

Archives Looking for a Home: The Cultural Heritage of the Estonian Diaspora in the Estonian Literary Museum

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Estonian Literary Museum

The Estonian Literary Museum (*Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum*) – at the moment, a state research and development institution – is historically a colony of three archives: the Archival Library (*Arhiivraamatukogu*, AR, established in 1909), the Estonian Folklore Archives (*Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiiv*, ERA, 1927), and the Estonian Cultural History Archives (*Eesti Kultuurilooline Arhiiv*, EKLA, 1929). The archives were born within the Estonian National Museum with the aim to collect publications, folklore and cultural documents in Estonian and about Estonia. This is the task the archives have performed since their establishment – irrespective of the changing systems of government, the formal status of the institution, and the generations of its employees. As a result of continuous work, the archives of the Literary Museum have a wide and versatile collection of material on the history of the Estonian diaspora; the present article can give only a superficial survey. As to the Archival Library and the Cultural History Archives, we limit ourselves to the cultural heritage of the Estonians who fled to the West after World War II, while with the Folklore Archives we include – and concentrate on – the material of the Estonians in the East. This refers to the priorities of different archives in collecting and researching their material, but also to future considerations.

The Archival Library

Collection and Partners

The oldest archives of the Literary Museum, the Archival Library established in 1909, includes material concerning Estonians in the East and *Baltica* collected since the early 20th century. The present survey, however, centres on the material on those who have left for the West.

The collection of exile publications was initiated in late 1950s. The first publications were exchanged with the authors themselves or their publishers (Bernard Kangro, Arvo Mägi, Valev Uibopuu, Andrus Saareste, Herbert Salu, et al). The exchange of publications with Estonians in exile has been the practice up to the present with the tide being low in 1970s and rising abruptly high since 1988.

The major exchange partner throughout years has been the Toronto Tartu Institute. The Archival Library had its first contacts with Dr Endel Aruja in 1989. At first the publications were exchanged, in recent years the Archival Library has mostly received donations. The publications have been usually sent twice a year. The year 2005 was especially lucky as Merike Kiipus, the director of the Archival Library, was in the Archives of the Tartu Institute and could select herself 14 boxes of publications needed in the Archival Library. It can be guessed that about a half of the exile collection in the Archival Library is composed of the deliveries of the Archives of the Toronto Tartu Institute. Next as to the quantity of its deliveries is the Australian Estonian Archives represented by Hugo and Inno Salasoo. The Corporation of Estonian Culture in Sweden (*Eesti Kultuuri Koondis Rootsis*) sent a lot of

publications in early 1990s, too. Since 1990 the editorial boards of all newspapers and journals (“Eesti Päevaleht”, “Teataja”, “Side”, “Estonia”, “Meie Kodu”, “Virgats” et al) have supplied the Archival Library with their issues.

In 1994 the collection of periodicals increased considerably as the publishing house *Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv* sent us 471 years of issues (54 different titles) and the Swedish Representation of Estonians (*Rootsi Eestlaste Esindus*) 341 years of issues (40 titles) of newspapers and journals.

A lot of publications have been received from individuals. The year 1990 was especially rich as Tarmo Oja presented to the library more than 3,000 issues of newspapers and journals, and Ants Viirsalu gave us the 804 books of his father Harald Viirsalu preserved separately as a memorial collection. Another memorial collection is that of Viktor Kõressaar (702 items) that arrived mostly also in 1990.

In 1994 Leelo Andrén, the daughter of Oskar Loorits, gave us her father’s books (200 items) preserved separately as the memorial collection of O. Loorits. In 1995 Paul Laane and Helgi Vihma supplemented the memorial collection of Johannes Aavik (213 books; Helgi Vihma has replenished the collection of Aavik in 2001 and 2006 also). In 1998 the library received the heritage of Richard Antik (657 items of publications) preserved also as a separate memorial collection. The last memorial collection was got in 2000 from Aino Tamjärv – the collection of Ilmar Laaban (about 4,500 items). It has to be added that the manuscript collections of O. Loorits, J. Aavik, R. Antik and I. Laaban are preserved in the Estonian Cultural History Archives. Thanks to the mediation of Aino Lepik at the end of 2006 the archives got 50 boxes of materials from the Library of the Baltic Archives.

Foreign Estonian collections in the Archival Library

The books in Estonian (about 3,000 titles in 8,000 copies) are listed in both the card file and the electronic catalogue ESTER (<http://ester.utlib.ee/>). The collection is grouped as to its size (A, B, C), archival copies separate from duplicates. A title can be represented by up to 3 copies (earlier some titles are present in as much as 7 copies). Publications received earlier are in worse conditions and can require replacement. The collection is not complete, over 600 titles are absent.

The collection of periodicals (newspapers, journals, bulletins) contains approximately 260 titles present in 1–3 copies. Newspapers and journals in Estonian are a separate part (those in other languages are in the division of periodicals of *Baltica*). All the titles and copies are listed in the electronic catalogue. As older newspapers are in a rather dilapidated state, these are being restored and the duplicates put in portfolios. The condition of issues in various copying techniques is also poor, asking for microfilming or digitalization. The incomplete collection is being continuously supplemented, for many journals, newspapers and bulletins are missing.

Memorial collections of exile authors (J. Aavik, R. Antik, V. Kõressaar, I. Laaban, O. Loorits, A. Viirsalu) contain publications in both Estonian and foreign languages published in Estonia and abroad (about 8,000 titles). These have been arranged but not yet listed in the electronic catalogue (with the exception of the collection of I. Laaban that is in the electronic catalogue of memorial collections (<http://www2.kirmus.ee/memoriaal/>)).

The exact number of books in foreign languages cannot be given as these have been inseparably included in the *Baltica* collection. They can be found in the alphabetic and the subject index. The electronic catalogue ESTER includes only a few titles. The collection is being supplemented as about 700 titles are absent.

The collection of exile small prints is small (just a few portfolios) and so cooperation in collecting them is inevitably required in future.

With years the reserve collection (books in Estonian and foreign languages, periodicals in Estonian) has grown into one of considerable size enabling to donate other libraries the publications they need. It also enables to replace the damaged copies of the main collection of the Archival Library.

Future plans

As already mentioned, there are many gaps in the collections of the Archival Library. These are filled being active in collecting publications, distributing lists of missing titles and publishing them in newspapers like “Eesti Päevaleht”, “Eesti Elu”, etc. In order to specify the desiderata of the Archival Library, research has to be conducted in the Estonian archives in exile.

As for years the Archival Library has suffered from insufficient work force, the exile publications present have not been arranged and processed as much as needed. The periodical exile issues printed on low quality paper or damaged mechanically already before these reached us need badly to be restored or conserved. New acquisitions have to be registered and arranged also and processed in the electronic catalogue ESTER. Likewise, the exile publications in foreign languages and special collections have to be electronically processed. To perform all these tasks, additional work force is needed. We hope for assistance from the Compatriot Programme (*Rahvuskaaslaste programm*).

The Estonian Folklore Archives

The Estonian Folklore Archives (ERA, established in 1927) is the central folklore archives in Estonia with its collections reflecting not only the oral artistic heritage in its narrow sense but also all the possible fields of spiritual folk culture. In addition to the collections of Estonian folklore the archives includes the folklore collections of Estonian past or present minorities, and the material of the kindred peoples and of the Estonian diaspora.

