
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 318: **Acts 21:1-14**

ACTS, Lesson 318, Acts 21:1-14

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Acts 21:1-14**Acts 21:1,2**

And after we had left them, and had launched, we came with a straight course to Coos, and the day following to Rhodes, and from there to Patara:

And finding a ship sailing to Phoenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

In this chapter Luke presents a day to day account of Paul's travel from Miletus to Jerusalem. In this is an apparent conflict: (1) Paul seems compelled by the Holy Spirit to proceed to Jerusalem, and (2) believers through the same Spirit are warning him not to go there.

Coos (Cos) is a small island in the archipelago of the Greek Islands, a short distance from the southwestern point of Asia Minor.

TOPIC: COOS

Rhodes was one of Paul's stopping points on this trip. The port city had once been one of the most flourishing commercial centers in the Mediterranean, but by the time of Paul's visit it was little more than a beautiful city with a glorious past.

TOPIC: RHODES

Patara - on the southwest coast of Asia Minor (Lycia) facing Rhodes, possessed one of Lycia's best harbors, E of the Xanthus River mouth and protected by a headland with a lighthouse. Paul's party changed ships here, after leaving Rhodes, for the voyage to Tyre. Patara was one of the six members of the confederacy big enough to have three representatives in the assembly, but there is no record of a church in the NT period.

MAP: PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Phoenicia designates the Syrian coast, and Phoenicians were the Northwest Semitic inhabitants of that region in the period from 1200 B.C. to about the end of the Roman era.

TOPIC: PHOENICIA

Acts 21:3

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unload her burden.

Paul sailed past Cyprus and continued sailing to the port of Tyre. The mainland of Syria and Palestine is visible from a ship sailing between Cyprus and the mainland.

Cyprus is an island off the coast of Asia Minor, in the Mediterranean Sea, lying between the shores of Syria and Cilicia. It had Syria on the east, Pamphylia on the west, Phoenicia on the south, and Cilicia on the north (according to the historian Ptolemy).

According to Pliny ¹, it lay to the east and south of Cilicia, and was opposite Syria, and had been the seat of nine kingdoms; its circumference was three hundred and seventy miles, and had been called by various names; as Acamantis, Cerastis, Aspella, Amathusia, Macaria, Crypton, and Colinia. On Cyprus were fifteen towns or cities, which were **Paphos**, Palsepaphos, Curias, Citium, Corineum, **Salamis**, Amethus, Lapethos, Solce, Tamaseus, Epidarum, Chytri, Arsinoe, Carpasium, and Golgi. According to the same writer, it was split off from Syria by an earthquake; and that part of it which lay to the east from Syria is said to be less than a hundred miles distant from it.

Cyprus' chief cities were Salamis and Paphos mentioned in:

Acts 13:5,6, And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

¹ Pliny, Natural History, 50:5

Tyre

In Acts, the name *Tyre* occurs twice in this context (21:3, 7) and once in 12:20. The city was located in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon); Jewish believers who were scattered after the death of Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia (Acts 11:19) and acquainted the people with Christ's gospel. When Paul and Barnabas traveled from Antioch to Jerusalem, they went through Phoenicia to tell the believers how God had brought Gentiles to faith (Acts 15:3). These believers were very happy to hear about the growth of the church among the Gentiles. The city of Tyre, which enjoyed colonial status in Roman times, may have had a Jewish-Gentile congregation when Paul came to visit. We know little about this church, but in post-apostolic times Tyre became a major center of the Christian faith (the fulfillment of Psalm 87:4).

Acts 21:4

And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

Tyre is approximately 110 miles to the north-northwest of Jerusalem and about 65 miles north-northeast of Caesarea. In other words, Paul could easily reach Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Even if he walked the entire distance, he would arrive in Jerusalem within a week. But now he has time to minister to the disciples in Tyre.

While the crew unloads the ship, Paul and his colleagues go into the city, where they try to find the members of the local church. They are successful in their search and stay for seven days (see Acts 20:6). We presume that Paul used the time to teach these Christians, whom Luke calls disciples. Yet these believers are not necessarily recent converts. They receive instruction from Paul and in return have a word of warning for him.

Acts 21:5-7

And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

That is, when the ship's crew had finished unloading cargo and the sailing ship was ready to depart, Paul and Luke and the other disciples went on their way to Jerusalem. They would sail from the port of Tyre and strike land again at the city of Ptolemais.

The believers at Tyre saw them off at the dock, and they all knelt and prayed and the disciples took ship, and the local believers went back to their homes.

Ptolemais is an alternate name for Acco. It was a major Palestinian port city which dated from the early Canaanite period. In Judges 1:31, the tribe of Asher is said to have failed to drive out the inhabitants of that territory; but the city came under Israelite control during David's reign; and it was among the 20 cities given by Solomon to King Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 9:11-14). Later, Acco was captured by Alexander the Great. It was eventually rebuilt and renamed Ptolemais, after Ptolemy, the king of Egypt. In modern times, the city's name is Acre.

There were Christians in Ptolemais, whom the disciples greeted and with home they lodged over night.

Acts 21:8

And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came to Caesarea: and we entered the house of Philip the

evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

Acts 21:9

And the same man had four daughters, which did prophesy.

Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea in the time of Christ and Paul, was located by the sea, thirty-two miles north of Joppa, and some sixty miles northwest of Jerusalem. Herod the Great began to build the city in 25 BC, and completed it in 13 BC. At the dedication on 12 BC, he named it Caesarea, in honor of Caesar Augustus, and made it the Roman capital of Judea.

