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Routes

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Introduction

The waters of the Mediterranean may be the greatest museum of Antiquity. Scattered across the seafloor are shipwrecks from every time period. Cargos of wine, oil, and fish were transported in clay amphoras, which are found stacked in the sands or spilling down submarine cliffs in waterfalls of ceramics. There are also other items: lamps, cooking pots, anchors, and fragments of everyday life. These objects tell human stories, which archaeologists carefully tease out of the material record. It is sometimes possible to identify the ship's previous ports of call, their home port, or their intended destination. Since the first shipwreck discoveries by early divers, a database of Mediterranean shipwrecks has slowly been built and recreated the paths that the ships navigated.[1] It reveals a 'globalized' ancient Mediterranean which spread cargo, languages, religions, war, and ideas. The efflorescence of ship-borne connectivity was possible through the creation and sharing of *routes*.

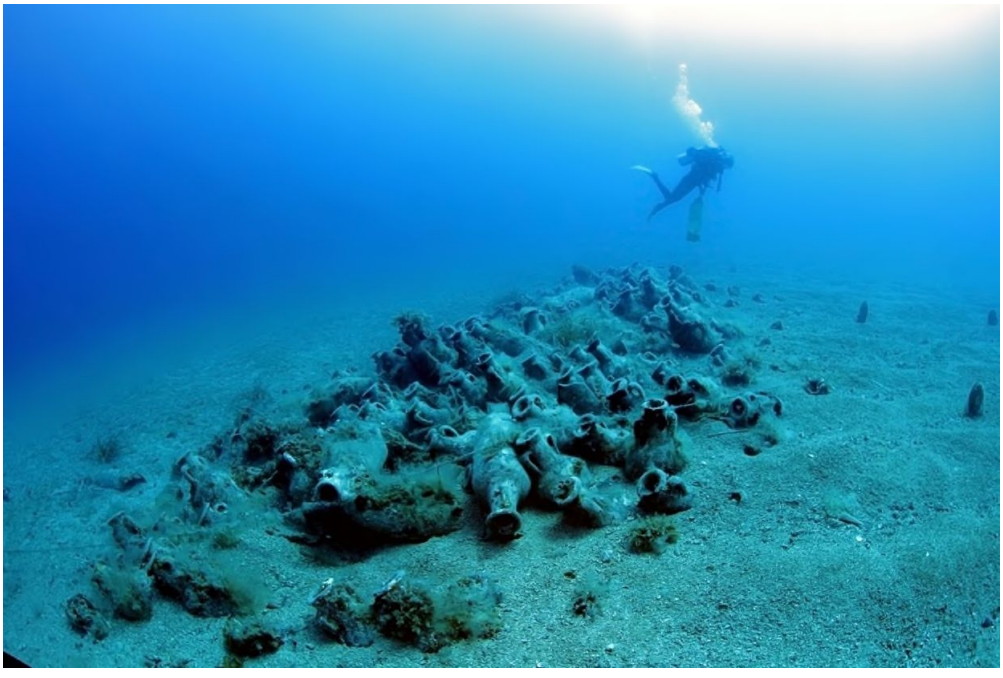

Figure 1. A 4th-century AD shipwreck discovered in Albania, lying on the seafloor in its original shape and transporting North African amphoras filled with fish sauce (Albanian Center for Marine Research/Elaine Ferritto).

[1] A.J. Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks of the Mediterranean and the Roman Provinces* (Oxford: BAR Intern. 580 Archeopress, 1992).

