

Evaluation of Research in Literary Science (6.7) and Folkloristics (6.4) in Estonia

Institutes evaluated

Tallinn Pedagogical University, Faculty of Philology

**Department of Estonian Philology
Department of Russian Philology
Department of Germanic and Romance Philology
Centre of Oriental Languages**

**University of Tartu Faculty of Philosophy,
Department of Germanic and Romance Philology
Department of Literature and Folklore
Department of Russian and Slavic Philology**

Under and Tuglas Literature Centre

Evaluation dates

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Part I

General Overview

Introduction

At the request of the Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre, Tallinn (EHEAC), an evaluation team (hereafter named the “Evaluators”) visited institutes in Estonia carrying out research activities in literary science (6.7) and folkloristics (6.4). The evaluating team consisted of Prof. Vilmos Voigt (University Institute of Folklore, Budapest), Prof. Pekka Pesonen (University of Helsinki), Prof. Ulrika Wolf-Knuts (Abo Akademi University) and Prof. Pekka Tammi (University of Tampere).

The institutions to be evaluated were:

1. Tallinn Pedagogical University, Faculty of Philology
 - Chair of Estonian Literature, Department of Estonian Philology
 - Chair of World Literature, Department of Estonian Philology
 - Chair of Russian Literature, Department of Russian Philology
 - Chair of English, Department of Germanic and Romance Philology
 - Chair of German, Department of Germanic and Romance Philology
 - Chair of Oriental Philology, Centre of Oriental Languages
2. University of Tartu Faculty of Philosophy,
 - Chair of Estonian Literature, Department of Germanic and Romance Philology
 - Chair of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, Department of Literature and Folklore
 - Chair of Comparative Literature, Department of Literature and Folklore
 - Chair of Russian Literature, Department of Russian and Slavic Philology
3. Under and Tuglas Literature Centre

The evaluators were provided in advance with self-assessment reports from each of these eight institutions, prepared by the members of these groups.

After a brief orientation meeting at EHEAC, the evaluators visited the different departments and institutes in Tartu and Tallinn during three days (two days in Tartu and one in Tallinn). At these meetings staff members of the various departments presented their work. During these presentations as well as during the subsequent discussions additional information about the research activities was provided. This included additional documents such as copies of published papers.

Approach to the evaluation

The evaluators were asked to:

- 1) Judge the activities of research and development in the units evaluated and the research topics implemented by them to ensure the governmental funding for internationally recognised research and development. The Team was asked to concentrate on research units (university departments, laboratories) with specific comments to sub-units, groups if necessary.

- 2) Identify deficiencies in the activities of research and development units.
- 3) Give recommendations on the development concerning research and development and research areas to the state of Estonia.

The Team received the following materials: A working schedule, principles and criteria for evaluation of the research units, evaluation guidelines for the ranking of research units, and self-evaluation reports created by the research units themselves.

On a first evaluation point, the **quality of the research activities** was considered. This assessment is largely based on the records of scientific publications.

<i>Excellent</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at a high international level and virtually all others at a good international level.</i>
<i>Excellent to good</i>	<i>At least one third of the submitted works are at a high international level and many others at a good international level, these together comprise a clear majority.</i>
<i>Good</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a good international level and virtually all others at a fair international level</i>
<i>Good to satisfactory</i>	<i>At least one third of the submitted works are at a good international level and many others at a fair international level, these together comprise a clear majority</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a fair international level</i>
<i>Satisfactory to unsatisfactory</i>	<i>A minority of the submitted works are at a fair international level</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>None, or virtually none, of the submitted works are at a fair international level</i>

Regarding the grading of the research activities, the evaluation team was instructed by the EHEAC to reserve the term **excellent** for groups, which were found to be among the best 10% of the European groups in the corresponding field. Similarly, the term **excellent to good** should be used if the evaluated group was found to be among the best 25 % of corresponding European groups. The full scale comprised 7 levels, in addition to the highest ones the grades are **good, good to satisfactory, satisfactory, satisfactory to unsatisfactory, and unsatisfactory.**

The **over-all capability** of a research unit was evaluated based on a the combined assessment of the following criteria (each graded in three levels):

- The originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activities
- The strategy and perspective of the research
- Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas
- The competence of the research groups and their capacity for development
- National and international co-operation
- Success in applying for grants

As the result of this assessment one of the four grades **excellent, good, satisfactory** or **unsatisfactory** was given for the group.

Finally, on a third evaluation point the critical comments and recommendations were asked to give by the expert team.

Part II

General Comments

Introduction

Estonian literature should, self-evidently, hold an important position in university teaching and research on all levels in Estonian Higher Education. It is a vital component of the Estonian national identity, and it should be provided with all the necessary means for continuation and development. The study of Estonian literature is but one branch of research in literary science, and should be tied together with other specific areas, such as World Literature, Comparative Literature, etc. (In practice in our report we will use the two above mentioned terms as synonyms, corresponding to the names of the institutions we have visited.) Study of literature is inseparable from other fields of philology, and in the names of some of the institutions (e.g. Department of Russian Philology / Chair of Russian Literature -- Department of Germanic and Romance Philology / Chair of English [or Chair of German]) one will find the indications to that. Similarities and dissimilarities in the names of university institutions and of their units are the consequences of the scholarly tradition in Estonia. The actual names of the institutions visited were clear, and we do not suggest to change them, unless university reforms will make it necessary. We will use the terms in our report as they were used in the documents before us.

In the study of literature it is important for the universities that they teach and study different literatures, including the literatures in major languages. In the case of Estonia the English, German, and Russian literatures are of great importance, they ought to exist in the university curriculum. Still other literatures should be considered for the university teaching: in Romance, Finno-Ugric, etc. languages. To some extent they are covered by teaching in different philologies at the universities, in other cases the “world literature” is the term embracing them. At the universities both in Tallinn and Tartu this system of teaching of literatures has already a good tradition, which should be kept also in the future.

Folklore as a field of teaching and research does not have at every university a separate unit (institution or chair). In Estonia (like in Finland, Hungary, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic States, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, the United States, Canada, etc.) there are separate chairs, devoted only to folklore – or joint institutions, where folklore is combined with ethnography, literature or cultural studies, etc.

