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**140.0 ISRAELITE-PHOENICIAN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND THE VOYAGE OF MULEK TO THE NEW WORLD.** By Bernhart Johnson, archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management, El Centro, California. A paper read at the Twenty-second Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and Allied Fields, held at Brigham Young University on October 28, 1972. Revised and extended to include new archaeological data, with the collaboration of M. Wells Jakeman, professor emeritus of archaeology and anthropology, BYU.

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS between ancient Israel and Phoenicia during the first half of the first millenium BC were chiefly known, until recent decades, only from brief biblical references. Because the ancient writers of the Bible were not primarily interested in Israel's economic relations with her neighbors, most of what they mention concerning trade is incidental—an illustration of a principle, or a statement in passing.

Yet it was mainly through utilizing opportunities for trade, provided by her advantageous geographical position, that Israel was able to maintain her independence among powerful neighbors for more than four centuries, and even become a leading nation for a time. Though ancient Israel—except during Solomon's empire—was very small in comparison with neighboring nations, it was in a strategic commercial location. For through it passed nearly all the trade routes that connected Arabia and Egypt on the southeast and southwest with Phoenicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia on the north and northeast.

Our knowledge of commercial relations between ancient Israel and Phoenicia has been greatly enhanced by archaeological excavations in the Holy Land during the past century. However, in spite of the great amount of archaeological digging that has been done, not much analysis and interpretation of the innumerable finds, relating to commerce, has thus far been published.

#### THE UNITED MONARCHY

Before the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites traditionally were at first wandering pastoralists herding sheep and goats; they added agriculture to their economy after returning to their promised land from the bondage in Egypt. Under David and Solomon, however, increased diplomatic relations with other nations coincided with expanded foreign trade. And following the Babylonian captivity, the surviving Israelites of Judah became even more involved in commerce and also finance—interests which have remained important among the Jews of the Diaspora to the present day.

*David and Hiram.* About 1000 BC, when David defeated the Philistines in the southern coastal area, the Phoenician city-state of Tyre was rising in power, and King Hiram welcomed David's subjugation of their common commercial rivals. The once-powerful nations of the Hittites, Hurrians, Egyptians, and Babylonians were, for the time being, no real threat; and Assyria had not yet come to full power. David and Hiram entered into a political and military pact wherein Hiram agreed to provide David with cedar and cyprus timbers, architects and craftsmen, and to build for him a palace at Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:11), which he in turn probably paid for more in military support than in silver or gold (Orlinsky, p. 73).

*Solomonic Period.* Though probably most of Israel's judges and kings had some realization of the

economic importance of their nation's position on the main international trade routes of their day, only Solomon, coming to the throne during the temporary inactivity of his powerful neighbors, took full advantage of the situation. Although various Israelite rulers exacted tribute for goods transported through their territory, thus sharing in small degree the riches of their neighbors, only Solomon expanded this business into an extensive trading system of his own (May, p. 66). Like his father David, he cultivated the friendship of Hiram of Tyre. This friendship resulted in lasting good relations between Israel and Phoenicia.

With Hiram's help, Solomon became one of Israel's heroes. His commercial ventures were considered fit topics for early biblical mention. He became a man of great renown—even to this day—for his calm, thoughtful nature and his wisdom. He is an example of the enlightened oriental ruler. His desire to make Israel a strong nation was foremost. He created new towns and rebuilt those devastated by war. He also built forts, supply depots, and a number of fortified outposts (the 'cities of store' of 1 Kings) for dealing with foreign traders who crossed his country's boundaries, at the same time that he was developing his own merchant system. Roads were developed to attract more foreign caravans into Israel, as well as to promote commerce within the nation.

Archaeological excavations have established that Solomon's major centers of trade within his kingdom, besides Jerusalem, were Hazor in the north, Megiddo in the center, and Gezer in the south. Each of these cities was rebuilt to facilitate his commercial enterprises. Another of Solomon's constructions for this purpose has been found at Ein Gev by the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, on the old route from Damascus to the coast. A building uncovered in Stratum E at Hamath in central Syria is probably also Solomonic. Solomon's success in holding the kingdom of Hamath in his empire gave Israel control of the main caravan routes from Mesopotamia across Syria to the Mediterranean coast and through Transjordan to Edom and Arabia.

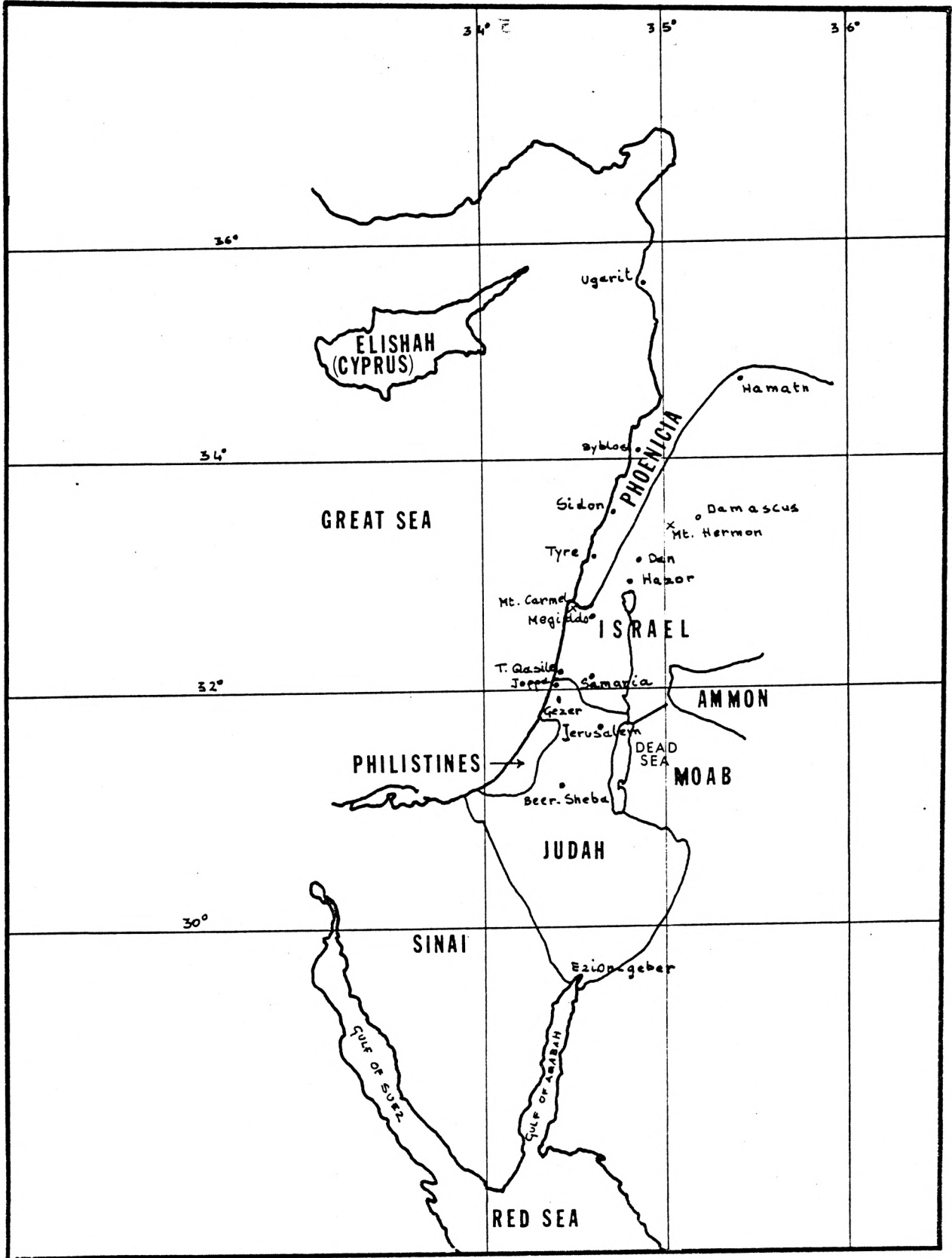
It is clear from 1 Kings 10:28-29 that Solomon was an effective commercial entrepreneur, for he quickly monopolized the lucrative, as well as strategic, horse-and-chariot trade. He imported horses from Cilicia, where fine animals were bred, as well as horses and chariots from Egypt. His agents purchased the horses at the current price of 150 shekels each. These were then resold at higher prices to the kings of all the Hittite and Aramean city-states in the north (Wright, p. 75).

Solomon's international status in his day is evident in Egyptian Pharaoh Siamun's gifts to him of not only his own daughter as part of a peace offering, but also the city of Gezer in southern Palestine, which the Egyptians had captured from the Philistines some years earlier. This is our only record of an Egyptian pharaoh giving his own daughter in marriage to a foreign monarch—ample evidence of Solomon's position in the ancient Near East.

It is clear from the Scriptures that Solomon obtained supplies and craftsmen from Hiram of Tyre for building his various palaces and the temple at Jerusalem. He said, "There is none among us who knows how to cut trees like the Sidonians" (1 Kings 5:20). "Sidonians" is now known to be a general term for all southern Phoenicians, including those of Tyre (Gordon, p. 184). The scriptural record tells us that Hiram sent to Solomon cedar from Lebanon and a large crew of architects, engineers, artisans, and overseers for building the great temple. Solomon's temple was thus in large part a product of Phoenician design and workmanship. The three main divisions of vestibule, holy place and holy of holies, the pilasters (ornamental attached pillars) with scroll capitals, and the two free-standing columns called Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings 7:20) all originated in Canaanite-Phoenician architecture. Even the respective Hebrew names for these three divisions (*ulam*, *hekhhal*, and *debir*), as well as the term *bayit*, 'house of the Lord,' for the whole temple, also appear to have been borrowed from the Phoenicians (Orlinsky, p. 80).

*Solomon's Building Activities.* The Scriptures do not, however, tell us the whole story. It is the archaeologists who give us today a much fuller record of Israelite-Phoenician relations in the first millennium BC.

It is now clear, as a result of the analytic and interpretative work of Yigael Yadin and other Israeli archaeologists, that Solomon also used Phoenician architects and masons to construct the palaces, defensive walls, and gatehouse complexes at the Solomonic cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. Yadin has also discovered that Solomon's temple at Jerusalem had a floor plan like that of excavated Phoenician temples; and that the gatehouse structures at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were similar in dimensions and structural style to those of Phoenician temples. He concludes that "This fact is particularly interesting, because it adds further evidence to the biblical assertion of Phoenician influence on Solomon's building activities. King Solomon's close collaboration with King Hiram was far more than a business partnership." (Landay, p. 162.)



Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century BC

Compared with Phoenicia, with its fine harbors at Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Ugarit, and other places, Israel had only a few, rather poor natural harbors on its sea coasts. Consequently it never ventured so much into sea trade, or became any kind of a sea power. One important Israelite shipping port on the Mediterranean, however, was at the present ruin-mound of Tell Qasile at the mouth of the Yarkon River, within the city limits of modern Tel Aviv. Recent excavations in this mound have uncovered the foundations of large public buildings and storehouses—the ruins of a flourishing Israelite seaport of the eleventh and tenth centuries BC. (Culican, p. 76.) This harbor, however, and others used by Solomon's ships at Joppa and Dor, being unprotected, could be used only when the sea was calm (Orlinsky, p. 48). It was from these ports on the Mediterranean coast that Solomon sent out some ships for limited sea trade with Phoenicia and Egypt. The cedars of Lebanon and other materials for David's palace and Solomon's palace and temple at Jerusalem, for instance, were undoubtedly transported by sea to Joppa (the port nearest Jerusalem itself) and thence overland to Jerusalem.

Biblical references indicate that Solomon's ships were all or mostly built by expert Phoenician craftsmen and manned in part—at least for distant voyaging—by experienced Phoenician seamen. This was the case in his first venture into sea trade with distant lands, namely his Red Sea commerce with the fabulous spice-producing kingdoms to the south near or by way of the Indian Ocean.

For a long time, spices from the lands of frankincense and myrrh in southern Arabia (Saba, Qataban, etc.) had been transported overland by camel caravan to Egyptian, Israelite, and Syrian markets. Then Solomon and his Phoenician friend decided to build a harbor and ships at Ezion-geber, the southernmost outpost of Solomon's empire, located at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, which leads into the Red Sea. Spices and other products could then be transported entirely by sea from southern Arabia to this Israelite port, without payment of the heavy caravan rental and protection money levied by the tribes along the land route. From Ezion-geber, the goods still had to be transported more slowly by caravan to the markets in Israel, Egypt, and Phoenicia. The cooperation of the queen who then ruled the kingdom of Saba (biblical Sheba) and controlled the South Arabian ports of origin, was necessary for the success of this astute venture (May, p. 66).

*Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.* Scholars have long pondered the biblical account of the visit of

the Queen of Sheba to Solomon with her gifts of fabulous wealth. In 1 Kings 10:1-13 we read that "when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon . . . she came to test him with hard questions. . . ." It has been suggested that her "hard questions" were intended to negotiate a business deal with the Israelite king (Orlinsky, p. 81).

Solomon's shipping line evidently made such inroads in the lucrative caravan-trade controlled by the Queen of Sheba, that she hastened to Jerusalem with all manner of presents in order to conclude an amicable trade agreement with him. . . . A satisfactory commercial treaty was evidently negotiated between the two sovereigns, because we are informed that "King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all that it pleased her to ask, besides that which he gave according to his royal bounty." (Glueck, 1938, p. 14.)

*Solomon and the Red Sea Trade.* Though the South Arabian spice trade via the Red Sea seems to have enriched Solomon more than Hiram, the Phoenicians remained paramount in the commerce of the ancient world.

Very early in their history they had opened up an overland route to India for their merchant caravans. Because the amount of goods that could be carried overland, however, was small compared to that which could be transported by sea, the Phoenicians continually sought a way to gain regular passage for their ships into the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea. There was the Wadi Tumilat canal in Egypt (connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea), but its use was dependent on the good will of the Egyptian kings. Occasionally it filled with sand and became unusable anyway. In the time of Hiram another way was found: the Israelite outlet at Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqaba. As we have seen, Hiram reached an agreement with his friend Solomon whereby the Phoenician king built a harbor and ships at this place for their joint use.

