THE ABDUL HAMID II ERA AND BEYOND: MASSACRES AND REFORM, RUPTURE, AND CONTINUITY
25-26 October 2018
Dear Participant,

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, one of the most polarizing figures in Ottoman history. Christians in the Ottoman Empire dubbed him the “Red” (Bloody) Sultan. The Western media represented him as a murderous despot. Meanwhile, for Muslim Turks, Kurds, and Arabs, he exemplified an historical “great khan,” leader of leaders. To reflect on his legacy in this milestone year, I have gathered an international group of scholars to examine the violent policies carried out in his name.

This conference will examine key aspects of the Abdul Hamid II period (1876-1909) and its aftermath by taking a closer look at actions carried out against Christians, especially the Armenians. Specialists will examine the significant and large-scale massacres committed against minorities; the impact of reforms initiated by Abdul Hamid II or imposed by the Great Powers; and the policies towards these same groups. Finally, they will consider the continuities or discontinuities with the catastrophic final years of the Ottoman Empire that saw the almost total annihilation of the Armenians and other Christians through genocide and other forms of mass violence.

As Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professor in Armenian Genocide Studies, I value the support of a dedicated group of friends. Under the leadership of Stephen Migridichian, these supporters have steadfastly funded and encouraged my scholarly projects, the research of my doctoral students, and conferences, such as this two-day event. Marc Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) merits mention for his outstanding support of this event and so many other projects and initiatives. I am equally grateful for the ongoing generosity of the Knights of Vartan. It has been the ardent wish of many friends and supporters to commemorate another landmark anniversary: my tenth as the holder of this prestigious chair. While reluctant to be the subject of celebration, I appreciate that the important scholarship that takes place under my direction in the Strassler Center’s Armenian Genocide track deserves recognition. It has been my privilege to carry out this work.

I look forward to an excellent conference. Thank you for your contributions.

Sincerely,

Taner Akçam

Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professor in Armenian Genocide Studies
THE ABDUL HAMID II ERA AND BEYOND: MASSACRES AND REFORM, RUPTURE AND CONTINUITY
25-26 October 2018

THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER 2018
Dana Commons, Higgins Lounge

6:00 PM: OPENING RECEPTION
Dana Commons, Higgins Lounge

7:00 PM: FROM ABDUL HAMID II TO THE GENOCIDE: CONTINUITY AND RUPTURE
Dana Commons, Higgins Lounge

CHAIR: Marc Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)

PANELISTS:

Ronald Suny, University of Michigan: "Exemplary Repression or Genocide? The Hamidian Massacres"

Stephan Astourian, University of California, Berkeley: “From the Hamidian Era to the Young Turks: Reflections on Issues of Continuity and Discontinuity”

8:30 PM: DESSERT RECEPTION
Dana Commons, Higgins Lounge

FRIDAY 26 OCTOBER 2018
Dana Commons, Higgins Lounge

8:45 AM: WELCOME

Taner Akçam, Clark University

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM: MASSACRES ACROSS ANATOLIA

CHAIR: Burçin Gerçek, Clark University
PANELISTS:

Ali Sipahi, Özyeğin University, Turkey: “1895 Massacres in Harput: How Did People Conceive Collective Violence?”

Toygun Altıntaş, Bilgi University, Turkey: “The Abode of Sedition: Revolution and Violence in Sasun, 1891 - 1904”

Ümit Kurt, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Israel and Fresno State University: “Reform and Violence in the Hamidian Era: Exploring Armenian Massacres in Aintab in 1895”

10:30 PM – 10:45 AM: COFFEE BREAK

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM: THE HAMIDIAN STATE

CHAIR: Ani Ohanian, Clark University

PANELISTS:

David Gutman, Manhattanville College: "The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America in the Hamidian Period"

Kamal Soleimani, College of Mexico, Mexico: “The Significance of Turkish Language in the Hamidian Era”

Owen Miller, Bilkent University, Turkey: “The Ottoman Colonization of the Mountains, 1876-1909"

12:15 PM – 1:20 PM: LUNCH
Rose Library, Strassler Center

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM: ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE HAMIDIAN ERA

CHAIR: Anna Aleksanyan, Clark University

PANELISTS:

Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: “Why is it Important to Look at the Hamidian Era through a Gendered Lens? Perspectives from the Capital”

Christina Maranci, Tufts University: “Vardges Surenyants’ (1860-1921) and the Hamidian Massacres”

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM: COFFEE BREAK

3:15 PM - 4:45 PM: REFORM AND SECURITY IN THE HAMIDIAN ERA AND BEYOND

CHAIR: Asya Darbinyan, Clark University

PANELISTS:

Emre Can Dağlıoğlu, Stanford University: “Writing on Ottoman ‘Armenia without Armenians:’ Reframing the Armenian Reform Process (1870s-1899) in the context of the 1895-1897 Massacres”


Thomas Schmutz, Center for the History of Violence in Newcastle, Australia, and the University of Zurich, Switzerland: “Crossroads in Eastern Anatolia: International Reforms, (Non-) Intervention and Violence, 1912-15”

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM: CONCLUDING REMARKS

CHAIR: Taner Akçam, Clark University

6:15 PM – 8:00 PM: CLOSING DINNER

Rose Library, Strassler Center

Sponsored by the Friends of the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professor in Armenian Genocide Studies, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.
Taner Akçam holds the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professorship in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University. An internationally recognized human rights activist, he was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to recognize the Armenian Genocide. He is the author of numerous books including, *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (with Ümit Kurt, 2015), and *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (2012). Akçam’s work on the Krikor Guergerian archive is the subject of a 2016 book in Turkish. The English language version, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*, was published in February 2018.

Anna Aleksanyan is a PhD candidate at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University where she holds the Ovsanna and Harry Chitjian Fellowship. Her dissertation explores gendered aspects of the Armenian Genocide in the experiences of its female victims. Before starting her PhD, Aleksanyan worked at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia as a scientific researcher. She has published widely both in academic journals and in non-academic publications in Armenian, Russian, French, Turkish and English.
**Toygun Altıntaş** recently received his PhD from the University of Chicago. During the current academic year, he is teaching at Bilgi University, Turkey. His research focuses on questions of ethnic hierarchies, political and social opposition, and governmental practices of marginalization and discrimination in the late Ottoman Empire. He published “The Ottoman War on ‘Anarchism’ and Revolutionary Violence” in the edited volume *To Kill a Sultan: A Transnational History of the Attempt on Abdülhamid II (1905)* (2018).

Emre Can Dağlıoğlu is a doctoral student in the History Department at Stanford University. Previously, he received a master’s degree from Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey and completed doctoral coursework at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He has published a number of articles and book chapters on late Ottoman history, Turkish-Armenian history in the Republican era, and the ‘minority issue’ in Turkey. Currently, he examines the impact of the Armenian reform process on the dynamics of the massacres committed against Armenians in 1895-7.

Asya Darbinyan is a PhD Candidate at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Her dissertation explores the Russian Empire’s response to the Armenian Genocide and to the refugee crisis on the Caucasus front of the Great War. Previously, Darbinyan worked at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia as a senior research fellow and as Deputy Director. She has presented papers at a number of international academic conferences and workshops, published scholarly articles in Armenian and in English, and co-authored a chapter in the volume Plight and Fate of Children During and Following Genocide - Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review (2014).
Lerna Ekmeçioğlu is McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she is also affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program. In 2006, she co-edited (in Turkish) A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862–1933). Her Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey (2016) focuses on the surviving Armenians who remained in Istanbul after the genocide. Currently, she is collaborating with Melissa Bilal on a book and digital humanities project, Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology and Digital Archive, which focuses on the life and works of twelve pioneering women intellectuals from the 1860s to 1960s.

Burçin Gerçek is a PhD student at the Strassler Center where she holds the Agnes Manoogian Hausrath fellowship. She earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Marmara in Istanbul, Turkey and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Strasbourg, France. As a Turkish correspondent for French newspapers, Gerçek wrote extensively about the Armenian Genocide. She published a book about righteous Muslims during the Armenian genocide, Against the Current: Rescuers, Resisters and Those Who Opposed the Orders during the Armenian Genocide (published in Turkish, 2016). Her dissertation examines perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide in the Ankara Province with a focus on their mindset and motivation.
David Gutman is Associate Professor of History at Manhattanville College. His research interests revolve around the politics of migration and migration control, the intersection of mobility and citizenship, the social and political history of Ottoman peripheries, and Ottoman Armenians in the last decades of empire. His book, *The Politics of Armenian Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire: Migrants, Smugglers, and Dubious Citizens*, is under contract with Edinburgh University Press.

