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TRAVELLING THROUGH TIME

Essays in honour of Kaj Öhrnberg

Edited by

Sylvia Akar, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila & Inka Nokso-Koivisto



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FOREWORD

Who was it that first suggested we should celebrate the 70th anniversary of our teacher and friend Kaj Öhrnberg, Phil.Lic., with a volume of studies in the fields he is interested in? Whoever it was, the idea was adopted by all and sundry as soon as it was expressed, and willingly at that. The editorial committee organized itself immediately and all those who heard about the plan were enthusiastic.

This is indicative of Kaj Öhrnberg's person. Over the years, he has been teaching and helping people around him. You need a bibliographical reference? Ask Kaj, he'll provide you with one and volunteer half a dozen others that just occurred to him might be relevant. Want someone to read your manuscript? Send it to Kaj, he'll be certain to read it carefully, comment on it and, at the same time, he'll routinely mark your misspellings and check your references. Need some help with Russian sources, Caucasian place names, history of Oriental studies? It is to Kaj we have always turned for help, advice, and sometimes even consolation when things were going awry. Under normal circumstances, many of the articles printed in this volume would first have been sent by their authors to Kaj for comment and corrections.

It is not only the people in his immediate surroundings that Kaj Öhrnberg has always helped. Our first circular concerning the Festschrift drew enthusiastic responses from Spain, Russia, Scandinavia, and other countries whose scholars he has been in contact with. Everybody was willing to, waiting to, and wanting to contribute. Contributions started flowing in almost immediately.

There were willing contributors galore, yet some we had to turn down. Early on we had decided that the Festschrift should be thematic and the themes discussed should reflect the scholarly interests of the honoree. His intellectual interests cover a lot more than just the topics he has been writing about — his love of Chinese cultural history, Spanish red wines, and Russian literature is well known to his friends — but we decided to limit the Festschrift to Arabistics and a few other topics he has himself been working with. Without this limitation, there would have been many others to join in and contribute.

For someone not privileged to know Kaj Öhrnberg personally, this collection of articles may perhaps provide a faint image of the person it celebrates. There are some more personal articles at the beginning of the volume. The rest have been selected because we think Kaj Öhrnberg might be interested in their topics. The wide scope of the articles reflects his equally wide interests. There are arti-

cles in English, German, French, and Spanish and there could as well have been several other languages, all of which Kaj Öhrnberg effortlessly reads.

But having said this, there remains one problem ahead. Always willing to help, Kaj Öhrnberg never pushes himself into the front line and he never particularly enjoys the limelight. How can we lure him into some occasion where his friends might come together to celebrate him and present him with the first copies of this Festschrift? We are still working on that ...

June 2013 in Helsinki

Sylvia Akar, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila & Inka Nokso-Koivisto