



Two Phoenician merchant vessels, their prows arching horses' heads, put out to sea as warships forge ahead to patrol their trade route. The sleek Phoenician fighting ships — equipped with oars for closing with hostile vessels and bronze-tipped rams for piercing their hulls — were roughly three times faster under sail than the bulky traders they protected. Rather than serving as close escorts, the warships ranged the sea lanes, deterring pirates tempted by the rich Phoenician cargoes.