Introduction

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The poster for Giovanni Pastrone's 1914 silent epic *Cabiria* evokes a luxurious and barbaric world of wicked priests, noble elephants, and child sacrifice in the belly of a giant brazen bull-headed god (Fig. 0.1. See also Plate 1). *Cabiria*, often described as the first feature film, told the story of a Sicilian girl kidnapped by Phoenician pirates and sold into slavery in Carthage (Pastrone 1977; Bertetto and Rondolino 1998). Once there, she is chosen for sacrifice to the god 'Moloch' – a modern invention who owes his name to a misunderstanding of the Phoenician term *molk*, or 'sacrifice', on votive inscriptions. In this scene, worshippers gather in anticipation at the temple of Moloch, while the heroic Roman general Fulvius Auxilla and his slave Maciste plan to rescue Cabiria from the fiery fate her Carthaginian captors have planned.

This populist vision of the western Mediterranean in the third century BCE was released just three years after the Italian invasion and occupation of Tripolitania, and closely equated Carthage and its Phoenician population with the Arab world (Garnand 2001; cf. Feig Vishnia 2008). In many ways it reproduced the horrified fascination of Greek and Latin authors with 'Punic faithlessness' and brutality (Prag, Chapter 1; Quinn, Chapter 9), and it coincided with a new scholarly interest in the Punic world, especially in North Africa, which was prompted in particular by the establishment of the French protectorate in Tunisia in 1883; Stéphane Gsell's great *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord* began to be published the year before *Cabiria* was released (Gsell 1913–28).

Despite this early interest prompted in large part by European colonial activity, 'Punic' and more broadly Phoenician history and culture rarely featured in the study of classical antiquity over the following half-century (van Dommelen, Chapter 3). The language was studied as a minor branch of Near Eastern Studies, and the lack of literature meant that the culture was scarcely felt worthy of study at all: like the Etruscans, the Phoenicians were simply irrelevant to those schooled in Greco-Roman history and literature. There were of course exceptions to this: in Malta, for instance, the Phoenician past has always been a strong focus of archaeological investigation – if often for more political than scholarly ends (Vella and Gilkes 2001).

Fig. 0.1. Poster for *Cabiria* (directed by Giovanni Pastrone, 1914). Poster design: Luigi Enrico Caldanzano. (Plate 1.)

Things began to change in Italy in the 1960s, when Sabatino Moscati founded the school of Phoenician and Punic studies whose work has been showcased in the *Rivista di Studi Fenici* since 1973 and that still thrives under his pupils today. This increased interest in Phoenician and in particular western Phoenician or 'Punic' studies was not peculiar to Italy: in the 1970s the UNESCO 'Save Carthage' campaign brought scholars and archaeologists from all over Europe and the USA to work at the great Punic city (Ennabli 1992).

The next twenty-five years saw the field's popularity grow in Europe as a result of collaborative research projects, including the publication of the series *Studia Phoenicia* by an inter-university working group based in Namur and Leuven, two dictionaries (Amadasi 1992; Lipiński 1992), and two research manuals (Gras *et al.* 1989; Krings 1995). Along with classic monographs on the Phoenicians (Aubet 1993) and Carthage (Lancel 1992=1995), these were milestones in what Moscati called 'l'età della sintesi' (1995b). Archaeology continued to play its part: along the coast of Andalucia in Spain, for instance, unprecedented archaeological discoveries, first by German and later by Spanish teams, revealed Phoenician activity in the western Mediterranean from an early date, a possibility hitherto denied in Grecocentric scholarship (Gill 1991: 41; Niemeyer 1995b).

At the same time, a series of exhibitions – in Brussels (Gubel 1986), Venice (Moscati 1988a), and Hannover (Gehrig and Niemeyer 1990) – put on display for public and scholarly consumption the fruits of new archaeological research throughout the Mediterranean, commemorating the coming of age of a discipline and challenging the supposedly elusive nature of its ancient protagonists, the Phoenicians.

