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THE MEDITERRANEAN MIRROR

CULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA BETWEEN 1200 AND 750 B. C.

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INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE FAR WEST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1ST MILLENNIUM BC: THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

At least from the end of the 2nd millennium BC onwards, the Iberian Peninsula was the setting for a wide range of intercultural contacts largely arising from its geographical position. In fact, the complex network of cultural relations and interchanges established between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic regions during the Late Bronze Age has been very well documented by a significant group of archaeological finds in the territories bordered by the two seas. This contact necessarily took place in the geographical area studied in this paper, enabling us to highlight the role played by both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic communities (the latter being responsible for the so-called Atlantic market). In this concrete case, as in many others, everything depends on the view that each researcher has of the world. It is in such a context, therefore, that many of the materials belonging to the inventories of Peninsular Bronze Age sites – both the materials that originated in this region, and those that had an exogenous inspiration – should be viewed, especially those dating from the 12th to the 9th century BC.

Older remains, from the 15th to the 12th century BC, can be explained by another set of circumstances, belonging to what Marazzi refers to as »the movement to the Far West« of Mycenaean contacts.1 From the 9th century BC onwards, the establishment of groups of eastern people in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in Eastern Andalusia, but also in the southwest and along the Atlantic coast, resulted in the foundation of colonies, transforming these territories into areas of colonial encounters, and leading to the formation of continuing relations between geographically and historically separate communities. As we shall see, this is a phenomenon that, without any preconceptions, can be referred to as a colonization, since it was only the supposed superiority of the Greek over the Phoenician world that determined that the former should be afforded the exclusive prerogative of having exercised effective colonial control. In this case, we understand colonization to be »the presence of one or more groups of foreign people [the colonizers] in a region at some distance from their own place of origin and asymmetrical socio-economic relationships between the colonizing and colonized groups – inequality, in a single word,«2 regardless of the fact that we know that since the 1990s, there has been a »gradual recognition of indigenous involvement in colonialism, which is a development that was obviously closely related to the fact that scholars were increasingly becoming aware of the colonialist nature of academic (and other) representations of ancient Greek colonialism in the Mediterranean«.3

THE FIRST CONTACT

The Mycenaean pottery from Cordoba, more precisely from Llanete de los Moros,4 is evidence of a movement westwards, relatively well documented in Sardinia, that Mycenae achieved after establishing successful contacts in Italy, both in the Italian Peninsula and in Sicily,5 during the Recent Helladic. Associated with decorated pottery of the Cogotas I type, the two ceramic fragments are difficult to classify in formal
terms (a krater? a bowl?), even though laboratory analyses have established that they originated from the workshops of Mycenae – Berbati in the Argolid. A chronology between the 14th and 13th century BC allows us to place them in late LH IIIA/early LH IIIB. Other sherds of wheel-made pottery were also found at the site, albeit at slightly later levels, which radiocarbon analysis has made possible to place in a time period between the late 13th century and the early 10th century. They belong to tripods, and possibly to pithoi, but their Mycenaean origin has been discarded as a possibility, although it has been proven that they were made at the same production center, possibly in Cyprus, as the pots that were found at Cuesta del Negro (Purullena, Granada).

At this last site, a Pythian krater and fragments of tripods were unearthed in strata whose C14 dating made it possible to attribute them with a chronology of around the 14th century. These layers also provided us with pottery displaying a decoration of the Cogotas I type. At the formal level, the krater is finely matched by discoveries at Komos, where an identical piece was placed in LM IIIA2 and identified as being Cypriot, as well as at Uluburun, a shipwreck dated as having taken place in the 14th-13th century, and therefore placed in LH IIIA2. Identical fragments were also found at Gatas, Almería, and X-ray fluorescence analysis performed on pieces from the three sites (Llanete de los Moros, Cuesta del Negro, and Gatas) confirmed that they all have the same origin. Under the same umbrella, we can place some personal adornments and decorative artefacts, namely vitreous paste necklace beads, especially the segmented ones, both those found in the northeast, and those found in the southeast.

