

Nekrologi / Obituaries

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In memoriam Zsuzsa Kakuk (1925–2025)

Zsuzsa Kakuk was one of the leading Hungarian Turkologists recognised internationally for her multiple publications in French, English and German, though she also published much in Hungarian. She was born in Nagytálya, a small village in Heves county in Hungary on 13 August 1925. She died in Budapest on 18 April 2025 and was buried on 17 June. Therefore, she almost attained the age of 100. In her early publications, according of the Hungarian custom of the 1950s–1970s, she used her first name in the form Suzanne.

Zsuzsa Kakuk started her education in a primary school in her native village in 1932 and continued it in a secondary school in Eger between 1936 and 1942 but passed her final secondary school examinations in Szatmárnémeti in 1943. Afterwards she studied at the University of Debrecen between 1945 and 1949, graduating in Hungarian and Latin. After graduation, she worked at the Institute of Linguistics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences approximately for a year when she started Turkic Studies at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest as Prof. Gyula (Julius) Németh's doctoral student in 1951. Gyula Németh was one of the most renowned Hungarian Turkologists and his guidance was very fruitful. Zsuzsa Kakuk got her PhD degree (candidate dissertation in the Hungarian system of education of that time) in 1955 and started working at the Department of Turkology of the university. In the following years she went through all degrees of her professional career and was appointed a full professor in 1977. At the age of seventy, she retired from the university in 1995 but remained active in research for more than two decades. Between 1971 and 1990, she was the head of the Department of Turkology.

Zsuzsa Kakuk was a member of the Committee for Oriental Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences from 1964 to the end of her professional career. Between 1985 and 1990, she was the head of this committee. She was also a member of various state commissions and bodies of accreditation of linguistic and oriental education.



Between 1986 and 1994, she was the editor-in-chief of *Keletkutatás* ‘Oriental Studies’, a journal which publishes articles, reports and other papers on Oriental languages in Hungarian, edited by the Csoma Kőrösi Oriental Society. She was a member of this committee and its head for ten years. From 1954 onwards, she was also a member of Hungarian Linguistic Society and from 1989 a member of Hungarian-Turkish Society.

In 1970, Zsuzsa Kakuk was elected an honorary member of the Institute of the Turkish Language.

In 1995, on Zsuzsa Kakuk’s seventieth birthday, her disciples and colleagues dedicated volume 48 of *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* to her. In addition to scholarly articles, a bibliography by Géza Dávid and a list of Zsuzsa Kakuk’s publications was published in this Festschrift.

Zsuzsa Kakuk’s scholarly output includes over 140 publications among which there are monographs, bibliographies, co-authored dictionaries, dictionary articles, translations of prose and poetry from Turkic languages, articles, reports, reviews and other contributions to Turkic and Hungarian in linguistics and philology. As a graduate in Hungarian and Latin, she started working on Ottoman Turkish loanwords in Hungarian. Her PhD thesis *Fejezetek oszmán-török jövevényszavaink történetéből* ‘Chapters from the history of the Ottoman Turkish loanwords in Hungarian’ (Budapest, 1955), post-doctoral thesis (doctoral dissertation in the Hungarian system of education of that time) *Tanulmány az oszmán-török nyelv 16–17. századi történetéhez (A magyar nyelv oszmán-török elemei alapján)* ‘Study on the history of 16th–17th century Ottoman Turkish (on the basis of Ottoman Turkish elements in Hungarian)’ (Budapest, 1969) and many subsequent publications were devoted to this field. Zsuzsa Kakuk’s internationally best-known contribution to this field based on her post-doctoral dissertation is the monograph *Recherches sur l’histoire de la langue osmanlie des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles. Les éléments osmanlies de la langue hongroise*, published in 1973. All these studies have been prepared meticulously, but the material basis was so great that she returned to these questions repeatedly in the subsequent years. Another important publication devoted to Ottoman Turkish spoken in Hungary in the 16th–17th centuries is *A török kor emléke a magyar szókincsben* ‘The memory of the Turkish period in the Hungarian lexicon’ (Budapest, 1996). An important contribution of this type is Zsuzsa Kakuk’s co-operation with the editors of the Hungarian Historical-Etymological dictionary (*A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára*). This dictionary was published in three volumes between 1967 and 1976. It comprises around 11,000 entries and Zsuzsa Kakuk is the author of the words of Turkic origin.

