



# TRAVELLERS IN OTTOMAN LANDS

PLACES FORGOTTEN, PLACES REMEMBERED  
ISTANBUL, 9–12 APRIL 2025

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## ABSTRACTS and BIODATA

### TIOL 3 Keynote and Special Speakers

***The Camera and the Notebook:  
photographic excursions in late Ottoman  
illustrated journals***

**Ahmet Ersoy**, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul,  
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The paper concentrates on the combined impact of nineteenth-century technologies of mobility (the train, the steamship, the bicycle) and visibility (photography, photomechanical reproduction) on late Ottoman visions of imperial space and its historical past. It brings into focus *fin-de-siècle* Ottoman illustrated journals, harbingers of the heavily image-centred 'information revolution' of the nineteenth century, as the prevailing media for articulating new modes of seeing and of engagement with the historical topography of the empire. Concentrating on the illustrated travel diary as a new, multi-medial genre introduced by the journals, it traces emergent modes for

envisioning the imperial past, and for creating a collective sense of memory. From the 1890s onward, as the camera was emancipated from the tripod and gained further mobility, many Ottoman authors and journal correspondents boarded steamships and trains, or took to the streets and fields, writing serialised travel diaries that were accompanied by photographs of landscapes, towns, their inhabitants, historical sites and monuments from around the empire. Thanks to the intensely visual format of the photographic excursions, travel functioned as a form of popular archival practice, whereby the readers participated in a new, extended sense of locality and spatial temporality. Conflating travel notes, stories and photographic traces of the past, they helped visualise, narrativise and memorialise historical spaces that were deemed essential for the consolidation of imperial identity.

*Keywords:* technologies of mobility, travel diaries, photographs, memorising historical spaces, historical topography  
**Dr Ahmet Ersoy**, Associate Professor, Department of History, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Türkiye. Specialist in the cultural history of the late Ottoman Empire, with particular interest in architecture, visual culture and image reproduction. He is the author of *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: reconfiguring the architectural past in a modernizing empire* (2015), and a co-editor of *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeastern Europe (1775–1945)*, 3 (2010).

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***Travel, Taste and Trend: fashion in women's travel writing and harem literature***

**Reina Lewis**, Centenary Professor of Cultural Studies, London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London, UK. TIOL3 Keynote speaker  
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This paper explores the importance of Western and Ottoman women's travel writing and harem literature for understandings of Ottoman dress and society. Within a popular middlebrow genre premised on women's gender-privileged access to segregated life, depictions of the embodied experience of dress formed a key component of the contact zone of the harem visit and accounts of women's public presence.

Western women demonstrate varied expertise across multiple dress systems, discerning trend changes in Ottoman wardrobe conventions and the use and adaptation of Western styles and fashion commodities. Within a prevailing discourse of civilisational difference, responses simultaneously applaud westernised modernisation and display

imperialist nostalgia for the loss of tradition. Ottoman women similarly deploy knowledge about local and Western fashions systems to stage demands for female and social emancipation and challenge western stereotypes.

For all writers, the enunciation of taste rests on the consciousness of being both the viewer and the viewed as their dressed bodies move through Ottoman spaces. The presence of Western bodies in Ottoman homes to travellers' harem visits to the Empress Eugenie at state events — served in the transmission of fashion knowledges. So too the fashion-scape of harem ladies' ensembles when greeting visitors and the parade of jewels on the bodies of slaves. I use the concept of aesthetic labour to move away from voluntarism in the analysis of how fashion was performed in these encounters, attending to the differential processes of subjectification engendered by the dressing of free, enslaved and manumitted bodies.

*Keywords:* harem visits, Ottoman spaces, Ottoman fashion, slaves, aesthetic labour

**Professor Reina Lewis** is Centenary Professor of Cultural Studies at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. Her books include: *Fashioning the Modern Middle East: Gender, Body and Nation* (ed. 2021 with Yasmin Nachabe Taan); *Styling South Asian Youth Cultures: Fashion, Media, Society* (ed. 2018 with Lipi Begum and Rohit K. Dasgupta); *Muslim Fashion: Contemporary Style Cultures* (2015); *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith*, (ed. 2013); *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (2004); *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (ed. 2003 with Sara Mills); *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*

(1996); and *Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Visual Cultures* (ed. 1996 with Peter Horne). Reina was consulting curator for the exhibition *Contemporary Muslim Fashions*, at the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco in 2018 and is co-editor of the accompanying book with Jill D'Allesandro. Reina currently holds a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust for her new book project *Fashion and the Embodied Expression of Belief, Worldview, and Religion*:

<https://www.arts.ac.uk/research/current-research-and-projects/fashion-and-the-embodied-expression-of-belief-worldview-and-religion>.

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***Places Misremembered: enslavement in Ottoman harems through the eyes of foreign women***

**Nancy Micklewright**, Fulbright Senior Research Grant; previously Head of Public and Scholarly Engagement at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art. TIOL Scientific Board; TIOL3 Special Speaker  
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The presence of enslaved women in Ottoman harems has long been recognised, but it is only in the past three decades or so that enslavement practices in the Ottoman Empire have been a focus of sustained scholarly attention. Descriptions of Ottoman enslavement in secondary sources vary significantly, depending on the author, the time of publication, and the author's perspective on the subject matter. Similarly, the writings of foreign women, nearly all of whom mention the fact of slavery in the harem, present a range of views of the positionality of enslaved women and speculations about their welfare. These eyewitness accounts of the institution of slavery in the Ottoman harem are a critical

source, but given the complexities of this material, how best to work with them? In this talk, I will focus on the extensive writings by nineteenth-century European visitors to Ottoman harems in Istanbul [Istanbul], comparing the subjectivities of the authors, their own positions regarding slavery and their descriptions of their harem visits as one way of understanding enslavement in the harem. A second key resource for this talk are the depictions of the harem and of harem women which are ubiquitous in the visual record of the Ottoman Empire. Travellers, photographers, Orientalist painters and Ottoman painters all produced images of the harem which range from the completely fictional to reasonably accurate depictions of Ottoman home life, and from the frankly erotic to gently romanticised views of Ottoman women. Examining this written and visual material in the context of Ottoman and international debates about slavery and the institution of the harem more generally, provides a picture of enslavement in Ottoman harems different from that derived from archival documents such as inheritance registers or other court records.

*Keywords:* slavery, Ottoman harems, painting, photography, visual records

**Dr Nancy Micklewright** is an Art Historian currently holding a Fulbright Senior Research Grant; previously Head of Public and Scholarly Engagement at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art. She is particularly interested in photography and the history of fashion. She began her career as a Professor of the History of Islamic Art and Architecture and the History of Photography, teaching for twelve years at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. Her current research focuses on the history of photography in the Ottoman empire,

particularly Istanbul. She is the author of *A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: the photography and travel writing of Annie Lady Brassey* (2003) and the editor, with Reina Lewis, of *Gender, Modernity and Liberty: Middle Eastern and Western women's writings; a critical sourcebook* (2006), as well as numerous articles. She holds a BA, MA and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in the history of Islamic art and architecture. Member of the TIOL Scientific Board.

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### ***Boxing Day 1893, when 32,251 travellers descended on Constantinople***

**Andrew Finkel**, writer, journalist and *Cornucopia* contributor, Istanbul; TIOL3 Tea-Talk speaker  
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The crowds did not flock to Istanbul's historical peninsula, rather to a colossal replica of the city, constructed under the vast glass-and-iron canopy of Olympia in West London. For a multitude unlikely to journey across Europe, Constantinople in London represented the real thing. Passengers to Addison Road station could even board a caique to ferry them down an imitation Bosphorus, through a torch-lit Byzantine cistern, into an ersatz Golden Horn. Twice daily for nearly a year, a cast of 2,000 performed *Constantinople or The Revels of the East – A Grand Terpsichorean, Romantic and Lyric Spectacle, and Aquatic Pageant, in Two Acts and Six Tableaux*. Orientalist for sure, the extravaganza still did much to reshape the popular image of the Ottoman empire at a time when the reputation of Abdülhamid II was at a low and the Realpolitik of the Great Game machinations at its height. It also gave birth to other 'constantinoples', from Buffalo to Budapest, and while little of these simulacra remain, arguably they

created an exotic, indelible, fairy-tale image of the city in the Western imagination. Shaped by commerce and love of spectacle, they also blazed an all too curious trail to today's mass tourism. Andrew **Finkel** has been based in Istanbul since 1989, he has corresponded for international media including *The Times*, *The Economist*, *TIME*, CNN and for the Latitude section of *The New York Times*. He is also a contributing editor and restaurant critic for *Cornucopia* Magazine. His articles, editorials and broadcast commentaries have appeared in an equal variety of media that includes *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *Observer*, *Financial Times*, *The Art Newspaper*, *The Spectator* and the BBC. His experiences of working in the Turkish language press, in newsrooms, as a columnist and on television, prompted him a decade ago to co-found Platform24 (P24) a human rights NGO that supports independent journalism and free expression. Among its projects is the popular Kiraathane, the Istanbul Literature House. He is the author of scholarly articles on press capture and media integrity as well as the Oxford University Press handbook, *Turkey, What Everyone Needs to Know*. His recently published debut novel *The Adventure of the Second Wife* revolves around the well-documented obsession which Abdülhamid II, the last great Ottoman Sultan, had for the stories of Sherlock Holmes.

## TIOL3 Abstracts and information about the speakers

### ***Layered Perspectives: travel albums of nineteenth-century Istanbul***

**Sibel Acar**, TOBB University of Economy and Technology, Ankara, Türkiye  
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This presentation examines how nineteenth-century travel albums of Istanbul, particularly those created after the 1880s, reflect the perspectives and visual expectations of photographers and travellers, unveiling layered perceptions of the city. The research emphasises that while photographers aimed to capture scenes and landmarks that catered to the 'tourist gaze', travellers actively engaged in the compilation and arrangement of their albums. This process enabled each traveller to craft a unique visual narrative that recontextualised the iconic imagery of Istanbul. By selecting and organising photographs, travellers personalised these commercialised photographs into their own stories.

The study further investigates how tourism influenced the content of these albums. Arriving in Istanbul with preconceived notions of the 'picturesque' and 'Oriental', travellers were often guided toward specific attractions shaped by existing city imagery from paintings, Western travelogues, and engravings. Unlike idealised images, however, photographs provided a more direct, though still curated, representation of the city, transcending established visual categories. Consequently, albums documented both the city and the travellers' interactions with it.

This study focuses on two distinct albums from the Pierre de Gigord Collection at the Getty Institute in Los Angeles as case studies, each highlighting different organisational and visual approaches. The untitled album follows a specific route, while 'Turquie' categorises its content by building type, including interiors and architectural details.

**Keywords:** nineteenth-century Istanbul, photography, travel albums, tourist gaze

**Dr Sibel Acar** is an Assistant Professor at TOBB University of Economy and Technology; an architectural historian with a doctorate and master's degree from the History of Architecture Program at Middle East Technical University, where she also earned her BSc in Civil Engineering. Her research interests include architectural photography, nineteenth-century Istanbul, and historiography.

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### ***Travels of Robert Blair Munro Binning: exploring the nineteenth-century cultural landscape and socio-economic spaces of Ottoman Egypt and the Levant***

**Emine Sökmen Adalı**, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye  
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This paper explores the mid-nineteenth-century socio-economic and cultural landscape of the Ottoman Empire through the travels of Robert Blair Munro Binning (1814–1891), an administrator with the East India Company in Madras. Binning's journeys across the Levant and particularly Egypt, though limited by health issues, offer a unique perspective on the region's social, economic, and cultural dynamics during the 'long century' of Ottoman rule. His detailed diary, bequeathed to New College, Edinburgh, and later transferred to Edinburgh University's Main Library, provides invaluable insights into key locations such as Cairo. These records not only capture the architectural and administrative framework of Ottoman influence in Egypt but also explore the archaeology and historical context of these regions.

Drawing from Binning's meticulous observations, this paper examines the ways in which the Ottoman administration impacted the socio-economic fabric of Egypt, illustrating the empire's control over urban and rural spaces and its interactions with local

communities. The diary also highlights the Ottoman policies that shaped both social and economic life, presenting evidence of the complex relationship between central authority and local governance. By integrating Binning's first-hand accounts with historical and archaeological analysis, this study enriches our understanding of the period's administrative structures and their cultural and historical implications.

*Keywords:* Robert Blair Munro Binning, Egypt, Levant, cultural landscape, socio-economic landscape

**Dr Emine Sökmen Adalı** graduated from the Ankara University History Department and received her PhD from the Middle East Technical University, focusing on the fortresses of the Mithridatic Kingdom and their spatial attributes to shed light on their significance in the administration of the Pontic Kingdom. Her research focuses on Hellenistic and Roman Pontus and Galatia, with active participation in archaeological projects in these regions. She has also studied the administration of the Temple of Augustus and Rome in Ancyra during the Ottoman period. Since 2017, she has been leading the Örukaya Archaeological Research Project, focusing on the hydraulic landscape through the study of a Roman dam in Galatia. She was previously a postdoctoral fellow at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilisations (ANAMED). In 2022–2023 she was an academic visitor at the University of Edinburgh's School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, supported by a research scholarship from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) for her project to map Roman dams in the Mediterranean world and study technology transfer. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the Social Sciences University of Ankara in Türkiye.

***The Travelling Mind and the Mindful Traveller: Orientalist-Nahdawi encounters in Ottoman lands***

**Feras Alkabani**, Associate Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature, University of Sussex, Brighton, Sussex, UK  
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The long nineteenth century was an era of transformation for the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It witnessed the gradual — yet assertive — expansion of European imperialism and colonial presence in the region. Never did so many Orientalists and Arab travel-writers traverse the Mediterranean in search of knowledge, ideas, hope, fantasies, clichés and outright Otherness and exoticism.

Despite this unprecedented mutual intercultural awareness, more stereotypes and generalisations were being produced about the 'Other'; that is, the 'Ottoman-Arab' for Orientalists and the 'European-Frank' for *Nahdawi* scholars, many of whom were driven by an Arabist nationalist fervour.

This paper explores the movement of ideas, motifs and stereotypes across the Mediterranean between an expansive European imperialism and a declining Ottoman Empire with festering separatism, a rise in ethno-cultural nationalist awareness, and anti-Ottoman sentiment. Specifically, it examines the *œuvres* of two eccentric British Orientalists and travel-writers, Sir Richard Burton (1821–1890) and T.E. Lawrence (1888–1935), and what the Ottoman-Arab East came to embody for them: a Romantic reincarnation of the lands of *The Arabian Nights*, sexual enlightenment, homoeroticism and heroism — an escape from a monstrous European modernity into a Uranian reverie.

I juxtapose both Orientalists' views with the ways in which contemporaneous Arab travel-writers in Europe had been constructing the 'West' to their audiences at home in relation to both: their contemporary reality (and decline) under Ottoman-Turkish rule on the one hand, and a romanticised distant past (a 'Golden Age of Islam') when the Caliphate and the seat of power were in Arab hands, on the other.

I explore the extent to which ‘mindful travellers’ may have given in to their ‘travelling minds’ *before* they set off on their voyages into the ‘unknown’, which, even when ‘made known’, appears to have been dictated by strong narratives of wishful thinking, desire and the power of discourse.

*Keywords:* Orientalism, sexuality, Ottoman Empire, *Nahḍa*, Sir Richard Burton, T.E. Lawrence

**Dr Feras Alkabani** is Associate Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at the University of Sussex, where he co-directs the Middle East and North Africa Centre at Sussex (MENACS). He is a Trustee of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) and a member of the Editorial Board of *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies* (North Carolina State University); co-president and principal investigator of the AHRC-funded Syrian Academics and Researchers’ Network (SARN) in the UK; author of *Richard Burton, T.E. Lawrence and the Culture of Homoerotic Desire: Orientalist depictions of Arab sexuality*, published by Bloomsbury on 17 October 2024.

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### ***Ivan Bunin in Istanbul: the anxious travel, decay, and nostalgia of Bird’s Shadow***

**Evan Alterman**, Department of Comparative Literature, Koç University, Sarıyer, İstanbul, Türkiye  
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Ivan Bunin (1870, Voronezh [Russian Empire]–1953, Paris) figures amongst the most acclaimed Russophone authors, the first to receive a Nobel Prize for Literature. His biography and corpus reveal an infatuation with travel, underscored by his thirteen voyages to Istanbul. In *Bird’s Shadow* [*Ten Ptitsy*, 1908], a composite travelogue reflecting his multiple journeys there, Bunin the narrator-traveller seeks humanity’s primordial origin. Instead, he finds an Istanbul teeming with death and deterioration.

My broader research shows how travelogues written between Russophone and Turkophone spaces sustainedly nourish images

of empire. Within this context, I argue that *Bird’s Shadow* projects imperial visions alongside anxiety about imperial collapse. Ubiquitous testaments to decay — souvenirs, cemeteries, the Hagia Sophia, and the Orthodox monasteries (*podvoriia*) where Bunin sojourns — serve as vessels for this anxiety, directed towards the Ottoman and Russian Empires alike. Despite such pervasive apprehension, within and surrounding *Bird’s Shadow* are hints of a futurity anchored in empire.

After the fall of the Russian Empire, Bunin found himself in exile, temporarily staying yet again in Istanbul before settling in Paris. There, he persistently redacted *Bird’s Shadow*. Such nostalgia for empire — and for an empire that wasn’t his! — ultimately resulted in Bunin’s continually ‘resuscitating’ the Ottoman capital. *Bird’s Shadow* and the eponymous cycle containing it have largely been neglected by scholars, yet its critical re-examination reveals the constitutive presence of anxiety — an affective mode little analysed in travelogue criticism (especially outside the Anglophone tradition) — in texts emerging from between waning empires. I thus reconfigure Mary Louise Pratt’s conceptualisation of the ‘contact zone’ and introduce travelogues to Laura Doyle’s schema of ‘inter-imperiality’. Revisiting *Bird’s Shadow* also shows how travelogues imagine revitalised empires. While travel accounts may keep empires alive after they fall, Bunin’s text shows how these accounts pre-emptively sense (and attempt to combat) imperial collapse.

*Keywords:* Russian Empire, Ivan Bunin, Russian-Ottoman travelogues, İstanbul, nostalgia

**Dr Evan Alterman** completed his PhD in Slavic languages and literatures at Stanford University in September 2024. His dissertation, ‘Between and Beyond Empires: Russian-Ottoman and Soviet–Turkish travelogues’, studies how travel accounts comprehensively respond to, and record, continuities and ruptures between empires and their successors. His translation of Mykhaylo Semenko’s pan-futurist manifestos will feature in a forthcoming volume entitled *Ukrainian Literary Modernism* (Academic Studies Press).

Other research interests include depictions of Freemasonry in Russophone literature; Volga Tatar intellectual and literary history; folklore as aesthetic, style and technique in Russophone literature of the early twentieth century; Nasreddin Hoca in the Soviet Union; intertexts between Russophone literature and the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan; and thematic and formal affinities between Anton Chekhov and Sait Faik Abasıyanık. From winter 2025, he will be an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Koç University.

