

When the Past is Still Present



AND THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN CONFLICT
AND IDENTITY IN LEBANON

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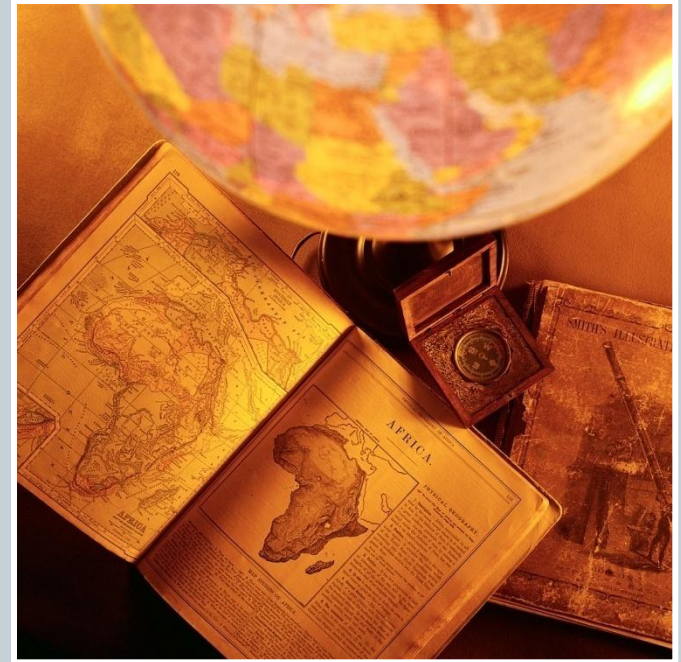
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AHS Course Capstone Presentation

My AHS Journey



- **University of Cape Town**
 - Making of the Modern Middle East
 - Liberation in Southern Africa
 - War and Society
- **This semester**
 - Nationalism, Politics & Uses of the Remote Past



5 Take Home Messages



1. The past is inescapable

How it is dealt with and recorded that matters

2. The past can be manipulated

Powerful political tool

3. Conflicts are catalysts

Also rally points, symbols

4. Appeals to identity can be powerful

Nationalism, religious heritage, culture, language, lineage

5. Nothing is static

The idea of a “homeland”

