

Epilogue: A New Paradigm for Romanization?*

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This country [Iberia interior], to be sure, has only a moderately happy lot, but that which lies next to it [Turdetania] on the east and south takes pre-eminence in comparison with the entire inhabited world in respect of fertility (...) The Turdetanians are ranked as the wisest of the Iberians; (Strab. 3.1.6) (...) The Turdetanians, however, and particularly those that live about the Baetis, have completely changed over to the Roman mode of life, not ever remembering their own language any more. And most of them have become Latins, and they have received Romans as colonists, so that they are not far from being all Romans (Strab. 3.2.15; Trans. Jones, Loeb, 1949).

In population, however, Gades does not fall short, it would seem, of any of the cities except Rome; at any rate I have heard that in one of the censuses of our own time there were five hundred men assessed as Gaditanian Knights, a number not equalled even in the case of the Italian cities except Patavium (Strab. 3.5.3; Trans. Jones, Loeb, 1949).¹

Twenty centuries after Strabo wrote these words, romanization still dominates Spanish studies on the Roman conquest and settlement of Iberia. Traditional scholarship considered the full transformation of a territory into Roman ways of life as the ultimate step towards development. In this context, Turdetania-Baetica became the ideal model for romanization.

Using Turdetania as a case study, the chapters in this volume contribute towards presenting two novel methodological approaches: a new definition for identity and a new way of understanding romanization, be it as hybridization, creolization or bricolage. Some of the suggestions and answers offered in relation to the issues discussed in this book transcend the boundaries of the Turdetanian question.

Research on ancient identities has abandoned essentialist views and adopted a historical approach, especially after the ground-breaking work of J. Hall.² In practice, this means identity references belonging to a specific historical context may no longer be applicable once circumstances change. Hence, it is no longer possible to speak of 'identity', but of 'identities'. No one is capable today of speaking of a 'Greek identity', rather of multiple 'Greek identities', which may have shared common traits, while at the same time maintained significant differences, ranging from city to city and through time.

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¹ Cruz Andreotti 1993, 1994, 2007 and 2010, and Castro Páez in this same volume.

² 1997 (see Hall 2002).

This premise is perfectly applicable to the Turdetanian world. As has been shown,³ ‘Turdetanian’ is an ethnonym created after the arrival of Rome, used to define a large territory, located around the Guadalquivir Valley, which was shared by various ethnic groups. Literary evidence has proven this territory was not defined by boundaries, due precisely to historical transformations. Therefore, the sources speak of ‘ethnic boundaries’, which were vague and subject to change through time.⁴ Although there are sufficient bases to argue in favour of a central or nuclear Turdetania around the Baetis River, the diversity with which the term ‘Turdetanian’ is applied to different ethnic realities in the sources,⁵ clearly presents the term as a mere agglutinant, which was useful to the Romans for understanding a very heterogeneous territory in a cohesive manner. Hence, it has been impossible for archaeologists to identify a recognizable ‘Turdetanian culture’ to define the Turdetanians.⁶

Among such diversity, there is one common element: a Phoenician-Punic substrate, which left a strong, cultural imprint, not only on the coastal populations, but also on wide areas of the interior. In fact, archaeological finds of the past years have brought to light the strong, Phoenician imprint, observable in hybrid populations, which seem to have been characterized by the mix of local and eastern traits, which ultimately led to the creation of a new, cultural reality. The most defining characteristic of this hybridization was the expansion of urban ways of life and organization, a key factor for understanding later contributions and adaptations during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Other eastern traces, surviving in pre-Roman Guadalquivir culture, may be found in coinage, territorial organization, funerary monuments, and traditions related to religion and foundational rituals recorded in the written sources. As regards population, there is ample evidence for mixed or strongly Punic communities, which subsequently could be described as having pluri-cultural identities.⁷ According to Strabo (Strab. 3.5.5), Gades, a city of 500 knights (Strabo, cit. supra), was embellished by the local patrician Balbus in the Roman fashion (Strab. 3.5.3). However, the city’s origins were described as Greek or Phoenician, depending on the social group trying to impose its view. This is the best example of shared ethno-political identities co-existing in the heart of Phoenician Turdetania—during the Roman period.⁸

³ Moret and Cruz Andreotti in this same volume.

⁴ The differences between Strabo, Agrippa and Pliny (vid. Pliny *NH* 3.8) concerning the extent of these Bastuli of Phoenician origin at either side of the Strait (or further or closer from the Guadiana River) are very symptomatic of what is being argued: ethnic groups change in their nature, composition and space through time (vid. Figs. 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 and the contributions of P. Moret and E. Ferrer Albelda).

⁵ Bastuli, Bastuli-Punic, Blasto-Phoenician, Turduli, south-western Celts and even Bastetanians.

⁶ García Fernández 2012, and in this same volume.

⁷ See the contributions of Álvarez Martí-Aguilar, Ferrer Albelda, Mora Serrano or Machuca Prieto in this same volume.

⁸ See Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2012a and Álvarez Martí-Aguilar and Machuca in this same volume. In the words of Machuca: “Phoenician way to be Roman” (2017, Chap. 6, 577 ss.)