Another field of Zsuzsa Kakuk’s scholarly interest is Turkish dialects in Bulgaria and Macedonia. She has collected, studied and published texts from Kazanlyk (two papers in 1958), from Kustendil und Mikhailovgrad (two papers in 1961) and from Okhrid (an article in 1972).

Apart from Turkish and Turkish dialects, Zsuzsa Kakuk also studied two other Turkic languages, Salar and Modern Uyghur. It was possible due to her 1960 trip to China where she recorded texts from a Salar native speaker and some Uyghur songs recorded on tape from discs in Beijing. The Salar texts and a study on Salar phonetics were published in two articles in 1962 and Uyghur songs were published in 1972.

The next type of Zsuzsa Kakuk's studies is the critical edition of Ignác Kúnos's recordings taken from the speakers of various Turkic languages in the prisoners' camps in Eger, Esztergom and Kenyérmező between 1915 and 1918. His informants were the captives taken from the Russian army at the time of World War I. Kúnos's recordings comprise many texts in Kazan Tatar, Mishar Tatar and Crimean Tatar, but also a small amount of Bashkir, Kumuk, Nogay and Turkmen texts. From this huge collection, Zsuzsa Kakuk has published the following recordings: Mishar Tatar folk songs recorded in Eger between 1915 and 1917 (*Das Kaufmannsleben der Mischärtataren*, 1982), a Mishar Tatar glossary, also compiled by Kúnos in Eger (*Ein mischärtatarisches Wörterverzeichnis*, 1982), Mishar Tatar folk songs and tales recorded in Eger between 1915 and 1917 (*Mischärische Texte und Wörterverzeichnis*, 1996), Kazan Tatar folk songs recorded in Eger between 1915 and 1918 (*Kasantatarische Volkslieder*, 1980), Kazan Tatar fairy tales recorded in Eger in 1917 (*Kasantatarische Volksmärchen*, 1989, co-authored by Imre Baski), Crimean Tatar riddles recorded in 1915 (*Krimtatarische Rätsel*, 1994) and Crimean Tatar folk songs recorded in Eger in 1915 (*Kırım Tatar Şarkıları*, 1993).

In 1999, Zsuzsa Kakuk and Imre Baski compiled a Kazan Tatar glossary based on Kúnos's Kazan Tatar folk songs and fairy tales published earlier in 1980 and 1989 (*Kasantatarisches Wörterverzeichnis*, 1999). Later Zsuzsa Kakuk published another glossary, compiled from Crimean Tatar folk songs and riddles (*Krimtatarisches Wörterverzeichnis*, 2012).

In addition, she has published a Crimean Karaim glossary compiled by Kúnos in Istanbul from words recorded from Seraya Shapshal and other Karaims between 1925 and 1927 (*Ein krimkaraimisches Wörterverzeichnis*, 1991).

Zsuzsa Kakuk has also written, edited and co-authored a few practical aids. The first is a textbook published in two volumes in 1976 and 1980, *Mai török nyelvek. I. Bevezetés* 'Modern Turkic languages I: An introduction' and *Mai török nyelvek II. Szövegek* 'Modern Turkic languages II: Texts', respectively. This textbook, intended for the Hungarian students of Turkology, is very helpful. It contains descriptions of Modern Turkic languages with rich bibliography and samples of texts. The second is a large Hungarian-Turkish dictionary (*Magyar-Török Szótár*) published in 2002 which on more than 900 pages has 35,000 entries and 25,000 phrases, collocations and example sentences. It was edited by Zsuzsa Kakuk and written by Gün Benderli, Yılmaz Gülen, Zsuzsa Kakuk and Edit Tasnádi. The third is a dictionary to the other side, i.e. Turkish-Hungarian (*Török-Magyar Szótár*) published in 2013 and prepared by the same team.¹

