

NEWS IN BRIEF

ÜLO TEDRE 75

Ülo Tedre, PhD (1955), the Grand Old Man of Estonian folkloristics, celebrated his 75th birthday on February 12, 2003.

Ülo Tedre spent nearly all of his working years in the former Institute of Language and Literature (presently the Institute of the Estonian Language); he was a member of its folklore section ever since February 11, 1949 – first as a student assistant and later, after post-graduate studies and defending his thesis, he became a researcher. During the period of 1962–1990, in total for almost 30 years, he was the head of the folklore section of the Institute; afterwards he worked as a senior researcher in the department of folkloristics (from 2000 under Estonian Literary Museum).

Ülo Tedre as a folklorist has been remarkably versatile. His main research areas include runo songs (although his dissertation treated newer rhyming folklore) and customs.

Because of their mere size and multiplicity of studied problems, the major publications of runo songs have usually required collective contributions. Tedre has participated (as one of the compilers and editors) in the publication of “Estonian Folk Songs” I–IV (*Eesti rahvalaulud I–IV*) (1969–1972) that is the most substantial runo song anthology so far, containing over 7000 texts; likewise he has contributed to production of the song collections of Jõhvi and Iisaku parishes in the series of “Old Zither” (*Vana Kannel*).



From old customs Ülo Tedre has paid the most attention to weddings and masking, publications such as “Estonian Weddings. A Short Overview of Ancient Courting and Wedding Customs” (*Eesti pulmad. Lühiülevaade muistsetest kosja- ja pulmakommetest*) (1973), and a comprehensive “Wedding Dictionary” (*Pulmasõnastik*) (in the journal *Mäetagused* in 1996–1999) need to be mentioned here.

Beside these two topics, Tedre has taken interest also in the history of folkloristics – articles about J. Hurt, M. J. Eisen, O. Loorits, W. Anderson. He was one of the compilers of Hurt’s jubilee album, that was granted the annual award of the publisher “Eesti Raamat”.

For decades Ülo Tedre’s excellent knowledge of folklore has been needed by the compilers of textbooks, books on history of literature and other collectively produced publications – for these he has written numerous overview articles. Moreover, he has also been one of the most consistent critics of folklore publications.

30 years as a head of the section probably required more energy than we could imagine – staff was divided between two towns, Tallinn and Tartu, communication devices then were extremely slow, and there was a strong ideological pressure from the direction of the Institute. All publications in print had to be subjected to repetitive discussion sessions within the sector that called for intensive reading of colleagues’ works and commenting on these. Decades of participating in the scientific board of the Institute and of Estonian Literary Museum, in editorial board of the journal “Keel ja Kirjandus” has kept him informed about the major part of Estonian philological research. He has certainly contributed to its development, as Ülo Tedre’s competent suggestions and opinions could not be disregarded.

Presently, as part of the “Kreutzwald year” (celebration of Kreutzwald’s 200th anniversary), Ülo Tedre is editing and preparing for print August Annist’s research on *Kalevipoeg* that will be published in 2004 by the Estonian Literary Museum.

Ülo Tedre is a (foreign) member of the Finnish Kalevala-Society (1966), Finnish Literature Society (1974), International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR, 1984) and “The Folklore Fellows”

and the honorary member of the Estonian Mother Tongue Society since 1999.

Lecture day “Ülo Tedre 75” on February 13, 2003

The Estonian Literary Museum, The Academical Folklore Society and the Estonian Mother Tongue Society organised a common lecture day in honour of Ülo Tedre who celebrated his 75th birthday. Ülo Tedre and his younger colleagues delivered lectures on a variety of research topics that Ülo Tedre has studied: folk songs, customs, eposes and sagas, also the works of K. A. Hindrey.

Rutt Hinrikus discussed the biography of K. A. Hindrey, Tõnno Jonuks' presentation examined the Yngling Saga and its role in the Pre-Christian Religion of Scandinavia, Madis Arukask focused on Estonian runic songs and Ülo Tedre introduced the phenomenon of Christmas mummers.

