

Phoenicians in the Iberian Peninsula and the Matter of Tartessos

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In Greek and Roman sources, Tartessos designates a geographical area and a legendary kingdom that flourished in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. For decades, much research on pre-Roman Iberia has gravitated around the nature of Tartessos as an historical or mythical polity, its possible location, and the archaeological identification of Tartessian material culture. It seems now increasingly clear that what the Greeks called Tartessos was inextricably linked to the presence of Phoenician culture in the area. It is thus only fitting that the first book about the subject to be published in English approaches the evidence with a special focus on patterns and phenomena of cultural and economic contact between the Phoenicians and the locals.

Tartessos may not be a household name among scholars of the ancient Mediterranean and Classicists, but it has been a basic staple in the education of every Spaniard since the mid-twentieth century, alongside Viriathus and the Visigoths. Although Tartessos is mentioned in classical sources, it was only in the early twentieth century that anyone became truly preoccupied with identifying its specific location. In 1922, Adolf Schulten published *Tartessos: Ein Beitrag zur ältesten Geschichte des Westens*. At the same time, Edward Bonsor was also looking for Tartessos at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River. As Celestino and López-Ruiz note in their recent monograph (p. 4), whereas Bonsor's approach was deeply positivistic, Schulten's was decisively romantic. Yet one thing both archaeologists did share was their faith in the work of the fourth-century Roman author Avienus. As Schliemann had searched for Troy by relying on Homer, Schulten was trying to identify Tartessos by resorting to Avienus's *Ora maritima*. The entire Tartessos enterprise, however, may have more to do with what Evans did at Knossos: the attribution of a tangible material culture to the alleged historical kernel of a mesmerizing legend.

As the publisher states, the book by Sebastián Celestino and Carolina López-Ruiz is the first monograph about Tartessos to be published in English. This excellent work will be of great interest both to the reader who has never heard of Tartessos and to the scholar with detailed knowledge of the subject. The volume consists of eight chapters and an epilogue. Chapter 1 ("In Search of Tartessos") provides an engaging history of the last century of research from Schulten and Bonsor to recent discoveries, such as those at El Carambolo (Seville). Emphasis is placed on the role of academic conferences in the development of the understanding of Tartessos, as exchanges between archaeologists and historians have played a key function in this matter.

Chapter 2 ("Tartessos in Greek Geography and Historiography") surveys references in the pre-Hellenistic Greek corpus, particularly Anacreon (PMG fr. 361), Hecataeus,¹ Herodotus,

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1. The authors mention two fragments from the revised re-edition of Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, the *Brill's New Jacoby* (1 F 38 and 45). They (p. 85 n. 120) also refer to a passage in Arrian's *Anabasis*

Herodorus, Ephorus, and Theopompus.² A number of these mentions of Tartessos occur in the context of the myth of the Pillars of Heracles. As Fowler has noted in regard to Pherecydes, “‘Tartessos’ denoted the whole of this area of Spain north of Gibraltar, not just the lower Guadalquivir valley further up the coast. Tartessos ... is well suited to the purpose of denoting the semi-mythical edge of the accessible world and the boundary of Libya and Europe, being the area explored by the Phoenicians already in the ninth century before Gadeira was settled.”³

In chapter 3 (“Tartessos through Carthaginian and Roman Lenses”), the authors discuss the references in the works of Polybius and Livy to Tartessos in the context of the Punic wars. In later Roman authors, the label “Tartessic” became a brand for goods and products, from Varro’s Tartessic eel (*muraena Tartesia*, apud Aulus Gellius 6.16.5), to which Columella also refers (*rust.* 8.16.10), to Martial’s Tartessic oil-presses (*Tartesiaca trapeta*, 7.28.3). Perhaps even a metallic version of a forerunner of the Andalusian castanets (*crusmata*) is mentioned in Martial’s description of the effects of the *lasciuia* frolicking on the pages of his poetry: *et Tartesiaca concrepat aera manu* “and it rattles the ‘(bronze) castanets’ with Tartessic hand” (11.16.4). Here Tartessos stands for a whole area of the Baetica on the same mental map on which one must locate the dancing girls of Gadir/Cádiz (*puellae gaditanae*), whose lustful dance so enthralled Martial (5.78.26, 6.71, 14.203). Even for a poet born in Augusta Bilbilis (modern Calatayud), near Caesaraugusta (Zaragoza), in Hispania Tarraconensis, by the first century CE Tartessos was little else than a legendary name that suggested exotic pleasures. Such evocative references can also be found in Silius Italicus. In a catalogue of the troops provided to Hannibal by various Baetic cities, Silius mentions the legendary Tartessic ruler Arganthonius (*Arganthoniacus*) and places his kingdom at the end of the Occident: *armat Tartessos stabulanti conscia Phoebos* “Tartessos, that sees the sun to rest, sprang to arms” (3.399; Duff’s Loeb translation).

