



Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire. Heidelberg: Project A7 "Ottoman Empire", Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a global context", Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 10.11.2011-12.11.2011.

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Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire

From 10 to 12 November 2012 the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies in Heidelberg hosted the international conference "Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire" with the financial assistance of Heidelberg University's Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context". Most scholars of Ottoman history would consider the domains of the sultan a transcultural sphere *par excellence*. Indeed, the very deep-rootedness of this understanding often means that phenomena related to transculturality are deemed to be so ordinary that they tend to be understudied as phenomena in their own right. Contributions focused on precisely these phenomena, linking aspects of interconnectedness of the Ottoman Empire with "the world around it" and questions of transcultural entanglement within the Ottoman domains. The symposium was organized by Project A7 "Dynamic asymmetries in transcultural flows at the intersection of Asia and Europe: The case of the early modern Ottoman Empire" directed by Thomas Maissen and Michael Ursinus at the Heidelberg Cluster.

The conference was opened by GÁBOR KÁRMÁN (Leipzig) who traced the development of the representation of the Ottomans in the writings of the "Turkish scribe" Jakab Harsányi Nagy from the stereotype commonly espoused by Transylvanian diplomats towards a much more sympathetic appraisal of the Ottomans. Placing these literary representations in their historical contexts, KÁRMÁN suggested that Harsányi's works provide an insight into the perception of the Empire by its

tributary states.

Turning the tables, HENNING SIEVERT (Bonn) discussed the perception of Habsburg Austria and Safavid Iran on the basis of the *sefâretnâmes* of DÂrri Ahmed Efendi and of Mustafa Efendi as well as EbÅ« Sehl NuËmÅn Efendi's *TedbÅ«rÅt-Å± PesendÅ«de*. Acting as a mirror of the situation at home, Sievert showed that these texts praise an idealized Ottoman rule, while injustice and incompetence are denounced as a breach of contract.

NUR SOBERS KHAN (Cambridge) examined the categories of ethnicity (*cins*) used to describe slaves upon their manumission in the *ÅerÅ«Ëçat* court registers of Galata. While these labels did not necessarily mirror the more complex reality of the diverse ethnic backgrounds of slaves in the Ottoman Empire, they contributed to the formation of their new social identities.

Giving an overview of his research in eighteenth-century Ottoman court registers from the Aegean islands and Thessaloniki, CHRISTIAN ROTH (Heidelberg) pointed out that non-Muslims in the city used the *ÅerÅ«Ëçat* courts considerably more often than their coreligionists on the islands. The sources suggest that communal institutions were approached before taking a case to the local kadi for final confirmation or further litigation, a procedure which reflects the deep integration of non-Muslims and their institutions into the Ottoman legal system.

Investigating the genesis of the Ottoman constitution of 1876, AYLIN BESIRYAN (Florence) argued that, since the state-initiated drafting process incorporated influences from a plurality of formal and informal agents based inside and outside the Empire with the most diverse professional, ideological and cultural backgrounds, the result was an exemplary transcultural synthesis of different legal traditions, ideas, and models.

GÄLAY TULASOÄLU (Heidelberg), who investigated the implementation of de-central reforms in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire, argued that the measures taken by local elites in order to prevent and contain epidemics were aimed at increasing, or at least preventing a further loss, of provincial revenues. She also demonstrated that the British consul in Salonica, Charles Blunt, had a decisive influence on these measures.

Also focusing on Salonica, SOTIRIOS DIMITRIADIS (London) examined the effects of modernization efforts in the second half of the nineteenth century on the city itself and its population. He argued that the cityscape (perceived space) was radically transformed by the agency of several new social institutions (lived space), which again based their decisions on a new discourse on how a city should function (conceived space).

ÄEYDA BAÄLI (Mardin) criticized what she called the "mainstream criticism" of the first Ottoman novels as the result of a certain political perspective based on drawing "rigid borders" between Ottoman and republican processes of modernization, East and West, tradition and modernity. This perspective has resulted in the dismissal of contemporary novels which seem to be at odds with the model of modernization put forward by these critics.

In the conference's keynote lecture on "Trading between East and West: The Ottoman Empire of the early modern period", SURAIYA FAROQHI (Istanbul) unfolded a fascinating panorama of the Ottoman Empire's global commercial links. She thus demonstrated the Empire's outstanding significance as a major hub with regard to the flows of objects and ideas between Europe and Asia. An audio recording of her talk is available at <http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/news-events/news/detail/m/jour-fixe-on-the-ottoman-empire.html> (31.01.2012)

KALLIOPE PAVLI (Athens) exposed the myth of exceptional Ottoman barbarism towards ancient monuments as a convenient excuse for European sightseers

and diplomats to legitimize their systematic looting in the Ottoman Empire. Ignoring even dissenting Greek sources, the perception of "Ottoman barbarism", which had been a pretext for the trade in artifacts, has survived to this day as a stereotype in Greek public education and propaganda.

Taking her starting point from a discussion of two recent exhibitions initiated by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Miniaturk and the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, PATRIZIA KERN (Heidelberg) put these examples in relation to official cultural policies and ongoing societal and political debates and showed how the re-evaluation of the Ottoman past ("neo-Ottomanism") has become a driving force in the creation and arrangement of such exhibitions.

Discussing the French capitulations and consular jurisdictions, VIOREL PANAITTE (Bucharest) focused on the material collected by French Ambassador Franois Savary de BrÄves (1593-1606) in a manuscript now preserved at the BibliothÄque nationale de France. Including a number of hitherto unknown Imperial decrees, charters, and legal opinions, this manuscript affords a fresh perspective on the consular presence and its day-to-day functioning.

In the 1620s, Barbary pirates raided the port of Iskenderun, creating a major diplomatic incident involving almost all diplomatic representatives at the Porte. JOSHUA WHITE (Ann Arbor) used the event as a window on both changing conditions in the Mediterranean at a time when Venice's commercial power was on the retreat and the poorly understood fiscal and political relations between Istanbul and the Ottoman periphery in Syria during this period of transition.

MICHAEL TALBOT (London) showed that in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Porte could adhere at once to the contradictory concepts of the "open" and the "closed" seas, shifting emphasis as expedient, for instance when forcing the British to try and restrain their privateers, who often violated Ottoman waters in pursuit of French ships, in order to avoid liability, even if Britain perceived Ottoman territorial claims as contrary to international law.

Examining the rise to prominence of the cities of Graz and Banja Luka, MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH (Istanbul) demonstrated that the military and demographic situation in such peripheral areas made it possible for marginalized groups to leave their mark on the monumental landscape in a way which would have been im-

possible in the core areas, thus creating an easily traceable link between the architectural topography of the area and its frontier situation.

By exploring the boundaries of the concept of fluidity with regard to early modern identities, ANTONIS HADJIKYRIACOU (Nicosia) and DAPHNE LAPPA (Florence) criticized the overtones of modernization theory inherent in current uses of the term which, they argued, is not exclusive to pre-modern eras. They stressed the need to explore the temporal and spatial contexts of early modern identities, rather than using ill-defined catch-all terms. Instead of exploring early modern fluidity, they called for an inquiry into what is early modern about fluidity.

In his contribution, MORITZ DEUTSCHMANN (Florence) examined the Iranian province of Azerbajdzhan in the nineteenth century where Iranians, Russians, and Ottomans vied with one another for political power even through Christian missionaries. While Russia attempted to influence the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Ottomans, in stark contrast to policy at home, encouraged the conversion of Armenians to Catholicism as a means to increasing their own influence in the region.

Challenging the notion that so-called renegades had undergone a *social death*, TOBIAS GRAF (Heidelberg) demonstrated that the identities and loyalties of those who had *turned Turk* remained ambivalent and frequently harked back to their pre-conversion lives e.g. in the choice of *nisbes* such as Frenk or in the formation of networks along the lines of shared origins (*cins*).

As the only group whose membership bridged the religious divides between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, DOROTHE SOMMER (Leiden), contradicting previous research, concluded that freemasonry in Ottoman Syria cannot be regarded as the vanguard of Western imperialism but instead acted independently in an attempt to promote a new Syrian self-perception.

KAY JANKRIFT (Augsburg) examined the involvement of Jewish advisors in the formulation of foreign policy in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. Individuals such as Joseph Nasi who had migrated to the Ottoman Empire after expulsion from the Iberian peninsula possessed a great deal of local knowledge and, more importantly, extensive networks of correspondents and informants. Christian European observers correctly attributed the political power of these Jewish advisers at the Porte to their role as brokers of information.

LINDA DARLING (Tucson) explored Eastern and

Western *advice literature* as a transcultural phenomenon. Despite their common roots, the traditions eventually diverged. Yet European interest in Ottoman *advice literature* continued in the early modern period while the Ottomans largely ignored European literature until the eighteenth century, when both strands, each on its own, began looking for more differentiated solutions to the problems of the day.

Tying in with the *bird's eye* views of historians like Bayly, Subrahmanyam, and Armitage, HÄLYA CANBAKAL (Istanbul) showed that the *WahhÄbÄ«* uprising was by no means the first, nor the most significant in the empire's history. Drawing upon the example of a longer period of trouble in the cities of Ayntab and Aleppo around 1790, she demonstrated that the Empire had participated in the Age of Revolution even earlier while stressing the economic roots of these short-lived rebellions.

Focusing on the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730, FELIX KONRADÄs (Kiel) explored contemporary notions of social order and disorder. While the European or Ottoman origins of the sources did not have a great influence on the perception of the rebellion, it seems that some accounts had been written from what could be called the *palace perspective*, while others rather viewed the riots from a *city-dweller perspective*. These perspectives and their underlying assumptions about society shaped the respective descriptions of the rebellion.

