



AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH

Tyre in the Early Persian Period (539-486 B.C.E.)

Author(s): H. Jacob Katzenstein

Source: *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Winter, 1979), pp. 23-34

Published by: [The American Schools of Oriental Research](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3209545>

Accessed: 21/09/2013 05:53

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The American Schools of Oriental Research is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Biblical Archaeologist*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

TYRE IN THE EARLY PERSIAN PERIOD (539-486 B.C.E.)

H. JACOB KATZENSTEIN

Two closely related developments influenced the history of Tyre in the early Persian period. The first was when Carthage in North Africa, the greatest Tyrian colony, became independent of the mother city, both politically and commercially. The second development took place in the 6th century when Tyre lost preeminence to its twin city, Sidon.

The Persian domination of Phoenicia extended over 200 years, beginning with the triumphant entrance of Cyrus the Great into Babylon on 29 October 539 B.C.E. and ending with the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the Great in August 332 B.C.E.

The 75 years before Cyrus' entry had been dominated by the rapid rise and fall of the Neo-babylonian or Chaldean Empire. That empire, founded by Nabopolassar on the ruins of the Assyrian empire and extended by Nebuchadnezzar to include Israel and Judah, was dissipated in the first half of the 6th century by their successors, of whom the last was Nabonidus (555-539).

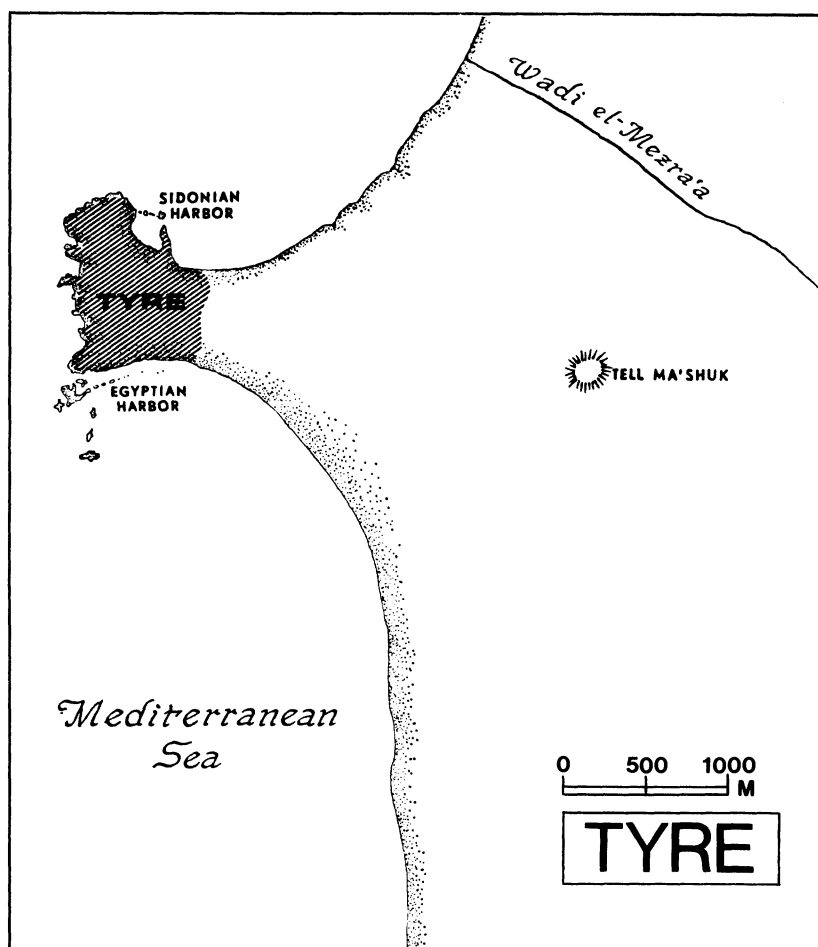
The great imaginative sources for the late 6th and early 5th centuries are the postexilic Hebrew prophets: Ezekiel, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and most

important, Deutero-Isaiah. In contrast, we know the Persian world of the 5th century best from Greek sources, notably Herodotus. An important part of historical study is learning to use these sources and to balance knowledge of the times and places they document with less well-known areas and eras. The 50 years of the early Persian period (539-486) are especially pertinent to the history of Syria and Palestine because the region is so obscure in that period. Some feeling for the environment that pressed in on Judah can be gained from a look at Tyre, the chief city of Phoenicia at the beginning of the time. The intimacy of Israel with the rest of the eastern Mediterranean basin that characterizes the preexilic prophets can also be seen in early Persian-period Phoenicia despite the silence of the Bible regarding its western neigh-

bor. Phoenicia, and its great twin cities, Tyre and Sidon, further provide a link between Asian and Greek history.

The early Persian period includes, in addition to the reign of Cyrus (559-530), the reigns of his son Cambyses (529-522) and of a member of another branch of the Achaemenid family, Darius I (521-486). Darius' struggle to attain power after Cambyses' death is vividly narrated in the most impressive of ancient historical inscriptions, the trilingual Behistun Inscription, carved hundreds of feet up on a sheer rock face.

Our sources for this period in the history of Phoenicia, even in its most important city-states—Tyre, Sidon, and Arvad—are meager. Having only a few direct glimpses, from inscriptions and coins, of events as they happened, we must therefore rely mostly on



the first city on the Phoenician coast. These events are closely related.

Cyrus (559-530) and the Rise of Persia

In 573/2 Nebuchadnezzar came to an agreement with Tyre after a siege of 13 years (cf. Ezek 29:18; Josephus *Ant.* 10.228), one of the longest of the many that mark the history of the island. (Nebuchadnezzar's difficulties confronted Alexander the Great 250 years later. With a typical lack of patience, Alexander refused to accept Tyre as an island; he built a dike and connected Tyre to the mainland, making it the peninsula it is today.)

