Phoenicians Spread Trade and Civilization

About 1100 BCE, the **most powerful traders along the Mediterranean Sea** were the **Phoenicians** (fuh•NIHSH•uhnz). Phoenicia was mainly the **area now known as Lebanon.** Phoenicians ***NEVER*** **united** into a **country**. Instead, they founded a ***number of wealthy city-states*** around the **Mediterranean** that sometimes competed with one another. The first cities in Phoenicia, such as **Byblos, Tyre (TIRE), and Sidon (SYD•uhn),** were **important trading centers**.

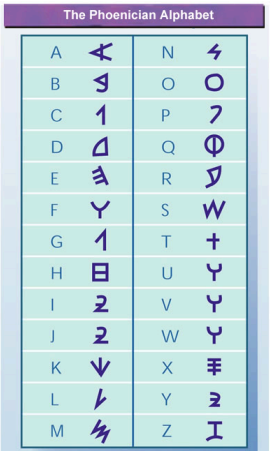


Their homeland was ***dry and not suitable for farming,*** so the Phoenicians ***turned to the sea*** to become the ***greatest travelers and traders of their time***. They were the first Mediterranean people to venture beyond the **Strait of Gibraltar** (at the far left of the map.) Some scholars believe that the Phoenicians traded for tin with inhabitants off the southern coast of Britain. Some evidence exists for an even more remarkable feat—sailing around the continent of Africa by way of the Red Sea and back through the Strait of Gibraltar. Such a trip was not repeated again for 2,000 years. The Greek historian **Herodotus** (hih•RAHD•uh•tuhs) speaks of this achievement.

Commercial Outposts Around the Mediterranean

The Phoenicians' most important city-states in the eastern Mediterranean were **Sidon and Tyre**, **both known for their production of purple dye**; Berytus (now Beirut, in Lebanon); and Byblos, a trading center for **papyrus**. Phoenicians built ***colonies*** along the northern coast of Africa and the coasts of Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain. The colonies strung out like beads on a chain about 30 miles apart—about the distance a Phoenician ship could sail in a day. The greatest Phoenician colony was at **Carthage** (KAHR•thij), in North Africa. Settlers from Tyre founded Carthage in about 725 BCE.

The **Phoenicians** ***traded goods*** they got from **other lands** — ***wine, weapons, precious metals, ivory, and slaves. They also were known as superb craftsmen who worked in wood, metal, glass, and ivory***. Their ***famous purple dye*** was produced from the ***murex, a kind of snail*** that lived in the waters off Sidon and Tyre. One snail, when left to rot, produced just a drop or two of a liquid of a deep purple color. Some 60,000 snails were needed to produce one pound of dye.



Phoenicia's Great Legacy: The Alphabet**

As ***merchants***, the Phoenicians needed a **way of recording transactions clearly** and **quickly**. So, the Phoenicians **developed a writing system** that used symbols to represent sounds. The **Phoenician system** was **phonetic** (fuh-NET-ik)—that is, ***one sign*** was ***used for one sound***. In fact, the word alphabet comes directly from the first two letters of the Phoenician alphabet: *aleph* and *beth*. As they traveled around the Mediterranean, the ***Phoenicians introduced this writing system to their trading partners***. The Greeks, for example, adopted the Phoenician alphabet and changed the form of some of the letters. Few examples of Phoenician writing exist. Most was on papyrus, which crumbled easily over time. However, the ***Phoenician contribution to the world was enormous.*** With a **simplified alphabet**, learning was now accessible to many more people.

Interesting Facts About Phoenicia

Purple Coloring is "To Dye For" Murex, the snail from which the famous purple dye is made, was an exclusive Phoenician monopoly. Workers break the murex shell, then take out the shellfish and put it in large vats. When the snails have died and rotted, they excrete a yellow liquid. When exposed to the sun for long periods, the liquid turns purple. The small amount of dye extracted from huge numbers of snails means that only the richest Romans can afford to use the dye for their robes. Thus the dye was been named "**royal purple**." Residents living near dye centers complained of the stench of rotting snails and the huge piles of empty shells left near the factories.



Home Construction (*Carthage, Tyre, Sidon)* Crowded conditions within these walled towns led to the ***construction of two-story homes***. Many added ***balconies*** onto the second story, so residents can look out over the city wall. Walls were constructed of ***brick or clay*** and covered with **stucco**. Some of the homes sport ***bathrooms with tubs featuring a bath seat***.



Glassmaking The glass manufacturing and export business was booming. The ***sands of Lebanon are rich in silica*** and make the ***best glass in the Mediterranean area***. Borrowing techniques from Palestine has resulted in the creation of window glass. Romans became extremely interested in this process and began experimenting with glassblowing techniques. Less expensive glass eventually replaced metal in Roman home decoration.

Interesting Facts About the Phoenicians Cont.



Phoenicians ***made vows to their cruel gods and goddesses,*** shown in statues like these from Byblos. The Phoenicians would sometimes ***sacrifice their firstborn children and animals to please these deities.***



The city of Byblos was so famous for its papyrus that it gave the Greeks their word for book, *biblos*, from which the English word Bible comes.

Though not the first, the Phoenician alphabet was one of the earliest. And because they were traders, the Phoenicians spread the idea of the alphabet far and wide. In fact, they spread so much information and culture around the Mediterranean that they were referred to as **“carriers of civilization”**.

Use this Graphic Organizer to take notes on these things which MUST be included in your paper

PHOENICIANS	
Describe the Rise and Fall of the Phoenicians: (STUDENT)	**Talk about how they are masters at making dye and glass and how that helps their economy:** (STUDENT)
Talk about how they created the alphabet: (STUDENT)	**Talk about the were masters at sailing the seas and how that factored into their trading empire:** (STUDENT)
Include information about why the Phoenicians are called the "carriers of civilization": (STUDENT)	**Include a timeline that has 4-6 important dates:** (STUDENT)
