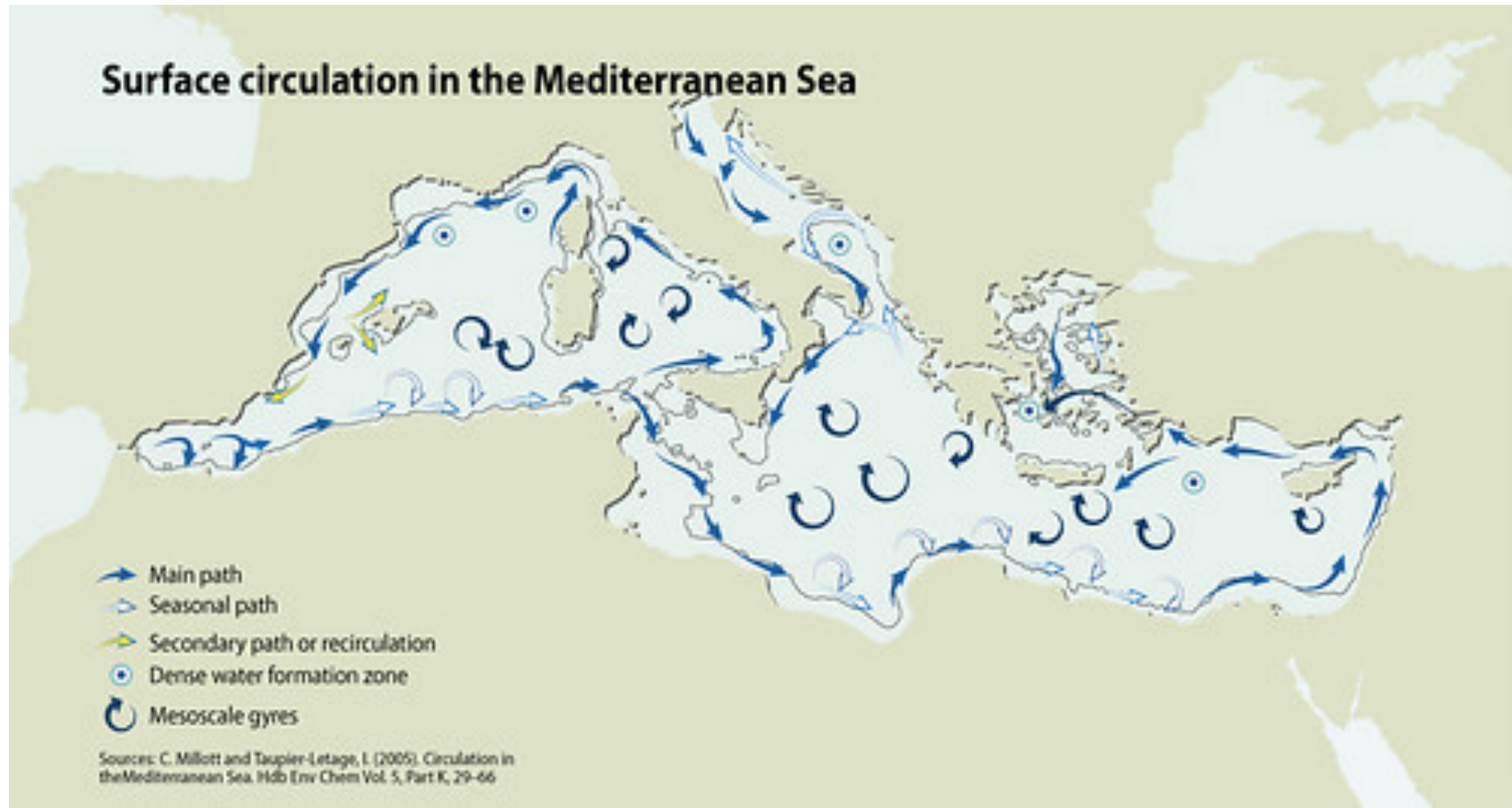


Winds, Weather and Geography

Currents in the Mediterranean



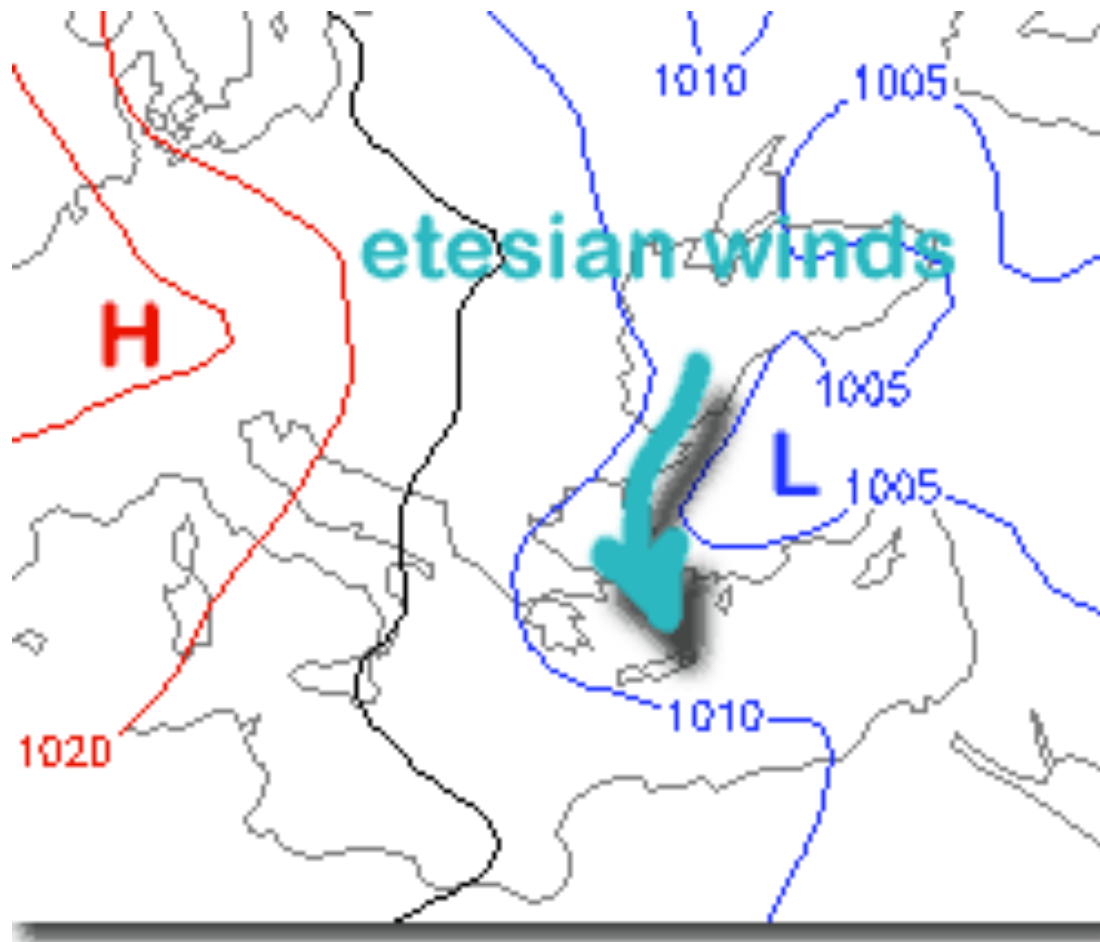
