

Helen Pfeifer
An Ottoman Majlis
Monday Majlis Online on the 29th of May, 17:00-18:30 (UK time)

We'd like to invite you to the next online Monday Majlis of the Centre for the Study of Islam, Exeter:
Monday Majlis on the 29th of May, 17:00-18:30 (UK time)

Helen Pfeifer, *An Ottoman Majlis*

Registration is required. Register please on this link:

https://Universityofexeter.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAqdO2hqzkiHN12WMVd_NIT7EqbrJFDbjrv



Domed reception hall (*qā'a*) in the 'Azm palace in Damascus (c. 1749/50). In the foreground lies the entrance area (*'ataba*) with a fountain; in the background, the raised platform for receiving guests (*tazar*) is visible under an arch. (Michel Écochard Archive, photograph Maison Bonfils, 1867. Courtesy of the Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT Libraries.)

Abstract

Less well known than the *majālis* of the medieval Islamic world, but no less magnificent, were the salons of the early modern Ottoman Empire. These were held in homes and gardens across Ottoman domains. In this talk, Helen Pfeifer will take participants through a sixteenth-century salon in Damascus. She will show how all aspects of

In the spirit of the label 'Majlis' and also to make the talks even more interesting, we are experimenting with a new format presenting the topic discussed by our speaker as embedded in their own research journey. Please come and enjoy the talks and the discussions. If you'd like to be included in the CSI (Centre for the Study of Islam (Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter) mailing list, please contact the CSI Manager: Sarah Wood (s.a.wood2@exeter.ac.uk).

We'll be happy to welcome you!

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these salons, from speeches to seating arrangements, could function as an index of a man's authority. And yet, however competitive these assemblies may have been, they also served an important role in building community across a sprawling and diverse empire.



Bio

Helen Pfeifer is University Associate Professor in Early Ottoman History at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Christ's College. Her research focuses on issues of empire, culture, and nature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a focus on today's Syria and Turkey. Her first book, *Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands* (2022) studied the social and cultural consequences of the Ottoman incorporation of Arab lands in 1516-7. Her current project focuses on human-animal relations in the Ottoman Empire.

<https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/people/dr-helen-pfeifer>