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**HONOURING THE DEAD, PRAISING THE LIVING:
THE INVENTED TRADITIONS OF OBITUARIES AND LAUDATORY
ARTICLES, OR HOW BALTICISTS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR DEAD
AND REVERE THE LIVING**

ПОЧИТАТЬ МЁРТВЫХ, ПРЕВОЗНОСИТЬ ЖИВЫХ: ИЗОБРЕТЁННЫЕ
ТРАДИЦИИ НЕКРОЛОГОВ И ХВАЛЕБНЫХ СТАТЕЙ, ИЛИ КАК БАЛТИСТЫ
ОБЩАЮТСЯ СО СВОИМИ УСОПШИМИ И ЧТУТ ЗДРАВСТВУЮЩИХ

Аннотация: Автор анализирует восприятие смерти и бытия в форме некрологов и хвалебных юбилейных статей в академическом сообществе советских и российских балтистов. Некрологи и хвалебные статьи стали одновременно изобретённой интеллектуальной традицией и формой современной светской агиографии. Предполагается, что балтисты как академическое сообщество развивались как корпорация, которая сформировала свои уникальные культуры памяти, методы и стили использования прошлого. Исторические и культурные памяти балтистов советского и постсоветского периодов были фрагментированы. Некрологи стали формой инструментализации и идеологизации смерти потому, что позволяют сообществу вспоминать своих мёртвых в политически и идеологически мотивированной системе координат. Некрологи и хвалебные статьи актуализируют различные измерения академического сообщества, включая представления о нём как политическом теле. Поэтому посмертная политическая и идеологическая жизнь героев некрологов как отцов-основателей балтийских исследований стала предметом идеализаций и мифологизаций. Некрологи стали одной из форм интеллектуального воображения, изобретения традиций и идентичностей. Автор полагает, что некрологи стали формой интеграции сообщества и актуализации различных измерений и проявлений социальной, культурной и исторической памятей. Некрологи и юбилейные статьи актуализировали связи поколений и содействовали консолидации академического сообщества.

Keywords / Ключевые слова: Obituaries, jubilee articles, historical memory, Baltic studies, academic communities / Некрологи, юбилейные статьи, историческая память, балтийские исследования, академические сообщества

Dieviņš veda dvēselīti
Pliku, kailu debesīs;
Te palika miežu lauki,
Te mantiņa, bagatība

Formulation of the problem

Intellectuals as the imagined community tend to invent their own social-cultural traditions, languages and forms of communication and symbolic rites of initiation.

The invented traditions of intellectual communities are extremely diverse and range from the field of science and academic specialization. Academic communities as professional corporations have historically invented and imagined procedures for real communication with the world of officials and symbolic forms of communication with the world of the dead. Commemoration of the dead and the celebration of the living belongs to a number of invented traditions that the academic community actively and carefully supports and cultivates. The invented tradition of remembrance of the dead and honouring and glorifying the living is historically rooted in medieval practices and hagiography strategies. Academic communities of the modern world borrowed forms and practices of communication with their living and dead from the experience of medieval religious cultures.

Aims and objectives of the article

The author plans to analyse the practices and strategies of Soviet and Russian intellectuals in the contexts of communication with the real and symbolic worlds of the living and the dead. The objectives of the article are the following: analysis of cultural genealogy and intellectual archaeology of obituaries and jubilee articles in the contexts of their medieval hagiographic origins; study of the structure, content and characteristics of texts of obituaries and jubilee articles; the analysis of their role and place in symbolic and real communications; the study of obituaries in the contexts of memory cultures; and the analysis of obituaries as an invented intellectual tradition.

