

Y2: Phoenicians *Applying the Model*

Looking Ahead

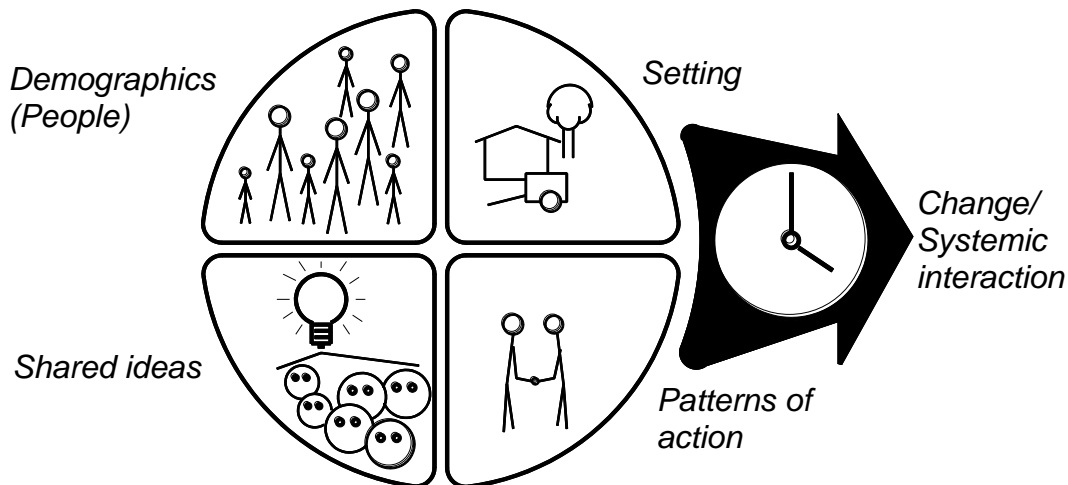
History is all about events, situations, conditions and so on. So is your everyday life. Improving your ability to make sense of history improves your ability to make sense of yourself and what's happening around and to you.

To make sense of the past, present and future (yours and the world's) you absolutely need to understand “systems”—collections of related things that interact. Trees, cars, clouds, and human bodies are systems. They're also subsystems—parts of larger systems. They surround you. You're a part of countless systems and subsystems—small and large, simple and complex, natural and human made.

The systems that affect you most are those that involve people, so those are the kinds we'll look at closely. They are complicated, but we'll organize and simplify your analysis using a “systems model.” For convenience, we'll just call it “the Model.”

The Model has four main, interacting parts. Everything you know, everything you'll ever know about anything, will fit within and can be organized by the four kinds or categories, subcategories, sub-subcategories of these four parts. Interactions between the four parts (which are always taking place) create change over time—change in history, change in your life.

Here, in graphic form, is a version of the Model. You'll use it as an analytical tool.



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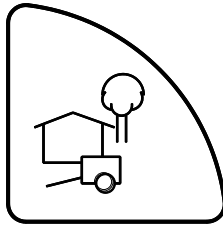
Investigating the Phoenicians

Greeks called the region where they originated, on the east end of the Mediterranean, “*Phoinikē*.” The people called themselves *Kenaani*, *Kinaani*, or *Kn'n*, but probably identified themselves more commonly by the name of their home city. In English versions of the Hebrew Scriptures (the *Tanakh*) they are called “Canaanites.” Most history books call them Phoenicians, adapted from the Greek name.

Unfortunately, there’s a lot we don’t know about the Phoenicians. Most of their written records were on papyrus-based paper they imported from Egypt, and these records did not survive. The Phoenicians were eventually conquered by Greek and Roman forces, which ended their separate civilization.

Investigation: The Phoenician Setting

To understand stories about people, it is important to know the “setting.” This includes the natural environment—location, climate, and resources—but also the human-made environment: the things they build, their towns and cities, the tools the people use, their facilities for producing food and other necessities. This map¹ shows where the Phoenician civilization began, generally in what is now Lebanon.



Work with others to analyze the data in the boxes on this page and those that follow, and identify important parts of the Phoenician setting, including their natural habitat, but also their tools and constructions that affected the ways they lived. Record your conclusions about the Phoenician setting in your journal.



¹ <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0410/feature2/map.html>

Greek historian Xenophon (c. 430–354 BCE) describes a Phoenician ship:¹

I think that the finest and most perfect arrangement of things I ever saw was when I went to look at a large Phoenician sailing ship. I saw a huge amount of goods and naval gear, organized and stowed in the smallest possible space. A ship, as you well know, is moored, and later begins a journey, using a vast number of wooden mechanisms and ropes; it sails the sea by means of much rigging. It is armed with a number of devices to use against hostile vessels, and carries a large number of weapons for the crew. Besides, it has all the vessels and utensils that a man ordinarily keeps in his dwelling-house, needed to prepare meals.

