

**EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE GAINED
FROM COLLECTING LEGENDS
AND GHOST STORIES IN DŽŪKSTE**

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S u b j e c t: Folk legends of a certain Latvian locality (Džūkste).

P u r p o s e o f s t u d y: Analyzing life of the narratives in the course of time.

M e t h o d s: Comparative and descriptive; reflective folkloristics.

K e y w o r d s: Legend, fieldwork, narrative research, local tradition, history and methods of folkloristics, ghost stories, storytelling.

Džūkste village¹, previously called also Džūkste-Pienava village, is a place, where “Father of the Latvian fairy-tales” Anss Lerhis-Puškaitis (1859–1903) used to work in the last two decades of the 19th century. In 1891, the first three volumes of his “Latvian Fairy-Tales” were published there, comprising about 250 fairy-tales and 100 legends that were collected in this village, i.e. more than had been published in Latvian ever before. The recordings of fairy-tales were so good and impressive, that many of them achieved the “Latvian fairy-tale status” and up to now keep being repeatedly published in various selected works. In this village, A. Lerhis-Puškaitis had recorded altogether more than 430 fairy-tales and legends.

Also later narratives were collected here, especially in the 1930s. In the Archives of Latvian Folklore (ALF) there is also a collection of Lancenieki School from 1929 and 1930 (manuscript No 1127) and a collection of Džūkste School (manuscript No 1551) from 1936 and 1937, comprising several hundreds of legend texts. More legends from that period have been collected by Kārlis Straubergs, who was born in Džūkste and was a curator of ALF at that time (manuscript No 880), and also in other collections.

Folklore kept being recorded there in Soviet times as well, although not systematically. But the third biggest collection was completed in the beginning of 2003, in relation to my intention of making a book, which title currently is “Legends and Ghost Stories from Džūkste”.



Collector of Latvian fairy-tales and legends Anss Lerhis-Puškaitis (1859–1903) with his wife Luīze Lerhis in the apple orchard at the Lancenieki School (around 1900)
Photo from collections of the Museum of Literature, Theater and Music, Rīga

Why Such a Book?

In the country school where A. Lerhis-Puškaitis lived and worked during the last two decades of his only 43-year-long life and around which he planted an orchard, in September 2002 a museum of history and fairy-tales of the village was opened. It seemed to me that a book of legends collected in this village could generate more interest in this museum. Another book, called *Džūkstes pasakas* ('Fairy-tales of Džūkste', 1980, 1991, 2003)² compiled by Kārlis Arājs (1929–2001) is generally well known to the readers. A book of legends and ghost stories collected in Džūkste seemed to be its suitable continuation (it should be noted here that ghost stories in most cases should be classified as mythological or demonological legends, but in the title of the book they are highlighted in order to attract attention). The number of legends already collected in this village was completely sufficient, i.e. over 500 texts.

But if the book consisted only of texts recorded in former times, a misleading impression could be created of such stories no longer existing nowadays. Comments for the texts were also provided, as I wanted to know which stories people still remembered and whether new stories and legends kept appearing here. It was also a remarkable opportunity of once more practically checking the thesis, for several decades accepted in the international folklore research, but still making the non-

specialists wonder: namely, that storytelling and folklore itself did not end nor disappeared nowadays, that stories changed along with passage of life and ages, adapting to the new situations and possibilities of communication. If a folklore collector maintains that there is nothing left to collect anymore, because all folklore is forgotten and „extinct”, then it is the collector’s (and not the informants’) problem, because the folklorist’s opinion seems dangerously behind the present reality, and not only that of the narratives, but also that of the research theories as well.

Unlike the book of fairy-tales from Džūkste compiled by K. Arājs, which is a selection comprising only the fairy-tales collected and recorded by A. Lerhis-Puškaitis, my book is intended as a publication of not only the already once or several times published texts recorded by A. Lerhis-Puškaitis and the subsequent collectors, but also of the stories put down nowadays. Criteria for their selection are: what used to be and still is told by the inhabitants of Džūkste (including narratives about the events taking place outside the village) beginning from the earliest records and up to the present, i.e. approximately in the course of 120 years.

Collecting

The project supported by the State Culture Capital Foundation allowed me to launch collecting of stories, for which I spent about 20 days in Džūkste village in the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003. The results were better than expected: I managed to accumulate hundreds of stories, including the traditional ones and variants of the old narratives as well as the new ones.

About 35 persons were interviewed, resulting in about 50 hours of audio recordings. The longest interviews were mainly those conducted with the oldest inhabitants of the village, who remembered life before the World War II. The oldest informant was born in 1907; over 10 informants were born in the 1920s and 1930s.

Many school children were also involved in the project: 67 school pupils altogether recorded about 650 texts, apart from those on the audio tape. According to the genre, these were mainly various ghost stories: ranging from the stories describing adventures of people who had allegedly seen ghosts or unidentified flying objects (UFO) to the originally composed horror stories. Although I had explained that I was interested in different stories including memories about the Soviet period and later times, but for the school children (the recorders were mainly pupils from the 5th–7th grade), the ghost stories seemed to be the most important ones. Besides, I was lucky to meet talented narrators and story experts among the school children as well.

Now the project is completed to “cover” all the 120 years, including the Soviet times, although not equally. There are interesting and typical stories from different periods. When putting those stories on the time axis, the “biography” of this place emerges (of which in more detail further).

The book is not ready yet, but now its vision seems unclear to me even more than in the beginning of the project. This is because of the project increasingly becoming

more explorative and giving rich experience and much food for thought. All the time I clearly realize that it's not the specific product (i.e. the book) that is the most important, but a possibility of acquiring deeper, more exhaustive understanding of the narratives and their life as well as a possibility of getting rid of myths and speculations that do not correspond with the present reality (both that of the narratives and that of the research).

What Has Survived and How?

Now it is possible to compare the three “crosscuts” of one local tradition that have been done in different moments of time, i.e. in the end of the 19th century, in the 1930s and in the beginning of the 21st century. Of course, the first question that arises is: what has survived from the “ancient times”? But it is not so easy to answer. Every story should be explored individually, and sometimes it seems to me that each one of them is like a human being with their own life, in which unexpected “biographical shifts” may suddenly occur and which may only fragmentarily be reflected in the folklore recordings. A folklore researcher, examining one or several “photos” (i.e. recordings) of the story tries to guess its whole life; and such process is like reasoning about a human life only from a number of photos. The lifespan of some stories is longer than those 120 years, for others it is shorter, but they are not less valuable. The “interrelations” of those stories are also interesting, e.g. how they get on in the same tradition, mutually influencing each other.

Other questions are possible too, and they may be even more interesting and difficult to answer. What is the role of publications in this local tradition? What *has not* survived and why? And what has not been previously recorded?

I have not tried to calculate, how many stories in these three collections are similar, how many times they are repeated, etc. I understand how imprecise and misleading such numbers can be, because every case that a certain story is recorded (or not recorded, because it seemed already familiar to the collector or, on the contrary, was regarded as not being part of the folklore) depends on a combination of numerous coincidences.

In the particular situation of Džūkste it is clearly evident that publications have a great effect on the continuity of oral tradition. Among the legends recorded in the 1930s, the most popular are those texts that A. Lerhis-Puškaitis had published for several times in the end of the 19th century: first in the periodicals, and afterwards in his fairy-tale books³. But it is impossible to prove completely that they are the most popular ones only because of the publications. Maybe some of those legends were really popular in oral tradition of that time. But there are also other ones, many times published but nevertheless later forgotten. (It should be noted here that publication considerably changes the “status” of the legend in tradition: having been published means being “accepted”, i.e. acknowledged as important. Unlike in case of the oral tradition, it should no longer be constantly repeated, because the publication indirectly performs this repetition function already.)



The former Lancenieki School, where A. Lerhis-Puškaitis worked in the end of the 19th century and around which he planted an orchard; since 2002, museum of history and fairy-tales of the village. *Photo by Guntis Pakalns*

It is indeed possible, that narratives published by A. Lerhis-Puškaitis were read and even studied at school (there are some figuratively and emotionally charged legends about places in the school's vicinity, see further an example about the mill's lake). After 30–40 years those ex-pupils were already informants for the next pupils' generation recording folklore in the 1930s. This second wave of collection also resulted in a voluminous publication, i.e. 33-pages-long retelling of legends from Džūkste village, which was part of the more than 600-pages-long study on the history of Džūkste (1939)⁴. The author of the study K. Straubergs was born in Džūkste and worked as a curator of the ALF at that time, therefore folklore materials were freely accessible to him. This book as a great rarity was kept fairly secretly and read also during the Soviet times, although only a few copies had survived. It seems that nowadays people know legends mainly from this publication, i.e. "History of Džūkste", rather than from the earliest publications by A. Lerhis-Puškaitis. Many informants, whenever asked about the legends, would advise me to have a look in the "History of Džūkste".

But it is not possible to declare that the several times published legend about the Lancenieki mill's lake survives in tradition only because of its publication. The lake is rather big and is located not far from the former Lancenieki School.

Strange screams, howls or groans may sometimes be heard from the lake. And afterwards somebody drowns – the lake takes some life. That happens in the definite periods of time, although the number of years may be different, from 3 to 10. A. Lerhis-Puškaitis wrote: in order to avoid human death, the millers used to drown a dog or a cat.

This is probably a variant of a legend well known not only in Latvia and called "The time has come, but not the man"* – such a voice is heard from the water and

* In Lithuanian tradition, these are belief legends classified as BLPK 3495: "Death Seeking a Victim" [editor's note].

then somebody feels an irresistible wish to go swimming. If such person is hindered from doing that, he / she is bound to choke on water even when washing or drinking from a glass.

But already during one of my first interviews one man very seriously declared having heard this howl himself! There were also others who heard it too. According to this man, it happened in winter, and the voice sounded across the lake, from one side to another! And in the following summer one person drowned again. It was in the beginning of the 1990s.

Of course, it is possible to try seeking rational explanations for this, e.g. reasoning that the ice movements when the water level decreases underneath or something like that may cause this howl. But the fact is that people do drown there, and sometimes even under strange circumstances. While afterwards this legend is repeated again very solemnly. Also nowadays the stories recorded by the school children keep asserting that there are places in the lake where the swimmers sometimes feel being dragged deeper and not allowed to swim...

A. Lerhis-Puškaitis has recorded other legends about this lake as well. E.g., in the middle of the lake in the ray of light a white lady is said to have appeared. Or, on the mill's bridge there sometimes appears a white lady who asks to touch her, and if the person refuses, then (typically for the traditional legends about the hidden treasures) clanking like a barrel of money she falls back into the lake. Already A. Lerhis-Puškaitis, by connecting these legends together, joined these white ladies into one personage. But there are recently recorded stories about the white lady or other visions seen on the bridge and about various accidents causing human deaths.

Admittedly, this cycle of legends about the lake that sometimes howls and the ghosts on the mill's bridge could survive for 120 years or longer without any support from the literary factors as well, because there are other emotionally charged facts that enhance its vitality.

However, in the recently opened village museum these legends are told to the visitors, therefore the white lady has become an important image of the local tradition, and as one of the carnival masks keeps "participating" in various events of the museum.

Modern Legends

I am well aware that by publishing my book – texts as well as comments – I will necessarily influence the further tradition, as publishing is almost the same as retelling the story approximately in so many times, as many copies make up the print run of the book (considering the fact that many purchased copies remain unread, but others may be read by several people). Whenever I have a possibility of retelling orally the legends collected earlier as well as narratives I have recorded myself, I watch the reaction from the audience trying to guess which stories should be told next: what causes emotions, stays in mind, i. e. what could be told further and returned to the oral tradition. I think (although I do not have solid proof for this) that things could have happened in a similar way earlier too. E.g., A. Lerhis-Puškaitis could have re-



Edīte Baldere-Sildedze,
the narrator of stories from
the Soviet period
Photo by Guntis Pakalns

corded or recreated a story like the one he had heard, which could have been known previously only to a single person. (This is typical for the cases when a person has seen ghosts or spirits, but may have entrusted this extraordinary experience only to the folklore collector who subsequently published this story.) But if the published story was emotionally impressive, imaginative and interesting, people remembered it and spread it further. Actually, such a story would achieve the status and functions of a legend only after its publication.

