

**Friedrich Pollack: “With all the particular features of the nation of the Wends”- On the construction of ethnic otherness in early modern scientific studies of the Sorbs**

Until late in the 17th Century it appears that hardly any special attention was given to the Sorbs as a separate ethnic community by their contemporaries. This only started to change when in the third part of the 17th Century early modern scientific studies of the Sorbs started to develop, in the first instance carried out largely by Sorbian priests such as Michael Frentzel. They were the first ones to concern themselves with the creation of consistent forms of the literary languages, based on intensive linguistic research. They were driven by the need to provide Sorbian parishes at last with the most important religious, liturgical and devotional writings, around 150 years after the Reformation. The result of the ensuing upturn in the Sorbian religious book market was that large areas of the educated world now became aware of the Sorbs. From the beginning of the 18th Century representatives of regional historical research, for example Christian Knauth from Görlitz, began to recognize the independent status of Sorbian history and presented their investigations in what were sometimes very comprehensive monographs. Linked to this there immediately developed a strong interest in the customs and traditions of the Sorbs of the time, which led to the first ethnographic studies, not least as well to the earliest illustrated accounts of Sorbian culture.

**Peter Kroh: The Skala biography, the Gestapo and the People’s Court. Contemporary remarks on files from a past era**

This is the first commentary on files used by the Gestapo and “The People’s Court” to prepare a case for high treason against Jan Skala. For this purpose he was taken into “preventative detention” on 21 January 1938. The Gestapo produced its final report at the beginning of May. However, Skala remained in total solitary confinement for several months more. On 26 October 1938 he was “declared to be unfit to be kept in prison to avoid danger to his life” as a result of his damaged kidneys and the weakness of his cardiac muscle.

The documents show that under these circumstances Skala remained true to his political and moral principles. He remained faithful to his Sorbian people, justified and defended their rights, declared his rejection of National Socialism, stood by his views on minority politics and remained true to his friends and acquaintances. Skala wrote two petitions to the Gestapo to try to escape from the crushing effects of solitary confinement and because of his deteriorating health. They are further proof of how he stood up for himself as a loyal citizen and Sorb in the face of Nazi terror. The Gestapo had to admit that they could not find any proof of their suspicions. The “People’s Court” abandoned the case against him on 1 June 1939 because a trial on the grounds of “preparing to commit high treason did not offer any prospect of success.”

**Walter Wenzel: The Slav colonisation of the Schlieben area in the light of place and personal names, as well as finds from excavations**

The small state of Schlieben, formerly the administrative authority of Schlieben, borders on the western part of Lower Lusatia and belonged until 1990 to the old district of Herzberg. The area was already the subject of an investigation into the names and the history of its settlement as the subject of a dissertation about 50 years ago. The progress that has been made in the meantime in the study of German-Slav names and in archeology, has led to new discoveries both in the explanation of certain place names as well as

the dating and extent of Slav colonization. Because of the natural circumstances of this region the Schlieben basin represents an ideal early medieval settlement area for study, in which around 800 Slavs settled. They probably came from Lower Lusatia, as the *pagus Zliuuni*, first mentioned in 973, shows a close connection to the *pagus Luzici* in terms of name typology.

### **Viktor Zakar: The Augmentative in Lower Sorbian**

The present article deals with the morphosemantic and morphonetic features of Lower Sorbian augmentatives. An augmentative is a noun formed by a specific root word and a formant, expressing an exaggeration of the referent's dimensions or qualities. The Lower Sorbian augmentative formants are: *-iščo* (*-yščo*), *-isko* (*-ysko*) and *-idlo* (*-ydló*). The formant *-isko* is the most common one, mostly, but not exclusively, creating augmentatives with negative semantics. The formant *-iščo*, though being far more polysemic, is less frequent than *-isko*. It often forms augmentatives from root words with the meaning of 'PERSON' or 'ANIMAL'. Although its derivatives usually have a negative and even insulting meaning, their semantics can be positive and even hypocoristic, too. Therefore the context, in which derivatives are used, needs close examination, in order to identify their actual meaning, and thereby enable them to be classified with certainty as augmentatives. Genuine augmentatives with the formant *-idlo* are very unusual.

### **Dietrich Scholze: The lyric poet Jan Lajnert. On the 120th birthday of the „Poet of the Sorbian Heath“**

The lyric poet, Jan Lajnert (1892–1974), had an original subject as the „Poet of the Sorbian Heath“, which he gave expression to in subjectively symbolic poems. German poetry had fascinated him as a young teacher; his interest in a – quasi exotic – region, the woods and ponds of Upper Lusatia to the north of Bautzen, was based on patriotic feelings, which had their artistic roots in (neo) Romanticism.

In the 1920s Lajnert created a modern form of nature poetry with neoromantic, impressionistic and naturalistic features, which demonstrated parallels with Czech and Polish vitalism. The landscape of his homeland represents in it a counterpoint to the unsatisfactory nature of contemporary Sorbian life; on the other hand his sense of national responsibility did not allow for aestheticism. In his small number of late works an increasingly philosophical notes tone can be discerned, together with a note of optimism in keeping with the times.

### **Peter Barker: Re-writing my life and work: Jurij Brězan's Autobiographical Writings**

Jurij Brězan was the most important Sorbian writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, who was known above all for his novels, a genre which before 1945 hardly existed in Sorbian literature. Despite his view that his most important task was the preservation of the Sorbian language and identity, he was a significant literary figure at national level in the GDR. His two most important autobiographical works, *Mein Stück Zeit* (1989, 2nd edition 1998) and *Ohne Pass und Zoll* (1999) illustrate the dilemmas of a socialist writer caught between politics and writing in the GDR who in the end gave up his belief in the power of literature to have a direct influence on politics.

### **Grażyna Barbara Szewczyk: Wilhelm Szewczyk's Sorbian studies**

I would like this article to serve as a reminder of the achievements of the Upper Silesian writer and journalist, Wilhelm Szewczyk (1916–1991), in the dissemination of Sorbian literature and culture in Poland. Szewczyk's personal involvement in the language, literature and history of the Sorbs found expression in his numerous Sorbian sketches, book reviews and articles of a popular nature, which he published as editor of cultural periodicals (“Fantana”, “Odra”, “Przemiany”, “Poglądy”) from 1938. It is particularly important to mention the more substantial publications, in which Szewczyk showed himself to be a connoisseur and excellent translator of Sorbian literature, which included his literary portrait of the Sorbian poetess, Mina Witkojc („Portret Łużyczanki“, Katowice 1948), with whom he had a longstanding friendship, the anthology of Sorbian poetry, which he edited, (“Antologia poezji łużyckiej”, Katowice 1960), and the richly illustrated anthology (“Podróż na Łużyce” Katowice 1973), which contained travel sketches and impressions from Lusatia. Apart from Mina Witkojc Szewczyk maintained close relations with other famous Sorbian writers and creative artists, (e.g. with Jurij Brězan, Dr. Jan Cyž, Jurij Młynk and Anton Nawka), with whom he conducted a lively correspondence often right up to his death.

### **Monika Blidy: Bolesław Lubosz – a Silesian ambassador for Lusatia**

This article draws a portrait of the lyric poet, journalist and translator, Bolesław Lubosz (1928–2001), who distinguished himself with his high personal commitment to the dissemination of Sorbian literature and culture in Silesia. His interest in the Sorbs found expression in a number of journalistic and literary critical articles (in publications including the cultural journals “Poglądy” and “Zaranie Śląskie”). He edited two anthologies of Sorbian prose and lyric poetry in Katowice (1982 „Latarnia. Współczesna nowela łużycka“; 1993 „Z biegiem Strugi, z biegiem lat. Antologia powojennej poezji Serbo-Łużyczan“). As a result of the language skills he acquired from his Slavonic studies in Krakow, he was able to translate works of Sorbian writers adequately into Polish (e. g. Martin Nowak-Njehorński: „Mišter Krabat“, Jurij Koch: „Wišnina“). Not least of his achievements were the numerous meetings with Sorbian authors, journalists, academics, artists and other creative artists, which he organised in and around Katowice, and he was also active as an author of poems with Sorbian or Lusatian themes.

### **Konrad Włodarz: Sorbian Literature in Poland after 1990 – Sorbian studies at the University of Silesia**

The publishing house “Śląsk” in Katowice was particularly renowned for its reception of Sorbian literature, which had never been particularly popular in Poland. After 1989, on the other hand, the dissemination of the literature and culture of the Lusatian Sorbs was concentrated in a number of universities (Warsaw, Opole, Wrocław, Katowice), at which friendship societies were sometimes founded at the same time and some still exist today. In addition, cultural days and similar events were also organised.

At the University of Silesia, Katowice-Sosnowiec, Sorbian studies are also not a separate area of study. However, lecturers in Western Slavonic studies make sure that they include the Sorbian language, culture and history in the appropriate part of the curriculum. In addition, since the political changes the state of research on the Sorbs and Lusatia has been presented at three international conferences, and the corresponding conference proceedings have already appeared or are in preparation.