Yet this was a strange arrangement. As has been mentioned, almost all the resulting increase of profit from the South Arabian spice trade seems to have gone to Solomon, who had contributed only the site for the Red Sea port. He had neither the craftsmen to build ships, nor timber, nor crews experienced in deep-sea navigation. And he supplied neither funds nor manpower for constructing the harbor at Ezion-geber. Why, then, did the Phoenicians put so much into the venture? It is true that they now had a way to reach India by sea. Possibly, however, there was

a more immediate attraction for such able and experienced men of business.

In a recent book Paul Herrmann, a German historian, has set forth the view that Solomon had something far more important to offer Hiram than a Red Sea port: he may have known about a mysterious land of gold to the south, Ophir, and the secret of how to get there. Zvi Herman (p. 151) suggests that this land of Ophir may have been the same as the famous land of Punt in Africa south of Egypt, visited by various Egyptian expeditions.

Certainly the idea is plausible. The books of Kings and Chronicles agree that one combined Phoenician-Israelite voyage from Ezion-geber to Ophir did occur, when 450 talents of gold were brought back to Solomon (2 Chron. 8:17, 18). But this was followed by voyages of only Hiram's ships.

The prevailing view of Egyptologists, at least, is that Punt was in or near present Somaliland, where the Red Sea opens into the Indian Ocean. Zvi Herman notes, however (p. 153), that in the present gold-mining region of Rhodesia in South Africa, where the ruins of the ancient stronghold of Zimbabwe are located, several statuettes of the Phoenician goddess Astarte have been found, and also some small idols with the head of an osprey, said to show Phoenician as well as Egyptian influence.

Ever since the discovery of Zimbabwe, archaeologists have been arguing about its purpose and the identity of its builders. Why do the ruins of such a great fortress, the only one of its kind for thousands of miles in any direction, exist in the middle of South Africa? A few students of the ancient Near East believe Rhodesia or Zimbabwe was the ancient land of Ophir, the source of much of Solomon's and Hiram's gold, as well as perhaps the famous ivories carved by the Phoenicians. Most, however, reject such a suggestion on the basis of distance, pointing out that it would take years to make a round trip from Ezion-geber.

It was once thought that the gold, ivory, apes, and peacocks brought back by Phoenician ships from Ophir (2 Chron. 9:21) were really from India. However, the Hebrew word for peacocks (*thukkiyim*) and also that for ivory (*senhabbim*) are of doubtful antiquity in this text and may have been added later, a possibility which weakens the identification of Ophir with India.

The present commonly accepted theory about this famous ancient biblical land, as stated by Culican, is that it was one of the South Arabian principalities (thus separating it from the Egyptian land of Punt across the Red Sea in Africa) which rose to commercial prominence during the early part of the

first millennium BC. He notes that according to literary evidence southern Arabia was probably the wealthiest part of the Near Eastern world at that time, and that this is confirmed by the rich architectural remains of the Sabeian and Qatabanian cities of the early first millennium BC uncovered by archaeologists working in that area. This wealth probably came from increasing demand for frankincense and myrrh, which were produced only by trees native to that part of Arabia and to nearby Somaliland (Punt?) in Africa. (Culican, pp. 72-78.)

Once Hiram had helped Solomon get a start as a competing neighbor, by building for him a harbor and fleet at Ezion-geber, the Israelites seem to have undertaken sea commerce not only with the lands of spice and gold (Saba or Sheba, Ophir, etc.), but also with an even more distant land of riches—again with Phoenician-built ships manned with Phoenician as well as Israelite seamen and sailing from Ezion-geber. This was apparently a land or place known among the Israelites by the name *Tarshish*, one of the most puzzling place-names in the Bible. We read in 2 Chron. 9:21 that Solomon, with the help of Hiram's mariners, sent ships to Tarshish which came back once every three years bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. In Kings 22:48 mention is made of an incident in the reign of a successor of Solomon: King Jehoshaphat "made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber."

Many scholars hold that Tarshish was a town on some coast of the Mediterranean Sea, either a Spanish coastal town, or perhaps Tarsus of Cilicia (the apostle Paul's birthplace) in southeastern Anatolia (cf. Harden, p. 160). For in Jonah 1:3 it is recorded that the prophet Jonah, when he attempted to flee from the Lord, "went down to Joppa [the Israelite seaport on the Mediterranean] and found a ship going to Tarshish." However, some of the products of the Tarshish of Kings and Chronicles were those of a tropical region of elephants and monkeys, not a Mediterranean land. Moreover, it was a place best reached by ships sailing southward from Ezion-geber, not westward or northward from Joppa. Also, the great distance of the latter Tarshish from Ezion-geber, as indicated in the 2 Chronicles reference, points to its location in a tropical region rich in gold and silver and best reached by first sailing the southward length of the Red Sea; in other words, probably on or near the east coast of South Africa (in Rhodesia, hence to be identified with Zimbabwe?) or else on or near the west coast of India.

