

During the period of Carthaginian colonial presence on Sardinia, to what extent should the Carthaginian relations with the Sardinian population from the sixth to the second centuries BC be regarded in terms of either dualism or hybridization?

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Introduction

From at least the early Bronze Age, the island of Sardinia played a crucial role in the histories and fortunes of a great number of ancient Mediterranean civilisations and cultures. A large part of this is due to the strategic location of the island, with its close proximity to Sicily, as well as the coasts of Spain and North Africa, making it ideal for developing trading networks.

From the Bronze Age through into the Iron Age, the civilisation which developed and inhabited Sardinia was known as the Nuraghi. This dissertation, whilst not focusing entirely upon the history of these people directly, will concern the relations that these indigenous inhabitants had with the successive groups of Phoenicians and eventually Carthaginians, who, attracted to the mineral wealth of the island and its centrality in the Mediterranean, came to settle on Sardinia from the sixth

century BC onwards until the eventual conquest of the island by the Romans following the end of the first Punic War, and the eventual complete cessation of Carthaginian influence on the island following the defeat and destruction of Carthage in the third Punic War.

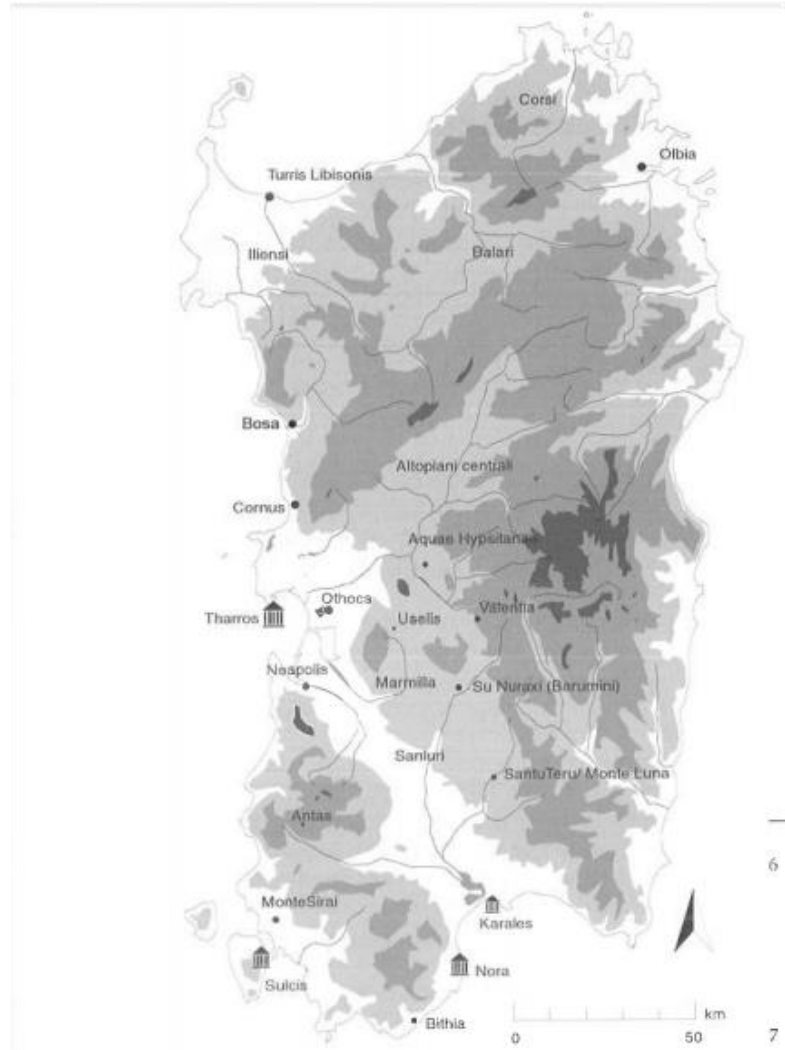


Fig. 1. Map showing the main Punic and Roman sites on Sardinia.

The nature of the relations between these groups have been the subject of a great deal of scholarly debate. In particular, this dissertation will focus on the debate surrounding the nature of the Carthaginian presence on the island, looking at a number of viewpoints both ancient and modern in an attempt to synthesise the many strands of evidence into a rather more unified picture. A number of scholars such as Moscati, influenced largely by the writings of ancient authors such as Polybius, Diodorus Siculus and Pompeius Trogus (conveyed in the *Epitome* by Justin), have proposed a model of Carthaginian exploitation of both the island's natural resources and its native population, through aggressive military tactics, destruction of population centres, and through changing the population demographic of the island by bringing in settlers from Carthage and North Africa.¹ This can be said to be the more traditional dualist view, emphasising the differences between Carthaginian colonialists and the indigenous population, and casting the two cultures as irrevocably separate and unrelated during the Punic period.

This view, in part due to the development of new theories and practices in archaeology, and particularly due to the application of post-colonial theory to archaeological evidence, has been largely challenged in recent years. The reasons for this move towards an interest in post-colonialism are outlined by Boardman who argues that post-colonialism can be seen as being a response against overspecialization within archaeology, as well as part of strong negative response to the history of European colonialism, which has led to a degree of favouring of the those who have been colonised within historical and archaeological narratives.²

The tone taken by Boardman can be seen as somewhat critical of aspects of post-colonial approaches, as he seems wary of narratives becoming apologist or overly

¹ Moscati, S. (1968), *The World of the Phoenicians*, trans. Alastair Hamilton, Chatham.

² Boardman, (2001), 33.

sympathetic. However, another view on the importance of post-colonialism to modern archaeology is offered by Van Dommelen. In a paper from 1997 he argues that post-colonial approaches have a great deal of use and application in archaeology, as an alternative to existing ways of viewing colonial situations. He points out that existing studies of ancient colonialism are inherently conceived as being “dualist” in nature,³ and that this “allows colonial situations to be reduced to a mere clash between two basically independent entities”.⁴ This is an important point, demonstrating that post-colonial approaches to archaeology can be used to replace these existing ideas, serving to add new perspectives to existing evidence. From this we can see the development of ideas of hybridization and cultural interaction taking the place as defining theories that help to understand Punic Sardinia. Van Dommelen can be seen as one of the most important scholars writing on Punic Sardinia, and as his work will be referred to throughout this dissertation; it is important then to remember that he is very much influenced by post-colonial lines of thinking of in archaeology.

Unlike other regions of the ancient world, research on Sardinia appears to be remarkably divided, between earlier scholars and those since the 1970s, with little overlap in ideas between these two schools of thought. This is compounded by the relative paucity of ancient sources, and the fact in the majority of cases, the sources we have do not particularly seem to match the archaeological evidence. These radically different interpretations of the ancient history of Sardinia raise interesting questions; in particular, why are there so many differing interpretations of the Carthaginian presence on the island, and is there way to reconcile and find a middle ground within the secondary scholarship? There is also something of a divide between historians and archaeologists who specialise in the Nuragic

³ Van Dommelen, (1997), 308.

⁴ Van Dommelen, (1997), 308.

period and those who focus on the Punic period, which has to some extent impacted views on the narrative of Punic Sardinia, and this is something which I hope this work will reconcile.

The majority of modern scholarship concerns itself with challenging the ideas of earlier scholars, or focuses primarily upon studies of the Sardinian economy. Therefore, there is little available evidence for such areas as the impact on social structure within Sardinia that the Carthaginians caused, nor has a great deal of work been done on, for example, the differences between the lives of Sardinian men and women during this period, or how Carthaginian colonialism impacted or changed the daily lives of indigenous people living in Sardinia.

Another point that must be addressed is that many sources for this period and this island are written in Italian, French, or Spanish, making them somewhat inaccessible to anyone without some grasp of these languages. Of course, this should not be taken as an excuse for my lack of ability in this regard, but it must be noted that this present work relies almost entirely on the English scholarship on Sardinia. In some places, however, articles will be used which have been translated from Italian with the assistance of Lucia Michielin (PHD).

By focusing the majority of this dissertation upon a relatively small geographical area (namely the southern and western coastal hinterland and the interior mountainous area) of Sardinia, it is hoped that not only will a clearer picture of Carthage's interactions with the Sardinian population emerge, but also that alongside their economic motives, inferences will be able to be made regarding any changes to social structures and cohesion that may have been brought about by the imposition of Carthaginian socio-political structures on the island. Focusing on a smaller area will ensure that I will be able to explore the topic in depth, and furthermore, it was generally within this region that Carthaginian and Punic influence was

expressed most strongly, in comparison to the northern part of the island which appears to have had only minimal elements of Punic culture.

