

# CULTURE AND DIPLOMACY

AMBASSADORS AS CULTURAL ACTORS  
IN OTTOMAN-EUROPEAN RELATIONS  
FROM THE 16<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

VOLUME I



Edited by

REINHARD EISENDLE · SUNA SUNER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER

HOLLITZER







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OTTOMANIA

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AND  
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(VI–VIII)

VOLUME I

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*Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in Ottoman-European Relations  
from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

Edited by

REINHARD EISENDLE · SUNA SUNER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER

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**Cover-image**

Türkischer Botschaffter am Röm. Kaiserl. Hoff

Engraving from: *Historische Nachricht von der Röm. Kayserl. Groß=Botschafft nach Constantinopel,  
welche auf allergnädigsten Befehl Sr. Röm. Kayserlichen und Catholischen Majestät Carl des Sechsten /  
nach glücklich vollendeten zweyjährigen Krieg, Der Hoch= und Wohlgebohrne des*

*H. R. Reichs Graf Damian Hugo von Virmondt / rühmlichst verrichtet. [...]*

*Aufgesetzt von Gerard Cornelius von den Driesch / Sr. Excellenz Secretair und Historiographus.*

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# HONOURS





Bundespräsident  
Alexander Van der Bellen

Diplomacy plays a significant role in the de-escalation of conflicts and the rebuilding of peace. Diplomats in most cases have multiple tasks: not only negotiating with the representatives of other states, but also mediating culture and knowledge, and not least elaborating reports on their observations of politics, society, and culture. The impact of such exchanges can be observed in theatre, music, literature, art, and fashion.

This book is focusing on the role of diplomats as cultural actors in the Ottoman and European relations from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It reflects a temporal spectrum of substantial transformations in social, political, and cultural systems, as well as in the interrelations of the Ottoman Empire with European states. And it is an appreciable result of an intense international academic exchange, involving almost fifty scholars from thirteen countries, and thereby itself belongs to the field and praxis of cultural diplomacy.

*Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in the Ottoman-European Relations from the 16th to the 19th Century* is without doubt a worthy general tribute not only to studies of cultural and diplomatic history, but in particular to the heritage of Turkish-Austrian cultural relations. I am grateful to everyone who contributed to this publication and I am sure it will appeal to a wide spectrum of international readers.



A. Van der Bellen

## HELGA DOSTAL

UNESCO INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE OF AUSTRIA  
PRESIDENT

Going through the centuries, following the traces of hundreds of personalities – ambassadors as well as authors, composers or scientists – results not only in a large landscape of pictorial impressions, but gives us a memorandum of the reality of cultural life in former times. It was an exciting experience to observe and accompany the Don Juan Archiv Wien on their way through the relations of the Ottoman Empire and the European countries, especially the Habsburg Monarchy. And it will be a great pleasure to find the results of this ambitious undertaking in this publication.

For the UNESCO International Theatre Institute of Austria it, too, implemented a kind of hermeneutic impression: The International Theatre Institute was established by UNESCO 1948 in Prague with eight countries being founding members – including Austria (nowadays iTi is represented in more than 90 countries all around the world). The main reason for establishing at that time a cultural institution might be interpreted like: how can countries and its inhabitants be brought to speak to each other again after a World War, how to build international contacts and achieve understanding if not by and through the means of culture and arts. This seems similar to the diplomatic agenda in previous centuries. Mutual understanding in changing times and a changing world is one of the important concerns and demands of the iTi. To understand, one has to know – through experience, research or information. Therefore it is the aim of the iTi to let people meet at international conferences, congresses and workshops to exchange information not only by usual networking but also personally. Don Juan Archiv Wien uses analogous methods, connects scientific research with the knowledge of cultural life. They are an important partner for the iTi since they are aware of cultural diversity and the necessity of respect when faced with different cultural achievements both in research as well as in human contact.

The research work documented in *Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in Ottoman-European Relations from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* offers cognizance about the significant influence of diplomatic activities on cultural/theatrical life and opens channels of wisdom to understand the ongoing processes in the different fields of the arts. The UNESCO International Theatre Institute of Austria says *Thank You* to Don Juan Archiv Wien for their work and this publication.

## AMBASSADOR TERESA INDJEIN

FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS – DIRECTOR GENERAL 2017–2022

In 1718, Passarowitz brought an increased inclusion of the Ottoman Empire into the European diplomatic system and the beginning of a more permanent Austrian diplomatic representation at the Sublime Porte. The march of the Austrian Magnus Legatus Damian Hugo von Virmont to Constantinople meeting his Ottoman counterpart near the border with an entourage counting in hundreds still was first and foremost a military triumphal procession and his mission was to ratify the peace. However, the role of the representatives was a wider one and changed over time as this volume proves most impressively.

Peace demanded a deeper cultural understanding for the other at least as much as war did, which made language skills crucial. Soon it was necessary to ensure communication with the Orient in general and especially the Ottoman Empire using a broader set of instruments. The education of skilled interpreters, the ‘Sprachknaben’ or dragomans, later becoming effective Internuntii/Ambassadors, turned out to be the decisive impulse for a professional Austrian education for diplomats. This need resulted in the founding of the “Oriental Academy” in Vienna, the precursor of today’s Diplomatic Academy. One of the alumni and simultaneously cultural ambassadors, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, laid the foundation for the Ottoman studies as part of the humanities.

Their reports and impressions not only shaped policies but also images. The adventures of Austrian civil servants of all mentioned levels had remarkable cultural repercussions. On these grounds, we can even find a recent novel on Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall’s life in Austrian bookstores.

Mozart’s *Entführung aus dem Serail/The Abduction from the Seraglio* represents this cultural side of perception especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in contrast to the war-driven images of previous centuries. Of course, the dichotomy of abhorrence and fascination was in itself a driving force that sparked interest when oriental became a synonym for exotic with the imagination of the Ottoman harem or serail combining all these aspects all to perfectly.

The volume demonstrates the ongoing importance of cultural representation and aspects within the world of diplomacy. Information gathering and negotiation of treaties always only have been a part of the job, never its sole purpose. Diplomacy in all its aspects contributes to reducing distances between entities and peoples as technological change does. This globalization is an ongoing process not confined to the present day. Due to its acceleration based on technical innovation the speed of this process is increasing. However, this sentiment of accelerated

globalization is present in almost all ages, and historians more and more tend to find its traces from the Bronze Age up to this day. The latest since the telegraph was invented diplomacy has been frequently confronted with the notion of its fading importance due to the possibilities of modern communication.

Nevertheless, this is not the case in all respects and an important part of diplomacy's actual *raison d'être* is culture. The work of an Austrian ambassador is, in most parts of the world, heavily and increasingly defined by international cultural policy. Culture, thus became even more important over time and nowadays lies at the very centre of Austrian diplomacy. The Basic Document of Austrian international cultural policy states: "The main goal of Austrian foreign policy is to cultivate Austria's relationships with the world and to represent the interests [...] of Austria [...]. In turn, the aim [...] is to realise this goal in the field of the arts, culture and the sciences. To this purpose, Austrian international cultural activities reflect the key areas of interest of Austrian foreign policy." Using vocabulary introduced to the broad public by the dramatic events of the most recent past, one could state that over the centuries culture became a main vector of Austrian foreign policy.

We found new forms of communication and today we foster young artists in any field representing our countries or – which becomes increasingly more important – connections and cooperation between our countries. Cultural production, technology, arts and science are as important factors of diplomacy as they have been in the past.

A simplified look at the work of diplomats would argue that in comparison to the events and processes described in this book, ambassadors and embassies themselves nowadays are much less "Cultural Actors" to paraphrase the title of the volume. Nevertheless, the importance of the cultural field is so undisputed, that Austrian Cultural Fora have been created as permanent structures and instruments of diplomacy. The role of historic embassies and residences as bilaterally used cultural stages is still embodied by them where the buildings still are in use. The former summer residence of the Austrian Ambassador, the famous Palais Yeniköy in Istanbul, perfectly demonstrates this shift from person to structure, now hosting the Austrian Cultural Forum Istanbul. London is a similar case.

This finding is not only a coincidence of former Austrian Imperial premises being used as bilateral cultural stages by the Republic. The contrary is the case. Today, Austria still orchestrates and conveys her international cultural policy also by means of contemporary architectural manifestations. The most prominent example probably is the Austrian Cultural Forum New York. It was either no coincidence, that the famous Austrian architect Clemens Holzmeister built the new Austrian Legation in Ankara in the 1930s. The solemn opening ceremony took place on the Turkish National Holiday in 1935. On request of Mustafa Kemal, he had

already built the former Presidential Palace (Çankaya Mansion) and also designed many buildings representing the new Turkish Republic, like the Parliament, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Trade or the Military Academy. In this case, the cultural work of an architect and the new diplomatic representation became the Ambassador. The buildings mirror each other, the difference between us and the other, the sending and the receiving state, is blurred by a cultural expression becoming enigmatic for both countries.

The focus shifted from the person of the ambassadors as conveyors of cultural finesse, achievement and talent displayed by protocol, his residence, habits, and language-skills, to more abstract and structural forms. Not to be mistaken: the Ambassador is as necessary as he was before but he is now less actor and personal example than promotor and coordinator of cultural exchange.

The shift from personal to more structural forms of interaction – and of course the changes of the balance of power – also can be detected in reference to the personal appearance of diplomatic and consular staff in the Ottoman Empire. While before and around 1800 a local Ottoman costume was still quite common to be worn by dragomans and other staff sent by the Viennese court to Istanbul like Hammer-Purgstall, this habit of visibly customising the receiving entity was reduced in the years to come.

Nowadays diplomats themselves do not need to be a projected area. They enable and facilitate the broad exchange, modern forms of cultural expression, science and technology made possible and therefore represent a more democratic form of exchange in the literal sense.

# AMBASSADOR OZAN CEYHUN

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA SINCE 2020

Although the conferences on which this publication is based took place before I took up my post as Ambassador of Türkiye to Austria, I am grateful to Don Juan Archiv Wien and their partners for all their preparatory and organizational work in this series. While I hold the honor of writing the current foreword, the Turkish Embassy's and my distinguished predecessors' dedicated support to this project illustrates yet another example of the importance attached to cultural interaction in Turkish diplomacy.

The study of International Relations as an academic discipline is almost a recent development. In spite of its relative youth as an academic discipline, its practice is old. Debates on war, its causes, prevention and recurrence – in other words the ways to establish and maintain peace – have always been among the major topics of this particular field.

The root cause of any hostility among nations is fear (Angst): The fear of the unknown, of the “other”. The more we know about each other, the less we fear. In the wide spectrum of international relations, diplomacy is the essential tool in knowing others, whereas knowledge of culture constitutes the diplomat's key instrument.

The relations between Türkiye and Austria since the imperial times serve as a solid basis for the study of International Relations' theory and its practice; charting the essential role of diplomacy in establishing peace along with the importance of culture in diplomacy.

The Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian Empires rose and fell almost simultaneously. They came to know each other first through wars, later by diplomacy and ended up sharing a vast cultural interaction. Ambassadors of both Empires played an important role in promoting synergy, as one of their most important missions was to discover the host country and its people in every aspect. Their reports were assessed at the highest levels in their home countries and directly impacted the making of statecraft.

From Mozart's famous operas to Sultan Selim III's music; from *Kipferl* with coffee to the return of tulip to Istanbul (Tulip Period / Lale Devri); from the foundation of the Diplomatische Akademie in Vienna, to the start of a more than a hundred-year-old excavation project in Ephesus in 1895 and an alliance during the First World War, there is a wide spectrum of cultural interactions and intersections regarding the ways the two empires influenced and affected each other.

We, however, still have limited knowledge about each other: There exist many misperceptions about Türkiye in Austria and Austria is not known well enough in Türkiye. Many aspects of our common culture and history are yet to be discovered.

I trust that, by tracing the roots of Turkish-Austrian cultural relations and exploring mutual influences, this publication series will not only serve the future of Turkish-Austrian bilateral relations, but also the wider practice and theory of International Relations and the questions upon which the discipline was built – humanity’s quest for peace. These explorations will provide us with guidance and insight regarding the ways that our ancestors knew the world and each other; which profoundly affected the course we perceive the world and each other today.

I wish each and every reader a joyful journey into this enlightening and thought-provoking volume, which I believe will constitute an invaluable reference for their world outlook and future studies.

## AMBASSADOR KLAUS WÖLFER

REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY 2012–2017

Europe's relations with Turkey, through trade, war, cultural and diplomatic interaction are well more than half a millennium old. They have seen many shades and, along the centuries, different protagonists appeared on the European side.

Obviously, direct neighbours played a preeminent role, like the Venetians, several Slavic nations, but also, at a very early stage already, the Habsburgs, i.e. the central European peoples, the "Austrians".

Spurred by Turkey's repeated attempt to snatch its very heart, the capital city of Vienna, the Austrians, over time, developed and preserved a high degree of interest and sensitivity for the Turks. Rivalry and fear slowly turned into curiosity and more serene forms of interaction: The wise female Habsburg ruler, Empress Maria Theresa, established the Oriental Academy in Vienna in 1754, with the aim to familiarise her diplomats with languages and habits of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, studies of the Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages became part of the academy's curriculum.

Studying "the other's" language equalled an inroad by the sphere of culture, i.e. literature, art, music, science into overall political relations. Such developments went hand-in-hand with or followed the proliferation of references to Turkey and quotations from Turkish culture by leading European artists such as Lully, Rameau, Goethe, Mozart, Bellini, Ingres and many others.

Today, modern media enable, at least in theory, broad high-quality cultural interaction between Europe and Turkey, considering that roughly five million Turks (including their descendants) live in Europe. They provide a formidably vast new element in that bilateral relationship, as an extremely rich interpersonal cultural osmosis happens every day. Despite certain shortcomings, its potential is huge and with history unfolding, chances abound, challenging us to grasp them.

In today's relations between Europe and Turkey arts and culture are far more than an accessory field of entertainment, decoration or mere erudition. They can play a crucial role for making the best out of a relationship, which definitely has a big potential, while staying complicated.

Maria Theresa's far-sighted example should inspire a new master-plan for today's leaders and experts on how to go about Europe's big neighbour in the south-east of the continent – and vice versa. It could well be worth it and culture, in the widest sense, holds a key to success. I therefore commend the Don Juan Archiv Wien for helping us to be aware of it.

## AMBASSADOR EMIL BRIX

VIENNA SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
DIRECTOR

First of all, I congratulate the Don Juan Archiv Wien on their important and continuous research work about the interplay between culture and diplomacy in the relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. As a contributor to the *Ottomania* symposia series and publications, I am proud to be invited to write a foreword for this opening volume of the new publication series *Diplomatica*.

During my whole career as a diplomat the link between culture and diplomacy has always been at the centre of my activities and interests. I am convinced that cultural relations rightfully form a centrepiece of Austrian foreign policy. As a historian, the juncture between diplomacy, culture and history is of course even dearer to me. And since I am the Director of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies, an institution that was founded in 1754 as Oriental Academy, the topic “Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in Ottoman-European Relations from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” is close to my heart. What is more important is the fact that the longstanding Austrian diplomatic tradition of the “logic of dialogue” has strong roots in the relations between Habsburg Austria and the Ottoman Empire.

As mentioned, the Diplomatic Academy Vienna was founded as Oriental Academy in 1754 by Maria Theresa. Therefore, it is the oldest school of its kind worldwide. As the relations to the Ottoman Empire became more intense and friendlier in the eighteenth century, it became obvious that the Habsburg Empire needed well-trained and educated officials who have an excellent command of the languages of that part of the world and a good knowledge of foreign mentalities, something more or less non-existing at that time. Therefore, Maria Theresa’s State Chancellor Kaunitz proposed the founding of an academy for that purpose.

“Happy is the man who can speak with Turks in their own tongue”, says the title page of a small Turkish dictionary from those times.

Following the end of the wars against the Ottoman Empire, the peace treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718), this vast and neighbouring empire opened up new opportunities in the early eighteenth century, but also required more communication with their administrative authorities and civil society at large. Languages of education and culture like French and Latin were still most relevant, but one has to admit that the new focus on other languages such as the ones of the Ottoman Empire was not solely for the purpose of cultural exchange, but motivated – besides the political influence – by economic interests. Kaunitz set out the goals of the newly founded institute: “Under the eye of the imperial court

in Vienna, talented youths should be educated and trained by teachers specially appointed for this purpose in the languages of the Orient and the Occident, as well as in all the branches of knowledge that are important for them to protect and promote the commercial and political interests of Austria in the Orient.” Officially, as it was written in the disciplinary law of the Oriental Academy, the sole purpose of the Academy was to form ambassadors and “worthy representatives” to the Orient.

The “Sprachknaben” (at that time the students were only boys, the youngest only eight years old) had to learn Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Turkish was politically the most important language. Persian and Arabic were considered to be auxiliary languages. At the heart of the criteria for acceptance to the Academy was the ability to acquire languages. Therefore, the applicants should not be too old or too young so that they could, as was noted in the report to the Empress, master the “palate and throat” of the Turkish language.

In addition to the academic curriculum, the “noble” components of education, riding, fencing, dancing, music lessons etc., were not neglected.

However, the Academy not only became the cradle of a professionalised diplomatic corps, but also a centre of Oriental studies. The most famous example is definitely one of the Academy’s pupils: Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), who was not only the founder and first president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, but the most significant Austrian orientalist.

From the beginning, the rectors – Father Joseph Franz (1754–1769), Father Johann Nekrep (1770–1785) and Father Franz Hoeck (1785–1832), to name just the first Jesuit rectors – were experts in oriental languages. Until the last third of the nineteenth century the Oriental Academy produced excellent orientalists, be it as teachers, civil servants (from ambassadors to foreign ministers) or in the academic field. Today the Austrian State Archives host the Oriental Academy’s valuable collection of documents. Moreover, the Academy also became the editor of new Turkish-Arabic-Persian dictionaries, the “*Anthologia persica*”, and a significant collection of firmans and phrases that served as in-depth knowledge of the Orient. This significance persisted at least until Ottokar Maria Freiherr Schlechta von Wschehrd became the Academy’s rector in 1861, who wrote a book on international law in Turkish and was a renowned orientalist and linguist. Until today the seal of the Diplomatic Academy Vienna contains a sentence in Farsi: “For God and the Ruler”.

Maybe the most pertinent example of the importance of the Oriental Academy as a cradle of (cultural) ambassadors was the Congress of Berlin in 1878, convened to deal with the Ottoman Empire and open questions related to the Balkans. Austria’s foreign minister and a number of high-ranking delegates were alumni of the Oriental Academy.

Diplomats are advocates of their states and their citizens abroad. And they not only serve as legal and political representatives of their country, but also as cultural ambassadors. To be successful, they need a deep knowledge of international relations, a high level of identification with their own state, but also a deep understanding of other cultures. Already in the eighteenth century the Oriental Academy offered its students not only academic education, but also living in a multi-cultural community with students from a number of different backgrounds and a wide segment of society – admittance being based not on nobility, but on merits. Educating for cultural dialogue is a characteristic that is still more than valid today.

