

## The Phoenicians

### Their cities, kings, culture, achievements and contributions to civilization

Edited By: R. A. Guisepi



More than 2,500 years ago Phoenician mariners sailed to Mediterranean and southwestern European ports. The Phoenicians were the great merchants of ancient times. They sold rich treasures from many lands.

These Phoenicians (the Canaanites, or Sidonians, of the Bible) were Semitic people. Their country was a narrow strip of the Mediterranean coast, about 160 miles (260 kilometers) long and 20 miles (32 kilometers) wide. The area now comprises Lebanon and parts of Syria and Israel. Their territory was so small that the Phoenicians were forced to turn to the sea for a living. They became the most skillful shipbuilders and navigators of their time. They worked the silver mines of Spain, passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, and founded the city of Cadiz on the southern coast of Spain. They sailed to the British Isles for tin and may have ventured around southern Africa. They founded many colonies, the greatest being Carthage.

The Phoenicians began to develop as a seafaring, manufacturing, and trading nation when the Cretans--the first masters of the Mediterranean--were overthrown by the Greeks. Not only did they take the fine wares of the Eastern nations to the Western barbarians, but they also became skilled in making such wares themselves especially metalwork, glass, and cloth. From the murex, they obtained a crimson dye called Tyrian purple. This was so costly that only kings and wealthy nobles could afford garments dyed with it.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Phoenicians was a syllabic writing, developed in about 1000 BC at Byblos. From this city's name come the Greek word *biblia* (books) and the English word Bible. This form of writing was spread by the Phoenicians in their travels and influenced the Aramaic and Greek alphabets.

There were two great cities of Phoenicia--Sidon, the center of the glass industry, and Tyre, the center of the purple-dye industry. In the middle of the 10th century BC, Tyre assumed the leadership of all Phoenicia. Friendly relations were established with the Hebrews, and King Solomon sent to King Hiram of Tyre not only for materials but also for skilled workmen to build the temple.

The Phoenicians supplied the great Persian fleets with which Darius and Xerxes attacked Greece. Usually they submitted readily to foreign conquerors and paid tribute. In return they were allowed to pursue their commercial enterprises as they liked. Alexander the Great took Tyre in 332 BC, after one of the greatest sieges of history. In 64 BC Phoenicia came under the control of the Romans.

The chief divinities of the Phoenician religion were the god Baal and the goddess Astarte, or Ashtoreth. In times of great distress human sacrifices were offered to the god Moloch.

Today the small island on which Tyre once stood is connected with the mainland by a broad tongue of land. It grew out of the causeway built during Alexander's siege. The town is called Sur in Arabic.

The Phoenicians of the Iron Age (first millennium B.C.) descended from the original Canaanites who dwelt in the region during the earlier Bronze Age (3000-1200 H.C.), despite classical tradition to the contrary. There is archaeological evidence for a continuous cultural tradition from the Bronze to the Iron Age (1200 -333 s.c.) at the cities of Tyre and Z araphath. In the Amarna age (fourteenth century B.C.) many letters to Egypt emanated from King Rib-Addi of Byblos, King Abi-Milki of Tyre, and King Zimrida of Sidon, and in other New Kingdom Egyptian texts there are references to the cities of Beirut Sidon, Zaraphath, Ushu, Tyre, and Byblos. Additionally there is a thirteenth-century B.C. letter from the king of Tyre to Ugarit, and a Ugaritic inscription has turned up at Zaraphath. Despite these facts showing that the coastal cities were occupied without interruption or change in population, the term "Phoenician" is now normally applied to them in the Iron Age (beginning about the twelfth century B.C.) onward when the traits that characterize Phoenician culture evolved: long-distance seafaring, trade and colonization, and distinctive elements of their material culture, language, and script.

The Phoenicians, whose lands corresponds to present-day Lebanon and coastal parts of Israel and Syria, probably arrived in the region in about 3000 B.C. They established commercial and religious connections were established with Egypt after about 2613 BC and continued until the end of the Egyptian Old Kingdom and the invasion of Phoenicia by the Amorites (c. 2200 BC).

Other groups invading and periodically controlling Phoenicia included the Hyksos (18th century BC), the Egyptians of the New Kingdom (16th century BC), and the Hittites (14th century BC). Seti I (1290-79 BC) of the New Kingdom reconquered most of Phoenicia, but Ramses III (1187-56 BC) lost it to invaders from Asia Minor and Europe. The roster of Phoenician cities changed during the near millennium-long period beginning in 1200 B.C., reflecting the waxing and waning of their individual fortunes and the impinging historical events of the Near East. At the beginning of the Iron Age, as part of the invasion of the Sea Peoples (groups from the Greek islands, especially Crete), the Philistines occupied the coastal area south of Mt. Carmel, including Dor, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza. By the eighth century B.C., however, the material culture of the Phoenicians extended southward, and Sidon controlled Dor and Joppa during the Persian period (539-333 B.C.). The Achaemenians, an Iranian dynasty under the leadership of Cyrus II, conquered the area in 538 B.C. Sidon became a principal coastal city of this empire. The history of Tyre and Sidon is intertwined (indeed they were only twenty-two miles [35 km.] apart). Classical tradition suggests that Sidon was the more powerful at first but by the tenth century B.C. Tyre dominated. Tyre's kings ruled a stretch of the coast that included Sidon and often they were referred to as kings of the Sidonians (1 Kings 16:31).

There were no major Phoenician cities north of Arvad, but Phoenician influence extended into Cilicia in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. Obscurity surrounds the emergence of Phoenician culture during the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C. In a foray, the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser I (1114-1076 B.C.) sojourned at Arvad and received tribute from Byblos and Sidon, and there are archaeological data from Tyre and Zaraphath for this period. The Egyptian Tale of Wenamun, dating to the mid-eleventh century B.C., graphically portrays the decline of Egyptian prestige and power in the Levant. This was due in part to the invasions of the Sea Peoples and the general disruptions of Late Bronze Age cultures throughout the eastern Mediterranean, with the collapse of Mycenaean and Hittite cultures and the destruction of city-states in the Levant. Trade was severely affected. In the aftermath of the disruptions and the power vacuum a new order emerged in which flourishing Phoenician settlements replaced such destroyed centers as Ugarit on the coast of northern Syria. Instead of the Levant being the recipient of Aegean wares, Phoenician cities began exporting goods and services.

In the 10th century B.C. the city state of Tyre rose to hegemony among Phoenician states and founded colonies throughout the Mediterranean region. During the same time, Tyre strengthened its influence over the northern kingdom of Israel. Phoenician influence is also to be seen in the region of Cilicia at Zinjirli where King Kilamuwa, probably Aramaean in origin, chose the Phoenician language and script for a long inscription at the front of his palace. Other Phoenician inscriptions come from the same region in the following centuries Azitwada marked the rebuilding of his city with bilingual inscriptions in Phoenician and hieroglyphic Hittite at Karatepe. The strong Phoenician influence in Cilicia may be due to trading activities in a network including Urartu, the northern rival of Assyria in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.

The pace of Assyrian activity in Phoenicia quickened in the ninth century B.C. when Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, and Adadnirari III exacted tribute and taxes from Sidon, Tyre, and other Phoenician cities. Assyria was gradually extending its control over the Levant. As a result of the far-reaching reorganization of the Assyrian Empire by Tiglathpileser III (744-727 B.C.), the nature of the impact on Phoenicia changed from one of occasional demands by raiding armies to incorporation as vassals into the empire. Many cities lost their autonomy altogether and became part of Assyrian provinces administered by governors; for example, an Assyrian province of Simyra was established by Tiglathpileser III.

