



The Friends of the ANU Classics Museum

invite you to a zoom lecture by

James Donaldson

of

RD Milns Antiquities Museum, University of Queensland

5.30pm Thursday 5 May

The Shellal Mosaic: Archaeological, Textual and Visual Traditions



The Shellal Mosaic is the largest ancient mosaic pavement in Australia. It was uncovered by Australian and New Zealand Service Personnel at Shellal, near Gaza, in 1917, and subsequently removed by Chaplain William Maitland Woods. The largest part of the mosaic is held by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, while other parts can be found in Brisbane, Sydney and central western New South Wales. Previous studies focus on the mosaic's art-historical importance and no study has fully examined its complex collecting history, from initial discovery, through excavation, recovery, dispersal, reconstruction and display, despite increasing questions about the circumstances of the mosaic's removal and questions over its possible restitution. Such an approach is long overdue. This talk presents initial findings of a project, supported by a grant from the Palestine Exploration Fund, that seeks to fill this significant gap, synthesising archival and photographic sources, illustrations, and physical artefacts to understand the way the mosaic has been transformed since its discovery to the present day.

James Donaldson is the Manager and Curator of UQ's RD Milns Antiquities Museum and a PhD Candidate with UQ's School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. His research focuses on why Australian First World War Personnel took items of ancient material culture during their war service. James is also broadly interested in the history, mechanics and circumstances of antiquities collecting in Australia.

The Committee of the Friends of the ANU Classics Museum would like to thank all Friends for their continuing support of this splendid teaching and learning facility that is open to the entire community.