A number of other artefacts are, however, much more difficult to classify, since most of them lack a specific context. Nonetheless, these have also tended to be considered as part of the same process. The cylinder seal from Velez Málaga was attributed at first to a Syrian workshop and later to another workshop located in Cyprus or Ugarit. Its chronology, calculated through the iconographic parallels technique, has been situated between the 15th and 12th century, but the possibility has not been discarded that it may be related to the Phoenician colonial movement of the 13th millennium. The same can be said about the poppy-shaped pendants and the cornaline necklace beads from various Andalusian sites (among others: Cerro de Córdo, Los Castilejos, Pocito Chico), for which attempts have been made to attribute a chronology within the limits of this ancient phase and an eastern origin, taking into consideration the parallels from Egypt, Cyprus, and Mycenaean Greece, from the 16th to the 12th century. However, the absence of a specific context may justify their being ascribed to later phases, including the possibility that they already date from the Iron Age, as has been convincingly argued by Torres Ortiz.

An eastern, and similarly Mycenaean origin, has also been proposed for the small curved blade bronze knives, which would bring the present-day Portuguese territory into the equation, since one of these knives (in this case with electrum rivets) appeared in the small hypogeum of Belmeque, for which a chronology of the 15th century BC has been obtained through radiocarbon dating. This movement would also extend to the northwest, more precisely to Galicia, in view of the example found at Castro da Lanzada, in Pontevedra. The size of the sample that allows us to interpret the relationship between the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula during the Late Helladic is, as we have seen, very small, so that it does not seem possible to admit the possibility that eastern populations (Mycenaean or Cypriot) established themselves here locally, as may have happened in Sardinia and in the south of the Italian Peninsula. In any case, the existence of both Atlantic tin and gold may have justified the westward spread of Mediterranean trading circuits, although it seems certain that the impact of this process on the local population was very limited, not only as far as the adoption of new technologies is concerned, but also in terms of the actual social and economic structure of the indigenous groups.

Everything points to the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial world as being the explanation for the decline in Mediterranean remains in the Iberian Peninsula from the end of the 12th century onwards, just as was
the case in the central Mediterranean area, where imports of Mycenaean pottery began to be a rarity after LH III C, coming to a complete halt in the 11th century. Even so, axes with lateral loops, found in great abundance in Sicily, Niscemi, and Nota Antica,27 might also be linked to the last Mycenaean voyages to the Far West, taking place, as Torres Ortiz maintains, during LH III C,28 but there is little documentary evidence of these in Cyprus, even though they have been found in abundance in Greece and the Aegean.

**BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ATLANTIC DURING THE LATE BRONZE AGE**

A quite different situation can be noted from the end of the 11th century onwards, when artefacts increased in number and the area of their geographical distribution grew considerably. In this phase, it is also necessary to take the Atlantic aspect into consideration, nor can we forget the important role played by the Iberian Peninsula in linking the two seas. The number of exogenous and/or affiliated artefacts found in areas outside the Iberian Peninsula is not compatible with their detailed study under the scope of this work. It is, however, convenient to begin by mentioning that these include metal pieces, more precisely those made of bronze. Nor can we forget, in this context, that the vast majority of these correspond to exceptional artefacts (even in their places of origin), which were frequently linked to votive or symposiastic activities, or were even used as adornments.

In the latter case, the leading position is occupied by fibulae, with attention being immediately drawn to the geographical spread achieved by elbow fibulae. Fibulae of the Huelva type (regardless of their actual origin – Peninsular29 or Cypriot30 – have been found in the Near East, but in this case already relating to the Iron Age, more precisely in Meggido31 and Achziv,32 as well as in Tell Dor.33 Such pieces are similarly known to have existed in Cyprus, more precisely in tomb 523 of Amathus,34 but also in Kourion.35 They have been found in great numbers in the Iberian Peninsula, and there is documentary evidence of their presence in the southeast (as, for example, in the case of Peña Negra), and above all in Andalusia, Extremadura, Meseta, and the center and south of Portugal.36 In the case of fibulae, mention should also be made of those of the ad occhio or bow type, which, even though they have been found in smaller numbers, are nonetheless present, with the example found at the funerary monument of Roça do Casal do Meio, in Sesimbra, being the most westerly of all.37 It should be remembered that two radiocarbon datings have made it possible to situate the burials between the late 10th century and the early 9th century.38

