



*Emplazamiento, infraestructura y organización de los puertos romanos*  
Irun (Gipuzkoa), 3-5 November 2021

## THE SITE AND THE PORT(S) OF ADULIS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - INDIAN OCEAN TRADE

Entre Mares

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## Adulis in its regional context

The image consists of three parts. On the left, there are two photographs of archaeological ruins. The top one shows a wide view of a site with palm trees and scattered structures under a clear blue sky. The bottom one is a closer view of the same or similar ruins. To the right is a Google Earth map of the Red Sea and surrounding landmasses. A yellow outline highlights the coastline from Egypt to Eritrea. Three red dots mark specific locations along the coast. One dot is near the northern tip of the Horn of Africa, another is further south, and the third is near the Dahlak Islands. The map also shows the "Dahlak Marine National Park". The bottom of the map has standard Google Earth interface elements like zoom controls and a scale bar.

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## Adulis in in the written sources

“a legally limited port” ruled by King Zoscales “versed in Hellenic sciences” (PME)

“a fair sized village” some twenty stades (3.3 Km) from the sea (PME)

“a trading center used by the cave-dwellers (Troglodytes) and also by the Ethiopians” (Pliny, NH VI, 172)

....the “harbour of the Adulitae”, 20 stades from Adulis and a journey of 12 days from Aksum, was the major port for journeys across the Red Sea (Procopius, *History of the War*, I, xix, 17-22)



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## Adulis in the written sources: the imported products

