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Un viaje entre el Oriente
y el Occidente del
Mediterráneo

A Journey between East
and West in the
Mediterranean

SEBASTIÁN CELESTINO PÉREZ
ESTHER RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ
(Eds.)

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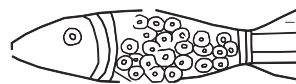
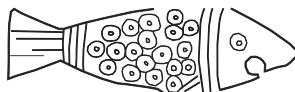
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WHY IS THE DOMAIN OF PHOENICIAN-PUNIC STUDIES STILL SO FRAGMENTED? A PLEA FOR THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PHOENICIAN AND PUNIC STUDIES

ROALD F. DOCTER¹

ABSTRACT

In this contribution the current fragmented situation of the discipline of Phoenician-Punic Studies is described and discussed. Attention is drawn to five challenges: the potential attendees of the four-annual congresses, international mobility of (junior) scholars, numbers of students and publications, and means of (digital) communication. A plea is made to overcome this fragmented state by creating an international organization that would include all working in the domain; its benefits are outlined and a proposal for setting things in motion is formulated.

KEYWORDS

Future of the Discipline, Internationalization, Congresses, Scholarly Debate, Sabatino Moscati, Hans Georg Niemeyer, Publication Strategies, Languages, Organizations.

RESUMEN

En este artículo se describe y discute la situación actual de fragmentación de la disciplina de los estudios fenicio-púnicos. Se llama la atención sobre cinco desafíos: los potenciales asistentes a los congresos cuatrienales, la movilidad internacional de los académicos (jóvenes), el número de estudiantes y de publicaciones, y los medios de comunicación (digital). Se hace un llamamiento para superar este estado fragmentado mediante la creación de una organización internacional que incluya a todos los que trabajan en este campo; se esbozan sus beneficios y se formula una propuesta para poner las cosas en marcha.

PALABRAS CLAVES

Futuro de la disciplina, Internacionalización, Congresos, Debate académico, Sabatino Moscati, Hans Georg Niemeyer, Estrategias de publicación, Idiomas, Organizaciones.

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The presentation of the following text at the IX International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies in Merida started with a word of thanks to Sebastián Celestino Pérez and his staff for the organization of the congress and to Joseph A. Greene for chairing the session. I deliberately read these introductory acknowledgements in Dutch in order to confront the non-Dutch-speaking audience with language barriers felt by some at this international venue². It was intended as a reminder that congresses like these are meant for *communication*.

It is telling for the state of affairs in the discipline of Phoenician-Punic studies that this congress has started with a session on historiography – the *history*, but not the *future* of our discipline. In fact, nowhere in the programme any space was foreseen to discuss how the future of the discipline could or should look like. We can hardly blame the organization in Merida for it, since our Spanish colleagues had taken over last minute the organization of the congress after our Sardinian colleagues had encountered difficulties in doing so. Many colleagues felt that the standing scientific committee had missed the opportunity to insist that the topic of this presentation, dealing exactly with the future, would have been scheduled in a *plenary* session rather than in the smallest room available in the building and without immediate discussion. It was, therefore, a wise decision that on suggestion of one of the members of the standing scientific committee, Helene Sader, the discussion of the subject was moved to the plenary closing session of the congress.

It is equally telling that even 21 years after the passing of Sabatino Moscati still every initiative seems to be measured against his views, or what some think are his views. 44 years ago, so two generations ago, Moscati indeed was *the* visionary dean of our discipline, and particularly the discipline in Italy, but the field has moved on and we have been living in the 21st century for almost two decades now.

