



I Fenici



I Fenici sono una popolazione di origine semitica stanziata nell'area dell'attuale Libano, a nord della Palestina. Qui dal 1.200 a.C., dopo la crisi dell'impero ittita e del controllo egizio sui territori, si svilupparono i loro principali centri, città stato come Tiro, Sidone, Byblos, Berytos, che non costituirono mai un regno unitario. In Fenicia le città stato erano rette da re, ma nelle colonie, come a Cartagine, potevano insediarsi governi oligarchici, cioè in mano ad un'aristocrazia da cui provenivano i magistrati detti suffeti, che furono poi imposti da Nabucodonosor anche a Tiro. La fortuna fenicia subisce una progressiva crisi dopo l'VIII sec. a. C. a seguito dei conflitti con Assiri e Babilonesi e poi della rivalità con i greci. La distruzione di Tiro da parte di Alessandro Magno segnò la fine del loro principale centro.



Il territorio, circondato da montagne ricche di cedri adatti alla costruzione di navi, e con poco terreno coltivabile, favorì la vocazione marittima dei Fenici, che divennero i più grandi commercianti dell'antichità al servizio dei regni circostanti, da Israele all'Egitto. Le esportazioni dei Fenici riguardavano legno di cedro, oggetti artigianali in vetro e metallo e tessuti colorati di porpora



Le rotte commerciali

Essi costituirono un impero commerciale attraverso la fondazione di empori sulle coste, poi diventate colonie vere e proprie, che garantivano il controllo delle rotte marittime e le relazioni con le popolazioni dell'interno. Fra esse Cartagine in Africa, Panormo, Mozia e Solunto in Sicilia, Cadice e Malaga in Spagna. I Fenici giunsero addirittura alle isole britanniche da dove si importava lo stagno necessario per il bronzo.



I Fenici svilupparono navi dotate di chiglia adatta per la navigazione in mare aperto. L'osservazione delle stelle permise a loro di praticare anche la navigazione notturna osservando l'Orsa minore (detta stella fenicia).

L'attività mercantile non escludeva tuttavia la pratica della pirateria, per la quale i Fenici erano famosi.



La circumnavigazione dell'Africa nel racconto di Erodoto

Mi meraviglio dunque di quanti separano con tanto di confini Libia [= Africa], Asia ed Europa. Le differenze non sono da poco: in lunghezza l'Europa si sviluppa lungo Asia e Libia insieme, in larghezza non mi pare neppure paragonabile. La Libia in effetti si rivela essere interamente circondata dal mare, fuorché nel tratto di confine con Asia. Per quanto ne sappiamo il primo ad averlo dimostrato fu il re d'Egitto Neco: interrotto lo scavo del canale che dal Nilo porta al Golfo Arabico, egli inviò dei Fenici su delle navi con l'incarico di attraversare le Colonne d'Eracle sulla via del ritorno, fino a giungere nel mare settentrionale e così in Egitto. I Fenici, pertanto, partiti dal Mare Eritreo, navigavano nel mare meridionale; ogni volta che veniva l'autunno, approdavano, in qualunque punto della Libia fossero giunti, seminavano e aspettavano il tempo della mietitura. Dopo aver raccolto il grano, ripartivano, cosicché al terzo anno dopo due trascorsi in viaggio doppiarono le Colonne d'Eracle e giunsero in Egitto. E raccontarono anche particolari attendibili per qualcun altro ma non per me, per esempio che nel circumnavigare la Libia si erano trovati il sole sulla destra.

Erodoto, Storie, 4, 42

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Erodoto, Storie, 4, 41

La porpora

I Fenici svilupparono una tecnica di colorazione della stoffa attraverso la macerazione di un mollusco, il murice, da cui si ricavava il colore porpora, considerato il più prezioso e resistente. 12.000 molluschi servivano per produrre 1,4 grammi di colore. Il nome Fenici, che non è originario della popolazione, deriva dal greco phoinix (φοῖνιξ) che significa “porpora”.



Il vetro

Fra le tecniche artigianali in cui i fenici eccellevano vi era la lavorazione del vetro, già impiegata dagli Egizi ed introdotta dal VII sec. a.C. in Fenicia, dove svilupparono la tecnica per renderlo trasparente, impiegando le sabbie delle loro coste.



