

traded with the Greeks. In Cyprus they mined for copper, from Italy they brought hides, from Spain they procured silver, from Cornwall and the Scilly Islands they brought tin. They have also left abundant traces of traffic in Ireland and in Scandinavia.

It has been held by some historians that they visited Central America. Before 600 B. C., under the direction of the Egyptian king Necho, they circumnavigated Africa. The dates of their earliest voyages must reach considerably back of B. C. 1300, for at this time they were already sailing to Ireland and Great Britain.

The great cities of Phœnicia were Aradus, Tripolis, Berytus (the modern Beyrout), Tyre, Sidon, Acca (Acre). The most important Phœnician remains in Syria are at Balbek—the foundations of its Acropolis. The three largest blocks of stone are each 64 feet long, 15 feet thick, and 15 feet high, and each one is estimated to weigh about 1,100 tons. The date of these famous foundations is uncertain, but probably earlier than 1000 B. C. They are the most stupendous existing monuments of Phœnician science under Egyptian tuition.

When the Phœnicians began their voyages the other Mediterranean nations were comparatively barbarian. Through intercourse with them these nations—Greeks and Italians first of all—obtained the basis of a civilization which they were to transform and develop in new ways.

About 850 B. C. the Phœnicians, who had already many colonies on the northern shores of Africa—in modern Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco—founded a new one, Carthage (in modern Tunis), which became the head of all the others. It acquired ascendancy over part of Sicily, over Corsica, Sardinia, and the coasts of Spain. After this time the mother country rather declined, and Carthage partly took its place. The Greeks had meantime become active merchants and sailors in the Eastern Mediterranean, pushing out their older teachers. The prosperity of the greatest Phœnician city, Tyre, was crippled by the campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, 586 B. C.

Chronology of Phœnicia.—Down to the year B.C. 1000, and for centuries before, the Phœnicians were the civilizing force and sole commercial power of the Mediterranean. Under this influence Greece and Italy developed, gradually assuming independent importance after that date.