



PHOENICIAN TOMB

The Phoenicians offered human sacrifices to please their gods. Inside this underground burial chamber at Carthage are clay urns that hold the ashes of victims who were sacrificed.

Why were sacrifices made to the Phoenician gods?

was walking along the seashore with his girlfriend Tyrus (tī' rus) and a dog. When the dog picked up a shellfish called *murex* (myuhr' eks) and bit into it, the dog's mouth turned purple. Tyrus liked the color so much that she said she would not marry Melqart unless he gave her a gown of that color. Melqart gave her the gown and started the dye-making trade in Phoenicia.

Gods and Goddesses The Phoenicians believed in many gods who were closely tied to nature. Since they thought the gods met people only on hills and under trees, they worshipped only in these places at first. Later, they built temples. Each had an entrance hall, a main hall, and a **holy of holies**, or most sacred chamber, where the image or sacred stone of the god was kept. Sacrifices of wine, perfume, animals, and humans were made on a nearby stone altar. Only priests could offer these sacrifices. It was thought that this strengthened the power of the gods and kept them friendly toward people.

The Phoenicians believed in a life after death. At first, they buried their dead in clay *urns* (ernz), or ornamental vases. Later, influenced by Egyptian customs, they embalmed the bodies, wrapped them in linen, and placed them in stone coffins in hillside cemeteries.