**Plinius the Elder**

**1st c AD**

**Periplus Maris Erythraei**

**1st c AD**

**Cosmas Indicopleustes**

**6th c AD**

**Nonnosus and Philostorgius**

**6th c AD**

Obsidian

Obsidian

Gold

Gold

Ivory

Ivory

Ivory

Ivory

Rhinoceros horns

Rhinoceros horns

Animals

Animals

Hippopotamus hides

Resins

Resins

Tortoise shells

Emeralds

Monkeys

Slaves

Slaves



## Adulis in the written sources: the exported products

*Periplus Maris Erythraei*

1st c AD

Egyptian textiles

Glass

Copper

Metal vessels

Iron

Iron tools

Roman coins

Wine

Olive oil

*Nonnosus and Philostorgius*

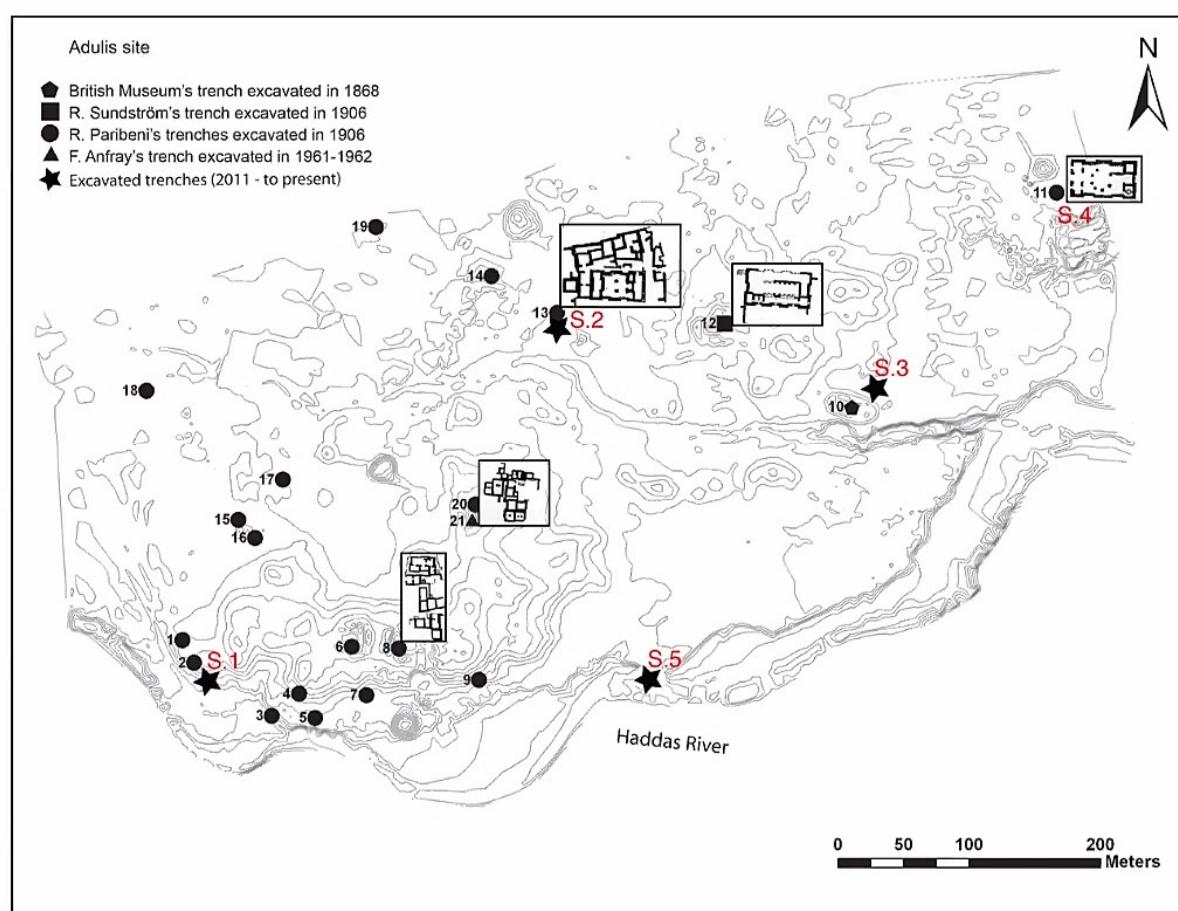
6th c AD

Sandal wood

Silk



## History of the studies at Adulis



## The 2004 survey of SOTON

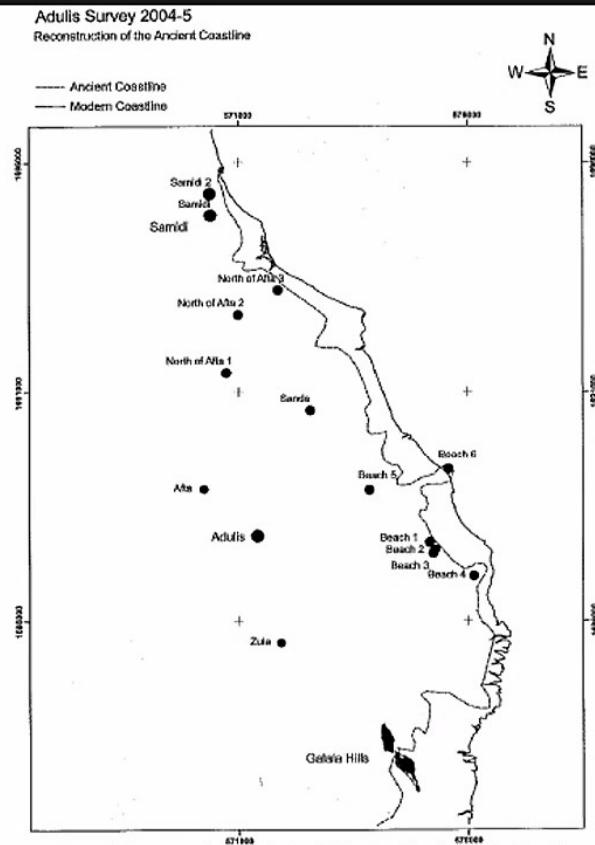


Figure 5.2 The ancient shoreline showing the location of beach and other deposits

