

Thomas F. Broden*

Chronology of A. J. Greimas

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1917 Algirdas Julius Greimas born 9 March in Tula, Russia, of public school teacher, education inspector, and local elected official Julius Greimas (1882–1942) and Konstancija Mickevičiūtė-Greimienė (1886–1956), ethnic Lithuanians displaced by World War I.

1918 In June, the Greimases return to the hamlet of Kunigiškiai¹ in rural Aukštaitija in present-day Lithuania. 1918–19, Lithuania becomes an independent country.

1919–31 The Greimases move to the town of Kupiškis in Aukštaitija (1919–27), then to the city of Šiauliai.

1931–34 The Greimases relocate to Marijampolė, Algirdas earns diploma at Rygiškių Jono gymnasium. Reads Nietzsche, Rilke, Schopenhauer.

1934–36 Program in law, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas; follows Lev Karsavin's course on medieval Christian philosophy. Reads Huizinga, Spengler, and modern Lithuanian poets.

1936–39 Undergraduate program in Romance philology and medieval studies, Faculté des Lettres, Grenoble; major professor Antonin Duraffour. Reads widely in French and world literature, especially fiction and poetry. Travels to Paris, Provence, Venice, Naples, Berlin. June–Sept. 1937 and 1938, at home in Lithuania.

1939 In June, licence ès lettres, Grenoble. In July, infantry officer candidate at the national military school in Kaunas, then Vilnius.

1940 In August, Lithuania annexed into the USSR. In October, Lieutenant Greimas graduates, is placed on inactive reserve. October 1940–42, teaches French and Lithuanian literature in Šiauliai high schools.

1941 In June, Greimas's parents deported to remote areas of the USSR. 22 June, Axis forces invade the USSR, including Lithuania; Nazi occupation.

1942 In January, Julius Greimas dies in Siberia. Fall 1942–June 1944, Algirdas in Kaunas. Joins the anti-Nazi underground, helps produce its newspaper. Reads

¹ Today in Utena county (*apskritis*), Anykščiai district (*savivaldybė*).

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Marx, also English and American literature. 1943–44, publishes literary criticism in Lithuanian.

1944 In May–June, serves as a national resistance leader, then flees Lithuania before the Soviets return. July 1944–April 1945, in German-controlled Alsace.

1945 In April, moves to Paris with Ona (Anna) Bagdonaitė-Martinkienė and her daughter Ada. Oct. 1945–Dec. 1948, doctoral student of Charles Bruneau in French philology, University of Paris (Sorbonne); courses by Bruneau, Mario Roques, Robert-Leon Wagner; develops new sociohistorical methods in lexicology with schoolmates Georges Matoré and Bernard Quemada. Reads *Annales* historians, Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl, Malraux on art, Mauss, Saussure, Trier.

1946 Reconstitutes his wartime resistance organization, now in exile and anti-Soviet; as General Secretary, travels to Germany and Sweden, collaborates with other underground leaders in exile and in the homeland. Founds the Paris chapter of Šviesa, a youth-oriented Lithuanian cultural organization.

1947 1947–49, research trainee (*stagiaire de recherche*), Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Paris. Begins co-authoring publications on French lexicology with Matoré. In December, co-founds the Foreign Delegation of the Lithuanian homeland underground, serves as General Secretary.² 1947–92, publishes extensively on French and Lithuanian culture in the liberal Lithuanian exile press.

1948 Marries Anna Bagdonaitė, applies for French citizenship by naturalization. 17 Dec., Sorbonne doctorat d'État, dissertation in French lexicology: *La mode en 1830*.

1949 Dec. 1949–June 1958, Associate Professor (*maître-assistant*) of French philology, University of Alexandria, Egypt, teaches history of the French language; summers in Paris and on the Riviera. In Alexandria, friendships with Roland Barthes, Mustapha Safouan, Charles Singevin, Hilde Zaloscer; reads Brøndal, Freud, Husserl, Jakobson, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss, Meillet, Merleau-Ponty, Saussure.

