Anglo-Turkish Society hybrid lecture, 17 November 2026, 6.00 pm (UK time)

Speaker: Can Çakır

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

Title: 'Memoirs of the Ottoman Major Kadri Bey through his Personal Diary: A Journey from the War of '93 to the Foundation of the Turkish Republic'

This book presents the memoirs of Major Kadri Bey, originally penned in Ottoman Turkish, rendered into modern Turkish. Through this work, you will explore three parallel narratives: the personal yet historic journey of Major Kadri Bey—a migrant* of the "War of '93" (the 1877–1878 Ottoman-Russian War) who was born in the village of Tihilazor in Artvin (then part of the Batum Sanjak) and whose memoirs (or rather, his life's odyssey); the broader history of the War of '93, the resulting mass exodus, and the arduous journey of displacement that spanned decades; and the story of the Republic of Turkey itself—evolving from the Ottoman Empire and culminating in the liberation of Artvin and its establishment as a province.

Kadri Bey was a soldier-educator who rushed from front to front during the Balkan Wars, the Great War, and the War of Independence—fighting at fronts such as Serres, Pristina, Lebyan, Ferizaj, Ioannina, Shkodra, Anafartalar, Seddülbahir, Gallipoli, and Yerli Su. He was battalion commander and was honoured with War of Independence Medal, the Order of the Medjidie, the Order of the Red Eagle (German), the Order of Danilo, and the Medal of Pride, he served as a military instructor and headmaster across various schools and even taught military subjects to Ottoman princes of the late imperial era.

The memoirs of Kadri Bey—a skilled staff officer who visited mosques and recited the *Dalail al-Khayrat* during his travels on duty, and who also served as a tax official collecting the *Ağnam* (livestock) tax while behind the lines. His path crossed with Atatürk—whom he addressed as "Gazi"—and he was himself a veteran disabled in combat.

In this study, you will witness the vast scope of *Major Kadri Bey's Memoirs*—which transcends the nature of a mere memoir—encompassing military, social, economic, historical, cultural, religious, literary, medical, transport, and educational dimensions. Through the experiences of Major Kadri Bey as a historical figure—spanning his life from birth and the shaping of his lineage—you will examine the migrations that occurred simultaneously in the Caucasus and Anatolia (the Eastern Front) and the Balkans (the Danube Front) as inevitable consequences of the Ottoman-Russian War, via utilizing documents from the Ottoman Archives (BOA) and the Republican Archives (BCA); furthermore, you will view and read about the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the years of the Turkish National War of Independence both through an academic lens and through the eyes and words of a firsthand witness.

Booking essential: https://can-cakir-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk



Muslim refugees escaping into Ottoman lands during the Russian incursions into the Caucasus



Can Çakır is a teacher, Turkologist, and published author whose work is deeply rooted in Turkish history, culture, language, and folklore.

Born in Üsküdar, Istanbul, Can developed a passion for history and literature at an early age, which led her to study Turkish Language and Literature at university. After forging a career as a teacher, Can returned to her first passion: writing.

Her published works include *Tarihi, Etimolojisi ve Edebiyatıyla Boza Kitabı* (2019), *93 Muhaciri Osmanlı Zabiti Binbaşı Kadri Bey'in Hatıratı'ndan Sergüzeşti (93 Harbi'nden Cumhuriyete Yolculuk)* (2024), and her most recent book, *Dede Korkut ve Oğuznameleri* (2026). Can's skilfully woven narratives bring together extensive historical research, literary scholarship, and a deep appreciation of Turkish cultural heritage. Website: www.cancakir.net

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