Possibly there were two or even three lands or places known to the Israelites and Phoenicians as Tarshish, one on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, another the same as Tarsus of Cilicia, and the third in South Africa (perhaps Zimbabwe), or in India. The occurrence of the same name for two or more different places is not unusual in the records of history.

On the other hand, *Tarshish* may not be a place name at all, since if it is a Phoenician word it means "refinery." That is, ships that "went to Tarshish" may have been merely ships that traveled to a place of refineries or smelters. In Jonah 1:3 this might be a reference to the copper refinery at Ezion-geber itself. Another possibility that has been raised is that the "ships of Tarshish" mentioned in Kings and Chronicles were simply very large ships, or freighters, such as those built for sailing to and returning from the distant tropical land of Tarshish.

Despite the rapid advance of Israel as a commercial power under Solomon, the Phoenicians continued to dominate commerce at least on the Mediterranean Sea. Then following Solomon's death, Israelite Red Sea trade with the southern lands of spices and gold seems to have rapidly declined. This left to the Phoenicians and Egyptians the near-exclusive use of the Red Sea for trading expeditions, not only to the South Arabian kingdoms but to far-off unnamed markets in Africa and India as well (e.g. Punt and Tarshish?). Unfortunately, these more distant voyages of the Phoenicians remain shrouded in mystery because of their rigid policy of keeping trade routes and seaports closely guarded secrets.

The theory that Phoenician ships traveled such distant seas as the Indian and Atlantic oceans, and those around Britain and Scandinavia would have little support except for the fact that sailing ships native to some coasts of those seas are nearly identical to sailing ships of the Phoenicians. Those still seen along the west coast of India, for example, are almost identical to the typical Phoenician ship seen in a bas-relief from Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, now in the British Museum (Herman, p. 157). Another support for the belief that Phoenician merchants may have reached India is the fact that cotton ("trees that bear fleece") and rice were apparently both introduced into the Near East from India about 700 BC.

### THE DIVIDED KINGDOMS

The split of Solomon's empire into two kingdoms after his death—"Judah" under Rehoboam and "Israel" under Jeroboam—was a weakening blow

from which she would never recover. The two smaller, second-class states could never achieve the unity necessary for national survival. Later Judean kings lacked the diplomacy and the international conditions which might have allowed them to continue the influence which Israel enjoyed under David and Solomon.

*The Kingdom of Israel.* The fall of the Empire also led to the emergence of several Aramean states, notably Aram or "Syria," whose capital was Damascus. These rising powers made necessary the continuation of friendly relations with Phoenicia. Between 888 and 659 BC both Northern Israel and Phoenicia, as well as Aram, were forced to pay tribute to the newly dominant Mesopotamian power, Assyria. In the face of an invasion by the Assyrians, these three small kingdoms joined in a temporary defensive coalition. The royal Assyrian chronicles on clay tablets record that King Ahab of Israel led the coalition and contributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers to the combined army. It was defeated, however, in a great battle at Karkar near Hamath in 853 BC.

The next three centuries of Israelite history were a troubled time of wars with Aram, invasions of Assyrian and Chaldean armies, disastrous foreign alliances, fratricidal feuding between the two divided kingdoms themselves, clashes between impious kings and zealous prophets, and finally the tragic and complete destruction of both states by the Mesopotamian kings Shalmaneser III, Sargon II, and Nebuchadnezzar. But there is no evidence of a termination of the close Israelite-Phoenician relations.

Excavations at Dan in Northern Israel have uncovered a monumental gatehouse and a city wall (the largest ever found in Israel) built by Jeroboam, both in Phoenician architectural style. Omri, a successor to Jeroboam, established his capital at Samaria. His palace, whose construction was finished by his son Ahab (excavated by Harvard University), was also in Phoenician architectural style. It is, in fact, the finest example of Phoenician masonry known in Palestine. Of particular interest is the gatehouse at Israelite Samaria, which has the same design as the gatehouses built for Solomon by Phoenician architects and masons at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

During the reigns of Omri and Ahab (c. 880-850 BC) an important trade route between Phoenicia and the Ammonite territory east of the Jordan passed through the kingdom of Northern Israel. Close trade relations between Omri and King Ithobaal of Tyre led to the marriage of his son Ahab to

the Phoenician princess Jezebel. Ahab not only kept trade relations with his father-in-law fully alive, but erected many buildings, besides completing the palace at Samaria, again with the help of Phoenician architects and masons. In fact he is recognized as the second greatest builder (after Solomon) in ancient Israel's history.

Today from archaeology we see that Ahab also left his mark on both Hazor and Megiddo in the form of building projects. From Yadin's careful re-analysis of the excavations at Megiddo, we know that the 480 storage chambers uncovered there were built by Ahab, not Solomon. Incidentally, until recently these were mistakenly thought to be horse stables; cf. refutation in LeGrande Davies, "New Light from Excavations at Tel Sheva, Israel (Biblical Beersheba)," Newsletter, 138.0.

