

NEWS IN BRIEF

ASTA ÕIM 60

On November 27, 2003, Asta Õim, senior researcher at the Folklore Department of the Estonian Literary Museum, celebrated her 60th birthday. Asta Õim is publicly known as a prolific lexicographer and editor. Her professional career has followed two paths: in lexicography and in scholarly organisational activities in the Estonian Language Institute (former Estonian Institute of Language and Literature).

Having graduated from the University of Tartu in 1970, majoring in Russian language and literature, Asta Õim took the position at the Estonian Institute of Language and Literature, where she re-



Photo 1. Lexicographer Asta Õim. Photo from private collection.

mained for the following thirty years. She worked herself up from the senior assistant of the department of sociolinguistics to the head of the institute. Her first extensive study “The Semantic Structure of Words in Translated Dictionaries (On the Basis of Russian and Estonian)” (*Sõna semantiline struktuur tõlkesõnaraamat* (*vene ja eesti keele põhjal*)) appeared in 1981. In the following years Asta Õim worked at compiling the four volumes of the Russian-Estonian bilingual dictionary (*Vene-eesti sõnaraamat*, published in 1984–1994) with a team of dozen researchers, and was the responsible editor of the last two volumes. The dictionary differed from other similar dictionaries both in its scope (74,000 head words) as well as in the presentation of expressions. In addition to basic contemporary literary vocabulary the dictionary contains numerous specialised terms and colloquialisms. Years of working at the extensive dictionary proved an enriching experience and have made Asta Õim one of the most prolific and reputed Estonian lexicographers. Asta Õim’s devotion, diligence and ambition turned her away from the collective lexicographic work, so she continued her work individually. At the end of the 1990s her previous experience enabled her to publish smaller, more specialised dictionaries – “Estonian-Russian Dictionary for Journalists” (*Ajakirjaniku eesti-vene sõnastik*, 1988), “Estonian-Russian Dictionary of Difficult Words for Journalists” (*Ajakirjaniku vene-eesti ohusõnastik*, 1989) and a two-volume publication on addressing formulae “How to Put It” (*Kuidas öelda*, 1990–1991).

Her work in the following years was largely facilitated by the opening possibilities for publication in the country of newly-restored independence, with no censorship and no endless arguments at the institute, although the financial situation was always troubling. In the 1990s Asta Õim set out to fill the void in Estonian lexicography and compile the long needed specialised dictionaries. She published three major works in Estonian lexicography, namely the dictionary of synonyms (*Sünonüümisõnastik*, 1991, which she self-financed), dictionary of phrases (*Fraseoloogiasõnaraamat*, 1993, 2nd edition in 2000) and the dictionary of antonyms (*Antonüümisõnastik*, 1995, 2nd edition in 1998). The latter two have appeared in electronic versions as well. (It is worth noting that Paul Saagpakk’s dictionary of synonyms *Sünonüümisõnastik* was published in 1992). On all these occasions the editor-compiler had no predecessors in the field

and has had to compile the material from scratch, systematise it and devise methodology. While working on her dictionary of phrases, Asta Õim could rely on the work of Feliks Vakk, and the dictionary of Estonian-Russian (edited by Agnes Reitsak, 1975) and Estonian-German phrases (edited by Virve Liiv, Alice Haberman and Milvi Paivel, 1973). Critic Helmi Neetar in her review of the dictionary of synonyms praises Asta Õim's consistency in systematisation and her strong theoretical background (see *Keel ja Kirjandus*, Jan. 1995, p. 64).

New horizons opened when the institute began publishing the works of researchers. These opportunities were very advantageous: according to the reports, 20 publications were issued in 1995, whereas two years later the number of publications was 36. The beginning of the 1990s witnessed the gradual publication of the series of several important dictionaries: the dictionary of the Votic language (*Vadja keele sõnaraamat*, since 1990), the glossary of the Estonian literary language (*Eesti kirjakeele seletussõnaraamat*, since 1991), the dictionary of Estonian dialects (*Eesti murrete sõnaraamat*, since 1994), the series of publications on Estonian dialects (*Eesti murded*, since 1995), etc. Several other publications of major importance were published, such as the *Eesti keele sõnaraamat ÕS* (1999), introducing recent views in language planning.

In these years the head of the institute, as well as the rest of the staff were forced to work in an unstable and changing environment: nobody knew whether research institutions would continue independently or under the management of universities, also, the general attitude towards humanities and national studies was continuously depreciative, people worked in undercapitalised conditions and the number of researchers was reduced.

The Estonian Institute of Language and Literature underwent major changes. In 1993 the research institution of language, literature and folklore under the Academy of Sciences, obligatory for smaller Soviet republics when it was founded in 1947, was divided in two. One division formed the Under and Tuglas Literary Centre, and the institute was renamed the Estonian Language Institute. Departments of folklore were joined to the Estonian Literary Museum in February 1, 2000.

On September 1, 2001 Asta Õim assumed the position of the scientific secretary of the Estonian Language Society, where she worked until April 14, 2003, and parallelly, since January 15, 2002, as a senior researcher at the folklore department of the Estonian Literary Museum.

Asta Õim and her research team of four have completed the compilation of the database of Estonian *kõnekäänud* 'phrases' (ESF grant *Fraseologism versus kõnekäänd versus troop*), which enables to systematise and work with the material. The research team under the leading of Asta Õim aims to compile the academic publication of the Estonian phrases as a part of the series *Monumenta Estoniae Antiquae*.

Asta Õim was awarded the 5th Class Order of the White Star (*Valgetähe teenetemärk*) of the Republic of Estonia in 2001, the Estonian Academy of Science's medal, she was granted the Science Award of the Republic of Estonia in 1992 and the Estonian Culture Foundation Award in 1991.

Rein Saukas

A DAY OF PHRASEOLOGY AT THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM

The research group of short forms of the folklore department of the Estonian Literary Museum organised a conference on phraseology on November 24, 2003. Presentations were delivered for specialists, such as folklore researchers on the subject, linguists, but also for a wider public, students, university professors, and secondary school teachers teaching Estonian language.

The conference aimed to introduce contemporary approaches in phraseological research and also to celebrate the 60th birthday of Asta Õim, a member of the research group and the compiler of several dictionaries.

The ten conference presentations were divided into three thematic sections (see also abstracts on <http://www.folklore.ee/pubte/teesid/sisu.htm>).

In the opening presentation “Parallelism, implicativity and predication in proverbs” Arvo Krikmann focused on two types of “syntactic symmetry”, or parallelism in Estonian proverbs, and attempted to demonstrate on the basis of different structural levels that syntactic and logical paradoxes can be explicated on the semantic and content level of expressions rather than on the basis of the outward form of the sentences.

The following two presentations dealt with biblical phraseology. In her presentation “On the Origin of Estonian Biblical Phraseology” Kristiina Ross, senior researcher at the Estonian Language Institute, analysed Hebraic expressions in the 1739 Estonian translation of the Old Testament, which Martin Luther has considered necessary to germanise, and which can be divided into authentic direct Hebraic loans and linguistic loans presumably mediated through Latin. The author illustrated her presentation with good examples, for instance, the well-known Estonian expression *kellegi silmis hea* [*halb*, etc.] *olema* ‘to be good [bad, etc.] in someone’s mind’, which is a direct equivalent of the Hebraic idiom, but does not occur in the original Estonian or Finnish translations, nor in the Lutheran Bible. The phrase has even been deliberately omitted from the 1739 Estonian translation.

Then the floor was given to Leena Huima, doctorate student at the University of Helsinki, who started her presentation “Biblical Metaphors in the Political Rhetoric of Estonia and Finland” with the treatment of phraseologisms, arguing that the central feature of set phrases and idioms is opacity. The author analysed figurative expressions from the Old Testament that were used in the speeches of members of Estonian and Finnish parliaments during 1995-2002. The form of Estonian expressions is fixed and the meanings are opaque, whereas the form of Finnish expressions is open and the meanings are transparent. This difference can be explained by the political situation of the neighbouring countries in the past few decades.

Kõnekäänd ‘phrase’ has been a central research object of the group of paremiology of the literary museum since 1994. Three following presentations, which aimed to explicate the semantics of expressions, were based on the material of the extensive digital database of Estonian phrases and phraseologisms, compiled by the research group. Anneli Baran’s presentation “On the Figurative Lexica of Phraseological Compound Nouns” was concerned with the figurative aspect of compound nouns, namely, the semantic field of origin of the main components of phraseological compounds. Baran argued, and proved by extensive and interesting examples, that the source is usually another person, animal or other zoological creature, domestic paraphernalia (commodities, items of clothing, food).

