

# CHRISTIAN ART UNDER MUSLIM RULE

PROCEEDINGS OF A WORKSHOP  
HELD IN ISTANBUL ON MAY 11/12, 2012

*edited by*

Maximilian Hartmuth

*with the assistance of*

Ayşe Dilsiz

*and*

Alyson Wharton



NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN  
LEIDEN  
2016

Copyright 2016 by  
Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten  
Witte Singel 25  
Postbus 9515  
2300 RA Leiden, Nederland

NinoPublications@hum.leidenuniv.nl

www.nino-leiden.nl

*All rights reserved, including the rights to translate or  
to reproduce this book or parts thereof in any form*

*Cover image: Frescoes in catholicon (1765) of Dekoulou monastery, Oitylo (Mani, Greece).*

Christian Art under Muslim Rule. Proceedings of a Workshop Held in Istanbul on May 11/12, 2012 /  
edited by Maximilian Hartmuth / with the assistance of Ayse Dilsiz and Alyson Wharton. — Leiden:  
Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten.

PIHANS = Uitgaven van het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden  
(ISSN 1571-5728; 127)

(voorheen *Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul*)  
= *Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul*)

ISBN 978-90-6258-338-6

Printed in Belgium

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Maximilian Hartmuth</i>	
Introduction . . . . .	VII-X
<i>Theocharis Tsampouras</i>	
The contribution of the Mount Grammos painters to the formation of a common artistic language in the seventeenth-century Balkans . . . . .	1-17
<i>Alyson Wharton</i>	
Localism in the late-nineteenth-century Armenian churches of Ottoman Upper Mesopotamia . . . . .	19-60
<i>Machiel Kiel</i>	
Christian art under Islamic rule: a critique of the historiography of Balkan art and architecture, based on Ottoman administrative sources and forty years of fieldwork . . .	61-115
<i>Paolo Girardelli</i>	
Religious imprints along the Grand Rue: Armenians and Latins in late-Ottoman Istanbul . . . . .	117-136
<i>Maximilian Hartmuth</i>	
The challenge of rebuilding a Catholic monastery in Ottoman Bosnia in 1767 . . . . .	137-144
<i>Bas Snelders</i>	
L'art et l'architecture syro-orthodoxe en Mésopotamie du Nord (VII <sup>e</sup> -XIII <sup>e</sup> siècles) . .	145-165
<i>Rossitsa Gradeva</i>	
Late Antique church buildings in Ottoman Sofia, fifteenth to beginning of nineteenth centuries . . . . .	167-193
<i>Lilyana Stankova</i>	
Tradition and innovation in the decorative practices in Christian art in the Balkans, fifteenth through seventeenth centuries . . . . .	195-205
<i>Luitgard Mols</i>	
Water vessels or pilgrim flasks? Medieval flasks in a Christian and Islamic setting . . .	207-218
<i>Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir</i>	
The fate of Tanzimat-era churches in Anatolia after the loss of their congregations . . .	219-235
<i>Robert M. Hayden</i>	
Afterword: Analyzing localized contexts of subordination and domination in the Ottoman <i>conveniencia</i> . . . . .	237-243

# INTRODUCTION

*Maximilian Hartmuth*  
(University of Vienna)

## THE IDEA

In the vast expanse of lands in the Mediterranean and Near East that came under Muslim sway in and after the seventh century, the spread of Islam at the expense of Christianity was a more gradual process than is often acknowledged. While the status of Christians was indeed reduced to that of a tolerated community, the production of religious art within such congregations was not brought to a halt (as the silence about it in traditional art history might suggest). Rather, it simply continued, and often very productively, under different precepts. While some examples, such as the art of Mozarabs and Copts, are better known, Christian artistic production in other Muslim contexts and in the period after the Mongol invasion is less explored. Moreover, there have been few attempts to integrate this body of art into mainstream art history.

The workshop from which most of these papers were collected sought to explore to what extent this art produced under non-Christian rule, when collected together, irrespective of period and region, can serve as a useful frame for analysis. It aimed to do so by bringing together scholars working on different territories in the Islamic world between the seventh and nineteenth centuries to present and discuss case studies with a view to identifying common threads. We asked: What, for instance, do biblical scenes in Ayyubid metalwork sponsored by Muslim patrons or Islamic ornament in Christian manuscripts written and decorated in Mamluk and Ottoman realms tell us about the cultures and societies in which they were produced? Is the seventeenth-century Armenian cathedral at New Julfa (Isfahan) an expression of relative 'tolerance' in Safavid Iran – or should its singularity be identified as the key factor in its analysis? Are cases of new church construction in the Ottoman Balkans illustrative of the assumed 'pax ottomana' – or was permission-granting used by the sultans as currency in their dealings with non-dominant populations? Did the fact of Muslim rule perhaps impact the iconographic features of Christian painting in these areas?

## THE EVENT

The workshop *Christian art under Muslim rule*, held at the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) on May 11/12, 2012, was organized as a forum for the discussion of such questions – and for the formulation of new questions to inform future research. The present volume is a record of this encounter and some of the discussions that arose. Unfortunately, not all speakers at the workshop were in the position to submit their papers for inclusion in this volume. As a

result, the publication's focus has slightly shifted from painting, which was better represented at the workshop, to buildings.

Among the contributions not included in this volume was, for instance, MAT IMMERZEEL's portrayal of the Ottoman period in parts of the Arab world as witnessing a veritable revival of Christian art after centuries of relative quiet. While in Aleppo Armenian and Melkite Christians benefited from the flourishing trade, in Cairo Coptic Christians improved their standing through services in the administration. By the nineteenth century, the 'market' in Syria and Egypt was dominated by Palestinian Christian artists, however. This owed in no small part to the fact that icons had become part of the souvenirs industry of Jerusalem.

The contexts and vestiges of icon production in nineteenth-century Anatolia were presented by SERCAN YANDIM. The situation in the thirteenth century, when parts of Anatolia, notably Cappadocia, were already under Muslim (Rum Seljuk) rule, was discussed by TOLGA UYAR. His finding was that this art both shared in the general iconographic trends of the period and witnessed the emergence of 'new' themes, such as the miracle of Saint George rescuing a youth imprisoned by the 'infidels'. IVANA JEVIĆ inquired about the representations of ancient philosophers in Balkan iconographies of the Ottoman period. Often inserted into the conventional theme of the Genealogy of Christ or the Tree of Jesse, they raise a number of interesting questions.

Two papers on aspects of Islamic visual culture in neighbouring Christian states, presented by DIMITRIS LOUPIS and MERIH DANALI, provided a background for the analysis of such features in the context of Christian art under Muslim rule. They, too, are not included in this collection. The contributions by Alyson Wharton and Theocharis Tsampouras were commissioned for this publication after the event, as were the ones by the archaeologist Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir and the anthropologist Robert Hayden. The latter kindly agreed to write an afterword to the volume, from the perspective of a research scheme on 'antagonistic tolerance'.

## THE PUBLICATION

PAOLO GIRARDELLI traces the evolution of landmarks along the Grand Rue de Pera (Istanbul's İstiklal caddesi), showing how their place in the urban fabric changed according to the position of non-Muslim Ottoman and foreign Catholic subjects. The Church of Saint Anthony is highlighted as the product of a period in which religion had become nationalized.

LILYANA STANKOVA inquires about motifs of Islamic origin in artworks in Christian contexts. She presents us with the fascinating case of a sixteenth-century manuscript painter of the Ottoman Balkans whose decorative repertoire was visibly informed by the contemporary Istanbul court style. She also stresses that one must distinguish between Islamic elements that had already entered Christian Orthodox art during the Byzantine Middle Ages and later ones popularized only under Ottoman rule.

