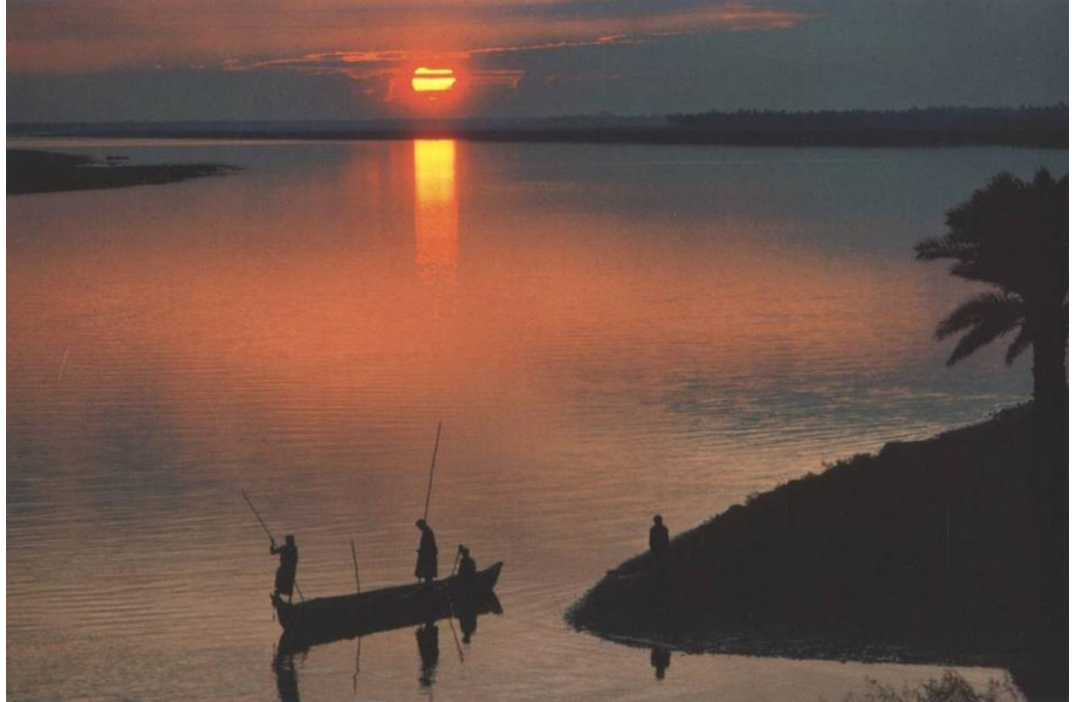
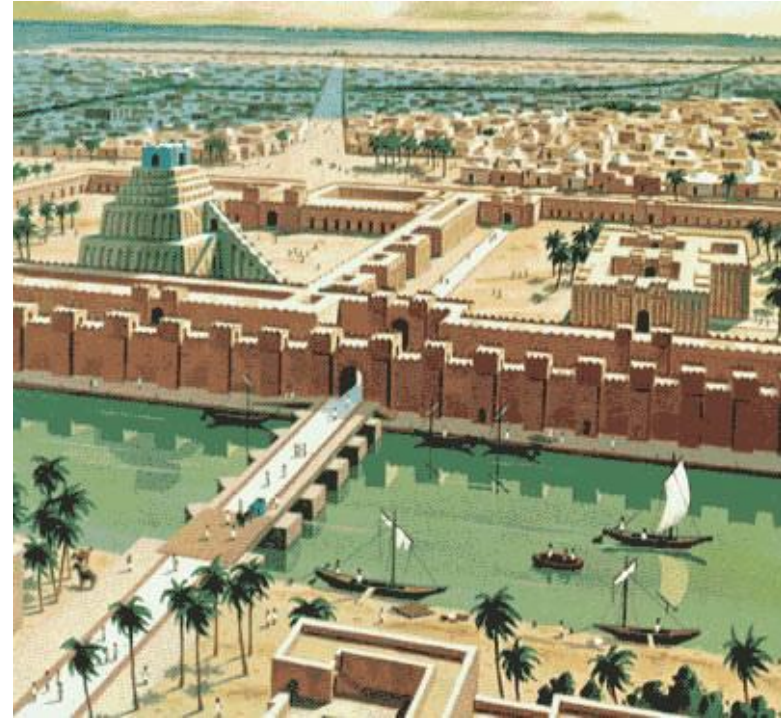


