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TRADE AND TRADERS

The Carthaginians are often visualised as a nation of seafaring traders, interested only in the bottom line. This supposed obsession is more a feature of modern stereotyping than ancient. True, ancient writers from Herodotus on often mention their trading behaviour, techniques and markets, as already shown. Greeks and Romans often and admiringly stressed Carthage's wealth: the Syracusan leader Hermocrates in 415 described her (according to Thucydides) as richer than all other cities, and two hundred and sixty-five years later, in Polybius' time, the universal view remained that she was the wealthiest city in the world. Cicero makes the entirely specious claim that it was Carthage's passion for trade, and by implication money-making, that eventually brought her down. Nonetheless, ancient sources focus more often on other prime features of the city's life – warfare and politics especially.³⁶

A great deal of Carthage's wealth did come from the sea. As noted earlier, the lengthy expeditions of Hanno and Himilco seem basically intent on fostering contacts along Europe's and Africa's Atlantic coasts. The takeover of Ebusus and interventions in Sardinia and Sicily had added to her trade advantages, so there is no surprise in her resolve, obvious in the first treaty with Rome (of 509 or thereabouts) and again in the second (generally dated to 348: Chapter X), to regulate Roman trading contacts with her territories in both islands as well as in North Africa. It would be hard to imagine that her agreements with other commercial states were very different, except perhaps ones made with sister Phoenician colonies that may possibly have given those places easier terms.

From early times on, the usual Carthaginian merchant ships, like others in the Mediterranean, were of two types: a small craft known

as a *gaulos* (thought to be a Phoenician word for ship), low in the water with a wide and rounded hull and pointed bow; and the *hippos* (Greek for horse, because of its horsehead prow), narrower and tapering at both bow and stern. In various forms and sizes, such ships and their descendants were the mainstay of the Carthaginian merchant marine down the centuries. It may have been in large merchantmen that Hanno's expeditionary colonists sailed, with his 60 penteconters as escorts. The penteconter itself – the name means fifty-oared ship – was descended from fifty-oared war galleys of more ancient times, and remained the standard ship of Mediterranean warfare until around 500. It could also be used for transport, as for example the Phocaeans did on their migrations; though, as noted earlier, Hanno's expedition would have needed many more than sixty if his colonists went in penteconters too.

Archaeological finds reveal imports to Carthage from all over the Mediterranean, even in early times as was shown above, and also installations for making the famous scarlet dye from the *murex* shellfish. Commerce in tin, iron, lead, silver and other metals continued, although these goods have left fewer physical traces. The remains of *amphorae*, pottery jars used for carrying wine, oil and grain, show continuing imports from Greece, notably Athens and especially prominent during the 5th and 4th Centuries, as well as increasing quantities from southern Italy and Campania, the Iberian peninsula, and later too from Rhodes. Diodorus records a thriving export of olives from Acragas in Sicily to Carthage in the later 5th Century: though he implies that, once olive cultivation became widespread in Libya, the exports fell off.

The Carthaginians in turn exported North African fish, grain, oil (this in later times at least), *murex* dye and other products. In the city's final centuries, after 300, Libyan wine too became an important export, or so suggest the wide-mouthed Punic *amphorae* (suitable for easy pouring) found in many places around the western Mediterranean – Massilia, Corsica and Rome among them – and even further east at Athens.

As well as handling such produce, the city's merchants were also active middlemen, acquiring goods from other producers and selling them on. A sizeable part of the cargoes set out on African beaches for the locals to inspect will have been of this sort, and it is worth noting that (as Herodotus tells it) the Carthaginian traders were paid in gold, not barter items. A 5th-Century shipwreck, just off the islet of Tagomago alongside Ibiza, was carrying a cargo probably of *garum* fish-sauce, in *amphorae* of a type made in the region of Gades

and Tingi; while the ship was a western Phoenician type, perhaps even from Carthage. A small Carthaginian ship which sank in the harbour of Lilybaeum (modern Marsala) around the year 250 also carried *garum* along with wine and olives.³⁷

What a Carthaginian merchant arriving in a foreign town might have for sale is playfully suggested by the Roman playwright Plautus in *Poenulus*, ‘The Little Carthaginian’ (or more freely ‘Our Carthaginian Friend’), a comedy put on, it seems, not long after the Second Punic War. The ‘little Carthaginian’ is a rich, elderly merchant named Hanno, searching the Mediterranean for his long-lost daughters and just arrived in a small Greek seaport. For his own reasons he pretends at first to speak only Punic, which allows a self-appointed local interpreter named Milphio to mistranslate him as huckstering a variety of mostly cheap goods: ‘African mice’ for display at a festival (a joke for panthers?), soup ladles, water- or music-pipes, nuts, lard, spades and mattocks. This miscellany, which is spread over several lines, is plainly meant for humour since the audience knows that Hanno is on a very different mission: but Romans might well expect much this kind of cargo from Carthaginian ships.

Hanno’s supposed Punic utterances not only mystified later copyists but modern scholars too until quite recently, the general verdict being that Plautus wrote invented gibberish. Now they are widely treated as genuine – the only specimens of Punic of any length in Greek or Roman literature. Translations of them vary because of the state of the text, but in any version they are unexciting: Hanno prays for help from the local gods, explains that he is seeking the hospitality of an old friend’s son who lives in the town, and identifies the young man’s house; he then answers Milphio’s questions in Punic until the false renditions provoke him into Latin. But his Punic remarks are lengthy enough to suggest that at least some members of his audience could understand him. With Carthaginian–Roman trade going back to the 6th Century or even earlier, this will be no surprise (not to mention that, by Plautus’ time, the first and second Punic wars had brought many Carthaginians to Italy as enslaved captives).³⁸

It is worth noting that an old street or district on Rome’s Esquiline Hill had the name *Vicus Africus*, ‘the African quarter’: perhaps it was where merchants from North Africa lodged in numbers sizeable enough to give the place its name. A community, small or substantial, of Carthaginians and other North Africans could be found at Rome and other important foreign centres at any time (save during wars), just as resident Greeks are glimpsed at

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Carthage in 396 and Italian merchants in 149. Syracuse in 398 had a large body of resident Carthaginians, with plentiful property to plunder when a new war broke out; so did other Sicilian Greek cities, Diodorus tells us (the Carthaginians, by contrast, seem to have left their resident Greeks alone).

Milphio in *Poenulus* describes Hanno as a *gugga*, a joke (it seems) about the merchant's colourful foreign clothing; a modern suggestion is that *gugga* was the Punic name for a purple-hued African bird. The widespread view that it was a word, perhaps derisive, for Carthaginian traders in general is less convincing, for it is not found anywhere else with this sense. Interestingly even so, a Punic-language inscription at Cirta in Numidia – today's Constantine in Algeria – probably from after the destruction of Carthage and thus after Plautus' lifetime, seems to use *hgg'* ('the *gugga*') for the profession of a man coincidentally called Hanno.

Given the importance of trade, within and beyond Africa, to the Carthaginians throughout their history, and the general view that their republic was run by a merchant oligarchy, it is paradoxical that the only rich Carthaginian merchant whom we know in any detail is fictitious. One real merchant may be attested on a mid-4th-Century Greek inscription (now lost) from Thebes: he was 'Nobas son of Axioubos' – probably one Nubo or Nabal (both are rare but attested Carthaginian names), son of a Hasdrubal or Esibaal – who received honours from the Boeotian League of which Thebes was the dominant city. Possibly the men called Aris and Mago whose names – in Greek letters – are stamped on some wide-mouthed *amphorae* found at Carthage were merchants too; but just as possibly or more so, they were the *amphora*-makers or the landowners whose estates produced the wine or oil transported in the jars (as was common practice on Roman-era lamps, *amphorae* and other pottery items). It is surely safe to suppose that most (if not all) of the city's leading men down the ages had links with commerce – directly or through kinsmen or merchant protégés – but this does remain a supposition.³⁹

LAND AND LANDOWNING

As mentioned earlier, it was not till after 480, in Justin's account, that the Carthaginians succeeded in cancelling rental payments to their Libyan neighbours. Instead, from then on they imposed control over much of their hinterland – and in a no doubt satisfying reversal

of fortunes, went on to exact tribute from it. How the process unfolded is not known, but Carthage's restraint over expansion overseas after the failure in 480 of Hamilcar's ambitious expedition into Sicily offers a context. Unwilling or uninterested in further confrontation with the Sicilian Greeks, at any rate for the next seventy years, and maybe deciding that there were still opportunities to exploit in her own continent, she chose – not necessarily right after 480 – to confront the populous but politically disunited Libyans. By bringing them under Carthaginian hegemony and taxing them she must have added significantly to her financial and economic strength. It was probably during the same period that the North African coastlands, including the other old Phoenician colonies, came under a similar dominance, as noted earlier.