In Tyre, as in Judah, the Neobabylonians took an important sector of the upper class captive. Indeed, one of the oil ration texts that mentions King Jehoiachin of Judah lists also "126 men of Tyre" (*ANET* 308b). These men were apparently experts at their jobs, to judge from their rations, which were equivalent to those given to the Judean princes. Among the exiles was a royal prince named Hiram, after Hiram I, the friend and building contractor of Solomon. The ruling king of Tyre was not among those hostages; there may have been a change in rulers (cf. *ANET* 308a) when Tyre eventually came to an understanding with Nebuchadnezzar and thus retained a king, possibly chosen (?) by the Chaldeans from local stock (like Zedekiah of Judah in 597). For the first seven years, these rulers were called "judges"; after this period they were again known as kings, the last two of whom were fetched from Babylon (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 1.158).

Our most important source for the 6th-century rulers of Tyre is Flavius Josephus' *Against Apion*. Josephus tells us that when the Tyrian king Merbaal died, the people sent to Babylon "for his brother Hiram, who reigned 20 years." That is, they called a royal prince out of his Babylonian

guesses or deductions from a few Persian sources, the Bible and classical historians.

This last group of sources is the most fruitful, and chief among the classical historians is Herodotus, who visited the Phoenician coast in the middle of the 5th century B.C.E., not long after the period we are considering. The bulk of the other classical sources consists of quotations or excerpts from books of earlier writers whose works have been partially or totally lost. This material, drawn from second- or sometimes third-hand sources, must be used with great caution. Equally difficult to use are later classical writers such as Pliny the Elder, whose visit to the Phoenician coast took place more than 300 years after the death of Alexander the Great. Even the description of the Phoenician

coast by Pseudo-Scylax (ca. 350 B.C.E., still before the conquest of Sidon by Artaxerxes III Ochus) is apparently a Greek version of a list of sites prepared for the use of mariners from local Phoenician sources.

Two main changes characterize the history of Tyre in the early Persian period. The first is that Carthage, the greatest Tyrian colony, became independent of the mother city both politically and commercially, apparently about a decade before Cyrus defeated Nabonidus. Only religious ties bound the cities together for the next three-and-a-half centuries (until the destruction of Carthage by the Romans in 146 B.C.E.). The second change involved the leadership among the Phoenician city-states. Late in the 6th century Tyre lost its preeminence, and Sidon became

captivity to become the Neobabylonian tributary monarch. Tyre, like all the other Phoenician towns, remained under the control of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, until his defeat and capture by Cyrus' army. Josephus tells us that "it was in the fourteenth year of Hiram's reign that Cyrus, the Persian, came into power [in Babylon]" (*Ag. Ap.* 1.158-59). Since we know Cyrus entered Babylon on 29 October 539, we can calculate that Hiram (III) reigned from 551 to 532.

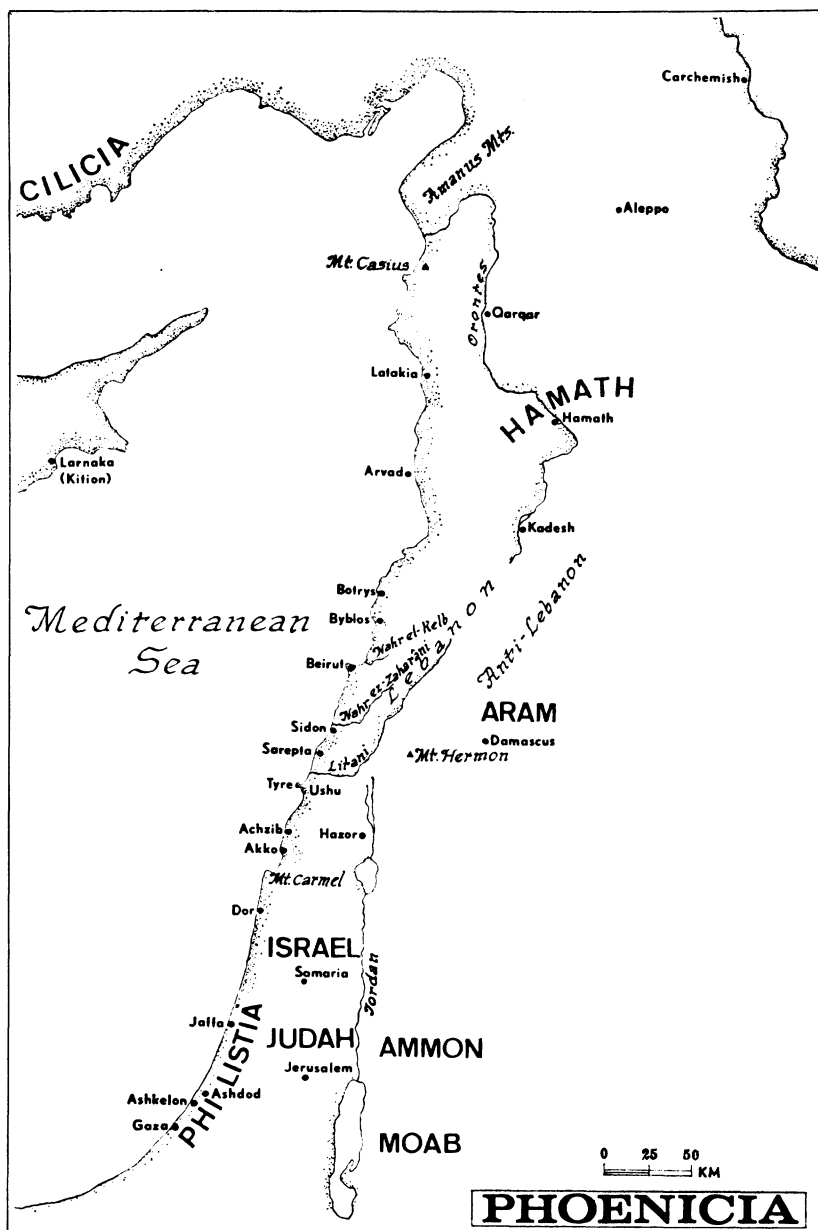
Some scholars have argued that Cyrus came to Tyre, or at least to some part of Phoenicia, before he reached Babylon. We know that after taking power in Iran, Cyrus extended his control up into central Asia and over to the Mediterranean. His most fabled success was his victory over Croesus, the king of Lydia, in 546. These scholars argue that after his triumphs in Asia Minor, Cyrus went south to Syria and Palestine before turning east to Babylon.