Lebanon as a Case Study



1. **The past is inescapable**

Picot-Sykes treaty, neighbor tension, Civil War

2. **The past can be manipulated**

No victor means history still to be written

3. **Conflicts are catalysts**

In Lebanon, conflict is interrupted by peace

4. **Appeals to identity can be powerful**

As Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Phoenicians, Lebanese

5. **Nothing is static**

Geography and Demographics



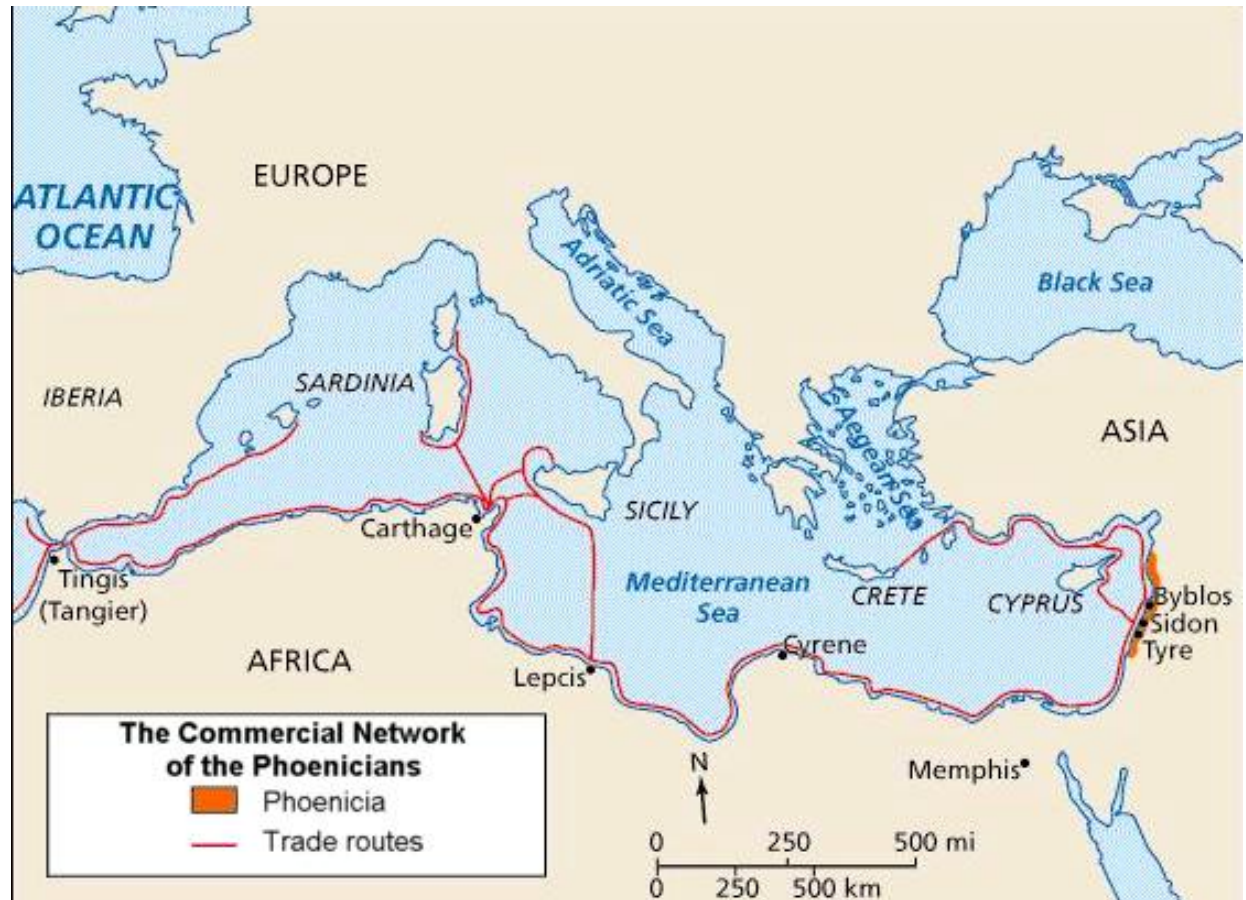
- 4 million inhabitants
- 17 recognized religious sects
- 2/3 Muslim
- No census since 1932

Religion and Politics



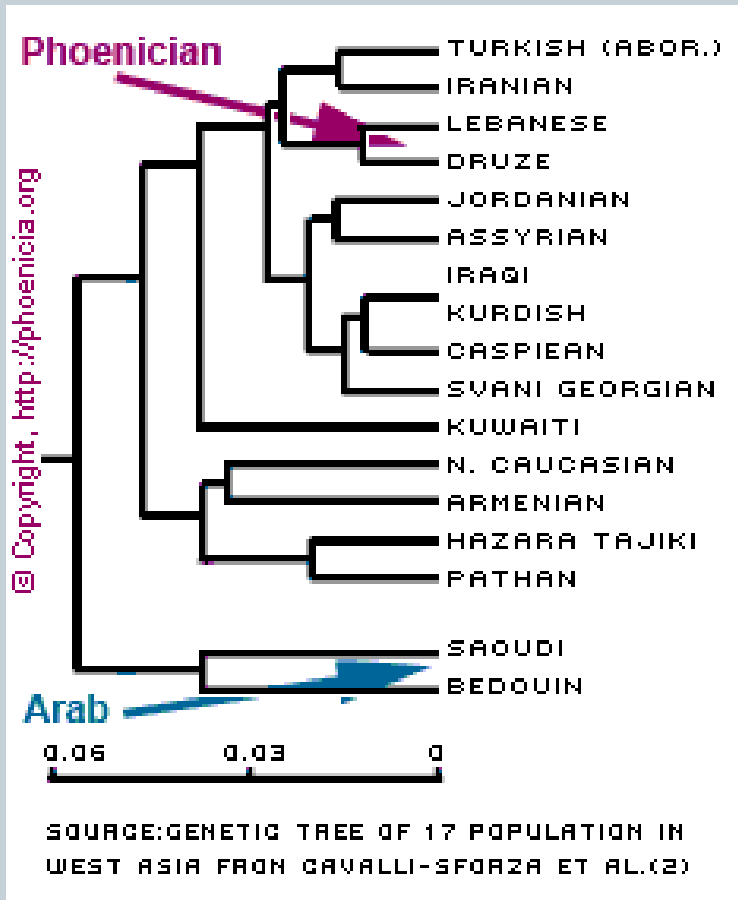
	Sect	Seats in Parliment
President	Maronite	34
	Greek Orthodox	14
	Greek Catholic	8
	Armenian Orthodox	5
	Armenian Catholic	1
	Protestant	1
	Other Christians	1
	Total Christains	64
Prime Minister Speaker	Sunni	27
	Shi'a	27
	Druze	8
	Alawite	2
	Total Muslims	64