BAS SNELDERS turns to the art of Mosul's medieval Syrian Orthodox community, identifying features inspired by contemporary Islamic forms. He interprets this not as an expression of cultural identity loss, but puts forward a more nuanced interpretation that appreciates this apparent instance of border-crossing as illustrative of integration into the cultural environment of Upper Mesopotamia.

ALYSON WHARTON arrives at a similar conclusion with regards to the analysis of features of nineteenth-century church architecture in those parts of Mesopotamia now in Turkey. Armenians' houses of worship there both echoed the new-found wealth of some communities and an aspiration to 'fit in'. The resolve to draw on local materials and models is apparent even in the case of Protestant buildings, whose orientation could have been expected to be more international. At the same time, a degree of acquaintance with the eclectic trends in Istanbul and Europe is evident.

THEOCHARIS TSAMPOURAS traces the emergence of one seventeenth-century 'school' of Orthodox Christian painters in the mountains of Northwest Greece. It emerged, he argues, at the time of a broader shift of Christian elites from the plains to the mountains, one consequence of which was the success of ambulant painter workshops. This repositioning, in combination with changed expectations, had a noticeable impact on these painters' work.

MACHIEL KIEL and MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH inquire about art production in the Ottoman Balkans by contrasting theory and practice. Kiel offers a compact survey organized around some of the principal 'myths' of Balkan historiographies and revisits a social typology of the new patrons of Christian art that he had first published three decades ago. Hartmuth looks at the dichotomy of theory and practice in the case of reconstruction work at a Catholic monastery in eighteenth-century Bosnia, as related in a contemporary chronicle. While previous studies of such processes were more typically based on Ottoman source material, he finds that this text, representing the ruled rather than the ruling, adds a valuable new perspective to the debate.

ROSSITSA GRADEVA and TUĞBA TANYERI-ERDEMİR inquire about the fate of Christian buildings after the advent of Muslim rule and the disappearance of the congregations that used them. While Gradeva reconstructs the (so far obscure) histories of three Late Antique churches in Ottoman Sofia, Tanyeri-Erdemir studies the afterlives of Tanzimat-era church buildings in Republican Turkey. Closing the volume, LUIT MOLS shares her thoughts about the provenance and iconography of a tin lead pilgrim-flask with a depiction of a horseman. While this object now housed in Rotterdam was previously interpreted in terms of its status as a Coptic object, it serves Mols to inquire about shared tastes in the medieval East Mediterranean.

## THE NEXT ASSIGNMENT

There are, I think, two broad conclusions that can be gained from our exchange that most participants might agree on. The first is that the situation differed enormously in accordance with region and period. Some contexts of Muslim rule proved significantly more conducive to the production of Christian art than others. Some of the cases collected here suggest that we

should perhaps more consistently pay attention to power relations in a given place and time in order to gain a more adequate background for the assessment of these Christian works. Moreover, differences between legal theory and everyday practice should not necessarily be seen as an inconsistency. Formal rules may govern negotiations, but their manipulation by local actors is common anywhere ('bargaining in the shadow of the law'), as Hayden reminds us in his contribution.

The vast differences in quality and scale that can be regarded in Christian art produced in various Muslim contexts should encourage us to inquire further about the sources of this discrepancy. They may include the standing of a certain community at a certain time, which impacts that community's negotiating power and its confidence to engage in projects of a certain scale; the existence of prosperous individuals (merchants, administrators, etc.) who at one point might commit to sponsor art so as to translate their financial potency into symbolic capital within the community; the involvement of Christian artists in monumental art projects of the ruler's faith; and very probably many more variables that only a far greater number of case studies could reveal. We need, in other words, more studies that also take these factors into account, and I hope that the issues addressed in this volume will help to give structure to and inform such inquiries.

A second broad conclusion is the need to recognize and address the fact that the occurrence of elements we identify as 'Islamic' in works of Christian art produced under Muslim rule was more frequent and widespread than hitherto assumed. These are not just isolated cases, neither regionally nor internationally, though the deliberateness of their use needs to be further discussed. Various instances in a variety of media among the illustrations in this volume range from *muqarnas* niches or pointed arches of the Ottoman type in church buildings to Ottoman court style designs in manuscripts, on column capitals, or on decorated ceramic vessels attached to a building's façade.<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of these phenomena remains a fundamental problem. Are they illustrative of Christian-Muslim cohabitation, synthesis, or even syncretism? Were these features indeed understood by contemporaries as borrowings from another culture – or should they not be exaggerated as anything more than pickings from the ornamental repertoire of a certain region and period? Did non-Muslim artists and patrons choose to use in works related to their community's life features previously established in Islamic contexts to express inter-confessional sensibilities – or did they simply seek to imitate what their age identified as the 'elite style' or the 'monumental mode'?

While this volume fails to provide the reader with generous insights with regards to the problem implicit in its title, what it does provide is a set of (perhaps more nuanced) questions for researchers to consider in future studies on this subject.

---

<sup>1</sup> See contributions by Snelders, Kiel, Wharton, Tsampouras, and Stankova.

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MOUNT GRAMMOS PAINTERS TO THE FORMATION OF A COMMON ARTISTIC LANGUAGE IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BALKANS

Theocharis Tsampouras  
(Aristotle University, Thessaloniki)

*Abstract: The shift of Christian elites from urban environments to mountain communities in the late sixteenth century created new conditions for artistic production in the Balkans. Painter workshops of the cities gradually fell into decline, but new mountain-based groups of artists appeared instead. Mount Grammos, a remote area of the southern Balkan Peninsula, suddenly became a cultural hub bustling with icon painters, wood carvers and artistic workshops in the seventeenth century. Some of them, such as the painter groups from Linotopi and Grammosta villages, presented a notable geographic expansion through the Balkans mostly due to their efficiency and flexibility, but also due to the low artistic expectations of the Orthodox populations under Ottoman rule. The work of these groups of artists is critically discussed and contextualized within the socioeconomic setting of its time, in order to attest that the painters from Grammos introduced a new artistic style in the seventeenth-century Orthodox art of the Balkans that was disseminated through their numerous journeys.*

\* \* \*

Seventeenth-century Orthodox art constitutes, even today, one of the least explored chapters in the art history of the Balkans. In the last twenty years the rediscovery of a significant number of seventeenth century frescoed churches by local scholars, as well as the accumulation of portable icons and iconostases of the same period in local collections and museums throughout the Balkans has intrigued some researchers, mainly Byzantinologists, to systematically study this neglected part of Balkan cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup> Seventeenth-century Orthodox art, however, is not groundbreaking in form or iconography, nor can it serve as evidence for constructing national narratives, which ultimately resulted either in the exclusion of this period from the 'official' art history research in the Balkans or its categorization as part of so-called 'post-Byzantine culture'

---

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the publications of the last decade concerning seventeenth-century Orthodox art, though useful, are still confined to documenting and categorizing the existing monuments and collections, cf. Nikola Mitrevski, *Monuments of fresco decoration from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century in the Demir Hisar Region*. Prilep: Institute for Old Slavic Culture, 2003; Anastasia G. Tourta, ed., *Icons from the Orthodox communities of Albania: Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korçë*, exhibition catalogue. Thessaloniki: European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, 2006; Nikolaos Toutos and Georgios Fousteris, *Corpus de la peinture monumentale du Mont Athos (10-17<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. Athens: Academy of Athens, Center of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Research, 2010; Bissierka Penkova and Tsveta Kuneva, ed., *Corpus of seventeenth century wall paintings in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2012.





