Summary. In spite of the interest generated by Phoenician-Punic Archaeology, this area of study has always been underestimated by comparison with Classical Archaeology. One of the main reasons for this is the persistence of a colonial representation of the ancient Mediterranean which assumes Greek culture to be the supreme expression of civilization. Other groups may imitate it through an acculturation process: Hellenization. As we shall see, this representation pervades even the Phoenician-Punic history and archaeology university textbooks. Starting with the various reasons leading to this situation, I aim to focus on the interpretation given to the ancient excavations at Carthage and, specifically, to its architectural and urban record, since this was the area of study where the prejudices about the Phoenician-Punic culture found an (albeit misunderstood) archaeological proof. I shall argue that the misinterpretation of these excavations is the key to understanding later developments and the general underestimation of Phoenician-Punic Archaeology.

INTRODUCTION

Phoenician-Punic Archaeology remains at the beginning of the twenty-first century in a position of academic inferiority in comparison with Classical Archaeology. This dramatically affects the number of academic posts dedicated to Phoenician-Punic Archaeology in Europe and North America. I shall use two examples: in Germany only one post, of recent creation, exists, whereas none can be found in the United Kingdom. There are, in contrast, hundreds of posts dedicated to Classical Archaeology. The paradox becomes apparent if this is compared with the number of papers presented at the last Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Classica, celebrated in Rome in 2008. There, at least one out of every six papers was directly or indirectly related to Phoenician-Punic Archaeology. Thus, it is clearly shown that, despite its academically marginal position, this area of study arouses significant scientific interest.

The reasons behind this situation vary depending on the academic tradition of the country in question. There is, however, a feature common to all, which is the persistence of a collectively perceived inferiority of Phoenician-Punic societies compared with Greek culture. This perception of antiquity is a paradigm inherited from the recent colonial past and is even
reflected in the academic policies set forth for the study of Phoenician-Punic Archaeology. The approach taken by textbooks regarding cultural contacts and the Hellenization of Phoenician-Punic societies is a clear example of this.

The revision of this paradigm, a task beyond the scope of a single article, remains to be done. My aim is to show that architectural and urban studies have been a major factor in the construction of this paradigm, and must also play a key role in dismantling it. In order to explore the persistence of colonial paradigms in Carthaginian history textbooks, I shall review how this representation of Phoenician-Punic Archaeology came to be; then I shall underline how the excavations carried out in Carthage between 1859 and 1884 and, more specifically, the interpretation of the architectural and urban record were presented as confirmation of such representation. I shall then briefly discuss the direction followed by Phoenician-Punic Archaeology as a consequence of these (mis-)interpretations and the colonial undertone still prevailing in the study of Mediterranean ancient history. Finally, I shall review what current university textbooks say about certain issues such as cultural contact and Hellenization in the light of this archaeological trajectory.

ON THE FORMATION OF A COLONIAL REPRESENTATION OF PHOENICIAN-PUNIC SOCIETIES...

Until the beginning of the earliest archaeological excavations at Carthage (Fumadó Ortega 2009, 57–66), the study of Phoenician, Punic and Carthaginian history mostly depended on Greek and Latin texts (Dubuisson 1983, 159–67; Mazza et al. 1988; Teixidor 1994, 131–9; Bernardini 2003, 29–40) and only marginally on cuneiform (Xella 1995a, 39–56), Egyptian (Scandone 1995, 57–63) and Biblical texts (Xella 1995b, 64–72). First-hand Phoenician or Punic sources were, therefore, limited to a few inscriptions. These non-Phoenician sources offered a heterogeneous image (Gruen 2011, 116–22). They show admiration for Phoenician dexterity in some of the most important skills of the ancient world, for example navigation (Hom., Od. 13.271–84; 14.285–97; 15.415), ceramic and metal craftwork (Hom., Il. 6.288–95; 23.740–3; Od. 4.614–19; Hdt. 7.23) and the development of the alphabet (Hdt. 5.57–9). Certain later passages also vindicate their mythological and historical traditions in connection with the social self-representation of some intellectuals living in the Roman Empire, such as Pomponius Mela or Philo of Byblos (Alvarez Martí-Aguilar in press; Ferrer Albelda in press). Finally, we must not forget the praises given to the Carthaginian constitution and political system (Isocr., Nic. 24; Arist., Pol. 1272b; Plb. 6.47.9; 6.51–2; 6.56.1–5; Str. 1.4.9).

On the other hand, many other texts were written in a context of war against Carthage. We must not, therefore, be too surprised at the anti-Phoenician and, more specifically, anti-Carthaginian propaganda inherent in some of these works: although some of these elements were already present in Homer (Od. 13.271; 14.287–97; 15.415), they were fully developed and

