



Islamic Archaeology Conference (ISAC) 2024

07-09 November 2024

Casino building, Campus Westend,
Goethe-University Frankfurt
Nina-Rubinstein-Weg 1, 60323 Frankfurt am Main

Thursday, 7.11.24

12:30-14:00 registration

Keynotes: what is Islamic archaeology?

14:00-15:30 Mahmoud Hawari

16:00-17:30 Andrew Petersen

18:00-19:30 Marie-Odile Rousset

Friday, 8.11.24

8:30-10:00 Architecture and daily life

Joanita Vroom

Alastair Northedge

Barak Monnickendam-Givon et al.

10:30-11:30 Architecture and daily life

Mustafa Tupev

Abed Matani

11:30-12:30 Settlements and Settlement Patterns

Martina Müller-Wiener

Mohammad Ghamari Fatideh

14:00-15:30 Settlements and Settlement Patterns

Ahmad Azadi & Andrea Ricci

Shulamit Miller

Catreena Hamarneh et al.

16:00-17:30 Trade, Economy, and Networks

Alexandrine Guérin

Jonathan Ouellet

Irina Shingiray

18:00-19:00 Trade, Economy, and Networks

Elena Salinas et al.

Heike Möller et al.

Saturday, 9.11.24

8:30-10:00 The Arabian Peninsula

Friedrich Weigel et al.

Alexia Rosak et al.

Karol Juchniewicz et al.

Abdullah Alzahrani

10:30-12:00 East Africa

Simon Dorso

Hussien Endris et al.

Iran

Hassan Hashemi Zarjabad et al.

Ute Franke

13:30-15:00 Central Asia

Sören W. Stark et al.

Iraqi Kurdistan

Mustafa Ahmad & Paola Sconzo

Valentina Vezzoli

Fruzsina Alexandra Németh

15:30-17:00 Egypt

Ralph Bodenstein

Robert Mahler & Magdalena Ostrowska

The Levant

Micaela Sinibaldi

Ian W.N. Jones

17:30-19:00 The Levant

Benjamin Dolinka

The Iberian Peninsula

Felix Arnold & Julio Navarro Palazón

Guillem Alcolea et al.

Amalia Pérez-Juez et al.

Sunday, 10.11.24

10:00-12:00 Assembly meeting

Architecture and daily life

Exploring the Archaeology of Consumption in the Islamic World (ca. 600-1500 CE) (Joanita Vroom)

This paper aims to present a first overview of the archaeology of consumption during the Early and Middle Islamic periods with the help of material culture. In the wide range of interdisciplinary scholarship on consumption studies (for example in anthropology, history, and art history), archaeology can nonetheless provide comparative rich evidence of material culture across time and space that is not always available in written texts or ethnographic research. It can thus offer 'an exceptionally powerful mechanism to examine complicated consumption tactics' (among which improvements of manufacturing techniques, technological innovations, the spatial distribution of specific goods, the changing consumer demands over time, etc.).

The idea for this paper is to use some case studies from the Mediterranean and beyond, including for instance finds along long-distance maritime trade routes in the Indian Ocean. The focus is in particular on ceramic finds (ranging from glazed tableware to unglazed transport/storage vessels and kitchen utensils), because these have great potential and can act as a pivotal guide to capture patterns of consumption and exchange systems in Islamic society. In addition, the transformation of consumption in material culture and lifestyles from Byzantine to Islamic times will be discussed in the regions under study.

The Tableware of the Abbasids: Palace B at Raqqa and Its Surroundings (Alastair Northedge)

Palace B at Raqqa was a noble residence located next to the palace of Harun al-Rashid, belonging to a close associate of the caliph, excavated by Nassib Saliby in 1950-2. The house apparently

abandoned when the caliph departed in 193/808, most of the ceramics, metal, glass and other objects were found in the latrines, giving an exceptional image of what was used in an Abbasid élite residence. In this paper we reinterpret the existing publication to identify and define the only so far known semi-complete assemblage from an Islamic palace or élite residence that shows how people lived.

Innovation and Adaptation: Art, Craft, and Architecture in Early Islamic Jerusalem (Barak Monnickendam-Givon, Yasmin Szanto, Tehila Sadiel, Ortal Chalaf, Michael Chernin & Ariel Shatil)

During the early Islamic period's late stages, substantial scenes of artists, craftspeople, and architecture emerged in Jerusalem. This scene was developed under the Abbasid and Fatimid regimen (mid-eighth century CE to the end of the 11th century CE). The vast activity in the city manifested itself in a variety of media, from the adaptation of already built structures for the current needs of the population to the decoration of buildings in mosaics and frescos and the innovation of gadgets to be used in the commercial and bureaucratic fields. The study of the material culture of this period demonstrates the extent of innovation prevalent among the city's population alongside how various aspects of the material culture of the previous periods (Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad) were handled and perceived. Our presentation will focus on the findings from the Israel Antiquities Authority's excavations at the Western Wall Plaza. The excavation yielded a well-stratified, rich, and diverse assemblage of architectural remains and small finds. Those finds allow us to reconstruct the nature of the local artistic industry in the city from various perspectives for a more comprehensive reconstruction of daily life habits, economic choices, and behavioral decisions in Early Islamic Jerusalem. A local capital and administration center that served as a meeting place for people from various social and

religious groups. Lastly, we would like to discuss the vivid activity in the city from a broader Eastern Mediterranean perspective and suggest what motivated it to flourish, maintain it, and finally caused it to collapse.

Stones in Motion: Spolia in the Old city of Cairo (Mustafa Tupev)

The Old City of Cairo, protected as a UNESCO-World Heritage site since 1979, resembles a manual of architectural history, covering a large chronological span from the 4th century up to the modern era. The urban landscape of Historic Cairo consists to a considerable extent of re-used material from Pharaonic, Roman, Late Antique, Byzantine, and Crusader buildings. Spolia are hardly ever missing on any of the most emblematic monuments and characterize the appearance of Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk edifices alike. Individual studies on re-use in Cairo have already been published, approaching the topic from an Egyptological perspective, through building surveys, from the perspective of building archaeology, or in an Islamic studies context. However, a detailed documentation and mapping of the spolia, or an attempt to refer to "lost" buildings on this basis, does not yet exist. A systematic collection of the confined building material, or an examination of the reasons and the meaning of the conspicuous practice of re-use in a historical context, have also not taken place.

Based on case studies from the Fatimid period (r. 970-1171) the paper will present the preliminary results of a research project based at the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo. The investigation is interdisciplinary in character and unites methods from Egyptology, building archaeology, digital humanities, and Islamic architectural history. The inquiry aims to shed light on the provenance of the craftsmen, on the time and origin of the building materials and on the reasons for their re-use. Together, the dated Fatimid monuments document cultural interactions in the Eastern Mediterranean,

reduce the possibility for errors of interpretation and present an opportunity to extract a rationale for the employment of spolia during a closely defined historical period, without falling into the trap of retrospective interpretations or of an overly theoretical art-historical model.