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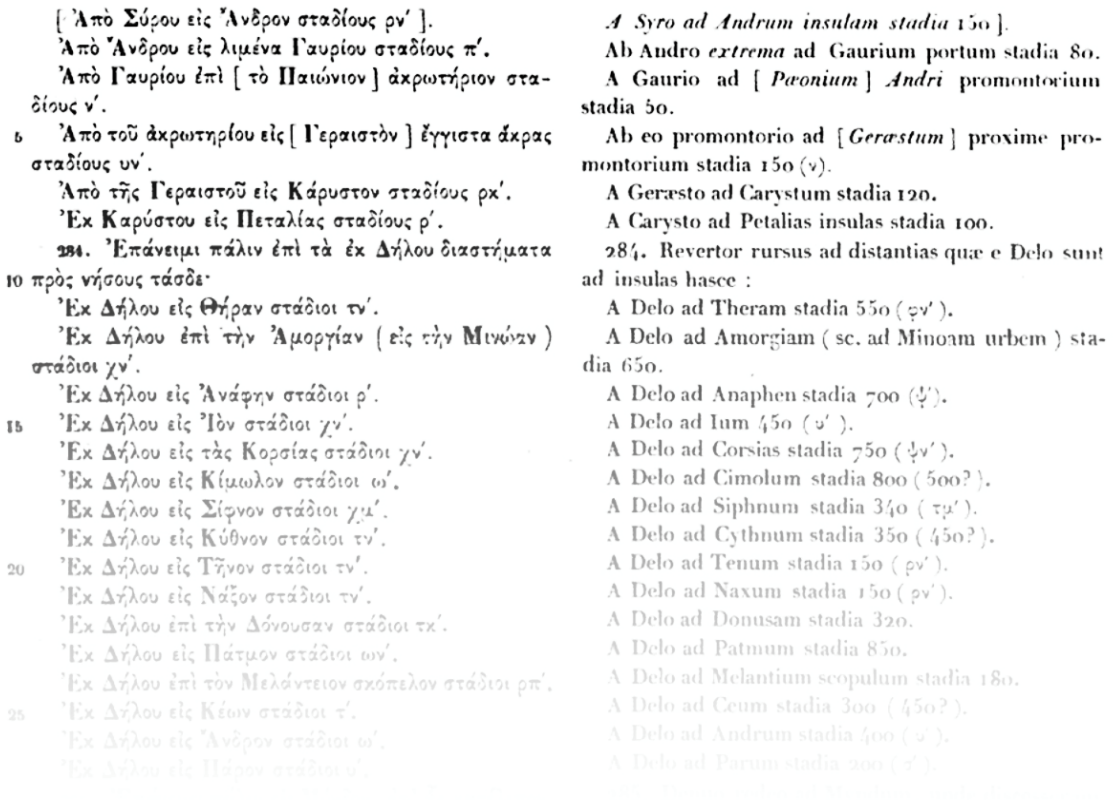
How does one navigate space to get from one place to another? Generally, one can follow a prescribed route or blaze a new one. But what is a route, precisely? The etymology of *route* comes from 13th-century Old French term *rute* meaning road, way, or path, which itself derives from the Latin *rupta* meaning a broken a path or way.[2] The term 'route' denotes a prescribed or customary path that people or animals travel. This is also the source of *routine*, which is a behavioral path or course of action.



[Ἀπὸ Σύρου εἰς Ἄνδρον σταδίους ρν'].
Ἀπὸ Ἄνδρου εἰς λιμένα Γαυρίου σταδίους π'.
Ἀπὸ Γαυρίου ἐπὶ [τὸ Παιώνιον] ἀκρωτήριον σταδίους ν'.
Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀκρωτηρίου εἰς [Γεραιστὸν] ἔγγιστα ἄκρας σταδίους υν'.
Ἀπὸ τῆς Γεραιστοῦ εἰς Κάρυστον σταδίους ρκ'.
Ἐκ Καρύστου εἰς Πεταλίας σταδίους ρ'.
284. Ἐπάνειμι πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἐκ Δήλου διαστήματα πρὸς νήσους τάσδε·
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Θήραν στάδιοι τν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀμοργίαν (εἰς τὴν Μινώαν) στάδιοι χν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Ἀνάφην στάδιοι ρ'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Ἶον στάδιοι χν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς τὰς Κορσίας στάδιοι χν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Κίμωλον στάδιοι ω'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Σίφνον στάδιοι χμ'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Κύθνον στάδιοι τν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Τῆνον στάδιοι τν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Νάξον στάδιοι τν'.
Ἐκ Δήλου ἐπὶ τὴν Δόνουσαν στάδιοι τκ'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Πάτμον στάδιοι ων'.
Ἐκ Δήλου ἐπὶ τὸν Μελάντειον σκόπελον στάδιοι ρπ'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Κέων στάδιοι τ'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Ἄνδρον στάδιοι ω'.
Ἐκ Δήλου εἰς Πάρον στάδιοι ν'.

