



Networks of Kinship in the Phoenician and Punic Foundations: A Graeco-Roman Vision of Identity

Corinne Bonnet

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in the Levant and Phoenician West
during the 12th-8th Centuries BCE*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN ROME,
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NETWORKS OF KINSHIP IN THE PHOENICIAN AND PUNIC FOUNDATIONS: A GRAECO-ROMAN VISION OF IDENTITY

CORINNE BONNET*

Abstract: This paper deals with the notion of kinship present in several classical texts in relation with the foundation of Thebes and Carthage by the Phoenician people. It is a useful concept to express the fluid evolution of identities in diasporic contexts and in critical situations arisen before, during and after colonial achievements. Two major figures are analyzed in this perspective: Kadmos and Elissa/Dido.

Keywords: kinship; foundations; Carthage; Thebes; Kadmos; Elissa/Dido.

CRITICAL situations and kinship networks are at the very core of the Greek and Roman vision of the Phoenician diaspora in the Mediterranean. The tale about the foundation of Thebes by Kadmos after Europe's rape by Zeus and the story of Elissa-Dido, running away from Tyre after her husband (and uncle's) murder by her brother, are the major examples of such a connection. Crisis, in fact, triggers transformations and even versatility; it requires answers able to stimulate the emergence of a new individual and social puzzle, and to facilitate a political, territorial, cultural new deal.¹ Historical transformations, related with intercultural contexts, also bring into play the web of affiliations and identities. We shall obviously refrain from considering them in an essentialist perspective as "genetic" or ethnic characteristics, but rather as social constructions, on both individual and collective levels, always working in relational strategies, without fixed boundaries. Identities will be explored in this paper as fluid realities, porous to historical contexts, open to negotiations and compromises, often paradoxical, always multiple.² Recent publications have illustrated the difficulty to grasp the concept of identity through texts and artifacts, and the limits of its application; others have suggested to replace it with the notion of "ethnicity", which better expresses the active construction of shared references and membership.³ My aim in this paper will be to analyze the Greek and Roman sources which refer to the category of kinship as a central element in critical situations tied up to the Phoenician and Punic expansion and consequently to the identity/ethnicity of those people in intercultural contexts.

Ancient populations frequently present themselves as autochthonous. The best example is Athens, which developed a strong discourse on autochthony.⁴ Athenians and others pretend, with mythical arguments, to be born from the earth on which they live. Such an ethnogenesis aims at rooting social identities in the concrete *humus* of the land and to "naturalize" the social construction of citizenship. In a recent essay entitled *Contro le radici. Tradizione, identità, memoria* (2012), M. Bettini denounces the rhetoric and nationalist discourses on cultural "roots", which metaphorically describe identities as the deepest and more stable element in a society. The relationship to the land can also be elaborated through the model of a quest: wandering, exodus, exile and return, diaspora, expansion. The cultural consequences of these movements can be compared with pollination or epidemy; the diasporic model is expressed with metaphors related to the bees' swarming or the plant's budding. The most famous example is Israel.⁵ The Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean with the emergence of small and big establishments, especially Carthage, is an interesting case study. Both paradigms in fact are mobilized in classical sources: roots and pollination, trees and bees, whereas the Greek Archaic colonization is characterized by the notion of *apoikia*, "colony", meaning etymologically "a place far from home". It evokes at the same time an attachment to the metropolis and the necessity of a proliferation in many directions. This tension reveals an identity crisis or instability in the relationship between metropolis and colonies. In order to express it, Greek and Roman authors frequently use the concept of kinship as a key-element of colonial networks which emerge in the Mediterranean world.⁶ From a chronological point of view, although I shall focus my analysis on Carthage's foundation (9th century BCE), I shall necessarily make use of sources from any time and origin. Since not a single piece of Punic literature has reached us, it will be required to decode Greek and Roman elements embedded in stories on Phoenician and Punic foundations. As S. Ribichini has many times brought to light, these elements are not to be considered as a smoke screen, but as a useful access to Greek and Roman *representations* of the "Others". Nonetheless, it would be an imposture to pretend to find in classical sources direct echoes to

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¹ For some examples of the use of the concept of "crisis" in the classical studies, see DRINKWATER – ELTON 1992; QUET 2006; HERMAN 2011; NEUDECKER 2011; GOLDEN 2013.

