



SRII SPRING AND AUTUMN LECTURES 2021
NARRATIVE AND POLITICS

Monday, May 31, 2021
19:00 (Turkey), 18:00 (CEST)

Narrated Empires and the Politics of Ottomanism

Johanna Chovanec (Vienna) / Olof Heilo (Istanbul)
Alp Eren Topal (Oslo)

Narrated Empires: Perceptions of Late Habsburg and Ottoman Multinationalism (ed. Chovanec and Heilo, Palgrave 2021) examines imperial narratives of multinationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In one of its chapters, Alp Eren Topal challenges the widely held notion that the Ottoman state embraced an official ideology of ‘Ottomanism’ during the *Tanzimat* reform period (1839–1876). An analysis of nineteenth century texts shows that the Ottoman state did not have such a clearly defined project for creating an ‘Ottoman nation’ out of the religious and ethnic diversity among its subjects; rather, it was acting in response to domestic and international pressure in implementing *ad hoc* reform policies, which historians have interpreted in hindsight as governed by ‘Ottomanism.’

After a general presentation of the book by the two editors Johanna Chovanec and Olof Heilo, Alp Eren Topal will talk about his findings, which trace the earliest identifiable ‘Ottomanist’ project not to the Ottoman government, but instead to the opposition of the ‘Young Ottomans’ in the 1860s and 1870s.

— Zoom admission code after registration to event@srii.org.tr —