Lebanon, Ancient

I. Archaeology and History
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I. Archaeology and History

1. Introduction. In biblical and ancient terminology, Lebanon (MT *Lĕbānôn*) refers to the Lebanese and Anti-Lebanese mountain ranges from which the modern country of Lebanon received its name (note: the modern country only became independent in 1945). The Beqaʿ Valley, the large north-south valley between the Lebanese and Anti-Lebanese ranges, is also referred to in the book of Joshua as the "Valley of Lebanon" (Josh 11:27; 12:7) where it appears as the northernmost boundary of Canaan. In most references, it seems likely that both the Lebanese and Anti-Lebanese range can be related to the Bible's general geographic term of "the Lebanon." Although, it is possible to see a distinction between the ranges in Josh 13:5–6, which records the northern boundary of Canaan as follows, "and the land of the Gebalites (i.e., the northern coast around Byblos/Gebal), and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise (i.e., the Anti-Lebanese range), from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath (i.e., sites related to the eastern range and/or Beqaʿ Valley), all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon (i.e., the Lebanese range) to Misrephoth-maim (location unknown, but possibly the Littani River), even all the Sidonians (i.e., the hill country between the Lebanese range and the coast of Sidon)."

So, while the Bible and other ancient sources often refer to "the Lebanon," these references do not denote the main zones of habitation within the modern country of Lebanon, namely, the Beqaʿ Valley and the coast from Rosh HaNiqra in the south (Phoenician control at various points in history would have extended as far as Joppa) until Arvad in the north (i.e., the entrance of the Orontes River into the Mediterranean). One of the best archaeological examples of the enduring importance of the Lebanese coastline to ancient empires is found at Nahr al-Kalb (north of Beirut) where invaders often inscribed their achievements on Nahr al-Kalb's limestone cliffs (e.g., Ramses II, Esarhaddon, Nebuchadnezzar II, Napoleon, British/French World War I; see e.g., Lipiński 2004: 1–2).

In biblical terminology, the inhabitants of the region west of "the Lebanon" were referred to as "Sidonians" (e.g., Josh 13:4; Judg 18:7; 1 Kgs 5:6), which is analogous to the later Greek term of "Phoenician" (Rainey/Notley: 27, 31). The settlements of the Beqaʿ Valley (e.g., Kamid el-Loz/Kumidi, Baalbek, Lebwe/Lebo-hamath) were not directly related to the Lebanese coast, and during the Iron Age this vicinity was most likely inhabited by Arameans and Neo-Hittites (e.g., Lipiński 2000: 319–46). For millennia, the Beqaʿ Valley (the land of ʿAmqi of the Amarna Age) was a major north-south route connecting the region of the Hulah Valley and Galilee to the northern Levant.

2. Historical Overview of the Phoenician Coastline. The Lebanese coastline was already a major objective of foreign powers in the 3rd and early 2nd millennium BCE. While significant settlements were established in the Early Bronze (e.g., Byblos) and Middle Bronze Ages along the Lebanese coast, in terms of scholarship, Phoenician history is often treated as a historical "continuity in tradition" from the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550 BCE) until the beginning of the Hellenistic period (ca. 300 BCE). This timeframe, which also correlates with the biblical era, constitutes the scope of this current discussion.

During the Late Bronze Age, the settlements along the coast, like the rest of Canaan, became dominated by Egyptian imperial control. Pharaoh Thutmose III's campaigns during the 15th century BCE would bring these regions under Egyptian hegemony, which would continue until the early 12th century BCE. Most of what is known about Phoenicia during this period comes from Ugarit and el-Amarna (Markoe: 12). During the biblical era, the northern coast of Canaan was controlled by a several large "city-states," most prominent of which were the harbor cities of Tyre and Sidon. These polities were one of the continuations of the flourishing pre-Israel, Canaanite governmental structure that began in the Middle Bronze Age (Gilboa: 49–50) that were extinguished in the Late Bronze II/Iron I with the arrival of the Sea Peoples and Israel and the formation of nation-states. The Canaanite city-states of northern Canaan (i.e., the Phoenicians) continued along the same trajectory as the Middle Bronze II–Late Bronze II culture that predated the arrival of the Philistines and Israelites (Ward 1996: 184).

In the Iron Age, Phoenician trade colonies would be established throughout the Mediterranean which would spread Levantine and Phoenician culture (e.g., ivories, ceramics, textiles, jewelry, burial customs, building techniques, religion, and language/alphabet) to the civilizations that were located at each of these outposts. In the early Iron Age (12th–10th centuries BCE), the Phoenician cities largely experienced independence from foreign intervention and domination that had characterized the Late Bronze Age (Egyptian; cf. the Report of Wenamon – COS 1:90–91). It is in this era, that the textual links between Israel/Judah and Phoenicia are the most prominent (e.g., 1 Kgs 9:11–12; 16:31). Beginning in the 9th century BCE, the Phoenician cities would become vassals of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and would continue to remain vassals under the control of the successive empires of Neo-Babylonia, Persia (often serving as their naval fleet), and the Greeks.

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One of the most significant historical records for understanding the makeup of Iron II Phoenician geo-politics comes from Sennacherib's famous "Jerusalem prism" (COS 2.302). During his third campaign (i.e., 701 BCE), Sennacherib attacked Luli the king of Tyre for his rebellion and received support from "Greater Sidon (Saïda), Lower Sidon (perhaps a quarter within Sidon), Bit-zitti (Zayta), Sariptu (Sarafand), Mahaliba (Khirbet el-Maḥalib), Ushu (inland settlement of Tyre – Tell Rashidiyeh?), Achzib (ez-Zīb), Acco (Tell el-Fukhkhar)" before installing Tubaʾlu (king of Sidon) in Lulli's place (COS 2:302 – see also Cogan: 112–17). In the early 7th century BCE, Esarhaddon would give Tyre (king Baal) back this territory after putting down a rebellion led by Abdi-milkutti, king of Sidon (Cogan: 131–33). These passages indicate the wide sphere of Tyrian control on the Phoenician coast, but also the methods of control used by Neo-Assyrian monarchs in re-establishing their own control over their vassal states (e.g., Lipiński 1985).

3. Archaeological Survey of the Principle Ancient Sites of Lebanon. This section will include a brief summary of the history and archaeology of the main Phoenician sites in the modern country of Lebanon. This does not include Phoenician settlements in modern Israel (e.g., Achzib, Dor, etc.), Phoenician colonies in the Mediterranean (e.g., Cadiz, Utica, Kition, Carthage, etc. – see discussion in Markoe; Aubet 2001: 185–276). Specifically, this section will summarize the history and archaeology of Tyre, Zarephath, Sidon, Beirut, Byblos, and Arvad (cf. Markoe: 192–205; Aubet 2001: 285–95 for a discussion of other significant sites in this vicinity), and the major sites of the Beqaʿ Valley. Each of the Phoenician settlements had at least one harbor. They also had extensive post-Hellenistic settlements particularly during the Roman and Crusader periods, but since these later periods are beyond the scope of our conversation, we have not included them in this discussion. It should be noted that the current state of archaeological excavations in Lebanon is largely unknown and inaccessible, as dozens of salvage excavations have been undertaken, but have not been published (Sader; cf. also Lipiński 2000: 319–46 for a discussion of the Beqaʿ Valley during the Iron Age – particularly the Aramean kingdom of Zobah (*Ṣôbâ*), many important sites in this region remain largely unknown [e.g., Tell Labwa/Lebo-hamath]).

Tyre was an island port city for most of antiquity until the siege of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, which led to the creation of a peninsula linking Tyre to the Lebanese coast. During the biblical era (and despite the prominence of the Sidonian name for the inhabitants of the northern coast), Tyre was unquestionably the dominant Phoenician port city and the center of a massive trade and colonization network across the Mediterranean (cf. Aubet 2001: 22–49 see also Isa 23; Ezek 27). Archaeological excavations at Tyre already began in the 1830s, but primarily dealt with the classical remains until the excavations of P. Bikai in 1973–1974. Bikai's excavations revealed that Tyre had been inhabited from the Early Bronze–Iron Age with a possible occupational gap during the Middle Bronze Age (Ward 1997: 5.247; Bikai). More recent excavation at al-Bass (east of Tyre) have revealed a large inland necropolis relating to Tyre with hundreds of tombs of cremation urns that date from throughout the Iron Age (Aubet 2010: 145–58).

Zarephath (preserved in the nearby town of Safarand) is mentioned in 1 Kgs 17:8–24 (cf. Luke 4:26) as the location where the prophet Elijah fled to during the famine in Israel. In Obadiah, Zarephath is envisioned as the northern boundary of Israel, which would include Tyre in Israelite territory (Obad 20). Outside of the biblical text, Zarephath (Serapta) is mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi I (late 13th cent. BCE) along with Beirut, Sidon, Usha, and Tyre (ANET 477). "Sariptu" also appears in the annals of Sennacherib (in 701 BCE; *COS* 2:302) who removed it from Luli's control before it was returned to Tyrian control under Baʿalu during the reign of Esarhaddon (*RINAP* 4.1.3; Leichty: 17). Besides Tyre, the archaeological remains at Zarephath may be the most known on the Phoenician mainland due to the excavations of Pritchard from 1969–74 (Markoe: 199). Zarephath was founded in the Late Bronze Age and inhabited continuously until the Roman period. During the Iron Age, Zarephath was built on a new plan with industrial, religious, and residential quarters. The excavations revealed twenty pottery kilns along abundant evidence of the production and export of red-purple dye (produced from *Murex trunculus*, cf. Reese) indicating that Zarephath was a major producer and exporter of pottery, textiles, and red-purple dye (from which Zarephath's name is also derived) (Pritchard: 71–84).

Sidon (Saïda) is a large settlement of fifty-eight hectares (145 acres) with remains from the Early Bronze Age until modern times (Markoe: 198–201). In 1965, the Directorate of General Antiqities purchased three sites in downtown Sidon including the "college site," which would be later excavated by Doumet-Serhal (Doumet-Serhal 2010: 115). Until the excavations by Doumet-Serhal (sponsored by the British Museum), which began in 1998 and are ongoing, the remains of ancient Sidon were primarily known from the excavations of various surrounding necropoli (e.g., Magharat Ablun, location of the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, Ayaʿa, and ʿAin el-Ḥilwe), "Murex hill" (where *Murex* shells were deposited after being used in dye-making), and Bostan el-Sheikh (the location of the Eshmun temple; Khalifeh). Doumet-Serhal's excavation have revealed a sequence of occupation ranging from the

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Chalcolithic/Early Bronze I through the Iron Age including public buildings from the Middle and Late bronze ages and over one hundred Middle Bronze Age burials (Doumet-Serhal 2010; 2013).

Beirut is the capital of the modern country of Lebanon. The modern city is situated over an ancient Phoenician settlement. Beirut probably does not appear in the biblical text, but it is mentioned in numerous historical sources (e.g., Ugarit, el-Amarna, etc.) during the OT/HB era. The ancient site of Tell Beirut (ca. two hectares in size) was excavated by the Lebanese Department of Antiquities together with the American University of Beirut from 1993–6 and various projects in the vicinity (Badre 1997a: 6–8). The tell is dominated by a Crusader castle and accompanying fortifications, but excavations at the site and at other nearby sites have revealed earlier remains from the Middle and Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron II (including successive phases of fortifications) Persian, Hellenistic (known as "Laodicea in Canaan" and underwent extensive urban development under the Seleucids), Roman, and Byzantine periods (Badre 1997a; Finkbeiner [*ARAM* 13 devoted to the study of ancient Beirut]; Elayi with extensive bibliography). While Beirut was a significant city during the Bronze and Iron Ages, it rose to particular prominence during the Roman era (Berytus, e.g., site of Herod the Great's "trial" of his two Hasmonean-born sons, Josephus, *Ant.* 16.361–370).

Byblos/Gebal (Jubail) rose to prominence during the Early Bronze Age due to its situation near the sea and close proximity to copper and cedar (Markoe: 202). Byblos was initially investigated in the 1860s by Ernest Renan, then by Pierre Montet in the 1920s. From 1926 until the 1970s the site was excavated by Maurice Dunand, who revealed remains of twenty-one strata including remains from the Neolithic-until modern times (Joukowsky: 4.391). The Early Bronze city was pre-planned around a spring and included two gates, a massive stone rampart, and a sacred precinct that included structures that were maintained until the Hellenistic era (Markoe: 202). During the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Age, Byblos remained the most significant Lebanese coastal settlement on account of it being a major supplier of timber to Egypt (Joukowsky; Markoe: 15). Byblos would remain an important city throughout the biblical era, as made evident by its occurrence in various historical recrods (e.g., 1 Kgs 5 : 18; Ezek 27 : 9; Kurkh Monolith line 92), but the remains of Iron Age Byblos are not as well known and its prominence seems to have been replaced by Tyre and Sidon during the Iron Age (Joukowsky: 392, the most significant find from this period is the 11th cent. BCE Ahiram sarcophagus). During the Persian period, Byblos became a Persian vassal and the city walls were reinforced (Joukowsky: 392).

Arvad (Arwad or Ruad) is actually located in the modern country of Syria, but was clearly part of the Phoenician settlement pattern during the Iron Age as it was the northernmost Phoenician port city. Ancient Arvad is situated on an island ca. two and a half km to the west of modern Tortose (Markoe: 205). According to Gen 10 : 18, Arvad was one of the descendants of Canaan. Arvad is also mentioned twice in Ezek 27, where its inhabitants served as the "rowers" (along with Sidon, Ezek 27 : 8) and armed guards of Tyre (27 : 11). Arvad also appears in various Egyptian, Assyrian ("city in the midst of the sea") Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic (cf. 1 Macc 15 : 23), and Roman era texts (Burns: 66–67). It also probably appears opposite Tyre in an Assyrian relief at Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabd) depicting ships transporting timber and dating to the reign of Sargon II (Aubet 2001: 33; but see Markoe: 97). The small island of Arwad, which is currently densely populated, is ca. 800 m long x 300 m wide in size (with a possible populated area of ca. forty hectares/100 acres). Arvad has not been excavated, but It was apparently inhabited from the 3rd millennium BCE until modern times while its oldest visible architectural remains (massive fortifications) apparently date to the Roman period (Markoe: 205–6). Like Tyre, Arvad was reliant on mainland sites to supply its agricultural needs. These inland sites include Amrit (ancient Marathus, founded in the 3rd cent. BCE and also likely served as Arvad's necropolis) and Tortose (ancient Antaradus), which would have both supplied Arvad, as well as offered strategic inland connections to the Akkar plain to the south (Markoe: 206).

Kamid el-Loz (ancient Kumidi of the Amarna texts) is situated in the southeastern Beqaʿ Valley. The tell (7.2 hectares/17.8 acres) was excavated from 1954–63 by A. Kuschke, in 1963–65 by Kuschke and Hachmann, and then from 1964–81 by Hachmann (Hachmann). Since the Lebanese civil war, the site has been heavily looted and bulldozed (Badre 1997c: 265). The excavations revealed that Kamid el-Loz was inhabited during the Neolithic, Early Bronze (few sherds), Middle Bronze (large urban settlement), Late Bronze Age (primary period of settlement, when the site had an Egyptian governor's residence), Iron I, Iron II (possibly a small occupation, see discussion in Lipiński 2006: 208–9) and Persian-Roman (cemetery) as a cemetery (Badre 1997c: 265–66).

The Late Bronze Age remains include fortifications, a palace, a temple (with a double court), and a royal cemetery, as well as ivory objects and six Amarna-era cuneiform tablets (Badre 1997c: 266).

Baalbek (renamed Helopolis by the Ptolemies) is located in the center of the Beqaʿ Valley near the watershed of the Orontes and Littani Rivers (3800 feet/1150 m) (Badre 1997b: 247; Anderson 2006). Owing to its elevation, Baalbek was thought to be

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the residence of the Canaanite deities of El, Anat, and Baal (of Beqaʿ = Baalbek). Baalbek was excavated in the late 19th century by the German scholars Schulz and Puchstein, then by French scholars (Dussaud, Rouzevalle, Syrig, and Schumberger, who restored the site's temples) from 1922–43, and finally by the Lebanese Department of Antiquities who have continued to carry out excavations and restoration work (Badre 1997b: 247; note: Baalbek became a UNESCO world-heritage site in 1984). While remains from the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Age were uncovered (probe in 1964–65), the majority of the remains date to classical eras (primarily the Roman era) (Badre 1997b: 247). During the Roman Period, monumental temples to Jupiter (relating to Baal), Mercury (relating to El), and Venus (relating to Anaṫ, although apparently the "temple to Venus" at Baalbek is apparently an incorrect identification, and the actual temple was closer to the Jupiter temple) were constructed (Badre 1997b: 247–48). These temples and later monumental structures, such as the Great Court and the Temple of Baachus have undergone extensive restoration and can still be seen today.