Ill. 1. Ioannēs from Linotopi, *The Nativity*, fresco, 1626/7,  
Church of Saint Athanasios, Rilevo, F.Y.R.O.M.

Orthodox communities and challenged the horizontally layered *reaya* class.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the old Christian urban elites fell gradually in decline and new smaller art patrons emerged in mountainous villages and small market towns across the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, after the confiscation of monastic properties by Sultan Selim II in 1568/9,<sup>8</sup> art commissions in large monastic complexes, such as Mount Athos and Meteora, were imped-

<sup>6</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crisis and change, 1590-1699," in: *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 447-52.

<sup>7</sup> About the different demographic changes happening in the cities and the countryside, see Phokion P. Kotzageorges, "Η Μακεδονία κατά τους πρώτους Οθωμανικούς αιώνες" [Macedonia during the first Ottoman centuries], in: *Μακεδονία: Χαρτογραφία και Ιστορία (15<sup>ος</sup>-18<sup>ος</sup> αιώνες)* [Macedonia: cartography and history (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century)], ed. Leonora Navari. Athens: Morphōtiko Idryma Ethnikēs Trapezēs, 2013, pp. 30-3.

<sup>8</sup> Aleksandar Fotić, "The official explanations for the confiscation and sale of monasteries (churches) and their estates at the time of Selim II," in: *Turcica*, XXVI (1994), pp. 34-54; John C. Alexander (Alexandropoulos), "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away: Athos and the confiscation affair of 1568-1569," in: *Ο Άθως στους 14<sup>ο</sup>-16<sup>ο</sup> αιώνες* [Athos in the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1997, pp. 149-51; Eugenia Kermeli, "The legal status of Athonite monastic properties in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries," in: *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15<sup>ο</sup> και 16<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα* [Mount Athos in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> international scientific conference, Thessaloniki, November 25-27, 2011), ed. Kriton Chrysochoides et al. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center, 2012, pp. 100-2.

The second indication of the dire straits of the donors is the amount of time elapsed between the building of a church and the completion of its decoration, which in many cases exceeds half a century. In the meantime the church was used without any wall-paintings or even without an iconostasis. The painted decoration of the main church of the Driovouno Monastery in Macedonia, for example, was commissioned 60 years after its foundation;<sup>16</sup> even the cathedral of the Holy Apostles in Molyvdoskepastos, which contained the cathedral of the Archbishop of Pogoniani, lacked wall-painted decoration for at least 58 years.<sup>17</sup>

The third indication of this harsh economic climate is the quality of the artworks commissioned and executed in this period. Sophisticated frescoes of the kind from the first half of the sixteenth century are no longer produced in Balkan cities, especially after the 1570s. New craftsmen, originating from small villages and organized in large groups of specialized artisans, are now emerging even in the cities, succeeding the old masters of the sixteenth century. As a result, a sudden change in the quality of the art is noticed, for these craftsmen usually worked hastily and did not always apprehend the underlying symbolism of Byzantine iconography.

#### THE MOUNT GRAMMOS PAINTERS

The painters from the villages of Mount Grammos constitute one of the largest groups of Balkan craftsmen in the seventeenth century. The group currently includes twenty-four artists from the villages of Grammosta, Linotopi, Zerma and Bourboutsiko, while more than one hundred works have been attributed to them in a region extending throughout Greece, Albania, F.Y.R.O.M., Bulgaria and Serbia. It was Anastasia Tourta's research on the paintings of Michaël of Linotopi – a prolific painter of the first half of the seventeenth century – which first shed light onto the works of the Mount Grammos painters.<sup>18</sup>



Ill. 3. Ioannēs from Grammosta, *Archangel Gabriel*, fresco, 1536/7, Church of Saint Nicholas, Monastery of Toplica, Demir Hisar, F.Y.R.O.M.

<sup>16</sup> Tourta, "Linotopi," pp. 38-9.

<sup>17</sup> Donald Nicol, "The churches of Molyvdoskepastos," in: *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, XLVIII (1953), pp. 147-50.

<sup>18</sup> Tourta, "Linotopi," pp. 176-221.

# LOCALISM IN THE LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY ARMENIAN CHURCHES OF OTTOMAN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA

Alyson Wharton  
(Artuklu University, Mardin)

*Abstract: This chapter draws attention to the particular adherence to local models of architecture, decoration, building materials and techniques in Armenian churches built in the south-east of present-day Turkey, grouped together under the geographical term of Upper Mesopotamia. It looks to examples from the cities of Diyarbakır, and Mardin, which were situated in the Ottoman provincial unit (vilayet) of Diyarbakır, and the cities of Urfa and Antep, which were in the vilayet of Aleppo. These cases show how the usage of local styles was prevalent not just in one province but in the region of Upper Mesopotamia as a whole. Each one of these cities expresses a different identity through its particular architecture, which is adopted by the late-nineteenth-century Armenian churches in place of historical models provided by Armenian architecture.*

\* \* \*

## I. INTRODUCTION: LOCALISM AND MEANING

European architecture in the nineteenth century was designed to speak its meaning. As Blondel, whose textbook was widely taught in the institutions of Paris, wrote “style, in this sense, is like ... eloquence.”<sup>1</sup> Architects working in the Ottoman capital of Constantinople followed this Parisian lead and created architecture that expressed a revived Ottoman identity in the late nineteenth century. Sarkis Balyan, who attended the École des Beaux-Arts at the same time Viollet-le-Duc was teaching there, and was a student of Louis-Jules André,<sup>2</sup> crafted what was referred to in texts as an ‘Ottoman Renaissance’ in his works such as the Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque (1872) in Istanbul (ill. 1). This style expressed what was regarded by these nineteenth-century European theoreticians to be the evolution and interconnectedness of historical and world styles. For this reason, Gothic, Mughal, and Seljuk styles are shown alongside decorative and structural elements from early and classical Ottoman architecture. Also reflecting European nineteenth-century practices, these varied historic styles were enlivened with an injection of bright color and attention-grabbing techniques such as *trompe l’œil* paintwork. Armenian churches in Upper Mesopotamia, as this chapter will show, participate in this revivalism of these works of Constantinople. They combine an accentuated adherence to elements from indigenous architectural traditions with a pool of other (Gothic, Orientalist and European nineteenth-century) references to create an eclectic whole.

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Collins, *Changing ideals in modern architecture 1750-1950*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998, pp. 178-81.

<sup>2</sup> Archives Nationales, AJ/52/161 class registers for 1860 and 1864. André had among his students Charles Garnier. His best-known work is the Museum of Natural History (now Gallery of Evolution), in the Jardin des Plantes, Paris.





Ill. 12. Surp Hovsep, Armenian Catholic Church (built 1894), Mardin, exterior, view from Kırklar Kilisesi.

There are three particularly distinctive elements that link Surp Hovsep to the local urban fabric of Mardin. Firstly, the grapevine motifs carved into the altarpiece. The grapevine was used by Sarkis Lole not only on Christian buildings such as this church and the Syriac Patriarchate, but also on secular works (the Hamidiye Barracks, now Sabancı Museum) and Islamic buildings (the minaret base of the Great Mosque, built 1176, restored in the nineteenth century). This varied usage indicates that this motif became less synonymous with a particular religious meaning (although presumably this meaning did persist within the Christian contexts) and instead became linked with the material identity of the city of Mardin.

