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RALF-PETER RITTER IN FRANKFURT (1994–2011)



The article summarises Ralf-Peter Ritter's activities in teaching and research in the years he spent at the Goethe University Frankfurt. The focus is first on the more than 100 courses and seminars he taught between 1994 and 2011, including the additional teaching he undertook at the universities of Heidelberg, Gießen, and Dresden. The article then analyses the monographs and articles Ritter authored in the time in question, most of which concentrate on Finno-Ugric languages and Armenian.

Keywords: Ralf-Peter Ritter, Finno-Ugric languages, Balto-Finnic languages, Hungarian language, Armenian language.

Among the many stations of Ralf-Peter Ritter's long and extraordinarily diversified academic career, Frankfurt was indeed peculiar. It was in Frankfurt that he received the title of a professor (in 2000), and it was in Frankfurt that he delivered his last hour of teaching (in May 2011). Before outlining the huge amount of works he accomplished during his time at Goethe University, I shall briefly summarise the steps that led him here.

Ralf-Peter Ritter (born 10.12.1938 in Berlin) first studied mathematics and physics in Würzburg (1957–1963) before he changed to the Free University of Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin), where he switched from the natural sciences to the philological disciplines of Slavistics and Balkanology (1963–1967). In connection with the latter, he became acquainted with related subjects that turned out to be decisive for his further career, viz. Finno-Ugric studies and the philology of the Christian East, which brought him to Munich and Helsinki (1967–1972) and which manifested themselves in his first *opus magnum*, the doctoral thesis of 1972 on the Vepsian partitive, published in 1989 at Otto Harrassowitz's in Wiesbaden (“Untersuchungen zum Partitiv im Vepsischen”). Having received his doctorate, Ritter started working as a lecturer (Wissenschaftlicher Assistent) at the Institute for Indo-European Studies of the University of Regensburg (1972–1978), and it was in October 1973 in Regensburg that I must have met him for the first time, at an Indo-Europeanists' conference held there; however, neither he nor



I later remembered having talked to each other on that occasion – probably he was too busy as a co-organiser of the conference, and myself, as a student in his third semester, was too shy to address one of the “big players.” As a matter of fact, we only got to know each other eight years later, in 1981, on a conference on ergativity in Hannover, where Ralf-Peter Ritter delivered a paper on ergative traits in Finno-Ugric languages – at that time, he had just changed from the position of a lecturer at the Institut für Finnougristik of the University of Vienna (1978–81) to the position of a researcher at the Iranische Kommission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, which he held until 1988. In the middle of this latter occupation, which was devoted to a totally different subject, viz. Iranian personal names in Armenian, he was awarded the title of PhD as a Candidate of Linguistics in Budapest (in 1985). In 1988, Ritter found his way back to the Free University of Berlin, where we worked until 1991 on the project of an Avestan dictionary at the Institute for Comparative Linguistics, and it was there that we even shared our office for two years (until 1990), after having worked together for the first time in Vienna for two years in 1982–84; and I was also present when he successfully defended his *habilitation* on the oldest Germanic loan words in the Finnic languages in 1989 (the thesis was published four years later, in 1993, under the title “Studien zu den ältesten germanischen Entlehnungen im Ostseefinnischen”).

Having received the title of a *Privatdozent* with a *venia legendi* in Comparative and Finno-Ugric Linguistics, Ralf-Peter Ritter was able to temporally take over professorships in Berlin (at both the Free University and the Humboldt University) and in Salzburg, before he accepted the post of a senior lecturer in Finno-Ugric languages, Baltic languages, and Armenian at the Institute for Comparative Linguistics, Phonetics and Slavic languages of the University of Frankfurt in 1994, a position which he held until 2003. In addition to the enormous tasks he had to fulfil at Frankfurt, he volunteered in teaching at the universities of Heidelberg (1996–9), Gießen (1999–2000), and Dresden (2002–3), thus filling gaps that resulted from sharp cuts in Comparative and Indo-European Linguistics in those years.

