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Dynamics of Production in the Ancient Near East

1300–500 BC

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Edited by
Juan Carlos Moreno García

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Cover: Kudurru (stele) of King Melishipak I (1186–1172 BC): Jacques de Morgan, currently on display at the Louvre Museum, Paris. Drachma from Bruttium (210 BC); Ancient camel from Persepolis; Gold mask of Shoshenk II; Babylonian kudurru from the late Kassite period, found near Baghdad: Creative Commons.

*Certains hommes sont des collines
Qui s'élèvent entre les hommes
Et voient au loin tout l'avenir
Mieux que s'il était présent
Plus net que s'il était passé*

To Pascal Vernus, with gratitude and admiration

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Chapter 5

Phoenician trade: the first 300 years

Carol Bell

This paper will consider the question: what do we really know about the initial trajectory of expansion of Phoenician trade in the earliest Iron Age? We know what the Phoenicians did but not how they did it (Kopcke 1992; Vella 1996) and the material evidence is, to say the least, patchy. But, to paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld (2002), knowing what we do not know is a crucial step in moving the debate forward, especially when this research question calls for coordination across such a wide geographical area and so many disciplines.

Consistent with the objectives of the workshop, I will also consider how one might analyse the material correlates of these complex interactions. As Vella pointed out some years ago, some historic approaches have been “expecting the impossible” from rather a small body of textual evidence (Vella 1996, 247). While not ignoring these sources, where they exist, my approach will consider how we might measure the degree of long-distance interaction and how this changes through time.

The Early Iron Age (EIA) expansion of Phoenician commercial activity – broadly speaking the period between 1200 and 900 BC – is obscure compared with later periods. Large scale syntheses of Phoenician history, such as Markoe (2000) and Aubet (1993), understandably, spend very little time on the economic aspects of this period. There are many problems, not least lack of data from the Phoenician heartland in modern-day Lebanon. This is due to several reasons:

1. The continuous inhabitation of Tyre, Sidon and Arwad to this day.
2. The political situation within the region over the past four decades

The absence of contemporaneous of textual sources adds to the challenge of working on trade in the EIA, as does lack of scientific analysis of e.g. pottery finds and absolute dating in the excavations that have been published for key sites in Lebanon. Adding further to the complexity of unravelling the development of Phoenician overseas interests, Phoenicia itself is a collection of city states with diverse interests

and international aspirations and what may be true for Tyre's long distance trade connections may not apply to Sidon.

It is vital to commence any discussion of this nature with a clear definition of terms and scope and nowhere is this more crucial than when dealing with the terms "Phoenicia" and "Phoenician". How do we define the cultural area known as Phoenicia when its own inhabitants considered themselves first as belonging to a city-state rather than a larger social unit? As Lehmann (2008) has pointed out, the emergence of the Phoenicians as a cultural phenomenon dates to c. 1200 BC with the appearance of epigraphy in the Phoenician alphabetic script. Their material culture, on the other hand, is the result of continuous development from the Bronze Age repertoire (Lehmann 2008).

From the close of the LBA forward, the coastal area between Arwad in the north (in modern Syria) to Tel Dor in the south (in northern Israel) shares a common material culture that can be labelled Phoenician (see Figure 5.1 for location of the sites discussed). Although the geographical location of Arwad, an offshore island close to the mainland, very much fits the bill for a Phoenician establishment, its material culture is almost completely unknown and its identification as a Phoenician site hinges on historical and linguistic references (Lehmann 2008). Tel Dor, however, has been the subject of a substantial excavation and publication programme for many years and provides much material relevant to this subject (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 114).

We may continue to lament the lack of well stratified new archaeological excavations from the Phoenician heartland in modern Lebanon across the LBA/Iron Age transition but arguably, we do not pay give the ones that do exist (Sarepta and Tyre) the attention they deserve (Nunez Calvo, 2008). What we do know is that, during this period, this part of the Levantine littoral did not suffer the destructive events that permanently removed Ugarit from Eastern Mediterranean trading circuits or the disruption experienced at ports on the southern Levantine coast, which were destroyed but recovered rapidly (Bell 2006, 137).

