

Archaeology of Mountain Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Research Strategies of Agro-Pastoralism in Upland Regions

Agro-pastoral landscapes characterize not only upland plains or irrigated areas around water courses, but they also define most mountain landscapes, sometimes considered as “marginal lands” when the territories of urban centers are concerned. However, at least a fifth of the terrestrial surface could be defined as mountain areas, hosting a fifth of the human population and providing sustenance for a much larger percentage. Bearing this in mind it is not a surprise to know that mountain areas have been transited, inhabited, exploited and conceptualized by humans since the very beginning of the species.

Due to the multiple factors and relationships involved, landscape-shaping - not only in mountain areas - is an extremely complex subject. Landscape studies are part of a wide range of disciplines such as History, Archaeology, Anthropology, Geography, Geology, Ecology, Economics, and Paleo-environmental Studies. In this research context, interdisciplinary and diachronic approaches have a great potential and they are a practical reality in nowadays research projects about mountain Landscapes.

Fieldwork developed during the last decades has changed our knowledge about the history of mountain environments. The 10th International Visiting Scholar Conference at the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology (IEMA) at the University at Buffalo will gather researchers who in different geographical areas (in both Eurasia and the Americas) have made significant contributions about land-use in mountain areas and human activities in the shaping of mountain cultural landscapes.

The discussions at the conference are centered around four main issues all papers will try to address:

- a) Archaeological record on mountain landscapes: how archaeological remains are identified and documented? The aim is to provide a common ground to discuss about the strategies used in documenting and analyzing the very particular mountain archaeological record.
- b) Paleo-environmental data in archaeological contexts and archaeological data in paleo-environmental studies: which interdisciplinary research strategies are used in the different study cases? What kind of data from paleo-botany, geomorphology and other related disciplines are used in the different projects? The aim is to provide an integrative approach to the Research on Mountain Cultural Landscapes and about the role of archaeology on interdisciplinary research groups.
- c) Anthropization of mountain landscapes: which processes are involved in the creation of agro-pastoral landscapes in mountain environments - with special attention to the role played by agriculture and herding? The aim is to provide insights on the different models of mountain cultural landscapes management.

d) Colonialism and complex societies in Mountain Landscapes: which usage and management of the mountain areas in the context of complex societies can be identified? The aim is to provide analyses of the development of specialized and intensive activities such as intensive agriculture, transhumance forest exploitation or mining linked to the development of markets, interchange and commerce.