



HISTORICAL APPROACHES IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH FIELD: MAKING CONNECTIONS

**Meeting of the SIEF working group of historical approaches
in cultural analysis**

Tartu 2018

SIEF working group of historical
approaches in cultural analysis

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore
of the University of Tartu

Department of Folkloristics
of Estonian Literary Museum

Academic Folklore Society

Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies

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August 29–31, 2018
Estonian Literary Museum
Abstracts

Tartu 2018

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Language editor: Tyce Shideler (Heidelberg University)
Cover: Andres Kuperjanov (Estonian Literary Museum)
Layout: Maarja Roosi (University of Tartu)
Cover photo: Andres Kuperjanov

The meeting is organized by SIEF working group of historical approaches in cultural analysis, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore of the University of Tartu, Department of Folkloristics of Estonian Literary Museum, Academic Folklore Society and Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies.

The conference is supported by European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, ASTRA project (EKM-DHUM), Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES), Estonian Research Council (through the research funding projects IUT22-5 and IUT2-43) and Estonian Cultural Endowment.

Printed by University of Tartu multimedia unit

Published by Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore of University of Tartu, ELM Scholarly Press

ISBN: 978-9949-586-78-3



Euroopa Liit
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Regionaalarengu Fond



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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29

9.00 Registration

10.00–10.15 Opening

10.15–11.45 **I Plenary session**

Marta Kurkowska-Budzan: Oral sources and academic historians: a difficult relationship

11.45–12.15 tea and coffee

12.15–13.45 **I Session: Concepts and Methods**

Jaana Kouri: Environmental knowledge past and present

Burkhard Pöttler: ‘Volkskultur’ – From Folk Culture to Popular Culture and Beyond

Sonja Petrović: Reconsidering evidence and truth in personal narratives

13.45–15.15 lunch (for registered participants)

15.15–16.45 **II Session: Artistic Mediations**

Olga Levitan, Roni Cohen: A look at one theatrical cartoon: archival encounters

Dinah Guimaraens: Continuous city : transcultural logic in brazilian architecture

Carlo Trombino: A land in pose: Sicilian identity in the 21st Century

17.45–19.00 Walk in the city (RonkRonk) (for registered participants)

19.00 Reception (The University of Tartu Museum) (for registered participants)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30

9.00–10.30 Visit to NOORA (National Archives of Estonia) (for registered participants)

10.30–11.00 tea and coffee

11.00–13.00 III Session: History – Adapting to Changes

Mare Kõiva: The Influence Government has on Religious Customs

Anni Reuter: The experience of internal exile in the Soviet Union during Stalin's time

Tsimafei Avilin, Elena Boganeva, Tatiana Oliferchik: Variations and changes. Images of werewolves in Belarusian oral tradition

Xuan Wang: How Do Historical Materials Speak in Folkloristics? Chinese Naodongfang (Obscene Wedding Games)'s Vitality in 2000 Years with a short Hibernation under Communist Mao Reign

13.00–14.30 lunch (for registered participants)

14.30–16.00 II Plenary session

Anna Kuismin: Processes and practices of literacy in nineteenth-century Finland – a multi-disciplinary research project in retrospect

16.00–16.30 tea and coffee

16.30–18.00 walk in the Estonian Literary Museum

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31

9.00–10.30 III Plenary session

Merili Metsvahi: The stereotype of the right of the first night (*ius primae noctis*) in the process of Estonian nation building

10.30–11.15 tea and coffee, posters

11.15–12.45 IV Session: Ambiguities of Fieldwork

Michele Tita: Researching about tarantism: a contemporary fieldwork experience about a culture-bound syndrome of the past

Karina Taruškaitė: „The construction of images from the past in the stories of Kaunas districts residents: practical and theoretical aspects of research“

Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahti: Oral history meets narrative and computational analysis: challenges of digital big data on politics

12.45–13.00 closing words

13.15–???? lunch and visit to Estonian National Museum (for registered participants)

PREFACE: MAKING CONNECTIONS

In the last 30 years there have been considerable changes in society and scientific community. Concerning the topic of our conference the most important of these has been the rise of the interdisciplinary research experiences and changing viewpoints about time. For example the philosopher Juhan Hellerma argues in his article „Is time out of joint? Recent discussions on time in history and the philosophy of history“ (Ajalooline Ajakiri: The Estonian Historical Journal 4, 2017) that our understanding of the linear connections between past, present and future has changed so considerably, that the questions about the presence of past in present have arisen. This is influenced by the fact that the attention of the researchers have shifted from events and leaders to ordinary humans who in one or other way participated in, or were influenced by the outcomes of those events. And so the examination of the connections between past and present has therefore expanded beyond the traditional history departments and into cultural studies. The focus of the conference is on topical matters brought up by researchers with different backgrounds, all addressing the question how the connections are made in the changing society and research tradition.

