

This volume is dedicated by the contributors, the editorial board,  
and the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies to

DONALD MACGILLIVRAY NICOL,

founder editor of *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, on the  
occasion of his retirement from the Koraës Chair of Modern Greek  
and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College  
London.

The editor

## Editorial Comment

As readers can see, this volume is dedicated to Professor Donald Nicol, the founding editor of the journal. It is thanks to Donald Nicol that *BMGS* was able to establish itself so quickly and so soundly as a new journal in the world of Byzantine and modern Greek studies; his hard work, editorial rigour and his enthusiasm made possible a journal for which students of the subjects with which *BMGS* is concerned are greatly in his debt — as is made clear in the brief ‘history’ of the journal by Anthony Bryer which appears in this volume. The members of the editorial board of *BMGS* would like to take this opportunity to express their thanks to Donald Nicol. In spite of this being the year of his retirement from the Koraës chair, we have no doubt that he will continue to be the productive scholar with whom we are all familiar.

In keeping with Donald Nicol’s original broadly-conceived plan for *BMGS*, the present editor has continued to promote other fields of practical research and interest which are relevant to the journal’s readership. Ottoman history is one area, among many, with which, until quite recently, the majority of those concerned with Byzantium or modern Greece had only a superficial acquaintance. In the last few years, however, it has become increasingly obvious that the vast wealth of still untapped archive material pertaining to every aspect of Ottoman state and society and the cultures which the Ottoman empire dominated can also be of crucial importance for an understanding of both the transition from late Byzantine to Ottoman social and political institutions, and the nature of the non-Islamic and non-Turkish cultures within the Ottoman state. From a late medieval perspective, scholars such as Beldiceanu and Zachariadou, to name but two, have made this clear. The relevance of late Ottoman historical writing to its

Greek as well as western European counterparts has also been made clear in the last few volumes of *BMGS*. But we should not see Ottoman history — or Ottoman ‘studies’ in the wider sense — as merely an occasionally handy, but mostly not very relevant field of study to be drawn upon occasionally and as the need is felt in order to elucidate a problem in our own work. We are all aware that Ottoman history is as relevant for an understanding of the evolution of modern Greece as Byzantine history is for the evolution of the Seljuq states. In order to appreciate this, of course, some general knowledge of modern Ottoman historical research is a useful asset, and in the present volume, Colin Heywood presents a critical survey of the state of the subject today, a survey which both sets Ottoman history writing in its contemporary context, and which also asks general questions which can be addressed not just to Ottomanists but to workers in other fields of historical research. As usual, we welcome contributions to this and to other debates or discussions which have appeared (or ought to appear) in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*.