

military context for Victoria in 3rd-c. Rome is given by the temple to Victoria dedicated on the Palatine in 294 by Q. Postumius Megellus to commemorate the victory in the Samnite Wars.<sup>84</sup> The Egadi 7 ram has a warrior head wearing a Montefortino helmet emerging from the upper cowl nosing, and its cheekpieces are identical to those found inside Egadi 6; the warrior head may be Roma personified, Minerva, or simply a soldier (identification is difficult as it appears the face was damaged in a purposeful fashion). Atop the helmet are three feathers attached to a ring sitting on its upper dome, a configuration described by Polybius (6.23.12-13).

The inscriptions on the Egadi rams are a valuable historical resource. A full exploration of the inscriptions and in-depth analyses of letter- and word-forms is slated for a later publication, but the preliminary analysis provides some useful results. Inscriptions were noted on the cowls of rams 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7, all in scripts of the 3rd c. B.C., and read from the starboard side. The Punic inscription on Egadi 3 attests to Carthaginian manufacture. A partial segment of the inscription has been analyzed with two possible translations. The first is: “We pray to Baal that this ram will go into the enemy ship and make a big hole”.<sup>85</sup> Subsequently, P. Schmitz, based on extensive comparanda, reads: “. . . tñt k̄ bñ bʿlm̄ l hwn spt ršp v̄ h̄mm lʿbn th[t. . .]”, translated as: “. . . Tanit, for in it are its *officers*. Blow, gales of Reshep! and build the surge/overflowing/wave und[er (?) . . . ]”.<sup>86</sup> This preliminary translation would reflect the Carthaginians invoking the gods in hope of assistance for success, while the references to winds underscore this crucial aspect of sailing for successful warship missions.

The Latin inscriptions on Egadi 1, 4, 6 and 7 attest to Roman manufacture, but they reflect different contexts. The inscription on the cowl nosing of Egadi 1 was engraved in 4 lines after the ram was cast. The first published transcription was: C SESTIO P F / Q SALONIO Q [F] / SEX VIROEN[-?--] / PROBAVE[-?--].<sup>87</sup> J. Prag offers an expanded text: C(aios) Sestio(s) P(ublii) f(ilius) / Q(uintos) Salonio(s) Q(uinti) [f(ilius)] / SEX VIROEN[-?--] / probave[re]. The text records 6 officials (*sex vir(i)*) overseeing the quality control of the rams’ castings. A portion of the inscription is illegible on the right side and *EN* remains enigmatic, so the exact meaning is still uncertain. Prag suggests that the letters following *sex vir(i)* or *sex viro(m)* may be the abbreviated title of the sevirate’s function (compare the Gracchan *termini*).<sup>88</sup> In

84 The iconography was reviewed by C. Hallett (Univ. of California at Berkeley) and T. Hölscher (Univ. of Heidelberg). Hallett further observes that the hairstyle appears to be Early Hellenistic (*Melonenfrisur*).

85 An initial reading was provided by G. Garbini (Università di Sapienza, Roma).

86 For “officers” Schmitz notes *bʿlm*. (nom. masc. pl.) can possibly, but less likely, be translated as ‘lords/masters’. The semantic uncertainty is whether *bʿl* refers to human military commanders, to citizenry, or to divine beings. The Phoenician word *bʿl* generally means ‘owner, master, lord’ (*Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions* 183 s.v. *bʿl*<sub>1</sub>); in that sense it serves as an epithet of the Storm god also known as Haddad. But the word can also designate human beings who are husbands (ibid. 183 s.v. *bʿl*<sub>1</sub>), landowners and/or citizens (ibid. 183-84), and a military or naval officer (ibid. 184). The phrase *bʿl m ym*, ‘master of the waters of the sea’ (*CIS* I 86 B = KAI5 37 B) appears to have been a title of naval command at Kition in the Achaemenid period. We can speculate that the *blm* in this text might also be naval commanders. Another possible word grouping offered by Schmitz would provide “. . . tñ tkbñ bʿl ml̄” and translate as “tn May you O Ball extinguish it, opposite . . .”.

87 See Gnoli 2011 for publication; slightly modified transcription here by J. Prag (Univ. of Oxford).

88 Gnoli 2011; Prag points out the missing missing ‘f’ in line 2 and the incomplete ending of