

Social Change in 'Phoenicia' in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Transition

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This dissertation explores social, cultural and political changes in the region later known as 'Phoenicia' during the period of approximately 1300-900 BC.

By applying modern approaches to theoretical questions such as the nature of social change, identity, migration and how such phenomena are represented in the archaeological record, this dissertation aims to provide a discussion of Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Phoenicia based on a more solid methodological foundation than has often been the case previously. As well as better illuminating social change occurring within Phoenicia itself, it is hoped that the methodological observations and comparative value of the case-study presented here will prove useful for discussions of the wider social changes occurring in the East Mediterranean at this time.

A key observation of this research is that past narratives have placed too much emphasis on the role of external powers such as the Egyptian 'empire' or 'Sea People' invaders in driving Levantine social change in this period. This dissertation stresses the critical importance of local responses to foreign influence and charts the balance between active choice and constraint by circumstances in shaping the development of the Phoenician polities. It is argued that the most important forms of change which can be identified in the archaeological and written records relate to the construction of identities, especially those of the Phoenician élites. These take the form of a move away from legitimation and identity-negotiation based on foreign contacts, towards greater emphasis on more local, Levantine features. The consequences of this change, it is argued, are felt within social, political, economic, religious and other spheres of life.

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This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. Its length is 79,565 words.

Abbreviations

BA – Bronze Age

EBA – Early Bronze Age

MBA – Middle Bronze Age

LBA – Late Bronze Age

EIA – Early Iron Age

IA – Iron Age

LH – Late Helladic

PG – Proto-Geometric

EPG – Early Proto-Geometric

MPG – Middle Proto-Geometric

LPG – Late Proto-Geometric

LC – Late Cypriot

CG – Cypro-Geometric

*ANET*³ – *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament. Third Edition.* J B Pritchard 1969.

Ant. Iud. – *Jewish Antiquities.* Josephus.

C. Ap. – *Against Apion.* Josephus.

CAH – *Cambridge Ancient History*

CIS – *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*

EA – Amarna Letter. Translations are from Moran 1992 unless otherwise stated.

FK III – *Fouilles de Kition III: Inscriptions phéniciennes.* M.G. Guzzo Amadasi & V. Karageorghis. 1977

IG – *Inscriptiones Graecae.* J. Kirchner (ed.) 1913.

KAI – *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften.* H. Donner & W. Röllig 1966

KTU – Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz & J. Sanmartín. 1976. Translated as *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other places.* 1995

Medinet Habu I – Medinet Habu I (Plates 1-54) Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III. Chicago Epigraphic Survey 1930.

Medinet Habu II – Medinet Habu II (Plates 55-130) Later Historical Records of Ramses III. Chicago Epigraphic Survey 1932.

RS – Ras Shamra

TBR – Textes Syriens de l'Âge du Bronze Recent. D. Arnaud 1991.

Wen-Amon – The Report of Wen-Amon. Translated in Aubet 2001.

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Chapter 1

The Bronze/Iron Age Transition and the ‘Phoenicians’ in Previous Scholarship

This thesis considers in detail the question of social change during the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition in the region later known as Phoenicia. The approach taken is integrative and interdisciplinary, combining archaeological and textual data within an up-to-date theoretical framework to assess change and continuity across several important categories of social organisation and practice. As well as shedding light on the period in this region, I aim to use ‘Phoenicia’ as a case-study for examining certain theoretical and methodological issues critical to our understanding of the transition in the broader East Mediterranean and Near Eastern context. I investigate how fuller understanding of areas previously considered ‘peripheral’ or of minor importance can illuminate wider regional questions, and consider the broader question of how we can construct a sound methodology for investigating complex issues within profoundly data-poor environments such as this one.

Context and Case-Study

The importance of an interdisciplinary approach for understanding the East Mediterranean cannot be overstated. This region is a nexus between the venerable and long-established fields of archaeological and historical investigation that are Classics, Near Eastern Studies, Egyptology and Biblical Archaeology, and younger but no less significant disciplines such as Aegean prehistory and Anatolian studies. Tackling issues of social change, in this region as elsewhere, also demands incorporating the contribution of other disciplines, especially social theory. Such interdisciplinarity poses substantial challenges. Institutional departmental boundaries, vast bodies of literature and often radically differing methods, data-sets, concerns and terminologies within each field present major obstacles to successful integration. Only relatively recently have successful advances been made in this direction.

Before the late 1980s and early 1990s, study of the end of the LBA was generally characterised by pronounced focus on the sub-regions that comprise the larger Mediterranean world. For example, Anthony Snodgrass and Paul Betancourt both produced important works in the 1970s which dealt with the end of the Aegean Bronze Age and its aftermath, but with little discussion of the wider regional context.¹ Similarly, Desborough's 1964 classic *The Last Mycenaeans and their Successors* examines the rest of the East Mediterranean only in fairly summary fashion.² Few symposia or conferences sought to bring together academics working in different areas in order to gain a better understanding of the overall picture.³ In many ways the 1975 edition of the relevant volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History* represents the field as a whole pre-1990: although all the major East Mediterranean societies are present in a single volume, they are treated separately, as part of individual regional histories, with no overall examination of overarching regional dynamics, nor a particularly concerted attempt to draw out the links and interrelationships between them.⁴

From the 1990s onwards there has been a shift towards a much more integrated approach, encouraged by conferences seeking to bring together people working in disparate disciplines and utilise individual specialisations as case-studies aimed towards a more holistic view of the region.⁵ Interdisciplinary co-operation now extends well beyond the previously dominant fields of archaeology and textual studies, including palaeo-climatologists, linguists, iconographers and others.

Throughout this considerable and welcome expansion, it has remained the overwhelming practice to examine the end of the East Mediterranean Bronze Age by focusing on a single sub-area. Providing that this is done within a framework of constant awareness of the wider context and with as much understanding and co-operation as possible between scholars of different specialisations, this seems an eminently sensible approach. Although there is always scope for further improving ties and understanding between scholars of different fields, there are

¹ Snodgrass 1971; Betancourt 1976.

² Desborough 1964.

³ Hallo 1992; Müller-Karpe (1975, 1976) edited two works which attempted a wider discussion.

⁴ *CAH* Vol II. Part 2 (3rd ed. 1975).

⁵ Ward & Joukowsky (eds.) 1992; Gitin, Mazar & Stern (eds.) 1998; Oren (ed.) 2000; Bachhuber & Roberts (eds.) 2009.

undeniable benefits to specialisation, not least the ability to discuss evidence in more detail than would be possible in more overarching studies.

I have followed this approach here. ‘Phoenicia’ has been selected as the focus for discussion for two principal reasons. Firstly, compared to other areas of the East Mediterranean, all periods of Lebanon’s history remain distinctly under-studied. This has partly been due to the extensive difficulties involved in archaeological work there (see below), but also owes something to the academic disciplinary boundary problem already discussed. As part of the Levant, but with – at least in later periods – many of their clearest archaeological traces occurring in the Mediterranean, the city-states of the Lebanese littoral have to some extent fallen between Classical and Near Eastern scholarship, neither quite comfortable with dealing with them. Modern political issues have perpetuated and exacerbated the divisions, creating a situation where it is difficult, if not impossible, for scholars trained in some parts of the Levant to undertake work in others.

Secondly, previous examinations of the social changes affecting the East Mediterranean during the LBA/EIA have overwhelmingly focused on the regions showing the most dramatic upheavals: the Aegean, Anatolia and the southern Levant. The period has overwhelmingly been seen in terms of ‘collapse’; even when elements of continuity are emphasised, as they are in many case-studies, the overall collapse/continuity dichotomy is taken for granted. As this chapter will argue, such polarities are unhelpful for understanding social change: a more nuanced, subtle conceptualisation is required. The polities of the Lebanese littoral are well-suited to such a methodology since *prima facie* evidence for ‘collapse’ is far less than elsewhere in the region. Indeed, these polities emerged from the events at the end of the LBA arguably more dynamic and more regionally significant than they had been before. The complexity of the social changes underlying this process is best understood through a methodology which does not seek to fit them into a simplistic schema of ‘collapse’, ‘continuity’ or ‘progress’.

Chronological and Geographical Definitions

I concern myself in this discussion with the ‘LBA/EIA transition’, which I count as approximately the period between the late thirteenth and tenth centuries inclusive (LB IIB to around the end of Iron I under conventional Levantine chronology). This is a much broader

definition of the ‘transition’ than some other recent treatments have taken.⁶ Given the scarcity of archaeological and textual data from Phoenicia during this period, a narrower focus would be unduly restrictive and unlikely to offer sufficient evidence to draw useful conclusions regarding social change. My period of interest thus mostly consists of the era traditionally known as the Levantine Dark Age, between the conventional c.1200 date for the end of the LBA, and the advent of Phoenicia’s better-known ‘colonial’ period in the ninth century.

Chronological controversies are rife during this period for much of the East Mediterranean. Many stem from the privileged position of text in both Biblical Archaeology and Egyptology (see below), with archaeological data fitted into a framework provided by traditional narratives which are often inadequately questioned. The clearest example of this is the on-going dispute between high and low chronologies for Palestine. The high scheme is largely based on traditional, textually-derived dates for events, such as a c.1000 date for the United Monarchy of Israel or the assumption that destruction horizons must relate to a single, short-lived Sea People invasion of the kind imagined in conventional interpretations of Egyptian, Ugaritic and Anatolian documents from the end of the LBA.⁷ This chronology is challenged by several scholars who draw mainly on archaeological data – primarily stratigraphic and radiocarbon-based – to argue for dates fifty to a hundred years later. A significant contribution to this debate has been made by excavators working at Tel Dor in southern Phoenicia, whose radiocarbon work suggests absolute dates perhaps even lower than those proposed by the mainstream Low Chronology.⁸

For internal discussions in Phoenicia, questions of absolute dating are of relatively minor importance. As we will see, the sequence of events of a destructive invasion horizon or an Egyptian ‘imperial’ withdrawal are not major issues. Although significant advances have been made in recent years, and work is on-going, detailed mainland Phoenician pottery sequences have yet to be established.⁹ Past work has largely focused on Phoenician material obtained from

⁶ Bell 2006, for example, defines the ‘transition’ as c.1225-1150 BC.

⁷ Both these ‘fixed events’ are somewhat dubious. See Chapter 2 below for fuller discussion of the Sea People problem, and Knauf 1991; Lemche & Thompson 1994, Finkelstein 1996b, Muhly 2005 on the doubtful historicity of the United Monarchy (*contra* Dever 2004).

⁸ For the debate in general, see Finkelstein 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2005. *Contra* Mazar 1997 and, using archaeological and Cypriot radiocarbon dates, Sherratt 2006. For Dor’s contribution, see especially Gilboa & Sharon 2003; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008.

⁹ Núñez-Calvo 2008, 19.

funerary contexts on Cyprus. Bikai categorised Levantine pottery on the island into four horizons named after the main sites at which they occur: Kouklia (c. 1050-850?); Salamis (850?-750?); Kition (750? to after 700), and Amathous (After 700 to after 600).¹⁰ While these phases are still recognised,¹¹ they are not unproblematic, particularly since they omit earlier material from the period which concerns us here. Although relatively rare, this is nevertheless present on Cyprus, at some sites in significant quantities.¹² Discussion of Phoenician LBA sequences still relies on Amiran's general examination of Canaanite pottery.¹³

Until such relative dating work has been properly established, chronological issues throughout the LBA/EIA transition will remain vague enough that a margin of error for absolute dates of around half a century is of minimal impact. Nevertheless, when examining the wider Levantine and East Mediterranean context, and interactions between societies, it is clearly necessary to operate within a consistent and well-established chronological framework. The foundation of the Low Chronology in archaeological evidence places it on a more methodologically-sound footing than the High Chronology's reliance on traditional readings of textual sources which may have been written substantially after the period they purport to describe and may be of more questionable reliability than is often allowed. Correspondences with the wider Mediterranean seem to fit better under the lower scheme.¹⁴ Consequently it is the Low Chronology which is followed here.

¹⁰ Bikai 1987, particularly p69.

¹¹ Núñez-Calvo 2008, 27.

¹² 'Stage A' in Núñez-Calvo 2008; 'Stage 1' in Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008. Phoenician material from this period has been identified at, among other sites, Khirbet Silm and Tyre's Al-Bass cemetery in Phoenicia, and at tombs in Alaas in Cyprus (Núñez-Calvo 2008, 29-30; Aubet 2004).

¹³ Amiran 1970.

¹⁴ Coldstream 2003, but *contra* Sherratt 2006.

DATE	LEVANT (HIGH)	LEVANT (LOW)	LEVANT RADIO-CARBON	PHOENICIAN SEQUENCE	EGYPT	CYPRUS	AEGEAN		
1300	LB IIA	LB IIA	LB		DYN. 18	LC IIB	LH IIIA:2		
					AKHENATEN SMENKHARE NEFERNEFRAUTEN TUTANKHAMUN AYA				
1200	LB IIB	LB IIB					DYN. 19	LC IIC	LH IIIB:1
							HAREMHAB		
							SETI I		
							RAMESSES II		
1100	IRON IA	LB IR					DYN. 20	LC III	LH IIIB:2
		IRON IB					IR 1A		RAMESSES III
	IRON IB						IR 1A B		RAMESSES IV-X
		IRON IB					IR 1A B		RAMESSES XI
1000	IRON IB	IR 1A B	LB IR	KOUKLIA HORIZON	SMENDES	CG I	LH IIIC LATE		
							GILBOA, SHARON & BOARETTO'S 'STAGE 1'	PSUSENNES I	SUB-MYCENAEAN
900	IRON IIA	IR 1B	IR 1A	KOUKLIA HORIZON	AMENEMNISUT AMENEMOPE OSORKON SIAMUN PSUSENNES II	CG I	PROTO-GEOMETRIC		
		IR 1 2						GILBOA, SHARON & BOARETTO'S 'STAGE 2'	DYN. 21
								IR 1B	GILBOA, SHARON & BOARETTO'S 'STAGE 3'
		IR 1B							OSORKON I

Fig. 1.1 *Approximate chronological correspondences for the LBA/EIA.*¹⁵

¹⁵ Data from Bell 2006, fig. 2, 26; Gilboa & Sharon 2003; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008; Hornung, Krauss & Warburton 2006.

DATE	LEVANT (LOW) DOR CHRONOLOGY	TYRE	SAREPTA AREA II, Y	TELL ABU HAWAM	TELL KAZEL	KAMID EL-LOZ	MEGIDDO	TELL KEISAN
1300	LB IIA	XV	H	V?	AREA IV: LEVEL 6- LEVEL 5 (LOWER)	PALACE P1/2 TEMPLE T1 BUILDING PERIOD 4	VII B	13
1200	LB IIB		G		AREA II: LEVEL 6 (LOWER)			
1100	LB IR	XIV	F	V?	AREA IV: LEVEL 5 (UPPER)	BUILDING PERIOD 1-3	VII A	12-10
	IR 1A				AREA II: LEVEL 6 (UPPER)		HIATUS	
1000	IR 1A B	XIII	E	VC LATE IV-1 IV-2	AREA IV: LEVELS 4-3		VII B	9C
	IR 1B				AREA II: LEVEL 5		VIA	9A-B
900	IR 1 2	XII	GAP	IV-3 IV-4			HIATUS? VB	8C?

Fig. 1.2. *Stratigraphic Correspondences, according to the Low Chronology.*¹⁶

As a geographical term ‘Phoenicia’, is highly problematic, especially for such an early period. As is frequently pointed out, ‘Phoenician’ was an externally-applied label rather than the

¹⁶ Data from Bell 2006, fig. 2, 26; Bikai 1978; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008; Gilboa & Sharon 2003; Hachmann 1989; Heinz *et al.* 2009; Badre 2006, Table 1. The Tyre sequence is not very well-defined and if Sherratt (pers. comm.) is correct in believing an LH IIIC/Submycenaean fragment is in reality EPG, Stratum XIV may end rather later than is generally assumed, in the late eleventh or even early tenth century.

name by which the inhabitants of the Lebanese coastal polities knew themselves. Even leaving aside problematic notions of 'ethnic' or 'cultural' unity, neither the geographical nor chronological extent of the term are conclusively defined. Traditionally, 'Phoenicia' is seen as roughly coterminous with modern Lebanon, stretching from approximately Arwad or the Nahr el-Kebir in the north to around 'Akko in the south, with the Lebanon mountains usually providing the eastern boundary.¹⁷ More recently, the excavations at Tel Dor have revealed a settlement of markedly Phoenician character from its earliest phases. In light of this, and of other minor sites in the Galilee region which appear more 'Phoenician' than 'Israelite' or 'Palestinian', I extend the southern boundary approximately as far as Dor.¹⁸ Arwad is my nominal northern boundary, though in practice there is almost no evidence for that city from my period of interest and Tell Kazel forms a more practical northernmost point of study. Although my discussion is primarily concerned with the coastal plain, which is usually considered the core heartland of Phoenicia, I also consider eastwards as far as the Antilebanon range, in order to include the Beqaa Valley and the key site of Kamid el-Loz (Fig. 1.3).

Chronologically, it is usual to reserve the term 'Phoenician' for the Iron Age and later, with the Bronze Age inhabitants of the same cities being referred to as 'Canaanite'. This entirely artificial and arbitrary distinction perpetuates a spurious presumption of discontinuity between the LBA and IA, but rarely have scholars sought to operate outside these conventions.¹⁹ To further complicate matters, the meaning of 'Canaan' is itself problematic, with clear differences between its ancient and modern usage, and between its theoretical definition and practical use. The ancient term seems to have been distinctly flexible. EA 151 attests a very broad interpretation: King Abimilku of Tyre, asked by the Pharaoh to 'write to me what you have heard from Canaan', proceeds to give news from areas including modern Lebanon, Ugarit and Cilicia. A more restricted definition is evident in the Ugaritic archives which seemingly distinguish 'sons of Ugarit' from 'sons of Canaan'.²⁰ Discussions of Egyptian involvement in the Levant have

¹⁷ Rawlinson 1889, 2-4; Aubet 2001, 16; Markoe 2000, 10; Harden 1962, 20; Moscati (1968, 5, 1988, 20) places the northern boundary as far north as Tell Sukas.

¹⁸ Gilboa & Sharon 2003; Gilboa 2005; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008.

¹⁹ e.g. Aubet 2001, 12; Lehmann 2008, 207.

²⁰ RS 20.182; Lemche 1998; Na'aman 2005.

suggested even smaller Canaans, dividing the 'empire' into two or three provinces: Canaan in the south, Amurru in the north, and Upe in the east.²¹

²¹ Higginbotham 2000, 2-3, with further references. Morris 2005, 478. See Chapter 3 below for a much more detailed discussion of Egyptian involvement with the Levant, including a critique of the imperial paradigm. Matters of Egyptian terminology for areas of the Levant are complicated by the plethora of apparently overlapping terms used for the region, or parts of the region at various times, including Djahi, Fenkhu and Hau-nebut (see Bikai 1992, 134ff. for a discussion of how these may relate to Phoenicia). In many cases the specific meanings are lost, and while some may denote different areas, others may be archaic or archaising synonyms for more familiar terms.



Fig. 1.3. *Map of Phoenicia*

The minimal LBA extent of ‘Canaan’ is generally agreed to encompass the Levantine coast from around the Egyptian border at least as far north as central Syria. In modern usage, however, there is a distinct tendency, particularly among Biblical archaeologists, to use the word

as coterminous with modern Israel,²² an Israel-centrism which also frequently sees Phoenicia labelled as belonging to the ‘northern’ rather than ‘central’ Levantine littoral. Furthermore, although indigenous ‘Canaanite’ elements within the IA southern Levant are often downplayed, their presence in significant quantity is undeniable; even within ostensibly ‘Philistine’ or ‘Israelite’ areas, ‘Canaanite’ elements continue to account for the majority of the overall assemblage.²³ Over recent years, southern Levantine scholarship has increasingly recognised a Canaanite resurgence during the EIA, with sites such as Megiddo and Tel Qasile showing strong Canaanite elements. Some, such as Tel Kinneret and Tell Rehov, actually seem to have increased in size at this time, before many faced violent destruction at the end of the EIA. Finkelstein has termed this phenomenon ‘New Canaan’, though Mazar has countered that it should rather be seen simply as a continuation of ‘Old Canaan’.²⁴ This presents a difficulty for that traditional interpretation which defines the ‘Phoenicians’ in the negative, as an IA remnant of LBA ‘Canaanite’ civilisation unaffected by the coming of Sea Peoples, Israelites or the other social transformations which were seen as characterising the end of the LBA. If ‘Phoenicia’ is defined solely by being the area inhabited by Iron Age ‘Canaanites’, there is no justifiable reason to restrict the term solely to the area of Lebanon and its immediate environs.

²² Even when the problem is acknowledged, the vast disparity in the amount of evidence available frequently leads scholars to restrict their discussion to Palestine by default. Killebrew, for example, having observed the problem and insisted that she will use the term to describe the area of modern Israel-Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and southern Syria, nevertheless makes almost no reference to anything north of Israel in her recent discussion of Levantine ethnicity (2005). Weinstein (1992) refers to Megiddo being in ‘northern Canaan’ (p147). The problem is dealt with rather better by Dever (1992). Having established clearly what he means by ‘Greater Canaan’, he admits the dominance of Israeli sites in his discussion, on account of the greater degree of excavation there, but, unlike Killebrew, does attempt to include evidence from further north where available. Even in this treatment, however, ‘Canaan’ and ‘Palestine’ seem to be used interchangeably at times and available evidence from northern sites is still discussed more summarily than that from the south.

²³ The presence of Canaanite elements is not disputed – even the most vociferous advocates of mass immigration during the EIA readily accept their presence (e.g. Dothan 1992). It is rather the extent and significance of the Canaanite presence which remains controversial. As Lipiński (2006, 50) concedes, LH IIIC pottery of the kind often associated with immigrant groups is consistently accompanied by a larger quantity of coarse-wares in the local Canaanite tradition. The vast majority of the population most likely remained ‘Canaanite’. Textual evidence is lacking for the EIA, but when it does become available it shows Philistines using Canaanite dialects and bearing Semitic names, a fact usually explained away as acculturation.

²⁴ Finkelstein 2003; Mazar 2012.

Attempts to clarify the definition on linguistic grounds, while perhaps acceptable for the later IA, are unconvincing for its early phase. We have no substantial Phoenician texts earlier than the tenth century, but what evidence there is suggests that, linguistically, Phoenician was not yet fully distinct from other West Semitic dialects.²⁵ Nor is script an adequate distinguishing factor, since already by the ninth century, the Phoenician abjad was in use throughout the Levant and in parts of Anatolia.²⁶

Similar statements are true concerning both religion and material culture. During the EIA relatively little differentiation can be observed between Phoenician cult and that of other Levantine societies. Although heterogeneity is apparent, they share many deities and many elements of cosmological organisation, including a predilection for ideologically-important pairings of deities arranged into male-female dyads. The differences between, for example, Phoenician and Israelite are arguably not significantly greater than the differences between Phoenician cities.²⁷ This inter-society differentiation does seem to increase over the course of the Iron Age, however, with religious traditions gradually diverging from their common origins. Chapter 5 will examine this process in more detail. In terms of material culture, many ceramic forms found in Phoenicia in the EIA have parallels throughout the Levant. Canaanite cities in the

²⁵ Phoenician texts dating from this period are mostly limited to a number of tenth-century royal inscriptions from Byblos, several eleventh- and tenth-century inscribed arrowheads (Cross 1980) and an inscribed tenth-century bowl found near Knossos on Crete (Sznycer 1979). To these can be added an early eleventh-century Assyrian foundation-text of Tiglath-Pileser I detailing a trip to Lebanon (*ANET*³, 275) and the Egyptian ‘Account of Wen-Amon’, (see below). An unprovenanced steatite unguent jar from Cyprus bearing three letters of what may be Phoenician has been suggested to be of twelfth- to tenth-century date (Amadasi Guzzo 2007, 197) but the reading is disputed and produces no recognisable Phoenician word. Consequently, it should probably be treated with extreme scepticism (Steele, pers. comm.; forthcoming). Regardless, it is useless as a textual historic source.

²⁶ See, for example, Yon 1995 or Smith 2008 for linguistic attempts to define ‘Phoenicians’. Puech 1983; Röllig 1995.

²⁷ Stern 2003, 310. Monotheism in Israel only gradually developed and very many aspects of earlier belief and cult practice were maintained (Day 2000). It is doubtful that Israel was truly monotheistic at any point in the IA, and for the EIA it would certainly be wrong to attempt to separate it strictly from ‘Phoenicia’ on this basis. The monumental structure on Mt. Ebal known as ‘Joshua’s Altar’ has been taken up enthusiastically by some Israeli settler groups as evidence of distinctly Israelite cult practice as early as the twelfth century, but its function remains uncertain and the religious interpretation has found little acceptance among most mainstream archaeologists (Zertal 1998; Killebrew 2005, 159ff.; Feige 2007).

southern Levant, such as Megiddo and Lachish, have produced assemblages with much in common with the pottery of Lebanon. While the typically ‘Phoenician’ ceramic style of the Iron Age – Phoenician Bichrome characterised by red and black concentric circle decoration – is attested from the beginning of the EIA, it initially appears at just a few sites and is apparently restricted to containers for export. It only becomes the dominant pottery in the ‘Phoenician’ area in the later IA.²⁸ It cannot be used to suggest EIA ‘Phoenician’ material culture was fundamentally different from that of elsewhere in the Levant.

Although, given its problems, it is tempting to argue for the abandonment of the term ‘Phoenician’ in favour of some alternative – perhaps Kantzios’ ‘Neo-Canaanites’²⁹ – in practice this would probably cause more harm than good: undermining the connection between the peoples of the central Levantine littoral and the ‘Phoenicians’ of the Mediterranean and Classical literature can only hinder the aims of this thesis to present a more integrated picture. In this discussion I will use the terms ‘Phoenicia’ and ‘Phoenician’, but only as a geographical short-hand to denote the region I have already defined and the people inhabiting it. I use it independently of chronology and the artificial LBA Canaanite/EIA Phoenician distinction is not enforced.³⁰ My use of the term should in no way be taken as endorsing a view of these people as unified and homogeneous, that they can be easily separated from their neighbours, or that they had any kind of ethnic, cultural or other common identity founded upon such a notion.

Phoenician Archaeology

Phoenician studies began, like other Near Eastern historical disciplines, as primarily textual. Following Barthélemy’s decipherment of the language in 1758 based on second-century bilingual Phoenician and Greek inscriptions, major scholarly contributions principally concerned linguistics. Gesenius edited a palaeographic study of Phoenician and Punic in 1835 and a corpus

²⁸ Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008; Gilboa 1999. See Chapters 3 and 4 below for more discussion.

²⁹ Kantzios 2000, 1065.

³⁰ Although the ‘Phoenician’ label is usually regarded as an innovation of the Aegean Iron Age, we cannot be certain that it was not used in the LBA too. It is now widely believed that the Homeric poems contain elements stretching back to the Bronze Age, and *po-ni-ki-jo* is attested in Linear B, though it is unclear whether it means ‘Phoenician’ or ‘purple’.

of texts in 1837. In 1855, the French orientalist Ernest Renan produced a comparative grammar of Semitic languages. He began fieldwork in 1860-1861 with his *Mission de Phénicie*. Carried out at the behest of Napoléon III, this marked the first serious archaeological campaign in Lebanon, and included limited investigation at Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Beirut. The expedition was curtailed by the death of Renan's sister and his own illness, but nevertheless furnished many more Phoenician texts, which would form the basis for the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*.³¹

Renan, like other nineteenth-century scholars, had an ambiguous relationship with the Phoenicians. Tainted by the legacy of hostile Biblical and Classical texts, as well as more general anti-Semitism, Phoenicians were excluded from the ranks of truly 'civilised' societies, considered 'other' by virtue of being not only non-European, but also the traditional enemies of Israel throughout much of the Bible.³² While Phoenician influence on, and involvement in, the development of the Classical world was acknowledged, they were considered separate from it: marginally superior barbarians, but barbarians nonetheless.

In general, outright negativity towards the Iron Age inhabitants of Lebanon was, in the twentieth century, replaced by a tendency simply to overlook them. Nevertheless, a number of major historical treatments emerged from both the Classical and Near Eastern scholarly traditions.³³ Frequently, though unsurprisingly, such works – especially those by Classicists – have downplayed the Phoenicians' early and Levantine history in favour of their Mediterranean expansion, colonisation and especially the detailed history of their North African colonies. Apart from disciplinary bias, this is an inevitable consequence of the substantial problems which beset Lebanese archaeology during the twentieth century, the effects of which continue to be felt. Tyre, Byblos, Sidon and Beirut are among the longest continually-occupied settlement-sites in the world, and remain Lebanon's major cities. Where the dense modern urbanism allows excavation, IA and earlier strata often prove almost completely obliterated by later building work. Furthermore, the Lebanese civil war of 1975–1990 made archaeology impossible within large stretches of the country. These decades were not completely without investigation – largely

³¹ Dupont-Sommer 1983; Barthélemy, J-J 1764; Gesenius (ed.) 1835, 1837; Renan 1855, 1864-74, *CIS*.

³² Almog 1988; Freeman, 1891-4, I:11; Shepherd 2005, 26.

³³ e.g. Harden 1964 and Aubet 2001 (first ed. 1993) from the former; Moscati 1968, 88 from the latter. Other important general contributions include Krings (ed.) 1995, several Congressi Internazionali di Studi Fenici e Punici (Bartoloni *et al.* (eds.) 1983; Acquaro *et al.* (eds.) 1991; Aubet & Barthélemy (eds.) 2000) and the *Rivista di Studi Fenici*.

confined to outlying sites such as Tell 'Arqa (1972–present) and Kamid el-Loz (1963–1981; 2004–present) – but the damage to Lebanese archaeology, as to all areas of life, was extremely severe. Lebanon has always had a problem with the looting of sites,³⁴ but the war greatly exacerbated the situation, with much material stolen from sites and museums across the country. The 'Arqa excavation, for example, lost much of the material and records relating to its earlier seasons in the 1975 pillage of the French Institute at Beirut and of the dig house on site, and final publication of the results of those years' investigation was rendered impossible. Kamid el-Loz likewise suffered extensive damage under the bulldozers of looters seeking gold.³⁵

As a result, the majority of Lebanese archaeological work during the twentieth century occurred before 1975. In contrast with the religiously-inspired LBA/IA focus of most research in Israel/Palestine, Lebanese archaeology in the first half of the twentieth century shared its problems with Mediterranean archaeology more broadly, including patchy publication and a focus on Graeco-Roman archaeology at the exclusion of the indigenous. In Tyre, the most important site for the Lebanese IA, Denyse le Lasseur's 1921 excavations and the systematic works begun by Maurice Chéhab in 1947 both, like Renan before them, only examined the Greek and later levels.³⁶

³⁴ Contenau 1920, 20-21; Sader 1995.

³⁵ Thalmann 1991; Fisk 1991.

³⁶ Jidejian 1969



Fig. 1.4. *Extensive Byzantine, Roman and Hellenistic remains in the area of Tyre's Southern Harbour.*³⁷

Byblos was better served in terms of investigation of early strata. Excavations carried out by Montet from 1921-4, and subsequently by Dunand, produced extensive MBA and earlier remains.³⁸ However, despite important tenth-century finds, including royal inscriptions and the famous 'Tomb of Ahiiram', Byblos has produced no LBA or IA levels. While severe coastal erosion probably played a part, it also seems likely that serious mistakes were made during excavation, including a complete failure by the excavators to recognise LBA material.³⁹

³⁷ This represents only part of by far the smaller of the city's Classical and later archaeological sites. In contrast, Bikai's excavation of the city's pre-Classical strata consisted of only c. 150 m².

³⁸ Jidejian 1971

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 58; Rainey 2003, 176; Margueron 1994; Salles 1994. The site was certainly occupied during the LBA and IA. It features prominently in the Amarna Letters, LBA and EIA tombs exist and inscriptions of Byblos' IA kings are among our earliest Phoenician texts. Although of dubious historicity, *Wen-Amon* can probably be relied upon as confirmation of the existence of a flourishing eleventh-century settlement at Byblos. A survey of IA pottery from the site produced nothing predating the eleventh or even tenth centuries, but the distribution of later IA material towards the margins of Dunand's excavation area may indicate that the Iron Age settlement lies under the modern city (Homsy 2003; Charaf 2007-8).



Fig. 1.5. *Excavated structures at Byblos.*

At Beirut, recent excavations have uncovered a small amount of LBA and EIA material, including sections of the city glacis which were in use from the thirteenth to eleventh centuries.⁴⁰ Current excavations at Sidon have so far found little of relevant date.⁴¹

Several important EIA necropoleis have been excavated in Lebanon, but all, to differing degrees, suffer from incomplete publication. The cemeteries of Khirbet Silm, Joya, Qrayé and Qasmieh, all in the Tyre-Sidon area and excavated between the 1920s and 1940s, have produced a wide range of MBA, LBA and IA material, now in Beirut's National Museum. Excavation records are lacking, however, severely limiting the information which can be gained from these objects.⁴² The major cemetery at Khaldé near Beirut's modern airport produced around 420 Iron Age tombs, mostly from the ninth to seventh centuries, but also including some tenth-century EIA examples. Again, however, publication is limited. A preliminary report on the 1961 and 1962 campaigns appeared in 1966, with brief updates the following year and in 1969 but the

⁴⁰ Badre 1997, 2000. The evidence for EIA remains in Beirut is, however, highly controversial (Sader, pers. comm.). Four MBA shaft-tombs found on a rocky promontory north of Martyrs' Square also produced LBA material, suggesting their continued use into that period (Chéhab 1983; Genz & Sader 2007-8). Just outside the city, funerary caves containing LBA material were found at the Nahr el-Kelb and at Fayadieh (Genz & Sader 2007-8).

⁴¹ Doumet-Serhal 1998-9, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2010. These have produced mainly EBA and MBA remains, with little EIA material (Sader, pers. comm.). Recent discoveries of an Egyptian faience vessel dating from Tawosret's early twelfth-century reign as pharaoh (Marée 2006) and a sistrum from c.1000 BC do, however, point to the presence of EIA strata at the site. (Zaatari 2011).

⁴² Chapman 1972; Genz & Sader 2007-8.

death of the excavator, Roger Saidah, in 1979, prevented full final publication.⁴³ The excavated human remains, including thirty-six skeletons entrusted to the hospital of the American University of Beirut, have since been lost.⁴⁴ At Dakerman near Sidon, a LBA cemetery, also excavated by Saidah, saw final publication from his notes in 2004.⁴⁵ Several other sites, similarly limited in their excavation and publication, have been investigated but did not produce evidence of EIA burials. Sader 1995 provides a useful summary of what had been found up to that point, and the various problems with it.

Since the late 1960s, there has, in general, been a marked improvement in the standard of archaeology in Lebanon, the disruptive influence of the war notwithstanding. Immediately before the outbreak of the conflict, two of the most important settlement excavations to date took place: Bikai's 1973–4 sondage in central Tyre, and Pritchard's 1969–74 excavation of Sarepta, a small coastal town around 13km south of Sidon. These projects, while small-scale, were well carried out using modern archaeological methodology; both have published final reports.⁴⁶ They remain our best source of information concerning EIA settlement sites within Phoenicia's core heartland.

The end of the war brought a significant increase in archaeological work, including substantial investigation accompanying the rebuilding of Beirut⁴⁷ and the British Museum Sidon project. In Tyre, Aubet has excavated the city's extensive cremation cemetery at Al-Bass. Although the burials so far excavated date to the later IA, EIA material has come to light, leading Aubet to speculate that there may be burials of this period in as-yet unexcavated areas.⁴⁸

Given the difficulties of excavating in Lebanon, it is unsurprising that the most detailed and extensive excavations of Phoenician sites are those which lie either outside the modern nation's borders, or on its periphery. Besides 'Arqa⁴⁹ on the northern border and Kamid el-Loz in the Beqaa', there are several well-excavated sites in modern Syria and especially in northern Israel/Palestine. Just inside Syria, only a few kilometres from 'Arqa, is Tell Kazel, allegedly a

⁴³ Saidah 1966, 1967, 1969; Shanklin & Ghantus 1966.

⁴⁴ Sader 1995.

⁴⁵ Saidah 2004.

⁴⁶ Bikai 1978; Anderson 1987, 1988; Khalifeh 1988; Koehl 1985; Pritchard 1988.

⁴⁷ Curvers, Stuart *et al.* 1998-1999.

⁴⁸ Aubet, Núñez & Trellisó 1998; Aubet 2004.

⁴⁹ Thalmann 1978a, 1978b, 1983, 1991, 2000, 2006; Gubel 2007-8; Charaf 2007-8; Badre 2007-8.

major Egyptian administrative centre for the 'Akkar Plain.⁵⁰ Like 'Arqa, it shows clear signs of EIA and LBA occupation. In addition to excavations during the early 1960s by Dunand, Bounni and Saliby, as yet unpublished in their final form, renewed excavations by the American University of Beirut are on-going.⁵¹ The 'Akkar Plain has also been the subject of a number of regional surveys.⁵²

In the south, several EIA sites within modern Israel frequently seen as 'Phoenician' have, generally, been excavated to a high standard and enjoyed much better publication than their Lebanese counterparts. On the 'Akko Plain lie Tell Abu Hawam, excavated by Hamilton in the 1930s and re-investigated by the Spanish in the 1980s;⁵³ Tell Keisan, investigated with a sondage by Rowe in the 1930s, with a full excavation following in the 1970s,⁵⁴ and Achziv. The latter site has produced cemeteries in use from the eleventh century.⁵⁵

The importance of Dor has already been alluded to. Originally excavated by Garstang in the 1920s and later by Leibowitz in the 1950s, since 1980 it has been the site of on-going major excavations by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. On the whole, the standard of these works, and particularly their publication, has been exemplary. The site's Phoenician character has been controversial in the past, but has now been demonstrated beyond doubt.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ But see Chapter 2 below.

⁵¹ Dunand 1964; Badre, Gubel, al-Maqdissi & Sader 1990; Badre *et al.* 1994; Badre & Gubel 1999-2000; Badre 2000, 2003, 2006; Badre, Boileau, Jung & Mommsen 2005; Capet & Gubel 2000; Pedrazzi & Chiti 2012.

⁵² al-Maqdissi 1989; Bartl 1998-1999. Both the Syrian and Lebanese parts of the 'Akkar Plain have been surveyed. The rest of Lebanon, however, has seen precious little survey work since Renan's mission of the 1860s (Yon 1995), with only the Beqaa' Valley survey worthy of note for this period (Marfoe 1998). Survey work has also been carried out in the Israeli portion of southern Phoenicia, in the 'Akko Plain (Lehmann 2001).

⁵³ Aznar, Balensi & Herrera 2005.

⁵⁴ Briend & Humbert *et al.* 1980; Humbert 1981; Balensi 1981.

⁵⁵ Dayagi-Mendels 2002; E. Mazar 2001, 2004.

⁵⁶ In addition to the articles cited above (n.8), see Stern *et al.* 1995; Stern 1998, 2000a, 2000b; Gilboa 2005; Sharon *et al.* 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

Theory and Methodology

Levantine archaeology has suffered from excessive conservatism in responding to advances in theory and interpretative methodology. Although progress has been made over recent years, especially regarding fieldwork practices and data-analysis, the discipline remains somewhat reactionary and a number of problems continue to exist. A key aim of this thesis is to highlight some of these areas and to suggest ways in which applying approaches and theoretical models which have proven successful in other areas of archaeology can improve our understanding of the Levantine LBA/EIA transition.

Within Levantine archaeology, especially that of Israel/Palestine, a strong tendency can be observed towards attempting to produce narrative histories rather than broader thematic discussions; in Braudellian terms, a predilection for the *histoire événementielle*. As Killebrew has remarked, Levantine, and especially Biblical, archaeology has ‘remained in a culture-historical time warp, focusing on writing a narrative history within the biblical framework by compiling typologies and dealing with chronological questions’.⁵⁷

Social change is still too often approached at a level of ‘national’ interactions, through ideas of invasion, migration and the supplanting of one population by another. Several such narrative frameworks have been constructed for the Levant: the coming of the Israelites and the expansion of the Davidic empire; the end of Egyptian imperial presence, and, the case *par excellence*, the incursion of the Sea Peoples. In much of mainstream archaeology migration as an explanation for cultural change has been, if not discredited, then certainly minimised in importance over the last half-century, with far more recognition of the difficulty of detecting migration archaeologically and the importance of internal social, political, ideological and economic factors. It would be wrong to suggest that this shift in attitudes has entirely bypassed the Levant, but it has not led to the same retreat from explanatory models of this kind as has been seen in other parts of the East Mediterranean.⁵⁸ Only the Israelite invasion hypothesis has been

⁵⁷ Killebrew 2005, 5.

⁵⁸ For example, the ‘Dorian invasion’ explanation for the end of the Mycenaean palaces (Desborough 1964, 244ff.), while still popular in some quarters, engenders nowhere like the same level of widespread belief as does its Sea People counterpart in the Levant. The dialectal arguments for Dorian intrusion have been questioned, with the suggestion of possible West Greek linguistic features in certain substrate varieties of Mycenaean Greek, (Chadwick 1976, *contra*

successfully challenged, with the majority having now abandoned the idea in favour of various models which emphasise diverse origins for the Israelites among the indigenous Canaanite population.⁵⁹ The Egyptian and Sea People narratives continue to flourish, despite – as Chapter 2 will argue – significant problems with their ability to explain the archaeological material, especially in Phoenicia.

Given the nationalist political agendas which often continue to play an important role in defining the East Mediterranean's archaeology, this reluctance to abandon culture-historical perspectives is perhaps unsurprising. For the current discussion it particularly manifests as a threefold problem: a methodological issue regarding the relative importance attached to textual and archaeological data, an outdated theoretical concept of cultural identity, and, most seriously, a failure to think critically about what social change actually is and how it operates. By examining each of these in turn, I will present the theoretical and methodological basis on which this thesis is built.

Text and Levantine Archaeology: Methodological Problems

The intellectual tradition from which Phoenician studies arose, as with wider Levantine archaeology, is overwhelmingly textual. Many Levantine scholars continue to treat written, especially Biblical, records as having primacy; archaeology, if not explicitly seen as a tool to 'prove' textual accounts, is at least to be understood within the framework of a pre-established and essentially immutable historical narrative.⁶⁰ Such an approach denies material culture evidence a legitimate role in a debate whose fundamentals have already been decided.

Thompson 2008) and the continued absence of compelling archaeological evidence has prompted a significant retreat from theories of invasion of the Mycenaean world from the north. Similarly, among Aegean and Cypriot archaeologists the idea that Aegean populations may have travelled east as 'Sea Peoples', while not generally rejected outright, is not embraced with the same enthusiasm as it is in the east. Karageorghis (1992, 84) sums up the situation: 'In Levantine archaeology, the words "Sea Peoples" are very often pronounced without any inhibitions. Not so in Cypriot archaeology, where every effort is made by a number of scholars to eradicate them.'

⁵⁹ Dever 1992, 1998; Killebrew 2005, 149ff.

⁶⁰ The most oft-cited theoretical work on combining archaeological and textual sources, Leone & Potter 1988, essentially supports this approach, talking about text as establishing a 'framework' which guides expectations for the archaeological record.

There is certainly a balance to be struck between the use of textual and archaeological sources: it would be foolish to argue that either should be followed to the exclusion of the other. Where this balance lies must depend on a clear and open-minded assessment of the nature and reliability of the sources in question. This is too rarely done for the Levant, despite the fact that many of the key texts used are highly flawed at best. The Bible – to take the most obvious example – is a disparate collection of writings mostly composed long after the periods they ostensibly describe, some as late as the Hellenistic period.⁶¹ Even laying aside the distorting effect of modern religious, ethnic and nationalist agendas in their interpretation, these texts were composed and compiled to serve ideological purposes. These two factors cannot help but call into question their reliability as accurate historical documents. However, as we saw above, even such dubious events as the reigns of David and Solomon continue to be treated not just as fact, but sufficiently certain and well-dated fact that they form the basis for the conventional scheme of Iron Age chronology. This despite a failure by archaeologists to find any material remains of the kind of great, united kingdom with monumental architecture suggested by the Old Testament account.

Nor is this lack of sceptical questioning confined to such unique and ideologically-charged sources as the Bible. Texts relating to the LBA/EIA Levant are scarce, but those that do exist have been treated with a similar level of misplaced confidence. The famous *Account of Wen-Amon* is a case in point. Our longest and most detailed description of EIA Phoenicia, *Wen-Amon* is ostensibly the account of an eleventh-century eponymous Egyptian envoy dispatched to Byblos from Thebes to procure cedar-wood for the sacred river-barque of the god Amon. It describes Wen-Amon's many adventures and misfortunes on his journey and his negotiations with the intransigent king of Byblos, before breaking off shortly after Wen-Amon's shipwrecking on Cyprus during his homeward voyage. The text has formed the basis of extensive discussion and hypothesising by Phoenician archaeologists eager for any scrap of information about this obscure period.⁶²

It is, however, a deeply problematic document which most Egyptologists now believe to be fictional, or at the very least a heavily fictionalised and romanticised version of real events. It was likely composed rather later than the period it concerns, possibly during the late tenth-

⁶¹ Mazar 2003, 86.

⁶² e.g. Aubet 2001; Katzenstein 1983.

century reign of Shoshenq I, and was designed to make some sort of point relevant to the internal Egyptian situation at that time. What this was remains unclear, with suggestions varying between satire, glorification of Egypt or the god Amon, illustration of the barbarity of foreigners and simple entertaining adventure. Regardless of the preferred interpretation, the historical reliability of the source must be in doubt, with its utility as a source for eleventh-century Phoenicia perhaps comparable to that of the *Odyssey* for the LBA Aegean.⁶³ This is not to deny its value, and some details may well reflect historical reality of the eleventh century; but they could just as easily relate to the tenth-century world of the document's composition, or be archaisms drawn from a much earlier period of Egyptian-Levantine interaction. They might simply be drawn from imagination or literary trope. Again, the comparison with the literary construct LBA/EIA world of the Homeric epics seems appropriate. Like them, *Wen-Amon* is an extremely valuable resource, but to use it unquestioningly would be a profound mistake.

Similar problems exist for the first- or second-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, whose *Contra Apionem* and *Jewish Antiquities* include passages on tenth-century Tyre from which many scholarly conclusions have been drawn.⁶⁴ Again, the problem is one of great chronological separation between the surviving text and the period described. Josephus cites his sources – principally Menander of Ephesos and Philostratos – but since these do not survive we have no way of knowing where they obtained their own information and how reliable we should judge their accounts. In any situation where we are incapable of ascertaining the reliability of a text written many centuries after the period it describes, the sensible approach, I would suggest, would be to proceed with extreme wariness, rather than treating it as true until proven otherwise.

As this thesis will show, a more questioning attitude towards the textual record of the LBA/EIA transition forces us to re-evaluate much of what we thought we knew about Phoenicia at that time. When we know so little anyway, this is perhaps uncomfortable, but it is necessary: it is better to accept that we know less than to convince ourselves we know more based on methodologically-unsound foundations. Text and archaeology should certainly be used together,

⁶³ Sass 2002; Baines 1999; Eyre 1999. Winter's 1995 discussion of the Phoenicians as literary trope in the works of Homer is a good example of the kind of discussion which might be more appropriate for *Wen-Amon*. For an even more radical (and rather implausible) critique of the applicability of *Wen-Amon* to the EIA Levant, see Nibbi 1996. For the contrary view that *Wen-Amon* is indeed a genuine historical document of the eleventh century, see Goedicke 1975.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion.

and in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for text to guide archaeological investigation. However, data-poor environments like this are far from being such circumstances. When our ability to verify sources is diminished, we must be more, not less, critical of the shortcomings of what sources we do have.

Cultural Identity

Inherent in the culture-historical narratives which have frequently prevailed in the Levant is a conception of societies as bounded and homogeneous entities, readily detectable in the archaeological record by direct material culture ‘markers’:

‘[LH IIIC] domestic pottery is a significant ethnic indicator which reveals the presence of a new population, native from the Aegean realm.’⁶⁵

‘[T]he appearance of Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery and its related assemblages at biblical Ekron and Ashdod is an excellent archaeological case-study of “pots equalling people”.’⁶⁶

Again, this is an approach which has fallen into disfavour in wider archaeology, where identity is recognised as much more fluid, ambiguous and problematic, and consequently considerably less straightforward to recognise in the archaeological record. Elsewhere in the East Mediterranean, scholars emerging from the Aegean, Cypriot and Classical scholarly traditions – less theoretically conservative than the Levant, Anatolia and Egypt, but also areas where there has been a relatively high degree of both archaeological and textual investigation – have generally produced more sophisticated treatments of identity.⁶⁷ Within Levantine archaeology, there has been much less progress. Objections to the prevailing static approach have been made by scholars such as Bunimovitz and, more recently, Anfinset,⁶⁸ but wider scholarship has been reluctant to

⁶⁵ Lipiński 2006, 50.

⁶⁶ Killebrew 1998, 402.

⁶⁷ e.g. Malkin 1998, 2003; Mac Sweeney 2008, 2009; Riva 2010.

⁶⁸ Bunimovitz 1990; Anfinset 2003.

follow their lead. Typology still forms the basis for most ‘ethnic’ discussions. Again, this reflects the polarised and rigid approaches to cultural distinction prevalent in much modern political discourse, especially in Israel but also elsewhere. Awareness of the variety of forms of social identity has yet to make much headway in most Levantine studies, although recently there has been some discussion in this area for IA Lebanon by Sommer.⁶⁹ Failure to recognise this potential for ambiguity risks not only creating an overly simplistic model of cultural interaction, but also obscuring one of the key dimensions of social change: change in the construction and negotiation of identities. As this thesis will demonstrate, such considerations are crucial to the LBA/EIA transition, and so it is essential to establish at the outset a theoretically up-to-date conception of identity and how it can be recognised archaeologically.

Contemporary theory recognises many potential forms of social identity, including ethnicity, age, gender, political affiliation and others.⁷⁰ This variety is to be stressed, since a tendency exists either to subsume all under the misleading heading of ‘ethnicity’ or else assume that ethnicity – that is, the form of collective identity based upon real or fictive common descent – was the most important and the one to which the greatest attention should be given. Such a view retrojects post-Enlightenment ideas about the importance of race, descent and place of origin into antiquity; we should not assume that our own concepts and priorities in constructing identities were shared by people in the ancient world, and must remain open-minded to the full range of possible dimensions of identity-construction.⁷¹

Since Barth’s seminal 1969 introduction to his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*,⁷² theorists have largely rejected the idea that social groups were bounded and homogeneous with intrinsic identities, and recognised that identity in all its forms is socially constructed, often in relation – particularly opposition – to an ‘other’.⁷³ Hall defines cultural identity as:

⁶⁹ Sommer 2010.

⁷⁰ The literature regarding all aspects of social identity is vast, but see, for example, Casella & Fowler (eds.) 2005; Insoll (ed.) 2007; Hales & Hodos (eds.) 2010.

⁷¹ Mac Sweeney 2007, 2009.

⁷² Barth 1969.

⁷³ Jones 1997, xiii.

the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from the totality of social existence and endowed with a particular symbolic signification for the purposes of creating exclusionary distinctiveness.⁷⁴

Such definitions draw heavily on the work of Bourdieu, whose theory of *habitus* – an enduring disposition towards certain practices and perceptions both structuring and structured by the social environment⁷⁵ – was applied to identity by Bentley,⁷⁶ and in a developed form is the basis for much modern thinking on the subject. In particular, his concept of ‘doxic’, ‘orthodox’ and ‘heterodox’ forms of knowledge proves useful. *Doxa* is seen as the misrecognition of cultural and social elements as natural and universal, and as such can only exist when a social group has no contact with those whose *habitus* differs from their own. When such contact occurs, the previously-assumed norms are brought into question by the presence of an alternative, leading to the transformation of doxic into orthodox or heterodox forms of knowledge, the former explicitly denying the appropriateness of alternative practices and the latter acknowledging the existence of a choice.⁷⁷

It is this questioning and assertion of habitual practices which forms the basis for distinctions in social identity: identity is not *habitus* itself, but the way in which individuals respond to, communicate and perceive the practices of *habitus* when they are confronted with alternatives. A logical extension of this is that just as there can be many loci of interaction, so identity is multidimensional and dependent on social context. Power relationships are important here: while ethnicity is subjective and self-ascribed, it can also be assigned from outside by others. The relationship between self-ascribed identities and those assigned by others is frequently

⁷⁴ Hall 2002, 17.

⁷⁵ Bourdieu 1977.

⁷⁶ Bentley 1987, Jones 1997, 90. Jones criticises Bentley’s approach in many respects, including his assumption of *habitus* as essentially uniform within a given social group, a view which comes perilously close to the old-fashioned normative models of identity peddled by culture-history. Nor does it account for examples where common identity does not arise despite commonality of *habitus*, or *vice versa* where common *habitus* does not seem to exist within known identity groups.

⁷⁷ Jones 1997, 97; Hall 2002.

determined by the power dynamics between those involved.⁷⁸ Consequently, careful consideration of the context in which ethnicity and other identities are negotiated is essential.

These are useful and productive ways of thinking about social identity, striking a balance between normative models which see it as inherent and unchanging, and extreme instrumentalist interpretations which would consider it entirely arbitrary and deployed consciously towards specific strategic goals. Variations on this approach now comprise something of a consensus in theoretical thought.⁷⁹

Consensus is less forthcoming, however, regarding how cognitive issues of identity relate to the practical fact of the archaeological record. Post-processual archaeology has rejected ideas of material culture as a passive reflection of the cultural environment in which it was created, instead emphasising its role as a medium for social communication, produced, maintained and manipulated through individual agency and in turn helping to structure that agency. It thus embodies meanings important within the social contexts in which it was produced and consumed. These meanings are not fixed, but vary according to any number of elements including the context of use, the social situation of its user, and the specific history of the individual object. Nor is its meaning confined to the relationship between objects and people: in recent years the relationships between objects have been increasingly recognised, with both Gell and Gosden emphasising the agency of objects themselves. In short, material culture, like identity, is polysemous and multivalent.⁸⁰

The implications of such an understanding for the discovery of identity archaeologically are much-debated and are particularly pertinent in environments which are only poorly-attested archaeologically. We need not, as Hall does, entirely despair of recovering meanings and significance when we lack an explanatory textual or iconographic record.⁸¹ Material culture embodies a series of specific, transient realisations of identity through practice in various times and contexts. Since these are both structured by previous practice and contribute towards constructing future realisations of identity, they enable us to reconstruct something of the social

⁷⁸ Jenkins 2008.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; Hall 2002; Jones 1997.

⁸⁰ Jones 1997, 117-118; Antonaccio 2010; Gosden 2004; Gell 1998.

⁸¹ Hall 2002, 111.

context.⁸² A detailed contextual analysis of the use of material culture is therefore required, with careful attention paid to the objects' stylistic references to a wider cultural milieu, but also, crucially, to where and how they were used within the specific chronological and geographical context in which it was found.⁸³ As Chapter 2 demonstrates, such an approach proves highly productive in LBA/EIA Phoenicia, and enables us to reconstruct aspects of changing identity even within this very problematic archaeological context.

Social Change, Social Complexity and 'Collapse'

We turn now to the most important theoretical issue for this thesis: the nature of social change itself. Terminology is important here: this thesis discusses 'social change', a neutral concept, while many other archaeological discussions have approached the issue in ways that are either explicitly or implicitly value-laden: 'progress', 'development' or 'emergence' on the one hand; 'crisis', 'collapse' and 'catastrophe' on the other. The conceptualisation of social change as a straightforward binary, either increasing or decreasing in complexity, has been integral to discussions of the past for centuries: studies of 'collapse' go back at least as far as Gibbon.

The most obvious manifestation of such thinking in the archaeology of social change has been the persistence of '(neo-)evolutionary' models to which the idea of 'progress' is fundamental. 'Evolution' as conceptualised here bears little resemblance to its biological counterpart: it is linear and universal, characterised by defined stages through which all societies are imagined to pass: bands, 'Big Man societies' or tribes, chiefdoms and states.⁸⁴ Critically, the process is teleological, with all societies advancing inevitably from 'primitivism' – the word is still used in many neo-evolutionist discussions – towards the 'modern', which, surprisingly enough, resembles the post-Enlightenment Western world. The problems of such an approach have been apparent for decades, though it has persisted longer in archaeology than in other social sciences.⁸⁵ Objections

⁸² Jones 1997, 125.

⁸³ Mac Sweeney 2007.

⁸⁴ Sahlins & Service (eds.) 1960; Service 1962; Fried 1960, 1967; Flannery 1972; Renfrew & Bahn 2000, 175.

⁸⁵ The topic has been explored in great detail in a vast field of sociological and archaeological literature, of which only a selection can be cited here. Parsons argued against the idea in 1937, identifying similar sentiments in the work of earlier writers such as Pareto (Joas & Knöbl 2009, 40), though his own theory of social change failed to deviate as far

include both the ideological – the notion that the West is ‘advanced’ and that societies organised differently are ‘primitive’ and have not yet progressed to our level cannot be disentangled from the racism and colonialism such views have inspired – and the empirical: it is not difficult to cite any number of societies which do not fit straightforwardly into the taxonomy. Often, the criteria for categorising societies are fiercely disputed even within neo-evolutionary archaeology. Such has been the proliferation of subtypes and additional categories, often differing more from each other than from supposedly entirely separate levels on the social evolutionary ladder, that the usefulness of terminology like ‘state’, ‘chiefdom’ or ‘tribe’ has been fatally undermined.

Neo-evolutionism has not entirely been excised from archaeology, its influence being most clearly evident in many scholars’ continued happiness to utilise the problematic typological categories it engendered. However, an increasing number of scholars reject it. Even among those who do still work within the evolutionist paradigm to some extent, few would now explicitly or unproblematically link ‘progress’ to value-judgements. Nevertheless, an implicit sense that increased complexity is a ‘good thing’, and any interruption or reversal regrettable, remains ingrained in habits of academic thought and rhetoric.⁸⁶ Nowhere is this more apparent – especially in the context of the end of the East Mediterranean Bronze Age – than in the continuing popularity of studies which frame social change in terms of ‘collapse’.

Although it has never really taken its place alongside Mesopotamia, Rome and the Classic Lowland Maya as one of the classic case-studies of ‘collapse’ theory,⁸⁷ *prima facie*, the East

from progressivist unilinearity as his earlier criticisms might have suggested. Eisenstadt, building on, but radically revising, Parsonian ideas in his discussion of historical social change, has stressed that the Western version is only one of ‘multiple modernities’ (Eisenstadt 1995, 2000). For criticism of neo-evolutionism among archaeologists, see Crumley 1979, 1995; Shanks & Tilley 1987, esp. Ch. 6; Chapman 2003; Yoffee 2005.

⁸⁶ Taking just a few East Mediterranean examples: Aubet (2001, 23) talks about ‘regression’ in Canaan; for Iacovou (2006), the pre-collapse centre at Kalavassos-*Ayios Dhimitrios* is ‘splendid’ and the Mycenaean palatial tradition ‘grand’, while the thirteenth century saw ‘a phase of deterioration’ and the ‘losses’ which were ‘fatal’. For Drews (1993, 3), the end of the LBA ‘was one of history’s most frightful turning points... a calamity... arguably the worst disaster in ancient history, even more calamitous than the collapse of the western Roman Empire.’ (In fairness, it should be pointed out that Drews emphasises that he considers the period, in the long run, a beginning rather than an end).

⁸⁷ Tainter (1988) discusses the fall of the Mycenaean palatial system to some extent, but less centrally than other examples; the wider regional phenomenon is largely overlooked. The publication of the ‘Forces of Transformation’ conference (Bachhuber & Roberts (eds.) 2009) cites no major theoretical works on collapse at all, and while

Mediterranean LBA/EIA transition appears to be one of the ancient world's clearest and most important examples; the significance of its transformative effects on later history are perhaps only rivalled by the downfall of the Roman Empire. Despite the surprising reticence to engage explicitly with social theory, 'collapse' has been the defining concept governing how scholars have approached the period. Sometimes the word itself is used (e.g. Routledge & McGeough 2009); often a similar term such as 'crisis' (Ward & Joukowsky (eds.) 1992) or 'catastrophe' (Drews 1993) is substituted. Whether the specific focus is the 'downfall' of the Mycenaean palace societies in Greece, the 'end' of the Hittite Empire, the attacks on Egypt by the 'Sea Peoples', or the upheavals affecting the Levantine coast, almost invariably the negative, disjunction-focused tenor indicates a collapse-based approach and the dichotomised view of social change that underlies it.

Interest in narratives of collapse has increased in recent years, spurred in part by Diamond's successful popular history *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*.⁸⁸ Diamond's project is an explicitly moralistic and didactic one, where a succession of ancient and more recent 'collapses' are presented as parables of societal 'failure' 'because they offer us many lessons'.⁸⁹ His approach, not to mention specific factual details presented in the book and many of his interpretations of them, have justifiably received widespread criticism from academics, but the book's catalysing effect cannot be doubted. After several years of relative limbo for collapse studies since the late 1980s, the last few years have seen numerous articles, a significant publication of academic responses to Diamond and at least one conference on the subject.⁹⁰ Much of this work follows Diamond in taking a distinctly 'ecological turn'. This has somewhat muddied the theoretical waters: environmental collapse and societal change have frequently become blurred and conflated.⁹¹ Given the increasing concerns in the modern world about the

Routledge and McGeough (2009) ask 'Just What Collapsed?', the perhaps more important questions of 'Just what do we mean when we say this collapsed?' and 'How does collapse work?' are left unasked.

⁸⁸ Diamond 2005.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 277. Sweeping comparative statements such as 'The parallels between Easter Island and the whole modern world are chilling and obvious' (p.119) are common throughout the book and give a clear idea of the tenor and aims of the work.

⁹⁰ e.g. Tainter 2006; McAnany & Yoffee (eds.) 2010; 'Crisis, What Crisis?': Conference held at the McDonald Institute, Cambridge, September 2010.

⁹¹ e.g. McAnany & Yoffee (eds.) 2010 and the McDonald conference above.

possibility of major environmental breakdown in the near future, an interest in how ecological issues impacted on past societies is perhaps inevitable. While I would certainly not doubt the importance of environmental issues as a possible stimulus for social change, it is important to maintain a firm conceptual distinction between them.

