

MEDITERRANEO PUNICO
SUPPLEMENTI ALLA RIVISTA DI STUDI FENICI

Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean “Identity” and Interculturality in the Levant and Phoenician West during the 5th-2nd Centuries BCE

edited by Giuseppe Garbati and Tatiana Pedrazzi

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GIUSEPPE GARBATI AND TATIANA PEDRAZZI



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	pag.	9
SANDRO F. BONDÌ, <i>The TCM Project: From Birth to Conclusion</i>	“	11

THE LEVANT AND BEYOND

TATIANA PEDRAZZI, <i>Cultural Contacts and Materialized Connections in the Levant and Beyond (5th-2nd Centuries BCE)</i>	“	17
S. REBECCA MARTIN, <i>Phoenician versus Phoenicianism: Scholarly Categories and Collective Identities</i>	“	31
MARIANNA CASTIGLIONE, <i>The Charm of the “Other”. Greek and Phoenician Art during the 5th and 4th Centuries BCE</i>	“	45
WISSAM KHALIL, <i>Warfare and Strategies in Hellenistic Phoenicia: Political Boundaries and Military Frontiers</i>	“	75
JESSICA L. NITSCHKE, <i>Meleager’s Syrian Identity</i>	“	89
MATI JOHANANOFF, OREN TAL, <i>The Coinages of Phoenicia in the Persian Period in Light of Contemporaneous Neighboring Minting Practices</i>	“	105
SABINE FOURRIER, <i>Phoenician Identities in Cyprus in the Classical and Early Hellenistic Periods</i>	“	123
LUISA BONADIES, <i>Being Phoenician in the Egypt of Persian Period</i>	“	137

TOWARDS THE PHOENICIAN WEST

GIUSEPPE GARBATI, <i>Hegemonies, Connections and Contextual Specificities. Towards the Phoenician West (5th-2nd Centuries BCE)</i>	“	151
BRUNO D’ANDREA, <i>The Tophets of North Africa between the 4th and the 1st Centuries BCE: Practices of Belonging, Phenomena of Innovation and Strategies of Appropriation</i>	“	167
IMED BEN JERBANIA, <i>Funerary Practices and Material Culture of the Two Punic Necropoleis in the Bizerte Region: Cap Zbib and Beni Nafa</i>	“	189
MERITXELL FERRER, <i>Reshaping Identities in “Times of Crisis”: A View from Sicilian Punic Cemeteries, 6th-4th Centuries BCE</i>	“	213

ANNA CHIARA FARISELLI, <i>Tharros, the Coastal Cities of Punic Sardinia and the Carthaginian Geopolitics from the 5th to the 3rd Century BCE</i>	“	231
ANDREA ROPPA, <i>Nuraghi and the Rural Landscapes of Punic Sardinia (5th-2nd C. BCE)</i>	“	245
ANA MARÍA NIVEAU-DE-VILLEDARY Y MARIÑAS, <i>Negotiation, Premeditated Imposition or Spontaneous Phenomenon? The Specific Ritual Developed in Gadir under the Barcids</i>	“	259
MANUEL ÁLVAREZ MARTÍ-AGUILAR, <i>Melqart-Heracles and the Edge of the World: Religious Reactions to the Threat of the Ocean among the Phoenicians of Iberia</i>	“	279

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With this volume, the third in the TCM series, we have reached the final stage of the path traced by the project of the same name, dedicated to investigating the forms of self-determination implemented by ancient communities, manifested in the most varied cultural expressions. As we have pointed out on several occasions, the research was developed through the presentation of numerous case studies set – thanks to the participation of Italian and foreign colleagues, specialists in different disciplines – in the lands of the “Middle Sea”, our “sea of mediation”, starting from the Levantine regions, reaching the westernmost shores of the Mediterranean and extending as far as the Atlantic coasts of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. At the centre of the project were placed the peoples of eastern origin and tradition – the Phoenicians in the first place – observed both from a *longue durée* perspective and with a special attention to individual, local phenomena and events, particularly in the dimension of interaction and exchange.

The possibility of starting and completing the TCM – although of course the conclusion of the project certainly does not mean the end of research dedicated to the themes addressed in our three volumes – was offered first of all by the site where our own “encounter” took place ten years ago, and thus where everything started, namely the (then) *Istituto di Studi sulle Civiltà Italiche e del Mediterraneo Antico* of the CNR.¹ It is therefore only right that we once again thank our first Director, Paola Santoro, who supported us greatly at the beginning of the project. Our warm thanks also go to our present Director, Costanza Miliani, at the new *Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale*, who continues to believe in our research, and to Lorenza Ilia Manfredi, who kindly agreed to host this volume in the series of the *Supplementi alla Rivista di Studi Fenici*.

