



The MARES Project



RED SEA V - Navigated Spaces, Connected Places

The fifth international conference on the peoples of the Red Sea region

16 - 19 September 2010

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

Thursday, 16 September

- 13.00-17.00** **Registration in the lobby at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.**
- 16.00-17.00** **Tea and coffee**
- 17.00-17.30** **Dionisius A. Agius**, MARES Project Principal Investigator, Al Qasimi Professor of Arabic Studies and Islamic Material Culture, IAIS, University of Exeter. *Opening remarks: Red Sea V.*
- 17.30-18.30** **Cheryl Ward**, Director of the Center for Archaeology and Anthropology, Associate Professor of History, Maritime Archaeologist, Coastal Carolina University.
Sailing the Red Sea: Pharaonic voyages to Punt, and Min of the Desert.
- 18.30-20.00** **Official opening of the Dhow exhibition.**
- 20.00** **Welcome reception in 'The Street', Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.**

Friday, 17 September

9.00-10.30 Session One (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Pierre Tallet. *The Pharaonic harbour of Ayn Sukhna (Old Kingdom/Middle Kingdom).*
- Rodolfo Fattovich. *The southern Red Sea in the 2nd millennium BC: an archaeological overview.*
- Andrea Manzo. *Exotic ceramics from Nubia and the southern Red Sea at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis: an update.*

10.30-11.00 Tea and coffee

11.00-12.30 Session Two (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Roger Blench. *The Semiticisation of the Arabian Peninsula and its apparent absence from the archaeological record.*
- Kenneth A. Kitchen. *Ancient Egyptians and early north-east African navigators' use of space.*
- Oscar Nalesini. *The Red Sea as space of sacred places and beings.*

12.30-13.30 Lunch (Common Room, IAIS).

13.30-15.00 Session Three (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Steve E. Sidebotham. *Berenike: fieldwork at a Ptolemaic-Roman port on the Red Sea coast of Egypt 2008-2010.*
- Caroline Durand. *Crossing the Red Sea: the Nabataeans in the Egyptian Eastern Desert.*
- Dario Nappo. *Trade and war in the Red Sea in the 2nd century AD.*

15.00-15.30 Tea and coffee

15.30-17.00 Session Four (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Solène Marion de Procé. *Harbours and coastal settlements in the eastern Red Sea during antiquity.*
- Ralph K. Pedersen. *Black Assarca: the shipwreck and island in the anthropological context.*
- Lucy Blue, Ross Thomas and Jeremy D. Hill. *New light on the vessels of Indo-Roman trade: Roman shipwrecks in the northern Red Sea.*

17.00-17.30 Tea and coffee

17.30-18.30 Session Five (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Peter Sheehan. *The port of Babylon, Egypt.*
- Eivind Heldaas Seland. *Liber Pontificalis and the Red Sea trade of the early 4th century AD.*

18.30-19.30 Keynote speaker T.B.A.

20.00 Dinner T.B.A.

Saturday, 18 September

9.00-11.00 Session Six (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- David Bramoullé. *Fātimid policy in the Red Sea (359-567/969-1171): from ideology to survival strategy.*
- Timothy Power. *Trade cycles and settlement patterns in the Red Sea region (c. AD 1050-1250).*
- Julian Whitewright. *Sailing with the mu'allim: The technical practice of Red Sea sailing during the medieval period.*
- Frank Trombley. *Flood and drought in early Islamic Makka.*

11.00-11.30 Tea and coffee

11.30-13.00 Session Seven (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS)

- Michael Mallinson. *Suakin: paradigm of a port.*
- Laurence Smith and Michael Mallinson. *Archaeological and historical evidence for the trade of Suakin, Sudan, 15th-19th century AD.*
- Jacke Phillips. *Beit Khorshid Effendi: a trader's house at Suakin.*

13.00-14.00 Lunch (Common Room, IAIS).

14.00-15.00 Session Eight (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Maher Memarzadeh. *Suez and silk: how a 1554 naval battle illuminates the Spanish maritime economic system.*
- Paul Lunde. *A Spanish spy in the northern Red Sea in 1807.*

15.00-15.20 Tea and coffee

15.20-16.20 Session Nine (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Janet Starkey. *Monks and Bedouins in the deserts around the Red Sea.*
- Petra Weschenfelder. *Caravan trade through the Eastern Desert.*

16.20-16.40 Tea and coffee

16.40-17.40 Session Ten (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

Ohsoon Yun. *Coffee culture in the Red Sea: the coffee ceremony in Ethiopia.*
Philippe Provençal. *Arabic plant names.*

17.40-18.00 Break

18.00-19.30 Session Eleven (Lecture Theatre 1&2, IAIS).

- Sadig A. Malki. *Awareness level among King Abdulaziz University students of the institutions and issues related to the vitality, geography and history of the Red Sea.*
- Fahad Alsharif. *The political economy of undocumented migration in Saudi Arabia: a case study of the city of Jeddah.*
- Jenny Balfour Paul. *Rendezvous on the Red Sea.*

19.30-20.30 Antonin Besse. *The last of the Aden dhows.*

20.30 Reception

Sunday, 19 September

10.00 Departure from the IAIS to the city centre for the guided tour.

10.30 Red Coat Guided Tour of the City of Exeter.

12.00 Exeter Cruises boat trip on the river Exe (to Double Locks Pub).

Please note: All papers will be twenty minutes in duration. There will be a period for questions and general discussion after each paper.

KEY NOTES LECTURE		
A	Antonin Besse	The last of the Aden dhows
B	Cheryl Ward	Sailing the Red Sea: Pharaonic voyages to Punt and "Min of the Desert"
ABSTRACTS		
1	Fahad Alsharif	The political economy of undocumented migration in Saudi Arabia: a case study of the city of Jeddah
2	Jenny Balfour-Paul	Rendezvous on the Red Sea
3	Roger Blench	The Semiticisation of the Arabian Peninsula and its apparent absence from the archaeological record
4	Lucy Blue, Ross Thomas and JD Hill	New light on the vessels of Indo-Roman trade: Roman shipwrecks in the northern Red Sea
5	David Bramoullé	Fātimid policy in the Red Sea (359-567/969-1171): from ideology to survival strategy.
6	Caroline Durand	Crossing the Red Sea: the Nabataeans in the Egyptian Eastern Desert
7	Rodolfo Fattovich	The southern Red Sea in the 2nd millennium BC: an archaeological overview
8	Kenneth A. Kitchen	Ancient Egyptians and early north-east African navigators' use of space
9	Paul Lunde	A Spanish spy in the northern Red Sea in 1807
10	Sadig A. Malki	Awareness level among King Abdulaziz University students of the institutions and issues related to the vitality, geography and history of the Red Sea
11	Michael Mallinson	Suakin paradigm of a port
12	Andrea Manzo	Exotic ceramics from Nubia and the southern Red Sea at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis: an update
13	Maher Memarzadeh	Suez and silk: how a 1554 naval battle illuminates the Spanish maritime economic system
14	Oscar Nalesini	The Red Sea as space of sacred places and beings
15	Dario Nappo	Trade and war in the Red Sea in the 2nd century AD
16	Ralph K. Pedersen	Black Assarca: the shipwreck and island in the anthropological context
17	Jacke Phillips	Beit Khorshid Effendi: a trader's house at Suakin
18	Timothy Power	Trade cycles and settlement patterns in the Red Sea region (c. AD 1050-1250)
19	Philippe Provençal	Arabic plant names
20	Solène Marion de Procé	Harbours and coastal settlements in the eastern Red Sea during antiquity
21	Eivind Heldaas Seland	Liber Pontificalis and the Red Sea trade of the early 4th century

