

## In memoriam Friedrich Rakob (1931-2007)

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The year 2007 has not been very merciful on the archaeology of Carthage. On December 28th, Friedrich Rakob died in Münster, where he spent the last years of his life. Fate decided that he would leave us in the same year as the other great excavator of Carthage, Hans Georg Niemeyer. In *Römische Mitteilungen* 2008, Adolf Hoffmann remembered Rakob in a very personal *in memoriam*, in which he gave full credit to the manifold interests and scientific achievements of Rakob (Hoffmann 2008). Here, we will therefore confine ourselves to a few memories and observations on Rakob's importance to Punic, Roman and modern Carthage.



Last portrait of Friedrich Rakob, drawn by his friend and collaborator Kheir-eddine Hassaine on May 8th 2007 in Münster.

Friedrich Ludwig Rakob was born on July 25th 1931 in Ennigloh (Westfalia) and studied architecture in Munich and Karlsruhe. He specialized in architectural history at the *Institut für Baugeschichte* of the *Fakultät für Bauwesen der Technischen Hochschule Karlsruhe* with Otto Schweizer and Arnold Tschira, receiving his degree in 1958. In 1962, he was appointed *Referent für römische Bauforschung* at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in Rome. For the academic year 1963/1964 he received the *Reisestipendium*, which enabled him to visit North-Africa. He completed his studies at Karlsruhe in 1967 with a dissertation on *Die Piazza d'Oro in der Villa Hadriana bei Tivoli*. Until his retirement in 1996, Rakob was attached to the DAI in Rome.

When in 1972 the UNESCO campaign *Pour sauver Carthage* was inaugurated, the DAI in Rome assumed responsibility and stepped in. Friedrich Rakob became responsible for the German contribution to this international endeavour and in 1974 started extensive excavations on a coastal strip, later known as the 'Quartier Magon' (Rakob 1992,1). Architectural remains from almost the entire history of Carthage, from the 7th century BC to the period of the Arab conquest of the city in AD 698, were encountered, documented and interpreted in the most detailed manner (Rakob 1991,1; see Niemeyer 1993; cf. Fig. 2).

Being a renowned specialist of Hellenistic and Roman architecture, a true *Bauforscher*, it comes as no surprise that especially this part of the archaeological remains received Rakob's full attention.<sup>1</sup> Not only did this lead to highly sophisticated reconstructions on paper of the often extremely disparate archaeological record, but also to very instructive visualisations in the shape of models and 1:1 reconstructions on the terrain. This kind of *mis-en-valeur* of the excavated site, always entrusted to Jan Martin Klessing, in Carthage and in Chemtou became more or less the hallmark of German archaeology in Tunisia. In the process, the modern landscape of Carthage has been enriched by several visually attractive archaeological zones within the *Parc archéologique de Carthage*: the *Quartier Magon* with small museum, the Rue Ibn Chabâat site<sup>2</sup> and (by Hans Georg Niemeyer) the Punic quarter below the *decumanus maximus* (see Fig 1). Especially the reconstruction of the ancient vestige of the Roman *cardo XVIII* at the seafront next to the 'Quartier Magon' may be considered a true blessing for modern Carthage. Since 1984, thousands of Carthaginian couples will have walked up and down this splendid seaside boulevard (the only in Carthage!) and sat down on the balustrade, overlooking the magnificent Gulf of Tunis with Cap Bon in the background. And this all, thanks to the architectural vision of Friedrich Rakob.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the other archaeological finds, especially pottery, were less close to his heart than architectural remains, Rakob always acknowledged their importance for the overall interpretation of the site. For this part of the archaeological repertoire, he could always rely on the expert knowledge of other members of his team, first and foremost of Mercedes Vegas.

<sup>2</sup> The excavations on the Ibn Chabâat site and control excavations on the northeastern part of the Bir Messaouda site will be published by Heimo Dolenz and Christof Flügel (Dolenz, Flügel forthcoming).



**Fig. 1.** Start of the work on the crossroads of the *decumanus maximus* and *cardo X* (March 1986). The ‘Ben Ayed property’ lies behind the concrete wall, left (photo Chr. Briese; archive of the Hamburg excavations, Tübingen).



**Fig. 2.** Excavation trowel of Hachemi Hamza, Rakob’s chief excavation technician, after more than 20 years of service. The trowel had been a present from Rakob to Hachemi Hamza, who was a master in making extremely clear trench sections. His skills lay to the basis of the clearcut stratigraphical documentation in the excavations of Rakob, Niemeyer, Dolenz, Flügel, Docter, Chelbi and many others (photo: R.F. Docter).

Before and after the official conclusion of the UNESCO campaign in 1984, Rakob excavated in various parts of the ancient settlement in order to get a better understanding of the layout of the Punic city. Partly, these investigations took the form of rescue excavations, as in 1983, when Friedrich Rakob and Otto Teschauer were asked by the then director of the site and museum of Carthage, Abdelmajid Ennabli, to examine and excavate structures that appeared during the construction of a swimming pool on the 'Ben Ayed property' (Fig. 1). For the first time, traces of the earliest Phoenician settlement were discovered.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of this discovery, Hans Georg Niemeyer started in 1986, on the wings of Rakob and the DAI, an excavation due East of that site (Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> From then onwards, the two German teams contributed complementary elements to Carthage's history.

For his scientific and cultural achievements, Friedrich Rakob was honoured with the German Bundesverdienstkreuz, the Tunisian 'insignes de Commandeur du Mérite culturel' and an honorary professorship at the University of Karlsruhe. We will remember him as a great scholar who left a lasting imprint on the archaeology of Carthage.

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<sup>3</sup> Rakob 1984,1; Vegas 1984. The architectural remains could be included in the architectural plans of the Hamburg excavations below the *decumanus maximus*, from Phase VIIa onwards (Niemeyer *et alii* 2007, 136-174, 195-199, 233-244, Beilagen 9-12).

<sup>4</sup> Both scholars are visible in the picture: Niemeyer in the centre with the white sunhat and Rakob in the background, wearing a light blue coat. Their *Chef du Chantier* Moncef Hamaïdia can be seen in the front, wearing a black jacket. For the final publication of these excavations, see Niemeyer *et alii* 2007, with full bibliography.

<sup>5</sup> On the occasion of a 'Hommage' for Friedrich Rakob, his Tunisian friend and colleague Abdelmajid Ennabli prepared a bibliography of his publications on Carthage and Chemtou: Ennabli 1997, 4-5. A bibliography of the excavations directed by Rakob in Carthage and including the works by other members of his team can be found in Rakob 2002, 35. His archaeological activities in Carthage from 1974 onwards have also been described in the *Jahresberichte des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Rom*, published annually in the *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (since 1975).

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