Travel and identity

ÜMİT KURT,
Literary Editor

The focus in this issue of Turkish Review is very much on the library rather than the seminar room, with six volumes examined. Conferences have not been entirely left out, however, and briefs on two events from late 2014 bring this edition of Reviews and Briefs to a close.

First comes Rainer Hermann's "Where is Turkey Headed? Culture Battles in Turkey," reviewed here by Chicago University's Varak Ketsemanian, which explores the social dynamics of the changes experienced in Turkey in recent times from an historical perspective.

Next comes Esra Özyürek's Princeton University Press publication, "Being German, Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the New Europe." Diğdem Soyaltın (Stockholm University's Institute for Turkish Studies) provides a solid account of Özyürek's valuable insights on the integrating of the ethnic and religious elements of Islam among Germany's Muslims and on converts to Islam in the country.

A nuanced account of Suraiya Faroqhi's work on the lives and history of craftsmen in the Ottoman Empire -- "Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire" -- is provided by Alexandra Mateescu (Chicago University). The Ottoman theme continues with the edited volume from Marios Hadjianastasis, "Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey." Researcher Görkem Daşkan summarizes some of social, political and cultural aspects of Ottoman history explored in this wide-ranging volume.

A more recent slice of Ottoman history comes in the form of Hakkı Taş's (İpek University) review of "Arming the Sultan: German Arms Trade and Personal Diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I," by Naci Yorulmaz. In this work, Yorulmaz looks at the influential role played by the arms trade and "personal diplomacy" in relations between the Ottoman Empire and Germany during the lead-up to World War I.

The first of the two conference reviews is a comprehensive account from Bahar Başer (Coventry University) of İstanbul Bilgi University's Kurds Beyond Borders: Transforming Spaces and Identities conference held in October 2014. Finally Benjamin Weineck (University of Bayreuth and University of Heidelberg) provides a brief of the November 2014 gathering at Heidelberg University. Text and Cultural Heritage: Alevi-related Sources between Philological Research and Theological Canonization looked at the ritual and cultural dynamics of Alevi communities in Turkey and in Germany, and was the source of important discussions on changes and transformations in Alevi cultural identity.

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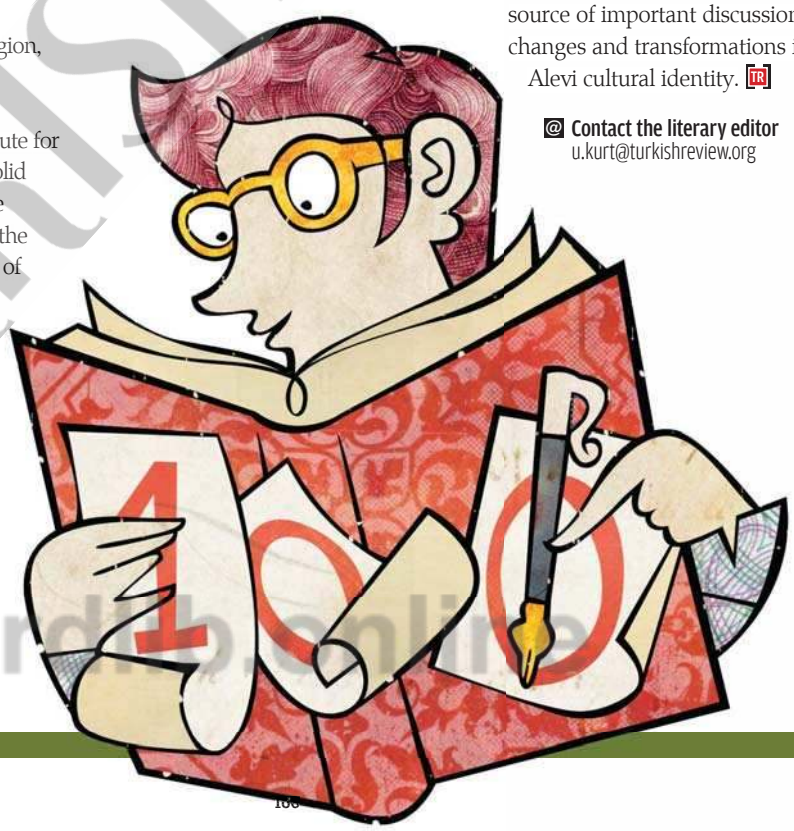

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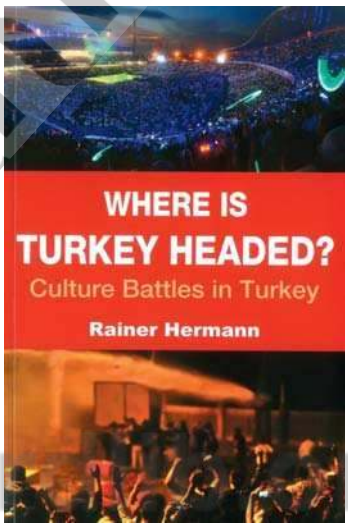
A backlash among the Anatolian population

VARAK KETSEMANIAN,
University of Chicago

In the midst of the turmoil in the Middle East, "Where is Turkey Headed?" is a lingering question, the answer to which remains blurry as social, economic and political factors fluctuate, bringing about a shift in the power balance of the region. In an attempt to gauge the seismic transformations witnessed in Turkey throughout the past few decades, Rainer Hermann's book "Where is Turkey Headed? Culture Battles in Turkey" looks into the dynamics of social change from the broad perspective of a German journalist who lived in İstanbul for nearly 20 years. With a panoramic view of the history of the Turkish Republic as well as a background of the Ottoman experience, Hermann argues that the driving force for this change has its roots in the very society that has discovered its cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity and is pushing back against omnipotent government control. Dividing his work into three main sections, Hermann analyzes the various fronts of the cultural changes in Turkey, explaining the way in which they are modifying the ossified political and social mechanisms of the Kemalist doctrine. The book is an effort to juxtapose the various elements of Turkish society in an attempt to assess the developing but oscillating relationships among them.

In the first chapter of the book, "The Founding Axioms of the Republic of Turkey and How they are Challenged," Hermann analyzes the various constituents of the Turkish elite -- the military and the Republican People's Party (CHP) -- who consider themselves the guardians of the country's integrity against domestic and foreign foes as well as the protectors of Turkish national security. In this respect, Hermann provides a historical background for the emergence of the Kemalist creed, the six doctrines of which -- populism, republicanism, secularism, reformism, nationalism, and statism -- adumbrated the political and social platforms of the ruling elite. Two aspects, amongst others, form the bulk of this chapter; an emphasis is put on the history of the military coups and institutions of violence in Turkey, with the Turkish generals acting as the power brokers policing the orthodox upbringing of Turkish society. Hermann argues that this not only dictated a homogeneous identity to all Turkish citizens but also brought a social and geographical stratification to the country. Being at odds, the gap is widened between the center and the peripheries, the inhabitants of which are regarded as "black" (siyah Türk) and hence lower-class Turks. Homogenizing in this way the standards by which a person could be a "real" Turk, Hermann explicates how the Kemalist elite failed to recognize the diverse cultures, ethnicities and even religions of the various components of Turkish society.

THE BOOK IS AN EFFORT TO JUXTAPOSE THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF TURKISH SOCIETY IN AN ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEM



According to the author, the

Rainer Hermann, *"Where is Turkey Headed? Culture Battles in Turkey,"* (Clifton: Blue Dome Press, 2014), 316 pp. ISBN: 9781935295211

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The book puts an emphasis on the history of the military coups and institutions of violence in Turkey.
PHOTO: ZAMAN ARCHIVE, KADİR CAN

repressive policy of the military and urban elite as well the ossification of the cultural rubrics of Kemalist nationalists triggered a backlash among the Anatolian population, who were eager to voice their opposition through an outright expression of religiosity as well as cultural diversity. This is what Hermann calls the "counter-elite" in the second chapter of the book, titled "The Counter-Elite on its Way to Power." It is in this section that the author attempts to redefine the contentious term "political Islam." With the rise of devout Sunnis to power, whose ascendance culminated in the Justice and Development Party's (AK Party) electoral triumphs, starting in 2002, the author contends that these people no longer see Islam as the guiding principle of political action but rather as a part of their cultural identity, long ignored by the urban elite. Therefore, political Islam is interpreted not as a threat to the secularism of the Turkish state but rather an evident pillar of society to be reckoned with. Surveying the

ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR, THE REPRESSIVE POLICY OF THE MILITARY AND URBAN ELITE TRIGGERED A BACKLASH AMONG THE ANATOLIAN POPULATION

various officials and politicians who spearheaded the rise of the "Anatolian tigers" (Anadolu kaplanları), Hermann argues that the process of economic liberalization initiated by former Prime Minister (and later President) Turgut Özal not only spurred large waves of rural emigration to the urban centers but also triggered the beginning of economic prosperity among many "Anatolian" businessmen and entrepreneurs. Hence, claims the author, they have come to fill the political vacuum left by the corrupted institutions of the state.

Appealing to the cultural differences of the "unorthodox" members of the society, the author concludes his analysis by stating that the AK Party, as the champion of the reinvigorated, rural Turk, wanted a democratic state that served the individual and society, not itself. He uses the expression "the state has retreated" to encapsulate his argument regarding the liberalization of major aspects of Turkish society, including the economy, political participation and cultural diversity.

Despite the revitalizing appeal of political Islam, some categories and groups of Turkish society are still left marginalized and even persecuted. In chapter three of the book, Hermann discusses the difficulties of disadvantaged groups like Kurds, Armenians, Alevis, homosexuals, liberal writers and women in integrating themselves in society without trouble. Rejected by both Kemalist circles and the "reformist" AK Party of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the author analyzes the various institutions of violence and coercion -- paramilitary organizations and judiciary bodies -- put into practice for the oppression of such groups. Such people are perceived as scapegoats and threats to the national security of the country. Presenting the historical precedents of such behaviors, Hermann explicates that the marginalization and persecution of unwanted or undesired elements has been part of a traditional domestic policy developed in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, this chapter tackles the organizations

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Former president and architect of the Sept. 12 coup Gen. Kenan Evren (C). PHOTO: ZAMAN ARCHIVE, KADİR CAN

and social instruments utilized by such groups against the reluctance of the state and state-sponsored institutions to provide immunization against abuses, coercion and persecution.

Although Herman paints a vivid portrait of contemporary Turkey while examining both sides of the diverse and contradictory elements of Turkish society, there is a conspicuous polemic underlying the narrative of the text. The reader experiences the polarizing notions of "good vs. bad guys" as he reads through the text. In other words, Erdoğan and his entourage of Anatolian descent are portrayed as the "liberators" of Turkish society from the oppressive regime of the generals and the Kemalist urban elite. Although with the arrival of the AK Party on the political arena the Turkish economy has progressed considerably, not only on the national but also the international level, there are many parallels and similarities with the "despised" Kemalists with regards to the cultural and multi-ethnic composition of Turkey. Given that Hermann considers the multi-cultural aspect of Turkish society as the revitalizing drive behind the significant political changes discussed in the book, the work fails to distinguish in what sense Erdoğan's treatment of socially disadvantaged groups who supposedly form the pillar of multi-culturalism in Turkey is different to that of the Kemalist urban elite who held power formerly. In this sense, it is surprising to find articles at the end of the work -- presented in the form of appendices -- that not only formulate a rejoinder to the argument presented by Hermann but also explicate the authoritative tendencies of Erdoğan in his attempt to consolidate his political position. Therefore, in spite of the author's success in producing an informative and all-encompassing work on the changing aspects of Turkish society, his conclusion that the rising Muslim middle class and the AK Party wanted a democratic state that served the individual remains dubious. It then becomes obvious that the state has not really retreated. One only needs to look at these final articles to see how Erdoğan offers harsher penalties for those who exercise the right to freedom -- something for which he fought for most of his life, according to Hermann. TR

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Contradictions and challenges in the lives of German Muslims

DR. DİĞDEM SOYALTIN,
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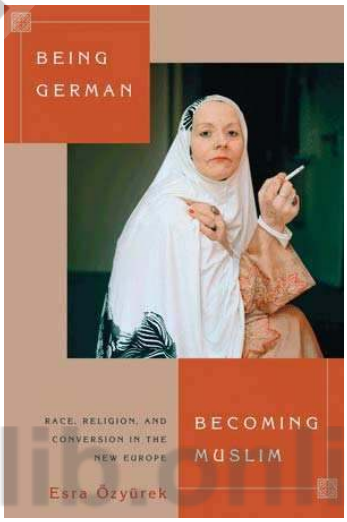
In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks in Paris, the PEDIGA movement -- or Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West -- held a rally in Dresden against the growing "Islamization" of Germany. A recent poll by the Bertelsmann Foundation also shows a majority (57 percent) of non-Muslim Germans thought that Islam was threatening to German society.[1] Yet, Chancellor Angela Merkel echoed Christian Democrat former President Christian Wulff[2] and said Islam belongs to Germany, in a clear repudiation of the protesters gathering in Dresden and other cities. In this political context, Islam in Germany is mostly associated with Muslim immigrants, especially with those from Turkey and Middle Eastern countries, while German converts to Islam not taken into consideration at all in public discussions. This book by Esra Özyürek challenges the ethnicized conceptualization of Islam in Germany by focusing on the highly ignored reality of native German Muslims who now number in the tens of thousands (21). Özyürek explores how converts embrace Islam, which is seen as an external religion to Europe, and accommodate becoming Muslim to being German in a society where Islam is increasingly marginalized and even criminalized. Being treated as traitors to European culture, German converts to Islam promote a "culture-free Islam," Özyürek argues, that is stripped of its cultural and traditional baggage and thus becomes more compatible with German and European values and mentalities.

Differently from scholars who explain the recent spread of Islam among Europeans by a globalization and secularization which has contributed to a standardization and purification of Islam, Özyürek attributes agency to converts in breaking the link between culture and religion. She argues that as a response to the marginalization and racialization of Islam, European converts and native European Muslims aim to break the association of being Turkish or Arab and being Muslim. To do so they promote a universal and tradition-free Islam, which fits European values more than Middle Eastern mentalities (p. 18). Nonetheless, such an approach reproduces the Eurocentric perspective that perceives the "European mind" as truly rational and the "Oriental mind" as not and makes it harder for German converts to Islam to get a legitimized space in the global Muslim world -- the *ummah*. This book provides a judicious and well thought-through consideration of such contradictions and challenges in the lives of German Muslims and offers a fascinating discussion on blurring boundaries between Germans and Muslim and the changing realities of European identity.

THE BOOK IS ORGANIZED IN SIX CHAPTERS AND IS FLUENTLY AND ELOQUENTLY WRITTEN



The empirical data comes from ethnographic research that was conducted over three and a half years (2006-7, 2009-11 and half of 2013). Özyürek conducted semi-structured interviews with converts, took part in their everyday activities over an extended amount of time

Esra Özyürek, *"Being German, Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the New Europe,"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 171 pp.
ISBN: 9781400852710

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and joined a number of lectures organized by German-speaking Muslim associations. The book is organized in six chapters and is fluently and eloquently written.

Chapter one explores the ways in which Islam gained a German face. German converts to Islam denationalize and de-traditionalize Islam to embrace a pure understanding of the Quran. This "purified Islam," as argued by some converts, is based on German Enlightenment ideas of the rational individual and natural religion (29). Özyürek shows how German-speaking Muslims and associations such as the Deutschsprachiger Muslimkreis (German-speaking Muslim Circle, or DMK) played a role in detaching Islam from its cultural or traditional interpretations. Yet, as well-argued by Özyürek, the efforts to create a German Islamic practice reproduced the anti-immigrant discourse that perceives immigrant Muslims, especially Turks and Arabs, as irrational and bad Muslims who are not compatible with pure German or European Islam (50).

In chapter two the author focuses on the flip side of the story and explores how German converts to Islam deal with the negative and unpleasant reactions they receive from mainstream German society concerning their new choice of lifestyle. In order not to be treated as uneducated immigrants, Muslim converts advocate a pure and idealized Islam that is untainted by underdeveloped traditions and by definition "wrong" Islamic practices. For example, Özyürek underlines that many female German converts follow the Arabic and African style of head coverings to differentiate themselves from Turkish women, who wear more fashionable, shiny and colorful headscarves. However, especially with the emergence and rise of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), this head-covering style has become a way to demonstrate how Islam can embrace modernity in Turkey. Founded in 2001, the AK Party defined itself as a conservative democratic party, which differentiates it from its Islamist predecessors. In this regard, it could have been interesting to read more on how the changing dynamics of political Islam in Turkey affect the perceptions of German converts to Islam with regard to Turkish Muslims.

Chapter three focuses on East German converts to Islam after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and shows how different their conversions are in comparison to West German experiences. As Özyürek shows, becoming a Muslim was regarded by marginalized East Germans as a way to get rid of their second-class status and to become German. However, their conversion to Islam made them marginalized Muslims in the new Germany and unexpectedly brought some of them together into close contact with immigrant Muslims. What the two groups had in common was a lack of ability to live and work in a Germany run by West German standards and rules (86). The rise of racist nationalism in Germany at the beginning of 1990s had an enormous impact on the East German way of being German. While some of the East Germans supported racist movements against immigrant Muslims to become more accepted by West Germans, others took the side of the immigrants and even converted to Islam in order to free themselves from their East German backgrounds and to simply be German.

In chapter four the author carefully unpacks the notion of being Muslim as a way of becoming German and analyses the role of a

Being treated as traitors to European culture, German converts to Islam promote a 'culture-free Islam,' Özyürek argues.
SEPT. 11, 2002
PHOTO: REUTERS, CHRISTIAN CHARISIUS

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PEGIDA demonstrators in Dresden, Germany. JAN. 25, 2015 PHOTO: AP, JENS MEYER

youth organization, the Muslimische Jugend in Deutschland (Muslim Youth in Germany, or MJD), in promoting a tradition-free Islamic lifestyle that is compatible with German identity. Founded in 1994, the MJD explicitly describes itself as "multicultural," "Islamic" and "hip" and addresses all Muslims regardless of nationality and background.[3] The organization has become popular in recent years, especially among young Muslims who are willing to leave their parents' ethnic identities and traditional practices behind and incorporate Islamic identity into fold of Germanness. Fun Islam has an important factor to explain the success of the MJD in reaching a wide range of German Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds (99).