During Sennacherib's reign (705-681 B.C.) he crushed a serious revolt by coastal cities in 701 B.C. and forced Luli (Elulaeus), king of Tyre, to flee to Cyprus where he died. Later Sidon revolted against the Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) who in 676 B.C. sacked and destroyed it and in its place built a governor's residence, called Kar-Esarhaddon, for a new Assyrian province. He also made a treaty with Baal, king of Tyre. Ashurbanipal (668-627 B.C.) laid siege to Tyre and Nebuchadnezzar besieged it for thirteen years (586-573 B.C.);

Sidon reemerged as the dominant city of Phoenicia in the Persian period (539-333 B.C.) and led a Phoenician contingent in the Persian wars of the early fifth century B.C., helping bridge the Hellespont and fighting at Salamis.

Herodotus and Phoenician history by Nina Jidejian

Everyone, at some time or another, has read about the Greek and Persian wars fought during the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. What he perhaps does not know is that the Phoenicians played an important role in this great historical drama.

The reason is simple.

Persia is not a sea power and is land locked in Asia Minor and on the East Mediterranean coast with a formidable array of soldiers from many nations.

The Phoenicians, on the other hand, have the fleets, the navigators, the seamen and the "know-how". Guided by the stars they sail at night over dark, dangerous, uncharted waters, guided only by the stars. An arrangement is therefore reached with the kings of the Phoenician cities to furnish a fleet to the Persians provided they are not bothered by them at home.

Soon after Greece is invaded by Xerxes, the Persian "King of Kings". Bloody battles on land and sea follow. Sporadic fighting spreads to the Greek islands and Cyprus.

Then in 333 B.C. Alexander the Great at the head of his Macedonian phalanxes crosses the Hellespont in pursuit of Darius Codamannus, the Persian king, thus bringing the war into Asia. City after city go over to him. Alexander's conquest of the East ushers in the Hellenistic Age. With the spread of Greek culture and ideas, a new political and social order arises and travels to the farther reaches of his empire contributing to fashion the course of the modern world in which we live.

The Greek and Persian Wars 550 to 330 B.C.

Herodotus is a Greek born during the fifth century B.C. in Halicarnassus, southwest Asia Minor. Centuries before his time the Greeks abandon their homes on the mainland, put their families and belongings in ships and sail eastwards across the Aegean. Some settle for good on the islands, others found a number of Greek cities all along the coast of Asia Minor.

As a young man Herodotus, intelligent and inquisitive, displays a great gift for story-telling. He wanders freely throughout a large part of the great Persian empire recording all he sees and hears. He is the world's authority on the Greek and Persian wars that shook the ancient world so long ago.

This is his story.

Soon after his conquest of the empire of the Medes, Cyrus, king of Persia, is attacked by a coalition of the other great powers of the day: Babylon, Egypt and Lycia who come to fear him, joined by Sparta, the greatest military power of Greece. In the spring of 546 B.C. the richest and most powerful man in the world, Croesus, king of Lydia, advances into Cappadocia, Asia Minor while the other kings are still feverishly gathering their troops for battle. But Cyrus cleverly attacks first, marches one thousand miles overland, even through the outlying provinces of Babylon. He defeats Croesus and follows him to his capital city. In the autumn of 546 Cyrus storms Sardis and orders that Croesus be taken alive. The Lydian kingdom henceforth becomes a province of Persia.

The gateway to Greece and the Near East now lies open before the Persian king. The Ionian Greek cities of Asia Minor, the Carians, the Lycians and the king of Cilicia humbly acknowledge Persian supremacy.

War with Babylon is inevitable. In a single swift campaign, Cyrus destroys the mighty kingdom. The army of King Nabonidus is defeated and Babylon surrenders without resistance in October 539.

In Sidon at this time Mapen and his sister Myra live in a little stone house near the port. Their father, Elibar, is a carpenter and is greatly respected for his ability and his skill. Not only does he saw heavy logs of wood with precision for sea-faring galleys but he can also carve smaller bits of wood into various objects: luxury boxes to hold jewelry, plain boxes to hold precious spices, wooden toys with which children can play: a cow, a horse, a dog and even a small doll for Myra. Children follow him closely when he walks through the streets of Sidon, hoping for a toy.

Mapen and Myra not only love their father but are very proud of him. They love their mother too, because she keeps the little stone house spic and span. She also welcomes her children's friends with warmth at any time.

Life is peaceful in Sidon. At nightfall around the fire their parents talk about what is happening in Babylon. But all this is so far away. Then one day the mighty king of Babylon is no more. The king of Persia from afar assumes sovereignty over Babylon's possessions on the east Mediterranean seaboard. Thus Sidon, Tyre, Byblos, Beirut, Arvad (Ruad) and the other port cities are left to themselves to enjoy a period of freedom and peace. Great excitement spreads in Sidon and Tyre when news arrives that all displaced persons by order of Cyrus can now return to their homelands. The Jews taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar are allowed to proceed to Jerusalem. Cyrus grants a royal concession of Phoenician timber to the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and their temple. Phoenician artisans make their way to Jerusalem to take part in the reconstruction of the city. In the Old Testament, Ezra infers that Jews and Phoenicians renew commercial relations: "So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters and food, drink and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus, king of Persia."

Cedar trees are cut on the mountains of Lebanon and rolled down the slopes. Logs are tied one to the other and dragged by teams of oxen to the port of Byblos. There they are lashed together with heavy ropes into rafts and floated down the coast.

From afar Mapen and Myra see the logs arriving. There is a frightening sound as they collide against each other. In the port there is a large galley ready to carry the carpenter and stone masons. Elibar hugs his wife and children tight to his bosom and embarks for Tyre to pick up more artisans and then sails further south.

A year goes by . . . The children miss their father. Then one day from afar, a galley is seen slowly approaching the port. Mapen and Myra rush to the shore. They are overjoyed to see their father once again. He has worked hard, has been well-paid and has a leather pouch full of gold pieces. But he is glad to return to the little stone house in the port. There the family receives relatives and friends who eagerly listen to the stories Elibar tells them about Jerusalem, the temple and other unfamiliar sights.

Peace reigns in the region. Trade prospers. Herodotus tells us that the Ionian Greeks too and those living on the Greek islands in the Aegean have nothing to fear from the Persians. For the Phoenicians alone control the sea routes and are free to come and go. The Persians are not seamen nor do they have a fleet.

The situation however soon changes. Egypt alone remains unconquered by the king of Persia. In 529 B.C. Cyrus dies and is succeeded by his son, Cambyses. The conquest of Egypt is necessary if Persia is to dominate the east Mediterranean world. The Mediterranean seaboard must be taken but first an understanding reached with the kings of the Phoenician cities to supply Persia with the necessary ships and crews. An arrangement is therefore made whereby the kings of the city-states place their fleets at the disposal of the Persian monarch. In return the cities are not occupied and are allowed to retain their native kings. All during the Persian period of domination (550 to 330 B.C.) the kings of the Phoenician cities command their naval contingents and are treated as friends and allies. In 525 B.C. Cambyses captures Pelusium in the Delta. The fall of Memphis completes the Persian conquest of Egypt. When Cambyses plans a campaign against Carthage, the Phoenicians refuse to sail because they consider the city is a colony of Tyre. Cambyses abandons the expedition. Herodotus explains:

"Cambyses did not think fit to bring pressure to bear because the Phoenicians had taken service under him of their free will and his whole naval power was dependent on them."

Cambyses dies. The year 521 B.C. marks the accession of Darius Hystaspis. Darius believes that the greatest danger to the Persian empire is a rebellion in a distant province. To prevent power being held by one man, he

appoints three officials in each province: a satrap, a general and a secretary of state. independent of each other they spy on each other and report to the king direct.

Herodotus lists the twenty satrapies of the Persian empire and the taxes paid by each. Phoenicia is united with Syria, Cyprus and Palestine in the Fifth Satrapy and is taxed lightly compared to the others.

Darius is the first Persian king to coin money. The "Maric", a gold coin weighing 130 grains, soon becomes the gold currency of the old World. Herodotus tells us that silver coinage, also called "Maric" is subsequently minted by a Persian satrap in Egypt.

Darius realizes the importance of good communications to hold his empire together. He orders that a royal highway with one hundred and eleven post houses link Sardis in Lydia to Susa in southern Persia. Herodotus travels on this royal road. At the post houses tired horses are exchanged for fresh steeds for the onward journey. Royal courriers find shelter and the much needed rest.

