

Workshop to be held at MIRI, University of Copenhagen
24th-25th August 2012

Organisers

P. Wordsworth and S. McPhillips, with assistance from L. Blanke



Wadis, qanats and terraces - a rural landscape from Eastern Iran (Google Earth©)

Islam has been frequently characterised as an urban religion, with the rural world being cast in a lesser or supporting role in Islamic societies. Landscape archaeology has drawn attention to the need for off-site investigation in many areas of the Islamic world, but focused studies of the extra-urban economic infrastructure of Islamic societies have only recently gathered pace. Archaeological work is helping show that rather than being peripheral, the countryside was frequently the engine of economic activity and was the theatre of agricultural and technical innovations that were intrinsically linked to urban centres and interregional networks. Just as the presence of the new religion of Islam in cities is increasingly viewed in the context of long and complex processes of urban change, in rural areas archaeological evidence encourages an equally nuanced reading of changing cultural and religious practices after the middle of the seventh century.

Modern agrarian practices are rapidly changing and as a result the available data concerning this component of socio-economic activity is being lost. This workshop proposes an assessment of the state-of-play in rural Islamic archaeology, inviting contributions from interested researchers currently working on aspects of rural economies. New research will be privileged and it is hoped that some funds will be available to enable scholars from MENA countries and Central Asia to attend. Papers from across the entirety of the historical Islamic world are encouraged, and those which examine diverse time periods, from the Arab conquests until the modern era. Contributions from doctoral students presenting new research are welcomed.

Intended outcomes

- an evaluation of the state of archaeological knowledge of the rural Islamic world
- a comprehensive review of the current preservation of rural Islamic heritage: this may include an assessment of the needs of the relevant authorities charged with registering and safeguarding these resources
- discussion of the future directions of research in the field
- an edited volume of papers to be published in Copenhagen.

Schedule

Closing date for abstract submission: *February 29th*

Confirmation of participants: *March 31st*

Workshop: *24th-25th August 2012*

Contributions for publication due: *October 31st*

Session themes*

Movement - Transport, routes, rural-urban connections and migration

Sedentary and Nomadic Societies - Settlement structure, social organisation, ethnicity and religion

Artisanal and Industrial Activity - Craft specialisation, art and commercial practice

Subsistence and Hydrological Infrastructure - Agricultural practices, irrigation, and hydraulic power

Methodologies and Theoretical Approaches to Islamic Rural Landscapes

*Suggestions for papers outside of these themes will be considered

Proposals

Paper presentations of 20 minutes with 10 minutes discussion

Please submit a working title and abstract (200-300 words) to the organisers:

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