“You Say ‘Classical,’ I Say ‘Imperial,’ Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off: Empire, Individual, and Encounter in 1700.”

What I plan to do in this paper is to mobilize a set of relevant issues concerning the state of the empire and the historiography of individual and encounter as the period in question begins. Such issues include the projection of Ottoman power and identity, the levels of encounter, and presumptions about who exactly is encountering whom. Then I will address the idea of encounter and the (possible) transformation of that idea as it relates to ‘European’ encounters with the Ottoman ‘citizen.’ What is the nature of the encounter? How is it ‘told?’ Is the individual discernible from the group? Is the eighteenth century radically different from the eras that preceded it?

“The Violent Confessions of an Ottoman Irregular: Self-Representation, Narrative Strategies, and Ottoman Interpretive Communities at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century”

This paper will analyze an autobiographical account written by a very unlikely Ottoman author: an obscure Anatolian irregular cavalryman Deli Mustafa (b. 1791/2) – or Kabudlı el-Haccî Mustafa Vasfî Efendi as he fashioned himself in his manuscript. His narrative provides rare glimpses into the tumultuous everyday life and moral dilemmas faced by the countless Muslim peasants who joined paramilitary orders. Vasfî Efendi’s narrative and self-fashioning strategies help us understand what common Muslim men serving in paramilitary forces had to do to make a living during this tumultuous period of Ottoman history, and most importantly, how they explained and legitimated their precarious and contentious way of life. In examining how the author understood his place in Ottoman society as he describes his long journey and adventures from the eastern Anatolian frontier west to the Rumeli frontier as an itinerate Ottoman soldier, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: can one derive a sense of what “Ottoman” meant to a low-ranking irregular from reading Vasfî Efendi’s account? How does the author see himself and his social status vis-à-vis imperial and local elites as well as Muslim and Christian communities in different parts of the Empire? What are the narrative strategies that the author uses to discuss pillaging and violence, and how and why do these strategies change as the author moves west from Anatolia to Rumeli? Considering the like-minded audience to which the author most-likely addressed his manuscript, can one speak of a distinct Muslim paramilitary community? What kind of sensibilities and textual repertoires do the recurrent tropes of violence in Vasfî Efendi’s text draw upon? What are the symbolic as well as material markers of self that emerge from Vasfî Efendi’s descriptions? And finally, how does the author use religiously charged discourse against Rumeli Christians to bolster his own position and social claims among his own co-religionists?
Rossitsa Gradeva  
American University in Bulgaria, Sofia

“Vidin at the Time of Osman Pazvantoğlu: The Complex Interaction of the Faiths at the Frontier of Ottoman Space and Time”

The paper explores the relations between the faiths, primarily Muslims and Orthodox Christians, but also the other religious groups within the domain of Osman Pazvantoğlu, 1790s-1810s against the backdrop of: 1. the ongoing conflict between Pazvantoğlu and central authorities, as well as the general processes of secession and political fragmentation; 2. the development of international relations in the region and the respective entanglement of local leaders of different provenance with the interests and policies of the Powers; 3. the development of the nation-formation processes in the region among Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians; 4. the policy of Pazvantoğlu himself vis-a-vis the Powers, the Ottoman centre, the other power holders in the Ottoman Balkans, and the various non-Muslim and Muslim groups; 5. the role of the frontier in shaping all these relations and the long and winding history of these relations in this particular Ottoman corner. It aims to reveal them in a transitional period preceding the explosion of nationalism in the Balkans when it was just beginning to be felt, and when religious borders were still easily transcended for the sake of common goals.

It is based on a variety of sources – a survey of the extant kadi sicills from Vidin from the period in question; hatt-i humayuns (from BOA_Istanbul), diplomatic sources; Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian documents and narratives.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou  
Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Cyprus

"Insular Space and Center-Province Interactions: Local Intermediaries in Late-18th Century Cyprus"

Debates in Ottomanist historiography are increasingly being energised by centre-periphery studies and examinations of the interplay between the capital and provinces that go beyond traditional dichotomies and analytical distinctions. Rather than trying to construct a neat structure of a state that functions in set and uniform ways, questions now concern the flexibility of the multi-layered interactions between Istanbul and the provinces.

Contributing to these discussions, this paper enquires into the nature of centre-periphery relations with reference to Cyprus by focusing on three prominent provincial intermediaries in the period between 1770 and 1810. These local actors, a Muslim, a Christian Orthodox, and an Armenian, were quintessential intermediaries that negotiated and brokered relations between the island, imperial authority, and foreign consuls through a variety of quasi-institutional channels.

Utilising the Braudelian concept of ‘miniature continents’ allows an envisioning of the Cypriot insularity that explains the nature of economic relations, modes of production, and patterns of concentration of the rural surplus. The means by which these key provincial agents were able to manipulate the economic structures of the island gave them a significant leverage in their interactions with the centre, whether this was Istanbul, Marseille, Venice, or London.
“Biographies” of Books and the Life of Their Readers in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries

Manuscript collections in Turkish libraries treasure important data about scribes, owners, readers and donators of books in the Ottoman society. In the 18th and the 19th centuries by far the most part of the books in circulation were still handwritten copies. In my paper I analyse colophons, readers’, owners’ and donators’ notes as well as other categories of users’ traces, such as bookmarks and marginalia on the basis of a corpus of popular religious texts (i. e. the works of the brothers Yazıcıoğlu Muhammed and Ahmed Bican).

My paper focuses on three questions: Who came into contact with manuscripts? Which role played manuscripts in the Ottoman society apart from imparting of knowledge? Are there any traces of a new approach to the medium book?

“Who was an Ottoman in the Naval Forces of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries? Was there Room in Rum for Corsairs?”

The Ottoman Empire expanded rapidly in the second half of the 15th century and the 16th century. While historical writing has emphasized the accomplishments of the land forces, a lack of effective naval forces severely hampered Ottoman abilities to expand in the Balkans and then administer these conquests. Although the Ottomans initially relied on foreign fleets, beginning in the 15th century the Ottomans expended significant resources in men and money to build a fleet that by the 16th century could rival any naval forces in the Mediterranean. The relationship between the most prominent men in these naval forces and elite of the central administration exhibited friction between the devshirme recruited elite who dominated Süleyman’s reign and the most successful Ottoman seafarers who often emerged from a corsair background.

This paper will focus on four prominent seafarers whose “Ottomaness” was questioned by the administrative elite. First I will examine the careers of Kemal Reis and his nephew Piri Reis who were active seafarers in Ottoman service beginning in the reign of Bayezid II. I will examine both their background and how they were viewed by the administrative elite who considered them rivals for the sultan’s favor. Piri’s experiences of being considered an outsider by the elite culminated in the reign of Süleyman when he was executed for failing against the Portuguese while serving as admiral in the Indian Ocean. His execution was tied to his inability to create bonds with the devshirme recruited officials who dominated naval administration despite their inexperience. His fate can be compared to that of Sidi Ali Reis who also failed in the Indian Ocean but escaped any punishment because he was accepted by the elite. Next I will examine the career of Hayreddin Pasha who became admiral and enjoyed high rank despite the jealousy of the devshirme elite, who resented his independence. Hayreddin’s value to Süleyman was so great that his jealous rivals could never seriously challenge his position. Finally I will examine the experiences of Turgud Reis who failed to succeed Hayreddin as admiral of the Ottoman navy despite his ability because of the opposition of Rüstem Pasha. Instead Rüstem Pasha’s brother, Sinan Pasha, was appointed admiral and continued in this position until his death, despite his failure at Malta in 1551. This rivalry between the corsair recruited seafarers and the administrative elite exhibited its most dramatic results in the Ottoman naval disaster at Lepanto.
This paper will analyze the experiences of prominent men of the Ottoman naval forces beginning with the reign of Bayezid II through the sixteenth century to demonstrate that individuals who emerged into naval prominence from a corsair background were at a disadvantage in competing for sultanic favor in contrast to the devshirme recruited favorites of the sultans. Using narrative sources from the sixteenth century such as the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Pasha*, the *Kitab-i Bahriye* by Piri Reis, the *Mir’at al-mamalik* by Sidi Ali Reis and the *Tarih-i Al-i Osman* by Lutfi Pasha, and the histories of 17th century historians, *Tuhfetu’l-kibar fi esfari’l-bihar* by Katib Çelebi and *Tarih-i Peçevi* of Peçevi, I will examine the implications of the interactions between the elite who defined Ottomanness and the corsairs whose appointment to the position of admiral was often blocked due to the influence of the administrative elite. The irony was that their identity as Turkish corsairs prevented their being fully accepted as Ottomans.

