

Hebrews and Phoenicians: An Ancient Historical Image and Its Usage

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IN THIS STUDY I propose to examine the history of the creation of a specific image of the ancient historical past (*Geschichtsbild*) by Jewish historiography. I will also examine the ideological use of that image by right-wing Zionism, principally the radical Revisionists, as well as by the anti-Zionist trend that stemmed from it and was reflected in the Canaanite group.

History is one of the means of constructing reality in that it is organized cultural knowledge of the past and of its relations to the present, giving it a significant continuity.¹ Historiography, in its effort to reconstruct and organize the flow of events in time, creates historical images which become part of the collective historical consciousness. Considered in that light, the historian, willingly or otherwise, becomes not merely a researcher within an academic discipline but also a source of cultural material which is absorbed and used by the public for its own purposes. Thus it is clear that a distinction must be made between historiography and the history of the development of common historical consciousness, both in specific social groups and in the public at large. Among other things, historiography creates historical images, and historical consciousness chooses between the images of the past which it needs from the existing repertory, employing them for its own purposes.² Sometimes historical images exist as cultural options available for utilization but

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1 E. Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, Yale, 1926, p. 206: "History as well as poetry is an organon of our self-knowledge; an indispensable instrument for building up our human universe."

2 The development of the ancient historical image of the Jewish people and the 'Hebrews' is discussed in detail in my book, *From Hebrew to Canaanite* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1984.

known only in professional circles until the time is ripe for them to be used for cultural and ideological purposes.

Moreover, it can also be said that a national movement generally seeks to form a comprehensive picture of the past based on its own "private" history, so that it can borrow examples and analogies from it as the need arises to create a contemporary historical consciousness. The changing needs of historical consciousness focus attention on various historical events and periods, sometimes placing secondary or marginal events in center stage, among certain groups, as long as they fill a vital need.

There is no doubt that those who adopt and make use of an historical image also believe in its truth. They attempt to prove to themselves and others that it is a venerable historical verity solidly based on facts. This was particularly characteristic of the nineteenth century, which regarded historicity as both a value and a vital need.³

On occasion, an historical image does not result only from independent, objective, scientific needs, but it is created explicitly for the purpose of supporting particular interests and ends. Both professional historians and those who make use of the results of historiographic research will always insist on the validity of their own historical descriptions and reconstructions, claiming that their opponents, who present a contrasting version of history, are distorting the truth for their own nefarious ends.

In Search of the Atavistic Past

It is not my purpose to describe either the history of biblical research or the historiography of the Ancient Near East and its influence on the historical polemic and the "historical language" of the evolving Jewish national movement. Scientific historical research presented complex challenges which the historiographic ideology of this movement could ill afford to ignore.⁴ The antiquity, origin, and development of Jewish monotheism and the antiquity of Israel as a nation were placed in question, as were the people's ties to its historic homeland, and its relations with the nations around it. The nonreligious national historiography did not concern itself so much with the antiquity of monotheism, its similarities to the other ancient religions of the surrounding nations, and their common sources, but mainly with the problem of locating the birthplace

3 See the introduction by Fritz Stern to the anthology he edited, *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*, New York, 1973, p. 16.

4 See, for example, M. Soloveichik, *Outlines of the Science of Scripture*, Hebrew translation from the Russian by Zalman Rubashov, Odessa, 1914.

of Israel's spiritual culture, and with the importance of the Land of Israel in that culture. While the historical image developed by the '*Wissenschaft des Judentums*' and later that of the assimilationist Jewish intelligentsia concentrated on the unique role of the Diaspora in shaping the character of the Jewish people,⁵ the radical nationalistic intelligentsia, on the other hand, claimed that the spiritual and national visage of the nation was formed in the Land of Israel, and therefore they insisted that spiritual and national revival could take place in that land and nowhere else.

The basis of this argument, the cultural-geographical, deterministic approach, was occasionally used by the nonreligious Zionists. Thus, under the influence of Buckle, Jabotinsky wrote:

Before our arrival in the Land of Israel we were not a nation, and we did not exist. On the soil of the Land of Israel the Hebrew nation was created from the remnants of other nations. It was on the soil of the Land of Israel that we grew and on it we became citizens; by creating the belief in a single God we breathed spirit into the land.... Everything that is Hebraic in us was given to us by the Land of Israel; everything else that is in us — is not Hebrew.⁶

Other efforts were made not only to establish the uniqueness of the Jewish people by using an image of ancient history, but also to demonstrate they were native to the Land of Israel. One example is Dr. Shlomo Rubin (1823–1910), a popularizer of the science of history. In a booklet entitled "Land of the Hebrews — Ideas about the Land of Israel" (Petrograd, 1886), he developed the historical claim that the people of Israel were the most ancient people to live in the Land of Israel. He considered that the relations of the Hebrew nation to the land were both "natural" and "historical":

In such times, it is right to seek out and look for the strong bond that links our national spirit with the atmosphere of the Land of Israel. The recognition that this land is not only the land which the tribes of Israel took from the Canaanites on leaving Egypt, using their swords and bows, the land in which

5 C. Montefiore, *The Bible for Home Reading*, London, 1896, quoted in the chapter, "Versions of the Past, Visions of the Future," in S. A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews*, Princeton, 1982.

6 Z. Jabotinsky, *Zionism and the Land of Israel*; the Russian original was published in Petrograd in 1905. It also appears in *First Zionist Writings* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 109–129. The influence of H.T. Buckle, the author of *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England*, London, 1857–1861, on the radical Russian intelligentsia, and through it on the radical Jewish intelligentsia, was very great and will be discussed in a separate article.

they later became a great nation, but also our homeland and the homeland of our ancient Hebrew forefathers, before the Canaanites and the Amorites came to live there. It has been our ancient home from time immemorial, from the ashes of Babylon.

After depicting the emigration of the Hebrew tribes from the Land of Israel to Mesopotamia under the pressure of the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Philistines, following which, later on, Abraham the patriarch returned to the country of his forefathers, Rubin reached a practical conclusion: the Land of Israel is

...a land we inherited from our ancient fathers of yore. It was our forefathers' homeland from the time we first became a family and a tribe on this earth, the quarry from which we were hewn, the land of our roots from the earliest days....

Thirty years later, in 1920–1924, Nahum Slouschz, an historian and literary scholar, published a series of essays entitled “Canaan and Eber.”⁷ He endeavored to prove that the Israelites were the only nation with national consciousness which ever inhabited the Land of Israel in ancient times, and that all the other tribes that lived there — first and foremost the Canaanites — were foreigners, with an immigrant consciousness and completely lacking territorial or national awareness. Prior to the arrival of the Israelite tribes, the Land of Canaan was in a twilight state from the ethnic, nationalistic, and cultural point of view. Only the tribes of Israel showed firm national awareness of the significance of a homeland and thus they were the first “homeland-nation” to live in the Land of Israel. In other words, the Israelites were the first to regard the Land of Israel as their homeland, and their consciousness of the significance of a homeland was central in their national self-awareness.

