

PERSPECTIVES TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ESTONIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES AND THE FOLKLORE ARCHIVES OF THE FINNISH LITERATURE SOCIETY

IRMA-RIITTA JÄRVINEN

PhD, researcher

Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society

P.O. Box 259, 00171 Helsinki, Finland

E-mail: irma-riitta.jarvinen@finlit.fi

ABSTRACT

The origin of the relations between Finnish and Estonian folklorists goes far back to the days of Elias Lönnrot and Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald in the first half of the 19th century. In this article, however, I shall concentrate on those decades since the 1930s, when the two archives, the Estonian Folklore Archives and the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society have existed as institutions. I shall highlight some events, joint projects, historical turning points, and pay attention to individuals, who have had more influence on developing these relations. There were periods of time when the contacts were not possible between the institutions, but still, the continuity of relations existed between individuals. My point of view is micro-historical, as the study of micro-history is interested on the small scale level on the individual, in opposition to macro-history that concentrates on the great changes brought along by political events, on the history of “great men and women”, as well as on the history of institutions. In the history of the folklore archives in Finland and Estonia, we can recognise both of those levels and pay attention to the way how they are intertwined.

KEYWORDS: Finnish-Estonian contacts • folklore archives • folklore materials • folklorists • history of folklore studies

ESTONIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES AND ITS DIRECTOR OSKAR LOORITS (1927–1942)

In June 1927, Dr. Oskar Loorits made an important trip to Finland. At that time plans already had been made for establishing the Estonian Folklore Archives, although the Archives actually started its work in September. Estonia was ahead of Finland in this matter as not until 1934 were the folklore materials of the Finnish Literature Society (FLS) separated from the collections of the library, and a special department, the Folklore Archives, was established.

The purpose of Loorits's trip was to take the invaluable original collections of Estonian folklore, the manuscripts of Jakob Hurt and that of the Estonian Students' Society back to Estonia; and this operation was carried out in 1927. Somewhat later, in 1931–1932 other Estonian original collections that were kept in Finland, for example, the song and riddle collections of Matthias Johann Eisen, were also sent back to Estonia (Luht 1962: 176–177).

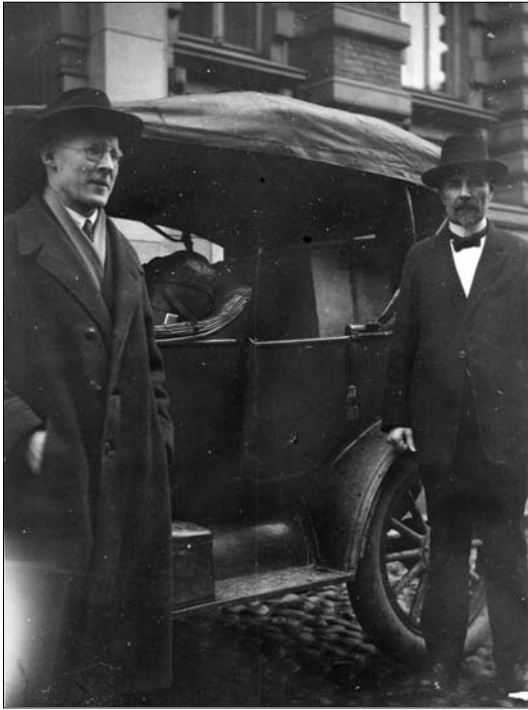


Photo 1. Oskar Loorits and Kaarle Krohn in front of the Finnish Literature Society, June 21, 1927. Photo: Estonian Literary Museum (Estonian Cultural History Archives).

nia as the revolutionary effects of 1905 in Russia had reached Estonia, political restlessness and strikes were spreading, and the Russian government sent brutalising troops to Estonia in order to launch terror and repression. A group of political refugees, young painters, writers, and students had fled to Finland, among them Friedebert Tuglas and Hella Murrik (Wuolijoki).¹ These representatives of the young intelligentsia were hired by the Finnish Literature Society with an aim to prepare the copies.

The effort had to be kept in secret and thus, in the official record of the Finnish Literature Society, no names were mentioned in this matter, but the fact was only briefly stated: "copying of those extensive collections was started, and as there were, by chance, plenty of young and vigorous employees available, the work progressed in a good speed" (Hautala 1939: 243). Hella Wuolijoki wrote a register of the copied songs, and after her the daughter of Jakob Hurt, Linda Hurt, prepared a detailed index of the material (*ibid.*: 244). The collections of M. J. Eisen were copied in Estonia in the 1930s and these copies were sent to Finland. The same outcome concerned the collections of the Estonian Students' Society and some other early Estonian folklore collections, for example, that of the Learned Estonian Society. This means that the copy collections of Estonian folklore, at the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, became quite extensive.

Why were these nationally important manuscripts preserved in Finland? The reason is quite interesting as it was due to the activity of the Finnish Literature Society, and above all of Professor Kaarle Krohn, to have the Estonian folklore materials copied in Finland. The idea was first presented as early as 1890 in the correspondence between Kaarle Krohn and Jakob Hurt. The active participant in realising this idea was Krohn, who was interested in the Estonian materials for his comparative research, whereas in the beginning Hurt was hesitant and reluctant (Ilomäki 1990: 149–151). Hurt's son Max started the work in St. Petersburg, but it was finally carried out after Hurt's death in 1907–1908, and thus the original manuscripts were brought to Finland for this practical purpose (Hautala 1939: 240–243).

How was this immense copying work organised? Here we must refer to macro-history. The year 1906 had been politically very difficult in Estonia

MARTTI HAAVIO'S TIME AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE FLS FOLKLORE ARCHIVES (1934–1948)

When the FLS Folklore Archives were founded in 1934, Martti Haavio became the first director of the archives. He was a friend of Oskar Loorits both belonging to the same generation (Loorits was born in 1900, Haavio in 1898) and had similar interests, including folk religion. They were facing also analogous questions – how to start and organise a modern folklore archive? They had apparently close contacts as Loorits was invited to become a corresponding member of the Finnish Literature Society in 1934 and a year later he visited Finland where he communicated with many Finnish scholars.

In 1935 Haavio and Loorits met in the Nordic Congress of Ethnologists in Uppsala, and made plans with Uno Harva, Reidar Christiansen, Sigurd Erixon, and Gunnar Granberg to establish a new folkloristic journal, called *Mare Balticum*,² which would publish articles about Estonian, Finnish, Swedish and Latvian folklore (Eskola 2000: 495–496). After those discussions Haavio was somewhat afraid that the Swedes would take over the initiative (ibid.: 246). During the same trip Haavio visited Swedish traditional archives in order to learn how to organise the growing collections of the Finnish Literature Society. Thus, in the 1930s, both Estonian Folklore Archives and FLS Folklore Archives had their hands full of practical organisational work, and new collecting activities were started (in Finland, for example, the great collecting competition to celebrate



Photo 2. Group of Ingrian singers in Tallinn at the Estonian Broadcasting Company, June 1937. From the left: Darja Lehti, Mari Vahter, Valpuri Vohta, Lauri Laiho, Pao Mägi, Tatjana Jegorov and Anna Kivisoov. In the back: Aili Laiho, Peeter Liivandi.

Photo: private collection of Irma-Riitta Järvinen.

the 100th anniversary of the *Kalevala* in 1935, and the collecting competition of historical and local legends in 1937; in Estonia analogous competition dedicated to place-related legends was organised in 1938–1939; see Hiemäe 2005).

Finnish folklorists began to carry out fieldwork in Western Ingria, in the so called Estonian Ingria, which was a small area that had been annexed to the Republic of Estonia as a result of the Peace Treaty of Tartu in 1920. Martti and Elsa Haavio worked in Ingria in 1936, and Aili and Lauri Laiho³ did interviews, took photographs and made sound recordings there in 1937–1938 (see Järvinen 1990). The recording of the Ingrian singers and narrators was carried out in Tallinn at the studio of the Estonian Broadcasting Company and a group of singers was brought to Tallinn by train from Narva. Altogether 66 sound recordings were made, including epic, lyrical and wedding songs, laments, magic tales, legends, shepherd's tunes, etc. In this work Elmar Päss from the University of Tartu assisted Finnish folklorists.

In 1939, again the Estonian copy collections were mentioned in the annual report of the FLS Folklore Archives: the major part of the material was put in order, the catalogues bound into covers, and the material was placed into special cardboard boxes.

WAR AND POST-WAR PERIOD

Finland was at war from November 30, 1939. My main source, the annual reports of the FLS Folklore Archives, becomes very laconic from this point onwards. And, of course, nothing is mentioned about contacts with archives and colleagues anywhere abroad, as there were hardly any. The report briefly stated in 1941: "Exceptional circumstances and the war are the reason, why the collecting activities of the Folklore Archives have been very scarce." In 1942–1943, when there were more peaceful periods in the eastern front, and when the Finnish troops had proceeded to East Karelia, some Finnish folklorists carried out fieldwork among Karelians, Lydians and Vepsians. Väinö Kaukonen collected in Viena (Archangel) Karelia, Lauri Laiho and Jouko Hautala as well as Helmi Helminen in Olonets Karelia (Järvinen 2004: 46–49).⁴

The annual reports of the Finnish Literature Society did not contain any information about the events in Estonia. There certainly were rumours that were later confirmed, about colleagues who had escaped from Estonia. Loorits had left for Sweden in 1944. In 1946 there was only a limited reference about Estonian folklore materials: "M.A. Maija Juvas has donated Estonian copy materials to the Folklore Archives. This material, about 2000 units of notes on beliefs and magic spells concerning childbirth, was copied by Astrid Reponen in 1931–1932 at the Estonian Folklore Archives." Astrid Reponen had spent, at that time, some months in Tartu at the Estonian Folklore Archives, together with Maija Juvas and Helmi Helminen. They formed a group of young idealistic and enthusiastic women, who were strongly devoted to folklore studies.⁵

After the war, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a clear emphasis can be seen in the activities of the FLS Folklore Archives as contacts with the Nordic countries were strengthened and visits to Sweden became more frequent. In the summer of 1950, the Nordic conference of ethnology and folklore was held in Helsinki. This conference was very important in the tense post-war atmosphere of Finland.

In early 1950s nothing was reported about Estonia, and of those Estonian colleagues

who did not emigrate. Estonia was there, but beyond reach. The Finnish Literature Society invited new Estonian corresponding members, but they were all abroad: Gustav Ränk in Stockholm, Andrus Saareste and Julius Mägiste in Uppsala, Alo Raun and Felix Oinas in Bloomington. There was, however, one exception, namely Paul Ariste from Tartu (1956). When the Finnish Literature Society celebrated its 125th anniversary, the greetings of the “Estonian kindred people” were delivered by Eeva Niinivaara, Laura Keipi and Osmo Nikanne. The two latter individuals were translators of Anna Haava’s poetry and Eeva Niinivaara worked as the teacher of Estonian language at the University of Helsinki. She had married a Finn and had moved to Finland before the World War II. She spoke the following words: “Now, when the Society is celebrating its 125th anniversary, there are, in a way, two Estonia’s: one in its own area, in the homeland, the other in all continents, where its people are scattered.”

In 1955, the staff of the Folklore Archives in Helsinki obtained a new member from Sweden: Aime Luht, who was an Estonian folklorist (Salokannel 1998: 80). She was born in Narva in 1922 and had studied at the University of Tartu as a student of Oskar Loorits. In 1944 she fled to Sweden, where her father was already resident. Her mother and brother missed the boat and thus were left in Estonia. Aime Luht studied folklore and ethnology at the universities of Lund and Stockholm, and got her M.A. degree in Helsinki 1957. She was in contact with Loorits in Sweden, and when the FLS Folklore Archives needed a person to organise its Estonian collections, Loorits suggested her.

Aime Luht worked and lived permanently in Helsinki until she passed away in 1975. She was *the* specialist of Estonian folklore in the archives, and, according to the words of Anneli Asplund, kept up the spirit of Estonia in those years. Anneli Asplund and Pirkko-Liisa Rausmaa also remembered her liveliness and intelligence in discussions, and her quick and sarcastic humour, which in Finland is often considered as typically Estonian. Anneli Asplund spoke about a definition used by Aime Luht: she called those seminar papers in which the student had not used Estonian comparative material with the Finnish term *siipirikko* – a bird with a broken wing.

FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE ESTONIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES AFTER THE WAR

In the late 1950s some cultural contacts between the Estonian SSR and Finland began to appear, for example, the ethnologist Kustaa Viikuna (1956) published a short and cautious report about his trip to Tallinn and Tartu. Nothing remarkable actually happened in the field of folklore scholarship until 1962.

Lauri Simonsuuri had been appointed as the director of the FLS Folklore Archives in 1961. According the words of Rauni Puranen, who was the director of the FLS Library, for Lauri Simonsuuri it was a matter of heart to create contacts with Estonian folklorists. Simonsuuri had a special background in relation to Estonia: he had studied at the University of Tartu in the autumn semester of 1934, at the age of 24. He met with Loorits, who advised the young Finnish student to strengthen his knowledge of Estonian before starting to work with the archive materials. Thus he attended the lectures of Julius Mark, professor of Uralic languages, and also became a *Revelus*, member of the student organisation Korp! Revelia, bearing their dark green student cap with white embroidery.⁶

Simonsuuri made his first effort to travel to Soviet Estonia in 1960. He first went to Leningrad, but there he was advised to go to Moscow, in order to get permission to enter Estonia. He spent some days in Moscow, waiting for the needed papers. He had plenty of time in Moscow – for example, to see the corpses of Lenin and Stalin – but after waiting for several days, he found that it was useless to stay longer and returned home.

In 1962, Simonsuuri had managed to get “a strong paper” (citing the words of Rauni Puranen) from the Soviet Embassy, and was able to travel to Estonia. He asked Rauni Puranen to come with him. In Tallinn they met with Paul Ariste and visited later his home in Tartu; Ariste showed books from the library of Julius Mark that he had managed to buy from a flea market. Due to the skilful manipulations of Ariste, certain people in Tartu (the relatives of Aime Luht) got word in advance that two Finnish scholars from the Literature Society would visit Tartu. Simonsuuri and Puranen spent three days in Tartu, but they were in the company of a representative of the Academy of Sciences, who doggedly followed them. Simonsuuri was warmly welcomed at the Estonian Folklore Archives (at that time the Folklore Department of the Fr. R. Kreutzwald Literary Museum) by his old friends: August Annist, Herbert Tampere, Richard Viidalepp and Erna Normann. They had a chance to discuss and agree about exchanges of micro-filmed folklore materials in the coming years.

Erna Normann, who was a researcher of folk legends and shared these interests with Simonsuuri, wanted to tell him more about the events in Tartu. They decided to visit the Raadi cemetery in Tartu, but as the representative of the Academy of Sciences could not be in two places at one time, he decided to stay outside the cemetery gate and keep company with Rauni Puranen. Normann and Simonsuuri had a private discussion for five minutes. Also, it was the special task of Rauni Puranen to bring the warm greetings of Oskar Loorits to his former colleagues in Tartu. The important outcome of the trip of Simonsuuri and Puranen was that the relations between the archives were re-established. In all probability this visit also laid foundation for the further co-operation in the field of paremiology (cf. Krikmann, Sarv 1996: 89–91).

According to the annual report of the FLS Folklore Archives the microfilm exchanges between the two archives were started in 1963. And also indicated was the new phase in the activities concerning Estonian copy collections where Aime Luht carried out the organising work. The collections were placed into new boxes; the colours of these boxes, blue, black, and white, were not chosen at random.

President Urho Kekkonen visited Estonia in 1964 and gave his famous speech in the Estonian language on March 12th in the University of Tartu (see Salokannel 1998: 102–109). It was said that the speech was written by the linguist Lauri Posti and ethnographer Kustaa Vilkuna, assisted by Aime Luht from the FLS Folklore Archives.

Towards the end of the 1960s the contacts became more frequent. Estonian researchers began to visit the archives of the Finnish Literature Society and travelling became easier when the boat connection was established between Tallinn and Helsinki in 1965. Soon groups of Finnish students and researchers from the FLS visited Tallinn. The annual reports of the Folklore Archives inform us that questions arose concerning Finnish folklore materials, for example, in 1967, Mall Proodel (Hiimäe) from Tartu got answers to her enquiries.

THE ERA OF SYMPOSIUMS AND CONGRESSES

In the 1970s there began the era of joint symposiums and conferences.⁷ As emphasised by the former FLS General Secretary Urpo Vento and the director of the Folklore Archives Pekka Laaksonen, for the younger generation of Finnish folklorists, the International Congress of Fenno-Ugric Studies in Tallinn in 1970 turned out to be important venue for establishing new contacts with Estonian scholars. As the outcome of these contacts, a Finnish-Estonian folklore symposium took place in Helsinki in September 1971; of this event, our annual report stated briefly: "Many official and unofficial conversations were carried on."

In 1973, at the Finnish-Soviet Symposium of the Baltic-Finnic Philology held in Tallinn (see *Läänemeresoome...* 1973), more microfilms on Estonian folklore materials were donated to the Folklore Archives in Helsinki: these included copies from the collections of the Society of Estonian Literati and that of Jakob Hurt. The organised co-operation and exchange took place under the supervision of the Committee of Co-operation in Science and Technology between Finland and the Soviet Union.⁸ Tartu was in practice a closed city for the Finnish visitors until the end of the Soviet era as it was possible to visit Tartu only for a day, which meant a six-hour car drive per day, and a terrible rush in Tartu. Only the official guests of the Academy of Sciences could stay overnight in Tartu.

The year 1974 marks a real boom time: the Finnish Literature Society obtained many new corresponding members from Estonia: for example, folklorists Otilie-Olga Kõiva, Eduard Laugaste, Ülo Tedre, Richard Viidalepp, Udo Kolk, as well as linguists Mari Must, Paula Palmeos and Eduard Päll. Ingrid Rüütel became a corresponding member somewhat later, in 1978. In 1974, the Finnish Literature Society received the letters, manuscripts, notes, books and photographs of Oskar Loorits from Sweden, to be preserved, according to his will, in Finland. Loorits had died in 1961 and Aime Luht was again engaged in organising these materials in order. In 1998 Loorits' scholarly archive arrived in Tartu; his personal archive was sealed until 2001, and finally, in October 2005 it was moved to Estonia under the supervision of Kristin Kuutma and Ergo-Hart Västrik.

Exchange of microfilms between our archives went on during the Finnish-Soviet symposium in Helsinki in 1977. In the section of folklore, problems of fieldwork, cataloguing, archiving and folklore anthologies were discussed. Also the further activities of the Estonian-Finnish proverb



Photo 3. Pekka Laaksonen and Annikki Kaivola at the International Congress of Fenno-Ugric Studies in Tartu, 1970.

Photo by E. Kivaste. Finnish Literature Society, KRAK 6793: 2.

project⁹ were considered. In 1979 Arvo Krikmann and Ingrid Sarv had the possibility to work for three weeks at the FLS Folklore Archives.

NEW TIMES IN THE HORIZON

During the 1980s exchange and co-operation between Finnish and Estonian folklore archives, at all levels, was frequent, vigorous and flourishing. More projects were started: Matti Kuusi and Ülo Tedre discussed comparisons of song types of the Estonian *regilaul* and Finnish-Karelian Kalevala-metric songs. Professor Leea Virtanen put a strong effort into creating contacts between Finnish and Estonian folklorists and folklore students. She also gave lectures about Estonian folklore at the University of Helsinki, and edited the book *Viron veräjät*, a collection of articles by Estonian folklorists (1987). Ulla Lipponen was video-filming children games in Tartu in 1989, and her long-term projects with Mare Kõiva for studying the folklore of Finnish and Estonian schoolchildren actually started a few years later. The proverb project produced the extensive volume *Proverbia Septentrionalia* (Kuusi et al. 1985), the comparison of 900 most popular proverb types in the Balto-Finnic area. Fieldwork was also carried out: with the great help of Ingrid Rüütel and the researcher of the FLS Folklore Archives Pirkko-Liisa Rausmaa had a chance to study and film folk dancing in Kihnu and in Setumaa (1987).



Photo 4. Matti Sarmela, Pentti Leino and Arvo Krikmann at the Estonian-Finnish Symposium in Helsinki, 1971.

Photo by Ilkka Kolhemainen. Finnish Literature Society, KRAK 6824: 9.

Great historical changes were taking place in the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. As the Soviet system ceased to exist, also old structures vanished (for example, the Committee of Co-operation in Science and Technology) and had to be replaced. Finnish and Estonian folklorists came together in 1991 to think, how they could co-operate in the new situation. A seminar, thanks to the efforts of Leea Virtanen, was organised at the University of Helsinki in November. We can read from the annual report of the FLS Folklore Archives: "The conclusion was that at this point direct co-operation between our institutions is the most effective way."

This direct co-operation produced, for example, excellent chances for fieldwork projects. With the assistance of Ingrid Rüütel, the Finnish researchers Anneli Asplund, Ulla Lipponen, Marjatta Jauhiainen, and Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, were able to start their fieldwork in Western Ingria in 1990 and the project went on practically throughout the whole decade. The project of collecting schoolchildren's folklore and traditions was started in 1992, and many seminars were held in Tartu in connection with the latter.

The latest great project has dealt with digitising Kalevala-metric poetry, published in *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient poems of the Finnish people). The digitising work was carried out in Tartu, under the responsibility of Academician Arvo Krikmann. Nowadays the interest in the study of old singing traditions of our countries is getting stronger in both archives and the same concerns the study of oral history and memories.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Looking back to the history of two institutions, the Estonian Folklore Archives and the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, it can be observed that their relations were at times kept up between individuals, even though it was more difficult on the level of institutions. This was the case, for example, between the post-war Soviet Estonia and Finland where the political ideologies created borders. When the political situation became less tense, it was essential to re-establish relations as quickly as possible, and the pre-war contacts clearly gave a firm basis for co-operation. Still, the situation was unequal between the folklorists of the two countries. Estonian folklorists had much fewer chances to travel to Finland, and their Finnish colleagues could not properly visit the Estonian Folklore Archives in Tartu. Estonian scholars had no chance to join the fieldwork trips carried out in Finland. In spite of all difficulties, many forms of co-operation could still be established. For the young generation of folklorists of both countries it may seem awkward how complicated the communication over the Gulf of Finland has been, via Moscow and Leningrad. Maybe it is good that hardships are forgotten, as the situation is normal and in balance again.

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NOTES

1 Hella Wuolijoki (nee Murrik, 1886–1954) became later a famous playwright in Finland. She was especially known for her Niskavuori-series of plays. During the Second World War, Wuolijoki received a life sentence for treason, but she was released soon after the war and worked as the disputed director of the Finnish Broadcasting Company between 1945–1949 (see Tuomioja 2006).

2 The journal never came out with this name, but as *Acta Ethnologica* (1936–1938), which was a joint project of Haavio and Granberg. (Oral communication with Kristin Kuutma, Oct. 30, 2006.)

3 Simonsuuri since 1945.

4 Estonian scholars made at that time field work among Votians in West-Ingria (see, for example, Talve 1990).

5 Astrid Reponen shot herself by the door of the Finnish parliament on March 13, 1940. On that day the Winter War ended, but Finland had lost Karelia including its second biggest city Viipuri (Vyborg).

6 Lauri Simonsuuri (1910–1964) was my father. He had sworn the oath of loyalty (“All for one, one for all”) to Revalia and I remember that in my childhood home, the members of Revalia were always welcome guests, no matter whether they came from Estonia, Sweden, Finland, the U.S. or Canada.

7 Estonian folklorist Pille Kippar (2006) has pointed out the difficulties that the Estonian participants had to face, in order to take part in these events. There were always more people willing to attend than were allowed to come.

8 The Committee was established in the 1970s in order to create possibilities for organising seminars and meetings for researchers in Finland and in the Soviet Union in a controllable way. The Committee came to its end in the turn of the years 1994–1995.

9 This project was initiated by Matti Kuusi, the professor of folklore studies at the University of Helsinki, in the 1960s and the working group consisted of both Finnish and Estonian scholars (among them Arvo Krikmann, Kari Laukkanen, Pentti Leino, Vaina Mälk, Erna Normann and Ingrid Sarv; see Krikmann, Sarv 1996: 89–104).