E.g. both in Tallinn and Tartu the teaching of Russian folklore is just a part of teaching Russian literature. Thanks to favorable circumstances Estonia has one of the most ancient and most prestigious independent folklore units: the Chair of Estonian and Comparative Folklore. As a logical development after a long and successful history of collecting, publishing and analyzing Estonian folklore, the chair as one of the very first newly formed ones at Tartu university was created in 1919. This is the second oldest of the university chairs of folklore in the world, and the oldest using in its name the notion of “comparative folklore” as a term. Thanks to the great comparative folklorist, Professor Walter Anderson (head of the chair in Tartu 1919-

1930), it became soon a world famous institution. After World War II the chair was not closed down, but it lost much of its fame. Only recently it has regained a world wide acceptance. It is fully justified that Estonia should have an independent university chair of folklore, and regular teaching of folklore at other universities in Estonia as well. In Tartu it must be deeper and more scholarly than the teaching of folk music, folk dance or folk art at different artistic high schools and colleges.

It was very positive to see improvements at the universities in Tallinn and Tartu, as regards the reconstruction of buildings, introducing modern equipments or information techniques. Still there is much to develop along that line too. We will come back to that topic in our recommendations.

We have visited small units, where the number of teachers was less than ten, the number of postgraduate students sometimes even less. There was a familiar atmosphere everywhere, and we have noticed that the students are motivated into their fields of interest. All the institutions we visited have a standing contact with the wider society, their results appear in the Estonian media, they are part of primary and secondary level of education. The number of the published works is amazingly high. They range from scholarly dissertations to folk-tale translations for small children. Since all of us have already had direct contacts with the Estonian colleagues, during our visit the reception was very friendly indeed and we could discuss many items of our further possible cooperations.

In every unit the research and the teaching are inseparable one from another. This statement was not only an answer to our questions, but it was a general opinion, shared by elder and younger officers.

It was however visible that not all the institutions or the individuals could present their works and results in an appropriate way. Sometimes the assessment papers itself were too detailed, or did just not mention important activities. The formulas they have used were slightly different, even within one unit. The oral presentations were uneven. Some people spoke only about themselves. In other cases the style of conducting the institution was old-fashioned, undemocratic or simply not clear. Important data were just mentioned in an improvised way, sometimes people were looking for materials they could not find. The language ability of the different generations was conspicuously varying. Young postgraduate students, assistants could speak English fluently, others were shifting from broken English into not less broken Finnish, or even ended up in a next-to-nothing-to-hear Estonian. It would be much to an advantage of these institutions to provide their staff members opportunities to enhance their power of persuasion when describing their work to an international audience. Practice will heal the problem. We have conducted the interviews in English, but in the chairs of other languages it was natural to use Russian or German too.

The publications we have seen have outnumbered the required 10. In some cases the level of the different publications was uneven. As regards the joint publications, we have seen them more then once. We have the feeling that there are good possibilities for publishing articles both in Estonian and international journals and collective works. Most of the dissertations could appear as university publications or elsewhere. In their form the look is similar, but today they do not form one gigantic set of absolutely different publications (as *Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis*

(Dorpatensis) or *Tartu Riikliku Ülikooli Toimetised* of Tartu University). The technical and linguistic level of most of the publications is very acceptable. It is important that on all the topics we could deal with, there were publications in Estonian, too. When dealing with Estonian national literature or folklore, it is quite obvious to present the results in the vernacular language. But it is also important to publish in Estonian the scholarly works on world literature in any sense of this term.

During our visits we have seen not only books and the university institutes' common rooms, but teaching cabinets, auditoriums, computer rooms, university cafeterias, videos, tapes, museums etc. They were mostly impressive and they mean much for a friendly working atmosphere. The small libraries of the institutes were less comfortable. The lack of rooms or bookshelves was visible. We do not know, whether the smaller institutes' libraries are registered at the main libraries of Tallinn and Tartu universities. Especially in teaching other literatures than Estonian both the professors and the students use xeroxed copies of the lectures, and sometimes even of the analyzed works. It is a good old technique, but today there are more modern possibilities, too. We could see the documentations about the universities or their philosophical faculties. It was mostly informative. We could get only some information in the home-pages of the institutions. We were told on the frequent use of internet in the contacts of the institutions. About the famous student life in Tartu we could gain but sporadic impressions.

Part III

Evaluation of institutes and research groups

1. Faculty of Philology, Tallinn Pedagogical University

Chair of Estonian Literature (Head: Prof. Toomas Liiv)

Target-financed project 0130017s98 "Lexicon of literary terms" (1998-1999). Supervisor Prof. Toomas Liiv. Research team: R.Neithal, L.-M.Tavel, A.Tooming-Ruusaar.

General Comments

The Chair of Estonian literature seems to be a rather small one; it is lead by Professor Toomas Liiv, who at his side has professor emerita Pille Kippar and two or three persons with a doctoral degree. During the last five years two doctoral dissertations have been produced, and none is listed for the next period. The amount of MA-theses is even less, only one has been finished at the Chair, and another one is supervised at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

For the Chair of Estonian literature, one of the main tasks is to decide whether this should be a university department with high quality research on Estonian literature or a department at a pedagogical college with a speciality in didactics. The publications shown to the evaluators were divided mainly into two categories. On the one hand, there were scholarly investigations on Estonian literature, which were conducted

partly according to the school of Yuri Lotman. The effort to write a dictionary should be mentioned separately. This is a huge task with its own specific problems and as such it deserves a positive comment. On the other hand, there were several schoolbooks, edited and put at the display without any scholarly dimensions. Certainly, both kinds of work are necessary, but both of them should not necessarily be carried out within a university department. The ideas on forthcoming projects were focused on Socialist Realism and Soviet time topics (e.g. Finnish-language literature written in Petroskoi during the Soviet period). This is an important field of research, especially within an Estonian context. However, no perspectives were mentioned, from which to carry out such projects in a new and creative way. Generally the researchers seemed to be cautious, maybe even reluctant, to experiment with new material, recent methods, and contemporary ways of conducting research.

There are international contacts mainly with Finland and Russia, to some extent also with Hungary and the other Baltic countries. There was no mention of co-operation with Estonians in other European countries, or in the USA, nor even within the frame of Baltic studies. Interdisciplinary co-work from the point of view of Estonian literature with other disciplines did not seem to be very central in the ongoing discussion nor in the publications demonstrated.

The lack of young students was brought to the fore. This, certainly, is another problem that should be solved as soon as possible. This is necessary both in the case that the Chair sticks to its role as a teachers' training department and in the case that it develops into a university level department.

