period (100-150 A.C.) in the stylistic evolution of North African stelae.⁵ In this and years of subsequent publications, he and his

³Picard (1970), 130; M'Charek (1982).

⁴Cf. M'Charek (1982), 82-83.

⁵Picard (1963), 240 (cf. Chapter 1, p.34).

wife, C. Picard, looked to the archaeology of Maktar to confirm that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae belonged to the first half of the second century;⁶ however, neither attempted to correct the dates for any stele on an individual basis. Their arguments were especially concerned with the ancient city's monumental architecture, which followed Hellenico-Numidian traditions until the mid-second century A.C. At that time, Maktar's citizens rebuilt the Temples of Apollo and Liber Pater in styles that completely discarded pre-Roman African styles in favour of Roman ones; they also began to use a different type of stone.⁷ In the Picards' opinion, the 'La Ghorfa' architecture adhered more to styles preceding this change.

In her 1978 study of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae in the British Museum (Cat.13 to 36), A.M. Bisi devised her own chronology for 39 known stelae of the type, placing them in specific quarter-century periods between the end of the first and the late second centuries A.C. To arrive at these dates, she compared the examples to other stelae published by Picard and in particular Le Glay, following their dates uncritically. She only occasionally referred to other comparative material, such as hairstyles of Imperial women.⁸ Many of her dates were unexplained. As a result, Bisi's overall chronology seems flimsy, especially given that she dated six stelae, which are here assigned to Group 1A, to the end of the first century and four other stelae, also belonging to Group 1A, to the mid-second century. This split is

⁶G-Ch. Picard published the mid-20th century excavations at Maktar in his Civitas Mactaritana, in Karthago 8 (1957).

⁷Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 185. Picard and Picard (1980), 22: limestone "à lumachelles" was rarely used in the Imperial period before the end of the second century, when it was used in the sanctuaries of Ceres and Apollo.

⁸For example, Bisi (1978), 48 and 55 n.3.

startling, since these particular stelae form the most cohesive group within the 'La Ghorfa' series in terms of content and style.

Two people have since argued for earlier dates within the Roman period. The first, E.F. Ghedini, suggested that the dates be moved back to the first century A.C. for most stelae, with the rest belonging to the beginning of the second century;⁹ unfortunately, she did not conclude with suggested dates or periods for specific stelae. She cited parallels from North Africa, Rome, and other parts of the Mediterranean for details of the architecture, hairstyles, dress, and inscriptions. In Chapter III, some of her comments on the inscriptions were corrected,¹⁰ but her evaluation of the relief elements will merit further discussion below. N. Ferchiou was even more emphatic that the stelae have many Julio-Claudian parallels and cited several of these in her work, *Décor architectonique d'Afrique proconsulaire* (1989), the most comprehensive publication of architectural components from Proconsularis up to the Antonines. However, her citations are sometimes haphazard, leaving much material that cannot be followed up. Furthermore, many structures lack secure dates, yet she assigned such monuments to chronological categories without explanation.

Detailed examination of the entire group refutes some of these opinions and supports others. Considerations such as epigraphy, iconography, architectural style, dress, and hairstyles provide the best clues.

⁹Ghedini (1990), 239. ¹⁰Cf. pp.142 and 153 n.89.

The inscriptions, which are extremely concise, offer limited evidence. At Aïn Tebernok (*Tubernuc*) and Aïn Tounga (*Thignica*), certain Latin votive inscriptions are also quite brief, although they are rare. They date from the first century B.C. through the third century A.C.;¹¹ in contrast to Ghedini's assertion, then, conciseness was not limited to a specific chronological period. Among the North African inscriptions, furthermore, no parallels are known for inscribing a stele with only the abbreviated votive formula, leaving out the names of the god and the dedicant. Ghedini's comment that such inscriptions belong to the first century is therefore unsupported, at least in North African epigraphy.¹²

Two inscriptions may be more informative. First, *L. luli(us) Urba(nus)* recorded his *tria nomina* on Cat.21, which stylistically belongs to Group 2B. According to Le Glay, most inhabitants of Africa Proconsularis probably did not assume the *tria nomina* before the late first century A.C.;¹³ admittedly, there were certainly Roman citizens in Africa before that time. Second, the *hederae distinguentes* on Cat.12 (Group 1B) may date to second half of the first century or perhaps even the early second century.¹⁴ By association, the other members of Group 1B, Cat.23 and 34, should be roughly contemporary.

Other factors point to dates not before the late first century A.C. for certain stelae. For instance, the depictions of Jupiter and the composition of Jupiter scenes on the 'La

¹¹Cf. Chapter III, p.139.

¹²Ghedini (1990), 238.

¹³Le Glay (1968), 235.

¹⁴According to Cagnat (repr. 1964), 28, *hederae distinguentes* were common from Augustus on, but cf. Haley (1991), 131: "indicative of a Hadrianic date or later ... [although] somewhat earlier in Spanish epigraphy".

Ghorfa' stelae resemble those of Saturn on North African stelae,¹⁵ to such an extent that the dates for Saturn's presence in sculpture probably also apply to those for Jupiter's appearances. Although some scholars have suggested that sculptors in North Africa began to portray Saturn in the Flavian period,¹⁶ securely dated examples only exist from the second-quarter of the second century on. Pre-Hadrianic dates for Saturnine stelae are unproven and are especially questionable in the case of much earlier dates, such as those within the Flavian period. If the same hypothesis can be applied to Jupiter, then Cat.12 and 34, which belong to Group 1B, conservatively date not earlier than the second century, as do Cat.2, 17, and 22, which are Group 1 stelae without close 'La Ghorfa' parallels.

Furthermore, in the art of Roman Africa, the Dioscuri most commonly accompany Saturn on stelae; the period when they flourished in this art should therefore be largely contemporary. On 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the trio appears on Cat. 2 and 17 (Type 1); the former stele has been quoted as one of the earliest examples of a Dioscuri register.¹⁷ It is possible that the 'La Ghorfa' sculptors were at the forefront of new Graeco-Roman trends in stelae, but if no secure dates exist for depictions of Saturn before the Late Hadrianic or Antonine period, estimates for precedents should be conservative.

Details of the epigraphy and the gods thus point to the late first and second centuries. However, the architecture and the appearance of the dedicants often follow earlier trends. Key aspects of architecture to consider are the Aeolic-Corinthian capitals, the ceiling

¹⁵A bust or head of Jupiter appears at the top of Cat. 12 and 34 (Group 1B) and 22 (Group 1u/a); he also appears in his own register with the Dioscuri on Cat. 2 and 17 (Group 1u/a).

¹⁶Le Glay SAH (1966), 500; Poinssot (1955), 36f.

¹⁷Lipiński Dieux (1995), 403; Le Glay, SAH (1966), 231.

coffers, the cornices, and the specific mouldings of the entablature. These details occur mostly on Type 1 stelae; dating evidence is sorely lacking for the architecture of Type 2 stelae.

The Aeolic-Corinthian capitals have documented parallels from central Proconsularis, mostly dating between the second century B.C. and the first century A.C.¹⁸ The ceiling coffers on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae are almost unique in North African sculpture. They are most common on Type 1 stelae, although they also occur on three Type 2 examples;¹⁹ the two streams are therefore not necessarily independent in chronology. Picard compared these coffers to examples from the Flavian and Antonine periods, even though the sources he cited did not address this period.²⁰ Ghedini rejected his suggestion, pointing to examples such as those of the *tholos* at Epidauros, on the Round Temple in the Forum Boarium, and in Late Republican mosaics.²¹ However, comparisons are difficult, for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae show the most rudimentary composition for coffers, plain recessed squares. Paint traces on Cat.32 and 39 show that the coffers were decorated, though likely in large blocks of bright colours, rather than in detailed ornamentation that could help pinpoint a date.

¹⁸Cf. Chapter IV, p.170.

¹⁹Type 1: Cat.4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 38, 39, and 40 (all Group 1A), 12 and 34 (both Group 1B), 32 and 36 (both Group 1D), 18 and 37 (Group 1u/a). Type 2: Cat.30 and 42 (both Group 2A) and 27 (Group 2 u/a).

²⁰Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 185, only cites sources dealing with late Republican and early Imperial architecture: P. Gros (1979), *Gallia* 37, I, 72, n.65, who cites Ward-Perkins (1960), "The Round Temple in the Forum Boarium", *PBSR* 28, 24-26, and M. Verzar (1974), "Frühaugusteischer Grabbau in Sestino (Toscana)", *MEFRA* 86, 400-404.

²¹Ghedini (1990), 235.

Ferchiou compared the entablature cornices of unspecified 'La Ghorfa' stelae to those of real architecture from the Julio-Claudian to early Flavian periods, including an arch at *Mustis*.²² However, the profiles on the stelae are not very close.

The architectural mouldings of the stelae follow Punico-Numidian traditions. For instance, a limestone cornice attributed to the Temple of Hoter Miskar approximates the mouldings that occur on both Maktar and 'La Ghorfa' stelae, including Cat.6 and 7 (Group 1A), and Cat. B14.²³ Based on Lézine's typology of North African temples, the Picards dated this cornice and its temple to the end of the first century or beginning of the second century A.C.²⁴ They concluded that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae had to precede the mid-second century, several decades before local sculptors stopped producing stelae for the Maktar sanctuary.²⁵ At the other end of the date range, Ghedini indicated general parallels for the mouldings between the second and first centuries B.C.,²⁶ while Ferchiou emphasized the influence of first century A.C. architecture. Ferchiou compared the mouldings of Cat.4, 10, 11 (Group 1A) and 8 (Group 1u/a) to Julio-Claudian styles, which are (in her opinion) degraded on these stelae due to poor craftsmanship, rural artistry, or the debasement of the

²²Ferchiou (1989), 345, no.XVIII.1.N.1, fig.66, a and pl.XCIII, b.

²³Cf. Picard "Essai" (1988), 17; Picard "Le temple" (1988), 21; and, for a summary of earlier evidence, Picard *CivMact* (1957), 58-60.

²⁴Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 184, and Picard and Picard (1980), 25, referring to the typology of Lézine (1959); cf. G. Picard "Essai" (1988), 19, and Picard "Le temple" (1988), 21.

²⁵G.-Ch. Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 185, believed that Maktar produced no stelae after the reign of Caracalla, since the Maktar sanctuary must have been destroyed to make room for the Temple of Saturn. The temple is contemporary with the nearby arch conventionally called Bab-el-Aïn, which dates not later than 215 A.D. Of course, this suggestion presumes that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae must be from the same atelier as that which produced the stelae for the Maktar *tophet*.

²⁶Ghedini (1990), 234.

canon after decades of copying.²⁷ In other words, the stelae may simply re-use motifs that are generations old. In addition, the hatched moulding on Cat.16 (Group 1u/a) relates to first century examples of real architecture, particularly of the Julio-Claudian period.²⁸ According to Ferchiou, the only undeniably later mouldings occur on Cat.2 (Group 1u/a); she believed that although its egg-and-dart moulding was a degraded version of one popular in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian period, its dentils belonged to the Flavian period or the second century.²⁹

These architectural comparisons highlight the importance of the Julio-Claudian period in terms of inspiring architecture in central Proconsularis. However, these architectural styles were long-lived in central Proconsularis; at Maktar, for instance, temples were local interpretations of both Numidian and Roman styles and were not replaced until the mid-second century, when more updated Roman-style temples appeared.³⁰ In this region, it is possible that stelae produced as late as the Antonines could still reflect Julio-Claudian details, as still seen in the most prominent local buildings.

The general appearance of most dedicants resembles that on Maktar gravestones in the first century A.C. to the Trajanic or Hadrianic period; these dates come from crossreferencing the sculpture with the inscriptions.³¹ Typically, the human figures are stiff and

²⁷Ferchiou (1989), 386, nos.XVIII.IV.A.6 to 9; she also referred to unspecified 'La Ghorfa' examples from Bisi (1978). For the bead-and-reel mouldings specifically, cf. Ferchiou (1989), 434, 436, and 437, nos.XVIII.IV.A.6-9. These identifications are problematic, for although Ferchiou was identifying different types of bead-and-reel on each of these pages, she used the same examples each time.

²⁸Ferchiou (1989), 433.

²⁹Ferchiou (1989), 417,4a.

³⁰Picard "La sculpture" (1982), 185; cf. above p.186.

³¹Picard (1970), 130 A; M'Charek (1982), 33-34.

frontal, with disproportionately long necks and large heads, which are dominated by huge almond-shaped eyes, as with most 'La Ghorfa' dedicants. The carvers used both incising and sculpting. The gravestone of *Arruntia Sperata* (fig.93) belongs to this period; by association, Cat.1 should, too (Group 2u/a).³²

Attempts to be more specific are hampered by the fact that the dedicants' dress and hairstyles tend to be schematic and therefore somewhat ambiguous. Cat. 1 demonstrates that some sculptors were not greatly concerned with creating realistic garments, let alone the current fashion. Certain features like the men's toga-like dress, their short haircuts, and the women's plaited hair may reflect lasting and local styles rather than, in the case of the latter, echoes of Faustina the Younger.³³ As for the male dedicants who appear togate, the garment is normally very simple, in the manner of the late Republic or very early Empire.³⁴ Only one example, on Cat.39 (Group 1A), shows a form extant in the latter part of the first century, and even then only uncommonly.³⁵ However, these styles were revived under Trajan, making dating more difficult.³⁶ Similarly, some of the male hairstyles also reflect early Imperial styles that were revived under Trajan, such as those on Cat.32 (Group 1D), 13 and 31 (both Group 1C). The man on Cat.16 has a particularly Trajanic look (Group 1u/a). The clean-shaven faces are significant, for on sculpted gravestones from Maktar, most men are bearded from approximately the mid-second century on.³⁷

³²Cf. Chapter IV, p.175.

³³Cf. Chapter II.3, p.84.

³⁴Ghedini (1990), 236, concurred.

³⁵Cf. Goette (1989), 112-113, pl.4.

³⁶Cf. Chapter II.3, p.85.

³⁷Picard (1970), 130 C; cf. Picard (1990), 201.

Women's clothing, accessories, and hairstyles vary more frequently, but are for the most part impenetrable in terms of date. More so than the men, they could belong to almost any decade within the Late Republic and Imperial periods; their appearance is no more likely to imitate Imperial fashion at Rome than to be following local traditions. Ghedini's comparisons of the hairbands to those worn in Italy during the second half of the first century A.C. do not bear scrutiny, as her suggested parallels are not like the 'La Ghorfa' examples.³⁸ More tellingly, the dedicants on Cat.6 (Group 1A) and 3 (Type 2) wear earrings comparable to types fashionable between the second half of the first century and the late second century at least.³⁹

As a whole, the best dating evidence comes from the dedicant on Cat.2, whose hairstyle evokes that of Hadrian's wife Sabina.⁴⁰ Combined with the dates for its Dioscuri register and architecture, this evidence places the stele probably in the first part of the second century, the date already suggested for it by Picard and Bisi.⁴¹ Unfortunately, this example is not stylistically linked to any other stele except in the most general terms.

For the other stelae, such precision is not possible. Frustratingly, features like the hair, dress, and accessories of some dedicants could be Julio-Claudian, Trajanic, or neither. Overall, the details resembling Julio-Claudian styles are schematic and perhaps best seen as continuing old fashions. At the very least, temples at Maktar retained architecture of the

³⁸Ghedini (1990), 237.

³⁹Cf. Chapter II.3, p.93.

⁴⁰Cf. Chapter II.3, p.90.

⁴¹Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 266; Picard (1982-83), 25 fig.7; Bisi (1978), 80.

early first century A.C. into the mid-second century; local representations of architecture will logically still have reflected Julio-Claudian techniques to at least that point.

If the men's hairstyles and garments can also be seen as a later, debased version of the Julio-Claudian toga, they fall in line with iconographic and epigraphic evidence that places certain stelae in the period of the second half of the first century A.C. and perhaps the early second century. The stylistic group that most demonstrably adheres to this period is 1B, for various epigraphic and sculptural reasons, including the presence of Jupiter, whose comparanda suggest that early second century dates may be more appropriate than Flavian or even earlier ones. For Group 1A, details like the toga style worn by the dedicant on Cat.39, the earrings worn by the women, and the parallel to architecture from the Hoter Miskar temple at Maktar, suggest that the stelae do not date before the mid-first century, perhaps not before the late first century A.C. In terms of hair and dress, Groups 1C and 1D may both reflect Trajanic revivals of Augustan styles. Evidence for the other stylistic groups, especially for Type 2 stelae, is more sporadic.

At the other end of the scale is the latest date possible for the stelae. The Picards suggested an end-date of c.150 A.D. Barring a renaissance of the 'La Ghorfa' style, this suggestion seems valid. The sculpture contains nothing with solid parallels beyond the mid-second century. Both Picard and M'Charek associated that date with the demise of Punico-Numidian figurative art; afterwards, sculpture at Maktar displayed more Roman plasticity and more natural anatomical proportions.⁴²

⁴²Picard (1970), 130; M'Charek (1982), 58.

One final consideration is whether the distinction between Type 1 and 2 stelae is temporally significant. With the available evidence, there is no reason to believe so. The Group 2A stelae tend to have simple niches, geometric 'signs of Tanit', and perhaps generic clothing, while the Type 1 niches tend to have more Graeco-Roman features, such as templetype architecture, anthropomorphic gods, and Roman dress. However, the differences could be ascribed to personal taste and different sculptors more readily than to an aesthetic judgement that views Group 2A stelae as more "primitive" and therefore earlier. While the two Neopunic inscriptions are on Type 2 stelae and the Latin inscriptions are on Type 1 stelae, this distinction may have less to do with date than with the possibility that Type 2 stelae appeal more to pre-Roman cultural manifestations. Though the workmanship differs, there are links between the two types. Both may include coffers, placed either above or below the niche, while a Type 2 stele, Cat.26, has the Aeolic-Corinthian capitals typically seen in Type 1 niches. Only stelae from Group 2A are quite far from the Roman look; on other Type 2 stelae, the 'sign of Tanit' has human features and the dedicants have more Roman-style dress. Finally, Cat.11, a Group 1u/a stele, has both Neopunic and Latin in its inscription, while Cat.B13 from Catalogue B has Type 1 presentation, but an entirely Neopunic inscription. Rather than differing in date, the two streams may be of distinct origins, made by different artisans, or reflect personal tastes or heritage of the dedicants.

Appendix to Chapter V Previous Suggestions for the Dates of the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

The following table summarizes the dates that scholars have suggested for specific stelae, presented here in the groupings suggested in Chapter II:⁴³

Group No.	Cat.	Picard ⁴⁴	Bisi ⁴⁵	Other
1A	4	2nd c A.C.	mid-2nd c A.C.	-
	5	end 2nd c A.C.	mid-2nd c A.C.	-
	6	end 2nd c A.C.	mid-2nd c A.C.	2nd c B.C. [<i>sic</i>] ⁴⁶ 2nd-3rd c A.C. ⁴⁷
	7	end 2nd c A.C.	4/4 1st c A.C.	
	10	end 2nd c A.C.	4/4 1st c A.C.	
	11	end 2nd c A.C.	4/4 1st c A.C.	1st c A.C. ⁴⁸ mid-2nd c A.C. ⁴⁹
	19		mid-2nd c A.C.	-
	38		4/4 1st c A.C.	-
	39		4/4 1st c A.C.	lst c A.C. ? ⁵⁰
	40	-	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
1B	12	end 2nd c A.C.	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
	23	-	-	
	34	-	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
1C	13		beginning 2nd c A.C.	-
	31	-	beginning 2nd c A.C.	-

⁴³Within this chart, "3/4 2nd c" means the third quarter of the second century, "4/4 1st" the last quarter of the first century, etc.

⁴⁴Following the dates provided in Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 265-273, nos.Cb-963 to Cb-974; although the Picards later attributed these same stelae to between 100 and 150 A.D., they never revised the dates on an individual basis.

⁴⁵Bisi (1978), 80, unless otherwise noted.

46 The Phoenicians (1988), 619, no.208.

⁴⁷Carthage (1995), 33 fig.32; CarthageHTE (1995), 203.

48 Yacoub MusBardo (1970), fig. 15.

49 Yacoub, Chefs-d'oeuvre (1978), 34.

50Noll (1986), 44.

1D	32	-	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
	36	-	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
1	2	beginning 2nd c A.C.	beginning 2nd c A.C.	-
unattributed	8	end 2nd c A.C.	mid-2nd c A.C.	-
	9	end 2nd c A.C.	4/4 1st c A.C.	late 2nd c A.C. ⁵¹
	14	-	beginning 2nd c A.C.	-
	16		beginning 2nd c A.C.	
	17	-	end 2nd c A.C.	2nd c A.C. ⁵²
	18	-	4/4 1st c A.C. ?	-
	22		end 2nd c A.C. ?	
	24	-	beginning 2nd c A.C.	-
	33	-	beginning 2nd c A.C.	-
	37	-	-	
	41	-	beginning 2nd c A.C.	2nd c B.C. [<i>sic</i>] ⁵³ beginning 2nd c A.C. ⁵⁴ 2nd c A.C. ⁵⁵
	43	-		-
2A	30	-	3/4 2nd c A.C.	-
	35	-		-
	42		3/4 2nd c A.C.	1st c A.C. ⁵⁶ beginning 2nd c A.C. ⁵⁷
2B	21	-	3/4 2nd c A.C.	
	25	-	3/4 2nd c A.C.	-
	26?		3/4 2nd c A.C.	-

⁵¹Balmaseda, LIMC V,1 (1990), 256 no.32 (Herakles/Hercules).

52Le Glay, SAM I (1961), p.225 no.3.

53 The Phoenicians (1988), 619, no.209.

54 Carthage-Kairouan (1982), 108, no.154.

⁵⁵Amiet MusLouvre (1971), 113.

56 Amiet, MusLouvre (1971), 113.

⁵⁷Carthage-Kairouan (1982), 108-109, no.155.

2	1	end 1st c A.C. ⁵⁸	3/4 2nd c A.C.	
unattributed	3	beginning 2nd c A.C.	3/4 2nd c A.C.	
	27	-	4/4 1st c A.C.	-
	28	-	end 2nd c A.C.	
	29		end 2nd c A.C.?	-
Other	15	-	end 2nd c A.C.	-
	20	-	end 2nd c A.C. ⁵⁹	-

59Bisi (1976), 37.

⁵⁸Although when Picard believed that the top fragment of this stone was a separate stele from Oudna, she dated that part to the end of the first/beginning of the second century: cf. Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 298.

Conclusions

The epigraphy and sculpture of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae contain an intricate mix of cultural and cultic aspects. Some of these features are unusual and largely unparalleled outside central Proconsularis; for instance, the sculptors have contradicted common habit by showing things not normally seen on stelae, such as a bull sacrifice in progress, a lion-bull combat, and obscure allusions to legend or local cult. These digressions add to the intriguing aspects of the community that produced the stelae. Frustratingly, two important questions remain for almost every stele. First, the deities who received the dedications are still unknown. Second, the identities of the donors are unknown, from the perspectives of both their general place in local society and their individual identities.

The inscriptions indicate that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae commemorated acts in which the dedicant fulfilled a sacred vow, one that probably took place in a sanctuary similar to those described in Chapter 1. In several instances, this act may have involved a bull sacrifice like those in the bottom zones. In the middle zone, the Type 1 niches especially are detailed enough to reflect architectural components of real structures, particularly those of the Thuscan area. However, this architecture cannot be identified with any real buildings and the variations in the details argue against the existence of any real version. Instead, the artist intended the viewer to envision the dedicant within a generic sanctuary, based on the presence of the apsed niche, columns, and other familiar components, including the sacrifice.

Whose sanctuary the viewer was supposed to envision is more difficult to ascertain. Only the Neopunic inscription on Cat.30 may name a god, Baal; even if this reading is accurate, the rest of the inscription is gone, including any epithet that might elucidate the god's nature. Judging by the sculptural iconography, he cannot have been identified in Roman times with Saturn, who seems to have been a relatively minor god in the Maktar area, compared with the rest of Roman Africa.¹ Furthermore, though the stelae contain derivatives of Punic symbols, none incontrovertibly belong to Baal alone.

In the upper zone of the stelae, any of several gods and symbols could represent the god or gods who received the dedications. In terms of physical hierarchy, the trio of Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros is inferior to the 'sign of Tanit' and the disc-and-crescent motif; these figures are also absent on Type 2 stelae. They cannot be the principal recipients of the dedication, but seem to symbolize fertility and perhaps even rebirth, possibly in order to draw out the nature of a superior god. Above them, the same themes are emphasized by the 'sign of Tanit', with its omnipresent grapes and fruit, as well as the birds and other small animals that surround the 'sign'. Whether the 'sign of Tanit' represents the bestower of success, or success itself, is another matter.

If the disc-and-crescent motif at the top of most of the stelae represents the supreme god, it is unfortunately a rather obscure symbol. This motif takes several different forms on the stelae; for instance, the disc may change to the form of a stellar rosette, an

¹Cf. Introduction, p.12.

anthropomorphic face, or the bust of thunder-bearing Jupiter, as on Cat. 12 and 22. The basic lunar and solar shapes flanking the motif fit with the heavenly nature of the Roman god Jupiter, so that he and his companions, the Dioscuri or Sol and Luna, may represent the celestial powers embodied in the disc-and-crescent motif. Many centuries had passed since Herodotus claimed that Libyans worshipped the Sun and Moon alone,² but this pair, as combined here with the 'sign of Tanit' and other gods, may still have ultimately presided over agricultural and personal success in the minds of many Thuscans.

