

Sándor Maticsák has turned 60

Sándor Maticsák was born in Kisvárda on May 4, 1965 (Eastern Hungary). He took his baccalaureate in the local György Bessenyei Grammar school in 1983. A year later, he began his studies at the Lajos Kossuth University in Debrecen. He obtained the degree of a grammar-school teacher of Hungarian language and literature and that of a Finno-Ugric linguist in 1990. After graduation, he taught at the university climbing each rung of the ladder of career: he taught as an assistant lecturer until 1997; In the meantime, from 1992 to 1996, he worked as a Hungarian visiting lecturer in Jyväskylä in Finland; He taught as a senior lecturer until 2003 and an associate professor until 2017; From 2005, he has been chair of the department. Up to the present time, he has been teaching as a university professor.

His promotions were preceded by obtaining the required academic degrees in each case: he submitted a doctoral dissertation with the title *A Mordvin Köztársaság településneveinek rendszere* [The system of settlement names in the Mordvin Republic] (Debrecen 1995), which served as a basis for his PhD degree.

He made good use of his experience as a Hungarian visiting lecturer when he became educational manager of the Debrecen Summer School: he compiled teaching materials with co-authors (seven volumes of the series *Hungarolingua*, Debrecen 1991–2016); he published essays on hungarology and edited conference publications.

Maticsák taught courses on Finnish descriptive grammar and the history of the Finnish language in cooperation with the Finnish lecturer in charge. This work produced the following results: a series of practical Finnish textbooks (*Finn nyelvkönyv*, Debrecen 2002–2018, 5 editions) as well as *Ki kicsoda Finnországban?* [Who is who in Finland] (Debrecen 1999), the co-author of which is Anna Tarvainen, an one-time Finnish lecturer.

He habilitated by submitting his thesis on Mordvin geographical names (*A mordvinföldi víznevek rendszere* [The system of Mordvin water names]). This led him to become associate professor and later, chair of the department. He started to be interested in problems of Finno-Ugric morphology and word-formation. He wrote up the 17-18th-century sources of Mordvin literacy step by step and, by using them as well as rich lexicographic materials, he

submitted a monumental monograph in order to obtain the title of DSc of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*Az erza-mordvin névszóképzők nyelvtörténeti vizsgálata* [A historical analysis of Erzya-Mordvin affixes]). Debrecen 2017). In his thesis, he took a stand on theoretical questions of noun formation and supplemented the relationship between the productivity and frequency of affixes significantly as well. In his historical analysis, he clarified obscured problems of noun formation (processes and stages of agglutination, development of suffixes and grammaticalization). As a result, he laid the foundation of an impressive Mordvin etymological dictionary. In the same year, he was promoted to university professor after obtaining the DSc degree.

In his scholarly work, the history of Finno-Ugric linguistic researches play a prominent role: *A mordvin írásbeliség kezdetei* (Debrecen 2012), *The beginnings of Mordvin literacy* (Hamburg 2017), *Gerhard Friedrich Müller és Johann Eberhard Fischer 18. századi szójegyzékeinek mordvin anyaga* [The Mordvin section of an 18th-century glossary by Gerhard Friedrich Müller and Johann Eberhard Fischer] (Debrecen 2016). He also analyzed works by Witsen, Damaskin, Richkov, Falk and Pallas.

Sándor Maticsák started out as a researcher. The evidence of this is a number of his collective works: *Rokon nyelveink szótárai* [Dictionaries of our related languages] (Budapest 2014); *Gerhard Friedrich Müller a csere-miszekről, csuvasokról és votjákokról* [Gerhard Friedrich Müller on the Cheremis, Chuwash and Votyak] (Debrecen 2018).

He was member of the editorial boards of international journals: *Hungarologische Beiträge* (Jyväskylä), *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* (Budapest), and *Onomastica Uralica* (Debrecen – Helsinki). He also edited the proceedings of international congresses of Finno-Ugric (1990, 1995) and Hungarian Studies (2001, 2006). In his collective work, editing the periodical of the department, *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia*, is of great importance. In it, he continuously publishes essays, reviews, and memoirs from the very beginning. He also designs the layout of the publications.

His teaching, academic organizational as well as public activities are far-reaching both on a national and international level.

We find it praiseworthy that the dissemination of knowledge is not alien to Maticsák. The evidence of this is a large number of studies and books popularizing etymological researches, for example, on the days of the week (*Vándorló napok. A hét napjainak megnevezése az európai nyelvekben* [Wandering days. Naming the days of the week in European languages]. Debrecen 2005); etymology of the names of currencies (*A mókusbőrtől az euróig. Pénznevek etimológiai szótára* [From squirrel pelt to Euro. An etymological dictionary

of names of currencies]. Budapest 2018, 2023) etc. In these publications, a strict professional and philological discipline blends with a readable style.

His work has been acknowledged with several medals: he was dubbed knight of the Finnish White Rose Order of Knighthood in 2012 (Suomen Valkoinen ruusu); in 2019, he was elected associate member of the Helsinki Finno-Ugric Society (Suomalais-ugrilainen Seura). He was given the prestigious Academic Award of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2024. He earned this award for his large-scale summarizing work, (*A magyar nyelv eredete és rokonsága* [The origin and relations of the Hungarian language]. Budapest 2020), which can be regarded as the latest basic product of Finno-Ugric researches. This thick volume not only aims at the dissemination of knowledge, but is also a reliable summary of hitherto academic research. His latest book (*Megtalált szavak. Az orenburgi expedíció (1768–1774) Volga–Káma-vidéki finnugor anyaga* [Words discovered: Finno-Ugric material from the Volga-Kama Region of the Orenburg expedition (1768–1774)]. Debrecen 2024) represents the research history of our jubilee celebrant.

The details of Sándor Maticsák's academic achievements are impressive (cf. 33–51 pages of our present edition). He has produced 305 publications so far. A third of them is on Mordvin linguistics. He published 11 books, three of which, with co-authors. He wrote a number of Hungarian and Finnish textbooks with co-authors, which had several editions. The number of his essays is 127, of which 91 was published in professional journals, whereas the rest as chapters in books, collected works, proceedings of congresses and complimentary volumes. Forty-six of his works were published in foreign languages. He is a hard-working reviewer: he reviews works written on diverse topics by authors of various nationalities and languages (50 reviews). The number of his other publications (in honorem, in memoriam) is 48. Thirty-seven reviews were published on his books. The number of his unrelated references exceeds 600, while that of his related ones is over a hundred.

The edited publications are not present in the notes. They are 58 in number. It is difficult to estimate the number of volumes whose layout resulted from his assiduity: his name can be found on the title page of almost a hundred publications.

Sándor Maticsák's academic work as well as his human conduct are exemplary and can serve as a guidance for both Hungarian and foreign colleagues and friends. He rightly deserves his colleagues' heartfelt greetings and encouragement for his future career.

LÁSZLÓ KERESZTES – IVETT KELEMEN