The stratigraphic sequence excavated by James Pritchard at Sarepta, which is located between Tyre and Sidon close to the mouth of the Litani river, is the only fully published continuous sequence across the LBA/Iron Age transition from a major excavation in Lebanon (see Bell 2006, 41–42, 99 for discussion and references). This sequence contains no destruction horizon corresponding the destruction of Ugarit and other sites in coastal Syria and Israel and the same is true for the sequence excavated by Bikai from a limited sounding at Tyre (Bikai 1978). This lack of destruction surely placed these Phoenician cities at an advantage when major ports to both north and south were out of action.

To begin at the beginning, therefore, what was the nature of the Late Bronze Age (LBA) trading system from which the Phoenician mercantile phenomenon evolved? The textual evidence excavated from the houses of merchants of Ugarit dating to the final decades of the LBA is the best starting point. These texts have been analysed by Christopher Monroe (2009a) as part of a wider study of Eastern Mediterranean



Fig. 5.1. Sites mentioned in the text.

textual material from this period. They cast a unique spotlight on the role of individual merchants, whom we know by name, in facilitating the flow of goods and commodities on which LBA society had come to rely. The evidence from Ugarit does not fit neatly into the conception of trade and international relations usually portrayed in large scale syntheses of the Eastern Mediterranean in for this period, for example Van De Mieroop 2007 (Monroe 2009b). Documenting the multifaceted relationships of individual merchants with the Royal Palace of Ugarit, these texts deserve integration into supra-regional syntheses of the political economy of this period. I will not reprise the substantivist/formalist debate here (see Bell 2006 and McGeough 2007 for recent discussions). Suffice it to say that the rather black and white positions these opposing paradigms portray of nature of trade seem to contradict the rather complex, and often personal, relationships that emerge from the texts from Ugarit. I prefer the position put forward recently in a major global and multi-period review of the archaeology of trading systems by Oka and Kusimba (2008) which sees traders being governed by social, political and ideological constraints as well as economic calculations.

Sometimes these merchants acted as agents for the state, by supplying pack animals for example in Rapanu's case, but also they put their own capital at risk. The scale of transactions they handled was impressive: one of Yabninu's documents records a consignment of 600 kg of tin – equivalent to 60% of the quantity found on

the Uluburun wreck (Bell 2012). This should make us think twice about assuming that all metal-rich cargoes emanating from the Levant were necessarily royal.

Sherratt and Sherratt (2001) referred to the transformation of the economy from the palace to the hands of merchants as privatisation. The evidence from the texts of Ugarit suggests that this process was firmly underway before the end of the LBA and it is no longer feasible to envisage wholesale replacement of palace administered exchange with entrepreneurial trade at the beginning of the Iron Age. Although Phoenicia has so far not yielded a comparable body of texts to Ugarit, it is not unreasonable to assume that a similar relationship between the state and merchants may have existed at Phoenician ports, which were counterparties to, and destinations for, trade from Ugarit (Bell 2012). Furthermore, any regulatory influence the Egyptian imperial authorities had on the Phoenician ports is likely to have been relatively “light-touch” in the years between the battle of Kadesh and the end of the LBA as Egyptian control of coastal Lebanon appears to have been low (Sherratt 2003; Stieglitz 1990).

Arguably, therefore, what happened after the destructions that affected coastal cities both to the north and south of Phoenicia can be seen in terms of restructuring long distance relationships by concentrating on routes that continued to be both feasible and profitable. This included exporting both raw materials and manufactured goods that were locally sourced to acquire unavailable necessities such as copper and other metals and, in due course, exotic luxuries.

Shortly after 1200 BC, the merchants of Phoenicia would have had no need for direction from a higher authority to reshape the scope and geographical reach of their activities. Nor would such direction have been necessary to identify the products they could continue to trade. For example, Phoenicia would have had timber, olive oil, textiles and wine to exchange for copper from Cyprus. The archaeological evidence from Sarepta shows that manufacturing olive oil and purple dye continued, along with a major potting industry to manufacture the jars in which to ship its wine (Pritchard 1978). Sarepta’s bronze industry also continued to function and, as well as being a supplier of copper, Cyprus was an ideal platform for western expansion for the Phoenicians.