Seyfi Kenan  
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“Behiç Efendi and the Role of His Lâyiha/Report in the Transition from the Ancient Regime to the New Order During the Selim III’s Rule”

Born in 1765 in Rusçuk in Balkans and a childhood friend of Alemdar Mustafa Paşa, Behic Efendi was a leading intellectual, particularly known for his actions and writings critical to the multi-layered reforms introduced by Selim III to the ailing Ottoman Empire. Written on the demand of the Sultan for the participants in the consultative council held in the Revan Pavilion of the Imperial Palace in 1789, Behic Efendi’s lâyiha is one of the most comprehensive reports presented to Selim III on how to reform the empire, covering military to political and educational realms. This paper aims to examine the life of Behic Efendi as, first, an insider in the powerful days of Selim III and, then, an outsider after his fall, through an analysis of his lâyiha the manuscript of which is preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum.

Julia Landweber  
Montclair State University, USA

“Venetian Vagabonds and Furious Frenchmen: National and Cosmopolitan Impulses among Europeans in Galata”

The eighteenth-century western-European community of Galata enabled the exercise of two new attitudes toward identity. While diplomatic representatives encouraged their people to identify as part of an international “European” society, among the lower orders national differences easily ignited violent conflicts. This paper examines a November 1729 event, when two French chefs provoked several Venetian domestics into assaulting them. The first chef was injured at a Venetian wedding; the second used the attack on his compatriot as an excuse to fight a Venetian barber, which ended when the Venetian shot him dead.

These violent events were predicated on national identity and national difference in the most literal fashion. Venetians were attacking French nationals simply for being French, and vice-versa. The French ambassador in charge of resolving the situation worked towards building an expansive concept of community based on being Europeans within the Ottoman Empire. National identity, perhaps surprisingly, in certain respects meant more to the lowest social orders than it did to the highest among early-eighteenth-century Europeans outside of Europe. For the servants, national origins defined both who they were and how they related to one another. For the ministers, nation defined their official positions, yet they worked together to restore harmony.
18th century Ottoman court chronicles are rarely studied as products of active, inquisitive minds. Most often they are seen as factual records without larger aims or messages. Such an approach, it should be said, obscures the chronicler’s role in bringing his own sense and form to history. This paper will explore some ways in which one prominent Ottoman historian came to terms with the past, above all the strange and inexplicable. Ahmed Vâsıf Efendi published his history *Mehâsinü’l–Âsâr ve Hakaikü’l–Ahbâr* (*The Charms and Truths of Relics and Annals*) in 1804. As a court chronicler (*vakanüvis*) he was charged with recording events of the court: war, administration, diplomacy, and ceremony. Yet Vâsıf undertook much more in *Mehâsin*, an interpretive digest of four earlier court chronicles. *Mehâsin* shows a mind seeking order, unity, and meaning in events of the past. I will focus primarily on how Vâsıf makes sense of strange or unexpected events, including premonitions, fires, earthquakes, eclipses, meteorites, and other natural phenomena. His reaction is far from that of a neutral recorder. Vâsıf often uses these moments to edify: he ties them, explicitly or implicitly, to individual action or a moral order embodied in the ruler. At other times, they bear more “rational” explanation. Vâsıf’s interpretations, however, uphold in all cases a strongly colored view of the past and moralistic function of history.

The sampling offered in this paper is admittedly small. Still, it is enough to prompt further questions about the court chronicler’s function and, more generally, about Ottoman conceptions of history and the natural world in the 18th century. At the very least it will encourage us to read more closely.

**“Expressions of Turkic Identity in the Early Ottoman Histories”**

This paper will examine the works of the early Ottoman historians and how they used the terms *türk* and *türkmen*. It will argue that in the beginning, historians marginalized the Turkic origins of the Ottoman dynasty. However, after 1470’s, a group of historians grew comfortable with both using the terms *türk* and *türkmen* in their references to the Ottoman dynasty, and started to point at the Turkic origins of the Ottomans in other manners. This shift in what was called the “Ottoman historical consciousness” coincided with major developments in Ottoman society’s perception of itself. Transforming the mostly oral memory of the Empire into textual realities, these historians composed the first blue prints of what would become the official Ottoman history. While they legitimized the Ottoman sovereignty, their insistence on representing the Ottomans as *türk* and *türkmen*, was not always how the Ottoman dynasty saw itself.

