

Obituary on Herbert Galton (1917-2004)

H. Galton was Viennese. His family was of Polish origin and moved from Lvov to Vienna before World War I started. He was born on the 1st of October 1917 in Vienna and died there on the 9th of December 2004. H. Galton was brought up bilingually, he spoke German and Polish. He was not only a versatily educated Linguist, but also a polyglot who knew the most important languages of Western Europe and almost all Slavic languages. Herbert Galton was a member of many scientific societies: The Wiener Sprachgesellschaft, Österreichischer PEN Club & Schriftstellerverband, Societas Linguistica Europea, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Studies, International Society of Phonetic Sciences. He was honoured with the “Gold medal of University Skopje for contributions to study of Macedonian language” in 1987. His publications consist of six books, almost one hundred essays and more than twenty reviews. After his school-leaving exam in 1935 he started to study in the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Vienna, with Slavistics as his main subject, in which he was lectured by the famous linguist N. S. Trubetzkoy. Sixty years later he had to confess that he never really became a devoted student to Trubetzkoy.

He was arrested in the Reichskristallnacht in 1938 and could emigrate only in the end of the year to the Netherlands and later to England. During World War II he was head of the Serbo-Croatian section of BBC. In 1951 he finished his studies in London, with his doctor's degree in Philosophy from the field of the Old Church Slavic phonology (Summary of the doctoral thesis: „*Tendency in Linguistic Evolution*“, Zeitschrift für Phonetik VIII (Berlin 1954), p. 238-255 and 321-335). He returned to Vienna five years later and worked as a reader of Yugoslavian Journals at the embassy of the United States until 1962, when Heinrich Stammler recruited him to the University of Kansas (USA), where he worked as professor for Slavic linguistics until he retired in 1988 and went back to Vienna.

In his essays, he deals with problems of almost all fields of linguistics: phonetics and phonology (including accent), morphology, syntax, lexicology and semantics. In the same way Herbert Galton occupies himself with general and concrete (but always complicated) questions about the diachronic and synchronic linguistics in individual Slavic and non-Slavic languages, groups or families of languages.

He is in particular famous for his research in the fields of phonetics and phonology, just as aspectology.

Two of his three linguistic books concern the question of category of aspect in Slavic: „*Aorist und Aspekt im Slavischen*“ (Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1976) and „*The Main Functions of the Slavic Verbal Aspect*“ (Skopje 1976), in which he claims: „The position of the aspect is quite central in the Slavic verbal system, because it reaches down to the foundations of our sense of time irrespective of relative location on the time axis [...]”.

The third book is dedicated to the historic theme of the emergence of palatalisation at the Proto-Slavic under the high influence of the Old-Turkish languages (e.g. Avaric in the epoch of migrations of the peoples. According to his theory, the influence would consist for a part of the Baltic-Slavic dialects of Indo-European languages in the tendency to a more palatal pronunciation of consonants; in Old-Altai, the vocal system in two parts (with a front and a back row of vocals) realised the vocalic harmony.

Galton's phonetic and phonological papers concern the questions of palatalisation, accent, syllabic structure in Indo-European and Slavic, sound shift, diphthongization and epenthetic vowel in Germanic / German, the phonological influence of Altai on Slavic, the phonological systems,

the phonetic typology of languages etc. They were published in many important scientific journals: *American Journal of Philology*, *Archivum linguisticum*, *Folia linguistica historica*, *Germanic Philology*, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, *International Journal of Slavic Linguistic and Poetics*, *Journal of English and German*, *Wiener slavistisches Jahrbuch*, *Lingua*, *Slavic and East European Journal*, *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, *Zeitschrift für Phonetik*, *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*; and in Slavic countries: *Balkansko ezikoznanie* (Sofia), *Južnoslovenski filolog* (Belgrad), *Makedonski jazik* (Skopje), *Polonica* (Crakow), *Slovo a slovesnost* (Prague), *Prilozi na Makedonskata akademija na naukite i umetnostite* (Skopje), *Russian Linguistics* (Moscow).

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