

INTRODUCTION

Nineteen eighty-seven, for no particular anniversary reason, turned out to be a year in which several cities and campuses in North America witnessed cultural and scholarly activities concerning Ottoman civilization in the age of Süleymân the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566). It was in that year, between January 25-May 17, that the first major exhibition of Ottoman art outside Turkey was opened in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and then toured several other American cities before moving on to Europe and Japan.¹

The ensuing interest in the age of Süleymân manifested itself in several ways, not the least of which is that this Ottoman sultan was honored as one of the figures to be represented among other major lawgivers of history in the halls of the US Congress. In the academic sphere, two conferences and several lecture series were organized in different cities that again focussed on the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth century. Of the two conferences, one was held at the University of Chicago on June 20-22, 1987, and the other at Princeton University on November 19-22 of the same year.²

This volume brings together most of the papers presented in those two conferences. At the same time, the Institute for Turkish Studies had commissioned a set of papers for an intended book on Süleymân; some of those, too, were eventually included in this volume.

As it will become clear from a study of the table of contents, this book does not aim to present a comprehensive coverage of all aspects of Ottoman history in the age of Süleymân. Nor does it aim to treat its different themes in the same depth or to delineate a common perspective. Based on pieces presented to conferences, the papers represent a variety of positions and even of scholarly traditions that will not escape the cross-referential eye of the careful reader.

The long delay in the completion of this volume was due to various unexpected difficulties, but we felt along the way and continue to believe that the papers retain their value and originality, namely that they represent a significant

¹The catalogue of the exhibition was published by Esin Atıl who was also its curator: *The Age of Sultan Süleymân the Magnificent* (Washington and New York, 1987).

²A similar conference was held in 1990 at l'École du Louvre in Paris to accompany the exhibition at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais. Its proceedings have already been published: *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris, 1992).

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contribution to the historical studies of the sixteenth century. We can only hope that the authors understand and the readers agree.

It is impossible to name individually all those who have made a contribution to this collection since it would need to include those who have participated in the organization of the Chicago and Princeton conferences. It is recognized with gratitude that the whole staff and faculty of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago as well as the Near Eastern Studies Department at Princeton University have generously given part of their invaluable time and energy. But special mention must be made of Professor Richard Chambers who was at first one of three intended editors for this volume; he spent a good deal of time in securing the papers and organizing the editorial process before he pulled out of the project due to reasons of health and time. It is a pleasant duty to express our thanks to him and to some others who have contributed directly to this publication: Evin Erder, Evren Ergin, Professor Fatma Müge Göçek, Professor Ahmet Kuyaş, Dr. Mark Pinson, Said Saffari, Derin Terzioğlu. Thanks are also due to the Institute of Turkish Studies, Inc., for providing funds to help defray part of the costs of edition and publication.

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