



# newsletter

International Society for Folk Narrative Research

No. 4

June 2009



Athens

Αθήνα

## Contents

<b>Friends in Folklore Research</b> <i>by Ülo Valk</i> .....	3
<b>The 50th Anniversary of the ISFNR: Some Recollections and Points of View</b> <i>by Ülo Valk and Elo-Hanna Seljamaa</i> .....	4
<b>Making the Mysore Congress Happen</b> Email interview with Jawaharlal Handoo .....	4
<b>Evaluating and Selecting Ideas Through Decades: Helsinki 1974 to Athens 2009</b> Interview with Anna-Leena Siikala .....	6
<b>ISFNR Meetings from the Perspective of Europe and North America</b> Interview with Barbro Klein .....	9
<b>Accepting Responsibility for the Advancement of Research</b> Email interview with Lee Haring .....	11
<b>Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens (The National Documentation Centre for Popular Culture)</b> <i>by Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki</i> .....	12
<b>In Memoriam Archie Green (1917-2009)</b> <i>by Nancy Yan</i> .....	16
<b>Seeing the Trees and the Wood and What Goes on Beyond the Forest</b> mail interview with Ullrich Kockel <i>by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa</i> .....	19
<b>Symposium on Historiolas</b> <i>by Jonathan Roper</i> .....	22
<b>The 120<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Louisville, Kentucky</b> <i>by Teri Klassen</i> .....	23
<b>Conference on Research and Researcher Ethics</b> <i>by Tiiu Jaago and Ene Kõresaar</i> .....	25
<b>Folklore Studies in Russia: Zhivaja Starina, a Journal Revived</b> <i>by Heda Jason</i> .....	28
<b>Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association</b> <i>by Xiang Yunju</i> .....	29
<b>New ISFNR members 2005-2009</b> .....	32



ISFNR Newsletter is published by the  
International Society for Folk Narrative  
Research.

ISSN 1736-3594

Editors:

Ülo Valk (ulo.valk@ut.ee)

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa

(elo-hanna.seljamaa@ut.ee)

Language editor: Daniel E. Allen

Design and layout: Marat Viires

Editorial Office:

ISFNR Newsletter

University of Tartu

Department of Estonian and Comparative

Folklore

Ülikooli 16-208

51003 Tartu

Estonia

ISFNR on the Internet:

[www.ut.ee/isfnr](http://www.ut.ee/isfnr)

This publication was supported by  
the European Union through the European  
Regional Development Fund.



## Dear Friends in Folklore Research,

The year 2009 has twofold significance in the history of the ISFNR: in the month of June the society will hold its 15<sup>th</sup> congress in Athens, Greece, and we are also celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In August 1959 our first congress convened in Kiel and in Copenhagen, followed by meetings in Antwerp in 1962 and Budapest in 1963. In September 1964 the fourth congress was held in Athens, with 86 papers given in two sections: one on research on folktales, the second on legends. Also, the congress in Athens approved the statutes of the ISFNR, which set the grounds for the society's regular work and continue to guide us today. The inaugural lecture of the first congress in Kiel was delivered by Kurt Ranke (1908-1985), the first president of the ISFNR, founder of *Fabula: Journal of Folktale Studies* as and the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* ('Encyclopedia of the Folktale'). Ranke talked about folk narrative research as a scholarship that transcends times and boundaries and as a discipline that promotes understanding between peoples and builds bridges between them: "There are borders between languages, ethnic and national regions, world views, political and economic ideas, however, in the realm of myths, folktales and legends and their disposition there are no borders" (Ranke 1961: 1). The topic of the 15<sup>th</sup> congress in Athens, "Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations" is carried by a similar understanding of our discipline, although folkloristics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not the same as fifty years ago. In 1995, after nearly two decades of debates and hesitation, the ISFNR held its first meeting outside Europe and the legendary success of the Mysore meeting no doubt helped to pave the way for the interim conferences and congresses in various parts of the world that have followed and for taking a step further toward making the ISFNR into a truly international organisation.

To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ISFNR, we asked some of our long-term members to share their thoughts about

these developments, and on the role of the ISFNR in the field as well as their memories of past meetings and expectations for the congress in Athens and beyond. One of the recurrent themes that emerges from interviews with Lee Haring, Jawaharlal Handoo, Barbro Klein and Anna-Leena Siikala is the role of the ISFNR as a mediator between scholars divided by different kinds of borders that are both real and imagined: selected European countries and the rest of the world, North American and European scholarship, the socialist East and the capitalist West during the Cold War era, ever-fluid borders of folk narrative research. At the opening of the 4<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in 1964, Georgios Megas stressed the historical importance of holding this meeting in a south-European country like Greece, regarding it as a sign of the broadening international scope of folklore research (Megas 1965: VIII). The very fact that in the year 2009 organising the 15<sup>th</sup> congress of the ISFNR is again in the hands of Greek folklorists, shows the vigour and continuity of folkloristics in this country and their outstanding position in international scholarship. The history of these traditions and the many-sided activities of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens are discussed in this Newsletter in an essay by Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki, the director of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre and one of the organisers of this year's congress.

The society also transcends time and space by linking people from different generations and from all continents. During the last year the following scholars have joined the ISFNR: Maria Teresa (Mabel) Agozzino (USA), Anna Angelopoulos (France), Vladimir Bahna (Slovak Republic), Tatiana Bužeková (Slovak Republic), Özkuş Çobanoğlu (Turkey), Paulo Jorge Rodrigues Correia (Portugal), Sharmistha DeBasu (India), Magdalena Elchinova (Bulgaria), Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (Iceland), Pekka Hakamies (Finland), Joseph Harris (USA), Anne Heimo (Finland), Iván Illésfavi (Hungary), Barbara Ivančič Ku-

tin (Slovenia), Jeana Jorgensen (USA), Akemi Kaneshiro-Hauptmann (Germany), George Katsadoros (Greece), Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto (Finland), Temuraz Kurdovanidze (Georgia), Janet Langlois (USA), Kim Lau (USA), Jana Noskova (Czech Republic), Antoaneta Olteanu (Romania), Stelios Pelasgos (Katsaounis) (Greece), Piret Paal (Estonia/Germany), Chandrabhanu Pattanayak (India), Jacqueline S. Thursby (USA), Helena Tužinská (Slovak Republic), and Mbugua Wa-Mungai (Kenya).

The 2009 issue of the ISFNR Newsletter also brings to you reports on some recent symposia and conferences, arranged by the ISFNR's Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming; the oral history network of Finnish universities and research institutions, and the American Folklore Society. Colleagues from China kindly sent us an overview of the work of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association who hosted the ISFNR interim conference in Beijing in 1996. Keeping close contacts with other organisations of folklore and neighbouring disciplines is an essential part of our task to develop the field of folkloristics worldwide and promote contacts between research centres and between peoples. We are glad to publish in this issue of the Newsletter an interview with Ullrich Kockel, the president of the SIEF who stresses the obligation of folklore and ethnology organisations to take a formative role in promoting research in these fields. One such initiative is the H-Folk Network developed in conjunction with The American Folklore Society, The Folklore Society of Great Britain, The Folklore Studies Association of Canada, the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, the National Folklore Support Centre (India), and the *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore* (SIEF) in order to foster better international communication among folklorists and to increase scholarly dialogue in the field. To learn more about the list and the subscription procedure, please visit the website of H-Folk at <http://www.h-net.org/~folk/>.

In March we received the sad news of passing away of the eminent North-American folklorist Archie Green. Green was a prominent scholar of labour folklore and played a key role in the establishment of the American Folklore Centre in Washington. Nancy Yan shares with us some recollections of Archie Green as an inspiring and influential scholar, activist, and mentor. In addition, this fourth issue of the ISFNR Newsletter brings to you information about some recent publications and forthcoming events: the revived Russian journal *Zhivaja Starina* and the second All-Russian Congress of Folklorists, which also welcomes international scholars, and the collection of plenary papers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore symposium held in Reykjavik in 2005.

I would like to thank all the scholars who contributed to the 2009 issue of the ISFNR Newsletter, Cristina Bacchilega, the chair of the Membership Committee, and other members of the Executive Committee, the secretary Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, our language editor Daniel E. Allen and artist Marat Viires. Together with all other participants of the 15<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in Athens I am looking forward to this meeting and wish best of luck to Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki, Marilena Papatristophorou and the whole team of organisers.

Ülo Valk  
President of the ISFNR

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## The 50th Anniversary of the ISFNR: Some Recollections and Points of View

by Ülo Valk and Elo-Hanna Seljamaa

### Making the Mysore Congress Happen

Email interview with Jawaharlal Handoo



Jawaharlal Handoo, the main organizer of the 1995 ISFNR Congress in Mysore and former ISFNR vice-president.

Photo by Ülo Valk.

**Ülo Valk:** The 1995 ISFNR congress in Mysore was the first time that the ISFNR met outside Europe. Do you see it as a landmark in the history of our society in terms of liberating international folkloristics from the burdens of Eurocentrism?

**Jawaharlal Handoo:** In a way it was, but the idea was more focused on making the ISFNR a real international body of folklore scholarship, rather than fighting Eurocentrism. I tried for this paradigm shift in 1979 in Edinburgh, the first time I participated in an ISFNR meeting, and failed and I renewed my effort in Bergen in 1984 and failed again, then in 1989 when I was least prepared for it, I bid again and this time I won. I had many friends in ISFNR who continued standing by my side even

though my first attempts were not successful. The point is that between 1979 and 1989 things had changed in folkloristics as a discipline and its relevance was being rejudged in many ways, and so the mindset for a paradigm shift to gain a true international character, etc., was there and that helped. I suppose that after the Mysore meeting the ISFNR has continued to strengthen this thought to some extent.

**ÜV:** You were the main organiser of the congress. Could you please share with us some of your memories of the long process of getting the meeting to Mysore, as well as of the event itself?

**JH:** As I said, I won the bid for the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the ISFNR in Budapest when I was least prepared for

organising it. However, I was happy that I had finally won the vote. Yet I found that many folklorists were still not prepared for a change of this kind. They tried to undo the decision of the General Assembly of the ISFNR in Budapest. Most of the members, including many senior members of the ISFNR, did not support the move. I am not certain about it, but I feel that this move might have resulted in forcing Reimund Kvideland, the President of the ISFNR, to visit Mysore before the Innsbruck interim meeting of the ISFNR so that he could report on the conditions in India and particularly in Mysore and my supporting institution, the Central Institute of Indian Languages. Reimund had never visited Mysore before. He stayed in Mysore for a few days and then on my request visited Delhi with me and while there, actually participated in a seminar of the Sahitya Akademi. He also met many folklorists and scholars of India. He was very happy after having seen some parts of India and also having met many people coming from many disciplines. As I already said, it was his first visit. I suppose he was impressed by India. He said it many times to me in Delhi. I wanted him to enjoy a little more of India and I just talked about it casually to my friend Prof. B. Krishnamurti, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Central University at Hyderabad, asking if he could invite Reimund as a visiting faculty to his university. This small meeting took place at the India International Centre where we were staying. He readily agreed to my suggestion and after couple of months, Reimund Kvideland arrived as a visiting professor of folklore and spent some time teaching in Hyderabad. He also visited Mysore again and we both travelled to Hyderabad for a seminar that I had organised in that city. Reimund Kvideland was now convinced that the ISFNR meeting in Mysore will be a great meeting and after the Congress many folklorists shared this view.

**ÜV: What was the impact of the congress on folklore studies in India?**

**JH:** International meetings hardly make drastic changes in conditions a discipline is situated in at a given point in time. Even when the impact of such a meeting is intended, it is never felt at once, and in fact it takes years to feel the impact. I guess this is truer of India than of a developed country. Indian scholars, more importantly non-folklorists, were impressed to learn and see for themselves that folklore is an international discipline and that we need to give it its due attention since we have so much of folklore still alive and shaping our lives. I suspect that this realisation helped folklore to receive unconditional support from people. The Mysore meeting of the ISFNR created opportunities for sharing experiences and knowledge that reassured scholars of the Indian subcontinent about the need to strengthen the discipline. The six-volume set of Congress papers made this impact even more meaningful.

**ÜV: As the President of the Indian Folklore Congress, you have a comprehensive view of current developments in folklore studies. How would you describe the situation of our field in India and what is your opinion about it?**

**JH:** I guess the field of folklore studies is well distributed in India. I also realise that folklore as a serious subject of inquiry enjoys more recognition and receives more attention in India than it does in many other countries in the world. Due to a variety of reasons folklore seems to be capable of answering more relevant questions about Indian culture and civilisation than many classical and sometimes prestigious disciplines. I would say that folklore studies in India have a bright future.

**ÜV: What are your expectations regarding the next ISFNR congress**

**in Athens? How do you see the role of the ISFNR in international folkloristics?**

**JH:** I realise that it is the second time that Athens is organising an ISFNR meeting. Many things have changed since Athens had the first meeting. My expectations are many. The conditions of folklore as a discipline in Europe, and in the USA and Australia, are not very good. The ISFNR meeting in Athens needs to address these and many other questions related to deteriorating conditions of folklore and the openly subversive attitude of the institutions and many rival disciplines towards folklore as a serious discipline. Consider, for example, the cases of Uppsala, Pennsylvania, Melbourne, etc. Maybe a special panel and discussions could be arranged in Athens to address these important folklore matters. I would expect that the papers presented in Athens are published later. In recent times after the Mysore Congress in 1995 the ISFNR Congress papers have not been published.



## Evaluating and Selecting Ideas Through Decades: from Helsinki 1974 to Athens 2009

Interview with Anna-Leena Siikala

*Anna-Leena Siikala visited Tartu in late autumn 2008. On December 1<sup>st</sup> she was nominated an honorary doctor of the University of Tartu. On the next day she delivered a lecture entitled "Reproducing Social Worlds: Ideology and Practice of Oral Legends" for students of folkloristics and ethnology. The following interview was made on December 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore.*

**Ülo Valk:** In 2009 the ISFNR will be 50 years old. Let's look back at its history, starting from the congress in Helsinki. You were among the organisers of this event. Do you have some recollections to share with readers of the ISFNR Newsletter?

