



CEFREPA Newsletter September/October 2024

WELCOMING NEW VISITING RESEARCHERS (CNRS DELEGATION)



Michel MOUTON

Michel Mouton joined CEFREPA on the 1st of September 2024, assigned for two years in Muscat (Sultanate of Oman). Archaeologist, PhD Habilit., Director of scientific research at the CNRS (France). His field of study is the Arabian societies in Antiquity, mainly the Oman peninsula, South-Arabia and the Nabataean. He has been heading projects in UAE (1990-1999, 2010-2011), in Yemen (1992-2006), in Jordan (2008-2011) and was involved also in excavations and studies in Cyprus, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Oman. He has held different positions at the IFPO (French institut in the Near East) in Syria from 2000 to 2006, and as director in Beyrouth from 2017 to 2021. He was also director of the CEFREPA from 2013 to 2017.

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Michel Mouton has just completed a volume on prospections conducted by the French archaeological mission in the Jawf Hadramawt during the 90' (Archaeopress, 2024), and a publication of an Indian sanctuary in the port of Qani' in Yemen. He is currently working on the publication of material from Mleiha (UAE), which he studies in connection with the archaeological documentation from the sites of central Oman.



Zaineb BEN LAGHA

Lecturer in modern Arabic literature at Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Zaineb Ben Lagha is deputy director of the Center for Arab and Oriental Studies (USN). She is currently on a CNRS delegation to CEFREPA at Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. Her research themes are the following: the historical novel; the figure of the marginal; referential space in the contemporary Arabic novel of the Arabian Peninsula.

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As part of her CNRS delegation, she is interested in the way in which the contemporary novel of the Arabian Peninsula makes it possible to understand the process of constructing a "national" or "regional" identity (golfiote, khaleejness), or even to contribute alongside other mediators (newspapers, publishing houses, book fairs, best novel prizes, etc.) in the development of a national or regional narrative. She also studies the place that this contemporary novel devotes to external (foreign residents) or internal (minorities) otherness and the roles that the latter can play in this process of identity construction.

VILLA HEGRA – RESEARCH PROJECT LAUNCH



During the visit of the President of the French Republic to Saudi Arabia in December 2021, the two countries signed an agreement for the establishment of a cultural institution in AIUla: Villa Hegra.

Villa Hegra, scheduled to open in 2026, will draw on the expertise of the Agence française pour le développement d'AIUla (AFALULA) and aims to promote artistic creation and dialogue between French and Saudi cultures. A place of design and integration, with the ambition to

radiate throughout the region, Villa Hegra follows the example of its prestigious predecessors: Villa Médicis, Casa de Velázquez and Villa Kujoyama.

As part of the preparation of the cultural and artistic activities of Villa Hegra, a call for projects ("AIUla: transformations and social dynamics of a development project") has been launched in partnership with the Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman (IISMM - CNRS/EHESS) and CEFREPA.

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The aim of this call is to stimulate research in the human and social sciences on the transformations brought about by the development of the AIUla site by supporting several research programs over a period of one year in 2024-2025.

In collaboration with AFALULA and the Royal Commission of AIUla (RCU), CEFREPA is pleased to provide logistical and scientific support to around twenty researchers in the management of the five winning projects of this call. We congratulate the different teams for the excellence of their projects and the richness of the topics addressed:

1. **“An Oasis Facing Globalisation: The History and Development of Hegra since the late 19th Century”** (PI: Ulrike Freitag, Director, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin & Professor at Institute of Islamic Studies, Freie Universität Berlin)
2. **“The Linguistic Ecology of AIUla (LEAIUla): urbanization and language change in north- western KSA”** (PI: Stefano Manfredi, Researcher at CNRS, Director of Laboratoire SeDyL, Structure et Dynamique des Langues, CNRS UMR-8202, INALCO, IRD UR-135).
3. **“The oasis of AIUla, future centrality?”** (PI: Sophie Brones, Associate Professor, Versailles National Architecture School, ENSA Versailles)
4. **“Learning from AIUla”** (PI: Pascal Ménoret, Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World, University of Oxford)
5. **“Archaeology in AIUla, between History and Memory”** (PI: Louis Blin, Director of Middle East Directions at the European University Institute, Florence).

