



# Le Miroir De L'art Musulman

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# *Le miroir de l'art musulman*

Deniz Türker

A PARTICULARLY OBSCURE AND THEREFORE ENGAGING ITEM IN THE Fine Arts Library formed the core of my qualifying paper for the PhD in the History of Art and Architecture in 2009. It was while I was conducting research on Halil Şerif Paşa, the infamous nineteenth-century Ottoman collector of Courbet's nudes, that a helpful librarian brought to my attention the journal of a lesser-known Ottoman man of objects.

A bilingual periodical published in 1898, titled *Le miroir de l'art musulman* for its French audiences, and *Mir'ât-i Sanâyi'-i İslâmîye* for the Ottoman ones, introduced its readership to the world of Islamic art in two idiosyncratic issues. A certain Hakky-Bey, the sole author behind these periodical issues and an antiques dealer in Paris, had the purpose of introducing his vast collection to readers through meticulously arranged lithographs of his objects. He told the story of Islamic art, in other words, through the exemplary items from his collection. Another interesting aspect of the textual content of Hakky-Bey's journal is that while the bulk of this historical information he supplies is matching in the French and Ottoman Turkish versions, his prologues for each are completely different from one another: if the French side spells out his extensive bureaucratic and cultural networks within museums and the international art market, the Ottoman side is deeply autobiographical. While the French side benefits from the typographic printing technologies of the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman side receives an elegant calligraphic title page in Arabic script. And lastly, if the French side contains a long bibliographic list, the Ottoman side not only has that, but it also retains lengthy personal footnotes on Hakky-Bey's intellectual upbringing as one in which he was surrounded by the Arabic and Persian classics.

Until Hakky-Bey came along, scholars of the historiography of Islamic art assumed that the origins of the field were brought about by Europeans with either linguistic or numismatic interests. It is with the introduction of Hakky-Bey and his journal that we begin to see how the networks that propounded the importance of the study of objects from the Islamic world were made up of a much more international cast of characters. My "discovery" of this journal also led to some further detective work into Hakky-Bey's intriguing cosmopolitan identity, from which it emerged that he mobilized his cultural networks to participate in much more underground political ones. The fact that, even as a man of a certain age, Hakky-Bey worked against the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II's autocratic regime at the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth century brought me to reconsider this period, in which the cultural and political spheres were deeply

connected. As a result, my research on who Hakky-Bey was, both as a Frenchman and an Ottoman, continues to this day.



*Le miroir de l'art musulman* (Paris: Hakky-Bey, 1898). Cover of no. 2. XFA13.191.

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