



The spatiality
of networks in the Red Sea
and Western Indian Ocean

RED SEA CONFERENCE IX Networked Spaces

2-5 July 2019

Lyon (France)

<https://redsea9.sciencesconf.org/>

Circular 1 – September 2018

Call for papers

The *Red Sea Conference IX* (<https://redsea9.sciencesconf.org/>) will be held from **2 to 5 July 2019**, in **Lyon, France**. The previous Red Sea Conferences have been hosted by the British Museum, the University of Southampton, the University of Exeter (UK), the University of Tabuk (Saudi Arabia), the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (Italy) and the University of Warsaw (Poland).

This event is being organized jointly by the European Research Council project "Desert Networks", HiSoMA (one of the research centers hosted by the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée) and the University of Artois. HiSoMA ("Histoire et Sources des Mondes Antiques") has a long tradition of conducting archaeological fieldwork in Egypt and the Red Sea region (French Mission of the Eastern Desert), as well as in the Indian Ocean area, from Bangladesh (Mahasthan) to Kuwait (Failaka). Last year a HiSoMA team successfully applied for an ERC grant and has engaged in a five years research program ("Desert Networks") on the connectivity of the Eastern Desert of Egypt from the New Kingdom to the Roman period. The University of Artois, in cooperation with three other universities (École Normale Supérieure – Paris, Rome "Tor Vergata", Paris Sorbonne), is establishing a *Groupement d'intérêt scientifique (GIS)* named "Méditerranée – Océan Indien: échanges à longue distance dans le monde antique". This partnership is to be launched in the coming months.

The Red Sea series has, at its core, a strong interest in connectivity, since three past events centered on connections and networks (Red Sea III, IV, V): cultural contacts, seafaring and sea routes, the connectivity of ports and hinterland and obviously trade and merchants were the key topics explored by the contributors. After several events devoted to other subjects, Red Sea IX moves back to the issues of **connectivity** and **networks**, putting forward a **space-oriented perspective**. We postulate that human networks and space interrelate; connections and contacts often take spatial forms. Conversely the layouts and dynamics of networks often depend on a particular spatial context. In other words, by taking the issue of space as a starting point, we would like to bring out a renewed inquiry into human networks that once linked the Red Sea region, the western Indian Ocean and their surrounding areas, from prehistory to modern times from a transdisciplinary perspective (archaeology, history, geography, cartography, anthropology, ethnography, biosciences, philology etc.).

We are thus inviting speakers from around the world to present subjects relating to the following topics:

1) Islands and insularity

- The importance of “large” and “very large” islands (Bahrain; Socotra; Sri Lanka) with respect to Red Sea - Indian Ocean seafaring and trade; to what extent did the dynamics of networks depend on them?
- The role played by the numerous “small” islands and archipelagos (Dahlak, Farasan and other Red Sea islands; Lamu and other east African islands; Failaka and other Arab-Persian islands); must they be regarded as active production centres connected to Red sea and Indian Ocean networks, or conversely as empty and isolated places?

2) Red Sea and Indian Ocean straits

- Connectivity and disconnections in the straits areas (Bab al-Mandab; Hormuz; Tiran; Jubal; Palk): the straits as crossing points, gates, barriers, bottleneck etc.;
- Rivalry, tensions and conflict around the straits.

3) Dangerous areas and safe places: the solidity of networks in practice

- The geography of danger: unsafe coasts, dangerous winds, desert zones etc; what can be regarded a safe place?
- Overcoming danger and building up expertise by launching reconnaissance expeditions, understanding natural phenomena etc.
- The spatiality of piracy;
- “Dark networks”: connections between piracy, merchants and power.

4) Sea, deserts, mountains: maintaining connections throughout discontinuous environments

- From desert and mountains to sea, from sea to desert and mountains: how was freight transferred from pack animals to ship's hold and vice versa?
- Logistic issues: how was fresh water supply secured on sea and land travel? Which kinds of containers were used to carry Indian Ocean commodities?
- Ports as interfaces;
- Group relationships: to what extent did nomadic and sedentary peoples cooperate or conflict? To what extent did they ignore each other? To what extent did maritime and terrestrial networks interrelate?

Scientific committee

- Dionisius AGIUS, University of Exeter
- Marie-Françoise BOUSSAC, Paris-Nanterre University
- John P. COOPER, University of Exeter
- Jean-Charles DUCÈNE, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Jennifer GATES-FOSTER, Chapel Hill University
- Elizabeth LAMBOURN, De Montfort University, Leicester
- Laïla NEHMÉ, CNRS, "Orient & Méditerranée" research center
- Jérémie SCHIETTECATTE, CNRS, "Orient & Méditerranée" research center
- Steven SIDEBOTHAM, University of Delaware
- Pierre TALLET, Paris IV Sorbonne University
- Chiara ZAZZARO, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

The scientific committee will prioritize overviews and problem-oriented papers rather than field reports. Posters are also welcome but slots are limited.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **January 15, 2019**. The submission is made on the conference website (page [Submit a proposal](#)), as explained on the page [Submission and registration procedure](#). Abstracts will be reviewed by the scientific committee. The participants will be notified of acceptance by early March 2019.

The organization team

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