Methodology

The article draws on the principles and approaches of intellectual history and history of ideas. Various constructivist and structuralist approaches and practices can also be applied to the studies of Soviet and post-Soviet cultures of memory and communication with the worlds of the living and the dead. The author presumes that the concepts of the imagined communities and the invention of traditions proposed in the first half of the 1980s by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger¹ are also applicable to the analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet traditions and practices of the secular academic hagiography of obituaries and jubilee articles. The author insists that these methods are applicable because obituaries and jubilee articles became invented traditions, universal symbolic forms of communication between different generations of representatives of academic communities because they, on the one hand, actualize

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

the various forms and dimensions of corporative and professional identities and, on the other hand, they provide and guarantee reproduction of cultural and social memories. This article can be partially localized on mental maps of “death studies,”² but the author recognizes that this text is not classical for this segment of contemporary interdisciplinary humanities.

The corpus of sources

Formally, the corpus of sources is extremely wide and these sources, despite the general features of content and structure, are quite diverse and different. Man is the only social animal who could make death “subject of reflection.”³ Obituaries and jubilee articles of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods provide historians with a significant body of texts that stimulate our reflections on the community we belong to and its intellectual and cultural histories. Obituaries in the contexts of social and cultural history, the history of ideas and intellectual history, memory and identity studies can be determined as “one of the basic techniques for modernity, the public taming of death.”⁴ Obituaries and jubilee articles were published in academic journals, but obituaries have not yet been the object of systematic studies.⁵ The number of these journals was quite significant always, but the author will focus only on obituaries and jubilee articles published in the yearbook *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia* in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

Thematically and methodologically academic journals are extremely diverse and heterogeneous, but they actualize the general practices, strategies and approaches in the culture of social memory of commemoration with the dead, glorification and celebration of the living and identity of the academic community. These sources are very diverse and the texts of obituaries and jubilee articles published in them are also very different. Svetlana Eremeeva, a modern Russian anthropologist, on the one hand, presumes that “some scientists created more than a dozen memorial texts for life... if you can see them as a general, continuum text, it will be a text about a living author, and not

² Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (New York—Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2000); Peter Metcalf, Richard Huntington *Celebrations of Death. The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead. A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

³ Evgenii Vdovchenkov, Aleksandr Kovalenko, “Zhivye i miortvye v mezhdistsiplinarnoi perspektive,” *Novoe proshloe*, no. 4 (2016): 10–21,

⁴ G. A. Orlova, “Biografiia (pri)smerti: zametki o sovetskom politicheskom nekrologe,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*. No. 2, <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/2/or11-pr.html>.

⁵ Kira Onipko, “Bytovanie nekrologa v sotsial’nom poriadke nebol’shogo goroda,” *Arheologija russkoi smerti*, no. 2 (2016): 156–174, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/bytovanie-nekrologa-v-sotsialnom-poryadke-nebolshogo-goroda>; A. Reitblat, “Nekrolog kak biograficheskii zhanr,” in *Pravo na imia. Biografiia vne shablona. Tret’i chteniia pamiati Veniamina Iofe, Sankt-Peterburg, 22–24 apreliia 2005 goda. Sbornik dokladov* (St. Petersburg: Memorial, 2006), 3–10.

about the dead heroes.”⁶ On the other hand, “different traditions of commemoration presuppose different traditions of understanding, and, therefore, different traditions of analysis.”⁷ This feature became one of the system characteristics of the Soviet and Russian culture of commemoration and the tradition of academic hagiography as an interdisciplinary genre localized on the frontier of cultural studies, anthropology, intellectual history and the history of ideas. Therefore, Soviet and post-Soviet obituaries actualize the various forms and dimensions of mutually exclusive cultures, tactics, practices and strategies of memory.

Death as an invented tradition in the Baltic studies

Soviet Balticists were actively interested in the perception of death and dying in traditional Baltic cultures, mythologies and identities. Therefore, obituaries dedicated to their colleagues were not accidental. The experience of Soviet and Russian Baltic studies of perception of death expressed in the analysis of funeral rites and traditions in the context of Balto-Slavic contacts⁸ and in national Baltic cultures.⁹ The study of the perception of death in the Baltic cultures never had independent significance in Soviet humanities because the Soviet canon of scientific knowledge did not perceive death and collective ideas about death, dying, the world of the dead and symbolic communications between the living and the dead as problems that were worthy of attention by Soviet scientists. Therefore, the problems of death in Soviet academic discourse were both marginalized and imagined as ideologically alien and not desirable. Soviet ideologists sought to deny death and delegitimize it because death as an image was ideologically and politically alien to a Soviet man who was forced to build communism as a local form of a bright future and any reflections on death in this social situation became ideologically alien and politically unacceptable and undesirable. Therefore, Soviet intellectuals who dared to study the problems of death were forced to analyse them primarily in the context of folklore or cultural parallels¹⁰ between the Baltic and other

⁶ Svetlana Eremeeva, “‘Death studies’ — razgovor o zhizni i o budushchem,” *Novoe proshloe*, no. 4 (2016): 237–242, <http://nempast.sfedu.ru/upload/iblock/006/The%20Nov%20Past%204%2015.pdf>.

⁷ Svetlana Eremeeva “To, o chem molchim... Pochemu death studies nepopuliarny v sovrememmoi Rossii,” *Arheologiya russkoi smerti*, no. 1 (2015): 35–49, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/to-o-chem-molchim-pochemu-death-studies-ne-populyarny-v-sovremennoy-rossii>.

⁸ L. Nevskaja, “Pogrebal'nyi obriad v Peliase: struktura i terminologija,” in *Balto-slavianskie etnoazykovye kontakty* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 245–254.

⁹ L. Nevskaja, “Semantika doma i smezhnykh predstavlenii v pogrebal'nom fol'klore,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1981* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 106–121; L. Nevskaja, “Mat' v pogrebal'nom fol'klore,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1982* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 197–204; L. Nevskaja, “Motiv ‘dozhd’ pri solntse’ v latyshskikh pogrebal'nykh pesniakh,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1987* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 73–78.

¹⁰ Viach.Vs. Ivanov, “Lingvisticheskie materialy k rekonstruktsii pogrebal'nykh tekstov v baltskoi traditsii,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1985* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 3–9; V. Toporov, “Zametki po pokhoronnoi obriadnosti,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1985*, 10–52.

Indo-European traditions. Death, dying and communications with the world of the dead were imagined as particular cases of ethnography in particular and therefore a place for death in Soviet humanitarian studies was absent in general. Despite these ideological circumstances, Soviet and Russian Balticists were able to develop their unique culture and identity of death, imagining it as an invented tradition. Therefore, obituaries written and published by Soviet Balticists became expressions of collective social, cultural and historical memories and forms of communication between different generations of the academic community as the worlds of the living and the dead.

Obituaries: the Soviet experience

The most of the obituaries published in the Soviet period had a unified structure and belonged to the number of formalized texts. Anna Sokolova, a Russian historian, presumes that ‘the theme of death and dying fell from the Soviet discourse and was generally tabooed.’¹¹ Therefore, official and semi-official obituaries, which were published in academic periodicals, form the core of the corpus of texts that fix the Soviet collective and individual attitudes toward death. Death and birth are among the central facts in most cultures and significantly affect the transformations of collective representations and different identities.

Authors of obituaries were allowed to use several stylistic clichés and these texts were maximally depersonified. Lithuanian philologists Kostas Korsakas and Jonas Kabiška died in 1986 and *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia* in 1987 published two obituaries,¹² signed by A. Sabaliauskas who was forced to use several cliché phrases, describing and emphasizing that the deceased “left a significant contribution in various areas of Lithuanian philology.” A. Sabaliauskas, characterizing Jonas Kabiška’s impact intentionally and consciously stressed that he managed to get education in independent Lithuania and even continued his studies in Germany, preferring to keep silence about the war period. A. Sabaliauskas cultivated the image of Jonas Kabiška as the last significant scientist who actualized the connections between different generations of Lithuanian intellectuals, between those who started their academic careers in the First Republic and those who came to Baltic studies after the Sovietization of Lithuania.

In fact, obituaries in this intellectual situation had political and ideological significance because they were a form of historical and cultural memory of inter-war Lithuania, which unlike Soviet Lithuania had state independence and political sovereignty. The Soviet culture of obituaries was in this context a culture of politically and ideologically

¹¹ Anna Sokolova, “Zamechanie o znachenii ‘death studies’ v sovremennoi nauke,” *Novoe proshloe*, no. 4 (2016): 243–245, <http://newpast.sfedu.ru/upload/iblock/006/The%20New%20Past%204%2015.pdf>.

¹² A. Sabaliauskas, “Kostas Korsakas (1909–1986),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia* 1985, 242–243; A. Sabaliauskas, “Jonas Kabiška (1914–1987),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia* 1985, 243–244.

marked and motivated silence. Obituaries in this intellectual situation actualized the role of the intellectual and academic community because “death plays a special role in the maintenance and construction of the social. Death is the problem of community in general... Communication with the world of the dead plays a special role in the life of society, connecting its mythological and social spaces.”¹³ Obituaries played this role in the Soviet intellectual tradition, actualizing various forms and dimensions of memory and interrelationships between different generations of the academic community imagined and invented simultaneously as a formalized professional corporation and symbolic collective body.

Obituaries: the post-Soviet experience

Post-Soviet obituaries differed from Soviet ones. *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1988–1996*, published in 1997 after an eight-year break, several obituaries and attempted to actualize the connections of different generations of the Balticists,¹⁴ including Soviet authors and their post-Soviet counterparts, successors, and heirs. Russian historians Evgenii Vdovchenkov and Aleksandr Kovalenko believe that “the image of the dead in culture and society is a kind of key to the world of the living.”¹⁵ Therefore, post-Soviet obituaries actualized the problems post-Soviet intellectual communities faced. Post-Soviet obituaries made visible the problems of social simultaneously, cultural and historical memories, the continuity of different generations of the intellectual community, the overcoming of ideological and political stereotypes because scientists who became compelled heroes of obituaries could be political and ideological opponents in the contexts of the significant ideologization of the Soviet humanities. Obituaries imagine, invent and integrate the life of an individual intellectual into the collective life and structure of the intellectual and cultural community, he belonged to. Therefore, obituaries actualize the general patterns of the existence of the community and the work of its social, cultural and historical memories.

¹³ Evgenii Vdovchenkov and Aleksandr Kovalenko, “Zhivye i miortvye v mezhdistsiplinarnoi perspektive.”

¹⁴ V. T., “Reinis Bertuls (10 maia 1937 — 19 fevralia 1994),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996* (Moscow: Indrik, 1997), 391–392; V. T., “Aleksandr Vanagas (12 avgusta 1934 — 13 apreliia 1995),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 392–394; V. T., “Kazis Ulvidas (15 [28] avgusta 1910 — 16 marta 1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 394–395; N. Mikhailov, “Kazimeras Eigminas (1929–1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 395 – 396; V. T., “Marta Rudzite (24 noiabria 1924 — 19 iulia 1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 396–397; T. Sudnik and T. Tsiv’ian, “Norbert Velius (1938–1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 397–398.

¹⁵ Evgenii Vdovchenkov and Aleksandr Kovalenko, “Zhivye i miortvye v mezhdistsiplinarnoi perspektive.”

Obituary dedicated to Jan Safarevicz in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1988–1996*¹⁶ became an attempt to actualize the contradictoriness of the Baltic-Slavic contacts and the sacred status of Vilna / Vilnius as a collective place of several national and historical memories. The obituary of Maria Gimbutas was also published in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1988–1996*¹⁷ and in fact actualized and restored the links between linguistic and archaeological studies in the inter-war, Soviet and independent Lithuania and Lithuanian emigration. Obituaries of Petras Jonikas and Valdis Zeps, published in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1997*¹⁸ also actualized inseparable links within the academic community between scientists in Lithuania and Latvia and Lithuanian and Latvian emigrations.