22	Peter Sheehan	The port of Babylon, Egypt
23	Steven E. Sidebotham	Berenike: fieldwork at a Ptolemaic-Roman port on the Red Sea coast of Egypt 2008-2010
24	Laurence Smith and Michael Mallinson	Archaeological and historical evidence for the trade of Suakin, Sudan, 15th–9th century AD
25	Janet Starkey	Monks and Bedouins in the deserts around the Red Sea.
26	Pierre Tallet	The Pharaonic harbour of Ayn Sukhna (Old Kingdom/Middle Kingdom)
27	Frank Trombley	Flood and drought in early Islamic Makka
28	Petra Weschenfelder	Caravan trade through the Eastern Desert
29	Julian Whitewright	Sailing with the mu'allim: the technical practice of Red Sea sailing during the medieval period.
30	Ohsoon Yun	Coffee culture in the Red Sea: about the coffee ceremony in Ethiopia

The last of the Aden dhows

Antonin BESSE

"The Last of the Aden Dhows" is the title I chose for a modest publication hurriedly put together in the sixties with the help of members of the Maritime Museum in Paris. It seemed at the time that the days of the Aden dhows were counted, as indeed they were, with the closing of the Suez Canal and the resulting suspension of activity through the port of Aden.

Aden had long been the entrepôt for all trade conducted between countries surrounding the Gulf and for all the import and export trade to and from Ethiopia, Yemen, Somaliland, Oman, the Persian Gulf and the East African coast as far down as Zanzibar.

Aden was also the bunkering port for ships plying the maritime routes from Europe to the Far East and back via the Red Sea and Mediterranean. The Aden refinery was built in the early fifties to serve the bunkering needs of the growing number of ships calling at Aden and to compensate for the loss of Abadan following the nationalization of Persian oil by Mossadek.

Most of the dhows operating in the Gulf of Aden, trading and fishing, were built in Aden, captained and manned by local crews, all seafaring men from the Houjouria in South Yemen and the Hadhramaut, in the former Western Aden protectorate.

The motorisation of dhows overloading the stern with heavy engines and shattering the frames with vibrations also helped to precipitate the demise of what were essentially enduring and elegant sailing craft.

Few have survived, alas, stripped of their sails and masts leaving in their wake a long and proud sailing tradition.

Sailing the Red Sea: Pharaonic voyages to Punt and "Min of the Desert"

Cheryl WARD

Center for Archaeology and Anthropology, Coastal Carolina University

Most people think of the ancient Egyptians as a peaceful farming people, bound to the Nile and receiving visits from other cultures, but the truth is that the Egyptians were a seafaring nation, sailing the seas for trade and conquest. Archaeologists and Egyptologists have long recognized the importance of watercraft in the life of the ancient Egyptians, yet Egypt's external connections often were seen as initiated across land routes or by other peoples.

Thousands of representations and models of ships and boats complement 24 excavated river crafts dating from the First Dynasty to the Persian period (c. 3050-450 BCE). Although these river boats are now familiar, much less is known about seagoing vessels. Recent discoveries of cedar planks rotten with shipworm at the Pharaonic harbour of Mersa/Wadi Gawasis on the Red Sea provide direct and dramatic evidence of ancient Egyptian seafaring to and from Punt at about 2000 BCE.

Building *Min of the Desert*, a 20-meter long reconstruction with ancient shipbuilding techniques, proved conclusively that the ancient Egyptians relied on technology developed beside the Nile for repeated long-distance sea voyages. While these discoveries illustrate the technology behind long-distance sailing, few inferences about operation, manoeuvrability, seaworthiness and other characteristics of Egyptian seagoing ships could be drawn.

Min of the Desert sailed the Red Sea for three weeks at the end of 2008/2009, exceeding all expectations for manoeuvrability, speed, and comfort, and the results of our recent expedition provide new information about ancient voyages.

The political economy of undocumented migration in Saudi Arabia: a case study of the city of Jeddah

Fahad ALSHARIF

Department of Politics, University of Exeter

Illegal migration (undocumented migration), according to a plethora of research on the subject, has emerged as an acceptable fact in the daily lives of almost all affluent nation-states and in many regional centres of production and consumption around the world, as well (De Genova 2002). In this regard, migrant "illegality" and border policing have become an important issue for policy makers to debate and find proper solutions to its real or imagined threats to the states around the world.

The literature on migrant "illegality" indicates that most scholarship done in this area is written in English with the majority of research dealing with undocumented migration to the United States by its Mexican neighbours. In Europe, illegal immigration has emerged as an important issue for debate only in the last two decades (Sassen 1999). However, research on "undocumented migration" in the Middle East and the Gulf states is lacking, perhaps due to the lack of reliable databases in the region and the difficulties associated with studying "hidden populations".

The aim of this research is to investigate the various social, economic, and security issues related to the presence in Saudi Arabia of many foreign nationals residing in the country without legal permits to do so.

This paper reflects the study results from fieldwork that was conducted in January, February, and March 2010. The research used a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire to interview members of four different communities of undocumented migrants in the city of Jeddah. Many of the subjects interviewed entered the country to work as guest workers and eventually broke their employment contract with their *kafeel* (sponsor); to perform *Hajj* and overstayed their visa; or were smuggled from the Horn of Africa via boats crossing the Red Sea to Yemen and then smuggled into Saudi Arabia.

The objective of the research at the macro-level is to provide information and analysis of the history of these "hidden" communities, their ethnic make-up, and their geographic distribution in the city. The thesis also looks at the current and past migration policies used by the Saudi government in dealing with undocumented and overstayers migrants. At the micro-level of analysis, the focus is on the social and economic needs of the various communities of undocumented immigrants and their place in the job market in Jeddah.

References

De Genova, N. 2002. Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31: 419-47.

Sassen, S. 1999. *Guests and Aliens*, New York: New Press.

Rendezvous on the Red Sea

Jenny BALFOUR-PAUL

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter
Royal Geographical Society

In January I travelled by the last freighter that still takes a few passengers from Britain to India, via the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the coast of Arabia, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. It enabled me to experience working life aboard a modern cargo ship, the 60,000 ton CMA-CGM *Coral*, and in container ports that are closed to the general public. I could also compare this with the movement of cargo on the same route in the mid nineteenth century.

The five week journey was fascinating, including as it did not just the general interest of modern container shipping, but also the realities of dealing with stowaways (our ship having had this problem on the previous voyage) and passing through the world's most dangerous 'pirate zone', which centres on the Bab el Mandeb Straits at the southern end of the Red Sea. This paper will describe these concerns, plus the passage through the Suez Canal, and various modern ports.

