ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Earthen Architecture and Cultural Exchange during the Phoenician Expansion in the 1st millenium BC

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Abstract

The Phoenician expansion into the central and western Mediterranean sea, as well as the Atlantic coast, which began in the early 9th century BC, has sparked extensive debate within archaeological research. Research confirms that they frequented the region after this date and established an extensive network of trade relations with the autochthonous communities of the region. Despite a wealth of archaeological data on Phoenician colonial activities, our understanding of these migrant communities' strategies regarding earthen resources in these distant territories remains limited. This paper seeks to analyze geoarchaeological and phytolith evidence from earthen building materials—such as mudbricks, mud mortars, and mud plasters—across various Phoenician and Punic settlements. Our goal is to uncover the intricate social and environmental interactions that characterized this demographic shift. Preliminary results concerning the geochemical composition of earthen building materials reveal diverse strategies in fabric selection, particularly when comparing Central Mediterranean and Western Mediterranean-Atlantic settlements. Additionally, phytolith evidence indicates selective manufacturing techniques applied to different earthen materials, reflecting variations in archaeological features from one site to another. Ultimately, this paper will integrate comparable evidence from local sites in these regions to enhance our understanding of earthen building practices.

Keywords

earthen building materials, petrography, phytoliths, Phoenicians, colonialism

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