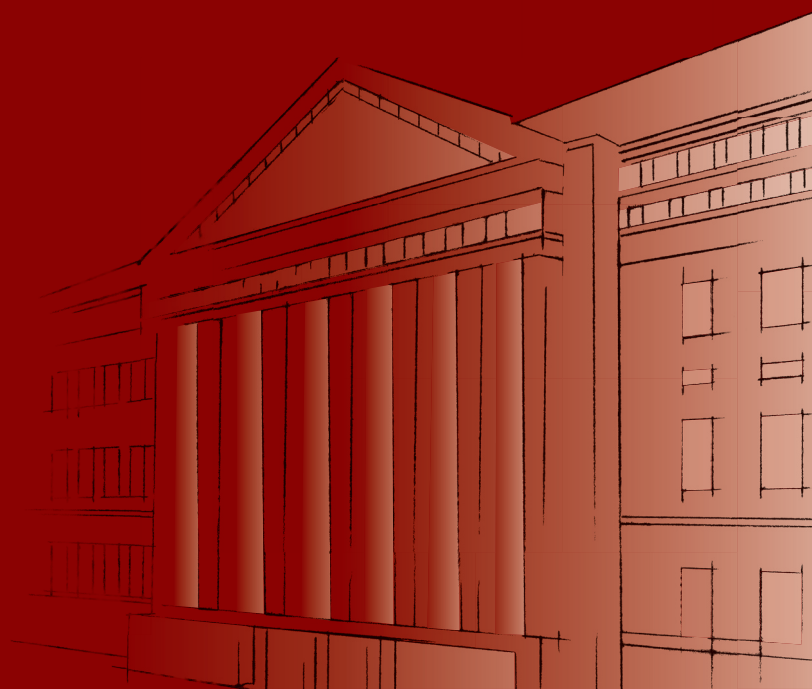


MARLEEN METSLAID

Between the Folk and Scholarship:
Ethnological Practice in Estonia
in the 1920s and 1930s



DISSERTATIONES ETHNOLOGIAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

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UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Press

The council of the Institute for Cultural Research and Fine Arts has, on November 9, 2016, accepted this dissertation to be defended for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnology.

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Tartu, 10 November 2016

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- Article I** Nõmmela, Marleen 2011. Becoming an Ethnographer. Becoming a Science. Ferdinand Linnus and Estonian Ethnology in the 1920s. – *Lietuvos ethnologija. Lithuanian Ethnology. Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology*, 11 (20), pp. 93–108.
- Article II** Nõmmela, Marleen 2010. On Creating a Realm of Memory: The First Permanent Exhibition of Estonian Folk Culture in the Estonian National Museum. – *Ethnologia Fennica. Finnish Studies in Ethnology*. Vol. 37. Ideas and Ideologies, pp. 7–21.
- Article III** Nõmmela, Marleen 2010. The State, the Museum and the Ethnographer in Constructing National Heritage: Defining Estonian National Costumes in the 1930s. – *JEF. Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 49–61.
- Article IV** Metslaid, Marleen 2016. Gustav Ränga tee Tartu ülikooli professoriks. Eesti etnoloogia 1930. aastatel. [Gustav Ränk's Road to Professorship at the University of Tartu: Estonian Ethnology in the 1930s.] – *Tuna: Ajalookultuuri ajakiri*, 1 (70), lk. 50–67.

1. INTRODUCTION

The dissertation discusses the history of Estonian ethnology in the 1920s and 1930s, with a focus on the individual researcher and the construction of his or her knowledge production process in an academic and socio-political context. The 1920s and 1930s in Estonian ethnology have been characterised as a period of institutionalisation and professionalisation, of becoming an academic research, when a specific field of study was defined, a concrete theory and methodology was taken into use, the first comprehensive studies were published, and a respective school was established (see e.g. J. Linnus 1989; Rebas 1995; Talve 1992; Vunder 1996). The aim of this dissertation is to present as diverse a picture as possible of ethnology during these decades, which would broaden and deepen the knowledge presented in earlier historiography. The dissertation derives from the reflexive historiographical approach, which I understand as a critical view of established research conceptions and concepts, and the discovering of ideological, rhetorical, and history-conditioned writing conventions by means of textual analysis.

In my research, I define scholarship as a practice¹ and a dialogue, and argue that academic research becomes existent and approachable procedurally, i.e. in the course of the knowledge production process. By knowledge production² I understand the production of scientific and socially significant knowledge and its establishment in the corresponding discipline. The concept of the knowledge production process emphasises changes in this knowledge in the dialogue that takes place between different parties in the course of practising scholarship. Science does not exist outside researchers, as it is the latter who define and discuss their discipline and by means of this “simultaneously change both themselves and the discipline” (Jacobsen 2005: 171). The arena of the ethnologists of the 1920s and 1930s was constituted by the state, the museum, and the university, and I consider the socio-political and academic context conditioned by them also worth studying.

I started my study into the history of Estonian ethnology a decade ago, by analysing Gustav Ränk’s fieldwork materials. The fieldwork diaries, ethnographic descriptions and collection books preserved at the Estonian National Museum (ENM) enabled me to delve into the essence of ethnological practice and better understand the process of knowledge production. Continuing my research, I took an interest in Ränk’s contemporaries, Ilmari Manninen, Ferdinand Linnus and Helmi Kurrik, and to deepen and extend my analysis, I included other sources, such as correspondence, minutes of meetings, research, reviews, newspaper articles, etc. Critical reading of sources and placing them in context diversifies the former image of Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s, which was mainly based on earlier historiographies.

¹ Cf. Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu 2003).

² Cf. Kuutma 2010.

The period under study started and ended with (worldwide) political changes, which had a considerable impact on Estonia. Independent statehood gained in 1918 enabled and necessitated the development of Estonia-focused disciplines at the new national university in Tartu. The period ended in 1940, when Estonia lost its independence and Soviet rule was established. My dissertation places the activity of Estonian ethnologists in the era of the newly established nation state, the two decades of which are clearly distinguishable from each other. In the first decade a significant turn occurred in Estonians' self-concept in comparison to earlier times, which required a re-identification. Society adapted to new conditions, the state was in the process of reconstruction, and in the state context ethnologists' activity was rather targeted at the nation, not regulated on the state level. The second decade is characterised by the establishment of authoritarian rule, which had a direct impact on ethnologists' work at the ENM. On the other hand, the 1930s were the years when society deviated from "the narrow national-local and peasant-patriarchal mentality" (Karjahärm 2001: 227). Due to independent statehood, the Estonian language was able to evolve into the language of culture and academic research, and support the development of specific Estonian studies.

As a humanitarian discipline or, to be more exact, as one of Estonia-focused fields, ethnology has performed a remarkable role in the creation of national culture, strengthening and maintaining national identity, and building the nation state in the interwar period. However, besides the topic of nationalism, the problems of the discipline dealing with the interpretation of culture and society arise as more acute today: who and how has been represented in culture and what has been the impact of this heritage on contemporary studies (Bendix 2002; Fenske&Davidovic-Walther 2010). The studies of the history of the discipline are aimed at a better understanding of oneself as a researcher and a greater awareness of the responsibility as a researcher.³ The main incentives of my study of the history of the discipline are the representation criticism and defining the role of nationalism in Estonian ethnology in the period under study.

Estonian ethnology has been called a "child" of Nordic ethnology (Vunder 2000), to which I principally agree. Estonians' interest in their peasant culture started already in the 19th century, when Jakob Hurt⁴ collected folklore and Oskar Kallas⁵ collected folk music and advocated folk art. At the beginning of the 20th century, the ENM was established, and on the initiative of Kristjan

³ See additionally about the significance of looking into the past of the discipline, e.g. in Bendix 1998, 2014; Löfgren 2014; Sandberg 2014.

⁴ Jakob Hurt (1839–1907), Estonian folklorist, theologian, and a prominent figure in the national awakening movement; initiated folklore collection and the scientific publication thereof.

⁵ Oskar Kallas (1868–1946), Estonian folklorist and diplomat, one of the initiators of the foundation of an ethnography museum in Estonia.

Raud⁶ ethnographic items were extensively collected. Similar undertakings were also carried out in other European countries. In the 19th century, increasing interest in native peasant culture was general; it often started with folklore collection and eventuated in the foundation of national museums of ethnography.⁷

Sooner or later, many European countries established ethnology as a national discipline, with a common aim to support the newly emerged sense of nationalism, provide the nation with a past strengthening the identity, and analyse the collected material. They also had a similar desire to contribute to the strengthening of the positivist worldview, according to which to classify and describe everything around us. National ethnologies evolved mainly in two directions, with an inclination towards the study of either material or non-material peasant culture. The countries where ethnology emerged from archaeology or the requirements of museums/archives, initiated the studies of material culture, whereas the ones in which linguistics and philology played a major role in the institutionalisation of ethnology took up studies of mental culture (Schippers 1996: 108). Also, a country may have developed ethnology and folkloristics separately, as it happened in Estonia and Finland. In addition, colonial or nation state background or the one conditioned by the history of occupied small nations played its role, influencing the selection and development of the research themes and methods of the discipline.⁸ However, we can say that today ethnology is mainly considered as the analysis of intellectual, material, and social culture (Löfgren 2012: 572).

Names and research objects of similar disciplines could differ by states and also by institutions. So in Sweden the field of studies was called *folklivs-forskning*, which involved the study of both non-material and material cultures; in Finland it was *kansatiede*, which focused on the study of material culture, in Germany it was *Volkskunde*, which had an inclination towards non-material culture, and in Russian it was *этнография*, which again involved both non-material and material cultures. The term “ethnography” was well known in Estonia already in the first half of the 19th century, and derived from Russian scientific traditions. The then Imperial University of Tartu taught ethnography side by side with geography and statistics (Vunder 1996). In the interwar period, both “ethnography” and “studies of the folk” (*rahvateadus*) were alternately used, which refers to connections with the corresponding disciplines in Russia and Finland. The concept of ethnology became established in the Estonian academia

⁶ Kristjan Raud (1865–1943), Estonian artist and museologist, instigator of heritage protection activities; organised the collection of Estonian folk art and material heritage.

⁷ For example in Sweden in 1873, in Denmark in 1881, in Finland in 1893, and in Norway and Latvia in 1894.

⁸ Cf. with Bjarne Rogan, who calls disciplines political projects (enterprises) on the one hand and intellectual on the other, saying: “Disciplines are thus political projects, whether as a part of relatively innocent identity politics or nation-building processes or as tools for totalitarian or colonial regimes, as outgrowths of cultural-political ideologies or even intelligence strategies” (Rogan 2012: 598).

in the 1990s. I have used it in the current research as a dominant concept, and also as a synonym for the term ‘ethnography’. Therefore I speak about ethnologists and ethnological practice instead of ethnographers and ethnographical practice. No matter what the discipline was called in the first half of the 20th century, in Northern, Eastern, and Central Europe it was unified by the focus on the study of “own” culture and own nation. The common historical-geographical method initiated cooperation and a wish to compile ethnographic atlases of Europe. Already at that time ethnologies in different countries had close academic connections.

In Estonia the development of ethnology as a discipline gained impetus from the establishment of the nation state in 1918; the chair was opened in 1924⁹, and it was headed by Ilmari Manninen (1894–1935) from Finland, who was also the director of the ENM.¹⁰ Based on local museological and cultural-historical background and emanating from disciplinary developments in the neighbouring countries, Manninen defined Estonian ethnology as a discipline dealing with descriptive and comparative material *vanavara* (old treasures, i.e. antiquities), i.e. material peasant culture (Manninen 1924: 530). In the second half of the 1920s, Manninen’s disciples Ferdinand Linnus (1895–1942), Gustav Ränk (1902–1998), and Helmi Kurrik (1883–1960) also appear on the arena of ethnology. Manninen himself returned to Finland at the end of 1928, to fill a position at the National Museum (*Suomen Kansallismuseo*) in Helsinki.

Ilmari Manninen (1894–1935) was a Finnish ethnologist, actually F. Linnus’ contemporary, who had studied history and ethnology at university, yet wrote his doctoral dissertation on folkloristics, under the supervision of Professor Kaarle Krohn. Before coming to Estonia, he had worked a couple of years at the National Museum of Finland and at the Naantali Museum, being a director at the latter. The Estonian period in Manninen’s life (1922–1928) could be described as follows: he was a fast learner and an exceptionally capable researcher, as well as a successful museum director and a docent at university, who laid the foundation for the scientific basis of museum collections and research, and directed Ränk and Kurrik to do professional work, tutoring several other students, including Linnus. Back in Finland, Manninen worked as head of ethnology department at the National Museum of Finland and as docent at the

⁹ About the establishment of the chair see in more detail in Jaago 2003. The “docentship of ethnography” became an independent entity in the university system already at the end of 1921 (ibid.: 45). Manninen started teaching in the spring term of 1923, but the official opening of the docentship was on May 8, 1924.

¹⁰ Several other disciplines with an Estonia-focused orientation opened chairs rather fast. As early as in 1919, the Chair of Estonian and Comparative Folklore (Professor Walter Anderson) was established (Jaago 2003), as well as Chairs of General History and the History of Estonia and Nordic Countries (professors Hans Oldekop and Arno Rafael Cederberg respectively) (Rosenberg 1999), and the Chair of Estonian Literature (Professor Gustav Suits) (Iher 2011). The Chair of Archaeology was established in 1920 (Professor Aarne Michaël Tallgren) (Lang 2006), and the Chair of Art History in 1921 (Professor Tor Helge Kjellin) (Jõekalda 2011: 30).

University of Helsinki. He published several researches into Estonian material peasant culture.

Ferdinand Linnus (1895–1942; until 1935 Leinbock) was born into an artisan's family in Viljandi County. He was so eager to learn that he made his way into the Imperial University of Tartu, where he studied history. He participated in the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920) and was conferred the Cross of Liberty. In 1921, Linnus resumed his studies of ethnology and archaeology at the (now already national) university, additionally taking courses in history and linguistics. Beginning in 1922, Linnus worked at the Department of Ethnography of the ENM, contributing to the scientific arrangement of museum collections that had started with Manninen's arrival, and the staging of the new permanent exhibition. He received his master's degree in 1927 (*Uste ja väravate sulused Eestis* (Locking elements of doors and gates in Estonia)), after which he was given a research grant by the university until the autumn of 1929 to study Livonians' material culture and ancient apiculture of Estonians and Livonians. After Manninen had left, Linnus worked as director of the ENM and head of the Department of Ethnography until 1941, when he was arrested and sent to a prison camp in Gorky oblast, where he died in 1942. Linnus participated in several international specialised conferences, took refresher courses with Professor Uuno Taavi Sirelius (1872–1929) in Helsinki (1929), and an ethnology course of the Baltic Institute under the supervision of Professor Sigurd Erixon (1888–1968) in Sweden (1934). He belonged to the editorial board of the journal *Folk-Liv*. Linnus was responsible for ethnological and museological activity in Estonia. He was the first Estonian to defend a doctoral thesis in his area of study, titled *Eesti vanem mesindus I. Metsmesindus* (Older apiculture in Estonia I: Forest apiculture) (1938).