**Anna-Leena Siikala:** The folk narrative congress in Helsinki was organized in 1974; I remember the time quite well because just before that the Department of Folklore at the University of Helsinki got a new set of rooms. The time was very special: it began in the '60s when many young people started to study folklore as their main subject and the conference was a common enterprise for all folklore departments, including the University of Turku, where Lauri Honko was a professor, and the University of Helsinki, where Matti Kuusi was a professor. The folklore archives helped a lot – researchers working in the archives in particular were involved in organising the conference. I was an assistant teacher at the folklore department of Helsinki University at the time and had to arrange a seminar on paremiology. This was quite a big task. Matti Kuusi was a specialist in paremiology and we published *Proverbium*, and he was able to invite people from all countries, not only Western ones, but also Eastern, socialist countries. One of the main features of the Finnish

congress was the multinational body of researchers: we had participants coming from all areas – not so many at that time from China, India and Africa, but mostly from Europe and United States, also from Russia and Eastern Europe. What also made the conference important was the change of folklore concept. Before, in the 1960s, we had in Finland two main approaches – the functionalist approach of Lauri Honko and the structural approach of Matti Kuusi, who was interested both in Claude Lévi-Strauss and Vladimir Propp. Yet, the popular topics were the new ideas on folklore transmission and genre, and at the time American scholars were presenting their new folkloristics to Europeans. Among the most important scholars were Roger Abrahams from Pennsylvania, Dan Ben-Amos, and Linda Dégh. When I talk about genre I always remember the discussions at the Helsinki conference. We were pondering how genre should be understood, but the new folkloristics was more interested in performance and took a totally different approach. Also, archival material was not as crucial as before – people talked about fieldwork a lot. Juha Pentikäinen was one of the main organisers of the conference and he stressed the relevance of fieldwork as did Lauri Honko. In a way, it was a change in folklore studies. Of course, American folklorists had published their ideas earlier, in the early 1970s, some even in the 1960s. But these ideas were spreading to Europe at the time of the Helsinki conference. Studying narrating in the field, in villages, and talking with people about their life and world view, became a new methodological approach. At the same time some of the old discussions continued, for example the discussion about the memorate. I remember how Otto Blehr, a Norwegian researcher



Anna-Leena Siikala is Professor Emerita of Folklore, University of Helsinki, and Chair person of Folklore Fellows' Network.

*Photo courtesy of Anna-Leena Siikala.*

who gave a paper at the conference, argued with Lauri Honko about the concept of the memorate. As Pentikäinen was Lauri Honko's student, he was always on Honko's side in discussions about the memorate. Blehr was maybe more right than we thought then. Then of course German researchers gave their papers – Lutz Röhrich, and also Rudolph Schenda, and Max Lüthi from Switzerland. Their audience consisted of researchers focusing on archive work and the German Märchen type tradition. Structuralism was still alive and important in 1974. It was good that E. M. Meletinsky was taking part in the conference – I appreciate his work very much. Alan Dundes also gave a presentation, but Ben-Amos and Roger Abrahams were the big stars. Barbara Babcock-Abrahams also presented at that conference.

**ÜV:** So Europe was quite open, as it was possible to invite people from Russia and Eastern Europe. How did Eastern European

**research blend in – was it possible to see a variety of approaches? You were talking about new ideas coming in from America and being accepted in the Nordic countries. Was folkloristics developing towards unity or in many different directions?**

**A-L.S:** Well, there were certain problems in these matters. At least Finland was a country where all people could come. In 1974, we lived on the border of different, inward-gazing worlds. We invited quite a few people from Eastern Europe; for instance, Matti Kuusi was very much in favour of a global network of paremiological studies. *Proverbium* was sold, or, actually also sent, not only to institutes of the Eastern and Western blocs of the world but also to the Far and Near East and Africa. Eastern European researchers were very much valued in the field of paremiology; also in the structural studies and semiotics their work provided models for study. For Finns, Estonian research was well known and we valued not only their study of Kalevala-metre poetry but also their study of legends; of course, Arvo Krikmann was becoming a leader in the world of paremiology. But, on a larger scale, there were also some problems concerning language, because at that time English was not as important as a common language of research as today and many Eastern Europeans spoke German. However, young people did not understand German so well. Then, of course, Nordic people had ‘Skandinaviska’ – a kind of Swedish – as their common language. The language problem was very clearly seen in conference discussions and how it divided people into certain groups. Maybe because of this the main ideas did not reach everybody. On the other hand, in Russia there were people for whom it was easy to move around in many countries and get to know people. Professor Kirill Chistov was this kind of person and, besides, a fine researcher of oral tradition.

Many new ideas were talked about. For example the study of narrators was one focus. It was not a new idea in Russia, where people – Mark Azadovskij for example – were studying narrators in the early twentieth century. Linda Dégh, a Hungarian who had moved to the USA, is a classic in narrator studies and her wonderful work affected young researchers. The European research of narrators of tales went in two opposite directions in East and West. We in Finland thought in the 1930s that the oral community is a very important object of study and not until the 1960s did we find that the study of individual narrators would reveal a lot of folklore. The book on Maria Takalo by Juha Pentikäinen is an example of this narrative approach. In Eastern Europe, also in Russia, the individual narrators were already an important target of studies in the early twentieth century. Later, the community had more weight in their topics of study. The reason for this is maybe the idea adhered to in early socialist Russia, where people tried to find folk artists – they were interested in performers who could sing or tell a story. Theoretical considerations have, of course, ideological backgrounds in our field of studies.

**ÜV: In 1974 ISFNR was 15 years old. Now we shall celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. After Helsinki came Edinburgh, Bergen, and other forums with new ideas. Do you have some vivid memories of these congresses?**

**A-L.S:** I went to Edinburgh after having gone through several changes in my personal life. Maybe the place where the congress is held affects the atmosphere and the kinds of themes that are discussed. In Scotland legends and narratives are important and that could be seen in the meeting. For example, I remember the spectacular performance of Alan Dundes, and a lot of people listened to it. Tekla Dömötör from Hungary

was there also – she was said to be the grandmother of all the folklorists. It was a congress where the older generation met young people. In some ways it was a mix of all these ideas that had been important before and things that were coming, but in 1984 in Bergen the change was really much clearer. The study of meaning was becoming prominent in the 1980s and changed the whole understanding of folklore. This means that cognitive studies were becoming important at that time: these analysed processes of memory, how narratives are understood and stored in the mind, how they are remembered and then performed. In Helsinki Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj and myself made some studies of this sort. One approach is to study the meaning of these narrated texts or archival texts, as Bengt Holbek was doing in Denmark. In the 1980s, there were also ideas of a short-lived nature, such as “there is no meaning in a text”. These ideas did not go on long [*laughs*], they just faded away... The “empty texts” idea did not survive, because, on the contrary, texts are just full of meanings, depending, of course, on the interpretations and contexts. In Bergen, semiotics was important as another way of analysing meanings in texts. I think that at that time researchers spent time not only on writing about folklore and what they thought it might be, but also on analysing folklore texts quite thoroughly. Structure as such disappeared into history – I mean the study of the structural schemes only, but in the study of meanings the structures of texts are of course one of the basic things. The study of different structures of performed tales helps to illuminate how the performer could remember and perform the tale later. And then there were other themes, which became important much later. Identity became important in the late 1970s and women’s studies also came to the fore in Bergen. For instance, Aili Nenola, a pioneer of Finnish women’s studies, gave a paper in Bergen. This

is interesting because these topics were taken up by very young people. At the same time the traditional type of studies were going on as well. If I think about these conference towns, how they colour the meetings, then Budapest was also special. People there were very much interested in belief traditions, in medieval and later European traditions. When scholars like Éva Pócs were among the organisers, they gave colour to the whole conference. In Budapest the organisers were interested in myths and the conference there was very different from the Helsinki one, stressing everyday oral lore.

**ÜV: Next summer we shall have the congress in Athens. If you look at the developments in folkloristics, what do you think will happen there? Could you predict some topics, new fields, prevailing ideas, approaches? Where is folkloristics going?**

**A-L.S [laughs]:** I don't know really what will happen in Athens; I need to think about this. Of course, I know the interests of the Finnish scholars going there, and of many other researchers, too. In Finland, we have been interpreting culture a lot according to the way of British cultural studies. A group of researchers in Finland is studying oral history – that's one way. I don't know if epic studies are represented in Athens as they have been at other conferences. It would be very important for Asian and African and South American peoples who don't have written traditions; also in China, quite a lot of people who study folklore represent minority cultures, which still have wonderful classical folklore traditions. It is something we should think about. In the 1990s, I sat on the Finnish commission of UNESCO for six years and took part in the Paris conferences. For that reason I am aware that folklore studies are important in the world for many minority peoples and developing countries. Hence we should study folklore

that is important for identity and the sense of belonging. For example, in India there are so many different groups of people and castes, they all want something valuable to represent their culture, and they want to see it printed, too.

It is difficult to say what will be happening in the Western countries. I usually look for international economics and the relations of leading countries to reveal what will happen. At the moment the world is moving, after the globalising movement, towards something multi-centred. China is rising rapidly. We have the Internet and other technologies for global communication, so that everything is simultaneously in our reach. We can look, for example, at the publications in the United States at home because we can find them through the Internet, or publications of other countries. All the theories go round and people have lots of contacts with other people, not just letters going from country to country, as in the time of my teacher Matti Kuusi and his friend Archer Taylor, who wrote 300 letters to each other, but met only three times. Because of new technology, things are happening very quickly – if somebody has an idea, it goes around immediately. We have instruments for a very quick development of our research, but on the other hand, when we get everything we want and can buy books immediately through Internet companies, we may lose perspective. We should evaluate and select new ideas more carefully. The one who can understand what is important and what is not important is going to be the winner and there should be more discussions about this.

I have been dealing with publishing houses a lot, for example in Germany and England. They want to publish research that can be sold to anybody and that suits any average academic reader, and, hence, represents quite simple methodical stuff. This kind of stuff sells well and a great number

of postgraduate students read this. They read books from the big publishing houses, rewrite the ideas they find there and thus the same ideas go around again and again. Well, researches are consumers today. This means that in folklore studies we should really evaluate what we want to study, what our basic aims are and how to do it, what to think about in the world and – what is important – about the world.

What is in the air, in the present climate of the world, is the individual, the average person instead of communities, societies and cultures. On TV, they show the likes of "reality shows" the whole time. This is not a time for big heroes, or for great names, who can tell us how we have to think about everything. This is an era of the ordinary man and commonplace things, when everybody has a chance to formulate his or her own ideas – but, of course, on the basis of the commonly accepted ways of seeing the world. We could ask whose ideas our individuality is based on, whose ideas we consume. I would say that media has a very big role in our culture and, hence, in steering the research interest. I feel that the everyday life of any person is an important target for research. But, as a representative of an older generation, I want to put a person in her/his social and cultural networks and in her/his community and history. Actually, I am interested in things, which we do not know yet. For me, to tackle things which are not easily understood gives a tingling feeling. It is interesting to see what will be the result of the Athens conference. The subtopics are interesting, for example one concerning ecology, the relationship of man and nature. As a researcher presently studying Siberian myths and rituals in the areas in which nature is now deteriorating very rapidly because of global warming, I feel that we should take climate change into our considerations.



## ISFNR Meetings From the Perspective of Europe and North America

Interview with Barbro Klein

*On November 15 and 16, 2008 Professor Pertti Anttonen (Helsinki) arranged a workshop entitled "Heritage Politics and the Theory of Cultural Transmission" at the Department of Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki. One of the participants was Barbro Klein, Deputy Principal of the Swedish Collegium for Advance Study (SCAS) and Professor Emerita of Ethnology, Stockholm University. Our conversation with her about the history of the ISFNR took place on November 15, in Helsinki.*

**Ülo Valk: The ISFNR has been a society whose aim has been to bring researchers together at congresses and interim conferences. You have been at several congresses. Please, would you like to talk about these events, some of the participants and dominating ideas? What was it like to be a folklorist in the 1970s?**

Barbro Klein: These little recollections are very disconnected. The congress that stands out most in my memory is the one in Edinburgh in 1979. I had been a member of the ISFNR for quite some time by then; in fact, Katharine Luomala was the one who introduced my name to the ISFNR. This comes with a bit of baggage; I hope you can stomach that. [Laughs] I had been outside the field and left unemployed on my own volition in the early 70s, I had too many children and all the other things to handle. So I was actually out of the immediate folklore business for 7-8 years and living primarily in New York City at the time, handling a major business together with my former husband, and spending summers in Sweden. So I took off this time, determined that I was going to re-tie links and bonds with old friends and colleagues. That's why I set out from Sweden to go to Edinburgh. There is one big scene that stands out in my memory and that was the big assembly in Edinburgh where for the second time,

I believe, the idea of going to Mysore was being introduced. But the discussion was very volatile and many people were upset and engaged. Alan Dundes held a really burning speech in defense of why we should go to Mysore but a number of famous European folklorists were worried – 'o this is not gonna be possible, they cannot possibly do it in India and how we are gonna travel that far'. Of course, Alan Dundes was entirely persuasive of why we had to go: 'Is this an international society or not?' And it stood out with clarity that this was a highly Eurocentric group, dominated by European scholars and a few American scholars. I remember that particular discussion because it was later repeated in another context in another way at SIEF. The two relate to each other because of Reimund Kvide-land and the particular position of Nordic folklorists and ethnologists in those societies. But it was Jawaharlal Handoo who consistently did push through the idea of Mysore. He said that if you want to come to Mysore, I will see that it will happen. It did not happen until 1995. This was almost twenty years later. You can imagine the intensity and the anxiety – 'OK, they can come to us, we know, how to arrange this...'

