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PublicLecture

“The Early Christian–Byzantine Monastery of Aghios Lot at Deir Ain Abata in Jordan”

Dr Konstantinos D. Politis

Chair of the Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies

The Monastery of Aghios Lot is located at the south-eastern shore of the Dead Sea on a steep mountain slope overlooking the modern town of Safi (biblical Zoara) in Jordan. It is accurately depicted on the early Byzantine mosaic floor map at Madaba in Jordan. The monastery was excavated from 1988-2003. The focal point was a basilica church built around a natural cave which early Christians believed was where Lot and his daughters took refuge after the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19). The church is adorned by five mosaic pavements inscribed in early Byzantine-period Greek and dated to A.D. 572/3, 605/7 A.D. and 691 A.D. Three Greek inscriptions on stone which invoke 'Aghios Lot', confirm the identification of the site as Lot's Sanctuary. The site was occupied until the 8th-9th centuries A.D., indicating a continued veneration of Lot by Christians and Muslims alike.

Konstantinos D. Politis is a Greek archaeologist based at the British Museum since 1988. He specialises in the Early Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. Dr Politis' most important work was the discovery and excavation of the Monastery of St Lot in Jordan, publishing a major report on that project, three other books and a number of

articles. He is founder and chairperson of the Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies and an active member of the Palestine Exploration Fund (London). Dr Politis leads the conservation project of St Lot, and is Director of Interpretation and Design for the Museum at the Lowest Place on Earth at that site. Recently he has completed two projects in Syria: documenting mosaics of Syria, and an exhibition on 'Hellenistic Syria'. Currently Dr Politis leads excavations of biblical Zoara in Jordan, and at Ra's al-Hadd in Oman.

Wednesday, 16 May 2012
6.30pm – 7.30pm

Elisabeth Murdoch Theatre
Old Pathology Building
The University of Melbourne
PARKVILLE VIC 3010

Admission is free.
Bookings are required.
Seating is limited.

To register visit:

<http://alumni.online.unimelb.edu.au/politis>

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