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## International Congress on Ottoman Studies, Sakarya University, Adapazarı, Turkey, October 14 – 17, 2015

The Center for Ottoman Studies (OSAMER) of the Sakarya University organized an International Congress on Ottoman Studies from October 14 to 17, 2015. The venue was the Cultural and Congress Center of the Esentepe Campus of the Sakarya University in the city of Adapazarı, Republic of Turkey. The intention of the congress organizers was to bring together Ottomanist scholars who would present the current state of research in Ottoman studies and introduce new approaches in this historical field which would depart beyond well-established and overly traditional historical narratives. The conference language was Turkish and English and the congress was superbly organized with numerous student staff which supervised the smooth functioning of no less than eight simultaneous panels in eight halls. In total, 60 panels were held in those eight halls during three full days of presentations during the congress. Moreover, this symposium featured invited lectures by eight prominent speakers, among them Suraiya Faroqhi, one of the leading authorities on Ottoman history today. Most of the invited speakers focused on the aforementioned aim of the congress and talked about problems facing Ottomanist historians today in different subfields of this discipline. Out of a total number of almost 300 accepted participants, around 245 of them eventually participated at the congress.

On the first day of the congress, after opening speeches followed contributions divided (as mentioned above) in eight parallel sessions devoted to panel topics as follows: studies in economic history and financial practices, Ottoman provincials, foundation of the Ottoman *beylik*, social life in the early Ottoman period, Ottoman provincial military and administrative organization, Ottoman cities, Ottoman music and fine arts, music education, *fetwas* as sources of Ottoman law, Ottoman civil procedure and *'ilm al-hal*, sources for Ottoman studies, Arabic language education in Ottoman madrassahs, Ottoman civilization and change, diplomacy and warfare, Ottoman ethical thought in the context of Aduian ethics commentaries, the Ottoman image, and the culture of coexistence. The panels comprised many interesting presentations, among which the ones that attracted most attention were the invited speeches by Mehmet Genç, who talked about the basic problems facing researchers in Ottoman studies today, and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, who held an exposé on the approaches to the relation between the Ottoman Empire and Islam. The session most relevant for the northwestern periphery of the Ottoman Empire, here including Croatian lands, was the one on the Ottoman image among other nations. Adrian Jones held an interesting presentation on the ideas which shaped the allegorical image of Istanbul in the writings of Dimitrie Cantemir (1673 – 1723), Ottoman tributary sovereign of Moldavia, who wrote the first work of fiction in Romanian, named *Istoria ieroglifică*, which is infused with a mixture of Romanian and Ottoman cultural influences. Milorad Pavić talked about the misconceptions concerning the Ottoman Empire and its institutions in Southeastern Europe as a result of the wrong educational approach, for example, too great insistence in the current bibliography on the phenomenon of forced Islamization among the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Balkan part of the Ottoman Empire, which was a marginal occurrence during Ottoman rule. Pavić also called for a more critical approach towards the nature of the Ottoman Empire and its institutions.

The second day of the congress included panels on following topics: Ottoman finance and archival sources, domestic and international trade, Ottoman mining, Ottoman-Italian relations, Ottoman-Russian relations, Iran and Algeria in the context of center-periphery relations, war and intelligence, Ottoman war history in the diaries of Marino Sanuto, strategy and ideology in the age of total war, Ottoman calligraphy and calligraphists, space and architecture, public construction activities, sources for the research of Ottoman law and its reflections, Ottoman urban *vakıfs*, Ottoman rural *vakıfs*, Health, disease and health facilities, Ottoman medicine and sources, health and disease in Ottoman society of the classical period through the eyes of European travelers, *divan* literature, Ottoman poetry, the relationship between religion, politics and society, the Ottoman notion of humanness, Ottoman philosophy, sufism and *tefsir*, Ottoman account books, letters and diaries, foreigners' views of Ottoman society, and Isma'il Ankarawi and his place in the Ottoman *sufi* thought. One of the most attentively followed presentations was the invited lecture of Feridun M. Emecen, who held a speech about new views of Ottoman military organization of the classical period and concluded that the research of the said topic is far from being exhausted. Michalis N. Michael held a presentation on the political situation on Cyprus in the first half of the 19th century and analyzed the major revolts which took place there in the light of the trend of general upheavals in the Ottoman periphery of that period, asserting that the events on Cyprus could be viewed as a case study for this period of Ottoman history in general. Francesco Pongiluppi held an exposé on the Italian policy towards the Ottoman Empire in the last two decades of the 19th century and the resultant Italian commercial, cultural, and territorial expansion in the Mediterranean and East Africa. A presentation by Mónica F. Molnár's was about a personality who played a considerable part in the early modern Croatian history: her talk concerned the relation between the war commander Raimondo Montecuccoli and Ottoman leaders in the 17th century. Molnár stated that Montecuccoli's writings on military theory and strategy represent the highest level of scientific approach of Christian war commanders of this period towards the Ottomans and are an excellent source for the research of Christian intellectuals' perception of „the Other“ and the research of personal interactions between the Christian and Ottoman leaders during this period.

