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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Rethinking Rurality Taking a Non-Urban Perspective on the Archaeology of Villages

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Abstract

Urbanism has long been a major research topic in ancient Western Asia studies. This interest is reflected in the concentration of archaeological fieldwork on large urban sites and the primacy given to epigraphic sources in understanding ancient urban life. Until recently, research mostly emphasized the function of cities, their layout, issues of neighbourhoods and more general social and economic interactions in the urban setting. Village life was viewed, in comparison, as relatively unproblematic and depending on the urban centres. Since Christaller's Central Place Theory, Childe's Urban Revolution and the Chicago School, the role of smaller settlements has been theorized as the production of sufficient food to feed populations in the city. The rise of centralized political power, specialist artisans, and a host of services ranging from stonecutter's to scribes in the cities was predicated on a secure supply of surplus grain, livestock, and other foodstuffs produced in the hinterland of dependent villages. Recent landscape surveys across Western Asia, employing satellite imagery, drones, and other remote sensing technologies have provided valuable new datasets for rethinking rurality, a research topic of growing interest globally. The significance of small agrarian and other non-urban sites for understanding of regional and cross-regional settlement systems has become widely appreciated by archaeologists lately. New excavations dealing with small villages, hamlets, and farmsteads are providing a wealth of data, and some surprises, to our preconceived notions of what village life was like in antiquity. This workshop brings together scholars working across Western Asia to compare results, and reconsider rurality from a non-urban perspective from the 3rd mill. BCE to the 1st mill. CE. Eventually, we aim at exploring the multi-faceted world of rural settlements, and the way their communities were engaging with their own landscape, reinforcing their own socio-economic identity, and relating to urban-like centres and core areas

Keywords

Rurality, Archaeology, SW Asia, Landscape , Social Organization

Program

Rocco Palermo (Bryn Mawr) - The Archaeology of Subalternity in the Plain of Erbil. Excavations at Gird-i Matrab

Tim Matney (Ohio @Akron) - The Sebittu Project and the Rural Assyria

Ivana Puljiz (Freiburg) - Excavations at Muqable (TBD)

Cristina Tonghini (University of Venice) - Exploring the early Islamic Rural Worlds of North Mesopotamia. The view from the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project

Simone Muhl (DAI, Berlin) - Gird-i Shamlu, Title to be defined

Dirk Wicke (University of Frankfurt), Excavations at the Rural Site of Gird-i Qalrakh

Daniele Morandi Bonacossi (Udine), The Assyrian Rural Landscape in North Iraq

Jason Ur (Harvard) - Theoretical Approaches to Rurality in Landscape Archaeology

Petra Creamer (Emory), The RLIM Project and the Role of Villages in the Assyrian Empire

We aim to extend the CfP via Social Media and Academic Mailing List to attract more participants. A max of 12 participants is expected.

Type of paper

Workshop