

FROM INFANT SACRIFICE TO THE ABC'S:  
ANCIENT PHOENICIANS AND MODERN IDENTITIES

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I was shocked to learn that Phoenicians were possibly sacrificing young children at the Carthage *Tophet*. The idea is horrifying. I always thought that the Phoenicians were a civilized race.

P.D. Roberts (2001) Forum, *Archaeology Odyssey* 4(3):10-11

#### FROM INFANT SACRIFICE TO THE ABC'S<sup>1</sup>

The Phoenicians showed extraordinary acumen in commerce and communications, colonizing the Western Mediterranean ahead of the Greeks and disseminating their most important invention — alphabetic script. At the same time, they earned a reputation for piracy and deceit, and showed extraordinary depravity in practicing infant sacrifice and ritual prostitution, according to the Classical and Biblical sources. Depraved civilizer, or civilized depraver — the Phoenician presented something of a paradox. During the nineteenth century, and through much of the twentieth, European artists, writers, and scholars solved this paradox by erasing the civilizer, downplaying the significance of the Phoenician development of the alphabet, and leaving only the depraved and exotic Oriental. Formed in an environment of racism, imperialism, and nationalism, the influence of such interpretations of the Phoenicians has now faded, to be superseded by ‘post’ interpretations — post-modern, post-colonial, post-structural. But recently certain scholars have abandoned the conventional infant sacrifice paradigm in favor of a narrative that emphasizes the Phoenicians’ contributions to civilization while expunging their rites of infant sacrifice.

The year 1987 was a defining moment for both professional and popular acceptance of this revised narrative. This was the year in which Martin Bernal, a well-read self-proclaimed outsider to Classical Studies, asserted that scholarship in that field had been so corrupted by

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article, Arabic and Turkish transliterations follow *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* protocols.

racism, anti-Semitism, and a number of other influences, that the full range of contributions made to Western Civilization by Egyptians and Phoenicians had come to be suppressed. After establishing that Gustave Flaubert's novel *Salammô* (1862) had been "enormously popular" and an "immense success" (1987:338, 358), Bernal alleges that Flaubert's depiction of sacrificial infanticide had inspired general society-wide revulsion and condemnation — "furthermore, there is no doubt that such feelings extended into academia. Nearly all 20<sup>th</sup> century historians of Carthage and Phoenicia have had to take Flaubert into account" (1987:359). Bernal describes *Salammô*'s widespread description of infanticide as so repulsive that it has led "even non-religious assimilated Jews to keep their distance from the Canaanites and Phoenicians" (1987:359). But the novel's influence on the writing of history is much easier to allege than to prove. Bernal cites only a few examples of revulsion; provides no chain of events linking the novel to the present; offers no specific instances of non-religious Jewish distance-keeping; and even the three historians (out of all of those that "have had to take the novel into account") whom he lists in a footnote briefly mention Flaubert's exotic depiction only to dismiss it. Bernal never draws an explicit connection between the no longer widely-read, imaginative novel of 1862, and current scholarship. In fact, while alleging the influence of Flaubert's novel, he never actually challenges the idea that the Phoenicians practiced some form of infant sacrifice.

In that same year, 1987, preeminent scholars in Phoenician studies condemned the standard depiction of the Phoenicians, and in particular decried the influence of *Salammô*, but went even farther in their critique than Bernal. Sergio Ribichini, a leading historian of Phoenician religion, and the late Sabatino Moscati, the foremost Phoenician scholar of the last century, working independently, realized that the study of infant sacrifice was in desperate need of a reform, or a *ridimensionamento*. Although they concede that the Phoenicians might have ritually killed (not sacrificed) humans under rare and extraordinary circumstances, such as siege or plague, their interpretations of the evidence could not abide a regular, state-sanctioned infant sacrifice (Moscati 1987; Ribichini 1987). Michel Gras, Pierre Rouillard and Javier Teixidor came to similar

conclusions, again independently, since they were only able to cite Moscati and Ribicini in a footnote (presumably as their own work was going to press — Gras, et al. 1989:170-197; translation 1991). All three essays begin by denouncing popular traditions concerning the Phoenicians, mentioning in their first paragraphs the gruesome infant sacrifice to Moloch depicted in Gustave Flaubert's novel. Since 1987, criticism of *Salammbô* has become the typical introduction to any treatment of infant sacrifice (e.g. Benichou-Safar 1989a; Moscati 1991a). Like Bernal, specialists on Phoenicia have sought to show that the novel's influence continues today: operatic versions of *Salammbô* continue to be performed (Gras, et al. 1989:170), and tour guides draw upon its imagery:

There is not a tourist who, while visiting the ruins of Carthage, Tharros, Sant'Antioco (Sulcis), Monte Sirai, Mozia or other Punic centers, has not heard from his guide the story of Punic child sacrifice, more or less colored with horrific or moving details, drawn perhaps from the pages of the *Salammbô* of Gustave Flaubert. Similarly, there is no historical manual that, in speaking of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, does not refer to the bloody rite of offering little human victims in the place commonly called 'tofet'.

(Ribichini 1987:9)

Ribichini portrays the tour guide's spiel and the historian's narrative as equivalent. From this perspective, in 1987, both the outsider (Bernal) and the consummate insiders introduced *Salammbô* only to allege that the novel insidiously continues to infect historical narrative. In other words, both outsider and insider sought to undermine the image of the depraved-Phoenician by attacking the tradition's modern, popular source.

Concerning the *ridimensionamento* of 1987, and its turn away from the sensational depraved-Phoenician toward the literate civilized-Phoenician, I concentrate here on only one

aspect — the alleged correspondence between popular narratives, on the one hand, and professional historical narratives, on the other. In doing so, I consider three popular descriptions of the Phoenicians which developed before archeological excavations in the 1920s had apparently confirmed the existence of infant sacrifice. I study them as narratives of national identity formed at specific moments: first Gustave Flaubert's *Salammbô* from 1862, in the context of the creation of a French identity (formed at least in part through victory over the Arabs, from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt to the gradual conquest and colonization of Algeria); then Giovanni Pastrone's 1914 silent film *Cabiria*, and an Italian imperial identity formed at the time of Italy's initial victories over the Turks and Arabs of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (modern Libya); finally, I examine the role of Phoenicianism in the development of identities in Mt. Lebanon in 1920. In all three cases, the ancient Phoenicians were entangled with contemporaneous ideologies, and these entanglements reveal much more about each of their historical contexts than they reveal about scholarship in the present day.

My study of Phoenician identities and modern ideologies provides a historiographical survey of the roles played by the Phoenicians in Europe and in the modern Arab World. In the process, I attempt to answer the following: Why do references to *Salammbô* still appear in scholarly Phoenicianist studies, now one hundred and forty years after this colorful, imaginative novel was issued? What can these casual allusions possibly mean? What does the mere mention (or lack of mention) of *Salammbô* signify?

#### BEFORE THE 1987 *RIDIMENSIONAMENTO*

Other disciplines are not haunted by once popular and influential historical novels — scholars of ancient Rome, for instance, see no need to preface their work with an analysis of the underlying preconceptions of the popular and influential novel, *The Last Days of Pompeii* (Bulwer Lytton 1834). Flaubert's continued association with infant sacrifice may simply be due to the

coincidental discovery of a sacrificial sanctuary in the modern quarter of Carthage that had been named ‘Salamambo’ (without circumflex) by the French in the protectorate era — reports from the site bear the byline “Salamambo, Carthage” and, today, anyone taking the train from Tunis to visit the *tophet* disembarks at the ‘Salamambo’ station. But this accidental association does not explain the corrective tenor of *Salammbô* citations from the 1987 *ridimensionamento*. Scholars might be criticizing Flaubert for basing his imaginative narrative on unreliable classical sources, such as Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, in order to criticize modern scholars who rely on those same sources. But this seems unlikely since scholars holding to the infant sacrifice interpretation do not accept all of the classical and biblical sources as reliable (Brown 1991; Mosca 1975), nor do they neglect to set their measured analyses against literary excess (Mosca, for example, cites Moloch references in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Dickens’ *The Haunted Man* (Mosca 1975, 1990)).

A further puzzling aspect of the *ridimensionamento* is that, without any new data, there can be a reformation of the entire ritual, a “riconsiderazione globale della questione” (Ribichini 1988a; b:120). Moscati compares this reform to the one initiated by Otto Eissfeldt, who had erased the god Moloch from Phoenician religion when he showed that the term *MLK* found in Punic inscriptions referred to a type of sacrifice (Eissfeldt 1935). Moscati compares himself to Eissfeldt because he has erased the sacrifice itself from Phoenician religion (Moscati 1987). But while Eissfeldt’s thesis represented a disciplinary shift based upon internal factors, since his argument was based upon new evidence (i.e., inscriptions in Latin transcribing Phoenician sacrificial terms — Alquier, et al. 1931), the scholarship of the 1987 *ridimensionamento* represents a shift based upon external factors. No definitive new evidence had appeared in the early 1980s to prompt such a shift, and many of the arguments proposed had been already been presented, in some form, in both scholarly works and popular narrative. The *ridimensionamento* was just the latest revival in a long series of polemics concerning infant sacrifice and the stature of the Phoenicians.

As soon as *Salammbô* appeared in 1862, the rehabilitation of the civilized-Phoenicians began. The critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve and the Louvre’s curator of antiquities,

Guillaume Frœhner (aka Wilhelm Fröhner), rejected Flaubert's description of infant sacrifice and challenged his use of the ancient sources (Frœhner 1862; Gras, et al. 1991:151; Sainte-Beuve 1885 [1862]). This Phoenician rehabilitation continued, before any *tophet* precincts had been excavated, with criticism of the inimical biases of the Greeks, Romans and Hebrews (Bérard 1902-1903; Pézard 1908; Reinach 1909). It was only in 1919 at Motya (Sicily) and 1920 at Carthage that urns and stelae were discovered in *tophet* precincts (so-called from Jeremiah 7:30-32), open-air sanctuaries dedicated to Ba'al Óammon and his consort Tanit. There stelae inscribed with Phoenician votive formulae and urns containing the bones of infants and juvenile sheep and goats have been found (Poinssot and Lantier 1923; Whitaker 1921). These finds would seem to support the classical and biblical accounts of infant sacrifice. But when the excavations at the Carthaginian *tophet* finally commenced in the early 1920s, Charles Saumagne, editor of the *Revue tunisienne*, urged that excavators and scholars in general exercise caution, that they not leap to conclusions that would compromise the recent gains in rehabilitating the Phoenicians, and that they not promote Flaubert's image of depraved-Phoenicians (Saumagne 1922). Thirty years later, Claude Schaeffer suggested that the precincts could be interpreted as infant cemeteries (Schaeffer 1956:81-83; 1962). But the works that most directly precipitated the 1987 *ridimensionamento* appeared in the early 1980s after renewed excavations in Carthage and Motya, and new excavations of *tophet* precincts in Sardinia.

While challenging depictions of the depraved-Phoenicians, scholars of the *ridimensionamento* ignore other popular traditions that celebrated the civilized-Phoenicians. Decades earlier, Isaac Asimov had already articulated the scholar's sentiments in his prophetic work of fiction, *The Dead Past* (Asimov 1956; 1957:11-55; c.f. Garbini 1994:67 n.1). In this short story, the mild-mannered Arnold Potterly PhD, Professor of Ancient History, has obtained a generous fellowship to use the government's chronoscope and view the past. He defends the significance of his research:



I must explain that my problem is quite an important one. Carthage was ancient commercialism brought to its zenith. Pre-Roman Carthage was the nearest ancient analog to pre-atomic America, at least insofar as its attachment to trade, commerce and business in general was concerned. They were the most daring seamen and explorers before the Vikings; much better at it than the overrated Greeks.

To know Carthage would be very rewarding, yet the only knowledge we have of it is derived from the writings of its bitter enemies, the Greeks and Romans. Carthage itself never wrote in its own defense or, if it did, the books did not survive. As a result, the Carthaginians have been one of the favorite sets of villains of history and perhaps unjustly so. Time viewing may set the record straight.

(Asimov 1956:7)

But, because the government bureaucracy never allows him access to its lab, he must build his own chronoscope in a garage with the help of a physicist colleague.

He has one obsession, one goal — the rehabilitation of Carthage — but he's pursuing a very personal agenda. He has lost his 3-year-old daughter in a fire that he accidentally started. So his mission, as he explains to his wife, is to prove that no one would ever intentionally incinerate his own toddler by throwing him or her, live, into the fiery belly of the god Moloch (as the Phoenicians are alleged to have done):

The Carthaginians, it seemed, worshipped Moloch, in the form of a hollow, brazen idol with a furnace in its belly. At times of national crisis, the priests and the people gathered, and infants, after the proper ceremonies and invocations, were dexterously hurled, alive, into the flames.

They were given sweetmeats just before the crucial moment, in order that the efficacy of the sacrifice not be ruined by displeasing cries of panic. The drums rolled just after the moment, to drown out the few seconds of infant shrieking. The parents were present, presumably gratified, for the sacrifice was pleasing to the gods...

Arnold Potterly frowned darkly. Vicious lies, he told her, on the part of Carthage's enemies. He should have warned her. After all, such propagandistic lies were not uncommon. According to the Greeks, the ancient Hebrews worshipped an ass's head in their Holy of Holies. According to the Romans, the primitive Christians were haters of all men who sacrificed pagan children in the catacombs.

"Then they didn't do it?" asked Caroline.

"I'm sure they didn't. The primitive Phoenicians may have. Human sacrifice is commonplace in primitive cultures. But Carthage in her great days was not a primitive culture. Human sacrifice often gives way to symbolic actions such as circumcision. The Greeks and Romans might have mistaken some Carthaginian symbolism for the original full rite, either out of ignorance or out of malice."

(Asimov 1956:16-7)

Potterly asserts that the civilized Phoenicians must have loved their children, too. But he only reacts against the hostile Classical sources. Asimov does not give this professor any awareness of archaeological evidence unearthed 35 years prior to *The Dead Past*. But, after all, he is only writing science fiction.