Chapter five elaborates more on the spread of Islam among

ÖZYÜREK SHOWS HOW SALAFISM ALLOWS GERMAN MUSLIMS TO EMBRACE THEIR RELIGION WITHOUT BEING ASSOCIATED WITH ANTI-MUSLIM SENTIMENT

European youth and embarks from an observatory approach to the Salafi al-Nur mosque in Berlin to introduce how Salafism has become so successful in attracting non-Muslims in Germany (112). Özyürek revisits the literature on the rise of Salafism in Europe, which suggests that the contemporary generation of European Muslims feel themselves as victims of racism, exclusion and loneliness in the West and they turn to Salafism to improve their status in society. Özyürek finds this kind of functionalist thinking that pathologizes Salafis rather weak in grasping its capacity as a political and philosophical alternative. Moreover, this instrumentalist understating fails to explain why converts choose Salafism in Germany, where it is closely associated with radicalization and terrorism (114). Exploring the theological aspects of Salafism, Özyürek shows how Salafism allows German Muslims to embrace their religion without being associated with anti-Muslim sentiment. In this way it has the potential to bring together people with diverse backgrounds who are willing to learn about Islam in a context outside national traditions. This "new generation of Germans," as she calls them, are interested in

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understanding the spiritual path they chose and find Salafi theology a way to attain a purportedly true Islam freed of cultural accretions (130). In conclusion, Özyürek presents Salafism as a "model of postethnic sociability that fits the realities of contemporary postindustrialist, postsocialist and postunification ethnically mixed Germany" but largely fails to unpack the political and philosophical capacity of Salafi theology and how it will escape from being used by German converts and native German Muslims as a way to differentiate themselves from "violent, uneducated and simply stupid" immigrant Muslims (131). This Eurocentric understanding distances Salafism from its theological principles and shows its limits as a model for contemporary societies, as claimed by Özyürek.

In her conclusion, the author deals with the discussion on moral panic over converts to Islam. It is not only the fear of a potential terrorist attack that puts German converts high on the agenda but also the worry that Islamic culture is taking over Germany (134). In this political context, converts to Islam have given flesh to the fear of the dominance of Islamic religion and culture in Europe and show the limits of European secularism. But

ÖZYÜREK TELLS A FRESH STORY FOR THOSE WHO ARE TIRED OF THE 'MODERN WEST AGAINST THE BACKWARD OTHER' DEBATE

at the same time they bring hope for the future since they challenge the boundaries between cultures and civilizations and define new ways of becoming Muslim, German and European. When it has disposed of its Eurocentric perspective that treats immigrant Muslims as patriarchal, intolerant and undemocratic, this way of becoming Muslim can challenge the rising Islamophobia cooked up by right-wing populists in Europe.

As someone coming from a different academic discipline but having received a Ph.D. in political science in Germany, it was a great pleasure for me to read this book, which offers an extremely interesting analysis and persuasive argument with regard to the contemporary generation of converts to Islam in Germany and how they challenge the common understanding on Islam, Germanness and being European. The book provides background information on Islam in Europe by both revisiting and rearticulating the insights of existing literature on transnational Islam and Islamism in Europe but presents a new perspective by bringing in the role of agency. Apart from being a brilliant guide to grasping the multifaceted and dynamic nature of Islam in Europe, the book sheds light on the complexities of today's irreversibly mixed and highly unequal societies.

This book comes at a time when Europe was once more slapped by the anger of Europe's young, marginalized and socioeconomically underprivileged Muslims when 17 people died during three days of deadly attacks in Paris.[4] Although the book is careful in its analysis concerning the difference between German Muslims and Muslims with immigrant backgrounds, it makes a meaningful input to today's discussion on whether Islam belongs in Europe by exploring different ways of being European and becoming Muslim. Özyürek tells a fresh story for those who are tired of the "modern West against the backward other" debate and are interested in moving toward grasping the ever-changing social and political conditions of Europe in general and Germany in particular. TR

1. "Muslims in Germany have close ties to society and state," *Religion Monitor, Bertelsmann Foundation*, Jan. 8, 2015, accessed Jan. 22, 2015, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/topics/aktuelle-meldungen/2015/januar/religion-monitor.
2. "The World from Berlin: 'Should Muslims Be Treated on an Equal Footing?'," *Der Spiegel*, accessed Jan. 22, 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/the-world-from-berlin-should-muslims-be-treated-on-an-equal-footing-a-722065.html.
3. "Wer ist die MJD?," *Muslimische Jugend*, accessed Jan. 22, 2015, http://www.muslimische-jugend.de/die-mjd?page=0,0.
4. "From Teenage Angst to Jihad," *The New York Times*, Jan. 13, 2015, accessed Jan. 22, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/14/opinion/the-anger-of-europes-young-marginalized-muslims.html?_r=0.

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A more nuanced understanding of when and why people traveled

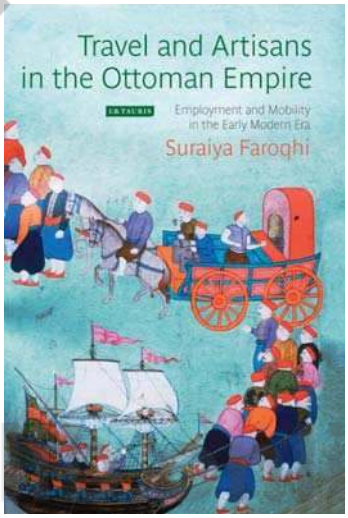
ALEXANDRA MATEESCU,
Chicago University

For historians, there are many challenges to studying people on the move. The problem of "keeping track" of subjects within governed territory has been the main reason that, throughout history, ruling powers have gone to great lengths to compel nomads and other itinerant peoples to become sedentary and thus more easily governable through record-keeping. Consequently, those who were mobile -- particularly non-elites traveling for trade, pilgrimage and other myriad reasons -- leave scarce documentation behind for understanding the spatial, economic and social boundaries of the worlds they inhabited. In "Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era," Suraiya Faroqhi has endeavored to flesh out the lives and movements of such people within both a historiographical and political context. Her book aims to challenge the predominant understanding that in the early modern era of the Ottoman Empire, "ordinary" people played a role in history merely as passive, sedentary subjects bound within their small worlds. It is true, she acknowledges, that immobility was the norm. However, even in a world where peasants were required to obtain official permission from tax administrators in order to leave their homes and migration in and out of İstanbul was meticulously regulated, there is still great value in developing a more nuanced understanding of when and why people traveled and the politics of control that sought to regulate the movement of people and goods.

Faroqhi has had an influential career working to document the lives of the Ottoman non-elite, as in her previous books, "Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire" (2005) and "Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople Under the Ottomans" (2009), among a wide array of literature addressing the economic and social history of artisans, merchants and other Ottoman subjects. Her latest book presents an array of small-scale studies organized by chapter. They present mobility among three broad groups: Ottoman elites, ordinary people traveling (both as free agents and involuntarily as slaves) and those who remained sedentary but were nevertheless mobile within the confines of İstanbul. The author covers a vast range of people on the move, including a look at pilgrims to Mecca through the lens of the noncommercial goods they brought back as well as tracing the trade and distribution networks of 18th-century halva manufacturers and Tunisian fez-sellers in the context of administrative policies regulating their trade and movements. She also addresses specific spaces of heightened commerce and travel, as in the textile industry of Bursa and Üsküdar as a place where fugitive slaves and others were continuously "just passing through" for both licit and illicit reasons (117).

One of the driving forces of Faroqhi's book is to serve as motivation and exemplar for other scholars to begin approaching the topic of mobility from new angles.

FAROQHI'S LATEST BOOK PRESENTS AN ARRAY OF SMALL-SCALE STUDIES ORGANIZED BY CHAPTER



Suraiya Faroqhi, *"Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era,"* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2014), 320 pp.
ISBN: 9781780764818

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As the author notes in her discussion on "Ottoman domestic politics," migration can look vastly different depending on the perspective taken. She notes that, "often we know more about the government's attempt to foil migration than about the moves and motivations of the migrants" (156). Consequently, the most obvious records of the movement of non-elites are generally from the perspective of the Ottoman administration, which show "Ottoman sultans moving their subjects around like pieces on a chessboard" and striving, as in the case of İstanbul, to enforce mechanisms for managing what was perceived to be the city's "surplus" population of undesirables (xiii). While much of the existing literature on mobility tends to rely on such records, Faroqhi's overarching aim is to "show the agency of the sultan's subjects both elite and non-elite" (xii) by making use of often indirect and under-explored sources to paint a broader picture of mobility in the early modern era. In one chapter, for example, she explores narrative complaints presented in petitions that were filed by 16th-century Ottoman merchants in the Adriatic who appealed to Venetian authorities for justice against robbers at sea, often by requesting letters from officials in İstanbul to vouch for their cause. She makes the case that while the petitions themselves are generally laconic and written in very simple Turkish, they, in addition to the supporting documents from Ottoman bureaucrats, provide a window into the ways in which Ottoman merchants in the 18th

AS THE AUTHOR NOTES, MIGRATION CAN LOOK VASTLY DIFFERENT DEPENDING ON THE PERSPECTIVE TAKEN

century chose to present themselves to Venetian officials. Faroqhi presents two case studies -- using these sources as a guide on how to utilize "unpromising documents" (77) -- in which she shows how such Ottoman-Venetian interactions can reveal the "political perspectives in which an Ottoman subject with some knowledge of the world regarded the relationship between Venice and the Sultan" (80). In this way, Faroqhi gives a sense of how historians can provide some insight into the outlooks of people who otherwise would not have left a record of their travels.

