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Contents / Sommaire / Inhalt

Editors & Editorial board.....	5
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Articles / Aufsätze

<i>Robert Latham & Lisa Williams, Power and Inclusion. Relations of Knowledge and Environmental Monitoring in the Arctic.....</i>	7
<i>Raynald Harvey Lemelin & Michel S. Beaulieu, The Technology Imperative of the Cree. Examining Adaptability and Livelihood in Northern Ontario, Canada.....</i>	31
<i>Kjell Sjöberg, Fishing Gear Used for River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (L.) Catches. Documenting Rivers that Flow into the Baltic Sea. Part I, Sweden.....</i>	49

Reviews / Comptes rendus / Besprechungen

Review Essay: Recovering the Heritage of Past Research and Natural Resource Exploitation in Polar and Alpine Regions. Lars Andersson (ed.), <i>Sarek, Arktis och akade-misk vardag. En bok om geografen Axel Hamberg</i> (Skrifter rörande Uppsala Universitet, Serie C, Organisation och Historia 94), Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 2012; Susan Barr, David Newman & Greg Nesteroff, <i>Ernest Mansfield (1862–1924). “Gold—or I’m a Dutchman!”</i> , Trondheim: Akademika Publishing 2012 (<i>Aant Elzinga</i>).....	86
Jóhann Páll Árnason & Björn Wittrock (eds.), <i>Nordic Paths to Modernity</i> , New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2012 (<i>Anders Lidström</i>).....	95
Nikolaj Frydensbjerg Elf & Peter Kaspersen (eds.), <i>Den nordiske skolen – fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske morsmålsfag</i> , Oslo: Novus forlag 2012 (<i>Monica Reichenberg</i>).....	96
Tuulikki Kurki & Kirsi Laurén (guest eds.), <i>Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore</i> , vol. 52, 2012, <i>Borders and Life-Stories</i> (<i>Coppélie Cocq</i>).....	98
Cornelia Lüdecke & Kurt Brunner (Hrsg.), <i>Von A(ltenburg) bis Z(eppelin). Deutsche Forschung auf Spitzbergen bis 1914. 100 Jahre Expedition des Herzogs Ernst II. von Sachsen-Altenburg</i> , München, Neubiberg: Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Geodäsie der Universität der Bundeswehr München 2012, Heft 88 (<i>Aant Elzinga</i>).....	100
Sigmund Ongstad (ed.), <i>Nordisk morsmålsdidaktikk. Forskning, felt og fag</i> , Oslo: Novus forlag 2012 (<i>Monica Reichenberg</i>).....	111
Marsha Keith Schuchard, <i>Emanuel Swedenborg. Secret Agent on Earth and in Heaven. Jacobites, Jews, and Freemasons in Early Modern Sweden</i> (The Northern World 55), Leiden & Boston: Brill 2012 (<i>Friedemann Stengel</i>).....	113
Instructions to Authors.....	130

Tuulikki Kurki & Kirsi Laurén (guest eds.), *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, vol. 52, 2012, *Borders and Life-Stories*, ISSN 14060949, 144 pp.

The special issue of *Folklore* vol. 52, *Borders and Life-Stories*, has been edited within the research project "Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders" (at the University of Eastern Finland). *Folklore*, the Estonian journal of folklore, is a venue for research articles and reviews within the field of folkloristics and related fields. The theme issue deals with the interdisciplinary field of border studies. The volume includes four research articles, review articles, an interview and news sections.

In the introduction, the editors Tuulikki Kurki and Kirsi Laurén give an overview of previous research in Border studies and position their work: the focus lies on "geographical, cultural and micro-level borders" (p. 8). As announced by the title, life-stories are a central theme in the articles of the journal. Life-stories include in this context published and unpublished memoirs of an oral and literary character. The borders discussed in the articles are both flexible, negotiated borders and restrictive, topographical borders. A central approach in the articles is to how these borders are dealt with in constructions of identities in narratives. Contributors to the issues are scholars in comparative literature, cultural studies and folklore studies. The research papers include two folklore articles based on folk narratives and two based on literary expressions.

Assistant professor of Folklore Research at the University of Tartu, Tiiu Jaago, studies in her article life-stories of an Estonian woman. Focusing on intercultural contacts, her research examines how events are interpreted and narrated from the perspective of the narrator. Jaago's narrative analysis pays attention to markers of social and cultural borders and illustrates how different cultures are intertwined and negotiated. Given the subjective character of the experience of borders, the analysis of autobiographical accounts is a relevant approach for the understanding of the interplay between different cultural spaces at a micro-level.

Kirsi Laurén, lecturer in Folklore Studies at the University of Eastern Finland, discusses the aspect of "fear" in border narratives based on personal narratives. In her article, the border in focus is the one between Finland and Russia. The informants are elderly; therefore the Second World War is a recurring motif in their accounts. Fear, introduced by Laurén as a central concept in her theoretical framework, is omnipresent in the material. The author connects convincingly the construction of place with the emotion of fear. However, the strong and manifest historical and geographical context of this specific border for a generation that has experienced the war trivializes the emphasis given to the concept of fear. Nonetheless, Laurén's study points at attitudes toward the Russian border in contemporary Finland and how reminiscence and memories persist and affect, still today, representations. Laurén's article is therefore a valuable study for questioning representations and constructions of otherness.

