

**ICAEM 2025: Mobility in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean:
Movements of People, Objects and Ideas**

**13–15 June 2025
Tartu, Estonia**

**Networks of the Phoenician Diaspora:
Bridging between the Ancient Near East
and the Far Western Mediterranean**

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Open studies on the Ancient Mediterranean World History

Collaborative engagement between research and education

Phoenician and Punic Studies
@University

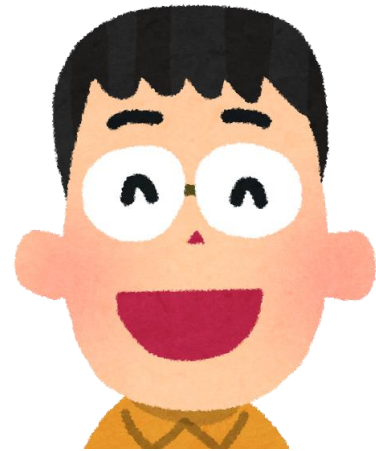
Assyriology
@High School



I.Sato



S.Maruono



We aim to re-examine the framework of the ancient Mediterranean world History

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1. Introduction by I. Sato
2. Phoenician Expansion toward the Mediterranean by I. Sato
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connecting the ancient Near East with the
Mediterranean world

Phoenician and Punic Studies

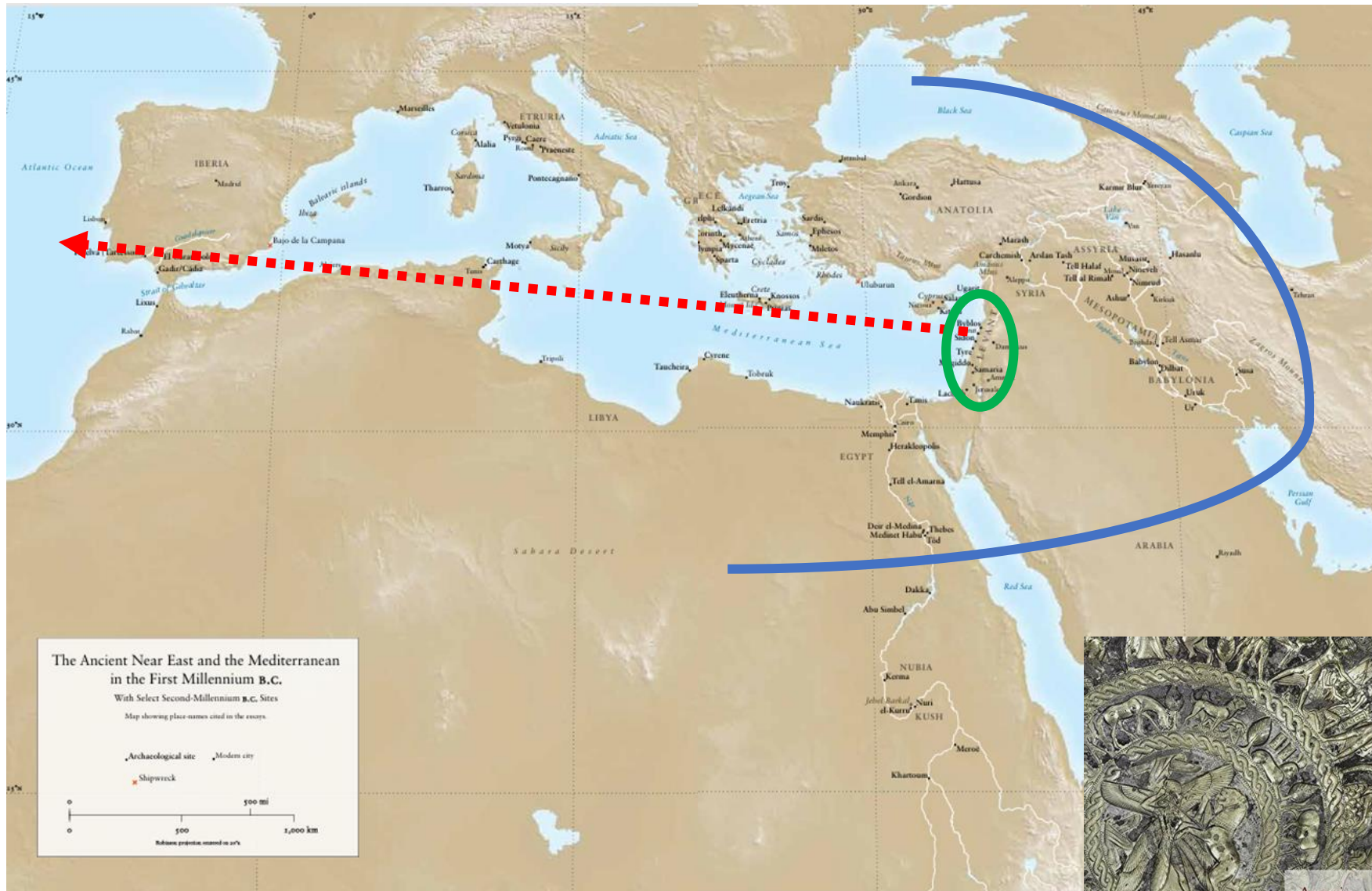
Greco-Roman

ancient
Near East

North Africa

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus

Google Earth

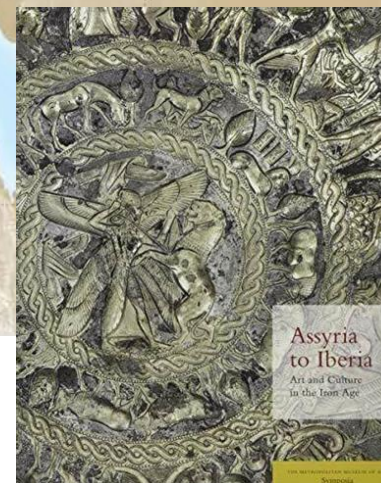


Neo-Assyrian Empire

Neo-Babylonian Empire

Achaemenid Empire

Egypt



