



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The Negev Transformed: The Exploitation of the Negev in Late Antiquity

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Abstract

The Roman Empire encouraged the development of arid landscapes into fertile agricultural land to feed and support their growing empire. This phenomenon can be especially seen in the southern Levant and North Africa, where arid marginal areas became flourishing settlements attracting trade and people. However, some have claimed that some regions were over-exploited, which subsequently worked in conjunction with the Justinianic Plague and the Late Antique Little Ice Age (LALIA) to cause the decline of these regions. One such contested region is the Negev desert, where several articles have raised that ecocide was a factor in the decline of the region. Using archaeological and environmental data, this presentation will argue that there was limited to no over-exploitation of the Negev during Late Antiquity. The analysis will include an evaluation of the Roman agricultural methods in the Negev desert, a review of the available data from the agricultural settlements and a re-examination of the dating of the finds.

Keywords

Late Antique Little Ice Age (LALIA), Justinianic Plague, Negev, Late Antiquity, arid environments

Session

2. Natural resources and anthropised landscapes

Type of paper

Oral presentation