

Humanities Research Seminar

9.30-10.30am Friday 22 March 2019

James D. Roberts presents



Image: This shows the sheer density of the animal bone deposits at Saruq al-Hadid, photo by Roberts

Reading the bones: The value of animal remains in understanding the human past in prehistoric southeastern Arabia

The study of animal bones recovered from archaeological sites can provide a unique insight into the activity of ancient humans. This can include, but is by no means limited to, insights into areas such as diet, resource use, transhumance, religious or cultural beliefs, and social activities such as hunting. An animal bone assemblage of prodigious size was recovered from the prehistoric site of Saruq al-Hadid (c.2000 BCE – c.800 BCE) located on the fringes of the Rub al-Khali desert in southeastern Arabia. The study of this assemblage, undertaken as part of the Saruq al-Hadid Archaeological Research Project (SHARP) has been hugely rewarding in the information it has provided regarding the activity of Bronze and Iron Age humans. Notably this includes evidence for the large-scale exploitation of wild animals, the transport of marine and coastal resources to the interior, the transhumance of domesticates and tentative insights into the nature of dromedary camel (*Camelus dromedarius*) domestication. This seminar will outline the motivations and methods behind zooarchaeological analysis before demonstrating the value of zooarchaeology using the work undertaken at Saruq al-Hadid as a case study. The insights gained by zooarchaeological analysis at Saruq al-Hadid shall be outlined and tied into our wider understanding of human occupation at this enigmatic site.

James D. Roberts is a 3rd year PhD candidate at the University of New England studying human-animal interactions in late prehistoric southeastern Arabia. Originally from the United Kingdom, James studied zooarchaeology at the University of Nottingham to Masters level before moving to UNE to work for Professor Lloyd Weeks as part of SHARP.

Oorala lecture theatre, Oorala centre
Followed by morning tea - all welcome
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