L'alfabeto fenicio

Erodoto attribuisce ai Fenici l'origine dell'alfabeto greco. In effetti è evidente la derivazione delle lettere greche da quelle utilizzate dai Fenici, che svilupparono un sistema di scrittura alfabetico anziché sillabico, in cui ad ogni consonante corrispondeva un unico segno, anziché prevederne uno diverso per ogni combinazione. Le vocali non erano indicate. In questo modo si riduceva il numero dei caratteri rendendo la scrittura accessibile anche ai non specialisti e facilitando il suo uso per il commercio.

𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖	𐤗	𐤘	𐤙	𐤚	𐤛	𐤜	𐤝	𐤞	𐤟	𐤠	𐤡	𐤢	𐤣	𐤤	𐤥	𐤦	𐤧	𐤨	𐤩	𐤪	𐤫	𐤬	𐤭	𐤮	𐤯	𐤰	𐤱	𐤲	𐤳	𐤴	𐤵	𐤶	𐤷	𐤸	𐤹	𐤺	𐤻	𐤼	𐤽	𐤾	𐤿	𐥀	𐥁	𐥂	𐥃	𐥄	𐥅	𐥆	𐥇	𐥈	𐥉	𐥊	𐥋	𐥌	𐥍	𐥎	𐥏	𐥐	𐥑	𐥒	𐥓	𐥔	𐥕	𐥖	𐥗	𐥘	𐥙	𐥚	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺	𐥻	𐥼	𐥽	𐥾	𐥿	𐦀	𐦁	𐦂	𐦃	𐦄	𐦅	𐦆	𐦇	𐦈	𐦉	𐦊	𐦋	𐦌	𐦍	𐦎	𐦏	𐦐	𐦑	𐦒	𐦓	𐦔	𐦕	𐦖	𐦗	𐦘	𐦙	𐦚	𐦛	𐦜	𐦝	𐦞	𐦟	𐦠	𐦡	𐦢	𐦣	𐦤	𐦥	𐦦	𐦧	𐦨	𐦩	𐦪	𐦫	𐦬	𐦭	𐦮	𐦯	𐦰	𐦱	𐦲	𐦳	𐦴	𐦵	𐦶	𐦷	𐦸	𐦹	𐦺	𐦻	𐦼	𐦽	𐦾	𐦿	𐧀	𐧁	𐧂	𐧃	𐧄	𐧅	𐧆	𐧇	𐧈	𐧉	𐧊	𐧋	𐧌	𐧍	𐧎	𐧏	𐧐	𐧑	𐧒	𐧓	𐧔	𐧕	𐧖	𐧗	𐧘	𐧙	𐧚	𐧛	𐧜	𐧝	𐧞	𐧟	𐧠	𐧡	𐧢	𐧣	𐧤	𐧥	𐧦	𐧧	𐧨	𐧩	𐧪	𐧫	𐧬	𐧭	𐧮	𐧯	𐧰	𐧱	𐧲	