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## Where Languages and Cultures Meet: Turcological and Orientalist Works of Professor Ewa Siemieniec-Gołaś

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to analyze the scholarly achievements of Professor Ewa Siemieniec-Gołaś, a prominent researcher in the field of Turkish and Oriental studies, whose work focuses on the structure and evolution of Turkic languages. Her research covers a broad spectrum of subjects, from Ottoman Turkish morphology to lexicography, with an emphasis on linguistic and cultural interactions between the Turkic world and Europe. Professor Siemieniec-Gołaś combines linguistic precision with deep historical analysis, which enables a better understanding of the ways in which language shapes and reflects cultural identity. Her work represents a key contribution to the development of research on Oriental languages. Professor Siemieniec-Gołaś is also recognized for her commitment to the academic community, supporting the development of young scholars and encouraging an interdisciplinary approach to Oriental studies. Thanks to her wide-ranging interests and rich scholarly output, Polish Oriental studies enjoy enduring international recognition.

**KEYWORDS:** Ewa Siemieniec-Gołaś, Polish Turkology, Ottoman Turkish morphology, lexicography, Karachay-Balkar, Turkish Studies in Krakow

### STRESZCZENIE

Na styku języków i kultur: turkologiczne i orientalistyczne prace Pani Profesor Ewy Siemieniec-Gołaś

Celem artykułu jest analiza dorobku naukowego Pani Profesor Ewy Siemieniec-Gołaś, wybitnej badaczki w dziedzinie turkologii i orientalistyki, której prace naukowe koncentrują się na badaniu struktury i ewolucji języków tureckich. Jej zainteresowania badawcze obejmują szerokie spektrum zagadnień,

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od morfologii osmańsko-tureckiej po leksykografię, z naciskiem na interakcje językowe i kulturowe między światem tureckim a Europą. Pani Profesor Ewa Siemieniec-Golaś łączy w swoich badaniach precyzję lingwistyczną z głęboką analizą historyczną, co pozwala na lepsze zrozumienie, jak język kształtuje i odzwierciedla tożsamość kulturową. Jej prace stanowią kluczowy wkład w rozwój badań nad językami orientalnymi. Jest także ceniona za swoje zaangażowanie w działalność na rzecz środowiska akademickiego – wspiera rozwój młodych naukowców oraz promuje interdyscyplinarne podejście do badań nad Orientem. Dzięki jej szerokim zainteresowaniom i bogatemu dorobkowi naukowemu polska orientalistyka cieszy się nieustającą rozpoznawalnością na arenie międzynarodowej.

**SŁOWA KLUCZE:** Ewa Siemieniec-Golaś, polska turkologia, morfologia osmańsko-turecka, leksykografia, język karaczajsko-bałkarski, studia turkologiczne w Krakowie

## Introduction

Academic interest in Oriental studies, including Turkic languages, has a centuries-long tradition in Poland, although it has been pursued in an institutionalized manner only since 1919, when the Chair of Oriental Philology was established at the Jagiellonian University thanks to the efforts of Professor Tadeusz Kowalski. In 1972, the Chair was transformed into the Institute of Oriental Philology, and the Chair of Turkish Studies was created as part of the Institute. Professor Ewa Siemieniec-Golaś, as an alumna of Krakow Turkology and long-time head of the Chair, continued the most distinguished traditions of her teachers and predecessors. In her article on the history, contemporary developments, and prospects of Krakow Turkology, she emphasized the need to constantly broaden research topics and adapt the teaching offer to changing study conditions while maintaining the quality of philological research (Siemieniec-Golaś, 2011a). Thus, Prof. Siemieniec-Golaś has emerged as a key figure in highlighting the importance of conducting in-depth and extensive philological research. This article aims to provide an overview of Prof. Siemieniec-Golaś's academic contributions, examining her major publications, key findings, research projects, and their impact on the field of Turkic linguistic and cultural studies.

Prof. Ewa Siemieniec-Golaś began her academic career at the Jagiellonian University in 1980, where she has continuously contributed to the development of Polish Turkology and Oriental Studies for more than four decades. She received her doctoral degree in 1990 and habilitation in 2000, and was awarded the title of professor in 2010. Her scholarly achievements, encompassing a wide range of research on the languages, cultures, and history of Turkic

peoples and the Caucasus region, are fundamental to understanding the cultural and linguistic dynamics of these areas. Over the years, she has passionately explored the complexities of the Turkic languages, becoming recognized as one of the leading figures in the fields of Turkology and lexicology. Her research focuses mainly on vocabulary, which, in her perspective, turns out to be the key to understanding the history, culture, and mentality of the societies that speak languages under investigation. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś has shown that words, far from being mere tools of communication, are carriers of experience and testimonies of past eras.

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's research interests can be divided into three main fields: the history and evolution of Turkic languages; lexicography and language interaction; and studies on the impact of historical figures on the development of language and culture. These three fields of research converge to create a rich and multidimensional picture of the evolution of Turkic languages in a historical and international context. They also reveal how language and culture are interrelated and how dynamic these processes can be. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's work not only contributes to the enrichment of academic knowledge but also offers insights into the complex cultural processes that shape the Eurasian region.

### Research on the history and evolution of Turkic languages

Ewa Siemienieć-Gołaś's scholarly output in the field of the history of Turkic languages is impressive and includes dozens of articles and several books on lexicology, lexicography, and historical grammar. Her works provide in-depth linguistic analyses grounded in cultural context. The first Turkic language that attracted her interest in the context of historical change was Ottoman Turkish, which, as the language of administration and literature of the Ottoman Empire, evolved intensively under the influence of numerous contacts with other languages and cultures. The study of Ottoman Turkish morphology conducted by Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś provides important insights into the way grammatical structures function in other languages as well and is widely used by researchers for this purpose (Teres, 2011; Urban, 2015; Khabtagaeva, 2020).

One of the most important areas of her research is the analysis of derivational processes in Ottoman Turkish. by analyzing historical texts and lexicographical sources, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś explores the ways in which borrowings were adapted and transformed, and how these changes affected the morphological structures of the language. The key results of her morphological research are presented in the book *The Formation of Substantives in 17th Century Ottoman Turkish* (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1997). The study presents not only the process of noun formation in seventeenth-century Ottoman Turkish but

also focuses on the most productive formatives. The results of the morphological analyses described in the monograph were later supplemented by articles on specific issues, e.g., the functions of the suffix *-gi* (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1998a) and suffix *-cik* in Ottoman Turkish (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2010a), and the suffix *-lik* in Karachay-Balkar (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2000c). Although the last paper focuses on another Turkic language, it serves as an addition to earlier research on the same issue in Ottoman Turkish (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1985–1986). Indeed, these studies provide a broader context for understanding how morphological strategies applied in one language can help explain processes in other languages of the same family. Analyses of Chuvash vocabulary serve a similar function (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1996; 2001).

Another important subject of Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's research is the linguistic reforms in the Republic of Türkiye carried out in the 1920s, such as the transition from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet. She examines their impact on the morphology of modern Turkish (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1999), while emphasizing that these reforms were a milestone in Türkiye's modernization and had significant implications for the availability of historical literature and documents. This research provides valuable knowledge about the linguistic dynamics that shape national identity, demonstrating how political decisions affect language and how language, as a living element of culture, adapts to new political and social realities. The article *Some Remarks on Turkish Dictionaries Published in Constantinople/Istanbul Before and After Language Reform in Turkey (1928)* (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2015b) traces how the alphabet change affected cultural continuity and the perception of history among Turks, which is crucial for understanding linguistic and cultural transformations in the country. It also examines how these changes have affected Turkish lexicography by analyzing differences in approaches to word definition, lexicographic methodology, and the presentation of lexical material in dictionaries. The article sheds light on the importance of historical dictionaries as tools for documenting linguistic and cultural change and their role in education and language standardization in modern Türkiye.

### Lexicography and language interactions

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's second main area of research concerns lexicography and the study of the influence of other languages on Turkic languages. By analyzing historical dictionaries and literary texts, she investigates how loanwords and lexical changes reflect broader cultural and political contacts.

The works of Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś in the field of Turkish lexicography, especially in the historical-linguistic context, make an important contribution to understanding the evolution of the Turkish language and its interaction

with other European languages. Her research on Italian-Turkish dictionaries has resulted in two monographs: the first presents a categorization of Turkish lexical material excerpted from the 17th-century *Dittionario della lingua Italiana, Turchesca* by Giovanni Molino (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2005c), and the second offers a description of an anonymous manuscript of anonymous Italian-Turkish dictionary from the Marsigli Collection in Bologna with a dictionary of Ottoman Turkish material excerpted from the manuscript, transcribed and arranged in the Latin alphabetical order (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2015a). Her most recent lexicographic achievement is a monograph presenting Turkish lexical material selected from the dictionary *Vocabulaire français-turc*, which is part of the textbook *Le Drogman turc...* written in 1854 by the Polish orientalist Aleksander Chodźko (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2024).

Both the three monographs and other shorter lexicographical studies and analyses (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1998c; 2007; 2010c; 2014) provide valuable insights into the processes of cross-cultural transfer and lexical adaptation that took place between European and Turkic languages during the Ottoman period. They also help us understand how lexical items were transferred between cultures and highlight the role that language played in diplomacy and trade in the Mediterranean region. Finally, they shed light on the lexicographical techniques used over the centuries, showing how translators and linguists attempted to capture the semantic and grammatical complexity of Ottoman Turkish with the tools and methods available in Europe.

More importantly, this research not only points to specific moments in the history of the Ottoman Turkish language from a European perspective but also enhances the understanding of broader cultural and linguistic trends that shaped the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's works hence underline the importance of lexicography in the study of historical linguistic change, offering new perspectives on cross-cultural communication. It is also worth noting that Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś has always appreciated the vital role of Turkish transcribed texts written in various graphical systems (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2009; 2011b). She emphasized their importance for the study of Turkic languages history, phonetics, and lexicon (in particular loanwords) as well as for understanding the mutual contacts between Turks and Europeans. Aware that many of these texts may still be hidden in archives or libraries, she encouraged her students to conduct archival research. Her efforts in this area are especially appreciated by Turkish scholars, who consider transcribed texts as an invaluable source of knowledge about the development of the Turkish language (Kartallıoğlu, 2010, Yağmur, 2014).

## Studies on the impact of historical figures on the development of language and culture

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's third area of research focuses on how individual efforts of scientists, researchers, and writers contributed to linguistic and cultural changes both in their region of origin and within the Turkic world. Her initial attention was directed toward English sources on the history of the Ottoman Turkish language (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1992–1993; 1994; 1995), but over time she turned to documenting Polish contributions to the development of Turkic studies. In addition to articles commemorating prominent Krakow Turkologists such as Tadeusz Kowalski (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 1998b; 2023), Włodzimierz Zajączkowski (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2000d), and Stanisław Stachowski (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2005b), she has also published a number of works highlighting the achievements of earlier experts and promoters of the East, including Marcin Paszkowski (Siemienieć-Gołaś & Pawlina, 2018), Józef Mikośza (Siemienieć-Gołaś & Filipowska, 2018), Józef Chodźko (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2021a), Władysław Jabłonowski (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2021b), and Jan Grzegorzewski (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2022), among others.

These works are part of a rich tradition of biographical research, which plays a crucial role in understanding the history of science and its impact on the development of academic disciplines. They also demonstrate the importance of placing science within a broader cultural and historical context. Such studies not only document the past but also inspire reflection on the future of Orientalist disciplines, raising questions about their directions of development and the ways in which modern scholarship can draw on the achievements of its predecessors. These biographical analyses thus have a dual value: they are both a tribute to past generations of scholars and an educational tool for current and future researchers, emphasizing the enduring significance of scientific curiosity and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś has frequently been recognized as an expert on Turkic languages and culture in Polish literature. As part of her onomastic research, she has investigated, for example, Turkish anthroponyms (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2012) and the name *İstanbul* in old Polish sources (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2010b). She also clarified ambiguities related to, for example, oriental vocabulary in Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy* (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2000b) or the image of the Tatar in old Polish writings (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2008). Her expertise in this field culminated in the *Orientalia Polonica* project, designed to promote the Polish tradition of research on the Orient. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś directed this project, which was carried out between 2013 and 2018 within the framework of the National Program for the Development of Humanities. Its aim was to re-edit written sources from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century concerning the Eastern world authored by Polish explorers, researchers, missionaries, and

travelers. As a result of the project, twelve volumes were published in the *Orientalia Polonica* series, of which Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś co-authored as many as three.

### Studies on the Karachay-Balkar language

Special attention should be given to Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's studies on the Karachay-Balkar language, which have been described by other researchers as "very valuable" (Cheung, 2016, p. 25). Her scholarly work on the Karachay-Balkar is primarily lexicographical and etymological, yet it goes beyond the standard framework of comparative linguistics by offering deep insights into the historical and cultural contexts of this Turkic language spoken in the North Caucasus region.

Her first major contribution to Karachay-Balkar language research was her habilitation monograph (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2000a). In this fundamental work, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś thoroughly analyzes the Karachay-Balkar vocabulary, with particular emphasis on elements of Proto-Turkic origin. In doing so, she not only underlines the importance of preserving linguistic heritage but also sheds light on the processes of adaptation that Karachay-Balkar has undergone over the centuries. This publication is frequently cited in studies on the etymology of Turkic languages, and its findings are used in reconstructing historical changes in the lexicon (Johanson, 2006; Bläsing, 2010; Bläsing, 2021).

In subsequent articles (Siemienieć-Gołaś, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005a) Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś expands her research by focusing on foreign elements in Karachay-Balkar lexis. She discusses the processes of phonetic and morphological borrowing and adaptation, as well as their impact on the contemporary state of the Karachay-Balkar language, presenting lexical changes within a sociolinguistic framework. Her studies demonstrate how external influences, mainly from Iranian, Caucasian and Russian languages, have enriched the Karachay-Balkar vocabulary, while also showing how these contacts have changed across different historical periods. This analysis not only underscores the dynamics of language contact in the Caucasus region but also points to the complex adaptation processes characteristic for languages in contact.