Similarly, in his strange book *Canaan Our Land: Israel's Five Thousand Years on Its Land Without Interruption*, Itamar Ben-Avi, son of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, writes:

The whole business of our leaving Ur of the Chaldees to capture a land not ours and empty it of its original inhabitants is a fabrication, the invention of anti-Semites in former generations.... The Bible should not read, “Get thee

7 The series was published in *Hashiloah* 37 (March–August 1920), pp. 237–242, 351–355, 519–525; 38 (September–October 1920), pp. 132–138, 273–277; and 41 (January–February 1924), pp. 328–343, 346–352, 502–521.

out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee” but rather, “... the land that is *your* land.”⁸

This book also puts forward another rather speculative theory concerning the antiquity of the Israelite presence in the Land of Israel and its reconquest by Joshua, the “Canaanite” — a term which the author construes as meaning “the conqueror.” According to Ben-Avi, Joshua in fact rejoined the portion of the Hebrews who had remained in the land and were not forced to emigrate to Egypt. This theory holds that the Canaanites were actually the ancient Hebrew people who “conquered” the country.⁹

As we have said, the purpose of this article is not to analyze the development of the historical image of the ancient Hebrews in national Jewish historiography or to discuss the validity of various theories on the subject. My aim here is much more restricted: to discuss that depiction of antiquity which claims that there was an historical and cultural connection between the Hebrew and Phoenician nations, and its uses in the ideology of both the radical right-wing Zionists and the anti-Zionists.

Canaanites and Phoenicians

It would seem that until the 1930s the Phoenicians and their history had no place in the image of the ancient past which was commonly employed in modern Jewish national consciousness. Historical research, both that of Jews and non-Jews, did not, of course, neglect the subject of Phoenicia¹⁰ and the connection of the Phoenician people with the Canaanite and Hebrew tribes. Nahum Slouschz, for example, described the Canaanites and the Phoenicians as the worst enemies of Israel. He stated that the onset of the emigration from the Phoenician coastal towns to North Africa and the islands was due to the pressure of the Israelite settlers, but at a later date the Phoenicians and the Israelite tribes mixed and intermarried.

The writer and scholar Aharon Reuveni also described the Canaanite and Phoenician peoples as enemies of the ancient Hebrews. He claimed that the Canaanites were members of the Hamitic race that took over the country from the earlier Semitic population which later gave the land its

8 Palestine, 1932, p. 12.

9 Ibid., pp. 88–90.

10 For a survey of that research up to the 1940s, see N. Slouschz, *Thesaurus of the Phoenician Inscriptions* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, pp. 12–31; Contenau, *La Civilisation Phénicienne*, 1949, Hebrew translation, Sh. Schnitzer, Tel Aviv, 1954, pp. 9–20, bibliography, pp. 259–271.

name. "Of the Semitic tribes, the ancient occupants of the country, only the Sidonites — the Phoenicians — had relations with the Canaanites, and the bond between the two nations continued formally in later generations."¹¹ Sometimes the Phoenicians are described as identical to the Canaanites and as their allies in their fight against the expanding Israelite population in the Land of Canaan,¹² and the Phoenician towns of Jubayl, Sidon, and Tyre are considered an inseparable part of the Canaanite city system. The Phoenicians are occasionally described as the ancient Semitic inhabitants of the land who were overrun by the non-Semitic Canaanites. The Canaanites were said to have mixed later with the Semitic population and adopted its language, while the old Semitic population gave up its own history and identified with the conquering Hamitic population.

Slouschz and Adolphe Lods (one of Adaya Gurevitz's teachers at the University of Paris¹³) adopted the theory developed by Hugo Winckler, according to which the Phoenicians originated in the Persian Gulf.¹⁴ That theory regarded the Canaanites, from a linguistic point of view, as a Semitic tribe which conquered Syria from the Amorites. In Lods's opinion the Hebrew tribes "not only lived side by side with the Canaanite tribes, but eventually mixed with them and amalgamated."¹⁵ When considered from this angle, it does not matter whether there was a difference between the Canaanite and the Phoenician nations, since there is no difference between the Canaanite and Hebrew nations. And Slouschz, following Ernest Renan, wrote: "Phoenicia was not a country but a group of coastal towns with narrow hinterlands." He claimed that until the days of Hiram king of Tyre, the Phoenicians had neither national consciousness nor a specific unique culture of their own. Only partnership with the Israelite kingdom gave the coastal towns of Phoenicia the opportunity of winning independence from their Egyptian overlords and Canaanite pressure.¹⁶

11 A. Reuveni, *Shem, Ham, and Japhet, The Peoples of Scripture, Their Lineage and Their Place in Ancient History* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1922, p. 182. See also his *Origins of the Hebrews* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1962.

12 See B. Meisler (Mazer), *History of the Land of Israel* (Hebrew), vol. I, *From Most Ancient Times until the Israelite Kingdom*, Tel Aviv, 1928, pp. 230–233. This was almost the only ancient history textbook available to the general reader in Palestine during the 1940s.

13 See below. His book, *Israël, des origines du Milieu du VII^e Siècle*, Paris, 1930, was translated into Hebrew by Mordecai Halamish in 1956.

14 N. Slouschz, "The Fate of Canaan" (Hebrew), in *Hashiloah* 41 (February, 1924), pp. 502–511. See Contenau, *La Civilisation Phénicienne*, pp. 237–247.

15 Adolphe Lods, *Israel*, pp. 250–251.

16 Cited from Renan, *Mission en Phénicie*, Paris, 1864 in Slouschz's article (see above, n. 14), p. 238. Today it is customary to use the term 'Canaanite' in reference to the inhabitants of the region up to the tenth century B.C.E. approximately, and the inhabitants of the coastal cities

It is noteworthy that Jewish historiography and historical writing which treated those two questions through secondary sources, was mainly interested in the essential difference between Canaanite-Phoenician spiritual culture and that of the people of Israel. For example, in *Our Holy Scripture*, written in Odessa in 1912 and published by La'am (publishers of popular science) in Jaffa in 1913, Yosef Klausner tried to discover the origin of the belief in the uniqueness of the people of Israel, or of the confrontation between desert religion, the popular culture of the Canaanite tribes, and the cosmopolitan culture of the merchants of Tyre (i.e., the Phoenicians).¹⁷ Nonreligious, nationalistic writers, on the other hand, perceived a different option in the same historical image, because biblical historiography makes a distinction between the Canaanite and Phoenician peoples and their relations with the Israelites. While the Canaanites are enemies who must be wiped out, the Phoenicians are sometimes regarded as allies. Therefore one may distinguish between the history of the Phoenicians and that of the Canaanites. Differences can also be noted between ethnic, religious, and cultural unity, and partnership and a commercial and political alliance which is maintained despite spiritual and cultural differences.