While the book's title suggests a central focus on artisans, a full third of the text is dedicated to the observations and interactions of elite travelers, including an exploration of Ottoman envoys to European courts, asylum-seekers into Ottoman territories (such as Jews, fugitive royals from foreign courts, Spaniards, Italians and other outsiders) as well as a chapter revisiting the fascinating but not-always-reliable narratives of famous traveler Evliya Çelebi recounting his stay in Cairo. Her discussion on the evolution of ambassador protocols for reporting back to İstanbul reveals the ways in which travel served as a source of political knowledge and can provide intriguing insight into the aspects of material culture and institutions that caught the attention of visiting diplomats. She does so by exploring the accounts of several dignitaries, including figures such as Zülfikâr Pasha, a 17th-century ambassador who spent much of his time reporting the indignities and poor treatment he suffered at the Habsburg court but who also

Faroqhi has endeavored to flesh out the lives and movements of tradesmen within both a historiographical and political context.
PHOTO: AKSİYON ARCHIVE

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relayed what insight he could gather on European military affairs.

These diplomatic accounts serve to urge the necessity of moving beyond what Faroqhi takes to be a simplistic argument put forward by figures such as Bernard Lewis that prior to the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon, there was very little interest on the part of Ottoman dignitaries in European politics unless directly pertaining to Ottoman interests. While it is true that embassy accounts in the 1700s generally focused on diplomatic protocol and functional description rather than deeper observation -- which, as Faroqhi herself admits, can be a source of frustration for historians -- they nevertheless document shifting Ottoman interest in closing a perceived gap in the knowledge of the affairs of Latinate Europe. In addition to highlighting primary sources that demand closer examination, she emphasizes the importance of such sources in reevaluating periodization schemes of different stages of Ottoman perspectives on Europe through distinctive worldviews.

Another instance of Faroqhi's creative approach to exploring movement employs documents pertaining to a building project at Hotin, a northern fortification where nearly 2,000 unskilled construction laborers were drafted and relocated from İstanbul in 1716. This case study is interesting in that it exemplifies an ongoing theme throughout the book: The preoccupation of the Ottoman administration with regulating borders and adjusting the population of İstanbul by ridding it of people perceived as surplus or possibly even undesirable. Many of the workmen drafted were young, single and unskilled male migrants into İstanbul, including Albanians, Armenians and various Christians of unidentified ethnicity. Consequently, Faroqhi speculates that labor conscription to remote regions may have been one mechanism for ridding the capital of "excess" people. Similarly, her chapter on 16th-century Üsküdar as a hub of movement into and out of İstanbul and her discussion on the trade networks of Tunisian fez-sellers through the guild system

FAROQHI GIVES A SENSE OF HOW HISTORIANS CAN PROVIDE SOME INSIGHT INTO THE OUTLOOKS OF PEOPLE WHO OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT A RECORD OF THEIR TRAVELS

present a fascinating picture of conflicting forces at work. The emerging paradox throughout the book shows how on the one hand İstanbul was a city that, prior to the 19th century, could not reproduce its population without influx of migrants. On the other, however, Ottoman administrators were heavily invested in preventing unwanted movement and occasionally pruning the population.

Faroqhi variously describes her chapters as "vignettes" or "sketches," and they should be taken as such. While the book's breadth ultimately leaves many questions unanswered and should pique the curiosity of both historians and non-historians alike, Faroqhi's contribution lies in the windows she opens for future scholarship on mobility. What emerges from her disparate accounts is a picture of movement as an integral part of the "business of living -- and of making a living" (xii) for many Ottoman subjects, whether through the complex circulation of people and goods required to sustain Bursa's textile industry or simply the excursions of sweetmeat sellers scouting potentially prime "slots" *(gedik)* to establish new shops in İstanbul. Through this lens, we can view a wide range of obstacles and regulations to movement, such as guild membership as a precondition for North Africans' legal residence in 18th-century İstanbul. Conversely, the act of travel generated anxieties, as with the links to criminality associated with boat travel into and out of İstanbul, where an underground of fugitive slaves, slave hunters, and various illicit activities took place. In this way, the many case studies in the book serve not only to show how control of movement became "a precondition for political survival" (216) for the Ottoman administration but also manage to capture both the autonomy of individuals and the complex webs of control they needed to navigate. TR

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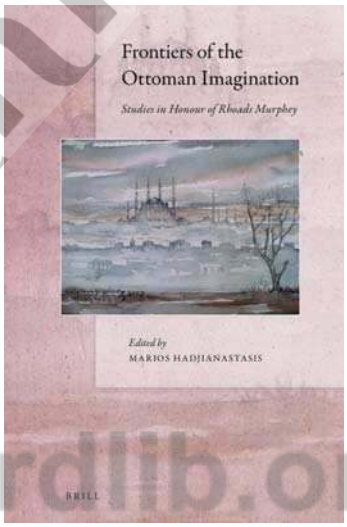
Frontiers of the Ottoman imagination

GÖRKEM DAŞKAN,
Independent researcher

"Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination" is a volume of articles written and compiled in honor of historian Rhoads Murphey by his students and colleagues. The volume offers a noteworthy contribution to Ottoman studies in that it brings together articles by emerging as well as renowned scholars that cover several political, social and cultural aspects of Ottoman history and span the imperial period and space, from the Balkans to the Mediterranean and from beginning to end. In this respect, the fact that the articles are on diverse subjects yet in harmony with one another and organized in chronological order ensures a lucid and enjoyable read for those who would like to read the book in one sitting.

In the opening article, Hasan Çolak discusses the ways in which Byzantine imperial titles were used in early Ottoman intellectuals' works and points out that there were mainly three of them -- namely *tekfur, fasiliyus and kayser* -- and each referred to a different sub-period in this early period of the empire (i.e., early Ottoman and pre-Ottoman periods or in comparison to the Anatolian Selçuks) vis-à-vis the Byzantine Empire and stood for a different context or approach within the Ottoman imperial ideology. *Tekfur*, when attributed to a Byzantine emperor (to Frankish governors as well), implied a certain "disdain"; *fasiliyus* suggested the "negligence" of the Byzantine imperial authority on the grounds that the empire no longer existed and the term was associated rather with the Selçuk legacy; and finally kayser -- which had the least-negative connotation -- hinted at "appropriation," for it seems that the early Ottoman historians generally enjoyed using the term for the Ottoman sultan.

THE VOLUME BRINGS TOGETHER ARTICLES THAT SPAN THE IMPERIAL PERIOD AND SPACE, FROM THE BALKANS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN



In terms of questioning the historian's "manipulative role" in the writing of history, Marios Hadjianastasis's article proves, for instance, how complex, flexible and fluid identities were in 16th-century Cyprus, despite common beliefs. Such fluidity incorporated elements of rigidness at times but first and foremost openness to negotiation depending on the positions local actors were in. Identities in pre-modern Cyprus were determined and driven predominantly by ever-changing social, economic and political conditions (rather than ethnicity and religion) and seem to have been shifting and blurry. No matter who the other party -- Catholic merchants, missionaries or Ottoman authorities -- was, the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the island would not hold a monolithic attitude towards any of them.

In her article about the legacy of the Ottoman commander Tiryaki Hasan Pasha -- according to various Ottoman and Turkish sources, most notably the *gazavatname* manuscripts -- Claire Norton challenges a similar bias on the part of the historian. The overall depiction of Hasan Pasha in these sources tends to be twofold: Pasha is either an unorthodox, dervish-like mystical warrior figure beloved by people for such qualities and for distancing himself from the imperial center by staying on the periphery, or an orthodox Muslim statesman who operated within the Ottoman political system. It finally turns out, however, that in the late Ottoman

Marios Hadjianastasis, ed. "*Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey,*" (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 323 pp. ISBN: 9789004280915

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and following republican historiographies, Hasan Pasha was given a new identity, that of a Turkish hero and defender of national territory (Nagykanizsa). It is indeed telling that in classical Ottoman sources, the heroic representation of Hasan Pasha is adorned with religious motifs such as *gaza*, *jihad* and martyrdom for God, whereas in the process of Turkish modernization he was turned into a national hero who became a martyr defending his nation and fatherland. Therefore, the author argues, historians have historically had the means and authority to recreate or reconstruct historical characters like Hasan Pasha for their own interests, as if those characters were fictional. In a similar vein, as regards the historian's struggle with historical characters, Heath W. Lowry's meticulous article on the myths and truths surrounding Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha is a lesson in itself.

