

# **Guardians of an Empire, Founders of a Republic: The Lives of the 1902 Graduates of the Ottoman Imperial Military Staff College**

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My project is that of a collective biography of twelve Ottoman officers who graduated from the military academy in 1902, served as commanders during World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, and, if surviving, had a public career in the early Republic of Turkey. This study pursues a middle way between conventional prosopography and individual biographies, and engages with the dominating narrative that identifies the secular military elite as central to the “Young Turk” movement, the driving force of late Ottoman constitutionalism and the War of Independence, but regards the Kemâlist period despite all its continuities with the period of 1908 to 1918 as one of a basically civilian regime. In addition, in the wake of post-new military history, this study deals with the experiences, networks and living conditions of the agents by focusing on complex variations of the military culture in different times and regions. On the other hand, it employs the systematic approach of new military history by offering theoretical frameworks and wider contexts. In this way, it is intended to achieve the study’s overriding objective of seeing inconsistencies and congruencies between the theoretical frameworks/wider contexts and the agencies/variations in the field. It thus contributes in equal measure to the political and military history of Turkey during the first half of twentieth-century.

The research proposed here chooses to dwell on a smaller but significant group of men who then can be investigated in greater depth rather than a large population (say, Ottoman military officers above a certain rank) where it is only feasible to compare those aspects that are relatively simple to unearth such as steps of a military career. The choice of a more limited sample allows for a contextualized investigation of life-stories with a common background that, however, occasionally took dramatically different directions.

The research question of the project is that how can be various identities and life cycles instead of physical aging and historical transformation processes rather than chronological account of events construed together? While carrying out the study and attempting to deal with the research question, netzwerkforschung (network theory) is particularly helpful in interpreting the multifarious sources and contextualizing the raw data to examine the complex processes of social concepts and theoretical approaches by establishing different sub-networks. In this way, the tension and harmony between social, temporal, spatial and experiential differences as well as collective actions, objectives, feelings will be considered.

Being involved in group discussions with professional specialists in various disciplines is one of the best opportunities for fulfilling the aims of the project because prosopography, as a methodological synthesis, is somewhere at the intersection of humanities and social sciences.

**Short Biography:** In 2019, she earned her master’s degree in History at Istanbul Şehir University. Thesis: Fahreddin Altay (1880-1974): Under the Shadow of Militarism; Supervisor: Professor Abdulhamit Kırmızı

In 2021, she began her doctoral studies at LMU, Munich. Dissertation: Guardians of an Empire, Founders of a Republic: The Lives of the 1902 Graduates of the Ottoman Imperial Military Staff College; Supervisor: Professor Christoph K. Neumann

Scholarships:

2021-2022: Munich Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, Ph.D.

Scholarship

2017-2019: The Turkish Historical Association, Graduate Scholarship in the History of the Republic of Turkey

2017-2019: Istanbul Şehir University, Full Tuition Fee Waiver Scholarship