

SCIENTIFIC CONTACTS WITHIN ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORISTICS BETWEEN SWEDEN AND ESTONIA

Personal Experiences and Considerations

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In recent years, presentations of scholars' subjective experiences and reflections have been an object of increasing interest in Nordic ethnology and folkloristics (Hellspong & Skott 2010; Rogan & Eriksen 2013). In this survey I will present a self-reflective overview of my experiences with new research contacts that became possible beginning in 1991, after the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – had been in isolation for decades. Although after 1991 ethnological views in Sweden focused on all the three Baltic countries, the focus here will be on Estonia as ethnologists at Uppsala University had the most contacts with this country throughout the 1990s. I held a professorship at Uppsala University between 1987 and 1997.

During my childhood and youth in western Sweden in the 1940s and 1950s, I did not hear much about the Baltic States. Sweden's deportation of 146 Balts to the USSR in 1946 was the most well-known episode and one that also proved tragic for Sweden (Ekholm 1984). In 1958, a farmer's family moved from the Kalmar district in eastern Sweden to the farm next to the one where I grew up in western Sweden. The farmer's wife told our family about her Swedish/Estonian background and her former life in Estonia. When she was eleven years of age, she and her family experienced a dramatic escape by boat as refugees from the Estonian island of Ormsö (Vormsi) to Sweden. This was just after the second Soviet invasion of Estonia in 1944.

In 1966, I began my studies of ethnology at the University of Lund. Among my first contacts at the Folklife Archives was an elderly librarian who was known as The Rector. He was said to have been a rector in Estonia before fleeing to Sweden. He was a conscientious person who kept a close eye on the students' loans of books (see Frykman 1988: 92). Other than that, I heard nothing about

the Baltic States during my basic instruction in ethnology or during the period of post-graduate studies that preceded my doctorate in 1972. When I was appointed as associate professor in ethnology at Lund in the 1970s, I did hear about Gustav Ränk (1902–1998) who worked on the ethnology of food. He had been the first holder of the professorship of ethnology at Tartu University in the years 1939–1944. When the professorship was abolished, he fled to Sweden. During the Soviet period ethnological research in Estonia existed under the label of ethnography (Annist & Kaaristo 2013). In 1947, the Chair of Folklore at Tartu (State) University was united with the Department of Literature. Within the available courses, the possibility to specialise in folklore remained (see <http://www.ut.ee/folk/index.php/en/department/history>).

Ränk became a well-known and respected ethnologist in Stockholm (Hellspong 1993: 10). The later appointed professor of ethnology at Tartu University, Elle Vunder (see below), was overjoyed at being able to meet him in Stockholm after 1991. This enabled her to interview him about his life in Estonia. In the 1970s, I became acquainted with Ilmar Talve (1919–2007). He had graduated in 1942, after completing studies in ethnology in Tartu, but had later fled to Sweden through Germany. In Stockholm he continued his studies in ethnography and in 1960 he defended his doctoral thesis about sauna and drying houses in Northern Europe. I heard him speak about his background in Estonia. In 1962, he was appointed professor of ethnology at the Finnish University in Turku, Turun Yliopisto, where he worked until 1986. His research concentrated on the folk culture of Finland. He also wrote a wide-ranging work on the cultural history of Estonia, which was published in 2004 (Talve 2004: 101ff.; Elmevik 2007: 14f.).

During the summer of 1980, I participated in fieldwork focused on culture in the coastal region of south-eastern Finland together with colleagues-ethnologists from Helsinki. This was the time when I learned how Finnish scholars established contacts with Estonia by sea. A colleague of mine, folklorist Leea Virtanen, had just returned from a boat trip to Tallinn.

It was only when the Baltic Sea seminars under the name *Kolloquium Balticum Ethnographicum* were resumed in 1984 in Schwerin, East Germany, after having been discontinued since 1966, that I came into contact with scholars from the Baltic States. They were able to travel freely behind the Iron Curtain but were absolutely forbidden to travel farther west. During a later conference in Stralsund, East Germany, in 1987, plans were made to hold the next conference in Riga, Latvia. Scholars from Latvia expressed grave doubts about whether their Nordic colleagues would be able to get entry permits to the Baltic States. These doubts were based on the intense Soviet rearmament at the time and their deployment of missiles quite near to Sweden. Thanks to the political

liberalisation that occurred under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev after 1987, this conference could be held in late April, 1990. Several Nordic delegates participated and even one from West Germany. That would have been completely impossible in earlier years.