Doing research is all about making connections – between past and present, sources and theories, disciplinary history and contemporary problems, the academy and the society etc.

On the one hand it is a question of positioning oneself as a researcher with respect to earlier theories, terminologies and methodologies. How do we feel about keywords that have already been criticised by earlier generations (‘the voice of the past’ or ‘history from below’ for example)? Are they adaptable to new situations, do they help to solve contemporary research problems?

On the other hand, it is a question of relationship between the academy and the society. How do developments in the society influence our understanding of scientific vocabulary or the uses of sources? Is researcher responsible for non-academic uses of specific keywords and notions or should we try to 'update' the society's understanding of them? Are we willing to share authorship of our researches with the people who have shared their experiences with us?

On behalf of the organisers,
Tiiu Jaago and Katre Kikas

PLENARY TALKS

Processes and Practices of Literacy in Nineteenth-Century Finland – a Multi-Disciplinary Research Project in Retrospect

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For the past twenty years, I have been involved in research that focuses on the texts produced by non-elite people before the era of general education. Over the years, many concepts used by scholars involved in multi-disciplinary research project like the ‘perspective from below’ and ‘vernacular literacy’ have been evaluated, and dichotomies such as the oral and the written have been called into question. In addition to giving an overview of these issues, I shall present “unlikely documents” that do not fit the common definitions of diary and autobiography.

Oral Sources and Academic Historians: a Difficult Relationship

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In recent years, we have observed the following paradox: the rapid success of 'oral history' in post-totalitarian countries (in Europe and Latin America), measured by the rapidly increasing amount of documentary and exhibition projects, the rise in the amount of people involved in such projects and the public funding allocated to them. This phenomenon has been coupled with the widespread public opinion throughout society on the high cognitive and ethical value of personal stories about the past. However, we have not witnessed a similarly spectacular success of oral sources within the framework of academic historiography. I would say that the enthusiastic, widespread description of 'oral history' as a democratic and methodologically fluid, cognitive and ethical, or sometimes even therapeutic undertaking is an expression of historians' perplexity as academics in the face of oral accounts.

On the one hand, it is difficult for any academic historian of recent past to remain indifferent to a large number of oral sources which could potentially be elicited; on the other – the lack of established scientific principles of conduct, appropriate in light of the objectives of historical research, discourages the majority of academics from using this particular material. Those historians who do work with oral accounts in a methodical manner, validated by scientific tradition, take advantage of the tools used in social studies. However, working within the various paradigms of qualitative sociology they encounter an epistemological net in which the specific identity of historical research becomes blurred.

To tackle this problem, we should start searching for the answer to the question of whether oral accounts are actually a 'historical

source’? That is: do they allow for the conceptualization of human beings in chronographic, chronometric and chronological dimensions? In my presentation, I discuss recent results of a joint team of historians, psychologists, and sociologists, that sought to address these questions. We worked to recognize the needs of academic historians and to set up the standards of eliciting and analyzing oral accounts for their purposes. In short, we tried to make oral sources ‘the evidence’ that an academic historian could be satisfied with regardless of the degree to which this task might present as a positivist endeavor.

The Stereotype of the Right of the First Night (*Ius Primae Noctis*) in the Process of Estonian Nation-Building

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The Estonian state was established in 1918. The nation-building prior to state formation was an intensive process that started in the second half of the 19th century. The first national song festival in Tartu in 1869 has been considered one of the cornerstones in this process. The extensive compiling and sending of petitions to Russian authorities (Estonia belonged to Russian empire in the 19th century) has received much less attention from the researchers to date.

In the first part of my presentation I am going to talk about Adam Peterson (1838-1918) who was one of the main organizers of the writing of the so-called Big Petition. In autumn 1864 he was the leader of a delegation that traveled to St. Petersburg to meet Alexander II to give him the Big Petition, as well as 96 smaller petitions, that contained the requests on behalf of 25 000 Estonian peasants. The Big Petition was the first document ever where national demands of the Estonians were formally stated.