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Chris McKinny

II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Lebanon is mentioned seventy-one times in the HB/OT. The Hebrew term *lĕbānôn* stems from the semitic root *l–b–n* (to be white) and refers to Lebanon as mountain range. Therefore, the name *lĕbānôn* is connected with the white appearance of the Lebanon mountains when they are covered with snow (Jer 18:14). The HB/OT is lacking a term to designate the whole area of modern Lebanon, from the coast to the Anti-lebanon mountains, because it never was a political entity in antiquity.

1. Geography. The Lebanon mountain range (cf. *har hallĕbānôn* in Judg 3:3) is approximately 160 km long and 50 km wide. Its highest peak reaches an elevation of 3,083 m above sea level. If ancient Lebanon is considered as an area corresponding approximately with that of modern Lebanon the HB/OT refers to it by mentioning various sub-regions. It mentions not only the Lebanon mountains but also the coastal cities and their hinterland, e.g., Tyre (1 Kgs 5:15–32; 1 Kgs 16:31–33; Ezek 26–28; Saur: 182–251), Sarepta (1 Kgs 17:9), Sidon (Gen 10:15; Josh 11:8), and Byblos (Josh 13:5; 1 Kgs 5:18; Ps 83:7; Ezek 27:9). The territories of the coastal cities are often designated in historical research as Phoenicia (Peckham: xix–xxi). For the coastal cities the Lebanon mountains played an important role as hinterland (cf. 1 Kgs 5:15–26). Therefore, the term Phoenicia should not be limited to the coastal strip but it should rather include the mountain areas as well. However, Phoenicia was neither a state nor a self-designation of the local inhabitants. The LXX uses Φοινίκη to translate "Canaan" (Exod 16:35), "Canaanites" (Josh 5:1) or "Sidon" (Isa 23:2).

Next to mountains of Lebanon and the coastal cities, the HB/OT mentions the "valley of Lebanon" (Josh 11:17; 12:7), i.e., the elevated plain of the Beqaʿ Valley stretching between two parallel mountain ranges (Lebanon mountains and Anti-lebanon). In some cases LXX translates *lĕbānôn* as Anti-lebanon (e.g., Deut 1:7; 3:25; Josh 1:4). Mount Hermon (*ḥermôn*; Deut 3:8–9; Josh 11:3, 17 etc.) is the southern extremity of the Anti-lebanon mountain range. Despite the terminological distinction between the different mountain areas in some cases *lĕbānôn* seem to encompass all mountain areas of modern Lebanon (Josh 13:5; cf. Mulder: 465). Similarly, the territorial vision of Deut 1:7 refers with

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lĕbānôn to an area corresponding approximately to that of modern Lebanon, excluding the coastal strip.

Within the various concepts of the "promised land," Lebanon is excluded in some instances (as northern border of the promised land, e.g., Josh 9:1 and, mentioning the town of Baal-gad, Josh 11:17; 12:7) while it is included in others (e.g., Deut 1:7; 3:25; Josh 1:4). Based on these latter concepts traditions like those of Solomon's building activities in Lebanon (1 Kgs 9:19) and like the vision of Zech 10:10 could develop. Historically however, Lebanon was never part of Israel/Judah. From an Israelite perspective, Lebanon was geographically close but distant because of its conspicuous different landscape and nature.

