Literatures of political advice encompass a delicate paradox: what were the parameters and limits of the socio-cultural terrain within which an author could give advice to the ruler on whose favour and patronage he also depended? Taking examples from the Arabic and Persian mirror literatures of the 11th to the 13th centuries, this presentation explores some of the ways in which writer-counsellors and ruler-recipients negotiated this ill-defined and unstable terrain. (Please google for the full abstract.)