To go back to Edinburgh, one of the important and personal things for me was to reconnect with Elli Köngäs-Maranda. We had known each other in graduate school. In fact, we were sharing a room together in 1962 in Indiana. She had been off for a year to work with Roman Jakobson at Harvard but she came back. We met in the summer school of the Folklore Institute in Indiana when Linda Dégh came to the U.S. for the first time and structuralism was taught for the first time and introduced by Thomas Sebeok; later Alan Dundes more or less took it over. Then in this seminar I was there, Dell Hymes was there, Pierre Maranda was there too. In that particular seminar Elli met Pierre Maranda and



Barbro Klein has published extensively on politics of cultural heritage and studying folk culture in the context of transnational migration.

Photo by Ülo Valk.

things happened... So they sailed off in the thunderbird, it's really true. One of the reasons why I mentioned Elli Köngäs is that I think that this was an occasion when she came with one version of her "Theory and Practice of Riddle Analysis," which is an incredible paper.<sup>1</sup>

**ÜV: The ISFNR has always been an international society but it seems that it was ruled by Europeans and remained quite Eurocentric for many years...**

BK: This is my absolute conviction. I think it is very important and unfortunate but part of the history. It was the same with SIEF but I think that the ISFNR handled it much better and I would say that Alan Dundes had a lot to do with that. When he was convinced of something... The mere fact that Mysore took place and was such an enormous success in terms of arrangements and thrill for the people who were there made ISFNR break through into other continents. It is a major-major thing! I think it erased a lot of stereotypes and prejudice. Then the ISFNR went on to Nairobi, Santa Rosa and so on.

This all would never have happened without Jawaharlal. The Mysore event made it possible for young European scholars and students to interact with Indian intellectuals and this was a real eye-opener to me. I had met a few like A. K. Ramanujan, whom I knew from Bloomington as a student in 1960s. Ramanujan was also one who was really important in Edinburgh. But we had not met so many Indian intellectuals before. In Mysore we became to understand the riches that are there.

**ÜV: So the world of folkloristics was expanding, new insights, perspectives, methodologies were introduced at congresses?**

BK: I would say, in a big way. If you have scholars of the status of Elli-Kaija Kõngäs-Maranda, who, I think, is being undervalued in many parts of the world, and Alan Dundes... This was the frontline of the field. ISFNR was the main forum where the new ideas were debated, where new insights were very much coming. They may not have been launched there for the first time but it was not the backwater, absolutely not. Of course, there were brainy people around. A lot of lectures gathered great numbers of people. One would be David Buchan. I remember him well from Bergen, we became good friends... David was famous in Scotland for his lecturing abilities, so a lot of Scots were there but a few others would gather as well. Listening to him was absolutely a ground field. If you think about his work on the ballad as folk narrative, this was extremely sophisticated theoretically. And that, of course, was transmitted through the kind of rhetorical elegance of David Buchan, this was extremely important.

**ÜV: Looking back into the history of folk narrative research, it seems that one tendency has been how narrative as text has been linked with society, how the performance and storytelling communities have been brought into the narrative. How would you describe the changes in folk narrative research on the way from Edinburgh to Bergen and the next congresses?**

BK: I think Lauri Honko dominated the Bergen meeting. I blocked it out, his corpus stuff – the thick corpus. I am pretty sure that he started the debate then. When it came to Lauri at this time, I did not go to listen to him then. I think that from a European perspective the ISFNR was for many years on the frontline. Not, however, if you look at it from the perspective of North America, the performance school – it was absolutely misunderstood by European scholars. It was made fun of. 'What's the big deal? We have known about that for years, what is this all about? This is just descriptive methodology.' A lot of European scholars and Alan Dundes said this. European folklorists were dead sure that they knew what it was, so what was the big deal among the Americans, Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock and others? Reimund Kvideland wrote an article in a little book on Nordic folklore studies where he expounded his ideas on performance studies in the early 1980s. Reimund just thought that these Americans are making the whole thing much more complicated than it has to be. I was childish. I got mad and responded, not at ISFNR but in a lot of other contexts [laughs]. Reimund was mad with me; he never got over it, which saddens me. I taught in Bergen for a while and we were quite good friends. I think that he was a fantastic folklorist. But this was really a big issue and really a watershed, a dividing line. As I saw it, none of them even began to understand the performance theory because they thought that talk about Erving Goffman and ethnopoetic transcription was nonsense.

**ÜV: How did things start to change? How did Europe open up for American folkloristics and toward a more comprehensive approach? Did you see a change in Mysore?**

BK: By that time, definitely. Bergen probably contributed to that, too. Göttingen was in between and Folklore Fellows' Summer Schools have also played a great part in that. By that time I had made my peace with Lauri

Honko. If I may say so, a few of us played some role in this. This will sound very much like bragging, but one was Galit Hasan-Rokem, and another one was me – at least for Northern Europe. I taught American folkloristics, making it not some mysterious, snobbish thing but trying to lay hands on it, show, what it was all about; what Dennis Tedlock really meant when he wrote that transcription is an analytic act, that this is not some way of showing off but it can really yield important results. There were others as well; Elli would have done it because of her incredible brilliance. Also, people started travelling a lot more, exchanging scholarships. If you think about Folklore Fellows' Summer Schools, a lot of very important people were there – Charles Briggs came, Dick Bauman, John Foley, but they often went over the heads of European young students who could not understand either their English or the sophistication... Some of us translated this for students into a language they could understand.

**ÜV: This is true. I first met the leading American folklorists at the Folklore Fellows' Summer School in Mekrijärvi in 1995. I remember well your inspiring lecture on the contemporary Swedish urban traditions but I also remember the frustration when some discussions went beyond my understanding. However, it was an extremely positive feeling to have a first-hand experience of international folkloristics, as memories about the iron curtain were still so vivid. It is wonderful that today we can look back at these times together. Thank you so much for your recollections!**

BK: I did not say so much but I talked a lot [laughs].

<sup>1</sup> Elli-Kaija Kõngäs-Maranda, "Theory and Practice of Riddle Analysis." In: *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 84, No. 331, Toward New Perspectives in Folklore (Jan. - Mar., 1971), pp. 51-61.

## Accepting Responsibility for the Advancement of Research

Email interview with Lee Haring

**Elo-Hanna Seljamaa: How and when did you become a member of the ISFNR?**

**Lee Haring:** In the late 1970s, Richard Dorson, the most forceful proponent of formal university training in folklore studies, was gracious enough to ignore the fact that I had no such training, and to ask me, "Do you ever go to international meetings?" I found he was thinking in particular of the upcoming ISFNR meeting in Edinburgh, a favourite city of mine, so I decided to attend that meeting in 1979. The unceremonious membership procedures enabled me to join that year.

**E-H.S: Are there any ISFNR meetings – congresses or conferences – that have stayed in your memory and why?**

**LH:** It was deeply affecting to be back in Nairobi in 2000, thirty years after living there, and to renew the connection with East African colleagues.

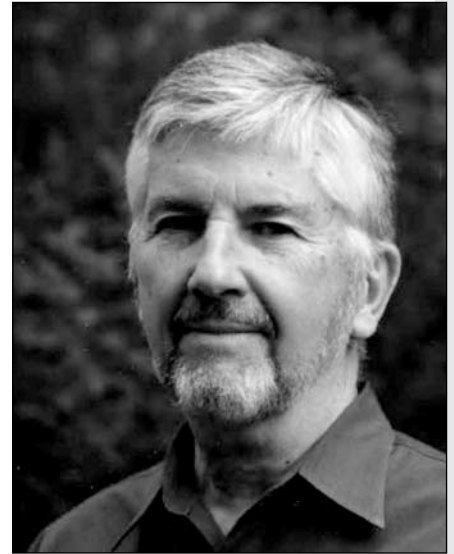
**E-H.S: Many European folklorists see the ISFNR meetings of the 1970s and early 1980s as a meeting ground for European and American folkloristics. How did you perceive these occasions and the approaches that were dominating in Europe at the time?**

**LH:** To me, the most exciting thing in those meetings was the opportunity to meet folklorists from Eastern Europe. I'd never met a Russian scholar before. As an American, I at first found some of their work uninspiring and their methods out of date; later, I stopped wishing they could take up "our" methods, and instead mentally paid them many a tribute, for creating and maintaining a place for the local and ethnic against the pressures of uniformization. In particular, it's always been important for me to discover approaches used in France, whose colonial officers and ethnologists produced data I

have relied on. I was a bit worried that the Americans, instead of absorbing methods from Europe and initiating collaborations, would simply act as though the ISFNR were one more meeting of the American Folklore Society. At that time, there was a movement – misguided, I thought – to extend the scope of topics beyond narrative. Yes, the meeting ground was there at ISFNR congresses, but not enough deep communication was instituted. The organisation took no responsibility between congresses to advance research in folk narrative across national boundaries.

**E-H.S: The ISFNR has from the very beginning been an international society by its name. The first time the society convened outside Europe was in 1995 in Mysore, fifteen years after the idea of having a meeting in India was proposed for the first time. You have worked extensively in Mauritius, Madagascar and other countries in the Indian Ocean and studied the folklore of these formerly colonised islands. From the perspective of this experience and knowledge, how would you discuss the relationships between the international, the European, and the national?**

**LH:** The de facto meaning of 'international' in the name was 'several European countries.' Before that meeting in Mysore, there were some scholars who feared travelling to India for any purpose, even a folk narrative congress. Fortunately for those who overcame their fear enough to attend, it was supremely well organised – the best-organised ISFNR congress in my memory – and the fine work of our Indian colleagues began to be more recognised. I have been grateful to be able to report on my research outside Europe to European colleagues. Moreover, a sense that folklore scholarship was increasingly connected around the world greatly facilitated my writing of UNESCO's Manual on



Lee Haring is Professor Emeritus of English, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. His recent publications include the story collection *Stars and Keys: Folktales and Creolization in the Indian Ocean* (2007).

*Photo: private collection.*

Safeguarding Oral Traditions and Expressions (not yet published). The ISFNR now has a lot of catching up to do. The meaning of 'Europe' has changed; the nationalist passion that animated the beginnings of folklore studies has been discredited; modes of scholarly communication, which folklorists have not used or profited from, abound. Folk narrative scholarship has new contours, which situate it in a pluridisciplinary location simply by virtue of the dispersal of its practitioners, who are pleased to meet together under a single disciplinary title. These facts pose challenges to an organisation calling itself International.

**E-H.S: What are your expectations regarding the next ISFNR congress in Athens?**

**LH:** I expect collegiality, first and last. I hope the excellent leadership of recent years will be continued and extended. I dream of papers in Athens which declare their own place in history, the social surround of their methods, and the national traditions of thought on which they are



based. I dream of papers in which the real subject is the crossing of local and national boundaries, and in which the real aim is the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. I dream of an ISFNR giving itself some shape, beyond merely being a mechanism for bringing scholars together; of an ISFNR that accepts responsibility for

the advancement of research and encourages international collaborations, which will integrate folk narrative research into the larger intellectual currents of the 21st century. I dream of a growing, collaborative complex of Internet documents, accessible from the ISFNR web site, where anyone can learn the history of folk narrative

scholarship in any nation, the contrasting traditions of thought that animated it, and the present and future goals of researchers – with links, of course, to texts of the world's folktales, legends, myths, and ballads. Those are my dreams; my expectation is that we'll all be delighted to see one another.

## Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens (The National Documentation Centre for Popular Culture)

by Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki,

Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, Greece

The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, which until 1966 was known as The Folklore Archive, was established in 1918, originally as an independent institution.<sup>1</sup> It was Nicolaos Politis who inspired and founded it. He was Professor of Greek Archaeology and Mythology at the University of Athens and 'father' of the discipline of folklore in Greece. Stilpon Kyriakidis was the first director of the Archive.

The aim of the Archive was "to collect, preserve and publish the memorials and records of the life and language of the Greek people." This work was considered to be of such national importance, however, that in 1926 the then Folklore Archive was placed under the aegis of the Academy of Athens.

In 1944 the Senate of the Academy of Athens approved the first regulations for the operation of the folklore archive, compiled by Georgios Megas – a disciple of Nicolaos Politis – who was director of the Archive from 1936 to 1955. In accord with its regulations the aim of the Folklore Archive was, firstly, to collect folklore material of every kind and to publish it. In particular, its aims are in accord with those pursued by similar scholarly institutions in other countries, as formulated in the decree of the folklore conference held in Lund in 1935.<sup>2</sup>



The building of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens.  
*Photo by courtesy of the HFRC.*

These aims are:

- To collect all published texts on folk culture, to extract any relevant information and to compile bibliographies.
- To enrich unpublished material drawn from oral tradition through fieldwork conducted by its research staff, through the institution of competitions, through the circulation of questionnaires to institutions or individuals, etc.
- To preserve in their original form or in copy the texts of the Centre's folklore collections.
- To classify into separate archives the folklore material that has been extracted so that it is accessible to researchers by subject.
- To publish the Centre's annual. This publishes studies written by researchers working at the Centre. The Centre also publishes independent scholarly publications in the form of books, maps, records, DVDs, etc.

The archive of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre contains a rich collection of holdings: folklore material in written form, musical recordings, photographs, film and video material and the museum collection of folklore objects (established in 1939 and today containing about 1000 exhibits), which pertain to every aspect of folk culture regarding the material and spiritual life of the Greek people.

In the century since Nicolaos Politis, the founder of Greek folklore studies, embarked on the recording of the folk life and culture of Greece, a body of valuable manuscripts has gradually formed. The manuscript archive consists of 7946 mostly unpublished manuscripts containing information on a variety of folklore materials. They derive from fieldwork carried out by the Centre's research staff members, by external associates of the Centre, by members of the public with a personal interest in Greek folklore, by the institution of annual competitions involving the collection of folklore material and by the contribution of data

by interested laypersons and professionals. The research staff members of the period, few though they were, fulfilled their various tasks. Without technical assistance, they recorded regional Greek folk culture through interviews, recordings, photographs, film, manual recording and participant observation, often under conditions of financial and material duress.