2. Resources. Numerous resources of Lebanon's landscape and nature are mentioned in the HB/OT: Agricultural products (Ps 72:16), abundance of water (Song 4:15), wine (Hos 14:7), and wild game (2 Kgs 14:9; 2 Chr 25:18). In particular, the unique mountain forests of Lebanon were known to biblical authors as an important resource. They were aware of the Assyrian interest to exploit this resource (2 Kgs 19:23; Isa 37:24) and of the utilization of mountain wood for shipbuilding in the eastern Mediterranean (Ezek 27:5; cf. Rich: passim). To designate wood from the Lebanese mountains, the term *ʾerez* occurs most frequently in biblical texts (Jdg 9:15; 1 Kgs 5:11, 30; 2 Kgs 14:9; Isa 2:13; Jer 22:23; Ezek 17:3; 27:5; 31:3; Zech 11:1; Pss 92:13; 104:16; Song15:5; Esr 3:7; Sir 50:12). *ʾerez* usually denominates the prominent cedar tree from Lebanon (*cedrus libani*) but may stand also as a term for coniferous trees in general. Next to cedar trees, juniper (*bĕrôš*, 1 Kgs 5:22–23; 2 Kgs 19:23; Isa 37:24) pine, fir, cypress, and other wood types from the mountains of Lebanon are known to biblical authors (Mulder: 466).

Cedar trees are mentioned for the time of King Solomon as building material for the royal palace and for the temple. One hall of Solomon's palace was called "house of the forest of Lebanon" (*bêt yaʿar hallĕbānôn*; 1 Kgs 7:2; 10:17; 10:21; 2 Chr 9:20). Despite numerous efforts to reconstruct the architecture and the symbolism of this hall (Weippert/Weippert: 10, 34–36), it remains doubtful if it ever existed in the described form (1 Kgs 7:2–5). Even if cedar wood was utilized as construction timber already during the Bronze Age in the southern Levant (Liphschitz: 116–24), it was most probably not used on a large scale at Jerusalem during the 10th century BCE. At this time the economic capacity of Jerusalem was not strong enough to obtain large quantities of cedar wood. Apart from that, the Deuteronomistic narrative of the "treaty" between Hiram and Solomon (1 Kgs 5:15–26) can not be regarded as a historically reliable source for the supply of cedar wood at Jerusalem in the 10th century BCE. In later times however, when the Judean kingdom did reach economic prosperity, cedar wood may have been used as timber for public buildings at Jerusalem on a larger scale. This assumption explains a specific hope which emerged at Jerusalem after the destruction of the temple, namely that its re-construction would make use of the "glory of Lebanon" (*kĕbôd hallĕbānôn*; Isa 60:13; cf. Ezra 3:7). The narratives of Solomon using cedar wood for temple and palace constructions portray him as a powerful king. This is in general accord with many Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern sources proving the great demand for Lebanese cedar wood in royal and public constructions of ancient centers of power (Weippert 1980–83: 642–45).

3. Literary Motifs. Lebanon was a neighboring region of Israel/Juda but had a conspicuously different landscape. And, Lebanon's main resources were connected with its nature. These distinctive features lead to the formation of many literary motifs about Lebanon in the HB/OT. Because of the cedars and the high mountain vegetation, Lebanon is a symbol of abundance (Song 4:15), opulent vegetation (Nah 1:4; Sir 50:8), nobility (Ps 104:16; Song 5:15); splendor (Isa 35:2), and glory (Isa 10:34). Hosea 14:7 and Song 4:11 praise the pleasant aroma of trees from the Lebanese mountains. Furthermore, Lebanon is a symbol for being proud, lofty, and impressive, both in a positive (Ezek 17:3; Ps 93:12) and in a negative sense (Isa 2:13; Jer 22:23; Ezek 31:3–14). Cedars are specifically linked with kings (1 Kgs 14:9; Isa 14:8; Ezek 17:3) and kingdoms (Jer 22:6). Fables of plants contrast the high trees of Lebanon with miscellaneous low plants: thistle (Judg 9:15), hyssop (1 Kgs 5:13), and thorny bushes (2 Kgs 14:9; 2 Chr 25:18).

The mountains of Lebanon have an important metaphoric value in the Song of Solomon. The lofty appearance of the beloved is like that of the Lebanon (Song 5:15) and the nose of the bride resembles a tower of Lebanon (Song 7:5). The fragance of the bride's clothes is like the fragrant odor of Lebanese wood (Song 4:11; cf. Hos 14:6). Lebanon's particularity of being close and distant at the same time is expressed in Song 4:8. Led by the desire to bridge the distance, the beloved calls the bride to "come down to me from Lebanon" (Weippert 2016: 355–60). It is possible that here, in Song 4:8, a mythological concept shines through which sees the Lebanon mountains as seat of gods. According to the Gilgamesh-tradition this concept was known in Mesopotamia already at the beginning of the 2nd Millennium BCE (Weippert 1980–83: § 5). In summary, most of the literary motifs regarding *lĕbānôn* in the HB/OT have a positive connotation which shows that Israelites and Judeans were deeply impressed and fascinated by the landscape and nature of the Lebanon mountains.

