

Assoc. Prof. Agata Bareja-Starzynska, Dr. habil.

Discipline: Literary Studies, Cultural and Religious Studies,

specialisation: Mongolian and Tibetan Studies

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4022-6226>

As the Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, I am committed to preserving traditions and seeking new solutions to contemporary challenges, including:

- maintaining the esteemed position of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw;**
- expanding and deepening international cooperation;**
- advancing research and teaching;**
- enhancing the professional competencies of Faculty staff, improving organization and working conditions, and reducing bureaucracy;**
- improving the integration of Faculty staff, students, and doctoral candidates;**
- ensuring equal treatment.**

My research interests encompass the culture, including literature, of Mongolia and Tibet, with a particular emphasis on Buddhism and its role in culture, worldview formation, and the regulation of social and political affairs, not only in Asia but globally. As a researcher, I am curious about the world and have an open attitude towards people and cultures.

In addition to my work at the University of Warsaw, I have 10 years of experience at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and 10 years of experience as a sworn translator of Mongolian.

Despite the niche nature of my research, I have had the opportunity to visit numerous scientific centres worldwide, including European, Russian, American and Asian (Mongolia, China, Japan, India, Thailand, Ceylon, Philippines), participate in dozens of international conferences, and manage national and international grants. I have reviewed doctoral theses (including international ones), habilitations, and academic positions (tenure and professorships in the USA). I have organized numerous conferences. I am involved in building the 4EU+ University Alliance at the University of Warsaw (Flagship 2). As President of the Polish Society for Oriental Studies and Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (until 2024), I have worked to disseminate knowledge about Asia and Africa and support research in these areas. Through my international travels and cooperation, I have learned about the functioning and structures of universities and science management institutions worldwide. I see the need for change in our Faculty and University and the potential to introduce good practices from other academic centers.

I intend to promote the achievements and address the needs of Orientalists at the University of Warsaw, supporting their efforts to strengthen the Faculty's status and improve working and study conditions. I am open to suggestions from my colleagues, both staff and students of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. At the same time, I believe that proper representation of the Faculty requires openness to other university units and engagement in team activities.

I perceive the internationalization of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and the University of Warsaw, i.e., the development of international cooperation and attracting academic staff and students from around the world, as a crucial element in conducting research and educating students, as well as building the Faculty's and University's high reputation globally. I believe that, alongside improving legal and administrative support, actions should be taken to ensure the rapid flow of information about ongoing international collaboration and English-language teaching.

As part of my work in the 4EU+ University Alliance, I aim to contribute to its faster development and facilitate access for employees, doctoral candidates, and students at the University of Warsaw to participate in this program. I declare my support in this regard. I consider the proper representation of the University of Warsaw in the Alliance as an important showcase of our University in Europe and the world. The Faculty of Oriental Studies, as a unit of the University of Warsaw, should benefit from its reliable knowledge about Asia and Africa and their mutual relations with Europe. I would like to see the potential of the Faculty of Oriental Studies fully realized in the work of the Alliance.

As a senator of the University of Warsaw, I have expressed my interest in improving the quality of research and teaching at the University, which is a fundamental postulate for the University's development. Based on my previous work and teaching experience, I believe that only through conducting one's own research and expanding knowledge can teaching be conducted at an increasingly higher level. Therefore, I believe that lecturers at the University of Warsaw should be involved in research or expanding their teaching skills (e.g., distance learning, etc.). Employees should have the option to choose their development path—research or academic-didactic—and their actual achievements should be evaluated—scientific achievements or enhancement of teaching skills.

I am committed to implementing a policy of flexibility (individual approach) at the Faculty of Oriental Studies and at the University of Warsaw in general, regarding research methods, educational programs, cooperation with university partners (national and international), openness to diversity, and ensuring equal treatment of employees and students (regardless of gender, ethnic origin, physical ability, religion, etc.). I believe that the University is a unique place where different research approaches and worldviews can meet and be discussed.

Looking more broadly at activities within the University as a humanist, I also declare my support for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, including sharing experiences gained during the preparation of an ERC Synergy grant application. I consider it useful to develop digital humanities by providing humanists with new tools that can accelerate research

and introduce new quality. I also believe that only sustainable development of the University will bring the expected result: good academic outcomes and staff satisfaction.

I declare that I will take action to change the ministerial lists of journals and publications. I see this as an urgent and important task for our Faculty. We have limited opportunities (e.g., in the field of Orientalist journals) to obtain a reliable assessment of our scientific achievements. The voice of the Faculty of Oriental Studies should play an important role in shaping opinion at the University and beyond on matters of scholarship in our field of research.

I do not agree with the mechanization of the assessment of academic work. I would like to work towards changing this situation—leading to greater individualization of the assessment of scientific achievements and developing a satisfactory evaluation system. I believe it is necessary to influence the change of current regulations in the country in this regard.

Doctoral students and participants in doctoral schools at the University of Warsaw increasingly need better organizational support. As a supervisor of doctoral candidates from the former mode and a promoter of researchers from the new doctoral schools, including foreigners, and also as the Deputy Director of the Doctoral School of Humanities at the University of Warsaw, I see shortcomings in both systems and would like to influence the real improvement of this situation. This is an urgent task due to the short period of presence of this group of researchers at the University of Warsaw. At the same time, the granting of doctoral degrees is the University's basic task, as it follows from its definition. If we do not take care of our doctoral students and create suitable conditions for research, we will not be able to ensure the continuation of our work.

At the University, we still encounter many bureaucratic barriers that hinder both scientific and organizational activities. I believe that the flexibility of working hours for administrative staff can be increased to properly utilize their potential. The opportunities created by remote working should be used to create a new working system based not only on electronic document circulation but also on a new working time grid. In return, administrators should have the opportunity for professional development, access to training to improve their skills, internships abroad, and a secure career path. In some examples at the University of Warsaw, I have noticed that a well-trained administrative employee (of any speciality) can relieve scientists and lecturers of burdens (including bureaucratic and technical ones) and streamline their work. Adequate remuneration for this group of employees should also be ensured.

Finally, as a parent who knows from personal experience the challenges of reconciling scientific work and motherhood, I would like to contribute to creating better working conditions for women at the University of Warsaw. I am interested in supporting practical solutions, such as deferring a researcher's evaluation by one year in the year she gives birth, or prioritizing young mothers in the timetable. Both young parents at the University of Warsaw need support, and the organization of work can be facilitated by the creation of a crèche, kindergarten, and playground near the University, and a children's playroom in the University Library, where parents who are employees and students could leave their children in professional care for a short period.

I encourage the reporting of all matters of importance to the staff, doctoral candidates, and students of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. I would like to strengthen the sense of the Faculty community to help in the proper organization of work and study and to bring satisfaction and pride. I believe that the Faculty of Oriental Studies has good prospects for the future, which need to be worked on together. I would like to help preserve the best of our tradition and seek new solutions that will help adapt the Faculty to new challenges.