But trouble is now brewing in the provinces. The Ionian cities in Asia Minor revolt against Persia. The revolt spreads to Caria and the island of Cyprus. Darius orders the Phoenician cities to assemble a fleet. Ships are sent to Cilicia to transport Persian troops to Cyprus. The fleet anchors in the bay opposite Salamis, Cyprus, facing the Ionian fleet already there. This is the very first encounter at sea between Phoenicians and Greeks. The Phoenicians lose the battle but Persian land forces gain a victory over the Cypriotes. Hatred flares up between the Phoenicians and the Greeks for the Greeks in the Aegean are a serious threat to Phoenician domination of the commercial sea lanes.

A series of rebellions follow. Sardis is taken and burned to the ground by Athenian and Ionian forces.

Next the Creek cities in Asia Minor rebel against Persia. Herodotus tells us that in his anger Darius commands one of his attendants to repeat to him three times whenever he sits down to dine: "Waster, remember the Athenians".

A great clash is in the offing. The decisive battle between the Ionian Greeks and Persia occurs at sea in the naval battle of 494 near the island of Lade opposite Miletus, the Persians with the Phoenician fleet defeat the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor.

Darius is pleased with the outcome of the battle and realizes that the conquest of mainland Greece will not present much difficulty. He decides to lead his army through Thrace and Macedonia with the ultimate goal of punishing Athens. Herodotus tells us that he has already sent a spying mission of Persian nobles in Phoenician ships to the coast of Greece.

The Phoenician cities furnish a large part of the fleet led by the Persian general Mardonius in the year 492. But heavy losses occur when the ships are dashed against the rocks of Mount Athos and most of the fleet sinks. Then comes the Persian setback at Marathon in 490 B.C. The Persian archers are cut down by the Greek phalanx of hoplites. In 485 Darius dies and with the accession to the throne in 481 of his son Xerxes we are about to witness the greatest expedition of all times. Forces are drawn from every quarter of the Persian Empire. Two bridges are thrown across the Hellespont, the narrow strait that divides Europe from Asia (called the Dardanelles today). At Abydos on the Propontis a lofty seat of white stone is carved out on the hilltop to enable Xerxes to look down on the seashore where his army and fleet are assembled. A race of ships is organized in his honor and the ships of Sidon win, to the king's great pleasure. Xerxes shows a marked preference for Phoenician vessels, the Sidonians ones in particular.

Riding in his chariot, the king drives past the men of each nation, foot soldiers and cavalry, questioning them while his scribes write down the answers. Then the king alights from his chariot and, according to Herodotus boards a ship of Sidon, sitting under a golden canopy. He sails past the prows of all the ships assembled before him, questioning the seamen and ordering that their answers be written down.

The loss of the fleet in the previous expedition off the rocky coast of Mount Athos prompts Xerxes to order that a canal be dug through the isthmus to allow his ships to pass in safety. No sooner this is done, however, the sides cave in. Phoenician engineers, Herodotus writes, rescue the project.

In the section of the canal allotted to them, the Phoenicians dig a trench double the width at the top than at the canal level thus preventing wall collapse. The other engineers follow the Phoenicians'. Example: Xerxes, at the head of his army, marches into Thessaly and quarters his troops at Therma, Macedonia. There he embarks on a ship of Sidon to reconnoiter by sea. After the Persian victory at Thermopylae, Xerxes gives orders to proceed to Artemisium, where the Greeks await him. A fierce battle ensues. The Athenians and Sidonians fight bravely. But the decisive battle is yet to come. Before throwing his troops into battle at Salamis, Greece, Xerxes holds a council of war. His high esteem for the king of Sidon is seen by the place assigned to him at the meeting. Herodotus tells us "First in place is the king of Sidon and next the king of Tyre." Among the kings and princes of Phoenicia who sail with Xerxes, Herodotus records, are Tetramnestus, son of Anysus of Sidon, and Matten, son of Sirom (Hiram) of Tyre.

Xerxes has one woman admiral. She is Artemesia, a widow, in command of the naval contingents of Halicarnassus, Cos, Nisyra and Calydna in Asia Minor. She is the only one to object to plans for a battle at sea, claiming that the Greeks are far superior to the Persians in naval matters.

On Mount Aegaleos Xerxes surveys the naval engagement from his silver footed throne. The narrowness of the straits at Salamis and the fact the Greeks are fighting in home waters leads to the defeat and flight of the Phoenician ships. When some of the captains appear before him to furnish explanations, Xerxes has them executed on the spot. Other Phoenician commanders become so alarmed that they desert the fleet and sail away. This is perhaps the reason why for the next fifteen years there is no record of Phoenician contingents in the service of Persia's kings. In 465, however, the victorious Athenians threaten Cyprus. The Phoenician fleet appears in support of the Persians once again as many of the cities of Cyprus are Phoenician colonies. From 465 to 390 B.C. they protect Cyprus from the Athenians and more than once fight them off.

During the Persian period Phoenicians find the time to do a bit of business on the side and exploit mines on the island of Thasos. Herodotus claims to have seen them: "A whole mountain has been turned upside down in the search of gold." In the early fourth century B.C. a very important political development takes place.

Tripoli in north Lebanon is founded by Aradus, Sidon and Tyre. These cities are united by federal bonds. A historian living in the first century B.C., Diodorus Siculus records that they convene a common council or "parliament" in Tripolis, the first to be held in the East Mediterranean world.

In the meantime, the pharaohs of the Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth dynasties stir rebellions in Cyprus against the Persians. Repeated attempts by the Persian king to regain Egypt, conquered earlier by Cambyses, fail. The Phoenicians and the kings of Cyprus now show open contempt of the Persians. In 366 the Phoenician cities join dissident satraps who wish to break away from the empire. In 358 Artaxerxes III (Ochus) ascends the throne of Persia. He feels he cannot deal with any rebellion until he conquers Egypt. His failure to do so brings forth the great Phoenician revolt led by Tennes, king of Sidon.

The Persian king's satraps and generals dwell in Sidon. Nearby is a beautiful royal park, where the kings of Persia hunt called the *paradeisos* in Greek (from the old Persian term *pardes*, meaning "garden"). This Greek word has been passed on from one generation to another to mean "paradise" in our days, a place of beauty and delight. The first hostile act of the Sidonians is to cut down and destroy the royal park, then they burn the fodder for the horses. Next they arrest Persian officials.

Ambassadors are sent to Egypt to seek aid from the pharaoh. In return, King Tennes receives four thousand Greek mercenaries. Adding these men to his own forces, Tennes defeats the satraps and drives them out of Phoenicia. The year is 351 B.C. Artaxerxes III is in Babylon and hastily assembles a large army. News of its great size reaches Tennes. Fearing that his forces cannot hold them off, the king of Sidon treacherously decides to come to secret terms with the Persians in order to save his own life.

Without the knowledge of his people, Tennes sends Thettalion, a faithful attendant, to the Persians with a promise he will betray Sidon. Tennes will also assist the Persian king defeat Egypt, for according to Diodorus (16.43.2), he is familiar with the topography of Egypt as well as the landing-places along the Nile. Thettalion returns to Sidon and reports on the success of his mission. The conquest of Egypt at this point is of great importance. Persian envoys are sent to the cities of Greece for reinforcements. Thebes despatches one thousand men, Argos sends three thousand and the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor send six thousand. Artaxerxes does not wait for them to arrive and, at the head of his troops, marches on Sidon.

The Sidonians dig triple ditches and raise high fortifications. They store up food, armor and missiles. In wealth and resources Sidon by far excels her sister-cities. There is an important number of Greek mercenaries available ready to fight. More important still is the fact that Sidon possesses over one hundred triremes and quinqueremes.