WORKSHOP



“Exploring Earth as a Building Material”

October 10, 11&12 2024

CEFREPA was pleased to host a Workshop on October 10, 11 and 12 entitled: “Exploring Earth as a Building Material”. We extend our warmest thanks to Zahra Ali Baba, her colleagues at the NCCAL and to all the participants for these days of raising awareness of the interest in safeguarding ancient construction techniques, and their role in the preservation of heritage and national identity.

VISITING CEFREPA



October 17, 2024 at CEFREPA

CEFREPA was pleased to receive the visit of Dr. Ahoud Alasfour (PAAET, Kuwait), Dr. Cristian Treppesch (University of Giessen, Germany) and Dr. Izoulet Maxime (European Institute for Development Studies, France), members of the European Research Project “Elevating Higher Education public policies: an empowering SPRingboard”.

LECTURE – DEBATE



« Parcours d’un anthropologue français au Yémen »

October 23, 2024 at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

A conference titled: « Parcours d’un anthropologue français au Yémen » by Franck Mermier, anthropologist, research director at CNRS was organized by the Embassy of France in Yemen and the CEFREPA on October 23, 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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This conference traced the professional career of Dr. Franck MERMIER in Yemen between the early 1980s and the 2000s. This retrospective look aimed to combine the evocation of personal experiences with the crucial historical events that Yemen experienced during this period. The eleven years spent in Yemen, divided into different stays, allowed him to live in Taz and Sanaa and to travel to different regions of the country, notably Aden. The evocation of these experiences were an opportunity to share certain reflections on Yemeni society and on the recent history of Yemen which were concluded with some observations on the current situation, particularly on the cultural field in the broad sense.

Dr. Franck MERMIER is a specialist in anthropology and the study of societies of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab East. He held the position of Director of the French Center for Yemeni Studies from 1991 to 1997, in Sanaa. He has also published several works on Lebanon and Yemen, some of which have been translated into Arabic and have become essential references in the fields of studies devoted to urban life, political anthropology and the cultural productions of these countries. He published, among others, *Le sheikh de la nuit. Sanaa: organization of souks and urban society* (1997) and *Stories of cities: from Aden*

to Sanaa (2015) and co-directed Contemporary Yemen (1999) and Yemen. The revolutionary turning point (2012) as well as Yemen. Writing War (2018).

LECTURE – LES MARDIS DU CEFREPA



« Les relations koweïto-françaises: origine et évolution (1778-1991)»

October 29, 2024 at CEFREPA

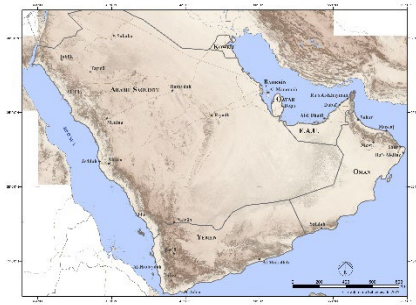
CEFREPA had the pleasure of organizing a conference dedicated to the presentation of the book by Dr. Nour Al Habshi: “Kuwaiti-French relations: origin and evolution (1778-1991)” in the presence of His Excellency the Ambassador of France in Kuwait Mr. Olivier Gauvin.

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Dedicated to the presentation of the book:”Kuwaiti-French relations: origin and evolution (1778-1991)” recently published by Dar That Al Salasil, the conference analyzes the content of this work, considered the first of its kind in the field of study of relations between Kuwait and France.

This work is based on unpublished archives on which the author worked during her stay in Paris in early 2024, and represents the first scientific effort dedicated to writing the history of relations between the two countries from the 18th century until at the end of the 20th century, thanks to the analysis of several sources written in French, Arabic and English.

Dr. Nour Al-Habshi is a professor in the Department of History and Archeology, Faculty of Letters, Kuwait University. She received the State Encouragement Prize in the field of historical and archaeological studies and popular traditions of the State of Kuwait for the year 2021, on the occasion of the publication of her book “Kuwaiti-American relations: their origins and development (1868-1991)”. She is a member of the Society of History and Antiquities of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, as well as the Union of Arab Historians. She has participated in several scientific events, and published numerous articles and works in Arabic and English.



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