

NEWS AND EVENTS

Celebrating Algimantas Grigelis

On May 11, 2026, we celebrated the 95th birthday of the noted Lithuanian geologist, paleontologist and historian of science, Algimantas Grigelis (b. 1931). His contributions—comprising over 1,000 publications—to Baltic geology and paleontology (particularly Foraminifera) as well as his biography are well documented (Juodėnienė *et al.*, 2011, English summary/interview on pp. 299–305; Grigelis, 2025). In brief, he received his PhD in 1958 and Dr habil in 1981 from Vilnius



University. He spent most of his career working at the Institute of Geology and Geography of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and also taught in the Geology and Mineralogy Department of Vilnius University (1992–2004). He has received numerous awards, and five new species of Foraminifera have been named after him.

The purpose of this brief note is to summarize Grigelis's contributions to the history of science. He became acquainted with history in the 1960s when, as a young scientist working at the Research Institute of Geology and Geography, he was put in charge of compiling the Lithuanian and Kaliningrad section of a large All-Union project documenting two hundred years of education, science and activities of the geological survey. The project was called *The Lithuanian Geological Awareness* and resulted in the publication of seven books in Russian on Lithuanian geological awareness and two on that of the Kaliningrad Region. From these materials, Grigelis (1981) compiled a monograph in Lithuanian on the *History of geology of the Lithuanian SSR*.

Beginning in 1970, he participated in international symposia on the history of geology organized by the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO), and was elected a corresponding member of INHIGEO in 1972 (re-elected in 2002 in Paris). These symposia provided an opportunity to meet Western historians of science and to become acquainted with historiographical trends in the West. However, it was not until 1990 and the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence that Grigelis and other scientists and scholars in Lithuania could write freely about the history of science in their country. Especially important was his friendship and collaboration with the English-Australian historian of the geological sciences, David. R. Oldroyd (1936–2014) (Grapes, Oldroyd and Grigelis, 2008).

Grigelis's major contributions are three monographs that he compiled and edited on the noted Lithuanian geologists, geographers and mineralogists Vytautas Gudelis (1923–2007) (Grigelis, 2011), Mykolas Kaveckis (1889–1969) (Grigelis and Gaigalas, 2012) and Juozas Dalinkevičius (1893–1980) (Grigelis, 2014), as well as a monograph on the geologist, mineralogist, educator and founder of the University of Santiago in Chile, Ignacy Domeyko (*Lith.* Ignotas Domeika, 1802–1889) (Grigelis, 2017). In preparing these books, Grigelis demonstrated the ability to bring together many different authors and to look at various aspects of these scientists' lives—not only through their educational activities and scientific publications, but also through their memoirs, diaries, letters and other archival materials, in order to understand them as individuals and the context of their times. According to Grigelis's good friend and colleague, the eminent historian and philosopher of science Juozas Algimantas Krikštopaitis (1931–2018): “Grigelis can be considered one of the first scholars in Lithuania to have professionally studied topics in the history of science” (Krikštopaitis, 2016; reprinted in Grigelis, 2025, p. 105). Besides these books, his articles on the history of geology number in the hundreds.

Grigelis was particularly fascinated by the life, works and times of Ignacy Domeyko. In 2003, he founded the Ignotas Domeika Society and has been its president since. The society was founded a year after UNESCO declared 2002 as the 200th anniversary of Domeyko's birth. Since then, the society has organized conferences and prepared publications, while maintaining ties with the Domeyko Society in Chile and Domeyko's descendants. The international conference organized in Vilnius in 2002 to commemorate the anniversary resulted in an important publication (Grigelis, 2002). Each year, the society presents the Ignotas Domeika Memorial Medals to prominent figures in Lithuanian science and culture.

Grigelis does not forget his friends and colleagues. He has written several short biographies of his Lithuanian, British, Swedish, German and Russian colleagues. His latest tribute is to Juozas Algimantas Krikštopaitis. Together with Birutė Railienė, he assembled 26 authors to share their varied memories of Krikštopaitis (Grigelis and Railienė, 2022). Professor Krikštopaitis is well known to many of this journal's readers. From 1996 to 2019, he served as president of the Lithuanian Association of the History and Philosophy of Science and was active in the Baltic Association of the History and Philosophy of Science. Grigelis has also been very active in the work of both these organizations, especially through his presentations at their conferences.

Despite his age, Grigelis continues to work hard and be active. Part of his life's motto is: "Work, and you will be rewarded". Just recently, at the Vilnius Book Fair, he presented a monograph presenting the results of the latest scientific (geological), engineering and archeological research on Gediminas Hill, an important symbol of Lithuania (Grigelis, 2025).

All that we can do now is wish him good health and many more good years. Happy 95th!

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