In 2000, Ritter was awarded the title of an extraordinary professor at Frankfurt, and as a professor and former *Privatdozent*, he continued teaching in our institute until 2011, even throughout the seven years of 2003–9 during which he occupied the chair of Hungarian at the University of Krakow in Poland.

The output of Ralf-Peter Ritter’s seventeen years in Frankfurt was enormous indeed, both in teaching and in written research, and it is not easy to outline it, given the great diversity of the subjects he mastered. It is clear that in accordance with his main interests and with the denomination of his post, two fields stand out here, viz. Finno-Ugric languages and Armenian, but there are many other subjects that he touched upon or even thematised separately. In the following pages, I shall first summarise the courses he taught at Frankfurt between 1994 and 2011 and, as an “ambassador” of the Frankfurt institute, in Heidelberg, Gießen, and Dresden, before I turn to his publications.

Within the field of Finno-Ugric linguistics, the focus of Ralf-Peter Ritter’s teaching in Frankfurt was mostly on the Finnic languages of the Baltic Sea. His courses included general introductions into these languages and their structure (under titles such as “Die ostseefinnischen Sprachen”, “Einführung in die ostseefinnischen Sprachen”,

or “Einführung in die ostseefinnische Sprachwissenschaft”), surveys of their literary monuments (“Ältere ostseefinnische Sprachdenkmäler”), as well as their linguistic contacts with neighbouring non-Finno-Ugric languages and borrowings from them (“Das altindogermanische Lehngut des Ostseefinnischen”, “Die germanischen Elemente des Ostseefinnischen”). In addition, Ritter addressed individual languages of the group, starting with Finnish (with courses like “Struktur des Finnischen”, “Finnisch für Anfänger”, “Kontrastive Grammatik Deutsch/Finnisch”, “Lektüre altfinnischer Texte”, and “Finnische Lektüre: Kalevala”) but also including “minor” languages (“Einführung in eine ‘kleinere’ ostseefinnische Sprache”, “Einführung ins Ingrische”, “Einführung ins Wotische”) as well as Saami (“Einführung ins Lappische”). Of course, Hungarian was also represented, with general introductions (“Struktur des Ungarischen”, “Einführung ins Ungarische”), language courses (“Ungarisch I” and “II”), and a sketch of its historical grammar (“Historische Grammatik des Ungarischen”).

As the second main pillar of his work, Armenian was represented in all its facets, Old, Middle, and Modern, from both a linguistic and a literary perspective. For Old Armenian, Ritter regularly delivered more general introductions (“Einführung ins Altarmenische”, “Sprachwissenschaftliche Einführung ins Altarmenische”, “Altarmenische Literaturgeschichte”), courses (“Altarmenisch I / für Anfänger”, “Altarmenisch II / für Fortgeschrittene”), seminars concerning the reading of texts (“Altarmenische Lektüre”, “Ašxarhac’oyc’”, “Texte zur Historischen Geographie Armeniens”), and seminars as to its historical grammar (“Historische Grammatik des Armenischen”, “Armenische Sprachgeschichte”, “Der altarmenische Lehnwortschatz”, “Das altarmenische Verbum”); in addition, an introduction into the language of Ur-Artu as the “local predecessor” of Armenian was also included (“Einführung in das Urartäische”). Middle and Modern Armenian were mostly covered by introductory courses (“Kilikisch-Armenisch I” and “II”, “Neuarmenisch für Anfänger”, “Einführung ins Ostarmenische I” and “II”) but also comprised literary aspects (“Armenische Literaturgeschichte”, “Armenische Lektüre”, “Westarmenische Lektüre”).

