

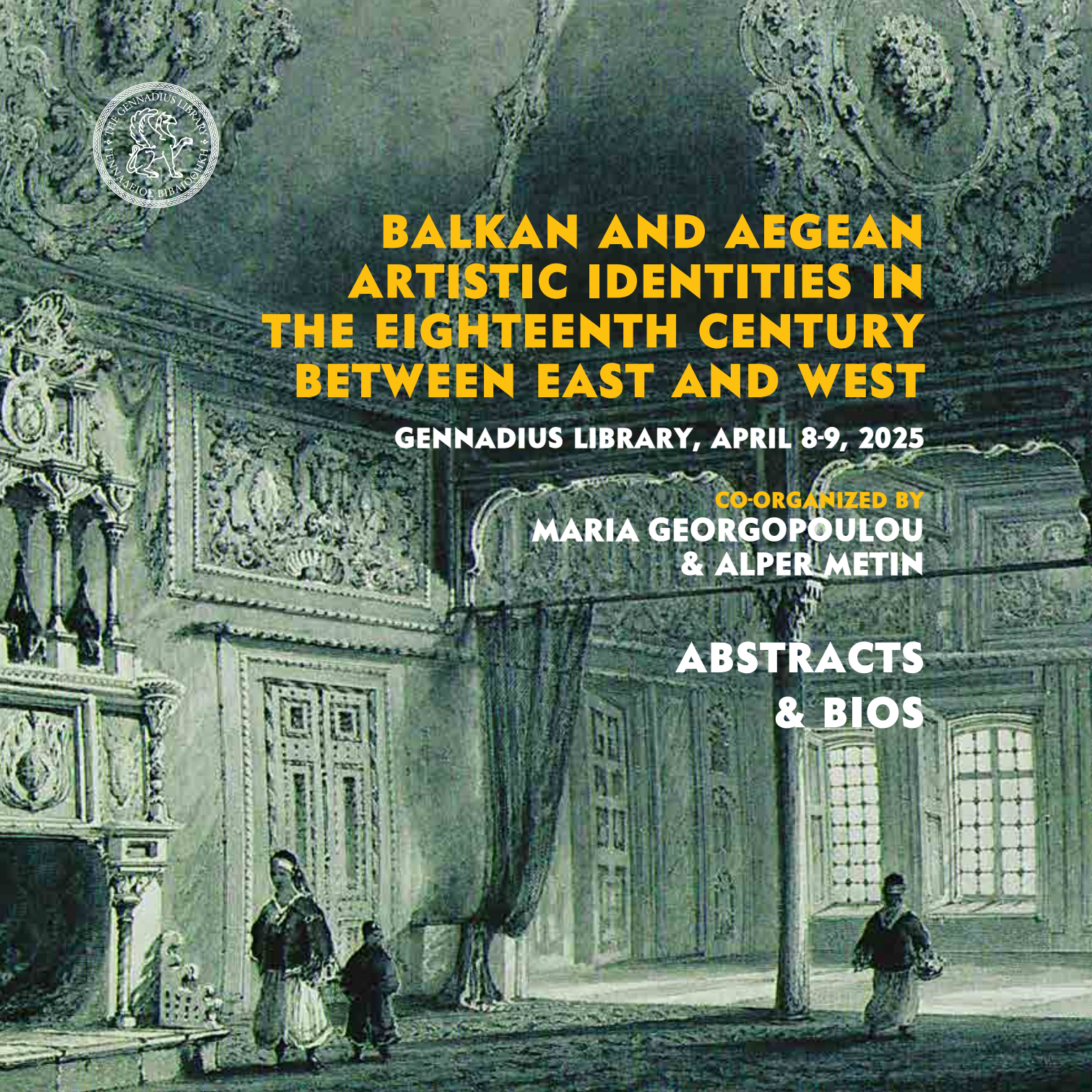


BALKAN AND AEGEAN ARTISTIC IDENTITIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

GENNADIUS LIBRARY, APRIL 8-9, 2025

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**ABSTRACTS
& BIOS**



Omniya Abdel Barr
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Eighteenth-Century Painted Ceilings in Cairo: Bayt al-Razzaz in the Context of Ottoman Architectural Networks

Bayt al-Razzaz is a palatial complex of medieval origins in Historic Cairo, a rare surviving example of Cairene domestic architecture (in total 3,400 sqm). Lavishly decorated with 105 spaces including four ceremonial halls, and one monumental loggia, the palace was gifted in 1638 to Khalil Agha, an Ottoman military officer whose fame was shaped around collecting taxes on rice. He and his descendants adopted the name 'al-Razzaz' (from *al-ruzz*, rice in Arabic), and they started remodeling and styling the palace according to the ornamental trends of their time, notably throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1951, the palace was listed and became the property of the Supreme Council of Antiquities. Today, it is known by the name of Khalil's grandson, as Bayt Ahmad Katkhuda al-Razzaz (d. 1833).

This paper will present three reception halls in the palace, with a focus on the colored ceilings and windows built during this Ottoman phase. It will attempt to situate the architecture of Bayt al-Razzaz and find connections between its surviving decorative styles and what was *en vogue* during the same period in the rest of the Ottoman world, notably in Istanbul, Anatolia, and the Balkans. Using this case study as a point of departure, the paper aims to explore the artistic and architectural exchanges of the eighteenth century between Cairo and other major cultural centers of the empire.



Painted ceiling from Bayt al-Razzaz, Cairo.

Omniya Abdel Barr is an architect, whose work focuses on Islamic art and architecture, restoration, urban conservation, as well as historic and curatorial research. She holds a Doctorate in Islamic History from the Maison Méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme, Provence University, Aix- Marseille, France (2015), a Master's degree in Conservation of Historic Towns and Buildings from the Raymond Lemaire International Center in the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium (2004), and a Bachelor in Architecture from the Faculty of Fine Arts - Helwan University, Egypt (2000). In Cairo, she is part of the Egyptian Heritage Rescue Foundation, who took residence in Bayt al-Razzaz, a fifteenth-century courtyard palace in Historic Cairo, and has been restoring, rehabilitating and activating the monument since 2018. In London, she is a researcher at the Victoria and Albert Museum, working on collections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints, drawings and photographs from Egypt.



Vegetal and calligraphic ornamentation from Bayt al-Razzaz, Cairo.

Anna Ballian
Benaki Museum, Athens

From Art of the Empire to Art in the Empire: the Case of Ottoman and “Post-Byzantine” Art

Ottoman history and culture is a concept by now widely accepted in Greek and Balkan historiography. In Greece there have been university courses since the 1980s, departments of Ottoman studies and Greek Ottomanists are producing exceptional work. Recent Greek historiography places the study of the Greek Orthodox population within the wider Ottoman framework in which, after all, they belonged. The catalyst for this shift towards contextualization, however, was the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when the post-war world ceased to have walls and barriers, - or at least thought it had ceased.

What has happened, though, in the domain of art? Is there a similar phenomenon, a similar development? I would say yes, but with some reservations, things are far more complicated and move more slowly. They differ from one medium to another; what applies in painting is not necessarily the case with silverwork, wood carving or architecture. What applies in secular art is not in religious art. Moreover, entangled with ethnic causes the study of art has been decidedly focused on art that could illustrate the fate of the Greek nation, rarely taking into consideration what applies in the domains of other Ottoman communities, be them Muslim or Christian and their art, such as Armenian, Bulgarian, or Serbian art, and for that matter also Ottoman art.

In a more general way, we would say that the study of art in Ottoman Greece should be reconsidered and adjusted to follow the trends in other related disciplines of the



Jewelled belt buckle, seventeenth century. Benaki Museum, No. 1983.

Humanities such as history or anthropology. Several steps have already been taken for a more cutting-edge approach, such as the abandonment of old Orientalist views. A further step is the rejection of the interpretative paradigm of "influence", a passive position that does not explain reasons and methods. A good example here are the so-called "Islamic influences", an a-historical, timeless expression used typically just to replace the now obsolete term Oriental but also in many instances meaning "Ottoman". The two were thus equated betraying an embarrassment either because of an intentional blurring or simply conveying an unknown and unexplored area of research. The terms used today in cultural anthropology are 'adoption' or 'appropriation', which in their positive connotation mean to make my own something that it is not my own.



Silver gilt Gospel-cover in the style of seventeenth-century Transylvanian models, Adrianople/Edirne 1799. Benaki Museum, No. 3418



Silver gilt New Testament-cover from Argyroupolis- Gümüşhane, made by the Transylvanian master Sebastian Hann, 1712. Benaki Museum, No. 34203

Anna Ballian holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham, Centre of Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, a M.A. on Islamic Art and Archeology from SOAS, University of London and her first degree on History and Archeology was from Athens University (ΕΚΠΑ). In 1990 she became curator of the collection of post- Byzantine silver and religious embroideries and from 2004-2014, she was the senior curator of the Museum of Islamic Art, Benaki Museum. She has published on subjects ranging from Byzantine and Islamic to post-Byzantine, Armenian, and Ottoman art and culture. Her latest work focuses on immured Iznik and other ceramics in Greek churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and on Despoineta, a Phanariot lady embroideress of the late seventeenth century. Several articles are in press, including: "The Church of Panagia at Hosios Loukas and the 'Bordering Saracens'" in a Festschrift for Helen H. Evans (De Gruyter, Open Editions), and "Art and Material Culture in Ottoman Greece: Between History and Tradition" in *A Tribute to Machiel Kiel: The Ottoman Monuments in Greece Revisited*.

Paolo Girardelli

Department of History, Boğaziçi University

A “Rotunda” on the Aegean Shores. The Franciscan Church of Santa Maria in Bornova (1797-1831)

The church of Santa Maria in Bornova was originally built in 1797, for a growing community of Levantine Catholics choosing this site mostly as summer residence. It was administered by the Istanbul based Franciscan Observantines of Santa Maria Draperis, originally in Galata but moving by the end of the seventeenth century to the heights of Pera, where they enjoyed the protection of the Austrian internuncio. They also staffed the church of Santa Maria in Izmir. In 1830 the building, called “cappella” in a report from the friars to their curia, or central administration in Florence, was in a state of disrepair and dilapidation. A petition was presented to the Izmir *kaimakam*, forwarded to Istanbul, and the friars finally obtained permission from the “most saint and knowledgeable” (“santissimo e dottissimo”) Şeyhülislam Yasincizade Abdülvehhab Efendi to restore the building, without altering in any way its dimensions. However, the restoration seems to have gone beyond simple repair, as it appears from a discussion of this project in the documents on the Franciscan Observantines preserved in the archives of Propaganda Fide in Rome. The prior of the mission, Isidoro da Boscomare, informed the Propaganda that he had an argument with the architect in charge of the work, a Levantine from Tinos, on the design of the building. While the builder intended to construct a church with two domes, the clergyman insisted that the new sanctuary should look like the “Rotonda”, the name normally given to the Roman Pantheon. The fact that such a discussion occurred



Santa Maria in Bornova, Izmir, interior. Image courtesy of Can Bozkır.



Santa Maria in Bornova, Izmir, portal.

implies a substantial reconstruction rather than a simple repair. In the end, with all the obvious difference of scale and material investment, it seems that the design advocated by Isidoro - and inspired by the Pantheon - was more or less implemented in 1831. This paper will contextualize the restoration/reconstruction of this Catholic landmark as a product of diverse pressures and agencies, in the evolving situation of inter-religious dialogue characteristic of the reign of Mahmut II.

Paolo Girardelli completed his PhD at the University of Naples in 1996. His work focuses on European, Levantine, and non-Muslim presence in the plural, cosmopolitan urban environments of the Eastern Mediterranean in the late Ottoman period. Girardelli served as an Aga Khan Fellow at MIT in 2005-06, visiting researcher at INHA in Paris in 2013, Senior Fellow at Koç University ANAMED in 2015-16, and as a visiting lecturer in Art History at UNC Chapel Hill in 2018-19. His publications and graduate seminars concentrate on the relationship between space, diplomacy, religion and communities. He has contributed significantly to the development of a graduate program in Art and Architectural History and Visual Culture at Boğaziçi University since 2000. As a member of ICOMOS (Italian Chapter) and expert member of PRERICO (International Committee on Places of Religion and Ritual), he has worked on the assessment of sites for UNESCO World Heritage designation. He co-edited the book *Italian Architects and Builders in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* with Ezio Godoli. For his contributions to the cultural dialogue between Italy and Turkey, he was honored with the Order of the Star of Italy in 2016.

Amalia Gkimourtzina

Ephorate of Antiquities of Kastoria, Hellenic Ministry of Culture

The Secular Decoration in the Eighteenth-Century Mansions of Western Macedonia Through the Example of the Conservation Works Carried Out in Tsiatsiapa Mansion in Kastoria

The secular decoration in the mansions of Western Macedonia during the eighteenth century is a combination of elements from the long and rich local tradition, Western European art and the oriental art of the period found in the palaces of Constantinople. The architecture of these mansions, as well as their decoration, reflects the economic strength and cosmopolitanism of the owners and is used as means of social promotion and display.

