



# World History Studies Weekly

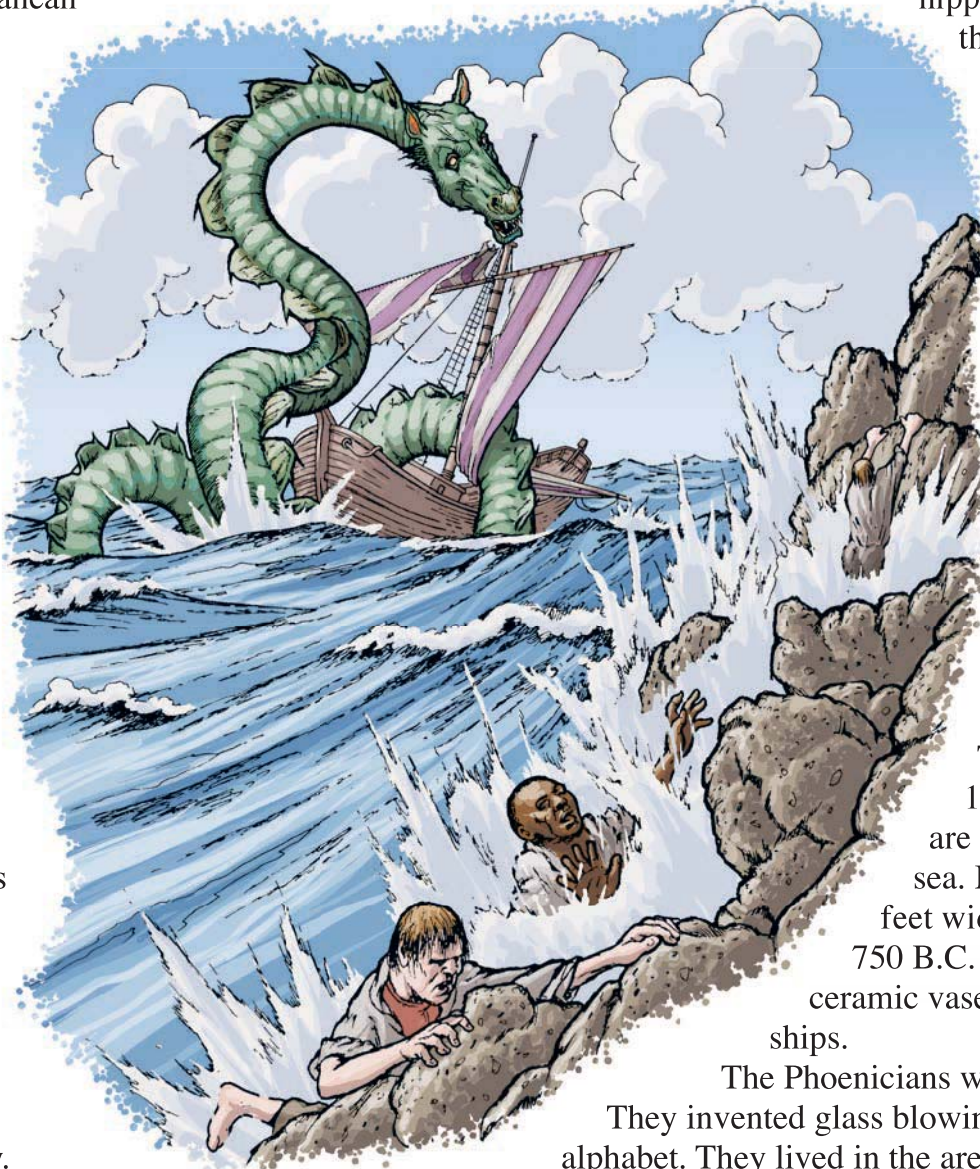


## Phoenicians Take to the Sea

Imagine sailing on the Mediterranean Sea without a compass or map to help you find your way. Some of the most famous sea traders in history were the ancient Phoenicians, who lived on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean around 1100 B.C. They not only sailed the Mediterranean Sea but also ventured into the stormy Atlantic through the Pillars of Hercules (Strait of Gibraltar) on leaky wooden boats, using only landmarks and the stars to guide their way.

