

Database relaunch to help protect endangered maritime archaeology

April 20 2021



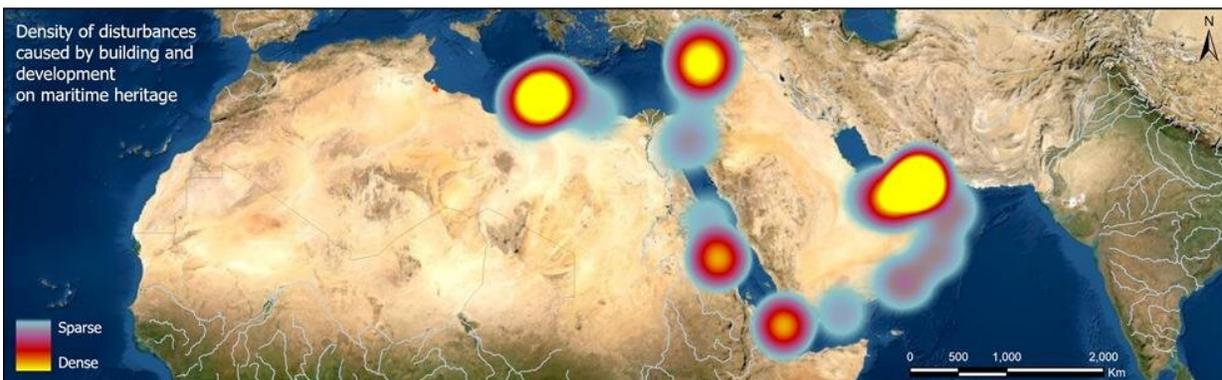
Archaeological remains of Roman fish processing vats in Kainopoli, Libya.
Credit: University of Southampton

An online resource documenting maritime archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has been improved and relaunched—helping to further protect sites that are under threat of destruction, erosion or neglect.

The MarEA (Maritime Endangered Archaeology) [database project](#), led by the University of Southampton with the University of Ulster, works in partnership with EAMENA (Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa) who house the [site](#) at the University of Oxford.

The [database](#) allows researchers to document, explore and analyze data on places of cultural heritage and the dangers they face in coastal and marine environments in the MENA region. Both projects are supported by Arcadia, a charitable fund of Dr. Lisbet Rausing and Professor Peter Baldwin.

[MarEA project](#) co-leader, Dr. Lucy Blue of the Archaeology department at the University of Southampton comments: "Many of the sites in the database are previously unrecorded, having been discovered through the use of remote sensing techniques, especially satellite imagery, and supplemented by reports and publications. MarEA is not, however, just restricted to sites that are directly under threat. All sites within the region are recorded, in order to monitor potential threats and decide where best to focus resources for preservation and protection—allowing heritage authorities to know which archaeological resources exist and where they are located."



Credit: [MarEA project](#)

The relaunched database includes many [new features](#) that facilitate the storage of complex archaeological data and help with the querying and

searching of records, as well as the integration of information. The upgraded version, which has been under development for the past year, features new, unique maritime specific forms of documentation that are paramount for contextualizing maritime heritage.

Of these is a new geoarchaeology resource model, which aims to capture evidence of past environments and landscapes, thus providing information about past environmental changes. This is particularly important given sea-level and coastal change that has and is still impacting on the location, preservation, and condition of maritime cultural heritage in the region. It also features a new way to capture geological data, as well as marine processes, for all heritage records.

The wealth of information held on the MarEA-EAMENA database helps in identifying threats and risks to archaeological sites. One example of this are disturbances impacting the maritime heritage resource from building and development activities along MENA's coastal region. Through consolidating this information, we have been able to identify and target areas at high risk, and work together with regional MENA heritage managers and experts to document and preserve maritime cultural heritage.

The latest EAMENA/ MarEA database (version 3.0) is modeled on the Arches 5 database platform, which is the latest in open-source cultural [heritage](#) documentation and storage software. Arches began as a collaboration between the Getty Conservation Institute and the World Monuments Fund. More advances are in the pipeline for MarEA that will allow data input and retrieval in several languages and connectivity with Geographical Information systems (GIS). Added to the improvements already in place, this will mark a massive leap forward in the digital documentation of archaeological material.

More information: [MarEA project](#)

Provided by University of Southampton

Citation: Database relaunch to help protect endangered maritime archaeology (2021, April 20)
retrieved 23 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2021-04-database-relaunch-endangered-maritime-archaeology.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.