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Il Cinema Ritrovato Bologna - 28 June – 5 July 2014
VIEWS FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 1896-1914

Film Screenings and Workshop / 1-2 July 2014

European film archives hold scores of films from the period 1896-1914 shot in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Unknown, forgotten, hidden behind the wall of the Great War that marked the end of vast multinational empires, these moving images from more than a century ago deserve to be screened and seen today. They clearly have dimensions beyond the discipline of film history; they might be valuable documents for people from those parts of the world and interesting source material for specialists able to interpret their content within a broader cultural and historical context.

The screenings and discussions are open to the public. We invite you to join us in talking about the films, trying together to uncover what they contain from many points of view and many research fields, such as history and film history in all their ramifications, ethnography, cultural sciences and performative arts.

Mariann Lewinsky, Curator (Zürich), Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Film Archivist (EYE Filmmuseum Amsterdam), Jay Weissberg, Researcher (Rome), Nezhir Erdogan, Scholar (Istanbul Sehir University)

The workshop will be held in english and italian

You can register in advance or ad hoc
www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2014en
Hotel reservations with special prices at incoming@bolognawelcome.it

Tuesday 1 July 10.15-12.00

Screening Session 1

Archival Questions and a First Overview

The opening films set the outline for our field timewise. The very first moving images from the territory of the Ottoman Empire are by Lumière cinematographer Alexandre Promio from 1896-1897, while the Gaumont newsreel *Vainqueurs et vaincus* (1912) shows footage from one of the many wars, revolts, occupations, and annexations that eventually would bring about its end. Both films also represent exemplary case studies of archival problems such as the identification and dating of material, or the changes a film might have undergone



since its production. The array of material in this first programme demonstrates the variety of genres produced and screened before World War I and the heterogeneous nature of the images. Some films were made with the intention of depicting lands and peoples, in styles hovering between ethnographic observations and picturesque illustrations of a tourist guidebook; others staged figments of the Imaginary Orient generated by a wild mixture of cultural sources, from the Bible to the vaudeville stage of the 19th century.

Tuesday 1 July 14.30-15.45

Discussion

Tuesday 1 July 16.15 -17.45

Screening Session 2

Everyday Life and Travellers' Tales

Cinema opened up the world for those who could not afford to travel. Before this, people experienced virtual voyages to the Orient through reading books by travellers such as Pierre Loti or visiting a World Exhibition. While films do have a compelling immediacy, bringing the viewer into eye contact with faraway times and places, we film historians and archivists often are unable to recognize what we see. We simply lack the knowledge to recognize the clues that could tell us where a film was shot, for example, or if a film might be a particularly valuable document, and why.



Wednesday 2 July 10.15-12.00

Screening Session 3

Territories, Borders - and Colonialism

Filming started in 1896, and while trying to put together a programme presenting a Grand Tour of the Ottoman Empire, from Bosnia to the Maghreb, with Constantinople at its centre, we realized that many extant films from 1896-1914 were shot in regions then no longer part of the Ottoman Empire, such as Algeria and Tunisia (occupied by France in 1830 and 1881 respectively), or only nominally Ottoman, such as Egypt (controlled by Britain since 1882). So, is it now legitimate to use the Ottoman Empire as a matrix, as a key of access to retrieve a corpus of films for viewing and for research? Or was our approach a (hopefully productive) false start?



Wednesday 2 July 14.30-16.00

Discussion