

Margarita Ivanova 1945–2020

On 12 May 2020, the well-known Udmurt archaeologist Margarita Grigor'evna Ivanova, Doctor of Sciences (History), passed away. She was mainly known for her studies of the ancient Udmurt fortified settlement Idnakar. She was born on 20 November 1945 in Kvachi, a village located in the Mozhga region of the Udmurt Republic. She never retired and, despite her illnesses, she actively visited her workplace, the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature, even up until this past spring. Like most Finno-Ugric researchers in Russia, she worked actively until the end. She is the author of more than 300 publications about ancient times, including many monographs. Margarita Ivanova was said to be the mother of Idnakar. Now, all of the 100,000 items found in that unique place have become orphans awaiting new researchers.

Margarita Ivanova's father had a great influence on her life. He was a veteran of World War II, where he had suffered severe injuries, but he began to study after the war while simultaneously working, and ultimately became a teacher of the Udmurt language at school. He also taught his children to play a variety of musical instruments. As a result, Margarita Ivanova learned to play the balalaika and the domra. Of course, she did not have any intention of becoming an archaeologist when she began studying at the teacher training college in Mozhga: after graduating from the college, she worked for two years as a teacher in her village's school, teaching small children.

She was very fond of her work in the classroom and, in order to enhance her education and become a specialised teacher, she decided to continue her studies at the Udmurt Pedagogical Institute (from 1972 on, Udmurt State University) in the Faculty of History. She graduated in 1969 with excellent grades and received a distinguished "red diploma". What happened next would prove to be a critical moment in her career: at that time, there were no educated archaeologists in Udmurtia, so the Research Institute of Udmurtia wanted to recruit some young and talented Udmurt students to study archaeology and help develop the field in the Republic. An excellent former student, Margarita Ivanova was chosen for post-graduate studies in archaeology at the Archaeological Institute in Moscow.

She successfully completed her post-graduate studies in archaeology over three years in 1970–1973, even if she did not have much faith in herself

at first, according to her own words. In any case, she wrote her candidate's dissertation in archaeology during her last year in Moscow and defended it successfully in 1975. It focused on the ancient Udmurt settlements in the Cheptsya River region. When Margarita Ivanova returned to Udmurtia from Moscow, the territory of the fortified settlement of Idnakar was open: there had previously been a military base in the area, and it had now been closed down. It could not have been a happier coincidence: archaeological excavations began in the area, and this became the main theme of Margarita Ivanova's research for her entire life. It was also of great significance that at that time, the status of the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature in Izhevsk changed significantly. In 1978, Kuzma Kulikov became Director of the Institute, and he managed to acquire for his Institute a status as part of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This meant better possibilities to conduct research and publish monographs.

After many years of work on the excavations, Margarita Ivanova wrote her doctoral dissertation on Idnakar (*Удмурты в эпоху средневековья (по материалам памятников бассейна реки Чепцы конца I начала II тыс. н. э.)*). She defended it successfully in 1996. After this, she continued her fruitful work at the Institute. She gave lessons in archaeology at the universities of Udmurtia and was a supervisor of many theses. For a long time, she was Deputy Director of the Institute. She never invented any wild theories. She was a very down-to-earth scholar. She felt her responsibility in the face of the past decades and future generations. As she put it, whenever she conducted an excavation on an archaeological monument, she ruined it forever at the same time. It was thus her responsibility to make the description of the monument as accurate as possible. She was well aware that others might find new ways to interpret the material, but they would always base their analyses on the thorough work she had done with it. The Idnakar excavations had a profound impact on the way we see the history of ancient Udmurts and eastern Finno-Ugric peoples nowadays: they proved that in mediaeval times, the ancient Udmurts had urban-type settlements and a highly developed, rich material culture. Margarita Ivanova made the findings of Idnakar known to the interested international community at the International Congresses for Finno-Ugric Studies in Syktyvkar (1985), Debrecen (1990) and Jyväskylä (1995). She was the initiator of the Idnakar museum in Glazov and the open-air museum in Idnakar, as well as several symposia for archaeological studies in Udmurtia. For her achievements, she received many local prizes.

As a native Udmurt born in an Udmurt village, Margarita Ivanova paid attention to the Udmurt language and was worried about its future. She also used it in her publications whenever possible. In 1988, she published one of her books in Udmurt entitled, simply, *Idnakar*. My own memories of Margarita Ivanova are also closely connected to the Udmurt language: namely, in 1997, I was an exchange student at Udmurt State University for the first time. I appeared at her Institute then knowing almost no Russian at all. Margarita Ivanova was told to give me some lectures: she explained every detail of the most beautiful items found in *Idnakar* using very good Udmurt terminology. It was extremely fascinating to hold ancient Udmurt decorations in my hands and talk about them in Udmurt using approximately the same words the makers and ancient holders of these objects had probably used themselves. It was one of the moments when I understood all of the possibilities the Udmurt language was to open up for me.

Margarita Ivanova was said to be the face of the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature, where she worked for most of her life. She was an elegant, calm and honest person. The large national community of researchers in Udmurtia as well as friends and colleagues all over the Finno-Ugric world will truly miss her.

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