

## **Foreword: Talat Tekin and His Works**

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T. Tekin was born on July 16, 1927 in Tavşancıl district of Gebze. His father, İsmail Tekin, was a graduate of Hereke Rüşdiye (Ottoman Junior High School), and he was the son of Hamit Çavuş from nobles of Tavşancıl; his mother, Fatımatüzzehra, was the daughter of İzzet Hodja, who worked as hodja and imam in Tavşancıl and who was originally from Nallıhan.

After completing primary school in Tavşancıl primary school (1934-1939), he graduated from Üsküdar Paşakapısı Junior High School (1939-1942) and Haydarpaşa High School (1942 – 1945) respectively. He had to adjourn his education for a year after graduating from high school. In the following year, he had passed the admission exams for Teacher's High School in 1946 and completed his higher education in Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Turkish Language and Literature (1946-1951).

While working under the command of the Ministry, he was accepted to Infantry Officer Cadet School in 1954 November period. He had completed his military service in Kırklareli between 1955 and 1956 as officer cadet. After discharge, he was appointed to Bitlis High School by the Ministry (by lot!) and took office in May 1956. He got married in August 1956, and went back to Bitlis for his duty together with his wife, when he was only married for twenty-one days. Together with his colleague and his friend from Teacher's High School Ahmet Miskinoğlu, they published a semi-monthly literature magazine named *Yula* ("light, torch" in Old Turkic) in Bitlis.

Although he should have been promoted in 1957, he could not find his name on the promotion list. He sent a telegram to the Ministry, asking the reason, and the Ministry said, "He did not undergo any inspections within the last three years". After that, he sent a fierce telegram to the Ministry and resigned from teaching and went to Turkish Linguistic Society. In Turkish Linguistic Society, he worked as "Grammarians" in Assoc. Prof. Dr. Samim Sinanoğlu's room for four years (1957-1961). While working in Linguistic Society, he attended Institute of Russian Philology in Language and History-Geography Faculty and took Russian lessons from Şefika Ortaylı as a private student for one year.

Shortly before May 27 Coup d'état, he applied for assistantship exam provided by Prof. Hasan Eren in Language and History-Geography Faculty. When he went to attend the exam after Coup d'état, Head of Department Prof. Kenan Akyüz stated

that Prof. Hasan Eren was laid off from job with so called “147’ler listesi”, and since the professor was dismissed, they could not employ an assistant.

In the meantime, he criticized *Sade Türkçe Kılavuzu* (Pure Turkish Guide) published by the Institution with his articles on *Dünya* newspaper. In *Ulus* and *Öncü* newspapers published in Ankara, he wrote some articles that supported Turkish Linguistic Society to receive academic status, and stated that it was Atatürk’s will. In the meantime, Head of Disciplinary Board, poet Behçet Kemal Çağlar conducted an investigation on him due to his articles on *Dünya*, *Ulus* and *Öncü* newspapers, and he was dismissed from his duty at the Institution.

After his dismissal from the Institution, we worked in Ankara bureau of Georgetown University for a while. At this bureau, he prepared books for illiterate soldiers in the army together with artist Adnan Turani and poet Tahsin Saraç.

Meanwhile, with the assistance of Prof. Andreas Tietze in California University in Los Angeles, he found a job as “Turkish language research assistant” in Near East Languages Department of this university and went to USA in August 1961. Prof. János Eckmann, whom he had known from Turkey, was also in the same university. Reason of arrival of Eckmann, who had also been called by Tietze, was that he had not been awarded with the title of professor in Turkey, where he had been teaching for many years. T. Tekin immediately enrolled for a doctoral program and became Eckmann’s student. In the meantime, he also continued to attend American linguist Prof. Hojer’s classes. After two years, he passed doctoral matriculation exam and went to Indiana University in Bloomington. He worked as “Turkish Language Lecturer” for two years in Ural-Altaic Languages Department under Prof. Denis Sinor. In the meantime, he took Mongolian lessons from Prof. John Krueger and prepared his doctoral dissertation.

In June 1965, he was awarded with the title of PhD in California University with his dissertation project named *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*. He applied many universities for a job before he submitted his dissertation. He even wrote a letter to Prof. R. Rahmeti and asked whether there were any vacancies in Istanbul University. He did not receive any positive replies. Even though he had been called to Harvard by Prof. O Pritsak, Pritsak’s student and T. Tekin’s friend Şinasi Tekin was assigned for this position.

In this period, Prof Denis Sinor suggested him to stay in Bloomington and work together in Indiana University. He thought about this for a while, and then accepted the offer from California University and went to Berkeley.

He worked as Turkish Language and Literature professor in California University in Berkeley between 1965 and 1972. In the mean time, he came back to Turkey with “sabbatical” permission in 1969-70 and gave general linguistics classes in Hacettepe University for one year. Since he wanted to come back to Turkey for good, he came back to Istanbul again in November 1970 and received the title of associate professor with his dissertation, *Ana Türkçede Asli Uzun Ünlüler* (Primary Long Vowels in Proto-Turkish), which he had prepared in the USA. Even though the jurists did not agree with his opinions in this study, in other words, even though they did not believe that there were long vowels in Native Turkish, they unanimously awarded T. Tekin with the title of associate professor, since they had faith in him as a scientist. He came back to Turkey in fall of 1972 and started working in Hacettepe University. In

1976, he was honoured with the title of “professor” with his dissertation, *Volga Bulgarian Epitaphs and Bulgarian language of Volga*.

In summer of 1977, he went to (West) Germany through a research scholarship that he received from DAAD and he made some scientific studies about Turkology and Altaistic in Central Asia Institute of Bonn University.

On September 1981, he went to Japan with a 4-month research scholarship from “Japan Foundation for the Promotion of Science” foundation and made research about Japanese in Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (“ILCAA”, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies).

In 1982, he was appointed as the Head of Turkish Language and Literature Department by the Office of the Dean Faculty of Letters in Hacettepe University.

He worked in this new Institution, especially for the new edition of Turkish Dictionary between 1984 and 1990. As he stated in his earlier interviews, he mainly attended etymology studies rather than lexical entries and explanations.

He went to Japan for four months in summer of 1991 as the guest of “Asia-Africa Languages and Cultures Institute” in Tokyo and conducted studies about Turkology. When he came back from Japan, he found out that his duty as the head of department, which he had been at for about 10 years since 1982, was terminated and continued to work at the same department until his retirement in summer of 1994. After his retirement, he maintained his postgraduate lectures and dissertations until 1997. In 1997, he moved to Istanbul in order to contribute to the new department established in Istanbul Yeditepe University and worked at the same university until 2002.

In 2000, Turkish version of his *grammar*, which he had been dreaming for many years, was published and sold out in a very short time.

Both Turkish language and Turkish grammar dissertation studies had been prepared under his supervision. As well as his students that he had directly lectured, he had been the mentor of all Turkology students with his articles and books, and he had been the most famous Turkish linguist outside of Turkey with his masterpiece, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*.

From the theory of Altaic languages to the poems in *Divanü Lugati't-Türk*, from Yenisey epitaphs to *Irk Bitig*, from Yunus Emre to Fuzuli, he wrote in almost every field of Turkology and produced original ideas.

This bibliography here is not complete or perfect. However, the first bibliography that I have prepared in 1993 has been a resource for the people, who give bibliography for T. Tekin, despite of its inadequacies and mistakes. This bibliography comes with a DVD that contains almost every single article of Talat Tekin as additions in accordance with their first places of printing and made the works of T. Tekin easily accessible.

Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues and students, who have contributed to this valuable work, and wish our professor a long and prosperous life.