Since those archaeological finds seemed to support the classical and biblical accounts of infant sacrifice, popular guidebooks tended to describe the excavated precincts with colorful details: "Their god Baal demanded the first born male of every family and in times of trouble He could be propitiated only by holocausts of boys of noble blood who were consumed alive in His

fiery arms” (Anthony 1961:69-70). One can imagine that Ribichini had just such an account in mind when he lamented the popular depiction of depraved Phoenicians fed to tourists by their guides (above), even though Anthony does not mention Flaubert or Moloch. In fact, some touristic accounts from the 1960’s went so far as to challenge such exotic reconstructions:

The image passed on by the Romans of their adversaries has persisted through the centuries. According to this image Carthaginians were cruel, cowardly, perfidious, lecherous and over-ambitious. Yet, as a Tunisian historian has told me: ‘Suppose Hitler had succeeded in the last war. What would posterity have thought of the peoples he was bent on exterminating? His views on them might well have been taken for granted.’ And what about the urns which had been found at Salamambo? They contained remnants of bones of small children that had apparently been burnt in sacrifice to Moloch. Nothing has perhaps done more to color our views of the macabre remains. ‘Who knows,’ my Tunisian friend said, ‘these bones might well have been of children that had died a natural death whereupon their bodies were incinerated in token of sacrifice to the gods.’ There is a marked reluctance in Tunisia to believe all the terrible things about the Carthaginians which Gustave Flaubert vividly depicted in his *Salamambo*. But he, too, no doubt drew his information from the Romans.

(Sylvester 1969:26)

The unnamed Tunisian scholar anticipates the 1987 *ridimensionamento* by nearly twenty years, and his comments suggests that the non-existence of infant sacrifice was already on its way to becoming a *communis opinio doctorum*. By the early 1980s, a growing number of scholars were ready to publish such views.

While scholars involved in the 1976-1979 ASOR Punic Project excavations at the *tophet* of Carthage held on to the infant-sacrifice interpretation as the best explanation of the archaeological evidence (Brown 1991; Stager 1980, 1982; Stager and Wolff 1984), others were at the ready to rehabilitate the Phoenicians: Schaeffer's infant cemetery hypothesis was restated and refined by Benichou-Safar (1981); the classical sources were again discarded as unreliable and inimical to the Phoenicians, and this called for a "*drastico ridimensionamento*" (Simonetti 1983); osteological analysis of the bones from Tharros confirmed reports from the 1950s and 1960s that the majority of the bones from *tophet* precincts belonged to perinatal infants, and this necessitated "a global reconstruction of the ritual activities" (Fedele 1983; cf. Müller, et al. 1952; Richard 1961). Moscati and Ribichini cite these articles as catalysts for their own 1987 *ridimensionamento*.

Prior to 1987, Moscati gave straightforward accounts of Phoenician infant sacrifice in historical manuals (Moscati 1968, 1982), although in journal articles he had offered certain qualifications. In 1966 he suggested that they were not generically or generally cruel sacrifices (Moscati 1965-1966:68). In 1985, following on the catalytic articles above, he proposed that infants who had not been sacrificed might also be buried in the same precinct (Moscati and Uberti 1985:83). And at a conference in 1986 he enumerated six problematic aspects of *tophet* precincts, but even in this case he remained cautious and concluded his paper thus: "All of this does not erase the ritual, but certainly gives it new dimensions (*ridimensiona*)" (Moscati 1990). In the following year, along with Ribichini (who had also taken part in the 1986 conference — Ribichini 1990), he would take the ultimate, audacious step. Pushing the *ridimensionamento* even further, with the bitter and joyous realization that it was all just the invention of inimical ancients and imaginative moderns, they erased the sacrifice itself.

One method by which they were able to erase the sacrifice was through pleading guilty to a lesser charge. **Human sacrifice**, they argue, requires a certain regularity, and must be offered to a superhuman being for consumption or for the maintenance of cult, while **ritual killing** occurs only in situations of particular crisis (i.e. siege, plague) and is an appeal for a direct divine

intervention. This is not an ancient, internal distinction (since there is no differentiation in the vocabulary of Greek or Latin between ‘human sacrifice’ and ‘ritual killing’), but a modern, external distinction made by Brelich (1967), restated by Simonetti (1983), and then picked up by Moscati and Ribichini. To summarize of the latter’s arguments, where human sacrifice is rare, ritual killing is common; in fact everybody in the ancient Mediterranean did it. Where Phoenician human sacrifice demanded infants, ritual killing involved prisoners of war. It is not so difficult, then, to admit that the Phoenicians only did ritual killing, just like everyone else. Now this ritual might possibly have included only that small percentage of infants more than a few months old buried in the *tophet*. But it certainly would *not* have included perinatal infants, that much larger percentage, who could in no way be described, as they are in the sources, as *paides* or *pueri*. The latter must have been buried in the *tophet* after a purificatory ritual, and so the precinct must have had a dual function: sacrificial and funerary (Moscati 1987, 1990; Ribichini 1987, 1990).

Imagining the ancient Phoenicians cleared of all charges of depravity is quite compelling. Like Moscati, the prominent Phoenicianist María Eugenia Aubet Semmler also had a change of heart. While in 1987 she presented a canonical interpretation of infant sacrifice (Aubet Semmler 1987, translated in 1993), she completely modified her previous interpretations after leading an excavation at a possible *tophet* precinct in Tyre, and now interprets the rite as a type of enfranchisement ritual (Aubet Semmler 2001 [1993]). With slight reaction from those holding to the conventional ‘infant sacrifice’ explanation (e.g. Fantar, et al. 2000; Garbini 1994; Grottanelli 1999; Lancel 1995; Mosca 1990 [unpublished]), a largely one-sided debate has ensued. The arguments of the 1987 *ridimensionamento* have become the new orthodoxy.

What I have summarized here is but a brief survey of current scholarship. Elsewhere I analyze the Classical, Biblical and archaeological evidence for infant sacrifice, and examine closely a broader range of current research (Garnand 2002). My working thesis is that this *ridimensionamento* follows on a so-called **reflexive turn** in ethnography and literary criticism. In anthropology, scholars made a problem out of what once had been unproblematic: the subjective

role of the fieldworker. Current anthropological methodology demands that ethnographers explain their own social involvements with respondents, and reflect on their own subject position. The **reflexive turn** took place first at the end of 1960s (Geertz 1968; Scholte 1999 [1972]), and then more definitely in the 1980s (Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Cushman 1982; Marcus and Fischer 1999 [1986]; Tyler 1987). This second wave developed out of literary theory and projects of cultural critique undertaken by Edward Said and others, and the rhetorical critique of history developed by Hayden White (Marcus 1998:182-183). Such theorists have argued that academic disciplines themselves construct their objects of study and, in the extreme, have also argued that the authority of disciplinary narratives is maintained and legitimized less by truth or an appeal to facts than by historical and ideological discursive structures and power relations.

I call this turn in Phoenician studies a '*ridimensionamento*', instead of a 'revision', because the self-ascribed term is preferable to any outside categorization, although they share some common characteristics (cf. Mosca 1990). Early in the 1900s, the term **reversionism** had a relatively neutral connotation, and was associated with certain specific appeals for 'review': in France, a call for a judicial review of the Dreyfus Affair; in the United States, H. E. Barnes' historical review of the causes of the First World War; and in Italy (among others), a call to review portions of the Versailles Treaty. But since the middle of the last century, **reversionism** has had a strong pejorative connotation, calling to mind Holocaust apologists and their form of **inexistentialism** that wishes away unpleasant aspects of the past (Vidal-Naquet 1987; 1992). At the very least, **reversionism** imputes a certain historical **relativism** which "holds that reliable knowledge of the past is unattainable because every work of history is inevitably limited by the subjective viewpoint of its author" (Ritter 1986:376). In our case, the hostile Greek or Roman and the modern archaeologist or philologist can easily be dismissed as biased, without a need to call on any new archaeological evidence or any newly discovered literary sources to overturn their arguments.

There are also pejorative connotations to **traditonalism**. The term might be used to describe those who hold on to the infant sacrifice interpretation, calling to mind an image of resistance to innovative theories or approaches, or suggesting adherence to some form of academic **positivism** — simplistically and naively believing that rigorous inquiry based upon objective methods can be applied to the study of the past in order to discover some scientific truth, all without the intrusion of any subjective biases (Ritter 1986:327-329; Williams 1983:238-239). In the extreme, the ‘traditionalists’ could face subtle accusations of embracing past **imperialist, racist, Orientalist** or **Salammbô-ist** depictions of the Phoenicians. This debate can also employ what Gellner, in a review of Said, has called a ‘contrary theory of knowledge’ which tries to solve problems of identifying a correct version of the past by claiming that historical truth is the prerogative of a certain category (the colonized) while other categories (Said’s ‘Orientalist’) are doomed to error. Thus one can find one’s “way about in a difficult world by identifying the Saved and the Damned” (Gellner 1993a, b).

The rigors of **traditional** scholarship are not to be dismissed, nor are **revisionist** challenges to narratives legitimizing European superiority and hegemony over the Near East and North Africa. My goal here is only to set up the background to the contested narratives concerning the Phoenicians which have led up to the contemporary *ridimensionamento* of infant sacrifice. In exploring these narratives we may find an answer to what the mere mention of *Salammbô* signifies.

## NARRATIVE AND IDENTITY

Historical interpretations of archaeological finds have generated conflicts, both public and scholarly, and “many of these controversies have centered around conflicting claims of national priority and superiority” (Trigger 1984:357). In the modern colonial era, European nations justified their control over others by defining themselves as agents of civilization bringing

peace and order (i.e. Rome ‘returning’ to vanquish the depraved Phoenicians), while the once colonized have redefined themselves as inheritors of civilizations that existed prior to their colonization (as do the descendants of the civilized-Phoenicians). The following are some of the well establish terms and concepts I use (summaries in Hall 1997:32-33; Lincoln 1989:173-174).

The ethnic label **Phoenician** is used here in its broadest sense. Just as the broad category **Greeks** (coined by the Romans) can be applied to Mycenaean, Classical and Hellenistic era **Hellenes** (as they called themselves at least from the Archaic Period), so, too, the term **Phoenicians** (coined by Greeks)<sup>2</sup> can be used to describe Bronze Age Canaanites, Iron Age Phoenicians, Punic Carthaginians, or *Καναῖται* (as they are called in the Hebrew Bible, and as those living near Carthage called themselves as late as the time of St. Augustine, *Exp. ad Rom.* 13). Like the Greeks, the Phoenicians had a broad geographic range, spanning the Mediterranean from its Eastern shore to the Straits of Gibraltar and beyond. However useful the term **Greek** may be, it fails to express the chronological, geographical and ethnic diversity of the Hellenes. Similarly, this broadest use of **Phoenician** encompasses considerable diversity. What we might today consider an ancient Phoenician **nation** — consisting of all those who shared a notion of common ancestry, language, and culture — never existed. The geographical term **Phoenicia** has often been used to describe only Biblical Canaan, that part of the Eastern Mediterranean coastline from the territory of the island of al-Ruwād to the territory of Akkâ (roughly modern Lebanon, Figure 11). But, again, in the same way that ancient **Greece** properly describes all Greek city-states, **Phoenicia** would have included all city-states inhabited by Phoenicians, including their colonies (Figure 15). Though the Phoenicians might on occasion have identified themselves collectively (as related to other kin), particularly when threatened (Herodotus 3.19), they normally chose to identify with their own city-state — as Tyrians, Sidonians, Carthaginians. Broad ethnic categories were rarely the most salient feature of their ethnic identity (for the varied interpretations

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<sup>2</sup> Krahmalkov offers the intriguing yet unconvincing suggestion that the term was self ascribed (2000:10-13).



of 'Phoenician', see Aubet Semmler 2001 [1993]; Moscati 1988:6-25; Pastor Borgoñón 1992-1993).

I use **nation** to describe what Benedict Anderson calls an 'imagined community' — 'imagined' because its members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" — that is limited within physical and conceptual boundaries beyond which other nations would lie (Anderson 1991:6-7). This is not a **nation** in the sense of political **state**, but in the sense of an **ethnic group** (Connor 1978). Identity (national or ethnic) is both constructed from within an ethnic group, by a process of self-definition, and from without, where outside groups do the defining, often in opposition to their own self-definition (e.g. 'they' do not live in cities, implying that 'we' do).

Ethnic groups are always defined from within and without — members belong to a group not just when they believe they are members but also when they are recognized by others as members. This highlights what has been called the subjective (**emic**) / objective (**etic**) issue in ethnicity theory (Harris 1976). The terms are taken from linguistics, where **phonetic** designates observable sounds which are detectable outside a language group, while **phonemic** designates sound contrasts which are meaningful to speakers of the language. Transferred to group identity, **etic** signifies categorization by non-members (the objective emphasis) as opposed to a person's own **emic** identity or identification with a particular ethnic group (the subjective emphasis). Whereas the **etic** viewpoint of the rational anthropologist was once privileged over the self-interested **emic** viewpoint of the anthropologist's subject, now, after the 'reflexive turn', the **emic** is usually privileged over the **etic**, and primary emphasis given "to the fact that ethnic groups are categories of ascription by the actors themselves" (Barth 1969:10). Past **etic** anthropological narratives have tended to describe another culture as removed in space, 'over there', or time, 'back then', in such a way as to create the inverse of the 'here and now' (Fabian 1983; cf. Hall 1989). Thus an 'Orientalist' viewpoint has greater value in telling us about an 'Occidental' identity formed mirror image of the Orient, rather than value in telling us about the Arab World itself. In

the same way, the oppositional identities formed in *Salammbô* and *Cabiria* tell us little about ancient Phoenician or modern Arab identity and a great deal about the creation of French and Italian identities.

Another critical shift in ethnographic theory arose from Barth's notion of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969). Once it was deemed ideal for the anthropologist to find a primitive, isolated **tribe** that would be bounded, homogeneous and complete unto itself. This conception of societies as bounded groups may have contributed to the study of inherent **national character** at a larger scale. During and after the Second World War, American anthropologists attempted to apply social psychology to studies of **national character** (Østergård 1992). While scholars had largely abandoned this approach by the end of the fifties, Barth further shifted the emphasis away from the essence and internal coherence of ethnic groups, which were presumed to have fixed boundaries, to the study of the boundaries themselves, their fluidity and their maintenance. From this perspective, ethnicity has no existence apart from inter-ethnic relations (Cohen 1978:389). The boundaries around ethnic groups, then, persist not because of isolation, but in spite of a flow of goods, ideas, and personnel across them. These conceptual boundaries are not static: they are continually recreated and maintained, in part because ethnic loyalties are overlapping and make for multiple identities (Handleman 1977). The definitional set of attributes, or **criteria**, by which ethnic membership is ultimately determined normally revolve around the putative notion of descent — such as from the Romans or from Phoenicians. At the same time, the operational set of distinguishing attributes, or **indicia**, are those which people tend to associate with particular ethnic groups once the defining criteria have been established — such as language, religion, or physical type (Hall 1997:20-21, 25-26; Horowitz 1975:119-120).