At this point the interpretation of the ancient historical image by the radical rightist movement split, and two trends with different aims emerged. The first maintained the conventional historiographical tradition and regarded the Phoenicians as merely the political and commercial partners of the Israelites; the other school regarded the Phoenicians, the Canaanites, and the Carthaginians as part of a great Hebrew nation, whose different groups were spiritually and culturally unified. Within that ethnic and cultural unity the political, commercial, and territorial alliance between the Israelite tribes and the Phoenicians was conspicuous.

The Appearance of a "Phoenician" Past

Jewish and Lebanese (mostly Maronite) men of letters used the Phoenician historical image in a similar fashion. In the Lebanese past, which was

in the following period, after Canaanite culture was wiped out in the other parts of the Land of Canaan, are known as the Phoenicians.

17 Y. Klausner, *Our Holy Scripture* (Hebrew), reprinted in *New Research and Ancient Sources: Collected Works of Professor Y. Klausner*, Tel Aviv, 1957, pp. 180–220. It was preceded by Slouschz's study, *La civilisation hébraïque et phénicienne à Carthage*, Tunis, 1911. Short summaries of the latter work, which paints a broad canvas of the traces of ancient Hebrew culture on the shores of the Mediterranean, also appear in his Hebrew writings.

investigated mainly after the 1860s, when Lebanon became an autonomous, independent territory, and especially so after Lebanon was separated from Syria under the French mandate, an historical basis was sought for a nationalistic-cultural ideology. It was to serve as the antithesis to the oriental-Semitic school, so widespread in France and in the West, and which had been popularized through Renan.¹⁸ Lebanese writers such as C. Corm, S. Aql and others, who were educated in schools in Beirut or France, launched the publication of a periodical titled *La Revue Phénicien*, and in 1933 they founded the "Young Phoenician League." They emphasized the civilizing role played by the Phoenicians in the history of humanity as the inventors of alphabetic script and as maritime pioneers. Sometimes they exaggerated the importance of the Phoenicians, describing them not only as a link between the East and the West, but also as the force that melded both civilizations and furnished their creative power.¹⁹

It was not, perhaps, entirely coincidental that a young Jewish scholar who had studied philology and the history of the Ancient Near East at the Sorbonne, under the tutelage of Virolleaud and Lods, commenced the publication of a series of articles in the Russian-language Revisionist periodical, *Rassviet* (The Dawn).²⁰ The series was signed 'El-Raid' (The Pioneer). It is impossible to determine whether he was aware of his Lebanese and Egyptian peers at the time.²¹ Like them, he combined a geographic-deterministic approach with an ancient historical image that was supposed to provide the historic and historiographic basis for a new national awareness. These articles were published almost at the same time as the documents from the Ugaritic archives, but at that stage the influence, if any, of Canaanite-Ugaritic mythology on his historic point of view was negligible.²²

The author of those articles was Adaya Gurevitz, later known as Adaya Gur and, still later, as Adaya Gur-Horon (naming himself after the Canaanite-Ugaritic god Horon). He was born in Kiev, emigrated to Italy with his parents, and later studied in Paris. In the mid-1920s he was associated with Betar and Revisionist circles and advocated the creation

18 See A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 789–1939; and E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1979, pp. 123–148.

19 See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 319–323, and especially the quotations from Ch. Corm's book, *L'Art Phénicien*, Beirut, n.d.

20 See the remarks of A. G. Horon, "Canaan and Greece in the Pre-Hebrew Bronze Age" (Hebrew), in *From Victory to Defeat*, ed., Yonatan Ratosh, Tel Aviv, 1976, pp. 209–215.

21 On the influence of the historiography of the Ancient Near East and archeology on Egyptian national and territorial views, see the excellent study by Israel Gershoni, *Egypt Between Distinctiveness and Unity: The Search for National Identity, 1919–1948* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1980, especially Chapter One, pp. 43–56.

22 I discuss the influence of the Ugaritic discoveries at length in *From Hebrew to Canaanite*.

of a Jewish merchant marine.²³ Gurevitz was influenced not only by his teachers but also by the research of V. Bérard, G. Rosen,²⁴ Slouschz, and others.

Gurevitz-Horon-'El-Raid' replaced the term "Semites" with "Hebrews." From his point of view "Israel" and the "Hebrews" were not different or opposing peoples. The term "Hebrews" referred to a larger group than "Israelites." While the former has an ethnic connotation, the latter has political ones. "Israelites," "Edomites," "Moabites," and "Ammonites" are all part of the Hebrew nation, and the covenant of the Israelite tribes is but one political association within the Hebrew nation.

Here we do not yet have a distinction between the Hebrews and the Canaanites. It seems that the Canaanites are regarded as the ancient inhabitants of the Land of Canaan, before the prolonged invasion of the Hebrew tribes, who, at a later date, named the Canaanites after the land they had conquered and occupied. The articles also do not explain the provenance of the "original Canaanites." Horon stressed the theory that the Hebrew tribes had conquered the Land of Canaan and formed different political groups sharing the same culture.²⁵ From his point of view, the findings at Ras-a-Shamra, i.e., ancient Ugarit, deepened and reinforced the Hebrew historical image and proved the existence of a central culture common to all the tribes that lived in the Land of Canaan from earliest times.²⁶

23 On that maritime activity see H. Ben-Yeruhim (ed.), *The Book of Betar, History and Sources* (Hebrew), vol. II, Tel Aviv, 1973, pp. 308–309, vol. III, Tel Aviv, 1976, p. 568.

24 V. Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et les poèmes homériques*, Paris, 1899, and *Les phéniciens et l'Odysée*, vols. I–II, Paris, 1927. G. Rosen, *Juden und Phönizier*, Tübingen, 1929. The bibliographies in the later works of Horon only permit us to conjecture about the material he read during the 1930s. See the comprehensive bibliography that might have been available to him in Lods's work (n. 13, above).

25 The survey is based on the following articles which were published in Russian in *Rassviet*: "Concerning History: Sources of the Hebrew Tribe," February 15 and 22, 1931, March 1 and 15, 1931; "The Hebrews in Canaan," December 20, 1931; "The Phoenicians — An Historical Sketch," December 27, 1931; "The Hebrew Empire Three Thousand Years Ago," January 3, 1932; "Jerusalem and Carthage," January 17, 1932; "Judaism on the Eve of the Conflict with Rome," February 14, 1932.

26 His more fully developed outlook is summarized in a pamphlet entitled "Canaan et les Hébreux," May–July 1938, and later appeared in articles published in *Shem — Revue d'Action hébraïque*, May–June 1939: "Hébreux et Juifs," pp. 7–28; "Mouvement national hébreu," pp. 60–72. See *The Ugaritic Scripts* (Hebrew), edited and annotated by Dr. H.A. Ginzburg, Jerusalem, 1936; its bibliography contains a comprehensive list of Ugaritic studies up to that time, including the first articles published in Palestine in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* (Hebrew) and in *Tarbiz*. This work was popular among Hebrew readers during the 1940s. See also excerpts on the Ugaritic discoveries and the conclusions drawn from them in Meisler, *History of Land of Israel*.

