Prof. Scott B. Noegel
Chair, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization
University of Washington

"Phoenicia, Phoenicians."

First Published in:
Bill Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, eds.
Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press (2005), 792-798.

Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books

Editors:

Bill T. Arnold

H. G. M. Williamson

InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois

Inter-Varsity Press
Leicester, England

2005

ries BCE (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998); **B. Hesse,** "Animal Use at Tel Miqne-Ekron in the Bronze Age and Iron Age," *BASOR* 264 (1986) 17-27; **S. A. Irvine,** *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimite Crisis* (SBLDS 123; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); **G. L. Kelm and A. Mazar,** eds., *Timnah: A Biblical City in the Sorek Valley* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995); **A. M. Maeir,** "Notes and News: Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath, 1996-2002," *IEJ* 53 (2003) 237-46; idem, "Philisterkeramik," *RlA* (forthcoming); **A. M. Maeir and C. S. Ehrlich,** "Excavating Philistine Gath: Have We Found Goliath's Hometown?" *BAR* 27.6 (2001) 22-31; **D. M. Master,** "Trade and Politics: Ashkelon's Balancing Act in the Seventh Century B.C.E.," *BASOR* 330 (2003) 47-64; **A. Mazar,** *Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part I: The Philistine Sanctuary; Architecture and Cult Objects* (Qedem 12; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1980); **N. Na'aman,** "Ekron under the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires," *BASOR* 332 (2003a) 81-91; idem, "In Search of the Reality behind the Account of the Philistine Assault on Ahaz in the Book of Chronicles," *Transeuphratène* 26 (2003b) 47-63; idem, "The Pre-Deuteronomistic Story of King Saul and Its Historical Significance," *CBQ* 54 (1992) 638-58; **E. Noort,** *Die Seevölker in Palästina* (PA 8; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994); **E. D. Oren,** ed., *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment* (University Museum Monographs 108; University Museum Symposium Series 11; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2000); **N. K. Sandars,** *The Sea Peoples: Warriors of the Ancient Mediterranean* (rev. ed.; London: Thames & Hudson, 1985); **C. Schäfer-Lichtenberger,** "The Goddess of Ekron and the Religious-Cultural Background of the Philistines," *IEJ* 50 (2000) 82-91; **I. Singer,** "Towards the Image of Dagon, God of the Philistines," *Syria* 69 (1992) 431-50; **L. E. Stager,** *Ashkelon Discovered: From Canaanites and Philistines to Romans and Moslems* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991); **B. J. Stone,** "The Philistines and Acculturation: Culture Change and Ethnic Continuity in the Iron Age," *BASOR* 298 (1995) 7-35; **D. Sweeney and A. Yasur-Landau,** "Following the Path of the Sea Persons: The Women in the Medinet Habu Reliefs," *TA* 26 (1999) 116-45; **S. Wachsmann,** *Seagoing Ships and Seamanship in the Bronze Age Levant* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press; London: Chatham, 1998).

C. S. Ehrlich

PHOENICIA, PHOENICIANS

The terms *Phoenicia* and *Phoenicians* designate the coastal region north of ancient Israel and the people who inhabited it from the thirteenth century BCE to the first century BCE. The geographic boundaries of Phoenicia are relatively clear. They extended from Mount *Carmel to the Amanus Mountains (Josh 11:8, 19:28; 2 Sam 24:6-7), with the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges marking its eastern flank (Lipiński 2003). Less clear, however, are the cultural and ethnic identities of the peoples who dwelled in Phoenicia's most prominent city-states (e.g., Arvad, Byblos, Sidon and Tyre). In the Bible each one appears with varying degrees of frequency that correspond to the level of economic, political and theological importance that each held for ancient Israel and the Bible's Judean authors. Thus Arvad and Byblos (Heb *gĕbāl,* "Gebal") receive only parenthetical treatments (Gen 10:18; Josh 13:5; 1 Kings 5:13-18; Ezek 27:8-9), whereas Sidon and Tyre appear prominently. Indeed, the characterizations of Sidon and Tyre, though hardly identical, reflect the Phoenicians' enormous economic, political and religious influence on Israel.

