

NEWS IN BRIEF

FIRST MEETING OF ETHNOBIOLOGISTS WORKING IN EASTERN EUROPE – PADISE, ESTONIA

The International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE) regional ethnobiology workshop “Old treasures in the new Europe: the future of ethnobiology in the East and Far East” was held in Kallaste tourist farm, Padise, Harjumaa, Estonia, October 15–17, 2010. The workshop reflected a special emphasis on the ethnobiology of the former communist Eurasia. Participating scholars were mostly conducting research in Eastern Europe and its border areas. The idea of the workshop was to share an overview of the current ethnobiological research in the region, and to establish an interdisciplinary research network that may in the future lead to joint research, publications and projects. The broader purpose was to get to know each other, and to find overlapping points in our research, that might open more possibilities for future cooperation.

First evening was dedicated to getting acquainted with each other, as most of the participants met for the first time. Also, the social program included watching the “Keeper of Seven Powers” made by Estonian filmmaker Rein Maran and a short discussion on the film. The most memorable part of the evening was visit to sauna, introduced and guided by Jan Seepter. Most of the attendees had never experienced sauna, and even some local participants mentioned, that the experience they got attending sauna after Jan’s lecture was much deeper than the ones experienced so far. Until the end of the seminar, sauna was an every evening event enjoyed by all participants.

Most of the presentations were concerned with plants and their use for multiple purposes, showing that most sustainable part of Eastern-European ethnobiology is covered by ethnobotany. The working part of the meeting was opened by the main initiator of the workshop, Andrea Pieroni (Italy), who said a few words about the purpose of the meeting and presented an overview of ethnobiology in the Central Mediterranean and the Alps. Renata Sõukand (Estonia) talked about her research on patterns of Estonian herbal knowledge, stressing the concept of herbal landscape. Ingvar Svanberg’s (Sweden) presentation concentrated on history and methods in ethnobiology. Valeria Kolosova (Russia) presented her research in the ethnolinguistics and geography-linguistics of Russian dialects, and Daiva Šešuskaite (Lithuania) gave an overview of ethnobiology in Lithuania compared with Europe. The first session was ended by Mare Kõiva (Estonia), introducing zoofolkloristics and her research on human-animal relations. In the second section Łukasz Łuczaj (Poland) gave an overview of the use of wild plants in Eastern Europe, with the main emphasis on Poland. Zsolt Molnár’s (Hungary) presentation on ethnogeobotanical studies in Hungary was followed by Anna Varga’s (Hungary) overview of the ethnobiology of used and abandoned wooded pastures in the Carpathian Basins. Aleksandra Ippolitova (Russia) presented her research on ethnobotany and plant lore in Russian herbal manuscripts, and Ülle Sillasoo (Estonia) gave an introduction to the archeobotanical approach to late Medieval religious art. In the afternoon session Iwona Kołodziejska-Degórska (Poland) introduced

her concept of mental herbaria, and Raivo Kalle (Estonia) talked about the landscape and medicinal plants. Martin Eessalu (Estonia) gave some insight into a methodological approach to most of the abstract categories of living nature in Estonia, Andres Kuperjanov (Estonia) presented animal-related Estonian astronymes and Aivar Jürgenson (Estonia) introduced the perception of mushrooms in Estonian culture. In the last session Monika Kujawska (Poland) talked about the ethnomedicine of Polish immigrants, Lisa Steker (Russia/Germany) introduced her research on wild plants in Eastern-Siberia and agrobiodiversity in Germany, and Aleksandra Anryka (Poland) gave some insight into the vegetation in rustic gardens. Zbynek Polesny (Czech Republic) introduced the ethnobotanical research of his group on agrobiodiversity use and management in traditional agriculture, and Marianna Teräväinen (Finland) ended the long day of presentations with a speech on ethnoentomology. The hard-working day was summed up by international evening program, performed by participants themselves: Daiva, Molnar and Martin. The concert was wonderful and relaxing.

The second day of the meeting was dedicated to facilitated brainstorming, clustering, and discussion about ethnobiological topics perceived to be the most crucial in Eastern Europe. Finally, we designed a concrete action plan for collaborations: several common papers on cross-cultural comparisons, exchanges between institutes, etc. Among other subject, the agreement was made, that the joint research themes would cover comparative forestry, agriculture, one-plant comparative study, cross-cultural



*The participants of the workshop made a short visit to Padise monastery.
Photo by Andres Kuperjanov 2010.*

studies and European content fieldworks. The need for mailing list, electronic directory of research centers and researchers in ethnobiology, library collections and joint grant proposals, as well as next workshop stressing comparative methods was outlined and tasks assigned to ones responsible for each step. As a step for popularizing ethnobiology as science, several concrete books were proposed: one on children toys, one about plant mythology, barely covered so far, a book on the ethnobotany in Eastern-Europe and the encyclopedia on European folk medicine.

The participants of the workshop made a short visit to Padise monastery, contrasting with the next day fieldtrip to the Open Air Museum (guided by the researchers Anneli Banner and Maret Tamjärv). Although the weather was quite cold, the participants had a chance to taste some late berries in the forest on their way to Padise monastery and to make a short stay at the wooden meadow that happened to be on our way from Padise to Tallinn.

Abstracts and presentations of the lectures held at the meeting, as well as photos of the workshop are available online: <http://www.folklore.ee/~renata/workshop/default.htm>. The workshop was supported by the Cultural Endowment of Estonia. Great thanks to Matt Herman for the design of the web page and to Andres Kuperjanov for taking care of the presentation equipment.

The second ISE regional Eastern-European workshop was held in Királyrét, Hungary, October 14–17, 2011. The overview of the workshop by Anna Varga and Zsolt Molnár is available at <http://ethnobiology.net/conference-and-workshop-reports-2/#EEE2>.

Renata Sõukand

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PAREMIOLOGY IN PARIS

The international conference of paremiology “All Roads lead to Paris Diderot” / Colloque Parémiologie “Tous les chemins mènent à Paris Diderot” took place this summer from the 29th of June until the 2nd of July 2011 in Paris in Diderot University. The event was organised by the language faculty (UFR d’Études Interculturelles de Langues Appliquées) of Diderot University represented by Jean-Philippe Zouogbo in cooperation with the phraseology researchers’ association Europhras.

It can be stated that this was the first grandiose and extensive conference of phraseology researchers. There were 120 participants from all Europe, Asia, Africa and North and South America. (More details can be found on the homepage <http://www.eila.univ-paris-diderot.fr/recherche/clillac/paremiologie2011/index.>)