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# CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds  
Studies

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## Panel 73

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### Medieval heritage of Iran and Afghanistan : News from the field

Considering the current limitations to access to the fieldwork, the wish of this panel is to gather authors of recent investigations undertaken in Iran and Afghanistan.

The four papers gathered in this panel propose a dialogue between different researches relating to architectural and archaeological heritage of these territories during the medieval period, in particular between the 10th and 14th centuries. These studies, and the fieldwork they require, shed new light on several medieval sites, whether at the scale of a specific architectural ensemble (Rab'-e Rashidi and Khwâja Sabz Push) or larger region (Balkh Oasis and Il-Khânid lands). They offer complementary perspectives on the history of architecture and associated material culture – in particular ceramics – of Iran and Afghanistan.

By presenting largely unpublished data, these papers aim to demonstrate the variety of their approaches, as well as the importance of sites as numerous and unknown than fragiles.

**People in charge : Aube Sandra (CNRS, UMR 8041) and Lorain Thomas (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)**

**Discussant : Grenet Frantz (Collège de France)**

#### Program

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#### **Marquis Philippe ( French archaeological delegation in Afghanistan )**

*Archaeology of Balkh and its oasis: An assessment*

Since 2003, the Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan on the initiative of R. Besenval (1947-2014) undertook the study of the Balkh oasis. During this period, research was strongly conditioned by the security situation prevailing in the area. However, significant fieldworks were implemented and their results combined with historical data or the use of aerial or satellite photos provide new elements of interpretation of this massive archaeological ensemble and its core, the city of Balkh itself.

While the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods remain barely known, our understanding of Kushan and Kushanno-Sassanid periods have well increased. The same applies for the period starting from early Islam to the establishment of the post-Timurid dynasties for which the comparison of archaeological and historical data is already proving particularly rewarding.

## **Lorain Thomas (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)**

### **Guionova Guergana (CNRS, LA3M, UMR 7298)**

*Khwâja Sabz Push, Bâmiyân (Afghanistan): A funerary complex associated to a ceramic workshop?*

Khwâja Sabz Push, a group of mausoleums linked to an ancient cemetery in the Foladi valley (Bâmiyân, Afghanistan), was the aim of an in-depth architectural study and archaeological excavations, which led to discover an important medieval funeral complex. The abundant ceramic material unearth on-site also points out the close presence of a pottery workshop, with pottery scraps, offering new insight into the so-called Bâmiyân ceramics.

## **Korn Lorenz (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)**

*From waqf to archaeological site: the Rab'-e Rashidi (Tabriz)*

Founded by the Il-khanid vizier Rashid al-Din (1247-1318), the Rab'-e Rashidi complex is mainly known thanks to its waqf document, which gives many details about its funding, architectural organization and uses. Since 2018, the site is the subject of archaeological excavations, carried out in close collaboration between Iranian authorities and the University of Bamberg. This communication will present the first results of this project, which aims to find traces of the Il-Khanid occupation of the site and its developments.

## **Porter Yves (Aix-Marseille University/UMR 7298-LA3M/IUF)**

### **Anaïs Léone (Aix-Marseille University/UMR 7298-LA3M)**

*Fortunes and misfortunes of Ilkhanid lustre tiles*

The inventory of the Ilkhanid monuments in Iran, that have nowadays lost their original decorations, encourages the development of several methodological approaches, among which the field research is central. At the same time, the thousands of remaining tiles, some of which have only recently been discovered, are often difficult to connect to a specific monument.

Based on the observation of these gaps and shortcomings, our contribution will focus on two points:

- Mapping of recent discoveries (sites not recorded by O. Watson [Persian Lustre Ware, 1985]: Zulfabad, Aveh, Alamut) and on-going researches (Sultaniya, Eghvard, Qalhat).
- Survey of monuments that have or had lustre tile decorations: case studies and general contributions based on remaining findings.