

## Kornélia Kiss

**Her motto: “There is no success without work, a lot of work!”**



Kornélia Kiss (13 February, 1969, Budapest) specialises in literary translation and French teaching. She is today member of MEGY (Magyar Műfordítók Egyesülete) and at the same time she is working at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University. Her special field is liberal arts.

She finished her studies at ELTE, where she also completed her PhD in old French literature. Then she moved to Törökbálint to work as a French teacher in a practicing school. During those years she also worked as a homeroom teacher and collected lots of useful experience for her later work. She also worked in Székesfehérvár, at the Kodolányi János College before getting her recent position at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University in 2009. Since then she has been working there as an associate professor and leader of the PhD office.

Kornélia Kiss is a very active person who is interested in many fields. This is supported by the fact that she does literary translation and she is also active in public and academic life. A great example for that activity is the *Société Internationale Arthurienne*, an international organisation.

Beside her academic success and teaching, it is very important to mention that Kornélia Kiss is interested in and does literary translation. It was not her aim, during her studies, to become a literary translator one day but 15 years ago she was asked to translate a thriller and so she began her career as a translator. Today she could not imagine her life without that activity. Interestingly, her husband has also been working as a literary translator for 40 years. So the couple can help each other.

At the beginning Kornélia Kiss got a lot of support from her husband who asked her to do the translation in writing without the help of any machine. The experience from that time meant to be very useful for today's work. She really enjoyed doing that translation which basically

grounded her later career because that thriller became a success. Later she also translated H el ene Berr's diary for the Magvet o publisher which was hard for her to translate, not because of the text but rather because of the emotional part. At the end of the book the whole family is dead and this fact was really hard to process.

A great work and success was the recompilation she did with her husband P eter  Adam, *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exup ery (*The Little Prince*). She really enjoyed the collaboration. Originally the work was translated by Gy orgy R onay but after 70 years the publisher does not have to pay royalties so the Szegedi Kiad o asked the couple to translate the book again. It was a huge challenge because working together requires the harmony and understanding of the parties. Korn elia Kiss and her husband are lucky because they could manage that, and produced a similar but completely new work. Korn elia does the control and the checking part especially while her husband did the translation itself. The recompilation of *The Little Prince* was not an easy task. The couple had the method to work from chapter to chapter after which they also read the original translation from R onay. The hardest part was to be objective and to create something new. All in all the focus laid on the voice and style of the work that should be clear and simple. Although the couple also emphasises the simplicity of the work, it was not an easy text to translate. The little Prince himself is a very nice guy but he should not be mincing. And the translators should take that into consideration. At the end of their work the couple discussed each part but the key to their success was to find the right style and the hidden dimensions as the use of the past tenses made the book also hard to translate.

Korn elia Kiss has never worked in a translation agency and she is not intending to do so. Not because she does not like translation but because, as she says, technical translation is a totally different area. Although she is not intending to translate such texts she has a clear opinion about the future and the people who are working there. She advises that not just the knowledge of the foreign language is important but also the mother tongue. Without that skill no one can make a text. And she finds that this skill is missing in many of her students. It is cool today to learn Translation Studies but it is not enough to be at the university and studying. Students should be very passionate and straightforward and servile to their work. Her motto is also convincing and says a lot to us: **“There is no success without work, a lot of work!”**

Although literary translation is not paid well in Hungary, Kornélia Kiss would not miss it from her life because she really loves this work and she could not imagine her life without it.

Her final pieces of advice to us are the following: The good translator should love her field but can not be too self-conscious because it does more harm than good. The difference lies in the small things and the translators **should have some doubt**. This is the way someone can become better and better.