

THE IDEAS ABOUT OTTOMANS IN ITALY DURING THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES: THE STUDY THROUGH TEXTILES

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Уявлення про османів в Італії в XV-XVI століттях: дослідження крізь текстиль

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Стаття є спробою доповнити знання про уявлення італійцями османів протягом XV та XVI століть, використовуючи збережені тканини обох культур, згадки про текстиль в писемних та візуальних джерелах.

Сучасні технологічні методи дослідження давнього текстилю дають змогу уточнити його атрибутивні дані, що в свою чергу, сприяє більш певним висновкам щодо мистецьких запозичень в царині оздоблення. В такий спосіб, наприклад, з'ясувалося, що дві тканини з колекції Музею Ханенків, які вважалися італійськими, є роботою османських майстрів. Якщо за будовою італійський та османський текстиль досліджуваного періоду досить різний, візуально – він навпаки часто є майже однаковим. Незважаючи на те, що торгівля османськими тканинами не була значно поширеною в Італії XV–XVI століть, італійські рисувальники та ткачі усе ж активно імітували текстильну продукцію Близького Сходу.

Писемні джерела, особливо листи та інвентарні документи, також наповнені згадками османських тканин та виробів «в турецькому стилі». Так як автентичного текстилю із Західної Азії в ті часи було небагато у світському просторі італійських міст, вірогідно, містяни могли асоціювати із османською культурою певні види тканин місцевого виробництва, що виглядали як «турецькі». Кількість та особливості їхнього опису у писемних джерелах наштовхують на думку про колосальну зацікавленість італійцями османською культурою, «обережну увагу» до зростаючої Османської імперії та визнання її домінування над багатьма народами Азії. Усе це відбувалося усупереч перманентним війнам між Венеційською республікою та османами. Входження у італійську моду тканин «на турецький лад» було блискавичним. Однак у місцевих писемних джерелах всіляко підкреслювалася давність традиції використання турецьких «модних прийомів» італійцями, що могло мати на меті укорінення уявлень про спорідненість культур.

Ключові слова: *давній текстиль, Османська імперія, Італія, орнамент, Книга костюмів.*

Introduction

After Russia's open invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, it is difficult even to think of the possibility of some kind of reconciliation with the aggressor. According to the results of a poll conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating" on 6 April, 2022, 64% of Ukrainians believe that restoring friendly relations between Ukrainians and Russians is impossible at all. At the same time,

22% suppose that it could happen in 20–30 years. Other 10% believe that the reconciliation is possible in 15 years (Romanenko 2022). For objective reasons, the reality of the early modern times was completely different. Despite constant military conflicts during the 15th and 16th centuries, Italian trade with the Ottomans, and thus close cultural communication, continued (Mack 2002, p. 23). Anxiety was in the air. But what else did Italian city dwellers feel about the foreign threat?

Thanks to diversity of contemporary studies, the classic concept of the Renaissance culture is gradually complemented with many aspects which demonstrate the richness and versatility of outlook, typical for the Italian citizens of that time. Not only was an outlook aimed at rethinking the past, but also at expanding ideas about the world as such, about its inhabitants and the difference between cultures. Studying perception of Ottomans by Italians in this context is particularly intriguing¹.

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, textiles were an integral part of trade between the Ottoman Empire and the Italian cities such as Venice and Florence² (Garett & Reeves 2018, p. 157). Based on this fact, it is textiles, as well as related references in written and visual sources, that serve as a means of information about the various contexts of interaction between the mentioned cultures. Fabrics also took part in the processes of forming the ideas of Italians about Ottomans, and vice versa. Textile as a material has only recently begun to be considered by researchers in this way. This subject is especially intriguing in the context of contemporary decolonization processes, which are being undertaken in the museological environment and not only (Weber 2016, p. 5).

A conspicuous effect of West Asian tradition on Italian art during 1300–1600th studied an independent scholar – Mack Rosamond. In the book “Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian art, 1300–1600” she reveals peculiarities of interconnection between Islamic and Italian arts in details, putting the accent on the decorative arts, such as luxurious textiles (Mack 2000). The work includes the look on peculiarities of the trade processes through art as an informative source.