It goes without saying that there is no hope of being able to address the evidence for this expansion to beyond the straits of Gibraltar without a finely resolved pottery sequence in the homeland (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 192). Until recently, the main sources for dating Phoenician pottery were Patricia Bikai’s volume on the pottery of Tyre (Bikai 1978) and her work on the Phoenician pottery of Cyprus (particularly Bikai 1983; 1987), together with William Anderson’s publication on Sarepta (Anderson 1988).

EIA horizons from recent and ongoing excavations Beirut at Sidon have not been published yet and the evidence from the Tyre al-Bass cemetery are of relatively little use for dating purposes (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 17). It is fortunate, therefore, that Tel Dor has furnished a superb ceramic sequence and dozens of absolute dates. Tel Dor has been excavated almost continuously since 1990 and was occupied between the Middle

Bronze Age II (MB II) and the Roman Period. Since 2003, excavations have been directed by Gilboa and Sharon, who have contributed many important articles to the question of Early Iron Age chronology (Gilboa & Sharon 2001; 2003; Gilboa 2005 and Gilboa *et al.* 2008). Tel Dor has yielded a detailed ceramic sequence (including imports) from reliable contexts in substantial EIA exposures. Moreover, extensive radiometric dating has been carried out, making Dor the ideal Levantine case study for this earliest Iron Age period (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 117). For a site located in the heartland of the Biblical narrative, relating the ceramic sequence, for groups of wares, to absolute chronology, rather than tenuous historical connections, is a major breakthrough (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 117). The fact that these ceramic groups travel far by ship and are the markers of early Phoenician trade activity makes the Dor data unique.

Historically, Dor was considered to be part of the territory of the “Sea Peoples”, specifically that of the Šikila (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 114), based mainly on the 11th century BC “*Story of Wenamun*” and the “*Onomasticon of Amenope*”, which dates to the end of the 12th–beginning of the 11th century BC (Stern 1990), both being Egyptian sources. This conventional wisdom contrasts strongly with the archaeological evidence from the now extensive excavations of this horizon, which appears to be early Phoenician (Stern 1990). The excavators describe the material culture as having a marked continuity with previous Canaanite traits, with some Cypriot input (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 117) and characterise the town as a “thriving urban center in this period of general decline” with commercial contacts in Cyprus, Egypt, Philistia and possibly Syria. Petrographic evidence from Cyprus identifies the Carmel Coast as the place of manufacture of Phoenician commercial containers in this period (Gilboa *et al.* 2008), confirming the involvement of this southern part of Phoenicia in trade.

The stratigraphic sequence of Dor parallels those of Sarepta and Tyre (Gilboa *et al.* 2008) in this period. From the point of view of determining the timing of trading contacts with Cyprus and Spain, Gilboa, Sharon and Boaretto published an important article that concentrates on small decorated Phoenician containers and commercial jars (the former being much better chronological indicators than the latter).

Figure 5.2 shows a synthesis of the chronology of the stratigraphic and pottery phases for key Phoenician sites in Lebanon. This figure also includes the Cypriot sequence in order to assist in pinpointing the earliest arrival of Iron Age Phoenician wares there. In the interest of brevity, I will only be able to mention some of the earliest relevant Phoenician finds in Cyprus (and I will not discuss the ceramic traffic going the other way from Cyprus to Phoenicia).

The LBA/EIA transition appears to be missing at Dor so far and the story must be taken up in Ir 1a (in the terminology of the excavators). A pre-Phoenician bichrome horizon has been identified at Dor that correlates in Cyprus to the LC IIIB and its transition to Cypro Geometric I (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 130). The radiometric dates at Dor are slightly lower than the conventional date shown on Figure 5.2 of 1050 BC for the transition between the Ir 1a and Ir 1b (or LC IIIB and CG I by implication) but not

Date	Levant	Tyre Stratum	Sarepta Area II, Y Stratum	Tel Dor	Phoenicia	Cyprus	Date	
1200	LB II	XV	G			LC IIC	1200	
1150	Iron Age IA	XIV	F	LBA/ IA Trans (missing?)	Continuity in Sequence Between LBA and Iron Age	LC IIIA	1150	
1100	Iron Age IB		E	Ir 1a Early			LB III	1100
1050				Ir 1a Late				LC IIIB
		Ir 1a/1b Trans		Kouklia Horizon	CG I			
	1000	XIII	Ir 1b			1000		
950	Iron Age IIA	XII	D1 (Poss. Gap?)			Ir 1/2	950	
900	Iron Age IIB	XI	D2	Ir 2a			900	

Fig. 5.2. Chronological chart. Source: Mazar (1993, 30) for the Levant; Nunez (2004, 286, fig. 138) for Tyre, Phoenicia, Cyprus and the Aegean post-1100 BC; Anderson (1988, 422–423) for Sarepta; Gilboa & Sharon (2003, 55, table 21) for Tel Dor and Tyre pre-1100 BC; Steel (2004, 13, table 1.1) for Cyprus pre-1100 BC.

radically so (somewhere in the third quarter of the eleventh century BC) (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 184).

Gilboa *et al.* (2008, 131) have made the point that, for some reason, this earliest Iron Age phase is left out from discussions on Phoenician pottery in Cyprus, which normally start with the appearance of Phoenician Bichrome and the onset of the Kouklia Horizon. At Dor, this earliest horizon marks the appearance of a few small closed containers (mainly flasks, but also jars), that are decorated mainly with concentric circles and which are descendants of LBA antecedents (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 124–125). A parallel is made with regard to this early phase to a flask found in Kouklia-Xerolimini Tomb 9 in the Palaepaphos region of Cyprus (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 131; fig 5, 128). It is relatively safe to deduce, therefore, that the first stage of Iron Age of Phoenician maritime trade involves Cyprus before the end of LC III. By Ir 1b period, these small beginnings have

developed into a “geographically limited but intensive Cypro-Phoenician interaction sphere” (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 190).

Palaepaphos, on the west coast of Cyprus, is unique within the Cypriot archaeological record because of the continuity of this site from LC IIIB into the CG I period, being neither destroyed, abandoned nor transferred to another site (Maier 1999). It has also proved to be a crucial site with regard to the identification of early Phoenician imports. Prior to the discovery of the tombs at Palaepaphos-Skales in 1979 (excavated by Karageorghis and published in 1983), it was generally believed that Tyre and Sidon had not begun their westward expansion until the 9th century, at the earliest (Bikai 1994) with a traditional date for the founding of the colony of Kition of 830–810 BC (Miles 2010, xiii). The excavations Palaepaphos-Skales pushed the date at which meaningful quantities of Phoenician pottery appear in Cyprus earlier by two centuries. Palaepaphos’ other name, Kouklia, gives its name to the earliest horizon of Phoenician overseas ceramic exports and is sometimes referred to as a pre-colonisation period (Gilboa *et al.* 2008, 118).

I have presented elsewhere (Bell 2009) the evidence Bikai put forward for parallels between storage jars at Palaepaphos-Skales and Tyre and Sarepta, in the earliest Iron Age and noted her striking comments about the similarity between these jars and their likely origin (Bikai 1983). All the evidence from Palaepaphos, unfortunately, currently comes from tombs and we must hope for some excavation of the settlement in due course.

I have also argued elsewhere that commercial contacts between Phoenicia and Cyprus, particularly with the west of the island, may have endured across the LBA/Iron Age disruption (Bell 2009). This accords with Bikai’s view but, as Karageorghis (2008) has pointed out, we do not have firm evidence for this in Cyprus itself yet.

Back on the mainland, at Sarepta, Cypriot ceramic imports continue in Stratum F and include LCII and LC III wares as well as, in all probability Mycenaean IIIC style deep bowls manufactured on the island (Anderson 1988, 390). Although these strata mark a low ebb in the ceramic imports at Sarepta (Gilboa & Sharon 2003, 51), there is nevertheless evidence of continuity of contact with Cyprus.