As a third pillar, which he had first established in connection with his habilitation thesis, Ralf-Peter Ritter delivered a broad program concerning the Indo-European languages of the Baltic Sea area, again beginning with general introductions into the field (“Die baltischen Sprachen”, “Die baltischen Völker und Sprachen”) as well as Lithuanian and Old Prussian as individual languages (“Einführung ins Litauische”, “Sprachwissenschaftliche Einführung ins Litauische”, “Einführung ins Litauische auf sprachvergleichender Grundlage”, “Altlitauisch”, “Litauisch für Anfänger” and “Fortgeschrittene”, “Einführung in das Altpreußische”), and ending up with peculiar seminars offering a historical perspective (“Baltische Altertumskunde”, “Das Problem der baltoslavischen Einheit”).

Beyond Armenian and the Baltic languages, Ralf-Peter Ritter taught an enormous range of additional topics for Indo-Europeanists, comprising the Slavic languages (“Slavische Sprachgeschichte”, “Altbulgarisch in sprachvergleichender Hinsicht”), Latin (“Geschichte der lateinischen Sprache”, “Altlatein”, “Altlateinische Inschriften”), Ancient Greek (“Geschichte der griechischen Sprache”, “Historische Grammatik des Griechischen”, “Sprachwissenschaftliche Homer-Lektüre”, “Sprachwissenschaftliche Interpretation ausgewählter Abschnitte der Odyssee”, “Homerische Hymnen”, “Grie-



chische Dialektinschriften”, “Herodot IV, 1-144: Lektüre mit sprachwissenschaftlichem und ethnographischem Kommentar”), Indo-Iranian languages (“Lektüre und Interpretation vedischer Texte”), and the so-called “Indogermanische Rest- und Trümmersprachen”, as well as more general topics such as the laryngeal theory (“Einführung in die Laryngalthorie”) or questions of Indo-European word formation (“Indogermanische Wortbildung”). In accordance with the requirements of our studies programs, Ralf-Peter Ritter further delivered tutorials and seminars in general and typological linguistics, covering areas such as the affinity of languages (“Der Begriff der Verwandtschaft in der Sprachwissenschaft”), areal linguistics (“Der balkanische Sprachbund”), aspectual systems (“Aspektsysteme”), prosody (“Typologie prosodischer Systeme”), or adjectival comparison (“Typologische Aspekte der Adjektivkomparation”), and he kept students up-to-date by reading new publications with them (“Lektüre sprachwissenschaftlicher Neuerscheinungen”). All in all, I have counted far more than 100 lectures and courses he delivered in Frankfurt between 1994 and 2011.

Ralf-Peter Ritter’s teaching in Heidelberg, Gießen, and Dresden was by far not restricted to a reduplication of what he taught at Frankfurt. In Heidelberg, he offered, apart from a seminar on the affinity of languages (“Der Begriff der Verwandtschaft in der Sprachwissenschaft”) and introductions into Finno-Ugric Studies (“Finno-Ugristik”, also taught in Dresden under the title “Einführung in die Finnisch-Ugrische Sprachwissenschaft”) and into Old-Armenian (“Einführung ins Altarmenische”, also taught in Dresden as “Einführung ins Armenische”), a seminar on the emergence of literary languages (“Die Genese von Schriftsprachen”). In Gießen, his teaching extended from a survey of language systems within and beyond Europe (“Übersicht über die Sprachsysteme der Erde I: Europäische Sprachen; II: Außereuropäische Sprachen”) and general introductions into historical linguistics (“Einführung in die historische Linguistik”), linguistic typology (“Einführung in die Sprachtypologie”) and linguistic morphology (“Morphologie”) up to seminars on loanwords in German (“Der Lehnwortschatz des Deutschen”) and ancient Greek dialect inscriptions (“Griechische Dialektinschriften”). It is extremely regrettable that his endeavours to keep the chairs of Comparative Linguistics in Heidelberg and Gießen alive by offering such a broad program turned out to be in vain at last.