One particularly interesting area which it would be interesting and expedient to study at length would be that of religious interaction during the Punic period on the island. However, although some evidence regarding use and re-use of religious sanctuaries on Sardinia is available, as well as tantalising clues regarding hybridization of religious customs, there is unfortunately not enough published information available to allow for a detailed discussion of this topic at length. This, I hope, is explanation enough for the lack of a chapter devoted purely to religion. Where applicable, however, the available evidence on religion will be used to further support discussion of social changes and interaction on Sardinia, in particular with relation to skeletal evidence from sites on Sardinia such as that from the necropolis at Monte Sirai.

Another area which will, unfortunately, not be discussed in as much detail as I would have hoped, is the archaeology of gender, as it seems that not enough work has been done on Sardinia to allow for a great deal of research to be conducted on this area. I do feel that this would present an interesting perspective, and one which archaeologists would do well to begin to focus on in the near future. I understand that this is a relatively new concept within archaeology in general. That being said, there have been a number of Punic burials that have been uncovered in the last few decades, and of these a number are of, often wealthy, Punic women. These shall be discussed to some extent in the hope of offering at least some light on this fascinating and vital aspect of the ancient world.

Given the nature of Sardinia as being both one part of a wider Carthaginian empire, and also a wider part of Western Mediterranean networks of trade and exchange, it would be unwise to view the island in isolation. Therefore, some consideration will be made of the

colonial situation on, for example, Sicily and Southern Spain during the period. However, such comparisons will be kept to a minimum to ensure that focus of this work is on Sardinia itself; furthermore, with regards to Sicily in particular, it will be seen that the differences in the colonial situation on that island make it rather difficult to use as a suitable comparison with Sardinia.

To clarify, the term Punic will be used throughout this dissertation not as a marker of ethnicity, but as a broad term to describe the culture of the many places around the Mediterranean which were colonised or influenced by the Carthaginians. Generally, I will follow the convention of Van Dommelen who defines the term Punic as meaning, “a cultural identity that can be applied to a large group of societies in the central and western Mediterranean between the middle of the sixth and the end of the second centuries BCE”.⁵ I shall now begin my analysis of whether dualism or hybridization defined Punic Sardinia by examining evidence of conflict and resistance on Sardinia during the Punic period.

⁵ Van Dommelen, (2014), 70.

Chapter 1: Analysis of Conflict and Resistance on Sardinia During the Punic Period

A common theme of both ancient accounts and secondary scholarship on Sardinia is that of strong resistance to Carthaginian colonialism from the indigenous population, leading to a degree of duality between the two groups. The general narrative is that, following the decline of Phoenician power in the Mediterranean, Carthaginian forces under Hamilcar and Hasdrubal conquered Sardinia, effectively subjugating large swathes of the Sardinian population, and forcing those not under their control to flee into the mountainous interior of the island.⁶ Indeed, like other aspects of the history of Carthaginian colonisation on Sardinia, this narrative has only relatively recently come under more intense scrutiny, with a number of different viewpoints from different scholars emerging as challenges to the traditional narrative which is mainly constructed from the ancient literary sources.

We must of course not view the Punic period as something of a vacuum; the Carthaginians followed on from the Phoenicians, who for a number of centuries had established colonies and cultural links on the island, leading Moscati to highlight that there was a definite Phoenician phase of occupation on the island prior to that of the Punic period.⁷ He goes on to point out that there are archaeological finds at S. Antioco and Nora on Sardinia of Phoenician material dating from the eighth century BC, markedly earlier than the first evidence we have of Punic material culture.⁸ It would, of course, be inaccurate to claim that the Carthaginians superseded the Phoenicians in some manner resembling a peaceful transition of power, without any violence taking place. Such an interpretation would certainly

⁶ Levi, (1943), 644,545.

⁷ Moscati, (1965), 206.

⁸ Moscati, (1965), 207.

border on apologist in nature, and in any case we do have evidence of what appears to be military action at a number of former Phoenician and Nuragic sites.⁹ What will be argued, therefore, is that beyond the initial conquest of the island, Carthaginian control of the southern and interior areas of the island was not maintained through military force as such levels of control over the indigenous population were largely not necessary, and that we should not view the Sardinians themselves in the simplistic terms of either a subjugated or rebellious people, alternating between submitting and resisting to Carthaginian rule over their island. Quite simply, such a narrative oversimplifies a complex situation that developed over a period of centuries.

One clear example of a site where military conflict in some form took place is that of Monte Sirai. This was a Phoenician settlement that was itself built upon an existing Nuragic site, in the Southwestern part of the island. We have evidence of destruction at this site at beginning of the Punic period.¹⁰ This is a pattern which is replicated at other sites in the Sardinian hinterland, however it should not necessarily be taken as evidence of Carthaginian subjugation of the Sardinian population, as I shall discuss with regard to the evidence of Van Dommelen below. For example, we have no clear evidence of whether the Carthaginian military defeats that were inflicted according to Justin when they first attempted to conquer the island were caused by Phoenician forces, indigenous forces, or some combination of both.¹¹ The information from Justin is indeed rather brief, stating that, “[...] when the theatre of war was transferred to Sardinia, they lost most of their army and were defeated in a critical battle” (*Justin: Epitome of Pompeius Trogus:18.7.1*). During the early Punic period, there is evidence of continued native settlement in these areas, which does of course somewhat undermine the narrative of Carthaginian subjugation and conquest. With regard to Monte

⁹ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 114.

¹⁰ Ridgway, (1979), 59,60.

¹¹ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 112.

Sirai, it also appears that, following the initial Carthaginian occupation of the site, relations were quite peaceful in the area, with no apparent evidence for further unrest.¹²

Furthermore, Van Dommelen in his doctoral thesis, questions whether the prolonged conflicts, termed the “Sardinian-Punic Wars”, took place at all. He points out that, although there is evidence of destruction at a number of sites, it is very much unclear whether or not Carthaginian troops were involved in these actions.¹³ Van Dommelen highlights that, for example, “the abandonment of Su Nuraxi fits in a wider pattern of destroyed and abandoned Nuragic sites in the Marmilla, which has been ascribed to internal strife”.¹⁴ This is an interesting point, as it would certainly be unwise to base interpretations of Punic Sardinia purely upon literary evidence, and if the archaeological evidence offers different interpretations from the literary sources, then this casts doubt upon the traditional narratives that emphasise Carthaginian military force as a dominant feature in the narrative of Punic Sardinia.

One school of thought suggests that, contrary to this model, the colonisation of Sardinia by Carthage should instead be seen as being driven by mercantilism, and that they had no overarching strategy for conquering and controlling the entire island.¹⁵ Rather, they focused on settling areas that were the most suitable for economic development and overseas trade, rather than sites that offered a strategic military advantage (of the 106 Punic sites on Sardinia, only seven per cent are in areas of lower quality soil).¹⁶ This is supported by the idea that the fortifications at Monte Sirai were re-established by the Carthaginians with the intention of protecting coastal cities, which of course would have been important to the

¹² Aubet, (1993), 240.

¹³ Van Dommelen, (1998), 124.

¹⁴ Van Dommelen, (1998), 124.

¹⁵ Roppa, (2014), 260.

¹⁶ Webster and Teglund, (1992), 457.

Carthaginians for ensuring safe passage of goods and ease of trade.¹⁷ It is also pointed out that quite simply Carthage would have lacked the population to deploy a constant military presence across the island.

A model, building on the work of Dyson in the 1980s, is also put forward by Webster and Teglund, who sketch out an analysis of Carthaginian colonisation arranged by region. When considered in this manner, it becomes immediately clear that pan-Sardinian models of colonialism largely become redundant. For example, the north of the island only had tangential contact with the Carthaginians, and they never fully controlled it, nor indeed attempt to control it, in the manner of the south of the island.¹⁸ The reasons for this are not entirely clear, however Webster and Teglund point to the possibility that there was less potential in the north of the island for the development of agricultural resources, making it less desirable to the Carthaginians.¹⁹ Furthermore, even in the southern lowlands and uplands of Sardinia, the pattern of peaceful interaction and military intervention varies dramatically. In a number of areas, perhaps due to existing relations between Nuragic and Phoenician urban centres, it seems that the new Punic populations were able to integrate peacefully with the indigenous population; for example, in this area there are no forts or evidence that native sites were destroyed.²⁰ In other areas, the landscape is characterised by many small rural settlements, which could have been occupied by either Punic settlers or local people influenced by elements of Punic culture.²¹ This could be regarded in much the same way as local people in Britain who began to adopt Roman aspects of culture following the Roman invasion of Britain.

¹⁷ Moscati, (1968), 209.

¹⁸ Webster and Teglund, (1992), 462.

¹⁹ Webster and Teglund, (1992), 462.

²⁰ Webster and Teglund, (1992), 457-460.

²¹ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 117.

Webster and Teglund argue that, based on identification carried out previously by Rowland and Barreca, there were in fact fourteen forts constructed during the later Punic period, with some further evidence of potential earlier fortifications as well.²² This clearly presents a different perspective on the manner in which Carthage exercised control over its territory. If these forts were indeed built for this purpose, it could be seen as implying that there was some form of active resistance from the Sardinian population which was deemed enough of a threat that it needed to be checked and controlled through the installation of permanent military garrisons, maintained by Carthaginian troops or troops loyal to Carthage. In addition, they point out that, between the sixth and the fourth centuries BC, a number of the towers which were built by the Nuragic people of Sardinia and which formed the centre of Nuragic communities²³ were either destroyed or abandoned, which could be seen as a suggestion a degree of military aggression on the part of Carthage.²⁴ This perspective, as we will see, has been disputed by some scholars such as Van Dommelen.

It must be noted that this concept of the establishment of permanent Punic military fortifications on Sardinia is one which has been a subject of a great deal of debate. Naturally, such a perspective can be seen as drawing heavily on parallels from later Roman examples, such as the *limes* that were developed along the borders of Roman provinces.²⁵ This can of course be immediately seen as problematic, as it is often unwise to make such parallels between what were clearly two very different situations.²⁶ One of the main difficulties which I can see in this argument, and one which has been touched upon by modern scholars such as Dyson and Rowland for example, as well as Van Dommelen, is that it would have required a great deal of manpower to maintain a constant garrison across such a large number of forts.

²² Webster and Teglund, (1992), 460.

²³ Balmuth, (1981), 37.

²⁴ Webster and Teglund, (1992), 460.

²⁵ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 114.

²⁶ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 116.

Much has been made of the idea that Carthage exerted a great deal of control of the island by sending across large numbers of “Libyan-Carthaginians” to settle on the island, thus changing the population demographic on the island in favour of the Carthaginians, and creating a stable base of loyal supporters to help maintain control of the island. This idea was put forward in 1968 by the Italian scholar Sabatino Moscati, who highlighted it as a deliberate method of Carthaginian control over Sardinia, and was furthermore the main difference between Carthaginian colonialism on Sardinia and on Sicily.²⁷

Van Dommelen highlights that, with regards to Sicily, it is a more difficult to establish a narrative of Carthaginian colonisation, as from the sixth to the third Centuries BC, the areas of the island which fell under Carthaginian control changed a lot over time.²⁸ Indeed, the fifth and fourth centuries on Sicily saw competition between the Greek and Punic settlements on the island.²⁹ This was clearly then a far more dynamic, shifting and tense colonial situation compared to the relative peace that characterised Punic Sardinia.

With the support of the work of scholars such as Dyson and Rowland, this view I believe can be countered in a number of ways. There is no real archaeological evidence for such a large intake of Carthaginian peoples, and this would have been unsustainable for the city anyway, especially over a long period of time.³⁰ Also, the Carthaginian military at all periods of Carthaginian history, relied on mercenaries, who by their very nature were taken on for short periods of time when the needs of the Carthaginians were most pressing, and it seems unlikely that the case would be any different for Sardinia.³¹ Indeed, the ancient evidence which we have seems to suggest that Carthage used Sardinia as a source of

²⁷ Moscati, (1968), 209.

²⁸ Van Dommelen, (2006), 15.

²⁹ Van Dommelen, (1998), 118.

³⁰ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 114.

³¹ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 114.

mercenaries in times of conflict, rather than the other way around,³² further supporting the idea that Carthage would not have been able to send a large enough population, in a military context or otherwise to the island on a permanent basis. Dyson and Rowland also further point out that at many of the forts, no Punic writing or military finds have been found, and that the main evidence for them being Punic rests on the way in which they have been built, however these techniques have also been found at Nuragic sites, which undermines the hypothesis that they are Punic forts.³³

Dyson and Rowland go on in their argument regarding these forts to make the suggestion that they could in fact have been constructed by elements of the Nuragic population on the island who, resisting Carthaginian imperialism, retreated into the hills to establish permanent lines of defence.³⁴ This is an interesting hypothesis that would seem to support the primary sources such as those written by Pausanias which do speak of such events taking place. However, once again this perspective can be countered when other available evidence is considered. To suitably construct and man these fortifications would have required a great deal of co-ordination, effort, and time. This does not fit a narrative of a harried people fleeing before an invading force. Once again, there is also no evidence of military action taking place around these sites, which in my view further undermines this hypothesis, as it seems highly unlikely that had the Carthaginians been maintaining an active imperialistic policy supported by military force they would not have tolerated these strongholds existing for the duration of their presence on the island.

Furthermore, there is evidence that a number of these fortified sites were of Nuragic origin but had been abandoned and subsequently reoccupied during the Punic period,³⁵ and

³² Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 121.

³³ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 116.

³⁴ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 116.

³⁵ Van Dommelen, (1998), 126.

therefore their defensive nature could be regarded as merely incidental, in much the same way that fortified towns such as York no longer have any use for such fortifications, but they remain extant in the town. Just because defensive fortifications existed at these sites does not mean that they would have been utilised for this purpose at all periods of their occupation. Van Dommelen further points out that from a number of these military sites the main body of archaeological evidence points far more towards them being substantial rural settlements.³⁶ If this is the case, it fits far more into theories of hybridization than it does of dualism. It also suggests that, if Carthaginian settlers were largely free to establish thriving trading communities within the mountainous interior of the island, then this serves as a stark challenge to the dualist narrative of an indigenous population fleeing to the hills and enacting guerrilla warfare from mountain strongholds.

Therefore, building upon the work of other contemporary scholars, I posit that the Carthaginian takeover of Sardinia, although instigated by military conquest, as attested in ancient sources such as Justin's 'Epitome of Pompeius Trogus', was followed not by a campaign of military control and domination over the population of the island, but by steady acculturation and the spread of Punic culture throughout the Sardinian population. The concept of a system of *limes*, such as those constructed later by Romans does not appear to have any real precedent on Sardinia, and should be largely dismissed. I do not however dispute the presence of a number of Punic forts in the interior of the island, although upon weighing the available evidence I do not feel that these represented permanent, manned fortifications with the aim of controlling the local population, but rather that these were used in times of need in the face of any threats that may have arisen.

³⁶ Van Dommelen, (1998), 126.

This view is supported, once again, by Van Dommelen who argues convincingly that the Punic period on Sardinia was characterised by a steady acculturation of the local population through a program of intense rural settlement that shifted relations between the Punic settlers and the Sardinian native population from being defined by exchange to becoming more “territorial”.³⁷ This is a good point, and suggests that the Carthaginians were consciously employing an active strategy on Sardinia to maintain and extend some form of control through influence and acculturation, suggesting that, unlike earlier narratives, they did not need to rely on the exertion of military force to achieve their aims. Indeed, Van Dommelen goes on to note that, by the start of the fourth century BC, there were, “a total of some 115 rural sites in a small area north of Neapolis”.³⁸ This is clearly a very large amount by any standard, although once again it must be noted that, if these were small rural settlements, it once more serves as a piece of evidence undermining dualist narratives such as that of Doro Levi which build on the concept of large-scale slave-ownership and *latifundia* as being the defining features of the Punic period on Sardinia.

³⁷ Van Dommelen, (2005), 129.

³⁸ Van Dommelen, (2005), 129.

Chapter 2: Analysis of the Economy of Sardinia During the Punic Period

It is widely held that the main motivation for the Carthaginians to ‘colonise’ Sardinia was to exploit both its mineral and agricultural resources.³⁹ However, unlike for example, the Carthaginian colonies on Spain and Sicily, there does not seem to be very much evidence for an organised export market to Carthage. Scholars such as Hoyos, however do believe that Sardinian grain was sent perhaps as tribute to Carthage, however it should be noted that these references coincide with times of war.⁴⁰ Therefore I do not believe that these sources should not be taken as a reflection of standard practice unless further evidence comes to light. This is further supported by Whittaker who has pointed out that there is very little evidence of tribute coming from the Carthaginian colonies in both Spain and Sardinia, and that the only time that this is mentioned concerns a time of civil strife around Carthage, and therefore once again should not be taken as evidence of a structured system.⁴¹ Indeed, as Whittaker states, the imported corn from these places could just as easily have been bought by Carthage rather than extracted as tribute.⁴² Van Dommelen does point out that a systemic export of grain from Sardinia to Carthage could have taken place, but there is as yet not enough evidence available to understand the nature of this system.⁴³

Despite these arguments that state-sponsored large scale agricultural export did not take place, or took place in a manner as yet unknown, some scholars such as Levi and Barreca have argued that the defining feature of the Carthaginian occupation of the island was the creation of *latifundia*. These were large agricultural estates, comparable to those later

³⁹ Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 49.

