

# Kalabalik!

*Bulletin of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul*



## On the comings and goings of a research institute

*Ingela Nilsson, director*

It has already been a year in the City! People have been coming and going, events have taken place – it's already difficult to keep track of everything that has happened. What I can say for sure is that the SRII is one of the richest environments I have ever worked in and that its value lies in the variety of topics that are being studied and discussed. The autumn lectures on "Continuity and Change" incorporated that rich variety as speakers looked at Tarlabaşı and Kavala, but also at Ottoman and Arabic manuscripts, Byzantine monuments and Romani dance and music – and that still doesn't cover all angles of cultural transfer that were displayed and discussed.

New habits have become routines. A little more than a year ago we received the first two of our writers in residence: Agneta Arnesson Westerdahl and Johan Jönsson. By now we have already hosted four more authors: Pontus Kyander and Marie Silkeberg at the beginning of the autumn, Jesper Huor and Namdar Nasser now in January. Their presence has further enriched the institute and we would like to thank all of them for so generously sharing their experiences, ideas and work with us and our guests. In the current issue of *Kalabalik!* you will find two beautiful poems on Istanbul which Pontus and Namdar have agreed to share with our readers.

### From this issue of *Kalabalik!*:

Ottoman and post-Ottoman Belgrade  
(Ulzhan Rojik)

Dubbel Medusa (Pontus Kyander) · Jag  
lyssnar till Istanbul (Namdar Nasser)

Interviews (Peter Ericsson, Mike Bode)

*Kalabalik!* is published twice annually by the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. Editor and graphic designer is Olof Heilo.

New collaborations have developed while old ones have been maintained. In October, Gülhan Balsoy (Bilgi University) and İpek Hüner Cora (Boğaziçi University) organized a pioneering workshop for us, entitled "Blood on her Hands: Historical Perspectives on Women and Criminality", bringing together

senior and junior scholars from humanities and social sciences. In December the workshop “Spoliation as Translation: Medieval Worlds in the Eastern Mediterranean” took place as a collaboration between the Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations in Istanbul (ANAMED) and the SRII. The more long-term collaboration between SRII, the National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens) and the Orient-Institut Istanbul resulted in the December seminar “The Traveler’s Voice: Approaches and Reflections on Travel Literature”, which will be followed by a series of lectures at Cezayir this spring on the theme “Crossroads of East and West: European Travellers to Istanbul & Anatolia in the Long 19th Century”, the program of which can also be found in this issue of *Kalabalık!*

New neighbours and colleagues at the Consulate General arrived in September. Two of them – Consul General Peter Eriksson and Cultural Counselor Mike Bode – are interviewed below. We’re really pleased to see how new ways of interacting are developing, not the least on the cultural side, and we can reveal that plans are underway for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Swedish Palace in November this year.

This week, our own Olof Heilo held the first lecture in the spring series “Classicisms and Orientalisms”, offering an introduction to the visual and aural ‘creepiness’ that seems to characterize several artistic representations of classical or oriental themes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This will be followed by several different perspectives on the theme; a full program is found on the last page below.

On a more personal level, I have spent my first year exploring the amazing food markets of Istanbul. This is not just a rich research environment, but also a food lover’s paradise. I’m even making plans for a culinary workshops of some sort. We’ll see where that takes us.



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## Summer/Autumn Scholarships 2019

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**Ellen Söderblom Saarela** defended her doctoral thesis *Her Story in Partonopeu de Blois: Rereading Byzantine Relations* at Linköping University in December 2019. Her research is focused on medieval love literature and literary connections between the Greek and Byzantine tradition and Old French courtly romances, focusing mainly on the Old French *Partonopeu de Blois* and the Byzantine *Hysmine and Hysminias* by Eumathios Makrembolites.

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Thanks to the generosity of the SRII I had the opportunity to work on my thesis in Istanbul during the period from June 1 to July 14, 2019. I was in the process of finishing the manuscript and was very much in need of a space where I could find concentration easily, as well as the possibility to discuss with other scholars in the field, not least the director of the institute Ingela Nilsson, who was my co-supervisor during my doctoral studies and whose expertise is very helpful for my work. Thanks to the institute, I had all resources necessary in order to complete my text in time for my defense. The access to the library and the help offered by the institute's staff made it very easy for me to work as much as I needed, with all thinkable resources to my availability. During the first days of my stay, the SRII held a workshop on the medieval novel and romance, which was great for me as I got to know scholars from my field, discuss with them and get new perspectives on my own work. I also appreciated the opportunity to talk to Panagiotis Agapitos, who visited the institute for a lecture and who is a renowned expert in the field of medieval (especially Byzantine) romances and novels.

I could not have had a more well-suited research stay than the one I had this summer. Not only was my stay important for me to finish my thesis, but the atmosphere of the city itself and the many impressions that it left me with were all stimulating – many long walks through the city inspired my thought process continuously in the breaks from writing. For me, in general, doing research at these sorts of institutes has been a very important factor through the years. Ever since I first visited Istanbul through a doctoral course held at the SRII in 2016, I have come back several times. One could say that the SRII is a huge part of my scholarly work in general; the place has offered me support and encouragement, as well as everything one could need as a visitor in the city of Istanbul. Through the scholarship, the institute helped me to finish my thesis and has thus played an essential role in my process towards receiving my PhD.



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## Summer/Autumn Scholarships 2019

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**Mahmut Ağbaht** is a PhD student in Semitic Languages at Uppsala University, working on the Arabic dialects spoken in Akkar in northern Lebanon. He is also partly working on the Arabic dialects spoken in Hatay (Antioch), Turkey. His academic interests include Semitic linguistics, Arabic dialectology, oral literature, and bilingualism.

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Academic works on the Arabic dialects of Hatay are limited. The main descriptive work on the dialects is *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens* (1998) by Werner Arnold. This book, in addition to some recent works, provides a general overview on the phonology and morphology of the dialects. Concerning the oral literature of these dialects, however, no thorough academic work has yet been done. Moreover, the Arabic as well as its oral literature in Hatay is in decline due to language shift from Arabic to Turkish therefore collecting data for the fields of linguistics and oral literature is a time-sensitive matter.

In June 2019, thanks to the research grant from Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, I spent three weeks in Istanbul. It was a great opportunity to attend research activities at the Institute, to get feedback from researchers in different fields, and especially to work with Dr. habil. Martin Greve, ethnomusicologist at the Orient Institut in Istanbul, on the performative aspects in the *fanns*, a genre of oral poetry which is composed by people known as *fnnāns* (roughly corresponding to English ‘poet’) in the Arabic dialects spoken by Alawis in Hatay.

I did not know much about the *fann* tradition in Hatay (Antioch) until 2012 when I contributed to a documentary film entitled *Finnên* as a translator and linguistic advisor. In 2017 I started working on the raw recordings of the documentary and wrote a chapter, which gives an overview of the form and content, as well as the social and cultural context of the *fanns*. It appeared in *Diversity and Contact among Singer-Poet Traditions in Eastern Anatolia* (2018) edited by Martin Greve, Wendelmoet Hamelink and Ulaş Özdemir.

The *fann* tradition has been in decline over the last few decades and is scarcely a living tradition today. A few *finnāns* remain. Three *finnāns* (Hasan Kültekin/Hasan Silmān (1926–2016) from Küçük Karaçay/Nahr iz-Zğayyir village, Naif Koç/Nāyif il-Qūçī (1927–2018) from Aknehir/Bsētīn il-‘āsi, Muhiddin Doğan/Mihyiddīn il-Qādi (1930–2011) from Dikmece/Dakimja village), who have been interviewed in the documentary, have recently passed away.

Although the raw recordings we have are the best source available, it is important to mention that they were not collected for an academic purpose. Consequently, additional documentation is urgent. I hope we can document as much as possible before the tradition completely dies out.

We were glad to present some preliminary findings in a joint seminar between Semitic languages section and Musicology department at Uppsala University in December 2019. We aim to publish an article focusing on the mentioned aspects.

# Ottoman and post-Ottoman Belgrade

*Ulzhan Rojik, Comenius University of Bratislava*

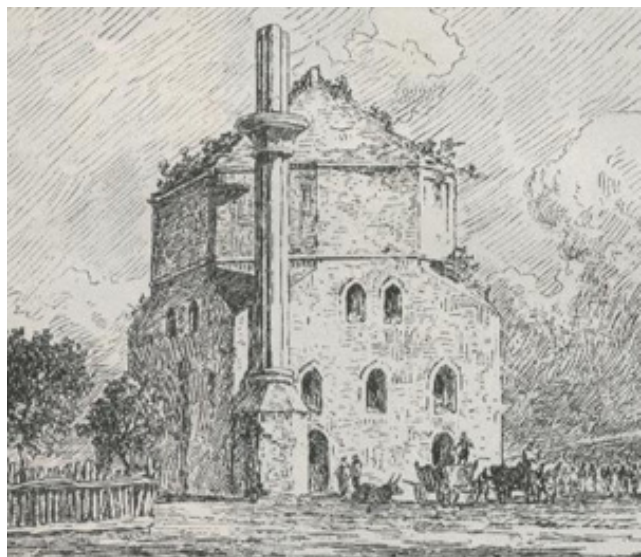
When empires collapse their territories often establish identities neglecting the patterns of past. Belgrade, which historically was an important trading and administrative center of the Ottoman Empire, is one notable example. Conquered in 1521 by the Ottomans under sultan Süleyman I, the city remained under Ottoman rule for centuries and became part of a new administration and system of communication and security, whose main role was to ensure authority over the local population and protect the trade routes.

Gradually, the cityscape of Belgrade began to change, as Muslims provided various *vakıfs* (endowments) to its urban structure. The famous traveller Evliya Çelebi called Belgrade the “Cairo of Rumelia” and was surprised by the wealth of its citizens. People of various confessions and communities lived in Belgrade at the time, as further attested by the travel accounts of Hans Kunitz, Daniel von Köln and Edward Browne. According to one imperial taxation protocol from 1536, out of 247 registered households 79 were Muslim, 139 Christian and 28 Romani. In less than thirty years there were 1127 households: 695 Muslim, 220 Christian 192 Romani and 20 Jewish, living in about 16 *mahalle* (districts).<sup>1</sup> The growing Muslim population was mirrored in the number of mosques: in 1560 there were 16 mosques registered in Belgrade, in 1572 there were 24, and at the end of the century there were 29. Less than a century later Evliya Çelebi claims that there were 33 mosques and 19 mescids, in total about 270 houses of worship.<sup>2</sup>

The only mosque remaining until today is the Bajrakli džamija on Gospodar Jevrem Street, built by Sultan Süleyman II around 1690 and originally called Čohadži-mosque after the endower Hajji-Ali, a cloth merchant.<sup>3</sup> It is a single-spaced building with a dome and a minaret, and served as a Catholic church during the Austrian rule (1717–1739). After the Ottoman recapture of the city, Yahya (chehya) Hussein

Bey renewed the building and it became the main city mosque after its renewal in the nineteenth century. The name is taken from the word *bajrak* for flag or banner, since a flag was raised as a signal for the other mosques that it was time to begin prayers. As such, Bajrakli-džamija alone has withstood the political changes of the city.

Since the late sixteenth century, a large mosque – the Batal-džamija – stood on today’s Nikola Pašić Square. Later abandoned and used as a bazaar and



*Batal-džamija, drawing by the Austrian traveler Felix Philipp Kanitz c. 1860. Wikimedia Commons*

<sup>1</sup> Ema Milković-Bojanić, “An account of travels and historical sources: Belgrade in 16th Century”, in D. Kostić and L. Radenković, *Belgrade in the Works of European Travel Writers*, Serbian Academy of science 2003, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Aleksandar Fotić, “Belgrade: a Muslim and Non-Muslim cultural centre (Sixteenth-Seventeenth centuries)”, in A. Anastasopoulos, *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, Crete University Press 2005, 61–62.

<sup>3</sup> David A. Norris, *Belgrade: a Cultural and Literary History*, Oxford University Press 2009, 15.

cattle market, it was demolished in 1869. It was single-domed mosque built on a square plan with an octagonal drum and with one minaret. A mosque that enchanted by many travellers was the Yahyali Gazi Mehmed Pasha mosque. Evliya Çelebi claims that it was built from war booty, and he called it “the pride of the *şehir* (city) of Belgrade”. Abdurrahim Efendi, mufti of Belgrade at the time and a great Ottoman scholar, was buried under the *mihrab* of the mosque.<sup>4</sup> Yet another mosque was the one of Turgut Pasha, which was turned into a church during the First Serbian Uprising (1804–13).

*Türbes* (mausoleums) are other notable elements of Ottoman cityscapes. There were at least ten of them in Ottoman Belgrade but only two remain: the türbe of David Ali Pasha (eighteenth century) and the türbe of Selim and Hasan Pasha Çeşmeli (nineteenth century). Ivo Andrić was inspired by this türbe to write his short novel *The Excursion*.<sup>5</sup>

Already after the Habsburg conquest in 1717, the cityscape began to change: mosques were converted into churches, buildings were heightened, the fortress was rebuilt, and the city acquired baroque features. After the Serbian uprisings and war of independence in the early nineteenth century, Belgrade became the capital of Serbia and was repopulated by Serbs from the Habsburg Empire, who gave a new cultural and political structure to the nascent state. The Governing Council, High School, Theological School and other administrative building were erected. In 1834, there were 6000 Muslims living in Belgrade, but in 1837 out of 20 000 citizen only 3000 were Muslims.

The Serbian writer Milan Milićević, who lived in nineteenth century, recalled that “several decades ago, the chief city of Serbia was part Turkish, part Greek, part cosmopolitan, but least of all Serbian. Turkish and bad Serbian was spoken on the street, largely Greek in the stores, and in church and school more Greek than Serbian. The houses, stores, shops, dress, mode of life and all the customs were oriental”.<sup>6</sup>

One significant reminder of the Ottoman past remains. Kalemegdan – from the Turkish words *kale* (castle) and *meğdan* (battlefield) – is the main fortress of the city, situated where the Sava encounters the Danube, on a rock previously occupied by Celts, Romans, Byzantines, Bulgarians, and Hungarians. The fortress was used as a garrison for troops in Ottoman times and the seat of the political apparatus of the local pasha. Today we can have a walk to that rocky slope and look out at the view from what in Ottoman times used to be called “fecir bajir” or hill for contemplation.

The King’s Gate (Kralj kapija) leads past the Roman well (Rimski bunar) to the Upper city (Gornji grad). This was the nerve centre for the military and government life of Belgrade and the surrounding region, featuring a mosque and a quarter for the Janissaries. Defterdarova kapija, a small gate into the white walls of the Upper Town has been built in honor of Mehmet Sokullu Pasha in 1577 and is marked by a water fountain. From a small gate a path leads to the Lower Town (Donji grad), which used to be an integral part of the city’s defenses. At the bottom of the slope are the remnants of what used to be one of the seven *hamams* (Turkish baths) in the city, the only one remaining from the Ottoman times and built at the

<sup>4</sup> Aleksandar Fotić, “Yahyapasa-oglu Mehmed Pasha’s Evkaf in Belgrade”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54:4 (2001), 442.

<sup>5</sup> David A. Norris, *Belgrade: a Cultural and Literary History*, Oxford University Press 2009, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Dušan T. Bataković, “Belgrade in the 19th century: A Historical Survey” *Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies*, 16:2 (2002), 335–339.



beginning of the nineteenth century. The Nebojša Tower (Kula Nebojsa) from 1460 was converted into a prison by Turks in the eighteenth century and had a dark reputation as a place from which inmates rarely returned. The far end of the Kalemegdan walls is marked by two gates, Despotova kapija and Zindan kapija as well as the Dizdareva kula, all from the fifteenth century. The path between them leads to what used to be a gunpowder storage place.

The Istanbul Gate (Stambol-kapija) is the massive main gate to the city. The road from here took the traveler inside the city and led to the Inner Istanbul Gate and the Upper Town of the Fortress, or took traveler down through Serbia and to the sultan's court in Istanbul. It was an integral part of the defensive system, well guarded to control traffic coming and leaving Belgrade. The Istanbul Gate was not only a door into Belgrade but a gateway to the Balkans. In eyes of the Serbs, Istanbul Gate was an iconic representation of Turkish oppression and became their main goal when they launched their attack on the city in 1806.

I would like to conclude by quoting the Yugoslavian author Lena A. Yovičić, who lived at the beginning of the twentieth century:

“a city undoubtedly reflects the mentality of the nation which conceives, and plans, and builds it. Viewed in this light, mere bricks and mortar assume a psychological interest, and are seen as the tangible embodiment of ideas, to judge according to their practical utility and esthetic value. Thus, the design of a school building, a church, or a house tells its tale more plainly than any words could do. Despite riches or poverty, the spirit and aspirations of a people are welded into every construction – be it high or low – which meets the eye. This is particularly the case in Belgrade, where the history of the country for several decades back can be traced in the various stages of architecture prevalent in town.”<sup>7</sup>

*Belgrade, view over the Kalemegdan c. 1929. Museum of Science and Technology, Belgrade, Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0).*



<sup>7</sup> Lena Yovitchitch, *Pages from Here and There in Serbia*, S. B. Cvijanovich 1926, 70, translated by David A. Norris in *Belgrade: a cultural and literary history*, Oxford University Press 2009, xv.

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## Summer/Autumn Scholarships 2019

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**Iva Lučić** is a historian of modern South-Eastern Europe. She holds a PhD from Uppsala University. Her current research focuses on forest use regulations in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the complex inter-imperial transition from Ottoman to Austrian-Hungarian imperial rule between 1878 and 1918. On the example of forest management, she examines the formation of imperial authority and law as well as subject-ruler relations during the complex post-Ottoman transition.

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During my stay at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul in June 2019 I did archival research in the Ottoman State Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*) which entail relevant sources on forest use practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Ottoman rule. By looking at different Ottoman archival fonts, I was able to trace several documents from the Tanzimat period, when the Ottoman imperial state tried to implement reforms of forest use regulations in order to restrict the commons' access to state forests (*arazi-i miriye*). The documents entail relevant information about the conflicts in regard to the usage rights of forests which emerged between the Ottoman imperial administration and the local Bosnian population. Apart from the intensive work in the archives, I was able to establish relevant contacts with Turkish colleagues working on Ottoman (environmental) history. During my one-month stay I was able to learn more about current research on Ottoman history which my colleagues conduct at different universities in Istanbul, including new methodological approaches, like digital humanities as well as GIS methods (Geographical Information System) and the ways they are applied on Ottoman sources.

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## Summer/Autumn Scholarships 2019

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**Ahmed Nuri** is a PhD Candidate in Literature at the University of Amsterdam. He holds a master's degree in European Studies from Lund University. His research is focusing on the structural and representational aspects of Turkish literary modernity, particularly the novels published between the 1950s and 1980s in which they are narratologically analyzed in the framework of literary modernism.

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In my doctoral project, I investigate the relationship between the notion of modernity and literature in the context of Turkish modernization through selected literary works of three prominent Turkish authors, Ahmet H. Tanpınar, Adalet Agaoğlu, and Orhan Pamuk. The aim of my research is to discuss and undertake an analysis of Turkish modernity with a focus on spatial and temporal dimensions, using Westernization/Occidentalism, nation-building processes, and secularization as essential categories. My research involves various aspects and structural elements of the socio-cultural, intellectual, and literary history of the modernization of Turkey, considering different representations, discourses, and reflections in and through the novels.

During my stay in Istanbul, I had the most productive period of my doctoral research process so far. Prior to my arrival, I had already nearly finished the first chapter of my doctoral thesis. Several resources from the library of the institute helped me to revise and sharpen some of its references, and the peaceful working environment inspired me to write a full draft of yet another chapter, and to revise some of my theoretical arguments and literary analyses in the last chapter.

The possibility to spend a month at the heart of Istanbul with its innumerable cultural and literary activities provided me to explore some other subjects on which I am academically interested in working: I scrutinized some studies and publications regarding the images of Turkey and Ottoman Empire which are mostly based on travel literature, which helped me to sharpen my preliminary ideas and to improve a parallel research project I am working on, focusing on the images of Turks and Turkey in Scandinavian Culture and the images of Scandinavia in Turkish literature. Apart from these academically inspiring and productive processes, the institute with its academic activities and network offered me a terrific opportunity to meet several scholars with a common interest in literature and Turkey. I hope to get yet another opportunity to stay and conduct my research in the near future.



## A few questions ...

### ... for the new consul general of Sweden in Istanbul, Peter Ericson:

**You arrived here in late August. Has it taken longer than usual to get settled? The palace was in a state of repair for the first few weeks ...**

Well, it took two months for our private furniture to get cleared through the customs, so our living quarters were quite empty, and the first month we also couldn't use the official reception areas of the residence because of renovations, that's true. But I don't complain. The Swedish Palace is a magnificent home, with its history (we celebrate the 150-year anniversary of the Palace this year), its location right in the middle of the magic and iconic city of Istanbul, its views of the Bosphorus, Topkapi, Hagia Sophia ... It is truly a great privilege to live here. And even though it creates a mess, the floor restoration is necessary, and the results are beautiful. Hopefully now the floors will survive another century and a half!



**Your previous position was Moscow. The political and professional context aside, what did you find most notable about the change of environment?**

Yes, I was the Ambassador of Sweden in Moscow. Me and my wife, acclaimed author Stina Stoor, applied to go to Istanbul because we were intrigued by the city, and we wanted a complete change of environment from Moscow. I can say that our hopes have been amply fulfilled! Moscow definitely has its charms and there are many individuals that I miss from there, but Istanbul is so much warmer in every sense – people are friendly and approachable, the fact that the city straddles two continents combined with its history has created a cultural melting pot, or maybe I should rather say has weaved a fabric, that is very cosmopolitan and attractive. We thoroughly enjoy discovering Istanbul, and even after several months we have still mainly explored our own neighbourhood, with a few excursions to other parts of the city of course. Stina misses the snow of her home village in northern Sweden, though. But I don't think it would be the same if Istanbul received a meter of snow...

**From the side of the institute, we are keen to keep up our long history of work with the consulate. Are there some areas in which you see an unused potential for synergy?**

The Institute of course is an independent entity in terms of its operations, while at the same time being part of the Consulate General. I see the Institute's main task as deepening and disseminating knowledge about Istanbul, Turkey and the region in Sweden and the Nordic countries, whereas my main task as Consul General is to spread knowledge about Sweden promote Swedish values and interests in Turkey

(and of course the Consulate is also tasked with issuing visas and supporting Swedish citizens in need and so on). So, our missions are very much complimentary. Based on that, I believe that we can indeed find synergies, both on the level of concrete projects, but also participating and contributing to each other's events, working together to increase our audiences, sharing information. I know Mike, our new Cultural Counsellor, also has a number of ideas. I am absolutely convinced that our cooperation will continue to develop.

**Will the 150-year anniversary of the palace be commemorated in some way locally in Istanbul?**

The current Palace indeed turns 150 years in November. It replaced the original Palace that was bought together with the rest of the property by the Swedish Government already in 1757, but unfortunately burned to the ground in 1818. It took more than 50 years for the authorities to finally decide to replace it with the "new" Swedish Palace that we now celebrate.

To begin with, basically everything we do this year will be under the heading "150-year Anniversary of the Swedish Palace". We just recently opened a duo of video art, by one artist from Sweden and one from Turkey, in the entrance of the Consulate, and we will continue with different projects through the year. Hopefully we will do a major celebration as well, but the plans are as yet very vague. And one project that I would really like to do, and where we are cooperating with the Institute, is to create a new book about the Palace. Whether it will succeed is too early to tell, it would need a lot of work and also financing, but I sincerely hope it will.

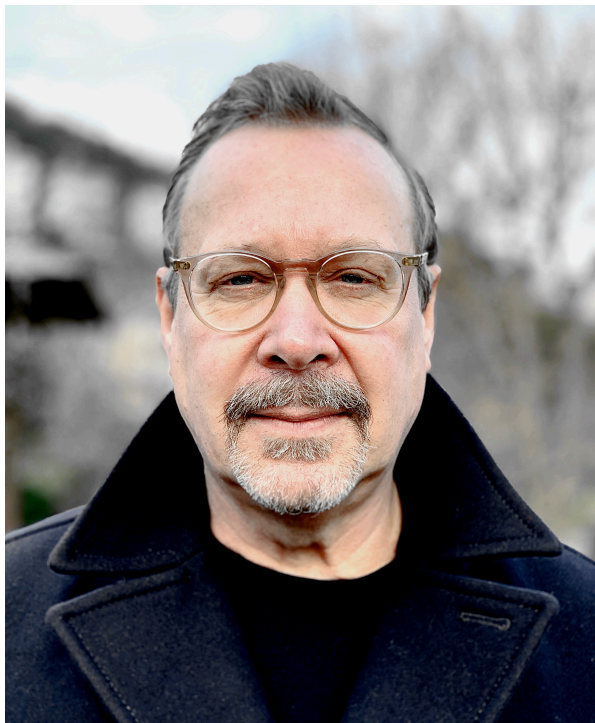
But of course the first activity in the context of "150 years" was when I personally removed the plastic screens from the fence along Istiklal Caddesi, which have obstructed the view of the Palace for several years. But now all the thousands of passers-by each day can enjoy the view of this 150-year old beauty in all her glory. I think she's worth it.





