

ANNIVERSARIES  
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LIBUŠE DUŠKOVÁ, OR SO MUCH TO DO

„To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old.“ Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Anniversaries are traditionally a time for reflection, though each time it is usually different. Is this one a great divide, or is it just a brief stop on the way? In this case, I think, it is definitely the latter. While Libuše Dušková faced the usual ado which accompanies such occasions with her usual matter-of-fact impassiveness, I myself was taken aback by the sudden realization that it was a full ten years that I had been her colleague. Her fifteenth year - my tenth - in the Prague Department of English at the Faculty of Arts since 1985. What has actually happened during the ten years? Perhaps one should start from the beginning. When in the mid-eighties Miroslav Jindra - an admirably farsighted head of the department in those days - invited Dušková to join the Department, it was a bilaterally felicitous step. After the departure of Ivan Poldauf and the retirement of Jiří Nosek in 1984, and with Marcela Kuncová retiring a few years later, the linguistic section of the Department was at a critical stage. Dušková was then at the Institute for Czech Language (which had incorporated the Institute of Foreign Languages) headed by the ill-reputed Jan Petr. Although at the peak of her scientific career, with the long years of systematic preparation and hard work coming to fruition - her *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* [A Grammar of Contemporary English against the Background of Czech], the largest Czech grammar of English to date, was to come out in 1988 - she had little expectation of further advancement there. Transition to the Faculty proved far from easy, however. It dragged on for more than a year and, if it had not been for Miroslav Jindra and others (such as Jarmila Mothejzíková), things might have turned out badly.

Dušková fulfilled expectations in every way. She came with a definite idea as to what form the course of English linguistics, drawing on the Mathesian traditions of functional structuralism, should have, and set down to work with clear purpose. Thanks to her grammar, the result of years of painstaking research, she was able to offer both a well-defined and carefully thought-out theoretical framework and the essential textbook (incidentally, winner of the best university textbook in 1989). In addition to morphology and syntax, she had to revamp the theoretical introduction to the study of English language and linguistics (the only existing textbook dating from 1965) and just about everything else. The amount of sheer work needed to bring English linguistics at the Department back to life is difficult to imagine. The immediate task was to devise and launch the study program-

mes: lectures, seminars, diploma theses, examinations and tests at all levels. As an illustration, since 1987 when the first MA thesis appeared with her name, the number of theses she has supervised until now has climbed to the incredible number of well over 70.

The arrival of 1989 was a great watershed in many respects, and the following school year of 1990-1991 the beginning of a busy new era, an era, which, on the one hand, brought a long-overdue recognition of Dušková's academic achievements (the degrees 'doctor of sciences' or DrSc and 'docent' in 1990, full professorship in 1992) and, on the other, changed the perspectives almost overnight. Instead of having time to reap the rewards of her previous labour and concentrate on her scientific work at leisure, Dušková had suddenly so much to do vis-a-vis the exigencies of the new situation that even the fact of retirement (1996) faded into insignificance. The curriculum had to be redrafted, the system geared up to new requirements, new vistas, the changing profile of students. Her plans for the restructuring of English linguistics concerned not only the content of the courses but also the staffing. She supported my being invited to join the linguistic section even before November 1989, but the transition could not take place until the following year. As before, postgraduate studies played an important role in her efforts to gain and train young promising scholars. Dušková's role as head and coordinator of doctoral studies, undergoing radical changes, has been and will be crucial for a long time to come. The full list of her successful and promising postgraduate students would be long indeed, Jan Čermák, Renata Pípalová, Dana Obenbergerová, and lately Ladislav Šmolka, Pavlína Šaldová and Markéta Malá, to name at least some of those she has groomed. Her former students teach not only at universities in Prague, but also in České Budějovice, Plzeň and elsewhere. Gently but inexorably, she steers her charges to write theses and take degrees to ensure that English linguistics is bolstered academically. That was how I found myself writing my 'habilitation' thesis, with Dušková providing all the support she could while taking care of the time-consuming and laborious administrative side.

The period under review was no less successful, in terms of her written output: a new edition of her grammar (1994), and, above all, her monumental *Studies in the English Language I, II* (1999), summarizing the work of thirty years and published after almost three years of preparation and editing. Both of them provide palpable evidence that English studies in this country have not over the years lost contact with the developments in Europe and overseas. Apart from these two publications, she has contributed quite a few papers to journals at home and abroad (see bibliography). Her own editorial work (as editor-in-chief of *Lingüistica Pragensia*) has been just as important for ensuring academic continuity, especially after 1989, when the change in atmosphere and the effects of a long-increasing generation gap have resulted in a certain waning in writing activities. Not so with Dušková - her diary is 'filled up' long ahead: the topics she has broached and wants to explore in depth include, for example, the interaction between grammatical word order and the principle of end focus (basic distribution of communicative dynamism), syntactic realizations of the principal FSP functions and their differentiation, interlingual constancy of syntactic functions from the viewpoint of their FSP

functions, word order modifications enabled by the system as compared with their textual uses, and others. With the Department slowly but surely entering the 'electronic era of corpus linguistics' and the hopes of acquiring the British National Corpus just about to become reality, Dušková has her work cut out indeed. And there is more work to be done in textbooks - after compiling a text collection for syntactic analysis (*Syntax současné angličtiny* [Syntax of Contemporary English], 1995), there is a textbook of morphological exercises, an introduction to English linguistics still to write and others.

It would be possible to go on enumerating Dusková's other victories and achievements - some inconspicuous, others quite memorable, such as the organization of the honorary doctorate for Prof. Randolph Quirk in 1996. Nor should one forget her presidency of The Czech Modern Language Association (Kruh moderních filologů), which she accepted in addition to her teaching, research, editorship, writing, and lecturing. It is typical of Dušková that she continues, regardless of circumstances: to have to retire in one's academic prime and then have one's part-time work load further reduced while working as much as ever before would be demotivating for most, to lose one's husband suddenly even more. However, following in the footsteps of her beloved teacher Bohumil Trnka, Dušková has succeeded in and carries on what she set out to do. restoring the position of English linguistics through her erudition, personal qualities and authority, among colleagues and students alike. Finally, I would like to debunk the image of an austere and dry academic. Academic, yes, but also an enthusiastic cross-country skier, hiker and an avid traveller. In fact, I am sure that she is the best-travelled anglicist in the country (for even Lord Quirk had to concede defeat when the two of them compared notes as to places they had visited). One failing, however, maybe she has - a strong personality, she finds it easier to give than to take. Well, I have seen people with vices much worse than this.

*Aleš Klégr (Prague)*

## I 65 ANNI DI SYLVA HAMPLOVÁ

Sylva Hamplová, professoressa di italiano presso l'Istituto di Studi Romani della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università Carlo IV di Praga celebra nel maggio di quest'anno il suo 65° anniversario.

Nata a Praga, laureatasi nel 1958 in filologia romanza (specializzazione italiano - spagnolo) presso la stessa facoltà con la tesi di laurea *La lingua e lo stile dell'opera di Carlo Levi "Cristo si è fermato a Eboli"*, S. Hamplová ottenne nel 1967 il titolo di PhDr., nel 1969 quello di CSc. e nel 1979 divenne professoressa associata di lingua italiana ("docentka").

Dopo la laurea, S. Hamplová ha lavorato come traduttrice presso l'Agenzia di Stampa Cecoslovacca e poi come ricercatrice presso la Sezione spagnola dell'Istituto di lingue e letterature dell'Accademia delle Scienze. Adesso la sua attività didattica si svolge all'