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Ottoman-Japanese Relations as the Site of Informal Diplomacy, Intelligence and the Transnational in Eurasia

Vortrag (englisch)



Zeit: 22.11.2012, 18 Uhr c.t.

Ort: Hörsaal 221

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Edmund-Siemers-Allee1)



Japanologie

Ottoman-Japanese relations during the nineteenth century emerged from the shared interest of both polities to incorporate sufficient degree of modern Western civilization for self-strengthening in order to counter the domination of the West. Divergent interests determined the attitude of the Ottoman and Japanese empires. The Ottoman Turkish perspective saw Japan as a rising star of the East that was successful in the reforms of the Meiji era and had achieved the goal of self-strengthening. The Ottoman ruler Abdulhamid II also desired to form a close relationship with the hope to find a special partner in an Asia-oriented diplomacy toward the world of Islam as a challenge to the British and Dutch colonial powers with large Asian Muslim populations. Japanese diplomats saw the Ottoman realm as the site for the investigation of rivalry between Russia and Britain and the problematic of the unequal treaties. The Japanese military incorporated the Ottoman territories into the Asian intelligence network against Russia. The Japanese Pan-Asianists gazed at the Ottoman empire as the gate-way to partnership with the transnational of the Pan-Islamist actors in Asia. The Ottoman Empire served as the site of informal diplomacy, intelligence, and the transnational connections for Japanese engagement. Hence, Ottoman-Japanese relations reveal an alternative form of “international rela-



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tions” based on the informal and the transnational that was inter-state and inter-regional. This twilight zone of international relations took place parallel to formal treaty-based relations, which have been the main focus of historical analysis, thereby expanding our understanding of the global processes in inter-state and inter-national relations.

Prof. Dr. Selçuk Esenbel lehrt an der Boğaziçi Universität in Istanbul. Sie studierte in Japan und den USA japanische Geschichte und Sprache. Ihre Forschungsinteressen liegen in den Bereichen japanischer Geschichte, Peasant Studies, Historiographie sowie im Bereich asiatischer Zivilisationen.

Publikationen (Auswahl):

Even the Gods Rebel: Peasants of Takaino and the 1871 Nakano Uprising in Japan (Ann Arbor 1998); *The Rising Sun and the Turkish Crescent: New Perspectives on Japanese-Turkish Relations* (Istanbul 2003) with Inaba Chiharu; *Japan, Turkey, and the World of Islam: The Writings of Selçuk Esenbel* (Leiden 2011); *American-Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989* (Newcastle 2011). *Türkiye’de Japonya Çalışmaları I (Japanese Studies in Turkey I)* (Istanbul 2012) with Erdal Kuçukyalçın; *Japon Modernleşmesi ve Osmanlı* (Istanbul 2012).