

JAKOB RIGLER, 1929-1985

The premature death of Jakob Rigler at the age of fifty-five is a permanent and irretrievable loss for all friends of Slovene studies, and above all for all students of the Slovene language. He was ill for a long time and his death was not unexpected; nevertheless, we were shocked to learn of his recent passing, on July 8, 1985.

Born in Nove Lužine (Dolenjsko) on December 2, 1929, Rigler was educated in Ribnica, Kočevje, and Ljubljana. In 1954 he graduated in *Slavistika* at the University of Ljubljana; in 1961 he defended his dissertation; and in 1969 he was habilitated as an academic instructor of the Historical Grammar of Slovene at the University of Ljubljana. Since 1954 he was employed by the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences, at first as an assistant, from 1961 to 1966 as a Senior Scientific Collaborator, and since 1969 as a Scientific Advisor of the Institute for Slovene Language. In 1961 he became Chairman of the Institute's Section on Dialectology. On May 23, 1985, a good month before his death, he was elected Corresponding Member of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts.

The list of Rigler's official assignments at SAZU was extensive. He served on the Yugoslav Inter-Academy Committee for Dialect Atlases; on the Commission for a Slavic Dialect Atlas of the Yugoslav National Committee of Slavists; on the Presidium of the SAZU Commission for the Orthography, Orthoepy and Grammar of the Slovene Language; and on the Orthography Commission of the Committee struck to formulate the new text of the Project for Slovene Orthography. Between 1972 and 1974 he served as President of the *Slavistično društvo Slovenije*, and between 1971 and 1974 as President of the Humanities Section of the SAZU Research Center.

Rigler was one of the most solid and dependable linguists and grammarians produced this century by modern Slovene grammatical and linguistic scholarship. His monographs on Slovene dialectology, both synchronic and diachronic (e.g., his *Južno-notranjski govori* of 1963; his descriptions of the phonologies of a number of Slovene dialects for the All-Slavic Linguistic Atlas, published in 1981; or his "Pregled osnovnih razvojnih etap," cf. below) are and will remain lasting contributions to the field of Slovene linguistics, as will his work on the codification of the orthography, the orthoepy, and the prosodic features of Modern Standard Slovene (cf. his contributions to the *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika*, 1970-). What most characterized his linguistic research was his continuous inquiry into the 'truths' established by his teachers and the 'discoveries' postulated by his contemporaries, and his search for new, original solutions. Such, for instance, were his first scholarly essay on the phenomenon of vowel dissimilation in Slovene of 1950; his revision of Ramovš's concept of the 'istrski' dialect of Brkini (1960, 1963); his daring attempt at treating Trubar's written Slovene as the language of an educated Slovene burgher class at an early stage of its development in 16th-century Ljubljana (*Začetki...*, 1968); or his vigorous repudiation of V. Georgiev's theories on Slovene dialectal akanje (in *Bŭlgarski ezik*, 1966, and in *Voprosy jazykoznanija*, 1969) and of Z. Junković's hypotheses concerning Slovene-Kajkavian relations (in *Slavistična revija*, 1976).

Another outstanding feature of Rigler's scholarship was his handling of language as a phonological system, synchronically and diachronically, in terms of customary and acceptable models. His "Survey of the basic evolutionary stages in Slovene vocalism," read at the International Congress of Slavists in Sofia in 1963, used the idiom of

structural linguistics, free of all mannerisms and idiosyncrasies, and gained for him international recognition for his new viewpoints on historical phonology.

Together with his distinction as a scholar, Jakob Rigler's human warmth and generosity of spirit will long be remembered by all who ever met him. His sudden loss will be felt painfully on this side of the Atlantic, also.

JAKOB RIGLER: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations used: *JiS* = Jezik in slovstvo (Ljubljana); *RS* = Rocznik slawistyczny (Warsaw-Cracow); *SR* = Slavistična revija (Ljubljana); *VJa* = Voprosy jazykoznanija (Moscow); *ZFL* = Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku Matice Srpske (Novi Sad).

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