² The bibliography on identities is almost infinite: see for example AMSELLE 1999; WHITMARSH 2010; SUBRAHMANYAM 2013.

³ See HALL 2002; CIFANI – STODDART 2012.

⁴ LORAUX 1984.

⁵ See SMITH 1984.

⁶ CURTY 1995; JONES 1999; MALKIN 2011; STAVRIANOPOULOU 2013.

the social imaginary of Punic societies. Elissa-Dido's story related to the foundation of Carthage or Kadmos's myth concerning the foundation of Thebes reflect Greek and Roman representations of the powerful, maybe dangerous identity networks binding Carthage and Tyre, or Tyre and Thebes.

Thebes' foundation by Kadmos, as it is told in numerous Greek and Roman sources since the Archaic period, is a huge question.⁷ I shall focus on two documents because they give an interesting insight into the complexity of kinship relations between Phoenicians and Greeks, as it is inscribed in the Boiotian soil through Kadmos' family saga. The first hint is Euripides' *Phoenissae*, a drama represented on the Athenian stage between 411 and 407 BCE.⁸ The core of the dramatic intrigue is Oedipus' lineage and its damned destiny, directly connected with Kadmos' myth. Any Athenian spectator was actually aware of the fact that Kadmos was Oedipus' ancestor. Kinship not only provides the context of the tragedy, but its matter itself. This is made clear by the central role devoted to the chorus of young Phoenician maiden just arrived in Thebes, where a terrible family crisis exploded.⁹ The young *Phoenissae* are intended to reach the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi and to serve the god for the rest of their life as "living offerings". During their stop at Thebes, the Phoenician colony, they are witness to the drama of their compatriots and express deep solidarity and empathy. The prologue of the tragedy is a long monologue of Jocasta, where she underlines Kadmos's responsibility in the Theban hereditary curse.¹⁰ During the foundation process, in fact, Kadmos killed the dragon which Ares had placed to protect the holy spring named Dirke. From that time, impiety and divine revenge struck Kadmos' descent. The Tyrian chorus is present when a fratricidal war breaks out between Eteocles and Polynices for the power over Thebes.

Since tragedy is used to show on the stage the paradoxical elements of the human condition, the Phoenician ancestor of Thebes, Kadmos, appears as an ambivalent figure. Without him Thebes would not even exist. At the beginning of the story, Kadmos acts as a good brother who, according to his father Agenor's orders – Agenor is described as a king of Tyre or Sidon – tries to find his sister Europe, raped by Zeus and passed through the Bosphorus in Greece. Kadmos also acts as a "pious" person since he consults the oracle of Delphi to know what to do. He strictly follows Apollo's indications and finally founds Thebes. The murder of the dragon creates a rupture in his life and in Thebes' destiny. From the dragon's teeth, spread on the earth, emerge the famous Spartoi, which kill one another and illustrate a perverted autochthony. Even if this story surely originates from pro-Athenian au-

thors who intend to revoke Thebes' mythical traditions, we must stress the fact that Kadmos the Phoenician could hardly pretend to promote autochthony. In other words, the myth and Euripides' tragedy clearly display the contradictions of the Theban identity or ethnicity. The Phoenician heritage, highlighted by the chorus who frequently underlines the kinship bonds between Thebes and their homeland, conflicts with the pretention to be born from the soil. Roots and diaspora are not compatible. Their association in Theban identity discourse gives birth to an unbearable cacophony and even to political, social and religious self-destruction. Initiated under the best auspices, the foundation of Thebes finally provoked whirls of transgressions and perversions in kinship relations. Thebes is now in the cyclone's eye, submitted to divine wrath and to internal social dissolution.

Nonetheless the kinship connections with the Phoenician homeland appear to be strong and produce positive reactions. The Phoenician chorus in Euripides' tragedy, almost in every occasion, reminds the Thebans about the eternal solidarity between Phoenicia and its colony. They want to share the Theban harmful fate in the name of the common blood which flows in their veins.¹¹ The concept of kinship is presented at the same time as the origin of the Theban crisis and as part of its solution. Positive and negative, the relationship between Kadmos and Phoenicia is deeply ambivalent. In Greek traditions, Kadmos' myth also concerns an important cultural element: the alphabet. Herodotus, in Book V, mentions the *phoinikeia grammata*, brought from Phoenicia by Kadmos,¹² while wandering in pursuit of Zeus and Europe. The Greek people, using the expression "Phoenician letters" recognized a cultural debt. And when Zeus ordered Kadmos to marry Harmonia, he obviously intended to conclude favourably the crisis opened with the dragon's murder.¹³ The gods' participation to the fabulous wedding sealed a new and harmonious cohabitation, and even kinship between Greek and non-Greek elements. The peaceful and happy interlude did not however cancel the "original sin", as Oedipus' dramatic fate shows.¹⁴

The Phoenician chorus itself embodies a similar ambiguity. The group of maidens, wishing to become Apollo's priestesses in Delphi, the same god who guided Kadmos, is full of empathy and compassion for their Theban "family", but they remain "Barbarians", in their way of speaking, praying, in their social attitude.¹⁵

«You also, offspring of our foremother Io, Epaphos, son of Zeus, you I invoke, invoke, <halloo>, with barbarian shout, halloo, with barbarian prayer» (679-680).

⁷ Essential remains VIAN 1963; see also EDWARDS 1979; KÜHR 2006.

⁸ MASTRONARDE 1994; KOVACS 2002; ALAUX 2007.

⁹ On the presence of this Phoenician chorus, see HARTIGAN 2000.

¹⁰ Eur. *Phoen.* 1-87.

¹¹ Eur. *Phoen.* 216-218, 246-249, 681-682.

¹² Hdt V 58.

¹³ ROCCHI 1989.

¹⁴ For a structural analysis of the myth, see LEVI-STRAUSS 1958, pp. 245 ff. and the critic by VERNANT – VIDAL-NAQUET 1988.

¹⁵ Eur. *Phoen.* 291-294, 301, 679-680.

Kinship is not sufficient to assimilate Greeks and non Greeks. Euripides himself, in his last tragedy, *Bacchae*, played in 405 BCE, tells that Kadmos, after his wedding, was exiled in Illyria, together with his wife, and transformed into a snake.¹⁶ Such a metamorphosis reveals the radical and endless “otherness” of the Phoenician *oikistes* of Thebes.

Our first example reveals the complexity and richness of the concept of kinship as it works in the mythological network. It provides a key to relations between homeland and colony, between Greeks and “Others”, between the past and the present. Kinship expresses either closeness and similarity, either distance and difference. It affords access to a dynamic picture of a multiethnic Mediterranean memory of mobilities and foundations, which shakes the identity foundations. Kinship also deals with human and divine interaction, and its consequences in social imaginaries.

The second document also involves Kadmos, Thebes, and the promotion of identity strategies in a multicultural framework. The context is Hellenistic Sidon, after the conquest of Phoenicia by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. The honorific inscription for the Sidonian citizen Diotimos is dated around 200 BCE. In a completely different context, with the Phoenician cities integrated into the Hellenistic kingdoms (Ptolemaic first, then Seleucid), this document hints at an analogous rhetoric of kinship between Phoenicians and Greeks. In February 1862, in a garden of Saida (Sidon), the “Mission de Phénicie” conducted by E. Renan unearthed a big marble block (54x152x51 cm), engraved with a Greek inscription studied in 1939 by E. Bickermann.¹⁷ Diotimos, who is celebrated for his victory in the chariot race at the Nemean Games in Greece, is a member of the Sidonian *élite*, and most probably a descendant of the royal Sidonian family, dismissed one or two generations after Alexander’s victory.¹⁸ He is undoubtedly very rich, since the chariot race is the most expensive competition in the Greek world. He is also powerful forasmuch as he bears the Greek title of *dikastes*, «judge», which probably reflects the Phoenician office of «suffet», a word meaning «judge». In this case we can assume that it refers to a “governor”, the most prestigious local office in Sidon, assigned to a member of the aristocratic *élite*, in good terms with the Greek “imperial” authorities.

