Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire
The conference “Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire” explored cultural flows between the Ottoman Empire and its neighbours in the East and West. It took place at Karl Jaspers Centre from 10-12 November 2011.

The conference focused on aspects of the interconnectedness of the Ottoman Empire with “the world around it” and questions of transcultural entanglements within the Empire itself. It also sought to overcome the historical construction of the bloc paradigm separating a Christian and European West from an Asian, ‘Islamic’ Ottoman Empire.

Presentations at the conference included multi-perspective approaches to transcultural encounters in the Ottoman Empire as well as case studies on the nature of linkages between the Ottoman Empire and other regions in Asia and Europe. The panel sessions covered a wide range of topics such as legal identities, modernization and heritage, as well as frontiers and statecraft.

Suraiya Faroqhi (Istanbul Bilgi University) gave the keynote lecture on “Trading between East and West: the Ottoman Empire of the Early Modern Period” on 10 November. The following two days saw talks by Linda Darling (University of Arizona) on “Advice Literature as a Transcultural Phenomenon” and by Hülya Canbakal (Sabanci University Istanbul) on “The Age of Revolution in the Ottoman Empire”.

The conference “Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire” concluded research project A7’s workshop series. In the past three years, the project held workshops at the universities of Cambridge, Princeton, Istanbul and Heidelberg. Project A7 “Ottoman Empire” is coordinated by Prof. Thomas Maissen and Prof. Michael Ursinus. The conference was organised by the four project members Pascal Firges, Tobias Graf, Christian Roth and Gülay Tulasoğlu.

For more information about the conference please visit www.well-connected.uni-hd.de.
Thursday, 10 November 2011

PANEL 1: PERCEPTIONS
Chair: WILLIAM O’REILLY (University of Cambridge)
GÁBOR KÁRMÁN (University of Leipzig): Turks reconsidered: Jakab Nagy de Harsány’s changing image of the Ottoman
HENNING SIEVERT (University of Bonn): Post-Safavid Iran and Habsburg Austria as seen by Ottoman diplomats

PANEL 2: LEGAL IDENTITIES
Chair: EYAL GINIO (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
NUR SOBERS KHAN (University of Cambridge): Identity formation and legal categories of ethnicity (cins) in early modern Ottoman Istanbul
CHRISTIAN ROTH (Heidelberg University): Aspects of juridical integration of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire: Observations in the 18th century urban and rural Aegean
AYLIN BESIRYAN (European University Institute, Florence): The transcultural dimension of the Ottoman constitution

PANEL 3: MODERNISATION
Chair: FELIX KONRAD (University of Kiel)
GÜLAY TULASOĞLU (Heidelberg University): A British consul and local reforms in pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Salonica
SOTIRIOS DIMITRIADIS (University of London): Transforming a late Ottoman port-city: Salonica, 1876—1912
ŞEYDA BAŞLI (Mardin Artuklu University): The birth of the Ottoman novel beyond cultural and literary borders

Keynote Lecture
SUARIYA FAROQHI (İstanbul Bilgi University): Trading between East and West: The Ottoman Empire of the early modern period

Friday, 11 November 2011

PANEL 4: HERITAGE
Chair: MICHAEL URSINUS (Heidelberg University)
KALLIOPE PAVLI (Panteion University, Athens): Constructing myths: Ottomans vs. Greek ancient monuments
PATRIZIA KERN (Heidelberg University): Neo-Ottomanism and museum space: Two case studies from Istanbul

PANEL 5: MARITIME TRADES
Chair: SUARIYA FAROQHI (İstanbul Bilgi University)
VIOREL PANAITE (University of Bucharest): Diplomatic and commercial linkages between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe: A case study: French capitulations and consular jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries
JOSHUA WHITE (University of Michigan): An international incident: Piracy and diplomacy in a seventeenth-century Ottoman Mediterranean port
MICHAEL TALBOT (University of London): Defining maritime territoriality: British privateers and Ottoman privateer lines, c. 1690–c. 1790
PANEL 6: FRONTIERS
Chair: LINDA DARLING (University of Arizona)
MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH (independent scholar, İstanbul):
Toward a cultural topography of violence on the
Ottoman-Habsburg frontier
ANTONIS HADJIKYRIACOU & DAPHNE LAPPA
(Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Nicosia):
Exploring the conceptual boundaries of the concept of fluidity:
Early modern ‘contact zones’ in the Adriatic and the Eastern
Mediterranean
MORITZ DEUTSCHMANN (European University Institute,
Florence): Christianity and the Russo-Iranian-Ottoman encounter
in the Iranian province of Azerbajdzhan in the nineteenth century