In addition, it is loaded with merchandise which the owner carries with him for his own profit. All the things I have mentioned were stored in a space not much bigger than a room which would conveniently hold ten beds. And I noted that everything stored there was placed so no item obstructed another, and was accessible without a search. Everything on board was organized so anything needed would be available immediately.

I learned that the captain's assistant or mate, who is called "the look-out man at the prow," is expected to know the position of all the articles, and the quantity of them. Even when not on board the ship, he knew where everything was placed, and how many there were of each sort, just as anyone who has learned to read can tell the number of letters in the name of Socrates and the proper place for them. Moreover, I saw this man, in his spare time, examining and testing everything that a vessel needs when at sea. I was surprised at this, so I asked him what he was doing. He replied, "Stranger, I am looking to see, in case anything should happen, how everything is arranged in the ship, and whether anything is lacking, and if anything would be difficult to access. When God raises a storm at sea, it is not possible either to look for what is missing, or to sort out what is arranged awkwardly. God threatens and punishes sluggards. If He destroys no innocent people when he punishes guilty ones, a man may be content. If He saves all those aboard that work together well, thanks be to the heavens."

Stone relief carving of a Phoenician ship ►



¹ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, Chapter 8: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/x/xenophon/x5oe/index.html> (adapted)

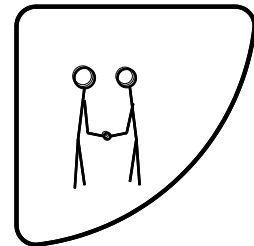
Assyrian warship, probably built by Phoenicians:



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia>

Investigation: Phoenician Action Patterns

Each human society shares certain important ways of acting. For example, the people of ancient Sparta were skilled warriors; the people of ancient southern China were rice farmers. Other ways of acting have to do with making decisions, exchanging goods and services, teaching the young, controlling behavior considered wrong, and religious practices.



Some information suggesting the ways of acting shared by Phoenicians are in the boxes you've already seen. Continue working with others to analyze that information and that which follows, and record what you think are important Phoenician action patterns in your journal.

Identify and describe relationships between setting and action patterns.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, or “Old Testament,” the prophet Ezekiel described Tyre, the dominant Phoenician city at the time (probably about 586 BCE). This is part of Ezekiel’s warning to the city that it was in danger of being taken over by Babylonian forces. In the third paragraph below, he uses the metaphor of a ship to describe the city and its main action pattern. (Ezekiel 27:3-25, 33, adapted from various translations):

...Tyre, you mighty seaport, you who carry the trade of nations to many coasts and islands, these are the words of God for you:

O Tyre, you boasted to yourself, “I am the most beautiful city anywhere.”

You extended your boundaries out on the high seas, your builders perfected your beauty. They shaped your planks out of pine from Senir, they used a cedar of Lebanon to raise up your mast, they made your oars of oak from Bashan, they made your deck strong with cypress from the shores of Cyprus. Your canvas sails were made of fine linen from Egypt. Your awnings were bright purple and red, colored with dyes from the coasts of Elishah. Men of Sidon and Arvad became your oarsmen; you had skilled men within you, O Tyre, who served as your helmsmen. You had master craftsmen from Gebal caulking your seams.

You had a fleet of sea-going ships and their sailors to market your wares. Men of Pharas, Lud, and Put served as warriors in your army; they hung shields and helmets around you, they were the ones that gave you your glory. Men of Arvad and Cilicia secure all your walls, men of Gammad are posted on your towers and hang their shields around your battlements. All of them help make your beauty perfect.

Tarshish was a source for your trading, supplying silver, iron, tin and lead. Merchants from Javan, Tubal and Meshech brought slaves and bronze containers for you to import. From Togarmah you obtained stallions, mares, and mules to ship and trade, Men from Rhodes traded with you, great islands paying you with ivory and ebony. Edom sent traders to you, offering gemstones, brocade and fine linen, black coral and red jasper. Judah and Israel dealt with you, offering wheat from Minnith and Pannag, and honey, oil and balsam for your imports. Damascus came to you with much to offer, wine of Hebron, wool of Suhar, and casks of wine from Izalla, adding to your wares. Vedan and Javan supplied wrought iron, cassia, and sweet cane. Dedan traded you heavy wool fabric used for saddle-cloths. Arabia and all the chiefs of Kedar supplied lambs, rams, and he-goats for trade. Dealers from Sheba and Raamah offered the best spices, every kind of precious stone and gold, for your trading stock. Harran, Kanneh, and Eden, dealers from Asshur and Media traded with you; they were your source of beautiful materials—violet cloths and brocades, colored fabric rolled up and tied with cords...

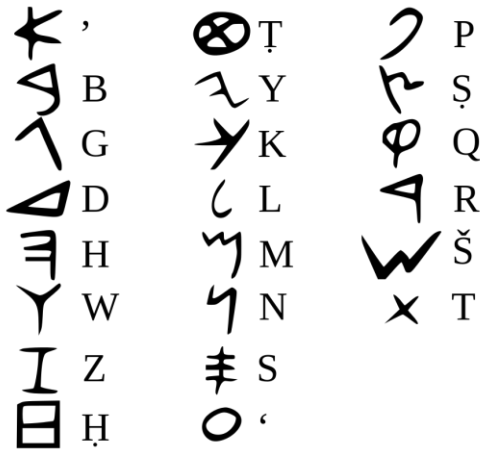
Ships of Tarshish were the caravans for your imports, filling your warehouses with their cargoes. Your oarsmen brought you into many waters...

...When merchandise was unloaded from your ships, it filled the needs of many nations. Kings at the ends of the earth were made rich with your goods.

The Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE) describes one of the most important inventions of the Phoenicians:¹

Now the Phoenicians...when they arrived in Greece, introduced a great variety of arts, including *writing*. Before this, I think, the Greeks did not know how to do this. When they began writing, the Greeks shaped their letters exactly like the Phoenicians, but later they changed their language little by little, and also the shape of their characters.

The Greeks who dwelt in that region at that time were mainly the Ionians. The Phoenician letters were adopted by them, but with some variation in the shape of a few, and eventually they arrived at today's letter shapes, still calling the letters Phoenician, ... after the name of those who were the first to introduce them into Greece. Paper rolls also were called "parchments" by the Ionians, because formerly when paper was scarce they used, instead, the skins of sheep and goats, which many of the barbarians even now use for writing.



Writing was not invented by the Phoenicians. The Egyptians wrote using hieroglyphics, the Mesopotamians wrote in cuneiform. Writing in those societies was usually done by specially-trained scribes, working for religious or government officials.

What is different about the Phoenician invention (left) from earlier writing systems? Identify and record possible advantages of the Phoenician way of writing to assist Phoenicians in their main action patterns.

Paper, mentioned by Herodotus, was made in large quantities in Egypt, from the papyrus plant, and was a major trade item for the Phoenicians.

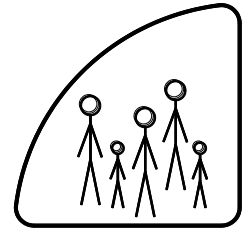
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenician_alphabet#/media/File:Phoenician_alphabet.svg

Note that some Phoenician characters (such as the first one, upper left) were used for sounds not used in speaking English, such as that made by briefly closing the back of the throat and releasing it with a short puff of air ("glottal stop"). Note also that there are no symbols for vowel sounds, although these sounds were certainly part of the Phoenician language. Writing was usually done right to left, the opposite of English.

¹ From Book 5, Chapter 58, in *The History of Herodotus*, George Rawlinson, ed. and tr., vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), adapted http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Phoalph.html

Investigation: Phoenician Demographics

The usual questions about demographics ask the number of people, how they are distributed, the number of young and old, how these numbers are changing, and so on. Unfortunately we don't know the answers to most of the questions for the Phoenicians. **However, one important demographic concern is the movement of people—the spread of populations—and we do have some limited Phoenician data for that.**



The map below provides data for an action pattern that led to demographic change.

Based on the map, identify the Phoenician action pattern and the resulting demographic change, and describe how this characteristic is related to the main Phoenician action patterns.



Note that many smaller Phoenician settlements, especially along the North African coast and on the Iberian Peninsula are not shown on the map.¹ We know of four in what is now Turkey, one in Cyprus, 16 in North Africa, 11 in Italy, three in Malta, and 16 on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal).²

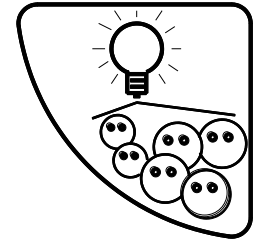
Similar maps from some sources show Phoenicians sailing to Britain, to obtain tin. No solid evidence for this direct trade exists, though Phoenicians may have traded for tin from Great Britain brought overland to northern Mediterranean ports by others. Other trade routes such as into the Black Sea were likely before Greek trade became important.

¹ <http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/art-163955/Phoenician-trade-routes-went-from-one-end-of-the-Mediterranean>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Phoenician_cities

Investigation: Phoenician Shared Ideas

The most important single category in our Model is “shared ideas.” The ideas and values a group shares motivate their actions. Ideas, of course, are invisible, so they must be inferred from what group members say and do, but they underlie and explain their constructions, their main ways of acting, their view of life and death, their religion—everything important.