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***Exploring Human Mobility: travellers and their accommodation in sixteenth-century Üsküdar***

**Mine Arslan**, TUBITAK Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Istanbul, Türkiye  
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This study attempts to identify individuals who were not part of the settled population and were passing through Üsküdar or temporarily settled in the town at the beginning of the second half of the sixteenth century. To predict the reasons behind their travel or sojourn in Üsküdar, their accommodation, identities and occupations will be scrutinised from their probate inventories. The main aim in deciphering these travellers' identities and exploring the places where they stayed during their journeys is to understand mobility in the expanding city of Üsküdar.

At the end of the reign of Suleiman the Lawgiver, with the rise of the population there was a significant increase in the number of neighbourhoods, religious buildings (mosques), social, commercial, and educational institutions such as schools (*medresas*), accommodation facilities (caravansaries), baths and bazaars. The years between 1560 and 1570 witnessed a transition in the history of Üsküdar and provided an adequate sample of records of probate inventories that were selected from twenty-two *sicils*. These enabled me to examine the growth of the city as reflected in the movements of a floating population, including travellers, passengers, sojourners, religious scholars, day labourers, household

servants, pedlars, and unemployed. Hence, while determining the individuals who were part of a floating population, the research also aims to contribute to the growing social and economic stature of the town with a perspective based on human mobility.

*Keywords:* human mobility, travellers, Üsküdar, probate Inventories

**Dr Mine Arslan** holds a PhD in History from Istanbul's Medeniyet University, specialising in early modern Ottoman History. She previously obtained an MA in Islamic History (2016) and BA in Econometrics (2012) from Istanbul University. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the urban development and population of Üsküdar during the period of Suleiman the Lawgiver (r.1520–1566). The emergence of Üsküdar as a town from the second half of the fifteenth century and its development as a city in the sixteenth century were analysed and the population of Üsküdar estimated for the beginning and end of this period by using the Ottoman *tahrir* registers. For comparative analysis of the population, sharia court records (*sicils*) were used to assess the reliability of the *tahrir* data and its potential as a source for population studies. The research aimed to make a methodological contribution to Ottoman demographic history. After earning her PhD, she was invited to the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, in Paris to present her dissertation there. She is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at Sabancı University in a TUBITAK project (1001) on gender inequality in Ottoman Crete, analysing data from Ottoman primary sources such as *tahrir* registers and probate inventories.

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***Cultural Exchanges on the Borders of Empires: nineteenth-century Scottish missionaries in the Crimea***

**Ines Aščerić-Todd**, Senior Lecturer in Arabic & Middle Eastern Cultures and Head of Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies; University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. TIOL committee member  
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A small collection of Turkish manuscripts originally donated to the New College Library and now housed in the Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, was acquired, and in part produced, by the Reverend John Dickson, who served in the Scottish Mission in Astrakhan in the North Caucasus between 1815 and 1825. Astrakhan was established as an offshoot of the original Scottish mission in Karass, partly due to the latter's difficulties with unstable security conditions and outbreaks of disease.

Following this move, the mission in Astrakhan enjoyed a period of impressive productivity, printing more than 20,000 tracts in Arabic, Turkish, and many of its lesser-known dialects, some of its publications reaching audiences as far as Tabriz.

In such a culturally and linguistically diverse region, acquiring the knowledge needed for their proselytising activities was one which many missionaries found difficult, if not impossible. Most, however, were well versed in Arabic and/or Persian, alongside Kipchak Turkish, and in some cases, Russian too. While this knowledge was acquired with the primary aim of preaching to the Muslim communities, one glance at the Dickson manuscript collection shows that Dickson's interests were by no means one-directional and went beyond the basic translational-propagating needs. Moreover, it shows that the female members of his family — often mentioned only in passing in reports and described as 'pious wives doing honour to the mission' or 'fine children' — shared his interest in the local culture and religion.

This paper examines the contents of the Dickson collection, alongside missionary reports from Astrakhan and other stations in the region, in order to paint a picture of the intellectual life of these Scottish missionaries

on the often-forgotten borderlands between Christian and Muslim realms, and to glean an insight into reciprocal cultural interactions which took place between these Scottish Christian families and their Tatar Muslim neighbours.

*Keywords:* Scottish missionaries, Tatar Muslims, Astrakhan, North Caucasus, Turkish manuscripts

**Dr Ines Aščerić-Todd** is a Senior Lecturer in Arabic and Middle Eastern Cultures, and Head of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh, UK. She has special interests in Middle Eastern, and particularly Ottoman, cultural and religious history, especially Sufism and Ottoman dervish orders, conversions to Islam, and interfaith relations in the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Europe. Dr Aščerić-Todd has been a trustee and committee member of the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE), and an organising committee member of *Travellers in Ottoman Lands: The Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond* (TIOL2, Sarajevo, 2022) and *Travellers in Ottoman Lands: Places Forgotten, Places Remembered* (TIOL3, Istanbul, 2025). She contributed to and joint-edited *Travellers in Ottoman Lands II: the Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2024).

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***Immigrants, State, and Reshaping the Urban Landscape: the case of Ottoman Transjordan through the eyes of contemporary travellers***

**Muhammed Aslaner**, DPhil candidate, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford (St John's College), University of Oxford, Oxford, UK  
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The Circassians' expulsion from the Caucasus by the Russian Empire, and their subsequent migration to Ottoman lands, has received considerable scholarly attention. Historians of the Ottoman Empire and the Circassian community have documented how vast numbers of migrants contributed to revitalising agriculture and expanding the central state authority in Anatolia and the

Balkans. However, their migration to Transjordan (1878–1914) is an understudied topic. Drawing on the memoirs of travellers to the region, this paper explores how Circassian immigration to Transjordan shaped the urban landscape in the region, and how these changes transformed the Circassian community itself.

I argue that the Circassian settler villages in the region quickly allied with the Ottoman state against the threat posed by the Bedouin nomads. In exchange for material and financial support against the Bedouins, Circassian immigrants facilitated the expansion of the central state apparatus in Trans-jordan. This alliance resulted in fundamental changes in the urban landscape of the region. While travellers to the region in the 1880s talk about a desert with little urban activity, those who visited the region in the early 1900s were fascinated by its advanced urban sophistication. These changes transformed the Circassian community as well.

This research utilises accounts from six travellers —Laurence Oliphant (1880), C.R. Conder (1883), Gottlieb Schumacher (1888), Gertrude Bell (1902), Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (1903) and Ada Goodrich-Freer (1905) — to analyse their observations on the Circassian settlements. Additionally, the paper introduces an unexplored primary source, the notebook of a rising Circassian military leader, Mirza Wasfi MW (Department of Documentation and National Archives, Amman), which provides an insight into the activities of an agent in the alliance between the Circassian community and the Ottoman state. Finally, the paper uses Abdulhamid II's photo album, demonstrating the scale of urban expansion in Circassian towns during this period.

*Keywords:* Russia, Circassians, Transjordan, urban sophistication, settler villages

**Muhammed Aslaner**, DPhil candidate, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford (St. John's College) through OOC AHRC DTP scholarships, generously co-funded by Clarendon and All Souls. His research focuses on the role of the irregular Circassian, Chechen and Bedouin forces in the Ottoman war efforts during World War I. He specialises

in late Ottoman history with a particular focus on military and social history of World War I; BA History at Bogazici University, Türkiye; MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oxford (St Antony's College) as a TEV-UK Scholar. While continuing his DPhil at Oxford, he is also working as a research assistant to Professor Adeel Malik (Oxford University) and as the academic director of the UK-MENA Network based in London. He has worked in the Ottoman/Turkish State Archives (BOA/BCA), Ottoman Military Archives (ATASE), and Jordan National Archives, as well as on personal diaries and memoirs written in Ottoman Turkish, Turkish, Arabic, English and French.

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***The Brewer and the Butler: 'Dutch' beer production and consumption in early modern Istanbul***

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Some 150 years prior to the foundation of the Swiss Bomonti brothers' beer brewery and factory at the end of the nineteenth century, a 'Dutch' beer brewer established a brewery in the neighbourhood of Beyoğlu in Istanbul. Before coming to Istanbul, Liège-born Fourneau (d.Istanbul, 1730) was employed until 1711 at the beer brewery 'Het Luykse Wapen' in Delft, where he brewed so-called Liège beer. After a breach of contract in Delft, Fourneau travelled to Istanbul with his wife and two sons sometime between 1715 and 1724. Even though beer was not a common beverage in the Ottoman capital at the time, master brewer Fourneau had an established clientele, mainly among diplomatic representatives and their communities comprised of European travellers, merchants, and ambassadorial staff.

Fourneau's beer was not only consumed at the Dutch Embassy but also sold in the tavern of Barchon (d.1731, Istanbul), who served as the butler of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis Calkoen (d.1764). Upon their founders'

demise, the inventories of the beer brewery and the tavern were registered in the Dutch Consular Court's records. This paper examines the operation and clientele of these establishments during a period when beer production and consumption were rare in Istanbul. It also places these inventory records, along with the associated cost and debt registries, within the context of Ottoman consumption culture.

*Keywords:* beer, Istanbul, Dutch consular court, consumption studies, eighteenth century

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### ***Mapping Sixteenth-Century English Travel Routes in the Ottoman Empire***

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This paper presents an ongoing research project that maps the travel routes of English travellers to the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century, examining their journeys within the broader context of Anglo-Ottoman relations.

The study addresses the following research questions: What routes did English travellers follow to reach Ottoman lands? Which ports did they use to enter the empire? Were their travel destinations limited to key trade hubs, or did they venture into the interior? For what purposes did they undertake their travels? How did these dynamics evolve throughout the century? By exploring these questions, the project seeks to determine how English travellers navigated Ottoman transportation, trade and information networks.

Methodologically, the project employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining historical and geographical analyses. It uses ArcGIS to visualise travel routes, providing a spatial understanding of these journeys. Primary sources include travelogues and other personal narratives from sixteenth-century English travellers, alongside secondary works, including those by Alfred Wood, Stefanos Yerasimos and Gerald MacLean. The study explores the concept of 'imperial envy', as discussed by MacLean, to examine the dynamics of early English-Ottoman interactions and the role of these travellers in shaping perceptions and exchanges between the two powers.

The study aims to contribute to our understanding of sixteenth-century Anglo-Ottoman relations by shedding light on the diverse purposes, methods, and trajectories of English travel. By mapping these routes, it aspires to offer fresh insights into the geopolitical and cultural dimensions of early

modern travel, enriching both historical scholarship and digital humanities.

*Keywords:* England, Ottoman Empire, digital history, travel in the sixteenth century

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### ***European Travellers and the Role of Local Embassy Staff as Travel Guides In Eighteenth-Century Istanbul***

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In the eighteenth century, European travellers increasingly visited Istanbul. It had become a favourite travel destination for a young curious elite, as well as for artists and scholars. Famous artists such as Jean Baptiste Vanmour and Jean-Etienne Liotard, scholars such as Richard Pococke, and adventurers such as Giacomo Casanova visited the Ottoman capital. The art works they made, and travel accounts they wrote still constitute important sources for scholars of European-Ottoman relations. This paper will focus on the embassy staff members who welcomed them in Istanbul as hosts. What types of services did embassies offer to travellers? What was organised for them? What advice did they receive from locals — Europeans who had sometimes lived in the Ottoman Empire

all their lives? What tourist highlights in Istanbul did the locals advise travellers to visit?

European daily diplomacy in Istanbul, which included the reception of foreign travellers, relied very heavily on local embassy staff. These locals have been described as 'trans-imperial subjects' (E.N. Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, Cambridge: CUP, 2012), as they almost always came from multicultural backgrounds. The local staff often possessed a great knowledge of Ottoman society, knew local traditions and languages, and used their own family networks to further European diplomacy. Recent scholarship has focused on the position of go-betweens, such as dragomans, and the way they made themselves invaluable as 'cultural and linguistic brokers'. But, as I argue, not only interpreters and ambassadors, but also secretaries, chancellors and their wives played a key role in daily diplomacy and in assisting foreign travellers as go-betweens. The way these staff members explained Ottoman culture to travellers, introduced them to Ottoman customs, visited tourist sites with them, and presented them to other locals, can tell us a great deal about the role and knowledge of these intermediaries in eighteenth-century Istanbul.

*Keywords:* Istanbul, embassies, go-betweens, tourist sites, embassy officials

**Dr Rosanne Baars** (PhD 2019, University of Amsterdam) is a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University in the Netherlands. She works on a project, financed by a VENI grant from the Dutch Research Council (NWO), entitled 'Women, Intelligence, and Diplomacy in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul' (2024–2027). To further our understanding of the role of women in diplomacy, this project postulates that we should study local women in Istanbul, who were essential for the functioning of European embassies. These women would undertake the job of gathering intelligence, tasks that were key activities connected to diplomacy, using their local networks and knowledge to inform the embassy.

In her research, Rosanne Baars attempts to grasp what people in premodern societies knew about the world around them, how they

perceived their world, and how they got their information. Her book, *Rumours of Revolt. Civil War and the Emergence of a Transnational News Culture in France and the Netherlands, 1561–1598*, was published by Brill in 2021. In 2014, she published an edition of the travel journal of an eighteenth-century ship's surgeon. Her research on news and diplomacy has also been published in *French History*, *Renaissance Studies*, and *Early Modern Low Countries*.

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***Colonial Exoticism Versus National Nostalgia in Early Twentieth-Century Travel Writing: a comparative reading of Trabzon in Isabella Bird and Mediha Kayra***

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This study discusses two unique perspectives on Trabzon (historically called Trebizond), a city on the Silk Road within the Ottoman Empire, as found in Isabella Bird's *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1890) and Mediha Kayra's *Hoşça Kal Trabzon* [Goodbye Trabzon], a World War I Notebook. Written within a few decades of each other, these two accounts portray the same city from different perspectives. As an English colonialist, Bird emphasised the city's strategic and geopolitical significance to the British Empire with references to Oriental exoticism. In her depiction of the city, Bird's narrative repeats a widespread Western fascination with the 'exotic East': an unfamiliar space in a distant land.

On the other hand, as a Turkish woman, Kayra provides a nationalist and personal perspective during the turbulent times of World War I. Having an emotional and cultural attachment to the city, the focus of Kayra, a ten-year-old child, was on a child's perception of war, displacement and migration. The Russian bombardment which forced the family to flee Trabzon meant that Kayra carried the weight of displacement and migration as a consequence. The geopolitical conflict, the

city's struggles, the lived experiences of its inhabitants are vivid and intimate in Kayra's depiction.

To understand how Bird's outsider viewpoint and Kayra's insider perspective shaped their portrayals of Trabzon, and what these differing accounts reveal about the city's shifting identity during a time of geopolitical upheaval, this study applies postcolonial theory. By comparing these two accounts, this study focuses on how Trabzon was depicted in different narratives that were shaped by imagined and remembered perspectives, thus providing new insights into how travel writing can mirror broader cultural and political shifts.

*Keywords:* women travellers, geopolitical conflict, Trabzon, nineteenth century, English attitudes to the Ottoman Empire

**Dr Şennur Bakırtaş** earned her PhD from Atatürk University, completing a one-year fellowship at the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Abdulrazak Gurnah, laureate of the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature. She serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Atatürk University, Erzurum, Türkiye. In addition to her academic work, she is a translator, and interpreter for the OECD election observation mission in Eastern Anatolia. Most recently, she is a visiting scholar at San José State University, USA, where she focuses on adaptations of postcolonial novels.

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***Tracing Antiquity: Count von Ulfeldt's Great Embassy to Constantinople in 1740 and the reception of ancient heritage***

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Two descriptions of the Habsburg embassy to the Sublime Porte led by Count von Ulfeldt contain invaluable information about ancient

monuments in the Balkans. Despite their long-standing existence, the two works remain unpublished, with the manuscripts currently housed in the Austrian National Library. The report places particular emphasis on the information provided about ancient monuments, the perceptions of these antiquities by Western travellers, and their role in Habsburg propaganda. The authors of the two travelogues, Johann von Kempelen and Captain Schad, remain relatively unknown. Upon their return to Vienna, both individuals submitted their diaries for evaluation to the Imperial Chancellery. The work of Kempelen, included in the embassy lists as 'secretary and historiographer', was deemed to be of greater value than that of Captain Schad.

On their way to Istanbul, the two travellers took different routes. Kempelen accompanied the ambassador on the land route from Belgrade via Sofia to Edirne and the Ottoman capital, while Schad continued along the Danube to Ruse and joined the embassy in Edirne. Both travelogues are in the form of diaries, providing a detailed account of the route traversed, the settlements encountered, the meetings held, and the sights observed. Both Kempelen and Schad were drawn to ancient monuments, and their descriptions were included in the official transcripts submitted for evaluation by the Imperial Chancellery. The texts are accompanied by drawings and sketches of ancient ruins and inscriptions. On the subject of antiquities, the two travelogues are not anomalous but rather part of a tradition that can be traced back to the fifteenth century. Ancient monuments were described earlier in travel accounts of Imperial envoys and ambassadors, but the subject was approached for the first time with a clearly marked research interest by Johann von Kempelen and Captain Schad, who attempted to explain and date the ruins seen along the way.

*Keywords:* Habsburg Embassy, ancient monuments, inscriptions, ruins

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research interests include the history of Habsburg-Ottoman relations, geopolitics, regional and military history, peace treaties in the early modern period and Digital Humanities. From 2011 to 2012, she was a research fellow at the Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz. She also specialises in the history of Vienna, Munich, Cologne, Hamburg and Wolfenbüttel. She is the author of articles and monographs as well as the editor of volumes on the history of south-eastern Europe in the pre-modern era. In 2021 she received the Academy Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities for outstanding scientific achievements. As of 2023, she is a leading Digital Humanities project team researcher focused on studying cultural and national heritage.

**Dr Ivan Valchev** is a Associate Professor at Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Bulgaria. His interests focus on ancient religion and especially on the religion of the Roman provinces of Thrace and Lower Moesia. He has published the monographs *Extraurban Sanctuaries in the Roman Province of Thrace (1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> Century)* (Sofia: St Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2015) and *The Cult of Jupiter in Lower Moesia in the Roman Age* (Sofia: St Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2022), both in Bulgarian.

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***Wordy Ambitions and a Quiet Career: an eighteenth-century Arab trader's involuntary homemaking in Istanbul***

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The Ottoman Empire set the framework for remarkably stable patterns of mobility, be it voluntary voyage or migration, enforced exile or captivity, or a grudgingly accepted necessity to change place. The means of mobilisation that girded these mobilities were often expressed through emotionally charged descriptions of place and space. The praise of local merits (*faḍā'il*), the stranger's nostalgic memory of the homeland (*ḥanīn al-waṭan*), the literature of longing for the great religious

sites (*tashwīq* and *madh*), the celebration of sociability (*uns*) and the lament of loneliness (*ghurba*) can all be read as performances of spatial belonging or estrangement.

Personal notebooks from the early modern Ottoman Empire are still exceedingly rare finds. The manuscript of an Arab tradesman and dabbler in poetry, known as the ‘Aṭṭār al-Shāmī (alive 1765), offers rare insights into the mobility of a person outside of (but perhaps adjacent to) the elite circles documented in the canonised literature of this period. The manuscript begins ambitiously like a belletristic travelogue, telling of the ‘Aṭṭār’s many business trips to Jerusalem, which also allowed him to rub shoulders and even exchange lines of verse with some of the famous Arab Sufi scholars of his day. The narrative hints at a legal conflict with a business partner that forced him to seek help in the Ottoman capital. The narrative then trails off into isolated notes that grant glimpses at a now quieter life in Istanbul, where the ‘Aṭṭār apparently chose to settle. The paper will investigate what can be learned from this notebook about the strategies and emotions in the ‘Aṭṭār’s mobility, relocation, and homemaking. I will argue that the memory of eminent places and the cultivation of longing and belonging were crucial resources for the realisation of not only this particular case of movement in the early modern Ottoman Empire.