Peterson was a skillful orator. In the meetings that he organized for the peasants in order to arouse their national self-awareness he talked about the past freedom of Estonia that was followed with hundreds of years of slavery. In this context he started to use the concept of the right of the first night as a powerful symbol of the tyranny of German landlords. According to Peterson the right of the first night was abolished in Estonia along with serfdom at the beginning of the 19th century. He wrote numerous poems on this topic which were distributed as leaflets among the people.

However, the right of the first night was never a historical fact. Since Karl Schmidt's 1881 treatise on the topic, the majority of scholars

have acknowledged that it was nothing more than a learned misconception. In spite of this in the beginning of the 20th century the stereotype started to spread extensively among Estonians. In the second part of my presentation I will talk about the reasons for this wide popularity of the idea of *ius primae noctis* and the ways of its circulation.

This research has been supported by the research project IUT2-43 (Estonian Research Council).

SECTION PRESENTATIONS

Variations and Changes. Images of Werewolves in Belarusian Oral Tradition

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The presentation will introduce the “Belorussian Ethnolinguistic Atlas” (BELA). Since the end of the 1980s, the BELA archive materials have been constantly systematized and integrated into scientific circulation. This paper analyzes a subgenre of the mythologem of shapeshifting – motifs which describe werewolves. The names of werewolf are *volkolak*, *volkolaka*, *vovkolaka*, *vavkulak*, *avkalaka*, less known are *vauchar*, *voukun* (*vavkun*), or *volkolatniki*, *voukulya*. Werewolves are divided into: 1) werewolves-magicians (temporary voluntary shapeshifting) and 2) victims (temporary stimulated transformation), 3) werewolves, who turned into the wolves for their own sins or which forcedly take the form of wolves at a certain time, e.g., the full Moon, for undetermined reason (periodically stimulated conversion). Largest groups of images constitute the werewolves-wizards (69 records in BELA) and werewolves-victims (147 records in BELA).

Discovered areals and the fact that beliefs about werewolves are distributed throughout the Belarus, provide an important new material for comparative studies. The data obtained allows to evaluate plot-thematic elaboration of texts.

Continuous City: Transcultural Logic in Brazilian Architecture

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The digital environment acquires the same anthropological, economic and political relevance that historians and philosophers point out in relation to the natural and urban environment. The adaptation to the city constitutes the construction of a second nature that differs from the different forms of social life, from the most primitive and reduced (clans and communes) to the most abstract and gigantic (megapolis or nations).

The nature we speak of is symbolic and connects with all the streams of people, words and goods that draw upon the networks that sustain life in common, including the streets of our cities, but also the festivals, laws and knowledge that have been produced by mankind over time and that can not be privatized. Living in society gave rise to an endless number of forms of organization that can be revealed through a framework that shows the hierarchies, dependencies and functions of each of the parties that conform them.

The transcultural logic can be defined by the transformations that occur in the friction of distinct cultures. Therefore, the academic knowledge in architecture and urbanism turns to a discussion in the field of anthropology and digital technologies, aiming at finding viable solutions to the current impasse of Brazilian megacities. It relates the occupation of the public space, housing and mobility that define the quality of urban life.

The project explores design logics of urban design responsible for spaces of socioeconomic exclusion and disciplinary schemes of public-private control. It contrasts Brasília's occupation with daily violence in Rio de Janeiro, comparing the modern design of the capital with spaces of power and updating of a supposed citizenship,

and the architecture of favelas such as Morro do Palácio, in Niterói,
Rio de Janeiro.

Environmental Knowledge Past and Present

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In my doctoral thesis (2017) I studied the history production of an old pilot village, Lypyrtti, in the southwestern archipelago in Finland. The Finnish National Board of Navigation abolished the pilotage of Lypyrtti in 1961. The nostalgic process included producing the oral history of Lypyrtti, writing and compiling information for the village book (2011), and the textualisation of the researcher's own experiences. The nostalgic village and its environment live in the memories of the present summer inhabitants, while the ominously changing environment reminds them of it, prompting them to remember. The research highlighted the experienced-based knowledge of water as epitomized by stories and performances. Beyond the village in question, the research also displayed the concern of the environmental condition of the Baltic Sea.

Cultural knowledge, rather than being imported into settings of practical activity, is constituted within these settings. Nostalgic narration, for example, is a part of dynamic process: people in the present are not only passive receivers or transmitters of heritage, tradition and history, but also active producers and circulators of experienced environmental knowledge.

