

NEWS IN BRIEF

THESIS DEFENCE: AVE TUPITS

ASPECTS ON FOLK MEDICINE: DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEFINITION, DATA COLLECTING AND RESEARCH IN ESTONIA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

On 27 November 2009, Ave Tupits, a researcher of the Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum, defended her PhD thesis, *Aspects on Folk Medicine: Development of the Definition, Data Collecting and Research in Estonia in the 20th Century*, at the University of Tartu.

The Doctoral thesis, written under the supervision of Ülo Valk, Mare Kõiva and Marju Kõivupuu was reviewed at the defence by Mall Hiimäe with regard to folkloristics, and by Ain Raal in the field of pharmacy who considered the treatise an extremely topical one – although folk medicine is usually regarded a research field for folklorists, the relevant subject matter is also of serious interest for pharmacy wherein three selection principles are being used as a point of reference in ascertaining new medicinal plants and drugs: 1) phylogenetic, 2) mass-scale screening, 3) ethno-medicine. The latter also provides some subject matter for researchers with regard to the novel aspects in using currently known medicinal herbs. Thus, it can be stated with assuredness that folk medicine, as an object of research, is inter-disciplinary and the associated problematique, rather than being solely confined to history and cultural history, is also of tangible importance from the viewpoint of pharmacy and medicine.

The thesis summarises an aspect of ethno-medicine which has so far not been thoroughly covered – the course of relevant data collection and research activities in Estonia during the 20th century. The corpus of the dissertation is mainly supported by the annexes comprising different questionnaires.

The main value of the thesis, according to the reviewers, is the presentation of an integral and complete overview regarding the ethno-medicine related collection work and research in Estonia during the 20th century. In this regard, the monograph facilitates further research in the field of folk medicine. Primarily, the author was criticised for the descriptive style and scanty reflection regarding the results of the research in folk medicine.



Photo by Ragnar Kruusimaa 2008.

Ain Raal

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