#### **Classification and Creation of the Ordered Material Archive**

After the information was extracted from the raw material recorded by fieldworkers, it was ordered and filed in accordance with the principles of questionnaires as laid out in the works by G. A. Megas, *Zitimata Hellenikis Laografias* ('Matters of Greek Folklore') vol. 1-3 and by S. D. Imellos and A. Polymerou-Kamilakis, *Paradosiakos Ilikos Vios tou Hellenikou Laou* ('The Traditional Material Culture of the Greek People'), thus forming the Ordered Material Archive of the Centre. The digitisation, in the form of computer-readable databases, of this Archive is proceeding as part of various, mainly European Community, programs.

**National Music Collection:** A music section was created as part of the Folklore Archive, which in 1927 absorbed the National Music Collection. The National Music Collection was founded in 1914<sup>3</sup>, "to preserve and collect the songs, dances and musical instruments of the Greek people." In 1939 the Archive acquired recording equipment. Due to the stormy political events of the time and despite the then director, Georgios Megas', efforts to employ this equipment "for the recording of folk music," it was not until 1950 that it finally began to operate, when the Folklore Archive acquired a music research staff member, with the result that the Centre possesses recordings dating from 1952. Today the Archive contains about 30,000 reels and cassettes of mainly musical material. As part of a series of special projects, the entire recorded material is being gradually copied in digital form in the *Menelaos Pallantios* spe-

cially equipped studio of the Centre. In 2005, as a result of a donation by Eleni Dalas, the Centre acquired a collection of musical recordings on eighty cylinders and the *panarmonium* once belonging to Constantinos Psachos.

**National Record Collection:** The National Record Collection was established in the Folklore Centre in 1966 in accordance with Law 4545. Record companies deposit records of folk and popular music in the National Record Collection. Today the Collection possesses about 13,000 records and CDs in duplicate and is continuously acquiring new material provided by music companies and individuals.

**Cinema Archive:** In 1962, the then director Georgios Spyridakis founded the cinematographic section for folk culture topics. This was subsequently added to by research staff member Georgios Aikaterinidis. The Archive possesses 82 films, totalling about 8,500 m, of folklore material recorded on 16 mm film. Since the 1980s, research staff members have been using video cameras during fieldwork and at present are also using digital cameras. As part of its ongoing programme of reorganisation and modernisation, the Folklore Centre has embarked on converting its cinematographic material to digital form, thus making it more easily accessible. A start has been made with the 16 mm films in the collection. Greek television has often made use of cinematographic material held in the Centre in its programmes.

**Museum Collection:** The Museum Collection of Folklore Objects was established in 1939 and today has about 1000 exhibits. The Collection consists of objects such as agricultural tools, utensils, clothes, ceramic objects and musical instruments. It has recently acquired new holdings, including the *panarmonium* once belonging to Constantinos Psachos and objects of folkloric interest belonging to the Hellenic Folklore Society, some of which are displayed in the municipality of Athens Centre for Folk Art and Tradi-



Wooden replica of a swallow (*chelidona*) held by children singing carols on March 1st to welcome spring to Greece. This swallow is the logo of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens.

*Photo by courtesy of the HFRC.*

tion, housed in the former residence of Angeliki Chatzimichali. The objects in the Museum Collection have been recorded in a database. The Archive is responsible for their conservation and various objects are displayed in turn in a permanent exhibition on the Centre's premises. A catalogue of the contents of this Collection is also currently being compiled.

**Photographic Archive:** The Centre has a rich photographic collection of over 30 000 photographic prints and numerous negatives. These photographs constitute part of the manuscripts produced by research staff members during the course of their

fieldwork. The Photographic Archive is gradually acquiring more holdings thanks to research staff members' fieldtrips and important donations. The electronic classification of these photographs in special picture files is but one of the special projects currently being undertaken by the Archive, a process that naturally contributes to the fullest possible development of the Archive.

#### **The Library**

The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre's Folklore Library was founded in the very earliest years of the Folklore Archive. It was further organised after World War II and acquisitions were generally dictated by the research

interests and needs of the Centre's research staff members. The library is a specialised scholarly non-lending library and is used chiefly by the research staff members of the Centre. It is, however, also used by scholars, postgraduate students and other researchers who may wish to consult it. It contains about 20 000 titles, among which are rare folklore and other publications of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The library is acquiring material all the time and is systematically kept up to date through purchases and donations of books, journals, offprints and other Greek or foreign publications. Today access to the printed material of the library is also possible through an online catalogue.<sup>4</sup>

Over the past decade, the Centre has also become better placed than ever to preserve and digitise its collection of valuable material. Its physical surroundings have also been considerably upgraded, as it is now housed in an elegant neoclassical building in the centre of Athens, the gift of the Lilian Voudouri Foundation.

#### **Developing a National Documentation Centre for Popular Culture, 2004-2008**

This task refers to the development by the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of a national centre for the documentation of traditional and contemporary Greek culture as part of Information Society (2004-2008). In particular, this task includes the following subtasks:

##### **1. Services for the digitisation of the Folklore Archive and development of infrastructure, namely hardware and software.**

- A.) Development of services for digitising, processing and entering material of the Folklore Archive of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre into databases.
- B.) Provision and installation of:
  - B.1. Equipment (Hardware)



## B.2. Software

As part of this subtask the Centre was provided with two scanners of the bookscanner I2S type which successfully deal with the needs of the Centre to digitise its manuscript material.

With regard to software, the SCCM© application installed in the HFRC is a full implementation of electronic filing and management of archives and collections of cultural content. The functionality of SCCM© supports the digitisation, electronic documentation, and dissemination of cultural archives with modern electronic media. The support of digitisation and documentation of cultural archives and collections is achieved through an advanced, user-friendly, open architecture information environment, and is fully compatible with contemporary and established international standards and practices of cultural informatics.

The SCCM© application has distinct subsystem documentation of digitisation, which offers users all the necessary functions for the documentation of digital resources of different forms. The digitisation documentation subsystem offers support for different file types (picture, sound, video); compatibility with international standards (TIFF, JPEG, GIF, RAW); bulk introduction of digital content. Apart from the original hires digital copy additional derivatives are also supported:

1. Secondary copy for access from the Internet.
2. Secondary copy for preview (thumbnail).

The cultural scientific documentation subsystem supports recording information on cultural objects relating to identity, creation, use and structure of objects.

The subsystem has the following characteristics:

- Information for each item is listed in the form of metadata.
- The metadata standard used is fully compatible with CIDOC/CRM.
- Use of UTF coding in the database,

for the support of characters and accents from different languages.

- Full support of thesauruses, compliant with the standards of ISO2788 and ISO5964, for monolingual and multilingual thesauruses, respectively.
- Access to clients provided by using a web browser environment.
- Remote documentation via the Internet, through appropriately authorised users and through strong security mechanism.
- The system does not impose any restrictions on the number of documentation fields and the types of data supported.
- It provides the user with advanced search functions in all fields and related digital copies.
- Saves, indexes and retrieves digital content fast, either by using keywords or attributes defined by the users or the nature of the content.
- SCCM© environment offers user-friendly search functionality.
- Allows overview of digitised copies.
- Supports search combining structured relational data and content (full text search).

SCCM© has the ability to export metadata in XML format, thus providing easy interfacing with other applications. The XML metadata approach ensures compatibility of semantic content of archives, the interoperability of the application, and facilitates publishing on the Internet.

In particular, during this subtask, the following materials were put in digital form, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Information Society.

- 400 000 pages from the manuscript archive
- 135 000 entries from the Archive of Indexed and Classified Folklore Material
- 11 500 photographs
- 1500 hours of archive film 1/4" 7 1/2 ips, 3 3/4 ips and 1 7/8 ips
- 110 hours of archive 78 rpm records

## 2. Electronic processing of digitised folklore material.

The digitised material was checked and entered in databases.

## 3. Conversion into Electronic Form of Manuscript Catalogues of Indexed and Classified Material.

During this subtask the following items were digitised in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Information Society:

- Songs, 120 000 pages of entries
- Riddles, 10 200 pages of entries
- Material culture, 70 000 pages of entries
- Toponyms, 13 500 pages of entries
- Distichs, 15 300 pages of entries
- Surnames, 10 200 pages of entries

## 4. Digitisation of HFRC Annuals.

The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre publishes an Annual. In total, since 1939 when the first volume was published, 29 volumes have been published, making a total of about 10 300 pages. The Annuals contain the following materials:

- Reports on fieldwork projects undertaken by the Centre's research personnel on the collection of folklore material, carried out in various areas of Greece.
- Studies written by the research personnel of the Centre and by its associates.
- Systematic bibliographies on folk culture.
- Reports on the activities of the Centre.

The digitisation of the Annual will facilitate its circulation. Henceforward an electronic edition of the Annual will be published, which can be circulated in automated fashion in parallel with the printed version. Furthermore, for users of the Annual who do not wish to purchase the whole volume in printed form, the electronic form will allow direct access to individual articles at no cost, by means of the Academy of Athens portal.

## 5. Developing the Application of

### Folk Culture Multimedia.

At the moment, this consists of the *Laografikos Atlas tis Elladhos* ('Folklore Atlas of Greece'). This is a digital atlas, of traditional Greek culture. It covers the whole of Greece in terms of particular sets of themes of traditional culture.

### 6. Development of the Educational Application of Multimedia.

The main aim of this is to link education with the treasury of folk culture. The educational exploitation of the material will be a means of inspiring interest in school students. The educational computer program is simple and user-friendly for teachers and students alike, while also giving educators the opportunity to use it as part of the educational process.

### 7. Creation of Portal on Greek Folklore.

The portal will allow the end user access to the content of the various collections of the Folklore Centre, to the Annual and to the Centre's publications. Publications by the Centre include studies published from 1920 up to the present day, although in view of their age some are difficult to access, and questionnaires for the collection of folklore material that are widely employed by collectors.

Of particular importance is the association between the Centre and various regional cultural associations, which for more than a century have rendered extremely valuable service, in the context mainly of urban centres, in the form of collection, study and preservation of materials of traditional Greek culture. The database that the Centre has created, and communication via the portal, will facilitate their work.

Thanks to digitisation, the specialised researcher, the user working at a distance and the educational community will have access to the resulting digitised material, thereby bringing about a completely new set of capabilities for the exploitation of this rich material. The portal will function as an information centre on the activities of the Centre, while also developing means for communication and the exchange of views.

The infrastructure created has allowed the Centre to complete, through its own means, the digitisation of the Manuscript Archive, of all its publications and of certain old works on folklore now difficult to obtain. These editions are henceforward accessible to the public by means of the Centre's portal. The aim in future is to digitise material immediately upon its placement in the Archive and to incorporate it in the existing infrastructure.



Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki, director of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, Greece.

*Photo by courtesy of the HFRC.*

<sup>1</sup> Law 1304, Greek government gazette A', n. 85/18-04-1918

<sup>2</sup> See *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, Bd/6, 1935, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> Law 432

<sup>4</sup> See [www.academyofathens.gr](http://www.academyofathens.gr)

## Archie Green, Labor Folklorist, 1917-2009



Archie Green and Nancy Yan in San Francisco. Nancy Yan is a doctoral candidate in folklore through the English Department at the Ohio State University. Her dissertation research examines Chinese restaurants in the American context as sites of contested authenticity and American identity.

*Photo: private collection.*

Archie was a scholar, activist, and mentor to the end. He was 91 when he passed away on March 22, surrounded by friends and family. But in those ninety one years, he left an indelible mark in the lives of the people he came across.

I first met him in 1999 when I was working at the San Francisco Labor Council where Archie would come in once a week to make photocopies. Colleagues introduced us once they knew I was interested in pursuing graduate studies in folklore. From then on, he would invite me to visit at his house and his wife Lou-Anne

would make sandwiches for us as we talked about folklore and politics. He taught me, told stories, and inquired about my life during those times at his house. He introduced me to budding folklorists and "famous folklorists" whom he thought I ought to know. He was constantly encouraging me to pursue my interest in social justice and folklore. "Use me," he insisted. "I know people in the field and I can throw in a good word for you." He continued to harangue me to go to graduate school even when I told him I had already applied and was waiting for an answer.

Archie was born in Canada to Ukrainian Jewish parents, but grew up in southern California. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1939. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and worked as a shipwright in the San Francisco shipyards. He returned to graduate school and obtained a Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Illinois in 1960. One story he told me was of how much he hated it there, the memory of living in a hot attic with no air condition still vivid in his mind. He recalled that he could never sleep well during the heat. One day in class, he fell asleep and the professor bawled him out. Archie awoke and bawled back at him! It was indicative of his wont to not only stand for others but to stand up for himself as well!

In 1968, he received his doctorate in folklore from University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation on the songs of Kentucky coal minors was published in 1972 as "Only a Miner." From 1969 to 1976, he led the arduous effort to lobby Congress for the creation of the American Folklife Preservation Act, its goal to document and preserve the rich cultural traditions of ethnic, regional, and occupational groups. Archie strongly believed that it was important for the nation pursue and value such cultural undertakings in order to acknowledge the plurality of the American population. From the Folklife Preservation Act<sup>1</sup>, the American Folklife Center<sup>2</sup> in Washington, DC was created in order to support these efforts. Archie also taught at the University of Texas until he retired in 1982.

In his retirement years, Archie remained busy as ever with frequent visitors and the phone constantly ringing. He continued his labor activism, serving as the secretary for the Fund for Labor Culture and History in San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> Notable publications include "Tin Men" (2002) which examined the art of tinsmiths and "The Big Red Songbook" (2007) which featured the lyrics to songs from the Industrial Workers of the World's (IWW) Little Red Songbooks from 1909 to 1973.

What was impressive about Archie was that he continued to be current in his knowledge and thinking. Alongside conversations about politics, we also talked about raves and hip hop. He explained to me the origins of the slang term "hip" and gave me fashion advice. He once told me that I should put my hair into little balls on the side of my head (similar to Princess Leia of the Star Wars trilogy) as he had seen the style on some girls in San Francisco.

