

# **Cultural Heritage of Estonian Diaspora in the National Library of Estonia: Practices and Opportunities**

**Mihkel Volt**

National Library of Estonia

During the last fifteen years, the National Library of Estonia has been among the institutions that collect and preserve the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora. The main objectives of this presentation are the following:

- To give a short overview of the archives of the Estonian diaspora collected by the National Library of Estonia
- To describe the acquisition principles used by the National Library of Estonia for the collection of the cultural heritage (publications, archives, pieces of art) of the Estonian diaspora
- To present the standpoint of the National Library of Estonia for co-operation between different memory institutions concerning the collection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora

## **Publications issued by the Estonian diaspora and the National Library of Estonia**

The acquisition of collections in the National Library began with the foundation of the State Library by the Provisional Government of the Estonian Republic on 21 December 1918. In 1935, the State Library Archive Collection was established, receiving a legal deposit copy of all printed material published in Estonia. At the same time, a systematic acquisition of Estonian publications (incl. publications in Estonian published abroad) and those introducing Estonia (incl. translations of Estonian authors and publications of Estonian authors originally published abroad in foreign languages) and the Baltic countries, was started. By the end of the 1930s the State Library had become much more than a government library. The number of items in the collection reached about 50 000 and the readership included outstanding intellectuals, cultural, and public figures.

With the Soviet occupation, the Library became a regular public library, run in conformity with Soviet library regulations. The library work underwent profound changes: all links with foreign libraries were severed, and Soviet Russian publications predominated, the majority of it constituting Soviet legal deposit copies. The bulk of Estonian publications (incl. publications in Estonian published abroad) and those introducing Estonia (incl. translations of Estonian authors and publications of Estonian authors originally published abroad in foreign languages) and the Baltic countries were placed in restricted access collections. In 1953, the State Library was named after Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, an outstanding public figure of the National Awakening Period of Estonia and the author of the Estonian national epic poem “Kalevipoeg”. By 1953, the collection of the Library had already reached one million items.

The liberation movement that began in the Baltic countries in the second half of the 1980s as well as the restoration of the independent Republic of Estonia on August 20, 1991 considerably changed the role of the Library. In 1988, Fr. R. Kreutzwald State Library was renamed the National Library of Estonia with its aim to collect, permanently preserve and make publicly accessible documents published in the Estonian language (regardless of their place of publication) and in Estonia (regardless of the languages used) as well as concerning Estonia or including information about Estonia. In 1989, the National Library of Estonia

regained its status as a parliamentary library responsible for serving the information needs of the Parliament and the Government. Since 1980s the Library has increased its collections according to its functions as a national and parliamentary library and a library for the humanities and social sciences. The acquisition of collections in the National Library of Estonia is based on the functions of the Library. The collections of the National Library of Estonia total 3 174 373 items, as of January 1, 2006.

In order to perform the function of the National Library, the following is acquired on a complete basis: literature published in Estonia, literature in the Estonian language published abroad, original works by Estonian authors and translations of these works, irrespective of their place of publication. In addition, publications containing information about Estonia, issued abroad and in foreign languages.

The National Library acquires the following materials published by the Estonian diaspora:

- books
- periodicals (newspapers, journals, sequels)
- sheet music
- cartographic materials
- graphic art (posters, postcards)
- booklets (advertising items)
- audio-visual materials (audio recordings, video recordings)
- electronic materials

Publications issued by the Estonian diaspora are generally acquired in 2 copies, ultimately in 5 copies. The Archive Collection (ca 500 000 items) permanently stores one copy of all publications, audiovisual and electronic documents published by the Estonian diaspora. These copies are subject to long-term storage. The publications in the Archive Collection can only be used when the desired publication is missing from the main collection. Publications are listed in the card catalogue and/or in the electronic catalogue ESTER.

### **Archives concerning the Estonian diaspora in the National Library of Estonia**

The National Library of Estonia has been granted archives and collections of prominent individuals and institutions/ organizations of Estonian culture and society, incl. the Estonian diaspora. Predominantly, these collections are comprised of documents and/ or of a personal library.

The Archives in the National Library of Estonia which contain documents concerning the Estonian diaspora are the following:

#### **F. 3 *Eesti Rahvusnõukogu Rootsis* (Estonian National Council in Sweden)**

Provider of the archive: Estonian National Council in Sweden

Year of acquisition: 1991

Source of acquisition: donation

Status: unarranged

Items: 43 shelf metres

Inventories: –

Content: correspondence, manuscripts, documents.

**F. 7 Reino Sepp** (1926 – 1992), collector (Sweden)

Provider of the archive: Anja Sepp

Year of acquisition: 1993

Source of acquisition: donation

Status: arranged (1996)

Items: 307

Inventories: 2

Content: Reino Sepp's correspondence and manuscripts concerning the history of Estonian music (sailors' and students' songs, Estonian tango, the history of Estonian audio recordings), copies of publications and manuscripts, audio recordings (R. Sepp's presentations, broadcasts of Estonian Radio), photos, clippings, booklets.

**F. 10 Väliseestlaste poolt saadetud dokumentide kolleksioon** (Collection of single documents of the representatives of the Estonian diaspora, 1933-2000)

Year of acquisition: 1998-2001

Source of acquisition: donation

Status: arranged

Items: 82

Inventories: 1

Content: documents concerning activities of the Estonians in the USA (Baltimore, Minnesota), Canada (Toronto), Sweden (Gothenburg), the Netherlands.

**F. 16 Kultuurilooline kolleksioon** (Collection of Cultural History, 1929-2003).

Year of acquisition: 1996 –

Source of acquisition: donation

Status: arranged

Items: 49 (5 items contain materials about the Estonian diaspora)

Inventories: 1

Content concerning the Estonian diaspora in this archive: photos of Estonian students at Tübingen University from 1948-1949, materials about Ilmar Sulg and Ants Vomm.

**F. 17 Paul Saagpakk** (1910 – 1996), linguist and scholar of literature (USA)

Provider of the archive: Paul Saagpakk

Year of acquisition: 1995

Source of acquisition: donation

Status: arranged (2004)

Items: 66

Inventories: 1

Content: versions of Paul Saagpakk's "Estonian-English Dictionary", correspondence and materials on the compilation of this dictionary, manuscript of Paul Saagpakk's dictionary of synonyms.

**F. 19 Hilda Sabbo's** collection of the copies of documents found in the archives of the Russian Federation concerning political repressions in the Soviet Union, 1917-1991

Provider of the archive: Hilda Sabbo

Year of acquisition: 1997  
Source of acquisition: donation  
Status: arranged (1997)  
Items: 35  
Inventories: 1

Content: the copies of documents concerning political repressions in the Soviet Union (*incl.* occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; the Estonian villages in Caucasus) which were procured by Hilda Sabbo in the archives of the Russian Federation.

Remark: Hilda Sabbo (born in 1930, Uus-Eesti village, North-Caucasus) is an active amateur historian.

**F. 22 Eduard Tubin** (1905 – 1982), composer and conductor (Sweden)

Provider of the archive: Eino Tubin  
Year of acquisition: 1993-1994  
Source of acquisition: donation  
Status: arranged (1998)  
Items: 32  
Inventories: 1

Content: manuscripts, correspondence, clippings, booklets and photos concerning Eduard Tubin's activities and the reception of his works (1938-1997).

Remarks: 1. The library of Eduard Tubin (books, scores, microfilms of his manuscripts) is available in the Fine Arts Centre of the National Library of Estonia. 2. Another archive of Eduard Tubin is located in the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum, Tallinn.