During the third day of the congress, the panels were focused on the topics as follows: Ottoman maritime trade, customs and port trade, Ottoman manufacturing, Ottoman cotton production and forestry, perception of the Ottoman Empire through literature and cinema, the Ottoman caliphate and its foreign policy, Ottoman tradesmen, rural administrative and socio-economic structure of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman women, Ottoman family life and childhood, Ottoman modernization efforts, Ottoman language and alphabet, the Ottoman struggle for dominance over Egypt and the Red Sea, wealth and heritage procedure, Ottoman justice, the views on Ottoman orientalism and colonialism, Ottoman morality, Ottoman identity issues, Ottoman philosophy, sufism and Islamic scholastic theology, theoretical approach to Ottoman literature, portraits of distinguished Ottomans, patronage and rebellion, Ottoman science, and Ottoman cuisine and culinary culture. As usual, invited lectures attracted the biggest attention. So it was with Suraiya Faroqhi, who held an exposé on the importance of research of Ottoman material culture, and Michael Ursinus, who talked about the Ottoman perambulations in the 16th century in the vicinity of Solin and Split. Another contribution concerning Croatian lands was the presentation by Anđelko Vlašić, who talked about the changes done to the size of forests of Slavonia

during the period of Ottoman rule in the region (1526 – 1690) and concluded that the size of Slavonian forests remained almost intact throughout the period. His work is part of the research project „From virgin forests to arable land: the history of anthropization of forests in Slavonia from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the 20th century“, which is financed by the Croatian Science Foundation. Frial Supratman held a presentation on foreign policy of Ottoman sultan Abdulhamid II in Southeast Asia from 1876 to 1909 and concluded that this period was crucial for the establishment of ties between the Ottomans and the vast number of Muslims living in Southeast Asia. Another very interesting presentation was held by Priscilla Mary Işın, who researched the history of *döner kebab* from the first mentions of this food in 1432 up to the 18th century, when it began to be made at *kebab* shops, thus giving foreigners the opportunity to taste it. Işın concluded that its place of origin is inconclusive and that this type of food became popular all over the Levant and the surrounding area.

Activities organized during the congress were rich and included a concert featuring classical Ottoman music, an exhibition of Ottoman archival sources called imperial *fermans* and of historical maps, a banquet night featuring authentic Ottoman cuisine, and a daylong field trip to the city of Iznik (ancient Nicaea) on the fourth day of the congress. Furthermore, the congress organizers acknowledged that the papers selected by a board of referees would be published in an edited collection of congress proceedings. All in all, this congress can be regarded as a success with regard to its major objectives, namely the introduction of new historical approaches. The symposium organizers made a laudable step by introducing panels on such underrepresented topics like the life of Ottoman women, the Ottoman family life and childhood, wealth and heritage procedure, Ottoman cotton production, Ottoman forestry, Ottoman cuisine, etc. As regards the Croatian perspective as part of the Ottoman studies, one has to note the participation of the two mentioned Croatian scholars at the congress. In general, however, the symposium's topics rarely encompassed Croatian lands and the situation on the Habsburg-Ottoman border, except when the presentations dealt with the wider center-periphery relations. This fact is probably a good indication of the need for a push towards more intensive research of Croatian-Ottoman relations.

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