Moving to another topic, the article by Konstantinos Moustakas presents a detailed account of agricultural slavery as a form of colonization in Thessaly, Avret Hisar, Drama and Serres during the 15th century. While the practice of enslavement was not the same in all four settlements, a pattern including the processes of mass conversion (to Islam), import of Anatolian Muslims (both settlers and nomads) and individual enslavement seems to have been in force to a certain degree in each of these places. The presence of extraordinary circumstances during the conquest of the region, such as slave markets, a decrease in slave prices, plunder and the newcomers' interest in farming can be named among the factors that contributed to the growth of slavery in this part of the world. Once the slaves were freed, they -- now Muslims -- were less pressured by taxation compared to Christian peasants. While this form of forced production precedes the forthcoming centuries' excessive laboring force in private farming (*çiftliks*), slave labor is by no means uncommon in early Ottoman agriculture. Ourania Bessi, on the other hand, portrays the development of urbanism in another Balkan town -- Dimetoka -- under Ottoman rule from the 15th century onwards, arguing that while the agricultural lands in the Balkans saw a drastic change of capital formation under the *timar* system, a new type of Ottoman centrum also emerged, outside the Byzantine citadel as in Dimetoka, with its mosques, *çarşiya* and quarters of commerce. So much so that such an unprecedented configuration of landscape in more than one Ottoman town produced a certain pattern. Similarly in Dimetoka, the newcomer administrative and religious classes as well as the bourgeoisie gradually reshaped the medieval town into the early modern Ottoman town it was.

THE READER IS REMINDED MANY TIMES THROUGHOUT THE BOOK THAT TO GRASP THE ACTUAL FRONTIERS OF THE OTTOMAN IMAGINATION CAN BE HARDER THAN IMAGINED

Jumping forward a couple of centuries, Katerina Stathi discusses in her article a rare Ottoman map of Athens that is reported to have survived the Greek War of Independence. Drawing comparisons between a few other French-made maps and the map ordered by the Ottomans, the author contends that the latter contained, unlike the others, certain cartographic elements to facilitate victory in the Siege of the Acropolis. The single article in the volume penned in French also focuses on the Greek War of Independence. Sophia Laiou looks into the Greek revolts on the shores of Minor Asia in this period and claims that the war, alongside the Muhammad Ali dynasty of Egypt, was one of the biggest incidents demonstrating to the Sublime Porte how weak and ineffective the Ottoman central administration was. Slightly before the move towards imperial centralization with the Tanzimat reforms, provincial administrations (that of Aydın, in this case) and local governors were incapable of defeating revolts and attacks, soldiers and janissaries were disobedient and land-owning elites (*ayans*) proved to be undisciplined and occupied more with economic issues. One exception is the case of Ilyaszade, who defended Kuşadası simply because he possessed large

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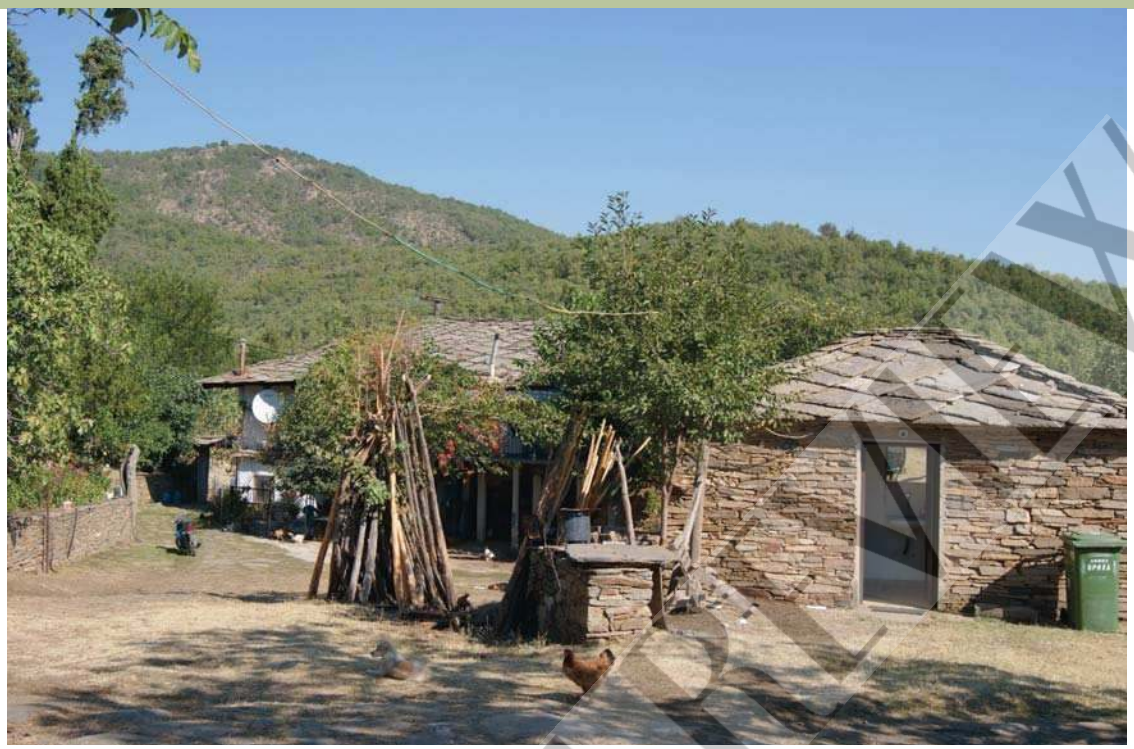

One essay focuses on the Balkan town of Dimetoka, which was under Ottoman rule from the 15th century onwards.
SEPT. 7, 2013
PHOTO: CİHAN, HASAN HACI

çiftliks in that village.

Moreover, two of the articles deal with the Western impact on late Ottoman trade, administration and foreign policy. In his work on British Consul Charles Blunt's tenure in Salonica during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, Michael Ursinus exemplifies the extent to which Britain held sway over Ottoman provincial governors, elites and the Christian clergy at a time when regional reform was much needed and demanded, and accordingly explains the diplomatic steps that the consul took so as to prevent the oppression, exploitation and injustice imposed on the Christian *reaya*. The consul's attempts included strategic partnering over the building of quarantine facilities in Salonica and intervening in support of reform. On a related note, Naci Yorulmaz manifests in his article the incremental German interest (on a spectrum from so-called "pretended disinterestedness" to bold interference crowned with an agreement) in the Ottoman army and state apparatus beginning in the late 19th century. As such, the arrival of German military advisors laid the foundation for the German-Ottoman alliance in World War I.

On the cultural end, Amanda Phillips's research on *hil'at* -- a special kaftan or "robe of honor" granted by the sultan not only to Ottoman elites upon appointment but also to ambassadors as a gift -- reveals that this custom-made clothing, embellished with expensive decorations, played "multiple roles" in the Ottoman world in that it was originally an item to be bestowed to a limited number of people but then proliferated and became a luxurious good with market value. Bearing in mind the very existence of historical continuities, commonalities and intertwinements between societies, cultures and political spheres, it is thus no surprise to learn that a similar ceremonial robe had been in use in the pre-Ottoman Byzantine and Islamic worlds. Likewise, Johann Strauss's piece illustrates the level of ethnic diversity in Ottoman Turkish authorship of translation as well as multilingual translations in the Ottoman space through the very first translations -- from both English and French -- of books on American history into Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Armenian and Greek.

In conclusion, the reader is reminded many times throughout the book that to grasp the actual frontiers of the Ottoman imagination can be harder than imagined, yet this dynamic collection of articles makes a good starting point towards achieving that goal. TR

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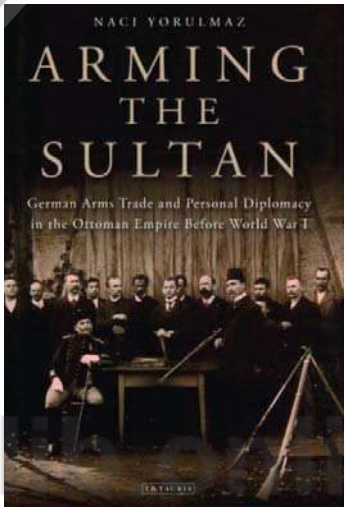
The German style of war business

HAKKI TAŞ,
İpek University

In recent decades, a new generation of historians has begun to revise the traditional accounts of Ottoman history and offer new perspectives. Naci Yorulmaz's newly published study of personal diplomacy during the German-Ottoman arms trade (1876-1914) offers a fresh perspective on late Ottoman history. By analyzing a chain of interactions, Yorulmaz focuses on how political, economic and military actors shaped the flow of arms and, consequently, how that trade influenced diplomatic relations and shaped foreign policy. "Arming the Sultan: German Arms Trade and Personal Diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I" takes us into the network comprised of armament firms, banks, military diplomats, advisers and bureaucrats. As a reflection of this agency-centered approach, the book covers the personal interventions of several actors, including German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Sultan Abdülhamit II and military adviser Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz Pasha.

Isolated by other European governments, the Ottomans considered friendly relations with Germany crucial. For its part, Germany, without colonial ambitions over the Ottoman territories, appeared as a potential ally for the Ottoman state under intense external aggression. At one end of this mutually beneficial bilateral relationship is the late Ottoman Empire, which lost two-fifths of its territories and one-fifth of its population after the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878. Germany, at the opposite end, was focused on acquiring new markets and raw materials to promote industrial development and its drive to become a world power (*Weltmacht*). In order to encourage arms sales, Bismarck used Germany's military reputation gained during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). For both sides, then, this arms trade appeared as a political bonanza.