Tuulikki Kurki, researcher in Cultural Studies at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, discusses in her article a novel by the Finnish writer Taisto Huskonen. The study examines how topographical and symbolical borders are enacted in narrating strategies for re-defining identities and otherness. From

this perspective, Kurki brings to the fore a topic of discussion of immediate relevance in a time where border crossing and cultural contacts are increasing.

“Ethnicity, cultural identity and bordering. A Tornedalian negro,” by Anne Heith, associate professor of Comparative Literature at Umeå University, is the fourth research article in the issue. This analysis of *Rättipäät* (‘Ragheads,’ 1996), a poem by the Tornedalian author Bengt Pohjanen discusses colonialism and otherness. Heith examines how issues of multilingualism, revitalization and decolonization come to expression in the poem. It is a well-written article, although the voice of Pohjanen himself is missing: in an endnote, we can read a few words about information he provided about his poem. Heith has apparently been in contact with Pohjanen, and the author’s comments and utterances about his own work would have been an important perspective to include in the analysis.

The interview with associate professor of English Literature Stephen Wolfe is an interesting and welcome contribution to the volume. Thinking of his prominent role in contemporary border research, as it is framed in the article (p. 109), one would have assumed and hoped that the articles in the issue would engage with his work.

The section “Review articles” includes a discussion of Knut Erik Jensen’s film *Stella Polaris* (1993) around aspects of liminality, a review of the film *Raja 1918* (2006) and the review of a book (in Finnish) by Sami Lakomärki, Pauliina Latvala and Kirsti Laurén, *Tekstien rajoilla. Monitieteisiä näkökulmia kirjoitetuihin aineistoihin* [‘Along textual borders. Multidisciplinary perspectives on written materials’] (2011). Under the categories “News in Brief” and “Book Review,” we can read about recent doctoral dissertations: one on Lithuanian proverbs (Dalia Zaikauskien, 2012, Vilnius) and one on deaf name lore (Liina Paales, 2011, University of Tartu). A major benefit of these sections is that they increase knowledge about the work of folklorists outside English-speaking countries and Scandinavia. These news and reviews give us an insight into the state of the field in Finland and in the Baltic region within folklore studies.

The Estonian journal of folklore opens for communication between scholars in folklore studies from different countries. Scandinavian scholars often lack knowledge about publications and research outside Scandinavia and English-speaking countries. It is thanks to journals like *Folklore* that we can cross this border in the academia. Moreover, this special number is a great example of collaboration beyond borders—national, linguistic, and between disciplines.

With its varieties of contributions—from “traditional” research articles to reviews of films and books—this issue illustrates attractively the field of Border studies. One important aspect of the issue is the study of narratives from the perspective of folklore studies and literary approaches. This makes this theme issue of *Folklore* a qualitative contribution for a broad readership with interests in topics such as minority literature, narrative research and post-colonial studies. However, although the topic of *borders* in a broad sense successfully links together the four research articles, two of them have no or very little connection to folklore studies. Thinking of the amount of journals in comparative literature, one might wonder if *Folklore* was the most adequate venue for these articles.

The concept of border provides without doubt a fruitful angle of approach to the study of narratives, not least for the understanding of representations of otherness, cultural differences and articulation of identities. This perspective

also opens for further research about the boundaries created by perceived, imagined or materialized borders.

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Cornelia Lüdecke & Kurt Brunner (Hrsg.), *Von A(ltenburg) bis Z(eppelin). Deutsche Forschung auf Spitzbergen bis 1914. 100 Jahre Expedition des Herzogs Ernst II. von Sachsen-Altenburg*, München, Neuberg: Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Geodäsie der Universität der Bundeswehr München 2012, Heft 88, ISSN 01731009, 120 pp.

This is a compendium in A4 format with two columns on each page. It comprises the proceedings of a conference held 24–25 September, 2011 at the Natural History Museum Mauritanium in the over one-thousand year-old town of Altenburg, Germany. The conference was a joint event organized by two associations, the German Society for Polar Research, and the Specialist Group on the History of Meteorology of the German Meteorological Society. The occasion was prompted by a centenary celebration of two events. One was the expedition to Spitsbergen undertaken by Duke Ernst II of Sachsen-Altenburg in 1911. The other was the establishment of the German geophysical observatory at Advent Bay, Svalbard in that same year (in 1912 this station was moved to Ebeltoftthamna, Cross Bay where it operated until 1914).

I

Svalbard is a high latitude Arctic region that is much in the news nowadays. Interest revolves around new opportunities of natural resource extraction and profit gains from the Arctic seabed opening up by the diminishing extent of the sea ice. Current expansions of scientific activities combined with the popularity of polar tourism add further to greater public attention regarding the region. Some scholars refer to a “globalization of the Arctic” (Grydehøj *et al.* 2012). In this context historians, archaeologists and museologists are also bringing to light further findings regarding comparable trends in and around Svalbard in earlier times. The period from the late nineteenth century and into the 1920s is a particularly rich object of study in this respect since in those days one saw a proliferation of expeditions and mining ventures but also an early tourist industry and some daring aeronautic experiments in the region.

In the literature the efforts of North American, Scandinavian and British