

Some Ways to Integrate Trade, the “Missing Link,” into Ancient History

Katherine G. Menechios

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA

Subject: Ancient History

Level: Grade 9

Length of Unit: Integration of subject matter throughout the year

Readings for the Teacher:

Bass, G. F. “Oldest Known Shipwreck” (see General Bibliography).

Haynes, Joyce L. *Nubia* (see General Bibliography).

Warren, Peter. *The Making of the Past. The Aegean Civilizations*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1989. Pp. 18–22, 84, 144.

Visual Materials: “Treasures of the Deep,” NOVA (film on the Uluburun shipwreck).

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Beverly Hills High School has a diverse group of students. About 25% of the student population is of Persian descent and there are many Korean and Israeli students as well. Beverly Hills is a suburb of Los Angeles and most of the students live in homes or apartments in Beverly Hills. Some students attend the high school by a special permit. The graduation rate and number of students who attend college is extremely high. BHHS places a great deal of emphasis on academics. In my ninth-grade ancient history course, the students are motivated and studious.

At the 1997 NEH Summer Institute, *Cargoes from Three Continents: Ancient Mediterranean Trade in Modern Archaeology*, it became apparent to me that trade was the essential element that I had been leaving out of my lesson plans on ancient civilizations

Trade was the critical connection that brought together the different cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. Europe, Asia, and Africa were “linked,” in the Bronze Age and later, by trade. Trade becomes even more important when we realize that trade of goods also leads to trade of ideas!

For example, in the future, when I teach about the Greek kouros figure of the Archaic period and how Egyptian sculpture influenced that kouros style, I will also include trade as

an explanation of this artistic influence.

Another benefit of the Institute was learning about unfamiliar areas in the Mediterranean world and beyond that were in the trade network. Areas such as Cyprus, Canaan, and Nubia were important and influential in the trade of the Mediterranean, but often they are left out of textbooks.

As teachers, we need to move away from teaching history in discrete units. Oftentimes an ancient history course will begin with the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, then move on to Egypt, then Greece, then Rome. In reality, there was a great deal of overlap among these civilizations. Students need to be made aware of these connections or they will have an incorrect perception of ancient history. Trade is an important way of explaining and clarifying these overlaps. For example, if students can understand that Greece and Egypt traded with each other, they begin to realize that Egypt does not “end” when Greece “starts.”

Integrating trade into the curriculum is not difficult. In fact, teaching about trade fills in the gaps and links cultures together for students. Maps, timelines and charts can be used to tie these cultures together effectively.

An additional benefit of studying trade is the opportunity to introduce to students the new technology which is being used to uncover new and exciting evidence in the field of ancient history. Much of this evidence has been found in shipwrecks, which are giving us a more clear idea of trade in the ancient Mediterranean. For example, archaeologists now can be used underwater robots (ROVs- remotely operated vehicles) to excavate sites. Recently, archaeologists have used nuclear submarines to find the location of underwater shipwrecks. A little research into some of these new discoveries will enhance the quality of our teaching, excite our students, and increase learning in the classroom.

Below is a basic outline for a one-year course in ancient history, along with the following suggested lessons which emphasize archaeology and trade in the ancient Mediterranean region.

1. Connections between literature and archaeology.
2. Ideas for lessons on Nubia
3. A one-week plan for teaching about the Uluburun shipwreck
3. Project: “Museum” exhibit on Uluburun shipwreck

LESSON PLANS

PART TWO: OUTLINE FOR A ONE-YEAR ANCIENT HISTORY COURSE

1. Archaeology
2. Tigris-Euphrates Civilizations
 - Sumerians
 - Babylonians
 - Assyrians
3. Egyptians
 - Nubia
4. Indo-Europeans
 - Hittites
 - Persians
5. Eastern Mediterranean
 - Phoenicians
 - Aramaecians
 - Hebrews
6. Uluburun Shipwreck
7. Bronze Age Civilizations
 - Minoans
 - Mycenaeans
 - Cyclades
 - Cyprus
8. Greece (Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic)
9. Rome (Republic-Empire)
10. Byzantine Empire
11. Middle Ages (west)

PART THREE: ARCHAEOLOGY AND TRADE IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN: SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSONS & UNITS**I. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY****Objective:**

Students will understand how works of ancient literature can enhance the study of archaeology.

Required Materials:

Warren, Peter, *The Making of the Past. The Aegean Civilizations*. Floor plan of the Minoan palace of Knossos, p. 84; excerpt of the myth of the Minotaur and labyrinth pp. 144-145; article on Sir Arthur Evans (teacher creates/cut and paste) pp. 18-22.

Step One:

Students will read the myth of the Minotaur.

Step Two:

Students will analyze the floor plan of the Cretan palace of Knossos.

Step Three:

Students will read the article on Sir Arthur Evans.

Step Four:

Students write an opinion essay in response to the following question, using evidence and specific examples to support their opinions: "Do you think that there is a connection between the myth of the labyrinth and the floor plan of the palace at Knossos?"