In fact, the core of this topic had already been discussed five years before, at the VIII International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies at Carbonia and Sant’Antioco in 2013, where I made an appeal to the audience and the then standing scientific committee in a presentation with the title: “«I Fenici siamo noi»: Phoenician Studies from the Mediterranean to Hamburg and Beyond”, but nothing had happened in the ensuing years³. My 2013 presentation was motivated by the suggestion of some members of the standing committee that the foundation of the International Phoenician and Punic Studies Association (IPPSA) after the VI International Congress in Lisbon (2005), should have been discussed plenary during that congress. Unfortunately, the intermediate VII International Congress at Hammamet (2009) proved not to be the occasion to make up for this apparent oversight, since the organizers formally denied IPPSA to meet during the congress⁴. Since the 2013 presentation had not been submitted for publication in the proceedings of that congress, its main contents will be included here⁵.

The quote in the title of the 2013 contribution (‘I Fenici siamo noi’) seems to answer the question posed by the *National Geographic* magazine some ten years before: “Who were the Phoenicians?” (Gore 2004).

² The Dutch text read as follows: “In de eerste plaats wil ik de collega’s in Merida – en dan in het bijzonder Sebastián Celestino – danken voor de organisatie van dit congres. In mijn dank wil ik graag de juniorstaf uit Merida en Alicante betrekken. Ook dank ik de voorzitter van deze sessie, Joseph Greene, voor de gelegenheid om hier te kunnen spreken.”

³ The session in which the presentation was scheduled in 2013 had been chaired by M.H. Fantar.

⁴ The reason given for the refusal – in an answer that took two (!) years to be formulated – was that the organizers were not in the position to allow any organization to hold meetings in Tunisia. Shortly thereafter, however, the president of the Hammamet congress invited the international members of the Corpus des Antiquités Phéniciennes et Puniques (CAPP), part of l’Union Académique Internationale, to gather during the congress.

⁵ For the first time in the history of the International Congresses of Phoenician and Punic Studies the publication of the Proceedings stirred a huge debate through personal email networks and on social media. The choice of publisher had not been appreciated by many in Italy and abroad, so that an appeal was launched to withdraw manuscripts from the Proceedings. See now, Guirguis 2017; 2018.

Little did the editors of that magazine know that they borrowed the title from the first of a series of three books written by Sabatino Moscati (Moscati 1992). The quote itself, “I Fenici siamo noi”, reputedly has been of Moscati himself; at least that is what Hans Georg Niemeyer, one of the other deans of our discipline, recalled at several occasions. Since both scholars are unfortunately no longer amongst us, at least not physically, there is no objective way of checking the correctness of the quote. When correct, however, it must have been meant jokingly, ‘scherzando’, one may assume.

There is a remark by Moscati, though, that cannot be denied to be his, since he published it in 1974, 44 years ago, when speaking of the state of affairs of Phoenician-Punic studies: “Parziali, frammentari, disorganici: tali appaiono dunque ancor oggi come in passato, gli studi fenici” (Moscati 1974: 15-16). Five years later, in his inaugural salute to the First International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies in Rome, he used the same remark, but now referring only to the past (Moscati 1983: 5). Apparently, in the meantime many things had changed for the better, and he lists them as four major ‘esigenze’, which one may translate as ‘requirements’, that by then had already been fulfilled. First, the formation on a university level, second the creation of a Centre for Phoenician and Punic Studies, third, a concerted research agenda with excavations in Italy and abroad, and fourth, a publication strategy. Reading his inaugural salute, one is struck – again – by its exceptional visionary spirit, albeit mainly with a national perspective. Italian archaeologists, epigraphists, historians, linguists, art historians, and numismatists have benefitted from this visionary agenda ever since. But not only our Italian colleagues, all others present at these international congresses of Phoenician and Punic Studies too, since without Moscati, there would not have been a series of four-annual international meetings, at least not in the present form (Vella 1996).