Collection and material on the Estonian diaspora in the archives

The first manuscript texts (folk songs, custom descriptions, proverbs, etc) of the Estonian Folklore Archives collected in the Estonian settlements date back to the 1890s. The statistics presented ten years after the establishment of the archives say there were about 11,400 pieces of folklore (every song, dance and game description, proverb listed separately) coming from the Estonian settlements. Most of them were recorded in Russia where the community of Estonians is most numerous and with the longest traditions. The richest material came from Oudova, Samara, Ingermanland and St. Petersburg regions. Already by 1937 the Estonian Folklore Archives included also material from elsewhere, like from Latvian (2,960 pieces) and Finnish Estonians (290 pieces; RPS 1937: 79).

In the post World War II Soviet period the active correspondents were Rosalie Ottesson who collected in 1969–1976 about 2,900 pages of traditional material from the villages of Upper-Bulanka and Upper-Suetuk in Kransoyarsk, Siberia, and Johannes Olev who collected in 1969–1981 about 3,100 pages in the villages of Sulevi, Salme and others in Krasnodar, the Caucasus. As J. Olev visited Tartu, he recorded about 6 hours of songs and tales.

In the Soviet period we received a few hand-written song-books from the Estonian diaspora, like in 1970s–1980s those of August Lutsar in the Kemerovo region.

The earliest recordings are those by the teacher Mikhail Tshuvashov from 1971 recording the Elram family orchestra in the Baltika village of the Samara region, and the 1972 tapes of Alfred Kurlents recorded in Canada with runo and rhymed folk songs and

arrangements of folk music. The Estonian Folklore Archives got the latter in 1990s as copies from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

In 1991 Anu Korb initiated the project “Folk Culture in the Estonian Settlements”. Meant as a modest rescue operation it developed into a wider research project including various aspects. In 1991–2004 Estonian settlement in Siberia (Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Tomsk regions, Krasnoyarsk and Altai territories) and inland Russia (Samara, Saratov, Ulyanovsk, Kirov regions) were visited by 2–4-member expedition groups. In Kirov the field trips, conducted in collaboration with the Kirov Pedagogical University, were tutored by the ethnographer Irina Trushkova. The field work was sponsored by *Eesti Rahvuskultuuri Fond*, *Eesti Kultuurkapital*, *Avatud Eesti Fond* and *Eesti Teadusfond*.

The collection was centred on sound and video recordings as these were scanty in the former diaspora material. The recordings included folk tales, songs, games, dances, charms, riddles, proverbs, sayings, and ethnographic material, village and life stories. The Russian field trips resulted in about 500 hours of sound recordings, 100 hours of videos, 5,000 pages of hand-written material and about 2,500 photos.

In 2004–2006 the Russians who have returned Estonia have helped us collect the life-stories of Estonians born in Russia and the material concerning the history of Estonian settlements (about 1,000 pages, 50 hours of sound recordings and a lot of old photos).

A more systematic collection of the material of the Western diaspora began in 1996 with Aino Laagus and her project “The language and culture of Estonians in Southern Sweden”. In 1996–1997 Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov collected in Sweden (Malmö, Lund and its neighbouring small villages) the life-stories of the there Estonians and traditional material. The later shorter interviews have been supported by the foreign exchange programme of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

During and after the conferences visited within the project of the Estonian Science Foundation in 1997 Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov collected traditional material and life stories from the Estonians in Seattle, the US, and in 2001 from those in Sidney, Melbourne and Thirlmere village, Australia. These were primarily sound recordings and films.

All in all there are 57 hours of material on the Swedish Estonians, 4 hours on the US Estonians, and 31 hours on the Australian Estonians.

Research and popularization

Field trips and research projects related to the diaspora have developed into a subject of its own producing many theses, research papers and publications bearing in mind different target groups. Research, publications and popularization have helped to make the history, culture and problems of Estonians in the diaspora known also in their homeland.

The Internet-page “Estonians in Siberia and the Volga region” edited by Astrid Tuisk (<http://www.folklore.ee/estonka>) and also the films made of the field material “In the strange land, on the distant road” (“Võeral maal, kaugel teel”, EKM ERA 2001) by Aado Lintrop, “In Strange Lands” (“Võera maade sies”, Exitfilm 2005) by Andres Korjus, and “Nameless” (“Nimetamatu”, EKM FO 1999) help to popularize the Estonian diaspora in wider circles.