In his articles Horon paid special attention to cooperation between the Israelite tribes and the Phoenician coastal towns. He claimed that the marine empire of the coastal towns in the north had been brought to an end at the time the Israelite tribes united in the 13–14th centuries B.C.E. The Achaean tribes wrested control of the Aegean sea from the Phoenicians. At the same time as Moses and Joshua “promulgated the idea of the new Hebrew nationality by fire and sword,” the coastal towns of Canaan barely managed to protect themselves from the “sea-people,” the Achaeans, of which the last and most dangerous were the Philistines.

When the coastal towns despaired of obtaining help and protection from the Egyptians, they looked for a new ally, a power that would be able to introduce order and stability in the area west of the river Euphrates and end the danger presented by the Achaeans; and ally that would be able to offer them manpower, of similar language and origin, and one that would provide a convenient market for their goods and supply them with food. The union of the tribes of Israel in the Land of Canaan was exactly the kind of ally the Phoenicians sought and needed.

As ‘El-Raid’ wrote, the Phoenicians were part of the historic-cultural landscape of the Land of Canaan and, indeed, they were Canaanites:²⁷

The history of the “people” of Tyre and Sidon is an inseparable part of the homogeneous chain of the past of the Hebrew people, just as the history of the “people” of Genoa and Venice cannot be separated from the history of Italy as a whole. All the recent data, collected in archeological excavations and extensive research into the life of the Phoenicians, prove that to speak of the Phoenicians as “a nation” is mere wordplay

All that we know about the language and literature of the Phoenicians proves them to be identical to those of the Hebrews. The inconsistencies between Phoenician inscriptions and the language of the Bible are no greater than the inconsistencies in the language of the Bible itself, and they stem from regional differences and differences in time. The religion, way of life, and

27 Essentially it is difficult to determine whether he is referring here to the Canaanites, the inhabitants (or conquerors) of the country before the penetration of the tribes of Israel, or to the Israelite tribes who had settled in the Land of Canaan together with the other ‘Hebrew’ tribes, and are called ‘Canaanites’ after the land which they settled, like the Phoenicians. This lack of clarity here or in other texts is not coincidental. For example, Slouschz, who claims (see above, n. 7) that the ‘Canaanites’ were a foreign and alien people in the Land of Israel, lacking national consciousness, and therefore they disappeared from the stage of history, also holds that the Canaanites and the Israelites shared a common culture and even the same religion until the establishment of the kingdom. See Slouschz, *Thesaurus of Phoenician Inscriptions*, pp. 27–28.

institutions of the Phoenician towns, to the best of our knowledge, were not much different from those of other towns in the Land of Israel.... From Egyptian sources we know that even before the time of Moses migrations between the Phoenician towns and their hinterland were regular occurrences, and the citizens of the coastal cities never considered themselves a separate tribe or a people different from the inhabitants of the hinterland.²⁸

While the Lebanese writers emphasized the uniqueness of Phoenician culture as a response to the pan-Semitic and pan-Islamic schools of thought, Horon stressed the unity of the culture of the Phoenicians and the Israelite tribes, all of whom were Hebrews who lived in the Land of Canaan. According to Horon, the Phoenicians were members of a group of tribes which included the tribes of Israel and other nations (Ammonites, Moabites, etc.). Tyre, the principal Phoenician town, always maintained a political alliance with the Israelite kingdom, and close cooperation between Tyre and Jerusalem continued until the time of Alexander the Great. In its wars and colonizing ventures throughout the Mediterranean Basin (and even beyond it), Tyre always gained the full support of the Israelite hinterland. “When the bell of mortal danger tolled for Tyre and Jerusalem, they fought together against their mutual enemy and together they lost the war both gloriously and tragically.”

What enabled Tyre and Sidon to embark upon such wide-ranging colonizing activity throughout the western Mediterranean and in parts of the eastern Mediterranean? Such ventures included the establishment of numerous trading outposts, towns, seaports and settlements. Where did the Phoenician towns recruit the necessary manpower for such large-scale colonization which continued for hundreds of years (from the eleventh to the eighth centuries B.C.E.) although their population was limited? ‘El-Raid’s’ answer is as follows:

It is clear that the merchants of Tyre recruited their agents, captains and crews for their vessels, the heads of delegations, and mercenaries in the interior, in the Galilee, Bashan, in the Damascus area, and south of Mount Ephraim, all of which are territories of the Israelite tribes par excellence.

In the light of this theory, Elijah’s battle with the prophets of Baal was a confrontation between closely related and competing deities, and the internal crisis in Israel derived, *inter alia*, from the inability of the Israelite tribes to accustom themselves to the status of a universal world power.

28 “The Phoenicians,” *Rassviet*, January 3, 1932.

Later Y. Klausner expressed similar opinions in reviewing publications dealing with Phoenician history. He described the conquest of the northern part of the country by the Israelite tribes, who then became the Phoenicians' political masters, but were subject to them from the religious, cultural, and economical points of view. The Phoenicians mixed with the Israelite tribes and the fresh blood that was injected into their veins:

...strengthened the smaller nation and enriched it with excellent new powers. And so this new blood made the Land of the Phoenicians flourish and enabled them to extend their combined powers to the far corners of the earth, as known in their day. Briefly it may be stated that Phoenician colonization between the twelfth and fifth centuries B.C.E. was not undertaken by Phoenician forces alone but with the cooperation of some of the ten Israelite tribes: Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Asher, and perhaps also Naphtali.²⁹

The Usage and Availability of the Ancient Past

Those views concerning the links between the Hebrew, Canaanite, and Phoenician peoples, regardless of their validity or speculative value, could well have remained simply historiographical theories known only in professional circles. But in the 1930s they became available and useful, and were thus disseminated by 'agents' and 'mediators,' who imposed ancient historical images upon the future. The outlook represented by Horon in the Revisionist ideological journal, which was distributed among the Russian-speaking Revisionist intelligentsia, might be regarded merely as the unique and interesting viewpoint of a young intellectual, one that had nothing to do with Zionist ideology. However, the revival of the Phoenician past was promulgated by a group which wished to arouse awareness, within the Revisionist movement, of the need to build up a Jewish maritime force. That group made use of the glorious historical image of a maritime empire, in which the Hebrews, the children of Israel, were the equal partners of a great maritime power, the earliest colonial sea power in history.