What I will take from Archie is his commitment to fairness and justice. It can be a fearful thing to stand up to injustice or speak truth to power, but in an interview, Archie told me that there are conflicts all around the world and we have to decide which side we would be on. I will remember that.

I am so saddened by his passing, as many others are, but I know that

he lived a good life. My mother always told me that when someone dies, their spirit guards over the living and ushers good fortune for them. I like to think that Archie's spirit will look out for everyone whose lives he touched and most importantly, he'll be looking out for the field of folklore.

Cheers to a long life well-lived, Archie!

Nancy Yan,  
Columbus (Ohio), USA

## Celebrate the Life and Work of Archie Green

### A Musical Tribute with:

- Hazel Dickens
- Mike Seeger
- Elaine Purkey



Tom Carey

**Where:** McKenna Theatre, Creative Arts Building, San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132

**When:** June 21, 2009 ~ 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Directions:**

- SFSU Campus Map: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~sfsuemap/>
- How to Get to Campus: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~parking/text/tocampus.html>
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<sup>1</sup> The Creation of the American Folklife Center: [http://www.loc.gov/folklife/public\\_law.html](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/public_law.html)

<sup>2</sup> American Folklife Center: <http://www.loc.gov/folklife>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.laborculture.org/> for more information on the fund.



The Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens.

*Photo by Ü. Valk*



## Seeing the Trees and the Wood and What Goes on Beyond the Forest.

Email interview with Ullrich Kockel, President of the SIEF



Ullrich Kockel is Professor of Ethnology and Folk Life at the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster, Derry.

*Photo courtesy of Ullrich Kockel.*

**Elo-Hanna Seljamaa:** It is now almost a year since you were elected president of the *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore* (SIEF). What have been the highlights of this first year for you?

**Ullrich Kockel:** Obviously, a lot of the things that happen during the first months of any term of office have been set in train some time before. Important progress has been made since last summer towards the SIEF being accredited as an NGO in relation to UNESCO's Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. This accreditation marks a significant step for the SIEF, confirming its international relevance beyond purely academic concerns.

At the Derry general assembly, two new working groups were established; one, dealing with heritage and cultural property, is directly relevant to the UNESCO link, while the other, on historical approaches to cultural analysis, enhances the profile of an aspect of ethnology and folklore that sets our fields apart from approach-

es to studying culture that tend to neglect the longitudinal dimension.

The first executive board meeting after Derry also confirmed some initiatives that had been in preparation since before last year's congress, including the assignment of clearly defined portfolios to individual board members. This is an important step towards the board taking on a more strategic role, along similar lines to the boards of comparable scholarly associations. Some new ideas have been put forward, and I am particularly pleased that a 'young scholar's award' will be introduced, to reward the best doctoral dissertation in ethnology and folklore. At a personal level, I am also delighted that a new working group I proposed recently, on 'Place Wisdom', has been approved by the board and is recruiting well.

**What are your current or next main goals as president of the SIEF?**

Our fields continue to suffer image problems in many countries, both East and West. In formerly Communist countries, colleagues often note that ethnology and folklore have become associated – both in the public mind and in the eyes of other academic disciplines – with the rise of nationalism, and are therefore viewed with suspicion, whereas in other countries – the United Kingdom, for example – our fields tend to be regarded as rather amateur pursuits with no great academic credentials because they are considered weak on theory and of little practical value in the post-industrial, post-modern age. Both images are, as all stereotypes, based on partial knowledge and misperceptions. But it is not enough to state this and hope sceptics can be convinced by argument. Deeds will always speak louder than words, and we will be judged by our actions.

In that context, our SIEF working groups have an absolutely crucial role to play. These groups give profile to the core concerns of our fields. Of course, each working group has its particular history and operational context, which needs to be taken into account and can be built on as a resource; some are more active than others, some engage in a broad range of activities while others concentrate on a narrower range. However, compared with other international scholarly organisations, the SIEF has in the past rather underutilised the great potential of the working groups. We, that is, the leadership of the working groups in co-operation with the SIEF executive board, need to look at the various possibilities and find appropriate formats and structures that best support the active development of our fields. I would like to see the working groups taking a strong, formative role in promoting research. Other scholarly societies are claiming their place on the platforms where research agendas are being shaped; just because ethnology and folklore are small fields, compared to sociology, for example, that does not mean we should stay on the sidelines and try to survive on the crumbs that more powerful players drop from the table. Obviously, to change this involves a long-term perspective. Within my term of office, a major goal will be to create an atmosphere that enhances communication and co-operation between the working groups, and between these groups and the SIEF executive board, to strengthen the position and profile of our fields.

A related goal is the creation of a portfolio of benefits for members. At the moment, SIEF membership comes very cheap at €20 per year. In return, our members receive a newsletter and special rates on certain publications. Since the Derry congress, the princi-

ple that you have to be a member to present at a SIEF congress has been implemented and members enjoy a 50% reduction on the congress fee. Other benefits need to be considered to enhance the attractiveness of membership, especially now that it has been agreed that individuals must be members of the SIEF to join a SIEF working group. But providing benefits incurs cost, and so we need to balance cost and benefits very carefully. I would like to explore the possibility of SIEF publications. There was a link with 'Ethnologia Europaea' in the past and I am aware of the problems that led to a parting of ways many years ago, but a periodical of some form or another is a vital element in a scholarly association's portfolio of activities. Perhaps working groups should be encouraged to launch their own journals, possibly on-line, working papers or monograph series, or whatever is most appropriate. We need to think creatively about these issues.

**What are, in your view, the traditional strengths of ethnology and folklore as disciplines? Are they the same or different?**

These are tricky questions to answer. In some countries, folklore is regarded as a discipline that is closely aligned to philology. Other countries take a much broader view. Similarly, in some countries ethnology is treated merely as synonym for folklore, and elsewhere it may be a synonym for a variety of social anthropology, or a designation for a distinctly undisciplined approach to the study of culture. In the 1990s, Alexander Fenton spoke of our fields as running along tracks close together but separated by walls that ought to be pulled down. He had a point, but how do we do that without getting injured by falling debris? To my mind there are at least three strong points that we need to maintain and cultivate, whatever else we do about our disciplinary alignments. Ethnology and folklore are strong on the detailed study of everyday objects and practices. Secondly, they have had a

greater awareness of the historicity of the everyday than other disciplines, even though their practitioners may not always have demonstrated such awareness. Both also have a long-standing commitment to a grass-roots perspective, and have been described by some as 'history from below' for that reason.

What has always attracted me most to European ethnology as an approach has been its pragmatically pluralistic methodology, which makes it particularly suitable for the analysis of real-life questions that are being increasingly recognised as requiring an 'interdisciplinary approach' – by its very nature, ethnology is such an approach. While I am conscious of the different traditions of folklore and ethnology, and view them primarily as an asset, I don't think we should be overly territorial. Debating the finer distinctions between our disciplinary traditions is interesting intellectually, but most people, including our own students, find it hard to see these distinctions as existentially important. While the extent of common ground may vary between different regional and national traditions, the two fields have a great deal in common. We should treat differences as resources for mutual learning rather than as reasons to build fences.

**You came to the field of ethnology after an earlier career in business and industry, as you have put it yourself. How has this influenced your understanding of ethnographic research and its subject matters?**

That relationship worked more in the opposite direction, I think – ethnographic research has influenced my understanding of economic matters. Questions of economy have interested me for a long time, but when I took a kind of 'career break' to study for a degree in business, I became increasingly conscious of the cultural foundations of economic activity, and therefore interested in ethno-/anthropological approaches. Having obtained my first

degree, instead of returning to work in industry, I grasped an opportunity to undertake postgraduate study and later research for a doctorate. During the work on my PhD, I became more acquainted with ethnology and what insights it had to offer into economic life. Issues of culture and economy have remained central concerns in my research. There are colleagues who would argue that in life everything is essentially economic, but I wouldn't be inclined towards such a reductionist perspective. I have looked at other issues from a non-economic perspective, including borders and migration, heritage, spirituality and human ecology. Someone once said: 'There is more to life than biology.' In that sense one could also claim that there is more to human cultural groupings than ethnology, and therefore ethnography is not the only, perhaps not even the best way of studying such groupings and the practices providing the 'glue' that holds them together.

That is why, I think, we need theory. Good theory. We have had bad theory enough in the past, from eugenics to *Volk ohne Raum*, and such theory has contributed to some of the image problems I mentioned earlier. That may be the reason why so many of us have shied away from theorising, on the grounds that if we don't have theory at all, at least it can't be bad. I have come from a disciplinary background that has had far too much theory and little concern for the actuality of everyday life – often illustrated by a quote attributed to the economist Lord Robbins: 'Don't bother me with facts!' What we need is a fertile combination of good ethnography with good theory, not one or the other. As for the subject matter of such research – anything that concerns human beings is a valid subject matter for ethnographic research. We may have to adjust our choice of specific methods, and keep an open mind with regard to interpreting what we find – but we should be doing that anyway. What matters is that we seek to ground our theorising in the lived experience of the people



we are studying, not in some idealised universe of discourse.

**The SIEF is an international organisation that unites scholars working in the field of European ethnology. How would you posit the SIEF in relation to the European and international, on the one hand, and the regional and national, on the other?**

You've said that rather nicely and courageously – 'unites scholars working in the field of European ethnology'. I am thinking there of the Budapest congress in 2001, when a proposal to rename the SIEF as 'Society for European Ethnology' was roundly defeated.

**Actually, I was not trying to make a statement, but I guess that my wording of the question and your reading of it are indicative of the broader terminological and institutional issues we discussed earlier.**

You're quite right, I think. We have already talked about the differences and similarities between ethnology and folklore, and the regional dimensions of both. With the European historical context in mind, it is important to recognise – in the dual sense of perceiving and acknowledging – the significance of all the various traditions. But we should exercise critical discernment as we do so. The Irish philosopher Richard Kearney speaks about 'myths that liberate and myths that incarcerate'. As ethnologists and folklorists, we should be able to make that distinction with regard to our fields. My hope is that we will find a way of building on the strengths that our diversity constitutes within our fields while projecting a more coherent image to the outside world, which is all too often confused about what we do and what our field names stand for. Diversity of traditions can be an obstacle to development, but it can also be a resource. The SIEF can play a crucial role in distinguishing the latter from the former, and thus helping the

joint fields to grow. It is an international – although at present primarily European – scholarly organisation concerned mainly, but no longer (if ever) exclusively, with European cultural groupings. Now is not the time to go into the vexed question of what is 'European' and where 'Europe' should be located, but these are very critical questions that need to be addressed, not just as academic matters but because of their significance in shaping the parameters of everyday lived experience. Arguably, the SIEF is well placed to do that, even if we should not expect it to deliver any neat answers on the spot. The Derry congress last year looked at some of the issues involved, and I am sure that debate will continue in Lisbon in 2011 – and meantime in the working groups.

More than other humanities and social sciences, folklore and ethnology are rooted in not just the national and the regional, but crucially in the local milieu. That inevitably brings political and ethical responsibilities. A key role for the SIEF here is as a platform for mediating between the sometimes, or indeed often, conflicting demands that come from different geopolitical levels. We need to see both: the trees and the wood, as well as understanding, at least in principle, what is going on beyond the forest. If the SIEF can play that connecting and mediating role well, it will make a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the world we live in, and that should be the ultimate goal of any scholarly association.

## Symposium on Historiolas

Tartu, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008

by Jonathan Roper, University of Leeds, UK

Charms often contain stories. These are, to be sure, brief, if not very brief, narratives – typically no more than a sentence in length. The technical term for such micro-narratives, *historiola* (i.e. a tiny story), signals their brevity. And yet such small stories do large-scale work. Historiolas form vital records of, for example, successful healing events in the (mythic) past, which are then referred to in the remainder of the charm, in an attempt to draw a parallel from the successful precedent to the current critical situation. These historiolas, along with much else in charms studies, have received little attention since the 'Golden Age' of charms studies, which can be said to have finished fifty or so years ago, a neglect which the ISFNR's Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming aims to reverse.

Thus it was that scholars from England, Hungary, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania and India assembled in sunny May weather in the university town of Tartu in Estonia for a one-day symposium dedicated specifically to the study of historiolas. Much of the existing thinking about historiolas originates with the great Danish scholar, Ferdinand Ohrt (1873-1938), who in a series of writings popularised the notion of 'encounter charms' (*Begeggnungssegen*, in German). In such encounter charms, the *historiola* relates a

meeting, in which one of the parties is a supernatural healer or a (personified) disease. The first session of the symposium was particularly focussed on such encounter charms. It was opened by Jonathan Roper (Leeds), who questioned the applicability of this model to the English corpus of charm materials. The distinguished Hungarian researcher Éva Pócs (Budapest) then presented a fine overview of Hungarian encounter charms, carefully relating her material to Coptic, Byzantine and Latin analogues. And this opening session was closed by Russian academician Andrei Toporkov (Moscow) who discussed the three forms of encounter charm in the East Slavic material he analysed.

After a coffee break, we then had two papers from the Baltics. Daiva Vaitkevičienė (Vilnius) traced a recurrent dialogue found in both charms and also in legends (an interesting example of parallel formations in separate genres), and Toms Keņcis (Riga) discussed the representation of space in Latvian historiolas, and how that reflected mythological worldview.

The speakers then walked down from the Estonian Literary Museum to the centre of Tartu, where a fine lunch awaited them in a newly restored hotel. Upon our return that afternoon, we were kept from a post-prandial doze by a series of

lively presentations. Mare Kõiva (Tartu) discussed Estonian encounter charms, and was able to draw on a broad range of folkloric documents archived in the very building in which we were gathered. Emanuela Timotin (Bucharest) told us about the presence and role of malefic demons in the historiolas of Romanian charms. And this session was brought to a close by a typically learned paper by Lea Olsan (Cambridge), who surveyed what manuscript evidence can tell us about the use of Latin charms against toothache featuring St Peter, which were recorded in Anglo-Saxon monastic contexts.