Some of the *runo* folk songs collected by Alfred Kurlents have been published in the monumental “Old Zither. *Runo* songs of Kihnu” (“Vana kannel. Kihnu regilaulud”) compiled by Otilie Kõiva and Ingrid Rüütel (Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum 2003).

Anu Korb has compiled four regional text-anthologies with comments for the series “Estonian Settlements” (the first volume together with Kadri Peebo) using the material of Siberian Estonians including tales, songs and descriptions of customs: “Grown Up Here, on the Siberian Land” (“Siin Siberi maa peal kasvanud”, *Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum* 1995), “Cannot Talk Like Speaking” (“Ei oska rääkimise moodi kõnelda”, edited by Kadri Tamm, 1996), “Seven Villages in Siberia” (“Seitse küla Siberis”, edited by Kadri Tamm, 1998),

“Estonians of Tara Region and the Village of Polivanova” (“Taaru-tagused ja stepiasukad”, edited by Kadri Tamm, 1999). A selection of songs of Siberian Estonians is on the double CD accompanied by the trilingual booklet (in Estonian, English, Russian) “Siberi eestlaste laulud. Songs of Siberian Estonians. Песни сибирских эстонцев” in the series “Sound Recordings in the Estonian Folklore Archives 5” (edited by Kadri Tamm, Ergo-Hart Västriik, Andres Roots, sound mixer and CD master Jaan Tamm, 2005).

The research publications are the collection of articles edited by Astrid Tuisk “Estonian Culture Abroad: Settlements in North-Western Russia and Siberia” (“Eesti kultuur võõrsil: Loode-Venemaa ja Siberi asundused”, 1998) and the monograph “Interviewing Compatriots in Russia: Theoretical Aspects of Folklore Field Work” (“Venemaal rahvuskaslasid küsitlemas: folkloristliku välitöö teoreetilisi aspekte”. *Studia Ethnologica et Folkloristica Tartuensia* 9) by Anu Korb, editors Tiiu Jaago, Ene Kõresaar (2005). To be published soon is the monograph of Anu Korb “The Ryzhkovo Viru People as Carriers of Traditional Culture” (“Rõžkovo virulased pärimuskultuuri kandjain”, edited by Kadri Tamm, 2007).

Problems

The field work in the dispersed Estonian settlements with their mostly elderly people asks for a lot of work and energy, and needs systematic financial support. The transcription of the sound recordings to study the tradition and the linguistic peculiarities of the settlers is time-consuming and there have been no resources to hire the personnel badly needed.

The Estonian Cultural History Archives

Although the Estonian Cultural History Archives (*Eesti Kultuurilooline Arhiiv /EKLA*) has become with years the Estonian central literary archives, it has, since its establishment in 1929, born in mind in its collection practice the Estonian culture at large: theatre, visual arts, music, journalism, education, arts, and society activities. The Cultural History Archives includes material on the Estonian settlements in the east, north and south (different regions of Russia, the Caucasus, Crimea, Latvia, etc). In the last 15 years, however, the work has been concentrated on the Western diaspora.

Collection and the exile material in the archives

The dynamics of the collection of exile material is similar to that of the Archival Library. The contacts with the exile community were established as soon as the circumstances enabled – in the late 1950s. The interest was mutual: the men-of-letters now abroad needed materials in the home archives, while in Estonia information was required on the exile life. There is a thorough article on the maintenance of old and the establishment of new contacts in the 1999 Yearbook of the Literary Museum “A Few Steps” (“Paar sammukest”) written by Rutt Hinrikus, the director of the Estonian Cultural History Archives in 1971–1996. Rutt Hinrikus is also the key person whose efforts have resulted in the delightfully big collection of the exile archives in the *EKLA*. R. Hinrikus has said that the arrival of the exile archives in Estonia is the home-coming of the Estonian exile literature, the end to the abnormal split of the national literature and the re-establishment of the Estonian literature as a historical unit (Hinrikus 1999: 14). The wish to see the national literature as a whole is expressed in the presence of the exile archives in Estonia.

