

**ARABIAN RED SEA ROUTE
WORKSHOP**

UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

3 JULY 2017

THE ARABIAN RED SEA ROUTE workshop, Warsaw, 3 July 2017

ARABIAN RED SEA ROUTE WORKSHOP

Organized in cooperation with the **RED SEA VIII CONFERENCE**
by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology
University of Warsaw

and the Aynunah Project
(National Science Center Grant UMO-2014/14/M/HS3/00795).

Organizing Committee

ARABIAN RED SEA ROUTE
Dr. Karol Juchniewicz

RED SEA VIII

Iwona Zych
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Research on both sides of the Red Sea, in Berenike (Egypt) and Aynunah (Saudi Arabia) under the auspices of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw: National Science Center grants UMO-2014/14/M/HS3/00795 (Aynunah) and UMO-2015/17/N/HS3/00163 (Berenike)

MONDAY, 3 JULY

Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

9.00–9.30

WELCOME COFFEE – REGISTRATION

9.30–11.00

Session 1

Chair: Laïla Nehmé

9.30–10.00

Michał Gawlikowski

Introduction. The first account of the Aynunah Project

10.00–10.30

Ali Ibrahim al-Ghabban

New archaeological evidence on the location of Ampeloni in the Island of Farasan, Saudi Arabia

10.30–11.00

Karol Juchniewicz

The role of Aynunah on the Red Sea trade route: preliminary conclusions

11.00–11.30

COFFEE BREAK

11.30–13.00

Session 2

Chair: Ali Ibrahim al-Ghabban

11.30–12.00

Iwona Gajda

Contacts between South Arabia and the Roman Empire

12.00–12.30

Laïla Nehmé

Oriental desert versus Arabian desert. Reflections on the connections between the Egyptian and Arabian shores in the northern Red Sea in Antiquity

12.30–13.00

Marta Luciani

Bronze Age precursors on the Red Sea

13.00–14.30

LUNCH

14.30–16.30

Session 3

Chair: Michał Gawlikowski

14.30–15.00

Zbigniew T. Fiema

To Hegra through al-Qusayr. The al-'Ula-al-Wajh Survey Project

15.00–15.30

Caroline Durand

When the merchants from Roman Egypt meet the Nabatean caravaneers: recent finds from al-Qusayr (al-Wajh, Saudi Arabia)

15.30–16.00

Rupert Brandmeier

Roads of Arabia: new findings of Aqaba amphorae in the Red Sea

16.00–16.30

Marcin Wagner, Zofia Kowarska

Pottery from Aynunah on the northern Red Sea coast (Saudi Arabia)

16.30–17.00

COFFEE BREAK

17.00–18.30	Session 4	Chair: Zbigniew T. Fiema
17.00–17.30	<i>Ralph K. Pedersen</i> “Wither Sailablest Thou?” Red Sea originations and destinations through the lens of ship technology	
17.30–18.00	<i>Zeeshan Shaikh</i> Placing ancient sailors in a time–space framework: visualizing ancient voyages of the Red Sea from a time geography perspective	
18.00–18.30	<i>Mateusz Lisak</i> The conditions and circumstances of discovery of a sea route to India: the issues of open-sea travel and the Bab el-Mandeb barrier	
18.30–20.00	Discussion	
20.00	GET-TOGETHER	