When it comes to mentions of Tartessos during the Roman Empire, Strabo is a key author. The third book of his *Geographica* is devoted to Iberia and it often refers to Tartessos, the Turdetania (in Baetica), and the Phoenician presence in the area. While writing of a reality to which he no longer had access, Strabo believed that Tartessos had been a city and that both the city and its inhabitants were intimately associated with a river of the same name. Strabo is the first author to link Turdetanians and Tartessians and to regard the former as the heirs of the latter’s territory. It is true that Strabo would seem to offer a unique window into Tartessos and the Turdetania, but, as the authors mention in passing (p. 71), Strabo makes clear that he is following a now lost work of Posidonius of Apamea. The fact that Strabo is using second-hand information may explain his peculiar use of an ethnically based term (Turdetania) instead of the proper administrative label (Baetica). Posidonius, nevertheless, seems to have traveled through the south of the Iberian Peninsula, and even visited Cádiz, although the main source for such journeys seems to be only Strabo himself.⁴

(2.16.4), but this contains another citation from Hecataeus; see R. L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography, I: Texts* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 137 (*26).

2. Concerning fragments from Herodorus and Pherecydes, see also Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography*, 1: 234 (2), 287 (17).

3. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography, II: Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 295. For a discussion of the traditional and mostly legendary dating of the foundation of Gadir (end of the second millennium BCE) in contrast with the limits of the material evidence, see D. Ruiz Mata, “The Ancient Phoenicians of the 8th and 7th Centuries B.C. in the Bay of Cádiz,” in *The Phoenicians in Spain*, ed. M. R. Bierling (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 155–98.

4. See B. J. Lowe, “Strabo and Iberia,” in *The Routledge Companion to Strabo*, ed. D. Dueck (London: Rout-

Still, from the point of view of the history of modern Tartessian research, the most crucial source is Avienus, as mentioned above. The authors note that Spanish scholars have bestowed an outsized value on Avienus as a source, although this ultimately stems from Schulten's own uncritical approach. Some readers may miss here a more detailed discussion of the problems presented by what the authors rightly describe as Avienus's chaotic use of sources, particularly when it comes to the so-called *Massaliote periplus*, a hypothetical sixth- or fifth-century BCE composition, whose existence was postulated by Schulten.

Chapter 4 ("Tartessos and the Mythological Far West") explores the place of Tartessos within the literary mapping of the ancient Mediterranean, especially as it pertains to the traditions regarding Heracles and the *Nostoi*. The authors' brief discussion of Stesichorus's *Geryoneis* (pp. 97–99) does not mention P. Curtis's recent edition and study, which deals with a number of literary references to Tartessos.⁵ This chapter also includes a section (pp. 111–22) on the possible occurrence of Tartessos in Phoenician sources and in the Hebrew Bible. The Nora Stela, in Sardinia, is mentioned here in passing (p. 114), but it would have deserved a more complete treatment, since it is probably the earliest Phoenician inscription found in the central Mediterranean (late ninth or early eighth century BCE), and it contains, almost certainly, the toponym Tarshish (*tršš*).⁶ Likewise, the discussion of the occurrence of Tarshish in the Hebrew Bible seems cursory and does not fully engage the bibliography on the subject.⁷ Most references to Tarshish in the Hebrew Bible would fit a western location (1 Kings, Jonah, Isaiah), but in 2 Chronicles Tarshish seems to have moved to the Arabian Peninsula (1 Kings constitutes the *Vorlage* of 2 Chronicles). In all likelihood, the expression "ships of Tarshish" (*šniyyôt taršîš*) refers to a kind of ship. Most biblical mentions of Tarshish have little to do with geography, but they are rather part of the evocative topography of luxury and precious metals associated with Phoenician settlements, as a sort of faraway version of Tyre.⁸ As López-Ruiz herself has pointed out elsewhere, most biblical mentions of Tarshish stem from the memory of a distant Tartessos in Iberia, which eventually became purely mythical, in a shift from historical to cultural memory.⁹ These details aside, it would be unfair to focus on a few isolated gaps in the coverage of this book, especially in light of

ledge, 2017), 69–78 (esp. 73–74); D. W. Roller, *A Historical and Topographical Guide to the Geography of Strabo* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018), 140–45.

5. P. Curtis, *Stesichorus's Geryoneis* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

6. For instance, E. Lipiński, *Itineraria phoenicia* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 234–48.

7. A. Lemaire, "Tarshish-Tarsisi: Problème de topographie historique biblique et assyrienne," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zecharia Kallai*, ed. G. Galil and M. Weinfeld (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 44–62; Lipiński, *Itineraria phoenicia*, 225–65; J. Day, "Where Was Tarshish?" in *Let Us Go up to Zion: Essays in Honour of H.G.M. Williamson*, ed. I. Provan and M. Boda (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 359–69; idem, "Where Was Tarshish (Genesis 10.4)?" in *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1-11* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 154–65 (a reworked version of his 2012 contribution). In spite of Lemaire's unqualified dismissal, there is no significant linguistic hurdle to connecting Tarshish with Tartessos, as Day points out. On the relation between *Tartessos*, *Taršîš*, and *Tarsisi*, see also R. Rollinger, "Das altorientalische Weltbild und der ferne Westen in neuassyrischer Zeit," in *Antike Lebenswelten: Konstanz—Wandel—Wirkungsmacht. Festschrift für Ingomar Weiler*, ed. P. Mauritsch et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 683–95.

8. M. Cogan, *1 Kings* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001), 319; T. Forti and D. A. Glatt-Gilad, "At the Intersection of Intellect and Insolence: The Historiographic Significance of Solomon's and Jehoshaphat's 'Tarshish Ships' in the Light of a Wisdom Motif," in *Now It Happened in Those Days": Studies in Biblical, Assyrian, and Other Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Mordechai Cogan*, ed. A. Baruchi-Unna et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 67–80.

9. C. López-Ruiz, "Tarshish and Tartessos Revisited: Textual Problems and Historical Implications," in *Colonial Encounters in Ancient Iberia: Phoenician, Greek, and Indigenous Relations*, ed. M. Dietler and C. López-Ruiz (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009), 255–80.

the vast bibliography on Tartessos that has been generated in the last century, which, by and large, the authors take into account comprehensively enough.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the matter of “Early Cross-Cultural Contacts.” Although the authors briefly question whether the label “Phoenician” is truly justified (p. 133), they still deploy it in an essentialized manner, and they refer to “the Phoenicians” as endowed with a number of practical skills and a body of common religious practices. As J. Quinn has shown, however, there is no evidence that those we now call “Phoenicians” ever identified themselves as members of a group.¹⁰ Yet our “Phoenicians” most certainly shared a repertoire of cultural devices, including a language and a religious tradition. Terminology aside, most of chapter 5 is devoted to the material and archaeological aspects of trade networks and cultural exchange with Greek and Phoenician speakers, and the nature of these exchanges prior to any actual colonization of the south of the Iberian Peninsula by Greek or Phoenician speakers. Whether one regards it as part of a legendary mental map or as a topographical reality, Tartessos is likely to have originally corresponded to a region or territorial polity, rather than a single city. Thus, this overview of archaeological information focuses especially on the area of Huelva.

