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## İÇİNDEKİLER . CONTENTS

İçindekiler . . . . .	III
(O. Pritsak's picture) . . . . .	VI
(Dedication to O. Pritsak) . . . . .	VII-VIII
Apologia Pro Vita Sua . . . . .	IX-XVIII
Yusuf AZMUN, İran Türkmenesi. Bir Yomut Ağzı: Arzuv . . . . .	1-46
Günay KUT and Richard CHAMBERS, A Bibliography of Modern Turkish Literature in English Translation. . . . .	47-54
A. Turgut KUT, İstanbul Sıbyan Mektepleriyle ilgili bir Vesika. . . . .	55-84
Daniel PIPES, Turks in early Muslim Service. . . . .	85-96
Nancy S. PYLE, Anatolian Ring Weights . . . . .	97-106
Gönül Alpay TEKİN, Zaifi Külliyyatının yeni bir Nüshası hakkında. . . . .	107-125
David S. THOMAS, Yusuf Akçura and the Intellectual Origins of "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset" . . . . .	127-140
<i>Tenkrit . Critica</i>	
A. J. E. Bodrogligeti, "Aḥmad's Baraq-Nāma" <i>Ḥāliş's Story of Ibrāhīm</i> (R. Dankoff) . . . . .	141-145
Yūsuf-i Meddāh, <i>Varqa ve Gülşāh</i> (R. Dankoff) . . . . .	146-154
Thomas Naf ..., <i>Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History</i> (Ahmet Ö. Evin) . . . . .	155-157
Mirali Seyidof, <i>Azerbeycan-Ermeni Edebi Alâkaları</i> (D. Yıldırım) . . . . .	158-162
D. Hume-O. Aruoba, <i>İnsanın Anlama Yetisi Üzerine</i> (Ş. Tekin) . . . . .	163-165
1978 yılında aramızdan ayrılanlar. . . . .	166-167
Addenda et Corrigenda (TUBA I, 1977) . . . . .	168-169

vita  
APOLOGIA PRO/SUA

When my friend and former student Şinasi Bey asked me to write an autobiography in connection with my nearing sixtieth birthday, I — being polite — naturally agreed. But when I started to write I realized my imprudence, for this was to be a far from easy task.

In many respects my life has been different from what I take to be the usual biography of a university professor, or a specialist in a well-established field.

Of my sixty years, the first thirty (actually fifteen, because of my first ten years of life were pre-history and five more years, 1940-1945, were virtually wasted by the Second World War), the years of "Lehr- und Wandejahre", ended in 1948 when I got my "summa cum laude" Dr.phil. diploma (in "Turkologie und Altaistik, Islamkunde und Slavistik") from the University of Gottingen in Germany.

As to the remaining thirty years, the greatest part of that time was spent in establishing and making respectable fields to which I committed my life. Fifteen years (1950-1965) were devoted to organizing — on an international level — Turkic and Altaic studies, and the other ten years (1967—1976) were given to laying the foundations for Ukrainian studies as a scholarly, respected university discipline in the United States, at Harvard.

If one adds to this one year of invalidism (in 1977, after my heart surgery), not more than four years remain for the 'normal' life of a university professor. So much for the arithmetic side of my biography.

But rather than account for four "normal" years I decided to concentrate on those moments and situations which, as I see it, molded my character and somehow made me what I am. I must begin by disclosing that I had three officially certified birth dates (though one can take it for granted that I was born only once). Until the fall of 1928 all my documents have as my birth-date May 14, 1919; in the documents between 1928—1936 I was born on April 7, 1918, and — according to the documents issued after 1936— this date was April 7, 1919, and this is still my current, official day of birth.

How did all these dates come into existence? After I passed the entrance examinations to the Gymnasium in the spring of 1928, I still had to present a certificate of birth in order to be admitted there. There was a difficulty, however, for I was too young. My mother, after taking counsel with her friends, journeyed to her native town of Luka, near Sambir, where I was born, to get a certificate that would make me at least one year older. The parish priest, an old family friend, did as she asked but while studying the Church register he discovered that my mother's memory had played a trick on her: the 14th of May was the date of baptism and not of birth, which was April 7th. At that time



I paid no special attention to this matter: next year I simply got my birthday presents 37 days earlier. But one year later when, as we shall see, my big personal problems began and I started to question my parents' accounts of various things, this confusion of birthdates caused me severe uncertainty (all the more so since I have a last name different from that of my mother's — who remarried).

One day, when my mother was out, I found among her personal papers her marriage certificate dated 29 June 1918. And since according to my now official birth certificate I was born in April of that same year, I decided that I was born out of wedlock. I was afraid to ask my mother this unpleasant question, however. Only one year later, when I had a chance to visit my grandparents, I forced myself to enter the registry of the local church and to ask permission to see for myself the entry on my birth. The young successor of the old family friend had some initial reservations (I was at that time twelve years old and the register was kept in Latin), but after some persuasion on my part he finally granted my request.

In the original book of registry I studied, with extreme care and meticulousness, the sections on the years 1918 and 1919, trying to find any sign of irregularity. But there was none. The entries of 1918 were listed professionally and carefully in chronological order with no deletions; nothing could have been changed there. On the other side, s. a. 1919, on its expected place (April 7) there was the entry of my birth. No falsification was possible. I regained my peace, but also used the opportunity to trace my family tree, on the maternal side, back to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This was my first direct confrontation with an original of a written historical source.

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I do not believe in astrology as a science, but as an "art" it deserves some attention, especially on occasions such as this. According to my horoscope I am an *Aries* (April 7), a ram with a golden fleece. As an Aries I am supposed to possess much energy (one of my former secretaries coined for me the nickname of "Tornado") and persistence, and especially the drive to realize impossible dreams. There must be some truth in this for I have always been attracted only by seemingly hopeless challenges which demanded enormous amounts of energy. My mind, apparently, is that of a problem-solver type.

Born in East-Central Europe (Luka in Galicia) in a year (1919) when after the great powers had finished their own strifes, the newly emerging small nations began their own turbulent existence, I became an orphan at the age of six months; my Ukrainian father (Osyp, a mechanical engineer), who last saw me when I was two weeks old, had perished as a Polish prisoner of war in September 1919 in a camp near Brest Litovsk under inhuman conditions; I was never able to establish the exact date of his death.

The first of my many transplantations occurred in 1920, when my mother (Emilia, neeKapko) remarried and we moved from Sambir to Ternopil' (Tarnopol) where I lived more or less continuously until my seventeenth year. My stepfather (Pavlo Saramaha), a Ukrainian merchant by profession and musician and politician by avocation, subscribed to all available newspapers and illustrated magazines in Ukrainian and Polish. Already as a child I was fascinated by the colored pictures and inscriptions and gradually, aping the adults, I learned to read and write at approximately the age of four. For several years my favorite pastime was cutting out and collecting from various journals the colored pictures of kings and presidents. When I was six years old I knew by heart the names and relations of most of the world's living rulers. A year later, I became engaged in a new task: establishing chronologies and genealogies of all political entities present and past.

In the meantime (the school year 1928—29) I entered high-school (*Gymnasium*) of the Austrian classic type (with Latin and Greek); my teachers (with the exception of the German teacher) were rather

mediocre. Although my Polish "First Gymnasium", a former Jesuit College, had a very solid reputation, the change of government (from Austrian to Polish) resulted in a gradual replacement of experienced professors by young Polish veterans of war, often without the necessary education, experience and devotion. But my school had inherited from Austrians times, an outdated but still excellent library for professors, especially by provincial standards. The majority of books were in German; this was one of the reasons why my teachers would only seldom make use of this treasury. Due to the fact that the son of the superintendent of the school building was my friend, I by chance discovered the library and then was given permission to use it. One of the first books I read there was Ferdinand Justi's Old Persian History, followed by Theoder Mommsen's Roman History and Leopold Ranke's History of the Popes. Although they were written in "scholarly German", and although for some time I had difficulty in comprehending complicated sentences and technical terms, I felt like somebody who was admitted to seventh heaven. Now I was able to establish genealogical and chronological tables for the Old Persian and Roman history. Soon I found basic works for other lands, like France, England, Germany, Turkey, China, etc., and gradually, without realizing it, I got involved in problems of cultural, political and social history.

Both my mother and stepfather lost all their assets after the cause of Ukrainian statehood collapsed. The victorious Poles confiscated my father's house and other possessions in Sambir (for his involvement in the Ukrainian cause); after the proclamation of the Ukrainian National Republic in 1918 my stepfather went east, to contribute his skills and means to the emerging Ukrainian state. By the end of 1919, having lost everything, he was brought home with severe typhus. His wife and beloved son were infected and soon died, but he recovered.

After he married my mother, they both agreed that I should have a better future. After the national catastrophe they lost faith in the Ukrainian cause and decided that I should be raised as a Pole. Consequently I attended only Polish schools. For several years I was the only student of Ukrainian background in the Polish high-school, the "First Gymnasium" of Ternopil'.

My third year in that school began very strangely. It happened that at that time — the fall of 1930— all of Galicia, including Ternopil', was suddenly in a state of internal war. The recently (1929) organized underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) initiated large scale acts of sabotage and terrorism. The Polish response consisted of bloody police and military actions known as "pacification." In a land where the bigger cities had a mixed population and the countryside was almost exclusively Ukrainian, the best way to punish the Ukrainians was to attack and destroy the defenseless villages. This in fact was done by the Polish regime. The result was that masses of peasants would stream to the capital city of L'viv and the other administrative centers including Ternopil', which was the seat of the local governor [*wojewoda*] to demonstrate against these unjust policies.

I must confess that at that time I was so busy with my interest in history and in physics — which was also a favorite subject— that I hardly took notice of these turbulent events. But one September day, just a few days after the opening of school, we received a new teacher in math and physics, a newcomer from L'viv, with a reputation for being very severe. His name was Jan Syrek, and he was a "diploma engineer." I was full of expectation since I looked forward to the class in physics. On the second day the new teacher started his lesson by asking me to step in front of the class and virtually the entire hour was then spent in making me the object of his hostility to all things Ukrainian. (Apparently the previous day he had witnessed a mass demonstration of Ukrainian peasants and was involved in some ensuing scuffles.) I was baited and vilified with a whole range of insulting epithets, my physical appearance examined for proof of my — as he saw it — racially inferior origin, and I was asked to produce the knife with which I was planning to kill him. This exercise was repeated day after day. My classmates had mixed feelings on this. On the one hand, they sympathized

with me, but on the other, this circus run by a severe teacher was the best assurance that the class hour would pass without anyone receiving bad grades, and so they encouraged his inquisition by their appreciative laughter. I found myself in an abominable situation especially since at that time a student was not allowed to bring his grievances to the superiors. Nor could I tell my parents about this. My mother was extremely emotional, and I was sure that knowledge of this would kill her: I was her only child. As to my stepfather, he was a very hot-tempered man, and I had no doubt that if he knew, he would just go and kill the teacher.

So I remained alone with my torments. After several weeks I started to stay away from school and roam the streets on the days when this teacher's subjects were taught. In my conversation with the protesting peasants I first encountered their grievances and gradually became aware of the existence of Polish-Ukrainian hostility.

And now I started to add up some odd facts. Several times at home I had heard the term 'Ukraine,' but always in a strange context. A number of times when I unexpectedly entered the living room while my mother had company, I would hear someone starting her story with the words: "When the Ukraine had erupted" (*jak uybuxla Ukrajina*). As soon as the speaker became aware of my presence, she immediately would change the subject.

When I asked my mother what the Ukraine was, she would answer that I was still too young to comprehend it. The only thing that I then knew about this mysterious Ukraine was its ability to erupt.

Another very important question had also remained without answer. Until I was six or seven, I regarded my stepfather to be my parent (he always treated me like his own flesh and blood). Then I learned that my real father had died. But at the age of eleven I wanted to know how he had died. My mother refused to give me a precise answer. But again, from fragments of her conversations with her friends I realized that first, my father was not killed but died as a prisoner-of-war, and secondly, that he was captured by the Polish army. Since, as I mentioned, I was raised as a Pole, I now had the task of trying to comprehend why my father, who obviously must have been a Pole like myself, would be a Polish prisoner-of-war.

And still another strange factor. Although I was a Pole, I was not Roman Catholic but Greek-Catholic (Uniate), and all my family went not to the Polish church, but attended Rus' (Ukrainian) church services. Also, at home we did not speak Polish, but Ruthenian (Ukrainian), which occasionally caused me embarrassment, especially when my mother, while visiting me during intermissions in the school, would use our daily "kitchen" Ukrainian — to the astonishment and bewilderment of my colleagues.

As I roamed Ternopil' and its vicinity instead of attending class, I arrived at the following conclusions: first, the Ukraine was the name of the larger country of which Galicia was a part; second, my spoken Ruthenian was a colloquial version of the literary Ukrainian language; and third, my father was Ukrainian and was apparently in the Ukrainian army before he was taken prisoner and died in the Polish camp. Ergo: I was not a Pole but a Ukrainian.

Now I wanted to know more about the Ukraine. I wanted to learn the correct, literary form of the language, and to find out about Ukrainian literature, and so forth. One Sunday morning, after Mass, I gathered up my courage and entered the Ukrainian bookstore "Budučnist'," located on the Ruthenian Street (Rus'ka vulycja), just opposite the main uniate church. There I found a Polish-Ukrainian and a Ukrainian dictionary, a Ukrainian grammar, and most importantly, studies and memoirs dealing with the Ukrainian war of independence. The next step was to find the money to purchase these books. I succeeded in obtaining two tutoring assignments, and all the money I earned I spent buying books. Gradually I expanded my interest and purchased the first seven volumes of the great "History of the Ukraine-Rus' " by Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj and the five volumes of his History of Ukrainian Literature, many odd

volumes of the "Transactions" (*Zapysky*) of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, the literary journal *Literaturno-Naukovyj Vistnyk*, and others. Since the burghers of Ternopil<sup>9</sup> were not very interested in scholarly books and since the store stocked many important publications going back to the middle of the nineteenth century, the owners were quite ready to give me a special discount to get rid of the unwanted merchandise. But a new problem developed. It so happened that as I triumphantly brought the first of my newly purchased Ukrainian books home, my stepfather was there and seeing me loaded with books asked to see what type of literature I was bringing into the house. He became enraged when he realized that these were Ukrainian books. They were immediately thrown into the stove and I was forced to promise never again to bring such books to our home. To this I found a solution, however. I had among my friends two Poles and three Jews. All of them agreed to keep my forbidden treasures at their homes. My library continued to grow — even though scattered in five different places. I did manage to keep some Ukrainian books (the Ukrainian Grammar, The Dictionary, a volume of Ševčenko's poetry and Hruševs'kyj's popular history of the Ukraine) at home inside my private library. I arranged to have a bookbinder put covers with Polish titles on them.

At night, when everyone was sleeping, I studied my Ukrainian subjects. I began with grammar and then moved on to the Polish Ukrainian War of 1918-1919 — always clandestinely. Finally I turned to the great history of Hruševs'kyj.

At this time I was finishing my twelfth year. Since the problems of my roots had become so important for me, I decided to drop physics completely and to devote my life entirely to history. It was not easy to do so, but I saw no other way. (Since 1932 I never touched any book dealing with physics, even the obligatory textbooks — my already acquired knowledge of the subject proved to be sufficient for the final examinations at school).

My transition to a new phase of my life was given symbolic substantiation. On the eve of my thirteenth birthday, in a private midnight ceremony directly patterned on a scene from *Dziady*, the work of the great Polish Romantic poet Mickiewicz, I changed my name from the "Polish" *Emil* to the Ukrainian *Omeljan*. I later requested the school authorities to officially change my name (basing myself on the Latin original of my birth certificate — Aemilianus) — and after about a year this was done.

Thus my search for my own true roots led me to history, my future calling.

