

Workshop
Rethinking Rural Communities and Tribalism in Islamic Lands
(6th–9th / 12th–15th centuries)
Provisional Program

Venue: Ghent University, Blandijnberg 2, 6th floor

Date: 17 and 18 December 2025

Organising committee: Prof. Jo Van Steenbergen (Ghent University), Prof. Malika Dekkiche (Antwerp University), Dr. Zacharie Mochtari de Pierrepont (Ghent University)

Day 1 – Conceptualising Tribalism and Rural Communities

08:50 | Welcome

09:10–09:20 | Opening Remarks – Zacharie Mochtari de Pierrepont (Ghent University)

Session 1: Concepts and Frameworks of Tribal and Rural Societies

Chair: Frédéric Bauden (Liège University) : tbc

09:20–10:10 | Yossef Rapoport (Queen Mary University of London)

Should we still speak about tribes? Arabic terms for families, clans, and tribes in medieval Islamic sources

10:10–11:00 | Amira Bennison (University of Cambridge)

The Reconfiguration of Rural Communities and Tribes in the Thirteenth-Century Western Maghrib

11:00–11:15 | Break

11:15–12:05 | Boris James (Montpellier-3 University, Montpellier)

Tribal Cast or Military Aristocracy: What are Medieval Kurdish Groups Made Of?

12:05–13:30 | Lunch

Session II – Rural–Urban networks, state formation and political authority

Chair: Malika Dekkiche (Antwerp University)

13:30–14:20 | Zacharie Mochtari de Pierrepont (Ghent University)

“Rural communities, elites and power in the Rasūlid sultanate” (title to be confirmed)

14:20–15:10 | Elise Voguet (CNRS)

“Nomads and Settlers in the Touat: Local Authority and Taxation in the Sahara (14th–15th Centuries”

15:10–15:25 | Break

15:25–16:15 | Michael Hope (Yonsei University)

Rural elites and the State under the Ilkhanids: negotiating power on the Mongol imperial western frontier (title to be confirmed)

16:15–16:30 | End of day 1, concluding remarks – Jo Van Steenbergen (Ghent University)

Day 2 – Case studies & comparative perspectives

08:50 | Welcome

Session III – Tribes, Rural Societies, and Imperial Strategies

Chair: John Latham Sprinkle (Free University Brussels)

09:00 | Georg Leube (University of Bayreuth)

“Petrified Social Infrastructure? Monumental Epigraphy as an Interface Structuring Urban–

Rural Entanglements in the Qaraqyunlu and Aqquyunlu ‘Turkmen’ Realms of the Fifteenth Century CE”

09:50 | Yoan Parrot (Aix-Marseille University)

“A nomadic landscape: Turkmen’s domination over rural areas (Syria, Anatolia and Caucasus, 14th-15th century)”

10:40–10:55 | Break

10:55–11:45 | Nicolas Michel (Aix-Marseille University)

“Bedouin/‘Urbān in Sixteenth-Century Egypt: What We Know, What We Don’t”

11:45-12:00 | Closing Remarks – Jan Dumolyn (Ghent University)

Session IV – Comparative and connected perspective: toward a new conceptual and practical framework?

14:00-16:00: Round Table

17:00-17:15 | Final Remarks – Zacharie Mochtari de Pierrepont (Ghent University)