Σιδωνίων ἡ πόλις Διότιμον Διονυσίου δικαστήν
νικήσαντα Νέμεια ἀρμυσι

Τιμόχα[ρ]ῖς Ἐλευθερναῖος ἐποίησε

Ἀργολικοῖς δὲ καὶ πάντες ἐν ἄγκεισιν ὠκεῖς ἱππους]
ἤλασαν ἐκ δίφρων εἰς ἔριν ἀντι[παλοί],
σοὶ καλόν, ὦ Διότιμε, Φορωνίδος [ῶπασε λαός]
κῦδος, ἀειμνάστους δ’ ἤλθεν ὑπὸ στεφ[άνους],
ἀστὼν γὰρ πρᾶτιστος ἀφ’ Ἑλλάδος ἱππικόν [εἰ]ῃχος
ἀγαγες εἰς ἀγαθῶν οἶκον Ἀγηνוריδῶν.
Αὐχεῖ καὶ Θήβας Καδμηίδος ἱερὸν ἄστυ
δερούμενον νίκαις εὐκλέα ματρόπολιν
πατρὶ δὲ σῶι τελέ[θ]ει Διονυσί[ω]ι εὖχος ἄ[γ]ωνος
Ἑλλάς ἐπεὶ τρανῇ τόνδ’ ἐβόασε [θρόνον].
οὐ μόνον ἐν ναυσὶν μεγάλυνε[αι] ἔξοχα, Σιδῶν],
ἀλλ’ ἔτι καὶ ζευκτοῖς ἀθλοφύροις ἐν ὄχοις].

«The City of the Sidonians honor Diotimos, son of Dionysios, a judge (*dikastes*),

who won the chariot race at the Nemean Games.

Timocharis from Eleutherna made the statue.

The day, on which, in the Argolic valley, from their starting posts,

all the competitors launched their quick horses for the race, the people of Phoronis gave you a splendid honor and you received the ever memorable crown.

For the first among the citizens, you brought from Hellas in the noble house of the Agenorids the glory won in an equestrian victory.

The holy city of Cadmos, Thebes, also exults, seeing its metropolis distinguished by victories.

The prayer of your father, Dionysios, made in occasion of the contest

was fulfilled when Greece made this proclamation:

“Oh proud Sidon, you excel not only with your ships but also with your yoked chariots which are victorious”».

The epigram is an elegant composition inspired by Pindar’s agonistic poems.¹⁹ It celebrates the prestigious victory of Diotimos in Greece, at Nemea, in Argolid, and his triumphant return in the Sidonian homeland. The epigram plays cunningly with the mythological matter, suggesting that Diotimos’ victory is not only a Sidonian achievement, but also a source of proud for Thebes. Through the mythological references to Agenor’s lineage and explicitly to Kadmos the text reactivates the kinship connection between Sidon and Thebes, Phoenicia and Greece. But, differently from Euripides’ statement, which suggested how ambivalent and dangerous the familiarity between Greeks and Phoenicians was, the honorific inscription switches the roles. Through Diotimos’ exploit, the Phoenician brought in Greece the agonistic excellence and came back with an epic glory, generously shared with the Theban “family”. The mention of Kadmos and the “holy city” of Thebes completely subverts the past memory and the picture of the present.

Whereas Sidon and all the Phoenician cities, which were, before Alexander, tributarian kingdoms of the Persian empire, are now submitted to the Greeks power, the inscription finely recalls the primordial role of the Phoenicians in bringing the “civilization” into Greece, whose inhabitants could not write or read before Kadmos’ arrival. The superiority and anteriority

¹⁶ Eur. *Ba.* 1330-1339. See CASTIGLIONI 2010.

