

Editor's Preface

Professor Tadeusz Majda during his many years as head of Turkish Studies at the University of Warsaw nurtured and inspired many generations of Polish Turkologists – unquestionably, he remains and will remain a role model for present and future students of Turkic Studies. Many works he authored during his long and prolific academic career remain scattered in various periodicals and publications that are difficult to access even nowadays, in the age of the e-library. In order to familiarize students and young researchers with Professor's opera minora we decided to collect and re-publish some of them.

The papers included in this book cover a wide range of topics, but at the same time are representative of only a fraction of the Professor's scholarly interests.¹ We decided to select articles from three research areas: the language, literature, and culture of Turks, and thus regrettably exclude the field closest to his heart: Turkish and Islamic art. However, since it is not possible to separate art from a culture completely, some papers that can be found in the third part of this volume reflect, albeit to a very limited extent, the Professor's valuable contribution to this discipline.

This publication is aimed to provide valuable substantial support for students and lecturers of not only Turkish, but also Arabic and Iranian Studies. Serving as an auxiliary textbook for classes and seminars on Turkish and Oriental literature, language, and culture, and also on the history and development of Turkic and Oriental studies, it will help students to broaden their knowledge of particular topics.

This volume is also a tribute to the Professor on his 90th birthday, which unfortunately we were unable to celebrate in 2020 due to the pandemic. It also marks the 70th anniversary of his appointment in 1951 – at the suggestion of his

¹ For a more detailed bibliography of Professor T. Majda's work see: A. Parzymies (ed.), *Studies in Oriental Art and Culture in Honour of Professor Tadeusz Majda*, Warsaw: Dialog Academic Publishing House, 2006, pp. 15–25; A. Bareja-Starzyńska et al. (ed.), *Oriental Studies and Arts: Contributions Dedicated to Professor Tadeusz Majda on His 85th Birthday*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 2015, pp. 27–43.

high-school teachers – to the Department of Turkology at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Warsaw University – the first step he took in his long and a brilliant academic career.

The course of his research has encompassed not only the Turkish language and literature but also its Arabic and Persian counterparts. It was his master, Professor Ananiasz Zajączkowski who awakened his great interest in and devotion to Ottoman Turkish and Divan poetry. It is noteworthy that he was appointed an aide in the Institute of Oriental Studies in 1955 when still only a 5th-year student. One year later he received his Master's degree after completing a thesis on the language of a collection of poems by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent preserved in a 16th-century manuscript kept in the University Library in Warsaw. In his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Literary Theme of Yusuf and Züleyha in Turkish Literature Up Till the 15th century* (1965), which focused on one of the most popular literary plots rooted in the Koran, he demonstrated a profound knowledge of the languages and literatures of the Middle East and Central Asia. His interest in Oriental manuscripts resulted in a fundamental work: *Catalogue of Turkish and Persian manuscripts*², which contains a comprehensive list of items from Polish collections. One of them, namely a handwritten Turkish-Spanish handbook of 1611, became the subject of his postdoctoral study *The development of the Turkish language in the 17th century*.³ After obtaining his post-doctoral degree in 1982, he became an associate professor in 1990 and a professor in 1998.

His broad research activities also included the contemporary Turkish language, literature and culture, Polish-Turkish relations, the language and literature of the Polish Tatars, and the history of Turkish Studies in Poland and Europe – these interests are reflected in the publications collected in this volume.

When discussing Professor Tadeusz Majda's contribution to the development of Turkish Studies, one cannot overlook his services as a teacher. Since the very beginning of his work at the Warsaw University, he conducted classes, seminars and lectures on Turkish grammar and literature, Turkish and Islamic art and aesthetics, and the development of Turkish Studies. He supervised more than 60 MA dissertations in Turcology, and also oversaw and reviewed numerous MA theses on Iranian and Arabic Studies and Islamic art. He was an advisor for 7 PhD dissertations and a reviewer of 4 doctoral and 6 postdoctoral theses.

Not only was Professor Tadeusz Majda a scholar and inspirational teacher who acted as a mentor and father figure for several generations of Turkologists, but he was also a more than able administrator, who performed various academic

² S. Strelcyn, A. Zajączkowski (eds.), *Katalog rękopisów orientalnych ze zbiorów polskich*. Vol. 5. Part 2: T. Majda, *Katalog rękopisów tureckich i perskich*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967.

³ T. Majda, *Rozwój języka tureckiego w XVII wieku (rękopis z 1611 r. ze zbiorów Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej we Wrocławiu, sygn. M. 1529)*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1985.

duties at the University of Warsaw. For many years he served as the Head of the Department of Turkology, in 1981–1984 as Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, and in 1985–1986 as Dean of the Faculty of Modern Languages. He also was a co-founder of the Centre for East European and Central Asia Studies and for more than 20 years chaired this institution.

While being affiliated to the University of Warsaw throughout his entire academic career, Professor Tadeusz Majda maintained close contacts with universities and centres of Oriental Studies abroad, giving lectures and conducting research projects, participating in numerous symposia and conferences⁴. In 2004, in recognition of the Professor's contributions to the development of studies on Turkish language and literature, and the promotion of Turkish and Islamic art, the University of Ankara conferred the title of *Honoris Causa* Doctorate upon him. In recognition of outstanding academic and outreach achievements he was awarded numerous distinctions from the Polish state: the Knight's Cross of the Order of *Polonia Restituta* (2014), the *Bene Merito* Badge of Honour (2014), the *Gloria Artis* Gold Medal for Merit to Culture (2014).

Professor Majda's scholarly work is well known and has earned him international recognition. Anyone fortunate to have met him personally has been impressed by his extensive knowledge, and also by his personal charm and elegance, and subtle sense of humour. May this collection of his *opera minora – sed non parva* – provide readers with an insight into his versatile mind and exceptional contributions to research on the language, literature and culture of Turks.

Anna Sulimowicz-Keruth

⁴ For Professor T. Majda's research internships and lectures abroad see A. Bareja-Starzyńska et al. (ed.), *Oriental Studies and Arts*, op. cit., pp. 19, 21–25.