Ethnic identity is not essential, not organically unified, not continuous; instead it is perpetually negotiated through discourse and social praxis, it is socially constructed and subjectively perceived in what people say and in what they do (Barth 1969; Hall 1997:19; De Vos and Romanucci-Ross 1995:350). **Discourse** is used here in a Foucauldian sense: something

pronounced or written that is controlled, selected and organized in such a way as to exclude what is forbidden, exclude what is mad from what is sane, and exclude what is true from what is false or imaginary (Foucault 1971). And **narrative** is the instrument “by which the conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in discourse” (White 1980:8). It is precisely through the evocation of sentiments via select moments from the past that social identities are continually (re-)established and social formations are (re-)constructed (Lincoln 1989:23). Members of a group use **narrative** to construct social identity at a specific level of integration, whereas other potential social formations are deconstructed in the process. What the members of an outside group regard as true and authoritative, the creator of the narrative and members of his or her group regard as false (Lincoln 1989:22-24; Lowenthal 1985:224-231). The ethnic claims that such a group makes on the basis of a 'real' ancestral state of affairs cannot automatically be privileged over the constraints and actualities of the present. Yet although nations and ethnic groups may be imagined, they have a strong, tangible impression of reality socially constructed and subjectively perceived (Hall 1997:19).

These shifts in the study of ethnicity and narrative are part of a general **reflexive turn** that, as mentioned above, saw parallel processes developing in literary and cultural criticism and the rhetorical critique of history. Regarding historical critique, in what follows I keep in mind Hayden White's suspicion that:

Narrative in general, from the folktale to the novel, from the annals to the fully realized 'history', has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or more generally authority . . . The more historically self-conscious the writer of any form of historiography, the more the question of the social system and the law which sustains it, the authority of this law and its justification, and threats to the law occupy his attention . . . Every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize the events of which it treats.

(White 1980:17-18)

Regarding literary and cultural critique, I now turn to the role of Flaubert's *Salammô* and use of the Phoenicians by Said and Bernal. I consider both together, because while *Black Athena I* (1987) is part of the 1987 reform, Bernal bases his treatment of Phoenicians on the theoretical groundwork laid in *Orientalism* (1995 [1978]).

### *SALAMMÔ* (1862)

#### ESSENTIALISM AND MODERN FRENCH IDENTITY

Of those writing about the depiction of the Phoenicians in 1987, I concentrate on Bernal, because he alone does more than briefly demonize the portrayal of infant sacrifice in *Salammô*, and on Said, because of his treatment of the novel in *Orientalism*, which has been cited as a catalyst for the 1980s **reflexive turn** in the social sciences (Marcus 1998:182-183). In the afterword to a recent edition of his work, Said says he had hoped that his readers might produce new studies — then he lists the many countries and many disciplines upon which his work has had an influence, and concludes, “I am pleased and flattered that *Orientalism* often made a difference” (Said 1995 [1978]:340). The field of Classical Studies has felt *Orientalism*'s impact, not least through the work of, and response to Bernal (Berlinerblau 1999; Bernal 1987, 1991, 2001; Lefkowitz 1996; Lefkowitz and Rogers 1996; Said 1995 [1978]:332). Bernal fits the category of Said's worldly, **secular critic**, freed from specialization, exhibiting a staggering breadth of interest, and **amateurism** of approach. In this context, **amateurism** means that the critic speaks from the margin, distanced from orthodox opinion, in a way that allows him/her to say things that those locked in partisan and specialist discourse cannot (Bernal 1987:1-10; Said 1983:1-30; 1993:61). Rather than signifying superficial dilettantism, this approach allows the intellectual to “speak the truth to power” (Said 1994), as did Michael Ventris and Heinrich Schliemann (Bernal

1987:5). As an outsider, Bernal speaks to so many disciplines that individual reviewers, unwilling to adopt the same amateur approach, have confessed an inability to judge the work in its entirety (e.g. Berlinerblau 1999: 18) or have reviewed his work by committee (e.g. Johnson-Odim, et al. 1993; Muhly, et al. 1990; Peradotto, et al. 1989).

While Bernal and Said surf across broad expanses of the intellectual waters, those who dive deeply into the same waters protest. Whereas Bernal colorfully describes his wide-ranging approach to historiography as “looking at flowers from horseback” (a Chinese proverb — Bernal 1993:132), intellectual historians are less than kind in their analysis of his approach (e.g. Blok 1996; Marchand and Grafton 1997). In general, the surfers scoff at the deep divers, portraying themselves as seekers of truth challenging hostile curmudgeons. Meanwhile, the divers scoff at the surfers, portraying themselves as guardians of truth defending against shrill harpies. The divers maintain that only through the expertise gained in examining a particular section in detail can one have the authority to extrapolate and pronounce upon the whole terrain (e.g. Elton 1967:16-22; cf. Foucault 1994 [1970]:138, 144). Although I am sympathetic to Bernal and Said, I do not consider that the products of Near Eastern and Classical Studies are merely corrupted literary excursions disguised as scientific inquiry. And frequent factual errors, flaws in methodology, and the unfair representations of the scholarship of others cumulatively weaken the force of Bernal’s argument (the criticisms of Blok, and Marchand and Grafton, above, are just a tiny sample).

One of many curious (and criticized) points in Bernal’s work is his assumption that modern British and Jewish narratives of identity should embrace the ancient Phoenicians, and his perplexity when they do not. He asserts that the British and French turned away from the Phoenicians because of the horrible ritual sacrifice of infants depicted in *Salammbô* (Bernal 1987:337). But critics have offered other alternatives to Bernal’s *Salammbô* thesis that might better explain why Jewish people have not claimed descent from the Phoenicians: in Biblical narratives the Phoenicians are enemies set against the Israelites; in regional narratives the Phoenicians are the ancestors of the Lebanese (Maronites and Druze) not the Israelis; and in

Western narratives, the depraved-Phoenicians are Arab Muslims pitted against the Romans, i.e. the Christian West (Bikai 1990; Zilfi 1993). Even though a Jewish-Phoenician connection seems logical from Bernal's **etic** viewpoint, descent from the Phoenicians has never been a salient criterion of Jewish ethnic identity.

As for the British, they have used the Phoenicians situationally, which is not surprising since, as defined above, ethnic identity is not essential and unchanging, but dynamic and circumstantial. Bernal has made much of British narratives from the 1800s, in which they saw themselves as commercial Carthaginians challenging the Roman French (Bernal 1987:350). But in other situations, the British imagined themselves as Romans, set against the Carthaginians of the United Provinces during three "Punic Wars", the Anglo-Dutch Wars of 1652-1672 (Fleck 2000:244-325). And they imagined themselves as Romans even as they were challenging France in the 1700s, since the appeal of identifying with the Carthaginians, who ultimately lost to Rome, did not endure (Salas 1996:295, 331-334, 365). In a parallel example, the Portuguese, with their expansive trade routes, saw themselves simultaneously as the "Phoenicia of the East," the "New Rome" due to Lisbon's position in the center of those same routes, and saw Goa as the "Rome of the East" (Figure 1). Descent from the Phoenicians was never an exclusive or static **criterion** of ethnic identity for the Portuguese or the British.

Bernal's expectation of a static British/Jewish Phoenician identity reveals the appeal of **essentialism** — the reduction of peoples to their static essence — one of the broad categories of ills that he and Said wish to combat. In reference to identity, this **essentialism** portrays and understands social and cultural practices and institutions "as what they are for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical matter can either dislodge or alter" (Said 1995 [1978]:70). It is a distortion that suppresses temporality and "assumes or attributes an unchanging primordial ontology to what are the historically contingent products of human or other forms of agency" (Herzfeld 1998:189). Of the forms of essentialism addressed by Said and Bernal, I summarize two here: racism, and Orientalism. Throughout Bernal's work, the two are often combined with, or

mentioned in, the same sentence as other essentialisms and movements deemed relevant to the narrative of *Salammbô*.<sup>3</sup>

Although the term **race** had been used to describe human groups joined by a common ancestry, instead of a socially constructed category (as ethnic group, defined above), by the mid-nineteenth century **race** came to describe a biological concept according to which the human species can be subdivided into distinct categories based on inherited physical characteristics (phenotypes). In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these biological divisions created secular, scientific genealogies that replaced Biblical genealogies (Ritter 1986:356-360). From this biological concept **racism** developed, the belief that certain of these human groups were superior to others — intellectually, physically, or otherwise — on the basis of these phenotypes (Bernal 1987:27-30, 201-204, 239-240; Said 1995 [1978]:206, 231-234). By the mid-nineteenth century, the competitive struggle for existence and the ‘survival of the fittest’ described by Darwin were extended from their biological source, where they referred to relations between the species, to social and political conflicts between **rac**es within the human species (comte de Gobineau 1983 [1853-1855]).

A second form of essentialism, **Orientalism**, was given three different definitions by Said: (1) an **academic** (and somewhat tautological) designation, describing anyone who teaches and writes about the Orient as an Orientalist, and describing what that scholar does as Orientalism; (2) an **imaginative** designation (exemplified by *Salammbô*), describing a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’, and referring to the large mass of writers who have accepted the basic distinction between East

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<sup>3</sup> Race and Orientalism are connected to Hellenocentrism/Hellenomania and Eurocentrism (belief in the inherent superiority of ancient and modern Western, Christian Civilizations); anti-Semitism (a subset of racism, used by Bernal to mean racial prejudice against Jews only — not Arab Semites); and all are often combined with pejorative notions of Romanticism and Progress, or notions of environmental determinism (see Berlinerblau 1999:82-92).

and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, ‘mind,’ destiny, and so on; (3) a **discursive** designation, describing the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it — a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (cf. Bernal 1987:233-237; Said 1995 [1978]:2-3). In Said’s works, the term **Orient** refers not to the Far East, but primarily to the Arab World, particularly the Mashriq (Figure 16). The three definitions were interrelated: Said describes a constant interchange between the academic and the more or less imaginative meanings of **Orientalism**, both of which, he suggests, supported the supposedly innate and categorical superiority of European civilization.

According to Said, the “authority” of Orientalist discourse derived from what he calls a “restorative citation of antecedent” that repeated a certain body of ideas, beliefs, and clichés. Flaubert complained about the extent of the preliminary research his contemporaries expected: “How much you have to read! You have to drink in oceans and piss them out again” (in Célestin 1996:9). Detailed research made the resurrection of the past possible, and the research was reinforced by travel to the Orient. For example, on visiting Cairo, Flaubert remarked that any European “who is a little attentive *re*-discovers here much more than he discovers” (letter to Dr. J. Cloquet, 15 Jan. 1850, Flaubert 1979:81; Mitchell 1988:30; Said 1995 [1978]:185). What he rediscovers are certain essential ideas about the Arab World that he had already internalized — its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its backwardness. When quoted authoritatively, this information seems morally neutral and objectively valid, it seems to have an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or geography (cf. Bernal 1987:3-4; Said 1995 [1978]:205).

So how was Flaubert rediscovering the Orient? Bernal and Said answer the question by constructing similar genealogies. The first step in the ordering of the Arab World occurred during Napoleon’s Expedition to Egypt (1798-1801) and the nearly concurrent inauguration of academic Orientalism with the establishment of Arabic studies at the *École publique des langues orientales*



by Sylvestre de Sacy in 1796 (Bernal 1987:234; Said 1995 [1978]:22, 42-43, 79-89, *passim*). Napoleonic France was envisioned as Rome unveiling the mysteries of the Orient (Figure 2.a). They imply that Flaubert drew upon the *Description de l'Egypte*, published by the scientific commission that had accompanied the expedition (Commission des sciences et arts d'Egypte 1997 [1808-1828]), to inform both his own travels in the Near East and his understanding of the Arab World.

One of the next forerunners in this genealogy is the historian Jules Michelet, who in his *Histoire romaine* gives an essentialist description of the Phoenicians as “a people who were hard and sad, sensual and greedy, and adventurous without heroism,” and whose “religion was atrocious and full of frightful practices” (Bernal 1987:352; Michelet 1859 [1831]:177-178). And their essential characteristics are set against those of the Romans:

It is not without reason that the recollection of the Punic War has remained so popular and vivid in the recollection of men. That struggle was not merely to decide the fate of two cities or two empires; the matter at hand was to determine to which of the two races, Indo-Germanic or Shemetic, should belong the dominion of the world. It must be remembered that the first of these two families of nations comprehends, besides the Indians and Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Germans; in the other are included the Jews and the Arabs, the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians. On one side the heroic genius, that of art and legislation; on the other, the spirit of industry, navigation, and commerce. These two hostile races have everywhere attacked each other . . . the heroes incessantly oppose their industrious and perfidious neighbors.

(Bernal 1987:341-342; Michelet 1859 [1831]:125; Salas 1996:368-369)

Without offering any supporting evidence or direct quotations (not even from his correspondence with Michelet), Bernal and Said assert that Flaubert used these essentialist aspect of Michelet's history to inform both his own travels in Carthage and his historical reconstruction in *Salammbô* and suggest an atmospheric determinism, or guilt by association (Bernal 1987:341-342, 352; Said 1995 [1978]:73, 137-138).