This raises the question of how, then, we *should* conceptualise social change. Most archaeological approaches of the last few decades have, as I have already hinted, answered this in terms of social complexity. Such approaches eschew subjective assessment of categories of achievement such as art, writing or complex bureaucracies, seeing these as merely epiphenomenal to the fundamental changes which occur in the nature of the social structure or system itself. Tainter, for instance, defines ‘collapse’ as:

a political process. It may, and often does have consequences in such areas as economics, art, and literature, but it is fundamentally a matter of the socio-political sphere. *A society has collapsed when it displays a rapid, significant loss of an established level of socio-political complexity.*⁹²

The reverse, that social complexity can also increase, is both implied by the definition and confirmed in Tainter’s discussion.

Systems theory has been inextricably linked to this approach. Under such definitions, social complexity is a measure of the number of distinct social roles within a society and of the number of interconnections between them. While precise definitions vary greatly, Price’s definition that ‘things complex have more parts and more connections between parts’ is characteristic.⁹³

While terminology varies, this idea is at the heart of most systems-theoretical models of social change: Parsons, although originally proposing a fourfold schema, focused principally on social change through ‘differentiation’ – the proliferation of increasingly specific institutions and division of labour. More recent scholars have generally opted for a two-dimensional model: Flannery talks about ‘segregation’ – the amount of social differentiation and specialisation, and of ‘centralisation’: the degree of interlinkage between these parts and their relation to different levels

⁹² Tainter 1988, 4. Emphasis original.

⁹³ Price 1995, 145.

of control. McGuire proposes similar categories: ‘heterogeneity’, which he defines as the distribution of the population between social groups or identities, and ‘inequality’, the differential access to material and social resources.⁹⁴

The multidimensionality of these models is welcome in that it eliminates the unilinear progression of previous evolutionist models. Since the variables of ‘parts’ and ‘connections’ can vary independently, social change can be conceptualised in a much more nuanced and subtle way. Systems theories also allow for similar nuance in how the internal organisation of societies is envisaged. They are highly compatible with ideas such as ‘heterarchy’ which seek to break down rigid notions that societies must necessarily be organised in unilinear hierarchies.⁹⁵

Perhaps the best application of systems theory to social change in the ancient world is Tainter’s *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988). Approaching ‘collapse’ in a commendably measured and sensible way, many of his points remain valuable, including his insistence that complexity not be treated as desirable *per se* and his emphasis on the importance of distinguishing between proximate stimuli for social change and systemic causes. Yoffee & Cowgill’s edited volume *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* of the same year had a more empirical and less systems-theoretical focus, but made many similar points.⁹⁶

More recently, it is worth mentioning the influence of complex systems analysis, which originated as a method for modelling the operation of neural, climatic, computer or economic systems. Like other branches of systems theory, it involves thinking in terms of interacting elements, processes and mechanisms, and is explicitly mathematical. Unlike conventional systems, complex systems are distinguished by the non-linear relationship between changes in their constituent parts and changes in the whole. While they possess order and structure, and are not random, the relationship of cause and effect governing them is not straightforward and they must be understood as more than the sum of their parts. New forms of order can generate spontaneously, without any direct linear causal link to changes in inputs. This is the world of

⁹⁴ Parsons 1966, 1971; Joas & Knöbl, 86-89; Flannery 1972, McGuire 1983.

⁹⁵ Crumley 1979, 1995. Rather than the traditional view of social roles, groups or individuals being ranked hierarchically, heterarchy posits a structure in which elements are either unranked in relation to each other, or have the potential to be ranked in various ways.

⁹⁶ Tainter 1988; Yoffee 1988, 13; 2005, 139.

chaos theory and ‘strange attractors’, of hurricanes caused by butterfly wings, as the classic example goes.⁹⁷

There can be no denying that systems theory analyses have provided some extremely useful insights into ancient social change. Certainly they represent a significant improvement over evolutionist perspectives. However, systems theory, whether in conventional ‘linear’ or complex ‘nonlinear’ flavour, is not without major limitations and problems of its own. Real doubts exist over its explanatory potential, especially in an archaeological environment.

The identification of systems and subsystems can be accused of being reductive and arbitrary even in modern societies unless the mechanisms of feedback relationships can be clearly demonstrated.⁹⁸ In conceptualising societies as relatively bounded, distinct systems, many systems theories pursue the old essentialist, bounded, homogeneous view which this chapter has already criticised.

What is more, the explanatory potential of the approach is deeply suspect: as with all functionalist approaches, while systems theories may be able to highlight relationships or identify the ‘function’ an element played within a social system, this does not constitute an actual *explanation* of how or why it came to fulfil that role. The fact that something may be interpreted as fulfilling a function within a social system does not mean that the fulfilment of that function is the reason for its existence in the first place.⁹⁹ This inability to deal with causality was recognised even among systems-theorists themselves, with the radical systems-theorist Luhmann urging acceptance that it simply was not their place to make causal statements.¹⁰⁰

The possibility of even this descriptive role is questionable in antiquity, where, however comprehensive they may be, archaeological and textual records furnish only a partial impression of a society. The empirically-demonstrable cannot straightforwardly be disentangled from the interpretation of the archaeologist. This tension between archaeology’s occasional scientific ambitions and the interpretative component is of course not confined to systems theory, and indeed formed the basis for the post-processual revolution of the later twentieth century. It affects systems theories severely and the complex, nonlinear variety most of all. In such cases, system

⁹⁷ McGlade & van der Leeuw 1997; Francfort 1997; Byrne 1998; Spencer-Wood, 2000.

⁹⁸ Shanks & Tilley 1987; Joas & Knöbl 2009.

⁹⁹ Joas & Knöbl 2009, 56-7.

¹⁰⁰ Luhmann 1970; Joas & Knöbl 2009, 255.

outcomes are by definition unpredictable based on inputs: while they are not random, complex simulations involving detailed and extensive data are required to identify the ‘attractors’ or outcome tendencies of the system. In the sociology of contemporary societies this involves more-or-less-objective, mass survey-derived datasets of a kind which simply cannot exist for the ancient world. Even when numerical data can be obtained, it is likely to be limited, partial and subjective. It is hard to see how the resulting models can be sufficiently reliable that genuine attractors can be teased out of the randomness: unsupported by adequate data, complex systems analysis merely posits that random change can happen on its own for no discernible reason. It is a non-explanation.

The most serious criticism of systems theory, however, is its reduction of human beings to mere cogs in a societal machine, denied any capacity for free will or creative action by a functionalist understanding of action in which they are assumed always to react in a particular way to a given stimulus. Rational actor theory in its most extreme, utilitarian form – in which people are conceived of as acting purely rationally in pursuit of maximisation of individual profit/pleasure and minimisation of discomfort – is frequently tempered by the suggested existence of norms and values which integrate society and prevent the *bellum omnium contra omnes* identified by Hobbes as its logical consequence. Normative models rarely, however, explain the origins or nature of these norms, treating them as abstract absolutes; when seen in this way they do nothing to alleviate the robotic vision of humanity inherent in the systems theory – whether driven purely by the functional demands of their role in the system or also by the mediating effect of abstract norms, people act out their lives with little scope for originality. Cartesian dualities are inherent in this view of human action: goal and action are distinct; despite being integrated into a system, each individual or subsystem carries out isolated rational cost/benefit analysis to achieve its goal. Individualism reigns supreme, but each individual is denied any uniqueness.

This is of course something of a simplification: systems theory is used to model and describe a very broad range of approaches to the question of society and the individual’s role within it, encompassing varying capacities to account satisfactorily for such phenomena as individual imperfections in knowledge, differing interpretations of societal roles, norms or the ‘rational’ choice of goal, unintended consequences of action, etc. But for a methodology whose

essence is the reduction of human interrelations to mechanistic objectivity, the issue of agency is fundamentally and irreconcilably problematic.

A final point regarding systems theory and social change stems from this. When people are denied creativity or an interpretative role in constructing their own place in the world, but are instead reduced to adaptive systems, constantly responding through feedback relationships to stimuli, the overall tendency of the system is not to change at all, but to homeostasis. Most sociologists who have employed systems theories have seen disposition towards equilibrium as a defining characteristic. Systems theory is by nature descriptive and synchronic in focus – this is problematic enough for theorising contemporary societies: even if modernity is seen as a phenomenon in itself, operating according to particular, relatively fixed rules, it is hard to escape the fact that the last few centuries have arguably seen an exponential increase in rates of social change. Examining history, and especially historical social change, is however almost inevitably a *diachronic* endeavour. As a theoretical framework, systems theory approaches are terribly ill-suited to the task at hand.¹⁰¹

We see the effects of these issues when systems theory has been applied to the subject. For all that it is useful and convincing enough on its own terms, Tainter's view of reduction in social complexity posits a highly rational view of the behaviour of 'subsystems'. Individual agency and especially subjectivity are conspicuously absent. His emphasis on the importance of internal causes rather than external stimuli, for all that it makes an invaluable point for a field still dominated by ideas of 'collapse' at the hands of external aggressors or natural disaster, is born from the fundamental inadequacy of systems theory at conceptualising change. Since social

¹⁰¹ The lack of applicability of many models, methodologies and tools of contemporary sociology to the study of pre-modern societies is far from a new observation. Historically-minded theoreticians from at least as early as Marx have utilised their historical perspectives to construct theory specifically orientated towards the situations of the modern capitalist world. There are of course profound disagreements over the extent to which 'modernity' ought to be reified as a distinct concept in itself, and we will touch on the arguments concerning antiquity's economic differences from the modern world in the next chapter. We must take seriously the warnings of sociologists such as Giddens that 'society' in its modern Western sense cannot be assumed to be a universal, and that consequently modern sociological models and methodologies cannot be straightforwardly applied to the pre-modern world (Noble 2000; Giddens 1984, xvii, 1991, 1, cited in Noble 2000, 213; Joas & Knöbl 2009, 302-3). This is not to deny that the insights of contemporary sociology have no bearing on the past; merely that they must be adapted in a careful and thoughtful way.

systems are ‘problem-solving entities’, he argues, (i.e., they tend towards equilibrium), for anything to change, there must necessarily be something fundamentally wrong with the system.¹⁰²

The inappropriateness of scientific, quantitative and mathematical approaches such as systems theory to the fundamentally partial and interpretation-mediated archaeological record is hardly a new observation. On the contrary, it formed the basis for the widespread dissatisfaction with the processual paradigm beginning in the late 1980s, and fuelled the subsequent plethora of post-processual methodologies. What the discussion above has aimed to demonstrate is that, despite the continuing influence of systems theory in archaeological concepts of social change, it is critically important that the post-processual agenda be embraced. This is especially true of a theoretically-underdeveloped field such as Levantine archaeology where the adoption of processual and post-processual paradigms is very patchy. In Israeli archaeology, for example, while much fieldwork and the analysis of its results are carried out in a highly processual manner, post-processual approaches often continue to be regarded as unproven and are not widely adopted. Beyond the data-gathering and processing, much interpretation continues to be carried out in a markedly culture-historical fashion, dealing with essentialist ‘peoples’, normative concepts of identity and textually-led research questions and interpretative frameworks. It is not enough simply to leaven the culture-history with a cautious sprinkling of processualism; what is needed is a wholesale updating of how we conceptualise society and the role of people within it.¹⁰³

A more productive approach is to draw upon the pragmatic and interactionist tradition of social theory, and especially on more recent synthetic treatments which have refined this approach. Symbolic interactionism rejects the presumption that individual, internal, rational

¹⁰² Tainter 1988. Tainter’s emphasis on the law of diminishing returns and the spiralling costs of social integration is an important concession in this regard, since it begins to approach the difference between human beings with expectations, desires and demands and functional subsystems in a societal machine. Even so, while the amount of resources required to maintain a system may increase, the actual organisation of the system remains essentially static until its eventual ‘collapse’. The whole theory is essentially that of a closed system coping with the principle of entropy; it remains thoroughly mechanistic.

¹⁰³ Post-processual approaches mostly function perfectly well alongside more ‘processual’, scientific methodologies. Indeed, working in this way is a mainstay of modern archaeology. When it comes to theory, however, especially something as fundamental as how we conceptualise society and social change, there is a clear incompatibility which stems from first principles. Byrne, although approaching the issue from his perspective as a systems theorist, is quite right when he asserts that the technique is fundamentally incompatible with the postmodernist project, and by extension with archaeological post-processualism (1998, 43ff).

decision-making exists as an isolated precondition for human action. Instead it proposes that action and intentionality are linked in a dialectical and reflexive way. Human action is not born out of an abstracted, internal, rational calculation; instead, thinking takes place in relation to action, each constantly informing and transforming the other. And thinking is not abstract or individualist, but fundamentally social in nature. Humans think and act in relation to each other, as well as to objects, events or features of their environment. Crucially, these relationships of interaction are not fixed into a mechanistic system but in constant flux, since the meaning of these elements is not inherent. Instead, these elements are symbolic, imbued with meaning often arbitrarily but socially through a communicative and ongoing process of interaction, both between people and between people and symbols. They must be interpreted, and so allow for creativity.¹⁰⁴ Human agency, interaction and interpretation are fundamental.

The influence of such ideas is apparent in Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. His notion that practice and identity are not fixed but constructed in relation to environment, peers and events in an ongoing dialectical process is extremely persuasive. Under this theory, individual agency is not unconstrained, since the *habitus* helps structure how people think, their values and decisions, but there is certainly scope for human creativity and innovation. People are human, not subsystems.

There are marked similarities between this approach and Giddens' theory of 'structuration'. He adapted several elements of symbolic interactionist and pragmatist thinking, including the rejection of the Cartesian mind/body and goal/action dualities and the automatic assumption that actors rationally control actions, stressing the dialectical relationship of action and intentionality, the significance of preconscious and routine actions and the mediating role of the body. Like Bourdieu, he believes that human action is both constrained and enabled by social structures, but argues that these are not fixed in stable systems but are constructed through human interaction – they can be, and indeed are, constantly changed and transformed.

Both scholars stress the importance of power relationships in this process, drawing on the Foucauldian notion that power is not tied to any particular economic resource but is an inherent property of discourses of interaction. Since Giddens defines power as a person's capability to 'make a difference' in the world,¹⁰⁵ it is fundamentally linked with human action. It is in how this idea relates to social change that we can identify the key difference between the two approaches.

¹⁰⁴ Joas & Knöbl 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Giddens 1984, 14-15.

In both cases, social structures are under constant negotiation and thus in constant flux. Far from, as systems theory has it, there being a tendency towards homoeostasis, social change is constant and ongoing. This is kept in check by discourses of power, which uphold the existing social formation. Bourdieu considers that mere participation in, and tacit acceptance of, such discourses is enough to maintain them and reproduce existing social structures with little change; he is pessimistic about the possibility for social change to be anything other than incremental, and does little to develop his ideas in that direction.¹⁰⁶

Giddens, on the other hand, is much more willing to embrace of the idea of constant social flux and change, highlighting the significance of contingent events – especially major upheavals such as wars – as catalysts for change. As Joas, who has developed a similar notion of social change, puts it, ‘the experience of war and consequences of wars open up *unpredictable possibilities* for actors... the actors respond to the “situation” of war by creatively generating new plans.’¹⁰⁷ As such, Giddens’ notion of social change is episodic, with constant flux punctuated by more rapid transformations of social relations, often prompted as a creative response to major upheavals.

The attractiveness of this approach for understanding the end of the East Mediterranean Bronze Age should be obvious. The notion of periods of comparatively low level flux punctuated by larger instances of social transformation fits very well with the apparent situation during that period, and avoids value-laden concepts such as ‘collapse’ or ‘crisis’. Instead of treating social change as the result of dysfunction within mechanistic systems of rational but robotic subsystems, it stresses the importance of human agency and creativity in response to historically contingent events. Its emphasis on symbols as mediating human interaction, and ultimately action and social structure, offers a material dimension essential to the archaeological process, readily adaptable to the interpretation of material culture, texts and so on. It is unsurprising that post-processual archaeological views of social change have been very much along these lines.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Bourdieu 2000, 181. ‘Pessimistic’ because Bourdieu saw a change in the structures of contemporary societies as eminently desirable, even if unlikely to occur. On the underdevelopment of Bourdieu’s ideas of social change, see Joas & Knöbl 2009, 394-5.

¹⁰⁷ Joas & Knöbl 2009, 523. Emphasis original.

¹⁰⁸ See in particular Shanks & Tilley 1987, 137-185, whose conceptualisation of ‘contingent and conjunctural’ social change is very similar to this, albeit in a more neo-Marxist vein.

This dissertation will proceed on this theoretical basis, and as such will pay particular attention to how historical contingency – and crucially the creative responses to it of human agents – changed social structures in Phoenicia during the LBA/EIA transition. These social changes are assumed to exist not in the restructuring of functional relationships in a reified system, but in the changing nature of symbolically-mediated interactions between the region's people, and between those people and the world around them. As such, social change ought to be discernible in those symbols which survive, including material culture, texts and what we can reconstruct of belief-structures. In order to examine the meanings invested in these items by the people of the time, close attention to context and usage are essential, as is a reliance – as much as is practical – on contemporary sources rather than later historical or pseudo-historical narratives.

Structure and Scope

From the discussion presented here, the approach this work will take should be clear. The aim is not to produce a narrative history of Phoenicia for the late thirteenth to tenth centuries, but to examine social change and continuity thematically and within the framework of explicitly-defined theory, as discussed above. All available evidence will be taken into account, but in a sceptical manner which pays due attention to the problematic nature of the sources. Neither textual nor archaeological sources are automatically presumed to be 'correct', and where the two appear to be in conflict, the judgement of which is given priority will be based on a consideration of the reliability of both the data and the usual interpretations of it. Given the scarcity of all forms of data for Phoenicia during the LBA/EIA transition, it will be necessary to draw eclectically on evidence outside this geographical and chronological focus where it is relevant and seems to offer insights. It will not, however, be assumed that what seems to be the case for earlier or later periods, or for neighbouring regions, automatically holds true in this one.

Structurally, the discussion will be split into six chapters. Chapter 2 examines traditional narratives which emphasise the role of foreign powers in shaping social change in LBA/EIA Phoenicia. It argues against the narratives of Egyptian imperialism and withdrawal and Sea People invasion which have often been considered to define this period in the Levant, and highlights the importance of recognising evidence of regional heterogeneity. Far from suggesting that external powers were the dominant forces shaping the destiny of an essentially passive Phoenicia, the

chapter argues that local agency and status-negotiation were critical to the region's political relationships with the wider East Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds.

Chapter 3 applies a similar approach to economic issues, questioning the usefulness in the case of Phoenicia of currently popular hypotheses which attribute changes in the East Mediterranean at this time principally to economic transformations and specifically to the destabilising influence of increasing 'decentralised', private commerce. It examines some of the issues surrounding the balance between deliberate choice and constrained necessity in Phoenician economic organisation, taking as a case study the question of population and subsistence strategies.

Chapter 4 broadens these economic questions to consider the nature of, and reasons for, Phoenician commercial expansion during the EIA, and the beginnings of the diaspora into the Mediterranean. It questions our ability to distinguish differing involvement in this process by the various polities and seeks to shed light on the complex interrelations between economic, social, political and ideological factors in shaping developments.

The questions of changing power relationships and ideologies of legitimation continue to be discussed in Chapter 5, which considers changing socio-political dynamics within the Phoenician polities. It explores oft-repeated narratives of religious reform, declining monarchical power and the emergence of new power groups and political institutions and argues that our ability to discern clear and substantial changes during the EIA has generally been significantly overestimated.

Having explored a wide range of issues in Chapters 2–5, in Chapter 6 I analyse the relationship between social context and human action. The chapter applies the model of social change expounded here to the Phoenician case-study and presents final conclusions for how and why some aspects of social practice were reproduced and others transformed during the LBA/EIA transition. Finally, it seeks to situate these observations within the East Mediterranean context and examines what insights the Phoenician case-study and the methodology adopted here can offer for understanding the complex and interrelated social changes affecting this strongly interlinked region at this crucial period in its history.

Chapter 2

External Contacts and Social Change

The importance of foreign powers in shaping the destiny of the Levant in the LBA/EIA transition has long been recognised. However, as Chapter 1 argued, many previous discussions have been extremely Palestine-centric. If Phoenicia is mentioned at all, it is treated as a straightforward northern extension of much the same kind of phenomena, albeit perhaps at a lower level of intensity. This chapter examines the two principal frameworks of external contacts in this period: the supposed withdrawal of Egyptian imperial control and the alleged violent invasion of large numbers of ‘Sea People’ migrants during the twelfth century. It argues that narrative frameworks developed to describe situations in other parts of the Levant cannot be used unquestioningly as a basis of extrapolation to explain the Phoenician situation. Instead it is essential that we closely examine the specific archaeological and textual data, paying close attention not just to the numbers of items, but also to their specific types and the contexts in which they occur. When such an approach is pursued it becomes clear that in fact neither paradigm in its standard form fully or satisfactorily explains the Phoenician data.

The first section of the chapter considers the differing relationships of Phoenicia and Palestine with Egypt. Phoenicia is generally not discussed in depth in most attempts to consider Egyptian activity in the Levant during this period, though it is not widely believed to have fallen under the same kind of direct domination as is envisaged for Palestine. This section aims to explore and clarify the nature of Egyptian-Phoenician interaction. I argue that the real differences between Phoenicia and the south are not simply in the degree of Egyptian influence,¹ or in how long this influence lasted,² but reflect fundamental differences in the nature and purpose of the

¹ Few would dispute Higginbotham’s (2000, 132-3) observation that the degree of ‘Egyptianisation’ among the populations of Canaan was highly variable and in general diminished with distance from Egypt.

² It is generally believed that the northern parts of the Egyptian Asiatic empire were abandoned first, with general consensus favouring a gradual retreat beginning with Qadesh, with Egyptian hegemony in the region utterly

contacts which critically undermine the usefulness of applying a straightforward imperial paradigm at all. Instead, as this chapter will demonstrate, we must pay much closer attention to the participatory, bilateral (or indeed multilateral) nature of contacts. We observe a significant dichotomy between how Egyptian items are attested in élite and non-élite assemblages which points to quite different levels of engagement. Rather than signifying actual foreign political control, Aegyptiaca are shown to be a medium through which local high-status groups utilised an Egyptian vocabulary of power and prestige as part of their own strategies of competitive identity- and status-negotiation. This changed in the EIA, and, as Egyptian prestige in the region declined, we witness a shift in the focus of élite identity-construction towards a greater emphasis on the more local and Levantine.

In its second part, the chapter reflects on why the Sea People migration paradigm – so influential elsewhere in the Levant – has proven difficult to apply to Phoenicia. Phoenician sites have so far refused to yield unambiguous evidence for the twelfth-century destruction horizons, immigrant populations and many of the allegedly foreign-derived material culture elements which are usually believed to typify the Levant in this period. A reasonable case for Sea Peoples can only be made in the south, in the 'Akko Plain and Carmel areas. As we shall see, even this is far from convincing. The chapter argues that the Sea People narrative offers no real explanatory potential for Phoenicia, and should be discarded.

Instead of relying on these transferred Palestinian frameworks, the chapter argues for a greater focus on heterogeneous experiences throughout the Levant. When we look beyond explanatory models which rely on the actions of grand, faceless foreign powers, we begin to understand how external contacts shaped, and were shaped by, the agency of local groups and individuals. Far from Phoenicia being a passive locus for foreign interference in which Egyptian imperialists or Sea People invaders played out their own objectives, a closer examination of the archaeological and textual data reveals the importance of local strategies of constructing political and social identities in shaping foreign contacts. The importance of foreign contacts as stimuli for social change is thus upheld, but in a more nuanced and indirect manner than is often the case. The recognition that changing forms of identity and shifting attitudes to connections with the outside world are key to understanding this period paves the way for much of the discussion to

extinguished by the end of the twelfth century (e.g. Sherratt 2003a). Others, such as Weinstein (1992), have argued for a much more rapid, phased withdrawal: decisive event rather than gradual process.

come in subsequent chapters, and, I hope to demonstrate, contributes to a new and clearer interpretation of Phoenician social change.

Egypt and Phoenicia

Despite the prominence of the ‘imperial’ paradigm in constructing narratives of the LBA Levant, it is surprisingly uncommon to see a proper definition of what is meant by the term in context, or an examination of what Egypt’s aims, objectives and expectations for the region were, let alone how these may have varied over time.³ By exploring the history of Phoenician contacts with Egypt, and their nature in the LBA, I aim to demonstrate that this was a phenomenon quite distinct from the ‘imperialisms’ observable in other parts of the Egyptian sphere of influence, such as Nubia or Palestine. Indeed, the term ‘imperialism’ proves itself ultimately unhelpful, and the form of interaction I will instead propose places greater emphasis on local Phoenician, and especially élite, agency.

Even the most cursory examination is enough to demonstrate that ‘Egyptian imperialism’ was distinctly heterogeneous. The pronounced differences between the two principal ‘imperial’ provinces of Canaan and Nubia are widely agreed:⁴ Nubia was directly ruled under an Egyptian viceroy, at the head of an administrative infrastructure based on that of Egypt, containing deputies, ministers, overseers and scribes. Permanent Egyptian garrisons existed. Upper Nubia was divided into five provinces, mirroring the nome structure of Egypt itself.⁵ New, Egyptian-style towns were founded and large temple complexes constructed according to Egyptian architectural and religious traditions (Fig. 2.1). Such ‘Egyptianisation’ was not pursued in the Levant. Instead, the well-established and sophisticated local institutions were allowed to endure and Egyptian power was exercised through them, with the existing local élites functioning as

³ As is noted, for example, by Higginbotham 2000, 4.

⁴ e.g. Kemp 1978, Redford 1992.

⁵ Darnell & Manassa 2007, 108-9.

middlemen.⁶ Egyptian overseers existed, initially as circuit officials and later as governors and garrisons with permanent seats, but their distribution seems to have been relatively sparse.⁷



Fig. 2.1. *The Great Temple of Abu Simbel: an example of Egyptian monumental architecture in Nubia, for which there is no parallel in the Levant.*

Less well-documented has been diversity in Egyptian ‘imperial’ entanglement *within* the Levant. A clear distinction is apparent between the function and treatment of towns in Phoenicia and Syria from their counterparts further south.

Egypt’s expansion into the Levant began under Thutmose I (c.1506-1493) as a direct response to the Hyksos occupation of Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. The experience of subjugation by an Asiatic élite is seen as having prompted the move from maintaining a sphere of influence in the Levant to permanent military occupation. A number of 18th Dynasty texts present the Asiatic campaigns of the Thutmosids in terms of pre-emptive

⁶ Redford 1992. In the Amarna letters, the local kinglets bear the title *hazanu* – mayor, with ‘king’ reserved for the pharaoh. The children of these rulers were frequently sent to the Egyptian court, ostensibly for education, but also to ensure the continued importance of Egyptian culture and élite practice among the Canaanite dynasties, and as hostages against their fathers’ continued loyalty (Redford 2000, 6).

⁷ Redford 2000, 6. *Contra* Higginbotham, who has argued against the consensus view of governors based in fixed residences, instead preferring a system of circuit officials (Higginbotham 2000). Either way, there is little doubt that the Egyptian administration in the region was small and relied extensively on the local élites to continue the day-to-day running of their territories.

action against enemies which posed an active threat to Egypt. For example, in a stele at the Great Temple of Amon, Thutmosis III describes himself as:

*strong of arm, an effective fortress for his army and a refuge for the common folk, one who attacks all lands when challenged, who saves Egypt on the battlefield, a protector who does not fear the rapacious.*⁸

Despite the rhetoric, however, defensive action cannot be considered the prime motivating factor behind Egyptian territorial expansion much beyond Thutmosis I's reign. The Hyksos no longer presented a serious threat and later Thutmosids were arguably motivated more by enthusiasm for conquest for its own sake, and for the economic and political rewards it could bring, than a genuine necessity to protect the borders of Egypt.

This early notion of defensive conquest against the Hyksos regions does, however, have a lasting influence on Egyptian interactions with the south which was not paralleled further north. Far from being enemies and potential occupiers like the inhabitants of Palestine, the cities of the Phoenician and Syrian coast, especially Byblos, were longstanding allies, with whom Egypt had had productive trading links since the beginning of the third millennium BC. MBA élites from Byblos, 'Arqa and Sidon looked towards Egyptian iconography and culture to articulate and negotiate their status (Fig. 2.2).⁹ Phoenician rulers treated Egypt not as an invading imperial power, but as a symbol of prestige and model for a style of monarchy and status which they sought to emulate. It is hard to see them as anything other than willing and favourable partners in these interactions.

This translated into a difference in the methods through which Egyptian power was exercised in the northern and southern Levant. The mass deportations, demolitions and land confiscations that were a feature of LBA Egyptian interactions with Palestine were not paralleled further north. Thutmosis III and Amenophis II mention the removal of thousands and tens of thousands of Palestinians respectively, while the importance of Canaan as a source for slaves is recorded under Thutmosis IV and in the Ramesside era. In almost every case where the source of

⁸ *Urk.* IV, 1230. Translation Cumming 1982, 2. See also *Urk.* IV, 758, 1229, 1254, 1333 and Redford 1984, 16.

⁹ e.g. Kopetzky 2007-8.

these deportations is known, it lies in the south.¹⁰ Where a deportation from further north can be identified, such as Akhenaten's transportation of 'Apiru from the Damascus area to Kush, it is notable that it involves disenfranchised, marginal groups, not the population of the urban centres with which Egypt had relations.



Fig. 2.2. *18th-century locally-produced Egyptianising pectoral from royal tomb, Byblos. Beirut National Museum. After Parrot, Chéhab & Moscati 1977, fig 29.*

The different power relationship operating in northern Canaan is also implied by certain material culture distributions. Prestigious stone (usually calcite) vessels bearing inscribed pharaonic cartouches occur in significant quantities at Byblos, Ugarit, Qatna and Beirut, mostly between the Old Kingdom and the reign of Ramesses II. They seem to attest high-level diplomatic gift-exchange, occurring overwhelmingly in élite contexts and with a prestige status confirmed by textual sources.¹¹ They are, however, entirely absent from provenanced contexts in

¹⁰ Redford 1992, 208-9. Spalinger (2005, 144) questions the precise figures, citing the Egyptian propensity for exaggeration and the prohibitive logistics of transporting such large numbers back to Egypt. While the numbers may therefore represent gross over-estimates, the broader point stands that deportation seems to have been practised in the south but not in northern urban centres.

¹¹ Sparks 2003; Bevan 2003, 2007; Ahrens 2006, 2010. Various stone vessels are listed among high-status gifts in EA 22: II.67-8, III.10. The latest examples from Byblos are of Ramesses II. Two occur within Tomb V (Montet 1928, 255, 227-8, pl. CXLII; Dunand 1939, 93, 399). A fragmentary faience vessel bearing the throne-name of Tawosret,

the south excepting a single fragmentary example from Gezer, strongly suggesting that a distinction should be drawn between diplomatic, ‘soft’ methods of influence in the north and the more direct civil and military administrations of Palestine.¹²



Fig. 2.3 *Egyptian calcite vessel with cartouche of Ramesses II. Tomb V, Byblos.*

After Montet 1928, Pl. CXLII.

and thus datable to her two-year reign c.1190 BC, was recently discovered in Sidon and is considered a late Egyptian attempt to cement its diplomatic and cultural prestige in the face of the instabilities at the beginning of the EIA. (Marée 2006; Doumet-Serhal 2010, 126). Two with non-pharaonic hieroglyphic inscriptions, were found in the royal tomb at Kamid el-Loz, and have likewise been interpreted as royal diplomatic gifts (Edel 1983; Lilyquist 1994 1996).

¹² Sparks 2003, 52; Bevan 2007, 148-9, 192.



Fig. 2.4. *Distribution of Egyptian stone vessels with royal inscriptions of the 18th and 19th Dynasties. Data from Sparks 2003; Ahrens 2006.*

Since material culture can be transferred by a number of means, which need not have anything to do with political influence or physical presence, it makes more sense to focus on artefacts which indicate actual Egyptian-style practices taking place at a location. When these items are mapped for the LBA/EIA transition, we observe a highly localised distribution throughout the region, but with a considerably higher prevalence in the south. This is true across several categories of material culture.¹³

¹³ While every effort has been made to include all items of which I am aware, no full catalogue of Egyptian and Egyptian-influenced artefacts in Phoenicia has yet been produced, so the comprehensiveness of the following distribution maps cannot be guaranteed. This does not diminish the general pattern evident in them.

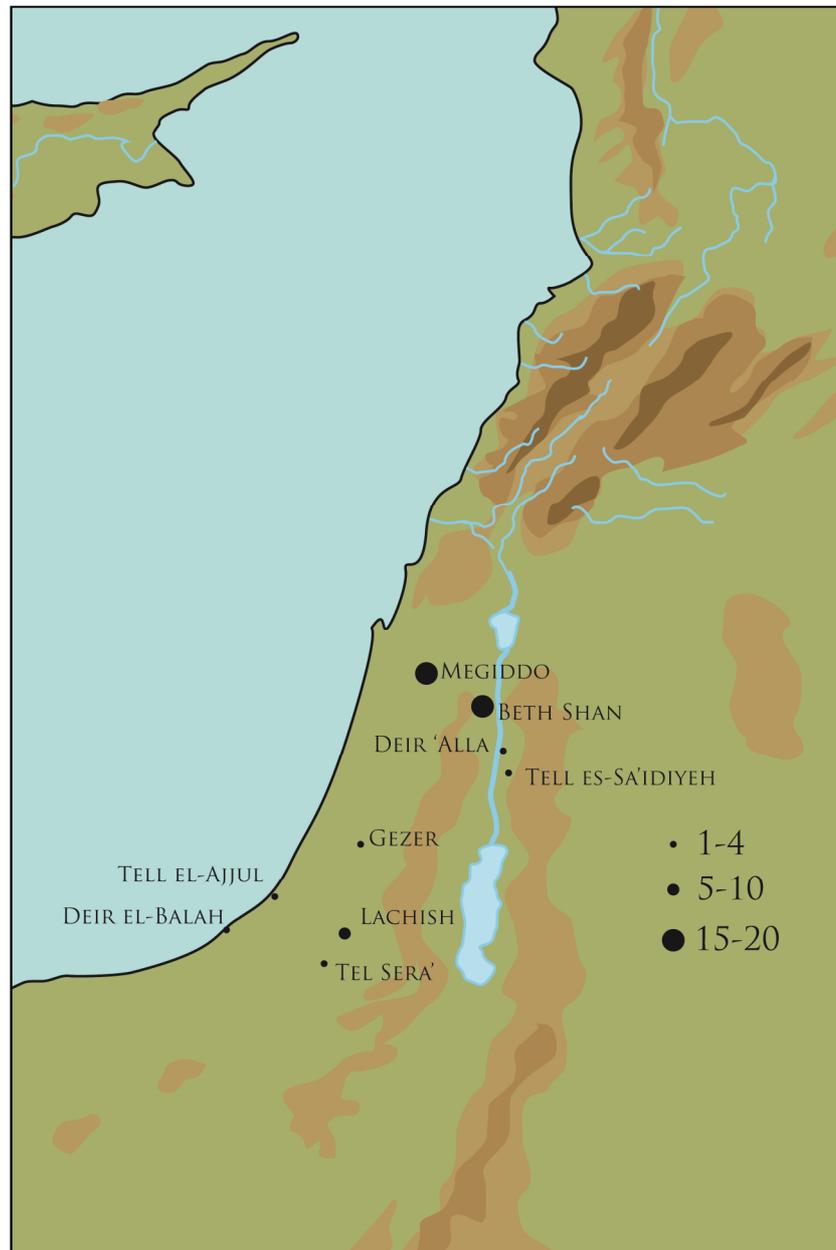


Fig. 2.5. *Distribution of locally-produced items connected with Egyptian-style practice, LB II – Iron I. Data from Higginbotham 2000.¹⁴*

¹⁴ Items counted include spinning bowls, spindles, cooking vessels, combs and zoomorphic stands ('fire-dogs'). There is a question over whether textile-manufacture should be seen as a domestic activity. In Egypt a long tradition existed of textile workshops (cf. also the Aegean Linear B records), whereas several IA sites in Israel have produced loom-weights in homes, implying that at least some of the production process took place in a domestic context (Barber 1991, 71-6).

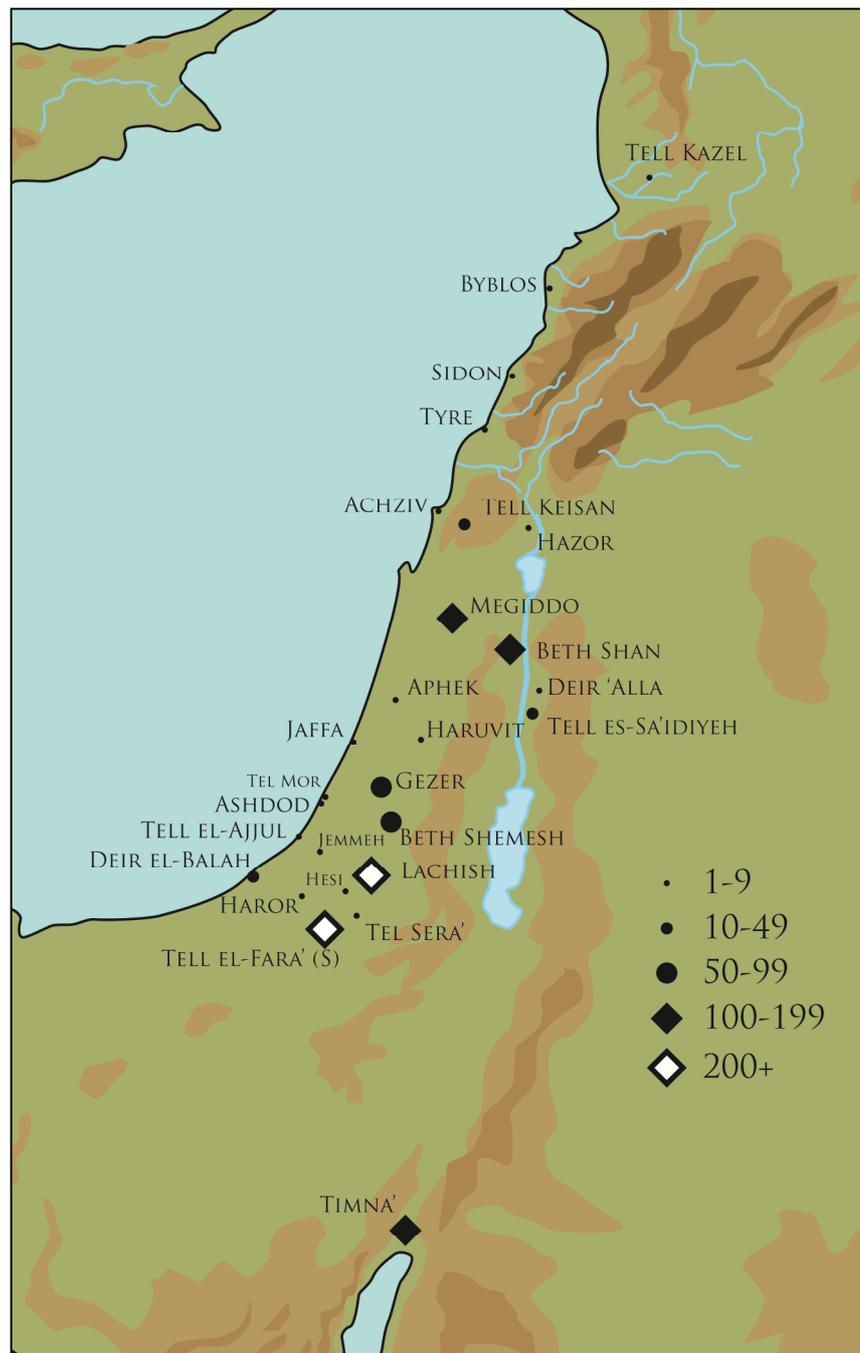


Fig. 2.6. *Distribution of items suggestive of possible Egyptian-style cult practice or ritual.*

LB II- Iron I.¹⁵

¹⁵ Includes: 'Flower pots', 'beer bottles', pendants, amulets, figurines, glass and faience ritual vessels, 'clappers'/wands, scarabs, sistra, 'menat counterpoises'. Scarabs, of course, are widely distributed throughout the ancient East Mediterranean and need not necessarily indicate genuine Egyptian religious belief. They are included here for the sake of completeness and because they do nevertheless demonstrate the cultural currency of Egyptian-influenced features. Occasional scarabs account for a great many of the sites with lower numbers of items.

When viewing these distribution maps, it is essential to bear in mind that archaeological investigation of Palestine has been much more extensive than in Lebanon so absolute numbers of finds are expectedly higher. Far more significant is that those Lebanese sites which have received the most extensive and well-published archaeological investigation still produce far fewer Egyptian finds than we might expect. Tell Kazel and Kamid el-Loz have been convincingly identified as Sumur and Kumidi respectively, both interpreted as seats of Egyptian governors, based on references in the Amarna Letters and later sources.¹⁶ In the case of Kamid, this seems to be confirmed by the discovery of a LBA monumental palace and temple which do not continue into the post-Egyptian IA, along with several cuneiform letters. Of these, one, Tablet 6 is addressed to the *rabu* or governor of Kumidi. One incumbent of this office, named Puḫurru, is mentioned several times in the Amarna letters and evidently represented Egyptian interests. Texts of Ramesses II refer to a *sakin mati* – governor – based at a town named Ramesses which Morris places either at or near Kamid el-Loz.¹⁷ If Egyptian presence in the northern Levant was of the same kind as in the south, this is where we should expect to find it. Although Egyptian-influenced material occurs at Kamid during the MBA and early LBA, for the thirteenth century and beyond it is conspicuous by its absence. Certainly, the disparity with Egyptian administrative seats in the south – most notably Beth-Shan – cannot be the result of simple archaeological happenstance.¹⁸ The archaeological data for Tell Kazel is even more striking: almost no Egyptian material at all has yet been discovered, despite extensive and long-running excavations.¹⁹ Unlike the south, where we might plausibly reconstruct for the Ramesside era a system of districts

¹⁶ e.g. Morris 2005, 392-3. EA 84, refers to the pharaoh's 'bedchamber' and 'treasure-house' in Sumur (Moran 1992). This letter is written by the king of Byblos, and Sumur is clearly fairly nearby. Morris 2005 suggests that Sumur may be a pharaonic campaign-base as well as a governor's residency.

¹⁷ Morris 2005, 393. See Chapter 5 below for fuller discussion of the institution of *sakin/skn* in the Levant.

¹⁸ These observations are made with the caveat that Kamid's publications are somewhat haphazard and the most recent excavations have not yet seen full reports. The University of Saarland excavations 1963-1981 have been the subject of many volumes, but so far Aegyptiaca of the end of the LBA and EIA do not seem to have been discussed. The on-going University of Freiburg excavations have received annual preliminary reports but so far no detailed finds catalogues.

¹⁹ Badre (pers. comm. Email dated 26th September 2011). Preliminary reports detail the Tell Kazel excavations up to 1998, but apart from a handful of articles, none of which focus on Aegyptiaca, more recent seasons have yet to be published. Both at Kazel and Kamid my interpretation must be considered preliminary and subject to revision as publication of these crucial sites progresses.

administered by Egyptian officials from royal towns, the situation in Lebanon appears much less formalised and likely lacked clear Egyptian administrative centres. Morris is probably right that inasmuch as Egyptian influence was exercised in the region, it more likely operated by temporarily utilising local resources and installations.²⁰

Four principal categories of Egyptian building are present in the Levant, either in their typical form or blended with indigenous elements to create hybrid forms: 'Central Hall Houses' or 'Residencies', 'Three-Room Houses', 'Administrative buildings' and temples. These occur at several towns in Palestine, such as Aphek, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh and especially Beth-Shan, but nowhere in Phoenicia. Texts such as the Amarna Letters may imply the existence of possible garrisons at Tyre and Byblos and an Egyptian-built fortress on the Lebanese shore,²¹ but so far these readings of the texts have not been confirmed by archaeological evidence.

²⁰ Morris 2005, 294-5.

²¹ Redford 1992, 206.

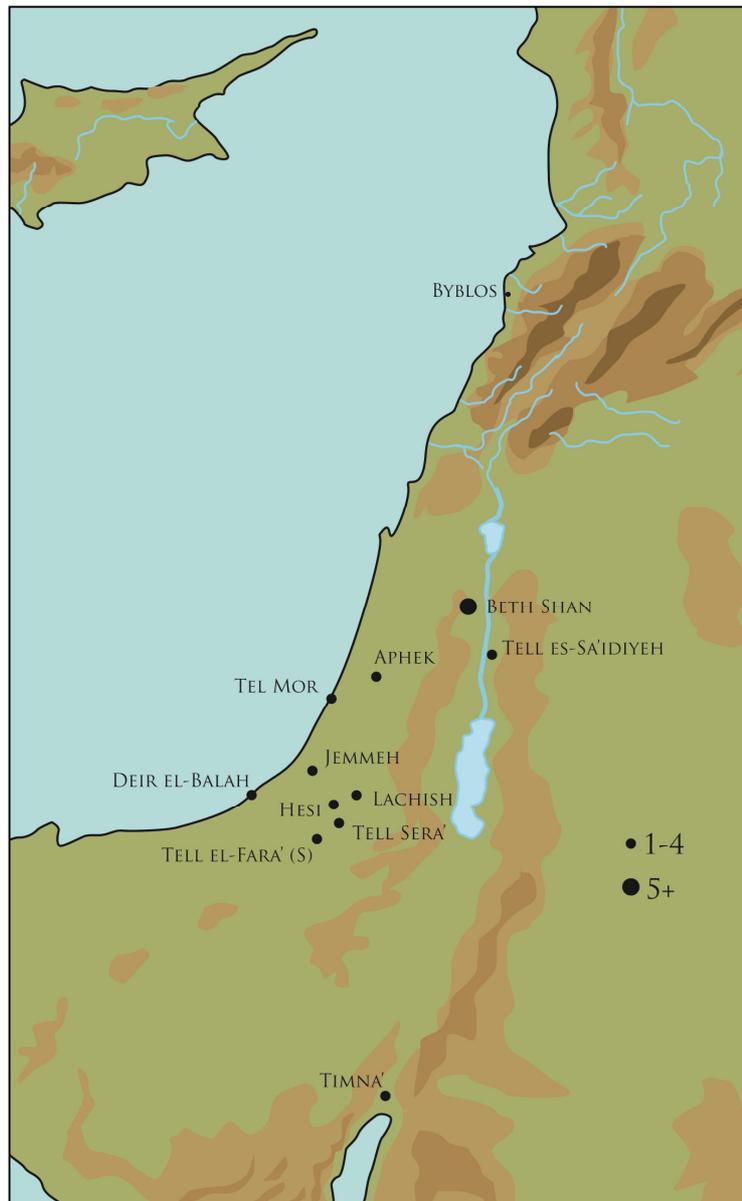


Fig. 2.7. *Distribution of Egyptian-style architecture in the Levant. Data from Higginbotham 2000; Dunand 1939; Killebrew 2005.*

We observe a similar pattern with other Egyptian practices, such as burial rites. The Egyptian-influenced burials in anthropoid coffins, often accompanied by Egyptian-style pottery or shabtis, are strongly concentrated in those few sites which display the greatest Egyptian influence in other aspects of practice.

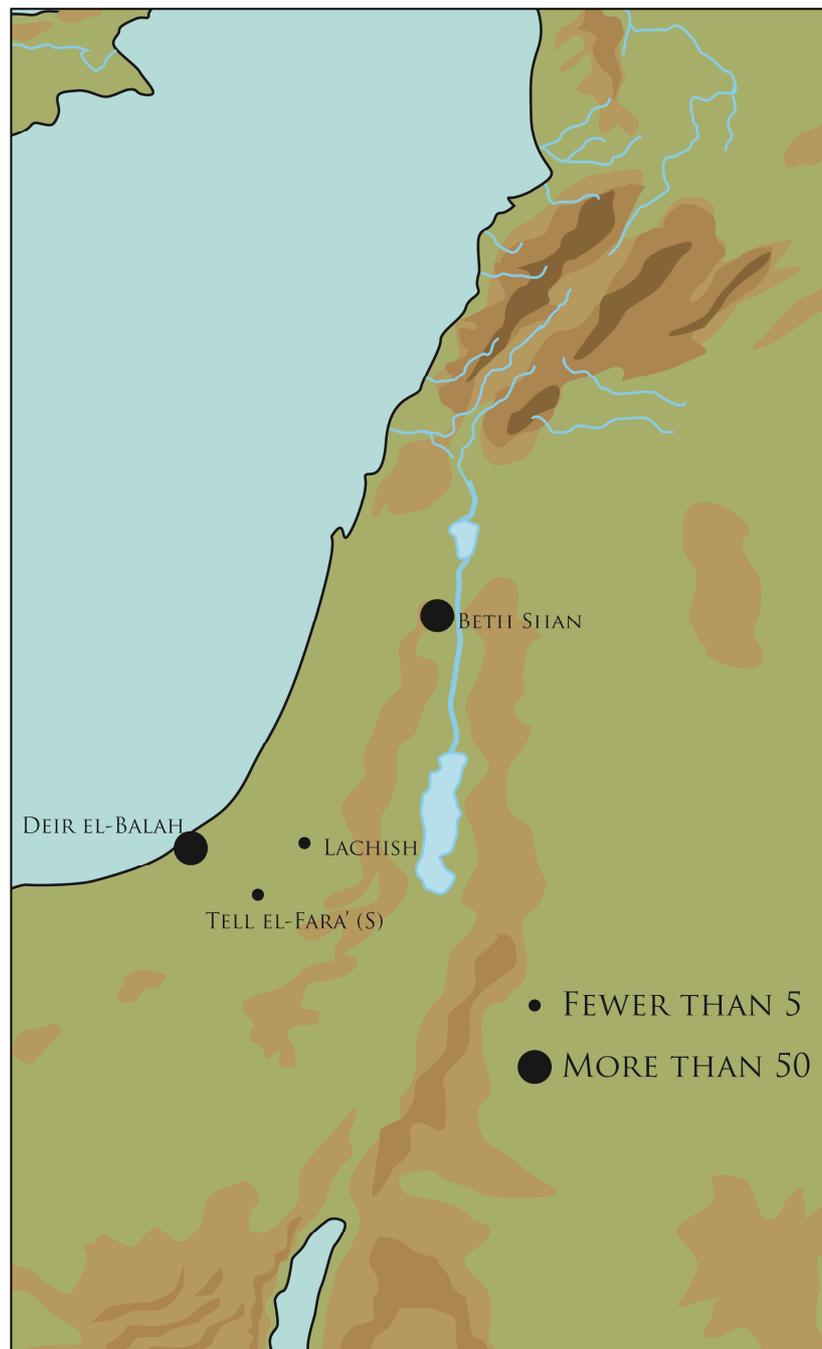


Fig. 2.8. *Distribution of burials in anthropoid coffins during the LBA/EIA in the Levant. Data from Higginbotham 2000 & Killebrew 2005.*

Hieroglyphic monumental inscriptions, implying a degree of Egyptian political power, are more widespread, but here the distribution map is somewhat misleading. While the inscriptions in Palestine include both civil and military examples dating from the reigns of several pharaohs,

almost all the Phoenician examples are campaign stelae of Ramesses II (e.g. Fig. 2.10).²² The difference between these and the evidence of ongoing civil administration as represented by, for example, the inscribed door-lintel of Ramesses-Weser-Khepesh at Beth-Shan (Fig. 2.11) is obvious.

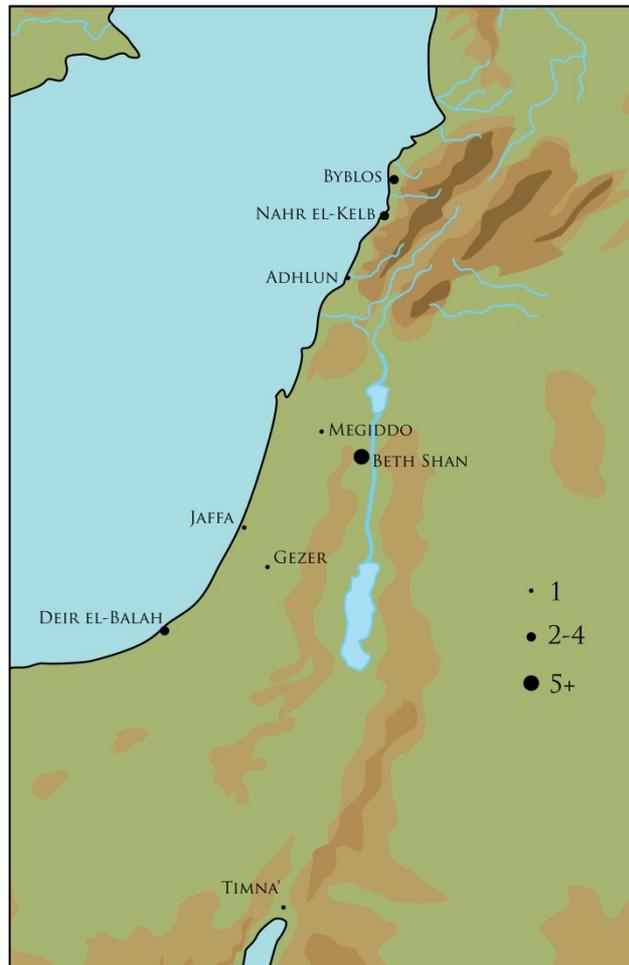


Fig. 2.9. *Distribution of monumental hieroglyphic inscriptions in the Levant. LB II-Iron I.*

²² The exception is an inscribed doorway of Ramesses II found at Byblos (Dunand 1939, vol. I, 54, 56, pl. XXVII). Morris (2005, 360-1) suggests this was part of a chapel dedicated by the pharaoh at the temple of Ba'alat Gebal, though since the fragments were found out of context, it is unclear what this is based on. Whatever its exact interpretation, it is certainly cultic, since the pharaoh is depicted in an offering pose and the inscription refers to him as beloved of a deity. It is uncertain whether this was part of an Egyptian-style building or merely an inscription made on an indigenous one, but I have included it here and in maps 2.6 and 2.7 nonetheless. Nothing about the piece is incompatible with the intermittent, campaign-based view of Egyptian involvement in Phoenicia I present here.



Fig. 2.10. Campaign stele of Ramesses II, showing the Pharaoh massacring captives in front of Re-Horakhty. Found near Tyre. Beirut National Museum.



Fig. 2.11. Twelfth-century inscribed door lintel showing the local Egyptian governor, Ramesses-Weserkhepesh, kneeling before the name and epithets of Ramesses III. Beth-Shan.

Portable objects bearing royal cartouches are attested in Phoenicia, but again we see a significant difference in both the number and kinds of objects compared to those in Palestine. The stone vessels with royal cartouches have already been discussed, and these comprise two of the three small items of Ramesside date attested at Byblos, both coming from the Tomb of Ahiram (see below). The third is an inscribed statuette of Ramesses III (Fig. 2.22). Scarabs with royal cartouches appear much less frequently in Phoenicia than the south, perhaps surprisingly given that the region is known for producing such items in the IA. Several do occur in later contexts, indicating the long usage-span of the items. Archaising imitations are also known, so it is hard to know whether examples such as the scarab of Ramesses II from Achziv tomb N.1 should be seen as LBA items. For the sake of completeness I have included them.²³

²³ The scarab in question belongs to Phase 1 of the multiple-use tomb, i.e. tenth century; however, the discussion of scarabs assigns a date of ninth to seventh century, so it is unclear how it should be interpreted (Mazar 2004).



Fig. 2.12. *Distribution of portable objects bearing pharaonic cartouches. LB II-Iron I.*

Hieratic inscriptions, usually on locally-produced Egyptian-style bowls, are also known from Palestine, but not yet from Phoenicia. They apparently relate to tax-collection and may also have had religious associations.²⁴

²⁴ Killebrew 2005, 67.



Fig. 2.13. *Distribution of hieratic inscriptions in the Levant. Data from Killebrew 2005.*

The material culture thus presents a consistent picture of the extreme concentration of Egyptian-style practice in a relatively limited number of sites in the southern Levant. This practice is generally and plausibly interpreted as reflecting the presence there of small groups of resident Egyptians associated with imperial governance: administrators, military personnel and their associated dependents.²⁵ This contrasts with Phoenicia, where the evidence for a permanent

²⁵ Killebrew 2005. Petrographic analysis has identified both locally-produced vessels and a smaller number of imports produced with Nilotic clay among the repertoire of Egyptian-style ceramics at Beth-Shan. Cohen-Weinberger (1998,

or even semi-permanent presence is virtually non-existent. While LBA Aegyptiaca are present, few indicate actual practice; in the EIA, the amount of Egyptian material culture diminishes still further. Besides a scattering of high-status items, evidence for hieroglyphic usage is confined to military inscriptions made by pharaohs passing through on their way to fight Asiatic campaigns in the north, perhaps best typified by the three inscriptions of Ramesses II at the mouth of the Nahr el-Kelb just north of Beirut, recording the successful passage of his army through the treacherous cliffs and river.

It seems highly likely, then, that Egyptian control was less explicitly ‘imperialistic’ in Phoenicia during the LBA, and more based on a development of the diplomatic trade relationships of preceding periods. The texts, however, present the relationship using the language of vassalage. Formalised declarations of loyalty and obedience in the fourteenth-century Amarna Letters, such as this example from the king of Byblos, are typical:

*Ribaddi says to [his] lord, king of all countries, Great King, King of Battle: May [Ba‘alat] Gebal grant power to the king, my lord. I fall at the feet of my lord, my Sun, seven times and seven times. May the king, the lord, know that Byblos, the loyal maidservant of the king since the days of his ancestors, is safe and sound.*²⁶

Such phraseology seems to offer little room for doubt. At the other end of our period of interest, the declaration by one of Ribaddi’s eleventh-century successors in the Report of Wen-Amon that ‘I am not your servant; nor do I serve the man who sent you’ seems to imply that although such a vassal relationship no longer obtained in Byblos, for it to be worth commenting on, it must have been the case in the past, or at least elsewhere in the Levant.²⁷

The resolution lies in recognising the potential for difference between presentation and practical reality, especially concerning the agency and political strategies of the Phoenician rulers

411) judges the technical quality of these vessels similar to ones manufactured in Egypt itself, and, based on the general conservatism of pottery traditions, assigns their production to resident Egyptian craftsmen.

²⁶ EA 74.

²⁷ Its doubtful veracity does not affect the point being made here: regardless of whether it is a work of fiction, its Egyptian audience evidently expected that, under normal circumstances, Levantine rulers should be vassal servants of their Egyptian masters.

themselves. For all the rhetoric, actual Egyptian political involvement in the affairs of the Phoenician polities in the Amarna Letters seems relatively slight. The impression is of a region mostly left to its own devices politically, with internecine conflicts and political intrigues allowed to follow their own course. Direct Egyptian intervention was apparently limited, characterised by apparently grudging dispatches of small numbers of troops until such time as the situation threatened to escalate out of control, at which point more serious military expeditions were sent to restore order:

He has taken all my cities; Byblos alone remains to me. I was in Šigata and I wrote to you, 'Give thought to your city lest 'Abdi-Aširta take it.' But you did not listen to me. Then from Batruna I wrote to you, 'Send men to take the city for you.' My words went unheeded and they were not taken to heart. Now they have taken my cities. Moreover, that dog is in Mitanni, but his eye is on Byblos. What can I do by myself? You have been negligent of your cities so that the 'Apiru dog takes them.'²⁸

Vassalage in Phoenicia, during the Amarna period at least, was arguably more rhetoric than political reality. Rather than a straightforward power relationship in which Egyptian empire dominated passive Levantine subjects, we observe the strategic adoption of the stance and language of vassal on the part of all the competing polities in an attempt to prompt an intervention from a reluctant pharaoh on their behalf. Thus the king of Byblos professes loyalty while denouncing Sidon for siding with 'Abdi-Aširta of Amurru and the 'Apiru;²⁹ the king of Sidon also claims to be loyal, portraying the 'Apiru as just as much an enemy as they were to Byblos.³⁰ Meanwhile 'Abdi-Aširta himself, presented as a rebellious enemy by the Phoenician rulers, sends his own letters proclaiming his status as a loyal vassal, as does his son, the allegedly

²⁸ EA 90, from King Ribaddi of Byblos to the Pharaoh, one of many in which he, and other Phoenician kings, complain about the lack of military support. Translation adapted from Moran 1992, 163.

²⁹ e.g. EA 83.

³⁰ EA 144-5.

equally rebellious Aziru.³¹ Vassal status was not an empirical political fact but a stance to be taken. The trappings of Egyptian ‘empire’ were enlisted in support of local political realities.

What, then, lay behind this dichotomy between Egyptian influence in Phoenicia and Palestine? While Egypt’s good relations and trade contacts with the Lebanese littoral may have played a role in shaping relations immediately following Thutmose III’s Asiatic campaigns, given the evolving nature of Egyptian involvement and administration in the south, it seems unlikely this alone could account for the continuation of a significantly more hands-off attitude towards the Phoenician polities. Instead, we should consider what Egypt’s aims and objectives in the Levant were.

