

Dear Colleagues and Students,

You are kindly invited to the seminar entitled as “Mustafa ‘Âli and the Arts of the Book” organized by the Department of History.

Date: 02 October 2025, Thursday

Time: 16.30

Avenue: AZ-31 Department of History Seminar Room

Title: Mustafa ‘Âli and The Arts of the Book

Speaker: Serpil Bağcı, Bilkent University

Abstract:

The Ottoman historian, intellectual and bureaucrat Gelibolulu Mustafa ‘Âli was keenly interested in the arts and artists of the book. His two interrelated accomplishments make this interest very clear. Firstly, he either directly commissioned or supervised artists to execute illuminated and illustrated fine copies of his works. Secondly, he shared his erudition on works of art and their creators, writing a pioneering work entitled *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* (artists’ exploits), which he completed in 1587.

This talk will first introduce the illustrated manuscripts which involve Ali’s patronage or supervision, in order to shed light on his affinity with the artists of the book. It will then examine Ali’s inspirations for writing *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and the context in which it was created. The aim is to understand the art market of late sixteenth-century Istanbul, about which ‘Âli provides invaluable clues.

Bio:

Prof. Serpil Bağcı received her Ph.D. from the Art History Department of Hacettepe University in 1989 and taught there until 2023. She is currently teaching courses on Ottoman art in the Department of History, Bilkent University. She has conducted research or taught at various international institutions including Naples L’Orientale, Oxford University, the University of Chicago, the University of London, Harvard University, and Università di Roma.

Prof. Bağcı’s main research interests are Ottoman and Persian arts of the book, with a focus on visual culture and painting in the Ottoman world. Her publications include *Mevlana Müzesi Resimli El Yazmaları* [The Illustrated manuscripts in Mevlana Museum], Istanbul, 2003; *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (with Massumeh Farhad), Washington, DC., 2009, and *Ottoman Painting* (with F. Çağman, Z. Tanındı and G. Renda), 2nd ed., Istanbul, 2019.