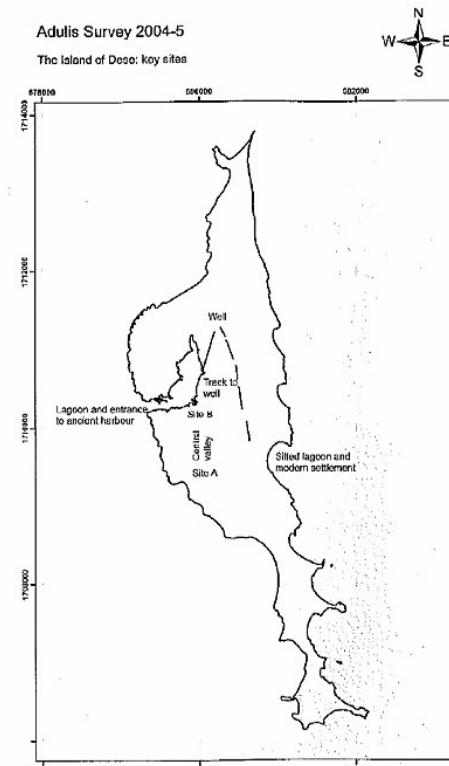


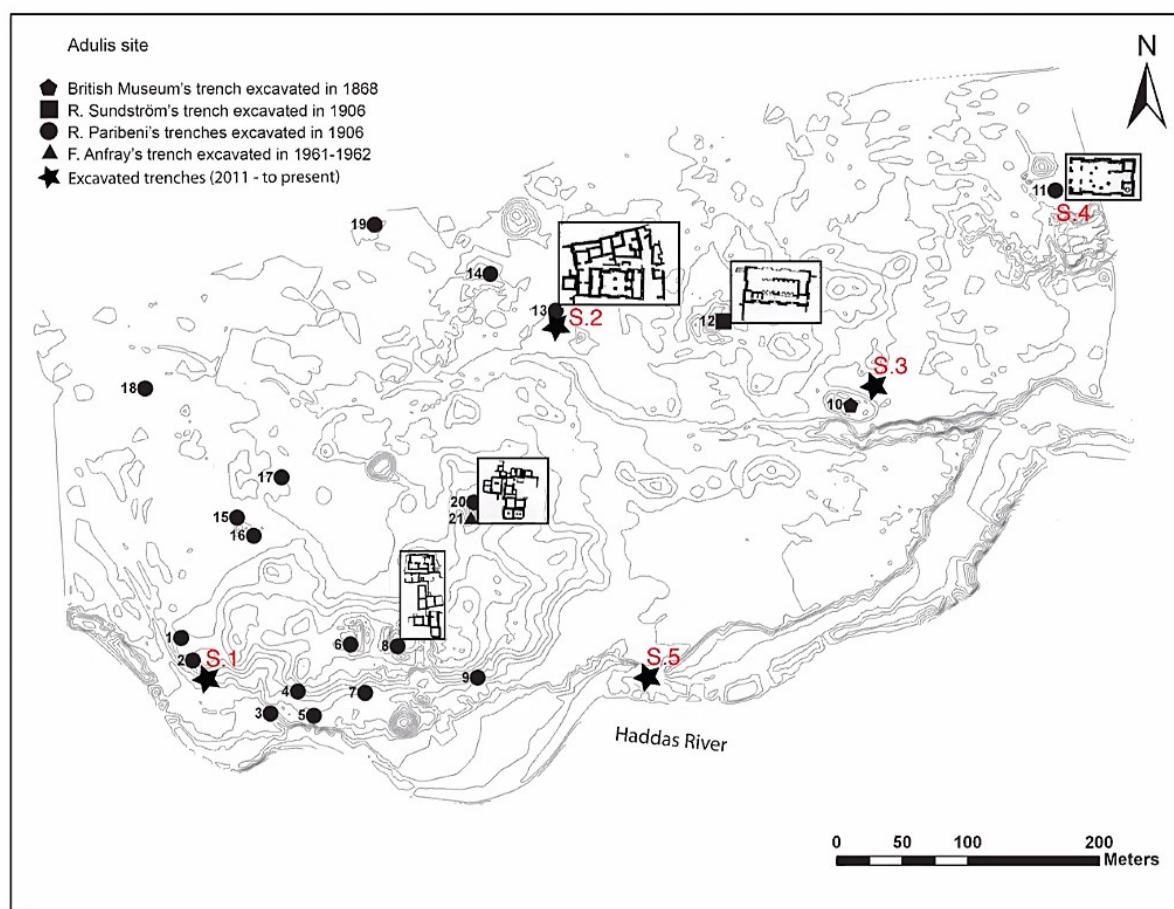
Figure 6.3 Map of Dese showing localities mentioned in the text



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## Recent investigations at Adulis

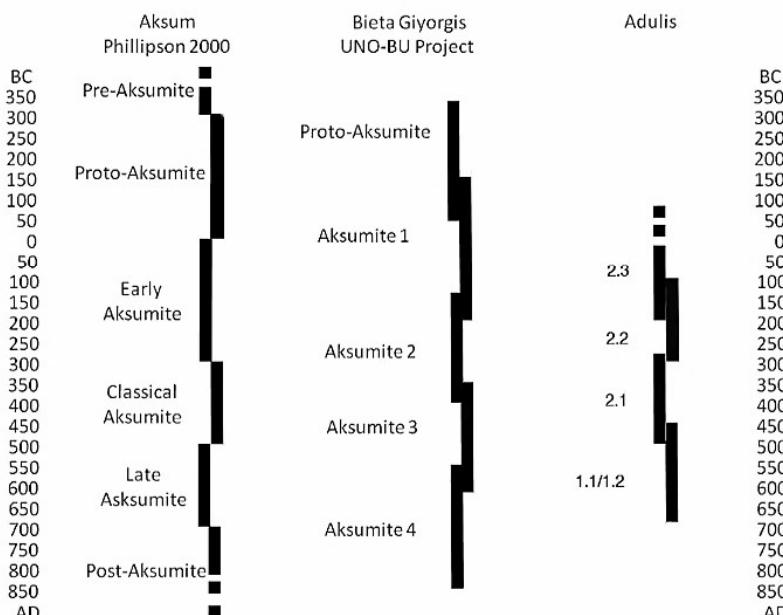


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## The chronology of Adulis



## Journal of African Archaeology

Vol. 12 (1) 2014

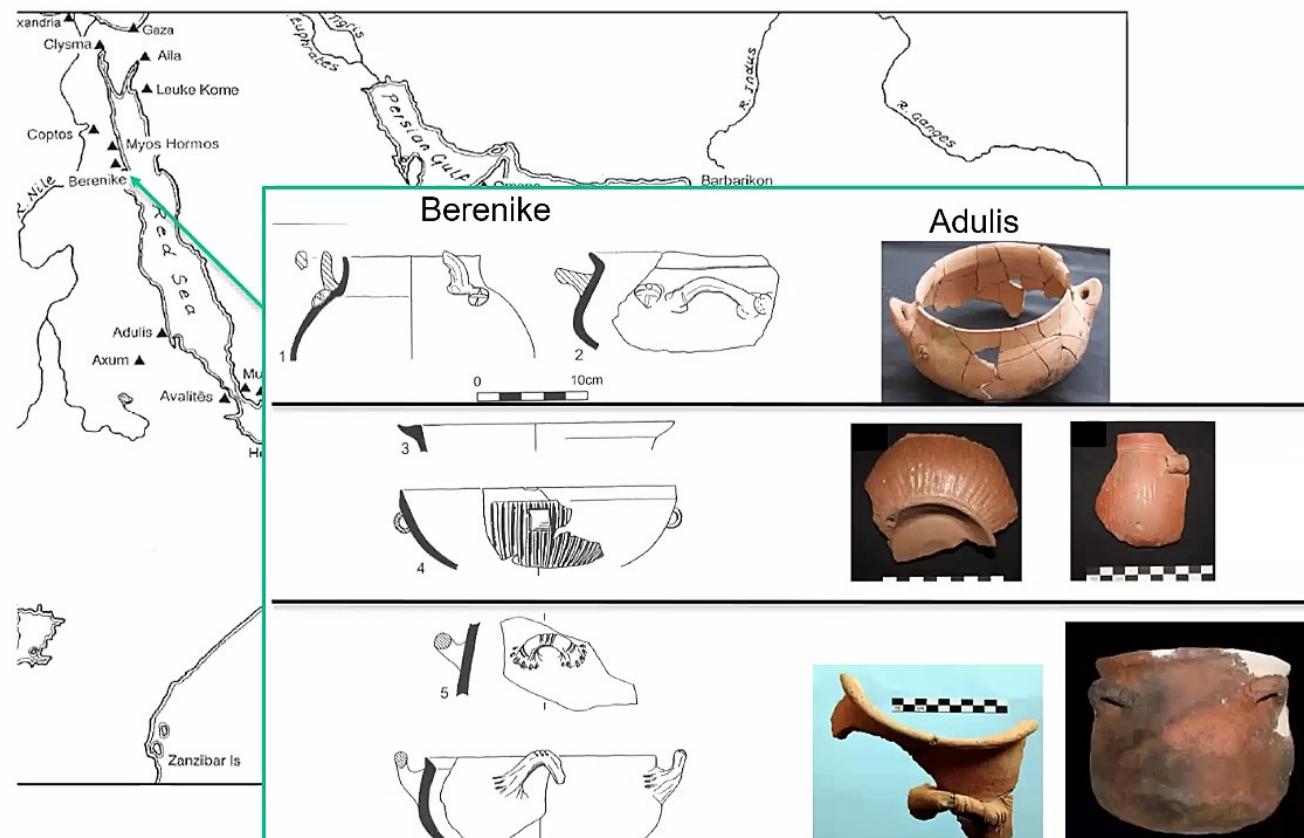