**“A View from Homs ca.1700”**

This paper examines the Arabic chronicle entitled *Tarikh Hims*, written by Muhammad al-Makki, a Muslim resident of the Syrian town between the years 1688 and 1722. Al-Makki was the son of a shopkeeper who served as a professional witness in the town’s shari’a law court. As such he belonged to
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the Muslim middle stratum who formed a significant proportion of the population of urban Ottoman Syria, but who rarely left written records like this one. *Tarikh Hims* is a chronicle of events as seen from the perspective of an Ottoman subject of middling means. His observations and reflections reveal the author’s world-view including how he understood his local world and related it to the wider Ottoman or sultanic one. Reading *Tarikh Hims* in the context of this conference offers a small-town vision of the sultanate from the Syrian Arab region in the early stages of the Ottoman Empire’s 1700-1850 transformation.

**Orlin Sabev**
Institute of Balkan Studies, Sofia, Bulgaria

“Portrait and Self-Portrait: An Eighteenth-Century Hungarian-Born Ottoman Muslim’s Self-Narrative”

The proposed paper will deal with an intellectual who became famous in Ottoman cultural history as the founder of the first Turkish printing house (1726). He was a Hungarian born Protestant (Unitarian), who left his homeland Transylvania in the late seventeenth century, took refuge in the Ottoman Empire and converted to Islam gaining a new Ottoman and Muslim identity under the name Ibrahim Müteferrika.

I intend to reveal Müteferrika’s portrait and self-portrait by dwelling not only on the few available narratives dealing with it, but also on those aspects of Müteferrika’s post-Transylvanian activities in which one could see some important idiosyncrasies of his pre-Ottoman identity. There are known so far only three narratives revealing Müteferrika’s biography: of Müteferrika’s contemporaries César de Saussure and Charles Peyssonnel, as well as of Müteferrika himself. However, Saussure’s and Peyssonnel’s portraits, on the one hand, and Müteferrika’s self-portrait, on the other, are advantageous for the necessity of cross-examination of the images, appearing from them.

All the three biographical narratives provide a basis for different and even controversial interpretations of the following more or less unclear issues: how did Müteferrika exactly become an Ottoman subject; what was his religious affiliation before Islam; and how did he convert to Islam: of own free will or under the pressure of unfavorable circumstances?

Müteferrika himself may be created a much more favorable self-image through mystifying the circumstances that led to his conversion. This story could serve also as a fawning before his new Muslim rulers. In other words, Müteferrika probably created an alternative and fictitious self-portrait, which is much more plausible than the real one.

**Dana Sajdi**
Boston College, USA

“In Other Worlds? The Geographical Visions of 18th-Century Syrian Chroniclers”

The paper explores 8 chroniclers from various social backgrounds from Syria (a barber, a soldier, a couple of Shi’i agriculturalists, a Greek Orthodox priest, a court clerk, and a Samaritan scribe, and a scholar). The idea is to plot out the towns/cities/regions/empires that each chronicle mentions and why, and whether this 1) geographical vision constitutes a "worldview", and whether 2) it has something to do with their respective identities (how does a Greek Orthodox priest's view of the world differ from say a Sunni barber or a Shi’i farmer).
Ottoman-Russian rivalry in this period has often been seen simply as part of the Western European diplomatic “Eastern Question.” I examine one effect of this rivalry on individual identities, using military captivity to provide a partial answer to the question of how individuals articulated their identities when dealing with the Ottoman state. What did it mean—both in definition and in consequences—to be an Ottoman subject in different circumstances? How did individuals couch their claims to, or denial of, this status, and why?

Captivity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offers a unique view of this question because, as my dissertation argues, the Russian and Ottoman states had worked out their own rules of captivity, under which freedom or slavery, and sometimes even life or death, turned on the subjecthood and religion of captives. Therefore, Ottoman and Russian archives contain fascinating records of captives' claims.

I use these sources to explore the strategies of both captives and the Ottoman state in these reciprocal, but unequal, negotiations. I focus on those captives in the hands of the Ottoman state who sought both to claim and to deny Ottoman subjecthood, demonstrating the vital importance of an emerging sense of legal "nationality."

