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THE PERCEPTION OF CARTHAGE IN CLASSICAL GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

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I

The Phoenicians, ancestors of the Carthaginians, first appear in early Greek sources. Homer refers to them as Sidonians in the Iliad and Phoenicians in the Odyssey. The term Phoenicians was invented by the Greeks as a collective denomination for the inhabitants of the Syrian coastal towns such as Tyre, Sidon, Biblos and Berytus. This term has become common usage.

The Phoenicians are represented as merchants who are brave and successful, but also shrewd and eager for profit. The sources do not provide much evidence of social and political structures and our knowledge about early Phoenicia is based on only a few remarks offering us no more than a rough outline. The state of our information increases in accordance with the growth of power of Carthage, the most important Western Phoenician colony. When this city, on the coast of North Africa, became increasingly important during the 6th century BC, a number of clashing opinions about Phoenicians bear witness to the interest which they aroused in Greek historiography. The Carthage depicted by the authors of the Classical Period is of primary interest to us, since their perception is not yet influenced by the negative image of the ‘interpretatio Romana’ which later conditioned documented political opinions about Carthage. After three bloody wars against Carthage, the main competitor in the West, the Romans were not only responsible for the material destruction of her community, but also projected a malicious and distorted view of their vanquished enemies.

Evidence of the extent to which the view of Carthage became distorted abounds in various sources: Plautus’ representation of the greed of Hanno,
a cartoon-like Punic merchant in *Poenulus*, Livy’s depiction of Hannibal’s atrocity,6 Diodorus Siculus’ description of the inhuman cruelty of Punic religious practices,7 influencing the view later presented by Gustave Flaubert in his masterful novel *Salambo*, and, finally, the proverbial ‘fides Punica’, an invention of the Romans.8

It is clearly necessary to obtain an objective assessment of the picture promoted by Roman propaganda. Moreover, when attempting both to attain historical justice and to analyse Roman ideology, one needs to inquire which contemporary sources describe Carthage before the interference of Roman malevolence.

The tension between the facts and their perception in the treatment of Carthage demands that we attempt to explain and supplement the fragmentary evidence reflected in the existing sources. The first Greek sources, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Aristotle, already provide some answers to this problem. But before looking at these authors, we briefly consider the general conception of the beginning of the Carthaginian state, particularly the history of the foundation of Carthage, as depicted in the works of Pompeius Trogus.

In contrast with early Roman history which was written mainly by later Roman authors, the initial stages of Carthaginian society were recorded by non-Carthaginian historians, both Greek and Roman. According to Pompeius Trogus9 the foundation myth of Carthage consists of three parts. The first part focuses on the city of Tyre and the conflicts among the reigning aristocracy as reflected in the story of Elissa and her companions leaving Tyre. The second part concerns an odyssey along the Mediterranean coasts with special emphasis on the foundation of a city on Cyprus.10 The final part relates the arrival of the Phoenician colonists in northern Africa, the actual founding of Carthage and the death of Elissa.

If we reduce the various versions of the foundation story to a single, basic account, this runs as follows: Elissa, sister of the king of Tyre, fled from her home town because her brother Pygmalion had, through avarice, killed her rich husband, the priest of Melkart. After stopping at Cyprus, Elissa (better known as Dido from Vergil’s *Aeneid*) and her companions sailed to the coast of northern Africa. Having obtained a piece of land from the native inhabitants they built a *new city*, which is the literal meaning of *Carthage*. They had to pay tribute to the Lybian landowners. When a native chief wanted to marry Elissa, she committed suicide.

It is both difficult and unrewarding to distinguish various historical layers in this outline and to relate individual traits of the founding legend to history or literary fiction since only a few facts are historically verifiable.11 The names of some of the protagonists occur also in other sources. We know, for example, of a king of Tyre named Pygmalion (this at least is the Greek form of a Phoenician name), and the name Elissa, in contrast
with Dido, is Phoenician. However, the main framework of the narrative and some stereotyped situations are composed according to the tradition of the Greek novel. The plot outline for this composition may be found in the culture of the Sicilian Greeks who from the end of the 6th century BC onwards were closely related to Carthage. From the works of Philistus of Syracuse, Eudoxus of Cnidos and Timaeus of Tauromenium we know that they wrote down Carthage’s founding history.

