Session at RSA (Toronto, 17-19 Mar 19)

Toronto
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Mamluk Aesthetics and Renaissance Italians, Out from the Ottoman Shadow

Organizers: Bradley J. Cavallo and Sharon C. Smith

Treating with Islamic-Italian relations in the Mediterranean, early modern scholars have focused almost exclusively on the attitudes of the Venetians towards the Ottoman Turks. And yet, in contrast to the “barbaric” Turks, the Mamluks did not become the object of Christian Crusader rhetoric. If anything, the religion of the Mamluks seems to have mattered less than their economic stability and potential as allies against the Turks in the political-existential imaginations of Christians. As a result, a material reality of trade and admiration continuously apprised Italians of Mamluk aesthetics as seen in textiles, metalwares, palace designs, and ceramics from Egypt and Syria.

The purpose of this RSA 2019 session is to explore how and to what degree Renaissance Italians adopted and then adapted the aesthetics of power and elegance manifested in artworks and architecture created by Mamluk artisans and architects before the ultimate Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1516–1517.

Please send a brief abstract of no more than 150 words; a selection of keywords for your proposed presentation; and a brief Curriculum Vitae of no more than 300 words, in outline rather than narrative form, to Bradley J. Cavallo, PhD, Bcavallo1@marian.edu and Sharon C. Smith, PhD, scmith@mit.edu by 1 June, 2018.

Reference:
CFP: Session at RSA (Toronto, 17-19 Mar 19). In: ArtHist.net, May 28, 2018 (accessed Oct 12, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/18251>.