Rein Saukas

FOLKTALE TYPE *THE NAME OF THE HELPER* IN THE CONTEXT OF ESTONIAN TRADITION

On March 31, 2003, Ell Vahtramäe defended her MA thesis on “Folktale Type *The Name of the Helper* (AT500) found from the Estonian Folklore Archives” at Tartu University. Supervisor Tiiu Jaago.

The MA thesis explores texts of the folktale type “The Name of the Helper” (AT 500) found in the Estonian Folklore Archives. A comparison is drawn with folktale texts published in the academic publications of other countries and with manuscript collections of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society.

The Estonian variants of the folktale type AT 500 are divided into three redactions:

- A – The gold spinner
- B – The servant with a secret name
- C – The helper of the lost person



Ell Vahtramäe giving a lecture at the seminar “Name and Naming” at Karepa. Photo by Andres Kuperjanov, 2002.

The common motif in all redactions is the revealing of the name from the song of the demon and the expelling of him with the help of name magic. Redaction A is most similar to the folktale “Rumpelstiltschen” by the Grimm Brothers, in which the helper helps the girl to spin the straws into gold. In the elaborations of this redaction the helper acts as a matchmaker. Redaction B includes shorter, one-episode legendary tales about the master, who hires a servant, but the latter disappears, when he hears him being called by name. The tales of this redaction have certain commonalities with the legend of the Oleviste (St. Olaf’s) Church building (Aarne S 83); in some versions the folktale type “The Name of the Helper” has blended with the Oleviste-tale. The motifs of the same legend

can also be found in a few variants of redaction A, collected from South-East Estonia (Setu parish). Redaction C tells about someone lost in the wood, who incautiously and unconsciously promises his/her child to anyone, who would show the way. The devil is beaten when his name is uttered. More similarities can be noted between redactions A and C; redaction B relates less with other tales of this type and is more connected to the legend of Oleviste and the treasure bearers. All redactions have contaminations with other folktale types, though in redaction C this tendency is more manifest than in others. While redactions A and B seem to contaminate somewhat more randomly, in redaction C the contamination is traditional. The greatest number of contaminated texts has been recorded in the south-western part of Estonia.

The folktale type “The Name of the Helper” appears in forty-three recorded entries in Estonian. With respect to the number of entries, “The Name of the Helper” amounts to less than the average. The collectors have mostly been students and the correspondents who have sent already published materials to the archives. The tale was first recorded in 1895 by Frido Matson (1857–?) from the Jõelähtme parish. Most of the narrators are women. Additional information has been added to the narrators from the eastern parishes of Estonia, that is, from the area, where the narrative tradition is more deeply rooted. From this area the archive texts of “The Name of the Helper” do not form strong connections with printed versions.

The folktale type “The Name of the Helper” has spread to Estonia mainly via printed sources, but the local substratum is especially noticeable in redaction B tales. “Rumpelstiltsen”, a folktale by the Grimm Brothers, was first published in Estonian in 1867 in the book “Five Nice Stories” (*Viis kenna jutto*), translated by Ernst Mohul (second edition published in 1880). The analysis of archive texts shows that this version of the folktale has had the greatest influence on both the narrators and the collectors. Single motifs and images can be found in many other variants: most commonly the name of the helper, which appears slightly modified in the Estonian context.

The text corpus includes two exact copies of the book version, three rather close recitations, two texts refer to the involvement of the

collectors, two are recorded from the same narrator at different times by different collectors, two texts are told by sisters, each of whom told their own version to the collector on a separate occasion. Nearly half of the texts have been taken over from the printed source, but have adopted features from local folktales. Apparently, the folktale “The Name of the Helper” has fascinated the readers’ minds so much that the tale entered the oral circulation in parallel with the book text.