THE ARABIAN RED SEA ROUTE Workshop Warsaw, 3 July 2017

Rupert Brandmeier

LMU Munich

Roads of Arabia: new finds of Aqaba amphorae in the Red Sea

The Thesis “Roads of Arabia: new findings of Aqaba amphorae in the Red Sea” concerns a probable shipwreck cargo of Aqaba amphorae, which was discovered during the second season of the survey project along the Saudi Arabian coast, initiated by nautical archaeologists of Philipps-University Marburg and conducted in cooperation with members of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Heritage in autumn 2013. Nautical archaeology in Saudi Arabia is still in its infancy and to understand the challenges of archaeological research, the geographical and historical circumstances have to be taken into account, particularly the area between Jeddah and Al-Shu’aybah with its particular setting of shoals, sharms and coral reefs. Seafaring and sea trade was, according to the few ancient sources and modern research activities, a hazardous endeavor in antiquity. Transport containers like the Aqaba Amphorae played a major role in sea trade, a significant number of which have been detected on various sites along the Red Sea coast and its hinterland. The chronological classification as well as the application is far from complete, and recent archaeometrical investigations help to clarify the logistical aspects of manufacturing and distribution of Aqaba amphorae. Finding a number of remains of Aqaba amphorae at a supposed shipwreck site close to Jeddah delivers new insight into the maritime routes and activities along the western coast of Saudi Arabia. The documentary material currently available is the baseline for further research in the field of maritime archaeology as it pertains to trade in the Red Sea.

Caroline Durand

CNRS/HiSoMA

When the merchants from Roman Egypt meet the Nabataean caravaneers: recent finds from al-Qusayr (al-Wajh, Saudi Arabia)

The ancient site of al-Qusayr is located approximately 40 km south of al-Wajh, about 6–7 km from the Red Sea coast. It is known since the mid-19th century when the explorer R. Burton described for the first time the remains of a monumental building, the so-called al-Qasr. In March 2016, a new survey of the site was undertaken as part of the al-‘Ula–al-Wajh Survey Project directed by Dr. Zbigniew Fiema. This survey focused not only on the Qasr, but also on the surrounding site corresponding to the ancient settlement. A surface collection of pottery sherds revealed a striking assemblage of Mediterranean and Egyptian imports on one hand and of Nabataean products on the other. This pottery material is particularly homogeneous from a chronological point of view, suggesting a rather limited occupation period for the site. We will present in detail these pottery finds and will discuss their significance regarding the contacts between Mediterranean merchants, Roman Egypt and the Nabataean kingdom. These new data, among other elements, allow a complete reassessment of the importance of this locality in the Red Sea trade routes during Antiquity.

Zbigniew T. Fiema

University of Helsinki

To Hegra through al-Qusayr. The al-‘Ula–al-Wajh Survey Project

The al-‘Ulā–al-Wajh Survey Project is the archaeological investigation of potential ancient trade and communication routes and associated archaeological sites between the ancient settlements of al-‘Ulā and Madā‘in Šāliḥ (ancient Hegra) and the Red Sea littoral in the area of al-Wajh. This investigation is related to the economics of long distance maritime and caravan trade and the utilization of the “Incense Route” which served to convey frankincense and other commodities from South Arabia to the Medi-

terranean during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The Project is also concerned with the localization of potential Nabataean seaports on the Red Sea coast, such as Leuke Kome and Egra Kome, mentioned in ancient sources. The presentation will include the results of two fieldwork seasons (2013, 2016), concentrating on the potential caravan route along the Wādī al-Ḥamḍ, leading to Hegra. Among the highlighted sites is the Nabataean al-Qusayr. The finds from that site clearly indicate a significant participation in the long-distance trade between the Mediterranean, Egypt and the Red Sea region. The presentation will conclude with the reassessment of the Red Sea trade, sites and communication routes.

Iwona Gajda

CNRS / UMR 8167, Orient et Méditerranée

Contacts between South Arabia and the Roman Empire

Ancient South Arabia was rarely and only during short periods dominated by foreign powers. The country, though distant from the main civilizations of Antiquity and protected by natural borders, was not completely isolated, as it was involved in long distance trade. Incense and myrrh, collected in the south of the country and diverse goods transported by sea from India and Southeast Asia and also from the Horn of Africa contributed to the legendary prosperity of South Arabia in the first millennium BC. In 26/25 BC, Augustus, who desired to control the regions where incense and myrrh were produced, sent an army which conquered some South Arabian cities but could not take the Sabaeen capital, Mārib, and had to withdraw.