Moving westwards, prior to the excavations at Kommos in southern Crete, the earliest evidence of Phoenician pottery in Crete came from Knossos, with the discovery of Phoenician jugs dating to approximately 800 BC (Bikai 2000). Early in the excavation of the Greek sanctuary area of Kommos, fragments of Phoenician pottery were recognised and Patricia Bikai was invited to write the short chapter thereon in the excavation report, which was published in 2000. The majority of the sherds had the characteristics of the Phoenician coast (soft fabric with many also having soft red ferrous inclusions). Bikai remarked that the number of Phoenician vessels that found their way to this area of Kommos was not high. She also noted that the fragmentary material recovered at Kommos would have hardly been noticed at a mainland site and it is a credit to the excavators that they were noticed at all (Bikai 2000, 310).

Unfortunately, as well as being fragmented, the assemblage at Kommos consists of storage jar sherds which, as already noted, are less useful for precise dating. For the period that concerns us here, some of the storage jar handle fragments found are of interest. Bikai (Bikai 2000, 308) cites similarities between one of these (cat. no 5: Bikai 2000, 310; pl. 4.63), with an inscription with a finger impression at the base of the handle, which has parallels in Tyre Stratum XIII (in the first half of the 11th century). It is impossible to deduce the form of this jar, but Bikai has cited parallels from Tyre (Stratum XV: 1200–1050 BC) or Palaepaphos-Skales Tomb 49 (1050–950 BC) that also have handles with incised marks (Bikai 2000, 308). The context at Kommos in which they were found is that in the first layer of reoccupation after the Minoan levels and the occupation gap at the site lowers the earliest possible date to about 925 BC (Bikai 2000, 310) – right at the end of the period under consideration in this paper.

Several rim sherds with incised bands below the rim were also found, that date to 920–880 BC approximately – the earliest phase of this temple. Parallels between these sherds and ones from Sarepta (unfortunately, from a disturbed context) led Bikai to suggest that the workshop that produced the Kommos jars was Sarepta and she mentions Anderson's hypothesis that Sarepta (with its substantial pottery industry) was the packaging branch of Sarepta Inc (Bikai 2000, 309). Be that as it may, the Kommos excavations pushed back the date at which the earliest Phoenician pottery appears on Crete by a century to around 900 BC. Prophetically, Bikai stated that it was only a matter of time before earlier Phoenician wares were found in the west (which then stood at 800 BC at Huelva) and it is to the evidence from Spain that we must now finally turn.

The Greek and Roman historical tradition puts the initiation of Phoenician expansion to the far west at the late 12th century BC (Neville 2007, 1) with the foundation of Gadir (modern Cadiz) and Lixus (in Morocco). Until rescue excavations were conducted in Huelva, in Southern Spain, however, there was no incontrovertible proof of Phoenician settlement anywhere near as early as this in the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean (Neville 2007; Gonzales de Canales *et al.* 2009).

The location of Huelva, close to the Riotinto polymetallic ore deposits, was no doubt of great interest to the Phoenicians, notably as an embarkation port for iron, silver, gold and copper. Like so many other Phoenician sites, it remains occupied to the present day, being such good harbour. The oldest Phoenician finds come from 7–13 Méndez Nuñez Street/12 Las Monjas Square which excavations were undertaken during 1998 in the old city of Huelva. Due to issues with the water table, pumping was necessary to get to levels earlier than the late 8th century BC. Some 8009 diagnostic sherds were catalogued (about 9% of those collected; Gonzalez de Canales *et al.* 2008) and, after limiting the count to rim and base fragments, Phoenician sherds represented 3233 sherds compared with 3000 local fabrics (Gonzalez de Canales *et al.* 2009). Gonzalez de Canales and colleagues then proceeded to analyse these Phoenician sherds armed with Bikai's work on Tyre and the Phoenician horizons of

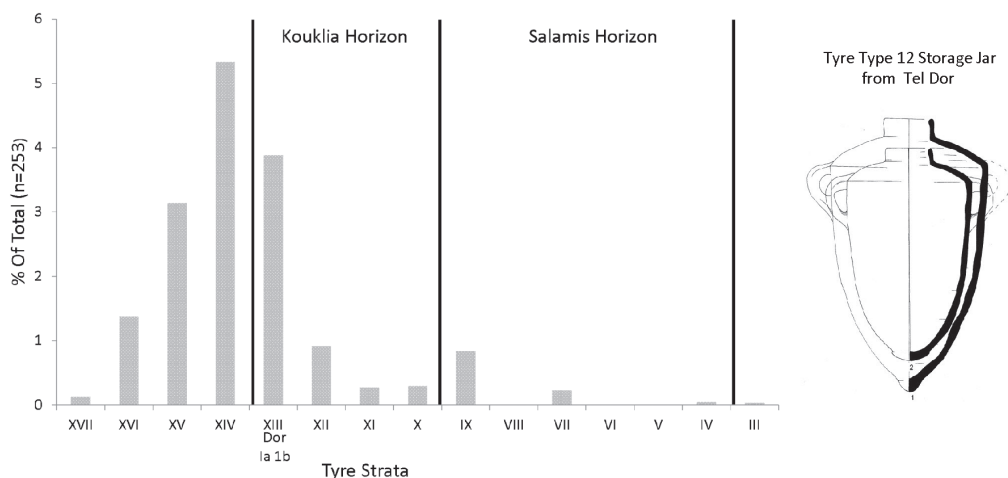


Fig. 5.3. Chronological distribution of Tyre Type 12 Storage Jars at Tyre. Source: Bikai (1978, 44 table 10A); Gilboa & Sharon (2003, fig. 4: 1 and 2).

Cyprus (Bikai 1978; 1987) together with Anderson's work on the Sarepta sequence (Anderson 1988).

Two points stand out about the Huelva finds from this earliest context. The first is that the excavators recognised many similarities between the ceramics of Huelva and those of Tyre (Gonzalez de Canales *et al.* 2008, 634) accepting the colour changes brought about through the action of the water table at Huelva. They assigned the majority of the Phoenician ceramics to the Salamis horizon (Strata IX–IV at Tyre), which comes after the end of the Kouklia Horizon and the period under consideration in this paper. However, they did attribute some of the Phoenician wares to the Kouklia Horizon (Tyre Strata XIII–X: 1050–900 BC, see Figure 5.2).

Such examples were few in number but included examples of the Tyre Type 12 Storage Jar, of which 11 examples were found at Huelva. This type of jar is virtually unknown in Tyre after Stratum IX and drops off very substantially in quantity after Stratum XIII (Gonzalez de Canales *et al.* 2006; Bikai 1978, table 10A). Figure 5.3 charts the appearance of this type of jar at Tyre to illustrate this point.

Moreover, the Huelva Type 12 Storage Jars are practically identical to those at Dor where they are prolific in Ir 1a, present in Ir 1b and are virtually absent thereafter (Gilboa & Sharon 2003, 48 table 17), which is consistent with the tail off in this vessel at Tyre after Stratum XIII.

Only three radiocarbon dates have been determined from this horizon at Huelva (on cattle bones) and these suggest a range of 1000–820 cal BC, with the weighted average of the three dates being 930–830 BC (Gonzales de Canales *et al.* 2009). Overall, the excavators date the beginning of the stratum excavated at Huelva to about 900

BC, without excluding the possibility that it could have begun in the closing decades of the 10th century BC.

The second point I should like to make is that, unlike the situation at Kommos, a substantial quantity of Phoenician material was recovered at Huelva, even if most of it dates to slightly later periods than concerns us here. This argues for a significant early contact between Huelva and Phoenicia.

Casting our minds back to Cyprus briefly, the concentration of earlier Phoenician finds in the Kouklia (Palaepaphos), and the possibility that some of the pottery at Kommos and even as far west as Huelva comes from the Kouklia Horizon, suggests that the Phoenicians used Western Cyprus as a staging post for westward voyages.

Having summarised the so far “known knowns” about Phoenician maritime trade expansion towards the west in this earliest period, I shall now turn to the “known unknowns” (Rumsfeld 2002). What do know that we do not know and how might we address these issues?