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Several circumstances made a Turkologist of me. Three of them were unconscious, and the first actually began in 1916, three years before I was born. Ottoman-Turkish soldiers, allies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were then stationed in Galicia. One detachment arrived in Luka, the town where my mother lived and my grandfather had long been acting mayor. My grandfather's house (where I was later born) stood on the edge of a very large meadow (or "luka," and hence the name of the town). The melancholy, lonesome songs of the Ottoman soldiers, who were being drilled there, would penetrate to the quarters of my mother and her younger sister. The girls began to hum the strange melodies and to mimic their foreign words. The Ottoman officers often visited my grandfather both officially and socially. Occasionally the girls were admitted into their company, too, despite the puritanical Galician mores of the Franz-Josephine type prevailing at the time, and despite the fact that the Ottoman officers, being Muslims, hardly knew how to converse with Christian girls. The sisters eagerly used every opportunity to get their "Turkish texts" corrected by the officers, who also spoke German. They learned some rudiments of conversational Ottoman Turkish and learned to sing several popular songs of the *Türki/Mani*-type, as well as Ottoman military marches.

I still remember the many times in my early childhood when my mother would sing me to sleep with Turkish melodies. My first nursery songs were Turkish and I remember some of them to this day. My mother also taught me to count in Turkish from one to one hundred, and to speak a few sentences, without, naturally enough, any notion of the language's grammar or structure. For quite some time thereafter, however, my exposure to Turkish lay dormant, and I was not even really aware of its existence.

The second unconscious stimulus was my interest in the Persian language which was sparked by the Old Persian History of F. Justi that I found in the teachers' library of my gymnasium. The library also had some Avestan texts which interested me when I turned fourteen (in 1933). The gymnasium got a new teacher of Polish literature, Dr. Franciszek Machalski, a young Iranist who at that time was unable to obtain a job in his field (still alive today in Cracow; he has become the leading Polish specialist on Persian literature). Once during a class he wrote some Persian words on the blackboard which my schoolmates, who knew about my Persian pastime, forced me to read. The teacher became curious about my unusual interest and suggested that I really learn New Persian. He lent me two standard German grammars of Persian, one by H. Fleischer and the other by S. Beck, and for the next two years I taught myself Persian. This was my first exposure to texts written in Arabic script. Since that time I have never stopped reading Persian texts, although Persian is not a "normal" province of Turkology. Knowledge of that language has helped me decisively in working with Middle Turkic texts.

The third kind of unconscious stimuli occurred some seven years later, after I had graduated from the University of L'viv (where Turkish was one of my subjects and one of my favorite textbooks was the excellent bibliographical introduction to Turkology by Ahatanhel Kryms'kyj). After the German-Polish Blitzkrieg of September 1939, Galicia was occupied by the Soviet Union. In the late fall of 1940 just a few weeks after I began my Islamistic work with Kryms'kyj at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev, I was drafted into the Red Army and began my involuntary career as a soldier in Ufa (in the Bashkirian ASSR). I therefore hated the military regime with all my heart and my only consolation in the few free moments I took was to try to read the local newspapers and few textbooks published in the Bashkirian language; I also attempted to identify Turkic forms and words in the quick speech of my fellow-soldiers from Kazakhstan, Kirgisia, and other Turkic parts of the Soviet Union. But this was nothing more than a sort of pastime, a kind of puzzle-solving without any scholarly intent or aim. These "hobbies," which lasted for some eight months, could hardly have predicted my later scholarly interests in Turkology.

An important stimulus was my historical work. During my "Ukrainization phase" I became acquainted, as I had mentioned, with the first eight volumes of Mykhailo Hrushev's'kyj's *History of the Ukraine-Rus'*. It was in the spring of 1934, the year the great historian died, that I recognized one major deficiency in his work: he was unable to make independent use of the Oriental sources — despite the fact that throughout all its history the Ukraine was an integral part of both the Eurasian steppe and of the Black Sea basin, which linked the Ukraine so directly to the Orient. This situation seemed incredible to me, for, after all, no German historian would write German history without having consulted the French sources.

So I drafted a lifeplan — to dedicate myself to the task of studying the Oriental sources not yet fully available to Ukrainian historians. These sources would basically be those from the Islamic cultural sphere: Arabic and Persian for Kievan Rus<sup>f</sup>, and Ottoman and Crimean for the Cossack period. Now for the first time I started learning Oriental languages — Arabic and Ottoman Turkish— with this goal clearly in mind. However, the languages were still always the means rather than the end of my goal. After Germany collapsed, I was in the summer of 1945 in Switzerland (illegally to be sure). Because I could not return to the Ukraine to do scholarly work, I decided to focus my attention on its historical neighbor, Turkey. I was ready to accept Turkish citizenship and to do archival work in the field



## APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA

of Ottoman history and Ottoman Ukrainian relations. I visited the Turkish consul in Bern and asked for his support, but to no avail. (In 1945, what diplomat would take the risk of admitting an alien without a passport into his country?).