This paper analyzes the encounter between sultan Abdülmecid and his subjects during the relatively unknown 1846 tour of Rumelia, based on local eyewitness accounts drawn from memoirs, poems and songs. The goal is to look at the ways in which the Sultan’s direct visibility was staged for and received by the population, the terms of the social pact between ruler and ruled, and above all, the various manifestations of the trope of love for the ruler, which served the purpose of anchoring provincial (esp. non-Muslim) loyalties to the center. These processes are heavily underresearched, but are indispensable to a realistic understanding of the formation of modern public space and the evolution of communal ethos in the late Ottoman Empire. The trope of love, solidified on this tour, was underwritten by an inclusive notion of God and like-minded practices of faith and prayer. In the long run, propelled by the escalating annual empire-wide celebrations of the sultan, it helped foster not only vertical ties to the ruler, but also horizontal group consciousness among the ruled, which eventually led to a new style of politics, ethnic nationalism and the modern nation-state.

A certain Zihni Ismail Pasha, died in 1786/87, left a weird weapon behind—a cart with many large calibre muskets fixed on it fired by a central mechanism. Resembling a ribauldequin (also known as a rabauld,
ribault, ribaudkin, or organ gun), many inventors including Leonardo da Vinci had always been fascinated with the idea of producing such a super, battle-winning weapon. As late as the 1800s, the British navy put orders for a similar volleygun to be deployed aboard some of its frigates as an anti-personnel weapon. Certain in-flaws of this type of weapon, surely recognized by Sultan Selim III long before did the British navy, made its adoption by the armies and navies impossible until the invention of modern machine guns.

Who was Zihni Ismail Pasha? Was Zihni his first name or, rather, a nickname in appreciation of his inventive mind. These questions are yet to be answered as this is still an on-going research project. I hope to find more information on his life, career, and his unwieldy invention through a research on probate inventories and narrative accounts of the era.

Veysel Şimşek
McMaster University, Canada

“The Making of the First Little Mehmeds: Life and Death in the Ottoman Regular Army, 1826-53”

After the abolition of the Janissary Corps in 1826 and in the face of concurrent military-political challenges, the Ottoman central authority saw creation of a Western-style army manned by long-term conscripts as an imminent necessity. Subsequently, the Ottoman state enacted a series of bureaucratic, administrative and financial reforms in order to expand and maintain its new army. The required manpower was provided through forcibly converting Turkish-speaking Muslim peasants of the “core provinces” and urban “riff-raff” into the uniformed soldiers. As the centre’s authority expanded further, the Muslim nomads, Albanians, Kurds and Bosnians were also rounded up to be either a “Victorious Soldier of Muhammad” or a “Victorious Reservist of Muhammad”.

There are only a few studies available on the Ottoman army in 1820s-50s, majority of which can be regarded as “institutional histories”, concentrating mainly on the military regulations and institutional re-organization. This paper will instead seek to account for the experiences of the Ottoman rank-and-file at peace and war. It will focus on the questions such as how the Ottoman subjects were inducted into the military service, what kind of responses they gave to the military recruitment and what sort of motivations and reluctances they had regarding armed service. Finally, it will attempt to gauge how ethnicity, religion and social status played a role in Ottoman state’s recruitment policies and the subjects’ attitudes towards obligatory military service in an era long before nationalism and mass politics came into existence for the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.

Steve Tamari
Southern Illinois University, USA

“Early Modern Manifestations of Cultural Regionalism in Geographical Syria”

One of the main contentions among historians of the 18th-century Ottoman Empire concerns the process of provincial decentralization. Was this process a function of an Ottoman administrative strategy engineered from the center or does it represent “localism” and proto-regionalism or even proto-nationalism? In the case of the Province of Damascus, most historians focus on members of the ‘Azm family who ruled as a virtual dynasty as successive governors of the province often for long (and unprecedented) tenures in office. This presentation will focus, instead, of literary manifestations of localism among members of the ulama who wrote in a variety of genres including legal treatises,
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histories, and poetry. Examples from this body of literature suggest that “localism” was more than a purely administrative phenomenon and reflected attachment to regional traditions and practices, such as pilgrimage to local saint shrines, associated with geographical Syria (Bilad al-Sham). This presentation is part of a larger project on attachment to Bilad al-Sham as a region which was viewed by members of the local ulama as having traditions that distinguished it from other regions of the Empire.

