



ZMO-Colloquium Winter Term 2014/2015

Who Speaks? The Global History of Intellectual Practices: Epistemological, Political, and Ethical Challenges

Thursday, November 27th, 2014, 6 pm

Chronicling the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: Historiography and Historical Thought

Venue:

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

By **Ethan L. Menchinger**

(EUME Fellow 2014/15, Forum Transregionale Studien)

History was immensely popular in the Ottoman Empire. Read, written, and recited across social spheres, it circulated in hundreds and perhaps thousands of works. However, as an intellectual field history inhabited an ambiguous place, one that we still do not fully understand. This talk does not offer a descriptive overview of historical writing in the empire. Rather, it explores the ideas that Ottomans brought to the act of writing history – what some of their underlying beliefs and assumptions were – as well how we as scholars can approach these. I treat the historical tradition from its fifteenth century origins through the eighteenth century, outlining some of the biggest and most basic gaps in our knowledge, including, but not limited to: how Ottomans defined history itself and in relation to other fields; how they viewed truth and historical knowledge; and how they understood historical causation. I also reflect on some of the challenges that an intellectual historian faces in working with these questions.

GEFÖRDERT VOM



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

Ethan L. Menchinger has a PhD in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan (2014), where his research interests included early modern Ottoman intellectual history, Middle East literatures and historical writing, and translation. He also holds a BA in History and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Toronto and an MA from the University of Michigan and has received fellowships from the US State Department, the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, and the American Research Institute in Turkey. He has published articles on Ottoman political and intellectual thought as well as translations, including his book *A Summary of Admonitions: a Chronicle of the 1768-1774 Russian-Ottoman War* (Isis, 2011).