

KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART





A COLLECTION OF WATERCOLOURS BY JOHANN JACOB FALKEISEN (1803-1883)

A SWISS ARTIST IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE



## Johann Jakob Falkeisen: a Swiss artist in the Ottoman Empire

This recently rediscovered group of watercolours sheds new light on early industrial development in Turkey, providing a unique visual record of the area in and around Bursa and into the workings of industries at the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Swiss artist Johann Jakob Falkeisen was born in Basel in 1804. After studying in Paris, Falkeisen went to Milan to further his career as an artist and worked under Giovanni Migliara (1785-1837) and Louis Cherbuin (1810-1875) until 1838.

Falkeisen took the opportunity to travel to Bursa in 1843, visiting Athens and Constantinople on the way, to work in his family's silk factory which was being run by his brother, who was also the Austrian Consul for Bursa. The Falkeisen family bought the factory, together with Tasciyan, an Armenian dragoman from the British Embassy, from a French entrepreneur called M. Glaizal, who had started the enterprise in 1837. The Falkeisen factory was the first steam-powered silk-spinning factory in Bursa and manufactured silk thread.

Johann Falkeisen lived in Turkey until 1855 when the family factory was destroyed by fire as a result of an earthquake and he returned to Basel. He then joined the fledgling Kunstmuseum in Basel where he worked as a curator.

An unpublished album in the Kunstmuseum, Basel contains eighty-two drawings by Falkeisen, the majority of which are watercolours and drawings of Turkey. These drawings, bound in elaborate black leather with gilt tooling are entitled 'Reise Erinnerungen' (travel memories) and provide a detailed visual account of Falkeisen's stay in Turkey, which evidently afforded ample time for him to travel. He recorded his movements in precisely drawn watercolours of great historic interest as well as artistic merit. His views of Bursa record the newly constructed factories and the surrounding area in great detail and this album informs and enhances our knowledge of the present works.

In general, travel in the Ottoman Empire at this time was very convenient for visiting foreigners as order was maintained. Lord Byron explained the details in a letter to a Cambridge friend Wiliam Banks on 26 December 1812 after his own visit in 1809-11: 'be particular about firmans-never allow yourself to be bullied- for you are better protected in Turkey than anywhere- trust not the Greeks and take some knicknackeries for presents-watches, pistols etc. etc. to the Beys and pashas.'. The firmans were imperial orders which could be bought through consuls and ambassadors, commanding Ottoman officials to provide hospitality, protection and 'necessaries for travelling' to foreign visitors.

Foreigners' journeys were organised by guides, as can be seen in the watercolour in the present group, of the party visiting the hot springs outside Bursa, and they in turn hired guards and other servants, with whom their employers communicated in 'Levant Italian', the lingua franca of the Ottoman Empire.

During Falkeisen's years in Turkey he travelled to Constantinople, spent time on the coast at Sü, a Greek village on the sea of Marmara, at the Gulf of Gemlik and the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara, where he sketched the busy market. He also journeyed to Banderma, a Turkish village on the Sea of Marmara, observed local bird life, olive groves, a local hamam in Anatolia and many other subjects. He worked initially in pencil and squared some of his sketches for transfer. He worked up his final compositions in watercolour of a detailed nature which he further elaborated with frequent use of gum arabic and bodycolour.

The artist encountered some dangers on his travels recorded in the album and he shows himself triumphing over adversity. He was stoned by pupils from a medersah while sketching from nature in 1844 and encountered hostilities with Asiatic nomads in the Bursa area in 1847. On another occasion the Bashi-Basouk attacked him, and he had a perilous horseback river crossing after a bridge over the Nilüfer river collapsed during a storm. Fire, theft and the earthquake of 1855 complete the hazards he recorded in the album.

The Follenweider family, to whom the six watercolours relating to the production of wine and raki in this collection belonged, also owned a silk business in Bursa in the mid nineteenth century. Almost all the privately run factories in the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century were established by foreigners. After some initial difficulties due to the reluctance of local workers to enter a factory with machines, the silk business expanded rapidly. By 1855 there were ten further silk thread factories around the Falkeisen concern and by 1876 there were at least fourteen such factories in Bursa alone. The thread was exported to Europe rather than to the silk-weaving enterprises within the Ottoman Empire.

