

Department of Middle Eastern Studies

Seminar Series

Michaelmas Term, 2022

Fanny Bessard
University of Oxford

“Precarious Prestige: Representation and Social Reality of the *tujjār* in Baghdad (892-945)”



Fanny Bessard is Associate Professor in Medieval Eurasian History at the University of Oxford. She is a historian of early and Classical Islam with expertise in Arabic historiography, as well as a practicing archaeologist with a decade of field experience in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Her main research interest lies in the social and economic transformations of the Middle East, 700-1000. Transcending the ‘Long Late Antiquity’ model that perceives the Arab-Muslim conquests and the birth of the caliphate as symptomatic of a world in transition, she puts the emphasis on the period of assertion of the Islamic world’s identity and authority. Her research realises the potential of combining a wide corpus of literary sources in Arabic with physical and epigraphic evidence collected in the field and archives. Her approach is both comparative and global. She looks at the Middle East in a Eurasian context, drawing parallels between the Islamic world and Western Christendom, Byzantium, South-East Asia and China.

Thursday, 20 October 2022, 17.15

Room 10 (the old common room) at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.
Refreshments will be served from 17.00.