The Phoenicians may have been the first to circumnavigate (go around) the continent of Africa—2,000 years before Vasco da Gama also accomplished this feat. Evidence also suggests that the Phoenicians traveled to Cornwall, Great Britain, searching for tin to use to make bronze. And some historians think the Phoenicians traveled to the Baltic area searching for amber, which was very valuable and used in jewelry.

Along the way, the Phoenicians told stories of terrible sea monsters that lived in the sea, such as the



hippocamp (also called hippocampus) that had the head of a horse and a long fish tail. The Phoenician sea traders didn't really believe in sea monsters; they just told these stories to try to keep the Greeks and other rivals away from what they considered their sea. Legends also say that if Phoenician captains were being followed, they would rather sink their ships than reveal their secret trade routes.

The modern world came upon ancient Phoenician ships in 1999 when Robert Ballard (who also discovered the Titanic) and his team found two ships off the coast of Israel. These ships were found about 1,000 feet below the surface and are the oldest ships found in the deep sea. Measuring 58 feet long and 48 feet wide, the ships date back to around 750 B.C. Believe it or not, the team found ceramic vases filled with wine on the sunken ships.

The Phoenicians were explorers and sea traders. They invented glass blowing, purple dye and the first alphabet. They lived in the area of present-day Lebanon and made many important contributions to the world. Let's sail into this week's paper to learn more.

### Connections

## Paddling Across the Atlantic!

Do you dream of becoming a big sports star or exploring Mars someday? When Gabor Rakonczay was a kid in Hungary, he dreamed of being alone in a ship on the ocean. It may seem unusual, but Gabor has made his dream come true!

On Dec. 21, 2011, 30-year-old Gabor set out from Portugal in his 24-foot canoe. His destination was the Caribbean island of Antigua, 3,500 miles away. No one had ever crossed the Atlantic alone in a canoe!

After 26 days at sea his canoe capsized (turned over). His communications equipment was ruined. For seven weeks he was totally alone with no way to let his wife know where he was. He didn't use a satellite tracking system because at the last minute the price went up and he couldn't afford it. Three different times he lit signal flares to get the attention of passing ships. But each time the waves were too high and the ships couldn't see his canoe.

His wife, Viktoria, never lost

hope. She was sure he was ok and even posted entries on their website. Viktoria kept track of the weather conditions and estimated where Gabor might be.

On March 25, 2012, Gabor landed on the island of Antigua. It took 76 days to cross the Atlantic alone in his canoe. He was even three weeks ahead of schedule! Congratulations to Gabor Rakonczay on making a difficult journey through the Atlantic.





# The Purple People of Phoenicia

## Sea Traders

Because they didn't have much room for growing crops, the ancient Phoenicians turned to the Mediterranean Sea and became traders instead of farmers. They created glassware from the sand along the coast to trade for things they needed. The Phoenicians invented glass blowing and were also the first to mass-produce and export glass. In addition, they traded metal objects, wood products, cedar timber and pottery. In return, the Phoenician traders brought back silver, ostrich plumes, ivory, tin, papyrus (paper from the Egyptians) and many other items.

Historians say the Phoenicians took cats on their trading voyages to trade and to help keep the rats on their ships under control. They found that many of the people they traded with liked white cats, while the Phoenicians preferred orange-striped tomcats.

## Ancient Rest Areas

If you were traveling by sea as much as the Phoenicians did, wouldn't it be nice to have a home away from home—a place where you could stop, repair your ship and get fresh food and water? The Phoenicians established colonies along the Mediterranean Sea to do just that. Look at the map on Page 4 to see some of the Phoenician colonies. Some of them, like Carthage, developed into very important cities of the ancient world.