In Riga I became acquainted with Elle Vunder, who presented a paper on German influences on Estonian folk art (Vunder 1993: 142ff.). My own paper concerned a study of the Forest Finns who had emigrated from Finland in the 1500s and 1600s to the border districts of Norway/Sweden (see below) (Gustavsson 1993: 24f.). While we were in Riga, we became very aware of the obvious political unease because of a Latvian parliamentary election scheduled only a few days later in early May. Domestic Soviet troops from Moscow, called the black berets, were posted in the streets. The Letts themselves had no idea about what the future would hold. We Nordic delegates were extremely relieved at being able to leave Riga on 30 April. We later followed news reports of events that took place in connection with the election with great interest.



Figure 1. A conference held by *Kolloquium Balticum Ethnographicum* in Riga, Latvia, in 1990. The man in the middle wearing a dark coat and a cap is Kai Detlev Sievers from Kiel, West Germany. Standing to his right and wearing a light coat is Hermann Strobach from East Berlin. To the extreme left of the first row is Nils Storå from the Åbo Akademi, Finland. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson.

Having had these experiences in Riga, I took great interest in attending the so-called Monday Movement meetings held in the Main Square in Uppsala throughout 1990 and 1991. The purpose of these meetings, which were arranged in a great many Swedish towns, was to demonstrate solidarity with the Baltic States' attempts to liberate themselves from the USSR (see <https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Måndagsrörelsen>). Andres Küng and some well-known Swedish politicians, such as Carl Bildt, came to Uppsala where they spoke to large crowds of people at noon, Monday after Monday. As early as 1989, another colleague, Professor Juha Pentikäinen from Helsinki, visited Uppsala. There he spoke about his personal experiences in Tallinn, recalling the mass demonstrations that had taken place since 1987, featuring spontaneous singing of national songs and hymns. These events, called the Singing Revolution, finally led to the restoration of independence in Estonia in 1991 (Thomson 1991; Smidchens 2014).

The first Nordic project I participated in together with an Estonian was the so-called Finnforest project (Gustavsson 1987, 1989, 1993), which lasted from 1986 to 1990. Project participants met each year to conduct fieldwork among the descendants of the Finns who had migrated from Savolax in central Finland to the border districts of Norway and Sweden in the 1500s and 1600s. Our studies concentrated on northern Värmland County in Sweden and Hedmark County in Norway. Thanks to Finnish contacts with Estonia, Toivo Sikka from the Estonian National Museum in Tartu was granted permission to travel and participate in these fieldwork studies. This also provided Nordic scholars with an opportunity to understand the difficult research conditions in Estonia. As Norwegian folklorist Stein R. Mathisen wrote in a report of one fieldwork session, "the participants showed great interest in the possibility of collaborating with Estonia" (Mathisen 1990: 147).

Closer contacts with Estonian researchers, research students, and museum professionals became possible only after 1991. By that time ethnologists in Uppsala had realised the importance of setting up cooperative projects with the newly independent Baltic States. This began with Estonia and continued with Latvia and Lithuania. Students and researchers from the Baltic States could be invited to come to Uppsala. The younger generation had an obvious longing for contacts with the West and, geographically speaking, Sweden lay closest to hand. Several students learned Swedish for the purpose of being able to read Swedish literature and to acquire personal contacts in Scandinavia.

The Swedish/Estonian records in the Dialect and Folklore Archives in Uppsala (Dialekt- och Folkminnesarkivet, abbreviated DUF, formerly ULMA) proved to be of special interest to Estonian researchers. This material had been collected in Estonia in the interwar years and also among the Swedish/Estonian refugees who had come to Sweden during the final phases of World War II. The



Figure 2. Map of Estonia after regaining independence in 1991 (<http://www.geatlas.com/en/maps/countries-4/estonia-1165>).

most important collector of material on both language and folk culture was Nils Tiberg (1900–1980) (see www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/folkminnen/samlingar/estlandssvenska-samlingar.html). During the early 1990s, head archivist Wolter Ehn became the central person regarding contacts with Estonia. The Swedish-speaking historian and ethnologist Jutta Holst from the Estonian Open Air Museum at Rocca al Mare, Tallinn, established in 1957 (<http://evm.ee/eng/home>), spent several periods as a guest researcher at the archives in Uppsala. Here she studied the Swedish/Estonian material that had been collected in Sweden. Her research interests focused on Swedish/Estonian agriculture during the interwar years. As a professor at the Institute of Ethnology at Uppsala, I was involved in the contacts with Jutta Holst. Elle Vunder also came to Uppsala as a guest researcher and visited our home at the time.

