

GEZA FEHER

1890-1915

Géza Fehér was born in Kunszentmiklós, Hungary, in 1890. After having finished his high school studies in Kiskunhalas, he came to Debrecen, where he matriculated at the old reformed College. Here under the leadership of his professors J. Darko, N. Láng and J. Papay he soon devoted himself to the studies of the history of the migration period. His inaugural dissertation "The Atelkuzu territory and name" deals with the problems of the original home of the Hungarian people. In 1913 he got his high-school teacher's diploma, and worked first in Sepsiszentgyörgy /Transilvania/, and then in Szabadka. During the world war he served in the infantry. Towards the end of the war he came to Turkey. Here he worked for six months in the Hungarian Institute in İstanbul. After the war he rearranged the oriental collection of the Municipal Library of Budapest. In 1921 he published his book "Bulgarisch-Ungarische Beziehungen in den V.-XI. Jahrhunderten" /Bulgarian-Hungarian Relations in the V.-XI. centuries/, which is up to now a fundamental work of the history of that time. - In 1922 he went to Bulgaria to do research work. Here with the assistance of the government he built a scaffold to the famous rock-relief of Madara, and got permission and assistance to carry out excavations in the neighbourhood of the rock relief. Géza Fehér succeeded in deciphering the inscriptions of the relief of Madara, a problem until then unsolved. He published his results in a monography in German and Bulgarian, and in a number of papers published in Bulgarian and Hungarian. He continued with its research work in the neighbourhood of Madara, and his further results were published in Bulgarian, French, German and Turkish. - In 1924 he became honorary lecturer of byzantinology at the university of Debrecen, and 1931 extraordinary professor of the same university. The Bulgarian parliament thanked him officially for his work, which he had extended over the whole Bulgarian ancient history; also a special national present was granted to him. The picture of the horseman of Madara/picture of the rock-relief of Krum Khan, whose secret was solved by Fehér/ was coined according to his plans on the Bulgarian 5 and 10 Levas coins, Fehér also became member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Bul-

garian Society of Archeology. King Boris decorated him, and honored him with his friendship, which then lasted until the king's death, - G. Feher delivered everywhere in the country lectures on the ancient Bulgarian history. He organised, and partly administrated social and cultural organisations for the Hungarians living in the Balkans. He had some outstanding Hungarian literary works translated into Bulgarian. There was no Hungarian workman or student living in Bulgaria, who, if he appealed to him, did not get assistance, or even financial help. Not only the Bulgarian writers and intellectuals, but everybody liked to spend his time with this vivid and interesting personality. - G. Fehér extended his research work over Austria, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Jugoslavia, Roumania, Greece, Italy, and compared the immense material he collected with his Bulgarian and Hungarian findings. - In 1937 he was vicepresident of the Turkish Historical Congress and delivered successful lectures. The Hungarian Government wanted to send him in 1942 to Ankara, where he ought to have become professor of Hungarian studies at the university of Ankara, but the occupying German military authorities in Bulgaria did not grant him the visa. Only in 1944 did he succeed to go to Turkey. In Ankara wrote the history of the Hungarian Bulgarian people for the "Turkish World History", also he finished his monography on the "Costumes of the peoples of East -Europe and its Influence on the Western Costumes" a work up to now unpublished. He studied thoroughly the bows of the Turc peoples and came quite new results. He examined almost the whole bow material of the museums of the Near-East, and compared this material with the findings of his own excavations. -After the second world war in order to participate the Hungarian scientific life and also to help the four orphans of his son, who died in the war, he came back to Hungary and worked in the Hungarian National Museum. Here he published a paper on "The Secret of the Treasure of Nagyazentmiklos-, and finished his great still unpublished monography on "The Early Conquering Hungarians and the Problems of the Hungarian-Slav Coexistence". In the years 1951-1954 he made great excavations in Zalavar, where he not only succeeded in unearthing the fortress and basilica of Holy Stephan, but also showed how the Avar-Slav, Franc-Slav and Hungarian -Slav historical relations ought to be interpreted. -Géza Fehér died at Easter 1955. His interesting personality, his loyalty to his scien-

tific belief, his humanity was internationally appreciated. His unpublished scientific legacy may give new results to archeology.

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