

2019

Phoenicians in the Hebrew Bible

Brian R. Doak

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ccs>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

CHAPTER 43

PHOENICIANS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

BRIAN R. DOAK

BY THE FIRST millennium BCE, the territory southeast of the coastal Mediterranean “Phoenician mainland” and west of the Jordan River and Dead Sea hosted a number of groups, sometimes called “Canaanites” or “Israelites.” At some point during this first millennium, these inland inhabitants of the Levant produced what we now have collected as the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament)—and the Phoenicians figure prominently in several important episodes in these texts. As a historical source, the Hebrew Bible immediately confronts us with the problem of providing secure dates not only for the texts themselves but also for the sources and information within or behind the texts. Are any of the Hebrew Bible’s references to the Phoenicians to be taken as primary-source information about the Phoenicians? If the biblical Phoenicians are mostly or only an imaginative ideological construction of ancient Israel, from which period(s) of Israelite history are those constructions derived, and for what purposes?

At a basic level we are justified in affirming the “artificial” and imaginative nature of all identity constructions; such an assumption is now bedrock in cultural studies and contemporary historiographic methodology, but at the outset we would do well to admit that, whatever image of the Phoenicians we derive from the Hebrew Bible, those “Phoenicians” are “Bible-Phoenicians,” not the Phoenicians of history “as it really was” on the ground. Such is the case with all images of the Phoenicians from antiquity. What Irene Winter has argued with regard to Homer’s Phoenicians, *mutatis mutandis*, could equally apply to these Bible-Phoenicians: “‘Homer’s Phoenicians,’ then, do not represent the world of the Phoenicians; rather, they present a masterful literary construct, at once produced by and working to produce the broader social, political, economic, and symbolic fabric of the early state in Archaic Greece” (Winter 1995: 264; cf. Skinner 2012: 86–89; Gruen 2011). So, too, the Bible-Phoenicians take on stereotypical characteristics as master builders, arrogant traders, wealth mongers, and hubristic false worshippers in texts where authors were clearly constructing a definition of Israel as humble recipients

of their own deity's favor. Having said all this, we would be wrong to dismiss out of hand the Hebrew Bible as a source of Phoenician identity. Even if we find only a few historical glimpses of a "real" Iron Age Phoenicia in the Bible, those glimpses would prove to be valuable in light of the general scarcity—especially in earlier periods—of information on the Phoenicians.

In what follows, I trace the appearance of "Phoenicians" in the Bible by way of examining texts in which basic Phoenician locales such as Tyre and Sidon appear. The Bible never uses the title "Phoenician" (Homer was the first to use terms such as *phoinix* and *phoinikoessa* in the eighth century BCE). Here we face the difficult question of whether "Phoenician" is indeed appropriate at all before the Roman period (see essays in Quinn and Vella 2014). Should we not, rather, speak only of specific coastal cities (Tyre, Sidon, Byblos), bound together not by any national or ethnic affiliation, religion, or culture but only by commercial relationships with each other and other Mediterranean locales, as well as by whatever cosmopolitan characteristics were generally found among coastal urban centers, as is sometimes postulated (see now Quinn 2018)? Even though this is not the place for a full discussion of these issues, as other chapters in this volume show (even if implicitly), we are justified in speaking of "Phoenicians" in the Iron Age—in light of several key points and as long as we recognize the limits of the term. The Greek etymology of "Phoenicia" attests to the viability of "the Phoenicians" as at least a "flexible external ethnonym" (Doak 2015: 8) for those traders and colonizers based in cities on the Levantine coast such as Sidon and Tyre. Material culture such as pottery, though not to be equated with identity, attests to some shared character within the mainland coastal region, as well as in Mediterranean colonies (e.g., Aubet 2013; Sader 2013; Núñez Calvo 2008; Schreiber 2003; Anderson 1990), and Phoenician artistic products adhere to a distinct style and undoubtedly created a broadly understood "Phoenician" craft identity (e.g., Doak 2015: 11–12, 41–44; Markoe 1990; Winter 1976, 1981). Phoenician language constitutes a distinct and coherent category (e.g., Hackett 2004), and the Phoenician script saw wide use to the west (as adopted/adapted by the Greeks by the eighth century BCE) and also inland in the Levant (Rollston 2010). (On these issues, see, e.g., chapters 3, 15–17, 22, and 23, this volume.)

