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Center for Hellenic Studies / University of Chicago

“Renouncing Islam to Join Greek Orthodoxy and the Nation”: Muslim Converts to Greek Orthodoxy during the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1832

This lecture will explore the conversion of Muslims to Greek Orthodoxy during the time of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832) and the first post-independence years as a case study that shows that religious boundaries in the Balkans do not seem to be as insurmountable as one might have thought and the bonds between people of different religious affiliations, including Christians and Muslims, were not too loose in the tumultuous and chaotic period of the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that religious differences have always existed in Southeastern Europe, the inhabitants of that region have not always seen fellow humans with different religious affiliations as estranged others. The Muslim converts were ready to compromise their Islamic faith due to the changed political and social environment that Greek nationalism created in exchange for security and advancing their material interests, social status, and well-being. The Greek case is not unique, and similar phenomena of religious conversions from Islam to Christianity can be observed elsewhere in the region during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, while Balkan historiography has focused on the phenomenon of Islamization of Christian populations in the region during the Ottoman period, it has paid little attention to the inverse process of Christianization of Muslims in the age of nationalism.

Biographical Note: Dr. Katsikas holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the Ionian University (Corfu, Greece), a Master's degree in Southeast European Studies and a Ph.D. in Social Sciences (History and Political Science) from the University College London (UCL). Dr. Katsikas has published three books, numerous book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed academic journals and has given papers in many academic conferences as well as invited public lectures in US, Canada and Europe. He is currently working on his fourth book *Islam and Nationalism in Modern Greece, 1821-1941* and was awarded a book contract for this from Oxford University Press.

Ort: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien
1010 Wien, Postgasse 7, 1. Stiege, 3. Stock
Zeit: Dienstag, 10. Dezember 2019, 18:30 Uhr

Anschließend wird zu einem Glas Wein gebeten! Eintritt frei.
Interessierte sind herzlich willkommen!