



**Anglo-Turkish Society hybrid lecture, 24 October 2023, 6.00 pm (UK time)**

Speaker: Dr Nil Palabiyik

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT

Title: 'A Lost Greek Renaissance: Nicodemus Metaxas and the first Greek printing press in Constantinople (1627–28)'

Nicodemus Metaxas was a man who was equally invested in God and worldly possessions. An independently wealthy Orthodox priest of noble Byzantine lineage, he enjoyed close links to the English Levant Company, which traded over the vast territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Hailing from the Venetian-controlled island of Cephalonia, Father Nicodemus arrived in England in 1623 to join his merchant brother and to study divinity at Oxford, but he somehow found himself in Fleet Street, at the heart of London's printing trade.

Having worked as an editor and publisher for several years, in 1627, Nicodemus boarded an English ship bound for Constantinople, equipped with a press, crates of books and printing equipment. He established the first Greek publishing house in the Ottoman Empire under English protection. Nicodemus was determined to give his community a voice against ignorance and oppression. The local Jesuit mission and the French ambassador strongly opposed the idea of a Greek press.

The talk will bring to life the story of a seemingly small printing house that was at the centre of political intrigue, religious conflict and the battle for cultural and commercial influence between European powers on Ottoman soil.

Booking essential: <https://nil-palabiyik-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk>

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Palabiyik examining Jacobus Golius's oriental dictionary, heavily derived from early Arabic-Persian-Turkish dictionaries compiled by Ottoman lexicographers.



Image of a 'caloire' from Peter Mundy's travel album, *A briefe relation of the Turckes, their kings, Emperors, or Grandsigneurs, their conquests, religion, customes, habbits, etc.* The British Museum

Dr Nil Palabiyik is a Lecturer in Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Queen Mary University of London. Her research is at the crossroads of intellectual history, book and print culture, and manuscript studies, focusing on the interactions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe in the early modern period.

Her recent monograph, *Silent Teachers* (Routledge, 2023), considers for the first time the influence of Ottoman scholarly practices and reference tools on oriental learning in early modern Europe. The book weaves a new story of oriental studies through the annotations, study notes, and correspondence of European scholars, focusing on the central but often overlooked role that Turkish-language manuscripts played in the achievements of early orientalists.

She has published extensively on early printing in the Ottoman Empire and the humanist interest in the Turkish language and literature in academic journals. She is currently working on a narrative non-fiction book set in seventeenth-century Constantinople.

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