THE BIBLICAL ORIGINS OF THE PHOENICIANS

As with many other major people groups and empires, the Bible's Phoenicians have their origins in the "primeval history" of Genesis 1–11. These materials have no place as historical data in a certain sense, but they do reveal the symbolic place various peoples had for the narrators at the time of the text's composition (the time period for which has been fiercely debated over the past two centuries; see, e.g., Tsirkin 1991: 128–31, who believes the Phoenicians' portions were composed between 743 and 676 BCE—i.e., between the time of Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns in Phoenicia and Esharhaddon's

destruction of Sidon). In the Table of Nations (Genesis 10), chronicling the descendants of Noah's sons after the Flood, "Canaan," grandson of Noah, bears as his firstborn a male descendent named "Sidon"—along with a list of other names associated with what the Bible sometimes calls "the Canaanites" (e.g., Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, and so on; Genesis 10:15–20; 1 Chronicles 1:13–16). Genesis 10:19 provides further association with the Canaanites in terms of geography: "And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha" (all translations in this chapter are from the NRSV). Though the location of "Lasha" has never been clear (presumably it is in the southern Levant, near the Dead Sea?), the basic spatial schema suggests that Sidon is a northernmost boundary of what the genealogist considered broader "Canaan" (thus also encompassing sites like Tyre, Dor, and Sarepta to the south, but not Byblos, Arvad, and other sites to the north). In what some consider an archaic poem embedded within Genesis, the prayer of Jacob in Genesis 49, we read of Sidon as a border again, for the tribe of Zebulun, who "shall settle at the shores of the sea" (v. 13). In Deuteronomy 3:9, a narrative aside provides a primitive ethnographic/linguistic note, claiming that the "Sidonians" call the geographical location "Hermon" by the name "Sirion." Where such information came from is not clear, though it is hard to imagine a scenario in which an author would invent this information from whole cloth—presumably the author had some contact with Sidonians and their language.

The narrators of Joshua and Judges mention Sidon in varying contexts when describing Israel's entry into and early experience within the land. Some of the references are quite incidental (e.g., Joshua 11:8; see also 2 Samuel 24:6) or occur to signal boundaries and other geographical references (Joshua 11:8, 13:4, 19:28). In both Joshua 11:8 and 19:28, the title of the city is "Mighty Sidon" or "Sidon the Great" (*šidôn rabbāh*), which seems to indicate the status of Sidon in the eyes of the narrator but little else (presumably, Sidon could have been considered "great" in any number of time periods or for any number of reasons by an Israelite audience; e.g., Peckham 1992: 349–51). Otherwise, authors refer to Sidon as an enemy city that oppresses Israel (Judges 10:12) and as a location from which the Israelites were to drive out the inhabitants (Judges 1:31; Joshua 13:6); people worship the "gods of Sidon" (Judges 10:6); and Sidon appears in a context suggesting awareness that it was a larger city that could have offered military aid to a small satellite location (Laish, in Judges 18:28). Judges 1:31 lists known Phoenician sites such Akko and Achzib as places the tribe of Asher was to drive out and occupy (but did not), and Judges 3:3 includes "all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon" among those whom the Lord had intentionally left in the land in order to teach Israel warfare.

Despite its known prominence in the eighth century BCE on onward, Tyre receives no reference in Genesis along with Sidon, nor does it appear in lists of tribal boundaries, genealogies, or any other texts until, primarily, the sixth-century BCE prophetic corpus (but see Joshua 19:29) and the material concerning Hiram (discussed later; Arvad, however, is mentioned in Genesis 10:18). The seemingly common pair

descriptor "Tyre and Sidon" appears only in later texts such as Joel 3:4, Zechariah 9:2, and Jeremiah 47:4, and then, still later in the biblical orbit, in early Jewish works such as 1 Maccabees (5:15), 1 Esdras (5:55), 2 Esdras (1:11), and the New Testament (several times in Matthew, Luke, and Acts). The dating of the texts in Genesis, Joshua, and Judges cannot be ascertained with anything near certainty, thus complicating any attempt to chart a development for why Sidon (on its own terms, or as opposed to Tyre) appears with such prominence in the Bible's vision of ethnic origins in Genesis 10 or in the struggle for Israel to establish itself in the land in Joshua and Judges. Moreover, the fact that Genesis, Joshua, and Judges occur before the monarchic period in the order of biblical books and in the Bible's own presentation of its past in no way indicates that the traditions behind the texts of the "pre-monarchic" books stand prior to the "later" monarchic traditions.

HIRAM OF TYRE AND THE PHOENICIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOLOMONIC TEMPLE

During the period of the biblical monarchy as represented in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the Phoenicians figure prominently in three major instances: (1) the building of the Temple, in which Hiram/Huram king of Tyre and another Tyrian craftsman, also named Hiram, aid Solomon in 1 Kings 5, 7, and 9; and 2 Chronicles 2, 4, 8–9 (though David initiated the relationship with Hiram earlier; see 2 Samuel 5; and 1 Chronicles 14); (2) Ahab's union with Jezebel, "daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians" (1 Kings 16:31), and the ensuing drama involving the prophet Elijah and his confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 17–19), Jezebel's involvement in the theft of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21), and the account of Jezebel's violent death (2 Kings 9); (3) moreover, prophetic books contain repeated condemnations of Phoenician cities, religion, and politics, and some of these texts may have been produced during the pre-exilic period.

