

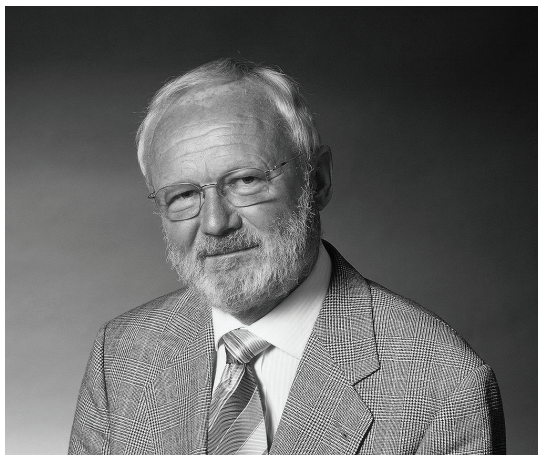
## IN MEMORIAM DIETER KASTOVSKY

(26 December 1940–23 November 2012)

Dieter Kastovksy, Emeritus Professor of English Linguistics at the *Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (University of Vienna), former Secretary–Treasurer of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea*, passed away on 23 November 2012. His sudden death came as a surprise to us all, as he still had many plans. Reproduced below are speeches delivered by two of Dieter’s friends and colleagues at a memorial event held on Wednesday, 18 September 2013 at the 46th Annual Meeting of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea*, in Split, Croatia.



Dieter Kastovksy combined within himself a fascinating range of affiliations and interests. He was born in Freudenthal (Bruntál), near the intersection of Czech Silesia, Moravia, and Bohemia, a bilingual area which in 1938 became part of the “Sudetenland” under Nazi occupation. Though of German-speaking heritage (as is shown by his given name), his family evidently was of Slavic origin (witness his last name). Like other Germans, his



family had to leave the Sudetenland when the Nazi occupation came to an end. He maintained some connection to this common heritage and became a “Member of the Sudentendeutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste”. But unlike many others he rejected any irredentist inclinations. His inclinations, rather, tended to international openness and cooperation.

He studied English, Romance, and German philology in Germany (Freie Universität Berlin and Tübingen), toyed with specializing in French and accepted a scholarship at Besançon, France, and eventually turned to English at Tübingen. Through his peregrinations and varying interests he managed to combine two countries and three linguistic traditions in one. He became one of the most important players in English historical and synchronic linguistics as well as in morphology, especially as professor at the Universität Wien, adding yet another country to his palette, as well as a well-cultivated – and cultured – metropolitan Austrian variety of German. (Before I found out more about his background I assumed that he was born in Vienna.)

Dieter was a master at networking, both within Germany and Austria and beyond, especially in Poland, where he became a regular guest at Jacek Fisiak’s conferences. Through these conferences he linked up with Werner Winter, the driving force behind the establishment of our Societas. Werner appreciated Dieter’s commitment to bridging gaps between East and West, and when Werner took over the presidency of the SLE in 1991, he turned to Dieter Kastovsky to assume the function of Secretary–Treasurer.

It was in this function that he became actively involved in the efforts of the Societas to build bridges across the Iron Curtain. Not surprisingly, a major focus for him was Poland, not only on an academic and institutional level – he received several recognitions for his work, including the Order of Merit, Commander’s Cross of the Polish Republic, but also on a personal one – through his marriage to Barbara Kryk-Kastovsky. Dieter and Basia were a regular item at our meetings, always friendly, gracious, and fun-loving. Those who know them well were also familiar with their love for opera and for all music. The fact that they published a joint paper with the title “Anything you can do, I can do better: A paper not so much about musicals, but about the semantics-pragmatics interface” in the 2006 Festschrift for Jacek Fisiak beautifully reflects their joint interests.

Dieter served the Societas as Secretary–Treasurer from 1991 to 2006, years that saw major changes in the political and social setting in which the Societas was operating, and he provided important leadership that helped smooth over the transition.

One of the tasks that he faced and that he dealt with in his usual tactful and competent way was the transition of the journal *Folia Linguistica Historica* to new editorship. I certainly can remember how I was – gently and cleverly – shanghaied into taking over as editor of *Folia Linguistica Historica*. As I recall, I was first softened up through membership in the Scientific Committee. But it was at the 2002 SLE Meeting in Potsdam that things really picked up. After throwing out increasingly strong hints that the journal needed a new editor, someone who (according to him) was considered well established as a historical linguist, Dieter – together with Camiel Hamans and J. C. Smith – plied me with excellent alcohol for the better part of the dinner boat trip until I finally caved in. The fact that, unlike your typical German or Austrian Professor, I could not count on a large stable of Assistenten to help in editing the journal led Dieter to use his Polish connections – and his Austrian charm – to persuade Agnieszka Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak, who had been Jacek Fisiak’s editorial assistant, to continue serving in that role until I was able to find some (unfortunately temporary) support from my home institution.

Even after stepping down as Secretary–Treasurer in 2006 and retiring from his position as Professor, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Wien, in 2009, Dieter and his wife Basia continued to be regular participants in our Annual Meetings. Beyond that he kept pursuing his active interest in building bridges, by supporting international academic cooperation and exchange programs such as SOKRATES (focus on Eastern Europe and Turkey) and TEMPUS (expanded focus, to include Central Asia, all of the Middle East, as well as North Africa).

His untimely death came on 23 November 2012, when he was visiting Poland, the country with which he had been so closely affiliated in his professional life, including many stints as guest professor at Poznań, and just as important – through his marriage to Barbara Kryk-Kastovsky.

Dieter Kastovsky’s passing is a great loss to our Societas, as well as to the study of English linguistics and of morphology. Presidents come and go; it is the Secretary–Treasurer who holds the association together. He is the bridge builder – Pontifex in the literal, original sense – and in building bridges between East and West and between German-speaking Europe and the rest of the continent, Dieter was a Pontifex par excellence.

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### Dieter, the historical linguist

As Hans Henrich has mentioned already, Dieter Kastovsky attended the universities of Tübingen and Berlin (Free University). At these institutions he studied English, German and Romance philology, and general linguistics, but with a substantial background in historical and Indo-European linguistics (he attended Hans Krahe's lectures on Indo-European phonology and morphology in 1959/60). In those early years, Dieter "had the good fortune to fall into the hands of [Hans] Marchand" (Kastovsky 2005b: 115) and to attend, already during his first term at Tübingen (1959), Marchand's lectures on English morphology, a field which from that time became one of Dieter's main areas of interest. In addition to Marchand, another lasting influence was Eugenio Coseriu, with whom Dieter studied Romance philology. Dieter found Coseriu's lectures at Tübingen "immensely formative" (Kastovsky 2005b: 115) and was influenced by Coseriu's theory of lexematics. Eventually, this led to Dieter's first publication, the edition of Coseriu's lecture notes on structural semantics (Kastovsky 1967).

Dieter's PhD dissertation, supervised at Tübingen by Hans Marchand, was completed in 1967 and published in 1968 (Kastovsky 1968). It dealt with zero-derivation in Old English, a topic to which he often returned in later work (e.g. Kastovsky 1980, 1996); in fact, Dieter good-humouredly described himself as "the man who knew everything about nothing". More generally, his PhD dissertation was "a fundamental pre-setting of his scientific interests for many years to come" (Dalton-Puffer 2013: 125). From then onwards, he was captivated by the structure of English words and the dramatic restructuring of English morphology and morphophonology over the course of its history due to the decay of the inflectional system and massive borrowing from French and Latin. His views on the typological questions raised by such developments were guided by his structuralist upbringing, in particular Sapir's (1921) and Coseriu's (1952, 1974) conception of language change as a cumulative process. As Dieter himself put it:

Individual, local changes sometimes move in the same direction over centuries with far-reaching consequences, which in the long run affect the general *Gestalt* of certain parts of the structure of a language. These are what I call 'global' or 'typological changes'. Of course, certain changes of this kind have been noticed because they are so obvious, such as the movement from a basically synthetic to an analytic language, [or] the replacement of inflection as a signal of syntactic function by fixed word order (i.e. SVO)

in order to compensate for this loss . . . But such observations have usually been very general and one has not really looked systematically at what these changes mean for the overall typological make-up of English . . . it is the momentum developed by the accumulation of certain changes in a specific direction that prompts the speakers/listeners to follow a path that is already there: i.e. to favour certain variants that go in this direction rather than another. (Kastovsky 2001: 279)

In one way or another, this concern with ‘local’ changes that eventually become triggering factors for long-range global linguistic changes is reflected in much of his published work; witness the monumental chapter on Old English semantics and vocabulary that he contributed to the *Cambridge History of the English Language* (Kastovsky 1992b), the comprehensive historical overview of vocabulary and word formation from Old English to Modern English which he wrote for a volume on the history of English co-edited in 2006 by Richard Hogg and David Denison (Kastovsky 2006b), studies such as Kastovsky (1992a, 1994, 1999, 2002, 2005a, 2006a), among many others, as well as the book-length treatment of the historical



Ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw where Dieter received the order of the Commander's Cross for his contribution to the Polish–Austrian academic cooperation

morphology of English which he was preparing for Edinburgh University Press at the time of his sudden death (Kastovsky & Giegerich forthc.).

But beyond his research activities as a leading morphologist and semanticist, Dieter was also “a European of the first order” (Dalton-Puffer 2013: 126), and “an ‘activist’ who believed in the importance of . . . building networks of personal and professional contacts” (Beck 2012). His fondness for networking was manifested, for instance, in his commitment to the two most important European organizations in the fields of Linguistics and English Studies respectively, the *Societas Linguistica Europaea* (SLE) and the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE). In the case of the former, he was actively involved in setting it up in the late 1960s, and served as both its Secretary and Treasurer between 1991 and 2006. He also showed unfailing support for ESSE from the moment of its inception in 1990, serving as Austria’s representative on the ESSE Board. It was in fact at the *Inaugural Conference of ESSE*, held in Norwich in September 1991, that we first met. The following year we coincided again, this time in Valencia, Spain, at the *7th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics*, and in the years that followed we saw each other regularly at a number of different conferences and symposia, including of course the annual SLE meetings and the annual conferences of AEDEAN, the Spanish Association for English and American Studies, which Dieter joined in 1999 and actively supported.

Dieter enjoyed life; together with his wife Barbara, he relished the company of colleagues and friends, and had a genuine appreciation for new places and customs. His deep connection and friendship with the east of Europe, where he died and had many family ties, are well known, but he also felt a special attachment to a thousand other places, including my own country, maybe because he found a kindred spirit in Spanish academic culture and its natural conviviality. Indeed, it is perhaps symptomatic of Dieter’s status as a true European that his last publication (Kastovsky 2012) is a written version of the plenary talk he delivered at the *22nd Conference of the Spanish Society for Mediaeval English Language and Literature (SELIM 2010)*, held at the University of La Rioja, Spain, in September 2010.

The worlds of Linguistics and English Studies have become emptier places following his loss. We will sorely miss Dieter the professional scholar, the generous colleague, and the great friend.

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