



ABOUT THE SESSION OF FERHAT TURANLY'S DISSERTATION FOR A SCIENTIFIC DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCES (HISTORY)

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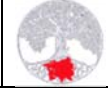
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A session of Dissertation For A Scientific Degree Of Doctor Of Sciences (History) took place at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv On October 12, 2017. In the session, ten people from Turkey, of whose the two with particular mission as “evaluators” participated.

The session prepared for the presentation of Ferhat Turanly's dissertation for a scientific degree of doctor of sciences (history) under the name of "The Cossack period in Ukraine's history in Ottoman Turkish writing sources"¹, was a very impressive and inspiring event for Turkish academicians. In the session where Ferhat Turanlı was a defender, 18 members of the academic council of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv presented their findings and criticisms on the thesis of Turanly. In this frame, me and Prof. Dr. Mehmet Inbası were particularly invited from Turkey and we offered our evaluations about Turanlı's work. I will share the evaluation with the reader below. However, firstly, I want to mention some issues that affect us about the event.

Particularly effective for the Turkish side was the seriousness, care and discipline demonstrated at the session. All council members evaluated Turanly's thesis with long analysis and put forward their recommendations. However, there were also some events that occurred suddenly and caused serious disturbance in this harmonious stream of the session. We all witnessed various interventions of academicians like Halenko, an academician at an institution in Kiev, Viktor Ostapchuk, who continues working as an academician in Canada, and Dariusz

¹ Ferhad Turanly, *The Cossack period in Ukraine's history in Ottoman Turkish written sources (the second half of the 16th – the first quarter of the 18th century)*, Kyiv - Mohyla Academy 2016.



Kolodziejczyk, a scholar in Poland though formally were not included in the session. Ostapchuk and Kolodziejczyk had not attended the session themselves, but they had reported their opinion with a sharp disagreement about Turanly with the letters they sent. Viktor Ostapchuk's attitude did not surprise me, because he had tried to influence my person with the mail he wrote two days before the session, and tried to change my positive findings about Turanly's research.²

The interesting opposition that Ostapchuk showed against our works which aiming only to contribute to the development of relations between Turkey and Ukraine was actually based on very much the old days. He radically opposed and scolded us for a book that we tried to carry out in memory of the deceased Omeljan Pritsak.³ Despite Ostapchuk's opposition, the gift book came out successfully with the support of valuable scholars such as Yuriy Kochubey and the others in Ukraine.⁴ The work of tribute we have organized for Olemjan Pritsak was a very effective foundation, followed by a series of scientific activities.⁵ Now, academic

² V. Ostapchuk, while we were preparing to go to Kiev, informed us of his thoughts two days before the session with an e-mail and expressed his negative opinions that I think was a product of a broad campaign about Ferhat Turanly. The fact that V. Ostapchuk had done such an action before a session reinforced my worries which I had raised about him and I was almost certain that he had acted on his own personal accounts rather than the scientific interests. I wrote a long letter to Wiktor Ostapcuk and I underlined that I was not agree with him, that Ostapchuk's letter was based on very personal competitions rather than scientific purposes.

³ When we took the information about the passig away of Omeljan Pritsak, we started to work right away on a tribute for this valuable scientist who devoted his life to the science of Turkology, and conveyed our request for Ostapchuk make a contribution with an article, too. Ostapchuk, incredibly, in addition of refusing our offer of contribution, scolded us by asking questions meaning, "Why are you prepering a book in memory of a Ukrainianhistorian? "Prepare a gift for your ownhistorians," In our answer to him, we told that the Turkish nation was a loyal nation, that he absolutely wold give the regard for the people who served. Indeed, rather than sticking to such negativities we had moved in good faith, and were focused on our business.

⁴ At the end of this study, a publication that has gaind an approval of a wide academic circle emerged. See, *Omelyan Pritsak Armağanı*, Editors: Mehmet Alpargu, Yücel Öztürk, Sakarya 2007.