Before turning to the biblical engagement with Jezebel or the Prophets, we first consider the question of Hiram of Tyre and his involvement with David and Solomon, culminating in the Temple construction (Green 1983). The relationship between Hiram and David begins without warning or elaboration in 2 Samuel 5. After David had established his reign in Jerusalem, "King Hiram of Tyre (*melek šôr*) sent messengers to David, along with cedar trees, and carpenters and masons who built David a house. David then perceived that the LORD had established him as king over Israel" (vv. 11–12). Hiram does not appear again (though see passing geographical references to Sidon and Tyre in 2 Samuel 24:5–6) until the reign of David's son, Solomon. In this case, too, Hiram initiates the interaction, and the two kings correspond *in absentia* by messengers. Solomon cites Sidonian mastery in the timber industry (1 Kings 5:6, seeming to conflate the Sidonians with the Tyrians?) by way of asking Hiram for materials, and in return, Hiram requests food for his household. Then 1 Kings 5:12

(Hebrew v. 26) states that the two kings establish a treaty, and King Solomon's conscripted labor force works alongside Hiram's builders to complete the project.

Later, as Solomon completes his own house along with the Temple, Solomon employs an individual called "Hiram *from/of* Tyre," not Hiram the "*king of* Tyre"—this Hiram "was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, whose father, a man of Tyre, had been an artisan in bronze" (1 Kings 7:13–14). This Hiram from/of Tyre works as a craftsman, casting objects in bronze, pillars, stands and various cultic items, and producing decorative motifs involving floral patterns and cherubim figures. The narrator even specifies the place of Hiram's construction, "in the plain of the Jordan . . . in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan" (1 Kings 7:45–46). The Chronicler may be attempting an explanation or harmonization of the problem of the two Hirams in 2 Chronicles 2 (Klein 2012: 37), where the narrator has Hiram sending a letter to Solomon explaining that the craftsman Hiram, named "Hiram-abi," is "the son of one of the Danite women, his father a Tyrian," clarifying that he will execute the artistic work (2 Chronicles 2:12–14).

The narrative then turns back to Hiram King of Tyre in 1 Kings 9:10–14 to report an odd incident. In addition to the food provision for Hiram (1 Kings 5:9[23]), Solomon offers Hiram a bonus of "twenty cities in the land of Galilee. But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him, they did not please him. Therefore he said, 'What kind of cities are these that you have given me, my brother?' So they are called the land of Cabul to this day. But Hiram had sent to the king one hundred twenty talents of gold" (1 Kings 9:10–14). The question of why these cities were offered and then rejected remains obscure; moreover, why the narrator sees fit to tell us any of this is even more obscure. Similar to the observation above about Deuteronomy 3:9, we must wonder if the incidental nature of this account militates in favor of its historicity—Why report any of this? If the account is not historical, its value may be as a political slight: by giving Hiram undesirable cities, yet still taking an additional 120 talents of gold in the process (the exact same amount the fabled Queen of Sheba provides to Solomon in 1 Kings 10:10), Solomon proves his superiority over the Phoenician city and its king.

As the King Hiram narrative concludes in scattered references (1 Kings 9:26–28, 10:11, 10:22), Hiram continues to provide materials to Solomon—sailors, imported gold, and other exotic materials, all without Solomon needing to offer anything in return. On a purely narrative level, animated by knowledge of Phoenician wealth, artistic achievement, and naval power that could have pertained over many centuries (e.g., the early eighth century through the Persian period), the Hiram story bolsters Solomon's regional credibility and positions him as a powerful ruler vis-à-vis a close neighbor. Moreover, as Peckham points out (1992: 351), the reference to Tyre/Hiram during the time of David (2 Samuel 5), connected as it is to Solomon and the building of the temple (1 Kings 5), draws together the founding of the temple with a "distant and idyllic past" of "right worship" (see also McCarter 1984: 146, who argues that the reference to Hiram in 2 Samuel 5 is out of place, the product of a "Deuteronomistic compilation").

How might we go about assessing the value of the Hiram stories in terms of learning anything about the Phoenicians of the tenth century BCE? The narrative and ideological value of the stories seems clear enough, assuming audiences know Hiram as a powerful local king (Liverani 2005: 308–29). On the other hand, readers may perceive in the Phoenician involvement in the temple some kind of subtle religious swipe against Solomon in light of the alleged syncretism he would later perpetrate (1 Kings 11, esp. vv. 1, 5, and 33, where Solomon marries Sidonian women and worships Sidonian deities; Hays 2003: 166–67, 171, on other aspects of the Hiram narrative that could be read as slights against Solomon). The Bible never elsewhere speaks of Phoenician religious involvement in the affairs of Israel as a positive development (compare with the Jezebel stories below). The archaeological record undoubtedly confirms the notion that Israel had close and repeated contact with Phoenician material culture (e.g., Crouch 2014: 28–29; Geva 1982; Mazar 1992: 376–79, 464–75, 502–507; essays in Lipiński 1991). The Phoenician timber industry was certainly notable and widespread (Truermann 2009; Markoe 2000: 93–95; Nam 2012: 81–83), as was their long-distance trade represented by the biblical trope of the “ships of Tarshish,” probably referring to a colonization movement that may indeed have started in Hiram’s time or slightly later (e.g., Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016: 111–21; cf. also chapter 6, this volume). The sphinx-like creatures utilized in the Israelite Temple adornment (1 Kings 6:23–36) and the ark of the covenant (e.g., Exodus 25:18–22; 1 Samuel 4:4) could indicate Phoenician influence, as sphinx motifs were prominent in Phoenician art (though of course not exclusive to the Phoenicians; see Gubel 1987; and chapter 23, this volume). The involvement of the same Hiram across the reigns of two long-ruling kings (David and Solomon) is possible (Green 1983: 391) but sounds suspiciously like a narrative device meant to link father and son as builders (a motif taken much further in 1–2 Chronicles).

