

Editors' Foreword

Although its roots can be traced to the work of Classical, Biblical, and Near Eastern archaeologists and Islamic art historians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as an independent academic discipline Islamic archaeology is quite young. The occasional university course in Europe and North America began to be offered in archaeology, history, area studies, and art history departments only gradually from the 1980s and specialized graduate programs appeared only from the 1990s. The establishment of institutions and research centers dedicated to Islamic archaeology – of which there are only a handful world-wide - is an even later development.

As the archaeological study of Muslim societies, polities, and communities, Islamic archaeology is by default concerned with a relatively recent period of human history, which extends to the modern era.¹ The “Early Modern era” is generally not covered by the antiquities laws of most modern Muslim countries, relegating their study to the field of ethnography and removing sites of this period from legal protection. This is particularly true in Greater Syria (Bilād al-Shām), which has some of the oldest departments of antiquities in the world and a long history of archaeological study of Islamic societies. The Jordanian Law of Antiquities No. 21[1988], was amended by Law No. 23 [2004], covers “any movable or immovable object which was made, written, inscribed, built, discovered or modified by a human being before the year AD 1750”². In Mandate-era Palestine, an “antiquity” was defined as any building or product of human activity dating before 1700. In Israel today, according to its 1978 Antiquities Law, an “antiquity” is defined as “any object, which was made by man before 1700 CE, or any zoological

¹ This is the definition adopted, as well, by the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* (<https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/JIA>).

² https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/law-of-antiquities_html/Law_of_Antiquities-1- jordan.pdf (accessed 24 August 2018)

or botanical remains from before the year 1300 CE”.³ These laws are slowly changing, however, reflecting a growing appreciation for the cultural heritage of the later historical periods. For example, Decree Law no. 11 on Tangible Cultural Heritage in Palestine, passed by the Palestinian Authority in June 2018, expands the timeframe of heritage protection to all structures built before 1917 AD, and including all material heritage of cultural, economic, or natural value.⁴ In Bahrain, the Antiquities laws are even more inclusive covering “anything descended from civilisations or left over by previous generations explored or discovered...or daily life or public events or anything that is at least 50 years of age that has an artistic or historical value is considered a monument”⁵. This Handbook devotes its final section to cultural heritage management, with a particular focus on the later centuries and on best practices in CHM. Islamic archaeology, as it practiced today in many countries, is committed to safe-guarding cultural heritage, including the man-made and natural worlds of the relatively modern periods.

What is essentially “Islamic” in this heritage is loosely defined and regionally specific. “Islamic archaeology” in this sense does not serve the same function as “Biblical” archaeology in the Holy Land. Research has never been directed at illustrating or investigating events, peoples/places, or the societies described in the Qur’an.⁶ Nor does it focus solely on religious architecture or artifacts in the same way as “Christian archaeology” has often done in Europe and the Mediterranean. “Islamic” here describes, in a very general sense, a political geography: it is those regions that are under Muslim control in a particular period (the “Islamic world”, as it

³ http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article_list_eng.aspx?sub_menu=2§ion_id=42&Module_id=6 (accessed 24 August 2018)

⁴ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/ramallah/about-this-office/single-view/news/joint_statement_the_palestinian_ministry_of_tourism_and_anti/ (accessed 24 August 2018)

⁵ Article 2 of Decree Law No. 11. Regarding the Protection of Antiquities, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information, Directorate of Heritage and Museums, State of Bahrain, 25th June 1995.

⁶ The recent movement in “Qur’anic archaeology” essentially serves that purpose and has not yet entered the mainstream of world archaeology.

existed at a certain time), or in which Muslims lived, not necessarily under Muslim control. It does not necessarily mean that the majority of the population at that place and time were Muslim or that the culture was dominated by Islamic norms, although that generally tends to be the case. Islamic archaeology is as much concerned with non-Muslim societies under the control of Muslim powers (whatever the institutional configuration). The geographical focus, of course, changes over time, as the center of the Islamic world shifted with the dissolution of old imperial systems and the emergence of new ones. Some parts of the world entered *Dar al-Islam* later than others: Islam came formally to southern Thailand, for example, only in the 14th century; in Egypt it was the 7th century. The chronological coverage of this volume reflects the diverse regional histories of Islamic conquest, conversion, and trade. It is roughly “medieval-to-modern”, beginning with the 7th century CE (the “Islamic conquest” in the Levant), and ending with the 21st century (during which time the making of cultural heritage policy and “community archaeology” gain the greatest significance).

Perhaps more than any other factor, it is geography and language that offers the greatest challenge to assembling a Handbook such as this. Most scholarship in English has focused on the “Arab heartland”, and specifically the Levant. Other regions of the pre-modern Islamic world – al-Andalus and the Maghreb, Africa, and Asia – have their own rich history of scholarship in the field.⁷ They are less well known to the Anglophone world, however, because of linguistic issues and limited distribution of local journals and publications; Russian publications on Central Asia are rarely read by, or available to, scholars outside the region and on-going research on China-

⁷ For some surveys in English, see: Insoll 1999 and 2003 (for sub-Saharan Africa); Fenwick 2013 and 2019 (for the Maghreb) SPAFA 1984 and Ali 1994 (for southeast Asia); and Priestman 2016 (for East Asia). The SPAFA Digest - the journal published by SAMEO (the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) Regional Centre in Archaeology and Fine Arts – provides convenient summaries in English of local archaeological research on the later historical periods and maritime trade. (It is, however, of limited distribution.) Special issues of the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* deal with the archaeology of African Islam.

Indian Ocean trade, Muslim-Buddhist-Hindu relations, and the culturally and religiously hybrid societies of southeast Asia are practically *terra incognita* due to the scarcity of reports in western languages. Linguistic issues are not restricted to non-European languages: troublingly even French, Spanish and Italian publications on the western Islamic world are not so familiar to Anglophone scholars. The results of such scholarship, however, open up new lines of inquiry and reveal cultural and socio-economic patterns that provide valuable contrasts with those of the Levant, the traditional heartland of Islamic archaeology. Regionalism is a key characteristic of pre-modern Islamic material culture, and it is certainly a phenomenon with which we must reckon when reconstructing “culture” from the local archaeological record.

This volume is not the first English-language survey of the field. It has been preceded by several important works, the sequence of which tracks the ways Islamic archaeology has developed institutionally since the 1990s. Several have become required reading for university students (Insoll 1999; Milwright 2010; Rosen-Ayalon 2006) and adopt different methodological approaches: phenomenological, cultural-historical, art historical. Baram and Carroll’s conference volume *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground* is considered by many to have officially launched Ottoman archaeology. More recent regional studies (Sutton 2000, Zarinebaf et al 2005, and Davies and Davis 2007 on Ottoman Greece; Insoll 2003 on sub-Saharan Africa; Walmsley 2007 on Syria; Walker 2011 on Jordan; Power 2012 on the Red Sea; Avni 2014 on Palestine; Cooper 2014 on the medieval Nile basin; Valor and Gutiérrez 2015 on Spain; Fenwick 2019 on North Africa) consciously combine textual and archaeological methods, to differing degrees.

This Handbook is distinguished from these important contributions, however, by its global coverage and inclusion of very contemporary issues, such as engagement with local

communities and best practices in cultural heritage management. The contributors have the highest reputations today in their geographical areas of expertise, yet represent different stages of the academic career, as well as diverse international backgrounds. Because a wide range of languages are represented in this global scholarship, many contributions have been translated into English (namely from French, Spanish and Italian). Global coverage also means that a range of methods, archaeological traditions, and research priorities are represented in this volume. Even so, the Handbook is not intended to be an encyclopaedic compendium but to provide an introduction into the different regional trajectories of Islamic archaeology. Reflections on the many disciplinary roots of Islamic archaeology and its vast geographical and complex chronological scope complete this Foreword.