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1 In the present article I shall use the term ‘Phoenician’ loosely to refer to the inhabitants of the Phoenician-speaking city-states in the Levant from the Iron Age to the conquests of Alexander the Great, and, as well, to the first generations of colonists spreading from them into the western and central Mediterranean between the ninth and fourth centuries BC. With the term ‘Punic’ I shall refer to later generations of ‘colonists’, including the ‘Carthaginians’, a term that will only be used to refer to the inhabitants of Carthage down to 146 BC. ‘Phoenician-Punic’ is a more ambiguous term which I shall nevertheless use to make a general reference to all of the aforementioned peoples. For a lengthier discussion on the limits and problems regarding the use of this terminology, see Prag (2006).
circulated during the wars between Carthage and Syracuse. After the battle of Himera in 480 BC, anti-Carthaginian discourse became common rhetorical stock for Sicilian tyrants down to the First Punic War (Prag 2010, 51–71). In this regard, the harangues penned by Timaeus of Taormine in the fourth and third centuries were particularly popular. In the Latin world, during the Punic Wars, Fabius Pictor offered a description of Phoenician and Carthaginian character which laid special stress on their cruelty and greed (cf. Huss 1985, 53–5). A few decades after the destruction of Carthage, and from the Augustan age in particular (Gruen 2011, 122–37), the idea of the *fides punica* (Plb. 3.78; D.S. 30.7.1; Sall., *Iug.* 108; Plaut., *Poen.* 112–13, 1032–4) was set forth as the most significant psychological feature of the inhabitants of the destroyed city (Verg., *Aen.* 1.661; Liv. 21.4.9; 22.6.12; 30.22.6; 30.30.27; 34.31.3; Hor., *Carm.* 3.5.33; 4.4.49; App., *Pun.* 53; 59; 60; 62–4; 88), in addition to the violence inherent in the late accounts of *tofet* sacrifices (D.S. 20.14.4–6; Plut., *Mor.* 171c–d), and the military feats of Hannibal (Plb. 3.47–8; 3.81; 3.93–4; 9.22; 15.13–16; Liv. 21.4.1–8; 22.1; 22.16–17; 22.43; 27.28; 28.12; 30.34; Plut., *Fab.* 19.5–6; Nepos., *Hann.* 1).

All these later elements were accepted by the earliest scholars who, like Jean-Jacques Barthélémy, Arnold Heeren and Charles Movers, focused on Phoenician and Carthaginian history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (cf. Gras et al. 1991, 17–31) with undisputable scientific concern but with poor critical spirit. For this reason they can be included in the so-called ‘academic orientalism’ defined by Edward Saïd (2003, 3) as a *corpus* of knowledge, academics and institutions intended to manage the dominion of the West over Muslim and/or Asian countries. This complex system of cultural representation – understood as a power discourse in Foucault’s sense – reached in the nineteenth century a latent hegemonic position in the West (Saïd 2003, 206–9).2 The discourse homogenized Muslim and Asian societies with disregard to their geographical, chronological and cultural characteristics. These nations were grouped under a series of common features, such as their alleged weakness, irrationality, exoticism, exuberance, fanaticism and sensuality. Some of these prejudices had already been established in antiquity, most particularly with regard to the Carthaginian case. Transmitted down the centuries through different written and iconographical media, their political message was adapted over time to serve the interests of the dominant power. For example, the early Christians underlined the moral message contained in the *Aeneid*, most notably in the exemplary attitude shown by Dido, who preferred death to dishonour (Balmelle and Rebourg 1995, 60–7; De los Llanos 1995, 68–83), while Charles I wished to draw on the martial prowess of Carthage to magnify the value of the conquest of La Goulette and Tunis in 1535 (Fumadó Ortega 2009, 44–55). The history and myth of Carthage are polysemous, and the multiple possible interpretations have unceasingly interacted in the artistic and historical sense down to the modern era (Siebenmorgen et al. 2004, 362–79) and the Second World War (Fumadó Ortega 2008, 99–104).

The reinvention of the origins of Europe, based on a mythology which permitted industrial nations to present themselves as the direct heirs of Greece and Rome, was developed

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2 In Gramci’s sense of the term, according to which a certain world view ceases to be perceived as an ideology once assumed and interiorized by the collective. This ideology abandons thereafter the political debate which is still perceived as susceptible to subjective interpretations closely related to party interests. On the other hand, according to van Dommelen (1998, 28; 2006, 106) the difference between a hegemonic and an ideological discourse rests neither on their varying degrees of subjectivity nor on their ability to explain the world, but on how clearly the discourse is perceived by society as such.
in close connection with this perspective on orientalism. This modern Western mythology, the earliest manifestation of which is the invention of the concept of the Renaissance in the sixteenth century (Heers 2000), was finally developed and institutionalized during the nineteenth century with a duel aim: first, to stand as the basis of the intellectual difference between the higher class and the middle and lower classes within each nation (Auslander 1996; cf. Bourdieu 1991); and second, to maintain a colonial discourse in justification of imperialist international policies (Dietler 2005, 36–7). It is a mythology supported by the ideological nucleus of classicism, mostly developed from the early nineteenth century (cf. Clair 1972; Marchand 1996, 24–35). Under this classicist and evolutionist perspective ancient Greece was seen as the highest expression of human virtues (Marchand 1996, 1–23). The enormous cultural influence acquired by this perspective on antiquity soon spread throughout Germany, England and France, and it reached such extremes that a definition of the phenomenon as ‘grecolatry’ would be fully justified (cf. Dietler 2005, 37–9). This affected the representation of the Mediterranean, both in geopolitics and in archaeology, in deep and complex ways.