In my presentation I approach the human–nature relationship as a historically constructed phenomenon and nostalgia and imagination as reciprocal actions of the history production. I have a long-term perspective starting from the examples of the past ideas of water revealed in the oral tradition of the Baltic Finns to the present experiences of the villagers in my case study. I examine imagination as a broader theoretical and analytical framework for tacit, situated and experience-based knowledge. Imagining is a social action, connecting human and non-human, material and immaterial actors. I ask,

whether social imaginary and co-imagination as analytical tools are convenient to bridge the gaps between oral tradition and present experiences of water.

The Influence Government Has on Religious Customs

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Influence of the state on the role of the religion is one of study questions in sociology of religion. The focus in this presentation is on the institutional changes and evolution of the religious behaviour of Estonian Russians in the period 1920-1944. The source materials come from folklore collections, folklore collectors' collection diaries and diaries of priests. The notes reflect the unfiltered views, personal perceptions and reflections of folklore collectors (with mostly Orthodox background) and Lutheran priests. Thus, the analysis does not pretend for exactitude but to outline tendencies.

In 1917 the first church congress of the Lutheran church defined the Lutheran church as 'a free people's church', but laws radically changed the position of the church as well as the relationship between church and state. The reforms of 1934-1935 reinforced the special legal status of the the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Estonia. Could we consider changes in the religious behaviour of Estonian Russians as caused by the privileged status of the Lutheran church? Could the changes be considered superficial, allowing return to the Orthodox traditions (e.g., after World War II)? What choices do people have and how are we influenced by modernisation in even conservative questions of the world view?

This research has been supported by the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (European Regional Development Fund) and is related to research project IUT22-5 (Estonian Research Council).

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Oral History Meets Narrative and Computational Analysis: Challenges of Digital Big Data on Politics

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My paper presents my research on ‘democracy talk’, based on the on-going academy project “Voices of Democracy: The Will of the People by the People and by Their Representatives” at the University of Tampere, School of Social Sciences and Humanities (PI Matti Hyvärinen). The main objective of the research is to identify how the will of the people is articulated verbally and used rhetorically both by the citizens and their representatives in the Parliament. In addition, the aim is to redirect the study of political culture so that narrative studies will be included and to introduce new synergies between qualitative and quantitative research traditions in the social sciences and humanities, between interpretive methods and computational and statistical ones. The materials consist of the oral history collection of veteran members of parliament, reminiscence materials from two recent collection projects by the Finnish Literature Society, a sample of the most popular online discussion forum, transcribed parliamentary records of plenary and digitized blogs written by members of parliament. My aim is to analyze political narratives, especially expressions and variation of conceptualized and experienced power. My paper deals with connections in the transdisciplinary field: how scholars of political and social sciences (political history, history), literary studies and heritage studies discuss, find and provide tools to analyze political culture. How big data research differs from manual archival work and what kind of new research results might one find there? What sort of (Finnish) political culture does big data reveal?

A Look at One Theatrical Cartoon: Archival Encounters

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The paper offers a discussion of theatre caricature as a source for cultural-historical research. It focuses on a forgotten cartoon, designed in the mid-1920s by a Jewish artist, Isaac Machlis. The cartoon depicts a burlesque procession of Moscow theatres of the post-revolutionary period and its legendary leaders, including Anatoly Lunacharsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Nikolai Foreger. However, in the first rows of the procession appear personages of the prominent Hebrew production, *The Dybbuk*, which was directed at the Habima studio theatre (1922) by Yevgeny Vachtangov, a famous Moscow avant-garde artist. The cultural-historical context of the cartoon comprises the Russian revolutions in 1917, avant-garde theatre in Russia, the Hebrew revival and Zionist movement and the fact that over the years Habima, which originated as a Hebrew studio of the Moscow art theatre, became an Israeli national theatre.

The Israeli Center for the Documentation of the Performing Arts has preserved this picture as a documentary item that indicates the significance of *The Dybbuk* play in Moscow theatre life as well as in the intercultural past of Habima. The cartoon can be described as an encrypted picture, whose narrative has hidden meanings and combines elements of parody and documentary evidence. These characteristics dictate the amalgam method of the discussion, which merges the tools of archeological study, the hermeneutical approach to history and laughter studies. The very need for a combination of research tools will be presented as a methodological principle.