Indeed, it should be stressed that many of the motifs that were widely used on the nineteenth-century foundations and repairs in Mardin were closer to those seen on Christian architecture, such as the Monastery of Deyr-ül-Zafaran, than to those seen on the Islamic monuments (from the Artukid Period of the fifteenth century) such as the Ka-

The few extant decorative details inside Surp Hovsep include shell niches, and the westernized scrolling vegetal motifs seen on the original portion of the altarpiece. The majority of the furnishings are moveable items: paintings, devotional sculptures, chandeliers and icons, many of which are later than the original foundation. These paintings and sculptures are Armenian works Italianate in style, and some are wholly Italian in manufacture.



Ill. 13. Surp Hovsep Armenian Catholic Church (built 1894), Mardin, interior in Gothic style.



Ill. 24. Surp Asdvadzadzin Apostolic Armenian Cathedral (built 1892/3), Antep, exterior.

The relative of a local stone cutter *Mahdesi Sarkis Usta* Kadehciyan provides an account that draws attention to Kadehciyan's role in the church's building. In this text Kadehciyan is referred to as architect (*jartarabet*) responsible for Surp Asdvadzadzin, as well as other works such as the Armenian Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, the Hacı Ömer Hanı and the Belediye Hanı. He even states that he was the "*Belediye Mimarbaşı*" (chief architect of

the municipality/պիլետիկ մեմարպաշի/*belediye mimarbaşı*).<sup>117</sup> This indicates that, for the case of the Antep Cathedral, although Sarkis Balyan was brought in for the sake of prestige, the design was implemented by the local architect and his team. The account suggests that Nazaretyan and Kadehciyan dominated the construction period. Thus, in this case, the local architect seems to have been possessed of considerable status.

If we turn to the formal features of the Antep Cathedral, we can see the mixture of imperial and local in both the plan and decoration. The plan has a cruciform shape, with an apse and *kavit* (which was an entrance space like a narthex) to each end; therefore it is in continuity with Armenian building types. Although the dome has been likened to "a design favored in the region of Taron and other parts of historic Armenia beginning in the ninth century,"<sup>118</sup> the interior space of the sanctuary is united under a rounded central dome, giving it the spatial feel of an Ottoman imperial mosque.

The external decoration of Surp Asdvadzadzin is dominated by the striped masonry (*ablaq*) that is characteristic of the architecture of the greater region spreading down to Aleppo and beyond. This local decorative overlay is combined with facades that have an overwhelmingly classical basis. To this is added the presence of a frieze of Gothic windows. Moreover, the sophistication and lightness of the arrangement of the structure, the dome and fenestration, is akin to Renaissance or rather Mannerist, architecture.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Gevorg Kadehjian, "Antepi mayr ekeghetsiin jartarapete" [The Architect of Aintab's Cathedral], in: *Patmutiun Antepi Hayots*, op. cit., pp. 443-4.

<sup>118</sup> Kertmenjian, "Planning and architectural reminiscences," p. 316.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

# CHRISTIAN ART UNDER ISLAMIC RULE: A CRITIQUE OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BALKAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE, BASED ON OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES AND FORTY YEARS OF FIELDWORK

*Machiel Kiel*

*(Netherlands Institute in Turkey, Istanbul)*

*Abstract: This paper sets about by explicating the Islamic legal context for the production of Christian art within its jurisdiction. It will show that the situation in the Ottoman Empire indeed compares well with the context of Catholic church-building in Protestant Europe and vice versa. Subsequently will be discussed three widespread conceptions that prove to be misleading in light of historical practice: that churches in the Ottoman realm had to be dug deep into the ground, that they could not be enlarged, and that new churches could only be built upon the remains of pre-existing churches. The second part of the paper is devoted to the sponsors of Christian art in the Balkans under Ottoman rule. Five patron types are identified and illustrated by noteworthy cases.*

\* \* \*

Our workshop dealt with a rich and fascinating subject that has received far too little attention in scholarship. It is moreover politically highly charged.<sup>1</sup> The material was forcibly squeezed into modern nationalist narratives. Our workshop was the first ever to gather specialists from several countries to chart and compare the findings from their respective areas of research with those from other places. The Balkans, where the study of Christian art under Islamic rule is more advanced than in the rest of the Ottoman Empire, have been a focus. If this region is really representative for the whole picture, however, remains arguable.

The term ‘Islamic rule’ does not really refer to anything specific. After all, ‘Islam’ does not exist in a unified sense. There is no pan-Islamic equivalent of the Pope, no Curia and no Synod to determine what is ‘Islamic’ and what not. Above all, there is the split into Sunni and Shia Islam.<sup>2</sup> Sunni Islam is, as we know, divided into four, equally valid, schools of law. The Turks – here Seldjukid and Ottoman as the central focus of this contribution – did well to choose at the time of their conversion to Islam the most liberal and adaptable school, the Hanefite one. This may be contrasted with North Africa, including Morocco, where people came to follow the Maliki School, one of the most severe and rigid traditions. The influence of this decision can still be felt today.

---

<sup>1</sup> We should perhaps recall the prohibition in Switzerland to build minarets, or the vehement protest actions in various European countries against the building of new mosques.

<sup>2</sup> The latter is in principle not included in the program of the present conference, but an exception will have to be made for the Fatimid period in Egypt and the Levant.





Ill. 4. Pčelinci (near Pernik), church of Letni Sveti Ivan, sixteenth century.

A fine Bulgarian example of Ottoman-period churches visible from afar is that of Letni Sveti Ivan near Pernik, one of the few surviving in our time. A group of monasteries in Akarnania, Western Greece and Mlado Nagoričane on the main Skopje-Kjustendil-Edirne highway offer some more highly instructive examples. Letni Sveti Ivan (ills. 4-5) near the village of Pčelinci in the district of Pernik, not far from the main road from Sofia that leads via Dupnica and Struma Valley to Thessaloniki, is an extreme example. Because of its location it is only used in the summer and owes its name to that practice. It is a small triconch church, dating from the sixteenth century and containing some rich fresco painting (badly mutilated by

twentieth-century barbarians), that is visible from many kilometres afar, probably making it our most extreme case.



Ill. 5. Pčelinci, Letni Sveti Ivan, sixteenth-century fresco.

---

*Heritage Site*, ed. Julija Tričkovska. Skopje: Cultural Heritage Protection Office, 2009, pp. 90-3 and 98-113) One of them (Sveti Kliment Stari) was even built by a ruler of the mini-state around Ohrid, the Albanian Lord Andreja Gropa in the decade after 1377.

# RELIGIOUS IMPRINTS ALONG THE GRAND RUE: ARMENIANS AND LATINS IN LATE-OTTOMAN ISTANBUL

Paolo Girardelli  
(Boğaziçi University, Istanbul)

*Abstract: Any analysis of the Christian presence in Ottoman cities has to acknowledge a set of dynamic relations that include place, identity politics, diplomacy, geo-political developments, and the role of other non-Muslim communities vis-à-vis the dominant Islamic order. In this paper, Catholic architecture in Pera or present-day Beyoğlu – a district of Istanbul often misleadingly considered as a European enclave – is read in the light of local practices and discourses of co-habitation, as well as international tensions revolving around the so-called 'Eastern Question'.*

