

This workshop organized by the Orient Institut-Istanbul (OII), the French Institute for Anatolian Studies (IFEA), and the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT), aims to analyze artistic performances representing the past. The panels will focus especially on music and dance as cultural practices reinforcing the establishment of a historical reflexivity.

The panels intend to question how historical cultures are (re)constructed. How are contemporary artists and cultural entrepreneurs involved in reconstructing the past, and how do they portray collectivities, figures and dramatic events of the past? Looking at the practical procedures for (re)building musical repertoires from unrecorded sources, we will question whether such a reconstruction of the past is possible.

The discussion of culture may also shed light on political struggles drawing on cultural and historical contents. The presenters will explore how performances might be relevant for marginal groups or larger narratives to raise awareness and generate mobilization among a wider audience.

The boundary that splits history from mythology might be blurred through cultural productions, especially when enacting on stage the characters belonging to a distant past and whose real existence is still debated. Hence, it is not uncommon that cultural performances regarding the past are the subject of intense debates about the historical facticity and authenticity of the narratives they convey. The panels will try to understand which ideologies sustain authenticity of the figures and narratives expressed through cultural performances, and to enlighten the particular context of their activation.

Finally the question arises, what still remains today from the cultural revivals of the 1990s when identity politics prospered and there had been a passionate engagement with “hidden memories” of the past?

#### Concept

PD Dr. **Martin Greve** (OII)

Dr. **Ülker Sözen** (NIT)

PhD C. **Lydia Zeghmar** (IFEA)

# Staging The Past in Contemporary Turkey



**Friday May 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 – 14:00-19:00**

Venue: **IFEA Conference Room**  
Palais de France, Nur-i Ziya Sk. No: 10  
Tomtom Mahallesi  
Beyoğlu/İstanbul

**Reservation required on [ifea-istanbul.net](http://ifea-istanbul.net)**

14:00 **Bayram Balcı** (IFEA) Welcome Speech

16:00 **Coffee Break**

### 14:10 **Introduction**

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**Ülker Sözen** (NIT) Neo-Cultures in Turkey: Cultural Revivals, Nostalgia and Performing Traditions since the 1990s

This introductory talk will discuss the socio-political framework of identity revivals and their cultural/artistic manifestations in Turkey since the 1990s. On the basis of the insight that identity is performative, the cultural and artistic enactments are important means for identification and group-making. Yet they also transpire as contested fields disclosing the inherent instability of identity and the excesses that representations fail to fully cover.

### 14:30-16:00 **Panel 1** **Performing the Ottoman Past**

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**Mustafa Avcı** (Altınbaş University) The Music of the Ottoman-American Diaspora in the Early Twentieth Century

This talk is about the musical scene that was created during the first quarter of the twentieth century by the Ottoman Diaspora in New York. New York is a significant home for a variety of influential genres such as hip-hop, jazz, funk, punk etc. In this talk I will analyze New York City's experience as a periphery of the old world, as it were yet another Ottoman city like Thessaloniki, Piraeus, Bursa, and Harput.

**Judith Haug** (OII) Ottoman Music and Historically Informed Performance Practice

In the Ottoman context, oral tradition is alive and notational sources are rare and isolated. Performing from those sources, we are confronted with the problem that the actual interpretation of *makam* and *usul* is very difficult to reconstruct, although theoretical production is copious. After a brief overview over European traditions, methods and viewpoints, the contribution will deal with the question of a specifically Ottoman type of historically informed performance practice.

**Ayşe Akyürek** (IFEA) Mevlevi Sema in Contemporary Turkey: The Culturalization of a Sufi Ritual

With the prohibition of Sufi *tariqas* in 1925, the *Mevleviye* has become part of one of those that declined. Then it had the distinction of regaining some public legitimacy in the 1950s, thanks to the rediscovery of Mevlana and sema, the whirling dance, through the interest of some intellectuals and Westerners. This presentation will retrace the historical evolutions of the process of culturalization of the sema by highlighting the political, artistic and religious actors.

### 16:30-18:00 **Panel 2** **The Past in Contemporary Turkey**

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**Lydia Zeghmar** (IFEA) "The Efe Walks". Staging a Late Ottoman Figure in Contemporary Western Anatolia

Based on long-term ethnographic research in Little Meander valley (2014-2018) among *zeybek* connoisseurs, this contribution investigates the relations between the late Ottoman *efe* figure and the contemporary *zeybek* folk repertoire. By considering the *efe* figure through its current poetical forms, I aim at opening an original perspective toward some uses of late Ottoman history in the present and to shed light on the issues that run through the representation of the local history.

**Fahriye Dinçer** (YTÜ) Afro-Turks and Revitalization of the Calf Festival (Dana Bayramı)

The Calf Festival, which its members revived in 2007, is an annual gathering of the African Turks and anyone interested, celebrated in and around Izmir. In this talk, first, I will compare the earlier and revitalized Calf Festivals in terms of their main goals, and try to evaluate the achievements of the present ones. Second, based on my research that started in 2011, I will focus on the dances and music that have a significant place in the parades and picnics.

**Martin Greve** (OII) Music within the Neo-Dersim Revival

During the 1990s, and initially mainly propagated by migrants from Dersim in Europe, a new discourse emerged, closely connected with several already existing revival movements and identity discourses which now focused on the identity and the local culture of Dersim. Within this discourse, "traditional" Dersim, that is the region before the 1960s, or, even more, before the violent military operations of 1937/38, was nostalgic transfigured and idealised.

### 18:00 **Conclusion Speech**

Prof. **Arzu Öztürkmen** (Bosphorus University)

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