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978-0-521-52085-0 - The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire

Edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman

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THE EARLY MODERN OTTOMANS

An innovative reinterpretation of the middle years of the Ottoman Empire, from the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 to the establishment of the Tanzimat in 1839. This period saw the evolution of the Empire from the height of its powers to – as the traditional view has it – an empire in decline, unable to modernize in the face of globalization and European ascendancy. The contributors challenge this view, demonstrating how the Ottomans came to be modern on their own terms. They explore the Ottomans as politicians and diplomats, military reformers, artists and historians. They also map out and redefine the material worlds which they inhabited – the courthouse, the cemetery, the Turkish garden. This book, which represents a turning-point in the intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire, promises to become a key text for students, scholars and anyone interested in the Ottoman world.

VIRGINIA H. AKSAN is Associate Professor of History at McMaster University, Ontario. Her publications include *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700–1783* (1995) and *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged* (2007).

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Acknowledgments

In January 2006, Dan Goffman, my colleague, friend, and co-editor on this project, suffered a major stroke. Just prior to that, he had emailed me the full draft of all the contributions included here, along with the Introduction, which he had just finished crafting. It has been my pleasure to see them through into print, as a tribute to the vision which Dan had for a volume which would explore lesser-known aspects of the Ottoman universe in the premodern world. Dan's expertise has always been the Ottomans and Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Mine begins in the grey zone after 1700 and before 1850. It was this crossover which allowed us to conceive of a volume which would explore the "early modern" in the Ottoman context.

My first instinct upon assuming sole editorial responsibility for this project was to send the full text to the other ten contributors of the volume, so that they could see the ways in which we had clustered the topics. In return, I received a number of revised and far more polished versions of the pieces: a response, I suggest, to the news of a colleague's illness, but also a measure of engagement with the aims of the project and its participants. Highly idiosyncratic, these essays represent the work of both "junior" and "senior" Middle East and Ottoman historians pushing their well-known work in new directions. I have deliberately tried not to impose too much of a straitjacket on the individual texts, with some editorial exceptions such as a uniform bibliography and footnote style, and a limited set of standard transliterations. As with any such collection, it will be picked over by instructors for classroom texts and graduate examination bibliographies, but can just as well stand alone as a reader reflecting the terrain of Ottoman studies in its era. I owe a debt of thanks to Carolyn Goffman, Marigold Acland, our anonymous reader, and all the contributors. I know they join me in wishing Dan well.

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*A note on transliteration and the use of
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Words like waqf (in lieu of the Turkish vakıf), shari'a, hadith, Quran, ulema and kadi (instead of qadi) are assumed here to have become part of regular English parlance. For languages such as Arabic and Persian, we have tried to keep the use of foreign words to a minimum, but modern Turkish spelling has been preferred when used, with the first occurrence of a word in each essay followed by its English equivalent or vice versa. For the rest, we have followed the transliteration scheme of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.