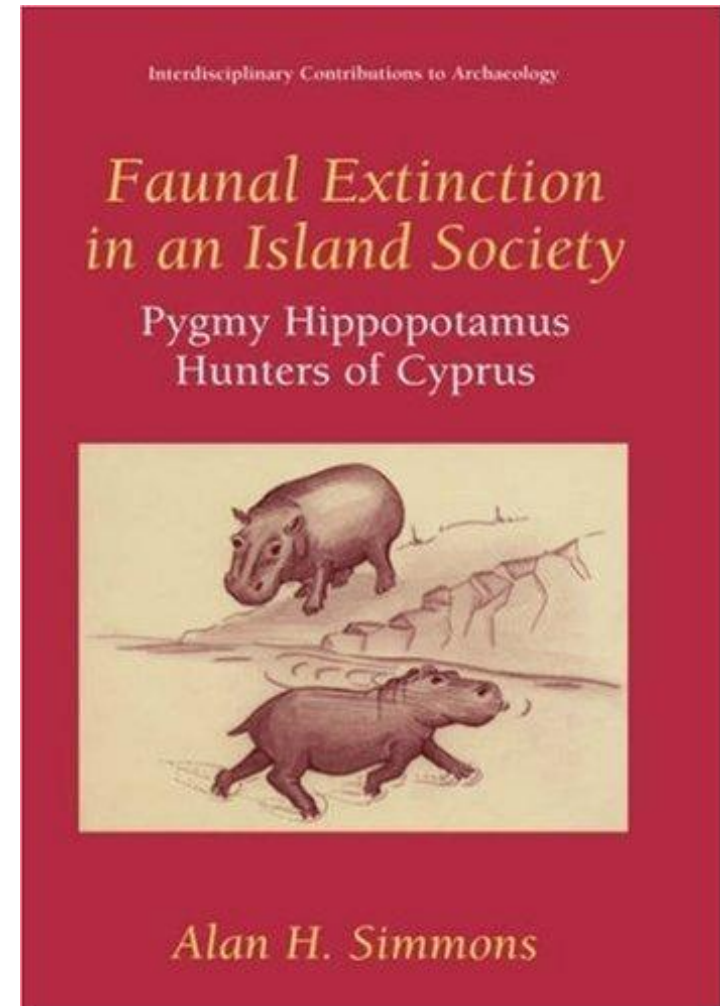


Seafaring during the Mesolithic and Neolithic in the Mediterranean Region



Seafaring during the Mesolithic and Neolithic in the Mediterranean Region

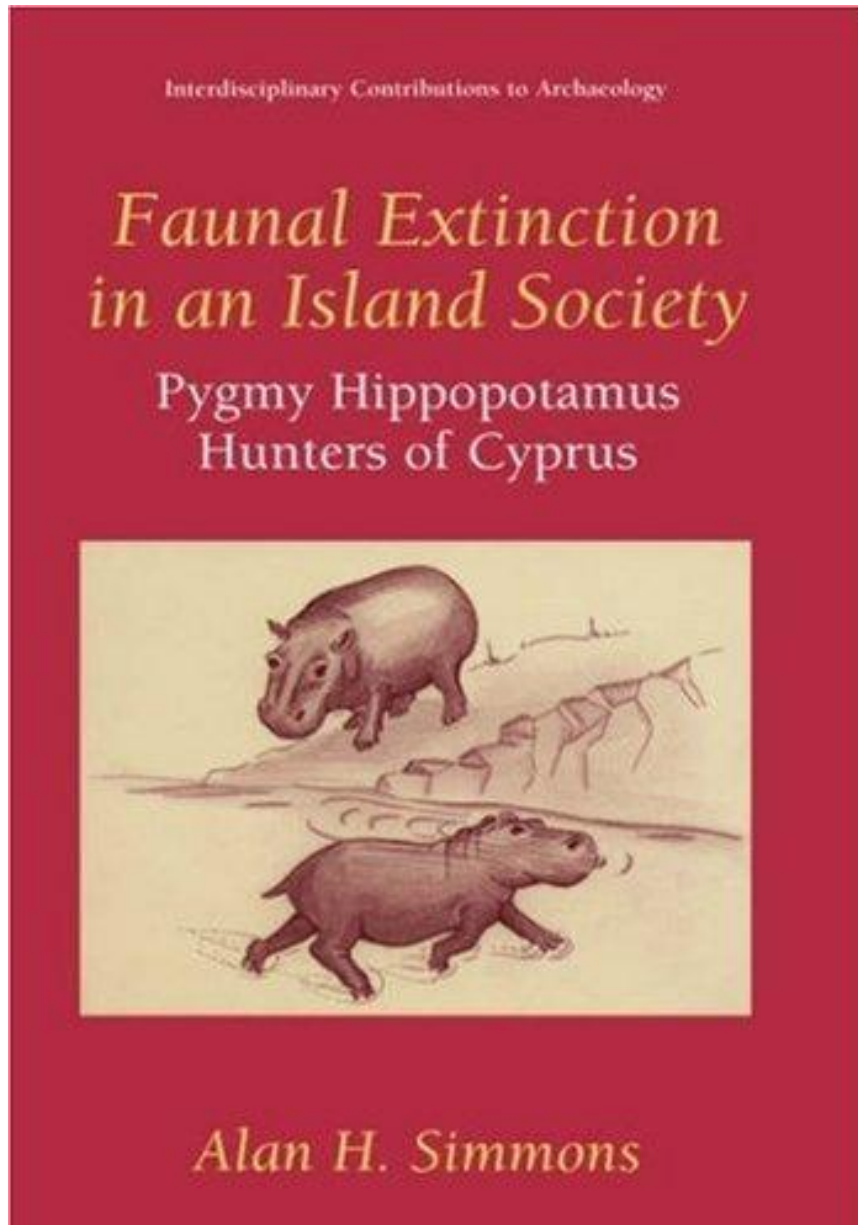


- 1) What does Mesolithic mean in prehistoric archaeology? And Neolithic?
- 2) Evidence for seafaring during both periods
- 3) How do maritime archaeologists cope with seafaring in deep prehistory?

The Mesolithic in the Mediterranean Region ca. 19,000-8000 BCE (the last 10,000 years of the Ice Age)



By ca. 9000 BCE which is near the end of the Mesolithic (the end of Ice Age) in the Mediterranean, the whole of region was inhabited by Mesolithic hunters and gatherers, including Cyprus



More Mesolithic evidence for open water travel in the Mediterranean, ca. 11, 000 BCE

Obsidian from the island of Melos (in the Cyclades) identified in the Franchti Cave (on the Greek mainland, 80 nautical miles across the Aegean)



Neutron Activation Analysis has been successful around the world in identifying the provenance of obsidian

The Neolithic in the Mediterranean Region ca. 9,000-4,000 BCE

in a slow trend from east to west communities around the Mediterranean region 'settled' into farming villages and towns (dates show onset of Neolithic)

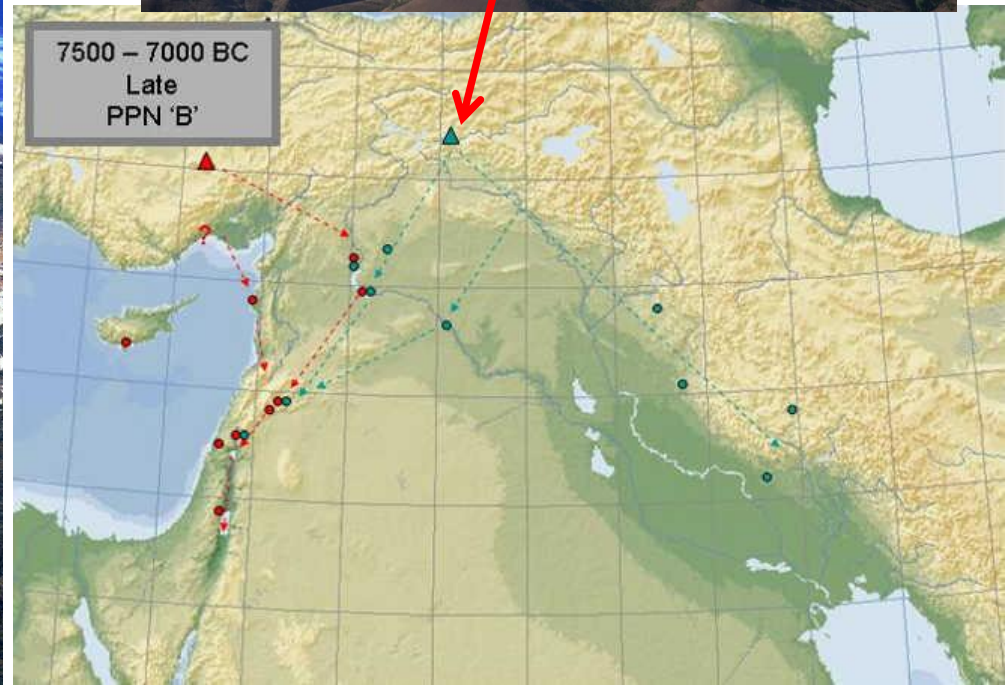


Reconstruction of Neolithic Çatalhöyük in southern Turkey (ca. 6500 BCE)