Further, it now appears that it was Phoenician aid at the key walled cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer which saved the Israelites from conquest by the Assyrian Shalmaneser II. Phoenician masons had completely rebuilt the outer walls and constructed an internal water system at each of these cities. Once again, we have the great detective work of archaeology to thank for these insights into Israelite-Phoenician relations after the Solomonic Age. (See also Landay, p. 170-175.)

*The Kingdom of Judah.* This same spirit of cooperation between Israel and Phoenicia is seen in the history of the Southern Kingdom. It will be recalled that on one occasion King Jehoshaphat of Judah (c. 871-849 BC) sent ships of Tarshish [i.e., very large ships, or freighters, such as used in the trade with the land of Tarshish?] to Ophir for gold, but they never left Ezion-geber, for they were broken and sank, probably in a storm. Thereupon King Ahaziah of Northern Israel, son of Ahab, offered Jehosaphat the services of his fleet of Phoenician ships. But Jehoshaphat refused the offer, and thereby lost most of the Red Sea trade developed by Solomon (cf. May, p. 66).

Ezion-geber is not mentioned again in the biblical record until the reign of Azariah of Judah (c. 775-734 BC). Apparently this important seaport had been destroyed and the caravan route connecting it with Judah severed by the Edomites, in their successful rebellion against King Jehoram about 845 BC. Sometime in the early part of his reign, Azariah recaptured the area and rebuilt the town part of Ezion-geber called Elath (2 Kings 14:22). He doubtless repaired the harbor and built new ships, probably again with Phoenician help. Nelson Glueck, the American excavator of Tell el-Kheleifeh, the ruin-mound of Elath, identifies Azariah's rebuilding with

Period III of that site. A signet ring dating to this period of reoccupation was also found bearing the inscription "belonging to Jotham, successor to King Azariah of Judah." (This ring may have actually been in the possession of a governor of Elath ruling in the name of Jotham.) Then in 733 BC—the first year of King Jotham—the Edomites regained control of the Aqaba area and partly destroyed Elath. But still another rebuilding by the Judeans is evidenced, which Glueck labeled Period IV. This was probably the last time the Israelites controlled the area. (Glueck, 1965, p. 85, 86.)

In the long reign of its most able ruler, Jeroboam II (c. 786-746 BC), the Northern Kingdom achieved a spectacular but short-lived reconquest of much of the original area in the north controlled by David and Solomon. The long tradition of cooperation between Israel and Phoenicia reached a new peak. Military cooperation probably continued out of necessity, due to the almost continuous attacks by Assyria. And commercial relations continued to be close and extensive, the result being that both nations enjoyed increased wealth and prosperity in the mid-eighth century BC.

The Old Testament also alludes to social relations between the two countries. Such relations between at least the ruling families are suggested by the marriage of Crown Prince Ahab of Israel with Princess Jezebel of Sidon. And some intermingling of Israelite and Phoenician commoners is indicated by the mention of a certain Phoenician metalworker named Hiram, whose father was a master craftsman of Tyre and whose mother was a widow from the Israelite tribe of Naphtali (cf. Gordon, p. 185).

It is most likely that after the conquest of Northern Israel by the Assyrians in 721 BC, friendly commercial relations between the Judean Israelites and the Phoenicians continued until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have attempted to summarize the extensive evidence, both literary and archaeological, of long and close commercial and other relations between ancient Israel and Phoenicia. From this we may conclude that the culture of the Israelites, at least from the reigns of David and Solomon in the late tenth and early ninth centuries BC to the fall of Judah to the Chaldeans in the early sixth century BC, became increasingly Phoenician-like.

*Phoenician Traits Adopted.* It is easy to recognize



the Phoenician origin of material culture elements such as purple dye, which the Israelites must have acquired by means of continuous extensive trading including high-level deals between kings. Special items of Phoenician material culture such as fine timbers (“cedars of Lebanon”) and great merchant ships were acquired. Some traits of Phoenician religion and cosmogony—despite occasional religious hostility between the two peoples—also found their way into Israelite culture. An example is the worship of the Phoenician fertility-goddess *Astart* or *Astarte* (the Mesopotamian goddess Inanna or Ishtar, Israelite *Ashtoreth*) which was added by the Israelites to the traditional religion of Yahweh or Jehovah taught by the prophets. This is especially evident in Northern Israel in the reign of Ahab and the Phoenician queen Isabel.

From her northern contacts, Israel also gained a belief in a great multi-headed serpent (sometimes, apparently, a giant crocodile) that lived in the depths of the sea. This creature was called *Lotan* by the Phoenicians and *Leviathan*—a name derived therefrom—by the Israelites (Psalms 104:26, Job 41:1, Isaiah 27:1). It was the “dragon of the deep”—a monster that seems to have represented primeval waters and to have derived in turn from an ancient hybrid figure in Mesopotamian cosmogony and iconography, the monster called *Tiamat*, part lion, part serpent, and part bird, which represented the original chaos or primeval waters from which the earth was created.

