

Popular science abstract

Jeddah, the port of Mecca, was the meeting point of numerous cultures. Thanks to its commercial activities, the city flourished, having extensive contacts with the Arabian Peninsula interiors and with countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. The project aims to trace cultural and economic changes and the potential extent of interregional contacts based on organic remains. It should be emphasised that archaeozoological research is still rare in the Arabian Peninsula region. On the other hand, the interdisciplinary studies currently being developed allow for very sophisticated analyses that give the possibility of tracing the migration of animals whose bones have been found during excavations. Other cognitive possibilities arising from the study of organic remains from excavations include the analysis of diet: capturing differences related to the wealth and status of people, and attempting to interpret these differences. The research will focus on basic archaeozoological and archaeobotanical analyses of the recovered remains and laboratory studies of the bones of camel, horse, sheep, and plant remains important in the desert landscape of the Peninsula. The choice was dictated by the specific breeding and use of these animals and the information potential of the plant remains.

The designed research will answer two main research questions:

1. Dietary patterns as an indicator of the social status and origin of Jeddah consumers;
2. The type and extent of contact between the inhabitants of Djedda and their closer and more distant surroundings.

The research will include the archaeozoological identification of animal remains from the excavations at Djedda conducted in situ during fieldwork and, for some of the material requiring detailed study, in the bioarchaeological laboratory of the IMOC PAS. In case of doubt, ZooMS analyses will be carried out to determine the remains fully. Detailed studies will also be carried out for plant remains, whether seeds, fruits or charcoals. To establish animal migration, samples will be taken for isotopic studies; analyses of samples will be carried out in national and international laboratories.