

# FIFTY YEARS OF THE *RIVISTA DI STUDI FENICI*

IDA OGGIANO

*For Sabatino Moscati, one hundred years after his birth*

The *Rivista di Studi Fenici* is fifty years old: half a century of history, that of the discipline related to Phoenician and Punic studies, straddling two centuries, the 20th and 21st, that have experienced sudden cultural changes and developments with all that this entails in the transformation of methodological perspectives and the quantity and quality of information available to scholars of Mediterranean history.

Fifty years following the furrow traced by Sabatino Moscati and the pioneering initiative to found a discipline and a scientific journal dedicated to it. In the new course of the *Rivista*, as I wrote in the editorial of the first issue I directed,<sup>1</sup> the discipline is now moving into new regions, new chronological areas, and undertaking the study of new themes with new or renewed methodological approaches.

To celebrate *RStFen* 50, we have decided to publish Sabatino Moscati's Introduction to the first issue of the *Rivista*, written in 1973, in memory of the distinguished scholar who founded and believed in the intercultural values of this Mediterranean discipline, a scholar whose centenary is being celebrated right now by bringing together Italian experts at the Accademia dei Lincei, in Rome, in November 2022. Given the policy of maximum accessibility that the *Rivista* promotes, Moscati's text is reprinted both in the original Italian version (and in the original format of the 1973 Review) and with an English translation.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the publication of this text, which has marked the *Rivista*'s history, we have entrusted two researchers who have dealt extensively and fruitfully with identity issues with the task of taking stock of the last decade of research on Phoenician identity. Giuseppe Garbati and Tatiana Pedrazzi are two Italian scholars who are part of the Phoenician and Punic Research Group of the Institute of Cultural Heritage Sciences of the CNR, which is the heir to the institute founded by Sabatino Moscati: the vitality and importance of the Italian school in the Phoenician field are confirmed by the activities of this research group within the new institute. While, in fact, many scholars deal with the discipline in many parts of the world, it is still the CNR that brings together a compact research group specialised in the history and archaeology of the Phoenician and Punic world in a single institution. Moscati's original idea, although the names of the CNR Institutes have changed rapidly over time, remains valid and successful, well represented today and projected into the future, thanks also to the younger researchers who have joined the research between East and West.

With a view to the international dialogue of which Sabatino Moscati was always a promoter, we asked Nicholas C. Vella, a member of the scientific committee and a fine connoisseur of the theoretical debate surrounding issues relating to the discipline, to write a free reflection on the current role of the Review also in relation to its past history.

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1 I. Oggiano, *Editoriale*, in «RStFen» 44, 2016, pp. 9-11.

2 I. Oggiano, *Lost in Translation. The Compromise of Translating non-English Writings*, in «RStFen» 49, 2021, pp. 151-152.

In the new century, the *Rivista* has had to keep up with advances in publishing and therefore we celebrate it with the introduction of open access. This does not mean that we're turning our back on the printed version, which will continue to be printed thanks to the fruitful cooperation with Quasar Editore. We scholars know that nothing can ever compare to the joy of leafing through a paper book in a library. But the Open Access movement in itself provides elements of fascination equal to those of the printed press: how can we not bring to mind a principle such as the democratisation of scientific information?

The adoption of OA is the first step in the Open Science mandate, which is now the approach enshrined in the major research infrastructures and programmes of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. This moment of renewal in publishing policy is also marked by a coincidence. The year 2022 marks the 20th anniversary of the Budapest Open Access Initiative, released on the 14th of February, 2002 (<https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read/>), a true milestone in the open access movement.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the 2022 meeting was to accelerate efforts to make the products of scientific research freely accessible online, enshrining the commitment of the signatory institutions to support open access as a fundamental tool for the dissemination of knowledge. While publishing research results is for a researcher one of the fundamental moments of his or her work as a scholar, a moment in which “he or she fully assumes his or her responsibilities as an archaeologist”,<sup>4</sup> the next step is to publish them open access, which must become a true institutional duty for research institutions and academies conducting their research with public funding.

Thanks to the introduction of open access, this issue experiments with the possibility of offering a hybrid contribution such as the one on Levantine amphorae, in which the extensive catalogue is accessible online and thus without the limitations that printed paper would have posed.

Finally, how better to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary than with the publication of a volume full of quality contributions ranging from historical to archaeological disciplines, from epigraphy to linguistics and from the eastern to the western Mediterranean? In short, the Phoenician Sea still has much to tell and the Journal of Phoenician Studies still has much life to live.

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3 «Archeologia e Calcolatori», created and edited by Paola Moscati, has pioneered the Open Archive Initiative since 2005. It inspired us to embark on the new open access adventure of *RStFen*. I would like to thank all the colleagues of the Open Data Group of the Institute of Cultural Heritage Sciences for their support, especially Alessandra Piergrossi, Salvatore Fiorino and Nicolò Paraciani. Thanks also to Sara Di Marcello who, as head of CNR edizioni, encouraged and followed this important moment for *RStFen*.

4 D. Manacorda, *Lezioni di archeologia*, Roma-Bari 2008, p. 235.

# PRESENTATION

SABATINO MOSCATI\*

Phoenician studies have had a singular fate. They have been approached from mostly sectoral, incomplete, and minority points of view. It seems to us that three main sorts of approach can be discerned: from semitics, with the development of valuable but often circumscribed epigraphic research; from archaeology, in the context of excavations that at times exaggerated the Phoenician phase and in any case were mostly limited, given the preparation and interest of the archaeologists, to the perspective of monumental description; from political and religious history, on decidedly classical bases that, if justified by the prevalence of direct sources, have sometimes even gone so far as to ignore direct sources.

No situation is determined, in studies, by pure chance. Therefore, even the one described here has its reasons, which, in large part, can be found in the very nature of the sources on Phoenician civilisation (understood, let us say straight away, in the broadest sense and therefore including the world of Carthage and the colonies in the West). Yes, the documents are numerous: but in repeating the names of the gods and those of the dedicators to their fullest extent, they say little about beliefs and rituals, nothing or nothing about myths and historical events. Archaeology has large gaps, among which those of Tyre and Carthage can be considered emblematic (they seem to be diminishing) and abounds instead in the remains of “minor” arts that are not always characterised and characterising, sometimes radiating out of places of origin that are not easy to recognise.

Despite all explanations, however, the state of studies remains unsatisfactory and disorganised, with incomplete perspectives that overlap in no way at all and above all with inadequate training that perpetuates the situation. As an organic discipline, in terms of comprehensive training for those who devote themselves to the field, it can be said that, for Phoenician studies, they have so far been almost non-existent. Yet, there is no doubt that they reflect a great civilisation, protagonist along with the Greeks of the beginnings of history on the Mediterranean shores. Whatever the reasons, the gap between the state of Phoenician studies and that of Greek studies is today, in both structure and achievement, striking.

To reduce this gap as far as possible we have recently begun an endeavour in Italy. This has been done in various ways: the beginning of research in particular, not only archaeological, for which we have brought together scholars from different backgrounds, in order to prepare for the day when there will be a unitary formation; the launch of a series of publications, to provide said research with an outlet and encouragement; the establishment of university courses in the major centres concerned (Cagliari, Palermo, Rome), which are essential for the training mentioned above. Finally, we have set up a specific body, the Study Centre for Phoenician and Punic Civilisation of the National Research Council, at the University of Rome.

The “*Rivista di Studi Fenici*” that we are presenting today follows this line. For this publication, we ask first and foremost for the collaboration of our foreign colleagues, which is fundamental given the organic perspective that we hold dear and especially necessary in the world of studies that widely radiates in the space

\* This *Presentation* is the English translation of: S. Moscati, *Presentazione*, in «RStFen» 1, 1973, pp. 1-2 (adaptation from the Italian by Ida Oggiano and Amy Sue Bennet). The original article is reproduced at the end of this text.

between East and West. At the same time, we ask for contributions from Italian scholars who are involved in Phoenician studies, so that the variety of interests and backgrounds becomes a fruitful stimulus. It is no coincidence that a journal in the sphere of the one we are presenting has not existed up until now: with it, therefore, we aim to offer a common forum to all those interested in these studies, reducing the dispersion of writings in the most varied and least typical journals that we have witnessed up until now.

Given what we have said about the research policy from which the “Rivista di Studi Fenici” was born, it is evident that it is particularly open to young people, for whom the organic education we are pursuing is intended. If our predictions are right, developments in these studies will soon make them better than us, who had to begin in almost pioneering conditions. And if such a situation prevails, we will certainly refrain from offering them (as is customary in similar circumstances) any type of message. In the world of scientific research, after all, the most effective messages are those that are implicit in works and examples: for those who are capable of understanding them, there is no need to declare them: for those who are not capable, declaring them declaring them is simply a waste of boastful words.

We, however, and we want to reaffirm this, have believed in the validity of the message offered to us by our own country: that of a scientific tradition that is transmitted through freedom, renewed through respect, and affirmed through continuity beyond the individual protagonists. The dedication that opens this presentation is intended to be, in general and for Phoenician studies in particular, an explicit reminder of a heritage of doctrine, of example, of remembrance.

CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE  
CENTRO DI STUDIO PER LA CIVILTÀ FENICIA E PUNICA  
PRESSO L'ISTITUTO DI STUDI DEL VICINO ORIENTE DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

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## PRESENTAZIONE

Alla venerata memoria  
di Giorgio Levi Della Vida

*Gli studi fenici hanno avuto un destino singolare. Sono stati affrontati da punti di vista per lo più settoriali, incompleti, minoritari. Ci sembra che si possano riscontrare soprattutto tre vie di avvicinamento: dalla semitistica, con lo sviluppo di ricerche epigrafiche pregevoli ma spesso in sé circoscritte; dall'archeologia, nell'ambito di imprese di scavo talora esorbitanti la fase fenicia e comunque per lo più limitate, stanti la preparazione e gl'interessi degli archeologi, alla prospettiva della descrizione monumentale; dalla storia politica e religiosa, su basi decisamente classiche che, se sono giustificate dal prevalere delle fonti indirette, hanno talvolta portato fino a ignorare le fonti dirette.*

*Nessuna situazione si determina, negli studi, per puro caso. E dunque anche quella ora descritta ha le sue ragioni, che possono ravvisarsi in larga parte nella natura stessa delle fonti sulla civiltà fenicia (intesa, diciamo subito, nel senso più vasto e dunque includente anche il mondo di Cartagine e delle colonie in Occidente). I documenti sono, sì, numerosi: ma nel ripetere a sazietà i nomi degli dèi e quelli dei dedicanti, poco dicono sulle credenze e sui riti, nulla o quasi sui miti e sulle vicende storiche. L'archeologia ha grosse lacune, tra cui possono considerarsi emblematiche quelle di Tiro e di Cartagine (sembra in via di diminuzione), e abbonda invece nei resti di arti « minori » non sempre caratterizzate e caratterizzanti, talora irradiate fuori di sedi di provenienza che non è facile riconoscere.*

*Malgrado ogni spiegazione, però, resta uno stato degli studi insoddisfacente e disorganico, con prospettive incomplete che spesso non si toccano neppure, e soprattutto con formazioni inadeguate che perpetuano la situazione. Come disciplina organica, sulla base di una formazione completa per coloro che vi si dedicano, si può dire che gli studi fenici siano stati finora quasi inesistenti. Eppure, non v'è dubbio che essi riflettono una grande civiltà, protagonista insieme a quella greca degl'inizi della storia sulle rive mediterranee. Quali che ne siano le ragioni, il divario tra lo stato degli studi fenici e quello degli studi greci è oggi, nelle strutture e nelle realizzazioni, impressionante.*

*A ridurre tale divario, nei limiti del possibile, ci siamo adoperati recentemente in Italia. E ciò per varie vie: l'inizio di ricerche in specie ma non soltanto archeologiche, nelle quali abbiamo di necessità posto insieme studiosi di formazione diversa, per preparare il giorno in cui vi sarà una formazione unitaria; l'avvio di una serie di pubblicazioni, nelle quali le ricerche trovino sbocco e incoraggiamento; la costituzione di insegnamenti universitari nelle maggiori sedi interessate (Cagliari, Palermo, Roma), essenziali per la formazione di cui si è detto. Infine, abbiamo costituito un organismo specifico, il Centro di Studio per la Civiltà Fenicia e Punica del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, presso l'Università di Roma.*

*La « Rivista di Studi Fenici », che oggi presentiamo, è in ordine di tempo l'ultima realizzazione sulla linea tracciata. Per essa chiediamo anzitutto la collaborazione dei colleghi stranieri, fondamentale per la prospettiva organica a cui teniamo e specialmente necessaria in un mondo di studi largamente irradiato nello spazio tra Oriente e Occidente. Chiediamo al tempo stesso il concorso degli studiosi italiani che comunque si siano avvicinati agli studi fenici, sicché la varietà degl'interessi e delle formazioni divenga, da frammentarietà, stimolo fecondo. Non a caso una rivista nell'ambito di quella che presentiamo non è finora esistita : con essa, dunque, ci proponiamo di offrire una sede comune a tutti coloro che s'interessano a questi studi, riducendo la dispersione degli scritti nelle riviste più varie e meno tipiche alla quale si è finora assistito.*

*Dopo quanto abbiamo ricordato sulla politica di ricerche da cui nasce la « Rivista di Studi Fenici », è evidente che essa si apre particolarmente ai giovani, per cui è destinata la formazione organica che perseguiamo. Se le nostre previsioni si riveleranno esatte, lo sviluppo degli studi li farà presto migliori di noi, che abbiamo dovuto cominciare in condizioni quasi pionieristiche. E se tale è la situazione, possiamo senz'altro astenerci dall'affidare loro (come pure s'usa in circostanze consimili) qualsiasi messaggio. Nel mondo della ricerca scientifica, del resto, i messaggi più efficaci sono quelli impliciti nelle opere e negli esempi: per chi è capace di intenderli, non v'è bisogno di dichiararli ; per chi non è capace, il dichiararli allinea parole vane.*

*Noi però, e vogliamo riaffermarlo, abbiamo creduto nella validità di un messaggio, che il nostro stesso paese ci ha offerto : quello di una tradizione scientifica che si trasmette nella libertà, si rinnova nel rispetto, si afferma nella continuità oltre i singoli protagonisti. La dedica che apre questa presentazione vuol essere, in generale e per gli studi fenici in particolare, l'esplicito richiamo a un patrimonio di dottrina, di esempio, di ricordo.*

SABATINO MOSCATI