2. IDEAS FOR LESSONS IN NUBIA**Objective:**

To include Nubia in the study of ancient Egypt. Students will learn about the geography of Nubia, the art of Nubia, and the relationship between Egypt and Nubia.

Required Material:

Joyce Haynes, *Nubia, Ancient Kingdoms of Africa*, pp. 13–24. The teacher will use this book to create handouts (articles) on the following topics in the study of Nubia: 1) geography; 2) art; 3) chronology/timeline; 4) ancient references to Nubia.

Suggested Lesson A (jigsaw):

After an introductory lecture by the teacher, students will be placed in groups of four. Each student will receive a different article. Each student will read his/her article, answer question about the article, and report to the group.

Suggested Lesson B (variation):

After an introductory lecture by the teacher, students will be placed in groups of four. Each group will receive an article (students in the same group reads the same article). Some groups may have the same article depending on the size of the class. Members of each group can answer questions or give an oral presentation of the material in their article.

3. A ONE-WEEK LESSON PLAN FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE ULUBURUN SHIPWRECK**Objective:**

In a study of the Uluburun shipwreck and archaeologists' conclusions about the evidence, students will acquire information about trade in the Mediterranean region in the Late Bronze Age. A one-week time span is suggested, but each step below may take more than one class period. The "museum" activity (No. 4) may be added to the activities in this plan.

Required Material:

G. F. Bass, "Oldest Known Shipwreck"

Individual maps of Mediterranean region during the Late Bronze Age.

Step One—Timeline of Bronze Age Civilizations

Students will read excerpt from Bass Article, "Cosmopolitan World of the Late Bronze Age." They will then construct a time line of Bronze Age Civilizations. This will be a layered time line with each line in a different color representing a different civilization.

LESSON PLANS

Step Two—Chart of Bronze Age Trade Items

Students will read, “Bronze Age Trade,” another excerpt from the Bass article. Basing their work on this article, students will construct a chart of Bronze Age trade items. Each item from the article will be listed as well as where this item originated and where else it was found in the Mediterranean.

Step Three—Map of Bronze Age Trade

Students will be given maps of the Mediterranean region in the Late Bronze Age. They will be required to make a key of the Bronze Age trade items listed on their charts. Symbols for many of the items will be provided, but some must be created by the students. Students will draw the symbols on the map according to where each item was found and where each item originated. Areas and peoples of the Mediterranean should also be labeled and included on the key. Finally, an X will mark the spot of the Uluburun wreck.

Step Four—Questions on the Bass article in *National Geographic*

After rereading the entire article, students will answer the following questions:

1. What is the best source of information for locating ancient shipwrecks?
2. Dates: When was the Uluburun wreck discovered? When was the INA (Institute of Nautical Archaeology) established? What is the approximate date of the wreck?
3. People (who are they?): George Bass; Jack Kelley; Don Frey; Cemal Pulak; Mehmet Sakir
4. Explain the importance of the Tell el-Amarna tablets.
5. What does the discovery of tin in the wreck suggest?
6. How does the story of the dagger demonstrate that many of the “most exciting discoveries often are made not on the sea floor but in libraries, museums, and laboratories long after our expeditions end?”
7. What is Bass’s theory on the role of Phoenicia in Bronze Age trade? (Include the conversion of raw materials into trade items.)
8. What made Bass assume that the ship was traveling from Cyprus?
9. Explain this statement: “In itself gold is of no greater value than lead or wood to the archaeologist...”
10. What was the significance of the discovery of the gold cup?

4. “MUSEUM” EXHIBIT ON THE ULUBURUN SHIPWRECK**Objectives:**

Students will understand the relationship between archaeological finds and museum exhibitions. Students will describe and organize archaeological objects and information. Stu-

dents will explain the historical significance of archaeological objects.

Required Materials:

Slides of objects from the Uluburun shipwreck (ordered from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology); photocopies of objects pictured in slides (2-3 items per student); poster board.

Step One

The class is divided into groups of four and each group gets 8-12 items (photocopied pictures of objects found in the Uluburun wreck). Each group member should have two or three items.

Step Two

Each group member will write a detailed description of at least two objects. For example: what is the object made of? What is the object used for? After concluding the description, the student will write a synopsis of the object’s significance.

Step Three

As a group, students will develop a title and theme for their “exhibit” on the Uluburun wreck.

Step Four

While keeping the theme and purpose of their exhibit in mind, each group will begin to decide which objects (at least one per group member) will be included in the exhibit.

Step Five

Each group will discuss how they will put together their exhibit.

Step Six

Students set up their exhibits using poster board to create wall and floor display areas. Each exhibit should have a theme and title. Each item of the exhibit should have a short description and brief explanation of the historical importance of the object.

Step Seven

Members of each group will stand up and explain their exhibit (why they picked the title/theme, why they chose certain objects, etc.).

Step Eight

Students will have ten minutes to walk around, analyze, and take notes on the exhibits.

Step Nine

Students will write a short paper on the following topic: What did you observe in others’ exhibits that was different or outstanding?