Ayyubid or Mamluk: On the Dating and Functioning of the Domed Buildings (Muqabab) in Palestine from the Middle Islamic Period (Abed Matani)

This research article will deal with the connection between sacred sites (mainly the tombs of holy men) and mosques. It will focus on the study of a certain type of structure which is commonly found in Palestine and which I have called muqabab (in Arabic: domed). These are submerged buildings that have a semi-circular dome resting upon a squinch, thus creating an octagonal collar for the dome. Since there is no clear dating for most of these buildings, which were usually built in outlying areas and in villages and for which there is little information, researchers have tended to date them to the Mamluk period. These buildings were also defined to a great extent as maqamat, "tombs of the holy ones" because it was the custom to attribute their construction to Mamluk rulers who wanted to be regarded as supporting religion and maintaining respect for righteous and holy men, as well as to increase the presence of Muslims in the country by holding Regular visit seasons (mawsim) at these sites approximately at the times of Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In this research article, the distribution of these buildings and their function will be examined, and the precise method used for determining the dating given to them. I shall try to answer the question: Are these really the tombs of holy men, or could some of them be mosques, and what is the dating for such buildings, what are their functions, and what can be learned from them about the kind of life that was led in the period under discussion?

Settlements and Settlement Patterns

Fruitful Discrepancies? – Integrated Historical and Archaeological Research into Settlement Processes (Martina Müller-Wiener)

Some twenty years ago, the evidence from intense archaeological research in the Greater Syrian region brought forth a reassessment of the historical development of the region between the 6th and 8th centuries. For some years now, a similar reassessment has been underway in relation to the early Islamic period of Iraq. The aim of this contribution goes beyond the revival of the classical argumentation pattern of historical thesis and archaeological antithesis. Rather, the abovementioned reassessment will be used as a backdrop for discussing the example of two late Antique and Early Islamic settlements in Syria and Iraq - Resafa and al-Hira - asking the question of what integrated historical-archaeological research into settlement processes and urban development can achieve and what not? This discussion includes reflecting about the meaning of source-appropriate questioning and a source-appropriate method, that takes into account the specific characteristics of the available textual and archaeological sources, as well as the fact that written sources - in contrast to archaeological ones - are intentional.

Adapting to Change: Archaeological Insights and Sea Level Fluctuations in the Southern Caspian Sea during the Islamic to Ilkhanid Periods (Mohammad Ghamari Fatideh)

The Caspian Sea's southern coast, enriched by unique climatic conditions due to its proximity to the Alborz Mountains, has hosted human populations since prehistoric times. This area, distinguished by its lush landscapes, is significantly influenced by the fluctuations of the Caspian Sea, Earth's largest lake, which experiences notable level changes within its closed basin system. These oscillations expose or submerge adjacent lands, impacting human settlements

over millennia. During the early Islamic period, around 700 AD, the sea level dramatically fell to -42 m, whereas by the Ilkhanid Period, around 1300 AD, it rose significantly to about -20m. This last rise, notable for its extent, coincides with a scarcity of archaeological evidence from the coastal regions before 1300 A.D. Historically, this lack of evidence was interpreted as abandonment due to unspecified reasons. However, integrating climatic and archaeological data has illuminated that many settlements were buried under sediments from the sea's fluctuations, particularly during the 1300 A.D. rise. This integration of data reveals a complex interaction between human societies and their environment, characterized by resilience and adaptability to the Caspian Sea's dynamic changes. The research underscores the necessity of considering environmental fluctuations in archaeological surveys, offering deeper insights into the historical interplay between humans and their landscapes. It not only bridges a significant gap in the archaeological record but also highlights the importance of ecological factors in the study of historical human settlements. Thus, this research enriches our understanding of ancient communities' strategies to adapt to their changing environments, emphasizing the critical role of environmental considerations in archaeological investigations. It provides a compelling narrative of human endurance and the transformative power of nature over human habitats.

Semi-Sedentary Lifestyle in the Zagros Mountains during the Islamic Period: New Evidence from Kohgiluyeh (SW Iran) (Ahmad Azadi & Andrea Ricci)

In the rugged terrain of the Zagros Mountains of southwestern Iran, the semi-sedentary lifestyle plays a crucial role in shaping regional occupation trajectories and greatly impacts local economies. In the highly mountainous region of Kohgiluyeh, a semi-sedentary

lifestyle ensures convenient access to local resources, with minimal distance to travel. These distinct mobility patterns contrast with nomadic movements observed in other regions of southwestern Iran, like Khuzestan or Bakhtyari. In Kohgilouyeh, archaeological survey has documented a series of sites, which reveal stone architecture of various nature. This evidence hints to the presence of a strong semi-sedentary component in the groups who lived the region during the Islamic period. This paper discusses these sites and structures and analyses them in a GIS environment, considering environmental landscape components such as topographic and geomorphological features. This enables us to reconstruct mobility patterns and strategies of resource procurement and management by pastoral nomads in the mountains of Kohgiluyeh during the Islamic period.

Retailing in Eleventh Century Tiberias (*Ṭabarīyah*): Between Resilience and Abatement (Shulamit Miller)

A street lined by a row of (work)shops was exposed east of the mosque in Yizhar Hirschfeld's excavations in ancient Tiberias (*Ṭabarīyah*). A number of stratigraphic phases were evident in the (work)shops that, according to the excavator, were constructed in the second half of the eighth century, going out of use during the Seljuk invasions of the 1070's CE.

Renewed analysis of the stratigraphy of the (work)shops shows that a new dating should be proposed, and that their construction as well as abandonment be delimited within a ca. one-hundred-year period during the eleventh century CE. Most of the (work)shops attest to at least two cycles of construction and destruction from the time of their inception until their final abandonment. The rich array of finds exposed in these (work)shops indicate events of sudden destruction, that were likely due to natural and/or human-caused disasters. However, the continued rebuilding of the (work)shops and

reinitiation of production and retail operations points to the resilience of the city and its economy until its final diminishment at the end of the eleventh century CE.

Preliminary contextualized studies of the finds, including ceramic, glass, metal and bone artifacts, display a range of workmanship from simple vessels to high end products. A combined analysis of the stratigraphy with the spatial distribution of the artifacts in the different layers of the (work)shops allows us to form a nuanced discussion of the retailing portfolio of the city throughout the eleventh century. The significance, however, resonates beyond this site and contributes to broader discussions of urban resilience. Ultimately, the quantitative and qualitative data from Tiberias provide an opportunity to assess urban economic resilience from the perspective of small-scale retailing operations and to explore the material expressions of the sequences of resilience and abatement through the material record.

