



Heba Mostafa

Monday 4th June 5:30-7:00pm Library
(Department of Architecture)

A New World Order: Authority and Sacrality in Early Islamic Architecture

This lecture interrogates the development of the spaces and locales of authority in early Islam as arenas for the negotiation of religio-political authority. This includes the early mosque and the Meccan House of Assembly (*dār al-imāra*) as well as other locales related to the promotion of authority, specifically the sacred precincts (*ḥarams*) of Mecca, Madina and Jerusalem. The lecture examines the Prophet's mosque in Madina not only as a mosque space but also as a space of authority and a sacred precinct (*ḥaram*), taking into consideration Muhammad's authority as Prophet, leader, military commander and judge. The questions center on how these spaces and sites contributed to a cross-cultural initiative geared towards creating a narrative for the legitimacy of the Umayyad rulers as God's caliphs. The objective of this lecture is to articulate how the referencing of religio-political authority through space relied upon an invocation of a former presence or entity expressing the operative qualities of that authority. Thus the study allows for the interpretation of the mode of this invocation, be it through the use of inscriptions, symbolism or spatial relationships. Finally this study aims to reinterpret and contextualize early Islamic deployment of specific architectural elements with respect to their responsiveness to constructs of authority, of which this lecture will highlight a selection

Heba Mostafa received her doctorate from Cambridge University's Department of Architecture in 2012. She also holds a B.Sc in Architectural Engineering from Cairo University (2001) and an MA in Islamic Art and Architecture (2006) from the American University in Cairo. Her research focuses on the early development of Islamic architecture with an emphasis upon the interaction of the political and religious in the articulation of early Islamic authority through architecture within the mosque, palace and shrine.

All welcome.