Colonisation of the kind seen in Nubia was evidently not the main purpose, either due to deliberate choice or forced necessity: there is no sign at all of large-scale settlement or Egyptian-style town-planning. Nor is there any evidence of a ‘civilising mission’ to spread Egyptian advances to the Asiatics. As we have seen, Egyptian-style practice was extremely localised, but even the adoption of non-practice-related material culture seems to have been very restricted. Where Aegyptiaca cannot plausibly be connected with resident groups of Egyptians, they are overwhelmingly fairly high-status. The creation of hybrid artefacts combining Egyptian and indigenous influences is also largely confined to more élite contexts. Killebrew has made a plausible case for the blending of local and Egyptian architectural elements and techniques in the ‘Administrative Buildings’³² and a number of ivory furniture-panels from Megiddo’s treasury also attest hybridisation. Indigenous motifs such as the presentation of captives to a banqueting king are combined with Egyptianising elements such as sphinxes in a style which conforms to the standards of Egyptian art but in a typically Levantine medium.³³

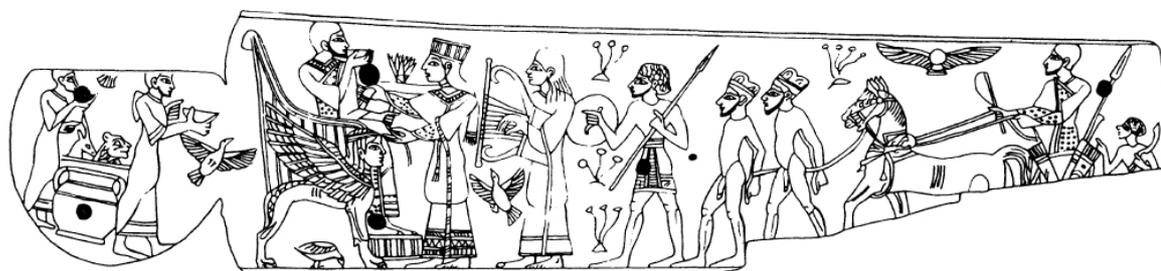


Fig. 2.14. *Ivory furniture panel from Megiddo. After Loud 1939, pl. 4:2b.*

³¹ EA 60-65, EA 156ff.

³² Killebrew 2005, 60ff.

³³ Higginbotham 2000, 260-1.

Beyond prestige items, Egyptian influences are mainly limited to a few elements of technical practice, such as the adoption of string-cut bases and straw temper in local pottery manufacture³⁴ or the 'spinning-bowl' for plying linen.³⁵ In general there was apparently no broad transmission of Egyptian-style practice and material culture to the general Canaanite population. The vast majority of Egyptian-style objects do not seem to disperse beyond a relatively small number of strongholds, and even in the sites with the highest proportion of Egyptian material culture, Beth-Shan, Deir el-Balah and Timna', they are almost universally confined to funerary and ritual contexts: a fundamentally different distribution from local types, even accounting for excavation biases and one which seems to indicate that while ideologically charged, these items were not in widespread everyday use.

It seems clear, then, that the Egyptians were uninterested in spreading their way of life to the general Levantine populace,³⁶ but, importantly, the agency in the situation was not solely Egypt's. Regardless of the Egyptians' wishes, we might expect Canaanites to have paid attention to what their imperial masters brought, and where they found it useful or attractive, to have sought to emulate it. The fact that they mostly did not implies that the lack of interest in cultural exchange was common to both sides. It is also essential to point out that hybridisation is not a one-way process, and for all the apparent reluctance from both sides to pass on Egyptian artefacts and practice to the Canaanites, it is easy to point to borrowings in the other direction. These include cultic and mythological adoptions, linguistic influences (the famous inscriptions of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, which I will be discussing in more detail below, are littered with Semitic-derived terminology, as well as repeated references to Ba'al), and military weapons and techniques, including such central elements of Egyptian Bronze Age warfare as the chariot and the *khopesh* sickle-sword.

Instead, Egypt's presence in the Levant seems to have depended on a combination of economic and military factors. While economic exploitation of the Levant itself was undoubtedly undertaken, it was evidently not the primary motivation for establishing political and military control. The Ramesside hieratic texts from Lachish and Tell Sera' refer to taxes and cereals, and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 124-5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; Barber 1991, 71-6.

³⁶ Redford 2000, 7.

have been interpreted as possible accounting notes;³⁷ however, the annual tribute imposed by Thutmosis III and apparently maintained by his successors seems rarely to have left the region, instead being used to support the Egyptian military and administrative presence there. On the basis of several Amarna letters, the existence of a centre for grain extraction, storage and redistribution in the service of the Egyptian state has been suggested at Yarimuta, a site which has not been archaeologically identified but which seems to be somewhere near Byblos and Beirut.³⁸ There is no indication in the letters, however, that this was in fact an imperial facility. Nothing suggests the grain was usually transported to Egypt; instead, all exchanges are with local cities, usually in return for payment. The site's ruler/supervisor, Yanḥamu, has a Semitic name, and the king of Beirut also seems to have fulfilled this role occasionally.³⁹ There seems no reason in the Amarna letters for suggesting it was anything other than a local Phoenician town, possibly associated politically with Beirut, and involved in a local trade in staple goods. Egypt may have been able to exert political influence there, as it did elsewhere, but it seems unlikely we should see it as an 'imperial granary' or anything similar. All this supports the suggestions of Kemp and Higginbotham that Egypt's involvement in the Levant need not have consistently yielded any significant economic benefit to the homeland.⁴⁰ Of course, the lack of any significant economic cost may well have contributed to the viability of the enterprise, but it seems unlikely this would have been Egypt's primary concern.

Rather than providing an economic advantage in its own right, the Levant was strategically important as the pathway to the more commercially attractive regions of north Syria, Anatolia and Mesopotamia.⁴¹ This tallies well with the pattern of archaeological evidence, both in the 'imperial' period and, as we will see, during the 'withdrawal' itself, in which the sites showing the most evidence of Egyptian presence and influence, and where these persisted the longest, seem to be those playing a strategic role in controlling trade. It also partially accounts for the more

³⁷ Kemp 1978, 48.

³⁸ EA 74, 75, 81-83, 85, 86, 90, 105. Morris (2005, 229) argues for a Phoenician location, which certainly seems most likely based on the texts. Because of the 'insurmountable obstacles' (Astour 2002, 70) to identifying a plausible location in Syria-Palestine, others have favoured locations as far south as the Nile Delta (Niebuhr 1896, Albright 1940, 31).

³⁹ EA 81, 83, 85 etc.; Morris 2005, 228-231.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19; Higginbotham 2000, 5.

⁴¹ Bienkowski 1989, 60.

intensive presence in Palestine. As we will see in Chapter 4, the Phoenician littoral's connections to the main trade routes were fairly restricted, and the two principal north-south arteries – the King's Highway and the main branch of the *Via Maris* – were separated from the coastal cities by the Lebanon mountains.

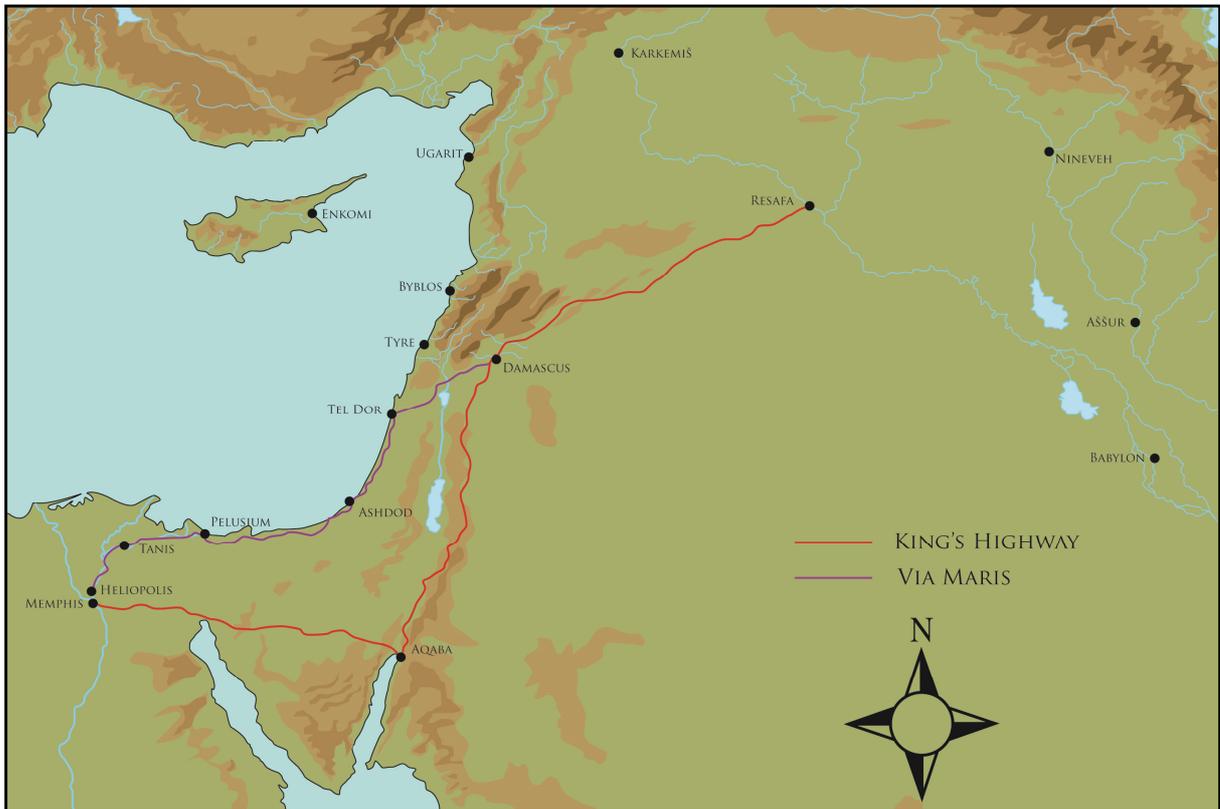


Fig. 2.15. *Main Near Eastern overland trade routes in the LBA/EIA.*

While there is some evidence that the access to the Mediterranean offered by the Phoenicians was valuable to the Egyptians, with them likely serving as middlemen for trade with the East Mediterranean and Aegean,⁴² it is fair to say that Egypt was primarily an inward-facing society, its attention more focused on the interior and the great rivers of the Nile and Euphrates than on the sea. In this respect, the Phoenician polities were less strategically important than their counterparts to the south.

Military factors are arguably of greater significance in conditioning the nature of Egyptian interest in Syria. As we have seen, military considerations were at the heart of the formation of the

⁴² See, for example, Bevan 2003.

Egyptian 'empire' in the Levant, and they remained central despite the considerable geopolitical changes over the course of the LBA, with the threat of the Hyksos being supplanted first by the Mitanni and then by the Hittite Empire as relations between the great powers deteriorated in the wake of diplomatic misunderstandings following the death of Tutankhamun.⁴³ While Palestine was strategically important for securing trade routes, northern Canaan functioned more as a locus for contesting international relations with the great powers of the age: Egypt seems to have had little interest in controlling the region for its own sake, finding little to value there.⁴⁴

As I hope I have shown, it is unlikely that this strategic importance was manifested in outright occupation. Despite the expansionist tendencies of the other major powers, Egypt never seems to have attempted a full-scale permanent takeover of northern Canaan, preferring instead intermittent campaigning. While this may seem counter-intuitive, it is a natural consequence of a cultural and social situation within Egypt itself in which military adventures and conquest were far more significant than the stable occupation of conquered territory afterward.

The reasons for this can be understood by recognising the relationship between campaigning and cosmology. Military action against 'barbarian' peoples lay at the heart of Egyptian elite identity and particularly the cosmological status of the pharaoh. The world was understood as a constant and cyclical battle between the forces of order and chaos, often personified mythologically as Ra, the sun-god and Apep, the chaos-snake (Fig. 2.16). The pharaoh, as son of Ra, was required to participate in this conflict and bring order from primordial chaos both by maintaining peace at home and subjugating foreign peoples.

⁴³ Warburton 2003.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

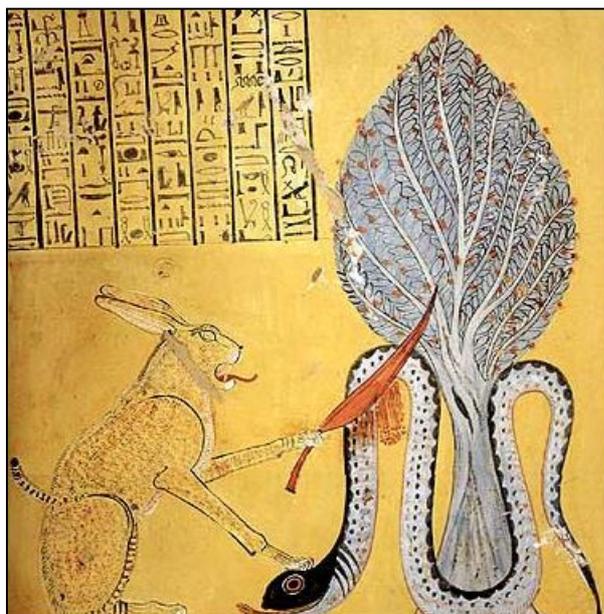


Fig. 2.16. *Ra in cat form, slaying the Apep chaos-snake.*
Tomb 359, Deir el-Medina. Late Ramesside.

The aim of foreign campaigns was to ‘enlarge the boundaries of Egypt’, but in a cosmological rather than cultural sense: to reduce the primordial chaos found there to the order experienced at home. As is made abundantly clear from the reliefs decorating royal mortuary temples, such as that of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, foreign campaigning was an act through which pharaohs could demonstrate their piety. While it would be a mistake to believe that the Egyptian élite saw the world entirely through such a mythological prism, and that more earthly politicking and strategy played no part in their actions, the theological significance of campaigning and its connection to the pharaoh’s own divine legitimacy cannot be overlooked.⁴⁵

This idea of a cyclical pattern of chaos and order may have helped create ways of thinking which favoured a kind of involvement in northern Canaan that entailed repeated campaigning interspersed by only weakly-articulated influence. It cannot be the whole story, however, and Egypt’s social organisation also played a role. As would later be the case in other imperial situations, such as Rome or the British Empire, successful military service was a central avenue for accruing political influence. The pharaoh’s campaigning may have been couched in the language of religious obligation, but the association of militarism with royal power ensured that it had an

⁴⁵ Manassa 2003, 1; Frankfort 1948; Baines 1995; Silverman 1995; Redford 1995; Murnane 1995. See also Chapter 5 below for more discussion of cosmology and kingship in the Near East.

appeal for a wider élite as a source of prestige and legitimation. Like other Near Eastern societies, Egypt possessed *maryannu*, a military aristocracy whose prestige and authority derived from warfare, and in particular from the great symbol of LBA militarism, the chariot.

The Egyptian élite therefore had a constant need for military adventures. While it was generally to Nubia that pharaohs looked for a quick, convenient campaign, the ancient, dynamic urban societies of the Levant presented an opportunity which the nomads and loosely-organised tribes of the south did not. By facing and defeating their well-trained and well-equipped armies on the very doorstep of rival great powers such as the Mitanni and later the Hittites, Egypt was able to demonstrate its power and importance on a world stage.⁴⁶

Direct, large-scale administrative control would have been difficult to accomplish in a region as distant from Egypt as Phoenicia, but southern Nubia was further away and Egypt was well able to maintain direct rule there. Nor can everything be explained by the destabilising influence of Phoenicia's proximity to the spheres of influence of Egypt's great rivals, the Hittites and Mitanni. Rather, it seems that the fractiousness and internecine conflict seen in the Amarna Letters suited Egyptian élite interests. In addition to a politically pragmatic element – infighting reduced the likelihood of polities uniting against Egypt and threatening the areas in Palestine where it did exercise more direct control⁴⁷ – the preservation of such a *status quo* allowed an arena where military adventures which affirmed and restated the legitimacy of the rulers, as well as demonstrating prestige on an internationally visible stage, could be played out again and again, whenever internal disorder became such that it necessitated military intervention. The three successive stelae commemorating Ramesses II's crossings of the Nahr el-Kelb thus stand as a metaphor for the whole of Egypt's interest in Phoenicia. It was the act of conspicuously passing through which was significant, and this could be done repeatedly without diminishing the achievement. Such an objective had little place for permanent occupation.

Phoenician Élite Identity and Egypt

If these were Egyptian objectives in the relationship, we must now consider the strategies and objectives of the Phoenicians, and in particular the élite groups with which the majority of

⁴⁶ Kemp 1978, 56-7.

⁴⁷ Morris 2005, 259-261.

contact seems to have taken place. We have already seen how vassalage was wielded as a foreign policy tool during the LBA. I wish to contend that the importance of relations with Egypt went further and that understanding the strategic utilisation of these links as part of the identity-articulation of indigenous élites is critical to appreciating the social changes apparent both within these groups and in society more broadly.

Funerary practice in Phoenicia in both the LBA and EIA is diverse and varies greatly both between and within sites. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify broad categories of burial practice which seem to correspond to differences in social status. In particular, what might broadly be called multiple-burial chamber tombs seem to be consistently associated with higher-status groups. Although very diverse in their specific details, such as whether they were built, rock-cut or utilised natural caves, the overall concept of multiple burial within some kind of chamber remains constant. The high-status interpretation of such burials is based on several factors. Elaborate and energy-intensive construction processes were often involved, e.g. deep, rock-cut shafts and ornate stone sarcophagi at Byblos (Fig. 2.17, 2.18), or ashlar at Achziv. Grave-goods are generally more abundant and, *prima facie*, more expensive than those accompanying the more standard pit-inhumations which comprised the majority burial rite,⁴⁸ and also more ‘personalised’, betraying much greater interest in representing the individuality of the deceased and their accomplishments and achievements in life. In Tomb N.1 at Achziv, for example, one Phase 1 burial was buried with warrior accoutrements: a sword, spearhead, knife, dagger, axe and arrowheads, while another was given a ‘very fine’ krater and two sets of bronze scales, possibly related to the jewellery trade. Mazar also speaks of scarabs, ivories, tools, beads and pendants from this phase.⁴⁹ Architectural parallels, as we will see, also point to a high-status interpretation.

The most obvious and conclusive confirmation that these burials belonged to the more prestigious segments of society comes from those burials in which we know the identity of the deceased, namely the royal burials documented in the early LB IB ‘*Schatzhaus*’ at Kamid el-Loz⁵⁰ and the extremely similar royal cemetery of the MBA-EIA at Byblos. The latter includes probably

⁴⁸ Although we should, of course, be wary of automatically assuming that objects such as gold, jewellery etc. must necessarily represent genuine high status in life, we can certainly distinguish major differences between the representational agendas of the ‘chamber tombs’, which include objects of exotic provenance or which seem to be heirlooms, and the simple, small and standardised ceramic collections found within most pit-burials.

⁴⁹ E. Mazar 2004.

⁵⁰ Hachmann (ed.) 1996; Adler (ed.) 1994.

the most famous example of chamber tomb burial in Phoenicia: Tomb V, the so-called ‘Tomb of Ahiaram’. These royal tombs are accessed by a deep rectangular shaft, the bottom of which opens out on to a burial chamber. Tomb V contained three stone sarcophagi, of which one was elaborately decorated and bore an inscription identifying its occupant as King Ahiaram – the earliest known substantial inscription in the Phoenician language. The dating of the tomb is controversial. LBA pottery and other items, including the inscribed stone vessels already discussed, suggest that it was in use from at least the late thirteenth century. Based on the artistic style of the sarcophagus and the palaeography of the inscription, however, the Ahiaram burial itself is generally assigned to the late tenth century.⁵¹

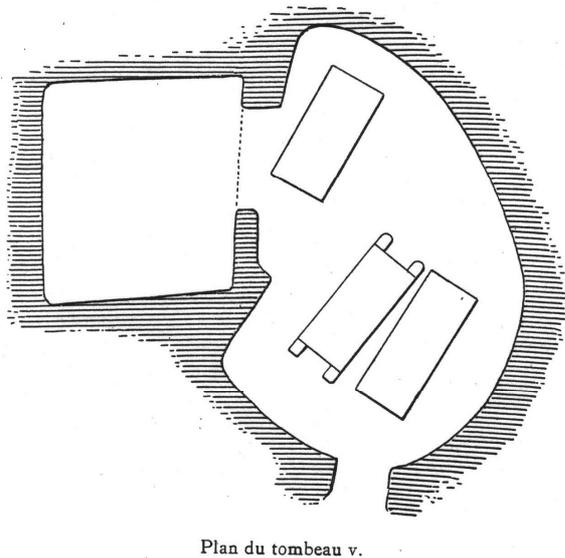


Fig. 2.17. *Plan of Tomb V, Byblos. After Montet 1928, Pl. CXXV.*

⁵¹ Montet 1928, Ch. 4; Albright 1947; Markoe 1990, 21.



Fig. 2.18. *Tomb V, Byblos.*



Fig. 2.19. *The Sarcophagus of Ahiram. Beirut National Museum.*

Within these élite graves we see a pronounced Egyptian influence during much of the BA. In their very form, the graves of Byblos and Kamid echo Egyptian prototypes,⁵² although their reuse for multiple burials seems to be a Levantine innovation, rendering the tombs themselves hybrid artefacts. From the earliest examples, lavish Egyptianising items were prominent among the grave-goods, such as that illustrated in Fig. 2.2. During the LBA at Kamid, in the rich shaft-tombs of Beirut⁵³ and in the plundered Tomb V of Byblos we see high-status items designed to emphasise the ruler's involvement in diplomatic links with Egypt, such as the inscribed calcite vessels already discussed.

Evidence is scarce, but it appears this had changed by the time of the burial of Ahiram. Although Egyptian influence has been discerned in some aspects of the sarcophagus decoration,⁵⁴

⁵² Hachmann 1996.

⁵³ Genz & Sader 2007-8.

⁵⁴ Hachmann (1996, 276), following Metzger 1985, sees the sphinx-throne as inspired by Egypt's lion-throne, but insists that it remains a genuinely Levantine creation.

stylistically it owes far more to north Syrian models.⁵⁵ There are no post-Rameses II Aegyptiaca amongst the grave-goods, although the possibility that this is an accidental consequence of tomb-robbing cannot be excluded. The Tomb of Ahiram appears to be the last time the Egyptian-influenced shaft graves were used for élite interment. By the tenth-century construction of the high-status chamber tombs at Achziv, which remained in use for much of the IA, Egyptian parallels have been replaced by allusions to a more distinctively Levantine funerary form. The three built tombs, especially N.1, display striking architectural affinities with LBA élite Ugaritic burial vaults.⁵⁶ The Ugaritic tombs were situated under the floors of houses in a high-status part of the tell, not in extramural cemeteries as was the case in Achziv, but with their rectangular plan, short dromos, corbelled ceiling and libation-opening in the roof, the resemblance in form is very close.⁵⁷ This is striking given the large chronological and geographical gap between them. The exact reasons for such a close parallel are uncertain, but the high-status families which probably used them were clearly seeking to align themselves with a Levantine rather than Egyptian tradition of high-status burial.

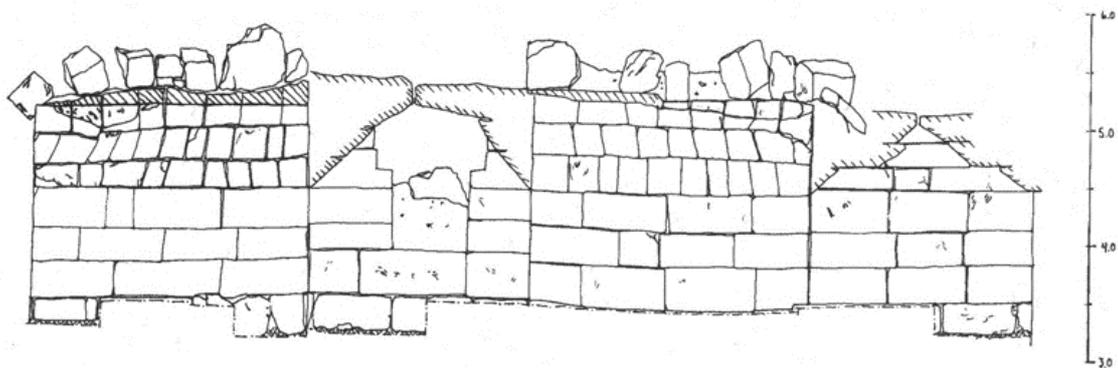


Fig. 2.20. *Section of four walls of Achziv Tomb N.1. After E. Mazar 2004.*

⁵⁵ Markoe 1990, 19.

⁵⁶ E. Mazar 2004. Parallels also exist at Megiddo from the MBA onwards and in thirteenth-century Enkomi.

⁵⁷ E. Mazar 2001, 2004. Salles 1995a, 1995b

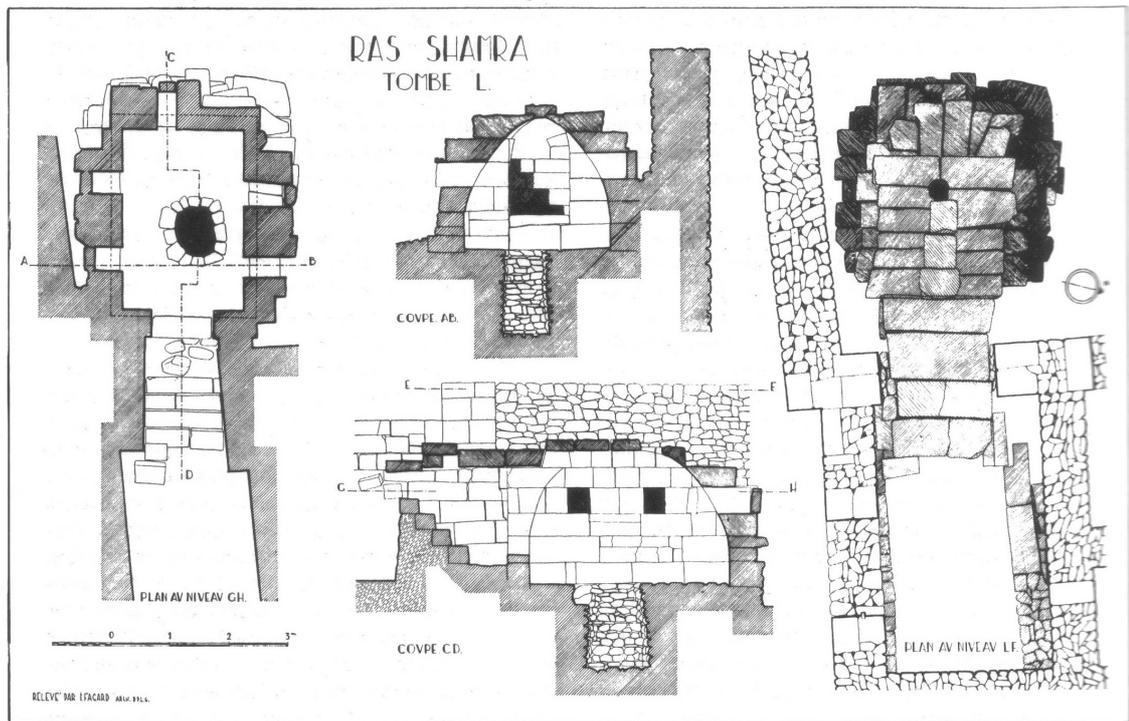


Fig. 18.3: Tombe L/50, couverture avec trou manquant et autres dessins

Fig. 2.21. Ugarit Tomb L. After Salles 1995a.

Among the EIA grave-goods of Achziv's tombs, Aegyptiaca are not prominent. Scarabs are present, but the dating for many of them is unclear. Of those featuring pharaonic cartouches, none are of kings after Ramesses II. Whether these are heirlooms with extended lifespans or later archaising imitations, this seems significant and may imply that the prestige-value of later pharaohs was less. Further signs of a more Levantine-focused élite identity come from the fairly meagre EIA finds of 'Arqa, where a stamp-seal recalls Syro-Cappadocian stylistic parallels,⁵⁸ and in Phoenician prestige goods for export from the tenth and ninth centuries, where bronze bowls and ivories in particular draw heavily on Syrian iconographic traditions (See Chapter 4 below).

These changes neither demonstrate a complete rejection of Egyptian culture nor reflect the 'withdrawal' of Egyptian imperial presence from the region. As we have seen, Egyptian presence in Phoenicia was always intermittent and transitory: there was nothing permanent to withdraw. Instead, it makes more sense to consider the prestige value to be gained from utilising

⁵⁸ Gubel 2007-8. We should, however, note the possibility of circular reasoning here: the seal is dated to the EIA based mainly on its stylistic features, so we should probably not rely too heavily on it as a basis for discussing changing trends in Phoenician glyptic at this time.

symbols of links with Egyptian power. LBA Egypt was a powerful force on the international stage with strong monarchs whose names were known in the Levant. A pharaoh like Ramesses II represented a paragon of kingship to which a Phoenician ruler could aspire; by displaying evidence of gift-exchange with him, as one of Ahiram's predecessors in Tomb V seems to have done, a local ruler was demonstrating his significance on a world stage.

The late thirteenth to tenth centuries, however, saw major changes in the relationship between Egypt and Phoenicia. After the treaty of Qadesh, the military role of northern Canaan as an arena for contesting international relations significantly diminished; this was even truer following the disintegration of the Hittite Empire in the early twelfth century. The prestige value of the pharaohs as symbols of monarchical power and legitimacy was tarnished by the succession of weak later Ramesside kings, culminating in the effective partition of Egypt during the Third Intermediate Period and establishment of the High Priests of Amon as *de facto* rulers of the south of the country. The precariousness of the political situation made extended overseas campaigning a riskier venture for élites keen to preserve their position, with the result that Egypt and its rulers' power ceased to be conspicuous in the Levant: it no longer carried the currency and significance it once had. The reduction of Aegyptiaca from Phoenician élite burials during the LBA/EIA transition was not a passive reflection of reduced Egyptian imperial presence but a deliberate and logical response by local élites to the inability of this material to suit their purposes any more.

This is not confined to burial evidence: only two Egyptian royal artefacts exist in the whole of Syria and Lebanon between the reigns of Ramesses II (c.1279-1213) and Ramesses IX (c.1129-1111): the faience vessel of Tawosret from Sidon and a fragmentary statuette from Byblos bearing the cartouche of Ramesses III.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Weinstein 1992, 1998; Marée 2006; Doumet Serhal 2010. Given Byblos' long-standing and unusually close relationship with Egypt, even if this was a sign of Egyptian influence there, it can hardly be extended to Phoenicia more broadly.



Fig. 2.22. Statuette inscribed with name of Ramesses III. From Byblos.

At Dor, Egyptian imports in Nile clay continued to occur in significant quantities in LB|Ir and Ir 1a strata, which its excavators see as indicative of continued intensive contacts. They acknowledge that this situation is anomalous regarding Phoenicia more broadly, however, and nothing suggests that these finds represent any kind of political influence beyond mere trade contacts. Dor is by far the most southerly ‘Phoenician’ city, on a similar latitude to Megiddo.⁶⁰ No other Egyptian pottery has been found in Phoenicia between the late twelfth and tenth centuries, nor Phoenician in Egypt. The only other possible Aegyptiaca found in Phoenicia from this time are a trio of scarabs from Stratum XIV (LB|Ir – Ir 1a|b) at Tyre.⁶¹ No further details are recorded, and since scarabs are notorious for their long usage lifespans and widespread trade and imitations, there is no particular reason to believe they were produced at this time or even actually came from Egypt.

⁶⁰ Gilboa 2005, 54. These items seem to attest trading links rather than any actual large-scale presence or political involvement by Egyptians.

⁶¹ Bikai 1978, Pl XLV B. Dating according to the revised chronology of Gilboa & Sharon 2003.

Not all contacts ceased. The Sidon vessel supports *Wen-Amon's* description of continuing diplomatic contacts, the Onomasticon of Amenemope lists several Levantine towns, and Ostrakon Cairo 25759, found at Deir el-Medina, records a transaction in north-west Semitic language but hieratic script.⁶² Nevertheless, there is a clear turn away from Aegyptiaca in the construction of Phoenician élite identities.

This may have been a logical strategic response to circumstances, but it appears to have been neither immediate nor painless: we have no high-status burials between the end of the LBA and the late tenth-century. Given our small number of high-status burials overall anyway, we should be cautious about reading too much into this, but the lacuna does seem to be paralleled in other areas of conspicuous high-status activity such as architecture. There is a widespread reduction in energy-intensive and ostentatious architecture in the twelfth century: at Tell Keisan, construction in stone appears to have ceased entirely, while elsewhere it was confined to the use of roughly-constructed lower courses to support a mud-brick superstructure. A partial recovery is apparent in the eleventh century, with the introduction at Sarepta of more elaborate, header-and-stretcher stone masonry, but élite display in Phoenicia does not appear to resume fully until the late tenth century, with the burial of Ahiiram at Byblos and increased elaboration in architecture: construction in stone resumes at Keisan, while at Sarepta and Achziv ashlar is introduced for the first time.⁶³

It seems likely that the failure of legitimization strategies which relied on Egyptian power and prestige precipitated a crisis in Phoenician élites, or at least in their ability or desire to express their status through conspicuous display. This was not a removal of society's upper strata, a 'top-slicing' of the kind apparent in the LH IIIC Aegean: what we know of Phoenician political structures and institutions shows clear continuity from the LBA into the IA (see Chapter 5), while the use of an LBA royal tomb by the tenth-century King Ahiiram suggests that the Gyblite monarchy not only survived, but sought to present itself as part of a dynastic line stretching back into the Bronze Age. *Wen-Amon*, highly problematic though it is, also suggests continuity in élite institutions: it presents Byblos's king as strong and powerful, and refers back to his ancestors, who were also kings. It seems clear that whatever the nature of the 'crisis', dynastic succession and the continuity of institutions were not permanently disrupted.

⁶² Shisha-Halevy 1978.

⁶³ Briand & Humbert 1980; Humbert 1981; Badre *et al.* 1994; E. Mazar 2001, 2004.

Another important thing to note is that the fall from favour of Egyptian culture was not permanent. When Egyptian prestige began to increase again in the later tenth century, and the Asiatic campaigning of pharaohs such as Shoshenq increased the recognition value of their names in the Levant, we see a resumption of the utilisation of Aegyptiaca as symbols of royal power by Phoenician rulers, particularly those of Byblos, where inscribed busts of Shoshenq and his successor Osorkon I have been discovered.



Fig. 2.23. *Inscribed bust of Osorkon I (922-887 BC). From Byblos, now in the Louvre.*⁶⁴

It is clear then that the evidence does not support the view that an Egyptian ‘imperial’ withdrawal marked a major political turning point for Phoenicia. Direct political interference by the Egyptians was always very limited, and local rulers afforded a great deal of freedom of action. Although the reduction of Egyptian prestige during the Third Intermediate Period may have adversely affected Phoenician élites’ ability to express themselves and prompted them to seek alternative avenues and referents for display, this seems to have been a temporary phenomenon. Far from being an unusual aberration to be explained, such fluctuations in the usefulness of a cultural assemblage as a means for an élite to express its status are the expected consequence of

⁶⁴ See Chapter 5, p.216 below for the Phoenician inscription.

assuming that both sides in a culture-contact situation have agency, rather than one passively receiving and mimicking a 'superior' culture.

Rather than use terms such as 'empire' or 'imperialism' which do not adequately reflect the realities of Egypto-Levantine interactions, it makes more sense to think of the situation as what Kolata has called 'hegemony without sovereignty':

'[P]ower and influence are exercised not by unilateral imposition of administrative regulations or centrally controlled bureaucracy but rather by the strategic application of force – tactical force, not generalized military oppression – [...] The intrusive, material presence of the state in local communities is much reduced, often absent altogether, in favor of the co-optation of local institutions and facilities, while the displays of superiority [...] are frequently restricted to capitals, where they may overawe local elites. The mere potential for direct military intervention, territorial subjugation, and social incorporation is sufficient to ensure the political and economic subordination of these subject populations. The dominant state exercises hegemony without the need for or logistical difficulties of maintaining sovereignty.'⁶⁵

While this model would seem applicable throughout the Levant to a certain extent, it perfectly describes the situation observed in Phoenicia. The differences between Palestine and Phoenicia would be in the balance and extent of the threat of military intervention and 'displays of superiority', cultural as well as military. Kolata stresses the role of agency among local populations under such a system. Because interaction between societies is largely conducted at the level of élites, the ability of the dominating power's culture, beliefs and ways of thinking to permeate wider society and become naturalised is limited; instead, foreign practice is 'strategically mimetic': a thin veneer in service of aims and objectives shaped by persistent local worldviews, beliefs and values. It produces, in Kolata's words, 'strategic subjects, not committed citizens'.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Kolata 2006, 210.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 215. Higginbotham pursued a similar approach with her suggestion of 'élite emulation' in Palestine, but Killebrew (2005) is correct in pointing out that her checklist of archaeological expectations of the model (Higginbotham 2000, 11) does not correspond with the observable data in an entirely satisfactory way. The problem may be more with the checklist than the conclusion, since influence on élites seems far better supported than the 'administrative imperialism' or direct rule favoured by Killebrew. Kolata's 'hegemony without sovereignty' is not far

This is true to an extent in any culture-contact situation: agency on both sides should always be assumed and the transmission of cultural elements always considered in terms of deliberate choice rather than passive acculturation. In a situation such as this, however, particular attention must be focused on the strategies of the indigenous population, and in particular the differences between the élites, with whom the majority of contact took place, and the wider population. Such political influence would be shallow-rooted and fragile, constantly dependent on the dominant power being able to act as a focus for local élite identification. Should it falter in this regard, and should the perceived threat of military intervention wane, it would be expected that ‘hegemony’ would swiftly come to an end, and that the most profound effects of this would be on the indigenous élites. The wider population, hardly integrated into the structures of political contact, would experience comparatively little disturbance to their ways of life, culture and economic fortunes.

Indeed, this is exactly what we see. Pit-grave cemeteries comprise the majority burial rite for the LBA and EIA. They involve simple individual inhumation in shallow pits cut into bare earth or sand, or into rock, or occasionally partially or fully lined with stone or mud brick to form cists. Grave-goods mainly consist of a fairly standard set, comprising a few storage-jars, bowls, jugs and other small containers,⁶⁷ as well as occasional simple non-ceramic items like pins or jewellery. Evidence for status-differentiation in these graves is very limited: only two graves can be considered at all high-status, both at the LBA cemetery at Sidon-Dakerman. T.7 contained, in addition to its pottery, a bronze dagger and a sheep’s skull. A hippo-ivory duck-shaped make-up box was found in the sand very nearby. T.8 contained 34 stone buttons, a gold-rimmed scarabaeus, three sea-shells and the remains of an ivory wand. These assemblages are exceptional by pit-grave standards, and, although it may be exaggerating to call them élite, it is plausible that they belonged to individuals who had attained, or aspired to, a certain wealth or status.⁶⁸ In

removed from ‘élite emulation’ but stresses the strategic and political objectives underlying the process of influence, crucially from a local as well as ‘imperialist’ perspective. Importantly for this study, it also predicts the likely social consequences of removal of the dominant political power.

⁶⁷ At Khaldé, some of the plates and vessels were found to contain the remains of food, suggesting that they were not simply grave-goods but reflected part of the funerary ritual: probably offerings or ritual meals to the dead. The continuity in the shapes between Dakerman and Khaldé may well indicate not just continuity in the form of the burial, but also in the practices involved.

⁶⁸ Saidah 2004.

general, however, both the LBA and EIA pit-cemeteries are very homogeneous and display little concern with reflecting the individual characteristics of the deceased. It is plausible, then, to see these as lower-status burials, at least compared to the élite practice already discussed.⁶⁹

The continuity between the LBA cemetery at Dakerman and the Iron Age one at Khaldé is striking. Grave construction, arrangement of the body and the number and type of grave-goods show great consistency. The only major difference is in the use of imported ceramics: like other LBA burials at Beirut, Fayadieh, Qrayé and in Byblos Nécropole K,⁷⁰ Dakerman was very rich in imports, with all but three graves containing Cypriot or Mycenaean wares. It is noticeable that T.7 and T.8 both had very high proportions of imported pottery in addition to their other 'prestige' items. There may, then, be some connection between imports and status-negotiation, although the exact nature of this is hard to discern from present data. At Khaldé, however, imports are much less common, reflecting changes in overseas trade in the EIA (See Chapter 4 below).

When the pit-graves are compared with élite burials, two things are notable. Firstly, Aegyptiaca appear to have had almost no significance in the pit-burials in either the LBA or EIA.⁷¹ Secondly, these burials display much greater continuity between the LBA and EIA than do their high-status counterparts, perhaps implying that this segment of the population was subjected to much less disruption during the LBA/EIA transition. Of course, the present small number and poor publication of Phoenician cemeteries of this date means that these conclusions must remain preliminary, and future discoveries may shed welcome new light on the issue. Currently, however, the available data strongly supports Kolata's model.

When the Phoenician relationship with Egypt is understood in these terms, the situation observed in the late thirteenth and twelfth centuries makes a great deal of sense. A clear distinction is apparent between northern Canaan, where Egyptian influence operated almost exclusively at the level of élite identity, and the south, where actual Egyptians were present and engaged in a degree of direct political administration. In Palestine, the strategic control of trade

⁶⁹ Of course, as in much of antiquity, it is likely that large sections of the population received no formal burial at all.

⁷⁰ Genz & Sader 2007-8; Chapman 1972; Salles 1980.

⁷¹ Duck-shaped cosmetic boxes such as that found near Dakerman T. 7 are ultimately of Egyptian derivation, but long-established in the Levant and East Mediterranean (Hakimian 2008). Again, note that the only arguably Egyptian object in the Dakerman graves is a higher-status object.

routes continued to be an important consideration for the Egyptians, while the localised, low-level administrative presence in the region was more sustainable than the occasional large, 'set-piece' military adventures that were characteristic of its involvement in Phoenicia. Egyptian presence at key strategic sites such as Megiddo, Beth-Shan and Timna⁷² is attested well into the twelfth century,⁷² and its removal can be seen as a genuine political upheaval with major effects for the whole social structure of the region. It should be clear that this paradigm cannot be straightforwardly transplanted to Phoenicia, where the situation was at all times very different.

⁷² Numerous objects featuring Ramesses III's cartouche have been found at the Egyptian stronghold of Beth-Shan, while scarabs with the name of that pharaoh also appear at Tell el-Fara' (S), Tell Jemmeh, Lachish, Beth-Shemesh, Ashdod and Megiddo. Cartouches and scarabs of Ramesses IV (c.1156-50) are found at Tell Dalhamiyah, Lachish, Tell el-Fara' South, Beth-Shemesh, Gezer, Aphek and Beth-Shan. Copper-mining took place at Timna' until the time of Ramesses V (1149-46), and there is a much-discussed statue-base of Ramesses VI (c.1145-39) at Megiddo (Lipiński 2006).

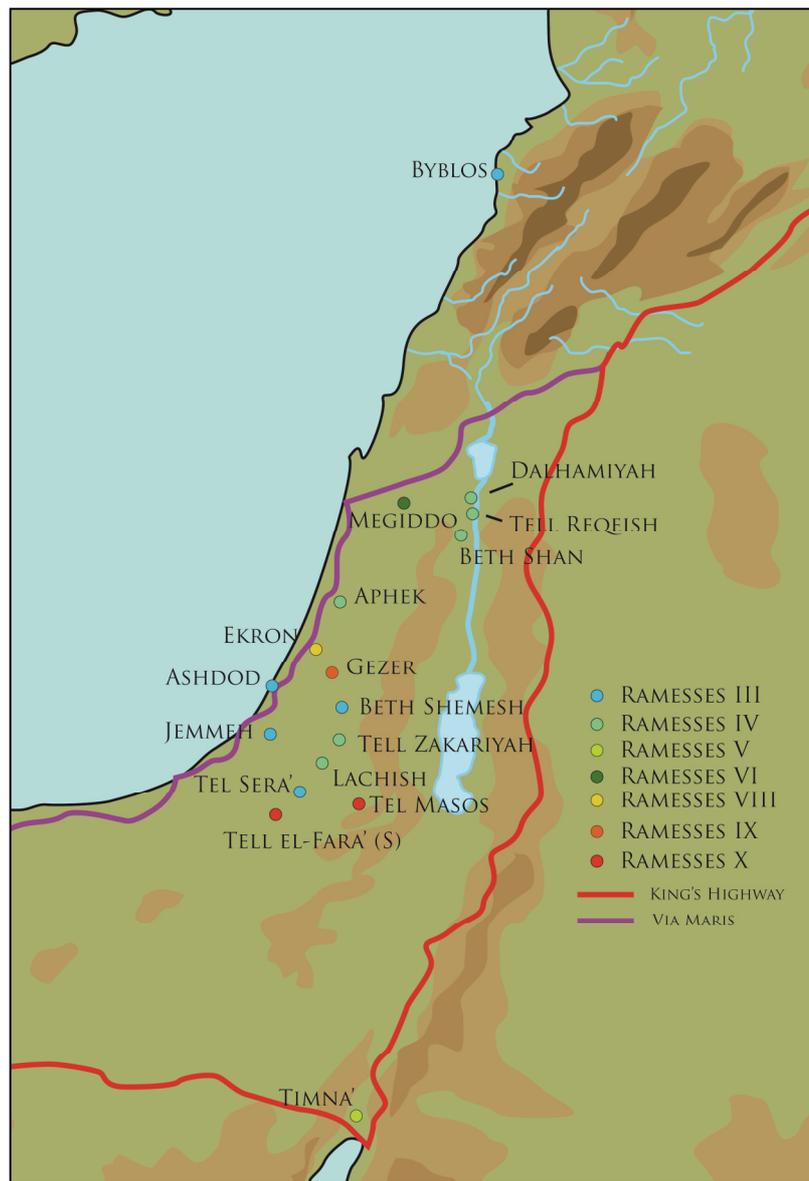


Fig. 2.24. *Distribution of objects bearing cartouches of Twentieth-Dynasty pharaohs. Sites are colour-coded according to the latest item found there. Data from Lipiński 2006.*

Phantom Migrants: The ‘Sea Peoples’ in Phoenicia

We turn now to the second main narrative framework within which the LBA/EIA transition in the Levant is usually understood: the supposed violent immigration of large numbers of ‘Sea People’ immigrants usually supposed to originate in the Aegean or Anatolia. This paradigm, chiefly created to explain the situation in Palestine, has not in general been applied to the majority of Phoenicia, but it continues to exert considerable influence over its peripheral

areas, including the 'Akkar plain and especially the region around 'Akko and Dor. Furthermore, continued references to the Sea Peoples making a southwards migration through the Levant and to a major battle between them and the Egyptians supposedly in the area of Lebanon maintain a presumption in much of the literature that Phoenicia was not entirely excluded from this defining narrative of the Levantine LBA/EIA transition. It is worthwhile, then, to take a little time to explore the question more closely.

The Sea Peoples are known primarily from two bodies of Egyptian texts: inscriptions relating to the campaigns of the pharaoh Merneptah, and those of Ramesses III a generation later. The former's Great Karnak Inscription records a Libyan war fought in the fifth year of his reign (c.1208). Although the main focus is on the Libyans, numerous allies are listed:

*Akawasha, Terusha, Lukka, Sherden, Shekelesh, the northerners who came from all lands.*⁷³

Later in the same text, the Sherden, Shekelesh and Akawasha are described as coming 'from the foreign lands of the sea'. The precise details of this campaign are not important here: the Libyans' objective is apparently settlement in Egypt, but it seems likely that their 'allies' are in fact operating in the capacity of mercenaries.⁷⁴ This comes as no surprise: many more occasional references to the various Sea Peoples occur in New Kingdom texts, with little consistency in whose army they are fighting for. They are present at Byblos in the Amarna letters,⁷⁵ fought on both sides at Qadesh,⁷⁶ and are mentioned fighting for Merneptah himself in Papyrus Louvre N 3136.⁷⁷ Nothing in these texts gives reason to believe that this was any kind of popular migration, rather than the mercenary work which was a mainstay of Bronze Age warfare. The other main

⁷³ Translation Manassa 2003, 155ff.

⁷⁴ Manassa 2003, 3. See Artzy 1997 and Bietak & Jung 2007-8 for discussions of Bronze Age mercenaries and their relationship with the Sea Peoples, but also Spalinger (2005, 7ff.), who argues that the 'mercenary' label is inaccurate and that although they were foreign, their loyalty went beyond mere financial reward.

⁷⁵ Sherden are mentioned in EA 81, 122, 123.

⁷⁶ As recorded in both the prose 'Bulletin' and poetic account of the battle by Ramesses II. Lichtheim 1976, 57-72.

⁷⁷ 'we sent forth 100 Peleset [...] the days, and 200 Sherden of the great strongholds [...]'. Translation Manassa 2003, 129. This text seems to describe the same Libyan campaign, since the enemies are listed as including the Rebu and Meshwesh.

source for this war is the famous ‘Merneptah’ or ‘Israel’ Stele, so-called because it marks the first written attestation of the name Israel, although it is far from clear what exactly it means in this context. The ‘Sea Peoples’ are not mentioned; nor are there any references to migrations other than the attempted invasion of Egypt by the Libyans. References to the Levant do occur, but as part of a formal, generalised passage describing how the world is at peace thanks to the pharaoh’s actions.

It is mainly on the texts of Ramesses III that the edifice of the Sea People migration theory is built. Two sources stand out: the historical inscriptions and reliefs on Ramesses’ great mortuary temple at Medinet Habu near Thebes, which record the king’s (ostensible) military triumphs, and Papyrus Harris I.⁷⁸ The vast majority of the latter text comprises lists, benefactions and gifts, with only a relatively short historical section near the end. Like the Medinet Habu inscriptions, it was intended as a memorial, and was written under the orders of Ramesses IV shortly after his father’s death. Both sources have been extensively studied, and it would be impossible to examine them fully here. Instead, I will lay out a brief summary of what they contain before turning to some points of particular relevance for Phoenicia.

⁷⁸ Breasted 1906 vol. IV, 87-206. The historical section comprises 198-206: § 397-412. Grandet 1994, vol. I, 335-341 provides a more recent French translation.

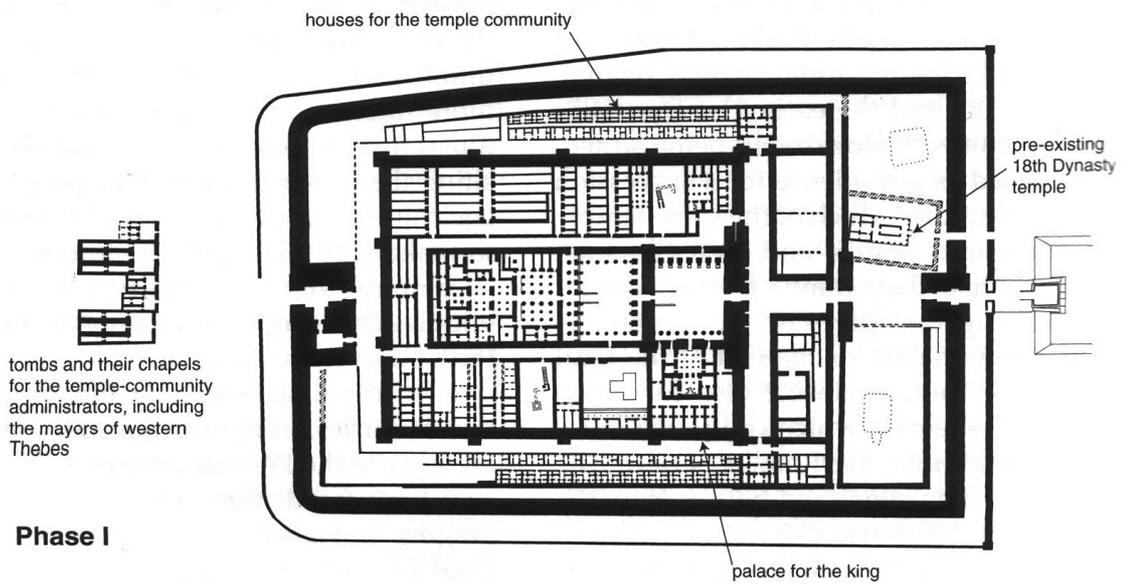


Fig. 2.25. *Medinet Habu. Plan after Kemp (et al.) 2004, fig. 9.*

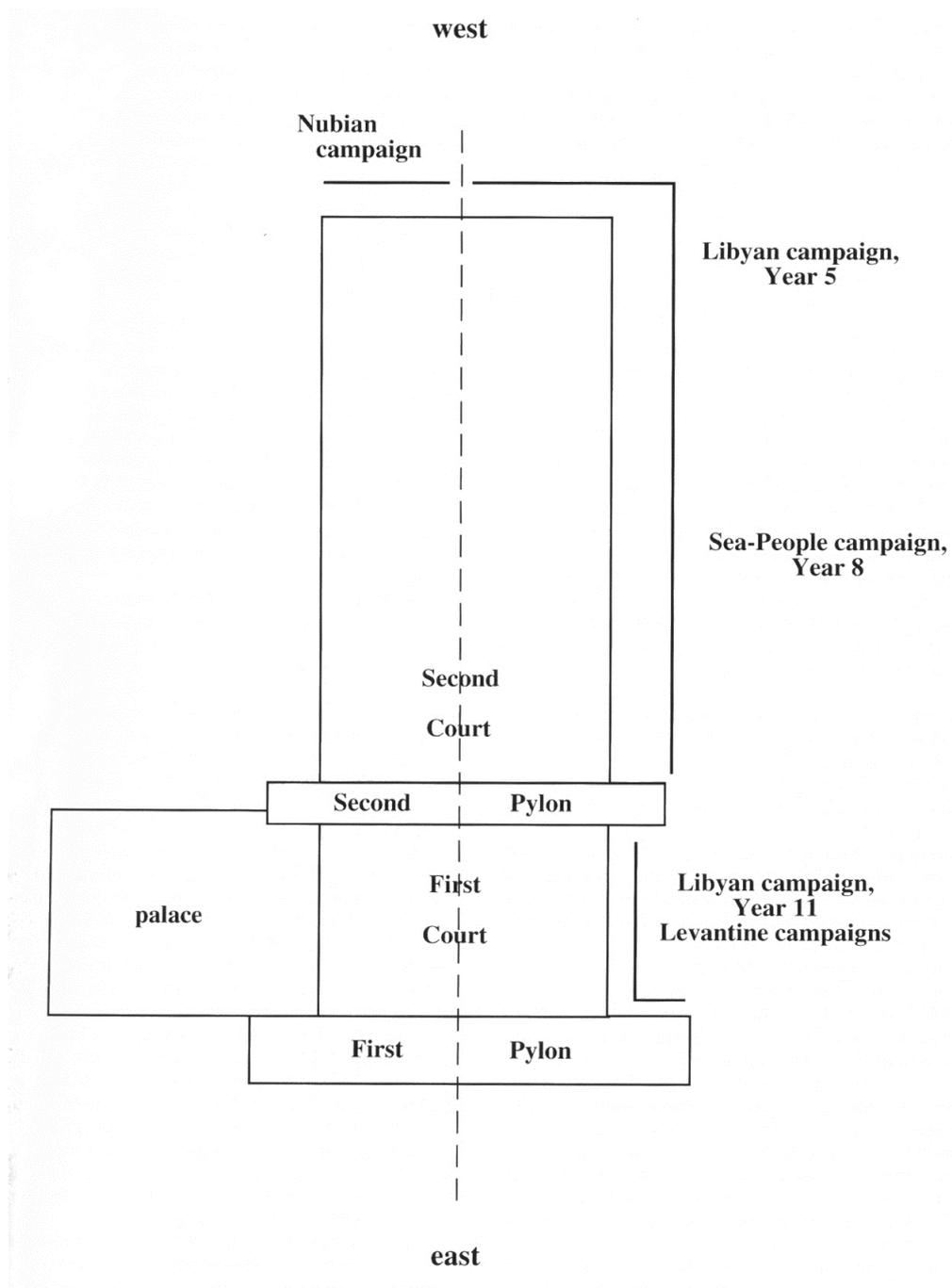


Fig. 2.26. *Plan of Medinet Habu Decorative Scheme. After O'Connor 2000, fig. 5.1.*

The temple at Medinet Habu is approximately 150m in length and constructed according to a typical Egyptian plan.⁷⁹ It comprises two courts, with a small subsidiary palace attached to

⁷⁹ Much of the temple always remained above ground, and the walls were fully cleared by Mariette in the early 1850s, paving the way for de Rouge's 1855 translation of the inscriptions. Full excavation at the site began under the auspices of the Chicago Oriental Institute's Epigraphic Survey in the 1920s, with the publication of the reliefs

the first. The whole temple is profusely decorated with reliefs and inscriptions. Most relevant are those detailing Ramesses' 'foreign' wars, which run in approximately chronological order right-to-left along the outside of the west and north walls (Fig. 2.26). Four principal campaigns have been distinguished, and assigned dates based on correspondences to the lengthy, dated, textual inscriptions found inside the temple.

The Year 5 inscription,⁸⁰ found on the south wall of the second court, shows many similarities to the Libyan campaign of Merneptah discussed above (also Year 5). Again the enemies are Rebu and Meshwesh tribespeople, and the names of two of the Libyan chieftains are identical to those in the earlier accounts. The main point of difference comes in the reason for the war: apparently this time the Libyans' refusal to accept a puppet child-king imposed by Ramesses. The historicity of the account is therefore widely doubted.⁸¹ Pharaohs had a tendency to pilfer from earlier monuments in search of great deeds to bulk out their own achievements; many of the Medinet Habu inscriptions are highly generic and stereotypical and their translators identify numerous indications that copying was widespread and conducted with varying degrees of competency.⁸² However, the references to Sea Peoples found in this inscription do not seem to derive from Merneptah's reign. In place of the five peoples listed there, we have only two: the Peleset and the Tjekker. The land and sea attack attributed to them here appears to be identical to that presented in greater length in the Year 8 inscription and its related reliefs. Consequently, there is little reason to believe that any significant campaign against the Sea Peoples occurred in Year 5 of Ramesses' reign. It is more likely that elements of the Year 8 campaign and Merneptah's Year 5 Libyan war were borrowed to flesh out a probably minor confrontation with the Libyans.

The Year 8 inscription⁸³ is far more important for the present discussion. It is found inside the first court, on the west wall, opposite the main entrance. Like the end of the Year 5 inscription, it describes the incursion of a coalition of northern invaders and their defeat in land- and sea-battles. While the sea-battle took place in one of the mouths of the Nile, the location of

following in 1930-1932 (*Medinet Habu I, II*) and accompanying new translations of the inscriptions (Edgerton & Wilson 1936).

⁸⁰ *Medinet Habu I*, Plates 27-8; Edgerton & Wilson 1936.

⁸¹ In particular, see Lesko 1980, 1992. His doubts regarding this inscription are supported by Drews 2000 and Higginbotham 2000, among others.

⁸² Edgerton & Wilson 1936, 5.

⁸³ *Medinet Habu I*, Plate 46; Edgerton & Wilson 1936; *ANET*³, 262-3.

the land battle, as well as its chronological relationship to the sea-battle, is a matter of debate: Egyptian and Levantine locations have both been suggested. It is here that the identities of the attackers are listed in full, their status as ‘Sea Peoples’ confirmed, and, as the conventional interpretation has it, their path of destruction across the East Mediterranean described:

The foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms, from Hatti, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alashiya on, being cut off at [one time]. A camp [was set up] in one place in Amor. They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being. They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them. Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh, lands united. They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: “Our plans will succeed!”⁸⁴

At first glance, the conventional narrative of Aegean peoples sweeping violently through Anatolia and the Levant before turning their attention to Egypt seems justified from this passage. We might quibble with the list of the attackers’ previous conquests. Karkemish, for example, has produced no twelfth-century destruction layer and was a flourishing city in the EIA,⁸⁵ while the role of external aggressors in the downfall of the Hittites has been increasingly downplayed in recent years, with greater emphasis placed on the role of internal upheavals. When attackers are credited as the straw that broke the camel’s back, within the core heartland of Hatti raiding Anatolian tribespeople are more commonly suggested than Sea Peoples.⁸⁶ Many arguments have been made for the immigration of exogenous groups to Cyprus at the end of the Late Bronze

⁸⁴ ANET³, 262. Kode is probably Tarḫuntašša (Cilicia).

⁸⁵ Lipiński 2006; Caubet 2003; Bryce 2005, 349.

⁸⁶ Singer 1985, 120; Seeher 2001; Bryce 2005, Chapter 13, esp. 345. Artzy 1997, 3 suggests the Sea People attack on Hatti may be an Egyptian misinterpretation of possibly much smaller disturbances on the Cilician coast. See also Chapter 6.

Age,⁸⁷ but the evidence seems to indicate the more serious discontinuities there occurred during the eleventh century, not the twelfth or late thirteenth. The Levantine evidence accords better: Amor/Amurru refers to the coastal region of modern-day Syria, north of Phoenicia (Tell Kazel seems to mark an approximate southern boundary). Destructions are indeed attested in this region, most famously at Ugarit, where texts seem to lay the blame firmly with seaborne raiders.

That this was a mass population migration, and not a mere military invasion is usually claimed on the basis of the depiction of ox-carts containing women and children among the Peleset and Tjeker forces depicted in the famous 'Land-Battle' relief on Medinet Habu's exterior wall (Fig. 2.27).

⁸⁷ e.g. Schaeffer 1971; Karageorghis 1992, 1994; Merrillees 1992; Iacovou 1994. Iacovou 2006 argues for immigration essentially on linguistic grounds, admitting that the drastic population changes she envisages for the LBA/EIA transition are 'invisible' (p32) and not reflected in archaeological evidence.