First, we do not have a good enough sequence from the central Levantine heartland across the LBA/Iron Age transition. We only have the meticulous but relatively limited excavations at Sarepta, which was not one of the leading cities at this time, albeit it did have a substantial industrial activity and its fair share of imported goods. Unfortunately, Stratum XIV at Tyre is far too long and undifferentiated to be used to resolve issues of continuity across the LBA/IA transition and Gilboa and Sharon (2003, 44) have also raised issues about the recording of this sequence. Meanwhile, the LBA/IA transitional horizon seems to be missing so far at Tel Dor (Gilboa & Sharon 2003, 44).

In Cyprus, of course, the evidence from funerary contexts from Kouklia/Palaepaphos is later, as is that so far published from the Tyre al-Bass cemetery. We must await the publication of the results of the most recent season which was undertaken in 2008–2009 at Tyre al-Bass.

Further excavations of settlement contexts both in Phoenicia and Cyprus – particularly the west of the island would be an important step forward in addressing this question. We must hope that Claude Doumet-Serhal’s Sidon excavations find the earliest Iron Age, but it is possible, given the limited extent of these excavations, they may not. The best opportunity to clarify this sequence in the Phoenician homeland in the near term may come on the “island” of Tyre where Maria Eugenia Aubet and her colleagues have recently been asked by the Lebanese authorities to work close to Bikai’s excavations (M.°E. Aubet, pers. comm. May 2012). Tel Dor may also yield something but perhaps a return to Sarepta for an extensive campaign would be appropriate, given that this site has not been overbuilt since the 1970s excavations finished? The excavation of a settlement context at Palaepaphos would also be invaluable (although that site, like Sidon, Arwad and much of Tyre, suffers from current occupation).

Logistically, the Phoenicians must have called at several ports en route to Huelva but so far, I am not aware of any ceramic evidence west of Kommos that dates to this

earliest period. I have not mentioned Italy, but that must be another fruitful area for enquiry, particularly Sicily and Sardinia. A theme that emerged at a conference in 2010 in Cyprus on cooking pots, drinking cups, loomweights and ethnicity in Bronze Age Cyprus and neighbouring regions was that more and more Italian pottery is being recognised (e.g. Charaf 2012) suggesting a greater degree of interaction with the Central Mediterranean than hitherto thought during this period. There is no break in Sardinia's connections with the Eastern Mediterranean across the LBA/EIA transition and the Nuragic culture continues (Dyson & Rowland 2007, 102). There is no evidence of permanent Phoenician settlements on the island this early, but it is nevertheless possible that it served as a stopping off point *en route* to Iberia.

It is also possible that new research on North African coastline may yield some insights, for example Linda Hulin's Western Marmarica Coastal Survey in Libya, east of Tobruk (which was initiated in 2008).

Having discussed the data, and the lack thereof, it is appropriate to conclude briefly with some methodological challenges and opportunities. Recent developments in the far west and at Tel Dor provide grounds for optimism about the integration of ceramic sequences from the Levant to Atlantic Spain, alongside a few absolute dates. This is a necessary first step when tackling broader questions about trade, especially the motivation behind such an expansion and the degree to which the Phoenicians put down permanent roots over time beyond the homeland in this earliest, and text-free, phase.

One of the reasons for selecting this subject for inclusion in this volume is, like the LBA merchants of Ugarit, the part Phoenicians played is often overlooked in broader syntheses of the region in the first half of the 1st millennium BC in favour of discussions of what went on in more conventional empires from which texts, mercifully, do exist. While this conference's stated objectives refer by name to Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and Egypt, I am most grateful to the organisers for granting the Phoenicians their seat at the table. Not only were they the prime-movers in long distance maritime trade of manufactured goods and raw materials in the Early Iron Age but also they transmitted arguably two of the most useful technologies to come out of the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant: an alphabetic script and the knowledge of iron working (even if they did not invent the latter technology).

