



No. 2 / September 2017

Spring fellowship grant 2018

Applications are open for our larger grant, amounting to 45'000 Swedish kronas and three months of stay at the SRII as a research fellow in the spring semester of 2018. Application deadline: October 15, 2017.

Spring scholarship grant 2018

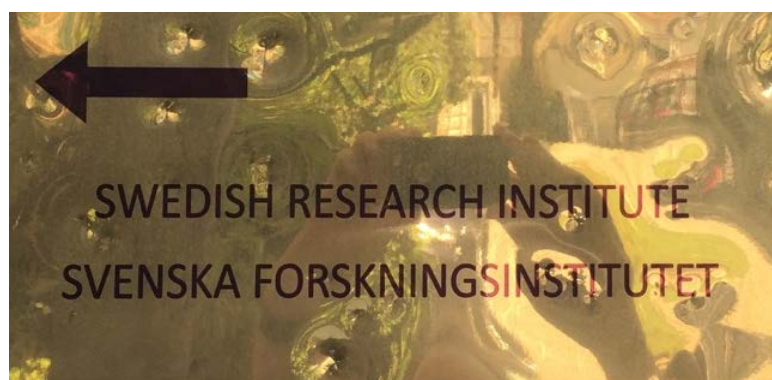
Applications are open for our smaller grants, consisting of 15'000 Swedish kronas and one month of stay at the SRII, to be used at a research visit to Turkey in the spring term of 2018. Application deadline: October 15, 2017.

Turkology grant

Applications are open for our Turkologist grants, amounting to 15'000 Swedish kronas and one month of stay at the SRII, to be used at a research visit in the spring term of 2018. Application deadline: October 15, 2017.

For more info about our grants, see www.srii.org/page/scholarships

Inblick och utblick



Höstsäsongen fick en rivstart med vårt välbesökta symposium i början av september om det Akemenidiska Anatolien. Det handlade alltså om perioden från 500- till 300-talet f Kr. Även om Akemenidernas maktcentrum fanns i dagens Iran var Anatolien en viktig del av det utsträckta imperiet, där intryck färdades i båda riktningarna. I symposiet medverkade ämnesområdets ledande internationella auktoriteter, samtidigt som en viss tyngdpunkt naturligen blev Labraunda, den säregna utgrävningsplatsen som i många decennier varit en central angelägenhet för SFII och för svenska forskare. Under det akemenidiska riket fick Labraunda sin dominerande gestaltning, med Mausollos som främste härskaren. Mausollos, mest känd för att genom sin monumentala gravbyggnad i dagens Bodrum ha fått ge namn åt själva byggnadstypen – mausoleet – var i åtminstone vissa avseenden en förlängd arm från härskarna i Persepolis. På konferensen ställdes den logiska frågan om inte Labraunda kunde kallas Anatoliens Persepolis. Men även om inspiration och parallellitet kan visas, uppfattades den regionala, kariska autonomin som överordnad, så att svaret ändå fick bli: Nej!

Akemeniderrikets kombination av centralstyrning och relativ autonomi för olika regioner, språk, religioner och identiteter kan uppfattas långt senare ha motsvarats i det osmanska riket. En workshop på institutet i somras, i samarbete med universiteten i Lund och Rotterdam, diskuterade hur den osmanska kulturen av pluralitet eller mångfald har förvaltats eller förfallit i de efterföljande samhällena. – Hur pluraliteten fortlever i dagens Turkiet var ett perspektiv i sommarens masterkurs för nordiska och turkiska studenter, med övergripande temat ”mänskliga rättigheter”. Den hölls som tidigare år i samverkan med vår kära granne, generalkonsulatet.

Centralstyrning och lokal identitet blev också ett slags tema för den dagsutflykt i Istanbul kontroversiella framväxande, alltmer storskaliga infrastruktur, som åtföljde styrelsens sedvanliga sommarmöte på plats. Vi rörde oss över stråket som snart väntas urholkas för den blivande kanalen, alltså Bosporens västliga parallell, och drog oss sedan upp i vägsystemet mot den kommande flygplatsen. Sedan korsades Bosporen via nyöppnade nordliga bron och sydliga tunneln, plus att vi spanade in en del anslående ny bebyggelse, givetvis i megaformat.

Den egna bebyggelsen, alltså institutets båda hus på konsulatsområdet, har också utvecklats under sommarmånaderna, framför allt genom diverse ommålningar, exteriört och interiört. Särskilt annexets yttre ommålning i mer harmoniserande gul nyans har påverkat helheten. Ommålningen fick dock utföras tre gånger. Andra gången handlade det om att ytterligare optimera nyansen, men strax därefter öppnade sig en helt osannolik störtskur av hagel i närmast kanonkuleformat, som skapade mycket förstörelse i omgivningen. Då härjades det helt nya målningsskiktet så att en tredje omgång måste utföras. – Ett exempel på de skador som hagelskuren förorsakade kan ses på den numera mycket buckliga mässingsskylten som visar vägen från konsulatets trädgård till institutet (se bild ovan).

