

Salt, Stone, Spice and Silk Trade in the Ancient World



With the development and opening of the new Silk Road – One Belt and One Road Project - linking China with the wider world comes the discussion of what were the ancient routes that are the foundation of this new enterprise. How was the ancient world interconnected through trade? What really is trade and how does it connect us?

Since the beginning of human existence, individuals and groups have exchanged goods that were needed or desired by one group and provided by another, in exchange for different but equally desired products. This two-way exchange is referred to as trade and its development and refinement has resulted in the ability of peoples to improve their lives by acquiring goods peacefully.

These exchanges have, over time, led to increasing contact between disparate groups of people. Moreover, this was accompanied by far more than just the exchange of commodities: ideas, inventions and knowledge of a wider world travelled with the goods being traded.

Be it obsidian from far Eastern Turkey, amber from the Baltic, gold from Nubia, silk from China or frankincense from Oman, these goods were traded, over vast distances, by land and sea, interlinking the populations along their routes of travel.

This series of lectures will examine the commodities traded, the routes they travelled and the effects this had on the cultures along the trade routes and far beyond.

The lecture will start at 10am with a tea/coffee break at 11.30am followed by second lecture commencing at 12pm and finishing at 1.30pm. There will be drinks after the lecture giving you a chance to catch up with the lecturer and others who share your interests.

24 June 2017 (Week 1)

Shipwrecks: Trade Frozen in Time

Ancient shipwrecks give us an almost unparalleled glimpse into the past for they are a moment in time, captured within the hull of a sunken ship. The contents of these ships can tell us so much about the commodities that were traded and the routes they took. As an introduction to this series, we are looking at three important wrecks from different periods in antiquity.

The Ulu Burun Wreck

Dr Stephen Bourke

The Ulu Burun shipwreck, discovered in 1984 off the south coast of Turkey, is perhaps the single most spectacular shipwreck from the ancient world. Dating around 1300 BCE, the diverse and exotic cargo seemed to include pretty much everything one might have expected a wealthy merchant venturer to carry across the east Mediterranean world in the time of the Egyptian, Hittite and Mycenaean Greek empires. Copper and tin, glass and metalware, pottery and faience, jewellery and weapons, rare cultic items, a writing tablet and several different sets of weights and measures—the Ulu Burun shipwreck has it all.

And yet many questions remain unanswered. Was the ship a royal trader, perhaps from Egypt? Or was it a private venture with a polyglot crew drawn from all the ports of the East Mediterranean littoral? Why are there Balkan stone axes, Mycenaean long swords, Canaanite statuary and defaced Egyptian scarabs among the cargo? How to tell personal items of the crew from cargo meant for trade? These and other questions will be examined in this short presentation of the riches that continue to emerge from what has rightly been termed '*a supernova in the constellation of maritime archaeology*'.

Bajo de la Campana

Maree Browne

This c. 7th Century BCE Phoenician wreck lies off the Mediterranean coast of Spain just to the north of Cartagena. Captured within this wreck is a snapshot of the goods carried and exchanged between the numerous Phoenician colonies that dotted this littoral. The four tons of cargo ranged from the prosaic (over a ton of lead ore) to the everyday pottery (from amphora to kitchen plates) and the exotic (inscribed elephant tusks and Baltic amber).

The Antikythera Wreck

Dr John Tidmarsh

The decline of the Hellenistic kingdoms with the expansion of Rome into the eastern Mediterranean saw an explosion in the demand for Greek works of art from wealthy Roman patrons. Most of these art works were carried in the holds of large ships, westwards to Rome from Greece and the opulent Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor and Levant. This talk deals with one such ship—wrecked in the first century BCE and the first to be excavated in Greek waters—whose remarkably rich cargo also included the world's first analogue computer.

1 July 2017 (Week 2)

Scientific Analysis of Trade Routes and Trade Objects

Dr Kate da Costa

The definition of trade is to move an object from one place to another. How do we detect this movement after thousands of years? Starting with the techniques that investigate raw materials, we also examine how manufacturing methods also reveal clues to an object's provenance and life history. We will see how artefacts – manufactured and environmental - are collected when analysis is needed. This overview is completed with a case study on glass.

Looking into Glass

Dr Wendy Reade

Much of the earliest glass is in the form of beads, small objects and many fragments. On their own, they can only reflect a small part of their story, but when we look into their compositions, we are led on a journey of discovery that connects land and sea trade routes with raw material sources and production sites, with some intriguing twists. This presentation will focus on material from the Late Bronze to Iron Ages.

8 July 2017 (Week 3)

Grain, Gold and Gossamer: Egypt Trade during the Pharaonic Period

Maree Browne

The prosperity of ancient Egypt was reliant on the reliability of its agriculture, particularly its wheat and flax. Other natural resources, such as gold and stone, were extensively exploited and traded. The reliability of agricultural production, afforded by the annual flooding of the Nile and the security offered by its centralised administration, allowed Egypt to trade over great distance to the south and east. While the Egyptians perfected their watercraft on the vast stretches of the Nile, early in the Pharaonic Era they developed a sea-going merchant navy to carry their abundance of wheat, gold and gossamer-thin linen cloth out of Africa and into the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This talk will discuss the commodities most traded and the trade routes and their ports that were strung along the Nile and the Red Sea. It will also examine how the ideas that travelled with this trade led to major developments within Egyptian culture.

