

NIT lecture

Wednesday May 23 (18:00, Auditorium)

Mr. Turkey goes to Turkey, or: how the 18th century Dutch diplomat Cornelis Calkoen lunched at the Ottoman court

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The aim of this lecture is to catch a glimpse of the wining and dining habits at the Ottoman court in Istanbul as seen through the eyes of an outsider, in this case, the eighteenth-century ambassador of the Dutch Republic at the Porte, Cornelis Calkoen (1696-1764 whose name means literally 'turkey'). Apart from describing his audience at the Sultan's court in a detailed report to his principals, Calkoen also commissioned the French painter Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737) to paint this important event. In addition to a description of Calkoen's audience, this lecture deals with the Ottoman rules of etiquette relating to eating and drinking, often derived from Islamic doctrine, and in a wider sense with the development of dining manners in the Aegean area from the late fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Special emphasis is put on the kitchen utensils and dining equipment used in the Imperial Kitchens of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, where Chinese porcelain, copperware and local tin-glazed pottery (such as Iznik Ware and Kütahya Ware) were stored.