Det tycks alltså finnas viss oro i luften i Istanbul och Turkiet, vilket också brukar noteras av våra svenska och andra kontakter, som ofta undrar hur verksamheten påverkas av tidsklimatet. Då kan vi svara att vi blickar framåt och bakåt med viss tillförsikt, bland annat inför höstens föreläsningsserie, som arrangeras i samverkan med tre andra lokala institut. Den handlar om ett historiskt omstörtande fenomen: Den ryska oktoberrevolutionen för precis ett sekel sedan. Det gäller framför allt hur revolutionen påverkade den turkiska verkligheten. Och då kan även visas hur en tillbakablick mot en dramatisk tid kan öppna nya framtidsperspektiv!

Istanbul den 12 september 2017
Johan Mårtelius, direktör



Tredje gången gillt: det ommålade annexet i färdigt skick.

10 October 2017**Stefo Benlisoy**

(İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi)

Images of the Bolshevik
Revolution in the "Well
Protected Domains".
Looking to the Revolution of
1917 from Ottoman Lands

18 October 2017**Takis Spetsiotis**

(Filmmaker, Writer)

Battleship Potemkin in
History and in the Movie

24 October 2017**Mehmet Ö. Alkan**

(İstanbul Üniversitesi)

Türkiye'de Kapital
Çevirilerinin Macerası

2 November 2017**Zaur Gasimov**

(Orient-Institut Istanbul)

Ideas, Persons, and
Transfers: Russian-Turkish
Interaction Between
1917 and 2017

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION & TURKEY 1917-2017



Screening of S.
Eisenstein's film
classic "Battleship
Potemkin"
(recently restored
1925 original)

October, 19th at 7pm.

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Konst och kontinuitet i Konstantinopel

Intervju med Cecilia Olovsson, Marcus och Amalia Wallenberg-fellow från Göteborg som bedriver forskning vid SRII 2016-18



Du är konsthistoriker med inriktning på senantiken – vilket intresse kom först?

Konsten. Jag tog en master i konstvetenskap innan jag började studera antikens kultur och samhällsliv, som sedan blev ämnet för min doktorsavhandling.

Du var alltså inte från början fokuserad på just den senantika konsten?

Inte alls – mina favoritperioder var, och är på många sätt fortfarande, 1700- och 1800-talen. Men jag är också intresserad av kontinuiteter inom konsten. Kontinuitet är ett övergripande

tema för den forskning kring senantik bildkonst som är min huvudinriktning sedan många år, och som sträcker sig in i 700-talet.

Mera specifikt handlar ditt nuvarande studieobjekt om den romerska segergudinnan Victoria. Hur kom hon in i bilden?

Det var under arbetet med avhandlingen, när jag sysselsatte mig med senantika konsulardiptyker. De knyter an till den romerska kommemorativa bildtraditionen och dess sätt att gestalta individen, och hans eller hennes status och handlingar i olika offentliga och sociala sammanhang. När man kommer in i 300-500-talen – alltså vad som betecknas som tidigbysantinsk tid – är Victoria-gestalten ett framträdande inslag i allt slags konst, också den kristna. Detta säger mycket om kejsarmaktens och segerbegreppets utveckling i denna tid, och visar på hur livaktig den romerska triumfaltraditionen fortsatte att vara.

Du har vistats en längre period som forskare på SRII förr. Vad jobbade du med den gången?

Den gången handlade det om hur man använde arkitekturmotiv i senromersk och bysantinsk bildkonst, särskilt inom kommemorativ konst. Annars är det framförallt i Rom som jag har varit en frekvent besökare, inte minst vid det svenska institutet där.

Vad var det som fick dig att vilja återvända till Istanbul?

Mest kanske den livaktiga akademiska miljön – dels hela det kollektiv av forskare i Istanbul som sysselsätter sig med antiken och Bysans, och dels blandningen av olika människor och discipliner på institutet. Här blir folk snabbt sociala och upptäcker ett intresse för varandras forskningsämnen, hur olika de än är.

Tycker du att det lever upp till dina förväntningar även denna gång?

Man kan inte komma ifrån att den inre och yttre miljön påverkats av de senaste årens händelser. Den ökade bevakningen gör till exempel att institutet känns mera isolerat och avskuret från sin geografiska och akademiska omgivning.

Hur går arbetet vidare under sådana omständigheter?

Vad som än händer kommer min forskning fortsätta att förena Västrom och Östrom, och samtidigt visa på kontinuiteten i senromersk och tidigmedeltida triumfaltradition.

Finns det några senantika Victorior att beundra i Istanbul?

Arkeologiska muséet har en hel del i sina samlingar, men tyvärr är inte allt utställt för tillfället. Bland annat ett flertal sarkofager, och panelen till en monumentalport från en av Blachernaipalatsets utgångar mot Gyllene hornet, i dagens Balat. Jämfört med Rom är antalet senantika monument i Istanbul begränsat, men kontinuiteten mellan öst och väst lever ju ändå i staden som helhet. Jag älskar verkligen Istanbul.

Intervju: Olof Heilo

Victoria-figur från dagens Balat.

Foto: Cecilia Olovsson





The 2017 Lecture in the
memory of Gunnar Jarring

Prof. Dr.

Mehmet Ölmez

Yıldız University, Istanbul

Old Turkic and Uighur Inscriptions in Mongolia, Investigated During an Expedition in August 2017

SRII, October 12, 2017, 19:00
İstiklal Caddesi 247, Tünel – Beyoğlu



The first researcher who mentioned the oldest known Turkic documents – generally referred to by such the names as the Orkhon inscriptions, Old Turkic inscriptions in a Runic alphabet, etc – was Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg from Sweden. Some photos of the Yenisei inscriptions were included in Strahlenberg's famous publication from 1730. Thereafter, 160 years later, Turkic inscriptions from Southern Siberia and Mongolia were published with photos by Scandinavian archaeologists on their return from expeditions to these regions. The most well known ones among these inscriptions are Kül Tëgin, Bilge Kagan and Tunyukuk. This was thus the beginning of Old Turkic Studies. Now, there are other important inscriptions that are much less known than the aforementioned ones, due to their location far from residential areas. In his presentation, Professor Ölmez will give an account of his expedition to Küli Čor (İkh-Khüşhöt) and Moyun Čor (Şine-Uşu) and his research on these and other Turkic inscriptions.

Mehmet Ölmez has been working mostly on Buddhist Uyghur texts and on Old Turkic texts from the 8th-13th centuries. His other research interests are Turkic languages in China and Southern Siberia (Fuyu Kyrgyz, Yugur, Salar, and Tuvan), lexicology, etymology and Turkic-Mongolian relations. He is a faculty member at Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul. Further info at:

www.ae-info.org/ae/Member/Olmez_Mehmet

Admission only after registration to helin.topal@sri.org.tr !

Spring Scholarships 2017



Dennis Johannesson is a student at the Master Program in Languages at Uppsala University, mainly focusing on Arabic but also touching upon Turkish - including Ottoman Turkish - and Persian. The main focus of his research lies on the Sufi tradition of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rūm and the Ottoman Empire, and especially Ṣaḍr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (1209-74), the main disciple of the Arab Sufi, poet and philosopher Ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240), and the tradition that emanates from him.

I spent my first ten years wandering the woods and swimming in the lakes of Sweden. I lived with my family outside a small town in the southern province of Småland. After that, first my family and later I myself moved to increasingly large cities, ending up in a three-year-long stay in Istanbul. The only thing binding the woods of Sweden and the streets of Istanbul together is maybe how suitable they both are for wandering and getting lost. But before my move to Turkey I studied literature and the Swedish language. During these studies I came to realise that I needed to learn at least one or two languages if I wanted to pursue anything serious when it came to research, and of course I also felt a strong personal urge to actually learn something 'real' and tangible.

I already had a strong interest in the philosophical, mystical and literary traditions of Islam, partly inspired by readings of the translations of Eric Hermelin, the paintings of Ivan Aguéli and others. So when I first went to Istanbul on vacation I got quite swept away by it. Would it be possible to actually live here? That was the question I returned with. It turned out that it actually was possible. In Turkey I began studying Turkish and tried to broaden my knowledge of the literature and tradition of Turkey. In Istanbul I also began studying Arabic, something I have continued to do back in Sweden.

My reason for spending one month in Istanbul in March and April 2017 lies with Ṣaḍr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, the main disciple of Ibn ‘Arabī, and the tradition that emanates from him. Istanbul has a very large collection of handwritten Arabic manuscripts in several different libraries, and especially when it comes to the period when he lived the resources in Istanbul are invaluable.

In Istanbul I perused the manuscripts of Qūnawī. Apart from trying to get a general ‘feel’ for the manuscripts, how widely they were circulated, and the existence of autographs or holographs etc., special attention was given a small treatise called *al-Risāla al-Muršidīya*. The treatise is considered important due to the fact that Qūnawī mentions it in his last will. Apart from this I also attended classes on the works of Ibn ‘Arabī given in Turkish by one of the leading experts in the world on Qūnawī and Ibn ‘Arabī, Ekrem Demirli of Istanbul Üniversitesi.

Inconsistent or insufficient

Theology, philosophy and the quest for totality in the works of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and al-Ġazālī

Dennis Johannesson, Uppsala University

The human race is not made up of a single community, nor does it follow a single intellectual or religious tradition. Instead we have different traditions and cultures intermingling, influencing and being influenced. Islam – defining itself as the final religion, followers of the Seal of the Prophets – has always been acutely aware of the dilemmas of this human predicament. Even though a certain historical consciousness is a marked sign of the developments of the so called Axial Age,¹ no religion has been more engaged in reflecting upon what came before it than Islam.

After the passing away of Muhammad a massive scientific movement, centered upon the sciences of the Arabic language, burst forth. The hitherto oral traditions of poetry, historical narrative and religious traditions of various kinds were collected and preserved and the abstract rules of language were codified. All these sciences orbited the *Qurʾān* and the prophetic traditions, the trajectories of some being closer and others elliptical and only seldom coming into contact with the two. It could be argued that these sciences were to a large extent native in origin, taking their form and way of expression from its object of study, the Arabic language. The same historical period also saw large movements of people because of war and migration, which meant that the Islamic religion came into contact with the dazzling legacy of the ancients.

The questions that ensued were as natural as they were inevitable: can we engage with the this legacy? Why are we not content with 'our' sciences? What should the relationship between the different traditions be? Can some sciences be studied and not other? Considering that the contacts between the different traditions – especially the Greek and the Arabic ones, if one may simplify matters to that extent – created a vast array of different responses which in turn developed into new schools of thought, the intellectual landscape quickly became overwhelming. This sense of loss of unity and harmony of Muslim intellectual life was recognised by the scholars when they tried to encompass the enormous amount of information available. It became increasingly difficult to master all relevant sciences and therefore one would have to specialise in one or two of them. Both these tendencies reminds us of the situation we are in today.

This predicament loomed large in the minds of some of the greatest thinkers, and they became increasingly aware that an 'Islamic' solution must be a synthesis of some kind, not a

¹ A term introduced by Karl Jaspers to clarify what he saw as major developments in, among other things, intellectual and religious traditions between around 8th to the 3rd century BC. See Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1949).

total rejection nor a total acceptance. But what basis could such a synthesis really have? Al-ʿImām al-Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) became one of the first thinkers to be intimately connected with this very question because he, as he describes it in his autobiography, *the Deliverance from Error*,² even came to doubt first-order propositions. This doubt (or maybe open-mindedness?) also led him, in the same book, to give us the contours of the intellectual landscape of his day, the various schools of thought, their *raison d'être* and their internal justifications for their beliefs. He is especially famous for engaging with the philosophical tradition, a tradition which he first described in *the Aims of the Philosophers*³ and later refuted parts of in his famous *the Incoherence of the Philosophers*.⁴

Ġazālī found his deliverance in following *al-ʿAsʿariya*, one of the main schools of Islamic theology, Islamic law according to the school of al-Šāfiʿī, and the Sufi path. His intellectual crisis did not really change his affiliations as such, but the framing and context of them changed. According to Ġazālī some parts of philosophy must be rejected and others not, but the determining factor was not only abstract theoretical considerations and rational arguments. Rather, what Ġazālī sought was a totality that tried to recover something of the simplicity of the era of faith⁵ before the compartmentalising and splitting into rivalling schools of thought; and the way to do this for him was not a rejection of the developed tradition, but rather a revitalising of it with a new sense of inner unity. This effort is most obvious in his magnum opus *the Revivification of the Sciences of Religion*,⁶ which begins with *the Book of Knowledge*,⁷ a book of epistemology and definition of correct belief.

The *Iḥyāʾ* continues with a description of the life of a muslim in all of his inner and outer states. For Ġazālī theology is just the starting ground, insufficient in itself, on the path to a experiential relationship with God. The subject experiencing this relationship is an acting, feeling, knowing and learning one, impossible to put into neat boxes. Theology is correct in its assumptions but given the limitations of such a view of God it is there to be transcended. But philosophy on the other hand is not correct in its core assumptions, rather it is, according to Ġazālī, inconsistent and even dangerous. What is of use in philosophy is of an instrumental character: mathematics, logic, rhetoric.

² For the best Arabic edition see al-ʿImām al-Ġazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl wa-l-muḥṣiḥ bi-l-ʿaḥwāl* (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhaġ, 2013).

³ al-ʿImām al-Ġazālī, *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā li-l-ṭibāʿa wa-l-naṣar wa-l-tawzīʿ, 2000).

⁴ Ġazālī and Michael E. Marmura, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers: A Parallel English-Arabic Text Translated, Introduced and Annotated*, Islamic Translation Series (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997).

⁵ The Era of the Pious Predecessors, the first three generations after the Prophet.

⁶ al-ʿImām al-Ġazālī, *ʿIḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhaġ, 2013).

⁷ *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*.

Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) was born around one hundred years after the death of Ġazālī, in Konya, at the time a flourishing and dynamic city, and capital of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rūm. The hundred years between them had not settled the conflicts and the felt disintegration and disharmony in muslim intellectual life. Ġazālī's ambitious and extremely influential attempt to solve it by way of a 're-reading' of the tradition within the context of a lived spiritual life proved to be a viable way forward, but, according to some, it did not really cut to the core of things, especially the relationship between theology and philosophy.

Between the two we find Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), the stepfather and spiritual master of Qūnawī, who continued in the vein of Ġazālī but moved in the direction of the concerns of the philosophers in that he took certain issues of metaphysics, especially ontology, as his basis for a close 're-reading' of the tradition.⁸ Ibn 'Arabī and Ġazālī both display a deep consonance with the *Qur'ān*, the prophetic tradition and the interpretative schools of thought that followed them. Therefore one hears the echo of all of them in their works, in a direct or indirect way, from the first line to the last. But what criterion⁹ did Ibn 'Arabī use to judge what had passed before him, if he did not base himself on a specific school of thought to the detriment of others? The Being of God and Its mirror in creation, the Perfect Man or *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, is the central axis around which this hermeneutical effort revolves. But the method is not at all a purely rational one, rather it depends on a spiritual transformation. The truths you might reach by different methods, be they rational in nature or by studying the sacred texts, must be 'verified' and 'realized' by first and foremost living them, and secondly by the true realization which God places in the heart of the one who lives as he learns so to speak. This is one of the reasons why the school of thought that takes Ibn 'Arabī as its basis have been called the School of Verification.¹⁰

Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī continued the work of his master but sought a more 'philosophical' way of expression. This point should not be overemphasised though, as it can easily lead to certain mis-understandings. Qūnawī was thoroughly acquainted with the religious texts and two of his most famous works deals directly with them; *Iğāz al-bayān*,¹¹ a commentary on the

⁸ The famous meeting between Ibn 'Arabī and Ibn Rušd is described by Ibn 'Arabī himself in the *Futūḥāt*. Ibn Rušd asked if what he learned through rational speculation was the same as that one can obtain through mystical intuition and a spiritual opening. Ibn 'Arabī answered: "Yes and no. Between the yes and the no the spirits take their flight beyond matter, and the necks detach themselves from their bodies.". See Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, ed. 'Uthmān Yahyá, vol. 2 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1392), 372-73.

⁹ In the sense of a criterion for judgement between right and wrong, true and false. In this sense the *Qur'ān* is called *al-Furqān*, 'the Criterion', taken from the 25th *sūra*.

¹⁰ See for example Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Iğāz al-bayān fī tafsīr 'umm al-Qur'ān*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 2008), 25-27.

¹¹ The best edition is Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Iğāz al-bayān fī tafsīr 'umm al-Qur'ān*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 2008).

opening *sūra* of the *Qurʾān*, and *Šerḥ al-ʿaḥādīṭ al-ʿarbaʿīna*¹² commenting on 29 prophetic traditions.¹³ But if we compare Qūnawī's search for a recovery of a unified vision and the totality of the first generations after the Prophet to Ġazālī's, we see that he displayed much familiarity and affinity with the tradition of philosophy, especially the tradition of Plato and his later day exponents. This is most obvious in his correspondence with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), the famous polymath and commentator on the works of Ibn Sīnā. Ġazālī had engaged the philosophical tradition, but Qūnawī actually engaged a philosopher, opening a correspondence that touched upon all the big issues of the day. The tone of the correspondence is rather cordial, and he goes to some lengths in emphasising his closeness to philosophy, which also gives us the impression that for Qūnawī the quest for totality must also integrate the philosophical tradition. In the correspondence Qūnawī talks about the views of the 'verifiers' and in what sense they agree with the philosophers and the theologians:

[they agree] with the philosophers concerning that which rational speculation is capable of grasping independently within its own domain, but nevertheless differing from them in view of their command of other cognitive faculties and insights outside the domain of reason and its limiting conditions. Concerning the theologians [*mutakallimūn*], in their varied appearances, the verifiers seldom agree with them, except on the most straightforward of questions.¹⁴

The hundred years that separate Ġazālī and Qūnawī had turned the tables on the relationship between speculative Sufism and theology. For Ġazālī the basis was still theology, but for Qūnawī a general independence vis-à-vis the other schools of thought is discernible, but also a much closer relationship to philosophy. A Turkish scholar, Ekrem Demirli, has summarised this major development by stating that for Ġazālī theology was insufficient but philosophy inconsistent. Qūnawī and Ibn ʿArabī on the other hand found theology inconsistent and philosophy insufficient.¹⁵ For all of them the rational speculation of theology and philosophy must be transcended by entering the spiritual path and getting access to the 'other cognitive faculties' that Qūnawī mentioned above. But the shift from a focus on theology to a focus on philosophy is important in that it marks a general trend of Islamic intellectual history in the direction of ontology and away from theology in a more narrow sense. From Qūnawī onwards

¹² Two good editions exists, see Muḥammad ibn Ishāq Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and H. Kâmil Yılmaz, *Sharḥ al-arbaʿīn ḥadīthan = Kırk Hadīs Şerhi ve Tercümesi* (Konya: MEBKAM, 2010); Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Abdullah Aydın, *Şerḥ al-ʿaḥādīṭ al-ʿarbaʿīna = Kırk Hadīs Şerhi* (Istanbul: M.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2015).

¹³ The title would indicate 40 traditions, but Qūnawī passed away before he could complete them all. The work was widely circulated with only the 29 traditions.

¹⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ishāq Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, and Gudrun Schubert, *Al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī* (Shtütgārt: Shtāyinar, 1995), 165–66.

¹⁵ See for example Ekrem Demirli, *İslam Düşüncesi Üzerine: Söyleşiler ve Konuşmalar* (Istanbul: Sufi Kitap, 2016), 111–13.

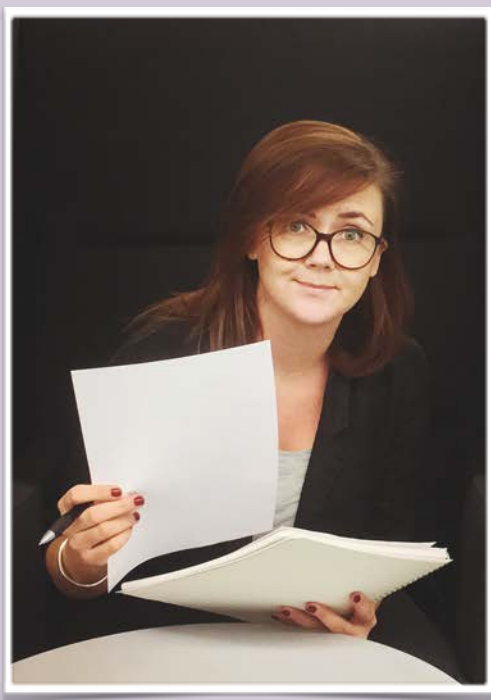
serious philosophical speculation was mostly done in the context of the spiritual path, and with the main objective reflection upon Being, Existence and the human state.

Qūnawī played a major role in bringing together several intellectual tendencies and systematising them into a coherent whole that later Sufis looked to as a signpost in the wilderness of philosophical speculation, but also as a way of accessing the massive and apparently sprawling output of his master, Ibn ‘Arabī. Qūnawī became the watershed between earlier and later Sufism in the sense that his influence was strategic rather than widespread. Thinkers interested in metaphysics, philosophical Sufism and the integration of spirituality and philosophy all had to take Qūnawī’s work into consideration. Obviously Ġazālī’s influence was much larger, and the practical nature of his synthesis speaks directly to the day to day needs of almost every believer. But both share a vision of integration of all Islamic sciences under the directing guidance of a life of faith. Qūnawī leans more heavily on the philosophical tradition and an ambition to develop a ‘pure’ science of metaphysics; Ġazālī, on the other hand, finds the theological tradition sufficient when viewed as a stepping stone to be transcended, insufficient as a means of salvation and closeness to God.

The tomb of al-Qūnawī, Konya, May 2017. Photo: Olof Heilo



Spring Scholarships 2017



Emma Stenvall is an undergraduate in Middle Eastern studies at Stockholm University. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Media and Communication studies and journalism at Umeå and Mid Sweden Universities. Her interest in the Middle East in general and Turkey in particular has grown during her years working as a journalist, and when she decided to continue with her studies her interest got caught by Alevis and their role in society, both in Turkey and the diaspora, with Sweden as focal point.

In the spring of 2017 I had the pleasure of spending five weeks at the SRII, working on my Bachelor thesis on the Alevis, the second biggest minority group in Turkey, and their use of *takiye*. The term *takiye* is used in Islamic jurisprudence and refers to a technique which allows a person to hide one's religious belonging in order to avert danger.

The Alevis are not a homogenous group and there is no cohesive definition of them. Some claim them to be descendants of heterodox nomadic Turkish and Kurdish groups living in Anatolia, and both scholars and Alevis themselves have for centuries been discussing whether to place their belief within or outside of Islam.