After the Nabataeans: Petra's Rural Landscape in the Islamic Period in View of New Data (Catreena Hamarneh, Sahar Khasawneh & Nizar Abu-Jaber)

Petra, also known as Raqēmō, seems to fall into oblivion after the Byzantine period, as no historical records mention its being reinhabited until the Medieval period. Archaeological excavations and surveys that were conducted in and around the hinterlands of Petra suggest the abandonment of the area around the end of 7th century to the early 8th century (see for example Kouki, 2002; Kennedy, 2021). Islamic historical records mention only the areas of Ma'an and Udhruh in the area as populated centers. Amr and Al-Momani (2011) mention that only 40% of the Byzantine villages continue into the Early Islamic period, and only very few centers show a purely Islamic footprint, and even these seem to have ceased to exist by the 8th century A.D. Despite the scarcity of material

evidence of human settlements (buildings, pottery sheards, etc.), there is strong evidence of continuation and uninterrupted land use and exploitation. Dating of soil samples by means of ^{14}C and optical stimulation luminescence dating (OSL) collected from terraced fields around Petra and in the immediate vicinity have shown continuous land exploitation through the 8th up to 12th centuries A.D. This is not restricted to irrigated terraces but extends to rain-fed agricultural terraces as well. Specifically, charred layers behind terraces in Wadi Hremiyyeh clearly indicate reclamation and exploitation of previously abandoned sites during the Early Islamic Period. This leads to two main theories. First, nomadic tribes, comprised of either of the local population who reverted to nomadism or nomads from other areas, continued to exploit the land for rainfed agriculture. The second is that the local population moved to new urban centers such as Udhruh, Ma'an, Raba among others. However, they retained their tribal territories and continued to exploit them, particularly the spring-fed agricultural terraces. Cautiously, it could be hypothesized that small garrisons might have continued to exist, who might have maintained gardens to sustain their existence. However, the southern areas seem to have been abandoned from the 11th century, with more emphasis on the areas to the north after that. This could be due to geomorphological and/ or climatological shift causing the change of rain patterns and spring water fluctuation (Abu-Jaber et al. 2022). This paper would like to show the results of the intensive study conducted on the ancient terraces in and around Petra that would shed light on these little-known centuries. These studies show that modern geoarchaeological and landscape archaeology studies can help extend the insight previously derived from traditional archaeological surveys and excavations.

Trade, Economy, and Networks

From Village to the World – Some Elements for Defining International Trade in the Early Abbasid Period, Qatar (Alexandrine Guérin)

The village of Murwab was discovered in 1959 by the Danish mission, and two further excavation programmes carried out by the French Archaeological (1979-1982) and the Qatari-French Archaeological Mission (2005-2009) uncovered the entire settlement dating from the late 8th to the late 9th century. Comprising a fort, 2 mosques and more than 220 mansions and workshops, the site can be considered complete and representative of a material culture that lasted only a century. More than 17,000 ceramic objects from the excavations have been counted, and over 12,000 have been the subject of more detailed studies. This sampling makes it possible to propose a typological and provenance catalogue covering both glazed ceramics with specific decoration - cobalt blue, pseudo-epigraphic, monochrome mould, splash, etc. - and common ceramics. The latter, following a new laboratory study (wavelength dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (WDXRF) / petrographic analysis, Arabian Seminar 51, 2022), show regional origins, Arabia and Oman as well as southern Iran. In fact, it is a question of superimposing the maps of provenance for tableware/glazed ceramics, which concern long to very long-distance trade (from Iraq to Central Asia and China), and the maps of regional provenance for common ceramics, which concern the Gulf and the Iranian coast /Arabian Peninsula.

This study of trade based on ceramics will be complemented by laboratory studies of glass objects (Dr C. Swan, Corning Museum USA) as well as bronze objects. The question obviously arises as to the presence of all these imported objects in a village located more than 5 km from the coast, as well as the methods of exchange on this scale. The compilation of catalogues of archaeological artefacts will

be cross-referenced with available Arabic written sources to better understand how these exchanges are organised.

Exploring the Social Fabric of Early Islamic Numismatics (Jonathan Ouellet)

This paper delves into the multifaceted role of coinage in early Islamic archaeology, emphasizing its significance as a social artifact rather than a purely religious one. While previous research has predominantly examined coins through a religious lens, this study seeks to shift the narrative towards a more nuanced understanding of these metallic tokens and their impact on the social dynamics of early Islamic societies. The investigation centers on the material culture unearthed from archaeological sites dating back to the formative period of Islam. By scrutinizing the patterns, inscriptions, and iconography present on coins, this research aims to unveil the intricate web of social interactions that coins facilitated. Rather than being mere currency, these coins emerge as powerful symbols of identity, authority, and cultural exchange within diverse Islamic communities.

The study employs a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on archaeological findings, historical records, and numismatic analyses. Through a meticulous examination of coin hoards, mint locations, and circulation patterns, the research elucidates the intricate connections between coinage and the social structures of early Islamic societies. It argues that coins served as instruments of communication, conveying messages of political allegiance, economic integration, and cultural cohesion. Furthermore, the paper explores the role of coinage in reflecting the socio-economic stratification of early Islamic communities. By examining variations in coin types, denominations, and minting techniques, the research sheds light on the economic disparities and power dynamics prevalent during this period. In essence, this paper challenges

prevailing interpretations of early Islamic coinage by positing it as a social item intertwined with the intricate tapestry of daily life, politics, and culture. By elucidating the social dimensions of coinage, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of the vibrant and dynamic societies that shaped the early Islamic world.

Islam, Trade, and Khazar Cultural Cosmopolitanism in Eastern Ukraine (9th-10th centuries) (Irina Shingiray)

During the 9th-10th centuries, Islam was spreading far and wide from its heartlands to many distant regions of Afro-Eurasia. Muslim merchants and settlers followed important trade routes reaching out into remote territories and forging partnerships with a variety of indigenous people—sedentary and nomadic—some of whom chose to embrace Islam and make it a religion of their own. Some of those indigenous populations also adopted Islam as a result of mass conversions propagated by their own political elites. Textual sources rarely provide a comprehensive picture (if any) of the Islamization process among communities distant from the Caliphate. Archaeological research is indispensable for uncovering this process and for providing evidence that Muslim communities inhabited some regions, where no texts ever mention any tangible existence of Islam. In this paper, I will consider archaeological evidence of such “islands” of Islam in Eastern Ukraine—the region that was dominated by the nomadic Khazar Empire during the 9th-10th centuries. I will focus on burial sites, as well as discuss some settlements in the Donets River basin, which were excavated during the past couple of decades mainly by local teams of archaeologists (before the war). Most of the data which I will use come from published and archival sources. By using historical contextual and comparative approach, I will provide my own interpretation as to why and how those Islamic communities emerged and functioned in that region. And how the Khazar Empire encouraged cultural

cosmopolitanism, which led to vibrant trade and religious diversity in Eastern Ukraine, as well as in other parts of the empire where the Muslim communities thrived.