Private factories contributed to economic growth throughout the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. In the Lebanon there were nine silk manufacturing plants in 1853, which sold their products mainly to France. In Izmir there were several carpet-weaving factories which employed about a thousand workers, and there was another near Konya. Flour mills and olive-oil extracting plants were built on Midilli island and in Syria. French interests established a candle and glass plant at Pasabahçe on the Bosphorus. A canning factory was built at Kartal with Swiss capital. Paper and glass factories were established at Beykoz with British backing. There were cotton-gin plants built by British businessmen in Tarsus and Adana; carpet thread factories at Afyon and Izmir; and cotton yarn factories at Adana, Tarsus, and Izmir. There were two cloth factories at Mudanya, three at Bilecik, all established on the European model; silk works at Konya, Diyarbakir, Damascus, and Aleppo and more rug factories at Bursa, Karaman, Damascus, Vidin, Bosna, Salonica, Aydin, Sivas, Silistria, and Nis.

Throughout his travels Falkeisen accurately recorded the rich diversity of costumes to be found in the Ottoman Empire. His remarkable drawings are a record of Bursa and the surrounding area at a critical moment in industrial history and an important record of the links between the Ottoman Empire and the businessmen of Europe.

1

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss,1804-1883)

An encampment by a cave with hot springs near Bursa, Turkey

Signed l.r.: J J Falkeisen fecit, watercolour over pencil heightened with white, gum arabic and touches of gold, with a black line border, inscribed in Old German (Sütterlinschrift) on a label attached to previous backboard:

Im Jahre 1848 besuchte Conrad von Muralt (damals noch nicht mit Luisa Hess verlobt)/seinen Neffen, der einige Jahre jüngerer Robert von Muralt. Sie/waren immer wie Brüder zusammen in Bursa, wo Robert 2 Jahre in Seidengeschäft war. Von dort machten sie einen Ausflug nach den heissen/Quellen, in der Umgebung und/Robert buk dort Omeletten...../Lan.. [derer] sitze mit Herrn Falkeisen, er trägt einen weissen Burnus. Der Mann, /Herr Landerer, hat ein Blatt Papier vor sich (?). Die anderen sind Gefolge und Leute aus der Gegend. (Amalie, sie ist Roberts Frau hat dies geschrieben in Dez. 1918).

[In the year 1848 Conrad von Muralt (who was not yet married to Luisa Hess)/visited his nephew, Robert von Muralt, who was a few years younger than him. They/were always like brothers together in Bursa, where Robert worked for 2 years in the silk industry. From there they made an excursion to the hot/springs in the neighbourhood and/Robert cooked omelettes../Lan..[derer] sits with Mr Falkeisen, he wears a white cloak. The man/Mr Landerer, is holding a piece of paper in front of him (?)./The others are friends and local people. (Amalie, Robert's wife, wrote this in December 1918)].

15.5 x 34.5 cm

Provenance (nos. 1-4)

Private collection, Switzerland until 2009

On the west side of Bursa and in the village of Çekirge are hot spring baths containing sulphur and iron which flow from Mount Olympus. The sources of the six hot springs, known in ancient times as 'Basilika,' are very probably remnants of the Roman period when the first development of the hot springs began.

A lively party was evidently in progress the evening that Falkeisen, who included a self-portrait and is the figure seated near the fire with a white cloak, drew this watercolour. The figure in a green suit and cap, who appears to be identified as Robert von Muralt, is cooking omelettes over the campfire and is included in two of the drawings of the Cave Grotte, including the one at the threshold of the house, suggesting he lived there. Landerer, identified in the label, is wearing a local cloak and holds a letter in front of him. The barrel of raki and the empty bottles attest to a good supply of drink.

The details of the trunk, clothes line, blankets and saddle bags provide an evocative record of the camping trip. The horses can be seen grazing beyond the campfire. The local guides, guards and other servants who accompanied the European visitors would also appear to have been relaxing and enjoying the evening.