A CRUCIAL INSIGHT OFFERED BY YORULMAZ REVEALS HOW GERMAN MILITARY ADVISERS TRIED TO MANIPULATE OTTOMAN DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY



At this historical juncture, Yorulmaz argues, the German government's attitude contrasted with the aggressive colonial attitude of other European countries and instead employed a language of cooperation and soft power in its diplomatic relations. Instead of direct colonization via imperialist military power, Bismarck preferred the penetration of overseas countries by exporting German products and dispatching civil and military advisers who could provide reliable information to their government (26). The book coins the term the "German style of war business," which refers to the "distinctive importance of personal diplomacy applied to arms sales negotiations through the creation of […] influence networks based on close personal relationships" (2). Yorulmaz underlines here the undeniable role of non-commercial actors in the arms trade, led by armament firms like Krupp and Mauser, and calls them "businessmen in uniform" (68). They employed a variety of tactics, from forging intimate friendships with palace officials to offering *baksheesh* ["bribes"], to facilitate their operations (127).

It was Bismarck who first laid down this peaceful penetration strategy. Although he dismissed Bismarck from his post in 1890, Kaiser Wilhelm, the first European

Naci Yorulmaz, *"Arming the Sultan: German Arms Trade and Personal Diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I,"* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 256 pp. ISBN: 9781780766331

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monarch ever to visit the Ottoman capital, accelerated this project and broadened the German sphere of influence in the Ottoman Empire (44). "Arming the Sultan" interrogates the German arms trade in three subsequent waves: The first wave (1881-1898) begins with Bismarck's meeting with the Ottoman delegation in Berlin and covers the dispatch of German military advisers to the Ottoman Empire upon the request of Abdülhamit. With an increase in the arms trade and bilateral relations, the second wave (1898-1909) refers to the period between Kaiser Wilhelm's second visit to the Ottoman Empire in 1898, known as the *Orientreise*, and the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 and Abdülhamit's dethronement in 1909. The last wave (1909-1914) continues from that moment to the Ottoman Empire's participation in World War I on the German side, ultimately leading to the demise of the empire.

These three periods are examined and narrated through an extensive analysis of archival documents, data and anecdotes. Bismarck's advice in December 1881 to the Ottoman delegation, which was dispatched to Berlin by Abdülhamit, is especially noteworthy. On the question of Christian subjects, for instance, Bismarck suggests the use of coercive measures, with the metaphor "the lion's claw covered by a silken glove," and even assimilation: "…if one acts cautiously in this way, in a short time the influence and significance of the Christian subjects, namely the subjects other than Turks, would diminish [*zail*] or possibly they might even entirely merge [*mezc*] with Turks and shortly afterwards be transformed [*qalb*] in the Turks" (22). Bismarck seems to have been quite positive about Abdülhamit's dissolution of the Ottoman parliament in 1878: "You acted very well with the dissolution of the parliament. Because, it would do more harm than good to a state, unless it does not consist of a single nation [*millet-i vahide*]" (23).

We also learn that the military advisers Bismarck sent to İstanbul became an indispensible part of the German arms trade and a reliable source of information for both the German government and armament firms. Yorulmaz describes them as a "Trojan horse for the German arms industry" (74). No doubt Goltz Pasha, a source of inspiration for many Unionists, was the most impressive among them. Having built an information network in the palace and close relations with the inner circle of the sultan, Goltz Pasha had a drastic impact on German-Ottoman relations by aiding with the fortification of the Turkish Straits with Krupp guns in 1885-1886, the 1886 Recruiting Law extending obligatory military service to all Muslim males aged 20 and over and the contracts signed with the Mauser Company in 1886-1887 (95).

THE AUTHOR SKILLFULLY MANAGES ABUNDANT ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND NARRATES THE TOPIC IN ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

A crucial insight offered by Yorulmaz reveals how German military advisers tried to manipulate Ottoman defense and foreign policy in accord with the German arms trade. For the fortification of the Turkish Straits with Krupp guns, Goltz Pasha tried to persuade the Ottoman palace of the risk of a probable Russian attack and "continued to elaborate on the concept of German-Austrian friendship and the Russian threat on many occasions" (103).

Yorulmaz's study deserves much praise; first, for relying on multi-national archival research -- something rare in Ottoman and Turkish studies. Benefiting from his competence in German, English and Ottoman Turkish, the author skillfully manages with abundant archival documents and narrates the topic in accessible language. Second, the book is a welcome contribution as it offers an agency-centered and interest-based realist approach to a period in Ottoman history subject to ideological disparities in previous academic literature. Third, Yorulmaz succeeds when indicating the relation between arms trade and foreign policy, or more generally, how economic and political concerns are bound together in the late Ottoman period. Finally, these archival analyses are quite telling in the light of consequent developments in the region. The undeniable role of the arms trade in the ceaseless turmoil in the Middle East can be scrutinized more deeply in this respect. TR

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The Kurdish situation in the Middle East

DR. BAHAR BAŞER,
Coventry University

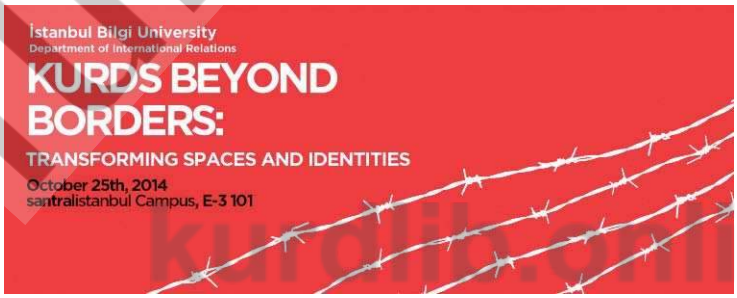
İstanbul Bilgi University organized a conference called "Kurds Beyond Borders: Transforming Spaces and Identities" on Oct. 25, 2014. The conference involved four thematic panels which touched upon extremely important issues with regards to interpreting the past, present and future developments in Kurdish politics, namely: "History, Space and Diaspora," "The Rojava Experience: Quest for Transnationalism," "Transformation, Peace and Neoliberalism" and a closing panel that brought together significant names from Turkish and Kurdish media. The organizers did not foresee that the Rojava experience would be in the headlines of newspapers on a daily basis all around the world, that the peace process would be affected by the developments in Kobane or that we would be discussing "whether we were going back to the 1990s" just a few weeks before the conference. Their aim was to organize a conference where issues related to the Kurdish situation in the Middle East would be discussed in a comprehensive manner through the participation of local and international scholars and, more importantly, would be discussed freely and openly in an academic environment; however, the recent developments made the conference content all the more important and topical.

THE ORGANIZERS DID NOT FORESEE THAT ROJAVA WOULD BE IN THE HEADLINES OF NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE WORLD JUST A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

Bilgi is one of the very few academic environments in Turkey where scholars can talk about issues that are considered to be taboo, which makes it twice as important for such a conference to take place. As everyone would recall, it was this university that fearlessly organized a conference where Armenian Genocide-related issues were extensively discussed in 2005, despite the uproar it caused among political and various academic circles in Turkey. What made the conference more interesting and important were the invited speakers. The organizers gave early career/young academics the opportunity to present their work and to potentially say something new and different with their wide experience from "the field."

The conference started with Fuat Dundar's presentation, titled "Ethnic and Sectarian 'Conflicts' and Forced Migrations in the Middle East: A Centennial Overview," which examined the relationship between conflicts and forced migrations that have happened in the Middle East since World War I. By putting the forced migration experience into a historical context, Dundar's presentation compared the "ethnic-nationalist"-oriented forced migrations of the Kemalist policy in Turkey and the Baathist policy in Iraq with the most recent "sectarian"-oriented forced migrations in Iraq and Syria. For instance, by referring to the Turkification policies of the early years of the Turkish Republic, the consequences of the 1918 Peace Conference or 1938 Dersim

WHAT: Kurds Beyond Borders: Transforming Spaces and Identities
WHO: İstanbul Bilgi University Department of International Relations
WHERE: Bilgi University
WHEN: Oct. 25, 2014



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Four thematic panels touched upon extremely important issues with regards to interpreting the past, present and future developments in Kurdish politics.
MARCH 21, 2015
PHOTO: REUTERS

massacres, among other examples, he mentioned a recurring but at the same time transforming pattern of forced migration in Turkey. The second presentation was Joost Jongerden's presentation on "Spatial Politics of Radical Democracy: Rethinking The Relations Between Place And People." His presentation is highly significant because he is one of the scholars who greatly contributed to the academic literature regarding how to understand the Kurdistan Workers' Party's (PKK) self-perception and its political transformation through the years. He discussed grounded initiatives for a re-framing and re-doing of geo-politics and the Kurdish issue in Turkey and Syria. In particular he referred to the people's councils that have been established in various places. He underlined the fact that people took responsibility for the places they live and analyzed how people who take part in these councils relate to one another, work on issues related to gender equality, equality in general and work towards no exploitation of labor. His take on the PKK was that perceiving the organization as a separatist and nationalist movement was not a correct starting point and one should put more emphasis on understanding the way in which the PKK looks at itself. He also emphasized that the PKK is more than a rebel movement because it does not just resist something but rather develops alternatives to an already existing system by creating alternative mechanisms and institutions, or regains control of the economy. His presentation was also highly interesting in the sense that he put the concept of "radical democracy" in a theoretical context by providing examples from different case studies as well as theoretical discussions brought into the literature by various intellectuals.

