

Book Talk

Island and Empire: How Civil War in Crete Mobilized the Ottoman World

Abstract

The Ottoman conquest of Crete in the seventeenth century materialized after one of the longest sieges in recorded history. Throughout the nineteenth century the island witnessed multiple episodes of armed struggle against the Ottoman rule, a process that resulted in the displacement of Muslim and Christian islanders and electrified European public opinion. The most sweeping of nineteenth century episodes of violence occurred in the mid-1890s, leading to a war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans won in the battlefield yet lost in diplomacy. Drawing on Crete's multilayered legacy of violence and tracing the Muslims displaced from the island because of civil war in the 1890s, this talk weaves together a story of intercommunal and environmental violence, European military intervention, displacement, and mass protest. I explore the transformation of Muslim Cretans from silenced refugees in the 1890s to loud protesters after 1908, arguing that the islanders energized late Ottoman politics and society.

Bio

Uğur Zekeriya Peçe is an Assistant Professor of History at Lehigh University. He received his PhD in History from Stanford University in 2016. He previously taught at Bard College and Harvard University. His articles have appeared in *Middle Eastern Studies*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and *New Perspectives on Turkey*. His book, *Island and Empire: How Civil War in Crete Mobilized the Ottoman World*, came out from Stanford University Press in the summer of 2024. Dr. Peçe is now on a fellowship by ARIT (American Research Institute in Turkey) conducting a new research project that explores soundscapes of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution.