

The thirtieth day after the death of Aharon – published in the Israeli media

Thirty Days to the Death of Aharon Dolgopolsky –
a Brilliant Ground-Breaking Researcher Who Discovered Our Ancestor's Language

How to Get Drunk on Wine in Hebrew, English, German, French, Russian, and Finnish?

Thursday, August 23rd 2012, was the 30th day of the death of the great world leading linguist and global expert on long-range comparison of languages, the man who wrote the "Nostratic Dictionary" that spans about 4000 pages in four volumes, whose contribution to mankind is clear and beyond doubt.



Aharon Dolgopolsky, "a genius in the field of comparative linguistics" (Prof. Vitaly Shevoroshkin, a linguist at the University of Michigan), whose "erudition was legendary" (Prof. Lord Colin Renfrew, an archeologist and linguist from the University of Cambridge), revealed that most languages in the world evolved from one ancestral language. His basic assumption was that over 15,000 years, there was a single language almost all currently-spoken languages originated from. He named this language the "Nostratic language" (from "Nostra", ours, our language).

For example, the familiarity between *Yayin* in Hebrew, *Wine* in English, *Wein* in German, *Vin* in French, *Vino* in Russian and *Vini* in Finnish. Or, if you play the *Keren* (Hebrew), *the Horn* (English), or the *Corno* (Italian) – you're actually playing the **Karen** – the 15,000 years old Nostratic origin!

As said, the Nostratic Dictionary he published spans 4000 pages in four volumes, and it contains entries for over 3000 roots.

The dictionary was published by Cambridge University. 50,000 researchers around the world use the online dictionary.

His enormous library – a one of a kind which contains over 12,000 volumes (dictionaries and studies) – will soon be moved its new residence, where a center for the study of Nostratic linguistics will be established on his name.

Aharon Dolgopolosky was born on November 18th 1930, in Moscow. His parents spoke Russian and Yiddish, and they had an enormous library containing many volumes of German literature, thus he learned the German language as a young child, by himself. Then he proceeded to English, French and Latin in the same way. He learned the basics of Hebrew from his father, who was well-versed in Hebraic sources. The young Aharon was attentive to his surroundings. He grasped the Tartaric language spoken by his neighbors, marveled at groups of people at the park who joked in Armenian, and sometimes he secretly followed dark-skinned couples in the streets of Moscow and listened to their chats. Once as a child in Moscow, lying many days in his bed, sick because of the rheumatism (in the minus 30 degrees temperature), he couldn't go to school, then he utilized his time in the best way possible: he learned French from a wonderful book about ancient Greek myths. He held on to that book for many years.

In 1957, he started his studies at the Moscow University of Linguistics (then "The Institute of Foreign Languages"), and later he worked there. Then he started his pioneering research in comparing Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic languages. At the tender age of 33, in 1963, he already started to be well-known in the linguistic community worldwide, because of publishing the first article of its kind about the possible connection between the European, Asian and African languages. Ten years later, he published his innovative and ground-breaking book on the Cushitic branch of Hamito-Semitic languages, which made him a global authority in the field until today .

In the late 1960s as the USSR Jewry became more Zionist after the six day war, Aharon Dolgopolosky decided to immigrate to Israel. He started learning Israeli Hebrew appropriately in the underground Zionist circles of those days. As a result, he was invited several times for being interviewed by the communist management of the "Institute for Linguistics" and by the KGB. Among other things, he was asked if he intends to immigrate to Israel. His neither-here-nor-there reply was always: "I have no such plans at the moment", all in an attempt to find the best moment to submit the immigration

request. Six months before he immigrated to Israel he was dismissed from his job. Until then he already published hundreds of entries in the Soviet Encyclopedia, and even after he was fired he continued to submit entries he had already written, and they were published omitting his name.

He already had a permanent professor position lined up for him at the University of Haifa before he immigrated to Israel (1976), when he was 46 years old. Before he left Moscow and went to Israel, he hurried to scatter his library among colleagues all over the world, and then each one of them sent him parts of this huge treasure to the University of Haifa, lest the Soviet authorities would have destroyed it. He reconstructed his library bit by bit, carrying his beloved books in a backpack from the University on the Carmel Mountain to his new house in Israel.

He continued intensively in his research, published hundreds of articles and delved deeper and deeper into the study of the Nostratic super-family which contains six families: Indo-European, Hamito-Semitic, Kartavelian (Georgia), Uralic (Siberia), Altaic and Dravidian (South India). He was invited to lecture in many international conferences and began publishing his major books. In 2008, all four enormous volumes of his groundbreaking dictionary, "**The Nostratic Dictionary**", were published by the British Cambridge University. This is his magnum opus placing him as a revolutionary in the field of Comparative Historical Linguistics.

Four jubilee books have been dedicated to this cultural figure to this day. The first one was published in Canberra, Australia, to mark his 70th birthday; two more were published immediately following the publication of the "Nostratic Dictionary" – one in Berlin and one in Lund (Sweden). The fourth will appear in Moscow to mark the beginning of his 9th decade that ended with a painless death while being at his home, sitting by his computer and preparing a series of complementary dictionaries to his voluminous work. This series will serve experts in specific language families with dictionaries of their own, derived from the master-dictionary published in 2008. This series is to be completed now in Moscow.

The groundbreaking school he founded is alive and kicking internationally. Gifted students, the pupils of his students, deal now with Nostratic linguistics, drawing knowledge and inspiration from the inexhaustible information he has left us by his life's work.

The majesty of his achievement shines vis-à-vis his lifelong modesty.

On Aharon Dolgopolsky, by prominent linguists across the Globe

By the archaeologist and linguist, Prof. Lord Colin Renfrew, who published Aharon Dolgopolsky's "Nostratic Dictionary" in the University of Cambridge, England:

A. Dolgopolsky's erudition was legendary, and deeply respected by linguists, including many who are not themselves working in the field of Nostratic studies. His impact has been worldwide, and has influenced developments in prehistoric archaeology as well as his own field of comparative and historical linguistics...

By the Slavist Prof. Vitaly Shevoroshkin from Ann Harbor, Michigan:

Prof. A. Dolgopolsky was a genius in the field of comparative linguistics who has accomplished a titanic work: using a precise comparative-historical methodology he has reconstructed the Nostratic proto-language, the ancestor of several old proto-languages, ancestors of Indo-European, Kartvelian, Semito-Hamitic, and other families. For that, he had a unique knowledge in hundreds of languages, belonging to each of the above families.

Thanks to Prof. A. Dolgopolsky the comparative linguistics made a giant step forward; a long work of fully-stuffed scholarly institutions would not be able to do such a research.

There are many sub-branches of Prof. A. Dolgopolsky's research: one is a recreation of ways of life of our remote ancestors – how they hunted, fished, the tools they used, etc.

The number of researchers who use his online "Nostratic Dictionary" worldwide has recently reached 50,000.

A. Dolgopolsky's contribution for the benefit of the whole mankind is undeniable.

By the Africanist, Prof. Herrmann Jungraithmayr from Frankfurt:

A. Dolgopolsky is the symbol of a cultural hero on a universal and historic scale who, throughout his life, has devoted his talent and unflinching energy to the realization of the linguistic-humane-cultural ideal to a profound degree. He aspires to describe, in a brilliant scientific manner, the relationship between languages from the earliest times as evidence of the human race's common history and

way of life. This is a particularly daring mission... his capacities are far beyond the normal. He has a sound professional knowledge and an excellent acquaintance with the literature of a very wide range of languages. He was fond of fierce debate, devoid of personal and academic preconceptions, and led by his eagerness to learn objective reality with inexhaustible energy, as R.M. Bulatova wrote in 1989: "Aharon proved to be a person capable of great self-sacrifice, a selfless worker, ready to perform any amount of labor in the interests of science."

By the expert in Comparative Historical Linguistics, Prof. Václav Blažek, Masaryk University, the Department of Linguistics and Baltic Studies, Brno, the Czech Republic:

Aharon Dolgopolsky belonged to such scientific titans who shifted the level of our knowledge more than all previous generations. For us, his followers, it is a great honor that we can stand on the shoulders of a giant of his stature.