The final session took the participants and discussion to pastures new, namely Asia. Vladimir Klyaus (Moscow) presented evidence of charming among the Russian-speaking population of China, illustrated with extracts from his own ethnographic films. Sadhana Naithani's (Delhi) presentation, 'When Charms Encounter Karma,' was an interesting discussion of philosophical issues that can be seen as underlying the use of charms in Indian folk narratives. And our symposium was brought to a close by the veteran researcher of shamanism, Mihály Hoppál (Budapest), whose presentation considered analogies between shamanic song and charms. Again, this presentation was enlivened by illustrative snippets of ethnographic film.



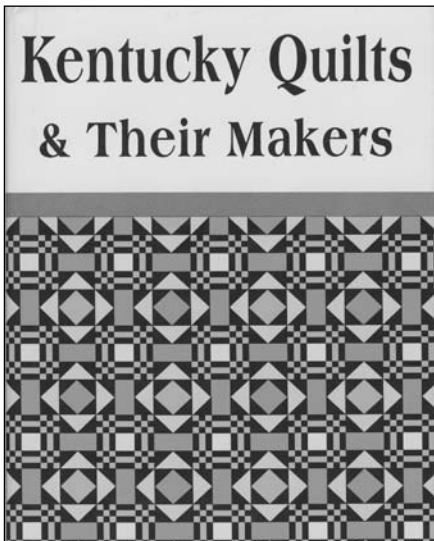
Charms scholars dine and discuss. From left to right: Peter Murray Jones, Lea Olsan, Jonathan Roper, and Éva Pócs.

Photo by Risto Järv.

The conference abstracts can be found at: [http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2008/charms/charms\\_A4.pdf](http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2008/charms/charms_A4.pdf), or via our presence on the ISFNR website, where other resources, such as a growing bibliography of international charms scholarship and details of recent charms studies, can be found. Also on the site is a discussion document assembled by committee member Andrei Toporkov entitled 'Charms indexes: problems and perspectives,' which will form the basis of debate in one of our section's sessions in Athens.

## The 120th Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Louisville, Kentucky, October 22nd-26th, 2008

by Teri Klassen, Indiana University-Bloomington, USA



This volume published by University Press of Kentucky in 1976 is an example of folklore studies research in Kentucky.

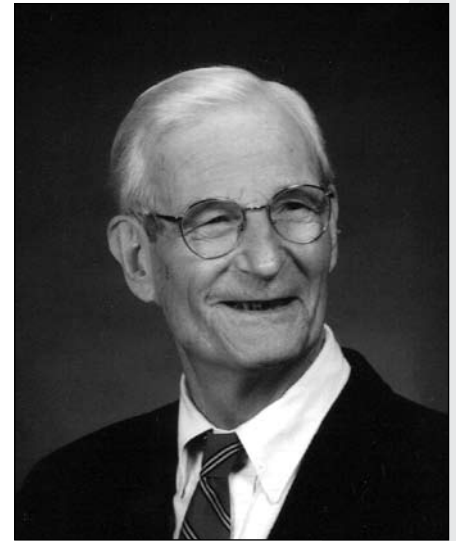
Photo by courtesy of the University Press of Kentucky.

"The Commons and the Commonwealth" was the theme of the American Folklore Society's annual meeting in 2008, bridging time-honoured concepts such as the notion of folk expression as shared culture and cutting-edge issues such as the role of the Internet as a knowledge commons. The word "commonwealth" highlighted the meeting location, given Kentucky's status as such, with its rich folkloristic history involving studies of Appalachian-region folk arts and music as well as concern about perceived exploitation by coal mining. Thanks for this well conceived and stimulating conference are due to the AFS 2008 Annual Meeting Committee: Chris Antonsen, Erika Brady, Tim Evans, Barry Kaufkins, Johnston A. K. Njoku, and Michael Ann Williams from Western Kentucky University; and Bob Gates, Mark Brown, and Sarah Schmitt from the Kentucky Folklife Program.

To my mind, the commons-and-commonwealth theme had a level of significance beyond that of individual papers in indexing developments in the field of U.S.-based folklore studies generally. Whereas the "new perspectives"

of the 1960s and '70s entailed a huge and disorienting expansion of folkloristic subject matter, methods, and theoretical approaches, I perceived at this meeting a strong presence of unifying forces sowing coherence amid the diffusion. Having attended some of the about 330 paper and poster presentations and read abstracts of others, I discuss below five such forces, or axes, that in cutting across diverse speciality areas testify to not only the existence but the current relevance of a scholarly folkloristic commons. These unifying sub-themes are: disciplinary retrospectives, public engagement, popular culture studies, multi-genre studies, and digital technology studies. While this list refers mainly to folklore studies in the U.S., with which I am most familiar, my reading of a recent ISFNR Newsletter (March 2008) suggests that at least some of these trends transcend national borders, for instance those of popular culture studies and digital technology studies. I posit these forces as evidence that certain historical tensions in U.S.-based folklore studies are being resolved, such as that between text-centred and performance-oriented approaches, between academic and public folklore, and between study of traditional and popular culture genres.

1. Historical retrospectives. The many sessions that recounted influential folklorists and aspects of disciplinary history served as sites for traditionalisation, a term that Richard Bauman (1992: 32) defines as "the social need to give meaning to our present lives by linking ourselves to a meaningful past." Such sessions included, "Meeting on the Intellectual Commons: Papers in Honor of Michael Owen Jones," "*With His Pistol in His Hand* for 50 Years: Folklore's Genealogies and the Intellectual Legacy of Américo Paredes,"<sup>1</sup> "The Folklore of Croning" (as a tradition of the AFS Women's Section), "Appalshop: Reflections on 40 Years of Place-Based



Warren E. Roberts, at age 73 in 1997.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Roberts.

Media in Central Appalachia," and "The New Lost City Ramblers at 50," which discussed a band that introduced "authentic" U.S. southern fiddle-and-banjo music to northern U.S. urban audiences. In addition, the forum "Warren E. Roberts and the Communitarian Ideal of Folklife Studies," which discussed this now-deceased Indiana University professor's concept of the "Old Traditional Way of Life" and presented plans for an online Pioneer Museum of Indiana Folklife that would incorporate his research on log buildings. The 2008 David Shuldiner-Phillips Barry Lecture titled "Folklore, Equity, and Political Activism: A Perspective Gained Over 70 Years," featured an interview with independent folklorist Stetson Kennedy, a human rights and labor rights activist who as head of the Florida WPA Writers Project was Zora Neale Hurston's boss.<sup>2</sup> With potential for both celebration and critique, these retrospectives facilitated consensus understandings of sometimes controversial subjects, initiated newcomers, and were vantage points for future research directions.

2. Public programs. Historically, for a variety of reasons, folklorists in the United States have struggled to integrate folk-



lore practice centred in higher education with folkloristic work undertaken in arts councils, museums, and other public agencies. However, the multitude of sessions at this AFS meeting that dealt with public folklore programs suggests that this tension is resolving. Among these were: "Developing and Supporting Regional Folk and Traditional Arts Infrastructure: Eight Years of the Maryland Traditions Program," "Teaching Folklore in an Age of Cultural Studies: The Twin Laws of Folklore Program Development," "'Are You Being Served?' The Library of Congress and You," "Best Practices from the Veterans History Project for Teaching Ethnography to the Public," which concerned a congressionally mandated oral history project that records wartime stories of U.S. veterans; and "Folklorists Beyond the Folk Art Museum—Reflections and Conversations." Beyond the passage of time and the cooling of older arguments, possible explanations for this apparent development of common ground are: continued maturation of the U.S. public folklore sector, the rise of a wider world of "public humanities" work with which public folklore articulates effectively, and the fact that academic folklorists are recognising public programs more clearly as effective channels for promoting folkloristic values and perspectives. The establishment this spring (2009) of a public folklore certification program in Indiana University's Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology is further evidence of this trend.

3. Popular culture studies. Although once stigmatised as a homogenising or adulterating influence, popular culture and mass media are now prominent research areas in diverse branches of folklore studies. Some presentations took a comparative approach (for instance, the forum titled "From Haunted Halls to 'Room 1408' and *The Romance of Certain Old Clothes: The Ghost Story in Folklore, Film, and Fiction*"); others recognised consumer products as a realm of folk expression (for instance, Danille Christensen's (Bloomington, IN) presentation "Form and Value: Material Rhetorics," which concerned



Teri Klassen, left, with consultant Lollie Lee Mann, during a quilt documentation session in western Tennessee, August 2007. Teri Klassen is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at the Indiana University and is writing her dissertation on the social life of American quilts.

Photo: private collection.

contemporary scrapbooks created in "a commodity-mediated commons"). Wolfgang Mieder (Burlington, VT) noted Barack Obama's effective use of folk speech in books and campaign speeches, and Jay Mechling (Davis, CA) observed that mass culture works best when it draws on folk culture.

4. Multi-genre case studies. Several papers incorporated more than one expressive genre in ethnographic studies, an approach which can be construed as synthesising the historic-geographic and philological emphasis on text (be it verbal, behavioural, material, or musical) with the performance studies emphasis on social context of a text's creation and use. An example is John F. Moe's (Columbus, OH) "From the 'Uprooted' to the 'Divided Heart': Norwegian Narrative and Material Folk Culture Traditions in Transition and the Role of the Ethnic Immigration Museum," which compared the experiences of Norwegian heritage by first, second, and third generation immigrants in North America. This trend reflects recognition that each genre has particular traits that may lead to different ethnographic insights.

5. Internet communication and digital technology. Another element of the folklore scholarship commons is the challenge of grappling with the Internet

and digital technology as both subject matter and instrument of study. Papers in diverse areas addressed this topic, including foodways (Heather M. Hoyt's (Tempe, AZ) "Sharing Virtual Meals and Cultural Appreciation: Arabic Foodlore on Websites for English-Speaking Audiences"), museum studies (Alysia D. McLain's (Juneau, AK) "Dos and Don'ts of Going Digital"), and mythology (Ray Lang and Donna Gould's (New Orleans, LA) "Toward a Generative Model for Transformation Myths").

As cultural scanning sites "where new ideas spread rapidly" (Hannerz 1992:206), annual meetings are important resources for keeping our heterogeneous field internally coherent and engaged with current social concerns. I predict and hope that trends such as those listed here will continue to strengthen our interconnectedness at the AFS annual meetings in Boise, Idaho, Oct. 21-25, 2009, and Nashville, Tennessee, Oct. 13-17, 2010.

<sup>1</sup> See also Christensen, Danille Elise 2008. "Américo Paredes: Intellectual Legacies" in: *Currents: News and Views in American Studies*. Indiana University, Bloomington. December 2008, p. 6; <http://www.indiana.edu/~amst/newsletter/>.

<sup>2</sup> WPA (Works Progress Administration) Writers' Project was a U.S. federal government project that provided income to unemployed writers during the Great Depression. For more information about Florida WPA and Stetson Kennedy, please see <http://www.stetsonkenedy.com/>.

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## Conference on Research and Researcher Ethics

by Tiiu Jaago and Ene Kõresaar, University of Tartu, Estonia

**The Oral History and Ethics conference took place in Helsinki on 3-4 December 2008, organised by the oral history network of Finnish universities and research institutions (Muistitietotutkijoiden verkosto: <http://www.finlit.fi/tutkimus/fohn/>)**

Oral history researchers of the Western World have discussed ethical problems since the 1960s, when the first manuals and instructions were issued. At first the ethical issues mainly concerned the collecting, analysis and storage of the so-called oral material. As the documentation and publication technology developed and the methods of oral history spread, the ethical norms have not only become more varied, but also more complicated and this has brought about the need to continue discussion on ethical issues, analyse new experiences resulting from practical work, review what has already been done and challenge existing standpoints.

At the beginning of December 2008 oral history researchers from Finland, England, Sweden, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Estonia came to Helsinki to attend the second international symposium organised by the Finnish oral history network, to discuss the various practical problems of oral history research from the ethical perspective. The main speakers were Robert Perks from the British Library (*Confidentiality, Control, Consent and Co-operation: Ethical Issues in Oral History*) and Arja Kuula from the University of Tampere (*Qualitative Research and the Ethics of Data Archiving*). 15 presentations were divided into parallel sessions, which concentrated, respectively, on the interviewee's anonymity and desire for confidentiality, prevention of ethical issues and the relationship between place/space and ethics.

Oral history researchers deal with different legal and ethical problems in



Robert Perks (British Library) takes questions from the audience after his presentation on issues of confidentiality, control, consent and co-operation in oral history. The session was chaired by Outi Fingerroos (Jyväskylä).

Photo by Ulla-Majja Peltonen.

every stage of their activities. Material has to be collected, taking legal restrictions into consideration, and it is useful to know that in different countries such activities are governed by different law acts: for example, while in the United Kingdom researchers proceed from the copyright law, which deals with the ownership rights and publishing possibilities of the audio recording and speech, in Finland as well as in Estonia the principle of personal data protection is followed, which emphasises other aspects. An oral history researcher involved in intercultural projects has to be aware of legislation valid in the country where she conducts the interviews, because local law governs the contents of the recording. Although the legal aspect of oral history was only slightly touched upon (by Robert Perks and Arja Kuula), the complexity and context-specificity of this area was still brought to the fore. In oral history research more important than legality is ethics which deals with the internal relations of practical oral history and, depending on the problem, may

be highly situative. However – and it was also clearly underlined at the conference – the ethical issues that affect researchers and at the same time shape the research practice are more universal, involving such areas like confidentiality, privacy, dignity and trust.