*Keywords:* ‘Aṭṭār al-Shāmī, Arab trader, early modern, memory, longing

**Dr Björn Bentlage** is a lecturer at the University of Bern and an associate postdoctoral fellow at the LMU Munich. He obtained his PhD in Islamic Studies from MLU Halle-Wittenberg in 2016. His research interests include Arabic travel writing in the early modern Ottoman Mashreq, the topic of his now concluded habilitation thesis.

## **Giambattista Toderini and Della Letteratura Turchesca**

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Giambattista Toderini, born in Venice, stayed in Istanbul from October 1781 to May 1786 and served as a tutor to the son of Venetian *bailo* Augustine Garzoni. Sixty years after the Ottoman–Venetian border was finalised in 1721, Istanbul had been seeking ways to draw closer to the West. The knowledge Toderino gathered during this time there formed the basis of a book reminiscent of the detailed reports that *bailos* had been compiling regularly from the fifteenth century.

Toderini’s book contains important insights into his interactions with the intellectual circles of the era, as well as valuable information about the Turkish education system, librarianship and printing. His three-volume work, *Della Letteratura Turchesca* [‘Turkish Literature’], published in Venice in 1787, is a comprehensive account of Ottoman manuscripts, their authors, *madrāsas* and schools, libraries, literature and scientific life.

What makes Toderini’s work particularly significant is its broad scope. During his stay in Istanbul, he explored topics ranging from Latin and Greek manuscripts, ancient coins and currencies, and books printed in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and European languages, to engravings, maps, celestial charts, the Turkish education system, inventories of works in major libraries and the art of painting. Another noteworthy aspect of his work is the historical context in which it was written. The late eighteenth century marked the final phase of traditional Ottoman art before it was heavily influenced by Western art.

This study examines the cultural atmosphere and literature of Istanbul as experienced and described by Giambattista Toderini. It aims to portray Istanbul through the lens of Toderini, with references to governmental, political, administrative and cultural developments. Additionally, the study incorporates texts written by artists who visited Istanbul before Toderini, as well as those by his contemporaries, to provide a

broader depiction of the city during this period.

*Keywords:* Venice, Istanbul, eighteenth century, Ottoman manuscripts, intellectual circles

**Nazlı Beşer Güngör**, Senior Specialist in the Collection of Visual and Decorative Arts at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum. With a degree in Art History and having completed advanced Museum Studies, she has been working in the fields of museum studies and art history for many years, with expertise in curatorial practices, exhibition management and museum communication. At the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, she has contributed to a wide range of projects, from collection exhibitions to shows of renowned artists. Thus, she has developed an in-depth knowledge of art history, museology and visual culture. One of her research interests is in travel writing within the context of the Ottoman Empire. She is particularly interested in gaining a deeper understanding of how Western intellectuals' engagement with Ottoman culture shaped their writings and the broader narrative of the time.

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***Botanical Pursuits and Maritime Realities: Tournefort's expedition to the Aegean Islands (1700–1701)***

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This paper examines the complex interplay of botanical exploration, scientific documentation and the logistical challenges faced by botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort and his companions during their 1700 expedition to Ottoman Crete and the Aegean Islands. Over their three-month stay, they traversed the island, engaging in the practice of 'herborising', which involved the meticulous collection and documentation of plant specimens in diverse terrains. Tournefort's correspondence reveals the difficulties they encountered in capturing the flora of the region, often hindered by rugged

landscapes and the rarity of certain plants. The meticulous nature of their work is illustrated through a three-step process of botanical illustration, demonstrating the transition from field sketches to finished drawings, highlighting the rigorous scientific methodology employed in early botanical studies. The paper further explores the logistical frameworks that governed the transportation of specimens, emphasising the essential role of consular support in facilitating their movement. The correspondence between Tournefort and various consuls underscores the importance of established networks in navigating Ottoman territories.

The reliance on merchant vessels for transporting plant specimens introduced significant risks, as evidenced by the precarious conditions of maritime travel during this period. The narrative illustrates not only the physical challenges of navigation amidst potential corsair threats but also the emotional toll of uncertainty regarding the fate of their collected specimens. Ultimately, this investigation underscores the intertwined nature of scientific pursuit and the socio-political context of seventeenth-century exploration, illustrating how botanical studies were shaped by both natural and human factors, and contributing to the broader understanding of early modern scientific practices in the Mediterranean region.

*Keywords:* Botanical specimens, Tournefort, Ottoman islands. maritime travel

**Aristide Chryssoulis.** After a History BA at Panthéon-Sorbonne University, he pursued a Master's degree at the École normale supérieure before completing a MPhil at the University of Cambridge. His first Master's thesis examined the French consular system in the Aegean Sea and islands in the late seventeenth century; his second prolonged this topic by way of a comparison with the English consuls. He is now a PhD candidate in History in the Department of History, University of Cambridge, supervised by Dr Kate Fleet and funded by a Cambridge Trust International Scholarship. And attached to Peterhouse. His research attempts a social and legal history of the Aegean over a long



nineteenth century. It addresses this topic from the islanders' quotidian experiences, as they adapted to changes in and to different jurisdictions across a connected maritime space. Those experiences and legal knowledge offer entry points into insular governance mechanisms and volatile insular identities within the Ottoman Aegean. His research contributes to the overlooked case of the Ottoman semi-sovereign Principality of Samos and the legal conditions of its inhabitants. He has presented his research at multiple occasions and has published an article on the Byzantine historian Helen Antoniadis-Bibicou: 'Bibliographie d'Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou', *Études Balkaniques* HS1 (2021: 151–158).

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***The Mysterious Travels of Tahra Bey, Fakir, across the post-Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean***

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In 1925 a strange man with mystical abilities appeared in Paris. Calling himself Tahra Bey the Egyptian fakir, he was able to withstand extreme pain, lying on a bed of nails and inserting needles into his body with ease. He was even able to put himself into a catatonic state and bury himself alive for up to twenty-four hours, so he claimed. Tahra Bey was cloaked in mystery, but one of the biggest mysteries was who he was and where he came from.

This paper traces the various stories about his early life between his birth in Istanbul in 1900 as Krikor Kalfayan and his well-documented arrival in Athens in 1923 as Tahra Bey, the Armenian fakir. The journey takes us between Smyrna (İzmir), Cairo, Alexandria and Salonica (Thessaloniki). It was a mythical journey, half-truth, half-fantasy that mirrors the journey of many other refugees in the Eastern Mediterranean in the early 1920s.

*Keywords:* Egyptian, Armenian, mythical journeys, truth and fantasy, mysticism

**Dr Raphael Cormack** is Assistant Professor of Arabic at Durham University, UK. He is the

author of *Midnight in Cairo* (2021), a history of Egypt's nightlife told from the perspective of its most prominent female stars. He is also the editor of two collections of short stories translated from Arabic: *The Book of Khartoum* (2016) and *The Book of Cairo* (2019). His next book, *Holy Men of the Electromagnetic Age*, will be published in the UK and USA in March 2025.

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***Travellers in Ottoman Eyüp***

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At the crossroads of the early Islamic, Byzantine and Ottoman periods, the shrine complex of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (*d.c.* 669) is imbued with intense religious and political symbolism in Istanbul. Said to house the relics of al-Anṣārī, a companion and host of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina, who died before the city walls during the Umayyad siege in the seventh century, the shrine functioned both as a *lieu de mémoire* of early Muslim presence in the city and as a symbol of the divine support behind the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. Becoming a significant place of *ziyāra* in the cityscape, it played a central role in the symbolic Islamisation of the new Ottoman capital.

By comparing the main differences between Muslim narratives in Arabic and Turkish, this paper will explore the observations and impressions of European travellers such as Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1551–1610), Reinhold Lubenau (1556–1631), Jacob von Betzek (travelling in 1564–1565, 1572, 1573), Stephan Gerlach (1546–1612), John Covel (1638–1722), Domingo Badia y Leblich (1767–1818) and Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867–1928) concerning the shrine. It will also compare these accounts with those of the local Christian residents of the city. In doing so, the paper will examine the multiplicity of narratives surrounding the origins of the shrine and its function in Ottoman religiosity. Through this analysis, it will offer a case study of the spatial dynamics of sacred places, focusing on the selectivity of collective memory.

*Keywords:* Eyüp, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Istanbul, sacred space, European travellers

**Dr Feray Coşkun** obtained her BSc from the Middle East Technical University, Department of History in 2003, an MA in History from Boğaziçi University in 2008, and PhD in History and Cultural Studies from Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Freie Universität Berlin in 2015. After completing her doctorate, she was a visiting scholar at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient. Before teaching at Özyeğin University, she taught courses on the early modern history of the Ottoman Empire at Freie Universität Berlin. Her dissertation ‘Sanctifying Ottoman Istanbul: The Shrine of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī’ concentrates on the symbolic importance of the shrine in Ottoman Istanbul and its relationship with Ottoman power practices and religious rituals.

Recently, she has been involved in the ERC Project ‘Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition’ in collaboration with the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas in Heraklion, Crete. The project explores Ottoman notions and belief systems concerning the ‘supernatural’ and aims to contribute Ottoman to intellectual and cultural history.

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***‘Avec la Fourchette du Père Adam’: Ottoman cuisine as an indicator of civilisational status***

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This presentation will unravel what French travellers at the end of the nineteenth-century described as Ottoman cuisine by using Théophile Gautier’s *Constantinople* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1891) as a case study. During his journey to the Ottoman capital, Gautier paid special attention to its culinary habits. Despite criticising its allegedly Oriental character, he equally lauded its savoury tastes, drawing an ambivalent image. For the writer, cuisine constituted an indicator of civilisational status. Advanced cooking

techniques and refined tastes implied progress, whereas mediocre food suggested primitiveness. In his appraisal of Ottoman cuisine, Gautier remained contradictory. His vagueness raises the question of why the usually-so-confident critic chose a more careful approach on this topic. To find an answer, passages from his book *Constantinople* will be closely read and grounded in their historical context by using other contemporary sources.

I claim that Gautier’s opinion was affected by French imperial politics. On the one hand, the Parisian writer tried to prove the superiority of French cuisine, which developed at the time into a somewhat scientific profession. On the other, Gautier was affected by Mediterranean politics. The coeval discourse surrounding the Eastern Question and the Crimean War motivated the author’s reticence when making civilisational claims about Ottoman cuisine. With my analysis, I demonstrate how Gautier used culinary descriptions to simultaneously declare the Sublime Porte a half-civilised state subaltern to France and a valuable ally. This image — gained through what appears to be at-first-sight mundane food criticism — ought to present the Ottoman Empire at the French imperial periphery but also as a respectable power to be reckoned with. While some maintain that politics are a matter of taste, Gautier’s *Constantinople* suggests that taste is also a matter of politics.

*Keywords:* Gautier, Ottoman cuisine, French imperial politics, Constantinople, food criticism

**Paul Csillag** studied History and European Ethnology at the universities of Innsbruck, Jean Jaurès (Toulouse) and Yeditepe (Istanbul). He gained a Master’s degree in both fields with papers on the reception of history in pop-cultural fiction. Currently, he is based at the European University Institute in Florence, where he is studying concepts of the Mediterranean as portrayed in nineteenth-century historical novels. He has taught courses on Historical Fiction Studies at the Universities of Firenze, Regensburg, Salzburg, and Sciences Po (Menton).

## ***Camondo: the rise and tragic end of a Jewish family***

**Cristina Erck**, independent scholar, Bonn, Germany. ASTENE member  
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Expelled from Spain, the Camondo family settled in several different Mediterranean countries before settling down in Istanbul. In 1802 Isaac Camondo founded a bank in Istanbul, which his brother Abraham inherited in 1832. The Camondos established business relations with the reformist viziers, for whom they sometimes acted as private bankers, as well as for the Sultan, for whom they co-financed the Crimean war. They helped set up a modern banking system in Turkey and contributed to the construction of the Galata financial district. Their international connections enabled them to act as cultural mediators and Jewish community leaders. As liberal Jews, they were keen to modernise their community and saw education as a prime means of achieving this; they founded the 'Institution Camondo' which focused on the teaching of Turkish and foreign languages, against the fierce resistance of the Grand Rabbi of Istanbul.

From the 1850s, Abraham was assisted by his grandsons Abraham-Behor and Nissim, who in 1868 moved to Paris. Due to international treaties, they had obtained Austrian nationality from the time of their exile in Venice and Trieste. Abraham was a keen supporter of Victor Emmanuel's plans for unification. His generous donations to the cause were rewarded by the title of 'count'. The Camondo family therefore arrived in Paris with Italian passports and noble status. The bank Isaac Camondo & Cie continued its close involvement in Turkey's economic development. When Abraham Camondo died in Paris in 1873, he was buried in his family vault in the Jewish cemetery in Hasköy, Istanbul.

When Moise Camondo took over, he was less involved in business than in collecting art and in 1917, after the death of his son Nissim, he closed the bank. The last Camondos – Moise's daughter Beatrice, together with her husband and their two children – tragically perished at Auschwitz.

**Keywords:** Camondo family, liberal Jews, economic development of Turkey, international banking, Auschwitz

**Cristina Erck**, originally from Germany, is author of *Das islamische Kairo* (1990) and co-author with Jürgen Gaubitz and Brigitta Schrade of *Welterbe der UNESCO Vorderasien* (Verlagshaus Stuttgart, 1998). As a freelance journalist, first for Latin America, and since 1985 for the Near and Middle East, she mainly reports on political and cultural matters from Morocco to Afghanistan. Apart from her journalistic work, she has organised exhibitions and concerts for artists from South America and the oriental world. She lives part of her time in Tunisia, and part of her time in Germany. A long-time member of ASTENE, she contributed, for example, to *Souvenirs and New Ideas: travel and collecting in Egypt and the Near East*, edited by Diane Fortenberry (Oxford: Oxbow, 2013), and to *Pious Pilgrims, Discerning Travellers, Curious Tourists*, edited by Paul and Janet Starkey (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020). She also attended TIOL2 and contributed to *Travellers in Ottoman Lands II: the Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2024).

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## ***Muscovites, Turks and their Boys: European travellers on Orthodox and Muslim sexual mores; Orientalism or Mediterranean model of male same sex desire?***

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At the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, Muscovy disappointed its Western European neighbours with indifference to the idea of establishing an anti-Ottoman alliance. This happened despite the dynastic marriage between the Russian prince Ivan III and the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Sophia Palaeologus, and the formulating of a political-theological concept in which Moscow replaced Constantinople as the core of the Orthodox world. At the same time, Russian lands began to attract European travellers, who described the Muscovite

lifestyle in early ethnographic accounts. With the growing tension in the Baltic region and the outbreak of the Livonian War 1558–1583, Muscovy began to be perceived as a power as frightening, mysterious and intriguing as the Ottoman Empire.

The image of the Eastern Orthodox Muscovite in the eyes of Westerners gradually became closer to that of the Muslim Turk — a barbarian, whose morals, including sexual ones, were regarded as ‘unnatural’. The main feature of this ‘unnaturalness’ was the supposedly special tendency of Turks and Muscovites towards male-male sexual activities, especially adult men with youths. While European travellers visiting both Muscovy and the Ottoman lands unanimously explained this as promiscuity, the attitude towards male same-sex desire was consistently regulated by religious and secular law in both states. These attitudes and laws were indeed quite comparable in Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire, largely through inheriting the same Byzantine tradition.

Was the comparison of the Muscovites and the Turks’ ‘sodomitical sins’ just an Orientalist stereotype based on political and religious prejudices? Could both be attributed to the more generalised Mediterranean model of homosexuality with its roots in Graeco-Roman antiquity? This paper analyses travellers’ accounts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, deepening the understanding of the Ottoman model of male same-sex relations with analogies from the Slavic Orthodox tradition.

*Keywords:* Homosexuality, early ethnography, premodern Russia, Ottoman empire

**Dr Hanna Filipova**, postdoctoral MSCA fellow at the University of Gothenburg. In 2015 she graduated from the Department of History of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; in 2018 she defended her PhD thesis at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, she worked in several Ukrainian educational, research and museum institutions. Since April 2022 she has been working in Sweden.

Areas of expertise: political ideology of the Russian Empire; propaganda during the Great Northern War 1700–1721; queer and gender

history in the context of early modern propaganda; othering in early modernity; prisoners of war during the Great Northern War 1700–1721. Her recent research has primarily focused on homosexuality in pre-modern Russia, its relations with power and representation in anti-Russian propaganda and domestic criticism of ruling regimes.

She recently finished her first monograph, *Male Same-Sex Relations and the Court of Peter I: turning Muscovite* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2025), which is based on her project ‘Dialogues, disputes and battles: propaganda during the Great Northern War 1700–1721’ (funded through the EU’s MSCA4 Ukraine project). She is a member of the Ukrainian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and the European Academy of Religion.

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### ***Unknown Cilicia through a Hungarian Camera***

**Gábor Fodor**, Head of the Ottoman Studies Research Group at the Institute of History - Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Research Network, Budapest, Hungary  
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Two secondary school teachers from Pápa, Zsigmond Fejes and Imre Lakos, set out on 7 July 1914 to explore the previously uncharted landscapes of Cilicia. With the help of their local guide, Hussein Arif, a Turkish student studying in Hungary, they reached the passes of the Taurus Mountains via Constantinople and Bursa on the Berlin–Baghdad railway, following the Eskişehir–Afyonkarahisar–Konya route. After crossing Adana and Mersin they travelled along the Silifke–Ermenek–Alanya–Antalya route with the help of a donkey caravan. Although the expedition was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I, when the two adventurers returned home on 30 August, they had largely achieved their objectives.

The expedition can be reconstructed partly from their travelogues, which were later published in Hungarian, but even more from the more than 440 photographs that were taken during their journey. The photographs

captured the major streets and buildings of Turkish towns, the local chiefs, and signs of modernisation at the time, such as factories, machinery and irrigation systems. The images are an excellent resource for researchers in detecting social and urban changes, but the Hungarian adventurers also captured important archaeological sites, some of which have now been demolished.

But why did the two Hungarian teachers travel to Cilicia and who helped organise the trip? What adventures did they have to go through on the eve of World War I to return home? What happened to the results of the expedition and how did the photographs, which have since been made available on the internet, escape? These and similar questions will be answered by the speaker, who will seek to shed light on the background to the expedition using new and previously unexplored sources.

*Keywords:* Hungarian travellers, Cilicia, photographs, social history, archaeological sites

**Dr Gábor Fodor** graduated from the Departments of Turkology and History of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, where he also completed his PhD. His main research interests include Turkish-Hungarian relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and, in particular, the Hungarian autobiographies and memoirs from the late Ottoman period and the Hungarian scientific endeavours in Istanbul.

He started his career at the research group of Turkology of the late Professor György Hazai as a young research fellow of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 2015, he was appointed as the Director of the Liszt Institute, the Hungarian Cultural Center in Istanbul, where he worked until 2023. He is now the Head of the Ottoman Studies Research Group at the Institute of History - Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Research Network, Budapest, Hungary. His first book, entitled *Visit to the Ottoman Empire. Dr Dezső Bozóky's photographs (1905–1916)*, was published in 2019, while his latest publication came out in 2023 under the title *Géza Hegyei: a Hungarian pianist in the Ottoman court* (in Turkish).

