

PROFESSOR MÁRIA IVANICS

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Mária Ivanics was born in Budapest on 31 August, 1950. She grew up in Gyömrő, a township near Budapest where her parents were residents. After her secondary school education she started her university studies at Loránd Eötvös University (Budapest) in 1968 focussing on Russian language and literature. Her interest in Turkology rose only by the second term, and her application to start at that point was unusual at that time when the system was rather rigid; however, she could quickly fill up the gap due to her perseverance and indefatigability. Those years there were two separate full time curricula at the department: Turkology in general and Ottoman studies. She chose the latter field, where Professor Gyula Káldy-Nagy was the competent staff member. Documents concerning the relationship between Transylvania and the Crimean Khanate early came into the focus of her attention. In 1972 she spent half a year at the Zhdanov State University in Leningrad/St. Petersburg, which was compulsory for all the students of Russian philology. Mária Ivanics managed to attend some of the lectures and seminars of professors of Turkic Studies there. She wrote her MA thesis on Transylvanian and Crimean Tatar connections in the 17th century.



Upon receiving her diploma in 1973, she started to teach Russian at a secondary school in Budapest. This was the period when Altaic studies were introduced at the Attila József University,

Szeged (today Szeged University), and she was invited to fill the position opening right at that time. During her first period in Szeged, she successfully defended her university doctoral dissertation entitled 'Crimean Tatar Documents in Hungary' in 1976. Then for a few years she stayed at home with her two sons. From 1980 until 1986 she accompanied her husband, the historian-archivist Imre Rész, to Vienna, where he was the Hungarian deputy at the Austrian State Archives for some six years. This was an extraordinary opportunity for Mária. On the one hand, she regularly visited the archives and collected all sorts of relevant material which she could use in her later works, and, on the other, she joined the seminars of Professor Anton Cornelius Schaendlinger, where she further developed her skill in reading difficult Ottoman texts.

With a so strongly widened knowledge she returned to Szeged, where she advanced step by step. In 1992 she defended her thesis entitled 'The Crimean Khanate in the Fifteen Years' War' submitted to acquire the 'candidate' degree (CSc) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. With her voluminous dissertation entitled 'The Nomadic Prince in the *Däftär-i Čingiz-nāmā*. The Nomadic Mirror for Princes' she became doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (DSc), and somewhat later, in 2009 she was elevated to full professorship. One year earlier, she had taken over the chair of Altaistics and remained in this position until 2015. As a professor she remained active until her seventy birthday in harmony with Hungarian prescriptions. Besides, she headed the research group of the Academy and Szeged University in the project 'Cultural Heritage of the Turkic Peoples' during the recent years.

Mária Ivanics has always been an outstanding and careful *hoca*. Her presentations have excelled with lucidity and meticulous arrangement. She prepared several materials for the novices assisting them to orientate themselves in the curriculum of Altaic Studies (Altaistics). She has actively participated in the MA and PhD programmes of the Szeged University. More than a dozen pupils prepared their MA theses under her guidance. She has never spared time whenever they or others needed help. Each week she took the train from Budapest and spent a few days in Szeged. This was not an easy way of life since she never failed to remain a responsible and watchful mother and wife at the same time.

As far as her scholarly work is concerned, Mária Ivanics can rightly be regarded as one of the excellent representatives of Hungarian Turkologists. She is a worthy continuator of the best traditions of Hungarian research that had gained international reputation. Basically, she had the training of a scholar of Ottoman history, having a special interest in the history of the Crimean Khanate. The latter, which played an important role in Hungarian history of the 16th–17th centuries as well, became a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire in 1475. Since the antecedents, origins and traditions of the Crimean Tatar Khanate went back to the Golden Horde, successor state of the Mongol Empire, her interest in Crimea gradually diverted her attention to the Golden Horde roots of the Khanate.