Islamic archaeology and Islamic art history: the special relationship

Islamic archaeology has an intimate but fraught relationship with art history. In Europe, Islamic archaeology began as a methodological specialization within Islamic art history and until the latter part of the twentieth century, most field practitioners were formally trained as art (or architectural) historians. Today, in contrast, Islamic archaeology is far closer to history and anthropology and there is limited inter-disciplinary dialogue with art history, despite their shared focus on material culture. This is not the place to delve into a detailed genealogy of the historiography of Islamic archaeology which is still to be written (see Rogers 1975; Vernoit 1997 for brief overviews), but a few remarks on the complex legacy of this relationship are necessary.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the accounts of explorers, diplomats, and missionaries as well as a growing Orientalist interest in Arabic languages spurred European scholarly interest in Islamic art and architecture in Spain, the Middle East and North Africa

(Vernoit 2000). These antiquarian effects gained momentum with growing European and Russian interest in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia and the imposition of colonial rule; indeed, the earliest excavations of Islamic sites took place in the immediate aftermath of annexation, as was the case for example for the Russians at Samarqand and Merv in the 1870s and 1880s and the French at the Qala'a of the Beni Hammad in Algeria in 1898. These and other early excavations at Samarra (Iraq), Madinat al-Zahra (Spain), Fustat (Egypt) and the often-overlooked Ottoman work at Raqqa (Syria) established the focus of Islamic archaeology: the study of monumental urban and palatial architecture (especially palaces, gardens, mosques, fortifications), the analysis of architectural décor (capitals, stucco, woodwork) and the study of high-quality objects (glazed ceramics, metalwork, glass) (Vernoit 1997). Accordingly, archaeologists devoted their energies to early Islamic palatial and urban sites such as Samarra or the desert castles of Jordan where rich architecture and decorative items (which could then be displayed in museums) were to be located. The emphasis on museum-quality artefacts had many unfortunate tendencies: only whole vessels tended to be recorded (and often kept) and contextual information was rarely recorded. But excavations were not sufficient to meet the rising demands for Islamic artifacts, and many sites were looted in order to provide artifacts for museums and collectors.

Archaeology's close relationship with art history in this formative period also established the geographic focus of the field: the so-called 'central Islamic lands' i.e. the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, Iran (and Anatolia for the Ottoman period) which were the heartlands of the great Islamic empires. Central Asia remained disconnected from mainstream scholarship on Islamic art and architecture, as did India, China, Mongolia and Africa and even the Islamic West (North Africa and al-Andalus). These regions were regarded as provincial and interpreted through core-

periphery models which depicted artistic and architectural production as inferior to, or derivative of, developments in the heartlands. So powerful were these colonial models that even today Islamic art survey books rarely include material from these regions except in passing. Of course, archaeological and art historical research on the Islamic period was not neglected in these ‘peripheral’ regions which each have their own complex scholarly traditions, but the result was a fragmented discipline divided into regional schools of research that rarely communicated with one another.

In the post WWII period, the continued close relationship of the two disciplines was acknowledged in the first state of the field articles written by Richard Ettinghausen (1951) and Oleg Grabar (1976), both of which were tellingly titled ‘Islamic art and archaeology’. Both identified archaeology as pivotal in shaping the research agendas of art historical scholarship, with its focus on the early and middle Islamic periods, on architecture and the ‘Islamic city’ and the central Arab lands. Their understanding of what archaeology was and what it could offer (a technique, a method), and its relationship to art history (a supporting, secondary methodology), was quite different than today. For Grabar, for example, archaeology’s main function was to catalogue, locate, date and describe objects, buildings and construction/ manufacturing techniques rather than to interpret or build theories about past societies. The potentially transformative impact of archaeology on the broader discipline was hindered by a widespread failure to publish the results of these earlier digs (some of which still remain unpublished to this day), a problem that both Ettinghausen and Grabar complained about in their reviews of the field.

In the 1980s, art history distanced itself from archaeology and Grabar’s (1983) essay “Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art,” in the inaugural volume of *Muqarnas* dropped

archaeology from the name of the field, in a reflection of the increasing dominance of art historical approaches as well as a growing frustration with the poor publication record of archaeologists and the appearance of new “abstruse and overly abstract” theoretical models in archaeology (1983:4). This separation came at a pivotal point for Islamic archaeology. The methodologies and theoretical models of New Archaeology and post-processual archaeology, together with the increasing maturity of medieval European archaeology as a discipline, heavily impacted the practice of archaeology in the Middle East from the 1970s. The spread of open-area excavation techniques, stratigraphic analysis, diachronic field surveys and the increasing use of radiocarbon dating for chronological precision started to shed light on the later phases of biblical and Classical sites. In Jordan, an important turning point was the work of Jim Sauer in the 1970s in distinguishing Islamic-era ceramics from that of Late Antiquity; his seriation of Islamic pottery at Tall Ḥisbān in many ways laid the foundations for the field in Jordan. Beyond the Middle East, excavations began to rapidly increase particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, with for example, fieldwork at Kilwa, Manda and Shanga shedding light on Islamisation and Indian Ocean trade in East Africa and work at Gao, Tegdaost and Timbuktu on trans-Saharan sites (see Insoll 2003 for an overview). With the publication of Insoll’s (1999) *The Archaeology of Islam*, it was clear Islamic archaeology was a field of research distinctly different from, although still overlapping to some degree with, and often heavily influenced by, Islamic art history.

No field of research stays the same, nor should it. Many of the circumstances that pushed Insoll to express his concern about the marginalization of the field vis-à-vis Islamic art history are no longer true (Insoll 1999: 3-7). Islamic archaeology is now in the mainstream of world archaeology – technologically, conceptually, methodologically. The scale of analysis is now larger, and the questions broader. Our view of the Islamic world is being de-centered from Syria-

Palestine and Iraq by new work by archaeologists on the edges – in Spain, Central Asia, East Africa and beyond. Rather than privileging the mosque, ribat or palace, archaeologists now excavate houses, shops and craft quarters to understand the spaces of everyday life. Excavation now goes beyond establishing architectural phases and floor plans of monuments and extends to understanding their role in the larger built (urban landscapes, settlements) and natural (rural landscapes) setting. This, in turn, has generated interest in rural society, their socialized landscapes, and a wide range of environmental and economic issues. Likewise, the study of the artifact has turned from typo-chronologies to that of the assemblage and its social context in order to understand the household, labor history, and even gender studies (Walker 2010). At the same time, Islamic archaeology is increasingly concerned with its responsibilities to local, living communities, which has resulted in efforts in heritage management, community development, and an expressed commitment to sustainability (agricultural, environmental, social, economic).

These shifts towards the social and economic in the past and present have widened the gap between archaeologists and art historians who rarely talk to one another despite a shared emphasis on material culture. No longer are Islamic archaeologists trained in art-history departments, but in archaeology, anthropology or history departments, and it is far more common for archaeologists to collaborate with historians, cultural heritage specialists (and less frequently) anthropologists in conferences, publications and even fieldwork. All the same, in recent years, the ‘social turn’ in the humanities and social sciences has the potential to bring about a renewed convergence between Islamic art and archaeology. Just as many archaeologists have moved away from the typo-chronology of object or monument, so too some art historians are moving away from the traditional approaches which privileged the visual and aesthetic properties of objects and buildings in the central Islamic lands before 1800, towards post-colonial,

anthropological, and socio-historical approaches with a greater chronological and geographical scope (e.g. Flood and Necipoglu 2018). One promising avenue for inter-disciplinary dialogue is the move towards considering the materiality of things (whether the art historian's "object", or the archaeologist's "artifact"), which allows one to speak at the same time about a thing as an expression of beauty, a marker of class and ethnicity, a symbol of the household, a function of political-economic networks, and proof of social and political encounters and exchanges across imaginary borders (for the latter, see Flood 2009).

