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Museum Lecture

**The Study of Ancient Greek Texts in Early Ottoman Istanbul:**

**The Work of George Amiroutzes**

Abstract

This lecture will survey the work of George Amiroutzes (ca. 1400– ca. 1469), one of the most learned men of his day, in the field of Classical scholarship. The primary sources and historical evidence that will form the basis of this lecture are the historical narrative of Kritoboulos, Greek manuscripts kept at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library and the Süleymaniye Library, as well as Amiroutzes’ own philosophical writings.

After the surrender of the Empire of Trebizond to the Ottomans, Amiroutzes was invited to the court of Mehmed II the Conqueror as a scholar. There he had to undertake the huge and complicated Classical scholarship-related task of combining the individual maps found in Ptolemy’s *Geography* “into one united whole as a single picture or representation”. Later, by the Sultan’s order, Amiroutzes and his sons also prepared an Arabic translation of Ptolemy’s text. According to Kritoboulos, Amiroutzes was “a great philosopher, learned in the studies of physics and dogmatics and mathematics and geometry and the analogy of numbers, and also in the philosophy of the Peripatetics and Stoics”. We can learn more about Amiroutzes’ views as a philosopher and which Classical authors and works have had an influence on him from his philosophical writings that have survived.

**Brigita Kukjalko** is a Lecturer in Classics at the University of Latvia in Riga. Her research is focused on Ancient Greek, Latin and Byzantine sources on language studies, as well as the studies of Ancient Greek theoretical texts in early Ottoman Istanbul. This academic year (2014–2015) she is working on her research project entitled “The Memory of Ancient Greece in the Ottoman Empire: The Transmission of Greek Texts” and teaching the graduate level course “Readings in Byzantine Texts, I-II” at the History Department of Boğaziçi University. This lecture will present part of the results of the aforementioned project supported by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK).