

## ESTONIAN FOLKLORISTS' 8TH WINTER CONFERENCE

On February 28 and March 1, 2013, the Centre for Landscape and Culture at the Estonian Institute of Humanities, the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory and the Academic Folklore Society organised a conference at Tallinn University, under the heading "Folklore in Town and about Town". The conference mainly focused on urban folklore, although some adjacent topics and folklore forms were also discussed, including the Internet, which has recently been used as an efficient source of folklore.

Ehte Järv and Pille Runnel (Estonian National Museum) in their presentation "Schoolchildren's Narratives about Urban Experience – Mapping of a Research Project" dwelt upon the results of a children's essay and drawing contest "Me in Town". On the one hand, the topic of "own places" described at the contest demonstrates children's possibilities to contribute to the usage of urban space; on the other, the places described by them are associated with place lore.

Piret Voolaid (Estonian Literary Museum) in her paper "Add it to Your Status and Learn What People Think about You! Age Group Identity Creation on the Example of Facebook Chain Posts" discussed the content and form of 10–12-year-old girls' chain posts, categorising them by topics (friendship, family and home, school, pets, social events, etc.). The genre similar to chain letters and personal poem collections known from earlier tradition supports the pre-teens' individual self-quests and evolution of social skills and provides the researcher with essential information about the era, environment, culture and young people's understanding of the world.

Eda Kalmre's (Estonian Literary Museum) presentation "Baby Carrots and Salad Rinsing – Commercial Legends and Rumours in Estonian Consumer Society" addressed the origin and evolution of two rumour cycles that recently spread in Estonia. In the autumn of 2009, a hearsay started to be disseminated both in social networks and later on also in the media about supermarkets selling stale salads, from which the old salad dressing had been rinsed out and replaced by fresh one. Although the concrete rumour is of Estonian origin, these stories are universal and are based on people's fears of novel or unfamiliar products, ignoring of cleanliness, domineering and conspiracies of large companies or ethnic groups.

Ell Vahtramäe (Estonian Agricultural Museum) in her presentation "Urban Agriculture on the Internet" discussed how Facebook reflects rural environment. The speaker was of the opinion that agricultural themes were not very popular and the posts mainly concerned general topics.

Jaanika Hunt (Estonian Literary Museum, Tallinn University) in her presentation "Grief Darned on the Body. Memorial Tattoos" spoke about immortalising grief on the body. Earlier on, people in North America and Polynesia believed that tattoos helped them to better orientate in the afterworld. Today, due to the Internet and cultural unification, this body marking method has acquired the function of mourning and commemorating. This kind of body decoration as well as virtual memorial places notify us about changes in mourning traditions.

Stereotypes in a wider and narrower sense were the topic of Elo-Hanna Seljamaa's (University of Tartu) paper "Why Not Study Lasnamäe?" This is a district in Tallinn that for many bears relation to Russians. In the course of her one and a half years of fieldwork, the speaker reached the conclusion that Lasnamäe is both an ordinary urban

district and also a figure of speech, an epithet and a metaphor, which different actors use to position themselves and others as well as to criticise the current circumstances.

Sille Kapper's (Tallinn University) presentation "Peasants' Dance Tradition in the 21st-Century City" discussed dance as a part of urban folklore, which varies both in primary and secondary contexts. Dance variations result from the dancers' different objectives, incompleteness of verbal dance descriptions, and also the era.

Tiiu Jaago (University of Tartu) in her paper "Town in Older Folksong (Historic Viewpoint)" described different attitudes towards town in runo songs. On the one hand, town in folksongs is associated with positivity: this is where trade and wealth are; on the other hand, town is seen as an immoral place inhabited by promiscuous women.

Aado Lintrop (Estonian Literary Museum) in his paper "Gate Games One Way or Another" talked about Old Town Days in Tallinn and cultural loans. No cultural loan emerges from an empty space; there is always some kind of background that enables to borrow. When initiating a new ritual, we often refer to "old Estonian tradition", which does not necessarily have associations with the former. For instance, in the case of the well-known gate game and the cultural undertaking with the same name, we can talk about conscious context creation.

Mall Hiiemäe (Estonian Literary Museum) in her paper "About the Public Christmas Tree as a Ritual Object" discussed the evolution of Christmas tree tradition. Already as early as in the 16th century, descriptions of Christmas and Shrovetide celebrations at the Blackheads Gild mention a tradition of setting up a conifer in the market square in Riga and Tallinn. The tradition of the Christian Christmas tree is associated with the city of Strasbourg, dating back to 1605. The custom became established in the 18th century, and in Estonian and German urban families Christmas celebration and gift-giving started in the 19th century. In Estonia, the tradition of setting up a public tree was revived in 1930.

A peculiar tradition in the Europe of medieval and early modern ages was the topic of Marju Kõivupuu's (Tallinn University) presentation "Magic of Early Modern Ages in Town: Cat as a Sacrificial Animal in Building". Decades ago, a cat mummy dating back to the 18th century was found in a house in Town Hall Square in Tallinn. The speaker explained the background of this weird finding. It was probably a case of protective magic, which had reached Estonia from Germany and was supposed to diminish the number of rats, which devoured grain and spread plague.

Mare Kõiva and Liisa Vesik (Estonian Literary Museum) in their joint presentation "Europe from Estonians' Viewpoint 2. Ethnic Stereotypes as YouTube Clips" dealt with the internet clip "YUROP According to Estonians!", which by its essence is a set of nations' visualised stereotypes.

Inge Annom