The museum is becoming a new arena for conflict with increasingly oppositional stances taken by archaeologists and art historians. Since the 2000s, a number of significant museum collections of Islamic art have been established in Kuwait, Sharjah, Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Toronto, and major museums in Paris, London, New York, Cairo and Copenhagen (to name a few) have reorganised their galleries (Benoit et al. 2013). These new collections have spectacular objects, many with dubious provenances. This new interest in Islamic art has reopened debates about the problematic choices made in collecting and displaying objects from the Islamic world and the close ties between curators, collectors, academics and the auction houses. Ongoing conflict in the MENA region and the corresponding increase in looting, destruction of heritage (for a myriad of reasons) and the boom of illicit objects entering the art and antiquities markets, raises a whole host of contentious issues for protection, repatriation, conservation and reconstruction that archaeologists, art historians and heritage officials, local and international alike, need to grapple with together rather than in isolation.

Islamic archaeology and Islamization

The extent to which Islamization has been explored through archaeological evidence differs regionally. In some areas of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, for example, archaeological studies of Islamization have been completed (e.g. Lape 2000; Insoll 2017). In other regions of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia such studies are rare or absent, reflecting a paucity of research and comparative data, as well as different methodological and theoretical approaches and influences (cf. Peacock 2017).

To take sub-Saharan Africa as an example, influential formative studies of religious conversion were developed by historians, anthropologists, and religious studies specialists, involving phased conversion (e.g. Trimingham 1968; Fisher 1973, 1985), or tiers of religious beliefs that had to be overcome for Islam (and Christianity) to succeed (e.g. Horton 1971, 1975, 1993). Occasionally, elements of these models can help in archaeological interpretation of conversion and to a lesser extent Islamization, but they are also problematic in being too all-encompassing and universal to explain such diverse and complex phenomena (Insoll 2017: 246). More useful are models which acknowledge local cultural adaptations, staggered chronologies, and gradual religious change, such as that proposed by Eaton (1993) to explain Islamization in Bengal with its important concepts of ‘inclusion’, ‘identification’, and ‘displacement’, and which could be successfully employed outside of the African and South Asian contexts where it has thus far been used (Insoll 2017: 247; Peacock 2017: 9).

Islamic archaeology as “historical archaeology” in the Middle East

In the Middle East where textual sources are more common, as an academic discipline, Islamic archaeology has had an ambivalent relationship with the textual record. Although the later medieval periods, in particular, are richly endowed with texts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and western languages, archaeologists of the Islamic world have been more hesitant to use the written record than their colleagues in other “historical” archaeologies, such as that of the New World and medieval Europe. This is, in part, a legacy of the “New Archaeology” and post-processual movements of the later 20th century, which had the effect in this field of discouraging archaeologists from being overly dependent on the historical record for project design, interpretation, and narrative building. It was also a reaction against the reliance on Latin and Greek texts that long molded the archaeology of the classical world, Byzantium and medieval Europe. As Islamic archaeology has gravitated towards anthropological approaches in the Middle East, and away from the textual-historical, however, we risk losing valuable information directly relevant to archaeological inquiry, such as land use, social and political structures, and economic life.

