



Invisible
East

A Hard Row to Hoe

LANDOWNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN
THE MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC WORLD (622-1250
CE), FROM FERGHANA TO THE FAYYUM

12 - 14 DECEMBER 2022

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE

تَجِيحُ مَا تَعَدَّمُ مِنَ الدَّرِيَا فَاثَابَتْ تَعْرِفَتْ اذْ وَبَيْنَهُ وَبِهِ ۞ مَا نَا لَذِيَتْ نَشِيحًا لَعْدُو وَمَا خَسِرَ اَوْ دَا
 لِيَجْرِي حَرْبًا وَاِنْ كَانَتْ جَرْبَةً ۞ وَهِيَ اَكْلَامُهُ بِلَفْظِهِ فَاثَابَتْ ۞ الْمَجْرِبَةُ الْاَوَّلَةُ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ مَعَى
 مَعَى لَوْنِهِ مَرَّكَانَ مَعِي وَاَبْنُ الْمَوْضِعِ زِيَارًا فَوَسَّخِنَ كُنْثُ الْبِكْرِ اِنَّهُ الْقَصِيحُ حَتَّى اَنْظُرَ مَا يَبْلُغُ اَرْبَعِ
 مَرَّادًا اَوْ شَرَابًا يَلِيحِي سِنْفَهُمْ وَبِحُلَّةٍ رَعِي الْعَيْكُ ۞ فَاَزَلَتْ كَذَلِكَ اِلَى اَنْ عَمَّ لِحْمُ يَوْمًا

فَاثَابَتْ تَعْرِفَتْ اذْ وَبَيْنَهُ وَبِهِ ۞ مَا نَا لَذِيَتْ نَشِيحًا لَعْدُو وَمَا خَسِرَ اَوْ دَا



ذَا اذْ ۞ فَاثَابَتْ تَعْرِفَتْ اذْ وَبَيْنَهُ وَبِهِ ۞ مَا نَا لَذِيَتْ نَشِيحًا لَعْدُو وَمَا خَسِرَ اَوْ دَا
 هِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ وَجَلَّ حُدُودَهُمْ مَعَى الْمَوْتِ فَيَسْتَقْبِرُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ وَيَكُونُ اِنَّهُ ذَلِكَ اَجْرُ الْاَذْ اَلْحَا
 اِنَّهٗ لَا يَابِتُ يَوْمًا ۞ نَلَا كَانَ قُرْبَ السَّلْبِ اَسْفَعُ نَفْعًا عَظِيمَةً وَبَقِيَ عَلَيْنَا اِلَى الْعِدَّةِ اَنْ
 حُلَّةً وَاَبْنُ الْمَوْضِعِ زِيَارًا فَوَسَّخِنَ كُنْثُ الْبِكْرِ اِنَّهُ الْقَصِيحُ حَتَّى اَنْظُرَ مَا يَبْلُغُ اَرْبَعِ
 يَلْعَلْ اِنَّهٗ يَتَفَعَّرُ مِنَ الْاَوْصِيَا لِشَدِيدَةِ فِيهِ الْاَبْدَانِ وَالْاَمْرَاضِ الْعَيْنِيَّةِ ۞

The Greek physician Andromachus observes some agricultural laborers.
 From BNF Arabe 2964, ps.-Galen's
 Kitāb al-diryāq,

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در بيان منسوخ حيره در بيان اولها و لحد و لقبه بالفاروق
لنا ليد هذا الورد بيان العالم الاناعي فيه هو تلكه اسباب
في بعض ضياع الموضع المعروف بورد و نوسر كذا نون كذا
فان اذا فرغوا من كتابه اجمل لهم من على الزمان و القبح في العباد



و كذا قد خرجت الالبسة و القبايل من بين الاربعة
فان هذا ابيو ابي نبي قد نطق و نطقه و قالوا انما في
من و صبره فهو الذي يراى و سقوة من ذلك الشرايط
سقوة سنة الجوار الخارج و حرمه الجدل الداخل فلم يزل حتى
فان الحنة ارض العسر و القهر

The Invisible East programme

Based at the University of Oxford, Invisible East is the first single, coherent research programme dedicated to the study of the Islamicate East, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, between the 8th and 13th century.

