

Socio-political structure of Phoenicia ()*

YU. B. TSIRKIN

SUMMARY.—The socio-political structure of Phoenicia was complex. The supreme authority of the king and the administrative powers of the community, royal and communal properties, «the sons of the city» who in their turn fall into «the mighty» and «the little» and alongside them —«the inhabitants», «the king's men» and slaves— all this is characteristic of Phoenicia cities.

The problem of the socio-political structure of Phoenician city-states in the metropolis is one of the least known and most disputable ones as a result of a relative scarcity of sources available. Yet the investigation of the socio-political set-up of Phoenicia may prove essential for the understanding of the entire historical process in the ancient Mediterranean. Chronologically the present paper covers the period from the invasions of the Seapeoples to the conquest of Phoenicia by Alexander, i.e. the XII-IVth centuries B.C., when for several hundred years the Phoenician cities were subordinated to the kings of Assyria, Babylon and Persia but the subordination did not lead to changes in their social, economic and political structures.

Politically the Phoenician cities were a monarchy and their throne, as would be expected, was inheritable. Curtius Rufus (IV, I, 1-20) and Diodorus (XVII, 47) tell us a curious story: after the seizure of Sidon (Diodorus mistakenly located the episode in Tyre) Alexander dethroned the king Straton (i.e. Abdastart) and commissioned Hephaestio to appoint another king; the latter offered the throne to his young friends remarkable for their wealth and glory (undoubtedly of aristocratic origin) but they declined the offer pleading that in conformity with the fathers custom (*patrio more*), the throne could only be handed down to the one of the royal family and thus the purple was entrusted to a certain Abdalonim who, though of the Sidonian royal family, was a poor man. For all the edifying nature of this account, at any rate as it is related in

(*) Translated from the Russian by L. Chistonogova

ancient literature in general and not only by Rufus and Diodorus, there is no reason to doubt its historicity, the more so that recently they found Abdalanim's inscription ¹. So if we must believe this story, a king's clan alone had the right of succession.

This allows us to view some earlier events from a peculiar angle. When in 564-556 B.C. (according to the calculations by B. A. Turayev) ² for some reason or other (evidently all members of the royal household were taken to Babylon) the Tyrian throne became empty, the state was headed by the judges, i.e. suffetes as Joseph Flavius (*Contra App.*, 1, 21) testifies. These suffetes could not have been regular city magistrates because the term of their office was not fixed, each enjoyed his own tenure of a different duration —two months to six years. In this case the suffetes acted as substitutes of the king and later they gave the sovereign authority back to the kings again. Presumably in the absence of the people of royal descent other men although they headed the state, were denied the designation of the king. Is this not exactly the reason why after Elissa's suicide a republic set in at Carthage?

Some time previously upon the assassination of king Abdashtart, grandson to the famous Hiram, the royal power in Tyre was usurped by the four sons of the king's wetnurse, the throne being mounted by the eldest brother who ruled for twelve years (*Jos. Flav. Contra App.*, 1, 18). Though some scholars identify the usurper with Metashtart and consider him the founder of the whole dynasty ³, B. A. Turayev, on the strength of the Greek text of Joseph's work, correctly refutes this opinion and points out that Joseph gives no name of the nurse's eldest son since it had been subjected to *damnatio memoriae*; the mentioned kings Ashtart, Ashtorim and Phelet held the throne already following the nurse's sons ⁴. Sharing the well-grounded opinion of B. A. Turayev allows us to draw an inference that even if the usurper managed to seize the throne he failed to be acclaimed by the public as a lawful king and at the first opportunity his name was razed from historical records. One more thing is noteworthy. The wet-nurse's sons' successor to the throne was named Ashtart and Joseph makes a special point to mention his patronymic-son to Deleashtart. This was not a custom with the author in other cases when a new dynasty was recorded to have come to power. The king's patronymic is possibly intended to underline the idea that no new dynasty but the restoration of the old one is in the author's mind. If we accept B. A. Turayev's explanation that the name of Ashtart is actually the abbreviation of Abdashtart ⁵, the above supposition becomes still more plausible, for in this case the new king may well be regar-

¹ *RSF*, 12, 1984, p. 170.

² B. A. TURAYEV: *The Remnants of Phoenician Literature*, Sankt-Peterburg, 1903, p. 112 (in Russian).

³ To date O. Eissfeldt maintains the same: O. EISSFELDT: «Tyros», in *RE. Hbd.* 14a, 1948, col., 1885.

⁴ B. A. TURAYEV: *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

ded as the grandson of the assassinated descendant of Hiram because this order of stringing names is a typical Phoenician and, in general, West-Semitic tradition.

Perhaps, it is precisely the lawfulness of the rule that is emphasized by those kings who claimed to be "regular" and "legitimate" as, for instance, did Yehimilk, the king of Byblos, in the tenth century B.C., who was the founder of a new dynasty (KAI, 4).

Yet well we know that in Tyre, Sidon and Byblos alike in the course of the nine centuries under study several royal dynasties replaced each other, some reigning not more than three generations. It seems possible to explain this contradiction by a hypothesis that these different dynasties were but the separate branches of the one royal clan which was, on the one hand, rather ramified and enormous so that it could include even utterly impoverished families and people like Abdalonim and, on the other, it was so definitely and clearly outlined that even the noblemen were quite well aware of who did and who did not, belong to it.

Phoenician kings enjoyed considerable authority. Inter-state ties were those between their kings. They sent each other greetings on occasions of accession to the throne; they exchanged gifts and concluded alliances with one another, as, for instance, did Hiram of Tyre—first with David and later with Solomon (II Sam. 24, 6-2; I Reg. 5, 1-12); on behalf of their states they paid tributes to foreign kings when for a good part of the first millennium B.C. they had to suffer foreign yoke. In the war kings led or at least could lead an army and navy. They performed this duty both when independent, as Matebaal, king of Aradus, in the battle of Karkar (ANET, p. 279), and when dependent, taking part in, say, Xerxes' campaign against Greece (Her. VIII, 98).

In their inscriptions the kings sometimes strove to present themselves as righteous and just people. Whatever could these epithets imply? First and foremost, of course, their services to the gods, and with this aim in view they built and rebuilt temples and altars which was the sovereign's prerogative and priority because the construction of temples was thought to be able to secure the prosperity of the whole state. This is clearly seen from the inscription of the Byblos king Yehavmilk (KAI, 10) who though son and grandson of the kings, yet took the trouble to specify and stress his regularity and lawfulness and thanked "the Lady of Byblos" for the fact that in response to his offerings and prayers she had taken heed of his voice and bestowed peace and grace in the face of the gods, the people of the country and other rulers. Similarly, it is just the sovereign's foreign, military-political and temple-building activities resulting in Sidon's efflorescence that are accented in the Eshmunazor II inscription of the midfifth century B.C.^{5a}

^{5a} A. FABER: «On the Structural Unity of the Eshmunazor Inscription», in *JAOI*, 106, n. 3, 1986, p. 428.

The famous inscription on the sarcophagus of Ahiiram of Byblos (KAI, I) reads thus: if a king of kings, or a sukin of sukins, or a commander of the camp forces the sarcophagus open, the mace of his judgeship shall be broken, the throne of his kingship shall be toppled over and peace shall flee Byblos. The laconic wording of the inscription and the infrequent mention of "sukin" in Phoenician epigraphy prevent from defining the exact essence of this office. In Ugarit "sakinnu" was used to designate various officials and the sakinnu of Ugarit is known to be at the head of communal self-government of this city ⁶. As for the Byblos sukin, a supposition was advanced to the effect that he was the supreme functionary who governed the country side by side with the king and who was in charge of judicature ⁷. Let us study the inscription more closely. In it the sukin is mentioned between king and general whose duty it was not only to exercise military authority but also to maintain inner order in the state. But we know that management and guidance of military affairs was in the king's hands. Moreover, even a mere declaration of a campaign brought about an immediate suspension of activities in all communal institutions ⁸. So we can deduce that a military commander was an authorized agent of the king, not of the community. Taking into account such neighbourhood we may surmise that the office of the Byblos sukin belonged to the royal domain, not to that of the community.

We may even suppose, however hypothetically, that different aspects of royal authority were combined in it: an abstract majesty, emanated by a man on the throne (very much like in Ugarit) ⁹, administrative-judicial powers and military-police functions. In any case, in Phoenician cities these were conceivably the duties of the king, except foreign policies.

Coinage was also the ruler's prerogative. It was not until the middle or end of the Vth century B.C. when the Phoenician cities were under the Achaemenids ¹⁰ that Phoenicia started to strike coins. It was precisely the kings who issued coins. When on the obverse or reverse there were any legends (that was not practised regularly) those were local kings' names, often not even full names but only initials ¹¹, sometimes accompanied by figures. Since the figures were small, never exceeding twenty, we must assume that they indicated the years of a king's reign, not, say, the city's era ¹². True, a supposition has been put forward that in Aradus, unlike other Phoenician cities, the coin's master was the city itself, not the king: on the coins of the earliest series (the

⁶ I. Sh. SHIFFMANN: *The Society of Ugarit in the XIV-XIIIth centuries B.C.* Moscow, 1982, pp. 262-282 (in Russian).

⁷ I. N. VINNIKOV: «The Ahiiram of Byblos Epitaph in the New Light», in *VDI*, 1952, n. 4, pp. 143-144, 149 (in Russian).

⁸ Cf. I. Sh. SHIFFMANN: *op. cit.*, p. 260.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 286-287.

¹⁰ D. HARDEN: *The Phoenicians*, Harmondsworth, 1980, p. 157.

¹¹ G. F. HILL: *Catalogue of the Greek coins of Phoenicia*, London, 1910.

¹² A. N. ZOGRAP: *Ancient coins*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1951, p. 87 (in Russian).

close of the Vth-the beginning of the IVth centuries B.C.) the letters "mem" and "aleph" were struck and E. Babelon maintains (his opinion is shared by G. F. Hill, the author of the catalogue of coins) that the first letter stands for the prefix of origin the second is the city's initial, so that the whole must be interpreted as "of Aradus". At the same time there existed an opposite opinion that it was the abbreviation of mlk 'rd, i.e. king of Aradus¹³. The latter seems more correct and feasible. For example, in Byblos we come across the full name of the king Elibaal and the letter "mem", undeniably standing for the word "king"¹⁴. In Aradus on some coins of the midfourth century B.C. the letters "mem" and "aleph" are followed by the figures 15 or 16¹⁵, which, as has been shown above, patently indicate the years of the king's rule. Perhaps, the "aleph" of these coins was not the beginning of the word 'Áradus" but the king's name. So, in Phoenician cities coins were minted not by the collective, as, for instance, in the neighbouring Judea, but by a monarch¹⁶, though he was subordinated to the supreme sovereign who, according to the scholars, was depicted on the reverse of the Sidon coins¹⁷.

The king was probably connected with the deity. The centre of the all-Phoenician pantheon was evidently Eshmun but each sovereign city had its own deity, whose patronage the city enjoyed and who authorized and blessed the majesty of any concrete king. No wonder usurpers of the throne claimed to have been delegated by the god to rule because the divine will was above the legitimacy of succession. The legitimate king of Byblos Yehavmilk too claimed that he had been made king by "the Lady of Byblos" (KAI, 10). Could it possibly mean that throughout the period under consideration sacralization of royal power had been increasing and eventually resulted in the merging of royal and priestly functions and the deification of the king?¹⁸ As concerns the latter item, it is necessary to point out right away that we have no evidence of the king's deification in Phoenicia's town and in general prior to Hellenism, kings in Western Asia were as a rule never deified (a few recorded exceptions only confirming the general rule). The problem of the monarch's priestly functions presents much more difficulty to solve.

While considering this issue scholars often draw upon and refer to the inscription of Tabnit, king of Sidon (KAI, 13) in which he, listing his own titles and his father's titles, gave pride of place to that of the priest: 'Í, Tabnit, priest of Ashtart, king of Sidonians, son of Eshmunazor, priest of Ashtart, king of

¹³ G. F. HILL: *op. cit.*, p. XXIII.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 94 (n. 2).

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 9 (n. 55).

¹⁶ P. NASTER: «Les monnayages satrapaux, provinciaux et régionaux dans l'Empire perse face au numéraire officiel des Achéménides», in *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, Leuven, 1978, t. II, pp. 600-601.

¹⁷ F. BONDÍ: «Instituzioni e politica a Sidone dal 351 al 332 av.Cr.», in *RSF* II, 1978, pp. 155-156.

¹⁸ S. MOSCATI: *I Fenici e Cartagine*, Torino, 1972, p. 668.

Sidonians." Amashtart, Tabnit's sister and wife, was also a priestess of Ashtart (KAI, 14). But already Tabnit's son Eshmunazor II did not care to mention either his priesthood or those of his father and grandfather (KAI, 14). Is this an example of growing sacralization? Hardly. Apparently such mentions of the priestly status in the inscriptions were dictated by specific concrete circumstances in Sidon at any given moment.

Let us study the situation in Tyre. Iustinus (XVIII, 4, 5) writes that Acherbas, priest of Hercules, i.e. Melqart, the patron god of Tyre, was the second person in the state after the king. And the two persons of Tyre came to clashes. King Pygmalion won a victory and executed Acherbas (XVIII, 4, 8) and thereupon the wife of the executed priest and the sister of the king Elissa fled and laid the foundation of Carthage. Pygmalion himself was the great grandson of Ashtart's priest Ithobaal, who, in his turn and time, had killed king Phelet and seized the throne (Jos. Contra App. I, 18). Thus, a king and a highest priest are two separate figures who sometimes come in conflict with one another. We know instances when a king turned out the victor in the conflict, in other cases—a priest; in the latter case one man could concentrate in his hands both royal and priestly functions, as did Eshmunazor I and Tabnit at Sidon. We shall say in passing, however, that already Eshmunazor I's grandson was no longer a priest, nor was the great grandson of Ithobaal, i.e. duality of secular and religious powers was in principle reinstated. Thus, the sacralization of royal power as such in the first millennium B.C. has not been substantiated by any evidence. The king remained in principal a secular person.

So, the authority of the king was rather significant, he reigned supreme in his state, he cannot be treated as a life-long magistrate similar to a Spartan king. And yet with all its might and weight the king's power was not despotic.

Simultaneously there existed in the Phoenician towns a community, *τοῦ κοινῶν*, as Arrianus called the Tyrian community (II, 15, 6). The community and its organs exercised a considerable amount of authority¹⁹. When the Thekera came to Byblos to demand the extradition of Wen-Amon, the Byblos king Theker-Baal before making up his mind, convened the council and, as can be understood from the context, it was only with its approval and consent that he gave the visitors an arch answer—he refused to extradite Wen-Amon but advised them to catch him at sea after he had left Byblos (2, 70-74)²⁰. In the treaty of the Tyrian king Baal with Esarhaddon the "folk" or men of "the land of Tyre" are mentioned side by side with the king. In the inscription on the Eshmunazor II sarcophagus in Sidon "any king and any man" (KAI, 14) are

¹⁹ Cf. F. BONDÍ: *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; H. REVIV: «On urban representative institutions and self-government in Syria-Palestine in the second half of the second millennium B.C.», in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XII, p. III, 1969, pp. 296-297.

²⁰ All quotations from «Wen Amon's Voyage to Byblos» are taken from the edition: *Wen-Amon's Voyage to Byblos*. The publication of the text and research by M. A. KOROSTOVTSSEV, Moscow, 1960.

warned against prying the sarcophagus open. Here "any man" should be decapitated not as "any man from the street", but a member of the Sidonian community.

The king had to reckon with the community. During the Phoenician rebellion against the Persians in the year 351 B.C. the Sidon king Tennes who had first headed and later betrayed the rebels, could not find the heart to just surrender the city to Artaxerxes. In order to be able to carry out his plan he had first not only to abandon Sidon, but also under some plausible pretext to lure away with him a hundred of the most influential citizens. And even after that it was not until he had entered into a collusion with Mentor, commander of the mercenaries, that he managed to bring into the city the Persian army, to which the Sidon residents offered a stubborn resistance. The likely reason why Artaxerxes executed Tennes was that the latter had failed to procure him an easy victory (Diod., XVI, 43-45). As testifies Curtius Rufus (IV, I, 16), eighteen years later the king Straton (Abdashtart) II surrendered the same Sidon to Alexander "not so much of his own free will as rather of the popular will".

In what way did the people express their will? It seems logical to suppose that the citizens congregated for their popular assemblies. True, direct evidence of their existence in Phoenicia proper belongs to the Hellenistic epoch alone ²¹, but we have at our disposal a very interesting account of Herodotos (VII, 23): the Phoenicians, as well as other subjects of Xerxes who had been driven together to build a canal, arranged on the neighbouring meadow a market-place and an assembly-place. Severed from their homeland, the Phoenicians organized in no time a sort of collective with its assembly. According to Arrianus (II, 15, 6) it was precisely the Tyrian community that forwarded its ambassadors to Alexander: an issue like this could only have been decided by the assembly. Beyond controversy, it was an "at-the-city-gates" assembly, the type of a popular assembly borrowed from the metropolis by the western colonists ²².

Alongside the assembly there was the council. As has been shown above, such council was summoned by Theker-Baal to decide the fate of Wen-Amon. The Byblos elders (zigne Gebal) are mentioned in the prophecy of Ezekiel (27, 9), true, in a somewhat moot context. In the pact of Baal with Esarhaddon we find the lines about the elders of the country and the council ²³. Iustinus (XVIII, 4, 15) writes about Tyrian senators.

We have no way of knowing what exactly duties and functions were performed by the community and its organs. But let us study attentively those cases

²¹ M. SZNYCER: «L'Assemblée du Peuple dans les cités puniques d'après les témoignages épigraphiques», in *Semitica*, XXV, 1975, pp. 51-54.

²² W. SESTON: «Remarques sur les institutions politiques et sociales de Carthage, d'après une inscription latine de Thougga», in *CRAI*, 1967, pp. 218-222.

²³ G. PETTINATO: «I rapporti politici di Tiro con Assiria alla luce del "trattato tra Asarhaddon e Baal"», in *RSF*, III 2, 1975, pp. 151-154.

when the community and/or the elders exercised their power. Theker-Baal was quite able at his own discretion to send wood-cutters to the Lebanon mountains to fell timber for Wen-Amon; and in general he dealt with the Egyptian envoy as he saw fit, asking for nobody's counsel. Only when the Thekers' ships entered the Byblos port did he summon his councillors. Previously Wen-Amon had long since stayed in the port of Byblos and the king had repeatedly insisted that he should leave the city but he had never resorted to armed forces in order to enhance his demand. Apparently the port held a very special standing in the city²⁴: the king could ill afford to turn out of the port the objectionable stranger; to treat the demands and claims of the outlandish shipmen who entered the port, the king was expected to have got the council's mind.

Many years later in Sidon Tennes, before surrendering himself to Artaxerxes and giving him up the aristocrats whom he had taken away (the man had virtually beheaded the community by their withdrawal, as was his intent), had to leave the city and look for a place beyond the communal jurisdiction. The Tyrian community in the absence of the king was caused to embark upon the negotiations with Alexander but by this time the Macedonians must have already captured the mainland part of Phoenicia: the envoys suggested that Alexander, eager to offer his sacrifices to Heracles-Melqart, should do it in the god's temple in the mainland Palaetyre; which aroused Alexander's wrath (Curt. Ruf., IV, 2, 3-5). Curtius Rufus offers his explanation of the Tyrians' suggestion somewhat earlier in the text (IV, 2, 2), he argues that Tyre would rather have united in alliance with the king than have acknowledged his power; obviously, to make sacrifices in the patron-god's temple was tantamount to recognizing the conqueror's supremacy, whereas Palaetyre was already, without doubt, in his hands. The Tyrians did not seem to regard the loss of their mainland territories to the Macedonian king as the recognition of their subordination to Alexander: for the Tyrian κοινον it was imperative that the later should not enter the city proper. If we accept M. L. Helzer's cogent idea that the phrase of Ezekiel "the elders of Byblos and her sages patch up your (Tyre's) battle-holes" means that the Tyrian ships had the right to enter Byblos for repairs and the Byblos inhabitants had to render the Tyrian seafarers assistance²⁵, we can be justified in believing that the Byblos elders managed the port.

Therefore we draw the conclusion that the plenary powers of the community and its organs embraced only the capital city proper and the citizens' plots around it. The community had no authority to speak for the whole state. It had no foreign policy initiative either. Its conduct under Alexander's storm was

²⁴ G. BUNNENS: «La mission d'Ounamon en Phénicie. Point de vue d'un non-égyptologue», in *RSE* VI, I, 1978, p. 13.

²⁵ M. L. HELZER: «Phoenicia at the Turn of the VII-VIth centuries B.C.», in the *Proceedings of the Institute of the Asian Peoples*, 46, 1962, p. 199 (in Russian).

conditioned by the extraordinary circumstances: the king was away with the Persian Fleet and there was no time to be lost because the conqueror was already standing at the very walls of Tyre; it was vitally urgent to save the city (precisely the city proper, not the entire kingdom) from the foreign incursion. Incidentally, the embassy to Alexander included the king's son with the express purpose to imbue the mission with the least shred of lawfulness.

Members of the community, citizens of the city could serve in the army. For instance, Ezekiel (27, II) mentions "the sons of Tyre" who side by side with "the sons of Aradus" protected the city's walls. This fact is of prime significance bearing in mind the close connection between the military service and the civil status in antiquity.

In the capital city of the state the king had to reckon with the community; the communal organs administered their local affairs, into which the king never interfered without their consent; the community, at any rate the port, is likely to have had the right of sanctuary that the king could not abuse of his own accord.

But every Phoenician king had a vaster territory to rule over than the one city giving the kingdom its name. There were other towns on the territory. A part of the Tyrian kingdom were obviously the colonies, deduced by Tyre, barring Carthage.

Joseph Flavius with a reference to Menandros who translated the Tyrian annals into Greek, describes the expedition of the Tyrian king Hiram against a town (its name is corrupted but the current belief is it is Utica in Africa) that had refused to pay the tributes and Hiram by force made the rebels resume paying them (*Contra App.*, I, 18; *Ant. Iud.*, VIII, 5, 3). I. Sh. Shiffmann with good reasons considers this account to be proof of the fact that other towns were also obliged to pay some tribute to the Tyrian king; more than that, he underlines that tributes had to be paid exactly to the king²⁶.

The ruler of Cartage in Cyprus, who bore the title "sukin", called himself "a slave of Hiram, king of Sidonians" (*KAI*, 31). Naturally, this high-ranking officer could hardly have been a slave in the true sense of the word²⁷, but the phrase is indicative of his subordination to the king, not Tyre or Sidon.

But back to Hiram I. Both the Bible (I Reg. 9, 11-13) and Joseph Flavius who, in all likelihood, drew on the Biblical data (*Ant. Iud.* VIII, 5, 3), narrate that in gratitude to Tyre's king for his services in the construction of the temple and palace, Solomon provided Tyre every year with grain, wine and oil and into the bargain he gave him as a gift twenty townships in Galilea, not far from Tyre. Hiram, however, on inspecting the townships, declined the present plea-

²⁶ I. Sh. SHIFFMANN: «On Qualification of Royal Obligations in Palestine in the First Half of the First Millennium B.C. According to the Data of the Biblical Tradition», in *VDI*. I. 1967, p. 41 (in Russian).

²⁷ *Idem*: «The Legal Standing of Slaves in Judah According to the Biblical Tradition», in *VDI*. 3, 1964, p. 55 (in Russian).

ding that they had not taken his fancy. Leaving aside, for the time being, the development of the relations between the kings of Tyre and Jerusalem, we shall only stress that both the presenting of the Galilean towns and the rejecting of them were but the king's private affairs. When refusing to accept the gift, Hiram was motivated entirely by his own desire: whether he liked those towns or not. The citizens of Tyre had no finger in this pie, figuratively speaking.

So it seems possible to assert that beyond the bounds of the metropolis proper and its vicinage the king acted absolutely independently, without taking into account the capital city's community.

Did the subjected towns have any communal structures? S. F. Bondi and M. G. Guzzo Amadasi have suggested their own deciphering of the inscription on the scarab found at Sarepta, a town that first belonged to Sidom and later to Tyre. They contend it reads as follows: ' m srpt-"the people of Sarepta". If it is correct we may say with certainty that about 400 B.C. (that is approximately the time to which the scarab dates back) there existed a community in the town. Incidentally, J. Teixidor's interpretation of the inscription "the ten of Sarepta" (which the above-mentioned authors have attempted to disprove) also testifies to the existence of some communal board ²⁸. There can hardly be any doubt that the remote overseas colonies of Tyre also had some civic collectives.

As is known, in the Ugarit kingdom there was a whole system of relations between the ruling community of Ugarit proper and other communities ²⁹. There is no evidence of a similar system in the Phoenician cities of the first millennium B.C. though. Absence of evidence of a social phenomenon must by no means spell absence of the phenomenon itself. Nevertheless, Hiram's conduct concerning the Galilean townships prompts us a supposition that the domination-subordination relations between the Tyre community and those of the vassal towns must have been lacking. They were all under the exclusive domination of the king.

So, the Phoenician states had a certain political dualism when royal power co-existed with a system of communities, with whose bodies the king had to share his authority directly in the cities but not beyond their borders or in the state on the whole.

Such politico-administrative dualism well corresponded to the duality of socio-economic relations.

The royal sector need not be questioned. It included, first of all, forests. Both Theker-Baal of Byblos and Hiram of Tyre felled cedars, cypress-trees, pinetrees and shipped them either to Egypt or Israel or other countries, asking for no one's permission and acting out of their right of property. We do not know if felling of timber was in general a royal monopoly. There is no

²⁸ S. F. BONDI and M. G. GUZZO AMADASI, in *RSF*, 5, 1977, p. 97.

²⁹ I. Sh. SHIFFMAN: *The Society of Ugarit...*, pp. 271-272.

evidence available of private felling but it cannot, of course, prove anything. We can only surmise that the king sought to secure if not an exclusive monopoly than at least a lion's share in the cutting and exporting of timber, one of the traditional major exports in Phoenicia.

The royal sector included also ships and sea-borne trade. King Baal's boat is mentioned in this monarch's treaty with Esarhaddon³⁰. The Bible describes the voyages of Hiram's (not Tyre's) vessels to Ophir and Tarshish (I Reg., 10, 11, 22). Much is said about the Tyrian ships by Ezekiel (27, 5-9), but his prophecy concerns Tyre as such and he does not distinguish the Tyrians' boats from those of the king. The following chapter (28), though, contains an account of the Tyre king who had multiplied his wealth due to his wisdom and commerce. Consequently according to Ezekiel, the king of Tyre was the chief, if not the sole merchant of his city.

Besides, the king had in his possession some lands, whose produce he could sell. In Palestine there have been found several Phoenician jugs with a name (obviously, a placename) and the designation "l-mlk", i.e. "of the king"³¹. As F. M. Cross sees it, the use of the king's brands in Palestine was, as a matter of fact, borrowed from Phoenicia³². A vessel of the mideighth century B.C., unearthed at Samaria, bears the name of Milqiram, believed to have been the hitherto unknown king of Tyre³³.

Judging from the available data on the king's artisans that we shall dwell upon below, the king seems to have possessed some handicraft workshops as well.

Thus, the royal sector covered all branches of the country's economy, including the major ones such as felling of timber and maritime commerce.

It goes without saying that people were part and parcel of the royal sector; First and foremost, slaves. It should be borne in mind that in the Orient in general and in Palestine and Phoenicia in particular, the usage of words was far from precise and accurate, therefore every time when "slaves" are mentioned we cannot be sure whether the word means people held as the legal property of a slaveowner, in our case-of the king. But there are some cases in which we can feel on a safer ground. For example, having received in advance from Wen-Amon the payment for the timber, Theker-Baal sent three hundred men and three hundred bulls to the Lebanon mountains to cut trees and put his overseers in charge of them (2, 42-43). The presence of the overseers patently bespeaks the wood-cutters' bound, dependent standing. When Solomon was getting ready for the construction of the temple he asked Hiram to send his slaves to fell timber in concert with his own slaves and promised to

³⁰ G. PETTINATO: *op. cit.*, pp. 151-154.

³¹ B. DELAVault and A. LEMAIr: «Les inscriptions phéniciennes de Palestine», in *RSF*, 7, 1, 1979, p. 15, n. 25.

³² J. TTEIXIDOR: «Bulletin épigraphique», in *Syria*, XLVII, 1970, pp. 358-359.

³³ B. DELAVault and A. LEMAIr: *op. cit.*, p. 21, n. 43.

give the slaves' wages directly to the king himself (I Reg., 5, 2-9). The fact that the master received those people's money attests to their dependent status ³⁴.

In other cases such clarity of evidence is missing but even here we find safe to surmise that the sources mean people somehow or other dependent on the king. As we remember, kings had ships all their own, and Hiram sent to Ophir "on board his vessel his slaves, experienced seamen, together with Solomon's slaves" (I Reg., 9, 27). Crews fell into sailors proper, oarsmen and helmsmen (Ez., 27, 26-29). The latter (of all the seafarers they were the most experienced) could scarcely be expected to be ordinary slaves. They were most probably "king's men", personally free, but their dependance on the king was rendered with the help of the word "slave", as was a custom in the Near East in antiquity. As regards the social status of sailors and especially of oarsmen, for lack of evidence it is impossible to say anything on this score. Our guess though, is that they were not after all slaves. Ezekiel (27, 8) calls rowers inhabitants (josebe) of Sidon and Aradus who for some reason or other had left their towns for Tyre and become employed as rowers.

Amidst "the king's men" there were artisans such as Hiram, the king's namesake, whom the Tyrian monarch commissioned to Solomon to erect a temple and who was proficient as architect, copper-smith, carver and jeweller (I Reg., 7, 13-45; II Chron., 2, 7-18; Jos. Ant. Iud., VIII, 3, 4). The author of the "First Book of Kings" and Joseph Flavius say little about this Hiram: he was the son of a Hebrew woman of the tribe of Naphtali, apparently an immigrant to Tyre, and a Tyrian, a copper-smith by trade. Hiram, a half-caste, could not possibly have been a Tyrian citizen. This, it seems, may throw some light on the way the king's men were made-of people socially defective in this or that respect. Hiram was above all a copper-smith (the Bible in the description of his arrival at Jerusalem emphasized his great skill in making different things of copper). This may also bear witness to the fact that the king's craftsmen inherited their skills and trades from the fathers and forefathers. Not slaves in the proper sense of the word but the king's men were, perhaps, those hands of Hiram and the Byblians (note the name of the city alone) who in concert with Solomon's hands were preparing the construction of the temple (I Reg., 5, 18) ³⁵. Their position might be similar to that of the artisans of New Carthage who were not proper slaves but formed a specific section of the dependent population-truly, the legacy of the Oriental origin of the Carthaginians ³⁶.

Ezekiel (27, 10-11) speaks about one more group of people-foreign soldiers of Tyre. They served with the Tyrian army amongst the locals. Those were, evidently, the representatives of the more privileged strata because the prophet calls the soldiers from Aradus "the sons (bene) of Aradus" whereas the rowers

³⁴ I. Sh. SHIFFMAN: *The Legal Standing of Slaves...*, p. 56.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ Ju. B. TSIRKIN: *Carthage and Her Culture*, Moscow, 1986, p. 98 (in Russian).

—“the inhabitants”. Since military affairs were the royal prerogative, not that of the community, the mercenaries were in the king’s service and so were the king’s men as well, though of a higher rank.

Significant as it was, the royal sector was not the only one in the state economy either. If we can admit the existence of the king’s monopoly of woods, no such monopoly of marine is to be ascertained. Baal’s pact with Esarhaddon mentions not only the king’s boats but also those of “the men of Tyre”³⁸. Land commerce was vastly carried on by the private merchants (the type of those who imprinted their names along the trade route from Gaza to the Gulf of Aqaba³⁹). A number of vessels have inscriptions, made before baking, with the names of, most likely, the artisans who manufactured them and they are all private individuals. Other inscriptions on similar vessels (mostly jugs for storing wine or oil) were made after baking and have the preposition *l-*, denoting possession. What is implied is evidently the owner of the thing contained in the jug, i.e. the land-owner⁴⁰. The craftsman who made the golden bowl discovered at Praeneste, engraved his name on it⁴¹. All these people had nothing to do with the king. Bearing in mind the existence of the communities in Phoenician cities they may be regarded as commoners.

No evidence as yet can sustain the interrelations of the two sectors in the Phoenician cities proper. However, the Bible tells us a most curious story about the attempt of the Israelite king Ahab to acquire the vineyard of a certain Naboth (I Reg., 21): he first had tried to buy the vineyard but the owner refused point blank to sell it and then the king’s wife Jezebel managed to wrongfully accuse the obstinate landowner of high treason; Naboth was put to death and the king succeeded in gaining the coveted vineyard. Once I. M. Dyakonov interpreted this episode as a proof of the absence of the king’s supreme property in land in Israel and proof of the commoners’ right to hold his land: in order to get the commoner’s plot of land the king was supposed to buy it, while the landowner could refuse to sell it (true, running the risk of losing his life)⁴². Surely, the events described took place in Israel, but Jezebel was the daughter of the Tyrian king Ithobaal and S. Moscatti with good reason underlined the Phoenician origin of the Israel queen⁴³. During the reign of Ahab Israel saw a sharp increase in political and cultural influence of Tyre⁴⁴.

³⁸ G. PETTINATO: *op. cit.*, pp. 151-154.