Today a balance between the two approaches is being achieved. The academic training of Islamic archaeologists is increasingly retooling scholars for historically-savvy research, bringing Islamic archaeology into the mainstream of Middle Eastern Studies. The emphasis on advanced Arabic-language training in Middle East Studies programs in North America (or Islamic Studies in Germany, for example) for archaeology students reflects this re-orientation. Islamic archaeology in Bilād al-Shām, Egypt, the Maghrib, and Andalusia has been radically transformed in recent decades, as a result, with multi-disciplinary and theory-rich research on urbanism, rural life, farming, natural resource management, and environmental history (Wordworth and McPhillips 2016; Cooper 2014; Cressier 1998; Ennahid 2002; Ettahiri et al

2013; Walker 2011 and 2017; Walker et al 2017; Éychemme et al 2018). Advances in the kinds of questions we can ask about the archaeological record in the Middle East and Islamic West have resulted through the analysis of documentary sources, such as tax and court registers, *waqfiyyāt* (endowment deeds), *fatwa* manuals, and water and agrarian treatises, which are largely available to us only in manuscript form. These have yielded abundant information on land tenure and use, management of water, daily life in local communities, and relations between these communities and the state. Document-informed archaeology, moreover, has revolutionized the archaeological study of the Ottoman period in Greece and Cyprus and has become a foundation for landscape studies there (Given 2000, Given and Hadjianastasis 2010, and literature discussed above.) Rather than blindly lead the interpretation of archaeological data, when read as historical documents by historically trained scholars, they enrich the archaeological record.⁸ As for the kinds of narrative sources traditionally used by archaeologists for chronological and spatial information – chronicles, geographies, and travelers’ accounts – many studies today of individual archaeological sites, monuments, and ceramic assemblages and ceramic exchange continue to make use of them, but in a more comprehensive way, and with an ever more critical eye, than ever before (François 2013; Milwright 1999, 2008, and 2009; and Cytryn-Silvermann 2010, for example, for Bilād al-Shām).

Problems of periodization

Chronological terminology and periodization remain a contested arena.⁹ This, of course, has always been the archaeologist’s dilemma: chronological terminology is either site- or region-

⁸ For debates on how to combine textual analysis with interpretation of the archaeological record for the Islamic periods, see Talmon-Heller and Cytryn-Silvermann and Walker 2010, 2013, and 2015.

⁹ See the special issue of *Der Islam* (2014).

specific which raises challenges for inter-regional comparison. All the same, periodization is key if we wish to explore difference and diversity across space and time – rather than risk falling into the trap of an ahistorical approach. Should we use dynastic periodisations such as Umayyad, Fatimid or Mamluk to frame material culture and sites, as many art historians and historians continue to do? Or should we use broader categories such as ‘early’, ‘middle’ and ‘late’ Islamic, each with their own starting and ending points in different regions? Is Islamic synonymous with medieval? Or does the scope of Islamic archaeology include the early modern and contemporary moment?

Part of the problem stems from the fact that the Muslim conquests in the seventh century are often seen as one of the ternary points in global history – in the vision of Henri Pirenne (1939), they meant the end of Mediterranean unity and the classical world, and marked a decisive rupture between West (Europe) and East (the Orient) that continues today. This highly negative view of the Muslim conquests is of course, closely linked to Western colonialism and Orientalism in the nineteenth and twentieth century, and has been comprehensively overturned by archaeologists, historians and art historians in the past four decades who have demonstrated both that the Muslim conquests were not catastrophic for daily life and that Islam and early Muslim rule were strongly shaped by earlier Arabian, Byzantine and Sassanian traditions. Where then should we place the formative period of Islam? Is it more productive to consider it within the remit of the late antique world or do the revelations to the Prophet, the journey to Medina, or the Muslim conquests mark the start of a discrete period in its own right?

Recently, some scholars have begun toying with the idea of an ‘Islamic Late Antiquity’ to get around these problems. Peter Brown in *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (1971) was the first to integrate Muhammad and the Umayyad dynasty into the reach of late antiquity, a