Some historical truth may indeed be derived from the Carthaginian founding legend. The later political importance of Carthage demanded a rather long preliminary history which had to be ennobled through the importance of its protagonists. This was meant to emphasize the exceptional significance of the city. The massive emigration of a part of the Tyrian nobility, together with their consorts, turned the newly built city of Carthage into more than a mere emporium. Thus the conditions of its founding made Carthage structurally different from most Phoenician colonies of the Western Mediterranean.

From the 6th century BC onwards Carthage emerges as a fully autonomous community comparable to Greek ‘poleis’ such as Syracuse or Massalia. This is the historical situation to which the notes of the Greek classical authors refer and which I would now like to analyse and evaluate.

II

Herodotus collected a whole series of notes on Carthage. We owe to him our knowledge about the first unattested historical facts of Carthaginian history. I am referring to the battle of Alalia (ca. 520 BC), when the joint forces of Carthaginians and Etruscans fought against the Phocaean pirates, who operated from the island of Corsica as their naval base. Here we are informed about the considerable military potential of the Punic side, which included about 60 ships.

Herodotus relates another very interesting incident in book 3, chapters 17 and 19. After invading Egypt (525 BC), the Persian king intended to campaign against Carthage. His intention failed, since the Phoenician fleet was not willing to co-operate in a hostile act against their relatives, and Cambyses had to abandon his plan. Steadfastness and loyalty to tribal relations on the part of the Phoenicians proved to be more powerful than the intentions of the Persian king.

In book 4, chapter 196, a Carthaginian claim is reported which shows that Carthage had trade connections with a land beyond the Pillars of Heracles on the African continent. The passage reads as follows:

εἶναι τῆς Λιβύης χώρῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἔξω Ἡρακλεών στηλέων κατοικημένων ἐς τοὺς ἐπεξ ἀπίστων καὶ ἔξελουσα τὰ φορτία, θέντες αὐτὰ ἐπεζης παρὰ τὴν κυματώγην, ἐσβάντες ἐς τὰ πλοία τύφειν κατανόν. τοὺς δ’
Hanno's periplus along the West African coast may be placed in this context. A large inscription to glorify Hanno's achievement, erected in Carthage and preserved in a Greek translation, underlines the significance of maritime expeditions for the Carthaginian state. These passages not only prove the importance of commerce for Carthage, but also reveal something about its conditions. Of course, such a pattern of trade was only possible with tribes far inferior to Carthaginian civilization. Peoples similar or comparable to the Carthaginians demanded a different approach. Political and diplomatic measures helped organize the trade with Etruscan and Greek cities.

In book 7 chapter 165 f. we hear that the Carthaginians failed to secure political and economic influence over Sicily. Herodotus' description of the events of the battle of Himera (480 BC) reveals the position of Carthage in the central Mediterranean region. Both Punic and Greek interest focused on the personality of Hamilcar. Asked for assistance by the rulers of Himera and Rhegion, the Carthaginians, acting under Hamilcar's leadership, tried to prevent the formation of a strong power under the rulers of Acragas and Syracuse. The Carthaginian Hamilcar is an example of the extent to which the Carthaginian nobility was integrated into the Sicilian aristocracy. His mother was a Syracusan princess and he himself was a relative or friend of the most important aristocratic families of the island. The close links between Greek and Carthaginian aristocrats bear witness to both individual interests and existing relationships between states. These links were further developed into close commercial contacts, which were useful to the Carthaginians as well as to their Greek business partners. An example of this situation is the close economic relationship between Carthage and Selinus. A dramatic change in the political situation of Sicily could endanger the stability of this economic system which was particularly important for Carthage. This explains the Carthaginians' willingness to participate in the Sicilian undertaking. It is probable that Hamilcar gained the military leadership because Carthage provided the largest military contingent. How carefully the Greek public registered the course of events is proved by the fact that Greek writers deal with the battle of Salamis, so important for Greek freedom, in the same way as they deal with the victory of the combined forces of Theron of Acragas and Gelon of Syracuse over the Carthaginians at Himera (480 BC). Ephorus even mentions a treaty between the Persians and Carthage which in all probability is not historical, but nevertheless illustrates subsequent views on Carthage. I therefore cannot agree with C.R. Whittaker when he assumes, on the basis of Herodotus 7. 158 and 166, 'a powerful and early historiographic tradition of Carthaginian imperialism which derives its strength from the supposed
ambition of Punic barbarians to dominate the civilized Greeks'.

As far as we can judge from the existing fragments, even Ephorus, who is a later writer than Herodotus and is influenced by pan-Hellenic ideas, does not mention the motive for the Phoenician threat.

Most of Herodotus' references to Carthage have to be seen in the context of her powerful role in the western Mediterranean. There is hardly any difference between the political behaviour of Carthage on the one hand and the Greek 'poleis' on the other. We cannot detect any negative depiction or prejudice. The Carthaginians are described in the very same way as any of the other seafaring nations of the Mediterranean world.

III

Thucydides also mentions Carthage several times, but his remarks are by far shorter than those of Herodotus, and he deals with Carthage through minor references.

In Thucydides 1.13 we find the first reference to Carthage when he informs us of the defeat of the Carthaginian fleet by the Phocaeans. This short reference seems to present a condensed version of the naval battle of Alalia which had been described in detail by Herodotus. Further observations are made in the context of the second phase of the Peloponnesian War or, to be more accurate, of the Athenian campaign against Sicily. In book 6, chapter 2, Thucydides, dealing with the Phoenician settlements of Sicily, mentions the strategically important position of the city of Carthage. Here Carthage appears as the naval base of the West Phoenician colonies.

There was an alliance between the Elymian cities, Eryx and Egesta, on the one hand, and the Phoenicians and Carthage on the other. Since Athens, the leading Greek power of the time, is known to have been on friendly terms with Egesta (458/457 and 426 BC respectively), it may be assumed that the relation between Athens and Carthage was also by no means hostile. In 416 BC Selinus put pressure on Egesta; as the Carthaginians refused to become involved in this conflict, the Egestans, like most democratic regimes under aristocratic dominance, turned to Athens for help. From 415 BC on, the general situation in the western Mediterranean changed completely when the Athenians decided to intervene in Sicilian affairs.

In book 6, chapter 15, Thucydides tells us about the political controversy between Nicias and Alcibiades, who were the most prominent figures in Athenian politics during the crucial phase of the Peloponnesian war after Pericles' death. Alcibiades, the primary protagonist of the war party, formulated the purpose of the Athenian expedition: the conquest of Sicily and Carthage. This point of view is confirmed once again in chapter 91. In the next reference we read that Carthage was threatened by an Athenian attack. In book 6, chapter 34, the Syracusan, Hermocrates, is said to have tried to gain the support of Carthage in view of Athens' impending attack.
on Syracuse. The main argument in his plea for help is the acknowledgement of the great resources of Carthage. In the assembly of the Syracusans Hermocrates said:

δυνατοὶ δὲ εἰς μᾶλλα τῶν νῦν, βουλήτευσες χρυσὸν γὰρ καὶ ἀργυρὸν πλείστον κέκτηται, οἶδεν ὅ τε πόλειμος καὶ τάλλα εὐπορεῖ.

The support of the Carthaginians was, however, of equal importance to both the Athenian and the Syracusan contestants. Therefore the Athenians had tried to gain the friendship of the Carthaginians during the winter of 415/414 BC, before the decisive battle for Syracuse began. In book 6, chapter 88, Thucydides describes how the Athenians sent a ship from their quarters in Catane to Carthage in order to gain the alliance of the North African metropolis. However, the Carthaginians, not supporting either of the two adversaries, remained neutral. They preserved their forces and intervened in Sicily after the Athenians had been defeated and the Syracusans weakened. This is related by Xenophon.

IV

While Herodotus and Thucydides tell us about Carthage as a sea power, Xenophon describes the Carthaginians as a land power which gained major victories in Sicily. Xenophon’s account, not unlike the brief references of Thucydides, is related to his reports on the last years of the Peloponnesian War. The weakening of Syracuse, as a result of the Sicilian campaign of the Athenians, offered Carthage an opportunity to create a power-zone of her own on this island. Unlike in 416 BC, when they had hesitated to intervene, the Carthaginians were now willing to grasp the opportunity and decided to send their general, Hannibal, to Sicily. Then the Carthaginians sent an enormous number of troops—Xenophon talks of about 100,000 soldiers—to Sicily in 410/9 BC, eventually conquering the Greek cities of Selinus and Himera and installing an overseas province in western Sicily. Two years later the Carthaginians besieged Acragas, the most important Greek city on the island after Syracuse, for seven months, and were able to conquer the city by famine:

καὶ ὁ ἔναυστός ἔληγεν, ἐν δὲ Καρχηδόνιοι εἰς Σικελίαν στρατεύσαντες εἰκοσὶ καὶ ἕκατον τρίηρες καὶ πεζῆς στρατᾶς δώδεκα μυρίαν εἶλον Ἀχράγαντα λιμῷ, μάχῃ μὲν ἠττηθέντες, προσκαθεζόμενοι δὲ ἔπτα μῆνας. (Xen. Hell. 1. 5, 21).

