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***Dimensions of Transformation in the Ottoman Empire from the Late Medieval Age to Modernity: In Memory of Metin Kunt*,**

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Dimensions of Transformation in the Ottoman Empire is a book dedicated to honoring the life and academic career of Prof. Metin Kunt. Unfortunately, due to a significant delay in its publication, this book could only be released posthumously following his passing. Kunt, a distinguished scholar, made noteworthy contributions to Ottoman history, establishing himself as a pioneering figure across multiple disciplines. His unique perspectives on Ottoman studies and broad research interests have played a pivotal role in advancing scholarly understanding in various fields. As an individual who was once a student of Kunt and holds a particular interest in the early modern period, I regrettably observed that his remarkable contributions to the field have not received adequate recognition within the realm of revisionist historians. Furthermore, his pioneering work remains undervalued, failing to receive the level of appreciation it rightfully deserves. I hope that this book, dedicated to his memory, will make a humble contribution to the academic reception of Prof. Kunt's works and scholarly heritage.

The book includes 18 articles contributed by colleagues and students of Kunt, accompanied by an introductory essay by the editors. Additionally, the editors have also written a concise article focusing on Kunt's life and works. These articles are organized under the headings of Ottoman Historiography and Reflections (Part 1), Ottomans – Culture and Careers (Part 2), and Law, Religion, and Political Thought (Part 3).

In the section titled "Metin Kunt: Life and Work," Kunt's academic career is described chronologically. Academics do not solely exist through their written works or research endeavors. It would have been valuable to include more personal or subjective aspects that extend beyond these realms. By examining Kunt's perspectives on his academic trajectory, unexplored research projects, evaluations of the recognition his research received, and reflections on the current state of Ottoman historiography, unexplored facets of his personality could have been revealed. In relation to this, a significant deficiency in the book lies in the absence of information regarding the extent of the contributors' association with Kunt and their familiarity with him in the section dedicated to their biographies.

The section on Kunt's contribution to Ottoman studies, on the other hand, is approached didactically and thematically, providing a summary of his works and general characteristics. However, in doing so, it appears that the editors have somewhat overlooked the question of the context in which Kunt's work should be considered, its relationship with the existing literature, and the nature of his primary contributions. In other respects, certain facets of Kunt's scholarly endeavors appear to have been relatively disregarded. Specifically, the extensive critique of Kunt's book by Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj has been overlooked within this section.[1] I consider this issue to be highly important due to the fact that Abou-El-Haj was supervised by Lewis V. Thomas for his dissertation, and similarly, Norman Itzkowitz, who served as Kunt's advisor, was also advised by Thomas, who himself completed his studies under the guidance of Paul Wittek at Brussels University in Belgium. Thus, it is crucial to recognize the academic lineage of several generations of scholars who have engaged in the teacher-student relationship at Princeton University. This recognition is necessary to fully grasp the scholarly heritage of Kunt, as well as to understand the inherent importance of contextualizing his approaches and scholarly works. In this sense, exploring a scholarly discussion between these two revisionist historians, who belong to the same school of thought, could have potentially resulted in a wealth of valuable insights regarding the Ottoman revisionist historiography.

Another issue that has not been addressed in this part is Kunt's pioneering article regarding the northern policy pursued by the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the seventeenth century.[2] The valuable insights offered by this article, which has regained prominence due to the publication of books by Kahraman Şakul in recent years, have gained even greater significance given the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict. It appears to be a noteworthy oversight on the part of the editors to have overlooked this article, which held pioneering significance for its time.

In their article titled "The Issue of Transformation within the Ottoman Empire," the editors emphasize several points. They first engage in a discussion regarding the acceptance of the concept of transformation as a theoretical and historical category. The editors present a convincing argument regarding the

1 R. A. Abou-El-Haj, "Review Article: Metin Kunt, The Sultan's Servants: Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government 1550–1650," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, VI (1986), pp. 221–46.

