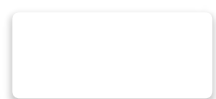


Ship Building





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Published: 2002

Arab Muslims brought shipbuilding techniques from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. In this regard, Dr. A Hakim Murad stated: "One reason for the Muslims to dominate the Mediterranean was their superior knowledge of shipbuilding mark techniques. The early Arab Muslims were a great maritime nation during the fifth Caliph, Mu'awiyah's rule. The first significant fleet was constructed in Alexandria. Muslims quickly confronted the Byzantine navy and established an unchallenged Muslim naval superiority throughout the Mediterranean.

The Arab shipbuilding techniques were made possible by the fact that the Muslim empire bordered both halves of the formerly divided world. What the Arabs did was to import into the Mediterranean shipbuilding techniques that had long been known amongst the navigators in the far more difficult and treacherous waters of the Indian Ocean. The ships were a lot larger and sturdier.

The galley, which had formally been the main method of long-range seafaring in the Mediterranean, was not completely displaced, but by and large the Muslims did not use the galley very much. This was largely because they had something called Latin Sail that was much more effective and efficient than the former rather simple square sail veils used in the Mediterranean, known as Carrack.

The European shipbuilders started to pick up on the Muslim techniques and improve upon them. The great journeys of discovery undertaken by the European in the fifteen century, whether around the Cape or across to the Americas, were based in large measure on this Indian Ocean technology, which was brought to the Mediterranean by the Muslim Arabs.



Because of the capacity of the European to emulate these innovations, European navigation started to rejoin the European trade. They had trading partners in North Africa and many of the mercantile in North Africa were not Muslims, but Jews. It was easier for Jewish merchants to visit

Europe and trade than for Muslims, because of European customs of tolerating Jews. North Africa was the emergent point for the Jewish contribution to Mediterranean trade.

This great domination of the seas by the Islamic world has left permanent memories even in the English language. The word Admiral, for example, came from the Arabic word “amir albahar,” which means prince or commander of the sea and Monsoon, Sloop, Barrack, Cable, etc.”
