

## Werk

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## **Ahmet Temir (1912-2003)**

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Professor Emeritus Dr. Ahmet Temir, a distinguished scholar in the fields of Turcology and Mongolistics, passed away in Ankara on April 19, 2003, at the age of 91.

Ahmet Temir was of Tatar origin, born on November 14, 1912, in the Tatar town of Elmet (Russian: Almetevsk). From 1920 on, he visited a Russian school in Bögölme (Bugulma), where his father had been appointed imam. In 1926, however, Ahmet was forced by the communists to leave the school because of his father's profession.

Three years later, at the age of 17, Ahmet Bey managed to escape to Turkey, where he first attended the Teachers' School in Trabzon and afterwards the Haydarpaşa College in Istanbul. In 1935, he began to study at the Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi of Ankara University.

In 1936, Ahmet Temir received a scholarship for Berlin, Germany, where he was awarded the doctorate of philosophy seven years later, in 1943. During his years in Berlin, he also worked as a lecturer in the Tatar language. It was in the middle of

this period that Ahmet Bey received the tragic message from Tatarstan that his father Reşid had been executed by the communists.

After some years in Turkey, Ahmet Temir returned to Germany in 1951, where he worked on his habilitation thesis (“Die Konjunktionen und Satzeinleitungen im Alttürkischen”) at Hamburg University and also held a position as a lecturer. On August 1, 1953, he received his habilitation diploma from that university.

In 1955, Ahmet Temir took up a position at the department of Turcology at Ankara University, where he was appointed professor in 1962. In the same year, he married Rana Soytekin, and in 1964 their daughter Bahşayış Zeynep was born—known today as Dr. Bahşayış Temir-Fıratoglu. From 1961 to 1975, Ahmet Temir was the founding director of the Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, Ankara. He retired in 1982, at the age of 70.

Retirement enabled Ahmet Temir to intensify his scholarly work. Already in the academic year 1980-1981, he had taught Turcology as a highly appreciated visiting professor at the Seminar für Orientkunde in Mainz, Germany. Immediately after this successful stay, Johannes Benzing, my predecessor at Mainz, and myself decided to invite Ahmet Bey for a further period. Thanks to the generosity of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Ahmet Temir was able to spend another year (1982-1983) in Germany, continuing his investigations concerning the history of German Turcology.

Back in Turkey, Ahmet Temir worked unremittingly for two full decades. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, he was invited to visit Tatarstan, but finally decided to decline, since he could not imagine seeing his native country again after his father had been executed there in 1938.

The scholar Ahmet Temir published many monographs, over 200 articles, many of which appeared in the journal *Kazan* (1970-1982), and a number of translations. He is widely known for his contributions to Mongolistics. For Turcologists, his investigations into the life and work of Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff—known in Russia as Vasilij Vasilevič Radlov—are of special interest because of his thorough knowledge of the career and scholarly achievements of this great pioneer of modern Turcology. Some of Temir’s publications on this topic should be mentioned here:

1954-1957. *Sibirya’dan. Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff*. 1-2. Ankara & İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti.

1955. *Leben und Schaffen von Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1918). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Turkologie*. *Oriens* 8, 51-93.

1966. F. W. Radloff’un Kazan raporları. In: *Reşid Rahmeti Arat için*. (Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü yayınları 19.) Ankara. 418-422.

1986. *Sibirya’dan seçmeler. Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff*. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı. [Second edition of the 1954-1957 publication.]

1991. *Türkoloji tarihinde Wilhelm Radloff devri. Hayatı, ilmî kişiliği, eserleri*. (Türk Dili Kurumu yayınları 552.) Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu.

Ahmet Temir’s personal memories of his sojourns and research in Germany have been published in:

1998. *Altmış yıl Almanya (1936-1996)*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

One of the monographs deals with the Tatar historian Yusuf Aqçura (Yusuf Akçuraoğlu):

1997<sup>2</sup>. *Yusuf Akçura*. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü.

Yusuf Aqçura, a member of the Turkish National Assembly in the 1930s, was the person who had—only some months before his death in 1935—stood surety for Ahmet Bey after his arrival in Turkey, thus enabling him to study and work in his new country. This confidence was a moral debt that Ahmet Bey repaid with infinite gratitude and with more than seven decades of prolific scholarly work. *Nur içinde yatsın!*