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## Local pottery

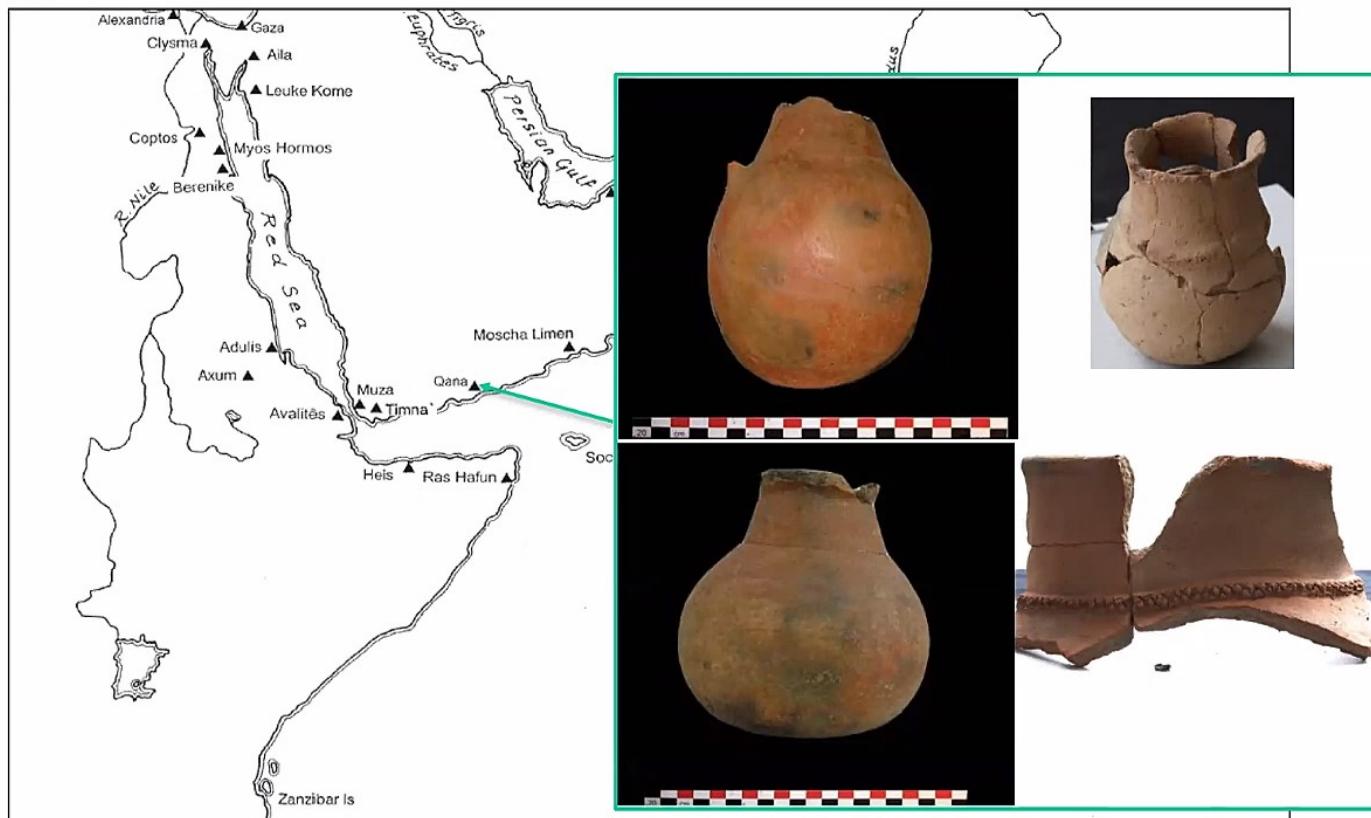


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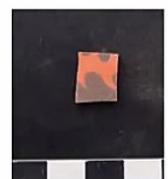
## Local pottery



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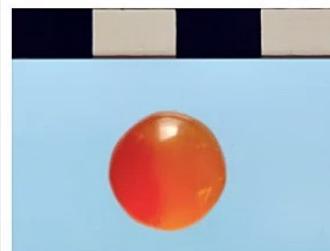
## Imported pottery



