



League of Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic Cities

Tyre Foundation

League of Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic Cities

Report

Forum V of the League of Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic Cities

« The Alphabet Road »

Greece: 11-18 October 2014

Theme and place of the Forum:

Under the patronage of the “**Greek Minister of culture and sport**” and the “**Greek National committee of UNESCO**” and in collaboration with the Piraeus Museum, the **International Association to Save Tyre (AIST)**, organized in Greece their fifth Forum of the **League of Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic Cities (LCCPP)** under the theme of: “**The Alphabet Road – Mediterranean Heritage and Challenges**”.

Opening of the Forum:

On October 11th 2014, the forum was inaugurated with the welcoming address of Mrs. **Angela Gkerekou**, Greek Vice-Minister of culture. It was then followed by a word of **Mrs. Rodi Kratsa**, Former Vice-President of the European Parliament, who introduced the participants. To start **M. Hervé de Charrette**, former French Minister for Foreign Affairs and President of the International Association to Save Tyre (AIST) – France made a speech in which he underlines that Greek language finds its roots in the Phoenician Alphabet of Tyre. He then spoke about the great classical philosophers of ancient Greece who had established the concepts of democracy and dialogue, showing evidence of Greece authenticity in the domains of History, Philosophy, Science, Geography and Mathematics. He also mentioned the audience by saying: " you represent the strengths of peace, the problems and the disorders shaking the Mediterranean region are due, on one hand, to the inability of its people to get along together and, on the other hand, to the influence of the great powers that use the people of the region and exploits them to realize their objectives which are foreign to us. He also asserted that the current wars in the region put us in front of big responsibilities and that it is up to us to take back our history which should be built on bases of peace, culture, attachment to our heritage, recognition of our common values and acceptance of our differences. "

Mrs. Maha El-Khalil Chalabi, Secretary-General of the International Association to Save Tyre - France took the floor to explain the purpose of the Forum V. "In the era of TV – modern communications, she has said, we are here to re-emphasize the importance of the Phoenician alphabet, a discovery which is considered as the main basis of dialogue and communication between individuals". She also said that the alphabetic writing, which does not age through centuries and millennia, is an element that helps conveying thoughts in this restless world and also passes on the cultural diversity in all its wealth. Mrs. Chalabi then announced the launching of two very large projects within the objectives of the LCCPP:

The establishment of the Research Institute on the Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic civilization and the construction of the Artisanal village (Ishtar). Mrs. Chalabi ended by saying that we are here together to promote cultural diversity and consolidation of culture and peace in this world overrun by violence and crimes against humanity.

Participants:

Participated in this Forum:

On behalf of the Lebanese town halls: **Dr Nader el-Ghazal** Mayor of Tripoli and President of the city halls union; **M. Hussein Awada**, President of the union of the city halls of Baalbeck; **M. Ali Abdel Sater**, Mayor of Iaat-Baalbeck; **M. Ayoub Bark**, Vice-president of the city hall of Jbeil.

On behalf of the European town halls: **M. Bruno Garsi**, Vice-president of the city hall of Cadiz (Spain); **Mme Phénicia Erdas**, Director of the museum of the city hall of Capras, representing the mayor.

On behalf of the Greek town halls: **M. Fotis Chatzidiacos** Mayor of Rhodes; **M. Markos Koveos**, Mayor of Paros; **M. Konstantinos Koukas**, Mayor of Mikonos; **M. Athanasios Foscolos**, Vice - Mayor of Syros; **M. Nickolaous Oikononou**, Vice - Mayor of Aegina; **M. Michalis Angelopoulos**, Mayor of Samos; and **M. Michael Lytos** Vice - mayor of Karpathos.

Also participated: **M. Spyros Spyridon**, General Secretary of the local administration of the Aegean sea; **M. Georges Boubopoulos**, Admiral of the Greek coast guard; **M. Miltiadis Varvitsiotis**, representative of the Secretary of Transport and the Aegean sea; **Mme Stella Chryssoulaki**, Director of the museum Ephorate 26 for Prehistory; **M. Vassilis Korkidis**, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Piraeus; **Dr. Titika Stasinopoulou**, President of the Center of the EuroMediterranean Cultures of the UNESCO and Ambassador of Tunisia in Greece; as well as other personalities, historians, archaeologists and politicians, coming from Tunisia, Lebanon, France, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Belgium.

The cities of Rhodes, Paros, Mikonos, Syros, Aegina, Samos and Karpatos participated to the Fifth Forum and signed "the Valuable charter " which includes a protocol of collaboration between them.

The debate sessions:

The subjects of the Forum were highly varied. The participants evaluated, for two days (on October 11th and 12th, 2014), the problems and the challenges which are facing the cities of the Mediterranean Sea, in the domains of: education and teaching, cultural tourism, pollution of marine environment and the development of handicraft. The debate also concentrated on the birth of the alphabet and its development. It was divided into four sessions:

First session: Culture and Education: this session dealt with the evolution of the alphabet, starting from Phoenicia until the era of the digital alphabet. It also concentrated on the Phoenician - Greek relationships as well as the traditions, which guided them. During this session moderated by Dr Naji Karam there were three successive lecturers:

- **Dr. Françoise Briquel-Charbonnet:** Genesis of the Alphabet
- **Dr. Dimitria Giennoupoulou :** The interrelations of Phoenicians and Greeks during the Early Iron Age
- **Dr. Elodie Guillon:** Hellenestic Phoenicia – Traditions and Innovations

Second session: Cultural Tourism: the participants "traveled" through time, a number of Mediterranean cities. This session led by **Hélène Kondilys** included five speakers:

- **Dr. Naji Karam :** Through the Christ Path : support of coexistence between religions
- **Pr. José Maria Gener Basallote :** Mattan Mystery – Museology and tourist development of Phoenician Site of Gadir
- **M. Bruno Garcia de Leon :** Spanish Phoenician Route
- **Dr. Valérie Matoian :** The Mediterranean from the East to West : images of protection and healing deities
- **Mme Maria Maraka Ramanous :** Traditional Settlements an asset for cultural tourism

Third session: Handicraft: Participants addressed the problem of the color purple and the secret of its extraction that always intrigued scientists. They also stressed the need to revive the craft trades that existed in the days of the Phoenicians but disappeared in many cities, such as blown glass, pottery and others.