PANEL 7: NETWORKS
Chair: HÜLYA CANBAKAL (Sabancı University, İstanbul)
TOBIAS GRAF (Heidelberg University): Renegades in the
Ottoman Empire and their networks, c. 1580–1610: Some
reflections
DOROTHE SOMMER (University of Sheffield): Freemasonry,
interconfessional sociability, and the promotion of a new Syrian
self-perception, c. 1860–1908

PANEL 8: STATECRAFT
Chair: ANTJE FLÜCHTER (Heidelberg University)
KAY JANKRIFT (University of Augsburg): The Ottoman hub:
Jewish advisors and Western diplomats at the sultan’s court in
the 16th century
LINDA DARLING (University of Arizona): Advice literature
as a transcultural phenomenon

Saturday, 12 November 2011

PANEL 9: REBELLIONS
Chair: MARKUS KOLLER (University of Bochum)
HÜLYA CANBAKAL (Sabancı University, İstanbul): The Age
of Revolution in the Ottoman Empire: A provincial perspective
FELIX KONRAD (Kiel University): “Erâzil” and “canaille”:
Ottoman and European perceptions of social unrest in the
Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730

PANEL 10: FRENCH REVOLUTION
Chair: THOMAS MAISSEN (Heidelberg University)
PASCAL FIRGES (Heidelberg University): The
French Revolution in Istanbul, 1793–1795
HİMMET TAŞKÖMÜR (Harvard University): From great
sedition to great revolution: Ottoman responses to the French
Revolution

Concluding discussion
WELL-CONNECTED DOMAINS

The conference participants in front of the Karl Jaspers Centre
From 10 to 12 November 2012 the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies in Heidelberg hosted the international conference "Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire" with the financial assistance of Heidelberg University’s Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context".

Most scholars of Ottoman history would consider the domains of the sultan a transcultural sphere par excellence. Indeed, the very deep-rootedness of this understanding often means that phenomena related to transculturality are deemed to be so ordinary that they tend to be understudied as phenomena in their own right. Contributions focused on precisely these phenomena, linking aspects of interconnectedness of the Ottoman Empire with 'the world around it' and questions of transcultural entanglement within the Ottoman domains. The symposium was organized by Project A7 "Dynamic asymmetries in transcultural flows at the intersection of Asia and Europe: The case of the early modern Ottoman Empire" directed by Thomas Maissen and Michael Ursinus at the Heidelberg Cluster.

The conference was opened by GÁBOR KÁRMÁN (Leipzig) who traced the development of the representation of the Ottomans in the writings of the "Turkish scribe" Jakab Harsányi Nagy from the stereotype commonly espoused by Transylvanian diplomats towards a much more sympathetic appraisal of the Ottomans. Placing these literary representations in their historical contexts, Kármán suggested that Harsányi’s works provide an insight into the perception of the Empire by its tributary states. Turning the tables, HENNING SIEVERT (Bonn) discussed the perception of Habsburg Austria and Safavid Iran on the basis of the sefaretnames of Dürri Ahmed Efendi and of Mustafa Efendi as well as Ebu Sehl Nu’man Efendi’s Tedbirat-i Pesendide. Acting as a mirror of the situation at home, Sievert showed that these texts praise an idealized Ottoman rule, while injustice and incompetence are denounced as a breach of contract.

NUR SOBERS KHAN (Cambridge) examined the categories of ethnicity (cins) used to describe slaves upon their manumission in the seri’at court registers of Galata. While these labels did not necessarily mirror the more complex reality of the diverse
ethnic backgrounds of slaves in the Ottoman Empire, they contributed to the formation of their new social identities. Giving an overview of his research in eighteenth-century Ottoman court registers from the Aegean islands and Thessaloniki, CHRISTIAN ROTH (Heidelberg) pointed out that non-Muslims in the city used the seri`at courts considerably more often than their coreligionists on the islands. The sources suggest that communal institutions were approached before taking a case to the local kadi for final confirmation or further litigation, a procedure which reflects the deep integration of non-Muslims and their institutions into the Ottoman legal system. Investigating the genesis of the Ottoman constitution of 1876, AYLIN BESIRYAN (Florence) argued that, since the state-initiated drafting process incorporated influences from a plurality of formal and informal agents based inside and outside the Empire with the most diverse professional, ideological and cultural backgrounds, the result was an exemplary transcultural synthesis of different legal traditions, ideas, and models.

