

## Werk

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## Obituary

### In memoriam György Hazai (1932–2016)

Heidi Stein

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On January 7, 2016, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. György Hazai, the great Hungarian Turcologist, Ottomanist and linguist, passed away in Budapest shortly before his 84th birthday. His scientific work was always internationally oriented, but thanks to his twenty-year stay at Humboldt University Berlin, he rendered great service especially to German Turcological studies.

Hazai was born on April 30, 1932, in Budapest. From 1950 until 1954 he studied Oriental Philology and Turcology at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest under the guidance of the eminent scholars Gyula Németh, Lajos Fekete and Lajos Ligeti, as well as Slavic studies under István Kniezsa. In 1956 he was offered a position as visiting lecturer for three terms at the University of Sofia where he also found impulses and materials for his first scientific fields of interest: Turkish dialects and Turkish transcription texts. In Sofia, he began his career as an academic teacher. His students from that relatively brief period—some of whom are today successful scholars at the Department of Turkish Studies at Sofia University—still remember with much gratitude his helpfulness and energy. Returning to Budapest in

1958, he became a Research Fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and in the same year received his Ph.D. degree for a study on *Problems of the Turkish linguistic monuments in Cyrillic script from Bulgaria*.

In 1962 he was appointed by the initiative of the Finno-Ugrist Wolfgang Steinitz of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin to rebuild the formerly famous Turcological studies program there. In this, Nâzim Hikmet, with whom Hazai was rather well acquainted, played an intermediary role, because Hazai had translated some of Hikmet's works. So in 1963 Hazai began his work, first as Visiting Associate and then Full Professor, at the Near Eastern Institute ("Vorderasiatisches Institut") of Humboldt University. In 1964 he habilitated at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with a study on *The Turkish text of Jakab Nagy de Harsány. Linguistic problems of Ottoman Turkish in the 17th-century*. It is thanks to Hazai that a Turcological course of studies, independent from Oriental studies in general, and also from the politically determined area studies ("Regionalwissenschaften"), could be established and successfully developed. Humboldt University remained the only university in Eastern Germany to offer a Turcology program. Having been one of his first students in 1963, I will always remember his inspiring attitude, trying to fill us with some enthusiasm for Turkish philology, and his active support when we were taking our first steps in this field. Still rather young, he had already acquired broad scientific experience, but he generally treated the students and young assistants as equals and took their imperfect efforts seriously. Hazai's numerous contacts with scholars in Turkey and other countries were also a great advantage for his young collaborators when entering into the international exchange of scientific ideas. One highlight in this regard was his organization of the XIIth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference in Berlin in 1969.<sup>1</sup> This was the first Altaistic conference where a large number of scholars from East and West could meet each other.

Another scientific field in Berlin is connected with Hazai's name: the intensive study of the Turfan texts. From the beginning, it was Hazai's task to revitalize the research on this eminent collection. Together with Wolfgang Steinitz, he founded in 1963 the *Turfan Research Group* at the Oriental Institute of the Berlin Academy of Sciences. He was its head until 1974, and also promoted its continuing research in many ways. Some of Hazai's first Turcological graduates took part in the early research on the Old Turkic Turfan texts, and have continued until today.

Hazai's work in Berlin, which was also characterized by his efforts to create a friendly and cooperative scientific climate between Turcological colleagues from his institute and others, ended in 1982. He returned to Budapest, working there from 1984 to 1990 as Research Professor and Publishing Director of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He became Honorary Professor of the University of Budapest.

1 Hazai, Georg & Zieme, Peter (eds.) *Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der altaischen Völker. Protokollband der XII. Tagung der Permanent International Altaistic Conference 1969 in Berlin*. Berlin 1974.

During 1992–1999, he took up a new challenge: He was appointed as Head of the newly founded Department of Turkish Studies at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia. With his authority, balanced personality, and broad international contacts, he was able to do good work at this young university that was developing in a difficult political situation. Even at the age of 70 he took on another official position of responsibility, discharging his duties with his characteristic energy and diplomatic skills. From 2002 until 2003 he acted as the Founding Rector of the Andrásy University of Budapest, a German-speaking university which plays an important role in the academic cooperation between Hungary, Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Alongside all his official work, however, he continued his research, his publishing and his scientific organizational activities. His main areas of interest within Turcology were the linguistic history of Ottoman Turkish, Turkish dialectology (especially Balkan-Turkish), Ottoman history, and Old Turkic.<sup>2</sup>

In the field of the linguistic history of Turkish he focused on the problems of phonology and morphophonology, and the appropriate sources for solving them. Early on he directed his attention to a special group of sources: the so-called transcription texts, or better, texts in non-Arabic scripts. His habilitation thesis on the texts of Harsány<sup>3</sup> became a standard methodological work on how to analyze such texts for results relevant to language history. He continued these studies with many articles about shorter texts and about methodological principles in this field.<sup>4</sup> By means of those texts, which mainly belong to the Middle Ottoman period from the 16th until the 18th century, he developed criteria for the periodization of the Turkish language history.

His interest in dialectology, especially the so-called Rumelian dialects, was awakened and promoted by his teacher Gyula Németh, and like Németh, Hazai approached the field from the perspective of language history. The same is true of his studies on different forms of language contact in the Balkans.<sup>5</sup>

2 See the overview of his research themes in Barbara Kellner-Heinkele et al. (eds.) *Monumenta et Studia Turcologica. Ausgewählte Schriften von György Hazai*. Berlin 2012.

3 *Das Osmanisch-Türkische im XVII. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen an den Transkriptionstexten von Jakab Nagy de Harsány*. Budapest 1973.

4 For the special group of texts in Cyrillic script see: Monuments linguistiques osmanlis-tures en caractères cyrilliques dans les recueils de Bulgarie. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* [AOH] 11 (1960), 221–233. For methodological principles see e.g.: Zum balkanischen Hintergrund der osmanisch-türkischen Transkriptionstexte von Bartholomaeus Georgievits. *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 20 (1974), 71–106.

5 See e.g. Les dialectes turcs du Rhodope. *AOH* 9 (1959), 205–222; Remarques sur les rapports des langues slaves des Balkans avec le turc-osmanli. *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 7 (1961), 97–138; Mes enquêtes sur les parlers turcs des Balkans. In: Van Windekens, A. J. (ed.) *Communications et rapports du Premier Congrès International de Dialectologie Générale 2*. Louvain 1964, 85–90; Probleme und Aufgaben der Balkan-Turkologie (Sprachwissenschaft). In: *Association Internationale*

From the beginning Hazai was concerned with Ottoman manuscripts. He published Ottoman documents connected with historical studies, and later a *Catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*.<sup>6</sup> For the solution of problems in language history, he always strived to bring together all relevant groups of sources; “synthesis” was one of his favored terms in this respect. Hence, in his later years he did a great deal of work with Ottoman texts in Arabic script, i.e. vocalized manuscripts that can also shed light on the phonology of Old Anatolian and Middle Ottoman Turkish. Four important texts which are also of literary and historical interest were made available by him in critical editions.<sup>7</sup> One of them, the edition of *Ferec baʿd eṣ-ṣidde*, was realized in close collaboration with his longtime colleague and friend Andreas Tietze.

His quest for synthesis also led to two works on the state of the art in the linguistics of Ottoman and Modern Turkish: his *Kurze Einführung in das Studium der türkischen Sprache* (1978, in Turkish 2012),<sup>8</sup> and, the *Handbuch der türkischen Sprachwissenschaft* (1990) initiated and edited by him.<sup>9</sup>

As head of the *Turfan Research Group*, Hazai promoted wide-ranging publication activities. He founded the series *Berliner Turfantexte*, which regularly makes available the texts of this eminent collection, and he personally took part in producing editions of Old Turkic texts.<sup>10</sup>

*d'Études du Sud-Est Européen. 1er Congrès International des Études Balkaniques et Sud-Est-Euro-péennes. Résumés des communications. Linguistique.* Sofia 1966, 92–100; Beiträge zu einigen Problemen der Lehnwörterforschung in den osmanisch-türkischen Mundarten des Balkans. *AOH* 18 (1965), 183–190; Die Turzismen in den Sprachen Südosteuropas. Erfassung, Bedeutung, Status. In: Majer, Hans Georg (ed.) *Die Staaten Südosteuropas und die Osmanen*. München 1989. 205–214.