It is important to remember up to what point these two factors had an influence on one another. In this regard, it has been said that ‘the discoursive foundations of modern European identity and colonialist ideology and practice were largely grounded in selective interpretations and interpolations of the text of two ancient colonial powers: Greece and Rome’ (Dietler 2005, 34). On the other hand, while archaeology grew as a scientific discipline it was also used as a means to support the cultural domination of industrial powers (Cañete Jiménez 2010). This instrumentalization pursued several aims. Among the most relevant are not only the scientific validation of the power discourses set forth to justify the political control of conquered societies (Dietler 2005, 48–9; 2009) but also its moral justification through the stress of the Western civilizing duty. The management of national identification with past cultures developed cultural nationalisms and sustained aspirations of sovereignty that were sometimes contradictory with each other (Laroui 1995; Marchand 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996, 1–23; Hamilakis 2007). In this context, the archaeology of the Mediterranean past (Mattingly 1996; Webster 1996; van Dommelen 1997, 305–8) and, specifically, Phoenician-Punic Archaeology (van Dommelen in press) were systematically instrumentalized.

In the meantime, archaeology was not a passive subject but actively contributed to this intellectual and political environment. By highlighting the subtle, ambivalent and deep relationship between modern and ancient colonialism, I do not aim to draw a simplistic and mechanical causal identification. Indeed, quite the opposite; I want to stress the multiple national and chronological subtleties that shaped very different intellectual contexts. The recognition of these differences (van Dommelen 2006) demands an investigation into the specific conditions which favoured the acceptance of the paradigm of inferiority in Phoenician-Punic studies in the late nineteenth century (Liverani 1998, 5–11) and, more specifically, of a logical-spatial prejudice (Fumadó Ortega 2010, 10–11), with significant consequences in the interpretation of Mediterranean ancient history. According to this prejudice, Phoenicians and Carthaginians, as Oriental and Semitic peoples, lacked the capacity for abstract thought needed for the development of complex political systems (cf. Burkert 1991, 160–3; Günther 1996, 790), philosophical thought and a rational management of urban space. This helped to convert ancient history into a moralizing tale in which the admirable Greeks and Romans represented the ancestor of the industrial nations while Phoenicians and Punics appeared as the forebears of the modern ‘Orientals’ under the political control of colonial Western powers. This and other prejudices brought about the ‘colonization’ of the collective ideal, including public and largely
also academic opinion, with a hegemonic discourse supported by various degrees by orientalism, classicism and nationalism, but also by evolutionism and anti-Semitism (Bernal 1987, 337–40).

In combination, anti-Semitism and evolutionism categorized cultures and races according to pre-established ideals of perfection. In parallel, ancient cultures were also categorized, and the peoples of antiquity *grosso modo* grouped by race. Racism and anti-Semitism had an increasing impact on Phoenician-Punic studies, even among the highest academic authorities: Ernest Renan defined Semitic languages as a morally and biologically degraded form of Indo-European languages (Saïd 2003, 140–3). As a consequence, around the turn of the twentieth century, Phoenician influence on the development of Greek culture and the emergence of civilization in the Mediterranean progressively disappeared from textbooks, with some exceptions, such as the French Jesuit school and the Maronite elites with which they collaborated (Kaufman 2004, 30–48). The most extreme positions were defended by Karl Julius Beloch (1913, 65–75), for whom Phoenicians were not capable of sailing the Aegean until the seventh century BC and whose influence on Greek language and culture would therefore be negligible. Other such radical examples are not hard to find: Nobel Prize winner Theodor Mommsen described the probable military victory of Carthage over Syracuse as ‘the annihilation of freedom and civilisation in the ancient Mediterranean’. Rhys Carpenter’s attempts, during the 1980s, to locate the contact between Greek culture and the Phoenician alphabet in the late eighth century in the allegedly Greek colony of Al-Mina, in the mouth of the Orontes river, may be included in this trend (cf. Bernal 1987, 393–9; Vella 1996, 246).

**AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATION**

The archaeological excavations carried out at the major Phoenician and Punic cities between 1859 and 1884, and, more specifically, the conclusions drawn from their architecture and urbanism, played an essential, and heretofore overlooked, role in the so-called ‘fall of the Phoenicians’ (Bernal 1987, 337–99). The result of these expeditions was unanimously judged poor, even mediocre. We must bear in mind that by then there were spectacular archaeological remains for all to admire at Pompeii, Rome and the Athenian Acropolis, among other places. In contrast, the expeditions of Charles Ernest Beulé (1861) to Carthage in 1859 (Fumadó Ortega 2009, 69–72), of Nathan Davis in 1859–60 and Daux in 1868 to Carthage and Utica, and Ernest Renan (1864–1874) to Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Amrit and Arwad in 1860–1 (Gran-Aymerich 2000, 82–7; Stucky 2010, 69–76), culminating in the Carthaginian excavations of Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon (1886) in 1884 (Fumadó Ortega in press a), were *prima facie* received in Europe with disappointment. Historiography, however, has blamed the works of Ernest Renan

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3 These political and religious circles were favourable to a representation of the Phoenicians as the first Western nation, and therefore different from their Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian neighbours. Similarly, the Maronites, with the support of the French Jesuits in operation in the region from the second half of the nineteenth century, portrayed themselves as the French of the Levant, increasingly rejecting their Ottoman, Syrian and Arabic neighbours (Kaufman 2004, 22–30). This context guaranteed a good reception to Vitor Bèrard’s studies on the *Odyssey*, in which Phoenician influence was overrepresented. They would be roundly rejected soon after.

