

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID



HPAH7006: Life in the Eastern Desert of Egypt (Module Syllabus)

Module Code: HPAH7006
Credit points: 30
Pre-requisites/restrictions: None
Taught: Semester 2
Lecturer: Dr Matthew Adam Cobb

AIM(S)

- To allow students to possess a detailed understanding of the complexities and modern scholarly debates relating to the conditions of those, living, working and travelling through the Eastern Desert of Egypt.
- To allow students to be able to evaluate and analyse the wide range of evidence that informs our knowledge of the Eastern Desert of Egypt.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, and to show a competent understanding of how economic, sociological and anthropological scholarship has attempted to understand the nature travel and settlement within the Eastern Desert of Egypt;
- draw upon and assess a wide range of disparate ancient evidence (archaeological, textual and visual), and to engage critically with modern scholarship;
- demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the indigenous inhabitants, travellers, civilians and the military interacted in this complex desert environment.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- The module will primarily look at Ptolemaic and Roman attempts to exploit the natural resources, but also examine some instances of this from earlier historical periods.
- The facilities constructed by the Ptolemaic and later Roman state to help monitor this region and created a corridor of access to the Red Sea.
- The nature of the relations between the Indigenous communities and those intruding onto this landscape.
- The difficulties of sustaining settlements within this region's harsh climatic conditions.
- The use of the Eastern Desert as a place of refuge and solace for Christian monastic communities and hermits.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

This 30-credit module has 9 main units and an epilogue unit. You should aim to do approximately one unit per week.

1. Unit 1: The Eastern Desert environment: geography, topography and ethnography
2. Unit 2: Mighty beasts of war: The Ptolemies and the hunt for elephants
3. Unit 3: Ceaseless toil and endless suffering: Gold mining in the Eastern Desert

4. Unit 4: The Erythra Thalassa: The Eastern Desert and Red Sea as the conduits for the Indo-Mediterranean trade
5. Unit 5: Life in the *praesidia* of the Eastern Desert and ports on the Red Sea
6. Unit 6: Hard Stone and Hard Labour: The major imperial quarries
7. Unit 7: The Wild East: The Roman Military and the Indigenous Populations of the Eastern Desert
8. Unit 8: Seeking sanctuary: Gods in the desert
9. Unit 9: Hermits and monks: Christian communities of the Eastern Desert
- Epilogue (Unit 10): Living in the desert today: Modern Bedouin communities

ASSESSMENT

Presentation (20 minutes with 5 minutes of questions / 35%)

This assignment consists of a 20-minute presentation delivered to the lecturer (and potentially also other members of the module, context dependent). This is followed by roughly 5 mins worth of questions relating to what was discussed in the presentation. Students can pick any topic they wish to present on, so long as it reasonably relates to the module. Seeking advice from the lecturer if you are unsure of the topic is advised.

Essay (4,000 words / 65%)

This assignment consists of a 4,000-word essay (65%). Essay topics are chosen by the student, but this should reasonably relate the module. If unsure, it is worth consulting the lecturer. Such topics could include subjects along the lines of “The causes of conflict between the Roman military and the indigenous population of the Eastern Desert” – or – “The practical and logistical problems connected to Ptolemaic elephant hunting” – or – “A critical analysis of the evidence for the presence of women and children in the desert settlement”.

Word count

Please note the following concerning the word count (in relation to the essay assignment):

If the specified word limit for an assessment is exceeded, the following penalties apply: The penalty cannot take the work into the fail category.

- a. Up to 10% above the word limit – No deduction off final mark
- b. Between 10% and 25% above the word limit – Deduction of 5 marks off final mark (or reduce the mark to the capped mark, whichever is greater)
- c. Between 25% and 50% above the word limit – Deduction of 10 marks off final mark (or reduce the mark to the capped mark, whichever is greater)
- d. 50% or more over length – Maximum mark of capped mark

Likewise, a failure to meet the maximum word limit may result in lower marks based on the quality of the work because they may not have included the necessary information required for the assessment and met the stated learning outcomes.

The feedback on the assessment should explicitly mention any mark deduction and the reason for it.

Welsh First language

If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit any assessed coursework in Welsh, please see the School Office as soon as possible to make arrangements for this.

PROGRESS

For each unit there is a focus question for distance students to consider. Distance students are required to **write a response to at least two** of these focus questions (you can pick those which most interest you from any of the ten units) and post it to the discussion forum on the unit. The posts do not need to be overly lengthy; **200-400 words** is fine. In addition, students should provide a suitably lengthy **reply to the post of another student**. The idea is that your post will be related to a specific focus question, but you can be broad and flexible in your response to / engagement with these questions. These non-assessed assignments are designed to encourage dialogue, particularly among the distance student cohort.

Special needs / requirements

If you have any special needs (e.g., dyslexia, visual impairment) that need to be taken into account for this module, please make sure that the Student Support Liaison Officer and Student Services is made aware of this so that they can ensure the university has support in place for your studies.

Returning of work

Your coursework will be returned electronically via Turnitin (links on the Moodle page). Detailed feedback is given on the Turnitin assignment comments box and the grade rubric but if you would like to discuss your work in more detail, feel free to contact me: m.cobb@uwtsd.ac.uk.

***** You need to watch plagiarism whenever you use secondary literature (ALL suspect coursework will be subject to Turnitin analysis).** Please consult the Library referencing guides for guidance on how to cite ancient sources, modern scholarship and other types of material. You can employ any of the referencing styles for which the library has created guides, but you should be consistent within any piece of work (i.e., do not mix and match different referencing styles):

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/using-our-libraries/online-library/referencing-handbooks/#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20recognised%20referencing,contact%20your%20Academic%20Liaison%20Librarian.>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential

Sidebotham, S. E., Hense, M. and Nouwens, H. M. 2008. *The Red Land: The Illustrated Archaeology of Egypt's Eastern Desert*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Recommended

Adams, C. 2007. *Land Transport in Roman Egypt A Study of Economics and Administration in a Roman Province*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Barnard, H. and K. Duistermaat (eds.), 2012. *The History of the Peoples of the Eastern Desert*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.
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- Cuvigny, H. 2014. ‘Papyrological Evidence on ‘Barbarians’ in the Egyptian Eastern Desert’, in *Inside and Out* (eds., Dijkstra, J. H. F. and Fisher, G.), Leuven: 165-198.
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- Starkey, J., Starkey, P., and Wilkinson, T. (eds.), 2007. *Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Van der Veen, M. 2011. *Consumption, Trade and Innovation: Exploring the Botanical Remains from the Roman and Islamic Ports at Quseir al-Qadim, Egypt*. Frankfurt: Africa Magna Verlag.

Background

- Alston, R. 1995. *Soldiers and Society Roman Egypt a Social History*. London: Routledge.
- Young, G. K. 2001. *Rome’s Eastern Trade International Commerce and Imperial Policy, 31 BC - AD 305*. London: Routledge.