The works at the next level in their genealogies are also those of contemporaries: Ernest Renan's *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques* (Renan 1928 [1855]) and Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (comte de Gobineau 1983 [1853-1855]). Both transposed linguistic and biological families, combined with ideas of the superiority of a pure 'Nordic strain', in order to create generalizations about inherent intellectual and cultural inequalities among the races (Bernal 1987:344-346, 353-355; Said 1995 [1978]:123-148). These works exemplify the structural tendencies within Orientalism, as Said describes it, to dichotomize into linguistic/racial families of we/they contrasts and essentialize the resultant 'other' (Clifford 1988:258), and both are cited by Bernal and Said to suggest an atmospheric determinism as Flaubert was preparing his novel. Though not a scientist himself, Count Gobineau used biological dichotomies to show that an admixture of black blood explained Oriental luxury and human sacrifice:

Besides the refinements of luxury, that I've just enumerated, human sacrifices — that sort of homage to the divinity which the white race has only ever practiced by borrowing from the habits of other human species, and which the least new infusion of its own blood made it immediately condemn — human sacrifices dishonored the temples of some of the richest and most civilized cities. In Nineva, in Tyre, and later in Carthage, these infamies were a political institution, and never ceased from being fulfilled with the most exacting formality. They were judged necessary to the prosperity of the State.

Mothers offered their infants to be disemboweled on altars. They took pride in seeing their suckling infant moan and struggle in the flames of Baal's hearth.

(comte de Gobineau 1983 [1853-1855]:371-372)

Bernal and Said both assert, again without supporting evidence, that Flaubert relied on the philological and scientific authority of essentialist passages similar to these while writing *Salammô*.

Underlying these assertions is the fact that these works were available to Flaubert for his re-discoveries. Also, such works served to distance Near Eastern and North African cultures, lumping their different characteristics into a general category of 'Oriental' merely because they were not European. Orientals were seen as 'exotic', and viewed as inert or passive in the face of European dynamism. The West combined a scholarly interest in Near Eastern societies with a contempt for them, and a conviction that 'Orientals' were unfit to analyze and arrange their own cultures (Bernal 1987: 235; Said 1995 [1978]). Conversely, as in Napoleon's Commission des sciences et arts d'Egypte, Flaubert and Maxime du Camp's photographic expedition through Egypt and Palestine (von Dewitz and Schuller-Procopovici 1997; Flaubert 1979), and Renan's scientific expedition to the Lebanon (Renan 1864), the attentive European was thought to have the ability produce an accurate, exact, mechanical reproduction — a 'mirror of truth' (Mitchell 1988:23).

Bernal links his chain of assertions with fragile logic: ignoring earlier French narratives from the 1700s, his chain starts with Michelet's description of the Carthaginians as the 'industrious and perfidious neighbors' of Rome, which "points to 'perfidious Albion', the French name for England" (1987:342); then, when Count Gobineau compares Tyre and Sidon to London, Liverpool and Birmingham, and compares Carthage to New York City, Bernal sees Michelet's ideas (1987:342, 354; comte de Gobineau 1983 [1853-1855]:396, 1141); finally, when Flaubert chooses to portray the Mercenaries' Revolt in Carthage and abandons his ideas of a novel about

Egypt, he sees the ideas of Michelet and Count Gobineau. Why did he choose Carthage? Bernal decides that “the answer would seem to be the ‘Indian Mutiny’” of 1857,” during which modern Phoenicians (the British) put down their own mercenary revolt (Bernal 1987:342, 355-356). The direct evidence offered here by Bernal scarcely supports this series of assertions. In the end, the entire chain is based upon Bernal’s own essentialist assumption — an unchanging essence of the French is that they always recognized the Phoenicians as British. The last link in his chain is questionable, especially since nothing suggests that Flaubert or his audience was overly concerned with events in India.

Said is more circumspect in his treatment of *Salammbô*: “Flaubert’s work is so complex and so vast as to make any simple account of his Oriental writing very sketchy and hopelessly incomplete” (1995 [1978]:185). Without drawing direct connections to his predecessors, Said outlines four influential trends in 1800s affecting Flaubert: (1) **expansion**, derived from the opening up of the Arab World (and beyond) to travelers and explorers, who wrote travel literature and created imaginary utopias from an ethnocentric perspective; (2) **historical confrontation** – derived from scholars confronting the Arab World with increased detachment, employing more primary source material, and applying a “simple comparatism” which was to be developed further in philology, anatomy, religion; (3) **sympathy** – derived from the notion that all nations had their own peculiar character and could be penetrated by sympathetic outsiders, leading to Romantic representations of other cultures; (4) **classification** – derived from an impulse to sort nature and man into classifiable types, first applied to national character then to national genetic composition (Said 1995 [1978]:116-118). While Flaubert is connected to and depends upon **academic Orientalism**, he remains independent, and creates his own personal, aesthetic, **imaginary Orient** (Said 1995 [1978]:181). The connection between specific imaginary narratives and specific academic ones is not as clear as their connection to a monolithic Orientalism (for a insightful critique, see Clifford 1988:255-276).

While Said's nebulous role for Flaubert has gained wide acceptance, Bernal may be alone in holding his 'Indian Mutiny' thesis, which he admits is unsupported by Flaubert's correspondence (Bernal 1987:356). What Flaubert's correspondence does support is the effort expended and extensive research undertaken in order to recreate a realistic past in *Salammbô*. His historical novel marked what he saw as a major change in the conception of history: "The historical sense (*sens historique*) was born yesterday, and it is perhaps one of the century's finest accomplishments" (letter to E. & J. de Goncourt, 3 July 1860, Flaubert 1991:95; Koelb 1998:xvi). Clayton Koelb argues that what was original about this 'historical sense' was not just any conception of the past, but a secular, scientific conception of history shaped by developments in the nascent fields of geology, paleontology, and biology — particularly Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (Koelb 1998:xiv). According to contemporary critics, interest in *réalisme* began in 1857 with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (Sainte-Beuve 1885 [1862]:33) and currently critics still put the same novel at the forefront of literary and artistic **Realism**. This secular 'historical sense' may have had something to do with the realism of his historical novel. However, realism is a problematic term, on the one hand, because representations can never be 'real' and, on the other, because not just realism but most of the theoretical and ideological disputes in the 1800s centered around what group had better claim to the most 'realistic' representation of social reality, which could distinguish what was true from what was false or imaginary (White 1973:45-48). For our purposes, literary **realism** does attempt to exclude what is imaginary and to represent experience with exceptional accuracy and detachment. Nothing is sentimentalized and everything is represented — the details of life for all classes, the mundane and the exceptional, the unpleasant and unmentionable (Harris 1992:324-325; Williams 1983:259-260). Said calls such representations in Flaubert **revivalism**, an attempt to bring the (ancient) Orient to life, based upon his own experience of the Arab World in books and in his travels (Flaubert as '*resurrectioniste*' — de Goncourt and de Goncourt 1935 [1887-1896]:1265; Levin 2000 [1963]:272; Said 1995 [1978]:185). In *Salammbô*, Flaubert excels in representing the unpleasant and unmentionable.

Why did Flaubert choose Carthage? It offered the opportunity to freely depict gory battles, desperate cannibalism, rites of child sacrifice, and above all sex, finding in the Arab World a “visionary alternative” in contrast to the “grayish tonality of France “ (Levin 2000 [1963]:271; Said 1995 [1978]:185).

In early 1857, the French government had brought Flaubert to trial on the grounds of *Madame Bovary*'s alleged immorality, and he narrowly escaped conviction. But he was never brought to trial for the even more sensational *Salammbô*, because its exotic subject was not France and was sufficiently removed in space and time:

There are two meanings to exoticism: the first is a taste for exoticism in space, a taste for America, a taste for yellow women, green women, etc. The more refined taste, the more supreme corruption, is the taste for exoticism in time: for example, Flaubert would like to fornicate in Carthage...

T Gautier, letter to E. & J. de Goncourt, 23 November 1863

(quoted in Célestin 1996:94; cf. Fabian 1983)

His main intention was to shock and to challenge accepted ideas (*idées reçues* — cf. Said 1995 [1978]:189), and he anticipated irritating the archaeologists, being unintelligible to the ladies, and being perceived a pederast and a cannibal (letter to E. Feydeau, 17 August 1861, Flaubert 1991:170). His intention was to annoy everybody:

The jokes I'm making will cause respectable stomachs to heave in disgust. I am piling horror upon horror. Twenty thousand of my good men have starved and eaten one another: the rest will end up under the feet of elephants and in the mouths of lions.

(letter to E. & J. de Goncourt, 2 January 1862 Flaubert 1991:195)

The ‘historical’ novel is full of exotic sex and violence. Flaubert writes, “It will be the special glory of the nineteenth century to have begun these studies [on the mutual influence of the body and the soul]. The historical sense is completely new to this world.” But this reference to the *sens historique* occurs not in a discussion of history, but of desire (letter to Mlle. L. de Chantepie, 18 February 1859, Flaubert 1991:16; Koelb 1998:xvi). In Flaubert’s correspondence concerning his travels in the Near East and concerning the writing of *Salammô*, and in his novel itself, there is an “almost uniform association between the Arab World and sex. In making this association, Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes to the Orient,” but Flaubert gave the association “artistic dignity” (Said 1995 [1978]:188, 190).

This depiction of the feminine Orient illustrates a technique through which power is exercised — the **gaze** (*regard*). Following Foucault, Said describes Flaubert’s experiences and encyclopedic learning as being structured like a fantastic library, parading before the anchorite’s **gaze**, a parade that includes his memories of the Egyptian courtesan Kuchuk Hanem whom he physically possessed and described as typically Oriental (Foucault 1972 [1969]; Lowe 1991:214-216; Said 1995 [1978]:6, 187-188). Foucault elsewhere describes this controlling and ordering of knowledge as a **panoptic** technique, developed in his study of the rise of prisons and disciplinary power. The term itself derives from a type of prison designed by Jeremy Bentham that allowed for constant surveillance of prisoners and served to order their behavior (Foucault 1979 [1975]). The concept of the **panoptic gaze** and the control of the feminine has developed further in feminist studies and film theory (Humm 1988; Kaplan 1983; Shohat 1997). Eighteenth century depictions of the Orient have been seized on as particularly illustrative of the passive, feminine Orient gazed upon by the masculine Europeans and waiting to be penetrated (Figure 2.a). *Salammô* was not originally illustrated because Flaubert was opposed to the notion: it would defeat the purpose of re-creating an “ideal” (Célestin 1996:116-117). But his literary depictions were soon transferred to

artistic media and later editions of his work were lavishly illustrated. In particular, the scene of Salammbô disrobed and sensually embraced by the sacred serpent (Chapter 10) became commonplace in painting and sculpture, and influenced depictions of Salome, Lilith, Eve, and other feminizations of the Orient (Figure 3). Eleven paintings exhibited at the Paris Salon between 1875 and 1891 depicted Salammbô (Kohle 1998; Peltre 1998). For Flaubert, Salammbô represented the Orient, the feminine gazed upon and desired by the masculine, just like Kuchuk Hanem (Figure 4.a, c — Lowe 1991:214-216).

Aside from sex, Flaubert incorporates plenty of violence (e.g. multiple, graphic battle scenes and a sadistic gauntlet endured by Matho in Chapter 14). Anne Green has suggested that the violent conflict between Carthage and her mercenaries invokes the French Revolution of 1848, which Flaubert witnessed, and the suppression of ‘Abd al-Qâdir’s revolt (1837-1847) in Algeria (Green 1982:73-93). In addition to these specific events, as Flaubert was writing *Salammbô*, France witnessed debates among *arabophobes* and *arabophiles* (between the visit of Napoleon III to Algeria in 1860 and his land law passed in the *Sénatus-Consulte* of 1863) which concerned the competing roles of the military, the *colons* and the Arabs (and Berbers) in Algeria, and how the French could best fulfill their paternal role of civilizing the natives, their *mission civilisatrice* (Lorcin 1995:76-77).

While Flaubert does not mention these debates in his correspondence, he did use the events of 1847-1848 as mine of graphic detail, in the way that he used the journals from the ship’s surgeon of the *Medusa* for his handling of cannibalism in the ‘Defile of the Ax’ (Chapter 15). Flaubert took delight in anticipating how his cannibalistic description would be received — “They will accuse me of exalting anthropophagy,” (letter to L. Bouilhet, 1 October 1860, 1991:117) and, “I disembowel men prodigiously, I spill blood, I work in the cannibal style” (letter to Mme. J. Sandeau, 1 October 1859, 1991:42) — but the depiction itself is detached and measured. As the forty thousand soldiers, trapped without food and water in the box canyon, begin to starve, die, and resort to cannibalism (only to be devoured in turn by jackals and lions), he describes their



condition in clinical detail: their skin becomes mottled and begins to hang loosely on their bones, like oversized garments; their nails turn black; they descend into rabid madness. Inquiries made to doctors and details from the journals of the *Medusa* survivors provided the details (letter to Mme. J. Sandeau, 28 November 1861, Flaubert 1991; Lestringant 1997:180-186). Such dreadful acts could be comprehended because of their distance, whether on the high seas or in the distant past of Carthage. From Herodotus to the present, cannibalism has been commonly ascribed (from an **etic** viewpoint) to geographically and conceptionally remote peoples in order to confirm their otherness (Arens 1979; Greenblatt 1991). The dreadful becomes aesthetic precisely because it is not happening in contemporary France, but occurs in a ‘not-France’. Cannibalism befits the exotic Arab World, as Flaubert notes in his facetious Oriental dinner, where guests are served with “human flesh, bourgeois brains and tigresses’ clitorises fried in rhinoceros fat” (letter to E. & J. de Goncourt, 30 April or 1 May 1861, Bernal 1987:356; Flaubert 1991:152).

Flaubert also took delight in his graphic scenes of infant sacrifice (Chapter 13, cf. Figure 4.b, d), what he called the “bar-b-que’d babies” or ‘grilled kiddies’ (*grillade de moutards*): “I’m just finishing the siege of Carthage, and I’m coming to the grilled kiddies” (letter to J. Duplan, 25 September 1861, 1991:176, see also 170, 178 — letters to E. Feydeau). While Bernal and the Phoenicianist of the *ridimensionamento* concentrate solely on Flaubert’s description of the *grillade de moutards*, references to *Salammbô* must be a synecdoche for Flaubert’s overall Orientalizing tendencies. While Flaubert relies on Polybius (*Histories* I.15-18) for his account of the Mercenaries’ Revolt (Benedetto 1920; Fay and Coleman 1914), the *Histories* do not mention Phoenician infant sacrifice. Instead Flaubert depends upon Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* XIII.86, XX.14), Silius Italicus (*Punica* IV.765-822), and Plutarch (*De superstitione* 171 C-D). He imaginatively adds to the bare outlines of the ancient sources — whereas Diodorus and Silius Italicus describe the substitution of noble children with commoners, and Diodorus places the sacrifice in the midst of a siege, Flaubert goes even further, to describe what must have been the

state of those besieged and what must have been the plight of the common child's parents (Chapter 13). He includes an invocation to Moloch and reconstructs the rite itself:

“Homage to thee, Sun! King of the two zones, Self-generating Creator, Father and Mother, Father and Son, God and Goddess, Goddess and God!” And their voices were lost in the outburst of instruments sounding simultaneously to drown the cries of the victims . . . The hierodules, with a long hook, opened the seven-storied compartments on the body of the Baal. They put meal into the highest, two turtle-doves into the second, an ape into the third, a ram into the fourth, a sheep into the fifth, and as no ox was to be had for the sixth, a tawny hide taken from the sanctuary was thrown into it. The seventh compartment yawned empty still. Before undertaking anything it was well to make trial of the arms of the god. Slender chainlets stretched from his fingers up to his shoulders and fell behind, where men by pulling them made the two hands rise to a level with the elbows, and come close together against the belly; they were moved several times in succession with little abrupt jerks. Then the instruments were still. The fire roared.

(Flaubert 2000 [1862]:223-224)

Here the imaginative details are provided not by classical sources but by Biblical commentaries (Figure 2.b — cf. Davis 1861:241).

On the one hand, Flaubert valued his extensive research and travels, and used these to respond heatedly to critics and defend his description of Carthage and of sacrifice to Moloch (Flaubert 1971-1975: Appendix 4; 1991:275-285, 293-301; Strong 1977). On the other hand, he considers this research secondary, as just a springboard to take his depiction to a higher level. He did not attempt to create a true reproduction of Carthage, but a “the ideal we have of it today” (in Célestin 1996:118). And this fantastic ideal was twice-removed: remote from 1860s France and

remote from ancient Rome. Since Carthage was poorly understood and poorly documented, even with his extensive research Flaubert was left much room in which his imagination could run wild. This was not a tale of Rome, with which France identified, and Romans do not even feature in the novel (which also reduced the amount of background reading about minutiae that Flaubert had to undertake). *Salammô* removed from 1860s France but could still speak to/about France precisely because of its exotic remoteness (Célestin 1996:93-133). In his historical research, his imagination was not captivated by nobility and civilization, but by depravity. As a young man, Flaubert had said, "I love to see men like that, like Nero, like the Marquis de Sade...Those monsters explain history for me, they are its complement, its apogee, its moral, its dessert." (letter of 15 July 1839, Flaubert 1973). In Carthage he had found his monstrous dessert.

Flaubert employs the new 'historical sense' to depict realistically the revolt of the mercenaries against Carthage. While he draws upon imagery evoking the 1848 Revolution in France, 'Abd al-Qâdir's revolt, and the survival cannibalism on the *Medusa*, his main sources are Classical and Biblical texts and his own imagination, which drew upon his experiences and 'knowledge' of the contemporary Arab World. He creates a narrative that does not describe nineteenth century France (or English colonial experiences in India), but instead consciously describes a 'not-France' where the realities of licentious sex, cannibalism and infant sacrifice are acceptable to his audience and his would-be censors. His literary depiction of the essential Orient in *Salammô* greatly influenced later artistic and literary depictions of the Near East and the Phoenicians: besides the novel's influence on artistic representations (above and Figure 3), a half-dozen operas were based on *Salammô* (including the opera in *Citizen Kane*), and the novel's influence on film will be seen in the following section (Gras, et al. 1989:170; Ley 1998). But those later depictions derived not only from *Salammô*, but also from their own historical contexts. *Salammô* would have been read differently after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the suppression of an ensuing revolt in Algeria; it would have been read differently during the period of intense imperial expansion in Africa when the French protectorate

was established over Tunisia in 1881; and it would have been read differently in Italy during the Italian conquest of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

*CABIRIA* (1914)

IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM AND MODERN ITALIAN IDENTITY

Coming on the heels of Italy's conquest, the film *Cabiria* (based in part on *Salammbô*) valorized the civilized Romans over the depraved Phoenicians. But this was only one of the narratives that employed the Phoenicians. In North Africa and the Near East, colonial powers portrayed indigenous societies (modern Arab / ancient Phoenician) as static and lacking initiative to develop on their own, while they portrayed their own societies (modern French or Italian / ancient Roman) as dynamic. In these **colonialist** narratives the latter "had every reason to justify their own past, they had no reason to extol the past of the peoples they were subjugating and supplanting. Indeed, they sought by emphasizing the primitiveness and lack of accomplishments of these peoples to justify their own poor treatment of them" (Trigger 1984:360). Paradoxically, one of the more apt examples of this colonialist mentality was an inversion of the depraved-Phoenician paradigm, a narrative in which Phoenicians, rather than primitive indigenes, built and occupied the monumental complex of Great Zimbabwe (Bent 1892; Haggard 1900; Hall and Neal 1902; Mauch 1874). While this narrative devalued African accomplishments, everything of value it attributed to the diffusion of civilization from the north, suspiciously resembling the 'civilizing mission' that the Europeans were claiming for themselves. From the first excavations by Mauch in 1868, early investigators offered the ruins of Great Zimbabwe as evidence of an ancient 'white' (Phoenician) antecedent of European settlement in southern Africa, and Cecil Rhodes himself became one of this narrative's strongest supporters. Although, from 1904 onward, professional archaeologists vigorously disputed this narrative (Randall-MacIver 1906), the white-Phoenician hypothesis remained popular, so much so that in 1971 the Rhodesian Inspector of Monuments,

Peter Garlake, was forced to resign because he was unwilling to support it. For European settlers, such claims “served to deprecate African talents and past accomplishments and to justify their own control of the country” (Trigger 1984:362-363). Forged Phoenician inscriptions ‘discovered’ in the New World produced similar colonialist narratives of the diffusion of civilization at the hands of the Phoenicians. An inscription found in Paraíba, Brazil (or Parahyba, modern João Pessoa), transcribed in 1874 then immediately and suspiciously lost, supported Phoenician colonization as an explanation for the origins of Meso-American civilization (Amadasi Guzzo 1988; Cross 1968; Gordon 1968; Johnston 1913 [1892]), as do the more recent ‘discoveries’ of Phoenician/Hebrew inscriptions in North America by ‘The Epigraphic Society’ (Fell 1980, 1989 [1976]; Gordon 1971).<sup>4</sup>

Colonial narratives gave justifications to a system of organized trade and rule.

**Colonialism** is the establishment and maintenance, for an extended time, of control over the sovereignty of a foreign society. It is not only associated with **colonization**, the settlement abroad of people from a mother country (as with ancient Greeks and Phoenicians), but instead serves here as a synonym of **imperialism**. While empires and colonies have long existed, the origins of **colonialism** and **imperialism** are usually found in the general expansion of European territorial control between 1870 and 1920 (e.g. Hobsbawm 1992 [1983]; Lowenthal 1985), the period of the so-called “scramble for Africa” and extension into Asia, including the resolution of the “Eastern Question” (the division among European powers of the territories of the Ottoman Empire).

Hannah Arendt described Cecil Rhodes as saying, “Expansion is everything,” and then falling into despair, for every night he saw overhead “these stars . . . these vast worlds which we can never reach. I would annex the planets if I could” (Arendt 2000:105). The imperialist expansion of this

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<sup>4</sup> Bernal relies on Cyrus Gordon’s ideas of Phoenician cultural diffusion and colonization, but Gordon’s overall credibility has been doubted due to his belief in the authenticity of these bogus inscriptions (Muhly et al. 1990:84-86). His interpretation of Paraíba inscription was immediately and definitively rejected by Cross (1968).

period is considered a unique phenomenon due to its enormous world-wide scope (compare Figures 17-18) and to its specific political, economic and social origins — distinct both from any historical empires that preceded it and from subsequent forms of indirect cultural and economic domination lingering after the political independence of the once colonized states (Arendt 1951; Hobson 1902; Mommsen 1982; Said 1993).

**Imperialism** in its political sense describes the desire of powerful societies to increase their influence at the expense of weaker societies, an extension of social Darwinism. The imperial powers justified this political control by equating **imperialism** with the diffusion of modern civilization — France’s *mission civilisatrice*, Italy’s *romanità*, England’s (specifically Kipling’s) “white man’s burden.” In its economic sense, **imperialism** was linked to overseas investment and the enforcement of a single, usually protectionist, economic system, and later linked by Marxists to a particular stage of development in capitalist economies (Hobson 1902; Lenin 1947 [1917]). In its social sense, **imperialism** described the ‘atavistic’ behavior of European ruling classes, conditioned toward aggressive behavior and war. **Imperialist** expansion between 1870 and 1920 gave positive evidence of a nation’s vigor (Ritter 1986). The ‘three Ps’ — Pride, Pugnacity and Prestige (Hobson 1902) — drove Italy to enter into the scramble for Africa, and compete with other European powers. For her, ancient Rome became the model of and reason for empire.

The Italian state was only politically unified after the *Risorgimento* in 1861, adding the Veneto in 1866, Rome in 1870, and Istria in 1918. As a latecomer to imperial expansion, Italians suffered something of an inferiority complex regarding colonialism, particularly after enduring severe setbacks in Tunisia (1881) and East Africa (1896). Italians had felt that they had the right to colonize Tunisia: they had gained ascendancy there in 1870 when France’s position was weakened after the Franco-Prussian War; they could appeal to their natural, geographic proximity (the distance from Sicily to Tunisia was negligible); and many thousands of Italians had already settled there. Although their economic position was slightly inferior to that of the French, their numbers were greater, even through the period of the later French protectorate. Italian immigrants

outnumbered the French in 1870 by 7000 to 1000, and in 1905 by 71,000 to 24,000 (Abun-Nasr 1975:270, 281). But in 1881, a border raid gave the French a pretext to send in a military expedition, one that did not pursue the raiders but made for Tunis and initiated their protectorate over Tunisia. From the Italian point of view, the French had seized their colony. In addition, Italy would later become the only European colonizer whose advance in Africa was thoroughly checked. In 1896, while attempting to expand their colonial territories beyond Eritrea at the expense of the Abyssinian Empire, Italian troops were crushed at the battle of Adowa (Figure 18). Thus when the Italians eventually did seize Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Dodecanese Islands from the Ottoman Turks in 1912, their success instilled great pride and made some amends for missed opportunities in Tunisia and Ethiopia (Childs 1990).

Giovanni Pastroni's silent film *Cabiria* (1914) was released two years after the capture of Tripolitania. This monumental epic was the Italian equivalent of D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) — stupendous sets, elegant costumes, meticulous attention to detail — a hugely successful and influential 'historical' film. For Griffith, cinema was not merely an instrument for recording reality, like a documentary, but it also served as a powerful mode of historical writing which could visually transmit a historical consciousness to the public better than months of study, and could usurp the educational value of conventional history books (Lowenthal 1985:230). Early reviewers praised Pastroni's film, which recounted the eventful life of a Sicilian maiden at the time of the Punic Wars, as "true history":

An intense emotion grasped the entire audience, the emotion of the incomparable spectacle which, through a set-designer's tenacious effort, revived the people of the third century and flung them into tremendous struggles before the steep walls of a city, into the burning waves of the flaming sea, at the feet of an idol crimson with fire . . . On their feet, on all sides of the theater, the crowd shouted with enthusiasm and joy. A genuine, sincere, unrestrainable frenzy accompanied the

majestic film from beginning to end . . . *Cabiria* is something that will last. It will last because at that instant the vulgar art of cinema ceases and history succeeds, true history.

(Italian review of 23 April 1914, quoted in Martinelli 1993:75; Wyke 1997:9)

In the United States, at its re-release in 1929, the film was hailed as “the greatest picture in memory” (Solomon 2001 [1978]:48). But even if it speaks about the past, film is a narrative in the present (Ferro 1988). While the narrative of Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* valorized the contemporary Klu Klux Klan, the narrative of *Cabiria* championed contemporary Italian imperialism. The film’s opening image of the Roman wolf taking down the Phoenician horse (Figure 5.d) symbolized not just the Romans defeating the Carthaginians, but also creates a parallel with the contemporary Italians defeating the Arabs of North Africa. It was a movie about ancient Rome but for modern Italy (Brunetta 1993:143-146).

Early Italian film valorized two competing myths of origin for the emerging Italian nation — a **sectarian** notion of descent from Saints Peter and Paul and the followers of the Roman Catholic Church, and a **secular** notion of descent from ancient Roman Empire. The struggle to define the archaeology and history of the city mirrored the struggle between the Papacy and the Risorgimento revolutionaries. The Church saw in the ruins of fallen Rome the ultimate triumph of Christianity over its persecutors, while the nascent state saw in Imperial Rome a precedent for a unified, secular, republican Italy (Wyke 1997:17-18). Early epic films such as *Quo vadis?* (1913) validated the former, *Cabiria* the latter.

In their colonialist narratives, the Italians had not conquered Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, as much as returned to North Africa in order to bring peace and prosperity, as depicted on postcards of the era: Italy was now united and admired, Italy now plants her flag on her ‘fourth shore,’ and Italy now brandishes the sword of Ancient Rome (Figure 5). The period between 1870 and 1914 saw the emergence of such narratives, which ensured group cohesion and legitimated



actions through establishing continuity with a suitable past (Hobsbawm 1992 [1983]). *Cabiria* both formed and disseminated this idea of *romanitá*, Italy's civilizing mission. While the movie has its exotic, erotic moments, its Orient waiting to be penetrated (Sophonisba with the doves of Tanit, Figure 8.e, f), the erotic is not as central to the narrative as it was in *Salammbô*. The symbolism in the film emphasized stereotypical Oriental characteristics of violence (piracy, Figure 8.a; torture and slavery, Figure 8.c), greed and filth (the proprietor and grounds of 'The Striped Monkey'), religious excess (in the Temple of Moloch, Figures 7 and 8.d) and extravagant opulence (in the royal palace, Figure 8.e, f). Here the most searing images of the Arab Orient are the cruel and depraved. And the victory of the upright, moral Romans over the corrupt and depraved Carthaginians symbolically justifies the return and re-conquest of the depraved Arabs of North Africa by the civilized modern Romans.

