

Baal Hammon

I. Introduction. *North Syrian god.* B. is a local god from North Syria who was worshipped primarily in Carthage and other Punic places in North Africa, Malta, Sicily, and Sardinia, where he was assimilated to Chronos, Saturn, and Pluto. Most of the Punic votives to B. were found in funerary areas, the so-called tophets (on the alleged child sacrifices to B. in the tophets see KEEL 2007: §§ 586–591). The meaning of his name “Lord of the Amanus” indicates that B. is a title, which perhaps replaced a proper name. B. is first attested in a Phoenician inscription (KAI no. 24, l. 16) from Zincirli/Sam'al (9th/8th cent.). Several scholars have tried to establish a relationship between B. and the divine symbols on inscriptions mentioning B. BARNETT (1954: 62–64, 73–75) identified B. with the sun god (→Solar deities) on the basis of his etymological explanation of B.'s name as “Lord of the burning (altar)” and thus related B. H. to the winged sun disk (→Winged disk). On the other hand, YADIN (1970: 215) interpreted B. as a moon god and proposed his identification in the crescent within the full moon appearing on inscriptions mentioning B. Both identifications have been rejected by XELLA (1991: 106–110) who rightly prefers to look for possible iconographical identifications within the Phoenician–Punic realm. The iconographic identification of B. rests on Punic evidence from the 2nd cent. BCE to the 2nd cent. CE: a stela from El-Hofra depicting enthroned B. is dedicated to the deity by inscription (ROOBAERT 1986: 341; XELLA 1991: 120, pl. 8:3), and a terra-cotta statue of the enthroned god was found in the Punic sanctuary at Thinissut, which is dedicated to B.–Saturn and →Tannit–Caelestis (ROOBAERT 1986: 341–343, fig. 6; XELLA 1991: 123, pl. 9:4). Despite Phoenician inscriptions and Punic representations, B. is not a Phoenician god. He was only received into the pantheon of Tyre (6th cent.). Between the first cent. BCE and the 2nd cent. CE (→IDD 2) a reception of B. in the east took place at Palmyra, where he had a temple on Jebel Muntar. The following discussion will restrict itself to the pre–Hellenistic Period.

II. Typology

II.1. Phenotypes

1. SEATED 1.1. On a sphinx (1–4) 1.2. On a throne (5–9) 2. STANDING (10)

GENERAL REMARKS. In the period under consideration B. is represented as advanced in years, with a beard, and wearing conical headgear but may also be

crowned with palm leaves. One hand is raised in a gesture of blessing (and possibly may sometimes hold a stafflike object), the other holds a scepter. His dress extends to the feet and is wide-sleeved (LE GLAY 1986: 72–74; XELLA 1991: 112).

1. SEATED

1.1. On a sphinx. B. may be represented as seated on a winged →sphinx (1–4*; see in addition WALTERS 1926: pl. 6:283; FURTWÄGLER 1900: pls. 7:12; 15:2). In most cases the scepter he holds ends in what is considered an ear of grain (on 3 B. holds a *was* scepter; however, in front of the sphinx a linear object is depicted which has a similar terminal as the scepter usually held by B.). A winged solar disc (→Winged disk) may hover above the deity. In the case of a scarab from Tharros a thymiaterion is depicted in front of B., a feature regularly occurring with enthroned B.

1.2. On a throne. B. may also be depicted as seated on a throne (5–9*; see in addition WALTERS 1926: pl. 6:282; CULICAN 1960–61: figs. 1c, 2). This phenotype is typically associated with a thymiaterion, but may also depict a winged disk above the deity (6, 8). In one case the throne is placed in a barque (5). On 6 B. holds a *was* scepter rather than the pointed scepter. On 7 and 9* B. seems to hold a stafflike object in the raised hand (see also in this regard the stela from El-Hofra; XELLA 1991: pl. 8:3–4).

2. STANDING

In the period under consideration only a bronze statuette from Sardinia has been identified as depicting standing B. (10*). His crown consists of palm leaves.

II.2. Associations

B. is associated several times with the →sphinx on which the deity is seated (1–4*). Only in one example does a human appear in front of B. (2). On a ring, which shows enthroned B. in a barque, a two-headed →serpent is depicted below the boat (5).

III. Sources

Objects considered here date from the 7th cent. to the 4th cent. (or possibly 3rd cent.), and stem either from Carthage and its vicinity (1, 5–7), Hadrumetum (2), or Sardinia (3–4*, 9*–10*). Media depicting B. comprise rings (1, 5), scarabs (3, 6–8), a limestone stela (2), and a bronze statuette (10*).

IV. Conclusion.

From an iconographic point of view B. appears as an aged and fatherly deity. He exerts his power as a majestic ruler and not in a violent manner as does Levantine →Baal. The latter occurs

often in mythological scenes, while B.'s representations are placed in a cultic setting (but see 5). Common to both, however, is their relationship to agriculture.

V. Catalogue

1 Ring, gold, Utica, 600–500. LE GLAY 1986: 72; XELLA 1991: 115f, pl. 7:3 **2** Stela, limestone, Hadrumetum, 500–400. Bisi 1975: 94–96, fig. 56; LE GLAY 1986: 72, no. 3; XELLA 1991: 117–119, pl. 7:5 **3** Scarab, greenstone facies, Tharros, 500–300. CULICAN 1960–61: fig. 1d; XELLA 1991: 114, pl. 7:1 **4*** Scarab, greenstone facies, 18 x 13 x 10 mm, Tharros, 500–300. London, British Museum, WA 133689. BARNETT/MENDELSON 1987: pl. 58b **5** Ring, gold, Dermech, 700–500. CULICAN 1968: 31–33, fig. 1b; PARROT/CHÉHAB/MOSCATI 1977: 271, fig. 332; LE GLAY 1986: 72, no. 1; XELLA 1991: 114f **6** Scarab, carnelian, Dermech, 500–400. VERCOUTTER 1945: no. 671; XELLA 1991: 116 **7** Scarab, jasper, Dahr-el-Morali, 400–300. VERCOUTTER 1945: no. 584; XELLA 1991: 116f, pl. 7:4 **8** Scarab, greenstone facies, Tharros, 500–300. CULICAN 1960–61: fig. 1e; XELLA 1991: 114, pl. 7:2 **9*** Scarab, greenstone facies, 14 x 12 x 8 mm, Tharros, 500–300. London, British Museum, WA 133320. BARNETT/MENDELSON 1987: pl. 58a **10*** Statuette, bronze, Masse, Genoni, 400–300. Cagliari, Musée de Cagliari, 10857. PARROT/CHÉHAB/MOSCATI 1977: 225, fig. 247; ROOBAERT 1986: fig. 1; XELLA 1991: 121f, pl. 9:1

VI. Selected bibliography

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