At any rate, none of these factors helps us achieve strict historical verifiability; at best, they provide a broad, plausible context within which the Hiram interaction makes sense historically. Major scholars of the Phoenicians tend to take the Bible at face value in its description of Hiram and use the account as a foundation for discussing the politics (an “expansionist policy”) and naval development of the Tyrian city-state in the tenth century BCE, and others have similarly argued for or assumed historicity (e.g., Aubet 2001: 43–46; Miller and Hayes 2006: 311–16; Green 1983).

Though we have no references to Hiram outside of the Bible from the Iron Age (presumably the biblical texts were produced in this period), the first century CE Jewish author Josephus claims to draw information from the now-lost works of Menander of Ephesus, a second-century BCE Greek historian, as well as from a certain “Dios,” presumably from the same time period and about whom nothing is known outside of Josephus. In his *Jewish Antiquities* (8.146–48; Thackeray and Marcus 1966: 647–53; for *Against Apion*, the edition is Barclay 2007), Josephus (following these sources) essentially paraphrases the Bible insofar as Hiram (*Eirōmos*) interacts with Solomon—with the addition of an exchange of riddle bets for large sums of gold. Otherwise, Josephus reports (following Menander and Dios at different

points), Hiram had succeeded his father Abibalos and reigned for thirty-four years until the age of fifty-three, during which time he completed various building projects in Tyre, religious reforms, and a single military campaign. In *Against Apion* (1.17–20), Josephus speaks of Hiram as a major builder and reformer along the lines of the presentation in *Jewish Antiquities*, though now Josephus claims that letters between Solomon and Hiram have been “preserved to this day among the Tyrians” (perhaps in an archive).

Because it might be unduly cynical to suppose Josephus invented Menander or Dios out of whole cloth, the question must shift to these Greek authors themselves and their own sources. As Barclay (2007: 67) points out, the folkloric riddle motif does not inspire confidence, nor does the relative anonymity of both Menander and Dios during their own time period. Undoubtedly the biblical Hiram colored Josephus’s Phoenician “Hiram of antiquity” as represented by both Dios and Menander. Josephus’s overall project here, of course, especially in *Against Apion*, is to prove the high antiquity of the Jewish people and compare them wherever possible with notable surrounding groups and empires. These putative Phoenician records were drafted (or outright manipulated) for that purpose, and thus they can hold little independent weight as affirmation of the biblical accounts of Hiram.

JEZEBEL, THE SIDONIAN PRINCESS

The narratives involving the Sidonian Jezebel stretch through 1–2 Kings and play an important role in building the case that Israel and Judah had committed apostasy deserving the loss of national independence, land, monarchy, and temple. This narrative voice has often been attributed to the “Deuteronomistic Historian,” a supposed sixth-century BCE source who drew upon earlier material in order to tell the story of the rise and fall of Israel in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (see the classic study of Noth 1981, as well as an overview of problems and new views in Römer 2006). Though the author introduces Jezebel herself in 1 Kings 16:31 (as “Jezebel daughter of king Ethbaal of the Sidonians,” wife of the Israelite king Ahab), the “Sidonian” element of her identity plays a key role in 1 Kings 11. Here, Solomon’s apostasy involves not only the marriage of foreign women—Sidonians among them (1 Kings 11:1)—but also the worship of foreign deities, inextricably linked for the narrator to the marriages (1 Kings 11:5, 33): “For Solomon followed Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians . . . he has forsaken me, [and] worshipped the goddess of the Sidonians” (compare 1 Kings 16:31, linking Jezebel to Baal worship). This all appears as a contrast to the narrative of the widow of Zarephath, a coastal town between Tyre and Sidon “which belongs to Sidon” (1 Kings 17). After declaring a drought against Ahab and Jezebel, the Lord instructs the prophet Elijah to visit an unnamed widow in the Sidonian town. Elijah receives miraculous food from the woman, then revives her son from the dead, prompting her to confession:

"Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth" (1 Kings 17:24). We must therefore recognize the clear theological coloring here: the narrator contrasts the identity of the Sidonian queen Jezebel and Solomon's false worship of Sidonian deities with the humble plight of a Sidonian widow, who shelters the prophet and recognizes Israel's God. The Sidonians in these texts are only relevant for their introduction of "other gods" into Israel. (Note also the notorious problem of the tophet ritual of child sacrifice, which the Bible never directly attributes to the Phoenicians; but see chapter 21, this volume).