No doubt, the Chair of Estonian literature covers one of the most important fields of research within Estonia. Anyhow, the evaluators' impression is that this department is rather isolated. Strong efforts should be made immediately to strengthen this unit in one direction or the other, most likely into a university department.

Evaluation of Research Activities

With reference to what has been stated above, the evaluators regard the lack of contacts outside the department, the lack of actual research topics and the lack of young people interested in Estonian literature as serious problems. Therefore, we rank the quality of research in international comparison as *Satisfactory to unsatisfactory*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

The rating of the overall capability is *Unsatisfactory*.

Recommendations

With regard to the fact that a Chair of Estonian literature has a central position at any university in Estonia, great efforts should be made to create an intellectual environment where serious scholarly work is demanded and provided. Our impression is that it is exactly this very position that has provided too much safety and reliance on future allocation of resources. Therefore the evaluators recommend the Chair to

1. Decide to improve the scientific perspective on Estonian literature. However, one should regard the plans of the corresponding department at the University of Tartu.
2. Find out why young students do not want to conduct research in Estonian literature, and after that, if necessary; announce a full time scholarship for doctoral students.

Chair of World Literature (Head: Prof. Riina Aunin)

Chair of English (Head: Prof. Suliko Liiv)

Chair of German (Head: Lect. Maris Saagpakk)

General Comments

Administratively, the Chairs of World Literature and the Chairs of English and German are affiliated with separate Departments in the Tallinn Pedagogical University (the former belonging to the Department of Estonian Philology, the two latter to the Department of Germanic and Romance Philology). In the interview conducted at the University, however, these units appeared together, and the impression of our team was that scholarly co-operation between precisely these units is seamless and productive. We should add that we got no similar sense of a fruitful collaboration between the Chairs of Estonian and World Literature, despite the separated departmental affiliation. Indeed, we strongly feel that the administrative structure in the Faculty of Philology might be in need of some rethinking.

The Chair of World Literature, despite its status as a relative newcomer in the Faculty and its somewhat meager output vis a vis master's and doctoral disputations (four master's theses defended between 1999-2002), still managed to create a largely positive impression during our interview at the Faculty. Definitely there is a lot of initiative and laudable research activity in the Chair. We detected a very visible effort to bring doctoral training up to the more demanding standards of a research university; there seems to be in place a good network of both national and international relations (especially via the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature and its representatives at the University of Tartu); and there is vigorous publishing activity that has resulted in a sufficiently impressive record of work. The Head of the Chair is a distinguished scholar. All this bodes well for the future, and these positive trends should certainly be developed further.

As to the Chairs of English and German, here the sense of unmistakable potential was further strengthened. We especially congratulate these Chairs for their very competent young doctoral students, who were present at the interview and clearly possessed the power of persuading an international audience of the relevance of their mission. This is a real asset the value of which can be hardly overestimated in today's academe. Questioned about their views with respect to the status of literary studies in the contemporary university, the fluctuating paradigms, or the challenge posed by cultural studies, the younger members of these units proved themselves to be fully in touch with current ways of thinking about these problematics. What is more, the answers they came up with showed good common sense. Any department should be proud of such academic offspring, and we recommend they be given full opportunity to continue their doctoral work.

We also feel that, with respect to doctoral training, the heads of the Chairs in Philologies would do wisely to somewhat rethink their attitudes towards the very promising plans for a Doctoral School being developed right now at the Faculty of Philology. Judging by their responses during the interview the Chairs, surprisingly, seem not fully to embrace the possibilities of utilizing this future opportunity for their doctoral students. We would strongly urge them to abandon all scepticism and to co-operate with the Faculty to a maximal degree in this essentially vital interdisciplinary project.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The senior members of the Chairs have brought out distinguished research. The international visibility of such work deserves to be made more prominent. There is much potential in the work brought out right now by some of the junior members and doctoral students.

All in all, the research activities can be rated as *Good*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

There will yet be a lot of novelty in the work brought out by some of the junior members of the units, and they should be given every opportunity to develop further. It is laudable that the units have been successful in attracting such talented young people to the field of literary studies.

The overall capability of the units is judged as *Good*.

Recommendations

1. The Chair of World Literature and the foreign philologies seem to have strong and productive co-operation. There is no evidence of similarly fruitful collaboration with the Chair of Estonian Literature. Should the administrative organization of the departments be reconsidered?
2. The Chairs have been successful in attaining gifted doctoral students. Their doctoral training should be supported to the full. The future of the university hinges on these people.
3. The Chairs should definitely reconsider their sceptical attitude with regard to the Doctoral School of Humanities planned for the Faculty of Philology.

Chair of Russian Literature (Head: Prof. Irina Belobrovtseva)

General comments and recommendations

The chair of Russian literature, founded in 1947, is one of the oldest in Tallinn Pedagogical University. Until 1976 the main aim of the department (Russian language and literature) was only the training of teachers of Russian for Estonian schools, and

the chair of Russian literature has had this aim until now. However, since 1990 when the chair of Russian literature was separated from the chair of Russian language the research activity has started to play an important, all the time growing role in the activity of the chair.

The staff of the chair is little, but very active. The evaluators got a very good impression of the atmosphere at the chair during the short visit. Older and younger scholars were speaking without any hierarchy, commenting and helping each other in the overview of the work at the department. Young scholars gave an impression of a promising future. Following the Tartu tradition they have had annual conferences for the young philologists for 5 years.

The main topics in the research of the chair have been the 19th century Russian literature (especially Bulgakov and Nabokov, but contemporary fiction as well), the Russian Culture in Diaspora, the Russian Emigration in Estonia and Russian Children's Literature.

These topics have been the focus of national and international conferences actively organized during the past years by the chair. The chair has international relationships and collaboration, especially with the other Baltic and other neighbour countries, but with other European countries as well. The chair has invited guest lecturers from different countries and used the contacts of the older scholars for the contacts of the younger ones.

The chair has a good publication series, "The School Life and Folklore" and "Bulgakov collection" being the most famous.. All the members of the chair have been active in publishing, some of them publishing in international publications as well. In this regard there still is very much to do, especially in publishing in other languages than Russian, especially. The members of the chair have produced good study material both for universities and schools.

The chair has been in collaboration within international projects, "Sankt Peterburg and the World of Baltics", for example. It has tried to get grants for the projects, but with no results so far. The members of the chair explained the difficulties in getting grants for projects dealing with Russia. The national topics are regarded as being of greater importance.

