Louis Cardahi Foundation
Lebanese American University

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LEBANON

A country of sea, mountains and green valleys, the Republic of Lebanon borders the east Mediterranean with 225 kilometers of coast from south to north, and its width varies from 10 to 80 kilometers from the coast to the east Syria. The narrow plain cases where cities and villages line up quickly rises into the massif of Lebanon Mountains, which reaches summits over 3000 meters high. Its slopes are covered by the famous Cedar tree, the symbolic tree of Lebanon. The Lebanon Mountains are fed by the Bekaa valley, planted of orchards and vineyards, dominated to the east, by the peaks of Anti-Lebanon mountain chain, the Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

This geographical characteristic of intimate proximity between the sea and the mountain conditioned the history of this corner of the Mediterranean. Lebanon mountains protected and caused the exchanges between the Orient and the Occident since the times of the Phoenicians. Lebanon is known for its very complex cultural history as refuge for many religious minorities, for which today Lebanon is a mosaic that hosts 18 recognized communities: Sunnites, Shiites, Druzes, Alaouites, Druzes, Ismaïlites, and eastern Christian confessions of which the Maronite's are the majority.

Around 2700 BC, the Canaanites, known later, originating from Arabia and Mesopotamia, migrated towards the territory of the actual Syria and Lebanon, some of them settled in pre-existing coastal settlements which developed into the main cities: Byrsa (Carthage), Leptis Magna, **Tyre (Sour), Byblos (Jbeil), Arados (Ruad), Sidon (Saida)**. Later, these Canaanites who became known as the Phoenicians, or Punic in Phoenicians by the Greeks, their city-states became maritime empires, they expanded their commerce and their influence throughout the seas and shores on the Atlantic, where they found for example Gadir, Cadiz, until 1200 BC. The Phoenicians are known for their exceptional artisans, with materials from different origins - gold, bronze, ivory, glass - indicate an eminent commerce with the Mediterranean and Oriental influences, that shine in their significant prestige exposed in the National Museum of Beirut, and Northern Museum (to the east). Moreover, the Unesaid dynasty, these cities were part of the Phoenicians Empire, and Arabic became the language of the region.

Tyre is a famous Phoenician city, the home of the Elissa, the founder of Carthage. It is approximately 40 kilometers south of Sidon, and 80 kilometers south of Beirut. Tyre was a city-state, the city-state model of the ancient coastal Lebanese cities was by the promise of independence and prosperity.

The city-state was a city with a harbor and a port and its agricultural hinterland. This city has one foot in the sea and another one in the land and agriculture. Its hinterland and its ancient port, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Beirut, Tripoli, Anjar, Baalbek, Byblos, Beirut, Tripoli, Anjar, Baalbek, Byblos, Beirut, Tripoli, Anjar, Baalbek