Herodotus strongly suggests that Cyrus did not do so, or at least that he did not have any success on the coast. He tells us concerning the residents of the important seaport of Miletus in Asia Minor, that "Cyrus has received them [the Milesians] into alliance. . . ." (*Ag. Ap.* 1.143). Cyrus had to gain the cooperation of Miletus, "since Phoenicia was still independent of Persia and the Persians themselves were not a seafaring people" (*ibid.*). This alliance with Miletus was concluded at a time when the Persians were gradually occupying the Ionian coastal cities as a consequence of their Lydian conquest, and before they could count on Phoenician sailors.

We can assume that Hiram III and the Tyrian nobles knew of and followed with increasing interest the great changes on the political map of Asia in the 540s. The conquest of Lydia and its capital Sardis in 546 changed the balance of power throughout the Near East. With this

victory Cyrus became the ruler of nearly the whole interior of Asia Minor. Consolidating this success, he merged the coastal countries and the Ionian city-states into an empire. Only the great city of Miletus, as we have already noted, made an independent alliance, which was based on an earlier treaty between Miletus and the Lydians. (The later "agreement" of the Phoenician city-states, when they "yielded themselves to the Persians" [Herodotus 3.19] after the conquest of Babylon, may have paralleled this Milesian agreement.)

Throughout the 540s, the effects of the rise of the new Persian empire, its ever-growing strength and its continual expansion must have been felt by all the countries in the Near East and influenced their political thinking. Although we can only surmise the reactions of the former allies of the Lydian kingdom, Egypt and Babylon, they must have been alarmed by the expansion of the Persian empire. Perhaps wishful thinking led both countries to suppose that Cyrus would content himself with that conquest. Both might reasonably have hoped that



the Persian upstart would need time to digest his conquests. Thus an encounter with Cyrus did not appear to be imminent. Without this supposition, we are hard-pressed to explain why King Nabonidus dared to be absent from his capital during the period of Cyrus' rise.

By the time Nabonidus returned to Babylon (ca. 542) after an absence of about ten years, largely spent in Arabia, he had estranged himself from both the clergy and the inhabitants of his capital. They regarded Cyrus as a savior when he attacked Babylon in autumn of 539. According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, "in the month of Tashritu (September/October 539), when Cyrus attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris, the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he (=Nabonidus) massacred the confused inhabitants" (ANET 306b). Nabonidus' army was defeated and the king fled to Babylon, where he fell into the hands of the victorious Persians. About two weeks later, on 29 October 539, Cyrus entered Babylon. The conquest of Babylonia and its incorporation into the Persian empire automatically made Cyrus the ruler of all the countries

in the west, including Syria and Palestine, as far as the borders of Egypt. Cyrus was the master of the whole of western Asia.

At this time the Phoenician city-states, of their own free will, transferred their vassalage to the Persian king. Herodotus, speaking of events 15 years later, reports that "Cambyses thought it not right to force the war upon the Phoenicians, because they had yielded themselves to the Persians" (3.19). Although the story of the Phoenicians is told in Herodotus' report on Cambyses' plans after the conquest of Egypt (525), we believe that the passage dealing with the Phoenicians refers back to events that took place in 539. Some scholars indeed hold that Cambyses, on his way to battle against the Egyptian king, received the submission of the Phoenicians, but our contrary view is supported by the words of Cyrus himself:

All the kings of the entire world from the Upper to the Lower Sea, . . . all the kings of the West land . . . brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon (ANET 316a).

The stories about the proclamation of Cyrus and the later rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (undertaken with the help of the Phoenicians, see Ezra 3:7) also suggest that Cyrus settled matters in western Asia, rather than leaving the work for Cambyses.

Undoubtedly, the Tyrians settled in Memphis sometime before Herodotus' visit, but how long is hard to say.

Further evidence is furnished by the Persian administrative system of provinces or satrapies. The older scheme of the satrapies stems largely from the days of Cyrus and is based on the sequence of his conquests. It subsumes Nabonidus' kingdom into one large satrapy of Babylonia and Abar-Nahara, literally Transeuphratia, the land west of the River Euphrates (cf. Ezra 4:10). The reliability of Herodotus' tradition about the submission of the Phoenician kings, of their own free will, to the Persians is supported by the fact that we never hear of any Persian administrators in the Phoenician city-states. These towns were permitted to keep their local kings, whose rights were similar to those of a satrap: they could pass on the crown to their sons, mint their own (silver) coins, etc.

Today, doubts no longer exist about the historicity of the proclamation of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1ff.) for the return of the exiles to their native lands. This event probably followed hard on Cyrus' entry into Babylon, part of a program of cultural tolerance that characterized Persian rule. We may assume that the royal Phoenician hostages, together with their households and many other exiles who had been taken by the Babylonians, returned to their Phoenician homes, as some Judahites returned to Jerusalem. The

Darius sitting on his throne; behind him stands his son Xerxes.



need for hostages and for total obedience came to an end under the Persians.

Thus, as a result of the first decade of Persian rule in the West (538-528), a new order prevailed on the Phoenician coast. For the historical events in the last years of Cyrus' reign (539-530), and even in the first years of Cambyses' (529-522), we have unfortunately only the stories of Herodotus to rely on. This limitation is profound because Herodotus writes from a notably partisan point of view. At the beginning of his history of the Persian wars, the Greek historian blames the Phoenicians for having "begun the quarrel" which led to the Persian invasion of Greece, "by seizing and carrying off Io, the daughter of Inachus, the king of Argos" (1.1). Admittedly, Herodotus has doubts about this information, for he adds, "according to the Persian story, which differs widely from that of the Phoenician." We can only wonder what story the Phoenicians would have told us.