Asta Õim’s presentation “Air and Metaphor” was largely based on the database material as well. The presentation introduced how Estonians conceptualise the word *õhk* ‘air’, which conceptual domains does *õhk* cover, how the semantic field of the word is transformed, and which attributes of air as a natural phenomenon are mapped onto different conceptual domains, and observed semantic transformation in set phrases on the lexical level.

Katre Õim’s presentation “On the Synonymic Relations of Estonian Similes Related to the Concept *kiiresti*” observed 158 similes, which are understood predominantly through metaphoric mappings, though the means of comparison may be often understood also through metonymic projection(s). Metaphoric sub-categories are covered by the basic level metaphor COMPLEX ABSTRACT SYS-

TEMS (a non-material domain of numerous complex interactive components).

The third section of the conference was reserved for practitioners – university professors, lexicographers and a language editor/journalist, whose occupation is also interrelated with phraseology. Helju Ridali discussed the semantics and symbolism of two basic colours – black and red – in German and Estonian set phrases in her presentation “On Colour Symbolism in German and Estonian Set Phrases”. She reached the conclusion that any symbolism, including colour symbolism is based on the long-term experience and worldview of people, the meaning of the symbols becomes clear in specific cultural contexts.

Rita Tasa delivered a captivating presentation “Differences and Similarities in Estonian and German Phraseology” and proved that German and Estonian phrases may coincide in meaning and in form; the formulation may be the same but the meaning different; and the formulation may be different and the meaning the same. Both languages include phraseologisms that are not present in the other language (e.g. there are no phraseologisms related to hunting in Estonians, also, expressions connected to the Martinmas and St. Catherine’s Day “mumming” are not known in German).

Enn Veldi, in his “Treatment of Idioms in English-Estonian Bilingual Dictionaries” observed the problems connected to the presentation of expressions in bilingual dictionaries, pointing out the most common mistakes in finding translation equivalents to idioms.

Helju Vals’s presentation “*Fraseoloogiasõnaraamat* and Practical Journalism” gave examples on the language use of journalists and public figures, which often consists of unidiomatic literal translations and foreign influences and where Estonian phrases are sometimes wrongly used.

The long conference day concluded with the presentation of ten popular books published by the research group of short stories in 2002-2003. The books were compiled by Anneli Baran, Anne Husar, Kalle Voolaid, Piret Voolaid, Asta Õim and Katre Õim, and deal with phrases, peripheral genres of riddles, proverbs and folk tales.

The books were edited by Asta Õim and Katre Õim, humorous cover design of most books was by Heiki Ernits.

The evening culminated with congratulating Asta Õim by his former and current colleagues from the Estonian Literary Museum, the Estonian Language Institute, the Estonian Mother Tongue Society, also the University of Tartu, the Tallinn Pedagogical University, etc. The organisation of the conference was supported by the Estonian Cultural Endowment Foundation, and private enterprises A. Le Coq and Du Nord.

Anneli Baran, Piret Voolaid

**VENEMAALE VEERENUD 'ROLLED TO RUSSIA':
THE DAY OF THE ESTONIANS
IN SIBERIA AND THE VOLGA REGION**

This day was held at the Estonian Literary Museum on November 22, 2003. I had fostered the idea of organising the day dedicated to the Estonians in Russia for some years. Folklorists have systematically collected the oral heritage of the Estonians in Russia, especially in Siberia, to the Estonian Folklore Archives on my initiative for more than ten years. 470 hours of audio recordings and 100 hours of video recordings, several thousands of photographs and thousands of manuscript pages and web pages on the subject have been stored in the archives, so there was plenty of material to exhibit. My idea was to organise the day in the Estonian Literary Museum, in the place where all this material is stored. The Estonian Cultural Endowment Foundation also helped to materialise the idea by endorsing the project "The Estonians, Who Have Returned from Russia: Collection of Heritage and Sharing Information Tartu". Thus, I was given the green light.