By the time we reach the main Jezebel narratives (1 Kings 18–19, 21; 2 Kings 9), then, the story follows a predictable pattern. Jezebel rallies her prophets of Baal as the antagonists for the Lord's prophet, Elijah, in the famous battle on Mount Carmel. Many have rightly doubted whether we can learn anything about "Phoenician religion" from the prophetic contest, which features a heavy dose of mockery against the Baal prophets as they cut themselves and work up a general frenzy trying to reach their god (admittedly, it is not even clear that the Baal prophets here are specifically "Phoenician" imports). Elijah's taunt in 1 Kings 18:27, implying that the prophets must cry louder because "perhaps he [Baal] is asleep and must be awakened," could provide evidence that the narrator is aware of some Phoenician "awakening" tradition sometimes associated with the primary deity of Tyre, Melqart. A sixth-century BCE Phoenician inscription from Pyrgi, on the western coast of Italy, refers to an event occurring *bym qbr 'ilm*, "on the day of the burial of the deity," perhaps implying a "dying and rising" type ritual, which might involve "awakening" (Gibson 1982: 151–59). Later Greek texts speak of a Melqart "awakening" (*egersis*) ritual (Bonnet 1988: 104–12; on 1 Kings 18, see Briquel-Chatonnet 1992: 303–13; and for Phoenician religion more generally, see chapters 19 and 20, this volume.) Otherwise, the Sidonian Jezebel appears in an episode in which she encourages her husband to steal land and facilitate the landowner's murder (1 Kings 21), and in the scene in which she dies, she is thrown from a tower by an Israelite king bent on religiously reforming the nation (2 Kings 9).

An intriguing reference in 1 Kings 22:39 to King Ahab's "house of ivory" (cf. Amos 3:15; 6:4; Psalms 45:8 [Heb. 45:9]) may indicate genuine Phoenician material involvement in the northern monarchy during the ninth century BCE. As famed exporters of precious goods and ivory products (Winter 1976; see chapter 23, this volume), it is certainly plausible that the Israelite monarchy traded with Phoenician cities to obtain ivory needed for such buildings (some have now argued that the ivory production for such purposes could have been local; see Suter 2010; and chapter 24, this volume). The excavations at the northern capital of Samaria revealed artifacts demonstrating the wealth and prestige of the ninth–eighth century BCE ruling group there (Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938; Mazar 1992: 503–14), and even the memories of Jezebel, though colored so negatively by the Bible's theological polemic against her, may be authentic or plausible in terms of the basic narrative: a royal marriage with a Phoenician woman, and the importation of new or expanded cultic options, priests, and so on.

ISRAELITE PROPHETS AND THE DENUNCIATION OF TYRE

Quite possibly the earliest stratum of biblical data (i.e., in terms of the authorship of the text itself, not its own internal chronology) we have concerning the Phoenicians occurs through the writings of the putatively eighth-century BCE prophets Amos and Isaiah. Typically, biblical scholars only attribute Isaiah 1–39 to the eighth-century BCE Isaiah of Jerusalem—and not always all those chapters—while Isaiah 40–66 belongs to a context in the sixth century BCE or later (Peckham 1992: 350–51, considers Ezekiel 26–28 to be the earliest biblical references to Phoenician cities, relegating the oracle against Tyre in Amos 1:9–10 to the status of a later “revision” to the text). In Isaiah 23, Tyre and Sidon both appear as objects of the prophetic critique. Here Isaiah mentions the “revenue” of Sidon—namely “the grain of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile” (23:2–3)—and asks the coastland inhabitants to “wail” over the fate of Tarshish, “your exultant city whose origin is from days of old, whose feet carried her to settle far away” (23:6–7). This “Tarshish” may be “Tartessos,” a famed coastal area beyond the Straits of Gibraltar in the far western end of the Mediterranean world, mentioned in many ancient Greek and Roman texts (Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016: 111–21 and López-Ruiz 2009 on the Tarshish/Tartessos issue; other references to Tarshish in the Hebrew Bible include Genesis 10:4; 1 Kings 10:22; Psalms 72:10; Jeremiah 10:9; Ezekiel 27:12, 25; and Jonah 1:3). If this identification is correct, Tarshish would point to the well-attested Phoenician trade and settlements on the southern coast of Spain (beginning in the eighth century BCE or before; see chapters 6, 38, and 39, this volume).

However, the situation for Tyre is not all gloom for Isaiah: at the end of a seventy-year period, the prophet declares, “the Lord will visit Tyre, and she will return to her trade, and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. Her merchandise and her wages will be dedicated to the Lord; her profits will not be stored or hoarded, but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who live in the presence of the Lord” (Isaiah 23:17–18). The context or result of any of this is unclear.

