

# IN MEMORIAM

**Andreas Tietze** (1914-2003)

Andreas Tietze's scholarship and teaching career established him as the greatest exponent of Turkish lexicography and language of the twentieth century. His vast knowledge and seemingly inexhaustible, accurate memory poured out for seventy years in publications and at conferences throughout the world. He held his students to the highest standards, and opened new insights and unforeseen possibilities in their own scholarship. Glancing over the titles of his more than 70 published articles and 25 books, one can only begin to grasp his value to Middle East Studies: grammatical structures, comparative language studies, the collection of multi-lingual bibliographies, the etymological dictionary of the Turkish language, and the unfolding of the history, culture, and folklore of the people of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey as found in their writings in the past six hundred years.

Tietze's life included both the terror and the brilliance of the twentieth century. Born in 1914 to two of Vienna's great art scholars, he spent his school years studying the classical and European languages and history. He developed a wide-ranging interest in the civilizations of the former Austrian Empire and in 1937 wrote his doctoral dissertation analyzing the agricultural theories of seventeenth century Italian economists. He studied the civilizations and languages of the Balkans and the Turkic peoples. While studying the Balkans he recognized the need to master not only the Slavic languages but also the languages of the Ottoman Empire. In his early university career he gained a certificate of highest merit for two years of Arabic studies. Early visits to Republican Turkey had attracted him to that country and by the late 1930s the implicit threat to life in Austria (his family had converted from Judaism) led him to accept an offer to teach German and English language at the University of Istanbul. He became one of many such invited scholars who contributed impressive intellectual assistance to the new Republic.

Thus the exiled Tietze moved in the late 'thirties to the security of Turkey and a career of teaching and scholarship. In 1942 he published a translation of a seafaring tale from a seventeenth century Ottoman text. Engaged by the Amerikan Bord Heyeti, he began revising the 1890 Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary into the newly adopted Latin script. In the ensuing decades he published in many related subjects: Turkish grammatical problems, readers for foreign students of Turkish, comparative languages, poetry, and the interrelationship of loan words in the major European, Slavic and western Turkic languages. His reputation grew as

a linguist and in 1952 he accepted an invitation to the University of Illinois where he co-authored his first major book in English, *The Lingua Franca in the Levant* (1958). In 1957 he accepted Gustave von Grunebaum's invitation to join the newly founded Near East Center at the University of California at Los Angeles. As a teacher he felt the need for graded materials to introduce students to the exciting world of modern Turkish literature, so he published two books of selected short stories and poems with glossaries (1963 and 1973), still widely used. Two major books on riddles from Koman Turkish (1966) and Anatolian Turkish (with İlhan Başgöz (1973)), were followed by his monumental *Mustafa Ali's Description of Cairo* (1975).

In 1974 Tietze resigned his post at UCLA and returned to Vienna as director of the University's Oriental Institute. Here he finished a two volume *Counsel for Sultans of 1591* (1979 and 1984). Having long realized the need for a uniform organization of the exploding number of Turkish-related scholarly works from many parts of the world, he gathered hundreds of useful bibliographic entries, and in 1975 the first of ten parts appeared of the *Turkologischer Anzeiger*, an assemblage that continues publication in Budapest.

His retirement in 1984 from the University of Vienna stopped neither his creative output nor his student seminars, which he continued almost to the end of his life. At age 80, he began the task of what may well prove his most important work, the *Tarihi ve Etimolojik Türkiye Türkçesi Lugatı* (Historical and Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish of Turkey). Volume I was published in 2002 and subsequent volumes will appear posthumously.

Andreas Tietze's life, devoted as it was to productive scholarship, always maintained a balance between his publications and his responsibility to family, students, and especially younger scholars. He cherished Suheylyla, his devoted wife of 50 years, and his four children. He believed in the importance of teaching. On receiving UCLA's Distinguished Teaching Award, he said, "I wouldn't feel at ease doing only teaching or only research....Students are not a negligible entity. I think it is important to view them as counterparts and in a way as equals." He supported the works of his colleagues through extensive worldwide correspondence. To the end he thoroughly enjoyed attending scholarly conferences, as he said "...just to see what the younger colleagues are interested in." Whenever he presented a paper, crowds sought to hear him – but he always acknowledged and supported the younger panelists.

Tietze's eyesight deteriorated to about 10% and by his 85<sup>th</sup> year he finally submitted to surgery to restore his sight. A year later he almost died of acute appendicitis. Yet his astonishing strength pulled him through both of these crises and he continued work on the etymological dictionary. In 2002 he wrote with obvious satisfaction, "...good news, the first volume of the etymological dictionary has come out. A heavy volume of over 700 pages..." containing the

letters A through E. He continued his task and when he died, December 22, 2003, he was working on the letter "S." The rest remains to his loyal students to finish.

Andreas Tietze's legacy to Middle East Studies will open doors to future generations of scholars of Turkish who will rely on his accuracy and thoroughness in explaining the modern Turkish language. For those of us who knew him he remains, as a colleague wrote, "...a model to emulate, knowing that I could never reach his level whether as a scholar or as a human being."

William J. Griswold  
*Colorado State University*