I have been working for several years on the illustrated Journals of an unusual young English Victorian, born 1824. Among the many adventures in his life, he undertook a nine-month voyage from Calcutta to Alexandria. Speaking Arabic and adopting a Muslim alias, he travelled on Arabian *dhow*s by sea (and then by camel across Sinai). As a former sailor, as well as keen observer, his descriptions (enlivened by watercolours) of merchants, life on board, ports, cargo, navigation etc are vivid. They even include an encounter with Wahabi pirates off the coast of Yemen.

Using these Journals, Victorian charts and watercolours of the Red Sea in the archives of the Royal Geographical Society, and my own recent voyage, this illustrated paper will bring to life, at firsthand, Red Sea shipping and cargo in both the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries.

The Semiticisation of the Arabian Peninsula and its apparent absence from the archaeological record

Roger BLENCH

Kay Williamson Educational Foundation, Cambridge

The Arabian Peninsula is entirely Semitic-speaking today, with Arabic dominant and the South Semitic languages confined to a small area of the extreme south, along the coast of the Hadhramaut, in Oman and Socotra. However, inscriptional data tells us that they were once much more widespread and indeed spread across the Red Sea to become the Ethio-Semitic languages. The Semitic languages are relatively well-attested compared with other branches of Afroasiatic and the lack of diversity within South Semitic argues that this process cannot be very old. Nonetheless, we have no clear idea of when Semitic languages became dominant in Arabia, nor by what process the existing populations disappeared or were assimilated. Moreover, there is surprisingly little substrate vocabulary in South Semitic, making it difficult to suggest an identity for the pre-Semitic populations.

The archaeology of Arabia and adjacent parts of Ethiopia has become significantly better known in the last few years and yet there is no obvious correlate for this remarkable process. The paper examines the evidence and makes some proposals as to the nature and chronology of the Semiticisation of the Arabian Peninsula, using principally lexical evidence from the South Semitic languages.

New light on the vessels of Indo-Roman trade: Roman shipwrecks in the northern Red Sea

Lucy BLUE

Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Southampton

Ross THOMAS

Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Southampton

JD HILL

British Museum

Evidence regarding the nature of vessels in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean during the period of Indo-Roman trade is sparse, with direct evidence for shipwrecks being extremely limited, restricted to a few scattered amphorae finds on the seabed. Our knowledge of the vessels of trade to date has thus essentially been confined to limited iconographic depictions of boats, descriptions in ancient texts, and elements of ship structure and rigging recovered from port sites along the Red Sea coast of Egypt and more recently coastal Kerala in India.

In the summer of 2010 the University of the Southampton in collaboration with the British Museum, the University of Alexandria and the Underwater Department of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt undertook a fact finding survey in the Fury Bay region off the southern Red Sea coast of Egypt. A number of new sites were assessed and one known wreck, the 1st century Fury Shoals wreck, was re-evaluated.

This paper will present the initial findings relating to preliminary surveys of two shipwrecks, the Fury Shoals wreck and a new Roman era wreck located during the survey. Both sites were examined using non-invasive techniques including photogrammetry, video, planning and technical drawing of the artefacts in situ, in order to examine the information these complimentary sites afford with regard to furthering our understanding of vessels of Indo-Roman trade and the dynamic nature of the cargoes they transported. Essentially this paper will present the first systematic survey of two Roman shipwrecks of the northern Red Sea.

Fāṭimid policy in the Red Sea (359-567/969-1171): from ideology to survival strategy

David BRAMOULLE

University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

From the 5th century onward, merchants of all nationalities needed Egyptian markets in order to get products arriving from India and beyond *via* the Red Sea where the Fāṭimids more or less controlled the coasts.

Bernard Lewis, in a leading article concerning the Fāṭimid policy in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, tried to show that even before the Fāṭimids ruled Egypt, they developed a strategy of the European/Mediterranean trade diversion from Mesopotamia to the Adanese coast and the Red Sea area where Fāṭimids allied dynasties could redirect the products to Egypt. Bernard Lewis assumed that the Ismāʿīlī preaching activity, the *daʿwa*, had been deliberately geared to meet that goal. This challenging theory needs to be qualified.

The linkages that the Fāṭimids maintained with the dynasties of the Red Sea, and particularly those of Yemen, go back to the very beginning of the existence of the Fāṭimids, even though it is true that the main development of business activity corresponds to the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt in 359/969. Therefore, the texts reported the strengthening of the relations between the two spaces while the dynasty, after having experienced a period of great power, was increasingly challenged until its disappearance in 567/1171. During the two centuries of Fāṭimid power in Egypt, the Mediterranean context changed greatly. The Egyptian civil war in the 452's/1060's, the Seljuk advance in Syria and finally the Crusades changed considerably the initial objectives of this Shīʿite dynasty. The Baghdad dream and the subjugation of ʿAbbāsīd Iraq which had been the Fāṭimid major political goal since 909 vanished and the Cairo masters had to build a kind of *realpolitik* dictated by a survival instinct. The Red Sea, hitherto relegated to a quite secondary position during most of the 6th/11th century, became a vital space that the Fāṭimids could not ignore because the tax revenues obtained from the trade of its products allowed the caliphs and others to maintain their power over Egypt and resist the Crusaders.

The sources show a strategical evolution of the Fāṭimid policy in the Red Sea during the 6th/12th century. To the religious propaganda and diplomacy, the Fāṭimids added direct military actions which, paradoxically, reflect maybe more of their weakening than a real capacity for nuisance in respect of the ʿAbbāsīd world suggested by Bernard Lewis.

Crossing the Red Sea: the Nabataeans in the Egyptian Eastern Desert

Caroline DURAND

Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, CNRS, Lion

The Nabataean kingdom, in North-Western Arabia, on the Eastern shore of the Red Sea, reached a considerable prosperity between the Late Hellenistic and Roman period, through its involvement in the trans-Arabian caravan trade.

The Nabataean presence in the Egyptian Eastern Desert is well known by a hundred of inscriptions – graffiti – left by travellers along the roads linking the Red Sea to the Nile. A first inventory of these inscriptions, usually considered as dating from the Roman period, has been done in the 1950's by Enno Littmann and David Meredith. This inventory has now to be completed by a few new discoveries from recent fieldworks. The results of excavations carried out during the last two decades in the Roman forts (*praesidia*) built along the desert roads from Coptos to the harbours of Myos Hormos and Berenike can help to precise the chronology of the Nabatean presence in the Eastern Desert. It seems that Nabateans were present in the Eastern Desert from as soon as the 1st c. AD and that their activities lasted until the 3rd c. AD.

On the other hand, the distribution of inscriptions reveals that Nabateans were more active along the Northern road between Myos Hormos and Coptos than on the Southern road linking Coptos to Berenike, even though this latter became the main trade route for Egyptian/Roman merchants after the mid-1st c. AD.

A possible interpretation is that Myos Hormos was the natural outlet of a Nabataean trade route coming from across the Red Sea. This would mean that a Nabataean harbour must have been located in front of Myos Hormos, probably near al-Wajh where ancient remains have been recorded. This harbour could have been Leukê Komê or Egra Komê as mentioned by the ancient authors.

The southern Red Sea in the 2nd millennium BC: an archaeological overview

Rodolfo FATTOVICH

Department of African and Arabian Studies, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

In the early 1990s I tentatively suggested the existence of an interregional exchange circuit between the opposite African and Arabian regions of the southern Red Sea in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC (Fattovich 1996a). I also suggested that the ceramics from a few coastal sites, dating to the 2nd millennium BC, shared some style features and might thus be ascribed to different human groups in mutual contact, which I provisionally grouped under the label of 'Tihama Cultural Horizon' (Fattovich 1996b). This hypothesis was based on the evidence Juris Zarins and Maurizio Tosi recorded, respectively, in the Saudi and Yemeni Tihama, and my personal research in the Gash Delta near Kassala (Eastern Sudan) in the 1980s. In the early 2000s the existence of a late prehistoric Afro-Arabian circuit and 'Tihama Cultural Horizon' was questioned by some scholars, who rejected any possible interaction between the human groups living in the opposite regions of the southern Red Sea, mainly on a misunderstanding and/or sometime limited knowledge of the African evidence (e.g. Schmidt 2002; Durrani 2005).

In this paper I shall test the hypothesis of an interaction between the human groups living in the northern Horn of Africa and south-western Arabia in the light of more recent archaeological investigations in these regions and the results of the UNO/IsIAO and BU project at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis in Egypt.

References

Durrani, N. 2005. *The Tihama Coastal Plain of South-West Arabia in its Regional Context, c. 6000 BC – AD 600*, Oxford.

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Fattovich, R. 1996b. Punt: the archaeological perspective, *Beitrage zur Sudanforschung*, 6: 15-29.

Schmidt, P. 2002. The "Ona" culture of Greater Asmara: Archaeology's liberation of Eritrea's ancient history from colonial paradigms, *Journal of Eritrean Studies*, 1: 29-58.

Ancient Egyptians and early north-east African navigators' use of spaces

Kenneth A. KITCHEN

University of Liverpool

In this study, "navigated spaces" are here taken in two senses. *Internally*, relating to the space(s) within ships and boats used in early Red Sea navigation: ship-sizes, crew-complements, and scope for various categories of cargo (inert and live), besides questions of also carrying water and food-supplies for crews. And *externally*, use of optimum sea-coast sites suited to successive overnight stops, to avoid night-time sailing within channels often closely bounded by reefs, as well as coastal harbour-sites geographically well-sited to be springboards for expeditions seeking to obtain valued resources from the north-east African interior.

A Spanish spy in the northern Red Sea in 1807

Paul LUNDE

University of Cambridge

The Catalan Badia y Leblich, travelling under the alias Ali Bey al-Abassi as an agent for Manuel Godoy, prime minister of Carlos IV of Spain, made the hajj in 1807. His account of Mecca and the ceremonies of the pilgrimage are well known, as are the magnificent drawings he made of the city and its surroundings. Not so well known is his account of the voyage from Suez to Jiddah, which he made in a local sailing craft. His log of the voyage vividly evokes the hazards of traditional seafaring in the treacherous waters of the northern Red Sea and gives valuable insights into the capabilities of dhows and their crews on the eve of their replacement by steamships.

Awareness level among King Abdulaziz University students of the institutions and issues related to the vitality, geography and history of the Red Sea

Sadig A. MALKI

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah

A quick glance at the number of institutions specializing in the study of the Red Sea in the countries surrounding it (i.e., Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt), can easily lead the individual to the conclusion that there is a high level of public concern toward the issues of the Red Sea, of which these institutions are only a by product.

However, it is the contention of this paper that, regardless of the current number of institutions or centres devoted to the study of the Red Sea, there is not only a lack of general public awareness of these institutions, but also little familiarity of facts about the geographical, economic, and cultural linkages between the different regions of the Red Sea.

Due to limited resources, the writer decided to study the level of awareness among university students at King Abdulaziz University, in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Jeddah was selected for this central location on the Red Sea and its ethnically representative population due to its location as gateway for pilgrims to Mecca coming from the different regions surrounding the Red Sea.

The study will use a structured, close-ended questionnaire relating to the subject of Red Sea awareness in terms of history, geography, and cultural linkages of other communities living in the different areas on the Red Sea. The objective of the questionnaire is to test for awareness in a random sample of KAU students. The main assumption of the study is that if weak awareness is prevalent within college students then it should be expected to be lower within the less educated population of the city.

If the data collected in this study shows a low level of awareness among KAU students regarding the issues discussed above, then the creation of institutions of all kinds at the state-level could have little impact on the development of the area because it lacks the human element in policymaking.

Ideally, the goal of creating institutions should not be enhance parochial state interest related to the Red Sea, but to bring about an awareness of the common history and shared livelihood, which would enhance a more fluid format of exchange that can benefit the people of the area.

The writer hopes that the case study results on awareness levels in the city of Jeddah will also instigate other research endeavours that would deal with the different human dimensions and connections of the people of the Red Sea. In this respect, building up institutions should include a parallel plan for informing, educating, and enlightening the public about the issues of the Red Sea.

Suakin paradigm of a port

Michael MALLINSON

Sudanese National Corporation for Antiquities and Monuments, Suakin Project

Suakin as we know it today is a Paradigm of a Red Sea port developed over 1000 years of port construction on the Red Sea. It evolved from earlier ports in the region, and over time acquired aspects of their culture and more importantly their roles as centres of trade and administration of that nebulous concept of empire. Its role on the Red Sea has shifted with the changing relations with the neighbouring powers which sought to use it.

The result of this developing history has been the port we see today, and now with its rebirth following the expansion of New Sudan this role may again become relevant again. This paper examines what has created this idealised port, and also how its emblematic nature figures in the Sudanese image of their international relations. From the earliest evidence of the port as a small coastal settlement in the 9th c through to its rise as the primary entrepôt of the Red Sea Littoral with the fall of 'Aydhāb in the 15th c, and its final flowering as the jewel of the Red Sea, the island has formed a focus for ambitions of power, trade, pilgrimage and architectural expression. The recent architectural and archaeological studies of NCAM's Suakin Project, working with Cambridge University, Khartoum University and Ulster University has produced new evidence of this history, and how the island and its architecture were created.

Exotic ceramics from Nubia and the southern Red Sea at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis: an update

Andrea MANZO

Department of African and Arabian Studies, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

This paper will deal with the exotic ceramic materials discovered in the last field seasons (2008-2010) at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis (Red Sea, Egypt) by the Italian-American Expedition of the University "L'Orientale", Naples (Italy), and Boston University, Boston (USA). Mersa/Wadi Gawasis was the harbour from where the Pharaonic seafaring expeditions to the land of Punt were launched in the Middle Kingdom.

The studied ceramics materials can be divided into two main classes: Middle Nubian sherds, and sherds from the Southern Red Sea. A systematic description and a typological classification of each class will be provided.