In short, the identity of the recipient god or gods is complex and not easily explicable, for the cult that produced the 'La Ghorfa' stelae had an unusually intricate view of its environment and gods. Though the basic components of the top zone are consistent and surely belong to one religious group, they take several different forms and expressions. Without clear inscriptions to identify them, the god or gods to whom the dedicants were appealing can only be interpreted in terms of potential nature.

The dedicants themselves offer a multifaceted perspective on the population of the *pagus Thuscae*. In past studies of cultural interaction between Romans and their subjects, most scholars place considerable weight on the role of the elite in transmitting Roman habits to the populace, although some have been torn between two models of how this transmission might have occurred.³ The first model asserts that the Romans gave the natives great, and sometimes emphatic, incentives to assimilate themselves, with the implication that life would flow more smoothly for those who cooperated. This theory has the Romans

²Herodotus IV, 188.

³E.g. Brunt (1976), 162, 166.

specifically and strategically courting chiefs and leaders.⁴ In contrast, the second model claims that financially and politically powerful natives 'Romanized' themselves through self-interest.⁵ Broughton was emphatic that Romans did not force their behaviour or beliefs upon the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa; therefore, any moves towards Roman accoutrements were at the instigation of the natives themselves.⁶ The 'La Ghorfa' dedicants offer a model with a slightly different nuance, since they were not demonstrably politically ambitious members or particularly public figures of their community. If they were, one would expect them to have identified themselves more unambiguously on their votive stelae, as most other worshippers did.

The physical nature of the stelae suggests that their owners had some disposable wealth. The height, intricate carving and painting, plus the presumed offerings buried with the stelae, indicate great expenditure. The dedicants apparently did not form a particularly small and exclusive group, for over forty 'La Ghorfa' stelae are known; when the close parallels of Catalogue B are included, this number rises to about 60. Clearly there was a consistent, well-formed cult that was appreciated by a fairly large group of people within the territory of the *pagus Thuscae*.

Little more can be ascertained about the dedicants of the 'La Ghorfa' ex-votos. They were neither poor nor ignorant of urban customs, yet left only a few tantalizing clues about themselves in their inscriptions or sculptural presentations. They did not indicate their

⁴E.g. Millett (1990), 37, but contrast p.38, point 1 with p.38, point 4.

⁵E.g. Bénabou "Résistance et romanisation" (1976), 370; Davies (1996), 479. ⁶Broughton (1929), 19, 196, 197, 208, 209, etc.

means of livelihood, which is not unusual in North Africa, but it is unfortunate that the inscriptions reveal so little about their places within their community.

From a cultural viewpoint, the stelae show a mixture of indigenous, Punic, and Roman aspects. Two still use Neopunic inscriptions (Cat.29 and 30). Of these, the only well-preserved inscription occurs on Cat.30; it is a stereotyped, essentially superfluous message, lacking the usual information supplied in Neopunic dedications. Cat.21 employs Latin script, but in a confused manner. Cat.11 uses both Latin and Neopunic, the latter unconventionally. The remaining Latin examples are formulaic and awkward. Nomenclature varies, where provided: one person uses a singular name, apparently derived from either a Punic or a native name, but he uses Latin-style filiation to include his father's Latinsounding name (*Bellic(us) Max(imi) f.*). Another person, *Rogatus*, perhaps has an *interpretatio Romana* of a Punic name. Finally, *L. Iuli(us) Urba(nus)* has *tria nomina* that were fairly common in Roman Africa. Among the remaining stelae for which most of the stone is preserved, the epigraphic field is either blank or was not supplied.

The sculpted elements also contain varying degrees of Roman-style features: some include Graeco-Roman-looking gods like Liber Pater, Venus, and Eros; some present the dedicant in garments approximating the toga, with *volumen* in hand; and others include architecture that has Hellenic parallels that go back to the pre-conquest period. In other provinces where Roman-style art and architecture occurs, such images may have been introduced via such media as sculpture, lamps, or coins.⁷ A similar situation can be envisioned for Maktar, where offerings in megalithic tombs included a bronze statuette of

⁷Beaujeu (1976), 436.

Mercury, lamps, Arretine ware, and Roman coins.⁸ Most of this material is dated to between the Tiberian period and the beginning of the second century A.C., overlapping the production period for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae.

However, when a local artist copied such images, he did not necessarily understand its full implications within a Roman cultural climate. A Roman image that had been reinterpreted locally did not necessarily reflect appreciation or worship of specifically Roman gods and religion, however powerful the reconfiguration was to locals.⁹ On the stelae, while the dedicants' names may sometimes seem to be Latin interpretations of non-Roman nomenclature, the sculpture often reveals an opposite process, indigenization, in which the locals interpreted Roman images in their own way.¹⁰ For instance, whether due to artistic licence or lack of familiarity, the toga is schematic. The *volumen*, a sign of education and particularly of the Latin script, contradicts the epigraphic fields, which in most cases remain empty or perhaps never existed. In both Punic and Roman settings, inscriptions advertise the actions of their donors not only to the gods, but also to peers; yet on the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, the surviving dedicatory inscriptions are not concerned with such proclamations: the abbreviated inscriptions are bereft of the name of the god or, in most cases, that of the dedicant.

Literacy is more an economic and social issue than an ethnic one in the setting of ancient North Africa. Studied independently of the stelae, the inscriptions may suggest that their donors were among the majority of North Africans who were not concerned with

⁸Picard *CivMact* (1957), 28-29. ⁹Beaujeu (1976), 436. ¹⁰Cf. Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 413.

advertising themselves in writing and who are therefore less visible in the archaeological record. However, the stelae themselves are highly visible and suggest donors of unusual wealth. They indicate a complex cult that was found in more than one town, suggesting a certain degree of organization and communication. They therefore serve as a reminder that activities in ancient times, just as today, could be highly evolved and well-funded, yet still essentially private.

Rather than undiscerningly assimilating Roman gods and cultural material trappings, the 'La Ghorfa' dedicants, like so many North Africans, chose only what appealed to them most from the Roman repertoire.¹¹ Details of their stelae suggest that they were adopting certain aspects of Roman culture without necessarily understanding what those traits meant or how they functioned. The dedicants cannot be considered fully Roman if they were merely mirroring certain aspects, without appreciating what the physical or nominal model signified. Emulation may be considered a preliminary step towards understanding, but these people, given their odd use of Roman conventions, were only slightly more 'Roman' than their pre-conquest ancestors, who had already been using Graeco-Roman elements in their art and architecture.¹² In the words of Freeman, "the adoption of 'Roman' goods and traits does not prove a desire to be seen as 'Roman'. It has more to do with the arrival of new, technologically-better and cheaper goods and practices".¹³ In the case of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, Roman customs allowed Thuscans to make their gods anthropomorphic and to dress themselves and their architecture in manners that seemed to impress people in urban centres,

¹¹Bénabou "Résistance et romanisation" (1976), 373.

¹²Cf., for example, Picard (1979) and (1983), Bisi (1986), Coarelli and Thébert (1988).

¹³Freeman (1993), 444.

even if some Thuscans did not recognize what those styles normally communicated. The coffers that appear below the floor, rather than the ceiling, of the niches on both Type 1 and Type 2 stelae (Cat.6 and 37, and Cat.27, 30, and 42, respectively), demonstrate how locals redefined such conventions according to their own views and priorities.

The parallels for the 'La Ghorfa' stelae suggest that this cult was limited to a specific part of Africa Proconsularis, although within that locale, comparable stelae are widespread. Stele parallels come from Maktar, Maghrawa, and Ellès, while details of the sculpture and architecture draw in Aïn Barchouch, Ksar Toual Zammeul, and, to a lesser extent, Siliana, Henchir Meded, *Althiburos*, and a number of other villages in the *pagus Thuscae*. Other features, like the drilled circles or Atlantes, belong to select, but more widespread, areas of central Proconsularis.

Maktar, Maghrawa, and Ellès are the only sites to have sculpture showing the most distinctive characteristic of the stelae, the 'sign of Tanit' in anthropomorphic form and holding grapes and pomegranates. Yet these locations do not yield examples of certain common 'La Ghorfa' features that are found elsewhere, such as the coffers or the Atlantes, or of less frequent figures like the 'snake-handlers' on Cat.8 and 37, which are unparalleled. Though Maktar has by far the largest stele assemblage in the region, certain sculptural or iconographic affinities come from towns with much fewer stelae. For instance, a stele from Aïn Barchouch is the only non-'La Ghorfa' stone to have coffers (fig.94), yet within the 'La Ghorfa' collection, coffers occur in Groups 1A, 1B, 1D, and 2A.

This situation may indicate diverse origins for some members of the group, as suggested by the differing qualities of limestone.¹⁴ While it is theoretically possible that the comparanda were produced in a central workshop and then distributed to different parts of the *pagus Thuscae*, such a workshop would have had to respect the distinctive motifs of certain areas, such as the radiant head within a tied wreath that is characteristic of Aïn Barchouch.¹⁵ Certainly such a workshop could have handled special requests for design, but it seems unlikely that a single workshop would have served the entire Thuscan area, which was quite large and contained several important centres.

The stylistic subgroups of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae indicate several different hands, if not workshops. Significantly, no stele from Catalogue B ("Parallels") combines both the style and general composition of any of these subgroups. For instance, the anatomical proportions of Liber Pater and Venus on Cat.B9, B10, B12, and B13 are nothing like those on any 'La Ghorfa' stele. In the few cases where dedicants are preserved on Catalogue B stelae, none duplicate 'La Ghorfa' dedicants exactly in multiple categories like hairstyle, facial features, and dress, especially in the case of the togate males. There is nothing to match the exuberant decoration of Group 1A stelae. In terms of general composition, Cat.2 compares best to stelae from Maghrawa, but again the style is very different: the physiques of figures on Cat.B9 and B10 are not comparable and the execution is not as lively or accomplished.

¹⁴Cf. Introduction, p.8.

Instead, points of stylistic similarity often emerge in stelae that lack the typical 'La Ghorfa' composition. Cat. 1, for instance, was surely produced in the same workshop as the stele of *Arruntia Sperata* from Maktar (fig.97), since the handiwork on the human figures is so similar. Despite the fact that the proportions are different below the neck, the portrait of *M. Aufidius Rogatus*, also on a gravestone from Maktar, is quite similar to those on Cat.30 and 35 (fig.96).¹⁶ This contrast between stylistic and compositional parallels is difficult to explain.

In addition, no stele from Catalogue B equals the great height of a 'La Ghorfa' stele, although admittedly most Catalogue B stelae are fragmentary. Of the better-preserved examples, Cat.B10 is the tallest at 1.23m, the size of several incomplete 'La Ghorfa' stelae. However, this circumstance and, indeed, the overall difficulty of finding stylistic or compositional parallels may have less to do with lack of parallels than with truths about 19th century archaeology and ensuing museum practices, in that larger stones are easier to find and more attractive to distant museum collections. Fragmentary stones are less likely to be published, displayed even in local museums, or be prominent in the minds of curators past or present. Despite the fact that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae were likely excavated over a century and a half ago, Cat.23 and 35 have never been published, while the majority of those in the British Museum were unpublished until Bisi's article in 1978. Cat.B6, the only parallel for the geometric 'sign of Tanit', has never been published and the circumstances of its excavation are unknown. Cat.37 and 43 have not been seen since around the turn of the century, while something like half the Catalogue B stelae are presently unlocatable, either

¹⁶Cf. Chapter IV, p.176.

within the museum to which they once belonged, or within the country. More parallels are probably hidden within museum sheds and local government structures or re-used as building materials in present-day towns, but they would not likely greatly enhance what is already known about the 'La Ghorfa' group. New and properly recorded excavations would be ideal, although any new information that new stelae yielded would probably be limited, since their iconography and inscriptions would not likely be any clearer than those of the present examples. Instead, the objects with which they were associated would likely be more informative in terms of date, material that could elucidate the names of the deities who received the offerings, and so on. Such excavations would have to take place at several sites in the Thuscan area, given the distribution of the Catalogue B stelae.

The anomalies of the 'La Ghorfa' group include stelae like Cat. 17, 18, and 20, which have plastic features characteristic of the Maktar style, but which have no parallels within either the 'La Ghorfa' group or North African stelae in general. Components of the architecture or accessories relate these stelae to the 'La Ghorfa' collection, but the stelae themselves do not belong to any of the stylistic subgroups. They demonstrate the individuality of sculptors and dedicants in choosing motifs and presentation for their stelae. Uncommon details, like the *triskeles* on Cat.41 or the Hercules on Cat.9, demonstrate that the cult did not deny the expression of personal tastes.

Long after the fall of Carthage, and after the creation of Africa *Proconsularis*, the 'La Ghorfa' stelae demonstrate the longevity of native and Punic traditions. Evidence for this heritage survives in many different forms through the second and third centuries in central Proconsularis. For example, on inscriptions from Maktar, Punic and indigenous names are in fact more prevalent *after* Marcus Aurelius made Maktar a colony.¹⁷ By the end of the first century A.C., Maktar already had a Roman *conventus* and *iuventus*;¹⁸ by the end of Trajan's reign it had a proper Roman forum and monumental arch. However, such Roman features inconsistently affected the surrounding population before approximately the Severan period; the new colonial status under Marcus Aurelius seems to have made more visible in the archaeological record those who had previously not been so concerned with Roman urban trappings.

Funerary architecture reflects the same pattern. Semi-cylindrical, oblong funerary monuments, called "caissons" by the French, were clearly derived from indigenous North African tomb structures and most often belonged to people with typically African names.¹⁹ They gained popularity through the second century A.C., precisely in the territory of the former Numidian kingdom; their use peaked during the third century, at the very time when, to paraphrase Bénabou, it is generally considered that the Romanization of Africa had reached its apogee.²⁰ Bénabou correctly remarked that this continued indigenous practice cannot be viewed as a sign of resistance to Roman practices, for many of these "caissons" were marked with Latin epitaphs. Like the Latin funerary epitaphs commemorating people of Punic or Numidian nomenclature at Maktar, "caissons" marked the appearance, in the

¹⁷Cf. Chapter III, above p.146.

¹⁸M'Charek (1982), 12. Iuventus inscription: Picard CivMact (1957), 77f.

¹⁹At Tebessa (*Theveste*), over 160 pagan epitaphs date from the third century on; all are on "caissons" and most of them attest typically African names: Bénabou *La résistance* (1976), 562.

²⁰Bénabou La résistance (1976), 496. See Lassère (1973), 125 fig. 19 for a "caisson" distribution map.

second and especially the third century, of new layers of Africans. The majority of them had previously been influenced only peripherally by the Romans.²¹

If the dating suggested in Chapter V is correct, the 'La Ghorfa' stelae may be among the early manifestations of this trend, in the latter part of the first or very early second century. They were created in a setting in which local traditions were mixing with Roman influences at approximately the same time as important Thuscan cities were approaching political elevation.²² The stelae form a relatively tightly-knit group, combining elements of the native, Punic, and Roman; nevertheless, they are not identical, nor are they typical of Thuscan stelae, as the brevity of Catalogue B demonstrates. In addition, some of their past labels must be discarded: Punic,²³ popular African,²⁴ Afro-Punic,²⁵ or "interpretatio graeca della teologia punica".²⁶ The stelae emphasize the fact that one cannot speak of the blanket adoption of a certain culture within even a small population, when that community was subjected to various influences.²⁷ Though many of the stelae are similar, each one reveals a personal combination of the native, Punic, and Roman, beginning with the choice between a Type 1 and Type 2 stele. On the part of the dedicants and craftsmen,²⁸ some combinations are not necessarily conscious choices or ones over which either party had total control, especially in the case of nomenclature or literacy. In other words, the sculpted stones are

²¹Bénabou *La résistance* (1976), 496. Rives (1995), 152-153 has also suggested that the elite cultivated supporters by giving official recognition to local cults, whether for altruistic or self-serving purposes, while it even became fashionable for Italian immigrants to use local nomenclature (pp.161-162).

²²Cf. Introduction, p.9.

²³Bayet (1957), 241.

²⁴Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 265; Le Glay SAH (1966), 14 and 36; Le Glay (1975), 134.

²⁵Bénabou La résistance (1976), 353; M'Charek (1988).

²⁶Bisi StelePun (1967), 116.

²⁷Cf. Potter (1999), first paragraph.

²⁸Freeman (1993), 441, has pointed out that either the craftsman or the patron may have been the driving force behind adopting Roman features in art.

not declarations of Punic partisanship in the face of Roman administrators, or of eagerness to become Roman. The many possible permutations emphasize how studying the entire group, as opposed to pieces from a single museum collection, increases the possibility of correctly understanding the dedicants and their environment. The differences simply reflect the logical diversity of local reactions to various stimuli. Within this one economic and geographic group, social environment may have influenced the general presentation, but the exact balance of traditional African, Punic, and Roman was an individual matter.

Appendix: History of the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

For over a century now, at least forty stelae of the 'La Ghorfa' type have been identified and documented. These objects are now in museums in England, continental Europe, and Tunisia. For a fairly small group of objects, this dispersal marks a great fragmentation, and only begins to hint at the complex routes the stelae have followed in the past two centuries.

In 1892, in one of the earliest detailed publications of a stone from this series, H. Saladin described a stele being used as a door lintel for an Arab house at the site of Dougga (ancient *Thugga*). He compared this stele (Cat.37) to Neopunic stelae conserved in the "résidence de France à Tunis",¹ but he did not claim that this particular object, or those in Tunis, were originally from Dougga.

As later publications would show, these Tunis stelae were actually housed in the collection of the Museum Mohammetanum, or the Museum of the Khaznadar's son at la Manouba, a district of Tunis. In 1881, Volume VIII of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* published certain inscribed stelae from this group, pointing out the similarities between them. Nevertheless, the *CIL* entries suggested various origins for individual pieces: "Carthagine rep." for *C.* 1011,² and "Hadrumetum [modern Sousse] fortasse" for *C.* 1145.³

¹Saladin (1892), 487.

²Cat.33, now in the British Museum.

³Cat.21, now in the British Museum.

However, *CIL* provided a *terminus ante quem* for the discovery of at least one stele: reportedly, F. Bourgade, first chaplain of Saint-Louis in Carthage, had already published the second inscription, *C.* 1145, in 1852 and 1856.⁴

In 1897, the *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui* cited Saladin's article in affirming that the Alaoui's dozen related stelae had apparently been found at or near Dougga.⁵ Supporting this assertion, L. Carton shortly thereafter reported that Saladin's Dougga example had been excavated from the very location at Dougga in which it had later been re-used as part of a door frame.⁶

One of the authors of the *CMA*, R. du Coudray de la Blanchère, also wrote an article in 1897 about these stelae, with further information on their origin.⁷ He reported that, approximately forty years prior, a group of Englishmen and some of the Khaznadar's soldiers had brought some Roman stelae to Dougga from Maktar. One of those stelae had remained at Dougga, and had since been used as a building material there. According to La Blanchère, the Tunisians who had been involved in this expedition identified the find place of the stones as not Maktar, but La Ghorfa; La Blanchère thought that the workmen had misnamed Gorrâ, which was a massif near Dougga.

By 1905, enough uncertainty already surrounded the origin of these stelae that L. Poinssot wrote an article attempting to clarify the details. In contrast to La Blanchère,

⁴Poinssot (1905), 403 and 403 n.2, added a bibliographic reference, which I was unable to locate: F. Bourgade, *Toison d'Or de la langue phénicienne*, 1re édit., 1852, p. 23, pl. 36e, tunisienne; 2e édit., 1856, p. 47 and pl. 36T.

⁵CMA (1897), 62-63, nos. 741-752; republished in Gauckler, *NécropPun* (1915), II, 332-333; these stelae correspond to Cat.1 to 12.

⁶Carton (1899), 29.

⁷La Blanchère (1897), 31-32.

Poinssot believed that the Tunisians had not been mistaken in naming La Ghorfa as the find place. Bahiret-el-Ghorfa was a plain situated halfway between Maktar and Dougga, further south than Gorrâ. Indeed, the 1881 register of the Louvre specified that its two stelae of this type were possibly from La Ghorfa.⁸ Poinssot compared the styles and types of unspecified inscriptions and ex-votos from the area and concluded that the two groups were related.

In Poinssot's reconstruction, the La Ghorfa-type stelae travelled between 1860 and 1873 to la Manouba, where the editor of *CIL* VIII, G. Wilmanns, read the inscriptions.⁹ Shortly thereafter, the group was split up. Based on this model, Poinssot found the evidence for La Ghorfa as an origin fairly convincing, although still "avec quelque indécision, il est vrai".¹⁰

At the time, the identification of the La Ghorfa plain as the stelae's find place had no glaring flaws. About a decade later, the final supplement to *CIL* VIII quoted Poinssot's article and attributed the Dougga stele (C. 26513 = Cat.37) to the plain of La Ghorfa; it also reassigned the similar examples that *CIL* had already described (C. 1142, 1143, and 1144)¹¹ to the same origin. Prominent scholars subsequently accepted and quoted this origin as

⁸The Louvre registry *Livre d'entrée Antiques et Monuments MNB (1870 à 1881)* records Cat.41 and 42; my thanks to E. Fontan, Conservateur en chef au département des Antiquités Orientales, for this information. Poinssot (1905), 396 and 400, cited another register recording the arrival of these stelae at the Louvre in 1876.

⁹Poinssot (1905), 397, n.5, added that two scholars had studied the Tunis collections between 1868 and 1872, at least one of whom had observed the 'La Ghorfa' stelae (M. Héron de Villefosse, in 1872). However, Poinssot's dates for the arrival of the stelae at Manouba (1860-1873) may be too late, given Bourgade's publication of Cat.21 in 1852; Poinssot referred to this publication later in the same article (p.403), apparently without realizing its significance. Part of the group was already on its way to England in the late 1850s (see below, pp.213-224).

¹⁰Poinssot (1905), 399.

¹¹Cat.43, 12, and 11, respectively.

fact,¹² while museum and special exhibit descriptions made the same attribution.¹³ The group quickly gained the title of "stèles de la Ghorfa", and this place-name continues to be the recognized designation for them.

In 1988, A. M'Charek re-evaluated the evidence and concluded that La Ghorfa could not have been the true origin of the stelae.¹⁴ First, in 1967 a crew of the Service des Eaux had accidently discovered four stelae at Aïn Maghrawa, located about eight kilometres northwest of Maktar. In M'Charek's view, the style of these stelae was too similar to the 'La Ghorfa' type to be coincidental.

Furthermore, M'Charek's own research had uncovered correspondence and documentation from the mid-19th century that had apparently been unknown or unavailable to La Blanchère and Poinssot. Especially significant was a communiqué detailing the activities of Honegger, a German who had served as an archaeological aide to the British consul in Tunisia in the mid-19th century. The letter, published in 1843, described how a group, headed in part by Honegger, had excavated the site of Mohammed Bey, a site between Magarao (Maghrawa) and Moctar (Maktar). Among their numerous finds were "quarante bas-reliefs très curieux, quelques uns avec des inscriptions puniques en bas...".¹⁵

¹⁴M'Charek (1988).

¹²For instance, Bayet (1957), 241; Picard (1962), 30 (in which the find place is actually identified as a *rural sanctuary at La Ghorfa*!); Fouchet (1962), 90-92; Le Glay *SAH* (1966), 34, 36, 153, etc.; Bisi *StelePun* (1967), 117; Toutain (repr.1967), 362; Bénabou *La résistance* (1976), 353; Bisi (1978); Hanoune (1986), 150; Picard (1982-83), 25; Le Glay (1987), 50 and pl. III.

¹³For instance, Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 262; Yacoub, *MusBardo* (1970), 16, and *Chefs-d'oeuvre* (1978), 34; *Carthage-Kairouan* (1982), 108-109, nos. 154-156. The labels on the examples currently in the collection of the Louvre also make the "La Ghorfa" attribution. Curiously, *The Phoenicians* (1988), 619 nos. 208 and 209, ascribes an origin of "La Ghorfa (Carthage)" to its two examples.

¹⁵Communiqué of a Mr. Jomard to the Séance du 17 février 1843, published in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie XIX (1843), 128-129, as quoted by M'Charek (1988), 735-736.

The letter indicated that these finds had been removed to Tunis and were then to be sent on to London.

By M'Charek's calculations, the figure of forty bas-reliefs coincided exactly with the number of known 'La Ghorfa' stelae; furthermore, the 'La Ghorfa' stelae were similar to the four stelae found in 1967, making Maghrawa a tempting identification for the origin of the former. Exactly what happened next to the Honegger finds is complicated to ascertain, but M'Charek assembled various pieces of documentation from the next half-century to clarify matters. His reconstruction of the first stage of the collection's journey was purely conjectural: that Honegger brought the supposed Maghrawa finds through Dougga on his way back to Tunis and for some reason had to leave them there to await further transportation at a later date. According to M'Charek's theory, they were still waiting at Dougga when Honegger died in 1849; by that time, locals had already used one of the stelae in the construction of the framework of a door of a local house.¹⁶

Nathan Davis, an Anglican bishop posted at Tunis, most likely took charge of the second leg of the journey, in cooperation with Mohammed, son of the Khaznadar. With Davis' help, the stelae may finally have arrived at Tunis between 1850 and 1860, minus the one that remained in the house at Dougga.¹⁷ If this reconstruction is correct, Davis' involvement may have led to the convoluted story heard by La Blanchère about the Englishmen and Khaznadar's soldiers who had moved sculpted stones to Dougga around that time.

¹⁶M'Charek (1988), 747.

¹⁷Like Poinssot, M'Charek overlooked the fact that Bourgade had already published Cat.21 in 1852, making it likely that at least part of the group had arrived at Tunis by that year.