𐧳	𐧴	𐧵	𐧶	𐧷	𐧸	𐧹	𐧺	𐧻	𐧼	𐧽	𐧾	𐧿	𐨀	𐨁	𐨂	𐨃	𐨄	𐨅	𐨆	𐨇	𐨈	𐨉	𐨊	𐨋	𐨌	𐨍	𐨎	𐨏	𐨐	𐨑	𐨒	𐨓	𐨔	𐨕	𐨖	𐨗	𐨘	𐨙	𐨚	𐨛	𐨜	𐨝	𐨞	𐨟	𐨠	𐨡	𐨢	𐨣	𐨤	𐨥	𐨦	𐨧	𐨨	𐨩	𐨪	𐨫	𐨬	𐨭	𐨮	𐨯	𐨰	𐨱	𐨲	𐨳	𐨴	𐨵	𐨶	𐨷	𐨸	𐨹	𐨺	𐨻	𐨼	𐨽	𐨾	𐨿	𐩀	𐩁	𐩂	𐩃	𐩄	𐩅	𐩆	𐩇	𐩈	𐩉	𐩊	𐩋	𐩌	𐩍	𐩎	𐩏	𐩐	𐩑	𐩒	𐩓	𐩔	𐩕	𐩖	𐩗	𐩘	𐩙	𐩚	𐩛	𐩜	𐩝	𐩞	𐩟	𐩠	𐩡	𐩢	𐩣	𐩤	𐩥	𐩦	𐩧	𐩨	𐩩	𐩪	𐩫	𐩬	𐩭	𐩮	𐩯	𐩰	𐩱	𐩲	𐩳	𐩴	𐩵	𐩶	𐩷	𐩸	𐩹	𐩺	𐩻	𐩼	𐩽	𐩾	𐩿	𐪀	𐪁	𐪂	𐪃	𐪄	𐪅	𐪆	𐪇	𐪈	𐪉	𐪊	𐪋	𐪌	𐪍	𐪎	𐪏	𐪐	𐪑	𐪒	𐪓	𐪔	𐪕	𐪖	𐪗	𐪘	𐪙	𐪚	𐪛	𐪜	𐪝	𐪞	𐪟	𐪠	𐪡	𐪢	𐪣	𐪤	𐪥	𐪦	𐪧	𐪨	𐪩	𐪪	𐪫	𐪬	𐪭	𐪮	𐪯	𐪰	𐪱	𐪲	𐪳	𐪴	𐪵	𐪶	𐪷	𐪸	𐪹	𐪺	𐪻	𐪼	𐪽	𐪾	𐪿	𐫀	𐫁	𐫂	𐫃	𐫄	𐫅	𐫆	𐫇	𐫈	𐫉	𐫊	𐫋	𐫌	𐫍	𐫎	𐫏	𐫐	𐫑	𐫒	𐫓	𐫔	𐫕	𐫖	𐫗	𐫘	𐫙	𐫚	𐫛	𐫜	𐫝	𐫞	𐫟	𐫠	𐫡	𐫢	𐫣	𐫤	𐫥	𐫦	𐫧	𐫨	𐫩	𐫪	𐫫	𐫬	𐫭	𐫮	𐫯	𐫰	𐫱	𐫲	𐫳	𐫴	𐫵	𐫶	𐫷	𐫸	𐫹	𐫺	𐫻	𐫼	𐫽	𐫾	𐫿	𐬀	𐬁	𐬂	𐬃	𐬄	𐬅	𐬆	𐬇	𐬈	𐬉	𐬊	𐬋	𐬌	𐬍	𐬎	𐬏	𐬐	𐬑	𐬒	𐬓	𐬔	𐬕	𐬖	𐬗	𐬘	𐬙	𐬚	𐬛	𐬜	𐬝	𐬞	𐬟	𐬠	𐬡	𐬢	𐬣	𐬤	𐬥	𐬦	𐬧	𐬨	𐬩	𐬪	𐬫	𐬬	𐬭	𐬮	𐬯	𐬰	𐬱	𐬲	𐬳	𐬴	𐬵	𐬶	𐬷	𐬸	𐬹	𐬺	𐬻	𐬼	𐬽	𐬾	𐬿	𐭀	𐭁	𐭂	𐭃	𐭄	𐭅	𐭆	𐭇	𐭈	𐭉	𐭊	𐭋	𐭌	𐭍	𐭎	𐭏	𐭐	𐭑	𐭒	𐭓	𐭔	𐭕	𐭖	𐭗	𐭘	𐭙	𐭚	𐭛	𐭜	𐭝	𐭞	𐭟	𐭠	𐭡	𐭢	𐭣	𐭤	𐭥	𐭦	𐭧	𐭨	𐭩	𐭪	𐭫	𐭬	𐭭	𐭮	𐭯	𐭰	𐭱	𐭲	𐭳	𐭴	𐭵	𐭶	𐭷	𐭸	𐭹	𐭺	𐭻	𐭼	𐭽	𐭾	𐭿	𐮀	𐮁	𐮂	𐮃	𐮄	𐮅	𐮆	𐮇	𐮈	𐮉	𐮊	𐮋	𐮌	𐮍	𐮎	𐮏	𐮐	𐮑	𐮒	𐮓	𐮔	𐮕	𐮖	𐮗	𐮘	𐮙	𐮚	𐮛	𐮜	𐮝	𐮞	𐮟	𐮠	𐮡	𐮢	𐮣	𐮤	𐮥	𐮦	𐮧	𐮨	𐮩	𐮪	𐮫	𐮬	𐮭	𐮮	𐮯	𐮰	𐮱	𐮲	𐮳	𐮴	𐮵	𐮶	𐮷	𐮸	𐮹	𐮺	𐮻	𐮼	𐮽	𐮾	𐮿	𐯀	𐯁	𐯂	𐯃	𐯄	𐯅	𐯆	𐯇	𐯈	𐯉	𐯊	𐯋	𐯌	𐯍	𐯎	𐯏	𐯐	𐯑	𐯒	𐯓	𐯔	𐯕	𐯖	𐯗	𐯘	𐯙	𐯚	𐯛	𐯜	𐯝	𐯞	𐯟	𐯠	𐯡	𐯢	𐯣	𐯤	𐯥	𐯦	𐯧	𐯨	𐯩	𐯪	𐯫	𐯬	𐯭	𐯮	𐯯	𐯰	𐯱	𐯲	𐯳	𐯴	𐯵	𐯶	𐯷	𐯸	𐯹	𐯺	𐯻	𐯼	𐯽	𐯾	𐯿	𐰀	𐰁	𐰂	𐰃	𐰄	𐰅	𐰆	𐰇	𐰈	𐰉	𐰊	𐰋	𐰌	𐰍	𐰎	𐰏	𐰐	𐰑	𐰒	𐰓	𐰔	𐰕	𐰖	𐰗	𐰘	𐰙	𐰚	𐰛	𐰜	𐰝	𐰞	𐰟	𐰠	𐰡	𐰢	𐰣	𐰤	𐰥	𐰦	𐰧	𐰨	𐰩	𐰪	𐰫	𐰬	𐰭	𐰮	𐰯	𐰰	𐰱	𐰲	𐰳	𐰴	𐰵	𐰶	𐰷	𐰸	𐰹	𐰺	𐰻	𐰼	𐰽	𐰾	𐰿	𐱀	𐱁	𐱂	𐱃	𐱄	𐱅	𐱆	𐱇	𐱈	𐱉	𐱊	𐱋	𐱌	𐱍	𐱎	𐱏	𐱐	𐱑	𐱒	𐱓	𐱔	𐱕	𐱖	𐱗	𐱘	𐱙	𐱚	𐱛	𐱜	𐱝	𐱞	𐱟	𐱠	𐱡	𐱢	𐱣	𐱤	𐱥	𐱦	𐱧	𐱨	𐱩	𐱪	𐱫	𐱬	𐱭	𐱮	𐱯	𐱰	𐱱	𐱲	𐱳	𐱴	𐱵	𐱶	𐱷	𐱸	𐱹	𐱺	𐱻	𐱼	𐱽	𐱾	𐱿	𐲀	𐲁	𐲂	𐲃	𐲄	𐲅	𐲆	𐲇	𐲈	𐲉	𐲊	𐲋	𐲌	𐲍	𐲎	𐲏	𐲐	𐲑	𐲒	𐲓	𐲔	𐲕	𐲖	𐲗	𐲘	𐲙	𐲚	𐲛	𐲜	𐲝	𐲞	𐲟	𐲠	𐲡	𐲢	𐲣	𐲤	𐲥	𐲦	𐲧	𐲨	𐲩	𐲪	𐲫	𐲬	𐲭	𐲮	𐲯	𐲰	𐲱	𐲲	𐲳	𐲴	𐲵	𐲶	𐲷	𐲸	𐲹	𐲺	𐲻	𐲼	𐲽	𐲾	𐲿	𐳀	𐳁	𐳂	𐳃	𐳄	𐳅	𐳆	𐳇	𐳈	𐳉	𐳊	𐳋	𐳌	𐳍	𐳎	𐳏	𐳐	𐳑	𐳒	𐳓	𐳔	𐳕	𐳖	𐳗	𐳘	𐳙	𐳚	𐳛	𐳜	𐳝	𐳞	𐳟	𐳠	𐳡	𐳢	𐳣	𐳤	𐳥	𐳦	𐳧	𐳨	𐳩	𐳪	𐳫	𐳬	𐳭	𐳮	𐳯	𐳰	𐳱	𐳲	𐳳	𐳴	𐳵	𐳶	𐳷	𐳸	𐳹	𐳺	𐳻	𐳼	𐳽	𐳾	𐳿	𐴀	𐴁	𐴂	𐴃	𐴄	𐴅	𐴆	𐴇	𐴈	𐴉	𐴊	𐴋	𐴌	𐴍	𐴎	𐴏	𐴐	𐴑	𐴒	𐴓	𐴔	𐴕	𐴖	𐴗	𐴘	𐴙	𐴚	𐴛	𐴜	𐴝	𐴞	𐴟	𐴠	𐴡	𐴢	𐴣	𐴤	𐴥	𐴦	𐴧	𐴨	𐴩	𐴪	𐴫	𐴬	𐴭	𐴮	𐴯	𐴰	𐴱	𐴲	𐴳	𐴴	𐴵	𐴶	𐴷	𐴸	𐴹	𐴺	𐴻	𐴼	𐴽	𐴾	𐴿	𐵀	𐵁	𐵂	𐵃	𐵄	𐵅	𐵆	𐵇	𐵈	𐵉	𐵊	𐵋	𐵌	𐵍	𐵎	𐵏	𐵐	𐵑	𐵒	𐵓	𐵔	𐵕	𐵖	𐵗	𐵘	𐵙	𐵚	𐵛	𐵜	𐵝	𐵞	𐵟	𐵠	𐵡	𐵢	𐵣	𐵤	𐵥	𐵦	𐵧	𐵨	𐵩	𐵪	𐵫	𐵬	𐵭	𐵮	𐵯	𐵰	𐵱	𐵲	𐵳	𐵴	𐵵	𐵶	𐵷	𐵸	𐵹	𐵺	𐵻	𐵼	𐵽	𐵾	𐵿	𐶀	𐶁	𐶂	𐶃	𐶄	𐶅	𐶆	𐶇	𐶈	𐶉	𐶊	𐶋	𐶌	𐶍	𐶎	𐶏	𐶐	𐶑	𐶒	𐶓	𐶔	𐶕	𐶖	𐶗	𐶘	𐶙	𐶚	𐶛	𐶜	𐶝	𐶞	𐶟	𐶠	𐶡	𐶢	𐶣	𐶤	𐶥	𐶦	𐶧	𐶨	𐶩	𐶪	𐶫	𐶬	𐶭	𐶮	𐶯	𐶰	𐶱	𐶲	𐶳	𐶴	𐶵	𐶶	𐶷	𐶸	𐶹	𐶺	𐶻	𐶼	𐶽	𐶾	𐶿	𐷀	𐷁	𐷂	𐷃	𐷄	𐷅	𐷆	𐷇	𐷈	𐷉	𐷊	𐷋	𐷌	𐷍	𐷎	𐷏	𐷐	𐷑	𐷒	𐷓	𐷔	𐷕	𐷖	𐷗	𐷘	𐷙	𐷚	𐷛	𐷜	𐷝	𐷞	𐷟	𐷠	𐷡	𐷢	𐷣	𐷤	𐷥	𐷦	𐷧	𐷨	𐷩	𐷪	𐷫	𐷬	𐷭	𐷮	𐷯	𐷰	𐷱	𐷲	