2

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
A market and mosque, Bandirma, Turkey

Signed I.I.: J J Falkeisen fecit, watercolour over traces of pencil heightened with touches of white and gum arabic, with a black line border, inscribed in Old German on a label attached to previous backboard: Banderma turkisches/dorf am Murmurur Meer/Markt und Mosche. gemalt 1852 von J.J./Falkeisen von Basel  
23.5 x 31.5 cm

Bandirma is a city in Balıkesir province in northwestern Turkey on the Sea of Marmara and a trading point between Izmir and Istanbul. Another version of this watercolour dated 1852 is included in an unpublished album of the work of Falkeisen in the collection of the Kunstmuseum, Basel. A further pencil drawing of the subject, squared for transfer is also included in the album which also contains another watercolour of the port showing boats being unloaded.



3

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
A caravan by a pavilion outside a town,  
probably near Bursa, Turkey

Signed l.r.: J J Falkeisen, watercolour over pencil heightened with touches of white and gum arabic,  
with a black line border  
24.2 x 33.2 cm

There are two drawing for this and the following watercolour in the album in the Kunstmuseum, Basel,  
one showing a figure firing a gun at the front of a slightly larger caravan and another with a different  
figure group containing musicians. This suggests that it was a place of some importance which Falkeisen  
visited often and can be presumed to be near Bursa. It may have been a place to break a journey and  
rest the horses, who could drink from the nearby river.

4

Circle of Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
A pavilion outside a town, probably near Bursa, Turkey

Watercolour over pencil with touches of white and gum arabic and a black line border  
25.7 x 35.2 cm

The quality of this drawing seems a little less good than the previous view of the same place by Falkeisen  
and it may be that it is by one of his friends, to whom he was giving instruction in watercolour.



3



4

## THE PRODUCTION OF WINE AND RAKI

This set of six recently rediscovered watercolours illustrate the production of wine and raki at the Cave Grotte near Bursa, and the office of the firm of Falkeisen and Corney and shops in the city itself. These important watercolours document very precisely how wine and raki were made and stored at this vineyard and contain delightful and closely observed details of everyday life in mid-nineteenth century Turkey. The extensive inscriptions by J.J. Falkeisen are in a mixture of French and German, as would be natural for a Swiss artist.

5

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
Lieu où l'on fait le Vin de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic and a black line border, inscribed verso:  
Lieu où l'on fait le Vin de la Cave Grotte  
21 x 25.8 cm

The artist carefully records the grape presses in a distillery in the mountains where the local workers are treading the grapes and using a screw press. The costumes of the workers are recorded in meticulous detail.

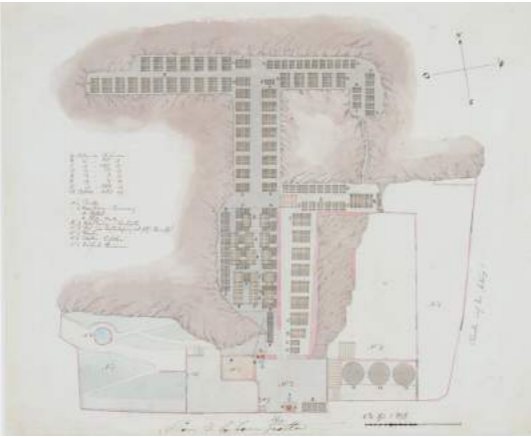
In the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century meyhanes run by Greeks and Albanians would mainly serve wine along with meze, due to religious restrictions imposed by various sultans. The more liberal atmosphere of the Tanzimat period (1839–1876) saw meyhane attendance among Muslims rise considerably, and raki became a favorite drink. By the end of the century, raki took its current standard form and its consumption exceeded that of wine.

During this period, raki was produced by the distillation of grape pomace obtained during wine fermentation as illustrated in this group of watercolours. When the amount of pomace was not sufficient, alcohol imported from Europe would be added. If aniseed was not added, it was called düz raki ("straight raki"), while raki prepared by adding gum mastic was called sakız rakısı (gum raki) or mastikha.