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Jens Kamlah

III. Judaism

By the first centuries CE, the importance of the area of Lebanon within Jewish political and economic life and even as a literary motif had diminished. The word Lebanon does not occur at all in the Mishnah, and in the Babylonian Talmud it appears in only fourteen passages, all of them citing and commenting on biblical verses. Here the general theme is that biblical references to Lebanon in fact allude to the Jerusalem temple. This idea derives from an interpretation of Zech 11 : 1, "Open your doors, O Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars!" The rabbis read this as a prophecy of the temple's destruction, first in 586 BCE and then in 70 CE: Lebanon – the temple – opens its doors so as to be destroyed. In *bYom* 39b this metaphor is developed, explaining that the temple was called Lebanon (from the Heb. root *l–b–n* meaning "white") "because it makes white the sins of Israel."

In midrashic literature, the theme of Lebanon as temple is developed with particular interest in Song 4 : 8, which presents God's statement to Israel: "Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon." At Song of Songs 4 : 8, this double appearance of the word Lebanon signifies two points. First, God took Israel as a bride "from Lebanon," meaning that, unlike in normal practice, in which the bride has twelve months to prepare for the wedding, God redeemed Israel straight from the bricks and mortar of Egypt (Lebanon can refer to bricks, *levenim*), by giving the people the Torah even before they had time for spiritual growth and preparation. The verse's second reference to Lebanon suggests that, even in exile, God's presence has not left the people; God again will quickly spring forth to redeem them, jumping "from Lebanon," that is, the temple (*ShirR* 4 : 11), to punish the nations and reclaim his people.

A second notable midrashic theme reflects on Ps 92 : 13: "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon." In what ways are the righteous like these trees? They are honest (i.e., not crooked, and they have no abnormalities); just as these trees cast far shadows, so the reward of the righteous is in a future world; the heart of the righteous is directed upward, just as are the cedar and palm; just as the cedar and palm desire to be connected to other trees to be able to bear fruit, so the righteous desire God (*BerR* 41 : 1).

These examples suggest that, for the rabbis, Lebanon does not function as a geographical area of political or economic concern or even as a place from which building materials are still to be derived. Rather, Lebanon becomes a metaphor that expresses their own social and theological message. The temple, referred to as Lebanon, cleansed Israel's sins, and from it God again will redeem the people; Israelites' righteousness is expressed by their emulating the cedars of Lebanon. Lebanon is no longer an actual location but a symbol through which aspects of rabbinic ideology are articulated.

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IV. Visual Arts

Ancient Lebanon's landscape and cities are not often represented in ancient Near Eastern iconography. Some Assyrian reliefs inform us about their topography and their monuments. One of the most famous cities of the Phoenicians, Tyre, ancient Ṣurru, is represented on the 9th cent. BCE bronze gates of Balawat (Pritchard: fig. 356). Tyre is represented surrounded by a fortification wall with two gates and is located on an island. It is the oldest evidence for the insular character of Tyre before it was linked to the mainland by Alexander the Great's dam. One notes its closed harbor, its people transporting in small *hippoi* boats a rich tribute to the Assyrian king Shamaneser III. This city is represented probably also on the bronze gates of Balawat of Ashurnasirpal II (Curtis/Tallis: fig. 55, L5)

Another relief from the palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh represents the city of Sidon, its city wall, its harbor, as well as its merchant and war ships (Markoe: fig. 6). Most interesting is the representation of a temple recognizable at the two free standing columns before its entrance, which recall Herodotus' description of the temple of Melqart in Tyre (*Hist.* 2.44) and the biblical description of the Jerusalem temple (2 Chr 3 : 15–17). The fortified city of Sidon is represented also on late 5th–4th-century BCE coins with a war galley (Hill: 140–42, nos. 4–16). The mythical topography of Tyre showing its Ambrosian rocks as well as a dog holding a murex shell in his mouth, symbolizing the myth about the origin of the famous Phoenician purple dye industry can be seen on later, 3rd century CE coins (Rouvier: 2477).