The archives of the late Hans Georg Niemeyer contained a manuscript of an unpublished lecture written sometime in 1980. Due to its programmatic contents, Niemeyer had likely submitted this when soliciting for the position of full professor at the University of Hamburg (‘Bewerbungsvortrag’). Its title may be translated as ‘Domain: Phoenician Archaeology. On the position of a separate branch of Mediterranean archaeology in the German-speaking sciences’ (posthumously published as Niemeyer 2013a). In it, Niemeyer makes a strong plea for the accreditation of Phoenician-Punic studies as a separate domain in Germany, much along the lines set out by Moscati in Italy. Unfortunately, apart from a temporary chair of Phoenician archaeology at the Ruhruniversität Bochum and two Universities where Phoenician-Punic archaeological research in the widest sense is conducted (Tübingen and Darmstadt), nothing has come out of this programmatic plea. On the contrary, Phoenician archaeology has even completely disappeared in Hamburg since the retirement of Niemeyer in 1999 (see Docter 2009; and, posthumously, Niemeyer 2013b). Fortunately, outside Germany proper, one should mention the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in Madrid, where Phoenician-Punic archaeology still flourishes with important fieldwork projects on the Iberian Peninsula and in Morocco. At the same time, however, one has witnessed over the last decade the gradual disappearance of the German language as a major scientific language in the discipline of Phoenician-Punic studies.

In 1979, so more or less at the same time Niemeyer wrote his 1980 lecture, Edward Lipiński founded in Leuven an Interuniversity Contact Group on Phoenician and Punic Studies, undoubtedly inspired by the example set by Moscati in Italy. This group has flourished till well into the Nineties of the last century, but its activities have been reduced since to the publication of a series of authoritative monographs.

The late Seventies and early Eighties of the last century were in all respects a busy period in Phoenician-Punic studies, starting with the ground-breaking *Phönizier im Westen* conference in Cologne of the year 1979. In hindsight, its success may well be explained by the swift publication of its proceedings, only three years later (Niemeyer 1982), but equally important was the fact that for the first time it brought together scholars working in the eastern, central, and western Mediterranean.

Seven months later, the Cologne Meeting was followed by the first International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies in Rome to which no less than 283 participants attended. Having its venue in Rome, it comes as no surprise that Italian scholars dominated the programme, but at the same time this also testifies to the fact that the efforts of Moscati were already paying off (Moscati 1983).

The second International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies in Rome of 1987 probably attracted an equally numerous audience, although it proved impossible to check this with a list of participants. The number of 151 is based upon those figuring in the publication, but there must have been more present, registered or not (Acquaro *et alii* 1991)⁶. The graphs illustrating the attendances at the following seven International Congresses of Phoenician and Punic Studies are illuminating of the development our discipline has taken since the Eighties of the last century (Fantar and Ghaki 1995; Aubet and Barthélemy 2000; Spanò Giammellaro 2005; Arruda 2013; 2014; Fantar and Ferjaoui 2018; Guirguis 2017; 2018. Cf. Falsone 1992; Vella 1996)⁷. One important congress outside of this series is included as well, the *I Fenici, Ieri, Oggi, Domani* conference of 1994 that attempted to formulate a state of the art of the field in a coherent manner (AA.VV. 1995). The average number of participants to the four-annual meetings is 262. If there is one constant element in the graphs, it is the strong presence in all congresses of Spanish and Italian scholars and, as Moscati remarked in 1995, also of Tunisian scholars, especially in the years when the conferences were held in Tunisia (Moscati 1995: 10). This may easily be explained by the fact that in all three countries the study of Phoenician and Punic culture belongs to the *national* history and archaeology and, hence, also enters the domain of national heritage management. It comes as no surprise that French scholarship, due to France's special colonial relationship with North-Africa, holds an equally important position in these congresses⁸.

On an organizational level, and apart from the four-annual congresses, there are several institutions that represent part of the scientific community in our field of studies. In the first place there is the Rome-based Centro di Studio per la Civiltà Fenicia e Punica, founded by Moscati at the early age of 47, and its successive follow-ups (currently Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico - ISMA). The Leuven-based Study Group of Lipiński had been composed for a large part of Belgian scholars. The Centro de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos (CEFYP) is with a current membership of 110 practically solely composed of Spanish scholars. It is an extremely active group that regularly organizes conferences, keeps a website up-to-date and represents the specific scientific community in Spain and more widely the Iberian Peninsula. The rules of membership are clear and the annual membership fee is relatively low for European standards (currently 30 Euros). In Tunisia, a Study Group exists within the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP) that includes all working in the domain of Phoenician and Punic studies. Since a few years, the colleagues of Oxford University have organized a UK-wide study group, the Oxford Centre for Phoenician and Punic

⁶ Being a student at the time, I did not register either and, hence, neither paid the registration fee but just attended the lectures. One has to praise the organizers of the International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies at Carbonia and Sant'Antioco for having waived the registration fee for all participants, enabling younger scholars and students to attend as well. Also the Merida congress was exempt of registration fees for students, and the same may have been the case for earlier congresses in this series.

⁷ The numbers and percentages given are those published in the preliminary or final programs and may well differ from the real attendances. Many people that initially registered may not have been able to partake for a number of reasons; alternatively, unregistered people may have turned up during the congresses as well. The fact that more and more multi-authored papers are presented, with only one or two authors actually attending, may also contribute to a distortion of the numbers.

⁸ The close ties between French and North-African scholarship is nowhere better described than in the important study by C. Gutron (2010) on archaeology in Tunisia during the 19th and 20th century. At the same time, however, this study illustrates the risks of such intimate, but inward-looking relationship; the contribution of non-francophone scholarship to the archaeology of Tunisia (Italian, German, British, US, ...) is almost completely invisible. The bibliography is telling in this respect: 523 French titles, 9 English and 2 Italian.

Studies (OCTOPUS), with a mailing list and connected to a regular series of meetings and conferences, the UK Punic Network Graduate Workshops. After the conclusion of the memorable sixth International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies at Lisbon in 2005, an International Phoenician and Punic Studies Association (IPPSA) had been created by a few colleagues from different areas of the discipline and from different countries. It has fared well for some years with over 160 members, but lacking a strict institutional embedding and financial means, even its primary aim, offering a platform for communication within the scientific community, has unfortunately not been kept up. Elsewhere, there are several other initiatives and organizations that deal with the core-business of our discipline. One may mention in this respect the International Centre of Phoenician, Punic and Roman Studies at Marsala, the Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa (UNIARQ), the Instituto Arqueológico Alemán (DAI Madrid), the Società Scientifica Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Cartagine (SAIC) at Tunis, the Network “Von Kanaan nach Gibraltar und zurück – Die Phönizier im Mittelmeerraum” at Darmstadt (see Bolder-Boos and Bagherpour Kashani 2019), the Society for Phoenician and Punic Studies in Japan, and many more.

How, then, may we define the current state of affairs in Phoenician-Punic studies? The answer must be, regrettably, that the ‘studi fenici’ in the words of Moscati are still or again “parziali, frammentari, disorganici,” and ironically, especially in Italy. One wonders what Sabatino Moscati would have said if he were still amongst us. It seems that now at least five challenges are at stake, also on a more international level, instead of Moscati’s four major ‘esigenze’ or ‘requirements’ that essentially had a national Italian bearing.

In the first place, one may ask whether our four-annual venues are attracting the full potential of scholars working in the domain. It seems that this is not the case: 17% of the CEFYP membership had registered at the VIII International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies at Carbonia and Sant’Antioco and only 14% of the IPPSA membership, half of which overlapping. At the IX Congress at Merida the numbers were 39% and 24% respectively⁹. So, a large potential of scholars is not partaking in these congresses that theoretically should be *THE* meeting place for debate, scholarly exchange and networking. There seems to be the need for some orchestrated action to arrive at an even higher and internationally broader participation grade. This is crucial for the future, since the four-annual international congresses form the sole binding element of our discipline. The congresses are always organized locally by an *ad hoc* national committee under the *aegis* of the standing international scientific committee¹⁰.

In the second place, it is clear that the domain of Phoenician and Punic studies is more international than ever. By way of example one may look at those registered at the VIII International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies at Carbonia and Sant’Antioco. Almost 10% is affiliated to an institution in a country other than where he or she took his or her university formation. At the IX International Congress at Merida this percentage was nearly 7%.¹¹ Mobility amongst especially junior scholars on PhD and Postdoctoral level is higher than a generation ago. International collaborations in field projects are more and more the rule.