I knew that the number of Estonians, who were born and raised in the Estonian settlements in Russia and who have returned to Estonia after World War II, reaches to several thousands. Many of those who resettled in Estonia, first tried to hide their origin and made efforts to identify with the local population and only later realised how valuable is the direct knowledge of two cultures. The need to preserve and determine one's identity reawakened the annual regional reunions of Russian Estonians in Estonia. Due to the re-establishing of the Republic of Estonia and the strict visa regulations, their contacts with their country of birth have been scarcer, therefore the need to meet with friends and neighbours from their old homeland is even more urgent.

I had acquired some addresses of the Estonians, born in Russia, from the Estonian settlements from people who had searched for their ancestors' folklore in the Estonian Folklore Archives; in addition, I acquired some contacts on the events of the East-Estonian Society and from the lists of a regional reunion. During the second half of October and a part of November I made visits to the Estoni-



Photo 1. *The lecture day had much attendance. Photo by Alar Madisson, 2003.*

ans born in Russia, questioning them on migration stories, life in the village of birth, customs and traditions as well as about their return to Estonia: e.g. adaptation to the new situation, participation in family, village, etc. reunions. My most valuable finding, perhaps, was Artur Kergandi's work "The Formation and Destruction of Estono-Semenovka village", which was a well-written study based on the recollections of local villagers. A copy of the study is now stored in the Estonian Folklore Archives.

The information day was targeted to the Estonian immigrants in Russia and their descendants, and to others interested in settlements.

Since the expeditions of the Estonian Folklore Archives have been made mainly to the Estonian settlements in Siberia and the Volga region, then the event became to be called "Rolled to Russia: The Day of the Estonians in Siberia and the Volga Region". I sent out personal invitations on the addresses I had and promoted the event in media. I decided to visualise the material by displaying archive material and categorise the material by regions. I displayed manuscripts, handwritten song books, books and articles on settlements. I also categorised almost all the photographs pertaining to the sub-

ject by regions, to make them easily accessible. In the stairway gallery of the literary museum the exhibition “The Estonians of the Simbirsk *Guberniya*” compiled by the author and Kanni Labi was opened, displaying material on the Estonian communities of Smorodino and Shirok villages in present-day Ulyanovsk Oblast. The former is a Lutheran community; the latter are the sc. Sabbath keepers. Making the choice from the existing video material proved the most complicated, for there is plenty of unedited material, but little edited material and video clips.

The event was deliberately planned on a Saturday, so that working people would be able to attend. Even the retired people, who do not wish to travel long distances alone, often depend on the younger working generation. The first guest was reportedly present nearly three hours before the beginning of the event: having taken a later bus, she would not have made it to Tartu in time. Those, who arrived early, had a chance to view exhibition items. By the opening of the event at noon the hall was crowded. People came from different parts of Estonia – Tallinn, Harjumaa County, Virumaa County, but also from southern Estonia.

Presentations were delivered by the author, the chairman of the East-Estonians Society, ethnologist Aivar Jürgenson, and Artur Kergand. Video films on the life of the Siberian Estonians were watched during and after the presentations.

As the initiator and participator of the 1991–2002 Estonian Folklore Archives expeditions to Russia, I introduced the Estonian settlements in Russia today, i.e. the about 30 multiethnic communities with the population of 25–300 people, with a slideshow of 88 photographs. Of the many multiethnic villages, six were fully Estonian. The Estonian settlements of the Volga region had largely disappeared, except for some smaller Estonian communities. More Estonians could be found in larger centres or in the surrounding Russian villages.

Aivar Jürgenson’s closer acquaintance with the Estonians in Siberia began in 1996, when he took part in the Estonian Folklore Archives expedition. At the beginning of 2003 he defended a doctor’s thesis on the territoriality and identity of the Siberian Estonians. Then he moved on to introducing the Estonians in the Far-East.

The Estonians, who largely came from islands, settled on the Pacific coast and continued fishing in spite of the considerably differing conditions. In their new homeland the Estonians began letting out tracts of lands to the Chinese. The main cultural contacts of the Estonians on the Pacific coast were with the Chinese and Koreans. The natural conditions and sources of livelihood of the Estonians in the Far-East differed from the herding-tilling Estonians elsewhere in Siberia. Within 15 years the Estonian community there grew stronger. The establishment of fishing cooperatives, later also collective farms, destroyed the private households of the Estonians, the immigrants suffered heavily under repressions. Regardless of that the Estonian collective farm *Uus ilm* or *Novyi Mir* (in Russian) 'The New World' remained the wealthiest for many years. During the fall of the Soviet Union the economical situation in the Far-East was much better than in other regions of Russia. Even the language situation of the Estonians in the Far-East differs considerably from what happened in other Estonian settlements in Siberia: the relatively uncorrupted Estonian language of the older generation has often remained incomprehensible for the younger generation, since the transition to Russian has been very rapid.