Obituary of Velta Staltmane¹⁹ actualized transcultural and multicultural dimensions of identity simultaneously, her role in preservation and popularization of the Latvian language outside the Latvian ethnic borders. Obituary dedicated to Antuonas Breidakas²⁰ actualized his contribution to the revival of Latgalian culture and the popularization of the Latgalian language. The post-Soviet history of obituaries provides its historians with several obituaries with features of martyrdom. For example, *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1998–1999* published an obituary of Konstantins Karulis,²¹ where his image was invented as a martyr who suffered from Soviet political repressions. The image of the righteous scholar and intellectual began to dominate in the post-Soviet obituaries²² and it became an expression of the desire of Russian intellectuals to actualize the historical and cultural continuity of different generations in the academic community. Post-Soviet obituaries actualized the achievements of their heroes, for example, Gintaras Beresnevičius,²³ in the development of the humanities. These obituaries inspired the emergence of new images of vivid intellectuals who made a significant contribution, for example, in studies

¹⁶ V. T., “Jan Safarevich (9 fevralia 1904 — 9 apreliia 1992),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 383–389.

¹⁷ V. N., “Maria Gimbutas (23 ianvaria 1921 — 2 fevralia 1994),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1989–1996*, 390–391.

¹⁸ V. T., “Piatras Jonikas (25 marta 1996 — 3 fevralia 1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1997* (Moscow: Indrik, 1999), 617–618; V. T., “Valdis Zeps (25 maia 1935 — 25 iulia 1996),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1997*, 618–619.

¹⁹ E. L. Nazarova and S. I. Ryzhakova, “Velta Ernestovna Staltmane (9 sentiabria 1926 — 16 apreliia 2010),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XIX* (Moscow: Nestor-istoriia, 2014), 259–263.

²⁰ V. T., “Anton Breidaks (Antuonas Breidakas) (25 ianvaria 1932 — 24 fevralia 2002),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XV* (Moscow: Indrik, 2002), 676–677.

²¹ V. T., “Konstantin Karulis (10 fevralia 1915 — 3 noiabria 1997),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1998–1999* (Moscow: Indrik, 2000), 393–395.

²² S. T., “Lidiia Georgievna Nevskaia (19 oktiabria 1938 — 19 maia 2008),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XVIII* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskih kul'tur, 2009), 633–635; A. V. Toporova and M. Evzlin, “Nikolai Mikhailov (11 iunia 1967 — 25 maia 2010),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XIX*, 543–547.

²³ I. Vaishkunas, “Gintaras Beresniavichius (6 iulia 1961 — 6 avgusta 2006),” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XVIII*, 640–645.

of the history of the Baltic paganism and reconstruction of collective religious representations of the ancient Balts.

Vladimir Toporov was the author of several obituaries of scholars who were not Baltists, but these texts actualize general trends in the history of the culture of academic and intellectual memories. Vladimir Toporov in 1999 published an article dedicated to the memory of Nikolai Bakhtin²⁴ which became a vivid example of the institutionalization of the traditions of cultural and intellectual history and the history of ideas in the post-Soviet humanitarian discourse. Vladimir Toporov integrated the personal biography and academic interests of Nikolai Bakhtin into the contradictions and zigzags of the history of the Russian humanitarian and intellectual community during the Soviet period. Obituaries dedicated to Viacheslav Ivanov and Vladimir Toporov became the brightest texts in post-Soviet academic hagiography. Russian linguists engaged in Baltic studies invented a positive image of Vladimir Toporov²⁵ as a revered saint and one of the founding fathers of Baltic studies in the USSR. Viacheslav Ivanov who wrote an obituary about his friend and colleague stressed that Vladimir Toporov was among the first Soviet linguists who actively began to use structuralism. Viacheslav Ivanov imagined Vladimir Toporov as a scientist who resolutely studied new topics and aspects of Slavic and Baltic linguistics.

Viacheslav Ivanov stated that Vladimir Toporov's texts were marked by the considerable academic liberties and freedoms and therefore his ideas had nothing in common with the official Soviet discourse that exaggerated the role of the Slavic element because Vladimir Toporov expanded significantly the boundaries the Baltic dialects dominated in. Viacheslav Ivanov actualized various hypostases of personality and activity of Vladimir Toporov, imagining him as one of the pioneers in Soviet and Russian linguistic constructivism because Vladimir Toporov was among the initiators of the imagination and invention of the Neo-Prussian language. Obituaries, on the one hand, became the form of collective memory of the intellectual community. On the other hand, dead intellectuals in obituaries and memorial collections of articles continued their intellectual and political existence and experience. The posthumous life of the intellectuals as parts of the collective cultural body of the intellectual community has much in common with the political life of the dead bodies of state leaders because intellectuals, as members of a corporation, prefer to preserve and develop symbolic ties and connections of the dead with academic traditions, they belong to.

