

# **Eat, Pray, Smelt: the Enigmatic Prehistoric Desert Site of Saruq al-Hadid, Dubai, U.A.E.**

by

**Lloyd Weeks,**

Professor of Archaeology, University of New England

**The subject:** Saruq al-Hadid, discovered accidentally in 2002 in the mobile dune fields of southern Dubai, is one of the most important but enigmatic late prehistoric sites in Arabia. It displays a super-abundance of material remains (including thousands of copper, iron, gold, bone, wood, stone and shell artefacts and metal production residues) in contexts characterized by pervasive 'ritual' snake imagery. A UNE-based team has been working at the site since 2014, in collaboration with Dubai Municipality, and this talk presents an overview of the results of our field and laboratory research, including new understandings of the site's stratigraphy, environment, and the human technological and ritual activities that were undertaken there. The talk will place the site in the broader context of Bronze Age and Iron Age societies in south-eastern Arabia, and try to explain what attracted humans to this isolated desert site and why they returned time after time over many centuries, to hunt, herd, feast, and craft.



**The Lecturer:** Professor Weeks researches the archaeology of prehistoric Iran and Arabia, and metal production and exchange systems in the ancient Near East. He has participated in collaborative field projects in Dubai, Sharjah and Fujairah in the U.A.E. and in Fars Province, Iran, incorporating field survey, excavation, materials analysis, and palaeo-environmental reconstructions. He is currently directing the Saruq al-Hadid Archaeological Research Project (SHARP), a collaboration between Dubai Municipality and the University of New England.

**5.15 pm Thursday 11 May, 2017**

**Venue: Australian Institute of Archaeology,  
Terrace Way, Macleod**

**(La Trobe University, Building TER 11, Melways 873-4,  
University parking restrictions end at 5pm)**

**Contact: Christopher Davey 0421 595966**