It is impossible to enumerate even her major articles and books written mainly in Hungarian, German and Russian. Her works tackle a number of questions concerning the history of the Golden Horde, the Crimean Khanate, the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires. Some of her favourite themes are as follows: character of and changes in the Crimean–Ottomans relationship (1475–1774), diplomatic contacts of the Crimean Khanate with Russia and the European powers, steppe historiography of the Golden Horde, diplomatic correspondence of the Crimean Khanate, especially with the Principality of Transylvania, clan system of the Crimean Khanate, etc.

Suffice it here to mention three of her major works. Her latest book (*Hatalomgyakorlás a steppén: A Dzsingisz-náme nomád világa*. [Power practice in the steppes. Nomadic world in the



Chinggis-nāma]. Budapest, 2017) is an extended version of her academic doctoral dissertation. This book, replete with novel insights into the functioning of the Eurasian nomadic world, would really deserve an English edition. The main starting point regarding vital issues of her argumentation is an important Tatar narrative source of the 17th century, which was published in collaboration with Professor Mirkasym A. Usmanov (Kazan), in a carefully prepared critical edition with a reliable translation (Mária Ivanics–Mirkasym A. Usmanov, *Das Buch der Dschingis-Legende* (Däftär-i Čingiz-nāmā) I. Szeged, 2002).

Her monograph *A Krími Kánság a tizenöt éves háborúban (1593–1606)* [The Crimean Khanate in the Fifteen Years' War (1593–1606)]. Budapest, 1994) was written with the inclusion of several unknown sources. This pioneering study, based on her above-mentioned CSc thesis, is still the best reference work on the topic in Hungarian, including aspects of the earlier history of the Khanate.

At present, she is engaged in a project on the relationship between the Crimean Khanate and the Principality of Transylvania (1597–1717). She intends to write a monograph on this theme, which would include some *eighty*, hitherto mainly unpublished diplomas. We are eagerly awaiting the publication of this work.

Side by side with her engagements in lecturing and tutoring at the Chair of Altaic Studies she undertook several editing and organizing tasks. She has been the editor of the semi-popular Oriental series 'Kőrösi Csoma Kiskönyvtár' published by the Academy since 2005 in Hungarian and co-editor of 'Studia Uralo-Altaica', appearing in Szeged, since 2008. The chair has had excellent contacts with German (Mainz, Berlin), Tatar, Kazak and naturally Turkish academic centres and scholars. Besides granting the possibility for students to open their vista by spending weeks or months in these countries, these connections ensured cooperation by organizing workshops, smaller or larger congresses (like the International Conference on Turkish Linguistics in 2010) and make joint publications.

Professor Ivanics' fluency in German, Russian and Turkish enabled her to regularly participate in international gatherings, workshops and conferences. She was a welcome guest in Germany, Russia, and Turkey. She has been in close contact with the Turkologists and historians of Moscow, Kazan and Kazakhstan.

Mária Ivanics has always taken an active part in the life of academia. From 1989 onward she has been a dynamic board member of the Csoma de Körös Society, a scholarly body of Hungarian Oriental scholarship. Since 1993 she has been member of the Oriental Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. From its inception in 1989, she has been on the Board of the Hungarian–Turkish Friendship Society, in 2008–2017 filling the post of the Vice-Chairperson.

She obtained numerous grants (Széchenyi Professorial Grant, Mellon Grant in Turkey, etc.), and is the holder of several awards (Géza Kuun Award, Ferenc Szakály Award, Prize for Hungarian Higher Education).

In addition to her large-scale scholarly activities, Mária Ivanics has been untiring in organizing the yearly 'Gyömrő picnic'-s, where she has regularly invited all the prominent Turkologists from Szeged and Budapest. Normally timed for the last Saturday of August, these occasions have presented good opportunities to discuss the actual issues of the previous and the next academic year and strengthen friendship between colleagues in the two main centres of Oriental studies in Hungary.

Now that Professor Mária Ivanics reaches the age of seventy years, we wholeheartedly congratulate her on this occasion. We wish our dear colleague and friend good health, physical and spiritual strength to continue her work and enrich our knowledge with new seminal articles and books.

