

# Tartu City Events: Expressing the Ethnic and Historic Connections

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**Abstract:** This article explores the ways that contemporary cultural events and festivals reflect and handle ethnic and historic connections, and how they have changed over time. The article investigates four types of events. The student customs analysed include the celebration of Walpurgis Night (April 30) within the framework of corporation culture and the celebration of the anniversary of the University of Tartu. St John's Eve celebrations organized by the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Agricultural Museum represent ethnic events. From agrarian festivals, the article presents the Viss or the Cow Day (selection of the prettiest cow) and the Animal Breeding Day. Celebration of the Hanseatic Days in July is a compound event focusing on handicraft, food, and culture of the Middle Ages. These are unifying events for the larger community, for people of all ages, and they also provide a distinctive identifier of a place – the city of Tartu.

**Keywords:** city events, St John's Eve, student traditions, agrarian festivals, invented traditions

## Introduction

The list of festivals, thematic days and weeks of city districts, literature, art, and music festivals, festivals of street and home cafés, handicraft festivals, etc., is long and varied. These events bring professional art and domestic products side by side into the streets. Some of them contain new elements and attract people's attention and interest. They show how community-based cultural festivals grow over time. However, there are also events with a longer history, which are a part of Tartu's cultural life. Part of them act as place marketing, part of them as image or society marketing, part are reinventions or invented phenomena. In this paper, we will explore various events with different backgrounds and give an overview of selected

student, ethnic, agricultural, and Hanseatic festivals. All these events are part of the complex cultural life in Tartu, and concentrate on the segments related to the ethnic history and identity, and traits specific to the city of Tartu.

The student traditions to be discussed include the celebration and customs of Walpurgis Night (this is the only night all student corporations open their doors to the public); also, the celebration of the anniversary of the University of Tartu on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December is analysed.

The selected agrarian events include the celebrations of St John's Eve organized by the Estonian National Museum (in cooperation with the city) and the Estonian Agricultural Museum, as well as the so-called Viss (selection of the prettiest cow) and Breed Animal competitions.

The celebration of the Hanseatic Days in July is a complex event focusing on handicraft, food prepared from local raw materials, or national food, workshops, and spontaneous and official concerts; a temporary science town is also set up for the occasion.

All the abovementioned events in Tartu are free; some of them are supported by different funds and the city government, though local companies and institutions as well as nonprofit organizations and societies that help to organize the events also contribute. In the following examples, responsibility is shared between a student organization and a museum or some other institution. By way of example, we observe changes in the policy of event management and in the process of changing their form and content, production of heritage, and entertainment.

The basic question of this study is the following: How are ethnicity, the specifics of Tartu and general tendencies of festivity culture matched?

## Methodology

With a population of 100,000, Tartu is the site of the oldest university in Estonia. Students and faculty members constitute a significant part of the city's population. Tartu has also been important in Estonia for more than a century when it comes to political decision-making and cultural events, hence the nickname "the smart city". The data used in the article come from the scholarly archives EFITA (the academic archives of the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum), and from the collections of the Estonian National Museum. General information was collected from the portal Window of Culture (<https://kultuuriaken.tartu.ee/en/node>), which advertises the main cultural events in Tartu. It contains information about event agendas, workshops, and performers. We collected data from the special social media accounts that offer more information on the events as well as contacts of supporters. In addition, we interviewed two of the main organizers of events, Sirje Madisson and Merli Sild, as both of them play an important role in

the celebrations of Victory Day and St John's Eve, and important festivals like St. George's Day, May Day, St. Michael's Day, Harvesting Day, and others. We used folkloristic methods for the analyses.

## Student festivals in the city

There are plenty of archival materials and some descriptions in literature on the emotionally laden and vivid memories of student traditions in Tartu. The beginning of student celebrations goes back to 1632. However, the colourful student life in Tartu is mostly associated with the Baltic German students, and later on with the Baltic German student corporations that were founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Societies that copied the corporation culture of their motherland united Baltic German students and caused a great deal of talk among the local citizens, because of the diverse traditions they brought to public attention on some holidays. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Russians and Jews also had their own corporations, as did the Poles (Konwent Polonia, established in 1828). Following the Baltic German style, the first Estonian student corporations were established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first of them was established in 1882 under the name Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts ('Estonian Students Society'), followed by Vironia in 1900. To this day, the model of the former Baltic German corporations has prevailed in Estonia, including the custom of having same-sex corporations. As the Association of Baltic German Corporations did not recognize Estonian organizations, the Association of Estonian Corporations was founded.