Philip is called “the evangelist” because of his witnessing and teaching in Samaria (Acts 8:4-13) and along the Mediterranean coast from Azotus to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). His four unmarried daughters had the gift of prophecy, but there’s no information of what prophecies they may have made. They were undoubtedly well taught in the Scriptures and had their own evangelistic ministries in the city where they lived. From the church fathers Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius we learn that the family moved to Hierapolis in western Asia Minor and eventually were buried there.

TOPIC: CAESAREA PALESTINE

TOPIC: PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

Acts 21:10

And as we stayed there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

Agabus was mentioned in Acts before in Acts 11:28.

Acts 11:28. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Tradition makes Agabus one of the seventy-two disciples (Luke 10:1), and one of the martyrs who suffered at Antioch. The Roman

Martyrology mentions his name on 13 February, while the Greek Church commemorates him on 8 March. According to Acts 11:27-30, Agabus predicted the famine which apparently must be identified with that happening in the fourth year of Claudius, A.D. 45. In the year 58 the prophet predicted to St. Paul his coming captivity, though he could not convince Paul to stay away from Jerusalem.

As a prophet with the spiritual gift of prophecy, Agabus comes from Judea with a personal message for Paul.

Acts 21:11

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's sash, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this sash, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

This is, to our minds, a strange way to do things. But Agabus is intent on providing a graphic illustration to Paul, and the others, of what the Holy Spirit has given him to foretell.

Agabus is following Old Testament examples of various prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who used visual signs to warn the Israelites of their impending exile.

Isaiah 20:2-5. At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, And put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot Three years for a sign and wonder Upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;

So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, Young and old, naked and barefoot, Even with *their* buttocks uncovered, To the shame of Egypt.

And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, And of Egypt their glory.

See also Jer. 13:1-11 and Ezek. 4:1-12.

So, Agabus takes Paul's belt and tied his own hands and feet with it. The belt was probably made of cloth, which would make it easier to tie in knots.

There is an important difference between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets like Agabus. The function of the OT prophets was to predict the coming of the Messiah. It is Agabus' duty to predict immediate future events, as he did in Acts 11.

So the Holy Spirit is saying, through Agabus, that the Jews in Jerusalem are going to bind Paul, the man to whom the belt belongs; that is, that Paul would be made prisoner in Jerusalem (not that they would physically bind him with a belt). The commander of the garrison (a Gentile; a Roman officer) rescued Paul and had him bound with chains (Acts. 21:31-33).

Acts 21:12

And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Luke and Paul's traveling companions, along with the Christian believers in Caesarea, Philip, his daughters, and the local church congregation, all were very concerned with the dreadful prediction of Agabus' prophecy. They all begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem! They wanted to shield him from harm and prevent his possible physical injury, just as Paul was advised, in Ephesus, not to go into the amphitheatre where the mob was ranting.

Acts 21:13,14

Then Paul answered, What do you mean to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Paul is showing great determination in the face of an emotional response from his own companions and the believers in Caesarea. This is not obstinacy, but obedience; he need to obey the urging of the Holy Spirit, who is directing him personally to proceed to Jerusalem. If his going to Jerusalem results in his death, then that is the will of God for him and he is quite willing to face that.

Now, Luke surely remembered that Paul had earlier said he intended to go to Jerusalem (Acts. 19:21). Also, when he finally left Troas on his way to Jerusalem he was in a hurry, expressing his need to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts. 20:16). Certainly, within two or three days' of his goal he wasn't going to be persuaded not to go.

Coos (Cos)

Cos is an island off the coast of Caria, Asia Minor, one of the Sporades, under Greek control since 1948.

Cos is mentioned in connection with Paul's third missionary journey in Acts 21:1, and in its relations with the Jews in 1 Macc. 15:23; Josephus Ant. xiv.7.2; 10.15.

Cos is a long, narrow island oriented E-W. About 23 mi (37 km) long, it has a circumference of 65 mi (105 km) and consists of an area of 111 sq mi (287 sq km). It is divided into three parts or regions: an abrupt limestone ridge along the eastern half of the southern coast, a rugged peninsula at the west end, and along the northern coast a central lowland of fertile soil which produces an excellent quality of grapes. The harbor is at the eastern end of the island. Mt. Oromedon, a landmark for navigators, rises in the middle of the island to a height of 2500 ft (762 m).

Cos was settled by Greeks as early as the 15th cent B.C. During the 5th cent the city-state joined the Delian League and suffered considerable destruction during the Peloponnesian War (431-404). A member of the Second Athenian Alliance, it revolted successfully against Athens in 354. Coming

under the control of Alexander, Cos subsequently oscillated between Macedon, Syria, and Egypt to find its greatest glory as a literary center under the protection of the Ptolemies, when it was the home of such great figures as the poet Philetas. In the 2nd cent Cos was loyal to Rome even before it became a part of the province of Asia. Herod the Great was one of the benefactors of the people of Cos. Claudius, influenced by his Coan physician Xenophon, made Cos a free city and conferred immunity from taxation upon it in A.D. 53.

One of the most beautiful ports of the ancient world, Cos not doubt was most famous as a health resort. It was the site of the first school of scientific medicine and the sanctuary of Asclepius (Aesculapius). The island had a healthful climate and hot ferrous and sulfurous springs, which the great Hippocrates (ca 460–377 B.C.), the father of medicine, first used to cure his patients.

The sanctuary of Asclepius (the god of healing) was excavated by Rudolf Herzog of Tubingen University, 1898–1907. He uncovered a sanctuary on three terraces set in a sacred grove of cypresses about 2 mi (3 km) from the town. The topmost terrace had a Doric temple built of white island marble, surrounded on three sides by a U-shaped portico with its open side facing the lower terraces, and dating ca 160 B.C. The middle terrace dated ca 280 B.C. and supported a great altar faced by a small temple and other structures. The lowest terrace had a U-shaped portico with its open side facing the one on the top level. Dated ca 350–250 B.C., this portico contained rooms where the patients slept.