- 6 Parlatr, İsmail & Hazai, György & Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara: *Catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*. Budapest 2008.
- 7 Ein “İskendernâme” als politische Zweckschrift aus der Zeit von Süleyman dem Prächtigen. *Archivum Ottomanicum* [AO] 15 (1997), 221–308, *AO* 16 (1998), 125–277, *AO* 18 (2000), 251–305; Hazai, György (ed.) *Die altanatolisch-türkische Übersetzung des Tazkaratu l-Awliyā von Farīduddīn ‘Aṭṭār* 1–2. Berlin 2008; Hazai, György & Tietze, Andreas (eds.) *Ferec baʿd eṣ-ṣidde. “Freud nach Leid”. (Ein frühosmanisches Geschichtenbuch)* 1–2. Berlin 2008; Hazai, György (ed.) *Die Geschichte der Ungarn in einer osmanischen Chronik des 16. Jahrhunderts: Tercümān Mahmūds Tārīh-i Ungurus*. Berlin 2009.
- 8 *Kurze Einführung in das Studium der türkischen Sprache*. Budapest & Wiesbaden 1978. A revised and completed translation is: *Türkiye Türkçesinin dünü ve bugünü. Türk dili araştırmalarına kısa bir giriş*. Ankara 2012.
- 9 Hazai, György (ed.) *Handbuch der türkischen Sprachwissenschaft* 1. Budapest & Wiesbaden 1990.
- 10 E.g. the reprint of editions of the Berlin tradition in Turfan research: *Sprachwissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der deutschen Turfan-Forschung. Text-Editionen und Interpretationen von Albert August von Le Coq, Friedrich Wilhelm Karl Müller, Willy Bang, Annemarie*

Hazai's general interest in bringing together Turcological scholars from different countries, and to contribute to a better exchange of their publications, resulted in his editing of several bibliographies. He started with the bibliographical monograph *Sovietico-Turcica* (1960),<sup>11</sup> and continued with *Bibliographisches Handbuch der Turkologie* (1986),<sup>12</sup> and the vital series *Turkologischer Anzeiger—Turcology annual* (since 1975).

He was also the editor or co-editor of several journals and monograph series such as *Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Turkvölker*, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, and served on the advisory boards of other prestigious series and journals. He held posts in international bodies like Vice-President of the *Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes*, Secretary General of the *International Union of Oriental and Asian Studies*, president of international congresses, and others.

In recognition of his prolific scientific work and its extraordinarily international scope a vast number of honors and awards were bestowed on Hazai such as Doctor honoris causa of the *University of Ankara* and the *University of Istanbul*; Honorary member of the *Turkish Linguistic Society*; Ordinary member of the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*; Honorary Member of the *Turkish Academy of Sciences*; Honorary Professor of the *Oriental Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences*; Honorary member of *American Oriental Society*, *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*, *Societas Uralo-Altaica*. He was awarded Orders of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of France, and the Republic of Turkey, as well as other national and international honors.

A great number of colleagues and friends came together at the touching memorial ceremony in Budapest, to pay their last respects to the great scholar. In spite of the sad occasion they were happy to learn that György Hazai's legacy is in good hands. His daughters Kinga and Cecilia have decided to create an archive of his works and make his extraordinarily valuable private collection of books available to the public. By 2017 his home will be converted into a library dedicated to research and study for scholars in Turcology and Oriental Studies wherever they may come from. György Hazai, who did not spend a single day away from his beloved work, would especially appreciate this kind of honor and remembrance.

von Gabain, *Gabdul Rašid Rachmati, Wilhelm Thomsen. Gesammelte Berliner Akademien-schriften 1908–1938. Mit Vorwort von Georg Hazai 1–2.* Leipzig, 1972.

11 *Sovietico-Turcica. Beiträge zur Bibliographie der türkischen Sprachwissenschaft in russischer Sprache in der Sowjetunion 1917–1957.* Budapest 1960.

12 Hazai, György & Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara: *Bibliographisches Handbuch der Turkologie. Eine Bibliographie der Bibliographien.* Budapest & Wiesbaden 1986.