Artur Kergand, a retired schoolteacher, who was born in Estono-Semenovka village in Siberia and is now living in Otepää, in southern Estonia, has written down the history of the village, based on the recollections and memories of his fellow villagers. He introduced his work, compiled during the past couple of decades, to the audience. The life and history of the villagers of Estono-Semenovka resembles that of other Estonians in Siberian villages: having overcome the hardships of migration, the Estonians struggled to get back on their feet, but soon they fell victim to repressions, wars and involuntary collectivisation. By the year 1980 the village had virtually disappeared. Former villagers erected a massive monument with the names of the first immigrants, the repressed and war casualties to the village cemetery. (The monument was reportedly inaugurated on St. John's Day in 1989.) The story is just a survived fragment of the history of settlements.

A request was made to everyone present to help to record the narrative history of the settlements. In the following weeks many people addressed me with a wish to share the stories from their villages. Some came alone, some in a group. Their help has enabled me to record hours of new material on the oral history of the Estonians in Siberia.

Anu Korb

THE GRAND OLD MAN OF ESTONIAN ETHNOLOGY: ANTS VIIRES 85

Before Christmas 2003, Ants Viires PhD. celebrated his 85 birthday. Ants Viires is, no doubt, the best-known Estonian ethnologist, whose academic achievements have attracted international acclaim and who has been indispensable in the last 50 years of Estonian ethnology.

The future ethnologist was born on December 23, 1918, in Tartu. There he attended primary and secondary school, which he graduated in 1937. Ants Viires was admitted to the University of Tartu in 1937, where he first focused on language studies. During the 1940s he turned his attention to ethnography.

Around this time A. Viires established contacts and began working at the Estonian National Museum, the central institution studying Estonian ethnology at the time. His interest towards the folk studies was largely motivated by Eerik Laid, Ilmar Talve, Helmut Hagar, his colleagues at the National Museum, with many of whom he retained friendly or academic relationships for decades.

Problematic political situation and the onset of the World War II had a bitter effect on the development of Estonian folk studies. Soviet authorities readily proscribed anything that even remotely had to do with nationalism. The name of the Estonian “National” Museum was replaced with a politically more neutral name, the State Museum of Ethnography, and the State Literary Museum was formed from one part of the former Estonian National Museum. From the academic viewpoint, this resulted in the separation of the study of material folk culture and the study of spiritual folk culture. The approaching frontier of the WW2 necessitated the evacuation of museum holdings. Ants Viires was actively involved in protecting the museum collection and in later re-evacuation activities.

During the tumultuous 1940s the loss of researchers was considerable: Ferdinand Linnus, the then head of the museum was arrested on false charges in 1941, and died in the POW camp a year later. In 1943 Ilmar Talve and the new head of the museum, Eerik Laid, fled to Finland. A year later Prof. Gustav Ränk, Helmut Hagar (MA) and Helmi Kurrik (MA) migrated to the West; for those who were left

behind this meant the growth of responsibility for preserving ethnological studies. During the years of tumult, 1994–1946, Ants Viires held a permanent position in the museum. He started with compiling new questionnaires to re-establish the network of correspondents. The museum work was difficult, but useful: many of his later monographs and articles were based on the materials of the Estonian National Museum archives.

Because of the war, Ants Viires graduated from the University of Tartu only in 1945, though with a versatile education: having completed courses in the Estonian language and literature,

ethnography and folklore proved useful in his later work and shaped a researcher who is familiar in both the material as well as the spiritual folk culture. The next year, having reached the position of academic secretary, Ants Viires left the Estonian National Museum and continued his studies in the university post-graduate program (the university was then called the Tartu State University). During his three years at the university, Ants Viires delivered numerous lectures on ethnography.

