

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a lecture by

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Patronage and Religious Politics: Epigraphic programmes in mosques of the Saljuq period in Iran (11th-12th cent.)

Inscriptions in mosques have a potential to be read as public statements on religious and political matters. At the same time, they form an important part of architectural design. This paper is intended to scrutinize inscriptions on a particular group of buildings for their potential as public statements. During the period of the Great Saljuqs (11th-12th centuries AD), the so-called 'Sunni Revival' has been considered a driving force of socio-political developments and inter-confessional strife, strengthening the claim for authority of the Abbasid caliphate against Shiite movements. Islamic art and architecture of the Saljuq period have been interpreted as expressions of these developments; but doubts have also been raised about the reach of this model. In religious architecture, the re-building of mosques in Central and Western Iran stands out as a wave of major investment in construction and design. Should this re-building be seen under the same auspices? Inscriptions offer valuable insight, as they belong to the body of architectural decoration. It can be asked to what degree their contents was standardized, and where they contain specific information or propaganda. This way, it is possible to get a glimpse of epigraphic programmes in an important group of buildings

Thursday, 30 January, 2020, 6 pm

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