³⁹ B. DALAVAUULT and A. LEMAIRE: *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29, nn. 52-55.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem, passim*: J. C. L. GIBSON: *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1982, vol. III, n. 19.

⁴¹ D. HARDEN: *op. cit.*, pp. 109, 180.

⁴² I. M. DYAKONOV: «The Problem of Property. On the Structure of Society of the Near East Up to the Middle of the Second Millennium B.C.», in *VDI*, 1967, (n. 4), p. 22 (in Russian).

⁴³ S. MOSCATI: *op. cit.*, p. 652

⁴⁴ *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*. Bd. I, München, 1978, s. 152-153.

Jezebel's counsel must have been prompted not just by an insidious intellect of the regal lady but also by an experience she had acquired in her homeland.

This misdeed of Jezebel's stirred up frightful anger in Israel and the Bible provides us with a faithful report of an ardent hatred the Israelites felt towards this queen and of their jubilations when she died a horrible death. They rejoiced at the fact that there were just a few remnants of her body left to be buried because dogs had eaten up almost all the corpse. They considered it to be Ahab's major transgression to have usurped the property of the calumniated Naboth. Obviously such ferocious wrongs were not the current practice in Israel at that time.

But if the crime Jezebel had committed for the sake of her husband was indeed fairly common in Tyre, it could not have passed unheeded and unimpeded there either. Curtius Rufus (IV, 4, 20) argues that the Tyrian agriculturists sought with arms in hands for new settlements in the foreign lands pleading their tiredness of frequent earthquakes. But Rufus wrote his account many centuries after the events had occurred and their real reasons must surely have sunk into oblivion by then. If it was the earthquakes that drove those agriculturists away, why should they have taken up arms? As we see it, two things are noteworthy here: first, the armed mutiny of the cultores, and second, the mutiny became one of the stimuli of the Tyrian colonization. The colonization, to be more exact its second stage, started precisely under Ithobaal, father of Jezebel⁴⁵. It follows then that the farmers' riot in Tyre falls exactly on his reign. The simultaneity of the riot in Tyre and the misdeed of Jezebel enables us to presume that such practice was resorted to under Ithobaal and it gave rise to the agriculturists' indignation. But if this presumption indeed holds water we must extrapolate I. M. Dyakonov's thesis (about the lack of the Israel king's supreme property in the lands of the communal sector) over the Tyre of the first millennium B.C. as well. And in this respect Tyre appears to be very much like the other cities of Phoenicia.

Summing up, it seems safe to conclude that there were two sectors both in the political and socio-economic spheres of Phoenicia. The royal power resting on its own socio-economic basis existed alongside the system of communities and politically the king had to take into account the position of the community in the capital city, city as such, as distinct from the townships of the state. The members of the city community constituted a civic collective of "the sons" (bene) of the city. As is only too natural, its inner structure was not homogeneous; its crust being the aristocracy. Philo of Byblos (FHG III, fr. IV-V) writes about the powerful people (κρατούντες) who in antiquity in case of emergency sacrificed to the gods their favourite children. In two inscriptions from Carthage and Sardinia (KAI 6) 'drnm ("the mighty") are mentioned. The very same people are meant by Sallust (Iug., 19, 1) when he narrates about the noblemen who in thirst for power urged many people to emigrate. Amidst the

⁴⁵ Ju. B. TSIRKIN: *op. cit.*, p. 17.

emigrants from Phoenicia the same Sallust mentions also "the plebs". This Roman term used by the Latin author clearly corresponds to the Phoenician *s'rm* ("the little") of the Carthage and Sardinia inscriptions ⁴⁶.

The "Sons of the city" were not the only free populace of the Phoenician towns. Ezekiel (27, 8) mentions "the inhabitants" (*josbe*) of Sidon and Aradus who served as oarsmen on Tyrian ships. They are opposed to "the sons" of the same Aradus, enrolled for military service in Tyre (Ez., 27, II). We know nothing about "the inhabitants'" social and property standing, but more likely than not they were not "the king's men" because they could freely move and become employed in other towns. But at the same time they were beneath "the sons", i.e. the citizens, for, unlike the latter, eligible for a prestigious service with the army, theirs was but a publicly inferior and more arduous drudgery of rowers. When in the foreign king's service they turned into "the king's men".

So the socio-political structure of Phoenicia was rather complex. The supreme authority of the king and the administrative powers of the community, royal and communal properties, "the sons of the city" who in their turn fall into "the mighty" and "the little" and alongside them — "the inhabitants", "the king's men" and slaves — all this is characteristic of Phoenician cities. Perhaps the set-up of the Phoenician society was even by far more complicated. Carthage's material should be considered too; but the comparative analysis of the social systems of eastern and western Phoenicians is the subject of another paper.

⁴⁶ I. Sch. SCHIFFMANN: «Zum Interpretationem der Inschriften IFPCO Sard. 36 und 39 aus Sardinien», in *RSF*, 1976, pp. 51-52.