When an earthquake nearly devastated the city of Cos in 1933, the Italians, who then controlled the island, availed themselves of the opportunity to excavate the ancient city. They found a planned Hellenistic town with main cross streets, a stadium, and a surrounding wall; and they found evidence of occupation at the site as early as Mycenaean times. At the lower level of the sanctuary the excavators uncovered Roman baths which utilized the

healing waters of the island's springs and which (by inscriptions) dated to Nero's reign — and thus to the time of Paul's ministry.

Phoenicia

Phoenicia was an ancient civilization centered in the north of ancient Canaan, lying mainly along the coast of modern day Lebanon, Syria and northern Israel. Phoenician civilization was an enterprising maritime trading culture that spread across the Mediterranean during the first millennium BC, between the period of 1200 BC to 900 BC.

Though ancient boundaries of such city-centered cultures fluctuated, the city of Tyre seems to have been the southernmost. Tyre is the most thoroughly excavated city of the Phoenician homeland. The Phoenicians often traded by means of a galley, a man-powered sailing vessel. They were the first civilization to create the *bireme*.

Cyrus the Great conquered Phoenicia in 539 BC. Phoenicia was divided into four vassal kingdoms by the Persians: Sidon, Tyre, Arwad, and Byblos; and prospered, furnishing fleets for the Persian kings.

Phoenician influence declined after this. Some of the Phoenician population migrated to Carthage and other colonies following the Persian conquest, as it is roughly then that we first hear of Carthage as a powerful maritime entity.

In 350 or 345 BC a rebellion in Sidon led by Tennes was crushed by Artaxerxes III.

Alexander the Great took Tyre in 332 BC following the Siege of Tyre. Alexander was exceptionally harsh to Tyre, executing 2000 of the leading citizens, but he maintained the king in power. He gained control of the other cities peacefully. The rise of Hellenistic Greece gradually ousted the remnants of Phoenicia's former dominance over the Eastern Mediterranean trade routes, and Phoenician culture disappeared entirely in the motherland (northern Canaan). However, its North African offspring, Carthage, continued to flourish,

mining iron and precious metals from Iberia, and using its considerable naval power and mercenary armies to protect its commercial interests, until it was finally destroyed by Rome in 146 BC at the end of the Punic (Phoenician) Wars.

As for the Phoenician homeland, following Alexander it was controlled by a succession of Hellenistic rulers: Laomedon (323 BC), Ptolemy I (320), Antigonus II (315), Demetrius (301), and Seleucus (296). Between 286 and 197 BC, Phoenicia (except for Aradus) fell to the Ptolemies of Egypt, who installed the high priests of Astarte as vassal rulers in Sidon (Eshmunazar I, Tabnit, Eshmunazar II). In 197 BC, Phoenicia along with Syria reverted to the Seleucids, and the region became increasingly Hellenized, although Tyre actually became autonomous in 126 BC, followed by Sidon in 111. Syria, including Phoenicia, were seized by king Tigranes the Great from 82 until 69 BC when he was defeated by Lucullus, and in 65 BC Pompey finally incorporated it as part of the Roman province of Syria.

Name ²

In modern historical use, Phoenicia designates the Syrian coast, and Phoenicians the Northwest Semitic inhabitants of that region in the period from 1200 B.C. to about the end of the Roman era. The words “Phoenicia” and “Phoenician” are Greek, attested certainly as early as Homer, therefore from the 8th cent BC, and were still used in Acts 11:19; 15:3; 21:2.

The terms are presumed to be connected with the word *phoínix*, which means “red-purple” (also “date palm”) and is attested already in Mycenaean documents of the 13th century BC. The Greek word seems to be etymologically grounded in the Indo-European sphere (cf. *phónos*, “murder,” and similar terms tied to the concept of “blood” or “red”).

² The following article is from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

The inhabitants of the region called themselves and were called by their immediate neighbors either “Sidonians” (cf. Josh. 13:6; Judges. 3:3), the designation that properly belonged to the inhabitants of the principal city of the area, or “Canaanites”. “Canaanite” does not exactly correspond to “Phoenician”; the former applies to the larger entity, whether from a chronological viewpoint, since it is attested from the 15th century BC, or from a geographical viewpoint, since it is applicable to a zone of the interior, especially in Palestine. I

The usage of either the more generic term (Canaanite) or the more specific term (Sidonians), and the absence of a local name to indicate this people, corresponds to the actual historical situation. For the Phoenicians were always subdivided politically into city-states (hence the political entities “Tyre” and “Sidon,” but no political entity “Phoenicia”), and not clearly distinguishable on the cultural or ethnolinguistic level from the population of the hinterland, but rather characterized clearly by their thrust toward the sea and the West.

Region

Phoenicia is a strip of land between the Mediterranean and the mountains that extends from Mt. Cassius on the north, to Mt. Carmel on the south, for a length of about 300 km (185 mi). The width is variable, depending on the distance of the mountains from the coast, but always rather narrow, becoming nonexistent where a mountain spur meets the sea in the form of a promontory. Actually, an alternation of coastal plains and mountain spurs produces a territorial fragmentation of the region that makes land communication difficult; the fragmentation is especially marked when each coastal plain is used as the agricultural hinterland of a port city that is neither an economic nor a political center.

Language and People

The language spoken in the region is included in the Northwest Semitic group, and is closely related to Hebrew (less so to Aramaic). It can be

traced essentially from a local dialectical development of Amorite (also called the Northwest Semitic of the first half of the 2nd millennium), characterized in part by elements that developed indigenously and in part by elements common to Hebrew.