Simultaneously with the oral circulation of the folktale, two books were published – “The Tales of Children and Home” (*Laste ja kodu muinasjutud*) in 1910 (new edition in 1918) translated and edited by H. Oras and “Folktales” 2 (*Muinasjutud II*) in 1931 in the translation of R. Roht. Both translations were closer to the original than that of Mohul. However, as to variants collected after 1910, the parts of translation by Oras and Roht that differ from Mohul’s renditions have nothing in common.

The analysis of the folktale context indicates that the circumstances and folk belief reflected in the folktale were familiar to Estonians. Parallel motifs can be found in other traditional tales as well as in belief accounts. Thus, the preconditions for the adoption process and incorporation of the tale in the Estonian tradition were there. This statement is supported by the closer adaptations written down in areas, where narrative tradition was more deeply rooted. Despite this, the folktale type “The Name of the Helper” did not become a part of the Estonian narrative tradition. This might have been a result of the general decline of narrative tradition and crucial changes in economic and political conditions. The lack of supporting publications had its role in the fast disappearance of the folktale: during the period 1931–1959 no versions of the folktale were published. A survey carried out in 2002 revealed that the Estonians have been reintroduced the folktale by publications and television only in the past ten years.

THE IDENTITY AND TERRITORIALITY OF SIBERIAN ESTONIANS

Aivar Jürgneson defended on January 9, 2003, his PhD on “The Territoriality and Identity of Siberian Estonians” at Tallinn Pedagogical University. Supervisors Halliki Uibu and Ants Viires.

There are 20,000 Estonians living in Siberia with some 10,000 of them in Western Siberia, 8,000 in Eastern Siberia and 2,000 in Russian Far East. During the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century many Estonians migrated from Estonia to Siberia. Although Siberia was not the first destination for the Estonian emigrants, it was certainly the most important one. According to the first census in Russia (1897) 4,000 Estonians lived in Siberia. But by that time migration to Siberia had not reached its culmination. Between 1906 and 1914 around 9,000 people moved from Estonia to Siberia – this was the most extensive wave of emigration. In 1924 there were 174 Estonian settlements in Siberia with more than 30,000 inhabitants.

In the course of migration the Estonian diaspora developed in Siberia. For decades the Estonians in Siberia lived in comparatively closed ethnical communities that were surrounded by foreign neighbours. This helped to preserve the Estonian cultural tradition. On the other hand, Siberia is detached from Estonia by thousands of kilometres. For that reason, but also on historical-political grounds, the Siberian Estonians have had few contacts with their homeland and have not been much involved in the process of cultural development. However, the cultural identity of Siberian Estonians does not result only from their Estonian origin, but depends on ethnical and cultural continuity, the new environment and the adaptability of the settlers. The behavioural models brought along from the homeland needed to be modified according to the new environment and adapted to local conditions.

Estonian origin on the one hand and local influences on the other hand have created a particular culture that has no analogy, it exists only in Siberia.

The main questions that Aivar Jürgenson has tried to answer are as follows: Who is a Siberian Estonian? What do Siberian Estonians

Aivar Jürgenson filming during fieldwork in Siberia, in Tsvetnople village. Photo by Astrid Tuisk. ERA photo archive, photo No. 610.



consider to be their homeland? How are they connected to Estonia and Estonians? Who have remained in their country of origin? In what way has Siberia influenced their culture? What are the contacts like between Siberian Estonians and their neighbours?

The Estonian settlers who left their homeland a century ago, broke away from their previous territorial ties and created new ones. The notion of territoriality is directly connected to migration.

