

Exceptional Ancient Ships

ANCIENT MAXI - SHIPS

Length (m)	Width (m)	Nb levels	Nb oarsmen Per side	Nb of ships	Owner	Date of construction	Observations	Source (see Biblio)
?	?	?	13	4 or 5	Demetrios Poliorcetes & Ptolemy II	ca 300 BC	Demetrios' flagship, also used for marriage of his daughter Stratonice at Rhosos (Pieria Antioch)	[6] p121
110?	10	1	« 8 » (or 16?)	1	Lysimachus of Thrace	ca 300 BC	« Leontophoros »: Double-hull (?) with 1600 oarsmen + 1200 soldiers.	[4] p39 [6] p171
70	20	2	15	1	Demetrios Poliorcetes of Macedonia	ca 290 BC	Captured by Ptolemy I, and destroyed.	[4] p41 [6] p144
70	20	2	16	1	Demetrios Poliorcetes of Macedonia	ca 290 BC	Demetrios' flagship against Lysimachus. Seen in Rome in 149 BC by Polybius.	[4] p40 [6] p144
70	20	2	18	1	Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia	ca 258 BC	« Isthmia »: Antigonus Gonatas' flagship against Ptolemy II. Ship « of Delos ». Double-hull?	[4] p41 [6] p185
?	20?	3	20	1	Ptolemy II of Alexandria	ca 255 BC?	Double-hull?	[3] p107 [6] p198
?	20?	3 or 4 ?	30	2	Ptolemy II of Alexandria	ca 255 BC?	Largest seagoing galleys ever built. Double-hull?	[3] p107 [6] p198
?	?	?	20	1	Hieron II of Syracuse	ca 240 BC	« Syracusia » did only one trip from Syracuse to Alexandria. First cruise ship?! Payload 2000 t	[4] p98 [3] p185
130	45?	3?	40	1	Ptolemy IV of Alexandria	ca 220 BC	Double-hull with 2 (or 4?) coupled « 20 ». 4000 oarsmen + 3250 soldiers & sailors. Mainly a deterrent?	[2] p289 [3] p108 [4] p40 [6] p206
130	45?	-	-	1	Ptolemy IV of Alexandria	ca 220 BC	« Thalamegus », floating royal palace. Probably never out of her home port.	[2] p289
75? 104?	11? 20?	3 or 4?	30	1	Caligula	ca 40 AD	Used for transporting the Vatican obelisk. Payload: 1300 t.	[3] p189 [4] p46 [8] p104
73	24	2	18	2	Caligula	ca 40 AD	« Nemi II », replica of the « 18 » of Delos. Used for naval games on the Lake of Nemi.	[4] p43
55	>14	-	-	1	?	2 nd century	« Isis », for transporting grain between Alexandria and Rome. Payload: 1 200 t (or 20 to 30 000 amphorae).	[3] p186

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OTHER ANCIENT SHIPS

Length (m)	Width (m)	Nb levels	Nb oarsmen Per side	Nb of ships	Owner	Date of construction	Observations	Source (see Biblio)
35	5	1	1	many	Greeks	ca 1100 BC	Pentecontore (50 oarsmen)	Wikipedia
20	2,6	2	2	many	Greeks Phoenicians	ca 700 BC	Bireme (140 oarsmen)	[4] p63
36	4,8	3	3	many	Greeks Phoenicians	ca 500 BC	Famous Greek trireme of the Medic Wars (170 oarsmen + 30 sailors)	[4] p22 & 63
35	5	3	5	many	Romans Carthaginians	ca 400 BC	Famous quinquereme of the Punic Wars (270 oarsmen + 120 soldiers)	[4] p108 [2] p337
35 to 40	9 to 10	-	-	many	Romans	ca 0	Cargo « 10 000 amphorae » transporting wine and oil. Typical wreck at La Madrague de Giens	[3] p173

PM: OTHER GALLEYS

Length (m)	Width (m)	Nb levels	Nb oarsmen Per side	Nb of ships	Owner	Date of construction	Observations	Source
45	9	1	5	many	Maltese galley	ca 1450 AD	250 oarsmen + 350 soldiers & sailors	Petiet (1992) p109...
23	3 to 4	1	1	many?	Viking	ca 320 AD	Nydam ship with 30 oarsmen	Wikipedia

Length is overall, Width is excluding outriggers

Number of levels: Nb of superimposed levels of oars/oarsmen (max of 3 to 4 levels) ([11] p38)

Number of oarsmen per side: Nb of oarsmen on all levels (max of 9 oarsmen per oar, [11] p39), e.g:

- a trireme had 1 oarsman per oar and 3 levels of superimposed oars (slightly shifted) ([12] p161)
- a quinquereme had 2 oarsmen per oar on 2 upper levels and 1 oarsman on the lower level ([11] p32)
- a Maltese galley had 5 oarsmen per oar on one single level (cf. C. PETIET)
- Acc. to L. Casson, all ships with more than 16 oarsmen per side are double-hull ships ([10] p107)
- Acc. to W. Murray, the Leontophorus is a double-hull ship with two coupled « 8 », hence an erroneous name designating a « 16 » ([13] p178)
- Acc. to W. Murray, the 20, 30 et 40 are double-hull platforms designed for besieging port cities ([13])

Amphora: a full amphora weighted 35 to 55 kg PM: dead-weight includes payload, passengers and consumables (water, food, etc.).

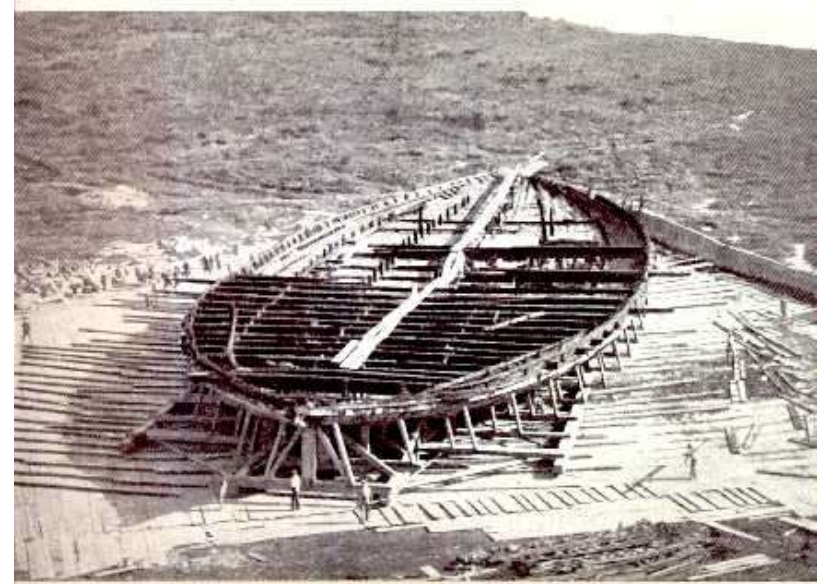
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2. BASCH, L. « Le musée imaginaire de la marine antique », Institut hellénique pour la préservation de la tradition nautique, Athènes, 1987, (disponible au Musée de la Marine de Paris).
3. CASSON, L. « Ships and seamanship in the ancient world », Princeton, 1971.
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Exceptional Ancient Ships

The initial ancient references are the following:

- the “13” of Demetrios Poliorcetes and of Ptolemy II: Plutarque, Démétrius, 31 & 32 ; Athénée citing Callixène, Banquet des Savants, 5, 9
- the Leontophorus of Lysimachus : described by Memnon, cited by Jacobus Palmerius (that is Jacques Le Paulmier, 1678)
- the “15” of Demetrios Poliorcetes: Plutarque, Démétrius, 20 & 43
- the “16” of Demetrios Poliorcetes: Pline l’Ancien, Histoire Naturelle, 16, 76 ; Diodore, Histoire, 20, 92 ; Plutarque, Démétrius, 20 & 43 ; Polybe, Histoire, 36, 5 ; Tite Live, Histoire Romaine, 45, 42
- the “18” of Antigonos Gonatas, son of Demetrios Poliorcetes, offers his flagship to the temple of Apollo at Delos around 255 BC: Athénée, Banquet des Savants, 5, 12 ; Pausanias, Grèce, 1, 29
- the “20” and the “30” of Ptolemy II: Athénée citing Callixène, Banquet des Savants, 5, 9
- the Syracusia of Hieron II of Syracuse offered to Ptolemy II : Athénée citing Moschion, Banquet des Savants, 5, 10
- the “40” of Ptolemy IV : Athénée citing Callixène, Banquet des Savants, 5, 9 ; Plutarque, Démétrius, 43
- the Thalamegus of Ptolemy IV : Athénée, Banquet des Savants, 5, 9
- the ship of Caligula for transporting the obelisk : Pline l’Ancien, Histoire Naturelle, 15, 76 & 36, 14 ; Suétone, Vie des douze Césars, Claude, 20 ; Ammien Marcellin, Histoire de Rome, 17, 4
- the Nemi I & II of Caligula : no ancient reference, but two wrecks found by archaeologists in 1927-32 and unfortunately destroyed in 1944 by fire (photo of 1930 right)
- the Isis : Lucien de Samosate, Le navire ou les souhaits



Caligula's Nemi II ship on Lake Nemi (picture 1930).