All this feverish activity raises the suspicion of young Straton, the son of a respected palace official. For some time now his father has remained at court all the time and has not come home at night. From an upstairs window Straton can easily see who enters and leaves through the palace gates. He begins to fear for his father's life. In those days it was usual for a king to hire foreign mercenaries to swell the ranks of his army. These men are paid generously for their services. Since they love money, adventure and the dangers of warfare, they are proud of their condition and insolently swagger through the streets of Sidon. Straton does not trust them, nor does he like them. After all, a man who is paid for his services can easily switch to another master if the pay is better.

Tennes in secret confides to Mentor, the commander of the Greek mercenaries in Sidon, that he plans to hand over the city to the Persians. Leaving him in control behind, the king at the head of five hundred citizens, leaves the city pretending he is going to meet with the kings of other Phoenician cities to plan a united strategy. On this pretext he also takes with him one hundred of the city's most distinguished citizens to serve as advisors. Among them is the father of Straton.

Upon approaching the Persian camp, Tennes and the one hundred Sidonians are suddenly seized and handed over to the king. Artaxerxes welcomes Tennes as a friend but has the dignitaries executed as the instigators of the plot. Then come the five hundred Sidonians notables carrying olive branches as suppliants. They too one by one are shot down and fall to the ground. Tennes assures the Persian king that he will now deliver Sidon to him. He leads the way and approaches the part of the fortifications held by Mentor and the Greek mercenaries. They allow the Persians inside the city walls. Thus Sidon, by Tennes' betrayal, is secretly delivered to the Persians. Now that Tennes is of no further use to him, Artaxerxes at once has him put to death.

Unaware of their king's betrayal, the Sidonians in the meantime take many precautions to defend their city. They burn all their ships so that the townspeople will remain to fight off the Persians and cannot secretly sail away. Diodorus tells us that when the Sidonians see the myriads of soldiers entering the city and swarming over the city walls, they shut themselves, their wives, children and servants in their houses. Straton and his mother do the same. Once the doors and windows are bolted securely, they set their homes on fire. Plumes of dust and smoke rise over the city. About forty thousand perish in the flames. A vast amount of silver and gold is melted down by the fire. This treasure is gathered up and later sold by the Persian king for many talents. News of the disaster that has destroyed Sidon spreads far and wide. The remaining Phoenician cities, panicstricken, go over to the Persians. After the destruction of Sidon and the arrival of his Greek mercenaries, Artaxerxes marches towards Egypt. The pharaoh picks up all his possessions and flees to Ethiopia. Artaxerxes installs a Persian satrap in Egypt and starts the long march back to Babylon. The year is 350 B.C.

Far away in Macedon Philip II (382-336 B.C.) becomes king. He gathers together a large force of infantry and the phalanx to support his cavalry and looks eastward, fired by ambition, to free Asia Minor of the Persian king. He marries Olympias, the wild, witch-like daughter of the king of Epirus. According to Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander* when newlywed, Philip comes upon his wife asleep with a serpent by her side. He is filled with revulsion and fears her as an enchantress.

Alexander, born of their union, is a fair-skinned handsome youth, quick to anger. He studies under Aristotle, the most celebrated philosopher of his time and has Leonidas as a tutor, a man of stern temperament.

Alexander thus becomes a great lover of all kinds of knowledge and always puts Homer's Iliad with his dagger under his pillow when he sleeps.

Alexander's faithful companion in both battle and the hunt is his horse Bucephalus. Plutarch records that Alexander, barely fifteen years of age, tames this tempestuous and unruly steed. Bucephalus is brought before Philip by a Thessalian who demands an exorbitant sum of thirteen talents in exchange. No sooner does an attendant attempt to mount him, the horse rears up and tosses him to the ground. As the horse is being led away, Alexander exclaims that he is able to mount him. Philip mocks his son and asks him what sum he will pay in case he is unhorsed. Alexander replies that he will pay his father the full price of the horse. The king and his attendants burst out into loud laughter. Unabashed, Alexander runs to the horse and turns him directly towards the sun, for the youth had observed that Bucephalus is afraid of the motion of his own shadow. He then leads the horse forward, stroking him gently, and with one nimble leap, mounts him, lets him go at full speed and gallops away. Philip and his attendants look on in wonder. When Alexander dismounts, according to Plutarch, Philip embraces him and says: "O, my son, look thee out a kingdom equal to and worthy of thyself for Macedonia is too small for thee."

In the following years, Philip's estrangement from Alexander's mother Olympias, leads to other marriages. At his wedding to the youthful Cleopatra, Attalus, the bride's uncle in a drunken fit implores the gods to give the couple a lawful heir to the kingdom. Alexander is outraged by this affront and throws his drinking cup at Attalus' head. When Philip rises in anger with his sword drawn to attack his son, his foot slips and he falls to the ground. Plutarch records that Alexander says insultingly: "See there, the man who makes preparations to pass out of Europe into Asia, overturned in passing from one seat to another."

After this incident, Alexander and his mother withdraw from Philip's court. The sullen and jealous queen travels to Epirus, Alexander to Illyria. Friends of the family bring about reconciliation, although short lived.

After subjugating his neighbors, Philip crosses into central Greece. In 337 he is in the Peloponnesus where he holds a congress of the Greek states at the Isthmus. A Hellenic league is organized that acknowledges Philip in the military command and furnishes contingents for an expedition against Persia.

In 336 Philip is murdered during the marriage festivities of his daughter in Aegae, Macedon. He leaves behind him a kingdom beset by troubles, but at the same time, the Macedonian army that enables his son within ten years to change the face of the old World.

Alexander is barely twenty years old when Philip is murdered. The countries surrounding Macedonia want to free themselves of its rule. The Greek cities are on the verge of rebellion. Alexander puts down the revolts and at the general assembly at the Isthmus, the Greek cities agree to join him in the war against Persia and proclaim him their general. Public officials and philosophers come from all parts of the land to congratulate Alexander -- all but Diogenes of Sinope who is living at the time in Corinth. According to Plutarch he does not even bother to leave Cranium, the suburb where Alexander finds him lying in the sun. When the philosopher sees so much company about him, he raises himself a little and glances at Alexander who asks him kindly whether he wants anything. "Yes", Diogenes replies, "I would have you stand from between me and the sun." Alexander is struck by this answer and is so impressed by the man that, as he goes away, he tells his followers were he not Alexander, he would choose to be Diogenes.

Alexander's aim is to strike at the heart of the Persian Empire and ultimately conquer the entire East. He crosses the Hellespont into Asia and at Troy sacrifices to Athena, goddess of wisdom, and honors the memories of the heroes buried there.

The Persian advance guard is encamped on the further bank of the Granicus River. Except for a few hand-picked soldiers and a body of Greek mercenaries, the Persian king depends upon oriental recruits, large in number but weak in fighting power. Alexander crosses the river on horseback and is met by a shower of arrows. He charges, horse against horse with his raised lance. While the horsemen are thus engaged, the Macedonian phalanx crosses the river. The Persians take fright and flee leaving the high roads of Asia Minor open to the young Macedonian conqueror.

News of this military disaster reaches Darius. At the head of a large force he marches toward Cilicia to engage Alexander in battle. Their armies meet at Issus (near modern Alexandretta) in October 333. Alexander fights in the foremost ranks while his army closes in on the Persians, putting them to flight. Darius narrowly escapes, leaving behind his queen, his daughters and court officials.

Now the gates of the Near East lay open before Alexander. However he does not pursue Darius. It is of strategic importance for Alexander to control the naval bases from which the Persian fleet operates. So he marches instead on to Phoenicia.

Eye witness accounts of the daring exploits of Alexander unfortunately do not exist. What we know about him comes from secondary sources. Arrian (first century B.C.) refers to the works of Ptolemy, a general of Alexander, and Aristobolus, whose writings are lost. Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.) and Quintus Curtius (first century A.D.) no doubt had access to earlier histories that have been destroyed.

Surprisingly enough, very few likenesses of the young Macedonian conqueror have come down to us. Plutarch records that the finest statues of Alexander were made by Lysippus for he was the only sculptor tolerated by the young man. Even the inclination of Alexander's head a little on one side towards his left shoulder was reproduced in marble and was imitated afterwards by the generals who succeed him in an effort to emulate him. Coins minted during Alexander's reign have on the obverse the head of the god Heracles wearing the lion skin. Portraits of Alexander only appear later on the third century B.C. coins of Lysimachus, king of Thrace. Here Alexander appears as a god wearing the sacred horns of Ammon.

As Alexander moves down the coast, the Phoenician cities are panic-stricken. The Persian fleet is manned by Phoenician crews and the kings of the Phoenician cities are at the time at sea with the fleet.

Independent of each other, each city adopts a position that suits it best. Aradus (Ruad) is the most northern of the Phoenician city states. The king's son Straton, according to Arrian, hastens to welcome him and lays

on his head a golden crown. He yields to Alexander the island of Aradus and Marathus, a great and prosperous city which lies opposite on the mainland (modern Tartous).

Byblos (Gebal) surrenders without resistance. The king ruling at the time is called Ayinel. He is away sailing with the Persian fleet. Alexander leaves Byblos behind him and marches on to Sidon.

Sidon was dealt a severe blow in 351 when Artaxerxes took the city. Many Sidonians perished in the flames and the memory of this disaster lives on. The city is ruled at the time by a puppet of the Persians and Alexander is determined to get rid of him.

Hephaestion, the trustworthy companion-in-arms of Alexander, is given the mission to choose a new king. He finds two Sidonians, each one is worthy to rule. However it is the custom in Sidon that the king should come from royal stock, so the choice falls upon a man, distantly related to the royal family. This man, modest and poor, lives in the suburbs of Sidon where he cultivates a small garden.

Hephaestion delegates the two Sidonians to bring him before Alexander. They find him, Abdalonymous by name, in his garden plucking weeds. As he stands up to greet them, the two men dismount from their horses and hail him as king. They give him royal garments to wear and accompany him to Alexander in his camp.

Gazing at him steadily, Alexander tells Abdalonymous that after all the years he has lived in poverty and privation, he will now become powerful and rich. Quintus Curtius records that the new king of Sidon puts out his grimy, work-worn hands and replies: "These hands having nothing, I lack nothing." Alexander is impressed by these words and leaving him to rule Sidon, he marches south to Tyre.

The king of Tyre is at sea with the Persian fleet. So a delegation headed by the king's son and noblemen comes out to meet the invader. It is of strategic importance for Alexander to take Tyre as the city is an important base for the Persians.

Alexander uses the pretext that he wishes to enter Tyre in order to sacrifice to Heracles, for the kings of Macedon hold they are descended from the god. Once Tyre is his, Alexander believes, all the Phoenician ships will desert the Persian king and come over to his side.

Confident in the fortifications of their island city, the Tyrians object. They realize the danger is great should Alexander enter their city. So they send envoys to Alexander telling him that there is a temple of Heracles on the mainland at Palaetyrus (old Tyre), suggesting that he offer sacrifices to the god there.

Alexander's face reddens with anger at this affront. He threatens to join the island fortress to the mainland by an artificial isthmus, turn Tyre into a peninsula and bring his powerful siege engines up to the city's walls.

That night Alexander falls asleep and has a dream. He sees Heracles stretching out his right hand to him to lead him into the city. The seers are summoned by him at once. Tyre would be taken with great toil and difficulty they predict, for toil is the mark of Heracles' achievements.

It takes Alexander seven months before he can enter Tyre. A strait of four stadia separates the island city from the mainland and is especially exposed to southwest winds. Alexander orders that large stones and tree trunks from the mountains of Lebanon be brought down to the coast and cast into the sea. As long as the building of the mole is near the mainland, work goes on smoothly enough but as his men get into deeper water and nearer the city, a volley of arrows fall around them shot by archers positioned on the walls. Tyrians sail up on either side, mocking and harassing them.

Alexander orders that two towers be built on the mole equipped with siege engines. Hides and skins cover the towers so they cannot be pelted with fire darts. The Tyrians fill a large horse-transport ship with dry boughs and other combustible materials. They fix two masts on the prow, each with a projecting arm from which is suspended a cauldron filled with bitumen, sulphur and other highly inflammable materials. The stern of the vessel is loaded with stone and sand and is thus depressed. In this way the prow is elevated so it can easily glide over the mole and reach the towers. The Tyrians wait for a wind blowing towards the mole and tow the ship astern with triremes. Running the "fire-ship" at full speed upon the mole, they set torches to the combustible materials. They dash the ship violently against the mole and the cauldrons scatter the fiery mass in all directions. The crew of the burning ship easily swim away to safety.

The kings of Aradus and Byblos hear that their cities are in Alexander's hands. They promptly desert the Persian fleet and arrive with their contingents and Sidonians triremes to side with Alexander. The kings of Cyprus learn that Darius has been defeated at Issus and sail to Sidon with one hundred and twenty ships. Triremes arrive from Rhodes, Soli, Mallos, Lycia and a fifty-oar from Macedon.

Arrian records: "To these entire Alexander let bygones be bygones supposing that it was rather from necessity than choice that they had joined naval forces with the Persians."

While all the ships are being prepared for battle and his siege engines fitted for the final assault, Alexander with some of his archers and cavalry march to the Anti-Lebanon. He conquers part of the country, others readily surrender.

The Tyrians have no choice but to go on the offensive before Alexander attacks. The enemy fleet must be sunk, including the ships of their sister-cities. This is not an easy task because ships from Cyprus are blocking the mouth of the Sidonians port, so-called because it faces north towards Sidon. Plans must be made in secret. So sails are spread before the entrance of the harbor to hide their preparations. At midday when the Cypriote sailors are not on their guard, the Tyrians set sail with their bravest sea fighting men and attack the surprised enemy, sinking several ships.

Alexander is infuriated by this setback. He orders his ships at once to sea to blockade the harbor. Those on the walls of Tyre see this and try with shouts and gestures to beckon their men to turn back. It is too late. Wheeling their ships about, the Tyrians attempt to sail back to the harbor. A few manage to get to safety but Alexander's naval forces put most of them out of action. Some of the crew jump overboard and swim to land. This victory allows the Macedonians easier access to Tyre's city walls. The battery rams are brought up against the walls. The fortifications on the mole are so high the Macedonians are unable to scale them.

Alexander is forced to turn south to the "Egyptian" port -- that facing Egypt -- testing the walls on his way. There, a part of the city's fortifications have broken down. Bridges are thrown over the walls but the Tyrians

repulse the attack. A great fear now arises in Tyre. Quintus Curtius tells us that a rumor spreads like wildfire that the god Apollo is about to leave the city. The Tyrians bind the statue of Apollo with a chain of gold to its base and attach the chain to the altar of Heracles, their patron god, hoping that he will hold Apollo back. Alexander has another dream. In it he sees a satyr mocking him at a distance and eluding his grasp when he tries to catch him. Finally after much coaxing, the satyr surrenders. Plutarch records that the seers are called in and dividing the word satyros into two parts, say to Alexander plausibly enough: "Tyre (Tyros in Greek) is to be thine."

The final assault is frightening. Triremes are ordered to sail both to the "Sidonian" and "Egyptian" ports in an effort to force an entrance. Alexander's ships close in on the city from all sides and bridges are thrown over the walls from the vessels. Crossing over and advancing through breaches in the walls, the Macedonians now easily fight off the Tyrians. Both harbors are forced and the Tyrian ships are captured.

A large number of Tyrians desert the walls and barricade themselves in the Shrine of Agenor. This monument is particularly revered by the people of Tyre for, in legendary tradition, Agenor is their king, the father of Cadmus and Europa. According to Arrian it is there that Alexander attacks them with his bodyguards. There is a bloody massacre. The Macedonians are infuriated, seeing themselves at last masters of the city, they fall mercilessly on the Tyrians. They are also determined to avenge the death of their companions, who when sailing from Sidon earlier, are captured by the Tyrians. These men are dragged up on the walls, executed in full view of Alexander's forces and flung into the sea.

