

WERE WEST AFRICAN CANOES SEAWORTHY?

Scandinavia

— Northern Europe (= Scandinavia = Nordic Europe) is but one of the various comparisons that will be touched in pages below when discussing merits or otherwise of several vessel-types. There is a long history of seafaring in Scandinavia (= Nordic/north Europe) and can be attested as far as back as the Mesolithic to judge from the finding of bones of deep-sea fish during excavations, so are decidedly of from Before Common Era (= BCE). Carvings on rocks evidently starting with the Mesolithic (= Middle Stone Age) and carry on through the Neolithic (= New Stone Age) plus the Bronze Age depict vessels of various forms.

Easily the best known of the Scandinavian vessels are those of the people of the Common Era (= CE = AD) called the Vikings or Norse. By far the most famous of the Viking ships are the drakarr (= dragon-ships = long-ships), as shown by the excavations at Osberg (Norway), Gokstad (Norway) plus other places in Scandinavia. They were the fighting/war-ships, as opposed to knorr (= round-ship = merchant-men = cargo-ship).

The high esteem in which Viking seafaring is held by modern writers of maritime history is surely attested by the title of a book dealing with that of thousands of miles away. The book treats of the inhabitants of the Pacific called the Polynesians and the title is “The **Vikings** of the Pacific” by Sir Peter Buck. The literary descriptions the long sleek drakarr are matched by the excavated vessels already referred to. This was taken to more extreme lengths in other written accounts, as shown by such as “Notes on Giant Ships” (on the Old & Sold site online). Particular instances include the Moon-ship (= that of the Moon-god named Navde) but rather more famous is that named Hringhorni better known as the Sun-ship belonging to Balder.

Having seen that parallels appear thousands of miles away, it is perhaps no great surprise that other seafaring nations also had legends of giant vessels. Especially well known are the giant Chinese treasure-ships of the fleet of Zheng-he (= Cheng-ho) going across the Indian Ocean. Rather less famous are those referred to in such Indian epics as the Rigveda. Coming towards the western Indian Ocean (= Erythraean Sea) and the Near East are the various forms of the Great Flood where great ships are most famously known via the Ark of Noah. There are east African forms of these Great Flood myths with the implied vast size of the vessels seeing the Great Flood out. West Africa had them too according to the African Creation site plus Alice Linsley (several papers on Just Genesis online) discussing Mande and Bornu (= Land of Noah?) traditions respectively. Near the points where speakers of Austronesian languages from mainly Indonesia became the Polynesians of the Pacific, there are yet more tales about gigantic vessels.

It may well be that as “The Vikings of the Pacific”, the feats of navigation plus long-distance voyaging of the Polynesians to even the remotest of islands might lead to direct comparisons of the Vikings of Scandinavia and the Polynesians of the Pacific.

Round-shaped merchantmen/cargo-ships were the basis of Viking trade but as normal, it is the warship/longship that takes most attention. Long narrow sea-craft achieve stabilising balance in various ways. When canoes, this can be done by methods that include large size, another is by lashing two canoes together that over time has one reduced in size to become stabilising floats or outriggers but sometimes

there are two such floats. The drakarr is one of the types achieving stability at sea by adding a keel.

Another feature of their construction is streamlined design plus construction of the Viking longships. This was seen to have prompted great admiration by ancient and modern historians. This was also seen to have been proven by the excavation of the Viking ships at several places including that at Gokstad and shows they were not the fairy-tales they were once thought to be. A replica of the Gokstad ship has given valuable evidence of the seaworthiness of these Viking ships.

Somewhat less admiring comments include that by the captain of the replica Gokstad reported by Percy Handford (*An Illustrated History of Small Boats* 1974). This was “that the hull worked a lot” which seems to be code for saying that the Gokstad leaked badly. This apparently fits with notions that despite the widespread idea of Viking ships going on non-stop journeys across seas, most of their voyages were strictly within sight of land. Progress was usually via island to island and very few were what have been called out-of-the-sight-of-land (= ootsol).

When the Vikings did go on non-ootsol sailings, they practiced the kind of navigation taking us far away to the Indian Sub-continent and which caused Pliny (1st c. CE Roman) to dismiss any possibility of any kind of science on the island that at various times was severally called Taprobane, Ceylon plus Sri Lanka. This particularly means use of birds for navigation, as when Iceland was rediscovered. When looking at the comparisons of Polynesian and Viking navigation and/or pilotage, some of the instances of Viking by George Marcus (*The Conquest of the North Atlantic* 1998) should give pause for thought at the very least.

Marcus (ib.) tells of Vikings having lost all sense of direction when at sea and that this could last up to a fortnight. He also wrote of Thorsteinn approaching harbour and running his ship aground. Another incident from Marcus (ib.) has Ogmund coming into a mooring and when doing so, collided with other craft and actually sunk another longship. The description of this episode from Ogmund’s own crew quoted by Marcus is that this was “lubberly” seamanship.

Greece

The Balkan Peninsula is in a corner of Europe opposite to that of Scandinavia in the northwest of the same continent. This puts the Balkans in the southeast of Europe. Undoubtedly, easily the best known portion of this Peninsula is the Greek mainland plus the Greek islands dotted across the Aegean Sea parts of the east Mediterranean.

There is again a long history of Aegeo/Greek seafaring. Thus apparently belonging to the Final Palaeolithic (= Old Stone Age)/Early Mesolithic overlap is the transporting of the material called obsidian from Melos to Francthi. There are ca. 80 miles of open sea between the Aegean island of Melos and Francthi Cave in the Peloponnese Peninsula. Sea-craft used were probably akin to those depicted on the Early Neolithic objects of “frying-pan” shape from the Aegean archipelago called the Cyclades. The best-known of the regional island cultures is that of the Later Neolithic on the island of Crete. This is the Minoan. The Minoan Culture has the approximate runs ca. 3000-2200/2000 BCE; Middle Minoan ca. 2000/1500 BCE; ca. Late Minoan 1500/1000 BCE.

The Minoan Culture seems to have been closed out by that named after the city on the Greek mainland named Mycenae. It seems the Minoans were replaced by the Mycenaeans over most of the east Mediterranean. The ships of the Mycenaeans are those of the Greeks described in the long epic poems by Homer (10th/9th c. BCE)

called the Iliad plus Odyssey. This especially means The Catalogue of Ships section of the Iliad that was so inspirational for Iron Age/Archaic and Classical Greeks. The warfare of the Homeric descriptions proved to be something that the Classical Greeks to be very good at. They were chosen by Ahmose II (= the Amasis of Greek authors) who was a 26th Egyptian Pharaoh ca. 570/525 BCE to act as mercenaries in a successful conquest of the island of Cyprus.

The replacement of the Mycenaean Greeks by those called the Dorians was part of the serious disturbances that saw the toppling of Mycenaean rulers of Greece plus Aegean islands; the same of the Hittite Empire of Anatolia (= most of modern Turkey plus attempted conquests of Egypt).

It seems that a word from one of the Semitic languages that were spoken by at least some the Pre-Greek inhabitants that were either ousted or absorbed by the Mycenaeans gave these earliest Greeks their word for the sea. This arises from the fact that Greek is a language of Indo/European (= I/E) type and the earliest I/E-speakers were land-dwellers and best were very lubberly sailors. This circumstance is how the Pre-Greek *thalassa* (= the sea) was adopted by the early I/E-speakers when they took up seafaring. Homer tells us the Phoenicians were around at the time of the war between the Mycenaean Greeks and Troy and it is later Greeks telling us that from the speakers of the Semitic language came some early Greek methods of navigation.

If there are negatives about the length of voyages by the Vikings, this pales against those applicable to the Greeks to judge from books by such authorities by Lionel Casson (*The Ancient Mariners* 1991) plus Peter Green (*A Concise History of Ancient Greece* 1991).

Casson (ib.) wrote of the great Mycenaean hero-king named Nestor described by Homer as falling to his knees and praying to Zeus on having survived an inter-island crossing to the island of Euboea that Casson points out comments is but 50 miles. The book by Green (ib.) lauds achievements of Classical Greece but he too has some caustic remarks to make about the supposed nautical prowess of the Classical Greeks. He too says that the later Greeks were reluctant to undertake ootsol voyages that means they went on journeys remaining inside brown-water or coastal seas rather than blue-water or open-sea/oceanic waters.

More indications of Mycenaeans learning to cope with the sea is seemingly further shown by remembrance of rafts not ships, as in Homeric reports of Odysseus (= Ulysses) and raft-building. A Swedish authority on ancient ships was Bjorn Landstrom (*The Ship* 1961). Landstrom (ib.) compared ships depicted in Mycenaean contexts and canoes of the Bismarck Islands of the west Pacific.

This will mean that most of the “splendid” black ships of “The Catalogue of Ships” carrying the Mycenaean Greeks to war to fight in Anatolia against Troy were little better than dugout-canoes. Nor should it be overlooked that given the choice of Phoenicians and Greeks to take their ships round Africa, the Egyptians chose the former. Given that from the Mycenaean to Classical Greeks, their ships were for inner-sea not oceanic conditions, the Casson (ib.) comment that early Greek ships were of inferior construction to the Viking ships that were intended for oceanic conditions probably means that inferior construction pertains throughout this period.

Canaan/Phoenicia

The homeland of the Phoenicians has been placed anywhere between the Indian Sub-continent and the modern-day Lebanon part of what the Old Testament calls Canaan that more or less equates with the archaeological province of

Syro/Palestine. There is a tendency to regard the Canaanites as the Bronze Age inhabitants of Canaan and Phoenicians as Iron Age inhabitants of its coastal fringe.

Until relatively recently, the received wisdom was that Bronze Age goods in the east Mediterranean came in the bottoms of Aegeo/Mycenaean ships. A change has come with the excavations of wrecked ships at Cape Gelidonya (Turkey), Uluburun (off Bodrum, Turkey), etc. They have prompted suggestions that they are most probably Canaanite or even Phoenician. Perhaps Proto-Phoenician might be a better label. On the other hand, this would accord with Phoenicians appearing in Homer's works but which is sometimes treated as anomalous.

So far as is known to this writer, no assessment has been made of carrying capacity of the Gelidonya wreck but that of the Uluburun vessel was guesstimated at 10/15 tons. If it was Canaanite/Proto-Phoenician, further hints of their shipbuilding expertise seem shown by Semitic names of some engaged in building ships for Egypt. Yet we can be sure no part of ancient Canaan (inc. Israel) was Punt. Despite the several Punt trips, the prime element of The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor is that the Punt-bound ship sunk. Again despite this frequency, the inscription recording the Hatshepsut expedition there has Puntites asking how Egypt knew how to get there.

Another hint of the same may be that Phoenicians were chosen to apparently go on what may have been a Punt-trip continuation. A feature of the Phoenicians is their willingness to go much further at sea than the Greeks. Probably the most famous examples are the cities they founded at some distance from their Lebanese homeland. This includes such as Carthage (= Puni [in Latin], Tunisia), Gdr/Gadir (= Lat. Gades = Cadiz, Spain), Lixos or Lixus (south Morocco), etc.

Herodotus (5th c. BCE Greek) said the Egyptian Pharaoh named Necos (= Necho) sent Phoenicians round Africa on what we will call the Periplus (= Voyage) of Necho. At about the same date of ca. 600 BCE, the elders of Carthage sent Himilco to explore the possibilities of west Europe and Hanno to do the same of west Africa.

This evidence of collusion by Phoenicia and its Punic colonies seems reinforced by the Phoenico/Punic voyagers of the Periplus of Necho said by Herodotus to have sowed and reaped crops; knowing where to do so, despite growing seasons being the opposite of that in the homeland; apparently being allowed to do so. To this can be added that such as Pliny, Plutarch (1st c. CE), Martianus Capella (4th c. CE), etc, holding that Hanno went round the southern tip of England. Further is that with the Phoenico/Punic ship-types seems proven on west European coast by that called a hippos depicted on an Aliseda Portugal) jewel plus that called a golah being echoed by the Caergwle (nth. Wales) bowl according to Christopher Hawkes (cited by Johnstone ib.). Hippoi (plural of hippos) went from Gadir to brave fishing in Atlantic waters off Morocco and that Strabo (1st c. BCE) says was found by Eudoxus (2nd c. BCE) in east Africa has prompted some writers to add this to the Phoenico/Punic vessels having rounded southern Africa.

A Phoenician homeland in India has been seen as part of such Asura giving Semitic Assyria, Pani giving Sem. Poeni (= Phoenicia), Chola giving Sem. Chaldea, etc. These are unlikely etymologies; the more so as Pani seems to indicate thieves in Indian epics and any Pani equation with the Latin term of Poeni for the Phoenicians and giving us such as Puni, Punic, Phoenico/Punic, etc, runs into the problem of that the Latin word probably derives from such as the Greek phoinix. This seems to mean red-skinned but is but one of numerous Greek terms from which the name of the Phoenicians could have come and being that Latin Poeni/Puni derives from any one of them, means they are far too late to have any bearing on the Phoenician homeland.

Nor can this be used to attach these “red-skins” to such theories as those of messrs. Petrie (*The Making of Egypt* 1939), Rohl (*Test of Time* books), etc, as chronology tells against them. A later claim for Phoenicians on African coasts was that put forward by the Phoenicians that went on the *Periplus of Necho* noted by Herodotus who seriously doubted it. Even more open to question must be that Hanno also circumnavigated all of Africa.

Further doubts about the *Periplus of Hanno* also come to mind. We are told 30,000 would-be colonists came with Hanno and this agrees with the ca. 300 colonies that Strabo says were founded by the Carthaginians in parts of west Africa. However, the very number is questionable. So too is the fact that they are said to have been carried in the galley-like penteconter. The penteconter was a fast warship type, so may indicate a need to outspeed unfriendly local vessels but is manifestly an unlikely type for carrying large numbers of passengers. There is little support for the claimed several colonies in antiquity according to Strabo and there is only a little evidence of a Phoenico/Punic presence in Africa revealed by excavation.

Having seen there is a probable Semitic origin for the word of *thalassa* (= sea) occurring in the I/E language of Greek, further oddities appear according to Paul Johnstone (*The Sea-craft of Prehistory* 1980) plus others. Greek (= I/E) *anaji* (= *navis* = ship/boat) as Sem./Phoen. *oniyath* or *oni* (= ship/boat; IE/Gk. *kerkouris* (= warship) as Sem./Phoen. *kirkarah/gurgurru*; IE/Gk. *gaulos* (= cargo-ship) as Sem./Phoen. *golah*.

In the famous “*History of Phoenicia*”, George Rawlinson (1899) described Phoenician sea-craft as fragile. Even when having become Phoenico/Punic types, both the *golah* plus the hippos were the subject of Greek ridicule. The Greeks labelled the Phoenician *golah* as bathtubs. *Hippoi* were of very simple design and described by Strabo (1st c. BCE Greek) as a very poor class of ship.

Phoenicians were seen as the fount of Mediterranean navigation but navigation on this sea was described as “Egyptian” by *ibn Majid* (ca. 1430- ca. 1490 Arab). In “*The Navigator: Ahmad ibn Majid*”, Paul Lunde (*Aramco World* 2005) points out that there is a considerable difference in the ancient methods of navigation on the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean based on what is said by *ibn Majid*. Gerald Tibbetts (*Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese* 1981) treats this passage as ridiculing the Egypto/Phoenician methods.

India

Probably the first comprehensive work on Indian nautical history was by Radhukummud Mukherjee (*The History of Indian Shipping & Maritime Activity since Earliest Times* 1912). Expanding Indian influences towards Southeast Asia would be Indo-China (= Indianised China or where Ind. & Chinese culture met) plus Indonesia (= Indianised Islands = most of Island Southeast Asia [=ISEA]). This is where live most of the Indo-Malays speaking languages of the Austronesian group(s).

Such words from the Indian language of Sanskrit as *Varuna* (= Lord of the Sea), *yava* (= barley) and *vrihi* (= rice) loom large here, in that they appear to have reached ISEA. Thus *Varuna* first named Brunei may have been corrupted into the Indo-Malay/ISEA island-name of Borneo via Portuguese. From *yava* came the island-name of Java (Indonesia) that Elsdon Best (*Journal of the Polynesian Society* = *JPS* 1923) says can also spelt as *Jawa*, *Hawa*, *Sawa*, etc. In the Polynesian sense of Homeland it becomes *Savai* (Samoa), *Havai* (Tahiti), *Hawaiki* (again Tahiti), *Hawaii*, *Hawaiki* (Cook Islands), *Hawaiki* (part of one old name for New Zealand), etc.

It has been suggested that from *vrihi* came the names of *Vrihia* (= Land of Rice? [= one the ancient names of India]), as *vari* (rice?) as part of some words of the Polynesian settlers on Pacific islands and *Irihia* (a word taken to New Zealand with the Polynesians called Maoris). The article by Best (ib.) was “Origin of the Maori: The hidden homeland & its probable location” and with India well to the west, it may well be significant that *Uru* (= the west) is another of the vaguer Maori terms for the direction of the original homeland.

Best (ib.) cites opinion that the Indian Buddha is to be seen as the Maori *Putā* and Rong Xinjiang discussed “Land or Sea Route: Commentary on the Path of Transmission & Areas in which Buddhism was disseminated during the Han Period” to China. Xinjiang (ib.) was translated by Xingui Zhou (Platonic Papers 2004). He cites writers saying Indians had spread Buddhism to China by at least the 3rd c. BCE.

According to some of the sources cited by Best (ib.), *Uru* applied to a large area vaguely west of India. This seems likely to indicate very roughly the region of the Harappan/Indus Culture itself a major candidate for being *Meluhha* that is evidently another ancient synonym for the west of “India” (= Bangladesh, India & Pakistan). *Western Bharat* (= an ancient term for “India”) was also the location of the Harappan dock at *Lothal* (India) claimed to be the oldest in the world.

Indian sources are usually sought for such small mammals as Asian house-shrews, black rats, etc. When we realise they are small enough to hide away in even open canoes and taken to the remotest of islands, this has interest when these same animals are found during excavations on Madagascar. To these probable Indian stowaways can be added that that the *Dvipa Mahal* (=Great Island) may be Madagascar plus what is said by messrs. Hromnik (Indo-Africa 1981) and Mallows (The Mystery of the Great Zimbabwe 1985) about the building of Great Zimbabwe.

That *Mount Meru* as the Hindu version of the Greek *Mt. Olympus* being echoed by temples as far away as Indonesia plus the Far East is generally accepted. Notions that the Pyramids of Egypt belong here too go as far back as the early 19th c. to judge from the Faber article in *Blackwell’s Magazine* (1819). There is also suggested equation of *Asura* as Assyria, *Pani* as *Poeni* (= Phoenicians), *Chola* as *Chaldea*, etc, on Hindu Wisdom (online).

India was a major centre of double-canoes under the general class-names of *shangada*, *kattu-maran*, etc. The spellings of *sangadam*, *sangara*, *jangada*, etc, are attested across the Indian Ocean. Indians on Atlantic coasts seem shown on *Vesconte/Sanudo Maps* (13th c. Italian) as having passed from the Indian to the Atlantic; got as far north as the *Green Isles* (= *Cape Verde Islands*?); comments by such as *Leopold Senghor* (online), *Bernard Sargent* (online), etc; the *jangadas* of Brazil; the Spanish copying of double-canoes in Mexico, etc.

The claimed Indian component among the Proto/Early Polynesians is not generally accepted these days. The idea that the earliest Chinese Buddhism came with Indians by sea is dismissed in the long article by Rong Xinjiang (ib.). If the vast size of ships in *Zheng-he/Cheng-ho’s* Chinese fleet can prompt scepticism, there is even less evidence for the large ships of the Indian epics.

Sean McGrail (The Boats of the World 2004) is one of those citing doubts about whether the *Lothal* dockyard is any more than a very large water-tank. The *Asura/Assyria*, *Pani/Poeni*, *Chola/Chaldean*, etc, equations can also be safely aside. If there are doubts about the claimed gigantic size of the Chinese treasure ships of the *Cheng-ho* (= *Zheng-he*) fleets, there is even less evidence for those described in the Indian epics. The denying of an Indian origin for the Egyptian Pyramids can also followed and that claimed for the Zimbabwe structures of southern Africa was denied

as far back as James Hornell (Man 1928: Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 1934).

If sailors of Greater India are to be judged by what was written by Pliny (1st c. Roman) about those of Taprobane (= Ceylon = Sri Lanka), he says they used birds in way-finding at sea because they did not know how to navigate. Even this low estimate of Indian maritime expertise is not allowed by Robert Dick-Read (The Phantom Voyagers 2005). Dick-Read (ib.) simply dismisses any notion of Indian maritime history. The links of ancient India with west Africa would be strengthened by the “Before Adam” books by Catherine Acholonu if they did not come replete with UFOs, space wars, Sahara resulting from nuclear war millions of years ago, etc.

Island Southeast Asia

The Dick-Read book deals with Indo/Malays from Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA) mainly speaking tongues of the Austronesian type among which are also those of Polynesia. The balance of opinion seems to be that the Austronesians left ISEA/Indonesia for first Melanesia then Micronesia plus Polynesia. On the eastern flank of Melanesia, it seems were the makers of pottery called Lapita Ware. Here Lapita-folk and Austronesians merged to become the proto-Polynesians. This has the support of genetics in form of mtDNA in terms of the express-train movement or the alternative term of slow-boat migration reinforced by Y-chromosome evidence.

According to the study of “Canoes of Oceania” by messrs. Haddon & Hornell (1936-8), the earliest migrations eastwards to the islands of the Pacific were on rafts then in canoes. This raft-first/canoe-next by yet more Austronesians but this time westwards across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar that are usually regarded as having done so on voyages of ca. 4000 miles of open sea of the Indian Ocean. To this can be added such as the Austronesian basis of the Malagasy language of Madagascar and the implements used for the scraping plus grating of coconuts.

Indo/Malays are held to have reached east Africa below or south of the Horn of Africa and such as Pyramids may attest them north of the Horn. When it comes to Pyramids, Mount Lalakon (Indonesia) is thought to be much older than those of Egypt. On the basis of the ISEA sources of the disease called elephantiasis, the kindred origin of types of banana said not appear in east Africa, types of instrument, Indo/Malays are held to have reached west Africa. Alongside this is Eric de Bisschop (The Voyage of the Kaimiloa 1939) proving a double-canoe could survive a three-ocean voyage from Honolulu (Hawaii) to Cannes (France) that included surviving passing from the Indian to the Atlantic Oceans. Bradley (ib.) shows the double-canoe was also known in west Africa.

Unfortunately for all this, the coconut scraper is too generalised an implement to be useful for marking antecedents. A sequence from double-canoes then to canoes with one float and those with two seems an orderly one but Hornell’s (Water Transport) 1946 map shows the Pacific has only canoes with a single float/outrigger but a mix of types across the Indian Ocean from ISEA to east Africa. Such sources as Robert Bowen (Mariner’s Mirror 1956), Louise Bradbury (Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt 1995), Roger Blench articles, etc, note raft-like vessels on Indian Ocean and Red Sea coasts. Blench holds that Pliny’s rati (= rafts) were probably not rafts proper but double-canoes (with platforms?).

Daft terminology was seen to apply to the both the so-called “slow-boat” plus “express-train” movements. The latter through the islands of the western Pacific seems almost designed to remove any need to invoke miscegenation between the

blacks naming Melanesia and the incoming Austronesians from ISEA, the more so given that the Lapita Ware-makers are identified with the black Melanesians.

It also seems reasonable to question another “express-train” movement but this time on very different grounds and as applied to the Austronesians going westwards. That Austronesian Indo-Malays went ca. 4000 miles non-stop has long seemed unlikely. The more so given that from several works by Roger Blench plus others, it seems there is good evidence for stopover points that mainly means islands. Given the connection with islands there is the Tamil word of Tyvan (= Islanders) for Pre-Tamils in south India but from Hornell’s many articles comes the fact that it relates to Ceylon/Sri Lanka removes any Indo-Malay linkage.

Mount Laloken as the possible inspiration of the Egyptian Pyramids because it is the earliest in the world, means that it joins those of Brazil, Cuicuilco (Mexico), Visoko (Bosnia), etc, as “the oldest in the world”. Or do we seriously assume the absurd proposition that all provided the inspiration for the Pyramids of Egypt (esp. the Stepped variety)?

With messrs. Worthington (JRAI 1933) and Chittick (International Journal of Nautical Archaeological 1980) noting of purely African traits for Great Lakes canoes plus sea-going mitepe (plural of mtepe) respectively, we can remove them from Indo/Malay sources. In any case, the claimed attribution of the proto-mtepe vessels to Indo/Malays wrecked in the Bajun Islands (Somalia) has left no tradition that the Bajunis know of (see East Africa & the Sea in Antiquity for references online).

Then we come to the matter of Austronesians in east Africa. If there are problems of proof about Phoenico/Punic settlers in west Africa, there is even less evidence for an Austronesian presence in east Africa.

Polynesia

The islands of the Pacific Ocean as a group have received many names. One of the oldest is Nusantara with a general meaning of simply islands stretching from Island Malaysia through Indonesia to the Philippines or from the eastern Indian Ocean to the western Pacific. This is again more or less what we saw was also called Island Southeast Asia or ISEA. Most of these islands belong to Indonesia or Indianised Islands (or Islands of the Indians?). More “nesias” based on the Greek nesos (= islands) are seen in Melanesia (= Black Islands/Islands of Blacks), Micronesia (= Small Islands) plus Polynesia (= Many Islands).

The obvious conclusion from this is that islands require use of boats. A major pioneering work by Alfred Haddon plus James Hornell is the still much-cited “Canoes of Oceania” published between 1936 and 1938. As seen already, they argued for the earliest migrants into the western Pacific having proceeded on rafts. This seems to have been into Melanesia then Micronesia followed by Polynesia.

It should not be overlooked that the Pacific is not just the largest of all our oceans but that inter-island travel involved enormous distances. This is well attested by what is called the Polynesian Triangle with its points at New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Island. In turn, this is held to attest the greatest feats of ancient maritime navigation of anywhere in the world.

Suggested long-distance voyages include a connection with the people to which the Luzia skeleton found in Brazil belonged. Others held to have taken place towards West-coast Americas involve those said in “Linguistic Evidence for a Polynesia/Southern California Contact” by messrs. Klar & Jones (Anthropological Linguistics 2005). Also “Diffusionism Reconsidered: Linguistic & Archaeological for Prehistoric Polynesian contact with southern California” by Terry Jones & Katherine

Klar (American Antiquity 2005). They regard as probable that a few early mid-Polynesian words as *tia (= sewn) plus *talai (= hewn) as Gabrielano ti'at (= sewn [plank?] canoe) and tarayna (= boat); mid-Poly. tumuRaa'au (= tree; timber) as Chumashan tomolo (= sewn-plank canoe). A Polynesian-type fishhook came from the Chumashan region.

Other proposed Polynesian contact-events with West-Coast Americas were thousands of miles to the south in Chile. Jones & Klar (American Antiquity 2009) is but one of the many sources telling us the only place in West-facing Americas where sewn-plank canoes appear is Chile. Here again are found the relevant fishhooks plus Polynesian-like ceremonial clubs. Undoubtedly one of the more interesting items found during excavations is the remains of chickens of a non-European type laying distinctive blue eggs that according to sources cited by Jones/Klar (ib.) state attest Polynesian influences in Chile.

It tends to be overlooked that the distances across the Pacific are immense, so the mind almost boggles at the vast distances that have to be sailed to get to some of the islands. For me, scepticism about the thousands of miles held to have been covered by the Austronesians seems but that claimed for Polynesian settlement is of a different order.

Between New Zealand and eastern Australia lies ca. 1350 miles and Fiji and New Zealand lies ca. 1320 miles, between Hawaii and Mexico lies ca. 2500 miles and Easter Island is ca. 2200 miles west of Chile. A quick look at a map of the Pacific Ocean soon reveals the isolation of Hawaii plus Easter Island with it being said that Easter Island is the loneliest speck of land in the world. From at least James Hornell (Antiquity 1946) onwards, it said these remote islands owed their settlement to Polynesians following the path of migratory birds.

In this region we have other good evidence of famous long voyages. They include that of the Bryants plus others in large rowing-boat of cutter size in getting from Sydney (Australia) to Timor (Indonesia) equalling ca. 3250 miles. Probably even more famous is William Bligh plus non-mutineers in another large rowing-boat getting from near Tonga (where Bligh had been dropped off) to again to the island of Timor.

They are considered to be considerable feats of navigation but are clearly matched by those of both the Austronesians plus the Polynesians. Among the methods of Polynesian maritime navigation was as use of "The Sacred Calabash" according to Hugh Rodman (JPS 1928).

On the other hand, there is a note from an anthropologist on the staff of the Bishop Museum named John Stokes attached to the Rodman (ib.) article by the editor of the JPS that should prompt caution. Stokes says the calabash in the Bernice Bishop Museum identified as that of the Rodman article plus the Hawaiian goddess of the winds does not really square with Rodman's description. Stokes (ib.) has doubts in general as to the practicality of a vessel that when filled with water weighed about 100 lbs. and more especially in bad weather with its choppy seas.

More of the same comes with the book titled "Ancient Voyagers in Polynesia" by Andrew Sharp (1956 & 1963) but his views were refuted by a symposium of the then experts in JPS and there was a response by Sharp in JPS 1963. This was added to in "Origins of the First New Zealanders" (ed. Douglas Sutton 1994) and this was answered in an article with the punning title of "A **sharp** rebuttal to "Origins of the first New Zealanders" by Brian Hooker (online).

Particular points made by Sharp (1963) are that Polynesian vessels were not ships, lacked metal parts, did not have added planks to make a high freeboard and also

lacked instruments. In short, could not have made long journeys at sea. Sharp allowed that shorter voyages of up to ca. 500 miles were probable but had real difficulties accepting that Polynesians were capable of purposefully able to reach such as Easter Island, Hawaii plus New Zealand. His argument was that this was only achieved by accidentally arriving through drift voyages.

With Polynesians finally getting to New Zealand and there becoming Maoris, there is the legend of Uiterangi that has been interpreted as Maori canoes having reached Antarctica. A major element in this the reporting of rocks apparently moving about in the sea interpreted as icebergs. However, we can surely wonder quite legitimately if this has any more substance than does the story of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (= Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot) with its telling us of mountains of crystal, also regarded as icebergs but this time from the Arctic.

Africa

What are called Out of Africa movement(s) attest genetic changes all along this Strand-looper/Beachcomber/Oceanic Negro/Ichthyophagi Route and to these several labels is added the apparent constant mixing between the groups that were emerging. However, differing from this genomorphic evidence is that of the phenomorph or external appearance remained Africoid for the most part. This is emphasised by terms that reflect Africa. They include the term of Ethiopia extended to as far to the east as India. Also the region of west Africa named Guinea echoed as the **New** Guinea; Melanesia (= Islands of Blacks) for islands in the overlap of the Indian and Pacific Oceans; Li-Min (= a Chinese word for Blacks); Blackfellas once used to describe the Australoids or Aborigines of Australia.

The sources of much of the food gathered by these Oceanic Negroes en route to these islands seems nicely shown by the combing of beaches (= strand-looping in Dutch) plus Ichthyophagi meaning Fish-eaters. An emphasis on the sea continued into Island Southeast Asia (=ISEA), Melanesia, etc. On the eastern fringes of Melanesia it seems that Austronesians from ISEA merged with locals to give rise to the Polynesians. The long narrow wakas (= canoes) took Polynesians to the remotest of the Pacific islands. Narrow canoes were seen to achieve stability by various means. One is by sheer dint of size and another is the lashing to another vessel to form double-canoes. Later came reduction of the second canoe into no more than a float or outrigger then came the addition of a second outrigger.

According to what was said in the oral-lore of the Polynesians called Maoris cited in "Maoris & their vessels" by Elsdon Best (Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand 1915), the Proto-Maori came in double-canoes. Yet that ancestor of the Maori called Kupe is said to have reached New Zealand in wakas from very large trees by Robbie Whitmore (New Zealand in History online). This very strongly suggests the canoe of large size without floats most closely associated with the Maoris and well shown in photos by Peter Buck (ib.).

These typical Maori wakas were seen in a Maori story that is accepted as having gone close to Antarctica. Yet more giant float-less canoes brought yet more ancestors but this time from the far side of the Indian Ocean Region (=IOR) to Melanesia according to Fijian oral-lore cited by the Balson Holdings site (online). This matches the ca. 4000 miles of ocean held to have been covered non-stop by Austronesians.

It is fashionable to dismiss out of hand all suggestions of long sea-voyages from any part of Africa, despite what is said by Melanesian plus Mexican tradition. When it is realised there are what might be called the orthodox and traditional theories

about how and when the Polynesian Proto-Maori reached New Zealand that are as opposed as the slow-boat and express-train ones tracing migration of Austronesians to the western Pacific. They all have had/still have their adherents and are as dependent on myths as is the story saying Maori canoes went near Antarctica. Nor should other tales of giant canoes on vast distances of ocean be overlooked.

Thus we return to what Melanesian tradition says about large **ocean-going** canoes coming from the opposite side of the IOR to Melanesia (= esp. Fiji). That far side of this ocean means the coast of east Africa south of the Horn of Africa. Here sea-going east Africans are recorded of the Thonga/Tsonga (of n/east Sth. Af./Moz.), the Turu (of Tanzania), etc, by messrs. Junod (*The Life of a South African Tribe* 1912) and Culwicks (*Tanganyika* 1933) but above all, there are the Swahili (of Mozambique to Somalia). The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (1st c. CE) attests the dugout-canoe of the same east African shores yet Henri Junod (*ib.*) and the Culwicks (*ib.*) refer to rafts but as seen above, so-called rafts on the IOR may well attest canoes with outriggers plus platforms.

Having seen that voyages over long distances based on little more than myths are readily accepted with hardly any demur from academics, there seems no valid reason to doubt the Melanesian harking to east Africa for at least part-ancestry for the Fijians. Nor is the matter of large canoes on ocean-long distances to be overlooked.

In any case, just-cited long sea-routes need not necessarily be looked for here. The arguments for Indian plus Indonesian cultural influences on Africa to as far round as west Africa include means of making music and the closely related dance is attested as remnants as *bataku* in the Cape Verde Islands (west Af.) and the Pacific islands of Samoa; compared dancers of the Xhosa (Sth. Af.) and Fijians; the “true Negro” from west Africa of older classifications echoed by the traits of the bronze figurine of a dancing-girl found at a Harappan Culture site.

Such Indian terms as *sangada/sangadam* plus *kattu-maran* refer to variants of tied-log, as shown by Sean McGrail (*Boats of the World* 2001). He cites messrs. the Huntingford and Casson translations of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* to that effect. That of Huntingford (1980) was “*Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*” and that of Casson (1989) was “*Periplus Maris Erythraei*”. Huntingford (*ib.*) wrote of “tied-logs” and Casson (*ib.*) of “yoked-logs”. From the Indian section of above plus Stewart Malloy (in *Blacks in Science* ed. Ivan Van Sertima 1983 & 2001) certain things emerge. They include a variant of a word denoting an Indian boat-type across one ocean; depicting of Indian crew symbolising going ocean-to-ocean; their being noted to as far north as the Cape Verde Islands; double-canoes of possible IOR origin; another version of that Indian word cross yet another ocean.

To this is added some of the several traits of proposed Indo-Malay/Austronesian or Indonesian origin also to be seen in parts of west Africa that would also indicate having come round Cape Agulhas at the southern tip of Africa. Evidence of this is held to be shown by the Austronesian origin of the disease called elephantiasis showing up on figurines of the Nok (Nig.) Culture (ca. 800/300 BCE). In *West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity* it was also noted there are varieties of Musas apparently absent in east Africa but occurring in west Africa. He also noted banana leaf-stem noisemaker plus a plantain-stem xylophone apparently known in ISEA and west Africa. De Bisschop (*ib.*) took a canoe of Pacific/ISEA base with Junk-type sails from the Pacific, across the IOR, along the west African coast up to France in Europe. An improved version of IOR sea-craft is depicted on the walls of the Bوروبudur (Indonesia) temple and its replica also got to west Africa.

The hippoi were the Phoenico/Punic workhorses. Among depictions of hippoi are those at Balawat (Iraq), Khorsabad (Iraq), Aliseda (Portugal), etc. The hippos engraved on the Aliseda jewel would appear to have operated near the Bay of Biscay considered as the most dangerous seas of Atlantic-facing Europe. Hippoi from Carthage plus Gadir went for four days to Lixos to fish in Atlantic conditions yet again but this time off Morocco in the west Magreb (= northwest Africa). An above-made suggestion was that circumnavigations of Africa were more frequent than thought and this brings us to the hippos found by Eudoxus ((3rd c.? or 2nd c? BCE Greek) after it having rounded Africa only to end up being wrecked at a point of east Africa that messrs. Cary & Warmington (The Ancient Explorers 1963) would place at Cape Delgado now shared between Mozambique and Tanzania.

Another vessel that has crossed the Bay of Biscay of the Atlantic-facing coast of west Europe and survived is that named Colmcille. It is named after an Irish cleric. The point about the Bay of Biscay is that its waters are regarded as the most dangerous of seas on the coasts of west Europe. So dangerous were these seas to 18th c. sailing-ships that such bitter rivals of the 18th c. as the Dutch, British and French Governments offered to defray the costs of the Spanish Government there. The skin-boats as defined by Paul Johnstone (The Sea-craft of Prehistory 1980) dominate the immrama (= voyage-tales in the Celtic language called Gaelic) of the Irish Gaels. An even more famous skin-boat of the currach class than those of the immrama or the Colmcille is that named yet another cleric of Gaelic Ireland is that on “The Brendan Voyage” by Tim Severin (1978).

The last four paragraphs describe four very separate types of vessel. Three are seriously regarded by maritime historians as capable of having navigated from ocean to ocean by going from the IOR to the Atlantic or vice-versa and to have survived the dangerous sub-tropical waters off southern Africa in doing so. Of them, two in the form of the hippos plus the currach/skin-boat appear to have coped with the fierce seas off west Europe known as the Bay of Biscay. **Absolutely salient here are that none of these non-African forms are in any whit superior to the African dugout-canoe and this especially means those of west Africa.**

There is also the matter of what academics will or will not accept. Some of this has been touched on already. Many of the Pacific migrations were seen to have myths attaching to them but which are taken as illustrating actual migration(s) without any real evidence to back this up. Quite apart from this, there is the disputed genetics of the proposed Austronesian (= AN) movements. There is also the curious situation of Punt. It is known only from Egyptian contexts yet is not dismissed as purely mythical nor is it equally dismissed as purely bombastic propaganda and the other end is absolutely unknown. Something not dissimilar applies to the Phoenico/Punic settlements in west Africa.

The 30,000 would-be colonists would appear to accord with the ca. 300 cities referred to by Strabo but of them, he could not record them but only that they could not be found. Nor is there very much archaeological evidence and what there is seems to be of Phoenician not from the Carthage that Hanno came from. There is some parallel with the Viking presence in North America. There is good testimony from excavations proving they were there but this again in no wise squares with the frequency of crossings of the Atlantic indicated in the Viking sagas.

The ships of the Vikings are referred to by Michael Bradley (The Dawn Voyage: The Black African Discovery of America 1991). He shows that they are not superior to the much-derided west African dugout-canoe and in some respects, are actually inferior. Landstrom’s (ib.) comparison of the Greek ships of Homer’s poems

that were such an inspiration to much later Greeks was seen to be with canoes of Pacific islands and which would mean they again are on a par with the dugout-canoe of west Africa.

