

Daniela S. Hristova In Memoriam

It is with an enormous sense of loss that we reflect on the untimely death of Daniela S. Hristova on October 10, 2010. Daniela passed away after an extremely brief battle with cancer, at the age of 48. At the time of her death, Daniela was employed as a Temporary Lecturer in the Department of Slavonic Languages at the University of Cambridge. She was visiting her native Bulgaria, on her way from her home in Chicago back to England, and died shortly after being diagnosed. Daniela's sudden death was a great shock to all who knew her.

Daniela was born on September 5, 1962, in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. She completed her B.A. and M.A. degrees at the University of Sofia, and also studied Slavic Philology in Prague before moving to Chicago with her husband Vladimir Tchernev and their son Ivo. Daniela did her subsequent graduate work at the University of Chicago, working under the directorship of Bill Darden and defending her doctoral dissertation in 2002 on *Grammatical function and syntactic structure: The participles in the Kievan Chronicle*. She was then hired to teach in Chicago's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, where she remained for five years.

During her Chicago period, Daniela also developed close ties with the Slavic Department at Harvard. As a graduate student, she had participated in the Harvard Ukrainian Summer Institute program in the summer of 1999. She then spent 1999–2000 as a visiting scholar, taking advanced Slavic linguistics courses with Michael Flier and pursuing her doctoral research on historical East Slavic syntax. Daniela also spent 2005–06 at Harvard, having been awarded a Eugene and Daymel Shklar fellowship for the fall to conduct research at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and teaching graduate courses in the spring of 2006. In the fall of 2008 she accepted a position at Cambridge, teaching courses in historical Slavic linguistics.

Daniela pursued a variety of professional activities as a developing scholar. In 1999 her first English publication appeared in these very pages (*JSL* 7(2): 171–78). This was a Reflections piece entitled "Total Fears," in honor of her favorite Czech author Bohumil Hrabal and

which described the unusual combination of challenges facing a “returning woman graduate student” and Bulgarian émigré. Around that time she also launched a publishing venture called the Aleko Society (“Obštество Aleko”, in honor of a much earlier Bulgarian with a Chicago connection, Aleko Konstantinov), which published translated collections by award-winning poet Mark Strand, then at the University of Chicago. Another scholarly venture to which Daniela was dedicated was the Norwegian “Landslide of the Norm” project, which studies interrelations between linguistic liberalization and literary development in Russia during the post-Revolutionary years of the 1920s and the post-Soviet period of the 1990s. In their obituary, which recalls “her great enthusiasm, scholarly curiosity, and cheerful spirit,” Daniela’s range of scholarly interests at the time of her death are nicely summarized to include: “the study of language change, diachrony and synchrony of East Slavic languages, diachrony of Bulgarian, Medieval Slavic Orthodox culture, post-perestroika linguistic developments in Russian, and their sociolinguistic motivations. [Her] recent research explored different aspects of Russian *anekdoty* in light of modern theoretical approaches to humor, [and] she was especially interested in the interrelationship between the standard language and non-standard language varieties as manifested on the Russian internet.”

During her abbreviated period of active scholarship, Daniela was very productive, publishing in 2006 alone the following works: “The Neoreichenbachian model of tense syntax and the Russian Active participles” (in *Rus’ writ large: languages, histories, cultures; Essays presented in honor of Michael S. Flier on his sixty-fifth birthday*), “Major textual boundary of linguistic usage in the Galician-Volhynian chronicle” (in *Russian history/Histoire russe*), “Dative absolute revisited: Subject coreferentiality in Russian” (in *Die Welt der Slaven*), and “The real nature of the secondary predicate in the history of Russian” (in *The Bill question: Contributions to the study of linguistics and languages in honor of Bill J. Darden on the occasion of his sixty-sixth birthday*, a volume she also co-edited). Her most recent publication reflected her growing interest in sociolinguistics: “Negotiating reality with *anekdoty*: Soviet vs. Post-Soviet human lore” (*Russian language journal* 58: 187–210).

Daniela was a woman of many talents and interests. She loved the best things in life: exquisite clothes, fine food, glowing health, and exotic travel. She was moved by literature, art, and music. She was irrepresible and irresistible, spontaneous yet unrelenting. She lived life to

the fullest, packing into her 48 short years an unparalleled intensity. As Michael Flier wrote in his *Linguist List* obituary, "Daniela was a vibrant, energetic scholar with boundless curiosity and an indefatigable work ethic. In addition to her many academic achievements, she was a talented writer, translator, designer, real estate developer, gourmet chef, and marathon runner. Daniela will long be remembered for her sunny smile, her eternal optimism, and her zest for living."

Steven Franks
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Indiana University
Ballantine Hall 502
1020 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47405-7103 USA