Aruz, J. and M. Seymour (eds.) (2016) pp. x - xi.

Some of questions in our presentations

©How did the expansion of the Phoenicians to the West interact with local culture?

©What was the importance of the Phoenician cities as military and economic centers in the Neo-Assyrian Empire?

©What role did the trade routes and networks established by the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean play in the relationship between Assyria and Phoenicia?

2. Phoenician Expansion toward the Mediterranean

1. The Two Phases of Phoenician Expansion

2. Previous research

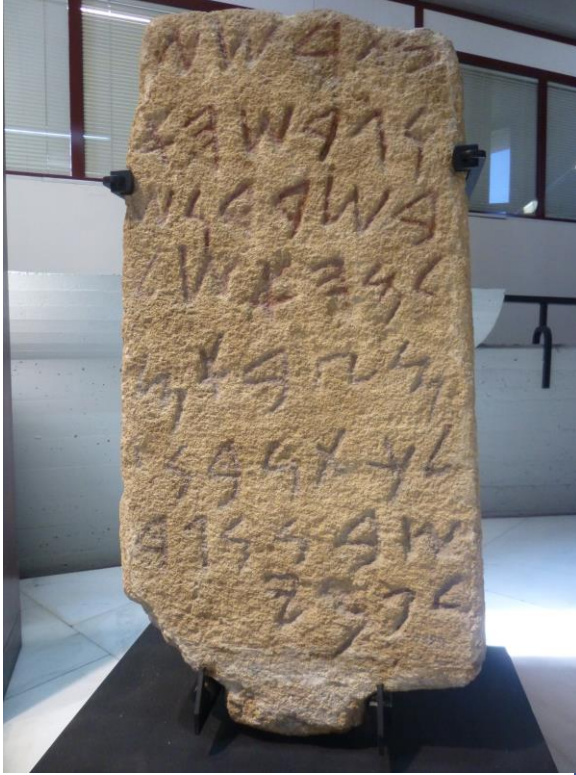
3. How did the expansion of the Phoenicians to the West interact with local culture?

4. The relationship between the Phoenician city-states and Assyria

5. Conclusion and Challenges

1. The Two Phases of Phoenician Expansion

- The first phase: pre-colonization
mid-10th century to the mid-8th century BCE
- The second phase: colonization
late 9th century or at the latest the mid-8th century BCE onward



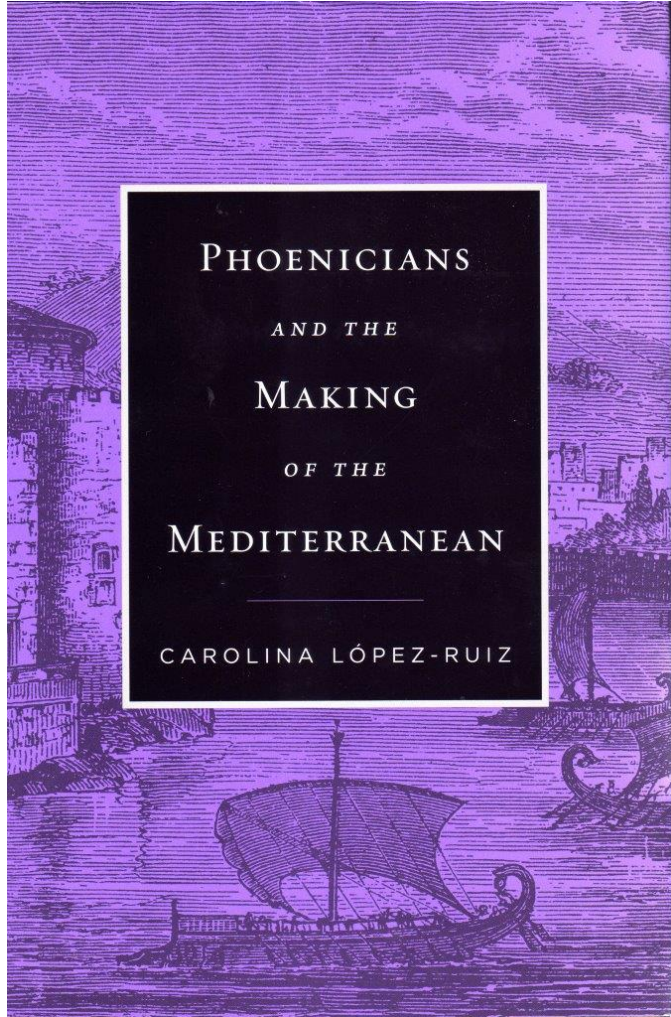
Nora Stone
Late 9th– Early 8th BCE

According to tradition, at the founding of Carthage (in 814 BCE), eighty maidens from Cyprus accompanied the settlers.