We transcribe, translate and analyse some of the oldest texts written in New Persian, Judeo-Persian, Arabic, Bactrian, Sogdian, Khotanese and Middle Persian, in order to shed new light on political, financial and legal infrastructures, and religious diversity of the region.

A Hard Row to Hoe conference

The conference examines landownership and the organisation of agricultural production in the medieval Islamic world (ca. 622-1250 CE), from North Africa to Central Asia: the economic relationships between cultivators, landlords, and the state, and how these changed and varied over time and space.

We will address the following questions:

- **Where and to what extent can we speak of private landownership in the medieval Islamic world?**
- **To what extent did landlords and the state involve themselves in agricultural production, and why?**
- **What obligations did cultivators have to the state and their landlords – tax, rent, or otherwise?**

Through this conference, we seek to bring about communication and collaboration across traditional disciplinary boundaries (e.g., history, philology, Islamic Studies, and Iranian Studies) to enable viewing these questions in a transregional and comparative perspective.

THE CONFERENCE ORGANISERS,

AREZOU AZAD
THOMAS BENFEY
HUGH KENNEDY





A view of the Afghan countryside.
Photo by Ninara



Speakers

- **DR AREZOU AZAD** (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)
- **PROF GIDEON AVNI** (ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY AND THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM)
- **DR THOMAS BENFEY** (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)
- **DR LORENZO BONDIOLI** (PETERHOUSE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)
- **PROF SIMONE CRISTOFORETTI** (CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE)
- **DR OFIR HAIM** (THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM)
- **PROF HUGH KENNEDY** (SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)
- **PROF AHMAD KHAN** (THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO)
- **MS ASEEL NAJIB** (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY)
- **MR MICHAEL O'NEAL** (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)
- **PROF PETER SARRIS** (TRINITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)
- **MR MATTEO SESANA** (CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE)



Programme

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER 2022
19:00

INFORMAL GATHERING AT A LOCAL
PUB, DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED



MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2022
12:00 - 13:00

LUNCH

RAINOLDS ROOM, CORPUS CHRISTI

FOR SPEAKERS AND CHAIRS

12:30 - 13:30

REGISTRATION

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2022

13:30 - 14:00

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

DR THOMAS BENFEY (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD),

DR AREZOU AZAD (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD),

PROF HUGH KENNEDY (SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)

14:00 - 15:30

**SESSION 1: LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE ORGANIZATION
OF PRODUCTION I**

CHAIR: DR REZA HUSEINI

(KING'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

PROF PETER SARRIS

(TRINITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

LANDOWNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT ON THE EVE OF
ISLAM

DR OFIR HAIM

(THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM)

LANDOWNERSHIP AND LANDHOLDING PATTERNS IN
EARLY GHAZNAVID BAMMIYAN

15:30 - 15:45

COFFEE BREAK

AUDITORIUM AND FOYER, CORPUS CHRISTI

MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2022
15:45 - 17:15

KEYNOTE LECTURE
AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

PROF SIMONE CRISTOFORETTI AND MR MATTEO SESANA
(CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE)
DISTORTED ISMAILIS AND UNSEEN CASTLES: HOW
MOVING OUR VIEWPOINTS CLEARS MIRAGES

17:15 - 18:15

RECEPTION
RAINOLDS ROOM, CORPUS CHRISTI

19:30

DINNER
AL-SHAMI RESTAURANT,
25 WALTON CRES, OXFORD

FOR SPEAKERS AND CHAIRS



TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2022

09:00 - 10:30

SESSION 2: LANDOWNING AND THE STATE I

CHAIR: PROF MARIE LEGENDRE
(UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH)