¹⁷ BICKERMAN 1939; EBERT 1972, pp. 188-193, n. 64. The inscription seems to be lost today. On this document and the cultural context of Hellenistic Phoenicia, see BONNET 2014.

¹⁸ For the arguments in favor of this hypothesis, see BONNET 2014, pp. 260-261.

¹⁹ See for example HORNBLLOWER – MORGAN 2007.

of the Phoenician are here underlined and reactivated by means of Diotimos' victory. The message, displayed in the "Hellenized"²⁰ Sidon could be expressed in these words: the winner is not the expected one, nor the "Barbarians"! The Greeks proud of their dominion in Phoenicia and more generally in the Orient, should not forget that the Phoenicians provided pride to Greece a long time ago, by founding the "holy" Thebes, and still now by the audacity of their international and multicultural *élite*. Far from being a place of malediction and desolation, Thebes is a holy colony, associated with its distinguished metropolis.

The kinship paradigm thus provides to the "Hellenized" Sidonian, around 200 BCE, pragmatic tools to display and negotiate new forms of identity or ethnicity, to elaborate new parameters of multicultural cohabitation. The Phoenician *élite* seized the Greek concept of *agôn* and *kleos*, and used them to promote self-celebration on an individual and collective perspective.²¹ They recall the best of their ancestral traditions and shape new networks based on genealogies, ancestors, and foundations.²² Recovering the memory of their former diaspora, and increasing its cultural value, they counterbalance the loss of political weight in the Hellenistic new deal. Later, in the second century AD, in the novel *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*, located in Phoenicia, Achilles Tatius write that Sidon is «the mother of the Phoenicians and the father of the Thebans»!²³ Kinship, all in all, is a useful tool to structure time and space at the same time.

Leaving now Phoenicia and reaching Carthage, we find several interesting features of the kinship paradigm in relation with crisis, identity and foundations. One can collect, in the Greek and Latin sources, at least three main aspects of kinship:

- 1) Born under negative familiar auspices (avidity, jealousy, murder) Carthage is, since the very beginning of its life, bound to a disastrous destiny.
- 2) Elissa/Dido's choice to suicide before getting married with the indigenous prince reveals an endogamic tendency in Punic political, social and cultural strategies. Closed kinship presages the decline and extinction of the group.
- 3) On the contrary, the (almost) everlasting relationship between Carthage and the Tyrian homeland is presented as a dangerous solidarity, which goes through the whole Mediterranean space and the long-span history. This unbreakable link between two "Barbarian" people is presented as a constant threat for the Greeks and the Romans, the civilizing nations.

²⁰ For a discussion of the concept of "Hellenization", see BONNET 2014, pp. 00-00.

²¹ See MA 2003, p. 32: «Peer polity interaction further ensured that local elites would remain embedded in their cities, by universalizing the assumption that the main site for individual honor was the community».

²² See WHITMARSH 2010.

²³ Ach. Tat. I 1,1.

We shall now analyze briefly each of this level, beginning with the context of the familiar crisis which caused Elissa/Dido's flight from Tyre. The foundation of Carthage is performed under the sign of a perverted kinship. In fact Elissa/Dido was married with her uncle, Acherbas, who was the high priest of Melqart, the tutelary god of Tyre.²⁴ He was therefore considered as one of the most prestigious and rich personality of the kingdom. His brother-in-law, Elissa/Dido's brother, Pygmalio, who reigned over Tyre, became jealous of Acherbas and decided to kill him. Elissa/Dido's exile in Occident is described as an attempt to escape from a familiar trap, to cut an unhealthy kinship. The Greek and Latin authors don't however depict a total rupture between the homeland and the colony. On the contrary, whereas she leaves the Tyrian soil, Elissa/Dido takes care of carrying away the *sacra Herculis*.²⁵ This expression most probably refers to a kind of *aphidryma*,²⁶ a relic of the cult of the Baal of Tyre, Melqart, frequently assimilated to Herakles-Hercules. This is the only heritage which Elissa/Dido received from her deceased husband, but it is a very precious token which will allow her to create a new Tyre, a new City, *Qart hadasht*, Carthage, another «City» (*qart*) placed under the protection of the divine King (*milk*). The relic of Melqart is a guarantee of legitimacy and continuity, a kind of clone or sprout, a stem cell, which is responsible for the duplication of Tyre. This story deals at the same time with a migratory process and with the rhetoric of the roots. The foundation of Massalia by the Phocéans is told on the same narrative framework, with an *aphidryma* of the cult of Artemis.²⁷