Baltic German corporations ceased their operation in 1939, when Baltic Germans were recalled to Germany; Estonian corporations and student societies were mostly closed down either in 1940 or after the Second World War, with the establishment of the regulations of the Soviet Union. During the Second World War many Estonians left their homeland and emigrated to Western Europe, America, Australia, and New Zealand. In larger expatriate Estonian communities, student corporations continued their activities. At the same time, in the Soviet period (1945–1990) many attempts were made in Estonia to restore earlier student customs and societies between the walls of the *alma mater*.

From earlier customs the student cap (*tekkel*) was restored in the 1950s. Originally, the cap with coloured stripes along the edge was given to students who were members of a student society or corporation and were allowed to wear it in public only on special occasions. Every corporation had their original cap with original colours. After the Second World War, all students were given caps in university colours and they were supposed to wear the cap every day. (In the case of the University of Tartu it was the cap of the former Estonian Students Society, only the black stripe was replaced by a red one.) The cap was a symbol of status and

affiliation. University students were thus clearly distinguishable from other people and from one another, as each institution had their own colours. Naturally, this situation inspired quite abundant folklore. The new caps in uniform colours were meant to be more democratic and unifying than the former caps in the colours of various student corporations.

Some of the earlier customs were temporarily allowed; for example, the procession of the corporations took place as a students' procession. The procession at the end of April was highly popular in Tartu in the 1960s. Considered a "potentially dangerous gathering" by the Soviet regime, the event was forbidden at the beginning of the 1970s.

Student corporations and their traditions were revived with the help of diaspora communities at the end of the 1980s. Among them were the public procession of corporation members through the city of Tartu on April 30<sup>th</sup>, and the popular parody procession on the following day, through Supilinn ('Soup city', part of Tartu), a district close to the city centre which has traditionally been the area of affordable rental apartments for students. The parody procession was a popular student ritual in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ordinary public procession of the corporation members through the city of Tartu is the most popular in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The students' procession in Tartu follows a clear pattern. The morning before the procession (April 30), or sometimes right after it has ended, another ritual takes place: the students wash/squirt/water/sprinkle/drench the head of the statue of biologist Karl Ernst von Baer (a ritual called 'head washing') located on Toome Hill.

At 8 pm the members of the various student corporations and societies march, singing, through the city. They take part in the procession, wearing their respective caps and carrying their flags and scabbards. The mayor of Tartu makes a short speech, and symbolically hands over the keys of the city of Tartu to the students' representative, who is then offered some beer. For one night students are delegated the power of decision making in Tartu.

The procession then heads to the front of the main building of the university, where students greet the rector with a song and the rector responds with a speech. The rector of the university may give a longer speech and, depending on the rector's speaking skills, he/she may weave admonishing calls for action or an assessment of the university's success in education and science or other topics. After the speech, the rector is also offered beer.

Walpurgis Night at many student corporations and societies includes, in addition to singing *cantus* and dancing, staged self-written plays, shadow theatre, parodies of operas, and beer-drinking (unless the society observes the temperance policy). However, a number of other festive rituals are also performed.

On the eve of 30 April, the students head to the corporation/society buildings, which open their doors at midnight to visitors from other societies, students from

other cities and also non-affiliated students. It is not easy to enter the corporation/society buildings due to the strict dress code: many guests are turned down because they do not wear a suit, a white shirt and a necktie or a (full-length) evening gown. Guests who are good singers are accepted more easily.

For other academics (lecturers, professors) an alternative event is organized – a ball in the theatre building –, and there are also spontaneous smaller parties for non-organized students.

The following morning, 1 May, members of corporations/societies take a boat down the Emajõgi River, drinking beer and singing, or finishing the party with other rituals, such as eating porridge.

Two important innovations can be mentioned: the week-long celebration of student days before the Walpurgis Night and the celebration of *Walpurgisnacht* (*volbriöö*) by citizens.

The celebration of student days starts a week before April 30, and includes a fair with peculiar merchandises, a self-made vehicles contest, a rubber boat rally on the Emajõgi River, and numerous concerts, all of which are open and highly expected events for all the citizens of Tartu.

