

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)  
announces a Lecture

by

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### **Indian Wisdom in *Kalīla wa-Dimna***

Much Indian material was received into classical Arabic literature. The classic of Arabic-Islamic statecraft *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, translated and expanded by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (executed 756 CE), famously reuses parts from the two Indian works, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Pañcatantra*. Despite its later popularity, the work's early textual history — before the first textual witnesses from the thirteenth century in Arabic and the medieval translations into Syriac, Greek, Persian, Hebrew, Castilian, and Latin — remains in the dark. Even from the time when full manuscripts for the Arabic version exist, these differ drastically. An early indirect transmission of the Buddhist tale of “King Shādrām and the Wise Bilād” (or Bilār), survives in a treatise on wisdom sayings, the *Jāwīdān Khirad* of Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030 CE). However, this witness to the earlier shape of the Arabic translation selects only the wisdom sayings from the tale. I will compare this to the later complete versions based on a synoptic edition of seven manuscripts (thirteenth to the seventeenth century) to investigate the manner and potential purport of their divergencies and to observe how the Arabic reception reengineered the Indian literature on practical wisdom (*nīti*) to fit it within the Arabic corpus of “applied knowledge” (*adab*).

**Thursday, 05 April 2018 at 6 pm**  
Room 0001, CSMC