

**10TH INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE
STUDIENKREIS GESCHICHTE DER SPRACHWISSENSCHAFT
(SGDS)**

Potsdam, 18th-21st June 1997

IF anywhere in Germany can pride itself on having seen summer in the rainy spring of 1997, it is Potsdam. A mild sun in a white-blue sky, a beautiful park and the woods nearby, a light breeze to cool off one's mind during the breaks: if Gerda Haßler and Peter Schmitter, the organizers of the colloquium, had not planned this, they certainly deserved it. In the spacious venue of the beautifully refurbished Siemens-Villa, located in what seemed to me to be the outskirts of Potsdam (but what turned out to be pretty central), the Research Centre Europäische Aufklärung hosted the tenth international meeting of the SGdS, which was devoted to the discussion of linguistic theory and linguistic description in the Enlightenment. As far as the perfect match of political history, ideational geography and linguistic historiography is concerned, a more appropriate place for a meeting is hardly conceivable. But all this was topped by the meteorological enlightenment during the days of the conference.

The beautiful and history-laden place and the lazy atmosphere of summery spring afternoons did not prevent fifty or so scholars from almost all over the world from engaging in hard work. Since the sheer number of papers offered had taken the organizers by surprise, the papers had to be split up into two parallel sections, a procedure that the former SGdS meetings had been keen to avoid. Obviously, there was no other way for a two-day meeting to accommodate about 40 papers. Unfortunately, the smooth passage of participants from one section to the other was often made impossible by those speakers who failed to stick to the time limits. Once more, many of us regretted that the ratio between the reading of a paper and its (public) discussion is moving more and more towards a point where discussion is completely relegated to lunch and dinner time. More discipline would help a little! As Peter Schmitter told me, the Studienkreis would like to go back some way to the days when its meetings were different from most others, because the ratio was balanced. On the positive side, however, the ever increasing number of papers and participants is of course a most welcome sign of the growth of interest in the history of the language sciences.

The papers read are too numerous to be listed here. Those interested in obtaining a copy of the full programme should contact either Gerda Haßler or me for information. A selection of the papers presented at the conference will appear in the conference proceedings to be published by Nodus (Münster).

The organizers had gone to endless trouble to make Potsdam a memorable experience in every way. The side programme included a joint dinner at a local restaurant, a guided visit of Sanssouci and the Neue Palais, a weekend full of touristic attractions such as a cabaret evening and boat excursions in Potsdam and Berlin. Thus, both the academic and the more mundane needs of the conference participants were

catered for with equal care. Looking back, however, I get the impression that the almost intimate atmosphere during the days of the conference was as much the result of careful organization as of the charming direction of proceedings by Gerda Haßler, which made everybody feel personally welcome. When I left, I left in a cheerful mood, with some new friends, a host of ideas and a light tan. Is there more that one might hope to take home from a conference?

Note: The next international colloquium of the SGdS (on 'The History of Linguistic and Grammatical *Praxis*') will be in Leuven (B), 2nd - 4th September 1998. For further information contact Pierre Swiggers, Departement Linguïstiek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Blijde Inkomststraat 21, B-3000 Leuven or Peter Schmitter, Postfach 410115, D-48065 Münster.

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