

12:05 - **SATURDAY 14th JULY** – Stevenson Lecture theatre

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Currently, I am a New Route PhD Candidate at the Archaeology Department, University of Nottingham. My dissertation focuses on archaeological heritage management and the presentation of the past in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The Role of museums in Saudi Arabia and the possibilities of community involvement

This paper is part of my ongoing postdoctoral research into archaeological heritage management and promotion in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and, in particular, the component of my dissertation that explores new narratives for the interpretation and representation of the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the pre-Islamic era to the present day.

This paper reviews the current function of museums on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, investigating the experiences of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) regarding the representation and interpretation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's history. It also explores issues of community involvement and the possibilities of building bridges between museums and local communities. These issues are addressed by briefly introducing a case study on the National Museum in Riyadh. The main purposes of this paper are:

(1) To emphasize the need to explore new narratives, in order to present the archaeological heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in museums. The structure of the narratives that I use is a step forward from the current, chronological manner of presentation. The narratives are quite wide-ranging and intensive, dealing with various themes of the ancient history of the Arabian Peninsula. This approach reveals the richness that this land holds, and permits people to connect the past with the present, in order to maintain a sense of place, as well as enable the public to understand the complex history of their land and appreciate the value of their archaeological heritage. Evidence of the effectiveness of this thematic approach is to be found in museum displays and by tracking changes in people's attitudes, interests and appreciation that can be discovered by using such an approach.

(2) To express a demand to establish a partnership between the community and museums in Saudi Arabia in order to provide an opportunity for people to have a clear picture of ancient societies that once existed in Saudi Arabia so they may appreciate the area's history and have a sense of place.

Keywords: Saudi museums, community archaeology, Saudi archaeological heritage, museum role, education