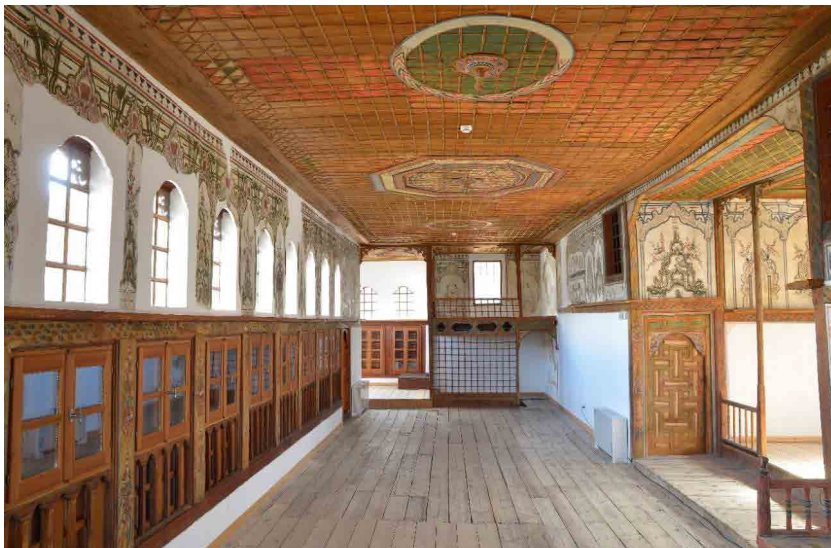
In this presentation, through the example of the Tsiatsiapa Mansion, which is a brilliant representative of the secular architecture of the eighteenth century, I will present the conservation work carried out on the second floor of the mansion, where most of the painted decoration dating back to 1798 covers the wall surfaces, as well as all the wooden structures, such as ceilings, wall cabinets, doors and wooden wall decorations.

The conservation works were divided into three parts: a) conservation of the wall painting decoration, b) conservation and restoration of the wooden and painted ceilings and c) the wooden wall decorative elements as well as the utilitarian elements such as the doors and wall cabinets.



The project which was funded by the Regional Operational Programme of Macedonia - Thrace 2007- 2013, was completed in 2015 by the EFA Kastorias. It concerned an emblematic mansion of the area of Kastoria, the completion of which was a long-standing request of the local community and its completion and operation as a visitable monument is by common concession a success of EFA Kastoria as it is the only preserved mansion of the city.

Tsiatsiapa Mansion, Kastoria, decorated wood panels and ceiling.



Tsiatsiapa Mansion, Kastoria, interior view.



Tsiatsiapa Mansion, Kastoria, murals.

Amalia Gkimourtzina was awarded a Bachelor's degree with honors in Conservation by Camberwell College of Arts - University of Arts London and a Master's degree in Conservation of Books and Archives by the same university. After a written examination in 2006 she was appointed to a permanent position at the Ministry of Culture to the 16th Ephorate of Antiquities, now Ephorate of Antiquities of Kastoria. Since 2014 she has been working as Head of Department of Conservation of the Ephorate. She conducted the study of the wall paintings and wooden decorations of the Tsiatsiapa mansion, as well as the supervision of the conservation works. She has conducted several conservation studies, supervised numerous conservation projects and the renovation of the conservation laboratories of the Byzantine Museum of Kastoria.

Elizabeth Key Fowden

Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge

Pharos, Tower, Temple and Tent: Visualizing the Horologion in Eighteenth-Century Athens

‘Ottoman’ or ‘Early Modern’ are labels – like ‘Post-Byzantine’ – that project an orientation to the set of questions a scholar will ask. As we saw with *Ottoman Athens*, the title of a Gennadius Library conference and subsequent publication over a decade ago, certain combinations can still seem quite jarring to conventional conceptualisations, even among some scholars. This seems especially so when applied to Athens, a city which more than any has been made to stand for its antiquities, rather than its post-antique artistic production. In this paper I will take the example of one ancient building in order to explore the problem of our evidence for different interpretive traditions and the question of interaction. I will argue that the phenomenon itself – attention to ‘antiquities’ and their visualisation both in word and image – springs from very different needs in each cultural tradition, leaving little occasion for interaction. In order to discuss the problems of the non-meetings of minds I will focus on the three known Ottoman literary visualisations of the building and introduce what seems to be the earliest (and so far only) Ottoman drawing of this ancient Athenian building.