From this point, M'Charek reconstructed the ensuing events more confidently, based on a number of communications. Although much of this literature is vague and does not even clearly refer to any stele typifying the 'La Ghorfa' series, it establishes that the Honegger collection was sold on at least two occasions (around 1852 and 1866), and split up at least once (1866). M'Charek believed that, at this dispersal, Nathan Davis obtained several pieces from the collection for the British Museum, including the 'La Ghorfa' stelae now in the Museum's holdings.¹⁸

The circumstances under which the British Museum acquired its examples from the series are murky; at the turn of the century, it was not even clear exactly how many stelae of the 'La Ghorfa' type were in the Museum's collection. La Blanchère had suggested a total of eighteen, but Poinssot reported only two, and he was dubious about the second, since he had seen it neither in person nor illustrated.¹⁹ In 1978, Bisi identified twenty-two stelae of the 'La Ghorfa' type in the museum's collections, probably a conservative tally.²⁰

Since Poinssot's 1905 article, the stelae's locations have have changed little. As he reported, the single example kept at Dougga was used as a door lintel for a room in the Darel-Acheb or Dar Lacheb,²¹ an Arab house that was converted into a museum in 1902. Both structures re-used the remains of a mid-second century Roman building variously identified as a marketplace or depot,²² or a temple.²³ At some point during the 20th century, the

¹⁸M'Charek (1988), 741 and 750.

¹⁹Poinssot (1905), 403.

²⁰Bisi (1978), but cf. note 42 below.

²¹Carton (1899) published the excavations at this specific site.

²²Poinssot (1983), 44.

²³Khanoussi, Dougga (n.d.), 38.

modern additions were removed; the stele (Cat.37) has apparently not been seen since. The rest of the group was most likely transported to la Manouba and there entered into the collection of the prince Mohammed, son of the Khaznadar Mustapha.

To form an exhibit entitled "von den Ruinen von Karthago", Prince Mohammed sent three of the stelae to the 1873 Universal Exposition of Vienna, along with other pieces from his collection. In September 1874, the Khaznadar made these pieces a permanent gift to the Imperial Museum at Vienna, now the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Cat.38, 39, and 40).²⁴

In the ensuing political upheaval in Tunisia, Mustapha's successor, Kheredine, sent the French government two of the 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae for the Louvre; the pair entered the museum in January 1876 (Cat.41 and 42).²⁵ In 1873 or 1874, Kheredine also removed other parts of the Musée du Khaznadar to the Dar-el-Bey at Tunis; this collection would later form the basis of the Musée Alaoui (created in 1885),²⁶ and almost certainly included the twelve 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae that are now conserved at that museum's successor, the Bardo (Cat.1-12).²⁷ Today, only the Bardo and the British Museum have any of the stelae

²⁴Pers. comm. from Dr. Alfred Bernhard-Walcher, Kunsthistorisches Museum. The Imperial Museum catalogued these stelae as inventory numbers 166, 168, and 178; now, as part of Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, they are inventory numbers KMB I 350, 351, and 354 respectively.

²⁵Poinssot (1905), 396 and 400. This pair was catalogued as MNB 898 and 899. In a photograph of the Louvre Gallery of Punic Antiquities (c.1916), they are visible flanking a doorway: Fontan and Metzger (1994), 13 fig.1. Both stelae appeared in the 1983 exhibit, *De Carthage à Kairouan: 2000 ans d'art et d'histoire en Tunisie*, at the Musée du Petit Palais in Paris; cf. *Carthage-Kairouan* (1982), 108-109 nos. 154-155. Cat.41 was also part of an exhibition on the Phoenicians in the late 1980s, as published in *The Phoenicians* (1988), 619 no.209; it has since returned to the Louvre.

²⁶Poinssot (1905), 401.

²⁷Infra Cat.1 to 12. The CMA (1897), 62-63, catalogued the group as C-741 to C-752; almost six decades later, the Punic collection catalogue of the CMA provided new inventory numbers for the same group, Cb-963 to Cb-974 (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 262-273). Cat.2 appeared in the 1983 exhibit, De Carthage à Kairouan: 2000 ans d'art et d'histoire en Tunisie, at the Musée du Petit Palais in Paris, as published in Carthage-Kairouan (1982), 109 no. 156. Cat.6 appeared in the Phoenicians exhibit of the late 1980s and in the 1995 Carthage exhibit at the Musée du Petit Palais in Paris; for the former, cf. The Phoenicians (1988), 619 no.208, and for the latter, cf. Carthage (1995), 30 and 33 fig.32, and CarthageTHE (1995), 203.

on display.²⁸ The four Aïn Maghrawa stelae, which M'Charek considered to be contiguous with the 'La Ghorfa' group, remain in the holdings of the Musée de Maktar.²⁹

Such is the history of the published hypotheses for the stelae's origins. Museum records add another interesting dimension to the puzzle, from the original labels of over a century ago to the unpublished photo registry of the British Museum. Where these records included provenance, over four-fifths of them named Carthage as an origin, albeit with varying degrees of certainty.³⁰ As late as 1986, the Kunsthistorisches Museum inscriptions catalogue unquestioningly identified Carthage as the find place.³¹

Nevertheless, the publications have had an effect. In addition to later labels on the pair from the Louvre,³² those on three examples from the British Museum³³ all suggest that these pieces come from central Tunisia, if not La Ghorfa. The newest labels, those of the Bardo Museum, eagerly take up M'Charek's proposal and, without hesitation, publicly declare their examples to be from "Maghraoua (ancient Macota)".

³³Cat.22, 30, and 32.

²⁸Bardo: Cat.2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; British Museum: Cat.30.

²⁹In the absence of inventory numbers for the Musée de Maktar, these correspond to M'Charek's numbers 1 through 4.

³⁰Interestingly, the registry identifies La Ghorfa as the probable origin of four stelae that are of a style completely unrelated to the familiar 'La Ghorfa' series; these, too, are probably not from La Ghorfa. For a description of this type, cf. Chapter I, p.40 and fig.64.

³¹I 351, in Noll (1986), 44. The museum records, as of May 1997, still listed Carthage as the find place, with Tunis as an interim resting place before the three stelae went to Vienna. This belief is understandable, given the fact that the stelae were awarded to the museum as part of a collection entitled "From the Ruins of Carthage".

³²Cat.41 and 42, now in storage.

M'Charek's identification of Maghrawa as the true origin of the 'La Ghorfa' stelae was the most convincing to date.³⁴ Beyond the numerical and documented evidence, it coincided well with the closest stylistic comparanda for the series, which seemed to occur at Maktar and in its vicinity of central Tunisia. However, certain factors weaken his arguments considerably; evidence from the British Museum alone serves to illustrate the most crucial of these.

C. Mendleson identified the first problem in the British Museum's archives: M'Charek's research had missed two critical letters in the Museum's holdings.³⁵ The first letter, written in 1848, documented twenty-seven stones excavated by Honegger at or near Maktar; he was offering to sell these pieces to the Trustees.³⁶ However, the Trustees did not accept the offer and, to judge by the descriptions provided, those antiquities did not at any time thereafter make their way into the British Museum.

The second letter was written in 1857 by Nathan Davis in announcement of several "Punic antiquities" he was exporting to London. He specified that Honegger had excavated them at Zama, Le Kef (ancient *Sicca Veneria*), and Baja (*Vacca* or *Vaga*). Frustratingly, this letter lacks specific details about the artifacts under discussion.³⁷

³⁴When Bardo Cb-968 (Cat.6) appeared in the Petit Palais exhibit at Paris in 1995, its findplace was confidently identified as "Macota (Maghroua)", as published in *Carthage THE* (1995), 203, and "Maghraova", as appears in *Carthage* (1995), 30.

³⁵Mendleson's findings are included in the introduction to her catalogue of the Museum's Punic and Neopunic stelae, currently at press; the two letters of interest here are her Appendices 1 and 2.

³⁶Nothing indicates whether any of these were the same antiquities described in the earlier communiqué of the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*.

³⁷Many of the British Museum's other Neopunic stelae are unfortunately also unprovenanced, although not linkable to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae.

The two pieces of correspondence provide the general origins of Honegger's various finds with some certainly. As a result, Mendleson now believes that Maktar or a nearby town cannot have supplied the stelae to the British Museum, as M'Charek suggested; instead, in her opinion, at least one of the three sites mentioned in the second letter is the true provenance of the Museum's 'La Ghorfa' stelae. Mendleson has also pointed out that M'Charek's theory had Davis gaining possession of the stelae after the Honegger collection was sold in 1866, almost a decade after Nathan Davis's letter. This last point is valid, but no other evidence supports Le Kef or Béjà as an origin; Zama, if Davis meant Henchir Jâma, is at least within the region of *Thusca*.

A mathematical problem is the second major weakness with M'Charek's desire to identify Maghrawa as the origin of the stelae. The 1843 communiqué had specified the discovery of forty stones by Honegger at or near Maktar. M'Charek's tally also totalled forty, but his addition relied upon Bisi's accuracy in publishing twenty-two stelae of the La Ghorfa-type in the British Museum. Catalogue A, *infra*, now lists 43 stelae, surpassing the forty required for M'Charek's reconstruction.

The third obstacle to M'Charek's theory is a visual one. The long parade of prior publications prove that he is not the sole guilty party, for visual inspection and comparison of the stelae suggest significant factors that are not evident in the publications to date, or to a person examining only a fraction of the group. The stelae vary from one to another, with some vast differences in size, sculpting techniques, choice and presentation of sculpted elements, or material;³⁸ these distinctions seem to deny the possibility that one ancient town or city had the monopoly on these stelae, and to support Mendleson's belief that the stones may come from more than one site. Nevertheless, Davis' letter is too vague to identify specific objects gleaned from the three sites he named; by no means does it state that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae originated at those places.

In the meantime, M'Charek has continued to promote his theory concerning Maghrawa. Since his original article in 1988, M'Charek has expanded the corpus of stelae from the area which are of the 'La Ghorfa' type, in his opinion; his brief report from a 1991 conference no longer insisted upon Aïn Maghrawa as the only find place, but expanded the stylistic repertory to *Thusca*, the name given in Antiquity to the entire region of ancient *Mactaris.*³⁹ Although M'Charek attributed these stelae that were more recently found to the 'La Ghorfa' group, he sometimes seems to have had little basis for doing so; yet one or two of the pieces are undeniably similar.⁴⁰ By expanding the provenance to an entire region, as opposed to one small town, his updated theory better explains the variations within the original 'La Ghorfa' group. Further parallels for the group, discussed in Chapter IV, add to the towns he named, emphasizing that while the style appealed to the entire region, it did not often venture beyond the borders of *Thusca*.

³⁸M'Charek's affirmations that his four Maghrawa examples belong within the 'La Ghorfa' type are too forced; while some of those stelae are not dissimilar in general structure from the 'La Ghorfa' examples, the style and presentation are not those of any 'La Ghorfa' stele. C. Mendleson has also expressed this feeling (private communication). There are, however, other examples from Maktar that are much closer to the 'La Ghorfa' style; cf. Chapter IV (p.156f).

³⁹M'Charek (1995), 247, stated that the 'La Ghorfa' stelae come from one of six sanctuaries in the region.

Catalogue A: The 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

The following catalogue entries are based on a combination of my own observations and those of other scholars; I have personally seen all stelae except Cat.5, 7, 37, and 43, for which the present locations are unknown. Information on each stele is provided in the following order:

The stelae are presented in alphabetical order of their current (or last-known) place of conservation, and, within that order, numerically by inventory number. For holdings of the Musée du Bardo (formerly the Musée Alaoui), two different catalogue publications have produced two different series of inventory numbers; the number appearing here is the most recent, and is preceded by a "Cb-", as appears in Picard, *CMA n.s.* (e.g. Cb-963). A table of concordances is provided at the end of the Catalogue for prior assignations.

State of preservation: Any damage to the stone, as well as surviving paint traces.

Description: A summary of the layout and details of the sculpted elements, from the top of the stele to the bottom. The stele type is indicated first; Type 1 has pedimental niches, while Type 2 has niches with arched lintels. The next entry records the number of sculptural zones; the term "surviving" indicates that the stele is fragmentary and its original number of zones is unknown.

In order to prevent similar entries from becoming overly redundant, the following terms are be used for characteristic features of the stelae:

The 'sign of Tanit' may occur in one of two forms, referred to as "geometric" and "anthropomorphic".

Liber Pater wears a chlamys and a wreath with grape bunches; he holds a cup in his right hand and a thyrsus in his left. Venus appears in the nude, as does Eros, a young male with wings.

Standard entablature type refers to the typical sequence of decorative mouldings occuring on the 'La Ghorfa' architecture: egg-and-dart above bead-and-reel above dentils.

Drilled circles are discs drilled into the surface; the drill's point has made an inner hole within this circle (\odot). Deep holes tend to be smaller in diameter than drilled circles, but much deeper, so that the mark made by the point of the drill is not visible (\bullet). Deep holes often occur on the same stele as drilled circles.

Inscription: The text of the inscription is presented in the original Latin or, if the text is Neopunic, the letters here transliterated into Latin letters. If no inscription survives, this heading does not appear.

Material: All of the stelae were almost certainly carved from limestone, but in a couple of cases, where the stelae have been lost, confirmation of this material is impossible. Wherever possible, distinctions are made between different colours and textures of the stone.

Dimensions: All measurements are in metres, given in the following order: h (height), w (width), and th (thickness or depth) of the preserved stone. Due to the unevenness of certain breaks or natural variations in cuts, measurements taken by different people may vary by several centimetres; the measurements provided here reflect that range. In some cases, measurements are incomplete because the stone was inaccessible for such close inspection.

Date: Dates which have been proposed for that specific stele by past scholars.

Bibliography: Sources appear in chronological order.

Cat.1 (Figure 1)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-963

State of Preservation: The stele is now broken in half; its two pieces were found separated in the reserves in June 1997. The break goes across the top of the apsed niche in the central zone. The top portion was erroneously identified by Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], as Cb-1074, from Oudna, but it is clearly the top to Cb-963, from "La Ghorfa", in the same catalogue.

Most of the triangular peak is broken off. A vertical strip along the left side is broken off, but does not apparently affect the plastic decoration except at the level of the niche. The bottom of the stone is chipped off at the corners. Between mould speckles and extensive wear, few details of the dedicant, beyond the folds of the garment, remain clear.

Description: Type 2 stele. Four zones survive.

1. Summit: At the top left, the fan-like tail of a bird survives, beside the bottom of a central circular object. A divider line, composed of a plain band above rows of dentils and bead-and-reel, separates the triangular top from the rectangle below; the whole divider line extends between two rosettes with deep sunken centres.

2. Divine Symbols: The 'sign of Tanit' is geometric, but has facial features. It holds a grape bunch in its right hand and a branch with two pomegranates in its left hand. Birds hover on either side of the figure's head; they are in a very low relief, almost incised.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: The apsed niche is formed by an incised smooth arcuated lintel, which rests on indistinct capitals on squat columns with globular double bases. The dedicant within wears a robe that falls to mid-calf and has complex folds; the robe gives the person the appearance of having a very wide, shapeless body. The figure's right hand holds an indistinct object in front of its upper chest; the left hand may be clasped to the right.

Outside the niche, at the right, is a tall palm surmounted by a sunken-centred rosette. The other side of the stone dips in all the way to the left colum, beside which part of the corresponding rosette is preserved.

Below the floor level of the niche hangs a quadrangular box with concave sides, containing three indistinct tall objects, possibly vases of different shapes.

4. Bull Scene: The lowest zone contains a bull wearing a girth.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.18-1.20, w 0.40-0.43, th 0.09 m

Date: end 1st c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 265).

top fragment: end 1st-beginning 2nd c A.C. (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 298). 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), C745, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.51, pl.IV,5 [51]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 265 no.Cb-963, pl.CII; Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 298 no.Cb-1074 and pl.CXXV; Bisi (1978), esp. 60, 75, 80.

Cat.2 (Figure 2)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-964

State of Preservation: An abraded strip runs vertically down the right side from the peak at the top, with the upper right corner of the niche quite chipped. The face of the person within the niche is damaged, and the bottom zone is quite worn, with the foremost leg of the bull chipped off. There is also a large chip out of the bottom left corner.

Tiny patches of colour survive in the upper zones, but they may be modern. Tiny spots of blue-grey remain in the niche zone.

Description: Type 1 stele. The five zones of this stele are rigidly compartmentalized by a flat frame running around the edges of the front face of the stone and by horizontal bands which separate the respective zones. Only the horizontal band marking off the triangular peak is decorated, as a braid-like line. Very deep holes are drilled from the front through to the side at the bottom of the triangular summit and at the lower part of the entablature; other deep holes occur below the 'sign of Tanit', in the dentil band of the entablature, and beside the dedicant's head.

1. Summit: At the top, the bottom of a circular wreath survives; below it, two downwardswimming dolphins face each other. Rosettes fill in the bottom corners.

2. Divine Symbols Zone: The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' holds in its right hand a horn containing branches of grapes, a pomegranate, and a *hedera*. It holds a corresponding bunch of branches in the horn in its left hand, but only the *hedera* and pomegranate survive.

3. Dioscuri and Jupiter: In a formal register, the Dioscuri, holding their horses, flank a clean-shaven Jupiter, who sits on his throne. He raises both hands: the left holds a thyrsus, and the right holds a convoluted version of a thunderbolt. The Dioscurus on the viewer's left, has an obscure object made of two cylindrical rods, instead of the usual spear.

4. Architecture and Dedicant: This zone has an entablature but no pediment. The entabulature consists of the thin plain band that serves as the scene divider, a thicker band with alternating rings and 'V's, a thin plain band, a thick band patterned with teeth, a thin band, and dentils, which are separated by deep incised lines rather than being individually sculpted.

Still visible at the left, supporting the entablature, is a column, fluted for the upper two-thirds of its height. Its capital is palmiform while its base consists of four superimposed plaques on a single thicker base. To the inside of each column is a tall palm frond.

The T-shaped niche contains a female standing on a plain pedestal. She wears a robe pulled in below the waist, large round earrings, and a necklace with hanging oval pendants.

She holds a round, eye-like object in her left hand; her right hand holds an object over a flaming columnar incense burner.

5. Bull Sacrifice: At the left, a figure who appears to be dancing waves a wand which is topped by a ring and holds a semicircular, cross-hatched basket. An altar separates him from a bull.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.49, w 0.41-0.47, th 0.19 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 266, and (1982-83), 25 fig.7). end 1st c A.C. (Picard (1962), pl. 11,2).

end 2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

beginning 2nd c A.C. (Carthage-Kairouan (1982), 109, no.156).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C748, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.54, pl.V,8 [54]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 265-266 no. Cb-964, pl.CV; Picard *RAA* (1954), 113; Picard (1962), pl.11,2; Fouchet (1962), 103-104 and pl.27; Picard (1982-83), 25 fig.7; Bisi (1978), esp. 59, 64, 75, 79, 80, 83, and figs.36-39; *Carthage-Kairouan* (1982), 109, no.156.

Cat.3 (Figure 3)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-965

State of Preservation: The left side is chipped, while the surface is abraded and worn. In the second zone, a roundish pock-mark mars the surface above the grape bunch, as does a diagonal score through the pomegranate. Paint preserved on this stele includes pale blue on the crescent at the top.

Description: Type 2 stele. There are five zones. A thin flat band frames the outside edges of the upper two zones, and the top triangular portion of the stele is separated by a triple horizontal band. Drilled circles are profuse in the upper zones. There is, incongruously, a single, off-centre drilled circle below the inscription cartouche.

1. Summit: In the centre is a large sunken disc above a very thin upturned crescent.

2. Divine Symbols: An anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' holds in its left hand a pomegranate branch in its left hand and a horn containing grape bunches in its right.

Two birds perch on top of the palm fronds arching over the apsed niche; on the viewer's left, this frond emerges from the top of a staff with inset discs. No corresponding staff survives on the right, possibly due to abrasion.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: The apsed niche itself is flanked by two square pilasters, fluted only from the middle up. Superimposed plaques serve as the pilaster capitals; the bases are similarly structured.

The dedicant wears a long robe, round earrings, and a necklace with a suggestion of a pendant.

4. Dolphins: Under the niche and above the inscription box are two dolphins facing each other. Below the two dolphins is a large double-framed rectangular cartouche, but no inscription is visible.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.39-1.40, w 0.30, th 0.16

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 266).

3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C744, pl.XVIII; La Blanchère (1897), no.50, pl.IV,4 [50]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 266 no.Cb-965, pl.CIII; Bisi (1978), esp. 60, 61, 75, 80, and fig.35.

Cat.4 (Figure 4)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-966

State of Preservation: The triangular peak is slightly chipped at the left and the side dips in at the left column of the niche. The lowest zone cuts off the sculpted detail rather abruptly, but is uniform and horizontal and is probably the original stone cutting.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones survive. There are drilled circles at the top, inside the pediment, and in the niche framework and the niche itself, and in the 'cache' below. There is also a hole in the moulding below the coffers, at the left side.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the very peak is a sunken-centred star-like rosette contained within an upturned crescent. Immediately below, from left to right, are a solar face, the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', and a lunar face. The 'sign of Tanit' holds two horns; that on the left contains a grape bunch and that on the right a pomegranate.

Liber Pater stands below the bunch of grapes. He holds his right hand empty in front of him [Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 267, saw a crater there], while his left hand holds a thyrsus. Opposite him is Venus, her left hand on a cross-hatched, columnar incense burner and her right hand holding up a wreath. Between this wreath and the left arm of the 'sign of Tanit' is a square object incised with horizontal lines, probably an altar.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is capped by an acanthus *acroterium*. The pediment itself has dentils on its inner frame and contains an eagle. The architrave is decorated: the uppermost strip contains tiny drilled circles, but the rows of moulding below it are of the standard entablature type. This group of mouldings is depicted above a double row of six square coffers, which are interrupted by a thin vertical strip containing two tiny crescents flanking a sunken disc.

The entablature is supported by two unfluted columns with double bases. The capitals are Aeolic-Corinthian. The frame of the niche is decorated with drilled circles parallelling the shape of the apsed niche. A draped woman stands inside the niche.

Below the niche, but above the floor level on which the columns rest, is a rectangular box containing a wide-mouthed vase with two handles and a basket-like container with a domed lid.

4. Atlantes: Below the niche is a rectangular cartouche with the left side missing. Two burly nude Atlantes hold up the cartouche; their legs are cut off at the knees by the bottom edge of the sculpted part of the stele.

Inscription: Poinssot (1905), 402, claimed that C.1142, an inscribed stele, is this one, but that statement is incorrect; that inscribed stele appears here as Cat.43.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.75, w 0.35 m

Date: 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 267). mid-2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C743, pl.XVIII; La Blanchère (1897), no.49, pl.III,3 [49]; *C*.1142 and p.1384; Poinssot (1905), 402; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 266-267 no.Cb-966, pl.CIII; Fouchet (1962), 104, pl.27; Bisi (1978), esp. 52, 54-55, 57-58, 72, 80, and figs.29-30; Ghedini (1990), 238.

Cat.5 (Figure 5)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-967

State of Preservation: The very tip at the top is broken off, and the sides are a little rough, but the greatest damage is at the bottom, where the stone is broken off just below the apse of the niche structure.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. The upper zone contains profuse drilled circles.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: The uppermost element is a multi-petalled flower or leafy plant. Below it is a row of symbols: a disc with a sunken centre, a solar face, a human face loosely surrounded by a ring or two snakes knotted at the bottom, a lunar face, and finally another disk with a sunken centre.

Below, the 'sign of Tanit' holds two horns, which contain a pomegranate (in the left hand) and a grape bunch (in the right). A bird stands between the pomegranate and Tanit, dangling a worm from its beak.

Below, at the left, is Liber Pater. A thick vine with rosettes grows up at his right side, all the way up to the grape bunch horn. Eros is beside him, his feet obscured by an indistinct object below him and above the peak of the pediment. An altar separates Eros from Venus, whose left arm hangs down over a columnar object. Her feet hover above a ground line which no other figure or object in the same zone shares.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is triple-framed and contains a male bust with cloth draped over his left shoulder and birds perched on both shoulders. The architrave below contains the standard entablature type with alternating plain horizontal bands. Next comes a double row of six square coffers; the third and fourth are separated by a vertical frame containing an upturned crescent, a rosette, and a downturned crescent. The coffers sit on a flat band pierced by drilled circles.

The entablature is supported by a pair of fluted columns with Aeolic-Corinthian capitals. The apsed niche is enclosed by a T-shaped frame. Holes parallel the shape of the apse.

Within the niche is the dedicant, cut off just below the shoulders by the break. Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], Cb-967, stated that this person was a woman wearing a mantle and earrings.

Material: Limestone. Dimensions: h 1.12, w 0.41m Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 268). mid-2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80). **Bibliography:** *CMA* (1897), no.C746, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.52, pl.IV,6 [52]; Picard *RAA* (1954), 114, 112, fig.10; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 267-268 no.Cb-967, pl.CIV; Bisi (1978), esp. 49, 52, 54, 80, 85-86; Ghedini (1990), 235, 242-243, and pl. VIII,1.

Cat.6 (Figure 6)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-968

State of Preservation: The very top is very abraded; anything sculpted there is no longer distinguishable. Most of the stele is fairly well-preserved, but it is broken off near the top of the lowest register. There is a reddish-brown splotch of colour on the belly of each of the Atlantes, and on the base of the left column. The green streak on the left column is the same as that on the top drilled circle-studded moulding of the architrave.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zone survive. The stele is studded with drilled circles from the central niche up. Holes were drilled through, front to side, at both bottom corners of the pediment. Around the niche, there were evidently two phases of hole insertions: the drilled circles were made first, not to very deep levels, then twelve deep holes were added later, sometimes overlapping the earlier holes, sometimes centred within them, and at other times nowhere near them.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: The top centre has a human face loosely encircled by a ring, which is knotted at the bottom; the ring may be formed by two entwined snakes. This face forms part of a horizontal group, in which the leftmost pair consists of a disc with sunken centre and a lunar face, while the pair at the right consists of a solar face and another disc with a sunken centre.

Below is the 'sign of Tanit', which has a bird sitting on each of its shoulders. In each hand, it holds a horn, with a grape bunch (right hand) and a pomegranate (left). A rosette grows out of the grape stem, while a small vine with rosettes creeps from the elbow of the 'sign of Tanit' to the pomegranate horn. Two birds facing right flank the bottom of the 'sign of Tanit'; a rabbit at the bottom right also nibbles at its 'skirt'.

Liber Pater stands below, flanked by Eros, who touches hands with Venus over the altar that separates them. Venus also touches with her left hand a columnar altar or incense burner with a cross-hatched and domed top; a vine with rosettes grows up from this dome. Liber Pater's feet are hidden behind the pediment, whereas Venus and the altars stand at a higher level on a ground incised with a reticulate design.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment has plain, bead-and-reel, and dentil components; it contains a nude male bust. The architrave below includes two strips of drilled circles sandwiching the standard entablature mouldings.

The entablature is supported by Aeolic-Corinthian capitals on unfluted columns. Each column has a single drilled circle at the very top and bottom. The columns extend down past the niche floor level to that of the Atlantes zone below.

A T-shaped frame surrounds the apsed niche. The female dedicant inside wears a long robe, double round earrings, and a faint necklace.

3. Atlantes: The floor level of the niche is held up by two muscular nude Atlantes. Their feet are cut off by the double row of eight square coffers below them.

4. Secondary Niche: The bottom zone, carved in slightly lower relief than the main zone, is broken off, but parts of it are still visible. At left is a basket-carrier, of whom only the long, shallow basket and the person's head remain. Next is the top of an apsed niche, containing a male head and a ringed, almond-shaped object incised beside him. A bull is on the other side of the niche.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.51-1.57, w 0.40-0.41, th 0.19 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 269).

mid-2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

2nd c B.C. (The Phoenicians (1988), 619, no.208).

2nd-3rd c A.C. (Carthage (1995), 33 fig.32; CarthageHTE, 203).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C747, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.53, pl.V,7 [53]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 268-269 no.Cb-968, pl.CIV [the plate is backwards]; Picard (1963), 240-241, and pl. 36,4; Bisi, *StelePun* (1967), 116-118, and pl.XXX,2; Bisi (1978), esp. 49, 52, 54, 56-57, 72, 80; *The Phoenicians* (1988), 619, no.208; *Carthage* (1995), 33 fig.32; *CarthageHTE* (1995), 203.

Cat.7 (Figure 7)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-969

State of Preservation: The very tip of the summit is gone. The break at the bottom is at the foot level of the person inside the niche.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. Drilled circles are randomly scattered around all of the figures in the upper section of the stele and more decorate the niche.

1. Divine Symbols: Right below the missing summit is a suggestion of a circular object, flanked by two sunken discs with raised central nubs. Below these is the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', holding a horn with a grape bunch in its right hand, and another horn, with a pomegranate, in its left hand. Two birds eat the pomegranate, while a third eats the grape bunch.

To the left of the pediment below is Liber Pater. Venus stands opposite him, holding a double wreath in her right hand while her left hand hangs down over a summary, cylindrical incense burner.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: A stylized calyx *acroterium* sits at the peak of the pediment, which is made up of three bands, the outer plain, then bead-and- reel, then dentils. Inside the pediment is an eagle flanked by two sunken discs with central nubs. The entablature below is the standard type, above a double row of six square coffers. The middle of the coffer rows is segmented by a vertical strip containing an upturned crescent, a ring, and a downturned crescent.

One plain horizontal strip separates the architrave from the Aeolic-Corinthian capitals; they sit upon unfluted columns. The columns flank the rectangular frame around the apsed niche. The togate male inside holds a round object in front of him with his right hand and a *volumen* in his left hand.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.48, w 0.34 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 269).

4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C749, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.55, pl.V,9 [55]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 269 no.Cb-969, pl.CV; Bisi, *StelePun* (1967), 116-118, pl.XXXI; Bisi (1978), esp. 48, 55-56, 61, 72, 80.

Cat.8 (Figure 8)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-970

State of Preservation: There is damage across the stele at the niche level, and the faces of the figured persons in the lower two zones are worn away.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive. The top zone and the architecture include drilled circles.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: The peak of the stele is occupied up by a rounded disc above a rosette with a sunken centre; the latter sits within the curve of an upturned crescent.

Below is a muscular nude human figure who wears ankle bracelets not unlike those often worn by Venus, below him. He is an unusually anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', holding a horn in each hand, from which hang a grape bunch (at the left) and pomegranate (right). There is a sunken disc between the hips of the figure and each fruit.

The 'sign of Tanit' stands on a rectangular base, held up by the two figures flanking the pediment below, who both hold their hands out towards the base, empty and open. The positions of Venus and Liber, on the left and right sides of this stele, are reversed from usual. Venus holds a round fruit in her right hand. There are two birds about her shoulders. Liber Pater, at the right, has a bird perched on his right shoulder.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment has three bands, the middle one bead-and-reel. Inside, flanked by two drilled circles, is a rooster. The architrave consists of the standard entablature type, with the decorative mouldings separated by plain strips.

A single plaque separates these mouldings from the Aeolic-Corinthian capitals, which stand on tall fluted columns with thick double bases. A T-shaped frame surrounds the apsed niche.

The togate male dedicant standing inside holds a *volumen* in one hand. He stands on an elaborate pedestal with concave sides. Carved on the face of this pedestal, in very shallow, flat relief are a two-handled jug and a slightly concave box with a triangular lid. The entire pedestal sits on a lattice-like support.

3. Secondary Niche: Below the niche level is another zone containing an apsed niche, which is flanked by two palm trees. A flat band frames the niche, pierced by three drilled circles. The figure within is kneeling and holds two snakes in front of his chest.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.87, w 0.40 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 270).

mid-2nd c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C750, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.56, pl.VI, 10 [56]; Picard *RAA* (1954), 112, 114, pl.VI,3; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 270 no.Cb-970, pl.CVI; Fouchet (1962), 103-104, pls.27 and 29; Bisi, *StelePun* (1967), 116-118, pl.XXX,1; Bisi (1978), esp. 56-57, 64, 72-73, 80, 86 and figs.31-32.

Cat.9 (Figure 9)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-971

State of Preservation: Almost perfectly preserved, although abraded at the left side just below the middle of the stele.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive. Drilled circles occur in the pediment and niche area.

1. Summit: At the top is a herringbone-patterned wreath containing a human face; it is nestled within an upturned crescent, flanked by sunken discs. The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' is immediately underneath, holding horns containing a grape bunch and a pomegranate. Above each fruit is a rosette with a deep sunken centre. Two birds stand on the pediment below and peck at the fruit. From each lower corner of the pediment grows a palm frond, beside a sunken hole.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment consists of three bands, the inner ones beadand-reel and dentil. Within the pediment is an eagle flanked by two drilled circles. The architrave has thin plain strips interspersed between the decorative mouldings of the standard entablature.

The column capitals are strange: they are fluted and inverted trapezoids in shape, almost palmiform. They sit on unfluted columns with globular triple bases. The column bases sit lower than the floor level of the niche. The apsed niche is framed in a T-shape.

The female dedicant wears round earrings and a necklace, of which the pendant has worn away. She holds a round object in one hand.

Below the column bases is a rectangular cartouche with odd lateral treatments, almost like two overlapping curtains at each end.

3. Mythological Representation?: A nude male runs, raising a club as if to strike the head of the lion which stands or lies behind him. His left hand holds a spotted cat, head down, over the lion.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.41, w 0.37-0.40 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 270; Fouchet (1962), 103; *Tunisie* (1964), 48).

4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

late 2nd c A.C. (Balmaseda (1990), *LIMC* V,1, 256 no.32)

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C751, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.57, pl.VI, 11 [57]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 270 no.Cb-971, pl.CVI; Fouchet (1962), 103, pl.26; *Tunisie* (1964), 48; Bisi (1978), esp. 61, 72, 80, 86; Balmaseda (1990), *LIMC* V,1, 256 no.32.

Cat.10 (Figure 10)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-972

State of Preservation: All of the zones seem to be well-preserved, but for some chipping at the left side of the summit. The stone is, however, broken in half at the lower level of the niche; it has been reglued.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones survive. The top zone includes drilled circles scattered throughout; more decorate the niche.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: A herringbone-patterned leaf wreath containing a human face fills up the very peak of the stele; the wreath sits within an upturned crescent. To the sides are a solar face and a lunar face.

The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' underneath holds a branch with a grape bunch in its right hand, and a very stylized horn with a pomegranate in its left hand.

Liber Pater stands below, on the left side of the pediment. A bird above his head pecks at the grapes held by the 'sign of Tanit'. Venus stands on the other side of the pediment, her left hand over a tall cylindrical object and her right hand holding up a herringbone-patterned wreath. Beside her, a square box sits awkwardly on the side of the pediment; it has several vertical bands framed within two horizontal bands; it is probably an altar.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is capped by a stylized calyx *acroterium*. Two bands form the pediment itself, which contains the bust of a female, crowned by a sunken disc. The decorative mouldings of the standard entablature are separated by plain bands. They stand above a double row of eight square coffers, which are divided in half by a vertical rectangle containing an upturned crescent, a sunken disc, and a downturned crescent.

The capitals below are Aeolic-Corinthian; they stand on a plaque which is striated like a twisted rope. The tall fluted columns on globular double bases stand at the floor level of the two Atlantes holding up the niche architecture. The apsed niche has a rectangular frame.

The draped male dedicant within wears a necklace with a rectangular pendant. He holds the chest fold of his garment with one hand, and a *volumen* with the other.

3. Atlantes: The niche stands on a rectangular cartouche, which lacks an inscription, but has a ring in the middle. A pair of nude Atlantes hold up the epigraphic cartouche.

4. Bull Scene: A solitary bull appears.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.49, w 0.41-0.51 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 271).

4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C752, pl.XIX; La Blanchère (1897), no.58, pl.VI, 12 [58]; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 271 no.Cb-972, pl.CVII; Fouchet (1962), 103-104, pls.26 and 28; Bisi (1978), 48, 52, 55-56, 61, 74, 80 and fig.26; Ghedini (1990), 235-236, 242-243; pl.VIII, 2.

Cat.11 (Figure 11)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-973

State of Preservation: The very tip of the summit is gone and the sides of the entire stone are quite abraded. The stone is broken in two at the niche's apse level, but has been reglued. The details of the highest relief points, such as the faces of the figures, are worn away.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones survive. Drilled circles fill the open spaces between all of the figures in the top zone. The apsed niche has a triple rectangular frame and is studded with drilled circles, and the niche is studded with drilled circles.

1. Divine symbols: The uppermost zone has very flat sculpting. At the top are a lunar and a solar face. The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' between them holds a horn in each hand; that in the left contains a pomegranate and that in the right hand, a bunch of grapes. A fat bird, barely more than incised, eats the pomegranate. Two sunken discs with central nubs separate the fruit from the 'sign of Tanit'.

Liber Pater stands below, with an incised bird perched on his right shoulder and pecking at one of the grape bunches dangling from his wreath. There is a small rabbit between him and the 'sign of Tanit'. On the other side of the pediment, Venus stands under the pomegranate, with her left hand on a post or small column. Her right hand holds a round object over a small altar. Above her hand is a bird.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment has an acanthus and stylized calyx *acroterium*. In the pediment, the bust of a female is flanked by two birds. The architrave below is of the standard entablature type, with the decorative mouldings separated by plain bands. Next are two rows of six square coffers, which flank a central rectangle containing a rosette with outward-facing crescents above and below.

The two columns supporting the entablature have Aeolic-Corinthian capitals and bases composed of two thin round drums on a large square base.

Inside, a draped person sits on a stool or chair, which has no depicted back support. The gender of this person is uncertain, although Ben Abdallah (1986), 92 no.233, stated that it was a togate male.

The niche columns do not rest on the floor level for the niche, but on the ground level of the two burly naked Atlantes who hold up the ensemble (zone 4). These two immediately support an inscribed cartouche, described below.

4. Below the Atlantes is a horizontal vegetal motif with rosettes flanking a stylized vine made up of interlocking lotus-like flowers. At the centre of the vine is an acanthus *acroterium* like that below the 'sign of Tanit' at the top of the stele. The vine is directly above a scene featuring a man who wears only a loincloth. He holds a knife (C.14273) or axe in his right hand and raises his left hand to the bull beside him.

Inscription: The inscription in the double-framed rectangular cartouche has a seal-ring in the middle, between the name and the formula. Five Neopunic letters are interspersed with the Latin characters, in the positions marked by asterisks:

ROGATVS* [ring] V*S*L*A*

The Neopunic letters transcribe to (from left to right) *R ND*'*R*. **Material:** Grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.83-1.87, w 0.39-0.44, th 0.155 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 272; Fouchet (1962), 103; Ben Abdallah (1986), 92 no.233).

1st c A.C. (Yacoub, MusBardo (1970), fig.15).

4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

mid-2nd c A.C. (Yacoub, Chefs-d'oeuvre (1978), 34).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C741, pl.XVIII, and D382; La Blanchère (1897), no.47, pl.III,1 [47]; C.1144 and 14273; Poinssot (1905), 402; Picard *RAA* (1954), pl.VI,2; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 271-272 no. Cb-973, pl.CVII; Fouchet (1962), 103, pl.26; Yacoub, *MusBardo* (1970), fig.15; Bisi (1978), esp. 48, 52, 54-59, 69, 75, 80, 83, and figs.26-28; Yacoub, *Chefs-d'oeuvre* (1978), 31-34; Ben Abdallah (1986), 92 no.233; Ghedini (1990), 238.

Cat.12 (Figure 12)

Musée du Bardo, inv.no.Cb-974

State of Preservation: The left side of the summit is chipped; the stele has also been broken in half across the niche's entablature, but subsequently reglued.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three surviving zones. There are small holes drilled into the niche.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: The top zone is framed by a flat band. Within this frame, at the very peak of the stele, is the bust of a bearded male person holding winged thunderbolts to his chest. An upward-pointing crescent, with a rosette by each point, is directly below the bust.

Below this is the 'sign of Tanit', with a pomegranate in its left hand and a ribbed horn from which springs the grape bunch in its right hand. A solar face is above the pomegranate.

Vines with rosettes separate the 'sign of Tanit' from the figures below. On the viewer's left, a dove hovers above Liber Pater, whose left hand extends out as if to hold a thyrsus as in other examples. On the right is Venus; a small dove is by her head.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is capped with an acanthus *acroterium*. Inside the pediment is a female head, flanked on both sides by a sunken disc with raised central nub. Below, the architrave has both egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel ornamentation. Two rows of six square coffers are depicted.

The whole is supported by two columns which are fluted from the top down to the lower sixth of the height. The ornate capitals are Aeolic-Corinthian, while the columns stand on double bases.

Inside an apsed niche, a male dedicant stands on top of a concave-sided base. His left hand holds a *volumen*, while his right arm lies across his chest, on the fold of his garment.

The lattice screen beneath the dedicant's pedestal is incomplete: the lines at the right side are etched in to indicate further carving to be done.

Inscription: Below the niche architecture is the inscription:

BELLIC • MAX / F•V•S•L•A•S

(with *hederae* rather than points separating the letters). Horizontal guidelines for the letters are still visible.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.70, w 0.34, th 0.135 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 273; Ben Abdallah (1986), 92 no.232). 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi (1978), 80).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), no.C742, pl.XVIII and D381; La Blanchère (1897), no.48, pl.III,2 [48]; *C*.1143 and 14272; Picard *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 272-273 no. Cb-974, pl.CVIII; Picard *RAA* (1954), 113; Fouchet (1962), 104, pls.27 and 30; Bisi (1978), esp. 48, 62, 70-72, 80 and figs.33-34; Ben Abdallah (1986), 92, no.232; Ghedini (1990), 235-236, 238, 242-243, and pl.VII,1; Picard (1990), 90.

Cat.13 (Figure 13)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125021

State of Preservation: The top portion of the stele survives, down to the neck-level of the dedicant. All edges of the stone are unevenly worn or chipped. The soft stone appears to have deteriorated at points, leaving pits in the left cheek of the dedicant and in the inner left side of the pediment.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. A hole is drilled through, from the side to the front, by the lower corner of the pediment on each side, and two more flank the dedicant's head.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the very summit of the stele is a sunken-centred flower within an upturned crescent. Below stands the 'sign of Tanit', which holds a cornucopia in each hand; a grape bunch grows out of the horn on the viewer's left and a pomegranate out of the one on the right. Below the pomegranate is a bird with its head turned back, away from the 'sign of Tanit'; it holds a small round object in its beak.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The sides of the pediment are composed of two undecorated strips; inside is a rooster.. The entablature is rendered as four plain stepped bands, which become lower in relief with each step down. It is supported by two unfluted columns, the capitals of which are Aeolic-Corinthian.

Still visible between the columns is the apsed niche, with the head of the male dedicant within preserved. The figure is in much deeper relief than the elements above, as the niche is carved to a depth of 2.0cm.

Material: Very soft, almost dusty- or sandy-looking limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.58, w 0.25, th 0.11 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 27-28 no.5, and fig.5.

Cat.14 (Figure 14)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125043

State of Preservation: The top of the stele is broken off almost all the way down to the level of the niche's pediment. At the level of the pediment and entablature, and down the left column, there is much damage due to abrasion.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive. The top zone includes drilled circles and the architecture below is studded with them.

1. Divine Symbols: Barely visible at the top are the legs of Venus (left) and Liber Pater (right). Venus stands to the right of a cross-hatched columnar incense burner, which has a cross-hatched flame issuing from it.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: Below these is the triangular pediment, which contains an outer band of drilled circle-studded moulding, followed by a plain band, and then innermost is a row of dentils. This part of the stone is extensively damaged, but a bird's feathers are visible at the left; Bisi (1978), 31, described the pedimental scupture as possibly a human bust with two birds. The architrave, though equally badly damaged, contains at the bottom a row of dentils above two plain bands. Below are unfluted pilasters, topped by Aeolic-Corinthian capitals set on a plaque decorated like a twisted rope. The bases are thick double tori. Three vertical lines of drilled circles (three, seven, three) stud the columns, which flank the frame of an apsed niche.

The niche contains a female, who wears for jewellery a wispy herringbone necklace with a central ringed pendant. She holds a round object incised with an almond shape, evidently not an apple, as suggested by Bisi (1978), 31. On her feet, the straps of her sandals meet in a 'V'. The woman stands on a base with concave sides, on which are carved three objects. The first is damaged, but appears to be a wide-mouthed jar with at least one handle, followed by an object much like a patera or mirror with a ringed handle, and finally a crosshatched rectangular box with double base and rim, topped by a domed cover.

3. Bull Sacrifice: A long and narrow band underlies the niche, almost like a rectangular cartouche for an inscription, but it is not inscribed. In fact, it is interrupted at the left by a bearded man clad in a loincloth. His empty left hand is raised towards the horns of the bull facing him, while he holds in his right hand a thick triangular knife.

Material: Brownish-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.23, w 0.365, th 0.12 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 31 no.9, and fig.9; Ghedini (1990), 236-237, 242, and pl.V,2.

Cat.15 (Figure 15)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125062

State of Preservation: Only the top portion survives, down to the shoulder-level of the 'sign of Tanit'. The tip of the summit is chipped off.

Description: Stele type uncertain. Two zones survive. A thin band frames the sculpted face of the stele. The top zone is separated by a horizontal dentilled band from the scene below it. Among the many drilled circles at the top are three in vertical lines between the face and each flower. Circular depressions approximately 1.0 cm wide are near the bottom corners and halfway up the sides. They flank four holes of comparable size, which were drilled through to the sides. Drilled circles proliferate in the second zone. All the drilled circles are about 1.0 cm wide and are in general probably too shallow to have held an inserted object of any kind.

1. Summit: A thin band completely borders the triangular summit. Within this triangle, in the centre, is a solar face flanked by two flowers with an inner ring of six petals and an outer ring of eight.

2. Divine Symbols: At the top left and top right are rings formed by two serpents joined at the tail, their heads facing each other at the top; each such ring contains a human face. Between these two rings is a lunar face. Two stylized dolphins with triangular heads and triple-terminating tails swim downwards; with their heads pressed against this figure's cheeks, they almost create the illusion that the lunar figure has raised arms.

Below this group, at the centre, is a 'sign of Tanit', holding up a grape branch in its right hand and another branch with fruit in its left hand. On either side, a palm tree flanks the 'sign of Tanit'. Under the branches of the left tree, a human figure stands; its round head and a raised, awkwardly-bent left hand are visible. The stele is broken off at the bottom of the left palm tree, at the upper chest level of the 'sign of Tanit', and across the branches of the right palm tree.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.445, w 0.46, th 0.12 m **Date:** end 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80). **Bibliography:** Bisi (1978), esp. 40 no.19, and fig.19.

Cat.16 (Figure 16)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125063

State of Preservation: Still preserved of this stele is the upper half, from the summit, with its chipped tip, down to the dedicant's head. There are small chips down the sides. The surface is remarkably smooth, as if polished.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. The drilled circles on this stele are 2.0 cm wide and 0.7 cm deep, have a barely visible centre mark, and would not easily have held anything without an adhesive. Small holes are drilled through to the sides, at parallel locations down both sides of the stone: a pair just below the crescent at the top, another at the tail level of the birds standing on the pediment, and finally a third pair near the bottom of the entablature.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: Sculpted at the very top, inside an upturned crescent, is a rosette. Below, the head of the 'sign of Tanit' is within a summary apsed niche (1.0 cm deep) which goes down to its shoulder level. The 'sign of Tanit' is nude and has fully human, female form. She stands on a hatched rectangular block and holds in her right hand a branch with two pomegranates and, in her left hand, a horn with two grape bunches.

Standing on the sides of the pediment below, on an angle, are two birds. The left one is a rooster; its partner is a bird standing on a small square box.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment consists of three rows, the middle one a moulding of bead-and-reel. The pediment sculpture is an eagle on a small globe. Under the pediment, the entablature has eight rows of moulding, the upper ones decorated with a twisting pattern and then the three standard entablature types, all separated by plain bands. Supporting the entablature are rectangular column capitals with incised volutes that are a cross between the standard Aeolic-Corinthian and Ionic. The capitals sit on plaques decorated in a zigzag pattern.

The stone is broken off below the head of the male figure in the niche. The apsed niche in which he stands is framed in a T-shape. This niche and the person within are carved in much deeper relief than the rest of the sculpted elements on the stele: the niche itself is carved to a depth of 3.5 cm.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.91, w 0.38, th 0.16 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 29 no.7, and fig.7; Ghedini (1990), 237, 241, 243, and pl.V,1.

Cat.17 (Figure 17)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125066

State of Preservation: The peak and very top part of the rectangular portion of the stele are broken off and the top portion down to the horizontal band touching the peak of the niche's pediment is quite abraded. A diagonal break crosses through the niche; the stone has been reglued and restored at this break.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive, each of which is divided from the one below by a plain horizontal band. A rough, irregular band frames the sides of the sculpted face of the stele; at the middle zone, this frame is clearly made up of interlocking lotus flowers, set into a rectangular base at the floor level of the niche. Deep holes are drilled into the top three registers. The stone is rough beneath the bottom zone.

1. Dioscuri and Jupiter: A formal register contains a wide rectangular box bearing Jupiter enthroned, flanked by the Dioscuri and their horses. The Dioscuri each hold a staff and wear a chlamys, but are otherwise nude. Jupiter raises his left arm and holds a staff; the object in his right hand is less distinct. An eagle perches on a sceptre next to the throne.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: On either side of the pediment is a disc, split into six sections by bars joining to a central point, in the fashion of a wagon wheel.

The pediment is formed by two plain bands. Within is a feminine face atop a crescent.

The architrave consists of a band of large rings or *clipei* and is supported by two tall half-columns. The upper two-thirds of the left column is fluted, while only the upper half of the right column is fluted. Their capitals are tall rectangles decorated with three horizontal lines of zigzags. The column bases consist of three slightly rounded rectangular plaques, the middle one slightly smaller than the outer two.

Immediately to the inside of the columns are tall palm fronds. Between them, the niche is rectangular with a T-shaped frame. The niche contains a woman dropping an offering from her right hand onto the low altar at her side. Her left hand probably once held something, but is now damaged. For jewellery, she wears large round earrings and a necklace with many hanging pendants, not the double necklace reported by Bisi (1978), 31. 3. Atlantes and Bull Sacrifice: At the sides of the lowest zone are two burly Atlantes, which hold up the niche above. They flank a central sacrifice scene, in which two figures stand before and behind a bull. The figure standing immediately in front reaches with both hands to the bull; the object in his right hand is more likely a long knife than the club recorded by

Bisi (1978), 42. He wears a knee-length garment. Between the rightmost Atlas and the bull, partially covered by the bull's body, is a very tall altar.

Material: Brownish-beige coloured limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.17, w 0.495, th 0.15 m

Date: 2nd c A.C. (Le Glay, SAM [1961], p.225 no.3).

end 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Le Glay, *SAM*(1961), p.225 no.3, and pl.VIII, 2; Le Glay, *SAH*(1966), 182; Bisi (1978), esp. 41-42 no.20, and fig.20.

Cat.18 (Figure 18)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125070

State of Preservation: Only a fragment of the right side of this stele remains: what was probably the middle (niche) zone, with the right side of the structural architecture, from the entablature to the floor level, and the person seated within. The sculpted elements are extremely worn.

Description: Type 1 stele. One zone survives. Drilled circles adorn the niche; they are about 2.0 to 2.5 cm wide and 0.3 cm deep.

1. Architecture and Dedicant: Of the architrave, all that remains is a wide band containing two square coffers, which do not touch each other; they sit above a plain band. The surviving capital is tall and very abraded, its Aeolic-Corinthian volute barely visible. It stands on a thick unfluted column with no base. A rectangular frame surrounds the apsed niche, which is carved to a depth of just under 2.0 cm.

The female inside the niche is seated. She wears a short-sleeved dress belted beneath the breasts and round earrings. Her chair is barely visible; it is carved in very shallow relief from the floor up to the height of her elbows.

A plain band indicates the floor level of the niche. It juts out below the seated woman, continuing the raised relief of her body.

Material: The limestone is hard, but has become sandy-coloured with wear.

Dimensions: h 0.41, w 0.27, th 0.11 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. ? (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 31-32 no.10, and fig.10.

Cat.19 (Figure 19)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125072

State of Preservation: The summit is broken off and missing, as is the lower part of the stone from the bottom of the niche down. The left side especially is chipped.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. Drilled circles are ubiquitous in the uppermost zone and are used to decorate the architecture; they are only about 0.2 cm deep, too shallow to have held anything. A deep hole flanks the head of the dedicant in the niche.

1. Divine Symbols: The top of the stele is broken off down to the neck of the 'sign of Tanit', which holds a grape bunch in one hand and a cornucopia with a pomegranate in the other.

Above the pomegranate is the remains of an enwreathed solar face. A bird stands on the branch, facing the cornucopia. Under each arm of the 'sign of Tanit' is a bird facing left.

Liber Pater is below, to the left of the niche's pediment. Venus stands opposite, her left hand hovering over a cross-hatched, columnar flaming altar. One of the birds under the 'sign of Tanit' stands on her right hand, while another stands on her left arm. An altar-box lies to her right, on the slanting side of the pediment.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: A stylized calyx *acroterium* adorns the pediment's peak. Dentils decorate the inner lateral faces of the pediment, which contains a bust. Bisi (1978), 35, thought it was possibly female, but its features and the diagonal twisted band of cloth across its chest make it more likely to be a togate male. It is flanked by two birds (doves?), and there is a drilled circle above it.

The topmost part of the entablature appears to have been a band of drilled circles. Below is the standard entablature, its decorative mouldings separated by a plain strip. A plaque studded with three drilled circles separates the architrave from the column capitals, which are Aeolic-Corinthian. The columns below are thick and unfluted, with thick globular bases.

Inside the niche are two figures. The larger, main figure is the female dedicant. She wears large round earrings, and a necklace with a central pendant. Her left hand holds a large round object, possibly a fruit, but not the patera suggested by Bisi (1978), 35. The smaller figure at her left is a Victory, who wears a belted tunic. Her right arm crosses in front of her body, as if to present something to the woman beside her; she also raises a large wreath above her head with her left hand. The stele is broken off at the left side the level of her feet, which is well above the floor level on which her companion is standing; she must have originally stood on a pedestal of some sort or hovered in the air.

The stele is broken off at floor level, preserving the main figure's left foot and the left floor level, which appears to be resting on a faint disc-like shape in the very corner. The column bases flanking the niche sit below this level.

Material: Whitish-beige limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.80, w 0.39, th 0.13 m

Date: mid-2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 34-35 no.13, and fig.13 [incorrectly identified as inv.no. 125345.]

Cat.20 (Figure 20)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125073

State of Preservation: The top of the stele is broken off to the head-level of the dedicant. The bottom of the cartouche is broken off, with the bottom edge of the stele now gone.

Description: Stele type uncertain. Two zones survive.

1. Architecture and Dedicant: An apsed niche is flanked by half-columns, which are fluted and narrow towards the top. The columns rest on double torus bases and are flanked on the outside by tall palm fronds.

A female person sits in the niche, her hands on her knees. She wears a dress belted under her breasts, an overgarment, and round earrings. A V-shaped band on each foot indicates sandals. The ornate legs of the chair appear, from the floor up, as lion's claws, with the length of the legs striped, and topped by a concentric circle.

2. 'Cache': A slightly raised squarish plane extends down to the break of the stone from below the columns. At the top, centred under the niche, is a cartouche framed with concave sides; it contains a striated two-handled jug and a large squarish box with a cross-hatched rectangular lid and base.

Inscription: A shallower, recessed surface with concave sides sits below these elements. No inscription is visible, however.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.41-0.42, w 0.34, th 0.145-0.155 m **Date:** end 2nd century (Bisi [1976], 37). **Bibliography:** Bisi (1976), 27 no.7, pl. IV,1.

Cat.21 (Figure 21)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125075

State of Preservation: The stele is broken down to below the head level of the person in the niche.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. A thin framing band survives at the sides. 1. Architecture and Dedicant: In the top surviving zone, the architectural elements consist of thick columns, unfluted and roughly-finished, standing on a thick double torus. A smaller column stands to the inside of, and on a slightly higher level than, each of these columns, perhaps in an attempt to provide depth to the niche. These, too, have a double base, with capitals consisting of three plaques set atop one another, stepped and increasing in size from bottom to top.

Inside the niche is a person of ambiguous gender, standing on a pedestal with concave sides; this pedestal is engraved with the inscription noted below. This person grasps with in the left hand a round object, which is divided in half by an incised line. With the other hand, he or she holds another object, possibly an apple (Poinssot [1905], 404) or an incense offering (Bisi [1978], 33), over an altar.

2. Bull Sacrifice: In the zone below is a sort of sacrificial procession scene, with two figures facing a bull. Both human figures face right. The first figure, a female, plays double flutes, the top pipe of which is curled up at the ends. Her long tunic is belted low with a double cinch, and is incised to indicate the garment's folds. The second figure is a shorter, plumper male, wearing a cloth wrapped around his hips and going in an arc up his back to under his right arm. He holds one of the bull's horns with one hand and plunges a spear into the chest of the facing bull with the other. The bull wears a girth around its barrel.

Inscription: In the two-lined inscription engraved upon the pedestal of the person in the niche, the first line is in retrograde letters:

ILVI.L ABRV

Material: Sandy-beige limestone. Dimensions: w 0.44, th 0.16 m Date: 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80). **Bibliography:** C.1145; Poinssot (1905), 403-404 no.A; Bisi (1978), esp. 33 no.12, and fig.12 [incorrectly identified as 125705]; Ghedini (1990), 238 [incorrectly identified as 125705]; Mendleson (1995), 261-262 and fig.12.

Cat.22 (Figure 22)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125076

State of Preservation: The top part of the stele survives, in quite good condition, down to the level of the niche's entablature. There is some chipping and yellowing of the stone around the edges.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones survive. The summit is separated from the second zone by a horizontal rectangular band incised with foliage and a central drilled circle; there is a stem below a deep hole at either end of this band. A thinner, herringbone-leafed band separates the second and third zones. The top three zones include drilled circles, none of which are deep enough to hold any object.

1. Summit: At the very top is a rosette, which appears above a bust of Jupiter, who clutches thunderbolts to his chest. Birds are perched on his shoulders, their beaks touching his ears. To the lower left of this central bust are a rosette and a solar bust, and to the right a lunar bust and another rosette.

2. Divine Symbols: Below the summit is the 'sign of Tanit', which has a masculine hairstyle, in contrast with the indication of breasts under its garment. It holds a horn in each hand. From the left horn hangs a pomegranate, being eaten by two birds. From the righthand horn grows a grape bunch, also being eaten by two birds standing beneath it; these two birds stand tail to tail, with their heads turned back to eat the grapes.

3. Liber Pater and Venus: The next zone includes Liber Pater, who stands on a pedestal. To the right of the pediment is Venus, who also stands on a pedestal. She holds a thick wreath up in her right hand; her left hand is over a flaming columnar altar.

4. Architecture: The pediment, which consists of a smooth outer frame and bead-and-reel inner moulding, is equilateral in shape and has a small round object at its apex. It contains the figure of Eros, holding a small leafy branch in each hand. On either side, a bird turns its head back to eat a leaf of the branch. This pediment is unusual in that it reaches right up to the herringbone divider above, forming a complete physical barrier between the two figures flanking it.

The stele is broken off at the level of the entablature, which has two plain bands, then a thicker egg-and-dart row, then another plain band of moulding.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.80, w 0.40, th 12.0 m **Date:** end 2nd c A.C. ? (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 39-40 no.18, and fig.18.

Cat.23 (Figure 23)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125078

State of Preservation: This stele is preserved down to the pediment, with the figures flanking the pediment damaged; the edges are chipped.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive, plus lateral sculpting. Drilled holes framed by rings appear in the top zone; these drilled circles are approximately 2.0 cm wide by 0.3 cm deep. A deep hole separates Venus from the pediment and pierces the apex of the pediment.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the top is an enwreathed face, which sits on an acutelycurved crescent, itself flanked by flowers. Directly below the crescent is the 'sign of Tanit', wearing a beaded wreath. The 'sign of Tanit' holds a horn in each hand: at the left is a branch with a small and a large grape bunch and at the right is a pomegranate and leaf.

To the left of the pediment, the grape bunches and wreath worn by Liber Pater are just visible. Venus stands at the right, holding out a large round object.

2. Architecture: The pediment's peak is adorned by an acanthus and calyx *acroterium*. A vine with rosettes also grows up out of each side of the pediment. The entablature consists of a thick plain band, then thin plain, bead-and-reel, another thin plain band, and dentils.

[3.] Lateral Sculpting: This stele is unique in that one of its sides is also sculpted, that on the viewer's left. On the angle of the summit is a tall wavy vine with rosettes. Below this, on the vertical side, is a thyrsus, more likely than a spear. No corresponding decoration balances the right side of the stele.

Material: whitish-sandy limestone.

Dimensions: h over 0.45m, w over 0.42, th 0.14 m

Date: no previous suggestions.

Bibliography: no publications known.

Cat.24 (Figure 24)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125098

State of Preservation: The triangular summit is broken off; minor chips and abrasions constitute the only other damage. The red paint traces along the upper right edge are modern. **Description:** Type 1 stele. Three zones survive. A thin rectangular band frames the sides of the first zone. A hole is drilled through to the side at the very top on either side of the sculpted surface.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: The bottom of the upturned crescent is still visible at the top. Below it is a nude 'sign of Tanit' of fully human form, possibly female. Its legs are obscured below the thigh level behind the niche's pediment. It holds a horn in each hand, the one in the right hand containing a pomegranate, the one in the left a grape bunch. A sixbranched, fern-like tree grows up out of each horn. Below the pomegranate is an enwreathed face. A bird is below the wreath and standing on and pecking at the left side of the pediment. Below the grapes on the other side is a rooster.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment below is unusual for its relief height, standing out 2.0 cm above the surface. The slanted cornice of the pediment is made up of three lines, all plain except for the top of the middle band, which starts off with dentils or bead-and-reel, but this decoration is quickly given up. Inside the pediment is a female head. The entablature below is a slight variation on the standard entablature type, with rows of bead-and-reel, egg-and-dart, and dentils, all separated by plain bands. The tall column capitals are Aeolic-Corinthian. They each sit on a plaque striped like twisted rope. The unfluted half-columns have bases of a single thick torus on a plinth.

A single rectangular frame surrounds the apsed niche, which is carved to a depth of 1.5 cm. The person within is probably female; she wears a double twisted necklace and possibly has earrings, and holds a 5-petalled flower in her left hand, not the patera hesitatingly suggested by Bisi (1978), 31. She stands on a high squarish box, which is bisected by a faint horizontal line; perhaps this pedestal was intended to be standing on a cache. On either side of the pedestal are deep tool chip marks; the back wall of the niche was not well-finished.

3. Bull Scene: A solitary bull occupies the lowest zone.

Material: Beige limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.295, w 0.335, th 0.12 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 30-31 no.8, and fig.8.

Cat.25 (Figure 25)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125101

State of Preservation: The top triangular portion is missing and a large chip has been glued back onto the surviving upper part, at the left. The lower part of the stele is missing from the bottom half of the lowest surviving zone, of which the left side is chipped off. There is much wear and abrasion, especially at the top and along the left side. A tiny amount of brownish paint remains between the 'sign of Tanit' and the lower pomegranate. There may also be slight traces of reddish-brown paint on the dedicant's necklace.

Description: Type 2 stele. Three zones survive. A thin frame is incised along the sides.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the top is a rounded object above an upturned crescent, to the left of which is a flat, round pomegranate. Beside this fruit is a sunken disc with a central nub. The crescent hangs above the head of the 'sign of Tanit', which holds a grape bunch in its right hand and a pomegranate branch in the left. A bird eats each fruit.

Below the fruits are two Victories, whose bodies parallel the shape of the arched niche between them. The one on the right holds a round fruit and a double ring; the other holds up a palm leaf. Both wear belted tunics.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The niche is formed by an arcaded lintel with individual blocks pierced by drilled circles, which measure 1.0 cm wide with 0.4 cm wide inner circles. Supporting the lintel are short, squat pilasters, which have volutes only on their upper half. The capitals are formed of four superimposed plaques, the bases of three. The *caduceus* standards at the sides have discs with raised central nubs, instead of rings. An almond-shaped leaf or flame is at the top of each standard. The standards stand at the niche's floor level, on triangular bases.

The woman standing inside the niche, on a base with concave sides, wears round earrings, a thin necklace with a central pendant, and a light garment over an underskirt which hangs to ankle-level. The woman's right hand is on a columnar altar or incense burner; her left hand, holding a round object, also crosses over her body towards the altar.

3. Figural Scene: The lower zone is largely broken off, but still visible is a scene with two figures. That on the left is probably female and holds up a large ring. The second person, probably male, appears to be nude. In his right hand is a long, curved object which, at the

top, divides into two close, parallel rods with pointed ends; its bottom is broken off by a chip in the bottom of the stele.

Material: Yellowish-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.00, w 0.39, th 0.19 m

Date: 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 36 no.15, and fig.15; Ghedini (1990), 234, 236-237, and pl.1,2.

Cat.26 (Figure 26)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125102

State of Preservation: The very tip of the peak is broken off, as is the bottom of the stone beneath the dedicant's waist-level. There are traces of reddish paint around the ansate *paterae* at the top and also in the hole in the disc in the right capital.

Description: Type 2 stele. Three zones survive. A double frame forms a triangular compartment around the summit of the stone; a single rectangular band flanks the divine symbols zone.

1. Summit: The top portion includes several elements. Foremost among these is an enwreathed face. Below is a small, thick crescent. From the bottom corners of the triangle spring two objects shaped like frying pans with raised central nubs; Bisi (1978), 37, suggested that these were possibly ladles or strainers, but they are most likely ansate *paterae*. 2. Divine Symbols: At the top is the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', which has quite a small wreathed head. It holds in its left hand a branch with a grape bunch and two pomegranates; in the other hand is a horn containing a grape branch. A bird sits on each branch and pecks at the fruit; two more peck at the fruit from below.

Victories in belted tunics hover around the arch of the niche below. The Victory at the right holds a wreath; her counterpart holds a palm and supports a bird sitting on her wing. Her tiny feet stand on a floating ground line. Underneath this groundline is an eye-like oval with a trefoil branch sticking straight up out of it; these elements most likely comprise the upper portions of a *caduceus* standard.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: The niche is composed of an arched lintel, made up of a single block of flat, smooth stone. It rests on two Aeolic-Corinthian capitals. These sit on a thick plaque lined with triangles, and then a second, undecorated plaque. The columns below are unfluted. The strips between the columns and the flanking objects are carved out to an unusual depth.

The male dedicant within the niche wears a V-shaped necklace with a pendant, a tunic, and a mantle. In his right hand, in front of the chest, is a tiny bird, not the lotus seen by Bisi (1978), 38.

Material: Grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.665, w 0.38, th 0.16 m

Date: 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 37-38 no.16, and fig.16.

Cat.27 (Figure 27)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125104

State of Preservation: Only a fragment of the lower left side of the original stele remains, in a roughly triangular break.

Description: Probably a Type 2 stele. Two zones survive.

1. Architecture: The double torus base of the left column survives above a plain band, which must have formed the floor level of the niche. Below these elements is part of the double row of at least six square coffers.

2. Animal Chase: These architectural elements are set above a curious animal scene at the bottom of the stele: At the left is an animal which, although it looks monkey-like, is probably a lion. This animal, its head cocked at an awkward angle, holds the legs of a bull, which is fleeing in the opposite direction.

Material: Whitish-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.54, w 0.38, th 0.15 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 33 no.11, and fig.11.

Cat.28 (Figure 28)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125174

State of Preservation: The very tip of the stele's summit is chipped off. The bottom portion of the stone from the ankle-level of the dedicant is missing. The surface is very worn, especially at the middle of the left side.

Description: Type 2 stele. Three zones survive. A hole is drilled through to the side in the bottom left corner of the triangular summit and more are drilled into the back of the niche around the dedicant.

1. Summit: A double frame encloses the summit. Within this frame is a disc incised to look like a circular rosette; it sits above an upturned crescent. Beneath the crescent lie three large circles with sunken centres, the middle one slightly smaller than the other two (2.5 cm compared to 4.0 and 3.5 cm; all are about 1.0 cm deep).

2. Divine Symbols: The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' at the top wears a wreath. It holds, in its left hand, a pomegranate branch with a bird sitting on top. Another bird sits on the right-hand grape branch, possibly eating a leaf. Below each fruit is another bird.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: A *caduceus* standard is positioned on either side of the niche, composed of three superimposed rings, each with a small hole at the centre, on a stick imbedded in a triangular base. The top ring is slightly open and folded back over.

The apsed niche has no decorated architectural frame; the niche itself is 2.5 cm deep. The woman standing inside wears a a billowing mantle over her dress and a faint, doublestrand necklace. There is a hole below her left fingers, presumably to add some object that she was holding.

4. Inscription cartouche?: At the lowest right corner, almost obscured by the break, seems to be a top corner of a cartouche.

Material: Very sandy-coloured limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.74, w 0.32, th 0.145 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80). **Bibliography:** Bisi (1978), esp. 39 no.17, and fig.17.

Cat.29 (Figure 29)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125177

State of Preservation: Only a fragment of the lower portion of the stone remains, from the very bottom of the niche zone down to the level of the inscription, which is badly damaged and survives only at the upper right corner of the cartouche. The sides of the sculpted scenes are framed with a vertical bar, the center of which is incised with a vertical line.

Description: Probably a Type 2 stele. Three zones survive, including the inscription.

1. Architecture and Dedicant: Among the remains of this zone are the bottom of an unfluted column or pilaster on a rectangular plinth, and part of the niche, which includes a fluted columnar object and the dedicant's feet. At the very left and the very right are the bottoms of *caduceus* standards on triangular bases. The niche is carved to a depth of almost 2.5 cm; the zone below is in such shallow relief that it is closer to incision.

2. Animals and Tripod: In the lower zone, animals cavort around a central two-legged table. On the table are three cups with no handles. To the right is a dolphin, swimming above a rooster, which stands at an angle. Another dolphin swims at the left of the tripod. All that remains of the rooster by this second dolphin is the feathers of its wing or tail.

Inscription: Still visible along the sides is the frame of a rectangular cartouche and part of the inscription contained within. Although severely damaged, the first five letters of the first line remain; they are in cursive Neopunic. Transcribed into Latin script, they read:

L'DN B

Material: Grey limestone. Dimensions: h 0.32, w 0.38, th 0.145 m Date: end 2nd c A.C. ? (Bisi [1978], 80). Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 42-43 no.21, and fig.21.

Cat.30 (Figure 30) British Museum, inv.no.WA 125183

State of Preservation: The very top of the summit of the stele is broken off.

Description: Type 2 stele. Three zones survive, including the inscription. A faint thin border frames the upper zone. At the edges of the top zone are holes drilled through to the side. The drilled circles in the top zone are too shallow and rounded for an object to be inserted.

1. Divine Symbols: Still visible at the top is a face enclosed within a vegetal wreath, on an upturned crescent; it is flanked on either side by a bird standing on a rosette. Each of the birds holds a small round object in its mouth.

The geometric 'sign of Tanit' underneath holds horns with a grape bunch and pomegranates. Two birds stand underneath the grape bunch. On top of the niche below are two more birds, balancing a tiny grape bunch on their beaks.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The apsed niche is formed by a arched lintel made up of individual blocks; each block is pierced by a single drilled circle. On each side of the niche

stands a fluted pilaster on a base made up of three plaques; the capitals are very similar, but consist of five layers. A *caduceus* standard hovers beside each column; each standard has a slightly rectangular base and two large rings near the top; flaring above the top ring is a small crescent or flying ribbons.

The person in the niche stands on a pedestal with concave sides. He wears a necklace with a round central pendant, in addition to the bracelet on his right wrist. In each hand he holds a round object with its centre cored out and lines project from the inner hole to the outside.

Two rows of five deep, square coffers lie beneath the floor level of the niche. Below the coffers is the inscription.

Inscription: The Neopunic inscription is one line long, with faint guiding lines still visible. It was read by Chabot (1917b), 31-32, as follows (transliterated into Latin letters and direction from his Hebraic transcription):

[ND]R 'Š N`D`R ŠM' QL' B`RK'

I agree with this reading. However, the unusual forms of a couple of the dedicatory words have been problematic for past readers: Levy (1864), 64-67, read the first word as ND'R, but Chabot favoured a reconstruction as NDR. Both Chabot and Bisi (1978), 36 n.1, also preferred the reading 'Š N'D'R to Levy's ND'R.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.195-1.27, w 0.37 m

Date: 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Levy (1864), 64-67; *CRAI* (1868), 6; Schröder (1869), Neupunische no. 110; Chabot (1917b), 31-32, no 1 (Brit.Mus. no. 104); Bisi (1978), esp. 35-36 no. 14, and fig. 14; Ghedini (1990), 236, 243, and pl.VII,2; Mendleson (1995), 261 and fig. 11.

Cat.31 (Figure 31)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125184

State of Preservation: The summit is very chipped and abraded. The stone has broken away from below the head-level of the dedicant

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. Four deep holes are drilled into the top zone and another marks the apex of the pediment below. On the apse of the niche, eight small holes are drilled through to the underside of the top of the inner edge of the apse. There are two more deep holes inside the niche, on either side of the male dedicant.

1. Divine Symbols: In the first zone, the sculpted elements only become comprehensible below the head-level of the 'sign of Tanit', which is anthropomorphic and holds a grape bunch at its right side.

Liber Pater and Venus stand on either side of the pediment. On the left is Liber Pater, who raises both hands, but it is not clear if they hold anything. Lack of space forced the sculptor to make this figure stand at an angle, parallel to the slanting side of the pediment. On the other side is Venus, who holds a wreath up in her right hand. Though her left arm is now broken off, her hand evidently hovered above the flame or roundish object on the columnar object at her left. Bisi (1978), 29, identified this object as a *cista* or basket, but it is more likely an incense-burner or narrow altar.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment, made up of two plain bands for each lateral side, contains a female bust who wears large dangling shell-like earrings and is apparently unclothed.

The moulded bands of the entablature are of the standard entablature type. The two Aeolic-Corinthian capitals survive, as does the top of one unfluted column. The niche itself is recessed to a depth of 2.5 cm and is in much deeper relief than the rest of the sculpted elements.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.535, w 0.36, th 0.16 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 29 no.6, and fig.6; Ghedini (1990), 235, 237, 242, and pl.III,1.

Cat.32 (Figure 32)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125186

State of Preservation: The stele appears to be perfectly preserved down to the break at the head-level of the dedicant. A hint of red paint survives in the coffers.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. Faint chiselling marks are infrequently visible, such as inside the pediment. A flat band encloses the entire sculpted face of the stele. Small holes dot the top of the niche.

1. Summit: At the very top is a ring framing a face. Below the ring is an upturned crescent. It hangs above the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', which holds in its right hand a horn with a pomegranate and a grape bunch. In its left hand is a branch, from which grow two more pomegranates.

Below are three human figures, Liber Pater, Eros, and Venus. Liber stands on the left; beside him, Eros stands knock-kneed on the peak of the pediment. He holds Liber's thyrsus with his right hand and raises a wreath in his left hand. The rightmost figure is Venus, who extends both hands towards the rectangular altar between the Eros and herself; she holds a small object in each hand. The altar is propped up by a squarish object.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: Two plain bands and an inner row of dentils form the slanting sides of the pediment. The clothed male bust within is set on a faint plain strip at the bottom of the pediment. Below, there are mouldings of the standard entablature type, separated by plain bands, above two rows of six square coffers each. The column capitals are Aeolic-Corinthian, set on a single thick astragal that leads to an apparently unfluted column. The dedicant inside the niche is male.

Material: Grey, almost clay-like limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.11, w 0.42, th 14.0 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 26-27 no.3, and fig.3; Le Glay (1987), 50, and pl.III.

Cat.33 (Figure 33) British Museum, inv.no.WA 125189 **State of Preservation:** The top of the stele is broken off to just below the head of the 'sign of Tanit'. Reddish paint remains on the folds of Liber Pater's garment and on the adjacent side of the pediment, and some orangish-red paint in the volute of the right column capital. **Description:** Type 1 stele. Three zones survive, including the inscription.

1. Divine Symbols: At the top, the 'sign of Tanit' is presumably anthropomorphic. It holds a grape bunch and pomegranate.

A vine with rosette flowers separates the 'sign of Tanit' from the figures below. On the left, Liber Pater holds a a cup in his right hand and a branch of the vine in his left hand. On the right, Venus holds out something in the shape of a down-turned crescent in her right hand toward the peak of the pediment; her left hand hangs down over a narrow columnar altar.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment itself is much taller and squatter than in most other examples, almost describing an equilateral triangle. The lateral frames of the pediment consist of a plain strip, then bead-and-reel moulding, then a plain band; a small acanthus *acroterium* may mark the join of the two bead-and-reel rows. Inside the pediment is a four-petalled flower, with a drilled circle filling the spaces between the petals. The architrave features the standard entablature type with a plain band only between the bottom two decorative mouldings, the bead-and-reel and dentils. The columns below are unfluted and bear capitals which seem more like stylized Aeolic types than is normal in this group. Below each capital is a plaque, incised diagonally. The column bases consist of a thick torus on a slightly thicker plinth.

Between the columns is the apsed niche, which contains a togate male. He holds what is probably a *volumen* in his left hand and wears a twisted bracelet on his right hand.

Inscription: In a rectangular box hanging below the niche is the inscription:

R.V.S.L.H

Material: Brownish-yellow/grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.21, w 0.34, th 0.11 m

Date: beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: C.1011; Poinssot (1905), 404-405, no.B; Bisi (1978), esp. 27 no.4, and fig.4 [incorrectly identified as inv.no.527]; Ghedini (1990), 238 [quoting Bisi's incorrect inv.no.527].

Cat.34 (Figure 34)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125190

State of Preservation: The top of the summit has been broken off and the lower part of the stone, in a break across the middle of the niche, is gone. Some modern pinkish-red paint survives around the upper edges of the stele.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. The sculpted surface above the niche level is surrounded by a thin frame.

1. Divine Symbols: The top of the stone has been broken off, damaging the upper two-thirds of a wreath composed of two bands patterned like twisted rope. It is contained within a thick upturned crescent. On either side is a rosette, its centre sunk 2.0 cm deep. Two birds, sitting on the two cornucopiae held by the 'sign of Tanit', peck at the rosettes.

The crescent sits immediately above the head of the 'sign of Tanit', which is anthropomorphic and wears a wreath composed of circles. It holds a horn brimming over with rosettes or vegetation in each hand; a pomegranate hangs from the horn in the left hand and a grape bunch from that in the right.

Below the 'sign of Tanit' is a vine rinceau extending across the width of the stone, flowered with rosettes. The two branches of this vine grow out of horns (or dolphin tails?) projecting out from behind the acanthus leaf *acroterium* on the pediment peak.

Liber Pater and Venus stand below the vine. On the left, Liber Pater extends his left hand out to the *acroterium*. On the right, Venus touches the pediment with her right, open hand; her left hand hangs down over a tall and narrow altar. There is a shape between her hand and the altar; it may be an offering, or, as Bisi (1978), 24, suggested, a stylized flame. A sunken disc with a central nub is beside the head of each of these two figures.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: From the level of the pediment down, the lines and modelling are much crisper and more regular than the features above. The pediment itself, which is decorated with a bead-and-reel motif between two plain bands, contains a mask-like bearded male head. The entablature below contains plain bands alternating with the decorative mouldings of the standard entablature type. Below these is a double row of six square coffers, carved to a depth of 2.0 cm, on a plain architrave. The latter is supported by two wide capitals of the Aeolic-Corinthian type. The capitals stand on thick pilasters with wide rigid fluting, which flank an apsed niche, bordered by a rectangular frame.

Within the niche is a draped female figure, who holds an oblong object in her left hand. On her right wrist, she wears an elaborate bracelet, which wraps snake-like around a single band.

Material: Beige-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.125, w 0.38, th 0.13 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 23-24 no.1, and fig.1; Le Glay (1987), 50, and pl.III; Ghedini (1990), 234-236, 242-243, and pl.I,1.

Cat.35 (Figure 35)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125192

State of Preservation: Most of the summit is broken off and the bottom of the stele is broken off from the floor level of the niche down. The edges are somewhat chipped. **Description:** Type 2 stele. Three zones survive. At the top, the triangular summit is framed with a concave bevelled strip. Drilled circles occur in all registers. In the second zone, three

horizontal rows of four drilled circles mark the surface in a grid-like pattern; these holes are larger than usual, 2.0 cm wide, 0.3 cm deep, with the central hole another 0.3 cm deep.

1. Summit: At the top are drilled circles in the very corners, two discs with sunken centres, and, in the middle, the preserved bottom of a wreath or crescent. Holes are drilled through to the sides at the junction between the summit and rectangular frames.

2. Divine Symbols: The 'sign of Tanit' is geometric. A bird, facing the 'sign of Tanit', sits on its left hand, which holds a pomegranate on a long branch. In its right hand is a horn with branches bearing grape bunches and a pomegranate, which hangs above a bird. Under the 'sign of Tanit', in the centre, is another bird, which holds a grape in its beak and stands on a small round object, directly on top of the niche.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: A *caduceus* standard, with three separated sunken discs with central nubs, is topped by trefoil, almond-shaped leaves. These flank an apsed niche with an arched lintel; each of the nine blocks of the lintel is pierced by a drilled circle. The lintel is supported by two fluted pilasters with no bases visible. The niche is carved to a depth of 2.7 cm.

The woman inside the niche wears a garment pulled in below the waist. Her earrings consisting of two parts, a round stud above a shell; other jewellery includes a herringbone necklace with a ring-like central pendant and a plain bracelet on each wrist. With her right hand, she holds a round object in front of her chest, while her open left hand is empty.

Material: Grey, clay-like limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.89 m

Date: no previous suggestions.

Bibliography: no publications known.

Cat.36 (Figure 36)

British Museum, inv.no.WA 125197

State of Preservation: The top portion is gone, down to the head-level of the figures standing on and around the pediment. Also missing is the lower part of the stone, from the hip-level of the dedicant down. Some cream-coloured paint may survive on the dedicant's garments.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survive. A thin frame goes down the sides of the top zone.

1. Divine Symbols: Three figures are distributed around the pediment. On the viewer's left is Liber Pater. Eros sits beside him, straddling the peak of the pediment. He holds onto Liber's thyrsus with one hand and holds a large ring out over an altar with the other. On the other side of the altar, Venus stands on a rough rectangular block. She holds a round object in her right hand over the altar. There is a looped object in front of her right thigh, possibly an oval wreath. A bird sits on her right shoulder.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is composed of three plain bands of diminishing thickness. The sculpture inside is of a clothed male bust. Below the pediment is an entablature of the standard type, with the addition of alternating thin strips of plain moulding. It is followed by two rows of seven square coffers each. Below are two thick unfluted columns with Aeolic-Corinthian capitals. They frame an apsed niche, which is unframed and undecorated.

The niche contains a figure whose gender is ambiguous, but who is most likely a togate male who holds a *volumen* by his side.

Material: Yellowish-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.60, w 0.36, th 0.12 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: Bisi (1978), esp. 24-25 no.2, and fig.2.

Cat.37 (Figure 37)

State of Preservation: This stele has not been seen since approximately a century ago, when it was re-used to construct a door lintel in an Arabic house built into a 2nd century A.C. building at Dougga. At that time, the stele was broken off down to the head of the dedicant; the left side of the stone, especially at the niche level, was quite chipped.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones survived. Drilled holes decorated the secondary niche.

1. Architecture and Dedicant: In the illustrations of Saladin (1892), fig. VIII, and Carton (1895), fig.48, all that survived of the left side of the niche architecture was part of the wall and of the frame around the niche; almost the full height of the right column -- excluding its capital - and the wall behind it remained. The column at the right was fluted but for the bottom quarter; it stood on a base of two very thick and globular tori. Beneath the floor level on which the column(s) stood was a double row of five square coffers.

The dedicant was a togate male; his right arm appeared to be holding the fold of his toga and he may have held a *volumen* in his left hand. He stood on a small pedestal with concave sides. On this pedestal was carved a hatched square object with a domed lid. The pedestal itself was positioned above a rectangular lattice-work screen.

2. Secondary Niche: The lowest zone contained an apsed niche flanked by two tall palm fronds. A six-petalled star rosette contained within a ring surmounted each palm. Within the niche was a kneeling (male?) figure. Saladin (1892), 488, described this person's hands as being clasped to his chest. His thigh-length robe had wide, loose sleeves, and was worn above pants. However, after a more thorough inspection, Carton (1895), 158, corrected parts of Saladin's description: the person grasped in each hand the neck of a snake. The bodies of these snakes hung down and coiled around the person's thighs; thus the lines of their bodies were what Saladin took for folds of a robe and cuffs of breeches; the figure may therefore have been nude.

Inscription: Saladin was unable to see any inscription where he expected there to be one, below the lower zone (Saladin [1892], 48), but Carton (1899), 29, after cleaning the stone, observed lettering immediately below the lower niche:

V.S.L.M.

Poinssot (1905), 400, recorded that the letters measured 0.025 m in height. Material: Limestone (?).

Dimensions: h 1.40, w 0.37-0.40, th 0.17

Date: "un peu antérieur" to the other stelae of this series (Saladin [1892], 487).

Bibliography: Saladin (1892), 487-488 and pl.VIII; Carton (1895), 157-159 and fig. 48; Carton (1899), 29-30; Poinssot (1905), 400; C. 26513.

Cat.38 (Figure 38)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv.no.I 350

State of Preservation: The preservation appears to be complete, but for wear on certain of the higher relief elements, such as the faces of the figures.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones survive. Drilled holes are common in the upper zone and decorate the niche; two more lie under the column bases in the bottom zone. The drilled circles measure about 2.4 cm wide, and 0.4 cm deep. Small holes lie closely parallel

to the apsed niche along its exterior and more are drilled though to the sides at the edge of the stele.

1. Summit: At the top is a six-petalled rosette within a disc, itself contained within an upturned crescent. To the left of the crescent is a solar face, while at the right is a lunar face.

Below, the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' holds cornucopiae from which hang a grape bunch (at the viewer's left) and a pomegranate (right); immediately above both fruits is a rosette with sunken centre. An acanthus leaf hangs from the bottom of the 'sign of Tanit'; it grows up from the stylized calyx that serves as the top *acroterium* of the pediment below. On either side of this vegetation grows upward a wavy vine with small rosette flowers.

At the bottom left of this zone, his feet angled on the slope of the pediment, stands Liber Pater. On the other side of the pediment is Venus, her feet hidden behind the pediment. She has her left hand on a hip-high columnar object beside her; a triangular flame issues from the top of this object. She holds the vine beside her with her right hand. On her right is a small box-like altar, sitting at an angle.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment itself is made up of three bands, the outer one hatched, the middle plain, and the inner one with dentils. Within the pediment is a nude and bearded male bust, flanked on either side by a bird. The entablature below, which recedes in depth towards the bottom with each stepped layer, is of the standard type, with the addition of a plain band between the bead-and-reel and dentil mouldings; these are followed by two rows of six coffers, recessed to a depth of 2.0 cm. Between the third and fourth coffers is a rectangular frame that divides both rows in half; it contains an upturned crescent, a concave disc, and a downturned crescent.

The coffer rows are supported by tall unfluted columns with thick, globular double tori; the capitals Aeolic-Corinthian, sitting on a plaque carved with a 'twisted rope' pattern. The columns extend below the floor level of the niche (1.7 cm deep), which is surrounded by a T-shaped frame.

The female dedicant inside wears a dress, an overgarment, shoes with V-shaped tops, and round earrings. She holds a large round object with her left. She stands on a pedestal with concave sides; carved on the front of it are a cross-hatched squarish object with a thin rectangular base and a slightly curved lid, and a fluted two-handled jug or amphora. The pedestal itself sits on a cross-hatched rectangular box; the latter rests on a framed rectangular cartouche with a seal-pendant ring in the middle (zone 3).

4. Bull Sacrifice: The zone below contains a bull at the top centre. Below the left column is a bald man who wears a loincloth; he reaches with his long left forearm up to grasp the right horn of the bull, holding a two-headed axe in his right hand. A large rectangular altar separates him from Eros to the right.

Material: Soft, sand-coloured limestone.

Dimensions: h 2.08, w 0.38-0.46, th 0.21

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: La Blanchère (1897), 37 no.166; Bisi (1978), esp. 52-55, 80, and fig.24; Le Glay (1986), *LIMC* III, 1, 74, Ba'al Hammon no.25, and *LIMC* III, 2, pl. 62 (Ba'al Hammon 25).

Cat.39 (Figure 39)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv.no.I 351

State of Preservation: The top part of the stele is broken off to the shoulder-level of the 'sign of Tanit'. The rest of the stele survives in fairly good condition.

There are extensive paint remains, including thick light green paint by the horn under the left hand of the 'sign of Tanit'; on the bottom of the pomegranate; above the nude female's left ear, by the pedestal she stands on and between her ankles; on the rectangular base her male counterpart stands on; in the inner top of the pediment; in a coffer in the top row, second from the right; by the extra hanging cloth, of the person within the niche; and in the left volute of the column capital at the right. Thin blue-grey paint survives between the left bird and grape bunch; between the nude female's right ear and face, under her right arm and her bird, on her right thigh and elbow, and between her legs; between the two outer rows on the top of the right side of the pediment, and on the pediment bust's right armpit. Whitish-grey paint remains in tiny patches on the garment of the person in the niche, although light-coloured accretions occur there, too. There are also tiny specks of reddishbrown paint along the edge around the arched frame surrounding the niche. The bright red paint between the upper and lower coffer second from the left is probably modern.

Description: Type 1 stele. Five zones survive. Drilled circles decorate the 'skirt' of the 'sign of Tanit', each 0.8cm wide, and stud the architecture. A hole is drilled through to the sides just above and at either end of the first band of the entablature and more are drilled into and around the niche.

1. Divine Symbols: The 'sign of Tanit' holds a horn containing a grape bunch in its right hand and a horn with a pomegranate in the other hand. The wing-like object by its left shoulder may belong to a bird, now lost. A rooster stands on the grape bunch, eating it; another bird also pecks at the grape bunch from below. A second rooster touches the bottom of the 'skirt' of the 'sign of Tanit'.

Below stand Liber Pater, Eros, and Venus; the outer two figures are tipped slightly inward. At left is Liber Pater, whose left foot is slanted along the pediment side, while his right foot is on a rectangular box or pedestal. He reaches with both hands towards the pediment peak; his left hand holds the hand of Venus on the other side of the pediment, and his right hand supports the foot of Eros, who is between them. Venus' feet are hidden by a rectangular box. Her left hand hangs over a short, thick incense burner. A bird stands on the pediment beside Venus. A small Eros figure stands awkwardly balanced on the forearms of these two figures, but with his knees bent; his arms are out, with palms open.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment is formed by three bands, the outermost one pierced by drilled circles, the middle one carved with bead-and -reel, and the inner one with dentils. Inside is a human bust. The first of the six bands of the entablature is dotted with drilled circles; the other mouldings are of the standard entablature type with alternating plain bands. They rest on a double row of eight coffers, carved 1.0 cm deep. A rectangular vertical band separates the fourth from the fifth coffers; it contains an upturned crescent, a rosette, and a downturned crescent.

Two plaques, the lower one pierced by a row of drilled circles, separate each of the column capitals from the coffers; the capitals are Aeolic-Corinthian. The fluted columns sit on globular double tori, which are set below the level of the niche. The apsed niche has a rectangular frame.

The togate male dedicant inside holds an indistinct object (volumen? mappa?). He stands on a flat, low pedestal or step.

3. Cartouche and Atlantes: The floor level of the niche is on top of a framed rectangular cartouche, which is inscribed and held up by two sturdy Atlantes. Their feet are obscured by the vine of rosettes and interlocking lotus-like flowers which hangs down from underneath each of the column bases.

5. Bull Sacrifice: Below the vine is a man wearing a loincloth. In his right hand, which is hanging at his side, is an axe. His left arm holds the horn of the bull, which faces him.

Inscription: The inscription is off-centre in the cartouche, and is carved in curved letters:

V.S.A.L.F.

Material: Limestone in a soft pinkish- sandy colour.

Dimensions: h 1.88, w 0.50, th 0.19 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

1st c A.C. ? (Noll (1986), 44).

Bibliography: La Blanchère (1897), 36-37 no.168; Poinssot (1905), 402; Bisi (1978), esp. 52-55, 59, 69, 80, 83; Noll (1986), 43-44 no.121; Ghedini (1990), 235, 236, 242; pl.IV,2; Le Glay (1986), *LIMC* III, 1, 74, Ba'al Hammon no.25.

Cat.40 (Figure 40)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv.no.I 354

State of Preservation: This stele is fairly well-preserved for the most part, although the front part of the summit has broken off and been reglued. It is quite abraded in a strip from the peak down the right side and from the lower part of the columns down. The exterior volutes of the columns are worn off. Much of the surface is covered in dark grey accretions. **Description:** Type 1 stele. Five zones survive. Deep holes are drilled into the niche area. 1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the top is a broken-ended crescent. It sits atop the head of the anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit', which holds in each hand a horn from which issues a large fruit, that in the right hand a grape bunch, and the left-hand one a pomegranate. A rabbit eats grapes directly under the right arm of the 'sign of Tanit'. A rooster faces the 'sign of Tanit' by the grape bunch, and another bird sits by the 'sign of Tanit'. An acanthus leaf hangs between the 'sign' and the stylized calyx *acroterium* on the pediment.

Liber Pater stands below, at the left, while Venus is on the right. She wears round earrings and holds a large worn roundish object up in her right hand; her left arm and anything on that side of her is obscured. An altar-box beside her sits at an angle, with its bottom left corner tucked behind the pediment. The feet of both Liber Pater and Venus are hidden behind the pediment.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment has three bands: plain, bead-and-reel, and dentils. Inside is a female bust with a small round object on top of her head. Although this sculpture extends to mid-chest, there is no indication of her arms. The entablature below includes plain bands separating decorative mouldings of the standard entablature type, above a double row of six square coffers. Dividing the coffer rows in half is a vertical band with an upturned crescent, a six-petalled rosette, and a downturned crescent. Next is a plain band, then abaci sitting on Aeolic-Corinthian capitals. The columns are thick, unfluted, and

slightly flaring; the bases are thick and globular double tori. The apsed niche is surrounded by a rectangular frame.

The draped dedicant inside in the niche sits on a low bench seat, hands on knees. This person wears a necklace with a square pendant. A shelf or second bench, carved in very low relief, extends across the niche at the level of and behind the seat.

3. Cartouche and Atlantes: The niche sits on a double-framed rectangular cartouche with a ring in the middle; this frame is held up by two sturdy Atlantes (zone 4), to whose hip level the column bases hang from above.

5. Face: In the very bottom left corner, a face with short hair and large ears is the only indication of a zone below that of the Atlantes.

Material: Sandy-grey limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.39, w 0.40, th 0.175 m

Date: 4/4 1st c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80).

Bibliography: La Blanchère (1897), 36 no.178; Bisi (1978), esp. 52, 80, and fig.24; Le Glay (1986), *LIMC* III, 1, 74, Ba'al Hammon no.25.

Cat.41 (Figure 41)

Louvre, inv.no.MNB 898

State of Preservation: Well-preserved down to the rough-cut bottom, the surface of which is mostly chipped off.

Description: Type 1 stele. Five zones survive. A flat band encloses the entire sculpted portion.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: At the top is a tiny crescent above a wreath; the latter encircles a *triskeles*. Below is the 'sign of Tanit', which may be wearing a wreath. It holds a double-rimmed horn in each hand; that at the viewer's left holds a branch containing pomegranates. The horn at the right contains a grape bunch with two smaller, ovoid objects above; at least one of the latter is a pomegranate. Below each of the large fruits, flanking the pediment, is a six-petalled rosette with sunken centre.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The pediment consists of four lines, the third decorated with bead-and-reel, the fourth with dentils. Inside is a male bust with a huge open mouth; he wears a wreath or decorated headband, and the base of his thick neck is encircled by two rings. The architrave consists of a thick band above a standard-type entablature alternating with plain bands. The Aeolic-Corinthian capitals rest on a single plaque, then on thick swelling unfluted columns on thick double tori. Four horizontal bands form the ground level for this zone.

A rectangular frame surrounds the apsed niche. The female dedicant within holds a small round object (fruit?) in each of her hands. She stands on a small rectangular box with slightly incurved sides.

3. Figural Zone: The lower zone is framed at each side by a tall staff imbedded in a rectangular box. At three points, this staff is interrupted by separate circles, the lowest one a ring or wreath and the upper two solid discs; on the top disc sits a triangular object incised with a herringbone pattern, almost like a feather or palm frond. Two human figures, both frontal and nude but for their wreaths, stand between these staffs, on a rectangular cartouche

(zone 4). The first figure is bearded and holds a thyrsus in his right hand and a large cup in his left hand; the second figure raises a wreath towards the head of the first.

5. Bull scene: Below the cartouche is a bull. It has been suggested that there may also be a fish there (*Carthage-Kairouan* [1982], 108, no.154), but none is visible.

Inscription: Poinssot (1905), 400, declared that he could see lettering in the rectangular cartouche in the lower zone, almost completely worn off, which was so small that no one else had ever noticed it:

V.

He assumed that this letter had originally preceded an 'S.', as part of the v(otum) s(olvit) abbreviation. There is a somewhat V-shaped mark on the surface there, but it seems more likely to be fortuitous wear and tear than a painted letter.

Material: Limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.30-1.38, w 0.34-0.35, th 0.14 m

Date: 2nd c A.C. (Amiet, MusLouvre [1971], 113).

beginning 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80; Carthage-Kairouan [1982], 108, no.154). 2nd c B.C. (The Phoenicians [1988], 619, no.209).

Bibliography: Poinssot (1905), p.400; Amiet, *MusLouvre* (1971), 113; Bisi (1978), esp. 50, 65, 68, 80, 84 and fig.23; Le Glay (1986), *LIMC* III, 1, 74, Ba'al Hammon no.25; *The Phoenicians* (1988), 619, no.209; *Carthage-Kairouan* (1982), 108, no.154.

Cat.42 (Figure 42)

Louvre, inv.no.MNB 899

State of Preservation: Well-preserved, but for some chipping along the sides.

Description: Type 2 stele. Two zones survive.

1. Summit and Divine Symbols: A small upturned crescent hangs above a rosette, which is itself above a larger crescent. A bird at the left faces the rosette; one of its legs is hidden behind another rosette; the latter has a counterpart on the right side. All the rosettes are sunken towards their centres.

The 'sign of Tanit' is barely anthropomorphic. It holds a grape bunch in its right hand, and a pomegranate in the left. A bird alights on the second fruit.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The niche is composed of an arcuated lintel made up of seven large blocks. It is supported by fluted pilasters with three thin tori instead of a true capital, and square bases of three thick rectangular layers. The bases stand on the same ground level as the niche, above a double row of five square coffers.

The woman within the niche stands on a concave-sided pedestal. She wears large earrings and a necklace and holds a round object with a pierced centre. Her left hand, hanging at her side, is damaged, but it may hold a small box-like object.

The stone is rough below the second zone, although inconsistently so: immediately below the second zone, the surface seems more abraded than rough-sculpted.

Inscription: Poinssot (1905), 400, reported an abbreviated v(otum) s(olvit) formula, inscribed on the arcade of the niche:

V.S.

The letters apparently measured 0.0125 m in height. No one else has ever noted this marking, and there is no trace of it today.

Material: Yellowish-brown limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.26-1.28, w 0.32, th 0.17

Date: 1st c A.C. (Amiet, *MusLouvre* [1971], 113). 3/4 2nd c A.C. (Bisi [1978], 80). beginning 2nd c A.C. (*Carthage-Kairouan* [1982], 108-109, no.155).

Bibliography: Amiet, *MusLouvre* (1971), 113; Bisi (1978), esp. 57, 60, 68, 75, 80, and fig.25; *Carthage-Kairouan* (1982), 108-109, no.155; Le Glay (1986), *LIMC* III,1, 74, Ba'al Hammon no.25; Ghedini (1990), 236-237, 243, and pl.IV,1.

Cat.43

State of Preservation: Unknown. This stele was published as C.1142 and CIL 8, p. 1384, but it is not the Bardo stele Cb-966, as reported by Poinssot (1905), 402. It was last seen in the Museum Mohammetanum at Tunis, but its destination after the dispersal of Prince Mohammed's collection is unknown.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive.

1. As described in C.1142, the top of the stele featured a half moon below a star; these symbols were on -- or more likely, above -- a man's head. In either hand, the man held a horn full of grapes and other fruits. On his right were two doves; another was on his left. Two men appeared below, wreathed and with grapes (two Liber Pater figures?).

2. Architecture and Dedicant: A dove in a triangle presumably formed the pediment. The triangle was probably above a niche containing the next figure, a togate male standing on a platform, holding a book in his hand. Before him (carved onto the platform or into a cache below the niche?) were a *cista* and a vase with handles. On either side of him was a palm frond.

Inscription: Below the niche level was the inscription:

L.L.V.S.

Material: Stone.

Dimensions: unknown. The *CIL* entry describes it as very large (*in lapide praegrandi*). **Date:** no previous suggestions.

Bibliography: C. 1142 and p. 1384.