8 July 2017 (Week 3 continued)

The Phoenicians: Sea-merchants of the Ancient World

Dr Stephen Bourke

The Phoenicians were the quintessential sea-merchants of the ancient world. Explorers, miners, traders and colonists-wherever there is a secluded port or off-shore island with a water-source, there you will find Phoenician colonists. Originating in the modern land of the Lebanon, and predominantly sourced to the great merchant city-states of Tyre and Sidon, Byblos and Beirut, the Phoenicians spread from their coastal homelands across the entire Mediterranean basin from the 11th Century BCE onwards. First evident in southern Cyprus by the 10th Century BCE, and well established in a network of trade entrepôts throughout the Aegean world soon thereafter, they spread rapidly into western Sicily and (most famously) into coastlands of modern Tunisia, founding Carthage traditionally in the 9th century BCE.

By the 7th Century BCE, they have occupied most west Mediterranean islands (Sardinia, Corsica, the Balearics, Elba and Malta), and much of the North African coast west from Cyrenaica to the southern reaches of modern Morocco. Phoenician explorers ventured even further, potentially as far north as Cornwall and as far south as the Bight of Benin. In this presentation we shall explore the world of the Phoenician merchant venturers, their colonial instincts and their trading acumen, seeking to understand the driving forces behind their hugely ambitious exploration of the ancient Mediterranean world, and the lands beyond.

15 July 2017 (Week 4)

Leaving the Jade Gate: Travels along the Silk Route

Dr John Tidmarsh

For some two millennia the legendary Silk Route (really a series of routes) wound its way from its origin in western China through oasis towns fringing the Taklamakan desert, Central Asian emporia, and Levantine caravan cities, to the shores of the Mediterranean. More than just a trade route for merchants with their textiles, spices, metals, and other cargoes, the Silk Route served equally as a vital conduit for conquerors, philosophers and religions. This talk will examine aspects of the Silk Route and consider some of the intrepid adventurers who traversed the route during the 19th and 20th centuries CE.

22 July 2017 (Week 5)

**Bread and Circuses:
Late Roman and Byzantine Trade around the Inland Sea**

Dr Kate da Costa

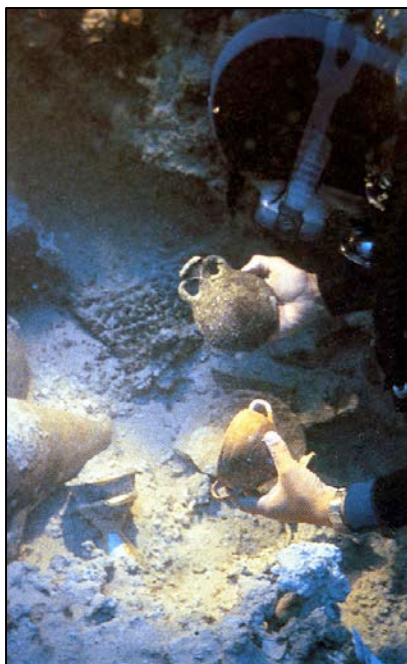
Wheat and wine, lamps and lions – these were the range of materials traded around the Mediterranean, from Africa to Germany, Spain to Syria. The enormous volume of trade in the first half of the first millennium CE produced tremendous wealth, and some of the most visible remains of the ancient world. Monte Testaccio in Rome is literally a hill of amphora remains. The Dead Cities of northern Syria flourished when the Visigoth invasion of North Africa interrupted the wheat trade. The Roman Senator Symmachus complained to the Emperor about the tax on exotic animals he was importing into Rome for the games. These and other case studies will illuminate the later Roman Empire and its trading might.

29 July 2017 (Week 6)

**From Sheba to Petra:
Along the Incense and Monsoon Routes**

Dr John Tidmarsh

Less well known than the Silk Route, but just as lucrative, from early in the first millennium BCE the Incense Route wound its way from the vast groves of frankincense and myrrh in “Arabia Felix” (modern Oman and Yemen) along the fringes of the “Empty Quarter” to the remarkable “rose red city” of Petra, before branching south to Alexandria and north to Damascus. The great profits from this trade and from the so-called “Monsoon Route” which largely replaced it in the first century CE resulted in the rise of powerful mercantile cities and ports whose impressive remains are relatively unknown in the west. This talk will explore these routes and the emporia through which they passed.



Excavating the Ulu Burun shipwreck examined in Week 1 of this series.

Booking form

The series will be limited to 55 people and will have a minimum of 20.

Unfortunately we cannot refund payments made for this series except in exceptional circumstance.

The cost of the Whole series is \$150 for members and \$180 for non-members.

The cost of an Individual lecture is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members.

Whole Series Name: _____

No. of tickets. Member: _____ Non-member: _____

Individual Lectures. Name: _____

Lecture 1 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 2 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 3 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 4 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 5 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 6 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Payment Information

Please use this booking form if paying by cheque or money order.

If paying by credit card, please use our on-line payment system. A link to the payment page can be found on the 'lectures' page at the NEAF website.

Please mail your cheque/money order along with the booking form to:

NEAF, SOPHI Office, Quadrangle A14, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006.

Enquires: P +61 2 9351 4151 | F +61 2 9114 0921 | E neaf.archaeology@sydney.edu.au