In my capacity as professor, I took part in arranging *three Nordic research courses in Uppsala* in the early 1990s. At the time, the Nordic Research Training Academy (Nordisk forskerutdanningsakademi (NorFA)) had made funds available to participants from the Baltic States. This gave several Estonian



Figure 3. Elle Vunder from Tartu (on the left) with Jutta Holst from Tallinn (on the right) on a visit to the author's home in Uppsala in 1992. Between them the author's wife, Kristina. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson.

research students an opportunity to come to Uppsala. Several of them had learned Swedish. Some of the discussions were held in English to accommodate participants not only from the Baltic States but also from Finland. The importance of these research courses is apparent in the evaluations later made by the Baltic participants. One of them from Tallinn wrote after completing a research course in 1991:

I think that the opportunity to participate in such research courses is extremely important, especially for the Baltic States and their futures because we have not had such contacts earlier (in the years after 1940) and information about studies in the humanities has been obstructed.
(Gustavsson 1992: 9)

Nordic cooperation with the Baltic States was also launched on the student level. In 1992, the Institute of Ethnology at Uppsala was visited by two lecturers and six students from Tartu University. This was in response to an invitation from the Uppsala section of the Nordic Ethnological and Folkloristic Working Group (NEFA). NEFA Uppsala made a return visit in the spring of 1993. NEFA publishes the journal *Nord Nytt: Nordisk tidsskrift for etnologi og folkloristik* (Nordic News: The Nordic Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics). A theme

issue, *Estnisk etnologi* (Estonian Ethnology), published in 1994, included articles by Estonian scholars written either in Swedish or in Estonian and translated into Swedish. As a graduate student, Liisa Pakosta at Tartu University wrote in the preface to this theme issue:

We hope that this little contribution is representative for a country on the Baltic Sea that has long been disregarded. Much has taken place in Scandinavia during the past fifty years. One element in this development is the nearly total break in contacts between the Baltic States and the Nordic countries. [...] It is to be hoped that this issue of Nord Nytt can also serve as a cultural and scientific link that can contribute to the integration of Scandinavia and the Baltic States into a single cultural area. (Pakosta 1994: 3)

In connection with a Nordic research network on the topic of *Alcohol and Abstinence*, I arranged three symposia in Uppsala in the years 1989, 1991, and 1993. Younger scholars from the Baltic States were able to attend the final gathering of the network thanks to special funds set aside for this purpose by the Nordic Research Training Academy NorFA (Gustavsson 1994: 8f.). The Balts were increasingly included in Nordic education and research cooperation in the years following 1991.

Contacts with Estonian scholars led to invitations to scholars and students at the Institute of Ethnology in Uppsala and to the personnel at ULMA/DUF. An excursion to Estonia took place between May 3 and 7, 1993. The guides were Juta Holst and Elle Vunder in Tallinn and Tartu respectively. We were able to visit the Swedish/Estonian coastal districts that had had a Swedish-speaking population as early as the 1200s. We also inspected the ruins of secret Soviet radio interceptions and radar installations. These were used to spy on Western activities in the Baltic Sea and on Swedish radio transmissions. No Estonians were allowed to come near these sites until after the Soviet withdrawal in the autumn of 1992, half a year before our visit. Before their withdrawal, they had destroyed military buildings and even burned large areas of nearby forests. Some islands were completely ruined because of all the abandoned military debris. We were also told of how Estonians were not permitted to use the best beaches near Tallinn during the Soviet occupation. These had been reserved for the Soviet troops. It was even thought that many of the fires that had broken out at the buildings in the Open Air Museum at Rocca al Mare had been started for political reasons.

We met some elderly women from the coastal districts who were still able to speak Swedish despite the fact that this language had not been taught during the Soviet occupation. They told us about the Soviet defence systems on the



Figure 4. A military building in western Estonia whose windows and inventories were destroyed by the Soviet troops before they left the district in 1992. Photograph by Kristina Gustavsson 1993.

islands along the western coast of Estonia. Local Swedish/Estonian inhabitants were deported during the last phases of World War II. An amateur artist, Felix Georg Sedman, who had lived his entire life on Nuckö (Noarootsi), told us in Swedish about his confirmation in 1936, led by Sven Danell, the future Swedish bishop of Skara diocese. This storyteller remembered the deportation of Estonians to Siberia in both 1941 and 1949. Soldiers had driven up in trucks at dawn and taken nearly all the local people, both young and old. Very few deportees ever returned to their home village. Sedman had escaped, however. His later attempt to escape to Sweden failed and led to his imprisonment. The excursion participants felt the terrible history of this Swedish neighbouring region as having occurred uncomfortably close by.