A. Jürgenson gives an overview of the concept of territoriality and presents its different definitions. He describes relations between people and space, gives a definition of environment and points out the ways in which an environment can be structured. A survey is provided about terms of identifying territories in different research traditions and languages. On the one hand, the concept of homeland of Siberian Estonians is influenced by the concept brought along from Estonia, which in its turn is strongly affected by the German language. On the other hand it is influenced by the concept used in the Russian-speaking environment. For these reasons the terminology of territoriality is closely studied in German (*Heimat*) and in Russian (*rodina*). Besides, the same terms in the Estonian language

are investigated. Homeland is not only a geographical but also social, historical and emotional notion. Homeland is something real, it has its territory and borders, but it can also be an imaginary, selected and idealized piece of world. The term *homeland* always contains some ideal pictures that give the term a subjective meaning; different people appreciate different values when speaking about homeland. So on the one hand the exterior features (geographical, historical, cultural, social, political) and on the other, interior values form the ideal picture about the dreamland that is often considered to be far away in time and space. In Estonian patriotic poetry of romanticism, homeland was connected to the lost paradise; it was an ideal situation that belonged to the Golden Age in past.

One of the main questions in the scientific treatment of homeland is the correlation between geographical and social environment. In the current thesis territoriality is studied in the context of traditions – connection between activities and territory is analyzed in the case of Siberian Estonians. The set of different activities of an individual creates a tie, which, although focusing on particular place, has dimensions that are not only spatial. Since physical, social and historic-cultural environments are the most important components of the structure of homeland, each of these notions is presented in a separate chapter in the empirical part of the thesis. At the same time the connections between different types of environments are also considered.

Another important topic in the theoretical part of the thesis is the relationship between territoriality and migration. After a critical analysis of different theories of migration, the following conclusion is drawn – migration can not be studied separately from the phenomenon of territoriality. The strength of territorial connections is one of the most important factors in making the decision to migrate.

Siberian Estonian settlements were formed as a result of deportation and volunteer emigration. Two centuries earlier, there is a list of Swedish war prisoners from the beginning of the 17th century who might be Estonians. There is no doubt that a large number of Estonian deportees arrived in Siberia during the 19th century when many new settlements were formed. Majority of the Estonian

diaspora in Siberia was developed by volunteer emigration that took place in the last quarter of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, the new homeland was created as an idealized and selected version of the old home. In Siberia the Estonian emigrants settled down in isolated colonies, that is integration was not their purpose. Their aim was to create a new safe territory. In forming inner structures of the colony the corresponding structures from motherland were taken as models. In the new environment the settlers tried to find and create circumstances similar to those that they had had in their motherland. In conclusion, the alternative to a homeland is another homeland and loss of a homeland can be replaced by returning home or creating a new home.

The main non-Estonian speaking neighbours of Siberian Estonians have traditionally been Lutheran nations: Finns, Latvians and Germans. Later on Russians have outnumbered the other nationalities. Stereotypes that the Siberian Estonians assign to their neighbouring nations are rather negative. Estonians thought more highly of themselves than of Finns, Latvians or Germans. Among the European nations the Russians form a specific category in the eyes of Siberian Estonians. Estonians feel that they belong to the same group with other Lutheran nations and they all contrast themselves to Russians. Native Siberians form a group with whom Estonians have had few contacts. Stereotypes attributed to native Siberians are quite uniform and rather negative, partly taken over from neighbours.

When analyzing human relations among Siberian Estonians it becomes evident that they do not form a homogeneous group. Territorial identity is formed of concentric circles. When the Siberian Estonians contrast themselves with non-Estonian speaking people from neighbouring villages then Siberian Estonians feel solidarity with other Estonians. At the same time Siberian Estonians, who originally come from different parts of Estonia, contrast themselves with each other. But when Estonians in different neighbouring villages contradistinguish themselves from each other, then the Estonians feel solidarity with the people living in their home village. When people contrast themselves to those from different parts or streets of a village, then those who come from the same part of the village form the 'our-group'. Sometimes also time dimension is added

to the ethnical or territorial dimension: belonging to an our-group and it depends on how long a person has lived in the village.

Without a doubt, a language is one of the most important categories of national identity. The linguistic identity of Siberian Estonians cannot be uniquely defined.

