



## CONFERENCE RED SEA VIII: INCENSE, BEADS AND INDIAN STEEL

Conference *Red Sea 8: Coveted Treasure* opens on Tuesday, the 4th of July at the University of Warsaw. Participants representing scientific institutions in 17 countries will present over 50 topics discussing the archaeology and history of lands surrounding the Red Sea. The conference will be preceded by a separate workshop “*Arabian Red Sea Route*” (3 July 2017) which is organized by the team of the Aynuna Project in Saudi Arabia.

During the 4-day long event, presentations will be grouped in thematic sessions related to the circulation of natural resources, Indian steel (including a live archaeometallurgic experiment), jewellery from the western Indian Ocean basin and ancient trade in incense and frankincense. The **opening lecture** by Dr. Eivind Helda Seland (Bergen University) will be an overview of research on the subject: *Thirty years of Red Sea studies: insights, agendas, perspectives*.

The *Red Sea* conferences have been held biannually at scientific institutions in the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and Italy, involved in research on the region. This year's edition has been organized by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA). The PCMA has been involved in research on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea for over a decade, working with the University of Delaware at the port site of Berenike. In 2014 a PCMA team started work at Aynuna in Saudi Arabia, another harbor site, thus bridging the two sea shores.



Long disregarded and overlooked in research, **personal adornments** are an important aspect of material culture which can contribute significantly to studies of economic, social and even political issues. The aim of this panel is to provide an overview of ancient jewelry from various periods, beads in particular, circulating in the Red Sea and around the Arabian Peninsula to East Africa and India.

Another panel will take a look at **metalworking technologies** from prehistoric times to the Islamic period. A workshop organized as part of the session will conduct an **experiment** aimed at reconstructing

the process of melting hypereuctectoid steel, commonly known as Indian steel, in its variant produced in antiquity between 300 BC and AD 600. Participants will observe the preparation of a melting crucible and the actual melting

process, as well as see the results — if successful. The discussion and presentations will concern metal as a resource as well as metal objects as a category.

**Incense** was one of the most important luxury items of trade in antiquity. The incense trade flourished from the 8th century BC to approximately the 2nd century AD and linked the incense-producing areas of Arabia and Africa with markets as far and wide as the Mediterranean, the Levant, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus and China. This trade led to many wide scale cultural, social, political and economic changes.

Go to [www.redsea8.uw.edu.pl](http://www.redsea8.uw.edu.pl) and [www.pcma.uw.edu.pl/EN](http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl/EN) for more information on the events and on registration.

The Berenike and Aynuna projects received funding from the Polish National Science Centre (grants UMO-2015/17/N/HS3/00163 and UMO-2014/14/M/HS3/00795 respectively). The smelting experiment hosted and co-organized by the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw. The conference is organized under the patronage of the Rector of the University of Warsaw. It received funding i.a. from the University of Warsaw Foundation.



is

#### **Red Sea VIII: Coveted treasure**

> Tuesday–Friday, 4–7 July 2017 r.,  
Old Library UW, Hall 107  
26/28 Krakowskie Przedmieście St

**Opening lecture:** Tuesday, 4 July, 10 a.m.

> Thursday, 6 July 2017 r. 9 a.m.–1 p.m.  
State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw  
52 Długa St

#### **Smelting experiment**

> Thursday, 6 July 2017 r. 1 p.m.  
State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw  
52 Długa St

#### **Workshop The Arabian Red Sea Route**

> Monday, 3 July 2017, 9 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, Hall 210  
26/28 Krakowskie Przedmieście St



*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw coordinates Polish archaeological research in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1959 (since 1990 under the present name). In recent years it broadened its scope of interest into the Arabian Peninsula and the Caucasus. Currently about 30 projects in Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, U.A.E., Georgia and Armenia. The PCMA also runs a Research Centre in Cairo.*

*For more information on the PCMA go to: <http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl/en/> ; [www.facebook.com/pcma.uw/](https://www.facebook.com/pcma.uw/)*

*Contact: Agnieszka Szymczak, [agnieszka.szymczak@uw.edu.pl](mailto:agnieszka.szymczak@uw.edu.pl) ; Mobile 0048 502 14 0036*