Although not being particularly abundant in the Far West, tweezers also shed light on the adoption of artefacts related with the attention that was given to the treatment of the body, and more precisely of the beard. There was a clear Mediterranean aesthetics, even though the same function was fulfilled by pieces with a much more Atlantic origin, as was the case with razors. We can further associate with these same practices and aesthetics the decorated ivory combs, which, despite also being rare for these chronologies, have been found at the already mentioned funerary monument of Roça do Casal do Meio (Sesimbra), on the coast, and Cabeço de Vaiamonte (Monforte), in the Alentejo heartland. As far as the present-day Spanish territory is concerned, mention should be made of the cases of Cerro de la Mora (Granada), Lebrija (Seville), and Mola de Agrés.39 For all of these pieces, clear parallels have been found in the Mediterranean, more precisely in Sicily and the south of Italy, but also in Cyprus.40

Glass beads were also particularly important in the Late Bronze Age, being found to some extent all over the Peninsula, at both necropoleis and habitats, reaching as far as the northwest, as is the case with São Julião (Vila Verde), and Santinha (Amares).41 Curiously, many of these artefacts (fibulae, combs) are graphically represented on stelae of the Extremadura type,42 and we may also add to these items mirrors, whose handles have come to be recognized in the so-called tranchets.43 It should be remembered that a Mediterranean
origin has already been defended for these pieces,\textsuperscript{44} which are to be found spread all over the Peninsula, with a clear concentration in the center and south of Portugal.\textsuperscript{45} Another type of connotation can be attributed to the tripods, bowls, cauldrons with handles, and articulated roasting spits, which were certainly linked to symposiastic activities, namely banquets. Three tripods with wheels appeared in Portugal, more precisely at Castro da Senhora da Guia (Baiões, Viseu),\textsuperscript{46} and, like those from the Province of Teruel (Les Ferreres and La Clota [Calaceite, Teruel]), they reveal close parallels with the Cypriot road tripods, although it must be acknowledged that they were made in the Iberian Peninsula, and that the braided decoration was also common in Sardinia, marking the Nuragic III. A chronology between the late 10\textsuperscript{th} century and the 9\textsuperscript{th} century seems to be the most defensible for these pieces, not only because of the Sardinian parallels, but above all due to the radiocarbon datings obtained at Baiões.\textsuperscript{47} Also originating from the Portuguese site are some fragments of articulated roasting spits, which are fundamentally Atlantic artefacts, with examples being found in the British Isles and Atlantic France. In the Mediterranean region, such artefacts are only known to have existed in Sardinia, more precisely on Monte Sa Ilda,\textsuperscript{48} and in Cyprus, in the already famous tomb 523 of Amathus,\textsuperscript{49} where, it should be remembered, an elbow fibula of the Huelva type was also found.\textsuperscript{50} But the Iberian Peninsula, and specifically Portuguese territory, has been fertile in this type of finds, because, besides the pieces found at Senhora da Guia, there are also records of similar discoveries in Outeiro dos Castelos de Beijós (Carregal do Sal, Viseu), Canezotes (Vila Nova de Paiva, Viseu), Reguengo do Fetal (Batalha, Leiria), Cachouça (Idanha-a-Nova) and Alvaízere.\textsuperscript{51} In present-day Spanish territory, there are also documentary records of three examples found in Badajoz.\textsuperscript{52} The geographical origin of the so-called flesh hooks has been open to greater discussion, even though the hypothesis that it is most frequently defended is also that they come from the Atlantic region, largely because of their concentration in western France and the British Isles.\textsuperscript{53} Their presence in the Iberian Peninsula is well documented, and it would seem important to once again mention the case of Nossa Senhora da Guia (Baiões, Viseu).

