Fordham Ancient History Sourcebook:  **Herodotus:
Hellenes & Phoenicians, c. 430 BCE Trade and Conflict**

Book I, ''1-2

The Phoenicians, who had formerly dwelt on the shores of the Persian Gulf, having migrated to the Mediterranean and settled in the parts which they now inhabit, began at once to adventure on long voyages, freighting their vessels with the wares of Egypt and Assyria. They landed at many places on the coast, and among the rest at Argos, which was then the greatest above all the states included now under the common name of *Hellas* (Greece). Here they showed their merchandise, and traded with the natives for five or six days; at the end of this time, when almost everything was sold, there came down to the beach a number of women, and among them the daughter of the king, who was, they say, agreeing in this with the Hellenes (Greeks), Io, the child of Inachus. The women were standing by the stern of the ship intent upon their purchases, when the Phoenicians, with a general shout, rushed upon them. The greater part made their escape, but some were seized and carried off. Io herself was among the captives. The Phoenicians put the women on board their vessel, and set sail for Egypt. Thus did Io pass into Egypt, and thus commenced the series of outrages. . . .At a later period, certain Greeks, with whose name they are unacquainted, but who would probably be Cretans, made a landing at Tyre, on the Phoenician coast, and bore off the king's daughter, Europa. In this they only retaliated. The Cretans say that it was not them who did this act, but, rather, Zeus, charmed with the beautiful Europa, who disguised himself as a bull, gained the maiden's affections, and thence carried her off to Crete, where she bore three sons by Zeus: Sarpedon, Rhadamanthys, and Minos, later king of all Crete.

Source: From: Herodotus, *The History,* George Rawlinson, trans., (New York: Dutton & Co., 1862).

1) Based on the passage above, how would you characterize relations between the Hellenes (Greeks) and the Phoenicians? Cite specific evidence.

2) The story about the kidnapped daughters is apocryphal (fictional), but what can it tell us about cultural diffusion and the influence different peoples can have on one another.

3) Herodotus refers to many different civilizations and personalities in the excerpt above. What appears familiar to you and where do you know the name(s) from?

4) How could Phoenician trade and colonization spark disputes with other civilizations (other than in the mythical example above)?

**Phoenicians and the Alphabet, according to Herodotus**

**[Excerpted from Book 5, Chapter 58, in *The History of Herodotus*, George Rawlinson, ed. and tr., vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885)]**

58. Now the Phoenicians who came with Cadmus, and to whom the Gephyraei belonged, introduced into Greece upon their arrival a great variety of arts, among the rest that of writing,[1] whereof the Greeks till then had, as I think, been ignorant. And originally they shaped their letters exactly like all the other Phoenicians, but afterwards, in course of time, they changed by degrees their language, and together with it the form likewise of their characters. Now the Greeks who dwelt about those parts at that time were chiefly the Ionians. The Phoenician letters were accordingly adopted by them, but with some variation in the shape of a few, and so they arrived at the present use, still calling the letters Phoenician, as justice required, after the name of those who were the first to introduce them into Greece. Paper rolls also were called from of old "parchments" by the Ionians, because formerly when paper was scarce they used, instead, the skins of sheep and goats - on which material many of the barbarians are even now wont to write.[1]

1. Homer (Il. vi. 168) shows that in his time the Greeks wrote on folding wooden tablets.

2. This is a remarkable statement. Among the "barbarians" alluded to, we may assume the Persians to be included. Stone and clay seem to have been the common material in Assyria and Babylonia; wood, leather, and paper in Egypt; the bark of trees and linen in Italy; stone, wood, and metal among the Jews. Parchment seems never to have been much used, even by the Greeks, till the time of Eumenes II. (B.C. 197-159).

1)

2) Using the chart below, what three letters seem to have evolved into our modern alphabet from Phoenician least changed? Which three are most changed?

