

AKDES NIMET KURAT, 1903–1970

Professor Akdes Nimet Kurat was the first scholar to use Ottoman Turkish archival sources for the study of the history of south Russia, the Ukraine, and the Black Sea region. His work serves to balance the past rather one-sided research from the Russian point of view. Born in a Tatar village near Kazan, Professor Kurat was educated in Russia, Istanbul, and Germany, conducted archival research in London, Paris, Uppsala, Stockholm, Vienna, The Hague, and throughout Turkey, and was appointed professor of medieval history at Istanbul University's Faculty of Literature in 1933. He possessed the cosmopolitan background and training necessary for the sophisticated treatment of the complexities of Russian-Ottoman history evidenced in his seven monographs and more than fifty articles.

Three of his works deserve special attention. In *Prut Seferi ve Barişi, 1123 (1711) (The Pruth Campaign and Settlement)* (2 vols.; Ankara, 1951–53), Professor Kurat took a relatively unimportant event in the history of Eastern Europe and expanded his subject to include the whole nature of Russian-Turkish relations. He examined the way policy was formulated in both states, and showed convincingly that Peter I's southern policy took a completely new direction from that of his predecessors. In 1966 Kurat published *Türkiye ve Idil Boyu (Turkey and the Don-Volga Canal)*—a study of the Ottoman campaign to retake Astrakhan in 1569. Again he used a relatively minor incident as a springboard to a broad study of Russian-Ottoman relations and how the two empires viewed each other officially and unofficially. Based on a wealth of Ottoman archival sources, his work is a necessary one for all historians interested in the reign of Ivan IV. Professor Kurat's last published book, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara, 1970), is perhaps the most important for Western historians. Concerned with the regions, governments, and peoples most intimately involved in the Eastern Question (that is, the Ottomans and their subjects), it gives an Eastern view of this complex problem. Kurat devoted over half of the book to the relations between the government of the Young Turks and Russia during the period of the Dumas, Revolution, and Civil War.

In all of his writing, one senses Kurat's belief that the Ottomans and other Turkic peoples have been "legitimate" members of Eastern Europe since medieval times. He has shown conclusively that their societies participated in East European politics, influenced non-Turkic peoples (and were influenced by them), and enjoyed "normal" diplomatic and economic relations with many of them, including Poland and Muscovy.

Professor Akdes Nimet Kurat made an important beginning in the re-evaluation, based on Turkish archival sources, of the role of the Ottomans in East European politics. One hopes that his works will form the foundation of further research rather than be ignored because they were published in a non-Western language.

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MATTHEW SPINKA, 1890–1972

Matthew Spinka came to Chicago with poor parents as a lad of fifteen and died at Claremont, California, as Waldo Professor of Church History Emeritus. His last active post was with the Hartford Seminary Foundation. He devoted sixty-seven

years in this country to higher studies, ministry, academic teaching, and critical scholarship.

He was thoroughly familiar with two vast fields: the Czech Reform movement in his native Bohemia, and Eastern Orthodoxy, especially in Russia. Qualified by theological studies and a wide command of languages, he was able to draw from sources accessible to not many scholars of his generation, and produced original contributions. It is no more than an academic question whether he was attracted more by the Czech Reform or the lot of Orthodoxy under the hammer and sickle. Czech spiritual heroes, John Hus and John Amos Comenius, appealed to him directly; when he dealt with them he needed no mediator. But the representatives of Russian religious thought exerted irresistible attraction, for they were living representatives of the contemporary struggle in which Spinka was emotionally involved. There are several contributions from Spinka's pen to elucidate the life and thought of John Hus. His translation of Hus's letters appeared posthumously. Spinka's translation of *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* by Comenius inaugurated in 1972 the Michigan Slavic Translations series. But the books on the fate of Eastern Orthodoxy after 1917 were topical and appealed to a much wider audience than the monographs on Bohemia. There was little at that time in English on the church and the Russian Revolution or the church in Soviet Russia. The book *Nicholas Berdayev: The Captive of Freedom* was acclaimed as a summary of a theologian-thinker for whom Spinka felt spiritual kinship.

No survey of Slavic studies in this country can omit Spinka's name. His place was among the pioneers. He took his task seriously and published not only an impressive collection of books but also a large number of articles, book reviews, and translations. He served for several years as editor of *Church History* and appeared on many panels, contributing constructively and debating vigorously. And he was a cooperative colleague, ready to help, especially to students who had the courage to leave the beaten track and explore unconventional topics.

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BORIS O. UNBEGAUN, 1898–1973

Unbegaun began his career as a librarian at the Institut d'Études Slaves, Paris. His first major publication was the extremely useful *Catalogue des périodiques slaves et relatifs aux études slaves des bibliothèques de Paris* (1929). He was a great master of what the French call *bibliographie raisonnée*. His later *Bibliographical Guide to the Russian Language* (1953) is a masterpiece of this genre, and his annual surveys of publications on Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian in the *Revue des études slaves* (1928–68) were a feat of industry and knowledge. They shaped research in these fields more than it may seem possible.

But the real Boris Unbegaun began in 1935, with his *La langue russe au XVI^e siècle: La flexion des noms*. The title of the book does not do justice to its contents. It is actually an entire history of the Russian declension seen from the vantage point of its crucial middle point, amazing in its organization, precision, and synthetic value. Neither in this book nor in any other did Unbegaun contribute to proliferation of linguistic terminology. With Turgot, he could have said: "Des