Cambyses and the Conquest of Egypt

Cyrus died while campaigning in the East in 529; before his death he designated his son Cambyses as his successor. In Cambyses' second year (528) preparations began for an assault on Egypt, surely time-consuming work. Egypt, at that time, was ruled by the Saite dynasty (26th Dynasty). Cambyses' troops assembled first in the Amanus region in northern Syria; the last Persian camp, on the eve of the invasion, was in Akko, a town below Tyre on the coast and one of its possessions. Akko was the base of operations and the staging ground of the Persian army. Cambyses may have chosen Akko in order to be near the main harbors of Phoenicia since the Phoenician fleet played a part in the invasion of Egypt. It was perhaps at this time that "the Cyprians had also joined the Persians of their own accord and took part with them in the expedition against Egypt" (Herodotus 3.19). Amasis, who had ruled

Egypt for 43 years, died on the eve of the invasion which took place in the winter of 526/5. Possibly the long reign of Amasis had lulled Egypt into a state of false security, reinforced by the fact that Cyrus himself had not attacked Egypt.

Relations between Egypt and the Phoenician city-states must have been strained for a long time before the campaign. After all, Amasis had subjugated at least certain towns on the island of Cyprus where Tyre had old colonial interests. The extent of Egyptian suzerainty over Cyprus is uncertain. Nevertheless, Herodotus tells us that "Amasis took Cyprus, which no man had ever done before, and compelled it to pay him a tribute" (2.182). In helping the Persians, the Tyrians undoubtedly hoped to win back their old influence on that island, a position which had been denied them by both Babylonia and Egypt. Hope bound them more firmly to the Persian empire, and patience and time stood to help them. The campaign against Egypt turned out to be a quick one; in 525 Cambyses entered Memphis. Herodotus depicts Cambyses as a man "losing his senses" and reports many hostile

including one against the Carthaginians (3.17).

The Phoenicians, however, said they would not go, since they were bound to the Carthaginians by solemn oaths, and since besides it would be wicked of them to make war on their own children. Now when the Phoenicians refused, the rest of the fleet was unequal to the undertaking; and thus it was that the Carthaginians escaped and were not enslaved by the Persians. Cambyses thought it not right to force the war upon the Phoenicians, because they had yielded themselves to the Persians and because upon the Phoenicians all his sea-services depended (3.19).

In other words, the Tyrians refused to follow the dictates of the most powerful ruler in the world, for the sake of their oaths to their colony, Carthage. This act of defiance would surely not be without consequences.

Sidon surpasses Tyre

The upshot of the Tyrian action was that Sidon was given preferential treatment not only by Cambyses, but also by his successors Darius I

The sources for the early Persian period in Phoenicia, even in its most important city-states—Tyre, Sidon, and Arvad—are meager.

acts against the religion, temples, and gods of Egypt (3.30-38), but whether these stories of Herodotus are based on good traditions is questionable.

Whatever Cambyses' behavior in Egypt, his control was sufficient to give him a base there for further operations. Herodotus also reports that the Libyans and the Cyreneans, "fearing the fate of the country [Egypt], gave themselves up to Cambyses without a battle" (3.13). As a result, the whole northern coast of Africa, including Carthage and the other Tyrian trading posts, now lay open to the Persian monarch. We learn from Herodotus that after the conquest of Egypt, Cambyses planned three expeditions,

(521-486), Xerxes (485-465), and Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464-423). Sidon is Tyre's neighbor, 20 miles to the north. In the second millennium, when Byblos dominated Phoenicia, Tyre and Sidon were its second cities. Despite their proximity, they were often at odds. In the 14th-century Amarna correspondence, for example, Abimilki, king of Tyre, writes to their common Egyptian overlord Akhenaton that Zimreda, king of Sidon, is in close touch with the rebel forces (ANET 484).

In the first millennium as the power of Byblos declined, Tyre achieved a hegemony over Sidon which lasted till the days of Sennacherib, while Arvad, north of

Byblos, remained an independent state.

Cambyses played on local rivalries when the Tyrians refused to obey his order "to sail against their own children [the Carthaginians]" (cf. *Ag. Ap.* 1.125). He retaliated by giving preference to Sidon. The treatment continued in the time of Darius. For example, Persian spies sailed from Sidon for Greece (Herodotus 3.136) in the early years of Darius.

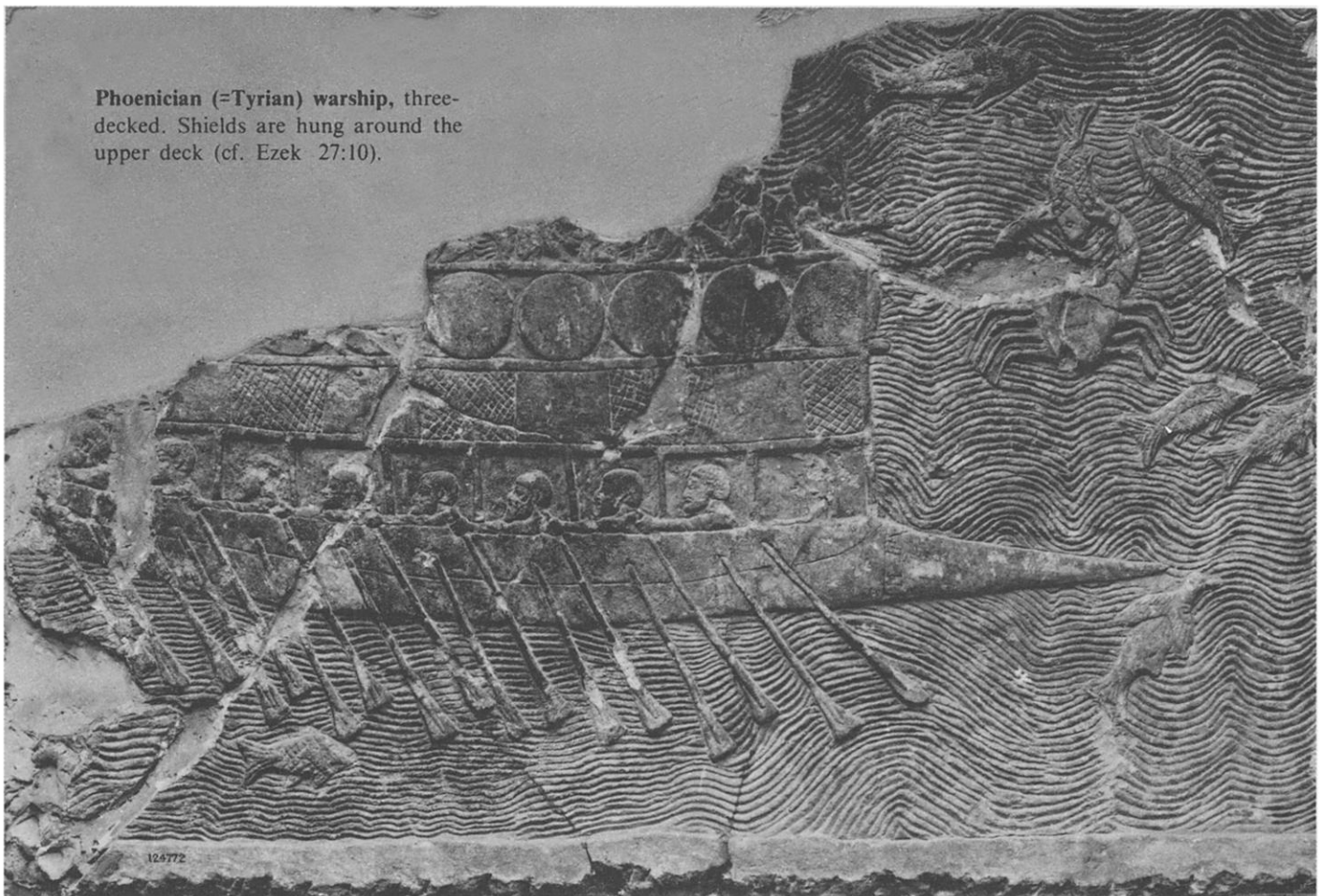
Xerxes I carried on the same policy. Herodotus devotes many pages to Xerxes' review of his army before the invasion of Greece. No doubt exists about the Phoenician role: the best of the fleet was the "Sidonian" group (Herodotus 7.96, 99). Tetramnestus, the son of Anysus, the Sidonian king, was the commander-in-chief of Xerxes' Phoenician ships (300 triremes). Second to him were Mattan, the son

of Hiram, king of Tyre, and Merbaal, the son of Agbaal, king of Arvad (7.98). Xerxes reviewed the fleet on board a Sidonian galley (7.100). Elsewhere Herodotus tells us that on first seeing the mountains of Thessaly, Xerxes embarked, "as was his wont on all such occasions, aboard a Sidonian vessel" to get a good view for the sake of reconnoitering (7.128). Persian preference was also shown by the grant of the first Phoenician minting privileges to Sidon.

From the Persian point of view, we should note, Sidon was, in any case, a more suitable harbor, situated on the mainland and connected directly with the hinterland. Tyre, on the other hand, was an island; goods had to be shipped to and from the mainland. This probably was not a decisive factor in the beginning, but it tipped the scale in favor of Sidon later on.

Possible Reasons for Tyre's Decline

This important change in the ranking of the Phoenician towns has been noted by all who have dealt with the history of Tyre. The medieval Jewish Christian chronographer Bar-Hebraeus (1226-86 C.E.) gives a reason for Tyre's decline. He tells us that "in the 6th year of his [Cambyses'] reign, they [the Persians] overthrew Tyre wholly." There is no other account of any destruction by a Persian king in Phoenicia or Palestine in this period of time. The basis of his report is revealed when Bar-Hebraeus remarks that Holofernes campaigned in the days of Cambyses. Now Holofernes is the general who according to the Book of Judith (2nd-1st centuries B.C.E.) served Nebuchadnezzar in establishing his domination over all of Syria and Palestine. The foreign general in the book is stopped by



Phoenician (=Tyrian) warship, three-decked. Shields are hung around the upper deck (cf. Ezek 27:10).

the archetype of Judahite womanhood, Judith, who gets him drunk, makes a pass at him, and removes his head with a sword. Bar-Hebraeus' source was a passage in Judith (2:28) that described the general's power: "The fear and the dread of him [Holofernes] fell upon them that dwelt on the seacoast, upon them that were in Sidon and Tyre, and . . . they that dwelt in Azotus (i.e., Ashdod), and Ascalon feared him exceedingly." Bar-Hebraeus knew little of the real Holofernes, a general under Artaxerxes III Ochus, who reigned 170 years after Cambyses (and two-and-a-half centuries after Nebuchadnezzar); his treatment of this phase of Tyrian history is groundless.

Equally improbable is Winckler's hypothesis that the change came about because, unlike Sidon, Tyre had associated itself with Egypt on the eve of Cambyses' campaign against Egypt. We have already noted the coincidence of Tyre's decline with her refusal to fight Carthage, after the conquest of Egypt.

The modern historian Movers contended that the fall of Tyre from its powerful height was caused partly by the many wars it had waged since the days of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681), especially in self-defense against Chaldeans and Egyptians. The progressive exhausting of a state's resources and reserves is a well-known historical phenomenon, though Tyre's strength came from commerce more than from natural resources. Movers also adduces, in support of his view, a statement from the Stoic orator Dio Chrysostom (1st century C.E.). Dio asserted that "Hanno [of Carthage] made the Carthaginians Libyans [= Africans] instead of Phoenicians" (*Oratio* 25.7). Movers believes Dio is talking not about Carthaginians who lived in Carthage, but about rich merchant princes who lived in Tyre and left their homes to emigrate to Carthage during the economic decline brought about by the Neobabylonian wars.

We believe that this is far from the meaning of Dio's assertion. We

An air view of Tyre as it appeared in 1917.



understand the passage to mean simply that Hanno declared the political independence of Carthage from Tyre and thereby "founded" the state as a politically independent entity. Carthage's aims and future henceforth lay in the western Mediterranean basin.

Carthage's independence was disastrous for Tyre because the daughter-city took with her all of Tyre's former colonies in the west. On the other hand, we may assume that, in the struggles between Tyre and Sidon, Carthage's sympathies were always on the side of Tyre (cf. Arrian 2.24.25; Diodorus 17.40.3, 41.1).

The Blessing of the Persian Policies

Although Tyre suffered some loss of political position after Cambyses' Egyptian campaign, in other respects the Phoenicians benefited from the Persian domination. Herodotus' claim that in the days of Cambyses "vast numbers of Greeks" came to Egypt (3.139) does not agree entirely with archeological findings at Egyptian sites. S. S.

Weinberg (1969) has found that a "rapid decline of the [Greek] settlement" at Naukratis took place after the Persian conquest under Cambyses in 525 B.C.E. Naukratis, a largely Greek town in the Delta during the Saite period, provides a good representation of Greek involvement in Persian Egypt. The Phoenician traders, it seems, knew better than the Greeks how to exploit the new opportunities, although it is not likely that they were entirely new.

When Herodotus came to Memphis in the days of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464-423), he found

a sacred precinct . . . in Memphis, which is very beautiful, and richly adorned, situated south of the great temple of Hephaestus. Phoenicians from the city of Tyre dwell all round this precinct, and the whole place is known by the name of the *camp of the Tyrians*. Within the enclosure stands a temple, which is called that of Aphrodite the Stranger, . . . among all the many temples of Aphrodite there is no other where the goddess bears this title (2.112).



A 6th-century papyrus from Saqqara written in the southern Phoenician dialect of Tyre and Sidon.

It should be noted that while Hephaestus was the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian god Ptah, who had been located in Memphis from time immemorial, Aphrodite was the Greek form of Astarte (cf. Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 1.10.32), and her worship had apparently been brought by the Tyrians from their homeland (cf. Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 1.118). Tyrian proximity to the temple of Hephaestus, the god of artisans, was not accidental. We should probably credit the Tyrian workers in Memphis with some of the notable Phoenician silver bowls, ornamented mainly in Egyptian style; Phoenicians were also famous for their ivory-work and other artistic triumphs.

Undoubtedly the Tyrians had settled in Memphis some time before Herodotus' visit, but how long is hard to say. The "Tyrians' camp" in Memphis was not the only Phoenician settlement in Egypt, Phoenicians had been living and trading there years before the Persian conquest. Phoenician settlements might, indeed, have preceded those of the Greeks. This is suggested by the historical ties between Egypt and Tyre, from the days of their valiant opposition to both Assyrian and Babylonian kings. Syro-Egyptian contacts had flourished in the Late Bronze Age, and they may well have revived quite early in the first millennium.

Another relevant piece of evidence is a 6th-century papyrus from Saqqara, the cemetery of Memphis, written in the southern Phoenician dialect of Tyre and Sidon.

Scene of the conflict between Persians and Greeks at the Battle of Marathon (5th century B.C.E.).

This document possesses great interest as one of the few ancient West Semitic texts that refers to women and their affairs. The difficult and fragmentary text can be rendered as follows.

To Arishut, daughter of Eshmunyatton

Say to my sister Arishut: "Your sister Beshah says:

'If you are well, then I am well.

I bless you by Baal-saphon and by all the gods of Tahpanhes.

May they give you health.

I hope to receive the money which you have sent me.

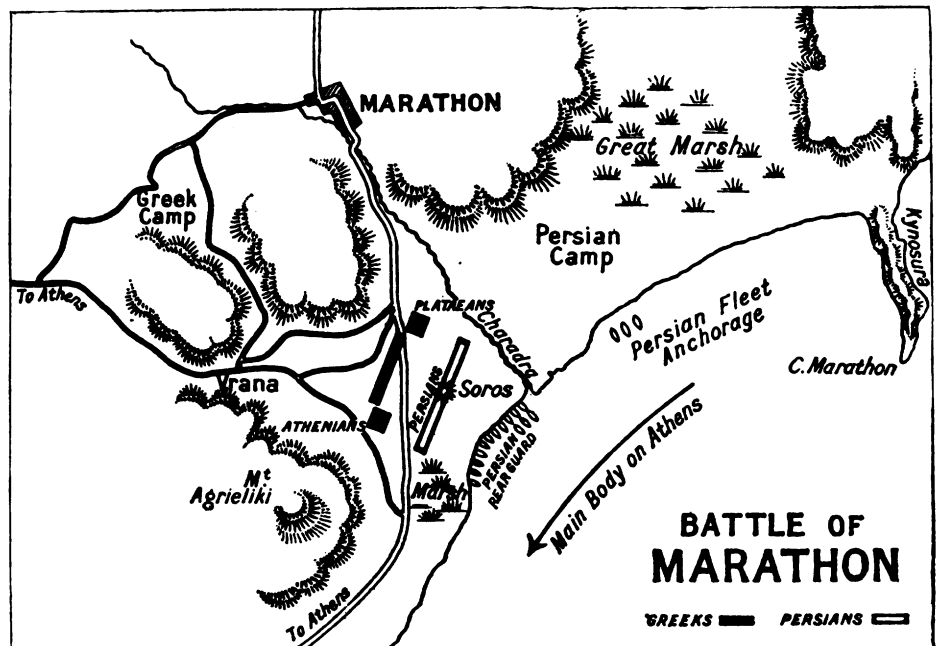
You should give me a weight of 3 . . . You should put aside all the money that is mine.

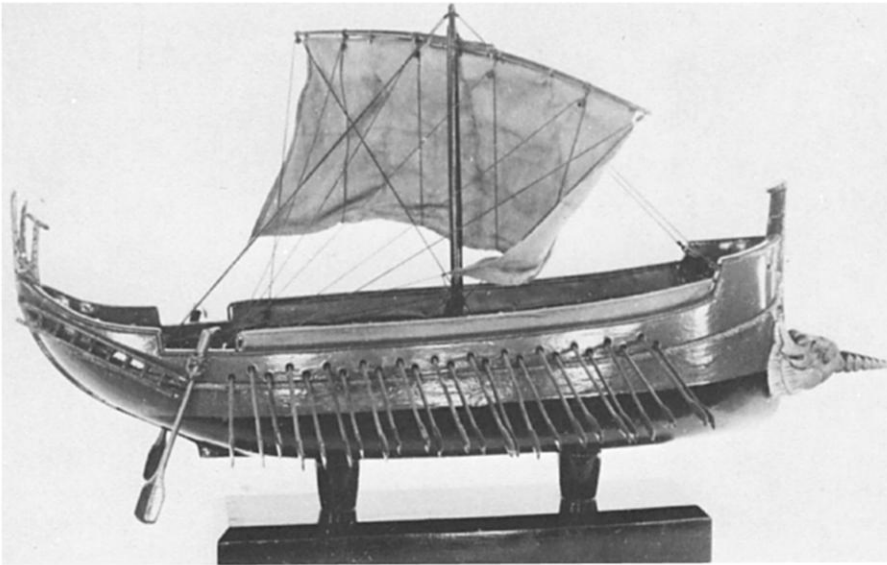
May he [Baal-saphon] bless you with security for paying me . . .