Gustav Ränk (1902–1998) was born into a farmer's family in Saaremaa. Having finished the local parish school and pedagogical courses in Kuressaare, he worked as a village school teacher. After completing military service, at the beginning of the 1920s, Ränk was an extended serviceman and worked as medical assistant in Tallinn, where he was finally able to complete secondary education at an evening school, which allowed him to enter the University of Tartu (UT), to study Estonian, folklore, archaeology, and ethnology. In the autumn of 1926, Manninen offered him a job at the Department of Ethnography of the ENM. In 1931 he was awarded a master's degree for his thesis *Peipsi- ja Pihkvajärve kalastusest: etnograafiline ülevaade* (Fishing on Lake Peipus and Lake Pskov: An ethnographic overview). In 1938, Ränk was the second besides Linnus to be awarded a doctoral degree for his research *Saaremaa taluehitised. I.* (Saaremaa farm buildings. I). In 1939, he was elected adjunct professor at the Chair of Ethnography of the UT, in which position he was able to train a new generation of ethnologists. In the interwar period, Ränk established scientific contacts mainly with colleagues from Finland, where he participated in several specialised conferences. He complemented his studies with Professor Albert Hämäläinen (1881–1949) in Helsinki (1931). He and his family left for Sweden in the

autumn of 1944, where he got a position at the Institute of Ethnology (*Institutet för Folklivsforskning*) thanks to Professor Sigurd Erixon. In 1955–1969, Ränk worked as a docent of ethnology at the University of Stockholm. He authored several ethnological studies into building types, religion, and the dairy industry.

Helmi Kurrik (1883–1960) was born in Tartu, into the family of Juhan Kurrik, a writer, educationalist, and figure of national awakening. In 1900, she was issued the certificate of a private teacher and after that she worked in Russia, Finland, and France. In 1911–1914, Kurrik was a teacher of French and German in Valga, southern Estonia, and a nurse during the war-years. At the beginning of the 1920s, she worked as a clerk at Tartu Observatory. In 1925, Kurrik completed secondary education at an evening school in Tartu and entered the UT to study ethnology, history, romance philology, and archaeology. In 1928, she started work at the Department of Ethnography of the ENM, being mainly engaged in national textiles. Kurrik compiled a handbook titled *Eesti rahvarõivad* (Estonian Folk Costumes) (1938), and defended her master's thesis about blood in local foodways in 1939. Kurrik participated in some specialised conferences in Europe and, as she organised folk art exhibitions outside Estonia, she was abreast of international museology. In 1944 Kurrik fled to Germany, from where she moved on to the United States in 1951.

The articles that constitute the core of the dissertation are based on the analysis of the ethnological practice carried out by Ferdinand Linnus, Helmi Kurrik, and Gustav Ränk as the first generation Estonian ethnologists, as well as by their tutor Ilmari Manninen. I have dwelt upon Linnus' first fieldwork expeditions in the 1920s, Manninen and the process of staging the first permanent exhibition of Estonian folk culture (opened in 1927), Kurrik's role in canonising Estonian folk costumes as cultural heritage, and Ränk's road to professorship at the UT in the 1930s. These four articles give answers to the following questions: what was the role of fieldwork in ethnologists' knowledge production; in what way and what kind of picture did ethnologists construct of Estonian folk culture; what was the Estonian version of ethnology like in the period under study and how it related to the international scholarship.

The dissertation consists of a review article, four publications, main conclusions and a discussion, and a summary. In the review article I first analyse the historiography of Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s, disclose the theoretical foundations of the reflexive historiographical approach, and place my research into the context of the historiography of European ethnology. I also discuss in more detail the connections of nationalism, cultural heritage, museology, and fieldwork as umbrella concepts essential for my research with Estonian ethnology of the period under study. In addition, I provide an overview of the sources used. This is followed by a survey of the articles that the dissertation is based on. The review article ends with the main conclusions of the dissertation, which summarise, yet also synthesise and, to a certain extent, also extend the arguments presented in the publications. The review article ends with a summary.

1.1. Historiography of Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s

I have divided the surveys of Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s into three periods, for each of which I characterise the manner of historiography writing. Firstly, I cover the discipline-historical articles published in the 1920s and 1930s; secondly, I discuss treatments published in Soviet Estonia and in exile; and thirdly, the articles and historiographic surveys published since the 1990s. Periodising derives from the changes in state order, which have partly influenced the way that ethnology and its history are discussed. On the other hand, the historiographical approach has been connected with the prevailing theoretical approach. Often it has been namely the change of paradigm that has given an impetus to writing about the history of the discipline. I am interested in what historiographies of different eras have regarded as necessary to say about the interwar Estonian ethnology, what has been criticised and what has been highlighted as positive, and to what extent individual scholars have been devoted attention to.

1920–1940: The Republic of Estonia

Histories of Estonian ethnology have been written since the discipline started to take form. While Manninen in his programmatic article (1924) mainly looked into the future and set objectives, the end of the 1920s already yielded overviews of accomplishments: in 1928 from Ränk (Ränk 1928), in 1929 from Manninen and Linnus (Manninen 1927/1929; Leinbock 1929). These articles were written by ethnologists who were directly connected to the ENM and collection work, and therefore they focus on the mentioned aspects. Ränk thought that, to develop ethnology, the connection between the museum and the university was indispensable, as it enabled the student/researcher to immediately merge theory with practice (Ränk 1928: 165). The next programmatic overview and also an interim summary were provided by Linnus in 1930, when he accepted the position of the director of the ENM (Leinbock 1930).¹¹ He focused on the changes that had taken place in the museum during the past decade and saw the need to continue with arranging the all-Estonian artefact collections, supplementing the collections, and advancing Manninen's programme in research, the latter with a few improvements.

In the period under study, the foundation was laid to the historiographical approach, which made a habit of connecting the first decades of Estonian ethnology very closely to the evolution of the ENM as an institution. More often than

¹¹ Linnus also published a summary of five years' "ethnographic work" in 1938 (Linnus 1938), which has memorialised his ambiguous opinion, "theories pass, material remains", with which Linnus used to characterise the "young Estonian ethnography" (p. 135). See in more detail in Leete 2005.

not, the story of the discipline has to be sought in the treatments of the museum's history, not vice versa.¹² Even if a survey focuses on the discipline, the researcher has to take a digression into the activity of the ENM and especially that of Manninen.¹³ As an exaggeration, one might say that over decades a mythological story has been created about Manninen and his activity in the 1920s, which has overshadowed the first generation of Estonian scholars.¹⁴ This might be due to the fact that quite a few progressive initiatives in the discipline are connected with his name. It was namely Linnus and Ränk who came up with the notion of Manninen's school in Estonian ethnology (Leinbock 1930; Ränk 1936). Manninen has also overshadowed Aarne M. Tallgren (1885–1945), professor of archaeology at the UT in 1920–1923, who in his years in Tartu actively participated in the activity of the ENM as a member of the board, as well as in establishing the Chair of Ethnology, and ran a course in museology at the university. Besides Manninen, Tallgren was one of the most important lecturers in the academic career of Ferdinand Linnus, who in 1922 was employed by the ENM thanks to Tallgren (J. Linnus 1989: 51).¹⁵

1940–1990: Soviet Estonia

In Soviet Estonia ethnologists had to adapt for research to the guidelines of a totalitarian power, which emanated from the materialist Marxist-Leninist approach. Soviet ethnography was based on historical materialism, which fitted well with the former historical-geographical approach, and so it was still

¹² Cf. the histories of Estonian folkloristics, in which the main emphasis is usually laid on folklore collectors and their collection work rather than from whom, what, and for what purpose something was collected (Kalkun 2011: 19).

¹³ See e.g. articles discussing Manninen's relations with Estonian ethnology and the ENM from later decades, especially from the 1990s: J. Linnus 1970, 1994, 1995a; Talve 1992; Viires 1994; Luts 1996; Öunapuu 2001, 2005.

¹⁴ Mythologising had already been started by Manninen's disciples Ränk and Linnus. In 1930 Ferdinand Linnus wrote: „After the ENM got the first head with an ethnologist's qualifications – I. Manninen – who filled the position until the beginning of 1929, it has been making remarkable progress during these years and in a short period of time changed from the former unorganised storage of old artefacts into a scientific institution complying with the requirements of the period. The personality of the director has played quite a significant role in it, as he is a splendid mixture of an accomplished researcher and a proficient museum man” (Leinbock 1930: 45–46). After Manninen's sudden death, Ränk wrote the obituary (Ränk 1936), in which he also commends his tutor's activity in Estonia. Linnus' son Jüri Linnus, also an ethnologist, continued the eulogy in 1995: “Ilmari Manninen's capable, industrious and honest personality and his Herculean work in the sphere of Estonian folk culture remain in the history of our discipline forever. [---] So, different generations are united by their great awe and respect for Ilmari Manninen as a scientist” (J. Linnus 1995a: 95). Heiki Pärdi, with sarcasm typical of those from the 1990s, calls Manninen the prophet of Estonian ethnology (Pärdi 1998: 253).

¹⁵ One article has been published about Tallgren's connections to the ENM (J. Linnus 1995b).

possible to focus on the vernacular peasant culture. During the first decades of the Soviet period, the number of researchers was small, and their working opportunities restricted, and due to the activity of authorities also liable to change. While in terms of methodology research of the previous period was continued, it was not acceptable to refer to the former Estonian authors as the new authorities regarded them as “bourgeois nationalists”. Therefore it is understandable why historiographical interest in the Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s was modest in Soviet Estonia. However, it was impossible to suppress it entirely, and nor was it intended. When reading the highlighted treatments, it has to be taken into account that Soviet censorship has left its imprint on them, although some authors were more influenced by it than others.

In the first post-war yearbook of the ENM (1947), archaeologist Harri Moora¹⁶ introduces the basics of Soviet scholarly approach, comparing them with “bourgeois” ethnology, and criticising the latter for not considering social and economic conditions. Moora adds: “Both the published works and the former museum exposition left an impression as if Estonian vernacular folk culture originated from a kind of patriarchal peace of the “good old times”. [Ignoring the role of social and economic conditions] is definitely one of the main shortcomings in the ethnographic research of the Estonian bourgeois period, which inevitably distorts all its results” (Moora 1947: 27–29).¹⁷ Moora saw Soviet ethnography as a broader and more practical discipline. Yet, he unites the “bourgeois” and Soviet scholarship into one whole, seeing consistency here.

The first historiographic treatments, which partly also concern the period discussed in the dissertation, were published in the 1960s. Ants Viires¹⁸ wrote a historical overview of research, published in the collection *Abriss der Estnischen Volkskunde* (1964), in which he gives a brief survey of the development of both ethnology and folkloristics in the interwar period, mentioning Manninen, Linnus, Kurrik, and Ränk, and critically dwelling upon the methodological approach introduced by Manninen. He emphasises that namely in the “bourgeois” period folkloristics and ethnology diverged from one another in Estonia, although they both studied the past and the “pre-capitalist folk culture” (Viires 1964: 14). In the following decades contradictory opinions were offered

¹⁶ Harri Moora (1900–1968) was an Estonian archaeologist who played an important role in the history of post-war Estonian ethnology and its theoretical and methodological development (see e.g. Viires 1970a).

¹⁷ Moora’s criticism is very similar to that expressed in Estonian ethnology since the 1990s. Cf. e.g. Vunder about the Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s: “Folk culture was treated stereotypically as a uniform, timeless, and anonymous creation formed in indefinite past in a socially harmonious peasant society” (1999: 32).

¹⁸ Ants Viires (1918–2015), Estonian ethnologist and cultural historian, disciple of Gustav Ränk.

as to when these two disciplines diverged.¹⁹ Elle Vunder²⁰ has been of the same opinion with Viires, maintaining that ethnology and folkloristics separated in the interwar period (Vunder 1999, 2000). Tiiu Jaago (2003), however, shows in her article that these disciplines had diverged already before the 1920s, and when we explore the opinions of the then ethnologists about their domain, Jaago's idea seems acceptable.²¹

In 1966, Aleksei Peterson²², the then director of the ENM (at that time the Museum of Ethnography)²³, summarised the development of Soviet ethnography in Estonia. Peterson avoids appraising the earlier period and does not analyse the causes of the situation that had developed by 1966 – an approach characteristic of Soviet historiography. He only mentions that the aims of ethnography in “bourgeois Estonia” differed from those of Soviet ethnography, and emphasises H. Moora's “leading role in directing Estonian ethnography to Soviet rails” (Peterson 1966: 10). When introducing Soviet research topics, he evades dealing with the work of the former researchers, with the exception of Helmi Kurrik's studies into vernacular foodways (*ibid.*: pp. 27–28). In a similar vein, he ignores the anthologies of Estonian folk culture published in the 1930s (*ibid.*: p. 29). This makes Peterson's approach different from Viires' article published two years earlier. However, it is namely Peterson who urges to study the history of the discipline, stating that so far only two articles on this subject have been published by A. Viires (*ibid.*). When appealing for the study of the history of the discipline, the author was influenced by censorship: as the above-mentioned articles by Viires had been published in the Soviet period and talked

¹⁹ Viires refuted his former opinion in 1993, when he, writing an overview of Soviet Estonian ethnography, attributed the deepening of the split (“unwholesome divergence”) between ethnology and folkloristics to the Soviet academic system (see Viires 1993a: 6).

²⁰ Elle Vunder (b. 1939) was professor of the re-established Chair of Ethnology in 1994–2004.

²¹ Ethnologists of that period do not mention folkloristics in their articles discussing ethnology; nor do they argue about whether one or another field of study belongs to ethnology or folkloristics. For ethnologists, borders seemed to have been clearly outlined. However, I have found an implication about folklorist Oskar Loorits' opinion from the 1930s, claiming that in Estonia ethnology could be a discipline involving both ethnography and folkloristics (Hiimäe 2003: 56).

²² Ethnographer Aleksei Peterson (b. 1931) was the director of the ENM in 1958–1992.

²³ In 1940 the ENM was divided into two separate institutions: the State Ethnographic Museum and the State Literary Museum. During the German occupation, the museum reclaimed its former name and used it also after Soviet power had been restored. In 1946, the ENM together with the Literary Museum was included in the system of the Academy of Sciences of the ESSR. In 1952, the ENM was renamed as the Museum of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the ESSR. In 1963, the museum went under the subordination of the Ministry of Culture and the name was changed again – the State Ethnographic Museum of the Estonian SSR. Since 1988, the museum again bears the name of the Estonian National Museum.

about people who had been engaged in the discipline in the 19th century,²⁴ Peterson completely ignores the historiographical treatments published in the interwar period as well as research done at that time.

At the end of the 1960s, two substantial historiographical treatments featuring the person-centred approach were published. Viires' article about Ferdinand Linnus (1969), published on the occasion of the latter's 75th birth anniversary,²⁵ is the first detailed writing about him. The article presents the scholar's work as linear, with neither a thorough interpretation of the context, nor a more detailed analysis of scientific practice as a process; nevertheless, the article is of paramount importance due to presenting biographical facts and an overview of the main areas of studies and research methods of Linnus as a scholar. J. Linnus' article about Manninen (1970),²⁶ on the other hand, focuses more on the latter's connections with the ENM, but also on the interpretation of the basics of his research. No other Estonian ethnologists of the second generation were treated separately, and as refugees (Ränk, Kurrik, Eerik Laid²⁷) they were actually *personae non gratae* for the Soviet authorities.

In 1970, A. Viires published an article titled "Etnograafilise mõtte arengu põhijooni" (Main features of the ethnographic idea) in the collection *Leninlik etapp Eesti ajalookirjutuses. Historiograafilisi artikleid* (Leninist stage in Estonian history writing: Historiographical articles). Besides history, ethnology was discussed in this collection side by side with other "special disciplines of history", such as archaeology and art history. Viires presents the history of ethnology in the interwar period in a most detailed manner, describing it as the period of the "evolution of historical-geographical approach". He focuses on the development of the Estonian version of this methodology, brings to the fore the main works of Manninen, Linnus, and Ränk, and introduces the methods they have used.²⁸ Viires understands the continuity between the ethnologies of the interwar and Soviet periods and highlights the positive in the latter. For example, the fact that Manninen did not support the idea of the Finnish ethnologists about the common Proto-Finno-Ugric features but was keen on defining cultural loans (incl. Russian ones) fitted well with Soviet ethnography (Viires 1970b: 238).

²⁴ Articles about Mihkel Veske (1843–1890) (Viires 1956) and Chr. H. J. Schlegel (1757–1842) (Viires 1959). Later on, Viires wrote about Finnish scholar Axel Olai Heikel (1851–1924), who was also important for Estonian ethnology and worked in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century (Viires 1980).

²⁵ The article was published three years after Soviet authorities had rehabilitated F. Linnus.

²⁶ The article was published on the occasion of Manninen's 75th birth anniversary.

²⁷ Eerik Laid (1904–1961), ethnologist, master's degree in archaeology in 1927 and in ethnology in 1932. Part-time lecturer of ethnology at the UT in the 1930s, inspector of heritage protection of the Republic of Estonia in 1936–1940, director of the ENM in 1941–1943. In 1943 fled to Finland and from there on to Sweden, where he defended his doctoral thesis in ethnology in 1954.

²⁸ Viires makes no mention of Kurrik and other ethnologists.

A. Peterson gave an overview of the interwar period in the history of ethnology in his book titled *Varaait. Ülevaade etnograafiamuuseumi ajaloost ja kogudest* (Treasury: Survey of the history and collections of the ethnographic museum), published in 1986, in which he focuses on the history and collection work at the museum, yet mentions all the names (Manninen, Linnus, Ränk, Kurrik) and the works that were excluded from his article published in 1966. He also emphasises that the historical-geographical and cartographic method used at that time “later on enabled Estonian ethnography to adopt the main principles of historical materialism in quite a short period of time” (Peterson 1986: 15–16). Similarly to Viires, he creates continuity between the two periods and recognises the fact that with the change of the regime the methodology of the discipline did not undergo a considerable change.

The historiographical articles of the period are characterised by a density of facts and the absence of a more detailed analysis of connections, context and conventions of research writing. These articles often feature deliberate omissions: for example, authors write about the connections of Estonian ethnologists with their colleagues in Soviet Russia, yet say nothing about contacts with North- and West-European scholars.

1944–1990: In exile

After the Second World War, several ethnologists who had escaped to the West, managed to prove themselves on a professional level in their new homeland, and continued research. Here G. Ränk, E. Laid, Helmut Hagar²⁹ and Ilmar Talve³⁰ could be mentioned. The first three stayed in Sweden while Talve found new career opportunities in Finland. The history of Estonian ethnology deserved little attention among refugees: H. Hagar’s article “Eesti rahvateadus käänakul maapakku” (Estonian ethnography turning to exile) (1952), and historian Hain Rebas³¹ article “Eesti rahvateadus ajaloolises perspektiivis” (Estonian ethnography in historical perspective) (1983). Hagar’s article, inspired by Ränk’s 50th jubilee, is based on his personal experience in the Estonian ethnology of the 1930s and 1940s, giving a valuable insight into the period and a possibility to

²⁹ Helmut Hagar (1914–1991), ethnologist, Ränk’s disciple, defended his master’s thesis in ethnology at the UT in 1942. He worked at the ENM in 1940–1944, and fled to Sweden in 1944. He got his licence degree in Sweden and organised the Museum of Wine and Spirit History in Stockholm (*Vin- och Sprithistoriska Museet*).

³⁰ Ilmar Talve (1919–2007), ethnologist and writer, Ränk’s disciple, defended his master’s thesis in ethnology at the UT in 1942. He worked at the ENM in 1940–1943. After the complicated war years, he managed to escape to Sweden, where he worked and studied ethnology and defended his doctoral thesis in 1960. Talve was the first professor of Finnish and comparative ethnology at the University of Turku in 1962–1986.

³¹ Hain Rebas (b. 1943), long-time professor of history at the University of Kiel, Estonian historian, military man and politician. As a child of refugees, he grew up in Sweden.

understand it better. Hagar is critical of the theory and methodology of the 1930s, stating that the ethnologists of that time perceived the limitedness of the prevalent cultural-historical approach, yet were still not able to change the situation.³² In Hagar's opinion, the modernisation of ethnology took place in the complicated war years due to Ränk, who had become a professor; yet, under the changed political circumstances, the "modern Estonian ethnology" failed to evolve (Hagar 1952: 50).

The aim of the article by H. Rebas in the journal *Tulimuld* (1983), published by exile Estonians in Sweden, was to show the poor situation of the Museum of Ethnography, successor of the ENM, at the beginning of the 1980s, and to demand improvement of the situation at the museum as well as in the entire Estonian ethnology. His appeal was directly related to the events happening in Soviet Estonia, which demanded the restoration of the former name of the ENM (Viires 1993: 13–14, 17). Against such political background it is understandable why Rebas views ethnology mainly in the context of the ENM, mentioning the more important scholars but not lingering on their work. Rebas emphasises that the ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s was on a level equal to that of the corresponding disciplines in Finland and Sweden. Considering the development of ethnology within the period under study as progressive enables him to present Soviet-period changes in especially dark colours. A revised version of the article was published twelve years later in a collection of Baltic social history (1995),³³ in which the author did not make changes in his approach to the interwar ethnology, yet supplemented the overview of the ethnology prior to that and in the Soviet period.

On the occasion of birthdays and birth anniversaries, articles have been published about Kurrik ("Helmi Kurriku aupäevaks" (On the occasion of Helmi Kurrik's honouring day) (1958); "Helmi Kurriku elutöö" (Helmi Kurrik's lifework) (1960); Laid 1960; Ränk 1983; Poska-Grünthal 1983; Aule 1983) as well as Ränk (Talve 1962, 1972); as a genre, these are introductory, comprehensive and laudatory rather than analysing. In exile, attention was paid, above all, to what was happening in Soviet Estonia, and Ränk took the role of an introducer and analyser thereof (1951, 1957, 1984). Yet, these articles also make references to how ethnologists in exile interpreted the interwar ethnology in their homeland. So, for example, in 1959 Ränk writes in his article "Kodumaist kultuurilugu ja rahvateadust kaugvaates" (Native cultural history and ethnology in perspective)³⁴ that the foundations that were laid in Estonia in the 1920s and 1930s "account for the relatively high level of Estonian scholarship today" (Ränk 1959: 128).

³² See in more detail in subchapter 3.3. „Estonian ethnology between the folk and scholarship”.

³³ The collection is based on the materials of a conference held in 1985, and the last reduction of the article originates from 1988.

³⁴ It was published again in the collection of Ränk's articles (Ränk 2000).

In the atmosphere of regaining independence, researchers again started to take more interest in the history of local ethnology, especially that of the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, in 1989 Jüri Linnus published an article rich in factual material, titled “Etnograafia ja museoloogia Tartu ülikoolis aastatel 1919–1940” (Ethnography and museology at the University of Tartu in 1919–1940), which focused on an overview of the studies and characterised the period under discussion as follows: “At the University of Tartu students of ethnography were taught to think highly of facts, respect the ethnic idiosyncrasy of each nation, and observe the continuity of the development of culture as a whole” (J. Linnus 1989: 60–61).

The Estonian ethnology of the 1990s was characterised by a “search for one’s own place”, a change of paradigm, which was accompanied by a discussion about the basics and the history of the discipline as well as the question of the name thereof.³⁵ The latter issue resulted in replacing the term ‘ethnography’ with that of ‘ethnology’. Over a decade, review articles were published, one after another, which summarised the work done so far and outlined new research for the present and future (Viires 1991, 1993a, 1993b; Viires, Tedre 1998; Vunder 1996, 1999, 2000). These articles described the history of Estonian ethnology in the period under study as part of the history of European ethnology, placing the development of the discipline in homeland above all into the context of the corresponding fields of study in the Nordic countries, and emphasising the progressiveness of the cartographic method as compared to those used in other European countries. On the other hand, Vunder gave a very limited interpretation of the concept of culture: she generalised one image of folk culture as a timeless, anonymous, and socially uniform phenomenon for the whole era (Vunder 1999: 32). In my dissertation I object to this on the basis of sources.

Among others, I could bring to the fore ethnologist Heiki Pärdi’s³⁶ article published in 1995, wherein he states: “In Estonia, the relationship of ethnologists with their discipline is a real *terra incognita*; it would be very educative to delve into it as it would help to evaluate research results more adequately” (Pärdi 1995a: 74). Pärdi’s (and Vunder’s) criticism falls into the then context, in which different authors interpreted and re-evaluated in different forms the former ethnographic approach. Above all, the Soviet-period research was criticised, and in the case of Pärdi mainly the collection policy of the ENM during the Soviet period. Pärdi started with the analysis of fieldwork diaries that so far

³⁵ H. Pärdi and A. Viires were the fiercest opponents. The former sharply criticised the Soviet-period scholarship and maintained that by the 1990s Estonian ethnology had reached an identity crisis (Pärdi 1998). The latter, however, appealed to peaceful discussion and an understanding that the work of several decades could not be cast aside, and argued that theoretical regeneration of scholarship occurred also in the Soviet period (Viires 1998a).

³⁶ Heiki Pärdi held various positions at the ENM in 1974–2000 (researcher, head of department, research director). Since 2005, he has worked as research director at the Estonian Open Air Museum.

had been discarded (Pärdi 1995a, 1995b). The same has been done in the following years by several researchers of the history of the discipline (see e.g. Leete 1998, Leete&Koosa 2006; Õunapuu 2004, 2007; Konksi 2004; Karm 2006).

Apart from generalisations, beginning in the 1990s, several articles also dealt with concrete researchers with different profoundness. I. Manninen's work was an ongoing topic (Talve 1992; Viires 1994; Luts 1996; Õunapuu 2001, 2005), but, next to him, Ränk became another central figure in historiography mainly through Viires' writings (Viires 1992, 1998b, 2002a, 2005).³⁷ When borders opened, it was finally possible to write openly about Ränk as an Estonian as well as European ethnologist. In the 1990s, the scholar of respectable age represented the link with the pre-war era and at the same time illustrated Estonians' possibility/capability to carry out internationally valued research.³⁸

Folklorist Tiiu Jaago (2003) has described, drawing on extensive archival material, the establishment of the chair of ethnology. Ethnologist Reet Piiri has explored the international relations of the ENM throughout decades, giving in her article an overview rich in factual material about ethnologists' self-educating, participation in conferences, and arranging exhibitions abroad during the interwar period (Piiri 1990). Overviews of the period under discussion have been published in the two editions of the anthology titled *Eesti rahvakultuur* (Estonian Folk Culture) (Viires, Tedre 1998; Leete, Tedre, Valk, Viires 2008), which fleetingly touch upon the main scholars and their most important activity and works.

In summary, in terms of biography, historiography so far has brought to the fore I. Manninen and G. Ränk; the former became a subject of interest already in the 1930s, the latter only after Estonia regained independence. Other first-generation ethnologists have been discussed considerably less. The treatments published in Soviet Estonia did not lose touch with the interwar ethnology; yet, they stated the qualitative leap of academic research under the conditions of the new rule. However, in reality this meant sticking to the old historical-geographical method and focusing on the old peasant culture, as the problem- and human-centred culture-analytical research directions failed to establish themselves under the rule of Marxist dogmatism (Vunder 1999: 32–33). The specific criticism that appeared in the 1990s and bore the signs of its era was

³⁷ In addition to this, also obituaries published on the occasion of Ränk's death (Viires 1998c, 1998d; Vunder 1998).

³⁸ Therewith Viires and Vunder have created a picture of Ränk as a great discoverer during fieldwork – an aspect that I have not found to be mentioned in any writings about other earlier researchers. During his field expeditions throughout years, Ränk “discovered” a dugout boat hewn from an aspen trunk, a weir trap called *kaits*, fertility god Peko, unique fishermen's dwellings, and cookhouse dwellings (see Viires 1992; Vunder 1998). Most probably, presenting his fieldwork as “extensive-exploratory” (Vunder 1998) enabled to write about Ränk as a scholar going down in history in capital letters.

mainly targeted at Soviet-period scholarship, yet the interwar ethnology was not untouched by it either. However, it was in the first decade of re-independence that society turned to the 1920s and 1930s on a wider scale; this topic became more popular and it was expected to support the processes in social life and provide a past strengthening the identity.