One may explain the racial and linguistic elements by assuming that the Phoenicians were the descendants of the population formerly in the region (if not always, at least for the historically documented period). The continuity of the indigenous peoples (Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, and in general all the Phoenician cities existed already in the pre-Phoenician age) and the complete cultural homogeneity of the Phoenician period with respect to the preceding, such as in the rather pure language and in other parts of the culture (religion, political and social structure, figurative traditions, etc.), suggest a substantial continuity with obvious innovations the result of internal development and not of outside introductions.

In the period between 1200 BC and the Roman age Phoenicia was inhabited by a population that by physical traits is included in the "Mediterranean" type common to a large part of the Near East. Naturally the ancient authors (from Herodotus i.1 and vii.89 on) fantasized on the provenience of the Phoenicians (from the Persian Gulf), because the historiographic theories of antiquity were based on the simplistic concept of "origins" and "provenience" and took into account only population shifts that had already developed their own characteristics.

Today, since the complexity of the constitutive process of ethnic entity is differently presented, and the cultural data are distinguished from the political and racial, the perpetuation of such theories is unacceptable. On the contrary it is necessary to demonstrate through the historical process that the people of Phoenicia were constituted in (relative) ethnic autonomy toward 1200, emerging from a more undifferentiated relationship to the wandering "Canaanite" that in the Late Bronze embraced all Syria-Palestine. It was a process of

identification that began from the comparison of and in opposition to the identification of other neighboring ethnic entities: that formed by Israelites, Arameans, Moabites, etc., with their own political formation and with their own linguistic and cultural characteristics, helped also to single out the Phoenician ethnos. Among these, the Phoenicians are the most direct heirs of the preceding "Canaanite" world, since the other peoples were affected by the phenomenon of nomadic sedentarization that carried even more substantial mutants in the social and political body.

In this process of differentiation, obviously long and progressive, a decisive turning point was the invasion of the peoples of the sea, for such invasions with all the political and economic consequences (destruction of cities, interruption of trade, fall of the Egyptian and Hittite empires, etc.) not only signaled a profound fracture in Syrian history but was also the occasion for a more decisive concretization of the innovative factors formerly latent (e.g., diffusion of the alphabet, metallurgy of iron, etc.). It is therefore reasonable to put the beginning of Phoenician history at about 1200 BC; and it is obviously easy to see the end in the Roman era, when the use of the local language gave way to Greek and Aramaic, and every element of cultural autonomy ceased, the culture having been progressively eroded during the centuries of dependence first on the oriental empires and afterward on the Hellenistic.

Between these two chronological limits one may single out a Phoenician people with its own history and its own culture that, though in the process of coming into being, nevertheless manifested characteristic traits. If the lack of political unity rendered difficult the emergence of a firm national conscience, nevertheless those with whom the Phoenicians came into contact recognized them as a unity (whether "Phoenicians," "Sidonians," or "Canaanites") and distinguished them from their neighbors (by language, by economic activity, by cultural

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elements, by religious faith), the Neo-Hittites and Arameans, the Israelites and Philistines.

Especially in the west the Phoenicians were presented as active navigators, merchants, artisans, assuming a sort of national image, recurring from Homer to Poenulus of Plautus and to the stories of the Punic wars with an evaluation that passed from admiration to ill will and to scorn.

Similarly, the attitude of Israel toward the Phoenicians passed from admiration of their technical ability and the desirability of economic collaboration at the time of Solomon, later to hatred and scorn, expressed particularly by Ezekiel (Ezek. 26–28; cf. also Joel 3:4–8 [MT 4:4–8]; Amos 1:9f). This change may be attributed on the one hand to economic pressures exercised by the Phoenician merchants on the poorer interior of Palestine, and on the other to the opinions of the ambient Jews, to whom the Phoenician cult was impious and immoral (cf. 1 K. 16:31–33; 2 K. 23:13; cf. already 1 K. 11:5–8; 11:13).

Demography and Economy

With drastic simplification one can imagine that in the 1st millennium the mountains of Lebanon and Jebel were for the most part still covered with woods and trees of great height (the celebrated cedars), while the coastal plains were completely free for agricultural use.

From this to the basic cereal culture were added in notable measure the typical Mediterranean arboreal cultures of the vine and the olive, which provided wine and oil. Likewise the wooded areas were exploited to provide timber for construction (of ships, of roofs, and for reinforcing brick walls, etc.) and for smaller objects (furniture, handles) as well as for resins.

Oil, wine, and especially timber were exported at the time of the great kings of Egypt and Mesopotamia, which for obvious climatic and historical reasons were lacking in forest resources. Since very ancient times (3rd millennium) the interest of the great empires in wood and other products of the region is

attested, and such interest was continually present in the Phoenician era proper, with obvious economic advantages but also with grave danger to political independence.

The distribution of the population was clearly distinguished between the small coastal plains, which were densely populated, and the mountainous zones at some distance from the coast, almost uninhabited. The forms of settlement tell nothing about the villages that housed the basic farmer population. The cities on the other hand reveal some proper urban characteristics, partly reconstructed from the topographical and archeological data. With few exceptions the cities were on the coast, and by preference made use of the rocky promontories, sometimes islands (Tyre, Arvad), always with the aim of providing anchorage secure against winds and currents, sheltered by the aforementioned promontories or by the lines of cliffs that in places fronted the coast.

The Phoenicians sought to reproduce this type of settlement also in the zones of their commercial expansion, choosing promontories and small islands facing the coast, anchorages sheltered by the capes or between lagoons. The Phoenician cities were obviously surrounded by walls (imposing remains from the Persian era at Byblos and Arvad); unfortunately all of the internal makeup of the cities is not known — the location of the temples among the more noteworthy edifices, together with the public buildings, markets, etc., and the royal palace.

