

ARCH/BIOANTH LUNCH TALK

WEDNESDAY, **FEBRUARY 16TH**, 2022, 12-1 PM

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Neither Person nor Beast: The (Pre)History of Working Dogs



A key evolutionary driver of phenotypic variation in domestic taxa is the utilization of working animals. While archaeological and genomic data clearly show that selection during the initial domestication and modern breed development phases was critical, the intermediate phase, when people began selecting animals for specific uses, is poorly understood. Consequently, little is known about the degree, direction, and potential consequences of

selective pressures imposed upon domestic animals during the vast majority of their evolutionary history. Dogs are the ideal model animal in which to address this. Since their initial domestication over 20,000 years ago they have served a wider variety of functional roles, for a longer period of time, than any other domestic animal. Ancient selection for working dogs may have led to identifiable landraces ('ancient breeds' adapted to local natural and cultural environments), developed and spread by human populations alongside more traditionally recognized material culture.

Dr. Perri obtained her PhD in archaeology at Durham University in the UK and is currently a visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Nevada (Las Vegas), Senior Archaeologist/Nevada Lead at PaleoWest and Research Associate at the University of Oxford, UK. Her research uses zooarchaeology, biomolecular methods and ethnoarchaeology to address questions on human-environmental interactions, domestication and peopling of the Americas, with dogs often center stage.