## And some more questions ...

### ... for the new cultural attaché of the consulate general, Mike Bode:



**I think you got a bit of a flying start here. How easy has it been getting into the local environment, scenes and networks?**

Fortunately I was not completely in the dark as I had been coming to Istanbul from time to time since my scholarship at the institute in 2013. This meant that I already had a few professional contacts and was reasonably familiar with the context, recent events and Istanbul as a city. However, there was still a lot to learn and take on, a lot of new people I needed to meet, networks to establish and there were also several ambitious ongoing collaborative projects and processes which I needed to familiarize myself with and get involved in. Also, having come from the cultural field, working as an official in the particular context of a Consulate General was itself quite a challenge, with a lot of new routines and responsibilities.

So, yes, you could say I hit the ground running. Fortunately the Turkish cultural scene has been very open and welcoming, so it has been relatively easy to meet and get to know some of the many interesting, inspiring and creative people in the field.

**What did you do at the time of your scholarship here, and is it something that your work here might reconnect to in some way or another?**

During my scholarship at the institute I was focusing on how one as an artist can approach or enter a new cultural context as an outsider. I initially began by looking into a wide range of subjects, I was interested in the city and its architecture, the layering of histories and ideas about memory, the mediation and expressions of politics as well as early republican initiatives such as the village institutes and Turkish classical music. I was also fascinated in the contents of the library and the archives kept at the institute. My research continued well after the scholarship was over and eventually culminated in an exhibition at the Depo art space in Istanbul. The exhibition was entitled "Two or three things I know about Turkey" and brought together two very disparate subject matters into one space, the 96 year old experimental composer İlhan Usmanbaş and the former Formula 1 race track in Akfırat. The merging of these two narratives together with the sound of the atonal and universalist music of Usmanbaş and the roar of the formula one racing cars implied a curious imaginary third space, one of courage, will power, neglect and unrest. I see artistic production as an experimental learning process and I think the research gave me a deeper understanding of Turkey and its cultural history than I would have gotten as a visiting tourist and is something which I think has been beneficial for me personally in relation to my new role.

**We are of course cooperating already, and I think we see potential for further synergies?**

I think the Institute is a very interesting and quite an exceptional establishment, it is both somewhere where one can conduct research but is also a place where different ideas, views and perspectives can meet and be exchanged. Especially through the public talks that you organize and the collaborative events that we do. I also find the interdisciplinary aspect very exciting too, not least through the residency you have initiated with the Swedish writers union and how the writers, journalists and authors have contributed to the discussions. I hope we can continue exploring this interdisciplinary exchange and for us it would be very interesting to bring in actors from other cultural fields such as the visual arts, film making or theatre. Of course one needs to find candidates who would feel comfortable both in an academic setting and at the same time be able to contribute to the knowledge exchange at the institute. This would be a marvelous platform for Swedish artists to explore different aspects and questions about Turkey and the region and to have a stimulating context in which to develop their work. We are also very much looking forward to collaborating on more public talks together, and we already have quite a few interesting people and bilateral dialogues in mind. Judging by the always appreciative and attentive audience, I think the public talks at the institute plays a humble but important role in Istanbul's cultural and intellectual field. It is an inclusive and neutral place to listen to and to discuss many different kinds of topics and ideas within different types of disciplines and specialist fields.

In short, I am very happy that we are able to collaborate and am looking forward to developing more ideas together. I am also very pleased that we were able to recruit Alev Karaduman as assistant to the cultural counsellor, she has both an academic and cultural background, and is very knowledgeable about the cultural field in Turkey and its challenges. She is also a writer herself, focusing on identity and has studied Applied Cultural Analysis in Sweden at the university in Lund. Moreover she was once an intern at the institute which is really great and something which I am sure will be conducive in developing our collaborations even further.

**Yet your work is not limited to our compound or even Istanbul. Do you have any short- or long-term plans for activities in Turkey at large at this moment?**

The cultural scene in Turkey is too easily and more often than not focused on Istanbul, for obvious reasons, not least due to the biennales and festivals and the strong philanthropic cultural institutions which operate here. However Turkey is a large and varied country with many different regions. I am very interested in rural initiatives and projects that have been springing up in recent years in the peripheries and in places outside of traditional cultural hubs. I think there is a huge potential not only artistically but also in relation to cultural sustainability. From what I understand there is also a lack of places where intercultural exchanges can occur and there are very few situations where different classes and minorities are able to meet in Turkey. Here I think culture can play an important role. We need to do some more field work, to find out more, but I think there might be some potentially interesting prospects for bringing together competencies from Sweden for mutual knowledge and experience exchanges in more rural areas.

We are also involved in a project called *Spaces of Culture* which was initiated by the Goethe-Institut, the Embassy of the Netherlands, the Institut français de Turquie and the Consulate General of Sweden in cooperation with Anadolu Kültür and Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV). The aim of the



project is to support and strengthen cultural projects in the cities of Izmir, Diyarbakir and Gaziantep in order to establish sustainable programs that value diversity, inclusivity, and cultural exchange.

We also have an ambitious ongoing collaborative project with the Swedish Institute called *Equal Spaces* which concerns design, sustainability and social inclusion and we will be working with the Design Biennial, some universities and initiatives and our partners on a series of events, exhibitions, talks and discussions in both Istanbul and Izmir.

**Within which field of artistic expression do you think Swedish and Turkish cultural workers might have the greatest benefit of sharing experiences right now?**

Istanbul has established itself internationally as an important contemporary cultural centre through its Art and Design Biennials and its well established literary field as well as its vibrant contemporary music, documentary filmmaking and theatre scenes. However the lack of public funding in Turkey makes it hard to maintain a diverse and healthy cultural ecosystem, and many of the smaller initiatives are more or less dependent on bilateral exchanges and international support in order to survive. We can see the potential for developing many different and mutually beneficial exchanges between Swedish and Turkish cultural workers from many different disciplines. There is for example much interest in Turkey for discussing societal issues and we recently supported bringing two documentary filmmakers to show and discuss their films, Fredrik Gertten and his documentary "PUSH" about how finance is fuelling the global housing crisis and Ingrid Rydbergs film "Army of lovers" about the emergence of the LGBT community in Sweden in the 1970's. We have also been looking into developing dialogues and exchanges around feminist graphic novelists, community driven archives and social realist Turkish and Swedish cinema.

## Dubbel Medusa

Två Medusahuvuden i Istanbul's  
antika vattencistern är svårt klämda  
under var sin korintisk kolonn.  
Med kinden i vattnet pressas den ena  
Medusan från tinning till tinning.

Överraskad av evighetsperspektivet  
i vattenspegeln krusar den ännu  
läpparna som en liggande Buddha.  
Alger klänger på kinder och mun  
Och i det ringlande håret.

Det andra balanserar på hjässan,  
Ur halsen reser sig pelaren, en stam  
med rötterna fästa i kraniets kupa.  
Blankt stirrar ögonvitorna över  
vattnets dubbla spegelskog.

Pontus Kyander (2020)

## Double Medusa

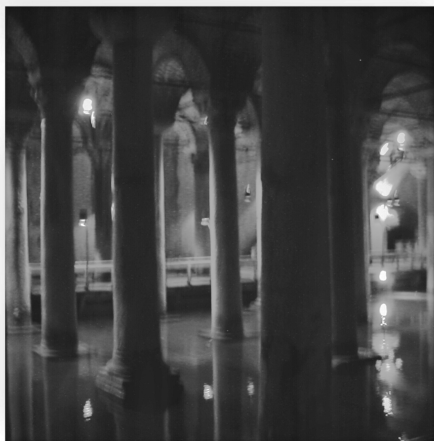
Two Gorgon heads in one of Istanbul's  
ancient water cisterns lie compressed  
each one under a Corinthian column.  
The first one, cheek in the water,  
is pressed from temple to temple.

Surprised by the endless perspective  
watery, mirrored, its lips curled  
like those of a Buddha, resting.  
Algae climbs its cheeks and mouth  
into the locks of its hair.

The other one balances on its crown;  
The column rises from its neck, a trunk  
rooted in the vault of the skull.  
The pale marble eyes gaze blankly into  
the water's doubly mirrored forest.

Pontus Kyander (2020)

transl. by Olof Heilo and Adrian Marsh



Polaroid photos by Adrian R Marsh,  
Polaroid SLR690 camera [c.1996],  
Polaroid Originals 600 film

*Jag lyssnar till Istanbul*

*med slutna ögon*

Här skaver två kontinenter

mot varandra

här skiljer Bosporens vågor

två världar

och förenar tre hav

*Nu blåser en lätt bris*

*sakta vajar löven i träden*

Här har många hjältar

med dragna svärd

karvat sitt namn

här har många kungar

byggt broar med soldaternas kroppar

Och här står jag

*jag lyssnar till Istanbul*

*med slutna ögon*

*İstanbul'u dinliyorum*

*gözlerim kapalı*

İki kıta çakışıyor burada

Karşı karşıya

Boğazın dalgaları

iki dünyayı ayırıyor birbirinden

Ve üç denizi birleştiriyor

*Şimdi usulca bir meltem esiyor*

*Hafifçe dalgalanıyor yapraklar ağaçta*

Ne kahramanlar

ellerinde kılıçlarıyla

yazdılar adlarını buraya

ve krallar askerlerin bedenleriyle

Köprüler kurdular

Burada duruyorum

*İstanbul'u dinliyorum*

*gözlerim kapalı*



Här har många berättelser  
vandrat från folk till folk  
här har längtan till förening  
ibland satt betraktaren ombord  
på färjan till andra sidan

Här har himlen inte blivit äldre  
men i ruinerna svävar ännu  
svunna tiders doft

Och här står jag

Duvorna kuttrar  
och måsarna skriar förbi  
jag är närmare mig själv  
men långt ifrån de mina

Här har kärleken blivit legend  
och legenden blivit myt  
här har kyrktorn och minareter  
kastat skugga  
här har många gudar  
speglat sig i vattnet

Burada bütün hikayeler  
halktan halka anlatıldı  
burada birleşme özlemi  
bazen feribottaydı  
karşı kıyıdaki izleyici

Burada gökyüzü yaşlanmadı  
fakat yitik zamanların  
kokularıyla uçuşuyor kalıntılar

Ve ben burada duruyorum

Güvercinler gugukluyor  
martılar çılglık çılgılığa uçuşuyor  
ben kendime yakın  
sevdiklerime uzağım

Burada aşk efsane oldu  
efsaneler mit  
burada kilise kuleleri ve minareler  
gölgelerini düşürdüler  
burada tanrılar  
suda kendilerine baktılar

Och här står jag  
stilla  
i stimmande sorl av  
gatusäljare, fiskare och  
skällande hundar

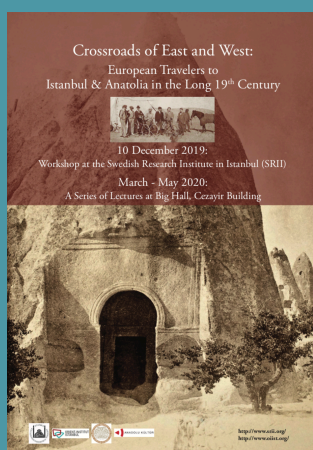
Jag står här  
utan pass pengar eller språk  
*och lyssnar till Istanbul*  
*med slutna ögon\**

Namdar Nasser  
ur *Jag är din röst i världen* (2016)  
\* Kursiverat, efter Orhan Veli

Ve ben burada duruyorum  
sakince  
sokak satıcıları balıkçılar ve  
havlayan köpeklerin  
arasında

ben burada duruyorum  
pasaportsuz parasız ve dilsiz  
*ve İstanbul'u dinliyorum*  
*gözlerim kapalı\**

Namdar Nasser  
İsveççeden çeviren  
Özkan Mert (2019)  
\* Orhan Veli'den



## Crossroads of East and West: European Travellers to Istanbul and Anatolia in the Long 19th Century

Lecture series at CEZAYİR  
Galatasaray, Istanbul

### March 11, 19:00

Gábor Fodor: *Hungarian Memoirs from the Ottoman Empire, 1848-1918*

### April 1, 19:00

Jitka Malečková: *Traveling Outside the Colonial Framework. Czech Travellers to Istanbul, 1860s-1923*

### April 22, 19:00

Ulla-Karin Warberg: *Fredrik Robert Martin: A Journey to Konya*

### May 13, 19:00

Christina Angelidi: *Exploring Cappadocia: Observing, Describing and Studying the Land of Fairy Chimneys*

## In the Crossfire of Projections: Turkey, Europe and Modern Visions of Historical Continuity

A half-day seminar at the Tarih Vakfı  
Eminönü, Istanbul

### April 8, 15:00-19:00

With Meltem Ahiska,  
Çimen Günay-Erkol,  
Ahmet Ersoy, Soli Özel  
and Paul Levin

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## Spring lectures at the SRII

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Tuesdays at 19:00, on the theme of  
CLASSICISM(S) AND ORIENTALISM(S)

**February 4**

Olof Heilo (Istanbul)

*Prometheus Unbound: Classicism and Orientalism as European Projections of Continuity and Change*

**February 18**

Rachel Mairs (Reading)

*Classical pasts in Oriental landscapes: Archaeologists, Tourists and their Dragomans in late 19th century Egypt and Palestine*

**March 17**

Frederika Tevebring (London)

*Great Goddesses of the East: Matriarchal theories and historiographic models*

**April 7**

Ahmet Ersoy (Istanbul)

Mediations of Orientalism in the Late Ottoman World

**April 28**

Ipek Hüner-Cora (Istanbul)

*"A Perpetual Masquerade" behind the Closed Doors: Rethinking Orientalism and Early Modern Ottoman Fiction*

**May 19**

Ulf R Hansson (Rome)

*A Passion for Systems: Adolf Furtwängler (1853-1907), Classicism, Panionism and the Experience of Large-Scale Archaeology*

**June 9**

Author talk: Mathias Enard and Christos Chrysopoulos

 Admission only after registration to [event@srii.org.tr](mailto:event@srii.org.tr) ! 