

**Anglo-Turkish Society / Royal Anthropological Institute lecture, Wednesday 11 October 2017**

Speaker: the author [Prof. Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu](#)

Time: 6 for 6.30pm

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT

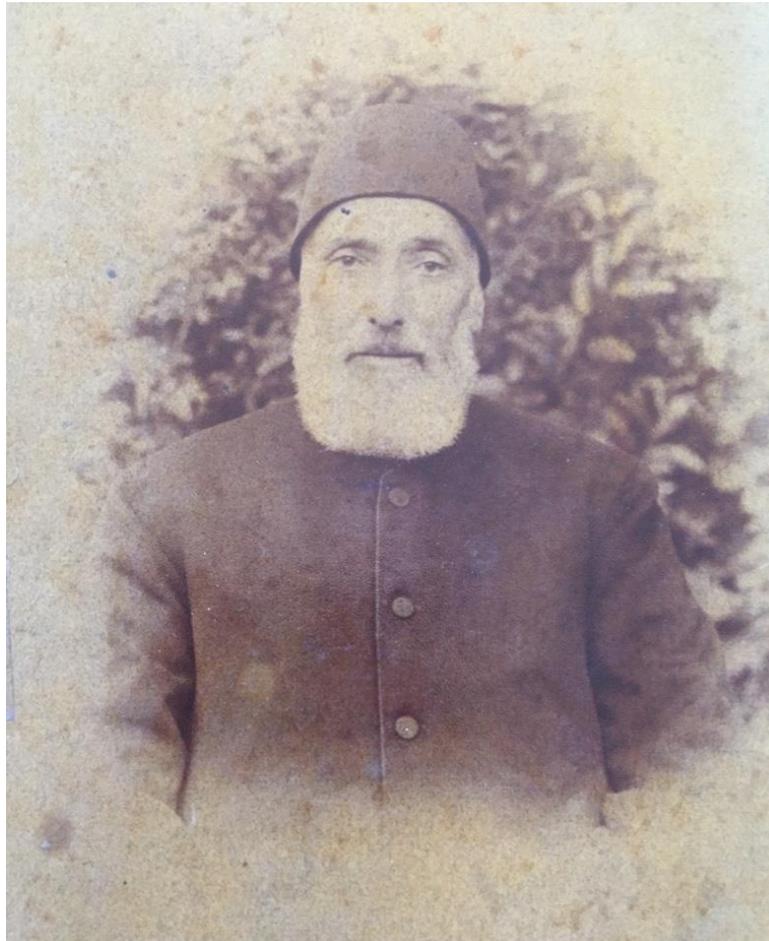


Title: **'Osman Zeki Bey, the Printer, His Printing Office and "The Ottoman Paper Manufacturing Company"'**

Osman Zeki Bey (printer, calligrapher) whose accomplishments will be the topic of this talk was the First Chamberlain of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Although the first Printing Press run by Muslim Turks had been founded in the 1720s in Istanbul by İbrahim Muteferrika and Mehmet Said Efendi, the printing of the holy book of Islam, the Quran had been denied to them. 150 years had to elapse until this permission was given to a printer. And this printer was Osman Zeki Bey who had a close relationship to the Sultan (therefore bestowed with his title "*serkurena*") and who had won his thrust over the years. Thus Osman Zeki Bey was given the monopoly to print the Quran for 50 years (1880-1930). Through selling the Quran for a relatively cheap price to all Muslim countries he soon became rich and bought a large plot of land to build houses for his 6 children. This area which is one of the city centres of İstanbul has been called after him since then (Osmanbey). Osman Bey's printing Office not only printed the holy book of Islam but upon closure of the state's printing office *Matbaa-i Amire*, in 1906 printed state documents, history books and all sorts of other books in Turkish and in foreign languages. There exist more than 1000 publications of *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* in the archives of the Turkish National Library.

In 1886 Osman Bey was also commissioned to set up a paper manufacturing company by the Palace which he did in 1890. The machines were ordered from the British Company Masson & Scott Inc. The company was given the name 'Ottoman Paper Manufacturing Company'. It had two administrative boards; one in İstanbul and another in London.

Dr. Nedret Kuran who is the great granddaughter of Osman Zeki Bey has researched Osman Bey since 2000 and has published two articles on that subject, one in Turkey, another on Harvard University's Journal of Near Eastern Studies and a book chapter in 'History of Printing and Publications of the Middle East' published by Oxford University Press, 2002. Dr. Nedret Kuran is also a Professor of Translation Studies and Comparative Literature. After teaching in various Universities for 41 years she retired in June 2017. She was a visiting scholar at CMES, Harvard University in 2000.



Osman bey

Booking essential: <https://nedret-kuran-burcoglu-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk>

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