Continue working with others. Identify and record important Phoenician ideas.

Left: Sarcophagus (stone coffin cover in human form) unearched in 1855 near Saida, Lebanon (ancient Sidon). The sarcophagus is now in the Louvre Museum (Paris). The stone used for the sarcophagus came from Egypt; its main carving was probably done in Egypt as well, since the face is carved in Egyptian style.

<http://www.codex99.com/typography/12.html>

The inscription is written in Phoenician. Below is a translation.¹

The King (or whoever wrote the inscription) almost certainly had the same shared ideas as other Phoenicians. Work with others to analyze it. Based on your discussion, describe what you think is the Phoenician understanding of death, and reasons for the importance of the gods mentioned in this inscription.

In the month of Bul, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Sidon King Eshmunazar [probably about 525 BCE] ... the King said, “I am carried away before my time, the time of my non-existence has come, my spirit [breath] has disappeared, and now I am silent, I have become unable to speak.

“And I am lying in this coffin, and in this tomb, in the place which I have built. You who read this, remember: No one, neither royalty nor common man, must open my tomb. Do not look here for treasures, for no one has hidden treasures here. Do not move the coffin out of my tomb, nor molest me in this funeral bed, by putting another tomb over it.

“No matter what anyone tells you, do not listen. Those who disturb my remains will be punished: Every person of royal race and every man who opens this tomb, or who carries away the coffin where I lie, or who disturbs me lying here—they shall not have a proper tomb with dead nobility, nor shall they be buried in graves. They shall have no son or children to follow them, and the sacred gods shall destroy them completely.

(Continued)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eshmunazar_II_sarcophagus (adapted)

“Whoever is future king, lead your subjects to exterminate any nobles or common men who open this tomb, or who carry away the coffin where I lie. Exterminate also their children, whether they are nobles or common men. They shall have no root below, nor fruit above, nor living form under the sun. For graced by the gods, I am carried away, the time of my non-existence has come, my spirit has disappeared, before my time, and now I am silent, I have become unable to speak.

“For I, Eshmunazar, King of the Sidonians, son of King Tabnit, King of the Sidonians, who was the grandson of King Esmunazar, King of the Sidonians, and my mother Amastarte, the Priestess of Astarte [*queen of the gods, goddess of fertility and war*], our mistress, the Queen, the daughter of King Esmunazar, King of the Sidonians: It is we who have built the temple of the gods, and the temple of Astaroth [*mother goddess, lady of the sea*], on the Sidon seaside, and have placed there the images and objects of the Astaroth; in this way we show their holiness. And it is we who have built the temple of Eshmun [*Phoenician god of healing, primary god of Sidon*], and the sanctuary of the Purple Shells River on the mountain, and have placed there his image; in this way we show his holiness. And it is we who have built the temples of the gods of the Sidonians, in the seaside Sidon, the temple of Baal-Sidon [*“lord” god of Sidon, storm god of thunder and rain*] and the temple of Astarte who bears the name of this Baal. The Lord of Kings gave us Dor and Jaffa, the rich wheat-lands that are in the Plain of Sharon, in recognition of the great deeds that I accomplished and we have added to the lands that are forever those of the Sidonians.

“Reader, remember this: No royal race and no common man may open my tomb, nor deface this cover, nor molest me in this funeral bed, nor carry away the coffin where I lie. Otherwise, the sacred gods shall completely destroy them and shall exterminate the noble men or common men and their offspring forever.”

Although we have very limited writings by Phoenicians, some of their ideas can be inferred from their action patterns: What was their motivation for their most important action pattern? Describe this motivating idea as precisely as possible.

How are they likely to view non-Phoenician people? Are they likely to start wars with others? How much control would they expect their own government to have over their actions? Discuss and record your conclusions.

Identify and record other possible relationships between Phoenician action patterns and shared ideas.

The data that follow will help you expand your Model-based descriptions (Phoenician settings, action patterns, demography, shared ideas, and the relationships between them). Use this information to complete your analysis of Phoenician society.

The Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE) described a voyage by Phoenicians:¹

As for Libya [*the name given to Africa in Herodotus' time*], we know it is washed on all sides by the sea, except where it is attached to Asia. This discovery was first made by Necho, the Egyptian king, [*Pharaoh Necho II, who ruled 610-595 BCE*] who, after stopping work on a canal which he had begun between the Nile and the Arabian Gulf, sent a number of ships to sea, manned by Phoenicians, with orders to sail [*around Africa*] for the Pillars of Hercules [*Straits of Gibraltar*], and return to Egypt through them and the Mediterranean.