A domain popularizing Turkic literature in Hungary to which Zsuzsa Kakuk has contributed is translation. She translated Orkhon inscriptions (1958 and 1975), Crimean Tatar folk songs and riddles (2004), Kazan Tatar and Mishar folk songs (2005), and Turkish folk songs into Hungarian (2015). Except for the Orkhon inscriptions, the translated popular literature was based on Kúnos's recordings.

Zsuzsa Kakuk has also published a bibliography of Hungarian Turkology for the years 1945–1974 (Kakuk 1981).

¹ The number of entries is not provided in this dictionary, it has 565 pages.

I would also like to commemorate Prof. Zsuzsa Kakuk as my teacher, who was exactly my mother's age. As a student of Turkology at Budapest University, I was attending her lectures and seminars between 1976 and 1981. Zsuzsa Kakuk's classes included an introduction to Turkic philology, History of Turkic, Hungarian-Turkic language contact, Turkic syntax as well as special seminars. Zsuzsa Kakuk was an excellent teacher, she loved teaching and working with students. She was always nice, but also critical and taught us to distinguish between outstanding, good and poor in research. She stressed what are the most important tasks for the study. In relation to me, she tried to encourage me to undertake the study on Kipchak languages saying that after Tadeusz Kowalski and Ananiasz Zajączkowski this branch of Turkology is well developed in Poland and it is worth continuing this tradition. After my graduation, we used to discuss some aspects of Karaim, Tatar and Crimean Tatar.

After retirement, Zsuzsa Kakuk was active till 2017, although the number of her publications was not as high as before due to her health condition.

Publications on Zsuzsa Kakuk

- Dávid Géza, 'Professor Zsuzsa Kakuk', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48/3 (1995), pp. 247–250.
- Eren Hasan, 'Kakuk, Zsuzsa', in: *Türklük Bilimi Sözlüğü. 1. Yabancı Türkologlar*, Hasan Eren, Türk Dil Kurumu, Ankara 1998, pp. 184–185.
- Kakuk Zsuzsa, 'Kakuk Zsuzsa vallomása pályájáról', in: *Magyar nyelvész pályaképek és önvallomások 83. Kakuk Zsuzsa*, Kálmán Bolla (ed.), Zsigmond Király Főiskola, Budapest 2008, pp. 5–17.
- Kakuk Zsuzsa, 'Kakuk, Zsuzsa (13 Ağustos 1925, Nagytálya –)', in: *Macar Türkologlar. Küçük Biyografik Ansiklopedi*, Gábor Fodor (ed.), Türksoy, Ankara 2022, 110–111.

A bibliography of Zsuzsa Kakuk's publications that appeared in print between 1996 and 2017²

1996

123. *Mischärische Texte und Wörterverzeichnis*. Aufgrund der Sammlung von Ignác Kúnos herausgegeben von Zsuzsa Kakuk. Szeged (Studia Uralo-Altaica 38), 192 pp.³
124. *A török kor emléke a magyar szókinsben*. Budapest (Körösi Csoma Kiskönyvtár 23): Akadémiai Kiadó, 366 pp.
125. *A török kor emléke a magyar nyelvben. Török Füzetek* 4,1: 4–6, 4,3: 5–7.

² The bibliography of Zsuzsa Kakuk's publications for the years 1954–1996 was published as: 'Bibliography of Zsuzsa Kakuk', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48/3 (1995), pp. 251–259. It contains 123 items and four items to appear. My best thanks go to Prof. Géza Dávid for his help and sharing some sources with me. However, some articles in Hungarian that appeared after 1996, mostly of popular character, which were inaccessible, have been disregarded in this short bibliography.

³ This item is also listed in the bibliography of 1995.