The third presentation came from this reviewer, titled "The Kurdish Diaspora in Europe and its Potential Contributions to the Peace Process in Turkey," where he discussed the Kurdish diaspora's involvement in the "process" since the beginning of the "Kurdish initiative" in 2009. He put the diaspora involvement in peace processes in a wider context by giving examples from different case studies including the Israel-Palestine conflict and peace processes and/or initiatives in Kosovo, Sudan, Somalia, Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia. Rather than referring to the widely used examples of South Africa and Northern Ireland, he tried to show other cases which involved a diaspora in political processes. He underlined that the Kurdish diaspora has always been active and mobilized in order to make the Kurdish voice heard outside Turkish borders; however, when it comes to the peace process, they should also have some agency in how things take place as their diasporic condition was mostly as a result of this very conflict in the homeland. He focused on the declarations of

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the peace conference in Brussels, which was organized as a result of a call from PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in June 2013. As the PKK, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the diaspora called for the formation of truth commissions as part of the peace process in Turkey, he discussed how feasible it is for the diaspora to take the initiative and directly participate in these transitional justice processes. He suggested that there should be a more systematic approach towards diaspora involvement as currently there is only lip service towards the diaspora's role and there is no proper acknowledgement of their active partnership at the negotiation table, either by the PKK-related actors or the Turkish state itself.

The second panel was about the Rojava experience and hosted three important scholars whose presentations were the result of their fantastic fieldwork experience. Each presentation said something new to the audience and pushed the boundaries of conventional wisdom on certain issues. Bayar Dosky's presentation was called "The Kurds and the Middle East: From Being a Factor to an Actor" and mostly focused on Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and how it contributes to raising the image of Kurds in Europe, the US and elsewhere. His argument was that Kurds are turning into an important actor in the region rather than being a passive "factor" of Middle East politics. He referred to the Rojava experience, the semi-state structure of the KRG and the current developments regarding the peace process in Turkey and negotiations between Iranian Kurdish political parties and Iranian officials and drew attention to the ever-changing dynamics in Kurdistan. Among them, he found the KRG experience to be the most important and underlined that despite being an actor without a state (and that a declaration of independence is a matter of when), it manages to shift alliances in the region and pushes for a change in conventional policies towards Kurds. After Dosky's presentation, Thomas Schmidinger talked about "Rojava and its Interdependencies." As a researcher who has conducted extensive fieldwork in Rojava, he discussed various political parties and political groups and their historical interdependencies. He is one of the very few academics who followed the political developments in the region for an extensive period with first-hand experience, so his original presentation contributed immensely to the discussions at the conference. For those who are curious about his arguments, his recent book -- called "*Krieg und Revolution in Syrisch-Kurdistan: Analysen und Stimmen aus Rojava*" (published in November 2014, unfortunately only in German) -- includes a deeper analysis of his work.

EACH PRESENTATION SAID SOMETHING NEW TO THE AUDIENCE AND PUSHED THE BOUNDARIES OF CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CERTAIN ISSUES

Finally, Cuma Çiçek presented part of his recently completed Ph.D thesis. His presentation was called "Kurds In Turkey: Rojava, KRG, Internal and External Borders" and he analyzed how different Kurdish organizations and political actors relate to the current developments in other parts of Kurdistan, such as the emergence of the KRG as a significant political actor in the region. He argued that there is not a single "Kurdish issue" but rather "Kurdish issues" and that there are a variety of actors in Turkish Kurdistan who have different ideological approaches for how to ameliorate the Kurdish situation in the Middle East due to their own interests and relations with the state authorities or ethnic and religious identity. Drawing attention to the developments in Rojava and the KRG, he argued that Kurdish political actors in Turkey were highly affected by them and transformed their policies accordingly. His work is extremely important as it includes the self-perceptions and aspirations of various Kurdish movements that are understudied, such as Hezbollah, Azadi, Kurdish Alevites or other socialist blocks.

The third panel included the presentations of Nesrin Uçarlar, Ayşe Seda Yüksel and Arzu Yılmaz. Uçarlar's presentation was called "The Missing Agenda of the Negotiation Process: Village Guard System as a Para-Military

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Several presentations focused on the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). DEC. 21, 2014 PHOTO: AP, ZANA AHMED

Structure" and it was based on a recently published Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research (DİSA) report (*"Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye'de Paramiliter Bir Yapılanma: Köy Koruculuğu Sistemi,"* 2013). Uçarlar gave a historical perspective of the village-guard system in Turkey, basing her arguments on the parliamentary discussions since this system was first established. Her argument was that the village-guard system should be analyzed within a wider debate of paramilitary systems rather than accepting them as Turkey-specific. Having said that, she underlined that their interviews with the village guards showed they had a variety of reasons to become village guards and collaborate with the state and that these could be defined as both forced and voluntary. She mentioned that state policies are not adequate to deal with the "village-guard problem" once the conflict is over. There are also significant crimes that have been committed by village guards since the system was first established and this should also be included in a transitional justice mechanism. This presentation was highly important in the sense that it shows there are more than two main political actors in the peace process and a comprehensive resolution to the conflict should include a wider population of actors who were directly or indirectly affected by the conflict. Yüksel's paper was called "Neoliberalization and the Changing Stakes of Local Politics: Local Businessmen Associations in Kurdistan." She conducted extensive fieldwork in Diyarbakır and Gaziantep between 2007 and 2010, investigating the transformation of local business in the region during the last 10 years. She analyzed economic growth in the region from a political economy perspective by supporting her findings with statistical data. She related her findings to the emergence of the KRG as an important actor in the region and trade relations between Turkey and

THE CLOSING PANEL HOSTED THREE JOURNALISTS: FEHİM TAŞTEKİN, FREDERIKE GEERDINK AND İRFAN AKTAN

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the KRG. Yılmaz's paper was also an interesting attempt to understand the intra-Kurdish dynamics in the region. Titled "The New Kurdish Identity and Nationalism of Kurdistan," her presentation focused on the encounters between the Kurds from northern and southern Kurdistan by looking at the internal migration experiences of Kurds. She conducted fieldwork in Iraqi Kurdistan during a three-year stay in Duhok and presented her first-hand experience and interviewee narratives. She suggests that a Kurdistani identity is in the making and the clashes between party politics within the Kurdish movements are being erased as conflicts are turning into cooperation due to recent developments.[1]

The closing panel hosted three journalists: Fehim Taştekin, Frederike Geerdink and İrfan Aktan, who are experts on the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the wider Middle East and have significant experience in the region. Taştekin talked about the respect and legitimacy that the PKK receives even outside Turkish borders, especially in Rojava. He discussed his own visits to the region and how the PKK ideology and philosophy was embraced by the prominent figures of the Kurdish movement in Syria. Geerdink explained her own personal experience as a journalist in Kurdistan and how her thoughts had developed since she moved to Turkey in 2006 and then to Kurdistan in 2012.[2] Aktan presented a rather pessimistic view about the current peace process for all the right reasons. He criticized the current foreign policy objectives of Turkey in Syria and underlined that Turkey still did not fully grasp the political dynamics of the Middle East, especially those related to the Kurds. He referred to the absence of a solid roadmap that would resolve the conflict at hand and he said he finds the Justice and Development Party's (AK Party) approach pragmatic rather than genuine when it comes to ameliorating the situation of Kurds in Turkey.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CONFERENCE ENGENDERED NUMEROUS SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS THAT ARE YET TO BE ANSWERED

All in all, each presentation had original contributions and fieldwork experiences that brought a fresh dimension to the discussions. Although each presentation focused on different topics, there were still some overarching themes that can provide clues about the direction future debates will be heading. First, it was interesting to notice that the so-called Kurdish issue in Turkey is no longer discussed within the realm of Turkish borders but rather each scholar refers to Kurdistan as a whole when they discuss the new dynamics, the peace process in Turkey and the Rojava experience. Kurdistan's separation by borders does not hold for academic studies related to this topic now because discussions also transcend borders. The complexity of the Kurdish situation in the Middle East and its historical components was discussed thoroughly in the debates. Second, the multiplicity of the actors is also emphasized in the presentations. There is no one single Kurdish movement but there are Kurdish movements, there are multiple identities among Kurdish groups and more importantly a potential peace process also has to have multiple actors that have different experiences, ideologies and suggestions for a resolution process. Third, the importance of the KRG as a rising power in the region is frequently mentioned because it is vital for any discussion regarding Kurdish politics in other parts of Kurdistan. The conference gathered young academics who had a lot to say about the current situation in the region, but most importantly it engendered numerous significant questions that are yet to be answered. [TR]

1. Arzu Yilmaz has recently been interviewed by Agos newspaper about her research. The interview can be accessed at: http://www.agos.com.tr/haber.php?seo=turkiye-bir-ortadogu-sorunu-olarak-kurt-meselesinde-inisiyatifi-kaybetti&haberid=8434.
2. The full text of her presentation can be accessed at: http://kurdishmatters.com.