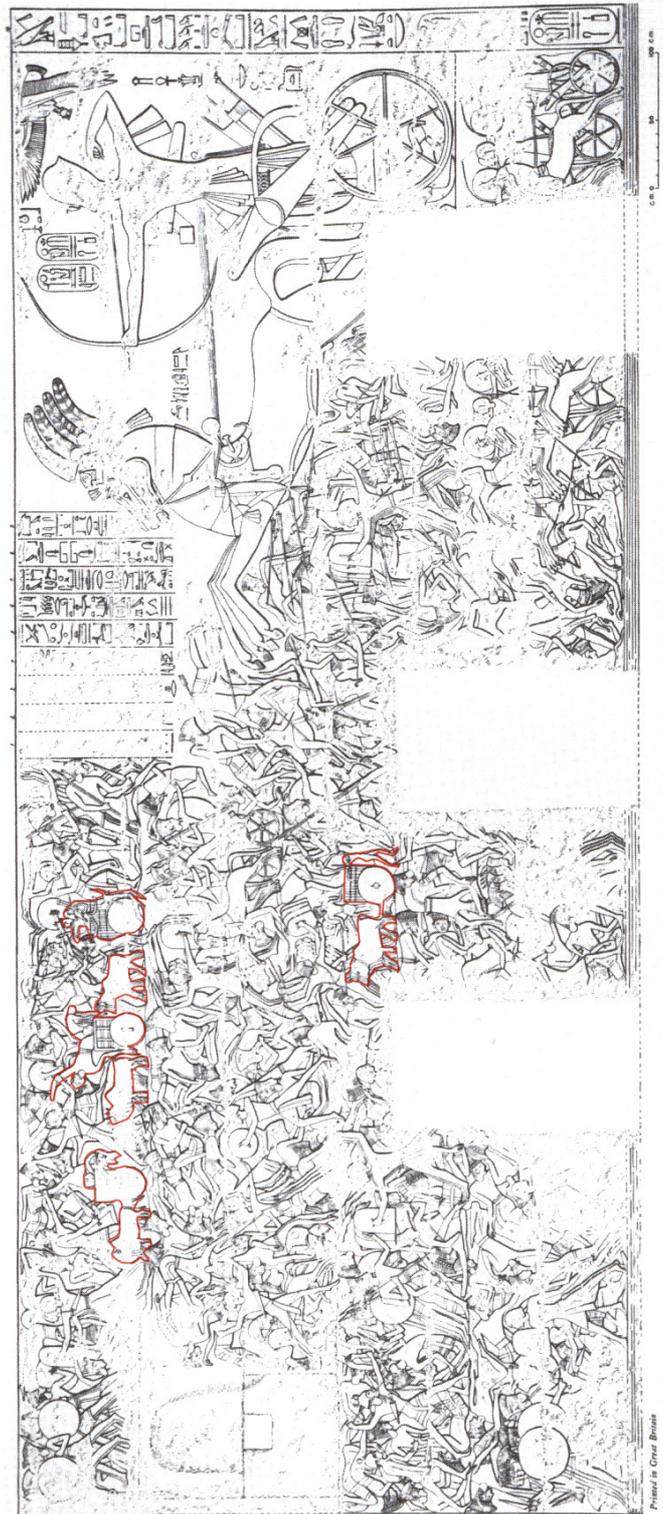


Figure 5.5. The land battle scene. Photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago.

Fig. 2.27. Land-Battle (Medinet Habu I, Plate 32. After O'Connor 2000, fig. 5.5.) Ox-carts and families are highlighted in red.

Following this defeat, it is usually assumed that the Sea Peoples, or at least some of them, settled in the Levant. In addition to the traditional assumption that the Philistines were

exogenous and that they should be equated with the Peleset, three other primary pieces of evidence are adduced in support of this view: in Papyrus Harris I, Ramesses is made to claim that:

I extended the boundaries of Egypt; I overthrew those who invaded them from their lands. I slew the Denyen from their isles, the Tjeker and the Peleset were reduced to ashes, like the Sherden and the Weshesh who came from the sea. They were annihilated, taken captive at one time, brought as captives to Egypt, as numerous as the sands of the shore. I settled them in strongholds, bound in my name. The young men among them counted in the hundreds of thousands. I taxed them all, in clothing and grain from the storehouses and granaries each year.⁸⁸

Moreover, in the eleventh century, Wen-Amon encounters Tjeker ships in Byblos' harbour and also reports that:

I arrived at Dor, a city of the Tjeker, and Beder, its prince made them send me 50 loaves, a jug of wine and a leg of beef.⁸⁹

Thirdly, the late twelfth or early eleventh-century Onomasticon of Amenemope lists three of the Sea Peoples – the Sherden, Peleset and Tjeker in a section naming Canaanite towns. It does not, however, associate particular towns with particular groups.

Besides these texts, a number of material culture 'markers' are generally adduced to confirm the arrival in the twelfth-century Levant of large numbers of migrants. Violent destruction horizons and the presence of locally-manufactured 'Mycenaean IIIC' pottery have traditionally been foremost among these;⁹⁰ other 'markers' include hearths, loom-weights,

⁸⁸ Translation adapted from Breasted 1906, 201 (§403) and the French of Grandet 1994, 336-337.

⁸⁹ Translation Aubet 2001, 356. Spelling adapted.

⁹⁰ The exact nature of the pottery bearing this label in the Levant is controversial and betrays a degree of circular reasoning. While the strong influence of Aegean-derived forms and decorative motifs cannot be denied, the term describes a wide range of fabrics and styles, many unique, and with varying degrees and types of foreign influence (Gilboa 2005). Despite the 'Mycenaean' appellation, they are the same phenomenon as Cypriot White Painted

‘bathtubs’, incised scapulae, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines.⁹¹ There is a methodological problem with such a ‘checklist’ approach to defining cultural contact, in that simple presence of an item, regardless of its prevalence in the overall assemblage (and often such material constitutes only a tiny proportion compared to locally-derived material culture), tells us nothing about whether it was the result of trade, emulation, migration or any other form of cultural contact. It also overlooks the fact that the meaning and function of an artefact is highly context-dependent, and simply because similar items were present elsewhere in the East Mediterranean, it does not mean that they held the same significance for the population or were being used in the same way.

Indeed, as more theoretically-aware discussions have been produced, it has become increasingly clear that very few of these ‘markers’ represent a straightforward cultural transplantation from the Aegean or elsewhere. Hearths, for example, are used on Cyprus and in the Levant very differently than in the megaron of the Mycenaean world, betraying quite different ideologies of power;⁹² similarly the ‘bathtubs’, long supposed to be Aegean-derived lustral installations, have now been shown to be more plausibly connected with local textile industries. They are, in any case, not confined to ‘Sea People’ sites, either on Cyprus or in the Levant.⁹³ When we consider the introduction of foreign-derived cultural elements into any society, we should think in terms of hybridisation and the creation of a new form in which various elements are deployed in a way determined by local agency and the cultural context: neither the ‘immigrant’ or ‘indigenous’ culture should be expected to be reproduced in a bounded, easily-identifiable way.⁹⁴

Among theorists it has now long been widely accepted that simple material culture checklists are insufficient to demonstrate the presence of migrant communities.⁹⁵ Instead, the value of practice-based approaches is stressed, and in particular the distinction between public,

Wheel-made III wares, the Levantine name deriving from the preconception that it was brought by Aegean immigrants, and then used to ‘prove’ that very hypothesis (Sherratt 2003a).

⁹¹ See, for instance, Dothan 1982, 2003.

⁹² Fisher 2008.

⁹³ Mazow 2008.

⁹⁴ Of course, hybridisation operates on a continuum, and it does not imply that cultural elements are necessarily blended equally. The new form can draw considerably more from one source than another.

⁹⁵ Adams, Van Gerven & Levy 1978; Anthony 1990, Burmeister 2000.

high-status spheres – where rapid acculturation and hybridisation of material culture and practice frequently carries distinct advantages – and the private, lower-status aspects of life, where the practices and associated material culture of the homeland are likely to be conserved longer. In many cases, this equates with a particular focus on domestic and kinship-based activities, especially those connected with social groups whose prestige and involvement with society are lower, such as women and young children.⁹⁶ Where the material record shows evidence for these kind of practices – basic cookery techniques, domestic production activities (e.g. textiles), domestic cult, child-rearing habits etc. – displaying elements associated with another society, even if more external aspects of practice such as public religious observance, funerary practice and architecture appear identical to local norms, a migration may have taken place.

Within Levantine archaeology in recent years there has been a welcome shift towards increased focus on such practice-based evidence, although Yasur-Landau's assertion that 'many archaeologists working on the Philistine problem swiftly and amply acknowledged advances in the theory of migration'⁹⁷ is hard to support, and scarcely borne out by the examples he cites. The evidence is far from unambiguous and it is not my intention here to provide a full assessment of the Sea People question as regards Palestine, but it is clear that there at least, several elements suggestive of a change in relevant practices do exist. More significant than the mere presence and quantity of IIC pottery is the fact that the repertoire includes a wide range of domestic vessels associated with forms of food preparation not traditionally attested in the Levant. In addition, kilns containing IIC pottery at Tel Miqne/Ekron point to the use of new manufacturing techniques and pottery fabrics which do not seem to be necessitated by the vessel forms and so may point to an influx of craftsmen trained in a different tradition.⁹⁸ Faunal remains from Philistine sites present a compelling argument for major changes in animal-rearing and consumption patterns, including a significant increase in pork consumption during Iron I.⁹⁹ Textile production too undergoes changes, with new loom-weights signalling changes in the kinds of loom used and possibly in the types of textile being produced. Continuity in spinning techniques is attested, however, emphasising that change was not total, something borne out

⁹⁶ Berry 1997, Burmeister 2000, Frankel 2000, Yasur-Landau 2010.

⁹⁷ Yasur-Landau 2010, 9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 241ff.

⁹⁹ Lipovitch 2008; Hesse & Wapnish 1997.

when the religious evidence is considered. Although there have been several attempts to link what is known about Philistine religion with Aegean cult practice, they are far from convincing and often focus heavily on deities, especially a mother-goddess, for which there is in reality very little evidence in the LBA Aegean.¹⁰⁰ For the later Iron Age, when inscriptions and archaeology permit us a clearer view of Philistine cult, it appears firmly rooted in the local Canaanite tradition, as do the cults of all the Levantine societies of the time.¹⁰¹

On the basis of such a cursory summary of the evidence, it would be inappropriate to offer any firm conclusions or judgements regarding the nature of ‘Sea People’ settlement in the southern Levant. It does, however, demonstrate that there is at least a plausible argument to be made, and forms a basis for comparison with the situation attested in Phoenicia.

As Table 2.1 illustrates, firm evidence for settlement destruction horizons at the end of the LBA is very scarce in Phoenicia. This is doubtless partly due to the lack of archaeological investigation, and until more fieldwork has been carried out, our conclusions can only be preliminary. Even so, the best- and most extensively-excavated sites present a clear and consistent picture of marked continuity between the LBA and EIA. Where destructions are convincingly attested, such as at Tell Kazel or Tell Keisan, without exception they occur at the area’s northern and southern periphery and are followed by immediate reoccupation. Clear continuity in architectural styles is apparent either side of the destruction.¹⁰² ‘Arqa, barely a few kilometres from Kazel, has produced not even that evidence of destruction, with occupation evidently continuing uninterrupted into the EIA.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ In this connection see the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines – for which there are no Aegean parallels despite their frequent citation as being ‘Mycenaean’ cult items – or purported later Iron Age Philistine inscriptional references to deities such as ‘Gaia, the Mycenaean mother-goddess’ (Gitin 2003, 286) or Πελαγία (‘Aphrodite Marine’) (Lipiński 2006).

¹⁰¹ Stern 2003, 310.

¹⁰² Niemeyer 2000. Badre & Gubel 1999-2000.

¹⁰³ Charaf 2007-8.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Destruction?</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Achziv	✘	No LBA levels.
‘Akko	?	Ash layer but seems to be industrial. ¹⁰⁴
Arwad	✘	Not excavated.
Beirut	✘	Only limited excavation.
Byblos	✘	No EIA levels.
Kamid el-Loz	✘	Site remains large in EIA. Architectural continuity. ¹⁰⁵
Sarepta	✘	Complete continuity. No destruction.
Sidon	✘	Only limited excavation of LBA/EIA levels as yet.
Tel Dor	✘	No LBA levels yet. ¹⁰⁶
Tell Abu Hawam	✓	Destruction/abandonment and replacement of public buildings.
Tell ‘Arqa	✘	Uninterrupted continuity.
Tell el-Ghassil	?	Increased importance in Iron I.
Tell Kazel	✓	Immediately reoccupied in EIA.
Tell Keisan	✓	Immediately reoccupied in EIA. ¹⁰⁷
Tyre	✘	No evidence of site-wide destruction.

Table 2.1. *Evidence for site destructions in Phoenicia at the end of the LBA.*

There is no sign in the Phoenician polities of anything comparable to the IIIC pottery phenomenon. IIIC wares are far fewer in number and strikingly absent from several of those sites

¹⁰⁴ Negev & Gibson (eds.) 2001. Material culture associated with the Sea Peoples, such as Aegean-style loom-weights, has been found at ‘Akko (Killebrew & Artzy 2012) but as there has been almost no publication of previous excavations at the site it is impossible to know how best to interpret these. Rahmstorf (2003, 404) points out that the ‘Aegean-style’ loom-weights in fact appear in Cyprus and the Levant before the Aegean, including at ostensibly non-Sea People sites, such as Beth-Shan. The newly-resumed ‘Akko research intends to address the lack of publication, so better answers may soon be available.

¹⁰⁵ It has long been believed that Kamid suffered a major decline in importance in the EIA, but recent excavations have forced a revision of this view. See the preliminary reports Heinz *et al.* 2002-2009 and in particular 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Stager claims it was violently destroyed, but this was based on preconception rather than evidence. As the current excavator, Gilboa (2005), points out, the LBA levels have not yet been unearthed so the fate of Dor remains unclear.

¹⁰⁷ The destruction in Keisan came to light only in one small probe but appears to have been intense. Nevertheless, since it seals IIIC pottery, it would seem to post-date most of the destructions usually associated with the ‘Sea People’ phenomenon (Gilboa 2005).

where destruction horizons have been suggested, such as Dor and Tell Abu Hawam, neither of which has attested a single sherd. At the Phoenician sites where IIC pottery is present, the range of shapes is in no way comparable to that seen in Philistia, consisting of just two principal forms – the stirrup jar and the deep bowl/skyphos.¹⁰⁸ Neither is associated with the kind of low-prestige domestic practice which we have identified as most likely to reflect a change in population. The IIC wares at Sarepta were not locally manufactured, and seem closer to examples from Cyprus, Anatolia and elsewhere in the Levant than to Aegean prototypes. Charaf has suggested that parallels exist between some shapes in the locally-produced pottery of ‘Arqa and some seen as IIC, but the fabrics are different, and many ‘IIC’ shapes are themselves of Canaanite derivation.¹⁰⁹ Some locally-produced Aegean-style pottery is apparent at Tell Kazel in the LBA and EIA, following the cessation of formerly intense importation of ceramics from the Argolid, but the excavators are almost certainly correct in their view that this represents an incorporation and adaptation of foreign-influenced styles into the local repertoire, not the introduction of a new tradition by immigrants. Its appearance predates what the excavators consider to be a Sea People destruction.¹¹⁰ Across Phoenicia, indigenous pottery traditions continue to develop uninterrupted throughout the Iron Age, and without changes in manufacturing techniques, as the pottery workshops excavated at Sarepta clearly show.¹¹¹

Faunal data suitable for comparison of LBA and EIA diet is not available for any Phoenician polity, so we cannot know whether there was a change similar to that witnessed in the south. We have similarly little data for other low-level domestic activities such as child-rearing or domestic cult, so it is not impossible that one of these might produce evidence of changes. At present, though, there is nothing to suggest any major change in low-level, private Phoenician

¹⁰⁸ Gilboa 2005, 55; Koehl 1985.

¹⁰⁹ Koehl 1985, 147; Charaf 2007-8.

¹¹⁰ Pedrazzi & Chiti 2012. The advent of significant local production of Hand-made Burnished Ware in certain areas at Kazel and ‘Arqa is sometimes seen as indicative of new population elements (Badre 2003; Boileau *et al.* 2010). It is, however, still unclear what groups, if any, may have been associated with the East Mediterranean HMBW phenomenon and the ware is already present at Tell Abu Hawam by the early thirteenth century (Artzy 2002-3, 20). We might also question the validity some scholars’ (e.g. Charaf 2007-8, 77) use of subjective aesthetic judgements to label the ware crude, unappealing and functionally unnecessary, and so unlikely to have been produced for any reason except to supply a population already familiar with it.

¹¹¹ Discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Anderson 1987, 1988; Khalifeh 1988.

practice during the LBA/EIA transition. Public activities such as burial or non-domestic religion are much less useful for identifying migrant groups, but it is worth noting that here too, as we have seen, the evidence is overwhelmingly for continuity.

There is every reason, then, to agree with the majority scholarly opinion which does not propose major Sea People presence in most of Phoenicia. A question remains, however, regarding the southern extremity of my area of interest, particularly the Carmel Coast and 'Akko Plain. Most of the sites where destruction horizons have been suggested are located in this area and it remains common to claim it for the Sea Peoples, specifically the Tjeker, with traditional narratives positing a 'Phoenician' conquest at the end of Iron I.¹¹² The origins of this hypothesis lie purely in the references from *Wen-Amon* and the Onomasticon of Amenemope mentioned above. Initially these texts seem fairly unambiguous, and strongly suggest that in the EIA the Egyptians believed some of the social groups we identify as 'Sea Peoples' lived in this area of the Levant.

There are, however, both archaeological and textual problems with such an interpretation. As we have seen, the archaeological evidence in no way suggests the presence of exogenous population groups in or around Dor at this time. Gilboa, one of the current directors of excavation at Dor, has strongly argued against her predecessor Stern's interpretation, stressing vehemently not only the lack of any sign of any of the features associated with the Sea Peoples elsewhere, but also the clear continuity between Iron I and subsequent phases.¹¹³ Far from there being a 'Phoenician invasion' at the end of the EIA, Gilboa and her fellow excavators conclude that:

'In contrast to this conventional wisdom, Dor's material culture in the early Iron Age epitomises the sort of cultural phenomenon that most scholars seem to have in mind when they relate to the early Phoenicians.'¹¹⁴

In an attempt to reconcile the Egyptian texts with the archaeological evidence, Gilboa draws on a strand of scholarship which has criticised the traditional interpretations of the Tjeker,

¹¹² Stern 1990, 1998, 2000a.

¹¹³ Gilboa 2005; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

and in particular the persistent attempts to identify them with a known group from the Classical tradition. The Tjeker vividly illustrate the spuriousness of such approach, having been made to correspond with a number of different peoples according to the fashion of the day. It is generally agreed that they are probably the same as the people usually transliterated as the Shekelesh (*Tkr* vs. *Škr*). The latter are often transliterated as ‘Sikels’ and linked with Sicily. When the Medinet Habu inscriptions were first deciphered, however, there was a desire to connect them with the Τευκροί, hence the choice to transliterate the final letter as ‘r’ rather than the more usual ‘l’. The Τευκροί hypothesis now has few adherents, though the ‘Sikel’ interpretation continues to be widespread despite the complete lack of anything remotely resembling Sicilian material culture in the Levant.¹¹⁵

Nowhere in the Egyptian texts is it said that the Tjeker were exogenous to the Levant, nor that they came from the sea or islands; on the contrary, throughout the Medinet Habu inscriptions they are frequently called Asiatics. If we are to believe *Wen-Amon*’s claim that Dor was inhabited by Tjeker, the only conclusion is that Tjeker refers to a group of people which, whatever the Egyptians may have believed about them, were indigenous Canaanites: in other words, Phoenicians. This is essentially the view of Goedicke, who suggested that in *Wen-Amon*, ‘Tjeker’ refers to a geographical place rather than an ethnic group, and as such is even more likely to reflect an established geopolitical unit rather than a newly immigrant community. When it is occasionally used to denote the people of this land, he argues that it ‘refers to the indigenous Semitic population of Palestine in contrast to the Philistines of distinctly different background.’¹¹⁶ In his view, the word is related not to the Sikels but to the Semitic word זכר (*zkr*) meaning ‘man, male’, as seen in the name of the king of Byblos in *Wen-Amon*, Zakarba‘al.¹¹⁷ Bikai has also voiced support for the idea of Tjeker as Phoenicians. In an often-overlooked 1992 paper she argued that the reason the Phoenician polities show no evidence for incursion by the Sea Peoples is that they were in fact among them:

¹¹⁵ Redford (2008) has also objected to the ‘Sikel’ transcription in philological grounds, preferring an Aegean or West Anatolian origin.

¹¹⁶ Goedicke 1975, 28.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 182. This connection is taken up by Eyre (1999), who refers to Zakarba‘al as ‘Tjeker-Ba‘al’.

The suggestion is that there is a layer of tradition at Medinet Habu which reflects a rebellion by the northern countries, perhaps the Phoenicians, a rebellion in which the “Sea Peoples” were involved.¹¹⁸

Given the loose nature of Egypt’s control of northern Canaan and its reduced influence post-Qadesh, it is very tempting to see the Tjeker element in the Ramesses III Year 8 coalition as comprising factions from what was later known as Phoenicia who no longer felt subject to Egyptian political influence. If Drews is correct and the ‘Land-Battle’ was indeed a punitive razzia against defeated rebels,¹¹⁹ it is striking that it seems only to have targeted the Peleset: a more ambitious campaign further north to launch reprisals against the Tjeker was apparently beyond Ramesses’ abilities or inclination. Again, this is consistent with an archaeological picture where Egyptian influence in the southern Levant remained strong well into the EIA, in stark contrast to the situation further north.

Gilboa’s position regarding Dor is similar. She proposes that the population there was mixed, consisting primarily of local Canaanites but also of small numbers of Cypriots, but suggests that these groups cannot be ethnically segregated and that ‘Tjeker’ should be seen as a local label of self-identification within the context of upheavals in identity taking place in the Levant during the LBA/EIA transition.¹²⁰

This is plausible, and seems the likeliest way of reconciling the archaeological and textual evidence. I do, however, have substantial reservations about whether this is something we should be attempting to do. The literary nature of the *Wen-Amon* text has long been overlooked by Levantine scholars eager to hang on to the one substantial written description of the region during the EIA. In light of the issues raised about it in Chapter 1, and in the absence of corroborating archaeological evidence, it is almost impossible to know how much credence to give elements such as the identification of Tjeker at Dor. *Wen-Amon* is virtually the only basis for inserting Sea Peoples into an EIA southern Phoenicia where they are otherwise unwarranted.¹²¹ In

¹¹⁸ Bikai 1992, 136.

¹¹⁹ Drews 2000.

¹²⁰ Gilboa 2005.

¹²¹ The Onomasticon of Amenemope remains, but, as with its reference to Sherden, it is hard to know what to make of its reference to Tjeker without any other convincing information.

my view it is a distinctly poor one, and until some better evidence emerges, I would suggest we abandon attempts to place Tjekker, Sherden or any other Sea People group in the area.

How, then, are we to explain the apparent absence of the ‘Sea Peoples’ from Phoenicia? One commonly-suggested explanation for this lacuna stems from the close links established during the LBA between Phoenicia and the Aegean, whence many of the Sea People groups are usually supposed to originate. Bell has argued that during the LBA the Phoenician polities functioned as *entrepôts* for Aegean goods into the Levant and that, unlike Ugarit, their links were frequently direct rather than conducted through Cypriot middlemen. Her suggestion is that in view of these previously familiar relations, the invaders passed them over for conquest.¹²²

This notion does not ring true, however. There is good reason to be sceptical of the Sea People mass migration hypothesis, but if we do accept it, the most plausible model is that of Yasur-Landau, who suggests that it must have taken place principally over land and most likely over a period of several years, probably decades. It seems inconceivable that such a mass of refugees might pass through Phoenicia – an economically prosperous and fertile region, untroubled by the Egyptian administrative and military presence that continued to exist in more southerly areas – without attempting to settle simply because some merchants among their number had once traded with the locals. Even if we allow that for some reason they did choose not to settle, we might still expect that in the time required for several thousand people, allegedly with families, to traverse the region, they should have left some material trace.

In fact, the idea that migrants might pass over regions with which they had previous contact seems to contradict directly our theoretical understanding of the way migrations usually occur. As Anthony has pointed out, long-distance migration is a risky proposition and so tends to focus on well-known areas: either places which have previously been frequented by members of that society as merchants, travellers, mercenaries etc., or to which the society has sent migrants before. Such associations between source and destination can create very specific migration pathways, operating down to the levels of particular towns, villages or neighbourhoods, and frequently involving kinship links.¹²³

If the Sea Peoples were as desperate, resourceful and destructive as they are often painted, it seems hard to believe mere sentimentality would have coloured their decisions concerning

¹²² Bell 2006, 110.

¹²³ Anthony 1990, 903.

whom to attack and whom to spare; nor does it appear that they overlooked the Phoenician coast because of its potential usefulness as a trading partner: if we assume that some of them at least did eventually settle in Philistia, the small quantities of Philistine pottery in Phoenicia seems to suggest that trade between the two regions was not particularly extensive (see Chapter 4). The fact is, the kind of contacts Bell has demonstrated ought to have made Phoenicia more, not less, attractive to migrants originating in the Aegean.

An obvious alternative hypothesis does not, however, present itself. Bikai's idea that inhabitants of Phoenicia itself may have been among the Sea Peoples is attractive, especially if we follow Drews' tempting suggestion that the Peleset too, far from being Aegean immigrants, may have been rebellious Canaanites who had always lived in the region of Philistia.¹²⁴ There is, however, almost no evidence to support such a view. It is likely that greater archaeological investigation of Phoenicia will enable greatly revised and improved understandings of the region's relationship with the 'Sea Peoples', which will likely impact significantly on how we understand their role in the region as a whole. If it proves that 'Sea People' groups can be identified with largely indigenous populations in the south of the region, a much wider re-evaluation of the role of local populations in the geopolitical shifts of the LBA/EIA in the Levant would seem to be required.

Conclusion

The primary narrative framework within which this period is generally understood in the Levant – the Sea People migration – has been shown to have little to recommend it for Phoenicia. It may well be that its usefulness for Palestine and north Syria should also be subjected to rather more sceptical scrutiny than has often been the case. The Egyptian question, on the other hand, does have a clear bearing on the Phoenician polities, but here too we have seen that we cannot simply extrapolate the situation in the south to cover the region of modern Lebanon.

The natural tendency when dealing with evidence-poor areas is to extrapolate from other, better known regions, and to push what data we do have as far as is possible. As this chapter has shown, both of these approaches have significant limitations. They lead to under-recognition of

¹²⁴ Drews 2000.

the significant heterogeneity which can exist over space, a failure to adequately explore the role of local agency and socio-political strategies, and an unwillingness to address the shortcomings of cherished sources of information, such as *Wen-Amon*. If we are to advance our understanding of areas such as Phoenicia in 'Dark Ages' such as this, the first step must be to assess frankly what we do know, and avoid falling into the trap of repeating time-worn narratives or clinging to texts whose veracity is doubtful. This may in the short term lead to an apparent reduction in what we seem to know, but, I would suggest, it is better to know less and be secure in that knowledge than to trick ourselves into believing we know more based on false assumptions and unsound methodologies.

This chapter has shown that external political influence on Phoenician polities was much more limited than is often supposed. The idea of imperialism poorly reflects the nature of the region's relationship with Egypt, which in fact was far more intermittent and bilateral. Phoenicia was at no stage subject to an Egyptian imperial 'yoke' and we must discard the idea that a 'withdrawal' of Egyptian imperial infrastructure at the end of the LBA unburdened the region and enabled it to pursue dynamic, self-directed policies during the EIA.¹²⁵ Instead, Phoenician interaction with Egypt took place through a prism of local élite strategies of identity- and status-negotiation. It is not so simple as saying that the withdrawal of the Egyptians led to a reduction in local use of Aegyptiaca. Instead we must recognise that local élite participation in an unequal but symbiotic system of political interaction was vital to Egyptian influence there. The downturn in the importance of Egypt in local political strategies was not a *consequence* of the end of Egyptian influence: they were one and the same phenomenon. If this was the prime driver of social change in LBA/EIA Phoenicia, then, as the data from the pit-grave cemeteries seems to confirm, it would follow that that change was restricted mainly to élite groups, with relatively minor impact of the wider population. To test this hypothesis, and to explore what other dynamics were affecting Phoenician society more broadly at this time, we must turn our attention to changes in the economy and internal politics.

¹²⁵ See, for example, Bell 2006, 113.

Chapter 3

Economic Change

The importance of economic issues to understanding social change is obvious. We might dispute Marx's view that the economic sphere is society's fundamental 'base', with all other social and political structures as a secondary and almost epiphenomenal 'superstructure', but it cannot be denied that the economic issues of subsistence and access to other material resources are among the most basic concerns of human life. Economic relationships and the structures these form are among the most powerful forces structuring human action and interaction; while not a 'base' separate from and preceding other forms of social relation and structure, economic questions are at the heart of how social order is produced, reproduced or transformed. However, despite this undoubted importance, the relationship between economics and archaeology has been problematic, especially as concerns questions of theory.

For much of the twentieth century the central debate in historical and archaeological economics was between formalism and substantivism over the degree to which the ancient economy is comparable to the modern. Formalism, developed from the works of theorists such as Marx (Marx & Engels 1848), adopted the modernist position that market principles and the desire for profit are universal and apply throughout history: modern economic theory is therefore applicable to antiquity. The substantivists, on the other hand, best exemplified by Polanyi (1944) and influential followers such as Finley (1973), took a contrary, 'primitivist' position that built on the Weberian notion that modern capitalism was historically-contingent, not fundamental: ancient economies were structured quite differently from modern, largely without commercial profit-concerns.¹

The overly polarised nature of this discussion was distinctly unhelpful, with neither position wholly to be recommended. Chapter 1 made extensive criticism of many of the specific tenets which underlie formalism, in particular the concept that human action is best understood in utilitarian terms as a rationally-considered attempt to maximise profit. The same criticisms,

¹ Nafissi 2005

unsurprisingly, apply here, especially concerning the implications of formalism for social change: it is a small step from accepting that the values of modern capitalism are universal and that the difference between ancient and modern societies is merely one of extent, to the view that the former is merely a ‘less developed’ precursor to the latter: precisely the sort of teleological, unilinear and Eurocentric concept of social change that this thesis profoundly rejects.² In this respect, the Weberian stance is preferable, but not the full-blown primitivism espoused by scholars such as Polanyi. This, as many scholars now accept, is utterly unsustainable in the face of abundant evidence for economic behaviour in the ancient world which shows every sign of being motivated by a desire for profit. This was not the *only* form of economic activity, and Polanyi was right to highlight the possibility of other forms such as reciprocal exchange and redistribution. Nevertheless, the ancient world has produced clear evidence of commercial, pseudo-capitalist practice such as investment, speculation, interest and so on.³ It is tempting to declare this entire debate futile, played-out and sterile, as many scholars have,⁴ but as we will see in this chapter, the question of the balance between centralised and decentralised, non-commercial and commercial modes of economic activity remains critically important to current discussions of economic change in the East Mediterranean LBA/EIA transition.

Despite its ongoing influence on debate, there can be little doubt that excessive focus on the intractable modernist/primitivist argument has distracted scholarship from developing potentially more productive methodologies and frameworks for exploring ancient economies, with the result that much work – especially that conducted from a material-archaeological rather than textual-historical perspective – is highly particularistic and *ad hoc*, with little engagement with theory of any kind. There has been surprisingly little attempt to develop a general methodology for reconstructing an ancient society’s economic organisation purely or primarily from the material record, and consequently interest has been overwhelmingly focused on those societies whose abundant textual records are best known to us. As Smith notes, ‘for most economists, Rome (or perhaps Greece) is as “ancient” as they are willing to study’.⁵ Finley is

² See, for example, Hudson 1996a, who verges on this kind of unilinear conception of history with his suggestion that history can be seen in terms of the effects (beneficial or otherwise) of repeated, and ever-increasing, instances of privatisation beginning in the second millennium BC.

³ Lamberg-Karlovsky 2009, 75.

⁴ e.g. Van de Mieroop 2007a, 189; Monroe 2009, 1; Nafissi 2005, 9.

⁵ Smith 2004, 73.

perhaps the most obvious, and still-influential, exemplar of this approach, though by no means the only one. Closer to our current area of interest we might point also to the Linear B-dominated discussion of the Mycenaean palatial economies.⁶

There is, of course, nothing wrong with using textual data when it is available, provided that due attention is paid to questions of how representative and reliable it is. As we have seen, however, there are serious questions regarding the reliability of almost all the few texts describing EIA Phoenicia, including those most often cited for economic questions, such as *Wen-Amón*. We can no more reconstruct the Phoenician economy from them than we can the Mycenaean one from Homer. We have, it is true, comparative data from Ugarit's abundant LBA archives, some of which deals with the Phoenician cities directly.⁷ The limitations of such information for approaching Phoenician economic and social change are, however, obvious. How closely did the situations in the various – undoubtedly diverse – Phoenician polities parallel that in Ugarit? And how can we begin to identify change between the LBA and EIA when these sources effectively cease at the end of the former? The only answer is that proposed throughout this thesis: that textual and archaeological data must be used in careful conjunction, each illuminating the other.

Current Approaches to East Mediterranean Economies

A polarised and straightforward modernist/primitivist dichotomy is now widely rejected, and with it the similarly rigid classificatory stereotypes which formerly characterised economic discussion. Particularly noteworthy are distinctions such as that made by Finley between Marx's 'Asiatic mode of production' – which stereotyped ancient Near Eastern economies as despotic, slave-driven and irrigation-focused – and a more open, democratic, quasi-commercial 'Classical mode'. Steeped in essentialist conceptions of culture, such categorisation draws clear links between 'modernity' and the Graeco-Roman world while painting the east as 'other', less developed and an evolutionary dead end. The orientalist ideology underpinning approaches of this kind would be enough to warrant their dismissal,⁸ but they lack even practical usefulness. Simplistic dichotomies struggle to account for the ambiguous situations we see in Phoenicia,

⁶ Finley 1973; Killen & Voutsaki (eds.) 2001; Pullen (ed.) 2010.

⁷ e.g. RS varia 25; RS 18.025; RS 18.031; RS 19.028; RS 34.137; RS 34.149; RS 34.167+175; *TBR* 107.

⁸ Said 1978.

Ugarit and elsewhere in the Levant. With its powerful palaces and kings, and strongly ‘oriental’ material culture, focus on commercialism and trade and lack of major irrigation projects, the Levant was neither truly ‘western’ nor wholly ‘oriental’. Indeed, Finley himself seemed to recognise this, and was forced in *The Ancient Economy* to relegate the Phoenicians to a shadowy economic limbo where they could safely be ignored, dubbing them ‘secondary, atypical, marginal’.⁹

It is on precisely such ambiguities that economic discussions of antiquity in general and the East Mediterranean in particular have increasingly focused. It is recognised that societies can include both commercial and non-commercial economic activity: private, often decentralised, ‘entrepreneurial’ practice can co-exist with centralised processes such as redistribution and reciprocal exchange.¹⁰ Furthermore, such categories are not absolute but malleable and open to interpretation, with certain forms of economic action open to interpretation in a variety of ways, not just by modern scholars but by the participants themselves. This chapter will argue that while scholars acknowledge these ambiguities, the vestiges of old dichotomous thinking remain present in contemporary archaeological approaches to the East Mediterranean. When the ways in which economic activity can be configured are complex and almost infinitely variable, it can be unhelpful to think in terms of ‘commercial’ or ‘non-commercial’ or ‘private’ as opposed to ‘public’ economic elements.¹¹

The reduction of the variability of economic relations to these slightly simplistic continua has been a marked feature of discussions of the LBA/EIA in the Eastern Mediterranean over the last two decades or so, with several scholars arguing that the period can best be understood through shifts in the balance between ‘private’ and ‘public’ control of the economy. At the

⁹ Finley 1973, 29.

¹⁰ Despite the temptation to see ‘state’ economic activity as centralised and to be distinguished from ‘decentralised’ private enterprise, the correspondence between private commerce and decentralisation is not automatic: as Hudson (1996b) points out, the aim of private commerce is also to exert centralised control in the form of economic monopolies and the conversion of commercial success into political power. The economically successful are frequently able to form political oligarchies in which political power is no less ‘centralised’ than in other forms of political organisation. Indeed, it has frequently been argued that this very process characterised Phoenician politics during the first millennium, for which discussion, see below.

¹¹ Hudson 1996b, 41; Smith 2004; Bell 2006; Routledge & McGeough 2009; Monroe 2009; Lamberg-Karlovsky 2009.

forefront of this process have been Susan Sherratt and Mario Liverani, who have both offered their own models in which social and political change is driven by increasing economic decentralisation and an expansion of dynamic, profit-driven, ‘entrepreneurial’ trade. A key difference between them, at least inasmuch as their theories relate to the Levant, is the kind of economy they imagine having preceded this change. Liverani remains quite strongly wedded to the old idea of Near Eastern LBA society as palace-dominated and non-commercial. Sherratt has recognised that ‘entrepreneurial’ elements existed alongside centrally-administered economic activity during the LBA, and that the transformation going into the EIA was essentially one of balance. As will become clear, this fits much better with the evidence and so it is with Sherratt’s version of the idea that this chapter primarily concerns itself.

The region’s old Bronze Age palaces, Sherratt argues, especially those in the Aegean, derived their importance from their ability to control the key nodes of regional trade. Élite legitimacy depended on control of imports and exports. Phenomena such as import-substitution, initially in less regulated, low-status products such as pottery, reflect the emergence of smaller-scale, independent merchants as increasingly significant. As they added more socially significant and desirable goods to their repertoires, they posed a significant challenge to the central palaces’ ability to control distribution.¹² Centralised dominance of resources such as metals was circumvented by a burgeoning scrap trade and the development of new products such as iron knives – turning what had previously been a fortuitous by-product of copper manufacture into a desirable commodity in its own right, specifically marketed at sub-élite groups.¹³ In Sherratt’s view, the shifting nature of the economy led to the old palace élites becoming irrelevant and obsolete: economic change was not just the result of the end of the Bronze Age palatial societies, but the cause.

Liverani and Sherratt have both grounded their approaches explicitly in world-systems analysis, focused on macro-scale interactions between societies over a relatively long time-scale.¹⁴ As originally formulated by Wallerstein to explain the emergence of modern capitalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries AD, world-systems theory focused on exploring intersocietal

¹² Liverani 1997, 2001, 2003; Sherratt 1994, 1998, 2001, 2003a, 2009, and, following her, Bauer 1998.

¹³ Sherratt 1994, 2003a. Bass (1967, 117) highlighted the presence of scrap in the cargo of the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck.

¹⁴ Liverani 1987; Sherratt 2009.

interactions through the movement of staple goods between peripheries and cores.¹⁵ It has since been subject to significant modification and reformulation to address shortcomings in the original model and render it applicable to pre-modern situations, to the extent that Kardulias now advocates the distinction between Wallerstein's original world-systems *theory* and the world-systems *analysis* in which scholars like he and Sherratt engage.¹⁶ Among these modifications two have been particularly significant: the expansion of the analysis to consider the movement of prestige and symbolically-important items and information in addition to staple commodities, and Kardulias' concept of 'negotiated peripherality', which addresses the problem of conventional world-systems theory's lack of room for agency on the part of the 'periphery'. Rather than seeing the periphery as passively exploited, it stresses its contributory role in defining the relationship for its own ends: people choose selectively how they involve themselves in an interaction and how to utilise the items they obtain.¹⁷

This focus on interactions between societies is clearly attractive in the interconnected world of the LBA Eastern Mediterranean,¹⁸ and is highly compatible with this thesis's aims of producing a more integrated picture in which the specific case-study of Phoenicia is seen explicitly as part of a wider set of changes affecting the broader region. While I do not explicitly adopt world-systems terminology, many of the observations of this thesis are compatible with its perspectives. The view of Phoenician elite involvement with Egypt outlined in the previous chapter, for example, could easily be presented in terms of negotiated peripherality to an Egyptian core. Sherratt's world-systems perspective envisages a key role for Phoenicia, seeing it, alongside Cyprus, as one of the hotbeds for the development of the kind of decentralised, commercial trade she sees as crucial in bringing about wider social change.¹⁹ World-systems approaches have been

¹⁵ Wallerstein 1974. Wallerstein himself explicitly denied the applicability of his approach to pre-modern contexts; this has done little to curb the proliferation of often highly successful world-systems approaches to antiquity.

¹⁶ Kardulias 2009. Much criticism of the use of world-systems analysis in archaeology has, rather unhelpfully, focused its attention on Wallerstein's original version rather than on the revised versions utilised by archaeologists today (e.g. Stein 1999a, 1999b; Lamberg-Karlovsky 2009).

¹⁷ Parkinson & Galaty 2009; Kardulias 2009. Chase-Dunn & Hall (1997) had already argued that not all core-periphery relationships need be exploitative.

¹⁸ Liverani 1987; Sherratt & Sherratt 1991; A. Sherratt 1993; Galaty *et al.* 2009.

¹⁹ Sherratt 1998, 306; 2009, 48.

applied specifically to the LBA/EIA transition in Phoenicia by Carol Bell and to Ugarit by Christopher Monroe.²⁰

It is in the light of these discussions that this chapter seeks to examine changes in the Phoenician economy between the LBA and EIA. I aim to show that while Sherratt's approach in particular has proven very useful for Cyprus and the Aegean, there are significant problems which undermine its effectiveness as a framework for understanding Phoenicia. These problems are categorical – as has already been alluded to, many aspects of Levantine economic activity cannot easily be expressed in terms of 'public' or 'private', 'centralised' or 'decentralised' – and evidential: the material and textual record of Phoenicia is inadequate for identifying such subtle alterations in economic relations. Instead of this regional metanarrative of 'privatisation', this chapter and the next advocate an arguably less ambitious perspective but one which, it is hoped, proves more productive in illuminating the Phoenician situation. In particular, rather than focusing on categories of economic activity, they instead attend to the factors that led to specific observable socio-economic choices made by the people of the Phoenician cities at this time. This chapter applies this approach principally to matters of population, subsistence and settlement pattern, while Chapter 4 explores the nature of, and reasons for, Phoenician commercial expansion beyond the homeland during the EIA. This division between chapters should not be interpreted as a simplistic dichotomy between 'domestic' and 'international' aspects of the economy. Such compartmentalisation would be arbitrary and deeply problematic, and it will be noted that some 'international' elements are discussed in this chapter and some 'domestic' matters in Chapter 4. Instead, the intention is in this chapter to highlight the uses and limitations of the 'privatisation' model and to illustrate a more appropriate approach for Phoenicia. Chapter 4 will then build on this to discuss Phoenician interaction with their neighbours and the wider Mediterranean – a topic which obviously extends beyond the straightforwardly 'economic'.

²⁰ Bell 2005; 2006, 112; Monroe 2009. Besides these world-systems approaches, detailed examinations of the EIA Phoenician economy are few. General works such as Aubet 2001 and Markoe 2000 devote brief sections to it and Bondi 1995a is a good overview, although not confined to the EIA.

The Changing Nature of the Phoenician Economy?

The suggestion that the balance between centrally-administered and private economic activity shifted during the LBA/EIA transition in no way imagines that economic organisation in the LBA was entirely the former, or that by the end of the EIA it was solely the preserve of private, profit-motivated merchants. Much recent scholarship has been at pains to draw out how different forms of economic activity coexisted in the ancient Near East in a complex and ambiguous fashion. Adams demonstrated in the 1970s that money, markets and ‘entrepreneurial’ behaviour existed in Mesopotamia as early as the third millennium BC. During the second millennium, *tamkāru* merchants were dispatched by the palaces of Mesopotamia and the Levant on state-sponsored missions to obtain particular commodities, the prices and values of which the central administration regarded as fixed. However, once a *tamkāru* was away from home he had a substantial degree of autonomy: exchanges could be conducted in whatever way he chose in order to maximise personal profit over and above obtaining the goods required by the central authority.²¹ By the LBA, the Ugaritic texts reveal in that city considerable intermingling of ‘private’ commercial activity and political life: merchants were in positions of administrative and military authority, or, to view matters from the opposite perspective, bureaucrats and generals also moonlighted as merchants. At least three successful merchants are listed as part of the élite military aristocracy of *maryannu*-charioteers, while another, Šiptiba‘al, was a relative of the Ugaritic queen and managed trading operations on her behalf in addition to heading a caravan venture between Ugarit, Karkemish and Emar. ‘Governmental’ functions seem to have been carried out by private merchants, including tax-collection.²²

Apart from individual people being involved in both administrative and mercantile activities, the Ugaritic documents suggest that the palatial infrastructure played an important facilitating role in enabling ‘private’ merchants to go about their business. It provided credit and investment, helped maintain trust through the regulation and inspection of goods, particularly

²¹ Adams 1974; Hudson 1996a, 1996b; Monroe 2009; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1996, 2009, 57.

²² Astour 1972; Monroe 2009, 153; Knapp 1991; Routledge & McGeough 2009; Bell 2012. Despite the general growth of support for a more ambiguous, mixed economy at Ugarit, some prominent scholars remain committed to the idea of strictly demarcated public and private spheres in which trade was largely conducted at the command of the state, e.g. Liverani 1997, 2001; Heltzer 1996, 1999.

staple foodstuffs; sought to safeguard its merchants' wellbeing in foreign territories; adjudicated disputes within its own territory and represented its merchants diplomatically when disputes spanned political boundaries. The formalised language and idiom of diplomacy between rulers is in many ways indistinguishable from that used for business transactions. Monroe argues that gift-exchange was used as a formal framework in which exchanges could be undertaken if the parties involved did not have an established personal relationship: the convention of addressing each other as 'brother' and giving gifts, so familiar from the political machinations of LBA rulers, is also used by profit-motivated merchants.²³

In short, 'private' commerce and 'state' trade, administration and diplomacy are not readily separable at Ugarit. They co-exist and intermingle, blurring into each other. When people in political office – up to and including the monarch himself – engaged in deal-making and profit-seeking in a patrimonial, unconstitutional system such as this, a distinction between 'public' and 'private' sectors is meaningless. There are, as Routledge and McGeough put it, 'a dizzying variety of exchange relations recorded and administered in an apparently *ad hoc* manner.'²⁴

Despite the scarcity of sources relating to Phoenician economic matters, there are several pieces of evidence which indicate that much the same kind of ambiguity existed there. A number of the texts from Ugarit mention Phoenician cities and merchants and seem to point to the existence of similar protocols and institutions. The involvement of the monarch in loan deals – presumably with interest – is attested by RS 18.025, which apparently records the king of Ugarit lending the king of Byblos money to build a ship. Much has been made too of *Wen-Amon's* references to '*hubūr*'. Bondi sees these as 'private agencies' of merchants existing alongside the palace. This echoes Astour's suggestion that 'merchant decumates' or *aširu* existed in Ugarit, though the existence of these remains impossible either to prove or refute on the basis of the present evidence.²⁵ Bondi's interpretation remains controversial, however, and it is not clear whether *hubūr* were actual organisations, perhaps akin to guilds, a kind of business relationship, or something else. It is clear that a *hubūr* was some kind of mercantile relationship, however, in which the king of Byblos, the Egyptian pharaoh and possibly the king of Sidon all appear to have

²³ Cline 1991; Monroe 2009.

²⁴ Routledge & McGeough 2009, 27.

²⁵ Monroe 2009, 153-5.

been involved.²⁶ Another similarity with Ugarit is the involvement of the administration in facilitating and protecting private economic activity. In RS varia 25, for example, the king of Tyre complains to his Ugaritic counterpart about the aforementioned Ugaritic merchant/royal hanger-on Šiptiba‘al’s failure to pay a Tyrian trader for merchandise.

We should not, however, overlook the strong likelihood that differences also existed between Ugarit and Phoenicia (not to mention between the Phoenician polities themselves). The letters we have are only a very partial record of the situation and, since they hail from Ugarit, are perhaps likely to focus on the points of overlap between the Ugaritic system and the Phoenician. The cities may have varied greatly in matters which were not recorded in this way. We might mention RS varia 25 in this connection: in this letter when the king of Tyre writes to the king of Ugarit, he appears not to know the correct title of the *wakil kāri* – ‘overseer of the quay’, perhaps indicating a degree of unfamiliarity with the Ugaritic system.²⁷

Alongside this evidence for commercial, profit-motivated economic activity in which categories of the ‘private’ and ‘state’ are blurred and intertwined, we should also consider the possibility of more straightforwardly centrally-administered aspects of the economy. The nature of the evidence from Phoenicia is particularly problematic in this regard. By definition, production, storage or redistribution will be most easily recognised as centrally-administered by the proximity of their material remains to the palaces themselves, or, to a lesser extent, temples. We see this in the Aegean, for example. While the Mycenaean palaces are no longer thought to administer the whole economy in the same way they once were, the clear evidence of storage, record-keeping and workshop facilities associated with the palaces has done a great deal to shape our understanding of how ‘public’ and ‘private’ interrelated in these societies.

However, we have only a single, partially excavated and published palace from Phoenicia: that of Kamid el-Loz. Situated in the Beqaa‘ and separated from the coastal heartland by the Lebanon mountains, we have little way of knowing how typical it was of Phoenician administrative complexes more generally. Even here, the evidence is only able to furnish us with limited conclusions, in part because much of Kamid el-Loz’s palace area is unavailable for

²⁶ Bondi 1995a; Goedicke 1975, 69; Katzenstein 1983. Katzenstein would also place Hiram’s dealings with Solomon in this category of relationship. If correct, this would suggest that *hubūr* was not limited to the eleventh century world of Wen-Amon, but continued throughout the EIA.

²⁷ Monroe 2009, 139.

excavation underneath the current village's cemetery. The palatial identification of the remains we do have is based on the monumentality of the architecture; indications of long-distance trade contacts, including high-status objects such as Aegean rhyta; and the presence of material culture indicative of administrative activity, including tablets and seals.

Production and storage facilities exist in the palace, but they seem rather too paltry to indicate a significant redistributive or production role for the polity as a whole. They essentially comprise a few ovens, a LBA blacksmith's workshop and an area identified as a MBA store-room on the basis of the burnt remains of several storage vessels (Fig. 3.1).²⁸ Such small-scale (and not even contemporaneous) facilities seem essentially domestic rather than industrial: probably intended to serve the needs of the palace and the élite resident there, with little bearing on the town or hinterland beyond. Extensive storage facilities have been identified as a characteristic feature of other Levantine palaces, including Qatna, Mari and Hazor, so we cannot rule out the existence of similar features in the unexcavated portion at Kamid, but even at those sites it does not necessarily follow that these were for redistributive economic activity.²⁹

²⁸ Frisch, Mansfeld & Thiele 1985; Strange 1987, 6; Heinz 2007; Heinz *et al.* 2007, 2008, 2009.

²⁹ Bonfil & Zarzecki-Peleg 2007, 41.

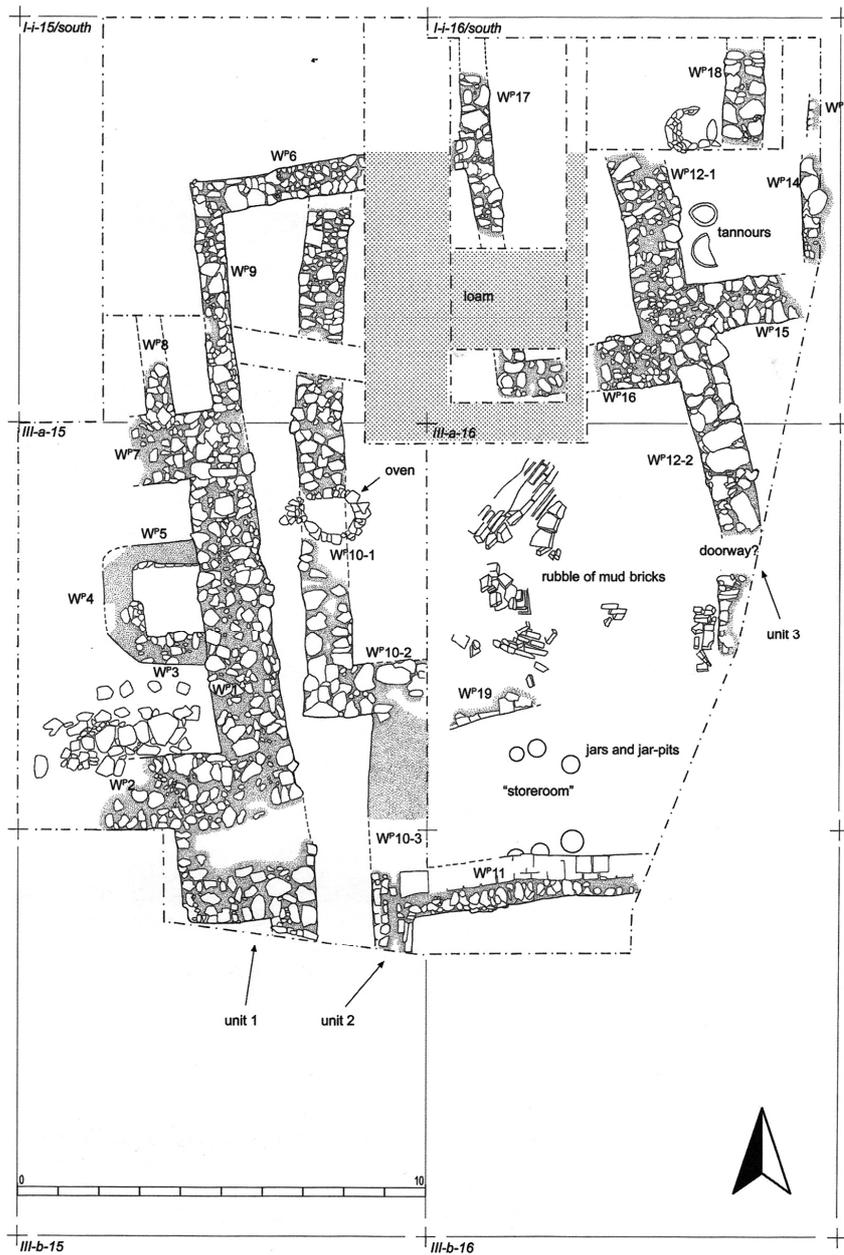


Fig. 3.1. *Kamid el-Loz Palace area. After Heinz 2007, Fig. 102.*

Our understanding of centrally-administered economic activity is therefore heavily reliant on textual sources, and consequently subject to the vagaries and limitations that entails. The problems of interpretation are evident in the Amarna Letters. In EA 85, for example, Ribaddi of Byblos' complaints may hint at centralised food-storage depots existing under royal control:

Since he [‘Abdi-Aširta, king of Amurru] has attacked me three times this year, and for two years I have been repeatedly robbed of my grain, we have no grain to eat. What can I say to my peasantry?’³⁰

However, this is by no means the only possible interpretation of these lines. In this and other Amarna letters in the ‘Yarimuta sequence’,³¹ Ribaddi consistently uses the following formula to describe the peasantry’s hunger and the lack of labour for the fields:

Their sons, their daughters, the furnishings of their houses are gone, since they have been sold in the land of Yarimuta for provisions to keep us alive.

The repeated use of ‘their’ seems to emphasise the peasants’ rather than Ribaddi’s own responsibility for provisioning. It is not clear whether the peasants’ own reserves have been plundered, whether they have acted independently to try to make up for the palace’s inability to supply them, or whether the palace has requisitioned the sons, daughters and furnishings to finance a centrally-organised grain exchange. The location of Yarimuta makes a big difference here: if it was near Byblos, it would be plausible for the peasantry to have engaged in transactions in their own right. If, as some have suggested, it was far away – possibly as distant as the Nile Delta – a centrally-controlled exchange would be much more likely, since we can presumably rule out the possibility of the starving Gyblite peasantry making the journey *en masse* to negotiate exchanges, laden with furniture on the way and grain on the way back.

This question remains intractable at present, but centrally-organised exchanges of staple goods *are* well-attested in the LBA Near East. The best example is the Hittite Empire, whose reliance on Syro-Palestinian grain during the reign of Tudḫaliya IV is indicated by numerous texts. Large grain silos found at Ḫattuša have been interpreted as evidence of central control of scarce food and military campaigning by Tudḫaliya and his successor Šuppiluliuma II around Alašiya may have been aimed at securing the trade routes connecting to the Cilician port city of Ura, particularly given the latter’s location in, or near to, the possibly rebellious kingdom of

³⁰ Ribaddi claims again in EA 91 that ‘I have been plundered of my grain.’ (Translations Moran 1992).

³¹ See Chapter 2, n.38 above.

Tarḫuntašša.³² Indeed, the demands of supplying the army itself must have been considerable. The Hittite case may have been exceptional, and many scholars have seen its apparently declining subsistence situation as a result of severe climatic upheavals and as a contributing factor towards – or side-effect of – the apparent socio-political instabilities which led to the empire’s eventual dissolution during the twelfth century.³³

Clearly, Near Eastern rulers did occasionally engage in large-scale trade in order to gather grain for distribution to the general populace, at least during times of crisis. Two Biblical passages shed interesting light on this for Tyre:

*Judah and Israel traded with you; they exchanged wheat from Minnith and confections, honey, oil and balm for your wares.*³⁴

*Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine logs he wanted and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year.*³⁵

Despite the reference to the king’s ‘household’ in the latter example, there can be little question that if we are to give the reference any credence it must describe commodities intended for

³² RS 18.031, RS 20.023, RS 20.212; Bryce 2005, 331-332.

³³ Carpenter (1966) and Weiss (1982) developed the notion that drought and famine may have played a role in the upheavals affecting the East Mediterranean at this time. Recently, Chew (2007, 84, 89-90) has argued that the intensity of exploitation of the natural environment in the East Mediterranean during the Bronze Age led to profound ecological stress, manifested in phenomena such as increasing salinisation. These effects combined with climatic variations – notably a period of increased temperatures and aridity of c.1300-700 BC. The resultant low harvests and crop failures were not confined to Hittite Anatolia; Chew links them to the destabilisation of the Egyptian regime that led to the Third Intermediate Period, highlighting a series of food riots recorded in the second half of the twelfth century. Scientific data from Gibala in the kingdom of Ugarit has been interpreted as supporting the drought hypothesis (Kaniewski *et al.* 2010).

³⁴ Ezekiel 27:17. The text is dated to the beginning of the sixth century, but probably incorporates elements of an earlier, probably eighth-century Tyrian source (Liverani 1991).

³⁵ I Kings 5:10-11. Although the historicity of events related to Solomon is disputed (e.g. Muhly 2005, 687), these texts nevertheless give some idea of what was at least considered a plausible relationship between Tyre and Israel.

distribution to a much wider population: 20,000 cors is approximately 4,594,000 litres, and 20,000 baths around 440,000 litres. Even if Solomon's palace was exaggerated or wholly invented by later storytellers, these quantities would massively exceed any plausible requirements a single household could conceivably have.³⁶

The significance of these accounts lies not in the specifics of the individual exchanges – it is unlikely the details reliably record actual events, especially given the doubt over the historicity of the Israelite United Monarchy and Solomon's reign in general – but in their implication that such centralised involvement in exchange and the supply of staple products was still seen as plausible for Phoenicia well into the Iron Age.

A similar impression is gained from the other major text relating to the Phoenician EIA: *Wen-Amon's* report. We have already discussed the possibility of blurred categories of 'private' versus 'public' economic activity on the part of kings in this text, as reflected in the enigmatic *hubūr*. However, other parts of *Wen-Amon* portray centrally-controlled industries highly reminiscent of traditional views of Bronze Age 'command economies', notably the exploitation of timber resources.

The supply of timber – and presumably the construction of ships from this wood³⁷ – is, alongside building, one of the only heavy industries which can reasonably be inferred for Phoenicia from surviving evidence. Lebanese cedar had been the major source of shipbuilding timber across the East Mediterranean and Near East for centuries, and represented Phoenicia's most valuable natural resource.³⁸ In *Kings* and in *Wen-Amon*, the continued importance of

³⁶ Discussing Rome, Garnsey (1983, 118) suggests grain consumption of around 150kg per person, per year. At that rate, this amount of wheat would feed almost 23,000 people, more than the entire estimated population of twelfth-century Philistia (Yasur-Landau 2010, 295, 299). See below for the likely EIA population of Phoenicia.

³⁷ Numerous Egyptian texts from the Old Kingdom onwards refer to *Kbn* or 'Byblos' ships. What this means is somewhat unclear, but it clearly refers not just to vessels travelling to or from that city, so may indicate that they were constructed at Byblos or in a Gyblite style. Levantine craftsmen worked in Thutmose III's shipyards at *Prw-nfr*, as demonstrated by the presence of people with Semitic names and the existence there of cults of Ba'al and 'Astarte (Katzenstein 1997, 25; Wachsmann 1998, 51-2). For Levantine ships in general, see Wachsmann 1998, 39-60.

³⁸ The cedars of Lebanon are mentioned in the Epic of Gilgamesh (*ANET*³ 82, tablet 5). In the earliest Egyptian references to the Levant, the twenty-fourth- and twenty-third-century BC Pyramid Texts, the term used for the people of the region, 'Fenkhu', literally translates as 'woodcutters' (Scandone & Xella 1995), indicating the very long-standing nature of this trade. The resemblance of the later Greek term Φοινίκες to 'Fenkhu' is probably coincidental. During the fifteenth-century reign of Thutmose III, texts refer to Phoenician ships coming laden with

Lebanese timber in the Iron Age is readily apparent. Besides cedar, the Lebanese mountains were rich in several other trees useful for construction and shipbuilding, such as pine, fir, cypress and oak.³⁹ The difficulty and manpower investment required for timber-harvesting becomes apparent when the source of this wood is considered. Cedars grew mainly high on Mt. Lebanon and the other highlands of Phoenicia's interior ranges. Felling them would have entailed not just the difficulties of cutting down what could often be extremely large trees,⁴⁰ but also the challenges posed by working in a highland area which was snowbound for much of the year (Fig. 3.2),⁴¹ and, perhaps most significantly, the immense difficulties of transporting the timber over rough terrain down the mountains to the coastal ports. The magnitude of this task should not be underestimated: in the sixth century BC, the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar II wrote that it was necessary to cut through steep mountains, split rocks, open passes and build new, straight roads in order to transport cedar from the Lebanon.⁴²

The trade component of *Wen-Amon* fits into the kind of ambiguous activity already discussed. It is conducted at the highest level within the diplomatic idiom of gift-exchange: it is futile to try to decide whether the concern with reciprocity and obligation here is 'genuine' or whether it masks a profit-motivated exchange as it did elsewhere, especially since *Wen-Amon* is very probably a fictional story, not a historical document. What is instead important to note is that while the trade itself is ambiguous and hard to categorise, the actual business of felling and transporting the timber is clearly presented as production centrally administered by the palace. The work-teams are palace-appointed and carry out timber-production under royal mandate:

*And the Prince rejoiced and he detailed three hundred men and three hundred beasts and appointed supervisors over them that they should fell the trees.*⁴³

timber, masts and poles (Breasted 1906, 492). On Phoenician forestry and woodcutting, see also Dalix & Chaaya 2007-8.

³⁹ Meiggs 1982, 54; Dalix & Chaaya 2007-8.

⁴⁰ Ancient examples are recorded of around 43 m in height and more than 6m in girth (Meiggs 1982, 472).

⁴¹ Furthermore, Dalix & Chaaya (2007-8) suggest that tree-felling was likely carried out during the winter.

⁴² Astour 1995, 1402.

⁴³ Translation Aubet 2001, 300.