Boats and ships and the world's first cities in Mesopotamia



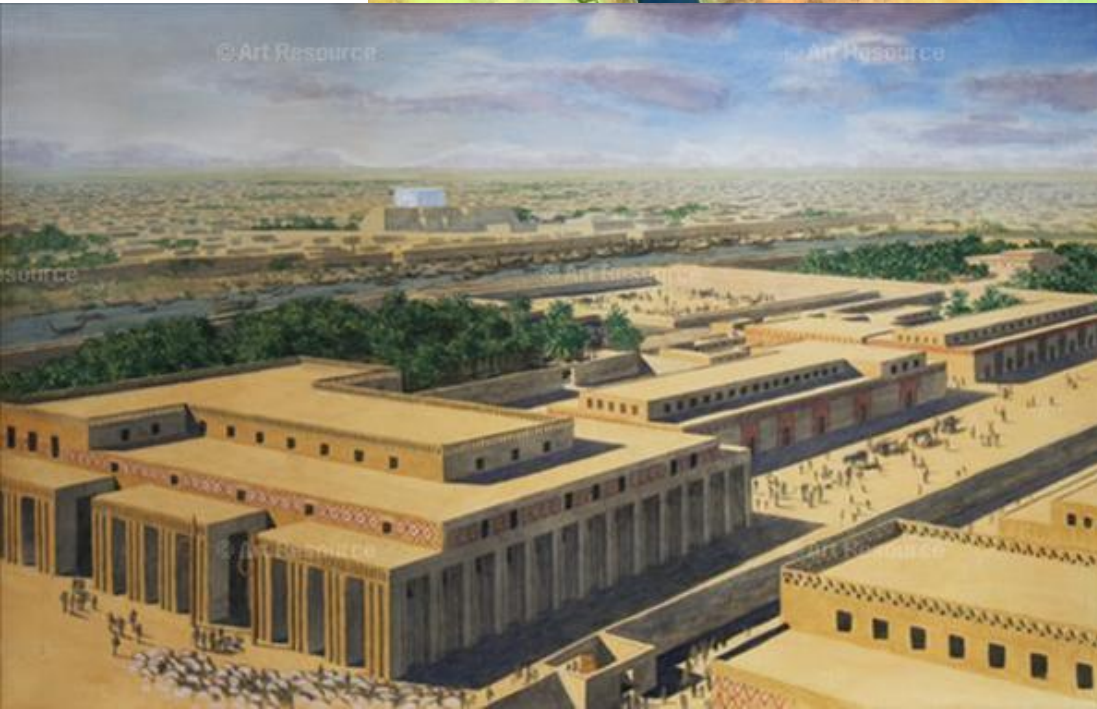
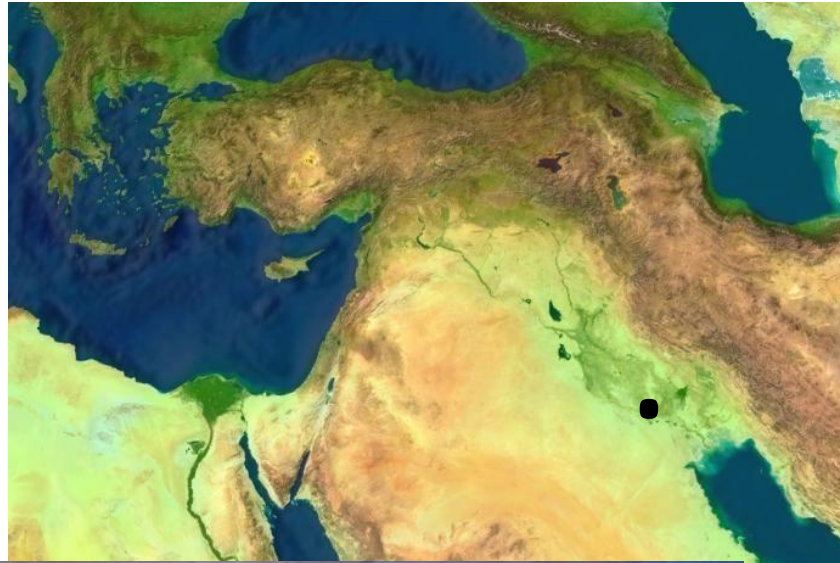
‘The formative processes leading to the world’s first urban civilization cannot be understood except as a creative adaptation to the priceless resource of Euphrates water.’
(Robert Adams, 1981)





The world's first states formed in the regions of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The riverine regions of Mesopotamia and Egypt are striking not only for their early, prodigious and enduring civilizations and economic base, but also for a notable deficiency in raw resources

The Late Uruk period (ca. 3600-3100 BCE): boat symbolism in the world's first city



The ancient urban centres of Uruk and Ur were much closer to the sea than they are today



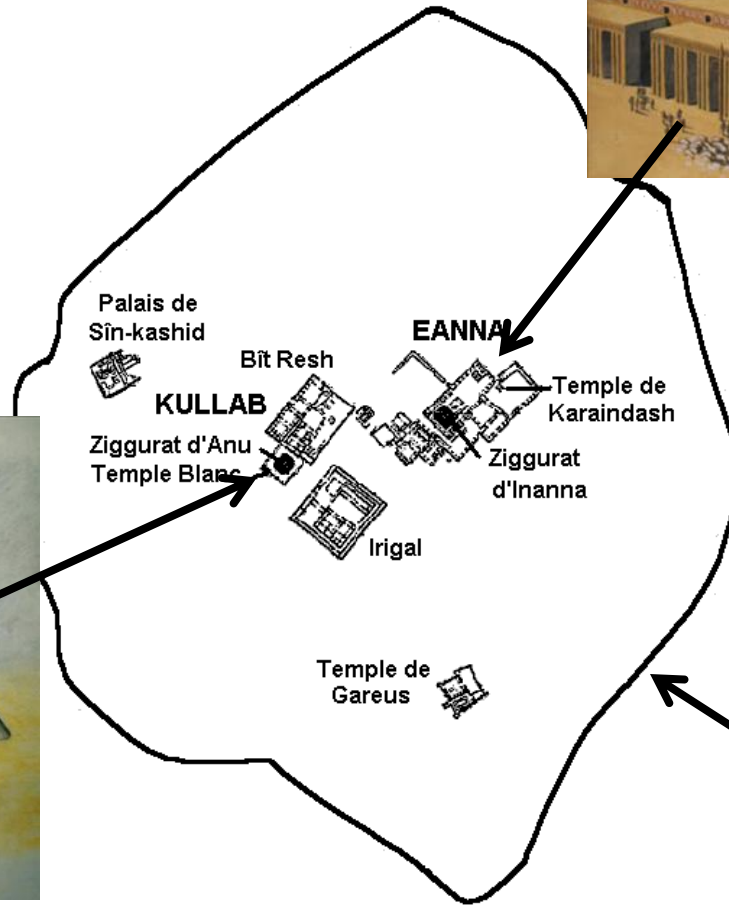
Uruk, ca. 3100 BCE

Reconstructions of the city of Uruk (as it looked ca. 3100 BCE)