A Syro ad Andrum insulam stadia 150].
Ab Andro *extrema* ad Gaurium portum stadia 80.
A Gaurio ad [*Pæonium*] *Andri* promontorium stadia 50.
Ab eo promontorio ad [*Geræstum*] proxime promontorium stadia 150 (ν).
A Geræsto ad Carystum stadia 120.
A Carysto ad Petalias insulas stadia 100.
284. Revertor rursus ad distantias quæ e Delo sunt ad insulas hasce :
A Delo ad Theram stadia 550 (φν').
A Delo ad Amorgiam (sc. ad Minoam urbem) stadia 650.
A Delo ad Anaphen stadia 700 (ψ').
A Delo ad Ium 450 (υ').
A Delo ad Corsias stadia 750 (ψν').
A Delo ad Cimolum stadia 800 (500?).
A Delo ad Siphnum stadia 340 (τμ').
A Delo ad Cythnum stadia 350 (450?).
A Delo ad Tenum stadia 150 (ρν').
A Delo ad Naxum stadia 150 (ρν').
A Delo ad Donusam stadia 320.
A Delo ad Patmum stadia 850.
A Delo ad Melantium scopulum stadia 180.
A Delo ad Ceum stadia 300 (450?).
A Delo ad Andrum stadia 400 (υ).
A Delo ad Parum stadia 200 (σ').

Figure 2. The Greek (left) and Latin (right) versions of the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* giving accounts of locations and distances in the Aegean Sea (Müller 1855:499).

An unknown author in the 4th century BC began writing down distances and names of sailing destinations in the Mediterranean. The project would continue for centuries as the text was copied, changed, and updated until the present surviving text, which dates to the 1st century AD.[3] Known as the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni,* this *periplus*, or a sailing guide, lists place-

[2] Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), s.v. route.
[3] Arnaud Pascal, *Les Route de La Navigation Antique* (Paris: Editions Errance, 2005).

name, distance, and a description.[4] The combination of distance and visual cues allowed the mariners to plan and follow a route. For example, in one part of the guide we find:[5]

From Alexandria to Chersonesos, a harbor, 2 stades. From Chersonesos to Dysmai, a harbor for merchant ships not exceeding a thousand units of cargo, 7 [stades]. From Dysmai to Plinthine, an open roadstead, harborless, 90 stades. From Plinthine to Taposiris, the city is harborless, with a sanctuary of Osiris, 7 stades. From Taposiris to Chimo, a town, with rocky shoals visible, 7 stades.

This is information enough to create a mental map of the Mediterranean. Mariners knew how fast their vessels traveled and they calculated how far they would travel in a half day or day. The description in *periploi* allowed them to predict the days at sea ahead of them.

As cultural historians, the authors use archaeology and historical texts, as well as contemporary ethnographic information, to understand how people conceive of and negotiate spaces – including ancient spaces which no longer exist. Whether these are enduring places like Rome's ancient marble foundations or more mutable spaces like the sea, it is the previously 'broken path' encoded as mental maps that allowed geography to be shared.

Traditional Navigation: (Re)conceptualizing geography

There are exceptional cases where ancient footprints are preserved and allow us to follow people's path directly;[6] however, aside from these rare cases, it is necessary to reconstruct routes through texts or the archaeological record. There are several ancient texts that give accounts of navigational routes, while the archaeological record includes cities or settlements, shrines, and shipwrecks. Paths themselves may be marked with roadmarkers, stone cairns, or blazed trees – marks cut into the bark and the origin of the term "trail blazing" – and trail trees, which are purposefully bent to indicate a route.[7]

The most common means for navigating space is the sharing of mental maps. This is done through a process of embedding meaning in the physical landscape, creating an itinerary of

[4] Karl Müller, *Geographi Græci Minores* (Paris, Ambrosio Firmin Didot, 1855).

[5] Müller, p. 481.

[6] Roberts, Gordon, Silvia Gonzalez, and David Huddart, 'Intertidal Holocene Footprints and Their Archaeological Significance', *Antiquity* 70 (1990), 647–651.

