Identity and Death in the necropolises of Cádiz (Spain) through their funerary monuments' biography. The case of *Lucius Popillius Acastus*

Identidad y muerte en las necrópolis gaditanas a partir de la biografía de sus monumentos funerarios. El caso de *Lucius Popillius Acastus*

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SUMMARY

Identity in the ancient world is a debatable matter but the funerary world is an undeniably excellent point of reference. The social complexity of death can be evaluated by studying an unusual funerary monument found in the necropolises of Cádiz. The object of study for this paper includes the monument itself, its location and context, and the associated inscription, reinforcing the possible connection between identity and certain funerary customs. These rituals may be linked to particular funerary topographies and cultures. The archaeological context, the use of local materials, the imitation marble covering, the possibility of colorant remains or the size and visibility of the piece make this find unique within Cádiz and the Iberian Peninsula more generally. This paper's main objective is thus to identify how certain ethnicities/identities became dominant within this particular funerary world. Our discussion revives reflections on the presence of settlers, indigenous or foreign, in ancient *Gades*.

RESUMEN

La identidad en el mundo antiguo es objeto de discusión a partir de parámetros diferentes, pero indudablemente las manifestaciones mortuorias aportan referencias de gran interés. El estudio del hallazgo y características de un monumento funerario singular de las necrópolis de Cádiz sirve para valorar la complejidad social del mundo de la muerte. En el caso que nos ocupa, tanto el propio monumento, como su ubicación, contexto y epígrafe, abundan en la conexión entre identidad y determinados usos funerarios que se arraigan en tradiciones ligadas a topografías funerarias específicas y culturas concretas. El contexto arqueológico, el

uso de piedra local, el recubrimiento de emulación marmórea, posible uso de colorante en la placa o el tamaño y visibilidad de la pieza la singularizan en el contexto gaditano y peninsular. Una de las líneas de trabajo que se derivan de este análisis es cómo la presencia de etnias e identidades diversas llegó a determinar el mundo de la muerte tan marcadamente. Este aspecto reaviva los argumentos de reflexión sobre la representatividad de colonos, indígenas o extranjeros en la ciudad de *Gades* en la antigüedad.

1. INTRODUCTION

Identity within ancient societies has been widely studied (Sommer 2010; Crawley and Vella 2014; Laurence and Berry 2001; Fernández-Götz 2010; Ferrer Albelda 2010; in some regional cases such as Mattingly 2004 and Jiménez 2008). Genetic studies, languages, religion and material culture are commonly the main pillars for this research. The funerary world is an especially fruitful resource for this point of study.

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The purpose of this paper is to analyse patterns of identity within the funerary world in the necropolises of Cádiz and through the study of a singular *stela* with a pyramidal top. This artefact was discovered at the intersection of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal in an intervention undertaken by a commercial archaeology firm. The funerary topography, the scale and disposition of the monument, the Mediterranean references and signs of reuse, etc., confirm a long material biography that is coherent with the constant movement of Mediterranean peoples.

Rereading tombstones and the typology of monuments and contexts enables us to have a new approach to understand the identity of the deceased, their class, possible long and short distance interactions, and reuse of sites and monuments. These elements illustrate the relevance of said interactions and reinforce the symbolic value of funerary sites as repositories of memory and collective memory. Furthermore, they reveal a dynamic panorama that allows us to go beyond a static interpretation of the artefact. It would be better understood as the final stage within a long process of change, which reveals much about the social dynamics of identity.

2. FUNERARY LANDSCAPES IN *GADIR/GADES*

2.1. NECROPOLISES OF CÁDIZ

Classical authors have already highlighted the importance of Cádiz, and more modern scholars have also been drawn to it (De la Concepción 1690). However, the archaeology of the city is a relatively recent phenomenon. An anthropomorphic sarcophagus was found in 1887, which awakened the interest of academics and general members of the public, alike. The initial *in situ* interventions began with the sole unscientific purpose of unearthing 'fancy' objects and monuments. Pelayo Quintero Atauri, whose interventions lasted from the 1920s until well into the 1940s, only left a handful of photographs and an excavation diary for each campaign. These require a thorough interpretation to obtain useful data. This task is necessary, as many construction sites were excavated under his supervision. Moreover, Quintero Atauri's work coincided with the urban expansion of Cádiz, whose natural area of expansion at that moment was the former burial grounds located on both sides of a 2km section of the *Vía Augusta* (Corzo 1992: 269). The

Figura 1. Map of Cádiz showing the location of the site at the intersection of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal (by the author).

main interventions took place around the current Puerta de Tierra, where the modern limits of the city walls were located, and the beginning of the necropolis area (whose extension is yet to be confirmed).

Other researchers intervened during this same period (Cervera 1923). Particularly noteworthy is the work by María Jiménez Cisneros (Jiménez 1971). Her excavations during the 1950s were left unpublished, but they are a valuable source of information about the necropolises and would surely contribute to a better understanding of it if they were restudied.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the city expanded considerably and archaeological interventions were developed to be more detailed and scientifically sound. Thus, there is an immense amount of funerary finds that are neither organized in a general compendium nor synthesized to shed light on how these ancient burial grounds were internally distributed.

This situation complicates the broader interpretation of the necropolis' evolution, its specialization (identities, age groups, classes, etc.) and its specific chronologies. A general interpretation should aim at depicting the enormous extension of these necropolises and their long-lasting occupation, confirmed as stretching from the 8th century BC until the 6th century AD (cf. Bernal and Lagostena 2010). Broad dating in the archaeological reports is believed to flatten the dates, which need to be reassessed in order be used (Bernal and Lagostena 2010: 409-411). The oldest examples are rather scattered throughout the city. Some of them are in areas that were not considered to be appropriate for burial ground, such as the modern historic centre and supposed ancient settlement area (Jiménez 2004: 141; Guzmán 2008: 95; Vaquerizo 2010b: 153). The most recent cases reuse older funerary spaces and take advantage of their materials, although their dispersion has not been thoroughly studied yet. All of the above should be faced against the fact that a rather significant area of these burial grounds is lost due to destruction. Another important portion is buried under the modern city of Cádiz.

Depending on the epoch, both the tomb ritual and the burial practices change. Cremation and inhumation seem to be used alternatively, although both of them are visible in the Roman period. The simplest burials are characterised by the arrangement of the corpses right on the sand, commonly covered by a shroud and arguably linked to the lowest *strata* in society (Corzo 1992: 275; cf. Vaquerizo 2010b: 155). Moreover, the complexity of the burials is related to the number of buried individuals, with the *hypogeum* being the classical place for Phoenician and Punic inhumation and the *columbarium* the most typical funerary edifice in Roman times (Ruiz 2006: 168-169;

Vaquerizo 2010b: 156-157). The abundance of *columbaria* explains as well the percentage of urns as funerary vessels in *Gades*, with examples of great wealth, such as the urn made of Fayenza ceramic (López 2003: 112). Examples of *sarcophagi* have also been uncovered (Bernal and Lagostena 2010: 428-429).

Graves were generally plundered in ancient times but it is noteworthy that those that were preserved until their discovery are usually dated between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. These present gold and bronze elements that suggest that even if they were not ostentatious burials, individuals expressed their social hierarchy through their grave goods. Roman grave goods consisted primarily in "ungüentarios (vidrio, cerámica), vasos de paredes finas, vajilla doméstica, lucernas, joyas, piezas de tocador, amuletos y monedas" (Guzmán 2008: 96).

The pyramidal *stela* that is the focus of this paper is a very rare funerary phenomenon in the necropolises of Cádiz. In fact, similar Mediterranean references are the best tool to contextualize this piece within the Phoenician rituals of the newly-arrived settlers.

2.2. The necropolis at the intersection of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal and its archaeological record

As part of the abovementioned urban growth process, a small quadrant of the necropolis was detected at the intersection between the Avenida de Carlos I and the Avenida de Portugal (Cádiz) in 2005 and subsequently in 2010, when the *stela* was found. This is an area of frequent discoveries in the Segunda Aguada borough. The site presented a number of burials dated in the 1st century AD. Most of them were inhumations in simple pits but there were also a number of cremations. On top of that, archaeologists found three different ancient wells, two basins from the 1st century AD and alignments of *amphorae* (Belizón and Legupín 2010: 30)[2]. The burials were dated to the same period (1st century AD) and at least 27 of the 34 burials were probably part of the same funerary complex. Besides this quite homogenous group, researchers found a ceramic funerary urn associated with a funerary *stela*, which is the object of study for this present paper.

The urn was shattered due to pressure of the earth covering it and showed signs of plundering, as well.

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[2] Belizón, R. and Legupín, I. 2010: Memoria final de la excavación arqueológica preventiva realizada en la avenida de Portugal esquina con avenida Juan Carlos I. This work was consulted at Delegación Provincial de Cultura de Cádiz.
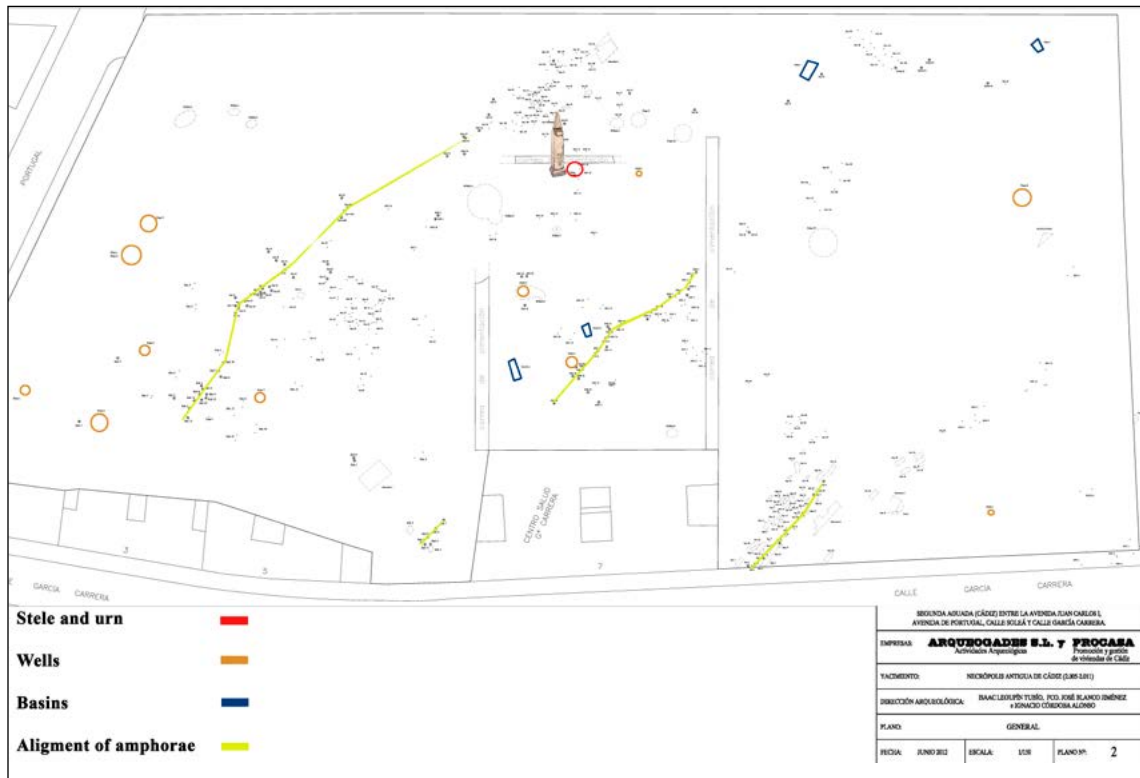
Figura 2. Junction of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal, Cádiz, Spain: Map of the site (taken from the archaeological report of Belizón and Legupín 2010) with key characteristics marked (by the author).

Its relation to the funerary monument was deduced from a spatial study: the monument had probably fallen and was laid in such a way that it would perfectly align with the urn's vertical axis if erected again. When it was first studied, the authors described the monument, its measurements and the inscription on one of its faces (Belizón and Legupín 2010: 33-35). Right beside this burial (number 24), the authors highlighted the appearance of stone slabs encircling the urn, which they suggested were the remains of a cist. The lack of grave goods is most plausibly explained by plundering. Stratigraphy and typological considerations of the *stela* suggest that it dates to the 1st century AD (Belizón and Legupín 2010: 61). It is worth noting that the area of the find is close to a series of red clay extraction pits (3rd century AD), which probably removed the *stela* from its primary location.

The site of the find is characterised by the appearance of at least two rows of aligned *amphorae* discovered during the two main excavation phases of the plot (2005 and 2010). These *amphorae* are oriented East-West and the separation between vessels is observed. The *amphorae* are stuck into the sand and chopped in half. They are typologically Punic, although the dates that the archaeologists presented, place the discovery in the 1st century AD. Their hypothesis is that the *amphorae* were arranged to divide the necropolis either from the 3rd to -2nd BC to the Imperial phase of reuse, or in the 1st century AD using older *amphorae* (Belizón y Legupín 2010: 69). The second hypothesis seems more plausible for the archaeologist, which is that a structure was erected in the 1st century AD using older materials. However, the first proposal would not be too far off the mark, considering the phases of use of the *stela* that will be presented here.

These sorts of 'barriers' have been found in many other areas of the city of Cádiz (Miranda *et alii* 2001-2002: 264). They are associated with walls at times, which also play the same role as space dividers (Gener and Pajuelo 2002: 45). They probably signalled the areas that had to be respected as they were specific funerary spaces meaning, also, that funerary areas could have had utilitarian functions as well (Miranda *et alii* 2001-2002: 258). There are a significant number of examples that date to the 3rd to -2nd BC (Vaquerizo 2010b: 154). They may have had a clear organizing function, which is the case with *diverticula* or the secondary paths usually found in Roman necropolises

Figura 3. Intersection of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal, Cádiz, Spain: Location of the stela and its funerary context (images taken from the archaeological report of Belizón and Legupín 2010).

such as those in *Baelo Claudia* (Jiménez 2008: 167) or *Malaca* (Vaquerizo 2007: 388). Likewise, the appearance of basins in the surroundings of these divisions is very common and very typical within the necropolises of Cádiz as an infrastructure to support funerary rituals (Miranda *et alii* 2001-2002: 261; Vaquerizo 2010a: 358-359). Wells and basins are often found together, which would suggest the existence of spaces for waste derived from the funerary and cult rituals, at least in the Punic period (Niveau and Zamora 2010: 155). It is not clear what function they had in Roman times, as wells are usually dated to the Punic period, but end up coexisting with Roman basins; only their mutual relation with water is clear (Miranda *et alii* 2001-2002: 261). In the case of study, two of the wells have a surrounding area that is free of burials. They are also aligned with the *amphorae*, creating a "street" that the basins fall into, as well (Belizón and Legupín 2010: 72).

A paper has already been published about these interventions. This publication focused on the seven simple cremation pits that could be linked to Phoeni-

cian merchants from southwestern Sardinia. The suggested date for these finds is 7th to -5th century BC according to the burial and grave goods typologies (Belizón *et alii* 2014).

3. *STELAE* CROWNED WITH A PYRAMID

This *stela* is a tall and strikingly large piece (2,22 m in height) with three freestanding modules, which are joined with male-female couplers as seen in the archaeological report. The general appearance of the artefact can be compared to an Egyptian obelisk. The bottom part is tiered, with up to two mouldings that seamlessly join the base to the rectangular and elongated piece on top. This one, quite bigger than the lower section, has the only preserved remains of the original stucco decoration. Later on, a funerary plaque was installed right onto this surface. Beyond the analysis of the *stela* to prove that it was reused, this is still evident by the 'forced' introduction of the plaque in an older support. The area of the installation presents vis-

ible damage on the stucco layer, which is much different from mere patina derived from degeneration over time. The trunk of the *stela* is topped with an elongated pyramidal top section that crowns the monument.

The raw material is a sedimentary rock (called 'piedra ostionera') that was quite common both in the Punic and Phoenician statuary and architecture, and in Roman funerary architecture in *Gades*. The sources for this material are local, easily extracted and quite abundant. This material was usually plastered with stucco to smooth and make the surface look like marble. It also allowed pictures and motifs to be drawn as decoration on these surfaces. The three visible modules of the monument are thus covered in stucco. The original surfaces have been analysed with D-Strech software. The results of this process unveiled the presence of red pigments as well as engraved motifs in the stucco plaster, which are visibly damaged and badly preserved. Sinuous geometric forms were painted as part of the decoration. They are located on the obverse, sides and reverse, suggesting decorations that certainly were more complex than what is currently preserved. The state of conservation is misleading as to imagining the *stela*'s original appearance.

The abovementioned software recognises different tones of colour. By scanning our photographic data,

we have identified red pigments filling up the calligraphy of the plaque. There are a number of possible pigments. The most documented in Roman epigraphy is *minium*, from the cinnabar family, but there are other more accessible pigments in the surrounding areas. That is the case of iron oxides, present within clay deposits. *Minium* was used during long periods of time, though it was expensive and difficult to extract. The main source of this mineral in Roman times in Iberia was the mines at Almadén (Ciudad Real). These were located in the territory of *Sisapo*, where not only red pigments were sought after but also mercury for the extraction of gold and silver (Zarzalejos *et alii* 2012: 70). The presence of other sources of colour at the necropolis has also been documented, such as murex, which is not linked to monuments or funerary plaques (nor does it appears in the burials). It is present in funerary banquet contexts or as part of Punic offerings (Niveau and Abia 2014: 292).

As for contextualizing the monument, two different possibilities emerge: Iberia or, perhaps less likely, other parts of the Mediterranean where there was a Phoenician/Punic presence. Both interpretations will be described here, as we understand that they are not mutually exclusive but add value to the same phenomenon.

Figura 4. Intersection of the Avda. Carlos I and the Avda. de Portugal, Cádiz, Spain: Different views of the stela and the plaque, with a hypothetical reconstruction of the colouring based on the D-Strech photographic analysis (by the author).

The 'macro' analysis of this monument suggests a first phase of use as a *locus* inhabited by the divinity, which is not represented by a figurative depiction but by a three-dimensional form. Thus we may call it a *baetylus*. This is an ambivalent term but the definition chosen here is influenced by Irene Seco Serra's study on these phenomena (Seco 2010). We subscribe to the idea that this is an ample and broadly, scattered in time and space, concept. The prehistoric roots of this sort of cult have captured scholarly attention, shifting it away from a series of historic examples that could be just as relevant.

We present two plausible models in this paper that are very comparable to the main object of study. On one hand, the conical trunk *baetylus*: deeply rooted into the Syrian-Phoenician area in the Eastern Mediterranean and usually representative of Astarte or Tanit. They are thus linked to female deities and morphologically they "adaptan perfiles que se acercan a lo triangular, hasta hacer a veces casi imposible decidir si la representación anicónica es troncocónica o piramidal, en forma de obelisco" (Seco 2010: 70). There is another *baetylus* shape: the pyramidal trunk form with a square body and pyramidal top. This is rather common within the Punic world, but it is restricted to *cippi* in the funerary context (Seco 2010: 75). Beyond the formal definitions, Seco rightfully defends the frequency and normality of the use of *baetyli* within Phoenician-Punic contexts. She also proposes the abundance of representations on *stelae*, in dyads or triads, rather than the realisation of the model as it seems to happen in Cádiz (Seco 2010: 117). It is true that this same author also assumes the existence of strictly Punic or Greco-Roman *baetyluses* in Iberia, associated to ethnically and clearly foreign settlements (Seco 2010: 459). This argument will be reassessed later on to compare it to the monument's signs of reuse and its possible cultural assimilation within a mixed context.

Pyramidal *stelae* were constantly used in the Phoenician tradition as burial markers and for religious cults. Their monuments were created to depict the soul's immortality while remembering the deceased's existence at the same time (Prados 2008: 65). Moreover, they are collective experiences, accumulated memories, spatial milestones and means for propaganda (Prados 2017: 75). This monument had varied meanings from the funerary to the religious world.

Within the Phoenician funerary world, this type of *stela* could be defined as a *nefesh*, the first material representation of both a funerary cult and a spatial signal. These forms also contain all the cultural and religious elements to which they refer (the pyramid and the elongated shape that brings them closer to the divinity, etc.). This very model was exported and reproduced along the Mediterranean basin. It is noteworthy that they are indeed monumental and they intend to evocate the deceased's figure with the stone as a physical intermediary. That differs from the Greco-Latin practice of a literal dedication of the funerary monument. After the body's cremation, the deceased's soul moves into the stone and inhabits the *stela*. This is thus a complex entity. In fact, the term for 'spirit' and *stela*, or funerary monument was the same word within the Syrian-Aramaic area, confirming the above-mentioned relation (Aubet 2016: 71-72). Moreover, there is a conceptual shift in the transit between the first and the second phases of the *stela* itself. By means of cultural adaptation, the piece lost part of its meaning (in the sense of a material expression or habitat of the soul) as the Greco-Roman influence grew stronger in the Mediterranean.

As mentioned above, the use of relatively soft stone supports (mostly locally sourced) is quite common in the Punic sphere. These structures were decorated with architectural motifs, covered in stucco and painted to imitate scaled temples or funerary sanctuaries (Prados 2008: 177-178).

4. PYRAMIDAL ENDING *STELA* IN THE NECROPOLISES OF CÁDIZ

The *stela* analysed in this paper is not the only one found in the necropolises of Cádiz. After a thorough read-through of Pelayo Quintero Atauri's reports from the beginning of the 20th century, it is possible to identify two more comparable examples in the necropolises. They were probably lost at the time they were excavated. One is preserved thanks to a line-drawing depicting a conical trunk structure with a large enough hole to fit a Roman plaque in almost the same configuration as that of the object of study (Fig. 5C). It is described as a cubical stone with a pyramid on top measuring 27 × 50 cm, which is similar to the example at Museo de Cádiz. The *stela* is dated to the 1st century AD and it has been suggested that it was the missing pair to a funerary plaque that was found right beside it, dedicated to the 65-year-old *Lucretia Pannyghis*[3]. The associated burial is a *bustum*, a rectangular box made of stone slabs covered in white stucco, in which the urn was placed. The plaque would round off the structure (Quintero 1932: 26-27). The most current references in that sense (Vaquerizo 2010a: 364, 2010b: 157) mention it within a general descrip-

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[3] IRPCádiz 408; ILER 6246.

tion of plausible burials in the necropolis of Cádiz, with no further details due to a lack of archaeological context.