In the film's opening scenes, the hapless Cabiria flees to the seashore during an eruption of Etna only to be captured by marauding Phoenician pirates (there is a clear association here between the Phoenician and Arab Barbary (Tripolitanian) pirates, who raided the Italian coast from North Africa and threatened shipping even into the 1800s (Figure 8.a). She is brought with her nurse to Carthage, where both are sold into slavery to the priests of the temple of Moloch. Cabiria's bad luck holds, and she is selected to be sacrificed, and then brought to the temple precinct, entering through its gaping maw (Figure 7.b). As the children are prepared, the worshippers line up side-by-side and prostrate themselves (except for their torches, they could be in a mosque, Figure 7.c), and the chief priest invokes Moloch:

— King of the Two Zones, I invoke you. I breathe the fire profound, born of you,  
the first born.

— Behold the hundred innocent children. Swallow! Devour! Be sated! Carthage  
gives you its flower.

— Hear me Voracious Creator, you who give life to all and destroy all, O Insatiable  
Hunger, now hear me!

— Behold the flesh most pure! Behold the blood most tender! Carthage gives you  
its flower.

— Consume the sacrifice, you yourself, in your throat of flame, O Father and  
Mother, you, O God and goddess!

— O Father and Mother, you, O Father and Son, you, O God and goddess!

Voracious Creator! Burning, Roaring Hunger . . .

(Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:58-59)

Gabriele D'Annunzio, who wrote the film's intertitles, repeats the invocation from *Salammbô* (quoted above). One by one, children are tossed, live and squirming, into the belly of the beastly statue, the hatch closes, and fire belches out its mouth. Fortunately Cabiria's nurse has stumbled across a Roman spy Fulvius Auxilla. He and his servant Maciste swoop in and snatch Cabiria, from the flames, just in the nick of time (Figure 9.b). The frames of Cabiria, nude, at this dire moment (Figure 7.a), were cut from the 1931 reprint due to child pornography laws, but figured prominently in promotional posters (Figure 6). Also prominent on the same posters was the name of D'Annunzio. Though the poet had a minor role in producing the film, and was only lured into the project by the money that he could use to pay off his massive debts (Solomon 2001 [1978]:48), his major contribution was to lend literary and artistic authenticity to the new medium (Celli 1998).

One of the saviors of Cabiria, Maciste, played by Bartolomeo Pagano, became immensely popular in Italy during the 1910s and 1920s (and his stance and bearing were later adopted by Mussolini, Figure 9). The muscular protector Ursus (from *Quo Vadis?*) influenced the development of the character Maciste, but he came to be even more successful and a national symbol — a dispenser of justice and a protector of children, the weak and the undefended. Pagano

was one of the first big box office stars, and parlayed his role in *Cabiria* into a career (Table 2). In *Maciste's Revenge*, *Maciste the First*, and *Maciste in Love*, all from 1919, he even was paired with his *Cabiria* co-star L. Quaranta. A cross between Hercules and Black Adder, spanning the globe and appearing throughout time, Maciste became a privileged vehicle for the transmission of nationalistic ideals (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:223-232; Brunetta 1979:86). Besides defeating the Phoenicians in *Cabiria*, he similarly took on the Arabs (*Maciste contro lo sciecco - Maciste vs. the Sheik*, 1925), the Austrians during First World War (*Maciste alpino - Maciste the Mountain Corpsman*, 1917, Figure 9.c), even Death (*Maciste contro la morte*, 1919) and the Devil himself (*Maciste all'inferno*, 1926).<sup>5</sup>

The imagery of the Phoenicians offering human sacrifice and the character Maciste were two of *Cabiria's* most enduring legacies. The scene of sacrifice in the Temple of Moloch reappears in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Michael Curtiz's *Noah's Ark*, and *Cabiria* has been considered one of the most influential movies ever made (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998; Brunetta 1979). *Cabiria* also set the stage for a number of films in the 1910s and 1920s (like *Maicste contro lo sciecco*) that set Italians in opposition to Arabs, and portrayed them triumphing over Oriental depravity, creating a precedent for the Fascist Era *Scipione l'Africano* (1937), where Romans (Italians) again defeated the Phoenicians (Arabs) in North Africa. According to Bernal, Carthage of the 3rd century BC was "in some way typical of Oriental culture; not only did it deserve the devastation it received from the Romans, but there was little moral objection to the colonial destructions of non-European civilizations in the 19th century" (1987:357).

#### PHOENICIANISM (1920)

#### NATIONALISM AND MODERN LEBANESE IDENTITY

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<sup>5</sup> The character Maciste (along with Ursus) was later revived in the 1960s heyday of so-called *peplum* films or "sword-and-sandal flicks" (Table 2).

Here we shift from narratives of the depraved Phoenician to those of the civilized Phoenician. Contemporaneous with French and Italian colonialist narratives in North Africa, a parallel nationalist narrative develops in the nascent state of the Grand Liban. As one would expect, depictions of Phoenicians similar to those in *Salammbô* are not found in this narrative. However, I use the poet D'Annunzio's avowal of nationalist expansion in the 1910s to link *Cabiria* and Lebanese narratives of Phoenician descent.

D'Annunzio became a prominent leader in the *Italia Irredenta* movement, from which nationalist **irredentism** takes its name. The movement had sought since 1866 to reclaim 'unredeemed' territories within the Austro-Hungarian Empire — Trentino, Istria, and Dalmatia, simplified in their rallying cry "Trent'e Trieste" — and join them to unified Italy (Figure 18). In fact, Italy entered into World War I in no small part to press her claims over these territories, claims which were to be only partially fulfilled with the Treaty of Versailles (Coppa 1985). Unsatisfied with Italy's gains, D'Annunzio raised a private militia and led the occupation of the Istrian port of Fiume (Croatian Rijeka) from September 1919 until December 1920, at which point they were driven out. Though the impulses behind **irredentism** had existed before, in the late 1910s and early 1920s the ideology was put into practice: Italian irredentists occupied Fiume; Greek irredentists began their disastrous campaign to achieve the 'Great Idea' (*Megáli Idéa*), the redemption of parts of the Byzantine Empire including the territory around Constantinople and coastal areas of Western Turkey; and Maronite irredentists shaped the State of Greater Lebanon in French Mandate Syria, with the redemption of both the territories of Phoenician city states along the coastal plan and the inland territories of the Emirate of the Druze (Figures 14, 18).

While there is nothing novel about ethnic identity or defining oneself as a member of a nation, **nationalism** is considered a recent political principle. **Nationalism** holds that an ethnic group (a nation in the cultural sense, an imagined community) and its state (nation in the sense of a territorial unit) should be congruent. Nationalist sentiments are stirred up when this principle does not hold — when the state's boundaries fail to include all of the ethnic group's members; or

when it includes them all, but fails to exclude other ethnic groups; or when it fails in both ways at once (Connor 1978; Gellner 1983:1-4). Throughout the nineteenth century, historical narratives were written to serve what might now be called nationalistic agendas, that is, the patriotic evocation of the interests and achievements of particular nations (e.g. Michelet 1833-1867). History became a ‘national pageant,’ a practice that persists in school textbooks (Ritter 1986:287, 295). In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, as class conflicts in Europe became more pronounced, archaeology and history were used to glorify national pasts in efforts to encourage a spirit of unity and co-operation (Trigger 1984:358).<sup>6</sup>

Nationalist narratives involving the Phoenicians were used to establish nations’ antiquity and literacy, and not only in the Near East. In the 1800s, popular traditions traced Ireland’s origins to the Phoenicians, and as late as the 1920s histories of Ireland began the with the island’s colonization by Phoenician merchants (e.g. Dunlop 1922). The Phoenician invention of the alphabet accorded well with Ireland’s reputation for book learning, and its struggle with England was cast as a renewed struggle between Rome and Carthage (Cullingford 1996). In 1907, James Joyce spoke before an audience of Italian *irredentisti* in Trieste, on the topic of “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages,” and yet, thanks to the Phoenicians, avoided invoking the traditional **sectarian** Irish identity. Rather than a tale of Catholic saints and monastic scribes, he told a **secular** narrative of Egyptianized Druidic priests and Phoenician sages who introduced literacy and diffused civilization from the East to Ireland. But Joyce himself doubted the tangible benefits of an ancient past invoked in myths of origin, because if such claims were valid “the *fellahin* of Cairo would have all the right in the world to disdain to act as porters for English tourists” (Cullingford 2000; Joyce 1959).

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<sup>6</sup> There is now a vast literature on archaeology and nationalism (e.g. Díaz-Andreu Garcia and Champion 1996; Graves-Brown, et al. 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998; Petricioli 1990; Silberman 1989, 1990).

The case of Egypt provides a further example of multiple myths of origin which can be called upon situationally — when a **secular** identity prevails, Egyptian narratives emphasize the glories of pharaonic times; when a **sectarian** Arab identity prevails, they emphasize the Islamic period (Wilson 1964). Egypt and the Sudan occupy an intermediary position in the Arab world, between the Arab East (Mashriq) and Arab West (Maghrib), and though all could embrace Islam in situations of Arab nationalism, the pharaonic myths of origin were Egypt's alone. Similarly, **sectarian** identities formed in the Maghrib and Mashriq called upon Arab and Islamic origins, while **secular** identities called upon the Phoenicians. Three examples of secular-Phoenician origins imagined in Mt. Lebanon follow, which serve to form Arab, Syrian and Lebanese identities.

The situational aspect of ethnicity allows individuals to maintain more than one socially determined identity, which in turn determines when and how an ethnic group or nation comes into existence. Ethnic groups share a deep, horizontal kinship with other lineages in a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness (Cohen 1978). Some cultural anthropologists have suggested a hierarchy of kinship, beginning with the **family**. A number of families would then constitute a **band**, several of which join and form a **clan**. Clans in turn unite to form a **tribe**, tribes form **ethnic groups**, and ethnic groups a **nation** (for this problem in ethnicity — Connor 1978; 1990; 1991). In such progression, groups sharing notions of putative descent and a common culture would naturally unite and propagate their interests, and these ethnic groups could eventually seek autonomy and evolve into civilized nations (Atkinson 1994:14). Regardless of anthropological conceptions of evolution from tribe to nation, a sort of Social Darwinism, ethnic identities rarely follow clear evolutionary paths. The ancient Phoenicians, for instance, always formed myriad subcomponents that never 'evolved' into a single nation.

At each hierarchical level within this anthropological schema — band, clan, tribe, nation — ethnic boundaries are drawn, with each of these groups claiming descent from a common ancestor. The relationship between each lineage rests on **segmentary opposition** where lineages

are supported by or opposed to one another based upon their degrees of relatedness (*locus classicus*, Evans-Pritchard 1951). Barfield has condensed this ideal, often honored in the breach, into an ethnographic cliché (Table 1): it's me against my brothers; my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins, and me against the world (Barfield 1990; Lincoln 1989:18-19, Figure 10) So conceived, an ethnic identity would define groups that, through processes of fusion and fission, could recombine at different levels to form aggregates of varying size (Horowitz 1975). Within these nesting hierarchies, ethnic identities are fluid and multiple, as narratives of identity in Syria and Lebanon clearly demonstrate.

As an example, the current ruling elite of the Republic of Syria is defined as ethnically Alawite, but can at the same time define themselves as Arabs in opposition to Europeans, as Syrians in opposition to Iraqis, and as Nuḥairi (Alawites) in opposition to, for example, the Druze. Syria's ruling family shares kinship with the major Matawira lineage in opposition to other major lineages, and more specifically with the minor Numailatʿya lineage, as opposed to other minor lineages (Table 1). Imposing a hierarchical order upon these ascriptions, **Arab** could be described as a supra-national identity, **Syrian** a national identity, **Alawite** an ethnic identity, **Matawira** a tribal identity, and **Numailatʿya** a clan identity (Tibi 1990). However, I generally classify all kinship-based lineages as **ethnic groups** for two reasons. First, because **nations** appear and disappear as lineages combine and recombine through fusion and fission — **Alawite** has at times been considered a national identity (as during the French Mandate), at times not. In such situations **tribal** subdivisions would then serve as groups at the **ethnic** order in the hierarchy. Secondly, I prefer to classify 'minor lineages' or 'sub-units' within ethnic groups instead of **tribe** or **clan** because the latter, though they have some heuristic value, connote the pre-modern and the primitive (Cohen 1978). Beyond any kinship-based identity, the Alawites could also define themselves by a **confessional** identity, as part of the community of Islam (*umma*) in opposition to other faith communities (*dhimma*), as having greater affiliation with Shi-ites instead of Sunnites, and with Twelvers instead of Isma-ilites. Or, because other sects charge them with heresy, they

could consider themselves Alawites in opposition to all other sects, with further religious subdivisions (again, Table 1). With that as a preview of the complexity of ethnic identities formed and maintained in Mt. Lebanon, we move on to narratives used in imagining the three largest aggregates: Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese. All three vied for priority when the French created the state of the Grand Liban in 1920.

### Arabism

On the one hand, Arab nationalists (**Arabists**) imagined a **sectarian** identity which relied upon the criterion of putative descent from those followers of the prophet Mu`ammad who had created the Islamic kingdoms of the eighth century (particularly the Umayyad Caliphate, which extended from Spain to India and had its capital in Damascus). They shared the sectarian indicia of religion (*umma*, community of Islam), and Arab culture and language. Arab geographers described the hierarchical subdivisions of the Arab World in geographic terms rather than terms of kinship (Figure 16). The largest Arab entity would include the subdivisions of the Land of the Sunset (*bilâd al-Maghrib*), Egypt (*Miṣr*), and the Land of the Sunrise (*bilâd al-Mashriq*). The Mashriq, standing alone, could be called Arabistan or the Land of the Arabs (*bilâd al-`Arab*), and could be subdivided into the Land to the North (*bilâd al-Shâm*, Syria — literally the Land to the Left for one facing the sunrise in Makka); the Land to the South (*bilad al-Yaman*, the Arabian peninsula — lit. Land to the Right); and the Land of the Riverbanks (*bilâd al-`Irâq*, Mesopotamia).