1. Phoenician Identity
2. The Historical Context of Israelite-Phoenician Relations
3. Judean Portraits of Phoenician City-states
4. Judean Polemic and Phoenician Cults

1. Phoenician Identity.

The cultural and ethnic contours of Phoenician identity are something of an enigma (Röllig). Most scholars see the Phoenicians as descendants of the *Canaanite populations who lived in the region before them, but the migrations and international trading activities that punctuate the region's history make this uncertain. Moreover, biblical texts apply the term *Canaanite* to the region later known as Phoenicia (Is 23:11; Obad 20), but also to a number of diverse cultural groups in antiquity (Gen 10:15-20; Judg 1:31-32).

It is ironic that so little is known about the Phoenicians. Already in antiquity they possessed enormous fame for their role in transmitting the alphabetic script to Greek-speaking peoples and for their ubiquitous maritime, mercantile and colonial activities throughout the Mediterranean world. But most of what is known about them comes from non-Phoenician sources (e.g., Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek and Israelite), many of which are tendentious, even po-

lemical, in their characterization of them (J am). Thus we can use them only with cautio

Many Phoenician inscriptions have survived, as well as a few letters, but they have yielded only limited information on Phoenician identity (*see* Non-Israelite Written Sources: Syro-Palestinian). An incommensurately larger number of texts must have been composed on papyri or leather, but they have not survived. The extant inscriptions are written in a Semitic language closely related to ancient Hebrew, suggesting some degree of cultural affinity. In fact, there are a great number of parallels between Phoenician inscriptions and Israelite literary texts (Parker; Avishur). Nevertheless, Phoenician inscriptions also demonstrate diversity. Texts from Byblos, for example, are composed in a different dialect and employ a distinct script. Moreover, the Phoenicians' dealings with the Greek world and Anatolia make it likely that those involved in international trade were multilingual.

Etymological research is of limited help in determining Phoenician identity. The origin of the term "Phoenicia" is either Egyptian *(fnḫw)* or Greek *(phoinikē)*. The etymology of the Egyptian word is unknown, and that of the Greek word is uncertain (Muhly). The Greek term initially designated a reddish color, perhaps the color of the Phoenicians' hair or skin or the textile dyes for which the traders in this region were internationally renowned. Regardless of the term's etymology, by the first millennium BCE Greek-speaking peoples were applying it generally to the inhabitants of the region.

The archaeological record sheds some light on issues of Phoenician identity, but considered as a totality, it is woefully incomplete. Although excavations have confirmed the region's activity in the large-scale production of reddish-purple dyes, none of the major Phoenician coastal sites has ever been excavated thoroughly below the Roman layer, because many of the most promising excavation sites are presently occupied or lie under protected monuments from later periods. Byblos has yielded information mainly for the Bronze Age (Markoe, 324). Thus the archaeological record produces a composite and fragmentary portrait of Phoenician civilization, one that is particularly weak for the period of the Iron Age (c. 1200-555 BCE). Even with this incomplete portrait, however, it is clear that the term *Phoenician* implies more of a uniform cultural and ethnic identity than was the reality.

Indeed, the people of the region never referred to themselves as Phoenician, but instead identified with the city-states in which they lived (e.g., Tyrians from Tyre, Sidonians from Sidon), much like the Canaanites who lived in the region before them. Assyrian, Babylonian and Israelite texts typically refer to these peoples similarly (e.g., Judg 3:3; 10:11-12; 1 Kings 5:1-14; 11:1, 5; 2 Kings 23:13; 1 Chron 22:4; Ezra 3:7). Even the gods of Phoenicia are distinguished by locale (e.g., Baal of Tyre, Baal of Sidon), and the divine pantheon differs considerably among its city-states. The consistent references to localized personal and divine identities similarly bespeak cultural diversity and complicate the question of whether Phoenicians are direct descendants of the Canaanites.