## The Purple People Get Their Name

The Phoenicians became famous for developing a beautiful purple dye. The color was highly prized. It is said that Cleopatra displayed a purple sail on her ship, and Nero passed a law that only he, the emperor, could wear the color. The purple dye even gave these sea traders their name. The ancient Greeks, who traded with the Phoenicians, called the traders "phoinikeia," which means "purple-red."



## Legend of the Origin of Purple

The legend about the first discovery of purple dye features Melqart, the god of the city of Tyre. He was walking along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea with his dog and his girlfriend. His dog came upon a murex snail and quickly

chomped down on it. The dog's mouth and teeth turned a beautiful shade of purple-red. The girlfriend demanded that Melqart make her a robe of the beautiful color, or she'd have nothing more to do with him. Melqart gathered some of the murex snails and had his people create the first robe made of purple cloth.

## The Phoenician Alphabet

In the time of the Phoenicians, writing systems were mostly based on pictures. Imagine having to do your homework in pictures; that would take lots of time. The Phoenicians needed a quick and easy way to record their purchases and sales, so they developed an alphabet.

## Lebanon

Lebanon, which is in the Middle East, borders the Mediterranean Sea. It is adjacent to the countries of Israel and Syria and was settled about 7,000 years ago. The name Lebanon comes from the old Semitic word, "laban," meaning "white," for the white snow that could be seen in the mountain regions of the land.

Although Lebanon doesn't have any navigable rivers or major lakes, it does have two rivers used for irrigation and hydroelectric power. These are the Litani and the Orontes rivers. The two highest points in the country are Qurnat as Sawda (with an altitude of 10,112 feet and many different spellings) and Jabal al-Sheikh (with an altitude of 9,230 feet). Most of Lebanon has hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters—a common Mediterranean climate.

About 4 million people live in this democratic republic that is about four-

fifths the size of Connecticut. The largest and capital city is Beirut, where about 2 million people live. Most people speak the three languages of Arabic, French and English, although the official language is Arabic.

Lebanon became an independent country in 1943. The majority of Lebanese people follow the Islamic religion. In modern history, there has been a lot of hostility between Christians and Muslims in the country. This led to a civil war in 1958 and another that lasted from 1975 to 1990. During the second civil war, other countries sent troops into Lebanon to try to help end the fighting. Sadly in 1983, 241 U.S. troops and about 60 French soldiers who were in Lebanon on a peacekeeping mission were killed in a suicide bombing. Today, Lebanon is involved in border disputes with Israel and Syria.

## World Regions



Their alphabet contained 22 letters, and each symbol stood for a sound. Writing was done horizontally from right to left, with no spaces between words. Later, dots and dashes were added to separate words and make it easier to read. Although Phoenicians first used wax tablets as paper, they eventually used Egyptian papyrus instead. The Phoenicians shared their writing system with everyone they met as they traveled the Mediterranean Sea. That's why the Phoenicians are often called the "carriers of civilization." Other cultures, such as the Greeks and the Romans, adopted the Phoenician writing system but tweaked it a bit. Over time, that alphabet changed and became the one we know today. Although the Phoenicians invented the alphabet, they left behind very few written records of their rich culture.

### Did you know?

- The word "bible" comes from the Greek word "byblinos" for the Phoenician city of Byblos, a center of bookmaking.
- Many historians believe the Phoenicians were the first to use the North Star for navigation.
- Phoenicians colonized the far corners of the Mediterranean, from the island of Cyprus in the east to Spain and Gibraltar (including the outer Atlantic coast) and North Africa in the west.
- The Phoenicians may have practiced dentistry. Braces have been found on the jaws of a skull.
- The Phoenicians raised elephants on farms.
- Himilco was the first known explorer to reach the northwestern shores of Europe in the sixth century B.C.



## Biography

# Hanno the Navigator

Hanno was born around 480 B.C. and is known for an amazing accomplishment. Sometime during the 5th century B.C., he sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Atlantic Ocean, and many historians believe



he may have circumnavigated Africa. If Hanno really did sail all the way around Africa, then he beat Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama by about 2,000 years. Da Gama began his voyage in 1497.