Varak Ketsemanian is a PhD student in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. He is working on the social history of the Armenian community in the late Ottoman Empire focusing on questions of constitutionalism, governance, and nationalism. Ketsemanian has published in the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. He is the recipient of several awards and fellowships including Fulbright, FLAS, and the Gulbenkian Scholarship for Armenian Studies among others.
Ümit Kurt earned his PhD in history at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Currently on leave from the Polonsky Fellowship at the Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, he holds the Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professorship in Armenian Studies at Fresno State University. Kurt examines the transfer of Armenian wealth, transformation of space, elite-making process, ordinary perpetrators, collective violence, microhistories, inter-ethnic conflicts, Armenian genocide and early modern Turkish nationalism. He has taught at Clark University, Fresno State University, and Sabanci University, Turkey; he received a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation scholarship and held a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University. He published *The Great, Hopeless Turkish Race: Fundamentals of Turkish Nationalism in the Turkish Homeland, 1911-1916* (2012) and co-authored (with Taner Akçam) *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (2015).

Christina Maranci is the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Chair of Armenian art and architectural history at Tufts University and Department Chair. She has held visiting positions in Armenian art at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is the author of three books and over sixty articles and essays on medieval Armenian art and architecture, including most recently *The Art of Armenia: An Introduction* (2018). Her monograph *Vigilant Powers: Three Churches of Early Medieval Armenia* (2015) on the seventh-century architecture of Armenia won the Sona Aronian Prize for best Armenian studies monograph from the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Karen Gould Prize for Art History from the Medieval Academy of America. Maranci has engaged with the cultural heritage of Armenians for over a decade, working on historically Armenian churches and monasteries in what is now Eastern Turkey. Her campaign for the Cathedral of Mren, near Ani in present-day Eastern Turkey, resulted in its inclusion on the World Monuments Watch List for 2015-17.

Owen Miller is an assistant professor of History at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. He received his doctorate in International and Global History from Columbia University in 2015. Miller previously taught at Emerson College and held a post-doctoral fellowship at Union College. His work dwells on histories of migration, violence and conversion. His manuscript is entitled, *The Ottoman Colonization of the Mountains: Religion and Violence at the Ends of Empire.*
**Ani Ohanian** is a PhD student at the Strassler Center where she holds the Margrit and Nishan Atinizian Fellowship. She earned an MA in History and Literature from Columbia University. Her thesis, titled *Napoleon and his Mameluk: Unveiling the Orient*, focused on Napoleon’s Armenian bodyguard, Roustam Raza, and the notions of *appartenance*. Ohanian earned a second MA in History from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, France. Her thesis, examined American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire between 1918 and 1923. For her dissertation research, she investigates Bolshevik and Kemalist relations with respect to the Armenian genocide.

**Thomas Schmutz** studied History, Political Science, and German Literature at the University of Zurich and Paris Diderot 7. He is affiliated with the Center for the History of Violence in Newcastle, Australia, and the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His research concentrates on Western diplomacy in Asia before and during the First World War with regard to violence, intervention, and reform. He published his findings on the Armenian reform question, “Reform or cataclysm? The agreement of 8 February 1914,” with Hans-Lukas Kieser and Mehmet Polatel in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2015). He wrote about the diplomatic context and road to genocide, “Reacting to Violence” in the *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 4 (2016). His analysis of the 1918 German-Ottoman rivalry appears in the volume *The Myriad Legacies of 1917* (2018).
Ali Sipahi completed his PhD in anthropology and history at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor with a dissertation titled “At Arm’s Length: Historical Ethnography of Proximity in Harput.” During his graduate studies, Sipahi focused on the urban history of Elazığ-Harput as a medium to uncover social transformation in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the last two centuries, looking at urban transformation, trans-regional migration and collective violence. With his colleagues, he co-organized a conference on the Ottoman East, and co-edited The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century (2016). In 2013-14, Sipahi was a visiting scholar at Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, Germany. His current project examines regimes of historicity and the 1960 coup in Turkey.

Kamal Soleimani specializes in Islamic and Middle Eastern history and politics. Soleimani received his PhD in Islamic and Middle Eastern history from Columbia University. He has taught in Turkish and American universities and has authored a number of scholarly articles. His book, Islam and Competing Nationalisms in the Middle East (2016), questions the foundational epistemologies of the nation-state by focusing on the pivotal and intimate role that Islam played in the nation state’s emergence. He shows how the entanglements and reciprocities of nationalism and religious thought have played out in the modern history of the Middle East.

Ilkay Yilmaz is an associate fellow at the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, Germany. Previously, she was an assistant professor of Political Science at Istanbul University, Turkey. Her research interests include security policies and police institutions in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian Question, the history of passports, the administrative history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic, state formation and comparative empires. She is the author of *Pursuit of Vagrant, Anarchist and Mischief: Internal Passports, Passports and Hotel Registers through Security Policies during the Abdul Hamid II Era* (published in Turkish, 2014).
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