

# Teaching about Trade in the Ancient Mediterranean

Zandra K. Ogata

BULLARD TALENT SCHOOL

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

**Subject:** Social Studies (Ancient Civilizations)

**Level:** Grade 6

**Length of Unit:** Intermittent throughout the school year

## Readings and Other Resources:

Bass, George F. "Oldest Known Shipwreck" (see General Bibliography).

Casson, Lionel, *The Ancient Mariners* (see General Bibliography).

Steffy, Richard J. *Wooden Ship Building and the Interpretation of Shipwrecks*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998.

Leonard, Albert, Jr. "The Late Bronze Age" (see General Bibliography).

Moran, William L., ed. and trans. *The Amarna Letters* (see General Bibliography).

*Spotlight on Literacy*. Level 12. "Ancient Secrets Run Deep." Macmillan/McGraw, 1998. Pp. 116–117.

Video: *Ancient Treasures from the Deep*. VHS Nova.

Slides: ordered from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology

## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Bullard Talent is a K–8 Magnet School for the Humanities, located in Fresno, California. Enrollment in our school is decided by lottery; we have general waiting list over one thousand students. Once enrolled, students may continue until graduation at the end of eighth grade when they enter a local high school. Instruction in Instrumental and Choral Music, Drama, Dance, and Visual Art is provided by professionals, as well as being integrated into academic subjects. Thematic teaching is emphasized at all levels.

Fresno Unified is the fourth-largest school district in California, serving a community of 400,000. The district has an enrollment of over 80,000 students; more than 90 different languages are spoken and almost a third of the students are limited in English proficiency. The District's current student ethnic breakdown is: Hispanic, 43.6%; White, 22.8%; Asian, 21.1%; African-American, 11.1%; Native American, 0.8%; Filipino, 0.5%; Pacific Islander, 0.2%.

The area served by the Fresno Unified School District encompasses the City of Fresno, and adjoining suburban areas of Fresno County. Agriculture is a major industry, grossing \$200 Billion a year with more than two hundred commercial crops.

## PART TWO: KEYING CARGOES INSTITUTE MATERIAL TO THE TEXTBOOK

Most sixth-grade classrooms in Fresno Unified use the textbook *A Message of Ancient Days* (Boston: Houghton, 1997). Because this textbook is written in themes by civilization, the tendency for teachers is to talk about each culture as if it existed in a separate time frame. I intend to supplement the material in the textbook by providing for my student a running chronology of trade and interaction among the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean and beyond. Large portions of the textbook are devoted to the field of archaeology and to the Mediterranean world in the period studied during the "Cargoes" Institute, 1600 B.C.–A.D. 200. From those sections, I have chosen pages which pertain specifically to archaeology, trade, and interaction among cultures. These are

Archaeology	pp. 54–85
Phoenicians	pp. 46–47
Obsidian Trade	p. 134
Sumer (Ur)	pp. 153–154
Babylonians	p. 177
Indus Valley	p. 225
Gupta Empire	pp. 248–249
China	pp. 285–286
Greeks	pp. 328, 330
Minoans	p. 331
Mycenaeans	p. 332
Carthage	p. 412
Romans	pp. 449–451

## PART THREE: SAMPLE LESSONS ON THE ULUBURUN SHIPWRECK

Note: This section contains plans for two lessons, one for two class periods, and the other for one class period. This second lesson is a hands-on art activity. Patterns needed for

## LESSON PLANS

this activity are included here.

### LESSON ONE: STUDYING AND IDENTIFYING OBJECTS FROM AN UNDERWATER EXCAVATION

**Estimated length:** Two class periods

**Purpose:** To acquaint student with marine archaeology; to develop an understanding of the problems of identifying artifacts found on an archaeological site, and an understanding of the importance of site information in archaeology.

**Required Materials:** Detailed information for the resources mentioned here is included in the list at the beginning of this unit.

Bass, "Oldest Known Shipwreck"

Moran, *Amarna Letters*

Slides from Institute of Nautical Archaeology

Video, *Ancient Treasures from the Deep*

**Teacher Preparation:** From slides ordered from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, prepare drawings or photocopied reproductions of artifacts found at the site of the Uluburun shipwreck. Laminate these so that they may be used more than one time. Slides and/or transparencies may also be made from illustrations in the George Bass article in *National Geographic*.

#### Objects to be Studied:

1. "Ox-hide" copper ingot
2. Stone anchor
3. Section of ivory tusk
4. Glass ingot
5. Canaanite amphora
6. Mycenaean bead
7. Oil lamp
8. Nefertiti scarab
9. Wooden writing tablet

#### Day One:

This lesson is designed for classroom groups of 4–6 students. Each group will receive a set of prepared cards (pictures of the objects listed above) and a response paper with questions, included below.

Students will be asked to carefully study each object, which may or may not be familiar.

Group Response Sheet (questions for students working in groups). You have not seen these objects at the archaeological site and know nothing about their relationship to the site, or each other. Study each object carefully and respond as best you can to the following questions:

What does your group think this object might be?

What materials do you think it is made of?

What uses do you think it may have had?

(Note of teacher: It is important to emphasize that students are not expected to know all of these objects.)

After studying the pictures and discussing the answers to the questions, students fill in response sheets. Teacher writes each group's ideas in a chart for future reference.

#### Day Two:

1. Show the video "Ancient Treasures from the Deep." This will initiate some discussion as students recognize the objects.
2. Using transparencies and/or slides show the pictures of individual objects and ask for discussion. Teacher then identifies each object and tells about how it was found and explains why it is important to know about the site.
3. Read about trade in selections from *Amarna Letters*.

### LESSON TWO: CREATING YOUR OWN CANAANITE MEDALLION (A HANDS-ON LESSON)

**Purpose:** To acquaint students with Marine Archaeology; to study ancient gold artifacts found in the Uluburun shipwreck; to study the process of making artifacts, especially medallions, by the repoussé method.

**Length of Lesson:** Estimated to be one class period. Students may need more time to complete the repoussé if they work slowly.

#### Materials:

George Bass article, p.719 (for photo of original medallion).

Design pattern (one per student) for medallion (included here) based on photo.

Brass shim (from hardware store): .001 gauge comes in a roll 6"x100"; approximate cost is \$14.00 per roll (.002 gauge is a little heavier, and may also be used). The medallion design included here requires a 6"x6" piece per student.

One 6"x6" (or larger) piece of corrugated cardboard or Styrofoam board per student.

Scotch tape, old ball-point pen, or orange stick, or similar tool for rubbing.

**Teacher Preparation (Optional):** Have photograph of medallion copied and enlarged on a color copy machine for classroom display.

#### The Teaching Plan

Introduction: This lesson is designed to be a continuation

## LESSON PLANS

of the Uluburun Shipwreck lesson on identifying objects found through marine archaeology. It may also be adapted for teaching about metal fabrication of medallions in the ancient world and/or process of repoussé. (French, meaning “pushed back.” Used to describe designs made by hammering a sheet of metal over a form or mold.)

## Process:

Tape the piece of brass shim to the cardboard or Styrofoam along the edges to provide a cushion for forming the design.

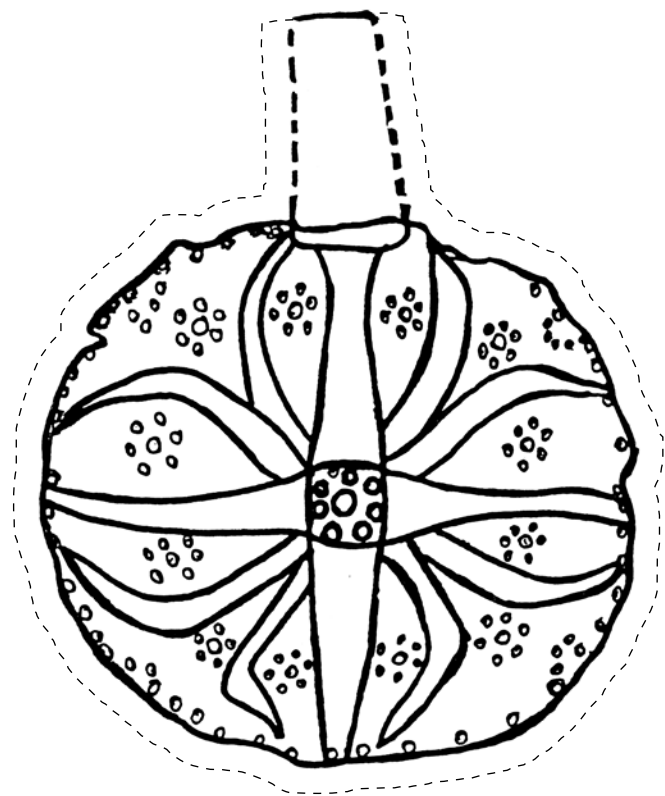
Position the pattern over the back side of the brass (use tape to hold it in place), and trace the line elements of the design by pushing hard with an instrument with a rounded point. Be careful not to tear the pattern.

Remove the pattern. Keep for reference as you work the design. Details may be added as you work.

Press into the design with your tool hard enough to cause it to push out the reverse side. When the design is complete, remove it from the cardboard and clean up any areas that did not push out as well as you expected. Cut out the design using an old pair of scissors. Allow about a quarter of an inch around the pattern. Carefully bend this allowance to the back. Bend the loop down in back and tape.

Your medallion may be finished by gluing another piece of brass to the back or (to save on material costs) cut a circle of tag board and bend the edges around it. This makes the medallion less fragile and wearable, if the student desires that.

Alternate: Included here is a smaller design of an owl similar to an Athenian coin and adapted from the Archaeological Institute of America logo. The design may be made from a smaller piece of brass shim and is offered as an idea for adapting this lesson to coins and jewelry from other cultures.



Canaanite Medallion Pattern



Owl Coin Pattern