Three speakers took the floor during this session moderated by **Marie-Thérèse Ashkar:**

- **Dr. Paulo Vasconcelos :** Potential and viability of muricid gastropods aquaculture. Overview and State of the art
- **Pr. Lilian Karali :** Aegean and the Middle East in prehistory – purple dye invention, production and diffusion
- **Dr. Eric Gubel :** Heritage and source of inspiration – The luxury craftsmanship among the Phoenician new readings

Fourth session: Marine environment: Participants described the problems of pollution and degradation of the marine environment, as well as the technical and political challenges facing Mediterranean ports. The session was moderated by **Dr. Maria Lekako** and three speakers participated:

- **Dr. Ioanna Siokou:** Impact of human activities on the Mediterranean marine environment
- **Dr. Issam Khalifeh:** The protection of cultural property during peacetime and in the event of armed conflict. A historical overview and case study, the plundering of Lebanon's cultural heritage.
- **Mr. Constantinos Triantafyllou:** The Role of the Human Element in Marine Environment Protection and Stewardship.

Other activities of the Forum:

- League's member cities mayors were invited to lunch by the Mayor of Athens. After lunch a meeting was held at the office of the Mayor of Athens, from 3PM to 5PM. A number of problems were discussed:

Mainly : transforming the ports of the cities of the League into green ports that do not pollute the Mediterranean, organize a yacht race between Phoenician Cities, encourage Murex cultivation for the production of purple and prepare an action plan for the coming year.

- The Scientific Committee of the Research Institute on the Canaanite, Phoenician and Punic Civilizations (IRCCPP) held a meeting Saturday, October 11th and has studied the future plans of the Institute, in the presence of:
Pr. Eric Gubel, Dr. Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, Dr. Elisabeth Fontan, Dr. Hélène Kondilys, Dr. Naji Karam, Dr. Issam Khalifeh, Dr. Samar Makki, Dr. Maha El-Khalil Chalabi and Ms. Marie-Thérèse Ashkar . (Minutes of the meeting have been established).

Dinner and Elissa/Didon Award:

Forum V was crowned by a gala dinner at the Acropolis Museum-Athens, in honor of the four winners of Elissa / Didon. This award created on June 25, 2014 was attributed this year to four women:

- **Lady Yvonne Cochrane**, Lebanon, for her protection of the Lebanese heritage.
- **Mrs. Rodi Kratsa**, Greece, in consideration of her support for the development of the role of the woman in the countries of the Mediterranean Basin.
- **Ms. Cherifa Khaddar**, Algeria, for her fight against domestic violence.
- **Ms. Souheir Belhassan**, Tunisia, for her fight in favour of human rights.

The Sailboat cruise:

The Forum V ended in a 5 day cruise with Ambassador **Tassos Krikikokis**, on the sailboat Panorama that moored in the ports of six Greek islands members of the League.

The first stopover took place in the island of Hydra where the friends of Tyre were received in the city hall. The mayor, **M. Georgio Kokolakis**, welcomed the visitors and explained to them the history and the monuments of the island that distinguishes itself from others by the fact that it is the only one who forbids cars and motorcycles. **Mrs.Chalabi** thanked Mr. mayor for his reception but also for his membership to the League. After exchanging souvenirs, participants began site visits starting with the museum.

On the second day, participants arrived to the island of Spetses and were received by the mayor **M. Panagiotis Lyrakis**. After the visit of the city hall and the exchange of points of view on the common projects as well as the souvenir gifts, the participants began the visit of the museum of Popolonia and other monuments of the Island, which had been the cradle of the regional developments at the origin of the revolution of independence of Greece.

On the third day, participants moved to the island of Paros known for its white marble quarries, a material Phoenicians imported that was used for carving the "legendary" statues. In the program: Welcoming by the Mayor **M. Markos Koveos**, exchanging souvenir gifts, guided tour of the sites of the island with the archaeologist Giannos Koragios and then, at the invitation of the mayor, a dinner along with folk dance party.

On the fourth day the delegation moved to the island of Delos, the largest archaeological site in Europe and shelter of a very important museum "Archaeological Museum of Delos". On this island, which was one of the most important commercial centers, where Phoenician Persian and Greek Civilizations have crossed paths. only Archaeologists currently inhabit the island of Delos.

After Delos, participants traveled to Mykonos, a city that receives approximately two million tourists a year and serves as a hotel for Delos. They were welcomed by the mayor and important officials and exchanged point of views and souvenirs.

On the fifth day, the sailboat headed for the island of Aegina. The participants were able to visit two museums as well as the important archeological sites, before meeting the mayor and discussing with him common problems.

At the end of the cruise, Mrs Chalabi said that the objective of Forum V was to proclaim the multiculturalism in order to build, in our cities, the culture of peace, which we urgently need in this world eaten away by hatred and ravaged by inhuman acts of violence. "We shall follow, she added, the steps of our ancestors the Phoenicians, pioneers of the world peace".