White Temple of the
Anu Ziggurat



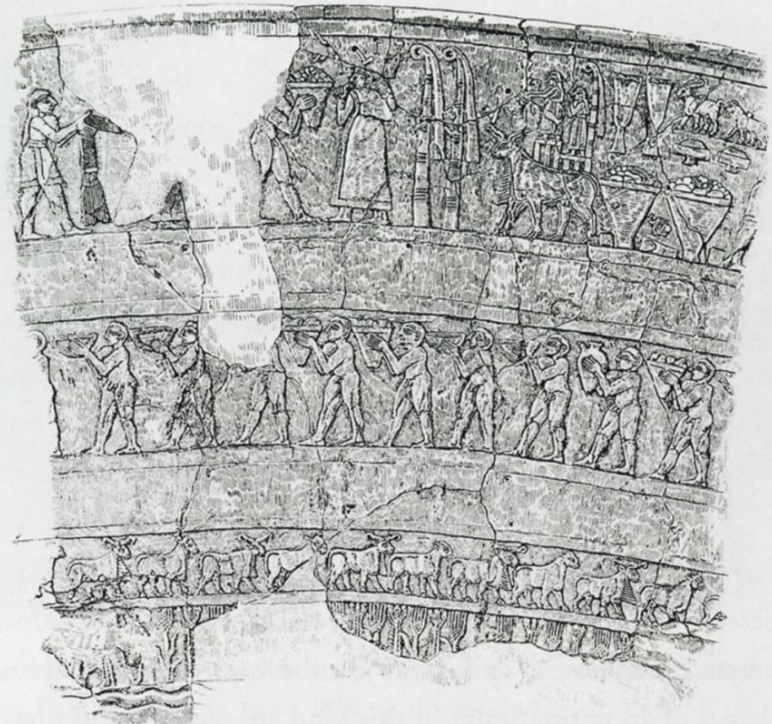
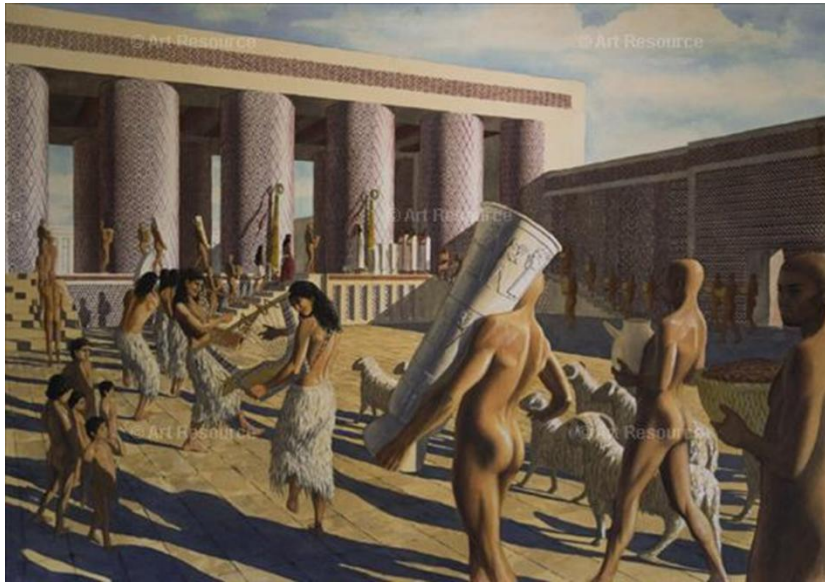
0 500 m



Eanna ceremonial precinct

city wall

Boat representations on Uruk cylinder seals (the goddess Eanna symbolized by the paired reed bundles)





Eanna precinct of Uruk



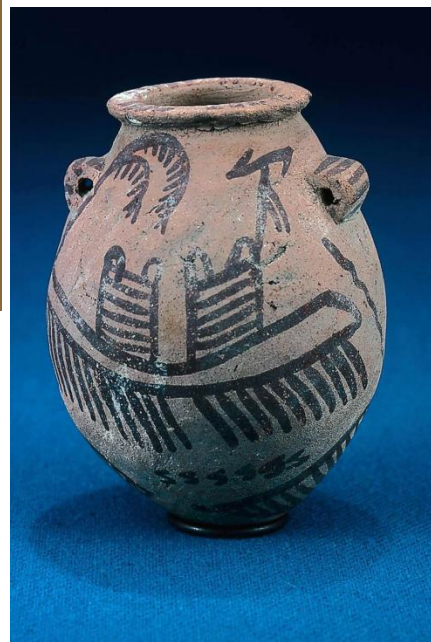
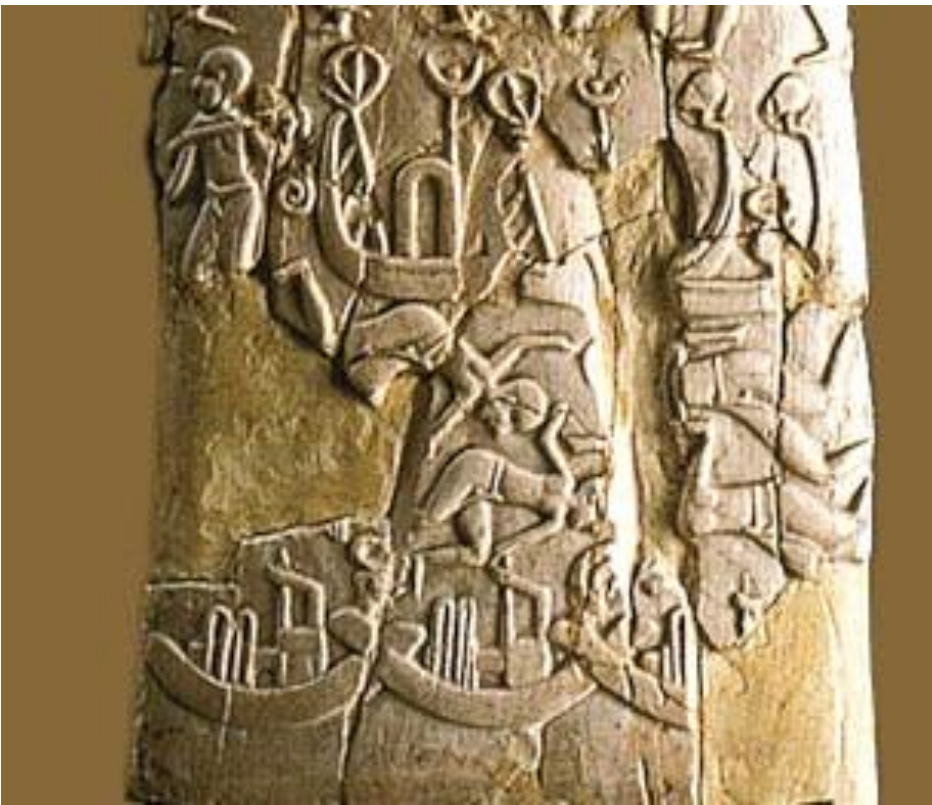
Reconstruction based on cylinder seals

The Gebel el-Arak Knife (looted from a grave in Upper Egypt, near Abydos)

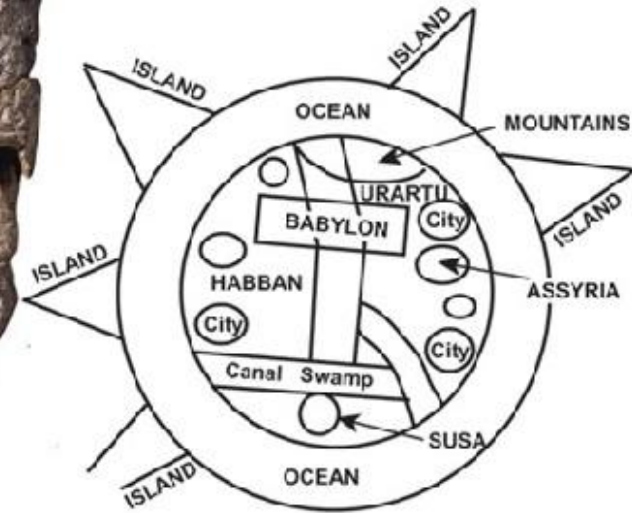


***some kind of (ritual-idealized?) battle on one side, with representations of ships
***master of animals and lion hunt scenes on the other
***this is all very Uruk Mesopotamian looking, with one exception





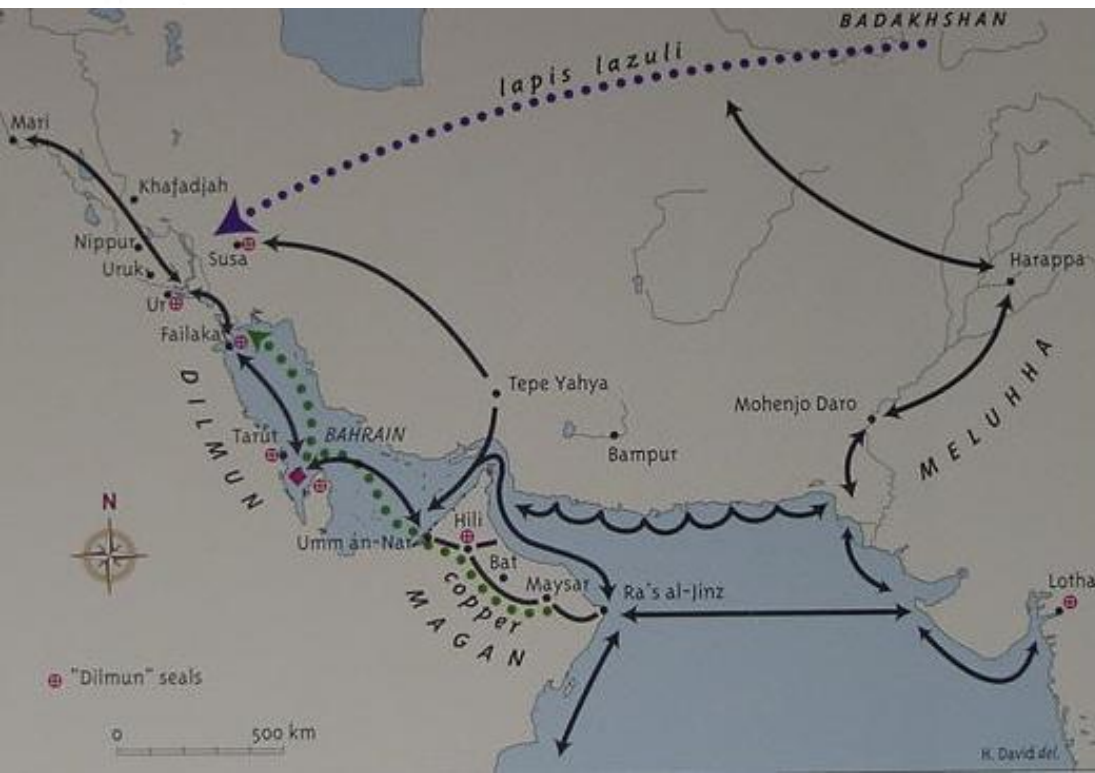
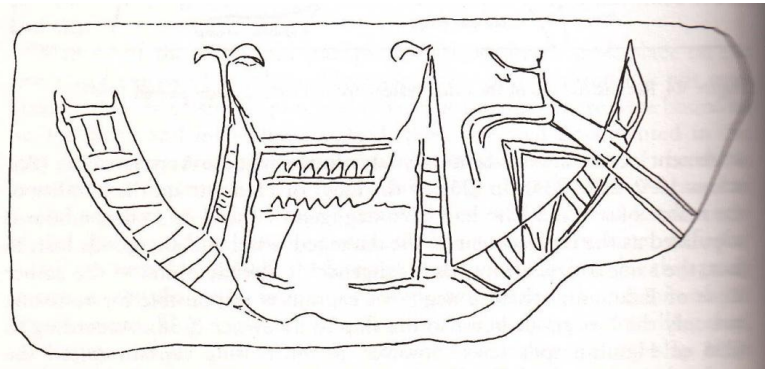
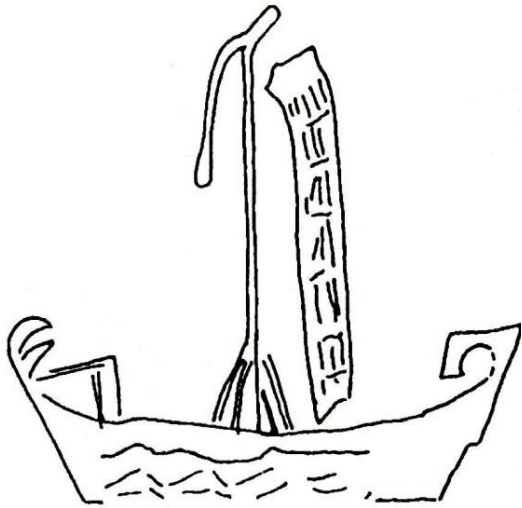
The ideological significance of boats and ships in early Mesopotamia (ca. 3500-2000 BCE)



A Babylonian map of the earth

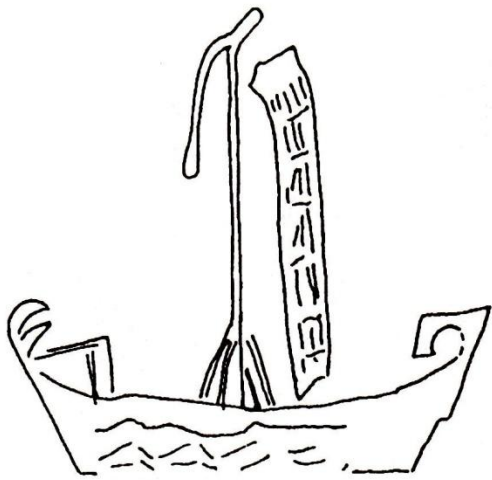
- Shamash, the sun god (from a cylinder seal, ca. 2300 BCE), delivered by a minor 'boat deity'
- **Shamash could also travel (across the sky) on horseback or in a chariot
 - **cult statues of gods travelled on boats in ritual processions to visit one another during festivals
 - **there is no evidence for a death cult related to ships or boat navigation (contrast with Egypt)

Materials and ships from distant origins



‘The ships from Meluhha
the ships from Magan
the ships from Dilmun
he made tie-up alongside
the quay of Akkad’

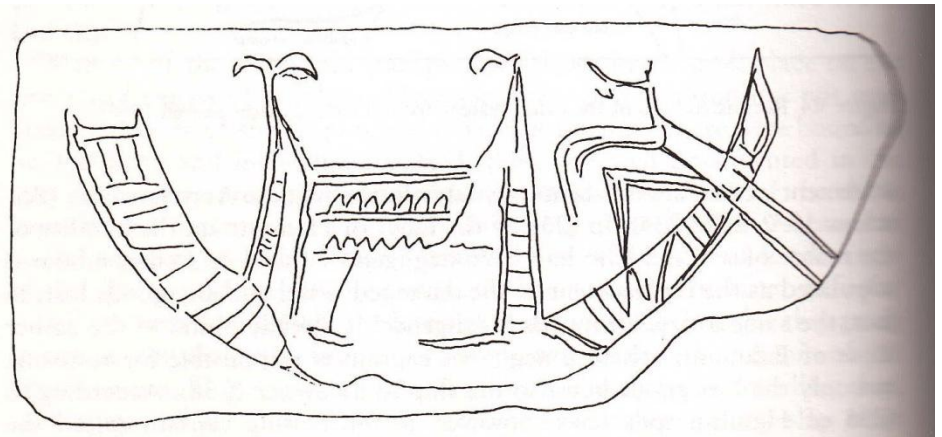
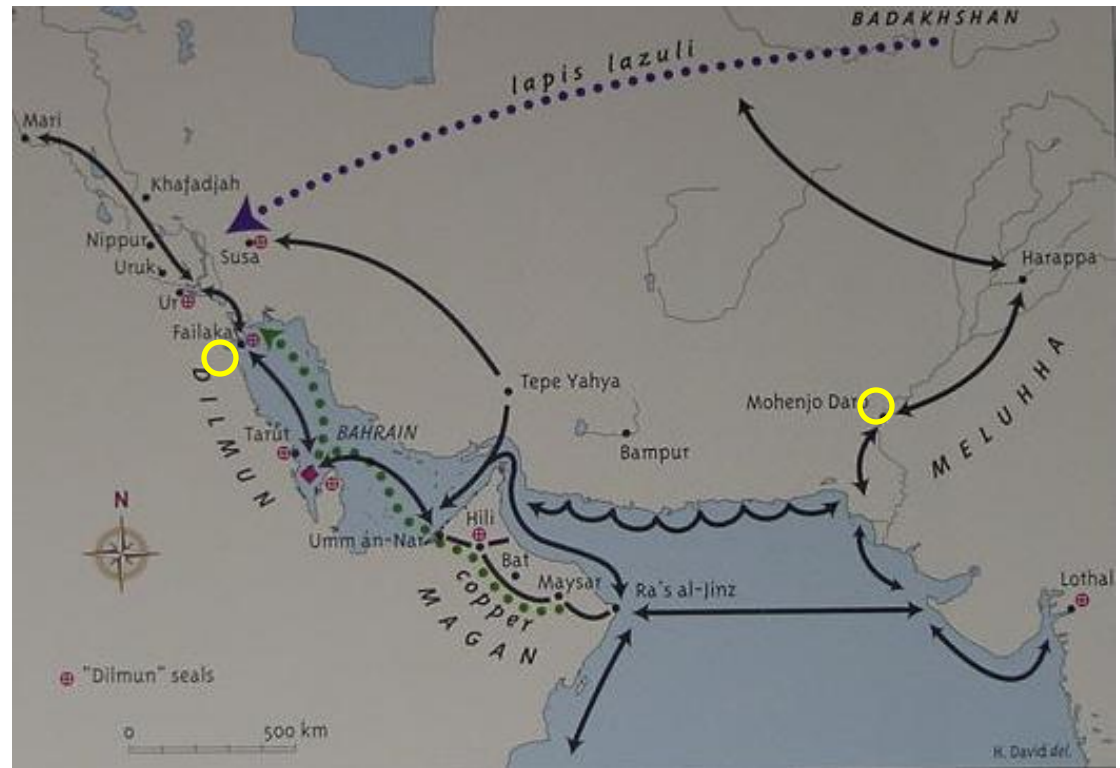
(Sargon of Akkad,
ca. 2270-2215 BCE)



A Dilmun ship
(stamp seal from
modern Kuwait,
ca. 1900 BCE)

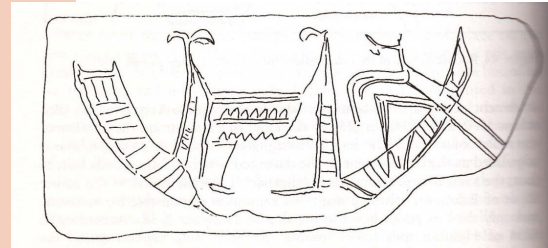
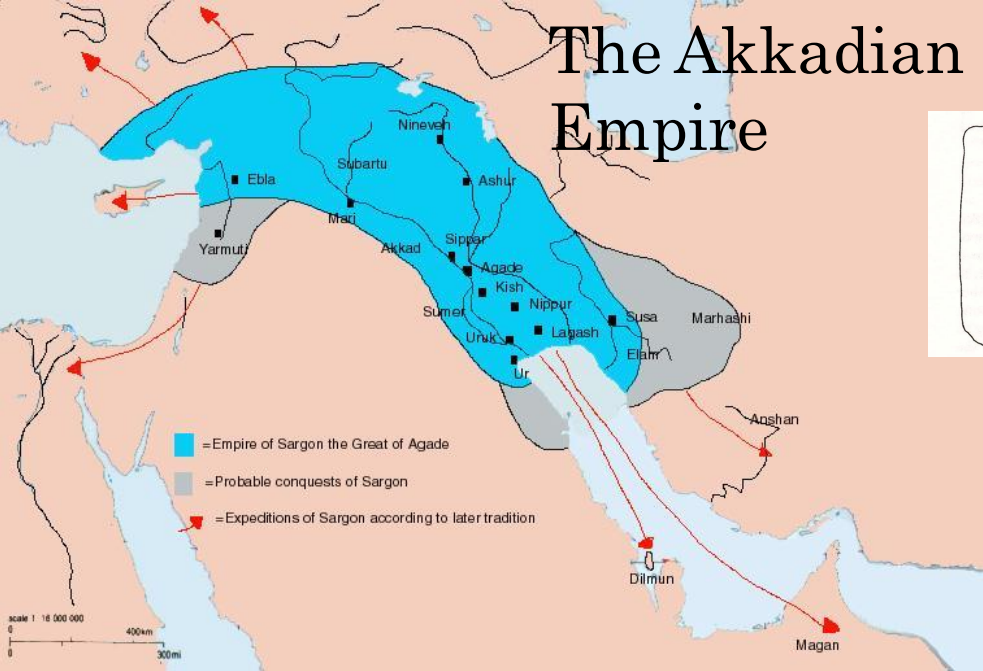


Thor Heyerdahl,
1978 Tigris expedition

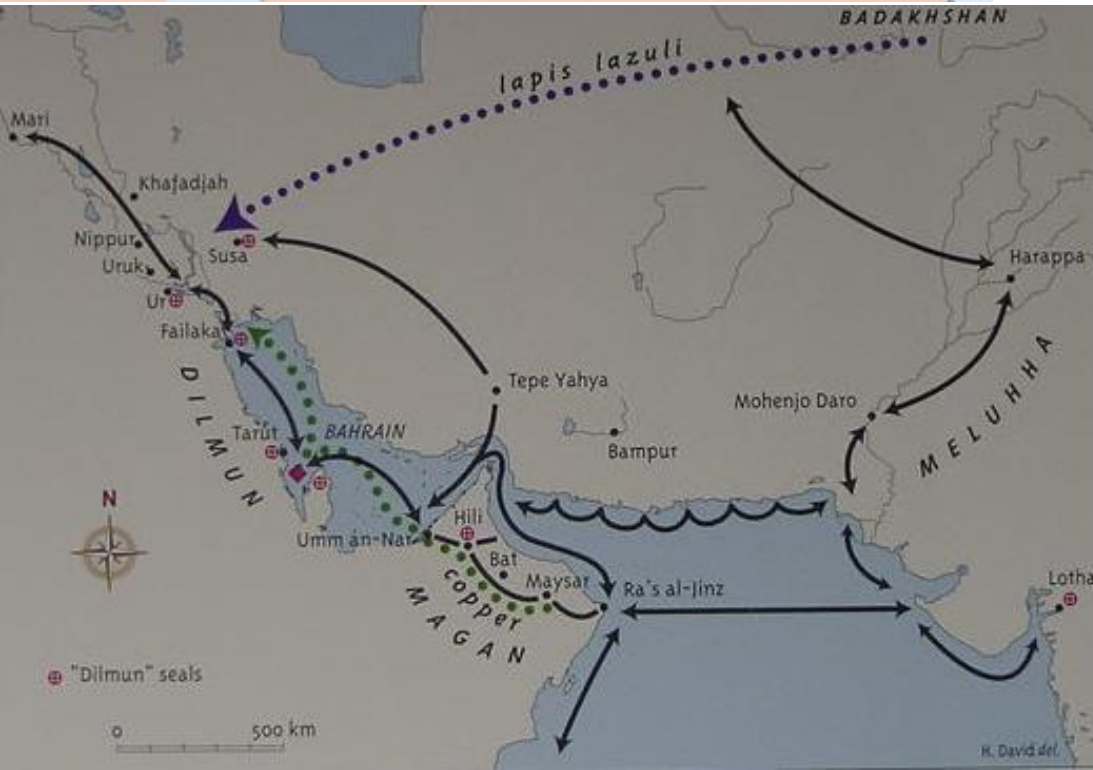
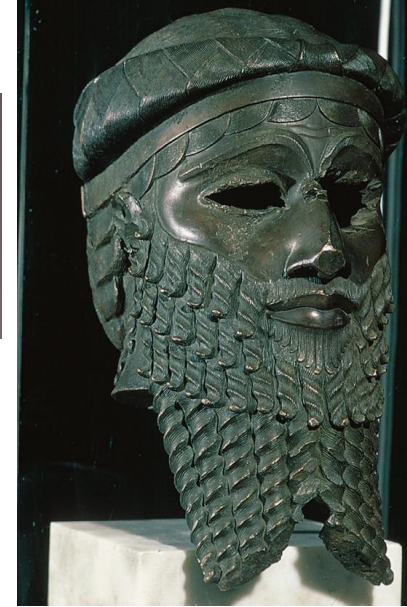


A Meluhha ship (stamp seal from Mohenjo Daro,
modern Pakistan, ca. 2300 BCE)

The Akkadian Empire

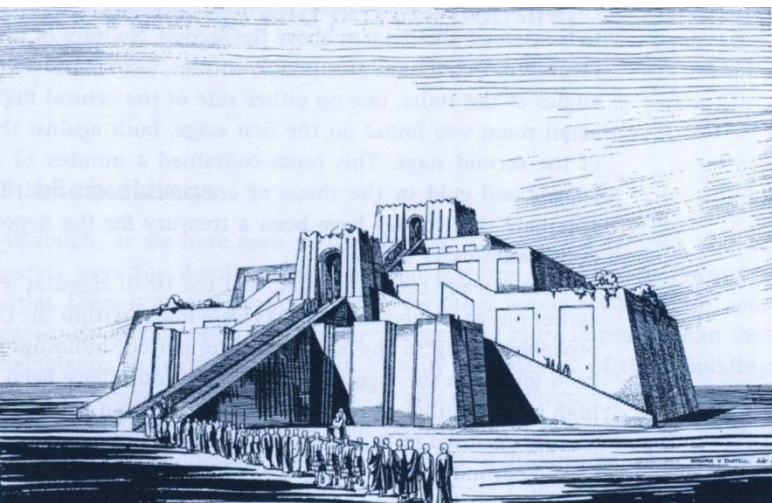


A Meluhha ship
(stamp seal from
modern Pakistan,
ca. 2300 BCE)