The population, as in general in the pre-classical Near East, was subdivided in two segments: (1) a peasant segment, united by the community life of the village, dedicated to the activity of the direct production of food (agriculture and arboriculture, and in Phoenicia probably also fishing but not pastoralism); and (2) an urban segment, centralized within the royal palace and dedicated to specialized economic activities, especially in the sectors of transformation and distribution (artisans, merchants) and in the service of the organizations of the state.

From the community of the village the produce flowed to the city, as the center of political power, the surplus of the products being necessary for the maintenance of the persons not involved in the direct production of food. In the particular case of Phoenicia, however, it seems that the activity of transformation and exchange of the products was of particular importance, not being sustained only by the surplus of the immediate interior, and not destined only for the sphere of the local royal palace; but being sustained also by the influx of raw materials from great distances, and being sent also to distant royal palaces and to foreign "markets"; i.e., Phoenicia produced also for export.

Typical in this sense was the working of ivory: the raw material came from afar (the Syrian elephant was already extinct in the 1st millennium), was worked in Phoenicia by the specializing workshops, and re-exported as objects of value either to the east, or to the west. The same applied to artistic working of bronze: items of armament, daggers, cauldrons, and especially plates, discovered on the one hand in Assyria, and on the other at Cyprus and as far as Greece and Italy; cf. also 1 Kings 7:13-47.

The same can be said for the working of glass, a product of value that had in Phoenicia, if not its origin (which dates from the Syrian Late Bronze), certainly a center of development and diffusion. The same applies above all to wool stuff dyed purple, which in antiquity was considered the typical product of Phoenicia and, in spite of the almost total lack (due to the obvious deterioration of the material) of direct archeological attestation, has been confirmed by texts. The wool certainly came from the surrounding Syro-Palestinian interior; the purple dye was extracted from a mollusk; indeed, little hills of conch shells of the murex, residue of the work, still attest to the intensity of such activity.

This inclusion of Phoenician artisanship in a complex commercial system is generally considered to be the reason for a presumed lack

of artistic "originality." In fact, the symbolic representations used are of diverse and often external origin, but in general their entrance into the Syro-Palestinian artistic repertory goes back to the 2nd millennium and therefore was an element of local tradition for the Phoenicians. More than a commercial fact, Phoenician iconographic eclecticism was a well-rooted cultural fact. The prestige of Phoenician artisanship is proved not only by the export of objects but also by the presence of craftsmen in the building of the temple at Jerusalem (9th cent) and the palace of Ashurnasirpal (8th cent); and in the west since Homeric times the Phoenicians were famous not only as merchants and pirates but also as most clever artisans.

Commerce and Colonization

Already in the period between 1500 and 1200 the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine had developed a notable commercial activity by maritime routes, besides donkey-caravans to the Syrian, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian hinterlands. But their trade was rather circumscribed, developing on one side toward the great Egyptian market to the south, on the other toward Cyprus, the Cilician coast, and then to the Aegean on the west. They were therefore technically constricted by a navigation exclusively coastal and one-directional, and were economically characterized in the same way by an exchange of products of luxury between centers endowed with an analogous palatine structure, besides the transportation of some raw materials (Cypriote copper, Lebanese timber) always within the same system.

The routes to more distant lands, a pre-urban structure, and the access to other more costly and exotic raw materials were in the hands of other commercial organizations: on one side Egypt had monopolized (if not made of it a notable economic force) access through the Red Sea to southern Arabia and to east Africa (Punt), and therefore the influx of gold and of products such as ebony, incense, etc. On the

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other hand Mycenaean commerce, accustomed by geographical necessity to more complex routes in the open sea, had controlled the nascent Mediterranean traffic, the volume of which and interest in which increased with the addition of side products (amber, obsidian, etc.) of metal research (tin, silver, etc.) in the Sardinian and Spanish west.

The turbulence produced by the invasion of the peoples of the sea (Philistines), and in particular the collapse of the Mycenaean commercial organization and the retreat of Egypt from the international scene, contrary to what one might expect, left substantially intact the commercial potential of Phoenicia, which knew how to take advantage of the occasion, succeeding on the one hand the Egyptians in the Red Sea routes to the lands of gold and incense, and on the other hand the Mycenaean in routes toward countries of silver, tin, and iron ore.

The methods of this phase of Phoenician commerce are shown especially in biblical passages about the joint enterprises of Hiram of Tyre and Solomon: the ships came and went on a triennial cycle, without the need of establishing along the way any point of fixed support (1 K. 9:26-28; 10:22; cf. 2 Ch. 8:17f). It was therefore a commerce without colonization, and the reports of classical authors on the early foundations of Utica and Cadiz ca 1100, if they have any value, must be related to frequent visits to intermediate landing places (Utica) or to points of contact with the natives (Cadiz) to effect the exchange.

This traffic with countries so distant and poorly known from legends, in the extreme south (Ophir) and the extreme west (Tarshish), resulted in the flow of raw materials or essentials for the technology of the era (metal) or valuables on the plane of personal prestige (exotic products) or of the incense. The Phoenicians were therefore economically attuned to the difference of value that the countries of origin and those of the destination attributed to such products: the "native" Somalis or Iberians were satisfied with necklaces of glass paste or at most with some

clothing (of which only the pins remain), while the imports into the Near East brought to the Phoenicians notable profits. The case of Phoenician commerce in highly cultural regions (Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Cyprus) was different; these regions absorbed products of luxury (ivory, bronze, purple stuff, etc.). Not least in importance among the effects of commercial contacts with Greece was the introduction of the Phoenician alphabet (9th-8th cents), an introduction connected with contributions in the fields of myth and art

The situation changed in the 8th cent through the concomitance of diverse factors. The economic and cultural stimulus of the commerce of metals helped create in the metalliferous countries of the Mediterranean (Cyprus, Sardinia, Etruria, south Spain) the major concentrations of wealth and therefore the major outlet of the market, with local aristocracies already exiting from the Bronze Age, in which, however, other areas remained (all northern Africa and W of Egypt).

Contemporaneously, Greece alongside Phoenicia was making use of maritime routes, in the search for and distribution of metals, with access to the great markets of Egypt and the Orient. Finally, in Phoenicia motives perhaps analogous to those of a socioeconomic nature known by Greece as well as political motives (Assyrian imperialistic pressures) stimulated emigration.

The combination of these various factors changed the Mediterranean commercial system (the route of Ophir was temporarily abandoned, its place taken by the continuous going and coming of caravans between south Arabia and Transjordan); it passed from a navigation that was based on a point of support perhaps habitual but certainly inconsistent to the foundation of true colonies; from searches for raw materials that took on the aspect of raids (*razzia*) harmful of the natives to a commerce of markets, with export to a local public more economically qualified and with organizations of the culture according to the needs of the motherland; from a free though adventurous

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navigation to a concurrence and contraposition of Phoenician and Greek routes, especially of the markets reserved for the Phoenicians and of the markets reserved for the Greeks.

The vigorous emergence of Carthage (in the 6th cent), which constituted a political unity and a western Phoenician cultural world ("Punic"), including its relationship with the natives in both the commercial and the cultural sector, its means of demographic and military penetration toward the interior, and its rapport with the Greeks and then with the Romans, constitute such important problems that the history can no longer be considered as properly Phoenician. From the diverse expressions of these factors in the various regions and various periods a Punic world resulted that was well diversified, both internally and especially with respect to the eastern motherland, but from which are perpetuated language and writing, political and religious elements, economic and artistic elements, leading to an era somewhat advanced, when it came to be progressively absorbed in the provincial Roman world.

Hence after the detachment of the colonial world Phoenicia remained a commercial center of primary importance. An oracle of Ezekiel on Tyre (Ezek. 27) gave a picture of the commercial network of the Phoenician city ca 580-570 that included the Mediterranean (from Spain to Ionia and Cyprus), Egypt and the Libyan coast, the Syro-Palestinian interior, Assyria, central and eastern Anatolia and Armenia, Arabia stretching to Yemen.

The ties with Egypt were based on the constant Pharaonic support of the struggles of the Phoenicians to maintain their independence in the face of Assyro-Babylonian pressures. Assyro-Babylonian documents prove the commercial presence of Phoenicia in Mesopotamia that was certainly the basis of the Achemenian interest in commercial development of Phoenicia, in opposition to the Greeks. Neither was the more properly explorative aspect of Phoenician navigation stopped: a natural continuation of the ancient route to Ophir was the circumnavigation of

Africa accomplished in three years (ca 600); on behalf of Pharaoh Neco Phoenician ships departed from the Red Sea and returned by the Mediterranean (Herodotus iv.42). And in the reverse direction the Carthaginian Himilco (ca 450) continued the ancient route from Tarshish with expeditions that went through the Pillars of Hercules, turned north and finally reached the English coast; and Hanno (ca 425) sailed along the coast of western Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea.

Political History

After the invasion of the peoples of the sea and the rapid constitution of a Phoenician ethnic entity (in the sense indicated above), the historic documentation began in a heterogeneous manner. The Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (ca 1100) made an expedition to Arvad to procure timber. Of Sidon we have only a glimpse of an ancient pre-dominance that passed to Tyre ca 1000. The chief notices about Tyre come from the OT, with reference to the participation of Hiram king of Tyre in the construction of the temple at Jerusalem and to the commercial expeditions to Ophir (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings. 5:15-7:51; 9:10-14, 26-28; 10:11, 22; cf. 2 Chron. 2:2-15; 9:10, 21). This was the period of greatest prestige for Tyre, which dealt favorably with the cities of the interior of Syro-Palestine and with the Egyptian and Assyrian empires, which could threaten Tyre militarily. It was also the period of the first commercial enterprises in distant lands.

Succeeding phases (9th-7th cents) have more precise reports about Tyre, among which the extracts of the "Annals" of small city-states that Josephus cited from Menander of Ephesus could be considered reliable (though the coincidence with the accounts of the OT known to Josephus, but not with the Assyrian texts unknown to him, is reason to be suspicious). Meander gives the list of the kings with the years of reign and some notices; the OT provides some detail, obviously on the connections with Israel (1 Kings 16:29-32; 2 Kings 23:13).

But the most significant reports are from the Assyrian texts. The purely commercial relationships in the time of Tiglath-pileser I passed to a weightier and unbalanced presence with Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III (9th cent): the Assyrian kings sought to procure needed raw materials by means of military pressure and the payment of tribute. The Phoenician cities, with rare exceptions, preferred to pay tribute rather than undertaking an armed resistance of dubious outcome and perhaps greater expense.

The final aggravation of the situation came in the 8th cent, with Assyria's progressive establishment of a provincial system that put an end to all local autonomy and placed the region under the direct control of Assyrian functionaries and garrisons. In 743 Tiglath-pileser III made northern Phoenicia (as far as, but excluding, Byblos) into a province; only Arvad remained autonomous because of its island nature. In 700 Sennacherib took Sidon from King Luli of Tyre and enthroned an Assyrian vassal at Sidon; when Sidon rebelled in 677, Esarhaddon destroyed it and made the area an Assyrian province, while imposing on Tyre a treaty of vassalage.

In 671 Tyre rebelled, and Assyrian intervention resulted in the formation of a third province in southern Phoenicia, with its center at Ushu. The final encounter of Assyria with Arvad and Tyre was indecisive. At the end of the Assyrian empire the situation was as follows: three Assyrian provinces comprising almost the whole territory, only the two small islands of Arvad and Tyre and the small city-state of Byblos remaining autonomous.

