

## **What we can learn from Maria (Puder): On Turkish Literature, Jews and Jewish Turkish Literature**

**Laurent Mignon (Oxford)**

### **Abstract**

The creation Maria Puder, a character from Sabahattin Ali's masterwork *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (published in 1943), arguably expresses the author's desire to document aspects of European life that had irremediably been destroyed by national-socialism and its fascist allies. Yet the novel was written at a time when in Turkey too nationalism left little space to articulate ethno-religious identities that were challenging the official vision of Turkish nationhood. Hence Maria Puder's existence is also an invitation to literary scholars to explore aspects of Turkish literary history that have largely been overlooked such as the history of Jewish Turkish literature which is the focus of this talk.

### **Bio**

Laurent Mignon is Associate Professor of Turkish language and literature at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St Antony's College. He is also Affiliate Professor at the Luxembourg School of Religion and Society and an Associate Member of the Centre de recherche Europe's Eurasie, at INALCO in Paris. His research focuses on the minor literatures of Ottoman and Republican Turkey, especially Jewish literatures, as well as on the literary engagement with non-Abrahamic religions during the period bridging the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. His new book "Uncoupling Language and Religion: An Exploration into the Margins of Turkish Literature" (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021) has just been published last month.