In the third place, the domain of Phoenician and Punic studies is larger than ever, with more scholars and students participating. One only has to look at the number of students entering the curricula of archaeology at our universities and the number of PhD’s that are finished every year within the domain and compare these with the numbers in the sixties and seventies of the last century.

⁹ The fact that some participants to the Merida congress explicitly gave the CEFYP as their academic affiliation, is a clear proof of their estimation of the association and proudness of their membership.

¹⁰ The standing international scientific committee, formed by co-optation, currently consists of Ana Margarida Arruda (Portugal), Maria Eugenia Aubet (Spain), Piero Bartoloni (Italy), Mhammed Hassine Fantar (Tunisia), Michel Al-Maqdissi (France/Syria), Dirce Marzoli (Germany/Spain), Jean-Paul Morel (France), Helene Sader (Lebanon), and Francesca Spatafora (Italy).

¹¹ Although the percentage of Merida is lower, the absolute numbers have risen since Carbonia/Sant’Antioco.

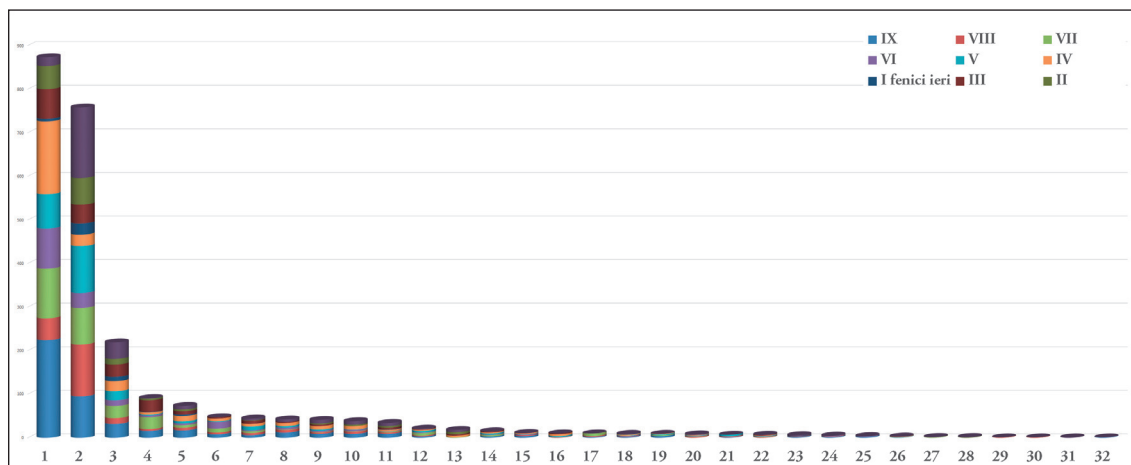


Fig. 1. Participation to the nine international congresses of Phoenician and Punic Studies, Rome 1979 (N=283), Rome 1987 (N=151), Tunis 1991 (N=202), Cádiz 1995 (N=291), Palermo 2000 (N=255), Lisbon 2005 (N=183), Hammamet 2009 (N=298), Carbonia/Sant'Antioco 2013 (N=235), Merida 2018 (N=463), and the I Fenici: Ieri oggi domani congress in Rome of 1994. 1: Spain; 2: Italy; 3: France; 4: Tunisia; 5: Germany; 6: Portugal; 7: Lebanon; 8: USA; 9: United Kingdom; 10: Israel; 11: Belgium; 12: Malta; 13: Denmark; 14: Morocco; 15: Canada; 16: The Netherlands; 17: Japan; 18: Cyprus; 19: Greece; 20: Sweden; 21: Austria; 22: Australia; 23: Switzerland; 24: Poland; 25: Algeria; 26: Russia; 27: Syria; 28: Andorra; 29: Libya; 30: Brazil; 31: South Africa; 32: Ecuador (R. Docter and V. Martínez Hahn Müller).