Probably the most famous Phoenico/Punic vessel is the hippos. It was seen that it probably was able to cope with the fierce seas of that branch of Atlantic called the Bay of Biscay; those of the Atlantic-facing shores of Morocco; going against prevailing currents en route to the south; capable of rounding Africa only to founder on the coasts of somewhere in east Africa. On the other hand, Greeks regarded it as a very poor class of vessel. The going against prevailing currents is just what Robert Smith (*Journal of African History* 1970) described for west African canoes on the sort of trade-trips envisaged by Pieter de Marees (17th Dutch).

The Marees comments are dismissed in the Hair/Jones/Law (1992) translation of the account of Jean Barbot of his time in the Gulf of Guinea. However, alongside what was written by Smith (*ib.*) are several other writers cited in “West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity” (online) saying much the same as Barbot. Another measure of the qualities of the west African dugout-canoe comes from Namibia. If such as the Indo/AN craft plus the Phoenico/Punic hippos being of “simple” construction could make it through the breakers of the sub-tropical seas of such as western South Africa plus Namibia, we come to who it was that the German rulers chose for sea-based duties off Southwest Africa (now Namibia).

The German regard for their African subjects is demonstrated by their slaughter of the Herrero after having manoeuvred them into war; German firepower settled the issue. Having cleared the Herrero off their tribal lands, the Germans looked to settle their own colonists on it. If the choice of Phoenicians to go on the African voyage detailed in the *Periplus of Necho* by Herodotus is truly significant, then so too must surely be who the Germans chose to ferry their precious cargoes of colonists ashore through breakers so dangerous that part of the same shoreline was called the Skeleton Coast because of the wrecked ships. The Wikipedia entry on Swakopmund (Nam.) shows that in pre-jetty days at Swakopmund, it was west African canoes plus crews that were chosen for the ship-to-shore ferrying of the would-be settlers.

West Africans from Angola became a menace to yet more European colonists but this time from Portugal according to Elisee Reclus (Vol. 1 of the *Earth & its Inhabitants* 1890). These Angolan Africans were harassing Portuguese settled on the island of Sao Thome but Reclus saw the Angolans as no more than victims of a shipwreck. Whereas, de Marees (*ib.*) saw west African canoes as having regularly plied between Angola and the island of Sao Thome in the Gulf of Guinea. From the fact that de Marees also reports that the Portuguese were ferried about in these canoes rather than their own boats; we can assume that they too were impressed by west African canoes.

Copper from the Democratic Republic of Congo (= DRC= ex Belgian Congo) seems to have been major factor in the north-going canoes. It is just possible that other sources were being anciently exploited in South Africa and Namibia and were part of this but this is more probable for Angolan copper according to Eugenia Herbert (*Red Gold of Africa* 1984). Congolese copper seems to have fitted an ancient trade-pattern across that was extensive across central-west Africa. Its possible antiquity is argued for by messrs. Walker (in *Different Vision* ed. Thomas Boston 1997), Lacroix (*Africa in Antiquity* 1998) and Lendering (Hanno article online).

Lacroix (*ib.*) and Lendering (*ib.*) suggested that from the Kikongo language of the Bakongo came the words of ngo diddi (= beast that beats its chest violently) that

were known as far back as Hanno (ca. 600 BCE). They regard it as probable has been corrupted into the modern word of gorilla and it does appear the African words are descriptive of the gorilla. Opinion cited in Juliet Walker's (ib.) "Pre-Colonial West & West-Central Africa: The Foundation of the African American Business Tradition" was to the effect that this was of a centuries-long pattern.

It is more than a pity that so rarely does the environment of west-central Africa allow the survival of past canoes but from the views just cited, Bakongo traders were known to the outside for millennia ago not just centuries. Another sign of Kikongo words in other tongues comes with those from the Kikongo-group language of Vili. Kevin Patterson (*The North Gabon Coast* 1975) traced a few words from it in the neighbouring language of Mahongwe who seem to have provided the sea-borne component of the trade in Congolese copper.

Europeans in the form of the two British writers named Thomas Boteler (*Narrative of a Voyage to Africa & Arabia* 1835) plus Richard Burton (*Two Trips to Gorrilaland & the Cataracts of the Congo* 1876) certainly had high praise for the canoes of the Mahongwe/Mpongwe of Gabon. Boteler (ib.) wrote that that they were built "for strength, speed & symmetry" and Burton (ib.) not only endorsed this admiration but went further when saying it seemed the Mahongwe canoes could probably have reached the far side of the Atlantic.

Another but later British author is John Fage (Vol. III of the *Cambridge History of Africa* [ed. Ronald Oliver 1977]). He points out the distance from Gabon to the Delta of the River Niger (Nigeria) is roughly the ca. 600 miles from the copper-mines of Takedda (= Azelik, Niger) to again the Niger Delta. Such writers as Kevin Patterson (*The North Gabon Coast to 1875*) plus Eugenia Herbert (*Red Gold of Africa* 1984) would regard Mahongwe canoes as distinctly capable of carrying copper over this same distance.

An empire stretching from Sanaga (Congo) northwards is the "Biaffran Empire" outlined by Knut Knutson (in *Swedish Adventures in Cameroon 1883-1923* ed. Shirley Ardener 2002). The spread from northwards from Congo (= ex-French Congo; not Democratic Republic of Congo/DRC = ex-Belgian Congo) was towards Lake Chad according to Knutson's source. Knutson also says that peoples newly arrived at what must have been close to what is now mainly occupied by speakers of Cross River languages straddling the Cameroon/Nigeria border were taught how to build canoes by the locals. The getting from Cameroon to the island of Bioko (ex-Fernando Po) took African canoes over ca. 32 miles of sea.

It is possible that that the Benin/Edo Empire has become confused and conflated with account of Knutson's account of what he calls the Biaffran Empire. Livio Stecchini (online) held Benin was "a great culture" by the days of Hanno (ca. 600 BCE). Reindorf says the Benin Empire went up to what is now modern Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast) and occupied a very much larger and less defined area to the east. He also tells us canoes from the Benin/Edo Empire of south Nigeria were reaching to as far as modern Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast). Figurines of the (Nok (Nigeria) Culture echoed for the form of the eyes plus when they are placed on another figurine noted by Von Wuthenau plus the Cross River menhirs noted by Catherine Acholonu (Before Adam books)

Any regrets about the near-complete absence of canoes having survived the ages, especially from remote antiquity should not cause us to overlook that ancient Nigeria provides with at least that from Dufuna. It seems to date to ca. 6000 BCE and puts it in the period when among the motifs decorating rocks in various parts of the Sahara. This is also a period when much of the north of Africa was covered by water

that included what would have been the greatest freshwater lake in the world. It is difficult to believe that most of the same region is now the hyper-arid Sahara Desert. Something of the benign fishing-based economy is depicted in the Saharan rock-art too. It is also the period that saw the emergence of the cult based on the half-man/half-fish deity that Clyde Winters (*Atlantis in Mexico* 2005) defined as Maa.

Reindorf shows sea-borne migrations in canoes from that part of south Nigeria called Benin (**not** the Benin Rep.) northwards. In “West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity”, a comparison is made of the ancient phrase used on the Niger of Sirius as Irawa-oko (= Canoe-star) and certain cave-art scenes the Pacific. The River Niger was also seen to figure in being the likely centre of Gabonese canoes bringing such as copper to Nigeria and its deity was Yemoja. This goddess-name goes under several spellings that come close to that of the Amerind name of Yemoye for the island of Jamaica. In this vein would be the Von Wuthenau comparison of the heads of a young Yoruba woman and that of a Mexican figurine in terracotta.

Carl Christian Reindorf (*The History of the Gold Coast & Ashanti* 1895) has twice been cited above. He points up the relative long distances covered between the Benin Empire reaching Congo the south and Ghana in the north, so very similar ethnic features can be expected over much of this stretch. This much is further shown by such African traits of Olmec Great Heads of mainly Mexico as type of helmets, braided hair, flat noses, thick lips, outlined lips, etc. This is despite an expert trio wanting to dismiss this for the Americas (esp. note the claimed lack of Af. braided hair) matched by another such trio already shown as denying this for west Africa.

In “Mexican Archaeologists “embarrassed” by discovery of Afro-Olmec Calendar dating to about 3113 B.C.”, Paul Barton (online in 1981 & elsewhere) compared the outline of the lips of Ghanaians and Olmec Great Heads. There are online histories of early surfing that include Ghana alongside Peru and Hawaii and de Marees (ib.) wrote that the locals here were great swimmers. This speaks strongly against those wanting to state that west Africans were too scared to go to sea, especially as de Marees (ib.) points up that sharks come close to shore. Moreover, crews from Gold Coast (now Ghana) are shown by Smith (ib.) to have been seen as among the bravest of all sailors of west Africa.

Other candidates for the latter role are inhabitants of what today is Liberia that speak Krio/Kru-group languages. Lacroix (ib.) plus Lendering (ib.) held that here too were the group that replaced those acting as his pilots/steersman plus translators when he was en route to the south. The originals in this role are those named as Lixitae after the River Lixos/Lixus (= Oued Draa?, Morocco) who are seen as “Aithiopian”/black-skinned not “Libyan”/light-skinned Africans. The next such change may have been some point of the Gulf of Guinea. Modern Ghanaians are one possibility, especially as someone with relatively good local knowledge seems to have turned Hanno away from the unfriendly “Great Island” (= Stecchini’s Lagos Island?). The more so given that Wikipedia on “The History of Lagos” (Nig.) shows Awori of Lagos Island also drove off an expedition from the Oba (= King) of Benin City.

The reputation of the Krio/Kru of Liberia plus Sierra Leone was/is such that we can imagine that initially that they would have been very interested in Eko (= Lagos) Island that seems to have been used by Awori for seasonal fishing. It is their canoes that the Germans hired to ply through the breakers of the Namibian coast in the early 1900s. A fisherman in a canoe typical of the Krio brought home two examples of what James Hornell (*Water Transport* 1946) described as monstrous tarpons. It was in one of these 1/2-man canoes normal for Krio fishermen that Hannes Lindemann (*Alone at Sea* 1958) went on to the Atlantic.

Most of what is now the coast of Mauritania is part of somewhere else that Hanno will have wanted to avoid. This is because it is part of the ca. 1000 miles of desert drea that is the western Sahara facing the Atlantic. However, it also seems that as the Ganar/Gannar coast of antiquity it was the coastal part of the Wagadu (= Old-Ghana) Empire based mainly on Mali plus Senegal. The Songhai who ruled Wagadu were Mande-speakers and it was Mande who were trading at Elmina (Ghana) long before the Portuguese were there. Groups from Senegal who wanted to get from there to the Cape Verde Islands would never have made it on the argument of Reclus (ib.).

Not too dissimilar is an opinion finding earlier expression in the 19th c. Edinburgh Encyclopaedia that apparently was still held by some into the 20th c. This is that canoes were unable to cope with the tricky channels between mainland Guinea-Bissau and the Bissagos Islands and returns us to just what the sea-going African dugout-canoe was actually capable of.

Matters are probably not helped by the views of such as the several works in which Atholl Anderson tells us his scepticism about replicated voyages. There are also criticisms about added details or features. Thus de Bisschop (ib.) sailed in a vessel that was of Pacific type in body but had the sails of a Chinese junk and John Voss (Wikipedia online) added a schooner rig to an Amerind dugout-canoe. My intention here is to outline a very few more of these replica voyages but we can observe the Chinese raft called Hsu-fu on the Pacific plus Egyptian papyrus barge named Ra I on the Atlantic got into conditions that needed the crews being rescued. The crossing of the Atlantic in the leather/skin-boat on "The Brendan Voyage" was achieved over two years. The Kon-tiki voyage is evidently seen by some as not showing that Amerind rafts got from South America to Pacific islands but its crew just showed Norwegians are good sailors.

Lindemann (ib.) added a small keel to his dugout-canoe on the Atlantic. Other African voyages would be ruled out by Columbus saying that sheer distance indicates this. If there were west African journeys across would we not expect that the claimed frequency would lead to knowledge of the circumstance in which the first fleet sent by Mali is reported by Chihab al-Umari (14th c. Syrian) to have vanished.

Can it be said this rules out regarding what is recorded as achievements? The normal consensus is no. Looking at the possible west African component, it can be straightforwardly noticed this usually starts with a near-absolute disbelief in west African maritime history. Something of the background is shown in "West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity" with a few of the details repeated above. The Dufuna dugout-canoe has been the subject of comparison with those of Europe roughly coeval and found to be more sophisticated than the European ones. If the sources behind those details can be followed, we find that from the Germans in Southwest Africa to the Carthaginians in the northern Gulf of Guinea, west Africans provided pilots over a very long time to non-Africans.

It is generally agreed that several elements make up the formative phases of African ethniae and the Ijo Genesis (online) says a South African component came by sea to Nigeria. Reclus (ib.) wrote west Africans from Angola got to the Guinean island of Sao Thome and de Marees (ib.) of west Africans from that part of Guinea known as Ghana reached both Sao Thome plus Angola.

If Africans could not have got from mainland Guinea-Bissau to the Bissagos Islands, a simple question arises. This is just where did the Africans that the Portuguese met in the islands come from? The more so given that online sources appear to indicate some of the islanders have a dialect that is now unintelligible to the degree that it may be said that a separate language has emerged. If so, a very lengthy

period lies behind this that may amount to a millennium or more before the Portuguese arrival. Much the same can also be said of the canoe-based fleet that Wikipedia says traded extensively on these coasts and saw off the Portuguese taking control of the islands for close for 500 years.

Another set of islands that Africans could not have reached according to Reclus (*ib.*) are the Cape Verdes. This is a surprise as other Europeans there say something quite different. The notion of west African islands apparently known but not permanently settled has been touched on and Bishop Feijo records traditions that such west Africans from Senegal as the Serers, Wolofs, Lebous, etc, fished in the Cape Verde Islands. Other Portuguese informants told Columbus of Senegalese canoes not just in the islands but also that they were recorded as **leaving** the islands westwards on the open Atlantic Ocean with evidence already given of a west African presence on the other side.

What is detailed in such as “West Africa & the Atlantic in Antiquity” and “Abubakri II: Who He?” gives the other side of this, so a brief summary is probably all that is needed here. What are claimed as the earliest are the affinities of the Luzia and Olmec heads. That of “Luzia” came from northeast Brazil and has prompted suggested Australoid or African sources. Drift voyages are often quoted for non-American traits of West-coast Americas in remote antiquity but ideas that the frail vessels of ca. 12,000/11,500 BCE could have survived an 8000-mile voyage from Australia, then the survivors crossing northern South America, etc, must surely put this into the realms of the highly improbable. This also ignores the much shorter ca. 1500 miles between the Bulge of west Africa and northeast Brazil, especially given that drift voyages on this sea-lane are also known and would be even shorter if heading from the Cape Verdes and may also be so for the earliest American gourds.

In “Luzia & the Possibility New Discovery of the Origins of Caribbean Indigenous Ancestry”, Ayes (online in 2008) compared the Luzia skull with the Great Heads of the Olmec Culture of mainly Mexico. John Ayes (*ib.*) is but one of the geneticists, artists, archaeologists, etc. doing so. Both the Luzia and Olmec heads also return us to the matter of elements combining to form new ethniae. The bulk of that of the Olmecs is Mongoloid Amerinds. In “Prehistoric Mexico”, Frederick Peterson (1960) wrote of the Negro sub-stratum he termed “Magicians” and this has been continued by several others and would require sea-craft.

The several tests by Michael Bradley (*Dawn Voyage: The Black African Discovery of America 1991*) attest the seaworthiness of models of past west African vessels. His pictorial reconstructions of them are no less theoretical than those of say Craig Weatherill (*Cornish Archaeology 1985*) of other Atlantic vessels but this time of the Gaulish Celts called the Veneti.

If Bradley (*ib.*) provides the theoretical, Lindemann (*Alone at Sea 1958*) provides the practical. His vessel was a typical west African dugout-canoe; this he did successfully in a dugout-canoe of standard Kru size across the Atlantic; in doing so he followed the ancient African economies of Ichthyophagi (= Fish-eaters) type by eating only fish en route. To this is added the obvious African look of the Olmec Great Heads that is supported by a number of other lines of evidence.

One of them is Ivan Van Sertima (*African Presence in Earliest America ed. Van Sertima 1992 & 1998*) citing Vargas Guadarrama that crania from Tlatilco (Mexico) differed from Amerind norms. Andrej Weircinski (*Inter & interpopulational racial differentiation of Tlatilco, Cerro de las Mesas, Monte Alban & Yucatan Maya*) went further when citing the African traits of ca. 15% of the whole in these graves that falls to ca. 5% by the later Olmec. Weircinski noting the differentiation of the Africans in

the same graves as Amerind women fits with those Olmec Great heads combining African looks with those of the majority Amerinds. Also with the African-looking figurines featuring in the above-seen Von Wuthenau book.

It is shown in “West Africa & the Atlantic...” that Africans coming from the sunrise (the east) fits with the Olmec tradition coming via their Mayan descendants of ancestors linked to Kukulcan also coming from the east. This needs an Olmec maritime tradition to be proved. That this is not difficult is shown by Philip (Mesoamerican Voices 2005) showing that Uixtotin (= People of the Sea) is an alternative for Olmec. The noting of west African economies of Ichthyophagi, that this fuelled voyages on the Atlantic, etc, was in fact the reason for some of them agree with the term for the ancestral group that translates as fish-keepers.

Diego de Landa’s “Relation of Yucatan” (1566) shows the ancestral group coming in ships via 12 routes. With the leader of this group identified with Kukulcan, we can note Douglas Peck (Yucatan: Prehistory to the Great Revolt 200 & elsewhere) showing how the Kukulcan cult changed on becoming that of the Nahual/Aztec Quetzalcoatl. Forms of the scene noting the Kukulcan group in ships on 12 routes also have Post-Olmec echoes and according to Winters (ib.), it is pictorialized on Stele No 5 at Izapa (Mexico).

Nor are long-surviving traditions confined to these regions, as besides those bringing west Africans to Olmec-era Mesoamerica are those of later times that include what is shown by Columbus. Portuguese records of long sea-voyages have been noted include those reported to Christopher Columbus. Having seen there were Africans in the Cape Verdes, there is the specific point emerging from Columbus that canoes were leaving for points west of these islands. A very simple point emerges here, namely that the only land due west of the Cape Verde Islands are the Americas.

Something frequently mentioned in connection with these comments by Columbus is his saying that sheer distance rules out west Africans from the Senegal parts of the Malian Empire. This selective reading of Columbus carefully ignores other things that he has written that contradict this.

It remains far from obvious what motivation prompted west Africans on to the Atlantic. Also the Maya plus their neighbours were excellent cloth-makers plus metallurgists within a limited range yet they feature in Columbus saying the Malians traded round the backside of the world. Just the latter what this means in practical terms remains unclear but that commerce is indicated is very very obvious.

This is that Columbus states this cloth-trade occurred. Looming large here is his stating that west African cloth seems to have been exported to Mesoamerica. Confirmation of this cloth being exported comes from Harold Lawrence (in African Presence in Early America ed. Van Sertima ib.) citing Herman Cortez (15th/16th c. Span.) about almaiwor cloth from west Africa reaching Iberia (= Spain & Portugal).

Further confirmation comes with the alloyed metal called guanine in west Africa. It attaches to high-status persons in west Africa that includes weapons according Lawrence (ib.). As such an individual, it is therefore no surprise that the Tainos presented Christopher Columbus with (a) weapons that were spearheads; (b) that they were of guanine. The ideal of west African guanine seems to have been 18 parts of gold, six of silver plus eight of copper. Columbus had hoped that the Taino items were of gold but analyses in Spain proved they were of guanine apparently identical to what was said about that of west Africa.

Alongside the story of blacks in canoes leaving islands on one side of the Atlantic is that also from Columbus is the story of blacks in canoes in islands of the Caribbean on the far side of the Atlantic. These black traders on both sides of the

Atlantic Ocean are probably nicely summed up in the figure of the Mayan god of commerce named Ekchuah. Having seen the ethnic mix represented by the Olmec Great Heads, it perhaps no great surprise that typically Mayan traits occur in images of the deity alongside his black face plus his name meaning the Black One. A point to bear in mind is that it is often held Great Heads turn black over time not because of the choice of stone but in the case of Ekchuah this cannot be so because he is **painted** black.

In other papers of mine, some surprise has been expressed about the fact that the anti-Afrocentrics have not made more of whether west Africans would ever have had the ability to return home. However, in having decided that Africans could never have gone from one side of the Atlantic to the other, the idea that they could not ever have navigated their way home is probably to be expected.

There are a number of myths covering the entire coast Atlantic-facing coast of Africa of giants turned to stone. At one end of these Atlantic-west coasts is Umlindi Wemingizimu (= Watcher of the South & the Bantu name for Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town). His function was to warn off invaders coming in ships to southwest Africa. He was turned to stone by the actions of a goddess and at the opposite end of West-coast Africa was another giant turned to stone via a female.

That other giant was Atlas and between him and Umlindi are myths about other giants fitting here (see *West Africa & the Sea...*). These in-between myths centring on Guinea have close nautical associations and this is repeated by the Atlas myths that in their earliest form(s) demonstrate that the Greeks viewed him as a master-seamen. Serge Plaza et al (*Joining the Pillars of Hercules...* online) looked for a genetic passage from Guinea bypassing Morocco en route to Iberia (= Spain).

Guinea to Iberia approximates to some of the distances covered in going across the Atlantic. Roger Blench (*The intertwined history of the silkwood & baobab trees online*) has pointed to the African palm-oil taken to the Americas and American silk-cottons to Africa. Blench (ib.) felt this was a horizon on which the Niger/Congo languages had started to diverge that seems ca. between 5000/2000 BCE (depending on which authority is followed).

What seems shown here is a two-way traffic across the Atlantic and a further point of seeming significance is that silk-wood timber became a major material for African canoes. One objection to voyages coming home to Africa is that if looked at in the light of the story that we will call “The Tale of the Returned Captain”. If there is the long history of west Africans on the Atlantic argues for here, how is it our returning captain and his fellows did not know of the conditions that would lead to the destruction of two recorded Malian fleets.

Such disasters appear in the histories of all the great maritime nations of the past. More specific are comparisons of “Captain” (as told by al-Umari) with “The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor/Mariner” (= our “Mariner”) of ancient Egypt. The analogies are several.

They include (a) being concerned with parts of Africa; (b) with voyages from their respective parts of Africa; (c) being long-distance voyages; (d) both were sponsored by their respective rulers; (e) both being told to their respective rulers; (f) both reported by Egyptian sources (Amenaa being the author of Mariner & the Governor of Cairo being who the Syrian-born al-Umari learnt about Captain from); (g) both the Mariner and the Captain remain unnamed; (h) serious difficulties being encountered; (i) this being destructive for the ships involved; (j) single survivors (the lone Egyptian sailor & the single ship of the Malian Captain).

Fitting with the literary evidence of Egyptian nautical activity in the east Mediterranean is the archaeological testimony of that on the Red Sea. The latter especially means the voyages to Punt including that of the Mariner to an island that was part of Punt. These Punt-trips were very frequent, so the conditions would have been well known to the Egyptians and yet the disaster recorded in “Mariner” occurred. This would be equally so with what was reported of “Captain” by al-Umari. Also the west African expertise shown by Atlas shown as a master navigator matches the “Captain” coming from a far point of the Atlantic where certain currents meet and evidently knew how to return home **safely**.

The brief noting here of problems with claimed west Africans reaching the Americas are precisely those of the numerous ones listed above for those great maritime peoples of antiquity. We often read of their several achievements but little of the otherwise that attaches to every single example listed above. This fully justifies the approach taken here. To put it mildly, it is somewhat curious that the reverse of achievements are stressed when applied to west Africa.

Harry Bourne (2011)

