

Obituary Larissza Hrotkó

On the morning of September 16, 2024, Dr. Larissza Hrotkó, our dear friend and comrade, passed away in her 79th year. She has returned to the Eternal, whose love she bore witness to throughout her life, as she now walks the path of those who live forever.

Larissza was a linguist, cultural historian, and doctor of Jewish religious studies. She began her professional career in the field of linguistics at the University of Bern and St. Petersburg. In 1969, she graduated from the Institute of German Studies at the University of St. Petersburg. She wrote her thesis on the structural analysis of medieval German. In 2002, she obtained a master's degree in religious studies at the Sapientia Theological College. Her thesis was

titled "Jacob, the little darling of the Eternal: A rhythmic analysis of Bresit chapters 25-49 and the study of their communal reception". In 2006, she completed a degree in Cultural History at the National Rabbinical-Jewish University (ORZSE). Her thesis entitled "The Influence of Social Processes on Jewish Literature of the Diaspora in the Early 20th Century" was based on the novels of Károly Pap and Zeev Jabotinsky. She completed her doctorate at the same university in 2013 with the dissertation: "The Settlement of Jewish Women and Men in Pest in the Late 18th and Early 19th centuries, with Special Attention to the Situation of Women". Her most recent research topics included the analysis of Jewish communities in the context of Hungarian right-wing populism and ethno-nationalism, providing insights into the political instrumentalization of faith from the far right.

Her research focused on feminist theories, women's studies, Jewish religion and culture, Jewish cultural anthropology, feminist cultural studies, dialects, philosophy of language and psychosemiotic text analysis.



Larissza was a member of the ESWTR and the Ecumenical Association of Women Theologians in Hungary (MTÖE) since 2002, serving as the latter's secretary since 2007. Over the years, she supported these organizations with great perseverance and enthusiasm. She participated in numerous international and East-Central European conferences of the ESWTR, giving lectures and publishing her research findings in the ESWTR journal. She was deeply committed to mentoring and fostering young scholars. In June 2024, she took part in the inaugural meeting of the Hungarian section, where she resigned as secretary due to illness and age, but even then, she seized the opportunity to contribute to feminist theology in Hungary, which has become increasingly difficult and persecuted under the long years of the Orbán regime.

Larissza was a pillar of the Frankel Synagogue in Budapest. Last year, when Hamas launched an attack on Israel, she decided to use her excellent Hebrew, German, and Russian language skills to provide the local Jewish community with reliable first-hand information about daily events in Israel. She read extensively in all three languages and summarized what she learned from the daily press in a post on her Facebook page. Many people read Larissza's reports and were grateful for her updates, which she always posted around 8 p.m. Her last post – number 327 – was published on August 28, and on August 29, she apologized to her readers: “I'm sorry, I can't write today because I'm ill.”

She was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia. I found out on September 10 and immediately sent her a text message, thinking of her with much love, but sadly, there was no reply.

This is how Larissza left us, whom we called “the original mother” because she was a woman of admirable strength. A woman who always had a kind word for everyone who needed it and who was a pillar of solidarity throughout her life, for those on the margins of society, for the poor, for refugees. She lived a life that the Eternal can only look upon with pride. And she was a person of infinite cheerfulness, full of life, and able to enjoy every moment. It was a great honor to know her and to work with her for so long in the Hungarian section of the ESWTR.

Her death is a great loss for Hungarian and European feminism!

Dr. Rita Perintfalvi

President of the ESWTR Hungarian section