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## Other imported finds

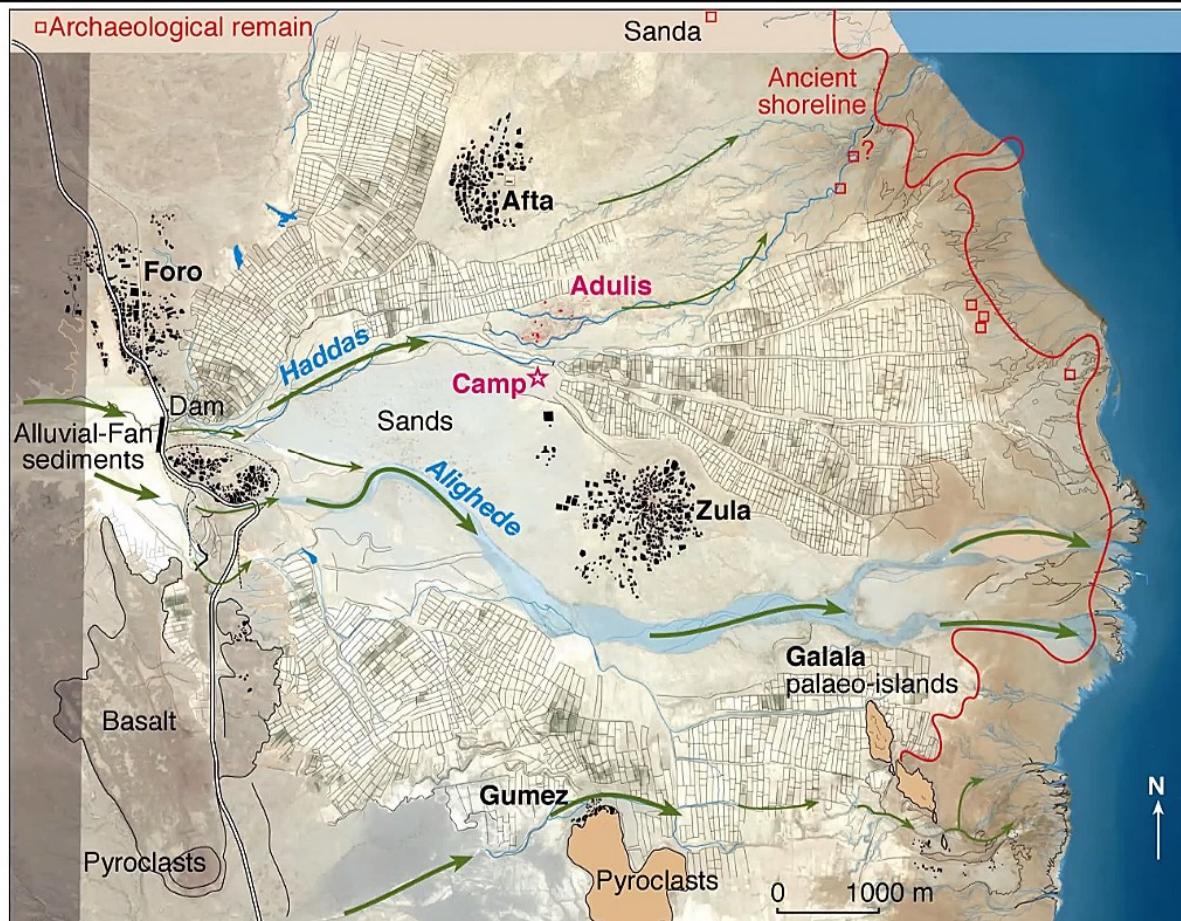


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## Other local products

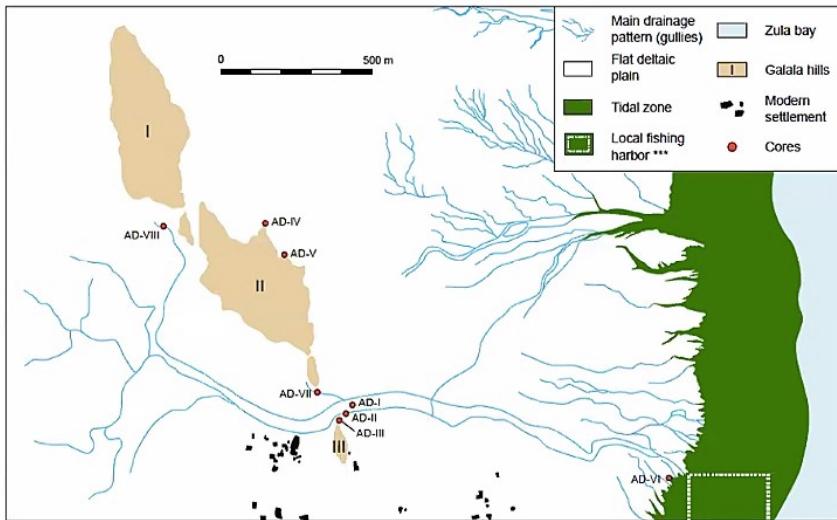


## The port(s) of Adulis



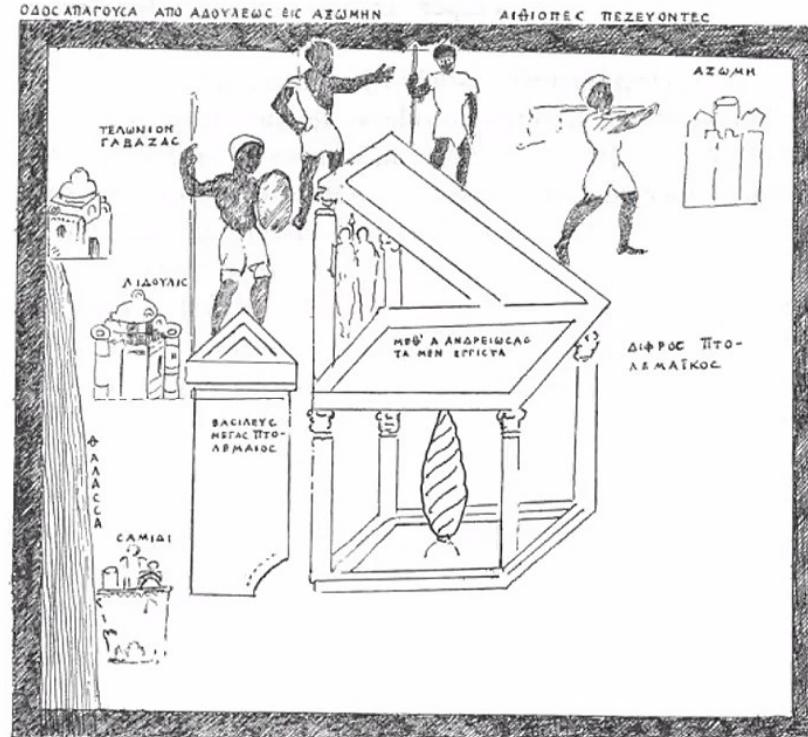
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[...] ships with cargo bound for Adulis had previously moored at “Diodorus Island”, connected to the mainland by a causeway, but that attacks on the port from local *barbaroi* had forced ships seek an alternative anchorage offshore at the island of “Oreiné” [...] (PME)



The 6<sup>th</sup> century *Martyrdom of Saint Arethas* relates that King Caleb of Aksum amassed a fleet of some sixty ships at Gabaza, ten of which were made locally.