By the 9th century BCE, sea routes heading westward had already been developed via Cyprus and Sardinia.



2. Previous research



The Phoenicians had a significant impact on the cultural formation of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Keyword:

Cross-cultural interaction

Cultural transmission/diffusion

Orientalizing

→ Orientalizing kit



C.López-Ruiz, *Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean*,
Cambridge (MA) & London, 2021.

<https://divinity.uchicago.edu/directory/carolina-lopez-ruiz>

Frank Moore Cross Book Award in 2022/ The Mediterranean Seminar Book Prize in 2023

3. How did the expansion of the Phoenicians to the West interact with local culture?

1. Contact through Trade and Commerce

- Before establishing permanent colonies, the Phoenicians interacted with local societies through trade.
- They created ports and trading posts, facilitating the exchange of goods, technologies, and cultural values.

2. Cooperation with Local Elites

- Rather than imposing direct control, Phoenician settlers often negotiated with indigenous elites.
- Access to mineral resources and agricultural products required collaboration with local power structures.

3. How did the expansion of the Phoenicians to the West interact with local culture?

3. Coexistence of Local Adaptation and Network Connectivity

- Phoenician colonies maintained ties with their mother cities (ex. Tyre) while adapting to local conditions.
- Punic people were genetically diverse with almost no Levantine ancestors | Nature

Published: 23 April 2025

- If this is true, it would tell us that the Phoenicians who migrated (moved) to the west interacted with the surrounding peoples through local networks.

3. How did the expansion of the Phoenicians to the West interact with local culture?

4. Intercultural exchange of religious thought

- The Phoenicians contributed to the transmission of religious ideas across the Mediterranean.