Tradition as a Modern Strategy: Indigenous Knowledge as Local Response to Globalization in Africa

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Globalization is now widely perceived in Africa as a new version of earlier forms of external domination and exploitation. But Marshall Sahlins has rightly emphasized the need for all peoples “to indigenize the forces of global modernity, and turn them to their own ends”, as the real impact of globalization depends largely on the responses developed at the local level. The challenge for Africa is how to engage and cope with globalization and other external influences in a way that is compatible with local values and priorities.

For a long time African customs and traditions were mis-conceived as irrational and incompatible with the conventional strategies of development. But the economic crisis and policy failures of the 1980s and 1990s, and the current threat of global recession have exposed flaws in the Western, neo-liberal, ‘external agency’ model of development imposed from the top by national governments and international development agencies. Because of growing concern about widespread poverty, widening inequalities and environmental deterioration, there is renewed interest in an alternative approach to development which emphasizes the cultural dimension of development, and the often-overlooked potential of indigenous knowledge as “the single largest knowledge resource not yet mobilized in the development enterprise”. This paper considers how indigenous knowledge and practice can be put to good use in support of local governance and development in Nigeria; how development policies and programmes can be made to reflect local priorities, and build upon and strengthen local knowledge, capacity and organization, especially in such vital areas as agriculture and natural resource management, the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, law review and conflict resolution, education, health care and poverty alleviation. The concept of indigenous

knowledge is used here as a model for rethinking and redirecting the development process, and as a way to involve, enable and empower local actors to take part in their own development.

The paper concludes with some general reflections on the indigenous knowledge movement as an appropriate local response to globalization and Western knowledge dominance, and as a way to promote cultural identity and inter-cultural dialogue on African development. By building on indigenous knowledge we can make development more participatory and endogenous, and therefore more sustainable.

Reconsidering Evidence and Truth in Personal Narratives

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The use of oral histories and life stories as historical evidence is linked to complex procedures of evaluating their reliability, validity and authenticity, as well as considering their historical and narrative truth. Although personal narratives can be verified by using the confirmed historical and qualitative methods (like testing the evidence, triangulation, comparing to other types of documents), historians acknowledge that reliability of oral sources lies in their subjectivity as oral testimony. Therefore, mistakes in narration caused by forgetting, constructions of individual and collective past or belief, reconstruction of life experience according the models of oral tradition, become the facts which deserve to be studied. It is suggested that narrative analysis can contribute to better understanding of the nature of evidence, since every narrative includes perspective and evaluation.

The Hidden Legacy of Nationalising Folk Culture – Fieldwork Experience in Goriška Brda (Gorizia Hills)

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Researching the folk singing traditions in the region of Goriška brda (Gorizia Hills) at the Slovenian-Italian border turned to be the first step to the research of the processes of national identifications of the local, predominantly rural, inhabitants. Despite rejecting the understanding of the cultural elements as bases of national identification, the question of how to understand national tensions in the second half of 19th century where for a long time people had lived together under the same political and administrative units in the region arose. How to approach the instrumentalisation of folklore in shaping the political nation of Slovenians in the 19th century? And how to tackle the folk songs' recordings collected in the frame of the national identification based on the distinctive elements of the folk culture? These recordings have been very influential and during the fieldwork it has been demanding to discover the hidden side of the living tradition. Therefore my paper will focus on the tensions between different images of traditions among various groups (professional, social, generations ...) in the region.

‘Volkskultur’ – From Folk Culture to Popular Culture and Beyond

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The term ‘Volkskultur’ has been widely discussed within our discipline for many decades now. Having been a core term since the beginnings of German-speaking ‘Volkskunde’ as a scientific discipline, it was nearly essentialized and therefore out of discussion and self-reflection. For the pre-industrial society, the use of the term as a label for cultural aspects of large parts of the population seemed at least tolerable. Caused by the differentiation of the society, the growing nationalism from the 19th century onward and the Nazi-period the term became more problematic and finally politically abused.

After 1945 and especially after the paradigmatic changes around 1970, the term ‘Volkskultur’ – like all compounds with ‘Volk’ – has undergone thorough reflections and intensive discussions. One suggestion was the temporal differentiation between ‘Volkskultur’ and ‘Alltagskultur’ (everyday culture). Another was the redefinition of ‘Volkskultur’ as popular culture instead of folk culture as introduced by social historians in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the terminological problems have remained until now.

An additional aspect of ‘Volkskultur’ concerns the active cultivation – and creation – of cultural forms, contributed mainly to the rural parts of the population. Especially in the 19th century, feasts and fairs with special stress on or the imitation of rural forms of dress, dance and music have been introduced by the nobility and adopted by burghers resp. the bourgeoisie. This development has caused some discussions within our discipline on the question of ‘real’ (‘echte’) ‘Volkskultur’ vs. ‘Folklorismus’ as second-hand ‘Volkskultur’; a debate which meanwhile has lost its importance.

Nevertheless, new considerations regarding the term 'Volkskultur' seem to be necessary, which will be focussed on with examples from Austria and especially Styria. The importance of 'Volkskultur' as a (semi-)political and commercial category in public life is significant. In the state administration as well as a label for more or less official events with large political influence and as a category for prizes.

How does or should this new use and importance of the term influence our discipline, where 'Volkskultur' is still a widely used term for historical topics?

The Experience of Internal Exile in the Soviet Union during Stalin's Time

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The Gulag system in the Soviet Union has been understood as an integral part of Soviet terror, but the view of those deported into the 'special settlements' are often marginalized from the historical understanding of it. Through the experiences of those deported, it is possible to reassess the terminology and approaches in contemporary historical research. Ingrian Finns, who were living around Leningrad, were deported to Siberia, Central Asia, Kola-Peninsula and other peripheries inside the Soviet Union in 1930s and 1940s. Drawing on letters from 1930s (150) and later oral histories (50) of people deported, this study shows the devastation of deportations, internal exile and diaspora that followed. Ingrian Finns highlighted the forced and violent nature of exile: hunger, slave-labor, illness, death, arrests and escapes, but also attempts to preserve their religion, culture, community and the collective memory of the homeland Ingria and the wish to return there. They told counter narratives and testimonies against the dominant Soviet narratives. Official versions of the Soviet power conflicted with the experiences of Ingrian Finns, who resisted stigmatization, repression and falsification of their past. Their counter history as suffering and diasporic nation was formed using Finnish networks, biblical references and the former history of Ingria also inside the Gulag.

The Construction of Images from the Past in the Stories of Kaunas Districts Residents: Practical and Theoretical Aspects of Research

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Topic of my dissertation: „The identity of Kaunas inhabitants: the shift in memory during mid XX c – XXI c.“

At this conference I would like to present the material collected during the field study and some of the conclusions. In modern day society, the following prevailing tendency can be noticed: the population of the surrounding regions is migrating to the growing cities. Expanding cities include rural settlements that are close to them. This process determines the changes of lifestyles, traditions and regional culture. In Soviet times (and earlier periods), Kaunas was expanding, during this process the former suburban areas became part of the city. Kaunas is the second biggest city in Lithuania, located in the geographical center of the country. Since the Second World War Kaunas has experienced demographical changes caused by inner-country immigration and fast industrialization processes. Researchers of the memory narratives sometimes divide memory into two types: exalted and embodied. These types of memory and also collectively / individually remembered experiences are important sources for creating identities. It is believed that there are common memories of human groups – it includes individual and collective memories / experiences, that are also interconnected with others. In this research classical ethnographic and historical research methods were used: comparative and retrospective methods, content analysis, analysis of statistical and historical sources.

Researching about Tarantism: a Contemporary Fieldwork Experience about a Culture-Bound Syndrome of the Past

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When Ernesto De Martino, one of the most famous Italian ethnologists, reached Salento (the ‘heel’ of Italy, as we imagine it as a boot-shaped country) in the 1950s, he came across a unique and extraordinary culture-bound syndrome, called tarantism. According to the local belief, this syndrome happened because of the bite of the wolf spider (*taranta* or *tarantola* in Italian), which made people hysterical and led to uncontrolled dancing in an effort to get rid of the evil effect of the bite itself. Music was also used to accompany this dance, which was assumed to make it more efficient. The interesting thing is that the poison of the wolf spider is scientifically unable to directly cause people to experience these symptoms or kill them: the reason of that syndrome, as said before, is completely tied to society and culture of Salento in the middle of the 20th century.

Nowadays the syndrome of tarantism has disappeared, but the phenomenon still affects hugely Southern Italian culture, inspiring dances, festivals and events as well as writings and researches from scholars. Among these studies, there is also my fieldwork in June 2018, made in Salento and of course about tarantism. However, my research differs greatly from that of De Martino due to differences in methodological approach and, above all, historical and cultural context. Therefore, how did these differences emerge in my work? How have they affected my research and my perception of the phenomenon (as well as the one of people in the field)? How can the results of this comparison with my main sources about tarantism be used to improve the analysis of this topic?

