

INTRODUCTION

The Polish Institute of World Art Studies has been conducting research on the art of Islamic countries since 2006. One of the first tangible results of this activity was the conference entitled “Oriental fabrics in Poland - Taste or Tradition” organised in Kraków in 2008, with an accompanying publication under the same title and edited by Beata Biedrońska-Słota in 2011. The largest international conference of Islamic Art was held in 2009 at the Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków and attracted researchers from Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Syria and Uzbekistan, as well as the Russian Federation (including Chuvash, Mari, Tatarstan), Crimea, the European Union including Poland, and the USA; many of them had the chance to meet each other for the first time. The result of the conference was a large volume of studies edited by Beata Biedrońska-Słota, Magdalena Ginter-Frolow and Jerzy Malinowski, published in 2011.

In 2010, a Jubilee International Conference on the bicentennial anniversary of the first lecture on the history of art at Wilno (Vilnius) University took place in Torun (15.09.1810). The result of the conference was a publication entitled “The History of Art History in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe” edited by Jerzy Malinowski in 2012. One of the sections of the conference and accompanying publication entitled “Art History in Islamic Countries” was devoted to the history of art research in Turkey, Tatarstan, Crimea and the study of Islamic art in Poland.

In connection with the 600th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey in 1414, two conferences were organised. The first entitled “The Bursa and Kraków: History and artistic culture of the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Poland in 15th and 16th century” took place in May at Uludag University in Bursa. The 2nd Conference of Islamic Art: “Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth - Ottoman Empire:

art & architecture - religions – societies” was organised by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies on 15th–17th September in Warsaw.

The final important result of the Institute’s activity so far has been the extensive publication in Russian by Prof. Swietłana Czerwonaja “The contemporary mosque: local and world experience in recent times” (Светлана М. Червонная, Современная мечеть: отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени).

The 6th volume of *Art of Orient* devoted to the art of Islam contains 20 articles presented during the previously mentioned 2nd Conference of Islamic Art: “Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Ottoman Empire: art & architecture – religions – societies” organised by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies in 2014 in Warsaw.

The volume opens with an article by Akin Tuncer entitled “Eurasian decorative animal features of ‘the Little Metropolis Church of Athens’” dedicated to a rich repertoire of relief decorations depicting supernatural fantastic animal figures, animal fight scenes, as well as human figures found on the entire outer surface of the 12th century Little Metropolis Church of Athens.

The next text by Sevgi Parlak: “A typological evaluation of arrow slits among elements of military architecture in the Medieval Period” examines arrow slits, which played an active role in passive defence during the Middle Ages in the castles of Anatolia and describes factors affecting medieval military siege techniques and technological developments.

“Infinite travel of the soul to the Sacred City and the Luminous City: visual depictions of Mecca and Medina in *Dalā’il al-Hayrāt*” is an article by Aida Smalbegović, who deals with the tradition of copying and book illumination in Bosnia, as well as with the tradition of book copying in general and its significance, specially focusing on the Sufi circles and their perspective and contribution.

Fatih Elcil Benlizâde an author of the following paper entitled “Benlizâde Madrasah and its place in Ottoman architecture” considers the characteristics of a non-moveable cultural heritage called the High School (Medrese) of Benlizâde Ahmed Reşid Efendi, embodied in Ottoman-built medrese (high schools) or mektep (primary schools), although according to some written sources it might have also included a tomb (türbe), fountain (sebil) and graveyard (hazire).

Architectural issues are also considered by Julia Krajcarz in her paper “Orientalism in the Orient – elements of the Moorish style in the sacred Muslim buildings of Istanbul”. The author describes the unique phenomenon

of using European artistic architectural and decorative styles – starting from the Baroque style in Muslim sacred places in Istanbul.

Tarek El-Akkad in his article entitled “The decline of Cairo under the Ottomans” in turn tries to explain what happened to Cairo during a period of 300 years (between the defeat of the Mamluks in 1517 and the arrival of Napoleon in 1798) and why the city became the Ottoman provincial capital, full of decadence and stagnation.

“Between Kraków and Istanbul: the art and architecture of the Crimean Khanate as the connecting link between Ottoman and European culture” is the next paper by Swietłana Czerwonnaja who considers the art and architecture of 15th, 16th and 17th century Crimea as significant examples of cultural trends originating both from the European Renaissance as well as the culture of the Ottoman Empire.

“The Islamic tradition of building water fountains in the Crimea” is a topic tackled by Nuriya Akchurina-Muftieva who indicates that the skill of constructing fountains in the Crimea had a sacred basis, leaning on the fundamental theories of Islamic works of philosophy and the concept of the synthesis of art with the surrounding nature.

In turn, Katarzyna Warمیńska in her paper entitled “Polish and Lithuanian Tatars. One history and two stories” considers the current status of the ethnicity of two Tatar communities – Lithuanian and Polish focusing on the similarities and differences that shape the identity of both groups.

Piotr Tafilewski’ text on “The Views of Erasmus of Rotterdam and his Polish followers on war against the Turks” analyses Erasmus’s view on the Turkish issue and his position on the struggle against the Ottoman Empire, as well as Erasmus’s impact on Polish humanists and poets in this respect.

The significance of the Ottoman-Polish trade treaties is described by Zül-eyha Ustaoglu in the article: “Treaties in historical studies – the 1607 trade treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Poland”.

Sabine Jagodzinski’s paper: “European and Exotic – Jan III Sobieski’s commemorative and representative strategies towards Polish-Ottoman relations” considers the Polish king’s attitude towards oriental elements in arts and architecture and shows that the king might have used them in order to glorify himself as a victor against the Ottomans as well as for their beauty and value.

The next text by Beata Biedrońska-Słota entitled “Ottoman tent from Prince Czartoryski’s collection – a new look at an old tradition” presents the author’s research conclusion on a tent from Prince Władysław Czartoryski’s collection, indicating that the object was made at the beginning of the

19th century (and not acquired during the Vienna battle, as has so far been accepted) and had a ceremonial significance.

Hatice Adigüzel's article "In search of diplomatic gifts. On a group of 18th century Polish items of porcelain in the Topkapı Palace collection" deals with the subject of ceramics and high quality porcelains introduced to Turkish palaces as gifts from Polish diplomats that would in turn change the eating and drinking habits of Turkish culture.

V. Belgin Demirsar Arlı and Şennur Kaya – the authors of "An evaluation of the architecture, culture and history of the Polonezköy/Adampol settlement in Istanbul" consider the issues of an autonomous village called Polonezköy founded in late 19th century and early 20th century for Polish refugees in the Ottoman Empire, presumably in hope of founding an independent Polish State and returning to their own country.

Elvan Topallı' paper describes "Kazimierz Pochwalski's sketchbook of Eastern travels", containing 78 sketches, drawn by the artist at the end of the 19th century either with watercolour or charcoal pencil.

Bogusław R. Zagórski's text on "Jean (Jan) Lambert-Rucki's artistic vision of the Ottoman women's world of Selânik" deals with a Polish artist living in Paris, who arrived in Selânik during World War I and created a unique series of lithographic prints.

Another article by Piotr Tafiłowski, this time on "The 16th to the 18th century printed Turcica preserved in Polish collections" presents the results of the author's ongoing research on recording the 16th to the 18th century printed Turcica (works thematically related to the Ottoman Empire), which have been thus far preserved in Polish libraries.

Piotr Hordyński's text titled "Diplomats, etiquette, ceremonies - the unpublished letters of Łazarz Hordyński from the Ottoman Empire circa 1790" concerns a set of unpublished correspondence, specifically fourteen letters written by Łazarz Hordyński who spent two years in Turkey and wrote unofficial reports addressed to his patron Wincenty Potocki, Grand Chamberlain of the Kingdom, and owner of an important art collection.

The last paper by Wojciech Zabłocki is dedicated to the author's inspirations from traditional Syrian architecture.

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