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

DR THOMAS BENFEY

(UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

**LAND TAXES IN THE MIDDLE PERSIAN DOCUMENTS FROM
EARLY ISLAMIC IRAN**

PROF HUGH KENNEDY

(SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)

**QAṬĪ'Ā LANDHOLDING AND THE NATURE OF PRIVATE
LANDED ESTATES IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD**

10:30 - 10:45

COFFEE BREAK

AUDITORIUM AND FOYER, CORPUS CHRISTI

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2022

10:45 - 12:15

**SESSION 3: LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE ORGANIZATION
OF PRODUCTION II**

CHAIR: PROF FANNY BESSARD
(TRINITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

PROF GIDEON AVNI

(ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY AND THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY
OF JERUSALEM)

**CHANGING PATTERNS OF LAND TENURE, WATER
MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN
EARLY ISLAMIC PALESTINE - SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL
OBSERVATIONS**

DR AREZOU AZAD

(UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

**FARMERS AND TAXES IN THE BAMİYAN PAPERS (12TH
AND 13TH-CENTURY CE)**

12:15 - 13:15

LUNCH

RAINOLDS ROOM, CORPUS CHRISTI

FOR SPEAKERS AND CHAIRS

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2022

13:30 - 15:00

SESSION 4: LAND AND THE LAW

CHAIR: PROF CHRISTOPHER MELCHERT
(PEMBROKE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

MS ASEEL NAJIB

(COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY)

**CONQUEST, FISCALITY, AND LAND TAXATION: THE LEGAL
THOUGHT OF AL-ḤASAN B. ṢĀLIḤ**

PROF AHMAD KHAN

(THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO)

**LAWS OF THE LAND: KHURASAN AND EGYPT, 8TH-10TH
CENTURIES**

19:00

DINNER

SCR DINING ROOM, CORPUS CHRISTI

FOR SPEAKERS AND CHAIRS



WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022

09:00 - 10:30

SESSION 5: LANDOWNING AND THE STATE II

CHAIR: DR HENGAMEH ZIAI
(SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

MR MICHAEL O'NEAL

(INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)

**WERE THE GHŪRĪS NOMADS? MOUNTAIN PASTORALISM
AND SETTLEMENTS IN MEDIEVAL GHŪR**

DR LORENZO BONDIOLI

(PETERHOUSE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF STATE LAND IN EGYPT,
800-1100 CE**

10:30 - 10:45

COFFEE BREAK

AUDITORIUM AND FOYER, CORPUS CHRISTI

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022

10:45 - 11:45

CONCLUDING REMARKS

AUDITORIUM, CORPUS CHRISTI

DR THOMAS BENFEY (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD),

DR AREZOU AZAD (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)



Programme overview

DAY 1: 12 DECEMBER 2022	DAY 2: 13 DECEMBER 2022	DAY 3: 14 DECEMBER 2022
<p>12:00-13:00 Lunch Rainolds Room – Corpus Christi</p> <p>12:30-13:30 Registrations Auditorium – Corpus Christi</p> <p>13:30-14:00 Introductory remarks Auditorium – Corpus Christi Arezou Azad, Thomas Benfey, Hugh Kennedy</p> <p>14:00-15:30 Session 1: Land Management and the Organization of Production I Chair: Dr Reza Huseini Auditorium – Corpus Christi</p> <p>Speakers: Prof Peter Sarris Dr Ofir Haim</p>	<p>9:00-10:30 Session 2: Landowning and the State I Chair: Prof Marie Legendre Auditorium – Corpus Christi</p> <p>Speakers: Dr Thomas Benfey Prof Hugh Kennedy</p> <p>10:30-10:45 Coffee break Auditorium and Foyer – Corpus Christi</p> <p>10:45-12:15 Session 3: Land Management and the Organization of Production II Chair: Prof Fanny Bessard Auditorium – Corpus Christi</p> <p>Speakers: Prof Gideon Avni Dr Arezou Azad</p> <p>12:15-13:15 Lunch Rainolds Room – Corpus Christi</p>	<p>9:00-10:30 Session 5: Landowning and the State II Chair: Dr Hengameh Ziai Auditorium – Corpus Christi</p> <p>Speakers: Mr Michael O’Neal Dr Lorenzo Bondioli</p> <p>10:30-10:45 Coffee break Auditorium and Foyer – Corpus Christi</p> <p>10:45-11:45 Concluding remarks Auditorium – Corpus Christi Arezou Azad and Thomas Benfey</p>