When we later visited Tartu during our excursion, the story of how the Swedish King Gustav II Adolf had founded the university in 1632 was told with great pride. A small statue of this king set up in commemoration of the founding was not allowed to remain by the Soviet occupation forces and was removed and destroyed. In connection with the Singing Revolution, the people of Tartu built a statue of snow representing Gustav II Adolf. A completely new and permanent statue was erected after Estonia had regained independence in 1991.



Figure 5. *Ethnologist Wolter Ehn standing on the left is listening to three elderly Swedish/Estonian women who relate in Swedish about the circumstances of their lives. The woman standing in the centre is Vilhelmine Sandvik who invited us for coffee in her home. Photograph by Kristina Gustavsson 1993.*

Ants Viires (1918–2015) was the only one of the ethnologists trained before the war who still lived in Estonia. At the time of our visit in 1993 it was felt to be of prime importance that new ethnologists and folklorists could be trained as quickly as possible. These were some of the students who visited Uppsala during their study tours. Some of these newly educated scholars were appointed to leading positions at universities and museums at a very young age since no older candidates were available. Jaanus Plaat became director of the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, founded in 1909, at the age of thirty. Ülo Valk (born in 1962) became professor of folkloristics in Tartu at the same age in 1994. He specialised in the field of worldwide concepts of the devil. Elle Vunder (born in 1939) became professor of ethnology in Tartu in 1994 at the age of fifty-five. Ten years later she was honoured with a *Festschrift* emphasising her scientific achievements. I was among the nine Nordic scholars who contributed articles to the publication. These marked the contacts of Estonian ethnology with Scandinavia under Elle Vunder's leadership (Kõresaar & Leete 2004). My contribution concerned ritual commemorations of sudden death in times past and present (Gustavsson 2004).

The cooperative efforts between Uppsala and Estonia were tragically interrupted when Wolter Ehn and two of his ULMA-colleagues perished in the *Estonia* shipwreck on 28 September 1994. Wolter Ehn's wife Marianne was one of the last to be rescued from the sea. These ULMA-colleagues were travelling to follow up the contacts with Estonian scholars and museum personnel, which had been inaugurated during the previous year's excursion. I will never forget the memorial service that was held when the coffins holding the victims from Uppsala were returned and placed outside Uppsala Cathedral.

The next exchange visit to Tartu was the one carried out by me and research assistant Jimi Axelsson from Uppsala on 9–14 March 1996. Axelsson was a very active participant in the NEFA Swedish/Estonian cooperative projects. We visited the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, accompanied by a younger scholar named Anu Järs. She had attended a Nordic conference in Uppsala on alcohol and abstinence in 1993. We also studied the immense collections in the folklore archives that had been established in 1927 and since 1940 had been preserved at the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu. We had the pleasure of attending a disputation in ethnology held for one of the young scholars, Ene Kõresaar. Her thesis on woven textiles considered in a semiotic perspective had



Figure 6. The evaluation board for Ene Kõresaar's thesis. Ants Viires, the first opponent, is on the far left. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson 1996.

Ants Viires as the first opponent. Thanks to simultaneous interpretation into English, I was able to understand the entire disputation. Afterwards Viires expressed his strong belief that young students and scholars had far more interest in theory than in empirical evidence. This led to ethnologists' losing the more widespread group of readers they had once had in Estonia.

One highlight of the visit to Tallinn in 1996 was visiting Ants Viires at his home together with Juta Holst and Elle Vunder. He had been trained as an ethnologist in Tartu before World War II and had remained in Estonia during the entire period of the Soviet occupation. His ethnological activities were strictly curtailed and restricted during this period. He refused to join the communist party. He had no possibility of taking an examination in ethnology but in 1979 he was allowed to present a doctoral dissertation in history in Moscow. This dealt with popular forms of transportation in the Baltic States. Despite all these difficulties, he was greatly respected in Scandinavia. He was created an honorary doctor at the University of Helsinki in 1982 and an honorary member of the Royal Gustav Adolf Academy for Swedish Folk Culture in 1984.



Figure 7. *Visiting Ants Viires's home in Tallinn in 1996 with Elle Vunder (in the middle) and Juta Holst (on the right). Photograph by Anders Gustavsson.*

After 1991, Ants Viires held lectures on ethnology in Tallinn, based at the Institute of History. When he was nearly eighty years of age, he published a standard work on Estonian folk culture (Anepaio & Jürgenson 1998a: 12ff.). For this work he was awarded a medal for meritorious service from the Estonian president, Lennart Meri. On his eightieth birthday, 23 December 1998, he was honoured with a *Festschrift* to which I and ten other Nordic scholars contributed (Anepaio & Jürgenson 1998b). My contribution dealt with how both oral narratives and silence are related to the power structure of the surrounding community on either the local or the national level (Gustavsson 1998).

It was also a great pleasure to be present at the re-opening of the Institute of Folkloristics in Tartu in 1996. The professorship in folkloristics had been established in 1920. Throughout the entire interwar period, until 1939, it had been held by folklore scholar Walter Andersson (see www.ut.ee/folk/index.php/en/department/history). In a report written after a study tour in Estonia in 1996, I noted “the go-ahead spirit and international outlook of the new generation of students and researchers. [...] It is no longer Scandinavia and Sweden that are of prime interest to young Estonians; it is the whole world. The young people are curious to discover not just about the present but also the past. Their increased interest in theoretical awareness is highly palpable” (Gustavsson 1996: 8f.).

The younger scholars’ progress since the previous visit in 1993 was, in other words, very obvious. As now the entire world and not only Scandinavia was the focus of their interest, English became the language they wished to learn. Now they tried to take their study and research trips in English-speaking countries. Thanks to their knowledge of the English language, Estonian scholars were able to participate in international conferences arranged by the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore – SIEF), and the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR). In 1996, Jaanus Plaat took part in a conference in Portugal, arranged by me and Maria Santa Montez from Lisbon, under the auspices of the SIEF Working Group on Folk Religion. He presented a paper on religious revival movements in the western regions of Estonia during the period lasting from the mid-1800s to the outbreak of World War II (Plaat 1999).

Ethnologists and folklorists in Tartu even began to publish journals. The first one, *Pro Ethnologia*, was published by the Estonian National Museum between 1993 and 2005. All articles published in it were written in both Estonian and English in order to attract interest abroad. In 1996, folklorists started *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, which has published 61 volumes so far (see www.folklore.ee/folklore/); Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov have been editors during the entire period. It is remarkable that Tartu folklorists so quickly published a journal in both printed and digital form. This was many years before



Figure 8. *The re-opening of the Institute of Folkloristics in Tartu in 1996. Standing in the foreground (from the left) are Jimi Axelsson, Ülo Valk, and Elle Vunder. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson.*

similar attempts were made in Nordic folkloristics and ethnology. I have had the pleasure of publishing three peer-reviewed articles on the topic of death in this journal. They have aroused a great deal of international interest. The next digital journal to be published by the University of Tartu, the *Journal of Ethnology and Folklore*, appeared in 2007. Two issues are published annually, and scientific papers are accepted from the entire world.

Folklorists in all three Baltic States established *The Baltic Institute of Folklore and Folkloristics* (BIF) in 1995. It has published the *Journal of the Baltic Institute of Folklore* and the *BIF Newsletter*. Its goal has been to coordinate and inform about Baltic folklore research on an international level (see www.folklore.ee/BIF/).

Folklorists in Tartu have also been engaged in international activities through the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, ISFNR. The decision made by the ISFNR, whose members come from eighty countries, to

hold its 14th congress in Tartu on 26–31 July, 2005, was a major achievement for the University of Tartu. The theme of the 2005 congress was *Folk Narrative Theories and Contemporary Practices*. More than two hundred delegates from all over the world attended the congress. The occasion gave me an excellent opportunity to grasp the enormous progress made in Estonian folkloristics after the country had regained independence in 1991, and the international contact network that had been built up. This had been the precondition for holding the world congress there. Mare Kõiva and Ülo Valk played a major role in planning and administering the congress. Ülo Valk was elected president for the period 2005–2009. He also became editor-in-chief of the newly founded *ISFNR Newsletter*, a position he still holds today (see <http://www.isfnr.org/index2.html>).

In connection with this conference I was also able to carry out fieldwork accompanied by an Estonian interpreter. The topic of my study was the renewal of religious ceremonies and rituals concerning death among the Orthodox Finno-Ugric Seto people in south-eastern Estonia. They lived on both sides of the Russian/Estonian border and experienced many difficulties when the border became strictly regulated and more difficult to cross after Estonia had regained independence in 1991. Until World War II, the south-eastern border of Estonia had held a more easterly direction towards Russia to the south of the long and narrow Lake Peipsi. During the Soviet occupation the border was drawn more towards the west and divided the Seto people's core area into two. The important town of Petseri (Pechory) ended up on the Russian side. The Seto people have preserved ancient folk costumes and song traditions, which we were able to see and study closely.

An earlier tradition concerning the use of cemeteries as assembly areas for religious ceremonies and meals has been resurrected and intensified after independence was regained in 1991. This was something I experienced on an important religious holiday, *Päätuitsapäev* (St. Paraskeva's memorial day), in the village of Saatse near the Russian border. Both younger and older relatives of the deceased had set up tables laid with food on many graves. Food and drink, especially vodka but also soft drinks, were available. It was very obvious that this was a festive occasion for the surviving relatives. At the same time they experienced a feeling of solidarity with the deceased. Priests taking part in the meals conversed with me in German. The participants also displayed an evident hospitality to strangers. Not being aware of the cultural codes, I first had much more interest in documentation, conversation, and taking photographs than in eating and drinking. Both the priests and my interpreter insisted on my accepting whatever I was offered. Non-acceptance of this hospitality would have been seen as an insult to both the living and the dead.



Figure 9. Eight elderly Setu women dressed in traditional folk costumes present folk songs. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson 2005.



Figure 10. Relatives have arranged a meal on the grave of a deceased in Saatse, Estonia. Photograph by Anders Gustavsson 2005.

The next occasion on which ethnologists and folklorists in Tartu were asked to arrange a large international congress was on 1–5 July 2013. This was the eleventh congress of the SIEF. Approximately five hundred delegates from over forty countries participated. Chief responsibility for this well-arranged congress lay with Kristin Kuutma (see www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2013/index.shtml). Topics in the field of cultural heritage, one of her main fields of interest, played a major role at the congress. Kuutma started as and still is the leader of the SIEF Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Property. I have found this group's activities to be of great benefit in my studies on the choice and conservation of cultural heritage in the form of grave memorials in Swedish cemeteries (Gustavsson 2014b).

The theme for the congress, *Circulation*, could be interpreted both in an abstract and a tangible sense. I chose a panel having a tangible emphasis, titled *Cycling: Past, Present, and Future*. My paper presented the earliest history of cycling in Norway and Sweden (Gustavsson 2014a).

The Baltic States received double attention during the summer of 2013 in that the ISFNR also arranged its sixteenth international congress in Vilnius, Lithuania. It was held during the week before the congress in Tartu. The theme was *Folk Narrative in the Modern World: Unity and Diversity*. One positive feature of this coordination was that it allowed foreign delegates from distant



Figure 11. *The final dinner marking the end of the SIEF congress in Tartu in 2013.*
Photograph by Kristina Gustavsson.



Figure 12. A visit to the ultra-Orthodox minority museum on the western shore of Lake Peipsi on 4 July 2013. Sitting on the right is Professor Peter Jan Margry from the SIEF secretariat in Amsterdam, Holland. Photograph by Kristina Gustavsson.

countries to participate in both congresses. The bus from Vilnius to Tartu in the weekend between the two congresses was fully booked and the journey provided an instructive opportunity to experience landscapes in large regions of the Baltic States.

During an excursion in connection with the SIEF congress in Tartu, we had the opportunity of meeting an ultra-Orthodox religious minority from Russia. Starting in the early 1700s, the group had found refuge in the village of R apina on the western shore of the long and narrow Lake Peipsi in south-eastern Estonia. The excursion participants also exhibited political interest in their eagerness to catch a glimpse of Lake Peipsi through which the border with Russia had run since 1991. We were also made aware of the local Estonian inhabitants' unease brought on by Vladimir Putin's show of political power on the other side of the lake.

In conclusion I wish to emphasise that the purpose of this survey has been to demonstrate the expansive development that has taken place in Estonian ethnology and folkloristics during the more than twenty years that have passed since independence was regained in 1991. The re-construction of ethnology and folkloristics that has taken place after that has been fantastic. Contacts with the outside world, first with Scandinavia and later on also with the rest of Europe and the entire world have been extremely successful. A specific proof of this is that the small country of Estonia was entrusted first with the arrangement of an international ISFNR congress in 2005 and thereafter an international SIEF congress in 2013.

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