This last reflection leads to a second conclusion: a new way of understanding romanization. Turdetania no longer stands as an example of ideal romanization, understood as a conversion into ‘Roman’ ways of life, as portrayed by Strabo (3.2.15, cit. supra). The model for Roman expansion only covered an initial—mainly military—phase, based on a swift and systematic pacification, tax collection and troop recruitment.⁹ While all this took place, Rome also developed bilateral relations with the local communities, following Roman norms and practices (as evidenced on inscriptions), although without imposing a standard model of organization, which did not even have to be Roman. This diverse scenario is evidenced from early on: in the 189 BC *Turris Lascutana* decree of Paulus Aemilius (which recorded the foundation of a peregrine *ciuitas ex novo*);¹⁰ in the 171 BC foundation of *Carteia*, populated by the children of indigenous women and veterans;¹¹ or in the *Tabula Alcantariensis*, which recorded the 104 BC decree of Lucius Caesio (the *deditio* of a *populus*, without known *ciuitas*);¹² all of which are only examples.¹³ It is already known and accepted that Republican Rome relied on the autonomy of provincial magistrates and their capacity to adapt to efficient solutions on the terrain, with no detriment to the pre-eminence of Rome over all things. The state could function as a mediator or as an organizer (with greater or lesser impact), according to circumstance.¹⁴ In southern Iberia, Rome would have found solid bases to consolidate and implement its domain at a lesser cost. Pre-Roman development of the area—urbanism and communication networks mainly—combined with an ancient civic tradition, deeply rooted in the communities, provided *a priori* a favourable scenario for Rome’s establishment, namely, the systematic (although localized) exploitation of the territory by Italian contingents.¹⁵

The development and consolidation of Roman structures and organization may have been facilitated by a very strong and early Punic influence among the indigenous communities,¹⁶ prone to the development of oligarchic and civic political models and identities,¹⁷ common throughout the Mediterranean. The hellenization of Turdetania or Gades, described by Strabo, does not overshadow the important Semitic origin of the region. It may be reflecting a ‘Roman’ model, in which the local populations progressively created their own ‘narratives of identity’, never becoming genuinely Italian or remaining particularly indigenous either. The adaptation and reinterpretation of ancient myths associated to the

⁹ Cadiou 2008.

¹⁰ *CIL* I², 614 = II, 5041. Bronze found near Alcalá de los Gazules, Cádiz. It records the creation of a new *ciuitas* separating the community of the Hasta a few years before the Second Punic War, in the midst of a process of territorial reorganization.

¹¹ Livy 43.3.3–4. Wulff 1989, 43–58.

¹² *AE* 1984, 495 = *Gerión* 2 (1984), 266 ss. Bronze found near Alcántara, Cáceres. It is a *deditio*, restituting freedom (under surveillance) for the people of the Seano.

¹³ Vid. Laurence, Cleary, and Sears 2011, 76–97.

¹⁴ Díaz Fernández 2016.

¹⁵ Marín Díaz 1987 (contra Wulff 2001 and 2006); Keay 1997; García Vargas, Ferrer Albelda, and García Fernández 2008. García Vargas in this same volume.

¹⁶ Pliego Vázquez and Ferrer Albelda in this same volume.

¹⁷ Ortiz de Urbina 2012, 191–222.

far west and the foundation of colonies would have contributed to this process,¹⁸ involving the figure of Heracles or Odysseus, among other archaic myths, which were conveniently updated.¹⁹ Urban society was competitive. All communities wished to participate of the past, which also included a Roman phase; the long and diverse (reinvented) historical tradition of Turdetania made it possible.²⁰

'Roman identity' was based, particularly at the beginning, on political and legal principals, which could be adapted and accommodated, laying the foundation for the consolidation of military control.²¹ Several, observable phenomena point in this direction: the numerous local variations recorded by the recent development of western 'Roman provincial archaeology'; the influential role of ethnic identities in the construction of new political realities, even in the most 'romanized' of regions, such as Turdetania;²² or the religious and cultural continuity of pre-Roman traditions. The continuity in Turdetania of ancient urbanism, religion, culture, language or ethnonyms, and their adaptation to the new imperial reality, should not be seen as a survival of the past, rather, as part of a 'pluri-ethnic' and 'pluri-cultural' romanization resulting in plural identities.²³ The widespread use of Latin reinforces, rather than contradicts, this view. It was used as a bridge language in exchanges with the empire or as the manifestation of social status in the Roman political apparatus.²⁴ The same may be said for the use of Roman legal structures, as has been exposed.²⁵

N.B. At the moment of the final edition (August 2017) we have not had access to the latest work of Louise Revell, *Ways of Being Roman: Discourses of Identity in the Roman West*. Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2016, only the review in [BMCR 2017.07.52](#)

¹⁸ Mora Serrano; Cruz Andreotti; Machuca; Álvarez Martí-Aguilar and Castro-Páez in this same volume. Johnston (2017, 125–189) has recently defended, in similar lines as Cruz Andreotti (1993, 2007 and 2010) the recovery in the Roman period of a Tartessian or Herculean past, the adoption of origin myths, such as the myth of Gargoris or Habis in Justin-Trogus, or the arrival of Homeric heroes, such as Odysseus, as part of the construction of a local identity under a Hellenistic cultural sphere.

¹⁹ Woolf 2011, 24–26. Bickerman (1952) already stated the central role played by Posidonius and Asclepiades (who actually set foot in Turdetania!) as important sources in Strabo's description of Turdetania (vid. Cruz Andreotti in these same pages and Johnston 2017, especially 146–159 for the *nostoi* and Heracles, and 136–141 for Tartessos, Gargoris and Habis as part of the 'local identity').

²⁰ Vid. ns. 18 and 19.

²¹ Le Roux 2006, 72 ss.; see also Caballos Rufino, and Lefebvre. eds. 2011., esp. the contributions of Le Roux, Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo; finally, Santos Yanguas, and Cruz Andreotti eds. 2012, passim.

²² Cf. Strabo, Pliny or Ptolemy. As way of example: *ciuitates*, which retained their ethnonym as part of their official name, such as *Colonia Augusta Gemella Tucci; Res Publica Tuccitanorum* (CIL II, 5.74–80).

²³ Revell 2016, especially 41–60.

²⁴ Beltrán Lloris 2004, 86–106; Lowe 2016, 45–55.

²⁵ Le Roux 2006.