

# IN MEMORIAM

## Nikolai Mikhailov

(Moskva, 11. 6. 1967 – Videm, 25. 5. 2010)



Januarja leta 1995 je prišlo Nikolajevo prvo pismo na moj naslov. V njem je izrazil zanimanje za slovenske raziskave na področju etnologije in folkloristike. K temu ga je spodbudil zbornik *Razvoj slovenske etnologije od Štreklja in Murka do sodobnih etnoloških prizadevanj*. Predlagal je, da bi izdali komentirano objavo Štrekljevih predavanj v znanstveni seriji »Studi slavi« in zbornik člankov o slovenskem bajeslovju in folklori. Zanimal se je tudi, kako potekajo terenske raziskave in zbiranje etnološkega gradiva v Sloveniji. Med drugim piše:

*Z velikim interesom sem prebral Vaš članek o rokopisih Štrekljevih predavanj v zborniku »Razvoj slovenske etnologije«. Tudi sam zbornik je zelo zanimiv in dobro izdan. Zelo me veseli, da so v Sloveniji etnološka raziskovanja tako dobro organizirana.*

It was in January 1995 when Nikolai's first letter reached me. In this letter he expressed his interest in research into Slovene ethnology and folklore, inspired by the anthology *The Development of Slovene Ethnology from Štrekelj and Murko to Modern Ethnological Research*. Nikolai suggested the publication of Karel Štrekelj's lectures, furnished with commentary and published in the Studi slavi scientific book series, and an anthology of papers on Slovene mythology and folklore. Among other things he was also interested in the field research in Slovenia:

*I read with great interest your article about the manuscripts of Štrekelj's lectures in »The Development of Slovene Ethnology from Štrekelj and Murko to Modern Ethnological Research«. The anthology itself is highly interesting as well, with excellent editorship. It*

*Jaz predavam ruski jezik in slovansko mitologijo na univerzi v Pizi. Sam se ukvarjam s slovansko (tudi slovensko) in baltsko mitološko tradicijo. Razen tega urejujem znanstveno vrsto »Studi slavi«, v kateri sta (poleg drugih knjig) že izšli Antologija slovanske mitologije in Antologija baltske mitologije (zbirki člankov).*

*V zvezi z Vašim člankom rad bi vprašal, ali imate v načrtu objaviti Štrekljeva rokopisa (čeprav, kot sem razumel, iz vašega poročila, nista končana)? Če Vas to zanima, verjetno bi bilo možno izdati komentirano besedilo Štrekljevih predavanj v naši »Studi slavi« (na primer l. 1997). Razen tega bi bilo zanimivo prirediti zbornik člankov o slovenskem bajeslovju in slovenski folklori.*

V času njegovega obiska v Ljubljani je počasi dozorela ideja o ustanovitvi znanstvene revije »Studia mythologica Slavica«, ki se je tedaj zdela najustreznejša pot za uveljavitev raziskav na področju mitosemiotike in komparativne mitologije. Že leta 1998 je izšla prva številka te interdisciplinarne znanstvene revije v Ljubljani in Pisi; medtem ko so vse ostale (od leta 1999 dalje) izšle pod okriljem Univerze v Vidmu (Dipartimento di Lingue e Civiltà dell' Europa Centro-Orientale) in ISN ZRC SAZU. Leta 1998 je namreč Nikolai Mikhailov prevzel mesto izrednega profesorja za slovenski jezik in literaturo na Univerzi v Vidmu, kjer je postal tudi predstojnik katedre za slovenistiko. Z Oddelkom za jezike in kulture Srednje in Vzhodne Evrope pri Univerzi v Vidmu smo julija 2002 tudi formalno potrdili soredništvo.

V trinajstih letih urednikovanja je pobudnik in soustanovitelj Studia mythologica Slavica prof. dr. Nikolai Mikhailov utrdil njen ugled v svetu, revija je postala pomembna in mednarodno priznana interdisciplinarna publikacija. Letos maja pa nas

*pleases me greatly that ethnological research in Slovenia is so well organized.*

*I lecture on the Russian language and Slavic mythology at the University of Pisa. My particular interest is in Slavic (including Slovene) and Baltic mythological traditions. I also act as editor of the »Studi slavi« scientific book series which have been already published »Anthology of Slavic Mythology« and »Anthology of Baltic Mythology«.*

*In relation to your article I would like to know if you plan to publish the two manuscripts by Karel Štrekelj, even though they had, as I have understood, not been completed? Should you be interested in doing so it might be possible to publish Štrekelj's lectures, furnished with commentary, in our »Studi slavi« (for example in 1997). It would also be interesting to prepare an anthology of articles on Slovene mythology and folklore.*

During Mikhailov's subsequent visit to Ljubljana, the idea about a new scientific journal that would bear the name "Studia mythologica Slavica" gradually started to form. That seemed to be the best way to promote mythosemiotic studies and comparative mythology. The first volume of this interdisciplinary scientific journal was published not much later, in 1998 in Ljubljana and Pisa (later in Udine). 1998 was, namely, the year in which Nikolai Mikhailov took the post of associate professor of Slovene language and literature at the University of Udine (Dipartimento di Lingue e Civiltà dell' Europa Centro-Orientale), and became head of the section of Slovene studies. This co-editorship of Studia mythologica Slavica, shared by the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Science and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and the Department for Languages and Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe at the University of Udine, was formalized in July 2002.

je – le nekaj dni pred svojim 43. rojstnim dnevom – nepričakovano zapustil.

Kljub svoji mladosti se je prof. dr. Nikolai Mikhailov zapisal v plejado največjih filologov in primerjalnozgodovinskih jezikoslovcev, ki so raziskovali jezikovno in kulturno dediščino baltoslovanskih narodov in je s svojimi številnimi objavami vidno pripomogel k premikom v razvoju vede.

Njegovo izjemno nadarjenost za jezi-ke je še dodatno spodbudilo okolje, v katerem je živel. Rojen je bil v intelektualni družini, mati je ugledna ruska filologinja Tatjana V. Civjanova, oče pa je priznan arhitekt, delujoč v Vilniusu v Litvi. Obiskoval je rusko-francosko srednjo šolo, nato pa vpisal klasično filologijo na Moskovski državni univerzi M. V. Lomonosova, kjer je leta 1989 diplomiral, in nadaljeval podiplomski študij na Inštitutu za slavistiko in balkanistiko pri akademiku Nikiti Tolstoj. Že v času svojega študija je bil njegov vzornik velikan ruske filologije Vladimir N. Toporov, ki je skupaj z Vjačeslavom V. Ivanovim utemeljil rusko mitosemiotično šolo. Z baltistiko se je začel ukvarjati že kot študent, ko se je med leti 1985 in 1990 priključil etnološkim in folklorističnim terenskim raziskavam v Litvi. Leta 1990 ga je življenska pot zanesla v Italijo, najprej v Bolzano, kjer je imel jezikovni tečaj ruščine. Kmalu se je poročil in preselil v Auer na Južnem Tirolskem. Med leti 1992–1998 je služboval na Univerzi v Pisi (Dipartimento di Linguistica già Istituto di Lingue e Letteratura Russa), kjer je predaval ruski jezik in slovansko mitologijo. Krajši čas (1993–1995) je poučeval ruščino tudi na Univerzi v Trentu. Doktoriral je leta 1998 na Univerzi v Leidnu na Nizozemskem. Njegov mentor je bil priznani nizozemski slavist Frederik Kortlandt. Disertacija *Frühslawische Sprachdenkmäler. Die handschriftliche Periode der slowenischen Sprache (XIV.*

During his thirteen years as co-editor of *Studia mythologica slavica*, professor Nikolai Mikhailov had strengthened its worldwide reputation as a distinguished interdisciplinary scientific publication. Sadly, only several days before his forty-third birthday and very suddenly, he passed away in May of 2010.

Despite his youth, Professor Mikhailov was one of the most distinguished and prominent philologists and scholars in the field of historical and comparative linguistics who were conducting research on the linguistic and cultural heritage of Balto-Slavic nations. His numerous studies represent an important contribution to the advancement of these disciplines.