Phoenician settlements off the mainland pose similar problems for ascertaining Phoenician identity (Moscati). Already by the eighth century BCE the Phoenicians had established trading and industrial colonies in a number of places throughout the Mediterranean world, including Carthage, Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily, Spain and Utica (the term *Punic* is used to describe these Phoenician cultures, especially after the sixth century BCE). Archaeological excavations carried out at these settlements reveal them to be of a very different character from one another and from those in Syria. A good deal of cultural exchange took place at these locations between Phoenician settlers and the indigenous populations, but since textual and archaeological records are limited, we can only hypothesize to what degree and on what levels such exchange took place. In some cases Phoenician settlers maintained their homeland traditions, especially in matters of religion, hence the discovery of dedicatory inscriptions devoted to the goddess Astarte of Sidon in Spain and Cyprus. Elsewhere, such as at Sidonian settlements in Zinjirli and Karatepe or at the Tyrian city of Carthage, Phoenicians appear to have partially acculturated.

The combined textual and archaeological data thus demonstrate that the term *Phoenician* loosely designates a number of different city-state cultures that lived in relative proximity, and that shared a similar language, as well as an industrious determination for locating new mercantile horizons.

2. The Historical Context of Israelite-Phoenician Relations.
The Phoenicians' mercantile horizons brought their city-states a great deal of wealth, but their wealth naturally made them targets for control by greater Near Eastern powers. Consequently, the history of Phoenicia's city-states is comprised of oscillating periods of autonomy and vassalage, though rarely of economic decline.

Scholars place the start of Phoenician history after the Sea Peoples invasions, when the loss of domination by *Egypt created a power vacuum. Although Ramesses III (c. 1187-1156 BCE) defeated the Sea Peoples, his campaigns ushered in a period of gradual decline for Egypt. No longer capable of maintaining a secure grasp in the Levant, Egypt could not stop its vassals from becoming independent and from reaping the economic benefits that they were once forced to share. Whether Phoenician city-states were willing accomplices in the Sea Peoples' attacks is debated (Bikai), but it is clear that their stability during this turbulent period gave them a greater economic advantage in the ensuing years.

The power vacuum lasted until the reign of the *Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser I (c. 1115-1077 BCE), who marched to Arvad, Sidon and Tyre and demanded tribute. Nevertheless, Assyrian domination was short-lived, and its decline allowed the early Phoenician city-states to flourish and expand their international reach for nearly four hundred years. The decline of Assyrian power also marks the start of Israel's monarchic history, and thus it is during the reigns of *David and *Solomon that the Bible's historical texts first report on Phoenician and Israelite relations.

3. Judean Portraits of Phoenician City-States.
It is only with caution that one can use the Hebrew Bible as a source of information on Phoenician culture and history. This is because the biblical texts were composed primarily from a Judean theological perspective and often are polemical in purpose, and because they were written and edited over a period of several hundred years (Zevit, 439-48). Consequently, they reflect changing political and economic relationships with cities of Phoenician power. Thus, whereas the Phoenician city of Sidon is consistently vilified, Tyre is transformed from a friend and ally of Israel during the period of the united monarchy to an arrogant city of greedy opportunists after the kingdom is divided.

The different orientations of the two major Phoenician city-states and the contractual relationships that formed because of them account in part for the differences in the way they are characterized in biblical accounts of early Israel and the united monarchy. The twelfth to the tenth centuries BCE mark a transitional period in both Israel and Phoenicia. During this time Israel was transformed from a theocratic and seminomadic confederation of twelve tribes to a sedentary monarchic nation with a capital at Jerusalem. The Phoenicians, by contrast, were well underway with their international expansion efforts. Sidon, with some participation from Byblos, began to move north into Anatolia, Cilicia, Aramea and Assyria, and west to Crete, Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily and Spain. Tyre, on the other hand, expanded its presence primarily in a southern direction into Palestine and North Africa, though Tyrian enclaves are known at Carthage and Cyprus and further north at Carchemish.

