

Speech of Professor
Halil Ibrahim Inalcik

Co-Winner of King Faisal international Prize for
Islamic Studies
33RD Awards Ceremony
Sunday 13.3.2011 (8.4.1432H)

Presented by
Dr. Polent Ary

HRH Prince Nayef Ibn Abd Al-Aziz Al-Saud
Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior
Your Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests

Twenty Six years ago I was in Riyadh to attend a congress to celebrate the foundation of the Saudi State. In my paper presented to the meeting I tried to emphasize the general decentralization of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century and the rise of Al-Saud's control in central Arabia in close connection with the religious movement of et- Tawhid.

In the meantime I had visited the newly established Saudi Archives, housing an important collection of documents from the Ottoman Archives of Istanbul.

I believe the rich Ottoman archives constitute one of the main sources for studying the origin and development of Saudi power in Arabia. In my paper read at the congress I published some samples from the Ottoman archives. In later years my focus was on the conditions and developments in the Arab lands under the Ottomans.

The results of those investigations were summarized in the first volume of An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, published in 1994. In this volume I tried to show, using the documentary evidence, that during the sixteenth century the Arab lands enjoyed political and economic developments in spite of European attempts at invasion and control. I believe in writing the history of the Middle East our cooperation will result in a balanced view of the region's history.

I am happy to observe that my efforts in this direction are appreciated by the Prize Committee. I consider the conferment of the prize as one of the most prestigious awards I have ever received to date.

My heartfelt thanks