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Alevis at a *cem evi* in İstanbul.
APRIL 3, 2008
PHOTO: REUTERS, ÜMİT BEKTAŞ

The accelerating visibility of Alevism

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The international workshop was organized by the research project "Negotiating Alevi Cultural Heritage" at the Institute of Near- and Middle East Studies, University of Heidelberg. The workshop was conducted in cooperation with the Heidelberg Center for Cultural Heritage (HCCH). Both project and workshop addressed processes of standardization and canonization of rituals and texts within Alevi communities in Germany and Turkey. Ever since Alevi organizations in both countries began to open their hitherto concealed traditions to a growing public from the late 1980s onwards, questions have gained momentum regarding the representation of *Alevilik* via its central characteristics and common denominators, such as the cem ritual, for example. In these contexts, various researchers have observed processes of standardization of religious practice[1] as well as other endeavors that aim at canonization -- for example, a work containing canonical hymns to be sung at the rituals issued by the Cem Vakfı. Moreover, in the 1990s a considerable number of Alevi private researchers and scholars started collecting and editing texts from an (assumed) Alevi context for identity formation. These processes of canonization and standardization as well as the (re)discovery of religiosity by Alevis culminate, for the moment, in approaches that aim at establishing "Alevism" as a confessional theological and educational academic discipline in Germany. In the field of historical research, the accelerating visibility of Alevism also brought up questions concerning possible sources for its historiography.

THE WORKSHOP ADDRESSED THE INTERDEPENDENCIES AS WELL AS CONFLICTS REGARDING THE DISCUSSIONS OF AN ALEVI CULTURAL HERITAGE

Taking these issues -- to a considerable extend raised by previous research on Alevism in Heidelberg -- as a point of departure, the workshop addressed the interdependencies as well as conflicts regarding the discussions of an Alevi cultural heritage between historical-philological research and normative approaches such as theological ones. "Text" and "cultural heritage" are thus to be taken as metaphors for these two different epistemological approaches to history and historiography as well as to their sources and resources.

Thus, the workshop's first session, called "Defining an Alevi Canon and Heritage," started with disputatious discussions on the topic

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of possible textual (in a narrower sense) canons of Alevi belief and Alevi history. Rıza Yıldırım (TOBB University, Ankara) raised the question whether it was possible, and if so, how, to define a text as "Alevi." With an example from the "*Alevi-Bektaşi Klasikleri*" (Alevi-Bektaşi Classics) series, which is issued by the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), it was discussed to what extend such text may constitute, both ethically and historically, a specifically "Alevi" canon of texts. Whereas Yıldırım was skeptical about this project, Doğan Kaplan (Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya) maintained in his presentation that the aforementioned series could be considered as representative for Alevism even though it was Diyanet publishing these texts. As it was Alevi dedes (elders, the religious authorities among Alevis) who chose the texts to be published in the series it would be -- normatively speaking -- a legitimate (re)source for representing Alevism.

Mark Soileau's (Artuklu University, Mardin) presentation added the "Bektaşi factor" to these issues. Although both traditions (Alevis and Bektaşis) must be distinguished from one another in socio-geographical terms, a common denominator between them is, according to Soileau, a shared mythological world. The hagiographies of Anatolian saints, though reflecting a folk-dervish-Bektaşi tradition, are also considered an Alevi tradition by many Alevis and as such are capable of contributing to an Alevi cultural heritage as a textual resource.

The discussion was challenged by a comment that any endeavor to define an Alevi textual canon would inevitably subscribe to a hegemonic notion of religion. An inner-Alevi discussion should rather approach such questions with a wide textual understanding which would include oral traditions and other cultural assets characteristic for Alevis.

The fundamentally different status of the written word in Alevi communities was further illuminated by David Shankland (Royal Anthropological Institute, London, and University of Bristol). In a panel called "Oral Culture and Text," he argued that the way of leading life in scripture-based and non-scripture-based religious communities -- that is, for example, in Alevi vs. Sunni villages -- is organized differently and thus implicitly underlined an approach to an Alevi heritage not based on texts in the narrower sense, as it is custom which constitutes a primary characteristic of Alevi socio-religious interaction.

THE LAST SESSION WAS DEDICATED TO A WIDER RANGE OF ALEVI RELATED TEXTS AND OTTOMAN HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Ulaş Özdemir's (Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul) contribution marked the beginning of yet another session, headed "Standardization and Diversity beyond the Written Word." The dynamics of contemporary Alevi ritual practice (including musical performances), he argued, also yielded a changing role concerning, for example, the *zakirs* in the rituals. In an analogy to Yıldırım's presentation, Özdemir asked what criteria could contribute to a notion of music being characterized as Alevi. Oftentimes, as he argued, any music sung by Alevis is categorized as Alevi music, but what kind of melody, text or person may be characterized as such? Being himself an active musician, he refuses to subscribe to such a categorization.

Martin Greve's (Orient-Institut, Istanbul) presentation followed Özdemir's and illustrated some of the thoughts brought to the scene before. In his talk on "Religious Music in Dersim between Standardization and Regional Reconstruction," he maintained that although Alevi ritual practice and music played therein may be more and more standardized, a younger generation of musicians, such as Metin and Kemal Kahraman, for example, is trying to develop a style of music that focuses more on historical reconstructions of melody and text. Thus, examples from these musicians show to what extent socio-economic transformations and processes of standardization within Alevism may be challenged when such a form of music -- which in the context of Dersim, where Alevis constitutes a majority, is not named as specifically Alevi -- is detached from ritual practice.

Béatrice Hendrich (Universität zu Köln) analyzed in her talk a paradigmatic change from performative to material culture within the processes of

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standardization of ritual practice and struggles for recognition. The *cem* ritual, she argued, is inherently performative in its meaning with the *dede* as the "embodiment of message" creating a sacred space by a speech act. Recent claims for *cem evis* as markers of recognition as well as the material existence of them undermine this fundamental performative aspect and emphasize materiality. Thus, this evidence raised yet again the question whether such a "materialist turn" represents success in an Alevi struggle for recognition or rather an example for the argument that recognition is only to be achieved by subscribing to hegemonic understandings of religion and the material manifestations thereof in the form of built sacred space.

The last session was dedicated to a wider range of Alevi related texts and Ottoman historical contexts. Markus Dressler (Universität Bayreuth) spoke about the changing connotations and perceptions of Alevi and Alevilik in the 19th and 20th centuries. His historization of the terms Alevi and Alevilik in Turkish nationalist discourses contributed to the workshop's discussion in emphasizing the contingency of the terms itself. Any attempt to discuss a history or a nature of Alevism, he argued, had to be sensitive about the possibly anachronistic assumption, taking a concise Alevi community for granted in times before the nation state.

Possible sources for such an Alevi history and historiography constituted the topic of Johannes Zimmermann's (Universität Heidelberg) contribution, "Finding only half the Needle: Alevi Presences in Late-Ottoman Sources -- Glimpses at Health Reports, Provincial Newspapers and Semi-private Letters." He argued for broadening the archive of Ottoman texts related to Alevi history. Whereas texts from the central administration and from contexts of *Kızılbaş* persecution were widely known and published by Alevi *araştırmacı yazars*, later provincial material has been largely understudied, with a focus on Alevi presences. The examples given in his presentation provided insight into the perception of local actors, such as doctors, and their observations on local customs, detached from an immediate imperial narrative on religious deviance.

This reviewer's talk took a similar line His presentation about a group of people from an Alevi context handing in a petition to the imperial divan in the late 18th century showed to what extent these parts of the population were interacting with Ottoman authorities without their religious identities being a central element in this interaction. He took Yıldırım's considerations concerning the "Aleviness" of texts into account and discussed methodological problems of Alevi's intelligibility in Ottoman texts when they are not explicitly named as religiously deviant or politically subversive as *Kızılbaş*.

Most of the papers presented -- though widely differing in both methodology and disciplinary background -- surrounded questions of standardization and canonization and asked who does or may define such canons and for what purposes or to what ends a certain canon or a specific standard could be accepted as such. Likewise, the presentations as a whole brought together multiple possible fields of inquiry and sources for studying Alevi history and identity. The various approaches also depicted the variety of epistemologies related to the question of text as a "source" for an Alevi historiography and as a "resource" for identity issues and theology. One important aspect in the overall discussion was also the question whether processes of standardization -- be it in contexts of text, rituals, architecture or others -- are necessarily linked with accommodation to hegemonic norms and ideas about religion, religious practice or sacred texts. This very *locus*, at which hegemonic definition and self-standardization meet, was also the point at which the project this workshop was related to located the negotiation of Alevi heritage. TR

1. For example, see: Raoul Motika and Robert Langer, "Alevitische Kongregationsrituale: Transfer und Re-Invention im transnationalen Kontext," In: Michael Ursinus. ed., *Migration und Ritualtransfer. Religiöse Praxis der Aleviten, Yesiden und Nusairier zwischen Vorderem Orient und Westeuropa* (Lang: Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 73-107; Fahriye Dinçer, "Alevi Semahs in Historical Perspective," In: *Dans Müzik Kültür Folklora Dogru* (İstanbul: Bogazici University Press), 32-42.

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