You have sent me the account of the discharge of someone who"

The two correspondents are daughters of a man with a Phoenician name, and one of them has a Phoenician name; Beshah is probably an Egyptian name. The gods invoked are both Phoenician (Baal-saphon is known as a god from Ugarit and as a place name in Egypt in the Bible, Exod 14:2, 9; Num 33:7) and Egyptian (the gods of the Delta town Tahpanhes, mentioned in Jer 43:7-8; 44:1). The business deal between these women is not otherwise clarified, but most likely their base of operations was the Tyrian camp in Memphis. (The text is *KAI 50*; the translation is courtesy of M. O'Connor.)

The incorporation of Tyre into the Persian empire was a great blessing for the Phoenician merchant princes. This empire was the greatest created until then, well organized, with a wide network of roads. It created markets for goods from the west to the east and vice versa. The empire was unified not only geographically but also by the imperial Aramaic language, of which Biblical Aramaic is one form, and by the





Greek warship, with two rows of oars, about 500 B.C.E.

imperial Persian monetary system. As a result the Phoenician city-states flourished.

The Phoenician towns became a strong factor in the development of Persian policy because of their fleets and their great maritime knowledge and experience, on which the Persian navy depended. The Persian king recognized this influential position, and the Persians regarded the Phoenicians more as allies than subjects. Arvad, Sidon, and Tyre were given large tracts of land and allowed to trade both on the Phoenician and Palestinian coast (see Pseudo-Scylax) and inland (cf. Neh 13:16; Josephus *Ant.* 11.344; 12.258ff.). Consequently, the Phoenicians put their ships and crews at the disposal of the Persians, and they sailed willingly against their ancient rivals, the Greeks.

The Greeks and the Persians

The Persians put Phoenician naval knowledge to good use in dealing with rebellious Greek subjects in Asia Minor. These actions, under Darius, form a prelude to the great campaigns of his successor Xerxes, mentioned earlier. When between 500 and 494 the Ionian city states in Asia Minor revolted against the Persians, Caria and Cyprus sided with the Greeks,

but the Phoenicians aided their overlord.

The Persian counterattack was carefully planned: first, Persian forces recaptured Cyprus (Herodotus 5.115-16), and then they moved slowly to the center of the revolt, the large town of Miletus. This was conquered in 494 after the great naval battle of Lade, in which the Phoenician ships played a decisive role (Herodotus 6.14). Miletus was destroyed totally, and its Greek inhabitants exiled to the interior of Persia. Thus, one of the largest Ionian shipping centers collapsed to the advantage of Phoenician traders. As a result of the resubjugation of the Greek city-states in Asia Minor and in the Cyclades, and the resubmission of Cyprus, the whole eastern Mediterranean basin was restored to Persian rule. This sector of the Mediterranean once again became a Phoenician lake, at least during the reign of Darius. Even the rich island of Thasos, an island in the north Aegean Sea, off the coast of Thrace, submitted to the Persian king in consequence of a message from the latter (Herodotus 6.46-47). Many years before, the Tyrians had founded a colony, another Tarshish (= a trading-place chiefly for smelting metals) in Thasos. Here Herodotus saw the gold mines,

“which the Phoenicians [= Tyrians] discovered at the time when they . . . colonised the island” (6.47). Herodotus also reports that “in Tyre I remarked another temple where the same god was worshipped as the Thasian Heracles” (2.44).

True to Persian policy, the overlord was eager to punish those Greek city-states which had actively assisted their brothers in Asia Minor. Phoenician fleets took an active part in the invasion of Greece by Darius’ army. The Persians under Mardonius reestablished Persian rule in Thrace in 492. Herodotus tells us that, as a result of storms off Mt. Athos later that year, part of the Persian fleet was destroyed (6.44). The number “was little short of 300” ships. Yet the Persian power still must have been great because

the heralds who had been sent into Greece obtained what the king had bid them ask from a large number of the states upon the mainland, and likewise from all the islanders whom they visited. Among these last were included the Aeginetans, who, equally with the rest, consented to give earth and water [the symbols of submission] to the Persian king (6.49).

Obviously, the Persian-Phoenician navy was powerful even after the incident near Mt. Athos. Phoenician ships were present at the battle of Marathon, as we know from the painting in the stoa Poikilē described by Pausanias (1.15.3). After the battle the Persian fleet, having lost only seven vessels (Herodotus 6.115), sailed around Cape Sunium to the bay of Phalerum, the harbor of Athens. When the Persians discovered the Athenian infantry waiting for them, they “sailed away to Asia” (6.116). The victory at Marathon strengthened Greek patriotism and inspired Miltiades to undertake a campaign in the spring of 489 against the islands in the Aegean sea; this expedition failed completely. The Persians did not give up easily their goal of subjugating all the Greek states. After the first Persian-Athenian war, Darius immediately



A Phoenician silver bowl,
Egyptian in style, from
the late 7th century B.C.E.

undertook preparations for another, which was waged by his son Xerxes a decade later.

