October 20, 2011

Maya Shatzmiller

Current Research

Online project of data collection: www.medievalislamiceconomy.uwo.ca

The project '**Measuring the Medieval Islamic economy'** is looking to study and quantify economic performance in the Islamic Middle East. The project is devoted to collecting the numerical and quantifiable data related to the Medieval Islamic World, approximately between 650-1517 A.D., in areas considered as diagnostic for measuring economic performance, such as commodity prices, population size, money and coinage, measures and weights, wages, taxes and tax rates. Data compilation comprises aggregation of specific features and assemblages from published sources. In the second stage we will collect data related to these areas directly from the Arabic sources. The objectives are to allow further statistical manipulation, cross-checking the Islamic data with similar data bases for other economies, study the wide spectrum of the medieval Islamic economic performance on both individual and comparative levels, and bring the research into line with scholarly work undertaken on other pre-modern economies. Bringing Islamic economic history to the level of current achievements in economic history by incorporating the new methodologies cannot happen without assembling the quantitative datasets. The project requires a long-term team and collaborative effort,

Book project: Global Economic Order at the End of the Millennium. The Islamic Caliphate and Europe: A new economic history.

I will examine some key areas of the diagnostic indicators of economic growth and structural changes as a proxy for a full and new approach to economic performance and economic growth in the early Islamic economy. For instance, I will collate the evidence of increased supply of money with structural changes in agriculture, manufacturing, and trade, as indicators of change in "scale and in patterns" in institutions, living standards, productivity rates and income levels. Based on data already collected in my project described above, estimates of standards of living and GDP have been calculated for the two dates, 700 and 1000 and compared with those of contemporary or earlier economies. These early results show that Islamic societies' standards of living were consistently well above the subsistence level. The benefits of the comparative approach lie in the possibility to see broader and more long-term perspectives. The events traced to Europe's economic rise, such as the commercial revolution of the 13th century and the Black Death in the 14th century, are good examples, however more important for the global economic order of the first millennium is the earlier plague, the Justinian plague of 541, and the evidence assembled for the Islamic Middle East indicates its considerable effect on its economic performance and expansion. Furthermore, only the economic performance of the early Islamic Caliphate may explain the intellectual achievements of the period, referred to as the 'Islamic golden age'.

Recent publications related to both projects and articles in press

"Economic Performance and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic World" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, 54(2011), 132-184.*

"Transcontinental Trade and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic Empire: The Red Sea Corridor in the 8th - 10th centuries" *Connected Hinterlands. Proceedings of the Red Sea Project IV held at the University of Southampton, September, 2008.* Ed. By Lucy Blue et al. Bar International Series 2052. Society for Arabian Studies, Monographs No. 8. (Oxford, 2009), 119-130.

"New initiative: Medieval Islamic economic quantitative data collection in global setting" *Al-Usur al-Wusta, The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists*, April 2010. In press.

"The Female Body in Islamic law and medicine: Obstetrics, Gynecology and Pediatrics" *Attending to Early Modern Women - Conflict,* University of Delaware Press, 2010. In press

"The Medieval Mediterranean and Global Order: Islam, Money and Markets" *La presència catalane a l'espai de trobada de la mediterrània medie*val*: noves fonts, recerques i perspectives*, Barcelona 2010. In Press

"Marinid Fez- Global Order and the Quest for Empire" *The City of Fez in World History, Al-Akhawayn University*, Ifrane, Morocco, 2010. In Press

"Money, Trade, Slaves and Division of Labour: An Early Economic Growth in the Islamic Caliphate (750-1000)." *Proceedings of the 24th Congress of the UEAI, Leipzig, 2008* ed. Verena Klemm et al. Peeters Publishers, Leuven, Series: Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 2011
In Press