15:30-15:45 Coffee break

Auditorium and Foyer – Corpus Christi

13:30-15:00 Session 4: Land and the Law

Chair: Prof Christopher Melchert
Auditorium – Corpus Christi

Speakers:

Ms Aseel Najib
Prof Ahmad Khan

15:45-17:15 Keynote lecture

Auditorium – Corpus Christi

Prof Simone Cristoforetti and Mr Matteo
Sesana

**Distorted Ismailis and Unseen Castles: How
Moving our Viewpoints Clears Mirages**

19:00 Dinner (Speakers and chairs)

SCR Dining Room, Corpus Christi

17:15-18:15 Reception

Rainolds Room – Corpus Christi

19:30 Dinner (Speakers and chairs)

Al-Shami Restaurant, 25 Walton Cres, Oxford



A visual work from the Diwan of Azeri poet Nimetullah Kışveri, 15th-16th century. Istanbul Research Institute archive. Photo by Matt Hanson



Abstracts

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LAND TENURE, WATER MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN EARLY ISLAMIC PALESTINE - SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

PROF GIDEON AVNI

SESSION 3, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 10:45

A detailed mapping of the Late Antique and Early Islamic Palestinian countryside, which has been conducted in the past thirty years, provides some new observations on changing patterns of land tenure, water management, and agricultural production. The contribution of regional surveys, large number of excavations in settlements of the countryside, and the development of new dating technologies, enable a refined view on changes in the structural organizations and ownership patterns of agricultural fields. In addition, recent archaeobotanical data show a penetration of new plant species to the region, leading to gradual but significant changes in the dining habits of local populations.

This paper will present several regional case studies, arguing that these changes, although spanning over two centuries, were related to settlement processes which were influenced by political events and environmental impacts. The changes in land tenure and water management were diverse: some regions present a dramatic shift between the mid-sixth and the early ninth centuries, which include the introduction of new settlements and water management technologies, while other regions show continuity of settlements in the countryside, stability in the traditional parcellation of agricultural lands, and preservation of existing water management technologies. For example, the agricultural regime of the Negev Highlands presents a continuity of previous land tenure, while the northern Negev, the Jordan and the Arabah Valleys show the introduction of new settlement patterns and land parcellation, reflecting the impact of the new Islamic rule. Other regions in the Near East, such as the Jordanian desert and the northern Syrian massif show similar preservation and transformation patterns in land tenure.

FARMERS AND TAXES IN THE BAMIYAN PAPERS (12TH AND 13TH-CENTURY CE)

DR AREZOU AZAD

SESSION 3, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 10:45

In this paper, I examine the hitherto unpublished New Persian documents written in the 12th-13th centuries that are under publication by Invisible East researchers and partners. As highlighted by A.K.S. Lambton in the 1960s and '80s, fiqh and administrative literature make explicit mentions of land and its management, and to a much lesser degree, the organization of production in the medieval Islamicate world. But, so far, we have lacked any falsifiable mass of documentation that allows us to understand how land economics manifest themselves in practice in the eastern Islamicate lands. In this paper, I discuss a set of documents from which I extrapolate information on how rural estates in one part of medieval Afghanistan were administered and taxed. My paper aims, in particular, to: identify which government authorities were involved in rural administration, the levels of centralization versus the devolution of authority to the local levels, the oversight mechanisms that were in place to ensure accountability amongst officials acting in remote areas, and the mechanisms that were in place to facilitate the flow of goods and money between the central (urban) and rural levels.