2 İ. Metin Kunt, "17. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Kuzey Politikası Üzerine Bir Yorum," *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 4–5 (1976–1977), pp. 111–16.

usefulness of the concept of transformation in historical analysis.[3] They effectively incorporate William H. Sewell's *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, and frequently refer to it to enrich the topic. However, those well-informed in the topic will notice the absence of a substantive link between this concept and the changes that occurred within the Ottoman Empire. What is both striking and lamentable is the exclusion of any discussion centered around Kunt and his diverse body of work into the discussion. A more proper evaluation of Kunt's works could have been achieved if the editors had included his research within the discussion, rather than merely listing them thematically in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, there is a limited number of references to works outside the literature familiar to the editors in the section discussing the issue of transformation in the Ottoman Empire and recent debates in Ottoman historiography. For instance, Baki Tezcan's influential work, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, which is considered a landmark of revisionist historiography in the last 50 years and heavily influenced by Kunt's perspective on Ottoman history, is treated superficially in the relevant section. It is also worth mentioning that the editors have handled the literature review in a way that lacks coherence by bringing together ostensibly related works. To give an example, the works of Leslie P. Peirce, Y. Hakan Erdem and Nazan Maksudyan are cited together in the same footnote (pp. 20–21, fn. 51). The issues can be partially attributed to the editors' expertise lying outside the early modern Ottoman period, which hindered their ability to establish a significant connection between recent works and the contributions of Kunt in evaluating the overall transformation process of the Ottoman Empire during that period.

As is common in Festschrift books, which was the intended genre for this edition initially, the essays included in this volume exhibit a lack of uniformity. Each author has contributed articles on topics of their individual interest. Therefore, it becomes necessary to provide a summary of each of these articles in the following lines.

The first part of the book, Ottoman Historiography and Reflections, comprises four articles. Part 1 commences with a study by Elizabeth A. Zachariadou titled

3 Indeed, the editors could have conducted a more comprehensive assessment of Metin Kunt's significant contribution to the transformation debates within Ottoman history by considering Murat Dağlı's perspectives on pragmatism. See, Murat Dağlı, "The Limits of Ottoman Pragmatism," *History and Theory*, 52/2 (2013), pp. 194–213.

"A Firman Issued by Mustafa the Son of Bayezid I Surnamed Düzme (1422)." Zachariadou's analysis of a scarce document originating from the post-interregnum era stimulates further inquiries into the early Ottoman era, subsequent to her meticulous examination of the document's authenticity. Through the investigation of a decree purportedly issued by Düzmece Mustafa, the son of Yıldırım Bayezid, Zachariadou emphasizes the significance of thoroughly scrutinizing all historical documents from this period. Furthermore, the author's article serves as a demonstration of her scholarly proficiency by showcasing her command of various languages and relevant literature.

This study is followed by Tülay Artan's "Imaginary Voyages, Imagined Ottomans: A Gentleman Impostor, the Köprülüs, and Seventeenth-Century French Oriental Romances." Artan's work provides an important analysis on the encounter between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the work of Johann Friedrich Bachstrom (1686–1742), a Lutheran theologian known for his contributions to language and science. Artan's assessment focuses on Bachstrom's previously overlooked oriental utopia, *Land der Inqviraner*. Artan suggests that Bachstrom may have drawn inspiration from seventeenth-century French orientalist novella writers like François de Chassepol and Eustache Le Noble. In addition, Artan suggests that Bachstrom may have received firsthand information about the themes discussed in his work from İbrahim Müteferrika during his time in Istanbul. Overall, Artan's analysis of Bachstrom's *Land der Inqviraner* raises insightful questions about "information flows", a research topic that has gained prominence in recent years.

Aslı Niyazioğlu, in her article titled "Practices of Remembrance and Sites of Violence in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: The Beheading of Şeyh İsmâil Ma'şûkî (d.1539)", focuses on the revisionist discourse regarding the execution of Melâmî-Bayramî Şeyh İsmâil Ma'şûkî in At Meydanı, which gained prominence in the subsequent century. Niyazioğlu argues that places of remembrance for persecuted communities, such as the martyrdom account of İsmâil Ma'şûkî, played a pivotal role in connecting the past with the present, enabling the people of Istanbul to contemplate the city's history. In can be inferred that the Melâmî-Bayramîs sought protection and formed alliances with different members of the ruling circles to counter the threats they faced, resulting in the emergence of Melâmî sympathizers. Notably, Sarı Abdullah Efendi (d. 1660), Nev'izâde Atâî (d. 1635), and Evliya Çelebi (d. 1684) were three seventeenth-century Istanbulites who exposed a defensive stance towards the şeyh.