So far, historiography has often and greatly been based on earlier historiographical treatments. Overviews have been reporting, summarising, and descriptive. In my research I partly avoid these historiographies, analyse the primary sources and present a new interpretation. Yet, at the same time, in my analysis I enter into a dialogue with the authors of earlier historiographical overviews. Focusing my attention on knowledge production and the socio-political and academic context that has influenced it, I have investigated the same history that has been repeatedly discussed, but with an objective to polemicize it and detect the possible deviations from established concepts about Estonian ethnology in the period under study. My reflexive historiographical approach is not new in Estonia (or in a broader international context). Hereinabove I mentioned several authors who have written reflexive history mainly through the analysis of fieldwork diaries as new sources (Leete 1998; Leete&Koosa 2006; Konksi 2004; Õunapuu 2004, 2007; Karm 2006). In 2007, I published a book about Gustav Ränk's fieldwork in the 1920s, which could be regarded as the foundation of the current research (Nõmmela 2007). Professor Art Leete has authored one of the few treatments of Linnus (Leete 2005), in which he, instead of an in-depth analysis of Linnus' activity as an ethnologist, focuses on the discussion concerned with collecting ethnology in the 1980s and 1990s, based on Linnus' ideas from the 1930s. Therewith Leete illustrates the impact of the history of the discipline on the later development within the discipline. Besides, already for more than ten years the University of Tartu has taught how to study the history of the discipline reflexively. Under the leadership of Professor Kristin Kuutma, a school of researchers has been established within the framework of two grants³⁹ who have critically studied the disciplinary histories of cultural research and tried to understand it reflexively (Kuutma&Jaago 2005; Kuutma 2005, 2006; Västriik 2007; Oras 2008; Kalkun 2011; Kencis 2012; Tasa 2008).⁴⁰

³⁹ ETF grant 5964 *Folkloristika ja refleksiivne kultuurikriitika (20. sajandi esimene pool)* (Folkloristics and reflexive cultural critique (early 20th century)) 2004–2007; ETF grant 7795 *Teadmiste produktsioon rahvusteadusliku uuringu kontekstis* (Analysis of knowledge production in the context of (national) heritage scholarship) 2009–2012. In the latter I participated as a doctoral student.

⁴⁰ See also the master's theses outside the mentioned school: Seljamaa 2006; Kaaristo 2007.

1.2. Reflexive historiographical method and history writing of European ethnology

In the present study I analyse knowledge production in Estonian ethnology in the interwar period and construe the essence of the discipline as learning. While using the concept of knowledge production, I drew on hermeneutics, which in turn took me to the reflexive historiographical method or interpretative historiography. According to hermeneutics or the theory of interpretation and understanding, the purpose of learning is not to explain reasons and predict but rather to try to understand empathic meanings (Alvesson&Sköldberg 2002: 52–53). Hermeneutics asserts that the meaning of an individual part can only be explained by reference to the whole and vice versa – understanding occurs by following the hermeneutic spiral (ibid.: pp. 52–60) and it happens in a dialogue of two parties. Hermeneutics opposed to the long-term positivist interpretation of academic research, which for decades served as the basis for writing the history of ethnology, especially the beginning and shaping of the discipline. The positivist viewpoint is represented, for instance, in Timo Niiranen's article in the collection dedicated to the history of Finnish ethnology, in which he designates as learning the systematic, universal, and proven knowledge as well as purposeful and systematic search for knowledge (incl. scientific research) (Niiranen 1992: 22). He brings to the fore the following criteria: researcher's critical attitude, search for the truth, applied concepts, formulating and testing hypotheses; in addition, science must have an identity and a defined area of study, theories, and methods (ibid.). Although the positivist interpretation of science enables to create structure in the history of science, and emphasise the top events and agents, it also increases the risk of getting bogged down in a certain (hi)story and being blind to alternative stories, processes, and persons.

The emergence of hermeneutics was initiated by the fact that the humanities and social sciences became bored of following the parameters of natural and exact sciences. It was also understood to be senseless, as to shape empirical and human experience into science demanded an approach different than the one offered by natural sciences. Instead of describing concrete phenomena, works, or events, researchers' attention was captured by the in-depth interpreting of the ongoing processes and knowledge production. The positivist (modernist) research did not regard the latter as worth analysing. The disciples of postmodernism started to question the basics of science valid so far: belief in the objective truth, the ability to reflect reality and to achieve rational knowledge was obliterated and the authoritativeness of the researcher was called into question (Alvesson&Sköldberg 2002: 151–152). The questions that started to be asked beginning in the second half of the 20th century about the essence of the discipline and, through this, also about the past, have been interdisciplinary – similar in ethnology, folkloristics, (cultural) anthropology, not to mention history or literary studies.

Interpretative historiography had emerged on the basis of issues related to interpreting a concrete domain. On a philosophical plane this approach largely

ensues from the culture criticism of French philosopher Michel Foucault. Anthropologist Paul Rabinow has said that “Michel Foucault has offered us some important tools for analysing thought as a public and social practice” (Rabinow 2007 [1986]: 137). Foucault’s novel understanding of the mutual relationship between the truth and power (incl. in the process of creating academic knowledge) enables us to inspect the historicity of the truth as well as power and subject (cf. Tamm 2011: 394). Foucault has stated that “we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function” (Foucault 2011 [1977]: 207), and that power is exercised rather than possessed. He was interested in what practices and institutions are essential in knowledge production in a concrete era. Proceeding from Foucault, Finnish folklorist Pertti Anttonen has added that the truth is a construct and a representation, and therefore subjective, interpretative, rhetorical, and political (Anttonen 2005: 22). Thus, knowledge is social and communicative; it is a process that is created in communication between two parties (Fabian 2001: 24–25). This process is initiated by a confrontation which, according to Johannes Fabian, should not be dreaded as it is irreconcilability and misunderstanding that renders subjectness and also objectivity to the “other” (ibid.). In the first half of the 20th century, it was believed that a rational approach to reality (incl. culture) detached from the researcher was possible. When we analyse the work of the then researchers by today’s parameters, we can better understand how knowledge production is conditioned by the surrounding context. Viewing a discipline as a dialogue and practice, “which is developed by real persons or which exists and can be treated namely due to the opinions and activity of concrete researchers as well as their mutual communication” (Seljamaa 2006: 42), we face the need to understand that the historiography of the discipline is also “continuous and potentially involving several different stories, yet comes into existence and assumes a concrete shape by retelling the story” (ibid., p. 43).

The reflexive historiographical method used in this study emanates from the critical analysis of the ethnographic description and writing that spread in the English-language cultural anthropology discourse beginning in the 1980s and has significantly influenced all the neighbouring disciplines.⁴¹ Postmodernist critical thinking in anthropology focused on the researcher, his or her role in text creation and culture mediation. Such a literary twist put into focus knowledge production (construction of the “other”) by means of writing. American anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano (1986) compared the culture describer with Hermes, messenger of the gods, who “constructs” the culture under study, translates its text into understandable form, and places it in a system suitable for the researcher.

⁴¹ A central work in this approach is a collection edited by American scholars, historian James Clifford and anthropologist George E. Marcus, titled *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986). This collection was preceded by substantial articles on this topic: Clifford 1980, 1983; Marcus 1980; Marcus&Cushman 1982.

Anthropology historiographer, historian George W. Stocking (1992) spoke about “ethnographer’s magic”, by which he meant the means used in creating a culture description to fill in the gaps between the knowledge gained during fieldwork and the endeavour of the researcher to create his or her own holistic picture.⁴² American anthropologist Clifford Geertz has also emphasised that anthropological scholarship has been highly person-centred from the very beginning and therefore, when studying the history of the discipline, the anthropologist (as the author) in the surrounding discourse should be studied above all (1988).

Thus, any kind of culture descriptions (texts, photographs, museum displays, etc.) are influenced by ideological viewpoints, historical opportunities, and culturally determined writing conventions (Klein 1995: 39) or historical, political, and institutional context (Gross 2007: 161). Anthropology historian James Clifford has emphasised that cultural and historical truths are partial truths, and that ethnography as an approach cannot embrace “the whole truth” (Clifford 2010[?] [1986]a: 7). Clifford and his co-thinkers in the collection *Writing Culture* suggested a way of writing a research, which besides and through textual practices also reaches the context of power, resistance, institutional conditionality and innovativity (Clifford 2010[?] [1986]a: 2). Critical approach to the former anthropology writing also changed the way the history of the discipline was written: anthropological ideas started to be seen in a complex context of their emergence and development, and science as a social process (ibid., p. 11). A historiographer focuses his or her attention on the past researcher as a writer, his or her texts and their creation process, and the researcher’s connection with the research subject or the “other”.

Pointing to the subjectness of the researcher and the research subject emphasises the significance of reflexivity in the knowledge production process. The researcher is no longer seen as an objective observer, who stands far from his or her research object or next to it, but rather as a participant and doer (Frykman&Gilje 2003: 10–11), who delves into the cultural process under study and enters into dialogue with the research subjects (see Pels 2000). Reflexivity in historiography calls for rethinking and reviewing earlier self-descriptions in the discipline.⁴³ In addition to different definitions of reflexivity, Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg have offered the method of “reflexive interpretation”, which involves four intertwined levels. On the first level the researcher creates empirical material, on the second starts to interpret it in the light of academic theories, cultural ideas, or prejudices. On the third level it is necessary to find the political-ideological contexts of the research, or, in other words, the critical interpretation. On the fourth level the issues of language, representation, and authority are clarified (Alvesson&Sköldberg 2002: 239–271). Reflexive inter-

⁴² See also the series edited by Stocking, titled *History of Anthropology* (1983–2010), the first three volumes of which deal with the pioneers of the discipline and the role of anthropology in the development of museums and fieldwork (Stocking 1983, 1984, 1988).

⁴³ Cf. Salvaggio&Barbesino 1996 about sociology.

pretation is the middle road between excessive empiricism and excessive theoreticism (ibid., p. 249).

The knowledge production process can be interpreted through the study of meta-discursive practices performed therein (Briggs 1993), which helps to place the creation of culture descriptions or academic knowledge into historical context. Proceeding from Foucault, Briggs shows how critical historical research enables to disclose the starting points and background of established concepts and theories that are regarded as neutral and objective, and at the same time to observe power relations between them (ibid., p. 388). The analysis of meta-discursive practices means, on the one hand, the analysis of entextualisation and, on the other hand, considering intertextuality, as the analysed texts cannot be viewed as static and stable (ibid., p. 390). By entextualisation, Briggs means formal processes that are connected with the creation of certain types of texts, which in turn are at the service of social and political objectives. This means the analysis of the social and political foundations of the poetics of texts (ibid.). Intertextuality is understood as a mutual relationship between individual texts. It is seen as a social product, a means to create, preserve, and/or contest power relations (ibid., p. 391). As researchers refer to different texts, the analysis of how intertextual connections are placed in the foreground or in the background is decisive in the study of the knowledge production process (Kencis 2012: 44).

Above I referred to the interdisciplinarity of the reflexive historiographical method. The critical analysis of textual practices has been influenced by the changes that have occurred in history since the 1970s, when historical philosophy started to ask questions about historians' opportunities to depict the past. Researchers realised that history was above all a story, a narrative (Tamm 2003: 129), which cannot be regarded as an absolute truth about the past events or, as French philosopher Paul Ricœur has put it: a historian mediates a relative truth, a certain subjectivity, yet not a random subjectivity (Ricœur 2002 [1955]). A milestone in the "linguistic turn" of the discipline of history is considered to be Hayden White's work *Metahistory* (1973), which a decade later had an impact also on the conceptions of the critics of anthropology about creating cultural descriptions. White, deriving from the interdisciplinary point of view, emphasised the importance of language in the creation of both the text and cultural description and thus also in the process of knowledge production (White 2000 [1995], 2003 [1988]). White has pointed out that history writing uses representation techniques similar to those of fiction, which transform "facts" into "narrative" elements (White 2000 [1995]: 90).⁴⁴ Each narrativisation is allegorisation, and the latter is a means with the help of which events are given

⁴⁴ White has developed a theory of tropology, which enables to classify and rhetorically analyse history discourses. According to him, each history writing can be reduced to one of the four figures of speech or tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony) and three methods of history interpretation, which in turn are divided according to tropes. See in more detail in White 2003 [1988]; Tamm 2003.

meaning, which is not so much causal but rather moral and ethical (ibid., pp. 96–97).⁴⁵ History as moral writing has also been discussed by Estonian literary scholar Jaan Undusk, who calls history a collation of past circumstances to morally summarise the present, and the utterances used for that purpose metahistorical gestures (Undusk 2000). Historical events (resp. folk culture) can be described in different ways, depending on the writer's basic foundations and endeavours. Accordingly, the modern history writing emphasises the significance of the historian as a subject (Tamm 2007: 11).⁴⁶

Regina Bendix's study titled *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (1997), in which the author explores the questions of the formation of the disciplinary canon through the prism of authenticity on the example of two countries, is chrestomathic in terms of the reflexive historiography of ethnology. The author discusses the development of the German *Volkskunde* and American folkloristics⁴⁷ from the 18th century until the last decade of the 20th century. Bendix emphasises the role of individual researchers in the shaping of the discipline and analyses the construction processes of research objects in historical context. Based on the examples from Great Britain, Germany and the United States, American scholars Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs (2003) discuss the history of anthropology and folkloristics through the problematics of constructing, articulating, and ideologising the concept of tradition. The history of Irish folkloristics has been placed in a wider international context by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin (2000/2007), who presents similarities and differences between different countries and regions. Both Ó Giolláin and Pertti Anttonen (2005) discuss, among other things, the opposing terms of tradition and modernism as central concepts in interpreting the foundations of the discipline. Anttonen in his comprehensive work based on the history of Finnish folkloristics points to the paradox that although in the first half of the 20th century folklorists (ethnologists) talked about rescuing the pre-modern, they actually proceeded from educational objectives and the need to establish a new modern society (Anttonen 2005: 92–93). In addition to the authors and works mentioned above, I would also like to highlight the historiography of Croatian ethnology by Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (2004), in which she tries to find an answer to how and to what extent a small discipline like ethnology was able to contribute to the creation of a national myth. Similar to several other authors mentioned above, Rihtman-Auguštin also focuses on the analysis of the foundations of a discipline, its first leading researchers, and contextualisation of their activity.

⁴⁵ Ethnographic allegory has been discussed by James Clifford (2010[?] [1986]b).

⁴⁶ During the past years Estonian archaeology has also adopted a reflexive approach to the history of science. See e.g. Kristiina Johanson and Mari Tõrv's article about archaeologist Richard Indreko (1900–1961), in which the authors emphasise that the former overviews written about him fail to answer the question about why Indreko made certain choices in his life and why his points of view and interpretations were namely as they were (Johanson&Tõrv 2013: 26). See also Lang 2006.

⁴⁷ In scientific tradition also involves the phenomena studied by ethnology.

She also emphasises the intertwining of politics and scholarship as well as their mutual impact.