[7] Dennis Downes, *Native American Trail Marker Trees: Marking Paths Through the Wilderness* (Chicago, Chicago's Books Press, 2011).

visual cues.[8] This may include estimates of travel time or distances, called *reckoning*, such as in the *Stadiasmus*. Features commonly embedded with meaning include prominent mountains, water sources, and islands, but could also include built structures like church spires or lighthouses. Toponyms like "Mount Everest" or "Pennsylvania Avenue" are a common way to embed meaning that can be shared with others.

Itineraries, Periploi, and Maps

Three types of texts survive from Antiquity which give insight into the ancient conception of routes. An *itinerary* is an account of a journey, listing nodes along the route taken. The term comes from the Latin *iter*, *itineris* which means journey. Ancient itineraries were accounts of, or plans for, journeys, but they could be re-used later. *Periegesis* were a form of travel guide (e.g. Pausanias who wrote a famous travel guide of ancient Greece). *Periploi* were mariners' navigation guides (e.g. *Stadiasmus*). Periploi contained information for mariners including built structures such as cities and harbours, natural features such as rivers and headlands, and resources like water and winds. Brian Campbell argues that periploi convey routes in a visual sense, as their narrative includes phrases such as "to arrive at" and "to find".[9]

There are also maps such as the Peutinger Table, the most complete extant Roman map. The 13th-century AD parchment is a copy of a 4th-century AD map; however, the 4th-century version is thought to build on a 1st-century AD original.[10] Pompeii, destroyed in 79 AD, is included on the map, while Constantinople and Antioch are given prominence, which indicates 4th-century additions. The Peutinger map looks odd compared to modern maps because it is not meant to reflect an accurate depiction of geography, but routes. The map is designed around the roads and the nodes within the roads, as opposed to the geographical

[8] Calvo, Manel, David Javaloyas, Daniel Albero, Jaume Garcia-Rosselló, and Victor Guerrero, 'The Ways People Move: Mobility and Seascapes in the Balearic Islands during the Late Bronze Age (c.1400-850/800 BC)', *World Archaeology* 43.3 (2011), 345–363. See also Timmy Gambin, 'Maritime Activity and the Divine – an Overview of Religious Expression by Mediterranean Seafarers, Fishermen and Travelers'. In *Ships, Saints and Sealore: Cultural Heritage and Ethnography of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea*, ed. by D. A. Agius, T. Gambin, and A. Trakadas, (Oxford, Archeopress, 2014), pp. 3–12.

[9] Brian Campbell, *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2012), p. 51.

[10] Dilke, 1987: 238. I can't find this in the biblio! Is it: O. A. W. Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1985).

space. Similarly, later maps have exaggerated coastal features, which aided mariners with visual markers.

Religious Routes

Routes are important to religious experience and the way believers engage with the divine in many traditions. Catholic Christianity celebrates certain days of the year — called *festivals* – where worship takes the form of a solemn procession in which believers carry a holy object around a particular area or to/from a sacred site. Figure 3 depicts the route pilgrims took to visit Rome's seven basilicas for the Holy Year of 1575. In Orthodox Christianity, priests and deacons perform a procession – called 'the entrance' – inside the church during the divine liturgy.[11]