**F. 23 Ajalehelõigete kogu** (Collection of clippings, 1934-1997)

Providers of the items concerning the Estonian diaspora: Ülo Jürima, Vello Kivisto  
Year of acquisition: 1997-1999  
Status: arranged (2002)  
Items: 67  
Inventories: 1

Content: clippings from the newspapers "Meie Elu" and "Vaba Eestlane" (Canada) by Ülo Jürima from 1950-1997; clippings from the newspapers "Stockholms-Tidningen" and "Eskilstuna-Kuriren" (Sweden) by Vello Kivisto from 1934-1977.

**F. 26 Robert Kreem** (1923-2006), social scientist and public figure of the Estonian community in Canada

Year of acquisition: 2002  
Source of acquisition: donation  
Status: unarranged  
Items: 5 shelf metres  
Inventories: –

Content: manuscripts, correspondence, photos.

**F. 28 Jakob Nerman's** (1882 – 1963) collection of documents and photos about Estonian settlements in Caucasus, 1882-1962)

Year of acquisition: 1966  
Source of acquisition: purchase  
Status: arranged (2005)  
Items: 76  
Inventories: 1

Content: photos collected by J. Nerman in Estonian villages (Estonia, Salme, Sulevi, Linda and Punase-Lageda) in Caucasus, manuscripts of J. Nerman's writings.

Remark: Another part of Jakob Nerman's collection about Estonian settlements in Caucasus is located in the Estonian History Museum, Tallinn.

**F. 29 Järvi, Neeme** (1937), conductor (USA).

Source of acquisition: donation

Year of acquisition: 2004 –

Status: unarranged

Items: 10 shelf metres

Inventories: –

Content: clippings, booklets and photos about N. Järvi's activities.

**F. 32 Sergei Soldatov** (1933 – 2003), Estonian-Russian dissident and fighter for freedom, leader of the Estonian Democratic Movement (*Eesti Demokraatlik Liikumine*) in the 1970s, publicist at Radio Free Europe/ Radio Freedom (Munich)

Provider of the archive: Ludmilla Grünberg

Source of acquisition: purchase

Year of acquisition: 2006

Status: unarranged

Items: 10 shelf metres

Inventories: –

Content: correspondence, manuscripts, copies of documents of Radio Free Europe/ Radio Freedom, photos of dissidents.

The personal and institutional/ organizational archives are available to users at the Rare Book Collection Reading Room – located on the 3rd floor. Phone: 630 7346 and, e-mail: arhivaar@nlib.ee, open: Monday to Friday 10-18. July and August: Monday to Friday 12-17.

Only arranged personal archives with inventory lists can be used. The usage of unarranged archives is limited. Both arranged and unarranged archives have been listed in the electronic catalogue ESTER. The provider of the archives sets access restrictions to the archival items.

## **Estonian diaspora and the art collection of the National Library of Estonia**

There are 200 pieces of art in the figurative art collection of the National Library of Estonia. 29 of them are the works by 14 Estonian artists abroad acquired by the National Library during the years 1995-2000. In addition to these, one work was deposited to the Library by the Tallinn City Government – Enno Hallek's (1931) „Objekt“/ „Object“ (1999, oil on plywood, 82 cm x 204 cm).

The pieces of art by the Estonian artists living abroad in the art collection of the National Library of Estonia are the following:

Eerik (Erich) Haamer (1908 – 1994)

- „Harakas“/ „Magpie“; *sine anno*, oil on canvas, 150 cm x 121 cm
- „Põhjapõdrad“/ „Reindeer“; 1957, oil on canvas, 108 cm x 191 cm
- „Tomativõrse“/ „Tomato Shoot“; *sine anno*, oil on canvas, 56 cm x 81 cm

Mai Reet Järve-Vomm (1938)

- „Pilvitus rannas“ („Rand“)/ „Clouds on the Beach“ („Beach“); 1972, oil on canvas, 94 cm x 119 cm

Jaak-Tuomas Järve (1956)

- „Homme“ („Tuleviku linn“)/ „Tomorrow“ („City of the Future“); 1988, acrylic on canvas, 80 cm x 82 cm

Mark-Kalev Kostabi (1960)

- „Joonistus“/ „Drawing“; 1995, chalk pastel on board, 189 cm x 120 cm

Endel Kõks (1912 – 1983)

- „Beduiinid“/ „Bedouin“; 1972, pastel on paper, 68 cm x 84 cm

Kai Käärid (1938 – 1995)

- „Ärkamine“/ „Wakening“; *sine anno*, watercolour on paper, 63 cm x 86 cm
- „Vana loss“/ „Old Mansion“; 1994, watercolour on paper, 75,5 cm x 59,5 cm

Toomas Lehes (1947?)

