

Ancient Cyprus: The Cesnola Collection at the Semitic Museum, Harvard University

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Editor's Note: The material in this chapter is planned to be used as a guide to a collection in a museum; it contains suggestions for lessons prior and subsequent to the museum trip, as well as for time spent in the museum itself. In this chapter, the greatest weight is assigned to lessons before the museum trip. Although planned for a specific exhibition, the ideas here, if considered in a generic way, are usable for any museum display. The material here is a sampling from Georgia Kalogerakis's museum guide, which includes more material for the museum visit itself. The format, since it is not strictly for a classroom unit, is therefore somewhat different from that of other teaching plans in this book.

Subject: World History (Classical Period)

Level: Grade 9

Length of Unit: Three sets of lessons designed for one or more class periods each

Readings: Specific readings are included with each lesson

INTRODUCTION

The NEH/AIA Institute *Cargoes from Three Continents: Ancient Mediterranean Trade in Modern Archaeology* inspired me to write a Teacher/Student Guide for an exhibition at the Semitic Museum at Harvard University which we visited as part of the Institute program. The exhibition "Ancient Cyprus: The Cesnola Collection at the Semitic Museum" was on display beginning in April 1997 and scheduled to remain through December 1998. Members of the staff of the Semitic Museum—Joseph Greene, Curator of the Cesnola collection, and Helena Wyld Swiny, Associate Curator—generously assisted me in preparing this material. Professor Greene had lectured at the Institute both at Boston University and during our visit to the Semitic Museum. Dr. Swiny also spoke to us during our visit, and later when I returned to complete this museum guide, assisted me in many ways, including reading through the material before I finalized it. I thank them both.

To prepare the material here, I drew upon the readings, lectures, and museum exhibits of the Institute and also upon my conviction that students can profit greatly from museum visits. My teaching experience has convinced me that students studying an earlier civilization benefit from a visiting a museum and seeing actual artifacts from the period which they are studying. Such a visit requires careful preparation and also well-planned opportunities after the visit to integrate the information thus acquired. A guidebook of the kind I have prepared here can help support this process.

My complete Teacher/Student Guide (of which this chapter is a condensed version) includes basic information about archaeology and trade in antiquity in the Mediterranean region, and focuses specifically on the Cesnola Ancient Cyprus Exhibit at the Semitic Museum. The guide was written for fifth through eighth grades. It is comprehensive and includes the following components: Pretest, Vocabulary Study, Geography Lesson, Ancient Trade Lesson, Current Events Article, the Collection (object by object), Post-test, and Teacher Evaluation. The culminating activity is an exhibit, at the school, of student work related to the exhibition, and a Cyprus cultural festival of music and food. The project covers a considerable amount of material. It is designed to be an enjoyable and informative experience, as well as to prepare students to appreciate and retain knowledge from the exhibit. Too often students remember only a few images after a visit to a museum. This guide proposes to maximize on the experience which will result in both acquiring historical information and appreciating the creative spirit of the ancient Cypriots.

Selected lessons follow, showing some of the many aspects of the Teacher/Student Guide for the Cesnola Exhibit at the Semitic Museum.

PART ONE: PREPARATION FOR THE MUSEUM VISIT

Students should have some knowledge about ancient civilizations, particularly those surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. It will be of great benefit to the students if, prior to the museum visit, the teacher has presented a basic overview of the study of archaeology, including underwater archaeology.

In addition, a preliminary visit to the Semitic Museum

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by the teacher will be helpful for becoming familiar with the exhibit and in planning how to use the student activity guide at the museum. The teacher would also be able to purchase at the museum books and slides which can be used to prepare the students for the exhibit.

Resources for the Teacher:

To obtain Cyprus slides from the Semitic Museum: The Semitic Museum, Harvard University, 6 Divinity Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-4631, E-mail davis4@fas.harvard.edu

Cork, Barbara, and Straun Reid. *Usborne Young Scientist: Archaeology*. Tulsa, Okla.: EDC Publishing, 1991.

Herscher, Ellen. "Cyprus in Context." *Archaeology*. July/Aug. (1997): 68–71.

Tatton-Brown, Veronica. *Ancient Cyprus*. London: British Museum Pub., 1997.

Wilford, John Noble. "Roman Ships Found off Sicily; New Site Broaden Study." *New York Times*, 31 July 1997.

Slide Set: Slides of Cyprus, available at the Semitic Museum Shop (cost in 1998: \$10.00).

Maps: "The Ancient World as known by Herodotus"; Cyprus.

Preparatory Activities for Students

Before visiting the museum, the teacher should explain the goals and activities to the students. Some of the activities need to be completed before the museum visit. These are described below, and specific handouts for students follow.

1. Pretest: A pretest will be given to the students to learn what they know about this topic.
2. Vocabulary Study: The teacher will give the students a list of words to look up in the dictionary, which will be helpful in understanding the unit of study.
3. Student Activity, Geography: The maps of the world and Cyprus should be used to familiarize the students with the island's location and the notion of the world at the time of manufacture of the artifacts in the museum exhibit (see below; requires maps mentioned in Resources for the Teacher).
4. Student Activity, Trade: See below for introduction to the discussion of trade.
5. Student Activity, Archaeology: See below for introduction to discussion of archaeology, including underwater archaeology.
6. Student Activity, Reading: The students should read the article on the discovery of eight ships off the coast of Sicily in the summer of 1997 (see Resources for the teacher, above, for specific reference to article, July 31, 1997). It is important to emphasize that the use of a nuclear submarine with sonar has revolutionized modern underwater archaeology. Previously, archaeologists had to make repeated attempts to find archaeological sites, some of which took several years to uncover. Also, the use of

robots, (ROVs- remotely operated vehicles) to bring up artifacts from depths of the ocean where divers once could not survive was an additional invention that aids modern underwater archaeology.