With regard to the pieces that can be related with what were very probably ritual and symbolic banquets, it seems essential to also mention the bronze vessels. As far as bowls are concerned, attention is drawn to the piece from Bercozana (associated with the famous gold torques),\textsuperscript{54} with clear parallels in the Levantine East.
and Egypt, as well as Cyprus (tomb 9 of Kition). The Castro de Nossa Senhora da Guia is once again of importance here, with five hemispherical bowls, once again displaying obvious parallels with the hemispherical bowls of the eastern Mediterranean region. The remaining pieces only correspond to fragments, as is the case with the one from the necropolis of Nora Velha, in the Alentejo (Portugal), and those from Casa del Carpio (Toledo, Spain), from where a number of iron knives also originate. Bronze cauldrons with handles are also to be found here, frequently coinciding with the other pieces analyzed previously. An Atlantic origin seems indisputable, which also justifies their dispersal around the Iberian Peninsula, most specifically in the northern half. Iron knives may also be related to this type of activities, because they are frequently found in the same places as the artefacts mentioned earlier. But the very presence of iron artefacts in Peninsular Late Bronze contexts should be stressed, and there are even data available about the existence of iron ore mining in these same contexts in the north of Portugal, such as the presence of iron slag in São Julião.

As noted above, this group of materials may be directly linked to activities of a ritual nature, where the use of a luxury vessel directs our attention towards the important role that banquets played in protohistoric societies. It is therefore not only a question of our merely noting the circulation of artefacts with a powerful ideological content, but we are also led to assume that together they had a certain symbolic power as a result of the function that they performed (ceremonies with ritual connotations), with their own language and codes. However, it is more difficult to interpret the function of the two bronze handles found in Portugal, more precisely at the Castro de São Martinho (Castelo Branco), and in Beja (Pê do Castelo). Although they have no archaeological context, these pieces display evident similarities in their form, and above all in their decoration (braiding, spirals, herring-bone patterns), with those found on the Monte Sa Idda, in Sardinia.

THE IBERIAN PENINSULA BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ATLANTIC DURING THE BRONZE AGE

It is now important to discuss the data that we have summarized above. The first thing that needs to be stressed is that there does not appear to be any continuity, or even a relationship between what we may call the »Mycenaean phase« and the »Cypriot/Sardinian phase« of the Late Bronze Age. And it is not just the numerical data that justifies this idea — even though it must be remembered that the intensity of imports was initially very low, contrasting with the panorama that was known to exist at the turn of the millennium. But what seems to be more significant is the fact that the first phase of imports was related to food products, contrasting with the situation that was to be noted from the 11th century onwards, when the inventories were almost completely dominated by metals. On the other hand, the Atlantic aspect then entered the equation for the first time, which justified the role played by the Iberian Peninsula at such moments. We are therefore faced with two phenomena with different objectives and forms, certainly perpetrated by distinct issuing communities, even though the recipients coincided, at least partially. And it is also important to note that the absolute chronologies do, in fact, reveal a reasonable hiatus between the two phenomena, even though they may sometimes have suggested otherwise. In my opinion, however, 14C dating must only be regarded as an indicator of trends, and not as something that establishes absolutely objective facts, giving rise to a situation that has already been referred to as a »positivist fallacy«. Everything would seem to indicate that, from the 11th century onwards, the nerve centers of the trade between the Atlantic and the central and eastern Mediterranean regions were located in Sardinia and in the west of the Iberian Peninsula, as others have highlighted. Thus, even though the data suggest that Cyprus was the most significant trading center in the Mediterranean region, the truth is that Sardinia may
have played an even more important role as a center for the spread of certain types of items. We see, then, that the »imported« pottery of the »Mycenaean phase«, and the food products they most likely contained were replaced as the main trading product by other artefacts, more closely linked to dress, bodily care and aesthetics. The Atlantic relations are documented by the presence of the so-called carp tongue and pistiliform swords, and also by the Porto de Mós-type daggers, among other elements. It was at this time that the Mediterranean touched the Atlantic space, penetrating deep into the inland areas of the Peninsula, as the data from the Portuguese territory seem to demonstrate. Fibulae, tweezers, the first iron artefacts, glass beads and some bronzes of debatable functionality, but most likely linked to symbolic activities (carp, handles), admittedly never abundant, testify to a significant geographical dispersal. The Mediterranean presence in the Peninsula manifested itself mostly through the introduction of artefacts related to adornment and bodily care and some exotic pieces, related to religious and/or symbolic practices, but the significance of such pieces should be nuanced given that despite their vast geographical dispersal, their numbers are small, especially when we consider the long time that they took to arrive, a period spanning roughly 200 years.

On the other hand, even though these imports prove that the Peninsula was not marginal in both the Atlantic and Mediterranean trading networks of the late 2nd millennium and the first century of the 1st millennium, the truth is that archaeological records clearly indicate that the contacts that took place in that period did not have any major implications in terms of settlement and territorial strategies, economic conditions, or even the socio-political relations of the groups that received and used the products introduced under the scope of those contacts. No profound alteration seems, in fact, to have occurred in the local cultural processes, but the nature of the imported artefacts, which can be seen as »status symbols«, suggests their use was restricted to a few individuals. Their distribution must have been centered on the existence of local elites, who in this way reinforced their power through the ostentatious display of these exotic elements. It therefore seems certain that these »imports« made a decisive contribution to the rise of the elites beginning to emerge in the Iberian Peninsula in the Late Bronze Age, being largely responsible for the gradual development of a greater social complexity at that time.

It is also important to discuss one last question that has always been raised by the existence of eastern materials in the Iberian Peninsula: pre-colonization. As is known, many researchers have defended the idea that the Mediterranean remains found in the Iberian Peninsula in Late Bronze Age contexts only expressed the preparation of the actual colonization of that region, which took place from the beginning of the Iron Age onwards at the hands of Phoenician groups. This thesis has been criticized on several occasions, with María Eugènia Aubet having proved the historical impossibility of such a theory. In 1997, Jaime Alvar proposed dropping the term »pre-colonization« altogether, defending the existence of a »non-hegemonic mode of contact« to define the reality that I have touched upon in the previous pages. In fact, the question that is frequently asked is whether the links between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, during the 12th, 11th, and 10th centuries, together with the cultural exchanges and the trading of goods that they set in motion, can be considered »pre-colonial« in anything other than the narrowest sense of the term (because they happened before the actual colonization took place). And, for me, the answer is clear: these contacts, which were episodic, irregular, and non-systematic in nature, and preceded the arrival and settlement of Phoenician populations in the west, were not a form of preparation for the following phase, because the agents of these two different processes did not have either the same origin, or the same motivation.
THE PHOENICIAN COLONIZATION

The situation at the beginning of the Iron Age – which coincided with the arrival and settlement of the first Phoenician colonizers in the Iberian Peninsula – is, however, a very different one (fig. 2). Archaeological records show unprecedented changes starting in the late 9th century, not only in technology, but also, for example, in architecture and building techniques. Prior to that, however, namely at the end of the 10th century, the presence of Phoenician material is borne out by significant numbers of specimens found in Huelva. Over 3,000 pottery fragments of Phoenician origin, associated with Cypriot and Greek imports and local materials, and related to the Strata IX to IV from Tyre71 were recovered in the excavation of Plaza de las Monjas,72 and it should also be remembered that it was at this time that the elbow fibulae of the Huelva type reached the Phoenician and Israeli coasts.73 Moreover, there are data that suggest that it was also at this time that silver cupellation started, as well as the local production of iron and ivory artefacts. This material from Huelva indicates a solid and effective presence of Phoenicians in the Far West, which marked the beginning of the Phoenician colonization of the Iberian Peninsula.

This first presence of eastern populations in the Far West was followed, from the 9th to the 7th centuries, by the foundation of sites both in eastern Spain and in southern Andalusia.74 This phenomenon also extended into Portuguese territory,75 but the presence of eastern populations is also clear at other sites that were indigenous in origin, but may have had Phoenician «quarters». All these sites are already very well known as far as their architecture (both domestic and defensive) and their material culture are concerned. It is not, therefore, necessary to give a detailed account of each of them again in this context, but it nonetheless seems important to stress a number of concrete aspects. At the sites that were founded ex novo, such as, for instance, La Fonteta,76 Mezquitilla,77 Toscanos,78 Cerro del Villar,79 Ayamonte,80 Tavira,81 or Abul,82 we can point to a notable uniformity in domestic and defensive architecture, as well as in funerary practices. The use of the same building techniques and identical architectural plans are well documented throughout the Mediterranean region, but also along the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula. This same standardization
is visible in the funerary world, with the existence of several necropolises that point to fairly uniform rituals and practices. As expected, the archaeological materials retrieved at such sites share the same techniques, morphologies, and decorative styles. The Phoenician language was also spoken at all these sites, as is borne out by the inscriptions written in Phoenician, particularly in Lisbon and Tavira. We should also mention the location and topographical position of these sites, which in every case occupied coastal positions, on small islands or peninsulas near the mouth of navigable rivers, affording easy access to inland areas. It was inevitable that the colonization of these coastal areas, even if this was negotiated with indigenous groups (or at least some of them), would have various consequences for the latter, and certainly resulted in a considerable range of responses and situations. The truth is that archaeological data reveal that the adoption of the eastern package by the indigenous communities took place in different ways, and it should be stressed that the arrival of new protagonists in an already occupied setting inevitably led to significant regional asymmetries. In this context, it seems important to remember that, in the Late Bronze Age, even though the human groups inhabiting the Iberian Peninsula had sporadically and somewhat marginally participated in the trading networks established between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, they presented a paleo-economic model based on agriculture and herding, while mineral resources, namely metals, were already being mined and processed, but only at a domestic, and perhaps even a family, level. Architecturally, domestic spaces consisted of circular or elliptic dwellings and, as far as mobile material culture is concerned, handmade pottery dominated household inventories, with Mediterranean imports always being vestigial in quantitative terms.

The economic and technological, but also the social and political, reality of the migrants from the East was significantly different. But the transition between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, which is also the transition from one economic, social, and political model to another very distinct one, took place in very different ways, because of the lack of uniformity in local reactions to the newcomers. What was designated as the first wave of colonization is documented only in Morro de Mezquital in Cádiz through both radiocarbon dating and archaeological materials. In this first phase, the interaction with local communities does not appear to have been particularly intense, and we can speak of a mosaic colonization, a model in which diverse human groups coexisted in neighboring territories, while still being at different stages of development, and it should further be stressed that such groups were often mutually exclusive. This was, nonetheless, a phenomenon of settlement colonization, with the occupation of new territories by exogenous groups leading to the foundation of actual colonies. This process was intensified in the late 9th/early 8th century, a period that corresponded to the second phase of colonization, with new settlements in the Southeast (La Fonteta), both on the coasts of Málaga (Toscanos, Cerro del Villar) and on the Atlantic (Ayamonte). Such changes also involved the incorporation of Mediterranean elements, so that, all in all, there was a strong Mediterranean influence to be noted in the indigenous coastal settlements (for instance, in the Lower Guadalquivir valley and western Portugal), not only in architecture, building techniques, and artefacts, but also in religious practices. This new reality is best understood in the context of what is usually referred to as an integrating colonization.

Inland, however, the situation was very different, and this period, around the 8th century, brought the abandonment of almost all the Late Bronze Age sites. It should be remembered that, in the late 2nd and early 1st millennium, documents show how the territory became densely populated, with numerous settlements being established, occupying both elevated, strategic sites, and plain areas, which demonstrates a considerable vitality and significant demography. As I mentioned earlier, almost all of these sites were abandoned in the final years of the 8th century without any evidence of any «easternization». This abandonment coincided roughly with the arrival and settlement of Phoenician populations along the southern and western coasts of the Iberian Peninsula. In the Portuguese territory, this situation is clearly documented both in the Alentejo...
and the Ribatejo and in the Beiras. The only exception is the site of Castro dos Ratinhos, Moura. An identical situation of collapse is also documented in the Spanish territories of Extremadura and Upper Andalusia. These inland communities from the Late Bronze Age did not survive the colonizing impact from the coastal areas, which seems to have had such a devastating effect on them that the whole socio-political model of the Late Bronze Age collapsed and the existing system vanished. The groups seem to have dispersed around the territory, occupying plain areas in keeping with a model centered around the existence of small farms. The social, political, and economic models that they adopted were very different to the ones that they had followed earlier, and were also very different to the ones developed in coastal areas. But from the 6th century onwards, in the Alentejo heartland, Lower Extremadura and Upper Andalusia, these human groups gradually adopted Mediterranean elements, slowly incorporating items of eastern origin and adopting architectural models that were also marked by profound Mediterranean influences. This fact is understandable, because unlike the northern areas, these territories were surrounded to the south, east and west by Phoenician or profoundly orientalized communities. It was, however, in the funerary world that this easternization process was to be noted most, but only in relation to those items that were used as offerings or found their way into the tombs, because both architecture and rituals seem to have been firmly anchored in indigenous traditions – a fact that is well documented at necropolises both in the Alentejo (Onuque and Beringel) and the Guadalquivir valley (Setefilla). The need to perpetuate the image of ancestors or older generations moved the cosmogonic valley of these communities towards death, legitimizing the occupation of a territory, providing protection for the living, and leading to the appropriation of space and land, while the monuments served as an existential map for each community.