The Rural Territory of Córdoba in the Umayyad Period (8th-10th c.): Economic Resources, Distribution Networks and Interrelations with Other Territories (Elena Salinas, Marina González & Fulgencio Cánovas)

Since Cordoba was the Umayyad capital of al-Andalus, all research has focused on the urban world and little is known about how the surrounding rural landscape functioned. This is why the KUWAR project was conceived. The project aims to answer five historical questions: Was al-Andalus a territory of self-sufficient or dependent sub-regions? What were the active rural trade routes in Umayyad times? When did the assimilation of Islamic material culture take place in the rural world? Was there a centralised model of ceramic production and distribution in the *kura* of Cordoba (with an extensive craft area of more than 100 kilns) or did it only supply the urban market? Was there a relationship between the consumption of semi-luxury ceramics in the rural world and the agricultural surplus?

The multidisciplinary methodology of this project is based on a multidimensional approach combining written sources, archaeological data, archaeometric analysis and geographical information systems. It includes a selection of regions as case studies and several levels: micro (habitat/settlement unit), meso (*kura*) and macro (al-Andalus). The study of medieval ceramics offers a unique perspective on the connections, the construction of identities in the rural world and the economic and cultural interactions of this historical period. The proposed research focuses on the interrelationship between the production, distribution and consumption of specific ceramic items and the political, economic

and social factors that shaped and influenced their assimilation. This project examines the production, trade and consumption of ceramics at the three levels mentioned above. The project is being developed along five main lines: the organisation of the territory of the *kuwār* of Córdoba, Fahs al-Ballut and Cabra; the mono- or polynuclear production of ceramics in the province of Córdoba; culinary traditions; the consumption and circulation of glazed ceramics; and the transport of liquids in al-Andalus with wine amphorae.

The Medjerda Valley (Tunisia): Ceramic Production and Exchange Networks in Late Antique and Medieval North Africa (Heike Möller, Veronica Occari, Moheddine Chaouali, Corisande Fenwick & Philipp von Rummel)

Despite recent advances in ceramics research, a better understanding is still needed not only of the local characteristics of each site's ceramic repertoire, but also of economic aspects such as regional and interregional exchange, especially along the Medjerda Valley of modern Tunisia. While research has focused primarily on the production and distribution of transport amphorae or fine ceramics (ARS), other types such as common or kitchen ware have not been of much interest. However, it is this type of ware that is most frequently used in everyday life and therefore provides us with information not only about daily life, but also about local production/local demand and exchange models at various levels.

The present study, carried out by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in collaboration with University College London (UCL), is at the center of an investigation into these specific areas. A distinctive type of pottery, the so-called painted ware, a type of common pottery produced from the 5th to the 7th centuries CE and that has hitherto been given little attention, forms the basis of this study. For the first time, interdisciplinary studies based on ceramic

samples from ongoing excavations, particularly at Chimtou, will provide insights into the production technology, but also regional trade clusters are scientifically defined and analyzed on an interdisciplinary basis. However, it is not only interesting in this respect. Does this type of pottery play a role in the development of Islamic glazed ware, produced from the 9th century CE onwards? The paper will conclude with a brief insight into the latest results of analyzed glazed ware samples from Chimtou and some general thoughts on markets, trends and changes in pottery production and technique from late antique to medieval times.

Research results:

The Arabian Peninsula & East Africa

Beyond the Surface: New Perspectives on the Occupation History of the City of Qurh (al-Mabiyat) during the Early – Middle Islamic Periods (Friedrich Weigel, Mustafa Ahmad, Stefanie Janke & Arnulf Hausleiter)

Once a thriving commercial city on the Syrian pilgrimage route, the ruins of Qurh (modern al-Mabiyat), ca. 19km southeast of Al-Ula (Medina Province, Saudi Arabia), represent an extraordinary archaeological archive. The Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute, funded by the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), completed a first 2-year phase of archaeological excavations within a multidisciplinary project. Whereas previous investigations by the Department of Antiquities (1984–1985) and the King Saud University (2004–2019) exposed a large residential area, the new excavations focused on different functional contexts within the settlement and on the stratigraphy of the site. As a preliminary result, the largest extension of the urban settlement, based on the pottery record can be dated to the 10th–11th centuries CE.

Thereafter, Qurh was apparently abandoned. A pottery kiln provides evidence for a 11th century production employing a local fabric, while contemporaneously imported materials from Syria, Iraq, Egypt and China are attested. This cultural diversity is accompanied by social differentiation as displayed by funerary architecture among inhumation graves.

Whereas this flourishing period of Qurh coincides with contemporary historical accounts, the texts also refer to an important settlement in the centuries before. Contrastingly, chronostratigraphic soundings indicate that the latest occupation period was founded at least to a large extent on a massive sand layer. With only very few materials attributable to the 9th century or earlier - always associated with pottery of the 10th–11th centuries, no context can be dated to the first centuries of the Early Islamic period so far. Similarly, re-used inscriptions from the pre-Islamic period indicate older occupation in the area but not necessarily at Qurh. These new findings challenge the general narrative drawn from the historical record leading to a reconsideration of the diachronic and spatial dimensions of Qurh's occupation history.

An Umayyad/Abbasid Elite Residence in Northwest Arabia: New Excavations on the Early Islamic Monumental Building of Dadan (Alexia Rosak, Jérôme Rohmer, Julie Monchamp, Hervé Monchot, Elora Chambraud, Fabien Lesguer & Abdulrahman Alsuhaibani)

The site of Dadan (mod. al-Khuraybah), in the al-Ula valley (northwest Saudi Arabia), is mostly known for its pre-Islamic remains, but it also includes a significant Early Islamic component composed of a monumental building and a small settlement. Between 2007 and 2011, a partial excavation of the monumental building by King Saud University clarified its layout (a c. 50 x 50 m trapezoid with side and corner buttresses and a monumental gate in the south), provided broad chronological evidence on its period of

use (the Early Islamic period) and led to interpret it as a fortress. From 2020 to 2023, however, as part of a new archaeological project on Dadan led by CNRS on behalf of RCU and AFALULA (the Dadan Archaeological Project), new excavations were undertaken on this building, leading to a general reassessment of its function, organization and chronology. The excavations combined a large-scale surface strip (to further clarify the layout of the building) and deep test pits in selected rooms (to understand its functional organization and chronology). Based on the pottery evidence and on a series of radiocarbon dates, a sequence of occupation spanning about four centuries, from the late 7th/8th to the 11th/early 12th cent. CE, has been established. The results also lead to question the defensive function of the building, as clear domestic and agropastoral components were identified, together with an assemblage of relatively valuable artefacts. The layout of this monumental building is to some extent reminiscent of the so-called “Desert castles”, that flourished during the Umayyad period in Bilad al-Sham and served as palatial residences. Indeed, the fine imported vessels from the “Samara horizon”, as well as the diversity of faunal remains (including many species of fish) and botanical species, suggest at first sight a relatively high standard of living.

