EVALUATION OF SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

Amir Kapetanović, Mediaeval conceptions of time and Old Croatian verb lexical aspect (aktionsart) in the Slavic context

1. Description of the work carried out during the visit

I studied extensive literature on the subject of my research in German libraries, especially in the library of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig. I had the opportunity to participate in the work of the Department of Linguistics (reading groups, talks, presentation of works in progress), which helped me in my research and will help me in my work in the future. I consulted with Prof. Comrie and Prof. Wiemer, which helped me in the writing of my paper. After my research I wrote a paper entitled „Mediaeval concepts of time and Old Croatian verbs" (48 pages). I presented the results of this research in Leipzig on June 25 (MPI EVA) and in Bamberg (Otto Friedrich University, Slavic Studies) on June 26. I received interesting comments after these presentations, which I can use to improve my paper. I will present my research results at my Institute (IHJJ) in Zagreb.

2. Description of the main results obtained

On the basis of the Old Croatian written texts, we have confirmed that the conception of time in the Middle Ages did not differ much from today's. This likely is not the case exclusively with the Old Croatian and Croatian ethnic community of the time, although we have not here performed comparative research in this direction. This is somewhat disappointing to those with "exotic" preconceptions about the Middle Ages. The basic conceptions of the world of Mediaeval people were much more similar to our own than we usually believe. The introductory analysis showed that time was observed through the aid of spatial relationships, such as motion (the relations forward – backward, past – present – future were attested). The illusion of future time approaching us and of past time passing as we move through time was part of Mediaeval everyday life as it is our own (in numerous world cultures). The conception of time (which is immovable according to the "theological" conception of eternity) as a container, and the conception of time filling a container and moving vertically in doing so are entirely common today (the conception of time as a container is especially tied to the conception of specific periods of time). Taking this discovery into account, it was not possible to identify anything in the Old Croatian language and in the linguistic reflexes of Mediaeval extra-linguistic reality that would be entirely different from today's conception of time and grammaticalisation and lexicalisation of temporal relations. Only the absence of some of today's conceptual metaphors was detected (foremost time is money, which is directly connected to the appearance of the merchant class in the late Middle Ages). This conceptual metaphor began to take hold in the late Middle Ages, from the appearance of the demand for time to be measured exactly, and after the invention of the mechanical clock. Regardless of the impossibility of universal, uniform and precise measurement of time, Mediaeval people relied on the sense of time shared by all people, as proven through modern neuroscientific research. This is seen especially in linguistic statements of varying intent, and ranges from an attempt to objectively designate a particular temporal moment or period, through approximate demarcation of temporal relations with the help of other temporal determinants established by other events, to highly creative statements regarding the durativeness of temporal intervals, the punctuality of events and temporally unbounded states. All of these statements are proof that time was important to Mediaeval people. On the other hand, the intralinguistic organisation of the Old Croatian language provided a wide range of ways in which to

grammaticalise temporal relations. Old Croatian "aspectual temporality" remains largely unchanged in modern Croatian, despite specific linguistic changes within these categories. The Croatian language developed its own idiosyncracies within the framework of the Slavic linguistic world, but nevertheless retained some (universal) Slavic linguistic characteristics and commonalities with specific, related Slavic languages. In its usage of the perfective imperfect and imperfective aorist, Old Croatian was more similar to some other (South) Slavic languages (e.g. Bulgarian) than is modern Croatian. As concerns lexical aspect, this paper confirms that nearly all of the possibilities available today in modern Croatian in the semantic modification of root verbs were also present in Old Croatian in nearly the same scope (with characteristics of polysemy). Numerous examples in different parts of this work confirm the ability of Old Croatian verbs (and situations related to them) to designate punctuality and durativity, limitation and non-limitation of intervals, iterativity and semelfactivity, stativity and dynamicness, successivity and simultaneity. On the basis of corpus-based research of Old Croatian linguistic realisations, vacillation in the choice of affixes — and especially of prefixes — were identified and illustrated, which leads to the conclusion that the name "empty prefix" for perfectivisers must be, at the very least, carefully used in the context of the Old Croatian period. That so-called "empty prefixes" were not entirely semantically "empty" has been shown though numerous examples of secondary imperfectivisation of prefixed perfective verbs in aspectual contrast (with an aspectually imperfective verb) through the addition of a suffix. Attestations of Old Croatian secondary imperfectivisation, which has been discussed neither in Croatian nor in foreign linguistic publications, ties Old Croatian with some other Slavic languages in the past, as well as in the present (e.g. Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak). Seeing as this work is anthropologically based, and that its goal was neither to criticise modern verb classification and contextual situations nor to offer new classifications, we have (especially in the last part) leaned in great part on an ontologically-founded trichotomy (state, process, event), but because of the linguistic focus of the research, some other classifications were also applied on Old Croatian texts.

3. Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)
There are opportunities for continued cooperation between the institutions in projects which will take into account Old Croatian and Slavic written heritage.

4. Projected publications/articles resulting or to result from the grant
I have not yet published my paper, but I will publish it in renowned international linguistic / Slavic studies periodicals. I will mention in this paper that the results of my research were attained thanks to the support of ESF.

5. Other comments (if any)
I bought airline tickets early on and within the allocated travel expenses (January). I had to postpone my research in Germany for a month due to family reasons (April/May > May/June). I asked ESF and my collaborators for permission, which was granted. Due to the delay in research, I had to change the purchased tickets, which incurred new costs and exceeded the allocated funds for my trip.