LAND TAXES IN THE MIDDLE PERSIAN DOCUMENTS FROM EARLY ISLAMIC IRAN

DR THOMAS BENFEY

SESSION 2, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 09:00

The seventh- and eighth-century Middle Persian documents from the Qom region offer a uniquely direct vista upon the organization of agricultural production on landed estates in early Islamic Iran, as well as the circulation of resources within these estates, and the complex interactions and intersections among laborers, landowners, and state officials. Along with a brief overview of the difficulties and opportunities these documents present, and the state of the field in Middle Persian documentary studies more broadly, this presentation will focus on one aspect of early Islamic economic history on which these sources may be particularly informative: how land was taxed in the early Islamic Qom region, and how and why this obligation shifted over time.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF STATE LAND IN EGYPT, 800-1100 CE

DR LORENZO BONDIOLI

SESSION 5, ON 14 DECEMBER FROM 09:00

This paper will address the hotly (if sparsely) debated issue of the role of the state in land tenure in early Islamic Egypt. Specialists of land tenure and land taxation have tended to paint the picture of a state that imposed a high degree of control

on all land. This narrative ultimately derives from the account of Mamluk-era polymath al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442), who, I will argue, imposed a distorting lens on modern scholarship. Drawing on the extant papyrus and paper documents from the period 800-1100, I will offer a new interpretation of land tenure that makes space for both private and state landownership. I will proceed to trace the history of state land, arguing that by the Fatimid period it represented a very large, if not necessarily preponderant, portion of Egyptian land. Finally, I will argue that changing patterns in the management of state land suggest that by the Fatimid period the balance of power between the state and the peasants had shifted in favor of the state, with profound implications for society at large. The political economy of state land in the period 800-1100 tells the larger story of an agrarian economy that was gradually becoming more commercialized and more socially polarized than it had been for centuries. This transforming agrarian world had new opportunities in store for those who had the means to take them, and new insecurities in store for those who did not. It is against this backdrop that we should set the rise of the 'Geniza economy' of the eleventh century—a countryside that was an increasingly unequal place where the increasingly hard toil of millions of members of the main subaltern class, the peasantry, afforded increasingly inflated profits to the few members of the landholding and mercantile elite.

LANDOWNERSHIP AND LANDHOLDING PATTERNS IN EARLY GHAZNAVID BAMMIAN

DR OFIR HAIM

SESSION 1, ON 12 DECEMBER FROM 14:00

The voluminous archive of Yehuda ben Daniel, a Jewish landowner and merchant who lived in the city of Bamiyan during the first half of the eleventh century, presents an array of texts related to his landed property in the Bamiyan area. These texts record the purchase of parcels of land in Bamiyan's hinterland and their subsequent lease to members of the rural population. By examining these documents and Yehuda ben Daniel's correspondence and ledgers, I discuss the different types of landownership and landholding patterns appearing in the archive and the significant presence of private landowners in the Bamiyan valley. In addition, I offer an analysis of the landowner-tenant relationship in the Bamiyan area, especially the obligations and rights of the landowner and the tenant and the landowner's engagement in local agricultural affairs. Finally, I raise the question of the absence of officials of the Ghaznavid state, such as tax collectors, in the archive documents.

QAṬĪ'Ā LANDHOLDING AND THE NATURE OF PRIVATE LANDED ESTATES IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD

PROF HUGH KENNEDY

SESSION 2, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 09:00

The question of private landed property in the early Islamic period is a contested area. On one hand the jurists are emphatic that conquered lands of greater Mesopotamia were to be the communal fay' of the Muslim conquerors who were to

to live of the *kharāj* taxation paid by the occupiers and workers of the lands, assumed to be non-Muslims.

In opposition to that was the clear desire of powerful people among the early Islamic elite to own private estates which they could enjoy and pass onto their families.

To accommodate the desires of the rich and powerful without undermining the basic principles of communal *fay'* the institution of the *qaṭī'a* was developed. This was land separated from the rest of the *fay'* and which was hereditary, alienable and defensible at law. It also paid a lower tax, an *'ushr* or tithe. It was in fact private property.