While Carthage's own city-territory (in Greek, her *chora*) remained a separate entity from the subject Libyan territories and the lands of her Libyphoenician allies, nothing banned Carthaginians from owning property in all three. The *chora* consisted of Carthage's immediate environs, probably including Tunes, as well as the Cape Bon peninsula, but its precise limits are not known. Carthaginian citizens very likely owned most of it, apart from any areas directly owned by the state, but there were probably some other property-owners as well – residents from the sister colonies, some Libyans (from the very beginning, according to Justin), even foreigners like Greeks, Tyrians and Etruscans. As mentioned above, there was a Greek community at Carthage early in the 4th Century and no doubt at other times, while property-owning Carthaginians could be found in many Sicilian cities and maybe at Rome.

Polybius, writing of the later 3rd Century, states that the *chora* supplied the Carthaginians' 'individual lifestyle needs' while the tribute from Libya paid the expenses of the state. This should mean that the *chora* provided citizens with their grain, other food and other private goods in a period when the citizen population – male and female, city and *chora* – was probably between six and seven hundred thousand. Its produce may have maintained their slaves and ex-slaves too, for Polybius is probably not being pedantically exact in his phrasing.

Hannibal in 195 owned an estate on the east coast in Byzacium, between Acholla and Thapsus, thus pretty certainly outside the *chora* and in the territory of one of these two Libyphoenician communities. Again in non-Carthaginian territory would be the land grants that Aristotle reports being given to citizens sent out into the Libyan countryside to ease population pressure in the city. He

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implies that the grants were generous, for they made the grantees 'men of means'. In time, then, Libya was dotted with Carthaginian settlers and their farms and orchards – a continuing factor for major cultural, religious and social impacts.

By Aristotle's day, and probably from early on, the Carthaginians were distinguished for their agricultural expertise. Diodorus, in his account of the Syracusan leader Agathocles' invasion of North Africa in 310, writes a famous description of the marvellous countryside that the invaders found as they marched down the Cape Bon peninsula:

The intervening country through which it was necessary for them to march was divided into gardens and plantations of every kind, since many streams of water were led in small channels and irrigated every part. There were also country houses one after another, constructed in luxurious fashion and covered in stucco, which gave evidence of the wealth of the people who possessed them. The farm buildings were filled with everything that was needful for enjoyment, seeing that the inhabitants in a long period of peace had stored up an abundant variety of products. Part of the land was planted with vines, and part yielded olives and was also planted thickly with other varieties of fruit-bearing trees. On each side herds of cattle and flocks of sheep pastured on the plain, and the neighbouring meadows were filled with grazing horses. In general there was a manifold prosperity in the region, since the leading Carthaginians had laid out there their private estates and with their wealth had beautified them for their enjoyment. (Diodorus 20.8.3–4)

Diodorus' narrative of this war in Africa reads as though based on a sound, maybe eyewitness source. It also chimes with Polybius' statement about the productivity of the *chora*: for as we have seen, the Cape Bon peninsula had long been an important part of this. When the Romans invaded Punic North Africa in 256, they promptly found quantities of goods to loot in the rich countryside, including no fewer than twenty thousand persons to carry off as slaves. A century later in 153, envoys from Rome – among them the famous, irascible and suspicious Cato the Censor – noted the wealth of the countryside as well as the prosperity of the city. This is echoed by Polybius, who visited North Africa a few years after

and stresses both the fertility of the land and how ‘the supply of horses, oxen, sheep, and goats in it is beyond anything to be found in any other part of the world’. Strabo rather exaggeratedly claims that even in 150 Carthage still controlled three hundred Libyan towns. Despite the damage done by invasions and local rebellions, Carthaginian and Libyan skills were always able to make the land flourish once more.⁴⁰

As mentioned earlier, archaeological finds suggest that Carthaginians moved out to live in the hinterland not much before the year 400: even within 50 kilometres of the city, recognisably Carthaginian sites are very few down to about the year 300, contrasting with plenty from the next two centuries. Whether this should mean that not many Carthaginians occupied Libyan properties before the final century and a half of the city’s existence still needs to be clarified. If correct, Aristotle’s report of regular allocations of land in Libya to citizens, good land at that, must be wrong, and we must wonder what made him imagine it. It may well be that earlier citizen settlers lived much like their Libyan neighbours, even if these were in practice their subjects or vassals. Carthaginian domination and exploitation of Libyans and Libya’s resources were well under way before 396, to judge by the great rebellion launched – unsuccessfully – by the Libyans in that year.

The development of the countryside beyond the *chora* would be especially notable in its most fruitful areas: the lower Bagradas valley, the so-called ‘little Mesopotamia’ between this and the Catadas (modern Mellane) river to its east, and also (by the 4th Century) the uplands around the middle Bagradas and its tributaries the Siliana and the Muthul – regions of populous towns like Thugga, Uchi, Thubursicu and Bulla; not to mention the richest region of all, Byzacium. On the island of Meninx, modern Jerba, off the western coast of Emporia, a prosperous countryside with large and small villas existed by the late 3rd Century, apparently untroubled by Roman seaborne raids during the Second Punic War. Thanks to this agricultural prowess, Carthaginian merchants down the ages – and surely too those of smaller but important centres like Hippacra, Utica and Hadrumetum – had their well-stocked cargoes of grain and oil to take to customers abroad.

Agriculture again was the theme of two of the few Carthaginian writers known to us, Hamilcar and Mago – both of them retired generals, according to Pliny and the 1st-Century AD agronomist Columella. When they lived is not known, though Hamilcar seems to have preceded Mago and both almost certainly lived after 400,

possibly even after 300. Their works have not survived but Roman authors mention them with respect, especially Mago and his twenty-eight books on estate management, in effect a complete encyclopaedia of farming. Both writers seem to have drawn partly on Greek predecessors, but in turn they powerfully impressed their Greek and Roman readers and later agricultural authors: a striking feat indeed. When Carthage was destroyed in 146 and all the city's libraries were passed on to pro-Roman North African rulers, the Roman senate ordered Mago's work to be reserved for translation into Latin. Sixty years later, a condensed Greek version was brought out by a translator from Utica with the interestingly Roman-Greek name of Cassius Dionysius.

Mago, and no doubt Hamilcar too, wrote for affluent landowners. Hamilcar remains only a name, but a number of passages from Mago and a few from Cassius are quoted or paraphrased by Roman authors (notably Pliny and Columella, as well as Cicero's contemporary Varro). We therefore have welcome glimpses of how wealthy Carthaginians treated their estates.

The beginning of Mago's work was much quoted. An estate buyer, he stressed, should sell his house in the city lest he grow fonder of it than of his country property. In turn, someone especially fond of his town home had no need of a rural estate. Most Carthaginian landowners are not likely to have followed this advice literally (we know that Hannibal had a city house as well as the Byzacium estate), but Mago's real aim was no doubt to emphasise the importance of intelligent and committed farm management. His variegated topics included how to select the best bullocks, site vineyards and prune vines, plant olives, and rear horses and mules. He also supported the less plausible but widespread ancient idea (later taken up poetically by Virgil) that bees could be produced from the carcase and blood of a slaughtered bullock.

