

**Tolga Uğur Esmer**  
Assistant Professor  
History Department  
Central European University  
Nador u. 9, H-1051  
Budapest, Hungary  
e-mail: [tuesmer@ceu.hu](mailto:tuesmer@ceu.hu)

### **Education**

- 2000 – 2009      **University of Chicago, Chicago**  
Ph. D. in History – Dissertation: “A Culture of Rebellion: Networks of Violence and Competing Discourses of Justice in the Ottoman Empire, 1790-1808”
- 1998-2000      **University of Washington, Seattle**  
M.A. in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
- 1998-1999      **Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey**  
Visiting Student at the History Department and Atatürk Institute.
- 1991-1995      **Hampden-Sydney College, Hampden-Sydney, VA**  
B.A. History & B.A. Economics (*Summa Cum Laude*; Phi Beta Kappa)
- 1994              **St. Anne’s College, Oxford University, Oxford (England)** Virginia  
Program Scholarship to Study Tudor/Stuart History and Elizabethan Literature

### **Work Experience**

- Fall 2009-Present      Assistant Professor of History  
Co-established Focus in Eastern Mediterranean and Ottoman Studies  
**History Department , Central European University (Budapest, Hungary)**
- Spring 2008- 2009      Lecturer  
**Pennsylvania State University (Department of History)**
- Winter 2006              Lecturer  
**Northwestern University (Department of History).**
- 1999-2000              Teaching Assistant in Elementary and Intermediate Turkish,  
**University of Washington (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations).**
- 1996-1997              Controller & Head of Media/Marketing,  
**Esmer & Associates Environmental and Mining Engineering, Inc., Boomer, West Virginia**

1995-1996                      Financial Analyst/Corporate Auditing,  
**Union Pacific Corporation, Bethlehem, PA**

Summer 1994                    Congressional Intern, Congressman Nick J. Rahall (D-WV),  
**United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC**

### **Publications**

#### **Book Manuscript:**

*Economies of Violence: Tales of Banditry, Corruption, and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire During the Age of Revolution (1790-1820s)* (To be submitted Summer 2016)

#### **Peer-Reviewed Articles:**

“Notes on a Scandal: Transregional Networks of Violence, Gossip, and Imperial Sovereignty in the Late Eighteenth Century Ottoman Empire,” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Cambridge University Press), Vol. 58/1 (January 2016), 99-128.

“Economies of Violence, Banditry, and Governance In the Ottoman Empire Around 1800,” in *Past & Present* (Oxford University Press), Vol. 221/1 (August 2014), 163-199.

“The Confessions of an ‘Irregular:’ Self-Representation, Narrative Strategies, and Ottoman Interpretative Communities at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Journal of Ottoman Studies* (Center of Islamic Studies, İstanbul), Vol. 41-2 (2014), 313-340.

“The Precarious Intimacy of Honor in Late-Ottoman Accounts of Para-militarism and Banditry,” in *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (L’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), Vol. 18 (2014).

This is a special issue on the proceedings of the CEU workshop I organized: “Honor in the Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Mediterranean World: Controversies, Continuities, and New Directions,” 21-23 March 2013. I am the co-editor of this special edition.

<https://ejts.revues.org/4786>

#### **Encyclopedia Entry:**

“Brigandage and Banditry in the Islamic-Ottoman World,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Brill) [Forthcoming, 2016]

#### **Book Review:**

Aksin, Sina, *Turkey from Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*, in *History: Reviews of New Books* 35/3 (2007).

### **Organized Conferences, Workshops, and Panels:**

- November 25, 2014 Middle Eastern Studies Association (Washington, DC)
- Organized and presented in panel entitled “Beyond Borderlands: Trans-regional Networks of Violence, Entangled Sovereignties, and State-Formation in the Ottoman Mediterranean on Land and Sea, 1600-1900”
- March 23-25, 2013 *Honor in the Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Mediterranean World: Controversies, Continuities, and New Directions* Workshop  
Co-Organizer (with Başak Tuğ and Noemi Aksu-Levy)
- Conceived of, organized, and won funding for the event from Central European University, CETOBaC – Centre d’études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centralasiatiques, CNRS – Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique, IDEMEC – Institute d’Ethnologies Méditerranéenne, Européenne et Comparative, and ANR “Transfaire.” It was hosted at Central European University (Budapest), in conjunction with Columbia University and Bilgi University
- May 26-28, 2011 *Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Crossroads in Ottoman Studies: Negotiating Communal, State, and Moral Boundaries* Conference  
Co- Organizer (with Başak Tuğ and Christine Philliou)
- Conceived of, organized, and won funding for the event from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung and Fritz-Thyssen Stiftung for a workshop in which 35 scholars participated. It was hosted at Central European University (Budapest), in conjunction with Columbia University and Bilgi University
- January 6, 2009 American Historical Association (New York, NY)
- Organized and presented in panel entitled “The Multiple Registers of Violence in the Ottoman Empire: When Imperial Rivalries and Domestic Grievances Converge, 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.”
- November 16, 2007 Middle Eastern Studies Association (Montreal, Canada)
- Organized and presented in panel entitled “Competing Discourses of Rebellion and Justice in the Ottoman Empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries”

