



[Home](#) > [News and events](#) > [Events](#) > [Details](#)

CSI'S Monday Majlis: Professor Letizia Osti

Beyond the chessboard: adventures in Abbasid literature and historiography

| An Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies research event | |
|---|------------------|
| Date | 14 November 2022 |
| Time | 17:00 to 18:30 |
| Place | Online |

The CSI Monday Majlis is a Monday evening, online event, where invited speakers present on aspects of their current research

Letizia Osti, Beyond the chessboard: adventures in Abbasid literature and historiography

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://Universityofexeter.zoom.us/j/950123456789>

Abstract: Abu Bakr al-Suli (d. 335/947) was an Abbasid polymath and table companion, as well as a legendary chess player. He was perhaps best known for his work on poetry and chancery, which would have a long-lasting influence on Arabic literature. His decades of service at the court of at least three caliphs give him a unique perspective as an historian of his own time, although he is often valued as an observer rather than an interpreter of events for posterity. In *History and Memory in the Abbasid Caliphate: Writing the Past in Medieval Arabic Literature*, I attempted to illustrate how investigating the life, times and works of such a complex individual can serve as a fil rouge for tackling broader, contested concepts, such as biography, autobiography, court culture, and written culture. The result is an exploration of the ways in which the Abbasid court made sense of the past and, in general, of what 'historiography' means in a medieval Arabic context.


Micro-bio: Letizia Osti is Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Milan. She has published on classical Arabic prose and narrative techniques in biographical collections, historiography, literature, and intersections thereof. Her recent publications include *History and memory in the Abbasid caliphate: writing the past in medieval Arabic literature* (Bloomsbury, 2022) and, edited together with Maaïke van Berkel, *The Historian of Islam at Work: Essays in Honour of Hugh N. Kennedy* (Brill, 2022).

Website: <https://expertise.unimi.it/get/person/letizia-osti>

We'll be happy to welcome you!

Istvan

Provider Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies

 [Add this event to your calendar](#)

 [SHARE](#)