



Hanène Tajouri Bessassi



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA
WASHINGTON D.C.

Historic Reception
February 16th, 2024

*The Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia to the United States of America,
Her Excellency Hanène Tajouri Bessassi,
welcomes you to this historic reception, connecting the ancient people of
Tunisia with the ancient people of America, and shedding light on the
greatness of the Carthaginian Empire and the Phoenicians.*

Heartland Research Group/Phoenicia Expeditions

Heartland Research is grateful for the support provided by the Tunisian government, for the Phoenician Ship Expeditions, and the Phoenician Ship Museum in America. Our understanding of the ancient histories of America and Tunisia will greatly increase by this partnership.

Phoenicians and Carthaginians are the unsung heroes of the ancient world. They invented the alphabet we use today, and introduced many new things to the western world, such as metal tools, iron nails, wine, blown glass, the color purple, and even the domestic cat. They navigated by the North Star and constellations, and with that knowledge, dominated the seas for over a thousand years.



Considered the best sailors of their time, Phoenicians and Carthaginians traders traveled to the limits of the known world, and then explored beyond it. According to ancient accounts they had over 300 cities and settlements around the Mediterranean Sea and on the Atlantic coast of Africa.



Intrigued by those accounts and legends, British captain Philip Beale constructed, in 2008, a replica Phoenician ship from the year 600 BC. The replica ship was based on the Jules Verne 7 wreck from the Marseilles Museum in France. Shipwrights from Syria using ancient tools and materials constructed the ship in the small Phoenician island of Arwad.

The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho II commissioned a Phoenician Fleet to circumnavigate the African Continent. To investigate if this account could be factual, from 2008 to 2010, Philip and an international crew of volunteers sailed over 20 thousand miles, crossing 5 oceans and seas, visiting 15 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, facing many challenges. After 2 years, they returned to Lebanon and Syria, their audacious experimental archaeological project was a huge success.

The second expedition, from 2019 to 2020, started in Carthage, Tunisia, to determine if an ancient vessel designed almost 3 thousand years ago could cross an ocean. The cultural association Didon de Carthage provided all the support the expedition needed for a great start. The expedition crossed the Mediterranean Sea, resupplying at the island of Tenerife, before attempting to cross the vast Atlantic Ocean. After 39 days at sea, they finally spotted land, the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. The expedition ended in Florida, arriving on Feb. 4th, 2020.



Captain Philip Beale proved that ancient people from the Mediterranean had the technology to reach the Americas, more than two thousand years before the official European discoveries.

Above: Phoenician ships with horse-head prows transporting cedar logs for Sargon.

Washington and Tunisia



America's diplomatic history has had a long and friendly relationship with Tunisia. General George Washington sent a letter to the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives on March 2, 1795, requesting financial support and confirmation to send a consul to Tunis, representing American interests abroad for the first time.

The Heartland Research Group is delighted to include President Washington in our story, celebrating the work Captain Beale did for the history of ancient America as well as Tunisia's friendship with America.

We think that it is wonderful to be able to play a small role in bringing to light the greatness of the Carthaginian Empire and the knowledge of the country that was among the first to recognize the independence Washington won for its people.



Andrew Shelmidine
in 1800's USA Uniform

Signed Cooperation Agreement

Inspired by this long history of friendship between America and Tunisia, Association Didon de Carthage's president, Eryj Ben Sassi Trimech, and Heartland Research Group's president, John Lefgren and Board Member Betty "Red Ant" LaFontaine, have signed a cooperation document for their organizations in Washington, DC, on February 15th, 2024, an important step to solidifying their partnership and to promote cultural and social exchanges between their countries. Tunisia and America will mutually benefit from entrepreneurship to empower and provide a more sustainable way of life for communities in need.

Native American Women and Native Tunisian Women

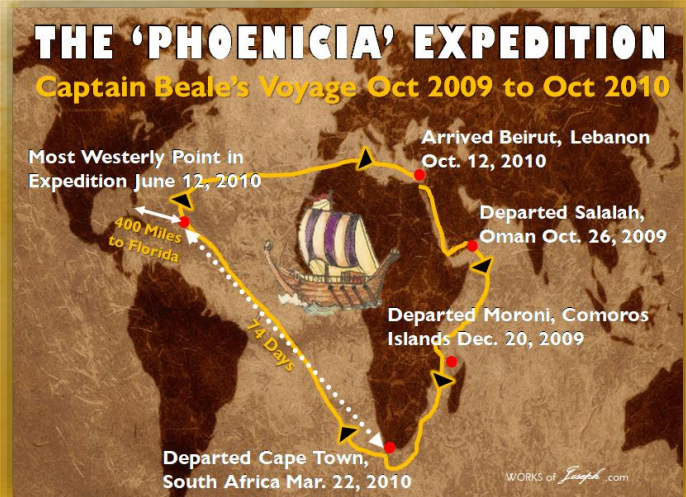
The association will cooperate on the construction of the Phoenician Ship Museum, and using the museum as a base, they will create many projects together, such as the Native American Women and Native Tunisian Women cultural and social exchanges.



Betty "Red Ant" LaFontaine and Eryj Ben Sassi Trimech

"Being a Navajo Native of America, fostering cultural exchange and embracing diversity, holds significance in connecting people and nations. While collaborating with the Heartland Research Group, I shared my insights and had the privilege of engaging with Eryj from Tunisia. Exploring the similarities between her culture and my Navajo heritage has brought forth new insights, enhancing our relationship and facilitating meaningful connections as we progress together..."

The historical narrative of the old world meeting the new world, coupled with the settlement of America and connections forged from the East, further illuminates the strength and novelty of cultural exchange in shaping our collective understanding and bonds. Recognizing the pivotal role women play in cultural identity within their families and villages, these connections contribute significantly to global diversity and the construction of strong, successful families worldwide. In the work field, this commitment extends to building successful individuals, thereby enhancing daily living for a better world" Betty "Red Ant" LaFontaine Dine' (Navajo)", Culture Advisor and Board Member of Heartland Research Group.



British Captain Philip Beale



Maritime adventurer Philip Beale has led a life of exploration, searching for answers to some of the great mysteries of ancient civilizations. His adventures began when he was chosen for *Operation Drake*, sailing the brigantine *Eye of the Wind* from Fiji to Papua New Guinea. Later, Philip joined the Royal Navy as an officer, and after leaving the Navy, he then led a successful career in finances. Years later, in Indonesia, Philip commissioned construction of a replica vessel depicted at the Borobudur stupa. He then navigated the *Borobudur Ship Expedition* across the Indian Ocean sailing far as Ghana in the West coast of Africa. The Borobudur Ship is now on display in its own dedicated at Museum at the Borobudur Temple in Indonesia. His next big project was the *Phoenician Ship Expeditions*.



"I'm very excited about the prospect of having a museum to celebrate trans-oceanic voyages and ancient cultures. This cooperation between Heartland Research Group and Association Didon de Carthage will make possible deeper understanding and promotion of the rich history of Tunisia and America."
- Captain Philip Beale. Contact: phoenicia.org.uk or philipbeale.com (Philip Beale Voyage pictures 2009)

Eryj Ben Sassi from Club de Didon of Carthage

Association Didon de Carthage is a non-profit organization dedicated to studying and promoting the Carthaginian and Tunisian cultures, organizing cultural events, and researching their ancient traditions. The partnership with America began in 2019 when Didon welcomed and organized the reception for the maritime archaeological expedition "Phoenicians Before Columbus Expedition" which sailed from Tunisia to Florida in America.

"Our association's main objective is to research and promote our Carthaginian heritage, and to be able to do it internationally, beginning in America, is a way to reveal the importance of our history to the world, perpetuating our legacy..."

This is a very important step into the cooperation between our organizations, which in time will bring many benefits to both the people of Tunisia and of America." – Eryj Ben Sassi Trimech, President and Founder of Association Didon de Carthage. Contact: eryjbensassi.ats@gmail.com



Picture: Historic Djerba is celebrated with Eryj Ben Sassi in Tunisia

AVENTURAS PRODUÇÕES



Yuri Sanada and Vera Sanada

Aventuras Produções is a partner in both Phoenician Ship Expeditions, and since then, has been working on facilitation of the Phoenician Ship Museum. Aventuras is a Cinema and TV production company with projects executed with partners such as US National Science Foundation, The Smithsonian Institution, and many Universities and Educational Institutions around the world.

Website: produtora.aventura.com.br



HEARTLAND RESEARCH GROUP



Iowa Home of the Philip Beale 'Phoenicia' 600 BC Replica. Sailed over 30,000 Nautical Miles

Located in Pennsylvania, the Heartland Research Group is a non-profit organization. Among its many activities, the organization is building the Phoenician Ship Museum, on the banks of the Mississippi River, in Iowa, which will house the oldest functioning replica of an ancient 600 BC ship, the 'PHOENICIA', which sailed around the entire African continent between 2009 and 2010 and then crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Carthage, Tunisia to Florida, USA between 2019 to 2020.



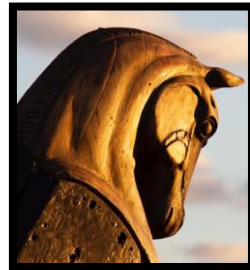
"Heartland Research picked up the pieces of the 'Phoenicia' from the mud of Florida and took them to the west bank of the Mississippi River in Iowa. Over the last two years, hundreds of volunteers have dedicated thousands of hours for the restoration of Captain Philip's ship replica. The ship is the clearest link between the people from the cradle of Western Civilization to the ancient people of America. We will go forward and build a proper museum for such a historic connection." – *John Lefgren, President of Heartland Research Group.*

Dignitaries mentioned, will be in Washington DC for the reception. Interviews by appointment.

Above: Mike (VP Heartland) and Betty LaFontaine awarding Captain Beale with a Native American handmade drum, congratulating the Captain on his last voyage of the 'Phoenicia'. April 2020 Ft Lauderdale, FL

For additional information, still photos or ultra-definition video images contact:
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Phoenician ships had horse-head prows because the word for "jumping" or "springing" horses was *ג'פנק*, almost the same word as Punic, and derived from the same root *pn* for "turning".

Join the Cause!



*Phoenicia being rebuilt in Montrose, Iowa.
We are Restoring the 'Phoenicia'*

Phoenicia is the only replica ship based on the oldest known ocean-crossing vessel, and with 30 thousand nautical miles navigated, it is for sure the ancient replica ship that sailed the longest. The Heartland Research Group is restoring this historic ship to be the centerpiece of the Phoenician Ship Museum in North America. By using the most modern technologies and reliable scientific methods, this educational institution will be able to research the mysteries of Ancient America, and its partners in the Old World, beginning with Tunisia. Join the cause! We are looking for like-minded people who embrace historic truth wherever it is found. Contact us to know how you can be part of this amazing project.



Future Museum Architectural Design
by Clark Schaffer Studios

Donate: Phoenicia.Rocks

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