I will use this paper presentation to discuss and answer these questions, relying mostly on my own fieldwork experience.

Selective Kinship in Sicilian Cultural Identity: a Land Posing

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Sicilian history could be summarized as an endless succession of rulers that came from the sea. Thus Sicilian identity could be considered as the epitome of a postcolonial identity, if there could be one. Its position at the exact center of the Mediterranean has made the island the gateway between European, African and Middle Eastern culture. This mix of insularity and cosmopolitanism still dramatically affects the way Sicilians see themselves; in this paper my aim is to understand how this mix has impacted the perception of their own history by contemporary Sicilians.

This paper seeks to shed light on some of the myths of the Sicilian past that influenced writers and thinkers from Sicily and from abroad, and still today are at the core of Sicilians' identity

From the Grand Tour to the recent mass migration from Africa, Sicily is the land of Passage, where people from all over the world come to "build wonderful monuments that we Sicilians will never understand", as Tomasi di Lampedusa famously put in "The Leopard". The complexity of Sicilian contemporary identity lays in the fact that it is both a land of migration and immigration, an island that natives are forced to leave if they don't want to be unemployed; but also an island that thousands of people try to reach notwithstanding the risk of drowning or being killed. Those contradictions make Sicily a land of opposites, an island always in pose waiting to be pictured by a foreign artist, whose unspeakable beauties cannot hide the bleak socio-economic conditions, with the highest unemployment rate in the EU.

Is Palermo comparable to Vienna as mythologist Furio Jesi noted in the 1970s? Or it is "proudly a middle eastern city" as mayor Leoluca Orlando recently said? How can we apply categories like post-colo-

nialism, class struggle or subalternity to better understand the way
Sicilians see themselves?

How Do Historical Materials Speak in Folkloristics? Chinese Naodongfang (Obscene Wedding Games)’s Vitality in 2000 Years with a Short Hibernation under Communist Mao Reign

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The tradition of Chinese Naodongfang (闹洞房) indicates wedding games and pranks with sexual instructions that are held by tricksters in a newlyweds’ house before, during or after the wedding ceremony. There is the evidence that Naodongfang has been practiced in China for over two thousand years; the first officially written reference to it appears in “The History of Han Dynasty: Geographic Records” (《漢書·地理志》) around 32-92 BCE. An older collection of folk songs “The Book of Songs” (《詩經》) even brought the initiation of Naodongfang back to pre-Qin period (2100-221BCE). Over its long history, Naodongfang’s core elements of dirty jokes and sex pranks became relatively stable. Today Naodongfang remains widespread in mainland China as well as among Hongkongese, Taiwanese and overseas Chinese immigrants. Unsuccessful efforts that past governments had made to ban and stigmatize it, proves that Naodongfang has essential functions for societies and people, no matter in Pre-Qin period or in Communist China today. Its vitality is worthy of researching through the historical approach.

In this paper, I will comb first ancient Chinese historical records about Naodongfang in a chronological order (before 1911). Secondly, legends and tales about Naodongfang which illuminate Chinese wedding beliefs and magics will be placed. The third part analyses contemporary materials between the collapse of feudalism China (1911) and the establishment of the PRC (1949) to support the hypothesis that, Naodongfang hibernated and suspended during the Mao reign and the Cultural Revolution between 1949-1979 and has revived when Deng Xiaoping launched “Reform and Opening Policies” in 1979 and pushed China into the global capitalist market. Many

Chinese who do not know principles and laws of folklore might insist that Naodongfang originated after 1979, indicating the decline and corruption of morals in contemporary China with capitalist influences. However, if we compare literary materials with an historical approach, it is easy to conclude that, despite a short period of dormancy of 30 years in Mainland China, Naodongfang has been a continuous and omnipresent phenomenon. Folklore never disappears, it just hides and disguises itself under the oppression of political ideology and regulations. Folklore spreads and functions once it has chance.

- Yehoshua Limor, former representative of the
Israeli Knesset, visited the post office
to meet with the Israeli community.
The Israeli community is a large and
growing one in the United States.

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Tiiu Jaago, Critical events of the 1940s in Estonian life histories.
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