

BOOK REVIEWS

M.^a CRUZ MARÍN CEBALLOS – M.^a BELÉN DEAMOS – A.M.^a JIMÉNEZ FLORES (edd.), *La cueva santuario de es Culleram (Ibiza)*, Sevilla 2022 («SPAL Monografías Arqueología», 47), Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 397 pp. (the catalogue of the terracottas is available online: https://alojaservicios.us.es/difuseditorial/Extra_content/terracota/cat_terracotas.pdf).

The volume *La cueva santuario de es Culleram (Ibiza)*, published in the series *SPAL Monografías Arqueología* of the University of Seville (Spain), is the result of a considerable commitment undertaken by the editors over several years, with significant support from various institutions (especially the museums in which the materials are preserved) and from numerous specialists in Phoenician culture and, in particular, in the history of Ibiza. I can therefore state from the very outset that the book – the product of intensive collaborations – will be a milestone in the study of the religious dimension of the Spanish island. Indeed, it presents in a broad and comprehensive manner, for the first time, all the available documentation – materials and context – relating to the sanctuary of the Cueva de es Culleram, located in the area of Sant Vicent de sa Cala, near the north-eastern end of the island of Ibiza (Spain).

After the foreword by the editors, which primarily explains the genesis of the study and publication project, the book opens with an essential chapter, written by Jordi H. Fernández Gómez, on the history of research devoted to the sacred area. This is a fascinating contribution, since on the one hand it describes the complex events experienced by the Ibicenco site and the materials pertaining to it (including the circulation of the objects after their discovery); on the other hand, through the example of the Cueva and Ibiza, it contributes to the reconstruction of an aspect of Spanish history relating to the dynamics of the approach to and management of cultural heritage, ranging from its valorization to its conservation, and including the delicate problem of collecting. In this context, the modern history of the cult place intersects with that of other archaeological sites on the island (such as the necropolis of Puig des Molins and the so-called “sanctuary” of Illa Plana).

The second and third chapters, both written by Joan Ramon Torres, focus respectively on the accurate restitution of the physiognomic and natural characteristics of the Cueva – including the partial and limited structural transformation of the place at human hands – and on the study of ceramics from the sanctuary. As one might imagine, these two chapters are primary so that the context – the cult place – can be correctly framed and analysed. Furthermore, they appear even more significant (especially in the case of ceramics and, as we will see later, of other mobile materials) if we consider that research dedicated to the site has tended to focus on the flared terracottas of a winged goddess, which, thanks to their originality and exceptional quantity, have often been assigned the role of representing the Cueva itself (sometimes to the detriment of the rest of the mobile material and the context).

Ramon Torres’ opinion – based on analysis of the ceramic forms – concerning the frequentation of the site is especially interesting. He suggests that the rather small number of materials («el número de piezas estudiado apenas alcanza los doscientos individuos») indicates that «casi con seguridad, nunca contó con presencia habitacional permanente o, como máximo, y aún con dudas, presencia de muy pocos individuos

y solo en el lapso de máxima intensidad cultural».¹ The attendance of the sacred area must not therefore have been based on the presence of a stable community on site: the area itself was probably rather isolated. It is possible, as suggested in Chapter 4 (p. 124), that the cult place was founded following an increase in the exploitation of the agricultural resources of the territory, which established itself, as in other regions of the Phoenician West, in a later phase of the 5th century BCE (and was then developed further in the following centuries).

But beyond the fundamental and unavoidable contribution of ceramics, the largest section of the volume is naturally the one dedicated to terracottas (discussed in the aforementioned Chapter 4, which spans pages 74 to 229). After all, the figured clay products, dispersed in various collections, constitute the category of movable material most widely attested in the Cueva (there are 1,155 specimens, which are positioned chronologically between the late 4th and the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE, with the majority belonging to the later phases of this time frame). The authors of this section – M.^a Cruz Marín Ceballos, M.^a Belén Deamos and A.M.^a Jiménez Flores – therefore proceed with their description by dividing the objects into two macro-groups: “Figuras acampanadas”, the group that includes the greater number of pieces, and “Figuras de tipología variada”. The second group is then subdivided into various iconographic types: “Figuras con antorcha y animal”, “Pebeteros en forma de cabeza femenina”, “Figuras entronizadas”, “Figuras con pectoral de collares múltiples o tipo ‘Athena lindia’”, “Figuras de músicas y bailarina”, “Figuras de pie con alto *kalathos* y cinturón”, “Tanagras”, “Figuras oferentes que realizan el ‘Gesto del velo’”, “Bustos de hombros”, “Cabezas/ bustos de tipología incierta” and lastly “Tipos únicos”.

