Király Péter 100

Nemzetközi tudományos konferencia
Király Péter professzor születésének 100. évfordulója alkalmából

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Az előadások szláv nyelveken, magyarul, ill. angolul hangzanak el.
Péter Király was born on November 22, 1917 in Málca in the East-Hungarian Zemplén County, which became part of the newly founded Czechoslovakia after 1918. Málca (in Slovak: Malče) was a small village of mixed Hungarian and Slovak population. Here is where he spent his childhood. His father, descendant of a farming family from Karcag in Hungary, was a Calvinist minister; his mother belonged to an old family of Calvinist ministers from the Zemplén region. Péter Király began his university studies in 1937 at Charles University of Prague. His parents were not able to finance his studies. Fortunately, because Hungarian Calvinists participated in 1620 on the side of Czech Reformed forces in the Battle of White Mountain, a few Hungarian Calvinist students from Czechoslovakia were given free housing at the so-called Husite-College (Husův Dům) of the Prague university. From 1938 on Péter Király continued his studies in Bratislava, choosing Slovakian-Hungarian linguistics as his main subject. Here he became acquainted with László A. Arany, a linguist-folklorist scholar, who greatly influenced much of Péter Király’s later career and work. As result of World War II, in 1945 he was forced to leave Czechoslovakia. Together with his older sister and two younger brothers he moved to Hungary. Here he met Klára Csilléry (1923–2002) in 1949, to whom he was married for 53 years. Soon after moving to Budapest, he got a job, aided by the Slavist-Linguist István Kniesza, at the Széchenyi National Library, but later moved to the Research Institute for Linguistic (Nyelvtudományi Intézet, Budapest). From 1959 on, he was Vice Director of this Institute. In 1974 he was chosen to lead the Department of Slav Philology at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (ELTE Szláv Filológiai Tanszék), a position which he held until his retirement in 1987. At the same time, from 1974 until 1987, as a member of the International Slavistic Committee, he served as Chair of its Hungarian Committee. His important roles as teacher, researcher and science organiser were mirrored in his academic title Doctor of Science in Linguistic („nyelvtudományok doktora“) as well as receiving the honorary title after his retirement „professzor emeritus“ of his university. He was elected in 1989 as a foreign member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and received the Slovakian Ludovít Stúr-award in 1993. Finally he was awarded the Eötvös József-anadem of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2006. Péter Király’s scientific activities were many: almost 200 publications carry his name. He worked every day, in his retired years, until his death in early 2015. Even in his later years he carried on his linguistic and historical studies, the latter devoted to the conquest and settlement of the Carpathian Basin by the Hungarians. Early in his career, he worked on Slavic dialects, later on this subject attracted him to early written Slavic documents, and the linguistic development of Slavic literature, as well as the activities of S. Cyril and S. Methodius in the region, further the Slavic prints in Hungary. He also did research on the so-called burse of S. Stephan in Vienna („Szent István erszénye“) an early precious artifact, with a Slavic inscription, connected to Hungary. Péter Király initiated research into Slav documents within the territory of Hungary; also he encouraged Hungarian scholars into taking part in the research for preparing the International Slavic Linguistic Atlas. In his later years the explorations of the ancient Hungarian language and culture became more important, mainly his research on the age of the Hungarian settlement. For this latter topic he extensively used old Slav documents, mostly unknown to Hungarian historians. As a result of this work, his book „A honfoglalás vitás eseményei. A kalandozások és a honfoglalás éve“ („The much debated events of the Hungarian settlement. The invasion and the year of the conquest“) was published in 2006. His pioneering results, based on the rich documentation of this book, established that the presence of Hungarians can be documented in the region from the second part of the 6th century A.D. on. It received attention among historians, but is still not widely recognized as it deserves. This topic, the settlement the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, was that he was most interested in his last years. Some of his results are still awaiting publication. Péter Király did a great deal for the exploration of the cultural connections between the Magyars and their Slav neighbours. A few aspects should be mentioned here:

— he discovered and published written documents in ancient and new Bulgarian, he became the founding president of the Society for Hungarian-Bulgarian Friendship
— he discovered and published a formerly unknown early biography of S. Cyril and S. Methodius, and initiated the inauguration of the statue of S. Cyril and S. Methodius in Zalavár, Western-Hungary
— his activity in Polonistics is considerable, as he also initiated the Department of Polish Philology (Lengyel Filológiai Tanszék) at the ELTE, Budapest.
— explored the Calvinistic writings in East-Slovak dialect, also published Slovak sources found in Hungary, and analysed spoken Slovak dialects he collected within the territory of Hungary
— found and published an earlier unknown Alexander Magnus-epoch from the 14th century, written in Czech.
— he explored in articles, outlined a book, and also organized a conference, to present the important role of the University Print of Buda, and its achievements with its editions in Slav, Rumanian etc. languages. What an enormous influence and stimulating effect these had on the development of the languages of the neighbouring nations, but also on finding their national identity
— last, but not least, his studies regarding the age of the settlement of Hungarians are significant.