The national contacts of the chair concentrate in the collaboration with the Tartu chair of Russian literature, 4 members of the staff have got their education there and brought the Tartu-school tradition to Tallinn. The contacts with the other chairs of the home university and the university of Tartu could be more active. The Russian literature should be seen and taught more in the context of European literature.

The chair has both Russian and Estonian native speakers as students and a special programme for both of them. Although most of the students become teachers of Russian, possibilities for scholarly work have been offered for the most talented students. During 1997-2002 there have been 5 PhD and 3 MA dissertations defended at the chair, which is more than a half of the degrees in the whole faculty. The same concerns ongoing works: 2 PhD and 6 MA. For a small chair it is a very good result;

in the framework of the university it is superb compared to the other chairs of the faculty.

The members of the chair did not see very many good possibilities in the new doctoral programme planned by the faculty and wanted so far to take care of their PhD – students by themselves. Here the team disagrees. Interdisciplinary doctoral training in the university ought to be strengthened to the mutual benefit of all parties concerned.

Evaluation of the research activities

The research activity has a growing profile which is very positive. So far the results are not so evident that they could be evaluated to be on the highest international level. But if the chair manages to keep their young talents, it has all the possibilities to reach such a level.

The research activities are graded as *Good*.

Evaluation of the overall capability

There is a certain originality and novelty in the research activities of the chair. In the future the main topics of study can be developed into an international level in cooperation with the international contacts the chair already has. The strategy of research is not quite clear but has perspectives for future research. Multidisciplinarity is very clear in some fields of study, in the others less. The chair has postgraduate and postdoctoral students, not many, but talented and active. International cooperation exists, but must be developed, as well as the national one. The chair has not had particular success in applying for funds and grants, but has made a serious effort.

The overall capability is graded as *Good*.

Chair of Oriental Philology (Head Ass. Prof. Haljand Udam)

The Centre/Center was founded 1993 or 1997, and in its present form in 2000. It trains philologists of Oriental languages, mainly of the Middle East. It was supported by the President of Turkish Republic. They have received support from the government of Japan, too. The well-known orientalist, Ass. Prof. Haljand Udam was working there. Now he is retired, and the Chairperson is Angelina Tshaikovskaya. There are 20 students of BA and MA. For minors they offer lectures for beginners of Turkish.

If the Centre will join the Estonian Institute of Humanities, where excellent teaching and research is carried on Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Iranian, Turkish etc. philology, it will make more sense and effort. E. g. Professor Rein Raud (Helsinki/Tallinn) is a first rank expert not only on Japanese but of other oriental languages.

We have not heard more about the Centre's actual activity, including publications. Of course, the aim of having a Centre for Oriental Languages in Tallinn is a noble one, and teaching of those languages is an important task. But the actual quality of

research can be evaluated now as *unsatisfactory*, and the overall capability of the research group is *unsatisfactory* too. We give 3 grades, because it is a multidisciplinary topic, has national importance and it had success in receiving support from Oriental states. The governmental offers could not be refused, and the Centre should not be closed, but for the research they have to reconsider, what do they want to do: simply the teaching of Oriental languages (and if yes, of which languages) or something more, which one might call research.

2. Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tartu

Chair of Estonian Literature (Head: Prof. Rein Veidemann)

General comments and recommendations

The Chair of Estonian Literature is one of the oldest in the Tartu University (as a national university) and it has long, good traditions, and, of course, a national mission to be the centre of the academic study of national literature in Estonia. That place belongs to the chair of Tartu University and should stay there.

The chair has experienced turbulent times during the last years in the sense that the head has changed several times. There has not been any continuity in the activities and research work of the chair which is rather clearly visible in the self-evaluation report. The impression all the evaluators received in the interview at the chair was somewhat negative. We got rather contradictory information and many facts we asked seemed to be lost and nobody could take the real responsibility for them. At the same time, divergent opinions of the staff on their mission can be seen as a sign of a living and liberal atmosphere, as well.

A good sign without any doubt is the new professorship in Theatre Research and Literary Theory founded 2001. It gives new topics and new points of view for the research and is already seen in the activity of the younger staff.

The main topic of the research at the chair is the history of Estonian Literature and Literary Criticism. This is self-evident. The histories have been written by different authors from varying points of view and with different methodologies, mainly “source-critical and comparative”. The self-evaluation document, the publications we saw and the general impression we got did not give a very good picture of the methodological capability of the chair. Lotman’s name, semiotics and the cooperation with the department of Semiotics was mentioned several times, but what semiotics really means in the study of Estonian literature at the chair stayed unclear to us.

The staff consists at the moment of 10 people. The chair has a lot of students and has obvious difficulties to cover the whole study field of the chair. The difficulties in the financing of guest-lecturers are a serious problem and the chair needs more economical resources, especially in teaching.

The number of MA works – 22 – is good, but 2 PhD theses during five years (1997-2002) is not a very good result. We did not get very promising numbers of the

ongoing works on the PhD –level either. The chair should more actively seek for young scholars willing to study Estonian literature. It is rather paradoxical that we found much more PhD –students in literature at the departments of foreign philologies than in Estonian literature.

There are 4 ongoing projects at the chair, 2 of them financed so far. The first of the last mentioned is “The Functioning of Texts of Culture”. It sounds very promising, there is the cooperation with Semiotics and good work has already been done. Anyhow, we hope for more attention to the theoretical background of the project. In principle, it is a real “Tartu-project”. The joint project with the chair of World Literature “Intertextual Paradigms of Estonian Literature and World Literature” looks promising and actual, but too broad and all-encompassing, at the same time.

The chair has organized 4 conferences which is not little, but not very much if compared with the activities of some other chairs of the university during the same time. The staff has been very active in publishing, of course, mainly in Estonian and in Estonia. The theoretical interests and studies could be more visible in the international publications in the future.

The chair has good cooperation with the other chairs of the university (World Literature, Russian literature, Semiotics etc.). The international relationships which were documented for us are rather limited. The evaluators regard them as important for the chair of national literature, as well.

The chair has excellent and living contacts with Estonian literary and cultural life, especially via the activities of its head. They are absolutely important for a chair of national literature. The creative activity in writing fiction and poetry by the staff and the students is remarkable, as well.

Evaluation of research activities

The situation of the chair has been changing and unclear for a rather long time. The results in research and its organization are not the best possible ones. The staff is talented and has all the possibilities to produce excellent results.

The research activities are graded as *Good to Satisfactory*.