### ***'The Circassian Blood Fills the Veins of the Sultan': European travellers in the north-western Caucasus***

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From the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire held varying degrees of authority over the north-western Caucasus and its people, the Circassians. By the sixteenth century, a large part of the lands inhabited by Circassians had entered the ambiguous borders of the Ottoman Empire, delineated by an early modern understanding of 'territory' which implied taxation and extraction rather than governance. It was also during the sixteenth century that the Circassians began to gain visibility in the Ottoman administrative-military sphere as *mamluks*.

The imperial harem was another place where enslaved Circassians could be found in the Ottoman Empire. However, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the Circassians' engagement with the Ottoman state peaked, when hundreds of thousands of Circassians left their homelands in the North Caucasus and settled in the Ottoman Empire — this time as refugees. Scholarship explains this migration, which lasted until the end of the nineteenth century, as caused by many factors including Russian expansion, ethnic cleansing, demographic engineering, internal colonisation and the Ottoman Sultan's self-identified role as caliph and protector of all Muslims. Although these were certainly defining factors, examining the larger shared history between the Ottoman Empire and Circassians (as well as other ethnic groups in the north Caucasus) can deepen our understanding of this mass migration, which shaped the socioeconomic landscape of the late Ottoman period.

This presentation will offer an entry point into this centuries-long entanglement between Circassians and the Ottoman Empire by using Ottoman archival sources and early nineteenth-century European travel accounts in the north-western Caucasus. By shedding light on a place forgotten by the scholars of

the Ottoman Empire, it will show how Ottoman historiography, especially regarding the north Caucasian migration in the late Ottoman era, can benefit from rethinking and remembering the north-western Caucasus as part of Ottoman history.

*Keywords:* Russia, Circassians, North Caucasus, migration, Ottoman historiography

**Janset Nil Genç** obtained her BA in History from the Erasmus University, Rotterdam and is currently pursuing a Research MA in Middle Eastern Studies at Leiden University. She co-founded and served on the editorial board of the undergraduate history journal *History Collective: Erasmus Student Journal of History Studies*. Her current thesis research focuses on the social and cultural history of Circassian *muhājirs* in the Ottoman Empire. Combining microhistory and oral history, she explores various aspects of the late Ottoman landscape, such as migration, agriculture, military, administration, property and family, through the experiences of Circassian *muhājirs* across the Empire. Her research aims to move beyond the state-centric understandings of Circassian migration to and settlement in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, she seeks to tell this history through the experiences of the *muhājirs* themselves.

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***European ‘Tourists’ and their Guides: sightseeing activity in early modern Bursa***

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Due to its proximity to Istanbul, its significance as the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, and its renowned hot springs, Bursa attracted numerous European travellers throughout the Ottoman period. These visitors were predominantly early modern scientists, including botanists, naturalists and clergymen who travelled as part of diplomatic entourage. Their scientific interests naturally drew them to Mount Uludağ and its surrounding regions, where they conducted extensive observations of the local fauna and

flora. Their botanical curiosity also led them to examine Bursa’s distinctive moriculture and sericulture practices, resulting in detailed accounts of these specialised agricultural activities. Although these early modern travelogues were rarely the product of grand tours or leisure tourism, the evolving nature of seventeenth-century travel revealed a gradual shift in travel patterns. Through the efforts of local guides, who mostly comprised local Christian residents as well as expatriates and renegades settled in Bursa, these scientific expeditions often expanded into broader urban explorations. The guides not only facilitated scientific observations but also introduced visitors to various urban sites and cultural landmarks. This integration of urban exploration into primarily scientific journeys suggests the emergence of a distinct form of leisure-based sightseeing activity, different from traditional religious pilgrimages, vocational journeys or family visits. This study examines the accounts of these guided tours in early modern Bursa as instances of a novel form of urban exploration: a type of sightseeing that was neither religiously motivated nor professionally necessary but rather represented a new way of experiencing the city. This emerging practice of leisure-oriented sightseeing in Ottoman domains is also reflected in contemporary Ottoman literary works, suggesting a broader cultural shift in how urban spaces were encountered and experienced during this period.

*Keywords:* Bursa, guides, leisure-orientated sightseeing, scientific observations

**Dr Ekin Can Göksoy**, PhD, is a historian and a production editor at the Istanbul Research Institute (Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü - İAE). He also serves as the managing editor of *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies*. He completed his PhD in History at Boğaziçi University in 2024, where his research focused on early modern Ottoman urban history. His inter-disciplinary background includes an MA in Cultural Studies from Istanbul Bilgi University (2014) and a BSc in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Middle East Technical University (2011). His research interests lie at the intersection of Ottoman urban history, public space studies and cultural

history, with a particular focus on the early modern period. His work explores the complex relationships between architecture, literature and urban life in Ottoman cities.

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***Speculation on the Position of Troy in the Antiquarianism of the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries: a corresponding Homeric question***

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This research aims to underline the pivotal role that European Antiquarianism, particularly between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, played in addressing the problem of the topographical localisation of ancient Troy. Heinrich Schliemann's groundbreaking discovery has indeed overshadowed a long and prolific tradition that profoundly influenced the interpretation of the Homeric poem and changed the diachronic and synchronic representation of the city itself.

For ancient Greeks, their history and their civilisation were rooted in the Homeric poems: the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' have been studied for years through several perspectives including literature, philology, history, mythography and linguistics. This contribution, however, takes a different approach by studying the 'Iliad' as a repository of geographical data, offering valuable insights for contextualising the episodes. The poem, indeed, provides an abundance of clues for reconstructing a precise image of Troy: clues those European travellers and scholars considered credible sources for identifying the city's topography. A shared attitude among all those antiquarians is their reliance on Homer and ancient authors as privileged sources for reconstructing Iliadic topography. Regardless of the methodologies typical of their respective eras, they treated these texts as authoritative guides. This enduring effort to contextualise and identify the legendary city has its foundation in referring to Homer as both the start and the end of the inquiry.

The aim of this paper is to underscore how the contribution of Antiquarianism to

resolving the topographical question of the site of ancient Troy, represents an independent branch of the broader Homeric Question that deserves recognition as an autonomous field of inquiry, reflecting the historical significance of antiquarian scholarship in shaping our understanding of Homeric geography and the legendary city of Troy.

*Keywords:* Troy, Homer, Antiquarianism, topographical localisation, classical scholar-travellers

**Marina Guarente** is currently pursuing a PhD in Historical, Archaeological, and Artistic Sciences at the University of Naples 'Federico II'. Her research focuses on the reception of antiquity and antiquarian culture, with a particular emphasis on the Campania region. Marina holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeological Heritage from the University of Studies of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli' and a Master's degree in Philology, Literature and Civilisations of the Ancient World from the University of Naples 'Federico II', both awarded with honours.

She is the author of the monograph *Alla ricerca della città di Omero: Viaggi ed esplorazioni in Asia Minore prima degli scavi di Schliemann* (Rome: Aracne editrice, 2021) and of the article 'Alla ricerca della città di Omero. Troia nelle memorie di viaggio dei secoli XVI–XIX', presented at *Beyond the gaze; Interpreting and understanding the city*, 11th AISU Congress, Ferrara 13–16 September 2023. Currently, she is an Adjunct Lecturer in Classical Archaeology and collaborates with the National Edition of the Works of Pirro Ligorio (editing manuscripts XIII.B.10 and XIII.B.3) as well as the *Ligorio Digitale* Project. She is the researcher in charge at 3ARC, the Ancient Art and Architecture Reception Centre.

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***The Life and Death of a Foreign Correspondent Resting at Feriköy Cemetery: Georges Gaulis***

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George Gaulis (1865–1912) was a Swiss-born, French journalist-writer who lived in the Ottoman capital for many years during the reign of Abdulhamid II and the Second Constitutional Period. As a special correspondent and newspaper director, he recorded this period in his articles and books. The contents of his writings consist of important historical, political, diplomatic, economic and social events of the time. As primary sources, they provide a substantial treasury in terms of both volume and continuity. Georges Gaulis, whose articles were published regularly in the Parisian newspapers, *Le Temps*, *La Revue de Paris*, *Journal des Débats* and *L'Opinion*, and in the Swiss newspapers, *La Tribune de Genève*, *Journal de Genève* and *Gazette de Lausanne* also directed the newspaper *Stamboul*, published in French in Istanbul. The two books, *Les questions d'Orient* (Paris: Librairie de 'Pages libres', 1905) and *La ruine d'un empire; Abd-ul-Hamid, ses amis et ses peuples* (Paris: A. Colin, 1913), and the countless articles he authored are unfortunately not yet sufficiently utilised as primary sources for research on the late period of Ottoman history. His writings on the Cretan Question, the Graeco-Turkish War of 1897, the Macedonian Question, the Tripolitania War, the Albanian Question, and the outbreak of the Balkan War, all of which he personally followed and witnessed, as well as his letter-style kept notes and dispatches provide a unique approach towards these events. The prominent political, diplomatic and military figures of the period, most of whom he knew closely, also find a place in his writings. This article is the first extensive study on the life, travels and works of Georges Gaulis, who deserves to be remembered and

acknowledged. His life and early death will be presented through his letters, and documents from European and Ottoman archives.

**Keywords:** Feriköy Cemetery, Georges Gaulis, writer-journalist, Abdulhamid II, Second Constitutional Period

**Dr Nilüfer Hatemi** is a Turkish language lecturer, author of *Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak ve Günlükleri* (Istanbul: YKY, 2002; 3rd printing 2021) was previously the Erteğün Visiting Assistant Professor, spring 2013–spring 2014. Hatemi received her PhD with a thesis entitled 'Unfolding a Life: Marshal Fevzi Çakmak's Diaries' in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University in 2000 and worked as an Assistant Professor at Yeditepe and Kadir Has Universities, Istanbul, Türkiye. At Princeton, she teaches courses on Turkish and Ottoman language and literature, including TUR 305, 'Advanced Turkish: Selected Readings in Historical and Literary Texts', TUR 424, 'Turkish Language in Translation: from Omer Seyfettin to Orhan Pamuk', and NES 504, 'Introduction to Ottoman Turkish'. Her articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, and in various conference publications. 'What Fairytales Meant to Selma Ekrem', appeared in *Bookbird: a journal of international children's literature* 56/2 (2018), and she wrote the article on Fevzi Çakmak in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, Part 2013–14. She has been working on a book project on Bethe and Georges Gaulis and presented a paper on the latter at the MESA 2023 conference.

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***The Cesnola Brothers and their Controversial Antiquities Exports from Ottoman Cyprus: defying Ottoman firmans, antiquities laws and the Imperial Museum through Italian, American and Russian identities***

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This paper is divided into three parts, each examining how the Cesnola brothers challenged Ottoman *firmans* and antiquities



laws to export Cypriot artefacts, alongside Ottoman efforts to claim these collections for the Imperial Museum in Constantinople. Together, these sections explore diplomatic identity, legal evasion and the tensions between foreign travellers and the Ottomans in the battle for antiquities.

The first part focuses on Luigi Palma di Cesnola, an Italian-born naturalised American, who served as American consul in Cyprus from 1865 to 1876 and later became the first Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1879. By leveraging dual identities, Cesnola used his American citizenship and connections in Constantinople to renew *firmans*, while assuming the Russian consul role to evade export bans directed at him. I will argue that through his Russian consul identity, Cesnola quickly found innovative ways to repeatedly evade the conditions of *firmans* issued between 1866 and 1873.

The second part examines Cesnola's interactions with Philipp Anton Dethier, Director of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, particularly regarding Ottoman demands for shares of the Cypriot finds. I will show how Cesnola framed these collections — including the monumental Bes statute now displayed at the entrance of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum — as 'gifts' to downplay Ottoman authority and confiscations. These collections later played an important role in expanding the Imperial Museum, prompting its relocation from Hagia Irene to the Çinili Köşk.

The final part examines the younger Cesnola brother, Alessandro Palma di Cesnola, who collected artefacts in Cyprus from 1876 to 1878. As an Italian citizen, Alessandro falsely represented himself as American to seek diplomatic protection but was prosecuted under the Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1874 by the new British administration in Cyprus — a notable, yet often overlooked, early case of cultural heritage law enforcement that this paper will highlight.

*Keywords:* Cesnola brothers, Antiquities Laws, Cyprus, diplomatic identities, legal evasions

**Ozan Hüseyin** is currently completing his PhD in the History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS, University of London. His research topic, 'Ottoman Museological, Legal and Cultural

Responses to the Neglect, Looting and Preservation of Antiquities', investigates how Ottoman authorities actively challenged Western travellers, archaeologists and museums in their pursuit of antiquities. Drawing from a diverse array of sources — including Ottoman Antiquities Laws, periodicals, travelogues, photographs, and paintings — his work brings to light the often-overlooked Ottoman reactionary initiatives in cultural heritage preservation.

Ozan's interdisciplinary expertise is informed by his diverse academic and professional background. He holds a BA in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies (First Class Honours) from the University of Westminster and two MA degrees from SOAS: one in Near and Middle Eastern Studies (Distinction), with a focus on antiquities preservation in Ottoman Athens, and another in History of Art and Archaeology (Distinction), where he explored Ottoman responses to German exports of Islamic antiquities.

Alongside his academic pursuits, Ozan has gained substantial experience in the museum (V&A), gallery (Amir Mohtashemi), and auction (Bonhams) sectors, and has exhibited at prestigious fairs such as TEFAF in Maastricht.

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### ***Local Battles in the Ottoman Province during the War of the Ottomans with the Holy League (1683–1699)***

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The war of the Ottomans with the Holy League (1683–1699) caused significant changes in the life of the Ottoman Balkans. An interesting moment in the history of the Empire is the participation of civilians in conflicts between armies. In the sources, the population was drawn into the conflict in various ways. The *reaya* took part in battles and assisted both parties.

One such moment is the defence of the Dragoman Pass. This episode is described by Gerhard Cornelius von Driesch and Simpert Niggel in their texts about the ambassadorial

travels of Count Virmont and Count Oettingen-Wallerstein. Their information coincides with narratives from the historical works of Silâhdar Mehmed ağa and Sarı Mehmed Pasha Defterdar, written at the same time. At the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

The goal of the paper is to reveal and to compare the above-mentioned information in different historical sources. Special attention will be paid to local battles of the *reaya* in the Dragoman region (today Sofia Province, Western Bulgaria) against an invading Habsburg vanguard unit. Usually, we see in the sources of the era that the Christian population joined the invading armies. However, the armed Christian peasantry, accustomed to hard labour and deprivation during times of war, was also forced to take part in battles in defence of Ottoman territory. The travellers' texts include important accounts of political and military decisions during the wars and show events from the life in the Balkan provinces from the end of the seventeenth century.

**Keywords:** Balkan Christian peasantry, Wars between Ottoman empire, the Holy League (1683–1699), Rumelia, Dragoman Pass (Derbent Pass)

**Dr Dzheni Ivanova**, PhD. Professional appointments: 2023 – to date Assistant Professor at Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; 2019–2023 Librarian at Institute of Balkan Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; 2015–2019 Head of Department 'Information, Preservation and Use', Scientific Archives of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; 2012–2015 Archivist in the National Library 'St Cyril and Methodius', Sofia, Bulgarian Historical Archive A; part-time lecturer, History Department, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'. Education: 2007–2011 PhD, History Department, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski': thesis title: 'The political situation in Bulgarian lands during the second half of the seventeenth century in Ottoman historical writings: according to Silâhdar Mehmed Ağa and Defterdar Mehmed Pasha's Writings'. Research Interests: History and archival studies; Ottoman historical writings;

Habsburg-Ottoman relationships; War between Ottomans and the Holy League (1683–1699).

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***Late Ottoman Tunis by Train: ruler visibility and colonial invisibilities. The TGM (Tunis-Goulette-Marsa) and Bône-Guelma railway networks in juxtaposition***

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In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Tunisian authorities, desirous of modernising the transportation infrastructure but lacking the necessary know-how during a period of political and financial turmoil, granted the first railway concessions to British and French companies. The first of these railways, the TGM (Tunis–Goulette–Marsa) was established between 1872–1874 by the British Tunisian Railway Company, linking Tunis to its northern suburbs, while the second was established in 1879 by the French Bône-Guelma as an (interrupted) extension of its Algerian network to the Tunisian capital. Given the railways' inaugurations shortly before the French occupation (1881–1956), the passenger experiences aboard them have been overlooked by a scholarly consensus that tended to consider that infrastructural projects in 'nominally Ottoman' Tunis between 1869–1881 were manifestations of early informal colonisation.

Intersecting French tourist travel accounts and albums with guidebooks and maps, this paper challenges such perspectives and seeks to reinsert Tunis and its railways into a wider scholarship about mobilities in the late Ottoman Empire. Through juxtaposition of these two networks in context, I argue that both railways acted as legitimisers of local policymakers' authority and modernisation of the territory, before the protectorate administration claimed full control of the Bône-Guelma network, that it used to undermine the persistently non-French TGM and earlier modernisation agendas, and to

make those behind them invisible. Alongside documenting how this mode of transport traced new circulation paths and shaped foreign perceptions of Tunis in alignment with official (local and later colonial) agendas, the accounts from 1872–1908 challenge the historiographical assumption that the transition from Ottoman province to French protectorate happened instantly after 1881.

*Keywords:* Ottoman Tunisian rail networks, French protectorate, mobility cultures, Ottoman historiographies

**Oumaïma Jaïdane-Yıldız** is a Tunisian recent graduate with a Master of Arts degree in History of Architecture from Middle East Technical University, Ankara. She holds a BArch. degree from the Izmir Institute of Technology, where she studied after having finished her basic education in Tunisia. She is interested in the themes of French colonial urbanism, railways and urban infrastructure, and timekeeping culture, as well as cultural and architectural history and historiographies of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in its North African provinces during the nineteenth century. In her thesis entitled ‘Long nineteenth-century Tunis and its first railway: (Re)constructing the TGM (Tunis–Goulette–Marsa) in context’, she explored this infrastructure in its spatial but also transnational, late Ottoman and colonial dimensions.

***Sultan Selim III and Mahmud II ‘Pulling a Long Bow’: foreign observations of Ottoman archery at the turn of the nineteenth century***

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This presentation focuses on the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century revival of archery in the Ottoman Empire, not as a weapon of war, but as a means to display physical prowess, and legitimise the reigns and Islamic reforms of sultans Selim III (r.1789–1807) and Mahmud II (r.1808–1839). Their shooting records were immortalised by commemoration stones (*nişantaşları*), some still

standing today. Consequently, their accomplishments — especially Mahmud’s — have been extensively discussed in academic literature based on various Ottoman sources, including archery treatises, poetry and the commemoration stones. Despite the sultans’ frequent mention in European and American travelogues, these foreign perspectives are overlooked in academic literature and, therefore, remain understudied.

Through a close reading of relevant sections in these travelogues, this presentation frames archery as an inter-imperial exchange, noting its concurrent revitalisation in Great Britain and the consolidation of diplomatic relations between the two empires. The paper commences by analysing Selim III and Mahmud II (and their court’s) archery performances as observed by Americans and Europeans, addressing three recurring themes in a thematic-chronological order: first, the archery field (*Okmeydanı*) and its natural surroundings; secondly, the sultan’s exercises and his (lack of) skill in archery; and lastly, the interpretation of the *nişantaşları* by foreign observers.

This topic aligns with the theme ‘Places Forgotten, Places Remembered’, as the Istanbul neighbourhoods of Okmeydanı and Nişantaşı, now urban centres, were named after archery activities in what was then the city’s outskirts. Additionally, the recent revival of archery in Türkiye as an ‘invented tradition’, including the (re)construction of the Okçular Vakfı lodge, adds to the subject matter’s contemporary relevance and visibility.

*Keywords:* archery, inter-imperial exchange, Mahmud II, Nişantaşı, Okmeydanı

**Rik J. Janssen** is a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh (January 2025) with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees (*cum laude*) in Middle Eastern Studies from Leiden University. His interests span the cultural, political and social history of the Turco-Persianate world from the late medieval to the contemporary era, with a particular focus on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. His interdisciplinary research explores the intersections between gender, identity, imperialism and empire-building, militarism, nationalism and nation-building, and sport. His

doctoral project explores the history of Ottoman archery, combining his scholarly expertise with his passion for archery. He aims to challenge the dominant Turkish-nationalist meta-narrative and revise the history of Ottoman archery by presenting a universal Islamic perspective of its cultural, political and social significance in the Ottoman Empire.

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***The Adventures of Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa in the Balkans and Istanbul: an exceptional case of a European woman's travels, enterprises and sociability in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire***

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The Ottoman Balkans and the imperial capital of Istanbul were destinations of great interest for eighteenth-century European travellers, who regarded those places as centres of their own Oriental fantasies and objects of wonder. Among those individuals, famous examples of early women travellers, like those of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lady Elizabeth Craven, continue to be mobilised by historians and literary scholars. The experiences of these two women in the Ottoman world were, however, highly controlled and in part artificial as they were evolving in a world of leisure travel delineated by their guides. The work of another woman of this period, less well-known outside the Polish historiography and baroque literature field of research, brings a different voice from the perspective of a singular individual travelling in Ottoman lands to survive and find new economic opportunities.

The memoirs of Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa, entitled in their most recent English edition *My Life's Travels and Adventures: an eighteenth-century oculist in the Ottoman Empire and the European hinterland* (Chicago: Iter Press, 2021) recount three journeys into the Ottoman Balkans by this self-proclaimed female doctor. Those mobilities reveal an experience far from the safe routes of passage, where the travels were unplanned, without commodities and made

sometimes in the context of wars, but also revealing experiences close to the realities of Balkan ways of life under Ottoman rule. The marginal status of Pilsztynowa, an isolated woman travelling without a male legal guardian, unveils a world where this exceptional individual could blend in with people from all strata of Ottoman society, from pashas to bandits, and make a name for herself, going even to the length of challenging Janissaries before Ottoman courts of law.

*Keywords:* Balkans, women travellers, Ottoman medicine, ransom slavery, *hajduks*

**Maxence Joscht** is a first-year PhD candidate in Social Sciences in the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) who is funded by a doctoral research contract. He earned his MA in History, Civilizations and Patrimony at Aix-Marseille University. His PhD research project revolves around the social and literary representations of emancipated women designated or self-identified as adventuresses in eighteenth-century Europe, questioning the relative neglect of the experiences of individuals simply because they were regarded as minor subjects in early modern societies in economic and cultural domains such as entrepreneurship, social and spatial mobilities and self-narrative strategies.

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***Through the Eyes of Travellers: refugee experiences in the late Ottoman Empire***

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This paper examines the accounts of the archaeologists Gottlieb Schumacher and Max von Oppenheim, who offered valuable insights into the lives of Circassian and Chechen refugees in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Through their detailed observations, supplemented with drawings and photographs, these accounts document the challenges and adaptations of refugee communities, providing alternative perspectives often missing from official reports.

Schumacher's 1888 expedition to the Hauran region of Syria offers a rich portrayal of Circassian refugee settlements. His account emphasised their industriousness, highlighting how they built villages using ancient Roman ruins and introduced innovations like wheeled carts that transformed local trade and transport. Schumacher also explores the complex relationships between Circassians and local communities, noting their occasional conflicts with Bedouins and alliances formed against common rivals like the Druze. His observations capture how Circassians navigated their new environment, contributing to the local economy through timber trade and adapting to the region's social and political landscape.

In contrast, Oppenheim's 1899 account of the Chechen refugees in Ra's al-'Ayn painted a more precarious picture. His observations illustrated how the Chechens struggled to adapt to their harsh environment, grappling with resource scarcity and shifting perceptions. Initially welcomed by the Ottoman state, they began to be viewed with suspicion and labelled bandits in state reports. Oppenheim documented how the Chechens sought to maintain their cultural identity while forging alliances with local power holders, such as Ibrahim Pasha Milli, chief of the Milan confederation of tribes. His account provides a nuanced understanding of the Chechens' resilience amid adversity.

This paper highlights the refugees' agency, survival strategies and impact on the regions they settled. The observations of Schumacher and Oppenheim, along with their visual documentation, offer a deeper understanding of how displaced communities adapted and reshaped their environments, influencing the local social and economic landscape.

*Keywords:* Archaeological accounts, refugee lives, late Ottoman Empire, Hauran, Ra's al-'Ayn

**Gizem Kazzaz** is a recent graduate in history, specialising in migration studies. She earned her BA degrees in History and Psychology from Istanbul Şehir University. Her first MA was completed at Sabancı University, where her research focused on Caucasian refugee settlements in Ottoman Syria, particularly in

the Golan Heights. She later obtained a second Master's degree from the Central European University, broadening her exploration of nineteenth-century migration movements, especially in the eastern regions of the Ottoman Empire. Currently, she is engaged in further research on migration and displacement, examining the interplay between state policies and local dynamics within refugee communities. Her academic interests include transnational migration, identity formation and the socio-political implications of refugee resettlement in the Ottoman context.

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***On the Heels of Mirza Abu Talib Khan: a rare voyage of an Indian Muslim noble through Ottoman Lands***

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Mirza Abu Talib was one of the few Indian Muslims to gain the favours of the British East India Company, enabling him to travel from Calcutta in 1799 to London and France and to reach Istanbul, where he met Sultan Selim III. His travel was sponsored by Captain Richardson, a phonologist. Talib wrote his travelogue in Persian in 1805. It was translated into English by Charles Stewart, Professor of Oriental Languages at Haileybury College and was published as *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa and Europe: during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 and 1803* (London: Watts Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1810).

As his work was translated into English after his death, the travelogue appears to be affected by bias, and probably, Orientalism. Nevertheless, this rare travelogue gives an emblematic representation of Anatolia and better part of Iraq, covering a wide variety of subjects like governance, cities, palaces, coffee houses, post offices and the social milieu of different nations in the Empire.

Supported by royal *firman*s issued in his favour, which acted as the executive orders of

Sultan Selim III, Talib was impressed by the grandeur of the court, and his descriptions throw light on the intricate and convoluted relationship between the Sultan, the Pashas who were ruling different governorates and the Viziers.

His thoughts appear to be affected by mundane happenings and the fear factor, especially during his transit from Diyarbakir to Baghdad. But the mere fact that Talib entered Ottoman territory in peace and exited it without physical or material damage, speaks volumes about the management of the Empire.

This paper will focus on the motivation of an Indian Muslim to undertake a long journey through Ottoman lands and his reflections on the governance and culture of the Ottomans during the nineteenth century.

*Keywords:* Mirza Talib, Sultan Selim III, Anatolia, early nineteenth century, travelogue

**Brig(R) Waqar Hasan Khan** is a retired Military Officer of the Pakistan Army with vast operational, command and teaching experience. He has taught at the National Defense University, Islamabad as well as the National Defense University of Zimbabwe, Harare. He has three Master's degrees to his credit and began his PhD studies in the University of Zimbabwe, but these remain incomplete due to time lapse affected by Covid 19. An avid writer whose work has been published in Pakistani and international newspapers and reports, he has also worked as Station Head of Suno News, a leading media house in Pakistan and appears as a defence and security analyst on Pakistani and international TV channels. His areas of interest include national and international security, hybrid warfare and travel. He has travelled widely to many countries including USA, Brazil, Middle East, Europe, South Africa, China, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Russia and Türkiye in various official capacities and to participate in international seminars and conferences. His latest visit to Türkiye was in April 2024, to participate in the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA)'s International Conference 'Global Transformation and Turkey'. His research paper was published by TUBA in October 2024.

**Adeela Naureen Waqar** is a well-known freelance journalist in Islamabad, Pakistan who has contributed to Pakistani and international newspapers and magazines in English on diverse issues affecting Pakistan and the region. Her areas of interest include psycho-social challenges faced by Pakistan, regional dynamics, international powerplay and travel. She has a Bachelor's degree in Applied Psychology and has been a freelance writer for the print media from 2010. She has travelled widely to many countries including Türkiye, Libya, KSA, UAE, Qatar, South Africa, Egypt, Bangladesh, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Syria and the Russian Federation.

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***The Poet and the Scholar: Lord Byron's Grand ---Tour/seyahat in the Ottoman Empire with John Cam Hobhouse, according to their travel firman (1810)***

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At the age of nineteen, Lord Byron began a memorandum-book in which he wrote 'Of the Ottoman History I know every event.' Two years later, he requested and was granted a *firman* by Sultan Mahmud II to travel in Ottoman lands. This unpublished document will be the subject of our presentation. The *firman* is dated 27 January–5 February 1810, and, in response to a petition by Robert Adair, British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, granted permission to Byron and John Cam Hobhouse for a tour (*berây seyâhat*) from Constantinople to the Morea, Salonica, Athens, the White Sea (Aegean), Smyrna, Aydin, and 'Old Istanbul' (Alexandria Troas) and its surroundings. We will compare it with a similar *firman* of the same Sultan, dated 5/17 December 1810 and granted after a petition by Stratford Canning, for Lord Byron to visit (*ziyâret*) Cyprus, Acre, Jerusalem, Damascus, Egypt and back to the capital — a trip which Byron never made. Both documents follow the official template of the Ottoman

chancery. The texts noted the aristocratic status of Byron and his companion, emphasised the cordial relations between the two states, listed conventional destinations for an antiquarian Grand Tour and a Holy Land pilgrimage, and made thorough provision for the safety, well-being and freedom from taxation of the travellers and their retinue. Byron and Hobhouse managed, through fortunate coincidences, to cover a lot of ground, from Tepelene to Topkapı, with innumerable sites of archaeological interest in between. From what each wrote about the journey, we can compare the planned itinerary with where they actually went. The two friends had different attitudes to travel, and Hobhouse's scholarly account complements Byron's light-hearted letters and verse.

*Keywords:* *firman*s, Lord Byron, John Cam Hobhouse, antiquarian Grand Tours, archaeological sites

**Elias Kolovos** is Research Director, Institute for Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation. He is an expert in Ottoman Turkish palaeography and is working with Ottoman archives in Turkey and Greece (including Mount Athos and Patmos). His research focuses on Mediterranean economic history, the history of the insular worlds, the history of the frontiers, rural and environmental history, as well as the spatial history and legacies of the Ottoman Empire.

**Anne McCabe** is Research Associate at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, University of Oxford. She has worked on Byzantine manuscripts (particularly technical treatises on agriculture and medicine) and inscriptions (particularly those of Constantinople and its hinterland), as well as on the excavations of the Athenian Agora with the American School of Classical Studies, and at Al-Andarin in Syria.

***Between Modern Musings and Living Tradition: the Turkish-Islamic monuments of Mehmed Ziya's late Ottoman landscape***

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When Vatan Matbaası published the travelogue of Mehmed Ziya (1866–1930), *Bursa'dan Konya'ya Seyahat*, in 1328/1910, it did so with the author's claim that, despite the efforts of Evliya Çelebi and the more recent scientific investigations of government-backed and privately supported foreigners, there were 'still no perfect works on the natural or civilisational conditions of the Ottoman lands'. His newly collated and formerly serialised reflections of journeys undertaken in 1896 and 1900, he asserted, would complete the works of travellers like Charles Texier and Clement Huart, addressing their shortcomings by referring to authorities like Strabo, Pliny and Herodotus. What Ziya did not mention is the value of this work itself, given his own unique perspective as a proponent of modernisation informed by the Sufi tradition.

Characterised both as an 'exceedingly sincere Mevlevi' and reformer with a 'charged', nationalist tenor, '*İhtifalci*' Mehmed Ziya, the '*commemorator*', is a compelling figure who came to the fore as a fixture of the 'vibrant, new intellectual environment' that flourished in the Second Constitutional period. Moreover, as an educator, active member of *Muhafaza-i Asar-ı Atika Encümeni*, and administrative member of the *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, Ziya occupied an important position in the developing discourse on cultural heritage, Islamic art and national patrimony.

By re-examining Ziya's depiction of historical Seljuk and Ottoman architectural works in Bursa and other cities alongside the descriptions of contemporaries such as Ahmet İhsan (1868–1948) and Halil Edhem (1861–1938), this contribution aims to assess Ziya's idiosyncratic voice and role as a 'place maker' while situating his writings in the broader, late Ottoman context. With its comparative approach, it will especially discuss the extent

to which Ziya's affiliations with the Mevlevi community, personal religious convictions, and aspirations for a nationally coherent and morally developed society affected his narration and 'remembrance' of place.

*Keywords:* place-maker, Mehmed Ziya, Sufi tradition, Mevlevi community, remembrance of place

**Dr Michelle Lynch-Köycü**, PhD, is a postdoctoral research associate at the School of Architecture, University of Notre Dame, where she currently teaches global medieval architecture. She completed her doctoral studies in the History of Architecture at Middle East Technical University in 2024, focusing on the Seljuk architecture of Anatolia and modern engagements with the medieval past. Her current research centres on the museographic appropriation of Seljuk monuments for local museums between the 1920s and 1960s in Turkey, as well as the development of cultural heritage concepts and practices in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. Lynch-Köycü holds an MA and MS in History and Archives Management from Simmons University, and is passionate about the use of archival research, visual resources and ephemera in her own research. During her studies, she worked as a visual resource assistant at the Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT, and in various archival and research roles in museum and library settings.

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***Byzantine Architecture Reimagined: Charles Texier, Richard Popplewell Pulla, and the Western gaze on Cappadocian landscapes***

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Every representation on a page is a narrative created by an observer-writer and holds a story to be told. Recent studies by Robert

Ousterhout and later by Veronica Kalas and Fatma Gül Öztürk Büke show that depictions of the Cappadocian landscape have been monumentalised and 'falsely' represented. This study explores Charles Texier and Richard Popplewell Pullan's network of practice, their professional fellowships, and what motivated them to travel through the Ottoman lands and publish *Byzantine Architecture* (1864). It will thus contribute to the broader understanding of the 'sacred' narratives created around the Cappadocian landscape.

Western interest in the Ottoman lands started with an interest in discovering its past, roots and sources of information. Even though there was an interest in the archaeological assets of the Ottoman lands, interest in the Byzantine heritage came later. Edward Freeman's quote encapsulates the common perception of the Byzantine heritage: 'It is Oriental ... Such an Oriental character the Byzantine empire had from its very beginning' (1849: 165). In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, there was a critical attitude towards amalgamating different traditions or distinguishing certain architectural periods of the historical buildings. The seminar series of RIBA, the Royal Academy and the London Architectural Society from 1843 to 1858 provided a ground for architects to rethink Byzantine architecture.

With these shifts in the perception of Byzantine architecture, it was no surprise that Charles Texier, an architectural historian based in London and a member of RIBA, travelled through the Ottoman Empire, focusing on earlier Christian monumental architecture. His book *Byzantine Architecture*, co-authored with his friend, Richard Popplewell Pullan, was published in 1864. This paper will unpack the motivations for monumentalising the Cappadocian landscapes in their work.

*Keywords:* Charles Texier, Cappadocia, Byzantine architecture, monumentalisation, sacred narratives

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Media Studio (CIMS), a research laboratory that focuses on digitally assisted storytelling and hybrid forms of representation. She obtained her Master's degree in the Department of Architecture, Restoration Program from Istanbul Technical University in 2022. Before joining Carleton University, Sena gained experience in the conservation of architectural heritage and was a research team member on archaeological excavations such as the Adramytteion Archaeological Excavation and St Thekla Archaeological Site Survey in Türkiye. Her research interests are concentrated on Cappadocia's rural and cultural landscape, multileveled settlement features, and conservation planning approaches. Her doctoral research centres around architectural narratives, digital representations and heritage data management of the Cappadocian landscape.

**Dr Stephen Fai** BArch (Carleton), BA, MA, PhD (Ottawa), MRAIC, is an Associate Professor and the former Director of the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism, Carleton University; currently the Director of the Carleton Immersive Media Studio (CIMS), Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, Canada. He holds a professional degree in architecture and a PhD in Religious Studies. His research involves the theory and practice of analogue, hybrid and digital representation in architecture, heritage conservation and medical science.

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***Accidental pilgrims: occult encounters in occupied Istanbul, 1918–1923***

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My paper examines the coincidental encounters of spiritualists from Europe and Russia in armistice-era Istanbul. Brought to the city as occupying military servicemen and refugees of the Russian civil war and revolution, multiple figures interested in the occult sought out or became aware of one another, coming together to exchange ideas

and explore what they saw as the mystical side of their host city. As the occupation drew to a close, these individuals departed for Europe where they made names as spiritualist teachers and acolytes. Their later fame induced several to publish memoirs which contain passages on their experiences in Türkiye, which form one source for the proposed research, alongside the French, English and Turkish press of the period, and documents created by Ottoman, French and British authorities in the city. This combination of sources is what makes my paper distinctive. Thus far scholarship on the lives of the most prominent of these individuals, namely George Gurdjieff, J.G. Bennett, P.D. Ouspensky, and Thomas de Hartmann, has been largely Eurocentric in approach, neglecting to fully investigate the significance of their time in Istanbul and Ottoman influences on their biographies and thought. In elucidating these connections, typical of a broad range of intellectual and artistic activities and a motif of the period, the paper will also contribute to the cultural history of armistice-era Istanbul. It further builds on a budding literature on the Ottoman occult, which has provided important sources for the understanding of local figures with whom these new arrivals interacted.

*Keywords:* spiritualism, Istanbul, occult, displacement, occupation

**Dr Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal** received his PhD from the University of Cambridge in 2014. His thesis comparing the military occupations of Alexandria, Thessaloniki and Istanbul during and after World War I was published by Oxford University Press under the title *Britain's Levantine Empire, 1914–1923*. Daniel joined the British Institute at Ankara as a postdoctoral research fellow from 2014 to 2015 and later served as a Research Fellow for the 'From Enemies to Allies' research project from 2015 to 2017, the results of which were published in a collected volume by Routledge under the same title in 2022. After working as Research Assistant Professor in Middle Eastern History at Hong Kong Baptist University from 2017 to 2019, he returned to the BIAA as Assistant Director from 2019 to 2023. He is currently a research fellow at the Scuola Superiore Meridionale, investigating

the smuggling of Turkish opium and opiates across the Mediterranean during the interwar period.

