

## EUOPHRAS 2012 IN MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

The EUOPHRAS conference is organised by the European Society of Phraseology every second year. The conference is the most important international academic event in the field of paremiology. In 2012 it took place on August 27–31 in Maribor, which is the second largest town in Slovenia. The University of Maribor welcomed the conference with over one hundred presentations. The conference theme was *Phraseology and Culture*, with the focus on the cultural, historical, intercultural, semantic and semiotic aspects of phraseology in language communication. The papers were divided into five subthemes: Phraseology and Culture (*In medias res*); Phraseology and Symbol (*Nomen est omen*); Phraseology in Interlingual and Intercultural Contact (*Nosce te ipsum*); Phraseology in Dictionaries and Corpora (*Libri amici, libri magistri*); Phraseology in Language Teaching and Training (*Usus magister est optimus*). The concept of phraseology could be replaced with paremiology as at the conference phraseology was understood rather broadly. The conference programme consisted of plenary sessions, thematic sessions, workshops and book, project and poster presentations. The programme can be found online at <http://www.euophrasmaribor.si/>, where also the abstracts of the seven plenary sessions are available.

This year the invited speakers were Harald Burger from Zürich (*Kulturelles "Wissen" in der Phraseologie*); the president of the European Society of Phraseology Jarmo Korhonen from Helsinki (*Interdisziplinarität im Dienste der Phraseologieforschung*); Erika Kržišnik from Ljubljana (*Phraseologie als sprachwissenschaftliche Disziplin im slowenischen sprachwissenschaftlichen Raum*); Annelies Häcki Buhofer from Basel (*Kann und soll der Erwerb von Phraseologismen gefördert werden und wenn ja, wie?*); Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij from Moscow (*Kultursemiotik und Phraseologie*); František Čermák from Prague (*Phraseology and Idiomatics: Substance and Vagaries of Views*) and Kathrin Steyer from Mannheim (*Syntagmen – Muster – Schemata. Neue Perspektiven für Phraseologie und Parömiologie*).

Unfortunately, the eighth invited speaker Wolfgang Mieder from Burlington, Vermont, was unable to attend the conference; yet, his abstract is available on the website (*"Aller Anfang ist Gefahr." Friedrich Nietzsches sprichwörtliche Aphorismen in Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*). From the participant's and listener's point of view, the plenary papers were not easy to situate in the subthemes of the conference. They predominantly represented the special interest of the speaker or something that the speaker wanted to take up.

As concerns language, merely the variation of languages makes one breathless. The official languages in Maribor were German, English and Slovene. This means that most of the information and official speeches were given in these languages. The official languages of the European Society of Phraseology are German, English, French and Spanish. The research subjects considered even more languages: Russian, Hungarian, Swedish, Polish, Croatian, Italian, Japanese, Estonian, Finnish and others. When you met a group of participants talking to each other, it was at least in two different languages. It was nice to notice that even in an academic atmosphere the most important thing was to understand and to be understood, no matter what language you used and how well you knew the grammar. The fruitful moments in this kind of conferences include papers, plenary sessions and breaks; all of them are needed.

In this conference there were also some book, project and poster presentations. A new feature was the *Dissertation forum*, where the speakers (about ten participants) were doctoral students presenting their ongoing study for their doctoral theses. Although the speakers were still engaged in the process of research, many of the listeners had a notable career in academic life. This forum is supposed to continue in the next meetings. Another notable innovation in the programme was the workshops. There were five altogether: two were mainly in German (*Extraktion der festen und usuellen Wortverbindungen aus Korpora; Phraseodidaktik*) and three in English (*The Influence of English on the Phraseology of European Languages; Formulaic Constructions in Dialogue; Cognitive and Linguistic Economy*). More information about the themes of the workshops is to be found on the websites of EUROPHRAS. Both of these innovations, the dissertation forum and workshops, present models for action that could be worth following in the future also in other conferences. For the participants the dissertation forum was a possibility to have a glance at the future doctoral theses as well as to learn something about the interests of young researchers. For the doctoral students this was a valuable possibility to actively participate in an international conference. The workshops offered an opportunity to participate in the discussions more than only with ordinary paper presentations. Every now and then the conversation changed direction and even some new ideas emerged from old subjects. This was possible because in the programme a four hour session was reserved for the workshops.

In 2012 Maribor is one of the European Capitals of Culture, which could be seen all over the town and its surroundings. Visitors had many opportunities to see, feel, listen and taste the various cultural elements of Slovenian life. Although the conference days were long and fully packed, the last day offered an opportunity to get acquainted with both the culture and agriculture of Slovenia.

The next EUROPHRAS conference will take place in two years' time in Sousse, Tunisia. In the meantime, an international conference participated by the EUROPHRAS society, *Phraseology in Multilingual Society*, will convene at Kazan Federal University in August 2013 (<http://kazan2013.wix.com/europhras>).

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