

TALKING ABOUT PROVERBS: THE 9TH INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM ON PROVERBS IN TAVIRA, PORTUGAL

In 2015, Tavira, in southern Portugal, hosted already the 9th Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs. As usual, it took place in the first week of November, this time on November 1–8. The economic crisis has not passed Tavira without changes, which was also visible in the organisational side of the colloquium. The hotel that had kindly supported the colloquium for eight times, accommodating the participants, had been closed down. Moreover, as it was pouring with rain, the southern Algarve was hit by so heavy floods that the folklore group from Olhão could not make it to Tavira. However, we counted on Saint Martin's summer, as it is said that "Saint Martin's summer lasts three days and a little bit more". And it was just what happened.

This year the colloquium honoured the memory of Spanish paremiologist José de Jaime Gómez (1921–2014), who had started collecting proverbs and sayings among peasants in his home village. He pursued his interest and acquainted himself with the old collections in libraries all over the country. As many other paremiologists before and after him, he had a huge number of cards telling the origin and age of proverbs. When teaching natural sciences at various schools, he made good use of the proverbs. This time one of the invited speakers was the son of José de Jaime Gómez, José María de Jaime Lorén, from Valencia, Spain. His first address was his father's work and the second one discussed the combination of computers and proverbial expressions.

It is difficult to highlight any of the papers as the most interesting ones. This year, among key notes was Harald Gaski from the University of Tromsø, Norway, who talked about Sámi proverbs. During the years of colloquiums it has happened only twice – in 2007 and in 2014 – that this topic has not been touched upon. Another not so extensively covered topic came from Albania. Ylljet Aliçka and Bisej Kapo from the European University of Tirana, Albania, made a presentation about the use of proverbs as tools of political rhetoric. Especially interesting were proverbs as slogans on hillsides and mountain slopes, written by university students with white stones.

Every year we have had the opportunity to listen to papers on all kinds of subjects related to proverbs as the colloquiums do not have any special theme for annual meetings. Among them are papers in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, including examples of proverbs most often in the mother tongue of the speaker. However, academic papers are usually in English. The titles of formerly published articles can be found at http://www.folklore.ee/ri/fo/koostoo/tavira/index_e.html.

Alongside the colloquium with presentations and discussions, the time before and after these hours is of great importance. It is like continuation of meetings in the form of tours. This year we visited one of the coastal towns, Olhão, where we were treated to very typical Mediterranean sea food – various kinds of grilled fishes. The other excursion was to the mountains of Alte–Loulé. In both resorts we acquainted ourselves with local habits, traditions, and friendly people.



*Participants of the conference on an excursion in the municipality of Loulé, Algarve region.
Photograph by Erkki Herranen 2015.*

The event was organised by the Associação Internacional de Paremiology (AIP) – International Association of Proverbs (IAP) (<http://www.aip-iap.org/en>). Besides the annual international colloquium, the association organises various events focusing on paremiology and other facets of Portuguese cultural heritage for the general public during the whole year. In 2015 the main interest of the association was Mediterranean diet, which UNESCO has inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/8.COM/8.10>) for Portugal, along with Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Morocco.

The next colloquium will be the 10th in order, held on November 6–10, 2016 (see <http://www.colloquium-proverbs.org/icp/en/>). This means that it is appropriate to expect that it will be an anniversary colloquium with a sense of celebration in the air.

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