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***Constantinople Seen and Reviewed through the Eyes of a Nineteenth-Century Diplomat and Journalist: Antonio Baratta***

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Genoese by birth, the adventurer Antonio Baratta (1802–1866) decided to pursue a diplomatic career after completing his law studies in Turin. His first assignment brought him to Constantinople in 1826, where he served in the Ottoman capital for five years as part of the Sardinian legation. While a modest diplomat, Baratta was a keen observer of the city, both artistically and culturally. In 1831, he published *Constantinople in 1831*, a book of descriptions and impressions of the city, written in a simple and comprehensible style for a Western audience, as the author himself defines it in the preface.

The setting is a few years before 1839, the start date of significant reforms for the Ottoman Empire. However, it is evident that the era of Sultan Mahmud II was already marked by events moving in that direction, such as the final abolition of the Janissary corps and its replacement with a modern European-style army.

Over a decade, Baratta produced other books based on his stay and experiences in Türkiye, some of which feature beautiful illustrations by the best engravers and artists of the time, such as *Constantinople, Pictured and Described* (1840) and *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* (1841).

Drawing from this publication and some Ottoman archival documents, this paper aims to introduce the figure of the traveller Antonio Baratta and rediscover the city of Constantinople, as well as the architecture of the time, through the perspective of someone who lived and explored it. Baratta had a sharp critical sense that placed him decidedly at odds with other diplomats and travellers in

Istanbul, who often held a superficial attitude towards the Turks and an alluring and Orientalist vision of the capital of their empire.

*Keywords:* Antonio Baratta, Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, Kingdom of Sardinia

**Consuelo Emilj Malara** is a PhD candidate at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Türkiye. Her doctoral research project focuses on diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Sardinia during the Crimean War. Between 2016 and 2018, Malara completed her Master's degree in the History Department at Hacettepe University in Ankara. Among her publications are the articles 'Mahmud II e l'uso propagandistico della propria immagine. Il caso della miniatura di Torino', in *STUDIA UBB HISTORIA ARTIUM*, 2022; 'Diplomatik Pasaport', in *Hukuk ve Uluslararası İlişkiler boyutla Diplomasi Kavramları Sözlüğü*; and 'Bella Ciao. La storia di una canzone di libertà nel Paese della Mezzaluna', in *Rivista Occhiali*, 2019.

**Dr Luca Orlandi** is an architectural historian who graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Genoa and obtained a PhD in 2005 from the Polytechnics of Turin in its 'History and Criticism of Architectural and Environmental Heritage' programme. In November 2022 he obtained the position of Associate Professor from the Inter-University Council (UAK) in Türkiye. He teaches History of Architecture and Architectural Design at the Faculty of Architecture and Design of Özyeğin University and collaborates with organisations including the Alte Vie Foundation and PIMo (People in Motion). He is a Senior Tutor at the Piranesi Prize — Prix de Rome.

He has published a monograph entitled *Il paesaggio delle architetture di Sinan: L'esempio della Tracia* (Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2017) and several essays and articles in collective publications and international journals. He often participates in seminars and international workshops and has organised conferences and exhibitions related to the themes he studies.

His fields of interest include the Ottoman architectural heritage and the architect Sinan; Turkish architecture; Galata and Genoese

colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean; Italian architects in the late Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Turkish Republic; travel literature in the Levant, and the Levantine world's heritage.

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### ***Political Travellers in the Ottoman Empire, 1740–1820***

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Many travellers were drawn to the Ottoman Empire by scholarship and interest in biblical or classical antiquity. Others investigated the power structure and diplomatic and strategic future of the Ottoman Empire. They included Lord Sandwich (1738–1740), later First Lord of the Admiralty; the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier (1774–1776), later French ambassador in Constantinople; and Thomas Hope (1794–1797), author of the great political novel *Anastasius*. Class spoke to class across barriers of race and religion. They valued the Ottoman Empire as an empire, for its splendour, hierarchy and diplomatic, strategic and geographical importance. After 1800 travellers were particularly interested in the plans of Ali Pasha, governor of southern Albania, and Muhammad Ali Pasha, governor of Egypt, for greater independence from the Ottoman Empire, and the advantages which might thereby be obtained for France or Britain. This talk will use their travel accounts and correspondences, and many unpublished pictures and drawings, to show that the Ottoman Empire was seen not only from the perspectives of religion, race and scholarship, but also politically and diplomatically, as a great power, which for most of this period was an ally of either Britain or France. Strategy and diplomacy provided the crucial background for travel.

*Keywords:* Lord Sandwich, Thomas Hope, strategy, diplomacy, Muhammad Ali

**Dr Philip Mansel** is a historian of France and the Middle East. His books include *Constantinople: city of the world's desire* (1995), *Paris between Empires* (2001) and *Levant: splendour and catastrophe on the*

*Mediterranean* (2010), a history of Smyrna, Alexandria and Beirut since 1600. His most recent books are *Aleppo: the rise and fall of Syria's great merchant city* (rev. ed. 2017) and *King of the World: the life of Louis XIV* (2019). He is a Fellow of the Institute of Historical Research, London, the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Asiatic Society and a founding committee member of the Levantine Heritage Foundation.

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### ***Edward Falkener in Anatolia: an architectural scholar between Classicism and Orientalism***

**Sebastian Marshall**, Leverhulme ECR Fellow, Schools of Classics and Art History, University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK  
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In recent scholarship on the Ottoman Mediterranean, it has become commonplace to challenge narratives of heroic discovery and cultural superiority expounded in publications by European travellers. Rather than taking a triumphal account of the appropriation of ancient heritage as its starting point, this paper discusses the experience of Edward Falkener (1814–1896), a little-known Victorian architect and writer whose journey around Anatolia from March 1844 to May 1845 was characterised by compromise, and whose plans to publish his travels were beset by setbacks. If Falkener is remembered today, it is usually as the author of the first anglophone monograph on Ephesus and the editor of the first British academic journal devoted to classical art and architecture. This paper provides a review of Falkener's career, but instead of these polished, published works, the focus is on his remarkable personal archive of diaries, sketchbooks, watercolours, and notes for an incomplete book about his tour of Anatolia. Drawing on this collection, it explores his uneasy position between the paradigms of amateur antiquary and professional scholar and his interactions with a variety of local actors who helped or hindered his meandering tour. While Falkener travelled without European companions, his reliance — at times uneasy — on the inhabitants of Anatolia is vividly illustrated by a series of Ottoman letters of introduction and

Italian contracts for servants. Setting out with the aim of recording ‘sublime specimens of Grecian art’, Falkener’s portfolios are filled with just as many records of Seljuk, Byzantine and Ottoman architecture. Representing the first attempt to study Falkener’s travels, this paper argues that the eclecticism of his unpublished records of his travels reflect a struggle to piece together heritage from different periods of Anatolia’s history.

*Keywords:* architecture, archaeology, draughtsmanship, landscape, nineteenth century

**Dr Sebastian Marshall** recently began a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at the University of St Andrews where he works on the history of travel in the eastern Mediterranean. Previously he took his BA and MPhil degrees at the Cambridge Classics Faculty where he specialised in classical reception in nineteenth-century British art, followed by a year working as an art market researcher. In 2024 he completed his PhD at Cambridge, supervised by the Classics Faculty and Art History Department, in which he examined representations of Greek and Anatolian landscapes in Victorian illustrated travelogues. Since completing his PhD, he has held the British School at Athens’ Cary Studentship and the William St Clair Fellowship at the School of Advanced Studies.

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***‘Wonders of the World’ and ‘Pieces of Paradise’: sightseeing on the Anatolian hajj road in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries***

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From trade and diplomacy to warfare and migration, the roads of the Ottoman empire were always bustling with activity. But perhaps the largest, and undoubtedly the most regular, flow of peoples and commodities through the empire’s arteries was the *hajj* caravan. Each year, thousands of pilgrims departed *en masse* from Üsküdar, making their way to Damascus through the

waystations of the right branch (*sağ kolu*) of the Ottoman road network. Over the course of almost two months, they visited sacred sites, locations of natural beauty and historical importance, and places of leisure and relaxation. Guidebooks to the waystations of the *hajj* road (*menzilnames*) became an important part of Ottoman pilgrimage culture, as a medium through which both expert and novice pilgrims recorded their own peregrinations and shaped the experiences of future travellers. *Menzilnames* offered a range of other practical information for each waystation, including historical and topographical information, local buildings and amenities, weather conditions, and the availability, quality, and price of food, water and other supplies.

*Menzilnames* offer an arguably more faithful insight into the everyday pilgrim experience than travelogues, which were usually authored by pilgrims travelling independently. Through a close examination of several such guidebooks from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, my presentation will discuss how pilgrims framed and presented their experiences of different sites along the *hajj* road. I examine the language they used to describe natural and architectural wonders, the kinds of associations they made with religious, mythical and historical figures and phenomena, and which elements of the landscape — whether natural or manmade — most captured their attention. I also explore how sightseeing interacted with the sacred nature and purpose of the *hajj* journey, sacred sites of multi-confessional interest, and the extent to which the sites and locations favoured by pilgrims evolved across time.

*Keywords:* Hajj, waystations, sightseeing, guidebooks

**Dr Yahya Nurgat** is a postdoctoral researcher at Sabancı University, where he examines Ottoman restorations of sacred sites in Mecca, with a particular focus on the Kaaba and the Sacred Mosque. He is especially interested in the interactions between sacred space, legal boundaries and patronage. He completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge, investigating the confessional, devotional and

spatial aspects of the *hajj* from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. His PhD dissertation received an Honorable Mention (Humanities) in the Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards (2023) from the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). His broader interests include Ottoman pilgrimage, religiosity, material culture, Islamic law, and the British Muslim heritage.

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***'He Painted as an Architect, and he Built as a Painter': Le Corbusier's travel to Turkey***

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The Swiss architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965) completed his Grand Tour of the Orient in 1911, including the cities of Istanbul, Edirne and Bursa in Turkey. This seven-month journey was part of his self-education in architecture and urbanism, and resulted in sketches, drawings and notes. With his Cupido 80 camera, he also created memories in form of photographs. He studied vernacular buildings as well as palaces and mosques. During his travels, not only architecture is seen as an interest, but also food, living conditions, and cultural anthropology. From his studies of Ottoman architecture, he built up a foundation around the concept of *purism* and thus the idea of modernism. The aesthetic value of purism included elemental geometry with the square, the cube and the sphere, and this is what he found in Hagia Sophia and Mimar Sinan's architecture. Further, he learned the idea of 'within-to-without'-view from the study of the Green Mosque (1419) in Bursa. In *Towards a New Architecture* (1927), he describes how in organic architecture '[t]he plan proceeds from within to without; the exterior is a result of an interior. The elements of architecture are light and shade, walls, and space.' The key ingredients in early modernism were functionality, simplicity and geometry, which Le Corbusier interestingly found in a completely different architecture and culture. Later, a couple of examples can be seen influenced by his studies in Türkiye:

Villa Jenneret-Perret (1912) and Villa Schwob, also called Villa Turque (1916), both in La Chaux-de-Fonds, are inspired by the Ottoman house. This paper will reflect on the 110 years perspective on travel as a source for knowledge (his notes are still mentioned by, for example, Orhan Pamuk), the aesthetic ideas he found on his way, and the strong colour-scale he used to describe rooms and patterns.

*Keywords:* Grand Tour of the Orient, Le Corbusier, self-education in Turkey, Ottoman architecture, perspective on travelling

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Her research, in the intersection of architecture, art, design and crafts, deals with perception, light, colour and materiality. Among her publications are *Den lilla skalan i den stora: Kaklet i osmanska rum* (Appell, 2022) [The Small Scale in the Large: Tiles in Ottoman Rooms]; 'Reuse of Edirne Balloon Hangar building in the light of other similar practices of the period', conference paper with M.S. Puyan and K.S. Bayraktar, (2023); 'The Turkish Modernist Osman Hamdi Bey and his view on Artefacts' (conference paper *ArCo*, 2021), and 'The renewal of street-scape through glass mosaic'. Pages 69–84 in İpek Yada Akpınar, Ela Güngören, Johan Mårtelius & Gertrud Olsson (eds), *Transformations of Public Space – architecture and the visual arts in late modern Istanbul 1950–80: Transactions 24* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2021).

## ***The Exploration of Architectural Spolia in Charles Texier's Œuvre on Anatolia***

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The architect and archaeologist Félix Marie Charles Texier travelled across Anatolia and Western Asia during the 1830s and 1840s. He is renowned for shedding light on Anatolian archaeology and contributing to new discoveries, most notably Hattusa, former capital of the Hittite Empire, and Yazılıkaya, a Hittite monument. The publication of his travels revealed significant insights into Anatolian civilisations while his drawings and explanations have provided guidance for numerous restoration projects.

This study investigates Texier's *œuvre* on Anatolia by focusing on the *spolia* that he identified within the monuments. The employment of *spolia*, re-using architectural fragments of older, usually dilapidated buildings in new constructions, is a significant characteristic of late antique and medieval monuments, transcending the pragmatic use of resources to include continuity with the past, as well as political or cultural legitimacy, exorcism, and visual appeal. Spoliated fragments can be so significant that a monument can be named after the *spolia* it carries. Not all *spolia* survive today, however, at least *in situ*. For instance, of the monuments depicted in Texier's engravings, the ornamental fragment on Lefke Gate of Nicaea is missing; and although the *spolia* in other locations are intact, their original context has been altered through renovations.

Texier occasionally depicts the *spolia* on monuments while he narrates them, and he does not fail to mention them even when he does not illustrate them, though his narrative occasionally displays a disparaging attitude towards their employment.

The aim of the study is to identify the *spolia* in Texier's illustrations and to understand his approach to these architectural fragments. Another goal is to reveal their current condition. This will display the afterlives of the *spolia*, whether they have

been lost, altered, or stayed intact, while also revealing the traveller's approach to an architectural practice that has been debated for centuries.

*Keywords:* Texier, *spolia*, narration of travellers, Anatolian archaeology

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## ***Narrating an Ottoman Plague to Public versus Private Audiences in Europe: Domenico Sestini's (1750–1832) contradictory testimonies of the 1778 Istanbul plague and the question of Ottoman Muslim fatalism***

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Arguably, one of the liveliest debates in Ottoman historiography involving European travellers is about the persistence of plague

epidemics in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Whereas until the last major episode in Europe (Marseilles 1720–1721) plague was a common scourge throughout the Euro-Mediterranean, only the Ottoman lands continued to suffer from it until the successful implementation of quarantine measures in 1830s. This divergence brought about the ‘exoticisation’ in Europe of plague as an Eastern disease.

The key agents in the making of European public opinion during this period were European travellers in Ottoman lands. Responding to the ever-growing demand for knowing more about the reasons for the plague’s persistence, travellers set out to explain plague dynamics in the Ottoman Empire. The leading reason repeatedly provided for its persistence was the fatalism of Ottoman Muslims, which travellers contended prevented the Ottomans from taking even basic measures against the epidemic like ‘social distancing’, let alone the quarantine measures already in place in Europe.

This paper addresses the question of Ottoman Muslim fatalism in the face of plague epidemics by cross-reading Florentine numismatist, botanist and traveller Domenico Sestini’s account of the 1778 Istanbul plague on the one hand, and the author’s narratives of the same plague as reflected in his private letters to his cousin Giovanni Mariti in Florence on a weekly or monthly basis in 1778. These letters, preserved in the University of Bologna, provide information on his daily life in the city, his motivation to publish a testimony of the plague, and most importantly his ‘kept-to-be-private’ remarks on Ottoman attitudes to the epidemic. Their cross-reading with his ‘meant-to-be-public’ *Della Peste* has the potential to cast further doubts on that long-accepted phenomenon as narrated by European travellers, and to extend the historiographical debate further.

*Keywords:* Plague, fatalism, travel writing, orientalism, history of everyday life

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Istanbul and Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, he was involved in thesis and research projects on European-Ottoman borderlands and mobilities and published, in book format, the Florentine travelling scholar Domenico Sestini’s (1750–1832) two exceptional Istanbul travelogues as edited Turkish translations: *Istanbul* (1778) and *Boğaziçi* (1779). He is currently working on an edited Turkish translation of Sestini’s Istanbul to Basra travelogue. Mert’s current main research interest is the instruction of European languages in late Ottoman and early Republican public education in Turkey, accompanied by various other forms of Ottoman-European interactions, primarily in urban areas.

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***On the Wings of Travelogues: Ottoman cultural heritage of the cities in the Klis sancak***

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During the seventeenth century, several settlements in the Klis *sanjak* in Dalmatia held the status of *kasaba* [village] (Klis, Sinj, Knin, etc.), along with two cities with *şehir* status (Drniš, Livno). The original richness of these cities during Ottoman rule is primarily known through the travelogue of Evliya Çelebi and the work of Franjo Difnik, *History of the Cretan War in Dalmatia*.

After the Ottomans were expelled from the Dalmatian interior in the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, much of the distinctive Islamic architecture in these cities was either neglected or abandoned to obscurity. Inspired by seventeenth-century travelogues, however, many travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries explored the Dalmatian interior and recorded traces of the Ottoman cultural heritage. Notable among these travellers were Alberto Fortis, Rudolf von Alt, John Gardner Wilkinson and others.

The first part of this paper will examine the rich cultural heritage of Islamic-Ottoman cities

during Ottoman rule through a comparison of travel notes with archival images from the seventeenth century. The second part will focus on the preserved pictorial and written travel records of the Ottoman cultural heritage in specific cities within the former Klis Sanjak (the mosque in Klis, the mosque and minaret in Drniš, etc.).

*Keywords:* Klis Sanjak, Dalmatia, Ottoman cultural heritage, Evliya Çelebi, Franjo Difnik

**Frane Prpa** graduated with a degree in History and Art History from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. Since April 2023, he has been employed at the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. He is a student in the postgraduate doctoral programme in Humanities, module Art History. He has participated in several domestic and international scholarly conferences. He is the recipient of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split award for outstanding achievements in academic and extracurricular activities (2020).

**Dr Ana Torlak**, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split. Currently, she serves as the head of the Department of Art History. The focus of her research is the history of excavations in Salona, with special emphasis on the excavations of the 19th century and travel writers' notes on ancient monuments. Her papers have been published in various reputable academic journals and other publications, both domestically and abroad. She is the author of *In Search of the Lost: Ancient Monuments of Salona in Historical Periods from the 10th to the 19th Century* (2024).

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### ***The Imagined Lands of Ottoman Luxury and Exoticism in the Horoscope for Trebizond (1336–1337)***

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An articulate picture of the imagery of the places of the Ottoman Empire in the Byzantine mindset is offered by a peculiar fourteenth-century Byzantine source. This text gives centrality to the theme of foreign countries and reflects the positive experiences of exchange that the Byzantines had with the Ottomans. The lands of the Ottoman Empire were seen as sources of luxury goods and highly developed trade. This paper will closely follow all the main places of the Ottoman Empire on the topographical map drawn by this extraordinary author, which deals with the empire's main trading centres and the cities sacred to the Muslim religion. The geography drawn, inspired by travellers' tales of the Byzantine literature, encompasses the entire Turkish, Iranian and Arab territory to the North, East and South, representing the topographical horizon of Byzantine curiosity. The interesting detail is that there is no mention of Christian lands in this text, with the exception of Constantinople and the Balkans.

This important source shows us how relations and interactions between the Byzantines and the Ottomans were not only negative and influenced by the Turkokratia, but also positive and of mutual exchange, as evidenced by the widespread linguistic borrowings in areas unrelated to the economic or military.