²⁴ Vladimir Toporov, "Pamiati Nikolaia Mihailovicha Bahtina. Predsport, sport i sport XX veka," in *Balkanskije chteniia — 5. Posviashchaiutsia Nikolaiu Mikhailovichu Bakhtinu. V poiskakh "balkanskogo" na Balkanah* (Moscow: Institut slavianovedeniia, 1999), 121–130, https://instlav.ru/images/stories/pdf/1999_balkanskije_chtenija-5-tezisy.pdf.

²⁵ Viacheslav Ivanov, "Vladimir Nikolaevich Toporov (1928–2005) i balto-slavianskie issledovaniia," in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XVII* (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 7–14.

Life is stronger than death: laudatory and jubilee articles and cultures of memory

Praise texts in the Soviet culture of memory became a form of secular panegyric, which glorified the scientist mentioned in it. Most of these texts were timed to coincide with anniversaries. For example, *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia. 1987* in 1989 published the text dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Viacheslav Ivanov.²⁶ *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia. 1987* in general were confined to this event and had a non-Soviet Latin initiation (Ad LX Diem Natalem V.V. IVANOVI. Collegae, discipuli, amici), claiming to restore the links and connections of Soviet and Russian pre-revolutionary classical philology. The authors of the jubilee article sought to form an attractive image of its hero, imagining him as “a high model worthy of imitation” and a scientist with “an uncontrollable urge to develop new spaces.” Soviet Balticists formed the image of Viacheslav Ivanov as a bright and talented scientist and poet, citing his lines about Latvia:

Mne kazhetsia, chto ia popal v stranu,	It seems to me that I am now in the country,
Gde solntsem, kak miachom, igraiat deti,	Where children play the sun like a ball
Gde sosny, otkhodia ko snu,	Where the pine trees are going to sleep
I rybaki zabrasyvaiut seti.	And fishermen are throwing their nets.

The jubilee article dedicated to Viacheslav Ivanov actualized the political and ideological dimensions of the Baltic studies and its authors boldly and decisively wrote about 1940 as a “sad year.” Viacheslav Ivanov was imagined as an ascetic of the Baltic studies and defender of the Latvian and Lithuanian languages and these maxims in the jubilee article actualized the non-belonging of its hero to the Soviet ideological discourse that strengthened his positive and attractive image in the eyes of the late Soviet intelligentsia, which became more liberal and anti-Soviet.

A few years later Viacheslav Ivanov²⁷ was imagined as a leading intellectual and historical witness of cultural transformations and a coeval of cult figures of Russian culture of the 20th century. Post-Soviet jubilee articles differed from Soviet ones. Anniversary article about Vladimir Toporov²⁸ also belonged to the semi-official discourse of the post-Soviet academic hagiography. Vladimir Toporov was imagined as one of the fighters against the state of cultural and intellectual non-freedom that dominated in the humanities during the Soviet period. Authors of jubilee articles in the post-Soviet period about

²⁶ “K iubileiu Viacheslava Vsevolodovicha Ivanova,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1987*, 3–7.

²⁷ V. T., “Chelovek i Vremia: k 75-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Viacheslava Vsevolodovicha Ivanova,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XVI* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 363–366.

²⁸ V. A. Debo, “K semidesiatiletiiu V. N. Toporova,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia XVI*, 357–360.

