

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Argonauts of the Stone Age: Early Maritime Activity from the First Migrations from Africa to the End of the Neolithic by Andrzej Pydyn

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of data presented in each chapter, the discussion of this data appears oddly truncated.

These are relatively minor drawbacks that do not measurably detract from the quality of scholarship in the volume, the thoroughness of the presentation of the data, or the validity of the general conclusions drawn. Overall, Mourad's volume is an excellent addition to the body of scholarship on Egyptian-Levantine relationships and the Hyksos and a standard reference for future researchers.

***Argonauts of the Stone Age: Early Maritime Activity from the First Migrations from Africa to the End of the Neolithic.* By Andrzej Pydyn.**

Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015. Pp. viii + 253, numerous illustrations, 11 color plates. Paperback, £36.00. ISBN 978-1-78491-143-0.

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*Argonauts of the Stone Age* arrives at a time where there is increasing scholarly and public interest in early seafaring activity and the role it played in the major developments of the *Homo* species (e.g., Pleistocene migrations from Africa, island colonization, and the spread of the Neolithic). Other notable recent volumes include Broodbank (2013), Phoca-Cosmetatou (2011), and Simmons (2014). Throughout most of the twentieth century, it was believed that major bodies of water acted as barriers to movement for both early modern humans and our ancestors. Within the last two decades, however, a growing amount of information, including archaeological, anthropological, geological, ethnographic, environmental, geochemical, and genetic, has called this belief into question. In this book, although the perspective is mainly archaeological, Pydyn draws on these different lines of evidence to examine early maritime activities.

Temporally, the book spans the Lower Paleolithic to the Neolithic. It impressively covers the Mediterranean basin and western and northern Europe. There is also

some discussion of maritime activity outside of these core geographic foci, including Southeast Asia and the Americas. The brief introductory chapter presents the layout of the book, including various themes of migration and colonization, exploitation of the sea environment, navigation, and types of water transport (p. 2). It is clear in these first few pages that Pydyn supports the assumption that members of the *Homo* species engaged in early maritime activity.

Traditionally, it was argued that hominin dispersals followed land routes. However, newer research suggests that open water crossings might also have been involved. Chapter 1, "Lower Palaeolithic seafarers: The oldest evidence of migration and sea-crossing," traces the Lower Paleolithic migrations of the *Homo* species from Africa and into Europe and Asia. In particular, Pydyn examines the main sea routes that our hominin ancestors might have crossed: the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Sicily, and the Strait of Bab-El-Mandab (Gate of Grief). Key physical, environmental, and geological characteristics are provided for each of the straits, including distance between the landmasses, possibility of the emergence of islands, and strength and direction of sea currents. Given that we do not fully understand Pleistocene conditions, the author should have treated these characteristics more cautiously. Nonetheless, Pydyn makes a compelling case that these straits could have been crossed by early hominins. Unfortunately, the evidence for these crossings in the form of stone tools and hominin skeletal remains have no associated dates. The author's argument is further substantiated by the inclusion of far stronger evidence of hominin sea-crossings in southeast Asia, particularly from the island of Flores.

In Chapter 2, "Middle Palaeolithic seafarers: The Neanderthal and the sea," the author turns to evidence from the Mediterranean islands and northern Europe to provide support for Neanderthal maritime activity. In regards to the former, particular focus was given to Coscia Cave (Corsica), the Plakias area (Crete), the Loutro region (Gavdos), and several of the Ionian islands, where stone tools have been recovered with Middle Paleolithic characteristics. However, radiometric dating of these artifacts or their contexts is often not possible (Phoca-Cosmetatou and Rabett 2014; Simmons 2014). The author's coverage of this issue could have been stronger

in places. In addition, there is some disagreement as to whether the faunal remains from Coscia Cave were recovered with clear-cut associated material culture (Phoca-Cosmetatou and Rabett 2014; Simmons 2014). Pydyn notes that there is less evidence of Neanderthal maritime activity in northern Europe, as compared with the Mediterranean basin (p. 33). He suggests that this situation is partly due to rises in sea level which led to the inundation of sites.

Chapter 3, “Upper and Final Paleolithic seafarers—the expansion of modern humans” focuses on the key issue of the migration of modern humans. Beginning with the Mediterranean, Pydyn notes that Cyprus and Melos, both oceanic, contain some of the most important evidence of advanced seafaring in the period (p. 44). The possibility that wild boar might have been introduced to Cyprus more than 11,000 years ago would have been a relevant addition to the topic at hand (Simmons 2014 and citations therein). Greater attention might have also been paid to several other island sites (i.e., Maroula on Kythnos, Kerami 1 on Ikaria, and Ouriakos on Lemnos) where recent excavations have demonstrated a clear human presence in the Epipaleolithic.

From the Mediterranean, the narrative moves to the coasts of western and northern Europe. Data from geochemical studies, faunal remains, and rock art representations are nicely integrated to illustrate the importance of marine environments. While the author does mention the recovery of bone tools that might have been used for fishing (p. 52) and rock art images possibly depicting a fish trapped in a net (p. 51), a more thorough discussion of the evidence for fishing could have been included. Of particular interest is the question whether the fish and marine remains from the sites could have been caught from the shore or whether they necessitated watercraft technology. I found the discussion of the petroglyphs depicting boats, especially those accompanied by humans and land mammals (pp. 63–64), fascinating. An important question for early human maritime activity and island colonization is: How did humans transport animals on watercraft? The chapter concludes with a discussion on modern human migration to the Americas, a topic of much recent scholarly attention. Apart from the interesting discussion of the genetic story (pp. 73–74), recent literature (e.g., Erlandson and Braje 2011; Erlandson et

al. 2008; Fitzhugh and Kennett 2010) should have been included to provide more up-to-date archaeological and paleoecological accounts.

Chapter 4, “Maritime activity of Mesolithic communities in Northern Europe,” focuses on selected sites from the British Isles in the west to contemporary Polish areas in the east that were occupied by the Maglemosian techno-complex. Here, Pydyn makes a strong argument for the social role played by maritime activity. Almost all major islands in northern Europe were exploited or settled, including several that were located nearly 100 miles from shore (p. 116). The evidence presented includes a boat burial (p. 108) and a possible *Kula* ring in southern Scandinavia (pp. 108–10). In addition, stable isotopic studies reveal differences in male and female marine resource consumption patterns at some sites, like in Brittany (p. 89) but not others like in Denmark (p. 93, p. 101). Pydyn discusses several reasons for this, including differing exchange systems between coastal and hinterland settlements. I wish the author had expanded on this interesting idea in greater detail.

The chapter also provides the first solid evidence for fishing, recording the recovery of woven fish traps, harpoons, nets, and hooks from sites throughout this region. Tybrind Vig, a notable site now underwater off the coast of Denmark, produced rope and other organic artifacts related to maritime activities (p. 101). Remains of paddles and several logboats were also recovered there, including one with a hearth located at its stern (p. 105). These artifacts allow for a better understanding of the tradition of watercraft construction, only conjectured in earlier periods because of the lack of well-preserved remains. Pydyn convincingly demonstrates in this interesting chapter that maritime activity was a major part of life in northern Europe.

In Chapter 5, “Neolithic voyagers—farmers of the sea,” the primary focus is on the crucial role that maritime activity, water transport, and seafaring played in the spread of the Neolithic model of economic and social behavior (p. 173). This chapter covers the Mediterranean basin, Atlantic Europe, and central and northern Europe. One main point discussed throughout the chapter is how seafaring was logistically more challenging than in earlier periods (p. 122). Neolithic voyages needed vessels of adequate size to transport the more substantial cargo,

such as domesticated and wild animals, domesticated grains, and people (p. 122, p. 160). Genetic diversity of both the human and animal groups became an important issue (p. 124), and one that was likely solved (at least initially) through continued contact with the mainland and with islands. In many cases, distances traveled exceeded 50, and even 100 km, such as between St. Kilda and the Orkneys and Shetlands (p. 160). Voyages likely also needed to be divided into stages, particularly when animals were being transported (p. 135). I agree with Pydyn that sea travels during this time period, including solutions to the above issues, was based on the accumulation of specialized knowledge (p. 171).

Another interesting point discussed is the extent of contact and exchange between “farmers of the sea” and maritime hunter-gatherers, the conclusion being that such relationships varied both across and within the different regions. For example, in southern Scandinavia, some communities seem to have continued to rely heavily on marine resources. In contrast, others decreased their reliance on marine resources in favor of domesticated terrestrial resources (p. 165). As a discipline, we need to be careful about using the farmer and hunter-gatherer dichotomy because evidence consistently shows that the adoption of domesticated resources was complex.

Pydyn uses historical and ethnographic evidence from around the world to discuss hypothetical early forms of water transport technology (e.g., floats, rafts, skin boats, bark boats, reed boats and other lashed vessels, logboats, and simple plank boats) in Chapter 6, “Early forms of water transport.” The archaeological evidence for these technologies was discussed in preceding chapters. As such, the placement of this chapter at the end of the book is somewhat puzzling. One would have wished for better integration of the historical, ethnographic, and archaeological data throughout. In addition, the book primarily focuses on the Mediterranean basin and Europe. Tailoring the discussion around data from these two regions would have allowed for a more unique presentation. Nonetheless, Pydyn raises an interesting point when he notes that the *Homo* species has had the technology to make simple water transports since the Lower Paleolithic (p. 207). However, just because they had the technology, does not mean that our early ancestors constructed

watercrafts. Whether such transports were made (particularly in the Lower and Middle Paleolithic) remains an intriguing question.