The fact that Syracuse persuaded the Greeks in Sicily to undertake a concerted effort against the Carthaginians when they faced a Carthaginian army on the island does not signify that an antagonism existed between Greeks and Barbarians. Stroheker also recognized this in his time. Syracuse appealed to the willingness of anyone to defend her against an aggressor whether Greek or not (Diod. 13. 81. 2), just like Hermocrates in 424
when he spoke against the Athenians during the congress of Gela. The successes of the Carthaginians and the failure of the people of Syracuse led to enthusiasm in Athens. Evidence that the Carthaginians were not hostile towards the Greeks *per se* during these conflicts, is the fact that in the peace treaty of 405 BC the Carthaginians claimed the autonomy of the Greek towns of Leontinoi and Messana (Diod. 13. 114. 1).

Carthaginian strategy was apparently inspired by the occasion of Greek discord, rather than by the decision to implement a well-directed policy of conquest.\(^3\)\(^8\) Xenophon also points to further conflicts that resulted from the competition between Carthage and Syracuse, since both powers aimed at hegemony. This becomes evident in his reports about the hostilities between Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, and Carthage.\(^3\)\(^9\)

The thesis that Dionysius of Syracuse had been agitating against the Carthaginians from a pan-Hellenic perspective has been corrected and abandoned.\(^4\)\(^0\) It should be sufficient to point out some incidents that can illustrate the real political situation. In a speech Theodorus, who was a fighter for Syracuse, compared Greek rule (the rule of Dionysius) with, for example, that of Carthage. In this speech Timaeus, who is the source of Diodorus, to whom we owe this passage, must admit:

*Kαρχιηδόνιοι μὲν γάρ, κἀν πολέμω χρατήσωσι, φόρον ὑφισμένον λαβόντες ὀφθ ἀν ἡμᾶς ἐκώλυσαν τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις διοικεῖν τὴν πόλιν.\(^4\)\(^1\)

We gain even more evidence from Lysias when he judges Dionysius who stylizes himself as the champion of ‘Greek freedom’. This testimony is very valuable, because Lysias’ family came from Syracuse and had exact knowledge of the situation there. In his 33rd Olympic speech of 388 BC he draws a parallel between Dionysius’ threatening behaviour and the dangerous attitude of the king of Persia. Lysias defines the struggle against the tyrant of Syracuse as a pan-Hellenic challenge.

By the beginning of the fourth century BC the Carthaginians had gained a position of superior power in the western Mediterranean. The Numidian tribes in the hinterland of Carthage were beaten, and the Carthaginian fleet sailed without hindrance from Spain to Greece, and from northern Africa to Gaul and Italy where one half of Sicily formed a Carthaginian province. This was a powerful fleet which made trade with all countries possible, and the North African and overseas possessions formed a further source of wealth for the city.\(^4\)\(^2\)

\*V\*

The view of the city of Carthage offered by Aristotle is very different. The works of this Greek philosopher contain the most detailed information about the institutions of Carthage.\(^4\)\(^3\) In his *Politika* he mainly points out the advantages of its constitution (*Pol. 2. 11*).\(^4\)\(^4\)
It is noteworthy that Aristotle ascribes to Carthage a position among the Greek states, because the Greeks firmly believed that they alone had the ability to found ‘poleis’, whereas the barbarians used to live in tribal societies (‘ethne’). It is therefore remarkable that Aristotle maintained that the Carthaginians were the only non-Greek people who had created a ‘polis’.