Northwest view of the Tower of the Winds, Athens. Unknown artist, watercolour, c.1810. V & A SD.1251.

Elizabeth Key Fowden studied Classics with an emphasis on late antique history at Princeton University. Her work focuses on the intersection of Hellenism, Christianity and Islam as lived out in geographical and architectural space. Her early work concentrated on Greater Syria and Arabia. Over the past decade she has turned to the early modern period and unexplored Ottoman views of the antiquities of Athens. Published or forthcoming are several articles on particular buildings and a monograph on *The Parthenon Mosque*.

Dimitrios Liakos

Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalkidike
and Mount Athos, Hellenic Ministry of Culture

Observations on Eighteenth-Century Sculpture in Mainland Greece: The Cases of Thessaly and Mount Athos

The production of sculpture in mainland Greece was flourishing in the eighteenth century, as is attested by the number of artworks that adorn the external facades of churches in many regions (Pelion, Mount Athos, etc). The main centers of production, from which these artworks originate, are located in Western Macedonia, the Cyclades and Constantinople. Of the preserved pieces, some were carved *in situ* by masons working in various regions, while others were imported from the production centers. This paper focuses on representative material from a variety of regions in order to discuss topics such as the origin of the works, their attribution to specific workshops and the artistic trends they reflect.

Dimitrios Liakos is an archaeologist. He studied History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and obtained a Ph.D. in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art at the School of Architecture of the same university (2000). His dissertation is entitled *Post-Byzantine Sculpture on Mount Athos* (in Greek). He works at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalkidiki and Mount Athos, Ministry of Culture and Sports (Greece), and teaches at



Iviron Monastery, Mount Athos, fountain (1735).



Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos, phiale slab (1784).

the Faculty of Theology (School of Social Theology and Christian Culture) of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in the Postgraduate Study Program *Studies in the Spirituality, History, Art, and Musical Tradition of Mount Athos*. His research focuses mainly on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art on Mount Athos, but also on other regions such as Albania, Crete, Cyprus, and the Dodecanese. He has published many articles in conference proceedings and collective volumes, as well as entries in exhibition catalogues.

Nikos Magouliotis

Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, ETH Zurich

The Printed Page and the Painted Column: An Architectural Microhistory of a Church in Ottoman Thessaly, ca. 1800

Most Ottoman craftspeople came in contact with Western ornament through books printed in Vienna or Venice that circulated throughout the Balkans during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even though not intended as pattern books, these prints often served as a source for iconographic and ornamental motifs for the painted decoration of buildings, leading to the dissemination of Baroque motifs in rural areas. This paper tells the story of the church of Saint Athanasios in Palamas, Thessaly (ca. 1810- 1835), and of how a group of painters decorated its interior with motifs they copied from liturgical books that had come from Venice, resulting in a regional idiom that transcended the limits of folk art and the "Post-Byzantine."



Saint Athanasios in Palamas,
painted column.



S- and C-scroll doodles found on the pages of a *Μηναίο* printed in Venice and sent to Palamas.

Nikos Magouliotis is an architectural historian and lecturer at ETH Zurich, in the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture. His work ranges between the Ottoman Balkans and central Europe, with a particular focus on vernacular architecture and the dissemination of ornament. His doctoral dissertation focused on the historiography of vernacular architecture in Greece during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is currently editing a theme issue for the journal *Architectural Histories* under the title *Indigenous Archaeologies, Vernacular Classicisms*. And he is also coordinating a research project at ETH titled *Swiss Rococo Cultures: Idioms of ornament and the architecture of East Switzerland (1700-1850)*.

Alper Metin

Department of the Arts, University of Bologna

Warming Up to Change: Heating Appliances in the Gradual Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Interiors

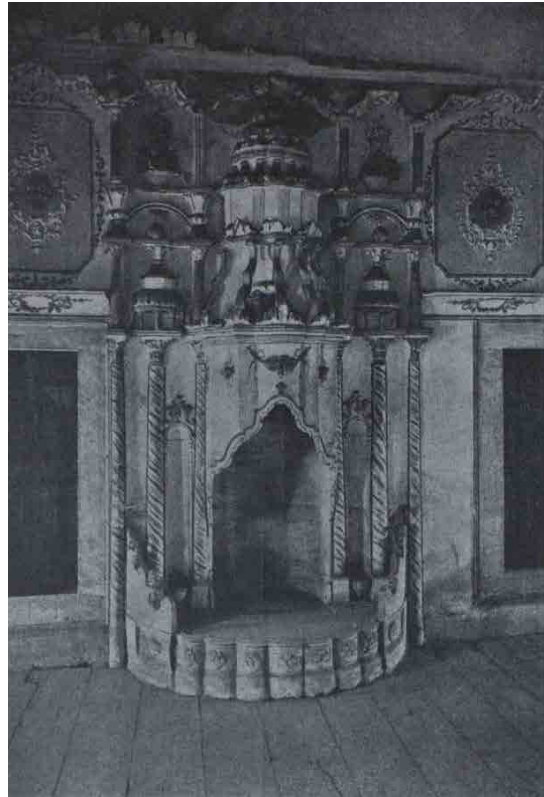
Residential architecture has long been a subject of debate in post-Ottoman contexts, often framed in relation to regional and ethno-cultural identities. Moving beyond these discussions, the spaces where Ottoman subjects lived their daily lives - particularly in the empire's core regions, including the Balkans and Anatolia, interconnected through Istanbul and the Aegean - offer valuable yet underexplored insights into the evolving artistic and material aspirations of the upper classes during the long eighteenth century. Among the many architectural elements shaping these interiors, wall-mounted fireplaces stand out as both functional and symbolic features. Their increasing presence and architectural refinement in urban residences not only reflected changing notions of comfort and sophistication, but also signaled social mobility and shifting patterns of domesticity.

This paper examines the role of fixed and movable heating appliances and accessories - fireplaces, stoves, braziers, *tandır*, fireirons, wall hangings, and portières - in shaping the cultural aspirations of Ottoman interiors and their diffusion across diverse urban settings. Focusing primarily on examples from modern-day Greece and Turkey, and through an

analysis of both architectural and material culture, it explores how these heating devices embodied broader processes of embourgeoisement. Furthermore, it situates them within wider networks of cross-cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, highlighting their role in transforming domestic habits and aesthetic sensibilities.



Interior view from one of the lateral rooms of the Osman III Pavilion (c. 1755). Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Image courtesy of Aras Neftçi.



The fireplace of a Phanariot House. From Cornelius Gurlitt, *Die Baukunst Konstantinopels* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1912).



Şerifler Mansion in Emirgân, fireplace arrangement in the main room. Image courtesy of M. Erem Çalıkoğlu (SALT Research, id. no. CALIST075517).

Alper Metin studied architecture in Venice and Rome, earning his Ph.D. with honors in Architectural History from Sapienza University of Rome in 2022. His dissertation, *The Renewal of Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Architecture Through Cross-Cultural Interactions with Italy and France*, explores the origins of the so-called Ottoman Baroque. His research focuses on the dissemination of architectural forms, expertise, and building materials within the broader framework of cross-cultural interactions among Mediterranean civilizations. In 2025, he received the Cotsen Traveling Fellowship at the Gennadius Library to study the role of Greek subjects in shaping eighteenth-century Ottoman architectural and artistic culture. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of the Arts at the University of Bologna and an adjunct professor of architectural history at Sapienza University of Rome. He was recently appointed the 2025-26 I Tatti & Dumbarton Oaks Joint Fellow at Harvard University for his project *After the Conquest of Crete: New Ottoman Engagements with Venetian and Byzantine Architectural Legacies*.

Theocharis Tsampouras

Ephorate of Antiquities of Kozani, Hellenic Ministry of Culture

The Political Character of Eighteenth-Century Christian Orthodox Art in the Ottoman Balkans

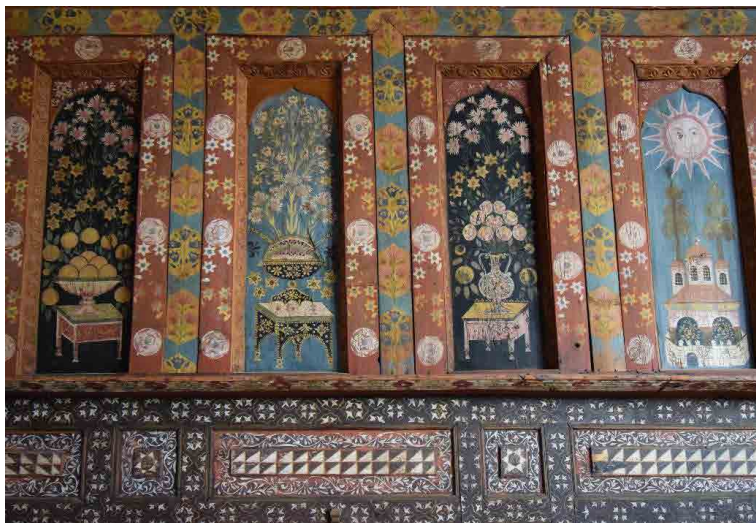
The art of the eighteenth century Ottoman Balkans is often viewed through the lens of folk painting, overshadowing its stylistic innovations and political significance. Emphasis on the ties between post-Byzantine art and its Byzantine heritage has obscured the baroque elements that emerged in regions where trade with Europe and connections to the Enlightened Orthodox diaspora fostered new financial and sociopolitical networks. Scholarship has largely concentrated on the baroque art of the Northern Balkans and the Ionian Islands, while the Baroque painting of mainland Greece and the southern Balkans, along with its political implications, remains underexplored.

