



Afternoon Seminar

Sponsored by the Australian Institute of Archaeology

The 'Land of Mēdeba' and Iron Age Moab

and

Temples, Tablets and Assyrian Imperialism at Tayinat on the Orontes

Professor Timothy P. Harrison

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Saturday 14 May 2011, 2:00- 5.15pm

at

**Australian Institute of Archaeology, Building EC 11, La Trobe University,
Terrace Way, MacLeod, (Melways 873-4)**

Admission Free

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ABSTRACTS

The ' Land of Mēdeba' and Iron Age Moab

Textual sources suggest that the Mādabā Plain region of Central Jordan, the Mishor of the Bible, experienced widespread land use and settlement during the early stages of the Iron Age (ca. 1200-900 BCE), and witnessed the emergence of mature nation-states, most notably the kingdoms of Ammon and Moab. Syntheses of the archaeological record, however, have generally characterized it as a period of limited settlement, marked by loosely confederated alliances and kinship networks; flourishing urban development and political centralization occurred only much later, during the era of Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony. Yet, until recently, this prevailing view has suffered from a lack of carefully excavated cultural sequences, or 'local histories', at key sites occupied during this period. The results of recent excavations at Tall Mādabā, the principal Iron Age settlement in the region, are starting to fill this gap. First mentioned in the so called 'taunt song' of its northern neighbour Heshbon (cf. Nu. 21: 27-30), Mādabā clearly had emerged as an important regional centre well before the mid-ninth century BCE, and Mesha's famous acknowledgment that much of the central highland plateau belonged to 'the Land of Mēdeba'. This lecture will review the results of the ongoing Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project investigations, and explore their implications for current understandings of the historical development of Iron Age Moab.

Temples, Tablets and Assyrian Imperialism at Tayinat on the Orontes

It is generally recognized that an important shift occurred in Assyrian imperial policy during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BCE). Excavations at Tell Tayinat, located on the Plain of Antioch in southeast Turkey, have uncovered the remains of a Late Assyrian settlement, including an Assyrian governor's residence and, most recently, a temple and a cache of cuneiform tablets dating to this period. Historical sources attest that Tayinat was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE, and then transformed into an Assyrian provincial capital equipped with its own governor and imperial administration. The Tayinat excavations thus offer a rare opportunity to examine the physical dimensions of one of history's earliest and most successful experiments in imperialism. This lecture will present the latest discoveries of the Tayinat Archaeological Project from this period. They reveal a carefully crafted visual landscape that both manifested and reinforced the ideology of the Assyrian imperial project.

Timothy P. Harrison

Dr. Timothy P. Harrison is Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto; a position he filled in 1997. Prior to his appointment at Toronto, he was a Research Associate at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where he began working on the Megiddo Stratum VI Publication Project. He earned his Ph.D in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Chicago in 1995, completing a dissertation on the Early Bronze Age in the Highlands of Central Jordan. He has directed excavations at the Bronze and Iron Age site of Tell Madaba, in Jordan, and currently is directing the Tayinat Archaeological Project excavations on the Plain of Antioch in southeastern Turkey. These projects form part of a wider, interregional research effort that seeks to shed light on the early development of urban life and state-ordered society amidst the diverse cultures that have given shape to the eastern Mediterranean world. In addition to his own projects, Dr. Harrison has participated in numerous other excavations and field expeditions in Israel, Jordan and Turkey. In 2007, he was elected President of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR).