

Re-Thinking Globalisation in the Ancient World
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Session F: Migration and Diaspora

The making of an Identity: the Phoenician communities of the Iberian Peninsula and their integration in the Roman world

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**Re-Thinking
GLOBALISATION
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This presentation aims to report the conclusions of our dissertation, titled *The Phoenician communities of the Iberian Peninsula and their integration in the Roman world: an identity perspective*. The period under discussion extends from the end of the Second Punic War in 206 BCE to the Flavian era.

Above all, the paper focuses on the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the process of integration of communities of Phoenician origin and tradition in the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula into the structures of Roman Empire.

Our investigation has as its primary goal the explanation of the mechanisms of construction of collective identity and forms of expression which have come about in the midst of these communities along the road to becoming established as Roman *ciuitates*. This dissertation also attempts to improve upon the one-dimensional classical perspectives concerning the poorly-named process of «Romanization». This in turn leads us to reinterpret the known «Phoenician» cultural «persistences» as a reflection of the possible existence of ethnic workings and re-workings by means of falsely or actually ancient components with the goal of legitimation within the dynamic Roman world.

Our main conclusion is that the Phoenicians, although they began to integrate themselves quite early into Roman power structures due to the necessity of the elites to consolidate their positions of power at the heart of their own communities, did so with the intention of maintaining their own idiosyncrasy and of not losing their unique cultural traits. As a base was used a series of cultural elements which displayed their specificity in the face of other contemporary identities by means of a connection with a prestigious ancestral past. There were two fundamental components of this process: the recognition of certain common origins, real or putative, which took root along with the city of Tyre, the oldest metropolis, and the figure of Melqart, the quintessential founding god within the Phoenician orbit.

Select bibliography

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