



LECTURE



Horace Vernet, *Tamar and Judith*, 1840. Private Collection

Monday, 14 November 2011

Depictions of Islam in European Biblical Art

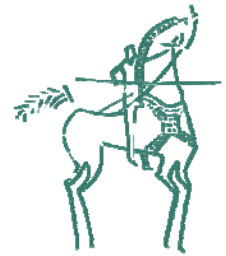
Professor Martin O'Kane
(University of Wales, Trinity Saint David)

6:00 pm at the British Institute in Amman (CBRL), 102 Uhod Street, Tla' Al-Ali

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Abstract: In 1978, Edward W. Said published a seminal book ***Orientalism*** in which he contended that Westerners' interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic Culture was essentially imperialist and served only their own ends. Said believed that Orientalism served political ends for the West, misrepresented Arab and Islamic Cultures by viewing them through a European lens and was more about defining Europe's self-image as appreciating Middle Eastern traditions culture. The Middle Eastern world tended to be portrayed as luxurious, sensuous and static in contrast to the dynamic, innovative and rapidly expanding world of the West. Using a range of nineteenth-century European paintings and photographs, some well-known and some perhaps not so, Professor O'Kane examines Said's argument and illustrates how the Middle East and its Muslim peoples was viewed and visualized by European travellers and artists over the last two hundred years, culminating with the Zionist appropriation of the European Orientalist tradition.

About the speaker: Martin O'Kane is Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, Edinburgh University and the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique française de Jerusalem. Having specialized first in Biblical Languages and Literature, he has over the last ten years become particularly interested in interdisciplinary approaches to the Bible, especially the visual interpretation of the Bible. He is author of *Painting the Text: The Artist as Biblical Interpreter* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), editor of *Biblical Art from Wales* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010) and *Bible, Art, Gallery* (Sheffield Phoenix, 2011). He is Chair of the *Bible and Visual Culture* section of the International Society of Biblical Literature and a member of an international research panel on the Bible and Old Masters paintings at the Barber Institute of Fine arts, at the University of Birmingham. He is currently Visiting Professor at Newman University College. He has recently completed two research projects: a British Academy funded project on *The Bible and Art: Towards an Interdisciplinary Methodology* (based at the Manchester Art Gallery) and an AHRC funded project *Imaging the Bible in Wales* (based at The National Museum of Wales, Cardiff). He is Moderator of the MA Programme *Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts* of the Prince's Trust Foundation in London. He is currently working with Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Zaagy on a project entitled *Perfection in All Things* which highlights the range of Islamic art and artefacts located in public and private collections in Wales and co-organizes with Dr. Abdulrahman a high profile series of seminars on *Islamic Life and Culture*.