There is however one narrative that is shared by most perspectives and can be considered to be the master narrative of Alevism – the narrative of Alevis in opposition against and as victims of dominant powers. Alevi history is characterized by persecution, and to avoid oppression they traditionally settled in rural and inaccessible areas and practiced their rituals behind closed doors, which also contributed to them being surrounded by rumours and prejudices. With urbanization the Alevi lifestyle changed as many of them moved to the cities, and in order to keep avoiding misrecognition they developed the technique of living their life in hiding.

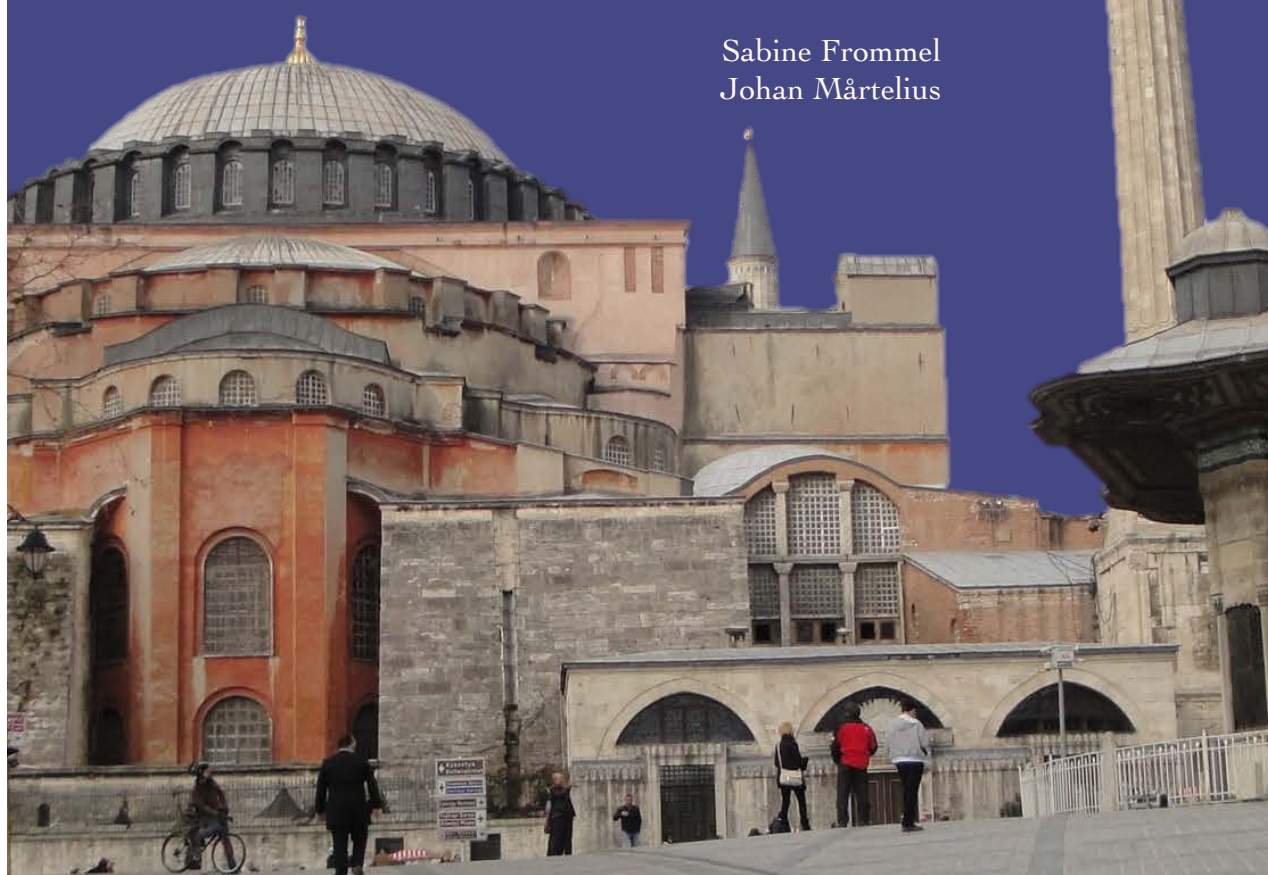
Alevis did not just leave the rural parts of Anatolia for the cities in Turkey; many of them also migrated to Europe. The number of Alevis living in Sweden today is impossible to know for sure, but an estimated number is around 12000.

Not much research has been made on the Alevis specifically living in Sweden, but thanks to the stay at the Research Institute in Istanbul I was able to have a closer look at studies conducted in other countries. In Germany for example, studies have shown that, although Alevis don't face discrimination from the state, they have brought the use of *takiye* with them from Turkey, and they use it both as a strategy and by default. In my thesis the aim is to have a closer look at the Alevis in Sweden. How are they talking about *takiye* – is the technique still relevant, and if so, in which context is it applied?

Synagogues, Churches and Mosques: Connections and Interactions SRII, 16-18 November 2017

The conference considers interactions, transformations and conversions of religious buildings as a result of diverse interventions and influences over a large span of time. A comparative analysis substantially adds to our understanding of the architectural essence connected to the three Abrahamic religions. With their shared roots in the eastern Mediterranean region, through many centuries interactions have taken place in many parts of Europe, in the Arab world, the Ottoman empire and beyond. The transformation of the architectural structures, the change of ornamentation, bearing new signification and symbolic values, will be considered in detail. The genesis of the projects for synagogues, churches and mosques will be investigated by the roles of architects, patrons and the religious communities, as well as of established conventions and innovative aspirations.

Sabine Frommel
Johan Mårtelius



Omtumlande möten

Intervju med Suzi Ersahin, kulturråd på det svenska generalkonsulatet i Istanbul sedan 2013

Vad har du för bakgrund?

Jag är utbildad bildkonstnär och studerade måleri på Konstfack, men har även arbetat med performance och många andra konstformer. Innan jag började arbeta här jobbade jag för Iaspis / Konstnärsnämndens ateljéverksamhet i Stockholm och lade upp program för internationella kuratorer och svenska och utländska konstnärer. Dessutom har jag arbetat som bildlärare – bland annat startade jag upp en distanskurs i illustration – och undervisat på Beckmans och Kansas City Art Institute.

Vad fick dig att söka tjänsten här?

Prospektet att få jobba med många konstarter och inte enbart bildkonst. Med min turkiska bakgrund verkade det möjligt. Under min vistelse här har fokus hamnat på mycket annat än just bildkonst.



Finns det någon särskild konstform som fångat din uppmärksamhet här?

Det finns starka grupper inom alla områden där folk experimenterar. Sedan är det givetvis en fråga om internationalisering. Turkisk bildkonst och litteratur är internationellt etablerad, och även musikscenen – vare sig det gäller pop, rock, jazz eller klassiskt – kan uppvisa många internationella utbyten. Teater är mer komplicerat då både språk och innehåll kan skapa ett glapp. Det gäller förstås på båda hållen: inte alla gånger är de ämnen som talas om i Sverige relevanta i Turkiet. Scenkonst är dessutom kostsamt på ett annat sätt.

I ditt uppdrag här gäller det att knyta kontakter mellan svenskt och turkiskt kulturliv. Hur förhåller sig båda sidor till det?

Det finns en stark nyfikenhet inför Sverige bland turkiska konstnärer, även om folk inte känner till så mycket om landet. Till exempel inom just teatern intresserar man sig här för hur teater görs i Sverige. Framförallt är det viktigt att möjliggöra direkta möten mellan konstnärer. Svenska konstnärer som kommit hit för att träffa sina turkiska kollegor har ofta använt ordet "omtumlande" när de beskrivit sin vistelse efteråt.

Omtumlande kan man också kalla åren som du har tillbringat här. Hur påverkar det den kulturella dynamiken inom landet?

Vi lever i en dynamisk tid, med fysisk rörlighet och snabba kommunikationer. Vissa saker har störts i sin planering på grund av politiska spänningar, men det behöver inte innebära att den kulturella livaktigheten minskar – Turkiets konstnärer lägger sig inte på soffan. Däremot märks det att kontakterna med EU har försämrats och att bidragen och kontakterna därifrån minskat jämfört med hur det var när jag började jobba här. För många turkiska konstnärer känns det särskilt värdefullt att ha en kontakt med Sverige under sådana omständigheter.

I kulturellt hänseende, vad tror du att Sverige kan ge eller lära Turkiet, och omvänt – vad kan Turkiet ge och lära Sverige?

Sverige är bra på organisatoriska strukturer, i Turkiet bygger kulturlivet i mycket högre grad på fria aktörer och privata sponsorer. Det förra kan ge institutionell säkerhet, det senare kan motverka att kulturlivet blir alltför toppstyrt.

Tycker du att det finns förutsättningar till samarbete med oss på forskningsinstitutet?

Absolut: det hade till exempel varit intressant att starta upp någon form av residensverksamhet. Det kan göras i enkel form – författare eller bildkonstnärer som kommer hit för längre eller kortare tid med finansiellt stöd av konstnärsnämnden eller författarförbundet, får boende, ett bord eller ateljé – t ex i det gamla kapellet – och att man lägger upp ett besöks- och presentationsprogram för dem.

Intervju: Olof Heilo



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