So, if the demic diffusion model seems to be the best one for explaining the realities of the coastal areas at an early phase of the colonization process, the situation was very different inland, and only from the 6th century onwards does cultural diffusion seem to have taken place here through a process we could designate as cultural osmosis, with local communities selectively filtering the various components of the eastern package. Anyway, it seems clear that the arrival of eastern populations in the west implies a demographic growth that would have caused imbalances in terms of available resources, as well as significant social inequalities. This new reality led to the disappearance of the pre-existing cultural models of Bronze Age communities within only a short period of time, taking no longer than one and a half centuries. Therefore, in the 8th century, we can detect the existence of a number of archaeographically distinct situations, which cannot be dismissed as being simply different registers of a single cultural system:

1. Phoenician colonies in the coastal areas;
2. Profoundly easternized indigenous settlements, also along the coast; and
3. Inland sites, which still did not show any signs of easternisation.

This panorama demonstrates the complexity of the easternization processes which, from the late 9th century BC onwards, took place in these areas geographically located between the western Mediterranean region and the Atlantic region of southern Europe deeply affected by the historical processes occurring in the Mediterranean basin, with a plurality of registers that resists any attempts at systematization and linear explanation. Of course, the diversity that I have been commenting on may have, at least in part, a chronological explanation that has so far eluded us, or that cannot yet be detected by available dating techniques, while the functional specialization of the sites may also have helped to accentuate a phenomenon of differentiation that was not only due to cultural reasons. But this differentiation was real, and it is certainly worth discussing, especially because it ceased to exist from the late 7th century onwards – when a certain uniformity began to appear, and this should also be considered in this analysis.

So, it seems that an initial period of diversity was followed by some cultural homogenization, through a process in which the Mediterranean colonizers may have played a fundamental role. Even more so because
this homogeneity seems to have originated in the coastal areas where the Phoenicians first settled, later advancing inland. As I have already stated, this homogeneity is relative, and I have no intention here of giving the impression of the existence of vast territories that were politically unified. Nonetheless, there was a vast area occupied by diverse communities that shared a material culture, with similar technologies and architectural models within the same chronological time frame. It seems undeniable that the Phoenician groups that reached the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the 1st millennium were responsible for the introduction not only of new technologies and new architectural processes, but also of new animal and vegetable species, social habits, funerary rituals and practices. But the truth is that all the available evidence points to the fact that, within the short space of one and a half centuries, indigenous groups were able to manipulate these components with relative ease.

In this context, it seems important to remember that, contrary to what is stated by the processual paradigm, human societies are never isolated or separated from one another, and are not rigid, static, or immovable structures closed in upon themselves. This does not mean that we should unconditionally embrace the perspectives that emphasize an individual “agency” in processes that, in one way or another, do in fact involve the different communities as a whole. Even though we cannot deny the existence of actual individuals and individual actions in the intercultural exchanges that took place in the Far West at the time of the arrival of eastern populations, and despite the fact that the communities that entered into such contact were not uniform from a social point of view (with there being groups within those communities that did not share the same expectations in relation to exogenous influences), the reality is that the interaction between cultures that took place in the eastern and southern parts of the Iberian Peninsula was defined by the power relations existing at that time within the two contacting communities.