The Neo-Babylonian kingdom inherited these situations and succeeded then to have final autonomy with Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Tyre in 573. In the 6th cent the culmination of the process of political subjugation, of economic exploitation, and of the demographic climax that characterized the entire Syro-Palestinian area under the Mesopotamian empires seemed to take place. With the rise of the Persian empire (538), however, the Phoenician cities

revived, through the Achaemenian kings' political awareness of the military and commercial opposition of the Phoenician fleet to that of the Greeks (e.g., the battle of Salamis, 480).

In the middle of the 4th cent the continuous struggles sustained by Egypt and Cyprus with the help of the Athenians against the Achaemenian involved also the Phoenicians: the Persians harshly repressed two revolts of the kings of Sidon, Straton "Philhellene" (362) and Tennes (346). The Greek commercial penetration (witnessed by the importing of Attic ceramic), the presence of Greek mercenaries, and the opposition to the Persian empire found their culmination and their outlet with the expedition of Alexander, who met with favor from all the Phoenician cities save Tyre, which was besieged and conquered (333). With the introduction of the Hellenistic kingdoms (Ptolemaic for Phoenicia S of Tripoli, Seleucid for the more northern region, with some fluctuations) Phoenicia was exposed to the Greek demographic penetration (which was concentrated in the more vacant northern region: the founding of Laodicea and Antiochia), and even more by the commercial and cultural penetration, with the introduction into a world more vast that spoke Greek and used Greek money. The political history ceased to have an autonomous character: the replacement of the monarchies with collegial governments, the beginning of the local "eras" in connection with the recovery of certain autonomies and the affirmation of the Roman dominion are all events that the Phoenician cities endured together with the neighboring Hellenistic world.

Religion

Phoenician religion was the direct continuation of "Canaanite" religion of the Late Bronze Age (known from the Ugaritic texts) having been left in the safety of the contributions of the semi-nomadic populations, which took the upper hand in the rest of the interior of the

country in 1200, introducing at the official level elements of the pastoral religiosity.

The Phoenician religion therefore remained typical of the surrounding agricultural environment, centered on the problem of the punctual and correct repetition of the seasonal vegetation cycle and of the reproductive cycle of the animate creatures. The essential nucleus of the pantheon was constituted by a pair of deities: one feminine, in the figure of a mother-goddess, represented the element of the earth; and the other a male, in the figure of a young god, represented the element of vegetation. The relationship between these two deities secured the correct repetition of the vegetative cycle. The alternation of a dry season with a rainy, with the consequent death and re-florescence of the vegetation, was symbolized by the death and resurrection of the young god. The figure of a father-god of cosmological character (the creator of the world) was less “active” in the cult and in the myth. The stabilization of these three elements in a fixed “triad” was a late and artificial achievement, but the three elements were much older, even pre-Phoenician.

In various cities these divine figures were called by different names, which in general were rather epithets, and therefore susceptible of variation and of application to the same entity. Thus the young god at Tyre had the name of Melqart, at Sidon he was Eshmun; the mother-goddess was Astarte at Tyre, Baalat at Byblos; the father-god was El at Byblos, Baal Shamaym at Sidon, etc.

Other deities attested in Phoenicia (and also in the rest of the Syro-Palestinian world, already in the 2nd millennium), such as Resheph, Dagon, and Elyon, were within certain limits amenable to the fundamental elements of the triad. It is particularly noteworthy that the epithet of the young god Baal was often qualified more specifically, assuming local forms such as *Baal Qarnaym* (“lord of the two horns”), *Baal Marqōd* (“lord of the dance”), *Baal Šûr* (“lord of Tyre”), etc.

The scant notices preserved by inscriptions (and related almost exclusively to the pantheon) can be integrated with the references in the OT (on the penetration of the cult of Baal and Ashtoreth at Jerusalem and Samaria: Judges 10:6; 1 Kings 11:4–8, 33; 16:31f; 2 Kings 23:13), and especially with the references in the classical authors, which although late (and subject to some misunderstandings) have their interest.

Rhodes

Rhodes is an island located between Crete and Asia Minor in the southeast Aegean Sea; also the capital of the island, a port city on the northeastern shore. Rhodes is a mountainous island about 72 km (45 mi) long and 35 km (22 mi) wide, the second largest in the Aegean. It was a major commercial center for traffic between the Aegean and the Orient in the latter half of the 1st millennium B.C. Indeed, the island’s size and natural resources are so limited that it was only the extensive trade of products native to other regions that enabled Rhodes to support a large population and attain political significance.

History

Toward the end of the Middle Bronze Age a Minoan merchant colony was established on Rhodes at Ialysus. As early as the 16th cent B.C. Rhodians engaged in commerce with some of the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine, notably Ugarit. It was primarily the Dorians, however, who developed the island into a commercial center. Lindus, located on the southeast shore, became an important port for traffic from the east.

After the Persian wars the island became a member of the Delian Confederacy and had substantial commercial relationships. Yet it was only after the founding of the city of Rhodes that the island became a formidable commercial and political power.

In 408 B.C. the communities of Ialysus, Lindus, and Camirus combined their efforts to construct a new capital city at Rhodes. Trade through this

port with Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, and the Aegean states brought great wealth and power.

Throughout the 4th and 3rd cents B.C. Rhodes remained the preeminent center of trade and international banking in the Aegean. Its strong navy protected Rhodian interests abroad and combated piracy. The renowned symbol of the city's wealth and prestige was the Colossus of Rhodes, a 32-m (105-ft) high bronze statue of the sun-god erected at the mouth of the harbor to commemorate a victory over Demetrius, who had attempted to invade Rhodes in 304/3 B.C. The Colossus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was destroyed by an earthquake ca 227 B.C.