Amos lists Tyre among others of Israel’s near neighbors in the Levant for their transgressions, “because they delivered entire communities to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of kinship (*bērit ’aḥīm*)” (Amos 1:9). The references here may indicate two situations (Paul 1991: 59–63):

1. Phoenician involvement in slave trade, which appears as a point of condemnation elsewhere in the Bible (Ezekiel 27:13; Joel 4:6–7). The general Phoenician reputation for this activity would have no doubt provoked strong feelings. No undisputed evidence exists in Classical Greek sources for such slave commerce with the Phoenicians (e.g., Reed 2003: 22–23, esp. 23n57; Paul 1991: 60, finds the verb here used for “deliver [over to],” *hasgîr*, used in Phoenician sources to refer to prisoner and slave transfer, as well as in Aramaic and other sources). An exception is Herodotus (*Histories* 2.54) in the

fifth century, who mentions the Phoenicians in this role, as does the earlier epic voice of Homer, perhaps in the eighth century BCE (*Od.* 14.288–97). As Paul notes (1991: 59–60), some have tried to emend Edom to Aram, since Aram is nearer to Israel in Amos’s northern context, but the literary linkage to Edom in Amos’s next prophetic oracle strongly suggests Edom was the intended reference.

2. The “covenant of brotherhood/kinship” (a phrase unique here in the Hebrew Bible) Amos cites may refer to the story of David’s and Solomon’s relationship with Hiram previously discussed. As Paul notices (1991: 61–62), technical idioms for covenant relationships do appear in the David-Solomon-Hiram passages, such as the word “love” (*’āhab*) in 1 Kings 5:15, “covenant” (*bērit*) in 1 Kings 5:26, and “brother” (*’āh*) in 1 Kings 9:13. If Amos does indeed here refer to the Hiram tradition, and if Amos’s oracles here are genuinely from the middle-late eighth century BCE, then we would be forced to take the Hiram tradition more seriously than we would if we only had at our disposal Josephus and the story in 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Kings 5, 9–10.

Numerous later prophetic voices refer to Sidon, Tyre, Arvad, and other Phoenician locations—almost exclusively in condemnation (Jeremiah 25:22, 27:3, 47:4; Ezekiel 26–28, 29:18, 32:30; Joel 3:4[4:4]; Zechariah 9:2–3; I am not including here references to the “coastlands” [*’i*] more generically, though sometimes coastal regions are mentioned alongside Sidon and Tyre—e.g., throughout Ezekiel 27). From the sixth century BCE, Ezekiel is the most prominent (Strong 2015; commentary ad loc. in Eichrodt 1970; Greenberg 1997). Ezekiel 26–28 are devoted largely to Tyre, but Sidon and Arvad also appear (27:8 11), as does a short oracle against Sidon (28:20–23; see also 32:30). These texts predict the violent downfall of the island-city of Tyre at the hands of the Babylonians—all predicated on the supposed Tyrian boast over Jerusalem, “Aha, broken is the gateway of the peoples; it has swung open to me; I shall be replenished, now that it is wasted” (Ezekiel 26:2). Ezekiel’s reference to the “pillars” and “stones” in Tyre may reflect the fame of the Tyrian Melqart/Heracles sanctuary described by Herodotus (*Histories* 2.66; Doak 2015: 78–79): Nebuchadnezzar’s horses will bring down Tyre’s “strong pillars” (*maṣṣēbôt ’ūzzēk*), and the Tyrian prince (Ezekiel 28), who had allegedly claimed divine status for himself, will be driven out from his dwelling among the “stones of fire” (*’abnê-’ēš*). Ezekiel 29:17–21 adds a fascinating closing statement on the Nebuchadnezzar prophecy. Here the prophet correctly notes that Nebuchadnezzar was *not*, in fact, able to bring down Tyre; rather, this would be accomplished in 332 BCE by Alexander the Great. Though these texts are filled with satire and derision, we may obliquely see something of the Phoenicians’ elevated view of kingship reflected in Ezekiel’s mockery (Doak 2015: 138–39). However, we have no direct evidence that Phoenician kings claimed divinity for themselves at any point, and Ezekiel’s accusations of vain Phoenician self-exaltation undoubtedly appear in the generally hyperbolic tone of ancient Near Eastern prophetic speech.

Ezekiel 27:4–27 in particular catalogues a long list of Tyrian material wealth, trading exploits, allies, and partners of various kinds: Phoenician shipbuilders take timber

and other precious materials for ships from Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt, and elsewhere (vv. 4–7); sailors and warriors in Tyre’s service include men from Sidon, Arvad, Gebel (Byblos), and Africa (vv. 8–11); trading partners include the fabled Tarshish, Greece (*yābān*), Edom, Israel/Judah, the Aramaeans, Arabia, and the Assyrians (vv. 12–23); and the prophet lists the signature Phoenician purple/crimson dye (Hebrew *tekelet*) as the premier trade item (v. 24). Certainly Ezekiel accurately reflects something of Phoenician trade wealth and their international network of human labor, though, as Stager points out (2005: 247), we should not see Ezekiel’s description here as indicative of any one literal ship, historical moment, or political scenario (for Tyre’s expansion, see chapters 6 and 40, this volume).