Jumeirah Research Project – Preliminary Results of the Study on the Abbasid Settlement in the UAE (Karol Juchniewicz, Agnieszka Lic, Mansur Boreik & Hassan Zein)

Jumeirah is the largest and yet still the most unknown Abbasid site in the UAE. Excavated for more than 50 years, it is open to tourists and selected finds are displayed in the local museum. Academically, however, it remains poorly understood, and virtually not published. In 2024, a joint team of researchers from the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences launched a new project with the

intention to target these issues. During its first study seasons it is focusing on documenting two major groups of objects – stucco decoration of buildings and pottery as well as on the architectural documentation of existing structures. In this presentation, some preliminary outcomes will be outlined: the possible redating of the earliest phase of occupation from the 9th/10th centuries into a slightly earlier period, and the evidence for the cultural relationships with the major urban centres of the Gulf in the Abbasid period. Presented will be also observations on the morphology of the settlement and its urban characteristics.

The Islamic Mining Sites Project: Excavations in al-Ma‘malah and al-‘Ablā’, Southwest Saudi Arabia (Abdullah Alzahrani)

The mining sites project conducted by Saudi Heritage Commission aims to (1) register all the ancient mining sites in Saudi Arabia, (2) shed light on their roles in history, (3) understand urban planning of ancient mining settlements, (4) collect information on mining methods and tools, (5) rehabilitate the sites to introduce old civilisations, and (6) invest in old mining sites. In the first stage of the project, two significant early Islamic mining sites in southwest Saudi Arabia, al-Ma‘malah (al-Bāhah Province) and al-‘Ablā’ (‘Asīr Province), were selected for excavations. Al-Ma‘malah, located ca. 30 km from the old trade route, was an extensive commercial and gold mining centre whose foundation dates back to the pre-Islamic period. It consists of 100 houses with a street 6 m wide from north to south. Meanwhile, al-‘Ablā’ served as a centre for copper smelting activities, as well as a focal point for commerce and agriculture. Located on the incense route, its economic activities seem to have started in the pre-Islamic period. The excavation works in both sites yielded many archaeological features related to mining activities dating back to the Abbasid period (7th to 10th century CE). The architectural remains exhibit excellent preservation conditions,

including walls of trimmed granite, bricks, and buttresses to protect walls from falling. On some floors and walls, partial traces of plastering were observed. Some buildings contain warehouses, *tannūr* ovens, basins, and underground water reservoirs and places to store tools. In the centre of the al-‘Ablā’ site, a mosque measuring 28.86 m by 22.30 m was discovered. Excavated objects from both sites comprise fragments of various glazed and unglazed pottery, glassware, stoneware (steatite lamps, cooking pots, etc., some with carved decorations), metalware, stone tools (querns, pestles of various shapes, etc.), and metal tools, some of which showing the intense mining activities.

Revealing Islamic Funerary Practices in Medieval Ethiopia (10th-16th Century): New Inputs from the ERC Project HornEast's Fieldwork (Simon Dorso)

Over the past two decades, Islamic archaeology in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa experienced a new impetus driven by the exploration of several regions in the framework of international research programs. One such initiative, the ERC project HornEast (2018-2023) brought together French and Ethiopian historians and archaeologists to conduct extensive campaigns of surveys and excavations in the northern (Tigray) and eastern (Somali) regions of Ethiopia. This resulted in the discovery of several medieval sites with an important funerary dimension and shed light on the long-distance connections between Muslim communities of inland Ethiopia and remote territories of the Islamic world. It also allows to reflect on the singular trajectories of Islam in a region partly dominated by a strong Christian kingdom and in close contacts with non-monotheistic societies. The two regions explored by the projects, from the northern highlands to the arid plains leading to the Red Sea serves to illustrate the drastically different environments in which Islam took foot prompting the medieval Muslim

communities to adopt different ways of lives while sharing common precepts and rituals.

This paper aims to present the findings from five years of fieldwork with a focus on Islamic funerary practices. It will delve into the chronological, geographical, and archaeological context in which Islamic funerary areas developed as well as the great variety of funerary structures evidenced in Ethiopia. Additionally, it will engage a discussion on the burial and post burial customs documented through excavations. Three primary facets of the funerary practices will be explored: 1) the inner organisation of the graves and the placement of the deceased body, 2) the selected use of Arabic funerary epigraphy and, 3) the collective mourning practices such as food consumption and the deposition of pottery or other items near grave markers.

First Archaeological Insight from Fedis: Preliminary Survey Results from a Medieval Islamic Settlement Site in Eastern Ethiopia (Hussien Endris, Meftuh S. Abubaker & Habir Mohammed)

Islam has a long history in Ethiopia, beginning with its introduction in the Kingdom of Aksum around 615 CE. From the 9th century CE onward, it developed in other regions along the great Rift, allowing the emergence and consolidation of Muslim polities and sultanates around the 12th century. However, until recent times, Islamic archaeology in Ethiopia has been understudied despite its enduring influence in shaping the country's cultural and historical landscapes over centuries. This study presents the preliminary results of surveys conducted by the authors in and around the site of Melka in Fedis district located south of Harar. Fedis is mentioned in several historical written sources in Gə'əz, including the chronicle of Amdä Şəyon (14th-15th century) and narrative sources from the 19th to early 20th centuries. It stands out as one of the Islamic polities in the south-eastern region of the Rift and appears on old maps revealing

several ruined settlements south of Harar. Although regularly mentioned in the historiography, it had not been thoroughly examined until the completion of this research. The 2021 and 2022 surveys allowed the identification of various remains including the ruins of stone-built defensive wall, mosque, monumental stepwell, storage pits and burials. Material culture collected from the surface by local inhabitants was also documented for the first time. It includes a carnelian-made artifact with an Arabic inscription, beads of various kinds and pottery providing parallels with other Islamic sites in the region among many other discoveries. This pilot research has provided new archaeological insight into the medieval Islamic site of Fedis, offering a foundational understanding of its historical significance and cultural heritage. It is hoped that future work on the site will allow for a better understanding of the Islamization process and the condition of emergence of the medieval Muslim principalities of Ethiopia.

Research results:

Iran, Central Asia & Iraqi Kurdistan

Archaeology of the Ancient Mining and Smelting in the Central Part of Tabas Country, on the Edge of Loot Desert (Hassan Hashemi Zarjabad, Abed Taghavi & Zabihollah Masoudi)

Tabas County in Southern Khorasan province is one of the regions that have high capacities in terms of mining and metallurgy studies, and compared with the other regions of Iran, this region is unknown. The abundance of smelting areas and accumulated slag and the presence of mineral cavities to extract minerals in the central part of Tabas are proof of extensive mining and metal production in this region, which plays an important role in the economy and ecological sustainability of the region along with other economic activities.