Cat.	Current Museum Inventory Number	Previous Location	CIL 8 no.
1	Bardo Cb-963	Alaoui C.745	
2	Bardo Cb-964	Alaoui C.748	
3	Bardo Cb-965	Alaoui C.744	
4	Bardo Cb-966	Alaoui C.743	
5	Bardo Cb-967	Alaoui C.746	
6	Bardo Cb-968	Alaoui C.747	
7	Bardo Cb-969	Alaoui C.749	
8	Bardo Cb-970	Alaoui C.750	
9	Bardo Cb-971	Alaoui C.751	
10	Bardo Cb-972	Alaoui C.752	
11	Bardo Cb-973 [Rogatus V.S.L.A.]	Alaoui C.741	CIL 8,1144 and 14273
12	Bardo Cb-974 [Bellic.Max.f.V.S.L.A.S.]	Alaoui C.742	CIL 8,1143 and 14272
13	British Museum WA 125021		
14	British Museum WA 125043		
15	British Museum WA 125062		
16	British Museum WA 125063		
17	British Museum WA 125066		
18	British Museum WA 125070		
19	British Museum WA 125072		
20	British Museum WA 125073		
21	British Museum WA 125075 [L. Iuli Urba(ni)]		<i>CIL</i> 8,1145
22	British Museum WA 125076		
23	British Museum WA 125078		
24	British Museum WA 125098		
25	British Museum WA 125101		
26	British Museum WA 125102		

Table of Concordances for the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

			1
27	British Museum WA 125104		
28	British Museum WA 125174		
29	British Museum WA 125177 [L'DN LB'L]		
30	British Museum WA 125183 [longer Neopunic inscr.]		
31	British Museum WA 125184		
32	British Museum WA 125186		
33	British Museum WA 125189 [R.V.S.L.H.]		CIL 8,1011
34	British Museum WA 125190		
35	British Museum WA 125192		
36	British Museum WA 125197		
37	? [V.S.L.M.]	Dougga	CIL 8,26513
38	Kunsthistorisches Museum I 350	Kaiserlichen Sammlung, no.166	
39	Kunsthistorisches Museum I 351 [V.S.L.A.F.]	Kaiserlichen Sammlung, no.168	
40	Kunsthistorisches Museum I 354	Kaiserlichen Sammlung, no.178	
41	Louvre MNB 898		
42	Louvre MNB 899		
43	? [L.L.V.S.]	Museum Mohammetanum	CIL 8,1142 and p.1384

Catalogue B: Parallels for the 'La Ghorfa' Stelae

The majority of the pieces included in Catalogue A, 'La Ghorfa'-type stelae, had already been placed in that category by previous scholars, with the exception of Cat.20, 23, 35, and 43. Other examples strongly resemble these stelae, but have not been included in the catalogue for a variety of reasons. One is that some are known only from brief written descriptions and lack enough information to confirm their relationship with the 'La Ghorfa' stelae beyond a superficial level; no illustrations of these stelae exist and their current location is unknown (e.g. Cat.B1 and B2).

In the case of stelae for which illustrations do exist, or of which the current location is known, the similarities are not extensive enough to place them securely within the group; they cannot be connected to the 'La Ghorfa' history and museum collections. Many of these stelae, however, have securely-known find spots, and, given their proximity in appearance to the 'La Ghorfa' stelae, they best indicate the elusive origins of the 'La Ghorfa' group.

To distinguish these stelae from those included in the main catalogue, which have numbers preceded by "Cat." (e.g. Cat.1, Cat.2), these stelae have numbers preceded by "Cat.B#" (e.g. Cat.B1, Cat.B2).

The same order of presentation occurs here as for the main catalogue, with the addition of "Origin" and a "Compare To" category, which points out stele/ae from the main catalogue with points of similarity.

Cat.B1

Origin: reportedly Carthage (C.1008); this origin is highly dubious.

Current Location: unknown.

State of Preservation: unknown.

Description: Three zones.

1. Architecture and Dedicant: Within a temple facade, the dedicant, standing on a socle, offers a sacrifice.

2. Bull Sacrifice: The lowest zone contains a bull sacrifice scene, with the bull-handler holding the bull by a rope; a flute-player is at the left.

Inscription: Located between the first and third zones is a three-line inscription, in which the first and third lines are Punic, the middle line Latin.

L'DN LB'L NDR 'S NDR CRES SM'QL'BRK'

C.1008 suggested that CRES is an abbreviated form of the name *Crescens*. The entire inscription can thus be translated as follows:

"To Lord Baal, the vow that *Crescens* vowed, he heard his voice, he blessed him." **Material:** unknown.

Dimensions: unknown.

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: C.1008; Audollent (1901), 397, n.2; Le Glay SAMI (1961), p.15 no.4-Carthage. Compare To: the reliefs and awkward inscription of Cat.21 and the bilingual inscription on Cat.11.

Cat.B2

Origin: unknown.

Current Location: unknown.

State of Preservation: Since the C.1010 described the figure at the top as broken, the top of the stele was presumably missing.

Description: C.1010 described only a person flanked by two palms.

Inscription: The inscription is below the sculpted zone, and contains letters 2.5 cm in height (C.1010):

Niger / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo). "Niger willingly fulfilled his vow."

Material: unknown.

Dimensions: unknown.

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: C.1010; Le Glay SAMI (1961), p.23 no.22-Carthage.

Compare To: the inscriptions of Cat.11, 12, 33, 37, and 39.

Cat.B3

Origin: Ellès

Current Location: unknown.

State of Preservation: Fragmentary.

Description: Most of the top two zones survive.

1. Divine Figures: Of the upper zone, all that survives is the legs of a nude person, near a grape bunch.

2. Dedicants: A bearded and togate person, crowned with laurel, pours a libation over an altar. To his right is a woman holding on her head a basket with a flat cover.

Material: Hard limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.60, w 0.50, th 0.10 m

Date: Hadrianic (Merlin "Quatre fragments" [1943-1945], 108).

Bibliography: Merlin "Quatre fragments" (1943-1945), 107-108, 2A; Le Glay SAM I (1961), p.241, no.2-Ellès.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' stelae with Liber Pater; the basket-bearer on Cat.6.

Cat.B4 Origin: Ellès Current Location: unknown.

State of Preservation: Only a fragment of the upper zone survives.

Description: At the top is an frontal head, probably feminine, between two *paterae*. Below is a person who holds in its right hand a spindle-shaped object, from which the handle of a large mirror springs (probably in fact a pomegranate and its stem). In its other hand it holds a *cantharus* with an enormous grape bunch. This figure is probably a 'sign of Tanit'.

Material: Hard limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.23, w 0.22, th 0.02 (?) m

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: Merlin "Quatre fragments" (1943-1945), 109, 2C; Le Glay SAM I (1961), p.241, no.4-Ellès.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' stelae with Liber Pater and Venus.

Cat.B5

Origin: Ellès

Current Location: unknown.

State of Preservation: Only a fragment of the upper part survives.

Description: Type 2 stele. Part of the upper two zones are preserved.

1. Divine symbol: A female head like that on the previous entry survives.

2. Architecture and Divine Figures: On either side of the top of this zone's arch is a figure. That on the left is in profile and holds a staff, possibly a thyrsus, on which a bird perches. The figure on the right faces the viewer and holds a staff with a disc at the top; a dove perches on top of the disc.

Between these two figures, a vaulted niche contains the unbearded head of a person, whose body below has been broken off with the rest of the stele.

Material: Hard limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.25, w 0.26, th 0.10 m

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: Merlin "Quatre fragments" (1943-1945), 109, 2D; Le Glay SAM I (1961), p.241, no.5-Ellès.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' stelae with Liber Pater and Venus.

Cat.B6 (Figure 43)

Origin: presumably in the Maktar area

Current Location: Musée de Maktar, public gallery.

State of Preservation: A fragment from the top of the stele survives.

Description: The top zone remains, comprising all of the triangular summit and the top of the rectangular section below. The resulting irregular pentagram is framed with large drilled holes.

1. Divine Figure: At the summit is a crescent or circle framing a six-petalled star rosette. On either side of it, slightly below, is a branch. Directly below is the 'sign of Tanit', which is very stiff and geometric in shape, and absolutely flat. It holds a pomegranate and a grape bunch, on the viewer's left and right respectively. Each of these fruits is being eaten from below by a bird that faces the 'sign of Tanit'.

Material: Grey limestone. Dimensions: Not recorded (inaccessible). Date: No previous suggestions. Bibliography: None known. Compare To: Group 2A.

Cat.B7 (Figure 44)

Origin: Found near the Old Forum at Maktar.

Current Location: In 1957, it was embedded in the wall of the excavation house at Maktar (Picard *CivMact* [1957], 46 n.163); it is now in a public gallery of the Musée de Maktar.

State of Preservation: The stele is preserved from the summit down to the top of the dedicant's niche. A tiny amount of reddish-brown paint remains at the crescent.

Description: Type 2 stele. All of the first and part of the second zones survive; the two are separated by a line of more than a dozen irregular holes.

1. Divine Symbols: A face is above a crescent at the top. Two fish or dolphins swim outward immediately below. Next comes the 'sign of Tanit', which holds horns containing a grape bunch (viewer's left) and a pomegranate (right). Standing by the 'sign of Tanit', on either side, birds peck at the fruit.

2. Architecture: The stone is broken off just below the top of the apsed niche, above which is a smooth, raised, arched lintel. On each side of the niche, three palm leaves grow upwards; the outermost ones grow vertically, the next bend slighly inwards, and the next arch over the lintel. Above the last, a pair of dolphins swims outwards.

Material: Light grey limestone.

Dimensions: Not recorded (inaccessible).

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: BAC (1951-1952), pl. VI,1; Picard CivMact (1957), 46 n. 163; Bisi StelePun (1967), fig. 80.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' examples with anthropomorphic 'signs of Tanit'; probably related to infra Cat.B10.

Cat.B8 (Figure 45)

Origin: Maghrawa

Current Location: Musée de Maktar, public gallery.

State of Preservation: The very top of the peak is broken off, as is the lower portion in a diagonal break from below the left column to below the floor level of the temple at the right.

Description: Type 1 stele. Three zones survive. The entire face of the stone is framed by a flat band, while the first and second zones are separated by a herringbone-incised vegetal band. From the pediment level up, small holes mark the corners of the trianglar features.

1. Divine Symbols: A central vertical line bisects the triangular peak and separates two downwardswimming dolphins. In the two bottom corners of the triangle are two wreaths containing round human faces. Divider and Tritons: The leaf-like *acroterium* at the pediment peak touches the herringbone band above and divides this zone into two. On either side are tritons which blow horns and hold up oars.
 Architecture: The pediment is made up of two bands, the outer one (slanting and horizontal cornice) composed of leaves arrayed in a herringbone pattern. Within the pediment, flanked by two birds, is an upturned crescent containing a round human face. Concentric rings surround the face, and triangular rays crown the outermost ring.

The architrave includes egg-and-dart, plain, herringbone, dentilled, and diagonally-incised bands; M'Charek (1988), 754, also noted bead-and-reel moulding. The column capitals below are highly stylized, perhaps Corinthian; they stand on smooth pilasters. The rectangular niche has a slightly T-shaped frame, including small dentils overhead.

Within the niche, a female stands on a flat rectangular box. M'Charek (1988), 754, thought that she held a cult object in her left hand and another object, now damaged, in her right. Two objects hang from the top of the niche by her head, perhaps lotus flowers.

Material: limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.95, w 0.45, th 0.17 m **Date:** 2/2 1st c A.C. (M'Charek [1988], 754). **Bibliography:** M'Charek (1988), 754 no.1; fig.3. **Compare To:** possibly Cat.15.

Cat.B9 (Figure 46)

Origin: Maghrawa

Current Location: Musée de Maktar, public gallery.

State of Preservation: The stele appears to be well-preserved, but for damage to the face of the person inside the niche.

Description: Type 1 stele. Two zones. A slightly rounded band frames the entire front face of the stone.

1. Divine symbols: At the top is a four-petalled flower, immediately above a wreath containing a round human face. Two objects, perhaps leaves, extend from on top of the wreath to the sides. Two upside-down pomegranates are below. Next, in the lower corners of the triangle, are two birds that face each other; the left one holds an almond-shaped object in its beak. The anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' below holds a bunch of grapes, a palm frond, and another branch with a pomegranate. The two birds above are feeding from these last fruits.

Below are three figures standing side-by-side: Liber Pater, Eros, and Venus. Eros shares the thyrsus with Liber Pater in one hand and holds up a wreath in the other. He stands beside an altar, at which Venus is sacrificing a round object.

2. The Liber-Eros-Venus group stand directly on a flat, undecorated architrave. The columns supporting the entablature are unfluted, and have leafy capitals with no volutes, but with an abacus above and astragal below; M'Charek (1988), 756, nevertheless called them Corinthian capitals. The column bases are triple tori on rectangular plinths. The wide rectangular niche is double-framed.

Inside stands a female wearing a *polos*, incised with vertical lines; M'Charek (1988), 756, thought instead that this was simply her hair, combed straight as for the figures above. **Material:** limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.14, w 0.44, th 0.18 m Date: 2/2 1st c A.C. (M'Charek [1988], 754). Bibliography: M'Charek (1988), 756 no.2; fig.4; M'Charek (1995), 250; pl.II, fig.1. Compare To: possibly Cat.2.

Cat.B10 (Figure 47)

Origin: Maghrawa

Current Location: Musée de Maktar, public gallery.

State of Preservation: The surface of the stele is badly damaged at the top and down its left side to the level of the niche.

Description: Type 1 stele. Four zones. The entire face is framed by a very regular flat rectangular frame. The top zone is marked off by a horizontal herringbone band of leaves.

1. Divine Symbols: Still visible at the top is the 'skirt' of the 'sign of Tanit', which holds at its left side a horn with a large pomegranate. There may be a bird in the right corner feeding on the fruit. 2. Divine Figures: Three figures stand facing frontally and side-by-side; they are all of the same height, nude, and in the same pose. Round six-petalled rosettes flank their heads. Liber Pater, at the left, is partly damaged. He holds a thyrsus with a very large round top, which Eros holds on the other side with his right hand. With his left hand, he holds another staff, which appears almost broom-like with its rectangular, vertically-incised top; it could be a tall torch. On the other side, Venus, too, holds this staff, as well as a smaller curved object. Finally, in the rightmost corner, is a small altar; however, M'Charek (1988), 759, identified this same object as a *bucranium*.

3. Architecture and Dedicant: The ground level for these figures is the top of the building containing the niche. There is no pediment, but an entablature contains bands of diagonally-incised, plain, and dentilled mouldings. The short, unfluted columns have strange large square capitals decorated with oblique lines of diamonds. The columns do not actually support the architrave; instead, small clothed figures holding up wreaths stand on the capitals. The bases of the columns consist of three thin tori on a flat plinth. The apsed niche is completely surrounded by a broad flat band; the sides are at least partially incised vertically, as if to suggest fluted pilasters standing at a level that is higher or more remote in perspective. The upper part of the rounded frame is damaged, but several holes are still visible.

The person inside has a body much more anatomically and proportionally-realistic than those of the figures outside the building. Its face is unfortunately worn away and its clothing does little to indicate gender. This person holds something over the columnar incense-burner at its right side. 4. Bull Sacrifice: A figure in the same pose as the three figures in the second zone stands frontally, with long rubbery arms raised up. Its right hand holds an axe; its left hand hovers near the horn of the bull, which stands on the other side of a rectanglar altar with a double base. **Material:** limestone.

Dimensions: h 1.23, w 0.47, th 0.20 m **Date:** 2/2 1st c A.C. (M'Charek [1988], 754). **Bibliography:** M'Charek (1988), 756 and 759 no.3; fig.5. **Compare To:** Cat.26 (remotely). Cat.B11 (Figure 48)

Origin: Maghrawa, south necropolis.

Current Location: Musée de Maktar.

State of Preservation: The stele is preserved from its summit down to the mid-body of the person inside the niche.

Description: The top two zones survive.

1. At the summit is a face surrounded by a wreath, above a crescent. The 'sign of Tanit' is below the crescent. In its left hand is a horn containing a pomegranate, in its right, another horn with at least two bunches of grapes. A bird sits atop the horn in the right hand. Another bird, below the 'Tanit' figure, pecks at the bottom-most grape bunch.

2. Flanking the niche are two figures. According to M'Charek (1995), 252, they hold long objects, which may be palms; in his opinion, these figures are Victories. Alternately, they could be Liber Pater and Venus holding staffs.

The apsed niche is surrounded by a flat framing band. Inside is a person of indistinct gender. **Material:** unknown.

Dimensions: h 0.53, th. 0.11 m

Date: No previous suggestions.

Bibliography: M'Charek (1995), 250-252 and pl.II,2.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' examples with a semi-anthropomorphic 'sign of Tanit' and possibly with Liber Pater and Venus.

Cat.B12 (Figure 49)

Origin: Maktar.

Current Location: Musée de Bardo storeroom, inv.no. Cb-1012 (Alaoui C.693).

State of Preservation: The lower part of the stele is broken, below the feet of the human figures. **Description:** Only the top zone survives.

1. Divine symbols and figures: At the top is a large radiant sun with a human face. Below it is a bird standing between two grape bunches, which, according to Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 284, are actually being pecked at by two birds. To either side of it are two figures: the person on the left is hard to distinguish, but has a cloth draped around his (?) waist; he is like Liber Pater. The figure on the right is nude and may be holding an object in one or both hand(s).

Inscription: A cartouche above the niche contains three lines of Neopunic inscription:

L'D'N B'L ...DM.. K'ŠM'QL'BRK'../L...NB'L KW'K.

"To Lord Baal .. [epithet].., for he heard his voice,

he blessed him, .. [name of dedicant] .. citizen (?) ..."

Material: greyish limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.50, w 0.375 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 284).

Bibliography: *CMA* (1897), C.693, pl. XVIII; Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284 no.Cb-1012 and pl.CXVII.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' examples with Liber Pater and Venus.

Cat.B13 (Figure 50)

Origin: Maktar

Current Location: Musée de Bardo, inv.no. Cb-1013 (exact location unknown).

State of Preservation: Most of the summit is broken off; the lower portion is gone from below the level of the temple architrave.

Description: Two zones survive. A flat band surviving at the upper left suggests that the summit was originally framed along its two outer edges. Drilled holes fill the corners and the inside summit of the pediment.

1. Divine Figures: Two human figures flank the pediment. At the left is Liber Pater. To the right of the pediment is a nude figure (head broken off), probably Venus. This figure's left hand either holds or rests on an altar, according to Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284.

2. Architecture: The sides of the pediment are made up of three bands, the middle one of bead-andreel moulding. Inside is a dolphin dramatically arching upside-down. The details of the entablature below are too worn for identification.

Inscription: One line of a Neopunic inscription survives below the pediment; the letters have not been recorded.

Material: Greyish limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.37, w 0.42 m

Date: end 2nd c A.C. (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 284).

Bibliography: Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 284 no.Cb-1013 and pl.CXVII.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' examples with Liber Pater and Venus.

Cat.B14 (Figure 51)

Origin: Maktar

Current Location: Musée de Bardo, inv.no. Cb-1014.

State of Preservation: Only a portion of the left half survives, from the torso of the human figure beside the temple pediment down to just below the column capital.

Description: Two zones have been preserved.

1. Divine Figures: The lower part of Liber Pater's body survives at the left. A fish was also observed in this zone by Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284.

2. Architecture: The pediment consists of three bands, the middle one bead-and-reel. The sculpture inside is damaged, but may be an eagle with outstretched wings. The entablature below consists of several bands of moulding, each separated by a thin plain band: egg-and-dart, bead-and-reel, plain, and finally the inscription band. A thick plate separates the entablature from the preserved column capital, which is Aeolic-Corinthian. The niche inside was apsed, and was set off by a double rectangular frame.

Inscription: The inscription band in the entablature is one line of Latin and Punic letters. The Latin letters read *QCP*, according to Picard *CivMact* (1957), 45, but the Punic letters have not been recorded.

Material: Greyish limestone. Dimensions: h 0.49, w 0.29 m **Date:** end 2nd c A.C. (Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284). **Bibliography:** Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 284 no.Cb-1014 and pl.CXVIII. Picard *CivMact* (1957), 45 and pl.XV,g. **Compare To:** 'La Ghorfa' examples with Liber Pater.

Cat.B15 (Figure 53)

Origin: Oudna (*Uthina*)?¹

Current Location: Musée du Bardo, inv.no. Cb-1072.

State of Preservation: The tip of the summit is broken off, as is the lower part of the stele, below the head of the person in the niche. The stone face is very worn and pocked.

Description: Two zones survive.

1. Divine Figures and Symbols: The damaged object at the very top is probably an upturned crescent; it contains an other object, which is no longer recognizable. Below is the 'sign of Tanit', with a tall rectangular body. It holds a grape bunch at the left, and a pomegranate on the right.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The 'sign of Tanit' appears to be standing directly on the apsed niche, within which is a person, of whom the details are too damaged for further comment. The niche is flanked by two *caducei*; Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 297, observed worn leaves growing from the rods.

Material: Greyish-white limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.50, w 0.33 m

Date: end 1st-beginning 2nd c A.C. (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 297).

1st c A.C. (Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, et al. [1998], 42).

Bibliography: Picard, *CMA n.s.* [1954-1955], 297 no.Cb-1072 and pl. CXXV; Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, *et al.* (1998), 42.

Compare To: Group 2A.

Cat.B16 (Figure 54)

Origin: Oudna? [Cf. note 1]

Current Location: Musée du Bardo, inv.no. Cb-1073.

State of Preservation: The top half of the summit of the stele is gone, as is the lower portion below the neck of the person inside the niche.

Description: Two zones survive.

1. Divine Symbols and Figures: The 'sign of Tanit' holds up a pomegranate on the left, and a grape bunch on the right. Two birds, perched on the 'Tanit' figure's hands, face each other. Beside the

¹Inventory numbers Cb-1072 to Cb-1074 in Picard CMA n.s. are there identified as having been discovered in the excavations of one Colonel Reyniers at Oudna. However, Cb-1074 is clearly the top of another stele listed in the same catalogue as being from 'La Ghorfa', Cb-963 (here Cat.1); the latter is included in the 'La Ghorfa' group of the CMA (1897) as inv.no. C.745, thereby ruling out its membership in any Oudna excavation. Cb-1072 and Cb-1073, however, are not identifiably listed in the CMA (1897). No known paperwork or article documents any stelae resulting from Reynier's efforts at Oudna (H. Ben Younes, private communication). For this reason, it is best to leave the find spot of Cb-1072 and Cb-1073 (here Cat.B17 and 18) as a question.

stem of each fruit is a ring. A dove-like bird sits on the pomegranate at an impossible angle perpendicular to the ground.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: The apsed niche is almost like a monumental arch in its solid, wide front; the only decoration of the structure is a plain band at the top, and large drilled holes outside of and parallel to the niche. The person is of indistinct gender.

Material: Greyish-white limestone.

Dimensions: h 0.37, w 0.23 m

Date: end 1st-beginning 2nd c A.C. (Picard, CMA n.s. [1954-1955], 298).

1st c A.C. (Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, et al. [1998], 42).

Bibliography: Picard, CMA n.s., 297-8 no.Cb-1073 and pl. CXXV; Ben Abdallah, Ben Hassen, et al. (1998), 42.

Compare To: Group 2A.

Cat.B17 (Figure 56)

Origin: Maktar

Current Location: Musée de Bardo.

State of Preservation: A chunk of the left side of the summit is broken off, and the lower part of the stele is gone (from below the dedicant's head).

Description: Two zones survive.

1. Divine Symbols and Figures: At the top, a sunken disc is above a crescent. Below is the 'sign of Tanit', which holds up a grape bunch in its right hand and a pomegranate in its left.

2. Architecture and Dedicant: An arched niche is flanked by columns, only the capitals of which survive. The latter are squarish and contain two sunken circles. A female person is inside the niche. **Material:** limestone

Dimensions: h 0.56, w 33.5, th 0.12 m

Date: 1st c B.C. (The Phoenicians [1988], 620 no.213).

Bibliography: The Phoenicians (1988), 620 no.213.

Compare To: 'La Ghorfa' stelae with semi-anthropomorphic 'signs of Tanit'.

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	5-10 novembre 1979) (Rome 1983).
ACPP	Actes du III Congrès International des Etudes Phéniciennes et
	Puniques (Tunis, 11-16 novembre 1991) (Tunis 1995).
AfrRom	Africa romana. Atti del Convegno di Studio
AION	Annali. Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli. Nuova Serie
AMS	Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires
BCTH	Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques
CahByrsa	Cahiers de Byrsa
CahTun	Cahiers de Tunisie
Carthage (1995)	F. Bejaoui, A. Ben Abed, et al. (1995). Carthage. Numéro spécial
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	la Ville de Paris, 20 octobre 1982-27 février 1983 (Paris).
CIL	T. Mommsen et al. (edd.) (1874-). Corpus Inscriptionum
	Latinarum (Berlin).
CIS	Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres (France) (1881-).
	Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (Paris).
CMA	Catalogue du Musée Alaoui (Paris and Tunis 1887-).
DCPP	E. Lipinski (ed.) (1992). Dictionnaire de la civilisation
	phénicienne et punique (Tunnhout).
DHA	Dialogues d'histoire ancienne
ILAfr	A. Merlin, R. Cagnat, and L. Chatelain (1923). Inscriptions latines
	d'Afrique (Paris).
ILAlg	E. Albertini, S. Gsell, et al. (edd.) (1922-1957). Inscriptions
	latines de l'Algérie (Paris).
IRT	J.M. Reynolds and JB. Ward-Perkins (edd.) (1952). Inscriptions
	of Roman Tripolitania (Rome).
JA	Journal Asiatique
LIMC	Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (Zurich-Munich
	c.1981-).
NAMC	Notizario Archeologico del Ministero delle Colonie

NAMS	Nouvelles archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires
The Phoenicians	S. Moscati (ed.) (1988). The Phoenicians (New York).
RA	Revue archéologique
RAfr	Revue africaine
Reppal	Revue des études phéniciennes-puniques et des antiquités libyques
RSF	Rivista di studi fenici
SMSR	Studi e Materiali di Storia della Religioni

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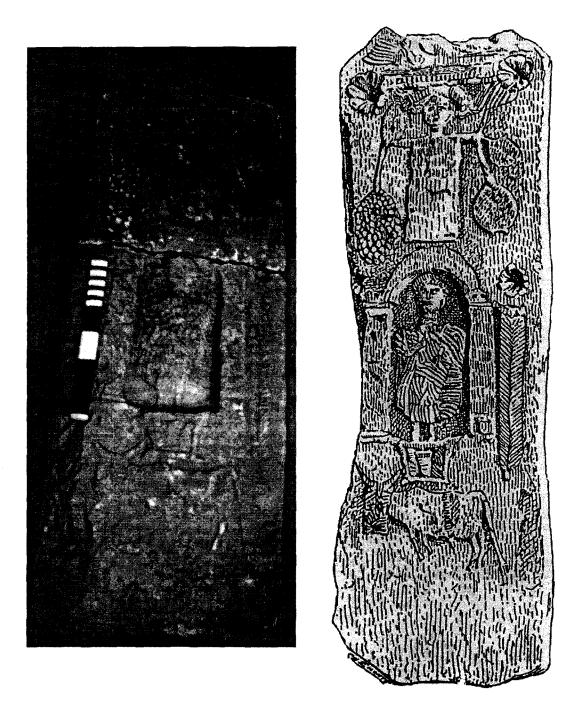




Fig.2a and b. Cat.2.