In the fourth place, the number of publications has witnessed an incredible increase over the past decades, which is logical given the exponentially growing number of scholars active in the domain (Niemeyer 1995: 430). Also, it seems that the number of multi-authored publications is on the rise, as are multi-authored presentations at the four-annual congresses. This seems to be in line with a general evolution in publication strategies in the humanities and archaeology in particular, which is more in line with practises in the sciences.

In the fifth place, one has to face the fact that the means of communication are far more developed than some decades ago. Students in the twenty-first century will start any research by taking the digital highway, be it at Google Scholar.com, Academia.net, or the Dyabola bibliographical website. Most scholars, too, rely upon digital ways of communication and information for keeping track with developments in the field, be it through websites, blogs, mailing lists, Twitter, or Facebook pages (Niemeyer 1995: 433).

Where do these challenges lead us? Considering the many and varied national and international initiatives already taking place, it is clear that there is an apparent need felt in the scientific community for some form of organization and communication next to the regular four-annual congresses. One has to face the fact that this inevitably leads to the need of creating a permanent international organization or association for Phoenician and Punic studies that includes and represents all scholars working in the domain and serves as a platform for communication.

The benefits of such an organization are manifold. It will offer a clear international visibility, like in the case of the Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica (AIAC), the International Association for Assyriology (IAA), the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), or the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA). A large and respected international organization can effectively weigh upon political decisions, make statements when e.g. archaeological sites are endangered or departments, institutions or schools are threatened to be closed. An international organization can also serve as a vehicle to attract international funding. Membership of international professional organizations is considered an added quality in

applications, both for research grants, scholarships, and academic positions. It offers also the benefit of website visibility. An up-to-date membership list of such an international organization or association would also make sure that the organizers of the four-annual congresses are in regulation with the new EU GDPR law (General Data Protection Regulation). The membership list can then be legally used for convocations or announcements, not least also for fieldwork calls and job opportunities. Finally, this international organization should provide a representative framework for the organization of the four-annual congresses.

On the basis of many discussions with colleagues before and during the congress, the following proposal was formulated, first to be discussed with all present in Merida and then with as many scholars as possible in the field:

1. Founding of an International Association for Phoenician and Punic Studies;
2. Formulation of Statutes and Bylaws for the association;
3. Creation of a permanent seat for the association;
4. Membership for all effectively working and publishing in the field, from level Master student on;
5. Democratic election of a governing board;
6. inclusion of the present international scientific committee in some form;
7. An organizational transition period.

Only in this way, one may hope that the discipline re-unites again and prepares itself for a future in the 21st century. On the first day of the congress, admittedly in another context, Fabio Porzia used the metaphor of the mosaic, concluding that we should leave this behind and instead go for the metaphor of 'action painting'. It is precisely this static metaphor of the mosaic that aptly describes the current state-of-affairs of the discipline of Phoenician-Punic Studies. Let us change the metaphor, indeed, into 'action painting' and act now!

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El presente volumen recoge parte de las contribuciones presentadas durante el IX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos que tuvo lugar en Mérida entre los días 22 y 26 de octubre de 2018. Este encuentro, reúne cada cuatro años a los mayores especialistas en el conocimiento de las Culturas Fenicia y Púnica. Estos cuatro volúmenes recopilan parte de las novedades históricas y arqueológicas que fueron presentadas durante las jornadas. Los libros se estructuran en 15 áreas temáticas, además de los posters presentados y los trabajos correspondientes al Taller Doctoral.

This volume contains some of the contributions presented at the 9th International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies that took place in Mérida (Spain) between the 22-26 October 2018.

This international scientific meeting is held every four years to bring together experts in Phoenician and Punic culture. These four volumes compile part of the new historical and archaeological data that was presented at the congress. The books are structured into 15 thematic sections and posters and papers derived from the Doctoral Workshop are also included.