Also in the sixth century BCE, Jeremiah predicts general destruction for Tyre and Sidon (Jeremiah 25:22, 27:3, 47:4), and a post-exilic oracle in Zechariah 9:1–4 notes both the wisdom of Tyre and Sidon and their building projects and wealth (all of which the Lord will hurl into the sea and devour with fire). In Joel 3:4–8, Tyre and Sidon are grouped with “all the regions of Philistia” and castigated for stealing both treasure and people from Judah: “you have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, removing them far from their own border” (3:6). Crenshaw (1995: 182) suggests the possibility that Joel refers not to a specific, isolated act of slave trading but, rather, to the long history of perceived violations against Israel (e.g., references to the slave trade in the biblical tradition persist into 1 Maccabees 3:41 and 2 Maccabees 8:11).

PHOENICIANS IN THE CHRISTIAN NEW TESTAMENT

In addition to the references from Iron Age Israel, it is worth noting the presence of the ethnonym “Phoenician”—more specifically, “Syro-Phoenician” (fem. *Syrophoinikissa*)—in the Christian New Testament (Mark 7:26). Jesus’s incursions to Sidon and Tyre at least faintly echo the prophet Elijah’s trip to Sidon discussed earlier (Luke 4:26 makes this connection explicit; see also Matthew 15:21; Mark 3:8, 7:24, 31; Luke 10:13), but the economic relationship between Tyre and the Upper Galilee region (where Jesus was from) is well known from the archaeological record and even the coinage in the region, which was mostly Tyrian during the first century CE (Reed 2002: 185–86). The references to Phoenician territories in the New Testament clearly serve a theological purpose in their literary settings—namely to show the inclusion of Gentile audiences in Jesus’s ministry (note, for example, the favorable comparison for Sidon and Tyre vis-à-vis Chorazin and Bethsaida in Matthew 11:21–22; Luke 10:13–14). Acts 12:20 contains a reference to the residents of Tyre and Sidon being dependent upon the Galilean governor Herod Antipas for food supplies, and Paul’s journeys take him through Tyre as a port city in Acts 21:3, 7, and 27:3.

CONCLUSION

What, then, does the Bible tell us about the Phoenicians themselves, and about the way they were perceived in ancient Israel? The biblical authors were clearly aware of the antiquity and power of the Phoenician cities, particularly Tyre and Sidon, and refer constantly (and often negatively) to these cities' artistic prowess, building and travel exploits, luxury trade activities, and distinct religious practices. Though the Bible can be considered something of a "primary source" of information on the Phoenicians from at least the later parts of the Iron Age, it is still an external literary source and we should be careful never to simply assume that the biblical perspective is anything like a straightforward observation of Phoenicians.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, W. P. 1990. "The Beginnings of Phoenician Pottery: Vessel Shape, Style, and Ceramic Technology in the Early Phases of the Phoenician Iron Age." *BASOR* 279: 35–54.
- Aubet, M. E. 2001. *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*. Translated by Mary Turton. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aubet, M. E. 2013. "Phoenicia During the Iron Age II Period." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: c. 8000–332 BCE*, edited by M. L. Steiner and A. E. Killebrew, 710–16. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barclay, J. M. G., trans. and comm. 2007. *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Vol. 10: Against Apion*. Edited by S. Mason. Leiden: Brill.
- Bonnet, C. 1988. *Melqart: Cultes et mythes de l'Héraclès tyrien en Méditerranée*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Briquel-Chatonnet, F. 1992. *Les relations entre les cites de la côte phénicienne et les royaumes d'Israël et e Juda*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Celestino, S., and C. López-Ruiz. 2016. *Tartessos and the Phoenicians in Iberia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crenshaw, J. L. 1995. *Joel*. New York: Doubleday.
- Crouch, C. L. 2014. *The Making of Israel: Cultural Diversity in the Southern Levant and the Formation of Ethnic Identity in Deuteronomy*. Leiden: Brill.
- Crowfoot, J. W., and G. M. Crowfoot. 1938. *Early Ivories from Samaria*. London: Palestine Exploration Fund.
- Doak, B. R. 2015. *Phoenician Aniconism in its Mediterranean and Ancient Near Eastern Contexts*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.
- Eichrodt, W. 1970. *Ezekiel*. Translated by Cosslett Quin Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press. [First published 1965–1966]
- Geva, Sh. 1982. "Archaeological Evidence for the Trade between Israel and Tyre?" *BASOR* 248: 69–72.
- Gibson, J. C. L. 1982. *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Vol. III: Phoenician Inscriptions*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Green, A. R. 1983. "David's Relations with Hiram: Biblical and Josephan Evidence for Tyrian Chronology." In *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel*