Although the ritual continuity is safe, the familiar bonds are cut. Elissa/Dido emigrates without her husband and without her brother, accompanied only by a group of eminent citizens of Tyre. Carthage's fate is thus described as tied up with a woman's decision and achievement, and even a widow. This is very rare in the classical foundation accounts and it looks like a handicap and an anomaly for a Greek and Roman audience. The very first steps of Carthage sound bad and announce a negative fate for the Tyrian colony, twice "barbarian". Virgil alludes, in the first verses of the *Aeneid*, to Carthage's past and future:²⁸ *Vrbs antiqua fuit, Tyrii tenuere coloni, Karthago*, «In ages gone an ancient city stood, Carthage», *diues opum studiisque asperrima belli*, «its wealth and revenues were vast, and ruthless was its quest of war». And Juno adds to this portrait: *hoc regnum dea gentibus esse, si qua fata sinant*, «if Fate opposed not, it was her darling hope to establish here». But the fate withdrew from Carthage

²⁴ Just. XVIII 4-5. On this text, see BUNNENS 1979, pp. 175-182; BONNET 2011. See also Timaeus *FGH Hist* 566 F82, and HAEGEMANS 2000.

²⁵ On this expression, see G. Garbati in this volume.

²⁶ On this notion, see MALKIN 1991.

²⁷ WESTALL 2009.

²⁸ Verg. A. I 12-17.

and adopted Rome! Virgil encompasses the Augustan vision of Rome as a providential nation and the reception of Carthage's destiny, after its destruction in 146 BCE, as a divine decision.²⁹

The perverted kinship which determines the conditions of Carthage's foundation and to a certain degree its future also influences the nature of the relationship established with the indigenous populations. In this episode, the question of territory and identity is at stake. The story of the *byrsa* is a very famous element of Elissa/Dido's attitude toward the previous inhabitants of Carthage.³⁰ The local chieftain offered her as much land as could be covered with a single oxhide. Therefore, she cut an oxhide into tiny strips and set them on the ground end to end until she had completely encircled a huge portion of territory, thereafter called Byrsa. The scene illustrates the *fides punica*, the absence of *fides* – a central ethic concept for the Romans – in the Phoenician and Punic people. Elissa/Dido then refused to marry the local prince and to promote, through the creation of interethnic familiar bonds, an alliance between the Carthaginians and the surrounding people. A comparison with Rome (involved in the rape of the Sabine women)³¹ and with many other foundations reveals that exogamy with local women (or men) is the condition to bring new blood, and to prepare the future through biological hybridization. Locked in an endogamic logic, Elissa/Dido considers only one kinship, with Tyre, even if it is a problematic one and, to a certain point, fruitless relationship since her husband is dead. Christian sources in fact celebrate Elissa/Dido as a model of matrimonial virtue.³² Her suicide to escape a new marriage also became a model of Punic resistance to external enemies. In 146 BCE, when Rome was about to conquest Carthage, the wife of the last defender of the besieged city, Hasdrubal, who was ready to surrender, decided to throw herself and her children in Carthage's blaze.³³ Dying was better than falling in Roman hands! The Greek and Roman representation of the destiny of Carthage displays a powerful city and empire, but extremely closed on its own territory and identity, unable to develop strategies of interaction and integration with its environment. Carthage is perceived in the mirror of Rome, as the exact opposite.³⁴