Worth noting, too, are some precepts quoted by Varro from Cassius Dionysius, who translated Mago. He recommended judicious treatment of estate slaves, particularly those chosen as supervisors. Slaves should be at least twenty-two years old and knowledgeable; supervisors and ordinary labourers must be given incentives to work well and feel loyalty to the estate and its owner; they should be chastised verbally rather than with blows; and the more alert and committed among them should be further rewarded, including encouraging them to marry fellow slaves and have sons. Such sound advice very probably came from Mago. Again we cannot say how far Carthaginians followed it in practice but, so far as they go, the

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precepts illustrate a sensibly enlightened attitude to slaves – one rather less forbidding than the strict and utilitarian slave regimen practised by Cato the Censor in 2nd-Century Rome.⁴¹

WORKERS AND LABOURERS

The potteries, foundries, dockyards and harbours at Carthage needed a sizeable working population. Some would be slaves and some others immigrants from the Libyan hinterland and from abroad, but many Carthaginian men and at least some women will have been breadwinners for their families. Maintaining, and at times extending, the amenities of a prospering city and catering to the needs and interests of its residents called for the normal broad range of occupations, from unskilled labourers such as dockworkers to goldsmiths, architects, doctors and teachers. Of their daily lives and needs not much is known, but the remains of houses excavated at Carthage and at the little Cape Bon town Kerkouane include small-roomed dwellings, some in multi-storeyed blocks at Carthage (in her later centuries), and shops opening onto the streets.

Ordinary city people lived close together, as they did in Phoenician, Greek and Italian towns too. Craftsmen in different trades may well have set up their shops, and therefore homes, along one or more streets, just as Rome had the *vicus Africus* and streets noted for particular trades such as scythemakers, cobblers and booksellers. As noted above, the area south of the walled city and beside the shore of the lake of Tunis seems to have been where the potters, ironworkers and dock labourers dwelt. There is as yet no archaeological evidence of dwelling-places in the sector, but the ‘New Gate’ inscription mentioned below strengthens the impression. In any case the homes of many of the very poor – Carthaginians and outsiders – must have been flimsy and perishable, leaving no traces.

Votive *stelae* and other inscriptions in Punic, from Carthage and elsewhere, commemorate ordinary folk down the ages: for instance Abdeshmun the scribe, ‘Abdmilqart the tax-collector’ (*ngš*), Aris a maker of strigils (metal scrapers used in the bath), carpenters named Ariso and Baalyaton, Baalhanno the fisherman, Baalsamor and his son Abdosiri who were each ‘chief of the gate-keepers’, an interpreter named Baalyaton son of Mago, wheelmakers named Bomilcar and Himilco, Bostar the innkeeper (*Bd’štrt hlyn*), a merchant Halosbaal son of Bostar son of Abdmilkot, a bow-maker named Hanno, and Mago the butcher (*Mgn hṭbh*). Another Mago, ‘son of Himilco

son of Himilco', was a chariot-maker. There were 'the craftsmen who made the female statues for the temple of *Mkl*' (a little-known deity); goldsmiths – 'the founders of gold objects' – with their foundry; and at a higher social level, the seal-keeper Abdeshmun whose son Baaliyaton became a *sufete*, and Yehawallon or Yehawwielon a road-builder or engineer.

Yehawallon figures in an inscription that is a rarity: a lengthy document in Punic found in the 1960s, attesting not a religious matter but a civic enterprise and dating from the 4th or 3rd Century. This was the building of an important street 'leading to the New Gate'. Just where the gate was is not certain, but the inscription may state – experts' interpretations of the Punic text vary – that it was in the southern wall. If so it would represent further development on that side of Carthage, which fits evidence for her urban growth from the 5th Century on. The inscription, on a block of black limestone, ascribes the project to 'the people of Carthage in the year of the *sufetes* Safot and Adonibaal' and 'the time of the magistracy of Adonibaal' and at least one other named magistrate, but the stone is damaged, 'and their colleagues'. What Adonibaal's office was is unclear, like so much else; were these men the heads (*rbm*) of the various pentarchies in that period? More interesting still is the range of workers involved in the project: tradesmen, porters and others 'from the plain of the town' (the area south of the city wall?), gold-smelters, furnace workers and, less certainly, 'the weighers of small change', the artisans 'who make vessels' (or 'pots'), and 'the makers of sandals'.

The relations between workers and employers, and levels of wages, are virtually unknown. With coined money not used by the Carthaginians until the late 5th Century – and even then only in Sicily until the century following – wages would have been paid in goods or valuables. There seems to have been some, probably modest, flexibility in employment. Two Punic inscriptions record transactions in which a man 'registered himself back into the employ of his master Eshmunhalos of his own free will' and 'without asking for silver'. One is the Hannobaal mentioned earlier, and the other is named Hannibal of Mique, possibly the same person (though the names are among the commonest at Carthage). In both the man acts – or claims to act – freely, and Hannobaal seals up the transaction with his own seal. Perhaps he and his namesake were freed slaves owning skills that led Eshmunhalos to entice or coerce them to come back and work for him; the denial of coercion may be just a formula. Even so it was an arrangement that earned written commemoration, no doubt for legal reasons.⁴²

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Other men with Carthaginian names, and of plainly low status, made dedications to Carthage's chief deities, Tanit and Baal Hammon, like the Safot also mentioned earlier, a *š šdn bd* – a slave 'owned by', or freedman 'thanks to', one Milkyaton son of Yatonbaal son of Milkyaton. So did Baalsillek, '*š šdn bd* his master (*'dnm*) Baalhanno'. Meanwhile *Gry*, a fuller who was slave of, or worker for, a Hanno son of Abdeshmun, had a tomb of his own in Carthage with his name on it. There is no report of Carthaginian citizens becoming enslaved to other Carthaginians, though it may sometimes have happened (for example as a penalty for debt, as could happen in early Rome), but Carthaginian names could well be given to slaves from elsewhere – and very likely to slave children born and raised among Carthaginians.⁴³

Why freedmen, if that is what these men were, should each be called 'a man of Sidon' (*š šdn*) can only be surmised. Diodorus' report of the Libyphoenicians having intermarriage rights with Carthaginians may be a clue that migrants to Carthage from kindred cities enjoyed certain privileges (at Rome, citizens of her satellite Latin colonies did). Sidon, second only to Tyre in kinship to Carthage, perhaps gave its name to such a status, limited but still privileged in comparison to resident Libyans, Numidians and the like. That would place a thoroughly Punicised and maybe Carthage-born *š šdn* like Safot, if he was a freedman, on a footing close to but not quite equal with Carthaginian citizens – a situation which these surely regarded as fit and proper.

Whatever their origins, the inscriptions of Hannobaal, Safot, Baalsillek and *Gry* suggest some degree of freedom in their doings. Hannobaal left his master or former master for other (unsuccessful?) activities and then returned. Safot and Baalsillek could make their own dedication (seemingly at their own expense, so it means they could earn money for themselves). *Gry* seems to have run his own fuller's shop, even if he was supervised by his master or patron. There would be equal or greater flexibility for freeborn Carthaginians working for employers, and still wider opportunities if they had independent professions such as scribes, goldsmiths, statute-makers or builders – professions in which they in turn would have employees or slaves.

SLAVES

Slaves worked in the city and the countryside. Their numbers will have grown sizeably with the growth of both the city and the *chora*,

and still more as Libya in turn became more prosperous. The Carthaginians built up a significant slave population of which only occasional glimpses emerge. As at Rome, rich citizens no doubt owned large numbers, less wealthy citizens fewer, and probably only quite affluent craftsmen and small farmers could expect to afford even one. Freed slaves surely existed too, as suggested above, but their numbers and the terms on which they might gain their freedom are not known.

Slaves originated from all round the Mediterranean and some no doubt from beyond. Slave-traders were a Mediterranean fixture at all times, and Phoenician slavers had been known even to Homer – one tried to kidnap Odysseus on his wanderings. Cassius Dionysius, says Varro, recommended slaves from Epirus in north-western Greece for their steadiness and loyalty: another piece of advice which may have come from Mago. Others were born to slave parents – as noted earlier, Mago approved of this – while still others may have been persons (perhaps even Carthaginians?) enslaved for debt or other penalties. Others who could become slaves were men, women and children carried off from their coastal homes by raiding pirates, as happened (in reverse) to the daughters of Hanno the ‘little Carthaginian’. Some children may have been sold into slavery by poverty-stricken parents who lacked means to raise them, a practice found in other cultures.

Foreign slaves could also be acquired as war-captives, either taken in battle or seized in attacks on enemy territory, especially in the sack of a city. Thanks to the Carthaginian campaigns in Sardinia, many slaves in the later 6th Century must have been natives of that island, while in the late 5th and through much of the 4th Century quite a number will have been Sicilian Greeks. Carthage’s off-and-on wars with the Numidians must have brought in many Numidian slaves from time to time, too. The struggles with Rome between 264 and 201 meant that Roman and Italian slaves in their turn could be found in both city and countryside. Their fates were rather happier. The later historian Appian in fact mentions that Scipio, on invading Africa in 204, rescued Roman captives working the fields who had been sent there from Italy, Sicily and Spain. Ransoms, prisoner exchanges and, at the end of each war, enforced repatriations also took home other Roman and maybe Italian slaves.

The glimpses we have of slave numbers are hard to evaluate. Hanno, one of the city’s chief men in the 4th Century, armed a supposed twenty thousand slaves when facing arrest for plotting a coup d’état around 350 – a suspect number, though, because he and

they in their futile attempt at resistance supposedly shut themselves up in a single 'fort' (which may have been his country mansion). It is fairly improbable too that, grand though he was, Hanno alone owned so many, especially as the narrative requires these to be males only. He very likely gathered slaves from around the countryside and even perhaps from the city, but Justin's figure would be more plausible, even then, if divided by ten.

The same figure of twenty thousand is given, this time by Polybius, for the 'slaves' whom Regulus' army a century later captured on its march through the Cape Bon region towards Tunes. Romans rarely discriminated, all the same, between seizing slaves and seizing freeborn enemy locals as human booty, so it may be that these were country folk both slave and free, who were later sold off into Roman slavery. Appian offers a third figure: towards the end of the second war with Rome and with Scipio's invasion looming, the general in command at Carthage bought 5,000 slaves to serve as rowers on his warships. If this report is true, most of them were probably bought within North Africa or even from owners in Carthage's *chora*, given the urgency of the situation. Since almost no sea-fighting took place and all the warships were burnt by Scipio at war's end, these *ad hoc* oarsmen were perhaps returned to their masters afterwards.

As noted earlier, Mago the agronomist recommended sensibly liberal treatment of farm slaves, but actual practice no doubt varied widely. When in 396 the Libyans launched a great rebellion against Carthage – one of the greatest in their history – they were joined by a large number of slaves in besieging the city. This obviously suggests that many slaves were unhappy with their lot, though their grievances were no doubt different in detail from those of the free Libyans. These must have promised their new allies their freedom at the very least. It could be significant that many slaves in 396 must have been Sicilian Greeks, for a new series of wars which had begun in 409 was marked by wholesale sackings of many important Greek cities, Acragas above all. It was in turn a succession of serious reverses at Greek hands in 398–396 which encouraged Libyans and slaves to revolt. The chief or sole grievance of the slaves who followed Hanno the traitor fifty or so years later was most likely again their enslaved condition. This time, though, the hopes of the rebels were centred on a charismatic Carthaginian, not on crushing Carthage herself. Memories of the failed revolt in 396 no doubt persisted, and not only among the slaves. Hanno at first had support from Libyans and even Numidians, though there are no details and they seem to have dropped him quickly.⁴⁴

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On the other hand, the idea that the Carthaginians suffered a constant, destabilising fear of and risk from the slave population has nothing else to go on. The invasion of Agathocles from 310 to 307 caused fresh Libyan unrest, but none is mentioned among slaves. Nor is any heard of during the Roman invasion of 256–255, whereas defections from Carthage by at least some Libyans and Numidians took place. Even more marked is the total silence about slave unrest during the massive rebellion by Carthage's unpaid mercenaries and heavily oppressed Libyan subjects that followed the First Punic War, even though it lasted over three years and is recounted in some detail by Polybius. None, again, is reported during Scipio's invasion late in the Second Punic War, during which he made extensive raids into the Libyan countryside and won a series of major battles. By contrast, as mentioned just now, we read of the Carthaginians buying slaves to row warships of the Carthaginian fleet. Finally, in the crisis of 149 when it was made plain that the Romans encamped outside the city meant to end its existence, the Carthaginian senate offered freedom to the slaves, obviously to recruit them for the resistance. Of course this was a risk, but one that proved to be justified, for everyone in the city fought to the end – in striking contrast to the sister colonies and the Libyan hinterland.

VI

THE CITYSCAPE OF CARTHAGE

THE GROWTH OF THE CITY

By the 4th Century, the roadstead along the shore of the lake of Tunis had been supplemented by an artificial channel extending for nearly a kilometre northward through the marshy lagoons to the area of pottery works and iron foundries next to Carthage's southern walls. Not much of this facility remains, for it was later replaced by the famous and still visible enclosed artificial ports. But wooden docks, for example, have been identified from evidence of post-holes in the soil of the Îlot de l'Amirauté, the little island in the circular port – now a shallow lake – which was built at the northern end of the old lagoon area in the late 3rd or early 2nd Century.

The channel was about two metres deep and some 15 to 20 metres wide – probably wider still where it met the lake – with the earliest datable pottery finds from it dating to the second half of the 4th Century. At the docks in its northern part the Carthaginian shipwrights built their vessels, both commercial and naval, which could then be launched down the channel. Given its width, this may also have received merchant shipping, which would be more sheltered than in the lake and nearer to the city proper.⁴⁵

The defeat at Himera in Sicily in 480, at the hands of Gelon and Theron, prompted the Carthaginians to consolidate and then develop their position in North Africa – to the sorrow, we have seen, of the hitherto independent Libyans. Investigations in the central sectors of the old city have shown that its defences were improved: for although there was peace with the Sicilians and Libya was coming under control, Carthaginians could not help but be conscious of the vulnerability of the site if left unprotected. During the 5th Century powerful fortifications were built along the sea-front east of Byrsa, as shown by the discovery in recent times of the remains of imposing stone

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walls, over five metres thick, and a mighty double gate opening onto a narrow beach. These fortifications extended along the shore as far as the edge of the lagoons: nor would it make sense if the landward sides of the city were still left open, though so far no traces of land walls have been found (*Illustration 1*).

The city itself was expanding, although the stages can only be partially and tentatively traced. It used to be supposed that Carthage's defeat in Sicily in 480 caused seventy years of reduced trade, limited state activity and general introspection. This was inferred largely from a serious drop in archaeological finds of datable 5th-Century Greek pottery at Carthage, as well as her lack of adventurousness abroad. More recent investigations have not only found new evidence but re-evaluated older finds. It now appears that 5th-Century Attic pottery remains were misdated, or wrongly ascribed to regions like southern Italy (south Italian pottery actually became prominent only in the 4th Century). In addition, substantially more Attic ware has been unearthed in the past few decades at both Carthage and Kerkouane. The continuing business activity thus revealed fits Diodorus' report about Carthage in the later 5th Century importing

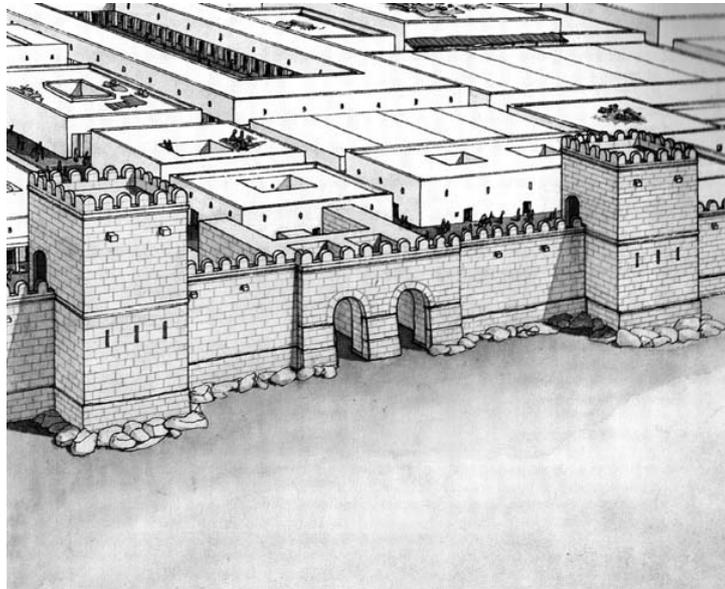


Illustration 1 Sea walls, c. 400 BC: artist's reconstruction

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olives on a large scale from Acragas. Trade with the Etruscans too did not suffer. These re-evaluations are paralleled by the evidence of the Carthaginians imposing and extending dominance over their Libyan neighbours, and carrying out important building projects in and outside the existing city.

