

Abstract

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Coastal animal economy: cultic and vernacular management of animal resources at Kalaureia (Poros, Greece) and sites in the northeastern Peloponnese, c. 700–150 BCE.

Animals in pre-industrial societies played a central role in life, not only in economic terms, but also in cult and culture in general. For Ancient Greece, archaeology and history has provided the data for studies on this topic, but, as these disciplines evolve and reflect on their scope, limitations and potential, the issue of human-animal relationships in ancient Greece may be revisited with new aims in mind.

The aim of my dissertation is to explore the multitude of human-animal relationships on a local and regional level, framed in the bipolar scheme of cultic and secular, that has often been treated as distinct areas of life by modern scholarship, but which were likely not as clearly divided in the past. The dissertation will focus on zooarchaeological remains (mammalian remains) from an archaeological site that has been extensively and carefully excavated, the Sanctuary of Poseidon (Poros, Saronic gulf) and the surrounding city. Ancient Kalaureia was situated near the Peloponnesian coast, in proximity to Athens, and participated in the political developments in the region during the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods (c. 700–150 BCE), and participated in a network of local and more distant relations with communities in the Saronic gulf. These relationships are evident in both the historical sources and archaeological evidence. Furthermore, such relationships may also be elucidated by investigation of the zooarchaeological record through regional site comparison (e.g. with Halieis and Corinth in the northeastern Peloponnese). In addition, the topography of Kalaureia permits investigation of intra-site patterns of use and regional variability of human-animal relationships in cultic and secular areas. The project will investigate human activities linked to cultic and vernacular management of animals and the products they provide (e.g. meat, dairy, wool, hides), and contextualize data through comparisons with written sources (ancient literature and epigraphy), other zooarchaeological-, archaeo-environmental data. The seminar will present the project at this stage and future directions of research.