In order not to present examples only from the classical legends, I will illustrate my presupposition with a story from the Soviet times.

My best informant while carrying on this collecting project was Edīte Baldere-Sildedze, born in 1938. For several generations, the history of her family was connected with the village. She worked in the accountancy of the kolkhoz in 1955–1964, was a chairperson of the executive committee of Džūkste local Soviet in 1971–1981, later up to 1991 she was a party secretary and a chairperson of the kolkhoz labor union. Besides, for 37 years she officiated the so-called civil funeral ceremonies. This informant accompanied me to the people whom she herself had advised me to meet. Frequently she remembered the discussed events better and could explain them in more detail than the others. Her life story is very interesting: she had suffered severe illnesses, and she has a peculiar talent of a good narrator to tell the history through events. My collecting project encouraged her to write down her life story, which is probably going to make a very thick book.

One of the most curious stories told by E. Baldere-Sildedze goes like that (just as before, I do not quote the whole written text, which is several pages long, but make my own short summary of it):

It happened in Soviet times, in the beginning of the 1980s. At that time USSR did not produce any chewing gum, only sailors' wives used to sell it. One day the narrator learned that chewing gum was brought to the shop. She invented some reason to go to the post office... But all the chewing gum in the shop had already been sold out. While talking to the shop girl she found out that there had been peppermint chewing gums, the packing was of silver color with a green stripe for 15 kopecks. At that time some woman entered the shop. Accidentally overhearing part of the conversation, she informed that gums had also been delivered to the chemist's shop. Now, the narrator hurried to the chemist's. Indeed, on the counter there she saw similar small packages: in silver paper with a green stripe for 15 kopecks per piece. The narrator counted out how many she ought to buy, because she had a large family, 17 people at home. Finally, she bought all 50. Having returned to the office, she gave one to everybody as a present: one to the chairman of the kolkhoz and his wife, one to the deputy chairman, also some to her colleagues at the local Soviet and to several other outstanding people of the village... Soon she received a telephone call and was summoned to come quickly to talk to the chairman of the kolkhoz and his deputy. Then, after a long and obscure dialogue about propagating a destructive ideology in which she had allegedly been involved, the men could not help laughing any more. They told her to open one of the small packages with this so-called chewing gum. What, wasn't it good? But inside there was something else – a condom...

Of course, specialists of the contemporary legends know lots of similar stories. But this thing had really happened to that woman, if we could trust her word. We may discuss, whether it had happened exactly the way she told. But when published in the book of folklore texts, this story will acquire certain characteristics of the genre. It is quite interesting and funny, people will argue whether it could really have happened... It should be noted here, that when telling this story to the people who had not lived in the Soviet times themselves (e.g. to children or foreigners), one has to elaborate more on some essential contextual things that were self-evident to the informant and therefore did not get mentioned: e.g. what the “deficit” was, or that the official hierarchy was very important in the Soviet times, or that sexuality was not a talking topic.

By the way, it may well be, that there are not very many typical contemporary legends about the Soviet times recorded or even registered, both belonging to the so far unknown types or as the “Soviet” variants of the familiar types.

Contemporary Ghost Stories

If we turn back to the “classical” themes, a very “fresh” example elucidating the origins of the traditional ghost legend should be mentioned. For several years during the 1990s, a school was re-established in the building where A. Lerhis-Puškaitis had worked. The school consisted of a kindergarten group and grades from 1 to 4. The teacher of history, at that time also headmistress of this school and presently the head of the museum Judīte Timma was connected to that building for a very long time: in 1964, together with E. Baldere-Sildedze they established a memorial room for A. Lerhis-Puškaitis there.