1997

126. Türkische Diminutivsuffixe in den türkischen Lehnwörtern der ungarischen Sprache. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 50,1–3: 147–154.

1999

127. *Kasantatarisches Wörterverzeichnis*. Aufgrund der Sammlung von Ignác Kúnos herausgegeben von Zsuzsa Kakuk unter Mitwirkung von Imre Baski. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu. Ankara, 135 pp.

2000

128. Török jövevényszavak. In: József Szentpéteri (ed.). *Magyar Kódex. 5. Szultán és császár birodalmában. Magyarország művelődéstörténete 1526–1790*. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 120–128.
129. Review of: Kúnos Ignác (ed. by Tuncer Gülensoy) 1978. *Türk Halk Edebiyatı*, translated from Turkish by Edit Tasnádi as *A török népköltés*. In: *Török Füzetek* 8,3: 11.

2001

130. Krimtatarische Soldatenlieder aus dem ersten Weltkrieg. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54,1: 509–517.

2002

131. *Magyar-Török Szótár* (co-authored by Gün Benderli, Yılmaz Gülen and Edit Tasnádi, ed. Zsuzsa Kakuk). Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 919 pp.
132. Review of: Edit Tasnádi (translated) 2000. *A pasa fia meg a világszépe. Török népmesék*. Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, Európai Folklór Intézet. In: *Török Füzetek* 10,1: 16.
133. *Kossuth Lajos törökországi napjai. Lajos Kossuth'un Türkiye Günleri*. Budapest: A Török Köztársaság Nagykövetsége, 80 pp. [bilingual publication; the Turkish text translated from Hungarian by Yılmaz Gülen].
134. The Footprints of the Turkish Age on the Hungarian Language. In: Hasan Celâl Güzel (ed.) *The Turks. 3. Ottomans*. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 868–872 [the English version of item 135].
135. Türk Döneminin Macar Dili Üzerinde Bıraktığı İzler. In: Hasan Celâl Güzel, Kemal Çiçek and Salim Koca (ed.) *Türkler Cilt II. Osmanlı*. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 526–531 [the Turkish version of item 134].

2004

136. *Hoztam tenger mélyéből. Krími tatár népdalok és találós kérdések*. Karcag: Barbaricum Könyvműhely, 128 pp.

2005

137. *Bükkönyrét a Volga partján. Kazáni tatár és miser népdalok*. Karcag: Barbaricum Könyvműhely, 160 pp.

2012

138. *Krimtatarisches Wörterverzeichnis*. Aufgrund der Sammlung von Ignác Kúnos zusammengestellt von Zsuzsa Kakuk. Szeged (Studia Uralo-Altaica 50), 172 pp.
139. Mikes Kelemen török szókincstára: Mikes Kelemen tiszteletére halálának 250-dik évfordulója alkalmából. In: Mihály Dobrovits (ed.). *Vámbéry tanulmányok: Az érett kor ítélete. IX. nemzetközi Vámbéry konferencia*. Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 158–214.
140. Török szavak Mikes Törökországi leveleiben. In: Gábor Tüskés (ed.) *Író a száműzetésben: Mikes Kelemen*. Budapest: Universitas Kiadó, 110–121.

2013

141. *Török-Magyar Szótár* (co-authored by Gün Benderli, Yılmaz Gülen and Edit Tasnádi, ed. Zsuzsa Kakuk). Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 565 pp.

2015

142. *Adakálei török népdalok: Kúnos Ignác gyűjtését versbe szedte Kakuk Zsuzsa*. [Turkish folk songs from Adakale recorded and published by Ignác Kúnos in 1906, translated into Hungarian by Zsuzsa Kakuk] Karcag: Mark Egyesület, 111 pp.

2017

143. Török kultúrhatás jövevényszavaink tükrében. In: Júlia Bartha and Mihály Hoppál (ed.) *Török hagyaték: Tanulmányok a magyar kultúra török kapcsolatairól*. Budapest: Európai Folklór Központért Egyesület, 43–52.