**Conference Presentations/Participation:**

- 19 March 2016 “Disease and Disaster in Ottoman Anatolia” Workshop, The Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies, Newnham College (Cambridge, UK)

Presented Paper: "Emotions and Corruption in the Archives: Imperial Uncommon Sense at the Height of Turn-of-the-Nineteenth-Century Insurgency in the Ottoman Empire"

- 28 June 2015 "Economies of Violence" Workshop, Ruhr University (Bochum, Germany)  
Presented Paper: "Economies of Violence, Imperial Governance, and the Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Banditry in the Ottoman Empire."
- 22 January 2015 "The Age of the Komitadji: Entangled Histories and Political Sociology of Insurgencies in the Ottoman World (1870s-1920s)" Workshop, University of Basel  
  
Presented Paper: "Criminals' Policing Empire: Transregional Networks of Violence, Governance, and Confessional cum Ethnic Boundaries in the Ottoman Nineteenth Century."
- November 24, 2014 Middle Eastern Studies Association (Washington, DC)  
Chaired Panel/Discussant: "The Balkan Wars and Its Aftermath: A Centennial Perspective"
- April 25, 2014 "Men of Disorder: Masculinity, Violence and Urban Networks in the Modern Middle East and Central Asia" Workshop, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Freiburg, Germany)  
  
Presented Paper: "The Precarious Intimacy of Honor in Late-Ottoman Accounts of Paramilitarism"
- January 4, 2014 American Historical Association (Washington, DC)  
  
Chaired Panel/Discussant: "Contested Subjects: Mobility, Identity, and Law in the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Middle East."
- October 12, 2013 Middle Eastern Studies Association (New Orleans, LA)  
  
Chaired Panel/Discussant: "Law and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, Panel III: Law and the Politics of Administration in the Ottoman Empire."
- October 5, 2012 Balkan Worlds: The Ottoman Past and Balkan Nationalism" Workshop, University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece)  
  
Presented Paper: "Bandits, Empire, and Nation-States: Economies of Violence and Competing Visions of Governance and Statehood in the Ottoman Balkans in the Nineteenth Century"

- April 20, 2012 “Living Empire: Ottoman Identities in Transition, 1700-1850” Workshop, McMaster University (Hamilton, Canada)
- Presented Paper: “The Violent Confessions of an Ottoman Irregular: Self-Representation, Narrative Strategies, and Ottoman Interpretative Communities at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century”
- September 23, 2011 Competing and Complementary Visions of the Social: History, Sociology, and Anthropology, Central European University
- Presented Paper: “Social and Cultural Dimensions of Banditry in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1793 to 1808”
- October 8, 2010 “Power and Influence in the Balkans: 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries” Workshop, University of Sofia (Bulgaria)
- Presented Paper: “A “Kãrdzhali Dynasty” and the Construction of a National Boundary from Below”
- May 7, 2010 “Choreography of Shared Spaces Workshop: State, Religion, and Conflict Resolution” Workshop, (Columbia University and Boğaziçi University – Istanbul, Turkey)
- Presented Paper: “A Saint, a Rebel, a Shrine and the Forging of the Bulgarian National Identities in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” (Workshop entitled)
- November 23, 2009 Middle Eastern Studies Association Conference (Boston, MA)
- Presented Paper: “Bandits, Saints, and Ethno-Martyrs: The Story of a Muslim Frontier Family at the Dawn of the “Age of Nationalism” in the Ottoman Balkans”
- January 6, 2009 American Historical Association Conference (New York, NY)
- Presented Paper: "Networks of Violence on the Habsburg-Russian-Ottoman Frontier at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century"
- November 16, 2007 Middle Eastern Studies Association (Montreal, Canada)
- Presented Paper: “Bandits and Bureaucrats Revisited: Acknowledging Competing Discourses of Justice and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries”

- November 17, 2006 Participated in Round-Table Discussion: Islam and Post-Socialism – Interdisciplinary Approaches  
American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies  
(Washington, DC)
- November 20, 2005 Middle Eastern Studies Association Conference (Washington, DC)  
  
