

# **Doc. Ladislav Nebeský, Mathematician, Linguist, and Poet, Have Passed Away Following a Long-term Illness on 13 February 2021 aged 84**

Ladislav Nebeský was born on 28 January 1937 in Jilemnice to a doctor who was executed during the Protectorate for involvement in the Nazi resistance. He graduated in mathematics from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University, with a dissertation on mathematic statistics. In 1962, he joined the Department of the Theory of Machine Translation at the Department of Czech Studies, Linguistics, and Phonetics at CU FA and he worked at the same department – now the Department of Linguistics – until his retirement in 2008. He lectured on the mathematics of sentence structures, algebraic linguistics, theory of diagrams, and mathematics in philological sciences for non-mathematicians. In 1991, he completed his habilitation (received the title docent) at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at CU.

He explored both genuine mathematics, especially the theory of diagrams for which he was internationally renowned, and in the application of mathematical methods in linguistics and semiotics. With his debut (article *O jedné formalizaci větného rozboru – On One Formalisation of Sentence Analysis*), he gained an international reputation in mathematical linguistics as early as 1962. His further work was focused on analytical models of language and the use of the theory of diagrams in linguistics, particularly in the analysis of formal phrases of sentence structure and word order (monograph *Kombinatorické vlastnosti větných struktur – Combinatoric Attributes of Sentence Structures, 1988*). He also researched cartographic

semiotics and the studies of relations between text and space.

Ladislav Nebeský was a poet as well. He wrote experimental poetry in the 60s (listed in the anthology *Vrh kostek* that could not be published until 1993); after a break, he returned in the 90s not only as an author (from 2006 to 2012, he published in *dybbuk* five collections which are publicly accessible online on the website of the publishing house) but also as a theoretician. He discovered, for example, so-called binary poems that seemingly use emptiness but can be seen (read). His poetry excels in inventiveness, playfulness, and wit.

A mathematician, linguist, and man of letters. All that was Ladislav Nebeský. But above all, he was an immensely forthcoming and understanding colleague who was always the most pleasant company to be in because he approached all problems with sympathy and an inner smile.

Website about doc. Nebeský

*The portrait was prepared by his colleagues from the Department of Linguistics at CU FA and the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences.*