

Transcultural Networks of Power and Knowledge: The Context for the Ottoman World of Printing

Evgenia Kermeli, Hasan Çolak, Orlin Sabev, Radu Dipratu

Despite the recent developments in the scholarship on the Ottoman world of learning and printing, little has changed in the general conviction that the processes of the formation, dissemination and circulation of knowledge took place in separate spheres for each community in the Ottoman Empire. With the aim of transcending such communal boundaries, the papers in this panel focus on specific case studies centred around several transcultural networks of power and knowledge that have received little, if any, attention in the scholarship. Based on the accounts written in Turkish and Greek, the first paper by Evgenia Kermeli focuses on how Moralı Beşir Ağa, the chief eunuch and one of the most important patrons of scholars in the Ottoman Empire, established his power through interaction with a diverse group of people from different backgrounds. The second paper by Hasan Çolak analyses the language employed in the letters between the patriarch of Jerusalem Chrysanthos Notaras and his Muslim correspondents, and discusses whether and how this transcultural interaction facilitated cooperation in the field of formation and circulation of knowledge and power. The third paper by Orlin Sabev focuses on the relationship between İbrahim Müteferrika and the Jewish printer Jonah Eshkenazi through a fatwa issued by the grand mufti Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, and offers a discussion of the transcultural aspects of the Müteferrika press. The fourth paper by Radu Dipratu analyses the connection between the French ambassador Louis-Saveur, Marquis de Villeneuve and the intellectual network of İbrahim Müteferrika on the basis of Villeneuve's diplomatic correspondence and scrutinises the reciprocal nature of transfer between them.