

IN MEMORIAM
ANDREJ ALEKSEJEVIČ ZHUKOV

The international Swahilist community mourns for Andrej Zhukov who passed away on 15th February 2006 at St. Petersburg. He was born on 27th November 1938 in Kirov, a Russian town close to the Ural Mountains. In 1956, he started his studies in Oriental languages at the University of Leningrad, where he was trained by two outstanding personalities in the Russian tradition of Oriental and African Studies, D.A. Olderogge and V. M. Misjugin. Though often engaged in administrative functions during his academic career at his *alma mater*, the University of St. Petersburg, he was able to reserve some time for his research work.

Among the African languages he studied, it was Swahili that fascinated him most, and to which he devoted most of his time. Thus he became one of the great specialists of Classical Swahili Literature. He bestowed great care on the study and analysis of the manuscripts written in Arabic characters, always striving for a better understanding of the archaic language of these old documents. For this reason, he visited the respective archives in Europe and Eastern Africa.

He was the first to point out that dating of the manuscripts needs a new approach that would include consideration of extra-poetical and extra-linguistic aspects, such as the quality of the paper or the ink used by the scribe. On the basis of his experience in reading the old poems, he also intervened in the controversial discussion on Kingozi, which he did not consider as Proto-Swahili or the earliest Swahili dialect, but as a conglomerate of poetical expressions (here he followed the great French scholar Sacleux).

Zhukov always pointed to the close relationship between the oral and the written forms of Swahili and underlined the enormous influence of the script on the language of the poems. His last '*grande oeuvre*' was in Russian, the title of which was simple and clear: *Suachili: Jazyk i Literatura (Swahili: Language and Literature)*; it is practically a reference book.

Besides classical literature, he gave much of his time to the study of Shaaban Robert's work. His last presentation at the Bayreuth Swahili Colloquium, which he had attended regularly since 1990 (when it was still held in Frankfurt), was devoted to this famous Swahili writer, the title being *Kitabu Kitwacho 'Barua za Shaaban Robert na Maana Yake Katika Fasihi ya Kiswahili'*.

Andrej Zhukov represented in the best way the long and famous tradition of Russian Oriental and African Studies. May he rest in peace!

*Prof. Gudrun Mieke
Bayreuth University*