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Acknowledgements

The idea of organizing a conference on Intercultural Aspects in and Around Turkic Literatures reflects the wish to bring together various aspects of and views on interculturalism, multiculturalism and multilingualism, cosmopolitanism and stereotypes in literatures written in different Turkic languages and under different historical circumstances, but also written in non-Turkic languages which were/are in contact with Turkic languages and literatures. I very soon realized that this ambitious plan conflicted with the actual practicalities of inviting the speakers and organizing the program, and I was forced to limit the contents of the conference to three basic areas and to certain languages and varieties: in the first place, I chose the topics “Stereotypes”, “Interculturalism” and “Cosmopolitanism”; furthermore, the geographical and temporal scope was restricted to Ottoman, Turkish, Azeri and Cypriot Turkish, and to Greek, Russian and Italian (a contribution on contacts with English literature could not be included in the proceedings, and regrettably Turkic-Armenian literary interaction could not be represented). The idea, however, was not only to describe contact phenomena and to reveal stereotypes, but also to provide a conceptual framework for cross-cultural literary exchange (see, for instance, the contributions on avant-garde and crime fiction in modern Turkish literature).

On the whole, the present volume reflects only a part of the vivid exchanges and discussions held in October 2003 in the beautiful Kastelliotissa Hall in Nicosia, and it represents only an infinitesimal part of a huge complex of problems and questions. Many more meetings and publications, and a more rigorous “intercultural” approach are required for answers to begin to take shape.

I am exceedingly grateful to Mark Kirchner, Stephan Guth and Roxane Haag-Higuchi, the editors of Mizan, for their kind offer to publish the proceedings in their prestigious series and for their patience while this work was slowly being completed. This book could not have been completed without the invaluable contribution of Anna Pettiward/Thessaloniki, who patiently and accurately copy-edited most of the English chapters, working with competence, intelligence and also humor, when sometimes things did not go as planned... It is her whom I must thank above all. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the Turkish Cypriot artist and friend Niğün Güney, who generously gave her permission to use one of her paintings for the cover of the book.

Lastly, I would like to mention that during work on these proceedings, one of the contributors, Stéphane Yerasimos, left this world leaving a big gap in the scientific community. It is to him that I dedicate this book.

Matthias Kappler, Nicosia, June 2006