1951 Algirdas and Anna Greimas naturalized French citizens.

1952 1952–67, summer vacations in Villefranche-sur-Mer near Nice, conversations with Pierre Guiraud, Matoré, Singevin, and with Lithuanian intellectuals, artists, and writers (Antanas Liutkus, Žibuntas Mikšys, Antanas Mončys, Jurgis Savickis, etc.).

1953 Ca. 1953–55, reads Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* in English.

² Bendras demokratinio pasipriešinimo sąjūdis Užsienio delegatūra.

- 1956** Begins publishing sole-authored scholarly articles in French, including the epistemological essay “Actualité du saussurisme.” 1956–68, works with Barthes to develop structuralism and semiology.
- 1957** In July and August 1957–64, collaborates on projects in applied linguistics and technology directed by Quemada in Besançon; discusses new trends in linguistics with Jean Dubois, M. A. K. Halliday, Klaus Heger, Nicolas Ruwet, et al. Drafts and discards the first version of a book on semantics.
- 1958** 1958–62, Professor of French language and grammar, Ankara University, Turkey.
- 1959** Frequents Georges Dumézil in Ankara. 1959–65, publishes on structural semantics in journals directed by Quemada.
- 1960** Gives inaugural lecture of SELF, Société d’étude de la langue française, Paris. 1960–62, teaches additional courses at Istanbul University, including a seminar on structural semantics.
- 1962** 1962–65, Associate Professor (*maître de conférences*), then Professor (*professeur*) of French grammar and philology, Université de Poitiers, France; has student François Rastier, colleague Jean-Claude Coquet. 1962–73, the Greimases live in Paris.
- 1963** 1963–65, gives doctoral seminar in structural semantics at the Sorbonne’s Institut Henri Poincaré, Centre de linguistique quantitative.
- 1964** 1964–66, correspondence and friendship with Roman Jakobson.
- 1965** July–Sept. in North America: seminar and lectures in Toronto and Montréal; lectures for Santara-Šviesa in USA. Elected Directeur d’études (Professor), École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), VI^e Section, Paris (as of 1975, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, EHESS); 1965–85, directs his Séminaire de sémantique générale and Groupe de recherches sémio-linguistiques (GRSL).
- 1966** Publishes *Sémantique structurale: recherche de méthode*. Co-founds the journal *Langages* (Paris). In May, asks Jakobson to support his proposal to found an international periodical devoted to semiotics. In September, participates in conference on semiotics in Kazimierz Dolny, Poland, with scholars from both NATO and Warsaw Pact nations, including Jakobson, Thomas Sebeok, Stefan Żółkiewski. At a 19 Sept. business meeting to create the Association Internationale de Sémiotique (AIS), Greimas elected Chair of Publications Committee. Visits Warsaw, Wrocław, and Puńsk.
- 1966–68 at the EPHE, creates and directs the “Linguistique et sémantique” track of EPRASS (Enseignement préparatoire à la recherche approfondie en sciences sociales), the first doctoral curriculum in France for linguistics or semantics per se.

- 1967** Edits the first four issues of AIS's periodical, "Studies in Semiotics / Recherches sémiotiques," in *Social Science Information / Information sur les sciences sociale* (Paris), ancestor to *Semiotica*, collaborating with Yuri Lotman, Sebeok, and Wojciech Skalmowski.³ Creation of small-group GRSL workshops devoted to particular media, genres or topics, directed by Coquet, Gérard Genette, Christian Metz, Bernard Pottier, et al.
- 1968** Publishes *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français*. Oct.–Dec., Visiting Professor, University of California at Berkeley; lecture tour in USA and Québec. Elected General Secretary of the AIS at its Aug.-Sept. 1968 symposium in Warsaw, directs AIS's business and planning, collaborating with Barthes, Émile Benveniste, Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss, etc.
- 1969** 21–22 Jan., at the business meeting in Paris that officially constitutes the Association Internationale de Sémiotique / International Association of Semiotic Studies (AIS/IASS), presents the statutes for the association and its publications, then steps down as General Secretary. Co-founder, Le Cercle de Sémiotique de Paris (1969–72).
- 1970** Publishes *Du sens: essais sémiotiques*. Program chair and keynote, international symposium on "Strutture e generi della letteratura etnica," Palermo. Founding Academic Director, Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e di Linguistica (CISL), Urbino.
- 1971** Directs CISL seminars and colloquia, July. Keynote, Premier Congrès international d'ethnologie européenne, Paris; lecture, LSA Linguistic Institute. Lectures and seminars at Vilnius University; in Moscow, meets Russian semioticians.
- 1972** 1972–85 GRSL office: 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris 6^e; longtime members and fellow travelers include Michel Arrivé, Françoise Bastide, Denis Bertrand, Jean-François Bordron, Per Aage Brandt, Claude Calame, Michel de Certeau, Corina Combet-Galland, Coquet, Joseph Courtés, Ivan Darrault, Jean Delorme, Paolo Fabbri, Jean-Marie Floch, Jacques Fontanille, Jacques Geninasca, Pierre Geoltrain, Manar Hammad, Anne Hénault, Eric Landowski, Louis Panier, Herman Parret, Paul Perron, Jean Petitot, François Rastier, Alain Renier, Felix Thürlemann, Claude Zilberberg.
- 1973** Lectures and seminars in São Paulo and Ribeirão Preto, creation of the Centro de estudos semióticos A. J. Greimas and its journal *Significação*. In December, the Greimases move out to the country, to the hamlet of La Chaussée (Orne), 150 kilometers west of Paris.
- 1974** Sept.–Oct., seminar and lecture tour in Québec.