The collection became active as the political situation changed in late 1980s. Although the “flood of exile archives came not on an empty space”, R. Hinrikus says in her above-mentioned article that “it was not a result of an impressive turn of the tide in 1988–1990 but

rather a result of the long-term and inconspicuous work of different generations of archivists” (Hinrikus 1999: 18). The mutual trust could rely on the contacts of the museum workers with the men-of-letters in exile. There are traces of it to be seen in the correspondence of Mart Lepik, the former director of the *EKLA*, with Bernard Kangro in Sweden, and elsewhere. The daily users of the archives, the literary researchers of Estonia, have also helped to assemble the material, understanding well the value of archival sources (Nigol Andresen, Rudolf Põldmäe, Arne Vinkel, Oskar Kruus, Ülo Tonts, et al). Looking at the archival sources one can follow the development of relations between the two worlds separated from each other.

Among the first exile authors to send material to Estonia were Bernard Kangro and Valev Uibopuu. For years a good friend and a partner for the Literary Museum was Arvo Mägi. Enn Nõu has been helping a lot in the collection up to the present. A major part of the archives has been received from the relatives or friends and colleagues of the writers. In 1990s the *EKLA* got the personal archives of Arno Vihalemm, Gustav and Aino Suits, Asta Wilmann, Imant Rebane, Frieda Drewerg (Reed Morn), Bernard Kangro, Herbert Salu, Helmi and Bernhard Mäelo, Ants Oras, Peeter Lindsaar, Gert Helbemäe, Marie Under and Artur Adson, Johannes Aavik, Valev Uibopuu and Ilmar Laaban, and the extremely voluminous archives of the publishing-house *Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv*. Hundreds of smaller collections of material have also arrived. At first the material came predominantly from Sweden but later also from Canada, the USA, Australia, Germany – i.e. from all the bigger Estonian settlements.

The material arrives mostly as a result of personal contacts and volunteer donations. The list of donators is too long to be published here but the archives are truly grateful to all of them. The archivists themselves have been also on collection and research trips in Finland, Sweden, Canada, the US and Germany. Copies have been made for the *EKLA* from the archives of other countries. The collection is more effective thanks to the network of Estonian memory institutions.

The come-in of exile material into the *EKLA* was the biggest in the mid-1990s. So in 1995 the manuscript collection got 1,160 items of exile content and/or provenance (34 of the 109 deliveries); in 1996 there were 1,914 items (41 of the 109 deliveries). The figures for the last years tend to recall these plentiful years: in 2005 the manuscript archives got 1,964 exile items (40 of the 196 deliveries of exile content and/or provenance). In 2005 the archives got also numerous exile sound recordings and video documents: 11,485 photos and negatives, 172 sound recordings, 3 video-tapes. Within a year the *EKLA* got all in all 13,654 exile archival records.

The increase in the photo material is most conspicuous. It is a source of both joy and worry: an historical photo is always welcome in the archives but it loses much of its value in case it has been poorly described or not described at all – a problem troubling probably many archives.