The war had passed, but the past kept reminding itself under the new ideological regime. The circle of the Estonian ethnologists who did not leave was severely diminished. The Estonian National Museum, the then centre of Estonian ethnology, was marked as the nest of bourgeois nationalists. Some ethnologists were fired; others were transferred to lower positions, yet others, among who was also Ants Viires (then MA), could not find work suitable for their qualifications. Moreover, Viires' record was not spotless enough for



Photo 1. *The best-known Estonian ethnologist Ants Viires. Photo from family collection.*

the Soviet officials. Mobilisation to the German army during the occupation period and working as an interpreter for some months in the German military pioneer unit was a blemish that could not be wiped away. Finding work in the specialised area proved impossible. Viires' employment history from this period includes random supernumerary jobs in various research institutions – as a technician-planner in the Elva trade association, as the teacher of Estonian and foreign languages and the director of studies at the Saku Research Institute of Agriculture during 1952–1956. His interest in science, however, did not diminish during these years of search. Ants Viires completed a groundbreaking study on the Estonian popular wood industry, which he later presented as his Ph.D. dissertation in history to the University of Tartu in 1955. This study on one of the most important areas of folk handiwork was later published and is still an important landmark in the Estonian ethnology.

In the meantime, the Soviet society had undergone slight changes (the sc. “Khrushchev’s thaw”), with some fresh ideas and loosening of the ideological control on the academic work, and the opening of new perspectives to those who had been kept from studying certain disciplines for political reasons. In the Tallinn Institute of History, Harri Moora, a clearheaded archaeologist had established a research group of ethnographers. Since the year 1956 Ants Viires' name can also be found in the payroll of the Institute of History. Ants Viires worked at the Institute of History for many decades, starting at the department of archaeology (since 1961 as a senior researcher), where he became the head of the ethnology group in 1968. In 1977 the then department of archaeology and ethnography was changed into an independent department of ethnography, with Ants Viires appointed as the temporary head of the department. In January 1978 the institute selection committee came together. Having considered the ideological argument ventured by the institute's party committee, according to whom Ants Viires was unsuitable for the position of the head of the department due to his activities in 1944 and low political activity (Ants Viires was not a member of the communist party), the committee decided not to recommend him as the head of the department of ethnography. An extract from the meeting's records wrote:

“We must not merely consider A. Viires' activities in the field, but also the different aspects of his personality. His activi-

ties in the academic sphere have been highly recognised. From this point of view, he would be a suitable candidate for the position. But other facts speak against A. Viires. His former affiliation with the police battalion, a part of SS, which, as is generally known, was declared a criminal organisation at the Nuremberg trials, does not enable him to be involved as a leader of the Soviet social studies.”

A member of another committee expressed his opinion that “*Presently, the general tendency in social studies is that heads of department should be members of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]*”. Ants Viires continued as the senior researcher at the department of cultural history and ethnology.

Dogs bark, but the caravan rolls on. Following the long years of discoveries, Ants Viires’ book *Talurahva veovahendid* [Folk Transport Vehicles] was published in 1980. Studying the issues of Estonian folk transport, Ants Viires decided to include the material of other Baltic countries as well. This led to a monograph, which conclusions and estimations have attracted international acclaim.

In the course of time the ideological oppression gradually weakened. In 1983 the research group of ethnology was founded at the department of cultural history and ethnography of the Institute of History, with Ants Viires as the head of the group. The same year he also became the head of the newly established independent department of ethnology. Ants Viires held the position until 1988, when he assumed the position of the senior research consultant.

In 1992 the institute structure underwent changes again: the department of ethnography was merged with the department of cultural history, which one subunit was the department of ethnology. The change had, therefore, also affected terminology – ‘ethnography’ was replaced by ‘ethnology’. Again, Ants Viires became the head of the department, who held the position up to the beginning of 1997.