4 This remark still appears without commentary or qualification in the revised and updated 1977 edition of Hermann Bengston’s *Griechische Geschichte*, first published in 1950 (1986, 30). The research for this work was probably carried out during Bengston’s time in the Nazi Party and the SA, in the late 1930s, and at the Russian front, in the early 1940s. This textbook remains popular among publishers; it has been recently re-edited in English (1988), Italian (1989), Spanish (1996) and German (2009).
for this collective disillusionment (Rouillard 2007, 27–8), forgetting the role played by the excavations conducted at Carthage. It is true that Ernest Renan occupied a preferential space in the bibliography with his monumental Mission de Phénicie. In this work, Phoenician architecture was labelled as inelegant and unoriginal troglodytic art, and its decoration as mere imitation (Renan 1864–1874, 822–5). Although less ambitious on the editorial side, the excavators of Carthage were no softer in their judgments of Carthaginian art, defined as decadent and wallowing in its own mediocrity (Reinach and Babelon 1886, 27). It is possible that the fact that their expedition was not reflected in a major publication such as Renan’s may also have had a very negative impact on the development of Phoenician-Punic Archaeology, as we shall see below.5

Before Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon intervened, however, Carthage remained the only hope of finding Carthaginian monumental architecture anywhere, especially after the publication of Mission de Phénicie. The monuments imagined by William Turner in his two paintings about the foundation and fall of the Carthaginian Empire,6 the marvellous palaces described by Gustav Flaubert,7 and the formidable and unconquerable wall mentioned in the sources (Plb. 1.18.8; 38.7; D.S. 23.8.1; Str. 2.5.33; 6.4.2; 12.8.11; App., Pun. 95) had captured the collective imagination.

The wall was the main target of two of the first scholars interested in the site, Charles Ernest Beulé and Charles Tissot. The former, famous for his successful reconstruction of the Athenian Propylaea, excavated the summit of Byrsa hill, at the time known as Saint Louis, in search of similar structures. He mistook the apses of a large retaining wall built in the Augustan age (Gros 1985) for the wall of a supposed Punic acropolis (Beulé 1861, 45–66). Since then, these apses, preserved in the Musée de Carthage, are known as the Absides de Beulé (Fig. 1.1). Charles Tissot (1884, I, 587–8) reviewed this conclusion, but could not resist the temptation to present a fabulous and romantic hypothesis about the Carthaginian walls (Tissot 1884, I, pl. V). After several years of study, and following the eccentric views of the engineer Daux, Charles Tissot drafted a detailed programme of excavation in order to find Punic Carthage’s defensive system. His health thwarted the project, which was then undertaken by Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon who, nevertheless, defined Daux’s work as a ‘topographic novel’ (Reinach and Babelon 1886, 34).

With a crew of nearly 40 workmen, these savants excavated an area of around 1300 sq m, shifting almost 5000 cubic m of earth, still one of the most substantial excavations ever carried out on the site. The results of this excavation, which was in itself highly relevant, have languished practically forgotten for decades as a result of the original interpretation.

5 Surprisingly, in the monograph published soon afterwards, Ernest Babelon (1896) did not even mention his 1884 excavations.
6 In 1815 and 1817, Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) produced two paintings in which the birth and fall of the Carthaginian Empire were represented. The paintings portray two magnificent urban landscapes, reflecting the ideal architecture defined by Claude Lorrain (1600–82), which bore such little resemblance to the African reality of Carthage. Artistic licence is also shown by the absence of architectural differences between the two paintings, regardless of the centuries that elapsed between both episodes.
7 The epic novel Salammbô (2002 [1862]) sublimates the oriental city according to the romantic ideal of the mid-nineteenth century. The success of this work was reflected in the production of operas and other plays. Soon, the story had become the wider public’s main Carthaginian reference (Daguerre de Hureaux 1995, 128–37; Pelletier-Hornby 1995, 138–47).
Figure 1
Location plan of pre-Roman features in Carthage. The numbers refer to the following areas of the site.
Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon started their campaign in March 1884 in three separate locations. The earliest soundings were opened to the south-east of the circus, in the area labelled on Bordy’s map (1898) as El Goulla (Fig. 1.2); after a month of excavation, this trench – 42 m in length, 5 m in width and approximately 5 m deep – was abandoned without any drawings or plans being made, after yielding ‘nothing but’ monumental Roman sculpture and architecture (Reinach and Babelon 1886, 36–7). The second area (Fig. 1.3), opened in April, was located near to the then-recent excavations by Évariste de Sainte-Marie in the area known as Feddan-el-Behim (1884) (Fig. 1.5), in which over 2000 Punic stelae had been found. The structures found in this trench – 54 m in length, 5 m in width and up to 8 m deep – seem to correspond to Punic houses, the first to be unearthed by archaeology. The third and largest trench was opened in the area between the wells labelled as Bir ez-Zrig and Bir Messaouda (Fig. 1.4). It was 135 m in length, between 5 and 7 m in width and had a maximum depth of 6 m. The information that the second and third trenches potentially offered is comparable to that of the recent excavations published by the University of Hamburg (Niemeyer et al. 2007), focused on the junction between cardo x east and the decumanus maximus (Fig. 1.6), and showing, underneath them, a superposition of pre-Roman dwellings running from the earliest phases to the destruction of the city in 146 BC. In the earliest excavations, however, the zeal of the diggers, shifting around 70 cubic m per day, only respected the deepest and sturdiest structures, in most cases just cisterns: ‘... les puits de la ville punique sont en général bien conservés; par contre, il ne subsiste que les fondations des maisons, bien qu’on distingue clairement la direction des ruelles le long desquelles elles étaient bâties’ (Reinach and Babelon 1886, 34).

