



Invitation

Monday, June 20th, 2011, 5 pm

The Deposition of Defterdar Ahmed Pasha: Law and Violence in 17th-century Ottoman-Egyptian Politics

Lecture by James Baldwin

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
Conference Hall

14129 Berlin

The governor Defterdar Ahmed Pasha was sent from Istanbul to implement a set of fiscal reforms in Egypt in 1675. These reforms threatened the interests of Cairo's soldiers, who promptly deposed him by force. This incident was not unusual: the 17th century saw frequent mutinies and rebellions in the Ottoman provinces. What is interesting about this incident is that the soldiers followed their rebellion with a lawsuit in a Cairo shari'a court, which sought to constrain the actions of the governor. This shows that the soldiers conceived of legal limitations on the authority of the imperial government. It also shows that they were able to use shari'a procedures to define an aspect of public law, which historically had been the remit of the Sultan. This dispute fits into a pattern in the 17th century in which Ottoman government was increasingly subjected to legal oversight, which accompanied the growth in power of the lower ranks of the ruling class.

James Baldwin completed his PhD in 2010 in the Dept. of History and the Dept. of Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies at New York University. His research focuses on legal institutions and legal practices in Ottoman Egypt. He has spent this year as a visiting fellow at the Islamic Legal Studies Program, Harvard University and at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Koç University. Next year he will begin a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship in the Dept. of History at Queen Mary, University of London.

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