Burçin Gerçek

Burçin Gerçek, recipient of the Agnes Manoogian Hausrath Fellowship and the Charlotte Calfaian research award, successfully passed her comprehensive exams and defended her dissertation prospectus in spring. Before beginning her doctoral studies, Gerçek served as Istanbul correspondent, between 2002-2016, for the French newspapers *L'Express* and *Ouest France*. She also specialized on Turkish-Armenian issues for the online magazine *Repair*.

For her doctoral project, Gerçek researches the mindset of Armenian genocide perpetrators in Ankara Province. She has identified diverse sources that help to illuminate the dynamics of the violence, including trial documents, memoirs, newspaper interviews and articles, oral and written depositions from bystander trials, witness accounts from observers and some righteous figures.

Now engaged full-time in the research phase of her dissertation, she has relocated to Paris where she has enjoyed access to the survivor testimonies in the Nubarian Library. These testimonies shed light on the mechanisms of involvement and provide valuable details documenting perpetrator actions. Gerçek hypothesizes that a complex mix of resentment (economic, social, cultural or political in origin) paved the way to the involvement of heterogeneous actors in the Armenian genocide. A central focus of her research is the resentment felt by Muslim refugees to the Ottoman Empire and its impact on their involvement in perpetrating atrocities. Muslims from the Balkans and Caucasus were among the high-ranking perpetrators in Ankara province, just as they were highly represented among CUP elites. Gerçek continues to develop reading skills in Armenian and Ottoman Turkish in order to study documents from the Ottoman archive, contemporary newspaper accounts, and survivor testimonies that are essential to her research.

In order to develop a broader perspective on their motivations, Gerçek considers factors that shaped perpetrator participation by studying recruitment mechanisms in other genocides. In spring, she presented a paper entitled “What can we learn about perpetrators from survivor video testimonies?” at the conference *Comparative Lenses: Video Testimonies of Survivors and Eyewitnesses on Genocide and Mass Violence* organized by American University of Paris.