PASCAL FIRGES (Heidelberg) examined the challenges faced by the French revolutionary consular agents in the Ottoman Empire in implementing the regime change within the French expatriate community. While they had to deal with many of the same problems as the authorities in France itself, because they did not dare alienate the Ottoman government they could not take recourse to coercive measures against their citizens but instead had to try to win them over to the new political system.

Scholarship on Ottoman reactions to the French Revolution has tended to underestimate the role which the revolution played in the Ottoman discourse before the Napoleonic Invasion of Egypt (1798). Drawing on Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts HIMMET TAÄKÄMÄR (Cambridge, MA) challenged this notion and showed that the Ottoman awareness of, and the engagement with, both the ideology and the political implications of the French Revolution were much stronger than hitherto expected.

As Linda Darling remarked after the conference, two major points connected all presentations. The first concerns the need for a precise terminology which allows scholars to distinguish the different mechanisms at work in specific frontier or contact zone situations. The second point is one of historiography. While the necessity of a critique of previous scholarship is undeniable, she, along with Suraiya Faroqhi, offered encouragement to do so not so much by way of self-righteously postulating the alleged ignorance of previous generations of historians but rather as a means of effectively communicating recent findings to an audience well-versed in precisely this existing scholarship. Personal email communication to all participants of the conference on 16 November 2011.

The organizers, Pascal Firges, Tobias Graf, Christian Roth, and G lay Tulaso lu would like to thank all participants in the conference for their contributions and immensely stimulating discussions. A collected volume containing a selection of papers delivered during the event is currently in preparation and is expected for publication in 2013.

Conference Overview:

Panel 1: Perceptions

G bor K rm n (University of Leipzig): Turks reconsidered: Jakab Nagy de Hars ny s changing image of the Ottoman

Henning Sievert (University of Bonn): Post-Safavid Iran and Habsburg Austria as seen by Ottoman diplomats

Panel 2: Legal identities

Nur Sobers Khan (University of Cambridge): Identity formation and legal categories of ethnicity (*cins*) in early modern Ottoman Istanbul

Christian Roth (Heidelberg University): Aspects of juridical integration of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire: Observations in the 18th century urban and rural Aegean

Aylin Besiryan (European University Institute, Florence): The transcultural dimension of the Ottoman constitution

Panel 3: Modernisation

G lay Tulaso lu (Heidelberg University): A British consul and local reforms in  pre-Tanzimat  Ottoman Salonica

Sotirios Dimitriadis (SOAS, London): Transforming a

late Ottoman port-city: Salonica, 1876 1912

 eyda Ba li (Mardin Artuklu University): The birth of the Ottoman novel beyond cultural and literary borders

Keynote lecture

Suraiya Faroqhi (Istanbul Bilgi University): Trading between East and West: The Ottoman Empire of the early modern period

Panel 4: Heritage

Kalliope Pavli (Panteion University, Athens): Constructing myths: Ottomans vs. Greek ancient monuments

Patrizia Kern (Heidelberg University): Neo-Ottomanism and museum space: Two case studies from Istanbul

Panel 5: Maritime trades

Viorel Panaite (University of Bucharest): French capitulations and consular jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean (late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries)

Joshua White (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): An international incident: Piracy and diplomacy in a seventeenth-century Ottoman Mediterranean port

Michael Talbot (SOAS, London): Defining maritime territoriality: British privateers and Ottoman privateer lines, c. 1690 c. 1790

Panel 6: Frontiers

Maximilian Hartmuth (Istanbul): Toward a cultural topography of violence on the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier

Antonis Hadjikyriacou (Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Nicosia) and Daphne Lappa (European University Institute, Florence): Exploring the conceptual boundaries of the concept of fluidity: Early modern  contact zones  in the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean

Moritz Deutschmann (European University Institute, Florence): Christianity and the Russo-Iranian-Ottoman encounter in the Iranian province of Azerbajdzhan in the nineteenth century

Panel 7: Networks

Tobias Graf (Heidelberg University): Renegades in

the Ottoman Empire and their networks, c. 1580â1610

Dorothe Sommer (University of Leiden): Freemasonry, interconfessional sociability, and the promotion of a new Syrian self-perception, c. 1860â1908

Panel 8: Statecraft

Kay Jankrift (University of Augsburg): The Ottoman hub: Jewish advisors and Western diplomats at the sultan's court in the 16th century

Linda Darling (University of Arizona): Advice literature as a transcultural phenomenon

Panel 9: Rebellions

HÃ¼lya Canbakal (SabancÄ± University, Istanbul): The Age of Revolution in the Ottoman Empire: A provincial perspective

Felix Konrad (Kiel University): âErÃczilâ and âcanailleâ: Ottoman and European perceptions of social unrest in the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730

Panel 10: French Revolution

Pascal Firges (Heidelberg University): The French Revolution in Istanbul, 1793â1795

Himmat TaÃkÃ¶mÃ¼r (Harvard University): From great sedition to great revolution: Ottoman responses to the French Revolution

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/>

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