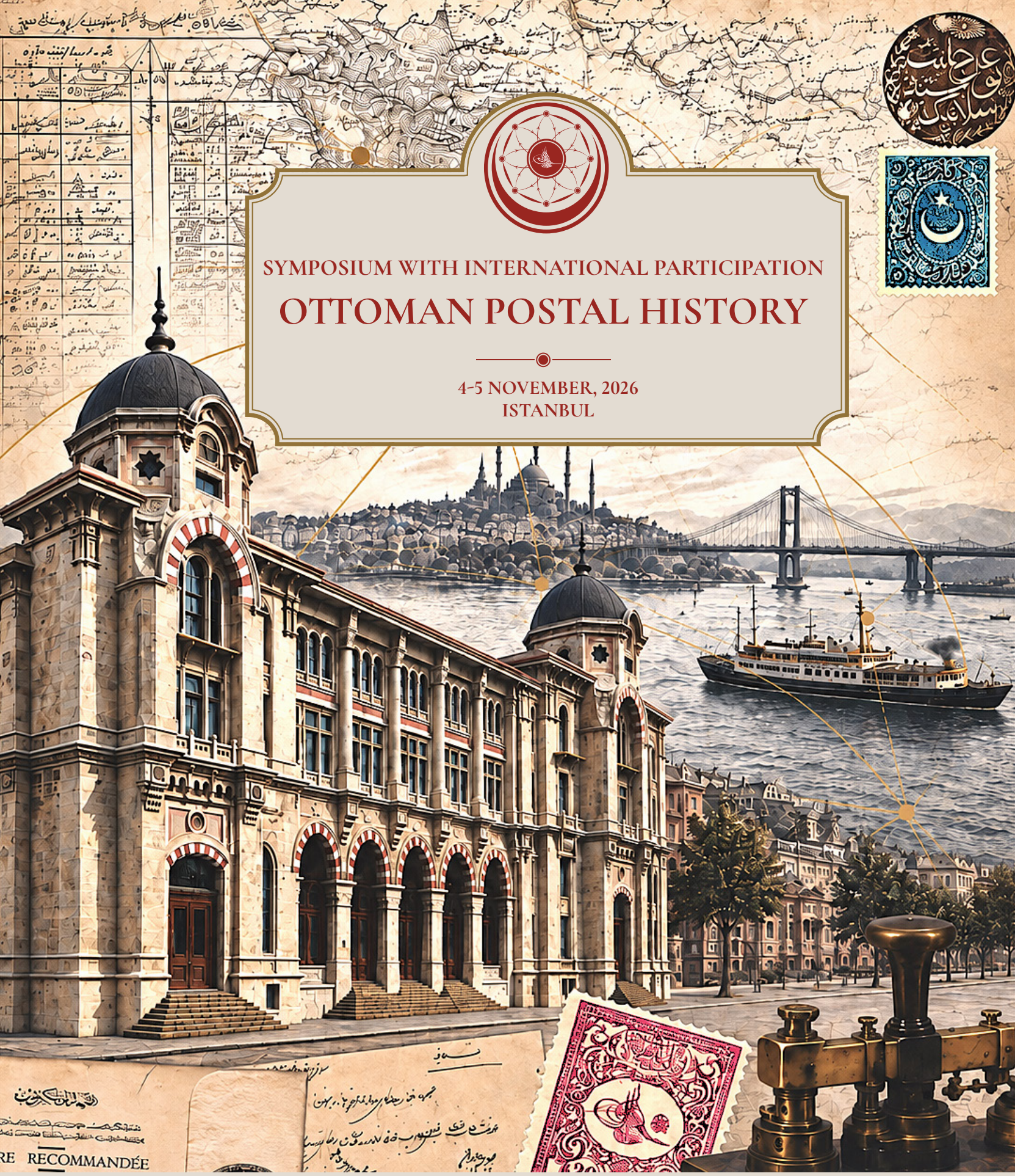


SYMPOSIUM WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

OTTOMAN POSTAL HISTORY

4-5 NOVEMBER, 2026
ISTANBUL

T.C. KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI

PTT

OPTAD

FATİH SULTAN MEHMET VAKIF ÜNİVERSİTESİ 1471

ORDAM ORTA DOĞU VE AFRİKA ARAŞTIRMALARI VE UYGULAMA MERKEZİ

MUSEUM OF ROMANIAN RECORDS

OTTOMAN POSTAL HISTORY
RESARCH ASSOCIATION

SYMPOSIUM WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION
OTTOMAN POSTAL HISTORY

4-5 NOVEMBER, 2026
ISTANBUL

STAKEHOLDERS

T.C. KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI

PTT

FATİH SULTAN MEHMET VAKIF ÜNİVERSİTESİ 1471

FATİH SULTAN MEHMET VAKIF ÜNİVERSİTESİ ORDAM ORTA DOĞU VE AFRİKA ARAŞTIRMALARI VE UYGULAMA MERKEZİ

MUSEUM OF ROMANIAN RECORDS

SYMPOSIUM WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTIPICATION

OTTOMAN POSTAL HISTORY

ORGANISATION POWER, INHERITED PRIVILEGE, TRADE ROUTES

4 - 5 NOVEMBER, 2026

FATİH SULTAN MEHMET
UNIVERSITY AYASOFYA
CAMPUS, GÜLHANE BUILDING

1. *1856 Pre-Philatelic Postal Map (Original Version)*

2. *1 Piastre London Edition (1914), Sultan Reşad Tughra with Star and Crescent emblem, registered envelope.*

3. *13 January 1865, Star and Crescent (Duloz) Postage Stamp Type I*

4. *1909-10 Tarabya Post Office, 1326 "Poste Imp. Ottomane Bur. De Therapia" - Bilingual Stamp*

5. *27 September 1876, Crescent (Empire Ottoman) Postage Stamp*

6. *Ottoman postal envelope dated 1906 (With Iraq - Karbala dispatch postmark).*

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LETTRE RECOMMANDÉE
POSTES OTTOMANES
PIASTRE

③



④


POSTE IMP. OTTOMANE

⑤


EMP: OTTOMAN
2 PIASTRES

⑥



WHO WE ARE ?

Our organization aims to research the historical development, institutional structure, international relations, and material culture of the Ottoman Empire's postal, telegraphic, and communication activities. The fact that the postal histories of the successor states emerging after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire remain an integral part of Ottoman history clearly demonstrates the international significance of this field.

Our society is looking forward to highlight the unique research potential this rich and compelling domain holds for both historical scholarship and philatelic disciplines, while transforming this accumulated knowledge into a systematic, accessible, and enduring resource.

With the primary objective of uniting academic researchers and collectors working in Ottoman postal history on a shared platform—fields that often proceed on distinct trajectories—our society aims to open new perspectives on Ottoman socio-economic history, politics, and diplomacy through the lens of postal history, fostering a structure for mutual knowledge exchange.

We believe that the invaluable information provided by rare items in the custody of Ottoman postal history collectors will add a new dimension to Ottoman historical studies, enriching this shared heritage.

Guided by scientific objectivity, source reliability, and academic ethics, our society conducts its activities in active collaboration with universities, research centers, public institutions, philatelic organizations, and museums, organizing joint research, publications, and diverse scholarly events.

Ottoman Postal History is a multi-layered historical heritage that provides key insights into state organization, international relations, trade networks, and military operations during wartime. Our association aims to transform this heritage into a systematic, accessible, and enduring knowledge base by uniting academic research and philatelic expertise on a shared scholarly foundation.

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

Even though hundreds of thousands of pages have been written on the Ottoman Empire, many intricate details elucidating the state apparatus, commercial networks, international concessions, diplomatic relations, and the realities of war have reached us today through postal documents, letters, postal cancellations, and philatelic materials. For decades, however, these rich source materials remained largely confined to a narrow circle of postal history collectors, seldom fully integrated into academic historiography.

Prompted by this realization, we set out to establish a shared platform uniting postal history collectors with academics working across history, political science, international relations, economic history, military history, and the broader social sciences.

The initial step of this journey was taken in November 2022 with the Ottoman Postal History Workshop. This gathering—which also laid the foundations for the Ottoman Postal History Research Association—attracted interest far exceeding expectations. The seminars, discussions, and scholarly activities conducted over the subsequent four years clearly demonstrated the immense potential and interdisciplinary nature of this field.

To build upon this accumulated knowledge, the decision was made to organize Turkey's first symposium in this discipline in collaboration with the Middle East Research Center (ORDAM) at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University. Out of 54 scholarly submissions received by the Scientific Committee, 33 were selected for inclusion in the program. The high caliber of papers submitted not only by universities but also by public institutions—chiefly the PTT—underscores the academic validity of the symposium and the necessity of such a platform.

We firmly believe that this event will be far more than a two-day academic conference. Our objective is to establish a permanent, biennial scientific platform that places Ottoman postal history on the agenda of the international academic community and brings together researchers from diverse countries around a shared history and cultural heritage.

The support of public institutions, universities, the private sector, and all individuals and organizations dedicated to cultural heritage remains crucial to realizing this vision. Your contributions represent an investment not merely in a symposium, but in the scholarly research, preservation, and transmission of our shared history to future generations.

MEETING IN THE HEART OF HISTORY

Historic venue.
Universal knowledge.
New collaborations.

The International Symposium on Ottoman Postal History will convene at the Gülhane Building of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University's (FSMVÜ) Hagia Sophia Campus on Istanbul's historical peninsula, culminating in its closing session at the historic Sirkeci Grand Post Office (***Büyük Postane***). Taking place in the very geography where Ottoman communication networks originated, this gathering brings together academia, collectors, and international experts at the heart of history.

Participants will have the opportunity to evaluate Ottoman postal history alongside international scholars within the historical core of its origin, while fostering new collaborations.

MAIN VENUE
FSMVU Ayasofya Campus
Gülhane Building
Aziz Sancar Auditorium
Alemdar Mahallesi, Alemdar Caddesi,
No:13, Fatih / Istanbul.







FSMVÜ Ayasofya Campus
Gülhane Building
Aziz Sancar Auditorium

THEMATIC SCOPE

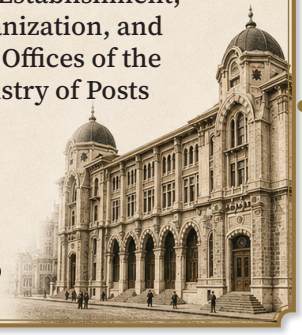
Ottoman Postal History constitutes an interdisciplinary field of inquiry spanning state structures, international competition, commercial networks, and philatelic studies.

The symposium addresses contemporary topics in Ottoman postal history through a comprehensive lens. Standing at the intersection of academia, independent researchers, and private collectors, the empire's communication network is examined around the following themes:

01 The Ottoman Postal System Prior to the Ministry of Posts



02 The Establishment, Organization, and Post Offices of the Ministry of Posts



03 Postal Concessions and International Competition (*Foreign Post Offices, UPU Membership*)



04 Postal Routes, Logistics, and Trade



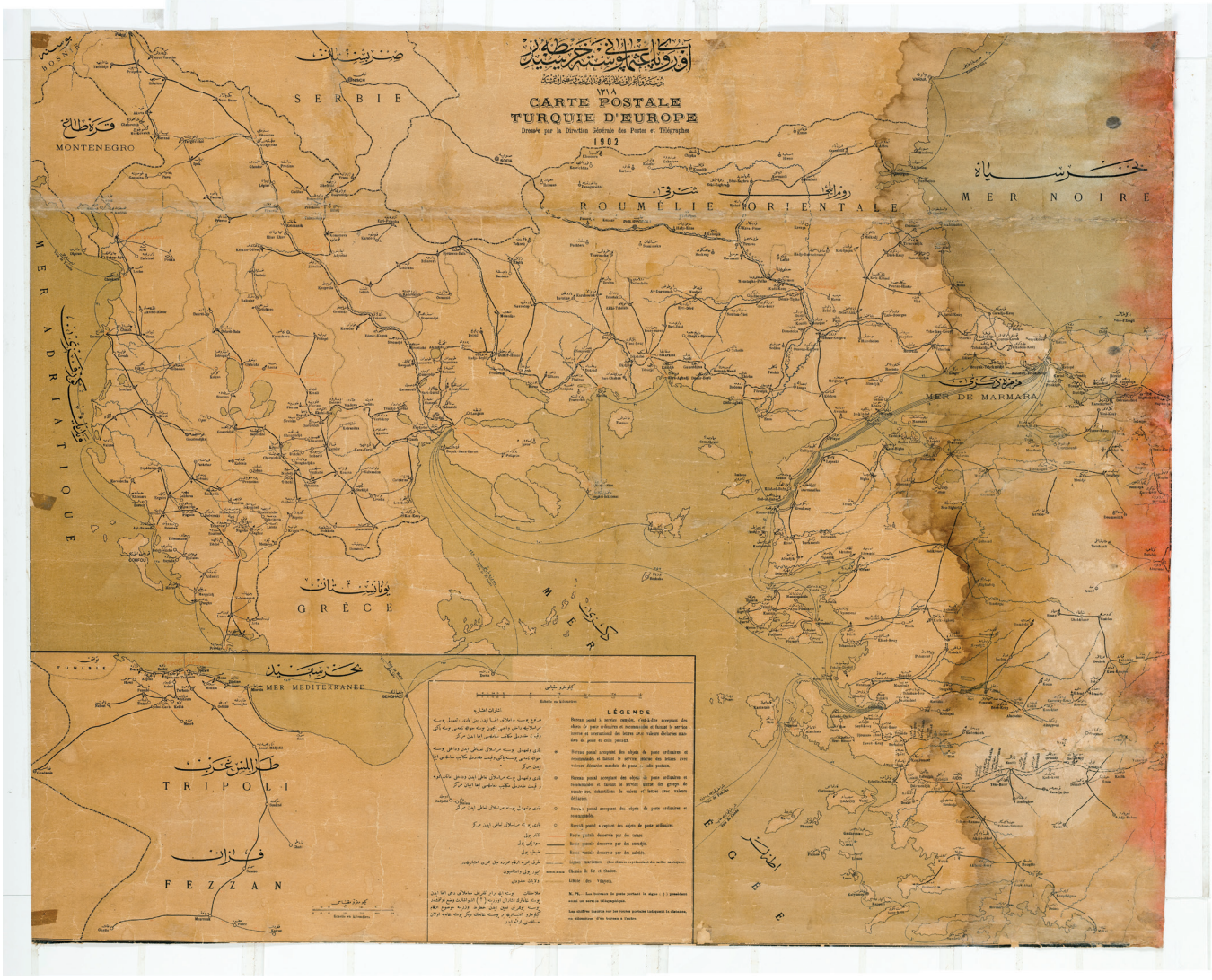
05 Security, Censorship, and Crisis Management



06 Postal Ephemera, Philately, and Extant Artifacts



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1. *Map of Ottoman postal and telegraph lines in European Turkey, 1902.*

2. *Handstamp of the 2nd Corps Field Post Office, Autumn Maneuvers, 1910.*

3. *Commemorative stamps marking the 50th Anniversary of the Local City Post, March 29, 1916.*

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND?

Connect with a distinguished academic network at the intersection of history, diplomacy, and philately. Build new research partnerships, gain access to unique archival sources, and contribute to the future of postal history.