A brief look into the service record of Ants Viires attests of the close interrelation of politics and academic work in the Soviet Union; however, it does not provide an overview of Ants Viires’ highly productive creative work. He is the author of many monographs:

Eesti rahvapärane puutööndus. Ajalooline ülevaade [Estonian Folk Woodwork. Historical Overview] (1960), *Puud ja inimesed* [Trees and People] (1975), *Talurahva veovahendid* [Folk Transport Vehicles] (1980), *Meie jõulude lugu* [The Story of Our Christmas] (2002). With H. Moora, he also co-authored the work *Abriss der estnischen Volkskunde* (1964). In 1995 the lexicon of Estonian folk culture *Eesti rahvakultuuri leksikon*, edited by A. Viires, was published, and in 1998 the collection *Eesti rahvakultuur* [Estonian Folk Culture], compiled by Ants Viires and Elle Vunder, was released. The latter work was awarded the 1998 Estonian National Book Award as the best book on history. Viires has also published numerous articles on Estonian folk culture and cultural studies, the comparative methods of studying the material culture of the European countries, etc. The list of his academic achievements is truly impressive, which due to the limitation of space cannot be published here. His best articles (*Kultuur ja traditsioon* [Culture and Tradition]) were published in the series *Eesti mõttelugu* [History of Estonian Thought] in 2001.

Ants Viires' impressive academic achievements have attracted wide international acclaim. *Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura* (1964) and *Kalevalaseura* (1965), *Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys* [Finnish Archaeological Society] (1970), *Suomen Kirjallisuuden Seura* [Finnish Literary Society] (1981) have invited him as external member. In 1982, Ants Viires became the honorary doctor of the University of Helsinki. He is also the external member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and the active member of the Royal Gustav Adolf Academy, the research centre of folk culture in Sweden.

In 1996 Ants Viires was awarded the Fourth Class Order of the National Coat of Arms of the Republic of Estonia for his excellence in promoting Estonian ethnology.

On the relatively one-sided field of Estonian ethnography, Ants Viires' activities stand out also because in his studies the spiritual and the material folk culture form a homogeneous entity. He has always viewed ethnography and folkloristics as neighbouring disciplines which should not be studied separately. *“Human thought and activity work together: this has to be remembered in studying human ac-*

tivities and its products”, argues he. It is regretful that during the Soviet period the two aspects of the same field were isolated, on the university level (in 1973 the ethnographers were merged with the faculty of history, while the folklorists were merged with the faculty of philology) as well as on the level of research institutions (ethnography became a branch of history), so that the point of contact of these two disciplines have remained superficial. This has resulted in one-sidedness and incompetence, which has been pointed out by many key figures of folk studies, Ants Viires among them. The criticism is surely justified.

Ants Viires’ contribution to promoting Estonian ethnology must not be undervalued. In 1998 the collection *Kultuuri mõista püüdes* [Trying to Understand Culture] dedicated to the 80th birthday of Ants Viires was published in the series *Scripta ethnologica*, vol. 3, of the Institute of History. The collection includes articles by various leading European and Estonian ethnologists-folklorists.

Five years later, on the winter equinox of 2003 the great hall of the Institute of History was filled with people from Estonia and abroad, who had gathered there for the conference *Kultuur ja traditsioon* [Culture and Tradition] dedicated to the 85th birthday of Ants Viires. Ea Jansen’s opening presentation dealt with the attitudes of the Estonian folk to nature. Jukka Pennanen from the University of Oulu discussed the fishing tradition in Quebec, the issue which he had addressed five years earlier in the publication dedicated to Ants Viires’ 80th birthday. Then the floor was given to Hanno Talving (Estonian Open Air Museum), who recounted how a farmhouse was added to the museum, using plenty of illustrative photo material. Jüri Viikberg from the Estonian Language Institute discussed the collection and research work in Estonian linguistics. The afternoon section, which was mainly reserved for the ethnologists-folklorists from Tartu, opened with an intriguing analysis of the past and present of Finnish ethnology by Pekka Leimu, professor of ethnology at the University of Turku, Finland. The following presentation was delivered by Pille Runnel, the academic director of the Estonian National Museum, who focused on the issues of preserving heritage in ethnology. Mare Kõiva’s presentation *Folklore Studies Revisited: 13 Years Later* was inspired by an article by Ants Viires, published in the early

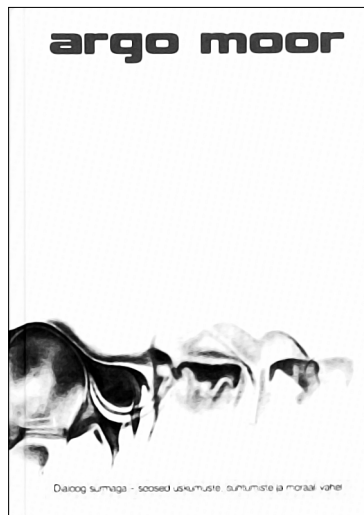
1990s, discussing topical issues in folkloristics. Art Leete, a senior researcher of the University of Tartu, discussed some aspects of field work in ethnology. The conference concluded with a speech by Ants Viires himself, who took a retrospective glance at his long academic career, followed by the congratulating of Ants Viires on his birthday with flowers and good wishes.

Aivar Jürgenson

ARGO MOOR'S DOCTOR'S THESIS IS A THANATOLOGICAL MONOGRAPH

Argo Moor. *Dialoog surmaga – seosed uskumuste, suhtumiste ja moraali vahel. Dialogue with Death: Relating Beliefs, Attitudes, and Ethics.* Supervisors Asser Murutar and Mare Kõiva, opponents Marju Kõivupuu and Toomas Liiv. Tartu: Elmatar 2003, 271 pp.

Argo Moor's dissertation "Dialogue with Death: Relating Beliefs, Attitudes, and Ethics" is a 271 pages long thanatological monograph, which is a unique study on the subject covering one of the most important aspect of human life, namely death. The author's contribution is significant: the treatise is logically structured and the conclusions presented are convincing and relevant. The author's forte is independent analysis and conceptualisation, and this is undoubtedly the most important requirement for a doctor's thesis. Argo Moor himself has described his work metaphorically: *The study is merely a long walk, in order to understand an inevitable and therefore an important aspect of human life – a man's relation to death* (p.7).



Moor has emphasised the ethical aspect of death. Methodologically the study is based on phenomenological approach, which is opposite to positivistic method. The study is interdisciplinary, touching upon ethnology, ethics, religion psychology, even sociology, and its main methods are: (i) logical analysis, (ii) comparison with the analogous material of other people and (iii) generalisation (see p. 11). For some reason the author has also mentioned contrasting as an applied method (p. 13), but it does not appear to be dominant, even though it has been said that it was used "fairly often". Of course, there is always argument about what can be called a method – various text-

books include longer or shorter lists on this. Although I have no objection to using generalisation as a method, it is still a question whether it can be considered one. The academicism of the study, however, is not flawless in every respect. On many occasions the author has presented an interesting set of facts without naming the sources. Consider, for example, page 93, where the personification of Death is discussed. The author has given an example of a motif in Sami beliefs, without making a reference to its origin. On the same page there is an example from the biography of Karl Ernst von Baer. Where does this example originate from? And on the very same page the author has mentioned Martin Shepard's work *Do-It-Yourself Psychotherapy*. But when was the book published? And so on. Or the claim: *Contemporary experiments in animal psychology have shown that differences between animals and humans are, perhaps, not that large any more. [---] There are a considerable number of documented cases, which would allow such speculations* (p 83).

And, I believe there are. But the references to studies on animal psychology are missing entirely in this dissertation; a vague reference has been made to two documentaries (without mentioning dates of release and other information).

Moor has used the works of many authors, which is also expected, but has done it in a disturbingly superficial manner, and, for some peculiar reason, seems to prefer material in the Estonian language. Moor has also used numerous foreign-language texts, though not enough. Let us consider, for example, Emmanuel Levinas, who seems to have been Moor's favourite author. Still, he has used only one text by E. Levinas, the one that has been translated into Estonian (*Eetika ja lõpmatus: Dialoogid Philippe Nemoga* (original *Ethique et infini: dialogues avec Philippe Nemo*), see *Akadeemia* 3, 1996 pp. 495-543). Emmanuel Levinas' texts in French and translations into Russian, English, etc. are easily available in Estonia. Moor's thesis should have relied on all the works by E. Levinas, as Levinas has written quite some things on the "dialogue" between a man and death.

Furthermore, Argo Moor has used numerous texts by Mircea Eliade, including those in foreign languages. This is commendable, though somewhat out of date.

Moor has also used “*unconditional love*” as a main concept in :“*the most appropriate psychological equivalent of religious experience would be unconditional love*” (p. 37). What would conditional love be like? But these are but few questions that arose in reading the thesis. Argo Moor’s monograph is an interesting read and meets all the requirements of a doctor’s dissertation.

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