Fatma Sel Turhan
Yunus Emre Institute, Turkey

“The Rebellious Kapudan of Bosnia: Hüseyin Kapudan (1802-1834)”

Hüseyin Kapudan’s rise to power is the key to understanding better the dynamics of Bosnia in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. Hüseyin Kapudan was born in 1802 in Gradacac which was a small city in the western part of the Posavina region. In fact, Gradacac was well known from the seventeenth and eighteenth century onwards when the ancestors of Hüseyin Kapudan became the holders of its kapudanlık. After the Vali of Bosnia, Ali Celaleddin Paşa, killed his father Murad Kapudan in 1821, Hüseyin Kapudan took the position and became the Kapudan of Gradacac at an early age.

Hüseyin Kapudan held the kapudanlık for 11 years between 1821-1832. It is understood that like other leading figures of the era, Hüseyin Kapudan had thrived and become increasingly prosperous as time went on. Hüseyin Kapudan claimed his valilik in Bosnia in 1831 with the support of inhabitants, since the Bosnians held the general belief that the valis whom the center sent did not protect their rights well. For the Bosnians, there were two main problematic areas which directed them to think in this way; the centralization policies of the Porte and the increasing pressure of the Serbians. The main argument of the Bosnians was that the changes which the Porte called “new order” were in reality contrary to kanun-ı kadim. It is seen that before this rebellion, the abolition of the Janissary army had met with strong reaction among the region’s people and although that rebellion was somehow carried out, the application of the new order of Mahmud II was postponed to a later period, because of critical conditions in Bosnia.

However, after a short period later, the recruitment of new soldiers from Bosnia because of the Russia-Ottoman war of 1828 caused great disturbances since the Bosnians neither wanted to provide soldiers, nor to accept the new uniform. The grievances intensified after the Edirne Treaty when the Porte was forced to make concessions contrary to the interests of Bosnians, especially with the ceding of six Bosnian and Albanian districts to the Serbians. At this point, the Bosnians gradually came to share the idea that the Sultan was much more interested in maintaining his authority over his subjects, regardless of their faith, than as Halife-i Müslimin, defending Muslim territories and protecting Muslim rights. Thus while this rebellion created the gradual alienation of the local inhabitants of Bosnia from the state, the Porte began to look upon the Bosnians as obstacles to their power and progress.

The de facto governorship of Hüseyin Kapudan was started in September 1831, with these considerations by local inhabitants who, old and young, applied to the Porte with petitions and demanded that he be the vizier. However all those demands were not approved by the Ottoman center. During the battle in June, 1832, Hüseyin Kapudan was repulsed. After that, Hüseyin Kapudan escaped from Saray to Austria together with his close associates. In spite of all the persistent demands of Hüseyin Kapudan, he was summoned to Istanbul in order to stay there. It is important to see that after Hüseyin Kapudan was sent to Istanbul and was under house arrest, he continued to communicate secretly with Bosnia. It is interesting to see that not very long after the Vali of Bosnia, Hamdi Paşa made claims about
his secret communications, Hüseyin Kapudan died in Istanbul. After his death, suggestions were made that the most probable reason was that he was poisoned.

Charles Wilkins
Wake Forest University, USA

“Ahmad Efendi Tahazada (d. 1773): Urban Notable of Ottoman Aleppo”

This paper surveys the intellectual horizons of a prominent judge and merchant from the Syrian city of Aleppo. Though not recognized in the biographical dictionaries of the period as an important intellectual figure, Ahmad Efendi Tahazada stands out as a major patron of learning. The examination will be based primarily on an extensive book list, taken from a deed of endowment by Ahmad Efendi, creating a public library in 1752. One important question driving the examination is to what extent the Ahmad Efendi, as a member of the Aleppan social elite, was engaged in Islamic trans-regional scholarly and mystical developments. One of these developments was the introduction of a range of new handbooks and teaching methods, known as “tahqiq,” in the fields of grammar, semantics-rhetoric, logic, and theology, mostly of either Persian or Maghribi origin; another trans-regional development was the spread of originally non-Arabic mystical orders in the region, which appears to have had the effect of strengthening support for controversial monist doctrines. The second question has to do with the degree to which Ahmad Efendi as a practitioner of the Hanafi legal rite embraced relatively new and regionally specialized works of jurisprudence, especially in the context of growing provincial political autonomy.