Evaluation of the overall capability

The chair has studies and projects which show novelty and originality, but in this capability they differ very much from each others. Unfortunately, we could not see any strategy for future research. In some studies and projects multidisciplinaryity was very clear, in some other it lacked totally. There is competence at the chair of organising research groups, but there are not many so far. The number of postgraduate students is good at MA–level, but weaker at the PhD-level. There is quite a lot of national, but rather limited amount of international cooperation at the chair. In applying for funds and grants there has been variable success.

The overall capability is graded as *Satisfactory*.

Chair of Estonian and Comparative Folklore (Head: Prof. Ülo Valk)
Investigators: Risto Järv, MA, Jürgen Beyer, PhD, Paul Hagu, PhD, Tiit Jaago, PhD, Merili Metsvahi, MA, Arvo Krikmann, PhD.

Main directions of the research activities are the following: Lyrical runo song (poetics and meanings); Epical songs; Folk religion and demonology; Legend and belief; Folktales (tales of magic); Minor forms of folklore (proverbs, phrases, riddles); Local tradition of Setumaa; Oral history and biographies; Contemporary urban folklore; Family traditions; Folklore theory (genre and genre system, text and textualization); Historiography of Estonian folklore; Folk religion of India.

Target-financed project: Process of Estonian everyday culture in historical and contemporary perspective (1998-2002).

The Chair of Estonian and Comparative Folklore was fully re-established in 1993. In 1995 Ülo Valk was nominated as extraordinary professor, and in 1998 he was elected as ordinary professor. The Chair is a part of the Department of Estonian Literature and Folklore. This status of being an independent chair but in cooperation with the Chair of Estonian literature is quite obvious and good. The professors in practice are alternatively chairpersons of the Department.

The chair has one full professor, 2 assistant professors, one-and-a-half researchers, 2 persons with half-and-half administrative loads. There are at the moment 2 professors from the outside: one from Germany and the other is Professor Arvo Krikmann, Member of the Estonian Academy, who has by a special agreement ½ load at Tartu University and ½ load at the Estonian Literature Museum, conducting there research on short genres of Estonian folk literature. Guest lecturers often visit the chair, and the staff members often give guest lectures elsewhere, mainly abroad. Gender and age criteria are satisfactory. The chair has a small library of its own, for fieldwork and archives they work together with the Estonian Folklore Archive at the Estonian Literature Museum in Tartu. At the beginning of re-establishing the chair, the Nordic Institute of Folklore (then in Turku) gave a good number of folklore books to the chair. Nowadays through international contacts some of the most modern books can be found in the chair's library.

Technical facilities are fair, but could be developed. The same could be said about the rooms of the chair. They need one own seminar room and another room for the library.

As for financing, they get various grants and funds. Since 1998 they participate in the target project "Processes of Estonian Everyday Culture in Historical and Contemporary Perspective". It makes circa 25 % of the finances of the project. From 1998 on there are target-financed resources for doctoral students too. For 2003-2007 they plan a project "Discourse of Everyday Life and the Dialogue of Cultures", which is multidisciplinary indeed, together with researchers of ethnography, cultural anthropology and other branches of the social sciences.

Both teaching and research cover the most important chapters of Estonian folklore: folk religion, folk song texts, contemporary folklore and family traditions, regional folklore (with special emphasis on Setu folklore) etc. They pay due attention to theoretical questions. They have organized seminars on history and on methods of folklore researches, and on genre theory as well. Estonian folkloristics was often (and not without reason!) regarded as being purely empirical. The chair tries to change the situation, by a careful selection of invited lecturers and by translating important works into Estonian. E.g. the book of theoretical papers by Professor Alan Dundes (University of California) was published recently. (One could add that no such book was published e.g. in Finland, Scandinavia, Russia, Hungary etc.) The participation of the staff members in international conferences, as well as Professor Valk's regular teaching activity abroad, give a good access to the most up-to-date results in comparative folklore research. However, the Tartu chair of folklore is not following any short-wave novelties in folklore studies, they combine the "classical Estonian" approach with a careful selection of modern methods.

It is very important for the international community of folklorists and ethnographers that from now on the Chair will edit (together with the Estonian Literature Museum) the most prestigious international bibliography Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie (which since 1917 is the best known and most used handbook of the research in folklore and ethnography). It is an important task and it needs more financial and personal support. This publication is number one in any respect in Europe, and can be done only through excellent international contacts, which the Tartu chair of folklore has already established. The publication in one way today belongs to UNESCO, but it is older than the UNESCO itself, or even than the League of Nations, which once was supporting it between the two wars. The Estonian editing institutions should be proud that the international community trust in them.

The list of publications contains more than 50 scientific papers, 13 monographs (10 in Estonia and 3 in abroad), and other publications too. Professor Valk's dissertation on Estonian devil lore was published in English in the world's most famous publication series in folklore: Folklore Fellows Communication in Finland. The Chair has its own publication series: Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion (hitherto 3 volumes).

7 MA and 1 PhD dissertations were defended during the period of the report. In addition to that in current projects there are 8 PhD and 17 MA students involved.

The Estonian fairy-tales research project (Grant no. 3894 for 1999-2001) aim to make (after a careful systematisation) a scientific and well measured anthology of Estonian fairy tales. There was no similar attempt in the Estonian folklore research before. The Legend as the Genre (Grant no. 4450, for 2000-2003) is about the interpretation of various sub-genres of the legends. There was a book already published on the topic (in German): Folklore als Tatsachenbericht. The project will cover other subgenres too.

The cooperation with other insitutes is exemplary. The Estonian Folklore Archive, the Estonian Literature Museum were always inseparable from the chair of folklore in Tartu. The chair is just keeping alive this tradition. They have added a more close contact with ethnographers, both in the Estonian Folk Museum and at the Chair of Ethnography at Tartu University (Faculty of Social Sciences). The cooperation runs

from fieldwork to publication, organizing conferences, etc. (In most of such reports similar sentences can be read, but in this case it is an everyday routine indeed, extending to all possible ways of cooperation.)

A new form of cooperation is with the Culture College in Viljandi, where previous PhD students of the Tartu Chair of Folklore are working. The work there involves both research and teaching.

International cooperation is frequent and many-sided. Lund, Turku/Abo, Helsinki, Joensuu, St. Petersburg, Riga, Dublin, Oslo were mentioned in connection with 7 international research projects. The other contacts (visiting scholars, students, joint publications etc.) are wider, and include the USA, Germany, Hungary, etc. too. The Chair is in fact one of the most frequented international meeting places of folklorists from all over the world. They deserve the name “chair of ... comparative folklore” very well.