Besides the mentioned line-drawing, there are a few graphic references from these archaeological interventions such as a pyramidal apex found on top of a number of Punic burials with no coherent archaeological context. This find has been interpreted as some sort of 'muñeco', comparable to those found in *Baelo Claudia* (Seco 2010: 387-389). However, both the dated nature of the interventions and the fact that a complete structure (in which that type of apex is essential) has been documented suggest that this could be the remains of another 'obelisk'/*baetylus* or a *stela* with a pyramidal ending. Nevertheless, the *in situ* description of the find suggested human-like characteristics, which would lead to a different interpretation. The piece chosen for this paper shows that sometimes the degeneration of the stucco against the sedimentary stone underneath could lead to varied

images being observed. That does not imply that they were intentionally done in the past. Another similar example with a pyramidal top that lacks context in the Pelayo Quintero's photographic archive is cited by María Belén (Belén 1992-1993: 334) as part of a bigger monument. Pelayo Quintero describes it in 1929 as "como grandes sillares, caídos hoy a los lados y uno de ellos labrado en forma de pirámide y con restos de estuco blanco y adornos amarillos y rojos" (Quintero 1932: 5-6).

There is another example, which happens to be a mobile artefact. It was found as part of the grave goods documented in 1891 in the area of the necropolis known as Punta de Vaca (San Severiano borough, Cádiz). This area has Punic *hypogea* where many outstanding finds have been identified, such as the pseudo-anthropomorphic male sarcophagus mentioned above. In *Expedientes del hallazgo de tumbas fenicias en desmontes extramuros de Cádiz*, published in 1892, there is a mention to this pendant within a 4th century
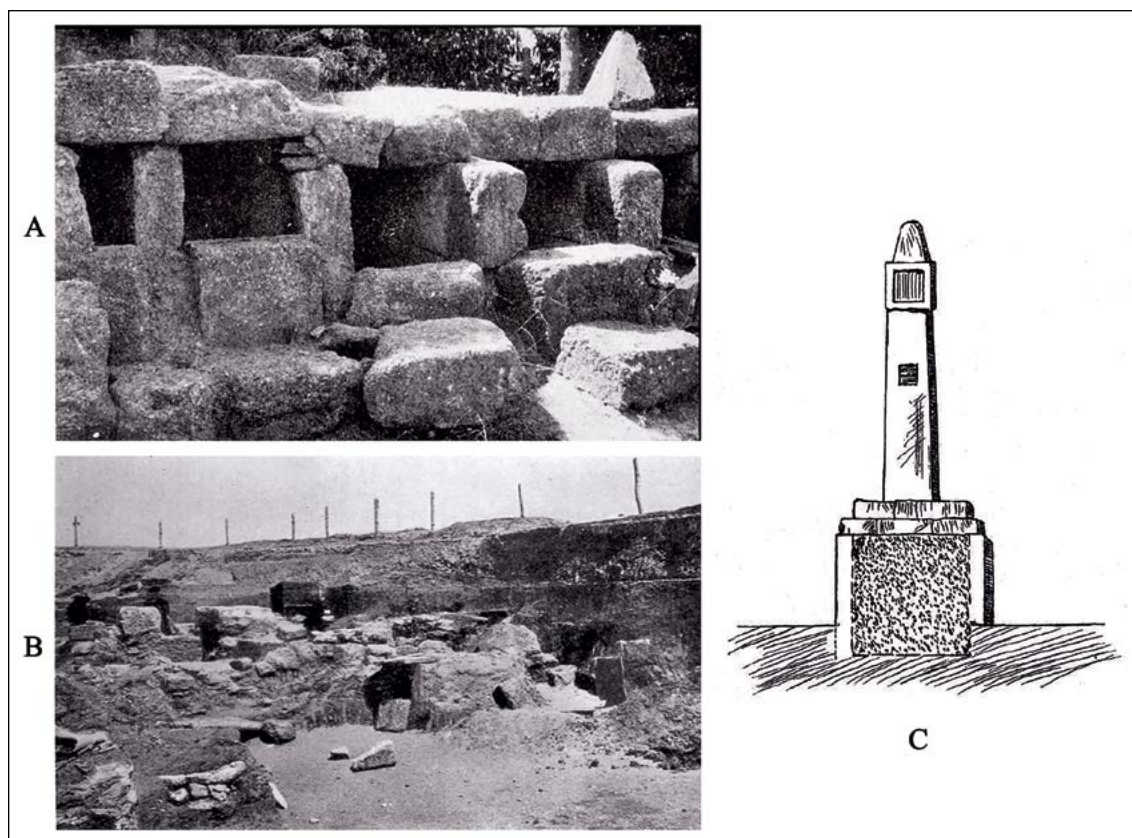

Figura 5. Pictures from the historical interventions in Cadiz and line-drawing from Pelayo Quintero's report. A-Punta de Vaca-Astilleros area. B- Playa de Poniente area (Belén 1992-1993: 331). C- Line-drawing of a funerary monument associated with *Lucretia Pannyghis* (Belén 1992-1993: 334).

BC funerary context. It is now kept at Museo de Cádiz, so we had the opportunity to study it with the intention of reflecting on the survival and influence of this symbol.

Figura 6. Punta de la Vaca, Cádiz, Spain: Different views of the pendant shaped as a scaled obelisk (by the author).

It is shaped like a scaled obelisk and P. Quintero Atauri dated it to the 4th century BC. Nevertheless, it does not have a clear adscription to a specific burial, as the archaeological report was poorly organized in that respect (Perea 1985: 295). This piece was studied and described as a pendant/box with a geometrical top. The author agrees with the date given by the excavated funerary context, mainly because of the similarities to other pendants in the necropolises of Carthage: Ard-el-Keraïb and Sainte Monique (Perea 1985: 300). The artefact has a hollow interior, is 2.8 cm in height and is made of bronze and gold. It has a three-faced canonical representation and a ring on top of the pyramidal apex to hang it to a necklace. These sorts of amulets were destined to contain small writings with protection spells. This function lost its importance with the passing of time and they became mere amulets. That probably increased their apotropaic qualities, mostly in the Punic world, as they resemble a *baetylus* (Jiménez 2004: 147). The similarities between this pendant and this paper's main object of study are undeniable, and they are displayed in relatively close proximity in the Museum. Other similar pendants have been found along the Mediterranean, specifically in Sardinia, with remarkably similar dates and measurements (Tore 1973; Prados 2008: 201). The importance of amulets lies within their effective use

in daily life. They differ from those gold jewels that were made specifically to wear as grave goods, substituting poorer daily worn elements (Jiménez 2004: 142).

5. PYRAMID-TOPPED *STELAE* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The existence of similar funerary types in other locations with a Phoenician or Punic presence and interaction with native cultures is an essential argument to support the identity hypothesis. Pyramid-topped *stelae* have a broad tradition in Punic funerary culture, but the chosen example is from the 4th to 2nd centuries BC (Prados 2017: 84). This is thus an uncommon monument outside the described contexts, and even less common in Iberia and the Roman province where it was found (Ruiz 2006: 178).

It is necessary to differentiate the various ways of representation that this monument's shape had. On one hand, there are *stelae* such as the one in Cádiz that appear in funerary contexts. They were sometimes reutilised in religious and votive contexts, as well. Moreover, there are many examples of mobile artefacts that show a deeper value and meaning.

This is an architectonical model that constituted an apotropaic reference-point from a very early stage onwards, with many different representations lasting longer in time than the architectonical typology itself. They appear in funerary *hypogea* from the surroundings of Carthage (Tunisia). There is a number of variations on this same concept that do not modify the intended message. Given that these are generally sealed spaces, these representations are more valuable, as they were chosen for a certain type of burial space and religious beliefs. Sidi Ali-Djebali's Haouanet (Tunisia) is a close parallel to the model from Cádiz (Deyrolle 1904: 86). Three structural elements (tiered base, rectangular trunk and elongated pyramidal apex) are present both in our case of study as well as in the following examples from the necropolis of Tipasa (Argelia). The use of pyramid-topped *stelae* beyond their material form expands the relevance of these monuments. Thus, the *stela* dedicated to Sactut[4] could be interpreted in a similar way. In this case, there is an accompanying 1st century AD bilingual inscription and, placed as a sort of a gable, a number of motives symbolising salvation and immortality, such as a solar disk with a crescent moon, a Tanith sign, a laurel crown, etc. Among them, there is a Punic tower-like

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[4] *Sactut Ihimir filius vixit an(n)orum (!)LXX* CIL VIII 5220; CIL VIII 17395; ILAlg-01 147.

representation with three structural elements and a false doorway as decoration (Prados 2008: 184-185).

Another variant of this same idea is provided by those *stelae* that appear to have been deposited in temples. We have already noted that this is associated to female deities from the Phoenician-Punic pantheon. Two of the most representative spots where these tower-like dedicated *stelae* have been found are Byblos (Lebanon) and Carthage (Tunisia).

The Obelisk Temple is located at Byblos. It was built on a previous temple from the 3rd millennium BC and is dated to the middle of the Bronze Age (1900-1550 BC). It has a large central obelisk and up to 30 smaller obelisks deposited as offerings in the court and auxiliary chapels. The amount of bronze figurines representing Baal is outstanding, with up to 2000 of them identified (Aubet 2009: 26). During the first half of the 20th century, a Punic temple dedicated to a female deity was recorded in Carthage (Poissot and Lantier 1923; Charles-Pickard 1945). It is located relatively close to the harbour, right in an area where other sanctuaries have been identified. The first excavations suggested two different phases of use. Within the second one, the archaeologists found at least 8 "cippes anépigraphes en forme d'autels décorés" (Poissot y Lantier 1923: 39). The preserved pictures suggest that they were simplified structures that reproduced the same model that has been recently documented in Cádiz. They seem to be made of a single piece of stone. The decoration cannot be related to the object under study here as it is significantly damaged. The sanctuary at Carthage was excavated again in 1945 and the researchers found a smaller number of similar *stelae*, which appeared along with funerary urns. These *stelae* were covered in stucco, and their estimated chronology was 4th century BC (Charles-Pickard 1945: 443-445). They could thus be another example of tower-like representations of the divinity.

Finally, funerary contexts are the best source of comparisons and therefore suggest the original use for the piece we are analysing.

The archaeological campaigns from the 1960's at Tipasa (Argelia) explored the sequence of the Roman necropolis. There they found various examples that can be compared to what was found in Cádiz. They are not identical, but they resemble the model and play the
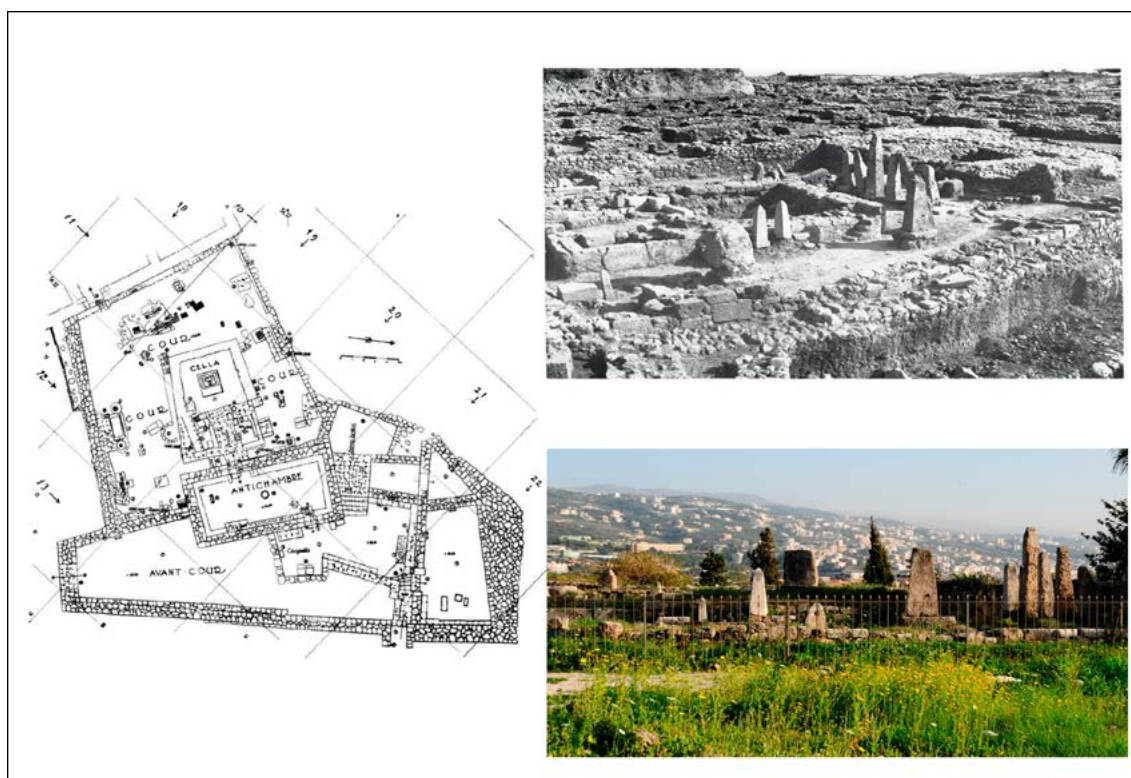

Figura 7. Byblos's temple layout and old picture (Mesnil 1970: Planche IV-V) together with a modern view of the remains (picture by Marta Gimeno Pascual).
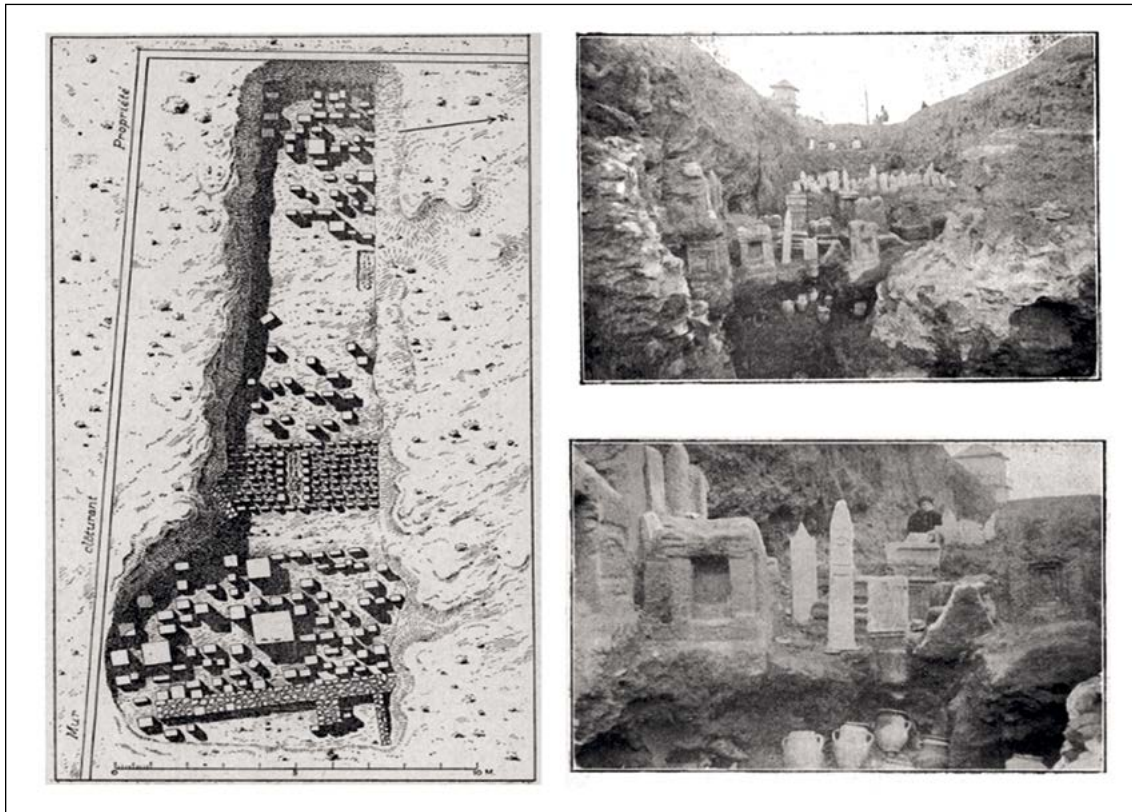
Figura 8. Cartague's temple layout and stelae (Poinssot and Lantier 1923: 36-37).