7. Slide Viewing: In preparation for the museum visit the teacher should show the Cyprus slides from the Semitic Museum to the students and provide some basic information about the kinds of artifacts in the collection (see Resources for the Teacher for reference to slides).

Pretest

1. Do you know where Cyprus is located?
2. Do you know what archaeology means?
3. Have you visited an art museum?
4. Write a few lines explaining what you know about ancient history.
5. Why was trade important in the ancient world?
6. List six trade items.

Vocabulary Study

1. archaeology
2. artifact
3. pottery
4. terracotta
5. copper
6. bronze
7. ingot
8. vase
9. amphora (plural, amphorae/amphoras)
10. krater
11. jug (juglet)
12. ware
13. chronology
14. curator
15. votive (offering)
16. necropolis (cemetery)
17. Semitic
18. nuclear
19. sonar
20. robot
21. radar
22. trade
23. design
24. function
25. stratum
26. Herodotus
27. site
28. molten

Student Activities

Geography: The students will look at the map of Cyprus. Then they will look at the ancient map Herodotus made of the world and locate Cyprus. They will observe the location of Cyprus which made it important to the trade ships sailing

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on the Mediterranean. Trade ships went to Cyprus to get copper and wood. The students will compare Herodotus's map with the map of the world today. List the countries of the ancient world that were near Cyprus.

Trade: In 1984 a sponge diver saw copper ingots, or, as he called them, "metal bisquits with legs," while diving off the coast of Turkey, at a place called Uluburun. This information led to the discovery of an ancient shipwreck by the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University. It took ten years for the divers to photograph, measure, map out, and bring up all the remains of the ship and its cargo. This information gave archaeologists and historians knowledge about ancient trade during the Late Bronze Age. All of what you see in the Cypriot Collection at the Semitic Museum could have been found on a trade ship in ancient times. Trade was one of the means of exchange of goods at the time, and using ships was the fastest way to bring goods from one place to another in the Mediterranean.

Archaeology (Including Underwater Archaeology): Archaeology studies life in the past by going to sites and excavating (digging) to find artifacts, ancient cities, tombs, and any other clues about the past. Underwater archaeology also tries to find similar information but usually requires very little digging. Marine archaeology uses x-rays, nuclear submarines, robots (ROVs) and other newly invented equipment to learn about the past. The use of modern technology revolutionized the discovery of archaeological sites. Some time and some physical labor can be saved by using technology. A person who is trained to study archaeology is called an archaeologist.

The basic method of archaeology is as follows:

1. Locating a site on land or in the sea.
2. Uncovering the artifacts, buildings, or ships.
3. Photographing and measuring the site before removing anything.
4. Keeping a written record (labeling, numbering every fragment).
5. Photographing the excavation and what/ where things were found.
6. Careful cleaning and storing of each item found.
7. Separating each artifact by: kind (pottery, tools, weapons, jewelry, sculpture), size, shape, material (stone, metal, clay, terracotta, gold, etc.).
8. Broken pieces must be put back together.
9. Finding out how old each artifact is (Carbon 14, etc.).
10. Comparing material, shape, and design with artifacts found at other sites/ places to find its origin.
11. Throughout this entire process all the work is recording in detail and then a report is made to share with other archaeologists.

Reading: Newspaper article, "Roman ships found off Sicily; New sites broaden study": the students will read the article and discuss the changes in archaeology from accidental discoveries by sponge divers or historical record to present-day use of sonar in locating archaeological sites.

PART TWO: VISITING THE MUSEUM

Each student will need a writing board, pencils, and erasers for drawing, and pens to take notes.

The teacher and students will enter the Cyprus Gallery on the third floor of the Semitic Museum. They will begin the tour of the exhibit with the wall display of the Chronology of Cyprus and the Map of Cyprus. They will then proceed to each display case where the teacher will give an overview of the artifacts. The students may take notes and make sketches. When the tour is completed it would be a good idea to take a fifteen minute break before beginning the student activities.

Student Activities

Following this the students will work on activity sheets they have been given by their teacher. It may be beneficial to have students work on activity sheets in small groups. Each group could work on different activities and share them with each other in the classroom. It will take approximately one and a half to two hours to complete both the tour of the exhibit and the activities.

A significant advantage to visiting the Semitic Museum at Harvard University is the size of the museum. Its smallness prevents students from being overwhelmed and distracted by large crowds and many exhibits. Thus, students should be able to focus more on the objects in the exhibit.

Activity 1: Studying a Wall Painting

Look at the wall painting "Amphoras: Transport and Storage." Write a story about this trade ship, where it may have been going and what was inside the amphoras.

Activity 2: Pottery Tells a Story

After looking closely at different pieces of pottery, you can learn about how people lived long ago. Pottery was used for cooking, serving, and storing. Sometimes when the inside of the pottery is examined, traces can be found of what it contained. Go to the Bronze Age exhibit. Case and look at the different pieces of pottery. Make a list with your ideas of what the pottery was used for (shape of pottery; use).

Activity 3: Vase (Object) Identification

The students will look to find cases with similar shapes and designs on their activity sheet. They will write the name of the exhibit case where it is located and the place it was found.

PART THREE: BACK IN THE CLASSROOM**POST-TEST**

1. Which activity did you like the most in the exhibit?
2. Write a few lines about how people were able to get different things they needed in the ancient world.
3. How/why was the location of Cyprus important during trade in the ancient world?
4. Why was copper important in ancient times?
5. List trade items found on sunken ships.
6. What other civilizations besides Greek are part of Cyprus's history? Explain how this happened.
7. Do you think modern archaeology will be able to uncover the past more quickly? Explain.
8. Describe the most beautiful artifact you like at the Semitic Museum exhibit.