Quintus Curtius tells us that at this time a Carthaginian delegation is in Tyre to celebrate the annual festival of Melkart-Heracles. The king of Tyre, Azemilcus, the chief magistrates and the Carthaginian embassy take refuge in the temple of Heracles. To them Alexander grants full pardon but he severely punishes the people of Tyre. Some thirty thousand are sold into slavery. Two thousand Tyrians, according to Quintus Curtius are nailed to crosses along a great stretch of the shore.

Alexander offers a sacrifice to Heracles and holds a procession of his armed forces in the city. A naval review is also held in the god's honor. The siege has lasted seven months. Diodorus Siculus ends his account of the dramatic siege of Tyre by telling us that Alexander solemnly removes the golden chains and fetters from Apollo and orders that henceforth the god be called Apollo "Philalexander". He rewards his men who have distinguished themselves and gives a lavish funeral for his dead.

Alexander leaves Tyre. With the fall of Gaza to the south, the way lies open to Egypt. Upon his arrival there, Alexander consults the oracle of Zeus Ammon and is hailed by the high priest as the son of the god.

He founds the city of Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile destined to be the new commercial and intellectual center of the East Mediterranean world.

In the spring of 331 B.C. Alexander leaves the Mediterranean to strike into the heart of the Persian empire. It is near Nineveh that Darius awaits him with a large army, hastily assembled. At the battle of Arbela Darius is defeated and flees into Media.

Alexander follows the Tigris River into Babylonia, the central seat of the Persian empire and its richest region. From there he proceeds to Susa, then to the royal city of Persepolis with its enormous treasure. There he destroys the palace by fire according to the geographer Strabo, ostensibly as revenge for the burning of Greek temples by Xerxes during the Graeco-Persian wars. Plutarch gives another version saying that the fire is started during a drunken revelry but is then extinguished by order of Alexander who regrets the deed.

What we see next is a king being chased by another king. From Ecbatana Alexander pursues Darius to the Caspian. The Persian Empire is crumbling, Darius is deserted by his generals one by one and by his troops. His cousin, Bessus, seizes this opportunity to rid himself once and for all of the Persian king. At night he and a few followers burst into Darius' tent, tie him up with ropes and carry him to his chariot and on to Bactria. He hopes eventually to offer the Persian king as a hostage in exchange for Alexander's recognition of him as ruler of the eastern satrapies. Alexander follows Darius in hot pursuit. Seeing he cannot escape, Bessus suddenly gallops up to the royal chariot, stabs Darius to death and gets away. When Alexander finally catches up with his rival, he comes into possession only of his corpse. Alexander looks down on his fallen foe with compassion, and covers his body with his purple cloak.

Eventually Bessus is captured and put in chains. Due to the nature of the crime, Alexander has him sentenced by Persian judges, not by himself. Bessus is found guilty of rebellion against his king. The sentence is cruel. Bessus' nose and ears are cut off and he is led to Ecbatana where he is crucified on a tree. Alexander marches through Bactria and Sogdiana putting down rebellions and founding Greek cities. Then he crosses the Hindu Kush and proceeds to India. One of the principalities, situated between the Hydaspes and Ascenines, is ruled by Porus. Alexander crosses the Hydaspes, Porus holds the opposite bank with a powerful force and two hundred elephants. During the battle Porus is wounded and falls into Alexander's hands. However Alexander gains the fallen king as a friend.

It is at this time, Plutarch tells us that Bucephalus dies, wounded in battle. Others relate that the horse dies of fatigue and old age. Alexander is overcome with grief. On the banks of the Hydaspes River he builds a city on the tomb of his horse which he names Bucephalia in his memory. When he reaches the Hyphasis River (Beas) the Macedonian army refuses to go farther although Alexander believes he has not much more to go to reach the ocean and the eastern limit of the inhabited world. He is obliged to give way and the return begins. In the spring of 323 he returns to Babylon. There he makes plans for the construction of a great fleet and the opening of a route by sea from Babylon to Egypt around Arabia. In Babylon he falls ill, consumed by a raging fever that does not leave him. He dies towards evening on June 13, 323 at the age of thirty-three.

His son by Roxana, the beautiful daughter of Oxyartes, king of Bactria, is born a short time later. The child, named Alexander "Aegus", is accepted by the Macedonian generals as joint king with Alexander's half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, mentally unfit to rule. Alexander's successors use these two pathetic figures as a



symbol of legitimacy to cover up their own ambitions. The day is now nearing when they can carve out a kingdom for themselves on the ruins of Alexander's empire.

The two kings, a child and one feeble of mind, are put under the guardianship and protection of Perdikkas, Peithon and Antipater, in succession. Upon the death of Antipater, Roxana flees with her child to Epirus seeking the protection of Olympias, Alexander's mother. She is taken there by Polyperchon, an officer close to Alexander to whom Antipater had delegated his power. From there Polyperchon accompanies Olympias, Roxana and the boy to Macedonia. All three fall into the hands of Antipater's son, Cassander, whose ambition knows no bounds. Olympias is put to death, young Alexander and his mother are kept under close arrest. They are murdered in 310-309 by order of Cassander. Thus the dynasty of Alexander the Great comes to an end with the death of Alexander IV Aegus, his son, barely twelve years of age.

The generals who succeed Alexander are Antigonus Cyclops or Monophthalmus, so-called because he lost an eye in battle, and his son Demetrius Poliocertes, Antipater and his son Cassander, Seleucus, Ptolemy, Eumenes and Lysimachus. They argue bitterly among themselves for each is determined to build a Hellenistic or Greek monarchy on the ruins of Alexander's empire.

Ptolemy, son of a Macedonian nobleman and the most trusted of Alexander's generals, was among the seven bodyguards attached to his person. In the division of the empire, Ptolemy takes Egypt as the safest and farthest place to establish a dynasty. He even manages to carry off the body of Alexander from Babylon to Egypt in order to bury him in Alexandria and thus enhance his own position.

Later Ptolemy mints a gold coin at Alexandria on which we see a char drawn by four elephants. Perhaps this is an attempt made by him to represent Alexander's funeral cortege that included elephants.

Antipater establishes himself in Macedon. He dies soon after and is succeeded by Cassander, his son.

Seleucus Nicator, a youth of twenty-three of age when he accompanies Alexander to Asia, wins distinction in the Indian campaign. Seleucus is given the government of the Babylonian satrapy.

Antigonus defeats Eumenes, installed as satrap of Cappadocia, and has him put to death. He thus gets rid of his most dangerous rival. Ostensibly Antigonus and his son Demetrius Poliocertes hope to reunify Alexander's collapsing empire but for their own purposes. Antigonus controls parts of Greece, Asia Minor and Syria.

Military clashes eventually occur as each tries to encroach on the other's territory. Ptolemy annexes Phoenicia to his possessions and places garrisons in the Phoenician port cities. Antigonus too decides to enlarge his territory and set himself up as king of Asia Minor.

Returning from successful wars in Babylonia, Antigonus easily takes over the cities of Phoenicia but meets with firm resistance from Tyre. Seventeen years have passed since Alexander took Tyre and the city has recovered rapidly. Antigonus has few ships as Ptolemy is holding all Phoenician vessels and their crews in Egypt, so he decides to build a fleet of his own. He camps before Tyre, summons all the kings of the Phoenician cities and the viceroys of Syria and demands them to assist him in building ships.

Antigonus blockades Tyre by land. He establishes three shipyards, one at Tripolis, one at Byblos, one at Sidon. Diodorus Siculus records that Antigonus collects wood-cutters, sawyers and shipwrights from all regions and has wood carried from the mountains of Lebanon to the sea. Eight thousand men are employed to cut and saw the timber; one thousand pairs of draught animals are used to transport it. "This mountain range", Diodorus writes, "extends along the territory of Tripolis, Byblos and Sidon and is covered with cedar and cypress trees of wonderful beauty and size." We thus have a description of the extent of the luxuriant forests covering the mountains of Lebanon about two thousand three hundred years ago. After a siege of fifteen months, Tyre is taken by Antigonus. He allows Ptolemy's garrison to leave and establishes his own in the city. In order to enhance their personal prestige, Alexander's successors strike their own coins. On the obverse of his early silver coinage, Ptolemy has engraved the head of the newly deified Alexander with the sacred ram's horns of Ammon and an elephant headdress. Alexander's name, not his, appears on the reverse of his coins.