Ali Yaycioglu
Stanford University, USA

“Mal Canın Yongasıdır’: Property, Life and Empire in the Ottoman World”

This paper focuses on the relationship between property owners and the empire in the early modern Ottoman World, roughly from the 17th to the early 19th centuries. It discusses four major questions: 1. What are the bases of the Ottoman imperial claim to confiscate the wealth and end the life of some individuals who were somehow connected to the imperial establishment? 2. What were the mechanisms and methods of property confiscations? 3. What were the strategies of some individuals and families to sustain wealth and power and avoid imperial seizure? 4. What is the role of instability of property rights in the macro politics and economics of the Ottoman Empire?

Fatih Yeşil
Hacettepe University, Turkey

“How to Be(come) an Ottoman at the End of the Eighteenth Century”

There is a general scholarly consensus as to what constituted an Ottoman. He is a person who served the Ottoman state as a member of the ruling elite or askeri class, in return for which he received an income from the Sultan and was given certain tax privileges. To join this elite one was required to behave as an Ottoman in manners and etiquette and to be in possession of certain skills, the most noted of which was a mastery of the elsine-i selâse, the three languages, namely Arabic, Persian and Turkish. However these characteristics which contributed to the portrait of an Ottoman did not remain static and changed with transformation in state organisation and social framework and the changing nature of
tradition, manners and language. External dynamics, such as diplomatic upheaval, wars, financial fluctuation and the impact of modern ideas also influenced the character of the Ottoman.

This paper will try to demonstrate the upbringing of an Ottoman at the end of the eighteenth century as reflected in the early life of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi. As a servant of the Sublime Ottoman State, Ratib Efendi, with his manners and the languages he knew, the posts assigned to him and his role in the formulation of the policy of the New Order can well provide us with a contemporary portrait of an Ottoman. No doubt, the modifications taking place in the political agenda of Ottoman elites and the consequent reorganization of the state was to recast the ideal Ottoman. Due to the influential posts to which Ratib Efendi was appointed, he was instrumental in the rebirth of the Ottoman during the reign of the Selim III. We can see how Ratib Efendi was influenced by Ottoman society in transition. The examination of the formative years of his life will not only show how the son of a preacher, born in a small town in Anatolia, became a high-ranking bureaucrat and accomplished poet, easily distinguished from the reaya, but also how the face of state and society changed at the end of the eighteenth century. From the story of Ratib Efendi’s early years we can observe the continuities and discontinuities in Ottoman society and the central administration and this can provide some important clues to the understanding of what constituted an Ottoman.

Gültekin Yıldız
Istanbul University, Turkey

“Who were the Bashibozuks?: Irregular Warriors as the Contractual Special Forces of Ottoman Regular Army (1826-1876)“

The abolition of the Janissaries and the consequent foundation of a relatively small new regular army (Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammadiyya) in 1826, was a real turning point in late ottoman political and military history. Nevertheless, till the political end of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, irregular warrior bands composing of tribal Muslim Albanian, Kurdish and Circassian warriors were continued to be employed by the Ottoman government. Though they didn’t prove to be loyal and efficient soldiers in wars and domestic counter-insurgency operations, Ottoman bureaucrats in Istanbul preferred to make them a part of their army on an ad hoc contractual manner. In doing this, their were not only motivated by the urgent need for special combat forces to confront tribal guerillas in frontier zones. If not employed by the military, it was very easy for these “part-time soldiers” of the Sublime Porte to go the other path and become outlaws ransacking Ottoman countryside. This paper would try to examine the Ottoman Bashibozuks in their own socio-economic context, and to re-conceptualize their employment in terms of labor history.

Robert Zens
Le Moyne College, USA

"Depicting the Age of Ayan through Creative Nonfiction"

The Ottoman Empire, in its long, colorful history, has many stories to tell. These stories usually are retold in detailed, scholarly monographs or general political histories. However, neither of these venues are able to capture fully “the story” that so often draws individuals to reading history books for pleasure. Many of the popular, yet scholarly, works that have appealed to the general public in recent years have been written to some extent as pieces of creative non-fiction. This paper will examine if and how this form of writing can be used to depict the fascinating age of the ayan. The personalities of this
period stretching from the mid-eighteenth into the early nineteenth century lend themselves well to a fascinating novelistic portrayal. Individuals such as Pasvanoğlu Osman, Tepedelenli Ali, Tırskiniklioğlu Ismail, and Cezzar Ahmed with their colorful lives would not serve merely as interesting protagonists/antagonists, but their influence on Ottoman domestic and foreign affairs would serve as an instructive history of the time period.