An important section of chapter 5 deals with the so-called “warrior stelae” (pp. 159–70), which appear throughout the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. These engraved stones constitute the most important source of information about the pre-colonial or pre-contact Tartessian society, as a number of them are conventionally dated to a period prior to the Phoenician colonization of the area (ninth to eighth century BCE). Nevertheless, as the authors point out, the over 120 stelae in question have been found outside their archaeological context. Thus, the dating of this corpus (from the eleventh to the seventh century BCE), only a part of which antecede the presence of eastern Mediterranean colonists, is predicated on iconographic parallels. For instance, some so-called Tartessian stelae exhibit the schematic depiction of what seems to be a bull with a human-like linear body, almost like a bull depicted by Alexander Calder. This bull resembles the famous eighth-century stela found at Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee, in 1997, which itself has only a small handful of parallels: two stelae from southern Syria (Tell el-Aš‘ari and ʿĀwas), one from Gaziantep in Turkey, and now an additional one from Jordan (eṭ-Ṭurra).¹¹ The dating of these Levantine stelae is, in turn, based on additional parallels with a number of similar motifs that also appear on a stela of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III (810–783 BCE) found at Saba‘a, south of the Sinjar Mountains.

By contrast, the southwestern Iberian stelae that are dated to a pre-contact period (e.g., eleventh century BCE) do not have iconographic parallels elsewhere, because they are rather simple slabs (“basic stelae” in the authors’ typology), without human figures and with few figures of any kind. There is, therefore, room for skepticism concerning the indigenous or “Tartessian” nature of this entire corpus of stelae: some stelae are dated by virtue of their parallels in the Near East, so they must date to the contact and colonization periods; another group of stelae is dated earlier merely because they exhibit fewer engravings and seem simpler.

If anything, these stelae may provide the perfect metaphor for what is most likely embodied in the set of cultural manifestations subsumed under the label “Tartessos”: a tapestry of more or less connected phenomena, which was born of the contact between the local popula-

10. J. Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2018).

11. S. Celestino Pérez and C. López-Ruiz, “New Light on the Warrior Stelae from Tartessos (Spain),” *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 89–101; S. J. Wimmer and Kh. Janaydeh, “Eine Mondgottstele aus eṭ-Ṭurra/Jordanien,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 127 (2011): 135–41.

tion of the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula and Mediterranean groups that would eventually engage in the colonization of these very areas. As with the “warrior stelae,” there seems to be no Tartessos to speak of without a Phoenician presence or an orientalizing influence in the equation. In this regard, the note on the term “orientalizing” (pp. 129–31) efficiently dissects its uses and its possible limitations when applied to the Tartessian area. The term “orientalizing” is, nonetheless, appropriate for the Western Mediterranean occurrences of the “international style” that came into existence in the Late Bronze Age in the Near East and which eventually expanded throughout the Mediterranean in the Iron Age.¹²

The “Human and Economic Landscapes” associated with Tartessos are explored in chapter 6. The relation between the settlements associated with Tartessos and those founded by Phoenicians may shed light on the historical nature of what scholars have been calling Tartessos for the last century. Huelva would constitute the core of Tartessos, and probably played a role similar to that of Phoenician Gadir (Cádiz), mirroring each other at a safe distance. The Phoenician enclaves are naturally located on the coast and connect with preexisting foundations within a network of exploitation of mineral resources, as in the case of the Río Tinto mines near Huelva. It is interesting to note here what the authors remark in regard to the poverty of mining areas, such as Río Tinto and Aznalcóllar, a fact that suggests that the locals hardly benefited from Phoenician commercial activities (p. 189). This is a scenario common in colonial settings, but not so much in pre-colonial contacts.

Aside from metallurgy, this chapter also reviews the evidence pertaining to farming, fishing, and animal husbandry. The myth of Geryon, situated in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula, contains echoes of this agricultural prowess. Likewise, the two earlier (and legendary) kings of Tartessos, Gargoris and Habis, were celebrated for their civilizing efforts, from apiculture to urbanization. In spite of all this, the wide-spread material remains associated with Tartessos (including its orientalizing constructions), which date to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, seem to dry up in the sixth century, when a number of sites in the area are abandoned (El Carambolo, Coria del Río, Carmona, Huelva). The sudden nature of this decline leads the authors to postulate a traumatic event. Regardless of the nature of this event or combination of events, what was once Tartessos may have found its continuation in the Turdetanian culture.

