

LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies Conference

Interrogating the Post-Ottoman

Thursday, 17 March 2016, 13:00-19:00, LSE

This conference interrogates the legacies of the Ottoman Empire as a domain, a system of rule, and a form of knowledge and practice. Religious, ethnic, and linguistic plurality marked the Ottoman world, which was legally hierarchical but where non-Muslims often rose to positions of power. Neo-Ottoman nostalgia today imparts a rosy glow to the Ottoman *millet* system that gave relative autonomy to religious minorities and ensured the smooth governing of a sprawling empire. This contrasts with the nationalist histories of former minorities, most of whom today live in ethnically defined nation-states formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through mass expulsions and a disentangling of peoples that would set an example for later decolonisation projects. This conference asks how we might understand the practices of pluralism that characterised the empire in ways that are neither nostalgic nor teleologically lead to the empire's fragmentation. Furthermore, given that the empire was, for the last four centuries of its history, coterminous with European empires, what intellectual legacies lead us to view the Ottoman Empire as Other to European colonialism rather than its competitor? What would an attention to the post-Ottoman tell us about the field of postcolonialism as itself a European legacy? Moreover, anecdotally many peoples of the Balkans, Southeast Europe, and the Middle East find cultural similarities amongst themselves, including food, music, and common words, but also shared sensibilities and values. In contrast, national cultures throughout the region deny these similarities; making them a part of what Michael Herzfeld has called the 'cultural intimacy' of the region. How do we account for such cultural legacies and what they accomplish in the present, becoming sources of both division and unity? May we speak of the post-Ottoman space as a region with some historical and cultural unity, and if so, how would we define it?

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Venue: Room COW1.11, 1st Floor, Cañada Blanch Room, Cowdray House, LSE

13:00 – 13:15

Introduction and Welcome

13:15 – 14:30

Panel I: Urbanism and Cosmopolitanism

Chair:

Christine Philliou, University of California, Berkeley

Speakers:

Amy Mills, University of South Carolina

"Post-Ottoman Urbanism and Topologies of Place in İstanbul"

Marc D. Baer, LSE

"Jewish Accounts of the Ottomans: From Sultanic Savors to Turkish Rescuers"

Discussant:

Rebecca Bryant, LSE

14:30 – 15:45

Panel II: Everyday Diplomacy

Chair: Glenn Bowman, University of Kent

Speakers: David Henig, University of Kent
“Spreading Sofra’ and ‘Being Merhametli’: Idioms of Everyday Diplomacy in a Post-Cosmopolitan Bosnian Town”

Rebecca Bryant, LSE
“‘We were All Neighbours’: Everyday Diplomacy in Post-Ottoman Space”

Discussant: Amy Mills, University of South Carolina

Venue: CLM.3.02, 3rd Floor, Clement House, LSE

15:45 – 16:15

Coffee/Tea Break

16:15 – 17:30

Panel III: Boundaries of the Post-Ottoman

Chair: Rebecca Bryant, LSE

Speakers: Christine Philliou, University of California, Berkeley
“Departure or Return? Ottoman Displacement in ‘Post-Ottoman Syria’”

Fatma Müge Göçek, University of Michigan
“Imagined Boundaries of the Post-Ottoman”

Discussant: Glenn Bowman, University of Kent

17:30 – 18:45

Panel IV: Nationalism in Post-Nationalist Greece

Chair: David Henig, University of Kent

Speakers: Nicolas Argenti, Brunel University
“Emptiness of Krifovouno: Late Nationalism and Post-Ottoman Melancholia on Europe’s Frontier”

Maria Couroucli, CNRS
“The Post-Ottoman Canvas of the Eurosceptic: Grexit and National Self-Representations”

Discussant: Glenn Bowman, University of Kent

18:45 – 19:00

Wrap Up

This event is free and open to all. No ticket is required.

For further information about the LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies and its seminars and other activities, please contact:

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