ANCIENT MOSQUES IN THEIR SPATIAL CONTEXT
WORKSHOP, DECEMBER 3rd-4th 2021

Friday, December 3rd

14:00-14:30 registration

14:30-15:30 OPEN DATA AND ARCHAEOLOGY
Chair: Catharine JUDSON
Why would you like to share your research data?
Sarah ZAHREDDINE (Université libre de Bruxelles)
Opportunities and challenges in archaeological data publishing: perspectives from Open Context
Sarah WHITCHER KANSA (The Alexandria Archive Institute)
Introducing the Early Islamic mosques database
Hagit NOL (Université libre de Bruxelles)

15:30-15:50 coffee break

15:50-17:20 ANCIENT MOSQUES SESSION I
Chair: Laurent BAVAY
Early and Middle Islamic mosques in Palmyra and Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi
Denis GENEQUAND (SMRA, Avenches)
Al-Khanka al-Salahiya Mosque (complex) in Hittin
Abed al-Razeq MATANI (independent scholar)

17:20-17:40 coffee break

17:40-19:10 KEYNOTE
Comparative perspectives on Islamisation. An archaeological view from Sub-Saharan Africa
Timothy INSOLL (University of Exeter)

19:10 reception

Saturday, December 4th

9:30-10:00 coffee

10:00-11:30 ANCIENT MOSQUES SESSION II
Chair: Nicolò PINI
The pre-Crusader mosque of Sour / Tyre (Lebanon)
Marie-Odile ROUSSET (CNRS – Archéorient, Lyons)
The congregational mosque in Jarash (Jordan) before and after the earthquake of 749 CE
Louise BLANKE (University of Edinburgh)

11:30-12:00 coffee break

12:00-13:30 ANCIENT MOSQUES SESSION III
Chair: Agnès VOKAER
The Early Islamic mosque at al-Yamāma (Najd, central Arabia)
Jérémie SCHIETTECATTE (CNRS Orient & Méditerranée, Paris)
Mosques in al-Andalus: state of the art from archaeology and experiences from Córdoba
Carmen GONZÁLEZ GUTIÉRREZ (University of Córdoba)

13:30-15:00 lunch

15:00-16:30 ANCIENT MOSQUES SESSION IV
Chair: Marie-Odile ROUSSET
Early mosques in West Africa and the Swahili coast: the role of Ibadi and Ismaili communities
Stéphane PRADINES (The Aga Khan University)
Mosque and the city: rethinking early Islamic concepts and links
Hagit NOL (Université libre de Bruxelles)

16:30-17:00 coffee break

17:00-18:30 KEYNOTE
Mosques and the material fabric of Islam: two questions for archaeologists
José C. CARVAJAL LÓPEZ (University of Leicester)

19:00 dinner

room B1.315
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1050 Bruxelles

For registration, please write Hagit NOL at: hagit.nol@ulb.be until November 30th.
The relatively young discipline of Islamic Archaeology deals with past cultures who either identified themselves as Muslim or were living within a Muslim hegemony. Unlike other disciplines that investigate material culture, the main emphasis of archaeology in many schools of the world is context, so that "an object as an object, alone, is mute" (Hodder and Hutson 2003: 171). The contexts commonly identified are spatial, typological, temporal, and dispositional. In practice, any find is interpreted in relation to other finds and other characteristics of its locus, layer, structure, site, or region. The object in its contexts tells the story of the people who made it, used it, disposed or destroyed it, and forgot about it.

Mosques are one of the physical representations of Islam and of Muslim communities in the archaeological record. Since the late seventh, eighth, and ninth century, mosques were built in various regions in Africa, Asia, and Europe with distinctive elements which allow for their identification. Archaeological excavations of ancient mosques as well as archaeologically-oriented surveys reveal the spatial contexts of these structures in their close domain, inside neighborhoods and settlements, and across lands and continents. These studies point to various practices linked to mosques or to the communities who maintained them, to changes over time, and to similarities and dissimilarities between places. The results of these inquiries provide a better understanding of the social practices of different communities as well as the possible networks and the diffusion of knowledge between them. It also highlights the unique contribution of archaeology to the corpus of historical sources.

This workshop will first present a number of archaeological case studies in the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, and Spain between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. Mosques will be introduced in relation to water systems and burials, to earlier and later structures, and to specific types of settlements. In particular, the workshop will treat the question of Islamization, the definitions of the term, and its validity. The event will also include launching a database for excavated mosques until the 9th century in OpenContext.org and discuss methods and approaches for open access to archaeological data.

The workshop is organized by Hagit Nol and CReA-Patrimoine, Université libre de Bruxelles, as part of the project “Early Manifestations of Islam: A Critical Worldwide Survey of Mosques in the First Three Centuries of the Hijra (622-913 AD) through Archaeology and Arabic Terminology.” This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no 801505.