5a

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
Plan de la Cave Grotte

Inscribed l.c.: Plan de la Cave Grotte, with a key, a scale and a compass, pen and black ink over pencil and watercolour, with a pen and ink border, extensive inscribed verso: Place actuelle dans la Cave Grotte pour un quantitatif (?)/de .e.ner 7231, soit 289,240 ... de Vin savoie / 7 Tanneaux F à ... 7. f 49/5 " E " " .. 40/51 " D " " 12- 612/55 " A " " 56 , 3080/15 " B" 60, 900/7 " C . 150.1050/1 " G " 3(?)00.300/3 " H " 400.1200 /. 7231  
21 x 25.8 cm



This detailed plan shows the precision which characterises the organisation of this well-run wine and spirits business. There are no records of Corney's involvement in the Corney and Barrow archives housed in the London Metropolitan Archive which suggest it may have been a small concern for local consumption. fermentation as illustrated in this group of watercolours. When the amount of pomace was not sufficient, alcohol imported from Europe would be added.



6

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
 Anti Local et Distillation de l'eau de vie de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic and a black line border, inscribed verso: Anti Local et  
 Distillation de l'eau de vie de la/ Cave Grotte  
 21 x 25.8 cm

This work shows the hearth where the distilling of the alcohol is being carried out, from the residual grape skins and grape residue, the festering pulp having been fermented with water. The European in the background appears to be Robert von Mural, who worked in Turkey for two years in the late 1840s, as recorded on a label attached to the backboard of the old frame of one of this group of watercolours.