Around the end of the 5th Century or rather later, new structures were built just inside the new sea-walls east of Byrsa but separated from them by open ground some 30 metres or more wide: houses and warehouses. Two centuries later at least some of these were enlarged or replaced to create prosperous city mansions, with the built-up area moving right up to the walls (*Illustration 1*). All this points to a growing urban population, just as it was probably during a stage of vigorous urban development that the New Gate project was launched. This was plainly a large project, for it brought in the (seemingly enthusiastic) participation of a notable range of craftsmen and workers, among them the craftsmen of ‘the plain of the town’, which (as we saw earlier) probably meant the district around the so-called industrial area south of Byrsa and around the lake of Tunis’ harbourage. The New Gate itself, whatever its precise site, could be one stage in the building of land fortifications around the burgeoning city.⁴⁶

Another important, though less traceable, feature of urban expansion was the development of the garden suburb *Megara* (*M’rt*). Appian almost certainly relies on Polybius, who had been to Carthage, in describing *Megara* as it was in the mid-2nd Century: a large district next to the city walls, ‘planted with gardens and full of fruit-bearing trees divided off by low walls, hedges, and brambles, besides deep ditches full of water running in every direction’, with properties belonging to Carthaginian citizens. It seems to have been the broad district north of Byrsa and the necropoleis on the hills overlooking the city: the area today from the resort village of Sidi bou Said along the cliff-edged upland called La Marsa and, though probably not from the start, as far as Cape Gammarth (Map 1B). The archaeological land surveys mentioned earlier have found five sites, dating before 300, in this district; from the period following 300, as many as eleven.

Westward *Megara* extended, eventually, to the start of the isthmus that bound Carthage’s arrowhead to the mainland. In the north this was about a kilometre wide, while from Sidi bou Said the district was up to six kilometres wide, and nearly four beyond the lagoon area and the ‘*tophet*’. Across that neck of level terrain were built, at some date, the massive triple-wall fortifications described by Appian

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– perhaps in the aftermath of Agathocles’ invasion but conceivably much earlier, for instance after the great Libyan rebellion in 396 when the city had been put under siege. Such secure defences would have encouraged Carthaginians to develop the area within them still further, even if tracts just beyond the city’s hills had quite likely been exploited for orchards and other produce from the earliest times.

Megara in Appian’s description was not a district of houses, apartment blocks and streets, although lanes and perhaps a few wider roads must have run through it for access. In other words it was not an area of planned urbanisation, but was allowed to continue as a semi-rural district. When the city’s great fortifications were built enclosing almost the entire arrowhead of Carthage, from the lake of Tunis to the lake of Ariana and over to Cape Gammarth, the district was at least fifteen times the size of the built-up city (which by then covered roughly 1½ square kilometres).

Megara was probably, too, the ‘new city’ which figures in Diodorus’ telling of the foiled coup of Bomilcar in 308. This over-ambitious general assembled his army ‘in what was called the New City, lying a short distance outside Old Carthage’, then dismissed all but a picked force and with it marched into the old city to seize the market square (the *agora* in Greek) – only to be driven back with losses through the narrow streets into the ‘new city’, where he and his surviving followers took refuge on ‘a piece of high ground’ but were forced to surrender. The details would fit: an area separate from the old city, but next to it and big enough to parade several thousand soldiers, and with a hilltop for a last stand. If it did count as a ‘new city’, the term suggests that already – during the Agathoclean invasion – it too had fortifications, though these may not as yet have been the elaborate in-depth structures described by Appian.⁴⁷

TEMPLES AND OTHER SACRED BUILDINGS

Naturally the city held temples of its many gods and goddesses. The most magnificent, the temple of ‘Aesculapius’ (Asclepius in Greek, and usually identified as Eshmun) as Appian calls it, stood on the top of Byrsa itself and was reached by a great flight of sixty steps from the foot of the hill. Nothing survives even of its foundations because in Roman times the summit of the hill was completely taken off, levelled and replaced by new structures (some broken remnants

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found on Byrsa's slopes have been tentatively suggested as from the destroyed temple). On the Byrsa side of the marketplace was another grand temple, that of 'Apollo', who seems to have been Reshef, lavishly decorated in gold. It may be that the remains of an early 2nd-Century temple, recently discovered near the suggested site of the *agora* and only a short distance north of the circular port mentioned earlier, was its final version, but this is uncertain.

The other major divinities like Tanit, Baal Hammon, Baal Shamim, Baal Sapon, Melqart and Astarte must have had their own temples, not to mention places of worship for the many lesser deities of the Phoenician and Punic pantheon, but where they lay is not known. We might wonder whether Tanit and Baal Hammon at least, perhaps Melqart too, had their seats on Byrsa with Reshef. At the same time, Tanit and Baal Hammon were the chief deities offered votive *stelae* in the '*tophet*'.

The flat-roofed temples of Phoenician and Egyptian traditions were standard in the Phoenician west, too, including Carthage. This is inferred from carvings on *stelae* and small sculptures. For instance a 6th- or 5th-Century representation from Sulcis in Sardinia and another of similar date from Motya in Sicily present a temple's goddess standing between the two columns of its porch, just as a 5th-Century *stela* from Carthage's '*tophet*' again has a worshipper (or the god) in the entrance porch between columns. Another *stela* found at Motya represents a small temple with the usual two-columned porch, the interior *cella* with a niche for the deity's image at the back, and an Egyptian-style entablature (its lower part adorned with a sun-emblem and a half-moon curving over this) – complete with the dedication to Baal Hammon by one *Mnms* son of *Hqm*. Most notable of all is a fine model or *naiskos* of a handsomely decorated, seemingly square temple or shrine, found at the Libyan town of Thuburbo Maius (some 60 kilometres south-west of Carthage, on the river Mellane) and perhaps 2nd-Century in date. This may represent a small shrine or 'chapel', again with a porch between two fluted columns in front of the interior *cella* of the building.⁴⁸

The entablatures of temple roofs were carved in complex geometric patterns like egg-and-dart moulding and Egyptian-influenced motifs; their fluted columns, round or square, could be adorned with Greek-derived capitals or sometimes with patterns like palm-tree fronds. Within each chapel and temple, there would be an inner room or rooms with an altar, the deity's image and pious offerings, cheap or costly, such as statuettes, jewellery amulets and small carvings. A

large sacred precinct would include a courtyard where priests and attendants would gather for ceremonies.

Temples in full Greek form, with a two-sided sloping roof and triangular pediment façade, were few at best and left no recognisable archaeological trace. If any did exist, they would probably have been ones dedicated to Greek divinities adopted by the republic – most famously Demeter and Kore (also called Persephone), adopted in 396 – or ones permitted to the resident Greek community. A pleasing white marble *stèle*, now in Turin, depicts Kore or Demeter standing with a horn of plenty in the columned porch of a Greek-style shrine of mixed Doric and Ionian styles, with a crouching lion sculpted in the pediment. The *stèle* is generally judged Carthaginian-made from the 2nd Century, though a dissident view sees it as from Sulcis in Sardinia and dating to around 300. Significantly, its dedicatee was ‘thy servant Milkyaton the sufete, son of Maharbaal the sufete’ – clearly a leading aristocrat, Carthaginian or Sulcitan – and the depicted temple surely stood in his city.

An impressive structure – not at Carthage, but in Carthaginian-influenced Libya – can cast added light on Carthaginian architecture. On the hillside just below Thugga (Dougga, 110 kilometres south-west of Tunis) stands the 21-metre-high tower-like mausoleum of Ataban ‘son of Yofamit son of Filaw’ (these transliterations are approximate), seemingly the Libyan lord of the region around the late 3rd Century. His inscription, now in the British Museum, is in both Punic and Libyan; one of his stonemasons, along with his own son Zimr, is ‘Bd’rš (perhaps *Abd’rš*, like the Carthaginian sufete mentioned earlier; but interpretations vary) son of Abdastart, while among other specialist workers was an iron-maker named Safot son of Balal or Baalal. These men and their fathers had Carthaginian names, indicating though not proving that they were Carthaginians in Ataban’s service. The mausoleum consists of three tiers. The first is cubic in shape resting on a podium of five steps, with a relief sculpture of a *quadriga* (a four-horse chariot) in each vertical face; the second also cubic but of narrower dimensions, with engaged square Ionic columns on each face and on a three-step podium; the third a rectangular, still narrower structure resting on a squared pedestal that originally had a horseman at each corner; and topping the whole a low pyramid on a pedestal with a sea-nymph at each of its corners (*Illustration 2*).

This grandiose erection is unlike anything built by Greeks or Romans (except, perhaps, lighthouses on a much more massive scale) but is strikingly like another monument, this time at Sabratha

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Illustration 2 Mausoleum at Thugga (2nd Century BC)

on the coast of Emporia, which can be reconstructed from the ruins that remain: a triangular two-tiered structure, with a pyramid much steeper than Thugga's, on a podium standing on five steps – but with the extra refinement that on both levels all three sides were concave in shape.⁴⁹

The design was popular. There is for instance another, though smaller and much plainer, rectangular two-tier mausoleum, again topped by a pyramid, at Henchir Jaouf near Segermes (south of Carthage and about 25 kilometres inland from the gulf of Hammamet); it has been dated by pottery fragments to around 175–150. A one-metre-high and half-metre-wide rectangular stone

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marker or *cippus* found in or near Carthage's 'tophet' has stylised columns carved to frame each of its four faces and is topped by a gabled roof, to resemble a similar structure (*Illustration 3*); on each of the two narrower faces is carved, in skilful style, a gourd or bottle crowned with a triangle – a religious symbol strongly resembling the 'sign of Tanit', to be met below. At Clupea (Kelibia) south of Kerkouane, the stone-cut entrance down to the underground tomb of one Mago has, on its lintel, a plain outline of a pyramid-topped mausoleum; Mago's family perhaps could not afford a real one, which of course would have been hugely expensive.

More striking still are paintings in a tomb in Kerkouane's Jebel Mlezza necropolis, each depicting in some detail a single-tiered and pyramid-topped mausoleum, with a ritual fire burning on an altar alongside. Such monuments were (we should note) well established by the mid-3rd Century, for as noted earlier Kerkouane was



Illustration 3 Stone *cippus* from Carthage: rectangular tower design and 'bottle' symbol on side

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destroyed then and never rebuilt. If Carthage's urban terrain was too constrained for similar impressive works, they may have stood in places in the necropoleis on the hillsides of Byrsa, Junon, Dermech and the others, perhaps elsewhere. The 'tower' which the Romans found close to the outer side of Megara's wall in 147, when trying to break into the city, was perhaps one such – not in a necropolis, but neither is Ataban's.⁵⁰

A kilometre south of Byrsa hill and just a few dozen metres east of the shore lagoons was the so-called '*tophet*', an entirely different type of sacred site first discovered in 1922 (*Illustration 4*). A narrow and elongated tract of walled but open-air ground eventually covering some 6000 square metres, it was the place where the cremated remains of very young children were deposited, in pottery urns and often (not always) with an accompanying *stèle* and grave-offerings, with dedications to the goddess Tanit and to Baal Hammon. Cremated animal remains also occur, sometimes in the same urn as those of a child. The earliest deposits can be dated to the late 8th Century; over the ensuing centuries, nine levels of deposits built up. On an informed estimate, about twenty thousand such urns were placed there in the two centuries from 400 to 200. The word '*tophet*' is not Punic but has been borrowed by archaeologists from the Hebrew Bible, where it is a valley outside Jerusalem in which



Illustration 4 View of the '*tophet*' at Carthage

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Canaanite children were sacrificed to please the Phoenician Baal until the later 7th Century. Carthage was only one of many Phoenician colonies in North Africa, Sardinia and Sicily with a *'tophet'*: the site was always outside the settlement, though in her case the city later expanded around it, and hers is by far the largest of them all. What was done in the *'tophet'*, or in preparation for the deposit there, is one of the most debated – and perhaps insoluble – questions in Carthaginian studies, as will be outlined later (Chapter VII).

HOUSES AND SHOPS

Secular buildings are not often pictured on *stelae* or in other Punic art, but just enough evidence survives for glimpses of the rest of Carthage's cityscape. In the same well-decorated Jebel Mlezza tomb, one wall shows a neat and naive painting of a walled city open to the shore (*Illustration 5*). The city is painted between a niche with a symbol of the goddess Tanit and, on its own other side, a rooster with sharp spurs (apparently a symbol of the soul), so the wall may depict the 'other-world' city receiving the soul of the deceased. Its semicircular crenellated wall and the square buildings inside would be based on familiar views of coastal towns – maybe, it has been suggested, of Kerkouane itself. Such views would, conceivably enough, be rather like those of many Greek islands' small towns

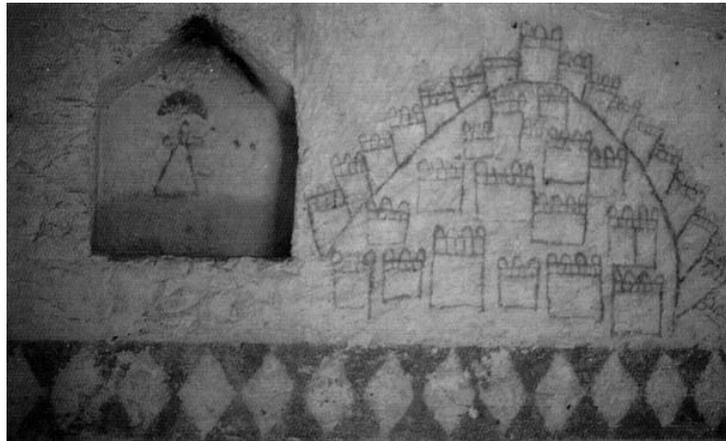


Illustration 5 Painting of city in Jebel Mlezza tomb VIII

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today, although stuccoed instead of whitewashed. Carthage in turn may have resembled an enlarged version of a city like this when viewed from a ship or from the hills on its north side, or – more distantly – from the Cape Bon coast opposite.

Diggings further inland in the old city show evidence of big dwelling-places even in Carthage's early centuries. Similar early houses have been identified at Phoenician sites in south Spain like Toscanos and Cerro del Villar, and later ones at Kerkouane on Cape Bon. They would be flat-roofed, with access by stairs or ladders: cool for sleep in high summer, warm for taking sunshine on winter days. Although there was nothing like standardised floor-plans, many larger houses had interior courtyards reached by narrow corridors from the street and giving access to surrounding rooms, thus letting in light and air. Some large buildings housed apartments, often with the ground-floor rooms let out as shops. On the southern slope of Byrsa hill, diggings have unearthed a sector datable to the early 2nd Century, preserved through being covered over by a deep layer of rubble when the Romans a hundred and fifty years later razed away Byrsa's summit. This is the so-called 'Hannibal quarter', so named because the famous general became *sufete* in 196 to carry out a number of progressive measures in politics, government and finance which had lasting effects – including perhaps this extensive urban improvement project in what previously was an industrial site (*Illustrations 6 and 7*).

The long-established workshops were replaced with carefully built structures on streets laid out on a grid plan. The streets, 5 to 7 metres wide (wider than in the old city) and of rammed earth, have drainage holes every so often feeding water and other liquids from the buildings lining the streets down into stone-lined wells (soakaways), with the runoff coursing through a basic type of drain made from pottery *amphorae* fitted together. When rain did fall on the streets, it soaked into the ground or ran off. The excavated street which climbs the hillside is fitted at intervals with short flights of steps: the whole sector, and no doubt much of the rest of Carthage's crowded terrain, was a pedestrian (and of course pack-animal) precinct.

The buildings form rectangular blocks, opening on all sides into the streets and subdivided into houses, apartments and shops. In Roman towns they would be called *insulae*, 'islands'. Those excavated measure either some 15½ by 31 metres (a 1:2 ratio), or 15½ by about 10½ (a 3:2 ratio), with the larger buildings lining one side of a street running north to south and the smaller on the opposite side facing them. Each building, small and large, was subdivided into

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Illustration 6 View of the 'Hannibal quarter' on Byrsa's southern slope



Illustration 7 Another view of the 'Hannibal quarter'

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separate dwellings with walls that are mostly very solid – 50 centimetres or so. Several are quite narrow at just over 5 metres wide, and while some extend the full depth of their block to the street at the other end, others were subdivided into cramped little units that might serve as lodgings or shops. At least two other dwellings are a contrast: twice as wide as the narrow-fronted ones, and at least one of them handsomely equipped with a stylish entrance of half-columns in white stucco and with stuccoed pillars flanking its marble-mosaic courtyard.