The Phoenicians left Egypt by way of the Erythraean Sea, [*Red Sea/Indian Ocean*] and so sailed into the southern ocean. When autumn came, they went ashore, wherever they might happen to be, and planted grain on a tract of land. They stayed there until the grain was ready to harvest. Once they reaped it, they again set sail. Two whole years went by, and it was not till the third year that they sailed past the Pillars of Hercules [*into the Mediterranean*], and finally made their voyage home. On their return, they declared – I personally don't believe them, but perhaps others may – that in sailing round [*the south end of*] Libya they had the sun to their right hand. This is how the extent of Libya was first discovered.

The claim of the Phoenician sailors in the next to last sentence—is it accurate, or was Herodotus right to not believe the story? Record your explanation.

In later Phoenician times, Carthage became the most important Phoenician city, located where the Mediterranean Sea narrows, across from Sicily. From that location Phoenicians could dominate east-west shipping traffic.

The date of the next document is not clear, depending on which of two men named Hanno commanded the expedition it describes. The earlier Hanno was the grandfather of the younger; if the older Hanno commanded the fleet, the expedition probably occurred about 520 BCE. If it was the younger, the date was about 470. We know the story from Greek sources.

Geographic descriptions in the account seem to match places on the west coast of North Africa, so historians consider the document to be essentially valid (though some details are likely incorrect or exaggerated, of course, and there's some disagreement between experts about the match between descriptions and actual locations). The geographic information in brackets in the account are possible or probable present-day names of the locations being described.

¹ Book 4, Chapter 42, in *The History of Herodotus*, George Rawlinson, ed. and tr., vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), adapted http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/PhoenAfr.html

Phoenician Ships from Carthage Explore the West Africa Coast:¹

Carthage decided to sponsor a fleet, led by Hanno, King of Carthage, to explore and colonize beyond the Pillars of Hercules [Straits of Gibraltar]. He sailed with 60 ships of 50 oars each, and 30,000 men and women, with wheat and other provisions. [*This is Hanno's account of the expedition:*]

After we sailed past the Pillars on this voyage, and sailed for two more days, we founded the first city, which we named Thymiaterium. Around it lay a wide plain.

Proceeding toward the west, we came to Soloeis, a Libyan [*African*] cape [*Ras Cantin*], thickly covered with trees. There we erected a temple to Neptune. We sailed on for a half day toward the east, until we arrived at a marsh close to the sea, filled with many large reeds [*area of Safi, Doukkala-Abda, Morocco*]. Elephants and many other wild beasts were feeding here.

After passing the marsh about a day's sail, we founded five cities near the sea, Caricus Murus, Gytte, Acra, Melitta, and Arambys. Sailing on, we came to the great river Lixus, [*Oued Draa, in Morocco*] which flows from Libya. On its banks the Lixitae, a shepherd tribe, were feeding flocks. We stayed among them on friendly terms for some time. Beyond the Lixitae live the inhospitable Ethiopians [*general term for black African people*], who pasture a wild country intersected by large mountains, from which they say the river Lixus flows. Near the mountains live the cave-dwellers, men of various appearances. The Lixitae say these men can run faster than horses.

The Lixitae furnished us with interpreters, and we sailed along a desert country toward the south for twelve days. After that we sailed toward the east for one Day. Here we found in the shelter of a bay a small island, about fifteen stadia [*approximately two miles*] around [*probably the Saolum delta region*], where we settled a colony we called Cerne...

We then came to a lake, which we reached by sailing up a large river called Chretes [*Saolum*]; this lake had three islands, larger than Cerne. We sailed for a day to the end of the lake near large mountains, a country inhabited by savage men wearing skins of wild beasts. They drove us away by throwing stones, and kept us from landing. Then we sailed to another river, large and broad, full of crocodiles and hippopotami [*Senegal River*], so we turned back to Cerne.

(Continued)

¹ *The Periplus of Hanno, A Voyage of Discovery Down the West African Coast by a Carthaginian Admiral of the Fifth Century B.C.* Translated from the Greek by Wilfred H. Schoff, a.m. Philadelphia, Commercial Museum, 1912 https://archive.org/stream/cu31924031441847/cu31924031441847_djvu.txt (adapted)

Then we sailed toward the south twelve days, along the shore, all of which is inhabited by Ethiopians who ran away when we approached. Their language was not understood even by the Lixitae interpreters. The last day we approached some large mountains covered with trees. The wood of the trees had a strong smell and varied in appearance.

After sailing past the mountains for two days, we came upon a huge bay [*mouth of the Gambia River*]; on each side was a plain. At night we saw fires here and there in the region.