### Serving the academic community

Professor Siemienieć-Gołaś has rich experience working in scientific institutions, where she has held many key roles. Her activities have encompassed both administrative leadership and active involvement in training future generations of scholars.

From 2000 to 2021, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś served as head of the Chair of Turkish Studies at the Jagiellonian University. Over the years, she successfully directed research and teaching programs that attracted students and scholars interested not only in the Turkic languages and culture but also in the broader linguistic and cultural landscape of Central Asia. Under her leadership, the Chair has thrived as an important research center that combines traditional philological methods with modern approaches in cultural studies.

As director of the Institute of Oriental Philology at the Jagiellonian University, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś significantly influenced the strategic development of Oriental studies. She strongly advocated for the establishment of Kurdish studies at the Institute of Oriental Philology and in 2008, thanks to the initiative of her doctoral student Joanna Bocheńska, the Section of Kurdish Studies was created. Since its inception, the Section has achieved notable academic success, securing national funding (two projects supported by the National Science Center) and international grants (one project financed through the Norway Grants and another within the Erasmus Plus program).

From 2012 to 2016, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś served as head of the Doctoral Program at the Faculty of Philology, where she played a pivotal role in shaping the development of young scholars. She ensured that the doctoral program was not only academically rigorous, but also supportive of interdisciplinary and international research initiatives. Her tenure was distinguished by efforts to integrate teaching with global research trends, to strengthen mentoring, and to enhance the research competencies of doctoral students.

As a member of the Scientific Discipline Council for Linguistics at the Jagiellonian University during the 2019–2022 term, Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś played an important role in shaping teaching and research programs. Her work on the council contributed to aligning curricula with current academic trends and students' needs, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education in Oriental studies.

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś is a member of many prestigious scientific organizations, including the Presidium of the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Orientalist Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow, and, since 2015, she has served as vice president in the Polish Society for Oriental Studies. As a member of the Societas Uralo-Altaica in Germany and the Central Eurasian Studies Society in the United States, she has actively participated in global discussions and academic exchanges on the languages and cultures of Eurasia.

Her involvement in scholarly institutions reflects both her dedication to research and commitment to education. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's contribution to the development of Turkish and Oriental studies is difficult to overestimate. Her work has not only advanced these fields in Poland but also fostered dialogue between cultures and scholarly communities around the world.

Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś has been significantly involved in a number of international research projects. In 2004, she collaborated with François Rosset and Dominique Triaire on the critical edition of Jan Potocki's works, which brought new insights into the oeuvre of this Polish writer and orientalist. A year later, she participated in the project *Le savoir de la réflexivité* at the CNRS in Paris, which comparatively examined intellectual practices across different cultures. In 2016, she contributed to Brill Academic Publishers' project on the *Encyclopaedia of Turkic Languages and Linguistics*, which documented and systematized knowledge of Turkic languages. In 2018, she was a contributor to the project *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History 1500–1900* preparing an entry on Józef Mikosza in the context of his engagement with religious affairs. Prof. Siemienieć-Gołaś's participation in these projects underscores her role as a researcher and organizer who not only advances scholarship, but also educates future generations of scholars in the field of Oriental studies, fostering an interdisciplinary and international approach to the study of Eastern cultures.

Prof. Ewa Siemienieć-Gołaś's efforts to educate and promote young scholars constitute a significant contribution to academic and scientific development both at the Jagiellonian University and to the broader scientific community. As an experienced mentor and supervisor, she has played a key role in shaping future generations of orientalists, promoting numerous master's and doctoral theses that have advanced the research on Turkic languages and culture. It is enough to mention that one of her doctoral students, Faith Yılmaz, became rector of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University in 2022.

## Conclusion

Professor Siemienieć-Gołaś is a prominent linguist recognized for her research in the field of Turkic and Oriental studies. Her contribution to the development of these disciplines at the Jagiellonian University and beyond can hardly be assessed in such a short paper. Her complete bibliography includes nine books and more than 70 articles written in English, Polish and Turkish, as well as numerous popular science publications, reviews, expert opinions, and consultations. Her research encompasses various aspects of the structure and functionality of Turkic languages, with particular attention to the history and evolution of Ottoman Turkish and Karachay-Balkar, lexicography and language interactions, and studies of the influence of historical figures on the development of language and culture. Siemienieć-Gołaś's pioneering research on Turkic vocabulary, alongside her critical engagement with cultural contexts, has opened new perspectives for scholarship and fostered a deeper appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Siemienieć-Gołaś's scholarly, teaching, mentoring, and organizational activities have left a strong mark on the academic landscape of Poland and the international research community. This article offers only an outline of her remarkably rich output, which has inspired and continues to inspire later generations of researchers. Her research and contributions to academia not only expand knowledge of the Turkic languages but also challenge traditional narratives, promoting a more nuanced perspective on Oriental studies.

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