The idea that the origins of ancient Israel’s god, Yahweh, can be found in the arid southern margins south and south-east of Palestine (known as the “Midianite-Kenite hypothesis”), has a long history in biblical scholarship. However, adequate analyses of the archaeological evidence of the arid areas of the southern Levant are few. In this lecture, instead of looking to the (mostly biblical) evidence of the origins of Yahwism and assuming its origin lies in movements of people from the southern regions to Canaan in the Early Iron Age, Dr Tebes will focus attention on the archaeology of the cultic practices in the Negev, southern Transjordan, and northern Hejaz during the entire Iron Age, and how this information is related to the religious practices known in Judah and Israel during the biblical period, providing new light on the prehistory of the cult of Yahweh. The evidence will be evaluated not as a single, exceptional event, but as long-term process within the several-millennia history of cultic practices and beliefs of the local peoples.

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE DESERT CULTS AND THE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL’S GOD

CCANESA
University of Sydney
WEDNESDAY 6 August 2014
6.30pm

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