

Call for Papers: “Multilingualism, Translation, Transfer: Persian in the Ottoman Empire”, Gotha Research Library, 27–29 April 2023

The widespread use of Persian in the Ottoman Empire as part of the larger multilingual region of the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond during the early modern to modern periods has been highlighted by scholars from various disciplines. Concepts such as the “Persophonie” (Bert G. Fragner) or the “Persianate world” (Nile Green) have pointed out the significant influence of Persian in the fields of literature, education and, to some extent, administration and diplomacy (e.g. as a lingua franca) in much of the eastern Islamic world from the 11th to the 19th centuries, especially in the Ottoman Empire. However, these discussions still lack adequate contextualisation and a multidisciplinary approach that allows for an analytical understanding of the phenomenon of translation as a particular mechanism of knowledge transmission and exchange in these contexts. The notion of translation as a concept, process, and product of transregional and intercultural entanglements in the broader Transottoman sphere thus poses an ongoing challenge to contemporary scholarship, especially with regard to the discussion of the Persian language and its role and significance in various cultural, literary, and political realms.

The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars with expertise in Persian and Ottoman Turkish language contacts who are interested in the fields of language, literature, and history, and to explore the role of multilingual practices – especially translation – which are an essential part of knowledge production in the respective traditions. In addition, the conference seeks to provide a forum for discussion and collaboration between scholars of Ottoman, Iranian and Arabic studies and beyond who are concerned with the interactions of the three languages in the Ottoman Empire (*elsine-i selāse*) and examine their functions as well as the interrelationships between languages, (literary) genres, and disciplines.

In particular, contributions are expected to focus on the agents (or institutions) involved in and facilitating such multilingual processes, on the processes themselves as forms of preservation, adaptation, etc. of knowledge, or on the products (i.e. translations contained in manuscripts and prints) and their reception within the Ottoman Empire and beyond during the early modern period. Possible topics therefore include (but are not limited to):

- Translations of Persian works into Ottoman Turkish or vernacular languages (e.g. Bosnian and Albanian, Eastern European or Caucasian languages)
- Translation of literary genres from Persian into Ottoman Turkish
- Reception of Persian at the Ottoman court or in the Ottoman public sphere (education, Sufi contexts, etc.)
- Role of Arabic in the interaction of Persian and Turkish
- Migration of Persian literati to the Ottoman Empire
- Persian manuscripts in Ottoman libraries

The conference “Multilingualism, Translation, Transfer: Persian in the Ottoman Empire” is located within the research framework of the DFG Priority Programme 1981: “Transottomanica: Eastern European-Ottoman-Persian Mobility Dynamics” and will take place at the Gotha Research Library in Thuringia (Germany) from 27 to 29 April 2023.

The Gotha Research Library preserves a remarkable collection of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish manuscripts, including numerous copies of translations into various languages. Most of these manuscripts were acquired around 1800 by the scholar and traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen for the Ducal Library in Gotha.

Application Procedure

Proposals including an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short biography (max. 200 words) may be sent to Dr. Philip Bockholt (Universität Leipzig), philip.bockholt@uni-leipzig.de by **15 July 2022**. Interdisciplinary contributions, including but not limited to history, literary studies, translation studies, manuscript studies, etc., are encouraged.

The conference will be held in English. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered.

The organisers are Dr. Philip Bockholt (Universität Leipzig), Jun.-Prof. Dr. Hülya Çelik (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), Prof. Dr. Ludwig Paul (Universität Hamburg), and Dr. Ani Sargsyan (Universität Hamburg).

PRIORITY PROGRAMME 1981