Like Crete and Sparta, Aristotle considers Carthage as an outstanding example of an ideal society. In his comparison of Carthage with Sparta we read that a number of Carthaginian political institutions correspond to Greek institutions. There are syssities in Carthage, similar to the magistracy of the ephoroi in Sparta, and a council of elders, comparable to the gerusia. The institution of a royal office existed in Carthage as well as in Sparta, but with one significant difference: the kings of the Spartans gained their status from belonging to a particular aristocratic royal family, whereas the Carthaginians gained royal office by election. This was granted to great men, due to their outstanding achievements. Aristotle thereby confirms the report of Herodotus, as quoted above, who informs us that Hamilcar became king on the basis of his special merits (Hdt. 7. 166). To summarize, Aristotle has a very high opinion of the political institutions of Carthage. Their constitution fulfils all needs of moderation and justice:

The positive view concerning the quality of the Carthaginian constitution expressed in Aristotle’s works is by no means an isolated opinion. In Isocrates (Nicocles 24) we read:

We may conclude that Aristotle’s positive assessment of the political institutions of Carthage was not restricted to his personal conviction but that it reflected a communis opinio.

Another facet of the Carthaginian state is emphasized by Aristotle in book 3, chapter 9. Here he deals with the close contractual relations between the Carthaginians and the Etruscans. Treaties concerning trade, mutual esteem and assistance, and the obligation of reciprocal military assistance were the three main aspects of this alliance. Aristotle’s statements on this matter are impressively confirmed by the latest archaeological
evidence for the Etruscan–Carthaginian entente. Here Carthage represents herself as a community well acknowledged and respected in the family of nations of the western Mediterranean.

Considering all the examples quoted above, one may draw the following picture of the Carthaginian state of the 5th and 4th century BC. By means of a powerful fleet and supported by their Etruscan, Greek, Italian and other allies, Carthage was able to gain access to and free trade with Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Italy, Gaul, Spain, and the North African coast which was her natural sphere of interest. Like most seafaring peoples the Carthaginians defended themselves against foreign competitors energetically or even recklessly, as a note by Eratosthenes illustrates:

\[ \text{Καρχηδονίους δὲ καταποντοῦν, εἰ τις τῶν ξένων εἷς Σαρδῶ παραπλεύσειν ἢ ἐπὶ Στῆλας· διὰ δὲ ταύτ' ἀποστείχοι τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἐσπερίων· καὶ τοὺς Πέρσας δὲ κακῶς ἠγείροντο τοὺς πρέσβεις τάς ὀδοὺς κύκλῳ καὶ διὰ δυσκόλων.} \]

VI

Notwithstanding the positive and partly envious recognition of the political achievements of the Carthaginians, criticism is not entirely absent from the sources. Its most important proponent was Timaeus of Tauromenium. For patriotic reasons (as a Sicilian Greek he chafed under the Carthaginian sovereignty in Sicily), he composed anti-Carthaginian tirades, the transmission of which permits however only the most general impression. In this respect Timaeus became a precursor of partisan historiography biased by subjective involvement—the kind of writing which, in the hands of Roman historians, led to the most consummately distorted image of the Carthaginians.

There are two different opinions about Carthage. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Aristotle report on the events in the western Mediterranean from a geographical distance. They were not directly affected by the results of Carthaginian politics. Although this assures a high degree of objectivity, it lacks a close involvement with the subject. This group of authors represents the oldest written records, whose perspective represents a definitely positive picture of Carthage. By contrast, Timaeus embodies the anti-Carthaginian position. As a Sicilian Greek he had closely experienced the Carthaginian development of power. He surely had reservations about the Carthaginians because they leaned heavily upon the Sicilian Greeks, at least from time to time. Considering the polarized opinions we may now ask which of these traditions was propagated and considered credible and, as a consequence, which of them became important for the perception of Carthage. Moreover, we need to take note of the fact that too schematic a differentiation between a neutral group of authors from the home country and an anti-Carthaginian western Greek tradition could hardly correspond to reality. It is doubtful that Timaeus’ picture of Carthage was valid as
a rule for a negative opinio communis.⁵⁶ The experience of the wars of Pyrrhus taught the western Greek world that the most dangerous future enemies were by no means the Carthaginians, but the Italian peoples. The long-lasting Carthaginian coexistence with the Greeks of Sicily and Italy had resulted in a state of stability and balance.⁵⁷ Not surprisingly the Greek historian Philinus of Acragias describes the First Punic War from the Carthaginian point of view.⁵⁸