David Ben-Gurion shared a belief in that version of history and in the use to which it should be put. In 1928 he wrote of the necessity of developing awareness of the Mediterranean in the minds of the Jewish

29 Y. Klausner, "The Ten Lost Tribes, the Canaanites, and the Anglo-Saxons" (Hebrew), in *Collected Works*, p. 176, and see the footnotes to that article which indicate his sources.

settlers in Palestine, so that Zionism would view the Mediterranean not merely as the western border of the Land of Israel but also as its natural extension. His argument was:

One of the Hebrew-Canaanite tribes, whose language was similar to that of the Bible, as were the languages of the Assyrians and the Edomites, settled on the narrow coast of the Mediterranean in ancient times, from the slopes of Mt. Carmel to the foothills of the Lebanon.... This tribe, known historically as the Phoenicians, was at that time the pioneer in commercial navigation, and unlike the Jews, they turned toward the sea in earliest antiquity.

Tyre and Sidon are lost to the world, and the Canaanites are no longer remembered in the land of Asher, but the Hebrew tribes are returning to their homeland via the great sea and they will renew the conquest of that sea as in ancient times.³⁰

Those who are drawn to an image of the ancient past and use it are generally unable to judge its validity with objectivity. They absorb such an image at a time when they have need of it. Similarly, they cease using it as soon as it loses its relevance. The Hebrew-Phoenician historical image was essentially a marginal one in that it differed notably from the common view of the ancient past, the one that was generally accepted and applied within modern Jewish national consciousness.

Apart from providing an historical basis for the ideology of Jewish maritime activity and a merchant marine, the historical image proposed by 'El-Raid' has two other principal aspects. The first, a broad and general one, replaces "pan-Semitism" with "pan-Hebraic" ideology, and describes an ancient Hebrew culture extending throughout the territory from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. The second, more limited in scope, describes the Hebrew-Phoenician partnership in the creation of a great empire.

30 David Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs* (Hebrew), vol. I, Tel Aviv, 1971, pp. 321-329. Ben-Gurion regarded the parallel with Carthage as a dangerous one, in that Carthage was a city-state which fought against a rural state (Rome), and it was therefore defeated by a nation that was deeply attached to its own soil. I am grateful to Professor Shlomo Avineri for calling my attention to Ben-Gurion's article, "Our Action and Our Path," published in 1935. The negative analogy is cited in his book, *Varieties of Zionist Thought* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1980, p. 231. In his speeches and articles encouraging maritime activity, Ben-Gurion did not present Israelite-Phoenician cooperation as a model. On the contrary, he wrote that in the days of King Solomon a first attempt was made to establish a Hebrew fleet. "The attempt did not succeed, perhaps because even then they were employing non-Jewish seamen" (D. Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, vol. II, Tel Aviv, 1972, p. 402).

It was Zeev Jabotinsky, at whose house in Paris Horon was a frequent visitor, who discerned the double option offered in the view of the past presented by 'El-Raid,' and it was he who grasped its full significance. Jabotinsky himself was far from holding a fundamentalist view of history. In the few cases when he wrote about ancient history, he claimed that the Hebrew nation was created from a mixture of peoples who were amalgamated and developed national consciousness as late as the Israelite Kingdom. His negative view of the "orient" and of oriental romanticism brought him to the conclusion, as published in 1930 in his pamphlet "Hebrew Accent," that the Hebrew race is fundamentally different from the Arab race. He claimed that during the period of the kingdoms Judah and Israel absorbed remnants of European and Anatolian races such as the Jebusites, Hittites, Philistines, etc. Therefore the Hebrew language came under northern and western influences, not eastern ones.

In his historical romance, *Samson*, a similar point of view is offered. The historical image presented by Horon should thus have neither surprised nor embarrassed Jabotinsky. On the contrary, he himself preferred to describe the Israelites in biblical times as a nation of merchants and disseminators of culture rather than as an agricultural people.³¹ However, Jabotinsky found a grave error in Horon's writings, and he hastened to take up this issue in an article which was first printed in Yiddish and later in Hebrew on February 5, 1932 in *Hazit Ha'am*. Obviously, very few of his readers knew what Jabotinsky was referring to; however, he felt that the matter was sufficiently important to justify a quick reaction.

Jabotinsky did not object to the description of the Phoenician and Punic cultures as integral parts of a single ancient culture, of which the Israelite nation was also part. But he rejected Horon's claim that all the inhabitants of the Ancient Near East were Hebrews, including the Phoenicians who lived in Tyre and Sidon. Like most later researchers who expounded the similarity of ancient Ugaritic literature to that of the Bible, he noted that this similarity was only cultural and linguistic, meaning that there was no common religious belief and no shared principles. The Jewish nation, in his opinion, crystallized around a clear, powerful ideological focus, that separated it from the other peoples in the region. That element was monotheism, the belief in one God. The Phoenicians, even though close to Israel, did not share this belief, and thus they could not have been part of the Israelite people.

31 Jabotinsky described the merchant as playing a role "second only to the Lord of the Universe." See his article, "The Storekeeper" (Yiddish), *Haim*, June 5, 1927 (Hebrew version, *On the Path to the State*, Jerusalem, 1953, pp. 101-107). However, when he sought to formulate a social philosophy and to find its sources in the ancient past, he described the Israelites as tillers of the soil and not as seamen and merchants!

Six years later, after the publication of Horon's pamphlet in May-June 1938, which also had a profound influence on Uriel Halperin (better known as the poet Yonatan Ratosh), changing his image of ancient history,³² Jabotinsky wrote a letter to Horon dated December 23, 1938. In it he restated his objections to the image of ancient history presented by Horon and to his conclusions. "My advice to you as a writer," Jabotinsky wrote, "is don't let yourself be seduced by the instinct that urges you to humiliate Israel for the glory of the Hebrews or to belittle monotheism in order to emphasize idolatry."³³

Benjamin Lubutzky (Eliav) was then secretary of Betar in Paris. In August 1938 he approached Horon with a proposal to transform his pamphlet into a history book to be entitled, "The History of the Hebrew Nation." Such a work would serve the educational program of Betar. It would consist of four volumes and present "a national approach, very similar to that of Betar, to the issues of nation and state."³⁴ It seems that what impressed Lubutzky in Horon's historical theory in 1938, although he criticized it sarcastically years later,³⁵ was the fact that this historical image added a glorious, new chapter of nationalistic activism to the history of the Jewish people; the people of Israel appeared as courageous seamen and daring settlers establishing trading posts and colonies along the shores of the Mediterranean, and disseminating their culture as they travelled. Even at a later date, in his essay entitled "Mare Nostrum," published in *Hamashkeif* on the April 4, 1944, the lingering traces of Horon's and Bérard's influences are still discernible (due, among other reasons, to the quotation from Bérard in the preface of Shaul Tchernikhovsky's translation of the *Iliad*:

The people of Tyre and Sidon, known as the Phoenicians, spoke Hebrew. Ethnically and linguistically they were Hebrews, and only in their religion did they differ from the people of the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Samaria. Since the Bible testifies that the children of Israel were not always "true observers" in that respect, one may state that there was no real difference

32 The encounter and the turn of events are described at length in my book, *From Hebrew to Canaanite*.

33 Eri Jabotinsky, "Adaya Gurevitz — The Beginning of a New Stream" (Hebrew), in *My Father, Zeev Jabotinsky*, Tel Aviv, 1980, pp. 127-138. The letter is quoted there, pp. 134-135. Eri Jabotinsky was a close friend of Horon-Gurevitz ('El Raid') and was greatly influenced by him.