In the 2nd century AD, a Roman army gained control of the Farasān Islands in the Red Sea and left there a garrison as a Latin inscription reveals. Some recently published inscriptions refer to the Roman presence in the Red Sea at that time. If the contacts with Rome are rarely mentioned in South Arabian inscriptions, many objects of Roman art have been found in Yemen, some are imports, some are Roman imitations locally produced, often bearing South Arabian inscriptions. However, Rome never really conquered South Arabia. This paper proposes to re-examine the question.

Michał Gawlikowski

*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology,
University of Warsaw*

Introduction. The first account of the Aynunah Project**Ali Ibrahim al-Ghabban**

Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage

New archaeological evidence on the location of Ampeloni in the Island of Farasan, Saudi Arabia**Karol Juchniewicz**

*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology,
University of Warsaw*

The role of Aynuna on the Red Sea trade route: preliminary conclusions

Aynunah's location in the northernmost extremity of the main body of the Red Sea offers an excellent connection with the rest of northern Arabia, avoiding the hardships and dangerous waters of the Gulf of Aqaba. Recent archaeological research at the site has supplied new information on Aynunah's possible role as a port of trade in the northern Hijaz in the Roman and late pre-Islamic periods. This contribution will address several issues: the nautical challenges in the Red Sea and the impact on maritime trade in the region, the importance of Aynunah as a port in northern Arabia and the tentative function of the trade facility on the mercantile route connecting southern and northern Arabia.

Mateusz Lisak

Institute of History, The Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce

The conditions and circumstances of the discovery of a sea route to India: issues of open-sea travel and the Bab el-Mandeb barrier

The issue of the discovery of a sea route to India is one of the most important questions about Indo-Roman trade relations and it has yet to be resolved. Historians tend to focus on who made the first open-sea journey and when, and whether it was a sudden change or a process drawn out in time. The conditions essential for the discovery of a new route are not considered, nor the circumstances that would have made this journey possible. Another issue is the case of the Arabia Eudaimon port. The 1st-century AD *Periplus Maris Erythraei* states that the port had been ransacked and there was no direct connection between India and Egypt, but that all ships were forced to stop there. Thus the resumption of active trade with India necessitated the lifting of the tentative blockade of Arabia Eudaimon and discovering the trans-oceanic route. The nautical guide, however, does not describe the new route in the context of the troubles in Bab el-Mandeb, but can we be really sure that these two events were not related? What were the circumstances and conditions that had to be met for it to be possible to discover the new pathway?

Marta Luciani

Institute for Oriental Studies, University of Vienna

Bronze Age precursors on the Red Sea

The size and position of the ancient oasis of Qurayyah have prompted its identification with the capital of the Medianites, a people attested in the Bible, Classical sources and the Qur'an. Moreover, its location on the eastern fringes of the Hisma range in the Northern Hejaz has resulted in Qurayyah being proposed as one of the main stops along an early overland Incense Road, beyond and besides the Red Sea Route.

The contribution will review the archaeological evidence for these claims, as well as the materials and settlement patterns in the region in the Bronze Age in order to understand incipient networks of communication and exchange in the Northern Hejaz-Red Sea system.

Laila Nehmé

CNRS, Paris

Oriental desert versus Arabian desert. Reflections on the connections between the Egyptian and Arabian shores in the northern Red Sea in Antiquity

This paper aims at exploring some research avenues on the connections between the Egyptian and Arabian shores in the northern Red Sea in Antiquity. Indeed, the author is exploring the possibility of launching on this subject an ERC project, which would group together various research teams and scholars interested in the subject. The core of the latter is the idea of connection, i.e., any general or particular topic which connects Egypt with Arabia. The idea emerged after the discovery, in Madâ'in Sâlih, ancient Hegra, of Latin inscriptions which mention the presence, in the Roman period, of *stationarii*, a term which is also used in ostraka found in the Egyptian Eastern Desert. The North–South itineraries, stations along them, commercial networks, etc., are however not the only parallels which can be drawn between the two regions. This paper will present briefly some of the aspects which may be explored, such as the possible Egyptian influence in Northwest Arabia in the Ptolemaic period, the presence of people carving Nabataean and Minaic inscriptions on both sides of the Red Sea, the possible connections between the ports as well as the navigation routes and techniques, the presence in Arabia of Roman military detachments coming from Egypt, the question of the origin of the Arabs mentioned in the ostraka from Egypt, etc. While not a specialist in the field of material culture studies, the author will undertake to address key categories: apart from the pottery, also glass beads, textile weaving techniques, units of measurements and a possible comparison between oasian agricultural systems. She would like to share with the colleagues present at the workshop a provisional inventory of points to discuss that she has been making for some time now.

Ralph K. Pedersen

The Red Sea Institute for Anthropological Research USA

“Wither sailest thou?” Red Sea originations and destinations through the lens of ship technology

The Red Sea is a deep rift between Africa and Asia, yet as an aquatic “highway” it links Europe to the Indian Ocean world. While the existence of Greco-Roman trade down the Red Sea to the wider eastern world is relatively well-known, we are still investigating the harbors and destination points along the shores of the Red Sea. Understanding the geographical, and indeed geological, aspect of the sea is a key factor in the finding of ancient harbors and anchorages. Coupled with this is the need to discern the technology of the maritime tools — navigation, ship-building technology, sailing practices — of the various eras and cultures of the Red Sea.

This paper explores these aspects through the growing body of evidence and theory of Red Sea maritime endeavors, as well as by the author’s own archaeological investigations in Eritrea and Saudi Arabia.

Zeeshan A. Shaikh

Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Southampton

Placing ancient sailors in a time-space framework: visualizing ancient voyages of the Red Sea from a time geography perspective

This paper aims to visualize the constraints and complexities encountered by navigators sailing the Red Sea. This is done by simulating a path of a voyage, as described by the author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, in a time-space framework introduced by Torsten Hagerstrand in 1968. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a travel guide of the 1st century AD, provides an account of the Red Sea trading network. It talks about trade routes and commodities that were traded but limited emphasis was placed on the constraints sailors faced while sailing the

Red Sea, such as availability of water, weather conditions, natural hazards and dangers while sailing, etc. Therefore major questions such as what were the challenges navigators had to encounter while navigating via the Red Sea route, or how they planned their voyages or chose routes for navigation, remained unanswered. Thus, there were constraints these navigators had to consider while sailing the Red Sea, about which current scholarship knows very little.

By visualizing ancient voyage from a time geography perspective this study explores, in real time, various constraints faced by sailors while navigating the Red Sea. In doing so it tries to answer some of the most challenging questions still enduring in the Red Sea maritime studies. For example, why sailors choose the route they choose or why some routes proved better than others. Could these constraints of navigation be one of the reasons that there were more archaeological sites along the African coast of the Red Sea than on the Arabian side during the Roman period?

Marcin Wagner

Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

Zofia Kowarska

*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology,
University of Warsaw*

Pottery from Aynunah on the northern Red Sea coast (Saudi Arabia)

A team from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw has excavated since 2015 in Aynunah, a site situated on the northern Red Sea coast. Two areas of archaeological interest have been identified: the lower town where four seasons of excavations were carried out, and the upper town which was surveyed in 2016, producing a surface collection of potsherds.

The ceramic material, both fragmented and complete vessels, covers pottery dated to early Roman–Byzantine times. Two phases of the functioning of the site were identified based on a provisional study of this material: 2nd–1st century BC? – 2nd–3rd century AD (Hellenistic and early Roman) and 4th–7th century AD (late Roman/ Byzantine). The assemblage consists of fragments of mainly storage vessels and amphorae. Table wares,

fine wares (that is, terra sigillata, thin plain or decorated Nabataean ware) and cooking wares form only a small percentage of the collected material.

Fragments of wasters and malformed vessels with hard green surfaces, especially big storage jars, found in all the excavated trenches indicate that pottery production was carried out locally. This local fabric is characterized by coarse fragments of limestone and grains of quartz.

Localization of the site on the northern Red Sea coast at the head of a caravan road presumes contacts with other regions and this is observed in the pottery assemblage. Most of the imported vessels come from the Aqaba region in the north with some sherds originating from South Arabia.

LIST OF SPEAKERS

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