3.1. Judean Portraits of Sidon. Sidon is consistently given a negative portrait in the Bible's historical texts. During the time of Joshua and the Judges it appears in a list of Israel's oppressors (Josh 13:2-6; Judg 1:31, 10:11), and as a powerful regional threat (Josh 19:28; Judg 18:28). The worship of Sidonian gods is cited as a partial cause for losses incurred at the hands of *Philistines and *Ammonites. During Solomon's reign Sidonian women are blamed for the introduction of the gods Baal and Astarte into Judah, and thus for turning the king away from worshiping Yahweh (1 Kings 11:1-5). These texts similarly connect the downfall of King Ahab to the princess Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31-33; 2 Kings 23:13), whom the text identifies as a Sidonian, even though her father was also the king of Tyre (Josephus *Ant.* 8.13.1). Although the Chronicler states that David received timber from both Sidonians and Tyrians when gathering the raw materials for Yahweh's temple (1 Chron 22:3-4), this text was composed during the Persian period and may reflect an anachronistic understanding of Israel's relationship with Phoenician city-states, for both Sidonians and Tyrians were employed in building the second temple (Ezra 3:7).

3.2. Judean Portraits of Tyre. Tyre, on the other hand, is portrayed positively in biblical texts that describe events during the united monar-

chy There may be political and economic reasons behind this. During the united monarchy Israel controlled the primary trade routes from Phoenicia to the Red Sea (Kuhrt, 2.408). It thus served Tyre well to maintain good relations with its southern neighbor. Similarly, Tyre's proximity and international reach made it an ideal business partner. Since Jerusalem and Tyre benefited mutually from the relationship, the biblical texts that record the relationship with Tyre do so positively.

Thus Hiram, king of Tyre, is called a friend of David (1 Kings 5:1), and he is credited with assisting the building of David's palace by supplying him with cedar, carpenters and stonemasons (2 Sam 5:11-12; 1 Chron 14:1-2). Solomon similarly enlisted Tyrian artisans when he built the temple of Yahweh, and he supplied Hiram with wheat and oil in exchange for cypress and cedar logs from Lebanon (1 Kings 5:7-11; 2 Chron 2:9). Tyrians supplied the bronze and artisans for constructing the temple's two pillars and sacred vessels (1 Kings 7:13-47; 2 Chron 4:11-17). Solomon relied on Byblos, however, for other timber resources and for its expert masons (1 Kings 5:13-18; Ezek 27:9). The gold, precious stones and *almug*-wood used in the construction of the temple and its liturgical instruments were obtained by way of a joint Tyrian-Israelite expedition to Ophir (1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:11-12; 2 Chron 7-18). Joint expeditions to Tarshish also were launched (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron 9:21). The historicity of these expeditions, however, remains in question (Lipiński, *CANE* 2.1321-33).

Indeed, the characterization of Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon is altogether flattering. Biblical texts portray Solomon not simply as an ally of Hiram, but as a quasi-Tyrian king equipped with Phoenician wisdom, wealth and fame (1 Kings 5:1-6; 15:26). The portrayal is underscored by way of literary parallels that draw Solomon and Hiram into close comparison (Peckham, 350-51).

3.3. The Changing Portrait of Tyre in Light of Phoenician History. The positive portrayal of Tyre, however, is gradually replaced with a negative one in biblical texts that detail events after the united monarchy. The change in characterization reflects a deteriorating relationship between Israel and Tyre in the years following the united monarchy.