The similar thematic has another publication “Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797” (Carboni 2007). The exhibition catalogue explores Venice as the “bazaar” and the way in which it absorbed ideas, knowledge, cultural and scientific achievements of the Islamic world. Not only were essays of the book created by the scholars, but also by the conservators which brought an academic theory closer to interaction with real textile objects.

Talking about researches, concentrated on investigating concrete textile samples, one of most thorough is the book created by the group of authors – “Ipek: The Crescent & The Rose: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets” (Raby (Ed.) 2002). It is exclusively devoted to Turkish silks. However, it also studies mutual borrowings in textile design by manufacturers of the Ottoman Empire and Italy and analyzes the difference in structure of different silks from both areas. This is helpful to attribute pieces of preserved textiles.

The purpose of the current research is to answer the main question: how can the aforementioned role of textile be useful in the researching idea of Italians about “the East” between the 15th and the 16th centuries? By using “traditional” types of sources, we have no other choice but to focus rather on the perceptions of the elite than on the general population. However, by looking on textiles, we can examine the spread of certain concepts in society in

¹ It should be clarified straightaway that because of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, the word “Turk” was used in Italy not for designation of a specific ethnicity, but served as synonymous with Ottoman Muslims in general perception (Denton, 2015, p. 8–9). Just to avoid frequent repetition, in the article we will use both words equally (Turks and Ottomans).

² Florence and Venice were the main players and competitors in the Mediterranean trade, buying mostly raw silk and selling finished luxurious fabrics (Michienzi 2019, p. 55).

principle, at least through those elite items that were in the field of view of the average city dwellers.

At the very beginning, it is important to note that Italian historical sources of various types have critical differences in the information they provide about Ottoman textiles. These differences are the subject of my study. In the current research I use namely Venetian and Florentine historical sources – written and visual.

Italian or Ottoman? Antique textile pieces from the Khanenko Museum

To gain the purpose of the research, I want to start with the consideration of textiles which reflect the strong interactions between Ottoman and Italian cultures during the period under the study. The Khanenko Museum in Kyiv preserves a valuable collection of the world art, which includes antique textiles. A significant part of them was bought by Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko – the founders of the museum (The Khanenko Museum Archives. Aids 1. File 2. 14., p. 14).

It is intriguing to look at an interpretation and presentation of the collection by Bogdan and Varvara Khanenko at the end of the 19th century, when they were still living in their mansion. In accordance with the European fashion of the second half of the 19th century, they decorated the rooms in the architectural style of historicism, that means in imitation and combination of various historical styles (O'Hear 1993, p. 128).

Taking a closer look at one of the largest halls of the Khanenkos' mansion, one can notice some similarities of its architectural elements with a medieval castle. However, this «castle» is filled with a wide range of art objects, including textiles, created in different parts of the world

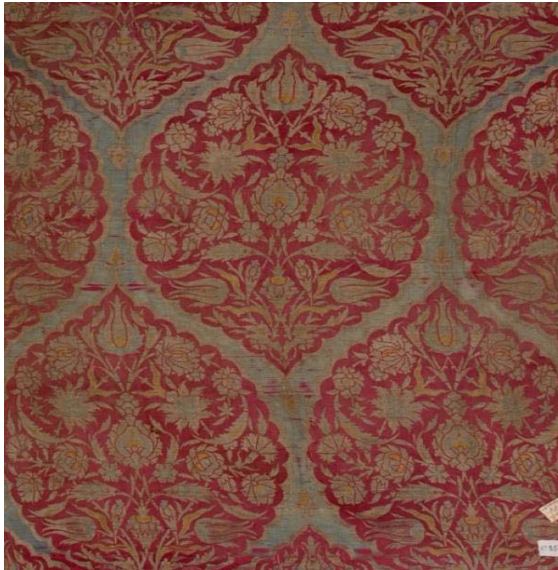


Fig. 1. The interior of the Khanenko house. Late 19th century.

during the time, which coincide with the Middle Ages and early modern period in Europe.

As erudite collectors, the Khanenkos may have wanted to demonstrate the coexistence of different cultural traditions and their interaction. In fact, Bohdan and Varvara were probably aware of the availability of certain stereotypes in the classification of objects according to place and time. Thus, they could have emphasized on the equivalence of different artistic

and cultural practices, presenting quite different artworks in a single space. Such display may also have had other reasons. It could have imitated a vision of the world of a medieval person, for whom all kinds of imported objects were one of the main sources of knowledge about the surrounding world.



*Fig. 2. Velvet fragment
The Ottoman Empire (?)
15th–16th centuries
The Khanenko Museum collection
Inv. № 41 TK.*



*Fig. 3. Silk fragment
The Ottoman Empire (?)
Late 16th century
The Khanenko Museum collection
Inv. № 257 TK.*

While displaying the artworks in such a way, Bogdan and Varvara Khanenko were also driven by their profound knowledge of intercultural exchanges of previous eras. However, during their time, this knowledge was formed mainly due to the observation and classification of the visual characteristics of artworks. Obviously, Bogdan and Varvara Khanenko, as well as other collectors and art connoisseurs of their time, occasionally had misconceptions about place and time of origin of collected artworks. This statement is especially true for textiles, which were one of the main materials of trade during the Middle Ages and early modern times. Fabrics "absorbed" and transmitted the experience of artists, weavers, and, in general, peoples around the world. Such circumstances complicate greatly the attribution of ancient textiles.

Nonetheless, over the last century, the scientists have developed different methods of the technical expertise of textiles¹. For instance, a careful study of the structure of the textile samples can sometimes allow to determine where they were made – in the Ottoman Empire, or in Italy. The fact is that between the 15th and 16th centuries Italian silks were highly respected in the Ottoman Empire and influenced significantly Turkish textile production (Phillips 2021, p. 155). The characteristic features of Ottoman art in turn were inherited and modified by Italian weavers and artists. Even if Turkish and Italian textiles of the specific time may be visually similar (regarding their patterns etc.), their structure usually differs (Peter, 2020, p. 168). This helps to clarify the attribution of several textile pieces from the Khanenko Museum's collection as well.

One of them, as we know from the inventory data, was bought by the Khanenko family as an 18th-century venetian velvet (Inv. № 41 TK). However, it has all characteristics of ottoman textiles, which were woven in a single structure for many years. For instance, the main warp of the fabric is Z-twisted silk, while the pile warp has no apparent twist. The structure of the fabric is a 4/1 satin weave foundation, with every third warp binding wefts in a ¼ S-twill order (Peter, 2020, p. 173). The "gold" weft is a metal foil wrapped in S-direction around an S-twist yellow silk core thread. (Carboni, 2020, p. 195). To conclude, these and other technical characteristics indicate that the textile was most likely made in one of the Ottoman workshops between the 15th and 16th

¹ One of the first researcher in the field was Donald King (1920–1998), who was an expert in technical expertise of both – Asian and European textiles.

centuries. Such items were the attempt of Turkish weavers to imitate imported Italian silks (Garett & Reeves, 2018, p. 157).

Another textile fragment was transmitted to the Khanenko Museum in 1955 as an example of Italian silk, made between the 17th and 18th centuries (Inv. № 257 TK). Nevertheless, its peculiarities also indicate that the textile originates from the Ottoman Empire.

The structure of it is known as a lampas, a particular combination of two weaves – in this case a 4/1 satin weave and 1/3 twill weave. The front of the fabric is characterized by two contrasting surfaces, one formed by the warp floats of the satin weave and the other by the weft



floats of the twill wave. These and other characteristics indicate, that this piece of a delicate silk was manufactured in Bursa or Istanbul at the end of the 16th century (Raby (ed.) 2002, p. 217). This example proves once again that no object in today's museums exists without a migration process – each embodying transregional links and exchanges (Weber 2016, p. 5).

Since the middle of the 20th century the technical expertise of textiles has been turning into a separate and solid field. Why are we so desperate to determine accurately the place and the time in which preserved textile pieces were made? Because this acquired knowledge gives us not only the opportunity to look at fabrics as unique artworks, but also the opportunity to confirm or refute, develop and supplement theories of broader scientific interest.

Now, thanks to a technical expertise of the textiles mentioned above, our assumption is proven – Italian masters borrowed the visual characteristics of Ottoman fabrics, in most cases copying them very accurately. In other cases, they copied the construction of decorative compositions, transforming their elements in accordance with local tradition. Interactions in the field of copying and borrowing decor are obvious. Even leaving the local fabric structure, a craftsmen copied the "fashionable" foreign decor – the Italians borrowed the Turkish one, and vice versa.

Ottoman fabrics in Italian written sources

While Italian written sources are filled with detailed descriptions of Ottoman textiles and demonstrate the ability of authors to distinguish them from others, visual sources, on the contrary, most often shows Turks in the Italian fabrics. Firstly, let us look through the abundance of mentions of Ottoman textiles in written sources. There are two main types of describing fabrics, connected to an Ottoman tradition by Italians – "Turkish" (turcheschi) and "in Turkish style" (alla turchesca).

For instance, the letter describing the journey and entrance in Pisa of grand duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, mentions different types of textiles, used by the court and its servants. Some of the court participants were clothed in costly velvets of different colors, others – in Turkish-style textiles (vestiti del medesimo drappo pagonazzo alla turchesca) (ASF, MP, f. 60, v. 6377, Doc ID 23668). Thus, it can be assumed that fabrics in Turkish style, in opinion of a man who wrote this,

Fig. 4.
Cesare Vecellio
(c. 1521 – c. 1601)
"Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of
Various Parts of the World"
The image of the Turk.

were visually somewhat different from others. Most likely, as a distinctive feature for identification of the textile could have served its ornament: other fabrics, according to their description, were monochromatic.

Both options for describing fabrics ("Turkish" or "in Turkish style") are also presented in inventory documents. As an example, the inventory of 1553, dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici's housing, located in the Palazzo della Signoria, has the description of items made in Turkish style, such as a belt (*Uno cinto alla turchesca di seta rossa et d' altri colori*) (Conti 1893, p. 192). In the same document, the authors describe Turkish fabrics (*6 panni di quoto rosso turcheschi*), probably knowing about their exact place of origin (Conti 1893, p. 123). Otherwise, they could have determined the place of origin of textiles due to their visual characteristics.

These examples could lead to the conclusion that Italians were able to distinguish textiles of Ottoman origin from Ottoman-style fabrics: this idea is being followed by some researchers¹. However, despite the frequent references of Ottoman textiles in written sources, according to the latest research, in fact, such textiles were not common for the daily life of Italian cities, during the period under study. While Italian silks were considered incredibly valuable in the Ottoman Empire, Turkish textiles probably had no such value in Italy, where locally produced products dominated. In the most cases Ottoman textiles were used in Italy in the forms of clerical vestments but not in secular spaces (Carboni 2007, p. 186). Moreover, many Italian cities implemented a policy of protectionism during the researched period (Raby (ed.) 2002, p. 186). Does the absence of such fabrics in large quantities in Italian cities mean a lack of interest in Turkish culture as such? Obviously not, quite to the contrary.

If authentic Ottoman fabrics were a rare sight in Italian cities, it is likely that both designations ("Turkish" and "in Turkish style") were used to describe fabrics that looked like Ottomans and evoked ideas about this culture. As I can suppose, even if it was impossible to observe actual Turkish silks frequently, authors of written documents constantly associated similar products of any other origin with them. As we have seen before, local manufactures also fascinated by copying West Asian fabrics.

To further develop the idea outlined above, I suggest referring to the book "*Dehgli habiti*" (which contains 420 illustrations of costumes) (Vecellio 1590). Describing dress of different peoples, Cesare Vecellio – a Venetian publisher of the second half of the 16th century – periodically uses the phrase "in Turkish style". Occasionally, he also focuses attention on Turkish origin of certain fabrics or fashion trends. Emphasizing the spread of Turkish fashion trends among Asians, Italian authors, to some extent, separated inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, demonstrating in some way the superiority of Turks over other Asians, which in this case embodies in the form of fashion.

For instance, according to Vecellio's "*Costume book*", Asians are used to wear Turkish-style clothing (*alla turchesca*) (Vecellio 1590, p. 371). In addition, in Armenia, as writes Vecellio, people are accustomed to wear shoes which look like Turkish ones (*portano scarpe ferrate come i Turchi*) (Vecellio 1590, p. 377).

Description by the author of the Ottomans themselves, also deserves attention. According to the "*Deghli habiti*", wearing turbans is a distinctive feature of "Turks", especially wealthy ones (Vecellio 1590, p. 295). Besides, on the book engravings the wealthy Turks almost always are depicted in ornamented textiles (Vecellio 1590, p. 297). Such an embodiment of the wealth on the pictures of a European author could be associated with widespread traditions and customs of

¹ In the article of Karellas H. is underlined: "Walking down the street, Italians could distinguish between basic Italian textiles and Middle Eastern ones, and the latter evoked a sense of respect and admiration of the wearer" (Karellas 2011, p. 26).

European cities themselves, formed according to peculiarities of the Sumptuary laws¹. Only Turkish servants, also depicted in turbans, are presented in plain clothes, without embellishment (Vecellio 1590, p. 305).

This phenomenon lies somewhere in the field of a concept of the period eye, proposed by the art historian Michael Baxandall (1933–2008)². In connection with it, Italians could have perceived and contextualized the Ottoman fabrics through the lens of their own daily experience, as also Vecellio was doing. His costume book, thus, could be the key to understanding perception of Turks by Italians, as researchers have defined (Semple 2019, p. 16). It seems to me that it demonstrates curiosity and interest in the culture of the growing Ottoman Empire rather than fear or a strong rejection of it.

Textiles and perception of Ottomans and the Ottoman Empire

In the opinion of some researchers, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and by the end of the 15th century, a negative perception of all Muslims as the «new barbarians» spread among Italian intellectuals. The events of that time, due to this point of view, also marked the beginning of the formation of the modern division into “East” and “West”, with a certain negative connotation of the former (Denton 2015, p. 2).

However, as mentioned previously, during the 15th and 16th centuries the ideas about Turks were very complex and often indistinct in the eyes of Italians of various cities. This circumstance often contributes to conflicting conclusions in different areas and contexts of modern studies, which can only confirm a wide range of interactions between Turks and Italians during the researched period. Thus, mentions of Turkish textiles in different types of written and visual sources enrich the concept, which highlights the prevalence of interest and attentiveness to Ottoman culture among Italians, and last but not least, comprehension and inclusion of its features into local cultural tradition.

Quite often Italians could identify the belonging of textiles to the Ottoman-style visual tradition. The phrase “in Turkish style” in this case embodies the process of spreading among Italians not only the use of Turkish products exclusively, but interaction and opened dialog with the concepts of Turkish culture as such.

According to a number of researchers, since the end of the 13th century, Asian influences began to penetrate especially actively into Italy. In order to protect themselves from alien cultures, Italians turned to their native past, to the great culture of Latin antiquity. Thus, according to scientists, this Asian influence became one of the reasons for the formation of those distinctive features of culture with which we now associate the phenomenon of the Italian Renaissance (Bitsili 1996, p. 26). It's hard to disagree with this theory. However, in order to determine the



Fig. 5.
Cesare Vecellio
(c. 1521 – c. 1601)
“Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of
Various Parts of the World”
The image of the Turks

¹ More about sumptuary law in Italy in: Facelle, E. F., 2009, Down to the last stich: sumptuary law and conspicuous in Renaissance Italy. Bachelor thesis. Wesleyan University.

² “But each of us has had different experience, and so each of us has slightly different knowledge and skills of interpretation” (Baxandall 1998, p. 29).

boundaries and peculiarities of one's own culture, it was probably necessary to find and accept not only what is different, but also what is common with one's neighbors.



Fig. 6.

Cesare Vecellio

(c. 1521 – c. 1601)

"Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of Various Parts of the World"

The image of Italian women.

The absence of a clear and formed stereotype about confrontation between East and West, Islam and Christianity in the eyes of Italians during the researched times becomes visible also in other philosophical doctrines and texts. Thus, according to practice of the Florentine politician Niccolo Machiavelli, wearing clothes in Asian style contributed to his mental activity. For him, it strengthened the sense of mystical connection with the past times and epochs. From this example, it can be assumed that Italian intellectuals considered the Asian cultural tradition as a potential heir to a common ancient heritage (Ruvoldt 2006, p. 643–644). Moreover, despite the gradual development of the idea of Turks as new barbarians, the concept of their possible origin from the Trojans, not the Scythians, remained widespread in the 15th and 16th centuries (Denton 2015, p. 8).

The idea of a certain commonality of cultures was traced not only in theoretical discourse, but also in practice. During the researched period Turkish fabrics and carpets were used not only in secular but also in religious spaces throughout Italy. Most likely, Italians were acquainted with the original purpose of such textiles (for instance, carpets): in inventory documents these items were often mentioned as «Muslim» (Mack 1997, p. 62). However, their

presence in Christian cult buildings could hint not only at territorial origin of Christian religion, but also at a certain unity in origin of Ottoman and Italian cultures. Of course, the basis of this concept could have been not so much cultural as commercial interest – the need to maintain adequate relationships for survival and interaction of the economics of both cultures (Devi 2009, p. 46).

It is interesting to note, that some researches (such as Dr. Robert H. Schwoebe) even have made the comparison of interconnection between the Ottoman Turks and Renaissance Europeans with the Cold War. They have observed that in both cases the interaction in the field of culture was caused by the need for cooperation in economic and politic spheres (Denton 2015, p. 16). The need for commercial interaction, therefore, to some extent reduced the vision of cultural differences.

In this context, an intriguing case is the depiction of appearance of a wealthy Italian woman in the «Costume book» by Cesare Vecellio. According to the author, wearing a turban «in Turkish style» was considered a fashionable trick among Italians long before the 16th century (portavano in testa, a modo de Turchi, quell Turbane molto variator di colori) (Vecellio 1590, p. 61). The description could indicate a desire to demonstrate the antiquity of the connection between the two cultures as well as between their economics.



Fig. 7.
Circle of Gentile Bellini (?)
Portrait of Sultan Mehmet II
with a Young Man (fragment)
 A young man, depicted in
 ornamented Italian (?) cloth
 c. 1500
 Purchased at Christie's London
 by the Municipality of Istanbul.



Fig. 8. Textile fragment
Turkey. Second half of the
16th century. Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston.



Fig. 9. Textile fragment
Venice, Italy. Second half of
the 15th century. The
Khanenko Museum, Kyiv
Inv. № 32 TK.

Ottoman textiles in Italian paintings?

Researching the written and visual sources of this topic, one can notice some dissonance between them. While Italian written sources are filled with the detailed descriptions of fabrics “in Turkish style” and “Turkish”, the Italian visual sources, on the contrary, most often shows Ottomans in the local fabrics. Indeed, the most common exceptions are those cases when an artist personally observed the real Ottoman textiles: around 1474 the venetian painter Gentile Bellini, invited by Sultan Mehmed II to Istanbul, painted a scribe in an elegant Ottoman brocaded-velvet caftan (Peter 2020, p. 170).

In other cases, Italians most often depicted Turks in very expensive local fabrics – different types of brocaded velvets and other silk garments. Very often such cloth was embellished with golden patterns. The “dressing” of Turks in such prestigious fabrics in painting emphasizes the high status of the neighbors in the eyes of Italians. This trick also indicates the understanding by them of a single source for the development of similar textile patterns, characteristic of both Ottoman and Italian art. Probably, it was precisely such fabrics with different variations of rich ornaments that Italians could occasionally have called “Turkish” or “in the Turkish style”.

Transformation of textile patterns as an embodiment of worldview

Even though Italian and Ottoman textiles of the underlined time have much in common, their details often differ. Interestingly, while the floral elements dominate in the Turkish textile ornaments, such motifs can often be replaced by the image of fruits in the similar European fabrics.

As early as the second half of the nineteenth century, an Austrian aesthetician, Alois Riegl (1858–1905), made the suggestion that the features of the materials and techniques that influenced the artistic process throughout the history were not decisive. Riegl insisted on the existence of something superior – an elusive artistic thinking (Riegl 1992, p. 7). According to Riegl, during a creative act, the symbolic meaning of the ornament usually became secondary for an artist (Binstock 2004, pp. 14–21).

A little bit later, an art historian Fritz Saxl (1890–1948) suggested that images-constants, moving between cultures, eras and mediums, constitute the foundation of European culture and the study of their "trajectories" – a necessary condition for orientation in its space (Honour & Fleming 1970, pp. 25–26).

Although I believe that "kunstwollen" was a major engine for the developing decorative arts, images-constants probably were more sensitive to the symbolic meanings that existed in a particular culture and were often transformed in connection with them. This process could often be unconscious from the point of view of a particular artist.

In accordance with the subject of my current investigation and in connection with the previous theories of this well-known historians, I can only dare to make an assumption and add to the above. Even if both ornamental traditions of the researched period (Ottoman and Italian), have a common origin mainly in the form of the ancient patterns, their transformation and adaptation still took place under the influence of the local peculiarities of worldview.

As most researchers believe, due to the extreme living conditions in the arid areas of Western Asia, it comes as no surprise that oases and irrigated gardens have a very special status in the Muslim religion (Roche 2015, p. 1). Increased attention to the garden forms was embodied mainly in the use of floral elements in patterns, including textile decoration (Ghasemzadeh et al. 2013, p. 73). In the same way, the importance and predominance of fruit symbolism in worldview of Christianity, could have led to the dominance of their forms in a part of textile ornaments. Of course, both fruits and flowers are important and symbolic in both cultures, however, here we just mean only a certain predominance of some forms over others in certain patterns.

A group of ornaments based on combining the shapes of different fruits and other modified plants, even received a generalized name – "the pomegranate ornament" – created by the 19th-century researches (Fanelli 1994, p. 193). However, the vast majority of the 15th and 16th-centuries Italian written sources contain a very general description of embellishments and patterns, presented on textiles. In the inventories and other types of documents the educated Italians gave no special attention to the ornaments of fabrics, despite a detailed description of their other characteristics. The creators of the written documents almost always mention the presence of patterns on textiles (Hotsalo 2019, p. 31). Notwithstanding, the symbolism of ornament as such, obviously, did not interest them. At the same time, there are some exceptions to the rule.

The inventory description of the Cosimo I de' Medici's housing in the Palazzo della Signoria mentions a costly fabric, decorated with the pattern in the form of golden fruits (*Un paramento di raso...col fregio da capo in pomi d'oro*) (Conti 1893, p. 46). Based on this example, it could be suggested that in case when it was necessary to describe textile in detail, some Italian citizens could subconsciously see a hint of fruit in elements of its pattern. The words "from gold" (d'oro) in the mentioned description could relate to the woven technique and used materials as well as to the symbolic meaning of the image: the "golden fruit" (pomi d'oro) – in such a way Italians also were used to name the various types of fruits, which were associated with different symbolism (of beauty, love, pleasure, postulates of faith), during the researched period (Fiorani, 1989, p. 66). "Pomi d'oro" could also have been a description of the coat of arms of the Medici family or its elements reproduced on the fabric. The researchers suggest that it is the golden fruit, or rather – oranges, presented on the Medici's coat of arms (Tacconi 2005, p. 187).