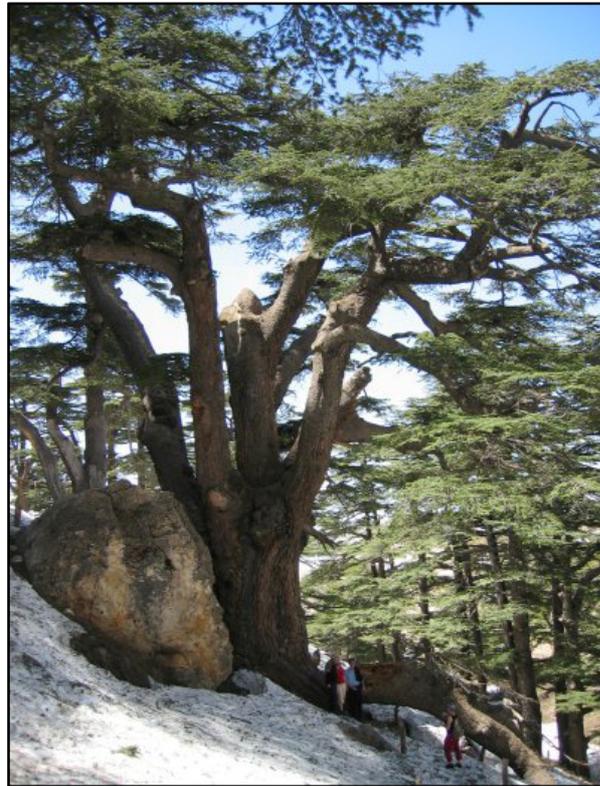


Fig. 3.2. *Cedar tree, Mt. Lebanon.*

As sources for economic relations, *Wen-Amón* and the Bible are highly problematic, not just because of the difficulties in verifying the information they contain, but also because there is a distinct element of chronological uncertainty: even if the information they contain reflected reality at some point, we cannot be certain that the details relate to the specific period they describe rather than to the later periods of the texts' composition or reminiscences of the old Bronze Age world. As sources for economic change, then, they are profoundly limited. But they should not be ignored. Ambiguous though they are, these sources provide a rather consistent portrayal of the role of the palace and the monarch in the Phoenician economies of the EIA, one which is largely indistinguishable from the LBA one we can reconstruct from Ugaritic and other sources. Any conclusions can only be very preliminary, but there is little here to suggest a major shift in the balance of intermingled 'administered' and 'private' economic activity.

It might be expected that those areas of economic activity which require less central organisation – in particular the spheres of craft-production and trade in value-added goods – would offer better scope for identifying signs of increasing private enterprise. These, after all, are the areas which Sherratt's own model particularly emphasises since, she argues, they were subject

to less centralised regulation that applied to raw materials and allowed for greater creativity and ‘entrepreneurism’ by their ability to be readily tailored to meet particular demand to fill market niches.⁴⁴ Again, however, while there is enough information to reconstruct the existence of particular forms of economic activity, the evidence is wholly insufficient to tease out the kinds of changes in which this perspective is interested.

Many of the products for which Phoenicia was best known were perishable. Changes in how they were produced, traded and marketed are consequently hard to reconstruct. Of these, the best-known is purple dye, the industry from which both the Phoenicians’ Greek and Semitic names are thought to derive. That this continued to be part of the Phoenician economy during Iron I is confirmed by the discovery at Tell Keisan of a large ceramic vat with traces of purple on its interior. There is no direct evidence for the industry at other Phoenician sites at this time, but murex shells have been found in the LBA levels at Sarepta, as well as massive deposits at Tyre and Sidon in later periods. There is no reason to assume it was not also practised in the EIA.⁴⁵



Fig. 3.3. *Murexes and modern murex-dyed cloth. Beirut National Museum.*

⁴⁴ e.g. Sherratt 1998.

⁴⁵ Briend & Humbert 1980, 226; Khalifeh 1988, 303; Bartoloni 1995.

Related to this would have been textile-weaving and spinning, for which Phoenicia was also famous in antiquity. EIA spindle-whorls exist from several sites, including Tyre and Tell Keisan. The scale and method of production, however, remain unclear.⁴⁶ The size and weight of spindle-whorls is related to the type of fabric being spun, larger, heavier whorls being required for coarser fibres. The weight of Phoenician spindle-whorls is rarely recorded, but in general they seem to be fairly small and frequently made from light materials such as bone and ivory (although ceramic and stone whorls are also attested). This would seem to indicate a concentration on finer textiles, most likely wool or perhaps silk, at the expense of coarser materials such as linen.⁴⁷

The production of food-products, such as pickled meat, fish preserved in wine, and garum, is attested in Phoenicia in later times. It seems likely that these were also made during the EIA, but firm evidence is lacking. Other perishables, such as resins, are also known to be among Phoenician exports.⁴⁸

While it is clear that these items were manufactured and traded throughout the LBA/EIA transition, our scarce data allows little more than speculation regarding the nature of these industries at this time; we are far from being able to identify changes. In this respect, pottery is by far our best and most ubiquitous source, not least because it is one of the only craft activities for which we have evidence of the workshop facilities themselves. The excavated areas of Sarepta contain a 'potters' quarter' in unbroken use from the LBA until the Persian era: the longest-lived and best-preserved in the East Mediterranean. It represents an invaluable resource for understanding changes in the industry during this time. There is little evidence of residential

⁴⁶ Bikai 1978; Briend & Humbert 1980. Bartoloni 1995 argues that, while in general in the Mediterranean textile production was 'women's work' largely carried out in a domestic setting, in Phoenicia, at least at certain times, it may have constituted a full-scale industry, particularly orientated towards the export market. It is impossible to judge whether this was the case in the EIA and if so how it would relate to any 'public'-'private' transition.

⁴⁷ Barber 1991 claims that a whorl of less than 8g is suitable for spinning wool, while something like flax might require over 150g (p.52). The diameters of whorls from Tyre are generally between around 1cm and 2.5cm. These seem to be on the small side, compared with, for example, whorls recorded by Keith (1998) from Hacinebi Tepe in south-east Anatolia/North Syria, again pointing towards finer textiles being produced.

⁴⁸ Bartoloni 1995. Since Canaanite jars were not being traded for their own sake, these can be taken as an indication for wide-spread trade in perishable products of some kind. Regarding resins, terebinth is probably the most notable example from Phoenicia. Canaanite jars from the Ulu Burun shipwreck have produced large quantities, and a possible lump also exists from the Cape Gelidonya wreck (Haldane 1993, 352ff.).

occupation in the area, so the pottery assemblage is likely to be a good representation of the kinds of material produced by the workshops.

In the absence of administrative records such as we have from Ugarit or the Mycenaean palaces of the Aegean, and with no excavated evidence of an administrative centre at Sarepta either in the LBA or EIA (although since the site has not been fully excavated this does not necessarily mean there was not one), we have little means of determining how the workshops there related to central administrative facilities. Even if we did, it is very unlikely a significant change in such relationships would be apparent during the LBA/EIA transition. The workshop area shows striking continuity in how it operated throughout its lifetime, with even kiln design essentially identical in the Persian period to what it had been in the Bronze Age. The likelihood is that production there was always ‘decentralised’, privately-run and profit-motivated.

This fits well with the suggestion by scholars like Sherratt that the economic changes affecting the broader East Mediterranean at this time were spearheaded by traders in Cyprus and the Levant who had always operated under a more ‘privatised’, entrepreneurial and decentralised system than the palace-dominated economies of other parts of the region. As Sherratt herself is swift to acknowledge, the principal explanatory potential of this model applies to how these regions’ commercial expansion affected and undermined their neighbours, rather than having major implications for Cyprus or the Levant themselves. In Phoenicia, the vague and inconclusive evidence for centrally-administered economic activity points to general continuity between the LBA and EIA, but it is not sufficiently detailed for us to tease out with any reliability the subtle changes that continuity likely masked. In those sectors of economic activity which seem least connected to the central organisation of the palace, such as (probably) pottery manufacture, it is hard to identify any particular changes in economic organisation. The potters’ workshops at Sarepta appear to function the same way in the Iron Age as they had in the LBA.

Once one accepts the ambiguity and mixed nature of the Levantine economies, it becomes difficult to see the categorising of certain kinds of economic activity as either ‘centrally-administered’ or ‘private entrepreneurship’ as anything other than problematically arbitrary. Without legal or constitutional frameworks distinguishing between the actions of officials in a ‘public’ or ‘private’ capacity, it is meaningless to try to force the entrepreneurial activity undertaken by palace personnel – up to and including the king – into such categories. It seems unlikely that any strict conceptual distinction existed between profits accrued for the benefit of

the public and those which comprised the private wealth of the king. In this sense, the dichotomy between ‘centrally-administered’ and ‘private’ is a false one: even if some kinds of economic activity which took place in the Levant at this time can be thought of in such terms, it seems clear that others cannot. Similarly, even if we accepted what might crudely be termed a ‘public’/‘private’ dichotomy, this is not identical with a distinction between ‘centralised’ and ‘decentralised’ economic activity. Centralised privatised economies are not just conceivable, but well-attested historically: it is not hard either in the ancient world or the modern to identify powerful commercial oligarchies, monopolising power which they wield to serve their own interests. This is precisely what some scholars have suggested occurred in Phoenicia during the Iron Age. They argue that monarchical power in administrative matters declined and specialised into an essentially sacral vestige, while a newly-emergent mercantile aristocracy attained political pre-eminence. The changing nature of Phoenician kingship will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 5, but I wish to address this question of merchant oligarchy here since it bears directly on the issue at hand.

Chief among the advocates of the idea that ‘merchant aristocracies’ rose to political pre-eminence in Iron Age Phoenicia is Bondi, who has suggested that Phoenician kings’ allegedly declining ability to rule (see Chapter 5) was due to ‘certain classes of the city population itself’. This idea has been picked up and expanded upon by Baurain, Bonnet, Sommer and others.⁴⁹ The reference to ‘class’ is typical, and the discussion is frequently framed in Marxian terms as the rise of a ‘bourgeoisie’ of successful long-distance merchants operating within a new structure of decentralised, pseudo-capitalist commercialism.⁵⁰ Wealth and profit became the primary criteria for a political power which was institutional and depersonalised, in contrast to the traditional, arbitrary and personal authority of the old monarchies.⁵¹

This chapter has, I hope, shown that this hypothesis is incompatible with current thinking on how the Levantine LBA economy functioned, but it is also unsupported by evidence. The fundamental premise that Phoenician kings were politically sidelined during the first millennium is, as Chapter 5 will argue, dubious, but even if it were accepted, there is very little to suggest that merchants were the ones who replaced them. Aristotle talks about a wealth qualification for

⁴⁹ Bondi 1988, 126; Baurain & Bonnet 1992, 144-5; Sommer 2000, 2010.

⁵⁰ Baurain & Bonnet 1992, 145.

⁵¹ Sommer 2000, 250.

election to public office in Carthage,⁵² but this hardly argues for the existence of a politically-active ‘merchant class’ as opposed to any other form of plutocratic oligarchy. Essentially the only other piece of evidence cited is a verse of Isaiah:

*Who planned this against Tyre, the crowned city, whose merchants are princes,
whose traders are renowned in the earth?*⁵³

As with all prophetic Biblical texts, a question exists about whether this should be assigned to the eighth-century prophet himself, or to a (possibly much) later editor or collector.⁵⁴ Whichever stance one takes – and I tend towards the latter – it is a mistake to interpret ‘merchant princes’ literally rather than as a rhetorical statement of the traders’ wealth and decadence. Given the context – a polemical oracle against the Phoenician polities in which their hubris is stressed in order to justify the prophesied divine retribution – the appropriateness of the rhetorical imagery is clear. The usefulness of this line as an actual political description of Phoenicia, especially anywhere near the EIA, is doubtful.

Archaeology is similarly equivocal. Political organisation can be difficult to reconstruct from any archaeological record, especially one as limited and fragmented as the one we are dealing with here. In few cases can it hope to provide the narrative histories and detailed descriptions of institutions which have generally characterised discussion in this area. It can, however, give an indication of issues such as identity construction and maintenance: attempts by certain social groups to distinguish and define themselves frequently involve the use of material culture and can consequently be detected archaeologically. Even in the problematic funerary record of LBA/EIA Phoenicia we would expect to see evidence of an emergent mercantile élite which sought to distinguish itself from the broader population and appropriate some of the powers associated with the traditional élite groups. As the previous chapter argued, this period witnessed something of a crisis in the traditional élites, or at least a wobble in their ability or desire to manifest and legitimate their authority through high-status architecture, burial practices and use of imported Aegyptiaca. If the suggestion of an emerging merchant aristocracy were

⁵² *Politics* II.11.

⁵³ Isaiah 23:8.

⁵⁴ Lemche 1991, 125-9.

correct, we would expect to see evidence of increased competition, the appropriation and transformation of some forms of material culture prestige-markers by new segments of the society, and the emergence of new modes of display, possibly involving material culture particularly associated with, or meaningful to, a successful, self-consciously mercantile class.

Evidence for anything like this within Phoenicia's extant funerary record is vanishingly slight. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, among the finds of one of the Phase 1 (tenth-century BC) burials in the high-status chamber-tomb N.1 at Achziv were two pairs of possible jewellery scales, which might point to the burial of a high-status trader. N.1 is interpreted as a family tomb, however, and nothing suggests a mercantile association for the other Phase 1 burials. Instead, warrior accoutrements seem more prevalent.⁵⁵ We are thus none the wiser as to how these individuals won their prestigious burial. While mercantile activity is a possibility in one case, martial prowess (whether putative or genuine) and kinship connections are at least as likely.

Phoenicia's pit-cemeteries show little social differentiation, with strikingly homogeneous assemblages in both the LBA and EIA. Far from there being an emergent new élite, the overwhelming picture is of an almost egalitarian ideology, at least in funerary representation. While imports are not, of course, a direct correlate of the amount of trade or the profession of the deceased, the significant decline in their deposition in the ideologically-charged funerary context seems contrary to what we would expect if involvement in – or connection to – long-distance trade was becoming an important factor in achieving social status. At the LBA cemetery at Dakerman, Cypriot imports comprised 20.32% of the overall assemblage and Mycenaean 16.82%.⁵⁶ All but three graves at the site contained at least one Mycenaean or Cypriot import, and of the remainder, one contained local imitations. There is no direct correlation apparent between the size of the assemblage and the proportion of imports, but it is noticeable that the tombs which contained, or were associated with, other items which might be considered 'prestigious' also featured high proportions of imports.⁵⁷ In an LBA cave-burial at Sarepta, 68.66% of items were Cypriot or Mycenaean and significant quantities of Mycenaean and

⁵⁵ E. Mazar 2004. Warrior burials are not, of course, intrinsically incompatible with the ideological importance of trade: a very similar funerary assemblage at Lefkandi is interpreted as that of a warrior-trader (Popham & Lemos 1995; Nijboer 2008a).

⁵⁶ Saidah 2004.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2, p.88-89 above.

Cypriot imports were also found in LBA tombs at Byblos (Nécropole K), Fayadieh and Qrayé.⁵⁸ The vast majority of imports at 'Arqa and Tell Kazel are also Cypriot and Mycenaean.⁵⁹ In contrast, the proportion of imports is low for the EIA tombs, even in otherwise rich assemblages.⁶⁰ This is not necessarily a sign of the amount of trade going on: the importance lies in the ideological significance of that trade. The declining deposition of imports does not seem to point towards a new importance for trade in constructing élite identities; if anything, the reverse seems more likely.

However, we should neither overstate matters nor oversimplify. If the mortuary record provides reason to suppose that old distinctions continued to be articulated through such features as burial orientation, then the pottery evidence points to some distinctions beginning to break down, namely that between material for foreign and domestic consumption. The increasing trend towards decoration began in commercial vessels, but during this period it gradually spread to encompass much of the ceramic repertoire. This may reflect a process of convergence between how local populations presented themselves to each other and how the region presented itself to foreign markets. A degree of flux, and perhaps the beginnings of a gradual move towards greater common identity in which commercial processes seem to have played a part, would therefore seem to have existed alongside the general continuity of the LBA's heterogeneous groupings.

The ceramic and funerary evidence thus present distinct (but by no means contradictory) pictures of how social differentiation was articulated. What links them is that in neither case is involvement with trade a significant axis for such differentiation. In burials, the emphasis placed on traded goods significantly declined, while the wider ceramic repertoire shows that styles initially reserved for exchange were becoming increasingly mainstream and so of declining utility as markers of social differentiation. An élite must distinguish itself from wider society in some way, but in neither burial nor wider ceramic evidence is there any indication for an emerging group doing so in relation to trade. If anything, the best argument for new axes of élite differentiation might be made concerning the warrior elements observable in Achziv N.1 and the

⁵⁸ Baramki 1958; Genz & Sader 2007-8; Salles 1980.

⁵⁹ Badre 2007-8.

⁶⁰ E. Mazar 2004. Pottery imports in N.1 are Cypriot and number only in single figures. A number of scarabs were found, but these were widely circulated long after their time of manufacture, and there is no reason to conclude that they indicate on-going and intensive links with Egypt, even if they originate there and not from the active Phoenician scarab manufacturing industry.

proliferation of objects such as inscribed bronze arrow- and spearheads. Generally though, if major social upheavals such as the polarisation of inequalities of wealth and the advent of new social classes⁶¹ *were* beginning to take place during this transition, they find little or no reflection in the material record. The evidence much more strongly supports continuity. Unless and until convincing evidence can be presented to support it, the assumption for a newly-emergent Iron Age mercantile élite is best discarded.

While it is productive, then, to approach the wider East Mediterranean situation in the LBA/EIA transition in terms of a shift in the balance of ‘public’ and ‘private’ economic control, for Phoenicia the utility of this perspective is distinctly limited. The scarcity of evidence means that we will face problems whatever our approach, but some progress can be made, I hope to demonstrate, by focusing less on arbitrary ‘types’ of economic activity and more of the specific economic decisions made by the Phoenician population(s) during this time and the factors which likely motivated them. In particular I want to examine the degree to which Phoenician economic strategies in this period were a matter of necessity dictated by historical and geographic contingency, or of deliberate choices of strategy from among multiple possible options. Two aspects of the Phoenician economy are particularly enlightening in this regard: the changes in commercial strategy evident in the beginnings of Phoenician foreign expansion, which will be discussed in the next chapter; and an issue often alluded to but almost never treated in any detail, to which the remainder of this will be devoted, the question of the extent to which the inherent limitations of geography, topography and agricultural potential influenced Phoenicia’s social and economic development.

Subsistence and Population

Beyond Phoenicia, the relationship between the population and the land has proven an important theme in discussions of LBA/EIA. In much of the Near East, the EIA was characterised by the abandonment and depopulation of the cities in favour of the countryside.⁶² Settlement patterns became increasingly dominated by small villages and nomadic and semi-nomadic

⁶¹ Sommer 2000, 252.

⁶² For Palestine and the rise of Israel, see Dever 1998; Finkelstein 2003; for North Syria/south-east Anatolia, Liverani 1987; Sader 1992; Ikram 2003; Fischer *et al.* 2003; for Mesopotamia, Van de Mierop 2007b, 196-7.

lifestyles. Pastoralism became increasingly significant.⁶³ Over time the socio-political consequences of these developments were profound, with new forms of identities crystallising among these groups. The emergence of 'Israel' as a social entity at this time is now seen by many in these terms: the ethnogenesis of a common socio-political identity among disparate groups of the disaffected who had made their home in the Palestinian hill country. In North Syria, the semi-nomadic Aramaeans became increasingly powerful in the interior, while in central and south-eastern Anatolia, the Hittite urban centres were abandoned for a more dispersed settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets.

Phoenicia, however, appears distinctly unusual in that there is very little evidence for de-urbanisation of this kind during the LBA/EIA transition. As far as we can tell – and the lack of survey data admittedly presents a problem here – the urban centres remained the overwhelming focus of life: there is relatively little evidence for nomadic or semi-nomadic elements as a significant emergent sector of society.⁶⁴ My aim in the following discussion is to explore whether this difference is due to active choices made within the Phoenician settlements or was conditioned by environmental factors, such as carrying capacity. The lack of material evidence from Phoenicia makes this difficult but by no means impossible. By constructing and assessing hypothetical models from Phoenician and comparative data and utilising approaches and advances which have proven productive elsewhere over the last few decades,⁶⁵ it is possible to gain an understanding of

⁶³ This was not entirely a new phenomenon: restive bands of nomads and semi-nomads known as 'Apiru comprised of runaway slaves, the disaffected, disenfranchised and even deposed royalty (such as the fifteenth-century king of Aleppo, Idrimi. Van de Mieroop 2007b, 198-200) had been an increasing feature of Canaanite life for centuries. 'Abdi-Aširta, the leader of Amurru was associated with them – or at least was portrayed as such by those hostile to him – in his wars against Egypt's ostensible vassals in the Levant during the Amarna age, and references among many Near Eastern peoples go back centuries even before that. Nevertheless, there is a strong argument to be made that in many parts of the Near East, the LBA/EIA transition witnessed a dramatic increase in people dropping out of urban, coastal society and joining such bands.

⁶⁴ Probably the clearest indication comes in the Beqaa Valley, where settlement during the EIA becomes more dispersed and Marfoe (1998) has suggested pastoral elements and extensive rather than intensive agriculture may have become more significant. There is a strong element of speculation here, however, and more recent excavations at Kamid el-Loz have suggested that it may have remained rather more important as a central place during the EIA than was previously thought.

⁶⁵ e.g. Garnsey 1998; Gallant 1991; Sallares 1991; Moreno 2007; Hansen 2006.

the nature of the Phoenician subsistence economy, the challenges and needs facing the population, the implications of this for economic and social change.

Phoenicia's fertility is not in doubt: average rainfall in Lebanon is higher than much of the East Mediterranean thanks to the mountains (600-900mm annually in coastal areas), and its coastal plain is well-served by springs and wadis. Travellers to Lebanon before its industrialisation describe a highly fertile and intensely cultivated landscape, especially around the major towns:

[Sidon's fruit plantations] extend an entire French mile around the town, and contain Pomegranate-trees, Apricots, Figs, Almonds, Oranges, Lemons and Plums, in such quantities, that the town can yearly furnish other places with considerable cargoes of these fruits; but the most numerous, and in which their numbers chiefly consist, are Mulberry-trees, on which they feed an infinite number of silk-worms.⁶⁶

[The plain around Tyre], as I beheld it, watered now as of old by the running stream of Callirhoë, which ever bubbles among luxuriant groves of orange trees and oleanders – was now in its spring attire. It was one rich meadow, chequered with green pastures, fields of corn, and patches of the “sweet cane from a far country” mentioned by the Prophet Jeremiah. Here and there over this plain, stood like giants, tall gaunt masses of ruins, the remains of a broken line of the famous aqueducts, which in days of old, carried the water from the fountains of Tyre to the citadel, and thence to the island city. And among these ruins were enclosed gardens of pomegranates, and of other pleasant trees, clad in thick and vigorous leaf; and bathed by the transparent wave of the Great Sea. Truly, as the prophet said of old, “Tyre was planted in a pleasant place.”⁶⁷

At a distance, the hill slopes have an arid look and also when skirting them by the long shore road, but the outskirts of Beyrouth are under intensive cultivation. We passed acres of market gardens, banana groves fringed by tall reeds for basket weaving with flowers that resemble sugar cane in arrow. Then plantations of mandarins laden with ripe green fruit... Most of the produce grown on these many

⁶⁶ Hasselquist 1766, 164

⁶⁷ Malan, c.1850, 60-1

miles of fertile land is shipped away to Egypt, Paris and London. Not an inch of soil seemed to be idle and everywhere there was water from the *Nahr* Beyrouth and the *Nahr* el-Kelb.⁶⁸



Fig. 3.4. *Verdant olive plantations near modern Amioun, in northern Lebanon.*

Despite this undeniable fertility, a question exists over the land's suitability for large-scale agriculture. Lebanon is often described as being agriculturally rather marginal, the amount of cultivable land restricted by the mountainous geography beyond the narrow coastal plain.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Gordon 1939, 8.

⁶⁹ e.g. Markoe 2000, 94.



Fig. 3.5. View southwards of modern northern Lebanon, showing the limited extent of land between the sea and the mountains.

Modern Lebanon consumes fertiliser at an intensity per hectare more than six times that of the average for the Middle East and North Africa, and more than double the global average.⁷⁰ We cannot simply assume, therefore, that Phoenicia's fertility was enough to ensure self-sufficiency in the LBA/EIA transition. We have already seen that Kings and Ezekiel suggest Tyre imported large quantities of staple products. In order to clarify these issues, and to determine whether Phoenician staple imports were due to short-term crisis, innate lack of agricultural potential, or deliberate choice in service of a wider economic strategy, we must examine issues of population and carrying-capacity. To do this, Tyre will be used as a case-study.

Urban Population

In the fourth century, Tyre, besieged by Alexander, is said to have contained around 30,000 people.⁷¹ For Phoenician urban populations in earlier periods, however, we are forced to rely on educated guesswork.

⁷⁰ EarthTrends Agriculture and Food Profile for Lebanon. Data is for 1999 and comes from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

⁷¹ Katzenstein 1997, 10. This figure is followed by Aubet 2001, 34. It is derived from Arrian's description of the fall of Tyre in *Anabasis* II.xxiv.

Although an island in antiquity, it is far from straightforward to determine the size of ancient Tyre. In addition to the construction of Alexander's mole, changes in water level, land-reclamation works and significant silting of the original northern harbour have all greatly altered the size and shape of the island. Josephus claims that Tyre originally stood on two islands, which were joined in land-reclamation works undertaken by Hiram during the tenth century. This has generally been considered plausible, but so far remains unconfirmed archaeologically.⁷² Bikai claims that:

the land area which resulted when the two islands were joined by Hiram, and expanded by land fill during the first millennium BC, never exceeded one square kilometer. The land mass of the original "large island" must be presumed to be considerably smaller.⁷³

If we assume that this 'considerably smaller' area may have been around half a square kilometre, and that the land reclamation works may imply that by the tenth century the available land was more or less used up, we have one possible size for the city of Tyre: approximately 50 ha. Katzenstein seems to envision a Classical city of around this size: he claims his estimated population of 30,000 represents an approximate density of 520 per hectare, which means he is assuming an area for the city of c.58 ha. I therefore take approximately 60 ha as the upper bound for EIA Tyre's area.

These figures are, for the EIA East Mediterranean, rather implausible. They would make EIA Tyre comparable to major East Mediterranean cities like Megiddo or Knossos at their zeniths, from which they had shrunk considerably by the beginning of the Iron Age.⁷⁴ Tiryns on the Greek mainland is exceptional in that it *increased* in size in LH IIIC, with a large lower city beyond its acropolis. Even there, at a site considered 'very large' for the period, the maximum suggested extent of the settlement is only 25.4 ha., and the population only around 10,000.⁷⁵ In

⁷² Marriner *et al.* 2005. *C. Ap.* I.113.

⁷³ Bikai 1978, 72.

⁷⁴ Whitelaw (2004) speculates that Knossos, for instance, probably housed fewer than 2000 people by LM III B-C. Despite a slight increase in the Subminoan and Protogeometric, it never returned to the peak of 14,000-18,000 inhabitants reconstructed for the Neopalatial.

⁷⁵ Thomatos 2006, 196; Yasur-Landau 2010, 299; Maran 2010.

the Levant, even large tells such as 'Akko (20 ha.) or Ashdod (40 ha.)⁷⁶ do not approach this size. The Mediterranean's eastern end was busier and suffered less in the upheavals of the end of the LBA than the Aegean and other parts, so it would not be surprising to find larger and more densely-populated sites there. Nevertheless, 60 ha. seems implausibly large.



Fig. 3.6. *Modern Tyre. The isthmus grew around Alexander's siege causeway and now connects the ancient island to the mainland.*

⁷⁶ Broshi & Finkelstein 1992, giving figures for Iron II.



Fig. 3.7. *Tyre from the Isthmus. 19th Century Lithograph by David Roberts.*

An alternative figure comes from Shiloh, who gives Tyre's area as 60 dunams (6 ha.).⁷⁷ While this seems a broadly plausible figure, no explanation is given for how he obtained it, and so we must use it with due care.

Further complication comes from the existence of Tyre's mainland 'sister city' of Palaeotyre/Ushu. Despite numerous textual references affirming its Bronze Age and subsequent existence, it has not yet been identified archaeologically. We thus have little idea of its size, population or the exact nature of its relationship with the island city.⁷⁸ While it cannot be ignored, it is such an unknown that there is little way to account for it in calculations, and consequently I will confine myself for the moment to discussing only island Tyre.

Once the possible area of an ancient city has been determined, two main methods exist for estimating its population. The first, proposed by Naroll, involves estimating the total amount of residential floor-space, then multiplying this by what he claimed was a cross-culturally

⁷⁷ Shiloh 1980, Table 1.

⁷⁸ EA 148, 149, 154 suggest it was the source of Tyre's water supply, as well as of other commodities such as wood, straw and clay. Whether it was mainly a base for the shipment of these products to the island city, or whether it also comprised a significant residential 'lower city' is not yet clear.

supported density figure for pre-industrial societies of one person per 10m².⁷⁹ Naroll's method has attracted criticism, not least because the 1:10m² ratio appears somewhat arbitrary, takes little account of cultural factors in what is considered a suitable amount of space per person, and can be easily contradicted with ethnographic examples.⁸⁰ Furthermore, detailed information regarding the amount of residential floor-space does not exist for coastal Phoenicia. The two principal sondages in settlement sites, at Tyre and Sarepta, both alighted on what can be shown convincingly to be principally industrial, rather than residential, areas.⁸¹

Nevertheless, we might estimate a figure for the floor-space based on comparative data. At Ugarit, where excavation has been far more extensive, Garr was able to calculate an estimate that approximately 72.5% of the city was residential in character. For Knossos, Whitelaw uses a figure of 74% residential, derived from observations at Gournia, Knossos and Malia.⁸² If a similar figure of c.74% residential floor-space is applied to the area figures already suggested for Tyre, Naroll's formula provides population estimates of 4,440 inhabitants for a 6 ha. city, and 44,400 for 60 ha.

The second method for calculating population from area simply involves estimating a plausible population density per hectare and multiplying. Several possible figures for density are used in the East Mediterranean. Some of these can be summarised as follows:

Whitelaw – Neopalatial Knossos – Average density of 200-225 people/ha.⁸³

Warren – Neopalatial Knossos – 300-400 people/ha.⁸⁴

Shiloh – Iron Age Palestine – 400-500 people/ha.⁸⁵

Katzenstein - Persian Tyre - 520 people/ha.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ Naroll 1962.

⁸⁰ Whitelaw 2001, 2004.

⁸¹ Bikai 1978; Anderson 1988; Khalifeh 1988.

⁸² Garr 1987, 35; Whitelaw 2004, 153.

⁸³ Whitelaw 2004. These figures are based on culturally specific factors such as house size and nature of the occupying group, but both of these are broadly comparable between Minoan Crete and what we know of the Levant. In the Levant, as on Crete, houses were occupied by discrete nuclear families of around five individuals (Gruber 1995; Garr 1987, 34; Whitelaw 2001, 18). House size distributions also seem broadly similar (Whitelaw 2001, 20; fig. 2.3).

⁸⁴ Warren 2004.

⁸⁵ Shiloh 1980, 30. A similar figure of 300-500 per ha. is given by Gruber (1995, 646), with no indication of how it was arrived at.

Since Whitelaw provides more explicit justification for his figure for Knossos than does Warren, I include the former's figure in my calculations rather than the latter's. Shiloh and Katzenstein's figures are similar, so I have simply carried out one calculation for 400 people/ha. and one for 500.

Estimated Size	Calculation Method	Estimated Population
6 ha.	Whitelaw (200 per ha.)	1200
	Shiloh (400 per ha.)	2400
	Shiloh/Katzenstein (500 per ha.)	3000
	Naroll	4440
60 ha.	Whitelaw (200 per ha.)	12,000
	Shiloh (400 per ha.)	24,000
	Shiloh/Katzenstein (500 per ha.)	30,000
	Naroll	44,400

Table 3.1. *Various population estimates for Tyre.*

There is obviously a huge variation between the smallest and largest possible results. For the reasons outlined above, the larger figures are probably far too large for an EIA city.⁸⁷ An urban population of between two and ten thousand might be considered highly likely for Tyre at this time. For the sake of examining all hypothetical possibilities, however, I will continue to calculate results using the full range of population estimates obtained here.

⁸⁶ Katzenstein 1997, 10.

⁸⁷ This is, of course, simply an assumption based on comparative data; it is not impossible that Tyre could indeed have eclipsed all other East Mediterranean cities at this time, but it seems unlikely.

The Rural Population

The lack of survey data or excavation of rural sites in Lebanon means that we have almost no information about the EIA settlement pattern in the non-urban hinterland. Again, we are reliant entirely on comparative models and guesswork. A similar environment of independent city-states dominating a largely coastal, mountainous landscape, exists in the Classical Aegean. Here Hansen has persuasively argued that the size of the rural population has been significantly overestimated, and that for small and mid-sized poleis, the majority of the population lived in the city itself, not in the hinterland. For poleis with less than 200 km² territory, he suggests that two-thirds of the population likely lived in the city; for poleis with 200-500 km², half the population were in the city and half in the hinterland; for those over 500 km², two-thirds of the population lived in the hinterland.⁸⁸ We have no way of knowing how applicable these figures are for Phoenicia, but, given the environmental similarities, they may at least be a useful starting-point. Before we can apply them, however, we require some idea of the size of the Phoenician polities' territories.

Once again, we have little direct evidence for territorial borders. Biblical sources from the later Iron Age suggest a degree of flux, with some towns switching between one city and another periodically. It would be a vain exercise to try to reconstruct actual territories for the EIA polities at present: the evidence is nowhere near sufficient. What we can do, however, is calculate the area of agricultural land necessary for the various population hypotheses obtained for Tyre. From this, we might begin to gain some idea of its possible hinterland requirement, and so the potential size of its rural population.

The average daily energy requirement per person has been calculated as around 2583 kcal/day, of which roughly 70% is likely to be derived from cereals, 20% from pulses and other vegetables, and 10% from oil, meat and fish.⁸⁹ Nineteenth-century Ottoman census data for Beirut vilayet (which included much of ancient Phoenicia, but is not precisely coterminous with

⁸⁸ Hansen 2006, 23-4.

⁸⁹ Foxhall & Forbes 1982, 71. The exact number, of course, varies depending on age, sex and degree of physical activity, but with data as speculative as we are dealing with here, an average figure is sufficient. Dietary proportions can and do vary slightly between societies, and those offered here are conjectural for Phoenicia, based on comparative data from Bronze Age Crete and the Classical world. In modern Lebanon, fruit accounts for 23% of crops by area, olives and cereals 20% each and vegetables 17% (Hatoum *et al.* 2003).

it and does not include the Beqaa Valley) suggests a pre-industrial annual cereal yield for Lebanon of approximately 2168.8 kg/hectare, or roughly 2,168,800 kcal.⁹⁰ This corresponds very well with Warren's estimate for LBA Crete of 2,355,500 kcal/ha/year.⁹¹ Pre-industrial yield information for pulses, legumes and olives is not available for Lebanon, but on the basis of this similarity, it seems justifiable to use Warren's estimates for Crete, namely 602,000 kcal/ha/year for pulses and legumes, and 3,371,250 kcal/ha/year for olives.⁹² The following results can thus be calculated:

Population Size	Daily Cereal Requirement (kcal)	Annual Cereal Requirement (kcal)	Area required to supply (ha.)
1200	2,169,720	792,490,230	365.4
2400	4,339,440	1,584,980,460	730.8
3000	5,424,300	1,981,225,575	913.5
4440	8,027,964	2,932,213,851	1352
12,000	21,697,200	7,924,902,300	3654
24,000	43,394,400	15,849,804,600	7308.1
30,000	54,243,000	19,812,255,750	9135.1
44,400	80,279,640	29,322,138,510	13,520

Table 3.2a. *Agricultural land requirements for cereals.*

⁹⁰ Karpas 1985, 222. Warren 2004, citing McCance & Widdowson 1991, gives an approximate energy value of 1000 kcal/kg for cereals.

⁹¹ Warren 2004, 165.

⁹² *Ibid.* This yield figure does not take into account the necessity for olive trees to have one 'off year' in every two, and so actual amount of land devoted to olive trees must be doubled. A second problem with Warren's data is that it seems to assume that all the remaining calorie intake not supplied by cereals, pulses or legumes must come from olive oil; it takes no account of other major sources of energy, particularly fish and wine. It is furthermore unlikely that all (or even most) olive oil was for internal consumption.

Population Size	Daily Requirement from Pulses, Legumes etc. (kcal)	Annual requirement (kcal)	Required Area (ha.)
1200	619,920	226,425,780	376.1
2400	1,239,840	452,851,560	752.2
3000	1,549,800	566,064,450	940.3
4440	2,293,704	837,775,386	1391.7
12,000	6,199,200	2,264,257,800	3761.2
24,000	12,398,400	4,528,515,600	7522.5
30,000	15,498,000	5,660,644,500	9403.1
44,400	22,937,040	8,377,753,860	13,916.5

Table 3.2b. *Agricultural land requirements for pulses, legumes and other vegetables.*

Calculating the land requirements for the remainder of the diet is problematic for the reasons outlined above. In an attempt to account in some way for the role of fish in the diet, I will, admittedly arbitrarily, assume that approximately half the requirement comes from fish and half from olives. Phoenicia was renowned for its olive oil in antiquity, and the richness of its fisheries is also a matter of ancient comment, so there is a distinct possibility that these figures represent an underestimate, and that a (possibly much) larger proportion of the diet came from these areas.⁹³ On the other hand, UN data for modern Lebanon shows that fish actually constitutes a lower proportion of the diet there than elsewhere in the Near East, and significantly lower than the global average.⁹⁴

⁹³ The exact quantity of fish consumption is hard to approach archaeologically. Fish remains are found in EIA graves at the Khaldé necropolis, not far from Beirut (Saidah 1967), and Papyrus Anastasi I, from the late thirteenth or early twelfth century, describes the wealth of Tyre's fisheries: 'They say another town is in the sea, named Tyre-the-Port. Water is taken (to) it by boats, and it is richer in fish than the sands.' (*ANET*⁵ 455ff.). See, however, Gallant 1985 on the difficulty of achieving high calorie proportions from fish.

⁹⁴ EarthTrends food and agriculture country profile for Lebanon, citing data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN.

Population Size	Daily Requirement from Fish, Olive Oil, etc. (kcal)	Possible Daily requirement from Olive Oil (kcal)	Annual Olive Oil Requirement (kcal)	Required Area (ha.)	Total Required Area, accounting for 'off year' for olive trees.
1200	309,960	154,980	56,606,445	16.8	33.6
2400	619,920	309,960	113,212,890	33.6	67.2
3000	774,900	387,450	141,516,112.5	42.0	84.0
4440	1,146,852	573,426	209,443,846.5	62.1	123.3
12,000	3,099,600	1,549,800	566,064,450	167.9	335.8
24,000	6,199,200	3,096,000	1,132,128,900	335.8	671.6
30,000	7,749,000	3,874,500	1,415,161,125	419.8	839.5
44,400	11,468,520	5,734,260	2,094,438,465	621.3	1242.5

Table 3.2c. *Agricultural land requirements for olives.*

From these results, we can calculate total values for the minimum agricultural hinterland necessary for the city of Tyre to be self-sufficient. From this, Hansen's figures for Classical Greece may give some rough indication of the approximate size of the rural population. Naturally, a rural population would further add to the food requirements for the territory, requiring an adjustment of the area to account for this.

City Population	Agricultural Area (ha.)	Agricultural Area (km ²)	Rural Population according to Hansen's Greek data	Total Agricultural Area, including food production for rural population (km ²)
1200	775.1	7.8	600	11.7
2400	1550.2	15.6	1200	23.4
3000	1937.8	19.4	1500	29.1
4440	2867	28.7	2220	43.0
12,000	7751	77.5	6000	116.3
24,000	15,502	155.0	24,000	310
30,000	19,378	193.8	30,000	387.6
44,400	28,670	286.7	44,400	573.4

Table 3.3. *Total agricultural hinterland requirements.*

When these agricultural hinterland requirements are mapped (Fig. 3.8), it is clear that even at implausibly large hypothetical urban population levels of 44,400, there is ample land

available on the coastal plain without encroaching overly on the immediate vicinity of the nearest other major urban centre (Sidon), or requiring much exploitation of the more hilly interior.

The actual extent of the hinterlands of the Phoenician polity centres is, of course, a matter of considerable uncertainty. Fig. 3.9 shows a hypothetical reconstruction for possible hinterlands in the EIA, based on Thiessen polygons slightly adjusted to take account of natural boundaries. It must be stressed that this is a theoretical construct and does not attempt to take account of political factors. This suggests a territory for Tyre of somewhere in the order of 1500 km². Even if we only count the 'lowland' areas of less than 400 m above sea level, this still gives an area of around 550 km². Using the ratio of hinterland to population suggested in Table 3.3, this would be sufficient for an urban population of around 42,000, with a rural population of similar size.

Of course, simple lines on a map cannot give an accurate impression of the actual suitability of the topology and soil within this area for agricultural exploitation, nor can they tell us whether some crops would have fared better than others. However, what these maps and calculations do illustrate very clearly is that the margin for error is very high: in reality, the population of EIA Tyre is highly unlikely to have been anywhere near 44,400, and probably did not exceed 10,000. Even accounting for the gaps in our knowledge and the imprecision of these calculations, it seems very probable that the cultivable land around Tyre was ample to support a population far in excess of what should be considered likely for the period. Added to this, as in modern Lebanon, it is likely that some of the highland areas were cultivated for olives. Land availability, we can be fairly sure, was not a problem in Phoenicia at this time. If constraints on agricultural production and subsistence existed, they must have related to other elements. The most obvious candidate is labour availability.

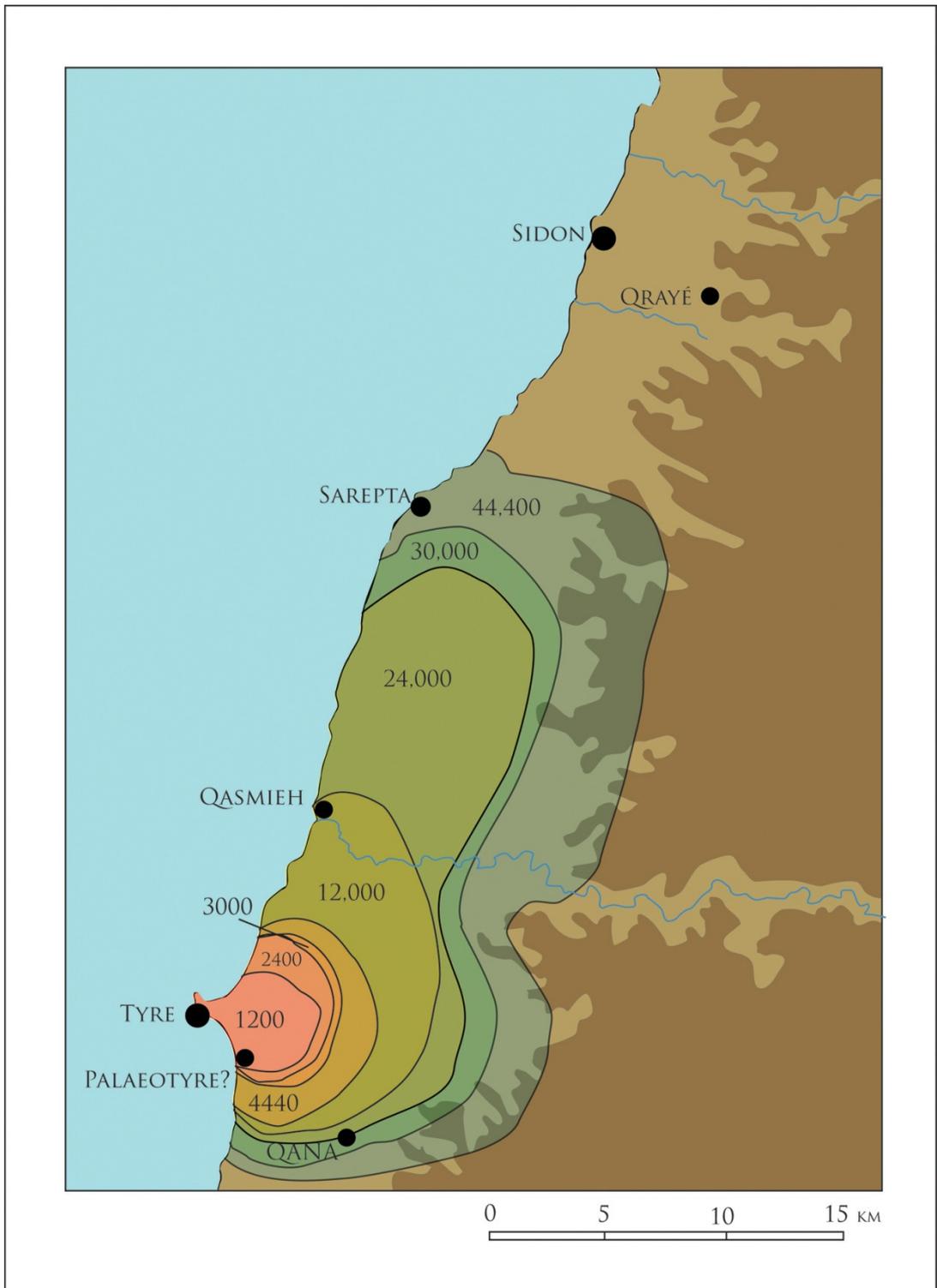


Fig. 3.8. *Agricultural hinterland requirements for various urban population estimates.*

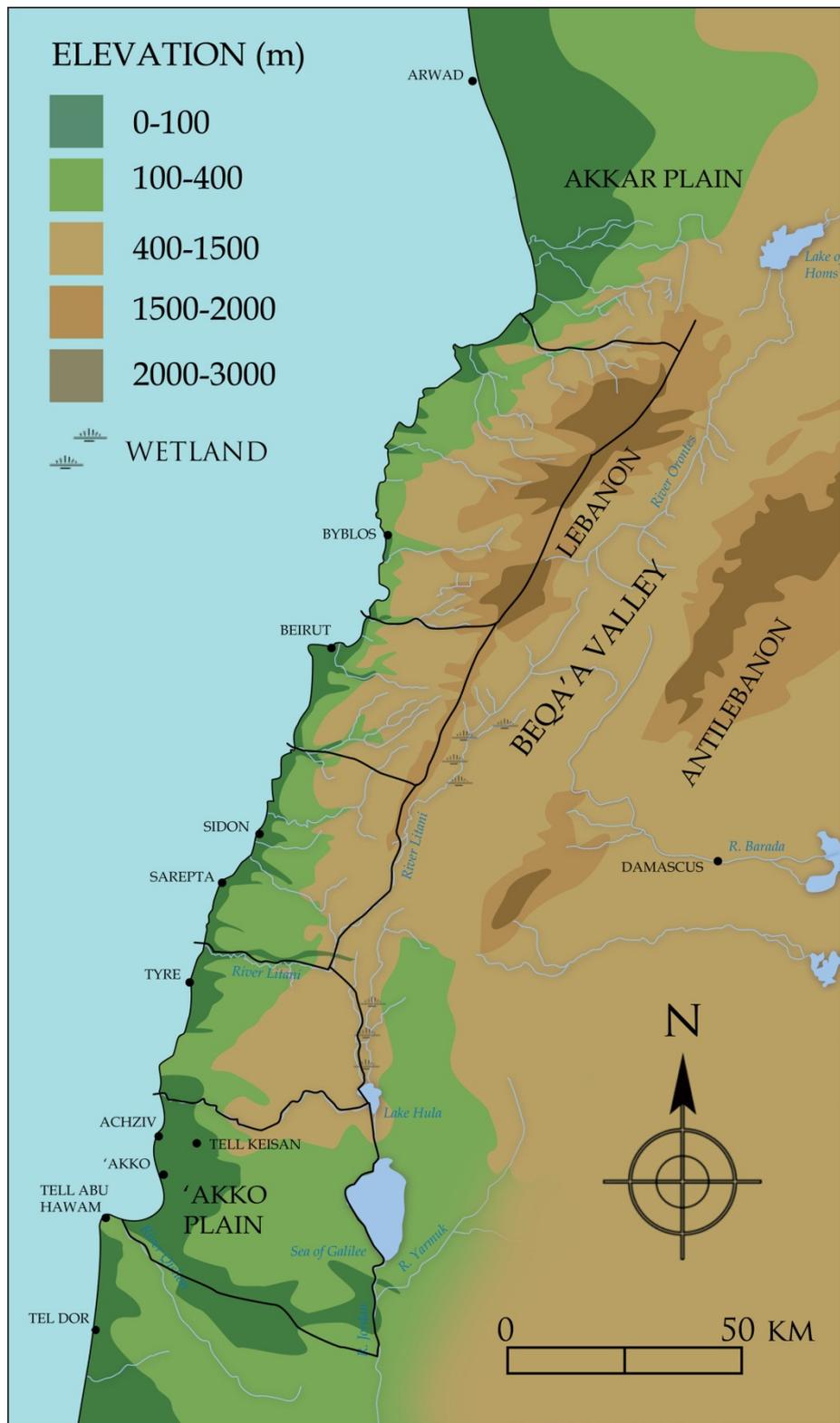


Fig. 3.9. Hypothetical reconstruction of major polity hinterlands for EIA Phoenicia.

Labour Requirements

Since the land itself was evidently available to be cultivated, the next question is whether sufficient work-force existed to farm it. Calculations here become extremely speculative since they are based on very little in the way of specifically Phoenician data. They depend on comparative and cross-cultural figures for urban-rural population ratios, labour requirements per hectare per day for particular products, and suggested figures for what Gallant calls the 'drudgery' index: the actual number of days a peasant could be expected to work per year, once other factors such as familial commitments, illness, leisure time etc. have been considered. Consequently, the results obtained here derive from the nature of the models utilised rather than real data. This is, obviously, a significant shortcoming. Nevertheless, it is a useful experiment which can provide some insights into the processes likely to have been affecting Phoenician subsistence at this time.

Using comparative data, Gallant suggests labour requirements of 48 man-days per hectare per year (hereafter md/ha/yr) for cereals, 125 for olives and 175 for pulses, legumes and other vegetables. Although some regional variation is to be expected for these figures, there is a reasonable cross-cultural correlation for a diverse range of pre-industrial societies, including examples from the Greek islands and mainland, Italy, Spain and Mexico. It is therefore reasonable to use them to provide a broad indication of the amount of labour that would have been required in LBA/EIA Phoenicia.⁹⁵ As well as an annual figure, a daily average can be calculated to give an indication of the approximate proportion of the population that would have to work on food production at any one time. Variable labour abilities of different age and gender categories have the result that one statistical population member contributes an average amount of labour of less than one man-day.⁹⁶

We should also take into account the 'drudgery index'. Gallant suggests a peasant can be expected to work an average of 175-200 days a year, based on comparative literature. In

⁹⁵ Gallant 1991, 75-6.

⁹⁶ I use Gallant 1991's coefficients, which are as follows: Adult male - 1; Adult and adolescent female - 0.7; Children and elderly - 0.5. Data for the proportions of these age and gender categories are not available for Phoenicia, so I will be using arbitrary, approximate figures of 50% children/elderly (c.f. Lucy 2005, 50), 25% adult males and 25% adult females. These produce an average per-person labour input of 246.54 md/yr.

combination with the age and gender factors, this results in an average annual labour input of 118-135 md/yr, which gives the following results for Phoenicia:⁹⁷

Projected Urban + Rural Population	Annual Labour requirement (md/yr)	Average Daily labour requirement (people)	Total Required Peasantry (175 work days/yr)	Total Required Peasantry (200 work days/yr)
1200 + 600	128,185.05	520	1086	950
2400 + 1200	256,370.1	1040	2173	1899
3000 + 1500	320,475.75	1300	2716	2374
4440 + 2220	474,309	1924	4020	3513
12,000 + 6000	1,281,884.25	5199	10,863	9495
24,000 + 24,000	3,418,402.6	13,866	28,969	25,321
30,000 + 30,000	4,272,992.1	17,332	36,212	31,652
44,400 + 44,400	6,324,007.5	25,651	53,593	46,845

Table 3.4. *Peasantry requirements to support a non-agricultural city.*

In all cases, the average labour requirement substantially exceeds the projected population of the hinterland. If we wished to maintain, as some scholars have,⁹⁸ a Marxian distinction in which the urban population existed by exploiting the rural peasantry for agricultural production, these figures would indicate that either Hansen's figures for the size of rural population in relation to a Greek polis, or Gallant's cross-cultural 'drudgery index', does not apply in the case of Phoenicia. There is no basis, however, for imagining that the rural/urban divide was so rigid, especially if populations were small and consequently a higher proportion of the required agricultural land could be situated nearer to settlements. There is no reason to suppose that city-dwellers did not travel out to work in the fields, as they did elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, we should not assume that Phoenician cities had to be autarkic, given the existence of a flourishing trade in staples in the region, as we have already established.

More significant than the question of whether agriculture was principally carried out exclusively by rural peasants is the issue of the uneven distribution of labour requirements throughout the year. Halstead and Jones discuss what they term 'time stress' – the significant pressure on agricultural labour at certain times of year due to the dictates of the agricultural

⁹⁷ Gallant 1991, 78.

⁹⁸ e.g. Liverani 1989; Heltzer 1990.

calendar. Halstead and Jones' observations are based on fieldwork undertaken on the Greek islands of Amorgos and Karpathos, which in the twentieth century operated a traditional extensive agricultural system which the authors are at pains to emphasise cannot be automatically assumed for antiquity. Nevertheless, their identification of particular periods of stress – most notably the requirement that the harvest be completed before the arrival of the autumn rains – cannot be ignored.⁹⁹

The discovery, not far from Jerusalem, of the 'Gezer Calendar', an inscribed limestone tablet in Early Hebrew describing agricultural activities by month, provides invaluable information on the EIA Levantine agricultural year. Although there has been debate over its dating, general consensus seems to have settled for around the tenth century BC.

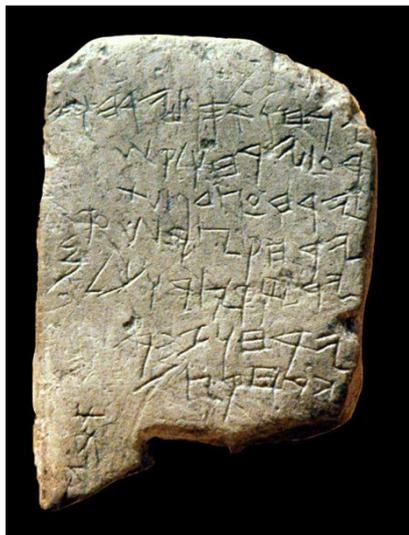


Fig. 3.10. *The Gezer Calendar.*

Two months of ingathering. [i.e, storage of grain and wheat. Sept/Oct.]

Two months of sowing. [Nov/Dec.]

Two months of late sowing. [Jan/Feb. Between the winter and late spring rains.]

Month of pulling flax. [i.e, the flax harvest. March.]

Month of barley harvest [April.]

Month when everything [else] is harvested. [May.]

Two months of pruning [vines]. [June/July.]

⁹⁹ Halstead & Jones, 1989

Month of summer fruit. [August.]¹⁰⁰

There is obviously a question of how representative this document is: in particular, flax is rarely mentioned in other documents of this period or in the Old Testament, and the evidence from spindle-whorls found in Phoenicia seems to suggest the textile industry there was more focused on other fibres, such as wool (see below). Olives, generally harvested in late autumn and winter, are notably not mentioned. Its prominence in this document may therefore be specific to the Gezer area, rather than in the Levant more widely. Nevertheless, the calendar mostly fits well with what is expected in the East Mediterranean, and with Halstead and Jones' observations in Amorgos and Karpathos. It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that the period of greatest time stress in Phoenician agriculture would have been during the harvest months of March to May.

If we assume that the main cereal staple for Phoenicia was barley, as the Gezer calendar seems to imply for Israel, and that its harvest was ideally to be accomplished within the space of a month, it is possible to calculate an approximate labour requirement for this task. For this calculation I have used a figure of c. 15md/ha, based on Halstead and Jones' figures for Amorgos. This is done with a caveat regarding the problems of extensive and intensive agriculture outlined above.

Population	Hinterland Area (ha.)	Labour required for cereal harvest (md)	Daily labour requirement for a one-month harvest	Workers needed per day
1200 + 600	548.1	8221.5	274.05	406
2400 + 1200	1096.2	16,443	548.1	812
3000 + 1500	1370.25	20,553.75	685.125	1015
4440 + 2220	2028	30,420	1014	1502
12,000 + 6000	5481	82,215	2740.5	4060
24,000 + 24,000	14,616.2	269,243	7308.1	10,826
30,000 + 30,000	18,270.2	274,053	9235.1	13,533
44,400 + 44,400	27,040	405,600	13,520	20,030

Table 3.5. *Labour requirements for a barley harvest.*

¹⁰⁰ Mauchline 1958.

These figures take no account of the ‘drudgery index’, since it is assumed that in periods of time-stress such as this, the maximum possible number of people would be enlisted to work – leisure time and other tasks would best be done at other times of the year. Table 3.5 shows that, while sufficient labour would have been available, it would have represented a very sizeable mobilisation of resources: for lower population estimates it would have involved around two-thirds of the entire rural population, or around 23% of the total population – including women, the elderly and children – working on barley-harvesting every day for a month. This represents a fourfold increase of the average cereal labour requirement. In addition, during the time of the barley-harvest, it would still have been necessary to perform work relating to other crops, further increasing the pressure on labour availability. It does not appear that the time-stress for Phoenicia at this time would have been unmanageable, nor would it seem to have necessitated a large-scale mobilisation of the urban populace to help in the fields. However, as in other parts of the Levant it does seem to have been a significant element which would have had to have been taken into account and, depending on culturally-determined ideas of an acceptable investment of time and resources, may well have helped shape the region’s economic development during the EIA.

The overall picture of population and subsistence in Phoenicia, then, is one of small urban centres which probably housed a significant proportion of their territory’s total population.¹⁰¹ Despite the topographic challenges the Phoenician landscape presented and the Biblical references to large-scale grain importation, it is clear that there was more than enough potentially cultivable land on Phoenicia’s coastal plain to support cities of this order of size.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Such a picture is, of course, open to revision in the event of new evidence. The lack of regional survey for much of Phoenicia means that the true complexities of settlement hierarchy remain obscure. Where data is available, it points to a degree of flux during the LBA/EIA transition. In the Beqaa’, while a number of LB II sites were abandoned, more Iron I ones were founded. The general picture is of smaller, more dispersed settlements rather than a move to or from the major centres (Marfoe 1998, 218ff.). Similar upheaval was detected in the ‘Akko Plain survey, again with a more dispersed settlement hierarchy in which central sites such as ‘Akko seem to have exerted less influence over the surrounding area (Lehmann 2001).

¹⁰² It is worth noting, however, that differences doubtless existed from one polity to another. Despite its relatively small extent, the Phoenician littoral is far from homogeneous, and in particular, the mountains come much closer to the sea in the area around Beirut than they do elsewhere, with the Tyre-Sidon region having the largest expanse of coastal flats. Modern agricultural exploitation of the Lebanese coast is most intense between around Sidon and Tyre (Hatoum *et al.* 2003), but this may owe at least something to the more stable political situation in the north, which has encouraged greater urban development.

Grain importation likely occurred for two principal reasons: to alleviate short-term disruptions in local supply, as in EA 74, 75 and others, or because of a deliberate choice. In the Biblical sources the imported grain is said to be wheat. This was generally considered a higher-quality grain than barley, although it was more labour-intensive to grow and more susceptible to climatic fluctuations.¹⁰³ The idea that Phoenician polities might seek to obtain this relative luxury through trade is thus highly plausible. Furthermore, by obtaining some grain by import rather than farming, agricultural time-stress during periods such as harvest would have been alleviated.

If we are correct in assuming that imported staples provided an important source of staple products for Phoenician populations, then we may have one reason for the relative lack of de-urbanisation there compared to its neighbours. We might assume that, having become accustomed to rely on commodities brought in at the major port cities, many of the population may have been more reluctant to strike out for the interior away from such centres to go it alone. Here the topography may be a particularly significant factor, since the mountains of the Phoenician interior certainly would make for a harsher refuge than the Palestinian hill-country. Greater social integration may also have been a factor. The importation of commodities would likely have precluded the necessity of a large, strictly rural peasantry devoted solely to agricultural production. Instead it seems more likely that the gap between rural farmers and urban craftsmen and traders was not absolute, and that the city-dwellers also contributed to the production of food.¹⁰⁴ These connections between the urban centres and their hinterlands may have helped mitigate the centrifugal effects of other social factors.

Conclusion: The Economy in LBA/EIA Phoenicia

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that, while they have produced useful insights elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean, current perspectives which attempt to map economic and social change in the LBA/EIA transition in terms of changes in the balance between ‘public’ and ‘private’ trade are of limited utility in Phoenicia. Although the evidence in both periods is far

¹⁰³ Foxhall 1998.

¹⁰⁴ Given the likely small size of even the main Phoenician centres, it is important not to overstate their urban character, and the picture suggested by Lehmann (2001, 87) in which most ‘city’-dwellers were to some extent farmers, seems highly plausible.

from abundant, it is nevertheless apparent that the kind of ambiguous mingling of different kinds of economic relations which characterised Ugarit and Mesopotamia very probably existed too in Phoenicia in both the Bronze and Iron Ages. Scholars like Sherratt and Bell are right to point out that, if we are to analyse change in terms of the amount of central control or private enterprise in an economy, it must have been an alteration in the balance between these coexisting different sorts of relations rather than – as Liverani and others have argued – a more or less wholesale transition from almost entirely one to entirely the other.

This situation is neither exceptional nor anomalous. Economic interactions, like those which comprise society more broadly, have no intrinsic existence in and of themselves but are simply one category of human action and practice. Like all forms of social organisation and interaction, then, they occur within a dialectic between human practice and social context. By their nature, then, they are in a constant state of flux: historically-contingent and dependent on the socially-mediated interpretations of the people who reproduce and renegotiate them. In short, economic change is, like social change, the normal state of affairs.