Join stakeholders shaping the communication history, diplomacy, and philately. This symposium brings together scholarly knowledge, archival documents, research partnerships, and global opportunities. Develop new projects, forge lasting connections, and engage in the debates driving the transformation of historiography.

1. Explore Historical Depth: The 1840 Reforms and Institutionalization



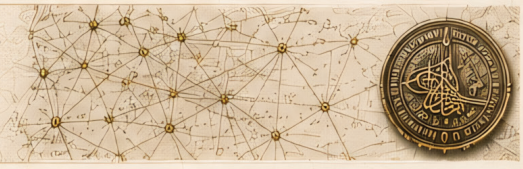
2. Analyze Global Networks and Diplomatic Influence: Foreign Post Offices and Capitulations



3. Examine Rare Archival Documents and Ephemera Firsthand



4. Forge New Partnerships in Dedicated Matchmaking and Networking Hubs



5. Debate the Economic Significance of Trade and Postal Routes with Experts



PARTICIPANT AND VISITOR PROFILE

A multidisciplinary profile connecting academia, public institutions and collectors into a dynamic knowledge network.

The symposium convenes decision-makers, experts, and future professionals under a single roof, spanning academia, the public sector, international federations, and the private collector ecosystem. Its diverse visitor profile creates a dynamic networking environment for knowledge exchange and new collaborations.

- University Academics in History, Sociology, and Economics
- International Philatelists, Private Collectors, and Federation Representatives
- Museum Curators and Archival Specialists
  Public Sector Representatives (General Directorate of PTT, etc.)
- Media and Specialized Publication Representatives
- Students and Recent Graduates in Communication and Cultural Heritage

ORGANISATION

Over the course of two days, sessions addressing the distinct periods, institutions, and international relations of Ottoman postal history bring together leading researchers in the field on a shared academic platform.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE	ORGANIZING COMMITTEE	SECRETARIAT
13	4	2

Scintefic Committee: Prof. Dr. Atadan Tunacı, Prof. Dr. Ebubekir Ceylan, Prof. Dr. Hakan Anameriç, Prof. Dr. Hasip Saygılı, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Güneş, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Göleç, Prof. Dr. Nesimi Yazıcı, Prof. Dr. Tanju Demir, Prof. Dr. Ulvi Keser, Prof. Dr. Zekeriya Kurşun, Turhan Turgut, Bülent Papuççuoğlu, Oral Avcı

Organizing Committee: Ali İhsan Aydın, Oral Avcı, Turhan Turgut, Zekeriya Kurşun

Secretariat: Salih Akın, Mine Ayçiçek

PROGRAM

1.st Day

AZİZ SANCAR SALONU

Morning	NOVEMBER 4, WEDNESDAY
09.00–09.30	**REGISTRATION**
09.30–10.00	**WELCOMING SPEECHES**
	Prof. Dr. Zekeriya KURŞUN *Director of the Center of Middle Eastern and African Studies at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University*
	Oral AVCI *Secretary General of the Ottoman Postal History Research Association* (OPTAD)
	Hakan GÜLTEN *General Manager of PTT* *(should they honour us with their presence)*
	Prof. Dr. Nevzat ŞİMŞEK *Rector of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University*
10.00–10.45	**OPENING SESSION**
	Fahameddin BAŞAR *Chair*
	Turhan Turgut (OPTAD) *The 1840 Postal Reform and the Establishment of the Civil Postal Service*
	Prof. Dr. Zekeriya KURŞUN (FSM Vakıf University) *The Use of Envelopes in the Transmission of Official Documents in the Ottoman Empire and the Practice of Inscribing "Bedûh"*
10.45–11.00	**BREAK**
11.00–12.30	**1st SESSION**
	Turhan Turgut *Chair*
	Dr. Oğuz Alpoğlu (Independent Researcher) *Diplomatic Confidentiality and Sovereignty over Communications: The Establishment of the Ministry of Posts through Mustafa Reşid Pasha's Vision for Foreign Affairs*
	Dr. İbrahim Akkurt (Istanbul Medipol University) *From Imported Draft to Local Adaptation: Provisions Excluded from the European Model during the Formulation of the 1840 Postal Regulation and the Role of the Ministry of Trade*
	Makbule Akyol Kitapcı (Beyoğlu PTT) *Postal Service Route Maps: Documenting the Communication Network from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic*
	Dr. Ceyhun Konak (Istanbul PTT) *The Sociological and Institutional Roots of Public Employee Organization from the Ottoman Empire to Modern Türkiye: The PTT Mutual Aid Funds*
12.30–13.30	**LUNCH BREAK**

Afternoon	NOVEMBER 4, WEDNESDAY
13.30–15.00	**2nd SESSION**
	Turan Gökçe *Chair*
	Dr. Fatih Çil (Kırsehir Ahi Evran University) *The Ottoman Menzil Organization in the Light of Eighteenth-Century Court Registers: The Case of Kastamonu*
	Prof. Dr. Yavuz Çorapçıoğlu (Texas A&M University) *The Evolution of the Turkish Postal Organization in İzmir*
	Dr. İrem Gürbüz (Independent Researcher) *The Bureaucratic and Spatial Organization of Provincial Post Offices during the Reign of Abdülhamid II: The Case of Konya Province*
	Doç. Dr. Ahmet Gülenç (Trabzon University) *The Diyarbekir Post Office: Establishment, Organization, and Routes*
15.00–15.15	**BREAK**
15.15–16.45	**3rd SESSION**
	Oral AVCI *Chair*
	Dr. Zekirja Shabani (Albonology Institute) *The Development of the Postal Organization in the Kosovo Province (1877–1912)*
	George Thomareis (Greek Philatelic Federation) *Postal History of Thessaloniki*
	Francisc Ambrus (Romanian Philatelic Federation) *Postal Traffic with the Sublime Porte Through Danubian Principalities in the 19th Century*
	Dr. Ergün Hasanoğlu – Dr. Yunus Güler (Independent Researchers) *The Ottoman Empire's Capacity for Diplomatic Crisis Management and Problem-Solving: The Issue of Foreign Mailbags on the Sirkeci–Cisr-i Mustafapaşa Line (1892–1893)*
16.45–17.00	**BREAK**
17.00–18.15	**4th SESSION**
	Atadan Tunacı *Chair*
	Dr. Ali İhsan Aydın (Yalova University) *The Establishment of the Modern Ottoman Postal Organization in Palestine and the Expansion of the Postal Service Network*
	Doç. Dr. Burcu Kurt (Istanbul Technical University) *An Alternative Transportation Model in the Ottoman Postal Organization: The Damascus–Baghdad Camel Post*
	Dr. Ahmet Ercivan (Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal Univ.) *Communication and the Establishment of Authority in Ottoman Yemen*