Recently, the student culture has spread from Tartu to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and to other colleges and higher education institutions in Estonia, founded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These processions are usually organized by the alumni. Everyone invents their own traditions, following the example of those performed in Tartu.

One example of the adapted celebration on 30 April is recorded from Rakvere, and involves, like in Baer's case, washing the head with champagne:

*Like in previous years, the Walpurgis Night party is celebrated in Rakvere community centre and the community yard on 30 April. The celebration starts at 7 pm, with an address of the head witch; the programme also includes the Tapa brass band performance, a pony ride for children, and a dancing group of the local girls.*

*At 8 pm, the pop group Nexus makes an appearance; one hour later, Ants Vi-  
ermann plays records at a disco terrace and the Walpurgis Night bonfire is lit.  
There is a lottery and a broom auction.*

*On the same day current and former students celebrate an event called Kram-  
bambuli, during which the head of the statue of [Friedrich Reinhold] Kreutzwald  
is washed. (Daily newspaper "Virumaa Teataja", 27. 04. 2004)*

Nevertheless, the student tradition has never been so prominent and popular as in Tartu, the city with one of the highest percentage of students of the total population, and a long tradition of student celebrations that can be traced back throughout centuries.

Those who are not students and people who do not like crowded public events prefer to light bonfires instead, in the company of family members and friends, which attests to the incorporation of Walpurgis Night tradition into the general cultural tradition.

In the late 1980s, attempts were made to introduce the German-influenced *Walpurgisnacht* (or *Hexennacht*) as a festival of witches and magic. The newly invented custom is one of the media newcomers, supported by schools, village societies, restaurants, etc. During the morning and daytime schools and kindergartens are celebrating, in the evening cultural societies start with performances, and later on it is possible to continue in pubs and restaurants. The tradition is accessible to all who are interested in spending great time together, masking, dancing, and having fun.

In the student calendar, the anniversary of the national university of Estonia (1 December) is important, although it has a much narrower meaning in Tartu and other parts of Estonia than in the diaspora communities in general (Kõiva, Kuperjanov 2014: 201–211, EFITA Australia, Sweden). Diaspora communities celebrate this day everywhere, as a decisive date that marks the educational and scientific history of Estonia. The celebration in Tartu is ceremonious; former students are invited to Tartu, they can visit lectures and university buildings, and celebrate the day in Tartu. The largest public event was organized in 1982, for the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Tartu. During the festivities, the university building was partially open to the general public. An outdoor performance *Vivat Academia!* took place in front of the main building. A students' torch procession, a formal reception, and a ball were also organized. Usually, in Tartu, this celebration is largely confined to the university's internal agenda.

## **Ethnic festivals: St John's Eve**

The importance of St John's Eve on the family, community, national, and state levels gives a reason for comparing it to Christmas. Some important practices that are related to St John's Eve are followed both in the countryside and in the cities, in the public and private spheres: visiting cemeteries and having a sauna, swinging and singing, and decorating homes with birches. St John's Eve was associated with ritual food practices (19<sup>th</sup>-century dairy foods were replaced by meat dishes after the Second World War, and later on by grilled meat), but ritual drinks (ale and root beer) have preserved their place. As not everyone wanted to go to the official big St John's Eve party, campfires were also lit in backyards and on riverbanks or seashores.

In 1918, with the establishment of the independent Republic of Estonia, Victory Day (23 June, established officially in 1934) fell right on Midsummer Eve (Est. *jaanilaupäev*, 23 June) and before the important St John's Day (celebrated on 24 June). In the 1930s the day became an official national holiday with military parades,



state addresses, and the commemoration of the heroes of the War of Independence (Kõiva, Särg, Vesik 2004), and was thus integrated into the folk calendar. The following annexation of Estonia by the Soviet army led to the banning of many holidays, especially those connected with national and political events, prompting the destruction of monuments, later also the collecting and burning of textbooks, academic literature and fiction published during the period of independence. St John's Eve was preserved because of its folkloric background, and its extensive celebrations in the private and public realm. It was celebrated in villages, but also as a city event with a common bonfire, concerts, and festive meals.

After the restoration of independence in August 1991, St John's Eve was celebrated in Tartu with great enthusiasm, though the city's Department of Culture placed the responsibility for managing this event on other organizations; various museums, organizations and societies celebrated St John's Eve.

After the Estonian National Museum regained its former lands on the shores of Lake Raadi, the largest St John's Eve celebration of the city started to take place at Raadi. The secretary of the Society of Friends of the Estonian National Museum was in charge of it.

One of the characteristics of the event was its prolongation, since the 2000s, into a full-day celebration, with the highlight being the lighting of the St John's Eve bonfire, accompanied by music and entertainment. The ten-hour-long celebration includes many activities for different age groups, especially children: exploring of new attractions – human hamster balls, big chess pieces for playing, giant photo cameras, chairs and tables, combat games and car shows, to name but a few. However, there have been several changes, one of which is to link the celebration of St John's Eve with the celebration of Victory Day. This changes the spirit of the event: the Estonian Defence Forces and the military personnel are present, and the bonfire is lit by women in the military. Thus, the Estonian National Museum's (ENM) way of celebrating has shifted closer to the customs from the 1930s, although it is still not quite the same as it used to be. In 2018, the event manager presented it as one of the biggest city events of the year. This is how Sirje Madisson described it:

*I've been in charge of Midsummer Eve celebrations for **12 years**. It is a ten-hour-long entertainment programme for all age groups from Tartu and the nearby area as well as their guests. We are seeing more and more foreigners that want to learn about our national traditions at these events. Tartu city's Midsummer bonfire is held on 23 June each year. This is to celebrate the most important holiday in our national calendar, as well as to commemorate **Victory Day**. Over the last few years, we've hosted more than 10,000 visitors. There are a lot of family entertainments — fun attractions for the kids, workshops by specialists from the ENM's Education Centre, different exhibitions, open-air chess and checkers, etc. There is a special playground for the littlest ones. A*

*folk music concert starts at 8 pm on the shore of Lake Raadi, and the bonfire is lit at 9 pm (it is usually lit from the victory fire ignited on Victory Day by the members of the Defence League and Women's Defence Organization, but we have also worked together with the Gaudeamus Student Song and Dance Festival and others).*

*This is followed by greetings from municipal and city leaders and then the party starts. Folk music and folk dancing continue until 1 am. I try to maintain high standards; this party is very safe for all the visitors.*

*I pick the performers, draw up the programme, order the stage equipment. I also take care of the lights for the stage and the dance areas, the sound equipment, G4S for security, and the Rescue Board to monitor the bonfire. This is normal practice.*

*In 12 years the following groups have performed in the Raadi Manor Park: Kiiora, Zetod, Lõõtspillipoisid, Svjata Vatra, Kihnu Poisid, Kõrsikud, Lõkõriq, Cätlin Mägi – Torupilli Jussi Trio, Paabel, Oort, Ro:Toro, Folkmill, Audru Jõe-laevanduse Punt, Curly Strings<sup>1</sup> – I can't recall all of them right now. People are happy, children dance until the very end of the party; there is catering for adults with low-alcoholic drinks.*

*The parking is organized, [and] the temporary traffic signs ensure safety. (EFITA, Sirje Madisson 2018)*

In 2018, for example, the agenda of St John's Eve included a bigger military exposition, and various activities connected with the military side of the day. The exhibition of military technology was attractive to the male visitors: the participants could explore the technology of the defence forces, take part in paintball target shooting, play and compete under the guidance of Young Eagles and the Voluntary Defence Organization.

The musical side started with an hour-long concert, performed by the academic brass band Popsid of the Estonian Defence Forces' Tartu Brigade. At 3 pm, a motorcade arrived at Raadi with the victory fire ignited by the President in Viljandi, where a motorcycle exhibition was later opened. During the ceremonious lineup of the Tartu Brigade of the Estonian Defence Forces, the fire was handed over to the city of Tartu, Tartu County, and its municipalities.

At the same time, handicraft workshops were organized in another part of the park, trampolines and small cars for children were available, as well as a playground.

The maquette of the new building of the Estonian National Museum (measurements 1:20) exhibited for the occasion provided the visitors with information about the layout of the rooms in the new building.



At 7 pm the representatives of the Tartu Brigade of the Estonian Defence Forces lit the midsummer bonfire with the fire of victory. The greetings of the city government were followed by a music and dance party for every interested citizen until one o'clock at night. All in all, more than half of the long day was dedicated to military topics.



Fig. 1: St John's Eve. Tartu. Photo by Alar Madisson, 2018.

