

Decolonising Ancient Narratives: A Research on The Phoenician Legacy in Mediterranean History and Culture

Background

Over the past few months, I have been conducting extensive research on the Phoenicians and the Punic language to address the Eurocentric bias in classical studies. This project involves collating and analyzing key Phoenician texts, artifacts, and archaeological findings to highlight their significant contributions to Mediterranean history. The goal is to develop inclusive educational materials that integrate Phoenician history and the Punic language into the classics curriculum, thereby providing a more diverse and accurate representation of ancient civilizations for academics and students.



Journey

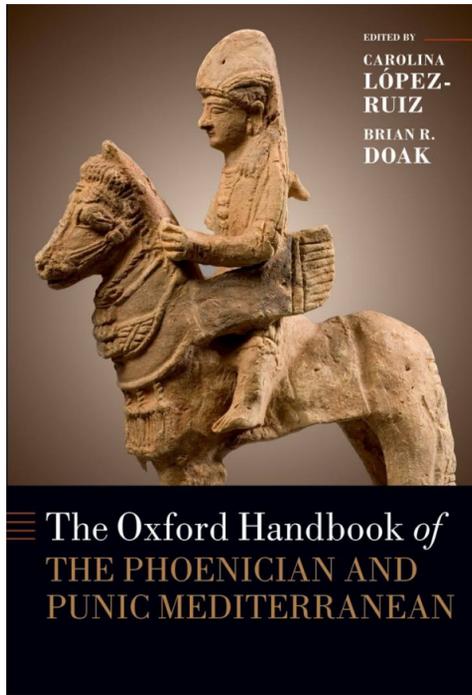
I began this project in January with training on decolonizing classical studies, focusing on challenging Eurocentric perspectives. This independent work allowed me to delve into areas of personal interest, such as cross-cultural exchanges between the Phoenicians and other ancient civilizations.

One of the first steps involved contacting the Oriental Museum to access their collection of Phoenician artifacts and texts, providing essential primary materials for my research. Additionally, I analyzed ancient myths about Dido, the queen of Carthage, to explore the intersection between Phoenician and Greco-Roman narratives, uncovering cultural interactions and biases.

Fieldwork was an integral part of my research. I visited several coastal cities that once harbored Phoenician ports, including Alanya in Türkiye. These visits offered valuable insights into the maritime activities and urban planning of the Phoenicians.

My work also included a detailed examination of the Punic language, comparing it with other Semitic languages to understand its historical and cultural context. I have advocated for incorporating these findings into classical studies programs to highlight the significance of Phoenician contributions to ancient history.

Looking ahead, I plan to expand this project by collaborating with researchers focusing on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This will broaden the scope and impact of our decolonizing efforts, ensuring a more comprehensive and inclusive view of the ancient world in educational resources.



Linguistic Contributions:

•**Example:** The Punic language, a direct descendant of Phoenician, influenced many Mediterranean languages. Specific examples include:

•**Latin "tunica":** Derived from the Punic word "tnk" (תנך), meaning a type of garment.

•**Greek "kyanos" (κύανος):** Believed to be influenced by the Phoenician word "kna" (כנא), referring to dark blue or purple, a color associated with Phoenician dye.

•**Latin "hispanus":** Derived from the Punic word "i-shepan-im" (אִשְׁפָּנִים), meaning "land of rabbits," referring to the Iberian Peninsula.

Methodology

Using academic databases, I searched for keywords and themes related to decolonizing classical studies and Phoenician history, such as:

- Phoenician maritime trade:** Investigating their role in ancient Mediterranean commerce.
- Cultural exchanges:** Examining interactions between Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans.
- Punic language:** Analyzing its development and influence on other languages.
- Dido and Carthaginian myths:** Studying the portrayal of Phoenician figures in Greco-Roman literature.

I reviewed bibliographies of frequently cited and recent publications, ensuring the inclusion of texts not originally published in English or already translated.

Fieldwork included visits to the Oriental Museum for artifacts and coastal cities like Alanya in Turkey, where I explored ancient Phoenician ports. This hands-on approach provided deeper insights into their urban planning and maritime activities.

By incorporating Phoenician history and the Punic language into classical studies curricula, we can provide a more inclusive and accurate representation of ancient civilizations. Educational resources developed from this research, such as textbooks and multimedia content, aim to decolonize the curriculum and broaden students' understanding of the ancient world.

These conclusions advocate for a more balanced and inclusive approach to classical studies. By highlighting these contributions, we can move towards a more comprehensive and decolonized curriculum.