Astarte
Sevilla



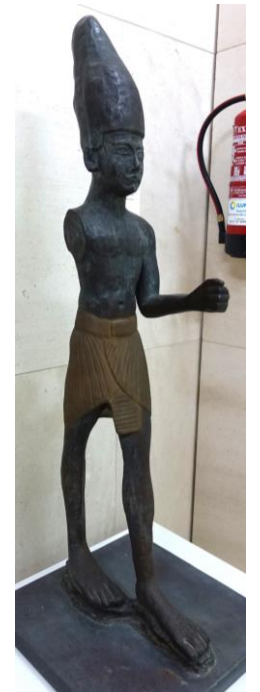
Astarte
Galera



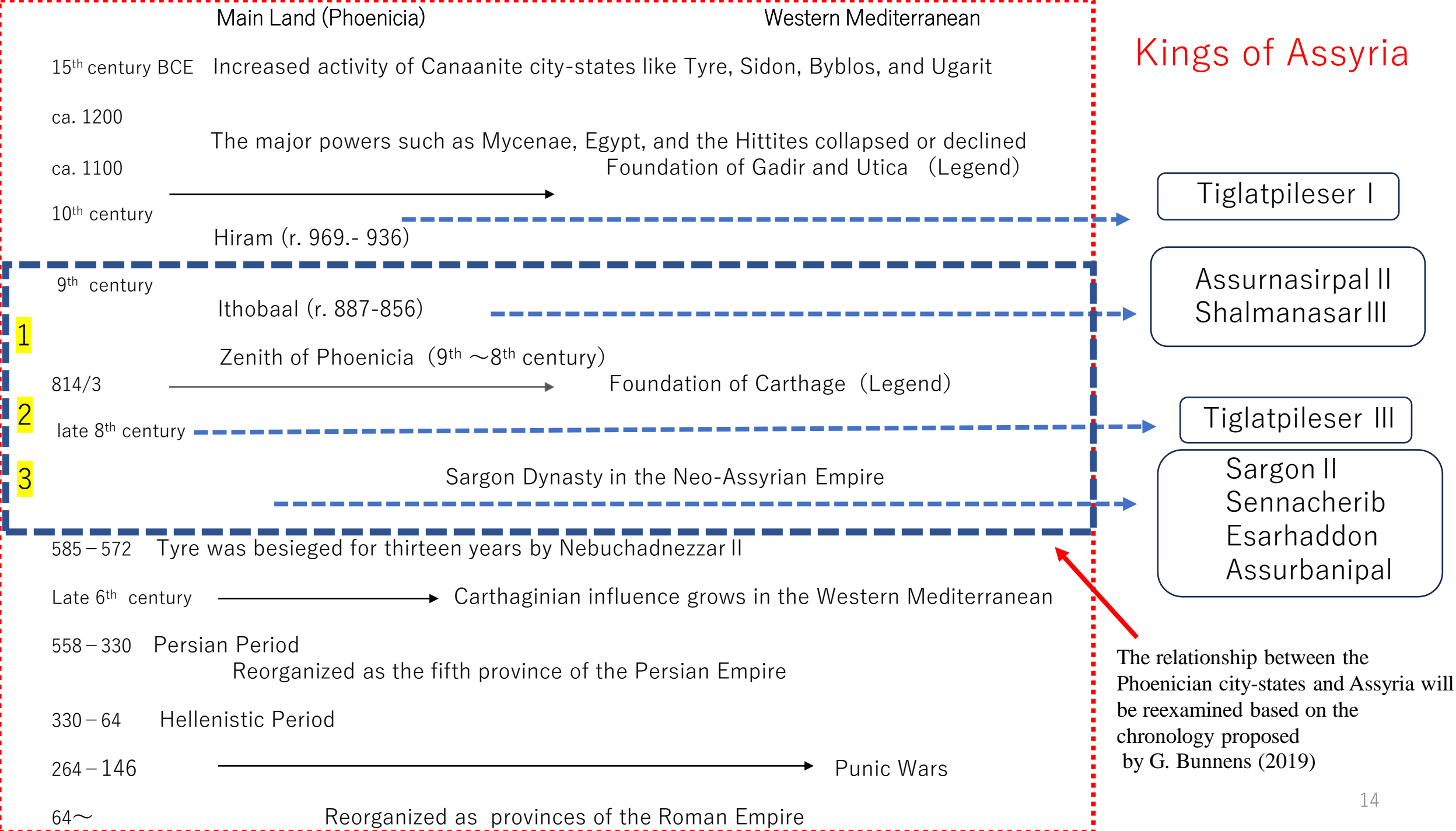
Astarte
Monte Sirai



Baal
Ugarit



Melqart
Huelva



4. The relationship between the Phoenician city-states and Assyria

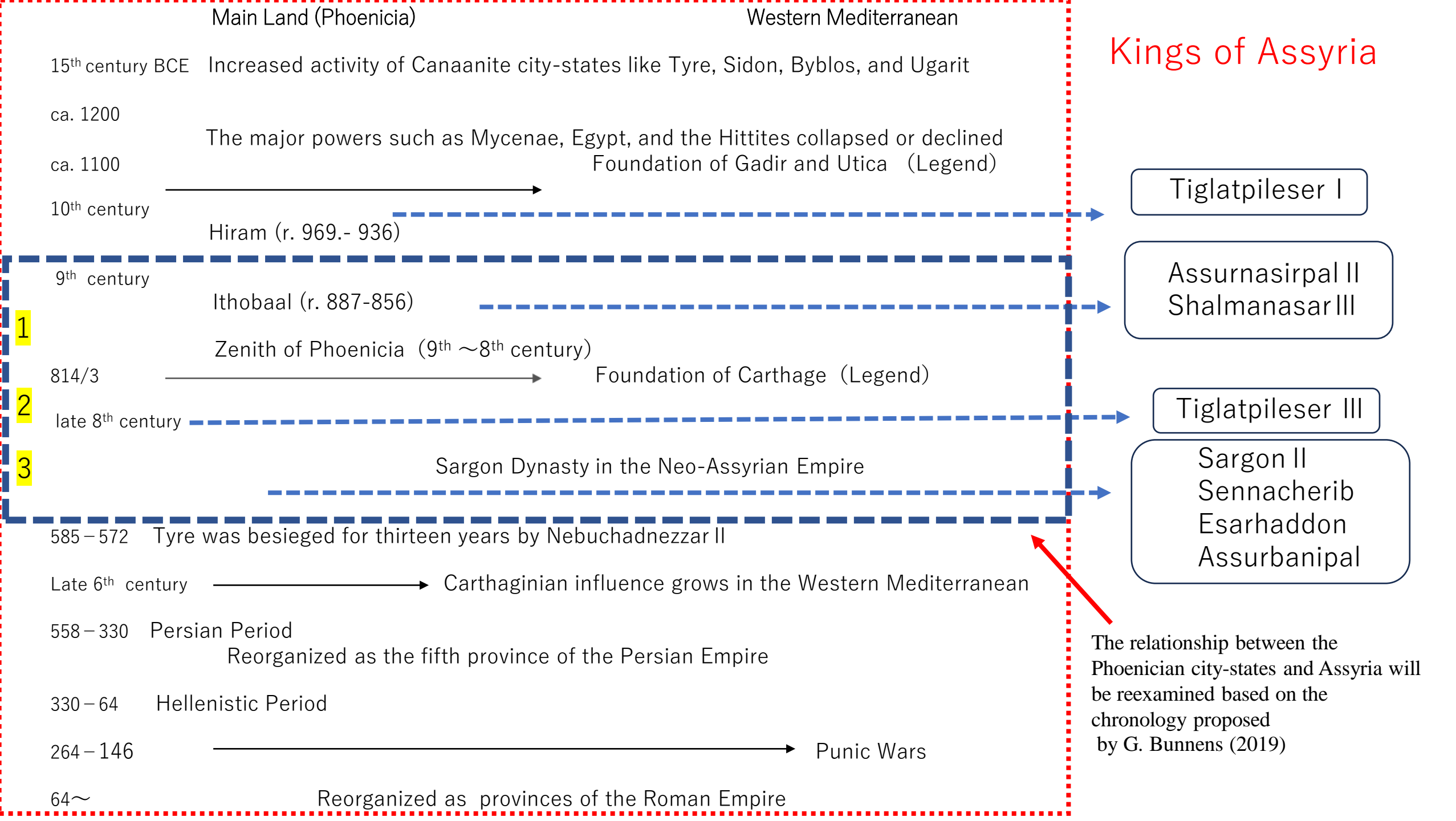
1. The 9th century BCE to the early 8th century BCE.