⁴⁰ Hoyos, (2010), 47.

⁴¹ Whittaker, (1979), 72, 73.

⁴² Whittaker, (1979), 72, 73.

⁴³ Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 52.

established across Italy under the Roman republic. Indeed, Doro Levi, writing in 1943, stated that Carthage, “established for the first time the system of large landed estates, *latifundia*, the principle of slave economy, and the tithes”.⁴⁴

This perspective suggests a strong level of Carthaginian agency in shaping Sardinia to suit their aims, and an aggressive dualism between the Carthaginians and the native Sardinians. However, this view has been argued against by scholars such as Van Dommelen and also by Dyson and Rowland who state that, rather than putting forward a model of large-scale colonialist agricultural production that forced the local population into the hills, a more reasonable view would be to present a picture of a landscape with some Carthaginian farms and villages, but largely dominated by local populations in different stages of cultural adaptation.⁴⁵ This is an important point, and one that builds on our earlier discussion of violence and military control within Punic Sardinia.

The more nuanced view this presents is very interesting, and one which has gained a great deal of traction in the last few decades. In part, this can be seen as a result of an increase in archaeological excavation and surveying across Sardinia, such as the one conducted by Van Dommelen and Roppa in conjunction with The University of Glasgow.⁴⁶ These efforts have presented a strong challenge to the prevailing ideas of an economy largely instigated and controlled by the Carthaginians at the expense of the local population. It seems that there has been very little evidence found for the presence of *latifundia*. Rather, evidence suggests that this was not the case, and that there was likely much more likely much more interaction

⁴⁴ Levi, (1943), 645.

⁴⁵ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 118.

⁴⁶ I refer here to the Riu Mannu Survey Project, <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeologyresearch/projects/sardinia/riumannu/>.

with the indigenous population, who it can be said, played a far more active role in the history of their island than they have previously been allowed.⁴⁷

Furthermore, in an article published jointly by Van Dommelen and Roppa, drawing on their on the Riu Mannu survey project, they argue that due to the wide variation of settlement types, sizes and distributions across Sardinia, it is quite simply no longer viable to project a model of Carthaginian colonisation that applied across the whole island.⁴⁸ This is clearly significant, and highlights once more the disparity between the literary evidence such as, for example Justin's 'Epitome of Pompeius Trogus', and Pausanius' works on Mediterranean geography, and the archaeological evidence that we have for Sardinia. To expand on this point, it is clear that if this is a correct reading of the archaeological situation, then it has implications for our understanding of the nature of the economic systems put in place by Carthage.

There have been a number of survey projects carried out in Sardinia, such as the one carried out in the Terralese area of the island.⁴⁹ The results of the survey, coupled with excavation reports, reveal a landscape of many small settlements, mostly self-contained agricultural units and small villages. Some inhabitants of this area appear to have been relatively wealthy, given the finds of imported Attic pottery and locally produced fine wares.⁵⁰ This indicates some level of social stratification, although the scale of these estates should not be conflated with *latifundia*, as they were still smaller in scale than these large estates. They also suggest the importance of individual enterprise in driving the local economy, as opposed to state sponsored large scale operation.⁵¹ It should also be noted, with

⁴⁷Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 118.

⁴⁸Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 66.

⁴⁹Roppa, (2013), 169.

⁵⁰Roppa, (2013), 172-173.

⁵¹ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeologyresearch/projects/sardinia/riumannu/>.

relevance to my earlier discussion of the role of the military in Carthaginian colonialism on Sardinia, that I have not found any evidence of military activity being noted in this region. Once more, this erodes earlier dualist narratives of Sardinian history, as it would be very unlikely if such an economic model of agricultural production and small settlements would have developed and thrived if there had been an active resistance from the indigenous population.

In support of this, it is from the fifth century BC onwards that we have evidence from Nuragic sites of both Punic amphorae and Attic fineware.⁵² The fact that these developments coincide almost perfectly with the generally accepted date of the first Punic influence on the island once more highlights what must have been strong mercantile links between the Nuragic people and the Carthaginians from an early date in the Punic period. Roppa points out that this pattern, “[...] is therefore regarded as a colonial production, implying the takeover of the indigenous interior regions of the island”.⁵³ Certainly, if this were the case it could be seen as a link between Carthaginian mercantilism and dualist narratives of Punic Sardinia, emphasising a supplanting of indigenous material culture with that of the Carthaginians. However, yet again such readings deny any real agency on the part of the Nuragic people themselves, and do not tally with the varied nature of the archaeological evidence.⁵⁴

These findings have been further supported by a study which was conducted to examine both changes in vegetation and the human impact on the landscape around Tharros, in the south-western area of Sardinia. The study analysed pollen samples taken from sediments in the Mistras Lagoon, not far from Tharros.⁵⁵ The general findings from their

⁵² Van Dommelen, (2005), 130.

⁵³ Roppa, (2014), 257.

⁵⁴ Roppa, (2014), 257.

⁵⁵ Di Rita et al, (2013), 4272.

analysis that are most immediately clear are that, over time, there was a steady intensification of human development and agricultural production from the Nuragic period through the Punic and Roman periods of Sardinian history.⁵⁶ The immediate conclusion that can be drawn from this is that it supports the findings of the Riu Mannu field survey. Interestingly, it also suggests that there was little disruption to this pattern, such as, for example, a longer period of stasis following military conquest of the area. Normally, when such drastic changes happen, they would appear in records such as these, and the fact that they have not been found once more undermines dualist narratives of Punic Sardinia by showing that there was no real evidence, at least in this area, for constant conflict and unrest. This also raises the question of how smooth the transition of power was when the Carthaginians first began to colonise the island, and how this was perceived by the local communities on the island, as well as how it affected the local economy.

With regards to metallurgy, I will focus once again on evidence for the area around Tharros. Excavation in this area has uncovered a large amount of waste-products and tools related to metallurgy in the Phoenician and Punic periods of Sardinia.⁵⁷ These finds are important, as prior to their discovery not a great deal was known about the actual processes involved in exploitation of metal resources on Sardinia in this period.⁵⁸ Indeed, this is a pattern replicated at other areas across Sardinia. For example in the mining basin of Montevecchio, “pyrometallurgical” materials have been found. However, despite these finds, the combination of a lack of scientific analysis coupled with the fact that, across Sardinia as a whole, furnaces and other helpful finds and information have not been found. This is indeed rather frustrating of course, but despite these difficulties, the fact that these remains from metallurgical processes have been found, and furthermore have been found in conjunction

⁵⁶ Di Rita et al, (2013), p.4272.

⁵⁷ Caro et al, (2013), p.933.

⁵⁸ Caro et al, (2013), p.934.

with both Punic and Roman remains allows us to say with certainty that during these periods there was clearly some intensive metal extraction and processing taking place on the island. Furthermore, the remains from the mining site, although limited, can be analysed using a variety of techniques which can tell us more about the processes which went into forging the metals, which in turn can help shed some light on Punic metallurgical processes, and skill level of the people involved in these processes.⁵⁹

The conclusions of the study show that the mining activities conducted at the site involved a number of complex processes related to the extraction of silver.⁶⁰ The complexity of the processes involved, shows that, according to Caro et al, “the ancient metallurgists knew and successfully controlled in an empirical way multi-step processes for the argentiferous lead production and silver recovery [...]”.⁶¹ These findings are important, as they highlight the skill and the scale of metallurgy and mining on the island during the Punic period, supporting the view that metallurgy was a key factor in motivations for the Carthaginians to colonise the island.

For the Athenian economy, the only surviving source is a short extract from the *De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus* preserved in the Aristotelian corpus which I shall discuss at length in my later wider discussion of ancient literary evidence. This short tract, despite being used for a long time as a key piece of evidence for Sardinian agriculture during the Punic period is in fact highly problematic for a number of reasons which I shall go into later. For now, I believe it will suffice to say that this text has a number of major problems, and I do not feel that it should be taken as a source of evidence for the Punic Sardinian economy.

⁵⁹ Caro et al, (2013), 945.

⁶⁰ Caro et al, (2013), 955.

⁶¹ Caro et al, (2013), 955.

So far, then, we have built what appears to be a viable model of the Sardinian agrarian economy as it was established by the Carthaginians. To reiterate, the general picture, at least in south-western Sardinia, was one of a large number of largely independent villages and farms producing largely for an internal market. This model emphasises a degree of acculturation, and is predicated upon the idea of peaceful cohabitation and co-operation between the Carthaginians and the local population. However, there is an alternate model, one which ties into our earlier debates over the degree of military intervention employed on Sardinia by Carthage. In this model, proposed by Rowland, the Punic forts are seen as part of a network for trade and distribution of goods amongst the population of the island.

