

## In Memoriam: Arvo Krikmann (1939–2017)

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Arvo Krikmann was, among many other things, an Estonian academician, folklorist, linguist, paremiologist, and humour researcher. Working in folklore departments at the Estonian Literary Museum, Institute of Estonian Language and Literature, and University of Tartu, his main resources for study throughout his career had been voluminous archival collections of Estonian folklore, as well as the early literary notations and contemporary parallels to these materials. As the head of the working group on paremiology, and compiler of academic publications “Estonian Proverbs” and “Estonian Riddles”, he had a thorough command of the variety of archival sources concerning all the genres of folklore short forms, as well as jocular stories. Arvo Krikmann’s doctoral dissertation, *Introspections into Minor Forms of Folklore, Vol. 1. Basic Concepts, Genre Relations, General Issues*, is a basic guide and source of inspiration in studying archival collections, on one hand leading us to the issues to take into consideration when dealing with vast collections, and on the other pointing us to abundant methods and discoveries. Krikmann’s main areas of research throughout have been on different aspects of folk short forms, the problems of variation and geographical spread of folklore, poetic language, metaphor theory, and humour theory. He had also taught these topics as a professor at the University of Tartu and supervised several postgraduate students. During his lifetime Krikmann had received numerous research awards and been recognized with various titles, medals and honoraria. In 1997 he was elected a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

For me personally, Arvo Krikmann was best as my teacher, advisor and good colleague since the very first days of my professional life. His warm support, advice, comments and discussions on my writings have been invaluable and have helped me through problems of research, as well as in other aspects of academic life.

I would like to highlight for the readers of *Studia Metrica et Poetica* some results from the works of Arvo Krikmann that might be of interest.

I. Having a total overview of the presence of several folklore genres in Estonian Folklore Archives, thoroughly typified during the compilation of academic publications, Krikmann was able to identify regularities of variation in cases of the oral transmission of folklore. Namely, he has shown how folkloric variation tends to follow the same patterns as lexical variation according to

Zipf's law, that is the frequency of any word is inversely proportional to its rank (Krikmann 1997).

II. In studying the spread and variability of various folkloric and linguistic materials, Krikmann developed his own methods for cartographic detection of regions and isolines, relying on heterogeneous data collected with various density. This led to more general results on the stereotypy and uniqueness of folklore material through a geographical perspective (Krikmann 1980, 1997, 2000)

III. In his numerous writings on the content, meaning, and form of Estonian proverbs (e.g. Krikmann 1974a and b, 1984, 2004, 2009 etc.) Krikmann analysed how these different levels of expression combine and mutually structure each other, how it relates to situation of proverb use, what the general principles are in a creative mind using proverbs, and within the general patterns of thinking about life.

IV. In his studying of alliteration in various Finnic folksongs, Krikmann made the important discovery of how not only does alliteration engage distinct consonants and vowels, but instead has a more general strive toward a similarity of vowels – the remarkable and relevant tendency to use vowels as phonetically close as possible in alliteration (Krikmann 2015).

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