- Freedman in *Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by C. L. Meyers and M. P. O'Connor, 373–97. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns; and Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research.
- Greenberg, M. 1997. *Ezekiel 21–37*. New York: Doubleday.
- Gruen, E. S. 2011. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Martin Classical Lectures. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gubel, Eric. 1987. *Phoenician Furniture: A Typology Based on Iron Age Representations with Reference to the Iconographical Context*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Hackett, J. A. 2004. "Phoenician and Punic." In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*, edited by R. D. Woodard, 365–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hays, J. D. 2003. "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1–11." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28, no. 2: 149–74.
- Klein, R. W. 2012. *2 Chronicles*. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.
- Lipiński, E., ed. 1991. *Phoenicia and the Bible*. Proceedings of the Conference held at the University of Leuven on the 15th and 16th of March 1990. Leuven: Peeters.
- Liverani, M. 2005. *Israel's History and the History of Israel*. London: Equinox.
- López-Ruiz, C. 2009. "Tarshish and Tartessos Revisited: Textual Problems and Historical Implications." In *Colonial Encounters in Ancient Iberia: Phoenician, Greek, and Indigenous Relations*, edited by M. Dietler and C. López-Ruiz, 255–80. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Markoe, G. E. 1990. "The Emergence of Phoenician Art." *BASOR* 279: 13–26.
- Markoe, G. E. 2000. *Phoenicians*. London: British Museum Press.
- Mazar, A. 1992. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
- McCarter, P. K. 1984. *II Samuel*. New York: Doubleday.
- Miller, J. M., and J. H. Hayes. 2006. *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Second edition. Louisville, KY, and London: Westminster John Knox.
- Nam, R. 2012. *Portrayals of Economic Exchange in the Book of Kings*. Leiden: Brill.
- Noth, M. 1981. *The Deuteronomistic History*. Translated by J. Doull, J. Barton, M. D. Rutter, and D. R. Ap-Thomas. Sheffield: JSOT Press. [First edition published 1943]
- Núñez Calvo, F. J. 2008. "Phoenicia." In *Beyond the Homeland: Markers in Phoenician Chronology*, edited by C. Sagona, 19–95. Leuven: Peeters.
- Paul, Sh. M. 1991. *Amos*. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.
- Peckham, B. 1992. "Phoenicia, History of." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by D. N. Freedman, 5:349–357. New York: Doubleday.
- Quinn, J. C. 2018. *In Search of the Phoenicians*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Quinn, J. C., and N. C. Vella, eds. 2014. *The Punic Mediterranean: Identities and Identification from Phoenician Settlement to Roman Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reed, J. L. 2002. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.
- Reed, C. M. 2003. *Maritime Traders in the Ancient Greek World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rollston, Ch. A. 2010. *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.
- Römer, Th. 2006. *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

- Sader, H. 2013. "The Northern Levant During the Iron Age I Period." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: c. 8000–332 BCE*, edited by M. L. Steiner and A. E. Killebrew, 607–23. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schreiber, N. 2003. *The Cypro-Phoenician Pottery of the Iron Age*. Leiden: Brill.
- Skinner, J. E. 2012. *The Invention of Greek Ethnography: From Homer to Herodotus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stager, L. E. 2005. "Phoenician Shipwrecks and the Ship Tyre (Ezekiel 27)." In *Terra Marique: Studies in Art History and Marine Archaeology in Honors of Anna Marguerite McCann*, edited by J. Pollini, 238–54. Oxford: Oxbow.
- Strong, J. T. 2015. "In Defense of the Great King: Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre." In *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles Against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, edited by A. Mein, E. K. Holt, and H. Chul Paul Kim, 179–94. London: Bloomsbury.
- Suter, C. E. 2010. "Luxury Goods in Ancient Israel: Questions of Consumption and Production." In *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East: 5 May – 10 May 2009, "Sapienza," Università Di Roma*, edited by P. Matthiae and L. Romano, 993–1002. Volume 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Thackeray, H. St. J., Ralph Marcus, et al., trans. 1966. *Josephus: Antiquitates Judaicae (Jewish Antiquities)*. Volume 5. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Truemann, B. "Lumbermen and Shipwrights: Phoenicians on the Mediterranean Coast of Southern Spain." In *Colonial Encounters in Ancient Iberia: Phoenician, Greek, and Indigenous Relations*, edited by M. Dietler and C. López-Ruiz, 169–90. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tsirkin, Y. B. 1991. "Japheth's Progeny and the Phoenicians." In *Phoenicia and the Bible*, edited by E. Lipiński, 117–34. Leuven: Peeters.
- Winter, I. J. 1995. "Homer's Phoenicians: History, Ethnography or Literary Trope? (A Perspective on Early Orientalism)." In *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule*, edited by J. B. Carter and S. P. Morris, 247–71. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Winter, I. J. 1976. "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Perspective: Questions of Style and Distribution." *Iraq* 28: 1–22.
- Winter, I. J. 1981. "Is There a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the Early First Millennium B.C.?" *Iraq* 43, no. 2: 101–30.