On the coins of Seleucus, Alexander is portrayed as the god Dionysus wearing a helmet covered with panther skin adorned with a bull's ear and horns.

Lysimachus in his turn presents on his coins the diademed head of Alexander, deified, wearing the sacred horns of Ammon. When Alexander conquered Egypt, he was hailed by the high-priest of Ammon as the son of the god and Alexander's generals are determined to let no one forget it.

In 305 B.C. Antigonus and his son Demetrius assume the title of king. Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus react to the challenge by doing the same. Henceforth the effigies of these men, wearing the Macedonian diadem, appear on their gold and silver coins. Their patron gods appear on the reverse. This ushers in the age of royal portraiture.

The battle of Ipsus in Phrygia in 301, called the "battle of the kings", signals the great military clash between Alexander's generals. The war elephant plays an important role in the outcome of this battle and is the symbol of military strength. The armies of Seleucus and Lysimachus with one hundred and fifty elephants cut off the infantry of Antigonus, left mortally wounded on the battlefield.

Notwithstanding, his son Demetrius rules Phoenicia until 287 when it once again passes back to Ptolemy. It remains a dependency of the Ptolemies for nearly seventy years. In the year 285 Alexander's empire is neatly divided between three of his former generals, Ptolemy in Egypt, Seleucus in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, and Lysimachus in Thrace.

At his death at the age of eight-four Ptolemy leaves behind him a well organized kingdom and the great library at Alexandria. He is succeeded by his son, Ptolemy 11 Philadelphus (285-246).

The persistent tug of war between Ptolemy's and Seleucids over Phoenicia, Syria and Palestine also results in great cultural changes in the region. Phoenician is discarded as a literary language and is replaced by Greek. Greek religious practices and beliefs take root but at the same time a Phoenician god travels south to Egypt and is honored with great pomp in Alexandria.

Byblos is the center for the worship of Adonis, a youth of great beauty, loved by Aphrodite. In legendary tradition, Adonis is hunting the wild boar one day in the company of Aphrodite at Afka, the source of a river high up in the mountains of Lebanon. The boar turns on him and gores his thigh. Adonis dies of the wound as his blood flows into the river turning the waters red and the anemones in the river valley scarlet. Aphrodite appeals to Zeus, king of the gods, to bring her lover back to life. Zeus pities the youth and allows him to pass part of the year on earth, the other part underground in Hades. His death is mourned annually at Byblos. He returns in the spring time to the upper world and there is great rejoicing. Adonis in Phoenician means "lord" and is the title given to the young god of vegetation.

Theocritus, a Greek poet born in Syracuse c. 315 B.C., lived in Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy I Philadelphus. In his *Idyll 15* he describes how the Festival of Adonis is celebrated in the city. On the first day a great procession forms as women and children pour out into the crowded streets to watch. Adonis has come back to life for a brief reunion with Aphrodite and there is great rejoicing. The second day is one of mourning as the women bewail the god's departure once again for the underworld.

In Alexandria, Adonis is represented by a graceful statue reclining on a silver couch in a temporary bower ornamented with birds and cupids. He is portrayed as a beautiful youth and the women cluster around him as he is carried through the streets in the procession. The crowd enters the royal palace as part of the ceremony is performed there. Praises are sung to Queen Berenice, the mother of Philadelphus and Arsinoë, his sister-wife, one way of eulogizing the family of Ptolemy who patronize the festival.

On the second day the women lament the departure of the youthful god. At the end of the festival the statue of Adonis is carried outside the city and flung into the sea amidst the wailing and weeping of the women.

The years roll by...

In Egypt, descendants of Ptolemy rule at Alexandria, one after the other. In Syria a line of Seleucid kings, usurpers and imposters alike, sit on the throne of Antioch.

The Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great (223-187) makes Phoenicia a battlefield in his wars against the Ptolemies. Antiochus III drives the forces of Ptolemy IV Philopator out of Syria takes Tyre and Acre (Ptolemais) and even threatens Egypt. In the following years the cities of Phoenicia pass back and forth between the two powers. In 196 B.C., Phoenicia and Coele Syria (the Bekaa valley) pass into the possession of the Seleucid kings. The Phoenician cities welcome the change, for the establishment and commercial expansion of Alexandria is a threat to their commerce.

The discovery in 1897 of several painted funerary stele in a garden south of Sidon point to the presence of Greek mercenaries in the armies of the Seleucids during the second century B.C. These soldiers of fortune from the Greek mainland and cities of Asia Minor died here while on active duty and were laid to rest forever in foreign land. The stelae today are exposed in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul.

The Seleucid monarchy is now in a state of chronic civil war. In the struggle to seize the throne between the usurper Tryphon and Antiochus VII Sidetes during the latter part of the second century B.C., the situation becomes so unbearable that merchants of Beirut desert the city and open commercial establishments on the Greek island of Delos where they conduct a flourishing business.

But in the West the rise of Rome presents a danger. The Italian wars of 91-83 B.C. keep the Romans at home. The chaotic conditions in Syria permit Tigranes II the Great, king of Armenia, to overrun Cappadocia and expel one of the last feeble representatives of the Seleucid monarchy. By 83 B.C. Tigranes sits on the throne at Antioch and his frontier extends to Mount Lebanon.

In 69 B.C. the Roman general Lucullus arrives in the East, crosses the Euphrates in pursuit of Tigranes and invades Armenia. However his army does not support him so he withdraws to Asia Minor.

Pompey replaces Lucullus in 66 B.C. Syria is taken out of the hands of the Seleucids once and for all on the ground that they have virtually ceased to rule. Pompey turns the districts of the Seleucid territory, including Phoenicia, Syria and Palestine into a new province named "Syria". Although this political move consolidates Roman authority in the East and increases the annual revenue of the Roman treasury, in return a measure of security is given to the peoples of the region that they had not enjoyed since the conquests of Alexander. Anarchy and piracy is brought under control and the cities of Phoenicia turn to the sea and trade.

Hellenistic

Phoenicia

John Grainger's second book, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, follows remarkably closely on the heels of his first, *The Cities of Seleucid Syria* (Oxford University Press, 1990), and deals with the same region and the same period. Both deal with the impact of Graeco-Macedonian expansion into the Near-East. While in his earlier volume, G. dealt with the imposition of an entirely new Graeco-Macedonian urban network on Syria, in this second book he considers the manner in which the cities of Phoenicia, which existed and partook of a distinctive culture before the arrival of Alexander, survived through Macedonian conquest and Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule.

In his Introduction, G. refers to three important themes. The first is the Phoenician cities' "methods of survival, the compromises they made to do so, and their varying responses to Greek and Macedonian power." The second theme is the fascinating issue of the cultural relationship between Phoenician and Graeco-Macedonian. To what degree did Phoenicia preserve a distinctive cultural identity? Does the concept of "Hellenistic Phoenicia" have any meaning at all beyond the purely geographic and chronological definition? The final theme is the economy of Phoenicia in the Hellenistic period, a question raised by the reputation of Phoenicians as traders.

