



The Phoenicians: The History and Culture of One of the Ancient World's Most Influential Civilizations

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures

*Includes ancient accounts describing the Phoenicians and their history, language, and culture.

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“These people, who had formerly dwelt on the shores of the Erythraean Sea, having migrated to the Mediterranean and settled in the parts which they now inhabit, began at once, they say, to adventure on long voyages, freighting their vessels with the wares of Egypt and Assyria...” - Herodotus

Of all the peoples of the ancient Near East, the Phoenicians are among the most recognizable but also perhaps the least understood. The Phoenicians never built an empire like the Egyptians and Assyrians; in fact, the Phoenicians never created a unified Phoenician state but instead existed as independent city-state kingdoms scattered throughout the Mediterranean region. However, despite the fact there was never a “Phoenician Empire,” the Phoenicians proved to be more prolific in their exploration and colonization than any other peoples in world history until the Spanish during the Age of Discovery.

The Phoenicians were well-known across different civilizations throughout the ancient world, and their influence can be felt across much of the West today because they are credited with inventing the forerunner to the Greek alphabet, from which the Latin alphabet was directly derived. Nonetheless, the Phoenicians left behind few written texts, so modern historians have been forced to reconstruct their past through a variety of ancient Egyptians, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman sources. It’s not even clear what the Phoenicians called themselves, because the name “Phoenician” is derived from the Greek word “phoinix”, which possibly relates to the dyes they produced and traded (Markoe 2000, 10). The mystery of the ancient Phoenicians is further compounded by the fact that archaeologists have only been able to excavate small sections of the three primary Phoenician cities: Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre.

Despite the inherent problems in reconstructing Phoenician history, there are enough primary sources available to accurately place the Phoenician people in their proper historical context within the ancient Near East, and scholars have found that given their extensive exploration, colonization, trade, and manufacturing (among other things), the Phoenicians deserve to be considered alongside the other well-known peoples of antiquity.

The Phoenicians: The History and Culture of One of the Ancient World’s Most Influential Civilizations comprehensively covers the history, culture, and lingering mysteries behind the Phoenicians, profiling their origins and their lasting legacy.. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Phoenicians like never before, in no time at all.

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