On the basis of the wonderful places in the Ottoman East described in this source, we will attempt to demolish the image of Turkish–Byzantine relations based exclusively on the military and political aspect. The dissemination of such ideologising literature has conveyed the image of a predominantly negative view of the invading Turk by the Byzantines. The Byzantines' view of the Ottoman East emphasised the luxury of trade and the refinement of their customs, over and above the false and sharp demarcation



between the 'Greek-Christian' and the alien 'barbarian-pagan Turk'.

*Keywords:* Byzantines, Ottoman Turks, linguistic borrowings, luxury of trade, refined customs

**Simona Puca** is about to present her PhD thesis in Byzantine History (University of Naples, 'Federico II'). She has a degree in History and a Master's degree in Medieval and Renaissance History (University of Naples 'Federico II'). She also holds a Postgraduate Expert Diploma in Byzantine Civilisation (University of Alcalá and University Complutense of Madrid). She was a scholarship holder at the LaMOP of the Université Paris Pantheon Sorbonne 1 and the Institute of Philosophical Studies in Naples and a visiting scholar at the Université Grenoble Alpes. She currently holds a research fellowship at the Department of Byzantine and Neo-Greek Studies at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on diplomacy and relations between East and West in the Mediterranean area in the Middle Ages.

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***The Similar, the Strange and the Comparable: Jacob Jonas Björnståhl in Constantinople 1776–1779***

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The Swedish linguist Jacob Jonas Björnståhl spent almost three years in Istanbul between 1776 and 1779, as a resident of the Swedish legation. He documented his experiences in a diary and travel letters, which were published shortly after they reached Stockholm and soon appeared in German, Dutch and Italian translations. This correspondence was the first extensive presentation of Islam and everyday Muslim life published for a qualified Scandinavian audience. Björnståhl can be said to be an instigator for a Nordic academic interest in Islam and, unique for his time, he provided a distinctive emphasis on religious practices.

Björnståhl was a well-read writer, and the references in his work are an excellent testimony to the circulation of 'Turkish letters' and other genres of travel literature. He showed a special admiration for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with whom he shared the ambition to learn the language and to make personal visits to people and places. Like her, he criticised previous travel accounts for repeating information without any effort to check the circumstances and the habit of wearing local dress. These are elements used in particular when Björnståhl wanted to present information from the sultan's empire with authority.

This paper will discuss how Björnståhl constructed a *persona* in his letters to give legitimacy to his observations of the customs he depicted. He declared his ambition to be 'a European Traveller who wishes to write nothing but what he has seen, and what he knows for certain to be true.' Such claims of authenticity dominate his letters; nevertheless, Björnståhl circulates knowledge about the Muslim world by means of comparisons, metaphors, analogies and with an ethnographic aspiration not previously seen in Nordic countries. Much of it still constitutes a valuable source today.

*Keywords:* travel literature; early ethnography; Muslim pious practices; cultural comparisons, Scandinavians in the Ottoman Empire

**Professor Catharina Raudvere** is Professor of History of Religions at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on Türkiye and the Balkans, contemporary Sufism and Muslim religious practices. She has also published on early Nordic travellers to Constantinople. Raudvere has published the monograph *The Book and the Roses. Sufi Women, Visibility, and Zikir in Contemporary Istanbul*, (2003), and edited and co-edited the volumes *Religion, Politics, and Turkey's EU Accession*, 2008; *Sufism Today. Heritage and Tradition in the Global Community* (2009); *Rethinking the Space for Religion. New Actors in Central and Southeast Europe on Religion, Authenticity and Belonging* (2012); *Contested Memories and the Demands of the Past*.

*History Cultures in the Modern Muslim World* (2016); *Nostalgia – Loss and Creativity. Political and Cultural Representations of the Past in South-East Europe* (2018); *Neo-Ottoman Imaginaries in Contemporary Turkey. Gendered Discourses, Agencies, and Visions* (2022). Raudvere is currently managing the inter-disciplinary research centre 'The Many Roads in Modernity: the transformation of south-east Europe and the Ottoman heritage from 1870 to the twenty-first century' (modernity.ku.dk).

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### **Questioning Imperial Attitudes in Thomas Thornton's Present State of Turkey (1807)**

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Thomas Thornton, who worked for the Levant consular service for many years and was an agent for the Levant Company, stayed in the Ottoman Empire for around fifteen years. After his return to England, Thornton published an account of his observations in 1807, arguing that previous works had been published by prejudiced travellers and highly misinformed Britons. Thornton was disillusioned through his exposure to the Ottoman Empire (state, society and culture). By criticising the hypocritical approaches of Europeans and his fellow Britons towards Ottomans, Thomas Thornton ended up questioning certain imperial attitudes promoted by European peoples, including the British.

*Keywords:* Ottoman Empire, British Empire, Europe, Enlightenment, imperialism

**Suheyra-Hacer Sahin** is a PhD candidate at the University of Strasbourg, working under a joint supervision at the University of Lorraine. Her research focuses on the formation of British identity in travel literature on the Ottoman Empire written during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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### **The Narrative of Architecture and Medieval Aesthetics in Bertrandon de la Brocquière's Travels to Jerusalem and Constantinople**

**Esin Korkut Savul**, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Türkiye  
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De la Brocquière, a spy who was given the mission to travel to the Middle East by Philip III, the duke of Burgundy, travelled extensively in the Ottoman Lands in 1433. His work, as a travel book, differs from its contemporaries such as that of Clavijo, since it lacks calendrical precision in the narrative and calculations in the description of architectural works and designs. It even errs in the information it provides concerning Murad II and his courtiers; and his predictions on the weakness of the Ottoman army turned out to be inaccurate. No matter how imprecise and vague, it is both as a narrative of architecture and as an itinerary, that the work is an invaluable source, offering glimpses of medieval aesthetics. The architectural illustrations reveal details that both seem to be realistic and functional but at the same time, too much concerned with detail and ornament. While frugality in everyday practices is cherished, a keenness on architectural detail, myth and admiration of beauty and ornamentation are the key features of the narrative. According to Eco's analysis of medieval aesthetics, this is not a contradiction but a consistency in the medieval idea of beauty and good. This paper discusses how De la Brocquière's work exhibits shortcomings as a military treatise on the Ottoman army and how, with all its imprecision and inaccuracies, it can be treated as a work marked by characteristics of a medieval aesthetics built upon a conflict between the venerable and the beautiful as well as the sacred and the attractive.

*Keywords:* medieval aesthetics, Ottomans, travel book, military

**Dr Esin Korkut Savul** studied American Literature between 1996 and 2001 at Ankara University; and obtained his MA degree from the same department in 2006. In 2006, he started working in the Department of Modern

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***Blurring the Boundary between Heresy and Orthodoxy: foreign travellers' accounts on everyday religiosity in nineteenth-century Istanbul***

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The nineteenth century was a period of contested religious discourses in the Ottoman Empire, when the ruling elite was engaged in a campaign to consolidate imperial legitimacy by crafting and promoting an interpretation of Sunni Islam defined by obedience. In addition to regulating Muslim religious behaviour, this intervention also aimed to separate Muslims from non-Muslims in popular religious rituals and beliefs in the imperial capital, Istanbul, which was the principal locus of this contention. Documentary sources from the Ottoman state archives give the impression that the 'lived' religion among Muslims in Istanbul and beyond conformed to the said discourse. However, the accounts of American and European travellers in Istanbul, among them diplomats, officers, scholars, missionaries and tourists, present alternative perspectives of how Ottomans received and reacted to such interventions in their daily lives. These figures include Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891), Adolphus Slade (1804–1877), Julia Pardoe (1806–1862), John Porter Brown (1814–1872), and William Hasluck (1878–1920). Critically engaging with their memoirs, letters and books, as well as the archives of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery, this research aims to shed light on the cultural

history of the late Ottoman Empire and the tensions between the urban populace and the ruling elite struggling to assert its Islamic legitimacy throughout the long nineteenth century.

*Keywords:* Feriköy Protestant Cemetery archives, late Ottoman Empire, urban populace, ruling elite, contested religious discourses, everyday religion.

**Enes Osman Sayın** is a postgraduate student at Bilkent University, Ankara, Türkiye, studying American missionary activities in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods; he holds a BA in History from Boğaziçi University (2024). He was an archival intern for the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) and the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) in 2023, where he catalogued parts of the American Board and the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery archives.

**S. Berk Metin** is a PhD candidate in History at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada. He enjoys dealing with everyday religion in the Ottoman World in the decades preceding the Tanzimat (1839). More specifically, he is interested in discovering the possible impacts of this period's social and political crises on the Empire's religious landscape. He holds an MA *cum laude* from Leiden University (2020) and a BA from Sciences Po (2018).

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***'The Most Regular and the Best Made of All': insights from early modern travellers' accounts of Ottoman royal tombs***

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Royal tombs were among the most prestigious buildings of Ottoman architecture in the early modern period. In a constant evolution, their designs responded to changing practices in architectural decorum. The mid-sixteenth century marked a pivotal moment in the development of Ottoman royal tomb architecture in Istanbul. With the construction of Hürrem and Süleyman I's tombs at the Süleymaniye Complex, a distinctive and more

monumental style of royal tombs with sophisticated dome structures emerged and prevailed for half a century, coinciding with imperial processions during which royal tombs acquired their definitive forms.

Accounts from Ottoman and European early modern travellers provide valuable comparative perspectives for investigating this transformative period in tomb architecture. Early modern travellers noted that they were permitted to visit and inquire about royal tombs, revealing the tombs' role in reflecting the posthumous image of the sultan to a broad audience. Embracing this opportunity, travellers even devised itineraries solely to view royal tombs, as in the case of Johann Michael Wansleben (1635–1679) to fulfil his 'one of strongest passions'. Their concise commentary reveals travellers' views of royal tombs, often intertwined with the reception of the succession history of Ottoman sultans and offers a comparative perspective. Though often brief and fragmented, these depictions shed light on how both Ottoman subjects and foreign observers received the tomb's materials, objects, interred individuals, and its scale in a period when royal tombs playing instrumental roles in legitimising dynastic succession. Close analysis of these accounts not only supplements formal architectural studies but also situates stylistic changes in Ottoman tombs within a broader historical and cultural context of dynastic succession.

*Keywords:* tombs, Süleyman II, funerary rituals, architectural decorum

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national monument, and the role of design-build studios in architectural education.

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***The Grand Embassy of Count Oettingen (1700) along the Lower Danube: symbolic encounters with the Ottoman province***

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On 4 January 1700, the inhabitants of the village of Pírgos, in the district of Rusçuk (on the lower Danube), witnessed an unusual event: the parade of the Grand Embassy of Count Oettingen, marching in their vineyards escorted by the Janissaries, and welcomed by high-ranking Ottoman officials from the nearby town with banners and accompanied by musicians.

The main goal of this paper is to focus on the symbolic encounters of ambassadorship with the Ottoman province, where strict diplomatic protocol was often intermingled with some spontaneous 'deviations' as, for example, unexpected musical performances, and 'strange' expressions of hospitality surrounding gift-giving practices and food rituals, which vividly illustrate mutual perceptions of strangeness and curiosity.

The basic source for this study is the diary(-travelogue) of Simpert Niggel ('Simperto'), the travelling chaplain of the Grand Embassy of Count Oettingen-Wallerstein (1700). The Benedictine abbot was not only a key figure in religious ceremonies of the embassy but gives some interesting details in this micro-historical provincial context. Besides, the Ottoman administrative sources, mainly the registers of the local sharia judges, will be correlated here to outline the obligations of the local population in servicing traffic through the province, as well as the reception and accommodation of foreign delegations. For the Ottoman districts on the lower Danube (in particular, the district of Rusçuk) this was the period when the frontier was moving closer and the river traffic was getting busier than it had in the past: both in terms of logistical organisation, troops concentration and the increasing flow of diplomatic agencies.

*Keywords:* symbolic encounters, diplomatic agencies, Ottoman provinces, gift-giving

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***German envoys and travellers' reports on non-Muslim communities of the Ottoman empire***

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In this paper we will examine the texts of travel diaries and reports by the merchant Hans Dernschwam (1553–1555), published by F. Babinger, 1923, rep. 2014, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1553/1555)* and compare Dernschwam's texts with those of three other writers:

- i. the Lutheran missionary Stephan Gerlach, 1674, *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch...Der von zween Glorwürdigsten Römischen Käysern/Maximiliano und Rudolpho, Beyderseits den Andern dieses Nahmens/ Höchstseeligster Gedächtnüß/An die Ottomanische Pforte zu Constantinopel Abgefertigten...* ;

- ii. the Lutheran theologian and anthropologist Salomon Schweigger, 1608, *Ein Neue Reyssbeschreibung auss Teutschland nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem...*;
- iii. the renowned scholar of Byzantine and modern Greek studies, Karl Krumbacher. 1886; repr. 1979, *Griechische Reise: Blätter aus dem Tagebuche einer Reise in Griechenland und in der Türkei.*

These texts, written in German, constitute a valuable source of information about the peoples of the Ottoman Empire (cf. Y. Ben-Naeh & G. Saban, 2013, Three German Travellers on Istanbul Jews. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 12/1: 35–51, who demonstrate how Jews are depicted in the texts they examined). However, the lack of recent editions, in most cases, and the language barrier have hindered access to them. In our investigation, we will chiefly focus on the references to the Greek-Orthodox and the Armenian communities in Istanbul and Asia Minor. We will also consider how stereotypes present in Orientalist literature and related works might challenge the reliability of these sources.

**Konstantinos Sampanis** is a post-doctoral researcher and lecturer in the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Vienna where he is currently conducting ethnographic and sociolinguistic field and archival research on contemporary Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul. His recent publications focus on the diachrony of the Greek language, dialectology, language contact and linguistic nationalism.

**Dilara Kaplan** studied Political Science (BA & MA) at the University of Salzburg, Boğaziçi University and BGSU. At the University of Vienna, she completed her

BA in Oriental Studies with distinction, writing theses on 'Female Figures as Demarcation Tools in 19th-Century Orientalist and Occidental Literary Constructions' and on 'The Preservation of Romyka, an Endangered Minority Language, as Cultural Heritage.'

Currently, she is writing her Master's thesis in the Turkology Department, analyzing the functions of code-switching in Armeno-Turkish and Karamanlidika letters from a comparative perspective. Additionally, at the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, she is studying registers of Cappadocian Greek Orthodox communities written in Karamanlidika.

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***From the Hôpital pour les maladies mentales de La Manouba to Berrechid system: on the border of the former Ottoman Empire, the places of psychiatry as scenarios of sociopolitical struggle***

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In the Maghreb, on the border between the former Ottoman Empire and the Moroccan Cherifien Sultanate, psychiatric hospitals become not only places of colonial domination, of Western science affirmation, but also of political struggle in which crucial figures in the anti-French nationalist movement emerge. Here, Tunisia plays a decisive role for the birth of a psychiatry on the move in which doctors, French and indigenous, are on Ottoman land, travellers who bring ideas to confront and conflict against the colonial background. Indeed, le Congrès des médecins aliénistes et neurologistes de France et des pays de langue française inaugurating colonial psychiatry in North Africa took place in Tunis in April 1912, chaired by the Islamophobic and anti-Semitic Gabriel Alapetite, the then Résident Général in Tunisia, whereof the secretary was Porot, the famous founder of the school of Algiers, whose first psychiatric hospital in which he

served was the French civil hospital, the future 'Charles Nicolle' hospital. If in Morocco, the French Loi des aliénés was inapplicable, given the administrative specificities of the Sultanate, in Tunisia its application was yet another expression environment and, indeed, as an actor in Ottoman of domination and assimilation to the colonial model. In this horizon, l'Hôpital pour les maladies mentales de La Manouba became a place not only of marginalisation of the patient, but above all a sounding board of nationalist emancipation. From the Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes to the Archives Nationales de Tunis, this hospital, characterised by a different history compared to the Moroccan alienation system whose center is in Berrechid, emerges as the place where the psychiatrist and politician Salem Esc-Chadely, travelling from Paris to Tunis, Algiers and La Manouba, conducted his medical-social battles not only against the various directors from Perrussel to Marechal, followers of Porot's theories, but above all for the birth of a national anti-colonial feeling.

*Keywords:* Tunisia, psychiatric hospitals, colonial domination, political struggles

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***'Purses of Gold' and 'Syrian Princes': travels of Christian dignitaries from Ottoman lands to early eighteenth-century Scotland***

**Janet Starkey**, Lecturer in Middle Eastern Studies, u3 and Durham University (retired). TIOL committee member  
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This paper will explore travel from the Ottoman Empire to Scotland in the early eighteenth century. Caspar Hillenbrand (2024) has pointed out that almost all Ottoman accounts about travel to Europe in this period were *sefâretnâmes*, official reports written by Ottoman envoys to foreign countries. Yet several members of Eastern churches in the Ottoman Empire also travelled around Europe to collect alms for the upkeep of their monasteries and churches. This was a continuation of an earlier tradition, as Alasdair C. Grant (2022) outlined in his study of Greek refugees, who were mostly clergymen. Those refugees arrived in Scotland after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and another group visited in the seventeenth century. This alms-seeking trend appears to have continued, for three such Christian dignitaries came to Edinburgh between 1732 and 1736 in search of funds and intriguing experiences. These clerics rarely provided written accounts of their travels, but some information can be discovered from kirk session records, burgh accounts, embassy reports, government records and other archives in Scotland and from Ottoman sources. It is fascinating to discover more about their routes across Europe (and beyond), support they received *en route*, and the part sometimes played by Russian and other inter-regional networks.

As background to these alms-seekers, this paper will consider why these clerics needed to seek funds in Scotland to support their communities in Ottoman lands, especially those in Cyprus and the Levant; the positions these travellers held there, and the contacts that helped them whilst they travelled in Europe. Some were fraudsters or freeloaders; others had genuine intentions, or something in between. Whatever else, they appeared to have been treated courteously rather than with enmity in Scotland. The paper will also reflect on the difficulties of discovering

evidence of such almsgiving in Scottish archives.

*Keywords:* almsgiving, Eastern Christian clerics, Cyprus, Levant, Russians

**Dr Janet Starkey** (MA Hons, MPhil, PhD), formerly worked at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait; in Jordan, Alexandria in Egypt, Oman, Sudan and elsewhere in the Middle East; at the British Museum, London, and the Oriental Museum, Durham; and as a lecturer in socio-cultural anthropology and in Middle Eastern Studies at Durham University, UK. Following her retirement from Durham, she lectures on the Middle East and on Social History for the u3a in the Scottish Borders. Editor of the *Red Sea Project Proceedings* (Archaeopress, 2005, 2007) and of *The Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* between 2007 and 2018, she is the author of many articles on the Middle East: her monographs include *The Scottish Enlightenment Abroad: the Russells of Braidlaw, in Aleppo and on the Coast of Coromandel* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). She was a joint editor of *Travellers in Egypt* (1998); and a contributor to and editor of several ASTENE publications, including *Travellers in Ottoman Lands: the botanical legacy* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018) and *Pious Pilgrims, Discerning Travellers, Curious Tourists* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020). She contributed to and joint-edited *Travellers in Ottoman Lands II: the Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2024). A founder member of ASTENE; a member of organising committees for TIOL1 (Edinburgh, 2017), TIOL2 (Sarajevo, 2022) and TIOL3 (Istanbul, 2025).

