



Orient-Institut Istanbul
Lectures Series

November 2 – 23, 2022

Artefacts and Identities

Convened by Roxana Coman



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Artefacts and Identities

“There are people like Senhor José everywhere, who fill their time, or what they believe to be their spare time, by collecting stamps, coins, medals, vases, post-cards, matchboxes, books, clocks, sport shirts, autographs, stones, clay figurines, empty beverage cans, little angels, cacti, opera programmes, lighters, pens, owls, music boxes, bottles, bonsai trees, paintings, mugs, pipes, glass obelisks, ceramic ducks, old toys, carnival masks, and they probably do so out of something that we might call metaphysical angst.”

José Saramago, *All the Names*

The sheer quantity of literature produced on the topics of museums, collectors and their collections has the potential to create a collection of its own. To make matters even more complex, the conceptual underpinnings of the words: museum, collection and collector have always been intertwined. Even from today’s heritage legislation perspective, a private collection can become a private museum opened for the general public, a public museum has a public collection, a private collector can donate artefacts to a museum, whether private or public. Therefore, this lecture series focuses on the intricate interplay between artefacts and identities, between private collectors and museums (be it public or private), against the backdrop of complex changes in the Ottoman Empire that marked the transition from an imperial to a national framework. The case studies at the core of the lectures are representative not only of the imperial centre of Istanbul, but also follow the former Ottoman provinces Wallachia and Moldavia’s strategies to create a national heritage inventory and deal with the Ottoman legacies. The lectures analyse how the collectors’ and museum directors’ agency impacted the selection of specific artefacts, how the artefacts were (re)contextualized in their display, and especially how the entanglement of individual, collective, gender, national identities impacted the collecting practices and the added value of the collection.

Roxana Coman

Programme UTC +3 (Istanbul Time)

- 2 November, 19.00** Edhem Eldem
Boğaziçi University
The place of Islamic Artefacts in Osman Hamdi Bey's Artistic and Museological Career
- 9 November, 19.00** M. Merve Uca
Sadberk Hanım Müzesi
Inveniam Viam Aut Faciam: Sadberk Koç as a Rigorous Collector
- 16 November, 19.00** Theodor E. Ulieriu-Rostás
Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Ethnological Archive, Bucharest
Recovering the Provisional. Musealization and Photography in the Early Years of the Museum of Ethnography and National Art in Bucharest (1906 – 1912)
- 23 November, 19.00** Roxana Coman
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Orient-Institut Istanbul
Antiquities and Rarities in mid-19th Century Wallachia: Dimitrie Papazoglu's Collection for "The Feeling of Love of the Progress of my Nation"

Registration information

The lectures will be held online via Zoom.

To attend this online lecture series or any single lectures, prior registration is necessary: Please send an email specifying your name and academic affiliation to events@oiist.net three days prior each lecture at the latest. For technical reasons, the number of participants is limited. You will be informed about the organizational and technical procedure before the workshop start.

The place of Islamic Artefacts in Osman Hamdi Bey's Artistic and Museological Career

Edhem Eldem (Boğaziçi University)

Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910), celebrated both for his talent as a painter and his achievements at the head of the Imperial Museum, has always had an ambiguous relationship to Islamic monuments, objects, and artefacts. On the one hand, they represented a gradual addition to the collections of the Imperial Museum, which eventually developed into a separate museum of Islamic art. On the other, they formed an integral part of his art, considering that he specialized, especially after the 1880s, in the depiction of Oriental(ist) scenes, consisting of one or a few figures in Eastern garb, located in, or before, a partially visible Ottoman monument, and surrounded by objects and artefacts of generally the same origin. Additionally, he also toyed with the idea of using these objects as a means of reviving local crafts, much in line with the arts and crafts movement initiated by the South Kensington Museum and emulated by practically every European state.



Osman Hamdi Bey, Persian carpet dealer on the street, 1888, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

The three dimensions of Hamdi Bey's engagement with Islamic arts and objects were not mutually exclusive. The use he made of these artefacts in the construction of imaginary scenes in his paintings was a constant until his death, and a close look at his works reveals numerous and significant repetitions and continuities. His treatment of the same objects as part of

the museum's collections was much less consistent. His initial plan of a revival of crafts never really took off, and soon left its place to the setting up of a collection that remained marginal compared to the institution's focus on more "noble" categories of antiquities. It was only towards the end of his life that this collection received much greater attention, mostly thanks to his brother Halil Edhem's interest in Islamic heritage, which was in conformity with the rise of Turco-Islamic nationalism among the political and intellectual elites of the time.

Edhem Eldem is a professor at the Department of History of Boğaziçi University and holds the International Chair of Turkish and Ottoman History at the Collège de France. He has taught at Berkeley, Harvard, Columbia, EHESS, EPHE, ENS, and was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. His fields of interest include the Levant trade, funerary epigraphy, Istanbul, the Ottoman Bank, the history of archaeology and museology in the Ottoman lands, Ottoman first-person narratives, Ottoman photography, Westernization, Orientalism, and Osman Hamdi Bey. Selected publications: *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (1999); *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (1999); *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul* (1999, with D. Goffman and B. Masters); *Pride and Privilege. A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (2004); *Consuming the Orient* (2007); *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* (2011, with Zainab Bahrani and Zeynep Çelik); *Camera Ottomana. Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire* (2015, with Zeynep Çelik); *L'Empire ottoman et la Turquie face à l'Occident* (2018); *L'Alhambra. À la croisée des histoires* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2021).

9 November, 19.00

Inveniam Viam Aut Faciam: Sadberk Koç as a Rigorous Collector

M. Merve Uca (Sadberk Hanım Müzesi)

Turkey's first private museum is named after Sadberk Koç, who pioneered in the development of private museums in this country. She is not only a key figure in the history of Turkish museums, but also in systematic antiquities collecting. Sadberk Hanım was born in Ankara in 1908, the second of three daughters of Seraktar Sadullah Bey, who belonged to an eminent local family. She attended the Sainte-Euphémie French Junior School for Girls in Istanbul and at the age of 18 married her maternal cousin Vehbi Koç. Sadberk Hanım was a woman strongly attached to traditional values

and family life and a supportive and understanding wife and caring mother, who ensured that her children grew up in a happy, peaceful environment that embraced the principles of the young Turkish Republic. At the same time, she was a dedicated collector with a keen aesthetic eye, who endeavoured to preserve Turkey's cultural heritage. The collection that she gathered so meticulously now forms the nucleus of the Sadberk Hanım Museum collection, Turkey's first private museum, which was founded with her encouragement and in her name. This collection, consisting particularly of textiles, embroideries and artifacts of other Ottoman arts that are now falling into oblivion, has in this way become available to the general public and academics,



Sadberk Koç photographed at the end of the 1920s, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi archive

so opening the way for fresh ideas. Although Sadberk Hanım's name is referenced in diverse publications on Turkey's museums, her visionary personality, her role as a systematic collector, her contribution to preserving our cultural heritage and to the development of private museums in Turkey have not been sufficiently recognised. This lecture seeks to fill this gap by examining the development of Sadberk Hanım's collection, the reflection of her personal characteristics on this development and the importance of her visionary approach in the context of antiques collection, private museums, preserving our cultural heritage and other areas. The lecture begins with an introduction about Sadberk Hanım's life and goes onto to discuss her interest in art, her early collecting, the expansion of her collection, the past, present and future of Sadberk Hanım Museum, and the importance of its collection, especially in the field of textiles.

M. Merve Uca graduated in Archaeology from Bilkent University and completed a minor degree in Ottoman History at the same university. This led her into the study

of Ottoman cultural history. She went on to take a master's degree in Art History at Koç University; writing a thesis entitled "A Fashion Bonanza: Representation of Ottoman Woman in the Sixteenth-Century Costume Albums", under her supervisor Prof. Dr. Günsel Renda. She worked as a research assistant at Koç University from 2016 until 2019, when she was appointed as an art history expert at Sadberk Hanım Museum. She is currently serving as curatorial team coordinator, responsible for coordinating content development and relocation projects for the museum, which is in the process of relocating to a new site in the Golden Horn area. While working in fields such as museum design, developing concepts and scenarios for museums, and relations between objects and their contexts, she is simultaneously pursuing her academic studies on subjects including early Ottoman period textiles and costume, Ottoman cultural history and Ottoman-European relations.

16 November, 19.00

Recovering the Provisional. Musealization and Photography in the Early Years of the Museum of Ethnography and National Art in Bucharest (1906 – 1912)

Theodor E. Ulieriu-Rostás (Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Ethnological Archive)

The 1900 Exposition Universelle and the 1906 Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition brought renewed interest in defining Romanian national specificity in visual and applied arts for wider audiences at home and abroad. In this context, German-trained art historian Alexandru Tzigara-Samurçaş was appointed director of the newly established Museum of Ethnography and National Art in Bucharest (1906). Central to Tzigara-Samurçaş' museal practice were his frequent acquisition trips in rural areas and his interventionist stance, which informed the relocation of large, freestanding structures to the museum – including an entire peasant house rebuilt indoors by its original maker. The museum and its collections were accommodated on the premises of the former State Mint, an ensemble shared with other public institutions on the northern outskirts of the city, while Tzigara-Samurçaş championed the project of a purposefully designed edifice in grand "national style" to be built on the same site, or preferably closer to downtown Bucharest. As such, the first ethnographic exhibition set up for about four years (April 1907 – spring of 1912) was caught in a peculiar state of fluidity: its existence was needed as a proof of validity for the museum as a large-scale project, but its setup at the old Mint was intended to remain provisional. Moreover, the incipient state of the collections left taxonomies, aesthetics and the underlying cultural narrative of the exhibition in con-



The provisional exhibition of the Museum of Ethnography and National Art in Bucharest: wooden objects hall. Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas (attr.), April 1907 – January 1908. Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Ethnological Archive

stant negotiation, with displays reworked and artefacts permuted in the pace of new entries to the museum's inventory.

Judging by his published work, it would seem that Tzigara-Samurcaş was not interested in memorializing his early museal experiments. While his militant articles from the 1900s included several views of the provisional exhibition, none was reproduced in his *Romanian Museography* (1936). The surviving photographic fonds of the museum comprise nonetheless several series of glass-plate negatives documenting the exhibition rooms, as well as details and individual artefacts put on display. Tzigara-Samurcaş' own production as an amateur photographer includes early film negatives taken on his acquisition trips and in the early setup of the museum. This presentation will draw the outlines of a comprehensive approach to this largely unstudied corpus. It aims to recover, as much as possible, the concreteness of these inaccessible spaces, to shed light on the intertwined microhistories of musealisation captured herein, and to reflect on the uses of photography in an early 20th century museum.

Theodor E. Ulieriu-Rostás has studied history and archaeology at the University of Bucharest, the University of Montpellier and the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (Paris). He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Bu-

charest (2013) and was subsequently a research fellow at the New Europe College (2015–2016) and the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (2018–2019). He also received research scholarships from the French Government, the French School at Athens, and the Hardt Foundation for the Study of Classical Antiquity (Vandoeuvres). Theodor E. Ulieriu-Rostás currently holds the position of assistant researcher at the Ethnological Archive of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant (Bucharest), where his research centres on 19th and early 20th century photography in Central and Southeast Europe.

23 November, 19.00

Antiquities and Rarities in mid-19th Century Wallachia: Dimitrie Papazoglu's Collection for "The Feeling of Love of the Progress of my Nation"

Roxana Coman (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Orient-Institut Istanbul)

In 1860, Dimitrie Papazoglu (1811–1892) opened a museum in his private residence on Calea Văcărești, no 151, Bucharest. During four decades, he had gathered a collection of "antiquities and rarities", as he called it, that now formed the core of this private museum. Lieutenant Major Dimitrie Papazoglu had a significant military career; his family roots were either attributed to the Phanariot merchant family Papazoglu or to that of old Wallachian boyar Slătineanu. He received his formal education in the Habsburg imperial school in Brașov. After retiring from the army in 1857, he began dabbling in archaeology and history writing, and published a significant number of books, lithographs, and maps, often with a didactic purpose.

When Papazoglu describes the object-categories of his curatorial discourse¹ he leaves the reader of one of his best-selling publications with the feeling of dealing with some form of Cabinets de curiosités or Wunderkammer. However, there is an evident didactic tendency in both his diverse publications, and his selection of artefacts. His insistence on and the various distinctions he makes between categories of "Turkish", "Oriental", and "Egyptian" provoke questions on their meaning in the context of the collection, the entangled histories of mid-19th century Ottoman Empire, and on the process of constructing a Romanian national heritage inven-

1 "Coins, Romanian instruments, statues, old Romanian and Turkish weapons, gold jewelry, Roman and Dacian bricks, Egyptian antiques, Oriental rarities, petrified animals, religious antiques, Roman sarcophagi, tombstones (including Muslim), manuscripts, books, etc."



Josefine Bielz, Dimitrie Papazoglu, lithograph, edited by D. Papazoglu, Editura D. Pappasoglu, image source: *Istoria fondării oraşului Bucureşti; Istoria începutului oraşului Bucureşti; Călăuza sau conducătorul Bucureştiului, Bucureşti: Fundația Culturală "Gheorghe Marin Speteanu", 2000*

tory. Dimitrie Papazoglu's collection is not only a self-narrative of himself and his nationalist discourse, but also integrated in Romania's self-representation, since Alexandru Odobescu exhibited a part of his collection in Romania's national pavilion at the Exposition universelle d'art et d'industrie, in 1867. This talk will focus on Dimitrie Papazoglu's collecting practices and attempt to answer questions such as: what are the meanings he assigned to the artefacts he collected? How did he define the concept of antiquities? What were the contents of his collection? What are the current available sources for (re-)tracing the collection?

Roxana Coman is currently a Post-Doctoral fellow at the Orient-Institut Istanbul and member of the COST Action *Europe through Textiles: Network for an integrated and interdisciplinary Humanities*. Her research interests include Ottoman material culture and

private 19th and early 20th century collections in Romania. After graduating from a B.A. and M.A. in Art History at the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, she explored in her Ph.D. the various narratives and representations on what was constructed as Oriental vs Romanian during the second half of the 19th century. Volunteering during her B.A. and M.A. studies in the National Museum of Art of Romania, she worked between 2016 – 2022 as a curator in the Bucharest Municipality Museum.

After obtaining her Ph.D. in 2016, Roxana continued to research the dynamic between the presence of Ottoman material culture in Wallachia and Moldavia, and the strategies employed by the national state of Romania in dealing with its Ottoman legacy. Therefore, she attended several summer schools such as "Shadows of the Empires. Imperial Legacies and Mythologies in Central Eastern Europe," 2021 in Sofia, Bulgaria, and "The City as Archive. Histories of Collecting and Archiving in and the Musealisation of Florence, Eighteenth Century to the Present," 2018.



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