The strength of the chair is its solid, continuous and multidisciplinary work in a friendly atmosphere. They go by steps and steps, and accumulate previous results. There is no hurry for so-called modernity, because they are modern and internationally oriented indeed.

As for weaknesses (aside from financial, technical shortcuts and the lack of necessary amount of rooms) we can mention the limited number of foreign students. A permanent position of teaching comparative folklore (in a special way) would be a good acquisition. Language skills of some of the older and very young staff members and students could be improved too.

Evaluation of research activities

Excellent, ranking among the 5-6 best chairs of folklore all around the world. (We could mention that there are more than 100 university chairs of folklore – sometimes together with ethnography – around the world.) It is rapidly developing, and for that it needs further support.

Evaluation of overall capability

Excellent (by about 11 grades), only with some lack in applying funds. As for the strategy of research and perspectives we saw only the immediate proposals.

Recommendations

1. To extend the special teaching of comparative folklore, by inviting visiting professors regularly. It will increase the number of foreign students too. It requires the enlarging of the library of the chair, and to work in more rooms.
2. Continuation of international and nation wide research (by grants). Perhaps the new opportunity of editing the Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie will give wider perspectives for that. From that publication one learns best, what is going on in current folklore research.

3. To consider the writing of a new university handbook of Estonian folklore, and then a book of introduction to folklore methods. It would be useful not just in the next years, but for a long run, both for students and scholars.

Chair of Comparative Literature (Head: Prof. Jüri Talvet, PhD)

General Comments

The Chair of Comparative Literature has been affiliated, since 1999, with the Department of Literature and Folklore together with the Chairs of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, Estonian Literature, and Theatre Research and Literary Theory. Due to the close and successful co-operation with foreign philologies (at the Department of Germanic and Romance Philology), with which the Chair was formerly affiliated, Comparative Literature will be evaluated here with reference to these areas of research. Indeed, in view of the continuing co-operation and co-dependence of Comparative Literature and the philologies in Tartu, we feel that their administrative affiliation might be reconsidered.

The Chair is headed by Professor Jüri Talvet (the present term 1992-1997). Other members of the staff include two full-time lecturers, one part-time lecturer, two full-time researchers, and one full-time assistant lecturer, plus one full-time and one half-time administrators.

The Department accepts c.a. thirty students on a yearly basis, of whom a variable number seem to choose Comparative Literature as their major subject (others go to Estonian Literature and Estonian and Comparative Folklore). During the period 1998-2002 four master's theses were defended in Comparative Literature; there are four new master's theses and three doctoral dissertations in progress.

Despite the somewhat disappointing statistics for master's and doctoral disputations – which ought to be an occasion for some soul-searching at the Chair – the team was on the whole favorably impressed by the vigorous research activities and prospects for future development in the area of Comparative Literature in Tartu. The head of the Chair has made a very laudable effort in both seeking international co-operation via the activities of ICLA (= International Comparative Literature Association) and – which is to be especially commended – in founding the pioneering new journal *Interlitteraria* which provides a national and partly international publishing forum for literary scholars in Estonia – not only from the field of comparative literature studies, but foreign philologies, cultural studies, and cultural semiotics as well. This is a genuinely interdisciplinary venture, promising higher visibility for Estonian literary scholars, and also serving as an important impetus for organizing conference activities in Tartu (the conference proceedings are regularly published on the pages of *Interlitteraria*). We feel that it will be a sound investment to continue support for this journal and the scholarly work it engenders.

As to the overall publishing activity of the staff, the team was rather positively impressed. The publications cover a wide range (from Hispanic literature and canonical authors to Russian underground poetry, feminist topics, narratology, and

visuality), and a fair amount of the articles were distributed internationally. The scholarly level of the work – also that of the junior members of the staff and doctoral students – was of a high quality. It is to be regretted that all this commendable activity has not so far been translated into a larger quantity of master's/doctoral dissertations, which ought to be among the top priorities of the Chair.

The Chair would benefit from a somewhat clearer strategy and a rethinking of its mission. True, for a chair with such a small staff the diverse areas of world (= western) literature seem to be sufficiently well covered. But Comparative Literature is also a theoretical field, and questioned about their methodological orientation the staff, as a collective body, showed some signs of disorientation. Should they continue teaching in a more or less pluralistic (eclectic) vein, trying to offer the whole range of methodological alternatives to their students? Or should they make an effort to find a literary-theoretical paradigm of their own? Either option has its advantages (and drawbacks as well), but we suggest the chair launch on a thorough methodological discussion to find their course – which might make the field intellectually attractive to a larger number of future doctoral students as well.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The published research is generally of a high quality and there is a laudable effort to become internationally visible.

The research activities can, with some slight hesitation, be given the rating *Excellent to Good*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

There are some signs of novelty and interdisciplinarity in the ongoing research. The Chair would benefit from a rethinking of its strategy and mission as a research unit. Increased methodological self-awareness would probably make studies in this area more attractive to talented students. The quantity of ongoing doctoral and master's work should definitely be increased.

In view of all this the capability of the Chair is judged as *Good*.

Recommendations

1. Given the quality of the research now being carried out, the next phase should be a still more ambitious publishing policy, with articles regularly submitted to refereed journals abroad.
2. In view of the close co-operation with foreign philologies, the administrative affiliation of the Chair might still be reconsidered.
3. The journal *Interlitteraria* is of vital importance to academic literary research in Estonia; continued support for the journal is highly recommended.

Chair of English Language and Literature (Head: Prof. Krista Vogelberg)

Chair of German Philology (Head: Ass. Prof. Anne Arold)

Programme of Spanish Philology

General Comments

The Chairs of English Language and Literature and German Philology, the Programme of Spanish Philology, and the Section of Scandinavian Philology are all affiliated with the Department of Germanic and Romance Philology. As the main research interests of these Chairs, we have learned, lie on the domain of linguistics, the evaluation of their research activities on the basis of performance in literary studies becomes necessarily lopsided. Obviously, our remarks do not concern linguistic research.