The conference presentations significantly stressed the problem of the research partner protection: how to forestall potential risks and damage to the interviewee and his/her next of kin; how to protect his/her privacy and human dignity; how to secure the confidentiality of interview data in future? In connection with this topic, the presentations repeatedly highlighted the need to guarantee the anonymity of the informant in the researcher's text, at the same time contesting it as a routine method which cannot always meet its objective. Firstly, anonymity is not only a problem of deleting the name, but under certain conditions is extended to the whole scientific textualisation process: for example, how much/little should we quote the words

of our interview partners within a small place or group study so that our research arguments remain verifiable, but at the same time guarantee the confidentiality of informants, as well as the privacy of the informant and his/her successors? Secondly, it was emphasised that people's (informed) consent to be identifiable, evident and recognisable in the study and responsible for their standpoints should not be underestimated. However, it is namely in this case where the researcher may prefer anonymity and so act against the informant's will. Also in this type of the case, the researcher's judgement is an ethical problem. Sofi Strandén (Åbo Academy) in her presentation laid the stress on the construction created by the researcher: the narrators, whom the researcher allows to speak in his/her text, are only partially "real" people from the researcher's perspective, because they are rather the researcher's construction of them. The interviewee feels responsible for his/her words, because s/he was telling the truth to the best of his/her knowledge. However, depending on the problem-setting the researcher may see something else in the text, between the lines, something the narrator was unaware of, and so the researcher has the final say and "the ownership right" in creating the text. The informant cannot foresee or control the researcher's interpretation, which is why in certain circumstances it may be justified to prefer anonymity even when acting against the narrator's intention.

The problem of anonymisation was also raised in connection with data archiving and here the positions diverge within different disciplines. Historians prefer to archive interviews and other oral history texts for future purposes, so that all biographical data were preserved as completely as possible, but sociologists often remove person-related data already in the collecting process. Arja Kuula's presentation revealed that for the bodies of information of social research a separate decision is made on the preciseness

of background information in every single case, e.g. whether it is necessary to remove data which enable direct identification of the person, to change the individual's or place names, to give background information only in categories, etc. In Finland a data protection system has been developed for this purpose. Naturally, such a substantially exceptions-based system is very expensive and time-consuming. Arja Kuula also criticised



Research interests of Tiiu Jaago include family lore, oral history, and regivärss, Estonian traditional folk songs.

*Photo by Alar Madisson.*



Ene Kõresaar has published widely on the history and memory in post-Socialist Estonian life stories.

*Photo by Alar Madisson.*

those researchers who oppose archiving because it damages the well-being of research partners. Other parallel studies disclose that usually people themselves are not against the archiving of their interviews and they are willing to speak in their own name. They want to make a contribution to science and they value the given information. Openness to researchers is regarded as self-evident, the interview is not considered private. Therefore it seems that the problem partly lies in the researcher: during the interview the researcher also opens up to some extent to the conversation partner (this

is a recognised and widely practiced interview method) and the awareness that the interview is archived may act as a censor to the researcher already during the collecting process. The researcher is not interested in publicising his/her privacy, and besides, in the project-centred world the researcher may be scared of the criticism by other researchers, which may arise when the material is re-used.

One should agree with the presenters (e.g. Jaana Kouri, University of Turku; Jekaterina Melnikova, the European University of St. Peterburg, and Arja Kuula, University of Tampere), who emphasised the ethical level in relation with research partners. It is not only the researcher who makes ethical judgments, but also the informant, starting from the decision whether and how much information s/he shares with the researcher and what the consequences are. Sometimes it is necessary to remind the researcher not to exceed the limit during the interview, confirming that "everything will remain between us", which endangers further research and makes archiving expensive and time-consuming.

In interview situations where the researcher focuses the main attention on creating a trusting relationship, negotiations over the destiny of the interview data (which also includes signing a consent form) may seem a formality interfering with the research, but – it was also emphasised in presentations – considering the future, the informed consent of the interview partner is important. After all, the textualisation and publishing of research data depend on it, and the latter is a very complicated ethical problem due to the varied and complex publishing technologies. How is it really possible to have "informed" consent, do we (both the researcher and the informant) for example really perceive the ethical consequences of publishing in a web environment?

From the researcher's point of view the entire research process is a complicated sequence of ethical choices





Closing of the "Oral History and Ethics" conference in Helsinki.

*Photo by Tomas Bouska.*

and decisions. Ethical dilemmas inevitably emerge in setting the research problem (Pauliina Latvala, University of Helsinki), in fieldwork in relationships with interview partners (Ulla-Maija Peltonen, Finnish Literature Society; Wiktorija Kudela, the Jagiellonian University/Cracow; Gulsina Selyaninova, the Perm State Teacher-training University; Leena Rossi, University of Turku), in the self-reflexivity and methodological reflexivity of the researcher (Marjatta Fyrstén, University of Oulu; Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, University of Jyväskylä; Sofi Strandén, Åbo Akademi; Jaana Kouri, University of Turku), in the choice of research concepts (Simo Laakkonen, University

of Helsinki), in the writing and publication process and public relations (Åsa Ljungström, Mid-Sweden University; Jaana Kouri, Ulla-Maija Peltonen). Ethical issues are complicated and the researcher may find him/herself alone with doubts, weighing the alternative responsibilities to protect the research partners or to publish the research results. It is impossible to control all ethical problems normatively, although in complex situations it might seem helpful. The regulations may seemingly be insufficient. A situation may emerge in which each country or discipline has their own ethical regulations, and that could lead to absurd results. As each stage and aspect of

the research process has its ethical perspectives, the researcher's general ethical attitude (Ulla-Maija Peltonen) and will to support the right thing is of importance. From the standpoint of the researcher's ethical self-realisation, the conference also proved fruitful in the sense that by discussing the same practices and the same problems, also the principles that one has followed in her own choices and quests became more fixed.



## Folklore Studies in Russia: Zhivaja Starina, a Journal Revived

by Heda Jason, Israel

Most regrettably, even now after 20 years, the “iron curtain” has not yet been lifted in the realm of scholarship. The main reason is the lack of language skills on each side. No Internet program can help if a person does not know the language of the publication: automatic translation does not work. A modest exchange of information with reviews of meetings and recently published journals may help to acquaint each side with the other’s work. We will start by drawing attention to a well-respected Russian periodical.

As is well known, *Zhivaja Starina* (‘Living Old-times’) was an important ethnographic and folklore journal in Tsarist Russia. It published materials from Russia proper and from the Turkic and Caucasian peoples of Russia’s possessions in Asia. These texts and descriptions, often the very first recordings of the folk culture of these people, are very precious to our discipline as they present some historical depth. With the upheavals in Russia accompanying the end of WWI and the establishment of the Soviet regime, publication of the journal ceased.<sup>1</sup>

After the change of the regime and the demise of the Soviet Union, publication of the journal resumed in the early 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Among members of the profession, it is now the main and most read folklore journal in Russia. The new *Zhivaja Starina* includes folklore and ethnographic materials, detailed research on specific texts and problems, and discussions of theoretical issues. On the margins, it reports on fieldwork projects and scholarly life, as well as personalia. The emphasis is on Russian folk culture and folklorists, folklore institutions and events. Other Slavic cultures are also discussed; reports on non-Slavic peoples from the Russian Federation and from abroad also have their place.

I will briefly review the contents of the newest volume as an example of the scope of *Zhivaja Starina*.<sup>3</sup> It

begins with theoretical issues: compositional models, and relationships between ethnopoetic genres; proceeds with a group of papers dealing with the genre of epic; follows with descriptions and problems of field work, relationships between folk cultures of diverse ethnic groups in Russia, and the folk calendar in the framework of the folk religions of various Slavic peoples; and includes other sections discussing folk art. Slavic customs are traced to a mythic basis, and the like. A whole section is devoted to Mongolian folk culture.<sup>4</sup> In many issues of the journal, interest in folk religion is conspicuous; this field was neglected during the Soviet period and is now emphasised. Field recordings of customs, rites, belief tales (sacred and demonic legends), jokes, various genres of verse, folk literature, etc. are published and analysed. Regrettably, no English summary has been added to the journal; we hope this will be done in the near future.<sup>5</sup> Conferences are good opportunities to meet people and establish contacts. There are many scholarly meetings, conferences, and congresses held in Russia, in the center as well as in the provinces. News of such meetings, during which many interesting papers are read, does not reach Western scholars. We want to draw attention to central events of this sort. A series of meetings is planned. The first all-Russian Congress of Folklorists took place February 1-6, 2006, with about 500 participants; 137 papers from this congress were published in their entirety.<sup>6</sup> The Second all-Russian Congress of Folklorists is planned for winter 2010 in Moscow. This forum is expected to meet every four years. Foreign scholars are encouraged to take part.<sup>7</sup>



*Zhivaja Starina* is the leading folklore journal in Russia.

<sup>1</sup> Published quarterly 1890–1917; ed. by V.I. Lamsky; publisher: The Ethnographic Department of the Geographic Society of the Russian Empire.

<sup>2</sup> Publication started in 1994 by the Gosudastvennyj Respublikanskij Tsentri Russkogo Fol'klora [Republican State Centre for Russian Folklore], Moscow. The graphic and publication formats of the original journal have been kept; quarterly issues of 72 pages each. The first editor was N. I. Tolstoj (1994–1996); current editor is S. Yu. Nekljudov. Journal address for authors: Turchaninov Per. 6, 119034, Moscow, Russia. E-mail: crf@inbox.ru (with note: “for *Zhivaja Starina*”).

<sup>3</sup> Year 2008, [n.s., vol. 15], issues 1/57, 2/58, 3/59, 4/60.

<sup>4</sup> Issue 3(59), pp. 17–38.

<sup>5</sup> The journal can be ordered through the website [www.rosp.ru](http://www.rosp.ru), Russian Newspapers and Magazines – 2008, no. 73149. ISSN 0204-3432.

<sup>6</sup> Pervyj vsrossijskij kongress fol'kloristov. Sbornik dokladov [First All-Russian Congress of Folklorists. Collection of papers]. Ed. By A.S. Kargin. 4 vols. (pp. 447+463+439+415). Moscow: Gosudarstvennyj Respublikanskij Tsentri Russkogo Fol'klora.

<sup>7</sup> Contact address:

Orggruppa Kongressa  
Turchaninov per., d.6  
119034 Moscow, Russia  
email: crf@inbox.ru (write as subject: A.S. Kargin, Kongress)  
[www.centrfolk.ru](http://www.centrfolk.ru)



## Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association

by Xiang Yunju, Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association, PRC



Opening ceremony of the international seminar on Shaman culture in 2004.

*Photo by courtesy of the CFLAA.*

### Main goals of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association (CFLAA):

Through organising, planning and facilitating various activities, such as folk culture investigation, recording, safeguarding, inheriting and exchange, to preserve and protect folk culture heritage, and to inherit and promote Chinese culture so as to enrich people's cultural lives and make contributions to the development of Chinese culture.

### Organisational overview:

The CFLAA, founded on March 29, 1950, is a member of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, "a non-governmental organisation composed of nationwide associations of writers and artists, federations of literary and art circles in the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government and those in state-level industrial sectors."<sup>1</sup>

The CFLAA connects people working in the field of Chinese folk literature and art. It unites the most famous masters of folk art and the most authoritative researchers, translators, educators, and publishers of Chinese folk literature and art. The association is devoted to organising, planning, and supervising

the nationwide study, collection, protection and distribution of folk literature, folk art and folk culture as well as to cultivating, supporting, discovering and awarding talented folk culture performers and folk artists. The activities of CFLAA also include international folk culture exchange, academic seminars, art exhibitions, folk art performances, and folk art festivals. In order to support Chinese folk art and literature, the CFLAA gives the 'Shanhua Award,'

China's top honour for outstanding works of folk art and literature, to folk artists and folklorists.

Headquartered in Beijing, the CFLAA is administered by its council, which has been headed successively by Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang, Zhong Jingwen, Feng Yuanwei and Feng Jicai. Presently the council is chaired by Mr. Feng Jicai, with Luo Yang as vice chairman, Xiang Yunju as secretary general and Zhao Tiexin and Lv Jun as vice secretaries general.

The CFLAA has 34 group members and more than 8000 individual members. The association has nominated more than 50 Chinese Folk Literature and Art Villages, established more than 30 speciality committees and over 20 research centres and museums of folk literature and art all over China.

### Academic activities:

Academic activities are one of the main missions of the CFLAA and include the survey, research, collection, compiling and publishing of folk literature, folk art, and folk customs as well as academic seminars and international cultural exchange. Projects representative of the association include the compilation of



Fieldwork in the framework of the international Nuo culture seminar in 2005.

*Photo courtesy of CFLAA.*



'A Complete Series of Folk Literature,' started as early as the 1950s, and the 'Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project' being carried out at present. The 'International Narrative Literature Seminar' (1996), 'International Shaman Culture Seminar' (2004), 'International Nuo Culture Seminar' (2005), 'International Seminar of Chinese Myths' (2006), 'Forum of Chinese Festival' (2006), 'International Summit Forum on Safeguarding Chinese Ancient Village' (2007), 'County Heads' Forum on Folk Cultural Heritage Saving, Safeguarding and Developing' (2007) sponsored by the CFLAA have played important roles in the history of the association's academic exchange. The CFLAA has established a working relationship with UNESCO and academic institutions from over 10 countries, providing a broad platform for scholars all over the world to exchange experiences in safeguarding intangible culture. The CFLAA was the first to promote the idea of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in China and to associate this idea with safeguarding the work of Chinese folk cultural heritage. China's first academic book about human oral and intangible cultural heritage theory study was written by an expert from the CFLAA.

#### **Expert Projects:**

##### **1. "Three Collections of Folk Literature"**

The CFLAA is in charge of compiling the 'Collection of Chinese Folk Stories,' 'Collection of Chinese Ballads' and 'Collection of Chinese Proverbs' sponsored by the Chinese Folk Literary and Art Association, the Ministry of Culture and the State Minority Affairs Committee. Each collection consists of a county volume and a provincial volume. More than 2 million persons are currently involved in research and recording. They have collected 1.84 million folk tales, 3 million ballads and 7.48 million proverbs - altogether 4 billion words. This project will be completed soon.

##### **2. Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project**

Initiated and organised by the CFLAA in 2001, the Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project aims to preserve and protect folk culture heritage and promote Chinese culture in order to enrich people's cultural lives and contribute to the development of Chinese culture. After several years' efforts, the Project has succeeded in raising general consciousness of the importance of safeguarding folk cultural heritage, as well as promoting the safeguarding and application work of oral and intangible cultural heritage; it has also been influential in resuming traditional festival culture, establishing the Heritage Day, stimulating legislative work on folk culture and has participated in the Humanities Olympics.