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***Summoned by the Sultan: Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and his pioneering newspaper al-Jawā'ib***

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The Lebanese writer, journalist and lexicographer Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1804?–1887) was not only one of the most original

intellectuals of the nineteenth-century Arab *nahḍa* ('revival'), but also one of the most widely travelled, having lived or worked in the course of his long career in Lebanon, Malta, Tunisia, England, France and Constantinople. His varied activities included not only an extended period working as a translator for Western missionaries in Malta and England, but also the publication of a pioneering literary work, *al-Sāq 'alā al-Sāq* (Paris, 1855), which is commonly regarded as the first attempt to produce a modern, European-style Arabic novel. Most of the last three decades of al-Shidyāq's life, however, were spent in Constantinople, where he founded and for several years edited the pioneering Arabic newspaper *al-Jawā'ib*, which circulated widely in the Middle East and beyond, and which is commonly regarded as the most influential Arabic newspaper of its time; with his son, Selim, he also established in Constantinople the al-Jawā'ib Press, which performed a major educational role by publishing editions of classical Arabic literature. Al-Shidyāq died in 1887 in Kadıköy, from where his body was transported back to Lebanon for burial in a suburb of Beirut.

This paper will describe the circumstances of al-Shidyāq's offer of employment and his move to Constantinople in around 1860; discuss the main topics and concerns of his newspaper *al-Jawā'ib*; and comment on the occasionally tense relations between al-Shidyāq's activities in the field of publishing and the Ottoman authorities. The paper will discuss the advantages to be gained from publishing the paper in Constantinople rather than another centre of Arabic literary activity and will also briefly consider some of al-Shidyāq's observations on the city itself. **Keywords:** Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, Arab *nahḍa*, Arabic press, al-Jawā'ib, Constantinople

**Paul Starkey** (D.Phil) is Emeritus Professor at Durham University and was the first Chair of ASTENE. A specialist on Arabic literature and culture, he is Chairman of the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature and until 2018 was Vice-President of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES). In summer 2021 he was the recipient of the BRISMES Award for Services to Middle Eastern Studies. Paul

Starkey is internationally recognised for his translations of Arabic novels, which have opened up the rich and dynamic field of Arabic literature to non-Arabic speaking audiences: his translation of *The Book of the Sultan's Seal* by Youssef Rakha won the 2015 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation, and his translation of *The Shell* by Mustafa Khalifa won a Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding in 2017. A founder member of ASTENE, he was contributor to and joint editor of *Travellers in Ottoman Lands: the botanical legacy* (Archaeopress, 2018), of *Pious Pilgrims, Discerning Travellers, Curious Tourists* (Archaeopress, 2020), and of *Travellers in Ottoman Lands II: the Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond* (Archaeopress, 2024). Member of organising committees for TIOL1 (Edinburgh, 2017), TIOL2 (Sarajevo, 2022), and TIOL3 (Istanbul, 2025).

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### ***Jurjī Zaydān in Istanbul: a traveller in the post-revolutionary capital***

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In 1909, the author, journalist and intellectual Jurjī Zaydān (1861–1914), who was born in Ottoman Syria, visited post-revolutionary Ottoman Istanbul. Zaydān, one of the leading figures of the *nahḍa* whose contributions were crucial to the formulation of the theory of Arab nationalism, was a traveller who was well versed in history and literature.

His observations on the sites he visited during his time in the city such as museums, mosques, palaces, schools and libraries, in addition to his thoughts on the social and political life of Istanbul and the lives of various social groups provide us with invaluable insights on life in the Ottoman capital at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A figure who was opposed to the ideas of Abulḥamid II and therefore more closely politically aligned with the Committee of Union and Progress, Zaydān travelled to the city riding on the wave of post-revolutionary zeal following the Second Constitutional



Revolution of 1908. After travelling throughout the city, he published his observations in his journal *al-Hilāl* (published in Cairo,) in a series of articles. Within this context, Zaydān wrote about his perspective of the lives of Turks, as well as Turkish-Arab relations. My paper will analyse his observations as a Christian Arab traveller in the Ottoman capital and focus mainly on his use of *ekphrasis* in describing Christian and Muslim worship spaces, namely the Hagia Sophia, Kariye Mosque, Süleymaniye Mosque, Eyüp Mosque, Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the Hamidiye Mosque built by Sultan Abdulhamid II. As observations of Christian Arab travellers in Istanbul were exceedingly rare, this paper will provide a new perspective on how the spaces of the Ottoman capital were viewed through Zaydān's eyes and recorded in his travelogue.

**Keywords:** Jurjī Zaydān, journalism, Turkish–Arab relations, *nahḍa*, Arab nationalism

**Dr Esra Taşdelen** is a native of Istanbul, Türkiye: She was awarded a BA in Social and Political Sciences from Sabancı University; MA in Middle Eastern Studies in 2005, and her PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilisations in 2014, both at the University of Chicago. Her PhD dissertation is entitled 'Literature as a Mirror of History: a comparative study of the historical fictions of Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu (1870–1927) and Jūrjī Zaydān (1861–1914).' Among her published articles are 'Race and Racism in Historical Fiction: the case of Jurji Zaydan's Novels', *Humanities Journal* (2021). She recently translated *Other Faces of the Empire: ordinary lives against social order and hierarchy* (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2022). She is currently a Lecturer at the Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies at the University of Chicago, where her teaching focuses on the history, languages, literatures and cinema of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as on translation theory.

***Monks and Monasteries, Real and Re-imagined, in the Travelogues and Poetry of the Seventeenth-Century Arab-Ottoman Sufi 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī***

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Famed primarily as a Sufi thinker and poet, the Damascene Sunni scholar 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641–1731) was one of the most important figures in the intellectual and literary history of the Arab-Ottoman world. He was also, in later life, a keen traveller, who has been credited with the creation of a specifically Sufi type of Arabic travel literature that recounts in prose and poetry the benefits derived from trips to the graves of prophets and saints and from stopovers in the lodges of living Sufi masters and their followers.

But al-Nābulusī does not restrict his attention to Muslim institutions and communities alone. Especially noteworthy in his longest travelogue *al-Ḥaḳīqa wa l-majāz fī riḥlat al-shām wa-miṣr wa l-ḥijāz* [*Reality and Metaphor in the Journey through the Levant, Egypt and the Hejaz*] is his readiness to admit Christian monasteries into the list of holy places he visited on his circuitous route through Ottoman Palestine in 1693.

Focusing on the philosophical ideas rooted in the thought of the Andalusian mystic Ibn 'Arabī, and cultural tropes that permeate not only al-Nābulusī's depiction of the monks and monasteries he encountered in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Jaffa, but also his poetic re-imagining (in an unedited section of his celebrated *Dīwān*) of the long-forgotten Damascene monastery of Dayr Murrān, this paper argues that al-Nābulusī saw such institutions not as manifestations of the Christian Other but as fully-fledged elements of an Arab-Islamic religious landscape.

**Keywords:** 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, Sufi travel literature, Arabic bacchic poetry, Dayr Murrān Monastery, Ottoman Palestine and Syria

**Dr Richard Todd.** Since completing his doctorate at the University of Oxford, Richard Todd has taught Arabic, classical Arabic

literature, and Islamic cultural and intellectual history at Durham University, the American University of Sharjah (as Visiting Assistant Professor), and the University of Edinburgh, where he also taught Turkish. In 2017 he joined the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham, where he teaches Islamic philosophy and medieval thought. He is the author of *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) and is editor-in-chief of the Taylor & Francis quarterly journal *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. His research focuses on points of intersection between premodern Islamic philosophy, theology, mysticism, science and literature (in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish) and often draws on Birmingham's Mingana collection of Islamic manuscripts.

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***An American 'War-Traveller': Constantinople, Chanak Kale and Gallipoli during World War I in the memoirs of Journalist Raymond Swing***

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As historian Roger Chickering states, historians writing on World War I have been shifting their point of view regarding the central themes on which they focus in their analyses of the war. World War I historians' interest in the military, diplomatic and political dimensions of the war was initially succeeded by interest in the social history of the war, and later by interest in the 'cultural dimensions of life in war...' This contemporary turn to the cultural history of World War I accords special importance to the actors and the environment of the home front, elements which were scarcely visible in the analysis of earlier historians. Moreover, considering World War I to be a total war that, in Chickering's words, 'left nothing, absolutely nothing untouched' only emphasises the necessity of taking cultural history into consideration.

This paper focuses on an American journalist, the Berlin correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*, Raymond Swing, and his

'war-travel' to Constantinople and Chanak Kale during World War I. Whilst 'tourism' with its demanding sightseers essentially stopped during the war years, an alternative kind of travel emerged among a different group of people, one that included journalists and war correspondents. Raymond Swing's memoir, which included his adventurous travel story from Berlin to Constantinople, then to Chanak Kale, and his observations of Gallipoli-Dardanelles-Chanak Kale area battles, and his interviews with the Ottoman bureaucracy could be considered a form of travel 'caused by war', in historian Mustafa Göleç's words

Swing's memoir significantly contributed to the relevant literature. An abundance of information that was usually missing from the diaries, letters or memoirs of soldiers could be found in Swing's memoir. Additionally, he, as a home-front character, became the protagonist of a story which took place in the battlefield.

*Keywords:* journalists as travellers, World War I, Gallipoli-Dardanelles-Chanak Kale area battles, cultural history

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### ***The 'Ottoman Provinces' through the Eyes of Russian Officials, 1880 to 1910***

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The 'Ottoman provinces' of Kars, Ardahan and Batum remained a part of the Russian Empire from 1878 to 1918. However, this period has been largely ignored by Russian and Turkish historiographers. This study aims to create a historically accurate depiction of these territories from the Russian perspective by utilising data from Russian sources.

After the Russo-Turkish War of 1876–1877, the Ottoman Empire lost the cities of Kars, Ardahan, Oltu and Batum. Established in 1878, the Kars provincial administration expanded its borders to include the Zakavkazye province and territories from Tiflis to Dagestan to form a consolidated governorship. As a result, affirmed by the Berlin Congress of 1878, the Russian Empire acquired three Ottoman regions or *sanjaks (Elviye-i selase)*: Kars, Ardahan and Batum. Kars remained a part of the Russian Empire until the Brest–Litovsk Treaty of 1918. In March 1918, the Turkish places were transferred back to the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian contingent left the area.

St Petersburg's Royal House appointed officials to serve in the seized Ottoman territories. They lived, travelled and wrote about it while serving in official posts. Annually from 1880 to 1910, the region published 'Memorial Books' of the Kars province, providing Russians' observations on Kars, Ardahan and other Ottoman areas.

My paper is a comparative analysis of such writings, in which I use the annual 'Memorial Books', as well as statistical analysis of quantitative data, to analyse the power interactions and bureaucratic structures of the Russian Empire, contributing to a better understanding of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious dynamics within the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. My paper aims to show the merging, interactions and fusion of cultures, nationalities, experiences and people living in peaceful coexistence. Territorial restructuring offered the Ottoman Turks educational

opportunities, social mobility, and growth, rather than subjugation.

*Keywords:* Ottoman history, Turkish history, Russian history, Russian officials' writings on Ottoman lands, Ottoman provinces

**Dr Katya Vladimirov** is a Professor of History at Kennesaw State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Her education includes a doctorate in History (Georgetown University), MA in History (George Mason University), and a BA and MA in History (State Academy of Humanities). Her research interests involve the history of elites and power structures based on quantitative analysis. Her publications include her book, *The World of Provincial Bureaucracy in Late 19th and 20th Century Russian Poland* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004); a translation of Grigorii Gershuni's *Artist of Terror: from my recent past: memoirs of a revolutionary terrorist* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), and several articles including: 'General Nicolae Rădescu: new sources, new perspectives, the 1940s–1950s', 'Purges and Forced Retirements of Soviet Party Elites as Power Tools of Social Mobility', 'Red East: Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s', 'Dead Men Walking: Soviet elite cemeteries and social control', 'The Art of the Arcane: The generational conflicts at the Plenum of 1957' and others. She is currently working on a book entitled *Soviets in the 1920s: death to banality*.

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### ***The Making of a British Hotelier in Nineteenth-century Istanbul***

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The mid- to late-nineteenth-century proliferation of hotels in Istanbul rested upon a series of approvals and opportunities in response to a district's rapidly changing urban and demographic morphology. One way of understanding the beginning of a modern tourist industry rests upon the isolation of a date. The opening of Pera's Hôtel d'Angleterre (c.1845) is argued by some Turkish writers to

have initiated the presence of more modern hotels, as opposed to private rooms and stays in legations. An overarching assumption is that the hotels and later the Western-inspired naming of such establishments further the argument of a Western imposition onto a shifting Ottoman template. Although my work centres on the 1920s early jazz culture in the district of Beyoğlu, the staging ground for early jazz is the conversion of the nineteenth-century district into a service and catering industry.

My presentation focuses on the role of resident and ethnic entrepreneurs by highlighting the figure of James Misserie, who opened the Hôtel d'Angleterre and who appears in the first edition of Murray's *Handbook* (1840) and in subsequent editions. Misserie's career overlaps with prominent travellers and his name appears in travelogues such as Kinglake's 1844 memoir *Eothen* and Lady Hornby's *Constantinople during the Crimean War* (1863). I examine the ways that the 'little' guidebook functioned as a commodity, providing recommendations for hotels, restaurants, and later theatres and other venues. A mere mention in the handbook as opposed to lack thereof could tender a clientele, and make a hotelier, which is precisely what occurred for Misserie. By using Murray's *Handbook*, it has been possible to trace the emergence of a tourist industry with local and foreign workers, professionals and entrepreneurs. The *Handbook* positioned the district of Pera as a base of operations and enabled visitors to navigate around the city and the surrounding region.

*Keywords:* Murray's *Handbook* (1840), Pera, Hôtel d'Angleterre, James Misserie, early jazz culture

**Dr G. Carole Woodall** is an Associate Professor in Modern Middle East History in the Department of History and is an Affiliate Faculty in the Women's and Ethnic Studies Department and Co-Director, Asian Studies Program; and Core Faculty, Center for Middle East Studies, Institute of Comparative and Regional Studies, University of Denver; Co-Curator, 2016–2019, Meydan Middle East Film Series, the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

Transnational jazz culture, constructions of blackness, sensorial and movement landscapes, and the urban environment are the *foci* of her research. Her research has been published in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, the *International Journal for Middle East Studies*, for several ABC-CLIO reference-work projects, and in numerous edited volumes including *Mediterranean Encounters in the City* (Lexington Books, 2015) and *Urban Popular Culture and Entertainment* (Routledge, 2023). As a translator, she has published primary sources on social dancing and the modern woman in 1920s Istanbul, which appear in *The Modern Middle East: a sourcebook for history and Sephardi lives: a documentary history, 1700–1950*. Her book manuscript, *Minor Registers: early jazz culture in 1920s Istanbul*, is nearing completion.

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***Gertrude Bell and the Tur 'Abdin: a remote area of Turkey through the eyes of a nineteenth-century British traveller***

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'I doubt whether there exists anywhere a group of buildings more precious to the archaeologist than these three churches and the little domed shrine of the Virgin which stands almost perfect among the ruins of Khâkh', Gertrude Bell, *From Amurath to Amurath* (1911): 317–318.

In 1909 Gertude Bell was riding back from the visit to the Middle East that resulted in her book about her Mesopotamian travels, *Amurath to Amurath*, when she discovered the Tur 'Abdin. Her first visit resulted in a survey of some of the main Syriac Orthodox churches dating back to Byzantine times that lurked forgotten in the villages. She returned for a closer look in 1911 and went on to write a short book summarising her findings, *The Churches and Monasteries of the Tur 'Abdin* (London: Pindar Press, 1982); a narrative account of her travels through the Tur 'Abdin also appears in *Amurath to Amurath*.

First, and foremost of those churches is the Church of the Virgin Mary in what was then

Hah and is now Anıtlı, at the time a domed building. Other churches that Bell recorded include those at Bağlarbaşı, Arnas and Salah but some of her most vivid descriptions are of the local monasteries, particularly Mor Gabriel, today the mother church of Syriac Orthodoxy in the area; and Mor Augen, a remote and extraordinary place, nestling against a mountainside. Bell's accounts are valuable not just for what they tell us about the built environment of the ʿAbdin villages just before World War I but for the picture they paint of the multi-ethnic society existing in south-eastern Turkey at the time, with the now tiny Syriac Orthodox community playing a large part in its life. Her talk will introduce this little-known area through the medium of Bell's invaluable writings and photographs.

*Keywords:* Gertrude Bell, Ottoman Turkey, women travellers, archaeologist, photographer

**Pat Yale.** After gaining an honours degree in History from the University of Cambridge, she became a travel writer, specialising in Türkiye, working at first for the Lonely Planet guidebook company and then for a variety of publications including *The Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Time Out Istanbul in English*. She has lived in Türkiye for twenty-six years, eighteen of them in a cave-house in Göreme in Cappadocia and for the last eight in Istanbul. By chance she stumbled on the untold story of Gertrude Bell's eleven visits to Turkey which took her to many places that are rarely visited by foreign travellers even today. In 2015 she retraced those journeys, travelling from İzmir to Cizre and then back to Istanbul, a journey that took seven months to complete and culminated in *Following Miss Bell: Travels Around Turkey in the Footsteps of Gertrude Bell* (London: Trailblazer, 2023).

### ***Notes of Exile: Monk Yūsuf As'ad from Nazareth to Mount Sinai***

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Marginal notes in manuscript collections at St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, preserve the memories of those who either came from afar to live in seclusion at the monastery or passed through as visitors or pilgrims.

The life of Yūsuf As'ad, an ordinary monk from Nazareth in nineteenth-century Palestine, offers a unique narrative of travel and memory. His story, recorded in the margins of Arabic manuscripts at St Catherine's Monastery, reflects a deeply personal journey of migration, aspiration, disappointment and exile. This paper reconstructs Yūsuf's experiences through his marginal notes, exploring how he used these fragments of writing to preserve and process the memory of places that had become to him sites of pride, pain and nostalgia. Yūsuf's journey began with pride in his origins, only to be followed by migration to his dream destination — St Catherine's Monastery. This place, however, became a source of deep disappointment. His marginal notes reveal his struggles to learn the Greek language, and to integrate into the Greek monastic community. In these writings, Yūsuf vents his frustrations, reflects on the harsh realities of discrimination and isolation at the monastery, and ultimately chronicles his departure. Through examining Yūsuf's notes, this paper will explore how places can embody pride, disappointment, alienation and refuge. Yūsuf's writings on Arabic manuscripts served as a sanctuary — an intimate and safe space where he could record his pride, express his frustrations, and preserve his memories. Ultimately, Yūsuf As'ad's story highlights how even an uneducated traveller's experiences can illuminate broader themes and complexities of memory, belonging, displacement, and the human desire to find a true home.

*Keywords:* St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, travel and memory, displacement, belonging

**Dr Vevian Zaki** is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at LMU, Munich. She obtained her PhD in the history and culture of the Middle East from the same university in 2019. Afterwards, she worked on the ERC project 'Stories of Survival' at the University of Oxford, and as a cataloguer of Arabic manuscripts at the Hill

Museum & Manuscript Library, St John's University, MN, then with the Sinai Manuscripts Digital Library, UCLA, USA.



# TRAVELLERS IN OTTOMAN LANDS

**PLACES FORGOTTEN, PLACES REMEMBERED**  
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