- „Vahtralehed sügisel“/ „Maple Leaves in the Autumn“; 1970, oil on canvas, 84 cm x 103 cm
- „Loodusmaal“/ „Nature“; 1971, oil on canvas, 61 cm x 76 cm

Silvia Leitu (Silvia-Virve Tannberg, 1912 – 1969)

- „Tuvikene“/ „Dove“; *sine anno*, mixed media on paper, 51 cm x 30 cm

Olev Mikiver (1922 – 1994)

- „Lilled“/ „Flowers“; 1971, oil on canvas, 70 cm x 45 cm
- „Poiss ja linnud“/ „Little Boy and Birds“; 1982, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 55 cm

Juhan Nõmmik (1902 – 1975)

- „Krüsanteemid“/ „Chrysanthemums“; 1960, oil on board, 51 cm x 43 cm
- „Saialilled“/ „Marigolds“; 1964, oil on canvas, 65 cm x 58 cm
- „Hamament“; 1970, oil on canvas, 51 cm x 66 cm

Rita Nõmmik (1910? – 2004?)

- „Indiaanlase portree“/ „Portrait of a Native American Man“; 1950, crayon on paper, 65 cm x 55 cm

Otto Rannamäe (1917)

- „Bareljeef dinosaurustega“/ „Wall Relief Sculpture with Dinosaurs“; *sine anno*, mahogany
- „Dinosaur“/ „Dinosaur“; 1998, mahogany
- „Hobune“/ „Horse“; 1995, mahogany
- „Jääkaru“/ „Polar Bear“; 1983, alabaster
- „Jäär“/ „Ram“; 1997, birchwood
- „Lohe“/ „Dragon“; *sine anno*, pinewood
- „Naise pea“/ „Head of a Woman“; 1995, alabaster
- „Naise rinnakuju“/ „Bust of a Woman“; *sine anno*, bronze

- „Tootem“/ „Totem“; 1995, mahogany

Ants Erik Vomm (1931 – 2003)

- Paul Saagpaku büst/ Bust of Paul Saagpakk; 1981, Vermont marble, 44 cm x 45 cm x 37 cm

Unknown author

- Maastikumaal/ Landscape; *sine anno*, oil on board

In 1999, Siiri Arras from Sweden donated a collection of 15 paintings (by E. Haamer, E. Kõks, O. Mikiver, J. Nõmmik, R. Nõmmik, S. Leitu, and an unknown author) which had been collected by her parents Aino and Elmar Kriisa. All other pieces of art in our art collection are donations from authors.

**The National Library of Estonia aims to achieve the following goals concerning the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora:**

- To acquire, store and make available 100% of publications (originals or copies) published by the Estonian diaspora.
- To store and make available the archives acquired by the Library.
- To store and make available the works of art acquired by the Library.

**The standpoint of the National Library of Estonia for co-operation between different memory institutions concerning the collection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora is as follows:**

- An active network of memory institutions concerning the cultural heritage of the Estonian diaspora should be developed. Partnerships are needed to share common values and know-how. It is necessary to be better informed and find support in solving complicated situations.
- We should lay stress on a better preservation of the cultural heritage using the most reliable solutions. The keywords here are: long-term storage, conservation, making preservation copies on microfilms. The cultural heritage should be preserved in the most safe conditions.
- The cultural heritage must be made accessible to everyone. Memory institutions should spread more information to all interested users.