We loaded on fresh water there, and sailed for five days near shore, until we came to a large bay, which our interpreters informed us was called the Western Horn. A large island was in this bay [*Bijagos Islands, Guinea -Bissau*], and the island had a saltwater lake, with another island in the lake. We landed on another island, and in the daytime found only trees, but at night we saw many fires, and heard the sound of pipes, cymbals, drums and a great uproar. This made us afraid, and our fortune-tellers told us to leave the island.

We sailed quickly away, and after four days passed a country burning with fires and strong scents; streams of fires from this country fell into the sea. The country was impassible because of the heat. We sailed as quickly as possible past this, since we were terrified. Sailing on for four days, we discovered a country full of fire at night. In the middle was a high fire, larger than the rest, which seemed to touch the stars. When day came, we discovered it to be a mountain called the “Chariot of the Gods” [*Mt. Kakulima?*].

On the third day after leaving there, having sailed past those streams of fire, we arrived at a bay called the Southern Horn [*Next to Sherbro Island in what is now Sierra Leone*]. At the inside of this bay was another island similar to the island in the Western Horn, with an interior lake, with another island within the lake. This island was full of savage people, mostly women, whose bodies were covered with hair. Our interpreters called them “Gorillas.” We pursued the men but could not capture any of them—they ran from us, escaping over precipices and defending themselves with stones. We captured three women, but they bit and scratched their captors violently, and we couldn’t tame them to bring them with us. We killed and skinned them, and brought their pelts back with us to Carthage. We sailed no farther, because we lacked provisions.

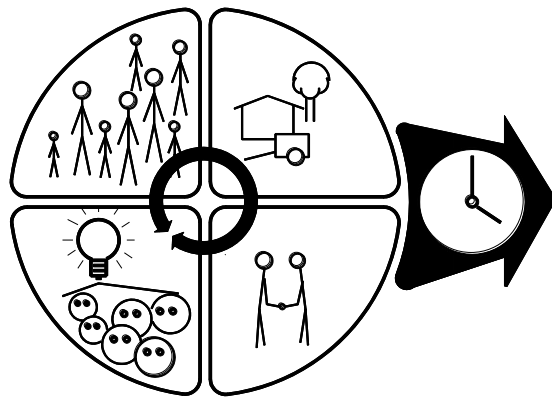
Follow-Up: Applying the Model Here and Now

With other members of your work group, choose a neighborhood familiar to you, such as the one where you live or the one surrounding the school building. Keep the area small enough that you can investigate it easily, but large enough to have several different kinds of buildings, such as homes, stores, offices, and maybe a place of worship.

- 1. Setting:** *Draw a map showing the main constructions—buildings, streets or roads, etc. Make the map big enough so you can add information as you continue to investigate.*
- 2. Patterns of action:** *Each construction on your map has certain action patterns that people follow for that place. For example, people driving vehicles on roads follow standard rules for which side to drive on, what to do at an intersection, and so forth. Identify and list the main patterns that go with each type of construction. Identify important patterns associated with food, fuel, and waste.*
- 3. Demographics:** *Do an analysis of the neighborhood. Estimate the daytime and nighttime population, the ages of the people involved, the ratio of males to females, and any other neighborhood demographic information that's significant. Identify important sub-groups..*
- 4. Shared ideas:** *Every pattern of action you've identified is probably motivated by an important shared idea. Some will be nearly universal (e.g. traffic rules exist because of the shared idea of "safety"). Discussion should help you identify shared ideas about work, ownership, nature, use of resources, the future, etc.*

This is a major project. Expect to spend enough time to really begin to understand the neighborhood.





For Teacher/Mentor—Overview:

When the Spanish language version of this world history course was created by Ignacio Carral, he intended it to be a two-year course of study, and his second year units re-introduced the Systems Model and applied it to the second group of units.

Active learning (using historical primary sources that require in-depth analysis) tends to go slowly, so it seems likely that some teachers and classes will also choose to spread these units over a two-year period. In those situations, some learners will likely be using the second year materials without having gone through the introduction, in the early units, to the conceptual framework central to this course.

For those learners (and as a review for others) we’ve provided this supplementary second-year opening unit to introduce the Model with new historical content. This unit may be used to introduce a second year of study at any point after unit 6 (Ancient Israelites).

As with all other units, this one includes a “Follow-Up” investigation applying the conceptual focus to the learners’ own present-day situation. We reiterate Ignacio Carral’s observation from experience, that with less-motivated learners, doing the follow-up “here and now” application activity **first** may increase their interest in the main ideas this course of study is emphasizing. Of course, present-day and historical investigations could also proceed contemporaneously, as another alternative—possibly the best approach.

This follow-up investigation is an extended one, and if most learners have completed prior units, they will have already done some of this investigation, so it could be abbreviated, if desired.

