

Re: Cos-B: 30 Years On (Forwarded)

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.space.history/2005-08/msg01230.html>

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Dale wrote:

In *theory* they've been built in historical times
- but there is no
real evidence that they were.

And even if they were, they likely used iron bands to keep things together. I suppose one of Noah's sons might have been into metal :)

The biggest ones found were the Lake Nemi ships in Italy AFAIK
http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/ships/html/sh_063900_nemiships.htm
Other big ones were Ptolemy IV's huge and unwieldy "Forty" at 420 feet by 57 feet wide:

<http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/GiantShips.htm>

The "Isis" grain transport ship:

http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/ships/html/sh_049300_isis.htm

And perhaps most intriguingly, the giant cargo ships of the Chinese trading fleet at around 400 feet in length.

Although exact sizes are hard to determine due to different interpretations of the Chinese units of measurement being used (length could have been from 390 to 408 feet and have a beam of 160 to 166 feet) the ruins of the dry-docks they were built in still exist, and could have handled ships of that size: <http://www.answers.com/topic/zheng-he>
<http://www.international.ucla.edu/ccs/article.asp?parentid=10387>

Given it's very wide beam, a ship of this size would probably have had a displacement greater than that of the Bible's Ark.

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Unlike a lot of the giant Greco-Roman ones, these ships apparently worked quite well.

If the Chinese hadn't abandoned their plans to expand their trade empire in 1433 they might have rounded the tip of Africa (they'd already started down its east coast) and shown up in Spain before Columbus started heading west looking for China.

This would have come as a surprise to the Spanish, as the biggest ships in the trading fleet were a tad larger than the Santa Maria:

<http://www.asianpacificpost.com/news/file/606.jpg> :-D

Pat