Regarding the quantity and quality of the studies prepared so far on mining and metallurgy in this city, the cultural and historical capacities of this cultural area have not been introduced as they should be. Citing the results of the field method, reviewing texts and written sources related to the central part, and identifying evidence related to the metalworking industry, smelting technology, and type of ore deposit thoroughly, this study has been provided to understand better the process and cycle of ancient metalworking, which includes three stages of mining, extraction, and melting. By typological and comparative studies of discovered slag with adjacent metal centers, it seems that the composition of slag includes the main elements of iron, lead, and copper. The typological and comparative studies of slag discovered in neighboring metal centers indicate that the composition of slag includes the main elements of Iron, lead, and copper. The archaeological field studies conducted on the mines and smelting verify the fact that metallurgists in this area used open and underground methods to extract the ore, and after transferring the mineral parts to the smelting workshops and furnaces, they used the roasting method.

Herat and Its Hinterland from the 9th/10th to the Late 15th Century (Ute Franke)

While Herat is known as the political and cultural capital of the Timurids, its earlier history is largely based on historical sources and a few architectural remains. This evidence has been enriched by archaeological surveys and excavations carried out from 2004 to 2012 by the joint German-Afghan 'Ancient Herat' project, a three-part research and training programme. Excavations in the city of Herat city (2004-2010), on the citadel, in Kohandez and in the Musalla area, have documented human occupation from the mid-1st millennium BC and from the 9th/10th to the early 20th centuries. The Islamic finds, although mostly found in debris layers rather than

in stratified contexts, have provided a wealth of material culture and important new information about the pre-Timurid and Timurid city. These data have been enriched by a survey of archaeological sites and historical monuments in Herat Province (2004-2006), which lead to the discovery of a surprisingly large number of sites and of substantial quantities of surface finds, mostly pottery. This material not only provides a representative overview of the local material culture, both elite and common, and its supra-regional connections, but also offers insights into human land use in the hinterland of Herat during the 9th/10th to 15th centuries, periods poorly preserved in the capital. These data have also facilitated the contextualisation of the Herat Museum's collection and its presentation in a new permanent exhibition in the citadel, offering the general public a journey through their regional cultural history.

The lecture will summarise the results of the survey, present the main pottery types and their spatial distribution patterns, and discuss the changes that become apparent when the data are analysed in a chronological perspective. The problems and limitations of working in a large, remote and underdeveloped post-war area and the resulting constraints on interpretation will also be addressed.

New Archaeological Data from the City of Bukhara during the Samanid and Qarakhanid Periods (9th – early 13th century) (Sören W. Stark, Asan I. Torgoev, Jamal K. Mirzaakhmedov, Siroj J. Mirzaakhmedov & Vikentiy A. Parshuto)

While the city of Bukhara ranks among the major urban centers along the so-called 'Silk Roads' in Central Asia, its archaeological exploration lacks, compared to other major cities (such as Merv or Samarqand), considerably behind. This gap of knowledge is now being closed by systematic excavations conducted since 2020 by the Uzbek-American Expedition in Bukhara at a prominent spot in the

old city center immediately to the north and west of the present-day Friday mosque (*Masjid-i Kalān*) and employing cutting-edge archaeological and archaeo-scientific methods.

The results so far obtained by four annual seasons of fieldwork (a fifth one is scheduled for this spring) proofed to be a real 'game-changer' for our understanding of several periods of the rich history of the city of Bukhara. Yet, it is particularly for the time of Samanid and early Qarakhanid rule (when the city of Bukhara housed a major court and thus became a celebrated political and cultural center of the eastern Islamic world) that our excavations produced a mass of new data. These include important new information pertaining to long-standing questions on the historical topography of the city (such as the location and chronology of the city walls, the chronology and character of a major cemetery close to the city walls, or the existence of a previously unattested extramural bazaar), together with an extremely rich ceramic, glass, and paleobotanical record. Notably, our finds include several spectacular ceramic and glass imports from 10th / early 11th century Iraq (such as monochrome lusterware or millefiori glassware), raising questions about the nature of connections between Samanid/early Qarakhanid Mawarannahr and contemporary Iraq.

Landscape Dynamics in the Middle Tigris Region from the Late Sasanian to the Early Islamic Periods - Insights from the EHAS and ReLand Surveys (Mustafa Ahmad & Paola Sconzo)

As the 7th century AD dawned, the rise of Islam marked a significant moment of religious and socio-political transformation, rapidly extending its influence across vast swathes of North Africa, West and Central Asia. This phenomenon had profound consequences for local societies, albeit with considerable variations across different regions. Notably, the initial phase of conquest displayed marked regional disparities in timing and character. In peripheral regions

that have thus far received comparatively less attention from archaeological investigations and for which the potential from written sources remains still to be methodically exploited, many questions persist concerning the resultant alterations in urban landscapes, material culture, and societal structures. The Middle Tigris region is one such region.

This paper aims to explore some of the preliminary results of two survey projects undertaken in the northernmost reaches of Iraqi Kurdistan, namely EHAS (Eastern Ḥabur Archaeological Survey) led by Tübingen University and ReLand (Resurfacing Landscapes of the Mosul Dam Reservoir) project of Palermo University. Focusing on the transition from the Late Sasanian to the Islamic period (600-800 AD), it examines shifts in settlement dynamics, land use patterns, infrastructure development, and transformations in material culture. These observations are subsequently placed into context alongside discoveries from neighbouring areas, contributing to a deeper understanding of overarching historical narratives.

Material Culture and Settlement Patterns in Northern Iraq during the Middle Islamic Period (11th – 15th cent.). Results from the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project (Valentina Vezzoli)

This contribution presents the results achieved in the framework of the archaeological projects 'Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project' (LoNAP, University of Udine), designed to study the natural and cultural landscape of a large area north-east of Mosul, in the governorate of Dohuk (Kurdistan Iraq) and 'Land behind Mosul Project' (University Ca' Foscari of Venice), focused more specifically on the history of the settlement during the Islamic period. Specifically, this paper will discuss the features of the occupation during the Middle Islamic period (11th to 15th cent.), providing new data regarding the distribution of settlement, the exploitation of infrastructure and the nature of the ceramic materials collected

during the survey. The diagnostic ceramic assemblage attributed to this period, which enabled the identification of settlements, will be presented in detail. These elements will make it possible to highlight the role of the hinterland of Mosul, which was the main administrative and political centre of the region, during the Middle Islamic period and to propose a general framework on the management of rural areas. The paper will also provide specific attention to the chronological evaluation of the archaeological record for this region, which is still little known as far as its more recent history is concerned.