British Museum



https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_Rm-1041



4. The relationship between the Phoenician city-states and Assyria

2. The first half of the 8th century BCE (ca. 800 BCE- ca. 750 BCE)

Formation of settlements in the central and western Mediterranean



Tharros



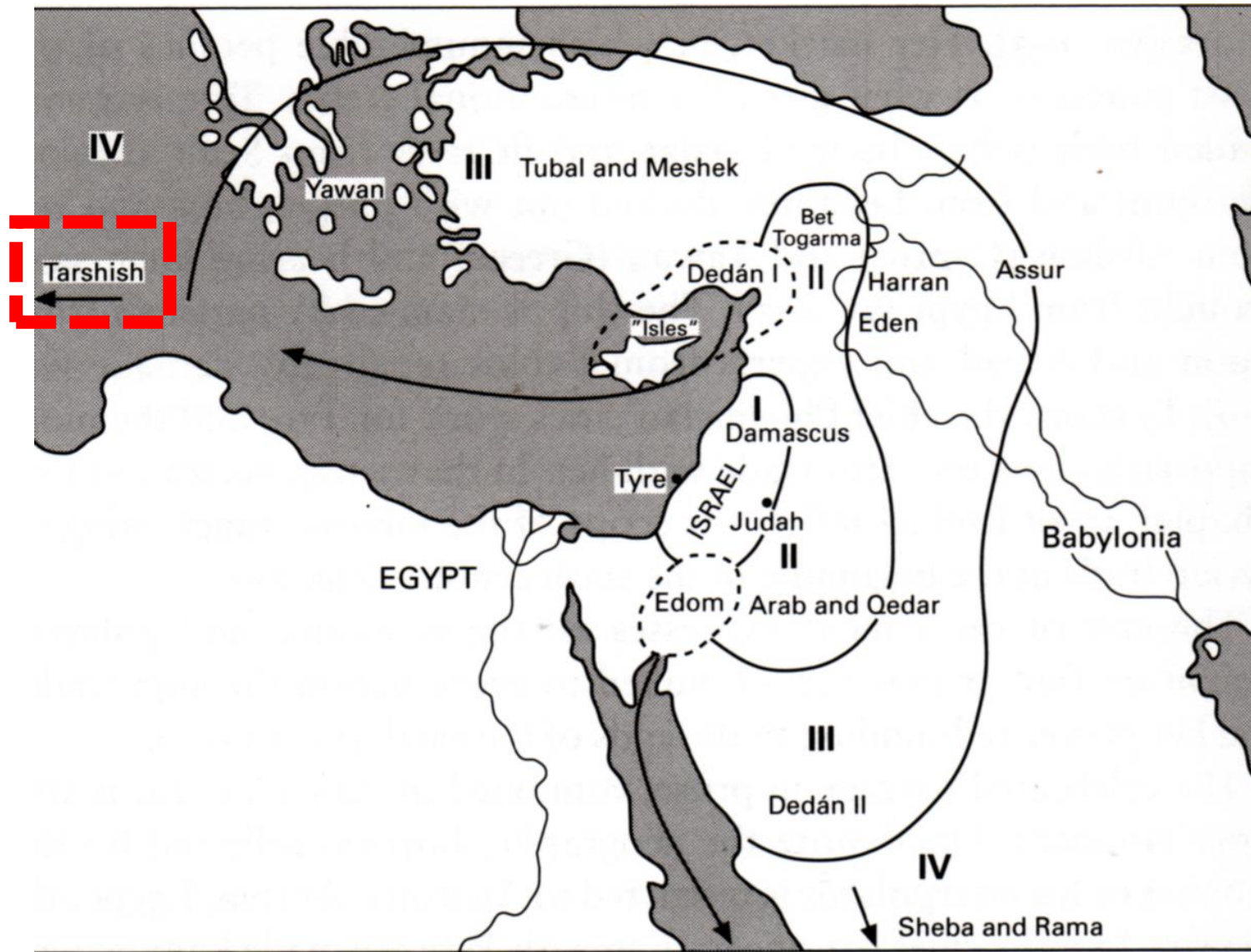
Motya



Doña Blanca

<https://www.lasapienzamozia.it/>

Phoenician Trade : Main Products of exchange in Phoenician trade in Ezekiel 27



- I Agricultural Products
- II Livestock Products
- III Craft Products and Slaves
- IV Exotic Product and Metals
 - * Tarshish
 - Trade goods:
silver, iron, tin, lead

The ships of Tarshish crossed the sea for your trade. (Ezekiel, 27, 25)



4. The relationship between the Phoenician city-states and Assyria

3. from the late 8th century BCE onward

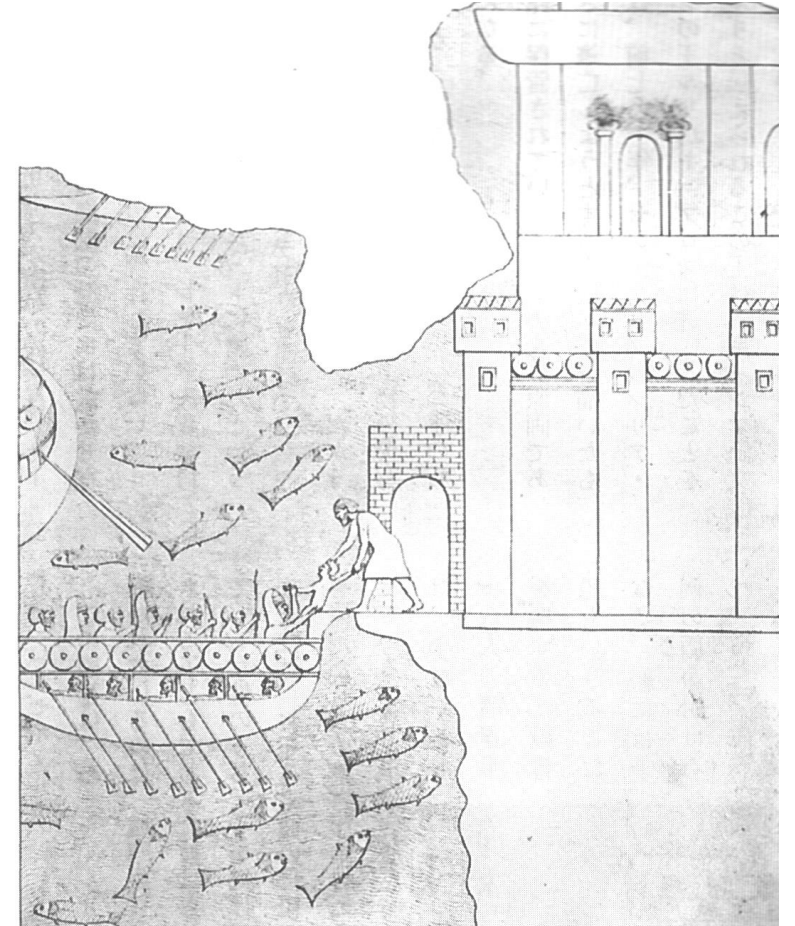
Luli's flight from Tyre

Drawing by A.H.Layard

Harsh military campaigns and the subsequent reorganization of territorial control



Increasing numbers of people migrated toward new territories in the western Mediterranean.



D. Harden (1980), pl.51

In addition, as we have seen, Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean had already begun before a clearly defined relationship with Assyria was established. Taking this into account, it is plausible to suggest that the trade routes and networks the Phoenicians built across the Mediterranean later came to complement and reinforce the tributary and vassal relationship that was eventually formalized between Assyria and Phoenicia.

Furthermore, as Maruono will demonstrate in the next chapter, the strategic military and economic importance of the Phoenician city-states is also reflected in their relationships with both the mother cities and the colonies established across the Mediterranean. However, from the mid-6th century BCE onward, Carthage rose to prominence in the western Mediterranean, leading to changes in the relationships among the previously Phoenician-founded colonies.

I believe this shift is directly connected to my own interest: namely, the cultural differences between early Phoenician traditions and the later Punic culture that developed with the rise of Carthage.

5. Conclusion: Three Turning Points in the History of Phoenician and Punic Religious Traditions

Period / Event	Historical Development	Religious Dynamics	Analytical Keywords
1. Early 1st Millennium BCE (Phoenician Expansion)	Overseas expansion led by Tyre across the Mediterranean	Transplantation of Phoenician religious traditions into local contexts	Intercultural Exchange, Hybridity, Continuity
2. Mid-6th Century BCE onward (Shift in Hegemony)	Transition of dominance in Central & Western Mediterranean	Transformation: Phoenician vs. Punic expression	Differences and Similarities between Phoenician and Punic Religious Aspects
3. Hellenistic to Roman Period	Roman integration of former Phoenician/Punic regions	Persistence of religious elements from Phoenician/Punic past	Legacy, Survivals, Continuity in Change

5 . Challenges

1 . To compare the role of the Phoenician networks under the Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid Persian empires, which became the great powers in the Near East after Assyria, with that in the Neo-Assyrian empire.

2 . Ultimately, to examine how the Phoenician network's connection between the east and west of the Mediterranean was transformed by the unification of the Mediterranean Sea as the Roman Sea.