So I returned to Germany. My Swiss adventure helped me locate my former teacher in Berlin, Hans Heinrich Schaeder, who more than anybody else had influenced my intellectual development. I met him under unusual circumstances in Berlin, in the winter of 1943-44. At that time the German Arabist Richard Hartmann (with whom I had corresponded previously in some matters dealing with Arabic sources) had miraculously succeeded in helping me exchange my status as an *Ost-Arbeiter* (former German prisoner-of-war) into that of a student at the University of Berlin. He was an excellent specialist, but very formal. For a time I was his only student, yet he would always begin his lectures with the traditional formal address: "Meine Damen und Herren!" He would never discuss problems during his class, although during office hours he could be quite cordial. I also enrolled in a class which dealt with New Persian historical texts, taught by Hans Heinrich Schaeder. He was unusual in many respects. An excellent Islamist and Iranist, he also was the leading specialist in the history of religions, and he had special interest in philosophy and poetry. Central Asia was his favorite geographical area for study. From him I had learned that there is only one history — universal history. His class in Persian introduced me to the new works of Max Weber, Arnold Toynbee, J. Ortega y Gasset, Ibn Khaldun, Josef Markwart, Wilhelm Barthold, Emile Durkheim, Edmund Husserl, J. W. Goethe, T. S. Eliot, Dante, Ferdinand de Saussure, and others.

In the spring of 1944, R. Hartmann became ill, so, with his consent, I came under the tutelage of Schaeder. I was fully charmed by this truly Renaissance man. During the turbulent year of 1944 (and in 1946-48) I learned more than at any time in my life, although the scholarly milieu was unusual, to say the least: every day Berlin was bombed at least twice — at lunchtime by the Americans and shortly after dinner by the British. Before we left Berlin H. H. Schaeder gave me the address of a personal friend, the Swiss-French historian Carl Burckhardt in Geneva, who at that time was the president of the International Red Cross; the address was to be our means for continued contact. The prospect of help from Burckhardt was one reason why I went to Switzerland. Although my Turkish plan failed, I was informed by Burckhardt's secretary that Schaeder had received a chair at the University of Gottingen. My Swiss trip was not entirely personal: as a board member of an organization of Ukrainian students, I went to scout out possibilities for study in the West and did succeed in securing several Swiss fellowships for Ukrainian students. I myself, however, decided to return to "hungry" Germany, just to have the chance to continue working with my esteemed and beloved H. H. Schaeder.

It was still while doing classwork in Berlin that I discovered, in Naršakhī's *Ta'rikh-i Bukhara*, a passage which threw new light on the system of government in the Karakhanid Empire. All my notes and books in Berlin vanished, so in 1946 I had to start from scratch in Gottingen.

Very soon I realized that in order to reconstruct the governmental structure of the Karakhanid Empire, I would first have to research its Old Turkic roots. So I began working on Old Turkic and Uighur texts. From time to time I had the privilege of discussing some textual problems with Annemarie von Gabain, who at that time was a private scholar in Bavaria and whom I wrote or visited. Gradually I became involved in the history of Turkic languages — that is, I started doing what I had tried to avoid. Since history was my discipline *par excellence*, I had long strived not to become involved in philological and/or linguistic questions which would distract me from historical work. But Schaeder convinced me that a true historian must also be a philologist who can properly appraise a source and thus get a perspective on it.