Perhaps also the belief of the Israelites that *cherubim*, such as those that guarded the tree of life, were winged genii may have come from the Phoenicians.

Three-chambered temples with pilasters having Phoenician (proto-Ionic scroll) capitals and free-standing sacred pillars in front, large “horned” altars for temple sacrifices and small ones for family rites (cf. Davies, 1976) and “Astarte” figurines became prominent in Israelite worship.

Now this partial “Phoenicianization” of the Israelites is important to Latter-day Saint students of the archaeology of the Book of Mormon, which contains a challenging account of Judean Israelites in ancient America. It means, of course, that these Book of Mormon Israelites in the New World must have had many Phoenician traits in their culture. This fact may well be kept in mind in any archaeological research checking or supplementing the Book of Mormon account of these people.

*Phoenician Mariners?* In view, moreover, of the long-known general superiority of Phoenician ships and seamen in the ancient world, we may also con-

clude that any group of Judean Israelites fleeing Judah on its fall to Nebuchadnezzar’s army may well have considered escape by sea in a safe Phoenician ship, manned by experienced Phoenician seamen (rather than in an Egyptian or even a Judean ship). Some students of the Book of Mormon, therefore, maintain that one of its Judean colonies that crossed the seas to the New World and brought with them a young son of King Zedekiah named Mulek, came across the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean in a Phoenician ship commanded by a Phoenician captain and manned by a Phoenician crew; and that, in consequence, the Book of Mormon people in ancient America who descended from the colony of Mulek were especially Phoenician-like (as well as Israelitish) in their culture, and even, it may be, Phoenician in their language and often their physical characteristics.

There are, in fact, some indications in the Book of Mormon itself that the group of Judeans who fled Jerusalem with Prince Mulek did cross the seas to America with a group of Phoenicians (including women), and that their descendants the “Mulekites” did come to speak the Phoenician language.

Moreover, there is now archaeological evidence from America itself that the Phoenicians (long known to have frequently crossed the Mediterranean Sea and to have occasionally navigated even the Atlantic Ocean off the coasts of Africa and Europe) were also capable of crossing that ocean; and that some of them did, in fact, cross the Atlantic to the New World, even to the Book of Mormon region of Mexico and Central America. (Could these have been Phoenicians of the Mulek colony of the Book of Mormon? See Irwin, 1963, for an interesting review of the many Phoenician parallels in the ancient civilizations of Mexico and Central America now known to archaeologists.)

For possible “documentary-archaeological” evidence that the Phoenicians also crossed at least once to the Atlantic coast of both North and South America, see Gordon, 1971, and Fell, 1976. These works contain asserted translations of purported ancient Phoenician, Carthaginian (late western Phoenician), and Iberian Celtic inscriptions found especially in eastern United States, and in one case on the east coast of Brazil.

For further discussions of the Mulekites of the Book of Mormon as a people of mixed Judean Israelite and Phoenician origin, and evidence of Phoenician ships reaching the New World, see especially Christensen, 1970, and idem, ed., 1970.

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140.1 **BYU EXCAVATIONS IN ISRAEL.** Just recently, the BYU administration reached a decision to formally conduct archaeological research in the State of Israel (cf. Newsletter, 138.2).

LeGrande Davies, part-time instructor in the Department of Ancient Scripture, in 1973 first took part in Tel Aviv University excavations at Tel Beer-Sheva, Israel, where Abraham and Isaac dug a deep well (Gen. 21:30; 26:23-25) in the early second millennium BC. Mr. Davies was made a member of the Tel Aviv staff during his first season of work. He returned to the site in 1974, 1975, and 1976 with volunteer students from BYU and the Utah area. This past summer Dr. Ross T. Christensen, BYU professor of archaeology and anthropology, and his wife Ruth, a graduate student in the same department, accompanied Mr. Davies at the dig. (See Newsletter, 138.0, 139.1.)

Dr. Yohanan Aharoni and other staff members of the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University, which conducted these excavations, had expressed interest in collaborating with BYU in future work. Thus BYU president Dallin H. Oaks, Dean Martin B. Hickman of the College of Social Sciences, and Bruce W. Warren, assistant professor of anthropology and archaeology, each made trips to Israel to explore this possibility (Newsletter, 138.2). The result was the recent decision that BYU officially co-sponsor archaeological field work in Israel with Tel Aviv University. The University of Pennsylvania, the University of Minnesota, and possibly one or two other institutions will also be involved.

Academic vice-president Robert K. Thomas has taken the lead in obtaining authorization for BYU to participate.

The 1976 season saw the completion of field work at Tel Beer-Sheva, however. The 1977 season will begin next summer at the site of Tel Michal, just north of Tel Aviv by the Mediterranean Sea. It is expected that this excavation will cast new light on the Israelite, Canaanite, and Philistine civilizations.

**140.2 SOCIETY SPONSORS RESEARCH AT IZAPA.** With the help of a grant from the SEHA Research Fund, V. Garth Norman made key astronomical observations last June at the ruins of Izapa, southern Mexico, find-spot of the famous Lehi Tree-of-Life stone.

The pyramids associated with Stela 5 and numerous other carved stone monuments of that site, Mr. Norman discovered, were so aligned as to mark the points on the horizon where the sun, the moon, and the planet Venus rise and set at the summer and winter solstices (June 22 and December 21).

His studies appear to show that alignments with these astral bodies and with a conspicuous nearby volcano were of great importance to the builders

who laid out the original ceremonial center at Izapa. ("Archaeoastronomy" is the term now in use for such studies of ancient alignments and related matters.)

The SEHA grant of last June, at the time of the summer solstice, advanced Mr. Norman's studies to the point where they could be reported before scholarly gatherings. His paper "Izapa Archaeoastronomy and Cosmology: Alignments of Structures and Monuments," was read at BYU at the Twenty-fifth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures on September 25, (Newsletter, 139.1). He also made similar presentations late last year at three international conventions: (1) a Cambridge University symposium on "Recent Discoveries in Mesoamerica," in August; (2) the International Congress of Americanists, Paris, in September; and (3) a symposium on "Mesoamerican World Views," Harvard Center for Precolumbian Collections, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, in October. Mr. Norman, a graduate student in archaeology at BYU, has developed his studies in this field over the past several years as a research associate of the BYU-New World Archaeological Foundation. The SEHA grant came at a moment which was critical to the development of the study and when funds could not be obtained elsewhere. In addition to Izapa, he studied alignments at Chiapa de Corzo and Teotihuacan.

Izapa, where the sculpture known as Stela 5 was identified as a portrayal in stone of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life (1 Nephi 8) by M. Wells Jakeman, BYU professor of archaeology in 1951, has been the scene of large-scale excavations by the NWAFF since 1961. Mr. Norman's findings show a remarkable sophistication on the part of its ancient inhabitants in matters of astronomy and calendrics. This calls to mind the interest in these subjects that developed in the Nephite civilization of the Book of Mormon during the first century BC and following (cf. Helaman 12:15).

Mr. Norman has delivered papers before the Society's Annual Symposium in 1963 ("The Tree-of-Life Symbol in Ancient Israel"); in 1964 ("The Seven Golden Candlesticks of the Apocalypse [Revelation 1:12].); and in 1972 ("Izapa Sculpture; a Contribution to the Study of Ancient Mesoamerican Art"). He has been a member of SEHA since 1960.

Other recent research establishing similar archaeoastronomical orientations of buildings in both the Old and the New World is reported in papers by Elizabeth Chesley Baity, "Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy So Far," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 389-449, October 1973; and

Anthony F. Aveni and Sharon L. Gibbs, "On the Orientation of Precolumbian Buildings in Central Mexico," *American Antiquity*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 510-517, October 1976.

**140.3 BYU ARCHAEOLOGIST PUBLISHES IN SCIENCE MAGAZINE.** By Ruth R. Christensen. "Maya Lowland Hydraulic Systems" is the title of a paper by Dr. Ray T. Matheny, BYU associate professor of anthropology and archaeology, which appeared in *Science*, Vol. 193, August 20, 1976, pp. 639-646. Based on some five years of archaeological field work, including aerial photography, by Dr. Matheny, assisted by others, the paper reports the investigation of apparent reservoirs, canals, drains, and other water controls discovered at the ruins of the ancient city known as Edzná, located in Campeche, Mexico, a part of the lowland Maya area. Without these facilities for water storage, people cannot live there.

Dr. Matheny traced the features of the ancient city, finding that it covered an area of 17 square kilometers. The first settlers at Edzná were Pioneers of the Middle Preclassic period (1000 to 600 BC). Pottery recovered from test trenches in the canals date the water control system to Late Preclassic times (the last centuries before the birth of Christ, i.e., early in the Nephite-Mulekite period of the Book of Mormon).

Dr. Matheny computed the water storage capacity of the canals and reservoirs at over 2,000,000 cubic meters.

The New World Archaeological Foundation, BYU, and National Geographic Society all provided grants to support the field work.

**140.4 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM CHAIRMAN NAMED, DATE SET.** By Ruth R. Christensen. Victor L. Ludlow has been chosen chairman of the Twenty-sixth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and Allied Fields. The date has been set for Friday and Saturday, September 23 and 24.

Mr. Ludlow, BYU assistant professor of ancient scripture, was elected a member of the SEHA Board of Trustees on September 25, 1976 (Newsletter, 139.3), and named symposium chairman at a meeting of the Board held on December 4.

Anyone engaged in research in the archaeology of the Scriptures or an allied field who desires to present a paper at the Symposium is invited to write for instructions, according to Professor Ludlow. His address is: 65 Joseph Smith Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.