On the basis of the characteristics of each class, remarks on their function will be proposed. On the basis of the function and origin of each type of exotic vessel, of their spatial distribution in the site, as well as of the relationships between these exotic ceramics and other classes of materials from Mersa/Wadi Gawasis, new insights will be given into the organization of the Pharaonic expeditions on the Red Sea. Moreover, these exotic ceramic materials will provide fresh evidence on the regions involved in the Egypt-Punt trade network and on the location of the different regions mentioned in the Egyptian texts describing these enterprises, such as Punt and Bia Punt (the "mine of Punt").

Suez and silk: how a 1554 naval battle illuminates the Spanish maritime economic system

Maher MEMARZADEH
Independent Scholar

Early modern Spanish archival references to the Red Sea show it as part of a larger maritime economic system which connected the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, incorporating the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Suez especially, as well as the coast connecting it to Goa through Aden, Masqat, and Hormuz, assumed greater strategic significance as Spanish, Ottoman, English, and Dutch armadas sought to control trade through seafaring, regularly engaging in naval battles to defend commercial interests. Incidental information from letters or reports addresses different aspects of colonial maritime ambitions and can provide the foundations to interweave a social history of seafaring. For instance, tribes' names, references to unpaid soldiers, viceroy noncompliance, location of lost ships and winter ports, lists of naval officers, plans of forced acculturation, differentiation between ship sizes and types, varieties of military weaponry, tactics of enemy ship capture, dietary habits of the colonists, popular uprisings due to the naval attack, navigating different wind patterns, and effects of tide cycles on navigation speak to the parameters of early modern maritime expansion.

A handwritten account of a 1554 naval battle incites the following questions: after the naval conflict near the Meccan Straights, did captured or mutinied Spanish Moors (*moriscos*) communicate with local Muslims in Arabic? What codes did spies use and how did spy-craft influence colonialism? What roles did Armenians, Jews, and Moriscos have in conquest and how did each group interact with the colonized populations? Can onomastic archival searches reconstitute colonists' local social networks in supplementing archaeological evidence? Do detailed descriptions of water delivery systems suffice to reconstruct the structures of self-sufficient sixteenth century coastal fortifications? Can estimates of naval personnel inform colonial warfare strategies?

For the Mares Conference Red Sea V: Navigated Spaces, connected places, I plan to discuss the social information from the account of the 1554 naval battle.

The Red Sea as space of sacred places and beings

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The paper will review the information on sacred places and beings among some littoral societies of the Red Sea recorded in the Greek and Latin sources. Sailors and merchants from Egypt and the Mediterranean in the 4th-2nd century BC witnessed ritual practices connected to the marine environment during their journeys. These involved environmental features tied to the daily life of the local populations as well as to their thought: coastal shrines, special places, sea animals and marine phenomena. Although scanty and manipulated by ancient observers and geographers, these data can still provide an insight into their ideological representation of the man-sea relation.

To further explore the theme, the paper will compare this information to similar records of man's intimate ties with the sea and its creatures from the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

Trade and war in the Red Sea in the 2nd century AD

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With this paper I aim to analyse the political and economic development occurring in the area around the Red Sea during the second century AD, starting with the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, under the rule of the emperor Trajan, and continuing up the reign of Marcus Aurelius and his Parthian Wars.

The paper is based on the analysis of the new available epigraphic documents from places such as Mada'in Salih and the archipelago of Farasan (both of them in Saudi Arabia), combined with the information available from literary sources (Cassius Dio, Eutropius, Ptolemy, Lucian, the Han Chronicle, and so far), and from archaeological surveys and excavations. Comparing such sources, it will be possible to reconstruct the lines of the Roman policy in the Red Sea during the second century, demonstrating how in the period between the reign of Trajan and the one of Marcus Aurelius, the Empire pursued a consistent military and economic policy in the area, aimed to foster the trade passing through the Red Sea, and to establish a more solid connection with Countries such as India and China. Such aim was pursued by enhancing the existing networks of the area, on both inland and the Sea. In the second century a number of new infrastructures were set up in the area, and new maritime networks were created, for both internal and external trade in the Red Sea.

The scenario that I aim to reconstruct will allow to better understand the key role played by the Red Sea area in the overall policy of the Empire and will give an insight on how during the second century AD the military and the economic policies of the Empire were operating together in order to secure the economic prosperity and the political stability. In this reconstruction, I will also aim to elucidate the role played directly by the emperors or by their entourage, in order to shed also some light on the imperial direct involvement in the trade passing through the Red Sea.

Black Assarca: the shipwreck and island in the anthropological context

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Shipwreck sites often fall into the realm of historical particularism - descriptive of the finds and the ship itself - in part due to the relative youth of the discipline of shipwreck archaeology. No ship, or its wreck, however, is isolated from the cultures that produced the vessel, launched its voyage, or interacted with it through trade or other activities. In this paper, the wider theoretical bases for the existence of the mid-first millennium shipwreck at Black Assarca Island will be explored with the goal of attaining a greater understanding of the processes which led the ship to that desert island, as well as to post-processual matrices which may have governed seafaring on the Red Sea in Late Antiquity.

Beit Khorshid Effendi: a trader's house at Suakin

Jacke PHILLIPS

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The island and city of Suakin lies on the Sudanese Red Sea coast some 40km south of modern Port Sudan. Its earliest known history dates back at least to the 10th-12th c. as a well-positioned trading port; interaction with Indian and Venetian traders is documented in the 15th c. Suakin became an Ottoman garrison in the 16th c., with well-built houses mostly owned by rich traders. Ceded to Egypt in the 19th c., it prospered again as a port after the Suez Canal opened in 1869. Revival of trade with the West after the *Mahadia* ironically was responsible for its final abandonment, after Port Sudan was founded to cater for the increasing large ships that could no longer enter its increasingly silted harbour. By 1922 the last trader had departed for the new port. Since then, it has fallen into a state of virtually complete disrepair and ruin, due to lack of resources and the legal right to act on what is still a bevy of private properties.

The building called Beit Khorshid Effendi (on plot 35) is considered to be one of the oldest existing houses on the island, today still owned by Khorshid Effendi's descendants. The house has been under investigation, with the family's permission, within a larger archaeological and development project under the overall direction of Hassan Hussein Idris, director of NCAM, the Sudanese National Corporation for Antiquities and Monuments. Gradual clearance of the house since 2002 has revealed not only the full plan of the present house but also many indications of its initial core, its history and its gradual expansion over time. The history of this house will be presented, revealing the combined private and commercial functions of the property and structure.

Trade cycles and settlement patterns in the Red Sea region (c. AD 1050-1250)

Timothy POWER

Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity

The trade of the Red Sea grew between the mid ninth and the mid eleventh centuries, when booming hinterlands supported an expanding network of ports. However, numerous port sites and hinterland settlements declined or were abandoned between the mid eleventh to mid thirteenth centuries. The Cairo Geniza has been taken to suggest that the volume of the Red Sea 'India trade' dropped off after the mid twelfth century, further reflected in the distribution patterns of south Iranian sgraffiatos. The general impression is of a protracted regional decline beginning in the mid eleventh and gaining pace after the mid twelfth century.