Depths and currents



Winds



Etesian Winds



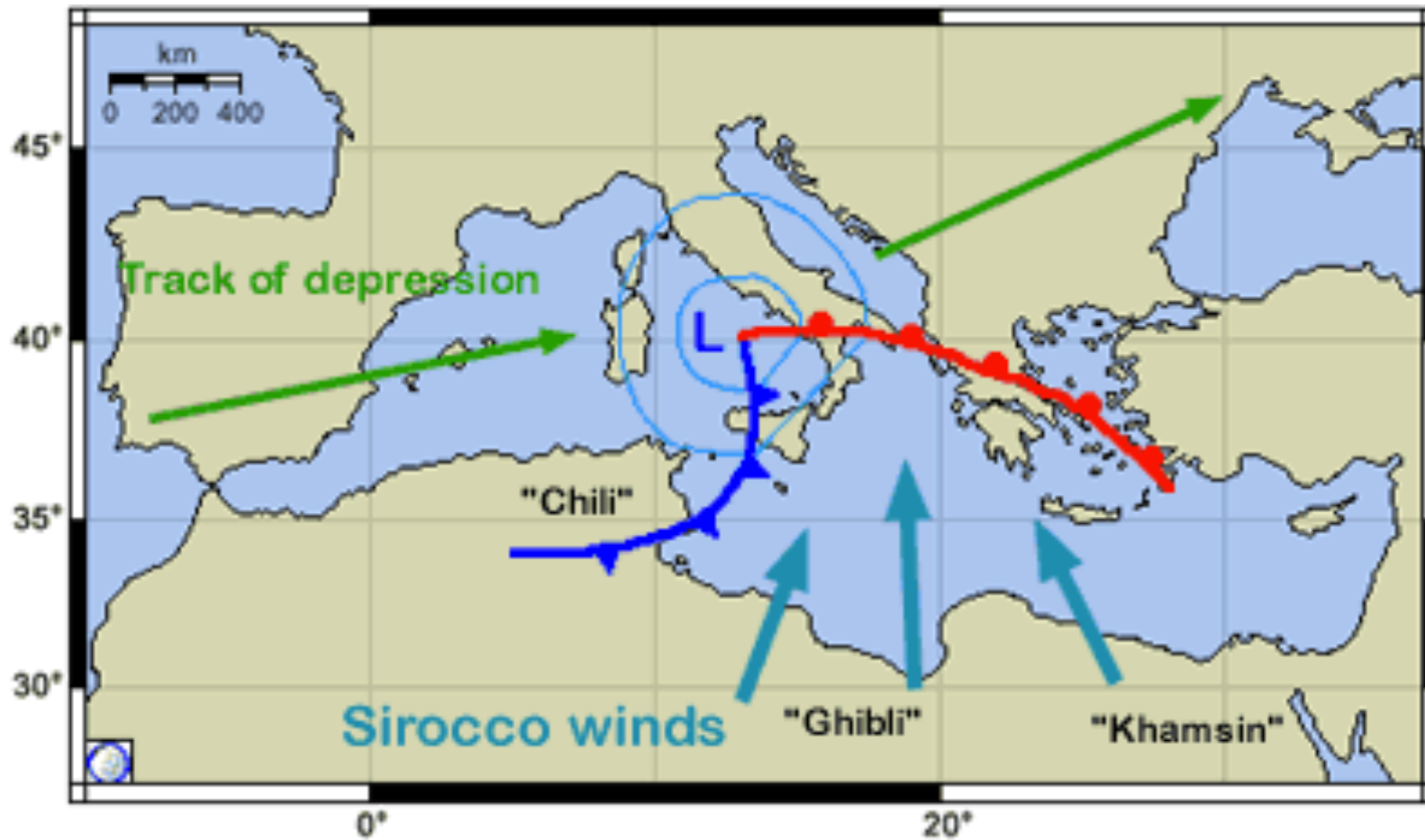
May to October
Stronger in August in
Aegean