There was another scholar in Gottingen at that time who contributed decisively to my becoming a Turkologist. This was Julius von Farkas. A grand-seigneur of the Austro-Hungarian type,

sophisticated and cultured, he captivated me, and all his acquaintances, by his strong personality. Until 1945 he was professor of Hungarian literature and director of the Hungarian Institute at the University of Berlin, as well as editor-in-chief of *Ungarische Jahrbücher*, a journal also of great value to Turkology. (Willy Bang-Kaup served on its editorial board until his death in 1934.) Von Farkas then lost his position and, after some adventures, appeared in Gottingen as a refugee in 1948. The University of Gottingen, one of the few German universities open at that time, accepted this famous scholar gladly, but since his field of specialization was not in demand academically, he was burdened with the administrative duties of prorektor, or administrative vice-president. His great wish, however, was to resume the publication of his beloved journal. His wide connections soon found him a publisher. But von Farkas realized that under the new conditions in Germany the survival of a journal devoted only to Hungarian studies would be impossible. Its scope had to be expanded to include the entire Uralic and Altaic world. What von Farkas needed was a diligent young man who could do editorial work and establish ties with German, European, Turkish and American Orientalists interested in Turkic and Central Asian studies. He himself, naturally, was well known among Finno-Ugrists and specialists in Hungarian studies. To secure a financial base a society devoted to the support of the journal was also desirable.

After my promotion to "doctor of philosophy," I became interested in the early Central Asian Empires, especially that of the Huns, who for several centuries had their realm in the Ukraine. Hungarian scholarship had always been involved in that particular field, and I undertook to read some relevant publications. Since my self-taught Hungarian was insufficient for me to understand some technical matters, I asked von Farkas for help. He gladly consented. Our meetings soon resulted in a mutual friendship, despite the difference in our ages. Von Farkas often spoke with me about his plans, and he suggested our cooperation on them — a suggestion which I accepted with great joy and zeal. The result was that in 1951/52, his resurrected journal began to appear under the title *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* and a special international "Societas Uralo-Altaica" was founded. For a time, precisely the "heroic period" of Ural-Altaic studies in Germany, the journal was a one-man operation. I typed letters, edited, proofread, persuaded scholars to contribute and/or join our new society, etc. I even bought stamps out of my pocket, because no funds were available.

On the other hand, I also had to prepare myself for new duties, which I began to undertake very seriously. I began to study not only all the living Turkic languages, but also Mongolian and Tungus (and even learned some elements of all the Finno-Ugrian languages). Until that time, I knew only some literary Mongolian, as a result of working with Władysław Kotwicz in L'viv, 1937-39. But my teacher was an extreme hypochondriac, and so our meetings were very few and my knowledge rather scanty. Upon my habilitation at Gottingen University, I received the *venia legendi* (6 August, 1951) for Altaic Philology.

Two factors contributed to my vigorous involvement in Altaic studies. First, I lost my faith in history as a scholarly discipline. Some doubts started to appear during my university work at L'viv, 1936-39. This was the apogee of nationalistic and chauvinistic trends among Polish and Ukrainian "intellectuals," and I often had difficulty in understanding why historians allowed themselves to be manipulated to defend totally opposite views. (My interest in the work of the conservative sociologist-historian Vjačeslav Lypyns'kyj saved me from the prevailing trends.) After the collapse of Germany ("Zusammenbruch"), all values, even the positive ones, lost virtue. In such a climate, the exactitude of neogrammarian linguistics with its laws "without exceptions" was extremely refreshing and appealing to me.

On the other hand, there was my "eternal" yearning for challenge on the forefront of some frontier. At that time, Turkology and Altaic studies had not yet been recognized as legitimate disciplines in Germany, "the fatherland of scholarship". Turkology was identified with Ottoman history, which also was not especially popular. Oriental studies in the strict sense meant either general Islamic studies or Far Eastern studies. My well-meaning professors (other than Schaeder and von Farkas) tried

to convince me to continue with Islamic studies in order to obtain a chair one day. This pressure elicited a negative reaction. I stubbornly stuck to Altaic and Turkic studies, regardless of the consequences.

Originally, my aim was to internationalize Altaic and Turkic studies. This was not to be easy, because internationalization required inclusion of scholars from the East Block and from the Soviet Union, especially from the national Turkic and Mongolian union and the autonomous republics. Moreover, I was not the best man for such diplomacy, in that from the Soviet point of view I was a defector (although I had lived under Soviet rule only due to wartime circumstances, from September 1939 until summer 1941).

Nevertheless, I worked very hard to help Soviet and Eastern block scholars and academic institutions obtain Western scholarly publications. In a few years, *The Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* numbered several Soviet scholars among its authors and editorial board members. I also established contact with the Mongolian, Korean and Japanese scholars. Thus, the desired internationality of the journal was achieved.

