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Hans R. Roemer (1915-1997)

On July 15, 1997, Hans Robert Roemer passed away at the age of 82 after a rich scholarly and family life. One of the most dynamic personalities in the field of Middle East Studies (*Islamwissenschaft*) in post-World War II Germany, Hans Roemer admirably maintained the delicate balance between the requirements of research, teaching, and administrative duties during his tenure as professor at the Oriental Institute (*Orientalisches Seminar*) at the University of Freiburg (1963-1983), member of university committees, and chairman of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (1972-1984).

His scholarly interest encompassed a wide variety of issues concerning—to use conventional periodization—the history of the late medieval/early modern Middle East, that is, the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries. Within this field he proved to be a true generalist whose expertise encompassed the Turco-Iranian sphere (the successors of the Ilkhans, Timurids, Turkmens, and Safavids) as well as the Mamluk state.¹

Roemer took his Ph.D. in 1938 at the University of Göttingen, where Walther Hinz was his supervisor. His thesis dealt with Safavid Persia at the end of the sixteenth century.² Then the Timurids attracted his attention. Besides working with chronicles,³ he took a special effort in making accessible and in using other kinds of source materials such as documents from royal chanceries, administrative manuals, and official guides for royal correspondence. His *Habilitationschrift* was devoted to a Timurid bureaucrat's guide to official correspondence.⁴ Roemer stimulated quite a few of his colleagues and disciples to concentrate on the field of documentary sources which had so long been neglected in German research on Islamic history. Years of research in Egypt and Lebanon let him take a special interest in Mamluk history and historiography. He initiated the edition of the fourteenth century universal history *Kanz ad-durar wa-gami'*

1. A complete bibliography up to 1979 is to be found in *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit, Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag*, Beirut Texte und Studien, vol. 22, (Beirut-Wiesbaden, 1979), 691-702.

2. *Der Niedergang Irans nach dem Tod Isma'ils des Grausamen (1577-81)*, (Würzburg, 1939).

3. He edited and translated *Sams al-husn: Eine Chronik vom Tode Timurs bis zum Jahre 1409 von Tag al-Salmani*, (Wiesbaden, 1956).

4. *Staatsschreiben der Timuridenzeit: das Saraf-nama des 'Abdallah Marwarid in kritischer Auswertung*, (Wiesbaden, 1952).

al-gurar by the Mamluk historian Ibn ad-Dawadari (1289-after 1336), which is now completed and available in nine volumes.⁵

Roemer's extensive contribution (five chapters with 350 pages) to Volume 6 of *The Cambridge History of Iran, The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge, 1986) represents the sum of his research on the political history of the Turco-Iranian world. The German monographic version that was published in 1989 is provided with a far more comprehensive bibliography.⁶

Roemer started his academic career as President of the Mainz Academy of Science and Literature (1949-1955). From 1955 to 1960, he held the position of official responsible for the field of Arabic and Islamic studies at the Cairo branch of the *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (DAI). With great skill, cleverness, and energy, he succeeded in founding the *Orient Institut der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* at Beirut and functioned as its founding director from 1961 to 1963. This institute, with its fine library, has ever since offered post-doctoral research positions and served as a stepping stone to a university career for many young scholars. Roemer also inaugurated the series *Beiruter Texte und Studien*. Up to now, more than sixty monographs have been published in this series. It gave him a sense of satisfaction that the *Orient Institut* survived the sad years of the Lebanese civil war and is now prospering again. Its wartime temporary emergency quarters in Istanbul are even going to be transformed into a permanent branch.

From 1963 until his retirement in 1983, Roemer held the chair for *Islamwissenschaft* at the University of Freiburg. Within a few years he built up and constantly expanded the department by adding two more professorships and quite half a dozen tenure positions. He further managed to integrate other disciplines (for instance, Japanese and Chinese Studies, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, etc.) in the *Orientalisches Seminar*, which soon obtained a respected position within the Philosophical Faculties. Roemer was a committed academic teacher and spared no pains to encourage and support his numerous students and graduates in scholarly and subsistence affairs. For his sincere and sympathetic interest in the welfare of his students and colleagues, he will be unforgotten.