If we reconstruct the beginning of Roman historiography, we realize that Fabius Pictor wrote the history of the Roman–Carthaginian conflicts in Greek to convince the Hellenic audience of the legitimacy of Rome’s action.⁵⁹ Would this have been necessary if the animosity against the Carthaginians had represented the general opinion of the western Greeks? Apparently the sympathies of the Greek public lay by no means with the Romans. This is confirmed by the fact that the Carthaginians received much support from the Greek side: at the beginning of the First Punic War, Hiero of Syracuse supported the Carthaginians who had the sympathies of most Greek towns after Acras was conquered by the Romans. In one of the most critical phases of the war for Carthage, the Spartan Xanthippus, who was at the head of a Greek mercenary force, beat the Roman consul Regulus and saved Carthage from a Roman conquest.⁶¹ Until its conquest by Claudius Marcellus in the Second Punic War, Syracuse supported the Carthaginians.⁶² Philip V, the king of Macedonia, was the most prominent ally of Carthage.⁶³ Numerous scholars stayed at Hannibal’s court, among them the historians Silenus of Caleacte, Sosylus of Sparta and Chaireas, who wrote the history of that time from a Carthaginian perspective. Finally, after the war was lost, Hannibal had to go into exile and found refuge at the court of the Hellenistic ruler Antiochus.

The above considerations support the thesis that the positive view of Carthage emerging from Aristotle was the dominant one in Greek writing. Seen from the Greek point of view at the time of Pericles and Plato, Carthage was a wealthy and important community, holding a key position in the western Mediterranean. In addition, the remarks of Aristotle on the public organization of the Carthaginians clearly show how highly this community was valued. Their constitutional achievements were considered exemplary by the Greeks of the classical period. Except for Timaeus, we find no negative judgements such as those in the 3rd, 2nd and 1st centuries BC, when all authors wrote under the influence of malevolent Roman propaganda and prejudice. Undoubtedly the Carthaginians were not infallible—just like any other society—but they certainly were not as perfidious as Roman historiography wished them to be perceived!
NOTES

2. *Il. 23. 743–745; Od. 13. 272 f.*
8. Cic. *de leg. agr. 2. 95; Scaur. 42; de off. 1. 38; Sall. *lug. 108. 3; Verg. Aen. 1. 661; Hor. *Carm. 3. 5. 33; 4. 4. 49; Liv. 21. 4. 9; 22. 6. 11–12; 48. 1; 34. 61. 14; Val. Max. 5. 1; 7. 3; 9. 6; Mart. 4. 14; 6. 19. 6; S. Luria, 'Zum Problem der griechisch–karthagischen Beziehungen', *AAntHung* 12 (1964) 70–75; H. Bellen, *Metus Gallicus – Metus Punicus. Zum Furchtmotiv in der römischen Republik*, Mainz 1985; E. Burck, *Das Bild der Karthager in der römischen Literatur*, 301 ff.; M. Dubuisson, 'L'image du carthaginois dans la littérature latine', *Studia Phoenicia* 2, Leuven 1983, 159–167.
15. Dion. Halic. *Ant. Rom. 1. 74. 1; F. Jacoby *FGGrH* 3 B, 566, F 60.
18. 'There is a place in Libya, [...] where men dwell beyond the Pillars of Heracles; to this they come and unload their cargo; then having laid it orderly along the beach they go aboard their ships and light a smoking fire. The people of the country see the smoke, and coming to the sea they lay down gold to pay for the cargo and withdraw away from the wares. Then the Carthaginians disembark and examine the gold; if it seems to them a fair price for their cargo, they take it and go their ways; but if not, they go aboard again and wait, and the people come back and add
more gold till the shipmen are satisfied. Herein neither party defrauds the other; the Carthaginians do not lay hands on the gold till it matches the value of their cargo, nor do the people touch the cargo till the shipmen have taken the gold.' (Ed. A.D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library).


30. K.J. Dover, ‘La colonizzazione della Sicilia in Tucidide’, Maia 6 (1953) 1–20; A. Domínguez Monedero, La colonización griega en Sicilia. Griegos, Indígenas y Púnicos en la Sicilia Arcaica: Interacción y Aculturación, Oxford 1989, 507 f. C.R. Whittaker, (above, n. 27) 64 concludes correctly: ‘There is no doubting Carthaginian intervention in Sicily over a long period from at least the later sixth century B.C. and it was in this context that Thucydides described Carthage as a force to be reckoned with’.