Alternative entertainment and Midsummer celebrations are also offered by the Estonian Agricultural Museum. This establishment has long been known as a promoter of old agrarian customs and practices as well as of traditional foods. The museum has its own farm, with horses, cows, sheep and other animals, as well as croplands where citizens can see various crops growing and witness their harvesting with simple tools, as back in time. The museum organizes many educational exhibitions and programmes for students all over Estonia, such as the rye bread programme established at Ülenurme. With the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, schools all over Estonia have the opportunity to travel to Ülenurme, near Tartu, to learn how rye bread is made.

The organizers of St John's Eve try to stick to traditional St John's Eve games, competitions, and other activities that were characteristic of the event in the past. The bonfire is collectively lit and is followed by music and a dance party. Local folk dance groups are always involved. The whole event is advertised as a 'traditional'

St John's Eve party, but in reality it is a performance, led by a host. This is how the main organizer, Merli Sild, described it in 2018:

*We celebrate St John's Eve with an enjoyable folk party where, in addition to the local cultural collectives, well-known singers and bands are performing; the event is hosted by two experienced ladies from southern Estonia – Mafalda and Loreida, who have a knack for talking to people.* (EFITA, Merli Sild 2018)

Separate events are organized for children and young people. The Õnnemaa NGO and Youth Centre conduct folksy games for children, and pony rides are organized by the museum; young people can learn how to weave wreaths, make bath whisks, and the blacksmith shows them how to sharpen scythes. Õnnemaa's collectives (dance groups for 12–14-year-old youngsters, a punk band) perform in the arena. Traditional entertainment includes a rural strongman competition, and the winner receives a prize. Some of these competitions are amusing innovations, such as the skiing competition (in late June!) in which the competitor has to carry a beer box. Prizes are given out to the participants and free bus transport is provided (as is also the case with the Estonian National Museum). Rural-style celebrations, including Midsummer parties, are quite similar elsewhere (cf. Midsummer Day in Ireland (Soverino 2016: 21); local feast in New Zealand (Grima 2019); harvesting festivals in Poland (Gierek 2016)).

### Agrarian events and reinvention of competitions

Two events – the Viss (the most beautiful cow) and the Breed Animal competition – offer great excitement, especially for younger citizens. Renewed and supplemented with a small fair, which allows the selling of various foods and handicraft, these events continue the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century farm animal and farm produce competitions. The competition of cows, hen, sheep, pigs, horses, and products like cabbages, pumpkins, and cucumbers were also restored at the earliest opportunity, in the 1990s. Recently, many new aspects have been added to this event. This is an important meeting when it comes to local breeds because it gives the animals and their owners the chance to catch the attention of the media and demonstrate to citizens and visitors healthy local animals and farm produce. However, the event's main mission is to reestablish the human-animal relationship in the times of urbanization, when the contact between people and animals or nature is rather sparse and superficial. Local handicraft and traditional food are also promoted.



Fig. 2: Breed Animal competition, Ülenurme. Courtesy of Merli Sild, 2018.

The first exhibition of Estonian Red Breed cows took place on 14 June 1990. It was soon followed by an exhibition dedicated to the Black-and-White Breed, in August of the same year. In 2000, the competition moved to the Estonian Agricultural Museum at Ülenurme.

Last year, the competition was attended by 90 most beautiful Estonian Holstein and Estonian Red Breed cows. The exhibition was held in cooperation with the Estonian Agricultural Museum and the Animal Breeders' Association of Estonia. In 2018, Tanel-Taavi Bulitko, the Chairman of the Board of the Animal Breeders' Association of Estonia, concluded:

*The dairy sector is one of the main domains of Estonian agriculture and in terms of milk production we held the second position in the EU last year. Cow competitions are popular all over the world. The candidates are evaluated by appearance, conformance to the type of breed, and the structure of the udder and legs. Not less important is also the presentation of animals and the harmony between the animal and the presenter. The competition is judged by Bruno Almeida from Portugal, a judge that has great experience. (EFITA, Bulitko 2018)*

The purpose of the animal competitions is to highlight the work of Estonian breeders and to introduce the results of their work to the general public. Nineteen animal husbandry organizations from all over Estonia participated in the Viss competi-

tion on 29 June 2018. Participants came from Tartu, Jõgeva, Põlva, Järva, Viljandi, Rapla, Lääne, Harju, Võru, and Lääne-Viru counties.