In addition, we are truly grateful to all those colleagues, both within and beyond the CNR, whether belonging to Italian and foreign institutions or working as independent researchers, who have enthusiastically participated in the volumes, bringing their knowledge and skills, stimulating lively scientific debate and – which is no less important – ensuring that dialogue could take place in an atmosphere of profound respect. All the authors of the three books – TCM I, II and III – have, with their different voices, helped to create what seems to us a rich (and, we hope, innovative) “polyphony” on the much-discussed themes of ancient and modern “identity”, culture and interculturality, and on the processes of transformation that take place through the (continuous and inevitable) encounter and clash between different perspectives, different world views and different perceptions of the meaning of events and objects.

Last but not least, we wish to sincerely thank all our friends and colleagues working in the administrative and technical sections of the Institute, who have offered their professionalism to the realization of the project in its various stages, from the organization of the Conference in 2013 to the production of the present volume. In particular, we are grateful to Laura Attisani, who has applied her expertise to curate all the graphic aspects of this work and its layout, and to CNR Edizioni, the book’s publisher.

For both of us, then, the TCM has undoubtedly been a wonderful theatre of confrontation, which, thanks to the support of all those who took part in it, has become a place of scientific and personal maturation, and for this we can only be profoundly grateful. In these times of crisis

¹ It then became ISMA (*Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico*), which subsequently merged, in turn, with the recently established ISPC (*Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale*).

and transformation, in which human mobility and encounter are strongly put to the test all over the world, we hope that we will soon experience again that dynamism and that possibility of lively but peaceful interrelations and cultural contacts that should characterize our multicoloured Mediterranean.

Giuseppe Garbati, Tatiana Pedrazzi
ISPC – CNR

THE TCM PROJECT: FROM BIRTH TO CONCLUSION

SANDRO FILIPPO BONDÌ

The publication of the third volume of the series dedicated to the theme “Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean. ‘Identity’ and Interculturality in the Levant and Phoenician West” brings to completion a project that has required great commitment; it has been conceived and elaborated over almost a decade by Giuseppe Garbati and Tatiana Pedrazzi, who have put to good use their different but complementary skills as orientalists and scholars of the ancient world.¹

It must be recognized that the project – certainly ambitious and apparently challenging to implement – has achieved significant results in many respects. First of all, it should be emphasized that, as evidenced by the three volumes that have marked the project’s stages, scholars of different origin and training and very varied skills have been invited to contribute, with the result that opportunities have been created for comparison and debate from the point of view of the various disciplines involved, of the different periods discussed, and of the horizon that constituted the geographical framework of the research.²

With regard to methodologies and disciplines, the range of the contributions is particularly significant. Scrolling through the collections of essays in the three published volumes, one is struck first of all by the variety of approaches. These include (without claiming to be exhaustive): the study of ceramics, numismatics and urban planning; the analysis of funerary rites, epigraphy and writing, and the art of war; and the study of various aspects intrinsic to the societies examined and elements of law.

Specific insights were dedicated to the cultural realities of the various areas being compared, on an expansive scale that is typical of studies on the East and the Mediterranean in antiquity, which is testament to the practicability of the experiment conducted by this project in different places and times. Here, too, it is worth remembering that the contributions range (again the list is not exhaustive) from Mesopotamia to Asia Minor, from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean to Cyprus, from Sicily to North Africa, from Sardinia to the Iberian Peninsula. And in each of these areas we appreciate the variety of approaches that have helped to clarify important elements of the cultural dynamics that took place in the individual regions.

No less relevant is the chronological aspect, organized in the volumes into three phases (12th-8th, 8th-5th and 5th-2nd centuries BCE). The validity of the overall system, in my opinion, is

¹ On the project, see the following articles by its two coordinators: G. Garbati – T. Pedrazzi, “*Identità*”, *incontri fra culture e prospettive plurilinguistiche nel Mediterraneo antico. Il progetto Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean*, in M.E. Cadeddu – C. Marras (edd.), *Linguaggi, ricerca, comunicazione. Focus CNR*, Roma 2019 (= *Plurilinguismo e Migrazioni*, 1), pp. 39-52 (<https://www.cnr.it/it/plurimi.2019>); G. Garbati, *The TCM Project: Studies and Reflections on (Phoenician) “Identity”*, in S. Celestino Pérez – E. Rodríguez González (edd.), *Un viaje entre el Oriente y el Occidente del Mediterráneo. Actas del IX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos* (22-26 octubre 2018), Mérida 2020 («Mytra», 5), pp. 917-923; T. Pedrazzi, *The TCM Project. Interculturality and “Mediterranean-Centric” Perspective*, in S. Celestino Pérez – E. Rodríguez González (edd.), *Un viaje entre el Oriente y el Occidente del Mediterráneo. Actas del IX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos* (22-26 octubre 2018), Mérida 2020 («Mytra», 5), pp. 961-967.

