

Arkite

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(Heb. Arki', עַרְקִי; Sept. and Joseph. Ἀρουκαῖος, like the Samar. Aruki', עַרוּקִי), a designation of the inhabitants of Arka (Plin. v, 16; Ἄρκα, Ptol. v, 15), who are mentioned in **Genesis 10:17**; **1 Chronicles 1:15**, as descended from the Phoenician or Sidonian branch of the great family of Canaan. This, in fact, as well as the other small northern states of Phoenicia, was a colony from the great parent state of Sidon. Arka, or Arce (Ἄρκη), their chief town, lay between Tripolis and Antaradus, at the western base of Lebanon (Joseph. Ant. i, 6, 2; Jerome, Qucest. in **Genesis 10:15**). Josephus (Ant. 8:2, 3) makes Baanah, who in **1 Kings 4:16**, is said to have been superintendent of the tribe of Asher, governor of Arka (Ἄρκή) by the sea; and if, as commonly supposed, the capital of the Arkites is intended, their small state must, in the time of Solomon, have been under the Hebrew yoke. In the time of Alexander a splendid temple was erected here in honor of Astarte, the Venus of the Phoenicians (Macrob. Sat. i, 21). Subsequently Arka shared the lot of the other small Phoenician states in that quarter; but in later times it formed part of Herod Agrippa's kingdom. Titus passed through it on his return from the destruction of Jerusalem (Ἄρκαία, Joseph. War, 7:5, 1). In the Midrash (Midr. Rabb. 37) it is called "Arkam of Lebanon" (דְּלִבְנוֹן עַרְקִים). The name and site seem never to have been unknown (Mannert, p. 391), although for a time it bore the name of Caesarea Libani (Aurel. Vict. De Cces. 24:1), from having been the birthplace of Alexander Severus (Lamprid. Alex. Sev.). Coins are extant of it (Eckhel, Doctr. Num. iii, 360), but not of its Phoenician period (Gesenius, Monum. Phenic. ii, 285 sq.). It was eventually the seat of a Christian bishopric (Le Quien, Oriens Christ. ii, 815, 823). It is repeatedly noticed by the Arabian writers (Michaelis, Spicil. ii, 23; also Orient. Bibl. 6:99 sq.; Schultens, Vita Saladini; Edrisi,

p. 13; Rosenmuller, Barhebr. Chronicles p. 282). It is mentioned in all the itineraries of this region, and is conspicuous in early ecclesiastical records. It also figures largely in the exploits of the Crusaders, by whom it was unsuccessfully besieged in 1099, but at last taken in 1109 by Bertrand (see Robinson's Researches, new ed. iii, 578 sq.). In 1202 it was totally destroyed by an earthquake. It lay 32 Roman miles from Antaradus, 18 miles from Tripoli, and, according to Abulfeda, a parasang from the sea (Tab. Syriae, p. 11). In a position corresponding to these intimations, Shaw (Observat. p. 270) noticed the site and ruins. Burckhardt (Syria, p. 162), in travelling from the north-east of Lebanon to Tripoli, at the distance of about four miles south of the Nahr-el-kebir (Eleutherus), came to a hill called Tel-Arka, which, from its regularly flattened conical form and smooth sides, appeared to be artificial. He was told that on its top were some ruins of habitations and walls. Upon an elevation on its east and south sides, which commands a beautiful view over the plain, the sea, and the Anzeiry mountains, are large and extensive heaps of rubbish, traces of ancient dwellings, blocks of hewn stone, remains of walls, and fragments of granite columns. These are no doubt the remains of Arka; and the hill was probably the acropolis or citadel, or the site of a temple (Hamesveld, iii, 39 sq.). The present village has 21 Greek and 7 Moslem families—a wretched hamlet amid the columns of this once splendid city (Bibliotheca Sacra, 1848, p. 16).