

## Re: dry Meditteranean

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.geo.geology/2005-01/1700.html>

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**From:** Daryl Krupa ([icycalmca\\_at\\_yahoo.com](mailto:icycalmca_at_yahoo.com))

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Damien R. Sullivan wrote:

> *"Daryl Krupa" <icycalmca@yahoo.com> wrote:*  
>  
> *>Also, Ballard did not find Noah's House, and he has recently*  
> *>admitted that he didn't find any evidence of human occupation*  
> *>of the Black Sea continental shelf, let alone any support for*  
>  
> *Is there any evidence of people living on what are now*  
> *continental shelves elsewhere?*

Very, very little. There are many significant difficulties inherent in any investigation of the possibility. The lighting is too poor for easy archaeological investigation, and you not only have to be supplied with bottled water, but also bottled air. Not to mention the enormous pressure to produce results under enormous pressure.

That said, an arrowhead was dredged up from the floor of the strait between the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) and the British Columbia mainland, after sonar had indicated a drowned river delta that would have been a good site for habitation, about 12,000 years ago.

But that site was only temporarily above water after being deglaciated.

The best evidence is distribution of early migrations of humans. Early Australians almost certainly inhabited parts of the Sunda Shelf between what are now the Indonesian islands.

The first North Americans likely exploited the extensive plains between Alaska and Siberia.

And I suppose that glacial-era habitation of Great Britain suggests that people were familiar with the river through the English Channel / La Manche.

But Madagascar doesn't seem to have been inhabited before Malays sailed there.

There is also the occasional set of sunken ruins, but they date from after the postglacial sea level rise. Other locations with

apparently—regular rock formations on the sea floor are not evidence of continental shelf civilisations.

- > *I read of a theory that the worldwide distribution of flood stories*
- > *might come from hunter—gatherers happily living on dry shelf in the*
- > *last Ice Age — coastal areas are often highly productive and*
- > *populated, after all, and sea levels would have been lower.*

Okay so far ...

- > *Then the glaciers melt, the seas rise, and half the world's*
- > *population is forced back into the now over—populated hinterland,*

People adapted to coastal living would follow the retreating coast, not retreat further into the hinterland.

- > *plus the climate's changed and everyone's hunting—gathering skills*
- > *are no longer entirely appropriate, and hey presto*

Inappropriate turn of phrase.

The deglacial postglacial sea level rise took at least 7000 years to accomplish, and never was very rapid, with the possible exception of a one—or—two—metre rise about 8000 years ago (due to the last draining of Glacial Lake Agassiz). There was an earlier period of relatively rapid rise, but you should think in terms of cms—per—year, not something that would be dramatic enough to force a mass migration.

Check out these generalised global sea level rise curves:

[http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/GEODEPT/COURSES/geo-10/images/sea\\_level\\_rise.gif](http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/GEODEPT/COURSES/geo-10/images/sea_level_rise.gif)

- > *people in the Old World turn their casual gardening skills into*
- > *full agriculture.*

I tend towards the idea that climate deterioration and increasing variability were more significant in putting pressure on hunter—gatherers to start practicing agriculture. Wheat, for example, originally grew in highlands far from the sea.

Re: settlement on river flats and irrigated agriculture, it would have taken some time for the flood and flow dynamics of major rivers to stabilise in an equilibrium state with the risen sea level, and so allow stable and exploitable riverine plains to develop.

The lower Nile, for example, was a deep gorge in glacial times, and most of the proto—delta was high and dry. The gorge took a while to fill in with sediment, and then more time for the river to adopt a stable course, and more time for the current version of the delta to flatten out and extend into the Med..

Once conditions are predictable, then it makes sense to commit yourself to a particular bit of land and invest something in it.

- > *I think the theory made specific reference to Persian Gulf*
- > *continental shelf, and claims that the four rivers of Eden*
- > *in the Bible would intersect off-shore.*

You'd have to make up your own mind about the "four rivers" part, but the general background of the evolution of the Tigris–Euphrates delta and the Persian Gulf inundation can be seen here:

"Environmental Change  
The evolution of Mesopotamia"

<http://athens.arch.ox.ac.uk/ArchAtlas/Environmental%20change/Environmetal%20change.htm>

- > *The flood wouldn't be catastrophic --*
- > *"Walk, walk slowly for the hills!"*
- > *but culturally traumatic.*

The trouble is, few, if any, cultures survive from the time of noticeable sea level rise.

- > *Secondhand source: The time before history :*
- > *5 million years of human impact,*
- > *Colin Tudge.*
- >
- > *It all sounded nice; I haven't known what more to make of it.*

My advice is to drop the modern cultural bias of regarding information as "news", and history as "formerly newsworthy". News is something strange enough to be interesting enough to induce people to trade money for it.

The vast majority of what happens is not news, but happens just the same. Life before news reporting, organised warfare, and historians was dull and largely uneventful.

We have a cultural imperative to impress urgency on reportage in order to make it worth paying attention to.

Thus the "sexing-up" of equivocal indications of an Iraqi nuclear weapons program and roughly contemporaneous dates on shells from the Black Sea.

Catastrophic change is unlikely, but avoids the problem of comprehending the vastness of great spans of time. Thus its appeal to people with a visceral suspicion of having their individuality and personal perspective swamped by globalisation.

So, avoid caffeine, settle down in a nice, hot bath with some warm sweetened milk, and then read. It worked for the Greeks. Healthy skepticism comes from a relaxed point of view.

Daryl Krupa