

Yonder lie the wastelands...
Investigating micro-scale dynamics in marginal zones

Steven Markofsky
Marie Curie Fellow
Wednesday, June 26th at 16.00
IMF- CSIC Seminar Room



For millennia, marginal alluvial environments have borne witness to dynamic trajectories of social and environmental change. Agricultural and subsequently urban societies have developed, flourished and sometimes declined in such regions, developments that can offer clues to the complexities of human/environmental interaction and co-evolution in these fragile, often unstable and heavily exploited regions.

Although environmentally marginal environments have been the subject of a great deal of research, the local dynamics of such regions remain unclear. However, such micro-scale issues can deepen our understanding of socio-ecological dynamics and provide insight into processes of adaptation, sustainable habitation and environmental modification/niche construction. Not only do such processes have profound local implications for social change, but these mechanisms may also be strongly influenced by decision-making processes at the local level.

My research here at CaSES will examine the late Holocene oasis environments of Central Asia to identify and interpret micro-environments and ecological 'niches' and their possible role in social development. Drawing on field data from the Murghab alluvial fan in Turkmenistan, the research will employ an integrated methodology that combines remote sensing, geoarchaeology and palaeogeography in order to develop socio-ecological models applicable for examining broader questions of marginality.