The Estonian Animal Breeding Association (EABA) was established on 18 August 18, 1993; the competition was organized for the first time in 1996, by the Estonian Agricultural Museum, in cooperation with the EABA (which includes various breeding organizations). The programme of the event is established by the head of the museum, and the entire staff contributes to the organization. Merli Sild is one of the important figures; she communicates with associations and farmers.

The Breed Animal competition is one of the biggest public events in Tartu, with 5,400 to 7,300 participants every year. In recent years, during competition attention has been paid to introducing traditional Estonian foods, but last year (2018) one month was dedicated to the cuisine of the former province of Livonia. Currently the Agricultural Museum and several other museums introduce to their visitors various foods and tastes.

### **Invented events: Hanseatic Days**

The Hanseatic Days in Tartu are an invented tradition. Tartu was one of the influential cities belonging to the Hanseatic League, a powerful group of allied cities during the Middle Ages, which controlled trade in the Baltic Sea region, and to some extent also in the North Sea. At that time, Tartu was an important meeting place for tradesmen from Germany, Sweden, Russia, and other countries. In 1986, the Hanseatic Days celebration was established to preserve this aspect of Tartu's heritage (see Hobsbawm 1983: 1 for invented traditions). It has since become one of the most important cultural events in Estonia. The Hanseatic Days owe their success to the increasing popularity of the medieval culture. Although filled with a variety of trades – with up to 400 local merchants involved – it is also a place to buy luxury and innovative items. It includes spontaneous as well as thoroughly prepared performances, river-related events, special food and drinks. Medieval music and clothing create a distinct atmosphere, in contrast to the ethnic clothing, fashion, and folk music present during other events.





Fig. 3: Hanseatic Days, Tartu. Photo by Alar Madisson, 2018.

## Conclusion

In their research on Finnish cultural events, Katja Pasanen and Eva-Maria Hakola (2012) conclude that, from the attendee profile and marketing point of view, the majority of the Finnish events are mainly local or regional. In nearly half (49%) of the events, the attendees come from the same municipality or from neighbouring areas. The same seems to be the case for Tartu, although some local traditions have spread to other cities (e.g., the Student Days) or to the diaspora communities (anniversary of the University of Tartu).

Resuming the characteristics of the chosen examples, it can be said that the events in Tartu are related to traditions and history; they are partly heritage, partly invented traditions of recent history. Student corporations have acquired neither Scandinavian nor American characteristics, but continue to follow the German corporate culture, particularly its Estonian version. The same conservatism and authenticity are characteristic of many other events. Although the Hanseatic Days are also known in other countries and share features with similar events in Europe, they everywhere reflect also local history, highlighting local customs.

St John's Eve and Student Days are meant to be unifying events for the larger community, as well as for the students. The extensive events organized by the ENM require a great deal of planning; they have acquired a certain political stance by combining Victory Day and a national holiday. The agenda is diverse, with a variety of special and more common events. The question is surely whether such large-scale events are sustainable and can maintain free access for citizens. Probably most events are close to saturation point, both in terms of participants and the

choices available. In Tartu, you can choose between two big St John's Eve celebrations in the city or make your own small bonfire and celebrate it with your family and friends. The most ethnic holiday, St John's Eve, is filled with contemporary content and elements, including music and exhibitions, and can no longer be called a completely ethnic holiday; it is rather a contemporary fusion event. From the traditional characteristics, only the bonfire and the dancing have been preserved. Basically, the same model can be applied to all kinds of other outdoor parties, and in many cases this has already happened. The Hanseatic Days have a more specific audience, for instance people interested in handicraft and gourmet food.

We can see the commercialization of bonfires and other public events, but there is neither withdrawal nor stigmatization – the events are open to all age groups and are free of charge.

Despite the fact that agriculture and related activities do not employ many people anymore, the agrarian feasts are still popular in Estonia. The Viss and the Breed Animal competition have become whole family events, appreciated by all age groups, and are usually related to a fair, often following ecological trends. Festivals and public events demonstrate the popular definition of community whose sense relies in the connections, belonging, support, empowerment, participation, and security it engenders (Derrett 2003: 52).

The events analysed not only support the sense of place; they also provide a distinctive identifier of place – the city of Tartu.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The list includes popular Estonian folk bands.

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