Note that, as with all units in this series, **the objective is not to learn and retain information about the Phoenicians, but to develop skills in analyzing human-based systems and the relationships that create history.**

The Canaanites/Phoenicians:

In the following, we use “Canaanite” to refer to the society at its source, “Phoenician” to refer to the society with respect to its trade and expansion.

As the material for learners indicates, we have meager evidence about Canaanite/-Phoenician society. Much of what we know comes from the writings of outsiders, Biblical prophets and Greek historians. However, every source makes clear that the people we call Phoenicians were the dominant maritime merchants of the ancient world, building and manning ships, and trading all around the Mediterranean (and perhaps beyond, such as around the Black and Red Seas).

Quigley¹ refers to the driving force of their civilization as “commercial capitalism,” familiar to all of us from our own civilization—perhaps too familiar for easy understanding. **The Phoenician objective, of course, was to make a profit by trading to obtain goods in an area where they were plentiful and cheap, and re-trading them**

¹ Quigley, Carroll, *The Evolution of Civilizations*, 1979, Indianapolis, The Liberty Fund, p. 240.

in a different location where they were needed or desired, but scarce or unavailable, driving up their value. Learner understanding of this simple economic principle is central to understanding of the Phoenician traders.

The Canaanites were also manufacturers of some goods, notably a very stable purple-dye for cloth, derived from a variety of sea snail. The production was difficult, resulting in small quantities of dye from a large number of snails; thus the dye was extremely valuable and expensive. (The author once picked up a shell from a related species on a beach on Grand Bahama Island. The animal was still alive inside, and stained my finger purple. The color persisted for many days.) The Canaanites also manufactured glassware, metal objects, and some other items.

Investigation: The Phoenician Setting

Their setting was a crucial element in the development of Canaanite society—on the sea, on a narrow strip backed by mountains that provided limited land for agriculture. This situation led them to look to the sea for their livelihood. The unit’s first written data focuses on one human-made part of the setting—Phoenician ships, because of their central importance to the society. However, the significance of the ship data may not be apparent to learners until they look at the data that follow.

Almost always, the primary sources provide information for more than one part of the Model. The close interrelationships between the Model elements make this inevitable. Thus, throughout investigations that follow, learners may infer additional information about setting, along with the other Model categories.

Another important part of setting was Phoenicia’s location on or near trade routes between the two main civilization centers of the ancient world, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Both of these civilizations were powerful influences on Canaanite/Phoenician society. However, these influences must be inferred from later data in the unit. The excellent map at https://my-ecoach.com/project.php?id=17201&project_step=76346 may be used as a supplement to show this relationship.

The Mediterranean climate of the region—rain during winter, drought during summer, with the amount of rain tending to vary over a wide range from year to year—was, of course, an influence on the ideas and action patterns of the Canaanites. (Unreliable rains tend to lead to worship and propitiation of weather or storm gods.) **We’ve given no data for this, but interested learners can investigate the climate of this area using outside sources such as the Internet.**

Investigation: Phoenician Action Patterns

The quotation from Ezekiel indicates a surprisingly intimate knowledge by the prophet of both ships and the trading done by their Phoenician owners. Tyre was, at the time, the most significant Phoenician city.

Relationships between the Israelites and the Canaanites were close, but usually difficult. They were both Semitic people, spoke very similar languages, and interacted a great deal (sometimes even peacefully). Both were quite religious, but their religious differences

were a major source of conflict. The success of the Canaanites tempted the Israelites on occasion to adopt polytheistic elements of Canaanite religion. This was strongly opposed by Jewish religious authorities, especially following the Babylonian Exile (587-538 BCE), with the absolute dedication to monotheism of those who returned.

The action pattern of the Canaanite/Phoenicians described here, is of course, their trading by sea with every possible market around the Mediterranean. In their later years, the Greeks became rivals in this trade, but it seems likely that the even when the ships were owned and sponsored by Greeks, they were built and manned by Phoenicians, just as the expedition around Africa sponsored by the Egyptian Pharaoh (p. 10) was done by Phoenicians.

The invention of an alphabet by the Canaanites was the crucial step to making literacy easily learned, thus widespread and common, eliminating the need for specially-trained scribes. As a tool, it benefited trade by making it easy to make and maintain inventories of goods and similar essential records, and likely led to the development of contracts between the Phoenicians and their trading partners. It was to the trader's advantage to have those with whom they traded to also be literate, so they passed along their invention, and Greeks, along with other groups, quickly adopted it (probably in the eighth century BCE). It is interesting and a bit curious that the Greeks would continue to give credit to the Phoenicians for the invention, but it suggests that relationships between the two societies were generally benign.

In the alphabet diagram, the Latin characters, sometimes modified, are from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which provides characters for virtually every sound in every language.