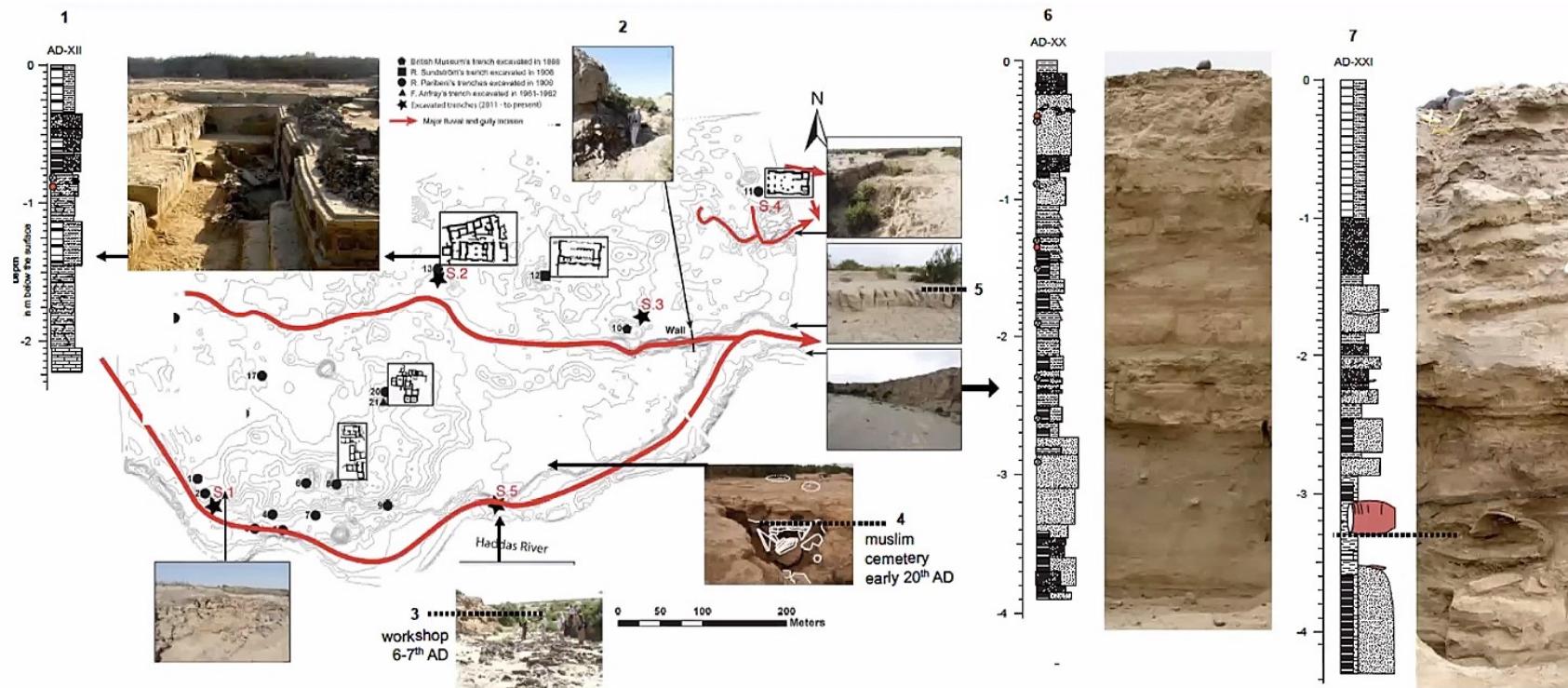
Procopius mentions sewn boats, used by Indians and the Aethiopians (*History of the War*, I, xix, 17-22).



Cosmas Indicopleustes (inizio VI sec. d. C.)

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## The sedimentation of Adulis



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## The Galala hills



## The Dahlak islands



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