Beyond his teaching career, Hans Roemer always did his best to promote the field of Middle East Studies in a wider and also international academic context. He played a substantial role in founding a new Middle East department at the University of Bamberg encompassing professorships for *Islamwissenschaft/Arabistik*, *Iranistik* und *Turkologie* in the 1980s. Further, he actively contributed to the founding of the *Societas Iranologica Europaea* (SIE) in Rome in 1983 and became a member of its founding board.

Roemer's time of retirement was soon shadowed by serious health problems, deteriorating sight being only one of them. Nevertheless, this did not mean the end of his scholarly activities. Roemer completed (with the assistance of Monika Gronke) the translation and commentary of a Timurid chronicle that he had put aside for decades, Nizamaddin Sami's *Zafarnama*. This volume will be published posthumously within the *Freiburger Islamstudien*, a series also

5. Roemer's edition of Volume 9 was published in Cairo, 1960.

6. *Persien auf dem Weg in die Neuzeit. Iranische Geschichte von 1350-1750*, *Beiruter Texte und Studien*, 40.

inaugurated by Roemer himself. To pave the way for publication of the third volume of *Philologiae Turcaicae Fundamenta* was another of his real concerns in his last years. And, of course, he continued to supervise doctoral dissertations, amongst them that of the late Shiro Ando

Hans Robert Roemer was also a loving family man who leaves behind his wife, five daughters, and twelve grandchildren. He will be sorely missed not only by his family but also by a vast number of his colleagues and disciples.

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Ahmad Tafazzoli (1937-1997)

Ahmad Tafazzoli, born in Isfahan on December 16, 1937, died in Tehran in a car accident on January 13, 1997. His numerous pupils, friends, and colleagues the world over in the field of Iranian Studies suffered a tremendous loss. Professor of Pre-Islamic Iranian Studies at Tehran University, a deputy of the Iranian Academy of Persian Language and Literature, and consulting editor to *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Ahmad Tafazzoli was one of the most prominent scholars of the field of Old Iranian.

Tafazzoli received his B.A. in Persian Language and Literature from Tehran University in 1959 and, working with W. B. Henning, his M.A. in Old and Middle Iranian from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London in 1965. From London he went to Paris, where he met, and came to greatly admire, the late Jean de Menasce, with whom he continued his research. In 1966, he obtained his Ph.D. in the Pre-Islamic Languages of Iran from Tehran University with a dissertation entitled *A Critical Edition of the Ninth Book of Dēnkard*. In 1968 he was appointed as Assistant Professor and in 1973 as Associate Professor of Middle Persian and Avestan in the Department of Old Iranian Languages in Tehran University.

His extensive publications provide eloquent testimony to the depth and breadth of his scholarship. Through his research he made significant contributions to our understanding of aspects of Pre-Islamic Iranian history, mythology, and Iranian languages, but the principal monument to his scholarship will be his work on Middle Persian. In 1969 he published a complete glossary of the *Dādestan ī mēnōg ī xrad* (*Važe-nāme-ye Minuye Xrad*), Tehran, 1348/1969) and in 1975 a Persian translation of the same book (*Tarjome-ye Minu-ye Xerad*, Tehran, 1354/1975). The *Dādestan ī mēnōg ī xrad* (*Judgments of the Spirit of Wisdom*), a Pahlavi example of wisdom (*andarz*) literature, is especially important for its references to predestination and the role of the stars in human destiny. In 1995 he published a Pahlavi grammar, *Zabān-e Pahlavi, Adabiyāt va dastur-e ān*, which is a revised version of his lecture notes for his many years of teaching at Tehran University.

In 1989 Tafazzoli, with his longtime collaborator Philippe Gignoux, embarked on an edition with translation and commentary of the *Selection of Zādspram*, published as *Anthologie de Zādspram* (Cahier 13, *Studia Iranica*,