Chapter 7 (“Religious Spaces and Ritual Life”) reinforces the impression that what is now identified as Tartessian was intimately intertwined with Phoenician culture. After providing a summary of Phoenician religion, two Tartessian sanctuaries are studied: El Carambolo and Cancho Roano. El Carambolo seems deeply orientalizing, from its formulaic Phoenician inscription to its oxhide-shaped altar, which is evocative of the bull symbolism of the cult of Baʿal and well attested at other Tartessian sites (Cancho Roano, Coria del Río). The orientalizing style of these sanctuaries speaks to the Tartessian cultural complex as primordially a contact phenomenon, at least in the way it manifests itself in the archaeological record. This chapter concludes by addressing the matter of burials and necropoleis in the area. Before the emergence of Phoenician elements, it seems difficult to identify any burial methods. Once such elements start to appear, one finds evidence of cremation, sometimes even with alabaster vases imported from Egypt (in Almuñécar), alongside inhumation. Both cremation pits

12. See M. H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005); eadem, *Communities of Style: Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014). Both of Feldman’s books are included in the bibliography and cited at least once.

and inhumation areas can be covered by tumuli.¹³ The contents of some of these tombs lead to the subject of chapter 8, “Art and Technology.”

Prior to the Phoenician presence, the pottery of southwestern Iberia was handmade and baked in reduction ovens. Once the first contacts with the Phoenicians seem to have been established, ovens became bigger and more efficient and, more importantly, the potter’s wheel made its first appearance. The most distinctive style of Tartessic ceramics is the “Carambolo type,” which is a diagnostic of Tartessic material culture in the eyes of many archaeologists (pp. 270–71). On the other hand, when one starts finding decoration on these pots, this is unequivocally orientalizing, as in the *pithos* with griffins found in Carmona (p. 272). Beyond pottery, it is in the bronze work and in the ivories where one finds the most consistent and archetypical orientalizing elements, of which the authors provide some illustrations (pp. 274–80, 285–89). In regard to goldsmithing, there is an economically meaningful switch from solid gold pieces prior to the contact period to hollow and lighter pieces once the Phoenicians entered the picture.

A section on language and writing closes the chapter on art and technology. There are three different, albeit closely related, scripts attested in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula: Iberian properly speaking, Southern (*meridional*), and Southwestern. All these scripts stem from an original Palaeohispanic script that resulted from a unique adoption, adaptation, and reinterpretation of the Phoenician alphabet, as Javier de Hoz, whom the authors follow here, has analyzed in detail.¹⁴ Palaeohispanic scripts exhibit a structural mixture of alphabet and syllabary: continuants (vowels, sibilants, and sonorants) are written with alphabetic graphemes that correspond to single phonemic segments (e.g., /l/, /r/, /n/), as is the case in Phoenician, whereas stops are represented with syllabograms that do not differentiate between voiced and voiceless plosives (e.g., *ba*, *be*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu*). The latter set of graphemes is predicated on an understanding of the Phoenician alphabet as an *abjad*, i.e., a writing system in which characters stand for consonants leaving it to the reader to supply the appropriate vowels, as happens in Arabic and in Hebrew. Although the authors do explain the term *abjad* in their overview of Phoenician culture (p. 135), the term and the concept are not deployed in their discussion of Palaeohispanic scripts in chapter 8 (p. 296).

Still, throughout this section on writing and language, the authors do a remarkable job in summarizing a vast array of references and epigraphic materials. The geographical area usually identified with Tartessos probably played a pivotal role in the development of the Palaeohispanic scripts, although most evidence is found on the periphery of this area. In this regard, the most significant inscribed object is the “Signary of Espanca,” found in Espança, near Castro Verde, in southern Portugal, which the authors describe as listing “a first set of Phoenician alphabet signs, then the Phoenician signs unused in the first list, and then the invented ones, as if deliberately demonstrating the adaptation process” (pp. 296–97).

In terms of language, little can be said with much certainty. In the Iberian Peninsula, there is an interesting toponymic isogloss, which the authors explore briefly (pp. 292–93). Place names ending in *-briga* (cp. German *-burg*) are common across the northwestern quarter of the peninsula, where Celtiberian inscriptions and speakers of Indo-European languages concentrated (e.g., Conimbriga > Coimbra, Segobriga). By contrast, place names ending in *-ilti* occur in the south and southwest and those in *-ipo-oba* in the south and southeast, where the

13. For a detailed repertoire of data concerning Tartessic burials, see M. Torres Ortiz, *Sociedad y mundo funerario en Tartessos* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1999).

14. J. de Hoz, *Historia lingüística de la Península Ibérica en la Antigüedad, I: Preliminares y mundo meridional prerromano* (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 2010), 485–525.

languages spoken were most likely not Indo-European (Corduba > Córdoba, Onoba/Onuba > Huelva, Olisippo > Lisbon, etc.).

The epilogue summarizes the major phenomena discussed in the previous eight chapters, poses several questions that still remain open, and significantly wraps it all up by comparing orientalizing cultures. As opposed to the untrammelled epistemological optimism that dominates much of the scholarship about Tartessos, the authors dwell on all that we do not know, such as the absence of evidence supporting the existence of a unified polity in the territory identified with the Tartessic culture. When comparing models of orientalizing influence, Etruria and Sardinia provide fruitful parallels, and both areas are repeatedly mentioned throughout the book. The final paragraphs strike a balance between the two sides of the coin: Tartessos as “a local culture of archaic Iberia” that, after a sixth-century crisis, survived in the Turdetanian realm and whose roots lay in the cultural developments of the Atlantic Late Bronze Age; and Tartessos as “heavily transformed by the cultural and economic changes brought by Phoenician colonization,” very much like other orientalizing cultures in the Ancient Mediterranean (pp. 309–10).

In spite of the authors’ cautious and nuanced approach to the historical status of Tartessos, one cannot shake the impression that, in many respects, Tartessos may be mostly a name in search of a geography and a legend in search of a history. Tartessos may not have been so much an actual polity or cultural realm, but rather the external perception of the acculturated areas in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. It is clear that the Phoenician settlements concentrated on the coast, but their influence penetrated farther inland. For instance, the sanctuary at El Carambolo (3 km west of Seville) contains a votive statue of Astarte (pp. 216–17, 239). Needless to say, this does not mean that the Carambolo sanctuary was a “Phoenician temple,” neither is the aforementioned *pithos* decorated with griffins and found in Carmona (33 km north of Seville) a “Phoenician *pithos*.”

All this material evidence, however, does bear testimony to the widespread presence of an international style rooted in the Levant and usually referred to as “orientalizing” when found in the western Mediterranean. If this orientalizing element is fully removed from the Tartessic realm, it is not easy to know what remains as genuinely native. In line with Michael Koch’s view, Fernández Flores and Rodríguez Azogue have suggested that Tartessos was not really an indigenous civilization, but rather the reality the Greeks met when they arrived in the Iberian Peninsula in the seventh century, i.e., a conglomerate of colonies founded by Levantine colonists who had been living there for a couple of centuries by then.¹⁵ This perception was resuscitated in the early twentieth century, when Schulten focused on the Tartessos tradition while striving to find in the Iberian Peninsula a civilization that could be compared to the Etruscans and a site that would resemble Troy or Knossos. In many ways, Tartessos may belong more to the notional realm than to historical reality.

One cannot recommend this work highly enough to Classical historians and to anyone interested in processes of acculturation and the difficulties of sorting out local and foreign elements in the study of material cultures. This is not only the first monograph about Tartessos ever published in English. It is also the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and accessible book on the subject in any language. It also happens to be a pleasure to read. Precisely for that reason, and given the price of this small-format hardcover book, the publisher should

15. M. Koch, *Tarschisch und Hispanien: Historisch-geographische und namenkundliche Untersuchungen zur phönikischen Kolonisation der Iberischen Halbinsel* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984); A. Fernández Flores and A. Rodríguez Azogue, *Tartessos desvelado: La colonización fenicia del suroeste peninsular y el origen y caso de Tartessos* (Córdoba: Almuzara, 2007).

have included a few illustrations in color, instead of only in black and white. A grayish and muted photograph of the famous “Treasure of El Carambolo” (p. 11) can hardly convey the beauty and craftsmanship of these objects. Nevertheless, the authors do succeed in conveying the complexity of Tartessos as a historiographical subject and as an archaeological endeavor.