

## Fellows



**Huseyin Yilmaz**

IFK\_Research Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. March 2010 bis 30. June 2010

**Huseyin Yilmaz**

## **PROJECT TITLE**

Translation and Cultural Formation in the Ottoman Empire

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Huseyin Yilmaz' research focuses on translation as part of everyday life in Ottoman society including learning, arts, entertainment, and propaganda between 1350 and 1550 when hundreds of titles in various disciplines and genres were translated into Turkish. Translation not only bred novel cultural currents but substantially shaped learning, spirituality and politics as well. His research shows, for example, that translation was prompted by the competition among Turkish rulers to reach out to illiterate folks who could not read Arabic or Persian. Popular religious, literary and medical works were translated by leading scholars who embellished these works with long panegyrics of their patrons. As these books circulated, read aloud in gatherings, and studied by students early Ottoman rulers gained an unprecedented fame and prestige among the Turkish folks beyond the reach of their physical power. By the sixteenth century, however, this intensive translation activity counter-produced an anti-translationist reaction among the elite who, in defiance of the canon in aesthetics and literature, ventured to devise indigenous forms of expression which they claimed to be genuinely Ottoman. By examining this historical process, Yilmaz' research also aims to explore such broader questions as transmission of knowledge in oral cultures, the function of the book in illiterate communities, the rise of vernaculars into hegemonic languages, and the politics of language.

## **CV**

Huseyin Yilmaz earned his Ph.D. in History and Middle Eastern Studies in 2005 at Harvard University. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of History, University of South Florida.

## **Publications**

(among others): The Eastern Question and the Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Near and Middle East in the Nineteenth Century, in: A. Amanat, M. Bonine (eds.), *Where is the Middle East*, Stanford 2010 [forthcoming]; *Containing Sultanlic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire before Modernization*, in: S. Hashmi, H. Chehabi (eds.), *Islam and Constitutionalism*, Cambridge, MA 2010 [forthcoming]; *Imperial Ideology*, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, New York 2008; *Constitutional Developments in the Ottoman Empire before the Westernization*, in: *Divan Disiplinlerarasý Çalýpmalar Dergisi*, 13, 2008, pp. 1-30; *Approaches to Pre-Tanzimat Political Thought in Ottoman Historiography*, in: *Türkiye Araþtýrmalarý Literatür Dergisi*, 1/2, 2003, pp. 231-298.