In the Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire, Baroque art is frequently dismissed as decorative, especially in secular contexts like merchant mansions. Yet, its adoption in religious art reveals profound socio-political dynamics. Initially embraced by wealthy merchants and Orthodox elites as a marker of distinction, Baroque art gained popularity among Orthodox trading communities in the late eighteenth century. It moved beyond stylistic borrowing to become a medium for political expression, reflecting a negotiation of identity by Orthodox elites who blended local traditions with Enlightenment ideals to assert their belonging in a “civilized” world.

By the century’s end, Baroque painting in the southern Balkans took on an overtly political character, influenced by Ukrainian and Russian iconography and Central European



Poulko Mansion, Siatista, murals.



Vourkas Mansion, Kozani, painted wood panels.



Nerantzopoulos Mansion, Siatista, window detail.

styles, often conveying nationalistic and revolutionary ideas. For example, the wall paintings at the *archontariki* of the Monastery of Timios Prodromos near Serres (1795) integrate Rococo ornamentation with politically charged imagery, subtly referencing French Revolutionary ideals. By the early nineteenth century, Neoclassicism and the Modern Greek Enlightenment reshaped artistic expression, tying it to ancient Greece while building on earlier Baroque innovations. This overlooked chapter of Baroque religious painting encapsulates the socio-political aspirations of its era and merits thorough investigation.

Theocharis Tsampouras studied Archaeology (2002) and History (2004) at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and holds a Ph.D. in Byzantine Archaeology (2013) from the same university. He was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Princeton University (2014–2015), has worked as an adjunct lecturer at Greek universities, and since 2020 has been an archaeologist for the Greek Ministry of Culture. His research focuses on eighteenth-century artistic eclecticism in the Ottoman Balkans and the evolving status of Greek artists before the Greek War of Independence.

Deniz Türker

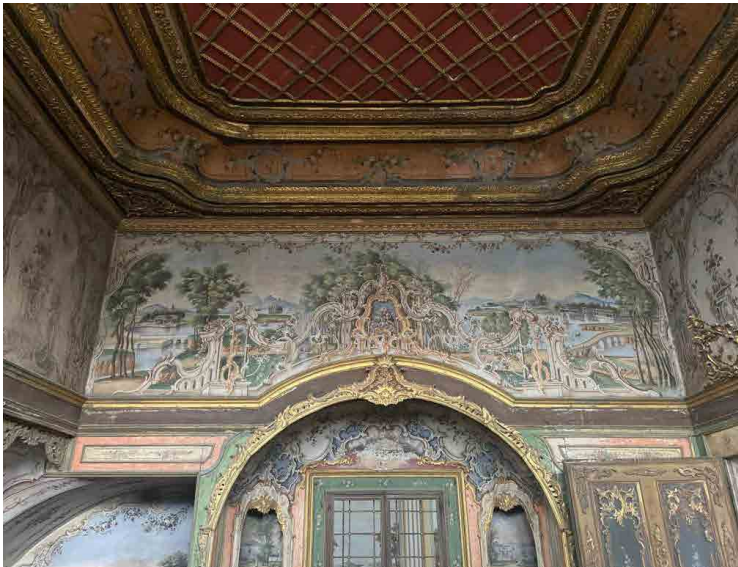
Department of Art History, Rutgers University

"Carvers of Chios": Imperial Patrons, Ottoman Greek *kalfas*, and Nimble Building in the Eighteenth Century

This paper begins with a close examination of the three interconnected rooms that the Ottoman sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and his mother, Mihrişah Valide Sultan (d. 1803), built for their private use in the winter harem of the Topkapı Palace shortly after Selim's accession. Now under restoration and largely inaccessible, these rooms followed an identical interior layout with a monumental, centralized alcove around which the rest of the decorative program was arranged. For their intimate interiors, mother and son chose Rococo exuberance but strategically vernacularized their preference by rationalizing the spatial effects of these spaces through inscriptions that described the program and specific motifs, linking these rooms to symbols of Ottoman sovereignty as well as Islamic imagery.