Mikhailov's exceptional aptitude for languages had been greatly encouraged by the intellectual environment into which he was born and by his local milieu. His mother, Tatjana V. Civjanova, is a renowned Russian philologist, while his father is a well-known architect working in Vilnius, Lithuania. After completing the Russian-French middle school, Mikhailov studied classical philology at the M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, graduating in 1989. He continued his graduate studies with academician Nikita Tolstoj at the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies. Even in his student years, his greatest inspiration was Vladimir N. Toporov, a leading Russian philologist who together with Vjačeslav V. Ivanov had founded the Russian school of mythosemiotics. Mikhailov's interest in Baltic studies started in his undergraduate years when between 1985 and 1990 he took part in ethnological and folklore fieldwork research in Lithuania. In 1990, his path led him to Italy, first to Bolzano where he initially taught Russian, and after marriage he moved to Auer in South Tyrol. Between 1992 and 1998 he worked at the University of Pisa (Dipartimento di Linguistica

*Jh. bis 1550*) je izšla še istega leta v Amsterdamu kot 26. v seriji »Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics« pri ugledni Založbi 'Rodopi'. Leta 2001 pa je bila v precej skrajšani obliki objavljena še v slovenskem jeziku v Trstu pri Založbi Mladika: *Jezikovni spomeniki zgodnje slovenščine. Rokopisna doba slovenskega jezika (od XIV. stol. do leta 1550)*. S tem delom je ruski filolog Nikolaj Mikhailov Slovcem razkril pomembne spomenike njihove jezikovne dediščine in zapolnil vrzel v jezikoslovnih obravnavah zgodovine slovenskega jezika. Prav tako v Trstu je naslednje leto 2002 pri isti založbi izšla tudi njegova knjiga *Mythologia Slovenica: Poskus rekonstrukcije slovenskega poganškega izročila*.

Na Univerzi v Pisi je Nikolai Mikhailov izdajal knjižno serijo »Studi Slavi«, v kateri sta med drugim izšli tudi Antologija slovanske mitologije (*Mitologia Slava* 1993, dopolnjena izd. 1995) in Antologija baltske mitologije (*Mitologia Baltica* 1995). Prav tako na Univerzi v Pisi je skupaj s prof. Pietrom Dinijem v letih 1995–1999 izdal pet letnikov baltističnega zbornika »Res Balticae«. Leta 1998 je v Madridu v seriji »Studia mythosemiotica« kot prva knjiga izšla tudi njegova monografija *Baltische und slawische Mythologie*. Pomembno pa je prispeval tudi na področju klasične filologije, npr. z objavami o Heziodovi »Teogoniji« ('Teogonia' Gesioda kak indoevropski kosmogoničeskij tekst v: *Jezyki kul'tury v antičnosti*, 1990) in s primerjavo Lokija ter Prometeja (Loki i Prometej. K tipologii protopersonaža v: *Znaki Balkan* 1994). Bil je aktiven na številnih področjih, od jezikoslovja in literarne vede do folkloristike in mitologije ter priznan v mnogih državah, še posebej v Litvi, Italiji, Rusiji, na Nizozemskem, v Španiji, Sloveniji in Avstriji.

S svojim delovanjem je na Slovenskem spodbudil zanimanje za mitosemiotične raziskave in nam približal izjemen znanstveni opus Vladimira N. Toporova.

già Istituto di Lingue e Letteratura Russa) as a lecturer in Russian language and in Slavic mythology. From 1993 to 1995 he also taught Russian at the University of Trento. Mentored by Frederik Kortlandt, the renowned Dutch Slavist, Mikhailov received his Ph.D. from the University of Leiden, Netherlands, in 1998. His dissertation, entitled *Frühslowenische Sprachdenkmäler. Die handschriftliche Periode der slowenischen Sprache (XIV. Jh. bis 1550)*, was published that same year by the renowned Rodopi Publishing House in Amsterdam as Vol. 26 in the Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics book series. Its shortened version was also published in Slovene by Mladika Publishing House in Trieste, under the title *Jezikovni spomeniki zgodnje slovenščine. Rokopisna doba slovenskega jezika (od XIV.stol. do leta 1550)* (Linguistic Monuments of the Early Slovene Language: The Manuscript Period from the 14th Century until 1550). Filling the gap in linguistic studies focusing on the history of the Slovene language, this text presented significant elements of the Slovene linguistic heritage. A year later, this same publishing house also published Mikhailov's *Mythologia Slovenica: Poskus rekonstrukcije slovenskega poganškega izročila* (*Mythologia Slovenica. An Attempt at a Reconstruction of the Slovene Pagan Tradition*).

While at the University of Pisa, Mikhailov was the editor of the Studi Slavi book series which, among other books, also published his *Anthology of Slavic Mythology* (*Mitologia Slava*, 1993, rev. ed. 1995) and his *Anthology of Baltic Mythology* (*Mitologia Baltica*, 1995). In cooperation with Professor Pietro Dini, he published between 1995 and 1999 five volumes of *Res Balticae*, an anthology of texts focusing on Baltic studies. His monographic work *Baltische und slawische Mythologie* was published in Madrid in 1998 as the first book in the *Studia mythosemiotica*

Z njegovim posredovanjem je na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani leta 2002 izšel fragmentarni slovenski prevod knjige V. N. Toporova *Predzgodovina književnosti pri Slovanih: Poskus rekonstrukcije*. V sodelovanju z etnologi na Koroškem je objavil več člankov v Celovškem zvonu in Koledarju Mohorjeve družbe v Celovcu. Objavljal pa je tudi v številnih pomembnih etnoloških in jezikoslovnih revijah kot so *Traditiones*, *Studia mythologica Slavica*, *Slovenski jezik – Slovene Linguistic Studies* in *Studies in Slavic Folklore and Folk Culture*.

Nikolai Mikhailov je pomembno prispeval k baltističnim raziskavam, zato mu je v Litvi 15. novembra 2000 predsednik Valdas Adamkus podelil častno litovsko državljanstvo. S svojim delom se je zapisal v zgodovino baltoslavističnega in mitosemiotičnega raziskovanja in je postal eden največjih primerjalnozgodovinskih jezikoslovcev in etnolingvistov našega časa. Ostal pa bo tudi v našem spominu kot dober prijatelj, čuteč človek in odličen znanstvenik. Žal se je tudi tokrat uresničila antična modrost: »Kogar bogovi ljubijo, ga vzamejo zgodaj k sebi«.

*Monika Kropelj*

Mikhailov's contribution to the field of classical philology is equally significant. Two of his notable texts are "Teogonia" Gesioda kak indoevropski kosmogoničeskij tekst, a study of Hesiod's poem *Theogonia* (published in 1990 in *Jezyki kultury v antičnosti*, 1990), and a comparison of Loki and Prometheus in *Loki i Prometej. K tipologii protopersonaža* (published in *Znaki Balkan*, 1994). Respected in many countries, particularly in Lithuania, Italy, Russia, the Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia, and Austria, he was active in a number of disciplines such as linguistics, literary science, folklore, and mythology.

Apart from initiating an interest in mythosemiotic studies, Mikhailov also advanced the remarkable scientific production of Vladimir N. Toporov to Slovenes. Resulting in the publication of a fragmentary translation into Slovene of Vladimir N. Toporov's book *Prehistory of Literature among the Slavs: An Attempt at a Reconstruction*, published by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts in 2002. A product of his cooperation with ethnologists in Carinthia were several of his articles which appeared in *Celovski zvon* and in the *Mohorjeva družba Calendar*. Apart from these, Mikhailov regularly published his studies in a number of distinguished ethnological and linguistic journals, for example in *Traditiones*, *Studia mythologica Slavica*, *Slovenski jezik – Slovene Linguistic Studies*, and *Studies in Slavic Folklore and Folk Culture*.

Due to his extensive Baltic studies, Nikolai Mikhailov received on November 15, 2000 honorary citizenship of Lithuania. His work has become a part of the history of Balto-Slavic research and of the study of mythosemiotics. He was truly one of the most prominent ethnolinguists and among

the leading linguists in the field of historical and comparative linguistics. In our hearts he will also remain a good friend, a sensitive man, and an excellent scholar. Unfortunately the well-known Greek saying “Whom the gods love die young” has proved true once again.

*Monika Kropelj*



*V krogu slovenskih prijateljev ob praznovanju svojega 40. rojstnega dne, 11. 6. 2007 v Ljubljani. Z leve: Monika Kropelj, Nikolai Mikhailov, Andreja Žele. Zmag Šmitek, Silvo Torkar, Lijana Dejak (foto: Blaž Telban).*

*With his Slovene friends on June 11, 2007, in Ljubljana. From left to right: Monika Kropelj, Nikolai Mikhailov, Andreja Žele, Zmag Šmitek, Silvo Torkar, and Lijana Dejak (photo by Blaž Telban).*