2.nd Day

AZİZ SANCAR SALONU

Morning	NOVEMBER 5, THURSDAY
09.00–11.00	**1st SESSION**
	Mustafa Göleç *Chair*
	Oral AVCI (OPTAD) *The German Postal Organization in Istanbul (1869–1914): Diplomacy, Trade, and the Rise of Imperial Influence*
	Uğur Can Yıldızdal (Kocaeli University) *Censorship and the Monitoring of Prohibited Documents at the Galata Post Office: Postal Surveillance in the Ottoman Empire (1890–1907)*
	Prof. Dr. Hakan Anameriç (Ankara University) *Philatelic Diplomacy and State Representation: An Assessment of the International Circulation of Ottoman Stamps*
	Elif Bayrakçı Gün (Istanbul University) *The State Lost on the Road: Postal Robberies, Route Security, and Institutional Responses in the Ottoman Empire (1840–1908)*
11.00–11.15	**BREAK**
11.15–12.45	**2nd SESSION**
	Hakan Anameriç *Chair*
	Doç. Dr. Mustafa Mesut Özekmekçi (Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University) *What Silent Figures Reveal: The Concept of Communicative Volume and the Revenues of the Edirne Post Office*
	Doç. Dr. Eralp Yaşar Azap (Presidency of the State Archives) *Networks of the Empire: Reading the Ottoman Postal Organization through Statistics (1892–1923)*
	Dr. Nihal Cihan Temizer (Yıldız Technical University) *Securing Commercial Circulation in the Ottoman Postal Organization: Valuable Parcels, Money Orders, and Financial Logistics (1904)*
	Dr. M. Levent Acar (OPTAD) *Methods of Revenue Collection under the Temporary Law on the Revenues Required for the Administration of Institutions Established for the Education and Training of the Children of Martyrs, Prior to the Issuance of the Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax Stamps*
12.45–13.45	**LUNCH BREAK**

Afternoon	NOVEMBER 5, THURSDAY
13.45–15.15	**3rd SESSION**
	Ebubekir Ceylan *Chair*
	Prof. Dr. Mehmet Salih Erkek (Usak University) *The Historical Testimony of Postal Ephemera from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic*
	Bülent Papuççuoğlu (OPTAD) *Types of Postmarks Introduced in the Ottoman Imperial Postal Organization Prior to UPU Membership*
	Prof. Dr. Atadan Tunacı (Istanbul University) *Ink in the Ottoman Postal History*
	Doç. Dr. İrfan Kokdaş (Izmir Katip Celebi University) *No Property Without the Post! Debates over the Postal Dispatch of Title Deeds in the Early Tanzimat Period*
15.15–15.30	**BREAK**
15.30–16.45	**4th SESSION**
	Hasip Saygılı *Chair*
	Dr. Fırat Küskü (Sinop University) *Knights of the East: Postal Tatars in the Ottoman Empire*
	Dr. Muhammet Ballı (Independent Researcher) *Post Offices Established Aboard the Ships of Small Steamship Companies: The Cases of Amirote, Bell's Asia Minor, and Morton*
	Prof. Dr. Nesimi Yazıcı (Ankara University) *Innovation and Organization in Communication Services during the Crimean War: Accelerating the Flow of News from Telegraph Wires to Newspaper Columns through Varaka-i Mahsûsa and Supplementary Issues*
16.45–17.00	**BREAK**
Moving to PTT Sirkeci *Büyük Postane* Building	
17.20–18.00	**EVALUATION SESSION**

PAPER OVERVIEWS

Turhan TURGUT, Ottoman Postal History Research Assosiation

The 1840 Postal Reform and the Establishment of the Civil Postal Service

The Postal Reform of 1840 marked a major turning point in the establishment of a modern civil postal service in the Ottoman Empire. With the First Postal Regulation of 16 November 1840, communications began to move away from the traditional menzil system towards a centralised, regular and increasingly public service. The new system strengthened links between the imperial centre and the provinces, while also contributing to the growth of commerce, private correspondence and social communication. This paper examines the institutional structure, post offices, routes and tariffs of the reform, demonstrating how the postal service carried not only letters, but also state authority and the broader vision of Ottoman modernisation.

Prof. Dr. Zekeriya KURŞUN, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University

The Use of Envelopes in the Transmission of Official Documents in the Ottoman Empire and the Practice of Inscribing “Bedûh”

This paper explores the little-studied role of envelopes in the transmission of official Ottoman documents. It examines the materials used before the adoption of standard envelopes and the gradual transition to their mandatory use alongside the modernization of the Ottoman postal system. Particular attention is given to the inscription “Bedûh,” often described as a “postal talisman,” which frequently appeared on official correspondence. The study investigates the meaning, function, and historical emergence of this distinctive inscription within Ottoman postal and documentary practices.

Dr. Oğuz ALPOĞLU, Independent Researcher

Diplomatic Confidentiality and Sovereignty over Communications: The Establishment of the Ministry of Posts through Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s Vision for Foreign Affairs

This paper examines the establishment of the Ottoman Postal Administration in 1840 not merely as an administrative reform, but as a response to the growing need for secure and sovereign diplomatic communications. During Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s reorganisation of the Foreign Ministry, the presence of foreign post offices and the limitations of the traditional Tatar courier system posed serious challenges to the security and confidentiality of diplomatic correspondence. The study explores how the demands of modern diplomacy for speed, security and secrecy shaped the institutional development of the Ottoman postal service. It therefore interprets the creation of the Postal Administration as a strategic assertion of communications sovereignty and an effort to strengthen state control over the circulation of sensitive information.

Dr. İbrahim AKKURT, Istanbul Medipol University

From Imported Draft to Local Adaptation: Provisions Excluded from the European Model during the Formulation of the 1840 Postal Regulation and the Role of the Ministry of Trade

This paper examines the Ottoman transition from a traditional communications system to a modern, centrally administered postal service. Particular attention is given to the transformation of an initial 55-article draft, translated from a foreign model, into a practical 44-article regulation adapted to Ottoman administrative, financial and provincial conditions. This institutional and legal process culminated in the establishment of the Postahâne-i Âmire Nezâreti on 23 October 1840. Drawing on archival sources, the study also considers key provisions concerning postal rates, the classification of letters, confidentiality and the security of correspondence.

Makbule AKYOL KİTAPÇI, Beyoğlu PTT

Postal Service Route Maps: Documenting the Communication Network from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic

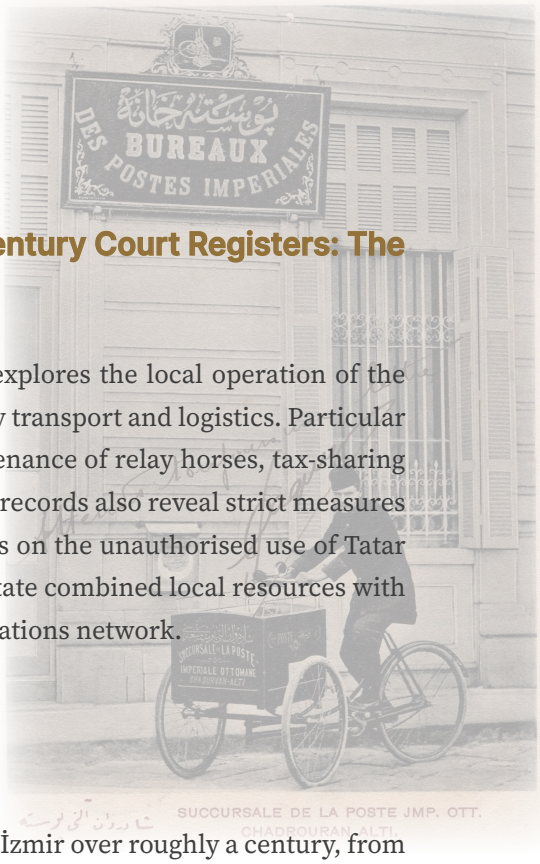
Drawing on material held in the PTT Museum, this study examines the identification, conservation, restoration and digitisation of Ottoman and early Republican postal route maps. The collection includes maps of land, sea and railway postal routes, alongside documents relating to telegraph networks, military geography and early telephone services. Maps dating from the early twentieth century and the First World War are particularly valuable for understanding the Ottoman Empire's communications, transport infrastructure and regional organisation. Their restoration and high-resolution digitisation, together with the preparation of a dedicated catalogue, help preserve institutional memory while making important historical sources accessible to future researchers.