This is clearly a very different interpretation of the available evidence than that which has been postulated by scholars such as Van Dommelen and Roppa. As we have discussed in our analysis of conflict during the Punic period, they did not see the forts as serving any form of military function, with the military aspects of their structure merely being hereditary from earlier uses of the sites. By Rowland's reading, however, these forts should in fact be seen as being central to a form of controlled distribution of goods by a Carthaginian military force, which does not seem to match the available evidence from the area of the forts themselves, as has been discussed.⁶²

This narrative, which emphasises the importance of cultural links and trading and breaks down the straightforward dichotomy between the native population and the Carthaginians, appears to be a relatively recent approach in terms of research on Sardinia, but receives support when evidence from other parts of the Punic world is considered. For example, Gascó and Sánchez set out an analysis of Punic Iberia in Southern Spain that largely follows similar lines to the discussions of Punic Sardinia. Following on from research by

⁶² Rowland, (1994), 257.

such scholars as Van Dommelen, they argue that Iberia during this period should not be studied in terms of a divide between the Carthaginian settlers and the local inhabitants. Instead, they make the case that it would be better to see these two groups as being closely linked and continuously interacting.⁶³ Furthermore, for this area, much like Sardinia, the economy consisted mainly of agricultural production and silver mining. This is important, as it means that comparisons between the two areas can more easily be made.

The central tenet of their argument is that, “contextualising the actions of each group of people within the whole context helps us to understand political changes in relation to local dynamics”.⁶⁴ This is clearly very much a divergent approach from narratives emphasising duality and the differences between cultural groups, and is an approach that I have applied to my approach to the study of Punic Sardinia.

It seems clear that, at least for a large part of Sardinia during the period of Carthaginian rule, the economy was developed along agricultural lines, with at times a heterarchical structure of small villages and farms emerging across the countryside, coupled with a great deal of trade and interaction with the local population. Furthermore, with regards to the development of metallurgy and mining on the island, it is clear that these too were very important resources to the Carthaginians, and we can view this aspect of the economy as a way in which to focus our attention more closely on Carthaginian and native cultural interaction, as it clear that the two populations traded ideas and goods, and surely, for example, the Carthaginians would have been unable to have properly developed mining operations on the island without at least some degree of local expertise and assistance. I shall now turn my attention to a more in-depth analysis of one sit in particular in the area around Tharros, linking this discussion of the economy with a wider discussion regarding the nature

⁶³ Gascó and Sánchez, (2014), p.256.

⁶⁴ Gascó and Sánchez, (2014), 256.

of Punic rural settlement as a whole, both within Sardinia and on a wider scale across the Western Mediterranean.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Punic Rural Settlement on Sardinia

There has been much study of Punic rural settlement, a fact which is hardly surprising considering the influence of the Carthaginians on such a large number of islands across the Western Mediterranean, as well as the agricultural knowledge these people had: for example, the Romans, prior to destroying Carthage, ensured that a Latin copy was made of the agricultural writings of Mago, a renowned Carthaginian agronomist.⁶⁵ Van Dommelen in particular has devoted a great deal of time and research to this topic and therefore it is to him that I shall turn for a definition of what constitutes a Punic rural settlement, namely, “[...] small to medium-sized establishments that existed in the countryside of all Punic regions, either alone or in small agglomerations. All the portable material culture found in and around these sites adheres to Punic cultural standards and finds parallels throughout the Punic world”.⁶⁶

This is of course very much an archaeological definition, and one which should be treated with caution, as the situation was not uniform across the Punic world.⁶⁷

As has been stated, a great deal of the archaeological investigation which has been carried out in southern Sardinia has been based around field survey, in part due to the traditions of how archaeology has been conducted on the island since the early twentieth century. However, in recent decades, more excavations have been carried out across the island, mainly focusing, as in this example, on rural sites. We shall now turn our attention to

⁶⁵ Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 49.

⁶⁶ Van Dommelen, (2006), 11.

⁶⁷ Van Dommelen, (2006), 11.

one such excavation of a late Punic farm carried out by Peter van Dommelen, Carlos Gómez Bellard, and Carlo Tronchetti, the results of which were published in 2012.⁶⁸

The location of the farm which they excavated, following promising results from both field surveys and geophysical analysis, was located near the banks of the Riu Mannu River in Southern Sardinia.⁶⁹ Upon initial excavation, it was revealed that modern ploughing had damaged a great deal of the site, however from about 50cm down there were a number of

surviving low walls in places around the site, enough to give some idea of the general layout of the site.⁷⁰ Two of the most important finds at the site were wells, the later of the two cutting the earlier and indicating that the site was occupied for at least for two consecutive phases during the Punic period.⁷¹ There were also two basins found at the site which contained traces of grape skins, which provided some evidence that the site was involved in the production of wine.⁷² Consequently, this is important as it offers a key insight into one part of the Punic rural economy on Sardinia, and shows that there was diversity to

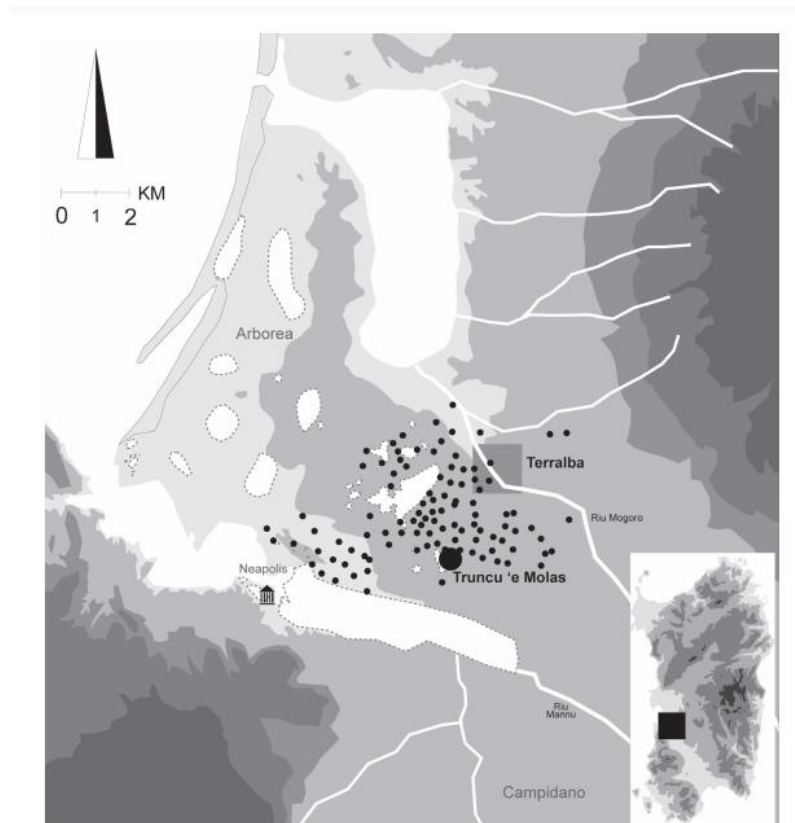


Fig. 2. Map showing the location of the site which was excavated.

⁶⁸ The article was originally published in Italian, and all translations have been carried out for me by Lucia Michielin (PHD).

⁶⁹ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 502.

⁷⁰ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 502.

⁷¹ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 505.

⁷² Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 505.

agricultural production beyond the narrative that the island was simply a grain producer during the period of Carthaginian occupation.

Interestingly, from analysis of samples taken from the site, there was no real evidence of grains being produced at the farm.⁷³ Furthermore, a number of samples revealed that many of the traces of plant material found at the site in relation to its Punic period of occupation originated not from the surrounding area, but in many cases from very afield.⁷⁴ This evidence can be used, as posited in the conclusions of the report, to suggest that there was a great deal of trade across the island between different communities, further suggesting that, at least for large parts of the island, the Punic period represented a time of relative stability and economic growth, as evidenced by the sheer numbers of rural settlements that appear during this period, and the fact that the site was occupied during at least two distinct phases over a long period of time, without any apparent sign of forced abandonment.

Developing from this and from themes elucidated in earlier chapters, it can once again be seen that it would be very unlikely that this landscape of rural settlement was entirely populated with Punic settlers from North Africa, but that we should instead take this as evidence of a steady acculturation of indigenous islanders during the Punic period.

This appears to support the initial findings which have made regarding both the Sardinian economy during the Punic period, and my argument that societal change and acculturation during the Punic period was a more gradual and generally more peaceful process than some scholars believe. However, it must be remembered that what we are presenting here is only the results from one site, and although they can be extrapolated to provide wider meanings, this must of course be treated with caution. Furthermore, the site itself was badly damaged by centuries of ploughing, with large parts of the structures on the

⁷³ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 507.

