

to proverbs. Mieder maintains that researchers have to start a systematic creation of a modern proverb corpus, which, despite the developing IT support, is a complicated and time-consuming process.

The academic speeches were followed by book presentations. Anneli Baran, Liisi Laineste and Piret Voolaid introduced a collection of articles in English, *Scala naturae: Festschrift in Honour of Arvo Krikmann*, published by the Scholarly Press of the Estonian Literary Museum. Alexandra Arkhipova presented the 21st issue of *Antropologicheskii Forum* (Anthropological Forum), a scientific journal in Russian, published in St. Petersburg, which, as a tribute to Arvo Krikmann, included a chapter on short forms and humour, entitled *O znamenakh, drakonakh i anekdotakh* ('About flags, dragons, and anecdotes').

It should be mentioned that the heading of the symposium and the Festschrift, *Scala naturae* (literally, 'ladder/stairway of nature') is well in line with the direction of Arvo Krikmann's academic interests. This concept with a long history has served as a basis to a philosophical theory, which is known as the Great Chain of Being. The beginnings of the theory originate in antique philosophy, and according to this all matter and life in the world forms a certain hierarchical system. Those who have an in-depth knowledge of Arvo Krikmann's academic research are well aware of how strongly he has been inspired, since the 1990s, by the chapter dedicated to the metaphors of proverbs, *The Great Chain of Being*, in the book *More than Cool Reason* (1989), written by cognitivists George Lakoff and Mark Turner. If we apply the theory of the Great Chain of Being to proverb studies, we can say that the creation and understanding of metaphors in proverbs is based on conceptual distinctions 'human-inhuman' and 'natural-cultural'.

The symposium was organised by the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum (research project IUT-2205) in cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Sciences. The programme of the event is available on the event's homepage at <http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2014/scalanaturae/>.

Piret Voolaid

## EUROPHRAS CONFERENCE IN PARIS

On September 10–12, 2014, two of the thirteen universities in Paris – Sorbonne Paris Cité and Sorbonne Universités – organised yet another conference of Europhras, the European Society of Phraseology, at Paris-Sorbonne University, under the heading *Phraseology: Resources, Descriptive Studies and Computational Processing*. Due to political instability, the conference that was initially planned to be held in Tunisia was transferred to Europe. The organising committee was headed by Salah Mejri and Ines Sfar, who represent the French-speaking researchers of Europhras recently active in organising phraseology events. This is proved by the fact that only a few years ago a paremiology conference in cooperation with Europhras took place in Paris. Despite the name of the organisation, it assembles researchers also from outside of Europe; this year, for instance, from Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, Nigeria, Egypt, Senegal, Tunisia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Madagascar, and Northern Korea.

This year the conference listened to 183 presentations, including 10 keynote speeches, and organised 6 round table discussions. As the heading of the event suggests, the main topics were concerned with digital resources or text corpora, computational processing and descriptive studies. The programme of the conference can be found at <http://extranet-ldi.univ-paris13.fr/europhras2014/download/Programme-Europhras-2014.pdf>.

One of the focal topics was the classification of phraseology, i.e., how to operate with the multifaceted phraseological linguistic material in the easiest and most reasonable way. For one, it is difficult to elaborate universal and uniform criteria, as the concept of phraseological units covers entirely different constructions. One of the problems, for example, is the relativity of its stability, which prescribes how variants of phraseological units must be treated. There is no common understanding and most probably will never be, which is also proved by the ongoing arguments in the field, which have been continuing for decades. Different schools have different starting points for defining figurativeness and analysing linguistic material. With regard to descriptive studies, it was suggested to pay attention to the fact that researches have mainly dealt with synchronic studies, especially within the framework of discourse analysis, whereas the diachronic aspect finds increasingly more treatment. This is beneficial in investigating grammaticalisation, but also in the study of phraseology in general. So phraseology studies still focus on theoretical and methodological issues waiting to be solved.

Of the ten keynote speeches, two were delivered in English and one in German; all the others were in French. The presentation of the grand old man of proverb studies, Wolfgang Mieder, under the heading *The Proverbial Rhetoric for Women's Rights by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* was dedicated to the first American female feminists and their powerful rhetoric. Elisabeth Piirainen and Dmitri Dobrovolski, in their presentation *Idiom Motivation and Corpus Data*, discussed the problems of translating and analysing idioms on the basis of concrete language examples. Peter Blumenthal from the University of Cologne, in his presentation *Kombinatorisches Wortprofil und Phraseologieforschung*, introduced a statistical analysis of the changes in German language of journalism, which emerged in research carried out over a period of sixty years.

The round table discussions, mainly in French, focused on pragmatic phraseologisms, phraseodidactic studies, translating of phraseologisms and the aspect of diachrony in phraseology. The only discussion held in English, *Computational Phraseology in Huge Linguistic Corpora: Tools, Methods and Perspectives*, led by Jean-Pierre Colson, with the participation of Adam Kilgarriff, Gloria Corpas-Pastor and Ruslan Mitkov, was dedicated to the management of huge linguistic corpora, the nature of the Sketch Engine and possibilities of applying it in phraseology research, as well as its perspectives in the work of phraseologists.

Drawing on the English- and German-language presentations, I would like to point to the main trends and more topical issues in the studies of phraseology today: to ascertain and analyse phraseological units on the basis of language corpora, comparative study of the phraseological material of two or more languages (for example, on the basis of expressions drawn on somatics and gestures), compound words as part of phraseology and lexicographical treatment in language corpora, the role of phraseologisms in (foreign) language learning, differences and similarities of phraseological expressions in journalism and fiction, the aspect of visuality and its applications. Year after year,

there are growing numbers of young researchers still working at their doctoral theses, who take the floor at the conferences of the Society of Phraseology, talking about how they use the possibilities that modern information technology offers, and presenting the results of their work. This tendency is bound to continue, the more so that the past conference elected a board for Europhras, with a new leader – Dr Kathrin Steyer from the University of Mannheim. K. Steyer has been actively engaged in corpus-based lexicography, including phraseology, as well as in the development of the SprichWort-Plattform, a project financed by the European Union.

Within the conference framework, a workshop for the project *Widespread Idioms*, run by the project leader Elisabeth Piirainen, took place. The problems under discussion were associated with the idiomatic equivalents in different languages, material for the next questionnaires, and the content and structure of the publication completed as a result of the material collected with the help of the questionnaires. A great number of phraseologists contribute to the project and nearly all the European languages are represented; yet, representatives of smaller language groups are also welcomed to join.

The next Europhras assembly takes place in Trier, Germany, in two years' time.

Anneli Baran



*Main entrance of Paris-Sorbonne University. Photograph by Anneli Baran 2014.*