34 Ben-Yeruham, *The Book of Betar* (Hebrew), vol. 1, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, 1969, pp. 308-309.

35 See his remarks at the symposium "Zionism and Its Relation to Consciousness of the Jewish Past," in *Knowledge of the Past in the Consciousness of the Gentiles and in Jewish Consciousness* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1969, pp. 140-143, 152.

between the two In my opinion, even this superficial survey could lead to the conclusion that the Jewish people today are not direct descendants of Judea and Israel alone, but also of other tribes, among which were the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Horon's theory was transported from Paris to Palestine by Uriel Halperin (Yonatan Ratosh). Along with Nahum Slouschz, the poet Shaul Tchernichovsky and Itamar Ben-Avi, Halperin was the main purveyor of the Hebrew-Phoenician historical image. But he transformed it into the basis for a nationalistic, radically anti-Zionist outlook, since he was not disturbed by the religious and cultural differences between the Hebrews and Phoenicians in biblical times. On the contrary, the idea that there was a culture common to the people of the area, which was destroyed only in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, was highly acceptable to him. In the first two 'Canaanite' manifestos, "An Epistle to Hebrew Youth" (1943) and "Opening Address at the Session of the Committee with the Representatives of the Cells" (1944), Ratosh had perspicuously depicted a view of history that sharply distinguished between 'Hebrews' and 'Jews.'³⁶ Those manifestos discuss the rebirth of the 'Hebrew homeland' and the identity with the 'ancient Hebrews' in general, making no distinction between the Phoenicians and the ancient Hebrew people, and not regarding the Maronites, who saw themselves as the heirs of the Phoenicians, as potential partners and allies.

During the 1940s Ratosh was not interested in a political alliance nor in an image of history in which the Phoenicians played a crucial civilizing role and established a glorious maritime tradition. For him the Phoenicians were merely part of a broader cultural and ethnic picture, the latter offering proof of the existence of a regional, national, and territorial culture in the area termed 'the ancient homeland.' It should be repeated here that the Lebanese intellectuals fostered the Phoenician theory as means of creating an ethnic and cultural distinction between themselves and Islam and the pan-Islamic movement, and of providing a link with Western (mainly French) culture. At the same time, Ratosh and his circle saw their 'Hebrew historical image' as the basis for a 'regional' ideology.³⁷ Only later, in the 1950s, were the Lebanese Maronites to become a

36 The manifesto was reprinted by Ratosh in *At the Start* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1982, pp. 32-37, 149-203.

37 The 'Canaanite' outlook is thus similar to the historical views of A. Saada: see A. Eilat, "Anton Saada — Portrait of an Arab Revolutionary" (Hebrew), in *The Return to Zion and the Arabs*, Tel Aviv, 1974, pp. 372-386; L. Z. Yamak, *The Syrian Social Nationalist Party, an Ideological Analysis*, Cambridge, 1966.

cornerstone in the 'Canaanite' political concept, being a sect with an indigenous territorial character, which maintained the heritage of a glorious ancient past; an ally in the creation of a united 'Hebrew' territory.

The 'Canaanites' encountered no ideological problem in adopting the 'Hebrew-Canaanite-Phoenician' historical image in its entirety, since they sought to present an historical image totally different from that commonly accepted: not removing the Jewish people from its 'historical corner,' and not a confrontation between it and its neighbors, but rather planting it as an integral part within its natural environment. The outlook of the radical-secular-nationalist stream of the Revisionists was quite different. The only acceptable historical image for them was that of a unique and particularistic ancient Israelite people with no peer in human history from earliest antiquity. Thus it is clear that an historical image depicting the Hebrews and the Phoenicians as one national and cultural entity could not find a place in their historical and mytho-historical consciousness. They viewed the history of the people of Israel as that of constant confrontation with its surroundings and not one of blending with them. It is thus interesting to trace the appearance and disappearance of the Hebrew-Phoenician historical image in the historical outlook of Lehi [Hebrew acronym of Lohamei Herut Israel — Fighters for Israel's Freedom — led by Avraham Stern (known as Yair)].

The second issue of *Hamahteret* (The Underground), the bulletin of Lehi, featured an article entitled "The Hebrews as Colonizers and Fighters." One notes the undeniable influence of Yonatan Ratosh on the writer, which can be explained by the strong friendship between Ratosh and Stern. Ratosh, who had returned to Palestine from Paris a year before, held hopes of influencing the ideology of Lehi, but these aspirations were not crowned with success.³⁸ This article contains certain striking expressions which also appear in a series of historical articles published by Ratosh, under the pen name 'El-Haran,' in the newspaper *Haboker* in 1938; their publication ceased after Ratosh became acquainted with Horon and his views in the middle of that year.

The article in *Hamahteret* painted an historical image that was meant to restore "the golden crown of Hebrew glory." Its writer held as insufficient the commonly accepted historical account of the Great Revolt and the Revolt of Bar-Kochba or the Hasmonean dynasty. Though expressing the political and national aspirations of the people of Israel, they all ended in defeat, destruction or foreign occupation. Heroic romanticism may of necessity adopt chapters of failure from the past, drawing practical or

38 For further details, see my book, *From Hebrew to Canaanite*.

theoretical lessons from them.³⁹ However, the author of the article was of the opinion that the timely 'discovery' of the common Hebrew-Phoenician past offered him a better option. He intended to use it to change the accepted historical image of the people of Israel in biblical times, in the spirit intended by the secretary of Betar in Paris two years previously.

Mankind is divided into races. The primary and most evident distinction is that between warring, dominant races and weak, subject races. Historians have never numbered the Hebrew people among the warring races.... The term Hebrew people does not apply only to the Israelite tribe known today as the Jews, but also, and primarily, to the two great and important branches: the Israelite and the Tyrian-Phoenician. For those two Hebrew branches are blood brothers, as well as brothers in language and culture. Only with the onset of the decline of the Israelite branch, after the death of King Solomon and the revolution of Jeroboam Ben-Nabat, did the cultural conflict between those two branches begin: the well-known conflict between the worshippers of Jehovah and the worshippers of Baal. The decisive majority of the Israelite branch, the members of the tribe of Ephraim, clung to the common culture, the culture of Baal.⁴⁰

The writer goes on to describe the joint ventures of the Hebrews-Israelites-Phoenicians as two branches of the same race. While the first tried to halt the spread of Hellenism in the east, the second (the Carthaginians) fought against the Romans in the west. Hannibal was defeated while Judah the Maccabee was victorious.