As it has been said, the Cultural History Archives pays attention not only to literary history. So the archives have material on the Estonian exile artists: there are the personal collections of Karin Luts, Arno Vihalemm and Amanda Jasmiin, the art collection of Richard Antik, and the correspondence of artists can be found from various collections. There are the archives of linguists: Andrus Saareste, Julius Mägiste and Johannes Aavik. In 2004 the Finnish Literary Society gave the *EKLA* the archives of the folklorist Oskar Loorits kept hitherto in Helsinki, in the Finnish Literary Society. The *EKLA* has material on the DP-camps, the exile theatre, schools, organizations and societies. Since late 1980s the archives, in collaboration with the union “Estonian Life-Stories” (*Eesti Elulood*), has collected the life stories of also the compatriots living abroad. The cooperation with the Chair of Estonian of Toronto University and the Toronto Estonian community has been very fruitful. The archives have a selection of private correspondences between the expatriates and their relatives living

in Estonia. A wide selection of small deliveries has been arranged in the exile miscellanea-collection (fond 375) including at the moment 1,520 items, and the miscellanea-collection *Varia* (fond 169). But exile material can be found from the so-called home collections, too: letters, photos, newspaper clips sent homeland have reached the *EKLA* as a part of the personal archives of home-Estonians.

In addition to the traditional card file the material in the *EKLA* can be found from the electronic data base ELLEN (<http://www2.kirmus.ee:8080/ellen/avalik.do>). Although there is no special data base for the exile material, the exile documents have been the priority in the arrangement for more than ten years – at the cost of the home material, I'm afraid. But the limited personnel resources and the heightened demand of researchers for the exile material has brought along the inevitability of making us prefer exile collections. At the moment there are being arranged the miscellanea collection, the personal archives of Oskar Loorits and the huge photo archives (about 10,000 items) of the newspaper "Teataja".

The Size of Collections

At the moment the Estonian Cultural History Archives has 32 systematized manuscript collections of exile provenance listed in registers (23,768 items), and 27 photo collections (24,372 photos and negatives) – mostly personal archives, a few archives of organizations, miscellanea collections. The *EKLA* has also pieces of art donated by expatriates (the biggest art collection of R. Antik has more than 200 items), sound and video tapes (mostly interviews and recordings of cultural celebrations, almost 50 items). It has to be stressed that these figures reflect only the material that has been systematized and arranged already. But a significant part of the material is still waiting to be arranged. The fact that the *EKLA* does not have preconditions for its material is one of the peculiarities of our archives. We get material often from people who have no experience with archives at all and they are unable to systematize voluminous and confusing material. Thus, we think it more important to accept valuable documents for future preservation than to get our collections arranged already beforehand. So the field of work for our archivists continues to be wide.

Research and popularization

The material preserved in the *EKLA* is not closed. To the fact testify numerous exhibitions of the exile material, conferences, studies, source publications, text-books and re-publications of fiction. The archival records have been used by the researchers of the museum and other institutions – and of other states. In 1998–2000 the collection and research was supported by the grant No 3445 of the Estonian Science Foundation "The Arrangement of the Exile Literary Archives" (grant holder Rutt Hinrikus).

The first publication on the exile material of the Literary Museum was the 1992 book "This is Bernard Kangro's Life in Time as Collected by Him to be Remembered for Instruction and Entertainment" ("See on Bernard Kangro ajalik elukäik ta enese poolt kokku pandud meeles pidamiseks ja õpetuseks ja nalja pärast") edited by Margust Kasterpalu. Research and publication has been actively continued up to the present. There has been published a series of correspondences with comments: that between Ants Oras and Ivar Ivask in 1957–1981 ("Akadeemia kirjades: Ants Orase ja Ivar Ivaski kirjavahetus") compiled and commented by Sirje Olesk, edited by Kajar Pruul in 1997; between Arvo Mägi and Arno Vihalemm in 1955–1959 ("Kord Vihalemm elas Ystadis: Arvo Mägi ja Arno Vihalemma kirjavahetus") compiled, commented and prefaced by Piret Noorhani, edited by Kristi Metste in 2000; and letters of Karl Ristikivi ("Valitud kirjad 1938–1977"), compiled and commented by Rutt Hinrikus, edited by Urmas Tõnisson in 2002.