The early alliance between Tyre and Jerusalem and the latter's emergence as a regional power under David and Solomon did not go unnoticed by Egypt. Five years after Solomon's death, Pharaoh Sheshonq I (c. 945-924 BCE) invaded the Levant (McCarter, 56-57). When he arrived at Jerusalem, King *Rehoboam paid him from the treasures in the royal palace and the temple of Yahweh (1 Kings 14:25-26; 2 Chron 12). The discovery at Byblos of statues of Sheshonq I, Osorqon I (c. 999-959 BCE) and Osorqon II (c. 874-835 BCE), the former two also containing Phoenician inscriptions of the Byblian kings Abibaal and Elibaal (Kitchen, 292-93, 308-9), demonstrates that Egypt and Byblos had resumed trading relations during this period (Pernigotti, 604). In an effort to expand its own influence, Egypt apparently was attempting to strain Judean relations with Phoenicia and Israel. Sheshonq I also had harbored the anti-Solomonic fugitive *Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40—12:1-3). Whether Byblos or other Phoenician city-states played a role in Sheshonq I's invasion is unknown, but it is possible that the renewed relations between Phoenicia and Egypt contributed to Jerusalem's souring relationship with Tyre.

In the ninth century BCE *Assyria began to show an aggressive interest in Phoenicia's wealth. Heavy tribute was imposed under Assurnasirpal II (c. 883-859 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (c. 858-823 BCE). Tilglath Pileser III (c. 744-727 BCE) later enlarged Assyria's holdings by annexing northern Phoenicia, including Sidon and Arvad, and by installing a network of governors there. Although Tyre remained independent, its autonomy was always in check. Sargon II (c. 721-705 BCE) soon completed the annexation of Phoenicia by suppressing a number of rebellions, fomented at times by Egypt, and ultimately by taking Tyre's holdings on Cyprus.

During the reign of Sennacherib (c. 704-681 BCE) the Phoenician city-states, Sidon chief among them, began to test Assyrian power and withhold their tribute. These acts bore swift and violent repercussions. Once again Phoenicia was brought under Assyrian domination. The period of domination, from the reigns of Tiglath Pileser III to Sennacherib, effectively ended Sidonian supremacy in Phoenicia, but since Tyre retained its independence, it benefited from Sidon's loss and became the leading city in Phoenicia.

Although Tyre was not an Assyrian puppet,

some Judeans must have perceived that the Tyrians were acting as go-betweens in the trade between Assyria and the west, and also with Egypt, and that their continued expansion was the direct result of Assyrian imperial growth (Frankenstein). Thus it is in this context that we see Judean prophets linking Tyre to Sidon and castigating it for its opulence and connection to Assyria (Is 23:1-14, Amos 1:9-10, Hos 9:13 [see also Ps 83:6-9]).

Sidon again asserted its independence during the reign of Esarhaddon (c. 680-669 BCE), but violent punishment was quick in the coming. Sidon was destroyed, its king beheaded and its inhabitants deported. A few years later Egypt successfully incited Tyre to rebel. Esarhaddon assumed direct control over it and restricted its trade in the Mediterranean. He then punished Egypt with an invasion and took Memphis in 671 BCE. Judah too was swept up in the wave of Assyrian control. During the reign of *Manasseh (c. 687-642 BCE) Judah even appears to have supported it (2 Kings 21:16), and archaeological evidence suggests that Judah's economy profited indirectly from Assyrian control of Phoenicia (Elat, 246-47).

In 698 BCE Esarhaddon moved to reconsolidate his power in Egypt, but he died en route. His son Assurbanipal (c. 669-627 BCE) completed the task by taking Thebes in 664 BCE. His intensive focus on Egypt naturally weakened Assyria's grip on Phoenicia. Consequently, Tyre and several other city-states rebelled. Assurbanipal retaliated quickly and put an end to Phoenician autonomy. In Egypt he installed Psametik I (c. 664-610 BCE), intending him to be a tool of Assyrian power, but campaigns in Elam and Babylon prevented him from responding when Psametik I drove out his forces in 653 BCE. Psametik I then established an Egyptian military presence in Phoenicia and Palestine.