Rome's declaration of Delos as a free harbor in 167 B.C. marked the turning point for the fortunes of Rhodes. Rome's move, in retaliation for Rhodian participation in the Third Macedonian War, caused a marked decline in the commercial volume passing through Rhodes.

Rome's reduction of Rhodes's mainland possessions also caused a significant drop in the Rhodian economy. Finally, in 43 B.C. Cassius plundered Rhodes of all its material wealth, reducing the island virtually to destitution. By the beginning of the Christian era Rhodian glory was gone. In the late Roman period Rhodes was known only as a cultural center and a resort city.

Biblical References

Rhodes is mentioned in the OT only in Ezek. 27, a lament concerning Tyre. In a description of Tyre's wealth and extensive influence the prophet names many nations and peoples who trade with Tyre. Verse 15 says that Tyre had a special arrangement with Rhodes regarding trade in ivory and ebony. As the prophet lists the countries that trade with Tyre, he begins in Ezek. 27:12 in the extreme west (Tarshish) and moves through Greece and Asia to Palestine and Arabia, finally ending with Tarshish once more. Rhodes occurs in the proper place in the sequence (v 15), and DEDAN is mentioned later,

also in its proper place (v 20), as a source of saddlecloths.

The capital city of Rhodes is mentioned in Acts 21:1 as one of Paul's stopping places on his final journey to Jerusalem. Though the port city had once been one of the most powerful commercial centers of the Mediterranean, by the time of Paul's visit it was little more than a beautiful city with a glorious past.

In 1 Macc. 15:13 the city is mentioned as the destination of a letter sent by Lucius, the Roman consul, concerning an alliance between the Romans and the Maccabean state.

Tyre

Tyre was an ancient Phoenician city-state located on the Mediterranean coast 20 miles (32.2 kilometers) south of Sidon and 23 miles (37 kilometers) north of Acre. Tyre consisted of two major parts: an older port city on the mainland and an island city a half mile (.8 kilometer) from the coast where the majority of the population lived. According to Herodotus,

Tyre was founded around 2700 BC. Its earliest historical attestations, however, are references in a 15th-century Ugaritic document and an Egyptian citation from the same period. Tyre first appears in the Bible in the list of cities that comprised Asher's inheritance (Joshua 19:29). At that time, it was described as a "strong city" and was evidently never conquered by the Israelites (2 Sam. 24:7). Tyre was most significant as a mercantile center, with maritime contacts throughout the Mediterranean region and overland traffic with Mesopotamia and Arabia.

During David's and Solomon's monarchies, Tyre was a strong commercial ally of Israel. Both David and Solomon contracted with Hiram of Tyre for timber, building materials, and skilled laborers, for which they provided Tyre with agriculture produce (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1-11; 1 Chr 14:1; 2 Chr 2:3-16). After the division of the kingdom, Tyre evidently maintained friendly relations with Israel for some time. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was the daughter of

“Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians,” a king who is known elsewhere as Ithobal of Tyre (1 Kings 16:31; cf. Menander). At some point, however, the pressure of Assyrian and Babylonian aggression dissolved the alliance, so that by the time of Samaria’s fall, Tyre and Israel were no longer aligned and shortly thereafter became enemies.

During the later kingdom period, Tyre was the focus for some of the strongest prophetic denunciations recorded in Scripture (Is 23:1–18; Jer 25:22; 27:1–11; Ez 26:1–19; Jl 3:4–8; Am 1:9–10). Tyre’s condemnation was justified for several reasons. Because of its commercial significance, Tyre was the focal point of Assyrian and Egyptian rivalries. Tyre managed, however, to play these rivals against each other while building its wealth and exploiting its neighbors. Additionally, the city of Tyre was not only a city of unscrupulous merchants but also a center of religious idolatry and sexual immorality.

Foremost among Tyre’s sins was pride induced by its great wealth and strategic location. Ezekiel’s prophecy against Tyre offers a detailed picture of the city, its commercial empire, its sin, and its eventual demise (Ez 26:1–28; 29:18–20). The final destruction of Tyre did not come for almost 1,900 years (AD 1291), though it was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar for 13 years (587–574 BC), and conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 BC after a seven-month siege, during which he built a causeway out to the island. Ezekiel’s description of Tyre’s arrogance can be compared to that of Satan’s, with Tyre’s words “I am a God, I sit in the seat of God” (KJV) being the expression that led to the fall of both Satan and Tyre (Ezek. 28:2).

Despite Alexander’s destruction of the city, Tyre had regained prominence by the NT period, being equal to or greater than Jerusalem in terms of population and commercial power. Jesus visited the region surrounding Tyre during his early ministry, healing the Syrophenician woman’s daughter (Mt 15:21–28; Mk 7:24–31). Jesus also compared the

Galilean towns that had rejected him to Tyre and Sidon, suggesting that the Galileans would bear greater responsibility for their rejection because of the number of miracles he had performed among them (Lk 10:13–14).

In Acts, the name *Tyre* occurs twice in this context (21:3, 7) and once in 12:20. The city was located in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon); Jewish believers who were scattered after the death of Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia (Acts 11:19) and acquainted the people with Christ’s gospel. When Paul and Barnabas traveled from Antioch to Jerusalem, they went through Phoenicia to tell the believers how God had brought Gentiles to faith (Acts 15:3). These believers were very happy to hear about the growth of the church among the Gentiles. The city of Tyre, which enjoyed colonial status in Roman times, may have had a Jewish-Gentile congregation when Paul came to visit. We know little about this church, but in post-apostolic times Tyre became a major center of the Christian faith (the fulfillment of Ps. 87:4).