⁵ The International Symposium on Karaite Studies, sponsored by Bilecik University, was the second high-level work that emerged for this purpose. I would like to note that this symposium, held in order to clarify the Eastern European Turkish civilisation, was the result of the joint efforts of the Turkish and Ukrainian scientists. See, *Uluslararası Karay Çalışmaları Sempozyumu / International Symposium on the Karaite Studies*, Editors: Mehmet Alpargu, Yücel Öztürk, M. Bilal Çelik, Bilecik 2010.



studies which have gain a solid framework of cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine are regularly carried out by sempozyums held almost every year.⁶

The case that Ostapchuk and his partners have targetted Ferhat Turanly is the last example of their behavior patterns mentioned above. For instance, although they were not officially involved, Halenko himself actually, and the other two by letters intervened in the session. In particular, Halenko, as if an activist kept the session busy for a long time and continued his attacks. Members of the council, who were present at the session, listened very earnestly to them and ultimately put their decisions on the thesis in secret ballot. As a result of the session, 17 of 18 members expressed a positive opinion as far as we could see, and a vote of a member was declared invalid.

According to the news we have received now, the team we are talking about carries out all sorts of scandalous work in an organized way on the subject, and makes all the efforts to politically block the decision that the university council has taken with full vote. We think that those actions do not have any academic purpose and intention, but rather originate from personal competition and enmity. If not, this would mean disregarding the scientific council of the Taras Sevchenko University of Kiev, all academic identity and respectability; because the academic members of this respected university have agreed to work with the vote. To claim otherwise, will also mean to discredit by prejudice the thought of academicians participating from Turkey.

Despite the fact that such negativities are experienced we would like to remind once again that the professorship – doctorship session was a scientific achievement in the true sense. We should also mention that this is the common opinion of our Turkish academicians who were there.⁷

⁶ I think that the Symposium on the Relations between Turkey and Ukraine held in 2014 was the one that is the most successful among others. The symposium, Carried in cooperation between Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and Sakarya University, have ensured that the studies about the Turkish and Ukrainian relations gain an institutional structure. The academic agreement made at the conclusion of the symposium is still in force and is carried out with new institutional tools. The proceedings of the symposium were published. Bkz. *International Symposium on the Relations Between Turkey and Ukraine: Kazak Period (1500 – 1800)*, Editors: Volodymyr Melnyk, Mehmet Alpargu, Yücel Öztürk, Ferhat Turanlı, M. Bilal Çelik, İstanbul 2015.

⁷ We are confident that the respectable institutions of the Ukrainian State will not be affected by unscientific and unjust attacks, and will approve the dignity of professorship that Turanly deserves.



I would like to share with the reader my presentation I made during the time allocated to me in the session. The following lines are directly transferred, from the analytical evolution presented in the session.

“Ferhad Turanly, who has chosen the Zaporozhian Cossacks History as his area of expertise, has contributed noticeably to illuminating the common period of the Turkish – Ukrainian history ‘The Cossack period in Ukraine’s history in Ottoman Turkish written sources’. The Cossack era is an exceptional period, in which the Ukrainian Nation has emerged in the modern sense of history, and Ukraine has become an actor in the international politics. During this period the Cossacks became a member of the International Community, opening the way for Ukraine to become a national state by removing the political forces of the great powers.

Although the great leaders of the Cossacks, like Dmytro Vyshnevetsky, Bohdan Hmelnytsky, Ivan Mazepa seem to have been fighting the Ottomans, actually they had always to enter an alliance with the Ottomans in the final stages.

It has also been proven by the alliances and collaborations, that emerged during the Russian occupation of Ukraine after the Cossack period, that the Turkish–Cossack co-operation was not temporary but a persistent and non-returnable fact. While this is the case, the number of scholars, who became distinguished in Ukraine and Russia, is very low in the Turkish academic community, which I have belong to until recently. Even today, some of the Turks regard the nations of Ukraine and Russia as products of the same history. We know that the main reason for this is the inadequacy of historical researches. As research works on the Cossack and Ukrainian history increases in and is spreading around Turkey, misinformation about the Ukrainian culture and civilization is being extracted, and understanding of history and then processes based on scientific information is gaining prevalence.