The discussion of *qaṭī'a* has been confused because scholars from Van Berchem on have treated it as the same as *iqṭā'*, familiar from the tenth century on whereas in fact it was radically different, the *iqṭā'* being essentially a fief, given in exchange for military or other service and not to be sold or inherited.

In this paper I will trace the origins of this institution in the land policies of Prophet Muḥammad, explain how it worked and address the problem of its disappearance in the course of the ninth century.

LAWS OF THE LAND: KHURASAN AND EGYPT, 8TH-10TH CENTURIES

PROF AHMAD KHAN

SESSION 4, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 13:30

Legal contracts and juristic works speak directly to the political nature of land resources, specific economic transactions around land, their management through agricultural resources such as water, irrigation, and cultivation. This paper studies these sources and questions to draw attention to the legal organisation of land and its attendant resources in the ninth-tenth centuries. It examines legal writings of late-ninth and tenth-century jurists, alongside documentary evidence from this period, to examine how land was regulated in early Islamic Khurasan and Egypt.

CONQUEST, FISCALITY, AND LAND TAXATION: THE LEGAL THOUGHT OF AL-ḤASAN B. ṢĀLIḤ

MS ASEEL NAJIB

SESSION 4, ON 13 DECEMBER FROM 13:30

Recent years have witnessed a refreshing uptick in interest in the Ghūrid Empire (c. 540-612/1146-1215), which has for too long remained at the margins of scholarship on the pre-modern Islamic world. During the sixth/twelfth century, the Shansabānī family became the leading clan amongst the Ghūrī tribes who inhabited the remote and mountainous region of Ghūr (located in present-day central Afghanistan), eventually bursting forth to conquer all of northern India and lay the foundations of the Delhi Sultanate. Despite their obvious historical importance, many intriguing aspects of the Ghūrid polity, such as its social and economic structures and the mechanics of Shansabānī rule, remain obscure. Fresh insights have been hampered by a paucity of written sources and a near-total lack of archaeological research in their mountain heartlands. The traditional view of the Ghūrīs based largely on literary evidence identifies them as unruly but settled

WERE THE GHŪRĪS NOMADS? MOUNTAIN PASTORALISM AND SETTLEMENTS IN MEDIEVAL GHŪR

MR MICHAEL O'NEAL

SESSION 5, ON 14 DECEMBER FROM 09:00

Recent years have witnessed a refreshing uptick in interest in the Ghūrid Empire (c. 540-612/1146-1215), which has for too long remained at the margins of scholarship on the pre-modern Islamicate world. During the sixth/twelfth century, the Shansabānī family became the leading clan amongst the Ghūrī tribes who inhabited the remote and mountainous region of Ghūr (located in present-day central Afghanistan), eventually bursting forth to conquer all of northern India and lay the foundations of the Delhi Sultanate. Despite their obvious historical importance, many intriguing aspects of the Ghūrid polity, such as its social and economic structures and the mechanics of Shansabānī rule, remain obscure. Fresh insights have been hampered by a paucity of written sources and a near-total lack of archaeological research in their mountain heartlands. The traditional view of the Ghūrīs based largely on literary evidence identifies them as unruly but settled

LANDOWNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT ON THE EVE OF ISLAM

PROF PETER SARRIS

SESSION 1, ON 12 DECEMBER FROM 14:00

This paper will explore the documentary and legal evidence for landowning and land management in the Late Antique Near East on the eve of the rise of Islam. It will focus on the organization and structure of estates, the condition of labour, and the demographic circumstances in which estates were obliged to operate in the sixth and seventh centuries. It will also raise issues of what aspects of the agrarian economy of the Early Islamic world it would be useful to know more about from a comparative perspective.





A Hard Row to Hoe

LANDOWNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC
WORLD (622-1250 CE), FROM FERGHANA TO THE FAYYUM

CONTACTS

Email: invisible_east@orinst.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk

CONFERENCE VENUE

Corpus Christi College,
Merton St,
Oxford, OX1 4JF