So changes between the balance of ‘public’ or ‘private’, ‘centralised’ or ‘decentralised’ economic activity almost certainly took place, if we wish to think in these terms. The nature of these changes remains, however, almost entirely speculative. Phoenician archaeological and textual records are not sufficiently detailed, unambiguous or reliable to allow such fine-grained analysis. Even more problematically, the categorisation of ancient economies in these terms risks a certain arbitrariness. While some elements can of course easily be thought of in this way, others resist such neat categorisation. Since these ambiguous forms of economic activity account for much of what we know about Levantine economic organisation, any approach which finds them difficult to deal with is in danger of obscuring rather than enlightening.

My approach here and in the next chapter replicates that of the thesis as a whole: to pull back from more elaborate conclusions and models which go beyond what the data can reasonably support and to focus instead on the arguably more basic issues where progress can be made. The discussion of subsistence and population presented here is one such area, from which, despite the hypothetical nature of much of the analysis, and the very broad tolerances within which we must operate, unequivocal conclusions do emerge.

Although Phoenicia presented unique topographical challenges for the production of subsistence staples, and had rather less cultivable land than its neighbours to the north and south,

it was certainly not ‘marginal’ in the sense that insufficient land was available to feed its probable population. It was more than capable of providing enough staple foodstuffs to support any population which can reasonably be imagined for this period. Instead, it seems likely that the Phoenicians may have imported quite large quantities of subsistence products from outside, while much of its own population remained nucleated in urban centres and engaged in ‘value-added’ craft production and commerce. This economic strategy was not dictated by simple geographical fate; starting with the most basic question of how they obtained staple goods, the Phoenicians were faced with choices.

Such considerations could be modelled in terms of rational choice and cost-benefit analysis: the bases of modern economic theory. While their homeland *could* supply their needs, this would have entailed significant proportions of the rural and urban populations labouring under conditions of time-stress at key points in the year. Even then, agricultural production was subject to the usual risks of pests, disease and weather. The decision to alleviate these problems by trade is a ‘rational’ one. With grain imported from elsewhere, fewer of the population would have been tied up in agricultural labour and periods of time-stress would be less severe. The risks and costs of agricultural production could, at least in part, be passed on to others, while more labour was freed up to focus on wealth-generating rather than subsistence production.

However, this is not the best way of approaching agency in ancient contexts. Many of the fundamental tenets of rational choice theory can be shown to be questionable even in the modern world; as this thesis has already alluded to, even the most basic – the notion that social phenomena should be understood through the decisions and actions of individuals (methodological individualism) – takes a distinct stance within a highly politicised contemporary debate concerning the nature of personhood and one’s relation to society. It cannot be taken for granted outside the modern western context. The extent to which ‘individuals’ in the modern sense even existed in the ancient world remains obscure and controversial.¹⁰⁵

It is better to think in terms of the dynamic processes of interaction – both between members of society and social groups, and between these social actors and their structuring social context, their habitus, in Bourdieu’s terms – which shaped how Phoenicians reproduced economic relations. These are very difficult to recover from currently available data, but we must still try. Issues of ideology and the symbolic aspects of some kinds of economic behaviour are

¹⁰⁵ Boudon 2003; Patterson 2006; Knapp & van Dommelen 2008.

apparent even within the very patchy evidence for subsistence patterns presented here. Foxhall, for example, has stressed the importance of aspiration and ‘fashion’ in shaping such patterns. Not just ‘prestige artefacts’ but even staple commodities are symbolically-loaded and their consumption is not merely passive or defined by rational cost-benefit concerns; it is an act of social presentation closely entwined with questions of identity and status: how people see themselves and want to be seen within their social context. The right goods can allow sub-élite groups to partake to some extent in ‘high-status’ lifestyle: éliteness becomes a matter of quantity, not quality.¹⁰⁶

We perhaps see an element of this in the fact that Tyre’s subsistence imports in the Bible are of wheat. We might suppose that, just as in modern and pre-industrial Lebanon, fruit rather than cereals accounted for a large proportion of Phoenician agricultural production. Of the cereals that were grown, it seems likely that, as in much of the East Mediterranean (cf. the Gezer calendar), barley was the principal crop. If this was the case then the large-scale importation of wheat – often seen as a higher-quality grain – was likely bound up with social-identity and aspirational issues of the kind Foxhall describes. We would, of course, need rather more and better evidence to be able to provide any firm answers regarding the social significance of patterns like this – if indeed the Biblical accounts are even reliable in the first place – but it is important that these questions are asked and that economic interactions are integrated into their wider social context.

This social context and issues of ideology, identity, politics, religion and so on, must all be considered, then, before it would be appropriate to offer a final conclusion on how the dialectic between context and agency shaped the reproduction and transformation of economic practices in LBA/EIA Phoenicia. For this reason, such conclusions are deferred to Chapter 6, where economic behaviour will be discussed as part of my broader conclusions regarding changing social practice, informed by the contextual information presented and examined throughout this thesis. The significance of this chapter has been to review previous approaches and raise the main ‘economic’ issues to be considered, not to provide answers or to deal with the economy in isolation as a bounded category or ‘subsystem’ in its own right. These issues will be explored further, and the inseparability of ‘economic’, political and other categories of practice will become

¹⁰⁶ Foxhall 1998, 306.

more apparent in the next chapter, which concerns the beginnings of the Phoenician commercial diaspora.

Phoenician Expansion and Foreign Trade

As previous chapters have emphasised, while structurally useful for discussion, categories of practice such as ‘politics’, ‘economy’, ‘foreign affairs’ must be understood as essentially arbitrary and do not represent genuine divisions in the organisational structures of the Phoenician societies themselves. Because all human behaviour and interactions are structured by, and in turn structure, a common social context, as much as possible they should be considered as a whole. Despite the propensity of much scholarship to see ‘Phoenician expansion’ as a topic of study in its own right, this chapter is resolutely not intended to be ‘standalone’; the topics discussed here can only be understood within the wider context explored in the rest of the thesis.

This preoccupation with the Phoenicians as Mediterranean traders is certainly informed by the maritime-orientated and frequently Aegeo-centric interests that continue to form a strong current in scholarship. However, it cannot be explained solely by this. Despite being arguably peripheral during the LBA, by the beginning of the first millennium BC the Phoenician polities were well on their way to being major players in Mediterranean trade. Their apparent supplanting both of long-established LBA superpowers and the dynamic new players such as Cyprus which rose to particular prominence in the twelfth century demands investigation, and the interrelation of cause and effect between these societies’ changing roles in trade and the rise of the Phoenicians is a key theme of this chapter. Over the early centuries of the first millennium, this expansion would be transformed from mercantile in nature to a diaspora involving permanent occupation. At this time the foundations were laid for a Punic world which still endured a millennium later.¹

¹ The fact that the destruction of Carthage formed the birth-pangs of Rome as a major Mediterranean power, thus granting the Phoenician diaspora a central role in the historical origin-myth for one of the most totemic societies of the ancient world, has undoubtedly contributed immensely to scholarly preoccupation with Phoenician ‘colonisation’.

For a period still often perceived as characterised by economic and mercantile retrenchment, this is an extraordinary achievement which demands investigation.²

At its heart, the question this chapter aims to address is straightforward: how and why did the nature of Phoenician interaction with the wider world change during the LBA/EIA transition, and what were the effects of this both at home and abroad? This question is not confined merely to maritime contacts: we should not overlook the possibility of overland interactions. Indeed, it is to these that we turn first, since they are bound up with questions of power dynamics between the Phoenician polities, and especially the rise to pre-eminence of Tyre. Because Tyre is usually seen as the driving force behind Phoenician activity in the Mediterranean, a clear understanding of its geo-political and economic status during our period of interest is essential. The chapter examines foreign contacts with the aim of clarifying three distinct questions. First, the balance between commercial, military and settlement-orientated aspects to foreign contacts and the question of whether we can distinguish changes over time; second, the extent to which a ‘foreign expansion’ appears to be a new phenomenon of the EIA, and if so, the reasons for it. Included in this is a discussion of how much diversity between polities can be identified. Thirdly, the chapter considers how this expansion fed into broader changes in identities and society in Phoenicia.

Overland Expansion and the Rise of Tyre

Because of its long coastland, separation from the Levantine interior by mountains and our own tendency to approach Phoenician civilisation primarily through its effects on the Classical world of the Mediterranean, it is easy to make the assumption that the Phoenicians themselves looked principally westwards and that the bulk of their foreign interactions are likely to have been maritime. In fact, this is far from clear. In Hebrew and Ugaritic, *qdm* – ‘east’ also carries the meaning of ‘front’, perhaps indicating a fairly deeply-rooted Semitic cultural disposition towards facing eastwards. The word is also attested in Phoenician, but only with the alternative sense of ‘formerly’, so we cannot be certain whether this cultural sense that east was

² This notion is rightly being subjected to increasing scepticism, with Parkinson claiming to have ‘demonstrate[d] conclusively what most Aegean archaeologists know instinctively: foreign trade actually increased in frequency during the Dark Age, in particular along newly established or newly significant trade routes’ (Galaty *et al.* 2009, 51; Parkinson 2010).

‘forwards’ was shared by the Phoenicians. Even if Phoenician did preserve the same meaning, of course, it would by no means be certain that the cultural assumptions underlying it remained current in the LBA/EIA transition.³

Topographically, Phoenician isolation is real, but by no means total. In antiquity, as today, a coastal road linked the major Phoenician polities. Passes and gaps in the mountains allowed vital connections of the major routes to the wider Near Eastern overland trade network. The most important were the Homs Gap near Arwad in the north and the ‘Akko Plain in the south, where the Via Maris – the main route connecting Egypt with Syria – passed through Tel Dor before branching inland towards Damascus. There were doubtless also smaller routes suitable for pack-animals at various points, but the journey would have been slow and difficult, even more so during the winter months. The dromedary was not widely adopted until around the beginning of the first millennium BC, so goods would have been distributed using donkeys or other equids.⁴

³ Gordon 1971, 212; Krahmalkov 2000; del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003; *Wen-Amon* notably provides a striking description of the king of Byblos enthroned before a window ‘so that the waves of the great Syrian sea were breaking against the back of his head’ (Aubet 2001, 358): in Egyptian perception, at least, the sea was the (literal) backdrop to Gyblite royal power. The scene is, however, described from the Egyptian’s point of view. If the king’s back is to the sea then he is *looking* east; it is not described what lies before him in that direction, and, if this in any way resembled the actual layout of the palace at Byblos, we cannot rule out that the view east may have had as much, or more, ideological and cultural significance.

⁴ Bulliet 1975 ; Liverani 1987; Finkelstein 1988; Astour 1995.

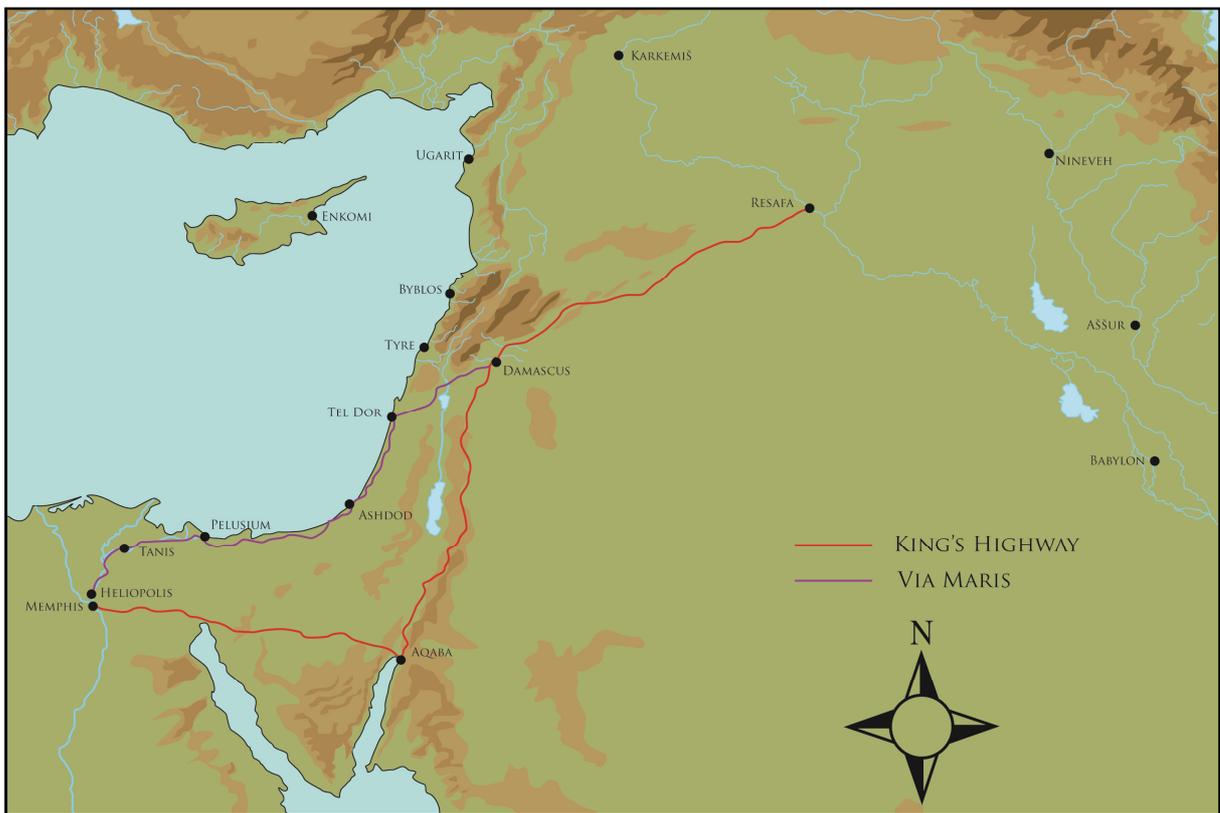


Fig. 4.1. *Main Near Eastern overland trade routes in the LBA/EIA.*

Ezekiel's 'Lament for Tyre' (27-28), dating from the sixth century but perhaps partially based on an older, Tyrian, source, has been used to attempt to reconstruct eighth- or, at the earliest, ninth-century trade circuits for the city, in which overland connections are at least as important as maritime ones. Liverani suggests concentric circuits from which different commodities were obtained: Syria-Palestine for agricultural produce; East Anatolia and North Arabia for farm produce and livestock; Anatolia and Mesopotamia for craft products and slaves. Only the outermost circuit, encompassing Arabia, the Aegean and possibly Tarshish, and supplying exotic goods and metals, includes a significant maritime component. Aubet, on the other hand, organises the trade circuits diachronically, with the earliest, tenth-century, one limited to Israel, the Red Sea and the as-yet-unidentified location of Ophir. Only later, she argues, did it expand to include North Syria and Cilicia, and subsequently the central and western Mediterranean.⁵

⁵ Liverani 1991, Aubet 2001, 120ff. Bondi 1995a.

Whether or not Ezekiel is a reliable account of later Iron Age trading circuits, its implication that perishable foodstuffs may have constituted the majority of Phoenician imports from its Levantine neighbours is seemingly supported by the archaeological record. Contacts between Phoenicia and Israel/Palestine are demonstrated by the presence of Phoenician Bichrome in eleventh-century contexts in the northern Palestinian interior at Tel Yoqne‘am and ‘En Hagit; further south in ‘Izbet Sarṭah; Tell Qasile in Philistia and Tel Masos in the Negev. By Iron IIA, ‘Phoenician’ stylistic influence has been discerned in locally-produced south-Levantine pottery.⁶ However, ceramics coming in the opposite direction are limited to a handful of Philistine Bichrome sherds, mostly from closed vessels, found particularly in Dor and nearby sites, which petrographic analysis suggests mainly originate in the southern Shephelah or north-western Negev. High-quality, elaborately-decorated, Philistine fine wares were generally not only traded for their contents but constituted a product with added value of its own: one for which, it seems, there was little demand in Phoenicia.⁷ Since Phoenician exports were presumably traded for something, we must conclude that whatever was imported from the southern Levant was mostly perishable. Grain or other foodstuffs are probably the likeliest candidates.

As with much early Phoenician trade, metals seem to have played a crucial role. Already by the late thirteenth century BC and continuing throughout the LBA/EIA transition, Phoenician materials in Transjordan and Phoenician parallels for items in metal hoards such as the Iron IB example found at Tel Jatt attest to the coastal cities’ involvement in the reopened copper mines at Feinan.⁸

Discussions of Phoenician expansion in Levantine contacts during the first millennium often focus on the relationship with North Syria and Cilicia, as attested in the Phoenician influence apparent in the Bir-Hadad stele or the Zincirli and Karatepe inscriptions, or the arguments over whether Al Mina was a Greek or Phoenician *emporion*.⁹ Although some have suggested these contacts began earlier – Peckham believes the Aramaeans borrowed the

⁶ Ben-Shlomo, Shai & Maeir 2004; Maeir & Shai 2007. The parallels are mainly with ‘Cypro-Phoenician’ or Black-on-Red ware, on which see Schreiber 2003.

⁷ Gilboa 2005, 54; Gilboa, Cohen-Weinberger & Goren 2006; Gilboa & Sharon 2003, 62.

⁸ Artzy 2006.

⁹ Pitard 1988; Winter 1976, 1981, 1988; Perrault 1993; Luke 2003; Niemeyer 2004, 2006a; Hodos 2006; Boardman 2006b; Pamir 2006; Lehmann 2008; Lane Fox 2008. These are mostly beyond the chronological scope of this thesis, but are discussed inasmuch as they relate to EIA matters below and in Chapter 5.

Phoenician alphabet from Sidonians in North Syria ‘no later than the tenth century’¹⁰ – there is no evidence that they preceded the ninth century. Instead, most scholars attempting to argue for a significant expansion of Phoenician interests on the Levantine mainland in the LBA/EIA transition focus on the emergence of Tyre as the dominant regional power, and its alleged military expansion into the ‘Akko Plain.

What constitutes a ‘dominant’ power is a complex question, however. There are many dimensions in which a polity could be dominant, ascendant, declining or so on, and too often scholars fail to define exactly what is meant, resulting in vague and ambiguous assertions such as that ‘Sidón prealeció sobre las ciudades de la costa palestina a lo largo de la segunda mitad del II milenio a.C., perteneciendo la primera mitad del I milenio a Tiro’.¹¹ This view, that Sidon’s pre-eminence during the LBA gave way to Tyrian primacy in the Iron Age, is close to consensus among Phoenician scholars. But what kind of ‘pre-eminence’ are we supposed to envisage?

It is in foreign affairs that it is easiest to argue for a shift in pre-eminence. Sidon’s self-confidence in LBA international relations seems to be fairly certain and does indeed contrast with

¹⁰ Peckham 1998, 348.

¹¹ Vita 2001-2, 427. As this statement demonstrates, discussion of power-dynamics between the various polities usually focuses on the relative importance of Tyre and Sidon. However, we should not ignore Byblos, Beirut and Arwad despite the generally poor quality of the evidence. It is widely believed that Byblos was in decline during the LBA/EIA transition, and had been for some time (Katzenstein 1997). Certainly we lack Iron Age finds comparable to the very rich MBA assemblage, but this probably owes much to excavation mistakes or a slight movement of the IA city. We should beware of letting it overly skew our impression of the site’s history (Chapter 1, n.39). For all its problems, *Wen-Amon* at least suggests that EIA Byblos remained a plausible setting for a tale of Egyptian trade and diplomacy, and its portrayal there is far from a spent force.

We know little of Beirut or Arwad at this time, either from archaeology or texts. Beirut appears to be independent in diplomatic correspondence with Ugarit at the end of the LBA, but the letters tell us little more about its relations with the other Phoenician cities. It is often assumed it fell within the territory of Tyre-Sidon during the IA but there is even less proof of this than there is of the existence of the joint kingdom itself (Vidal 2005, 648-9; Boyes 2012). Almost all we know about Arwad in the EIA comes from an inscription of the late-twelfth- to early-eleventh-century Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (*ANET*³, 275), in which he claims to have visited the city and received tribute from it, Byblos and Sidon. The absence of Beirut and Tyre from this list has been variously interpreted, either as showing their weakness, since they were not even worth mentioning, or, especially in the case of Tyre, strength, since they were not compelled to pay tribute. Katzenstein’s (1997, 63) suggestion that Tiglath-Pileser never did any more in Phoenicia than enjoy a short sojourn in Arwad, during which he received gifts from Byblos and Sidon, seems eminently plausible; we should not read too much into which cities are or are not mentioned in this text.

an altogether more diffident attitude on the part of Tyre. In diplomatic correspondence, for example, Sidon is consistently given the Akkadian determinative 𒌦: KUR – ‘country’, while Tyre is always merely 𒌶: URU – ‘city’, even in its own letters. All the Phoenician kings address their Ugaritic counterpart as ‘brother’, suggesting putative equal rank, but only the king of Sidon is addressed thus in return. He, like the king of Beirut, places himself first in letter headers, while the Tyrian king consistently puts himself second behind the addressee, which Arnaud takes as Tyrian recognition of its lower status.¹²

We might question, however, whether any genuine political or cultural dominance underlay this diplomatic stance. We are not yet at a stage where we can examine the material record of LBA and EIA Phoenicia for signs of Sidonian cultural or economic influence in other cities, in the movement of goods or the diffusion and emulation of material culture styles. Our typologies are insufficiently detailed to identify most material with particular polities or production centres, and material of this date at Sidon is even less common than at many of the other cities. Nevertheless, a measure of Sidonian political influence over Tyre may be suggested by an unpublished letter in which the Ugaritic ruler requests the Sidonian king’s protection for his grooms as they visit the harbour at Tyre.¹³ Militarily too it seems to have been superior, at least during the fourteenth century. The Amarna letters vividly describe conflict between Tyre and Sidon, in which Sidon seems to have much the upper hand, conquering Ushu/Palaeotyre and besieging island Tyre.

On the other hand, Tyre was neither poor nor isolated: in EA 89, Ribaddi of Byblos asserts that the Tyrian royal palace is second to none and its treasure-houses equal to those of Ugarit. This may well be exaggeration aimed at prompting a pharaonic intervention, but it is unlikely such wealth would have been wholly fictive. Furthermore, Arnaud makes a plausible case for Tyrian cultural and commercial links with Hazor, opening the possibility that it is not so much that Tyre was secondary to Sidon universally, but rather that it focused its attention predominantly southwards. Since the majority of our diplomatic evidence for LBA Phoenicia comes from Ugarit, such a policy would result in a misleading impression of Tyrian inferiority.

Despite these quibbles, there is little reason to doubt Sidon’s significance among the Phoenician cities during the LBA. It is less clear how matters changed after around 1200.

¹² Vita 2001-2, 427; Arnaud 1998, 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, n.36.

Probably the commonest view is that the city's influence gradually declined, while Tyre's increased. By the ninth and eighth centuries BC, it is argued, there were strong political links between the polities, possibly including the existence of a joint kingdom ruled from Tyre, but in which Sidon retained a degree of ideological prestige.

This theory is based largely on the fact that in many sources, including the Bible and arguably parts of Homer, 'Sidonian' is used in a wider sense than simply to denote the inhabitants of that city, taking on a metonymic signification of any Phoenician.¹⁴ According to the usual interpretation of Biblical and Assyrian sources, as well as Josephus, the title 'King of the Sidonians' was claimed by kings of Tyre, supporting the view of a joint monarchy.¹⁵ A link between Tyre and Sidon around this time has also been extrapolated from the late tradition that Tyre was founded c.1200 BC by Sidonian refugees.¹⁶ I have argued elsewhere against the idea of a long-lasting joint kingdom of Tyre-Sidon: if we confine ourselves to primary, contemporary sources, rather than ideological, partial and late 'historical' accounts, there is no reason to believe the two polities came under the rule of the same authority for more than a very brief spell in the eighth century.¹⁷ When the term 'King of the Sidonians' is used, it is, in fact, very rarely clear that it refers to the king of Tyre rather than any other Phoenician polity; when this does seem the likeliest interpretation, it seems more plausibly to represent a metonymic label for (southern)

¹⁴ e.g. *Iliad* XXIII.743; *Odyssey* IV.84. 'Phoenicians' and 'Sidonians' in Homer do, however, seem to have slightly different senses. Tyrians are never mentioned (cf. Sherratt 2005). 'Sidonian' is clearly meant metonymically in Josh. 13:4-5, rather than as an indication that most of Phoenicia was under Sidon's control during the period of the supposed Israelite invasion (Vidal 2005, 648).

¹⁵ The title is first attached to the ninth-century king Ittoba'al (I Kings 16:31) and is used by the Assyrians of the eighth-century king Luli (*ANET*³ 287, 288). It is worth noting, however, that these are foreigners, who we know used 'Sidonian' in a generic sense to mean any Phoenician. We have only a single case where a Phoenician source seems to use the title in this way, the eighth-century *KAI* 31 from Cyprus. In all other inscriptions 'King of the Sidonians' refers to the king of Sidon, not Tyre (Boyes 2012).

¹⁶ Justin XVIII 3.5; Josephus *Ant. Iud.* VIII 62. We can disregard this account as literal truth, since there is abundant historical and archaeological evidence for Tyre's existence in the Bronze Age (although several scholars cling to the idea of a Sidonian *re*-foundation), but it does demonstrate an ancient belief that Tyre was once dependent on Sidon, something also reflected in Hellenistic Sidonian coinage, which bore the legend 'Sidon, mother of Carthage, Hippo, Kition and Tyre' (Aubet 2001, 29). Tyrian coinage of similar date likewise refers to that city as 'Mother of the Sidonians' (Vita 2001-2, 427).

¹⁷ Boyes 2012.

Phoenicians in general, apparently originating amongst their neighbours but perhaps spreading to Tyrian use, rather than a genuine indication of political hegemony.

This is not merely a technical discussion over the meaning of an abstruse piece of titulature. The idea of a politically expansionist Tyre infuses much of the literature about this period and is especially pertinent in the case of the plain of 'Akko and the Carmel Coast. It is frequently argued that from the eleventh century onwards Tyre expanded militarily, culturally and commercially to exercise hegemony over this region, for the reason of securing a hinterland and workforce which would form the basis for its commercial expeditions westward into the Mediterranean.¹⁸ As we have seen, the 'Akko Plain also represents one of the two major points of connection between the Phoenician littoral and the network of Near Eastern overland trade routes. If the suggestion that Tyre gained control of this region is correct, it would represent a major advantage for the city in further expanding its commercial reach, and arguably go a long way towards explaining the Tyro-centric focus of first-millennium Phoenician expansion.

This is the 'Phoenician invasion' to which scholars like Stern credit the displacement of the Sea Peoples from Dor and the surrounding area.¹⁹ I explained my rejection of the idea of Sea People presence on the Carmel Coast in Chapter 2; there is no need to rehearse it in detail here. There is nothing in the archaeological evidence to suggest that the coast as far south as Dor, including the 'Akko plain, was anything other than Phoenician throughout the LBA/EIA transition. An invasion of new people bringing new practices and material culture is unnecessary to explain the area's Phoenician character in the first millennium: this would merely represent a continuation of the prevailing local culture of the LBA.

Even if the local populations were predominantly 'Phoenician', however, it is still possible that Tyre attempted to expand its kingdom southwards, and there *is* evidence of discontinuity during this period. There is a destruction horizon at Dor, and Lehmann has identified major disruption in settlement patterns during Iron I and especially the eleventh century, which are consistent with 'Akko losing its place at the head of the local site hierarchy. What has not been adequately proven, however, is that military expansion by Tyre is the only, or even best, explanation.²⁰ Ceramic sequences from Dor and Tell Keisan show similarities to those from Tyre

¹⁸ e.g. Aubet 2000; Lehmann 2001.

¹⁹ Stern 1998; Gilboa 2005.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; Lehmann 2001.

and Sarepta, and parallels also exist with Tell Abu Hawam and 'Akko, but these are mainly confined to commercial containers; domestic wares show much greater regional heterogeneity.²¹ This pattern is more consistent with inter-polity trade links and the development of a common southern Phoenician commercial pottery style than with the movement of people or diffusion of material culture types from a central source. The development of this 'koine' admittedly remains enigmatic. Matters might be helped if we better understood the LBA sequences in the area, and so could tell whether these parallels were a new development or could be traced back into the thirteenth century. LBA material from Dor and Keisan remains scarce, however, and 'Akko has not yet been published.

The fortress or fortified public building at Ḥorvat Rosh Zayit in Galilee is often cited in support of the idea of Tyrian control, but, again, the links are questionable. The pottery assemblage includes Phoenician Bichrome and 'Cypro-Phoenician' Black-on-Red ware vessels which date it to around the early ninth century. Such items were popular exports, however, and not confined to Phoenician sites, still less to Tyre. The identification of Ḥorvat Rosh Zayit as 'Phoenician' is based mainly upon its use of header-and-stretcher ashlar masonry and the discovery of large numbers of 'hippo' storage jars. The latter is particularly puzzling as a supposed parallel, since these vessels are not known from Lebanon at all, nor from the key sites in northern Israel generally identified as 'Phoenician', such as Tell Keisan, 'Akko or Tell Abu Hawam. Petrographic analysis allows for their origin anywhere between southern Lebanon and the southern Beth Shan Valley. The closest parallels come from other nearby sites such as Tel 'Amal and it is hard to see how these vessels can be used to demonstrate links with Lebanon in general or Tyre in particular.²² In short, nothing in the site's material culture assemblage links it unequivocally with Tyre or any other Lebanese Phoenician city. Ḥorvat Rosh Zayit makes far more sense within the general context of northern Israel's local variety of Phoenician culture than as evidence for any kind of intrusive expansion from the north.

The archaeological case for Tyre's expansion into the Carmel Coast during the LBA/EIA transition is, then, minimal to say the least. If it were not for the pervading Tyro-centrism of first-millennium Phoenician studies and the textual issues which helped shape it, it is hard to imagine anyone suggesting it. This whole scenario stems from the reference at I Kings 9:11-13 to the

²¹ Gilboa 1999, 2; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008.

²² Gal 1990, 1995; Alexandre 1995; Lipiński 2006, 177-8.

cession of the so-called ‘Land of Cabul’ by Solomon to Hiram of Tyre, a tale repeated by Josephus.²³ Katzenstein cites Josh. 19:24-30 as evidence that ‘the whole “ladder of Tyre” until Achzib was firmly in Tyrian hands’²⁴ but this is unjustified: the passage merely lists sites around southern Phoenicia and the ‘Akko Plain. Besides claiming the presence there of members of the Israelite tribe of Asher,²⁵ it makes no statement about their political control. The records of the Assyrian king Sennacherib place ‘Akko and Achziv, along with Tyre, Sidon and Sarepta, under the control of king Luli during the eighth to seventh centuries,²⁶ but this is not evidence for a Tyrian southwards expansion during the eleventh. Indeed, although Luli is generally regarded as a Tyrian king, closer examination of the original texts seems more consistent with him being a king of Sidon who only added Tyre to his territory for a relatively short period.²⁷

These few lines of Biblical testimony seem a poor basis for proposing a Tyrian expansion into the ‘Akko Plain, whether through military conquest, political domination or at the invitation of Solomon. The book of Kings, from which it is primarily drawn, while perhaps based on earlier annals, is at the very least the result of much later redaction and collation. Given the substantial doubts which exist over the historicity of the United Monarchy and the reigns of David and Solomon, these sections in particular should be treated with great caution, especially since II Chron. 8:2 presents a contradictory version of the events. There is a genuine archaeological question to be answered, namely the cause of the destruction horizon at Dor and the disruption of the ‘Akko Plain settlement patterns, but bringing Tyre into matters seems, at present, unwarranted and only muddies what are already cloudy waters. It may be that if and when ‘Akko itself finally sees publication, we will understand events in the region better; until

²³ *Ant. Iud.* VIII.142. Josephus can hardly be used as corroboration for the Biblical account since he seems to be using it as his source. The added detail of Hiram’s dissatisfied return of the cities to Solomon seems designed to reconcile the account in Kings with the apparently contradictory version in II Chron. 8:2. The Tyrian interpretation of Ḥorvat Rosh Zayit and of the settlement discontinuity in the ‘Akko Plain are explicitly linked to Cabul tradition by their proponents (Gal 1990; Lemaire 1991; Lehmann 2001, 92.)

²⁴ Katzenstein 1997, 65.

²⁵ Katzenstein (*Ibid.*, 68) acknowledges that these Asherites were likely incorporated into an overwhelmingly Phoenician cultural milieu, basing this on Judges 1:31-32 rather than archaeological evidence.

²⁶ *ANET*³ 287; Katzenstein 1997, 106.

²⁷ Boyes 2012.

then, I would suggest it is better to admit the limits of our knowledge than to build elaborate scenarios on shaky textual evidence.²⁸

If Tyre was in some way inferior to, or dependent on, Sidon in the LBA, its status in the EIA seems far more unclear, to a degree that is perhaps unexpected given the prominence attached to the city in most accounts of the first millennium. One cannot help but wonder how much the notion of a Tyrian first millennium might be an artefact of our own assumptions and the biases of the textual sources. There is no denying that Tyre features by far the most prominently of Phoenician cities in the Biblical account and that of historians such as Josephus, but these are explicitly Judaeo-centric texts: they describe the history of Phoenicia only inasmuch as it impacts on that of Israel-Palestine. Since Tyre was the closest of the major Phoenician polities, it is only to be expected that it had more contacts with its southern neighbours.

This rejection of the Tyrian expansion model merely refutes the notion that there was a major increase in that city's military or political involvement in the 'Akko Plain during the eleventh century. It does not argue against Tyre's – or any other Phoenician city's – involvement in overland commercial interactions with Israel-Palestine or other parts of the Near East during the EIA. Such contacts almost certainly existed, but the evidence is at present too scarce to reconstruct them in detail for this period. It is not until the ninth century that convincing evidence emerges. Whether this represents a genuine expansion of contacts, or merely the better survival of remains, is unclear. A combination of both is perhaps most likely. This uncertainty contrasts with the Mediterranean evidence, for which an EIA expansion certainly is apparent.

Phoenician 'Pre-Colonisation' in the Mediterranean

Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean has traditionally been seen in terms of 'colonisation'. The imperial experiences of the West during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did much to inform this approach, conceiving in such terms any contact between societies where one was operating beyond its borders and where there was perceived to be a difference in levels of 'development' or 'complexity'. More recently, while the impact of

²⁸ I have passed over some of the most unlikely Biblically-inspired elements, such as the suggestion that Tyre and Sidon were only able to expand at all – either westwards or southwards – during the first millennium because of David's defeat of the Philistines' land and sea power (Katzenstein 1997; Aubet 2001, 43-44).

colonialist notions on scholarship is now explicitly recognised, critiqued and problematised, this ‘post-colonial’ archaeology continues to deal with ancient contact situations in these terms, situating them relative to modern concerns.²⁹ This is not necessarily a problem – one of the important contributions of post-processual archaeology was the recognition that interpretations of the past are always a product of contemporary concerns, and indeed, that archaeologists should face up to and embrace the social, political and ideological implications of their work for the modern world. However, the result of this expansion of anti-colonial critique has been the widespread conceptualisation of ancient contacts in terms which are anachronistic and arguably unsuited to the historical case-studies.³⁰ In this respect, the spread of ‘colonisation’ as the defining paradigm of ancient culture-contacts mirrors the imposition of a ‘public’/‘private’ economic dichotomy explored in the last chapter. In some ways the problem is even more acute, because the term ‘colonisation’ itself is notoriously slippery and open to diverse definitions, with scholars not always spelling out the precise sense in which they mean it.³¹

For Phoenicia, there is a second consideration which has promoted continued discussion in terms of ‘colonisation’ despite the common acknowledgement among scholars that, certainly for the earliest phase, there was little ‘colonial’ – that is, involving permanent settlement in foreign-inhabited regions – about Phoenician interactions with the west. The Phoenician diaspora has long been used as a counterpoint to Greek ‘colonisation’, with some approaches merely using it as an illustration of an alternative, roughly contemporaneous, model for this kind of process; others framing the debate in antagonistic terms, with a long-standing argument over whether Greeks or Phoenicians were responsible for particular settlements or in control of certain areas of trade.³² As long as researchers continue to think in terms of ‘Greek colonisation’, there is a strong impetus for Phoenician engagement with the Mediterranean to be discussed in similar terms.

These factors have prompted the conventional division of Phoenician involvement with the Mediterranean into ‘pre-colonial’ and ‘colonial’ phases. The transition from the former – seen as characterised by commercial contacts and exchange, and possibly transitory *enoikismoï* – to the latter, where genuine Phoenician settlements or emporia can be identified, is generally placed

²⁹ van Dommelen 2002, 2005; Lyons & Papadopoulos 2002.

³⁰ Osborne 2008.

³¹ For different kinds of colonies, see Branigan 1981; Hodos 2006.

³² Niemeyer 1990, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Coldstream 1982; Boardman 2006a, 2006b; Fantalkin 2006.

around the mid-to-late ninth century, the traditional date for the foundation of Carthage and the date of the first large Phoenician-style temple at Kition.³³

Before this date, there is little evidence for permanent Phoenician settlement at these sites, or elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Some scholars interpret Josephus' account of Hiram quelling a revolt among the Ἰτυκαῖοι as a corrupted reference to the Kitians, and so as an indication that Phoenician hegemony there should be extended back as far as the tenth century,³⁴ but the reading is disputed and unsupported by archaeological data. The alternative suggestion, that it means the people of Utica, is equally impossible to verify. Likewise, it has long been recognised that Classical traditions dating the foundation of Phoenician settlements at Gadir/Cádiz and Utica to the twelfth and eleventh centuries respectively are unreliable and more closely linked to the myths of Homeric *νοστοί* than to genuine history. Archaeological remains at the sites are considerably later, and late tenth-century finds at Huelva are the earliest Phoenician material culture in the Iberian peninsula.³⁵

While the usefulness of the 'colonisation' terminology may be debatable, it can hardly be doubted that any Phoenician involvement in the Mediterranean prior to the mid-ninth century is unlikely to have been based on settlement. The extent to which scholars have believed in such a 'pre-colonial' phase has depended less on questions concerning the date of the first permanent settlements as on their readiness to accept what, until comparatively recently, was fairly scattered and inconclusive evidence for any EIA activity at all. It would be going too far to suggest that such controversies are now resolved, but the accumulation of good archaeological data indicating

³³ Despite the scepticism towards other such dates from the Classical tradition (see below), Timaios of Tauromenion's date of c.814 for the foundation of Carthage seems increasingly credible as excavation there continues (Docter *et al.* 2005, 2008; Nijboer 2006). For Kition, see Karageorghis 1976, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005; Karageorghis & Demas 1985; Swinton 1996; Yon 1997; Smith 2008.

³⁴ *C. Ap.* I.119; *Ant. Iud.* VIII.146. Given the mid-ninth-century construction of the temple, Sznycer's (1980) suggestion that some sort of presence may have begun at Kition by c.900 seems plausible. Indeed, given that they had reached areas much further west and were interacting with other places on Cyprus, there is no reason to suppose they had not been passing through Kition for some time. It is highly doubtful this would have constituted anything we should describe as a colony, however.

³⁵ Velleius Paterculus' *Historia Romana* I 2.1-3 places the foundation of Gadir eighty years after the battle of Troy, so in the late twelfth century, a date followed by Strabo and Pliny. Pseudo-Aristotle (*Περὶ Θαυμασίων Ἀκουσμάτων* 134) dates Utica's foundation 287 years before that of Carthage, citing Phoenician histories. For early discussions, see Beloch 1926, Vol. 1.2, 250-252; Albright 1941.

Phoenician contacts throughout the Mediterranean during the EIA is rendering the view that the expansion did not begin until the first millennium less and less sustainable.³⁶

Although twelfth-century finds are very scarce, it is unlikely that contacts between the Levant and Cyprus completely ceased at the end of the LBA. Cypriot White Painted Wheelmade III stirrup jars have been found in Phoenicia, notably at Sarepta, while a silver bowl with close parallels at Megiddo and inscribed in Ugaritic cuneiform was found in a LC IIIA context at Hala Sultan Tekke. Many Levantine parallels have been observed in the material culture of Enkomi, especially in the religious sphere. The twelfth-century bronze 'Ingot God' figurine, for example, shows close parallels with the Canaanite 'Smiting God' type and the 'Enthroned God' type is also derived from LBA Levantine predecessors. Ox-hide ingots were not solely manufactured on Cyprus, but given that they are not depicted in Levantine figurines and Cyprus's association with copper-production, it is hard not to interpret the former as a hybridising piece adapting a Levantine form to local concerns. Levantine influence has also been observed in the temple of the Ingot God at Enkomi and temples 4 and 5 at Kition. Stylistic, cultural and religious influence is thus more evident than the presence of clearly-definable imports, which raises the possibility that these items were products of a hybridising tradition shaped by the long-standing Bronze Age contacts rather than contemporary twelfth-century interactions.³⁷ This can hardly explain the convergence of Phoenician and Cypriot EIA pottery repertoires already apparent in the eleventh-century imports from Palaepaphos-*Skales*, however, and to deny the possibility of on-going twelfth-century links would be perverse.

³⁶ See, for example, Fantalkin 2006 for rejection of pre-ninth-century expansion.

³⁷ Knapp 2008; Negbi 1976, 1982; Courtois 1971, 1984



Fig. 4.2. *LBA/EIA Cyprus.*

In the eleventh century, tombs from Palaepaphos-*Skales* have produced a number of Canaanite jars with close parallels at Tyre, Sarepta and Tell Keisan. Phoenician vessels are also present in early eleventh-century tombs at Alaas. Pots and Phoenician-influenced mortuary practices also suggest eleventh-century contacts with Salamis, and Semitic influence in toponyms has been suggested there, at Amathous and at other sites on the island.³⁸ The types and locations of items are almost identical to the pattern of Phoenician imports to Cyprus during the LBA, which may also indicate that contacts did not completely cease during the twelfth century. The later eleventh century saw a significant expansion of contacts, with a wide range of Phoenician Ir 1b vessels appearing in Cypro-Geometric IA tombs at Palaepaphos-*Skales*, Kourion-*Kaloriziki*, Lapithos and Kition. These vessels continue to be the jars and small commercial containers which had typified earlier exchanges.³⁹

³⁸ Dugand 1980; Calvet 1980.

³⁹ Janes 2010; D'Agata *et al.* 2005; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008; Yon 1999; Maier 1999. More than half the eleventh and tenth century tombs from Palaepaphos-*Skales* contained Phoenician pottery (Bikai 1983). Both Sherratt (2003a, 44) and Bell (2006, 97-99) think it likely that contacts did continue during the twelfth century.

In the Aegean, eleventh-century items of Levantine origin have been identified at several sites. At Lefkandi, Early Proto-Geometric tombs have produced faience beads and a dipper juglet resembling later Phoenician examples from Kition.⁴⁰ On Crete, the *naïskos* at Kommos known as Temple A contained three sherds of Phoenician pottery and Tomb J at the Tekke necropolis near Knossos produced an early bronze bowl inscribed in Phoenician. The grave context is ninth-century, but the inscription is dated palaeographically to the eleventh, suggesting it may already have been old when it was deposited. At what point in the vessel's lifespan it was brought to Crete is, of course, a mystery. Even further west, an eleventh-century date has also been suggested on palaeographic grounds for the apparently Phoenician inscription on the Nora Fragment from Sardinia (not to be confused with the more substantial inscription on the ninth-century Nora Stone). However, the fragment lacks an archaeological context to confirm this date and no generally-accepted translation has yet been proposed so extreme caution is warranted. Western imports to Phoenicia are also known: Euboean Middle and Late Proto-Geometric ceramics occur in increasing numbers at Tyre and Dor in particular from Ir 1b and especially Ir 1|2 onwards. These predate the resumption of Aegean imports to Cyprus, implying contacts were direct, not conducted through Cypriot intermediaries.⁴¹

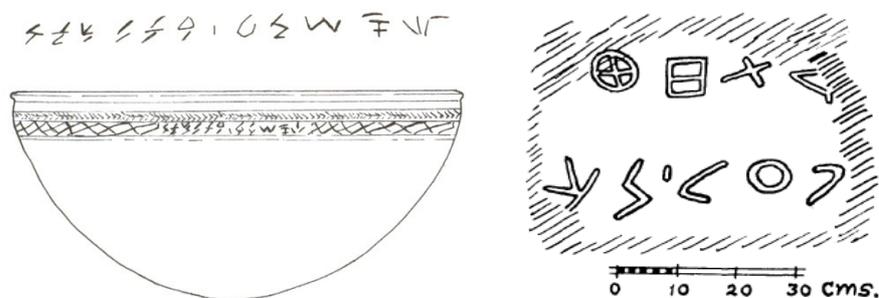


Fig. 4.3. *The Tekke Bowl and Nora Fragment Inscription.*

After Hodos 2006, fig 2.26 & Albright 1941, Fig. 3a.

⁴⁰ Tombs S.16 and S.46 respectively. Kourou 2008; Nijboer 2008a.

⁴¹ Bikai 2000; Cross 1980, 15-17; Naveh 1982, 40-41; Hodos 2006, 36, 86; Gilboa & Sharon 2003, 70; Lemos 2005. The earliest currently-known IA Aegean import to the Levant is a Submycenaean/EPG sherd from Tell es-Safi/Gath in Philistia (Maeir, Fantalkin & Zukerman 2009), though Sherratt believes Bikai's 'IIC/Submycenaean' sherd from Tyre XIV is an EPG cup of similar date (pers. comm.).

While the evidence is limited and scattered, it nevertheless seems clear that during the eleventh century, Phoenician polities were establishing contacts with points well into the Mediterranean. The kinds of contacts implied by the evidence are fairly diverse: commercial exchange in commodities is suggested by the presence of storage-jars at Palaepaphos and, to a much lesser extent, Kommos. At Salamis, Knossos and Lefkandi, the funerary context of some Phoenician imports shows the importance of these products in the negotiation of local status and identities. The presence of goods such as faience beads and a bronze bowl demonstrates the beginnings of a trade in prestige items to satisfy this demand. Since we know so little about it, it is hard to know what kind of contacts may have lain behind the Nora Fragment.

Further intensification and expansion of contacts occurred in the tenth century. Again, material from CG IB-II Cyprus is principally from tombs, though this is probably more to do with the lack of non-funerary contexts of this date than any pattern in how Phoenician material was used. Phoenician Ir 1|2 vessels occur at Amathous, Palaepaphos and Kition. Cypriot imports to Phoenicia, which had previously been rare, began to increase at this time, particularly at Tyre and Dor. They consist mainly of table-wares.⁴²

Contacts with the Aegean also increased. By the tenth-century LPG, Phoenician items are relatively abundant at Lefkandi and include not just pottery but bronze objects, such as in tombs T.70 and T.55. Some have argued that Phoenician influence goes beyond the mere supply of goods: the assemblage in warrior tombs such as Toumba T.79 has been seen as extremely similar to Achziv N.1, while Gauer even suggested that the Heroön may have been the grave of a Phoenician aristocrat. Euboean and possibly Cycladic pottery occurs in growing quantity at Tyre and Dor.⁴³

Particularly interesting in its implications is on-going archaeological work on the Iberian Peninsula, which has been pushing first contact there slightly further back than the ninth-century date previously envisaged. Pottery and bronze finds as well as radiocarbon data from Huelva increasingly suggest Phoenician contacts in the region began in the second half of the tenth century.⁴⁴

⁴² Gilboa & Sharon 2003; Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008.

⁴³ Ibid.; Kourou 2008; Nijboer 2008a; Gauer 1996, 516.

⁴⁴ González de Canales, Serrano & Llompart 2006, 2008.

The current near-consensus view that Phoenician expansion began mainly during the eleventh century and intensified in the tenth is thus amply justified by the evidence. Archaeologically-recoverable Phoenician exports almost entirely comprise small commercial vessels and, to a lesser extent, luxury objects such as jewellery. There is nothing here to suggest the kind of non-prestigious, domestic practices which this thesis has already established as the best way of confirming the settlement of migrants. Instead, as almost every scholar has emphasised, Phoenician expansion in this period was concerned with trade, not permanent settlement.

The Reasons for Expansion

The recognition that Phoenician interest in the Mediterranean began at least as early as the eleventh century, and likely never truly ceased at the end of the LBA, undermines the theory – proposed by Frankenstein in 1979 and since widely accepted – that Phoenician expansion was largely aimed at securing metal resources for the production of prestige goods for supply to the Assyrian Empire. With such items, it was argued, the Phoenician polities were able to ‘buy’ their continued autonomy in the face of increasing Assyrian domination of the Levantine littoral.⁴⁵ This geopolitical situation is, however, that of the eighth century BC and so significantly post-dates the beginnings of the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion. During the EIA, Assyrian contacts with the littoral were limited to the visit of Tiglath-Pileser I (n.11 above). Major political and military pressure by Assyria on Phoenicia came later, and must therefore be discounted as a reason for the beginnings of their commercial interest in the Mediterranean.⁴⁶

Many scholars have consequently amended their interpretations of Phoenician expansion, though metals have justifiably remained central in many theories. It has long been observed that the pattern of early Phoenician commercial contacts in the Mediterranean correlates well with sources of metals, and especially silver. Thus Cyprus for copper, Euboea and Athens provide access to silver from Laurion and sites of early Phoenician interest in Italy such as Pithekoussai and Frattesina have produced evidence of metalworking. Closer to home, there was also renewed

⁴⁵ Frankenstein 1979.

⁴⁶ Aubet 2008. Fletcher (2012) doubts that even by the eighth century Assyrian pressure on Phoenicia was as significant as has often been assumed.

exploitation of Levantine copper sources at Feinan and Timna'.⁴⁷ By the later Iron Age it has been suggested that Phoenicians were involved in trading metals around the *Colline Metallifere* of northern Etruria.⁴⁸ Particularly prominent in many discussions has been the Tartessos region of southern Iberia, which includes the silver and tin reserves of the Río Tinto. In light of the archaeological evidence for early Phoenician trade contacts with Huelva and, as the first millennium progressed, the establishment of numerous other outposts along the south-west Iberian coast, many have been keen to connect the region to Biblical references to 'Tarshish', from where Ezekiel claims Tyre obtained silver, iron, tin and lead.⁴⁹

The market for these metals does not require Assyrian pressure to explain it. Strong continuity in Levantine metalworking traditions has been demonstrated between the LBA and EIA and metals continued to fulfil extensive practical functions as well as being ideologically-charged prestige goods. There are also signs of their range of usage expanding: as well as the increased production and marketing of iron as a utilitarian product in its own right, mentioned in Chapter 3, the role of silver as effectively a form of currency was becoming ever more consolidated, ensuring a constant demand.⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, then, metals were an important commodity which the Phoenicians sought as part of their commercial expansion. However, it is unlikely that this demand was the prime factor in instigating that expansion specifically in the eleventh and tenth centuries. The very continuity which ensured the on-going market for metals means that it can hardly be seen as a new factor explaining the changes in Phoenician commercial relationships with their neighbours: on the contrary, the search for metals appears as something of a constant within many discussions of ancient trade, attached to whichever society happens to be prominent at the time: it was an important concern for Ugaritic trading ventures of the LBA and has also been proposed as a key

⁴⁷ The Feinan mines have already been mentioned in connection with the Jatt metal hoard. After a period of dormancy for much of the second millennium, metal extraction seems to have resumed in the twelfth and eleventh centuries (Artzy 2006; Weisgerber 2006; Tebes 2007). Evidence for eleventh-to-ninth-century copper production at Timna' after the Egyptian withdrawal has recently been discussed by Ben-Yosef *et al.* (2012).

⁴⁸ Sherratt & Sherratt 1993; Aubet Semmler 2002; Sherratt 1994; Ridgway 1992; Markoe 1996; Nijboer 2008b.

⁴⁹ Tsirkin 1997; Nijboer & van der Plicht 2006; Neville 2007; González de Canales, Serrano & Llompert 2008. The association of Tarshish with Tartessos is by no means universally accepted, however. For contrary views see, see for example Muhly 1998; Lemaire 2000; Andrew Das 2008.

⁵⁰ Negbi 1974; Sherratt 1994; Thompson 2003.

motivator of Mycenaean expansion, as it would be again for the Greek 'colonial' impulse of the first millennium.⁵¹ Some other factor or factors must evidently have been playing into this more-or-less constant background of the necessity of obtaining metal resources to explain why Phoenicia in particular rose to the fore at this time, and why its commercial expansion took the form it did.

It has previously been suggested that the upheavals of the end of the LBA may have disrupted supplies of metals from existing sources in the East Mediterranean, prompting exploration for new reserves. As information on the EIA increases, such ideas have been recognised as less and less likely. We have already seen that contacts with Cyprus were probably uninterrupted; nor does it appear that tin supplies were much disrupted.⁵²

More generally, as Fletcher has argued,⁵³ the overwhelming preoccupation of many scholars with luxury goods as a category and metals in particular runs the risk of oversimplifying the diversity and complexity of the Mediterranean economy. Muhly has also warned against overstating the importance of metals, although his assertion that there is no good evidence at all that Phoenicians or Greeks were involved in the extraction or trade of western silver and tin in the earlier first millennium diverges significantly from the general consensus.⁵⁴ Muhly's stance is almost certainly over-cautious, but it is nevertheless prudent to remember that metals were probably merely one commodity among many which were traded, and that the majority of trade is likely to have involved lower-status commodities including, as we saw in the previous chapter, staple foodstuffs, textiles and other perishable goods.

The search for metals was an important contributory factor in shaping the form Phoenician expansion took, but it is evidently insufficient explanation on its own. A plethora of other factors have been suggested to account for why Phoenicia in particular rose to prominence at this specific time, but none seem quite satisfactory. Overpopulation was clearly not a factor. A significant population increase has been observed in Tyre during the ninth century,⁵⁵ but there is no evidence for anything similar in the eleventh or tenth; even if there were, there is no possibility

⁵¹ Sherratt 1994; Bell 2006, 2012.

⁵² Muhly, Maddin & Stech 1990; Muhly 1998; Tebes 2007. For the traditional view that disruption of existing metal supplies was a major factor in LBA/EIA social change, see for example, Liverani 1987; Knauf 1991.

⁵³ Fletcher 2012.

⁵⁴ Muhly 1998

⁵⁵ Aubet 2004, 449-466.

that population could have risen to a level where there would have been significant overcrowding or pressure on resources. The last chapter demonstrated clearly that Phoenician had more than enough agricultural potential to manage any population plausible for this period. Besides, should pressure on space or resources at home have been the driving force behind Phoenician overseas interests, we should expect the pattern of early contacts to be dominated by settlement and/or attempts to obtain staple resources. This is markedly different from the commercial patterns we in fact observe.

The lifting of the ‘burden’ of Egyptian rule has also been suggested,⁵⁶ the idea being that the end of regulation and restrictions imposed by Egypt allowed Phoenician trade to achieve its full commercial potential for the first time and expand in new directions. The theory can be rejected: as I argued in Chapter 2, it is unlikely that Egypt represented any real ‘burden’ on Phoenicia during the LBA, since its ‘imperial’ overlordship of the region was a matter more of rhetorical and ideological convenience than direct (or even indirect) administration with control of daily lives.

A similar argument has also been applied to the effects of the end of the LBA palaces in several parts of the East Mediterranean. Having undermined élite ability to control certain sectors of trade to the extent that these élites themselves suffered a terminal loss of status and legitimacy, the private, commercial trade which had always flourished alongside and intermingled with ‘palace’ trade in the Levant naturally took advantage of the gaps in the market and expanded. This is, to a certain extent, almost certainly true, but the end of the palaces did not mark a fundamental break in the nature of East Mediterranean trade. It is now becoming increasingly clear that while the major LBA palatial societies surely represented important markets for, and producers of, goods, they may not have actively controlled the trade networks by which these items were traded. Instead, much East Mediterranean trade took place through intermediaries, often Cypriot. This is true even of trade-focused cities such as Ugarit (so we must reject Aubet’s idea that Tyre could have inherited Ugarit’s Mediterranean trading networks). Phoenicia seems to have been an exception to the rule, operating its own direct links with trading partners in the Aegean and elsewhere.⁵⁷ While the downfall of the palaces doubtless had a major impact on trade, it did not free up large areas of the Mediterranean into which Levantine merchants could expand

⁵⁶ e.g. Bikai 1994; Aubet 2000; Bell 2006.

⁵⁷ Bell 2006.

unopposed. The major player, Cyprus, remained active and arguably even more important during the twelfth century, and continued to produce metals, Mycenaean-style objects and other goods to satisfy market needs.

Cypriot merchants' established role as middlemen in much of LBA Mediterranean trade granted them a significant competitive advantage over would-be Levantine competitors. Only Phoenicia, if Bell is right, had existing direct trade contacts of its own. These may have been decisive in enabling its cities to carve out their own niche in the EIA, from which base they were able to expand over time. The competitive nature of trade at this time is reflected in the development of Phoenician pottery from the twelfth century onwards. During the LBA, Phoenician pottery was largely undecorated; the majority of vessels found overseas are either coarse storage amphorae of the type often known as 'Canaanite jars', or small, undecorated flasks.⁵⁸ In the IA, proliferation is evident in both form and decoration: the repertoire continued to comprise overwhelmingly closed shapes, the most ubiquitous being pilgrim-flasks and, as the EIA progressed, the neck-ridge jug, but we also find diverse new kinds of jugs, small jars and flasks. As we see at Sarepta (Fig. 4.4), fewer and fewer of these vessels are left undecorated. This points towards an increased concern with marketing the commodities contained within these vessels, and to adding value to the ceramics themselves. The convergence of Cypriot and Phoenician pottery styles may be a result of attempts to appeal to the same markets.

Given Cypriot dominance of East Mediterranean trade in the twelfth century, it is unsurprising that the major upsurge in Phoenician contacts with overseas markets seems to coincide with the major social and political upheavals which affected the island during the eleventh-century LC IIIB period. Earlier burial grounds were abandoned and major settlement dislocation occurred. Key trading centres were involved in this: Enkomi was abandoned, with settlement moving to a new site at Salamis; Kition also saw depopulation and its harbour was allowed to silt up. The nature of this social upheaval is disputed, but many scholars connect it with the arrival of the first Greek-speakers on the island, as suggested by the famous 'Opheltau'

⁵⁸ Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008. Sherratt (1999) has persuasively argued against the notion that all LBA trade in pottery must have been 'incidental' to the exchange of other commodities. 'Canaanite' jars were used ubiquitously in the Eastern Mediterranean for a wide range of commodities, and despite the name, not all necessarily originate from the Levant.

obelos from Palaepaphos-Skales.⁵⁹ Certainly it involved new and extravagant forms of élite display which may point towards intensified competition for status and, by extension, perhaps a degree of political instability.

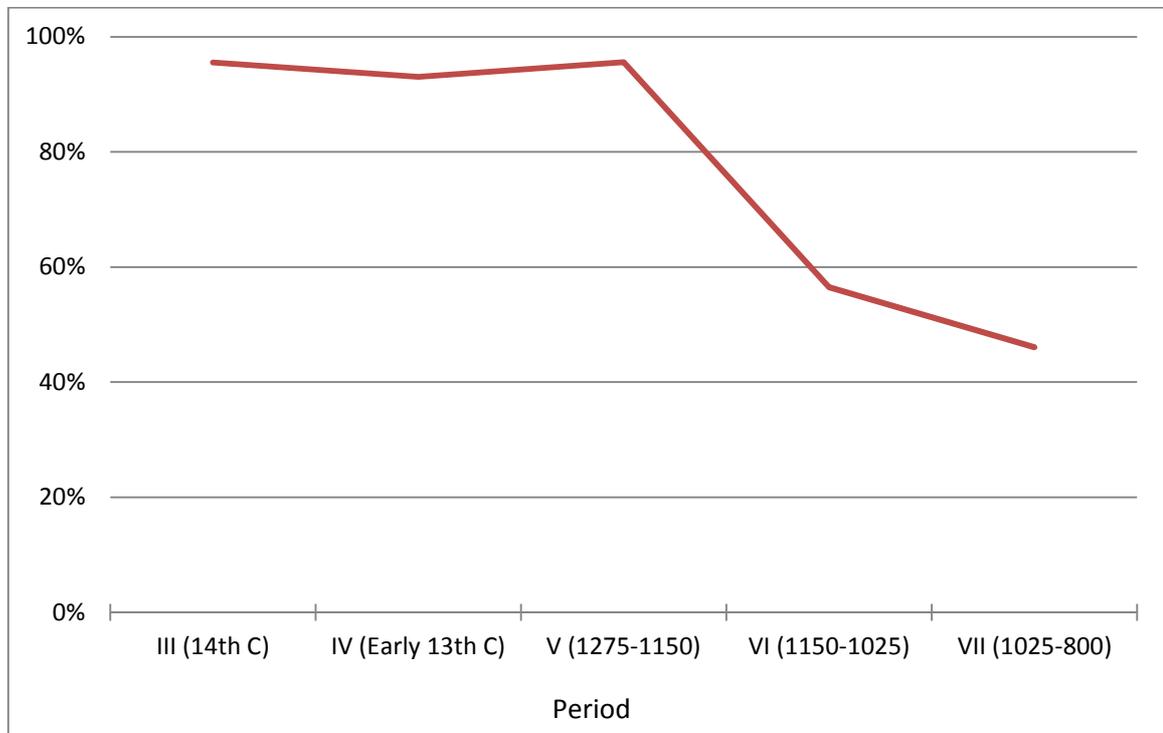


Fig. 4.4. *Plain Wares as a proportion of total assemblage. Sarepta Area II, X. Data from Khalifeh 1988.*

We saw in the previous chapter that there is a good chance that even though Phoenicia likely had sufficient agricultural potential to support itself autarkically, its people more probably chose to obtain a proportion of subsistence goods through trade. It is unsurprising, then, that the Phoenician polities should have sought to maintain extensive, diverse and profitable trading contacts throughout the LBA/EIA transition. The fact that they had inherited from the LBA direct connections with certain parts of the Mediterranean, rather than, like other Levantine areas, having to conduct their business through Cypriot intermediaries, ensured that even in the highly competitive twelfth century the Phoenician cities were able to carve out their own niche;

⁵⁹ Lemos 2001; Karageorghis 1994; Iacovou 1994; Maier 1999; Knapp 2008.

when Cyprus faced its own disruptions in the eleventh, Phoenicians were well-placed to take advantage.