The categories in the Model overlap, which may be confusing for some learners. For example, ships are human-made parts of *setting*; building ships and using them for trade are *patterns of action*. Similarly, the alphabet is a tool, thus part of setting, but writing using the alphabet is an action pattern. The spread of Phoenicians to colonies is both an aspect of demographics and a pattern of action. The point here is to understand societies as wholes, without too much concern for overlapping categories.

Of course, each human group has myriad elements of setting, many action patterns, and many shared ideas. Some are more important than others. Organizing information to separate essential from trivial (the thrust of Unit 2 in this series), is an important part of information processing. The teacher or mentor can help by asking, "Is this element (action pattern, idea, part of setting, etc.) *trivial* or *essential*?" or similar questions at appropriate times.

Investigation: Phoenician Demographics

Lack of demographic information is a problem for the study of all ancient civilizations; this lack is especially acute for the Phoenician/Canaanites. The demographics section of the Wikipedia article on Phoenicia¹ only cites some recent genetic studies that attempted to define these people and their spread to their colonies using DNA patterns, with

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia>

minimal definitive results. The evidence we supply in this investigation is, of course, secondary, and provides no real thinking challenge for learners.

Online articles about Phoenician settlements typically identify them because the names given to them are Phoenician instead of Greek or some local language. The tendency of the Phoenicians to found colonies is, however, attested in the last document in the learner materials, describing the Carthaginian attempt to colonize West Africa.

Investigation: Phoenician Shared Ideas

This investigation provides evidence that can lead to some in-depth thinking and productive discussion by learners. The initial data—the sarcophagus inscription—isn't explicit about shared ideas, but is very suggestive. For example, the dead ruler indicates no particular belief about any kind of continued existence in an afterlife except as a deceased human body lying, he fervently hopes, in peace. The importance he places on his corpse is an idea also common in Egypt, of course, but in Egypt the idea of rebirth and living on in an afterlife was also present, and seems to be missing here.

The gods he venerates suggest the need for protection from various calamities:

- Astarte, queen goddess of fertility and war, would be important to help avoid the dangers of childbirth, infertility, agricultural failure, and invasion by outsiders.
- Astaroth, mother goddess, goddess of the sea, would likely provide protection during voyages.
- Eshmun, god of healing, was the principal god of Sidon, with obvious merit.
- Baal-Sidon, the local name for the “lord of storms,” would also be important to seafaring people as well as those growing crops. The term “Baal” in Phoenician meant “Lord,” generally applied to a deity.

A close-up view of this sarcophagus is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eshmunazar_II_sarcophagus#/media/File:Eshmunazar_II_sarcophagus.jpg which shows some of the inscription close enough to make out letters.

Other Phoenician shared ideas may be inferred from their main shared pattern of widespread trading. They would have contact with many different societies with distinct differences from their own ways of acting and thinking. To be successful, they had to maintain peaceful relations with all those outsiders, so an important idea almost certainly was “don't alienate customers; maintain friendly relations.” Related shared ideas about how to conduct business were also essential, such as ideas about the techniques for successful bargaining, including avoiding problems in later transactions that might occur if a transaction is seen by the customer as unfair.

It seems likely that the amount of authoritarian control exerted by rulers was limited, because the maritime mobility of the people would have given them considerable autonomy to decide their own fates. A fair level of freedom from authoritarian control was also needed so the traders could operate efficiently.

The next source describes circumnavigation of Africa by the Phoenicians, sponsored by the Egyptian Pharaoh, about 600 BCE. This sponsorship reinforces the suggestion that

the Phoenicians had to maintain cooperative relationships with the surrounding powers. It also strongly suggests that Phoenician trading by ship was active in the Red Sea.

The information which Herodotus refuses to believe about the sun's position in the sky during part of the voyage is powerful evidence that the trip actually occurred. Sailing west in the southern hemisphere, around the tip of Africa, the sun would certainly have been on the sailors' right hand, in the northern sky. If learners don't understand this geographic relationship, encourage discussion of the sun's position relative to various positions on earth, e.g. overhead in the tropics, low on the northern horizon (or below the horizon, in winter) at the South Pole, etc.

The last primary source, as we said, confirms the Phoenician practice of founding colonies (here from Carthage as a base), but adds little else to our understanding. If desired, after a brief look at the first paragraph or two, spending time on a detailed analysis isn't necessary. However, some learners may find it interesting. Really interested learners could correlate the places described with their appearance on Google Earth®.

Follow Up: Applying the Model Here and Now

See earlier notes about this activity on page 15. Work groups formed from learners from the same neighborhood would be ideal, if possible, unless they choose the school neighborhood itself to investigate. As with all activities of this sort, learner skills will be enhanced if they make a formal presentation of their findings to their peers, complete with their maps, photographs, charts and graphs, etc.

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