



Review

NAVIGATED SPACES, CONNECTED PLACES
PROCEEDINGS OF RED SEA PROJECT V
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER, SEPTEMBER 16-19, 2010

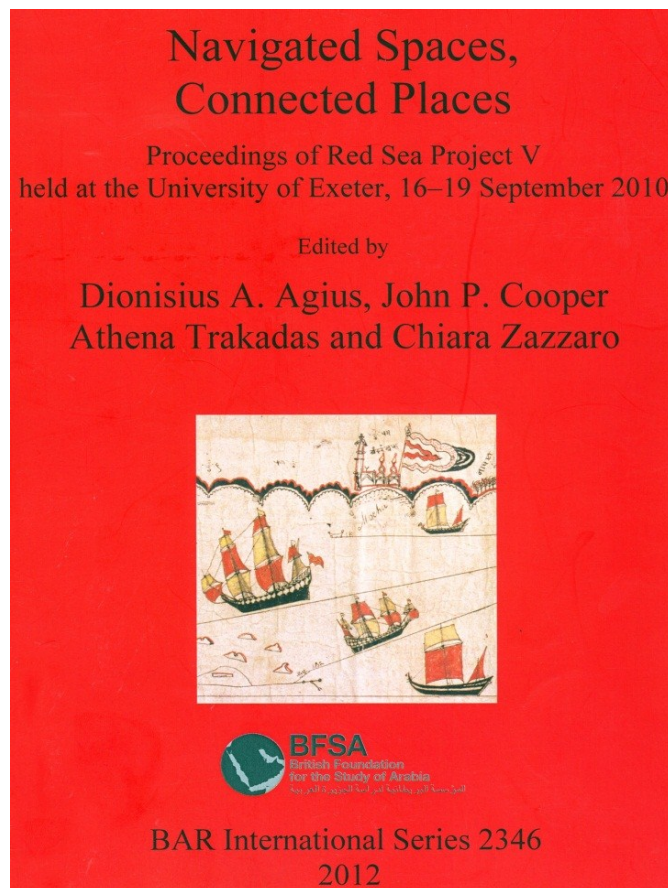
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This volume contains 23 of over 30 papers presented at the Red Sea V conference. Research on various aspects of the Red Sea has expanded dramatically over the last several decades or so, and this conference, the fifth held in Great Britain, testifies to this growing interest. This 2010 biennial gathering was held in conjunction with a small but very informative exhibit “The Dhow: Mastery of the Monsoon.” This reviewer attended the conference and delivered a paper, which is not published here.

Divided into six sections, the volume presents paper topics ranging chronologically from ancient (Old and New Kingdom Egypt) to modern and covers archaeology (both terrestrial and underwater), comparative travel, history, ancient ship architecture, ethnography, analysis of botanical studies made during Niebuhr’s expedition to Yemen in the



eighteenth century, and the level of modern awareness of the Red Sea among some of those living along its shores.

Part I “Recollections” comprises two contributions: 1, by J.B. Paul, “Travels with Machell in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean: The Voyages of Thomas Machell and Jenny Balfour Paul, in 1848 and 2010.” 2, by A. Besse, “The Last of the Aden Dhows.”

Part II “Early Navigation and Contact” has six papers: 3, by C. Ward, “Sailing the Red Sea: Pharaonic Voyages to Punt and *Min of the Desert*.” 4, by P. Tallet, “A New Pharaonic Harbour in Ayn Sokhna (Gulf of Suez).” 5, by R. Fattovich, “The Southern Red Sea in the 3rd and 2nd Millennia BC: An Archaeological Overview.” 6, by A. Manzo, “Nubians and the Others on the Red Sea. An Update on the Exotic Ceramic Materials from the Middle Kingdom Harbour of Mersa/Wadi Gawasis, Red Sea, Egypt.” 7, by K.A. Kitchen, “Ancient Egyptian and Allied African Navigators’ Use

of Space on the Red Sea.” 8, by R. Blench, “The Semiticisation of the Arabian Peninsula and the Problem of its Reflection in the Archaeological Record.”

Part III “The Sea in Classical Antiquity” has three chapters: 9, by O. Nalesini, “Sacred Places and Beings of the Red Sea Littoral Societies.” 10, by C. Durand, “Crossing the Red Sea: The Nabataeans in the Egyptian Eastern Desert.” 11, by L. Blue, J.D. Hill & R. Thomas, “New Light on the Nature of Indo-Roman Trade: Roman Period Shipwrecks in the Northern Red Sea.”

Part IV “From the Classical to the Islamic” presents five papers: 12, by P. Sheehan, “The Port of Babylon in Egypt.” 13, by E.H. Seland, “The *Liber Pontificalis* and Red Sea Trade of the Early to Mid 4th Century AD.” 14, by D. Bramoullé, “The Fatimids and the Red Sea (969–1171).” 15, by T. Power, “Trade Cycles and Settlement Patterns in the Red Sea Region (Ca. AD 1050–1250).” 16, by J. Whitewright, “Sailing with the *Mu'allim*: The Technical Practice of Red Sea Sailing during the Medieval Period.”

Part V “Suakin” includes three papers: 17, by M. Mallinson, “Suakin: Paradigm of a Port.” 18, by L.M.V. Smith, *et al.*, “Archaeology and the Archaeological and Historical Evidence for the Trade of Suakin, Sudan.” 19, by J. Phillips, “Beit Khorshid Effendi: A ‘Trader’s’ House at Suakin.”

Part VI “People and the Environment in the Red Sea Region” contains four chapters: 20, J.C.M. Starkey, “(Dis)located Spaces and Mediated Oppositions: Monks and Bedouin in the Deserts around the Red Sea.” 21, P. Weschenfelder, “The Integration of the Eastern Desert into the Islamic World: Beja Groups in Medieval Islamic Geography and Archaeological Records.” 22, S.A. Malki, “The Awareness Level among Students of King Abdulaziz University (Jeddah) of the Institutions and Issues Related to the Vitality, Geography, and History of the Red Sea.” 23, P. Provençal, “Arabic Plant Names and Botany in Arabic Civilisation. The Contribution of Peter Forsskål (1732–1763) and Others.”

The editors should be commended for producing this volume as rapidly as they did; the photographs and drawings, some in color, are clear and of good quality. Some chapters (9, by Nalesini and 21, by Weschenfelder), however, would have benefited from additional editing for their grammar and writing style; other contributions have some inconsistencies in spelling and the inevitable, but relatively few, typographical errors.

This reviewer noted some factual errors and omissions in several of the chapters, and he would also beg to differ with some of the observations presented.

Kitchen’s paper assumes that Pharaonic era ships sailing from Egypt to Punt carried all the food and water necessary for crews for the entire voyage. This is highly doubtful. Certainly such vessels had to land occasionally to rest the crews, who

undoubtedly supplemented their diets with items acquired ashore.

Contrary to what Durand notes in her chapter, there are probably only a hundred or so Nabataean graffiti and dipinti (the latter on ostraca for the most part) thus far documented from the Eastern Desert of Egypt (outside Sinai), not the “hundreds” that she mentions.

Blue’s, Hill’s, and Thomas’ informative chapter on the underwater survey of ancient shipwrecks does not record additional amphora sherds and remains of at least one almost entire (but broken) amphora (noted by this reviewer on a dive there in August 2007) from the Fury Shoals wreck located some distance from the main concentration of amphoras they discuss.

P. Sheehan’s paper on the Port of Babylon suggests that shipment of stone from the Eastern Desert quarries in Roman times was via the Red Sea and the Nile-Red Sea canal, but this reviewer knows of no ancient texts or archaeological data that support this assumption, at least on a regular basis; all the evidence points to shipment of lithic products from the Eastern Desert to the Nile for onward transport.

Mallinson’s chapter on Suakin contains a number of inaccuracies and omissions. He has incorrect dates for both the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (almost unanimously held to be approximately mid to third quarter or second half of the first century CE not mid-first century BCE) and also for Claudius Ptolemy’s *Geography* (mid second century CE, not ca. 160 BCE). It is not clear whether Mallinson places Hatshepsut’s reign in the Middle or New Kingdom, the latter, of course, being the correct period. This reader is not certain that any cisterns have been documented from excavations at Myos Hormos (Qusier al-Qadim); the single example found thus far in excavations at Berenike (of which this reviewer is co-director) is only a small portion of one in the Ptolemaic industrial area at the extreme western end of the site. Mallinson notes a Nubian attack on Egypt in the time of Caesar; this occurred, however, during the reign of Octavian/Augustus. Although the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* indicates that ships from the Red Sea sailed along the Indian Ocean coast of Africa, Mallinson’s reference to archaeological evidence of Roman presence in these areas, specifically Tanzania and Rhapta, is not well documented; a few beads from these regions may or may not be of Roman provenance, and, if they are Roman, they may have reached here indirectly through some third party. Mallinson refers to multi-storied structures at Suakin built of coral as if this were the only archaeological site on the Red Sea coast with such buildings; we have excavated numerous multi-storied edifices—constructed of fossilized coral heads—of the mid to late fourth and early fifth century CE at Berenike. Mallinson suggests (by omission) that his project first recorded the classical Greco-Roman architectural

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remains at Adobana, south of Suakin and Aqiq (photos on p. 163); this reviewer was a member of a survey team that documented these in December 2004 and published those results in *Sabara* 17 (2006): 7–18.

Phrasing of some of the excavations at Suakin (on pp. 178–179) in the chapter by Smith, *et al.* is inconsistent. In some places phase 1 is the latest level on the site, and in others phase 5 is the latest. Although this chapter was not intended as a field report,

better editing here would have noted and corrected this discrepancy.

Aside from these criticisms, this reviewer found the papers collectively informative and useful for those interested not only in some aspect of the history and archaeology of the Red Sea but also for comparative purposes for those undertaking research in the wider Mediterranean, Middle East and Indian Ocean basin.