𐷳	𐷴	𐷵	𐷶	𐷷	𐷸	𐷹	𐷺	𐷻	𐷼	𐷽	𐷾	𐷿	𐸀	𐸁	𐸂	𐸃	𐸄	𐸅	𐸆	𐸇	𐸈	𐸉	𐸊	𐸋	𐸌	𐸍	𐸎	𐸏	𐸐	𐸑	𐸒	𐸓	𐸔	𐸕	𐸖	𐸗	𐸘	𐸙	𐸚	𐸛	𐸜	𐸝	𐸞	𐸟	𐸠	𐸡	𐸢	𐸣	𐸤	𐸥	𐸦	𐸧	𐸨	𐸩	𐸪	𐸫	𐸬	𐸭	𐸮	𐸯	𐸰	𐸱	𐸲	𐸳	𐸴	𐸵	𐸶	𐸷	𐸸	𐸹	𐸺	𐸻	𐸼	𐸽	𐸾	𐸿	𐹀	𐹁	𐹂	𐹃	𐹄	𐹅	
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La religione

I Fenici svilupparono una religione politeistica con ampia influenza delle popolazioni circostanti. Particolare diffusione ha in origine la figura del dio solare Baal e della dea Ishtar-Astarte, dea della fertilità, anche se si impone poi il culto del dio supremo El, a capo del pantheon fenicio. A livello di culto popolare aveva poi diffusione quello di Adone, legato al morire ed al rinascere della natura. Assimilabile ad Eracle era poi Melquart, venerato a Tiro.



Tofet

Molto discussa è la funzione dei Tofet, cimitero di bambini cremati per i quali si è supposto il legame con i sacrifici umani attribuiti dalla Bibbia alle popolazione cananee. Tuttavia alcuni studiosi mettono in dubbio che si tratti di bambini passati per il fuoco attribuendo la loro morte a fattori naturali.

