



ARIT LECTURE

An Innovated Mevlud: Music, the Turkish Woman, and Halide Edib's Transnational Voice

by Lynsey Haught

**at ANAMED Auditorium and on ZOOM
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 6:00 pm İstanbul**



In person lecture at Anamed Auditorium, İstiklal Caddesi, 181, Merkez Han, Beyoğlu
For livestreaming on ZOOM, register in advance for this meeting:

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This presentation considers the social and political messages embedded in the use of music in Halide Edib's novel *The Clown and His Daughter* (1935). I suggest that Halide Edib uses the Quran readings of the female protagonist Rabia as a metaphor for both the woman's voice in late Ottoman society and the ideal resolution of tensions between Eastern and Western perspectives. This historiographical approach to the novel encompasses early feminism in the Ottoman Empire, cultural and military conflict with European powers, and the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye with a new national identity and social agenda. This close reading of a novel published for an international audience during her exile attempts to reflect her ripened outlook on women's issues and Turkish national identity as she frames it aesthetically. Presenting a historic peak of modern cultural friction in musical terms, Halide Edib illustrates, I will argue, what she considers a Turk's ideal relationship with the West through Rabia as a singer with a deep appreciation of both Eastern and Western music and as a Quran reader married to an ex-priest classical pianist. Addressing marriage, ethnic heritage, and cultural development through the medium of music, Halide Edib constructs a Turkish New Woman who harmonises the spiritual and carnal, individual and community, nation and world.



Lynsey Haught is completing a PhD at the University of Birmingham. Her project compares the New Woman ideals manifested in the female characters of Victorian and late Ottoman/early Republic female novelists, particularly in the intersection of personal spirituality and the majority faith system with developing democratic concepts of women's identities and roles in society. These ideals complicate traditional marriage and family dynamics, religious practices, social and commercial relations, and political activities.