From Beyond the Grave: Reconstructing the Historical and Social Context of a Micro-Region in Light of a Cemetery Site (Fruzsina Alexandra Németh)

The study of cemeteries is essential for interpreting archaeological cultures as they reflect not only the religious and belief systems of a community, but also its cultural characteristics and social structure. This holds true even in the Islamic period. However, the strict burial rules of the Islamic religion, the absence of grave goods, and the largely uniform characteristics of the tombs often limit the detailed study of rural sites, providing little additional information beyond what is available from written sources and settlement excavations. Nevertheless, in certain areas, geographical features, historical events, the fragmentary nature of written sources, and the influence of local traditions endow these cemeteries with considerable scientific value. They can augment our incomplete knowledge of the historical and social relations of less well-known regions.

One such area lies between the high ranges of the Zagros Mountains, where the settlement hill of Grdi Tle resides. The earliest known Islamic part of this site is a cemetery excavated on the eastern slope of the hill, covering an area of about 50 square meters. The 53 graves identified here suggest that the entire area may have contained

more than a thousand burials. Preliminary investigations indicate that at least three thicker layers of graves can be isolated, which, based on the analysis of two radiocarbon samples, can be dated between the 11th and 17th centuries. Due to the site's position and nature, as well as the complete lack of written sources, a detailed evaluation of the cemetery, the identification of its periods, and the study of changes in the use of the cemetery, in addition to the history of the site and the nature of the local population, may unlock the door to the medieval and early modern history of the Kurdish-inhabited area. Beyond the fundamental issues of cemetery analysis, such as gender and age distribution, diseases and deaths, and social contexts, broader questions regarding the ethnicity of the groups living in the region, the coexistence of Islamic rites and local beliefs, and the impact of historical-political changes on the population and their way of life can also be addressed.

Research results:

Egypt, the Levant & the Iberian Peninsula

Arabic-Muslim Graffiti and the Archaeology of a Monastic Site: Dayr Anba Hadra at Aswan in Upper Egypt (Ralph Bodenstein)

This paper deals with a central aspect of a project that lies at the intersection of Christian/Coptic and Islamic archaeology in Egypt: the Arabic-Muslim graffiti at the Monastery of Anba Hadra (a.k.a. St. Simeon's Monastery) on the west bank of the Nile at Aswan. The project started out in 2013 as a cooperation between the German Archaeological Institut, Cairo Department, and the Department of Egyptology/Coptology at Freie Universität Berlin, with the aim of systematically documenting and studying the vast corpus of both Coptic and Arabic visitor inscriptions covering the walls of this long abandoned, but still impressively well-preserved monastic complex.

While the project soon expanded into including the building-archaeological study of important structures of the monastery (e.g. the church and a workshop area), the documented Arabic-Muslim inscriptions surprisingly turned out to comprise the oldest dated inscriptions in the monastery, preserved from the early 4th/10th century onward, and began to play an unexpectedly crucial role: They help the building archaeologists to establish *termini ante quem* for dates of construction and buildings phases, and they throw an entirely new light on questions regarding the history and changing functions of the monastery – not just as home to a monastic community, but as a point of attraction for a variety of visitors, including Muslims from the region and from as far afield as Bilad al-Sham and Iraq. The paper will give a brief introduction into the project and present selected examples of inscriptions and their implications for reconstructing the otherwise elusive history of this major monastic site in Upper Egypt.

Early Islamic Cemetery on Kom el-Dikka in Egyptian Alexandria: Testing the Revised Chronology in the Field (Robert Mahler & Magdalena Ostrowska)

The early Islamic cemetery at the Kom el-Dikka archaeological site has been studied since the 1960s as a consequence of the discovery and investigation of a group of late Roman public buildings. After the Arab conquest these buildings fell into ruin and were buried under the extensive Islamic cemetery. Its chronology has been updated a few times, however the three-layer division into the Upper, Middle, and Lower necropolises adopted early in the history of the research at the site (Kubiak 1967: *Bulletin De La Société Archéologique d'Alexandrie*, 42, 47–80) has not been questioned until recently. The most up-to-date comprehensive publication about the cemetery (Mahler 2021) challenged the division into three general chronological phases, instead recognizing only two of them: the

Lower Necropolis dated to the 9th–10th centuries CE and the Upper Necropolis comprising of graves from the 11th–12th centuries CE. Nevertheless, the revised chronology of the necropolis was simply a result of a critical analysis of the available documentation. We now have the opportunity to test this in the field.

We anticipate that the excavation area, encompassing 5.5 ares, is large enough to enable an evaluation of the new division and allow more precise dating. The use of modern 3D documentation techniques should facilitate the division between subsequent layers and make any interpretation of the complex relations between box-graves that cut through each other easier. To make the situation even more difficult to interpret, we also anticipate the presence of numerous simple pit-graves scattered all over the place on every level. We intend to present the current results of the ongoing excavation and discuss the most important discoveries concerning chronology of the site. This research is funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, 022/47/D/HS3/02162.

The hinterland of Petra in the Islamic Period: Recent Results from a Survey of the *Late Petra Project* (Micaela Sinibaldi)

The purpose of the *Late Petra Project* is to reconstruct the landscape of Petra in the Islamic period, which followed Petra's urban phase. As part of this overall project, in October 2023, a survey has been carried out in the area around Baydha, in the Petra hinterland. The purpose was to reach a deeper understanding of the landscape around the village of *Islamic Baydha*, where excavations have been conducted since 2014. Here, the occupation of the village was recently dated to covering the period of the 11th-14th centuries, when one of the two mosques discovered served a community of at least 300-400 people, therefore revealing that the village was of a considerable size and significance. In the 12th century, the Franks were controlling this specific area of Baydha, in which they had a

great strategic and economic interest. As a more general aim, the purpose was also to contribute to reconstruct the broader landscape of the Baydha area, where there is the unique opportunity to investigate the most significant and, at the same time, accessible evidence of Islamic-period settlement for the Petra region.

The surface survey, integrated with photogrammetry and remote sensing, has shown the presence of a large number of sites of the Islamic period, so far undetected by earlier surveys, in addition to the phenomenon of the abundant reuse of earlier structures, thus reflecting a trend already encountered in the Petra valley itself. The conclusions of the survey imply that settlement in the hinterland of Petra in the Islamic period was far more significant than formerly thought, despite the historical period being relatively dry. The population, largely based on agriculture, was mainly concentrated in the middle heights of the mountain, near the springs. Among the structures detected are farms, shrines, fields, water management systems, terraced fields and fortified posts, in addition to villages of various size.

Field F103 Revisited: A New Analysis of the 'Abbasid Family Qasr Complex at al-Humayma, Southern Jordan (Ian W.N. Jones)

From 1992 to 2002, the Humayma Excavation Project excavated a modest palatial structure in Field F103 at the site of al-Humayma in southern Jordan. Early on, the excavators recognized that this structure should be identified as the qasr and mosque complex described in Arabic historical sources as having been built at the site by the 'Abbasid family. Some material from these excavations, notably the ivory panels discovered in the “Fresco Room,” has received attention from Islamic archaeologists, but the excavations themselves have not been fully published, and questions remains about the chronology and stratigraphy of the structure. This paper presents results of an ongoing project to analyze and fully publish

the Field F103 excavations, including the ceramics, small finds, and stratigraphy. This analysis supports the original excavators' argument for an early 8th (or late 7th) century AD foundation but complicates our understanding of the site's occupation after 750 AD. Rather than an abandonment and later reoccupation of the structure, renewed analysis demonstrates continuous use, with distinct peaks and valleys of intensity, from the early 8th century to the 11th century AD. These results raise questions about the site's function as a regional center during the 'Abbasid period that this paper will begin to answer and contribute to recent discussions of settlement during the late 10th and 11th centuries, until recently a very poorly known period in the archaeology of southern Jordan and adjacent regions.

The Ceramic Repertoire of Ayyubid Jerusalem Reconsidered: Local Production, Regional Exchange, and Typo-Chronology in Light of Recent Research (Benjamin Dolinka)

For the scholar attempting to study the ceramic record of Jerusalem, there is currently no adequate synthesis for the Ayyubid period (1187–1250 CE). This is due to the fact that, until recently, studies on the material culture of the Holy City have focused mainly on earlier historical periods, while the era following the Islamic conquest has received rather short shrift. With regard to the pottery corpora from Ayyubid Jerusalem in particular, much of it has been ascribed to either the earlier Crusader period or the later Mamluk era. Research on the Ayyubid ceramics of Jerusalem region has progressed rather slowly as a discipline, with only a few publications (e.g. Avissar and Stern 2005) addressing the topic. In addition, pottery studies from excavations in Jerusalem published during the past four decades (e.g. Tushingham 1985) have complemented the existing works and provided a better understanding of the local vessel forms from Jerusalem during the Ayyubid period. Finally, recent excavations in

the Maghāriba Quarter (2013–2015) from the Old City of Jerusalem have provided important evidence for the Ayyubid Period from clean stratigraphic contexts. The ceramic material from this fieldwork was discovered in two large buildings separated by an alley; inside these buildings were a series of sealed floors (Strata IVa–IVb), dating from the founding of the Maghāriba Quarter by al-Malik al-Afḍal (1193 CE) until the destruction of the city walls and fortifications by al-Mu'aẓẓam 'Īsā in (1219 CE), i.e. roughly a quarter of a century. The nature of this context can therefore be likened unto a 'Pompeii-style' deposit, which represents a brief snapshot of Ayyubid Jerusalem, frozen in time. This paper will present a summary of the Ayyubid ceramic evidence from the Maghāriba Quarter, including discussion of the vessel forms and ware types, local production, regional exchange and typo-chronological considerations.

Excavating and Interpreting Country Estates: Research at al-Rummaniya (Córdoba) and Monteagudo (Murcia) (Felix Arnold & Julio Navarro Palazón)

Country estates (*almunias*) have increasingly drawn attention as places of economic, social and political significance and cultural innovation. From 2006 to 2014 the German Archaeological Institute investigated al-Rummaniyya (Córdoba), the estate of a finance minister of the 10th century, and since 2012 the Escuela de Estudios Árabes has documented the Agdal in Marrakesh) and the Cuba Soprana in Palermo. Research is now being continued within the 3-year joint project “Palatial Architecture in Medieval Country Estates: Transmission of Models from Antiquity to the Renaissance (ARQMUNIA)”. Field work in 2023 focused on the *almunia* of Ibn Mardanish (1143-1172) in Monteagudo (Murcia), where an extensive garden area and an adjoining large water basin have been identified based on visible structure and aerial photographs. In the past season a large audience hall was excavated at one end of the

garden, positioned between two water basins, as well as the entrance area. The field work at these sites has provided data on distinctive models of country estates of the 10th–14th century, their prototypes and functions, as well as their prolonged period of use and remodeling, while at the same time raising methodological questions of how to study gardens through archaeological and archaeobotanical means. The paper will focus on current research questions, methods and aims.

Ruined Houses in a Deserted Andalusi City: Madīna Balaghî (Pla d'Almatà, Balaguer, Spain) (Guillem Alcolea, Helena Kirchner, Carme Alòs, Eva Solanes, Marta Monjo & María Isabel Molina)

The archaeological site of Pla d'Almatà (Balaguer, Lleida, NE of Spain) is the deserted city of Madīna Balaghí, located in the so-called Upper Frontier of Al-Andalus. Its 27 hectares are delimited by a wall to the west and east and by River Segre cliffs to the east and south of it. Islamic occupation of Balaguer can be traced back to the beginnings of the 8th century and continued until the start of the 12th century. The settlement fell under the rule of count Ermengol VI of Urgell in 1105, after a long siege, that resulted in the expulsion of muslim population. In the 1990s, four houses were excavated, and between 2022 and 2023, another one was carried out. The study of materials recovered from the four houses, plus the one excavated in recent years, has provided a significant opportunity for the scientific analysis of the life patterns and abandonment processes of an al-Andalus city. Through the meticulous examination of artifacts, architectural features, and the spatial arrangement of the remains, it has been possible to deduce aspects related to the economic and daily activities of its last inhabitants until their forced expulsion at the beginning of the 12th century.

Manurqa: Rural Islamic Medieval Archaeology on the Balearic Island of Menorca, Spain (Amalia Pérez-Juez, Alexander Smith & Kathleen Forste)

The Talayotic sites on Menorca were reused in the medieval period by groups of Andalusian peasants who arrived after the Islamic official conquest in 902 A.D. The modifications made to these Iron Age sites reflect a typical Muslim architectural pattern of house construction that follows cultural, religious, and social practices, specifically as rural *alquerías*. Access to natural resources, cultivation areas, and readily available building materials led to the Muslim settlement and significant changes to the prehistoric sites' urban fabric. The Christian conquest of 1287 AD resulted in a clearly intentional erasure of the memory of the Muslim inhabitants. Islamic heritage was buried, silenced, or destroyed after the 13th century. Nevertheless, nearly four centuries of Muslim control of the island has left a profound imprint on Menorca's landscape. Our team, the Menorca Archaeological Project (MAP), investigates the occupational episodes of Iron Age settlements throughout time with special attention to the Muslim medieval period. MAP is an international and interdisciplinary team that focuses on this "forgotten" part of history to better understand the Muslim rural communities on Menorca. Through the combination of archaeological, spatial, ceramic, faunal, botanical, micromorphological and historical evidence, we take a household approach to understanding everyday life in farming villages. In this paper we present the results of our project's current work, examining the site of Torre d'en Galmés, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage settlement boasting a chronology spanning 2500 years. The repopulation of sites like Torre d'en Galmés during the Islamic period reflect shifting identities and shifting cultural values, which are visible in the way they understood social and domestic spatial dynamics. This paper will discuss how our project has uncovered the daily life and urban fabric of a well-preserved and under-studied *alquería* atop of the Iron Age site.



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