3 Issues 6.2–3 (April–June 1967): 27–109; 6.4 (August 1967): 63–141; 6.5 (October 1967): 159–229; and 6.6 (December 1967): 101–146.

- 1975** GRSL-affiliated Centre pour l'analyse du discours religieux and its bulletin *Sémiotique et Bible* founded in Lyon.
- 1976** Publishes *Maupassant. La sémiotique du texte* and *Sémiotique et sciences sociales*. March–April, seminars and lecture tour in USA.
- 1977** Creation of GRSL's periodical *Le Bulletin*.
- 1978** GRSL founds non-profit Association pour le développement de la sémiotique.
- 1979** Publishes *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, with Courtés, also *Apie dievus ir žmonės* [*On Gods and Men*]. Creation of GRSL's periodical *Documents*. First of five public discussions between Greimas and Paul Ricoeur, in Paris. In May, lectures in Helsinki; meets Soviet semioticians in Leningrad-Saint Petersburg; lectures and seminars at Vilnius University.
- 1981** Lectures and seminar at the second International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies (ISISSS), Vanderbilt University; international colloquia in Albi.
- 1982** In August, Ona Greimienė dies and is buried in La Chaussée. In November, Algirdas moves to Paris and attempts to sell his house.
- 1983** Publishes *Du sens II: essais sémiotiques*. Presentations at the colloquium "Sémiotique en jeu: à partir et autour de l'œuvre d'A. J. Greimas," Cerisy. In the fall, hospitalized for a month. 1983–92, publishes extensively in cultural periodicals in Lithuania.
- 1984** Lectures and seminars at ISISSS in Toronto. Health issues force cancellation of a lecture at the Third Congress of IASS in Palermo and a September trip to Vilnius; in the fall, surgery and convalescence. 1984–85, engages Teresa Keane as an English tutor.
- 1985** In June, Greimas's retirement ceremony in Paris, with presentation of the Festschrift *Exigences et perspectives de la Sémiotique*. Sept.–Nov., seminars and lectures in Canada. 1986–92, co-directs his EHESS seminar with colleagues.
- 1987** Publishes *De l'imperfection*. Foundation of the Association Française de Sémiotique, Greimas President.
- 1990** Publishes *Tautos atminties beiėškant* [*In Search of the Nation's Memory*]. 1990–91, Lithuania regains its independence.
- 1991** Publishes *Sémiotique des passions* with Fontanille. With Keane, book project on the aesthetics of the female nude in Renaissance painting, joint lecture in Bilbao, October.
- 1992** With Keane, publishes *Dictionnaire du moyen français: la Renaissance*. 24 Feb., marries Keane. 27 Feb., dies of cancer in Lariboisière Hospital in Paris. Ceremonies in Paris and at Vilnius University; state funeral in Kaunas. In September, establishment of the A. J. Greimas Research Center for Semiotics, Vilnius University.