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## The Archaeology of Iron Age Transjordan

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The conference aims to discuss the nature of society, politics, and religion throughout Iron Age Transjordan. Our goal is to explore interconnections, systems of control, and the tensions between local networks, emerging 'state' power, and the wider imperial context.

Each paper will contribute to these broader themes, and by the end of the conference, we seek to move beyond traditional assumptions and illuminate the complexity of Iron Age communities in Transjordan.

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## Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics'

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The Cluster of Excellence has been investigating the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures since 2007. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences are focusing in the current funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the 'dynamics of tradition and innovation'. In transepocheal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day, they are analyzing the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change, with their focus being above all on the paradox that religions often develop their innovative potential precisely by drawing on their traditions. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.

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## Organization


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### Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics'

Prof. Dr. Katharina Schmidt, University of Münster  
Project A3-42: Mountain-top sites in Edom: Disentangling politics, religion and economy in an Iron Age tribal kingdom  
[transjordan@uni-muenster.de](mailto:transjordan@uni-muenster.de)

in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Piotr Bienkowski, University of Manchester

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 [@religionundpolitik](https://www.instagram.com/religionundpolitik)

[www.religion-und-politik.de/en](http://www.religion-und-politik.de/en)

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## Location and registration

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Cluster of Excellence lecture theatre  
Room JO 101 (1st floor)  
Johannisstraße 4, 48143 Münster

Registration at [transjordan@uni-muenster.de](mailto:transjordan@uni-muenster.de)

International Conference of the Cluster of Excellence  
'Religion and Politics'

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Between Empires and Local Networks

06 October 2025 – 07 October 2025

Image: Mountain-top Site Jabaḷ\_Qsayr, Felix Wolter



Programme		
<b>Monday, 6 October 2025</b>		
08.30–09.00 Opening Remarks	Theme: Jordan Valley and Northern Jordan 14.40–15.20 <b>The Iron Age in the Jordan Valley: trajectories and connections to the Mediterranean coast and Cyprus in the Iron Age</b> Teresa Bürge (Bern)	<b>Ammon</b> 11.00–11.40 <b>Tell Bleibil: an Iron Age fortress in the south-eastern Jordan Valley</b> Alexander Ahrens (Berlin)
<b>Edom</b> 09.00–09.40 <b>Mountain-top sites in Edom: the archaeological evidence</b> Katharina Schmidt (Münster) and Piotr Bienkowski (Manchester)	15.20–15.50 Coffee	11.40–12.20 <b>Ammonite settlement patterns in the Wadi az-Zarqa Basin</b> Zeidan Kafafi (Amman)
09.40–10.20 <b>Mountain-top sites in Edom and their broader context</b> Piotr Bienkowski (Manchester) and Katharina Schmidt (Münster)	15.50–16.30 <b>Interconnectivity in Tell al-Assara and Tell Ya’moun</b> Marta Lorenzon (Helsinki)	12.20–13.00 <b>Discussion</b>
10.20–10.50 Coffee	16.30–17.10 <b>An attempt at autonomy: monumental fortress building in the early Iron Age of northern Jordan</b> Dominik Bonatz (Berlin)	13.00–14.00 Lunch
10.50–11.30 <b>Nabonidus and Iron II Sela: textual and archaeological evidence</b> Mohammad Najjar (Amman) and Rocío Da Riva (Barcelona)	17.10–18.00 <b>Discussion</b>	<b>Moab</b> 14.00–14.40 <b>What happened to Dhiban in the 7th Century BCE?</b> <b>Archaeological clues for settlement change in Iron IIC Moab</b> Bruce Routledge (Liverpool)
11.30–12.10 <b>The caravans of Tayma and the merchants of Saba: Arabian connections to Jordan during the Iron Age</b> Andrew Danielson (Harvard)	19.00: Conference Dinner	14.40–15.20 <b>Pottery as an indicator of inter-regional and international networks in Moab</b> Margreet Steiner (Leiden)
12.10–12.50 <b>Connections between Transjordan and the Negev from a ceramic viewpoint: Local patterns of ‘Edomite’ pottery distribution</b> Charlotte Whiting (London)	<b>Iconography</b> 08.30–09.10 <b>Networking ritual: style, function, and production of ritual implements in Iron Age Transjordan and the Southern Levant</b> Erin Darby (Knoxville)	15.20–15.50 Coffee
12.50–13.15 <b>Discussion</b>	09.10–9.50 <b>Art and identity in the Levant during the Neo-Assyrian expansion: a look at carved ivory</b> Claudia Suter (Basel)	<b>Beyond</b> 15.50–16.30 <b>The Jordanian Iron Age deities in the wilderness: An ancient north Arabian perspective</b> Hani Hayajneh (Riyadh)
13.15–14.00 Lunch	09.50–10.30 <b>Seals from Iron Age Transjordan. What do the seals tell us about the organization of society and politics?</b> Christoph Uehlinger (Zürich)	16.30–17.10 <b>Theoretical approaches to Neo-Assyrian peripheries—what does "periphery" mean within the Assyrian worldview?</b> Janoscha Kreppner (Münster)
14.00–14.40 <b>Archaeological correlates of a southern Levantine chiefdom: the case of Iron Age Edom</b> Juan Manuel Tebes (Buenos Aires)	10.30–11.00 Coffee	17.10–17.30 <b>Discussion</b>
		<b>Round Table</b>
		19.00: Conference Dinner