On the other hand, **secular** Arabists have imagined an identity that embraced all Semitic predecessors (save one) as putative ancestors, and in this narrative they imagined the seventh century Arab ‘invasion’ as a ‘liberation’. The secular indicia were not necessarily interdependent — both Islamic non-Arabic speakers (e.g. Berbers, Somali, Kurds) and Arabic-speaking non-Muslims (e.g. Christians) could be included in a secular Arab nation. This narrative invokes the Phoenicians as one of many Semitic ancestors by quoting Herodotus, who says that they came



from the Erythraian (Red) Sea, the body of water which surrounds the Arabian peninsula and into which the Tigris and Euphrates flow (Hdt. 1.1, 7.89). Furthermore, the Phoenician colonies of the western Mediterranean served as precursors to the seventh century Arab invasion/liberation (Figure 15 — Lewis 1975:35-37; Salibi 1988:60-61, 167-181).

### Syrianism

As for the second competing aggregate identity, Syrian nationalists (**Syrianists**) did not conceive of a sectarian aspect to their identity, although their early political leaders were chiefly Greek Orthodox, the sect that would have formed the dominant Christian minority in a Greater Syria. Instead, Syrianists imagined an entirely **secular** identity based upon geographic determinism, Arab culture and language. They imagined al-Shâm (Syria) as a discrete entity with natural borders, extending from the Sinai to the Tarsus, from the Mediterranean to the upper Euphrates in the northwest and to the Syrian Desert in the southwest (Figure 16-18). The Syrianists of the 1920s cited the work of Rev. Henri Lammens S.J., who taught at the Université St. Joseph in Beirut and promoted Syrianism at the turn of the century. Lammens suggested that the region had always cradled a unique nation which was internally divided by its rugged terrain but was nonetheless united by intellectual and commercial resourcefulness and initiative, a love of freedom and a corresponding hatred of oppression; and that all of these traits were conditioned by geography. Furthermore, from the first appearance of Islam only the un-subdued mountains of the Lebanon were able to preserve these traits, and that tiny region became the heart of Syria, a bulwark against tyranny, and a refuge (*asile du Liban*) for ethnic minorities (Lammens 1921). Although relying on Lammens, AnṯËn Sa·âda, leader of the PPS (Parti Populaire Syrien / Syrian Nationalist Party), offered a more expansive and less Lebano-centric narrative in which the geographic determinism reached further eastward, to include Mesopotamia as part of a renewed Fertile Crescent, and further westward, to include Cilicia and Cyprus. In this secular narrative,

although Phoenician origins served to orient Syria toward the Mediterranean and highlight Syrian commerce and learning, Syrianists in general gave even greater emphasis to their Aramaean ancestors. Like the later Umayyads, Aramaeans had established their capital in Damascus and, starting under the Assyrian Empire, their language had served as a unifying *lingua franca* throughout the Near East (Kaufman 2000:59; Lewis 1975:35-37; Salibi 1988:54, 132-135, 167-181).

### Lebanism

Regarding the third aggregate identity, by 1920 Lebanese nationalists (**Lebanists**) imagined, on the one hand, a **sectarian** identity which relied on putative notions of descent from a sect founded by one St. Maro (Arabic, MārĒn), a fifth-century hermit monk, and championed by another, St. John Maro (Yu`anna MārĒn), who led the Church to sanctuary within the *asile du Liban* in order to avoid Byzantine persecution during the eighth century. Lebanonists shared their Maronite religion, Arabic language (as well as liturgical Syriac) and Arab culture. Though of Syrian Orthodox origins, Maronites practice an Eastern rite within the Roman Catholic Church. Their ties to the West, in this sectarian narrative, were never broken, or at least reached back to the twelfth century when the Maronites allied with the Crusaders (Traboulsi 1993). Their communion with Rome was re-affirmed during the Council of Florence (1439-1444), and their seminary was established in Rome in 1584 (Hitti 1957 [1951], 1967 [1957]; Salibi 1988:72-86).

Lebanists imagined, on the other hand, a **secular** identity that relied upon two criteria of putative descent, one from the mountain Emirate of the Druze, the other from the Phoenicians, both of whom offered historical justification for irredentist claims to a Greater Lebanon, beyond their mountain. Even the most extreme colonialist hypotheses of Phoenician exploration and their diffusions of civilization — not just to Ireland and England, not just around Africa, but even across the Atlantic to the Americas — were absorbed into this secular narrative (Hitti 1967

[1957]:113-121). The secular indicia would be shared religion (primarily Maronite Christian, but also Druze, whose families were prominent in the Emirate) with a shared Arab culture. In addition, commercial ties with the West were maintained with the Venetians, the Florentines, and then since the mid-nineteenth century with both Britain (which claimed the role of protector over the Druze) and France (traditional protector of Uniate Christian communities). Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries were active in the Lebanon, and established universities in the mid-1800s: the Jesuit Université de St. Joseph and the Syrian Protestant College. When the Lebanists succeeded and their state was declared in 1920, its flag combined East and West, French and Phoenician, the tricolor and the cedar (and the Protestants, now in 'Lebanon', changed the name of their school to the 'American University of Beirut').

In 1919, the Maronite Patriarch Elias Hoyek combined both the sectarian and the secular Lebanist narratives. He submitted a memorandum to the peace conference at Versailles in which he stressed that the Lebanese nation was not to be confused with the Arab or Syrian: "Without mentioning their ancestors the Phoenicians, the Lebanese have always constituted a national entity, distinct from neighboring groups, through their language, their mores, their affinities with Western culture." He also made an appeal to the French, stressing their deep kinship. The Frankish crusaders, he argued, had been liberators as much as invaders since they were themselves descendants of the Phoenicians, having embarked from the Phoenician colony of Marseilles (Kaufman 2000:141). Although Patriarch Hoyek may have spoken for a majority in Mt. Lebanon, most of the inhabitants of the 'Greater Lebanon' (*Grand Liban*) claimed by Maronite irridentists did not ascribe to any such Lebanese identity, which they saw not as 'always existing' but as an artificial innovation imposed by the French. Residents of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre, as well as the Biqâ' were more likely to ascribe to the predominately geographic divisions of the Arab world, which could adopt the guise of kinship in segmentary opposition, as Kamal Salibi's personal account of 1930s Lebanon attests:

Nobody else I knew seemed to identify with the new country or take its affairs seriously. If asked what they were, people described themselves as *wlād ·Arab*, meaning vaguely “Arabs” as distinct from *Firanj*, or Europeans. If pressed to identify themselves with more precision, they could say they were *SĒriyyi* or “Syrians” as distinct from the other *wlād ·Arab*.

It was probably from the text of the national anthem that I first became aware that our country was called Lebanon. Otherwise I do not recall ever hearing anyone speak much of the subject.

(Salibi 1996:164)

Prominent Arabists from the Lebanon (including Christians) joined the Great Arab Revolt, 1916-1918, led by the Hāshemites (ruling family of the Hijāz, protectors of the holy cities, and descendants of the Prophet). These Arabists believed that their aspirations would be met after the war, and the Mashriq would form an Arab state. Others from the Lebanon (including Christians) identified with Syria (al-Shām) instead of the Lebanon. But the Syrianists and Arabists failed where the Lebanists succeeded.

One reason for this failure was the competing and irreconcilable commitments made by the British: to the French in the Sykes-Picot Agreement; to Sharʿf Óusain of the Hijāz through the Arab Bureau in Cairo (for an Arab kingdom to include all of the Mashriq, though the British sought to exclude some western portions of al-Shām, such as the autonomous Mt. Lebanon, and their already existing protectorates from the Persian Gulf to ·Adan); to Ibn Sa·Ēd of the Najd through the British viceroyalty in India; and to the World Zionist Organization through the British Foreign Office. Although Sharʿf Óusain had proclaimed himself King of the Land of the Arabs (*malik al-bilād al-·arabīya*) and his son, Faiḅal, had established an Arab government in Damascus, the Hāshemite Arab kingdom was short-lived. The French ousted Faiḅal in 1920, and the Sa·Ēdi family of the Najd took the Hijāz and the holy cities from Sharʿf Óusain in 1926. After

the San Remo accords in 1920, most of the Mashriq and all of the Maghrib were not even independent, but either under mandate, protectorate or colonial rule (Figure 18).

Another reason that Arabism and Syrianism failed was that other identities more salient than ‘Arab’ or ‘Syrian’— kinship within ‘tribal’ groupings (segmentary lineages, Table 1), class affiliations (adhering to local notables), or sectarian loyalties (as Sunnite, Shi-ite, Alawite, Druze, etc., as well as Christians and Protestants)— superceded imagined nationalities. To the extent that it existed, Arab nationalism “was blurred and confounded by traditional loyalties of other kinds which were often in conflict with one another. The Allies felt that they could ignore such rudimentary and confused national sentiments (and redraw) the political map of the Arab world in a manner which suited them best” (Salibi 1988:20). As constituted, the new, mandatory ‘nations’ and boundaries were recognized by all of their inhabitants as artificial — all but the Lebanists who considered the Greater Lebanon as natural and historical. They evoked their Phoenician origins and the precedent of the independent ‘Emirate of the Druze’ in order to justify the territorial annexations which would produce their new state.

### Imagined Emirate<sup>7</sup>

In 1516 the Ottoman sultan made Fakhr al-Dīn I of the Maʿn emir over the Druze (*amīr al-DurĒz*). But the emir did not rule over an autonomous region, but was a mere “fiscal functionary of the Ottoman state, whose *iltizām*, or tax farming concession, was subject to annual renewal” (Salibi 1988:109), and securing his position required the support of feudal shaikhs of the prominent families who in turn held subordinate tax concessions. The emirate was centered in the ShĒf region, with its administrative center at Dair al-Qamar (Figure 12), but its geographical extent was fluid and dependent upon the enterprise of individual emirs. After 1660, the ShĒf was

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<sup>7</sup> The following two sections (and their titles) are derived from Salibi (1988) and Kaufman (2000).

within the province of Sidon (Turkish, *Seyda vilayeti*), and the emir of the Druze answered to its governor (*vali*). As the emirs of the Ma'n family, and later emirs of the Shihâb family (1697-1842), expanded north into the Lebanon and east into the Biqâ' valley, they then had to answer not only to the vali of Sidon, but also the vali of the Tripoli province (Trablus vilayeti) for the northern concessions, and the vali of the Damascus province (Shâm vilayeti) for the Biqâ' concessions. While various emirs such as Fakhr-al-Dÿn II (1570-1635), who fought for greater autonomy with Florentine support, and Bashÿr II (1788-1840), with Egyptian support, the emirate never gained its independence and remained just a tax concession that straddled three provinces. While the majority of the emir's subjects were Maronite Christians, the notables were predominantly Druze (though the Shihâb emirs themselves were sometimes Shi'ite, sometimes Maronite converts) and their regime was "dominated by an elite hierarchy in which secular rank rather than religious affiliation defined politics" (Makdisi 2000).

In the first half of the nineteenth century sectarian politics began to emerge, partly due to **etic** constructions of Maronite and Druze identity. From within (**emic**), the Maronite and Druze, Shi'ite and Orthodox, Sunnite and Catholic were part of a complex, evolving, multi-communal culture, with traditional loyalties but always part of the Ottoman state. From the Occident (**etic**), these were distinct races, and the Druze and Maronites were singled out as especially freedom-loving and fierce mountain tribes. Tension and violence between the communities after the end of the Egyptian occupation of Syria (1831-1840), resulting from the return of notables who had been dispossessed by the last, great Shihâb emir, Bashir II, were aggravated as sectarian communities turned to foreign consuls of the Great Powers in Beirut to protect and advance their interests — the Orthodox turned to Russia, the Druze to Britain, and the Uniates to France and Austria (Makdisi 2000; Salibi 1988). After 1840, the French and Maronites pressed for the appointment of a new emir of the Shihâb family, which the British and Druze opposed, while the Ottomans planned to integrate Mt. Lebanon into the province of Sidon, which the Russians supported but the British and French opposed. The Austrians presented the compromise that was eventually adopted

— the Lebanon would be divided into two districts, with a Christian governor (*kaymakam*) to the north, and a Druze south (Figure 12).

But the dual kaymakamate failed. The arbitrary choice of the Beirut-Damascus road as a dividing line isolated Maronite communities in the south, where they were a majority; and the division isolated the already dispossessed Druze elite from their former subjects in the north. Sectarian violence culminated with an infamous massacre of Christians in Dair al-Qamar in 1860, followed within days by an even greater massacre in Damascus. Six European nations intervened (the French sending in a military force) with the pretext of protecting minorities, and signed the *Règlement Organique* (1861) establishing Mt. Lebanon as an autonomous Ottoman province (*mutaṣarrifiyya*), governed by an outsider, a non-Lebanese Christian mutaṣarrif appointed by the sultan (Figure 13). The signatories guaranteed both the agreement's conditions and the province's very existence. Recent studies have investigated the role that the Great Powers, the Ottomans, and the inhabitants of the Emirate themselves played in rise of the sectarian identities; and the effect of wide ranging reforms (*tanzimat*) on the economy, politics and society (e.g. Farah 2000; Makdisi 2000). Of interest here are the resulting physical and conceptual boundaries of the autonomous Mt. Lebanon, which had never existed before. The agreement excluded Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli from the province and, as part of the tanzimat reforms, these merged in 1864 into the newly formed province of Beirut (Beyrut vilayeti). At the same time most of the Biqā' valley remained under the jurisdiction of Damascus in the re-named province of Syria (Suriye vilayeti). The conceptual boundaries of the mutaṣarrifiyya did not yet include the Phoenicians, although during 1861-1862 a scientific corps under the direction of Ernest Renan accompanied the French military expedition (as in Egypt in 1799) and catalogued the region's Phoenician antiquities (Renan 1998 [1864]).

### Phoenicia Revived

In the years following the end of the Egyptian administration of Syria, Maronite clergy promoted Lebanism as a parochial, conservative, Christian identity, but the movement faded after the political settlements of 1842 and 1861 (Hakim-Dowek 1997). The Phoenician component was only employed in a revived Lebanism at the end turn of the century among the educated elite, and was fostered in no small part from abroad by immigrant communities in America and Egypt. The economic and social turmoil of the mid-nineteenth century, and the lure of greater economic opportunity, precipitated a diaspora from the Lebanon. The immigrant community in Alexandria, whose language skills and post-secondary education made them highly employable in the Anglo-Egyptian bureaucracy, developed a sense of their own ethnic identity in the face of nascent Egyptian nationalism, and in response to Egyptian anti-Syrian resentment due to their privileged economic and administrative position. Instead of pharaonic myths of origin, the immigrants from the Lebanon traced their own origins to the Phoenicians (Kaufman 2000:98-125). Many from the Lebanon migrated to the United States, but their economic opportunities were tempered by racial discrimination. Upon arrival, alien immigrants were required to report their nationality and last residence, and were subject to quotas which ranked immigrants by their racial desirability and level of civilization. Those from Mt. Lebanon were first ranked as Turks (who fell below the Chinese but above Negroes on the ladder of races), then after 1899 as Syrians. These Syrians, according to official U.S. policy, were not Arabs (Semites) though they spoke Arabic, nor Turks (Mongolians), but were Christian descendants of the Phoenicians (Folkmar and Folkmar 1911). In an effort to advance themselves up the ladder of civilizations, Syrian-Americans established cultural centers, 'Phoenician Clubs', throughout the country where their children could embrace their Phoenician heritage, study Arabic, and learn the history of Mt. Lebanon (Faires-Conklin and Faires 1987). As one Maronite immigrant summarized: "We started learning. We started navigation. We started accounting. Just name it and it was started by the Phoenicians" (Kaufman 2000:155, n.120). The secular national identity evoked at Versailles by Patriarch Elias Hoyek had



first been formed within communities of the Lebanese diaspora in reaction to various forms of discrimination.

The French proclamation of the state of Grand Liban in 1920 sought to fulfill Lebanese demands to include 'unredeemed' Phoenician territory (not only Beirut, but Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre), as well as territories once subject to the tax levies of the Emir of the Druze (the Biqā valley). During the Paris and Versailles negotiations, when the Zionist Chaim Weizmann appealed to the British to extend Palestine and the Jewish National Home northwards to include the water resources of the River Litani, the French and Maronites could assert a counter-claim to natural and historical borders that included Phoenician Tyre (Amery 1993). But this irredentism compromised their position, for although they had formed an absolute majority within the territory of the mutasarrifiyya, Maronites held only a plurality in the new state and were dependent on the French Mandate for their continued existence.

While they yielded to the Lebanese, the French denied the Arabists' demands, since pan-Arab nationalism threatened their hold on their colonies and protectorates in the Maghrib. Accordingly, the new Arab caliphate was annulled by the French expulsion of Faisal from Damascus. With the pretext of protecting minority rights, the French saw the benefits of sectarian nationalism as part of a Machiavellian policy of 'divide and rule' (Khoury 1987; Longrigg 1958; *divide ut imperes* — Lorcin 1995:11). Besides the Maronite state of the Grand Liban, in 1922 they created a number of small states for ethnic groups whom they classified as aspiring nations — for the Alawites (Nuʿair) a state north of the Lebanon around Tartus and Lattaqia; for the Druze a state in the Jabal Druʿz; autonomy for the district (sanjak) of Alexandretta; and briefly, 1920-1924, separate states for Aleppo and Damascus — each with its own flag, assembly and institutions (Figure 11). French creation and maintenance of states at these subordinate orders of identity served to diffuse the energies of Syrianists and Arabists. While the mini-states of Aleppo and Damascus were united in 1924, the struggle to unify the other artificial states of French mandatory Syria continued up to through 1939, and saw the French transfer the district (sanjak) of

Alexandretta to Turkey. The creation of a Greater Syria — incorporation of the Lebanese coastal cities and the Biqâ' (with Mt. Lebanon autonomous), unification with Palestine and Transjordan — and the creation of a pan-Arab state became less feasible as the artificial borders became *faits accomplis*.

Under the mandate, Lebanese nationalists replaced French colonial narratives employed in North Africa, where Phoenician depravity was emphasized, with narratives of Phoenician civilization. The Lebanese became more interested in problems that related to their own national history, and the origin and evolution of their own historically attested social and economic institutions. In Trigger's terms, the Lebanese were beginning to transform archaeology and history from colonialist types into nationalist types (Trigger 1984). Philip Hitti, a Maronite Christian from Shemlan in the Druze ShĒf, educated at the American University of Beirut, and then a preeminent scholar in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton, provides a later and more complete example of the nationalist narrative. Instead of discarding the paradigm of the 'passive Arab', he has promoted instead a 'dynamic' Phoenician/Lebanese paradigm. This reversed paradigm has depicted the Phoenician/Lebanese with commerce in their shared blood, and has depicted their diaspora as a modern colonization (Hitti 1957 [1951]:102; 1967 [1957]:114). Indeed, Hitti accepted biological distinctions between Lebanese (Druze or Maronite) and Arab, quoting cephalic indices:

Until the present day, according to anthropological researches, the prevailing type among the Lebanese — Maronites and Druzes — is the short-headed brachycephalic one. The same is true of the Nuṣayrĳyah in north-western Syria. This is in striking contrast to the long-headed type prevailing among the Bedouins of the Syrian Desert and the North Arabians.

(Hitti 1957 [1951]:154; cf.Hitti 1967 [1957]:68)

The Maronites, Druze and Alawites (Nuṣayrī) are related and racially distinct. Instead of completely discarding essentialist and imperialist categories, this narrative co-opts them. But where is the depraved-Phoenician in this narrative? Hitti's strategy is to admit Phoenician infant sacrifices, but stress that it was abandoned at the end of the sixth century B.C. (Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* 552A) and was no worse than Greek and Roman infant exposure (Hitti 1957 [1951]:24, 78; 1967 [1957]:135).

Before 1900, the notion of descent from the Phoenicians was hardly a salient feature of ethnic identities in Mt. Lebanon. Even the idea of a distinct national identity for the inhabitants of Mt. Lebanon is a recent development and in large part the result of Western interference. 'Arab', 'Syrian' and 'Lebanese' identities have all invoked descent from the Phoenicians as an ethnic criterion, but since 1920 this putative line of descent has been associated with Lebanese, specifically Maronite, nationalism and territorial expansion.

#### THE END OF INFANT SACRIFICE?

To return to our initial query, why do scholars care about popular representations of the Phoenicians in an imaginative novel from 1862? The mere mention of *Salammbô* must invoke a atmosphere of racism, Orientalism, imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism that allegedly continues to impact scholarship. But this does not place *Salammbô*, and the artistic representations, operas or films it has influenced into any historical context. Nor does the mere mention of the novel demonstrate how *Salammbô* continues to influence descriptions of ancient Phoenicia. The invocation of past essentializing ideologies challenges the very idea that generalizations can be made about other ethnic groups: "Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulations (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the 'other')?" (Said 1995 [1978]:325). But such a challenge is a two-edged sword, for how can

generalizations about European representations of their own identity be generalized with static labels like Orientalism? If European narratives of the depraved-Phoenician, represented by *Salammbô* and Cabiria, imposed limitations of thought and action, determining what could be said about the Phoenicians (Said 1995 [1978]:3), then the narratives of the civilized-Phoenician represent new limitations by removing infant sacrifice as the primary explanation of the rites performed at the *tophet* precincts. As archaeology always operates within a social context (Trigger 1984:357), the 1987 *ridimensionamento* in Phoenician studies and contemporary ethnic and national identity politics form the current context for the study of Phoenician infant sacrifice. The distinguished scholars of the *ridimensionamento* have not proven their case: if direct connections between *Salammbô* and current scholarship exist, rigorous research might well prove such links. In the meantime, just as critics of Bernal have feared that his factual errors, flaws in methodology, and the unfair representations of scholarship might cause the virtues in his theses to be discarded (Liverani 1996; Morris 1989), I fear we are throwing the baby sacrifice out with the bathwater.

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## FIGURE CAPTIONS

- Figure 1. How Portugal Spread Over the World: (1) Expansion Overseas; (2) Portugal, “Phoenicia of the West”; (3) [not pictured], (4) Lisbon, “New Rome”; (5) Goa, “Rome of the East” (de Amorim Girão 1958 [1941]: Figure II).
- Figure 2. (a) Obverse — Gallia (France), in the guise of Roman general, unveils Egypt, in the guise of Cleopatra, in 1798, Reverse — Egyptian deities, with *ankh* and scarab; a medallion commemorating the order by Louis XVIII to complete the publication of the *Description de l’Egypte* in 1826 (Curl 1994: Figure 81; Wyke 1997: Figure 4.1); (b) “The Moloch Idol, with 7 chambers or chapels” (Lund 1704: Figure 564)
- Figure 3. (a) Salammbô mingling with the serpent, Hadyn Mackey, illustrator (Flaubert 1930 [1862]:179); (b) *Lilith* (1887), John Collier  
[\[http://www.artmagick.com/ALLpaintings/collier/collier6.jpg\]](http://www.artmagick.com/ALLpaintings/collier/collier6.jpg);  
 (c) *Fantaisie Egyptienne* (1898), Charles Allen Winter  
[\[http://www.artmagick.com/ALLpaintings/winter/winter1.jpg\]](http://www.artmagick.com/ALLpaintings/winter/winter1.jpg);  
 (d) *Salamambo* (1896) Alphonse Mucha
- Figure 4. (a) Matho gazing upon Salammbô, Hadyn Mackey, illustrator (Flaubert 1930 [1862]:78); (b) Moloch consuming a living victim, Hadyn Mackey, illustrator (Flaubert 1930 [1862]:249); (c) “Never! Your desire is sacrilege,” Mahlon Blaine, illustrator (Flaubert 1927 [1862]:49); (d) “Lord! Eat!”, Mahlon Blaine, illustrator (Flaubert 1927 [1862]:283).
- Figure 5. (a) “Tripoli is Italian!” Italia plants a flag on her ‘Fourth Shore’, postcard from 1912 (Goglia 1981: Figure 14); (b) “Peace and Progress: What once seemed like some fleeting dream is fulfilled in this hour of peace. Italy, united and admired, arises. She offers a pledge of trust and brotherhood to all, and she offers an honorable hand to her enemies. Oh, day of great rejoicing!” the Italian *bersagliere* (Army Ranger) extends his

hands to Arab and Turk, postcard from 1912 (Goglia 1981: Figure 15); (c) “Italy brandishes the sword of ancient Rome,” Italian marine landing in Tripolitania, Christmas postcard from 1911 (based on Matania 1911; Wyke 1997:19, Figure 2.2); (d) opening image from *Cabiria*, the Roman she-wolf taking down the Punic horse, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:31 Figure 1)

Figure 6. (a) poster for *Cabiria*, sacrifice of Cabiria, with broken Punic sword below, by L. Metlicovitz, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:4); (b) poster for *Cabiria*, sacrifice of Cabiria, by A. Vassallo, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:14)

Figure 7. (a) scene from *Cabiria*, sacrifice of Cabiria (censored from the 1931 re-release), Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:195); (b) scene from *Cabiria*, entrance to the temple of Moloch, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:60, Figure 95); (c) poster for *Cabiria*, worshippers of Moloch, with Fulvius Auxilla, Maciste, and Croessa in foreground, by A. Vassallo, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:5; Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:13)

Figure 8. (a) scene from *Cabiria*, Carthaginian pirates capturing Cabiria and Croessa, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:47, Figure 58); (b) scene from *Cabiria*, Carthaginian proprietor of ‘The Striped Monkey’, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:50, Figure 64); (c) scene from *Cabiria*, punishment of Croessa, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:53, Figure 73); (d) scene from *Cabiria*, prayer of the priest of Moloch, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:60, Figure 97); (e) scene from *Cabiria*, Sophonisbe releasing the doves of Tanit, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:108, Figure 257); (f) scene from *Cabiria*,

dream of Sophonisbe, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:204)

Figure 9. (a) scene from *Cabiria*, the hero Maciste, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:49, Figure 62); (b) scene from *Cabiria*, Maciste saving Cabiria, Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Pastrone and D'Annunzio 1977:66, Figure 120); (c) scene from *Maciste Alpino (Maciste the Mountain Corpsman)*, L. Maggi & R. L. Borgnetto, directors (1916), Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:228); (d) scene from *Maciste nella gabbia dei leoni (Maciste in the Lions' Den)*, G. Brignone, director (1926), Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:231); (e) scene from *Maciste imperatore (Maciste the Emperor)*, G. Brignone, director (1924), Museo nazionale del cinema, Torino (Bertetto and Rondolino 1998:224)

Figure 10. segmentary lineages (Barfield 1990; Lincoln 1989:18-19; Tibi 1990)

Figure 11. map of the major city-states of KNN / Canaan / Phoenicia in purple, and  $\leq$ RM / Aram-Damascus (based upon Denk 1993; Kellermann, et al. 1985)

Figure 12. map of the Ottoman Empire, The Christian *kaymakamlıḡ* (district) and Druze *kaymakamlıḡ*, 1842-1861, with transliterated Arabic place names, as well as Ottoman administrative units transliterated from modern Turkish in red (based upon Denk 1993; Huber  $\pm$ 1900a, b; Spagnolo 1977: frontispiece)

Figure 13. map of the Ottoman Empire, *mutaḡarafiyya Jabal Lubnan* (Autonomous Province of Mt. Lebanon), 1861-1915, with transliterated Arabic place names, as well as Ottoman administrative units transliterated from modern Turkish in red (based upon Denk 1993; Huber  $\pm$ 1900a, b; Spagnolo 1977: frontispiece)

Figure 14. map of the French Mandate, *Etat du Grand Liban* (State of the Greater Lebanon), 1924, with transliterated Arabic place names and French administrative units in blue (based upon Birken and Reissner 1986; Denk 1993; Hartmann 1979a, b)

- Figure 15. map of metropolitan Phoenicia and its colonies, ca. 700 B.C., compared to extent of Umayyad caliphate, with Greece and Etruria (based upon Birken 1980; Cancik and Schneider 1996- : ss.vv. 'Kolonisation' and 'Phönizier, Punier'; Darby and Fullard 1970)
- Figure 16. map of the Arab World, showing majority languages, ca. 1920, compared to extent of Umayyad caliphate, with geographical terms (based upon Birken 1980; Darby and Fullard 1970)
- Figure 17. map of the Arab World, 1862, with transliterated Arabic place names (based upon Birken 1980, 1981; Darby and Fullard 1970)
- Figure 18. map of the Arab World, ca. 1920, with transliterated Arabic place names in uncolonized/non-mandate areas, otherwise in common English forms (based upon Birken 1980, 1981; Darby and Fullard 1970)



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