

origin, selected in the process of joint work of phraseologists from different countries (incl. Estonia).

The European Society of Phraseology elected the new board and chairman for the next five years – this being Jarmo Korhonen, Professor at the University of Helsinki. The next Europhras conference will take place two years hence in Maribor University, Slovenia.

Anneli Baran

#### **FROM LANGUAGE TO MIND 4**

The international conference – From Language to Mind 4 – that took place in Elva on October 15–17, 2010, was dedicated to the occasion of the 110th anniversary of academician and renowned folklorist Oskar Loorits, a researcher who set a cornerstone for various research subjects in folkloristics, and simultaneously updated and developed the methodology. The conference also celebrated the 75th birthday of Pille Kippar whose research and publications about fairytales are widely known. The past conferences, held to acknowledge the anniversary of O. Loorits (in 1990 and 2000), have brought a number of new valuable contacts and enriched the Estonian field of folkloristics in many ways. In the same vein, the present conference was remarkable because of the extraordinarily wide expertise of those researchers present.

The conference consisted of thematic panels of presentations followed by discussions. In addition to that, two plenary sessions were held and round-table discussions took place on both evenings in a more informal setting but nevertheless were filled with vigorous academic exchange of thoughts. A number of posters were presented to the conference delegates dedicated to the re-structuring of the ritual year during the post-socialist period in Russia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Hungary (I. Sedakova, A. Vaicekauskas, E. Anastasova, G. Barna) and to the theories of the Tunguska catastrophe (N. Dmitrieva).

Together with the academic event in Elva, an exhibition, “Tsässons and churches of Setomaa in the 17th to 21st century” was opened at the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu which includes 80 photos of all the 23 tsässons and 6 Orthodox churches located within the Estonian territory of Setomaa (Setoland). The central topics were humour, ancient mythologies, narratives and expressions of belief, and creating places and identities on the Internet.

Humour has a key role in media texts, first of all on the Internet. In online communication, television, personal communication and elsewhere, humour is used to tackle questions of identity that are especially topical in the post-socialist region. Playful and irreverent genres are equal to other, more serious-minded ones, and deconstruction of identity requires in addition to the study of economic and political aspects also the study of emotions and attitudes. From time to time, they provide the ground for politically incorrect (media) texts, analyzing of which leads us to the subjects of censorship,

globalization and identity creation. The humour sessions were opened by two young researchers, Ilona Piirimägi, from the ethnology department of Tartu University, and Liga Strazda, from the ethnology department of the University of Riga. Their presentations touched upon the way the environment shapes jokes – be it in a totalitarian society or during a live entertainment show in a stand-up comedy evening. Liisi Laineste's presentation was about the inter-war caricatures, from the 1920s to 1939, published in the Estonian daily papers. Arvo Krikmann gave a thorough overview of the huge and extremely heterogeneous corpus of tales about Hodja Nasreddin that have been, and continue to be, very popular and productive in the very large area of the Oriental world. His argument was directed towards defining the punch-line and, more than that, defining the essentials of a joke. Władisław Chłopicki presented an illustrated introduction to the stand-up comedy genre in Poland from its beginnings to the present day. His most interesting examples also continued to amuse the audience during the late evening session which compared contemporary trends in Polish and Estonian stand-up comedy.

The session on ancient mythologies and belief narratives was centred on the present-day conceptions of ancient beliefs. The presentations aimed at answering the questions about what time and religious system the myth was connected to and why have some myths pertained while others seem to have disappeared quickly, etc. For the purposes of research, myth must be situated in its historical contexts. It is clear that myths (however the term is defined) have been used by people in recent as well as ancient past, while it is unclear whether we are capable of studying these myths. The first presentation, delivered by Kaisa Sammelseig, described ways that a religion expresses itself through explaining the meaning of the term *hiis* (holy grove) for people living close to a (formerly) religious place, on the basis of ethnological fieldwork. The thought-evoking paper by Ester Oras concentrated on the possibilities of using a contextual approach for interpreting archaeological material. Archaeology was further revisited in the presentation of Tõnno Jonuks, which contemplated about the justifications of religious interpretations of archaeological source material, thus forming plenty of parallels with the previous paper. The topic was eloquently closed by the keynote, delivered by Jaanus Plaat from the Estonian Art Academy, with an insight into the rich cultural tradition of the *tsässon*s (chapels) of Setumaa in Southern Estonia.

The Internet session brought together a medley of approaches to this inevitably important source of contemporary folkloristic material. Mare Kalda, from the Estonian Literary Museum, described the tradition of geo-cashing and its expressions on Internet discussion boards. Eda Kalmre focused on contemporary romantic imagination of young girls who publish their novels online in a public portal [www.rate.ee](http://www.rate.ee). In addition to other remarks, she stated that these interactive love stores of the [rate.ee](http://www.rate.ee) blogs are very similar to their handwritten analogues from the second half of the 20th century. This kind of self-expression is also affected by the current role-models of contemporary pop culture and literature. Liisa Vesik concentrated on the formation of virtual communities on the websites dedicated to pets. Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov gave an interesting overview of YouTube clips of the former Yugoslavian leader “comrade Tito” in order to analyze myths and anti-myths in a popular visual media environment.

In addition to these presentations, some very interesting insights into archival material did not fall into any of the previous categories: Risto Järv, from the Estonian Folklore Archives, talked about the animal fairytales, dedicating his paper to Pille Kippar's birthday and attempting to outline the main characteristics of animals belonging to the fantasy world of fairy tales, and Katre Kikas, who concentrated on the topic of giving and receiving books as presents for collecting and sending pieces of folklore. The presentation by Renata Sõukand and Raivo Kalle discussed the folk ideas about healing with herbs, introducing the concept of a herbal landscape, which once created remains with the person or community and is constantly being upgraded by the knowledge developed within (community exchanged, personal experiences) or coming from outside (media, books).

The conference was held in a pleasant informal atmosphere, and as a result, a number of ideas for future academic events and publications were conceived.

Liisi Laineste