One late evening in the autumn of 1993, she was working alone with the school documents in a room where some time ago A. Lerhis-Puškaitis' study had been. The outer door



Creator of the museum
of history and fairy-tales
of Džūkste, Judīte Timma
Photo by Guntis Pakalns

was closed. Suddenly she heard shambling footsteps, which came down the stairs and approached her. She raised her head and said spontaneously: “Good evening, teacher! As you see, school is here again!” Then the footsteps stopped and retreated. She was sure that A. Lerhis-Puškaitis had come to look what happened to the school.

Approximately one and a half year later, the cleaning woman of the school heard these footsteps in the second floor hall and quite accidentally uttered the same words: “Good-evening, teacher!”

Later J. Timma told her pupils about her experience. Afterwards, the story acquired numerous variants: e.g., if the wind in the garden stirred the swing, it was A. Lerhis-Puškaitis swinging; if somebody turned on the light in the school’s building in the evening, it was him walking there; he played the piano at night etc.

The stories recorded by the children clearly prove that the best informants on the ghost stories were a number (5 to 7) of kids, who studied at this school, lived nearby and used to come there at night to get scared. Almost everyone referred to a certain girl, who allegedly knew these events best of all.

I heard that children narrated these things very seriously, believing that everything could have really happened, and also J. Timma was sure of having met A. Lerhis-Puškaitis; she occasionally relates this story to the museum visitors. Apparently, this is the only occasion in her life connected with haunting.

It is of course questionable, if the teacher should have told her pupils something so enhancing their so-called “superstitions”. But up to then, there was no ghost story associated with such an important building. So, whenever a chance appeared, the story came into being and became established in the tradition.

I was lucky to record many other stories about haunting in this village, mainly related to places about which nothing had been previously recorded.

What Was Not Recorded Earlier?

A more difficult question to answer is: could something be left unrecorded, which folklore collectors could definitely put down now? I think such stories may be quite numerous, but it is difficult to prove.

Only recently the folklore researchers acknowledged the fact that in the course of time the idea of what folklore was has changed along with the notion of what should or should not be recorded by the collector.

I seem to have managed to find specific evidence proving that folklore collectors in the 1930s in Džūkste did not record (i.e. did not consider valuable) the stories that survived in old people's memory up to now even for several generations. Apparently, the locals regarded these stories valuable enough to be told and remembered. I will further present some examples.

Not long before the World War I a curious accident happened. One man with a surname Zvirbulis ['Sparrow'] suddenly woke up during his funeral ceremony from lethal sleep. Shortly before his coffin was lowered into the grave he sat up. Of course, everybody ran away. Only the priest stayed. He said: "If you are a good spirit, then stand up, give me your hand and let's go home! If you are a bad spirit, then stay where you are and sleep!" The man stood up, was led home and lived for several years more.

Stories about rich and strong men of the village were left unrecorded as well, describing their joking and jostling with each other when getting drunk.

One strong man clung to the wings of the mill and went round. Another one carried a horse to the second floor of the municipality building: he put the front legs of the horse onto his shoulders and the horse came on hind legs with him. But the greatest joke devised by one rich man was as follows: having sold his crops in Rīga at a very good price, he bought a ride home by train – a locomotive and a carriage just for himself. Besides, he rang the municipality to tell that a very important person from the capital was coming. So all the local officials were waiting for him at the station, accompanied by girls in national costumes and a brass band...

A purposeful search makes it possible to record numerous new stories similar to legends or legend-like recollections that cannot be found in the folklore collections from the 1930s or earlier. They probably were not included into the "lists of the collectibles", both thematically and in terms of the genre. Some of these stories found their way into the literary works by authors coming from this parish, e.g., in the novel "Putras Dauķis" (1930) by K. Ieviņš, dragging the horse onto the second floor of the municipality building was described. Probably also other stories mentioned above could be discovered in some published texts that facilitated their preservation in people's memory. In the modern folklore research, references like "the ancient oral tradition" are regarded incorrect, because usually some earlier written sources or subsequent artificial renewals of the broken tradition could be found, therefore every "life of the story" should be investigated individually.