The Sinaitic ports of 'Ayla and al-Qulzum fell into ruin, with survey in the Wādī 'Araba and Negev attesting to the abandonment of mines and farmsteads. In Egypt, Aswān was replaced as capital of the Ṣa'īd by Quṣ and declined under the Arab/Beja tribal confederation of the Awlād al-Kanz. Exploitation of the mines of the Eastern Desert including the Wādī al-'Allāqī ceased, which may have contributed to the crisis of the Ayyūbid *dīnār*. The Sudanese port of Bāḍī was abandoned whilst Egyptian control of 'Aydhab was contested by the Ḥadārib Beja. Piracy went unchecked and this period witnessed the efflorescence of the 'Sultanate' of Dahlak.

In the Tihāma, the Ṭarfīd dynasty collapsed and the port of 'Aththar was abandoned, with a gradual 'Bedouinisation' of the Mikhlāf Ibn Ṭarf under the subsequent Sulaymānīd Sharīfs. Zabīd suffered in the warfare between the Najāhīds and Ṣulayhīds, with further destruction attributed to the fanatical Mahdīds. In the Ḥijāz, the mines and estates of the Wādī al-Qurā fell into neglect together with its ports, viz. 'Aynūna, 'Awnīd and al-Ḥawrā', and the administrative capital Qurh – once the most populous Ḥijāzī city after Medina – was abandoned. The Ḥaramayn were beset by squabbling Sharīfs, of whom the Hawāshim of Mecca took to plundering the Hajj caravan, so that the Darb Zubayda slowly declined to be largely abandoned after the Mongol sack of Baghdād.

The pattern of decline and abandonment therefore seems to have been a regional phenomenon. However, only local dynamics working on specific sites have hitherto been considered, such as the silting of the harbour at al-Qulzum or disturbances associated with the Crusaders at 'Ayla. The present author regards these as symptoms rather than causes, and instead attempts to identify the underlying structural or systemic roots of a regional economic contraction. Intraregional factors include the decline of Egyptian market demand following the Fāṭimid *shidda* of the 1060s; the collapse of the mining industry following the exhaustion of the Arabian-Nubian Shield; the dramatic fall in the slave trade after the shift to Turkish cavalry made African infantry obsolete; the advance of military feudalism and retreat of the mercantile bourgeoisie. Interregional or 'world-systems' trends include the decline of the textile industry before European imports; the shrinking share in Indian Ocean trade, possibly associated with Chola hegemony over the Bay of Bengal; conflict with the Gulf emporia, including the raid against Aden by the Amīr of Qays in 1135 and the abandonment of the Ḥaḍramī port of Sharma at around that time.

Harbours and coastal settlements in the eastern Red Sea during antiquity

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"Next in order one comes to a stony beach, and after that to a stretch of coast about one thousand stadia in length which is rugged and difficult for vessels to pass, for lack of harbours and anchoring-places, since a rugged and lofty mountain stretches along it. Then one comes to foot-hills, which are rocky and extend to the sea; and these, especially at the time of the Etesian winds and the rains, present to sailors a danger that is beyond all help."

Strabo, *Geography*, XVI, 4, 18 (Loeb Classical Library Edition, 1932)

Most of the classic authors in antiquity refers to the Arabian coast of the Red Sea in these terms, a hostile shoreline without any good harbours for ships to find refuge. One cannot deny the fact that the rocky coast of the eastern Red Sea and the changing wind regime makes it difficult to sail along western Arabia, let alone to approach it to set ashore. However, if we take a closer look at these texts combined with modern toponymy, the geography of the region and archaeological finds that have been reported, it appears that these shores were not as uninhabited as the ancient authors wrote they were.

Studying the issue of ancient harbours or coastal settlements in the eastern Red Sea implies taking into consideration the smallest evidence of settlement. This coast was populated with trading groups, even more when the maritime itineraries supplanted the caravan routes; but also with pirates profiting from the foreign merchants sailing into the Red Sea basin, and smaller communities that lived off the products of their fishing activities.

We propose to draw a map of the ancient eastern Red Sea according to the pre-Islamic archaeological finds along that coast as well as the geographical features and eventual toponymic correspondences from the documentation available so far.

Arabic plant names

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My research in the Arabic plant names gathered by Peter Forsskål during the Royal Danish expedition to Egypt, the Red Sea and Yemen in 1761-1767 (the so-called Carsten Niebuhr expedition) is presented here. This expedition, named the Arabian Journey 1761-1767, is considered as one of the important scientific undertakings of the 18th century. The aim of the expedition was *i.e.* to make observations in Natural History, including the gathering, description, preservation or illustration of all kinds of zoological and botanical species, and also to note the local vernacular names of these species both in Arabic script and in Latin transcription.

Forsskål gathered more than 2000 botanical specimens, of which 1846 are still kept in the *Herbarium Forskalii* at the Botanical Garden and Museum of the Natural History Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen. In 1994 Professor Ib Friis and F. Nigel Hepper published *The Plants of Pehr Forsskål's Flora Aegyptiaco-Arabica*, a book containing a survey of the *Herbarium Forskalii* and a revision of Forsskål's posthumous work, *Flora Aegyptiaco-Arabica*. My research has resulted in the book: *The Arabic Plant Names of Peter Forsskål's Flora Aegyptiaco-Arabica*, The Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, Biological Papers, No. 57, 2010. This book aims at supplementing Friis' and Hepper's work with a philological study of the Arabic plant names gathered during the expedition. Forsskål had scrupulously fulfilled his task of noting the local names, and his notes represent a unique material regarding Arabic botanical linguistics, as it can be closely connected to herbarium specimens.

Liber Pontificalis and the Red Sea trade of the early 4th century AD

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The *Liber Pontificalis* or "Book of Pontiffs" is an early medieval collection of biographies for the first ninety bishops of Rome. Silvester (314–335) was in office for most of the reign of Constantine I (306/312–337), who was the first Roman emperor to tolerate Christian religion, and who financed the construction of a number of churches. Silvester's biography in the *Liber Pontificalis* contains lists of gifts given by the emperor for the upkeep of the churches he built in Rome. Many of these gifts were estates in different parts of the Roman Empire, some of them yielding as revenue commodities originating from Red Sea and Indian Ocean commerce.

The *Liber Pontificalis* has received little attention in the scholarship on ancient Red Sea commerce, and has mostly been utilised briefly as evidence of the fourth century economy, or church involvement in the eastern trade. This paper argues that it can also be used to study the early fourth century Red Sea trade itself, through the pattern of distribution of products and estates mentioned in the text.

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The port of Babylon, Egypt

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This paper will consider the ancient port of Babylon and the role it played with the *Amnis Traianus* in connecting places within and beyond the Red Sea. The paper will examine key episodes in the development of the port of Babylon which may be also be of significance to the broader picture of the Roman Red Sea. The existing state of knowledge about the layout and of the port and the entrance to the canal will be drawn primarily from archaeological evidence recorded during the groundwater lowering project in Old Cairo from 2000-2006. The paper will consider ancient sources for the canal and harbour as well as what light the more prolific early and medieval Arab sources relating to Fustat may throw on the original configuration of the port and its place within the later development of the city.

The paper will begin with a very brief background to the Red Sea canals, presenting archaeological evidence for the first settlement at Babylon being broadly contemporary with the successful cutting of a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea by Darius in the sixth century BC. It will also consider the underlying topography and hydrology of the site, much of which has been obscured over time.

These underlying conditions allowed the later shifting of the mouth of the canal to Babylon during the first of the two key episodes to be considered, the reign of the emperor Trajan. The reasons for the shifting of the mouth of the canal to Babylon and the construction of a harbour there will be considered, and an attempt will be made to narrow down the date and circumstances of this construction. The second key chronological episode to be examined will be the construction of the fortress of Babylon by Diocletian around 300 AD and its role within a strategic, military and commercial network covering Egypt and beyond. This part of the paper will discuss how the fortress was laid out around the canal and harbour in a way that allowed their essential functions to continue. Like the Trajanic episode, we have no epigraphic evidence from the site confirming a Diocletianic date, so the archaeological evidence for the dating of these two key episodes will be presented.

The final part of the paper will consider possible directions for further research into the layout of the port and the canal and how these functioned in the peculiar conditions presented by the Nile flood.

Berenike: fieldwork at a Ptolemaic-Roman port on the Red Sea coast of Egypt 2008-2010

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Continued fieldwork at the Ptolemaic-Roman (third century BC-sixth century AD) Red Sea emporium of Berenike expanded knowledge about the city's interactions with other areas of the Red Sea-Indian Ocean littorals, recorded religious, industrial, consumer and maritime practices of the port's inhabitants and documented early Roman-era ship building methods in the Red Sea.

In addition, a total station survey located precisely all trenches excavated since 1994. Geophysical surveying provided new data on subterranean features throughout most of the western and south-western portions of the site.

Trenches excavated near a Ptolemaic-era V-shaped ditch first documented in 2001 further exposed that unusual feature, but provided no additional details about its function. Four dog skeletons lay north of the harbour and east of the Ptolemaic industrial area.

Approximately 240 first century AD ostraca preserved details of fresh water supply to Berenike and its control by the Roman military. Pre-Islamic South Arabian graffiti increased to 12 the number of ancient languages now documented from the site. Imported wood of the genus *Boswellia* indicated the presence of frankincense.

By the first-second centuries AD sections of the south-western harbour had become engulfed in sand and converted into trash dumps and small scale industrial areas. Remains of large ropes, a cedar bollard and charred ship timbers made of cedar signalled, however, some continued maritime activity in this location. Mortise-and-tenon fastening techniques tied ship timbers together in a manner similar to that used in the Mediterranean at that time. Piles of vesicular basalt, originating from Qana' on the Indian Ocean coast of Yemen, were discarded ships' ballast. Excavations recorded over 11 kg of obsidian from this area.

Geophysical data and partial excavation of a late fourth-possibly sixth century AD shrine in the harbour suggested that it had been constructed on an island or dredge heap. The temple contained a recycled inscription of the Roman emperor Trajan dedicated to Isis, Tyche and perhaps Serapis. The shrine also preserved stone temple pools, stone altars, a terracotta incense burner, a bronze *patera/phiale* with remains of an iron tripod attached, wooden bowls and approximately 50 cowry shells. Painted ostrich eggshell fragments had incantations written on them. Pentagrams painted on one of the eggshells and carved on the bottom of a terracotta lamp were symbols of the Dog Star Sirius, which was associated with the beginning of the Egyptian New Year, with the start of the Inundation season and with the goddess Isis.

Excavations in early and late Roman trash dumps provided evidence of small-scale industrial activity in wood, turtle shell, animal bone and leather in the late period.

Archaeological and historical evidence for the trade of Suakin, Sudan, 15th-19th century AD

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The Suakin Project is an archaeological and conservation project on the Red Sea coast of Sudan. Suakin was the main port of Sudan from 15th to early 20th century, important both for trade and for the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Archaeological work is directed towards establishing the history of architecturally and historically significant buildings, and investigating evidence for the medieval town and the origins of the settlement. This paper will present a summary of the main archaeological results of the terrestrial excavations, but will concentrate on a reconstruction of the trade of the port from 15th to 19th century. During seven seasons, excavations have been carried out at four house-sites, the Governor's residence and one of the two surviving mosques. Test excavations have been undertaken at several points around the Town Island and in government buildings relating to late 19th-early 20th century occupation. The terrestrial excavations were accompanied by an underwater survey of the bay and the periphery of the Town Island.

The reconstruction of trading contacts will be based on secondary historical evidence for the later phases of the port's existence, and on archaeological evidence for the earlier period. Accounts of European visitors to the region can be used to provide a summary of the main areas with which Suakin traded and the major items traded here for most of the period under consideration, ranging from those of da Castro and Ovington in the 16th and 17th century, through Poncet and Bruce in the 18th century to authors such as Valentia, Burckhardt and Baker in the 19th century. These demonstrate that a range of organic and inorganic items were traded. Contacts for the latest period of the operation of the port and for the earliest part of the period are also indicated by archaeological evidence, particularly the pottery recovered from stratified contexts. This includes glazed 'China' wares and stonewares, glazed earthenwares and porcelains with blue on white, black on white underglaze decoration. The historical and archaeological evidence is used to provide a picture of the development of the trade at Suakin over time, and indicate the main regions with which this trade was carried on, viz, neighbouring countries in Africa, East Asia and Europe.

Monks and Bedouin in the deserts around the Red Sea

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This paper explores the interaction between nomadic groups and the monastic communities on either side of the Red Sea including those of St Anthony, of St Paul near Suez and at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai. It will be based on travellers' descriptions and a study of the elaborate iconographies in the monasteries themselves. Travellers often feared the nomads but were at the same time fascinated by them. In contrast to the communities of devoted monks, the Bedouin provided travellers with romantic fantasies of the heroic self-willed nomad, the evocative image of the exotic other in the imagined desolate and seemingly illogical open spaces of the desert. Yet the desert provided aesthetic solitude for the monastic communities themselves. The complexities of domination, rivalry between Bedouin groups and the monks and hermits, as well as the mobility of Bedouin life are explored.

The Pharaonic harbour of Ayn Sukhna (Old Kingdom/Middle Kingdom)

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Located on the western coast of the Gulf of Suez, Ayn Sukhna lies about 120 km south Cairo. In 1999, a Pharaonic site was discovered there, thanks to numerous inscriptions in hieroglyphs carved on the cliff, referring to Middle Kingdom Pharaohs and pointing out to a significant settlement from this period (c. 2000-1800 BC). Those texts make it obvious that Ayn Soukhna used to being the Harbour to reach the Sinai and its mines of turquoise and copper.

From 2001, excavations were carried on at the foot of the inscribed mountain. This lead to the discovery of 10 galleries, planned to create a huge, elaborate storing system. In two of those galleries, remains of two dismantled sea-going boats were found. Those boats are still under study. It looks as though they were kept and stored there between the expeditions. From the C14 dating, they would be linked with the end of Middle Kingdom (c. 1800 BC), which would make them the oldest sea-faring boats ever found.

