

Preface

We dedicate this volume to Axel Holvoet, a talented linguist, a distinguished professor of Vilnius University, Honorary Doctor of the University of Latvia, a recipient of the Gold Cross of Merit of Poland, a member of the Academia Europaea, a teacher, a colleague and a friend. He is best characterised by three things: first, by his passion for Baltic and general linguistics, second, by his dedication to students, colleagues and friends, and third, by his role in Academia Salensis, a gem of academic excellence and a place of attraction to many linguists.

In January 2021 Axel Holvoet celebrated his 65th birthday. He started his career as a linguist after graduating from the Department of Slavic languages and literatures at Ghent University in 1977, then moving to Poland and working mainly as a scholar of Slavic. He defended his PhD thesis on grammatical aspect in Polish in 1983 and began working at the Institute of Slavonic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. In 1991 he defended his habilitation thesis on transitivity and clause structure in Polish. His growing interest in the Baltic languages in the mid-eighties of the 20th century was a primary motive for him to learn first Latvian and later Lithuanian. In 1988 he started teaching Baltic linguistics at the University of Warsaw. In 1998 he moved to Lithuania; there he worked at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language and then at Vilnius University, where he has been teaching and doing research until now. His main subjects include trends in contemporary linguistics, syntax, language typology, and grammatical theory. He has initiated and completed several international projects resulting in a series of publications such as monographs *Studies in the Latvian Verb* (2001), *Mood and Modality in Baltic* (2007), *Basics of Syntax* (2009 in Lithuanian; 2012 translated into Latvian), *The Middle Voice in Baltic* (2020), and edited volumes *Grammatical Relations and their Non-Canonical Encoding in Baltic* (2014, co-edited with Nicole Nau), *Voice and Argument Structure* (2015, co-edited with Nicole Nau), *Argument Realisation in Baltic* (2016, co-edited with Nicole Nau). For many years he has been managing editor of *Baltic Linguistics* published by the University of Warsaw and has also worked as editor-in-chief of *Linguistica Baltica* and of *Acta Linguistica Lithuanica*.

Axel Holvoet has been instrumental in promoting the study of the Baltic languages and enhancing the awareness of the general linguistic community of the wealth of non-trivial phenomena found in them. Likewise, his role in making the linguistic community in Lithuania open to current trends in theoretical and typological study of language cannot be overestimated. Linguists interested in Baltic and general linguistics are familiar with a series of publications under the names of *Acta Salensia* and *Bibliotheca Salensis* initiated and promoted by Axel Holvoet.

Axel Holvoet spent many years cherishing Salos Academy, or *Academia Grammaticorum Salensis*, born of a joint effort of Axel and his wife Gina in 2004 in a remote picturesque village in northern Lithuania, now a place for annual summer schools of linguistics. A gorgeous historical manor and stunningly beautiful surroundings in Salos together with a school led by Axel Holvoet, a prolific and insightful linguist and an outstanding personality, continue to attract linguists every year.

This volume is a collection of papers written by people who have met Axel Holvoet as a colleague and a teacher on different occasions and under very different circumstances of his life. The book starts with *Tabula Gratulatoria* followed by a list of selected publications by Axel Holvoet. The volume also includes 24 papers by 32 authors; most of them have met and were inspired by Axel Holvoet in Salos Academy. The papers address a large number of aspects of linguistic research focusing primarily on the Baltic languages in their synchrony and diachrony, and also covering Slavic and other languages of Europe. The topics include phonology, morphology, syntax, grammatical and lexical semantics, pragmatics and etymology.

The languages of the contributions are English, German and Russian, which is only a small subset of all languages that Axel Holvoet has managed to very proficiently master. He is one of those remarkable scholars who have a special attraction for languages and an exceptional language learning ability.

We sincerely hope that the volume will be of interest both to Axel Holvoet and to many other linguists working in the same or similar fields, including those who do not yet share our privilege to know him and collaborate with him. Any remaining errors in the book are our responsibility.

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Tabula gratulatoria

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