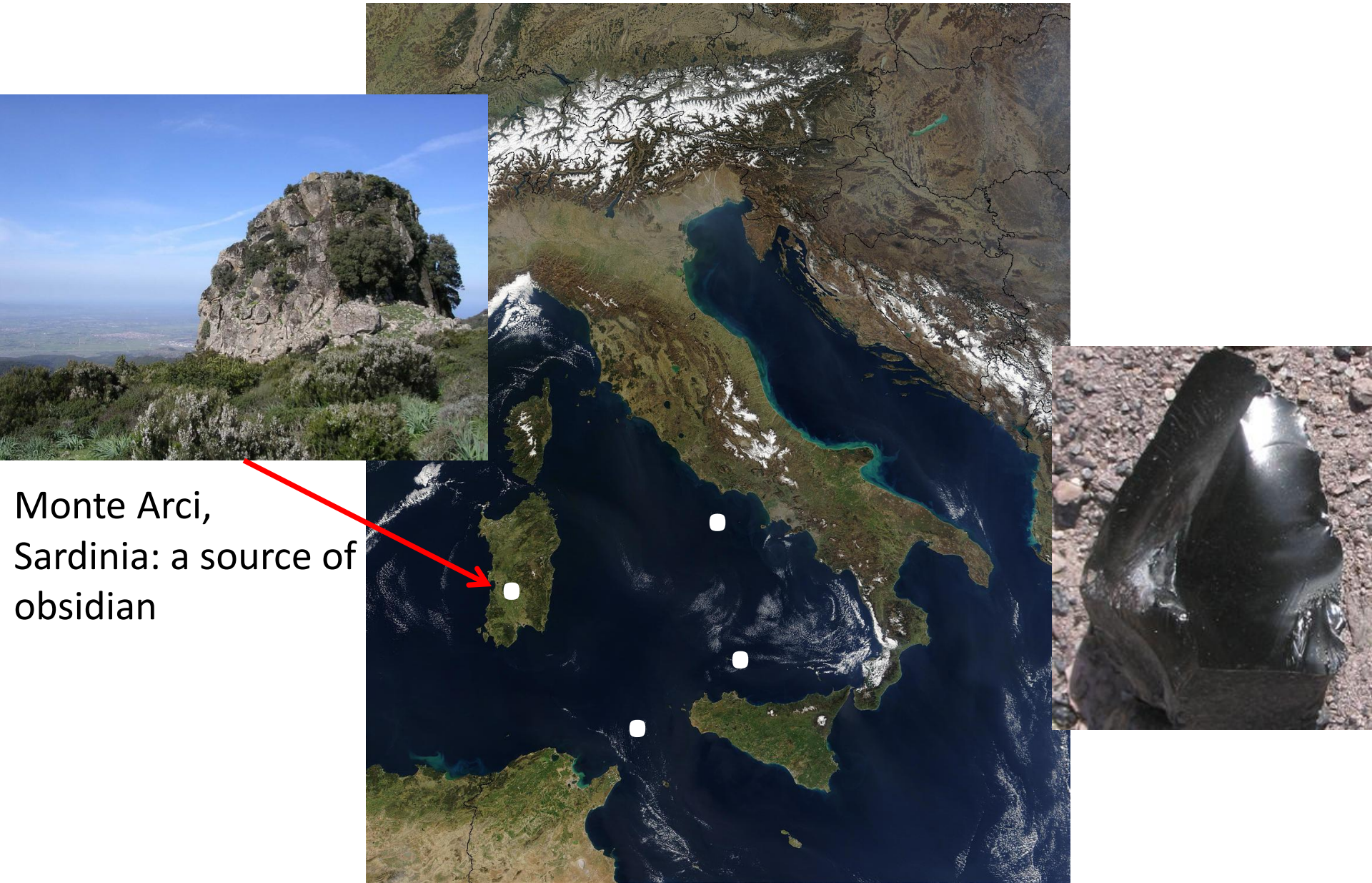


Neutron Activation Analysis has shown that obsidian mined in southern and eastern Turkey circulated extensively across the Middle East and Mediterranean (including to Cyprus)

Bingöl Mountains in eastern Turkey, a source of obsidian



In the Central Mediterranean obsidian sources are all located on islands, and this obsidian also circulated widely during the Neolithic



Monte Arci,
Sardinia: a source of
obsidian



So what do maritime archaeologists have to work with?
The Lake Marmotta and Lake Bracciano
dugout canoes (ca. 6000-5000 BCE)



35 foot dugout canoe recovered from
the floor of Lake Marmotta in Italy
(Neolithic, 5700 BCE)



Preserved posts from Lake Marmotta village houses,
and artist's reconstruction

Experimental archaeology and ethnographic analogy



Harry Tzalas' *papyrella* reconstruction and trials to Melos, the source of obsidian in the Aegean



Why did Harry Tzalas choose to reconstruct a reed (papyrus) boat that is archaeologically unattested in the Mesolithic/Neolithic Mediterranean region, vs. a dugout canoe that is archaeologically attested (Neolithic Lake Marmotta)?

ON THE OBSIDIAN TRAIL



Fig. 5



Fig. 5

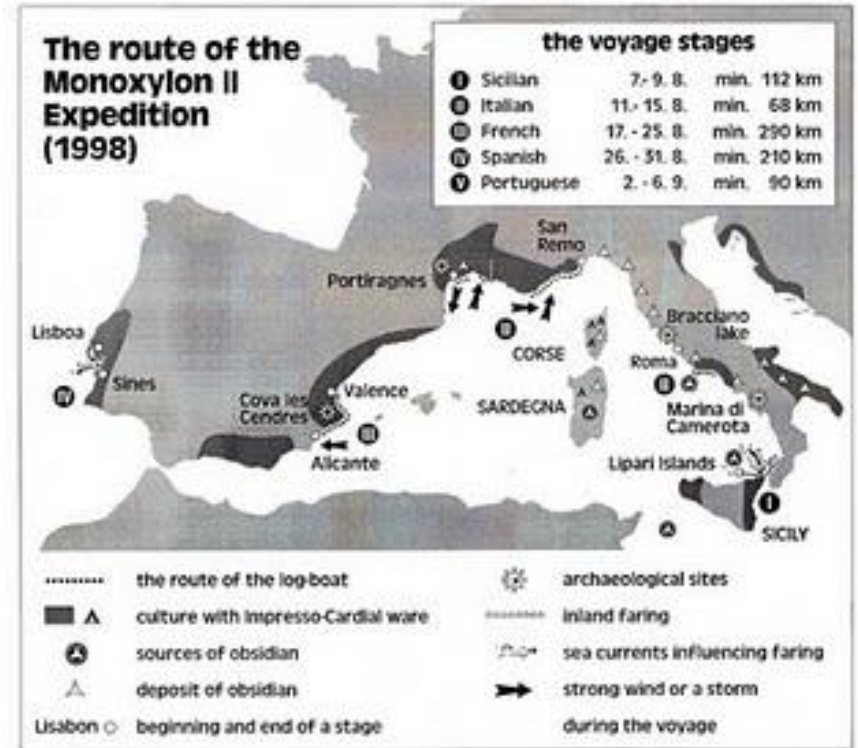


Fig. 5

Tzalas did not believe that dugout canoes were seaworthy

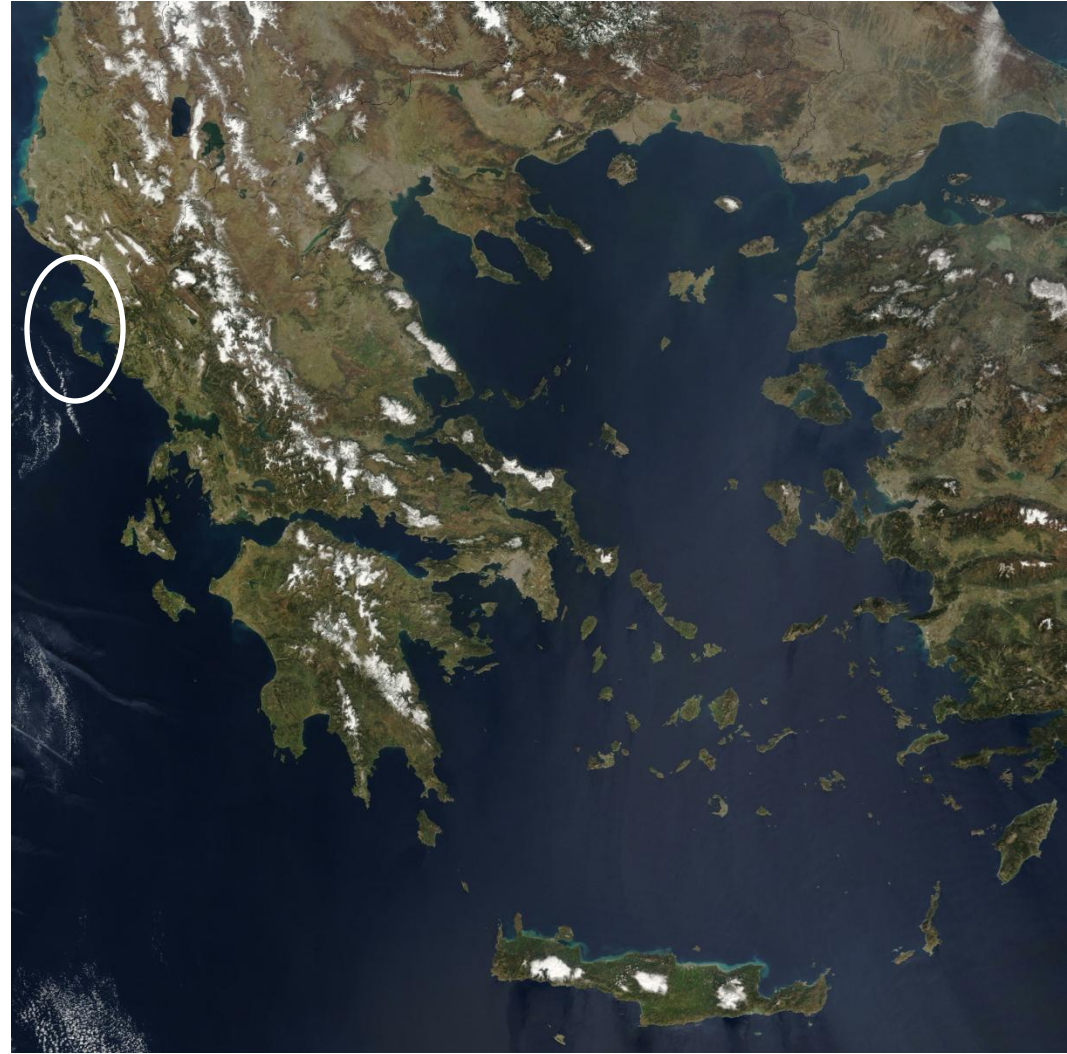


EXPEDICE MONOXYLON / Pocházíme z mladší doby kamenné



...but this was disproven in the later reconstruction and sea trial of 'Monoxylon' (replicating the Lake Bracciano canoe)

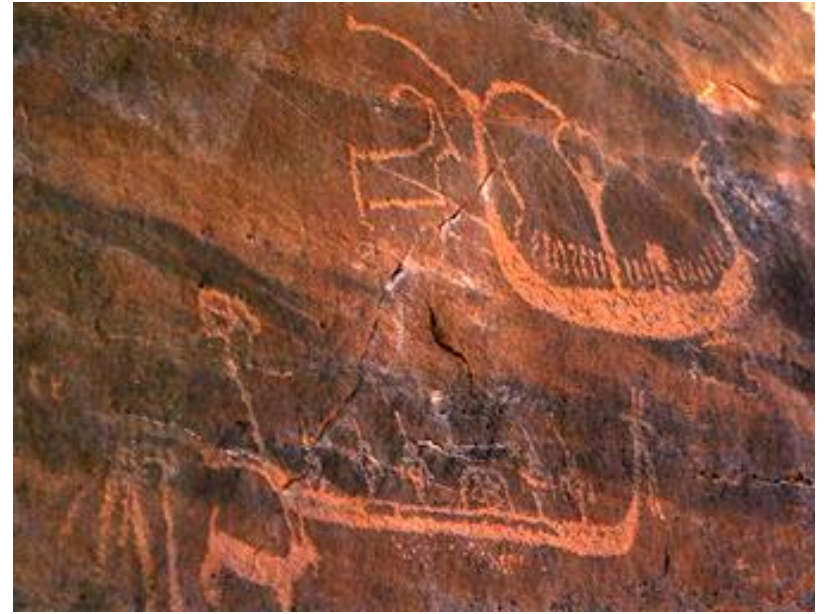
Reed raft tradition existed on the island of Corfu until the early 1970's (the vessel-type is called *papyrella*) but the dugout canoe tradition did not survive in the Mediterranean



Some of the earliest representations of boats in Egypt and Mesopotamia are reed-built

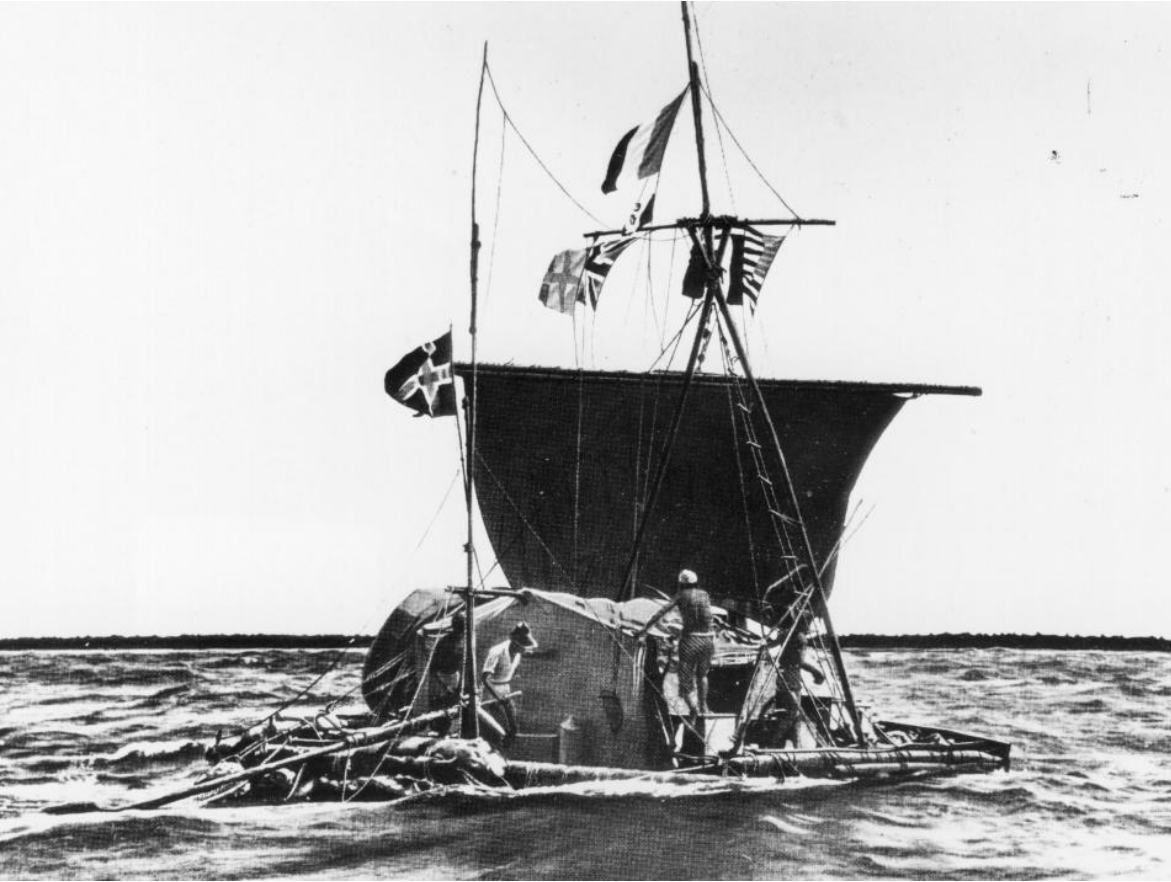


Akkadian boat seal (ca. 2300 BCE)

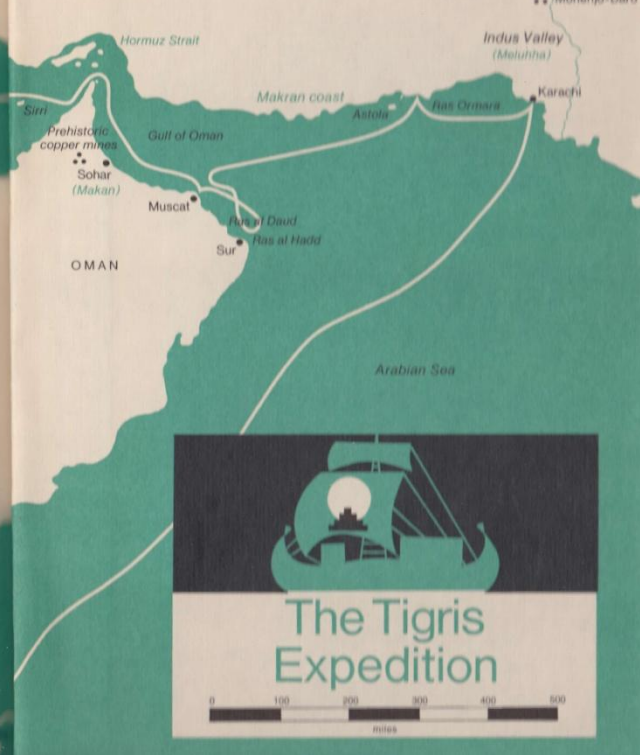


Petroglyphs of reed boats from the eastern desert in Egypt (ca. 3500 BCE)

A precedent had been set with the adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, who achieved fame for his reed boat reconstructions and trials of *Kon-Tiki* and *Tigris* vessels