Persian Administration of Phoenicia

The system of satrapies under Cyrus and Cambyses was revised by Darius during the last decade of the 6th century. In the new division of the empire there were 20 satrapies. The former satrapy of Babylonia and Abar-Nahara was split in two. Babylonia (and Assyria) became the ninth satrapy (Herodotus 3.92). Herodotus' account of the fifth satrapy differs conspicuously from his description of the other satrapies. There he names the peoples or their countries; here exact borders are given in the north, the south and the west (= the sea). Thus the fifth satrapy extended from the town of Posideium (south of the Orontes) to the (northern) borders of Egypt (excluding a district of Arabia). And Herodotus adds "all

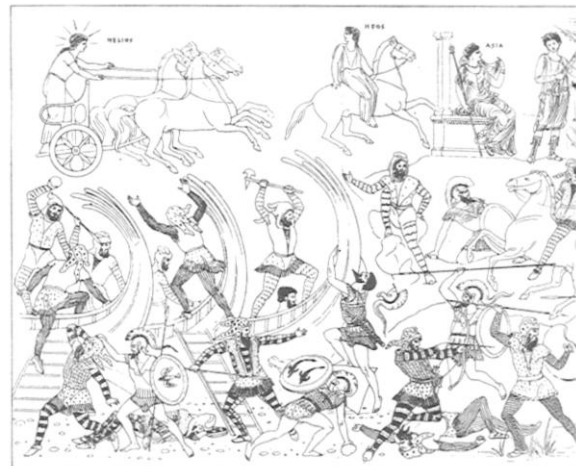
Phoenicia, and Syria, which is called Palestine, and Cyprus" (3.91). The scholars do not agree in regard to the eastern border. The most likely hypothesis is that it was the western line of the Euphrates. These borders recall the expression "Beyond the River" (Ezra 8:36; Neh 2:7, 9; 3:7; cf. also 1 Kgs 5:1 [MT], where the scribe gives the borders of the kingdom of Solomon "from the River [= Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines and unto the border of Egypt").

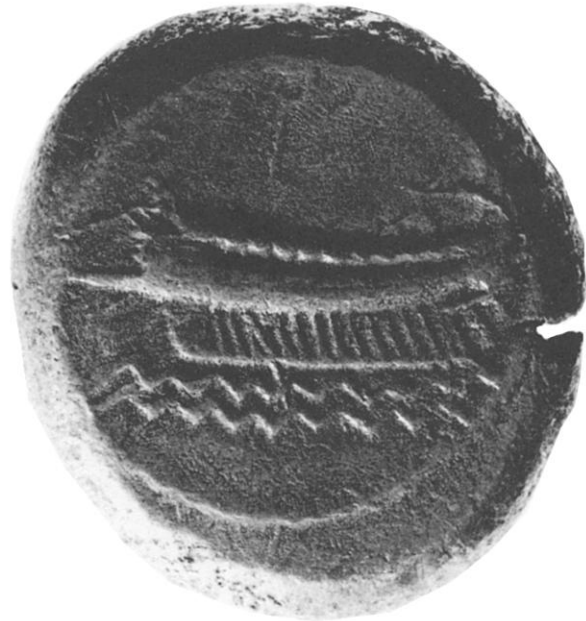
This satrapy paid 350 talents to the king and was responsible for the upkeep of its governor and sub-governors and their household (cf. Neh 5:14ff.) and for the whole administration and its officials. Moreover, the satrapy had to provide its share in ensuring the preparedness of the armed forces. The fifth satrapy paid as low a sum as it did because Phoenicia's share was to see to the readiness and

fitness of the fleet. There were no subordinate governors in Phoenicia, as there were in Samaria and Jerusalem; the rulers of Phoenicia were always called kings (Diodorus 19.58.1; Arrian 2.15.7, 20.1). As such, they dealt directly with the Persian satrap who came to Tripolis of Phoenicia, a colony north of Byblos, whose parent cities included Arvad, Sidon, and Tyre (Diodorus 16.41). Tripolis was the common meeting place of these kings, where they took counsel among themselves as well as met with the representative of the Persian crown to discuss and settle matters of grave importance.

The Persian empire was a blessing to the Phoenician towns, but their contribution to history remained in the mercantile field during this long period of time. No longer was it to Tyre but to Carthage, the daughter of Tyre, that the Tyrian trading ports in the west now looked for political support and protection. For the next 300 years, Carthage was a mighty power in the western Mediterranean Sea.

The rivalry of Tyre and Sidon came to an end after Sidon led a revolt against a later Persian king, Artaxerxes III Ochus (358-338); in 351/50, Ochus destroyed Sidon; Tyre was left alone for another two decades until Alexander tied the beautiful ship of Tyre (Ezekiel 27) to the mainland of Asia and ravaged it.





The Battle of Marathon as shown in the reconstruction of the picture of Mikon and Panainos in the Stoa Poikile (“the Painted Portico”) in Athens. The Phoenician ships are shown at the extreme left. Pausanias described the painting as follows:

At the end of the painting are those who fought at Marathon; the Boeotians of Plataea and the Attic contingent are coming to blows with the foreigners. In this place neither side has the better, but the center of the fighting shows the foreigners in flight and pushing one another into the morass, while at the end of the painting are the Phoenician ships, and the Greeks killing the foreigners who are scrambling into them (Pausanias 1.15.3)

The reconstruction is from *Die Marathonschlacht in der Poikile*, by Carl Robert. Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm 18. Halle: Niemeyer, 1895.

Sidonian war galleys depicted on two silver double shekels dating to the reign of Abd-Astart, king of Sidon (370-358 B.C.E.).





Darius with an attendant behind him and nine rebels before him, as shown on the relief at Behistun.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ANET= *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, third edition. Ed. J. B. Pritchard. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1969.
- Bar-Hebraeus =
The Chronography of Gregory Abūʿl Faray... known as Bar-Hebraeus. Trans. E. A. W. Budge, I. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Hill, G. F.
 1910 *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*. London: British Museum.
- KAI= *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*. Ed. H. Donner and W. Röllig. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962-64.
- Katzenstein, H. J.
 1973 *The History of Tyre*. Jerusalem: The Schocken Institute for Jewish Research.
 1978 Some Notes about the "Tyrian camp" in Memphis, Egypt (Herodotus II.12). *Eretz Israel* 14: 161-64 (Hebrew).
- Leuze, O.
 1935 *Die Satrapieneinteilung in Syrien und im Zweistromlande von 520-320*. Halle: Max Niemeyer. (Reprint: Hildesheim: H. A. Gerstenberg, 1972.)
- Movers, F. K.
 1841-56 *Die Phönizier*. Bonn/Berlin: Ferd. Dümmler. (Reprint: Aalen Scientia, 1967.)
- Pseudo-Skylax =
Geographi Graeci minores I. Ed. C. Müller. Paris. 1855.
- Weinberg, S.
 1969 Post-Exilic Palestine. *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4: 78-97.
- Winckler, H.
Altorientalische Forschungen. 3. Reihe. Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer.