



Preface

This book is dedicated to the 10th anniversary of Yuri Vella's death. At the conference gathered in Tartu in March 2014, attended by people for whom Yuri Vella was important and who were important for him, the participants agreed that it was important to keep Yuri's legacy alive. And thus, many of us, in the following years, continued to write about him and to endeavour to keep his heritage alive. This book is another way of keeping our promise. I have chosen to collect the articles I have written, sometimes alone, sometimes with other colleagues with whom we shared principles and reflections.

As Yuri Vella's life and activities were very thoroughly connected with his people. What meant, for Vella, his people? His understanding was broad. He didn't distinguish between his ethnic group, the Forest Nenets, and his neighbours, the Khanty, more precisely the Eastern Khanty. His wife was Khanty, and he drew the line more between the natives and the Russian, or those who shares with the Russians the language and the urban way of life.

But for the scope of this collection, I concentrate on the Forest Nenets. The main reason is that while there is an abundance of scientific literature, even in English, about the Khanty, general information about the Forest Nenets is but scarce. This is a good occasion to gather articles published in different reviews at different times, and which give about the Forest Nenets a sum of information.

With Liivo Niglas, we published a book in 2021, which summed up our observations about Yuri Vella. This collection includes some of the articles that inspired the book, but time has passed, and others have been written and published. They form the bulk of this edition.