Genre Borders

On the theoretical grounds of the Finnish school, all the narratives were classified in four groups since the Archives of Latvian Folklore was established in 1924: a1 – fairy-tales, a2 – legends, a3 – anecdotes, and b – stories (histories). The last one of these groups deserved the least attention: e.g. the stories still have no catalogue and no bigger publications either. My more experienced colleagues recommended me to classify stories that “did not fit into other categories” here. In Soviet folkloristics there was a genre called *skazi* in Russian: i.e. descriptions about past events in which, unlike in legends, no fantastic elements were included. Nowadays, mainly because of studies in oral history, it has become clear that people cannot tell “absolutely objectively”, i.e. with no use of imagination, without adapting to the situation, and so cannot avoid the “fantastic elements”. And exactly the presence of those “fantastic elements” turns an “ordinary story” into a “good story”.

Texts that could be considered to be the most interesting ones by the readers of my future book, according to genre fall into the “space” between legends and memory stories. They have characteristics of both genres. I would not like asserting that the genre system of narratives is very different from that which existed some 120 or 70 years ago, as it is indicated by the modern collections, predominated not by fairy-tales and legends, but by memory stories. Methods of collection, collectors’ interests and possibilities have changed too. The fact that collections from Džūkste from the 1930s comprise practically no stories could be explained by lacking interest in them and considering them “too ordinary” by the collectors.

The methods of folklore collection were developed in the 19th century, when there were no tape recorders yet. While writing the texts by hand or later recreating them from the memory the collector would frequently miss or even disregard those places in the stories, which did not seem important. Oral historians’ methods are closely connected to the recording technique: the whole text, created together in the course of the interview is fixed on tape. Afterwards, while using the tape, the folklore collectors “cut out” pieces that are identified as folklore, still not knowing what to do with the rest of the record.

I also cut out the brightest pieces, smoothed out by life or frequent retelling from the life narratives of Džūkste people. But quite frequently exactly those short stories concentrate many things from the person’s life and peculiarities of a certain period, as it was in the above-mentioned example with the chewing gum.

“The Life Story” of the Place

If different stories, recorded from a number of people, would be placed on the time axis, the collective history of those people and of this place would emerge. There are events typical for the period in question, reflecting history of the whole Latvia (as part of the Europe), as well as specific events from the village life, demonstrating how

things happened in this particular place. This case could be described by the following formula: *history through stories*.

I have particularly sought out memories of the Soviet times. People in the post-Soviet world are not overly enthusiastic about recollecting the Soviet times. The memory is selective. Soviet times are like a completely different, remote and strange civilization not only to the foreigners, but also to the younger generations, who are students now. And memory-based stories that according to genre are quite close to the legends, along with political anecdotes are good means of spelling out what life in the Soviet times was like. Although some explanations regarding the background are sometimes necessary, as many things do not seem self-evident for the people who have not lived in this system.

In Džūkste, the typical themes for the historical narratives would include the war and its consequences (in winter of the 1944/1945 the front line was here for a long time, even now many bombs lay hidden in the ground, while recently a tank was dragged out from the lake and could still be started up), the kolkhoz times, the people who had power at that time and also those who opposed this power, or simply were out on a limb, the building of houses and schools, changes in life and experiences of the people, building of the oil-pipe and stealing of diesel from it. It is difficult to enumerate the topics abstractly; narrating individual stories seems much easier. I could tell them for hours: funny and tragic, serious, mystical and romantic.

My Narrative of the Stories from Džūkste

Besides comprising the previously mentioned individual and collective life history, the stories from Džūkste have yet another “level” or aspect to them, which might be even more distanced from the reality (or, to be more precise, creating another reality from the stories). It is *my story about the stories from Džūkste*, colored by my subjective viewpoint, influenced by my attitude of the professional folklorist, by my distance and concepts about the narrated events. And by my ideas regarding the way in which texts should be selected and “a little bit” altered in order to make them interesting and suitable for further retelling to my listeners. (Also the examples in this article are not quoted directly from the writings or recordings but retold by me.) I have many times and for many hours told the ghost stories to children of various ages, I prepared and recorded radio broadcasts where I told the legendary history of Rīga, since 1997 I was a member of the jury at the children’s storytelling competitions, I watched different performances of the most popular contemporary storyteller Alma Makovska (1922–2004) in various situations, and I felt increasingly sure that a good narrator did not retell the text in a formal way, but adapted it creatively according to the specific situation, while of course being aware of traditions, situations and borders of other actual contexts.

I still do not know how to combine this experience gained through oral narrating with the intentions of the book. The book “Legends and Ghost Stories from

Džūkste” initially was meant to be a collection of legends and legend-like texts with the specialist’s commentaries. Written narratives follow other “rules of the game” than the oral ones. The tradition of publishing folklore allows for careful editing of the texts, but more liberal “literal reworking” is reserved only to the writers (who believe themselves to be “better narrators”). 120 years ago the chief goal for A. Lerhis-Puškaitis was “rescuing the ancient heritage from oblivion”, and this included both stories and knowledge. Nowadays the attitude ought to be different: if the story is interesting enough and worth telling, it is going to survive without the folklore collector’s assistance, because presently there are numerous kinds of mass media and also possibilities of documenting have expanded. My goal is different: fostering the understanding of stories and storytelling.

At the moment I am not yet aware of what kind of book it will make: whether I will follow the easiest route and publish the collected texts with short commentaries in order to be able to fill in the report that “the project is accomplished with an appropriate result” or make my own subjective story about the “life of the stories” regarding every legend or group of legends that need wider study. But I am certain of one thing: in order of exploring the stories one does not only have to carry on “the writing-desk research”, studying the earlier collections and publications; doing fieldwork is absolutely necessary, i.e. going to get acquainted with life of the stories in the place where they keep being told in all their variety and confusion. Moreover, some experience can only be gained if the explorer of narratives sometimes finds himself / herself “on the other side” of the microphone, i.e. telling the stories in front of the listeners.

¹ Džūkste is located approximately halfway between Latvian towns Tukums and Dobele, about 40 km from the Lithuanian border. It should be noted here that this is a reworked version of the article published in Latvian: *Guntis Pakalns*. Gaidītais un negaidītais, vācot teikas un spoku stāstus Džūkstē. – *Meklējumi un atradumi 2004* (rakstu krāj.). Sast. I. Daukste-Silasproge. Rīga, 2004, pp. 62–75.

² Džūkstes pasakas. Pierakstījis A. Lerhis-Puškaitis. Sast. K. Arājs. Rīga, 1980. – 332 pages; 2. izdevums: Rīga, 1991. – 302 pages; 3. izdevums: Rīga, 2003. – 472 pages.

³ *Puškaitis*. Džūkstes teikas. – *Balss*, 1884, Nr. 34; *Puškaitis*. Džūkstes teikas. Pienavas teikas. – *Rakstu krājums*. Izdots no Rīgas Latviešu biedrības Zinību komisijas. Rīga, 1885, pp. 80–90; *Latviešu tautas pasakas*. Sakrājis Anss Lerhis-Puškaitis, 3. daļas otra puse. Jelgava, 1891, pp. 102–110; see also: *G. Pakalns* (sast.). *Anss Lerhis-Puškaitis atmiņās un stāstos*. Rīga, 2000, pp. 107–118.

⁴ *Jānis Straubergs, Kārlis Straubergs*. Džūkste. Pagasta un draudzes vēsture. Rīga, 1939, pp. 468–500.

PATIRTIS IR IŠVADOS, SUKAUPTOS DŽŪKSTĒJE RENKANT SAKMES IR PASAKOJIMUS APIE VAIDUOKLIUS

GUNTIS PAKALNS

Santrauka

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