

We proved point, says Ra chief

NEW YORK, Wednesday.

NORWEGIAN EXPLORER THOR HEYERDAHL, who had rain and bad weather on his voyage in the Ra, flew into New York from Barbados yesterday — in a heavy rain storm.

The RA, made of Papyrus — like those of ancient Egypt — foundered 480 miles east of Barbados; after setting off from Safi, Morocco and covering 2,700 miles.

Mr. Heyerdahl said at Kennedy Airport — he thought the voyage had shown that Egyptians could have sailed the Atlantic and possibly have affected the course of the New World.

The explorer said he decided to transfer to an escort vessel in order to safeguard his crew.

NOT DESPERATE

"We were not desperate and did not have to leave," he said. "we could have continued but we did not want to take the responsibility of losing one or two men overboard.

"Some people thought a paper boat would dissolve in sea water. This is completely wrong."

Heyerdahl said his crew of six, including a medical officer from the Soviet Union, had displayed perfect co-operation despite religious, political and language differences.

"We had no elbow space," he said. "We were cooped in a cabin 12 by 9 feet. We had trouble right from the start beginning with bad weather. The steering rudder snapped. We made such mistakes as loading the boat on the windward side. It should have been loaded on the leeward side. We were all unfamiliar with how to navigate."

He added, "I am satisfied we proved the point."

He said he was of the opinion that the Egyptians could have

made such a trip with four or six boats grouped together, so that the crews could help each other.

He said he made this trip as well as the one across the Pacific on "Kon-tiki" — not in the spirit of adventure but "purely out of archeological interest."

He expressed a hope that a similar expedition could be tried on a large scale for the "common interest" of all. — Sapa-A.P.

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