For reasons that are unclear, relations between Egypt and Assyria appear to have become friendly during the reign of Psametik I's successor, Necho II (c. 610-595 BCE), who maintained a strong military presence and active trading network in Phoenicia. The close relationship also permitted a joint Egyptian-Phoenician expedition to circumnavigate Africa (Herodotus *Hist.* 4.42). However, Necho II's hold in Phoenicia was ephemeral because he spent much of his efforts unsuccessfully assisting the Assyrians against a growing Babylonian threat (2 Kings 23:29-34; Jer 46:2; 2 Chron 35:20-24; 36:3-4).

By the end of the seventh century BCE the *Babylonians had tipped the balance of power, and under King Nebuchadnezzar II (c. 604-562 BCE) they moved to establish control over Phoenicia (2 Kings 24:7). Tyre and Sidon allied with Philistia and Egypt against him, but their alliance in the face of almost certain annihilation was little more than wishful thinking, as the Judean prophets asserted (Jer 25:22; 27:3, Ezek 32:30). Thus it is on the eve of Babylonian control that attitudes toward Phoenicia, particularly among the prophets, become acutely negative (Jer 47:4-5). Although Nebuchadnezzar II had pressured Tyre and Sidon into assisting the second stage of his attack and eventual destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (2 Kings 24:10—25:21; 2 Chron 36:5-19), the prophets perceived them as willing accomplices eager to remove a competitor and create greater opportunities for profit (Ezek 26—28). Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege of Tyre (Josephus *Ant.* 10.228; *Ag. Ap.* 1.21), though an ample demonstration of Tyre's own loathing of Babylonian control, was perceived as a divine punishment for its greed (Ezek 26:1-14; 29:18).

When Babylon fell to the *Persians in 539 BCE, Phoenicia again faced a new suzerain. Unlike the Babylonian kings, however, the Persian rulers realized that they stood to benefit if they allowed Phoenician city-states greater autonomy. Persia even bestowed on Tyre the territory between Mount *Carmel and Zarephath, and on Sidon the cities of Jaffa and Dor. Nevertheless, Persia kept close tabs on Phoenicia. Thus Sidon became one of its satrapies and the site of a key military fleet against the Greeks and Egyptians. As a consequence of Persian rule, Phoenician trade and industry again flourished while the Persian Empire grew.

It is in this context that Sidonian and Tyrian merchants were granted the right to conduct business affairs with the Judeans who had returned from exile. In exchange for their timber, they received foodstuffs and oils (Ezra 3:7). The spread of Phoenician interests in the region is evident by the presence of a Tyrian trading enclave in Judea (Neh 13:16). Despite the apparently good commercial relations, Tyre and Sidon still were remembered in Judean prophetic circles as decadent and were even accused of trading Judean slaves abroad (Joel 3:3-8; Zech 9:3-4). Whether the latter claim is based in reality or on

a widespread mythmaking cliché among Phoe-icia's detractors remains a question (Mazza, 1-43).

4. Judean Polemic and Phoenician Cults.
The changing context of Judean relations with Phoenicia and also with Israel informs biblical polemics against Phoenician forms of religion. In texts that portray events from the time of the united monarchy to the period in which Assyrian hegemony weakened Jerusalemite and Tyrian relations (i.e., from Tiglath-pileser III to Sennacherib), Sidon stands alone among the Phoenician city-states as a target of Yahwist polemic. Indeed, although Solomon's construction of Yahweh's temple adopted Tyrian design (*see* Solomon's Temple), this fact does not appear to have posed any problems for Israelite polemicists. Although many historical factors could be cited as a cause for Israel's schism, biblical texts place the blame squarely on Solomon's tolerance for Sidonian forms of worship (1 Kings 11:1-5; 16:31-33). Anti-Sidonian sentiment and Judean differences with Israel also lie behind the antagonistic accounts of *Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18—19:1-2), King Ahab's Sidonian wife Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30-37), and the brutal eradication of Baal worship by King Jehu (2 Kings 10:18-27).