same role as funerary demarcation with ancient roots. The most visible example is burial number 107, where archaeologists found a fallen tower-like structure. The pyramidal top is fractured, although the similarities are obvious. The only difference with the stela from Cádiz is that the latter was supported by having part of the trunk set into the ground, while the example from Tipasa had a podium to keep it upright. There is a significant number of decontextualized pyramidal tops that have been found at the site as well as burials that are similar to the number 107 but are missing the pyramidal top (burials number 105, 55, 54, 72). Lancel defines these with the term *pyramidion* (Lancel 1970: 178). He demonstrated that a cist burial with funerary urns was usually present under some of these structures (Lancel 1970: 189). Lancel also cites another example where the tower-like structure is constructed on a three-stepped base made of large stone blocks. It does not have a documented associated burial, but he does not discard that it might have been located directly beneath the whole monument (Lancel 1970: 198).

There are a few examples in Iberia, even though they have not been considered as part of this phenom-

enon. At the site of Villaricos (Almería), archaeologists found a number of funerary *stelae* that may be comparable. These are 'simple' *stelae* "en piedras alargadas, de base rectangular, acabadas en punta" (Belén 1994: 260). They usually appear associated with inhumations and the stones are placed resting close to the head. Nevertheless, there are cases where cremations are associated with *stelae* as well (Belén 1992-1993: 332). The use of sandstones or soft limestone is common as it is the subsequent covering with plaster (Belén 1994: 262). The suggested chronologies are between the 6th and 3rd centuries BC, with the 4th century BC being the broadly agreed date. There is a specific example, however (burial number 612) where a similar *stela* appeared next to a Roman funerary *amphora* (Belén 1994: 263). Seeing the pictures of the pyramidal-topped *stelae* (Belén 1994: 277; Seco 2010: 402), we reckon they could be original models that were not physically developed later on, or that they could be the remains of pyramidal tops for *stelae* just like the one discussed in this paper.

At a much closer location to Cádiz than the other cited examples, the so-called 'Gran Estela' was found
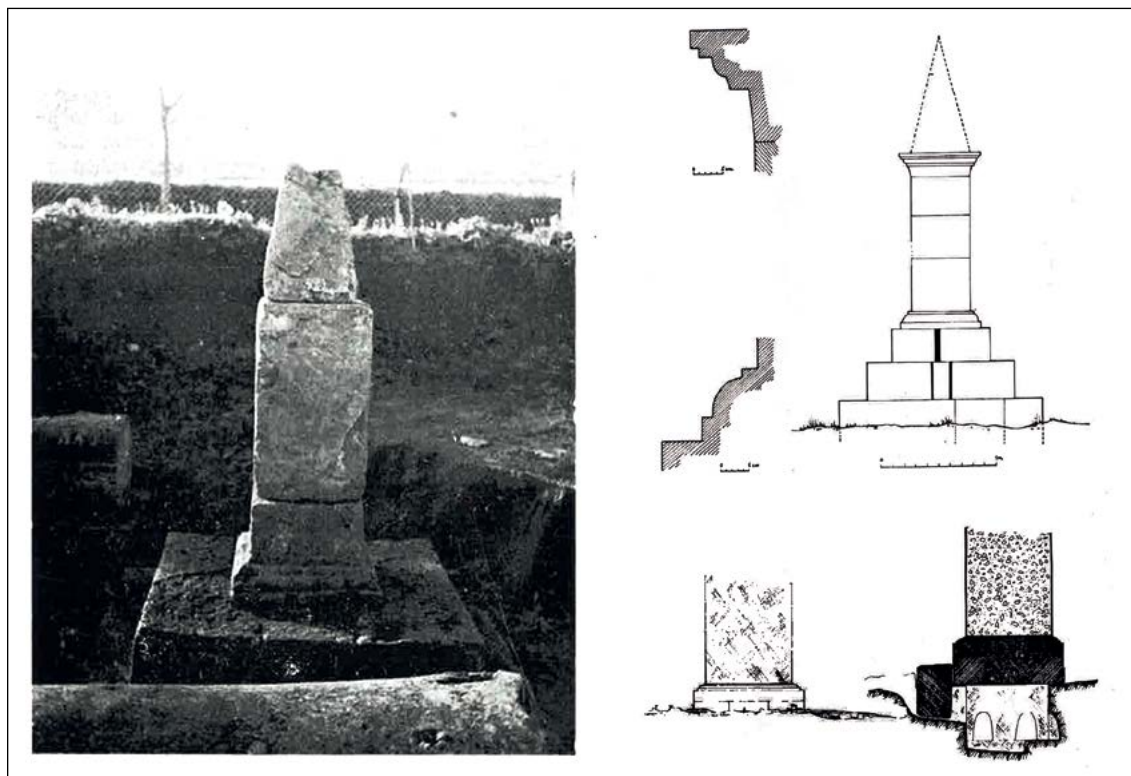
Figura 9. *Stelae* from Tipasa (Lancel 1970: 186, 188, 198).

in *Baelo Claudia* (Tarifa, Cádiz). This funerary monument was identified for the first time during Pierre Paris' 1926 intervention in the east necropolis (Paris *et alii* 1926: 24 and ss.). It was accompanied by a cinerary urn with grave goods in a cist. The two- metre-tall obelisk-like pyramidal top *stela* was located right above the burial. Among the grave goods, archaeologists found a bronze mirror, dated in the 2nd century AD, along with many artefacts related to the children's sphere (Vaquerizo 2006: 350). The *stela* has a mounted funerary plaque[5] on the side that was oriented towards the ocean (Jiménez 2008: 175). The plaque is currently at the Spanish Museo Arqueológico Nacional (inv. num. 38336) and it was dedicated solely to the *manes* gods. It was possibly engraved during the Flavian or early Antonine period (Bonneville *et alii* 1988: 60). Some authors also affirm that it was probably covered in stucco and decorated with some sort of paint (Jiménez 2008: 175).