This part concludes with Suraiya Faroqhi's article titled "Ottoman Artisans in a Changing Political Context: Debates in Historiography," which provides a thorough overview of recent literature on the Ottoman guilds and artisans. Faroqhi examines the relationship between artisans and the sultan's officials, and briefly but concisely outlines the guilds' history. She focuses on the transformations that occurred in the eighteenth century, including the emergence of new practices such as *gedik*, while also subtly questioning the impact of the Ottoman government's bureaucratization on artisans and guilds. Lastly, Faroqhi sheds light on the changing attitudes of artisans during normal circumstances as well as during times of revolt.

The second part of the book, entitled "Ottomans – Culture and Careers", comprises seven different articles. The first article in this part, authored by Fatih Bayram, is titled "*Türbedar* of the Ottoman Sultans: Şevkî Çelebi's Nostalgia for the Bursa of Bayezid Han and Emîr Sultan." Focusing on the life of Şevkî Çelebi, who worked as a *türbedar* (tomb keeper) of Osman Gazi and Orhan Gazi and lived a modest life in Bursa, Bayram contributes to the discourse on the *gazi* rhetoric, a highly controversial topic in early Ottoman history, from different angles by focusing on the content of two works written by Çelebi, *Menâkıb-ı Emîr Sultan* and *Menâkıb-ı Ebû İshak-ı Kâzerûnî*.

In their collaborative work entitled "The Personel Anthology of an Ottoman Litterateur: Celâlzâde Sâlih (d. 1565) and His *Mecmua*", Cornell H. Fleischer and Kaya Şahin offer initial observations and preliminary findings on a specific manuscript authored by Celâlzâde Sâlih (c. 1495–1565). The authors also provide a brief introduction to the life of Celâlzâde Sâlih and offer general information about the contents of the Mecmua. Although the authors plan to publish further details about the manuscript, they have already situated Sâlih within the context of the Ottoman Renaissance, particularly in relation to his writings on administration, political thought, literature, and the arts.

In this part, there is another article entitled "Transforming the Abode of War into the abode of Islam: A Local Grandee in Ottoman Hungary, Osman Ağa, Çelebi and Bey," authored by Pál Fodor. Fodor's article delves into the micro-level details of the Ottoman Empire's military and financial transformations at the end of the sixteenth century, with a particular focus on the career of an enterprising elite figure named Osman Ağa. Osman Ağa held the positions of *Ağa*, *Nazır*, and *Sancakbeği* in Ottoman Hungary during the late sixteenth century. Like his previous works, Fodor once again exhibits his proficiency in different languages and

encourages the reader to view the empire's significant transformation through the lens of individuals rather than sweeping generalizations.

Christine Woodhead's article title "Making Recommendations: Azmîzâde and the *Mahzar* for Vücûdî Efendi, 1608" is a noteworthy piece that highlights the presence of professional and social flexibility in Ottoman society. Woodhead specifically concentrates on Azmîzâde Mustafa Hâletî Efendi (d. 1631) and his fluctuating career, which elucidates how patronage networks transcend career boundaries. Additionally, Woodhead sheds light on the *Mahzar*, also known as petition, as a means for an unaffiliated provincial scholar to secure individual patronage. The significance of Woodhead's article lies in its analysis of a specific example from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a period when the Ottoman religious hierarchy was consolidating while simultaneously facing various challenges.

Mehmet Kalpaklı's "A Poet's Warning: Veysî's Poem on the Breakdown of Ottoman Social and Political Life in the Seventeenth Century" appears to be a published version of a previous paper he presented at MESA in 1999.[4] In this brief article, Kalpaklı concentrated on a poem that he supposed was written by Veysî (d. 1628), which he acknowledges as a poetic representation of the tradition of 'letters of advice' (*nasihatnâme)*. Kalpaklı, however, disregards not-so-new article by Baki Tezcan, who has successfully demonstrated that the poem, known as *Admonition to Istanbul*, was actually written by Üveysî (d. 1630). It is possible that Kalpaklı submitted his work to the editors before Tezcan's article was published. It might have been reasonable to anticipate that the editors would have caught this significant oversight prior to the book's publication, or at the very least, that Kalpaklı could have incorporated this information into his own work.

Looking at the articles in the book, one can see that Ekin Tuşalp-Atiyas's article titled "From the 'Scribe of Satan' to the 'Master of Belâgât': Ottoman Chief Scribes and the Rhetorics of Political Survival in the Seventeenth Century" is the most closely related to the field of interest of Kunt, who wrote scholarly works on the transformation of political elites. By concentrating on the careers of two influential bureaucrats –Şâmîzâde Mehmed (d. 1663) and Râmi Mehmed (d.

4 For this reference, see Baki Tezcan, "From Veysî (d. 1628) to Üveysî (fl. ca. 1630): Ottoman Advice Literature and Its Discontents," *Reforming Early Modern Monarchies: The Castilian Arbitristas in Comparative European Perspectives*, eds. Sina Rauschenbach and Christian Windler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), pp. 141–56, at 150 ft. 36.

1708)– who held the position of *reîsülküttâb*, a position that gained prominence in Ottoman politics toward the end of the seventeenth century, Tuşalp-Atiyas provides a nuanced perspective on the ascent of the Ottoman scribal community over time. In doing so, she focuses on the changing political atmosphere, patronage relations, and more importantly, how the literary and rhetorical worlds gradually began to identify the Ottoman scribal community as a fully competent group.

In the last article of this part, titled "The Compass and the Astrolabe: Empricism in the Ottoman Empire," Bekir Harun Küçük directs his attention towards the significant developments that occurred in Ottoman science during the eighteenth century and emphasizes the hybrid and heterogeneous nature of Ottoman science of this period. In doing so, he conceptualizes the emergence of empirical science in the Ottoman Empire by drawing a connection between the mentality of Kadızadelis and the puritan movement in Europe. Through the use of works written during the aforementioned period, Küçük argues that eighteenth-century Ottoman science should be conceptualized in terms of competition, conflict, and accommodation, as it relates to the relationship between state-sponsored practical naturalists and self-empowered scholars.

The last part of the book, entitled "Law, Religion and Political Thought", is composed of six articles. The first of these, titled "In Search of the Ancient Law or *Kānûn-i Kadîm*: Some Notes on Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Political Thought," is authored by Mehmet Öz. In this article, Öz presents a revised overview of the Ottoman decline corpus subsequent to providing an exposition of the principal tenets of classical Ottoman political thought. To be more precise, he examines the works of Ottoman bureaucrat-intellectuals on the topic of Ottoman decline and contends that the Ottoman advice writers articulated their criticisms without the philosophical basis that existed in earlier periods, and with less attention to socio-cultural aspects. Rather, according to Öz, they exhibited a greater concern for practical issues in administration, military matters, and finance.

In her article "Between a 'Brilliant Retreat' and a 'Tragic Defeat': Ottoman Narratives of the 1529 and 1683 Sieges of Vienna," N. Zeynep Yelçe decontextualizes two unsuccessful sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683. Yelçe's primary objective is to illustrate why the first campaign was regarded as a glorious one while the other was perceived as a defeat, despite most contemporary accounts of both campaigns sharing some common elements. Yelçe posits that a concrete answer to this question can be found in the long-term aftermath of both campaigns. She argues that, whereas the first campaign failed to diminish Ottoman claims to

universal kingship, the second campaign appears to have instigated a significant abandonment of such claims.

Derin Terzioğlu in her article "*Bidʿat*, Custom and the Mutability of Legal Judgments: The Debate on the Congregational Performance of Supererogatory Prayers in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire" tries to adress the issue of permissibility of performing the congregational performance of supererogatory prayers. She aimed to demonstrate that the discussion surrounding this kind of prayer delves into significant inquiries that were debated by Ottoman scholars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By focusing on the works of lesser-known figures such as Nushî el-Nâsıhî, ʿAbdülkerim Sivâsî, Mehmed b. Hamza el-Aydınî, Terzioğlu presents a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted debate, particularly in relation to prayers conducted on the days of Mawlid, Raghâʾib, Miʿrâj, Barâʾat and Qadr. The article once again underscores the fact that Ottoman intellectual life is replete with nuances that defy generalization.