The drawings provided (Fig. 2) show several walls, cisterns and wells. Beyond the initial, somewhat confusing, impression, we may appreciate that all structures are aligned with only three orientations (Fumadó Ortega in press b): the first corresponds to the structures located in the deepest strata, which are aligned with the junction between the decumanus maximus and the cardo x east (Niemeyer et al. 2007); the second corresponds to the middle strata, aligned with the structures found in the so-called ‘Quartier Hannibal’ (Fig. 1.7) (Lancel 1982); the third and closest to the surface is aligned with the structures found in the ‘Quartier Magon’ (Fig. 1.8–9) and the Colonia Iulia (Rakob 1991). Despite the enormous interest of such a sequence, provided it is followed by a proper interpretation, the lack of monumentality of the remains which managed to survive the none-too-subtle nineteenth century excavation techniques was a disappointment for these palace-hunters.

8 Only the recent international campaigns launched by UNESCO have managed to identify the most pervasive feature of Carthaginian archaeology, the ‘robber trench’ (cf. Ennabli 1992). The repeated episodes of looting and quarrying of building materials to which Carthage has been exposed since the Middle Ages explain why in most cases the only traces of walls found in excavations are the trenches opened by looters and subsequently refilled with Islamic and medieval material.

9 The structures were masterfully drawn by Teissié and Canasi at a scale of 1:100 (Reinach and Babelon 1886, pl. IV).

10 Forming straight angles, 45° towards the north-east and 45° towards the north-west.

11 Walls oriented 63° towards the north-east and 27° towards the north-west.

12 Walls oriented 30° towards the north-east and 60° towards the north-west.
Figure 2

Plans and sections published by Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon, and digital image of the large trench dug between Bir ez-Zrig and Bir Massouda (Fig. 1.4). The various tones of grey indicate the three different alignments identified: dark grey is used to indicate the deepest strata and light grey the most superficial ones.
CONSOLIDATION OF THE LOGICAL-SPATIAL PREJUDICE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARTHAGINIAN AND PHOENICIAN-PUNIC ARCHAEOLOGIES

The inferiority of Phoenician-Punic societies in their capacity for abstract thought was often supported by arguments ex silentio. Nevertheless, the remains documented by Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon in Carthage were perceived as the scientific validation of these prejudices, at least with regard to architecture and urbanism. This was an increasingly popular field of study both within and outside academia, as a consequence of the enormous urban development which industrial nations were undergoing at the time (Laurence 1994a). One of the main specialists in the field, Francis Haverfield, thought that the grid plan followed by most modern cities, the origin of which was traced back to the Roman colonies, was the most perfect of urban designs. Urban layouts were even considered the reflection of psychological attitudes, for example: ‘The square and the straight line are indeed the simplest marks which divide civilised man from the barbarian’ (Haverfield 1910, quoted by Laurence 1994b, 15); and ‘The savage, inconsistent in his moral life, is equally inconsistent, equally unable to “keep straight”, in his house-building and his road-making’ (Haverfield 1913, 14). This connection between the inability to adapt urban spaces to grid plans and the inability to develop logical thinking probably aimed at stressing the intellectual superiority of the colonial bourgeoisie, inhabiting straight-lined newly built areas in the suburbs of Berlin or Paris, against the inhabitants of chaotic and overpopulated Muslim medinas.

The logical-spatial prejudice thus became the prevailing paradigm, and excessive credit was given to the tale of Carthage’s total destruction at the hands of the Roman legions, which, according to the text, even spread salt over the remains to prevent anything ever growing back again (App., Pun. 134). All hopes of finding a large city at Carthage were therefore abandoned, and complete acceptance of René Cagnat’s (1909, 9) ill-chosen sentence – ‘la vérité est qu’il ne reste à peu près rien de la cité punique’ – was repeated as a mantra until the 1970s (Cintas 1970–1976, 124; Tlatli 1978, 57). Any architectural remains found at Carthage thereafter were the consequence of sporadic and badly documented undertakings, and were often erroneously dated to the Roman period. One of the most eloquent examples of this is ‘Quartier Hannibal’, the regularity and symmetry of which veered the excavators towards a Roman chronology. This dominant paradigm, which saw Phoenician-Punic urbanism as ‘typically oriental’ – that is, chaotic and irregular – remained unchallenged until the results of the stratigraphic excavations promoted by UNESCO’s international campaign started to come to public light (Lancel 1979, 94–6).

As previously noted, another important consequence of the ill-starred interpretation given to the Carthaginian remains by Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon was the disproportionate attention paid to cemeteries thereafter (Vernaz 1887; Delattre 1890; 1896; 1898; 1905; Drappier 1911; Gauckler 1915; Merlin 1918). Cemeteries at least, thanks to their funerary goods, offered safe and museum-worthy recompense (Bénichou-Safar 1976; 1982).

