This conference focuses on networks, production, and transmission of knowledge during the Ottoman conquest of the eastern Mediterranean. The aim of this conference is to further our understanding of the ways in which knowledge was transformed, exchanged, diversified, expanded, and suppressed during the period beginning with the Ottoman conquest of the Eastern Mediterranean. The conference and the intended publication, it is hoped, will make an important contribution to the growing body of research that challenges long-held assumptions, prejudices, and misconceptions that the Ottoman Conquest of Byzantium and former Byzantine lands signalled the beginning of a ‘Dark Age’ of the production and exchange of knowledge.

The conference is meant to cover a broad geographical and disciplinary field. Each panel will focus on a different geographical area, with chronologically ordered papers to cover both diverse regions—Europe, the Near East, the Balkans, North Africa, and Muscovy—and a large number of historical questions regarding the effects of the Ottoman Conquest on written culture, book-learning, and the production of knowledge. The conference will engage substantially with questions concerning the mechanics of the transmission of knowledge: the transfer of books and texts from the Byzantine Empire to other parts of the world, the transformation of the built landscape, intermarriage and marriage alliances, exiles and refugees, and diplomatic exchange; and the production of knowledge: through cross-cultural exchange and dialogue, the production and recuperation of texts and written culture, the collection and recuperation of Byzantine learning and knowledge in the wake of the Ottoman Conquest, and the creation and function of networks of knowledge in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

One of the major thematic strands examines intellectual exchange and the transmission of information through diplomatic, mercantile, and religious infrastructures that rose out of the Ottoman Conquest. A second major thematic strand examines how cultural and religious tolerance developed out of the Ottoman Conquest based on knowledge exchange and transmission and why the early Ottoman Empire attracted rather than simply created immigrants. It is important to ensure a geographic diversity, so that the regional impact of knowledge expansion (or contraction) during the period and in the wake of the Ottoman Conquest is addressed. It is precisely for this reason that the geographic limits of the conference are not restricted to the lands that the Ottomans conquered, but include regions that were affected by the transmission, production, and exchange of knowledge that occurred during the period of the Ottoman Conquest of the Eastern Mediterranean. This is also why the chronological boundaries have been substantially enlarged to encompass the Ottoman Conquest from the 14th century and the Byzantine-Ottoman wars and period of Ottoman conquest to about 1566 and the consolidation of Ottoman rule, the rise of Muscovy, and the winding down of Ottoman expansion. This geographical and chronological framework will ensure that the conference papers, and the planned publication, draw on diverse sources that are rarely treated in conjunction. Participants will include historians of the Byzantine Empire, the Medieval Mediterranean basin, the late Medieval Balkans, the early Ottoman Empire, the Medieval European States, and Muscovy.
Day 1 (July 6)

10:00 am – 11:00 am  Panel 1:  “Understanding the ‘Other’”
Chair: Nora Berend

Aleksandar Savic
“Hagar’s Heathen Spawn”: Serbian Sources on the Muslim “Other” in the Wake of the Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans

Juliette Dumas
“The Ottoman Marriage System in the mid-15th century: Protectionism as the new Ottoman model?”

11:30 am – 1:00 pm  Panel 2:  “Ottoman Dialogues with Muslim Neighbours: Reception and Appropriation”
Chair: Chana Morgenstern

Helen Pfeifer
“Teaching the Conquerors”

Cihan Yüksel Muslu
(Some Reflections on Pre-Conquest Mamluk Perceptions of the Ottomans’

Homa Lessan Pezechki & Michel Balivet
“The Ottoman conquest as a vector of the expansion of Persian culture (14th-16th c.)”

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm  Panel 3:  “Venice and the Ottoman World: Cross-cultural Knowledge Across the Mediterranean”
Chair: Kate Fleet

Alessio Sopracasa
“In the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, from within the Muslim world, a call to “crusade” in 1455’

Christine Gadrat-Ouerfelli
“To the Great Turk and beyond: Western travelers’ descriptions of the Ottomans in the 15th c.’

Markus Koller
‘Forgotten Sources? Early Ottoman Rule in Southeastern Europe through the eyes of Venetian chronicles’

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm  Panel 4:  “New Opportunities: The Ottoman Conquest and the Northern World”
Chair: Simon Franklin

Florent Mouchard
‘Historical Narrative as a Call to Action: understanding the genesis of ‘Tale of Constantinople’ attributed to Nestor Iskinder’

Don Ostrowski
‘Morean Greeks and the Establishment of the Muscovite Dynastic State’

Alexandra Vukovich
“The Ottoman conquest as a catalyst for new intellectual possibilities in Muscovy”
Day II (July 7)

10 am – 11 am  
Panel 1:  
“Cross-cultural Knowledge and Networks of Transmission in the Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule”  
Chair: Ida Toth

Johannes Pahlitzsch  
‘Greek Orthodox Christians in Early Ottoman Asia Minor’

Mihailo Popovic  
‘Dynastic Marriages in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Mara Brankovic Revisited’

11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Panel 2:  
“Perceptions and Reception of the Ottoman ‘Other’, Byzantine Perspectives”  
Chair: Jonathan Shepard

Ida Toth  
‘Even the Ruins of Rome are Similar to Ours: Time and space in Manuel Chrysoloras’s comparison of the two capitals’

Alexander Beihammer  
‘Byzantine views of the earliest phase of Turkish expansion in the Balkan Peninsula’

Judith Ryder  
‘Demetrius Kydones and Byzantine responses to the Ottoman threat in the mid-fourteenth century’

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm  
Panel 3:  
“Conservation, Transformation, and Transmission of the Built Landscape in Conquered Lands”  
Chair: Olenka Pevny

Suna Cagaptay  
‘Productive in Transition: The emergence of a Bithynian architectural idiom in the 14th c.’

Ivana Jevtic  
‘Palaeologan artistic legacy and Orthodox art during the Ottoman Conquest: the iconographic “canonization” of Greek philosophers’

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm  
Panel 4:  
“The Reception, Rejection, and Creation of Technologies”  
Chair: Alexandra Vukovich

Roman Shlyakhtin  
‘An Abandoned Border: The Transformation of Defensive Landscape of the Sakarya-Sangarius in the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Period’

Alex Rodriguez Suarez  
‘Tick tock: Clocks on the eve of the Ottoman conquest’

Eurydice Georgatelli  
‘The Lord of Coin and Friday Prayers. Continuity and Change along Early Ottoman Egnatia’