Every subdivided house has its own well-made underground cistern for water, sometimes two, and all of them sizeable. Rain, when it did fall, could be collected in wells, basins, and perhaps from rooftops via downpipes to feed into the cistern, while the relatively high underground water-table could also be reached by wells. In the houses, the only adornments surviving are certain floors with patterned mosaic or terracotta-fragment pavements (decorations that the Romans called *pavimenta Punica*) and pillars covered with white stucco; nor, it seems, have traces turned up of the neat bathrooms fitted with ledge-seats that have been found in some Kerkouane dwellings. The buildings' size and the strong walls capable of carrying upper floors lend support to Appian's mention of buildings being six storeys high in precisely this area. The upper storeys would be reached via wooden stairs; there is evidence at Kerkouane again, for staircases in houses (although of course those storeys must have been many fewer). We may recall Strabo's reference to Tyre's lofty buildings too.

Given the variety of dwelling sizes revealed by the foundations – we have no evidence of how upper floors were divided – it looks as though the population of the quarter must have been quite varied. Its nearness to the crest of Byrsa and its complex of rich shrines surely made it, from the start, an attractive area to many different types of resident. Merchants and priests, scribes, goldsmiths and jewellers (fragments of a jeweller's cutting implements have been identified, such as obsidian and pieces of coral), architects, road-builders, fullers, butchers and bow-makers might all live in the district. Butchers and other shopkeepers, as well as skilled artisans like a bow-maker or statue-carver, could have their shops in rooms opening onto the street while they and their families lived upstairs. Propertyless workers, not to mention visitors to the city, would lodge in rented rooms or whole apartments.

A site excavated near Cape Gammarth, in the Megara district, is a contrast: a semi-rural residence with a section for pressing olives

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probably from nearby olive groves, along with an unpretentious but affluently adorned house which had stuccoed sandstone columns and floors with Punic-style mosaics. Further investigations in both the city area and Megara will, in time, bring these lively varieties of Carthaginian dwellings and their amenities into sharper focus.⁵¹

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Not much is known about Carthage's non-religious public buildings save their names. As noted already, in later centuries there was a marketplace or square (*agora* in Greek) near the shore south-east of Byrsa, for Appian describes it as near the city's famous artificial ports and these occupied the transformed area of the old lagoons sector (*Illustration 8*). Investigators have noted, in fact, that somewhat north of them the terrain shows a marked absence of finds later than the archaic period (thus after the 6th Century): this would of course be typical in a broad open space. Diodorus' account of the coup attempted by Bomilcar in 308 describes the marketplace as surrounded by high buildings while the streets around it were narrow. So does Appian when reporting its final capture by the Romans in 146. Besides its role as a market, it would be the obvious place for magistrates to assemble the citizens for elections and lawmaking. That would explain why Bomilcar's first move was to try to seize it.



Illustration 8 Carthage 1958

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In the original colony, the *agora* must have been well to the north, since the urban area included only Byrsa and the level ground eastwards down to the shore (compare Map 1A). Even if replaced as the main square in the 5th or early 4th Century, the earlier one may have remained a subsidiary focal point, for quite likely there were other, smaller marketplaces around the city. Kerkouane has a number of small squares, for example, providing extra space for movement and maybe tradesmen's stalls; in a city of Carthage's size and complexity, lesser market sites would hardly be surprising.

Where in the city the senate, the *adirim*, met is unknown, but there was (it seems) a senate-house – *bouleuterion* in Greek – very near to or even alongside the *agora*. A reference to it by Diodorus seems to put it there, just as in Rome the senate-house opened onto the Forum. Appian, like Diodorus telling of events in 149, writes of returning Carthaginian envoys going to the *bouleuterion* while a massive crowd waited outside: this also sounds like nearness to the *agora*. On the other hand, Livy twice reports the *adirim* holding sessions in the temple of Eshmun (Livy calls him Aesculapius) on Byrsa, in 174 and again in 172 – at night, allegedly for secrecy. Livy's account seems to imply that it was an unusual venue, but it is worth recalling that the Roman senate too could meet in a temple – or a theatre, as on the famous Ides of March. Just possibly Eshmun's temple, or another building within Byrsa's citadel, had been the senate's original meeting-place and continued to be a venue from time to time.⁵²

The many administrative functionaries attested on inscriptions – not only the magistrates and the generals, but the accountants (*mḥšbm*), members of the boards of ten and of thirty, and those working in other pentarchies – would have worked in buildings separate or shared. At least one can be identified. When the artificial ports in the old lagoon sector were created sometime around 200, the island in the circular port housed Carthage's naval headquarters, described by Appian as a high building where the admiral in command could survey both the ships and shipyards below and the sea outside. As a result the island is now called the Îlot de l'Amirauté. The admiralty building can be recognised in the excavations of the long and narrow foundations of a six-sided building, about 80 metres long and 25 at its widest, surrounded by the traces of shipsheds for part of Carthage's fleet. There would similarly be headquarters for the general or generals commanding Carthage's land forces, located (at a guess) further inland for ready access to the outside world. Bomilcar, who in 308 began his coup attempt by marshalling

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troops in the 'new city' Megara, may have done so at his headquarters, for this would no doubt have a parade-ground alongside or surrounding it.

THE LAND FORTIFICATIONS AND THE PORTS

Some traces of the city's earlier fortifications have been found, as noted earlier, and so have impressive remains of the sea-wall built in the 5th Century (*Illustration 1*). The great walls west of the city, which gave Carthage virtually impregnable security against attack, just possibly were also part of this 5th-Century effort but more likely followed the Libyan revolt and siege in 396: for this was the first great insurrection, and the land walls plainly aimed at guarding the city from just such a threat. Appian's description of them as they stood in the mid-2nd Century is a classic, though it might give the impression that they bounded Carthage just beyond Byrsa and not four kilometres further west. The walls formed a triple line, each 30 cubits (about 13.5 metres) high plus parapets and towers standing at 2-*plethra* intervals (about 30 metres). The towers were four-storeyed and 30 Greek feet high (9 metres), while the walls themselves held two storeys with quarters for elephants, horses and troops.

Some traces of the outer lines were revealed in the mid-20th Century, first through aerial photographs and then by diggings at various points. These revealed a broad trench on the landward side, then a built-up embankment with many post-holes (probably for stockades), and after this a narrower trench. The innermost wall is thought to have stood some metres east of these positions. According to Appian's statistics the walls with their two storeys could accommodate 20,000 infantry and 4000 horsemen, the same number of horses, and 300 elephants – this last almost certainly a notional, or wishful, total since the Carthaginians are never recorded as having so many – as well as fodder and other feed for the animals. At the northern end of the fortifications, where these reached the gulf of Ariana, only a single line of wall seems to have run from there north-eastwards to cross the hilly terrain which becomes Cape Gammarth, and down to meet the sea north of that cape. Nonetheless it proved no less hard to breach, as the Romans found during the Third Punic War. It was the south side of the city's defensive enceinte that was less certain. The weak point, Appian remarks, was 'the angle which ran around from this [triple] wall to the harbours, along the tongue

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of land' forming the shoreline south of the city. He and his source may have been writing from hindsight, for this was the direction from which the Romans launched their final assault in 146. His account of the Roman siege makes it clear that this southern line of wall left an open strand, at least several metres wide, between it and the lake.

The harbours that he mentions were the two artificial ports built in the old lagoon area (Map 1A; *Illustrations 8, 9 and 10*). They continued to be used in Roman times and still survive as shallow lagoons. One was originally rectangular (then changed in Roman

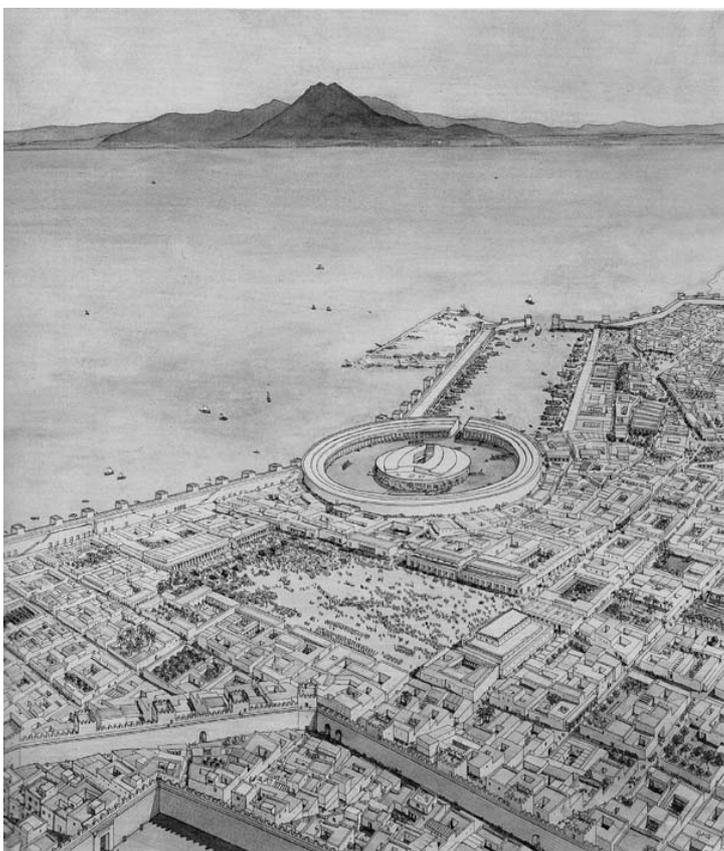


Illustration 9 Carthage c. 200 BC: artist's reconstruction

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Illustration 10 The artificial ports area c. 1922

times to a long hexagon), while just to its north the other is circular, with the man-made and equally circular Îlot de l'Amirauté in its centre. That these were Appian's ports has been confirmed only in recent decades, thanks to excavations on the Îlot (earlier doubts had been due to their distance from the site of the original colony). As noted above, earlier the inlet from the lake of Tunis had been developed as a channel for shipping with dockyards extending into the lagoons area, as shown by finds of timber underlying the later works on the Îlot. It had always had a battle with silt – including effluent from the city – and was finally abandoned in favour of the impressive new constructions, which gave much greater room and safety to shipping and to the war-fleet.

Appian calls the pair of artificial ports the 'Cothon'. The water in them was 2 metres deep (in late Carthaginian times, the sea-level was about one metre lower than today). The rectangular port, originally 300 metres from north to south and 150 east to west, was entered from the Mediterranean via a new channel in a gentle arc, some 250 metres long, which reached the port at its south-eastern corner and could be closed off by iron chains. A millennium later Byzantine Constantinople's Golden Horn would be protected in similar fashion, if on a vaster scale. Some of the south-western side of this entry channel has been found, nicknamed the 'Mur Pistor'. Built of massive blocks of stone cut from the El-Haouaria quarries on the cliffs of Cape Bon – 50 metres of these have been uncovered on its western side – the port was used by merchant shipping and in turn was linked by a shorter channel to the circular naval port about 100 metres away.

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This port, 325 metres across, was the secure anchorage for Carthage's navy, quinqueremes each crewed by three hundred oarsmen in groups of five and the dominant battleships of the 3rd and 2nd Centuries. Appian offers a vivid description that must come from an eyewitness, very likely Polybius. The circle of water was surrounded by 'great quays' and a double wall, so that no one even in the outer port could see what was going on, whereas the island's tower overlooked everything. The quays could accommodate 220 ships, with magazines above to hold their sails, masts and other equipment. Every ship's dock had a pair of Ionic columns before it, 'giving a view of both the port and the island like that of a colonnade'.

Excavations have revealed the nature of the docksheds on the Îlot, not mentioned explicitly by Appian but implied in his comment. There were some fifteen built in parallel rows on either side of the central building (the admiralty): each shed 30 to 48 metres long and about 6 metres wide, with a sloping slipway to allow a ship, or even two, to be berthed lengthways. The land circuit of the port has room for only some hundred and fifty or possibly hundred and seventy ship-sheds, not two hundred and twenty as Appian would seem to suggest. They and the island's thirty, however, would be a total nearer to his, and some could receive two warships. His figure for the port's capacity is therefore plausible, though it was no doubt a wartime – or even just a theoretical – maximum.

The cost, effort and skilful engineering of the two ports match the great harbour projects at Rome's port of Ostia under the early emperors. The quantity of groundsoil needing to be removed to create the naval port is reckoned at some 115,000 cubic metres, and for the merchant port about 120,000, while to build up the Îlot de l'Amirauté required about 10,000. When they were built is a question still unresolved. North African and Italian pottery fragments found on the island are of styles ranging from the 4th Century to the 1st, and mostly of the 2nd and 1st. As a result, most opinion favours the early to mid-2nd Century for their construction. This would make them a product of Carthage's recovered prosperity after the Second Punic War – and, more darkly, would make the war harbour a deliberate violation of the peace with Rome, which had ended the war in 201, for this banned any Carthaginian war-fleet larger than ten vessels. Yet, when the Carthaginians surrendered all their existing armaments and munitions to the Roman forces outside the city in 149, Appian's list of the quantities of armour and weapons for soldiers handed over makes no mention of ships or naval stores. Nor

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did Carthaginian warships (unlike Roman) play a part against the ensuing siege until 147, and then it was a squadron of 50 triremes and smaller craft which that had been built out of old timber.

A more plausible date for the ports would be sixty to seventy years before 149. The bits of 4th- and 3rd-Century pottery are compatible with a time earlier than the Third Punic War, as would be two coins found on site, one Carthaginian, one from Tarentum in Italy, dating to the later 3rd Century. Historical evidence may suggest a particular time. Whereas Carthage had an unimpressive navy when the second war with Rome began in 218 – about 80 ships, many of them unfit for sailing – over the next decade she sent large fleets to sea, while reports got back to Rome of vigorous shipbuilding going on. In fact the largest reported fleet, in 212, was a hundred and thirty ships strong. The degenerate state of the navy in 218 makes it very unlikely that the elaborate Cothon complex was already in being. By contrast, during the war's first decade the Carthaginians had the wealth and manpower for such a project – and the fear, for from the start they not only faced a Roman navy of, as it happens, 220 warships but knew that their enemies planned to invade Africa as well as Spain. Even after Hannibal took the war to Italy, one damaging raid after another was inflicted on Carthage's coastlands by Roman fleets and troops. The need for a secure war harbour, as well as one where merchant shipping could be safe from attacks, was surely acute after 218. After the war, on the other hand, with Carthaginian warships prohibited and prosperity gradually rebuilding, it is conceivable that an overhaul of the circular port was carried out, for instance to make it more suitable for merchant shipping. That could explain why the bulk of the pottery evidence belongs to the earlier part of the 2nd Century, with only a few items from earlier.

The Cothon was not Carthage's only impressive waterside project in her later centuries. Alongside the shore to the south-east of the ports, an exceptionally large platform of stone and rocks also existed. 'Falbe's quadrilateral', now under shallow water and named after the 19th-Century Danish scholar who first studied it, is about 425 metres from north to south and, along its northern side, some 100 wide. There are some remains of walls along its seaward sides, while it narrows southward to project a short way beyond the entrance to the Cothon ports, thus sheltering ships' access to these. Predating adjoining Roman structures, the quadrilateral or trapezoid can be identified as the *choma* or quay 'which', Appian records, 'had long existed as a broad expanse in front of the [city] wall for merchants to unload their cargoes'.

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Its date is generally thought to be the same period as the ports. This has to assume that, around the same time as the massive Cothon project, the Carthaginians also built up the quadrilateral's massive structure outside – even though its materials can hardly have come from the sandy and waterlogged ground of the lagoons alongside, but must have originated further afield – and did this for much the same purpose: to improve facilities for shipping. Another possibility, then, could be that the landing platform predates the Cothon. It might have been, for example, an earlier solution to the problematic silting-up of the inlet from the lake of Tunis; while one reason – as just suggested – for the Cothon project could have been to protect the navy and mercantile commerce from enemy attacks, which became a constant menace after the wars with Rome started.⁵³