This analysis of the funerary context is focused on a small figurine found on top of a libation table in front of the whole ensemble (Jiménez 2007: 84). We only

have access to drawings depicting this *stela*. Based on what they suggest and not considering the top, the typology is indeed significant for our analysis given its measurements and its supposed use. There are no more details about this piece, its chronology, the plaque or the burial. The lack of reference could indicate that it was contemporaneous. We cannot make a direct correlation between the two reused *stelae,* as there is not enough data. However, its chronological proximity to the plaque commemorating *L. Popillius Acastus* is another supporting argument in favour of the survival and persistence of this model in Iberia. If we had evidence that this is a purely Roman type, we could affirm the assimilation and hybridisation of two cultural elements of very different origins.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAQUE: AN INTERPRETATIVE PROPOSAL ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL COMMEMORATED AND ITS CHRONOLOGY

This is a white marble plaque with the following measurements: 12 cm high, 20.3 cm wide and 2 cm thick. The letters are 3 cm high in the first line and 2.3

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[5] *Di{i}s/ Mani/bus* IRPCádiz 56; IRBaelo 37.

cm in the remaining lines. They present possible pigment remains as well. The interpuncts are shaped like a *virgula*. The plaque is embedded into the top half of a piece of local sedimentary stone (called *ostionera*), which is covered in stucco and has possible remains of red paint and engravings. The whole structure comprises a base (38 × 52 × 52 cm), a central trunk (133 × 37 × 37 cm) and a pyramidal top (51 × 30 cm). On the trunk, on the left side, the stucco has signs of a line that could have supported a frame. It is now at Museo de Cádiz (inv. num. 31183/33530). The text reads as follows:

L(ucius) • Popillius •
Acastus
h(ic) • s(itus) • e(st) • sit • t(ibi) • t(erra) • l(evis) •

Here lays *Lucius Popillius Acastus*. May the earth lie lightly upon you.
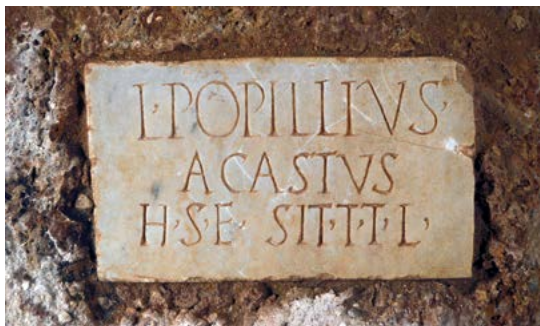

Figura 10. Marble plaque as found in the stela (by the author).

This inscription is perfectly coherent with the funerary epigraphy in *Gades*. Many of the known texts there are characterised by laconic expressions: brief references to the deceased, quite repetitive funerary *formulae* and nearly no biometrical information. In that sense, the archaeological data is essential, particularly when contradicting the available epigraphic information.

Regarding the letter-forms, it is noteworthy that they comprise oblong capital letters well finished and of elegant quality, which would date the plaque between the Flavian and the Trajanic periods. We believe that a concern for the aesthetics of the textual layout (*ordinatio*) dictated the fact that the letter-cutter did not abbreviate the *sit*.

As mentioned before, the burials from this excavation generally date to the 1st century AD. The specific burial with which this *stela* was associated does not have grave goods as it is located between two ar-

eas that were modified in the 3rd century AD to extract red clay. Thus, it could have a very different chronology. We suggest the possibility that both the first phase of usage for the *stela* and the delimitation made by the alignment of amphorae are in fact contemporaneous (3rd to-2nd century BC). The whole area would have been repurposed in the 1st century AD, which coincides with the plaque's estimated chronology (second half of the 1st century or beginning of the 2nd century AD).

Regarding the scarce information provided about the individual commemorated, there are some elements that should be highlighted. The *nomen Popillius*, of Latin origin (Abascal-Ramallo 1997: 95), is a famous plebeian *genticilium* from the Republic period. There was also a number of republican *consules* with similar names. Based on Clauss Slaby's data base, the *gens Popillia* appears in epigraphy from the Hispanic provinces on 34 occasions (Fig. 11). It appears scattered along the Mediterranean coasts, with *Saguntum* being the place with the largest number of epigraphic finds (12 out of the known 34). On the other hand, this same *nomen* is found on coinage and lead ingots in Cartagena (Llorens 1994: 49). Moreover, one of the main gates of the wall was known as the *Popilia*, as seen in the inscription mentioning the *augur* and *quinquennalis*, *M. Cornelius Marcellus*[6]. Some authors have tried to link these *Popillii* families from *Saguntum* and *Carthague* because of the Punic character of both locations (Abascal-Ramallo 1997: 96), though their relation has also been attested through the presence of *gentilicia* from the Campania region in Italy in both cities (Stefanile 2017: 64).

On the other hand, this *gentilicium* was widely scattered when it first arrived from the Italic Peninsula to *Hispania*. It was then concentrated in important cities along the Mediterranean coast. All of them are fundamental commercial and administrative places. If viewed more broadly, they also cover the extension of the main maritime commercial routes. Thus it is not surprising that we find possible examples of Italic migrants, which was fairly common at the time and necessary for provincial and local administration as well.

The *cognomen Acastus* has a Greek origin and many examples throughout the Empire (Solin 2003: 497-498). There are at least 103 within the Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby (consulted on 13-07-2018). This *cognomen* is especially linked to freedmen, as they appear in epitaphs both as the commemorated and as commemorators (30 cases) and many also ap-

[6] CIL II 3426.

Nombre	Lugar de hallazgo	Referencia
P. Caecilli Popilli	Cabrera, Islas Baleares	AE 1988 832c
L. Popillius Acastus	Cádiz	
Porta [Popilia]	Cartagena, Murcia	CIL II 3426
[Sa]binus [Po]pillius	Herrera de Pisuerga, Palencia	Ceballos Hornero, A. (2002). *Los espectáculos en la Hispania romana. La documentación epigráfica*. Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Vol. 2.
Popil(io) Staphylo	Játiva, Valencia	CIL II 3641
M. Popili Celsini	Lara de los Infantes, Burgos	AE 1981 553
Popillius Gratus	Las Valeras, Cuenca	CIL II 3202
Popilius Respectus	León, Castilla y León	AE 1967 225
Iuventii Vibiorum [Po]piliorum y Primulae	Mérida, Badajoz	Hep 5 86
L. Popillio Primo y Popillia	Mérida, Badajoz	HEp 4 170; AE 1990 854
M. Popilli Iunci	Mérida, Badajoz	HEp 6 98; Ae 1994 855/ HEp 6 97; AE 1994 854
Popillius	Monforte, Portalegre, Portugal	HEp 3 487; AE 1995 720
Popillio Flavo	Poza de la Sal, Burgos	CIL II 750
Popillius Hirsutus	Puebla de Trives, Orense	AE 1903 236
M. Popilio Opta[to]	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 535
M. Popillio	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 504
M. Popillio	Sagunto, Valencia	HEp 12 450
M. Popillius Martialis	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 506; CIL II 3928; Hep 12 502
P. Popillio Avito	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 370; CIL II 6026
P. Popillius Hebdomus	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 645; CIL II 6062
Popilia Avita y C. Popilli Cupiti	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 354; CIL II 3856
Popillia Marcia	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 507; CIL II 3927; Hep 6 1996 966; AE 1995 972
Popilliae Rectinae	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 367; CIL II 3866
Popillius Agathemer	Sagunto, Valencia	CIL II/14 505; Hep 12 501
Pop(ilius) Flaccus	Tarazona, Zaragoza	AE 1992 104; AE 1997 931; HEp 5 933
L. Popillius Prunicus	Tarragona, Cataluña	RIT 645
Popil[- - -]	Tarragona, Cataluña	RIT 644
Popiliae	Tarragona, Cataluña	RIT 504
Popiliae Secundae	Tarragona, Cataluña	CIL II 4276
Popillia Vegeta	Torrejon del Rey, Guadalajara	AE 1987 633
M. Popillius Onyxs	Tossal de Manises, Alicante, Valencia	CIL II 3563/ IRA 02
P. Popilius y P. Popil[ius] P[a]ullus	Vall de Uxó, Castellon	CIL II/14 712; CIL II 3984
[Pop]illio	Vall de Uxó, Castellón	CIL II/14 713; Ae 1986 447; Hep 12 132
Popilio Pedone	Villamontan de la Valduerna, León	AE 1928 176; AE 1963 21; Hep 1 413