Likely enough, this harbour was already known within much earlier period of Egyptian history: most of the buildings that we studied, as well as the galleries, are now dated from the Old Kingdom (4th-6th Dynasties, c. 2600-2150 BC). During the two last excavating campaigns, very important hieratic texts were discovered on the walls of two galleries. Those are mainly official reports and account of expeditions led during the reign of Djedkare Isesi (5th Dynasty) and quoting "kebenet boats" (i.e. boast of a "Byblos' Type") as the ones in use at Ayn Sukhna for the period.

Flood and drought in early Islamic Makka

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I propose to examine the evidence for major climatic disturbances in the early Islamic chronicles of Makka. These were of two principal kinds, floods and droughts. Rainfall-induced floods filled the basin round the Ka'ba and at times caused a severe loss of life and the destruction of permanent buildings. The rains may well have been caused by heat convection over the Red Sea; their relationship to the Red Sea typhoons mentioned by Arab geographers will require further study. We have detailed information because the floods sometimes coincided with the *hajj*, thereby becoming cultural events of a sort, which the Makkan chronicles date by year and month in describing the attendant circumstances. The sources also provide information about hydrological works designed to minimise the effects of the waters, which sometimes achieved torrential force. The early Abbasid caliphs took a particular interest in these problems, committing central funding to help alleviate these conditions and thus making it a matter of policy vis-à-vis the *hajj*.

This data will be combined with other climatic information such as the operation of ENSO (El Niño) events, which normally led to a reduction in the Nile flood in consequence of the partial failure of the Western Indian Ocean typhoon and resultant drought conditions on the Arabian peninsula, all this based on the Nile Flood figures conserved in Arabic sources from 622 CE onward. One of the central questions is whether there is a correlation between heavy rains, flooding at Makka and Red Sea typhoons in ENSO years, or whether these were demonstrably independent climatic events. By the same token, there is a need to investigate whether severe drought years can be calibrated to the ENSO. There appears to be sound historical and climatic data to support this for 629-30 CE. It may well be possible to demonstrate some of the operative factors in these processes through the investigation of well documented 20th century phenomena.

I recognise that that this line of research is at a preliminary stage and thus speculative. It is intended to establish provisional lines of correspondence where they can be demonstrated, and to exclude hypothetical models where the data fails to corroborate any connection. Whatever the outcome of these propositions, the social, political, fiscal and cultural consequences of these events will be given detailed attention.

Caravan trade through the Eastern Desert

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Caravan trade through the Eastern Desert joined the Nile valley with the Red Sea. I focus the Bedja groups who organized this caravan trade through the 18th and 19th century AD. In my contribution I would like to share my thoughts of how social networks of the Bedja groups influenced the caravan trade, and how at the same time their involvement in the trade affected Bedja intragroups relations.

With this paper I present an aspect of my PhD project. In this project I reconstruct the perspectives of Eastern Desert nomadic groups within their interactions with sedentary peoples of the Nile valley. The written records of these interactions give a rather biased view of the sedentary perspective from Pharaonic times onwards. The archaeological monuments visible within the Eastern Desert rather affirmed this perspective in the eyes of European scholars. Yet, detailed analysis of how social networks organize interactions of current nomadic groups with sedentary peoples provides a different perspective. This analytical data I compare to written sources and archaeological records to propose a reinterpretation of past interactions from a nomadic perspective.

With my contribution to the Red Sea Conference I would like to present caravan trade as one of the spheres in which nomadic groups of the Eastern Desert interacted with sedentary peoples of the Nile valley or of the wider world.

Sailing with the mu'allim: the technical practice of Red Sea sailing during the medieval period

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In most periods of its history, the Red Sea has acted as a conduit for communication, trade and exchange for a range of cultures in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and along the shores of the Red Sea itself. This is particularly true in the medieval period when sailing vessels from all over the Indian Ocean plied the waters of the Red Sea. To fully appreciate the human endeavour of this complex exchange system an attempt must be made to investigate and understand the technical practices utilised by medieval mariners when sailing on the Red Sea. Direct archaeological evidence for such practices remain frustratingly absent from the archaeological record. However, a rich corpus of historical sources survive that can greatly inform our understanding of this subject. The writings and treatises of Indian Ocean navigators such as Ibn Mājid and Sulaimān al-Mahrī provide clear evidence for the nature of sailing rigs, the practices used when under sail and the probable performance of medieval sailing vessels in the western Indian Ocean and Red Sea. Addressing these texts purely from the perspective of sailing and voyaging allows a detailed layer of technical information to be added to our existing knowledge of Red Sea sailing and navigation during the medieval period.

Coffee culture in the Red Sea: about the coffee ceremony in Ethiopia

Ohsoon YUN

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My research focuses on the potential for coffee tourism in Ethiopia as illustrated in the famous coffee ceremony.

In order to understand the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, one must examine the unique coffee culture in the Red Sea region. This paper traces the interaction between coffee culture in the Red Sea and coffee culture in Ethiopia. This study explores the Red Sea region's unique coffee culture and how it is the result of interaction between the different civilizations lining its littorals. There is considerable research on coffee and coffee trade in the Red Sea, but little of such research focuses on the shared similarities of coffee cultures and coffee-associated rituals in the Red Sea region.

It is said that coffee was first discovered in Abyssinia, and was then taken via Djibouti to the port of Mocha, from where it spread to both inside and outside the Red Sea.

The Red Sea historically played an important role in the development of coffee culture but its importance seems to have been dismissed despite the region's sizeable coffee output. By following the historical coffee trade routes, it may be inferred that there are shared coffee associated rituals within the Red Sea region that feature departures from what has come to be known as the mainstream coffee culture. The coffee ceremony, especially in Ethiopia, is revered as being highly symbolic of coffee culture in the region.

Although modern-day Ethiopia is a landlocked nation, its coffee ceremony inevitably demonstrates strong connections with the Red Sea. In most written material on the coffee ceremony, little emphasis is placed on explaining its history or origin and is merely introduced as being unique to Ethiopia's culture. The importance of Ethiopia's history with coffee is ironically most repeated in tourism information packages that make passing references to Ethiopia as being the birthplace of coffee and that they have a coffee ceremony. Ethiopia's coffee ceremony reflects Arab-Islamic influence on the words used in describing the coffee ceremony process and its associated utensils. Coffee ceremonies occurring in neighbouring countries tend to be similar in practice, although there is a small variation in the language used. This phenomenon cannot be explained without acknowledging the role played by the Red Sea.

Although the Red Sea physically divides its littorals, it has not cut off interactions between the various cultures that thrive on its sides. Coffee growing and trading has been a core motive behind the migration of people and their cultures in the Red Sea's history and it displays potential of playing the same role today. It can be suggested that through the historical "coffee road", the unique coffee culture and materials of the Red Sea could become coffee tourism attractions for coffee enthusiasts, especially if coffee could become a means to attract tourists to be connected to current tourism attractions in the Red Sea area.

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