In his concluding chapter, Pydyn insists that “seafaring and the early maritime activity of the representatives of the *Homo* were inextricably linked to the most important events in human history” (p. 208). Although the author’s treatment of some of the earlier data could have been more cautious and more recent literature should have been included, Pydyn makes a compelling case that pre-*Homo sapiens* may have utilized water transport technology. Even the use of natural floats was perhaps “culturally enriched,” meaning that our ancestors consciously affected the direction of drifting or floating (p. 209). He also argues that studies of early maritime activity have demonstrated the research potential of the continental shelf, because many Paleolithic and Neolithic sites are likely underwater (p. 208). In addition, the author notes that exploration and exploitation of islands both in Europe and the Mediterranean basin were due to physical and environmental conditions as well as human choice (p. 212). Pydyn concludes with this powerful statement: “It should be noted that it was not only boats or representatives of the *Homo* that travelled by sea, but also new ideas and beliefs” (p. 214). *Argonauts of the Stone Age* is a well-illustrated and engaging addition to the recent volumes on early seafaring and maritime activities.

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***Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology.*  
By Eric H. Cline.**

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Pp. xix + 455.  
Hardcover, \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-691-16640-7.

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Popular books on archaeology come in many guises. Some are edited volumes, others are textbooks, a few have a narrower focus or cater to *National Geographic* kinds of readers. All of them have a specific audience in mind. Many cater to undergraduates. Others aim firmly at very broad audiences, which is where Eric Cline assumes that his *Three Stones* belongs. The subtitle calls it “The Story of Archaeology,” which means that the book does not necessarily have to be a chronological account of great discoveries. This allows the author considerable latitude in what he writes about, of which he takes full advantage. Better, however, that he had called it “A Story of Archaeology.” There are narratives of archaeology around and this certainly is not *The* story with a capital T. Cline tells us that the text is based on introductory archaeology lectures he has given over the years. Fair enough, but I think that the best way to describe the book is as a kind of eclectic tour of selected archaeological discoveries, sites, and research, historical and modern.

*Three Stones* is divided into six parts, with four shorter essays between them that discuss such often-asked questions as “How do you know where to dig?” The prologue is, perhaps inevitably, the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922, the description briefly updating events since then, notably the CT-scans and DNA research, also the claims of hidden chambers revealed by remote sensing. From the golden pharaoh, we go back in Part 1 to the beginnings of archaeology, to the familiar eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Chapter 2 finds the Schliemanns excavating at Troy. Their discoveries are familiar; those of later researchers like Dörpfeld and Blegen are less so and are briefly discussed here, as are the researches of Manfred Korfmann, who showed with remote sensing that Schliemann and his successors had merely dug the citadel of a much larger Troy. The third chapter takes us to Egypt, which covers Champollion, Lepsius, Mariette, and other well-known figures. We are treated to a description of mummification and pyramid construction. Chapter 4 on Mesopotamia begins with Ur, Leonard Woolley, Max Mallowan, and Agatha Christie, then leaps back to Paul Botta, Austen Henry Layard, and Henry Rawlinson in the mid-nineteenth century. The story would have worked much better if the author had begun with Botta and Layard, then Rassam and Place (often neglected), then told the Ur story. The same is true of Chapter 5, where we learn about LIDAR surveys, then find ourselves back in the 1840s with Catherwood and Stephens and the Maya. We end with Edward Thompson at Chichen Itza’s cenote. The coverage of what we know today about the Maya is very quick fire.

Part 2 has but two chapters, one on “Our Earliest Ancestors,” a second on early farmers in the Near East. Cline plunges into the often-told stories of Lee Berger’s fossil hunting in South Africa, and the discoveries of Mary and Louis Leakey. Then, suddenly, we jump forward in time (but back historically) to Dorothy Garrod at Mt. Carmel. Then we learn about Upper Palaeolithic art—Altamira, Lascaux, and the Grotte de Chauvet. Early prehistory is painfully short-changed. There is no mention anywhere of the controversies over the antiquity of humankind or the discovery of *Homo erectus* by Eugene Dubois. One of the fundamental questions of archaeology surrounds human origins, and we were attacking that mystery long before the Leakeys. A mere twelve pages survey the origins of food production, which cover Göbekli Tepe and Jericho, also Çatalhöyük, but, surprisingly, not Abu Hureyra, an exemplary piece of research. We then receive a brief discussion of processual and postprocessual archaeology, which, while obviously important, does not belong in a popular book of this nature when there are so much more exciting stories in archaeology to captivate the general reader than Lewis