Diverse Patterns of Expansion?

Thus far, this discussion has largely considered ‘Phoenician’ contacts in general, following common scholarly practice in not attempting to distinguish diverse patterns of contacts relating to different Levantine polities or regions. This often unspoken assumption of uniformity treats ‘Phoenicia’ almost as a single power with a unified and coherent foreign and trade policy, something we know not to have been the case. Frequently, scholars seek to avoid the contradiction between such an approach to overseas contacts and the notion of a diverse and heterogeneous Levant in which ‘Phoenicia’ cannot be straightforwardly demarcated by treating Mediterranean contacts as if they were essentially the sole prerogative of a single city, Tyre. The Tyro-centrism we identified in overland contacts is thus greatly exacerbated:

The Phoenician expansion westward was the work of the kingdom made up of Tyre and Sidon. It has occasionally been hinted that the colonization could have come from various cities on the Phoenician coast. However, the Old Testament is clear and categorical in this respect. The trading and seafaring city par excellence was Tyre and even when a state of Tyre-Sidon was in existence, the political and economic initiative was in the hands of Tyre.⁶⁰

This approach is unsatisfactory, and recent work has emphasised the necessity of paying far more attention to heterogeneity in Phoenician commercial impetuses into the Mediterranean. Despite demonstrating the importance of recognising such diversity, however, attempts to demonstrate the differing spheres of interest and methodologies of contacts of the various polities have so far failed to convince. The prime exemplars of this are Peckham and, following him, Fletcher.⁶¹ Peckham argues for early Sidonian dominance of the diaspora, based largely on linguistic and epigraphic features, and the use of ‘Sidonian’ in Homer, a situation which could

⁶⁰ Aubet 2001, 31; see also Aubet 2000.

⁶¹ Peckham 1998, 2001; Fletcher 2004, 2006.

easily be explained by the idea that in early contacts, most Phoenicians with whom the Greeks had contact were from Sidon. Given Sidon's apparent status as the prime Phoenician city in foreign affairs during the LBA, this suggestion is not implausible. Peckham goes further, however, identifying a particular Sidonian 'predilection' for working alongside Euboean Greeks and a northwards impetus towards North Syria and Cilicia which he believes was responsible for the transmission of the alphabet to the Aramaeans by the eleventh century.⁶² His view is that Tyre's role in the expansion only became pre-eminent after Sidon's destruction by the Assyrians in the eighth century, a change he links with the shift from 'pre-colonial' to 'colonial' interest in the Mediterranean. Fletcher essentially follows this line, adding the argument that particular material culture classes – certain Aegyptiaca in the case of Sidon; mushroom-lipped jugs for Tyre – reflect the differing interests of Phoenicians from certain areas.

In place of a blanket assumption of Tyrian primacy, this kind of greater specificity is just what we should be striving for. There remains, however, especially in Peckham's work, a reliance on sweeping and largely unsupported stereotypes to characterise the differences between the polities:

Tyre was completely urban and favoured colonization, that is, the establishment of walled settlements which maintained political ties to the island city and regulated relations with the local inhabitants; Sidon was the city of merchants and skilled craftsmen who typically built shrines to their gods wherever they settled but were content to intermarry and assimilate to the native population; Byblians, similarly, renowned as architects and masons, travelled extensively but could be recognized in their new surroundings by their persistent fidelity to Adonis and the Ba'alat of

⁶² This is, it seems, based on little more than epigraphy, and given how little Phoenician we have from the earlier IA and how indistinct the boundaries between even such major branches of Semitic and Phoenician, Hebrew and Aramaic are in this period, it seems preposterous to think that we can discern the writing of individual Phoenician towns with any certainty. If any dialectal variation is proposed, it is generally between the peculiar local dialect of Byblos and a more generalised Phoenician spoken elsewhere. The largest and earliest assemblages of Euboean pottery occur not in Sidon but Tyre. It should also be stressed that Phoenician pottery is extremely rare in the region during the Syrian Iron I period and that there is little evidence for major contacts before the second half of the ninth century (Lehmann 2008). Aubet (2000) attributes the spread of the alphabet to the Tyrians.

Byblos... All in all, Tyre was eclectic, Sidon was adaptable, Byblos was traditional.⁶³

Such assertions require archaeological justification; given the nature of the material record, it comes as little surprise that for the most part none is offered. Peckham and Fletcher's aims are laudable and not every point they make should be dismissed. The idea that the 'Phoenician' expansion comprised Sidonian, Gyblite and North Syrian impetuses as well as Tyrian seems highly likely.⁶⁴ Such variations are clearly observable in the early first millennium. In ivory-carving, for example, Winter has distinguished stylistic differences between Phoenician and Syrian examples, on the basis of which slightly different patterns of circulation are discernible. Syrian seem to be exported westwards earlier, but their distribution is focused on the Aegean. Phoenician ivories are more widely distributed in the Mediterranean, but do not seem to arrive until the eighth century. Similarly, while Classical sources tend to generalise all imported Near Eastern metalwork as 'Phoenician', many pieces actually seem to owe more to North Syrian types. It has also been suggested that the script on eighth- and seventh-century silver bowls from Pontecagnano and Praeneste is Aramaic rather than Phoenician. Here too, attempts have been made to distinguish between an earlier, ninth- and eighth-century Syrian impetus and a slightly later eighth-to-seventh-century Phoenician one.⁶⁵ We should beware of reading too much into this, however. Even in the eighth century, Aramaic and Phoenician scripts are not readily distinguishable, and many attempts to identify Levantine material as produced by the allegedly non-seafaring Aramaeans rather than the Phoenicians are arguably at least partly motivated by a

⁶³ Peckham 2001, 20-21. See also Fletcher 2004, 60.

⁶⁴ It has been suggested that Linear B preserves references to Beirutis (pe-ri-ta – KN V 60.5), Tyrians (tu-ri-jo – KN Nc 4473; PY Jn 693.8) and Arwadites (a-ra-da-jo – KN 1516.3) (Astour 1964; Yasur-Landau 2010, 40), though all these translations are subject to varying degrees of doubt (Aura Jorro 1985-1993). Contact with, or at least awareness of, Byblos must also have been LBA or earlier, since the toponym was evidently borrowed into Greek before the post-Mycenaean sound change /gʰ/ > /b/, or else we should expect a form *Γύβλος. Archaeologically, Gyblite trade with the Aegean is apparent in the EBA and MBA, especially on Crete (Wengrow 2009; Branigan 1966, but cf. Philip 1991, 85). Linguistic factors also help date contacts with Tyre and Sidon as early, since their Greek names clearly reflect Levantine versions that had yet to undergo the merging of their original consonants /d/ and /s/ into /s/.

⁶⁵ Winter 1976, 1981, 1988; Hodos 2006, 64-74; Pisano 1999; Boardman 2006a, 2006b.

Hellenocentric desire to deny early Phoenician involvement in the Mediterranean and to attribute the key role in carrying this material to the Euboeans.

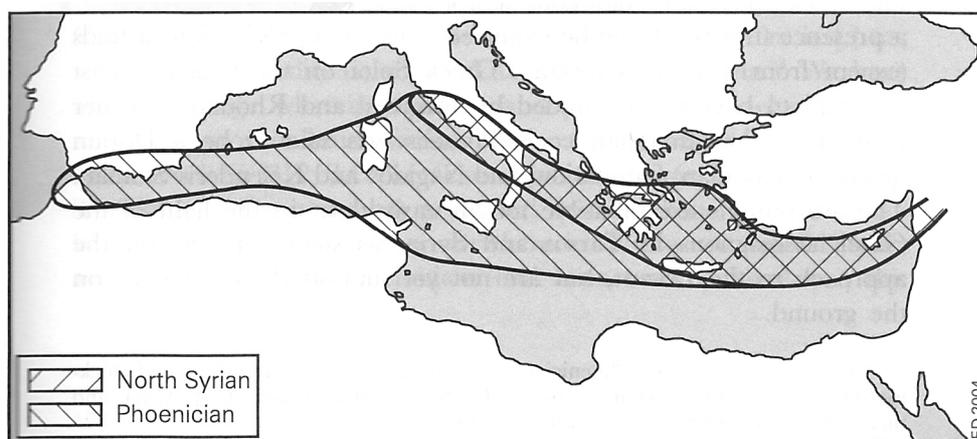


Fig. 4.5. *Distribution of Phoenician and Syrian artefacts in the Mediterranean, 8th-7th C. BC.*

After Boardman 2006a, fig. 3.

While the material culture distribution offers interesting implications of spatially and chronologically diverse trade routes and, potentially, tastes, it is of limited usefulness in identifying the carriers of these objects. And even if we can reconstruct distinct Syrian and Phoenician patterns of trade for the first millennium, we are not yet able to extend these differences back into the EIA. Nevertheless, it does seem very likely that early Phoenician contacts with the Mediterranean were more diverse than the general picture of overwhelming Tyrian dominance.

Peckham and Fletcher's aim to inject greater diversity into the Levant's Mediterranean contacts is thus justified. But solid evidence is required, not generalisation and speculation, if we are to provide a convincing and consistent framework within which the scattered and diverse material remains of early Phoenician involvement in the Mediterranean might be integrated. Until we are able to discriminate with rather more confidence between the material cultures of the major polities, we must reluctantly conclude that such clear-cut conclusions as Peckham and Fletcher offer are probably premature.

A more limited and supportable suggestion has been made by Gilboa, Sharon and Boaretto, who point out the predominance of black or brown concentric circles on the earliest

Phoenician vessels in Cyprus. These tend to be more characteristic of the parts of Phoenicia corresponding to modern Lebanon, while at more southerly sites such as Dor and Keisan there is an apparent preference for red or (rarely) red and black decoration.⁶⁶ This suggests that we should look to Tyre, Sidon and Byblos for the lead role in Mediterranean expansion, with more southerly cities such as Tel Dor, Tell Keisan and 'Akko perhaps less active. This is consistent with what we can determine of contacts in the LBA, where Bell observes more direct contacts between the cities of her 'zone L2' (Phoenicia as far south as Tyre) and the Aegean than elsewhere in the Levant, which seems to have been more reliant on Cypriot middlemen.⁶⁷ This adds to the sense which has emerged throughout this chapter that, while there was indeed an 'expansion' in Phoenician commercial contacts with the Mediterranean during the EIA, it developed, probably without disjuncture, from pre-existing LBA patterns of interaction.

Foreign Contacts and Changes in Social Identity

Chapter 2 argued that the LBA/EIA transition is characterised by changes in how Phoenician élites used their relationship with Egypt to help define their social identities and legitimate their socio-political status. The evidence for Phoenician contacts with, and commercial expansion into, the Mediterranean casts further light on this progress, suggesting that it was not simply a matter of reference to foreign contacts being replaced within status-negotiation and display by increased focus on Levantine practices, iconography and material culture. Instead, a more nuanced process is apparent in which the changes taking place – including a reduced emphasis on material representations of foreign connections – are themselves part of a wider transformation in East Mediterranean élite identities which seems to have developed and spread precisely through the commercial networks which existed.

This process has been recognised for Cyprus and the Aegean for several years now. Many of the features apparent in the high-status chamber-tombs of Palaepaphos-*Skales* and in tomb T.1 at Salamis echo aspects of contemporary high-status burials in the Aegean, at Lefkandi and elsewhere.⁶⁸ In particular, there is an upsurge in the deposition of weapons and feasting

⁶⁶ Gilboa, Sharon & Boaretto 2008, 130.

⁶⁷ Bell 2006.

⁶⁸ Karageorghis 1983, 370-374; Calvet 1980; Yon 1971, 1999.

paraphernalia such as *obeloi*. Prestige goods and ‘antiques’ also occur in both areas. We should not overstate the closeness of these parallels: significant differences do exist. But it does seem likely that these new forms of display throughout the East Mediterranean were related. Crielaard has proposed that this represents a newly emerging East Mediterranean idea of éliteneſs, diſtinct from that which had existed in the LBA but, like it, ſpread through the networks of interregional interconnections. An emphasis on warrior identities and associated practices ſuch as feaſting ſeems to have been central.⁶⁹

The Levantine dimension of this phenomenon has not been ignored, but generally the focus has been on the use of Levantine material culture and practices in the construction of élite identities elsewhere in the Mediterranean, while the extent to which ſimilar processes are evident in Phoenicia itſelf has arguably gone ſomewhat under-remarked. There are, however, ſeveral indications that the élites of this region were participating in much the ſame kind of phenomenon. The Phase 1 aſſemblage in Tomb N.1 at Achziv is broadly ſimilar to Lefkandi T.79 and, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, weapons feature prominently. The ſelection, ranging from ſpear- and arrowheads to ſwords and axes, is diſverse, and ſtrongly indicates the importance of emphasising warrior attributes in ſome élite burials. Also preſent is a large, well-made krater, which is ſuggestive of the kinds of drinking rituals we ſee elsewhere.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Crielaard 1998; Nijboer 2008; Hamalakis & Sherratt 2012. Crielaard probably does overplay the degree of ſimilarity between the Aegean and Cypriot burials, and his attempt to lower the dating for Cypriot material in the weſt – eſpecially on Sardinia – in order to eliminate the apparent eleventh-century hiatus in contacts between them has been judged ‘unconvincing’ (Papasavvas 2004, 48) and ‘highly hypothetical and in many points misleading’ (Matthäus 2001, 154, n.2). Nevertheless, the general point that interconnection between ſocieties continued to be a feature of the EIA and that ideas of élite practice and diſplay likely ſpread through theſe networks, ſeems unproblematic.

⁷⁰ The parallels between Achziv and Lefkandi T. 79 are brought out in particular by Nijboer 2008. For other remarks on the Phoenician dimension of ſuch warrior identities, ſee Carter 1997; Hamalakis & Sherratt 2012; Nijboer Forthcoming; Boyes In Preparation.



Photo 119. Sword (Fig. 29:8).



Photo 120. Arrowheads (Fig. 29:9-21).



Photo 121. Arrowhead (Fig. 29:22).



Photo 117. Spearhead (Fig. 29:6).



Photo 118. Axe (Fig. 29:7).

Fig. 4.6. *Weapons from Achziv Tomb N. 1, Phase 1. After Mazar 2004.*

We cannot, of course, read too much into a single tomb, especially since the despoliation of our only clearly-identified LBA high-status tomb, Tomb V at Byblos, makes it impossible to compare directly with the preceding period. Nevertheless, there are other signs that in the eleventh and tenth centuries weaponry was becoming increasingly symbolically important. In sheer numerical terms, we seem to witness an upturn in the amounts of weaponry being recovered from Phoenicia at this time compared to the LBA. It is not simply that this was a period of warfare or instability: many of the arrow- and spearheads discovered in Phoenicia (and Palestine) from this period are inscribed, often with their owners' names, suggesting they were not intended purely as practical objects. Some scholars have associated them with belomancy, but they also point to a connection between identity and weaponry.⁷¹ There have also been finds of deliberately bent swords from EIA funerary contexts in Phoenicia and other parts of the Levant.⁷² With both these classes of objects interpretation is significantly hampered by the almost total absences of contextual information; even so, we might tentatively infer the greater prominence of warrior themes in the construction of some elite identities. If Crielaard is right in his view of new

⁷¹ e.g. Iwry 1961; Puech 2000. *Contra* Sass 2010.

⁷² Warmenbol 1983.

ideas of éliteness spreading through Mediterranean trading networks, it seems highly likely that Phoenicia was part of this.⁷³



Fig. 4.7. *11th-Century inscribed arrowhead from Lebanon. Beirut National Museum.*

This new style of élitè display may have grown in the networked world of EIA trade-contacts, but the extent to which trade and foreign connections were stressed in contexts such as burial seems to be a major point of difference between the three regions involved. In Lefkandi, as we have already seen from the abundance of Phoenician objects found in its burials, exotica were a major feature of élitè display. Imported goods are also deposited in ideologically charged contexts on Cyprus, although the pattern is rather different. The EIA was marked by a spiralling convergence of Phoenician and Cypriot ceramics, to the extent that even using modern analysis it can be hard to distinguish them. There is a real question, then, about the extent to which these objects were seen as ‘imports’ or ‘exotica’ for the purposes of display. We must be wary of using pottery as a proxy for all imported products, but without clear information on how similar the substances contained in Phoenician and Cypriot vessels were, or how perishable products such as textiles may have played into this dynamic, it is hard to offer a conclusive answer here. Even so, there does seem to be a distinction between the conspicuous use of exotic objects from distant lands in Lefkandi, and the superficially less obtrusive deployment of imported goods on Cyprus. In Phoenicia, the picture appears different again, though admittedly we have little to go on at present. Although Cypriot and Aegean goods were finding their way to Phoenicia, as we saw in Chapter 2 there seems to have been little desire to use them in funerary contexts. This is not to

⁷³ For further discussion, see Boyes, In Preparation.

say that they did not play a role in other aspects of high-status identity-negotiation, but in the primary one available to us, there is little sign that foreign contacts were ideologically significant.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued three main points which tie closely into this dissertation's wider themes. The first, concerning the Tyro-centrism of much of the scholarship and the question of Tyrian political and military expansion, reiterates once again the importance of examining the whole range of evidence without preconceptions, not starting from textually-derived assumptions and seeking archaeological evidence to 'prove' them. While we should certainly not assume that the great majority of Phoenician focus on external interconnections was with the Mediterranean and the west, our ability to reconstruct specific Levantine contacts at this time remains very limited. What evidence we have certainly does not support the idea that any Phoenician polities were engaged in political or military expansion southwards. Nor is there any convincing reason, beyond our preconceptions, to assume that Tyre was the sole, or overwhelmingly dominant, city participating in the commercial diaspora westwards.

Second, I have argued that Phoenician Mediterranean expansion occurred not because the end of the LBA swept away obstructions or hindrances, but within a highly competitive environment dominated by the still-formidable commercial power of Cyprus. The direct Aegean links inherited from the LBA may well have served as a toehold meaning the Phoenician cities were well-placed to capitalise when Cyprus faced its own instabilities in the eleventh century. The search for metals was undoubtedly very important in shaping the nature of this expansion, but it cannot be considered the prime stimulus which initiated it.

The third point concerns how this expansion fed into the wider changes in Phoenician identities. Although the evidence is patchy and scarce, and so any conclusions must at this stage be considered provisional, there seems good reason to believe Phoenician élites participated in the same common sphere of high-status display which was emerging at this time on Cyprus, in the Aegean and in other parts of the Mediterranean. It can be broadly characterised as a warrior ideology, with burial and other assemblages emphasising martiality and feasting. Regional differences can, however, be tentatively identified; most notably the apparent preference in Phoenicia more material of local derivation, in contrast with the prominent role of exotica in the

Aegean and the at-least acceptability of imported goods in Cypriot prestige display. Further investigation and assemblages will be necessary to confirm whether this is any more than an artefact of chance or preservation; it does, however, fit well with the trend in both élite and lower-status display discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5

Internal Social, Political and Religious Transformations

This thesis has identified changing strategies of identity- and status-negotiation as a central driver of social change in the Phoenician EIA, entangled in issues of foreign contacts, trade and economic subsistence. The role of political and social élites has been especially highlighted, with the suggestion that these changes are particularly apparent among these groups, and were substantially prompted by the declining international prestige of Egyptian culture. In this chapter I explore the nature of Phoenicia's internal political changes directly and examine the extent to which the observed shifts in identity and legitimation strategies were accompanied by changes in political organisation, institutions and relations.

Previous scholars have observed a number of important developments during the LBA/EIA transition, which have been thought to have contributed significantly to the development of the social order that would define Phoenicia during the later Iron Age and which would underpin the political organisation of its Mediterranean colonies. In particular, I will discuss the significant politico-religious reforms believed by Bondì, Ribichini, Bonnet and many others to have taken place around the tenth century, which involved major reorganisations of civic pantheons and an apparent change in the way élites engaged with religion, manifested, so it is claimed, most dramatically in a shift in the monarch's role from primarily political to essentially sacral.

My discussion will identify crucial methodological and interpretative problems with both this narratives. Just as with the question of the Sea Peoples, there has been a strong tendency to utilise sources of extremely diverse kinds and of widely differing geographical and chronological origins without adequate consideration of their limitations or ability to be integrated into a coherent and plausible whole. When these problems are taken into account, and what evidence we do have is re-examined, we find that it is much harder to judge with certainty the extent to which we should believe in these proposed changes, and, if we do, with what precision they can be assigned to the period currently under discussion.

Monarchies in Decline?

It has often been asserted that the first millennium BC saw a significant decline in many aspects of the power and role of Phoenician kings. Political, juridical, economic and diplomatic roles were, it is claimed, diminished, leaving a model of Phoenician Iron Age kingship which was almost exclusively sacral. As Bondi puts it:

The Phoenician kings did not as a rule enjoy real decision-making independence in the political field. Their authority in the civic sphere was based primarily on their sacred and priestly function.¹

The king, it is alleged, was active in founding and maintaining temples, participating in rituals and was closely identified with new, civic deities which characterised the Phoenician first-millennium pantheons, but the ability to rule in any meaningful way had been ceded to other, less centralised institutions whose basis was oligarchic rather than monarchical, plutocratic instead of hereditary.² This decline is generally envisaged as a gradual process and opinions vary on when the political role of the monarchs became fully elided. While it is principally recognised as a phenomenon of the first millennium, most variants imply that at least the beginnings of the process ought to be detectable during the LBA/EIA transition. Sommer, for instance, believes political powers had likely already passed to suffetes by the eighth century BC, hence the preponderance of this form of government rather than monarchy in the cities of the Phoenician western diaspora,³ while Sanmartín places the beginnings of royal decline as early as the mid-second millennium.⁴

¹ Bondi 1988, 126.

² Ribichini 1988; Bondi 1988, 1995b; Bonnet & Xella 1995; Mazza 1994; Stern 2003; Sommer 2000, 2010; Baurain & Bonnet 1992, 143ff.

³ Sommer 2000, 245. Known in both the Phoenician form $\theta)^\omega$ – *šp̄t* and Latinised *sufes*, the term ‘suffete’ is usually translated as ‘judges’, as is its Hebrew cognate שופט – *šōfet*. Both the Punic and Biblical versions attest powers which go considerably beyond the purely judicial. In Livy VIII: 30, 7.5, at Carthage, as well as administering justice, they convene and chair the council of elders. Suffetes are absent from Aristotle’s description of the Carthaginian

When evidence is scant and scattered, however, we must be very careful of arguing that powers were removed from the royal purview simply because we lack direct evidence for them at a particular point in time. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that sources from different times differ considerably in kind: we are unable in most cases to compare like with like. It is only to be expected that, for example, a royal dedication inscription will preserve different forms of monarchical practice than a diplomatic letter. Given these problems, undue weight has been placed on the testimony of the longer textual sources, often without the necessary questioning of their reliability. Once again, *Wen-Amon* features heavily, as do the much later accounts of the Biblical prophets and Josephus. The prominence given to these sources of uncertain reliability or certain unreliability has two distorting effects on our overall understanding of royal functions. Aside from the obvious point that we cannot verify that the information they give us is correct, they risk giving the impression of an association between particular royal functions and the times they describe, rather than being recognised as extremely partial depictions of only those aspects of royalty relevant to their authors' agendas. We should not, of course, ignore these sources, but it

constitution (*Politics* II.11), but he does include βασιλεῖς, who are otherwise unattested in the Punic world and, since they fulfil much the same role, may well be suffetes by another name. The most obvious parallel with Punic-era suffetes is the Roman consuls.

That suffetes were not just a colonial institution but existed also on the Phoenician mainland is claimed on the basis of Josephus' brief account (*C. Ap* 1.156) of Tyre's rule by δικάσται during an interregnum following its conquest by Nebuchadnezzar II in the sixth century. Although various other sources confirm the Babylonian takeover, there is no external corroboration of suffetic rule. However, the Book of Judges, which describes suffetic rule in Israel between the Israelite conquest and the formation of the United Monarchy, was written down around the same time, which would seem to suggest that at least in Israel this form of government was seen as a long-established local tradition. Onomastic reflections of the institution may be attested from the LBA: the name *šptb'l* occurs as a fourteenth-century king of Lachish in the Amarna letters, a high-ranking official at Ugarit and a number of kings of Byblos from the late tenth century onwards. The root is clearly identical, and there seems in principle no reason why it may not mean 'Suffete Ba'al' *vel sim*. The vocalisation seems to be different, however, with Akkadian transcription giving it as *Šiptiba'la*, and the more usual translation is 'Judged by Ba'al' (Moran 1992, 384). On the basis of this we might justifiably speculate that suffetes were a feature of Levantine society with fairly deep roots, but at no point in Phoenician history is their political role more than very loosely outlined. Nothing in the evidence allows us to suggest a date for any hypothetical takeover from the monarchy as the key political institution with any degree of certainty.

⁴ Sanmartín 2001-2, 418.

would be wise to minimise their input and assign priority to direct, contemporary sources such as epigraphy and iconography. This immediately renders the development of Phoenician kingship far less straightforward than it is often presented.

Political Functions		
Diplomacy	<i>Wen-Amon</i>	11 th C
	1 Kings 5.15 (Hiram-Solomon)	10 th C
	Esarhaddon Treaty	7 th C
	<i>IG IP</i> , 141	4 th C
	Ugaritic Letters	13 th C
	Amarna Letters	14 th C
Jurisprudence	<i>Wen-Amon</i>	11 th C
Political Overlordship	<i>KAI</i> 31	8 th C
	Josephus <i>C. Ap.</i> 1.119	10 th C
Military Leadership	Josephus <i>C. Ap.</i> 1.119	10 th C
	Herodotos 8.67	5 th C
	Diodoros XIV.79	5 th C
	Arrian <i>Anabasis</i> II, 13.7	4 th C
City Foundation	Josephus <i>Ant. Iud.</i> 8.324 (Ittoba'al)	9 th C
Unspecified Building	<i>KAI</i> 4	10 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 7	10 th C
Economic Functions		
Long-distance Trade	<i>Wen-Amon</i>	11 th C
	1 Kings 5.21-25 (Temple of Solomon)	10 th C
	1 Kings 10.21ff (Ophir Expedition)	10 th C
Labour Resource	<i>Wen-Amon</i>	11 th C
Control	1 Kings 5.23	10 th C
Raw Materials Control	<i>Wen-Amon</i>	11 th C
	1 Kings 5.22ff (Temple of Solomon)	10 th C
Sacral Function		
Priest of Civic Deity	Josephus <i>C. Ap.</i> 1.119 – Indirect	10 th C

	Josephus <i>C. Ap.</i> 1.123	9 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 13	6 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 14 – Indirect	5 th C
	Ugarit Letters (Possible) ⁵	13 th C
Builder of Temples and Cult Installations	Josephus <i>C. Ap.</i> 1.118 (Hiram)	10 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 10 (Byblos)	5 th -4 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 14 (Sidon)	5 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 15 (Sidon)	5 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 16 (Sidon)	5 th C
Guarantor of Justice	<i>KAI</i> 4 (Byblos)	10 th C
	<i>KAI</i> 10 (Byblos)	5 th -4 th C
Intermediary between Man and God	<i>KAI</i> 6 (Byblos)	10 th C

Table 5.1. *Sources for Phoenician royal functions. Adapted and expanded from Sommer 2000, 240. Unreliable or questionable sources are shaded pink. Green-shaded items have been added by me and are not in Sommer's original list.*

Table 5.1 presents an adapted and expanded version of Sommer's list of Phoenician royal functions over time and the evidential bases for them. Sommer uses this to argue that all roles except the sacral significantly diminish after around the tenth century BC. This alleged pattern entirely stems from the testimony of problematic sources I have identified. It disappears when we focus our attention on more reliable, direct sources. Kings continue to be active in most non-sacral spheres throughout the first millennium: in diplomacy we have the seventh-century treaty between King Ba'al of Tyre and Esarhaddon of Assyria, while a fourth-century stele from Athens records assistance given by Straton of Sidon to Athenian ambassadors. Militarily, Phoenician monarchs seem to have remained extremely active until at least the Hellenistic period: Esarhaddon records seventh-century rebellions by the kings of Sidon and Tyre.⁶ Even if this did

⁵ A sacerdotal role may be reflected in RS 86.2221 + 2225 + 86.2226 + 86.2240 from the king of Sidon to his Ugaritic counterpart (Arnaud 2001, 269-271; 1992, 190). See below.

⁶ *ANET*³, 291

not involve actual armed resistance, it certainly implies they retained genuine political powers: it is hard to see how a purely sacral ruler could ‘throw off the yoke’ in any meaningful sense. To argue otherwise would involve suggesting the Assyrians utterly misconstrued the nature of political organisation in their vassals, something which seems rather less likely. Evidence for Phoenician monarchs’ participation in naval campaigns during the Persian period and beyond is also abundant.⁷ The rule of overseas territories is also attested during the first millennium, such as in the eighth-century *KAI* 31:

*[Abi]ṭub, skn of Qartihadašt, servant of Hiram, King of the Sidonians.*⁸



Fig. 5.1. Sidonian fifth-century coin bearing the label *tm'* – ‘commander’ – beneath a ship.

After Elayi & Elayi 2004 Pl. XI no. 295 & Fig. 29.

⁷ Most of the Greek historians agree that Phoenician kings led their fleets into battle, or at least were present, during the Battle of Salamis and Alexander’s invasion of the Persian Empire; fifth-century coinage of King Baana of Sidon includes the epithet *tm'* – commander. (Fig. 5.1) and King Philocles of Sidon served in the fleets of Ptolemaic Egypt (Elayi 2006).

⁸ *KAI* 31.1, 31.2. Translation adapted from Krahmalkov 2000, 342-3. See below for further discussion of the *skn*. Here the meaning seems to be something like ‘governor’ or ‘viceroys’.

Tyre	Years	Sidon	Years	Byblos	Years	Period
Abimilku	14 th C	Zimrida	14 th C.	Ribaddi	14 th C (Amarna Letters)	LBA
Ba'alat-Remeg	c.1230			Ili-rapi		
				Zakarba'al	c.1075 (Wen-Amon)	Iron Age I-II
				Ahiram	c.1000 BC	
Abiba'al	10 th C.			Ittoba'al	10 th -9 th C Byblos Royal Inscriptions	
Hiram I				Yehimilk		
Ba'aleser I	c.935-919			Abiba'al		
'Abd'aštar I	c.919-910			Eliba'al		
Astartos	c.909-898			Šipitba'al I		
Astharymos	c.898-889					
Phelles	c.888					
Ittoba'al I	c.887-855					
Ba'aleser II	c.855-849					
Mattan I	c.848-819					
Pummay	c.818-771					
Ittoba'al II	c.750-739			Šipitba'al II	c.740	
Hiram II	c.739-730					
Mattan II	c.730-729					
Eloulaios		Luli	c.704-681	Ormilk	c.701	Assyrian Domination
		Ittoba'al				
Ba'al I	c.660	Abdimilkuti	c.671	Milkasaph	c.670	
Ittoba'al III	c.591-573					Babylonian Domination
Ba'al II	c.573-564					
Suffete Interregnum	c.564-557					
Balatoros	c.556	Eshmun'azar I	2 nd quarter, 6 th C			
Merbalos	c.556-552	Tabnit	2 nd quarter, 6 th C			

Table 5.2. *Known kings of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos from the LBA to the Persian conquest. Names in bold are known from contemporary documents or inscriptions. Yellow-shaded kings are known only from later historiography such as Josephus or the Book of Kings. Jidejian 1961, 1971; Boyes 2012, with further references.*

As Chapter 3 discussed, it has been suggested that there was a decline in royal involvement in economic activity. No clear first-millennium evidence shows a substantial economic role for the monarch, while the comparative evidence of Ugarit reinforces the problematic testimony of *Wen-Amon* and various Biblical texts in suggesting that before the end of the second millennium this aspect of royal powers was significant. Direct, reliable evidence of this from the Phoenician polities themselves is, however, currently lacking. The suggestion that there emerged during the Iron Age merchant aristocracies which undermined and appropriated royal economic roles, was shown to be largely incompatible with the idea that LBA Levantine economic activities were ambiguous and cannot easily be conceptualised in terms of a simplistic ‘public’/‘private’ dichotomy. Furthermore, archaeological or textual support for these aristocracies is currently extremely slight. We have already identified a number of examples where flux in identity-negotiation and status-legitimation strategies seems to be important in driving social change in Phoenicia, however, and despite the difficulties in believing that this manifested in the emergence of new political institutions based specifically around mercantilism, it remains possible that other forms of institutional change may have taken place. In particular, it is worth examining in some detail Sommer’s suggestion that power became increasingly decentralised and depersonalised during the early first millennium: while during the LBA authority was patrimonial and concentrated in the person of the king, during the Iron Age, it is claimed, collective institutions which had always existed became more significant and allowed much wider political participation.⁹ Again, this is pure speculation, unsupported by persuasive evidence. If we consider the best attested non-royal institutions – the city elders, popular assembly and *skn* – it becomes quite clear that our knowledge of their role and functioning at any point in time is quite inadequate to enable identification of specific diachronic changes.

City elders are first attested in Phoenician politics during the fourteenth century: EA 100 is sent not by a king but by ‘Irqata [=‘Arqa] and its elders’. This is an unusual political situation: they seem to be acting as an interim administration following the king’s recent death and the letter gives no clues as to what their everyday political role might have been. We get no more clarity about their specific powers and responsibilities in first-millennium sources. When Ezekiel 27:9 (written in the sixth century but possibly based on earlier sources) mentions ‘elders of

⁹ Sommer 2000, 246ff.

Byblos', it is not even clear whether this refers to an actual political institution. The early seventh-century Esarhaddon Treaty is at least unambiguous on that point, but provides little more elucidation:

[...] *the elders of your country [convene to take] counsel.*¹⁰

Politically-active elders also occur in the Punic world, as the *γερονσία* or *senatus* in Aristotle and Livy's descriptions of Carthage and in inscriptions from Utica, Sulcis and Malta.¹¹ While these are better-documented, they are subject to the heavy distortion of an *interpretatio graeca* – Aristotle merely says the *γερονσία* is equivalent to the same institution in Sparta.

The political role of the council of elders therefore seems exceptionally long-lasting, but we should not overstate the case for continuity. The existence of apparently similar institutions at different places and different times does not necessarily indicate any connection existed between them.¹² We cannot identify with any certainty changes in function over time; even if we did have sufficient data to recognise functional differences, the geographical scatter of our sources means we cannot be sure whether the variation existed over time or space. Nor is comparative information much use for earlier periods: city elders were a long-established and widespread element of Near Eastern urban life,¹³ but their role can be seen to vary a great deal from place to place. At thirteenth-century Emar, for example, elders were particularly important, controlling large quantities of land and participating in legal adjudication, land transactions and the

¹⁰ Translation Parpola & Watanabe 1988.

¹¹ Aristotle *Politics* II.8; Livy VIII: 30, 7.5; Bondi 1988.

¹² Underlying the English translation 'elders' is a diverse collection of terms in the original languages. In EA 100 and at Emar the Akkadian term *šibuti* is employed; in the Esarhaddon Treaty they are *paršāmutu*. Ezekiel uses the Hebrew term *יְדֵי – זִקְנֵי*, while the Punic inscriptions use *𐤇𐤏𐤍𐤌 – h'drm* – 'the powerful ones'. This last makes clear that despite the similarity of the English translations, we should be cautious of assuming that these necessarily refer to identical or comparable institutions: while it seems to be used equivalently to Greek *γερονσία* or Latin *senatus*, in terms of LBA/EIA Near Eastern forebears, it bears most resemblance to the 'Great Ones' attested at thirteenth-century Emar or Qadesh, an entirely different political entity.

¹³ Fleming (1992) has suggested that this is a relic of early kinship- and residence-based political structures which were gradually superseded by newer institutions more strongly rooted in the specifically urban way of life which characterised the region in the Bronze Age, most notably the monarchy and the temples.

administration of wills.¹⁴ At Ugarit, however, it has been suggested that the elders ‘existed only as a rudiment of the former days’, their practical powers largely taken over by newer institutions connected to the palace.¹⁵

A very similar picture emerges when we consider popular assemblies. Again these are attested in the Amarna Letters. In the letters relating to Arwad we consistently find, in contexts where other letters would lead us to expect references to the king, ‘the men of Arwad’. There is no reference anywhere to a monarch in the city before the ninth century BC, possibly indicating that some unusual political situation pertained at Arwad, with the assembly fulfilling the role usually taken by the monarch.¹⁶

Wen-Amon, despite its problems, demonstrates that the Egyptians believed a popular assembly formed part of the political organisation of Phoenician polities, though of course we cannot know whether this related to the tenth-century time of the document’s likely composition, the eleventh-century world it was set in, or is an archaising feature drawn from Egyptian remembrances of the LBA world.

*The morning came, he called together his assembly, and he stood up in the midst of it and said to the Tjekker: [Why] did you come?*¹⁷

EIA assemblies are also implied by the tenth-century stele of the Gyblite king Yehimilk,¹⁸ which is a dedication to the ‘assembly of the holy gods of Byblos’. It seems likely that in Phoenicia, as in much of the ancient Near East, the divine political order replicated the earthly: as above, so below.¹⁹ The two-level division of the gods, with a pairing of male and female Ba‘als – lord and lady of the city – pre-eminent over a more generalised assembly, replicates the situation

¹⁴ Fleming 1992; Heltzer 2001.

¹⁵ Heltzer 2001, 236.

¹⁶ EA 101, 105, 149. Briquel Chatonnet 2000. EA 100’s ‘Irqata and its elders’ could be interpreted similarly, if ‘Irqata’ can be read as meaning the assembled people of the city, rather than just the geographical point of origin of the letter.

¹⁷ *Wen-Amon*. Translation Aubet 2001.

¹⁸ *KAI* 4, quoted in full on p.215 below, and reproduced as Fig. 5.2.

¹⁹ Clifford 1990, 56-7.

attested in the LBA texts.²⁰ This text therefore supports the suggestion that some sort of popular assembly, subordinate to the king, remained a feature of Phoenician political life at the end of the EIA. They appear too in historical accounts of the Persian and Hellenistic period, and on into the Punic world.²¹

Perhaps the only institution where there does seem to be clear evidence of change between the LBA and EIA is the *skn*. From abundant attestations throughout the LBA Levant, it is clear that at that time the *skn* was a deputy of the monarch, with wide-ranging powers. The Akkadian form appears in the Amarna letters as a gloss on *rabiṣu*, the usual term for an Egyptian overseer,²² and is attested at Emar, Qadesh, Amurru and Alashiya/Cyprus.²³ The Ugaritic archives represent by far the most bountiful source of information: the word occurs in both Ugaritic (*skn*) and Akkadian form (*sākinu*) throughout the preserved records, hardly surprising considering that a substantial number of them come from the archives of the merchant Urtenu who may have been *sākinu* himself.²⁴ The picture which emerges here is of an official independent of the royal family whose powers were nevertheless surpassed only by those of the king. He was involved in legal activities and transactions, took part in diplomacy, had control over royal dependents and had the right to use the royal seal. Most striking, however, is his role in commerce, where he acted as overseer, customs and taxation official and was responsible for state interaction with visiting

²⁰ The ideological link between the monarch and the local Ba‘al is well-established in Levantine religion, especially at Ugarit. See also below.

²¹ Diodoros XVI.45.1; Arrian II.15.6; Curtius Rufus IV.3.21. Aristotle (*Politics* II.11) speaks of legislation being considered by the *δημος*. Phoenician inscriptions from Tyre and Sidon, and Punic ones from Gozo, Leptis, Bithia, Olbia and Carthage (Baurain & Bonnet 1992, 147; Bondi 1988) refer to the assembly with the word *ʕ°* – ‘*m*’ (Sanmartín 2001-2, 421). This seems originally to mean ‘ancestors’ (del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003, vol. 1, 163) which might seem to fit better as a name for the council of elders. It is possible then that a degree of confusion exists in modern understandings of these institutions and the relationships between them. See also, for example, Aubet’s (2001, 146) comment on the *Wen-Amon* reference, stating that it ‘seems...to be an allusion to the senate of the city, made up of elders or the great of the community, the suffetes.’ This assertion amalgamates three distinct branches of the Punic political structure into a single body, and it is not clear upon what she bases it. The word used in *Wen-Amon* is *mw‘d*, which seems to be a rendering of a quite different Semitic word otherwise unattested in Phoenician but reflected in Hebrew as *מוֹעֵד* – *mō‘ēd* (Wilson 1945, Num. 16.23, Exod. 27.2).

²² As *súkini* in EA 256 and *súkina* in EA 362. The latter, it is worth pointing out, comes from Byblos. See Chapter 2.

²³ Heltzer 2001; Monroe 2009, 167ff. For Qadesh, RS 20.16; for Alashiya RS 20.18.

²⁴ Caubet 2003, 18.

foreign traders.²⁵ He could also act as regent, as Urtenu may have done for the boy-king Ammurapi in Ugarit's final years. The term is typically translated 'prefect', 'governor' or 'vizier'.

The word occurs in Phoenicia in the Ahiram inscription. Nothing more than the title is given, but if the meaning is similar to that at Ugarit then the three offices would be listed in descending order of importance: a king, his administrative deputy, and a military commander.

*Now, if a king among kings or a governor [skn] among governors or a commander of an army should invade Byblos and then uncover this sarcophagus – then: may the sceptre of his jurisprudence be stripped from him, may the throne of his kingdom be overturned, and may peace flee from Byblos.*²⁶

In Phoenician inscriptions of the later Iron Age, however, the meaning seems to be slightly different. *KAI 31* (quoted on p.202 above) and *FK III F 6* from Cyprus attest a sense which seems more similar to 'viceroy', in that he seems to be a governor ruling an overseas dependency with the king's delegated authority:

*<This is the coffin of> Ešmunadon, son of Ešmunadon, the Tyrian skn of Kition.*²⁷

It seems that when the king needed to maintain his authority at a distance, he dispatched his deputy, effectively specialising the office's formerly wide-ranging powers to an overseas, 'colonial' jurisdiction. As the overseas settlements ceased to be under the direct political suzerainty of the mainland cities, the office would have ceased to be relevant and fallen out of use. It seems to be absent from texts relating to Carthage. On the other hand, we should beware of

²⁵ Heltzer 2001; Monroe 2009, esp. 168ff.

²⁶ My translation based on the German of Lehmann 2005, 38.

²⁷ *FK III F 6*. Translation adapted from Krahmalkov 2000, 343. Fourth-century. Masson & Sznycer (1972, 67-75) translate it here merely as 'representative' or 'ambassador' and Yon (1997, 2) agrees that it need not necessarily indicate Tyrian control or ownership of Kition at this point. Regardless of its exact meaning – and Yon is correct in saying that our understanding of the word is so imprecise that any translation is to a certain extent speculative – it seems fairly clear that whatever reality underlies the word here is fairly unlikely to be the all-encompassing administrative 'grand vizier' we see at Ugarit.

assuming, from a single inscription found overseas, that the *skn* had universally become a colonial institution: we almost entirely lack evidence for whether the office continued to exist on the mainland, and if so what its role was at this time.²⁸ Overall, while it is tempting to suggest a gradual specialisation of the role of *skn*, followed by its obsolescence, the evidence remains inconclusive and any attempt to illuminate the wider reasons behind the phenomenon could only be guesswork. Since there is nothing in the Ahiram inscription to suggest the institution in tenth-century Byblos was any different from what it had been during the LBA – in all likelihood something roughly equivalent to that at Ugarit, acting as a royal deputy – any changes are unlikely to have progressed far by the end of my period of interest and consequently such speculation lies beyond the scope of this work.

This brief survey of the evidence for Phoenician institutions should be sufficient to demonstrate that in no case do we have sufficient detail on their roles or functioning to be able to identify with any certainty trends towards increased powers of these ‘decentralised’, ‘participatory’ institutions during the first millennium at the expense of the monarchy. On the contrary, the only occasions where either civic elders or popular assemblies can be definitively shown to have taken on some of the functions normally associated with the monarch date from the LBA, and both are special cases: the interim administration of Irqata during an interregnum, and the unusual situation in Arwad, where, if anything, the reverse process seems to occur to that proposed by Sommer: in the ninth century the city gains a king where previously only collective, decentralised institutions are attested. We might also ask why, if success in the field of long-distance commerce was the basis for political authority from the early first millennium onwards, this would impact negatively on the king and the *skn* when we know that both of these had been extremely active in these areas during the LBA, not just within the restricted, formalised structures of Bronze Age diplomatic gift-exchange but as commercially-motivated merchants in their own right, as Urtenu was at Ugarit. Entrepreneurial trading élites were not a novelty of the Iron Age: they were fundamental to the LBA political system and found their greatest expression in the king and his *skn*.

²⁸ *FK III D 17* (also from Cyprus) mentions ‘[...] *skn* ‘ky [...]’ – ‘the *skn* of ‘Akko’ – but since that is the sum total of its content, it sheds no light on the nature of the institution on the mainland. Guzzo Amadasi & Karageorghis (1977, 146) think it more probably the second part of a theonym ‘*bdskn*’.

The Rise of the Sacral Monarchy

The second key aspect of the traditional view of the changing nature of Phoenician kingship during the LBA/EIA transition is an increasing focus on the sacral. If, as the previous section has argued, the case for the elision of other aspects of royal power has been overstated, there remains the possibility that a change occurred in the ideology and style of kingship, possibly including an increase in monarchical involvement in cult practice.

In discussing these ideas we must not retroject contemporary notions of binary opposition between the ‘political’ and the ‘sacred’ into the ancient world. Such distinctions derive from the fundamentally transcendent and monistic conception of the divine of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. In the ancient world ‘the purely secular – in so far as it could be granted to exist at all – was the purely trivial. Whatever was significant was imbedded in the life of the cosmos, and it was precisely the king’s function to maintain the harmony of that integrity’.²⁹ Far from being an abnormality or innovation, the sacral and the ritual have been seen by both historians and anthropologists as central to what kingship is, far more so than what we might think of as secular, ‘political’ power.³⁰ They were fundamental, albeit in differing forms, to kingship in both Egypt and Mesopotamia, and, as we will see, was well-established in the Levantine littoral. While there may have been increased emphasis on these fundamental ritual aspects during the LBA/EIA transition, it is highly unlikely that this represented an *ex novo* advent of a sacral dimension where none had existed previously.

This said, the hypothesis of an increased sacral dimension is initially attractive, according well with the possible crisis in élite ideology and legitimation, during the twelfth and eleventh centuries proposed in Chapter 2. As a response to the waning value of traditional markers of prestige and legitimacy, such as the strategic engagement with Egyptian culture and politics, these changes would make a great deal of sense. Playing up the sacred aspects of monarchical power has been seen as a method of formalising relations between a monarch and those around him; by shifting the ruler at least partly into the divine sphere, distance is created between him and his entourage, with the freedom of both to act circumscribed through the extreme regulation of now-

²⁹ Frankfort 1948, 3; Oakley 2006.

³⁰ e.g. Frazer 1915; Hocart 1927; Frankfort 1948; Kantorowicz 1957; Quigley 2005; de Heusch 2005a, 2005b; Scubla 2005; Oakley 2006.

ritualised interactions.³¹ Generally speaking, when the political and religious spheres become intertwined, the observance of correct etiquette and ritual becomes tied not just to matters of political respect and propriety, but to fundamental cosmological issues. Any interaction involving the king must be approached with greater care lest it expose him as mortal and undermine the religious as well as political ideological apparatus. This is not just a religious, ‘theological’ issue but has serious consequences for any society in which religion is a major ‘interpretative apparatus’ which structures people’s ability to make sense of the world.³²

In this sense, the foregrounding of royal sacrality is a paradoxical phenomenon, born out of both strength and weakness on the part of the monarch. Strength and charisma are required to pull off the process of merging the royal and the divine, even if there is no attempt to move towards divine kingship in its most extreme manifestation. The constraints imposed on all participants by such a move, however, betray concern about the long-term fragility of the king’s position. The ritual shackles imposed on élite freedom of action by shifting the monarch into the sacred realm have negative as well as positive effects for rulers. By distancing himself from those around him, the monarch risks removing the basis for the creation of genuine bonds of loyalty in favour of ritualised patterns of obedience; the constraints of ritual etiquette, while potentially liberating in providing a clear structure for relations, can engender tension; by enforcing a sense of inferiority and subjugation in his entourage, the scope for resentment and betrayal duly increases. Such measures are not, therefore, something to be undertaken lightly. Such tight controls on élite behaviour represent an extreme measure betraying a fundamental lack of confidence in the current mode of relationships between them and the king. It is no coincidence, Bernbeck has argued, that most documented cases of increased emphasis on the sacrality of a ruler – whether in the ancient world, as with Augustus, or more recently, as with James II of England – occur in or shortly after a period of crisis and political upheaval.

³¹ Bernbeck 2008. Anthropologists since Frazer have emphasised that the monarch is as much restricted by such ritualisation as those around him; indeed in many cases the monarch is arguably the weaker party in the power relationship, metaphorically, and occasionally literally, a captive (Scubla 2005) and frequently facing death as a certain or likely consequence of their acceptance of the office (Frazer 1915; de Heusch 2005; Scubla 2005).

³² Geertz 1957, 1966; Bernbeck 2008. We might see an example of this in the English Civil War, where rebellion against the divinely-ordained king involved religious as well as political schism, and following which the Enlightenment increasingly challenged religion as the principal means of understanding the world.

This would seem to fit the LBA/EIA Phoenician situation rather well: strong political authority was potentially threatened and undermined by the disruption caused to its ideological base and legitimacy by the decline of Egyptian engagement and prestige in the Levant. Following such an upheaval it is only to be expected that ruling élites should look elsewhere for new bases for authority. We saw in Chapters 2 and 4 that greater emphasis on local material culture styles and new forms of warrior display were two such avenues; it could be that increased stress on the relationship between kings and the divine was another.

Tempting though this scenario is, it somewhat over-simplifies the reality. Our first task is to examine the evidence for the relationship between the monarchy and cult in both the second and first millennia and assess the likelihood of change between them. When doing this, we must consider two broad categories of investigation. The first comprises practical aspects of cult participation. Did the monarch have a sacerdotal role? What was the nature of his involvement in ritual and cult practice? Secondly we must consider the ideological and mythological thought underpinning monarchical legitimation: whereabouts on the blurred boundaries between the human and divine did Phoenicians believe their monarchs stood? A third matter, while not concerned with kingship *per se*, is sufficiently closely bound up in these issues that it will be considered here alongside them, namely the apparent change in the pantheons of the Phoenician cities during the LBA/EIA transition and the question of the extent to which this religious transformation constituted a genuine, deliberate ‘reform’ in support of a new Iron Age sacral monarchy.

There is little doubt that Phoenician monarchs of the first millennium BC fulfilled a sacerdotal role within their polities. Their titulature reflects this: priestly titles are claimed and occasionally take precedence over royal ones. Thus the inscription on the fifth-century sarcophagus of king Tabnit of Sidon identifies him as ‘priest of ‘Aštarte, king of Sidon, the son of Eshmun‘azar, priest of ‘Aštarte, king of Sidon’, while the fourth-century King Aziba‘al of Byblos is named as ‘Priest of Ba‘alat’.³³ Josephus states that Kings Ittoba‘al and Abbar of Tyre were the priest of ‘Aštarte and high priest respectively (these to be dated to the ninth and sixth century).³⁴

³³ *KAI* 11, 14.

³⁴ *C. Ap.* I.123, 157. I need hardly repeat again the necessity of caution regarding the use of Josephus as a source. Furthermore, as Tsirkin (1990) has argued, these seem to be cases of priests seizing the throne rather than existing monarchs being accorded priestly titles.

These were not mere epithets: there is reasonable evidence that kings took part in actual religious rituals. Perhaps the most conspicuous example is the central rite in the cult of Melqart, the annual ἔγερσις or ‘awakening’, in which the god’s death and resurrection were re-enacted. A fourth-century vase from Sidon depicts proceedings, in which, on the second day of the festival, the king takes part in a funerary ritual for the dead god, also involving the goddess ‘Aštarte.³⁵ Although the evidence for the ἔγερσις is late, it has proven central to discussions of these changes because its institution is one of the changes attributed by Josephus (citing Menander) to the tenth-century King Hiram of Tyre in a passage which has formed the foundation for most attempts to suggest that the religious changes being discussed here were deliberate and to be dated to the EIA:

*These two kings are also mentioned by Menander, who translated the Tyrian records from the Phoenician language into Greek speech, in these words: “And on the death of Abiba‘al, his son Hiram succeeded to his kingdom, who lived to the age of fifty-three and reigned thirty-four years. He it was who made the Eurychoros embankment and set up the golden column in the temple of Zeus. Moreover he went off and cut timber from the mountain called Lebanon for the roofs of the temples, and pulled down the ancient temples and erected new ones to Heracles [i.e. Melqart] and ‘Aštarte; and he was the first to celebrate the ἔγερσις of Heracles in the month of Peritios.”*³⁶

It is less clear whether the king functioned as a priest during the LBA. There can be no doubt that the monarch of Ugarit acted as high priest of the city’s religion. In the ritual texts he is by far the most prominent cult celebrant in rituals including sacrifices, other offerings, processions, purification-rites, divination and more. Cult personnel were under royal control and the royal palace itself included an extensive cult area known as the *ḥmn* – ‘chapel’, to which both

³⁵ Xella 2001-2, 42. Some of the cult symbols from this vase also appear on a royal casket from Tyre, which Bonnet (1995) takes as further evidence linking the Tyrian monarch with the ritual (although see Smith 1990). For the royal connections of other Iron Age Phoenician deities, see Xella 2001-2 and below.

³⁶ *Ant. Iud.* VIII, 144-146. Translation adapted from Thackeray & Marcus 1966. The same passage of Menander is cited again as *C. Ap.* I.117-123.

gods and members of the ruling family could ‘go up’ and where offerings could be made.³⁷ As we will see, there is good evidence for similarities in the religious ideology of kingship in Ugarit and Phoenicia, so on the basis of such comparative evidence we might expect to find a very similar situation in Phoenicia. Direct evidence remains elusive, however. Until recently there was none at all, but a recently-published letter from Ugarit sheds some scant light on the issue. The letter, written by the king of Sidon to his Ugaritic counterpart, is one of a set concerning an unspecified act of sacrilege committed by some Ugaritic citizens against the storm-god (presumably Ba‘al Hadad/Shamem) in Sidon. The letters are mainly diplomatic and juridical in content and consist of attempts by the Sidonian king to extract financial compensation from the perpetrators, or the Ugaritic king, to pay for the ‘solemn sacrifices’ necessary at all the temples of Sidon if the gods’ anger is to be assuaged.³⁸ The lines detailing the form of these rites are ambiguous, but the king does seem to be involved:³⁹

*...and the sacrifices entered into the temples with us...*⁴⁰

Arnaud has speculated that the king may have been present ‘comme grand-prêtre de la ville’.⁴¹ Nothing in the letters themselves explicitly confirms this – the monarch’s concern in the remainder of the text is overwhelmingly judicial; while he bemoans the effects of the gods’ anger on his city, there is nothing here which points to his seeing the affair from a specifically religious perspective – but nor is there any reference to other priests or their demands. Inasmuch as the will of the gods is discussed, the king appears as its sole interpreter, which may well point towards the correctness of Arnaud’s conclusion. Even if this is correct here, however, we should beware of assuming that this represented the usual state of affairs in either Sidon or Phoenicia more generally. The case of Emar is cautionary: a text from that city attests the monarch’s involvement in a rite which appears broadly comparable to that at Sidon, in that it involved his visiting a large

³⁷ del Olmo Lete 1993; Merlo & Xella 1999.

³⁸ The king’s polite, diplomatic request for compensation stands in (presumably deliberate) contrast with the outraged reaction of the Sidonian mob, who demand the right to stone the culprits to death and then possibly crucify whatever is left.

³⁹ Arnaud 2001, 1992, 185, 189-91; Vita 1999, 2001-2.

⁴⁰ RS 86.2221 + 2225 + 86.2226 + 86.2240. My own translation based on the French of Arnaud 2001, 269-271.

⁴¹ Arnaud 1992, 190.

number of the city's shrines and making offerings as part of a single ceremony. From the rest of the Emar archive, however, we know that this 'imištu of the king' was far from typical of religious practice; on the contrary, it was the *only* cult rite in which the monarch was involved.⁴² The cult role of Levantine monarchs – while consistently present – thus varied considerably in its extent.

While the Ugaritic situation means it is likely Phoenician kings did carry out sacerdotal functions, for now we must acknowledge that this remains speculation. We can, however, identify the king's involvement in other practical aspects of cult during our period of interest, namely the making of votive offerings and in building and maintaining cult installations. If it were merely the passage of Josephus cited above, we might be doubtful, but the tenth-century royal inscriptions of Byblos confirm the general involvement of Phoenician kings in such activities:

*The temple which Yehimilk, king of Byblos built – it was he who restored the ruins of these temples. May Ba'al-Shamem and Ba'alat-Gebal and the assembly of the holy gods of Byblos prolong the days of Yehimilk and his years over Byblos as a rightful king and a true king before the holy gods of Byblos!*⁴³

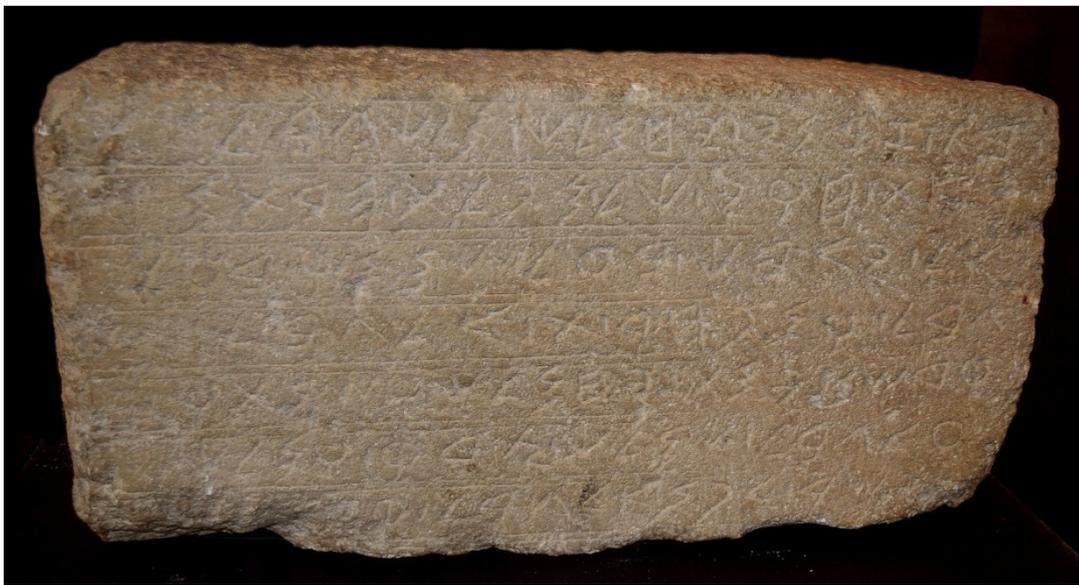


Fig. 5.2. *Yehimilk Inscription Stele (KAI 4). Byblos Museum.*

⁴² Fleming 1992.

⁴³ KAI 4. Apparently tenth-century inscription found on a stele among debris near the temple of Ba'alat Gebal (Fig. 5.2). Translation adapted from Albright 1947.

*The statue which Eliba'al, king of Byblos, son of Yehimilk, king of Byblos, made for Ba'alat-Gebal, his lady. May Ba'alat-Gebal prolong the days of Eliba'al and his years over Byblos!*⁴⁴

These aspects of royal activity also continued into the later first millennium:

*...we are the ones who built the houses of the gods, the house of ['Aštarte] in Sidon-by-the-Sea, and we also established 'Aštarte in Shamem-Addirim. We are the ones who built a house for Eshmun, the Holy Prince at Ydll spring in the mountain. We are ones who built houses of the gods of Sidon at Sidon-by-the-Sea, a house for the Lord of Sidon and a house for 'Aštart-shem-Ba'al.*⁴⁵

*In the month of mp' in the year of the accession to the throne of King Bodaštart, king of the Sidonians. Behold, Bodaštart, king of the Sidonians has built this šrn in the land of the sea for the divine 'Aštarte.*⁴⁶

I am Yehawmilk, king of Byblos, the son of Yeharba'al, the grandson of Urimilk, king of Byblos, whom the mistress, Ba'alat-Gebal, made king over Byblos. I have been calling my mistress, Ba'alat-Gebal, [and she heard my voice]. Therefore, I have made for my mistress, Ba'alat-Gebal, this altar of bronze which is in this [courtyard], and this engraved object of gold which is in front of this inscription of mine, with the bird (?) of gold that is set in a (semiprecious) stone, which is upon this engraved object of gold, and this portico with its columns and the [capitals]

⁴⁴ *KAI* 6. Inscription on Egyptian statue bearing the cartouche of Osorkon I (924-889). See Fig. 2.23 above. Translation adapted from Albright 1947. *KAI* 5, a statue of Sheshonq I (945-924) dedicated by Abiba'al features almost identical wording.

⁴⁵ *KAI* 14. Inscription on the sarcophagus of Eshmun'azar II. Fifth-century. Translation adapted from *ANET*³, 662.