GÜLAY TULASOĞLU (Heidelberg), who investigated the implementation of de-central reforms in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire, argued that the measures taken by local elites in order to prevent and contain epidemics were aimed at increasing, or at least preventing a further loss, of provincial revenues. She also demonstrated that the British consul in Salonica, Charles Blunt, had a decisive influence on these measures. Also focusing on Salonica, SOTIRIOS DIMITRIADIS (London) examined the effects of modernization efforts in the second half of the nineteenth century on the city itself and its population. He argued that the cityscape (perceived space) was radically transformed by the agency of several new social institutions (lived space), which again based their decisions on a new discourse on how a city should function (conceived space). SEYDA BASLI (Mardin) criticized what she called the "mainstream criticism" of the first Ottoman novels as the result of a certain political perspective based on drawing "rigid borders" between Ottoman and republican processes of modernization, East and West, tradition and modernity. This perspective has resulted in the dismissal of contemporary novels which seem to be at odds with the model of modernization put forward by these critics. In the conference's keynote lecture on "Trading between East and West: The Ottoman Empire of the early modern period", SURAIYA FAROQHI (Istanbul) unfolded a fascinating panorama of the Ottoman Empire's global
commercial links. She thus demonstrated the Empire's outstanding significance as a major hub with regard to the flows of objects and ideas between Europe and Asia.

KALLIOPE PAVLI (Athens) exposed the myth of exceptional Ottoman barbarism towards ancient monuments as a convenient excuse for European sightseers and diplomats to legitimize their systematic looting in the Ottoman Empire. Ignoring even dissenting Greek sources, the perception of "Ottoman barbarism", which had been a pretext for the trade in artifacts, has survived to this day as a stereotype in Greek public education and propaganda. Taking her starting point from a discussion of two recent exhibitions initiated by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Miniatürk and the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, PATRIZIA KERN (Heidelberg) put these examples in relation to official cultural policies and ongoing societal and political debates and showed how the re-evaluation of the Ottoman past ('neo-Ottomanism') has become a driving force in the creation and arrangement of such exhibitions. Discussing the French capitulations and consular jurisdictions, VIOREL PANAITE (Bucharest) focused on the material collected by French Ambassador François Savary de Brèves (1593-1606) in a manuscript now preserved at the Bibliothèque national de France. Including a number of hitherto unknown Imperial decrees, charters, and legal opinions, this manuscript affords a fresh perspective on the consular presence and its day-to-day functioning. In the 1620s, Barbary pirates raided the port of Iskenderun, creating a major diplomatic incident involving almost all diplomatic representatives at the Porte. JOSHUA WHITE (Ann Arbor) used the event as a window on both changing conditions in the Mediterranean at a time when Venice's commercial power was on the retreat and the poorly understood fiscal and political relations between Istanbul and the Ottoman periphery in Syria during this period of transition. MICHAEL TALBOTT (London) showed that in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Porte could adhere at once to the contradictory concepts of the "open" and the "closed" seas, shifting emphasis as expedient, for instance when forcing the British to try and restrain their privateers, who often violated Ottoman waters in pursuit of French ships, in order to avoid liability, even if Britain perceived Ottoman territorial claims as contrary to international law.

Examining the rise to prominence of the cities of
Graz and Banja Luka, MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH (Istanbul) demonstrated that the military and demographic situation in such peripheral areas made it possible for marginalized groups to leave their mark on the monumental landscape in a way which would have been impossible in the core areas, thus creating an easily traceable link between the architectural topography of the area and its frontier situation. By exploring the boundaries of the concept of fluidity with regard to early modern identities, ANTONIS HADJIKYRIACOU (Nicosia) and DAPHNE LAPPA (Florence) criticized the overtones of modernization theory inherent in current uses of the term which, they argued, is not exclusive to pre-modern eras. They stressed the need to explore the temporal and spatial contexts of early modern identities, rather than using ill-defined catch-all terms. Instead of exploring early modern fluidity, they called for an inquiry into what is early modern about fluidity. In his contribution, MORITZ DEUTSCHMANN (Florence) examined the Iranian province of Azerbajdzhan in the nineteenth century where Iranians, Russians, and Ottomans vied with one another for political power even through Christian missionaries. While Russia attempted to influence the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Ottomans, in stark contrast to policy at home, encouraged the conversion of Armenians to Catholicism as a means to increasing their own influence in the region.