Each group and each type is analysed with the highest scientific rigour and with an evident comprehensiveness of approach (the discussion ranges from an analysis of the iconographies to that of the individual attributes, from the search for comparisons to a recognition of the setting of the productions). As the authors themselves rightly state, extensive use is made of the most recent learnings from investigations into coroplastics, thanks above all to the work of Arthur Muller, established since at least the mid-1990s:² on a methodological level, then, the volume undoubtedly constitutes a solid point of reference, both for studies aimed at the Phoenician civilization and more generally for studies on the production of coroplastics in the ancient world. I should add, in this regard, that the work is accompanied by an indispensable catalogue of all the pieces examined, available online in PDF format: each sheet is quick and easy to consult, containing all the basic information relating to the individual items.³

Still on the subject of the terracottas, while of course I cannot discuss all the individual issues addressed in the volume, I would like to highlight a couple of elements which seem to me worthy of attention. First, the value of the contribution in this part of the work lies not only in the presentation and analysis of the terracottas but also in the depth of the discussion. In the case of winged statuettes, just to cite the “heftiest” example (though the point can be extended to other groups), the examination rightly starts from the division into types and series (in turn based on the classification developed for these terracottas by María Eugenia Aubet in the late 1960s).⁴ It then proceeds with a sort of deconstruction of the images, through which the authors are able to analyse the individual attributes: the headdresses, hairstyles, jewels, clothing, wings, and including the elements often depicted in the space between the wings themselves (e.g. the lotus flower, caduceus or astral symbols). Presented with this articulation, one almost has the (favourable) impression of dealing with a sort of compendium (obviously not arranged in alphabetical order) which contains

1 Both the citations are taken from p. 70.

2 See especially Muller 1996; 1997; 2000; 2014.

3 The catalogue is by Ana M.^a Jiménez Flores, Ana Mezquida Ortí, Jordi H. Fernández Gómez, María Belén Deamos, Elisabet Conlin and M.^a Cruz Marín Ceballos.

4 Aubet 1968; 1969; cfr. also Aubet 1982.

an in-depth description of the individual attributes/elements, their history, their use and their recurrence in Phoenician craftsmanship (and also, to some extent, in other cultural contexts). Such an approach is very useful not only for the obvious study of clay figurines but also for research on other categories of Phoenician materials, such as stelae, which may present among their iconographies some of the elements discussed in the chapter.

Second, the analysis of the terracottas allows us to see Punic Ibiza as a flourishing centre characterized by productions that were fully elaborated on site, while at the same time forming part of a vast network of relationships. The terracottas with wings, on this level, are certainly the result of a local orientation, incorporating original features; however, this originality is accompanied by an adherence to Carthaginian models (especially in respect of the iconography of the winged female figure) and the use of elements of Greek and Egyptian derivation (particularly with regard to the attributes of the figurines). The other types of statuettes, although they can also be recognized as mostly local in production (few imports appear), are shown to be broadly inspired by Greek models (from Sicily specifically), which probably reached the island through the mediation of Carthage. As is well known, a similar dynamic links Ibiza to other regions of the Western Phoenician world, such as Sardinia.⁵ However, as the authors clearly indicate, this does not mean that the presence of some products in the Cueva cannot be attributed to direct contact (i.e. not mediated by Carthage) with Sicily itself: an indication of this, for example, is the typology of the “Bustos de hombros”, which are not apparently documented either in the North African city or in Sardinia. Finally, there is no shortage of objects of entirely local creation, the workmanship of which is not connected to any external influence: specifically, these are the “figuras de pie con alto *kalathos* y cinturón”. In summary, the processing of the terracotta from the Cueva shows both Ibiza’s adherence to a figurative language widely attested in the western Mediterranean and the local rereading of that language, which leads to the creation of original products, perhaps elaborated specifically for the cult celebrated in the specific sanctuary.