The next step was to obtain funds for the Uralo-Altaica Society and to help institute a permanent scholarly exchange. Here again my appeals to the reconstructing German industry had some success. (Let me give just one example. Located not far from Hamburg is the leading German tobacco company, Reemtsma. One day I visited its executive director and delivered a speech on the role of Turkey in the tobacco industry. The director was very attentive, but after I had finished he remarked that his company used not Turkish, but Virginia tobacco. However, finding my argument convincing, he nevertheless placed several thousand German Marks at the annual disposal of the society and I now could respond positively to some of the requests of Japanese, Turkish, Polish, and other scholars.

Finally, with my friend and "privat-Dozent" at Gottingen, Walther Heissig (specialist in Mongolian literature), I decided to create an annual forum where young Altaists could meet outside the crowded International Orientalists Congresses. This resulted in the birth of PIAC —the Permanent International Conference of Altaists.

Until I turned forty-five, (in 1964) I paid no attention to the factor called *time*. I was always available to anyone who needed assistance, especially if they worked in my beloved (if "adopted") fields of Turkology and Altaic studies. But in 1965, after I was made an honorary member of the Uralo-Altaica Society, I realized that I had to make a decision: either to continue in Altaic studies, or to return to my original plans and bring the experience I had gained on my "Oriental journey" to the field of Ukrainian history.

Again two factors helped me decide. By then, neogrammarian linguistics had lost its charm for me. I was captivated by structural linguistics, especially after having had the privilege of discussing some problems with Roman Jakobson (during my visitor's stay at Harvard in 1960-61) and with Jerzy Kuryłowicz (whom I had first worked with in 1936, when I was not yet interested in linguistics as such); he visited Hamburg several times and later spent two years at Harvard.

Structural linguistics helped me rethink historical theory and to conceive the concept of a structural and functional method based on the idea of the multiperspectivity of the sources.

Having regained faith in the history as an *exact* discipline on the level of abstraction, I returned to a consideration of problems in Ukrainian history. The immediate pretext was Roman Jakobson's wish to evaluate the *Igor' Tale* as an historical source for both Old Ukrainian (Rus') and Turkic Polovcian (Qipčaq) history.

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After I had settled permanently at Harvard (1964) and had gotten to know the Ukrainian American scholarly establishment on the East Coast, I came to the conclusion that research and instruction in the Ukrainian disciplines had to have stronger and better planned basis. This basis, I felt, should combine American and West European theory and methodology with the accomplishments of Ukrainian scholarship. The synthesis could occur, I believed, only at a permanent, independent scholarly center established at a leading American university, where disciplines dealing with the Ukraine could be challenged and developed in the most sophisticated academic and intellectual milieu. This center should comprise three endowed chairs in the crucial "national" disciplines of history ("common memory"), literature (the source of spiritual nourishment for the higher levels of culture) and language (the nation's common "code" of communication), which would be responsible for instruction and a Research Institute, which would undertake research and publishing (e. g. journals, general textbooks and monographs). The library of the chosen university should also have Ukrainian collection (books and manuscripts) and an endowed librarianship.

In 1967, with the active support of the Ukrainian-American students from both the United States and Canada, I started a "crusade" which, after seven years of extensive and exhaustive effort on my part and that of my young friends, realized almost all my plans. In 1973, three endowed chairs and the Ukrainian Research Institute became a reality at Harvard University. In 1968, I had begun training gifted young students in the Ukrainian disciplines.

At the present time, there exists a cohort of young academicians working in Ukrainian studies; it is gradually taking over the management of matters pertaining to Ukrainian studies at Harvard. Now, during the remaining years of my life, I hope to devote most of my time to *my own* scholarly work. I wish to complete several works I have begun which combine my knowledge of the distinct yet closely allied disciplines of history, philology, and linguistics, in the contiguous areas of Europe and Asia —Ukraine and the Turko-Altai world. As I work, I will continue to be guided by the belief that human cultures develop in continual contact and interrelation with each other, and that they cannot be housed comfortably in any *one* scholarly department.