⁴⁶ *CIS* 1.4. Fifth-century. Translation based on the Italian of Amadasi Guzzo 2001-2, 48. The meaning of šrn here is unclear, but may be 'precinct' *vel sim.*

*which are upon them, and its roof: I, Yebawmilk, king of Byblos have made (these things) for my mistress, Ba'alat-Gebal, as I called my mistress, Ba'alat-Gebal, and she heard my voice and treated me kindly.*⁴⁷

We can be fairly sure, then, that the monarch was involved in these aspects of cult from at least the tenth century onwards. We have neither cult installations nor many finds related to the monarchy from the LBA or EIA, so it is hard to confirm materially whether these activities were a new aspect of royal behaviour or a continuation of LBA activities. Given the continuity we have already observed, and the royal role in building and maintaining religious buildings in other LBA and EIA Near Eastern societies, the latter seems considerably more likely.⁴⁸ Essentially our only source of information is the despoiled Tomb V at Byblos. The other surviving tombs of the royal cemetery are earlier, most probably MBA.⁴⁹ While a preference for prestige artefacts and particularly, in the Bronze Age, Aegyptiaca, is apparent, there is no pattern to the remaining funerary assemblages which might suggest a consistent style of royal burial over this long period; nor do cultic items figure prominently among any of the assemblages. Of the finds in Tomb V, consistently thirteenth-century and so presumably to be associated with burials earlier than that of Ahiiram himself, nothing allows us to reconstruct anything of the monarch's involvement in religious practice. There is no overt depiction of royal sacerdotal practice in the iconography of the sarcophagus itself, which instead depicts an enthroned king feasting and receiving offerings. If a religious connection were to be made from such a portrayal, it is more plausible to highlight the parallels with scenes of deities feasting, such as that depicted on a mug from the Maison du Prêtre at Ugarit, and see these as blurring the boundaries between king and god in ideological terms.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ CIS 1.1. Votive stele, mid-fifth-century BC. Translation adapted from *ANET*³, 502.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Green 2010, 65-66 on the temple-building of Assyrian monarchs. Accounts of temple-building on the littoral in the LBA are admittedly scanty, but this is probably due to accident of preservation rather than the lack of a tradition. What evidence there is, including structural parallels between the building of Ba'al's palace in Ugaritic mythology and Mesopotamian temple-building texts, and RS 94.2953, points to temple-construction on the coast taking place as part of the same tradition as in the interior (Pitard 2010).

⁴⁹ Montet 1928-9.

⁵⁰ For the Ahiiram sarcophagus, see Fig. 2.19 and cf. Fig. 2.14 above for an LBA parallel from Megiddo. The Ugaritic image is discussed in Schaeffer 1966.

Regarding this second aspect of sacral kingship, the ideology of divine kingship, the evidence for continuity is slightly less ambiguous and the links with the rest of the Levant much clearer.

Ideologies in which the monarch's power derives from their liminal status, blurring the boundaries between the human and the divine, are well-known throughout world history and we need only consider pharaonic Egypt or third- to second-millennium Mesopotamia to recognise the idea's long heritage in the ancient Near East.⁵¹ Several sources from Ugarit demonstrate very clearly the prevalence of the notion there. It is played out in mythological analogue in the stories of Ba'al Hadad, who sits enthroned at his palace on Mount Saphon, wielding power won through conquest but ultimately delegated from his 'overlord', the supreme god El.⁵² Other myths tackle the subject of royal divinity directly, most notably the Tale of Keret, which has been seen by some as propaganda promulgating a divine ideology of kingship and by others as a satire ridiculing it.⁵³ Either way, the text undoubtedly proves the concept's existence at Ugarit: King Keret is repeatedly said to be the son of El; his own son and heir is described as being wet-nursed by the goddesses Athirat ('Aštarte) and Rahmay. Upon Keret's death, the problem of reconciling semi-divine status with mortal death is explicitly discussed:

*How can it be said Keret is the son of El,
The offspring of the Compassionate and Holy One?
Or do gods die,
The offspring of the Compassionate One not live?*⁵⁴

Wyatt sees these lines not so much as questioning Keret's divinity as problematising his death.⁵⁵ He points out that Semitic gods do indeed die, but are resurrected, with the king-archetype Ba'al the most prominent Ugaritic example. This transcendence of death is apparent in the treatment of deceased kings in the ritual texts, where they seem to have become *rpm* –

⁵¹ Wyatt 1996, 293-4.

⁵² Wyatt 1999, 545.

⁵³ e.g. Pedersen 1941; Wyatt 1996, 1999 for the former view and Margalit 1999 for the latter.

⁵⁴ Translation adapted from Wyatt 1996, 298 and Gray 1958, 121.

⁵⁵ Wyatt 1999, 562.

Rephaïm. The exact status of these beings remains somewhat controversial, but that they were apparently chthonic entities with at least a measure of divinity about them: the terms *ilnym* ('godly ones') and *ilm* (gods) are used of them and in certain king-lists (e.g. *KTU* 1.118), dead kings are prefaced by the word *ilu* – divine. Royal status was apparently retained after death: *KTU* 1.108 refers to them as *mlk 'lm* – 'eternal king', and RS 34.126 describes them as enthroned in the netherworld alongside the sun-goddess. They were the subject of on-going cult practice: RS 24.257 may represent a recitation of the names of deified kings at a festival in their honour, while *KTU* 1.111 points to sacrifices and other offerings being made to celebrate the deification of a monarch. Variants of this rite, referred to in texts as the *kispum*, are also attested in both textual and archaeological remains from other Levantine royal sites, including Qatna, Ebla and Mari. Several powers appear to be associated with these deified dead, the foremost of which seems to have been a protective, fertility-related influence, but also including an oracular role and significance in certain funerary rites.⁵⁶

There can be little question, then, that Ugaritic and other Levantine monarchs were seen as mediating between the earthly and divine realms, not just in terms of sacerdotal practice but as actual embodiments of the divine whose power was delegated from the gods and who were capable of making the transition into that category after their death. Indeed, any doubt must surely be dispelled by the fact that the Ugaritic king's very enthronement ritual involved him officiating in a sacerdotal capacity over his own symbolic hierogamy to Pidray, the daughter of Ba'al Hadad.⁵⁷

The all-pervasiveness of these monarchical-cosmological traditions in the Levant is confirmed by their appearance in much of the Hebrew Bible, which attests not just similar general ideas but also specific myths and cosmological concepts, including persistent Ba'al-worship, the integration of elements of Ba'al-ic myth into the cult of Yahweh, and the existence of substrate beliefs in Rephaïm as the protective spirits of the deified dead.⁵⁸

Phoenician mythological beliefs and religious practices remain, of course, largely a mystery to us, so we cannot be sure how such a common Levantine set of beliefs may have manifested there, but we have enough evidence to be reasonably sure that it did. Many Ba'als, and indeed

⁵⁶ Pitard 1999, 260; Healey 1995; del Olmo Lete 1993, 1999, 314-5.

⁵⁷ *KTU* 1.132; del Olmo Lete 1993.

⁵⁸ Wyatt 1996; Day 2000; I Sam 28.13, Isaiah 8.19.

Ba'alats, are attested in Phoenician cult – the word merely means 'lord'. Among these we find the same Ba'al Hadad whose myths exemplified kingship at Ugarit. The 'Storm-God' of the Sidonian letters to Ugarit is not named explicitly, but he is almost certainly the same deity, and as Ba'al Saphon he is cited among the Tyrian deities called upon to enforce the seventh-century treaty between King Ba'al of that city and Esarhaddon of Assyria. A number of scattered hints suggest that Ba'al mythology, with all its connotations for earthly kingship, as well as the deity himself, was known in Phoenicia. Thus the specific identification here with Mt. Saphon, where Ba'al Hadad won his royal throne, or fragments preserved in later texts which seem to echo specific elements of the Ba'al mythology as attested in the Ugaritic mythological texts.⁵⁹

Our understanding of the relationship of myth and royal ideology in Phoenicia is, for obvious reasons, largely dependent on texts, but there is some archaeological evidence. In the scant survivals of LBA and EIA royal iconography we observe a prominent role for mythological creatures. Thus we see sphinx-thrones on the Ahiim sarcophagus and the similar scene on the Megiddo ivory inlay, and a griffin on an ivory plaque also found in Byblos Tomb V.

⁵⁹ Philo of Byblos, writing in the first or second century AD, (quoted by Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* I.10) presents a Phoenician cosmogony which, while clearly heavily influenced by Classical myth and thus hardly a reliable guide of 'unadulterated' Phoenician religion, nevertheless seems to preserve some genuine Levantine features (Clifford 1990, 56). He describes the role of divine, primordial serpents in Phoenician mythology, claiming this was the inspiration for the sixth-century pre-Socratic philosopher Pherecydes of Syros' account of a battle at the dawn of time between Chronos and Ophioneus for control over the heavens. Macrobius (*Saturnalia* I.9.12) also mentions the importance of serpents in Phoenician religion, claiming they used the *ouroboros* as a symbol of the universe. These references are slender and late, but it is tempting to link them, as Ribichini (1986, 50-51) does, with the primordial dragon-slaying of the Ba'al cycle (*KTU* 1.3, 1.5, 1.6), particularly given the reflexes of this story in other East Mediterranean mythologies, such as Yahweh's defeat of Leviathan (cognate with Ugaritic *Ltn*) and Tannin (Job 7.12, 26.12-12; Psalm 74.13-14; Isaiah 27.1; Wyatt 1996, 89ff; Day 2000, 98ff.) or Zeus' conflict with Typhon.



Fig. 5.3. *King seated on a sphinx throne. Detail of the Ahiem Sarcophagus.*



Fig. 5.4. *Ivory plaque fragment depicting a bull being attacked by a griffin and a lion. Tomb V, Byblos. Beirut National Museum. After Aruz, Benzel & Evans (eds.), 2008, 411.*

It might be argued that the integration of supernatural creatures into royal iconography is related to a mediating, transcendent conception of kingship. That is almost certainly the reason for the initial incorporation of these motifs into the canons of Near Eastern iconographic traditions. The very extent of this heritage, however, undermines attempts to connect their use here with their supernatural status *per se*. In both Phoenician examples real, but similarly potent,

beasts also appear: lions on the sarcophagus and a lion and a bull on the plaque. These had been the standard beasts used in the region for centuries to signify royal power:⁶⁰ their status as natural or supernatural seems in these cases to be almost immaterial. Instead the importance of such depictions is that they confirm that Phoenician kingship is to be understood as part of this wider regional tradition, a tradition which we know incorporated ideas of divine mandate for earthly rule.

The existence of *kispum* rituals associated with the high-status dead is demonstrated in Phoenicia by the incorporation of openings and channels for food and libations into élite tombs. Such installations are familiar from Ugarit and appear in both the early LBA royal tomb at Kamid el-Loz and their persistence into the first millennium is demonstrated by the EIA chamber-tombs at Achziv.⁶¹ Rephaïm are specifically mentioned on the sarcophagi of the Sidonian kings Tabnit and Eshmun 'azar II (sixth- and fifth-century BC respectively) as ghosts whose company the dead join. Although the word itself does not occur, the nourishing, fertility-related influence the Rephaïm exert in the Ugarit texts and the Hebrew Bible also seems to be reflected in the Ahiaram sarcophagus inscription, in which Byblos' continued prosperity is implied to be dependent on the king remaining undisturbed. Popular Phoenician deities of the Iron Age, such as the healing gods Shadrpa and Eshmun, may originally have fulfilled a similar function.⁶² Late accounts of Phoenician mythology prominently feature men who become gods: Philo of Byblos's cosmogony is markedly euhemerist and claims that even El was originally a human king who became deified.⁶³ A similar theme emerges in Damascius' sixth-century AD version of the myth of Eshmun. The god, long known in Phoenicia by the epithet 'Holy Prince' (cf. *KAI* 14 above) begins as a mortal son of Σαδυκος – Phoenician *šdq*, which means justice, a key element in royal

⁶⁰ The importance of sphinxes and griffins in Egyptian art hardly needs stating (see, e.g. Frankfort 1948, 11), but by the tenth century these motifs, as well as lions and bulls, were well diffused and are known too from Anatolia, North Syria and the Aegean.

⁶¹ Niehr 2006; Salles 1995a, 1995b.

⁶² Xella 1983.

⁶³ Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* I.10.44. This passage alludes to the idea of infant-sacrifice, stating that El sacrificed his son, who is explicitly said to be 'in royal regalia', emphasising a link between late beliefs about Phoenician tophet-practices and kingship. Xella (1986, 31) believes Philo's euhemerism is not just a feature of the first-to-second-century AD, but reflects 'dans une mesure considérable, un trait spécifique et original de la tradition religieuse phénicienne'.

ideology. His deification takes place at the intercession of the goddess Astronoe, i.e. 'Aštarte, after he suffers a freak axe-related mishap while engaged in the archetypal royal activity of hunting.⁶⁴ The parallels with the myth of Adonis, another first-millennium Phoenician deity (albeit in Hellenised reflex), are obvious, and it is also to be noted that Melqart, whose very name means 'king of the city' found his Greek equivalent in the most ambiguously divine of heroes (or mortal of gods), Heracles.

Such late stories are far removed from LBA Ugarit, and often preserved only in fragmentary form. We cannot easily discern the balance between contemporary philosophical and theological attitudes, the influence of Greek heroic mythology, and genuine Phoenician tradition. The cult of Melqart is known in Phoenicia from at least the early first millennium, and Adonis is almost as ancient in the Aegean.⁶⁵ It seems extremely likely, then, that we should see in this mythological blurring of mortal kingship and divinity a tradition which goes back at least to the tenth century BC and, probably back to the same West Semitic common source from which the Ugaritic royal ideology emerged. This is not to say it remained unchanged throughout this time: given the changing character of the evidence we have discussed, it seems quite clear that it did not. However, there does appear to be continuity in the underlying ideology that kings were beings who straddled the boundary between the earthly and the sacred, whose power stemmed from that and for whom death brought divinity rather than oblivion.

Phoenician sacral kingship, then, is clearly not a new phenomenon for the Iron Age, though there is more evidence for continuity as regards the general ideology than for involvement in religious practice itself. If change did take place, there is little to suggest it was anything other than a gradual process the vast majority of which took place during the first millennium itself, and therefore beyond this thesis' scope. There is no reason to believe any substantial change occurred during the twelfth to tenth centuries.

⁶⁴ Damascius *Vita Isidori* fr. 348; Xella 2001-2, 40.

⁶⁵ See below for further discussion of Melqart. The Adonis cult appears first in Greek literature in Sappho fr. 140, 168, though Burkert (1985, 176-7) speculates its history in the Aegean may be substantially longer. Numerous Classical sources identify it with Phoenicia, and specifically Byblos, and since the name 'Adonis' is clearly derived from Semitic *Adonai* – lord – we can be fairly sure this is correct and that it probably relates to some local Ba'al. We cannot at present say which.

Tenth Century Religious Reforms?

As the previous discussion has illustrated, the basic structural organisation of Phoenician religion is relatively clear and shows strong continuity between the second and first millennia. A general pool of deities was common to all the Phoenician polities, and many other Levantine societies besides. Also shared was the general organisation of the pantheon, with a dyad of a male Ba‘al and his consort at the summit. However, the choice of which deities received the highest honours – or at least became most associated with civic identity and authority – varied between polities. This form of organisation is most associated with the Phoenician Iron Age, but its LBA heritage is clear: it is essentially what we find at Byblos from the earliest times, though that city is somewhat unusual in assigning greatest prominence to the female goddess, whose identification with ‘Aštarte is also less clear than in other polities. An unpublished, presumably thirteenth-century commercial letter from Tyre attests a dyad there between Ba‘al and ‘Rimittu’,⁶⁶ while RS 20.225 from Hazor demonstrates similar religious organisation in Palestine at the end of the LBA.⁶⁷

The key change between LBA and EIA religion in Phoenicia was not in how pantheons were structured, but in the gods comprising them. Byblos shows strong continuity, with Ba‘alat Gebal appearing as the prime civic deity throughout its history, but the situation in the other polities is more complex and ambiguous. Our LBA sources imply the importance of the Canaanite storm-god Ba‘al Hadad, as is the case at Ugarit. As we have seen, he appears in the Sidonian letters to Ugarit, in the Hazor letter, and possibly also in that from Tyre.⁶⁸ In the first millennium, however, Hadad seems to have been supplanted by a new set of previously-unattested deities with much in common: like him, they are closely tied to royal ideologies; like him they are dying-and-rising deities. But unlike him, they are closely associated with specific

⁶⁶ Arnaud 1998, n.38. Rimittu is perhaps to be linked with ‘Aštarte, since her worship at Tyre is recorded already in the Ugaritic Tale of Keret.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28. The male deity’s identity is lost, though Arnaud restores ‘the storm-god’ on the basis of bull-statuettes found at the site. The goddess is again ‘Aštarte.

⁶⁸ In Ugarit, when reference is made merely to ‘Ba‘al’, with no further epithet specified, it generally means Ba‘al Hadad. Melqart is unquestionably the ‘Ba‘al of Tyre’ in the first millennium, e.g. *KAI* 47 (Bonnet 1995, Xella 2001-2) but see below for why this is less likely here.

polities: Melqart with Tyre, Eshmun with Sidon, and so on. They appear to be new creations, unknown from LBA sources. On the female side, while 'Aštarte is attested during the LBA, she achieves a much-increased popularity during the Iron Age, becoming the Phoenician goddess *par excellence*.

This is a genuine change, but also a complex one. Despite the importance of the new gods in the formation of civic and élite identity, the old deities were not entirely displaced from their official roles. Thus, Melqart takes a subsidiary role in the Esarhaddon Treaty amid a much broader list of Tyrian gods, which gives pride of place to the storm-god in threefold aspect as Ba'al Shamem, Ba'al Malagê and Ba'al Saphon:⁶⁹

May Ba'al Shamem Ba'al Malagê and Ba'al Saphon raise an evil wind against your ships to undo their moorings and tear out their mooring pole, may a strong wave sink them in the sea and a violent tide [rise] against you.

May Melqart and Eshmun deliver your land to destruction and your people to deportation; may they [uproot] you from your land and take away the food from your mouth, clothes from your body, and the oil for your anointing.

*May 'Aštarte break your bow in the thick of battle and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy, may a foreign enemy divide your belongings.*⁷⁰

Clifford suggests that Ba'al Hadad and other members of the old LBA pantheon retained something like their position in the formalised and traditional religion, while the new deities rose to prominence initially as dynastic gods associated with the royal families, and then as popular

⁶⁹ The cult of Ba'al Shamem – 'The Lord of Heaven' is attested throughout the first millennium across the Phoenician and Punic world (e.g. *KAI* 4.3; *KAI* 18.1, 7; *KAI* 26; *KAI* 78.2; *KAI* 64.1), and he is identified by the Greeks with Zeus (c.f. Josephus *Ant. Iud.* VIII, 144-146; Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* I.10). He is unquestionably a storm-deity, though whether he is, or ever was, identical with Hadad is not entirely clear. We might similarly question whether, by the time of the Esarhaddon Treaty, Ba'al Saphon was considered the same deity as Hadad. We know very little at all of Ba'al Malagê. See Cooper 1987; Clifford 1990, 60.

⁷⁰ Translation adapted from Parpola & Watanabe 1988.

deities. This is plausible: the royal associations of gods such as Melqart and Eshmun have already been discussed and in the Esarhaddon Treaty their responsibility seems to be the well-being of the land and its people. Thus, the interpretation drawn from Josephus that this change of gods represents a deliberate strategy of royal legitimation and identity-construction may well be correct.

Rather more problematic, in my opinion, is any attempt to pin such a 'reform' to the LBA/EIA transition, or even more precisely to the tenth century. This view relies entirely on Josephus *Ant. Iud.* VIII, 144-146 (quoted p.213 above), and we have several reasons to doubt its reliability. Throughout this chapter, change in the nature of the Phoenician monarchy and its relationship with religion has presented itself as a gradual process stretching well into the first millennium, not as single events of reform. The characteristic 'Iron Age' Phoenician cults are first attested in very different times and very diverse places. Melqart first appears on the ninth- to eighth-century Bir-Hadad Stele, from near Aleppo rather than Tyre.⁷¹

⁷¹ Despite its name, the Bir-Hadad stele has nothing to do with Ba'al Hadad himself. It is named for its dedicant. Pitard (1988, 4) translates the Aramaic inscription thus: 'The stela which Bir-Hadad the son of 'Attar-hamek, king of Aram, set up for his lord Melqart, to whom he made a vow and who heard his voice.'



Fig. 5.5. *Left: The Bir-Hadad Stele, depicting Melqart. Ninth century BC. After Pritchard (ed.) 1958, pl. 139. Right: MBA depiction of Ba'al Hadad from Ugarit. Louvre.*

The Bir-Hadad stele is representative of the mutual influence and cross-fertilisation between the Phoenician and North Syrian traditions during the early first millennium BC. At first impression it owes much to the canons of North Syrian iconography, as illustrated by the second image above. The form, pose, and manner of dress are almost identical. Many of the details, however, recall Phoenician sources. Where the Ugaritic Ba'al wields a club, Melqart bears a fenestrated axe of a type well-known from MBA Byblos and which seems to be distinctive of later iconographic representations of Melqart. Syro-Palestinian iconography is blended with adapted Egyptianising motifs in a typically Phoenician way: thus in place of the sprouting plant a different symbol of life and fertility seems to be substituted: the ankh (or possibly a lotus flower);

uraei hang from his belt.⁷² Melqart in his earliest depiction, then, appears as something of an amalgam. Defying simplistic associations between Melqart, Tyre and ‘Phoenicia’, he presents a hybridised image reflecting elements from many parts of the Near Eastern world. In later times Melqart would become the Phoenician coloniser-god *par excellence*, as Heracles was for the Greeks, occurring throughout their Mediterranean diaspora. This adaptability and malleability is already apparent in this, his first appearance.

This exists within a wider context of cultural and iconographic interplay between Phoenicia and the north at this time, as also reflected in the use of Phoenician script in inscriptions from Cilicia and North Syria and the hybrid Phoenico-Syrian ivories from Nimrud and Karkemish.⁷³ It would be a mistake, however, to see this simply as a diffusion of Phoenician influence northwards. The people of Cilicia and North Syria certainly adapted Phoenician cultural elements to their own use, but traffic was not one-way. What the Bir-Hadad stele illustrates is that from the outset Melqart cannot be tied down to any single place or significance: he was a god with a tendency to travel, and who apparently existed from the earliest times in the hybridising ‘middle-ground’⁷⁴ of cultural contacts. His links with Tyre, particularly later in the Iron Age, cannot be doubted, but he was not just important in Tyre and to see him as the tenth-century creation *ex nihilo* of a Tyrian royal ideology seems far too simplistic. The connected deity Milkašart – worshipped during the first millennium at Umm el-‘Amed near Tyre but already attested in Bronze Age Ugarit – seems to demonstrate that far from being a tenth-century innovation born of specifically Tyrian civic ideology, Melqart emerged from a wider Syro-Palestinian complex of ideas whose roots ran back into the LBA.

With Eshmun too, evidence suggests the existence of his cult in Bronze Age Syria. The Eshmun‘azar sarcophagus inscription is no longer the first attestation of the name: it has now been recognised in ritual texts from Ugarit and as an LBA onomastic element.⁷⁵ The increase in ‘Aštarte’s profile is also hard to pin down to the tenth century: as a development of Ishtar her cult can be identified at several Levantine centres from the earliest times, but she is not mentioned in

⁷² Bonnet 1988, 135-6.

⁷³ Pitard 1988, 14; Winter 1979, 1981.

⁷⁴ Malkin 2002.

⁷⁵ e.g. *KTU* 1.41, 1.87. Xella 1983. The anthroponym *Šmn*, vocalised in Neo-Assyrian as *Šamunnu vel sim.*, is early, since an onomasticon of Thutmose III refers to a ‘Hill of *Šmn*’ in the Plain of ‘Akko (Lipiński 1995, 195).

Phoenician written sources until the eighth century, and even then appears to be considered a foreign deity.⁷⁶ She does not seem to be definitively identified as a Phoenician civic goddess until the seventh century, when a seal refers to ‘*št bʿdn* – ‘Aštarte of Sidon’.

It seems far more likely that these were existing cults which, at various points during the first millennium began to take on particular importance in the civic identity of various Phoenician polities. Besides Josephus (or rather, the common interpretation of his account, for the passage itself does not say that these cults were new, only that new temples were built), however, nothing links these changes to the tenth century BC or to a single deliberate act of royal creation. All other indications are more consistent with a slightly later and more heterogeneous set of developments probably belonging to the ninth or eighth century or even later, and drawing on a melting-pot of traditions which spanned the Levant.

Conclusions

Discussions of political change in the Phoenician polities during the LBA/EIA transition have relied very heavily on textual information, in part because of the types of stories they try to tell. A strong focus on political institutions and on narrative histories of conquest and domination by particular cities require a kind of information which the scant archaeological record cannot provide. What this chapter has sought to demonstrate is that the written sources utilised are equally ill-suited to the task. Many of the commonly-held beliefs about Phoenician politico-religious change are based more on tradition and assumption than on firm evidence and reliable data. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, such preconceptions serve to hinder our understanding. Until we assess the reliability of our sources and honestly admit the gaps in our knowledge, any interpretations we construct will be built upon very unsound foundations.

Our present state of knowledge only allows for limited conclusions, and these must be couched in terms of probabilities rather than hard facts. Nevertheless, it should be clear that some of the key changes often supposed to have occurred are, in fact, based on implausible assumptions which contradict what evidence there is. There is no evidence for a significant reduction in the

⁷⁶ An amphora reused as a funerary urn and found somewhere in the Sidon area is inscribed ‘*štrt hr*, which Amadasi Guzzo (2001-2, 48) plausibly reconstructs as ‘Aštarte of the Hurrians’.

non-sacral aspects of Phoenician kingship, nor any good reason to imagine that these functions were taken over by a new ‘bourgeoisie’ of successful merchants or other ‘decentralised’ institutions.

As concerns the sacral, there are perhaps some signs of gradual change, but these are not the straightforward and far-reaching politico-religious reforms often supposed. There is no sign that the civic pantheons of the Iron Age were entirely new either in their structural organisation or in the deities which comprised them. Where we can identify the advent of new gods or significant increases in the cult of old ones, nothing associates these changes with the tenth century besides the ambiguous and tendentious account of Flavius Josephus writing over a thousand years later. It may be that the king’s role changed slightly – there is certainly more unambiguous evidence for a sacerdotal role in Phoenician cult during the first millennium than the second – but the strong links apparent between first-millennium Phoenician royal ideology and that of the rest of the Levant in both the Iron and Bronze Ages suggest that kingship in Phoenicia too is likely to have been similar in essentials to that in cities such as Ugarit. That being the case, and given how fundamental the sacerdotal role was to LBA royal practice there, it seems more likely that the apparent increase in this function in Phoenicia between the second and first millennia is an illusion based on the frequency and nature of our sources rather than a genuine change in the role of the monarch.

The shifts in élite identity which this thesis has suggested, should not, then, be seen as having driven some fundamental restructuring of political organisation in Phoenicia. The growing emphasis during the Iron Age on the identification of particular deities with specific polities, and the apparently close relationship between these deities and the monarchs, may indicate a trend towards stronger use of religion in the differentiation of civic identities and the implications for this process in royal identities and legitimation strategies. This phenomenon seems grounded in the processes we have already observed during the LBA/EIA transition of the disruption to LBA modes of materialising éliteneſs through foreign contacts and exotica, especially Aegyptiaca, and increasing emphasis on the (relatively) local. But it was not a deliberate or short term ‘reform’; nor did it represent any significant innovation or break in kind from the political practice of the LBA. Existing structures and practices were largely reproduced, and where there were adaptations of changes of emphasis, these were developments of long-standing traditions and ideologies.

Conclusion: Social Change in Phoenicia in the LBA/EIA Transition

The key aims of this thesis, as laid out in Chapter 1, were both explanatory and methodological. In the first case, my objective was to explore the dynamics of social change in the case-study region of Phoenicia between the thirteenth and tenth centuries, and to integrate these observations into the wider regional picture of the end of the East Mediterranean Late Bronze Age and the transition into the Iron Age. The second aim was to highlight some of the important methodological issues inherent in the study of extremely data-poor historical areas and periods in general, and the EIA Levant in particular. The approach I have adopted in the preceding chapters addresses these problems and lays out an alternative which, although by no means eliminating the numerous ambiguities and gaps in our knowledge, at least allows us to be clearer about where these gaps are and how they may best be remedied.

Chapters 2 to 5 examined in turn disparate aspects of Phoenician society, practice and culture: responses to the ostensible activities of external societies in the region; the changing nature of economy and subsistence; the emergent commercial expansion into the Mediterranean, and changing structures of politics and religion. It was consistently stressed that these areas of practice are not self-contained social ‘subsystems’ which can be understood in isolation; nor is any one to be regarded as more ‘fundamental’ than the others. The model of social change followed here instead sees all such social structures as existing only inasmuch as they are enacted, reproduced or transformed through human activity, which in turn is structured by the existing socio-cultural *habitus* within which it takes place. Consequently, it is only by considering all areas of practice together – the whole *habitus* in relation to which human action took place – that we can properly understand the processes of reproduction and transformation which comprise social change at this time.

This process of integration and final interpretation forms the core of this final chapter. I do not presume to boil down social change in Phoenicia at this time to a definitive description or

simple explanation – that would be difficult enough for a contemporary situation where, at least in theory, information is abundant. For a proto-historic case-study such as this, where the available evidence permits only a very partial reconstruction of the overall social context, we can never hope to disentangle all the dynamics and factors which contributed to changing patterns of human practice. Nevertheless, as I hope is already apparent, and as this chapter aims to highlight more clearly, there are a number of trends and patterns which do emerge, which help contribute towards a clearer understanding of Phoenicia at this time, and of its place within the East Mediterranean region as a whole.

This wider perspective is this chapter's second key focus. Various connections with other societies and areas within the region have, of course, arisen throughout the preceding discussion. My intention here is to draw these strands together and to show how the key themes synthesised in this conclusion relate to similar processes elsewhere in the region. By placing the case-study firmly in its regional context, and clearly demonstrating where social change there resembles that in other areas, and where it differs, we not only gain a better sense of the Phoenician situation; we enhance and nuance our ability to understand the LBA/EIA transition at a regional level.

Methodological Conclusions

The methodological observations made throughout this thesis are disparate and relatively numerous, but generally fall within two broad categories. The first concerns how we approach evidence and the kind of inferences and interpretations we attempt to construct from it. The second relates to how we deal with heterogeneity: how we conceptualise similarity and difference and how we integrate diverse localities and scales of investigation.

It was argued in Chapter 1 that there remains a major imbalance in how scholars of much of the Eastern Mediterranean approach evidence. The limitations and lacunae of the material record are widely recognised, but, especially among Near Eastern historians, the 'incubus of literary preconception'¹ continues to weigh heavy on scholarship. Throughout this dissertation it has been readily apparent that conventional interpretations often drastically outstrip the corroborative ability of a sparse material record. The sweeping migrations of the 'Sea Peoples',

¹ Whitley 2002, 217, referring to Aegeanists' attempts to rid themselves of the spectre of Homer.

discussed in Chapter 2, are a key example. Their alleged passage *en masse* through the Levant towards the ‘promised land’ of Philistia is extrapolated from a few oblique references in Egyptian texts, a small feature of a single pictorial relief and Biblical traditions regarding the Philistines’ supposed Caphtorite origins. Sea People presence in southern Phoenicia, implied by this widely-believed southwards march and far-too-credulous readings of *Wen-Amon*, is stubbornly reiterated by many despite the lack of any convincing archaeological evidence.²

Chapter 3 dealt with the hypothesis that Iron Age Phoenicia was dominated by decentralised ‘merchant aristocracies’, based largely on a single line of Ezekiel and few tendentious readings of Aristotle. In Chapter 4, an uncritical and overly literal reading of the Bible was credited with the Tyro-centrism of much of Phoenician study, and especially with the idea – almost entirely without archaeological foundation – that during the eleventh and tenth centuries that city launched a military and political expansion into the ‘Akko Plain. The taken-for-granted assumption of Tyrian dominance of Phoenician Mediterranean expansion was also questioned. In both Chapters 4 and 5, I took issue with the readiness of most scholars to treat Josephus’ histories as reliable records of early Phoenician history, despite the many anomalies and inconsistencies apparent within them, and our inability to verify a great many of the claims he makes.

Besides these issues dealt with in depth, others – no less important in their own rights but of rather more marginal significance to Phoenicia – have also had a bearing: the historicity of the Israelite United Monarchy and its fundamental entanglement in traditional chronologies of Israel-Palestine; the question of how ‘Israel’ itself emerged in the EIA, whether through Exodus, social dislocation or revolution; the Helleno-centrism born from Classical literature’s traditionally privileged position at the heart of Western intellectualism, from which has emerged the unproductive Phoenicians *vs.* Euboeans debate.³

The gulf, highlighted again and again throughout this dissertation, between textually-derived traditional narratives and what can be inferred from the archaeological record amply justifies my decision to adopt a far more questioning approach to documentary evidence. I do not deny the importance of texts in contributing to our understanding, but we must approach them questioningly and as part of a wider investigation into the full range of evidence available. Consequently, I prefer primary, contemporary sources such as the Amarna Letters or the records

² e.g. Stern 2000; Gilboa 2005.

³ e.g. Crielaard 1992; Coldstream 1998; Niemeyer 2004, 2006a; Boardman 2006b.

of Ugarit to the myth-historical accounts of much later writers. As much as possible, I have attempted to use these in close conjunction with archaeological material, noting where they offer mutual support and where they do not. This process is essential if the historiography of this period is to avoid the fate of simply being the repetition of comforting traditional stories in updated forms. Only by utilising textual, archaeological and other sources of information in conjunction, can we create interpretations and hypotheses with genuine explanatory power.

The advantages of such an approach were clearly demonstrated in Chapter 2, where I stressed the differences between the Phoenician and southern Levantine experiences of Egyptian influence in the LBA and proposed a new, more subtle interpretation which places greater emphasis on Phoenician as well as Egyptian agency. The role of élite legitimisation strategies on both sides was seen as the driving force in creating, maintaining, and eventually transforming the relationship between the societies. This more ideological, strategic, instrumental view of Phoenician élite engagement with regional powers proves key to the central conclusions of this dissertation, as discussed below.

The corollary to this more balanced approach to evidence is that the nature of the interpretations offered cannot remain the same. This is not just a matter of recognising that in many cases we can no longer aim to tell the kinds of *histoire événementielle* which the privileging of textual narratives encourages. Indeed, while this remains a strong element in the scholarship, particularly in the Levant, it would be extremely misleading to suggest that the kinds of question-based, thematic research typical of wider archaeology do not also take place there. The move away from narrative histories is already well underway in places, but in many others they remain sufficiently firmly entrenched that it is still necessary to argue against them. Even more important is that we recognise that the explanations we *can* offer are limited. We must avoid the tendency, evident in many traditional narratives, to elaborate interpretations far beyond what the scarce and ambiguous evidence – whether textual or archaeological – can support. If we do this, we create not explanations but houses of cards, lent the appearance of solidity by the familiarity of constant repetition but often based on extremely unstable foundations. As I have repeatedly argued over the preceding chapters, perhaps most explicitly in Chapter 5, scanty archaeological and textual records of the kind we have in Phoenicia very often allow only for ambiguous, partial and limited interpretations. Counter-intuitive as it may seem, it is essential that we embrace this and do not

push the evidence further than it can go. Only by recognising where the gaps in our knowledge are can we address them effectively.

The second main set of methodological observations I want to draw out relate to the importance of dealing effectively with heterogeneity while still integrating it into a coherent overall picture. Previous scholarship has hardly been ignorant of the social diversity of the East Mediterranean during the LBA/EIA transition, nor of the fact that this diversity was integrated within a regional network of interconnections which means that no one element can be understood in isolation. As Chapter 3 pointed out, the proliferation of world-systems perspectives as a framework for analysing these interconnections is testament to the extent to which scholarship has embraced the idea of integrated diversity.

Nevertheless, there are still areas of weakness in how some parts of academia approach these issues. First is the continuing currency of essentialist and normative approaches to identity, which treat it – especially when framed as ‘ethnicity’ (though often not conforming to the usual theoretical definition of that term laid out in Chapter 1) – as an inherent property of a given person or group, which can be readily recovered from a checklist of material culture or practice. This was particularly evident in Chapter 2’s discussion of the ‘Sea Peoples’, but the issue recurred throughout this dissertation: it is this overly bounded and rigid view of social identity and difference which informs the efforts to distinguish a ‘Phoenician’ incursion into the ‘Akko Plain, or which simplistically attempts to map Phoenician or Euboean commercial and ‘colonial’ expansion through the distribution of their pottery. In short, the idea that pots equal people, while roundly problematised in much of archaeology, remains an important one in the Levant and East Mediterranean.

When we reject this approach and instead treat social identity as variable, plural and discursive, the picture which emerges is far more ambiguous but considerably more interesting. A repeated observation throughout this thesis, as this chapter will proceed to clarify, has been how changing contacts, circumstances and events can transform the practice of social identities, and how this can in turn prompt wider social change. Instead of seeing the East Mediterranean in terms of grand migrations and invasions of bounded social (‘ethnic’) groups, by approaching it as a time of flux in how people perceived, constructed and enacted their identities, we are able to present a picture which is not only more consistent with current theoretical perspectives, but also places a much greater emphasis on human agency. The Levant ceases to be merely a passive

region transformed by the withdrawal of Egypt or the incursion of ‘Sea Peoples’; Phoenicia is no longer defined as just a negative space where the processes affecting the rest of the Levant for some reason failed to occur. Instead, this approach grants indigenous populations – and diverse social groups within them – an active role in the social transformations which take place. This is essential if we follow the definition of social change presented in Chapter 1.

While the conceptualisation of social difference has been too rigid and absolute, this has, however, often not been reflected in diversity and heterogeneity of the narrative frameworks and hypotheses proposed. Bound up in the points made above about the privileging of textual evidence is the fact that areas like Phoenicia continue to be approached, to a very great extent, from the perspective of their neighbours. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, the frameworks within which much of the Levant is generally understood were largely generalised from Israel-Palestine. The multiple meanings of ‘Canaan’ stand emblematic of the wider problem: on the one hand it is accepted to mean much of the Levant, at least as far as Ugarit; on the other, it is treated in practical terms as synonymous with ‘Israel-Palestine’. The latter thus comes to stand for the former, and, almost accidentally, Palestinian interpretations are assumed to have wider applicability. Needless to say, this has much to do with the fact that Israeli archaeologists have been among the most active and influential in shaping the field, but are unable to work in Syria or Lebanon.

Of course, it may well be the case that what is true of one region also applies to its neighbours, but this judgement must begin with the evidence. There should be no doubt by this stage that the Phoenician evidence strongly indicates that social change there did not occur in the same way as in the southern Levant. Chapter 2 argued this particularly strongly, stressing the differences in LBA interaction with Egypt and the uselessness of the ‘Sea People’ paradigm for understanding the Phoenician situation. In Chapter 3 it was pointed out that the social dislocations and rising inequalities which seem to have characterised Palestine, and perhaps also Syria, are considerably less apparent in Phoenicia.

We cannot try to account for heterogeneity by creating a broad narrative framework based mainly on one area – usually through texts – and then using it to structure the ambiguous and scarce evidence from another. This is not to say that we should not attempt to identify overarching phenomena and processes working across the region – on the contrary, I have made clear that this is one of the central aims of this thesis – but this process should be comparative,

not generalising. It should be based on examining evidence clearly and without preconception from the ground up, not imposing a top-down model to unify disparate data. Once again, my point is that evidence should be analysed and interpreted independently, not as a secondary concern to support or undermine a narrative framework which has already been fundamentally decided upon.

Social Change in Phoenicia

I turn now to the central element of this conclusion: the synthesis of the various threads and observations made in the previous four chapters to present an overall discussion of social change in Phoenicia. The key area I wish to focus on is identity- and status-negotiation, particularly among élites. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the practice of identity is inherently discursive: it consists in enacting and redefining a person or collectivity's place within the social context. Identity is relational: it is always constructed in comparison to others. As was apparent in Chapter 1, the theory of identity is the theory of social change. Not all social change involves identity, but all change in identity is social change. The question is how, and to what extent, it is connected to wider changes in other areas of social organisation.

Chapter 2 argued that Phoenician relations with Egypt should be seen in these terms. Apart from the occasional disruption of Egyptian armies passing through the area on their way north to act out their military competition with their rivals, Egypt's direct impact on the majority of Phoenicians was probably extremely minor. At the end of the Late Bronze Age, there was no 'Egyptian withdrawal' in any sense meaningful for most of the Phoenician population. The one social segment which did engage with Egypt to a significant extent was the élite. The Egyptians were not 'present' as a level of hierarchical administration, but there was a discourse of vassalage, in which Egyptianising practices and especially material culture were utilised by indigenous élites to signify engagement as part of the network of international diplomacy and trade. Undoubtedly the extent varied from place to place. There is reason to believe Byblos had particularly close links, but Aegyptiaca also occur in Kamid el-Loz.

It is critical that we understand this emulation as strategic and active, serving local Phoenician socio-political ends. It was not an automatic consequence of Egyptian power or inherent superiority. Consequently, when Egypt turned inwards as a result of the political

weakness and instability which led into the Third Intermediate Period, its prestige on the world stage diminished. In Phoenicia this is apparent in a marked turn away from the trappings and discourses of Egyptian culture. For a short time in the twelfth and eleventh centuries, the élites seem not to have known how to express and maintain their status identity. There is no clear form of high-status display. As Chapter 5 argued, the evidence for change in political institutions and the extent of their powers is equivocal. It would not be a surprise if this lacuna in élite legitimation was associated with challenges to existing institutions themselves – if legitimation did not play an important role in bolstering and reproducing the status of élites there would be no point doing it – but there is little concrete evidence for such instability. Whatever upheavals did occur seem to have been markedly less severe than in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, since the political organisation of the Iron Age very much follows the traditional structures of the LBA. For all the ambiguities of the evidence, Chapter 5 shows that almost every institution and ideological feature of Phoenician Iron Age politics was firmly grounded in the LBA.

When clear high-status display re-emerged in Phoenicia during the late eleventh and tenth centuries, a clear change is apparent in its form. While Aegyptiaca eventually did reappear at the end of the tenth and in the ninth centuries, the discourse of vassalage which characterised the LBA interactions of the Amarna Letters apparently did not. Instead, the most prominent aspect of EIA Phoenician élite display is their engagement with the same kinds of warrior identities which were gaining significance elsewhere in the East Mediterranean, as Chapter 4 discussed. Although this seems to have emerged and spread in the commercial networks of the time, it was not homogeneous, and in Phoenicia the use of material imported from overseas in conspicuous, ideologically-charged displays such as funerary rites seems to be significantly less than was the case either in the LBA or in the EIA Aegean. Chapter 2 highlighted the presence of North Syrian influence in Phoenician display of this period, such as the decoration of the sarcophagus of Ahiiram or the design of the chamber tombs at Achziv. This presages the closer cultural and economic ties between the Phoenician polities and the north of the ninth and eighth centuries, evident in the hybridising iconography of the Bir-Hadad Stele or the Nimrud ivories, or the use of Phoenician script in the inscriptions at Zincirli and Karatepe.

As would be expected, given that the utilisation of Egyptian material culture and practice seems to have been an élite phenomenon, the flux in identities among the wider population does not take an identical form. Nevertheless, certain similarities are apparent. Egyptian material

culture was never widespread in Phoenicia's pit-cemeteries or residential areas, but that does not mean exotica were unknown during the LBA. On the contrary, at Dakerman, as we saw in Chapter 2, imported Cypriot and Aegean pottery accounts for a significant proportion of the funerary assemblage. Like the highest social strata, the people of southern Phoenicia in the LBA seem to have wanted to express their connectedness to the regional trading networks by using, and being buried with, exotica.

The change in preference for Levantine rather than exotic material culture may represent a growing emphasis on Levantine distinctiveness in place of its sublimation to an overarching 'international spirit'. This particularisation is echoed in other aspects of culture and practice too, such as the ongoing differentiation of the Phoenician language and script from those of their neighbours, or the gradual divergence of the old Canaanite religion in different parts of the Levant.

We should not overstate the extent of this process: 'local' is, of course, a relative concept, and it is hard to know whether people of the time would have recognised, for example, North Syrian iconographic motifs as more 'Levantine' than their Egyptianising predecessors (although, as Chapter 4 noted, 'Phoenician' as used by the Greeks encompasses North Syrian as well as properly Phoenician items, suggesting that *they* at least saw a unity between them). In the southern Levant, scholars often see this period as one of 'ethnogenesis', with the distinct socio-political and ideological entity of Israel apparently crystallising amid the profound social and ideological upheavals. If there was a greater sense of locality in Phoenicia, it was nowhere near as sharply-defined.

Unlike 'Israel' there is nothing to suggest the word 'Phoenicia' began to be used for the first time in this period (on the contrary, it seems to appear in Linear B, although whether it is an ethnonym there is unclear), while the use of the generic term 'Sidonian' to denote any inhabitant of southern Phoenicia does not seem to be adopted by the Phoenicians themselves (or more precisely, the Tyrians) until some centuries later. Similarly, while it is common to see the beginning of the Iron Age as heralding a significant transformation in Phoenician religious practice, characterised by the closer identification of specific deities with individual civic identity, Chapter 5 showed that the situation is rather more ambiguous and cannot be firmly pinned down to the EIA. The characteristic dyads at the head of civic pantheons were a feature firmly established in the LBA. The more diverse choice of deities – Melqart and Eshmun apparently

supplanting the storm-god Ba'al as the primary civic deities and consort of 'Aštarte at Tyre and Sidon – represents a genuine change, but one that probably occurred gradually over many centuries beginning in the LBA and continuing well into the Iron Age. We might draw comparisons with similar processes elsewhere in the Levant, specifically with the very long period it took for Yahweh to become established as the main god and focus for identity in Israel.

We should therefore distinguish between two distinct processes taking place on different time-scales. There is an initial reaction to the reduction of Egyptian prestige and the plummeting cultural capital of the old trade and diplomatic networks which, as well as prompting new forms of cultural interaction of which the Phoenician commercial expansion is an example, manifested especially among élites but also in the wider population as a tendency to look more towards Levantine sources in the creation and negotiation of status and identity. This process was relatively short-lived, however. By early in the second phase of the Iron Age, from the end of the tenth and early ninth centuries, we see the return of Aegyptiaca in high-status display and the increasing presence of Aegean and Cypriot imports in the Phoenician cities.

The development of the civic deities, the on-going linguistic differentiation and the eventual adoption by some Phoenicians of the foreign collective term 'Sidonian' belong to a different, longer-term process which, while probably not to be termed an 'ethnogenesis', nevertheless seems to involve the increasing sense of the individual identity of both 'Phoenicia' as a whole and the cities which comprise it. This process is not unconnected to the shorter-term introversion following the end of the LBA. But while one is a phenomenon closely associated with the EIA, the other is an on-going trend of the Iron Age as a whole, and one which never culminates in the establishment of a single, unified 'Phoenician' identity.

These, then, are the key areas of social transformation which are apparent in the Phoenician evidence. We should not, however, ignore the many areas in which social structures and practice were not transformed, or were reproduced with only minor changes. I have already mentioned the continuity of political institutions and ideologies, as well as the general persistence of the fundamental framework of religious practice. Within the field of social identities too, there are aspects of funerary practice which point towards continuity.

The small, problematic, samples at Dakerman and Khaldé make any genuine statistical analysis impossible, but the patterns which emerge do raise possibilities even if they do not permit firm conclusions. Burial orientation in particular seems to hint at some interesting aspects of

continuity in social groupings between the LBA and EIA. Among the pit-graves, great variety of grave orientation is characteristic, but at both Khaldé and Dakerman certain orientations are particularly popular. Although the specific directions differ between the sites, the proportion of the population buried in the first-, second-, third- and fourth-most-popular orientations are very similar:

Khaldé		Dakerman	
58%	N-S	53%	E-W
20%	W-E	18%	N-S
15%	E-W	12%	S-N
7%	S-N	6%	W-E
		12%	Other
(178 graves)		(17 graves)	

Table 6.1. *Pit-grave orientations at Khaldé and Dakerman.*

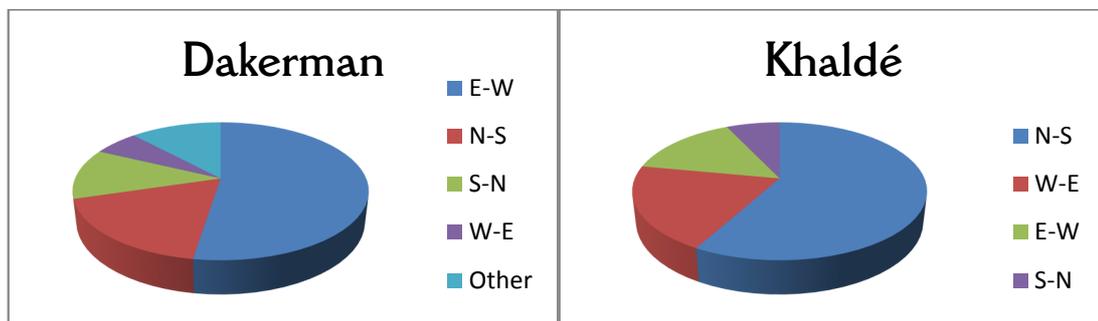


Fig. 6.1. *Broad similarity in pit-grave orientations at Dakerman and Khaldé.*

With such small data-sets, it is hard to know whether this represents anything more than a coincidence, especially since it is clear that the proportions of similar size in no case correspond to the same orientation at each site.⁴ It is important to note that the information for Khaldé cannot be narrowed down to merely the EIA. The site was in use from the tenth century to the seventh, and Saidah does not provide a breakdown of figures or comprehensive description of

⁴ At Dakerman, there may be an indication of a chronological dimension: E-W burials in particular seem particularly common in earlier periods, with variation increasing later in the LBA.

burials which would allow us to restrict our analysis to just the EIA data. Furthermore, these proportions relate only to the tombs discussed in the 1966 preliminary report, that is, 178 out of the 420 eventually discovered.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible that these similarities might point towards the existence of certain population groups which preferred particular orientations and that these groups constituted similar proportions of the overall pit-grave population at both Khaldé and Dakerman. There is little evidence which would allow a more conclusive or specific statement than that: no correlation was apparent between orientation and variation in body treatment, grave goods or any other feature which might allow us to identify the basis for the grouping or pinpoint the significance of the particular orientations (topographic features perhaps?). Although far more detailed data would be necessary before this could become anything other than an interesting pattern, to some extent at least it emphasises that not all segments of Phoenician society are likely to have seen major changes in how they perceived and expressed themselves.

Further signs of the reproduction of the LBA state of affairs are apparent in economic practice, and it is here that we can best approach an explanation for why some aspects of Phoenician society and culture were transformed while others were not, as well as why social change in Phoenicia appears to have progressed rather differently from in the bordering regions of Syria and Palestine.

Despite the conventional interpretation that the end of the LBA witnessed a substantial decentralisation and 'privatisation' of economic practice in the East Mediterranean, Chapter 3 makes clear that the Phoenician evidence offers little scope to be interpreted in such terms. Private entrepreneurship was likely intertwined with the activity of the political administration in both the LBA and the EIA. The Phoenician evidence is not sufficiently detailed to allow the identification of subtle changes in the balance between them, and the overwhelming sense is that the EIA economy functioned along very similar lines to its LBA precursor. This is evident not just in trade – the economic area most focused on by East Mediterranean archaeologists – but in subsistence and agriculture. As far as we are able to determine from the admittedly very patchy and inadequate data, Phoenicia remained well able to support its likely population through agriculture, but its people probably eschewed such labour-intensive work for the convenience of the large-scale importation of grain and other staples. If we are correct in this hypothesis, this may have contributed to the absence in Phoenicia of some of the more dramatic social changes seen in

other parts of the East Mediterranean. If people were used to relying on imports of staples organised by the élites and conducted through the coastal port cities, this would have served as a strong disincentive either to the removal of those élites or secession from their control by moving away from the cities. The lack of any attractive place to move *to* – the Phoenician interior being considerably more mountainous than its Palestinian counterpart – would probably have further compounded this tendency to stick with the old ways.

The picture which therefore emerges of social change in Phoenicia in the transition of the LBA to EIA is one which, as would be expected from the model of social change expounded in Chapter 1, emerges partly from human agency, but partly from the constraints of the geopolitical situation, economy and environment. The changes in identity which I have suggested were prompted by external events: the political fortunes of Egypt and the disintegration of the LBA regional networks. This does not mean that Phoenicia was passively changed from without. On the contrary, it was the strategies and material culture preferences of the Phoenician people which had led to them being involved in these networks in the first place. Moreover, how the polities responded was not dictated either by outside invasion or the constraints of geography, but by active choices about how to form new models of identity. While these choices fit well within our understanding of the changes taking place in the wider East Mediterranean at this time, they were nonetheless particular to Phoenicia, and – if we had enough evidence – would doubtless show variations from one polity to another.

Contrary to the impression given by some accounts, however, the end of the Late Bronze Age world order did not free up boundless possibilities for Phoenician agency. While it was not a straitjacket, their geographical situation did constrain them and make certain courses of action more desirable than others. As Chapter 4 argued, some foreign societies – most notably Cyprus – played a very significant role in shaping social change on Phoenicia, just as the Phoenician polities did there. While there may have been more of a trend towards the local and Levantine in Phoenician display, social change in the region never occurs in isolation. Even in the Dark Ages of the LBA/EIA transition, it remains profoundly bound up in the reflexive interconnections of the regional context.

Phoenicia in Wider Perspective

From the outset, one of the key aims of this thesis has been the clearer integration of Phoenicia into the events of the end of the LBA across the Eastern Mediterranean. We cannot hope that the relatively meagre and ambiguous evidence from Phoenicia will wholly transform the big picture, or that it will ‘solve’ the enduring mysteries of the processes of social change at this time. But the observations we have made concerning Phoenicia clearly do fit within a larger context and shed new light on this situation.

Firstly, the discussions presented here add support to those hypotheses which approach the end of the Bronze Age less in terms of violent ‘collapses’ wrought at the hands of intruders, and more about change as resulting from active choices made by the local inhabitants – or some of them at least. Sherratt’s attempts to understand the Sea People phenomenon through markets and trade patterns was discussed at length in Chapter 3, and while I had reservations about whether some elements of her approach could productively be applied to Phoenicia, the attempt to break free of the invasions-and-migrations paradigm is one my work clearly supports.

Another important parallel comes in Hittite Anatolia. The traditional explanation for the end of the Hittite Empire centres about the violent destruction of Ḫattuša at the hands of attackers, either Sea Peoples or Kaška, in a single, violent event. Following recent excavations at the site, this narrative has been substantially revised. Seeher has suggested that many areas of the city seem to have been abandoned and partly derelict before the destruction occurred. He proposes a gradual departure of the higher social strata and much of the supporting military and administrative infrastructure after the city lost its status as the imperial capital, leaving the remainder under-occupied and under-defended. Enemy action cannot be entirely discounted, but it is not confirmed, and the city’s eventual destruction could just as easily be due to natural fires, poor upkeep or the actions of its impoverished remaining population.⁵

If Seeher’s theory is correct then the disintegration of the Hittite Empire should be approached not through the conventional narrative of the Sea People migrations and invasions, but with rather more emphasis on the agency of the local populations. As in Phoenicia, the

⁵ Seeher 2001; Genz 2003.

choices of high-status groups and their efforts to adapt their practice in order to maintain their status in a changing world are key to driving wider social change.

The specific changes in identity we have observed in Phoenicia are not closely paralleled within the (neo-)Hittite élite, but they do resemble processes in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean. Chapter 4 discussed some of the resonances between Phoenician élite identities of the EIA and the emerging warrior élites of Cyprus and Euboea. The antiques, drinking krater and abundance of weapons at Achziv are very similar in kind, if not in precise detail, to the sort of funerary assemblages we get at Lefkandi and Palaepaphos. As Crielaard has suggested,⁶ this may in part have been due to the similarities of social conditions at all three sites, but these should not be overstated. Substantial differences exist between them. The effects of the end of the LBA in Greece were more severe, with great diversity between regions: some areas suffered swingeing depopulation while others became more populous. It seems likely that entire levels of the administrative hierarchy were removed, although Mycenaean material culture persisted for some time beyond this political disintegration. Euboea was not among the worst-affected parts of Greece, but the point nevertheless remains that these upheavals seem far more dramatic than what we have seen in Phoenicia. In Cyprus, it seems that there was significant instability at the end of LC III, but even so, it was not on the scale of the discontinuity affecting Greece and many elements of Bronze Age Cypriot culture continued into the Iron Age.

While there were parallels, then, we should not overestimate the extent of similarities in the situations in these parts of the Aegean. Instead, it seems far more likely that Crielaard is right in his idea that a new concept of éliteness was spreading through the trade links between these societies. His study and others have emphasised the parallels between Cyprus and Lefkandi. Phoenicia must be added to these, and perhaps Philistia too, if we interpret its drinking and feasting paraphernalia and weapons as a result of emulation and choice as much as (or more than) the presence of immigrant Mycenaeans. The development of warrior ideology in the Levant would be a fruitful topic for further investigation. Similar phenomena are also apparent in the western Mediterranean around this time, a symptom of ever-increasing Mediterranean interconnectedness.

As we have seen, part of this new form of éliteness is the turn towards more local – or at least less ‘global’ – forms of display and material culture. The processes of more strongly-

⁶ Crielaard 1998.

articulated local distinctiveness outlined above are far from unique to Phoenicia at this time. I have already alluded to the ‘ethnogenesis’ of Israel, and we might also mention the cases of Beycesultan and Aphrodisias in Anatolia, where Mac Sweeney has identified the growth of community-based forms of identity in the EIA,⁷ or Crete, where Wallace has proposed that the EIA saw the emergence of new forms of identity centred around communities and which drew heavily on the visible remains of the Bronze Age past.⁸

Paradoxically perhaps, this notion of ‘localism’ itself seems to have spread along the interconnections between societies. It has been argued that Phoenicia itself – undergoing this change of focus relatively early – acted as a stimulus to other East Mediterranean societies in this regard. Joffe, for example, has proposed that Phoenicia acted as a ‘core’ of secondary state-formation, serving as a model for similar processes in the ‘periphery’, notably in Israel.⁹ We probably should not put this in terms of ‘state-formation’, secondary or otherwise, since I have in this thesis criticised both the category of ‘the state’ and the idea that the existing political structures of the Levant collapsed at the end of the LBA and needed to be re-formed. The notion that ideas of how identity can be constructed should spread between neighbouring societies is, however, a good one. Indeed, it is a natural consequence of assuming that identities are constructed in relation to others. If one’s neighbour begins defining himself in a particular way relative to you, it is a logical consequence that this has implications for how he defines you and, in all likelihood, how you define yourself.

Sherratt proposes a comparable process in the Aegean and Cyprus, suggesting that Phoenician westwards expansion, beginning in the EIA and becoming more pronounced in the ninth and eighth centuries, helped trigger a Greek ethnogenesis predicated around language, and in particular on the visual ‘Greekness’ or otherwise of language embodied in script.¹⁰ Phoenician interests on Cyprus, she argues, contributed to competition and differentiation of identity between the various centres there. For the most part, this process belongs later in the Iron Age than the period under discussion here, but its origins lie in the processes discussed in this thesis, especially in Chapter 4.

⁷ Mac Sweeney 2007.

⁸ Wallace 2003.

⁹ Joffe 2002.

¹⁰ Sherratt 2003b.

If, as Chapter 1 suggested, discursive identity emerges when previously doxic forms of practice are transformed by encounters with others, then it is only to be expected that the closely interconnected world of the LBA would have had profound effects on how people perceived and constructed their own social identities. By the same token, the reduction of these interconnections and, more importantly, the declining prestige attached to them, and the societies which had dominated them, must necessarily have had significant effects on these identities.

These processes of social change in Phoenicia and the wider East Mediterranean find parallels in discussions of globalisation in the modern world, a connection which has become increasingly widespread both implicitly and explicitly in the scholarship of the last two decades. The idea of an interconnected Mediterranean ‘world’, united but also characterised by its diversity, has grown in currency in the wake of contributions such as Horden and Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea*.¹¹ These notions are particularly apposite for understanding the end of the LBA, as is demonstrated by the proliferation, as Chapter 3 discussed, of world-systems approaches originally designed to understand the emergence of the modern globalised world as one of the most widespread frameworks for investigating the period. Some scholars have explicitly used the terminology and theory of ‘globalisation’ as the basis for their interpretations.¹²

Modern globalisation theory stresses that an emergent emphasis on local or regional diversity often occurs alongside ideologies which valorise large-scale interconnectedness, especially when such ideologies have reached a mature stage of their development, as was the case at the end of the LBA. The ‘localising’ and ‘globalising’ impulses are not necessarily in opposition – indeed, the ugly neologism ‘glocalisation’ has been coined to describe the way they can intersect and reinforce each other – but it is also true that attempts to ‘recapture’, or rather create, the ‘original’, ‘authentic’ or distinctive in a certain place often occur as a response to what may be perceived as a stifling homogenisation of culture and practice.¹³ This is precisely what we have in LBA/EIA Phoenicia and in the other parts of the East Mediterranean discussed.

¹¹ Horden & Purcell 2000. See also Morris 2003.

¹² e.g. Sherratt 2003a; Ekholm-Friedman 2005.

¹³ Caldwell & Lozada 2007, and other contributions to Ritzer (ed.) 2007. In the modern world, in which the onward march of globalisation looks increasingly unassailable, this resurgence of differentiation of identities, often with a strong connection to place, is clearly apparent, manifesting itself in such diverse forms as growing nationalism, the resurgence of socially- and politically-engaged religion or the exhortations of the food industry for customers to

Just as there is a dialectic between human agency and the structuring effect of context and contingency, there should be a dialectic between diverse particular cases and larger patterns and tendencies of social change. This thesis has aimed to show that the problematic process of negotiating these different levels of analysis, of working with both the local and the larger-scale, is not only essential to understanding the LBA/EIA transition in the East Mediterranean, it was an important challenge which faced the people undergoing the transition itself. The changes in identity which are the central form of social change evident in the textual and archaeological record should be understood in just these terms. The methodological and interpretative conclusions of this discussion thus converge, providing, I hope, a synthesis which casts new illumination on the specific case-study of Phoenicia and the wider challenges we face in approaching questions of this kind.

favour locally-sourced produce. See also, for example, Hines 2000 for a political attempt to harness the discourse of 'localisation' in opposition to modern globalisation, or Friedman 1998 who draws parallels between the modern situation and the proliferation of more specific forms of identity towards the end of the Hellenistic period and the Roman Empire.

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AJA – American Journal of Archaeology
AHL – Archaeology and History in the Lebanon
ANES – Ancient Near Eastern Studies
AOAT – Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ÄUL – Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant
AWE – Ancient West & East
BAAL – Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises
BAR – British Archaeological Reports
BASOR – Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BCH – Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
BMB – Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth
CAJ – Cambridge Archaeological Journal
ICAANE – International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East
JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society
JHS – Journal of Hellenic Studies
JMA – Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies
OJA – Oxford Journal of Archaeology
RSO – Ras Shamra-Ougarit
UF – Ugarit-Forschungen

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