



Image: Personaggi ottomani osservano la base della colonna di Arcadio.
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International conference - Program

THE TWO ROMES IN THE (EARLY-)MODERN PERIOD DIVERSITY, SPACE, AND VISION IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

10.00 – Welcome coffee

10.30 – Francesca Cappelletti, Welcome & Opening Remarks

10.40-11.10 – Paolo Girardelli (Boğaziçi University Istanbul), *Visible or Invisible: Ottoman Armenians in the Two Romes*

11.10-11.40 – Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu (Boğaziçi University Istanbul), *Constantinopolitan (and Rūmī) perspectives on Rome and Roman heritage (15th-18th centuries)*

11.40-12.10 – Alper Metin (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz), *New Evidence on Lorenzo, a Member of the Cerroti Family in Ottoman Istanbul*

12.10-12.40 – Discussion

12.40-13.00 – Concluding Remarks

After the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, what survived of the old connection between the two Romes? Cemal Kafadar, in his groundbreaking essay "A Rome of Its Own", argued that Roman imperial memory was instrumental and effective for the Ottomans as a tool of identification and legitimation. Architectural historian Spiro Kostof, on his part, claimed that in the conquered city, Mehmet II created, for the first time after the

fall of the (Western) Roman empire, a monumental complex comparable in scale and concept to Roman imperial prototypes.

This panel promotes a reflection on scarcely visible connections and parallel developments in the evolution of Rome and Istanbul as "plural environments", between the 16th and the 18th century. While the center of Catholicism had limited exposure to Islamic cultural production and performance, it also attracted several Ottoman subjects of the non-Muslim confessions (Greeks, Armenians, and, less prominently, Jews), who represented roughly 40% of the population of Istanbul. Conversely, the papal patronage of art and architecture exerted some influence on the urban and architectural development of Istanbul over the long durée.

In this panel, moderated by Francesca Cappelletti, three scholars focusing on different aspects of such neglected analogies and connections will expose materials, narratives and critical perspectives, allowing to contextualize Rome and Istanbul as distant but synergic centers of cultural, spatial and visual diversity.

Paolo Girardelli, *Visible or Invisible: Ottoman Armenians in the Two Romes*

Armenian communities have always been part of the Ottoman social fabric and occupied relevant roles in the economic and cultural life of the empire. The majority of the Ottoman Armenian “nation”, led by a patriarch appointed by the Sultan, followed the Apostolic or Gregorian confession, and was separate from Rome by belief in monophysitism (denial of the double nature of Christ). However, over the centuries, for complex historical reasons, a considerable part of its members opted for union with Rome and became, secretly or openly, Catholic. This talk will explore the visual and spatial dimension of Armenian Catholic presence in Istanbul and Rome, reflecting on communal spaces and landmarks, and on aspects of material culture. The church of Santa Maria Egiziaca in Rome (temple of Portunus), and the traces of Armenian presence in the Latin churches of Istanbul will be discussed and contextualized as elements of an important but neglected connection between the two cities.

Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolitan (and Rūmī) perspectives on Rome and Roman heritage (15th-18th centuries)*

This talk will trace representations of Rome and Roman heritage in Ottoman letters between the late 15th and the early 18th centuries, highlighting notions of “two Romes” in early Ottoman historiography. The exploration of narratives and representations of Rome in literary, historical, and geographic writing (chronicles, captivity narratives, cosmographies, translations from Latin) foregrounds the changing emphases with regard to Roman heritage within different epistemological frameworks. A historically grounded exploration of these texts will pave the way for an inquiry into shifting attitudes towards the Roman past and present in the material culture of the period.

Alper Metin, *New Evidence on Lorenzo, a Member of the Cerroti Family in Ottoman Istanbul*

This paper presents new archival evidence concerning Lorenzo Cerroti, a little-known member of a renowned family of Tuscan stonecutters established in Rome, and reconstructs his involvement in the rebuilding of the Observant Franciscan complex of Santa Maria Draperis in Pera between 1769 and 1772. Drawing on unpublished documents recently identified in archives in Florence, Livorno, and Rome, the paper situates Lorenzo’s activity within the history of the Cerroti family while examining the intersecting Italo-Ottoman and Ottoman-Habsburg networks through which the project was conceived and executed. The inquiry proceeds along two closely related lines. The first reconstructs Lorenzo’s biography and professional formation: his place of birth and family background, his training and earlier activity, and the personal and professional networks that connected him to Rome and Tuscany before his arrival in Istanbul. The second examines the chancel ensemble of Santa Maria Draperis, including its monumental high altar. Designed and carved in Italy, shipped from Livorno, and assembled in Istanbul by Lorenzo in 1772, this ensemble provides a particularly revealing case through which to investigate the transregional organization of architectural production. Its history raises broader questions about the negotiation of artistic commissions across political, confessional, and imperial boundaries. Given that Santa Maria Draperis was then under Habsburg protection, why were the high altar and its associated architectural elements commissioned and produced in Italy rather than in Vienna or elsewhere within the Habsburg territories? How did Lorenzo secure the commission, and through which diplomatic, mercantile, religious, and professional intermediaries was the undertaking coordinated? By reconstructing the design, production, financing, shipment, and installation of the chancel furnishings, the paper sheds new light on the circulation of craftsmen, materials, and technical expertise between Tuscany, Rome, Livorno, the Habsburg lands, and Ottoman Istanbul. At the same time, it demonstrates the importance of familial, commercial, and institutional networks in shaping Catholic architectural production in eighteenth-century Pera.