In the UK, however, despite Donald Harden's work on Carthage and other aspects of the western Phoenician world (Harden 1927; 1937; 1962; 1981), Benedict Isserlin's excavations at Motya (Isserlin 1964), Henry Hurst's project at Carthage (Hurst 1984; 1994; 1999; Hurst and Roskams 1984), and Richard Barnett's publication of artefacts from the tombs at Tharros and ivories from Nimrud (Barnett 1957; Barnett and Mendleson 1987), Phoenician and Punic studies made very little impact at all: there are no established academic posts in the area and, until recently, very little of the scholarly literature was published in English.

This comparative British silence on the widespread activities and connections of Phoenician-speaking communities in the western Mediterranean made Punic Studies an obvious focus for a joint project between the British School at Rome and the Society for Libyan Studies in 2008, which was generously funded by the British Academy. But when the steering group first met to discuss the precise form this project should take, we realized that we had great difficulty answering a very basic question: what does 'Punic' actually mean? 'Identifying the Punic Mediterranean' became the theme of a workshop held at the BSR in November 2008, for which nineteen scholars from Tunisia, France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Malta, Holland, Belgium, Canada, the United States of America, and Switzerland were asked to address the following questions: What does 'Punic' mean? How does it relate to 'Phoenician'? How has Punic identity been constructed by ancients and moderns? Is there a ' Punic world'? How coherent is Punic culture? The papers given at the workshop addressed both ancient identities *as* 'Punic' and modern identifications *of* 'Punic', two separate but often closely related problems that have become the twin themes of this volume. Many of those papers are published here, along with four additional contributions by Corinne Bonnet, Alicia Jiménez, Josephine Quinn, and Andrea Roppa, which were written to fill specific gaps that emerged in the project's geographical and thematic coverage, and an afterword by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill.

This book is divided into two sections, the first exploring our two themes at a general level, and the second focusing on particular places and case studies. The first three chapters tackle modern identification. Prag opens the volume with a deconstruction of the modern distinction between

(eastern) Phoenician and (western) Punic, showing that it was not, or not until a late stage and in a partial fashion, a distinction that can be found in the ancient textual evidence. Vella then traces the development or even invention of the modern category of Phoenician itself, before van Dommelen looks at the ways in which 'Punic' identities have been used in modern social and political contexts. Turning to ancient identities, Bondì's chapter problematizes the notion of 'Punicity' from a different direction, with a forthright account of the differences between the material cultures of the western regions that calls into question the homogeneity of the 'Punic Mediterranean' from an archaeological perspective. The chapters by Gómez Bellard and Frey-Kupper take a different line, however, based in both cases on studies of specific aspects of 'Punic' material culture across broad geographical areas. Gómez Bellard's general survey of burial practices makes the case for a common cultural identity in the west, and Frey-Kupper extends this position by arguing that supra-regional coinages not only expressed a significant degree of cultural homogeneity but also promoted interregional exchange.

When we turn to particular case studies, however, it seems that the smaller the scale of the analysis, the larger the variation that looms. Starting with the city of Carthage itself, Maraoui Telmini and her colleagues explore the ways in which the pottery record shows both openness to the rest of the Mediterranean and strongly conservative traits. With regard to the problem of definition, they point out that although the archaeology of early Carthage marks it out right from the start as singular among western Phoenician settlements, there are very significant changes in the city's urban fabric and material culture in the middle of the sixth century that map on to the traditional chronological distinction made between 'Phoenician' and 'Punic'. Looking at the nearby Sahel region, Ben Younès demonstrates the variety of 'punicities' encountered even within a small area, and Krandel-Ben Younès then emphasizes the Libyan contribution to the cultural character of the 'Numidian' Tell. Still within the Maghreb, Quinn explores Carthaginian, Greek and Numidian relations that she argues are played out through a myth whose likely western Phoenician origin has been written out of modern scholarship. On a more practical level, Bridoux collects the pottery data for exchange between the Punic world and the Numidian kingdoms to argue once again for a high level of local variation, and most significantly to query the centrality of Carthage's role in these trade circuits. Papi then takes us further west again to pre-Roman Morocco, where he questions whether Carthage played a role in commercial and cultural exchange at all.

Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, Jiménez uses the coinages of southern Iberia to question the homogeneity of 'Punic' culture there, especially after the fall of Carthage, and Aranegui and Vives-Ferrándiz focus not so much on Punicities but Iberianisms, describing local cultural and economic networks in southeastern Iberia, and the impact on them of traders and travellers from a Punic cultural background. Completing this circuit of the western Mediterranean, Roppa looks at settlement patterns in Sardinia to argue against conventional analyses of the island as 'Punic' as well as conventional accounts of Carthaginian imperialism there, and to highlight once again variation in identities at the local level.

Finally, Bonnet takes us all the way back to the Phoenician motherland. While for Bondì there had been a substantial unity between the cities of the Levant that means that we can still talk about one 'Phoenicity' there, Bonnet argues that by the Hellenistic period at least, these Phoenicians too 'combined tradition and innovation, and displayed different identities according to space, time, purpose and social context'. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's afterword then situates the problems raised by the essays in broader contexts of modern politics and Mediterranean scholarship, and suggests a new way forwards.

In the context of its particular focus on identity and identification, we want this book to illustrate the current nature of research in Phoenicio-Punic studies, and make no apology for the fact that this gathering of scholars from very different backgrounds and academic traditions reveals the variety of assumptions and starting points from which we approach the field; indeed, we see this as one of the strengths of the volume. In particular, we have not attempted as editors to impose a standard or agreed definition of 'Punic' – a particularly tricky problem given the apparent lack of self-definition or indeed self-consciousness as a group on the part of those to whom we apply the term, on which more below. Instead, we merely asked authors to define how they each use or understand the term. The results reveal the confusing variety in the modern usage of the word, and help to explain why many of the chapters here attempt in various ways to deconstruct and contest its usage.

On the most straightforward level, 'Punic' can be used to denote the world of the Phoenician settlements in the western Mediterranean (here, for instance, by Frey-Kupper and Bonnet). Another geographically based definition, however, sees 'Punic' as the result of the mixing of Phoenician and local cultures in these colonial contexts; for Ben Younès, for instance, a 'Punic' is somebody living in the Sahel, whatever their ethnic origin, and Krandel-Ben Younès distinguishes the 'Libyan' interior from the 'Punic'

coast. Often, though, as Gómez Bellard's survey of dictionary definitions shows, the word is understood specifically in relation to the city of Carthage (cf. here Bondì); in rather different ways, Bridoux and Papi's chapters reflect on the extension of the scope of that traditional definition to the areas of the western Mediterranean under Carthaginian political and cultural influence.

Not all definitions focus solely on geography, however. Largely as a result of the traditional connection between the term and the city of Carthage, the scope of 'Punic' has frequently been restricted to the period from the sixth century onwards (as here by Bondì, van Dommelen, Gómez Bellard, Aranegui and Vives-Ferrándiz, and Jiménez), with the earlier period called 'Phoenician' even in the west. This usage follows the classic definition given by Moscati (1963) and discussed in this volume by Maraoui Telmini and her colleagues, and reflects the perception of many scholars that the sixth century was a time of significant cultural change in the western Phoenician world – exemplified, for instance, by the shift from cremation to inhumation in burial practices (Gómez Bellard, Chapter 5), a phenomenon that is itself usually connected with increasing Carthaginian hegemony in the western Mediterranean (Bondì, Chapter 4). Some of the contributors to this volume debate the true significance of these cultural changes (Roppa, Maraoui Telmini *et al.*), and discuss the nature of Carthaginian hegemony in the wider western Mediterranean (Bridoux, Papi, Roppa); the latter chapters represent only the latest contributions to an ongoing debate on Carthaginian imperialism that started with C. R. Whittaker's classic article arguing that 'only in one or possibly two respects can imperial control be detected: one is emigration under what might be called privileged conditions to states who owed obligations to Carthage . . . the other is in control of ports of trade' (Whittaker 1978: 60). A version of Whittaker's point of view is now largely accepted, as Maraoui Telmini and colleagues note in this volume, but the definition of a 'Punic' periodization based on an older model of Carthaginian territorial control remains standard in much scholarship.

But should we be using the word 'Punic' at all? This collection of writings might suggest not. As Prag shows, the ancients distinguished only rarely and late between 'Phoenician' and 'Punic', and there is no certain attestation of anyone identifying themselves as 'Punic' (Prag 2006; Chapter 1). At the same time, many of the chapters collected here draw attention to cultural variation in the 'Punic' Mediterranean (on which see also, in the Iberian context, Ferrer Albelda and Álvarez Marti-Aguilar 2009). Does the much stronger modern distinction between the two serve

a purpose, or would it be better simply to talk of eastern and western Phoenicians? This would draw useful attention to what these two groups shared in common, such as their language (Punic does not diverge significantly from Standard Phoenician until after the fall of Carthage: Hackett 2004: 367) and the economic contacts and cultural interactions that existed between east and west, even if their relative significance is debated (Ferjaoui 1992; Quinn 2011a; cf. Bonnet, Chapter 15). It would also avoid the negative connotations of the ancient usage of 'Punic' (López Castro 2006).

Should we in fact go further, though, and avoid even 'Phoenician'? As is well known, those we call Phoenicians never called themselves 'Phoenician' (Xella 2008: 70); instead, they identified themselves by their city-origins (Bordreuil and Ferjaoui 1988) and occasionally, perhaps, as part of a broader group of Canaanites, though there is no evidence from Phoenicio-Punic sources for that identification either (Xella 1995: 247). There is in addition a great deal of cultural and economic exchange between Phoenician speakers and other populations in the east that mirrors that described here in the west (Ben Younès and Krandel-Ben Younès; Bridoux; Aranegui and Vives-Ferrándiz). Is the whole notion even of a 'Phoenician world' then a purely external construction? If so, Vella and van Dommelen show here how useful such constructions have been to modern scholars and politicians; perhaps it is time to leave them aside – and time to consider too the history and utility of even more familiar categories such as 'Greek' and 'Roman'.

However that may be, this volume forms part of a recent renewed enthusiasm for Phoenician and Punic studies demonstrated elsewhere by a major exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (Fontan and Le Meaux 2007), a substantial volume in English on Punic rural settlement (van Dommelen and Gómez Bellard 2008b), a new research manual for Italian students (Bondì *et al.* 2009), and a new monograph on the history of Carthage (Miles 2010). In Britain the Punic Studies Network, which grew out of the 2008 British School at Rome conference, holds regular annual graduate student workshops, currently under the aegis of the Oxford Centre for Phoenician and Punic Studies. Whether or not readers of this book conclude that the Punic, or indeed Phoenician, world is an invention – ancient or modern – we can agree with Martin Frederiksen (Vella, Chapter 2) that the Phoenicians are still on the way back.

We owe a great deal of thanks to all the people who have been involved in this project, especially the contributors, who have been extremely patient over the lengthy period between the original conference and final publication, as well as the other members of the steering committee: Roald

Docter, Lisa Fentress, Simon Keay, Emanuele Papi, Jonathan Prag, Andrew Wilson, and especially Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, who suggested this project in the first place, and then supported it with great generosity and good humour. Bryan Ward-Perkins, Susan Walker, and Gill Clark have been very helpful in the process of turning the papers into a book, as were the comments of the anonymous readers, and we are especially grateful to Michael Sharp, Elizabeth Hanlon, Jessica Murphy and Gill Cloke at Cambridge University Press. We also thank those who contributed to the conference whose papers are not included here (Ricardo Olmos, Trinidad Tortosa, Robert Kerr, and Lisa Fentress; the paper that Corinne Bonnet delivered at the workshop has now been published elsewhere as Bonnet 2011). Matthew McCarty helped run the workshop in Rome, and has been our indispensible editorial assistant for this book, contributing a huge amount to the intellectual as well as practical formulation of the finished product. Maxine Anastasi was responsible for the final versions of many of the figures. Matthew McCarty translated the chapters by Ben Younès and Krandel-Ben Younès, Bridoux and Gómez-Bellard and Sally Cann translated the chapter by Bondì. We are grateful to them, as well as to the University of Malta, Oxford University's John Fell OUP Research Fund, the Classics Faculty of the University of Oxford, the Oxford Centre for Phoenician and Punic Studies, and Worcester College, Oxford, for their generous support of the editorial work on this volume.

Abbreviations of ancient sources follow the conventions in the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1996).

PART I

Contexts