

## UNIT 4 TASK BOOKLET

### – Ancient Food Globalisation and the Roman World



Indian jars found buried in courtyard of Isis Temple, one containing 7.5 kilograms of black peppercorns

In this online task you will consider the theme of “food globalisation” and what greater connectivity with the Indian Ocean world meant for dietary choices of people in the Roman Empire. You should read the chapter on ‘Food globalisation and the Red Sea’ by M. van der Veen and J. Morales (citation below) that is available on Moodle. If you have the time, you should also try to take a look at the article by E. Rowan on consciousness of food origins in the Roman world. While reading this material consider the questions set out below and please consider writing up a short summary of your thoughts and posting them to the unit discussion forum. Polite and constructive responses from other students are welcome.

#### Questions:

- 1) How can archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological evidence help us build up a picture of local and non-local consumption at sites in the Roman Empire?
- 2) How should we understand the presence of black pepper, rice, coconut, and to a much lesser extent mung bean and myrobalan species (*Terminalia bellirica* and *Phyllanthus emblica*, aka Indian gooseberry), at Roman period Myos Hormos and Berenike?
- 3) What do you make of Rowan’s use of sensory archaeology for establishing links between local foodstuffs, “local imports” and “non-local imports” and the way in which cuisine was experienced by individuals in a given location?
- 4) Do you agree with the basic premise that more “unknown” foodstuffs may have invited reflection upon their exotic (and imagined) origins?

#### Modern scholarship

Van der Veen, M. and J. Morales (2017). “Food Globalisation and the Red Sea: New Evidence from the Ancient Ports at Quseir al-Qadim, Egypt”, in D.A. Agius, E. Khalil, E.M.L. Scerri and A. Williams (eds), *Human Interaction with the Environment in the Red Sea*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 254–289.

Rowan, E. (2019). “Same Taste, Different Place: Looking at the Consciousness of Food Origins in the Roman World”, *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 2 (1): doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.378>