Here, for decidedly ideological reasons, the practical image of the past adopted by Lehi and the analogy it drew with current events parted ways with the version of the past propounded by Horon and Ratosh. The

39 Klausner, who gave form to the historical image of the Second Temple Period in the consciousness of the Zionist right, wrote: "Bar-Kochba's revolt ended in failure. Nevertheless Bar-Kochba's blood is as dear and holy to us as is the name of Rabbi Akiva.... Because both of them taught us a marvelous doctrine, that life is not the most precious possession in life, and that both national freedom and the national-religious faith are worthy of self-sacrifice to the very end" [*Shimon Bar-Kochba, as a Nation Fights for Its Freedom* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1951, pp. 250-251].

40 *Fighters for Israel's Freedom — Works* (Hebrew), vol. I, Tel Aviv, 1959, pp. 31-34. Cf. Ratosh's article (signed El Haran), "Introduction to Hebrew History" (Hebrew), *Haboker*, January 14, 1938. In an issue of the magazine *Hahazit*, of November-December 1944 (*Works*, vol. I, pp. 279-282), the writer (apparently Y. Eldar-Scheib) describes Gedaliahu Allon, Yehezkel Kaufmann, and Nahum Slouschz as the creators of a new Israeli historiography. The choice of those three (and the omission of Klausner) merits separate treatment.

nationalist-messianic ideals of Lehi dictate that the history of the Hebrews as a politically oriented people imbued with messianic hopes for territorial and national revival, can not end with the Second Temple Period or the last days of the First Temple Period. From that point of view, there is no distinction between the Hebrew-Israelite past and the Israelite-Jewish past; there is one past, organic, complete and trans-historic. The Hebrew-Jews survived as a nation after the destruction of the ancient Hebrew world. Phoenicia passed away, but not so Jerusalem. The hope for national-political revival is evident in messianic movements and in 'forgotten,' romantic chapters of Jewish history from the Middle Ages. The Poalei Tzion movement also drew from this romanticism during the Second Aliya, influenced in no small measure by the philo-Jewish romanticism of the west.

Thus we find echoes of the theory developed by Bérard, N. Slouschz, and 'El-Raid' in the sixteenth paragraph of *Ikarei Hatehia* (The Principles of Rebirth), the ideological program of the Irgun Zeva'i Leumi (National Military Organization). The paragraph states that the aim of the organization is: "To strengthen the Hebrew people and convert it into a primary military, political, cultural, and economical force in the east and on the shores of the Mediterranean."⁴¹

We find no reference to the Phoenicians after the period when Stern was influenced by Ratosh, and they vanished completely from the historical image presented by Lehi. The Phoenicians were not needed any more, as they had ceased to fit the pattern. Lehi found sufficient substance in its Hebrew-Jewish historical image to meet its ideological needs. An historical image based on cooperation between the Hebrews and Phoenicians mars the historical image and outlook that seek to describe the nation of Israel as one which developed as a result of total reaction against its surroundings. Therefore the Phoenicians disappear at this stage, and the term 'Hebrew' takes on a different meaning.⁴²

Radical, activist, nationalistic Zionists, with a secular bent, need not reject an historical image in which the ancient people of Israel are described as idolaters, as long as it gives substance and strength to the image of the nation as indigenous, attached to a territory and experienced in war. A typical example of a nonreligious, maximalist (in the political sense), intellectual approach can be found in a review published by Abba

41 *Works*, vol. I, pp. 27-28; see also D. Margalit, "Lehi Historiography in a Critical Light" (Hebrew), *Kivunim* 15 (May 1982), pp. 91-93.

42 Y. Eldar, "The Simple Truth about the Culture of Canaan and the Culture of the Jews" (Hebrew), *Sulam* 113 (November 1958), reprinted in *The Reflections of Judah* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1981, pp. 141-149.

Ahimeir in *Hamashkif* on April 24, 1942, following the appearance of Nahum Slouschz's book, *Thesaurus of the Phoenician Inscriptions* (Hebrew).⁴³ Ahimeir had earned his doctorate in 1924, at the University of Vienna, with a dissertation on the philosophy of Oswald Spengler; but on the subject of the history of the peoples of the Ancient Near East he was a dilettante, and all his information was second-hand. He wrote not as an historian but as a philosopher of history who attached importance to the morphological structure of Jewish history. The Hebrew-Phoenician historical image enabled him to trace an alternative, more desirable morphology of Israelite history.

In this review Ahimeir wrote that Slouschz was the first person, Jew or Gentile, to claim the Mediterranean as "our sea" (*Mare Nostrum*), meaning that it belonged to the Semitic and Hebrew peoples and not to the Greeks and Latins. He erroneously stated that Victor Bérard and the French archeologists who had made "the wonderful archeological discoveries at Ugarit" had followed in Slouschz's footsteps. According to Ahimeir, those archeological finds eliminated once and for all the anti-Semitic perception that had become rooted in the historical research of the nineteenth century, mainly due to the influence of Ernest Renan:

At present, in view of research work done by Nahum Slouschz and Bérard, and especially in view of the Ugaritic discoveries, Renan, Flaubert,⁴⁴ Mommsen and their pupils such as Rosenberg⁴⁵ have been humbled. The history of Canaan has not yet been written. But if it is written it will introduce a fundamental change into human history. In the light of the Canaanite problem, the entire well-known anti-Semitic historic theory looks pitiful. We, the Hebrew people of the last generation, are interested in writing that history. For us it is not a purely academic question. The paradox in this case is that those who delve into the history of Canaan demolish the Nuremberg school of thought, as well as that of 'Yavneh,' which, of course, should not be mentioned in the same breath....

The historical image described by Ahimeir is not taken from *Thesaurus of the Phoenician Inscriptions*, in which, in addition to presenting the inscriptions, Slouschz mainly describes the history of research on Phoenicia and

43 Uriel Halperin (Ratosh) also wished Dvir to publish his unfinished work, *The Government of Jerusalem* (Hebrew), a Zionist-nationalist history, some chapters of which had appeared in *Haboker* in 1938.