The five subsequent chapters (5 to 9) are each dedicated to other craft categories attested in the Ibicenco cult place. The first of this section (Ch. 5) is reserved for the “Piezas de orfebrería” and was written by M.^a Luisa de la Bandera Romero (with an iconographic analysis by M.^a Cruz Marín Ceballos). At the heart of the discussion are three pendants, two in gold (respectively with a four-winged uraeus and a male face in profile) and one in silver (with a rosette). According to the author, the three jewels were produced between the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE in local shops; more specifically, they would have been linked to Ibicencan manufacturing of a previous age, although adopting modifications due to external influences, including those of the Greek-Italic context. The volume then proceeds, in Chapter 6, written by Ana Mequida Ortí, with the presentation of the iron and bronze materials (most of which are fragmentary and difficult to identify). Of particular interest are two iron knives found in 1965, perhaps used in the cult place to prepare meat for local banquets and/or rituals. The next chapter (7), by Benjamí Costa Ribas, deals with lead objects associated with fishing, represented in the Cueva by seven net weights and an “escandallo” (for lines and hooks probably used for coastal fishing), perhaps placed in the sanctuary by fishermen. The study of the materials is accompanied by a wide-ranging exposition on the ancient methods and tools for catching fish, which in Ibiza must have been one of the main activities. This is yet another example of the many insights that enrich the volume and go far beyond the description and interpretation of the sacred area and ritual activities.

The two chapters that follow – the eighth and ninth – focus respectively on the coins and the stone and ivory objects retrieved from the sanctuary. In Chapter 8, by Marta Campo Díaz, nineteen coins from the local mint (at *Ebusus*) – with the sole exception of a Philip II sestertius – are described and examined. Most of the specimens belong to the series with Bes on the obverse and a bull on the reverse or with Bes on both faces, dating from the last quarter of the 3rd century and the end of the 2nd century BCE. Chapter 9,

5 On Sardinia see van Dommelen – López Bertran 2013; cfr. Garbati 2016.

written by the three editors of the volume with the collaboration of Ana Mezquida Ortí, is dedicated specifically to lithic materials largely documented only through old publications and now no longer available: a small stone altar (10 cm high in the residual portion), now lost and probably of votive use, and four betyls also in stone (all no longer traceable). These materials are then accompanied by two small sculptures, one representing a male figure (unpublished and with a Besoid appearance?⁶) and the other configured as a lion's protome (lost). This section is completed by a small ivory lion figurine (also lost) and three rounded pebbles, the function of which remains difficult to establish (although similar objects used for cultic purposes are known in different Phoenician contexts).⁷

An extremely valuable tool for an accurate reconstruction of the history of the Cueva is undoubtedly Chapter 10, contributed by José Ángel Zamora López and devoted to the well-known bronze plaque, bearing two inscriptions (one on each side), and to some graffiti from the cult place. As regards the plaque, this section finally provides confirmation that the older inscription is dedicated to the double deity Resheph-Melqart, which has been questioned several times in the past (side A is mid-5th to early/mid-4th century BCE; side B on the other hand bears a dedication to the goddess Tinnit *'drt* and *gd*, "powerful" and "Fortune", probably written in the first half of the 2nd century BCE). Zamora's work goes well beyond this aspect, however, proposing new ideas to stimulate the reading and interpretation of the texts. Returning to the older dedication, for example, the reading of the word *mqm*, "place", at the end of the first line, instead of the more commonly accepted *mqdš*, "sanctuary", is original. Another important point that emerges from the contribution is the possibility that both the inscriptions belonged to the cult organized in the Cueva: they should not be understood – as often has been done – as an indication of the reuse of the plaque and its removal from an original sanctuary of Resheph-Melqart (located somewhere else on the island) to the sacred grotto, and in turn dedicated to Tinnit. Indeed, according to the author, the addition of the later text would have been an indication of the transition, in the same place, from the cult of the male deity to the prevalent worship of the goddess, as indicated also by the terracottas from the area (especially those of the goddess with wings). This phenomenon could also be linked to the possibility that some structures located outside the Cueva were renovated during the first half of the 2nd century BCE (the inscription on side B, moreover, speaks of structural works that were undertaken in the place of worship). As it is easy to envisage, this is clearly a very complex issue, which merits further investigation.

Regarding graffiti, the use of a particular sign is documented in the Cueva, composed of three strokes (and having the graphic appearance, approximately, of an "A"); it is engraved on eleven winged statuettes (all type 14) and on a female-headed *thymiaterion*. As Zamora rightly indicates, the same sign is also known from a statuette with torch and animal from the Puig des Molins necropolis and from a perfume burner (again with a female head) found in Villaricos. The author proposes various interpretative hypotheses for this sign: for example, as a factory sign, as a sign somehow linked to the cult of Tinnit or, more speculatively, as a grapheme composed of two letters, *gimel* + *dalet*, which would result in the monogram *gd*, "Fortuna", already attributed to Tinnit in the most recent inscription on the bronze plate.

The final part of the volume is reserved for a discussion of ritual (Ch. 11), of the goddess Tinnit (Ch. 12) and of the historical framework of the Cueva (Ch. 13); these three concluding chapters are written by the three editors of the book. Chapter 11 opens with an introduction that clearly sets out the problems that must be addressed, especially on a documentary level, when trying to reconstruct rituals in Phoenician contexts. Going on to discuss the Cueva in detail, the contribution shows how the sanctuary must have been a place of sacrifice of goats and sheep in particular. Surprisingly, however, birds and fish seem to be absent (the

6 The statue's possible morphological proximity to the physiognomy of the god Bes would be entirely consistent with the context of the Cueva and, more generally, of Ibiza (as seen with the coins). This is, however, a mere suggestion.

7 See, for instance, Nigro 2009.

data are derived from the collection of samples from the earth accumulated near the sanctuary following old excavation operations). According to the authors, then, the fragments of double patera incense burners that were found in the cave must also have been linked to the sacrifices.

The following chapter, as mentioned, contains a complete description of the functional profile of the main goddess of the Cueva, Tinnit. As in other parts of the volume, the approach is once again adopted of broadening and deepening the themes derived from the data by going beyond the context itself. In this case, a complete and updated portrait of the goddess emerges, retracing with balance and with the proper critical perspective what is known from and what is suggested by numerous previous studies. A similar approach would surely also be useful well beyond the confines of the Ibiza cave. (However, I must admit that I am not completely convinced by the proposal, inspired by an idea of Krahmalkov,⁸ that we should identify Tinnit alone, but defined by two epicleses, in the expression *lrbt l'm' wlrbt lb'lt hhdrt*, “To the Lady, to the mother and to the Lady, to the Lady of *hdrt*” of CIS I 177. I prefer the traditional reading that sees in the formula the mention of two goddesses, who have been difficult to identify, in relation to each other).⁹ The presentation of the goddess is followed by an examination of her iconography and a description of the role she played in the Cueva specifically, starting with the rocky character of the place of worship. In this regard, the authors rightly highlight how, in contrast to the commoner association of Tinnit with Baal Hammon, known from documentary sources (specifically of the tophets), the Ibicencan sanctuary constitutes a key attestation of devotion addressed to the goddess alone, i.e. devoid of her traditional “partner”. A similar aspect is shown not only by the most recent dedication but also by the predominantly female configuration of the cult as a whole (as indicated by the terracottas). The data from the Cueva, then, show a clear phenomenon of local “declension” of the Tinnit’s functions and cult, with respect to what is usually known on the deity from other contexts (the tophets again).

This section (and the volume itself) closes with a proposal for a general framework of the cult organized in the cave within the broader history of Ibiza. Here the authors highlight the possibility, which was mentioned at the beginning, that the devotion to Tinnit is to be connected to the process of agrarian exploitation of the territory that found its fullest expression between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, at which time the Cueva was densely frequented. Unsurprisingly, this is the period of the «mayor apogeo económico de la ciudad (...). Tal apogeo es patente en la máxima expansión de los asentamientos rurales por toda la isla (...), en el activo comercio exterior (...), y en la máxima difusión de la moneda ebusitana» (p. 351).

Moving on now to my conclusions, I should first point out that *La cueva santuario de es Culleram (Ibiza)* is a work with numerous positive qualities. First of all, it has the merit of presenting a sacred context of Phoenician origin in its entirety, providing a large amount of data, correctly interpreted. This merit is all the more notable if we bear in mind that the larger part of the materials comes from old excavations, which, due to a lack of methodology, did not record and preserve the information necessary to reconstruct the history of the Cueva (not to mention the dispersion of the material across various collections). Undoubtedly, then, the challenge of studying and organizing this work of publication was considerable, and this allows us to appreciate the results even more. Secondly, the various contributions collected in the book offer many stimuli for in-depth analysis of the issues addressed which, as I have mentioned several times, go far beyond the boundaries of the Cueva and Ibiza themselves. From a personal perspective, I believe, for example, that it would be very interesting to further investigate the role of Resheph on the island and more generally in the Phoenician West, including a (re)examination of the “Cypriot connections” that may have characterized Ibiza at the time of the first Levantine communities: the particular rock context of the Cueva, in which, according to Zamora, the oldest inscription dedicated to Resheph-Melqart also probably belonged, could

8 Krahmalkov 2000, pp. 31 and 177.

9 Garbati 2022a, pp. 125-128.

provide some food for thought.¹⁰ To sum up, the volume is a very dense and rich resource, and it will constitute an excellent point of reference for studies dedicated to the religion of the Phoenician world, of the West and beyond, and more generally to the culture and history of that world.

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10 Garbati 2022b.