- Maritime culture
- Descended from Canaanites
- Peaked from 1200 – 800 B.C.
- Based in Lebanon, Costal Syria/Isreal
- Often tributaries to larger empires
- Eventually dissolved into local populations
- May never have viewed themselves as a single people



The Glory of the Phoenicians – 2700 B.C. to 350 B.C.

Phoenicianism



<http://phoenicia.org/today.html>



<http://phoenicia.org/syria.html>

Phoenicianism



“In reality, the Lebanese are Phoenicians, who got hellenized and aramaized in Late Antiquity. Arabic speaking Syrians and Iraqis are Aramaeans. So are the Palestinians and the Kuwaitis, as well as the Emirates and the Qataris, who have certainly been intermixed with Persians. Egyptians are Copts, native Egyptians, descendants of the people of Ancient Egypt . . .”

-Prof. Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis in Yemen Times
2003

“New” Lebanese Nationalism



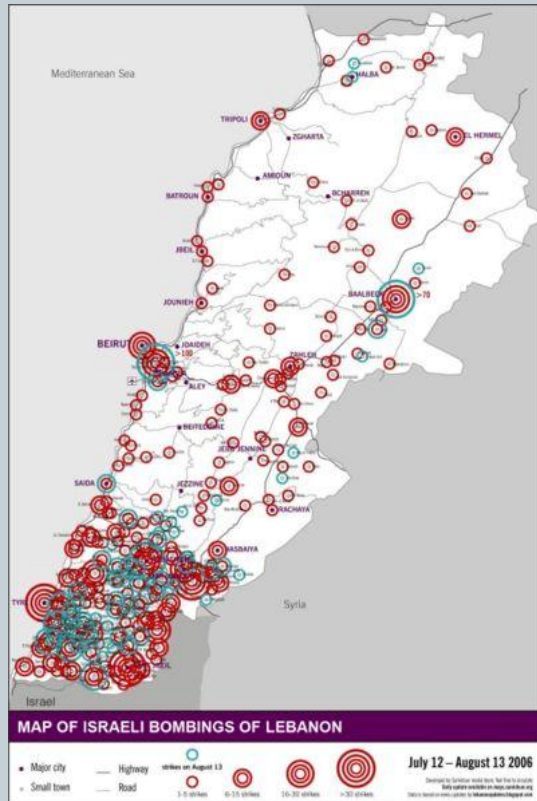
- The State of Lebanon is a reality
- Phoenicianism is declining, *l'asile du Liban* is growing
- Continues to be sectarian conflict and history is often at the center
 - Elementary school textbooks
- Becoming a cohesive country a particularly difficult and important challenge

2006 Lebanese War



Israeli Bombings in 2006

Downtown Beirut (World Press Photo of the Year)



2007 Lebanon Conflict

Map of Major Events

A Car Bombing