44 The reference here is to his historical novel *Salamambo*, which was translated into Hebrew by Slouschz.

45 Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi ideologue.

the Phoenicians.⁴⁶ There is no way of knowing whether Ahimeir was aware of the essays of 'El-Raid' in *Rassviet* (although in our opinion he was). In any event he does not mention them, and the conclusions he arrived at were different from those of Horon and Ratosh:

Canaan and Eber, two kindred nations, and such a difference in their historic destiny! Canaan is Eber's big brother. Canaan lived in the Lebanon and in the Galilee, and to his south lived Eber, the forefather of Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor.⁴⁷

In the period after the destruction of the First Temple, the "diaspora" of the Hebrews and Canaanites commenced. The Hebrews began to penetrate to the south and east, overland to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Ancient Hebrew lost its purity and was influenced by the Akkadian-Babylonian language, the first international language of humanity... and, at the same time, while the people of Israel (Ephraim) and the sons of Jacob (Judah) advanced overland and conquered the lands on the banks of the great rivers, the Canaanite tribes turned toward the sea and established their colonies on the shores of the Mediterranean. Here lies the reason for the historic failure of both the Canaanites and the Greeks. Those two nations spread out over many countries and had no national focal points. The Canaanites set forth and distanced themselves from their homeland even before they had developed a sense of nationhood. Later they moved their center from the Lebanese "Riviera" to the fertile plain of present-day Tunis.

Ahimeir does not refer to the morphology of history in the sense of universal symbolism, but to an "ancient" historical image. In so doing he ignores the warnings of Spengler, the subject of his thesis, who attacked Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Bachofen as three "backward romantic" professors who lost their way while "counting the clouds of antiquity, which are nothing but a faithful reflection of their own sentimentality, which is subject to philologic orders," when they rely on relics of ancient literature and fabricate an imaginary picture of "classical antiquity" from them.⁴⁸

46 Slouschz wrote: "the children of Israel themselves, who, after all, were partners of the Canaanites in culture and even in the worship of Baal throughout the generations of the double kingdom...." See also his books, *Les Hébréo-Phéniciens*, Paris, 1909, and *La civilisation hébraïque*. This certainly contradicts what he had written elsewhere about the lack of national consciousness and the alien character of the Canaanites in the Land of Israel.

47 See Genesis 10. In the genealogical list there Canaan is given as the son of Ham, and Eber as the great-grandson of Shem.

48 Spengler was first translated into Hebrew by Asher Barash in *Hedim* (a bi-monthly devoted to literature and reviews), vol. 5, nos. 1 and 3 (September-October 1929). The quotation is from "A New Evaluation of History" (Hebrew), *Hedim*, vol. 5, no. 3, p. 374.

In the historical image developed by the 'Phoenician' Maronites, there was no reference to cooperation between the ancient Phoenician civilization and the people of Israel.⁴⁹ Zionist ideology and politics also made little use of this historical image. The Revisionist press, for example, devoted limited space to coverage and analysis of the situation in Lebanon in the 1930s and 1940s. In contrast, Itamar Ben-Avi used this ancient historical image in arguing for a future common destiny for the Hebrews and the Phoenicians. He saw in the Maronites, as well as in other non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East (such as the Druze, Copts, Assyrians, etc.), potential allies for Zionism in its struggle against pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism. In 1924 he wrote that Maronites had to learn from the Jewish people how to revive an ancient language and mold a cultural-nationalist identity. They knew nothing of the common Hebrew-Phoenician past and needed a Maronite Eliezer Ben-Yehuda to revive their ancient language.⁵⁰

But Ben-Avi did not speak of a shared cultural and national identity in the future but of a political pact. For that purpose there was no need to claim that the Maronites were the ethnic or cultural descendants of the ancient Phoenicians. The separatist aims of the Maronites and the tradition of cooperation between Solomon and Hiram king of Tyre were sufficient to serve as a basis for the Zionists' vision of future political cooperation. In the late 1940s Zionist diplomacy was seeking the understanding and support of the Lebanese Maronites. The theory about the cultural identity of the ancient 'Hebrews' and 'Phoenicians' was relegated to the ideological margins, awaiting the right time to surface and become relevant again. This also applied to the theory of a common national, political, and cultural past.

An Historical Image, The Options for Its Use: The Hebrew-Phoenician Case

The historical consciousness of an activist national movement strives to possess a complete set of historical images, i.e., a picture of the past which is composed of a sufficient inventory of "events" to provide the precedents, parallels, and historical symbols needed for historical consciousness

49 See the article by the Maronite priest Y. Marun in *Al-Machshuf* (Arabic), March 30, 1944. He uses language almost identical to that of Horon and Ahimeir. Quoted by Eilat, "Doubts Concerning the Pan-Arabic Idea and the 'Greater Syria Plan'" (Hebrew), in *The Return to Zion*, p. 337.

50 See his articles in *Doar Hayom*, August 31, 1924 and February 14, 1936.

in the present. The revelation of a Hebrew-Phoenician past provided an historical image that was ready to hand and could be used for several purposes:

A. It provided an historical platform for a maritime ideology and orientation, i.e., for those Zionist circles who sought to develop a Jewish maritime capability and merchant marine. The Hebrew-Phoenician historical image made the biblical children of Israel into a people who took part in the most glorious and daring marine ventures in the history of the Ancient Near East; competitive with the ancient Greeks, and an historic equal to Britain, the ruler of the waves!⁵¹

B. It proved the irrelevance of Renan's 'Semitic' theory, which described the Semitic race as a desert race lacking imagination and the aptitude for national existence. The Hebrews and Phoenicians, according to the new theory, were not only completely distinct from the Arabs, but were also described as the most highly developed and illustrious ancient civilization, not an oriental civilization but one that spread all over the Mediterranean, and was the primary source of West European culture.

C. It also helped to destroy the common political-historical image of the 'Arabic east,' and not only pointed to the existence of non-Islamic minorities, but also to the fact that those minorities are the indigenous population of the Ancient Near East, a relic of glorious cultures that were later overrun by the Arab conquerers.

D. It offered the possibility of describing the world in which the Jews now lived not as an exile but as a diaspora which came into being because of the emigration of the 'Hebrews' and 'Phoenicians' to the settlements they had founded all along the Mediterranean coast, especially in North Africa. This diaspora provided a strong, reliable backbone for the homeland, to such a degree that it threatened the Roman Empire. The 'exile' is not the outcome of destruction but of colonizing activities and socio-economic developments, quite common in the ancient world.⁵²

E. Mainly for the 'Canaanite school' it permitted the creation of an historical image in which 'Hebrews' and 'Phoenicians' shared the same culture, and it presented an argument in favor of the possible unity of the Middle East based on a different set of values from the one presented by the Arab-Muslim approach.

51 See especially N. Slouschz, *The Book of the Sea: the Conquest of the Seas in History* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1948.

52 See the articles of Sh. Perlman, Y. Schatzman, and A. Kasher in *Emigration and Settlement in Jewish and General History* (Hebrew), ed., A. Shinan, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 29-94.

Obviously, this historical image entailed certain problems. The historical image of a cultural and spiritual unity seemed inappropriate and superfluous, as did the colonial historical image. It clashed with some of the widely accepted fundamentals of the traditional picture of history, and for that reason it became marginal. When it reappeared at a later date, it was in a more moderate and restricted form. The historical 'payoff' offered to the radical nationalist groups by this historical image, consisting of a vision of historical 'depth' and 'space,' was no longer needed.