



BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR TURKISH AREA STUDIES

The 28th Spring Symposium

in association with the London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI)

Saturday, 6 May 2017

Wolfson Lecture Theatre, Paul Webley Wing, Senate House,
SOAS University of London, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU

PROGRAMME

- 10.00 – 10.40 Registration and Coffee/Tea*
- 10.50 Opening remarks (Professor William Hale, Acting President of BATAS)
- 11.00 **Uluç Gürkan**
(Former Deputy Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe (PACE) and OSCE)

“Legal light on the ‘Malta Tribunals’ of 1919-1921: The British Government’s unsuccessful attempt to bring Turks to trial after WW1”
- 11.50 **Professor Scott Redford**
(History of Art & Archaeology, SOAS, University of London)

“An A-Z of medieval Anatolian travel”
- 12.45 Break for lunch (list of local eating places available at registration desk)
- 14.15 **Dr Ziya Meral**
(Resident Fellow, British Army’s Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research)

“Turkey’s Security Dilemma: What drives Turkish security and defence policies? And why is the country facing more insecurity as their outcome?”
- 15.05 **Dr Rachel Harris**
(Reader in Ethnomusicology, SOAS, University of London)

“Text, performance, and the transnational circulation of the *Hikmet* poetry of 12th-century Sufi Ahmet Yesevi”
- 16.00-16.30 Coffee/Tea*
- 16.40 BATAS Annual General Meeting

Symposium admission charges: Full-time students (whether BATAS members or not) free, other BATAS members £3, non-members £10.

* Payment for coffee/tea (with biscuits) will be *by ticket only*, obtainable at registration for £2 per person per session.

Abstracts of presentations

Uluç Gürkan, ulucgurkan@gmail.com

Former Deputy Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Legal light on the 'Malta Tribunals' of 1919-1921: The British Government's unsuccessful attempt to bring Turks to trial after WW1

After WW I, the Ottoman Government organized a series of **courts-martial** in 1919-1920 to prosecute war criminals, but the Allies considered Ottoman trials as a travesty of justice. So Ottoman justice had been replaced with Western justice by moving the trials to Malta as "International" prosecution...

144 Ottoman officials were arrested and deported to Malta as prisoners of war. The aim was "to trial and sentence the Turks" on the grounds that they had "*perpetrated mass killings against Armenians*".

A judicial prosecution was opened. The prosecution was conducted by Britain's highest legal prosecution authority, Her Majesty's Attorney General for England and Wales in London. The Attorney General's prosecution was based on Articles 230 and 231 of the Treaty of Sèvres on "Armenian massacre" allegations. Despite the British government's every effort to trial and sentence the Turks detained in Malta, no evidence that a British court of law would consider sufficient proof against them was found. Consequently, the Attorney General, in a document dated July 29, 1921, informed the British government that with the "*evidence in hand*" none of the Turks in Malta could be prosecuted on the grounds of the Armenian massacre.

It goes without question that the prosecutor inquiry constituted a legal procedure antecedent to the Nurnberg Trials. Accordingly, the Malta Tribunal is a judicial decision consistent with the relevant 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention declaring that the "Armenian massacre", or currently termed "genocide" allegations do not exist... The Attorney General's decision to dismiss the Armenian massacre accusations for "lack of evidence" corresponds in modern law to a "judgement/verdict of non-prosecution/non suite."

This is the reason why no trials were held in Malta.

Professor Scott Redford, sr63@soas.ac.uk

Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, SOAS, University of London

An A-Z of medieval Anatolian Travel

Caravanserais are not peculiar to the Islamic world: there are remains of roadside inns from the Iron and even Bronze ages. Indeed, caravanserais are not found at all epochs of Islamic history, nor in all parts of the Islamic world. Be that as it may, the central and eastern Islamic lands, in the medieval period, witnessed an interest in building caravanserais. Because many of the caravanserais of Iran and Central Asia were built of more perishable materials, they are less well known than those of the Seljuks of Rum, or Anatolia, which were built of stone. True palaces of commerce, caravanserais are in many ways more impressive than the actual palaces of this dynasty, and have been studied and analysed since the great publications of Kurt and Hanna Erdmann in the early 1960s. This talk will examine recent work on Rum Seljuk caravanserais, and try to understand the reasons for their construction, and how they connected to land and sea routes in all directions. What was travel like in medieval Anatolia, what did

caravans carry, and how did caravanserais work, both as roadside inns and as part of the patronage of the Rum Seljuk state?

Dr Ziya Meral, ziyamerl@gmail.com

Resident Fellow, British Army's Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research

Turkey's Security Dilemma: What drives Turkish security and defence policies? And why is the country facing more insecurity as their outcome?

Dr Meral will explore the complex security and defence challenges facing Turkey, and the factors that are shaping the Turkish government's responses to them. This will be followed by a forecast of the short- and medium-term outcomes of current policies, and a discussion of possible ways Turkey can meet increasing insecurity and instability. The presentation will focus on the impact of the Arab Spring, and particularly developments in Syria, on Turkey, and how the Turkish government's space for manoeuvre is limited. It will also discuss issues surrounding security structures in the aftermath of the coup attempt and the central problem with Turkey's counter-insurgency approach to addressing the PKK terror threat.

Dr Rachel Harris, rh@soas.ac.uk

Reader in Ethnomusicology, SOAS, University of London

Text, performance, and the transnational circulation of the *Hikmet* poetry of 12th-century Sufi Ahmet Yesevi

In Uyghur villages in Xinjiang (East Turkestan) *hikmet* are sung poems, performed to provoke weeping. They remind pious listeners to meditate on the certain approach of the grave, and to fear the Day of Judgement. Their melodies are handed down within religious lineages from teacher to apprentice, and their texts are carefully recorded in handwritten notebooks.

Hikmet are known in Turkey as a body of medieval Turkic poetry written by the twelfth century Central Asian Sufi saint Ahmet Yesavi, and collected in the *Diwan-i Hikmet*. Manuscript versions of the *Diwan-i Hikmet* have circulated across Central Asia for centuries, and in modern times published versions have circulated from Istanbul to Urumchi to Kazan. What relationship, if any, does the living ritual tradition of East Turkestan have with this transnational circulation of printed *hikmet*?