13 According to Ernest Renan, Semites never produced mythology, art, commerce or civilization; they were nothing but a lower manifestation of human nature (Renan 1855, 145–6, quoted by Said 2003, 142). Their rudimentary language would explain their inability to produce speculative writings and their political backwardness.

14 ‘. . . The mind of the Oriental, (. . .) like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry’ (Lord Cromer 1908, quoted by Said 2003, 38). The contrast was apparent and intentional in city planning in the colonies, for example between Delhi and New Delhi but also in Maghrebian cities like Tunis or Rabat.
This ‘necrocentrism’ spread throughout the Mediterranean over the following decades, and has in fact prevailed at some sites until the twenty-first century. Most Punic settlements in the central and western Mediterranean have since been interpreted according to a model of the oriental city, without well-structured spaces and following a natural, unregulated growth pattern; an ideal model based on Phoenician Carthage, a mixture of Bronze Age cities in the Levant and modern Muslim *medinas*. Furthermore, the interpretation of Byrsa as a central *tell* (Cintas 1970–1976, 124–6; Lancel 1994, 134–40) is allegedly supported by a series of written references to the fourth century at the earliest (Str. 17.3.14–15; Serv., *In Aen.* 1.421; *alib.* 130) and by an archaeological record no earlier than the third (Ladjimi Sebaï 2003). The evidence, in fact, points towards the hill’s marginality between the eighth and third centuries BC (Fumadó Ortega 2010, 12–20). Despite this, the hypothesis of a typically oriental Carthage stood as the model for the interpretation, and sometimes supposition, of the morphology of other Punic cities in the western and central Mediterranean. By focusing attention on cemeteries, the urban evolution of settlements was largely overlooked. The comparison of the model of the typically oriental city with the monumental architecture of Hellenistic Greek cities and imperial Rome perpetuates, with great iconographical emphasis, Hellenocentrism. Hellenization is still seen as a one-way acculturation process, which fundamentally maintains the colonial perspective on Mediterranean ancient history. Hellenization also pervades the way the history of Carthage is portrayed in university textbooks.

**HISTORIES OF CARTHAGE: CULTURAL CONTACT AND HELLENIZATION IN UNIVERSITY TEXTBOOKS**

During the central decades of the twentieth century, Phoenician-Punic Archaeology went through a period of stagnation, in sharp contrast with the enormous development of Classical Archaeology in the same period (Moscati 1974, 15; cf. Morris 1994). Within this framework, the considerable focus on Greek colonialism and Roman imperialism cornered Phoenician-Punic societies into providing an alternative model, a contrast and complement to Greco-Roman history (van Dommelen 1998, 17–18). This explains the marked chronological polarity shown by academia even today. Attention oscillates between the earliest, most archaic period (cf. Arruda 2000; Aubet Semmler 2009) and the Punic Wars (Le Bohec 1996; Goldsworthy 2008; Hoyos 2008, among others), the period in between being largely ignored. In short, despite the crucial role played by Phoenician-Punic-speaking communities in the ancient Mediterranean, our knowledge about them is still very limited in comparison with that of Greece and Rome. Not for nothing have they been called the ‘forgotten ones’ in Mediterranean ancient history (Vella 1996, 245).

In spite of this, the discipline has experienced some revival from the last quarter of the twentieth century, once again as a consequence of new, large-scale excavations at Carthage.

15 The term ‘necrocentrism’ was coined by Ramón Torres to refer to the history of archaeological research in Ibiza during the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, but I believe it to be equally adequate to describe the excavations carried out at sites such as Baria, Tharros, Sulky, Mozia and Utica, among others.

16 A trend that was not seriously challenged until the publication of Benedikt Isserlin’s article (1973).

17 The exiguous role played by Phoenician-Punic Archaeology in European and North American universities is remarkable, with regard to their weight in academic curricula and also to research projects. Spain, Italy and Tunis are simply timid exceptions to the general rule.
This is demonstrated by several publications (Huss 1985; Lancel 1994; Lipiński 1992; Fantar 1993; Krings 1995; Moscati 1995) that, at long last, aim at offering the comprehensive overview long overdue since the monumental attempt by Stephan Gsell (1913–1927), which Pierre Cintas (1970–1976) had tried to bring up to date. These publications, however, still carry the weight of colonial insight into Mediterranean ancient history, the key features of which can be summarized as an overrepresentation of the colonizing, allegedly civilizing element which minimizes the agency of the indigenous populations with which Phoenicians and Punics interacted, and the spurious division of colonial contexts into well-defined Phoenician and Punic groups and equally well-outlined indigenous communities, both of which groups show solid and fully coherent collective identities (cf. van Dommelen 1998, 17–22).

In the present article I will focus on just three of the above-mentioned works, more specifically those which were conceived as university textbooks on the history of Carthage.18 In these, the approach towards such a crucial factor as cultural contact ranges from total disregard in the first, a negative interpretation in the second, and an attempt at subversion in the third. Although these three referential works tried to depurate the exclusively negative views on Carthaginian history which had been taught uncontested until the Second World War (cf. Bonnet 2006, 365–6), they have not fully shaken off the colonial undertone prevalent in the study of Mediterranean ancient history.

The first of these works is Werner Huss’ encyclopaedic and profusely documented attempt to cover the entire history of Carthage. From the current perspective, the absence of any reference to cultural contact from such an otherwise comprehensive account is to say the least remarkable. Most of the 39 chapters into which the work is divided are dedicated to the narration of Carthage’s wars and the detailed analysis of diplomatic agreements. The author has not dedicated a single chapter to the way Carthaginian societies interacted with other communities, probably in the belief that cultural contact and cultural change play a negligible role in the issues in which he is interested. The presence of a chapter on the Carthaginian Volkstum and Volkscharakter is also significant (Huss 1985, 52–6): this involves the implicit assumption of such unhistorical concepts. The selection of contents, therefore, suggests that while avoiding subjective comparisons between Carthaginians, Romans and Greeks, the author does not consider the relevance, perhaps not even the possibility, of social transformation through cultural interaction between different groups. Carthaginian society is as a consequence shown as a stable and fixed reality, a concept of culture borrowed from cultural nationalism (cf. Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Jones 1996; 1997). The application of this theoretical perspective perpetuates the validity of hermetic classifications of human groups and the colonial approach to Mediterranean ancient history imposed by industrial nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Cultural contact is indeed analysed in the other two textbooks, but it is at the same time given a negative undertone. Serge Lancel’s notion that the coexistence of different communities in the same city or territory does not necessarily imply cultural contact, provided that the identities of the groups involved are sufficiently strong, is today very popular among European conservative politicians. According to this idea the Phoenicians coexisted for centuries with African peoples, but that does not mean that Carthaginian society was African (Lancel 1994, 239), nor similarly in the Roman case afterwards (Lancel 1994, 251). Nevertheless, according to Lancel (1994, 281–90), one of the sides, in this case the

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18 A critical review of the rest can be found in Bonnet and Krings (2006, 37–9).
Carthaginian in the last few centuries of its history, can lose cohesion over time and/or show some ambiguity. Then, and only then, does cultural contact take place, which is inevitably defined by the loss of identity of the weakened society. According to Lancel, this argument finds support in Carthaginian domestic (Lancel 1994, 146–64) and religious architecture (Lancel 1994, 198–202), in religious decoration (Lancel 1994, 282–94), and in the plastic arts in general. In these areas, Greek-based motifs and objects became increasingly popular in Carthaginian material culture. The growing assimilation of Greco-Sicilian features progressively displaced the oriental traits in a trend that became particularly acute on the eve of the Punic Wars. This suggests a loss of cohesion and authenticity, which ultimately became the weak spot of the Punic metropolis. In short, what Lancel suggests is that the final outcome of the war was caused by certain differences in the quality of the collective identity of both groups (Lancel 1994, 281–2): strong and cohesive on the Roman side, but weak and ambiguous on the Carthaginian (cf. Bonnet and Krings 2006, 40).

The last of the textbooks we want to focus on is that of M'hammed Hassine Fantar. His overview of Punic Archaeology in the central and western Mediterranean assumes a full correlation between material culture and cultural identity, thus placing all Punic material culture under the umbrella of an unequivocal and homogeneous Carthaginian cultural identity (Fantar 1993, II, 13–76). This pan-Carthaginian perspective neutralizes the historical role of local Punic and indigenous communities which, as the latest research is showing clearly enough (Ruiz Rodríguez and Molinos 2002; Arteaga Matute 2004; Grau 2005; Aranegui Gascó 2005; 2010; López Castro 2006; Kallala et al. 2010, among others), followed their own pathways of socio-economic development and had their own independent political trajectories. The pan-Carthaginian approach, also shared by Lancel (1994, 87–108) among others, is based on an ethnic interpretation of material culture, most particularly once more with regard to funerary and military architecture (Ferchiou 1987; 1990; 1994). But a different perspective could well see the same evidence as a trace of self-representation by local elites beyond Carthaginian control. In fact, we still need a review of the North African material record free from ethnic or cultural nationalist approaches (Quinn 2003, 19–26). In his attempt to ‘give Carthage its due’ (Fantar 1993, I, 10), Fantar underlines its cultural independence and its oriental, non-Greek roots, especially in relation to urbanism and architecture (Fantar 1993, II, 174–8) but also to sculpture and other plastic arts. Fantar attributes a hegemonic identity to Carthage similar to that traditionally associated with Rome the presence of which tends to minimize the impact of external influences (cf. Bonnet 2006, 370). By proposing a Carthaginian identity to match the Roman, however, this author turns the original paradigm around without transforming it. In this way, the paradigm emerges reinforced.

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19 This Carthaginian assimilation of Greco-Sicilian elements was, once again, noted for the first time in the context of the earliest excavations carried out in Carthage, the importance of which in the emergence and consolidation of certain prejudices I aim to stress in this article. In Salomon Reinach’s and Ernest Babelon’s (1886, 27) own words: ‘Les carthaginois ne paraissent pas avoir eu d’art national proprement dit; sur le tard ils se sont mis à l’école des Grecs de Sicile et même ont dérobé à cette île, pour les placer dans leurs temples, les œuvres des artistes grecs que Scipion devait rendre à leurs possesseurs.’ This idea reproduces Ernest Renan’s (1864–1874, 836) analysis of archaeological monuments in Phoenicia, which were divided into three categories according to their relationship with Greek and Roman cultures: pre-Greek influence, pre-Roman influence and purely Greco-Roman.
Although it never acquired the category of textbook, we must include in this bibliographic review the work of Friedrich Rakob, one of the key excavators of Carthage. His positive view on Carthage’s Hellenization is of note. Following his examination of the city’s architecture and urbanism (Rakob 1987; 1989; 1991; 1991–1999; 1995), he suggested that Carthage’s proficiency in adapting to Greek urban and architectonic models was proof of the city’s advanced cultural development. From his perspective, this converted the city into ‘an influential Hellenistic metropolis, the architectonic decorations of which preserve Punic elements interpreted under a Hellenistic key’ (Rakob 2002, 22–3).