The second half of the paper speculates on the largely anonymous builders of these spaces. Scarce archival documents related to the construction of these chambers hint at paper models, artisanal specializations from Chios and Rhodes, and the organizational expertise of Ottoman Greek *kalfas* in Istanbul. However, archives of contemporaneous buildings—such as the rebuilding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (under Ottoman rule and supervision) and the Istanbul mansions of the dynasty's affluent women—allow for a rethinking of artistic identities, materials, motifs, and skills in the period under scrutiny.

Deniz Türker is an Assistant Professor of Islamic art and architecture at Rutgers-New Brunswick, who specializes in late-Ottoman and Turkish visual and material cultures. Her book entitled *The Accidental Palace* (Penn State Press, 2023) traces the architectural and landscape history of Yıldız, the last Ottoman palace in Istanbul. She has recently co-authored (with Hilal Uğurlu) two interlinked volumes on the material worlds and architectural patronage of eighteenth-century Ottoman dynastic women (forthcoming with Cambridge University Press's Constantinople Series). Türker also has a sustained interest in the history of Islamic art collecting (especially in the nineteenth-century Ottoman and Egyptian domains). Her next project is centered on Yıldız Moran's photographic practice in the context of Anatolia's rediscovery by Turkish humanists in the 1950s. She currently holds an Aga Khan Program Fellowship at Harvard University.



Mihrişah Valide Sultan's Private Chamber (sofa), Topkapı Palace Museum, 1791-92.



Aedicule of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Komyanoz Kalfa, 1809-10.



Murals from Mihrişah Valide Sultan's Audience Hall, Topkapı Palace Museum.

Nikolaos Vryzidis

School of Applied Arts & Culture, University of West Attica

Networks of Pluriversality: Trade, Diasporas and “Baroque” Textile Culture in Ottoman Greece

The proposed paper will explore those networks of trade and global diasporas that contributed to the dissemination of textiles that can be perceived as “Baroque” in Ottoman Greece. Baroque-period textiles are characterized by the heavily ornate style we see in European art and architecture, as well as the fertilization by Asian productions that resulted in the so-called “bizarre” silken fabrics, primarily produced in France and Italy. Nonetheless, the definition of a Baroque textile aesthetic in the Ottoman context seems like a more elusive task. Much of this difficulty can be traced first to the idea of Asian loans in Europe, the Ottoman Empire being a Eurasian polity, and second to the Ottomans’ love for rich ornamentation in earlier periods as well, an aspect that was not unique to Baroque. In the Ottoman case, Baroque was an artistic mood that conveniently fell in line with local cultural sensibilities, a factor that perhaps explains its success and remarkable longevity. At the same time, an extensive network of diasporas centered on transcontinental trade connected the empire with both Western Europe and the rest of Asia, thus facilitating the spread of the global fashions of the time. Given that quite a few of these diasporic communities were Greek Orthodox, Greece naturally held a privileged position in the center of this dynamic. Textiles that fit into the Western definition of Baroque came to Greece from Venice, Vienna and elsewhere, paving the way to a truly global eclecticism.



Ecclesiastical embroidery,
Central European workshop,
eighteenth century, Karakallou
Monastery, Mount Athos.



Phelonion of woven fabrics, eighteenth century, Karakallou Monastery, Mount Athos.

One of the arguments implied by the proposed narrative is that this Ottoman “Baroque” eclecticism could be interpreted through networks of pluriversality, with their actors’ space for mediation lying somewhere between local needs and global fashions.

Nikolaos Vryzidis received his PhD from SOAS University of London, with a thesis on the aesthetic of Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical fabrics of the Ottoman period. His research is centered on the applied and minor arts of the late medieval and early modern Mediterranean, with particular reference to intercultural phenomena and artistic exchanges. He has published extensively on these subjects in scholarly journals such as *Convivium* and *Muqarnas*, as well as collective volumes. He is currently exploring the concept of globalism and its local manifestations in the long eighteenth century, a subject that he will be also talking about at this symposium.



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Gennadius Library

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