On the other hand, due to the close and successful co-operation with Comparative Literature in Tartu, with which these Chairs were formerly affiliated, we have decided to evaluate the foreign philologies with reference to the work done on the area of comparative literature studies as well. It is our impression that these fields are largely co-dependent, and the positive results achieved in one area should also be, to a considerable part, credited to the other (on the role of the interdisciplinary journal *Interlitteraria* and the publishing activities it has engendered in all these areas, see above). Indeed, in view of this symbiotic relationship we feel that the administrative affiliation of these Chairs might well be reconsidered.

Research having relevance to literary studies is conducted a) in the Chair of English Language and Literature by roughly half a dozen members of the staff, holding positions from full professor to lecturer and researcher (the statistics supplied are somewhat less than clear in this regard); b) in the Chair of German Philology by five staff members (professor to lecturer); c) in the Programme of Spanish Philology by a single person, who also holds the position of the Professor of Comparative Literature.

There were a) three master's theses defended on the area of English-language literature during the years covered by our evaluation; eleven theses were in progress as well as one doctoral dissertation; b) four master's theses defended and seven in progress on the area of German-language literature; one doctoral dissertation was defended and one is in progress; c) one master's thesis defended, one in progress, as well as one doctoral dissertation in progress in the Programme of Spanish Philology (these might, perhaps, have been credited to Comparative Literature just as well, due to the joint professorship).

In their self-evaluation report the Department lists as one of its strengths the interdisciplinary nature of the research conducted and as one of the weaknesses the uneven development of the separate disciplines, reflected in the number as well as quality of the publications and the theses defended. The members of our team cannot but agree. It is our impression that the interdisciplinary quality of the publications produced at the Department might even be strengthened by taking full advantage of

the linguistic specialization of the Chairs. At present, there seems to be no conspicuous cross-fertilization of linguistic and literary methods in the scholarly work produced by the staff, and this could well be one of the directions into which the research in the Department might be developed.

If, on the other hand, the staff feels more inclined to move towards genuinely literary study, with no particular linguistic emphasis, it is our belief that a frank joining of forces with the Chair of Comparative Literature would be a healthy development. There does seem to be overlap right now with work done in Comparative Literature, not least in the English-language literary studies, where many of the theses written might just as well be accepted in the neighboring literary discipline. We again suggest considering administrative readjustments.

As to uneven development of the separate disciplines, it seems to us that the work done in the Chair of English Language and Literature is on the whole more advanced, with German Philology coming a good second. There is laudably vigorous conference activity in either discipline, good networks of international contacts, and many staff members have impressive records of publications. The international visibility of this work would definitely deserve to be strengthened. The record of the leader of the Spanish Program is impressive, too, but the credit, in this case, goes directly to Comparative Literature.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The published research is generally of a high quality and internationally visible. Due to the close relationship between the Department of Germanic and Romance Philology and Comparative Literature in Tartu University the high rating reflects our positive impression of either of these research units.

The research activities are given the rating *Excellent to Good*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

Signs of novelty can be detected in the ongoing research in the Philologies. The interdisciplinary nature of the research could be enhanced through more vigorous cross-fertilization of both linguistic and literary methods – if not, there is considerable overlap with work done in Comparative Literature. The Department ought to still rethink its strategy vis a vis literary studies.

The overall capability of the Department is given the rating *Good*.

Recommendations

1. In view of the symbiotic relationship with Comparative Literature the administrative affiliation of the teaching posts connected with literary study in the Philologies might be reconsidered.

Chair of Russian Literature (Head: Prof. Ljubov Kisseljova)

Principal investigators: Sergei Issakov, PhD, Jelena Pogosjan, PhD, Galina Ponomarjova, PhD.

General comments and recommendations

The self-evaluation report of the Chair of Russian literature is detailed and very well written and can be evaluated as the best one of the self-evaluation we have read. It gives a good overview of the research and teaching activities at the chair. The visit to the chair gave an impression of a staff working in earnest. The members of the staff responded to the questions of the evaluators rather hierarchially; the active head spoke and especially the junior members of the staff remained silent.

The chair already has long, rich and very famous traditions. It is the chair of Yuri Lotman, who with his research activities and its influence on his staff and pupils made the chair one of the most well-known and admired chairs on its field in the world. The reputation of the chair was not only connected with Lotman's work, but with the works of its other members, especially those of Z.G. Minc, as well. After Lotman's death the chair has been divided into two chairs in different faculties (of Philosophy and of Social Sciences): Russian Literature and Semiotics. Both chairs have tried to follow and develop the valuable tradition. It has been and is an extremely demanding and difficult duty. At the same time the excellent reputation of the chair has provided many possibilities which other departments of the university do not have, for example, the excellent international relationships in the whole world. They still work. The chair is very active in maintaining them and looking for new ways to develop them.

The staff consists of 11 people, eight of whom are active teachers. The staff is too small to cover all the fields of Russian literature. This can be seen and it was admitted to be one of its main weaknesses by the chair. But the evaluators found very positive the decision of the chair to concentrate in those fields in which it has the capacity to produce research of high international quality and supervise students on all the levels from BA to PhD. These fields are first of all the Russian literary and cultural history of late the 18th – early 19th century (Lotman tradition), Russian modernism (Minc tradition) and the literary and cultural contacts between Russia and Estonia/Baltic countries (led by Prof. Sergei Issakov). The tradition in the studies of literary and cultural theory is not very well represented in the works of the scholars at the chair. The research is more concentrated in studying literary and cultural history, but there are some excellent results in the study of poetics, as well.

The chair publishes three peer-reviewed series, a fourth one is published together with the chair of Russian language. There were four more collections of articles published by the chair during 1997-2002. All the collections have been reviewed in international journals. The evaluators can agree with the statement of the chair in the self-evaluation: "We consider the existence of the chair's publications an important stimulus and at the same time an indispensable precondition for fruitful research of each member of the chair as a whole research unit.---the publishing activity of the chair is one of the priorities of its work." The collections of articles by young philologists deserve a special mention. They are based on the annual regular seminars arranged for many decades and they have enjoyed an international popularity. A special mention is also due the excellent internet project and publication *Ruthenia*

which is read all over the world. In addition to bringing out their own collections and monographs the staff of the chair has been very active in publishing in international journals, as well. Most of the publications have been published in Russian. It is a natural language in the studies of Russian literature, but the evaluators suggest the staff of the chair to publish more in Western languages as well.

The chair has many research projects and it has been very active in getting grants for them. These grants have eased somewhat the difficult economical situation of the chair. According to its teaching and research activities the chair is clearly underfinanced. Also, the working space and basic equipments are rather poor, although the new location has offered better circumstances than in the previous location.