chronological expansion into the eighth century that was matched with a geographic expansion of coverage to include Western Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. The year 750 and the movement of the caliphal capital from Mediterranean Damascus to Baghdad is frequently taken as an endpoint for late antiquity, firmly putting the formative period of Islam and the Umayyad caliphate in the world of late antiquity. More recently, however, scholars have been arguing for a much longer late antiquity: Garth Fowden (2014:18-47) for example, argues that the first millennium is a more effective periodization. There are some benefits of moving away from seeing the Arab conquest as a ternary point in world history, which resonate particularly well with archaeology. Inspired by Hugh Kennedy's (1985) *Polis to Madina* article, archaeologists have demonstrated that the seventh century does not equate to a rupture in urbanism, the countryside, religion and technology: the scale and timing of these changes varies at the regional and site-level. Seductive though the notion of a long late antiquity may be, in practice, if not intent, it privileges scholarship on the Mediterranean and the endurance of a Romano-Byzantine heritage. Far more troubling, however, is that it over-emphasises continuity and underplays the dramatic changes brought about by the imposition of Muslim rule on the former Byzantine and Sasanian realms, and those regions beyond their borders.

Other scholars employ the term "medieval" as an alternative in reference to the Islamic world. Of course, the term 'medieval' which has been adopted in Europe in reference to the chronological period following the collapse of the western Roman Empire. This period is neither "ancient" nor "modern", but somewhere in between, and it represents an era of cultural co-existence, confrontation, and symbiosis between Muslim and Christian societies. It is also the term most frequently bantered when scholars of pre-modern societies in Europe and in the Middle East meet for conferences. It is the term often adopted in Spain (al-Andalus), Sicily,

North Africa, Cyprus, central Europe (the Ottoman's "Rumelia") and Central Asia, but far less frequently in the Middle East. There is no "Middle Ages", however, from a Middle Eastern, Islamic perspective, as the chronological and cultural points of reference are uniquely western. The combined terminology "medieval Islam" is a frequent compromise, referring to Muslim societies in the pre-modern era.

Similar problems of applicability exist in relation to using the term 'medieval' in South East Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. In the latter, for example, Islamic archaeology forms part of what is generally referred to as Iron Age archaeology, i.e. the period, varying regionally, after which iron was commonly in use (cf. Phillipson 2005: 214-216), which in itself means something quite different to 'Iron Age' in European archaeological chronology which generally refers to the pre-Roman period (e.g. Collis 1984). However, 'medieval' is now routinely employed in sub-Saharan African contexts (Insoll 2018), for though inappropriate to African chronology it is commonly understood, and as such, in the words of Moraes Farias (2003: xxiii) has become a "dead metaphor", and thus can be used outside its "original frame of reference".

If these shifts are intended to bring the Islamic world into conversation with developments in Europe and Asia as part of the new emphasis on global history, we still need to grapple with how to break down these very large periods into meaningful chunks of time that can be compared with one another. The traditional solution has been a dynastic periodization which follows the general precepts of Islamic history, beginning with the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties that governed vast 'universal' empires and concluding with regional dynasties such as the Safavids, the Ottomans and Mughals (the modern period tends to be divided along nationalist lines). The Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 and collapse of the Abbasid caliphate is widely agreed to mark both a watershed in Islamic history and in the development of Islamic art and

architecture, and continues to be used as a dividing point, particularly in art historical surveys (e.g. Ettinghausen et al. 2001; Blair and Bloom 1995). Such periodizations sit uneasily with archaeological evidence which rarely, if ever, maps neatly onto dynastic history (people do not begin to cook in different pots because a new caliph or sultan is on the throne) or reveals ruptures in the material record that relate to conquests or regime change. Similarly, they do not allow sufficiently for regional diversity, particularly after the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, and as a result many areas are left out.