⁷⁴ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 507.

site being no longer in any way extant.⁷⁵ With regard to the two wells which were found, these also present some problems, as the only other comparable wells, both of which were found in Tharros itself, were both found without any discernible context that would have allowed for them to be accurately dated.⁷⁶

Despite this, it is still important that we have such a well-excavated site from this area of Sardinia, and allows for reconstructions and patterns to begin to be pieced together and for hypotheses to be tested. It must of course be noted that more sites are required to make large scale reconstructions, and for an island known during the Punic period for grain production and export, the fact that this site was clearly not part of that pattern as it could most likely have been exporting wine, and also that it dates only from the later Punic period, does raise questions over how useful it is as an example. However, this farm can still be seen as an important example for the nature of Carthaginian colonialism on Sardinia, as the paleobotanical remains recovered from the site suggest a high level of trade and interaction between locations across the island, as well as with other civilisations across the Mediterranean.

⁷⁵ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 505.

⁷⁶ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 508.

Chapter 4: Identity and Religion on Punic Sardinia: Funerary Evidence

Some of the best evidence for social status and cultural practices can be found through the study of skeletal remains from ancient sites. On Sardinia, one of the best examples of a Punic era burial ground was discovered at the site of Monte Sirai, with the area being excavated in three phases: the first excavation took place in the mid 1960s, the second in 1980, and the most recent being between 2005 and 2010.⁷⁷ One of the most interesting discoveries was the body of a pregnant female, aged between 20 and 25 years old,⁷⁸ an important discovery as there are generally very few such individuals attested in the archaeological record of the ancient world.⁷⁹ This is also of particular importance to this paper, as it is one of the few times that we have evidence for the lives of Sardinian women during the Punic period.



Fig. 3. Skeleton of the pregnant female in its archaeological context.

The remains of the individual appeared to have been partially cremated, a fact that appears to be peculiar to remains found at Monte Sirai in the early fifth century BC.⁸⁰ The individual has no obvious signs of serious illness or injury,⁸¹ perhaps an indication that they

⁷⁷ Piga et al, (2016), 51.

⁷⁸ Piga et al, (2016), 54.

⁷⁹ Piga et al, (2016), 51.

⁸⁰ Piga et al, (2008), 144.

⁸¹ Piga et al, (2016), 54.

may have been of a higher status in society, as she seems from this evidence to have not endured a life of physical labour, and may also have, by inference, had access to a better diet. Indeed, it seems from the evidence available that she died from complications during childbirth.⁸²

The practice of partial cremation appears to have been applied to a number of the bodies thus far recovered from the necropolis.⁸³ It appears that this was done primarily to remove the flesh from the skeletons. It is unclear the reasons for this, however the main two theories are that it was carried out for hygienic reasons such as to prevent the spread of disease, or that it represented a Phoenician symbolic rite.⁸⁴ This second option appears to be the most likely, as the individuals were buried carefully with grave goods, and it is unlikely that such care would have been taken with victims of a disease.⁸⁵ If this is the case, and it represents a Phoenician burial tradition surviving into the Punic period on Sardinia, then this may be seen as having interesting implications for this study. It implies that, after the Carthaginians conquered this area of the island, they were willing to let those who had lived there previously continue to carry out their existing religious traditions rather than imposing Carthaginian religious rites. Furthermore, despite the evidence we have stated that attests to some conflict breaking out around Monte Sirai in the initial Carthaginian forays into the island, this was clearly not a war cemetery, as we have mixed genders present and no signs of physical violence on the bodies, implying that this area was relatively peaceful during the Punic period.

It would at this point be helpful to our discussion if it would be possible to compare the remains from Monte Sirai with other Punic necropolis on Sardinia. In this regard, Roppa

⁸² Piga et al, (2016), 61.

⁸³ Piga et al, (2008), 147.

⁸⁴ Piga et al, (2008), 154.

⁸⁵ Take, for example, Thucydides' account in Book Two of his History of The Peloponnesian War of the aftermath of the plague at Athens (*Thucydides: 2.5*).

highlights that, as a general trend across Sardinia, there was a change in burial traditions from cremation to inhumation, a change which implies a pervading Punic influence during this period, as this tradition is associated with Carthage.⁸⁶ This point should be seen as being quite important as it implies a level of religious continuity between the two periods that does not fit with the narrative of active Carthaginian imperialism. If the Carthaginians were pursuing such a policy, it is unlikely that they would have allowed previous religious practices to go relatively unchanged.

This is all certainly important evidence that supports the conclusions of the study of both the Sardinian economy and the nature of Carthaginian colonialism. However, it does raise interesting questions regarding concepts of identity, which we have only briefly touched on earlier, but which would be worth exploring in more depth. With regards to the Punic world, what was meant by a “Punic” identity was very much hard to define, as it can be argued that “an archaeological culture is not an ethnic identity”.⁸⁷ In the case of the above necropolis, this leads to interesting questions of whether these people were of Carthaginian origin or whether they were indigenous Sardinians adopting elements of Punic culture with regards to burial rites.

One model for cultural interaction between the Carthaginians and the Sardinian population which has been proposed is that indigenous Sardinian troops who fought for Carthage would have, upon their return to their local areas with money and booty, become something of an intermediary between the Carthaginians and the Nuragic people.⁸⁸ It is an interesting idea, and particularly for Sardinia, is an important model as it gives the Sardinian population a level of agency not normally ascribed to them in the majority of accounts.

⁸⁶ Roppa, (2014), p.261.

⁸⁷ Bellard, (2014), 70.

⁸⁸ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 121.

It can be difficult to test this theory in the archaeological record, however some scholars such as Dyson and Rowland have argued that mercenaries from Sardinia served in the Carthaginian army.⁸⁹ If this is the case, then these individuals could have been in part responsible for cultural diffusion across Sardinia during the Punic period, once more countering the dualist narrative. Once these troops had returned from duty, it is possible that they would have passed on elements of Carthaginian and Punic culture which they had acquired during their service.

⁸⁹ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 121.

Chapter 5: Ancient Literary Evidence For Punic Sardinia

I turn now to the ancient literary evidence for Sardinia. The main evidence comes from the works of Polybius, Justin's 'Epitome of Pompeius Trogus', Thucydides, Aristotle, Pseudo-Aristotle, Pausanias, Diodorus Siculus, and Livy. Unfortunately, even across this range of authors, evidence for Punic Sardinia is still relatively scant, and, as has been noted, written from a primarily Roman perspective, with the exception of the earlier works by Greek authors.

This lack of both Carthaginian sources and sources written by sympathisers of Carthage does result in a strong negative bias. This is not to say of course that such historians did not exist, as we know of historians such as Philinus of Agrigentum, however their works unfortunately are not extant.⁹⁰ Polybius, whose writing was contemporaneous with the third Punic War and the destruction of Carthage, was focused on providing a narrative of how and why Rome rose to be the greatest power in the Mediterranean.⁹¹ Nevertheless, by his proximity to the events which he describes, Polybius' account remains a valid account of the later Punic period, and his comments on the situation in Sardinia shed some light on a relatively under-documented part of the ancient world, just as long as one bears the caveat of his Roman bias in mind. The events which he describes mainly relate to the later period of the Punic world and its interaction with Rome. With regard to Sardinia, the main evidence he recounts is that, with regards to trade between Rome and Sardinia, stating that,

⁹⁰ Eckstein, (2010), 406.

⁹¹ Duff, (2003), 59,60.

“Those who come to trade shall not conclude any business except in the presence of a herald or town-clerk. The price of whatever is sold in the presence of these officials shall be secured to the vendor by the state, if the sale takes place in Africa or Sardinia” (*Polybius: III.22.*).

This evidence, albeit requiring some degree of reading between the lines, implies that Sardinian trade during the later Punic period was thriving, and that Carthage was still able to exert some level of overall control over trade regulations on the island. Roppa makes the point that, by Polybius’ reading, it is taken for granted that Sardinia was under strict Carthaginian control, and that it is largely this evidence that has informed traditional, dualist narratives of Carthaginian imperialism.⁹²

Earlier works by writers such as Aristotle, while only tangentially of relevance to this topic, reference a Carthaginian state and Carthaginian cities (*Aristotle: Politics: II.20*). This is important, as it suggests that this was how people of the time conceptualised the Punic world, and the idea of a large state implies a degree of shared cultural ideas and of connections through, for example, trading partnerships in a structured and controlled way. This helps to further add to the idea that Sardinia was most likely an active and engaged part of this network, a fact which is supported by the evidence we have attested for the Sardinian economy and its network of small, wealthy estates that must surely have been supported by overseas trade. Furthermore, the finds of Attic pottery at such sites can be seen as further support for this.⁹³

It is also from this period that we have the controversial agricultural tract attributed to “Pseudo-Aristotle”. A small portion of this text, the “*De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus*”, refers to an alleged Carthaginian decree that called for a ban on Sardinia of growing fruit trees. The author writes regarding Sardinia, “Now the island no longer bears anything,

⁹² Roppa, (2014), 260.