Antonis Anastasopoulos has authored an article titled "The *Sicils* of Karaferye (Veria) in the Eighteenth Century: A Case of Transformation?" which raises an inquiry into whether the absence of trials and contracts in court records signifies a shift in the manner in which records were kept. To this end, Anastasopoulos provides examples from Karaferye's eighteenth court records in search of a possible explanation behind this transformation. As the author notes in the acknowledgments section of the paper, the ideas put forward in this article are based on a paper presented by the author at Harvard University in 2001, which reminds us that the issues discussed in the article need to be re-evaluated in the light of the last 20 years of Ottoman court record studies.

In her article "Ottoman Legal Change and the Sharia Courts in the Long Nineteenth Century," Iris Agmon explores the Ottoman sharia court system within the broader context of legal modernization in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. The author specifically examines three crucial elements of the Ottoman legal system: its structure, legislation and codification, and judiciary and legal education. Agmon asserts that certain aspects of the reform process can be called neither a contradiction nor a failure. She further argues that despite shifts in political trends, reformers consistently pursued a well-established trajectory of legal modernization.

Cemil Koçak, in his article titled "Transformation Through Constitution: Young Ottomans and the *Kānûn-i Esâsî* of 1876," has assembled a highly organized

study on this subject matter. Within his article, Koçak explores the First Ottoman Constitution and the ideology of the Young Ottoman movement, situated within the framework of continuity and change in the late Ottoman political structure. This examination primarily focuses on influential Young Ottoman leaders, highlighting the complex and ambivalent relationship they maintained with the concept of modernity. Koçak also delves into the Young Ottoman thought in relation to the enduring political rivalries inherent in the Ottoman political order, offering a comprehensive assessment of the provisions outlined in the *Kānûn-i Esâsî*. Furthermore, the author briefly evaluates the process by which the First Ottoman Parliament was established, culminating in his observations regarding the reception of the *Kānûn-i Esâsî* in subsequent periods.

Karl K. Barbir's "Repertories of Empire: How Did the Ottomans Last So Long in a Changing World?" is the final contribution to this book, published under the section titled "In Lieu of a Conclusion." Barbir overviews the possible factors and conditions that allowed the Ottoman Empire to maintain its existence for several centuries. Barbir suggests that the Ottoman enterprise possessed certain features that enabled the empire to endure from the late medieval ages through to early modernity, ultimately reaching the twentieth century. These features included policies that recognized differences, allowed local leaders to administer their populations, and employed intermediaries to deal with diverse geography and ethno-religious populations. It is noteworthy that Barbir frequently cites Jane Burbank and Henry Cooper's *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* in this article. Moreover, in footnote 19 of his essay, Barbir acknowledges that Burbank and Cooper's work owes a great deal to Karen Barkey's *Empires of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*. However, upon examining the mentioned book, there is no apparent reference to Barkey's work in it. What is even more intriguing is that Barbir does not make any additional references to Barkey's book, even though she had already introduced all the concepts discussed in Barbir's article in her own work.

As indicated in the acknowledgements, the idea of presenting a Festschrift to Metin Kunt dates to the second half of 2013. Kunt's death on December 3, 2020, however, led to the conversion of this book from a Festschrift to a memorial book. Kunt did not have the opportunity to witness the publication of this dedicated book, despite the possibility of its completion at an earlier stage, considering the seven-year preparation period. I wish *Metin Hoca* had the opportunity to witness the publication of this book. In relation to this, the extended duration of book

preparation and the absence of a thorough editorial process resulted in serious problems throughout the book. The absence of references to recent publications in some articles implies that these studies were submitted at an early stage. Moreover, the submission of outdated papers by some contributors has resulted in the inclusion of topics that offer no substantial contribution to the literature and may be considered disrespectful to Kunt's scholarly legacy. I wish the editors had been more demanding from contributors during the selection process and incorporated a greater number of competent and original articles in the book. Despite all these shortcomings, it is pleasing to see that the book includes works that uphold Kunt's academic legacy.

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