

Alex Andrason, University of Iceland

#### **VILAMOVICEAN AND LANGUAGE CONTACT PHENOMENON – THE INFLUENCE OF POLISH ON THE SMALLEST GERMANIC LANGUAGE**

Vilamovicean (Wymysöeryś) is a Germanic language spoken by 80 people in the south of Poland in the town of Wilamowice situated in the Western Galicia on the boundary with Silesia. The language itself is a descendant of Middle High German and it shares a common development with other Central East German daughter languages, like for instance Silesian and its dialects. Because nowadays Vilamovicean is spoken only by a small group of elderly native speakers (most of them are more than 80 years old), its future is in a real danger. In consequence, since 2007 Alex Andrason has done several researches (both theoretical investigations and field work) in order to preserve Vilamovicean and, first of all, describe its contemporary structure. Together with a linguist from the University of Poznan (Poland) Przemyslaw Czarnecki and receiving a great help of the local authorities and the people from Wilamowice he has collected necessary data, which enable him to write a grammar of this almost completely unknown Germanic language.

The lecture at the University of Manchester will deal with one aspect of the history of the Vilamovicean language and its grammar, i.e. the influence it has suffered from the dominant Polish *superstratum*.

First, in order to give attendants a general view of the structure of Vilamovicean the main grammatical features will be presented, including phonetics, morphology and syntax. Next the author will present some major changes that have taken place in Vilamovicean due to the Polish influence. Examples of phonetic (consonants, clusters, palatalization), lexical (kinships terms, idioms, conjunctions, prepositions), morphological (nominal, verbal, derivational), and syntactical ('agglutination', double negation, lack of the concordance of tenses) aspects of the polonization will be given. In the third part of the lecture, we will deal with the question of parallelism and differences between Vilamovicean and Yiddish (another Germanic language spoken in the Polish territory) in what concerns the phenomenon of polonization. Finally, after resuming the influence of Polish on both Vilamovicean and Yiddish, the author will explain what new aspects this comparative study introduces into language contact linguistics.

Vilamovicean examples will be taken from the poem of Florian Biesik as edited by Wicherkiewicz 2003 (which remains the only literary text in Vilamovicean) and from a date-base which has been built up by Alex Andrason since 2007.

The lecture may be interesting not only for specialists in the study of Germanic languages, but also for all scholars and students interested in language contact phenomena.

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A young Icelandic linguist investigating in areas of typology, diachronic and comparative grammar, language contact phenomenon and in matters related to the phenomenon of grammaticalisation (and de-grammaticalisation) in the verbal system (universality, paths, directionality). His language interests include Indo-European languages (Germanic, Romance, Slavic and Greek) and Semitic languages (Hebrew, Arabic and Acadian). He speaks and reads in many Indo-European and Semitic languages and in some languages from other families (Bantu and Turkic). His education curriculum includes a B.A. degree in Icelandic Philology, B.A. in Romance Philology, B.A. in General Linguistics, M.A. in Icelandic Grammar, M.A. in Romance Philology, and M.A. (D.E.A) in Semitic Languages. Since 2005 he has been writing his Ph.D. thesis on the history of the perfect (resultative) in Icelandic and Germanic languages at the University of Iceland. Since 2005 he has worked as a teacher at universities in Iceland (University of Iceland, University of Akureyri) and Spain (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela). He also worked as a visiting teacher in various universities in Spain, Poland, Montenegro and Morocco. Additionally, he works on preserving endangered and minority languages. He is the director of the research projects *Saving a Language – Vilamovicean* (Poland) and *Descripción gramatical de Mingaña* (Spain).