Presented Paper: “Religion and Rebellion in the Life and Practices of the Rumeli A’yān Kara Feyzi, c. 1795-1830.”
- July 14, 2005 Association Française pour l’étude du Monde Arabe et Musulman – *Muslim in Europe* (AFEMAM – Strasbourg, France)  
  
Presented paper: “The Live(s) and Religion(s) of a Rumeli A'yan: Breznikli Kara Feyzi and Communal Violence in Ottoman Bulgaria, c. 1790 to 1830.”
- March 5, 2004 Presented Paper: “The World of an Ottoman Rebel: Reconciling Christian and Muslim Narrative Sources with Official Ottoman Documents to Understand Kara Feyzi’s Rebellion, c. 1790 – 1830.”
- November 10, 2003 University of Chicago, Early Modern History Workshop  
Presented paper: “Ottoman Modernity and Its Discontents: The Politicization of Religion and the Demise of the Local in the Balkans, c. 1750s-1878.”
- May 10, 2000 University of Washington—*Dreams and Demons of the Nation: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Cultural Studies and the Nation*.  
Presented paper: “The Representations of Rape, Forced Conversion, and Mass Killings in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman and Balkan Post Cards, Illustrated Journals, and Novels.”
- November 24, 1999 Middle Eastern Studies Association Conference (Washington, DC)  
  
Presented paper: “Revamping The State’s Image on the Frontier: the Ottoman Empire’s Use of Stamps and Postcards in the Ottoman Balkans, c. 1890-1914.”

**Invited Lectures:**

- May 13, 2015 “Kolloquim München” Series Lectures, the Graduate School for Eastern and Southeastern European Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München  
  
Presented Paper: “Crime, Corruption, and Imperial Governance in Late Ottoman History.”

May 17, 2013      The Institute for Mediterranean Studies & University of Crete (Rethymno, GR)

Presented Paper: “Gossip, Rumor, and Legality in the Ottoman Empire at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century”

November 29, 2011      Central European University (Budapest)  
University-Wide Middle East Seminar

Presented Paper: “Outlaw Economies and Ottoman Successor States”

December 7, 2010      Boğaziçi University (Istanbul, Turkey)

Presented paper: “A Micro-history of an Ottoman Bandit and the Culture of Rebellion in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Rumeli”

#### **Honors and Awards:**

Aug.-Nov. 2015      **Collaborative Research Center SFB 948 (Sonderforschungsbereich) “Heroes-Heroizations-Heroisms,” Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Freiburg, Germany) – Visiting Researcher Fellowship**

April-Aug. 2010      **American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) & National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) – Post-Doctoral Fellowship**

April 2006      **International Turkish Studies Association – Dissertation Write-Up Grant, 2006-2007.**

March 2006      **American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) – Dissertation Write-Up Fellowship, 2006-2007.**

May 2005      **Fulbright-Hayes – Dissertation Research Grant, Bulgaria and Turkey (Declined).**

April 2005      **German Marshall Fund – Dissertation Research Grant, Bulgaria and Turkey, 2005-2006.**

April 2005      **American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) – Dissertation Write-Up Grant, 2005-6 (Declined).**

March 2005      **International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)- Dissertation Research Grant in Bulgaria and Turkey, 2005 – 2006.**

February 2005	<b>American Research Institute of Turkey (ARIT)</b> – Dissertation Research in Turkey, 2005-2006
April 2004	<b>Fulbright IIE Grant</b> – Dissertation Research in Bulgaria 2004-2005
April 2004	<b>Council of American Overseas Research Centers Dissertation Research Grant</b> (Declined).
2000-2004	<b>University of Chicago (Division of Social Sciences)</b> – University Scholar 4 Year Stipend and Full Tuition
Summer 2003	<b>Institute of Turkish Studies</b> – Pre-Dissertation Research Grant
Summer 2003	<b>University of Chicago (Department of History)</b> – Kunstadtler Pre-Dissertation Research Grant
Summer 2002	<b>Title VI/FLAS</b> – Language Learning in Bulgaria (Bulgarian)
Summer 2002	<b>American Council of Learned Societies</b> – Language Learning in Bulgaria (Bulgarian)
Summer 2001	<b>Title VI/FLAS</b> – Language Learning at Harvard’s Summer program in Turkey (Ottoman Turkish)
Summer 2001	<b>Institute of Turkish Studies</b> – Language Learning in Turkey (Ottoman Turkish)
Summer 2000	<b>Title VI/FLAS</b> – Language Learning in Bulgaria (Bulgarian)
1998-1999	<b>University of Washington</b> – Schmidt Graduate Fellowship to Study Abroad in Istanbul, Turkey at Boğaziçi University
1994	<b>Virginia Program at Oxford</b> – Full Scholarship to Study Tudor/Stuart History and Elizabethan Literature at St. Anne’s College, Oxford University (Oxford, England)
1991-1995	<b>Venable Merit Scholarship</b> – 4-year Merit Scholarship to attend Hampden-Sydney College.

### **Courses Taught**

#### **Graduate (CEU):**

- PhD Seminar on Southeastern European History
- Everyday Life History in Empire and Beyond



- The Mediterranean and Mediterraneanisms: Explorations in the History of a Concept  
Islam in the Balkans: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Past and Present of Muslim Communities in the Balkans
- The Ottoman Balkans and Its Legacies
- Borderlands in Islamic and Ottoman History
- Social Discontent, Violence, and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire
- Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Historical Texts and Historiography
- The Ottomans and the Challenges of Building a Multi-Confessional Empire Building (co-taught with T. Krstic)
- Ottoman Historians and Historiography (co-taught with T. Krstic)
- Islam in the Balkans

Undergraduate (Penn State University and Northwestern University):

- Introduction to Islamic Civilization (ca. 500 to 1500) (History Survey)
- Introduction to Islam (Religious Studies Survey)
- Modern Middle Eastern Survey
- Religion, Imperialism, and Conflict in the Late-Ottoman Empire and Modern Middle East

**Membership/Activities in Professional Societies/Organizations**

American Historical Association

Middle Eastern Studies Association

Reviewer for the JESHO, *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Brill)

Reviewer for *Halcyon Days in Crete Series in Ottoman Studies*, The University of Crete

Reviewer for the *Turkish Historical Review*

**Graduate Supervision:**

**PhD Students:**

Scott Rank (History) – “Christian and Muslim Religious Polemics in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Competing Discourses of Modernity”

Eda Güçlü (History) – “Family Conflict, Law, and Property in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul”

Tamas Kiss (Medieval Studies – Second Reader) – “Early Modern Cultural Intermediaries Between Europe and the Ottoman Empire”

Andriy Posunko (History – Second Reader) – “The Trans-Danubian Kazaks in Russo-Ottoman Borderlands”

Ahmet Bilaloğlu (History) – First Year PhD Student

**MA Students:**

Martin Valkov (History) – “The Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization

and the Idea for Autonomy for Macedonia and Adrianople Thrace, 1893-1912”  
Defended June, 2010 – now a PhD Candidate at the University of Sofia

Aleksandar Zdravkovski (History) – “The Macedonian Intellectual Elite in Exile from 1904 to 1918: Appraising the Output of National Thought”  
Defended June, 2011

Bojana Savić (History)– “Everyday-Life, Christian-Muslim Relations In Belgradî Raşidi’s *Tarih-i vak‘a-yı hayret-nümâ-yı Belgrad ve Sırpistan*, c. 1870’s”  
Defended June, 2011 – now a PhD Student at the University of Belgrade

Rozina Gilani (History – Second Reader) – “Liberation Art and Resistance in late-Twentieth Century Palestinian Graffiti and Sculpture”  
Defended June, 2012.

Nina Raiković (History) – “Remembering and Forgetting the Ways of Rumeli: The Struggles of Balkan-Muslim Refugees to Become “Turk” in late-Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Anatolia”  
Defended June, 2012.

Uroš Dakić (Medieval – Second Reader) – “The Sokollu Family Clan and the Politics of Vizierial Household In the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century”  
Defended June, 2012

Ahmet Bilaloğlu (History) – “The Ottomans in the Enlightenment: The Case of Public Libraries in the Reign of Mahmud I (1730-1753)”  
Defended June 2013 – now a PhD Student in History at CEU

Daniel Hartmann (History – Co Supervisor w/ Nadia al-Bagdadi) – “The Ottoman Past in Present-Day Turkey”  
Defended September 2013

Ana Sekulić (History – Supervisor) – “Boundary Entrepreneurs: Manipulating Difference on the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman-Venetian Border”  
Defended June 2013 – Now a PhD Student in History at Princeton

Klara Volarić (History) – “Inter-Communal Relations in Edirne During the Bulgarian Occupation of 1913”

### **Language Skills**

Proficient (reading, speaking, writing skills)	English (Native Language), Turkish
Excellent reading and speaking skills	Bulgarian
Excellent reading skills	Ottoman Turkish
Good reading and speaking skills	Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian

Fair reading and speaking skills  
Reading knowledge (with dictionary)

German  
Persian