Fig.3a and b. Cat.3.



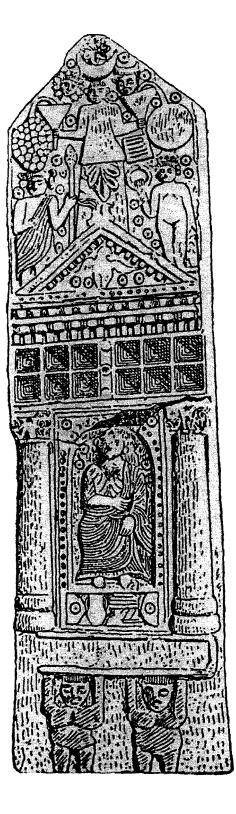


Fig.4a and b. Cat.4.









Fig.6a and b. Cat.6.



Fig.7a and b. Cat.7.

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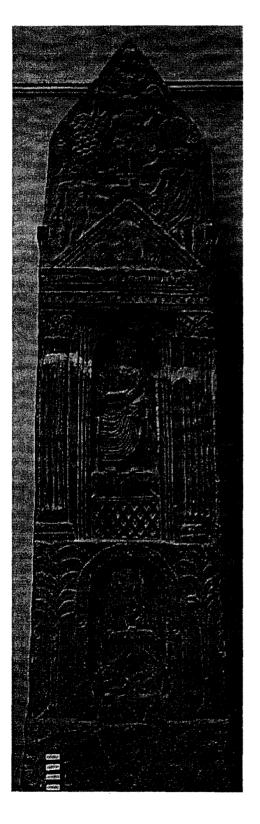




Fig.8a and b. Cat.8.



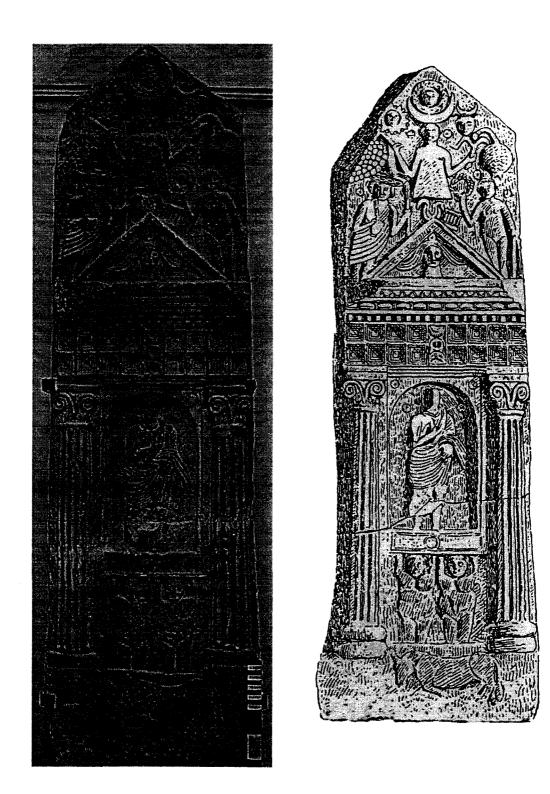






Fig.11a and b. Cat.11.

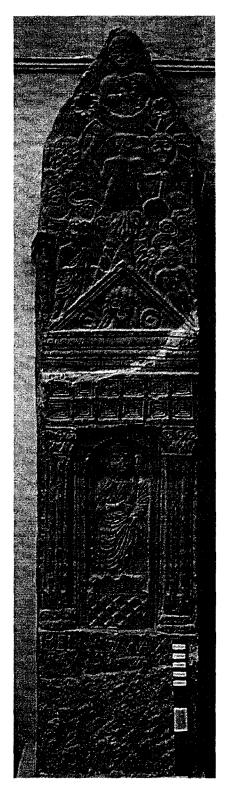




Fig.12a and b. Cat.12.

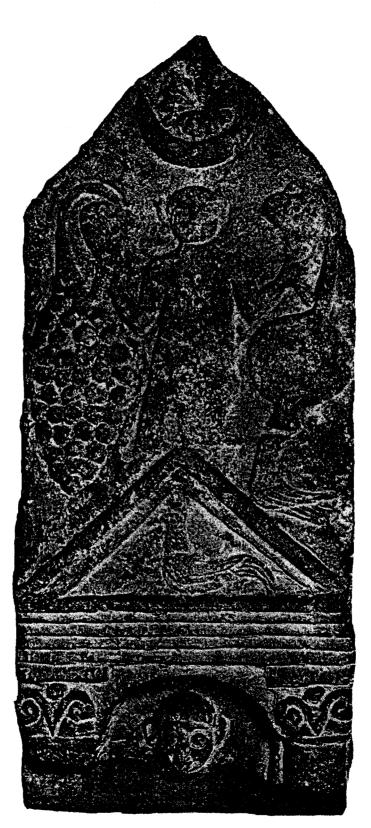


Fig.13. Cat.13

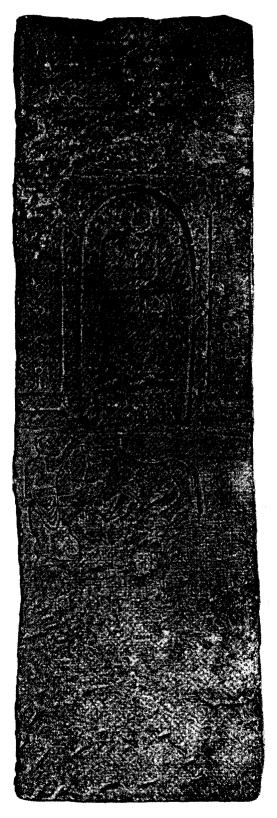


Fig.14. Cat.14



Fig. 15. Cat.15



Fig.16. Cat.16



Fig.17. Cat.17.

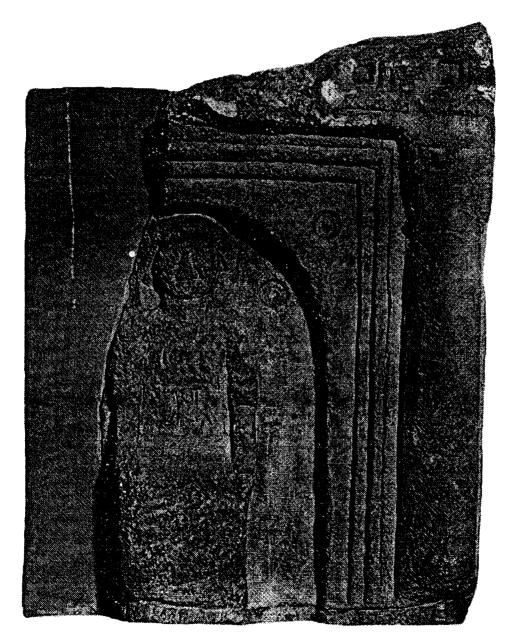


Fig.18. Cat.18.



Fig.19. Cat.19.



Fig.20. Cat.20.



Fig.21. Cat.21.



Fig.22. Cat.22.



Fig.23. Cat.23.



Fig.24. Cat.24.



Fig.25. Cat.25.



Fig.26. Cat.26.





Fig.28. Cat.28.



Fig.29. Cat.29.



Fig.30. Cat.30.





Fig.32. Cat.32.



Fig.33. Cat.33.



Fig.34. Cat.34.



Fig.35. Cat.35.



Fig.36. Cat.36.

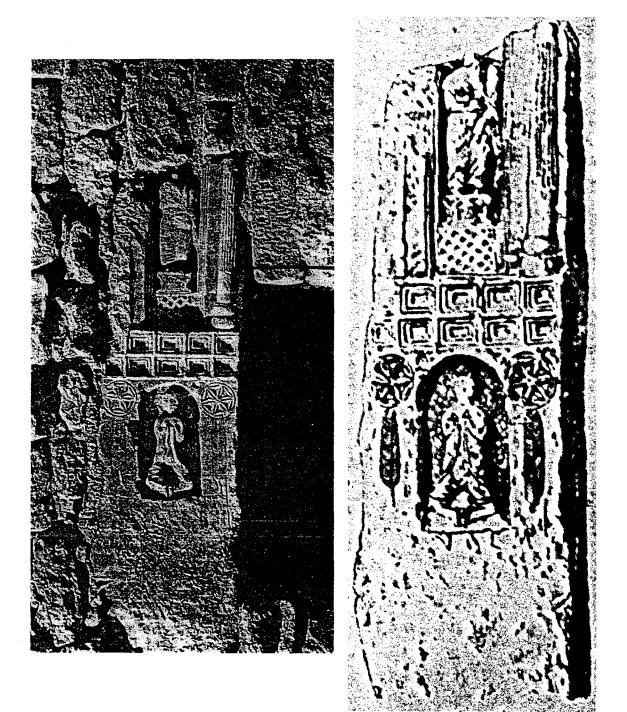


Fig.37. Cat.37.



Fig.38. Cat.38



Fig.39. Cat.39.

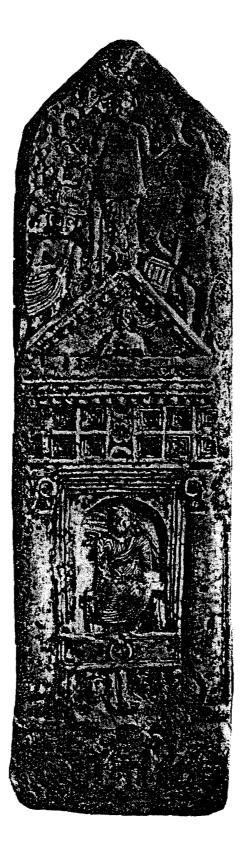


Fig.40. Cat.40.



Fig.41. Cat.41.



Fig.42. Cat.42.

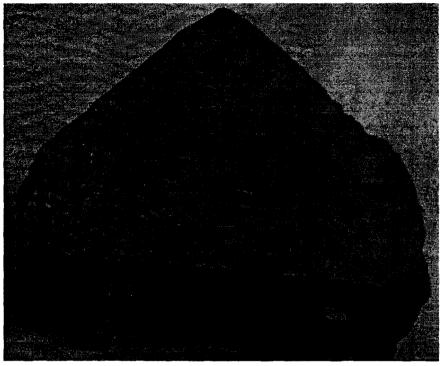


Fig.43. Cat.B6.

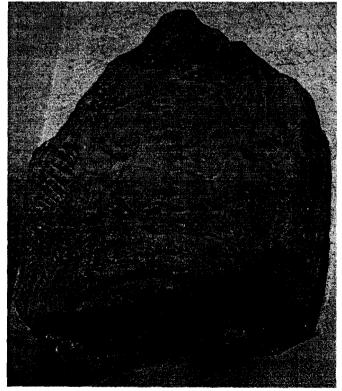


Fig.44. Cat.B7.

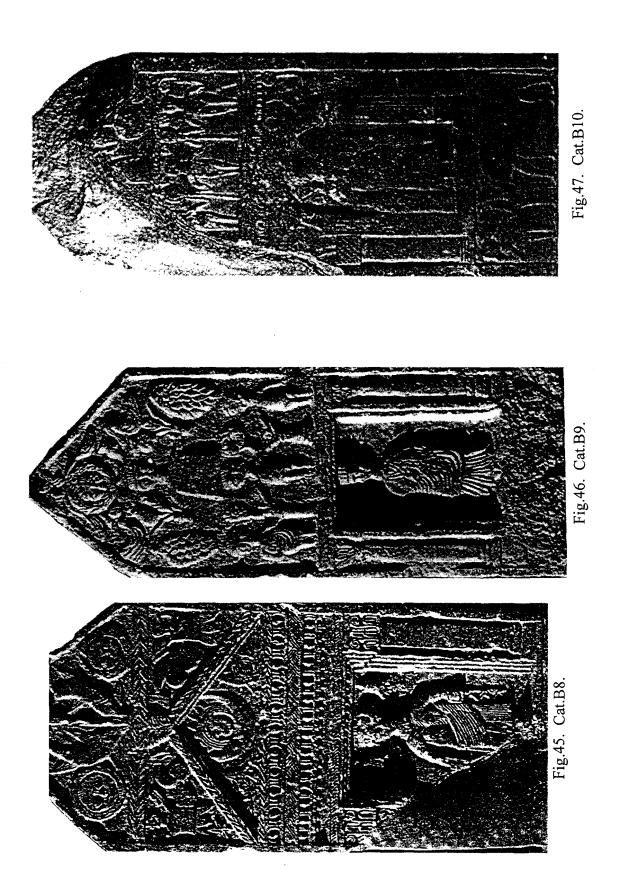




Fig.48. Cat.B13, from the south necropolis at Maghrawa.



Fig.49. Cat.B14, from Maktar.

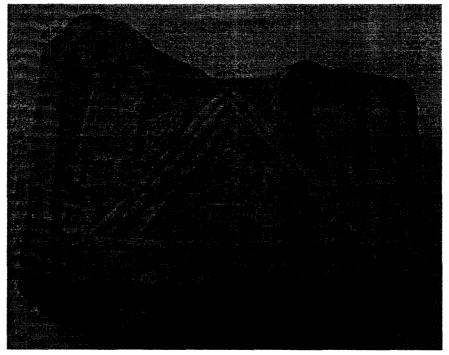
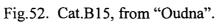


Fig.50. Cat.B15, from Maktar.



Fig.51. Cat.B16, from Maktar.





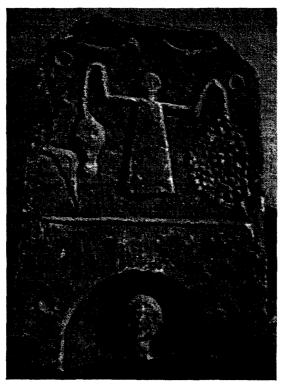


Fig.53. Cat.no.B16, from "Oudna".

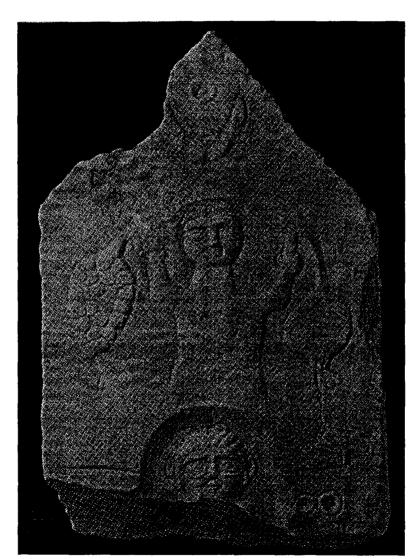


Fig.54. Cat.B17, from Maktar.

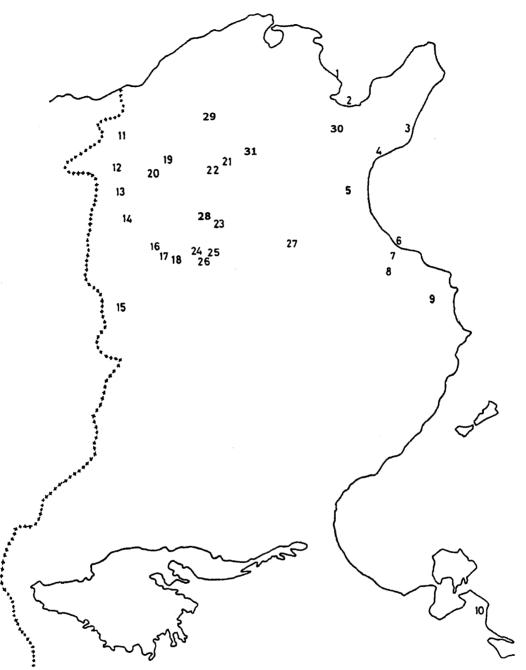


Fig.55. Map ofAfrica Proconsularis. 1=Carthage, 2=Soliman, 3=Korba, 4=Bir Bou Rekba, 5=Aïn Battaria, 6=Sousse, 7=El Kenissia, 8=Menzel Harb, 9=Henchir Bou Chebib, 10=Henchir Ziane, 11=Bulla Regia, 12=Thuburnica, 13=Henchir Guergour; 14=region of El Kef, 15=Thala, 16=El Ksour, 17=Medeïna (*Althiburos*), 18=Aïn Barchouch, 19=Thibar, 20=El Ghzaiziya, 21=Teboursouk, 22=Dougga, 23=Henchir Ghayadha, 24=Maghrawa, 25=Maktar, 26=Henchir Meded (*Mididi*), 27=Ksar Lemsa, 28=Sidi Bou Rouis, 29=Béjà, 30=Oudna, 31=Aïn Tounga.

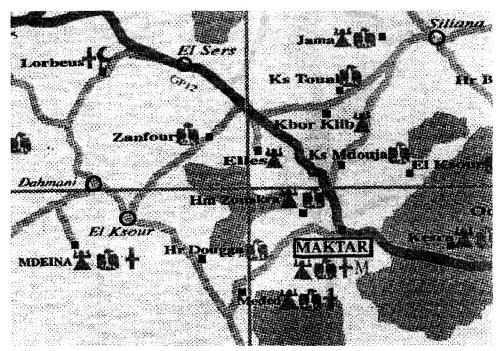


Fig.56. Detail from map of present-day Tunisia, showing the region of the *pagus Thuscae*.

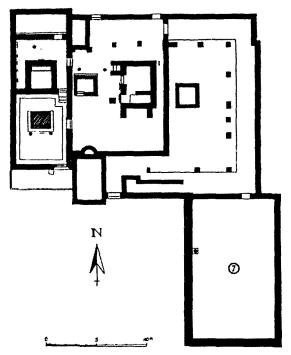


Fig.57. Plan of the sanctuary at Siagu (*Thinissut*). The enclosed area marked "7" contained votive stelae, statues, and other offerings.



Fig.58. Detail of goddess on Libyan deities stele from Borj Hellal.

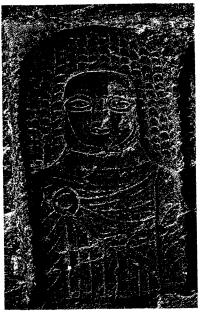


Fig.59. Detail of god on Libyan deities stele from Borj Hellal.

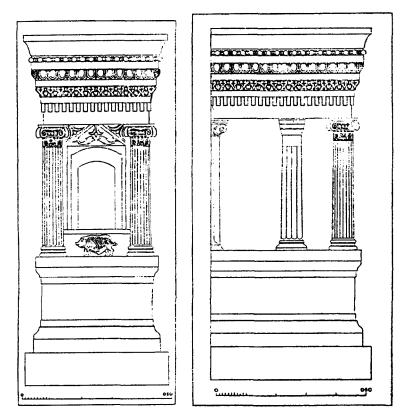


Fig.60. Naos from Thuburbo Majus.



Fig.61. So-called 'Stele of the priestess of Ceres', from Sidi Ali Madiouni, near Maktar.



Fig.62. So-called 'Boglio Stele', from Siliana.

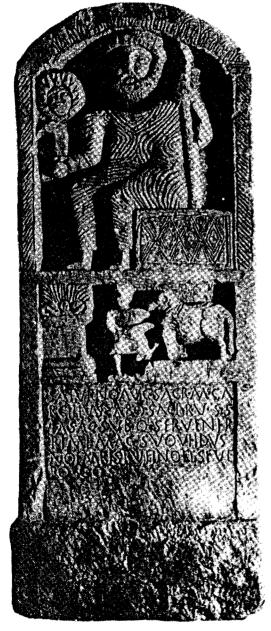


Fig.63. Stele of *M. Gargilius Zabo*, from El Ayaïda, near Béja. Dated by its inscription to 323 A.D.



Fig.64. Example of the Roman flat-style stele from central Tunisia, in the British Museum.



Fig.65. Detail of Jupiter in pediment, on Cat.34.



Fig.66. Detail of Jupiter on Cat.12.



Fig.67. Detail of Jupiter on Cat.22.



Fig.68. Detail of summit of Cat.10. At the top, the face in the wreath replaces the disc in the disc-and-crescent motif. Below, from left to right: solar face, head of the 'sign of Tanit', and lunar face.



Fig.69. Detail of 'sign of Tanit' on Cat.8.



Fig.70. Stele with Liber and Libera, from Djemila (*Cuicul*).



Fig.71. Detail of Dioscuri register on Cat.2.

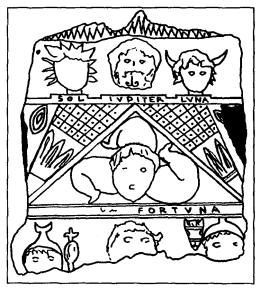


Fig.72. Stele from Sidi bou Rouis.

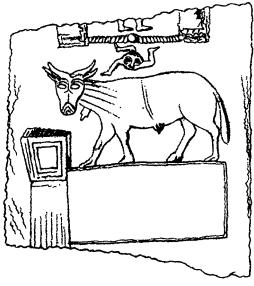


Fig.73. Stele from Béja or El Kef.



Fig.74. Detail of pediment bust on Cat.17.



Fig.75. Detail of pediment bust and Venus on Cat.12.



Fig.76. Detail of ritual goods on Cat.4.



Fig.77. Detail of ritual goods on Cat.8.



Fig.78. Detail of ritual goods on Cat.20.

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Fig.79. Detail of dedicant on Cat.11.



Fig.81. Detail of dedicant on Cat.4.



Fig.80. Detail of dedicant on Cat.30.



Fig.82. Detail of dedicant on Cat.2.



Fig.83. Detail of dedicant on Cat.3.

Fig.84. Small pediment on the site of ancient *Mactaris* (Maktar).

Figure 84 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.



Fig.85. Detail of Numidian cavalier relief, from near Chemtou.



Fig.86. Detail of portrait on stele in the Musée de Maktar.

Fig.87. Detail of portrait on stele in the Musée de Maktar.

Figure 87 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.



Fig.88. Bull sacrifice scene on Cat.11.



Fig.89. Detail of Atlantes on Cat.4.



Fig.90. Detail of Atlantes on Cat.10.



Fig.91. Detail of the lowest register of Cat.9.

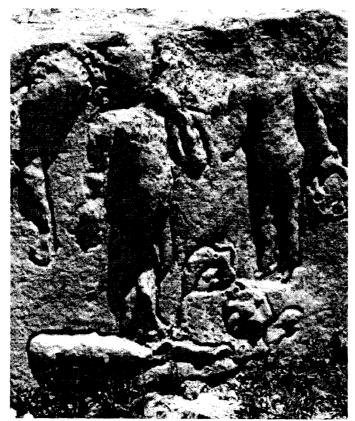


Fig.92. Detail of a sculpted architectural block with Hercules, at Maktar.

Fig.93. Stele fragment in the Musée de Maktar, showing an animal combat.

Figure 93 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.



Fig.94. Stele from Aïn Barchouch, in the Musée de Maktar.



Fig.95. Detail of male dedicant on stele in the Musée du Bardo.

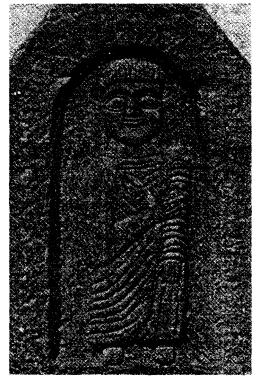


Fig.96. Detail of the Stele of *M. Aufidius Rogatus*, from Maktar.

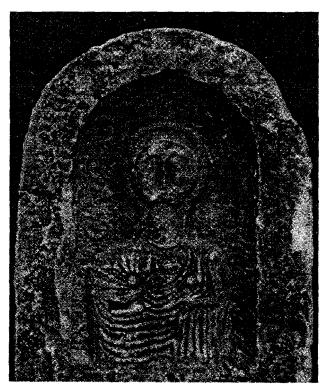


Fig.97. Detail of the Stele of Arruntia Sperata, from Maktar.

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Fig.98. Detail of dedicant on Cat.2.

Fig.99. Detail of portrait of stele in the gardens of the Musée de Maktar.

Figure 99 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.

Fig.100. Detail of portrait on a stele in the Musée de Sbeïtla.

Figure 100 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.

Fig.101. Detail of portrait on a stele in the Musée de Sbeïtla.

Figure 101 is unavailable due to the unpublished nature of the stele.



Fig.102. Detail of bull sacrifice on Cat.21.



Fig.103. Stele from Ellès.



Fig.104. Statue head found in the Old Forum at Maktar.



Fig.105. Stele from Sidi Abdallah, near Bou Arada.



Fig.106. Stele in the Musée de Timgad.