Sherratt and Sherratt (1993) suggested that breakthroughs in the production and working of iron in Cyprus in the 12th century BC spread along the old trade routes that were used to supply copper and tin. I would contend that the Phoenicians certainly played their part in keeping some of these routes alive in the aftermath of the destructions at the close of the LBA. Papasavvas (2003) has put forward the argument that Cyprus continued to be an active copper producer and exporter after the end of LC IIC (or the destruction of Ugarit). Certainly, the material culture of the island is rich in terms of bronze in LC IIIB–CG II period, as evidenced by the bronze tripods found in graves at Palaepaphos-Skales and Kourion-Kaloriziki (*ibid.*) at the western end of the island, with which Phoenicia had contact. Interestingly, also,

evidence from the Palaepaphos-*Eliomylia* tomb suggests a pioneering role of this site in western Cyprus in adoption of iron for tools (Karageorghis 1990, 84).

Perhaps the nature of Phoenicia's political structure, based on the city rather than being a unitary state, lies behind the difficulty in conceptualising these early stages of its expansion? Perhaps the fact that this expansion seems to have been, on the whole, friendly and not aimed at gaining territorial control or agricultural resources to satisfy demographic constraints (with the possible exception of the expansion south towards Tel Dor in Israel)? Instead, it appears that Phoenicians inserted themselves at key points in the supply chain, without seeking to control the whole chain by conquest or colonisation (Braudel 1984, 65).

The only visible means of payment for the acquisition of metals that definitely originated from the Phoenician homeland are the decorated containers and storage jars and, presumably, their contents. In terms of landfall, Phoenicians looked for compact settlement areas with natural borders that were easy to defend, such as an island or a spit of land jutting out to sea, with good harbours and access to resource rich hinterlands (Niemeyer 1990). The initial Phoenician strategy with regard to Cyprus seems to have been motivated by trade, particularly with the west of the island and the first Phoenician colony to be confirmed by archaeology on the island, Kition, is not established until the 9th century BC (Aubet 1993, 42).

Most recent scholarship would certainly place the exciting evidence from the early context at Huelva firmly in a pre-colonial setting (e.g. Gonzalez de Canales *et al.* 2009). Nor can this initial contact with the far west be tied to the later neo-Assyrian demand, with menaces, for iron and bullion that emerged at the time of Tiglatpileser III (Aubet 2008; 1993, 46). Perhaps the initial voyages to the west were driven only by the need to acquire metals for domestic consumption or onward trade with others?

The study of economic interactions is beset by a number of theoretical oppositions (usually ending in -ism). I have mentioned in passing substantivism and formalism and how the activities of the merchants of Ugarit, as recorded in texts, appear more complex than either of these two oppositions can accommodate. Trade on their own account was possible, but this was surely governed by social norms.

Another feature of the development of Phoenicia in this period is one of gradual rather than abrupt change and one of the challenges for archaeologists is to obtain data that are sufficiently fine-grained to detect this. An abrupt end is undoubtedly what happened to prosperous Ugarit, Alalakh and Emar on the important tin route from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. Phoenicia did not suffer the same abrupt end, nor even the temporary disruption experienced elsewhere in the Levant at the close of the Bronze Age. Things were really never that dark in Phoenicia, even if the quantity of imports from Cyprus did drop for a time. The merchants, and perhaps the leaders, of the Phoenician city states knew what to do to keep trade flowing.

On the subject of the measurement of the volume of trade and interaction, archaeologists do not always succeed in differentiating between the importance of a handful of imported sherds and material quantities thereof (perhaps the collective

noun for sherds should be shedloads)! Finding a way of measuring the intensity of trade, and how this changes through time, must be a priority. Given the nature of the material record, this will inevitably result in an even greater focus on ceramics than is healthy, so we must beware the pots = people equation and hope for help from the scientific disciplines and for architectural and other evidence of lifeways from settlement contexts.

The European academic establishment in general, and archaeology in particular, is facing a difficult time with regard to funding research projects at the moment, which I know only too well from my vantage point as Treasurer of the British School at Athens. In crisis years such as these, the drive is on to make all research in the humanities and social sciences count with a growing emphasis on funding multidisciplinary, cross regional and scientific research to the detriment of stand-alone excavation projects. This publication and the workshop that inspired it are prime examples of this trend. Ironically, such collaborative approaches can only help in uncovering the steps through which the Phoenicians rose to such prominence from the ashes of that other economic crisis at the end of the 2nd millennium BC.

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