As an admiral for the Phoenician colony of Carthage, Hanno preferred deep-sea sailing to shallow water sailing. That means he traveled away from the shoreline, which made his journeys more dangerous. Unlike most sailors of the time, he also sailed at night using the stars to navigate. Because they sailed before the invention of the compass, Phoenicians had to rely on landmarks and the stars for navigation. Some say the North Star was called the Phoenician Star in ancient times.

On his first voyage, Hanno sailed with more than 60 ships and 30,000 men and women to establish new colonies on the coast of Morocco. These colonies would allow the Phoenicians to extend their trading routes. He continued his sailing adventure, and historians believe he may have reached the corner of Arabia before returning home when supplies ran low. When he returned to Phoenicia, Hanno told of coming upon wild men who threw stones at the crew to prevent their landing and seeing a huge mountain of fire (maybe Mount Cameroon). He said he saw shaggy-haired creatures called gorillas and large animals that were probably elephants. He talked about how the stars looked different in the night sky above this new place. He also described the sun rising and setting further north than he was used to seeing. The last part suggests that Hanno crossed the equator because the stars' and sun's positions are different in the Southern Hemisphere. Unfortunately, Hanno's own record of his voyage no longer exists.

## This Week's Question

### How did cedar trees help the Phoenicians?

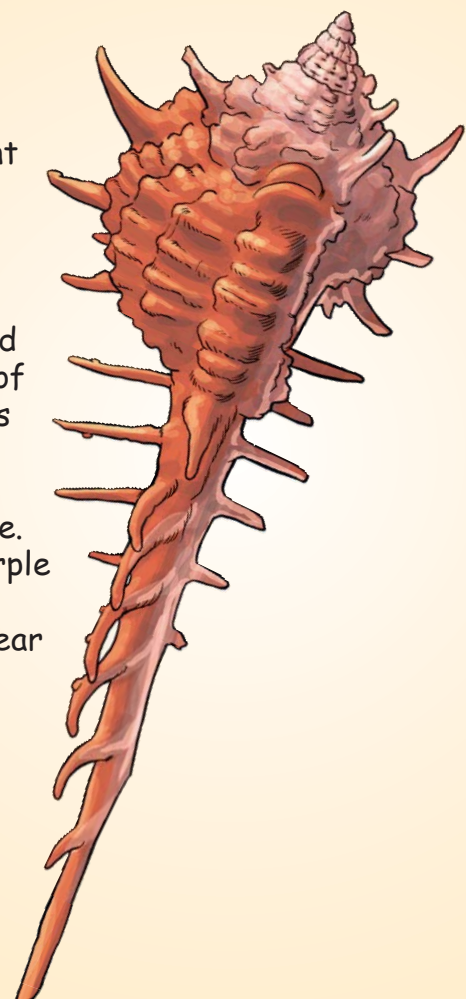
The Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus Libani*) was very valuable to the ancient Phoenicians, more than any other tree. The Phoenicians used these strong, straight-growing trees with a pleasant fragrance to build trading ships. The Egyptians and Mesopotamians bought the cedar trees from the Phoenicians, since they had almost no wood for construction. They used the cedar wood to build temples and palaces. The Egyptians also used cedar resin in the mummification process. Unfortunately, no one thought to plant replacement trees, and deforestation caused most of the cedar forests to disappear. Today, Lebanon is trying to reforest its land with cedar trees. It's a very slow process because the cedar trees grow so slowly. A cedar tree is displayed on Lebanon's flag in honor of its contribution to the country's history. Can you think of any trees that have a place in American history?