During 1997-2002 the chair has organized 20 international conferences. The congress "Semiotics of Culture: Cultural Mechanisms, Boundaries, Identities (February-March 2002) devoted to the 80th anniversary of Yu.M. Lotman, was organised together with the department of Semiotics and had 120 participants from Europe, America and Asia. Aside from their own conferences the members of the staff have actively participated in the international conferences. Thanks to the excellent international contacts many famous scholars of Russian literature and culture have arrived to Tartu, given lectures, supervised dissertations and done this not for money, but for love to the chair.

The chair has 7 PhD and 12 MA theses defended during 1997-2002 and there are 5 ongoing PhD and 10 MA theses. We see this as a good result.

The chair has excellent international contacts and collaboration, the national ones are weaker and could be more intensive, although there are joint projects and seminars with other chairs in Tartu and Tallinn. Especially the evaluators recommend the chair to maintain good and intensive contacts with the department of semiotics and continue together the famous heritage of Yuri Lotman. The evaluators heard during their visits to different chairs almost everywhere the name of Lotman mentioned and the willingness to be the followers of the heritage. That's excellent, but somehow confusing. At the same time, we were not quite sure what different scholars meant by Lotmanian heritage. This, we are sure, is well known in Lotman's "home chair" or like we want to put it "home chairs": Russian literature and Semiotics. The work with the concrete heritage in the chair of Russian literature is fundamental and deserves all attention and praise and, absolutely, economical support.

The chair has a special duty to take care of the old and famous tradition in Russian studies in Estonia. At the moment, it has, like it always has had, both Estonian and Russian native speakers as students and takes good care of both of them with the – we would like to say – too limited staff possibilities, it has. The great tradition of Russian studies in Estonia must not collapse: It must be seen as an international and a special Tartu mission at the same time. We got the impression that the Tartu chair of Russian Literature does its best in this, but needs more support.

Evaluation of the research activities

The research activities at the chair are on a high international level. The great tradition is known and followed to the best possible extent. There are some small weaknesses mentioned in the general comments. Nonetheless:

The research activity of the chair is rated *Excellent*.

Evaluation of overall capability

The ongoing research has novelty, originality, but follows those traditions which have been continued and developed already for a long time. Some innovations would be much appreciated. The chair has a very clear strategy and many perspectives for future research. Some of the plans are not very concrete so far. The projects and studies of individual scholars are almost always multidisciplinary and often have good contacts with other research areas. There are a good number of postgraduate and postdoctoral students at the chair. The chair has good international relations, but they, and especially the national ones could be more developed. The chair has had activity and fair success in applying for grants and funds, the projects could be more concretized and more could be done by real working groups than by individual researches.

The overall capability of the chair is rated *Good*.

3. Under and Tuglas Literature Centre

Principal investigator: Virve Sarapik

We met the director of Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, who told us that at the Centre there is another project, on literary studies, which will be evaluated by March 2003. He described very shortly the structure and work of the Centre, expressing his wish to find in spring 2003 evaluators, who will know about the whole activity of the Centre. We could agree with his wish.

Target-financed project 0240365s98 “**Semiotic Aspect of Estonian Literary History**” (1998-2002). *Principal investigator: Virve Sarapik, PhD. Investigators: Maie Kalda, PhD, Elo Lindsalu, MA, Liina Lukas, MA, Aare Pilv, MA, Hilve Rebane, MA, Kadri Tüür, MA.*

General Comments

This project tries to bring together several scholars from different disciplines to work on one common topic. The interdisciplinary purpose is good. The scholars involved represent different scholarly and scientific branches, and they belong to different generations, as well. This is also positive. They have different international backgrounds and international contacts. This opens up for new perspectives on the Estonian literary history. The co-operation with the corresponding departments at the University of Tartu seems good, although more concrete co-work should be done with the department of semiotics there. The publications shown to the evaluators were of a high, internationally good standard.

Certainly, one should question the necessity of developing a project of semiotics in Tallinn when there are many trained and extremely skilful semioticians in Tartu. Is the need for semiotic projects really so great in Estonia? On the other hand, this country is one of the world's Centers for this kind of research and, moreover, there should always be a sound competition between nearly equal units. Therefore, the evaluators are happy to write a positive recommendation for the project "Semiotic Aspect of Estonian Literary History".

Evaluation of Research Activities

Referring to the circumstances mentioned above, the evaluators rank the quality of research in an international comparison as *Excellent to good*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

The evaluators find it unfair to ask for a comment on the group's success in applying for funds and grants *before* the group has finished its work. Therefore, we have decided not to give any grades for this point in the rating list. Still, this group deserves nine (9) points. In other words the project is *Excellent*.

Recommendation

The evaluators recommend this project for further support.

Part IV Summary of evaluation

It has been very rewarding to get an overview of the situation of research and teaching of literature and folklore studies in Estonian Universities. Generally, the departments have to get on with rather small resources. Still, most of them manage to do their work in an effective way. It was nice to notice that the University of Tallinn had the possibility to receive the Center for Women's Studies. However, this Center should be more integrated into the teaching and research activities at the University.

Part V Recommendations

The relevant departments at both the University of Tartu and the Tallinn Pedagogical University should be given enough resources to develop into high quality university departments on an international level. However, the departments at the two universities should complement each other. This means that they should consider their profiles in a fruitful way. Especially, we want to point at the frequent use of electronic ways of spreading information and the results of scholarly work. The world's most famous electronic journal *Folklore*, and an excellent journal *Ruthenia* edited in Tartu, are good examples. In view of the inestimably valuable legacy bequeathed by Yuri

Lotman the close co-operation between the Department of Semiotics in Tartu and the various disciplines working with problems of literature and culture is highly recommendable. We have found it positive that two universities (in Tartu and Tallinn) work on the same topics. Their independent but parallel teaching and especially their cooperative researches will be of great importance. Especially the co-operation between Comparative (World) Literature and the foreign philologies in both universities struck us as intensive and productive. There was no evidence of similarly fruitful collaboration with Estonian literature. This might call for departmental reorganization.

In one word both the national and comparative aspects in all kinds of literary and folklore research in Estonia should be continuous and more efficiently supported.

VI. Acknowledgements

We thank the Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre and the staff of the visited institutions who were most hospitable to us and went to great lengths to show us all of their facilities and to make our stay a most enjoyable one.

Tallinn, November 30, 2002

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