In Florentine letters of the 16th century, the word "pomus" is most often used as a generalized designation for fruits. For example, Johanna of Austria, Grand Duchess of Tuscany (1547–1578), in the letter from 1578, also admires the variety of fruits sent to her, identifying them with the word "pomi": "I like to consider the variety of those fruits" (mio piacere in riguardare la varieta di quei pomi...) (ASF, MP, f. 170, v. 5926, Doc ID 3627).

We can admit that most often Italians perceived the textile patterns holistically, as a luxurious embellishment, not splitting them into components, in pursuit to reveal some assumed symbolic meanings. Nevertheless, the exceptions to this rule indicate that sometimes Italians, in some written documents (for instance, in inventories), were forced to describe decoration of fabric. In such cases, in connection with the peculiarities of the local sociocultural system, they, maybe even unconsciously, could have recognized the forms similar to fruits in elements of textile ornaments. And local designers and weavers depicted exactly them in fancy patterns.

Conclusions

As I have demonstrated, by means of the fabrics from the Khanenko Museum collection, the simultaneous study of preserved fragile textiles, as well as written and visual sources associated with them, allows to enrich our knowledge about the perception of some cultures by others.

Of course, the interaction between Turks and Italians in the 15th and 16th centuries was multifaceted and complex. However, such an important item of trade, daily use and rituals as textile sheds light on an aspect of a genuine Italian interest in Ottoman culture. "Turkish" or "Turkish-style" were what Italians called a great variety of textile products. Despite the difference in the worldview of Italians and Turks, more practical tasks encouraged them to look for common ground. And this search became not only formal – a deep interest and integration of Ottoman elements in daily life of Italian cities is evident. It is possible, that some caution can be observed in the manifestations of this interest, but so far not a negative perception of the Turks. What rightfully belongs to the Italian tradition (for example, luxurious patterned fabrics) was instead often interpreted by Italians as something that can also be related to the Ottoman one.

If, however, we take a closer look at these patterned fabrics, we would notice, that among similar items of Ottoman and Italian production there are some differences, formed in accordance to peculiarities of their local worldview. In future research, a more thorough study of the modification in specific elements of textile patterns by the considered cultures, seems to be promising. Such developments will continue to test and develop the theory, we proposed (displaying in ornamental elements the features of the worldview through their transformation). In subsequent studies, it may also be prospective to investigate it vice versa – Turks' idea of Italians through textile, especially since there were a lot of fabrics of Italian origin in the Ottoman Empire.

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***The ideas about Ottomans in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries:
the study through textiles***

The article is an attempt to supplement the knowledge of Italians' ideas about Ottomans during the 15th and 16th centuries, using the preserved antique textiles of both cultures, as well as fabrics' mentions in written and visual sources.

Modern technological research methods of ancient textiles make it possible to clarify their attributive data, which in turn contributes to more definite conclusions about artistic exchanges in the field of decoration of expensive textiles. Thus, for example, it turned out that two fabrics from the collection of the Khanenko Museum, which were considered Italian, are the work of Ottoman masters. If the structure of the Italian and Ottoman fabrics of the period under the study are quite different, visually – they are often almost identical. Despite the fact that the trade in Ottoman fabrics was not widespread in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries, Italian painters and weavers still actively imitated the textile products of Western Asia.

Written sources, especially epistolary and inventory, are also filled with references to Ottoman fabrics and "turkish-style" textiles. Since there were few authentic silks from West Asia in the secular space of Italian cities at the time, it is likely that citizens could even associate with Ottoman culture certain types of local textiles that looked like "Turkish". The number and peculiarities of

their description in written sources suggest the Italians' enormous interest in Ottoman culture, "cautious concern" in growing Ottoman Empire, and recognition of its dominance over many Asian peoples. All this took place in spite of the permanent wars between the Venetian Republic and the Ottomans. The entry into Italian fashion of fabrics "in the Turkish style" was lightning fast. However, local authors emphasized the antiquity of this fashion tradition, to some extent rooting the idea of kinship between the two cultures.

Keywords: antique textiles, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, ornament, Costume book.

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