Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (Bilkent University, 2008)
BA (Ankara University, 2003)

“From Raqqa with Love: The Raqqa Excavations by the Ottoman Imperial Museum (1905-06 and 1908)”

Department of Art History and Visual Studies

Tuesday, January 10, 2017
8:30 a.m.
Fine Arts Building
Room 109

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Marcus Milwright, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Evanthia Baboula, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, UVic (Member)
Dr. Martin Bunton, Department of History, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Stephennie Mulder, Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Patti-Jean Naylor, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The Ottoman Empire initiated a serious attempt in the archaeological exploration of ancient sites lying in its territory during the Hamidian period. By claiming ownership over the heritage of past civilizations, it aimed to counterbalance the European hegemony over its antiquities while constructing a new, “civilized” identity as part of its modernization programme. Adopting European archaeological practices, it became an active participant in the scholarly scene. Despite being latecomers and lacking sufficient resources and expertise, the Ottoman archaeologists pioneered and promoted archaeology so successfully that, they were able to achieve the disciplinary criteria in archaeological practice established by their Western counterparts. However, due to ideological factors, their names are absent from the standard account of early history of archaeology while their accomplishments are yet to be recognized in historiography.

This dissertation examines two excavation campaigns undertaken at Raqqa by Theodore Macridy and Haydar Bey on behalf of the Imperial Museum in 1905-6 and 1908 respectively and their finds collection housed within the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in İstanbul. While documenting these two excavations and their corresponding finds thoroughly for the first time, this study also reveals the contributions of such key figures of Ottoman archaeology to the development of archaeology during its formative years. The history of Ottoman archaeology is yet to be written. Analyzing the field methods, collection strategies, and restoration practices of the two Ottoman archaeologists working at Raqqa within a historical and disciplinary context, this study offers insights into the practice and the conceptualization of archaeology as a discipline in the Ottoman Empire, a subject that has been overlooked in scholarship. Moreover, this study demonstrates that the importance of the Raqqa excavations as exceptional cases in targeting mainly ceramic finds with no interest in the architectural remains of the site, a practice contrasting with contemporaneous excavations. Besides, a collection of fairly modest components, the Raqqa finds indicate an emerging interest in the potential of artifacts as sources of information rather than being merely objects for museum display, thus representing a key milestone in the newly emerging discipline of Islamic archaeology.