Dr. Ceyhun KONAK, Istanbul PTT

The Sociological and Institutional Roots of Public Employee Organization from the Ottoman Empire to Modern Türkiye: The PTT Mutual Aid Funds



Focusing on the mutual aid funds established within the Ottoman Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, this study explores some of the earliest institutional forms of solidarity among public employees in Türkiye. Created by postal officials to provide support in cases of illness, death and retirement, these funds marked an important transition from traditional charity to more organised forms of social security. They are analysed through Tönnies's concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, alongside Turan Yazgan's approach to social protection. Drawing on regulations and ministerial yearbooks, the study considers their contribution to the historical development of professional solidarity, institutional identity and collective organisation among public servants.



Dr. Fatih ÇİL, Kırsehir Ahi Evran University

The Ottoman Menzil Organization in the Light of Eighteenth-Century Court Registers: The Case of Kastamonu

Based on eighteenth-century Kastamonu court registers, this study explores the local operation of the Ottoman menzil system, a vital network for communication, military transport and logistics. Particular attention is given to its financial structure, the provision and maintenance of relay horses, tax-sharing arrangements and the use of the iltizam system in local administration. The records also reveal strict measures designed to prevent abuse, including documentary controls and restrictions on the unauthorised use of Tatar dress and privileges. The Kastamonu case demonstrates how the Ottoman state combined local resources with central supervision to maintain the security and continuity of its communications network.

Prof. Dr. Yavuz ÇORAPÇIOĞLU, Texas A&M University

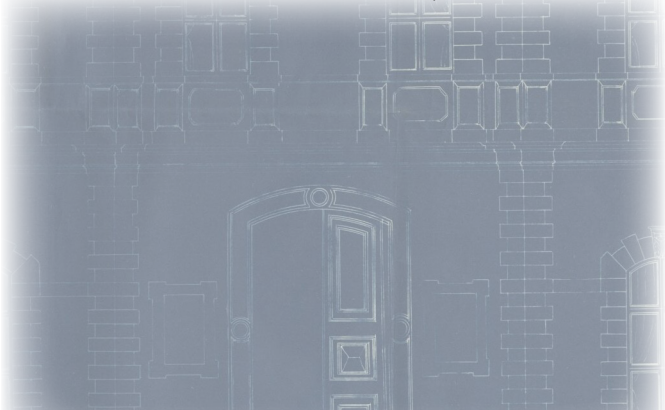
The Evolution of the Turkish Postal Organization in İzmir

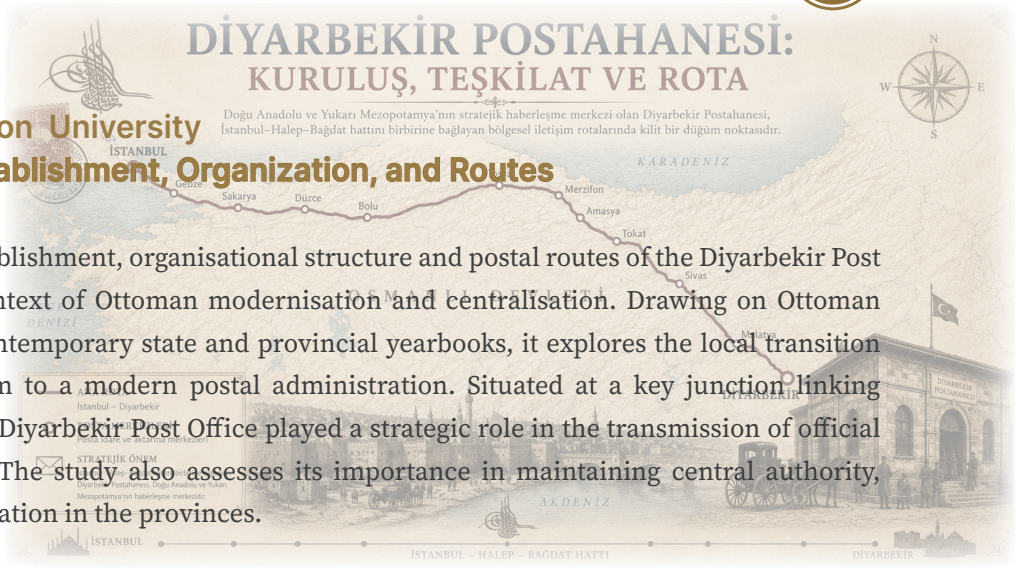
This paper examines the development of the Turkish postal service in İzmir over roughly a century, from the establishment of the Ottoman post office in 1842 to the early years of the Republic. It considers the Ottoman period, the Greek occupation of 1919–1922, the Great Fire of 1922, and the institutional transformations that followed under the Republic. The study explores the physical locations of post offices, methods of mail transport, the evolution of postmarks and seals, postal tariffs, wartime censorship, and competition with foreign postal administrations. It thereby highlights the close relationship between İzmir's growth as a major commercial port and the evolution of its postal services.

Dr. İrem GÜRBÜZ, Independent Researcher

The Bureaucratic and Spatial Organization of Provincial Post Offices during the Reign of Abdülhamid II: The Case of Konya Province

This paper examines the bureaucratic and spatial organisation of post offices in Konya Province during the reign of Abdülhamid II within the broader framework of Ottoman modernisation and centralisation. It considers the construction, repair and location of post offices in relation to central directives, local needs, financial supervision and the roles of provincial administrative actors. The study argues that post offices functioned not only as centres of communication, but also as public institutions that made state authority more visible in the provinces. Drawing on archival records and provincial yearbooks, it explores the expansion of the postal network through the interconnected themes of administrative control, architectural choice and spatial representation.





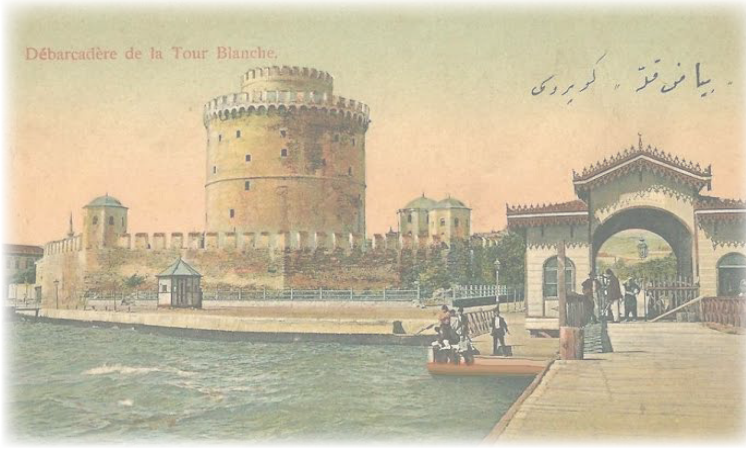
Doç. Dr. Ahmet GÜLENÇ, Trabzon University
The Diyarbekir Post Office: Establishment, Organization, and Routes

This paper examines the establishment, organisational structure and postal routes of the Diyarbekir Post Office within the wider context of Ottoman modernisation and centralisation. Drawing on Ottoman archival documents and contemporary state and provincial yearbooks, it explores the local transition from the traditional menzil system to a modern postal administration. Situated at a key junction linking Istanbul, Aleppo and Baghdad, the Diyarbekir Post Office played a strategic role in the transmission of official and commercial correspondence. The study also assesses its importance in maintaining central authority, public order and the flow of information in the provinces.

Dr. Zekirja SHABANI, Institute of Albanology
The Development of the Postal Service in Kosovo Province (1877-1912)

This paper examines the development and operation of the postal service in Kosovo Province between 1877 and 1912 through Ottoman archival records. It focuses on the expansion of the postal network, staffing and mail transport in major administrative and commercial centres such as Skopje, Pristina, Prizren, Mitrovica, Peja, Gjilan and Novi Pazar. The study also considers problems including postal robberies, delays, damage to communication lines and shortages of personnel, together with the measures adopted by the Ottoman authorities in response. It thereby assesses the role of the postal service in administrative communication, provincial control and Ottoman modernisation in Kosovo.

George THOMAREIS, Greek Philatelic Federation
Postal History of Thessaloniki



Tracing the postal history of Thessaloniki from the Ottoman conquest to the early twentieth century, this presentation examines the city's transformation into a major commercial and communications hub. Particular attention is given to the Tanzimat era, when economic growth, urban development and expanding international trade accelerated the modernisation of postal services. Between the second half of the nineteenth century and 1914, ten foreign post offices operated in the city under the capitulatory regime. The presentation places these postal developments within the wider political, economic and social history of Thessaloniki, highlighting their close connection with the city's multinational character and strategic importance in the Balkans.

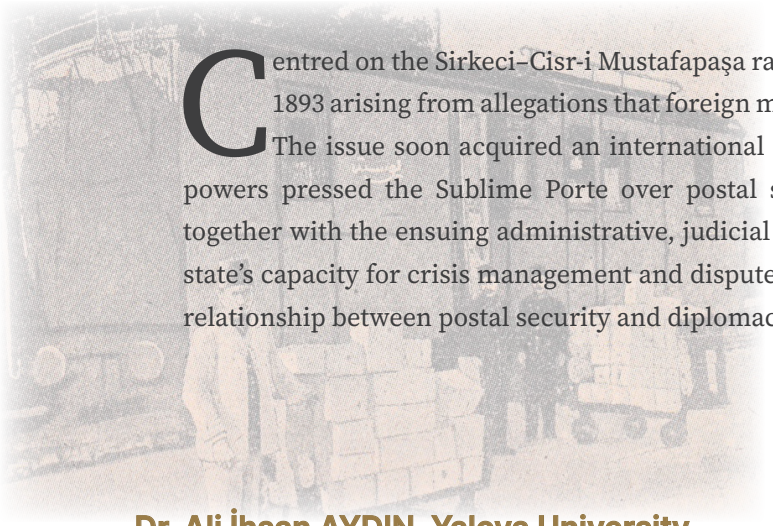
Francisc AMBRUS, Romanian Philatelic Federation

Postal Traffic with the Sublime Porte Through Danubian Principalities in the 19th Century

Focusing on nineteenth-century postal traffic through the Danubian Principalities, this study examines the routes linking the Sublime Porte with Western Europe by land and water. Before the union of the Principalities in 1859, international correspondence depended largely on foreign postal networks operating across the region. Wars, occupations, political change and the incorporation of Dobrogea into Romania all reshaped these communications. Particular attention is given to the Austrian, French and Ottoman postal services in Northern Dobrogea and to the transition towards a more modern and internationally integrated Romanian postal system.

Dr. Ergün HASANOĞLU – Dr. Yunus Güler, Independent Researchers

The Ottoman Empire's Capacity for Diplomatic Crisis Management and Problem-Solving: The Issue of Foreign Mailbags on the Sirkeci–Cisr-i Mustafapaşa Line (1892–1893)

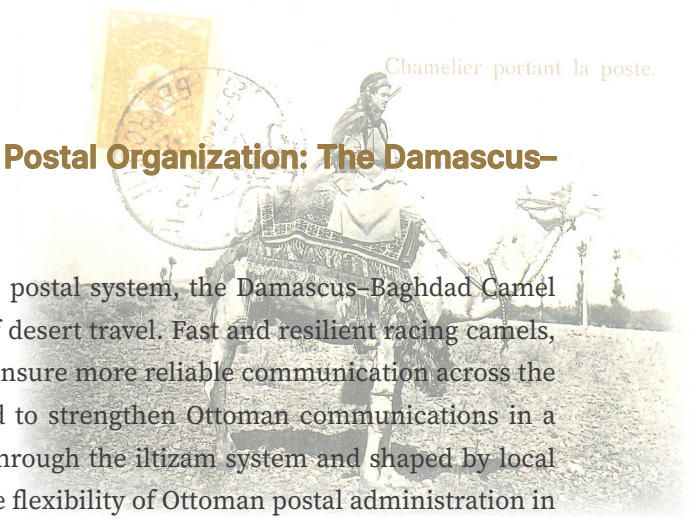


Centred on the Sirkeci–Cisr-i Mustafapaşa railway line, this study examines the diplomatic crisis of 1892–1893 arising from allegations that foreign mailbags had been opened and postal items had gone missing. The issue soon acquired an international dimension as Austria-Hungary, France and other European powers pressed the Sublime Porte over postal security. Investigations ordered by Sultan Abdülhamid II, together with the ensuing administrative, judicial and diplomatic measures, provide insight into the Ottoman state's capacity for crisis management and dispute resolution. The case offers a revealing example of the close relationship between postal security and diplomacy in the late Ottoman period.

Dr. Ali İhsan AYDIN, Yalova University

The Establishment of the Modern Ottoman Postal Organization in Palestine and the Expansion of the Postal Service Network

Against the background of Tanzimat reform, this study traces the establishment and expansion of the modern Ottoman postal network in Palestine. It examines the opening of post offices, the creation of new routes, the growth of the telegraph network and their relationship with transport infrastructure across Jerusalem, Acre and Nablus. Particular attention is paid to Ottoman efforts to expand services in response to the growing presence of foreign post offices. The study presents postal development as part of a broader strategy to strengthen central authority, improve provincial integration and counter foreign influence.



Doç. Dr. Burcu KURT, Istanbul Technical University

An Alternative Transportation Model in the Ottoman Postal Organization: The Damascus–Baghdad Camel Post

An unusual example of adaptation within the Ottoman postal system, the Damascus–Baghdad Camel Post was established in 1881 to meet the challenges of desert travel. Fast and resilient racing camels, known as hecin, were employed instead of horses to ensure more reliable communication across the difficult route between the two cities. The service also aimed to strengthen Ottoman communications in a region where foreign postal networks were active. Operated through the iltizam system and shaped by local security conditions and tribal relations, the route illustrates the flexibility of Ottoman postal administration in responding to regional needs.



Dr. Ahmet ERCİVAN, Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University

Communication and the Establishment of Authority in Ottoman Yemen

In Yemen, postal and telegraph communications became essential instruments for strengthening Ottoman authority in one of the empire's most distant and challenging provinces. From the second half of the nineteenth century, these networks played a key role in monitoring rebellions, facilitating military movements, supporting provincial administration and maintaining links with strategic ports. Under Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, the establishment of a modern postal service in 1871–1872 was accompanied by the expansion of telegraph connections along routes such as Jeddah–Hodeidah, Hodeidah–Kamaran, Hajur and Qataba–Taiz. Archival evidence shows that communications infrastructure formed an integral part of Ottoman centralisation and the consolidation of state authority in Yemen.

Oral AVCI, Ottoman Postal History Research Assosiation

The German Postal Organization in Istanbul (1869–1914): Diplomacy, Trade, and the Rise of Imperial Influence



More than a postal service, the German postal network in Istanbul between 1860 and 1914 functioned as an instrument of diplomatic, commercial and imperial influence. Centred on branches in Pera and Sirkeci, it supported German trade and diplomacy while integrating postal services with Norddeutscher Lloyd shipping routes and the Orient Express. The network also projected ideals of administrative order, punctuality and efficiency within the Ottoman capital. By examining its institutional growth, rivalry with other foreign postal systems and relations with the Ottoman authorities, the study reassesses the German post as a significant component of imperial strategy, particularly in the period leading up to Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit in 1898.

Uğur Can YILDIZDAL, Kocaeli University

Censorship and the Monitoring of Prohibited Documents at the Galata Post Office: Postal Surveillance in the Ottoman Empire (1890–1907)

This paper examines censorship practices and the monitoring of prohibited material at the Galata Post Office between 1890 and 1907. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, the postal service became an important instrument not only of communication, but also of security, intelligence and the control of information. Drawing on archival documents, lists of banned publications and censorship reports, the study considers the monitoring of Armenian-language publications, foreign newspapers, political pamphlets and other material deemed harmful by the state. Through the case of the Galata Post Office, it explores the relationship between communications, censorship, foreign postal services and state security in the late Ottoman period.

Prof. Dr. Hakan ANAMERİÇ, Ankara University

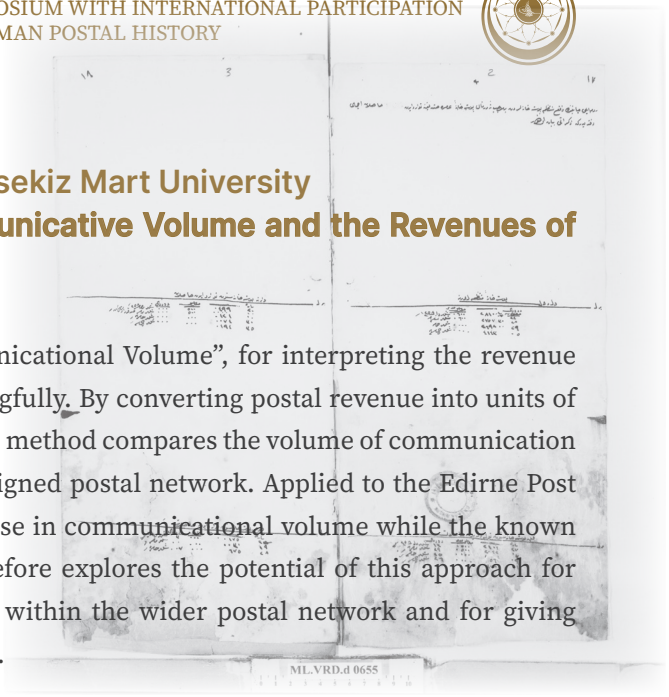
Philatelic Diplomacy and State Representation: An Assessment of the International Circulation of Ottoman Stamps

Postage stamps functioned not only as instruments of communication, but also as symbols of state visibility and official representation in the international arena. The Ottoman Empire's role as a founding member of the Universal Postal Union in 1874 facilitated the wider circulation of Ottoman stamps and their display in foreign institutions. Drawing on archival documents, this paper examines correspondence involving the German Postal Administration Museum, the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, and the Dublin Science and Art Museum during the reign of Abdülhamid II. It thereby explores the role of postage stamps in diplomacy, state representation, cultural promotion, and international relations.

Elif BAYRAKÇI GÜN, İstanbul University

The State Lost on the Road: Postal Robberies, Route Security, and Institutional Responses in the Ottoman Empire (1840–1908)

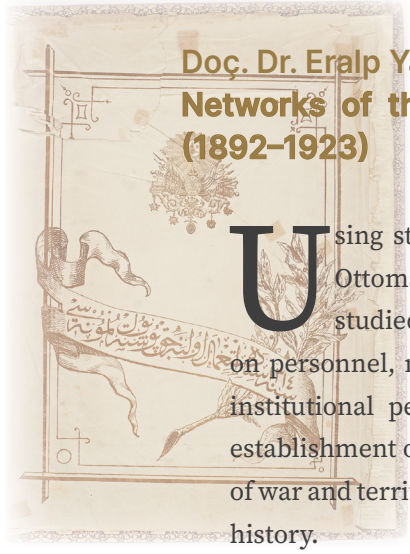
This paper examines postal robberies across the Ottoman Empire between 1840 and 1908 and the institutional responses developed by the state to address these security challenges. Drawing on archival records, it explores the financial, logistical and administrative difficulties involved in protecting mailbags, couriers and postal transport along an expanding communications network. It also considers how weaknesses in postal security were used diplomatically by foreign powers, alongside legal uncertainties over compensation for losses and possible links between local bandit networks and postal officials. Postal security is thus presented as an important measure of the state's practical authority in the provinces and of the limits of Ottoman sovereignty.



Doç. Dr. Mustafa Mesut ÖZEKMEKÇİ, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

What Silent Figures Reveal: The Concept of Communicative Volume and the Revenues of the Edirne Post Office

This paper proposes a new method, termed “Communicational Volume”, for interpreting the revenue figures of individual urban post offices more meaningfully. By converting postal revenue into units of travel time according to contemporary tariff rules, the method compares the volume of communication generated by a post office with the physical extent of its assigned postal network. Applied to the Edirne Post Office, data from 1842 and 1850 indicate a substantial increase in communicational volume while the known road network remained largely unchanged. The study therefore explores the potential of this approach for comparing the relative importance of Ottoman post offices within the wider postal network and for giving greater analytical value to otherwise isolated revenue figures.



Doç. Dr. Eralp Yaşar AZAP, Presidency of the State Archives

Networks of the Empire: Reading the Ottoman Postal Organization through Statistics (1892–1923)

Using statistical evidence rather than a conventional institutional narrative, this study examines the Ottoman Post and Telegraph Organisation between 1892 and 1923. Its principal source is the little-studied Statistical Sub-Fund within the Ottoman Archives’ Postal Collection, containing detailed data on personnel, mail volumes, relay routes, revenues and expenditure. These records allow the organisation’s institutional performance and financial structure to be traced from the reign of Abdülhamid II to the establishment of the Republic. By revealing how communications networks were maintained through decades of war and territorial loss, the study introduces a quantitative and methodological perspective to Ottoman postal history.

Dr. Nihal Cihan TEMİZER, Yıldız Technical University

Securing Commercial Circulation in the Ottoman Postal Organization: Valuable Parcels, Money Orders, and Financial Logistics (1904)



By the early twentieth century, the Ottoman postal service had developed into an important infrastructure for safeguarding commercial and financial circulation as well as correspondence. Drawing on regulations recorded in the Sicill-i Kavânîn, this study examines the 1904 rules governing postal parcels, money orders and insured or declared-value items. Detailed provisions on packaging, charges, delivery, returns, compensation and record-keeping reveal a sophisticated system of administrative control and risk management. The study shows how the postal administration contributed to commercial trust, financial accountability and the secure movement of money, documents and goods across the empire.

Dr. M. Levent ACAR, Ottoman Postal History Research Assosiation

Methods of Revenue Collection under the Temporary Law on the Revenues Required for the Administration of Institutions Established for the Education and Training of the Children of Martyrs, Prior to the Issuance of the Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax Stamps

Following the Balkan and Italo-Turkish Wars, the Ottoman government introduced the Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax on 3 June 1915 to help finance institutions established for the care and education of the children of fallen soldiers. Although the legislation imposed additional charges on various postal and telegraph services, the practical method of collecting the tax was not initially defined. Until dedicated Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax stamps were prepared and distributed in September 1915, existing postage stamps and various specially designed handstamps were used as temporary means of collection. This paper examines these transitional practices and the practical methods used by the Ottoman postal administration to collect the tax.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Salih ERKEK, Uşak University

The Historical Testimony of Postal Ephemera from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic

This paper examines telegrams, postcards and other forms of postal ephemera as historical sources spanning the transition from the late Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Rather than treating them simply as means of communication or aesthetic objects, it considers them as primary evidence of the social, economic, diplomatic and cultural relations of their time. Drawing on original examples from private collections, the study explores the technical infrastructure, visual language and everyday historical testimony embedded in these materials. It highlights the value of postal ephemera for understanding both continuity and change during the transition from empire to nation state.

