

### **P206. Be-longing: ethnographic explorations of self and place.**

Coexistence of belonging and longing was one of the permeating themes in this panel. The focus was also on narratives and construction of places in the course of social interaction: how are people affected by the stories associated with different places, and how do these narratives mould their attitude towards the surroundings? How do people position themselves somewhere, merging the memories of the past, activities of the present, and the longing projected towards the future? The presentations also touched upon the role of the already non-existent places, imagined places and virtual places in people's lives. As in the previous panel, the papers mainly observed the recent migrants, yet this time mostly in Eastern rather than Southern Europe. The main issue was centred on the changing meaning of home, and discussion about the possibility of return. When do relationships with home alter to such an extent that return is no longer conceivable? How do people maintain contact with their old homeland when going back is not possible? The means for preserving these ties are not necessarily modern: **Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj** referred to cases of having seen one's home in a dream. Likewise, in the panel on the day before, mention was made of a woman who had climbed a high mountain to be "in contact" with her son living on the other side of the world. All presentations were based on ethnographic fieldwork or life histories. One worthwhile to be mentioned was the research by **Petri Hautaniemi** who studied the second generation of Somalians in Finland – the author has had contacts with these men, currently in their thirties, since the beginning of the 1990s – having the opportunity to observe them growing up as adults in the diaspora. Transnational identity has not always been perceived positively; it is of great significance in this context whether the person has been forced to move or has instead gone voluntarily (in this case the term "mobility" is used). Such mobility was represented by German-speaking pensioners – studied by **Martina Kleinert** – whose lifestyle was to cruise on yachts in the vicinity of New Zealand. This was a very interesting example of how the feeling of home and locality is being created when the person is *settling in motion*, i.e. constantly moving from one place to another, without any intention to stay somewhere permanently.

Pihla Siim

### **TAKING MALTA OUT OF THE BOX**

The second interdisciplinary Island Dynamics Conference took place in Valletta, capital of Malta, on May 11–15, 2011. The conference was dedicated to the memory of recently departed Maltese folklorist G. Mifsud-Chircop. The main organiser and island research network leader Adam Grydehøj (Aberdeen University) was proud to present more than a hundred lectures from scholars representing 39 countries. The scope of research topics ranged widely – from archaeology to folkloristics, from history to economics, from musical studies to anthropology. The conference keynote speeches, delivered by David Lowenthal, Godfrey Baldacchino and Henry Glassie were colourful

and well illustrated generalisations from outstanding researchers of their fields sharing their experiences.

Naturally, one of the focal points of the conference centred around the aspects of Maltese cultural life, tourism and economy. Isabelle Calleja Ragonesi, (University of Malta), discussed the linguistic skills of the Maltese people and predicted points of danger for the island's language usage. Malta has two official languages – Maltese and English. As she pointed out, the claim of perfect and equal bilingualism is a myth since users of one or either language lack a deep level of language skills. English also constrains Maltese in areas of fast innovation and change.

Another focal point of the conference was related to the structure of tourism, highlighting the many similarities in different regions of the world. Voon Chin Phua (Gettysburg College, USA) analysed long-term changes in a privately operated theme park of traditional Chinese culture – the park, popular in Singapore for decades, quickly lost its visitors after American-style changes and ticket price increase. Many papers were dedicated to the unique culture of specific islands, including discussions of why they have applied for UNESCO protection. That was the angle Felicite Fairer-Wessels (University of Pretoria, South Africa) used to broach the history of the small island of Robben off the southern end of the African continent. For centuries, the Robben Island had been a destination for deportations, but today the island and its prison milieu is part of the tourism industry.

Political and multiple era-encompassing problems, including expressions of identity and humanity, were the subject of numerous papers. For example, renowned American Italian folklore researcher Luisa Del Giudice (independent researcher, USA) talked about the Los Angeles city food programme for the poor where St. Joseph's Day is celebrated by filling the so-called Sicilian St. Joseph tables.