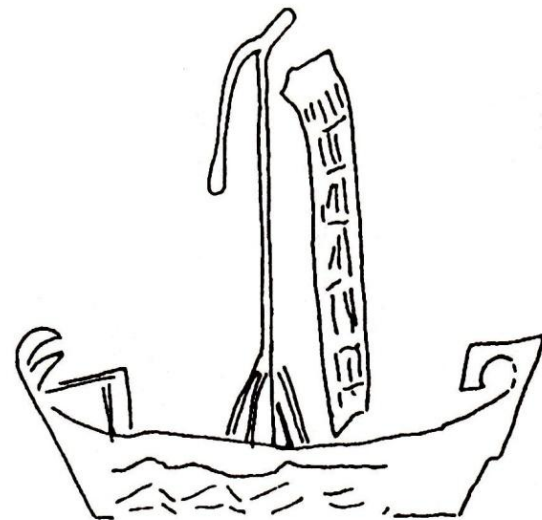


‘The ships from Meluhha
the ships from Magan
the ships from Dilmun
he made tie-up alongside
the quay of Akkad’

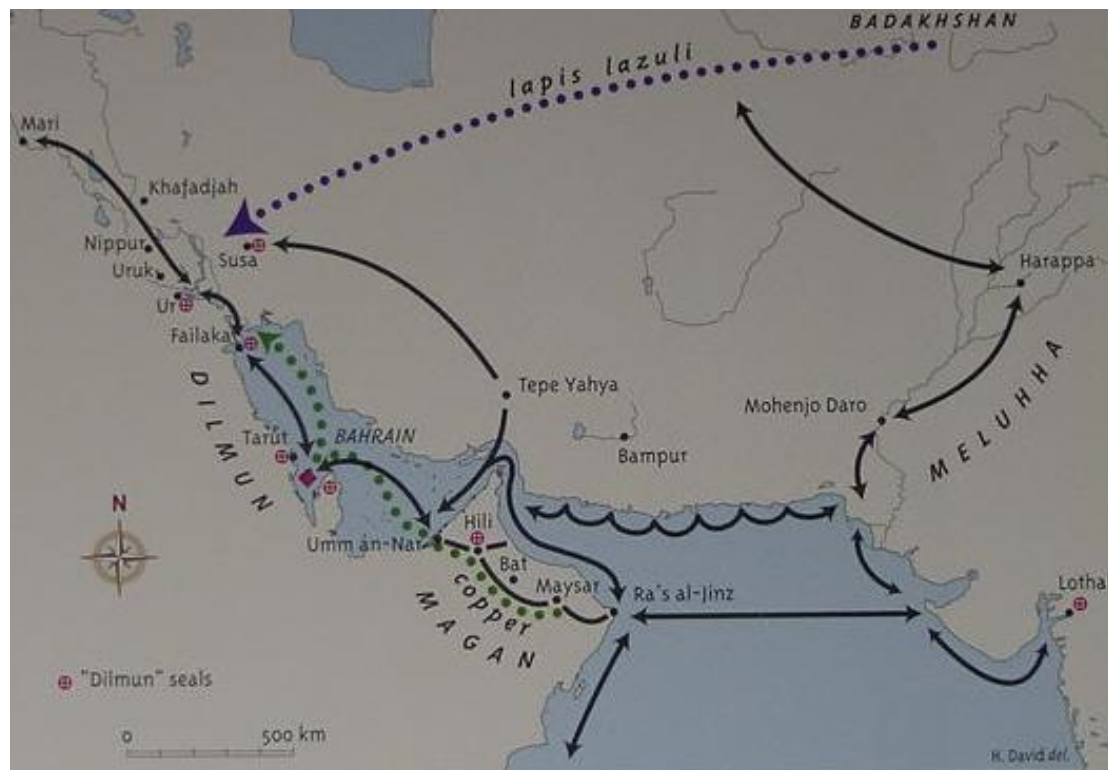
(claims Sargon of Akkad,
ca. 2270-2215 BCE)



Ur III ziggurat

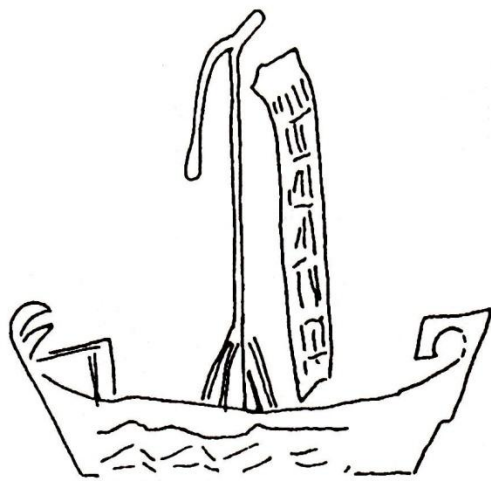


A Dilmun ship

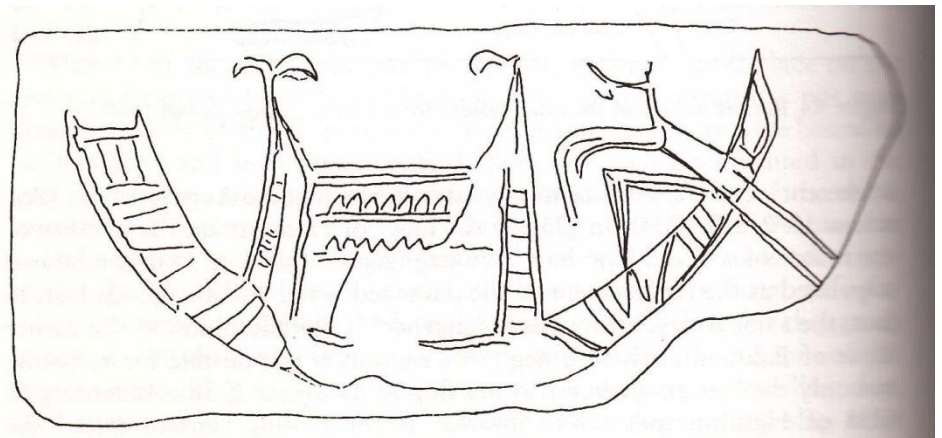
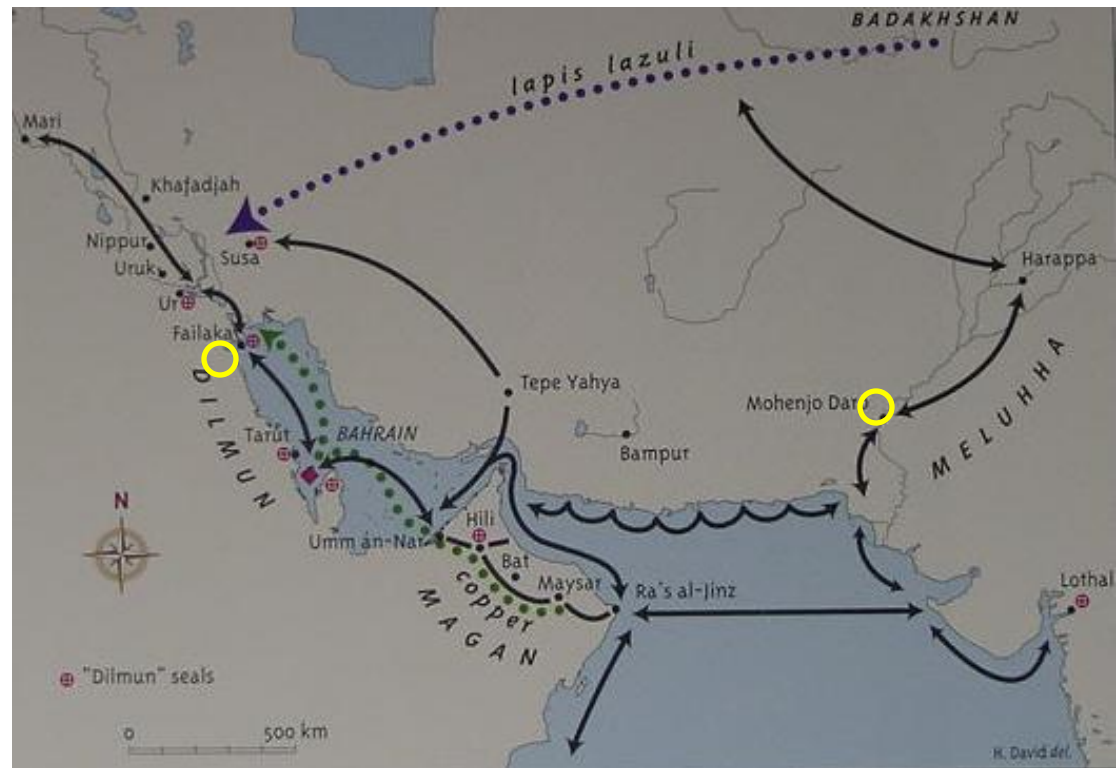


Ur III text (ca. 2000 BCE)

Ships of Dilmun delivering ivory, timber, gold, lapis lazuli, and 'fish eyes'



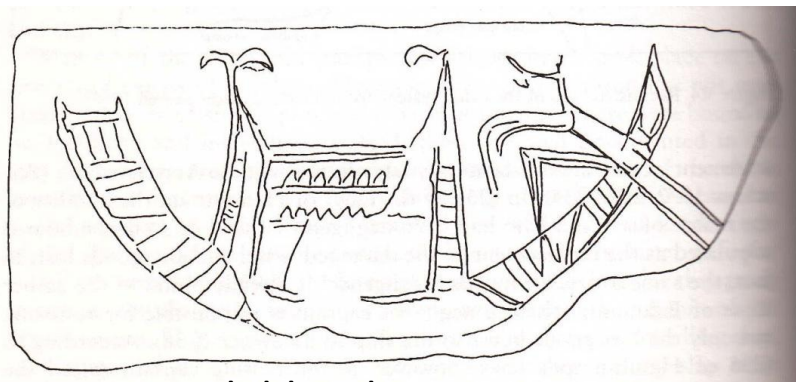
A Dilmun ship
(stamp seal from
modern Kuwait,
ca. 1900 BCE)



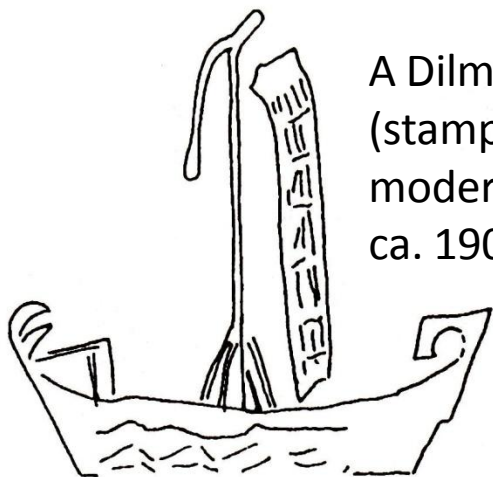
A Meluhha ship (stamp seal from Mohenjo Daro,
modern Pakistan, ca. 2300 BCE)



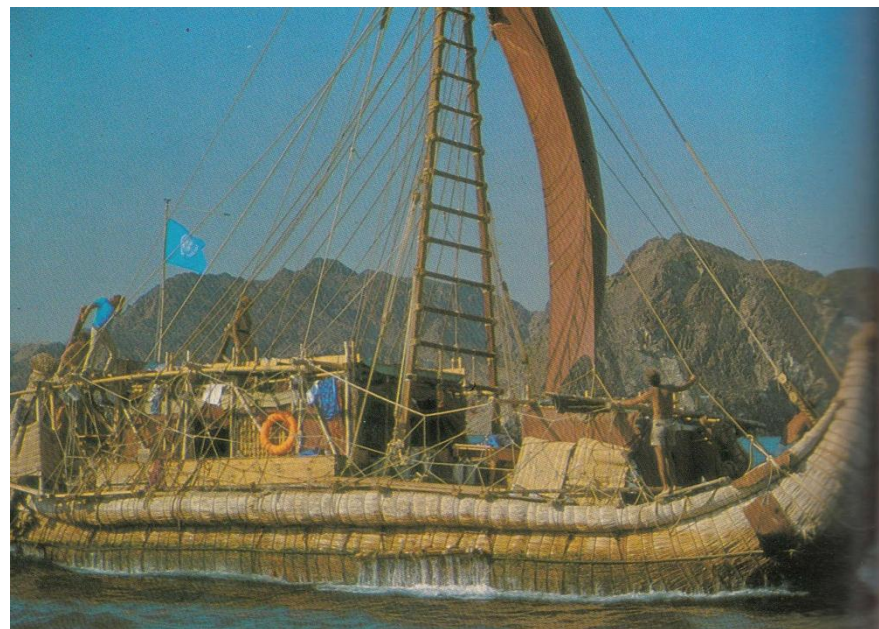
Akkadian cultic boat
(ca. 2300 BCE)



A Meluhha ship
(stamp seal from
modern Pakistan,
ca. 2300 BCE)



A Dilmun ship
(stamp seal from
modern Kuwait,
ca. 1900 BCE)



Thor Heyerdahl, Tigris expedition

Thor Heyerdahl, Tigris expedition

