

The participants of the conference had the opportunity to go on an excursion and visit some places of archaeological, religious and ethnographic interest. The group enjoyed the so-called *martinovanje* – the celebration of St Martin’s Day with a dinner in a vineyard cottage, listening to Slovenian folk songs and performing their own national songs in response.

The eighth conference of the SIEF WG “The Ritual Year” will be held in Plovdiv, Sofia, on June 26–29. The ninth conference will take place in Szeged (Hungary) and the tenth one in Innsbruck (Austria).

Irina Sedakova, Secretary of The Ritual Year SIEF Working Group,
leading research fellow, Institute for Slavic Studies,
Russian Academy of Sciences

Svetlana Sidneva, Docent of the Lomonosov Moscow State University

Notes

¹ On the Sixth Conference of The Ritual Year WG see: Irina Sedakova. *The Inner and the Outer in the Ritual Year: Traditions and Today*. Folklore, Vol. 46, Tartu.

² Information on this Institute see at: <http://isn.zrc-sazu.si/>.

³ Walton, Kendall Lewis. *Mimesis as Make-Believe: on the Foundations of Representational Arts*. Harvard University Press, 1990.

⁴ More on this see: <http://www.hogmanay.net/events/scotland/burghead>.

⁵ Winnicot, Donald Woods. *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock, 1971.

⁶ Butler, Jennifer (ed.). *Gender. The Ritual Year 4 & Cosmos*. Edinburgh, 2011.

⁷ Kõiva, Mare (ed.). *The Inner and the Outer. The Ritual Year 6*. Tartu, 2011.

ESTONIAN FOLKLORISTS’ 7TH WINTER CONFERENCE

On February 2–3, 2012, the 7th folklorists’ winter conference was held on Rogosi manor, Võru County, South Estonia. The conference was dedicated to the 75th jubilee of our colleague Mall Hiiemäe, who still pursues her research on the topics of traditional place knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and narratives.

Presentations inspired by nature and place folklore continued throughout two long working days. The place lore working group of the Estonian Folklore Archives – the organiser of the 2012 winter conference – involved the audience in the discussion about the meanings of tradition in the dialogue between Man and landscape.

One of the aspects that several papers were focused on was place names and their accompanying narratives. In her paper ‘Landscape Elements in Place Name Creation’



Participants of the 7th folklorists' winter conference. Photo by Aado Lintrop 2012.

Mall Hiimäe herself discussed small local events, which were given the form of short stories and fixed in the users' memories with (micro)toponyms. According to her, this simple generation mechanism proceeds from everyday needs and mediates information about landscape signs, which become symbolic in the course of customary actions. Reet Hiimäe provided a retrospective study of classical plague legends ('Päinurme, Pätsavere, Suureluige and Lustivere. Place Specifications in Plague Tradition'). The speaker drew an interesting conclusion that the positioning of the itinerary of the mythological disease spirit makes the "movement" of the illness somewhat more predictable and therefore subject to certain control. Urmas Kalla and Mariko Faster from the Võru Institute participated with their presentations in the field of place names. Urmas Kalla's paper dealt with the toponyms and related narratives from Võnnu parish. On the example of the Suursoo region of the River Emajõgi, the speaker presented the possible relations between places, narratives and place names at a certain moment, summarising it as a paradox: in a certain sense, the "lost" places still exist due to the name system, which helps us remember them. Mariko Faster, whose paper was entitled 'Woman in South Estonian Place Names', claimed that although the database of Võrumaa place names contains only 2% of toponyms referring to the female sex, it includes interesting layers such as the names of female saints, references to sacrificial springs and eloquent connections, for example in the case of the *mõrsja*(bride)-particle in place names. Naming and names were also in the focus of cultural geographer Taavi Pae's paper. He has discovered about thirty cases of unofficial, tourism-related or fictional place names, such as *Eestimaa Šveits* (Estonian Switzerland), *Setumaa Sahara* (the Sahara of Setumaa County), *Emajõe Ateena* (Athens on the River Emajõgi), *Eesti Donbass* (Estonian Donbas), which have been formed on the basis of more widely known geographical locations.

The papers delivered by Mare Kõiva, Mare Kalda and Mari Sarv explored the relations of place lore and how it functioned in a certain region. Mare Kõiva ('Castle of

Paalalinn with and without a Map') and Mari Sarv ('Who Planted this Oak-Tree?') represented the auto-ethnographic perspective at the conference, analysing the places and narratives with which they have personal emotional relations. M. Kõiva discussed on the basis of Põltsamaa narratives how stories about immuring, treasures in the castle basement, underground tunnels and torture chambers reflect in people's undertakings, and positioned the corresponding database on the imaginary line of tradition. M. Sarv concentrated her attention on home lore in Kullamaa commune, speaking about how the narratives of generations continue in certain cases, depending on the influence of the surroundings. Mare Kalda in her paper 'From an Article to a Research. Invisible Place Narratives in East-Viru County' introduced on the basis of selected examples the development features of place lore in East-Viru County. The places and place narratives here have been influenced by two opposites – change (mines and other industrial areas) and permanence (primeval forests and mires) – more clearly than in other regions.

Triin Kusmin from the State Forest Management Centre dwelled upon place lore in a somewhat wider, traditional culture context in connection with an extensive project of mapping and data concentration and the promotion of the objects of traditional culture. Due to the extremely dedicated activity of local investors, a free access database with the descriptions of up to 35,000 landscape objects was completed in the map server of the Estonian Land Board. A month after the conference, Triin Kusmin's activity in the recording of tradition won the folklore prize of the President of Estonia, a national award to recognise the correspondents of the Estonian Folklore Archives.

The paper delivered by Jüri Metssalu, the main organiser of the conference, also focused on place lore, more precisely, the issues related to the holy springs in Juuru parish. The speaker was of the opinion that, although landscapes change, the landscape pattern has generally remained the same; Juuru springs have provided villages with drinking water already from time immemorial. Research has revealed some regularities in the location of holy places: they are usually situated on the borderline of the cultivated land and wilderness (with the exception of holy groves in bogs).

Ergo-Hart Västriik's and Aado Lintrop's research topics proceeded from religious practices. E.-H. Västriik ('Stones and Stone Heaps in Votic Religion') presented data about the Votes' respective attitude towards trees and stones and characterised the corresponding rituals and their descriptions in their historical context (performances at sacrificial stones on church holidays and in Ukkola forest during village festivities). A. Lintrop ('Finno-Ugric Sacred Places') defined a sacred place as an intentionally organised distinct space as opposed to the differently valued surroundings. Withdrawing in circles from the hearth as the centre of the universe, the listeners participated in an imaginary journey in order to understand the traditional space structure of the Udmurt, but also the Mansi and Khanty peoples. Both human beings and supernatural creatures had their own spheres of influence, and people knew how to ward off alien border crossings. The common sacred places of the whole village were usually situated in the transition area between the village and its farther surroundings.

Semiotician Eva Väljaots used more general categories of perception in her paper entitled 'Perception of Natural Environment by the Example of the Forest and the Sea'. Place narratives enable us to study perceptive experience, as they include both the experience related to staying in a place and its interpretation. E. Väljaots also used the concepts of the border and space structure: in the case of the sea she emphasised the

meaningfulness of the horizon and the waterline, in the case of the forest – the vertical openings, but also the existence of the depth and the edge. In both environments supernatural creatures and phenomena are a part of our perceptive experience.

Risto Järv's and Sille Kapper's papers dealt with teaching practices and looked for solutions to the problems of terminology creation and continuity in respective fields. S. Kapper ('Conceptualisation and Location-Coherence of Traditional Dance') clearly differentiated between the traditional dance and standardised stage style. She raised an interesting issue concerned with the relations of the traditional dance with the places where these dances are popular. R. Järv in his paper 'Weighing Legends and Lore' voiced a serious concern of the investigators of folk narratives about which term should be used when talking about folk legends. The artificial term *muistend* has not been adopted into everyday use. However, as was emphasised in the comments from the audience, the conformity of terminology to common usage should not be an aim in itself, as the etic (researcher) and emic (lore group) concept systems are different.

Applied linguist Pille Arnek demonstrated examples of marking methods in a distinct context of language use. Her paper 'Estonian Inscriptions on the Gravestones of 19th-Century North Estonia' explained that usually the person's name, age and date of death were inscribed on the gravestone; later on age was replaced by date of birth and some other abbreviational forms were added. Kadri Tüür with her topic 'Fish Folklore and Lake Lore in Estonian Nature Writing' added analytical diversity to the event. The researcher shared with the audience her observations about folklore narratives in nature writings, which either enliven the descriptions based on scientific facts or help to balance the poetic style. Herbal knowledge and use of herbs in folk medicine was in the centre of attention in Renata Sõukand and Raivo Kalle's research. Ülle Sillasoo was inspired by the depiction of plants and animals in the scenes of the sufferings of Christ, and she concluded that plants and animals in paintings emphasised Christ's blood, death and ascension as well as the fight between Good and Evil.

The first conference day concluded with the presentation of two recent publications: Mari-Ann Rimmel's "Päritud paigad. Kohajutte ja legende Rae vallast" ('Inherited Places. Place Narratives and Legends from Rae Commune'), and Anu Korb and Andreas Kalkun's "Siberi setode laulud" ('Songs of Siberian Setos'), which offers a possibility to listen and sing along. The working group of the Estonian Folklore Archives introduced their sphere of work through a slide programme. On their way home the participants of the conference witnessed an unprecedented experiment: despite the temperatures of -30°C , some young archaeologists were trying out the olden way of life in a Viking Age house at Rõuge (for more on the experiment, see: <http://www.muinasmaja.edicypages.com/blog>).

The 7th folklorists' winter conference was a successful and worthy event, and the participants expressed their gratitude towards the organisers Jüri Metssalu, Mari-Ann Rimmel, Kaisa Kulasalu, Pille Vahtmäe and Valdo Valper, as well as the team of assistants (Maarja Aigro, Risto Järv, Annika Kupits, Pille Niin). The conference was supported by AS Hallik from Tamsalu and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia.

The abstracts (printed version financed by Jaan Metssalu) are available at <http://www.folklore.ee/era/tk2012/TK12teesid.pdf>.

Mare Kalda