Vladimir Toporov emphasized his academic courage and the fact that he was one of the first Soviet Balticists who suggested that the Proto-Slavic language developed as a Baltic dialect. If the authors of the Soviet jubilee article about Viacheslav Ivanov hinted on his structuralism, the authors of the text written for the sixtieth anniversary of Vladimir Dybo,²⁹ published in 1997 in the first *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia*, published after the collapse of the USSR and eight years later after the publication of the last formally Soviet yearbook of *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia*, wrote about structuralism as an important stage in his academic biography.

Preliminary conclusions

Obituaries and jubilee articles as forms of memory had various functions in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Obituaries and jubilee articles stimulated intellectuals to imagine their communities, to invent secular traditions and rituals of academic communication. Obituaries and jubilee articles helped the intellectual community understand what it was and what its historical roots and cultural backgrounds were. Genetically textualized forms of memory as attempts of symbolic communications between the worlds of the dead and the living have different origins. On the one hand, the author presumes that it is possible to localize the cultural and intellectual origins of modern institutionalized attempts to fix memory in the form of obituaries and jubilee “laudatory” articles in medieval Christian hagiography that suggested the basic canons, laws and patterns of describing the martyrdoms or the holy life of saints. Secular academic hagiography, represented by obituaries and jubilee articles, simulates and imitates the basic laws of the hagiographic genre. The actualization of righteousness, honesty, devotion and other positive features of the late intellectual in the obituary brings him to the heroes of medieval hagiography and turns him into a modern secular saint or academic martyr. On the other hand, the Soviet and post-Soviet academic culture of an obituary and jubilee eulogy is rooted in a Soviet ideologically marked and motivated political obituary. Obituaries of political Soviet leaders formed the canons of the right communist political and ideological life. These obituaries provided Soviet intellectuals with the necessary ideological ritual clichés, but they sought to avoid consistent ideologization and politicization of their corporate practices and rituals of communication with the living and the dead. The Soviet political obituary and ideological panegyrics inspire the development and further progress of academic obituary, and the Soviet culture of political memory stimulated the genesis of fixed rules and canons how to write obituaries and laudatory jubilee articles. Obituaries and jubilee articles could actualize

²⁹ “К юбилею Владимира Антоновича Дыбо,” in *Balto-slavianskie issledovaniia 1988–1996*, 9–12.

the party spirit and loyalty to the communist ideology of their heroes, and these texts formed the orthodox ideological discourse of the Soviet memory culture. Alternative strategies of communication with the world of the dead could actualize the alienity of the hero to the Soviet system and these texts emphasized deliberately academic merits and achievements. Pure science in these intellectual contexts confronted communist ideology as a form of control of the past in Soviet collective historical and academic memories. Obituaries and jubilee articles, published in the Soviet period, actualized personal academic trajectories of intellectuals and could be forms of political memory and identity. Obituaries of the post-Soviet era played a different role because they became a form of collective recall, the actualization of connections between different generations of the academic community and attempts to strengthen identity as an invented tradition that was imagined in the previous Soviet period. Obituaries became a form of consolidation and self-organization of the academic community because they allowed intellectuals to preserve the memory of their deceased colleagues as members of a formal or informal corporation. Consolidation and cohesion of academic groups became an extremely important factor in these contexts because it preserved the fact of death from the integration into official ideological discourse because Russian history provides historians with numerous examples how the authorities seek and attempt to appropriate the death of prominent representatives of the intellectual community and use it for their ideological purposes and needs. The death of Viacheslav Ivanov in 2017 and independent non-governmental intellectual obituaries proved that Russian intellectual community still retains an insignificant degree of freedom because the authorities could not turn the fact of his death into an occasion for numerous ideological manipulations and speculations. Ignorance of Viacheslav Ivanov's death by the official Russian authorities actualize the level of development of a culture of memory in Putin's Russia, which is clearly lower than Soviet elites had because they got significant experience of politically and ideologically motivated use of the past during a history of the USSR. Modern obituaries and laudatory articles can become sources for intellectual and cultural history, the history of ideas and form the corpus of texts of post-Soviet secular academic hagiography. Historiography of obituaries in contemporary interdisciplinary Humanities is the main form of the existence of collective memory about the academic community of Balticists because there are no other attempts to understand and systematize their intellectual heritage.

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