## Trades & Technology

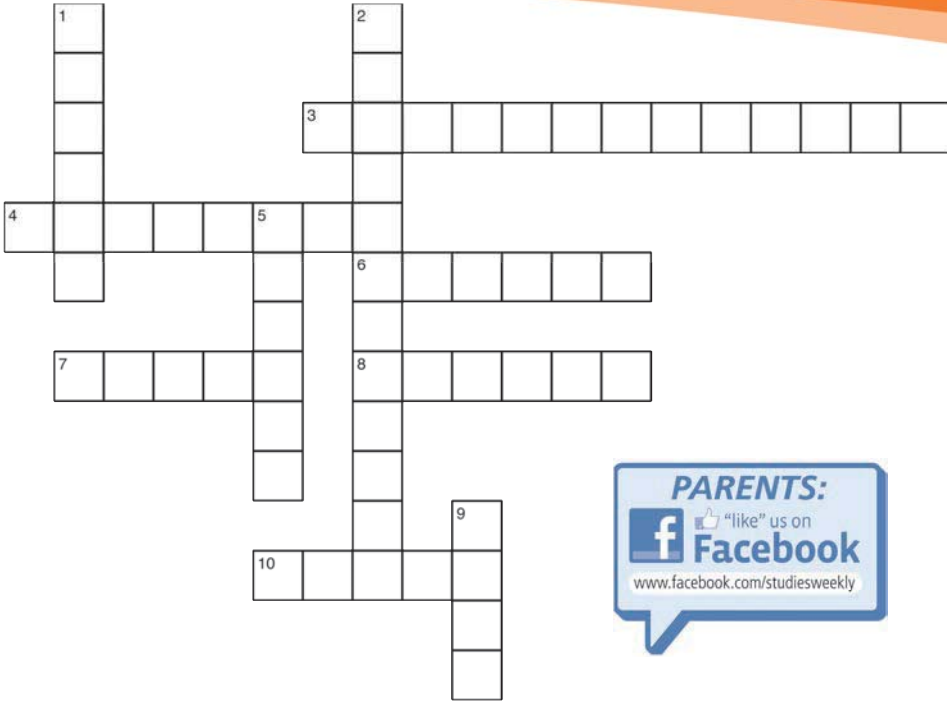
### Tyrian Purple

If you like the color purple, thank the ancient Phoenicians. By squeezing a gland of a murex snail, the Phoenicians would get a few drops of yellowish liquid. When this liquid was exposed to the sun and air, it turned into a bluish-red dye. The Phoenicians applied the dye to wool and created purple cloth. It took about six pounds of liquid to dye just one pound of wool. That means it took about 10,000 snails to make just one robe. Tyrian purple was very expensive, so the color became a symbol of wealth and importance.

The city of Tyre was the center of the purple dye industry. Marine archaeologists are still finding millions of shell heaps in the waters near the city. Killing so many murexes caused the snail to become nearly extinct in the region. Some of the earliest complaints about air pollution date back to the city of Tyre where the dye was made. The process caused a very strong odor like garlic, and people tried not to live downwind of the places where the dye was made.



Name \_\_\_\_\_



**Across**

- 3. a body of water the Phoenicians sailed
- 4. The Phoenicians invented this to make record keeping easier.
- 6. Phoenician city that was a center of bookmaking
- 7. the tree the Phoenicians used to build their boats
- 8. country that borders Lebanon to the south
- 10. Phoenician explorer who may have circumnavigated Africa

**Down**

- 1. the color of the dye the Phoenicians were famous for making
- 2. The Phoenicians sailed to this country for tin.
- 5. the capital of the country of Lebanon
- 9. Egypt and Mesopotamia didn't have much of this resource.



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

*Mapping & Charting*

**Phoenician Trade Routes**



Use the map to help you answer the following questions.

1. Which city was established as a colony by the Phoenicians on Africa's coast near the islands of Sicily and Sardinia?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were the three main cities of Phoenicia?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What were three dangers the Phoenician traders may have encountered along their journeys?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Without a compass, how did early Phoenicians find their way?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Iberia is known by what name today?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which colony was established nearest Iberia? Find the name for the strait that separates this area.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Name two countries located on a peninsula.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What are three characteristics a Phoenician sea trader might need to possess?

\_\_\_\_\_

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