Bronze Arrowheads "Orientalizing" with Double Blade, Central Rib, and Socket. Documented in the Castle of Ibiza. 6th Century B.C.

Ancient societies were closely linked to violence, war, and piracy. More or less aggressive population movements were part of the development of these societies.

Initially, Phoenician colonization in the West was characterized by a distinctly commercial approach. The exchange of goods, economic transactions, and cultural contact shaped the course of this Phoenician expansion. However, this dynamic was not free from conflict.

We largely lack knowledge about the interactions between human groups arriving from the East and settling on foreign coasts and the native populations. These contacts were likely peaceful and negotiated at first, but were not exempt from periods of violence.

One expression of the instability in these relationships is the repeated use of islands and peninsulas—more or less defensible and with direct access to the sea —for the establishment of colonies.

PIRACY

Despite their commercial focus, the Phoenicians also resorted to piracy on certain occasions. The search for surplus goods and food often led to armed

raids, both against coastal settlements and commercial vessels. This duality between trade and piracy reflects the complexity of the economic activities of the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Etruscans in the ancient Mediterranean.

"Because in ancient times the Greeks and the barbarians who lived along the coast and on the islands, once they began to interact by sea, engaged in piracy under the leadership of powerful men, who sought personal gain and means of subsistence for the weaker ones: and by attacking communities that lacked fortifications and lived scattered in villages, they would plunder them and seize most of their resources, for such behavior was not yet shameful, but rather brought a certain kind of glory."
- Thucydides I, 5, 1

"By birth, I am proud to be from spacious Crete, where I had a wealthy father... I had no love for farming or managing a household that raises noble children, but only for ships with oars, battles, polished spears, and arrows—things sad and dreadful for others, but very dear to me, for some god gave me that inclination, since not everyone finds joy in the same pursuits. Even before the Achaeans set foot in Troy, I had already led nine expeditions with men and swift ships against foreign peoples, and I obtained many goods. I kept the most pleasant things for myself and gained much more by lot; thus, my household grew rapidly, and I became powerful and respected among the Cretans... Later, my spirit urged me to sail to Egypt. I properly outfitted my ships with comrades like gods. I equipped nine ships and soon gathered the needed crew... In five days, we reached the river of Egypt, with its lovely current, where I ordered the curved ships to be docked. Then... I sent scouts to suitable places to explore the region. But my men, succumbing to arrogance and acting on their own, began to ravage the beautiful Egyptian fields before I gave the order. They seized women and children and killed the men…"
- Odyssey, Book XIV - Eumaeus' Tale

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF VIOLENCE

The presence of violence during Phoenician colonization is revealed through careful analysis of historical sources and archaeological findings. The discovery of weapons in burials and certain archaeological records suggests the conflictive nature of some periods. A notable example is the settlement of Dalt Vila, in the Castell d'Eivissa, where more than 75 arrowheads of different types were meticulously documented, connected to each other and found in a very specific location.

Additionally, the presence of documented fortifications in excavations, such as at La Fonteta, indicates substantial defensive systems intended to confront possible conflicts and protect the population from both external and internal violence. Furthermore, sources reveal that commercial activity was occasionally marked by piracy, which intertwined with trade and became an additional means to obtain surplus goods and wealth.

CONFLICTS ACCORDING TO ANCIENT ACCOUNTS

Accounts from Greek and Roman historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius provide valuable information about Phoenician wars and their interactions with other regional powers such as the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Greeks. The Phoenicians, organized into independent city-states like Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, often clashed with each other over control of territories and trade routes. They also took part in external conflicts, forming alliances with foreign powers to protect their commercial interests or to undertake joint military campaigns.

One of the main sources of information on Phoenician wars comes from these ancient historians, who recorded events related to interactions between the Phoenicians and other regional powers.

It is known that the Phoenicians, organized into city-states like Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, occasionally fought each other for territorial and commercial dominance. They also engaged in external conflicts, often allying with foreign powers to protect their economic interests or join military campaigns.

One of the best-known Phoenician wars is the conflict between Tyre and Babylon in the 6th century BCE, described in inscriptions by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II. This war resulted in the destruction of Tyre by the Babylonians after a prolonged siege, although the city eventually recovered and was rebuilt.

> "Returning to the brave Dionysius the Phocaean: after seeing the complete defeat of the Ionian cause in battle, having captured three enemy ships, he decided never to return to his homeland Phocaea, as he clearly foresaw that it, along with all of Ionia, would ultimately fall to the Persians. He then set sail for Phoenicia, where, having seized many merchant ships and grown rich with spoils, he scuttled them and sailed to Sicily. There, he took to piracy, often sailing out from local ports, never attacking Greek ships but seizing all Carthaginian and Etruscan ones he could catch."
>
> **- Herodotus II, 100.19**

> "The number of triremes rose to one thousand two hundred and seven, provided by the following peoples. The Phoenicians supplied three hundred, together with the Syrians of Palestine. They were equipped as follows: on their heads, they wore helmets very similar to the Greek type; they were dressed in linen breastplates and carried rimless shields, along with javelins."
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> **- Herodotus VII.89.1.2**

SA CALETA

The founding of the colony on a peninsula framed by a deep ravine is indicative of caution and a search for security for the population.

In Sa Caleta, no fortification structures have been documented, possibly due to coastal erosion, which may have deteriorated and destroyed the existing archaeological remains.

Nonetheless, the possible absence of defensive structures and the evident vulnerability to a potential maritime attack likely contributed significantly to

the decision to relocate the population to a more suitable and protected site, such as the elevated area of present-day Dalt Vila in Eivissa.