Identity is a result of a long-time interaction, in that in the course of time it is influenced by belonging to several groups or contact areas of groups. Identity is always a multistage notion; it is dynamic and susceptible to every change in a social environment. That is why Russian should not be viewed as a foreign substance in the identity spectrum of Siberian Estonians but as an elementary part of bicultural identity. “We are not Estonians, we are not Russians, we do not know who we are” – this frequently expressed hesitation confirms that Siberian Estonians feel themselves in between two different cultures.

TRADITIONAL UDMURT CUSTOMS

Tatiana Minniyakhmetova defended on June 16, 2003, her PhD thesis on “The Traditional Rites of Trans-Kama Udmurts: Structure. Semantics. Folklore” at Tartu University. Supervisor Ülo Valk.

The study *The Traditional Rites of Trans-Kama Udmurts: Structure. Semantics. Folklore* is devoted to the investigation of the ritual culture of an Udmurt diaspora group. Three sets of rituals are subject to analysis: rituals connected to childbirth, to New Year’s celebrations according to the folk calendar, and to the construction of a well. The choice was motivated by the fact that all these rituals share a common feature – within them occurs ‘birth,’ or the creation of something that did not exist previously.

The diaspora – the Trans-Kama Udmurts – inhabits the left bank of the river Kama and has maintained its traditional folk beliefs to the present day. The adherence to their “own” native religion is the main determining factor of the group’s cultural uniqueness.

The study is largely based on the author’s own field work materials, which, in their analysis, take into account the meaning that transmitters of culture have attached to the ritual phenomena and their perceptions of it. A basic underlying thesis is that the study of rituals and the accompanying folklore material must be undertaken as an indivisible whole, as they are clearly understandable only in combination.

Chapter 1, “The rites connected to childbirth,” examines the main rites and customs related to the giving of birth and the genesis of humans, and to a set of post-natal norms and rules for the treating of new-borns. Every stage that



Udmurtian folklorist Tatiana Minniyakhmetova. Photo by Merili Metsvahi 2003.

the newborn child passes on its journey to becoming a complete human being is accompanied by specific ritual acts.

Chapter 2, “A Great Day – the beginning of the new year according to the folk calendar,” looks at rites including many archaic elements devoted to the celebration of the ‘Great Day’, which ushers in the new year. Preparations for the event involve acts of cleansing the individual’s personal environment and space, and include the banishment of evil spirits. The main ceremonies consist of prayers – addressing to the gods and guardians. When religious ceremonies are carried out, people begin to celebrate by visiting one house after another participating at small gatherings at relatives’ and friends’, with ritual drinks and beverages. Women provide entertainment with songs and dances, some including erotic elements. The festival ends with a prayer at the nightfall of the “Great Day.”

In Chapter 3, “Rites connected to the construction of a well” the topic is addressed for the first time in the Udmurt tradition. This rite is a recent phenomenon, though it fully complies with the traditional patterns of old rites in form and likeness. The cleansing of the site for the construction of a well, the digging of a pit, and the erection of the well’s structure are attributed special meanings that reflect the ritual concepts of the Udmurts. However, unlike other common buildings that are directed upwards, the well is directed downwards. The ritual is therefore criticised by its observers, and will, most likely be abandoned.

Chapter 4, “Peculiar genre of ritual folklore”, analyses all oral folklore texts related to the above rites. The ritual folklore material is rich, but only comprehensible in a specific ritual context. At the same time the ritual context may be the source of certain oral expressive-texts, creating genre forms and genres. This chapter introduces and discusses the genres of oral expressions.

The conclusions support the idea that the traditional layer in the ritual culture of the Trans-Kama Udmurts today is preserved to a marked degree. Only certain elements of the upper-most ritual layer have been subject to modernisation. The ritual’s structure has remained stable and determines the ritual’s functioning. In this respect the ritual culture certainly needs further study.