32. M. Treu, ‘Athen und Karthago und die thukydideische Darstellung’, Historia 3 (1954/5) 45 f. is right in his doubts concerning Thucydides’ assertion.

33. ‘They (the Carthaginians), of all men of the present day, are the most able to do so, if they will; for they have an abundance of gold and silver, by which war and everything else is expedited’ (Thuc. 6. 34. Ed. Chr. Forster Smith, Loeb Classical Library).

34. M. Treu, (above, n. 32) 42–45; S. Luria, (above, n. 8) 56.

35. Diod. 13. 44. 1.
36. For the diplomatic efforts of the Carthagians K.F. Stroh Meyer, ‘Die Karthagerges-
sellschaft in Athen 406 v. Chr.’, Historia 3 (1954/5) 163–171. For the military
campaigns W. Huss, (above, n. 19) 107–123.
38. L.-M. Hans, (above, n. 24) 105 f.
Diodor von den Anfängen bis zum Tod des Agathokles. Quellenuntersuchungen zu
Buch IV–XXI, München 1967, 97 f.
40. S. Luria, (above, n. 8) 59–64.
41. ‘For even should the Carthaginians defeat us in war, they would only impose a fixed
tribute and would not prevent us from governing the city in accordance with our
42. Vide the differentiated portrait of the situation, including the Carthaginian alliances,
in C.R. Whittaker, (above, n. 27) 68 f., 76–80.
43. The essentials of the constitution of Carthage in W. Huss, (above, n. 19) 458–466.
45. With reference to their way of life and their customs the Carthaginians are addressed
as ‘ethnos’ (Pol. 1324 b 13), with reference to their political organization, however,
as ‘polis’ (Pol. 1273 b 12; 1293 b 15; 1307 a 5; 1316 a 34; b 5; 1320 b 4).
46. Most of the information of the Carthaginian internal affairs of these periods we
deduce from later sources like Diodorus or Pompeius Trogus. An overview of the
relevant developments is given by L.J. Sanders, ‘Punic Politics in the Fifth Century
47. P. Carlier, La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre, Strasbourg 1984, 240 f.
48. ‘Many regulations at Carthage are good; and a proof that its constitution is well
regulated is that the populace willingly remain faithful to the constitutional system,
and that neither civil strife has arisen in any degree worth mentioning, nor yet a
tyrant’ (Pol. 2. 11.1; 1272 b Ed. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library).
49. ‘We know that while the Carthaginians and the Lacedaemonians, who are the best
governed peoples of the world, are ruled by oligarchies at home, yet, when they take
the field, they are ruled by kings. One might also point out that the state which
more than any other abhors absolute rule meets with disaster when it sends out
many generals, and with success when it wages war under a single leader’. (Ed. G.
Norlin, Loeb Classical Library).
50. P. Barceló, Etruscos y fenicios: Colaboración y conflicto. Actas del Congreso: La
51. M. Pallottino, ‘Scavi nel santuario etrusco di Pyrgi. Relazione preliminare della
settimana campagna, 1964. E scoperta di tre laminae d’oro inscritte in etrusco e in
punico’, ArchClass 16 (1964) 49–117; J. Ferron, ‘Un traité d’alliance entre Caere
et Carthage contemporain des derniers temps de la royauté étrusque à Rome ou
l’événement commémoré par la quasi-bilingue de Pyrgi’, Aufstieg und Niedergang
11) 278 f.
52. ‘And the Carthaginians likewise, says Eratosthenes, used to drown in the sea any
foreigners who sailed past their country to Sardinia or to the Pillars of Heracles,
and it is for this reason that most of the stories told about the West are disbelieved’
54. The Proxeny-decree of Thebes is very interesting in this context (Syll. 1, 3, 179. (The Carthaginian Hannibal, the son of Hasdrubal, is honoured in this decree as he probably played an important role in the reorganization of the fleet of the Boeotian federation).

55. S. Luria, (above, n.8) 64–66.

56. R. Lacqueur, RE 6 A, s.v. Timaios, 1194. I agree with W. Huss who referred to Timaeus with restraint and only cited him twice in his Geschichte der Karthager.


60. W. Huss, (above, n. 19) 224–226.

61. W. Huss, (above, n. 19) 236.


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