3 Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia

3 – 1 Introduction

3 – 2 Previous research

3 – 3 Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia

3 – 3 – 1 Sources

3 – 3 – 2 The relationship between Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia

3 – 4 Conclusion

3 – 1 Introduction

- In this chapter, I aim to examine **the position of Phoenician cities and the role of the Phoenicians within the Neo-Assyrian Empire.**
- Neo-Assyrian Empire = the first “world empire” [ex: Yamada 2022]
(an expansive territory) **the ancient near east and mediterranean**
(a wide range of ethnic groups) Arameans, Egyptians, and **Phoenicians**
- **Neo-Assyrian Empire was connected to the distant western Mediterranean through Phoenician agency.**

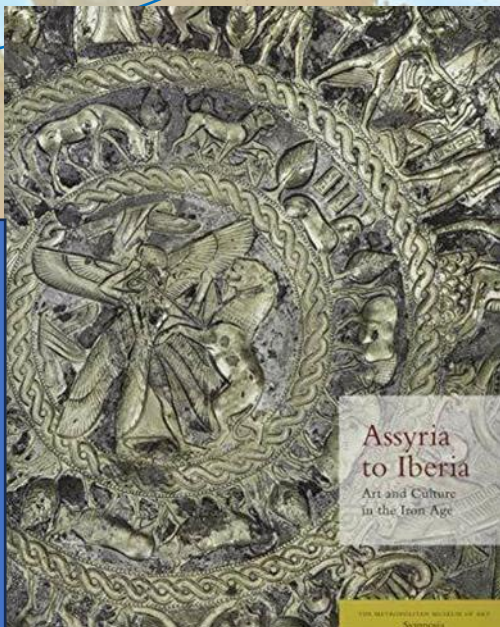
Why does this study focus on Phoenician activities in the Neo Assyrian Empire?



Neo Assyrian Empire

This Study :
Cultural exchange
between Neo
Assyrian Empire
and Phoenicia

The Phoenician trade network had already reached the western Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts during the Neo Assyrian Empire in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE.



Aruz, J. and M. Seymour (eds.) (2016) pp. x - xi.

3 – 2 Previous research



- **Aruz, J. and M. Seymour (eds.) (2016)**
the exhibition "**Assyria to Iberia**", Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014-2015. both Assyriologists and scholars of Phoenician and Punic studies.
- **Fales, M. (2017)**
a comprehensive overview of prior studies and primary sources **related to the history of Phoenicia within the Assyrian context.**
- **Rollinger, R. (2022)**
Mediterranean(the far west)'s role in the Assyrian imperial world.

Achievements

As these studies illustrate, a considerable body of literature has emerged concerning **the position of Phoenicia in Assyrian history**.

Challenges

First, the need for deeper interdisciplinary **dialogue between Assyriology and the fields of Phoenician–Punic studies**.

Second, based on such dialogue, there is a need to further develop research into **identity formation through cultural exchanges**—arising from **the movement of peoples and interregional networks**

3 – 3 Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia



3 – 3 – 1 Sources

To proceed with the main argument, Phoenician cities are described in Neo-Assyrian sources in three primary ways:

- (1) as strategically important **military** sites
ex: royal inscription under the reign of Sargon II (first **Cyprus** expedition)
- (2) as **economically** valuable centers
ex: letter during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (the tribute obligations of **Tyre** as a province of the Neo Assyrian Empire)
- (3) as crucial nodes within a **network**
ex: Oath document during the reign of Esarhaddon (the document of the Oath between Esarhaddon and **Baal**)

3 – 3 – 2 The relationship between Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia

- **“How did Neo Assyrian Empire make use of the characteristics of the Phoenicians?”**, this section examines the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal during the 7th century BCE, following the tripartite framework outlined above.

- (1) Military Role
- (2) Economic Role
- (3) Network Role (Military + Economic)

(1) Military Role

- King Ashurbanipal inscription

“In the course of my campaign, **Ba’alu, king of the land Tyre, ... — in total, twenty-two kings of the seacoast, the midst of the sea, and dry land, servants who belonged to me, carried their substantial audience gifts before me and kissed my feet.**” (RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 6 25-52.)

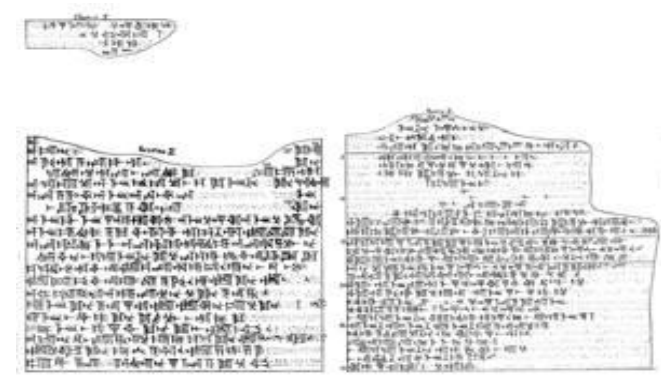
- This statement illustrates **how the Neo-Assyrian Empire recognized and exploited the maritime and strategic importance of the Phoenicians within its imperial structure.**



Victory stele of Esarhaddon



(2) Economic Role



- **Oath between Esarhaddon and Baal, king of Tyre** (SAA 2 5 18-30)

“These are the ports of trade and the trade routes which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, [entrusted] to **his servant Baal**: to Akko, Dor, to the entire district of the Philistines, and to all the cities within Assyrian territory on the seacoast, and to Byblos, the Lebanon, all the cities in the mountains, all (these) being cities of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.

...Nobody will [do] injustice [to those] who are hired [...] and nobody will harm their ships. In the coun[try of ...], in his district, in his villages ...[...] the people of Sidon [...] as in the past [...]”

- This provision highlights **the integration of Phoenician maritime trade into the Assyrian economy**, while also reflecting the value placed on preserving the human resources of its trading partners.

(3) Network Role (Military + Economic)

- Rollinger, R. (2022)
: Esarhaddon's reign
: RINAP 4 60, line 10

“*a-di KUR.tar-si-si.*”



Aruz, J. and M. Seymour (eds.) (2016) pp. x - xi.

Neo Assyrian Empire

This Study :
Cultural exchange
between Neo
Assyrian Empire
and Phoenicia

This term may refer either to **Tarsus** on the southern coast of Anatolia or to **Tartessos** in southern Spain. Regardless of the precise identification, the reference underscores the extent to which the **Assyrian Empire encompassed the Mediterranean**, an area in which **Phoenician activity was particularly vibrant**.

Rollinger argues persuasively for identifying *KUR.tar-si-si* as Tartessos.

RINAP Esarhaddon 34 13-19

- In the course of my campaign, I set up fortifications against **Ba' alu, the king of Tyre, who trusted in his friend Taharqa, the king of Kush**, threw off the yoke of the god Aššur, my lord, and kept answering (me) with insolence. I cut off the supply of food and water that sustained their lives. (15') I removed my camp from (this so-called) 'Egypt' and headed straight for Meluhha, (covering) a distance of thirty leagues from the city Aphek, which is in the region of Samaria, to the city Raphia (Rapihu), which is in the neighborhood of the Brook of Egypt, a place that has no river(s). By means of ropes, chains, (and) sweeps, I provided water for (my) troops drawn from wells.
- Furthermore, above Source , which pertains to Esarhaddon's **Egyptian campaign**, reveals that **Phoenician cities** acted as intermediaries between **Assyria and Egypt** and were at times even involved in anti-Assyrian uprisings—**evidence of their complex and essential role within the imperial network.**

3 – 4 Conclusion



- In conclusion, these examples collectively demonstrate that **the Phoenicians played a critical role in connecting the Neo-Assyrian Empire with the western Mediterranean and Egypt.** Their utility to the empire lay not only in their strategic and economic capacities but also **in their ability to facilitate interregional connectivity across military, commercial, and cultural domains.**
- Furthermore, **the Neo Assyrian Empire and Phoenicia were key elements in the movement between the ancient Near Eastern and ancient Mediterranean worlds.**

4 Conclusion

Our question : What role did the trade routes and networks established by the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean play in the relationship between Assyria and Phoenicia?

- **The Phoenician trade network** had already reached the western Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts during **the Neo Assyrian Empire** in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE.
- The Importance of the **Phoenician Diaspora Crossing the Borders between the Ancient Near East and the Ancient Mediterranean World**.
- Historical research that meticulously demonstrates large-scale concepts.

Traces of Phoenician and Punic material culture in the Mediterranean

Ceramic
fragment
inscribed
with a ship



Statuette of Astarte



Seated statue of Astarte

Bronze bowl with
Phoenician inscription



Hathor capital



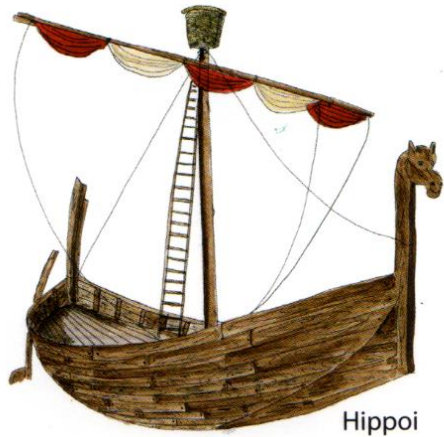
Throne of Astarte

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus

supported by a grant (KAKENHI) from JSPS

Google Earth

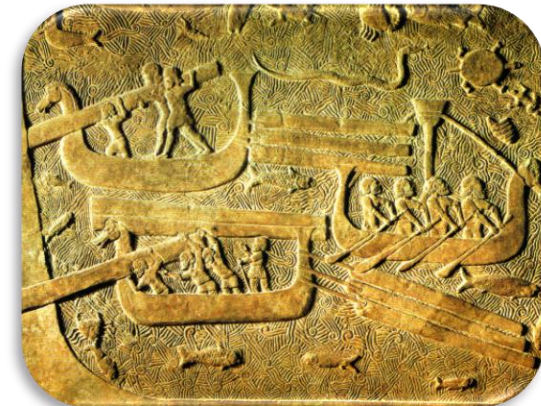
A New Perspective on ancient Mediterranean history.



Spatial “horizontal axis”
Interconnected
networks between the
ancient Near East and
the Mediterranean



Coherent temporal
“vertical axis” of
Phoenician and
Punic history



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- RINAP = Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period.

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SAA=State Archives of Assyria.

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Thank you for your attention!