Ancient Lebanon was famous for its cedar trees which were used by its neighbors for the building

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of their temples and palaces. The Hall of the Forest of Lebanon in Solomon's palace (1 Kgs 7 : 2–4) is a good example for the use of cedar logs in palace building. One register of Ashurnasirpal II's Balawat gates represents a tribute of timber probably from Lebanon (Curtis/Tallis: fig. 55, L8). The transport of cedar logs is represented also on a relief from the palace of Sargon II (Pritchard: fig. 107).

All these reliefs give us invaluable information about how the ancient inhabitants of Lebanon were dressed, the characteristics of the cities they lived in, as well as some of their furniture and main crafts. The throne of King Ahirom represented on his sarcophagus (Pritchard: fig. 456) as well as the so-called Astarte thrones which are characterized by their arms in the shape of sphinxes remind us of the throne of YHWH with its cherubim as described in the Bible (1 Kgs 6 : 23–29). The palmette motif so often represented on Phoenician ivories is also mentioned as a decoration of the *hekal* of the Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 6 : 35). Some of the Nimrud ivories represent a woman at the window (Herrmann et al.: S0110, S0111, S1351). They inform us about elements of ancient Lebanese architecture such as the recessed window and the balustrade in the shape of small palmettes.

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Hélène Sader

See also →Sirion

Lebanon, Modern

→Maron, Maronites; →Western Asia

Lebaoth

→Beth-Lebaoth

Lebbaeus

→Thaddeus

Lebensohn, Micah Joseph

Micah Joseph Lebensohn (1828–1852) was a Hebrew poet. He was born and died in Vilna. At age seventeen, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and died shortly before his twenty-fourth birthday. He was the author of about thirty poems, including six that were published during his lifetime in the collection *Shirei Bat Tsiyyon* ("Songs of Zion"). A second group of poems were published posthumously under the title *Kinor Bat Tsiyyon* ("Lyre of Zion").

Micah's father, Abraham Dov Lebensohn (1794–1878), also known as "Adam Ha-Kohen," was himself a notable Hebrew poet and the author of a controversial allegorical drama called *Emet we-emunah* (1867, Truth and Faith). Abraham was the official preacher at Vilna's first modern synagogue, and a public figure within the Jewish community of Vilna. He also published new editions of biblical books, accompanied by German translations and the commentaries of Moses Mendelssohn. Abraham encouraged his son's poetic experiments, but his own work was far more conventional than Micah Joseph's searingly personal meditations on death and suffering.

Shirei Bat Tsiyyon includes five poems on biblical themes. Two scholars, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) and Samuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865), encouraged the young Lebensohn, after he published a Hebrew translation of a section of the Aeneid, to turn towards writing poetry with Jewish and biblical heroes. The five biblical poems in *Shirei Bat Tsiyyon* are: "Solomon," about the young Solomon, identified as the lover in the Song of Songs, and "Kohelet," about the old Solomon, the author of Ecclesiastes, contemplating death; "Yael and Sisera," "The Vengeance of Samson," and "Moses on Mount Abarim." The sixth poem in the collection is on the death of the medieval Hebrew poet, Judah ha-Levi (ca. 1075–1141). Four of the biblical poems – all except "Solomon" – are vignettes of the dying moments of biblical characters and heroes. Each of the biblical poems focuses on the hero's intense, and sometimes conflicting, emotions. Many of the poems have been read autobiographically. Struggling against the epic register of his predecessors, especially his father, Micah's work strives for greater intimacy with the reader.

Lebensohn's interpretations of biblical stories were all quite radical within the context of 19th-century Judaism. His treatment of biblical themes is a departure from the previous half-century of Hebrew poetry, going back to Naphtali Herz Wessely's *Shirei tif'eret* (published beginning in 1789), a tradition that affirmed rather than questioned the transcendence of the biblical original. The poem on Yael and Sisera is an indictment of Yael, while the aged Solomon of "Kohelet" is overcome with despair.

For more than a century after his death, Lebensohn was regarded as one of the most talented modern Hebrew poets. In the early 20th century, Lebensohn's poetry was read and taught within a Zionist framework, and he was admired for his personal voice, his existential concerns, his self-image as a romantic artist, and his striving for directness. Like the other 19th-century Hebrew poets, Lebensohn

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