Steady winds
Occasional gales

Bring high seas in Egypt
and Levant

Sirocco winds

Khamsin: Egypt and Levant
April to June



Mare Clausum

- But from the month of November the winter setting of the Vergiliae (Pleiades) interrupts shipping with frequent storms. So from three days before the Ides of November (i.e. 11th November) until six days before the Ides of March (i.e. 10th March) the seas are closed.
- When Pachon has run its course, that is, after the rising of the Pleiades, from six days before the Kalends of June (i.e. 27th May) until the rising of Arcturus, that is, eighteen days before the Kalends of October (i.e. 14th September), navigation is deemed safe, because thanks to the summer the roughness of the sea is lessened.
- Excerpts from Vegetius (4th C CE)

Short and safe sailing (in a smaller world)

Fifty days after the solstice, when the season of wearisome heat is come to an end, [665] is the right time for men to go sailing. Then you will not wreck your ship, nor will the sea destroy the sailors, unless Poseidon the Earth-Shaker be set upon it, or Zeus, the king of the deathless gods, wish to slay them; for the issues of good and evil alike are with them. [670] At that time the winds are steady, and the sea is harmless. Then trust in the winds without care, and haul your swift ship down to the sea and put all the freight on board; but make all haste you can to return home again and do not wait till the time of the new wine and autumn rain and [675] oncoming storms with the fierce gales of Notus who accompanies the heavy autumn rain of Zeus and stirs up the sea and makes the deep dangerous. Hesiod Works and Days – 7th C BCE

Practicalities of a different sort

- Movement of goods is also seasonal
- Agricultural goods + harvest
- Harvest times vary according to area and to crop.



Moments in the agricultural year

- But when the House-carrier climbs up the plants (mid-May) from the earth to escape the Pleiades, then it is no longer the season for digging vineyards, but to whet your sickles and rouse up your slaves.
- Set your slaves to winnow Demeter's holy grain, when strong Orion (July) first appears, on a smooth threshing-floor in an airy place. [600] Then measure it and store it in jars.
- Excerpts Hesiod Works and Days

Trade, Weather and Agreements

- Androcles of Sphettus and Nausicrates of Carystus lent to Artemo and Apollodorus, both of Phaselis, three thousand drachmae in silver for a voyage from Athens to Mendê or Scionê, and thence to Bosphorus—or if they so choose, for a voyage to the left parts of the Pontus as far as the Borysthenes, and thence back to Athens, on interest at the rate of two hundred and twenty-five drachmae on the thousand; but, if they should sail out from Pontus to Hieron after the rising of Arcturus, at three hundred on the thousand, on the security of three thousand jars of wine of Mendê, which shall be conveyed from Mendê or Scionê in the twenty-oared ship of which Hyblesius is owner. Dem. 35.10
- Check the change in interest: Before mid-September 22.5%; after mid-September 30%