Overall, a number of impressive projects and discoveries were presented at the conference. For me, two from the archaeology section were most outstanding. Marie-Yvane Daire (Rennes University, France) introduced an international interdisciplinary research project concerning the Groix island, involving archaeologists, geologists and cartographers. Archaeological digging is accompanied by measuring GPS coordinates of historical monuments, thus creating map layers for the island and neighbourhood in different eras, which is further compared to geological data and results from laboratory analyses.

The Groix Island, 15 sq km, is 11 km off the coast. Today, its population of 2200 make their living from fishing and tourism. The project observes and reconstructs the long history of the island – from prehistoric times up to the middle ages. The original settlers of the island (500 000–300 000 BC, the Paleolithic era) erected monuments and used stone objects. The Mesolithic (8000–5000 BC) is characterised by the many small stone objects from the time, the Neolithic (5000–2000 BC) and Bronze era (2000–800 BC) are characterised by various megaliths, menhirs and dolmens. Innovation is best seen in ceramic tableware (Neolithic, 3500–3200 BC, decorated clay pottery) and architecture. In the Iron Age (800–20 BC) the main economic trade was in salt production. Accordingly, new settlements arose in sites where seawater was turned into salt, but also the first fortified settlements come from that time. During the Roman period (20 BC – 500 AD) settlement types and locations changed yet again, everyday objects were made mostly of metal and bone, but the most important legacy of the era was the establishment of the Lacarna harbour. From the Middle Ages (5–15 c. AD), the Groix

Island features Viking burials, including Viking boat burials; warring apparel changes, including the developed forged metal parts. An important new line is the establishment of monasteries, which in turn influences fishing routes and the importance of fish as a food source.

The paper very aptly demonstrated on maps how settlements evolve – they are established and abandoned according to changes in economy and lifestyle. Changes in nature and usage of natural resources are limited by the island's limited resources. Production also meant adaptation to limited resources. We can also see more open and closed eras in the history of the island, when cultural and economic contacts with the continent are either important or shunned. Archaeology was an important source for constructing the lifestyle and influences in the island dwellers' life.

A comparison of ritual sites and memorials on the Easter Island, Pohnpei and Society Islands, presented by Reidar Solsvik (Kon Tiki Museum, Norway), demonstrated the role of archaeology in reconstructing the cultural pictures. Easter Island, with its mysterious monuments, has been a source of endless speculation for more than a century. Reidar Solsvik outlined the power relations and ritual needs necessary for erecting the monuments. Once again, the limited resources of an island were discussed, how they determine or even end a certain cultural phenomena. Thus it happened on two out of three volcanic islands, first established in 700–1000 AD, that it took a few hundred years before stone monuments were erected, coinciding with the time of cutting down the forest, and the settlements collapsed around 1550–1650. The Easter Island monuments, *moais*, are located on a special platform, which originally functioned as a temple and which later became part of the funeral complex. A total of approximately one thousand figures, one to ten metres high, some of them only roughly finished, were erected during 1300–1650. Similar temples on Society Island, with large monoliths and small figures, were established in 1300–1800. Exceptional is the island of Pohnpei where more than a hundred small artificial islands were created for temples – people first settled in 2000 BC and the last monuments were erected in 400 BC. Nan Mado was an important religious and political centre where architecture accommodated for both death culture and festivities.

R. Solsvik emphasised that the largest changes took place within a short time period, approximately 400–600 years. In Austronesian culture, high status architecture was related to ancestor cult and memorisation, expressed in monoliths and stone sculptures created by a small society. In the end, several things coincided, leading to the depletion of the potential and resources of the societies that created this wonderful culture.

Each paper of this content-filled and multi-aspect conference was a filigraided presentation of novel results or long-term studies. Most of these papers will be published as articles available to the general public. However, those interested in island cultures might want to go and have a look at the portal dedicated to island studies – information about upcoming events, island life news from all over the world, a blog and references to scientific publications. The site <http://www.islanddynamics.org> was created by Adam Grydehøj.

Estonian representatives Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov were supported by the Estonian Cultural Endowment and ESF grant no. 8137.

Mare Kõiva