Another way out of the quandary is to adopt a periodization that reflects general socio-cultural changes relevant on a regional level. For Islamic historians working in the Middle East and Egypt, the division of time into the Classical Period, Age of the Sultanates, and Age of the Gunpowder Empires are convenient reference points, representing the interplay between political institutions and cultural forms (Hodgson 1975).¹⁰ Even this broad characterization of Islamic political history assumes that political institutions are created the same way at the same time in different regions; the institutionalization of sultanates, for example, was not contemporary in the Levant and Egypt. Alternatively, one can adopt a cultural periodization that emerges from the archaeological record itself, such as the Early Islamic (630-1055) -Middle Islamic (1055-1500)-Late Islamic (1500-1750) scheme proposed by Whitcomb (2000), which has come to be adopted by most archaeologists working on, for instance, Islamic Syria or Bahrain, but not in the Islamic West or Central Asia. Such schema rarely include the modern period and in practice, it remains difficult to incorporate the period between 1800-1950 into archaeological narratives because so little archaeology has been conducted on this period outside

¹⁰ Hodgson's Age of the Sultanates was problematized by a group of historians, archaeologists, and art historians by the French and American institutes in Cairo and Amman in a series of conferences (Walker and Salles 2008; Denoix and Bierman 2012).

the Arabian Gulf (see e.g. Eddisford and Carter 2017). Art historians have grappled far more intensively with this problem than archaeologists in recent years and Flood and Necipoğlu's (2017) *Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* effectively proposes a new eight-phase chronology for the Islamic world stretching from 650 to the present that may prove useful to archaeologists seeking to make trans-regional comparisons.¹¹ Like them, our vision of an 'Islamic archaeology' is far more inclusive than exclusive – we include here the material culture of Muslim communities and those living under Muslim rule from the seventh century to the present day. However, we found it more useful to organize the Handbook geographically by region rather than to divide it chronologically into periods– each chapter can thus define the chronology used in its particular region, explain the historiography behind it and outline the key chronological gaps and holes in archaeological knowledge which differ markedly from region to region.

Organization of the volume and final note

Because of its global coverage, this Handbook is organized geographically, with sections devoted to the Central Islamic Lands, the Islamic West, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Each section is further subdivided into chapters on specific regions, which best reflect the development of Islamic archaeology in that region and adopt regionally acceptable periodization. Each section begins with brief introductions on the region and its general historiography. The

¹¹ They divide their chronology as follows: I) The Early Caliphates, Umayyads, and the End of Late Antiquity (650–750); (II) Abbasids and the Universal Caliphate (750–900); (III) Fragmentation and the Rival Caliphates (900–1050); (IV) “City States” and the Later Baghdad Caliphate (1050–1250); ; (V) “Global” Empires and the World System (1250–1450); (VI) Early Modern Empires and their Neighbors (1450–1700); (VII) Modernity, Empire, Colony, and Nation (1700–1950); (VIII) Islam, Art, and the Contemporary (1950–Present).

contributors were asked to address as much as was relevant to their region from a range of topics: historiography and chronology; survey of main sites; rural and urban landscapes; health, diet, and climate; archaeology of religion; gender; labor; and new (unpublished) research. The volume's final section is rather unique for the Oxford series of archaeology Handbooks, as it is dedicated to Heritage Management and Community Development, highlighting the very special responsibility of practitioners in the field of Islamic archaeology towards local communities.

The production of this Handbook was a group effort. We (the co-editors) want, first, to thank the contributors for their enormous efforts in producing chapters that reflect not only state-of-the-field but also visions for the future. We also are indebted to the many individuals who helped with editing at different stages: Felicitas Weber, Greg Williams, and Britta Wagner, at the University of Bonn. To our Series Editor, Stefan Vranka, the entire University of Oxford Press, and our anonymous reviewers, we also owe a debt of gratitude.

A final word should be said about spelling and dating formulae. While there has been an effort to standardize, to some degree, transliteration of Arabic terms and phrases (adopting the guidelines used by the University of Chicago for *Mamluk Studies Review*), for site names local traditions of spelling (reflecting local Arabic dialect) have priority. Diacritics appear only when a technical term in Arabic is used; diacritics are not used for persons, places, and terms that are generally known in western scholarship by their Arabic names. The authors had the choice to use Gregorian or Hijri calendars, which are differentiated in the texts with CE and H; unless otherwise noted, the date follows the Christian calendar.

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