

Prof. Dr. h. c. György Hazai (1932-2016)

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Friends, students, and colleagues around the globe are grieving the passing of the great Turkologist and Ottoman scholar György Hazai in Budapest on 7 January, 2016. György Hazai was both a full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an honorary member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA), as well as an honorary member of numerous scholarly institutions and organizations including the Turkish Language Association (TDK), the American Oriental Society, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, and the Societas Uralo-Altaica. He received numerous academic and state honours and citations. In 2014 Abdullah Gül, the President of the Republic of Turkey, honoured him with the Order of *Liyakat Nişanı*.

The broad scope of his research interests and his commitment to hard work defined György Hazai up until the very last weeks of his life. Only recently he completed an edition of the more important works of old Anatolian Turkish literature; other texts of his were completed and ready for printing. To name only a few examples: the anonymous translation of the *Tazkharatu l-Awliya* of Fariduddin 'Aṭṭār¹, and also the edition of the early Ottoman history book *Ferec*

1 Hazai, G.: *Die altanatolisch-türkische Übersetzung des Tazkharatu l-Awliya von Fariduddin 'Aṭṭār*. Edition der Handschrift der Bibliothek der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. 1: Text. 2: Faksimiles. Berlin. (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Türkvölker. 6, 1-2.)

*ba'd eṣ-ṣidde*², a work started in collaboration with Andreas Tietze (1914-2003). The range of his scholarly research is evident from the way one would depict the career of György Hazai to include Turkology and Ottoman history, Ottoman and Turk-Turkish linguistic history, text transcriptions, dialects, historical documents, and Old Turkish studies.³

His publications in the field of Turkish bibliography and documentation proved to be especially influential, in particular his ongoing Bibliography of Turkish and Ottoman Studies in the *Turkologischer Anzeiger/Turkology Annual (TA)*, which he initiated and published in collaboration with Andreas Tietze. In addition to this his translations and publications of Turkish literary works must be added, along with his essays concerning the academic relevance to the Turkic-speaking world of the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as his articles and reviews ranging over subjects extending far beyond the field of Turkology.

By means of his work at several universities and in numerous scholarly organizations his contribution to, and development of, both Oriental studies in general and Turkology in particular, was sustained well over half a century.

György Hazai was born in Budapest on April 30th, 1932. Here he spent his childhood and youth. His studies of the Turkic world and the Middle East were completed at Budapest University, and in 1956 he began teaching at Sofia University in Bulgaria. Throughout his entire life he demonstrated that he had the courage and energy to assume new assignments. And so it was that in 1963 he accepted a professorship at the Humboldt University in Berlin (in the former GDR), where he trained a new generation of Turkologists, some of whom later took on Turfan studies. Whether it was re-enlivening Turfan research at the Academy of Sciences in Berlin, during his time at the Humboldt University (1963-1982), or the formation and development of the Department of Turkish Studies at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia (1992-1999), or his untiring engagement in his role as founding rector of the Andrassy University in Budapest (2000-2003), his commitment was always to achieve the highest academic level for the future of the humanities and social studies. In addition, as the organizer of a long list of

2 Hazai, G. /A. Tietze: *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde. „Freud nach Leid“*. Ein frühosmanisches Geschichtsbuch. 1: Text. 2: Facsimiles. Berlin. (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Türkvölker. 5.)

3 Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara/Simone-Christiane Raschmann/Claus Schönig/Gerd Winkelhane/Peter Zieme (Hrsgg.) (2012): *Monumenta et Studia Turcologica*. Ausgewählte Schriften von György Hazai, Berlin. (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Türkvölker. 14.)

international conferences and symposia he devoted himself to this same goal. The International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS) doubtless owes a debt of thanks to György Hazai for its survival since the 1990s.

He worked unfailingly to build bridges between scholarly traditions, people, and lands. As he showed through his activities at the 12th Annual Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC) in Berlin in 1969, he succeeded, as president of the assembly, in gathering an impressive array of orientalists from both East and West, a remarkable achievement which cannot be overestimated, given the historical situation at that time.

György Hazai saw himself as a component within the rich tradition of Hungarian Oriental studies. It was in this spirit that he assumed – beginning with Volume XIII (1993-1994) – the editorship of *Archivum Ottomanicum*, the journal founded by Tibor Halasi-Kun. He was also active as an editor for other journals and series such as, for example, *Philologiae et Historiae Turicae Fundamenta*, the *Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica*, and the *Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Türkvölker*, all of which remain of significance for the advancement of Oriental studies today.

György Hazai brought scholarly discourse to its foremost level, innovating with new problems and solutions. More than anything he took on problems for himself in order to reduce their difficulties. In these efforts he was always intensely interested in the exchange of ideas and cooperation within a broadly defined and international network of colleagues.

As an especially valued teacher he set high standards of probity and scholarly excellence. Countless are those whom he helped with professional advice and active support. So many were given free access to his knowledge and his collections and contacts. Unflagging hospitality and generosity of spirit, a sharp sense for the better things in life, and a fine sense of humour were the character traits which made him one of the greats of his time. He was truly a citizen of the world. His close personal attachment to Turkey, its people, and its culture shaped both his life's work and his life itself.