

Editorial

This issue of the Estonian Oriental Society's Yearbook, the sixteenth in number, is special. The managing editor of all the previous Yearbooks was Indrek Ude, who did his work with utmost care and sense of duty from the very beginning for almost twenty years. A total of fifteen volumes were published under his supervision. However, while editing this issue when already severely ill, Indrek's life path was interrupted, and his colleagues had to take over the editing. It took time to get the editing back on track, and, therefore, this Yearbook is published with some delay as a double issue of 2023/2024.

We did our best to leave Indrek's editorial style and principles unchanged and to continue along the path he had trodden. Moreover, he had managed to edit almost half of the contributions here. The design and style have also remained the same and have been done by the same people who, together with Indrek, have worked on the Yearbook for years. The result is now in your hands, and we hope that Indrek Ude himself would have been satisfied with it.

As always, this issue contains papers from several fields of Oriental studies, including nine articles, one commented translation, two anniversary stories, four obituaries, and a review of books on the East published in Estonian in 2023–2024.

In the opening article, to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Centre for Oriental Studies at the University of Tartu, its former and current heads Märt Läänemets and Alevtina Solovyeva look back on the Centre's past and discuss the current state and developments of Oriental studies today. Professor Emeritus Ott Kurs writes about the Turkic world and its renowned 19th-century researcher Wilhelm Radloff, a pioneer of Turkology in many fields. In the Ancient Near East section, Peeter Espak analyses the hymn to the god Enki by Ur-Ninurta, king of the Isin kingdom, from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE, and finds features of a creation myth in it. Helen Geršman, Head of the Study Area of Asian

Studies at Tallinn University, writes about the less-studied form and rhetoric of pre-Islamic Arabic prose, and Alice Volkonski, lecturer at the same university, discusses the work of the 11th–12th century Jewish author Yehuda ben Šemu'el ha-Levi from Andalusia, *Zion, will you not ask for the peace of your prisoners?* Professor Emeritus Tarmo Kulmar continues his research series with an annotated translation of a chapter from the work of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, one of the most important chroniclers of Peru, this time exploring the possibility of the Inca monotheism. Associate Professor Emeritus Henn Käärrik examines the reception of Carthage in the works of ideologists and historians of the Third Reich. Vladimir Sazonov and Sirje Kupp-Sazonov once again turn to Mikhail Bulgakov's famous novel *The Master and Margarita*, this time examining the mystical number "50" and its possible connotations in the religious history of the Middle East. Üllar Peterson's article focuses on the Islamic writings of the founding ideologists of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, Muṣṭafā as-Sibā'ī and Sa'īd Ḥawwā, which have not been studied in Western scholarship so far. Peterson also contributed to this issue a commented translation — the short story *Karaji Don Juan* by the Iranian writer Sadeq Hedayat.

In 2024, two esteemed scholars, honorary member of the Estonian Oriental Society Märt Tānava and corresponding member Ott Kurs, celebrated their anniversary birthdays, on which occasion *Idakiri* publishes articles about them as personalities. Tarmo Kulmar writes about Tānava and Hagani Gayıblı about Kurs.

Unfortunately, this time, we could not do without obituaries. In 2024, the Society's honorary member Arvo Valton, Society members Indrek Ude and Bishop Eelija (Ott Ojaperv) of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church and our long-time good friend Manfred Leonhard Georg Dietrich, a renowned German Middle Eastern scholar, honorary doctor of the University of Tartu, left us. They are commemorated (in the same order) by Andres Herkel, Harri Ints, Leho Rubis and Tarmo Kulmar.

As usual, the issue ends with an overview of Estonian-language literature on the East, which this time covers the period 2023–2024.

We would also like to inform you that Tarmo Kulmar, who has been the editor-in-chief of the Estonian Oriental Society's Yearbook since 2008, has decided to step down from his position in September 2025 due to his advanced age. The next issue of the Yearbook is already being put together by new editors.

Idakiri will continue to be published and may this be the best memory of our departed fellow member and editor Indrek Ude, his lasting legacy to the Oriental Studies of Estonia.

Tarmo Kulmar, editor-in-chief

Märt Läänemets, acting managing editor