It is possible that Judeans viewed the religious practices of northern Israel as particularly Sidonian. Archaeological excavations have confirmed the spread of Phoenician cults in northern Israel and beyond after the tenth century BCE (Stern). Nevertheless, it is virtually impossible to delineate artifacts that represent Sidonian as opposed to Tyrian influence, and it is likely that economic and political motives also inform the Judean polemics.

Direct authoritative sources on Phoenician religions are rare, and only a small proportion of Iron Age Phoenician sanctuaries have ever been excavated (Stern). This often makes it impossible to assess the veracity of the biblical characterizations. Some aspects of Phoenician religion do appear to be represented accurately (Zevit, 540). Baal and Astarte (biblical Asherah) were in fact prominent members of the Phoenician pantheon. However, Baal (Phoenician "lord") was a generic title applied to a number of local mountain deities whose identities were not identical, and Astarte was not always Baal's consort. At Sidon Astarte was paired with Eshmun, at Tyre she was Melqart's wife, but at Carthage Baal-hamon was coupled with Tanit. Such local variations again fit the distinctive cultural portraits of the Phoenician city-states (Ribichini).

Archaeological work also has revealed that at least some Phoenician cults practiced child sacrifice in accordance with what is noted in the Bible (2 Kings 16:3; Jer 7:31; 19:5-6), but most of the evidence comes from non-Levantine sites, especially Carthage (Markoe), which has led some to doubt that the practice ever took place in Israel. Similarly debated is the existence of a god named Molech, to whom some of the Phoenicians are said to have sacrificed these children (Jer 32:35). On the other hand, child sacrifice appears to have been practiced periodically in early Israel (Judg 11:34-40), and there seems to be no reason to doubt the biblical accounts even if they provide a polemical charge (Zevit, 549-53).

Despite the Bible's polemical treatments of Phoenician forms of religion and the ideological differences that they represent, archaeologists have shown that the outward forms of Phoenician cults (e.g., temples, sacrifices, sacred utensils, divine titles, etc. [e.g., 1 Kings 18:1—19:2]) were very similar to those of ancient Judah, Israel, Philistia, Ammon, *Edom and *Moab (Schmitz). For some, these similarities suggest a common Phoenician, and ultimately Canaanite, ancestry (Stern). Our inability to define "Phoenician" identity with precision, however, only complicates the question of influence.

See also CANAANITE GODS AND RELIGION; SOLOMON.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. **Y. Avishur,** *Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible: Select Inscriptions and Studies in Stylistic and Literary Devices Common to the Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2000); **P. M. Bikai,** "The Phoenicians," in *The Crisis Years: The Twelfth Century B.C. from Beyond the Danube to the Tigris,* ed. W. A. Ward and M. S. Joukowsky (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1992) 132-41; **M. Elat,** "The Impact of Tribute and Booty on Countries and People within the Assyrian Empire," in *Vorträge gehalten auf der 28. Rencontre assyriologique internationale in Wien, 6-10. Juli 1981,* ed. H. Hirsch and H. Hunger (AfOB 19; Horn: Berger, 1982) 244-51; **S. Frankenstein,** "The Phoenicians in the Far West: A Function of Neo-Assyrian Imperialism," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires,* ed. M. T. Larsen

