

**“PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY LEGEND”. INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH, 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference” (3<sup>rd</sup> of June – 8<sup>th</sup> of June, 2014, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic)**

The International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR), one of the most important international learned societies devoted to the study of folklore, was founded in 1988 in Sheffield, England, United Kingdom. Its intellectual roots can be traced to the early 1980s, when the now legendary “Sheffield seminars” were held at the University of Sheffield Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language. These seminars organized mostly by folklorists Paul Smith and Gillian Bennett and focused on the study of contemporary / urban / modern legends, followed the increased academic interest in these actual forms of expressive culture. Following the success of these scholarly meetings, the international society was formed which ...*shall encourage and support the scholarly study of contemporary legend, in the broadest sense of the term, and related phenomena. “Contemporary” refers not only to so-called “modern urban legends” but also to any legend in active circulation in a given community.* (ISCLR Constitution 2011). Five volumes which collected papers from the Sheffield seminars (summarized in Bennett – Smith, 1990) gave way to the ISCLR peer-reviewed journal *Contemporary Legend*, regular newsletter *FOAftale News* (FOAftale News, 2014) and various irregular publications. Because of these

achievements, the ISCLR can be now regarded as the most important international community devoted to legend studies, with perhaps greater institutional, publication and –most importantly– temporal stability than similar attempts conducted by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) since the 1960s.

Since 1988, the *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend* conferences are held annually alternately in North America (USA or Canada) and Europe. This year, the conference has been held for the first time in one of the post-socialist countries, organized jointly by the Institute of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague and the ISCLR, with financial support of the Faculty of Arts (especially Dr. Mirjam Fried, Dean of the Faculty), and the Charles University Research Development Programme No. 09: *Literature and Arts in Intercultural Contexts*, and organizational support of the students’ club *PAKET – Pro AKTivní ETnologii (For Active Ethnology)*.

The conference was one of the biggest conference events conducted in Czech ethnology/anthropology since the EASA 2nd Biannual Conference held in Prague in 1992 and biggest folklore conference ever organized there since the ISFNR Interim Conference held in Liblice in 1966. During six days



*Two generations: Sandy Hobbs (University of West of Scotland, Paisley, Scotland, United Kingdom), one of the founding members of the ISCLR, and Adriana Kábová (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic). Photo: Jan Pohunek.*



*The “Dr David Buchan Prize” for best student paper is being awarded to Adriana Kábová by President of the ISCLR Elizabeth Tucker (left) and Secretary Elissa R. Henken (right). Photo: Jan Pohunek.*

of the conference, 54 conference participants from 15 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slova-

kia, Slovenia, United Kingdom, USA) presented 38 papers divided to 9 thematic panels (*Legends and Internet; Legends and Mass Media; Legends and (Sacred) Places; Spatial and Social Contexts of Legend; Legend, Art*



David J. Puglia (Penn State Harrisburg, USA) presenting his paper about legends connected with the alleged deathbed confession of Charles Darwin. Photo: Jan Pohunek.



Daria Radchenko (Moscow, Russia) presenting her paper about Russian chain letters. Photo: Jan Pohunek.

and Popular Culture; Occupational Folklore, Legends of Rites of Passage; Legends, Politics and Ethnic Identity; Legends, History, Local Tradition, and Legends and Media Across

Time and Space). The panels were accompanied by the ISCLR Annual General Meeting and various cultural events.

An important encouraging impulse for lo-



Participants of one of the ISCLR conference cultural events at Ethnographic Museum of the National Museum. From bottom left: Andrey Moroz (Russia), Marina Bayduzh (Russia), Elena Iugai (Russia), Christine Shojaei Kawan (Germany), Elissa R. Henken (USA), Aurore Van de Winkel (Belgium), Celia Lottridge (Canada), Radvilė Racėnaitė (Lithuania). Upper left: Daniel Rygovsky (Russia), Nikita Petrov (Russia), Petr Janeček (Czech Republic), Yvonne Millspaw (USA).

cal folklorists was given by awarding the “Dr. David Buchan Student Essay Prize” for the best student essay that combines research and analysis to Mgr. Adriana Kábová, who graduated in Ethnology from the Charles University in Prague, for her paper *Blood in radios, heads in televisions: Identity and ‘civilizing forces’ beyond the Sumbanese rumors*. Another encouraging impulse, but for international folklorists, can be seen in fact that, because of this conference, Prague became once more an intellectual meeting place of Western and Eastern folklore studies. This was evident by the highest number of participants from the Russian Federation in the history of the ISCLR conferences, where American, Canadian, and Western European folklorists historically dominated. Results of this intellectual melting pot will be summarized in two special issues of the journal *Contemporary Legend*. The first one will be devoted to Soviet and Russian legend studies, second to the study of legends in Central and Eastern Europe.

Abstracts of the conference were published and are available, along with list of the conference participants and other materials, in printed and also electronic form on the web pages of the Institute of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague (Janeček, Henken, Tucker 2014; Institute of Ethnology, 2014).

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## References

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- FOAFtaleNews. *Webpage Newsletter of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research* (2014). Accessed on June 12<sup>th</sup> at: <http://www.folklore.ee/FOAFtale/>
- Institute of Ethnology (2014). Accessed on June 12<sup>th</sup> at: <http://etnologie.ff.cuni.cz/>
- ISCLR Constitution (2011). Accessed on June 12<sup>th</sup> at: <http://contemporarylegend.org/isclr/constitution/>

Janeček, P., Henken, E. R., Tucker, E. (Eds). (2014). *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend. International Society for Contemporary Legend Research 32nd International Conference. Faculty of Arts, Charles University in*

*Prague, Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday 3 - Sunday 8 June, 2014. Conference Abstracts. Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts - International Society for Contemporary Legend Research.*

## VISUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER IN TARTU (7<sup>th</sup> of May – 9<sup>th</sup> of May, 2014, Tartu, Estonia)



*Liisi Laineste, local organizer of the conference. Photo: Alar Madisson. From the archive of Estonian literary museum in Tartu.*

In the days from 7<sup>th</sup> until 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 the 3rd conference of the international project “Visual Encounters with Others” took place in Estonian town Tartu under the title “Constructing the Other through the prism of war: Contested images in Eastern Europe (1930s to 1950s)”. The head of the project is professor Dagnosław Demski from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the local organizers were Liisi Laineste and the Estonian Literary Museum.

After the previous conferences in Warsaw (2010) and Budapest (2012) is obvious how the conference series has extended the original scope from caricatures to various other channels of social groups visualisations. The

group of 30 participants from 9 countries (including experts in history, anthropology, folklore and literature studies, linguistics, ethnology, design etc.) offered various approaches to visual depiction of categories of “Us” and “Them”, including caricatures, photographs, illustration or sculptures. The programme of the conference was divided into 9 sections: 1. Visualisation of the East, 2. Baltic viewpoint, 3. Images of the Enemy, 4. Ideology and war, 5. Constructing the Other as a stranger, 6. Contested photography, 7. Visualisation of the East II., 8. Women: New image, and 9. Pointing the West. We can find there for example analysis of memories of Finnish soldiers and their war memories visualising Soviet soldiers (Tuija Saarinen), Estonian caricatures from World War II. (Liisi Laineste), theoretical analysis of the connections between war propaganda and humour (Alexander Kozintsev), images of enemies in Hungarian and German caricatures (Ágnes Tamás) as well as images of traitors and enemies in caricatures of the wartime Slovakia (Zuzana Panczová), visualisations of the beginning of the Cold War through the official press of communist Poland (Kamila Baraniecka Olszewska), *Ostforschung* as a photographic source during World War II. (Ewa Manikowska), the image of Polish women between 1939 and 1953 (Marta Frąnciekiewicz) or an interesting lecture by Christie Davies named “Cartoons, caricatures and conflicts: The British tradition and its East European rivals”.

There was opportunity for informal discussions during the rich social agenda in-