Major achievements of the Saving Project include the publication of the 'Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project Survey Manual,' 'Working Manual for Investigating, Understanding and Nominating Excellent Chinese Folk Culture Inheritors,' 'Collection of Chinese Woodblock New Year Paintings' (20 volumes) as well as collections of Chinese folk tales from the Dali region (12 volumes), Hubei Yichang region (12 volumes), Hebei Qinhuangdao region (6 volumes) and Jiangsu Xuzhou region (7 volumes); in addition, the 'Collection of Chinese Folk Paper-cutouts' from Hebei Yuxian region, 'Collection of Chinese Tangka Art' from Qinghai Wutun region, 'Chinese Folk Art Heritage Catalog' of the Guizhou region, 'Collection of Chinese Folk Customs' from the Macao region, 'Chinese Folk Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage Introduction Series' (15 volumes up to now), 'Chinese Knot Series' (16 volumes), 'Chinese Folk Customs Records' from Men Tougou region and Xuanwu region, the 'Folk Customs Survey Manual' and various other publications. The Project has identified and nominated 166 excellent inheritors of Chinese Folk Culture. Mr. Feng Jicai, the chairman of the CFLAA, recommended to the Chinese government that they establish National Cultural Heritage Day.

The Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project has made a difference in the whole country. In 2008, after the tremendous earthquake in Sichuan, CFLAA promptly sent an expert group to the disaster area in order to investigate the condition of local intangible cultural heritage and that of the Qiang ethnic group in particular. The group made useful suggestions regarding cultural safeguarding in the disaster area.

#### **Cooperative Projects with UNESCO**

The CFLAA has a longstanding friendly relationship with UNESCO. UNESCO Office Beijing and the CFLAA have on several occasions worked together successfully and officials from UNESCO Office Beijing have repeatedly participated in activities initiated by the CFLAA.

##### **1. Safeguarding Chinese Folk Literature Heritage Project (1994-1997)**

The main purpose of this project was to safeguard Chinese folk tales, ballads and intangible cultural heritage of other kinds. Over a three-year period, representatives of UNESCO, CFLAA and experts on folk art from both China and abroad repeatedly visited Jilin, Hubei, Chongqing and Yunnan studying and recording local traditions. Scholars interviewed folk singers and storytellers and nominated 10 great folk storytellers.

##### **2. Activities for the Protection of Ethnic Minority Folk Songs in China (2001-2003)**

Between 2001 and 2003, representatives of UNESCO, CFLAA and folk art experts from China and abroad visited Guangxi, Gansu and Qinghai in order to interview folk singers from Zhuang, Yao, Dong, Yugu, Baoan, Dongxiang, Hui, Tu, Zang and Sala ethnic minority groups and to record their performances. Altogether scholars interviewed 235 singers and collected 235 385 songs from 10 ethnic minority groups (2520 minutes of tape recordings and 3420 minutes



Selected publications of the CFLAA.

Photo by courtesy of the CFLAA.

of video recordings). Results were summarised and published in 'The Achievement Report on the Activity for Protection of Ethnic Minority Folk Songs in China.'

### About the Author

Mr. Xiang Yunju, of Tuijia nationality, was born in Hunan Province. He graduated from the Central University for Nationalities in 1987 with a BA in Chinese and an MA in Ethnology. He is presently the general secretary of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association (CFLAA), director of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Research Institute, member of the Academic Committee of the Intangible Culture Heritage Researching Centre of Sun Yat-Sen University as well as a part-time professor at Tianjin University, Henan University, Changchun University and Changchun Normal University.

Books published by Xiang Yunju include *Chinese Minorities' Primitive Art* (1994), *Human Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2004), *World Intangible Culture Heritage* (2007), *Unscramble the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2008), *Folk Myths* (2004), *Our Festival - Tomb-sweeping Day* (2008), *Our Festival - Dragon Boat Festival* (2008), *Our Festival - Mid-autumn Festival* (2008).

Xiang Yunju has studied Chinese folk literature and art and the theory of intangible cultural heritage over a long period. Since 1984 he has recorded and studied folk literature in the area of the Tuijia nationality. In 1987, he started to work in the Ministry of Culture Minorities Bureau. During that period, he extensively explored the culture of 56 Chinese nationalities. In 1998 he became the vice general secretary and in 2006 the general secretary of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association.

He has taken charge of the Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project, and sponsored the constituting work of the project's 'Survey Handbook' and 'Working Handbook of Investigating, Understanding and Nominating Excellent Chinese Folk Culture Inheritors.' He is also one of the major planners and presidents of the Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Saving Project and its projects for collecting Chinese folktales, ballads, proverbs, Chinese woodblock New Year paintings, Tangka art and many other projects.

Xiang Yunju has taken the lead in studying, promoting and facilitating UNESCO's human oral and intangible cultural heritage action. His book *Human Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2004) is the first Chinese academic publication about the theory of

intangible cultural heritage. He is also a member of the lawmaking group for the 'Safeguarding Law of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage.' In addition, he took part in the brief biographical study of Chinese copyright and is a member of its expert group dealing with the study of the copyright of folk literature and art.

Xiang Yunju has led Chinese folk art troupes to perform and exhibit in Greece, Singapore, Japan, Republic of Korea, and many other places. He went to Austria to participate in the International Conference of Oriental and Western Children's Folklore and Education, and delivered a speech at the conference. He has participated in sponsoring international seminars on Nuo culture, shamanism, mythology and the International Summit Forum on Safeguarding Chinese Ancient Villages. He also participated in a research project that focused on folk songs of Chinese minority ethnic groups and was organised in cooperation with UNESCO. Xiang Yunju is also a member of a collaborative study group on the intangible cultural heritage of China and Japan (2007-2010).

Translation into English by Li Gang.



Xiang Yunju, general secretary of the CFLAA and director of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Research Institute.

Photo by courtesy of the CFLAA.

<sup>1</sup> A Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC) <http://w.cflac.org.cn/english.htm>

## New ISFNR members 2005-2009

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# 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)

**“Narratives across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations”**  
Organizer: Hellenic Folklore Research Centre - Academy of Athens  
Athens, Greece, on June 21-27, 2009



### Subtopics:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| I. History and Future of Folk Narrative Research             | IV. Social Strategies and Collective Identities |
| II. Mythologies, Ecology and Environmental Representations   | V. Storytelling and Storytellers                |
| III. Migrant and Diaspora Communities: Adaptation and Memory | VI. Folk Narrative in the Modern Media          |

Symposia:  
Charms, Charmers and Charming  
Belief Tales

Congress web site: <http://www.isfnr-athens2009.gr>







## NOMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FOLK NARRATIVE RESEARCH (ISFNR)

In compliance with the statutes of the ISFNR, Art. 5, "Any person qualified by his [or her] scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research may become a member of the Society. Requests for membership, supported by two members, shall be examined and decided on by the membership committee.---"

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I. First Name of Person Nominated \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name of Person Nominated \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Title, If Any \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

- II. Nomination should be signed by two (2) Members.  
Nominating members can send an e-mail to the Membership Committee Chair in lieu of signatures (see address below).

Name (signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (signature) \_\_\_\_\_

- III. Please supply the Curriculum Vitae and list of publications in folk narrative research.  
Include two recent offprints and/or abstracts that are representative of the applicant's scholarship.

IV. Please mail this form to:

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Professor Cristina Bacchilega  
Department of English  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
1733 Donaghho Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
USA  
E-mail: cbacchi@hawaii.edu

**ISFNR President**

Professor Ülo Valk  
Dept. of Estonian and Comparative Folklore  
University of Tartu  
Ülikooli 16-208  
51003 Tartu  
ESTONIA  
E-mail: ulo.valk@ut.ee

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Ülo Valk  
Dept. of Estonian and Comparative Folklore  
University of Tartu  
Ülikooli 16-208, 51003 Tartu  
ESTONIA  
E-mail: ulo.valk@ut.ee

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Ezekiel Alembi  
Department of Literature, Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844  
EAK-00100 Nairobi  
KENYA  
E-mail: ealembi@yahoo.com

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Cristina Bacchilega  
Department of English,  
University of Hawai'i at Manoa  
Kuykendall 402, 1733 Donaghho Road,  
Honolulu HI 96822  
USA  
E-mail: cbacchi@hawaii.edu

#### Vice-President representing Asia

Mehri Bagheri  
Tabriz University, Faculty of Letters,  
Department of Culture, Tabriz  
IRAN  
E-mail: mbagheri@tabrizu.ac.ir  
mehribagheri@yahoo.com

#### Vice-President representing Latin America

Manuel Dannemann  
Casilla 51413, Correo Central,  
Santiago  
CHILE, S.A.  
E-mail: manuel.dannemann@gmail.com

#### Vice-President representing Europe

Lauri Harvilahti  
Finnish Literature Society, Folklore Archives  
Hallituskatu 1, P.O. Box 259, FI-00171 Helsinki  
FINLAND  
E-mail: lauri.harvilahti@finlit.fi

### Members:

Donald Haase  
German & Slavic Studies  
443 Manooqian Hall, 906 W. Warren Ave.,  
Wayne State University  
Detroit MI 48202  
USA  
Email: dhaase@wayne.edu

Gabriela Kiliánová  
Institute of Ethnology,  
Slovak Academy of Sciences  
Klemensova 19, SK-81364 Bratislava  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
E-mail: gabriela.kilianova@savba.sk

Fumiko Mamiya  
Department of Developmental Psychology and  
Children's Literature/ Culture  
Shirayuri College  
1-25 Midorigaoka, Chofu-shi, Tokyo 182-8525  
JAPAN  
E-mail: fmamiya@shirayuri.ac.jp

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Ulf Palmenfelt  
Gotland University  
SE-62167 Visby  
SWEDEN  
E-mail: ulf.palmenfelt@hgo.se

### Secretary:

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa  
Dept. of Estonian and Comparative Folklore,  
University of Tartu  
Ülikooli 16-208, 51003 Tartu  
ESTONIA  
E-mail: elo-hanna.seljamaa@ut.ee

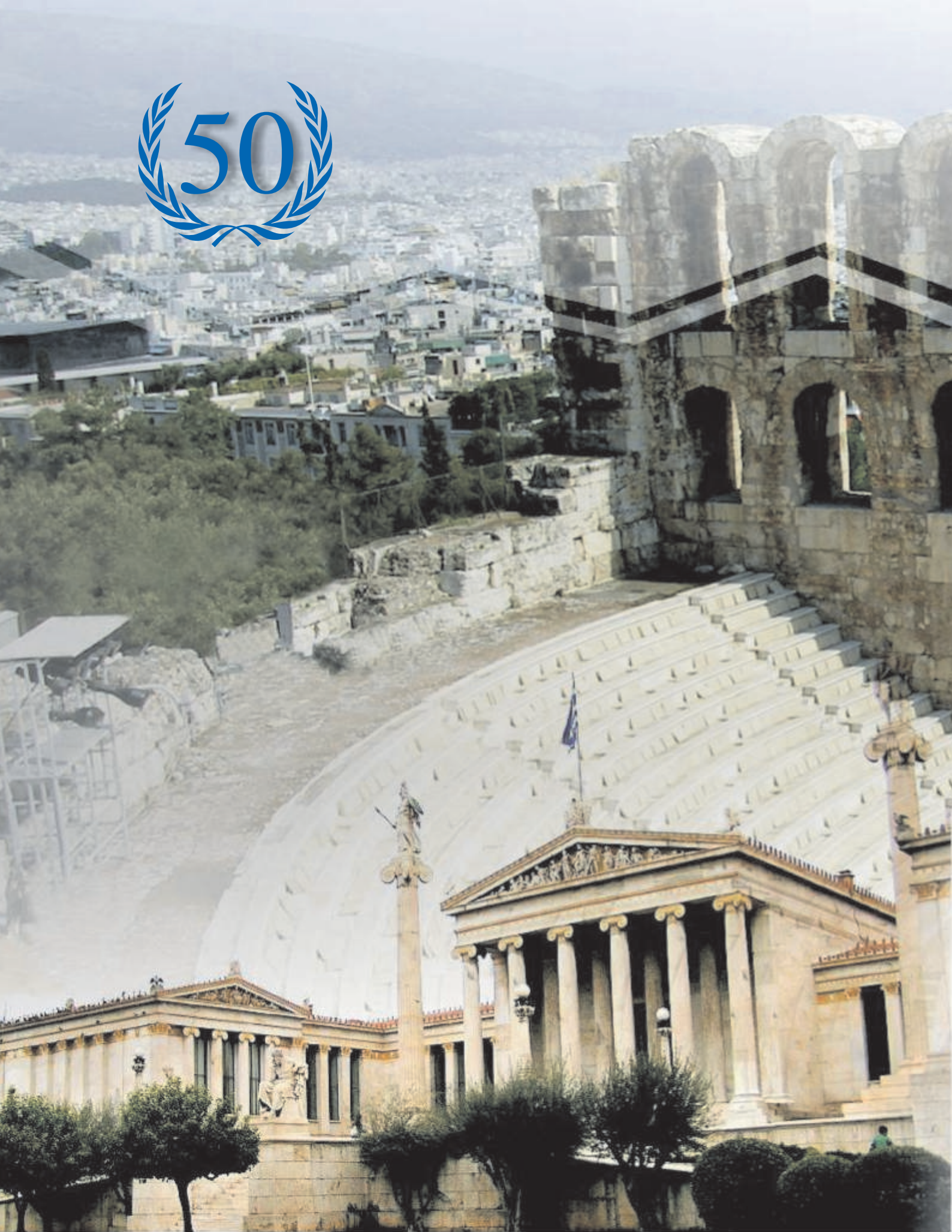


The Arch of Hadrian, the Temple of Olympian Zeus and their surroundings. View from the Acropolis, Athens.

Photo by Ü. Valk



50



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