Both colonists and indigenous groups contributed to the process of cultural change that took place during this period, even though the technological gap that separated them from one another was a considerably large one. It does, in fact, seem undeniable that colonialisms, even those promoted by just one metropolis, are forced to deal with the indigenous realities that they find and which, in one way or another, can determine the nature of the systems imposed in the colonial setting. However, even though indigenous groups were certainly much more than merely passive spectators in a process that involved them directly, the truth is that the role of the Phoenician colonizers was crucial for the construction of the new social models created by the dynamics of interaction, all the more so because it was these same Phoenicians who brought with them the very elements that led to the changes taking place in social, political, economic, and cultural systems. Of course, this statement does not naturally imply the defense of any sort of “colonial system” or of any intellectual minority among the indigenous groups.

Anyway, it seems clear that, in the period under analysis here, new protagonists arrived in an already occupied setting, giving rise to several actions – and reactions – of the various intervening agents. The fact that the newcomers sought primarily to reproduce the cultural systems of their homeland should not be overlooked, even though this intention may have been partly thwarted, or at least modified in its shape, by the indigenous groups. On the other hand, the absence of any evident signs of violence should not be overemphasized, especially because the fortification systems, consisting of both walls and ditches, documented at sites such as La Fonteta,90 Toscanos,90 Castillo de Doña Blanca,91 Tavira,92 or Almaraz, to mention just a few, point to a scenario of conflict, albeit a latent one, in the early phase of the Phoenician settlement of the region. It also worth mentioning that domination is not always exerted through force, and there are other equally effective forms of coercion, namely economic and technological dependence. And, in many cases, it is the ideological control that allows, or at least favors, such domination. I believe that the reality that can be inferred from archaeological data allows us to state that the contact between cultures that took place as a result of the arrival in Western Europe of populations from the Near East led to the almost
complete dissolution of the cultural systems developed by the indigenous communities with varying degrees of sophistication from a technological point of view, even though their genetic legacy at least survived. The available data do, however, show that, from a cultural point of view, the exogenous influence seems to have prevailed over the cultural background of the indigenous communities.

Notes

2) van Dommelen 2012, 398.
3) van Dommelen 2012, 340.
4) Martín de la Cruz/Perfines Benito, 1993.
6) Martín de la Cruz/Perfines Benito 1993, 335.
7) Martín de la Cruz/Perfines Benito 1993, 335. – Martín de la Cruz 1994, 121, 141; 2008.
11) Torres 2008, 63.
17) García Alfonso 1998, 64.
18) Vera/Martín de la Cruz 2004. – Martín de la Cruz 2008.
19) Torres Ortiz 2008, 77.
21) Schubart 1975, 91 pl. 59.
22) Soares/Tavares da Silva 1998, 236.
23) Coffyn 1985, 178 pl. 18, 1.
26) Torres Ortiz 2008, 78-79.
27) Giardino 1995, 17, 22 fig. 88; 23 fig. 10A.
28) Torres Ortiz 2008, 80.
31) Loud 1948, 78.
33) #Ayelet Gilboa in this volume#.
35) Cesenola 1903.
36) Carrasco Rus/Pachón Romero, 2006a; 2006b.
40) Almagro Gorbéa 1996.
45) Vilaça 2008.
52) Armada Pita 2005. – Armada Pita/Rafel/Montero 2008
57) Jiménez Ávila 2002.
59) Vilaça 2006.
60) Bettencourt 1998.
64) Taramelli 1921.
65) Torres Ortiz 2008.
66) Snodgrass 1983.
71) Corresponding to the Levantine Iron Age IIA, according to Gilboa/Sharon 2003.
73) Akhiv, Meggido’s levels VA-VB.
77) Schubart 2006.
78) Schubart et al. 2002.
80) García Teysander/Cabaco Encinas 2009.
84) Zamora López/Amadasi Guzzo 2008.
87) Arruda/Celestino 2009.
88) Berrocal Rangel/Silva 2010.
90) Schubart et al. 2002.
91) Ruiz Mata/Pérez 1995.

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