Challenging the notion that so-called renegades had undergone a 'social death', TOBIAS GRAF (Heidelberg) demonstrated that the identities and loyalties of those who had 'turned Turk' remained ambivalent and frequently harked back to their pre-conversion lives e.g. in the choice of nisbes such as Frenk or in the formation of networks along the lines of shared origins (cins). As the only group whose membership bridged the religious divides between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, DOROTHE SOMMER (Leiden), contradicting previous research, concluded that freemasonry in Ottoman Syria cannot be regarded as the vanguard of Western imperialism but instead acted independently in an attempt to promote a new Syrian self-perception.

KAY JANKRIFT (Augsburg) examined the involvement of Jewish advisors in the formulation of foreign policy in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. Individuals such as Joseph Nasi who had migrated to the Ottoman Empire after expulsion from the Iberian peninsula possessed a great deal of local knowledge and, more importantly, extensive
networks of correspondents and informants. Christian European observers correctly attributed the political power of these Jewish advisers at the Porte to their role as brokers of information. LINDA DARLING (Tucson) explored Eastern and Western "Advice literature as a transcultural phenomenon". Despite their common roots, the traditions eventually diverged. Yet European interest in Ottoman advice literature continued in the early modern period while the Ottomans largely ignored European literature until the eighteenth century, when both strands, each on its own, began looking for more differentiated solutions to the problems of the day.

Tying in with the bird's eye views of historians like Bayly, Subrahmanyan, and Armitage, HÜLYA CANBAKAL (Istanbul) showed that the Wahhabi uprising was by no means the first, nor the most significant in the empire's history. Drawing upon the example of a longer period of trouble in the cities of Ayntab and Aleppo around 1790, she demonstrated that the Empire had participated in the Age of Revolution even earlier while stressing the economic roots of these short-lived rebellions. Focusing on the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730, FELIX KONRAD's (Kiel) explored contemporary notions of social order and disorder. While the European or Ottoman origins of the sources did not have a great influence on the perception of the rebellion, it seems that some accounts had been written from what could be called the palace perspective, while others rather viewed the riots from a city-dweller perspective. These perspectives and their underlying assumptions about society shaped the respective descriptions of the rebellion.

PASCAL FIRGES (Heidelberg) examined the challenges faced by the French revolutionary consular agents in the Ottoman Empire in implementing the regime change within the French expatriate community. While they had to deal with many of the same problems as the authorities in France itself, because they did not dare alienate the Ottoman government they could not take recourse to coercive measures against their citizens but instead had to try to win them over to the new political system. Scholarship on Ottoman reactions to the French Revolution has tended to underestimate the role which the revolution played in the Ottoman discourse before the Napoleonic Invasion of Egypt (1798). Drawing on Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts HIMMET TASKÖMÜR (Cambridge, MA) challenged this notion and showed...
that the Ottoman awareness of, and the engagement with, both the ideology and the political implications of the French Revolution were much stronger then hitherto expected.

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

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

Text by Pascal Firges, Tobias Graf, Christian Roth and Gülay Tulasoğlu

E-mail: well-connected@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de
WELL-CONNECTED DOMAINS

Thomas Maissen, coordinator of research project A7, opens the conference
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Gábor Karmán during his talk “Turks reconsidered: Jakab Nagy de Harsány's Changing Image of the Ottoman”
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Hülya Canbakal during a podium discussion
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Henning Sievert talking about “Post-Safavid Iran and Habsburg Austria as Seen by Ottoman Diplomats”
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William O'Reilly chairing the panel discussion on “Perceptions”
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Linda Darling and Michael Talbot during a break in the Karl Jaspers Centre
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Discussions continue over coffee: Suraiya Faroqhi and Thomas Maissen
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Christian Roth, member of project A7, on “Aspects of Juridical Integration of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire”
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Christian Roth, Eyal Ginio and Aylin Besiryan during the panel “Legal Identities”
Gülay Tulasoğlu, member of project A7, on “A British Consul and Local Reforms in Ottoman Salonica”
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Christian Roth and Eyal Ginio during Nur Sobers Khan’s talk “Identity Formation and Ethnicity”
Gülay Tulasoğlu and Sotorios Dimitriadis during his talk “Transforming a late Ottoman port-city: Salonica”
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Suraiya Faroqhi giving the keynote lecture “Trading Between East and West”
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Suraiya Faroqhi answering questions after her keynote lecture
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Gábor Karmán and Henning Sievert during a coffee break in the Karl Jaspers Centre
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Nur Sobers Khan and Hülya Canbakal during coffee break
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Michael Ursinus chairing the panel session on “Heritage”
Panel discussions on “Frontiers”, chaired by Linda Darling
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Podium discussion among the members of the panel session on “Frontiers”
Tobias Graf, member of project A7, during his talk on “Renegades in the Ottoman Empire”
Questions and answers during a podium discussion
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Hülya Canbakal and Tobias Graf during the panel session on “Networks”
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Linda Darling during a podium discussion
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Tobias Graf during his talk on “Renegades in the Ottoman Empire”
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Joshua White and Robert Langer during a podium discussion
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Michael Talbot, Linda Darling and Suraiya Faroqhi during a podium discussion
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Pascal Firges, member of research project A7, gives a talk on “The French Revolution in Istanbul”
Research Project A7 “Ottoman Empire. Dynamic Asymmetries in Transcultural Flows at the Intersection of Asia and Europe: The Case of the Early Modern Ottoman Empire”

Abstract
Until very recently historians have tended to overemphasize a bloc distinction between a Christian and European West on the one hand and an Asian and ‘Islamic’ Ottoman Empire on the other. Our project seeks to overcome the bloc paradigm through the emphasis on multiperspectivity in four case studies analyzing crucial moments of the early modern and modern Ottoman Empire. The intersectional area between Asia, Africa, and Europe is marked by long-standing intensive exchanges among individuals and groups of different ethnic, religious, and social origins, where concepts of order, of identity and of boundary were reshaped through various encounters. The project seeks to contribute to the scholarship on cultural flows between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe. Our project is supervised by Prof. Thomas Maissen (History) and Prof. Michael Ursinus (Ottoman Studies).

Case Studies
Four case studies, each entrusted to one member of the team, ensure a sufficiently wide database on which well-informed conclusions can be drawn. Their different regional and temporal foci notwithstanding, all four studies examine concrete instances of transculturality in four large and interrelated fields.

Pascal Firges is writing his doctoral thesis on “Istanbul during the French Revolution. Regime Change in Transcultural Context.”

Tobias Graf is interested in the phenomenon of so-called renegades in the Ottoman Empire in the period c. 1580-1610.

Christian Roth is a PhD candidate in Islamic Studies working on “Non-Muslims dealing with the Ottoman kadi in the eighteenth century rural and urban Aegean.”

Gülay Tulasoğlu is currently working on her PhD thesis “Consuls as agents of cultural flows in the nineteenth century and their role in local reform in the Ottoman Empire.”
Press and Public Relations Office

Cluster of Excellence
“Asia and Europe in a Global Context”
Heidelberg University
Karl Jaspers Centre for
Advanced Transcultural Studies
Voßstr. 2, Building 4400, Room 113
69115 Heidelberg, Germany

Phone: +49 6221 54 4008
Fax: +49 6221 54 4012
E-Mail: press@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de

About the Cluster “Asia and Europe”

The Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” is an interdisciplinary network of researchers at Heidelberg University. It was founded in October 2007 as part of the Excellence Initiative launched by the German state and its federal governments.

Today, the Cluster has about 300 affiliated researchers, who examine the processes of cultural exchange between Asia and Europe. In particular, they analyse the shifting asymmetries in cultural, social and political flows. Their work probes issues relevant to contemporary concerns about globalisation by investigating the cultural transfer of ideas, knowledge and commodities.

The Cluster is located at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies. Among its partners are Harvard University (United States) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (India).