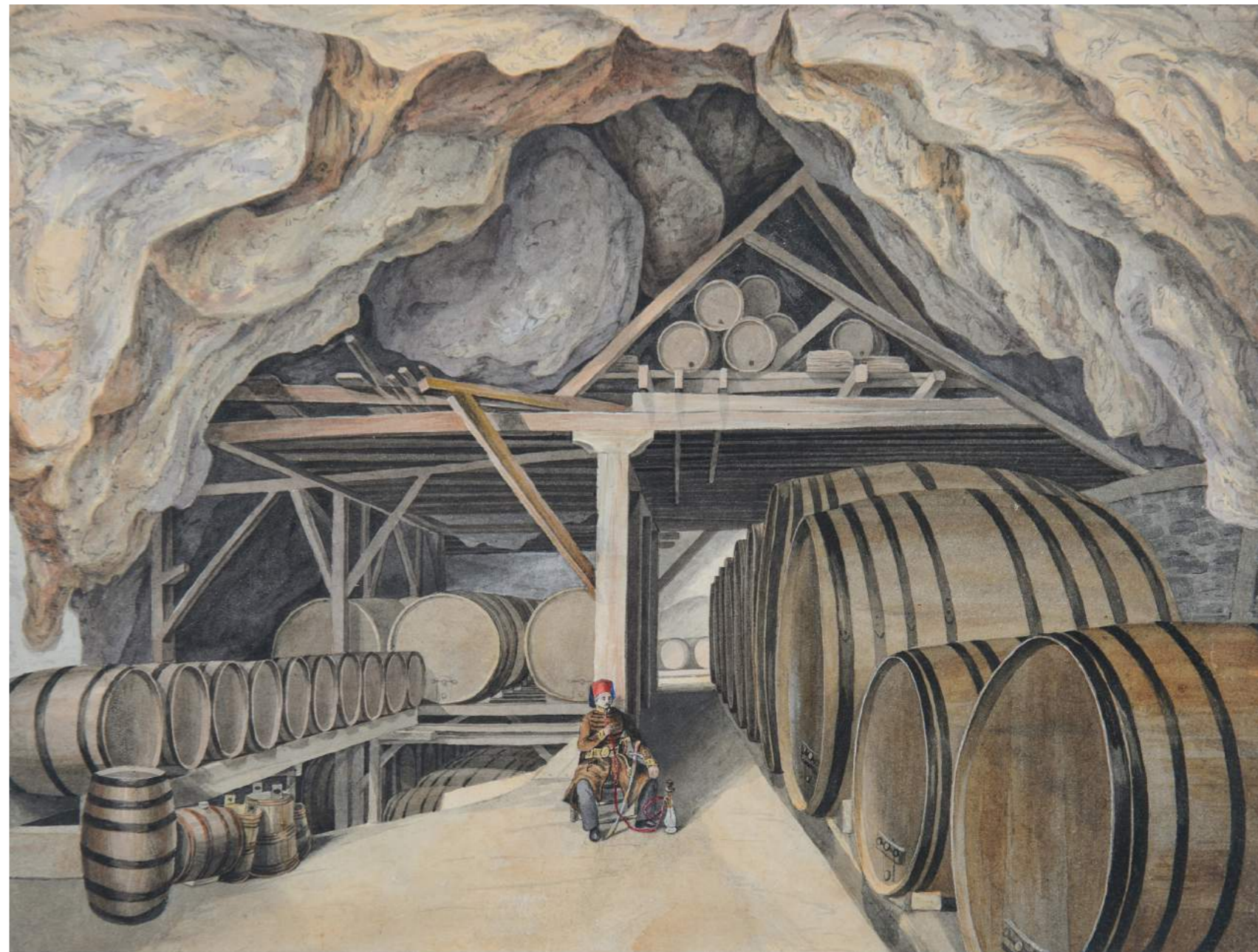


7

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
Intérieure supérieur de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic and touches of gold, with a black line border, inscribed  
verso: Intérieure supérieur de la Cave Grotte  
21 x 25.8 cm

Some very large barrels can be seen stored in the well organised cellar in the caves, guarded by an immaculately dressed guard with a hookah.



8

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
Jardin de la maison d'habitation et réservoir d'eau de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil heightened with white and gum arabic, with a black line border, inscribed verso: Jardin de la maison d'habitation et réservoir d'eau/ de la Cave Grotte  
21 x 25.8 cm

Robert von Muralt stands outside the house outside the cave at dusk, perhaps painted with his wife and children at the door, a fountain playing in the foreground. The terraced garden and fountain show a green fingered gardener has been at work and a charming home has been created at the foot of the cliffs. The sky has turned pink and the mountains appear purple as the sun sets.



9

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)  
Bureau et magasins de Falkeisen & Corney  
dans le Mahmoud Pacha Chan à Broussa

Watercolour over traces of pencil with gum arabic, the barrels inscribed FC or MF 1820, with  
a black line border, inscribed verso: Bureau et magasins de Falkeisen & Corney dans le  
Mahmoud Pacha Chan à Broussa  
21 x 25.8 cm

The two Europeans standing at the door under the plaque reading FC, the offices of Falkeisen and Corney in the Mahmoud Pacha Chan are presumably Messrs Falkeisen and Corney, or possibly senior employees. Many bales of cloth wrapped in a striped material can be seen strewn around and the stacked sacks may contain silk cocoons. The locked door with a Star of David above on the right of the composition appears to show the entrance to a small synagogue.

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Archival Material

J.J. Falkeisen Reise-Erinnerungen, Kunst Museum, Basel, Switzerland, Inv. 835



## Karen Taylor

Karen Taylor has been working with paintings and drawings for over thirty years. She works as a fine art adviser, agent and dealer, offering independent, impartial advice to collectors and museums all over the world on buying, selling and all areas of collection management.

After graduating from Brasenose College, Oxford, where she read history, she joined Sotheby's British Paintings department and spent nearly ten years there. She ran the topographical and travel picture sales, where she built up the Greek and Turkish areas, and also specialised in British drawings and watercolours.

In 1993 she joined Spink's picture department. Here she expanded her interest in Oriental, Indian and Far Eastern art and organised exhibitions of Orientalist pictures and twentieth century British paintings and contemporary artists. She also represented Spink at international art fairs in Basel, Maastricht, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore, amongst other places, and served on the prestigious Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair picture vetting committee.

Based in Sydney for several years, where she renewed her interest in Australian art, Karen headed up Spink Australia before returning to London. Since 2001 she has been running her fine art consultancy, handling British paintings and drawings of all periods, typically placing pieces privately and working with many of the world's major museums.

She can provide valuations for all purposes and advice on insurance, framing, conservation, lighting and display, storage and logistics.

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