

Instead of the one tier of oars which propelled the old form of ship the triremē had three and was accordingly built much higher. After this first great step naval architecture made little advance before the Macedonian age. The trireme may have been a Grecian invention, but some authorities claim that it was borrowed from the Phœnicians. Though the Greeks looked upon their navy as being more important than their army, yet the great difficulty of procuring suitable timber prevented to some extent the building of ships. Athens had to import her timber from Thrace. This fact however, did not debar them from the sport of sea fighting. The first naval battle recorded in Grecian history occurred about 660 B. C. and was between the Corinthians and their own colonists in Corcyra. In later years the Greeks did not need to pick quarrels with their relatives, for the mighty Empire of Persia came down looking for trouble with all the fleets of Phœnicia at her command. How gloriously the Greeks behaved against mighty odds is well known.

Cretans, Lydians, Carians, Thracians, Milesians and other almost forgotten peoples had their days of Empire on the blue waters of the Mediterranean but the Carthaginians were the most worthy rivals of the Phœnicians. Carthage, child of Tyre, came of the old sea stock and we find in Ezechiel xxvii., 12. that the Carthaginians supplied Tyre with a multitude of riches; silver, iron, tin and lead. They were the first people who raised their warships from three to four tiers of oars and are supposed to be first to use figure-heads.

About 400 B. C. Carthage—in order to discover the location of the Cassiterides, which were such a source of wealth to their mother country, Phœnicia—fitted out two expeditions at the same time. Hanno with 60 ships bearing 30,000 people sailed south from the straits and founded seven towns along the west coast of Africa. This voyage