Bülent PAPUÇÇUOĞLU, Ottoman Postal History Research Assosiation

Types of Postmarks Introduced in the Ottoman Imperial Postal Organization Prior to UPU Membership



Postal markings are among the most important primary sources of postal history, recording the time, place, route and administrative context of postal operations. This study examines the markings used by the Ottoman Post between its establishment in 1840 and the Empire's accession to the Universal Postal Union on 1 July 1875. They are divided into two principal groups: monolingual markings, predominantly in Ottoman Turkish, and a smaller number of bilingual Ottoman Turkish–French examples, many associated with telegraph services. The presentation further classifies the monolingual markings into ten distinct types, illustrating their places and periods of use with selected examples.

Prof. Dr. Atadan TUNACI, Istanbul University

Ink in the Ottoman Postal History

An often-overlooked aspect of Ottoman postal history is the ink used in postal cancellations and other official markings. These inks, applied to indicate postage payment or to cancel stamps, were closely connected with the wider Ottoman tradition of manuscript and calligraphic materials. Particular attention is given to traditional varieties such as soot ink and la'lî ink, including their ingredients, preparation methods and durability. By examining the material composition of postal markings, the study places postal history within the broader context of Ottoman technical and cultural practices.

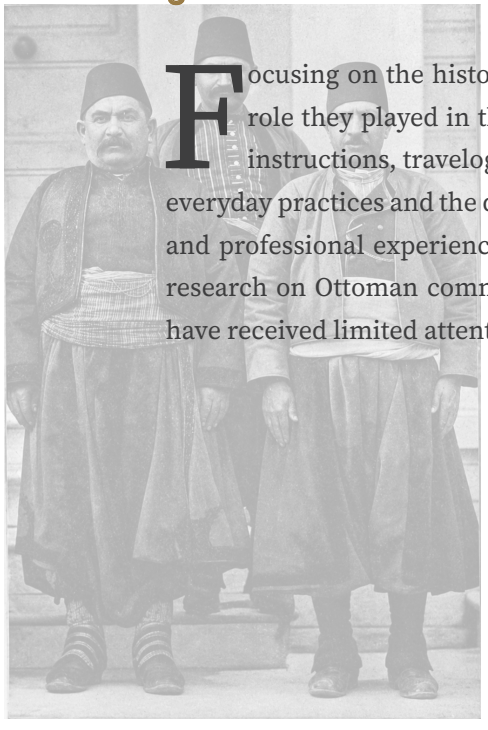
Doç. Dr. İrfan KÖKDAŞ, İzmir Katip Çelebi University

No Property Without the Post! Debates over the Postal Dispatch of Title Deeds in the Early Tanzimat Period

This paper examines the administrative and political debates surrounding the transmission of land deeds and title documents by post during the early Tanzimat period. It argues that contemporary disputes over the efficiency, reliability and supervision of the postal system were shaped not only by institutional shortcomings, but also by tensions involving provincial officials, merchants and local interest groups. The study also considers the impact of drought, transport shortages, animal supply and regional economic conditions on the functioning of the postal network. Drawing on Ottoman and British archival sources, it reassesses the prevailing discourse of postal "inefficiency" within the broader context of Tanzimat political economy and state–society relations.

Dr. Fırat KÜSKÜ, Sinop University

Knights of the East: Postal Tatars in the Ottoman Empire



Focusing on the historical, professional and social dimensions of postal Tatars, this paper explores the role they played in the Ottoman communication system. Drawing on archival documents, regulations, instructions, travelogues and memoirs, it explores their duties and responsibilities, working conditions, everyday practices and the dangers they encountered during their journeys. It also sheds light on their lifestyles and professional experiences through the observations of foreign travellers. The study aims to contribute to research on Ottoman communication history by presenting a comprehensive portrait of these officials, who have received limited attention in the existing literature.

Dr. Muhammet BALLI, Independent Researcher

Post Offices Established Aboard the Ships of Small Steamship Companies: The Cases of Amirote, Bell's Asia Minor, and Morton



This paper examines the Amirote, Bell's Asia Minor and Morton steamship companies, which provided postal services along the Ottoman coasts from the 1850s to the mid-1870s. Operating under special permits, these companies used their vessels as floating post offices to transport letters, parcels and cargo. Drawing on domestic and foreign publications, archival documents and periodicals, the research analyses their postal activities and their position under Ottoman administration. It aims to establish the place of these companies in the history of Ottoman postal services and maritime transport.

Prof. Dr. Nesimi YAZICI - Ankara University

Innovation and Organization in Communication Services during the Crimean War: Accelerating the Flow of News from Telegraph Wires to Newspaper Columns through Varaka-i Mahsûsa and Supplementary Issues



"The tall, stalwart form of the Adjutant of the Greys, Lieut. MILLER, was seen standing in his stirrups, and yelling with all his strength— Rally—the Greys!"

The transmission of news from the Crimean War fronts to Istanbul via telegraph, and its subsequent dissemination to the public through the periodical press, forms the central focus of this study. The introduction of telegraphic communication greatly accelerated the flow of information, which had previously depended largely on the speed of steamships, enabling war news to circulate more rapidly and reliably. Particular attention is given to the Varaka-i Mahsûsa and İlâve-i Numaralar, important yet often overlooked forms of supplementary publication in the history of the Ottoman press. The analysis highlights how these publications strengthened the relationship between emerging communications technology and the dissemination of news during the Crimean War.

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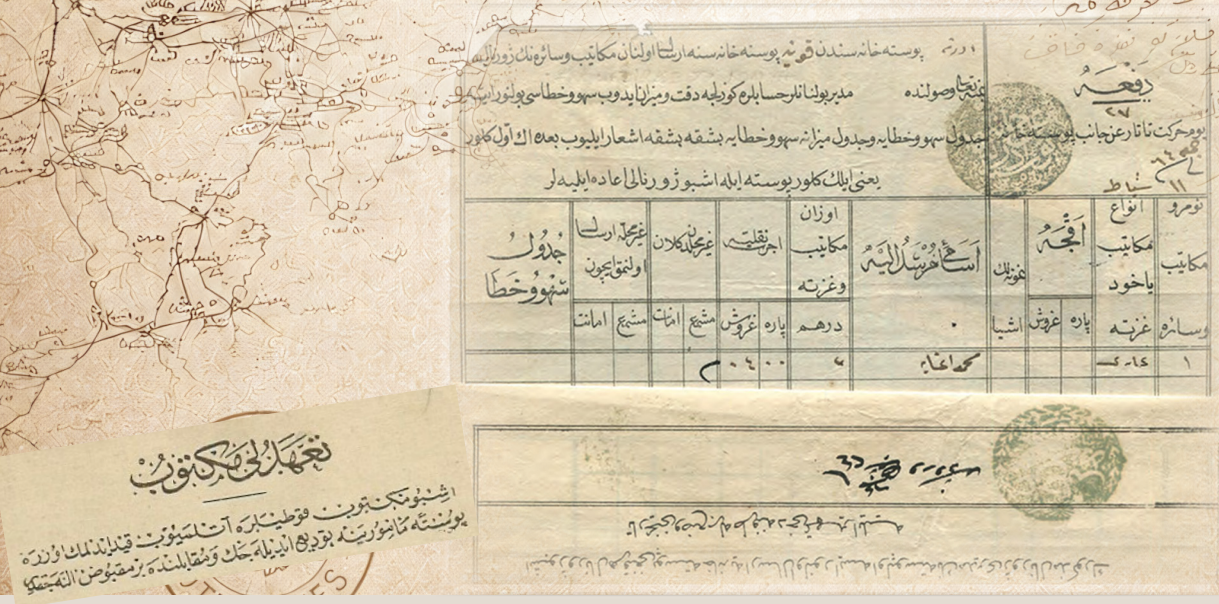
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