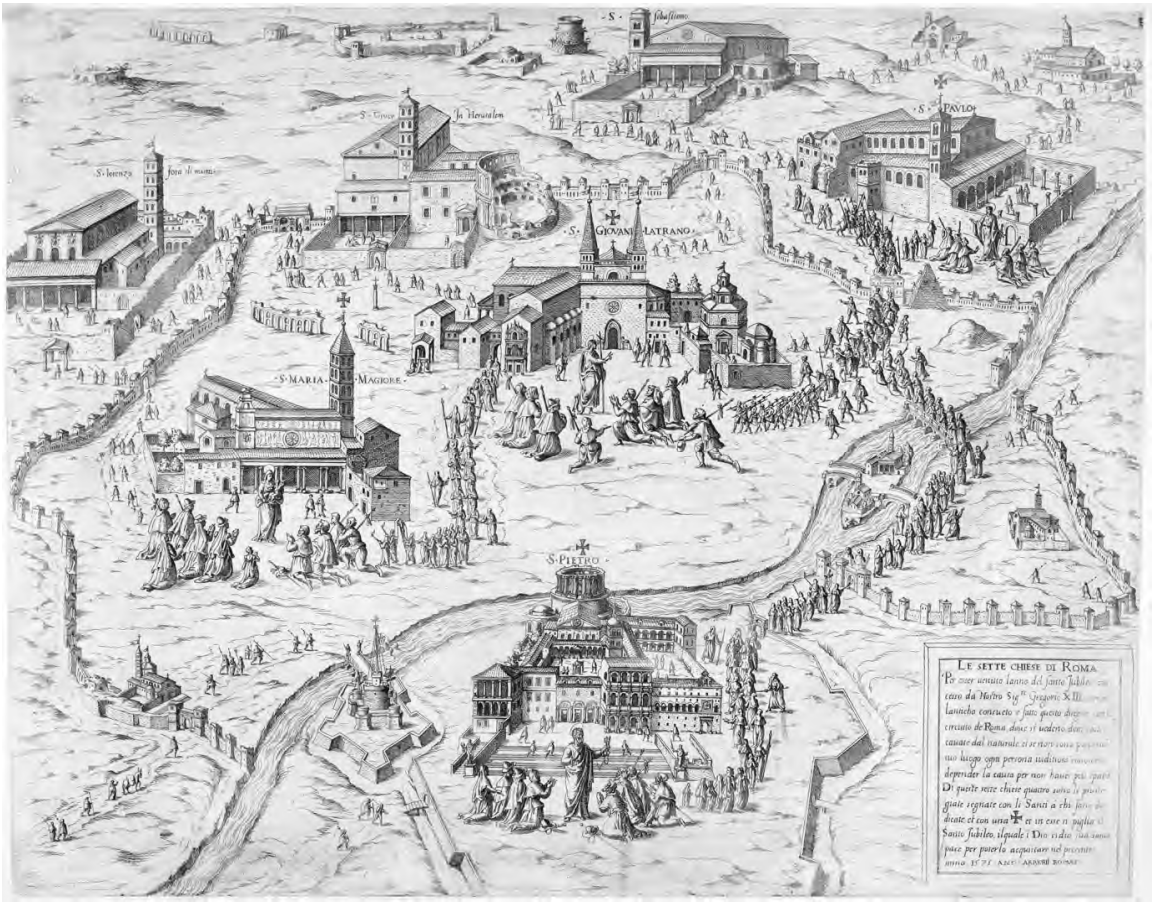


Figure 3. A map of Rome showing the pilgrimage route for the Holy Year of 1575, which visited the city's seven basilicas (Antonio Lafreri/Metropolitan Museum of Art).

[11] I. J.Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (Englewood, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1922), p. 83.

Routes are a feature of pilgrimages, which are journeys to sacred sites. There are many such sites but most popular in the Abrahamic religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam is the city of Jerusalem, which is very significant in the history of these traditions. In Islam, the annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca is called the Hajj. It is one of the five holy pillars of Islam and all adult Muslims who can afford it must perform the Hajj at least once in their life. During the Hajj, pilgrims circle the Kabah mosque seven times in an anticlockwise direction.[12]

In ancient Rome, processions played a key role in defining sacred space. Lustration was a form of ritual in which the participants went around an area in an anticlockwise direction in order to purify it and invoke divine blessing. Lustrations took many forms and were a part of everyday life throughout the Roman Empire. Ancient texts talked about lustrations of armies, navies, fields, cattle, city quarters, and the people during a census.[13] The most famous Roman procession was the *triumph* in which a victorious general rode a chariot through the city, followed by his troops. This was unusual, as the army was normally not allowed inside Rome. The troops displayed trophies and spoils of war.[14] The celebration took the form of a procession and culminated with a sacrifice to the god Jupiter.

Irregular Routes

Religious routes are examples of paths with restricted access, in this case available only to religious practitioners. What happens when The Route – the standard or normative route – is unavailable to certain individuals? Within every culture there are power inequalities and social hierarchies that privilege certain knowledge and spaces for some and exclude others. As a result, there are routes unavailable to certain groups. These people are forced to take new, illegal routes. The result is dangerous and, at times, deadly.

The shipwrecks in the opening paragraph describe the author's archaeological discovery of 53 wreck sites in Fournoi, Greece.[15] While divers work on the seafloor, Syrian refugees navigate the waters above. They seek to reach Europe via the nearby island of Samos, while

[12] Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*. (New York, Modern Library, 2002), p. 10-12.

[13] Krešimir Vuković, 'The Topography of the Lupercalia', *The Papers of the British School at Rome* 86 (2018), 37–60.

[14] M.L. Popkin, *The Architecture of the Roman Triumph*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6-11.

[15] Peter B Campbell and George Koutsouflakis, 'Shipwreck Capital of the Aegean: The Fournoi Underwater Survey', *INA Quarterly* 44.3/4 (2018), 9–15.

Turkish warships attempt to interdict their small vessels. Archaeology provides a perspective from the *longue durée*. We found amphoras, ceramic jugs that served as barrels in Antiquity, transporting wine, olive oil, and fish products, while at night we dined on those same goods. The artifacts tell a story of an arterial route connecting Egypt, the Levant, and Syria to Cyprus, the Aegean, and Black Sea in every time period. Sometimes the flow of people and good goes in one direction, sometimes it goes in the other. However, the flow of people continues along this previously broken path.

Those who have the usual route closed to them must resort to irregular routes. This includes refugees, who must travel through war, social divisions, or economically depressed areas to reach a border. Once at the border, they may face a politicized route of entry, as many countries do not wish to admit large numbers of refugees, leading to irregular routes.

Routes are negotiated through cultural factors, including politics. The route between Mexico and the United States is different for a US citizen than it is for a Central American refugee. This is particularly evident through a policy known as Prevention Through Deterrence, or PTD.[16] First articulated by the United States in 1993, it was designed to block straightforward passage from Mexico into the United States, leaving only hazardous routes available to those seeking refuge. The policy argued that if the route was dangerous enough then individuals would not attempt to travel it, thereby preventing immigration. A version of this approach was adopted by the European Union to counteract refugees from Syria and North Africa. The number of sea journeys, as well as a major increase in deaths, increased as a result of agreements between Turkey-EU and North Africa-EU closing land routes and forcing refugees to undertake sea routes.[17] 25 years of data demonstrates PTD does not prevent crossings, but instead results in trauma and death.[18] The same result is evident with Mediterranean refugees following 2012.[19]

Just as travelers and mariners share itineraries, periploi, and maps, refugees and smugglers share information about irregular routes. Known as migration-specific capital, it is the

[16] Jason De León, *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. (Oakland, University of California Press, 2015), pp. 4–5.
[17] UNODC, *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants* (New York, United Nations, 2018), pp. 6.

[18] Jason De León, 'Undocumented Migration, Use Wear, and the Materiality of Habitual Suffering in the Sonoran Desert', *Journal of Material Culture* 18.4 (2013), 321–345.
[19] UNODC, pp. 6–7.

sharing of secret routes.[20] Sadly, it is not always effective. Despite the fact that only 1% of refugees travel by sea, 58% of reported refugee deaths occur along sea routes.[21] These routes have come to symbolize the current flow of displaced people and contemporary power dynamics.

