



Seminar for Arabian Studies 2016 Paper Abstracts

Session 4: Prehistoric Arabia Part 3. Chair: Sophie Méry

New Late Bronze Age –Iron Age Funerary Data from the Wādī Fīzh, northern Oman.

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In the 2016 campaign of the Wadi al-Jizzi Archaeological Project we found a rich collection of Late Bronze Age/Iron Age funerary artefacts from disturbed (probably collective) burials in the Wādī Fīzh. These graves have relatively few comparative parallels in other sites around eastern Arabia and are therefore of some significance for our understanding of these periods. In this presentation we will discuss softstone vessels, metal artefacts and pottery retrieved from these grave contexts. We will compare our data with those from other sites in Oman and the Emirates.

Keywords:

Two seasons of the Sarūq al-Hadid Archaeological Research Project (Dubai, UAE): preliminary results of the excavations

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This paper presents preliminary results from the first and second seasons of excavations by the University of New England (Australia), under the auspices of the Dubai Municipality.

To date, excavations at the site of Sarūq al-Hadid have yielded thousands of display-worthy metal artefacts, primarily dating to the Iron Age II-III period. The site is equally fascinating when attention is turned to the earlier, second millennium BC, deposits. A new research programme combines targeted excavations with a variety of specialist studies, including those focusing on the substantial organic remains from the site. This paper highlights a few of these preliminary findings, focusing on

the unique information provided from ongoing excavations in combination with the archaeobotanical and zoo-archaeological assemblages. This research supports previous findings while nuancing the sweeping site-wide observations with greater detail.

While the metals assemblages of Sarūq al-Hadid are justly worthy of attention, the site's animal and plant remains have much to tell us about ancient Arabia, including (but by no means limited to) subsistence practices, long-distance trade, and ancient life in the sands of the northern extension of the Rub' al-Khālī.

Keywords: Iron Age; Bronze Age; faunal analysis; archaeobotanical analysis

Snake Decorations on Iron Age Pottery from Sarūq al-Hadid: a possible cult site?

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The Iron Age pottery from Sarūq al-Hadid has a high frequency of vessels decorated with snake applique. These vessels compare favourably with material from Bithnah, al-Qusais, Salūt, and Masafi, all of which have been previously interpreted as cult sites. Additional parallels between these sites, including the presence of metal snakes, further support the likelihood that ritual practices were conducted at Sarūq al-Hadid. This raises the question: what was the nature of the cult activity that took place at Sarūq al-Hadid? Our preliminary study of the snake applique pottery, which combines visual analysis and portable X-Ray fluorescence, offers insights into the sources for this material, and, in turn, sheds light on how Sarūq al-Hadid may have fit within the larger ritual landscape of Iron Age southeast Arabia.

Keywords: cult; pottery; Iron Age; pXRF

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