Figura 11. Above: epigraphical spatial distribution in Hispania for the *gentilicium* Popillius. The smallest dots represent 1 inscription, their size increasing up to the biggest concentration of 14, at *Saguntum*. Below: information regarding the specific inscriptions shown in the map (by the author with data extracted from Clauss Slaby's data base; 08-09-2018).

pear on *instrumenta* (37 examples in Rome, *Germania Inferior*, Belgium and *Lugudunensis*) (Fig. 12). The only case in *Hispania* is precisely a stamp from Tarragona[7]. In the western part of the Empire, a Greek *cognomen* is often linked with unfree status, but slaves also bore Latin *cognomina* and Greek names were used by freeborn individuals (Bruun 2015a: 608-609). Consequently, having a Greek *cognomen* does not add much valuable information about ethnicity, real origins or other factors that help us recognise identities. In the case of Cádiz, however, the nature of its commercial relations and the presence of the Ocean make it easier to identify foreign elements that live in, or pass through, the city. A good example is the funerary plaque of *Valeria Graeca*[8], which was found in 1950 in Cádiz by Jiménez Cisneros (Jiménez 1971: 121). The *cognomen* cannot be anything but Greek related. That is also the case with the funerary epigraph of Ἰουλία Μυρίνη, found in 1918 by the Pelayo Quintero's interventions and currently lost (Quintero 1920: 5). The abundance of Greek onomastics in Cádiz has been highlighted before (Pemán 1938: 2-3), so it does make sense to find yet another example.
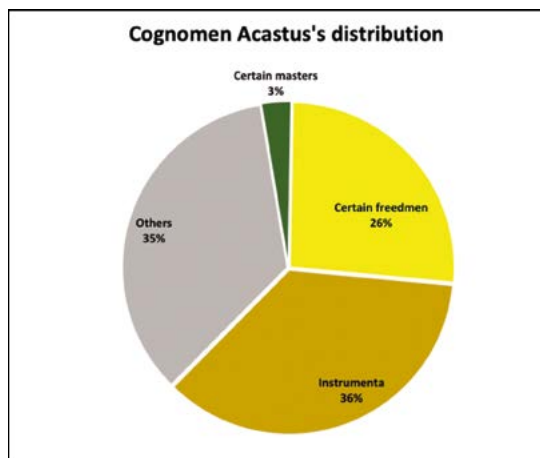

Figura 12. Epigraphic distribution of the cognomen *Acastus*. The label Others gathers inscriptions with insufficient information to be included into other groups (by the author with data extracted from Clauss Slaby's data base; 08-09-2018).

Given the widespread presence of *Acastus* in social contexts related to slavery, we could think that *Lucius Popillius Acastus* was actually freed by a *Popilli* family. Nevertheless, we have to account for the difficulties in understanding the jurisdictional status of a Ro-

man individual, mostly in contexts like Cádiz where inscriptions never make a reference to it. Onomastic *formulae* were very relevant for displaying Roman hierarchies, but at the same time they were not a direct sign of social status (except when expressively mentioned). It was a common practice to use the *tria nomina* without indicating affiliation or civil condition (slave, freedman, Roman citizen…). We must simply refer to these individuals as *incerti* (Bruun 2015b: 803). In our case, the individual referred to on the plaque would belong to this group of "uncertain" as we cannot affirm origins or social status through the onomastic data.

7. CONCLUSION: IDENTITY AND KINSHIP

We have tried to show the magnitude and complexity of the process of imitating funerary models throughout this paper. This is an outstanding singularity in the whole of the necropolises of Cádiz and within Iberia as well. As a very recent find, it has a well-documented context. Although it belongs to an area that was modified in ancient times, its phases are very clear. First, around the 3rd century BC, a funerary monument was erected in a Punic milieu and within an area where there are many examples of the presence of foreigners, possibly merchants (Belizón *et alii* 2014: 216). Second, at the end of the 1st century AD, the whole area was repurposed with a new phase of tombs that included the modification (shown by the appearance of the funerary plaque) of this *stela* for a new burial.

The individual buried here was probably wealthy, as he, *L. Popillius Acastus*, had enough resources and social position to erect such a funerary monument in a city with visible spatial issues for funerary use. Cádiz's idiosyncrasy had a specific weight on the funerary space and visibility, which is finally a sign of a relative social importance. These stand out on the epigraphic record, where the vast majority of examples are plaques originally thought for *columbaria*.

It is clear that there is a question of ethnic identity raised by this burial, as well. Was this character a resident of *Gades* or was he just passing by? Was his family of Italic origin? Or was he, on the contrary, a freedman? None of these questions have definitive answers. What is fairly evident is that he decided to be buried as a local. He used images, symbols and perhaps a specific area of the necropolis as a way to relate and hybridise with the local society. This whole process shows the importance of tradition and the influence of the past at the end of the 1st century or the beginning of the 2nd century AD. It also suggests a

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[7] *Acas(tus)/ C(ai) Vale(ri)* CIL II 4970, 2 (p 1004).
[8] IRPCádiz 431; HEp 6, 1996, 522.

relationship between that past and a certain socio-economic level.

Such elements allow us to depict a complex panorama of how the Mediterranean operated in Antiquity. Cádiz is a great example of interaction and the survival of different ethnic groups because of its location and special characteristics (Padilla 2010: 263). Ethnic groups tend to define themselves in opposition to other groups and with a common origin narrative (Jiménez 2008: 355). Although the term 'archaeological cultures' should not be taken as a paradigm that actually differentiated identities, it is true that material expressions of these cultures had a meaning in the past, as they do now, mostly in those places where ethno-cultural diversity is more visible. Some of those elements are voluntarily chosen by these groups and thus the circumstances whereby they survive long periods of time in hybrid environments must be considered.

Some cities that have a specific ethnic origin, Phoenician-Punic in this case, express diversity in a particular manner, which is quite visible in the funerary world. Other sites in the region, such as *Baelo Claudia*, contribute to the understanding that these cities cannot be separated from what they were and probably still are even in Roman times (Prados 2015: 110-111).

This means that if we were to know the true original identity of the character from our *stela*, it would not be as transcendent as the circumstance by which he was so closely tied to local society. Moreover, it would not be as relevant as the reason he chose to be buried in a way that showed his wealth while also following the dominant cultural trend, which completed the whole image of prestige.

The necropolises of Cádiz are an extensive point of reference for the complexity of Roman provincial society, its nuances, its ethnic diversity and the surviving cultural expressions. *Gades* cannot be understood without *Gadir*. Examples such as this paper's object of study demonstrate how much and for how long ancient identities can influence a given society, especially in such diverse and wealthy urban settlements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIL II= *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* vol. II. *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Latinae*

CILVIII = *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* vol. VIII. *Inscriptiones Africae latinae*

HEp = Hispania Epigraphica

ILAlg = Inscriptions latines d'Algérie

ILER = Inscripciones latinas de la España romana

IRBaelo = Les inscriptions romaines de Baelo Claudia

IRPCadiz = Inscripciones romanas de la provincial de Cádiz

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