



Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

ZMO-Colloquium Winter Term 2018/2019

Performing Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia

Thursday, 25 October 2018, 5 pm

Köçeks in the "Culture of Beloveds": Gender, Love, and Dance Performance in the Late Ottoman Empire.

Lecture by **Mustafa Avcı** (Altınbaş University, Istanbul)

The köçek practice, in which cross-dressed boys and men entertain an audience by belly dancing, was widespread in Central Asia, Asia Minor and the Balkans from the fifteenth to the beginning of the mid-nineteenth century. The dancers were very popular and highly visible in elite and ordinary settings alike. Historical accounts show that this practice was often associated with same-sex love. During the nineteenth century the practice (along with homoeroticism) became a source of shame for the Ottoman State and a number of proscriptions were issued against it. Köçeks gradually lost their popularity, first among the elites and then among ordinary people of Istanbul.

Mustafa Avcı is an ethnomusicologist and cultural historian. He is also a composer, lavta and bağlama player as well as a full time faculty member at Altınbaş University Social Sciences department. He graduated from Boğaziçi University, Department of Economics in 2005 and finished his Master's Degree in Music at ITU – MIAM (Centre for Advanced Studies in Music) in 2009. He received his PhD in Music from New York University Music Department in 2015 with a doctoral thesis on Köçeks (cross-dressed male belly dancers/dancing boys) in the Ottoman Empire and contemporary Turkey. Currently he is working on a monograph dealing with the musics of the Ottoman Diaspora in New York. Furthermore he is involved in a project elaborating a chronology of the musics of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey.

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