The organisation of the book is generally chronological rather than thematic, and given the extremely limited nature of the evidence G. is dealing with, this tends to weaken his ability to tackle these key problems. However, this arrangement works well enough for a study of the political and military impact between the Graeco-Macedonians and Phoenicians. 360-287 B.C. was a period of tremendous upheaval in Phoenicia, with the revolt of Sidon against Achaemenid rule in 345 B.C. and its subsequent destruction (though G. suggests, sensibly enough, that the latter was not as severe as implied by Diodorus' account) and the arrival of

Alexander in 333-2 B.C.G. illustrates the varied responses of the Phoenician cities to Alexander. The ruler of Aradus submitted, the king of Sidon was overthrown (perhaps by Alexander or perhaps by his own people) and replaced by a pro-Macedonian (and perhaps more popular) appointee. Tyre, of course, resisted and was captured after a prolonged siege. Alexander is supposed to have executed 2000 leading citizens but maintained the king in power and G. suggests that he showed a preference for monarchs and popular control, as opposed to some form of oligarchy, which the 2000 executed men may have represented. After the siege of Tyre, no Phoenician city seems to have resisted occupation, despite the shifting control of the area by Ptolemaic and Antigonid/Seleucid armies in the following decades. G. suggests that the sacks of Sidon and Tyre had taught the value of cooperation and compromise with conquerors.

The years 287-225 B.C. saw the Ptolemies gain and maintain control of the cities (except for Aradus), and the disappearance of the Phoenician monarchies. G. suggests (p.58) that in some cases the depositions were carried out by Graeco-Macedonian rulers because the kings had failed to change sides swiftly enough in the period of rapidly changing hegemony early in the century. They were replaced by nominally republican constitutions of "the Tyrians" and "the Sidonians," with epigraphic formulae (in Greek) suggesting similarities to the *boule* and *demos* combination of contemporary Greek cities in the area. Little is known about civic magistrates or the franchise, and the only possible expression of something untypical of Hellenistic cities in general is the use of the Greek term *dikastes* for a Sidonian magistrate in an inscription, a usage which may reflect the Phoenician title *shofet* (p.65-6; 81). However, just as in Seleucid northern Syria, "real power, military power lay in the hands of the king, Ptolemaic or Seleucid." Thus there is little evidence of any major political distinction between the "Phoenician" cities and the "Greek" foundations of the Hellenistic world.

The Seleucids gained control of Phoenicia early in the second century, but from late in that same century there is evidence of increased assertion of local independence in the Phoenician cities as royal control broke down. This phenomenon occurred in other geographically marginal areas of the Seleucid kingdom too, notably those controlled by the Palmyrene, Ituraean and Emesene neighbours of Phoenicia. As before the Macedonian conquest in Phoenicia, this independence focused on the autonomy of individual cities not some wider political and cultural entity of that name.

Thus G. provides a good survey and discussion of the limited evidence regarding the political histories of the cities of Hellenistic Phoenicia in the Hellenistic period. But what about his second theme, that of cultural identity? Regarding the violence and shifting control of the period 360-287 B.C.G. raises the pessimistic possibility that the "cultural heritage (of the Phoenician cities) was also surely mutilated beyond repair, leaving an impoverishment which Greek culture could hope to fill." As noted above, there is little to distinguish the Phoenician cities from "Greek" Hellenistic cities in terms of political situation and institutions. Likewise the ruling classes are known to have engaged in Greek philosophy, Greek athletics and to have set up inscriptions in Greek. In contrast, Grainger refers us to sites away from the major urban centres, such as the cult centre of Astarte at Wasta and the rural community and cult centre of Umm elAmed. The former "remains resolutely local, Phoenician and traditional" in terms of the names of worshippers, the languages they employed and the cult symbolism employed. The latter includes inscriptions in Phoenician (and only in Phoenician), and, according to Grainger, the material culture such as pottery shows little evidence of external influence, except for imported Rhodian amphorae. "Yet of Hellenization there is no sign" (p.81) he claims of Umm el-Amed. Examination of the excavation report suggests that this assertion is an unfortunate over-generalization. Certainly the inscriptions are Phoenician, and the courtyard plans of the temples on the site owe much more to Near Eastern antecedents than to contemporary Greek planning. However, the details of those temples, such as the architectural mouldings and the forms of column capitals and bases show very strong Greek influences. As G. indicates, there are fragments of imported Rhodian amphorae. But the report indicates that there were significant quantities of characteristically Hellenistic black slipped wares and some red-slipped "Hellenistic Pergamene" (Eastern Sigillata). On a more fundamental level, the bulk of the pottery from the site, which the excavators suggest was of local production and which G. dismisses as "the usual local type," displays strong evidence of the influence of the wider Hellenistic world. The forms of most of those vessels, incurved rim bowls, everted rim bowls, fish-plates, fusiform unguentaria and even a *lagynos* and an *amphoriskos*, would be at home at just about any site in the Hellenistic world. Certainly these are not "Phoenician" in origin. The inhabitants of the site may not have been importing much pottery from Greece, but local potters were copying shapes from Greece and elsewhere in the Hellenistic world. The significance, nature and chronology of this "Hellenization" of the material culture of the site are all open to dispute, but it deserves more careful consideration than G. gives them. This tends to weaken the dichotomy between the "Hellenized elite culture" of the urban centres and the supposedly "more traditional" culture of the rural population.

In addition, one must take issue with some of G.'s comments regarding what one might describe as "pan-Semitic" cultural sympathies (such as his description, on p.145 of Tyre and the Jews under John Hyrcanus as "both-self-consciously Semitic"), which manifested themselves as occasional political cooperation between Phoenicians, Jews and Ituraeans in the late Hellenistic period. The evidence of such cooperation is slim enough, and there is plenty of evidence for conflict between "Semites" too, as G. himself documents between Phoenicians and Ituraeans). What cooperation existed surely was based on immediate and practical considerations. Even if those responsible for policy-making in Phoenician cities at that time (the "hellenized" urban elite discussed above) had any conception of themselves as "Semitic," surely it was as Phoenician or Tyrian rather than "Semitic" in any general sense which included Jews and Ituraeans too.

The third topic considered in the book is the economy of Hellenistic Phoenicia. Of course, Phoenicians are, and were, known as traders, but at a more basic level it might be interesting to consider the contribution of local agricultural resources to the development of Hellenistic Phoenicia. Unfortunately there is little evidence. We do not have a clear idea of the rural hinterland controlled by the individual cities at specific

times, and we lack archaeological survey data. However, G. does marshal some of the scattered evidence for the rural economy, including olive oil production at Umm el-Amed and Sarepta and the possible Phoenician involvement in the development of villages in the hinterland. For the most part G. focuses on trade and traders, since that was how Phoenicians appeared to the Greeks and Romans to whom we owe most of our evidence. Much of what G. says is reasonable. However, when he tries to make a case for the Phoenicians as the developers of trade routes eastwards in the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, to the Red Sea, Arabia and India, by way of Syria and the Euphrates, he does seem to be stretching some very tenuous evidence too far. If Phoenicians were important in trade east along the Euphrates, one might expect to find evidence of their presence at Dura Europos, for example, along with the Palmyrenes who are attested there, albeit in the later Hellenistic and Roman period.

In 64 BC Phoenicia was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria, though Aradus, Sidon, and Tyre retained self-government. Berytus (Beirut), relatively obscure to this point, rose to prominence by virtue of Augustus' grant of Roman colonial status and by the lavish building program financed by Herod the Great (and in turn by his grandson and great-grandson). Under the Severan dynasty (A.D. 193-235) Sidon, Tyre, and probably Heliopolis (Baalbek) also received colonial status.

Emperors embracing Christianity protected the area during the later Roman and Byzantine periods (c. AD 300-634). A 6th-century Christian group fleeing persecution in Syria settled in what is now northern Lebanon, absorbed the native population, and founded the Maronite Church.

More to come...

In 608-609 the Persian king Khosrow II pillaged Syria and Lebanon and reorganized the area into a new satrapy, excluding only Phoenicia Maritima. Between 622 and 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius mounted an offensive and restored Syria-Lebanon to his empire. This success was short-lived; in the 630s Muslim Arabs conquered the old Phoenician cities that offered only token resistance to the invader.

The geographical location of Phoenicia at the cross-roads of the Eastern Mediterranean made it a fertile ground for invading armies as indicated earlier. Hence, the Phoenicians were influenced in many ways by the invaders. Also, the Phoenicians as a people did not remain pure Semites. With this in mind, references to individuals as Phoenicians need to be seen in this light.