A similar breadth of knowledge as in his teaching manifested itself also in Ralf-Peter Ritter’s publications. Between 1994 and 2011, he published a total of 41 articles and 28 book reviews, about two thirds of which were either written or at least conceived in Frankfurt. Among the articles, the bulk (32) is again on Finno-Ugric languages, with a special focus on their contacts with neighbouring Indo-European languages, and Finnic languages are as well represented as Hungarian; the list comprises the following items concerning the Finnic languages:*

- Über das Alter der baltischen Elemente des ostseefinnischen Wortschatzes (1995)
- Zum baltoslavischen ‚epexegetischen‘ finalen Infinitiv und seiner ostseefinnischen Entsprechung (1996)
- Zum Supinum im Ostseefinnischen, Lappischen und Baltischen (1996)

* For details cf. the list of publications provided by W. Sowa in Ralf-Peter Ritter’s Festschrift [1] and online [2].



- Die Bedeutung des Altpreußischen bei der Frage der baltischen Lehnwörter des Ostseefinnischen (1998)
- Fahren und Reiten im Ostseefinnischen (1998)
- Zu den Reflexen der baltischen Liquiddiphthonge im Ostseefinnischen (1998)
- Verwendungstypen des Partitivs in den ostseefinnischen Kontaktsprachen des Russischen (1999)
- Präliminarien zu einer Entgegnung (1999/2000)
- Der Eintritt der Ostseefinnen in die ‚europäische Geschichte‘ (2002)
- Towards determining the *terminus ante quem* of the beginning of Proto-germanic-Fennic contacts (2002)
- Zu einer baltischen Reaktion auf fragwürdige germanisch-ostseefinnische Lehnwortforschung (2002)
- Die Baltismen des Ostseefinnischen und die türkischen / iranischen Elemente des Ungarischen (2003)
- Das Germanische und die nordöstlichen Anrainersprachen (2004)
- NWGerm * $\bar{e}_1 > \bar{a}$ und einige ‚urgermanische‘ Lehnwörter des Ostseefinnischen (2004)
- Zur Herkunft von fi. *mäyrä* ‚Dachs‘ (2005)
- Luthers Katechismus als Sprachdenkmal im Baltikum (2005)
- Zum finalen Infinitiv im Ostseeraum (2006)
- Die Methode der textuellen Minimalpaare (2011; posthumous publication online) [3]

Hungarian is addressed in the following articles:

- Fälle von ‚sporadischem Lautwandel‘ in bairischen, slavischen und italienischen Lehnwörtern des Ungarischen (1997)
- Az Ehrenfeld-kódex latin megfelelőjéhez (1998)
- Slawisch, italienisch oder deutsch? Zur Frage der Herkunft einiger europäischer Kulturwörter des ungarischen Wortschatzes (2000)
- Das Kochbuch der Anna Bornemisza als Sprachdenkmal (2002)
- Zur Herkunft von ung. *vászón* ‚Leinwand‘ (2002)
- Zu einem vermeintlichen Lautwandel **o > á* in einigen slavischen Lehnwörtern des Ungarischen (2003)
- A Murmellius-féle latin szójegyzék (2004)
- Zu den ungarisch-iranischen Lehnbeziehungen (2005/6)
- A magyar nyelv korai újfelnémet elemei – különös tekintettel a jövevényszó-kutatás módszerére (2007)
- Zur Herkunft von ung. *beteg* ‚krank‘ (2011; posthumous publication online) [4]
- Österreichisch *Teebutter* ~ ungarisch *teavaj* (2012; posthumous publication)

[5. S. 373–375]

A broader Uralistic perspective is visible in the following three articles:

- Zum Äquativ in finnisch-ugrischen und indogermanischen Sprachen (2000)
- Ex Septentrionibus lux? – Laryngaltheorie und Uralistik (2002)
- Zur Frage der uralischen Evidenz für die Laryngaltheorie (2005)

As in his teaching, the second main pillar of his work is represented by the Old Armenian language, which is the subject of seven articles of the period in question:



- Armen. *erek 'matean* (Ezn. 195) (1997)
- Zu einigen Wörtern ostiranischer Provenienz im Armenischen (1997)
- Zenob Glak, P'awstos Biwzandac'i, Ignatios Vardapet, Grigor Narekac'i (2001)
- Greek-Armenian Isoglosses and the Ancient Greek Dialects (2004, with W. Sowa)
- Zum Kasusverhalten der altarmenischen Präposition *and* ‚mit‘ (2006)
- Zur Frage der Reste indogermanischer Dichtersprache im Armenischen (2006)
- Uridg. **r* im Armenischen (2009)

It would be extremely useful for both Uralicists and Indo-Europeanists if Ritter's articles, published in an enormously wide range of journals and collective volumes, could be reprinted in a cohesive way as a *Kleine Schriften* volume soon, including those that thematise other languages such as German (“Ahd. *ôstarrîchi* zwischen Appellativum und Toponym”, 2003) or Latin (“Zur Etymologie von lat. *lignum*”, 2004; “Lat. *mēlēs*”, 2009).

Besides the articles mentioned above, Old Armenian was also the object of a monograph which Ralf-Peter Ritter published together with Javier Martínez in Spanish in 1999 (“Introducción al armenio antiguo”, Madrid, 100 pp.); an English version of this book (edited by A. Korn and D. Fear) is still under preparation. Unfortunately, Ritter did not live either to see the publication of the monograph he worked on between 1981 and 1988 in Vienna, viz. the volume on the Armenian “Nebenüberlieferung” of Iranian personal names (“Iranische Namen in der armenischen Nebenüberlieferung bis zum Ende der Sasanidenzeit”, planned to be “Faszikel 3a” of “Band V: Iranische Personennamen in Nebenüberlieferungen indogermanischer Sprachen” of the series “Iranisches Personennamenbuch (IPNB)” founded by Manfred Mayrhofer). The manuscript, which comprises a total of 228 lemmatic entries, was converted into an up-to-date digital format (as illustrated in the appendix below) by Ralf-Peter Ritter himself during his time in Frankfurt, and it seems feasible indeed to have it edited for being printed soon.

Summing up, we may state that Ralf-Peter Ritter's work in Frankfurt was characterised both by an extraordinarily broad expertise in languages and linguistic topics and by an extraordinary readiness to serve the needs of academic teaching, which manifested itself not only in his publications and the courses he offered but also in his efforts concerning the supervision of students and younger colleagues. The fingerprints of this extraordinary person will last on our institute for many years to come!

Appendix: *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, unpublished manuscript (excerpts)

1. Agowrhi, Agrowth: s. Ogowhi

2. [Alanayoz: B *Alanayoz* (a,2)?; *Alanayoz* (a,1); *Alanozean*: Xor. III 34 (a,2). – P General des pers. Königs *Šapowx*. – D H. vergleicht *Rāzmiozan* (s.d.). Da er dieses jedoch als pers. *razmyoz* ‘kampfbegierig’ (vgl. NB 498: *A.* und *Rāzmiozan* zu phl. *yožān* ‘sich bewegend, aufsuchend’) auffaßt – was in GERSH. Deutung von el. *Ra-iz-mi-za-na* als **razma-čanah-* ‘longing for battle’ (1969b, 228) eine Parallele hätte –, wobei er auf arm. *paterazm yowzel* ‘nach Kampf begehren’ hinweist (199), ist nicht klar, wie *A* semantisch zu analysieren sein soll. Zum Ausgang vgl. *Argamozan*



(Xor. I 23), die arm. Bezeichnung des Assyrsers *Adramel* (ehd.), ass. *Adramelek* (RLA I 39), bei Euseb. Chron. arm. 14: *Ardownowzan*. Da der arm. PN *Alan* möglicherweise auf ein Appellativum assyrischer Herkunft zurückgeht (so AČN. 97), kann man mithin auch für *A.* semitischen Ursprung vermuten. Die Vermutung, daß *-(y)ozan* eine Übersetzung des sem. *mlk* ‘König’ sei, führt nicht weiter.]

3. **Ambak** s. **Ampak**

4. **Amirnerseh** s. **Atrnerseh**

...

42. **Ašxadar**: **B** Xor. II 83; III 43; **Ašxindar**: Owxt. I 67. – **P** Vater der *Ašxēn* (II, Owxt.). 2. Armenier aus dem Hause *Dimak* ‘*sean* unter *Xosrov* III. (III). – **D** Prth. *hštrdy*, phl. *štrd* ‘ly, *strd* ‘[ly], *štld* ‘ly ‘gouverneur’ (GIN. 34 bzw. 53) < **xša*Θ*ra-dāra* (s. BACK 262); arm. *A.* < **Ašxahadar* oder **Ašxahradar* (vgl. NB 174 ff). Naeh NALB. alanischer Herkunft (19), doch ist die Volkszugehörigkeit zu den Alanen eine durch die Quellen nicht gesicherte Vermutung C[‘]IAMC[‘]IANS (s. AČN.). Die Variante bei Owxt. wohl in Anlehnung an den Namen der Tochter (**Ašxendar*). Dieses von NALB. als *xša* ‘Herrschaft’ und dar ‘besitzen, lenken’, also als ‘Herrschaft ausüben’ erklärt, doch was ist morphologisch *xsa*?

43. **Ašxēn**: **B** Agat[‘]. 106, 111 f., 112, 116, 118; Xor. II 83. – **P** Frau des *Trdat*, Tochter von 16 – **P** 1. – **D** Wohl zu av. *axsaēna-* ‘dunkelfarbig’ (AČN. 179). Möglich wäre auch eine *-ēn*-Bildung von einer hypokoristischen Wurzel zu *Asxadar*.

NALB. denkt an oss. *æxsīn* ‘Königin’ (19), doch ist Alanentum ihres Vaters nur eine Vermutung C[‘]IAMC[‘]IANS.

44. [**Atom**: **B** Xor. III 55; P[‘]arp. 23, 47, 68 f., 71; Eł. 54, 77, 103, 150; Arcr. I 11. – **P** 1. Arm. *Naxarar* aus *Mokk* ‘(1. Viertel des 5. Jh) – Xor. 2. *A. gnowni*, *Naxarar*, Teilnehmer am Aufstand 451 (P[‘]arp.; Eł.); noch ein anderer *A. g.* um 450? S. AČN. – Kaum mit Privativsuffix zu phl. *tōm* ‘seed, family’. Schwerlich auch Zusammenhang mit dem ägyptischen Gott *Atum* bei den Achämeniden (DAND.-LUKON. 338 f.)]

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Й. Гипперт

Деятельность Ральфа-Петера Риттера во Франкфурте (1994–2011)

Франкфурт в научной деятельности Ральфа-Петера Риттера был очень важным местом: здесь он получил ученую степень профессора (в 2000 г.), здесь читал свои последние лекции (в 2011 г.). Начиная с 1994 г. Р.-П. Риттер преподавал финно-угорские, балтийские и армянский языки, вел более 100 лекций, курсов и семинаров, посвященных прибалтийско-финским, венгерскому, армянскому и другим индоевропейским языкам; вопросам общего языкознания и типологии. Параллельно с этим, в промежутке между 1995-м и 2003-м годами, Риттер регулярно преподавал в университетах Гейделберга, Гисена и Дрездена тот же широкий спектр предметов. Свою преподавательскую деятельность во Франкфурте он продолжал даже в то время, когда работал профессором кафедры венгерской филологии в Кракове.

Во Франкфурте Риттер написал около 25 статей и 20 рецензий, большинство из которых посвящены финно-угорским и армянскому языкам. Грамматика древнеармянского языка была также предметом монографии, написанной им вместе с Хавьером Мартинесом по-испански в 1999 г. и которая еще ждет своего издания на английском языке. Уже готов к финальному редактированию и публикации манускрипт выпуска иранских личных имен, документированных в армянской письменности до конца Сасанидского господства. Риттер разрабатывал его для серии «Iranisches Personennamenbuch» в 1980-х гг. в Вене.

Ключевые слова: Ральф-Петер Риттер, финно-угорские языки, прибалтийско-финские языки, венгерский язык, армянский язык.

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