



Law, Finance, and Knowledge Production in the Early Ottoman Era

Panel V-21, 2023 Annual Meeting
On Friday, November 3 at 1:30 pm

PANEL DESCRIPTION

N/A

DISCIPLINES

History

PARTICIPANTS

- Dr. Vefa Erginbas -- Presenter
- Mr. Morgan Sinan Tufan -- Presenter
- Alaa Attiah M -- Chair
- Şeyma Nur Temel -- Presenter
- Mr. Günay Kayarlar -- Presenter

PRESENTATIONS

- Mr. Morgan Sinan Tufan

"Otlu Sulu Yol Var Mı?" The Role of Cartographic Intelligence in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Expansion

This paper discusses the pivotal role of military maps in the planning and execution of the Ottoman Empire's campaigns during the first half of the sixteenth century. By analyzing unpublished sixteenth-century cartographic materials, the study examines the strategic significance of these maps in facilitating the navigation of the massive and unwieldy Ottoman armies through challenging terrains, including deserts, mountain passes, and marshlands, to reach far-off destinations such as Tabriz, Cairo, Baghdad, and Vienna. The research highlights how the utilization of these maps enabled the campaign leadership to identify critical locations such as water sources, firewood, and populated zones, to access territories beyond their sphere of influence. Furthermore, I analyze how this creation of geographic intelligence was crucial in the success of Ottoman campaigns, even as it helped increase the state's knowledge of its territory. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of military cartography in shaping Ottoman military strategy and territorial expansion during the early modern period.

- Mr. Günay Kayarlar

An Ottoman Scholar's Exile Memoirs: Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz's Gülşen-i Niyaz

Can we use Ottoman ego documents to learn about an author's psychological states and mentalities of premodern Ottoman learned men, as well as broader themes such as political networks and exile? This is the main question this presentation seeks to answer. To do so, it takes a deeper look at a previously understudied ego document, an exile memoir by Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz Efendi (1592-1658). Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz was an Ottoman scholar, grand mufti, and historian. Having spent most of his career in religious-judiciary posts, he is nonetheless best known to modern academics for his historical writings: a universal history titled Ravzatü'l-Ebrar (The Gardens of the Beneficent), an addendum to Ravzatü'l-Ebrar about recent Ottoman history based on his personal involvement in political affairs, and a Zafername (Book of Victory) detailing Murad IV's (r. 1623-1640) Baghdad campaign. However, he has

other writings that have attracted less scholarly attention. One such writing is *Gülşen-i Niyaz* (The Pleas of the Rose Garden), narrating his exile in Cyprus between 1634-6. Written in verse in a relatively plain Ottoman Turkish and completed after his return from Cyprus, this text can be characterized both as a personal plea to the ruler and to God, and as a personal memoir. Such ego documents are relatively rare in the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period and have been systematically studied qua ego documents only in the last few decades. Earlier literature saw such documents as valuable insofar as they provided material for historical reconstruction, but did not delve deeper. This presentation, instead, aims to contribute to the budding subfield of ego document studies in the premodern Ottoman lands. It looks at Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz's *Gülşen-i Niyaz* not just as a repository of facts to reconstruct his career but also as a window into the inner psychological state of a seventeenth-century educated Ottoman scholar in exile and a window into Ottoman mentalities and cultural history at large.

- [Şeyma Nur Temel](#)

- [Between Government and Sacred: The Ottoman Sultanic Waqfs in Ebussuud's Fatwas](#)

This article investigates development of law of the Ottoman sultanic waqfs founded from the state lands with a particular focus on Ebussuud's (d. 1574) ideas. It analyzes this particular category of waqf as a distinctive type due to its divergence from the Islamic law and seeks to explore its exceptional position within the Ottoman waqf system. Even though endowments of this kind were a widespread practice among Muslim rulers from at least the twelfth century onwards, they were also subject of debate among the scholars. Some of them considered endowing public property of the sultans invalid on the ground that they contradicted a fundamental condition of waqf law: originating from private property. My paper questions the Ottoman application of this type and it makes the case that the Ottomans built up a distinctive institution under the rubric of waqf, in some cases benefitting from its legal features while in other cases diverging from them entirely. Based on Ebussuud's fatwas, I analyze some of the more distinguishing features of the Ottoman waqf system, including their process of foundation, the management of changes in revenues or expense items, and the execution of annulments. As a result, I will argue that Ottoman sultanic waqfs appear to be more than simply religious foundations, and might more accurately be characterized as government institutions formulized within waqf law. To illustrate the double sided nature of the sultanic waqfs, I will rely on one of Micheal Mann's categorizations of power: authoritative vs. diffused power. This article sets out to show that Ebussuud seeks to depict an institution

dependent on the will of sultan. In Mann's terms, Ebusuud aims at strengthening the authoritative power of the sultan or center on sultanic waqfs in particular, and on public property in general. On the other hand, he recognizes that the inherent immunity of waqfs to external intervention due to the Islamic legal principles which constituted a representation of the diffused power provided by the waqf frame. This paper will demonstrate traces of this dichotomy in Ebusuud's fatwas. On a broader level, the subject helps us to take a closer look at the complex process of development of established legal norms revealing confusions and contradictions. Thereby, I hope to shed some light on the notion of change and adaptability of legal norms.

- [Dr. Vefa Erginbas](#)

- [A Preliminary Inquiry: Were Ottoman Darülhadis Madrasas agents of Ottoman Sunnitization?](#)

The first dar al-hadith madrasa was reportedly opened by Nur al-din Zangi in 1169 in Damascus to teach the study of hadith. It is no coincidence that both Nizamiyya madrasas and this first dar al-hadith in the Islamic world were opened when the Saljukids and Zangids were fighting an ideological war with the Famiids and other Shiite movements of the 12th century. A darülhadis madrasa was opened in the late 14th century in Iznik by Murad I and the number of darülhadis madrasas multiplied as the Ottoman Empire expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the 16th century, Sultan Suleiman built his famous Süleymaniye complex, which will become the Ottoman world's highest madrasa. Attached to this madrasa was a darülhadis, which served as something close to a graduate institution, in which the highest-paid professors were assigned to teach hadith. In the 17th century, a staggering one hundred and thirty-five darülhadis madrasas were reported by Evliya Çelebi only in Eyüp, Galata, and Üsküdar. It is difficult to claim that all of these darülhadis madrasas served as specialized institutions. Some were opened in remote Anatolian towns and their professors were paid only twenty piasters daily, a sum smaller than what professors are paid in most midsize madrasas. The curriculum for these smaller darulhadis madrasas was teaching a select compilation of forty hadith and nothing beyond that. Recently a scholar suggested that in the multiplication of darülhadis madrasas in the 17th-century Ottoman Empire, Kadızadelis had a role. By emphasizing the tradition and sunnah of the Prophet against the innovations of the Sufis and other groups, Kadızadelis inadvertently helped the multiplication of these institutions. This paper will investigate the role of the darülhadis madrasas in the Ottoman Empire in the period before 1700. By scrutinizing the curriculum and the books assigned to the students it will examine if these madrasas were different than any other madrasa in the

Ottoman system. It will also present some preliminary conclusions as to if darūlhadis madrasas acted as agents of Ottoman Sunnitization in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Middle East Studies Association
of North America, Inc.
3542 N. Geronimo Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85705

520 333-2577 phone
520 207-3166 fax
secretariat@mesana.org
mesana.org