It is not only the alumni who hold an Austrian citizenship and who go into the Foreign Service, who have become “ambassadors” of Austria in different regions of the world. The same holds true for the high number of foreign alumni (in the last decades always about 60–70%), be it from the two-year master programmes or the short-term courses for young diplomats and civil servants. Many of them are in high positions and have become “cultural ambassadors” of Austria. Therefore, the programmes of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien form a valuable part of the “smart power” of Austrian foreign policy.

Although the Academy has grown into a more broadly defined School of International Studies, it still is a centre of dialogue between different cultures, political and social backgrounds. Students come from all over the world (around 180 young people from around 50 countries each year). They come from all continents often having very different religious, social and cultural backgrounds. The Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies is a truly international family. Cultural diversity is therefore not only part of the curriculum but also of the daily life at the Academy. For an international career professional knowledge, languages and practical skills are a prerequisite, but to be successful in our “global village”, be it in diplomacy or any other international area, understanding of different cultural backgrounds and open-mindedness are fundamental. Culture is the backbone of diplomacy. I first learned about the importance of culture within diplomacy as a young man studying at the Diplomatic Academy when I read a novel about nineteenth century international relations between Europe and the Ottomans in the Balkans. Even today I re-read from time to time Ivo Andrić’s great novel *The Days of the Consuls*.

I am sure that the activities of the Don Juan Archiv Wien are in this spirit and therefore I wish the Don Juan Archiv Wien a lot of success for their future work and for this new publication series!

## M. ÖZALP BİROL

SUNA AND İNAN KIRAÇ FOUNDATION CULTURE AND ARTS ENTERPRISES  
GENERAL MANAGER

It is our joy and our great honour to be supporting the Don Juan Archiv Wien's meticulously prepared "Ottoman Empire and European Theatre" symposia, and contributing to the publication *Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in Ottoman-European Relations from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century* with a preface text.

One of the institutes which I am directing is the Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation Pera Museum, established in 2005; an important and innovative establishment that offers a wide selection of arts, research and cultural services.

The Pera Museum has hosted 87 exhibits, published over 100 books and catalogues, and held hundreds of activities, film screenings, teaching sessions and musical recitals. To this date, more than 1.5 million visitors have toured it. The museum hosts, and prepares regular exhibits from the Ottoman-era-centred Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation Orientalist Painting Collection; the Collection of Anatolian Trade Weights and Measures; and the Collection of Kütahya Ceramic Tiles; some of the most extensive and important collections in their respective fields.

The Pera Museum continues its work as a cultural platform connecting the Turkish public with the universal values of world art; through exhibits by artists such as Dubuffet, Cartier-Bresson, Miro, Chagall, Koudelka, Pirosmeni, Picasso, Kahlo, Rivera, Goya, Botero, Kurosawa, Warhol, Giacometti, de Chirico; and by hosting exhibits of corporate arts collections such as JP Morgan Chase and La Caixa, among others.

But most importantly, one of the Pera Museum's greatest assets is its range of world-class partnerships; with institutes such as Tate Britain, the V&A, the St. Petersburg Museum, Maeght Foundation, Magnum, NYSVA, ICC; and of course, your valuable contribution as the Don Juan Archiv Wien.

Art illuminates points in time, in which cultures and diplomacy intersect. Our "Intersecting Worlds: Ambassadors and Painters" exhibit, in the Pera Museum's second-floor Sevgi and Erdoğan Gönül Gallery, is a perfect fit for the Archiv's "Ottoman Empire and European Theatre" symposia, and its publication on *Culture and Diplomacy: Ambassadors as Cultural Actors in Ottoman-European Relations from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century*; for paintings in this exhibit highlight Ottoman-European relations between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Dozens of works from master painters such as Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, George Engelhardt Schoder, Antoine de Favray, Carl Fredrik von Breda, Luigi Mayer, Jean-Baptiste Hilaire and Fausto Zonaro are notable simultaneously as interesting