⁹³ Van Dommelen et al, (2012), 509,510.

because the Carthaginians who got possession of it cut down all the fruits useful for food, and prescribed the penalty of death to the inhabitants, if any of them replanted them” (*Aristotle: De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus*: 100). Clearly, this can be read as evidence of interventionist Carthaginian policy on the island, and Van Dommelen and Roppa point out that it is this short extract that provides a great deal of the back-bone of the scholarly arguments in favour of a narrative of Sardinian history characterised by an active imperialist Carthaginian programme of policy.⁹⁴ It suggests a very dualist narrative of Carthaginians using their power to dictate policy on the island. However, this document is far from reliable. It is clear immediately from the style in which it was written and indeed the content that it is highly unlikely to have been produced by Aristotle himself. Furthermore, the text only survives in later copies, and it is unclear as to when it was even first composed, much less who wrote it.⁹⁵ The volume in which it is preserved is a collection of facts and observations from regions around the Mediterranean, many of which are myths or humorous accounts, far removed from the serious and scholarly nature that defines much of Aristotle’s writing. Therefore, I feel that to use this text to bolster scholarly arguments is far from ideal, and that it should largely be discounted from the discourse over Punic Sardinia. It is unfortunate, as it leaves us with even less reliable primary scholarship, although it is of course useful to eliminate misleading accounts from the discussion.

One of the most important, and indeed controversial, accounts is that provided by Pausanias in his description of the geography of the Greek and Mediterranean world.

Describing the history of the island during the Punic period he writes,

“When the Carthaginians were at the height of their sea power, they overcame all in Sardinia except the Ilians and the Corsicans, who were kept from slavery by the strength of the

⁹⁴ Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 53.

⁹⁵ Roppa and Van Dommelen, (2012), 52.

mountains [...] Some of the Carthaginian mercenaries, either Libyans or Iberians, quarrelled about the booty mutinied in a passion, and added to the number of highland settlers”

(*Pausanias 10.17.9*).

From statements such as this, it is easy to see why some narratives on Punic Sardinia paint a picture of a society subjugated by imperialist Carthaginians, forcing the indigenous population into a life of servitude akin to the relationship between Spartans and the Helots. However, as has been stated, there is no real evidence for anything resembling a system of *latifundia* such as those established by the Romans, and nowhere have I read of any archaeological evidence for large-scale systemized slavery.⁹⁶ The comments from authors such as Pausanias have further added to the debate attested to earlier over the fortifications attested in the interior of the island. Once again, we see a divergence between the archaeological evidence and the literary evidence, and once again I would argue that the archaeological evidence should take precedence in modern reconstructions of Punic Sardinian history.

The views of Pausanias receives an echo in the writings of Diodorus Siculus, another Greek writer who produced a “universal history” covering large parts of the Ancient Mediterranean world.⁹⁷ This work was highly influential on the account of Punic Sardinia produced by the scholar Sabatino Moscati, who cites Diodorus as evidence of, for example, large-scale North African immigration into Sardinia.⁹⁸ It is also from Diodorus that we have this brief account of a rebellion on Sardinia taking place during the Punic period,

⁹⁶ For example, I have not read anywhere of discoveries of slave collars, or of records of manumission, both of which are concrete signs of a slave society such as that of Athens or Rome. I concede that I have not read into a great deal of scholarship written in Italian, however I believe that such an important point would have merited a mention in the English scholarship as well if it existed.

⁹⁷ Duff, (2003), 60.

⁹⁸ Moscati, (1968), 209.

“[...] a plague broke out among the inhabitants of Carthage which was so violent and took off so many of the Carthaginians that they risked losing their commanding position. [...] and the Sardinians, thinking they now had an opportunity to oppose the Carthaginians, revolted, and, making common cause, attacked the Carthaginians.” (*Diodorus Siculus*, XV.24).

This is an intriguing point, suggesting a contradiction with the narrative of relative peace during the Punic period on Sardinia. However, Moscati notes that this is the only ancient account of such a rebellion taking place.⁹⁹

Another important ancient source, and one who has served as the basis for many of the more dualist narratives of Punic Sardinia is Justin, whose 'Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' presents a number of important details for the early period of the Carthaginian colonial presence on Sardinia. Indeed, it is from this account that we have the ancient evidence that scholars have used to piece together what is commonly held to be the most accurate date for the beginning of the Punic period on Sardinia. He gives evidence of two military campaigns conducted by the Carthaginian generals which scholars believe to have taken place around 545-535 BC and 525-510 BC respectively.¹⁰⁰ Once again though, this account has led to much controversy between modern scholars, with Van Dommelen going as far as to call into question the accuracy of Justin's dating. As has been stated, Van Dommelen is highly critical of Justin's work on Sardinia in general, pointing out that at least part of the text of Pompeius Trogus which Justin epitomized is based on a "Punic religious source", which has then been further complicated in Justin's reworking.¹⁰¹ This is an important factor that runs throughout

⁹⁹ Moscati, (1968), 210.

¹⁰⁰ Roppa, (2014), 260.

¹⁰¹ Van Dommelen, (1998), 123.

his own research, and one of the reasons why his work differs so greatly from earlier scholars such as Barreca.

This is certainly interesting, as I can think of no other example in the ancient world where the literary evidence appears to disagree so strongly with the archaeological record; for example, as I have stated, there does not appear to be evidence of violence and conflict on a scale that matches the accounts in Justin or Pausanius, or of the unrest documented in Diodorus' Siculus' work. Indeed, as has been said, this may have some connection to bias on the part of the authors or their sources. The lack of sources written by Carthaginian authors or from a Carthaginian perspective is certainly an issue when considering ancient evidence for Punic Sardinia.

With regards to the evidence of Livy, he relates the account of a failed revolt led by the Sardinian nobleman Hampsicorus during the period of Roman occupation on the island towards the latter stages of the Punic wars. According to Van Dommelen, it is Livy's account that has been taken as some of the main evidence for *latifundia* and wealthy landowners on Sardinia, a fact which Van Dommelen uses as evidence to address the shortcoming of this traditional narrative.¹⁰² Indeed, within Livy's account Hampsicorus is described as, "[...] Hampsicoras who at that time surpassed the others in influence and wealth" (*Livy*, 23.32). This is slim evidence, and furthermore the revolt Hampsicorus orchestrated took place when Sardinia was coming more heavily under Roman influence. Therefore, it should not be taken as typical of the entire Punic period. Furthermore, Livy was writing his account at a much later date than the events which he was describing, and would have been basing his account of the Punic wars on earlier sources. He also, like some other ancient historians, often

¹⁰² Van Dommelen, (1998), 127.

structured his narrative around making sure it was dramatic and painted Rome in a good light, than necessarily being accurate.¹⁰³

Therefore, from this summary of the available literary evidence for Punic Sardinia, it is immediately apparent that there are many problems with the available accounts. I believe then, that the ancient literary evidence should be treated with a great deal more caution and critical analysis than appears to have taken place previously. This is not to say that the ancient evidence should be discounted entirely, but rather that it should be used more in a supporting role rather than governing the entire narrative. In particular, when the archaeological evidence offers a divergent narrative from the archaeological evidence, I would argue that the archaeological evidence should take precedent, and that it is precisely this move that has led to some of the most interesting interpretations of Punic Sardinia that have emerged in the past thirty years.

¹⁰³ Duff, (2003), 82.

Chapter 6: New Approaches in Sardinian Archaeology from the 1970s to the Present Day

The study of Punic Sardinia in the modern period can be traced towards a primarily Italian school of study that originated in the 1960s with the work of Moscati, developing on ideas proposed by Pesce.¹⁰⁴ For a long time the view, based primarily on the evidence of ancient authors, was that Carthage exercised a form of very heavy-handed controlling hegemony over a number of regions across the Mediterranean, from Southern Spain to Sicily. However, by the mid to late 1970s, these views were beginning to be challenged, and debate began to open up over to what extent this model of Carthaginian imperialism could be applied to Sardinia. C.R. Whittaker, writing in 1979, was one of the first scholars to suggest a more nuanced interpretation of the Carthaginian presence on Sardinia.¹⁰⁵

Whittaker makes the point that, in most cases, the surviving primary literature we have is written to create the impression of the Carthaginians as “barbarians” seeking to supersede the “civilized” Greeks.¹⁰⁶ Naturally, this presents scholars with a problem; there are no surviving pro-Carthaginian works to counter this view-point.¹⁰⁷ This is plainly a major issue, as any scholarship basing itself purely or mainly on the literary evidence will naturally have an inherent bias against the Carthaginians, a problem which I have just discussed in the above section.

This move away from reliance upon the ancient sources led to a move towards emphasising the importance of archaeological evidence in understanding the history of Punic

¹⁰⁴ Roppa, (2014), 259.

¹⁰⁵ Whittaker, C. R. (1979), ‘Carthaginian Imperialism in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries’ in P. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (eds.), *Imperialism in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, 59-91.

¹⁰⁶ Whittaker, (1979), 61.

¹⁰⁷ Whittaker, (1979), 61.

Sardinia, something that could be seen as a general trend within archaeology in general at this time. In particular, scholars such as Andrea Roppa and Peter Van Dommelen have taken this approach in their studies of Sardinia, such as the Riu Mannu Survey project which they worked on, and Van Dommelen's excavations near the city of Tharros in collaboration with Italian archaeologists. Roppa points out that archaeological investigations in the Sardinian countryside have revealed a great deal of variety of patterns of settlement during the Punic era.¹⁰⁸ This immediately highlights something of a difference between the archaeological evidence and the historical sources, as the sources point towards more of a systematic and complete take-over of the island by the Carthaginians, which is not reflected in the archaeological record.

Roppa also highlights that, although it cannot be refuted that the Carthaginians employed military tactics in their control of the island, other views can be put forward as to why they took such an active interest in the island, with the main theory being that their intentions were largely to do with securing and developing the economy of the island for their own needs.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, I would argue that, if the main aim of the Carthaginians was to ensure economic development on Sardinia, then a program of military conquest and domination of the island's peoples would be largely counterproductive to their ambitions, as large-scale conflict over a long period of time would most likely have led to the collapse of the island's infrastructure. It would also have naturally turned the island's inhabitants entirely against the Carthaginian settlers, making trade with the Nuragic peoples, as well as the acquisition of important local knowledge, unfeasible for the new settlers.

Dyson and Rowland further point out that, due to the fact that Punic and Nuragic scholars often fail to work together on their research, there has been too much of a focus on

¹⁰⁸ De Roppa, (2014), 257.

¹⁰⁹ De Roppa, (2014), 260.

the differences and the discord between these two cultures.¹¹⁰ This is an important point, and one that I feel should certainly be taken into consideration when interpreting the narrative of Sardinian history. This point is furthered by Hayne who argues that, “we cannot see Sardinian identities being formed solely in reaction to foreign colonisation”.¹¹¹

With this being taken into account, we must assess the evidence for peaceful interaction between the Carthaginians and the Sardinians. One of the main areas that I have focused on is the economic system established by Carthage in the southern part of the island, and the ways in which this facilitated further cultural interaction between the local Sardinian population and the Carthaginians. Dyson and Rowland point out that one of the main catalysts for interaction between the two groups could have been through the exploitation and subsequent utilisation of metal resources on the island.¹¹² Furthermore, with regards to religious practice on the island during the Punic period, the traditional view taken by scholars is that the Carthaginians brought the cult of Demeter to the island, reusing pre-existing Nuragic sites.¹¹³ This view would once again suggest an imperialist narrative of Carthaginian colonisation however, once again, there is evidence that the picture was more complicated.

In an article from the 1960s, evidence is presented from the site of Monte Sirai which suggests a merging of Sardinian and Punic religious belief.¹¹⁴ Moscati highlights that there is a tomb on Sardinia which bears the symbol of the Carthaginian goddess Tanit, however in this case the symbol is shown upside down.¹¹⁵ This is interesting, as it suggests that it was carried out by an artist who did not fully understand what it meant. Alternatively, it could perhaps be read as a form of resistance through actively mocking Carthaginian religious

¹¹⁰ Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 109.

¹¹¹ Hayne, (2010), 148.

¹¹² Dyson and Rowland, (2007), 108.

¹¹³ Roppa, (2014), 278.

¹¹⁴ Moscati, (1968), 212.

¹¹⁵ Moscati, (1968), 212.

beliefs, however there is as yet no evidence to support this idea. Furthermore, it could also suggest that local artisans were being employed by Carthaginians to carry out work, and thus merging religious and artistic traditions in the process.¹¹⁶ This is clearly significant, and not only for the fact that it goes against the current of much scholarship of both the ancient world and of this period in secondary scholarship. It suggests that the Carthaginians and the Sardinians were actively sharing religious ideas, and stemming from that, if they were sharing religious ideas it would present one argument against the traditional view of a dichotomy between Carthaginian invaders and a subjugated indigenous population.

¹¹⁶ Moscati, (1968), 212.

Conclusion

Thus, from the evidence above, I believe it can be concluded that, in general, the narrative of Sardinian history during the Punic period should be viewed in terms of cultural hybridization rather than the prevailing dualist descriptions that have largely steered the path of modern scholarship. With regards to the motivation of the Carthaginians to begin attempts to colonise the island, it is true that they were driven by a need to acquire for themselves the agricultural and metallurgical resources on Sardinia. However, I would argue that the manner in which they acquired these resources was based not on a policy of military violence and suppression, as argued by scholars such as Barreca, but rather on trade and mercantilism, establishing trading networks and cultural links between the Carthaginians and the indigenous population.

This view, based at least in part on developments relating to post-colonial theory and its application to archaeology, is still to some extent a minority view. However, its main proponents such as Peter Van Dommelen and Andrea Roppa believe that, based upon both archaeological evidence and interpretations of the ancient literary evidence, this should be taken as a correct reading of the situation in Punic Sardinia, and I am inclined to believe their viewpoint based on my conclusions from this paper.

For a long time, it was believed by modern scholars that Carthage exercised an active and aggressive imperialist policy on the island. This viewpoint is based largely on the idea that the Carthaginians established large estates, known as *latifundia*, to maximise agricultural production on the island and as a means of control over the Sardinian population, coupled with the establishment of a series of internal fortifications, loosely following the model of *limes* later established by the Romans. This view, I argue, is no longer applicable, as I have shown that there is very little evidence for *latifundia* during the Punic period. Rather, the rural settlement pattern in the South of the island is comprised of large numbers of small

villages and farmsteads, populated by a mixture of Carthaginians and indigenous Sardinians. Further, I have shown that the evidence for *limes* can be strongly disputed, as it is based on an interpretation of a series of interior forts as being Punic sites. However, there are few Punic artefacts at these sites, the building techniques are concurrent with Nuragic sites as well as Punic sites, and there is a strong case to be made that they represent Punic civilian re-occupation of abandoned Nuragic sites.

Even as far as evidence does exist, both from archaeology and ancient sources, of conflict taking place at the beginning of the Punic period, it should no longer be stated that this clearly represents Punic and Nuragic conflict. Such a reading oversimplifies a complex situation, as this conflict could also have stemmed from conflict between different groups within Sardinian society, and a number of sites which appear to have been abandoned could just as easily have been abandoned for other reasons than conflict with Carthaginian forces.

Additionally, when we consider evidence from Punic Iberia, on the coast of Southern Spain and Sicily, we have seen that this area followed a similar pattern of cultural interaction and trade between different communities integrated into a wider political sphere. The argument of scholars focusing on this area is much the same as that which I have aligned myself with over the course of my study of Punic Sardinia, namely that we should not consider the island in terms of distinct peoples, remaining separate from each other, but rather that we should see these communities as continuously interacting and developing an inextricably linked network of cultural and economic links. I posit that it is only through an application of this model and these post-colonialist modes of thinking that the narrative of Punic Sardinia can be suitably reconstructed.

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Fig. 1. ‘Source: Roppa, A., Van Dommelen, P. (2012), ‘Rural Settlement and Land-Use in Punic and Roman Republican Sardinia’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 25, p.50, fig. 2’

Fig. 2. ‘Source: Van Dommelen, P., Bellard, C. G., Tronchetti, C. (2012), ‘Insediamento Rurale e Produzione Agraria Nella Sardegna Punica: La Fattoria di Truncu ‘e Molas (Terralba OR)’, trans. L. Michielin, in C. D. Vais (ed.), *Epi Oinopa Ponton: Studi Sul Mediterraneo Antico in Ricordo di Giovanni Tore*, Cagliari, p.514, fig. 1’

Fig. 3. ‘Piga, G., Guirguis, M., Thompson, T.J.U., Isidro, A., Snzo S., Malgosa, A. (2016), ‘A Case of Semi-Combusted Pregnant Female in the Phoenician-Punic Necropolis of Monte Sirai’, *HOMO Journal of Comparative Human Biology* 67.1, p.53, fig.2’