The most recent publication on Carthage for the university student is Sandro Bondi’s (et al. 2009) textbook, which presents a comprehensive review of Phoenician/Carthaginian sites, organized by region, and a survey of the key elements of their material culture. His approach to the history of Carthage, however, is still fundamentally conceived as an account of the city’s wars and empire (Bondi et al. 2009, 106–9). The latter follows the same theoretical approach applied to account for Romanization until the 1980s, which has since been amply superseded (van Dommelen 1997; Mattingly 1997, among others). This model of ‘Punicization’ has already been criticized (Quinn 2003, 23–7). According to it, the changes in settlement pattern, burial practices and economic strategies detected from the Atlantic coasts of Morocco and Portugal to the Libyan coastline from the sixth century BC are due mostly to Carthaginian imperial expansion (Bondi et al. 2009, 116). This extreme view of Carthaginian control over the Mediterranean reduces the agency of local populations to almost nothing, and ignores regional variation in the archaeological record. The work stands as the explicit representation – note the singular case in the title – of a unified Phoenician and Carthaginian culture (Bondi et al. 2009, viii–x), in which no attention is paid to cultural evolution, except in the chapter dedicated to pottery (Bondi et al. 2009, 323–45). In conclusion, in my opinion the latest textbook on the history of Carthage fails to account for the heterogeneity shown by Phoenician-Punic societies, and certainly remains within the old-fashioned paradigms of cultural nationalism.

The approaches to cultural contact in these works are, in my opinion, once again heir to the colonial representation of the ancient Mediterranean, which from the outset has so heavily affected Phoenician-Punic Archaeology, and which is still latent in academic circles. The developments of the last few decades, however, have finally offered new theoretical and methodological approaches to the matter regarding urban development (López Castro 2007; Helas and Marzoli 2009), interaction between Phoenician and local communities (Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez 2008; Cañete Jiménez and Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez 2011), agricultural exploitation regimes (van Dommelen and Gómez Bellard 2008), religious practices (Bonnet 2011; Quinn 2011), and identity manifestations (Delgado and Ferrer 2007; Quinn and Vella in press), to cite but the most prominent examples.

In this regard, I believe that the recent debate on the Hellenization of the Punic world from the perspective of religious practices is having a very salutary effect (Melliti 2006; Bonnet 2006; van Dommelen and López-Bertran in press). In my opinion, however, the debate should in future undertake a deep reanalysis of the architecture and urban structure of Carthage and other Punic cities, because of the significant role played by these factors in the emergence of the colonial discourse still prevalent in textbooks. In the specific case of Carthage, the stratigraphic superposition of domestic structures and their surprising alignment with remains found in other areas of the city, like those documented during Salomon Reinach’s and Ernest Babelon’s excavations (see above), have yet to be satisfactorily explained. This record should encourage us...
to pay more attention to the urban evolution of Greek archaic colonies in Sicily (Gras 2002; Fumadó Ortega in press b).²⁰

The dominant paradigm might never have reached such an undisputed position had Salomon Reinach’s and Ernest Babelon’s results been interpreted differently. However, the university student of the twenty-first century does not have the chance to access the developments and approaches achieved over the past two decades in relation to Phoenician-Punic Archaeology. On the contrary, the main teaching tools insist on communicating the old colonial notions of Carthaginian history.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present paper is to illustrate the persistence of the old discourse, which sees Phoenician-Punic Archaeology as ‘colonial archaeology’, in university textbooks. This discourse, the product of a complex intellectual and political context, has been thoroughly analysed by several authors, but the important role played by the extensive excavation campaigns in Carthage between 1859 and 1884 had hitherto been overlooked. The interpretation of its material record, which has been amply superseded in recent times, was understood as scientific proof of Western prejudices. Some of them still persist in the representations of Carthaginian history set forth in university textbooks. For this reason, I believe that a thorough reinterpretation of the results of these excavations, the hypotheses on pre-Roman Carthaginian urbanism, and the relationship between the morphology of ancient cities and society is therefore mandatory.

This debate has, in my opinion, the potential to shed new light over the question of the Hellenization of the central and western Mediterranean, and may be to prompt the production of a university textbook in which cultural contact and the social transformations undergone by the ancient Mediterranean are viewed from a perspective that goes beyond the mythology of Western colonialism.

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²⁰ If we accept that the foundation of Carthage involved the official birth of a politically independent community (Niemeyer 2006, 161; González Wagner 2006, 104), the most efficient way to allocate urban land among the new settlers would be, as was the case with the Greek colonies in Sicily (Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 1–10), the division of the territory per strigas (cf. Ben Younès 1995, 824–6; cf. Gras 2002, 186–9).
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