

Onur Usta

Doctoral researcher

[Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies \(/research/activity/bomgs/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/bomgs/index.aspx)

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About

Title of thesis: **In Pursuit of Herds or Land? Pastoralists in Anatolia from a Regional Perspective, 1611-1650**

Supervisor: **[Dr Rhoads Murphey \(/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx)**

Funding: Higher Education Council of Turkey

Qualifications

- BA in History Education (Dokuz Eylül University, Turkey)
- MA in History (Bilkent University, Turkey)

Biography

Two important courses that I had taken before starting to PhD have played a great role in shaping my current research field. Firstly, during my undergraduate education at Dokuz Eylül University, the course of "The Ottoman History in a Period of Change" given by Dr. Fikret Yılmaz shifted periodically my attention to the 17th century when the Ottoman State was in the process of adaptation with its all military and administrative institutions as well as socio-economic organization to the changes required by the era. I began to deal with the changing nature of the Ottoman State with the help of the works by Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, Halil İnalcık, Mustafa Akdağ and Kemal Karpat. Secondly, during my M.A period at Bilkent University, the course of "Rebellion and Revolutions in Early Modern World" given by Dr. Oktay Özel provided me with a comparative perspective in general on uprisings and revolts of the 17th century which were seen across the world and it enabled me to deeply focus on the provincial uprisings in Ottoman Anatolia throughout the 17th century which are known "Celâli İsyanları" in literature. I turned my attention to understanding the dynamics of provincial society in Anatolia and put the tribes and nomads into my center of attention in association with the *Celâli* rebellions. In my M.A thesis, I try to demonstrate that an economy based on pastoralism drew more attention of state elites who struggled with each other over the economic resources of the Empire during the 17th century. I tend to see nomads as prudent producers of countryside who sought to protect their own benefits against the new social and economic conditions.

Doctoral research

PhD title In Pursuit of Herds or Land? Pastoralists in Anatolia from a Regional Perspective, 1611-1650

Supervisor **[Dr Rhoads Murphey \(/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx)**

Course **[Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies PhD/MA by Research \(On-Campus or by Distance Learning\) \(/postgraduate/courses/research/bomgs/byzantine-ottoman-mod-greek.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/research/bomgs/byzantine-ottoman-mod-greek.aspx)**

Research

The initial aim of my thesis is to demonstrate the regional differentiation of pastoral economies in Anatolia after the Celali rebellions (1596-1611). My target is to understand how the pastoral nomads in Anatolia, as a group who lived in the periphery, built their own economies according to two important means of production; animals and land. My thesis covers Ankara and its environs, Adana-Urfa-Antep, and Afyon-Isparta as research areas. I have intentionally chosen the period after the Celali rebellions; because, there are some important theories concerning nomads as regards the aftermath of the Celali rebellions. It is generally admitted that the Celali rebellions had a severe impact on the social and economic order of rural Anatolia. The widespread turbulence forced a large number of peasants to leave their original places in order to find more secure areas. According to a dramatic fall in the number of taxpayers in records, some scholars argue that the newly-settled nomads in the 1580s might have returned to nomadism after the rebellions due to the lack of security in countryside. Furthermore, it is also claimed that tribes in a large number moved unexpectedly from the eastern and south-eastern Anatolia to the western and central parts which became deserted due to the "peasant flight" (*büyük kaçgun*). The problems of re-nomadization and that large-scale geographic reshuffle of tribes are my starting points.

Although the *kadi* court records are the main primary sources of my thesis, I examine a wide range of archival documents such as the Imperial orders (*mühimme defterleri*) and fiscal registers (*maliyeden müdevver defterleri*).

Other activities

- President of the Bilkent Historical Society, 2008-2009
- Responsible person for the organizations of seminars for the Bilkent Historical Society, 2009-2010
- Assistantship for the course of History and Civilization at Bilkent University, 2009-2010
- Research Assistantship at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, 2011-2012
- Full tuition and stipend fees provided by Bilkent University, 2008-2011
- Full tuition and stipend fees for overseas student provided by the Turkish Higher Education, 2012-2015

