



## A Note From the Editor



*Alisa F. Tuğberk, Editor*

Academia is a great place to learn concepts and frameworks. The working world is one in which to put those to use. In the last two months, we have discussed several concepts surrounding challenges and opportunities in Turkish Studies and have laid a foundation from which to build out concrete and constructive thoughts on emerging areas in the field. In this issue, we visit the ends of this spectrum, with contributions on finance and Ottoman Studies.

This month also marks the first of a new bimonthly series of reflections we will publish on Turkish-American life. The Turkish diaspora began to convene and share lives decades ago through the formation of several organizations throughout the country. Since then, a generation of their children has come to mature on this land, myself included. They have different perspectives on what it means to be Turkish-American. The number of people comprising this community is growing rapidly yet still fragmented. This series will hopefully give voice to those experiences.

Beyond this, though, there is yet another segment to consider in this light -- those who are not ethnically Turkish but who have been absorbed into the Turkish-American community. These people come from all walks of life, and are often significant contributors to Turkish-American life and livelihood. The first in this series begins with one such person, David Saltzman, a lawyer committed to Turkish-America.

## Turkish Studies and Finance: A Concrete Opportunity

While Turkish Studies is rich in works on history and many of the social sciences, one of the fields of exploration that strikes me as of particular interest and timeliness is that of finance. This may sound odd but allow me to explain. First of all, in the tradition of full disclosure required in the capital markets, I am not unbiased. As someone who spent twenty years in the bond business, finance and capital markets are subjects of intrinsic interest made only better by how they relate to their surrounding societies. For finance and capital markets to function efficiently there must be a system of rules which are regularly and fairly applied to all parties. In short, there must be transparency and law. If these and other conditions exist, there is the possibility for greater democracy as well as economic advancement. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in modern

Turkey where the past five to seven years have witnessed one of the great success stories in economic development. The Istanbul Stock Exchange (IMKB) has turned into a highly profitable regional exchange that serves to provide liquidity in Turkish securities. This success has in large part been built on the very successful but draconian banking reforms that began in earnest in 1999. Prior to this time, banks served political interests and the policies of the central bank led to the hyperinflation that reduced the value of the lira to 1.5 million to the dollar.



*David Cuthell,  
ITS Executive Director*

## Events

**San Jose, CA** April 28, 2007  
Turkey's Role in the Global High Technology Market, annual conference hosted by the Turkish American Business Connection. Details at [www.tabcon.org](http://www.tabcon.org).

**New York, NY** May 1-June 15  
MayFest, a cultural mélange from The Moon and Stars Project. Events include exhibitions, panels, concerts and theater programs. Details at [www.moonstandstarsproject.org](http://www.moonstandstarsproject.org).

### **Announcement**

The Forum welcomes feedback and submissions.

Please send articles to:  
[newsletter@turkishstudies.org](mailto:newsletter@turkishstudies.org).

Today the situation in Turkey is one where inflation is still a concern but where the Central Bank is trying to squeeze out the remaining inflationary biases with some of the highest real rates of interest in the world. The net effect is that Turkey has become a magnet for capital inflow. This is fortunate as Turkey currently needs these inflows in an effort to keep its trajectory moving forward.

All of this makes for fertile ground to explore and cultivate. What, for example, will the impact of a home mortgage market be on Turkish society? For the US, the development of federally assisted mortgages after the Second World War was one of total transformation of the American Dream. In a similar vein, what is the long-term effect of cheaper and ubiquitous consumer credit on the middle class? What

are the prospects and perils of financial reforms in general, particularly as they may widen or narrow the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” in Turkey? What would a student loan program like Sallie Mae do for Turkish education?

Financial reform and capital markets must have transparency to survive and become institutionalized. A corollary of this is that should they succeed, crony capitalism and insider trading must be curtailed. For scholars, this should have an immediate appeal not just for Turkey but for the World as a whole. As Turkey has proved it can make great strides, it should serve as a model for how things can begin to go right. At the same time the scholarship in this field is somewhat limited. With luck, ITS and its community might serve to partially redress this limitation.

## **Reflections of Turkish-America**

*David Saltzman, Principal, Saltzman & Evinch, PC*

I am not a Turk, though upon learning I was Jewish an acquaintance enthusiastically insisted that I am a descendant of the band of Khazar Turks who had converted to Judaism in the 9th century. Like many whose families left Old World poverty and oppression to emigrate to America, however, I have only the vaguest sense of my ancestry, which troubles me not at all. I am therefore flattered to have been accorded the ersatz title of ‘honorary Turk’ by my Turkish friends in recognition of my eager willingness to dive into issues of importance to Turkey and Turkish Americans. Though I discovered Turkey by circumstance – my now-colleague Günay Evinch, a Turkish-American, recruited me into our law school’s rock band – I have found Turkey worthy of a lifetime of passionate study. And from a legal practitioner’s standpoint, the diversity of issues and concerns, even contradictions, woven into Turkish politics, society and history constantly renews my interest. I consider myself very fortunate to practice in such a dynamic arena.

Among my favorite cases was a series of land claims lawsuits regarding Northern Cyprus that my firm litigated in the mid-1990’s. These were the U.S. analog to the consequential Loizidou case in Europe. Northern Cyprus remains special to me because it constitutes the rare example where a people who had faced annihilation chose to forswear the paths of violence and rage and instead rebuild their lives in peace and institute a functioning democracy.

I confess to being captivated by most of Turkey’s controversies, whether modern or ancient. Unfortunately, though controversial issues constitute a minority in the field of Turkish studies, they exert a disproportionately large influence because they tend to draw out the most fervent defenders of the opposing viewpoints. I have grown especially concerned that the Turkish viewpoint on some issues is being suppressed, even in academic settings. For example, I was recently the victim of viewpoint discrimination in the form of a “heckler’s veto” when Johns Hopkins SAIS rescinded an invitation for me to speak on minority rights in Turkey when one of the other speakers, who was from Armenia and had never even met me before, protested that there was no “possibilit[y] of a real and sincere dialogue occurring.” For many who possess preconceived notions about Turkey, usually negative ones, the idea of free speech has been reduced to permitting speech only to the extent that it agrees with those preconceptions. I, therefore, believe we all must elevate our vigilance toward the preservation of academic freedom and public debate on controversial issues, lest all of Turkish studies become hostage to such tactics.

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# Contemporary Applications of Classic Subjects: Giancarlo Casale

*Alisa Tuğberk, Editor*

**AFT: In your purview, what are areas you would define as emerging?**

GC: As a historian, I see that world history is gaining appreciation at the university level. For example, it is [one of] the fastest growing area of study in the States, and last year more US college applicants took the advanced placement history exam than any other. We take this for granted, but the same has not been true abroad and world history has not been fully developed in many places. People have not made connections between particular histories and the entirety of the globe. For example, Ottoman history was not associated with a larger world history. This has led to new opportunities for scholarship, collaboration and exploration.

On top of this, the quality and quantity of students participating in study abroad in Turkey in recent years has risen dramatically, and this elevates the role of Turkish Studies at the secondary and tertiary levels.

**AFT: As an Ottomanist, what areas do you see emerging within your own field?**

GC: I see growth in Ottoman Studies propelled by a feeling at many universities that without an Ottomanist a history department is not complete. This is because of the new approach towards historical legacies I just mentioned. For example, Southeast European history needs to cover the Ottoman history because the two are interlinked and were synonymous for a period of time. I particularly see this as true in the late Ottoman period and for those pursuing regional studies of all types. Many scholars focus on a particular region and want to understand the Ottoman period of their own countries. This has replaced a rather general approach to Ottoman studies as its own separate entity.

There has also been a revitalization of the field as scholars are coming to the US and discover that they are studying the same things as their colleagues. This has led to a new level of collaboration amongst people of different nationalities, fields and backgrounds. This is filtering down even to earlier Ottoman periods all the way back to the Medieval era. Today, Byzantine, Islamic and Armenian studies can be seen as one field in some senses, as there is so much to understand from all of these when looking at one specifically.

**AFT: How does a field of study that looks back keep pushing itself forward?**

GC: History as a whole is not necessarily flourishing. The job market is one indicator of this, but Ottoman history has seen a marked upswing. Institutions want to start new areas, graduate programs, regional studies tracks etc. It used to be that Turkey fell between other disciplines because schools wanted to fit everything into boxes. Now that mentality is reversed and Ottoman is in the middle instead of being on the fringe.

It is also true that Europeanists are in a crisis, with enrollments dropping and more students studying developing regions so European Studies is looking East to broaden its horizon and revive itself. This also has an impact on Ottoman.

Finally, there are many new areas of study arising that utilize Ottoman Studies, such as post-nationalism/border lands/transnationalism, e.g. changing from an imperial identity to a national identity.

**AFT: As a young scholar, do you see a generational division within your field?**

GC: Older scholars have not been as used to people listening or understanding their field. They were lone scholars in the previous era. Now there is a critical mass of listeners which has changed things.

**AFT: How is this manifested in your own research and publications?**

GC: More self confidence, a sense of community and a greater exchange of ideas.

**AFT: Do you think the gap between Ottoman Studies and contemporary studies can and should be bridged? Are there new opportunities for usage of Ottoman in contemporary topics?**

GC: I do not think there needs to be an overt bridge; it is seamless at this point. Areas such as law (court systems) and religion already do that. The divide stems from people who work in different disciplines. Topics can get politicized and become polarizing issues. This overshadows other work, and interesting work that is destabilizing to our assumptions.

*"Giancarlo Casale, Assistant Professor of History, University of Minnesota"*