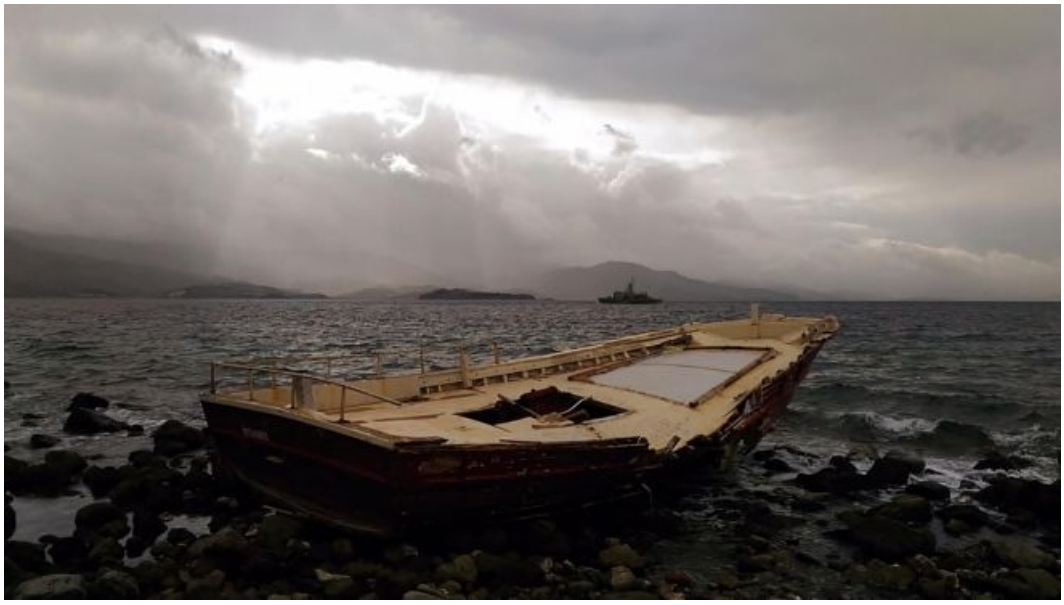


Figure 4. A ship used by refugees that was run ashore in Greece with a Turkish naval vessel patrolling the channel in the background (David Ang).

Exploiting Routes

Where there is an established orthodoxy, there are people who break it. In terms of cargo routes, this deviance takes the form of smugglers and pirates. Smugglers transport resources that are in demand, but cannot travel along established routes either due to taxes on items like cigarettes or alcohol or prohibition such as the immigration of certain people. Smugglers create new, small-scale routes circumventing the established route. Antiquities, stolen from archaeological sites, museums, or collections, are one such product. They are smuggled from source countries to market countries through 'fluid networks'. These are *ad hoc* routes that are constantly changing to fit the geographical and social landscape.[22] As a corrupt border

[20] De León 'Undocumented Migration, pp. 321-45; A. Singer and D. Massey Singer, A., and D. Massey, 'The Social Process of Undocumented Border Crossing among Mexican Migrants', *International Migration Review* 32.3 (1998), 561–592.

[21] UNODC, pp. 6-9.

[22] Peter B.Campbell, 'The Illicit Antiquities Trade as a Transnational Criminal Network: Characterizing and Anticipating Trafficking of Cultural Heritage', *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20.2 (2013), 113–153.

guard is replaced, the network changes to take advantage of another permeable border, shifting the route. These fluid routes result in millions of criminal profits from illicit antiquities trade.

Pirates and wreckers, on the other hand, exploit established routes. Knowing a route location allows brigands and highway men to lie in wait and spring a trap on unsuspecting travelers. Merchant traffic draw pirates, congregating at straits where ships were forced into constricted space such as the Fournoi islands.[23] Edward Daniel Clarke described the experience of sailing through the pirate-infested strait of Fournoi in the 19th century, writing:[24]

…our Captain busied in appointing an extraordinary watch for the night, as a precaution against the pirates, who swarm in these seas… They lurk about the Isle of *Fourni*, in great numbers… After they have plundered a ship, and murdered the crew, they bore a hole through her bottom, sink her, and take to their boats again.

The chances of coming upon a ship in the open ocean is miniscule, but within restricted spaces like straits pirates can take prizes because established navigational routes guarantee large amounts of traffic.

Wreckers take advantage of dangerous waters or cause passing ships to sink.[25] They congregate along shipping routes and place false lights to confuse passing vessels, causing them to crash. The wreckers then strip the ship of anything they can reach. The odd shipwreck may benefit a local coastal community, but it is unpredictable. Entire communities of wreckers developed in key areas along navigation routes, being sustained annually through wrecked vessels.

Conclusion

Routes are a means of conceptualizing and sharing spatial information composed of not only geographical data, but also reflecting hazards, politics, deviant behavior, and other cultural information. A route for one person may be non-negotiable for another based on these

[23] Henry A. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World*. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[24] Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa: Part The Second Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land*. (London, T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1813), p. 245.

[25] Bella Bathurst, *The Wreckers: A Story of Killing Seas, False Lights and Plundered Ships*. (New York, Harper, 2006).

factors. Routes have connected people for centuries and, even with satellite positioning and digital maps, people continue to rely on the previously “broken path.”

Further Readings

Campbell, Peter B., and George Koutsouflakis

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