(Mesopotamia 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979) 263-95; **K. A. Kitchen,** *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 BC)* (2d ed.; Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986); **A. Kuhrt,** *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000-330 BC* (2 vols.; London and New York: Routledge, 1995); **E. Lipiński,** *Itineraria Phoenicia* (OLA 127; Leuven: Peeters, 2003); idem, "The Phoenicians," *CANE* 2.1321-33; **G. Markoe,** "Phoenicians," *OEANE* 4.324-31; **F. Mazza,** "The Phoenicians as Seen by the Ancient World," in *The Phoenicians,* ed. S. Moscati (New York: Rizzoli, 1999 [1988]) 628-53; **P. K. McCarter Jr.,** *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996); **S. Moscati,** "Substrata and Adstrata," in *The Phoenicians,* ed. S. Moscati (New York: Rizzoli, 1999 [1988]) 580-90; **J. D. Muhly,** "Homer and the Phoenicians," *Berytus* 19 (1970) 19-64; **S. B. Parker,** "The Composition and Sources of Some Northwest Semitic Royal Inscriptions," *SEL* 16 (1999) 49-62; **B. Peckham,** "Phoenicia, History of," *ABD* 5.349-57; **S. Pernigotti,** "Phoenicians and Egyptians," in *The Phoenicians,* ed. S. Moscati (New York: Rizzoli, 1999 [1988]) 591-610; **S. Ribichini,** "Beliefs and Religious Life," in *The Phoenicians,* ed. S. Moscati (New York: Rizzoli, 1999 [1988]) 120-52; **W. Röllig,** "On the Origins of the Phoenicians," *Berytus* 31 (1983) 79-83; **P. C. Schmitz,** "Phoenician Religion," *ABD* 5.357-63; **E. Stern,** "The Phoenician Source of Palestinian Cults at the End of the Iron Age," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina; Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium, W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research, Jerusalem, May 29-31, 2000,* ed. W. G. Dever and S. Gitin (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 309-22; **Z. Zevit,** *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

S. B. Noegel

PILLARED HOUSE. *See* ARCHITECTURE.

PLOTS, NARRATIVE. *See* NARRATIVE ART OF ISRAEL'S HISTORIANS.

POETRY

Songs, hymns and poems are scattered irregularly within the Bible's prose stories. Their appearance has prompted attempts to reconstruct older poetic epics behind the prose accounts, as well as debates over the distinction between Hebrew poetry and prose. Recent research, however, increasingly has focused on comparing their literary and theological roles within their narrative contexts. These studies have emphasized that inset hymns in particular played an early and distinctive role in shaping the Historical Books to function as Scripture.

1. Poetry and Prose
2. Inset Songs
3. Psalms and Scripture

1. Poetry and Prose.

1.1. Hebrew Prose Narrative. A distinctive feature of ancient Hebrew literature is that stories always appear in prose. Unlike Babylonian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Egyptian and Greek cultures, no poetic epic survives from ancient Israel. Instead, prose narrative dominates the Bible's history books. Prose was also used to write stories in Egyptian and Greek cultures, but only in Israel does it seem to have excluded the epic form, at least from the surviving literature.

1.2. Inset Poetry. Prose's monopoly on storytelling did not, however, completely exclude poetry from the Historical Books. The stories occasionally depict characters voicing poetic couplets and singing songs, usually by quoting only excerpts, but sometimes quoting what appear to be the entire pieces. Oracles, vows, boasts, riddles, blessings and curses usually take the form of a few poetic lines—for example, Joshua 6:26; Judges 14:14; 18; 15:16; 1 Samuel 15:22-23, 33; 2 Samuel 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16/2 Chronicles 10:16; 1 Chronicles 12:18. A rare longer oracle appears at 2 Kings 19:21-28. Song excerpts of a few lines or less appear at Joshua 10:12-13; 1 Samuel 18:7; 21:11; 29:5; 2 Samuel 3:33-34; 1 Chronicles 16:41; 2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3, 6; Ezra 3:11. But the Historical Books also incorporate one complete dirge in 2 Samuel 1:17-27 and five complete hymns: Judges 5:1-31; 1 Samuel 2:1-20; 2 Samuel 22:1-51; 23:1-7; 1 Chronicles 16:8-36.

1.3. Defining Prose and Poetry. Such a list of inset poetry in prose cannot be definitive, however, because of disagreements over how to distinguish the two modes. The distinction between prose and poetry in modern English is far from clear-cut, and ancient Hebrew was no different. Hebrew prose can exhibit poetic tendencies, especially when it employs word plays and parallelism, while poetry can incorporate prose