

the collection for publication, and also to Ms. Anke de Looper of John Benjamins Press.

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FOREWORD

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When I was a senior about to graduate from Reed College in 1970, the two languages in the world I wanted most to learn were Bulgarian and Georgian. It so happened that both these languages were being (and still are) taught at the University of Chicago by Howard I. Aronson, and this fact was crucial in my decision to pursue my doctorate at that university. It was typical of Howie's generosity that when no one signed up for Georgian for credit for 1970-71, and I was unable to do so myself owing to the requirements for my M.A. in Slavic linguistics, he nonetheless taught first-year Georgian for me as lone auditor. (During the spring quarter of 1971, when Howie's schedule became too busy, one of the editors of this volume, Dee Ann Holisky, took over as my tutor). There was a joke in those days that he would be willing to go to the Illinois Central (now Metra) commuter train station at 57th and Lake Park to pass out leaflets encouraging people to take Georgian as they got off the train.

Howie has had a tremendous influence on generations of students, not only at Chicago, but also, through his Georgian textbooks, throughout North America and beyond. In addition to directing numerous dissertations on Georgian and other languages, he initiated the first dual degree program in the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago. That program, which Howie initiated in 1972 between the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (he was chairman of Linguistics at the time, and I was the first student to go through the dual degree program), has blossomed into a broad range of interdisciplinary degrees between the Department of Linguistics and most of the relevant departments in both the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

It is thanks to Howie that his two areas of interest — the Balkans and the Caucasus — have both been the focus of international attention at the University of Chicago. In 1978, with Bill J. Darden, he organized the first Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics and Literatures at the

University of Chicago, That conference quickly grew into a biennial event hosted by various North American Universities and attracting scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. Howie organized it five more times in the past twenty years.

In 1979, just before the annual meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society, Howie (again assisted by Bill J. Darden) organized the first International Conference on Non-Slavic Languages of the USSR, The proceedings of this conference were published together with papers from the parasession of that year's CLS conference, and eight of the twenty papers treated, in whole or in part, languages of Caucasia. The conference continued to be organized by Howie and held at Chicago biennially for twenty years, and the proceedings have been published either by Slavica Publishers or the Chicago Linguistic Society (NSL 9 will soon be published by Slavica). Papers on the languages of Caucasia have constituted from 40% to 70% of each volume.

In 1983, Howie organized the first Conference on the Cultures of the Caucasus, which from then on was held regularly as a continuation of the linguistics meetings. In 1993, in recognition of political realities, the name of the linguistics conference was changed to NSL (Non-Slavic Languages of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic Republics). Another transformation occurred in 1999 owing to the fact that under changed political circumstances most of the non-Slavic languages of what had been the USSR were now accounted for by larger regional organizations — Turkic Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Baltic Studies, etc. As a result, the substantial section of NSL devoted to the languages of the Caucasus and the conference on the Cultures of Caucasia were combined into the First Chicago Conference on Caucasia. The papers from this conference appear in Volume 8 of the *Annual of the Society for the Study of Caucasia*, a journal that has been edited by Howie since its inception in 1989.

The present volume contains papers from the last of the NSL conferences as well as other contributions written especially for this publication. It is dedicated to Howie's honor for his many, many years of contribution to the field of Caucasian studies, not only organizational, but also scholarly, as seen from the bibliography of Howie's publications that follows this note.

ჰოუარდის ვაჟმარჯოს!

THE PUBLICATIONS OF HOWARD I. ARONSON

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