The Council of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation invite you to our series of public lectures.

Wednesday 17th September 2014

Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia (CCANESA)
Level 4 Madsen Building F09
University of Sydney
6.30 to 8.30pm (includes a light supper)

Bookings are essential for this event. We prefer prepayment by 12 September 2014.

The discovery of an Early Byzantine chamber tomb at Tell Arqa, Lebanon.

Dr Hanan Charaf Mullins
University of Paris I

In October 2010, a Byzantine tomb was discovered during agricultural activities in the rocky hills surrounding the ancient site of Tell Arqa (ancient Irqata mentioned in the Egyptian Amarna Texts). Salvage excavations conducted by the author under police protection in dangerous conditions, in an area known for its tomb looters, led to the discovery of at least one chamber tomb of the arcosolium type. The tomb was entirely covered with white plaster and sealed by a door. It contained three rock-carved sarcophagi and a cist tomb, all of which yielded a rich array of gold and silver jewellery, coins, and pottery. More than 50 lamps were found, most of them deposited on the floor of the tomb. Amongst them, a lamp depicting a menorah that could indicate that at least one of the dead was Jewish. This is not exceptional as we know from texts that the Tell Arqa housed a synagogue. The perfect state of preservation of this tomb is unique to northern Lebanon where the majority of ancient tombs are found looted. Thus, the Tell Arqa tomb offers a unique occasion to study the funerary practices of the family or the community which used it.

Dr Hanan Charaf Mullins, a research associate at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, France is a Lebanese-American archaeologist specializing in the interconnections between Lebanon and its neighboring regions during the Middle and Late Bronze Age period. She is affiliated with the Tell Arqa and Sidon excavations.

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