There have been jubilee collections: to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Richard Antik ("Raamatu valgusel: Richard Antik 100: artikleid ja bibliograafia"; compiled by Merike

Kiipus and Piret Noorhani, edited by Tiina Saluvere, 2001) and the 85th birthday of Ilmar Külvet (“Vana arm ei roosteta. Mälestusteos Ilmar Külveti 85. sünniaastapäevaks”, compiled by Vaike Külvet, edited by Piret Noorhani, 2005).

The popular series “Litteraria. Eesti kirjandusloo allikmaterjale” publishing archival sources has issued the letters of August Gailit to the publishing-house *Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv* (compiled, prefaced and commented by Janika Kronberg, edited by Eve Annuk, Litteraria 15, 1999), and the letters of Mart Lepik to Julius Mägiste, Karl Ristikivi and Bernard Kangro (compiled and commented by Sirje Olesk, edited by Tiina Saluvere, Litteraria 19, 2000), and the literary diary of Karl Ristikivi (compiled, preface and comments by Rutt Hinrikus, edited by Eve Annuk, Litteraria 17, 2000).

If the Literary Museum had not got the exile archives of Gustav Suits, it could not have issued his personal bibliography and the list of the collection (compiled by Külli Tamkivi, Tiina Koiva, Krista Pisuke, 1998). Without the archives of Marie Under there had not been the substantial and the beautiful album “Marie Under 1883–19802 (compiled by Rutt Hinrikus, Janika Kronberg, Sirje Olesk and Tio Tepandi, edited by Janika Kronberg 2003). Both the home and exile authors meet in the 2003 publication of autographs “Käsi kirjutab. Valik autograafe Eesti Kultuuriloolisest Arhiivist” compiled by Piret Noorhani, photos selected by Vilve Asmer, essays by the employees of the EKLA, edited by Tiina Saluvere.

Fruitful has been cooperation in studying the life stories. By the end of 2006 the 700-page collection of exile biographies “Rändlindude pesad” will be ready for publication (compiled by Tiina Kirss, edited by Maarja Hollo, Rutt Hinrikus, Janika Kronberg) – as a token of the good cooperation with the Chair of Estonian of Toronto University.

As it has been said, the materials of the Literary Museum are used by its researchers but also by colleagues from other research institutions, archives, museums, libraries and publishing-houses. The exhibition compiled for the conference gave a survey of the publication of the Estonian Literary Museum but also of several other publishers.

The troubles of the *EKLA* ... and not only

The troubles we have are by and large the same as those of the Archival Library and the Estonian Folklore Archives: the materials are partly unarranged and uncollected, there are problems of transport, there is not enough time, not enough money, thus not enough research can be conducted outside Estonia. We realize the need for better-targeted collection campaigns. At the same time it is difficult to be equally active in all the communities: Germany, Great Britain, South America would require definitely more attention. The *EKLA* together with the other archives of the Literary Museum has understood that alone and isolated we are all too small. In order to achieve better results we need an active and efficient network of cooperation including the memory institutions and researchers, active community members and volunteers at home and abroad. The resources of all of us – those of time, and the material ones – are limited. Common strategies and plans would help us optimize our action and concentrate on the most important issues. The need to be more efficient in collecting information on the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora has been also realized. It is clear we cannot and need not bring everything to Estonia but the preservation and accessibility of the material and of the information has to be guaranteed.

Bearing in mind all the mentioned problems, needs and perspectives in spring 2005 the working group of exile archives uniting all the Estonian memory institutions was convened. That led to the conference on the Baltic Archives Abroad so that we could be better informed about our mutual activities and move on in a more efficient way. The Literary Museum has got used to frequent telephone calls and letters telling us about collections left to chance and reflecting the life of Estonians all over the world. The archives of the Museum have tried to be a hospitable and safe repository for the archives looking for their home. At the same time

we have not been sitting here idle but have been active in finding the archives and our partners. So that there were no homeless records. A lot has been achieved, but still more has to be done in future. We hope we can rely more and more on cooperation.

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