² Together with the present volume, see: G. Garbati – T. Pedrazzi (edd.), *Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean. “Identity” and Interculturality in the Levant and Phoenician West during the 12th-8th centuries BCE. Proceedings of the International Conference held in Rome* (May 8-9, 2013), Pisa-Roma (*Rivista di Studi Fenici*, suppl.); G. Garbati – T. Pedrazzi (edd.), *Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean. “Identity” and Interculturality in the Levant and Phoenician West during the 8th-5th centuries BCE*, Roma (*Rivista di Studi Fenici*, suppl.).

shown by the recurrence of many themes throughout the time frame considered, which gives depth to the system itself and dispels any sense that the contributions might have been casually chosen.

All this even before one recalls the fundamental core of the project, that is, the analysis of aspects of identity, of the transformations that have occurred as a result of the relations between various “ethnic groups” and of the crises that sometimes followed. With regard to the first aspect, one cannot fail to note that the concept of identity, in the sense in which it is commonly used today, is essentially foreign to the ancient world. Only one example comes to mind: Herodotus (VIII 144) defines Greek identity (*to hellenikón*) as the commonality of blood and language, places of worship, sacred rites and more generally of customs. This may also give rise to the same difficulty in modern thought, not only in defining the identity of ancient cultures but also – and perhaps above all from the TCM’s perspectives – in recognizing in the term/concept of identity itself a fully operative research tool that is applicable to historical investigations. In recent years, a comprehensive debate has been under way on this issue, to which the two scholars who conceived the TCM project have recently made various contributions, mainly focused on the Levant and the Phoenician world.³ One must remember, moreover, that in the last decade the Phoenician field has enjoyed a privileged position, with individual research, collective publications and study meetings dedicating a series of analyses to the subject.⁴

In the TCM volumes, alongside the attention paid to the methods of use and “management” of the notion of identity, emphasis is also placed on the notion of interculturality, another key term/concept of the research; and this interculturality has been explored, as already mentioned, in relation to different geographical quadrants and chronological phases, thus confirming the validity of a project that unfolds over a wide horizon of time and space. In all three volumes derived from the project, therefore, what clearly emerges is the centrality of cultural interactions, which matured at various levels, in the different territories examined (from the Levant to Atlantic Spain), as well as the formation of mixed communities (of which numerous settlements in Cyprus and Sardinia are now very evident examples) and the presence of individuals and/or communities of Levantines, mostly “Phoenicians”, in foreign lands (Etruria and Egypt are both emblematic in this respect). Such dynamics of encounter, which on the level of historical analysis must (rightly) entail the adoption of very nuanced visions of the concept of “culture”, force us to see the different degrees of interaction and exchange (which may be more or less conscious and more or less marked, at times, by moments of conflict).

³ E.g. G. Garbati, *Fingere l'identità fenicia: Melqart “di/ sopra šr”*, in «RStFen» 40, 2012 [2014], pp. 159-174 and T. Pedrazzi, *Fingere l'identità fenicia: confini e cultura materiale in Oriente*, in «RStFen» 40, 2012 [2014], pp. 137-158.

⁴ To mention some examples: P. Xella, *I Fenici e gli “Altri”. Dinamiche di identità culturale*, in M. Congiu – C. Micciché – S. Modeo – L. Santagati (edd.), *Greci e Punici in Sicilia tra V e IV secolo a.C. Atti del Convegno* (Caltanissetta, 6-7 ottobre 2007), Caltanissetta-Roma 2008, pp. 69-79; C. Bonnet, *On Gods and Earth. The Tophet and the Construction of a New Identity in Punic Carthage*, in E.S. Gruen (ed.), *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Los Angeles 2011, pp. 373-387; C. Bonnet, *Lorsque les “autres” entrent dans la danse ... Lectures phéniciennes des identités religieuses en contexte multiculturel*, in P. Payen – É. Scheid-Tissinier (edd.), *Anthropologie de l'Antiquité. Anciens objets, nouvelles approches*, Turnhout 2012, pp. 101-119; J.C. Quinn – N.C. Vella (edd.), *The Punic Mediterranean: Identities and Identification from Phoenician Settlement to Roman Rule*, Rome 2014 («Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome»); P. Xella, *“Origini” e “identità”*, in «MEFRA» 126, 2014 (on line: <http://journals.openedition.org/mefra/2278>); F. Porzia, *“Imagine There’s No Peoples”. A Claim against the Identity Approach in Phoenician Studies through Comparison with the Israelite Field*, in «RStFen» 46, 2018, pp. 11-27; J.C. Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians*, Princeton 2018; I. Oggiano, *Who Were the “Phoenicians”? A Set of Hypotheses Inviting Debate and Dissent*, in «JRA» 32, 2019, pp. 584-591.

As we can see, aspects of interculturality remain prevalent in the set of achievements that the project has generated in the course of its development. In the climate that we have been experiencing in recent decades, in which many people prefer to emphasize identity differentiations rather than commonality, this may be a useful reminder to us of the substantial unity that in many respects the ancient world knew in the Mediterranean area: not *mare nostrum*, but everyone's sea.