Kon-Tiki expedition (1947): From Peru to the Polynesian Islands



Tigris expedition (1978): From the marshes of southern Iraq to Djibouti

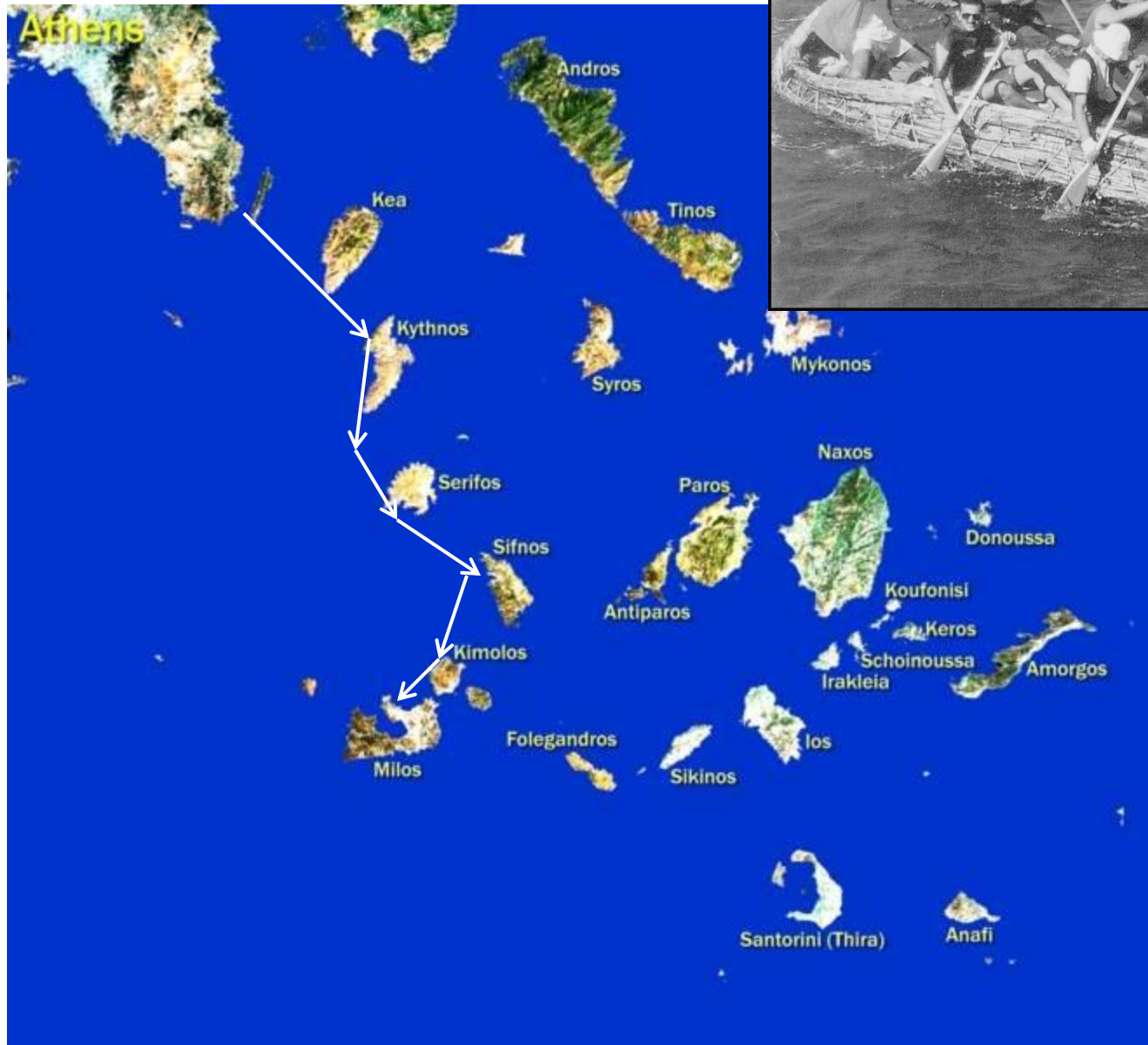
Back to the Mesolithic and Neolithic

Sea trials: paddling a dugout canoe vs. paddling a reed raft



Both could achieve a cruising speed of 1.5 knots, paddling 7 hours a day

Harry Tzalas' *papyrella* reconstruction and trials to Melos, the source of obsidian in the Aegean



This distance of 72.5 nautical miles was achieved in 51 hours 45 minutes over 7 days