Isolated from the African populations, Carthage is deeply interconnected with the Phoenician homeland. The kinship with Tyre represents a central element of the Carthaginian identity, especially in critical situations. The Greek and Latin sources consider these bonds with great suspicion because they create a sort of invisible link between the Eastern and the Western

Phoenicians through the whole Mediterranean area. The fantasy of a cross-ways barbarian threat appears for the first time in Herodotus,³⁵ when he stresses the synchronism between the Eastern Greeks' victory over the Persians (and Phoenicians) in Salamis, in 480 BCE, and the Western Greeks' success on the Carthaginian troops at Himera, in Sicily.³⁶ The same feature is present in the accounts of Alexander's siege of Tyre in 332 BCE.³⁷ After seven months of a brutal assault, Alexander announces to the Carthaginian ambassadors present in Tyre for a cultic office that, for the time being, he cannot conquer Carthage, but he announces that this moment will come! Another synchronism is emphasized by the classical sources in this occasion. In Tyre, there was a huge statue of Apollo, which had a long story.³⁸ It was originally consecrated in the god's sanctuary in Gela, in Sicily. There, during a war and a *razzia*, in the fifth century BCE, the Punic army profaned the temples and took away the statue. As part of the booty, it was sent by the Carthaginians to Tyre, as a gift to the homeland. During Alexander's siege, the poor Apollo was victim of a second profanation. Fearing that the Greek god could have the desire to flee from Tyre and join Alexander, the Tyrian decided to bind him with chains, like a prisoner. Such a behavior is completely impious and deviant, since a man should never force a god, who is always free to be benevolent or not. Now, one of the first deed of Alexander, when he penetrated in the Tyrian island, was to liberate Apollo, and that happened, according to Diodorus of Sicily, the same day, at the same time that the Punic had, many years before, captured him.

The powerful kinship between Tyre and Carthage clearly produces pernicious effects, which even strike the gods. The critical situation in which Tyre was during the long and cruel siege reactivated the links between the homeland and the colony, but with negative effects. Not only the Carthaginians, true to the stereotype of the *fides punica*, promised a military support which never arrived,³⁹ but the Tyrians, according to Curtius Rufus, considered having recourse to human sacrifices in order to conciliate the divine pity.⁴⁰ Rufus adds that this ritual, which Carthage had adopted from its homeland and practiced until the destruction of the city, had been interrupted in Tyre since several centuries. Although the Tyrians finally refrain from reintroducing the most "barbarian" ritual, this episode reveals how the kinship between Tyre and Carthage could be demonized in the Greek and Roman representations. Some years after the end of Alexander's

²⁹ See GRIMAL 1985; TARRANT 1997.

³⁰ See SCHEID – SVENBRO 1985.

³¹ See BEARD 1999. ³² See LORD 1969.

³³ App. *Lib.* 131. See BERNARDINI 1996; BONNET 2011.

³⁴ See PICCALUGA 1983.

³⁵ Hdt. VII 166.

³⁶ See GAUTHIER 1966; KRINGS 1998, pp. 261-326.

³⁷ See Arr. *An.* II 14-16; Diod. XVII 40-47; Plut. *Alex.* 24-25; Curt. IV 1 5-26; Just. XI 10. For an analysis of this evidence, see BONNET 2014, pp. 41-106.

³⁸ See Diod. XIII 108 2-4, and the commentary in BONNET – GRAND-CLÉMENT 2010.

³⁹ On the notion of *fides punica*, see PRANDI 1979.

⁴⁰ Curt. IV 3 23. See on this text, RIBICHINI 1997.

conquest of Phoenicia, in 310 BCE, a similar situation is referred by Diodorus of Sicily.⁴¹ This time Agathocles of Syracuse put Carthage under pressure and the inhabitants of the Punic metropolis feared that the gods could be irritated against them. Interestingly enough, the cause of the divine wrath is the fact that the relationship with the Tyrian homeland has been neglected. The Carthaginians immediately try to find a solution and to restore the umbilical cord:

«Therefore the Carthaginians, believing that the misfortune had come to them from the gods, betook themselves to every manner of supplication of the divine powers; and, because they believed that Heracles, who was in charge of the colonies, was exceedingly angry with them, they sent a large sum of money and many of the most expensive offerings to Tyre. Since they had come as colonists from that city, it had been their custom in the earlier period to send to the god a tenth of all that was paid into the public revenue; but later, when they had acquired great wealth and were receiving more considerable revenues, they sent very little indeed, holding the divinity of little account. But turning to repentance because of this misfortune, they bethought them of all the gods of Tyre. They even sent from their temples in supplication the golden shrines with their images, believing that they would better appease the wrath of the god if the offerings were sent for the sake of winning forgiveness. They also alleged that Cronos had turned against them inasmuch as in former times they had been accustomed to sacrifice to this god the noblest of their sons, but more recently, secretly buying and nurturing children, they had sent these to the sacrifice; and when an investigation was made, some of those who had been sacrificed were discovered to have been supposititious. When they had given thought to these things and saw their enemy encamped before their walls, they were filled with superstitious dread, for they believed that they had neglected the honors of the gods that had been established by their fathers. In their zeal to make amends for their omission, they selected two hundred of the noblest children and sacrificed them publicly; and others who were under suspicion sacrificed themselves voluntarily, in number not less than three hundred».

The “memory of Tyre” is so far presented, by the Greek and Latin authors, as a vital element for the life of Carthage. But as far as both Tyre and Carthage belong to the “barbarian” world, any manifestation of their familiar bonds leads to transgressions of the norms and to a reinforcement of their dangerous or blamable identity, without solving the crisis they have to face. The great T. Mommsen, who knew so deeply the ancient texts, was well aware of the classical rhetoric on Phoenician and Punic kinship, as a structuring element of the Mediterranean puzzle. In his *Römische Geschichte*, published between 1854 and 1856, before he reached forty years, he emphasizes in different occasions the geopolitical impact of this connection.⁴² Mommsen’s ambition is to make clear how Rome, in a first time, unified the Italic peninsula during the Re-

publican era, and then, remained trapped in the imperial “universal” expansion which caused its decline and fall. In his splendid narrative, Mommsen pays a very special attention to the Punic Wars. According to his historical scenario, the destruction of Carthage by Rome marks a turning point (*Wendepunkt*: «inflection point») in the dynamic of the Roman power. He describes the Phoenicians as a respectable Semitic people, traveling on “floating houses”, able even to reach the Far West and to build a strong north-African empire. The persistence of the links between Carthage and Tyre reflects a certain conception of the “internal sea” as an interconnected space. Rome, after 146 BCE, inherited such an ambition even though the Republic was not ready for such an expansion. «Without having conceived such a project (...), Rome received abruptly the scepter over the Mediterranean» (RG I, 637).

To conclude, we have observed that in the Greek and Roman sources the memory of a kinship between Phoenicia and Greece, on one hand, Phoenicia and Carthage, on the other hand is differently used to bring these people closer or more distant, in space and time, according to the context and the goals. Kinship is a “plastic” concept which can convey positive or negative aspects of identity in multicultural situations. Contexts of crisis, transformations, wars or conquests, expansion and social or territorial tensions stimulate the rhetoric of kinship. The set of heterogeneous documents which are available does not allow us to focus on the centuries 12th-8th, when Phoenicians, Greeks, and other people frequented the Mediterranean shores in search of new markets, products, and territories. They give access to a kind of mental map, familiar to Greek and Roman people, in which the Phoenicians are portrayed as a diasporic nation, a sort of many-tentacled ethnic reality, outstretched in the whole Mediterranean area from the East until the Far West. The cases of Thebes and Carthage show that the kinship strategies of Phoenician and Punic groups are perceived and represented as basically dangerous or unsuccessful. The inscription of Diotimos from Sidon is the only evidence that Phoenicians themselves tried to rehabilitate this pattern for their own benefit and glory.

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⁴¹ Diod. XX 14.

⁴² For an analysis of Mommsen’s vision of Carthage, see BONNET 2013.

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