We do not think that information about Turkey is sufficient in Ukraine either. The Soviet concept of trying to see Cossacks as the precursor of nostalgic Russian nationalism, or the pioneers of the socialist revolution, has long inhibited Ukrainian society from acquiring the scientific knowledge of both itself and the Turkish history. We think that the two nations will have a more mature and correct understanding of history depending on the increase in the use of Turkish sources in the historical researches in Ukraine, and Ukrainian sources in the historical researches in Turkey. From this point of view, the scientific contribution of Mr. Ferhad Turanly to the history of both nations, which examines the Cossack period, which



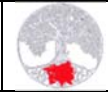
represents the most important stage of the Ukrainian history according to Turkish-oriented sources, is far from all kinds of discussion. The author of the monography study has made a necessary work and put it as an exemplary one in front of the historians of the two countries.

Mr. Turanly has also used authentic documentaty sources from the Ottoman–Turkish archives, which even Turkish historians have difficulty to enter effectively, and he has also been given the necessary weight to the Ottoman histories, who are written in a very difficult style. Mr. Turanly's research did not exclude research works having been carried out, and he has benefited from the researches and compilations related to the subject in Turkey. This scholar has developed an exemplary academic work with the features above mentioned. Turanly's work reveals exactly, how important Turkish written sources and archival materials are in the Ukrainian history. This research as a whole has a special importance in terms of revealing, how intimate and related the Ukrainian and Turkish histories are to each other.

The given monography work is, as far as I can say, a unique scientific work in terms of the methodology and originality, which is not much of an example in the Ukrainian historiography. The author, who aims to address the Ukraine–Turkey relations politically and socially in the determined period, has given priority in using, among the other documents, sources that are the product of the Sublime Porte and Zaporozhian Sich Kosh – the main administrative organs of both states.

These documents have been identified and analyzed in the political, economic and social terms. The importance given to the elucidation of the origin and meaning of the texts and terms, the care taken in the acquisition of historical information and correct translation of the texts into Ukrainian, as well as the rigor with the author demonstrated in collecting the resources and undoubtedly manifested his scientific success. With this understanding, it is clear that a searching method of Turkish-Ottoman written sources, which can be able to bring together intellectuals from different traditions in important joint studies, has obviously been offered. Turanly has also conducted independent researches on the history of the Turks alongside the history of the Cossacks. I would like to mention the importance of this in particular. If a historian brings his academic vision to life with a single national culture and mentality, he will be away from the positive effects of international academic developments. Although a geography is open to all international academic experience, it is more in need of knowing the historical traditions of the geographies most related to it.

I would like to point out without hesitation that, as the mutual interaction between Turkey, Ukraine, Poland and other Balkan and Caucasus countries in historical research enters into interaction, the common historical heritage of this region will be better noticed and will have



real positive effects on the development of relationships between the corresponding geographic areas. In my opinion, a Ukrainian historian needs to know more about Turkish history than the history of France and the British one. Likewise, for the Turkish historian, the history of Ukraine, Poland, Russia, Caucasus, Balkan, Iran is more important than the French and British histories. If there is a common destiny of a geography, it can only be achieved by providing the necessary proximity in scientific research.

Ferhad Turanly's thesis and all the research he has done for a number of years of his academic activities are positive steps taken in the direction he chose for making his personal studies. It is an indication of the recognition of the academic value of his studies. For example, Turanly is the author of the notion "Hetman" in the Encyclopedia of Islam, which is the most important scientific encyclopedic work in Turkey in recent years carried out by the Turkish science community.

While Mr. Turanly published his own analytical works on Ottoman–Turkish chroniclers in various journals in Ukraine, he evaluated the little-known aspects of the Ukrainian history in many articles published in the academic journals of the universities in Turkey. In this respect, he is a true cultural envoy, who has placed in the centre of his understanding of science bringing the Turkish and Ukrainian nations closer and together through true historical knowledge.

Ferhad Turanly is a person, who brings together, particularly me and Turkish historians, with our Ukrainian colleagues engaged nowadays in the development of important adequate researches in the field of the East-European history. I must admit, that he was the chief activator in providing publications and organization of international scientific conferences dedicated to the commemoration of Omelian Pritsak and Yaroslav Dashkevich, as well as regarding the Ukrainian Cossacks historical period."