

Bar-Ilan University
The Aharon and Rachel Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education
in the Sephardic Heritage

Call for Papers

You are cordially invited to participate in a Dahan Center International Conference:

“Between Coffee and Ayran” – Jews and Culture in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey

To take place on Monday-Tuesday, 14-15 Sivan, 5778 (May 28-29, 2018)
at Bar-Ilan University

The aim of the conference is to present a picture of daily life in the Ottoman Empire and in modern Turkey, through different aspects of the various ethnic, religious and social groups, with emphasis on their connection to the Jewish communities throughout the Ottoman lands, and subsequently in the Turkish Republic.

The Conference seeks to address the following questions:

Can we identify a specific “Ottoman Jewish culture”? If so, from what did it derive? What are the expressions of this “Ottoman Jewish culture” up to the Turkey of today? In what way does Jewish Ottoman culture differ from Islamic or Christian Orthodox culture? What was the status of women in traditional Ottoman Jewish culture, as compared with their status under the other two Ottoman cultures? How did the Ottoman ethno-confessional groups differ in terms of their attitude toward modernity? Did they view Westernization as a form of de-Ottomanization? Was one culture viewed as superior to the other? How did social and economic structure shape the consumption and existence of Ottoman Jewish culture?

The Conference will also look to present new research perspectives on Turkish Jewry, their intellectual output, the Ottoman-Turkish Rabbinate, attitudes toward tradition in the modern era, and the perception of the Jewish community in the eyes of the Ottoman majority: were the Jews a desirable minority, a tolerated group, or perhaps a threat to the supremacy of the Moslems? The Conference will also include discussion of intra-Jewish processes, such as the relationship between the established Sephardic Jews of Istanbul and the Jewish newcomers from Turkey’s Kurdish region, or changes taking place in recent years in the attitude of the Jewish community toward the Sabbateans. Other relevant topics are the contribution of Turkey’s Jews to the culture and economy of the Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish Republic, and relations between the community in Turkey and Jewish communities elsewhere in the world, and particularly the ties between this community and the community of Turkish Jewish immigrants in Israel.

Topics not listed above will also be considered by the Academic Committee.

Papers may be presented at the conference in either English or Hebrew.

Researchers specializing in any of the relevant areas are invited to submit a proposal for a paper, accompanied by a one-page abstract.

Final date for proposal submission is Wednesday, 15 Shevat, 5778 (January 31, 2018).

Proposals/abstracts should be sent to: dahan.center@mail.biu.ac.il

Sincerely,

Conference Academic Committee:

Dr. Efrat Aviv, Prof. Yosef Drori, Dr. Eliezer Papo, and Dr. Shimon Ohayon, Dr. Umut Uzer