\* \* \*

The place of Catholic spatial and visual expressions in the Ottoman world, especially in the imperial capital Istanbul, is a more peculiar aspect of the general question of the role of non-Muslim sanctuaries addressed in this book. In the Ottoman socio-political order of the later centuries, most Catholics were not officially identified as *dhimmi*, or protected non-Muslim subjects.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the Greek Orthodox or Armenian communities, whose respective patriarchates were also Ottoman institutions, they remained under the religious authority of an apostolic vicar who was not acknowledged by the Porte. 'Foreignness', with a nuance of conflict and enmity, seemed therefore for a long time the right framework for situating Catholics in the Ottoman context. Their presence appeared to be tolerated only for strategic purposes, of a commercial and political nature. In fact, Catholic institutions and communities in the empire had to be legally protected by a foreign diplomat, often the French ambassador to the Porte, who was acknowledged as the ultimate official responsible for (and representative of) Roman Catholic subjects living in the empire. But a French, a Venetian or a Habsburg representative were not the same thing to the Ottomans in varying historical and political contexts, and in a world where the modern notion of national identity was still in the making. During a war with Venice, a Catholic institution protected by the Serenissima had less chances to survive intact than a similar establishment protected by France – for long the preferred authority in these matters, as the main European power practicing a policy of *entente* with the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century, and until the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt. On an individual basis, a newcomer from France or the Italian states may have felt, or may have been perceived

---

This study was supported by the Bogaziçi University Research Fund (BAP, project n. 7684: "Landscape and Settlement in a Plural Environment") and benefited from the author's visiting scholarship at the Institut national de l'histoire de l'art (Paris) during the spring of 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Claude Cahen, "Dhimma," in: *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, II (1965). The standard and still valuable collection of essays on non-Muslims in the Ottoman empire is B. Braude and B. Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the functioning of a plural society*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982.





Ill. 1. Galata in an illustration of Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber insularum archipelaghi* (1422), showing the Franciscan and Dominican complexes in the middle of the earliest enclosure of walls. Courtesy Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.



Ill. 2. Galata in Matrakçı Nasuh's view of Istanbul (after Halbout du Tanney, *Istanbul vue par Matrakçı*).



Ill. 3. Detail of ill. 2, showing St. Francis as a church and the Dominican St. Paul as a mosque, with lead cladding on its roof.

mosque (later called Arap Cami and used by Muslim immigrants from Iberia) in 1475, and the chromatic peculiarity of the miniature denotes precisely this changing of rank and function. The two main Christian landmarks of Galata, also prominent in several illustrations of Buondelmonti's work (ill. 1), are treated by Matrakçı as a visual signifier of the ambivalent, Muslim/Christian identity of the district.<sup>13</sup> After the loss of their main church, the Dominicans would use a small wooden sanctuary, which was later rebuilt and upgraded until the final, still standing reconstruction was designed by Gaspare Fossati and executed in 1841-43. Saint Francis, described in some Latin sources as the most magnificent Latin church of the East,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The tentative identification of the red roofed building as the church of St. George (a sanctuary of limited architectural standing and urban visibility) by Dominique Halbout du Tanney (*Istanbul vue par Matrakçı*, Istanbul: Dost Yayınları, 1993) is not plausible in my view. I propose instead St. Francis on the grounds of its urban and cultural prominence, and of the frequent synergy/association of Dominican and Franciscan establishments in late medieval urban culture.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Frazee, *Catholics and sultans: the Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923*. London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 154.



Ill. 11. The Grand Rue de Pera in a watercolour by anonymous Greek painter (1809). Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum.

tural associations, department stores, passages and other commercial spaces also transformed its image. In the Republican period it became “İstiklal” or Independence Street, and is today an overcrowded, lively urban stage of multiple socio-cultural affiliations, an arena of political expression and contestation, as witnessed by the anti-governmental upheavals of May-June 2013 in nearby Taksim.

A multi-layered, hybrid and polysemic space, the Grand Rue was compared by different nineteenth-century western authors to places like High Street in Edinburgh, the Boulevard des Italiens in Paris, or even to Broadway in New York. A valuable visual document for our assessment of the hybrid urban and architectural features of this artery is a watercolour produced before 1809 by an anonymous Greek or Armenian painter in the service of the British diplomat Stratford Canning (ill. 11). This image shows how different the Grand Rue was from the standard and later accepted image of a western avenue, notwithstanding the insisted association with European urban spaces. In this watercolour of topographical and documentary character, all the buildings on the left, or northern side of the street, seem to belong to the Ottoman type of timber house, developed as a recognizable model only in the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup> The view may represent the performing of a common ritual in the life of Pera: the British ambassador with his retinue of Janissary guards, is going back to his residence off the Grand Rue, proba-

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Cerasi, “The formation of Ottoman house types: a comparative study in interaction with neighboring cultures,” in: *Muqarnas*, XV (1998), pp. 116-56.

# THE CHALLENGE OF REBUILDING A CATHOLIC MONASTERY IN OTTOMAN BOSNIA IN 1767

Maximilian Hartmuth  
(University of Vienna)

*Abstract: This paper discusses the circumstances of a church's reconstruction in a Catholic monastery in the environs of eighteenth-century Sarajevo. The chronicle composed by a friar about this enterprise proves a singular source not only for this historical event; it also provides valuable information relating to the process, such as concerning the paths and dynamics of communication with (what were thought of as) the relevant authorities. One of several findings recapitulated at the end of the paper is that these procedures were not as clear-cut as is often inferred in the research literature.*

\* \* \*

It is without doubt that our knowledge relating to the modalities of church construction and reconstruction in the Ottoman Empire – a state whose ruling elite was Muslim and in which authority was often legitimized engaging Islamic rhetoric – has significantly increased in recent decades. This progress has been not least due to studies based on Ottoman source material by the likes of Machiel Kiel and Rossitsa Gradeva.<sup>1</sup> Their presence greatly enhanced the workshop *Christian art under Muslim rule* (Istanbul, 2012) from which the majority of these papers were assembled. The historical documents their work has brought to light have shown under which circumstances the relevant authorities thought it legitimate for the Ottoman sultans' many non-Muslim subjects to alter the fabric of existing buildings, or even to build new ones. These documents' complete silence with regard to buildings' interiors also appear to illustrate that the Muslim Ottoman authorities had relatively little interest in whether or not spaces that were concealed from public view would be unassuming or ostentatious. Instead, the authorities' mandate was to regulate the height of buildings and noteworthy elements such as belfries or domes. What mattered in particular was these buildings' appearance at the time of conquest by a Muslim sovereign and their relation to Muslim buildings in the same locale. The cityscape was regarded as a mirror of hierarchies constitutive of the Ottoman social order. When in the nineteenth century this system changed, so did the cityscapes.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> To name but two: Rossitsa Gradeva, "Ottoman Policy towards Christian church buildings," in: *Études balkaniques*, 4 (1994), pp. 14-36; Machiel Kiel, *Art and society of Bulgaria in the Turkish period: a sketch of the economic, juridical and artistic preconditions of Bulgarian post-Byzantine art and its place in the development of the art of the christian Balkans, 1360-1700: a new interpretation*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> For the workings of this system, see Maximilian Hartmuth, "The historic fabric of Balkan towns: space, power, culture and society," in: *Four historic cities in the Western Balkans: value and challenges*. Eds. Stephan Doempke, Anduela Lulo Caca, and Sadi Petrela. Tirana: Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization, 2012, pp. 17-22.

# L'ART ET L'ARCHITECTURE SYRO-ORTHODOXE EN MÉSOPOTAMIE DU NORD (VII<sup>E</sup>-XIII<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLES)

Bas Snelders

(Paul van Moorsel Centre, Amsterdam)

*Abstract: L'art chrétien médiéval du Moyen-Orient a attiré une attention toujours croissante de la part du monde universitaire au cours des deux dernières décennies. Au-delà du domaine de l'histoire de l'art, cependant, l'art chrétien d'Orient reste un domaine de recherche largement inexploité. Il n'est quasiment jamais utilisé comme source dans les cultural studies. Les études portant sur l'histoire sociale et culturelle des communautés chrétiennes orientales se sont presque exclusivement concentrées sur les sources écrites, en particulier sur les textes qui ont été produits dans les cercles monastiques pour un lectorat ecclésiastique. Ces sources ne nous donnent qu'une image très partielle du développement et des attitudes d'une communauté. Les œuvres d'art et l'architecture restent encore largement négligées. Pourtant, en tant qu'élément de la vie quotidienne, elles révèlent souvent des points de contacts qui n'ont jamais été jugés suffisamment importants pour être consignés dans les registres officiels. Ces sources peuvent même conduire à dresser une image en contradiction flagrante avec celle que les plus hautes autorités ecclésiastiques souhaitaient véhiculer. C'est en cela que l'étude des sources matérielles apparaît essentielle lorsque l'on cherche à élaborer une image globale et équilibrée du développement social et culturel des communautés chrétiennes d'Orient, ainsi que de leurs relations avec les groupes environnants. Cet article marque le début d'un nouveau projet de recherche interdisciplinaire sur l'histoire sociale et culturelle de la communauté syro-orthodoxe sous domination musulmane. Il se donne pour but de dresser une première vue d'ensemble de l'art et de l'architecture des chrétiens syro-orthodoxes du nord de la Mésopotamie, dans une période approximativement comprise entre 640 et 1300 après Jésus-Christ.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

Le nord de la Mésopotamie était divisé entre les empires byzantins et persans jusqu'à l'invasion arabe de 640. Suite au remplacement des administrations traditionnelles par une nouvelle classe dirigeante de musulmans, ainsi qu'à la mise en place progressive d'une nouvelle hiérarchie ecclésiastique islamique, un nouveau système religieux et social régulant les relations entre les autochtones chrétiens et les colons musulmans vit le jour. Après la réoccupation temporaire de Mélitène (Malatya) par les Byzantins (934-1101), le nord de la Mésopotamie se trouva sous l'emprise des dynasties turques des Artukides et des Zengides. Les chrétiens syro-orthodoxes furent pourtant en mesure de se maintenir, malgré l'arabisation et l'islamisation progressive de tous les niveaux de la société. Les syro-orthodoxes connurent même deux 'âges d'or' à la suite de la phase de formation, comprise entre 451 (Concile de Chalcedon) et 640, la première ayant lieu au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et la seconde débutant au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec une apogée aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup>





Ill. 2. Jugement du Christ; ms. London BL Add. 7170, fol. 145r (avec permission du British Library).

Plutôt qu'une tentative délibérée de promotion d'une image négative entre les persécuteurs du Christ et les tribunaux musulmans contemporains, la correspondance semble être mieux expliquée par le fait que son créateur utilisait un modèle de composition qui lui était parfaitement familier.<sup>21</sup> Ensemble, les analogies stylistiques et iconographiques suggèrent que les peintres responsables de l'exécution des miniatures à Vat. sir. 559 et London BL Add. 7170 répondaient aussi aux be-

soins du marché musulman.<sup>22</sup> Davantage de recherche est nécessaire pour confirmer ou infirmer cette hypothèse. Il faudrait étudier simultanément les méthodes de production, les styles et les techniques, à la fois dans les manuscrits syriaques et arabo-musulmans.

D'autres œuvres d'art produites dans la région de Mossoul pour l'Église syro-orthodoxe montrent également que les traits stylistiques et techniques ne peuvent pas être connectés exclusivement avec une communauté religieuse ou confessionnelle. Un bon exemple est ici la paire de flabella liturgiques décorés d'images de la vierge *Hodegetria* entourée de d'anges volants, qui date du 1202/03 (ill. 3).<sup>23</sup> Selon leurs inscriptions syriaques, ces flabella étaient faits pour Dayr al-Surian, un bastion syro-orthodoxe dans le Wadi al-Natrun en Égypte, mais suffisamment de preuves ont été réunies pour soutenir une théorie selon laquelle ils proviendraient originellement de Mossoul. Il y a, par exemple, une évidente affinité stylistique entre la décoration figurative de ces flabella et un groupe de manuscrits illustrés, rédigés en arabe, provenant de la Mésopotamie du Nord. En terme de composition et de l'organisation de la décoration sur la surface, ils peuvent être comparés au métal incrusté de Mossoul. Il suffit ici de se référer aux illustrations d'un volume du *Kitab al-Diryaq* daté de 1199 et conservé à Paris,

<sup>21</sup> Snelders, *Identity*, 186-187.

<sup>22</sup> Sur la production des manuscrits syriaques illustrés, voir Snelders, *Identity*, 169-180; Anna Contadini, *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Naʿat al-Hayawān) in the Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ Tradition* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 160-162.

<sup>23</sup> Morlanwelz, Musée Royal de Mariemont, n° IIIG 76B 2; Paris, Musée du Louvre, acc. n° OA 7947; Snelders, *Identity*, 105-150, pls 10-11; Julian Raby, "The Principle of Parsimony and the Problem of the 'Mosul School of Metalwork'," dans *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World. Art, Craft and Text*, eds Venetia Porter et Mariam Rosser-Owen (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 49-50, figs 1.24a, c.



Ill. 4. 'Freer Canteen', Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Purchase F1941.10 (avec permission de Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution).

#### L'IDENTITÉ DES PRODUCTEURS ET DES UTILISATEURS

La convergence de l'art islamique et chrétien, dont le 'Freer Canteen' et les pièces en rapport sont un cas d'école, a permis de poser d'importantes questions au rapport avec l'identité du peuple qui les a commandés et utilisés, et sur les fonctions possibles de ces sortes d'objets. On a suggéré que les pièces d'artisanat d'art les plus précieuses furent acquises aussi bien par les membres de la classe supérieure musulmane et par la noblesse franque (croisée), et qu'elles servaient de produits de luxe. Les pièces les plus humbles de l'artisanat mineur, qui étaient produites massivement et servaient d'ustensiles domestiques, ont traditionnellement été perçues comme étant destinées aux indigènes chrétiens.<sup>26</sup> Ce point de vue néglige pourtant de préciser

<sup>26</sup> Eva Baer, *Ayyubid Metalwork with Christian Images* (Leiden: Brill, 1989); Eva Hoffman, "Christian-Islamic Encounters on Thirteenth-Century Ayyubid Metalwork: Local Culture, Authenticity, and Memory," *Gesta*

# LATE ANTIQUE CHURCH BUILDINGS IN OTTOMAN SOFIA, FIFTEENTH TO BEGINNING OF NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Rossitsa Gradeva  
(American University in Bulgaria)

*Abstract: This paper is dedicated to the 'Ottoman life' of three churches: St Sophia, St George (a.k.a. the Rotunda) and the church(es) which housed the sessions of the Council of Serdica in 343 CE. These foundations all date to the Late Antique period but by the time of the Ottoman conquest had become an integral part of the material and thought life of the citizens of Sofia. This paper takes in hand these physical and ideological transformations that the churches experienced during Ottoman rule. While the first two churches were at different times converted to mosques by the conquerors – St Sophia eventually became a vakıf of Siyavuş Paşa and the Rotunda a vakıf of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) – the church of the Serdica Council suffered from the vicissitudes of time and disappeared physically. All three, however, were the subject of legends and played an active role in the duel between the two main faiths in Ottoman Sofia. This paper is based on sources of various provenance – kadi sicills, single Ottoman documents, atik şikayet defters, Ottoman chronicles and Bulgarian narrative sources, as well as travel accounts of foreigners who visited the city in those centuries.<sup>1</sup>*

\*\*\*

The longevity of human presence in Sofia was in no small part due to the location of the city at the crossroads of important communication arteries, the favourable natural conditions, and the hot mineral springs.<sup>2</sup> Archaeological excavations in various parts of its current territory have revealed settlements from the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age eras. However, the emergence of the urban centre settled on the plain can be dated with greater precision to

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on research carried out within the project *Religion and Public Space*, supported by the FNI-Bulgarian Ministry of Education. This made possible my work on the history of non-Muslim houses of worship in Sofia at BOA-Istanbul and at the Oriental Department, National Library-Sofia. My study on the houses of worship in Sofia during Ottoman rule continues, and I hope some of the gaps in the data will be eventually filled.

<sup>2</sup> During its long history of more than two millennia Sofia has had several names – Serdonopolis/(Ulpia) Serdica (Thracian, Roman), Triadica and variants (Byzantine, especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries), Sredets (Slavic, Bulgarian), Sofia. Each marks a stage in its development, and is related to its different rulers, respectively the Thracian Serdi, Romans, Byzantines, Bulgarians, and Ottomans. Hereafter I shall use Sofia which became the name of the city sometime in the fourteenth century. On the evolution of the name of the city as reflected in historical sources see Jivka Velkova, "Imenata na nashata stolitsa prez vekovete," in: *Vekove*, II/2 (1973), pp. 57-62; Anna Choleva-Dimitrova, *Selishtni imena ot Yugozapadna Bulgariya. Izsledvane. Rechnik*. Sofia-Moskva: Pensoft, 2002, pp. 168-70. A different reading of the names of the city through the centuries is offered by Vesselina Vachkova, *Serdikiyskiyat Subor: 1670 godini istoriya i interpretatsii*. Sofia: Zlaten zmey, 2013, pp. 88-112 who believes that Sofia has been a parallel name of the city from at least the tenth century, along with the original (Bulgarian/Slavic) Triadica.



# TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN THE DECORATIVE PRACTICES IN CHRISTIAN ART IN THE BALKANS, FIFTEENTH THROUGH SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Lilyana Stankova  
(Independent researcher, Paris)

*Abstract: This paper, based on the results of my unpublished doctoral research, sheds light on certain features of the ornamental language of Christian Orthodox art in the Ottoman Balkans. It seeks to determine which particular elements entered from Islamic art and to what extent they were innovative and became integrated in manuscripts' and icons' decoration. The paper focuses on examples from the manuscript heritage of two of the most important Balkan scribes and illuminators of this period, namely Vladislav the Grammarian and Joan Kratovski, whereas the second part is dedicated to icons.*

\* \* \*

In the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries the Balkan peoples lived in a complex ethnic and religious environment in which Islam played a dominant role. The majority of the non-Muslim population shared a common heritage and formed a single cultural community, united by the Orthodox faith. This is confirmed by the remarkable uniformity of patterns and themes that characterized ecclesiastical art of the Ottoman period and the ease with which they moved irrespective of language and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, exposure to the visual culture of the local Muslim elite, not least through the commercial trade of objects within the Ottoman Empire, had a visible impact on the artistic production of the Christians.

In fact, contact between the art of Byzantium and the South Slavs with that of the Muslim world is on record since the early Middle Ages. Quite often Islamic art was a source of enrichment for the repertoire of ornamental motifs in Byzantine art and could also have provided a model for their stylization.<sup>2</sup> As both Christian and Islamic art in the Balkans continued medieval artistic traditions, it seems advisable to ask to what extent such exchanges took place

---

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Dujčev, "Byzance après Byzance et les Slaves," in: *Medievo Bizantino-Slavo, Saggi di Storia Letteraria*, II (1968), pp. 287-311; Aksinia Džurova, "Vizantija i slavjanite, tipologička saopštavka na kulturnite modeli," in: *Godišnik na Sofijski Universitet, CSVP 'Ivan Dujčev'*, 4 (1990-1991), pp. 267-72.

<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, II. ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan et al. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, s.v., "Islamic influence on Byzantine Art"; Oleg Grabar, *L'ornement, formes et fonctions dans l'art islamique*. Paris: Flammarion, 1996, pp. 35-70; Robert Nelson, "Palaeologian illuminated ornament and the Arabesque," in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XLI (1988), pp. 7-22; ibidem, "Letters and language/ornament and identity in Byzantium and Islam," in: *The experience of Islamic art on the margins of Islam*, ed. Irene A. Bierman. Reading, U.K.: Ithaca Press, 2005, pp. 61-88; Priscilla Soucek, "Byzantium and the Islamic East," in: *The glory of Byzantium, art and culture of the Middle Byzantine era A.D. 843-1261*, ed. Helen Evans and William Wixom. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, pp. 402-12; Scott Redford, "Byzantium and the Islamic world, 1261-1557," in: *Byzantium, faith and power (1261-1557)*, ed. Helen Evans. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004, pp. 389-96.



The second type of frontispiece is the rectangular one, accompanied by a miniature. It represents a new, original way of composing decorative vegetative motifs under the influence of the floral arabesque. These frontispieces are accompanied by a peculiar and well developed vegetative stalk as a decorative element in the margin (ill. 2). They are linked to the works of the South Slavic scribe Ioan Kratovski. This form of decoration also has as its prototype the compositions familiar from the Byzantine period, whose ornaments were influenced by the medieval vegetative arabesque.<sup>10</sup> The originality of the decoration of its codices lies in the 'modernization' of well-known compositions by means of decorative motifs current in the sixteenth century.



Ill. 2. Four Gospels Book from 1567 (HACI № 250, Sofia), f. 234r.

They also initiated the development of a specific trend in composing the frontispiece-miniature, which became widespread and very popular in the decoration of Bulgarian, Serbian, and Romanian manuscripts in the period between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The greatest contribution to their development was made by the illuminators from the Literary Schools in Etropole and Adžar.<sup>11</sup> The deviation from Ioan Kratovski's prototype is revealed in the altered stylization of decorative motifs, which prevents the recognition of the floral motifs and their almost complete decomposition within the interlaces.

<sup>10</sup> Kurt Weitzmann et al, *The place of book illumination in Byzantine art*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1975, fig. 25; George Galavaris, *The illustrations, the liturgical homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1969, pl. CIV, fig. 456; Jean Ebersolt, *La miniature byzantine*. Paris: G. Vanoest, 1926, pl. LXX, ill. 2; Nelson, "Paleologan illuminated," p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Božidar Rajkov, "Etropolskata kaligrafsko-hudožestvena škola prez XVI-XVII vek," in: *Izvestija na Narodna biblioteka 'Kiril I Metodij'*, XVII/XVIII (1971), pp. 19-39.

# WATER VESSELS OR PILGRIM FLASKS? MEDIEVAL FLASKS IN A CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC SETTING

Luitgard Mols  
(Sabiel, The Hague)

*Abstract: A tinned lead pilgrim flask with a bearded horseman on both sides, housed in the collection of Museum Boymans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, serves as the starting point of this article. Although its formal resemblance to Byzantine ampullae brought back by pilgrims from visits to the Holy Places suggests a Christian use and background in medieval Syria or Egypt, its iconography and size lead to discussing and proposing wider audiences and functions of this and similar wares. Two angles will be explored. Besides an investigation of the different religious and cosmopolitan usages of this type of iconography in the medieval context also the appropriateness of the term pilgrim flask will be discussed.<sup>1</sup>*

\* \* \*

Sometimes the combination of the specific form and decoration of an object seems so harmonious that it discourages research at first. This had been the case for a metal flask from the collection of the Museum Boymans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (inv. no. OM 11; ill. 1), on which a horseman is depicted. Its identification as a Coptic pilgrim-flask dateable to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries seemed only natural. However, when comparisons with similar objects were made, its shape and iconography did propel questions about the use of this, and identical flasks of similar shape, and about the identity of their patrons. This type of flask seems to have appealed both to a Christian and Muslim clientele, both in a religious and worldly sphere. This paper will address questions posed by the iconography, form and use of this and similarly shaped flasks.

The Boymans van Beuningen flask is made of heavy lead coated with tin. It has a bulbous body with a spout adjoined on each side by an ornamental handle with protrusions. Its foot is soldered to its base. Both sides of the body are decorated with a central medallion with a horse-rider, carrying a rounded shield and what seems to be a lance or a spear, which punctures a creature or object on the ground below the horse's feet (ill. 2). In the past this militant horseman was identified as the equestrian saint St George.

---

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Maximilian Hartmuth and Fokke Gerritsen for inviting me to participate in the workshop Christian Art under Muslim Rule at the Netherlands Institute in Turkey, Istanbul. Furthermore I would like to say thanks to Alexandra van Dongen, Curator of Preindustrial design in the Museum Boymans van Beuningen in Rotterdam who first drew my attention to the flask and who enthusiastically provided me with additional information. I am also grateful for constructive advice given by Mat Immerzeel from the Paul van Moorsel Centre at Leiden University.

# THE FATE OF TANZIMAT-ERA CHURCHES IN ANATOLIA AFTER THE LOSS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS

*Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir*  
(Middle East Technical University)

*Abstract: The compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1924 and the tragedies of 1915 changed the demographics of the Ottoman Empire drastically. Consequently a large number of churches were left without their congregations. In this article I investigate an important, but rarely asked question: What happened to Christian religious buildings after the departure of the Christians from Anatolia? Based on selected examples, I illustrate a range of transformations from conversion to mosques to reutilization as movie theaters or penitentiaries.*

\* \* \*

Growing up in the industrial city of Samsun on Turkey's Black Sea coast, I rarely came across remnants of the town's Christian past. There were a few nicely built stone mansions in lush gardens, clustered in some neighborhoods, said to have been left behind by the Greeks. The coastal resort area was known by the name 'Matasyon', built on the massive lands that were formerly owned by the Moutassian family, a wealthy Armenian family that had a tobacco farm in that region. Other than occasionally coming across the name of the Matasyon neighborhood, as a child growing up in Samsun in the 1980s I had little perception or memory of the Greeks and Armenians that populated the city up until the early twentieth century. I was perplexed upon coming across a nineteenth-century postcard with the image of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Samsun (ill. 1). Indeed, this magnificent building with its onion dome and two ornate bell towers was the most spectacular edifice of Samsun in the late nineteenth century. In the early photographs of the city, it is almost the sole identifiable edifice in the skyline, sticking out with its bright white color and tall dome and towers. Yet, by the 1980s there was no memory of that building, and the Christian community that built it. In modern Samsun, "Greek and Christian history has been air brushed away from the local heritage."<sup>1</sup> Samsun, however, is not an exception. Travelling around modern Turkey one rarely catches glimpses of the vivid and multi-religious past of the country.

In this article I investigate an important, but rarely asked question: What happened to Christian religious buildings after the departure of the Christians from Anatolia? This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive survey, but rather a short synopsis of a range of transformations that have taken place after 1924, based on well documented examples.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Clark, *Twice a stranger: how mass expulsion forged Modern Greece and Turkey*. London: Granata Books, 2006, p. 75.

serve as humble mosques.<sup>15</sup> Each of those three church-to-mosque transformations is different. The earliest converted of the three, the Çınaralan village mosque, retains some fine masonry decorations on the western exterior façade, but there is a later dome and minaret added to the structure (ill. 2). The mosque is vividly painted and has green walls, orange and green domes and a red, white and blue decorated minaret. The façade of the former church, where the entrance to the mosque is currently located, is unpainted and displays its fine stone masonry work. Similarly, the Karaperçin village mosque had a dome and a minaret added later. In both Çınaralan and Karaperçin, the original buildings were probably rectangular basilicas with pitched roofs. The added domes are oversized, and redefine the proportions of the buildings. In both cases, the hefty domes and tall minarets clearly identify the structures as mosques. The Çınaralan church has strong similarities in the finely cut masonry and the decorative scheme with the Andyeri church, and may have been a simple rectan-



Ill. 2. Çınaralan Mosque, Samsun (photo credit: Yücel Tanyeri).



Ill. 3. Andyeri Mosque, Samsun (photo credit: Yücel Tanyeri).

gular village church at the time that it was built. Of all three, the most untouched example of conversion is the Andyeri village mosque (ill. 3). The small rectangular church was constructed with finely dressed masonry, has meticulously carved decorations on its eastern façade, and still retains its ornate bell tower. Located in the Black Sea countryside where the trees in the fields are green sublime, from the exterior this hum-

<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank Yücel Tanyeri for his help in identifying surviving churches in the district of Samsun.



## AFTERWORD: ANALYZING LOCALIZED CONTEXTS OF SUBORDINATION AND DOMINATION IN THE OTTOMAN *CONVENIENCIA*

Robert M. Hayden  
(University of Pittsburgh)

Max Hartmuth has told me that this workshop developed around the fundamental issue of whether it was possible to find a common denominator for considering the cultural products of Christians in the Islamic world, dispersed as they are over a large geography. The specific question underlying the workshop was whether it makes sense to discuss these materials as all having been produced in the context of power structures and regulations that usually did not work in favour of those who produced Christian art. Instead of contextualizing the products with that which came before in the same region, the idea was to try to contextualize comparatively, with other places where the conditions for artistic production were structurally similar.

The resulting contributions to this volume all display the careful attention to local contexts that has long been the hallmark of serious scholarship, and all are excellent contributions to the specific literatures they address. Not surprisingly, however, and despite the comparative charge to the participants, it was realized in the workshop that the situations in various regions (e.g. Syria vs. Balkans) differed greatly, reflecting, but also reproducing, the regionalist divisions of scholarly specializations.

I was asked to comment because my colleagues and I have been engaged in an international, comparative and multidisciplinary project on 'Antagonistic Tolerance' (hereafter, AT) or competitive sharing of religious sites. We have done research in the Balkans, Turkey, Mexico, Peru and India, developing a theoretical model and set of empirical measures that have let us draw consistently on data from all of these regions, data developed through contemporary ethnography, archaeology, history, art history and religious studies; statements of our program can be found in our theoretical publications<sup>1</sup> and specific analyses of sites in Turkey,<sup>2</sup> the

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Hayden, "Antagonistic tolerance: competitive sharing of religious sites in South Asia and the Balkans," in: *Current Anthropology*, XLIII/2 (2002), pp. 205-31; Robert M. Hayden and Timothy D. Walker, "Intersecting religioscapes: a comparative approach to trajectories of change, scale, and competitive sharing of religious spaces," in: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LXXXI/2 (2013), pp. 399-426; Robert M. Hayden, Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, Timothy D. Walker, Aykan Erdemir, Devika Rangachari, Manuel Aguilar-Moreno, Enrique López-Hurtado, and Milica Bakić-Hayden, *Antagonistic tolerance: competitive sharing of religious sites and spaces*. London: Routledge, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Rabia Harmanşah, Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, and Robert M. Hayden, "Secularizing the unsecularizable: a comparative study of the Hacı Bektaş and Mevlana museums in Turkey," in: Karen Barkey and Elazar Barkan (eds.), *Choreography of sacred space: state, religion and conflict resolution*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, pp. 336-67; Robert M. Hayden et al., "The Byzantine mosque at Trilye: a processual analysis of dominance, sharing, transformation and tolerance," in: *History and Anthropology*, XXII/1 (2011), pp. 1-17,