In recent years, much has been argued and written about the foundations, position and future prospects of European ethnology and folkloristics, which could largely be defined by a common denominator.⁴⁸ Scholars have studied the general and national history of the discipline, focusing on the contextual reflexive analysis, to discover and understand the connection of the discipline with the discourses of nationalism, heritage, and social cohesion/separation (incl. “otherness”), as well as with neighbouring disciplines. They have also been worried about the limitedness or discursiveness of the discipline, trying to find an answer to this problem by delving into the past of the discipline, using more modern methods.⁴⁹ In the neighbouring countries of Estonia, a number of historiographical collections have been published in recent years: in Sweden in 2010 (Hellspong&Skott 2010), in Norway in 2013 (Rogan&Eriksen 2013), in Latvia in 2014 (Bula 2014). During the past decades, reflexive treatments of the history of Swedish ethnology have repeatedly been published. In addition to the articles by Orvar Löfgren (1990, 1996a, 2008) and Barbro Klein (2006, 2013), I would like to point to the study published on the basis of Fredrik Skott’s doctoral dissertation (2008) about folklore collection practice in the years 1919–1964, which partly coincides with the period I have studied. Skott criticises earlier historiography and tries to show the heterogeneity of viewpoints on the basis of his material, therewith deepening the knowledge of the earlier practice of tradition collection, which in other words means a more thorough knowledge of the history and foundations of the corresponding discipline. Thematically, the doctoral dissertation of Swedish ethnologist Karin Gustavsson (Gustavsson 2014a) is also connected with my research, as the former discusses the relationship between practical fieldwork and the process of knowledge production, analysing the fieldwork done in Sweden in the 1910s–1930s for the purpose of

⁴⁸ See e.g. the collection *Everyday Culture in Europe. Approaches and Methodologies* (eds. M. Nic Craith, U. Kockel, R. Jöhler, 2008), special issue of the *American Journal of European Cultures* (Vol. 17, 2008), special issue of the *Journal of Folklore Research* (Vol. 47, No 1–2, Ethnological Knowledges, 2010). See also Rogan 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2012), *Ethnologia Europaea* 38:1 (2008); about Finnish context Siikala 2006; about recent discussion see *Ethnologia Europaea*, issue titled *European Ethnology Revisited* (44: 2, 2014), and special issue of the journal *Cultural Analysis*, titled *What’s in a Discipline?* (Vol. 13, 2014). In addition, two salient collections have been published recently, which interpret ethnology-folkloristics-anthropology as one discipline, with the articles discussing the past, present, and future of the discipline(s): *A Companion to Folklore* (2012), edited by R. Bendix and G. Hasan-Rokem, and *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe* (2013), edited by U. Kockel, M. Nic Craith, and J. Frykman.

⁴⁹ Earlier more extensive re-interpretation of the discipline and arguing about its past occurred in the 1990s due to various public, political and social changes in Europe. See about it, e.g. in general, on European scale, in a special issue of journal *Ethnologia Europaea* 26:2 (1996) and in the context of Nordic countries in Löfgren 1990, Löfgren&Ehn 1996, Lönnqvist 1990, Bringéus 1994, Reiakvam 1994, and Räsänen 1992.

an ethnological study on buildings. Her approach to the history of the discipline was narrow and exhaustive, drawing on the practice of fieldwork, using the critical method or close reading.⁵⁰

Similar to the abovementioned authors, I also deal with the meta-level analysis, texts, and their producers. My research analyses the textual practices of earlier scholars, placing them in a cultural and social context. I focus my attention on the understanding of the process of the institutionalisation and self-assertion of the discipline, trying to look behind and beside the positivist, linear approach presented in most historiographical overviews so far. My questions about the long-forgotten ethnologists (Kurrik) and sources not receiving attention (fieldwork materials) as well as general interest in persons' histories (Linnus, Kurrik, Ränk) also derive from this approach. The personal aspect or focusing on the individual's activity forms the lion's share of the reflexive method: I view the history of a discipline as a practice and a process, in which a scholar acts proceeding from his or her personal viewpoints. Through personality I approach various arenas – the state and institutions (museum, university) where the individuals under study were engaged.

1.3. Nationalism, cultural heritage, and folk culture (in the 1920s and 1930s)

Nationalism was the main organising principle of the ethnology focusing on peasant culture (cf. Woolf 2006). With “ethnographic descriptions” ethnologists created the discourse of nationalism or continued and expanded it.⁵¹ In the following I will disclose the topic of nationalism from my position as a researcher and, on the other hand, according to how the ethnologists under study may have possibly approached it.

Although until today the theoretical definition of nationalism has been complicated and an unambiguous theory satisfying everyone has not been formulated by the 21st century (Özkırmı 2010), the current study focuses on the constructivist-modernist approach to nationalism. The modernist approach that emerged in the 1960s emphasises that nationalism (and nations) must be regarded as a result of the processes that occurred during the past two centuries, such as the evolution of capitalism, industrialisation, urbanisation, and the establishment of the modern bureaucratic state (Özkırmı 2010: 72), not as objectively granted (primordial essentialism).⁵² As prominent modernists,

⁵⁰ See also Gustavsson 2014b.

⁵¹ Cf. Ó Giolláin's “‘map’ the nation” – folklorists (ethnologists) were the creators of nationalism (2000/2007: 63).

⁵² Modernist approaches to nationalism can be found already in the 1920s (see in more detail in Palti 2001). Palti calls these early modernist nationalism discourses antigenealogical, which he sees as a trend opposing primordialism or genealogical and romantic approach.

Ernest Gellner, Eric J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson should be mentioned here.

E. Gellner describes nationalism as an ideology supporting the modernisation of society, and therefore as a socially conditioned requirement in modern society (Özkırımlı 2010: 100). He sees nationalism as human groups organised into large, centrally educated and culturally homogeneous units. “In other words, nations make the man; nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities” (Gellner 1994: 2227). Gellner assures that nationalism has no deep roots in human psyche (*ibid.*, p. 2448). However, he does not regard nationalism as a random, artificial or ideological contrivance (*ibid.*, p. 2661). Gellner has highlighted the paradoxical approach of the modernist society to folk culture – a concept that I will dwell upon further on. In short, I could agree with Gellner, who has stated that myths of nationalism turn reality upside down: it [i.e. nationalism] claims to be sparing folk culture, actually producing high culture; it declares to be protecting the former village society, while in reality it helps to establish an anonymous mass society (Gellner 1995: 445; cf. Anttonen 2005). E. J. Hobsbawm has disclosed the processes occurring under the sign of nationalism through the concept of “invented traditions”, describing the self-coined term as a set of practices that are formed by following rules, and that are used to produce social unity, real or imagined communities, by means of which institutions or authoritative statuses are created or legitimised, and which are aimed at socialisation and introduction of beliefs, values and behavioural rules (Hobsbawm 1996a [1983]: 1–9).⁵³

The constructivist point of view sees nationalism as a result of its creators’ practice – in the current study as the activity of the first generation ethnologists in contributing to the shaping of the discourse of Estonian nationalism. Prior to the Second World War, the constructivist view self-evident for today’s researcher was not what the then ethnologists moved and acted in. And what is more, in the case of an ethnologist, nationalism did not need to be expressed as political ideology but rather a so-called banal nationalism (cf. Billig 2006 [1995]). Therefore nationalism can be treated as a specific cultural model or discourse, which “constantly shapes our minds and how we interpret the world” (Jääts 2005: 24). Dwelling upon the culture researchers of the 1920s and 1930s, and how they interpreted nationalism, I suggest a hypothesis claiming that they largely acted in the existing discourse of nationalism, not clearly defining it themselves, nor analysing or critically arguing about it. I introduce the possibility of active and passive nationalism, referring to the fact that an ethnologist

⁵³ Hobsbawm opposes the “invented tradition” to a custom, convention, and so-called genuine tradition (Hobsbawm 1996a [1983]). He sees as “invented traditions” the development of (basic) education, introduction of public ceremonies, large-scale creation of public monuments (Hobsbawm 1996b[1983]: 270–271). Based partly on Hobsbawm, I have analysed the construction of Estonian folk costumes as cultural heritage in the 1930s (see in more detail in **Article III**).

(or a scholar in whatever field, a thinker, etc.) can, when producing knowledge, use nationalism unconsciously, as a representative of this discourse, or consciously (nationalistically, so to say), expressing his or her position clearly and acknowledging the politicality of his or her activity (cf. Kohl 1998; Kukk 2005).⁵⁴

Nationalism in Estonia, as well as in any other Eastern, Central, and Northern European country, is based on German cultural nationalism and romanticism, the main philosopher of which is Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who lived in the 18th century. He spoke about the concept of people (*Volk*), by which he meant a metaphysical unit created by language, art, prominent figures, religion, and customs, which is a manifestation of the spirit of the people. This approach was based on the opinion that culture tells people what they are, not vice versa (Dawisha 2002: 7–8). Nation originates from the remote past and is uniform. Herder emphasised each nation's right of self-determination: the humanity is divided into different nations by divine providence. He valued national idiosyncrasies, which deserved attention starting from him (Jääts 2005: 28). Nation was seen as a unique collective individual, who has the same right to life and self-determination as people (Karjahärm 2001: 219). Unlike researchers before him, Herder turned his attention to the peoples of his homeland, their language and culture. This was the beginning of exoticising the native people (above all, the peasantry) (Kencis 2012: 25).⁵⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, in the era of National Awakening, Estonian intellectual elite, when interpreting nation, proceeded from the above-mentioned Herderian concept.⁵⁶ This was the reason why initially attention focused on the collection and study of folklore or oral heritage (Jakob Hurt and others). Material peasant culture started to be valued and collected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁵⁷ By that time, Estonians' national self-awareness had increased considerably and become universal, which in turn was supported by the emergence of national history writing (see Kukk 2005, 2013).

After Estonia had achieved independence, state nationalism emerged beside ethnic-linguistic cultural nationalism. "Estonian nationalism simultaneously marked loyalty to both the nation and the state. [...] the state started to shape the nation and nationalism [...]" (Karjahärm 2001: 255). So, besides language and culture, emotional and economic criteria were taken into account in the concept of nation (ibid., p. 257). It has to be emphasised, however, that from the

⁵⁴ In principle, there is also a third possibility – detaching oneself as a researcher from the discourse of nationalism.

⁵⁵ About Herder's influence on the development of (American) anthropology, see Stocking 1996. Herder's legacy in the context of European folkloristics/ethnology has been studied, for example, in Bendix 1997; Leerksen 2006.

⁵⁶ The era of National Awakening has been thoroughly studied, for example, by Ea Jansen and Mart Laar.

⁵⁷ For a more detailed overview, see the introduction to the anthology of Estonian folk culture (Leete, Tedre, Valk, Viies 2008).

very beginning culture has largely been the basis of Estonianness (i.e. national identity). Estonian historian Toomas Karjahärm has stated that by the 1920s–1930s, due to the prior historical context, “the image of endangered national small culture” had deeply taken root in Estonians’ self-concept (ibid., p. 233). He adds: „For intellectuals, the issue of culture was an existential issue, a question of national security” (ibid.). It was even more essential for ethnologists who, through studying folk culture, were closely connected to the creation of Estonian (national) culture.

Gustav Ränk in his articles published in the 1930s, while speaking more narrowly about ethnology or expanding upon Estonian (national) culture, expressed fear about “disappearing” and merging, resulting from the self-perception of a small nation (Ränk 1937, 1939a).⁵⁸ Ränk also manifests the Herderian personification of the nation (see e.g. Ränk 1933). The works of the other ethnologists under study (Linnus and Kurrik) do not accentuate the discourse of nationalism so clearly, which allows me to speak about passive nationalism (see above). However, knowing the biographical background of Linnus and Kurrik, placing their activity in the political and social context of the period (Europe of the 1920s–1930s, the newly established nation state Estonia), and reading their researches, reports preserved in archives, etc., their links to nationalism are still obvious. On the social level, on the other hand, Ränk, Linnus, and Kurrik did not speak up as actively as, for example, Oskar Loorits⁵⁹, Peeter Tarvel⁶⁰ or Harri Moora (cf. Karjahärm 2001).

Thus, in the 1920s and 1930s, an essentialistic, primordial discourse of nationalism prevailed in Estonia (as well as elsewhere in Europe), which saw nations as “objective, constant phenomena” (Kohl 1998: 225). Historian Oliver Zimmer has written that the interwar European nationalism emphasised ethnic or even racial homogeneity (Zimmer 2004: 24). When speaking about the then nationalism, one cannot overlook its political manifestations – establishment of authoritarian regimes in several European countries, including Estonia. The question about to what extent ethnologists were connected with or involved in it requires a more thorough analysis.⁶¹ In **Article III**, I argue that their activity has

⁵⁸ For a broader Estonian background, see Karjahärm 2001: 259–265. In the context of nationalism, Ränk has been called a representative of the moderate-liberal direction (Karjahärm 2001: 275; Viies 2002a).

⁵⁹ Oskar Loorits (1900–1961), Estonian folklorist and religious historian, head of the Estonian Folklore Archives in 1927–1941.

⁶⁰ Peeter Tarvel (1894–1953), Estonian historian, professor of general history at the University of Tartu in the 1930s.

⁶¹ Karjahärm has stated that in the 1930s Estonia distanced itself from German and Italian nationalism and did not adopt the ideology of race and blood (Karjahärm 2001: 258). German ethnologists, who have explored the past most thoroughly, have perceived the connection of their discipline to the then Nazi ideology most painfully (see e.g. Dow, Lixfeld 1994). Petra Garberding (2010, 2011, 2012) has written about the mutual relations between Swedish and German ethnologists in the 1930s. Francine Hirsch (2005) has dealt with the relations of the

to be considered as national rather than nationalistic (cf. Kohl 1998: 226) – their knowledge production was instigated by an idealistic-dreamy vision, not an ideological-political objective.

In the atmosphere of romanticism, nationalism and impetuous social-economic changes in the 19th century, the intelligentsia and elite first took an interest in peasant culture, discovering “people”,⁶² seen in the then Europe through the evolutionist prism as primitive and therefore close to origin, the unspoilt, primeval or authentic (national) culture (cf. Bendix 1997). Initially, the discovering of “people” was closely connected to the concepts of antiquarian and exotic, which formerly had been used to describe peoples in faraway countries. Scholars at that time understood culture as a regularly and progressively developing object outside the researcher (Lotman 1999: 39). People’s creation (folklore) and way of life started to be catalogued, stored and archived; folkloric archives and ethnographical museums were established. These activities helped to map the national territory and “nationalise” the land (Ó Giolláin 2000/2007: 63–93). Leerssen has called these activities “cultivation of culture”, yet understanding it more extensively than just rescuing and counting (Leerssen 2006). Löfgren uses the expression “nationalization of culture“, which also involves more extensive processes, not just the work of ethnologists and folklorists (Löfgren 1989). Thereby he has emphasised the international “cultural grammar of nation-building” in constructing national culture, referring to similar processes all over Europe, conditioned by similar social, political and economic developments as well as close international contacts of the intelligentsia/elite (Löfgren 1989, 1999 [1993]).

The modern reflexive research tradition understands ethnologists’ activity at that time as constructing folk culture rather than reconstructing or writing it down. According to American anthropologist Richard Handler, this process can be called “objectification of culture”, i.e. seeing culture as a thing, an object, or a unit consisting of objects and entities (Handler 1984). Culture (and tradition) was regarded as detached from researchers and this resulted in conclusions as if new and old, modernity and tradition should be clearly separated. Researchers distanced themselves from research subjects,⁶³ seeing people met during fieldwork as sources, by means of which it was possible to get access to the relics of past culture. By distinguishing their time from the time under study, researchers converted their research subjects into mythical and exotic “other”

authoritarian regime and ethnologists in the context of Soviet Russia. See also Tehno Pimiä’s articles about the relations between Finnish ethnologists and German national socialism (Pimiä 2004, 2012). The connections of Estonian ethnology and racial science with Nazi Germany under German occupation during the Second World War have been discussed by Anton Weiss-Wendt (2013).

⁶² Cf. to what has been said about Herder above. See also Damsholt 1995.

⁶³ Similar processes can also be found in anthropology, where it is called denial of coevalness (see Fabian 2002 [1983]), i.e. a practice of placing the research subjects in a temporal dimension different than that of the researcher and the produced culture description.

(Anttonen 2005). When writing an overview of folk culture, the timeless stable peasant culture was constructed, which was in contrast with the insecurity and rootlessness of the present (devolutionist narrative structure) (Löfgren 1990: 10).⁶⁴ A special writing style was used in ethnographic texts, which in anthropology is called “ethnographic present” (see Hastrup 1990; Fabian 2002 [1983]), and in Estonian context “ethnographic eternity”. Such a description is characterised by timelessness: the phenomenon under study was, is and will be in a certain way (Nõmmela 2007: 146). Folk culture was as if sacralised (cf. Löfgren 1989: 12). By creating folk culture this way, the establishment of the nation and the nation state was supported (common language, culture and heritage).

In the 19th and in the first half of the 20th centuries, folk culture was discussed in a rescue discourse, as a recognised necessity to “save the traditional folk culture” from vanishing on the eleventh hour. Löfgren has called ethnology even a national rescue action and a discipline of collecting (Löfgren 1990: 4; cf. Jakubowska 1993: 146; O’Dell 1998; Klein 2006: 59; Ciubrinskas 2008: 103). When analysing ethnologists’ (but also archaeologists’ and folklorists’) activity resulting from the rescuing ideas, I use the concept of cultural heritage as a theoretical viewpoint. This term that was taken into use in the 19th century generally means valuing cultural treasures (both tangible and intangible): highlighting in the present the phenomena originating in the past, with an end in view to perpetuate belonging and/or draw the line with the “other”. Cultural heritage is nothing existing, *de facto*, it is created in the process of heritagisation. According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, heritage is a form of cultural production, which draws on the past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 369). Heritage is closely connected to politics, ideology, economy, and also the tourism industry, the latter especially in the 21st century.

In the first decades of the 20th century, heritage (even if the word was not yet widely used and instead tradition, folk culture, etc. were talked about) was construed as predominantly positive and the fact that along with valuing, something was forgotten or pushed aside, did not deserve any attention. At that time, in the process of heritage creation, attempts were made to simplify the past, to forget the changes that occurred in cultural treasures in time, to deny merging (hybridity) and freedom of choice, etc. (Bendix 2000; Anttonen 2005; Klein 2006; Kuutma 2012). Today, the creation of cultural heritage is seen as meta-cultural production (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004), and the need to consider the social-political and economic context and to have a more reflexive attitude towards personal practices is emphasised.

Cultural heritage was and is created in the knowledge production process of heritage professionals,⁶⁵ which secures them a significant position in society:

⁶⁴ Cf. with postmodernist approach, where any understanding means interpretation, and therefore „the ‘correct’ presentation of the ‘objective’ situation is not possible“ (Kannike 1994: 7).

⁶⁵ Besides professionals, practitioners are also engaged within the discourse of cultural heritage.

cultural heritage becomes a reality if it is identified as such (Kuutma 2009: 7). Wolfgang Kaschuba has stated that the concept of cultural heritage makes the so-called ethno-sciences to assume the role of “cultural creators”, as they actively participate in the creation of collective images and identities. By partaking in transmitting popular narratives about ethnic origin and cultural belonging, researchers are able to provide scientific justification and ideological legitimacy for the notion of cultural heritage (Kaschuba 2008: 37).

Apart from ethnology, archaeology and folkloristics emerged as disciplines in the process of the creation of cultural heritage in Estonia.⁶⁶ In the 1930s, the concept of folk culture was first taken into use as a specific term of ethnology (Viires 2002b). Folk culture denoted material peasant culture from the so-called ethnographic time, i.e. the period prior to major industrial and social changes at the turn of the 20th century. In the following decades, the concept of folk culture underwent constant changes and expanded into the domain of other disciplines, also embracing the intellectual sphere of culture, other social strata, and more recent periods. Thus, folk culture today covers practically the entire human existence, and since the 1990s research rather uses the concept of everyday culture (Kannike 2005).

The use of the theoretical framework of cultural heritage helps me to construe the processes under study or the activity of the then researchers. The creation of cultural heritage through the concept of folk culture is the topic of the article about compiling a handbook of Estonian folk costumes (**Article III**); yet, the concept also occurs as a leitmotif for the other articles in this dissertation (**Article II**, **Article IV**).

1.4. Museum in interwar ethnology

While studying the history of Estonian ethnology, it is not possible to overlook the discourse of the museum as a memory institution. In the period I have explored, the Estonian National Museum defined ethnologists' research in many aspects and also shaped the public concept of folk culture mainly by means of exhibition activity. To paraphrase Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2005), the museum was the home of ethnologists and their discipline. The ENM as an institution was the field where the ethnologists studied by me mainly worked. It was their workplace that provided them with symbolic and social capital (Bourdieu 2003), which they draw on during fieldwork, when collecting artefacts and information, making presentations at conferences, arranging the Estonian

⁶⁶ Jakob Hurt's activity in rescuing and collecting old treasures could be regarded as an attempt to make the public aware of it as cultural heritage. Archaeology studied archaeological cultures of the past, thereby contributing to learning about and analysing the earlier history of the Estonian territory, helping local people to construe the past of their country and to perceive their belonging and roots.

museum landscape, or engaging in heritage protection.⁶⁷ In my research I was interested in the epistemological foundations of the national/ethnography museum: how to construe the museum and ethnologists working there, how they construed themselves and what was their relationship with the museum.

Today, museology literature is very comprehensive;⁶⁸ herewith I focus on the issues related to the history of museums and staging of exhibitions. The emergence of modern museums coincided with the formation of modern nation states in the 19th century. Benedict Anderson, calling nations imaginary communities, has emphasised the role of museums in visualising nations, contributing to the creation of a common ingroup identity (Anderson 2006 [1983]). Memory institutions defined as national museums represent(ed) the predominant national values, myths and realities, thereby consolidating national identity and the cultural basis necessary for the state to operate. Big and small countries have had different reasons for establishing their own national museums. The former (e.g. France and Germany) exalted their heroic past through museums and demonstrated their mental and political strength (Õunapuu 2011: 31), or tried to encompass and possess the “endless diversity” of the world’s heritage, like the British Museum (Raisma 2009: 776). The national museum of a small country, on the other hand, has been “a memory institution that is very strongly ethnos-centred, monocultural, insightful, and reflecting about its own identity” (ibid., p. 785).

As a backwash of the activities related to the national movement that had started in the 19th century, the ENM was established in 1909, to commemorate Jakob Hurt. The museum focused on strengthening the identity of the nation and preserving its culture. Before the establishing of independent statehood, the ENM became “a memory institution with an extensive membership and clear objectives, actively communicating with people” (Õunapuu 2011: 184), which had no state support whatsoever. After the Republic of Estonia had been established, the museum had to reformulate its identity. “The newly established state needed a new history and new memory institutions” (Raisma 2011: 7–8). Paradoxically, nationalisation took place only as late as in 1940, under the Soviet rule. However, two major problems were solved at the beginning of the 1920s: the building and the head. The museum was housed in the Raadi manor house (1921) and the board (led by A. M. Tallgren and M. J. Eisen) found a professional – Ilmari Manninen – to become the director of the museum in 1922. Conditions had been created for the scientific arrangement and exhibiting of the “treasures” collected in previous decades.⁶⁹

In the 1920s and 1930s, the ENM was regarded as the only institution for the professional ethnologists to work at (Ränk 1937: 122). In the first of these

⁶⁷ About the latter see in more detail in Jõekalda 2009.

⁶⁸ For an overview, see e.g. Taavi Tatti’s doctoral dissertation (2013) (beginning on p. 8).

⁶⁹ I have dwelt upon the history of the ENM in the years 1920–1940 in the collection dedicated to the history of the museum (see Nõmmela 2009a).

decades, being employed by the ENM confirmed the choice of speciality for the first generation ethnologists. Linnus (1922), Ränk (1926) and Kurrik (1929) started work at the museum when they were still studying at university. While the first was hired by A. M. Tallgren, the others were offered a job at the ENM by I. Manninen. However, work at the museum meant not only doing their research; rather, ethnologists in the 1930s were overloaded more and more with administrative and “technical organisational work” (Ränk 1937). Museum as a working place might have restricted ethnologists’ possibilities to realise their scientific ambitions (**Article IV**). While exploring the history of museums, people who worked there cannot be overlooked, and vice versa: while studying the then ethnologists, one cannot overlook construing the museum as an institution.⁷⁰

Today the museum is regarded as a memory institution collecting, preserving and making available memories, objects, photographs, etc. So museums are, in principle, seen as depositories for collections of objects protected, studied and documented on a scientific basis (Guzin Lukic 2011: 154). The aim of the museum is to serve as a cohesive element between heritage and society, to shape and maintain the identity (Raisma 2009: 776). M. Foucault has called the museum a heterotopia, which he understands as different or other spaces (*des espaces autres*), which are closely connected to the rest of society/culture, at the same time terminating, neutralising or reversing the relations between elements in the latter. What makes a museum a heterotopia appears to be threefold: 1) its juxtaposition of temporally discontinuous objects; 2) its attempt to present the totality of time; and 3) its isolation, as an entire space, from normal temporal continuity (Lord 2006: 3–4). Thus, in the case of museums (actually, above all, its exhibitions) both spatial and temporal factors are emphasised: the museum brings together disparate objects from different times in a single space that attempts to enclose the totality of time – a totality that is protected from time’s erosion (ibid.).

According to philosopher Beth Lord, it is the addition of interpretation and representation dimensions beside and between artefacts and collections that distinguishes the so-called depository of old artefacts from a museum (Lord 2006). In other words, the artefacts that happen to reach the museum are made ethnographical; they become “objects of ethnography” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991), as ethnographers have defined, segmented, detached, and carried them away from their original environment (i.e. spatial, temporal and often also linguistic context). Artefacts are given new meanings through interpretation. Therefore the question is who and proceeding from what, influenced by whom or what interprets and represents culture, as well as what is the initial basis for

⁷⁰ Cf. Pettersson 2011: 278ff. While discussing the history writing of Finnish national museums, Susanna Pettersson emphasises the need for a more individual-centred analysis, i.e. the need to view, more thoroughly than ever, the role of so-called museum professionals in the history of these institutions.

supplementing collections (i.e. not only artefacts). While compiling collections and staging exhibitions, decisions are inevitable to present a competent image of the past. Museums cannot be considered as depositories of culture but rather as power staging arenas and common carriers (Luke 1997: 4–5).⁷¹ Such creation of authoritativeness was brought to the fore in the museums in the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, which Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000) has called modern.⁷² The postmodern, multicultural and global society of the 21st century prefers to present at the museum multivocality, visitors' opinions, etc. (Tatsi 2013). The museum as a temple has turned into museum as a forum: the timeless exhibition environment aiming at reality and objectivity has been replaced with a place for experimenting and debates (Karp, Lavine 1991: 3).⁷³

The first bigger task that Manninen had to undertake was to stage an exhibition of Estonian folk culture, the initial smaller version of which was opened in 1923; the entire permanent exhibition opened completely in 1927. For the first time ever, the museum had an opportunity to exhibit Estonian history, as apart from folk culture, i.e. ethnography, it also presented an overview of archaeology and art history (**Article II**). Drawing on Pierre Nora, I have viewed this permanent exhibition as a realm of memory, both on a wider scale, for the so-called Estonian tradition, and on a narrower scale, for Estonian ethnologists. According to Nora, a realm of memory (*lieux de memoire*) is where “memory can happen”, or a memory-loaded “place” (monuments, commemoration days, books, buildings, exhibitions). Realms of memory are characterised by rituality, collectivity and solemnity, and their aim is to stop time and inhibit forgetting (Nora 1996). Ethnologists in the 1920s had a similar objective when they made preparations for a major permanent exhibition at the ENM.

The modernist museum communicated with the public (“people”) namely through exhibitions, offering competent knowledge of the topics under discussion. The permanent exhibition of a national museum occupies a responsible role therein – institutionalisation of the past history acceptable for the state (see Crang 2003). The ethnographic display of peasant culture at the ENM legitimised the latter as the foundation of the evolving modern Estonian culture. The exhibitions opened in 1923 and 1927 were both of major importance for the museum in terms of securing its position in Estonian society. Apart from the permanent exhibition of Estonian folk culture, the ethnologists of the ENM contributed to the strengthening of Estonians' identity also by staging a Finno-Ugric exhibition at Raadi in 1928. The museum had shown an interest in kindred peoples already before the First World War. A corresponding

⁷¹ The more so that economically, museums have usually depended on the state.

⁷² Modernist era museum (as also anthropology and sociology) enabled to classify the surrounding world, impose order and establish borders (Macdonald 1996: 7).

⁷³ Today, relations between the museum and visitors are being modified. Not always is the museum willing to tell the visitor how things really are, but rather to make them contemplate and find answers themselves.

department was established in 1924 and collection work was intensified as much as possible to get material for the exhibition (see Auasi. Eesti etnoloogide jälgedes ... 2008). Finnish museums' example was followed when dealing with Finno-Ugric cultures (Karm, Leete 2015: 102).

In the decades under study, the ENM participated with exhibitions also in the international arena. Exhibitions of Estonian folk culture curated by Helmi Kurrik were hosted by the following cities: Stockholm in 1928, Brussels in 1929, Berlin, Cologne, and Vilnius in 1930, and Paris in 1935 and 1937 (see Nõmmela 2009b). These exhibitions offered good opportunities for introducing ("beautiful", i.e. aesthetic) Estonian folk culture within the national discourse – strengthening the identity and dignity of the nation. Kurrik had thorough knowledge of Estonian folk culture (textiles, tankards, etc.), she had mastered several foreign languages, and was well aware of the role of the exhibitions staged abroad for Estonia, which made her a suitable person to organise them. F. Linnus acknowledged the fact that these exhibitions staged abroad helped to introduce the then achievements of Estonian ethnology in Europe (Leinbock 1930: 48).⁷⁴

1.5. Fieldwork as a basis for ethnological practice

Two of the articles in the dissertation (**Article I, Article IV**) focus on the analysis of ethnographic fieldwork as an essential part of the process of knowledge production. In ethnology (similar to anthropology and folkloristics) fieldwork is regarded as the foundation of the discipline or at least one of its pillars. It is what the authoritativeness and credibility of an academic discipline rely on. Fieldwork can be regarded as *habitus*, i.e. the way that "ethnology is made" (Löfgren 2014: 119). How it works or influences the researcher's evolution into a professional is even more interesting, especially if we consider the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century the university did not deem it necessary to teach methods of fieldwork, so this skill developed in practice.

In the analysis of the fieldwork done by the ethnologists under study I draw on Berger's definition of the "field": a "field" is constructed socially, culturally and historically, and therefore "fieldwork" is not a neutral, merely normative term; it has a history that should be considered in the analysis (Berger 1993: 176). "Field" and "fieldwork" are scientific constructions and their meaning derives from the concrete ethnology, ethnologist, and the subject of ethnology (Čapo Žmegač, Gulin Zrnčić, Šantek 2006: 261). Historically, ethnographic fieldwork has meant collecting and describing, with an end in view to "rescue"

⁷⁴ F. Linnus: "The work done in Estonian ethnography during recent years has sparked lively interest and often found laudatory evaluation in specialised press of nearly all countries. As a result, increasing interest can be noticed abroad in Estonian folk culture, especially folk art, and at the request of foreign organisations a number of exhibitions of Estonian folk art have had to be organised abroad [---]" (Leinbock 1930: 48).

and supplement museum collections, and the latter have been used to study, above all, native “exotic” culture or marginal peasantry (Nic Craith 2008; Ciubrinskas 2008; Jakubowska 1993), whereas main attention has been paid to the collection of past material.⁷⁵ A similar understanding of fieldwork could also be encountered in folkloristics (both in Estonia and on a wider scale in Europe), where fieldwork drew on the following principles: preference of archaic lore, collection of variants, and requirement for territorial completeness (Korb 2005: 74).

Today, fieldwork is regarded as researcher-centred and therefore it cannot be considered as equivalent to collecting. In the first half of the 20th century, fieldwork was rather construed in the discourse of collecting and “rescuing”, which is also manifest in the way it was called at the time. Both the ethnology and folkloristics of the 1920s and 1930s talked about “collection expeditions” and “collection trips” (Hiimäe 1996), as well as “collection work” (Leinbock 1930), not fieldwork. This way ethnologists positioned themselves in the historical discourse, from Jakob Hurt’s activity in “gathering together” folklore in the second half of the 19th century to the extensive collection of artefacts by the ENM prior to the First World War.⁷⁶ In the second half of the 1930s, Ränk took into use the expressions “study trip” (see Nõmmela 2007: 134) and “field research” (Ränk 1937: 121), which already refers to researcher-centeredness. During the Soviet period, Estonian ethnology and folkloristics started to talk about expeditions. This was derived from the name of great interdisciplinary study expeditions (which in turn emanated from the research tradition of the 18th-century Tsarist Russia), which was also transferred to less extensive fieldwork (Vunder 1996: 17). The word “fieldwork” was taken into more extensive use in Estonia beginning in the 1980s (Hiimäe 1996). When I analyse fieldwork, I emphasise the then researcher and his or her knowledge production process.

Annist and Kaaristo (2013) have brought to the fore a peculiarity in the Estonian language, where the plural form *välitööd* (fieldworks) is rather used, which in their opinion refers to either repeated trips to the “field” or expeditions, during which a group of scholars perform a similar fieldwork. This practice distinguishes ethnographic fieldwork from anthropological one (ibid., p. 131). The term “fieldwork” emphasises working outside and presumes “leaving the everyday natural environment for the purpose of collecting and studying” (Korb 2005). In addition, speaking about fieldwork instead of collecting emphasises the “field” and activity therein, meeting people, and mutual communication, i.e. the aspects that are highlighted in modern ethnology and

⁷⁵ Contrary to anthropology, in which fieldwork was aimed at focusing on the present, interpretation, and analysis (Ciubrinskas 2008).

⁷⁶ While emphasising the aspect of collecting folklore, Linnus mentions as ethnologists’ predecessors also Baltic German researchers from the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, such as August W. Hupel and Johann Chr. Brotze (Leinbock 1930; see also Lang 2006).

folkloristics. The professional slang today speaks about “going to the field” and “being in the field”.

Theoretical literature on fieldwork often presents oppositions such as ethnological-folkloristic fieldwork versus anthropological fieldwork, where the former is criticised for being stagnant, for excessive focusing on nationalism, and for being excessively impressionable by politics (see e.g. Jakubowska 1993; Baskar 2008; Ciubrinskas 2008). Disciplines proceeding from a similar interest in people and culture were seen as adverse: their opinions about time (anthropologists’ long fieldwork that lasts for a year versus ethnologists-folklorists’ fieldwork of a shorter duration) and the studied “other” (anthropologists’ “exotic” faraway peoples versus ethnologists-folklorists’ native “exotica” or the peasantry) contradicted each other. This criticism originates mainly starting in the 1990s⁷⁷ and derives from the biased and restricted point of view of cultural and social anthropology of Eastern and Central European ethnology/ethnologies, which part of ethnologists adopted.⁷⁸ However, just like ethnologists have long studied more than only the peasantry and its past culture, anthropologists have already for decades turned their attention to domestic topics.⁷⁹ In my opinion, when discussing fieldwork, emphasis should be laid on the researcher’s wish to understand the research subject (be it material and past or, in more recent decades, non-material and present world), and to do this, they have to go to the field. This opinion also holds true about later analyses of the fieldwork of earlier researchers, as fieldwork itself has become a research topic.⁸⁰

Ethnographic fieldwork is complex and it was so already in the 1920s and 1930s. The ethnographers I have studied took notes during fieldwork, wrote diaries, took photographs and made drawings, used (participant) observation, collected artefacts, etc. The scholars at that time proceeded from a classical understanding that there exists objective reality outside the researcher, which can be examined and written down (cf. Čapo Žmegač, Gulin Zrnić, Šantek 2006: 275). By focusing on material culture, it was easier for ethnologists to keep distance from their research subjects. Drawing on prevalent theories (e.g.

⁷⁷ The difference between Soviet and Western ethnologies in connection to understanding fieldwork was noticed already earlier; see e.g. Dragadze 1978.

⁷⁸ For more detail, see Jasna Čapo’s article, in which she dwells upon the debate between Central and Eastern European ethnologists on the one hand and mainly British anthropologists on the other about their disciplines in the 20th century (Čapo 2014). The author points out that this dichotomy largely results from how anthropology was defined in the past, and that the earlier period has left a distorted image of Central and Eastern European ethnology.

⁷⁹ The relationship between anthropology and ethnology in the Estonian context has been discussed by Aet Annist and Maarja Kaaristo (2013); in their opinion these disciplines are still characterised by a principal difference in understanding fieldwork, which in turn brings about differences in the study focus (Annist&Kaaristo 2013: 137).

⁸⁰ See e.g. on the example of anthropology in Stocking 1983, on the example of Swedish ethnology in Skott 2008, Gustavsson 2014a, on the Estonian example in Karm 2006, Nõmmela 2007, Oras 2008, Kalkun 2011.

diffusionism), the academia believed in the possibility of neutral knowledge (Gustavsson 2014b: 62). According to positivists, subjectivity did not play any role in research, as, by the prevalent understanding, it questioned the objectivity of academic research (Ruotsala 2001: 116).

However, it is namely the written sources left behind by researchers – notes, diaries, ethnographic descriptions⁸¹ – that reveal their ideas about their discipline and research objects, as well as relationships with local people, and which help to understand what the field was like during a concrete “study trip”. I have tried to imagine, from the point of view of a researcher, their meetings with local people and the dialogues that took place. I analyse the sources created during fieldwork as the first stage in the knowledge production process, which was followed by writing an article or research.

1.6. Sources: Specificity of written ethnographic sources

The sources used in the study of the history of Estonian ethnological practice in the 1920s and 1930s can be divided into two groups: the ones of primary importance for my research, dealing with the knowledge production process, and secondary sources providing context to the said process.

The first group includes fieldwork diaries, ethnographic descriptions, collection and inventory books, scientific and popular-scientific articles written by the scholars under study, their major researches, review articles of the discipline authored by them, the catalogue of the permanent exhibition opened in 1927 and newspaper articles published about the exhibition, as well as entries in the main catalogue, ethnographic drawings, and photographs focusing on museological activity yet related to the conducted fieldwork.

The second group includes minutes of the meetings of the museum board, activity reports, work programmes, and the correspondence of departments and individual employees, applications, reports and reviews from the archives of the students and academic staff of the UT, as well as reminiscences of the researchers.

The sources used in the dissertation are heterogeneous, requiring various levels of analysis; therefore I have asked different questions from different sources. Some sources have been approached more profoundly, exploring the ways of expression, vocabulary, etc. (e.g. F. Linnus’ fieldwork diary from 1925). Some others have been treated as a fact, without any polemics (e.g. G. Ränk’s university graduation certificate). In the study of ethnologists’ knowledge production, I have regarded as central the ethnographic sources dwelt upon below, as well as newspaper articles and archival materials (e.g. Albert Hämäläinen’s review of Ränk’s research in 1939, when the latter applied for the

⁸¹ See about the specificities of these sources in the Estonian context in the following subchapter about sources.

position of a professor), which express opinions of Estonian ethnology and ethnological practice.

My approach to ethnographic sources has been uncommon. I have asked questions different than those they are meant to answer. The centre of analysis is the researcher who has created the sources, not the topic that the researcher studied when creating these sources. Ethnographic archives have predominantly been regarded as treasuries preserving information about the “others”. Beginning in the 1980s, they started to be viewed also as places for depositing the practices of preceding researchers. This is connected with the impact of the reflexive turn that originated in anthropology, which I mentioned above (see p. 26–27). To write a reflexive historiography, scholars did not limit themselves to analysing their predecessors’ published works but started to ask more specific questions about how knowledge had been produced. So they turned to archives and started to emphasise that the latter should be viewed as a result of successful procedures of compiling and arranging knowledge (both by archivists and archive users), and therefore as a place for understanding the nature of ethnographic work (Gomes da Cunha 2006).⁸² Sources are asked questions about their creation, depositing in archives, and usage; the study, description and interpretation of these stages can be regarded as a kind of ethnography – the research field is comprised of personal collections and people’s archives (ibid.; see also Gustavsson 2014a).

However, one could wonder about the possibility of “adequate interpretation”: if it is difficult to gain the “correct” knowledge even in a fieldwork situation, is it at all possible in a later (secondary, tertiary) reading and using of sources? Sociologist Molly Andrews emphasises that the researcher’s background influences his or her research and that this background changes in time. Yet she maintains that the more multilevel the study of sources is, the more information they can yield. Therefore it cannot be said that their secondary or tertiary reading is better than the first or fourth (Andrews 2008: 86–92). What is important in reading ethnographic sources is to link them to one another and analyse the context of their creation.

Fieldwork diaries, ethnographic descriptions, and questionnaires are the ethnographic sources that have provoked most of the argument. The discussions that I will dwell upon below illustrate how important and yet ambiguous these specific texts in the knowledge production of Estonian ethnology are. I will also look into collection and inventory books as well as photographs taken during fieldwork.⁸³

⁸² About sociology see Savage 2005.

⁸³ The collections deposited at the ENM today can roughly be divided into six groups: artefact collections, archives, photographic collection, film archive, sound archive, and library. The archives in turn are divided into topographic (TA, diaries), ethnographic (EA, descriptions), correspondents’ answers (KV), sanitary-topographic (STA), and ethnographic drawings archives (EJ), archive of drawings of museum items (MJ), and institutional archive (ERM A).

From the very beginning of the museum, the ENM demanded from its collectors *fieldwork diaries*, which are deposited in the topographic archive (TA). The grantees were supposed to document their activity in the diaries as well as pass on information about artefacts of collection value. The diaries have been written in various ways due to different periods of time and people. The early amateurs-collectors put down everything that seemed to be interesting. They were not restricted by professional canons as these did not exist yet. Beginning in the 1920s, fieldwork was carried out mainly by university students with special training, for whom the diary was an additional task (the main one being, depending on the objective, collecting artefacts and/or providing ethnographic descriptions). That is why in 1923–1956 the museum received only a few fieldwork diaries (Linnus 1959: 301). Pärdi has argued that the fieldworkers at that time did not value the diary; they did not regard it as “equal to real, ‘scientific’ ethnographic sources”, and that is why they put down things that they thought to be insignificant for their research or for which they could not find a proper place anywhere else (Pärdi 1995a: 71). The diaries seldom reflect the everyday fieldwork and way of life in the place under study; there are only short notes about artefacts or studied phenomena. Entries were usually made by one person, but beginning in the 1960s often by several (depending on the format of the expeditions) (*ibid.*, p. 72).⁸⁴ In the Soviet period, self-censorship was very strong, which was also conditioned by the established tradition of handing the diaries over to the museum at the end of the fieldwork (i.e. make it available to the general public). Fieldwork diaries constitute the oldest part of the ethnographic archive of the ENM – the topographic archive; it is systematised by parishes, with no card index by topics or authors’ names.

Only beginning in the 1990s, fieldwork diaries started to be considered as worth studying, due to paradigmatic changes occurring in the discipline.⁸⁵ Heiki Pärdi, who in 1995 recognised the existence of fieldwork diaries in Estonian ethnology, has emphasised that it is an “unwilling evidence” of history, and that is why they cannot be regarded as “sources created to purposefully inform the reader”; yet, mainly because of this they yield information about the real life ongoing before the eyes of the researcher (Pärdi 1995a: 73). Art Leete has argued against Pärdi’s definition, stating that a professional ethnologist is also charged with theories, attitudes and pre-suppositions, and therefore such “unwilling evidence” could actually be a construction exposing the brightest

⁸⁴ Beginning in 1957, keeping diaries and handing them over to the museum became obligatory for the museum staff (Linnus 1959: 301).

⁸⁵ Yet, not much is known about specific fieldwork diary studies in other European countries; they have only been used to a small extent. In Estonia, earlier fieldwork diaries have been used as sources of research, besides the author of this dissertation, also by Pärdi (1995a, 1995b), Leete (1998), Konkasi (2004), Karm (2006), Leete and Koosa (2006), Oras 2008. See also publications of fieldwork diaries: the series *Vanavara kogumisretkedelt* (beginning in 2006), Peterson 2006; from folklorists a collection titled *Rahva ja luule vahel* 1997 and Ariste 2005.

possible side of his or her personality (Leete 1998: 43). Leete acknowledges, however, that both viewpoints of diaries are grounded and they can involve both “unwilling evidence” and reliable indications of “ethnographic construction” (ibid., p. 44).

In traditional terms, fieldwork diaries consist of events written down by dates, as well as descriptions of meetings and personal experiences.⁸⁶ In the context of my research, only four diaries can be categorised as such: three from Linnus (TAp 313, 327, 329) and one from Ränk (TAp 610). Linnus’ diaries originate in his first three fieldwork periods (western Estonia in 1923, Ruhnu Island in 1924, Hiiumaa Island in 1925), and Ränk’s diary from his collection expedition to Finnish Karelia in 1928.⁸⁷ The rest of Linnus’⁸⁸ and Ränk’s⁸⁹ fieldwork diaries in the topographic archive include information put down in situ, which they later on, when writing an ethnographic description or research, often numbered and crossed out. Ränk’s diaries, however, reached the museum collections later on, in 1971–1972, not immediately after the end of fieldwork.⁹⁰ Helmi Kurrik undertook fieldwork repeatedly in the 1920s and 1930s (see Nõmmela 2009b), but there are no diaries of these at the ENM. The only Kurrik’s so-called diary I found was in her personal archive in the Baltic Archives of the National Archives of Sweden, and it is dedicated to the fieldwork expedition to Peipus Russians⁹¹ in the summer of 1938 (SE-RA-720989-3-2). In a similar vein, I found outside the museum archive Linnus’ notebooks (II–IX) with notes from his fieldwork at Livonians in 1927 and 1928 (altogether nearly 1200 pages of materials). The tenth notebook, however, is devoted to the expedition to Livonians in 1939, and was written in the style of a traditional fieldwork diary.⁹²

As the fieldwork diaries were fragmentary and featured diverse writing styles, it was difficult to make generalisations about them as sources. And what is more, although the ethnologists who worked at the ENM in the 1920s and 1930s kept diaries (if only to recall later on where and who was encountered), they did not necessarily have to hand them over to the museum.⁹³ So they

⁸⁶ Pärdis and Leete also discussed this particular diary style.

⁸⁷ For more detail, see Nõmmela 2007.

⁸⁸ Ruhnu Island in 1924, TAp 328; Hiiumaa and Muhu Island in 1925, TAp 330, TAp 331. Linnus appears to have had two “diaries” in Ruhnu and three in Hiiumaa simultaneously. There are no Linnus’ fieldwork diaries from later years in the archives of the ENM.

⁸⁹ Ränk used one notebook for fieldwork in Estonia in 1926–1929 (TAp 609). Fieldwork diaries from the 1930s were still meant for taking notes (TAp 611–619).

⁹⁰ An exception is Ränk’s diary (written together with Enn Koit) in Saaremaa in 1940 (TAp 359).

⁹¹ Estonian Russians living on the coast of Lake Peipus, mainly the Old Believers, who settled there in the 17th century and have kept alive their old traditions.

⁹² I received digital copies of these materials from Ferdinand Linnus’ grandson Tanel Linnus.

⁹³ For the same reason, I. Manninen’s fieldwork diaries from the 1920s are also missing from the archives.

regarded the diaries as personal documents and insignificant sources from the point of view of ethnology as a discipline and the museum as a depositing institution. On the other hand, in terms of studying the knowledge production practice, these are sources of essential importance, which can yield information along with all the others.

Ethnographic descriptions are deposited in the ethnographic archive (EA), which was founded in 1923; yet, the first descriptions date back to three years before that. The need for descriptions stemmed from the fragmentariness of the artefact collections and the absence of more detailed explanations, i.e. the evolutionary requirements of ethnology as academic discipline.⁹⁴ These descriptions compiled on the basis of the ethnographic material collected during fieldwork constitute an intermediary stage in knowledge production between the fieldwork diary and a publication on the corresponding topic. However, ethnographic descriptions might also have constituted the final stage for the writer, for example, in the case of a student-grantee sent out by the ENM with a concrete task and into a concrete region. In the latter case, the museum's collection policy prevailed over research. In the 1920s and 1930s, the museum staff members were not so keen on writing ethnographic descriptions any more, but during the Soviet period this practice changed, as the descriptions were made obligatory. The EA is systematised topographically (by parishes) and thematically. Often the descriptions are based on questionnaires compiled by ethnologists, which refers to prescription. Ethnographic descriptions are essential sources for reflexive history writing because during the Soviet period this material became the foundation for the majority of Estonian ethnologists' research.

In 1959, Jüri Linnus said that ethnographic descriptions were “the most substantial part of the museum archives because they were authored mainly by people who knew the basics of ethnography. [---] Earlier descriptions generally feature a matter-of-fact assertive style and present rather rich factual material”.⁹⁵ Following on H. Moora's criticism (1947), Linnus adds that material folk culture was viewed “separately, in isolation, not considering economic and social factors” (Linnus 1959: 302). Decades later, H. Pärdis characterised the ethnographic descriptions of the ENM as follows: they were aimed at “recording for further research the so-called folk culture as completely and ‘objectively’ as possible. In this sense it is very uniform material [---]. Uniform character derives from common mentality: ‘people’ know how things really were, and we know what is important to know. [---] Everything outside the ‘canon of the discipline’ – inevitably the majority of life/culture – was not recorded. [---] They [descriptions] are characterised by fragmentariness and

⁹⁴ For more detail about the beginning of the EA, see Peterson 1986: 57–58, Nõmmela 2009a: 119–122.

⁹⁵ A. Peterson also regarded the EA as the most substantial manuscript collection of the museum (Peterson 1986: 57).

elaborateness. [---] These descriptions were aimed at giving as ‘objective’ a picture as possible of the past culture. The personality of both the interviewer/collector and the respondent had to be winnowed out” (Pärdi 1995a: 70). Pärdi’s criticism, which I partly agree with, belongs above all to the identity debates in Estonian ethnology of the 1990s, a part of which was “discovering” fieldwork diaries as sources. To do this, he contrasted the latter with ethnographic descriptions.⁹⁶

One of the articles in my dissertation analyses ethnographic descriptions written by Linnus in the 1920s (**Article I**).⁹⁷ Earlier on, I also studied descriptions compiled by Ränk in the same decade (Nõmmela 2007).⁹⁸ In the following decades, neither of them compiled descriptions for the museum archives, as they focused on writing research articles and doctoral dissertations. Kurrik did not compile any ethnographic descriptions (Nõmmela 2009b). One of the reasons can be that it was time-consuming, or that professional ethnologists at that time considered it rather the work of students-grantees. They might also have thought that their contribution to ethnology and the museum as the collector, keeper and displayer of folk culture was to write scientific articles and supplement other museum collections (artefacts, photographs, drawings). It is obvious that the approach is very different from the ethnographic practice of the Soviet period, as at that time ethnologists at the museum were the main compilers of ethnographic descriptions; they were obliged to do so. Thus, I have been able to analyse only ethnographic descriptions written during Ränk’s and Linnus’ formative years; these give a diverse picture of the then ethnologists’ ideas of ethnology, folk culture, and the knowledge production process (representativity, authenticity, objectivity). Although they proceeded from the then theoretical and methodological ideas (e.g. typologies) and based their work on oft-used questionnaires, they did not write texts as canonical as might be presumed according to J. Linnus or H. Pärdi.

Since the 1920s, *questionnaires*⁹⁹ have been used by ethnologists when compiling ethnographic descriptions and during fieldwork, when collecting material. Museum workers, grantees, and museum correspondents have collected material by using this method. The first questionnaires about folk costumes, buildings, burial traditions and geographic distribution of ethnographic phenomena were drawn up by the director of the museum, I. Manninen. Both Linnus and Ränk used them during their first fieldwork expeditions. Later

⁹⁶ It is possible that Pärdi formed his opinion on the basis of ethnographic descriptions compiled in the Soviet period. Ene Kõresaar has called the descriptions from the 1970s laconic “typologies”, whereas the descriptions dating from the 1930s are, in her opinion, multifaceted (Kõresaar 2012).

⁹⁷ Linnus’ descriptions are deposited in volumes 3, 7, 9, 10 and 11 of the EA. He did not compile any ethnographic descriptions for the museum during the fieldwork at Livonians.

⁹⁸ Ränk’s descriptions can be found in volumes 12 and 14 of the EA.

⁹⁹ In Europe, the history of questionnaires as a method dates back to a considerably earlier period; for more detail, see Schrire 2012: 97.

on, they both drew up their own questionnaires pertaining to their personal research topics, distributing them among the network of correspondents.¹⁰⁰ Questionnaires as well as other sources in this study cannot be considered as a thing-in-itself. As I focus on the analysis of ethnographic knowledge production, I emphasise the high impact on answers of the way questions are asked as well as their structure. “So informants are connected to the questions that also direct the respondent’s train of thought. Therefore answers are influenced by how the questions have been asked” (Kõresaar 1995: 32, cited in Storå 1968: 62–63). The thematic direction of questionnaires and the manner of asking questions are related to the theory prevalent in a concrete era and the methodology used (Schrire 2012). The questionnaires sent out by the ENM in the 1920s and 1930s are characterised by a multitude of general questions, a wish to define the area of distribution of cultural phenomena and historical period of usage; descriptions of the sphere of usage of these phenomena and detailed descriptions of ethnographic items also arouse interest.

Part of the fieldwork practice of Estonian ethnologists in the 1920s and 1930s was the collection of artefacts, about which the following information had to be recorded in the *collection book*: origin of the artefact, donator-seller, age of the artefact, its price, and other notes. The information therein was later catalogued together with additional data (usage of artefacts and their meaning for people) and added in the main catalogue of the museum, i.e. *inventory books* were compiled for individual collections. These sources present information about collecting artefacts during fieldwork, with the main emphasis on artefacts as material objects.

Manninen, Linnus, Ränk, and Kurrik all valued the role of *photographs* in the production of ethnographic knowledge. They supplemented the museum’s photographic collections with hundreds of photographs taken during fieldwork, and used them in compiling ethnographic descriptions and in writing articles as well as master’s and doctoral dissertations. Taking photographs was one of the collecting and studying methods and related, on the one hand, to the so-called rescue discourse; on the other hand, they added to the authoritativeness of the scientific text (see **Article IV**). I have not undertaken a detailed study of photographs as my main focus has lain on text analysis. I still consider it important to emphasise, however, that ethnographic photographs deserve an in-depth study (cf. Becker 1992; Gustavsson 2014b).

¹⁰⁰ I do not dwell on the correspondents’ network and the KV-archive (correspondents’ answers), as I have not used them directly in my research. In short, the correspondents’ network was established at the ENM in 1931, from the example of other countries. Questionnaires were sent out to people who had joined the network, and they were supposed to find answers in their native parishes. Drawing on the historical-geographical method prevalent in ethnology at that time, research was mainly aimed at defining the area of distribution of objects and cultural phenomena, and in this respect collecting data by means of the network was deemed useful.

In my general analysis of fieldwork and ethnological practice, I have treated them as a complete process. On the one hand, I have found it necessary to see the context surrounding fieldwork. On the other hand, and as even more important, I have imagined fieldwork as an event with a beginning and an end, in which it is understandable who, where and when was met, and what was seen and done. References to the sources of analysed fieldwork, scattered around in different archives of the ENM, are not complete. The documentation of fieldwork as a whole is separated in the museum system and cross-references have often been thought to be unnecessary. On the basis of my analysis, I can say that the then ethnologists regarded artefacts, drawings and photographs as museologically valuable and they were handed over to the museum right after fieldwork had been completed. The situation with diaries and ethnographic descriptions is not as clear, as the ethnologists I have studied handed them over to the museum randomly. On the one hand, it indicates that museologically (from the viewpoint of the museum) fieldwork as such was not of significant importance for the museum; on the other hand, however, that for the then researchers the texts written during fieldwork or as a result thereof rather served their own research interests and were not directly meant for supplementing museum collections.

2. SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

The dissertation consists of four articles published in 2010–2016. The sequence of articles in the dissertation is not chronological by the years of publishing but the period under study: the first two articles deal with the 1920s, and the following two with the 1930s. Two of the articles bring to the fore researchers (Linnus and Ränk) and how they became scholars; in the remaining two, a concrete researcher (resp. Manninen and Kurrik) is related to the discussed phenomenon (permanent exhibition, handbook of folk costumes). In all the articles I have regarded as important the analysis of the knowledge production process in its context, in other words, the level of the state/society and institution (museum, university).

Article I. Becoming an Ethnographer. Becoming a Science. Ferdinand Linnus and Estonian Ethnology in the 1920s. – *Lietuvos ethnologija. Lithuanian Ethnology. Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology*, 11 (20), 2011, pp. 93–108.

The first article in the dissertation discusses the era of the institutionalisation of Estonian ethnology through the analysis of Ferdinand Linnus' first fieldwork materials. Following the reflexive historiographical method, I explore Linnus' knowledge production practice, to ascertain his understanding of ethnology, (folk) culture and fieldwork. I examine how Linnus defined his research object, which problems he faced in scientific knowledge production, and how his fieldwork experience is positioned in the tendencies discussed in historiography so far.

Linnus' fieldwork materials written down at Estonians and Coastal Swedes in Estonia and at Livonians in Latvia in the 1920s reveal a hesitant ethnology student, who interprets his activity either as a "museum man" and collector (supplementing of collections) or a learner of folk culture (finding out about the techniques, and types of folk culture phenomena). Although in his fieldwork Linnus derived from the questions and directions prescribed by the museum and Manninen as well as knowledge gained during his university studies, meeting people and seeing their real life made it hard for him to match theory and imagination with reality. In his ethnographic descriptions he brings to light all the variants related to cultural phenomena that he has heard from people "in the field"; he does not take a position of authority and leaves all possibilities open. Linnus' ethnographic descriptions do not correspond to the former concept thereof as purely scientific writings (cf. Linnus 1959; Pärdis 1995a).

A critical analysis of the ethnological knowledge production practice of the 1920s highlights the ambivalent relationship of the then researcher-beginner with the research object and the concept of culture. Within the earlier folk

culture discourse that emphasised the archaicism and authenticity of folk art, Linnus is positive about the historicalness of folk costumes. In the case of other cultural phenomena of interest, such as farm architecture, gates and agriculture, the ethnologist has not limited himself temporally in his cultural descriptions. He also writes about what he saw in situ, i.e. in the present. Linnus' descriptions of the culture of Coastal Swedes and Livonians are different. While in the case of the former he describes the contemporary everyday life of the inhabitants of Ruhnu Island, in the case of the latter he has tried to capture the past.

This kind of equivocalness cannot be found in earlier historiographies that focus on forwarding facts, as it becomes evident only in a closer analysis of ethnological practice.

Article II. On Creating a Realm of Memory: The First Permanent Exhibition of Estonian Folk Culture in the Estonian National Museum. – *Ethnologia Fennica. Finnish Studies in Ethnology*. Vol. 37. Ideas and Ideologies, 2010, pp. 7–21.

In the second article of the dissertation I turn attention to a particular way of knowledge production in the Estonian ethnology of the 1920s – an exhibition. I analyse the way that the permanent exhibition of Estonian folk culture was arranged – the exhibition that the contemporaries regarded as the most important task that the ENM was faced with in that decade. Besides the reflexive historiographical method, I use in the article the theoretical framework of the realm of memory suggested by P. Nora, as well as the museological approach. I argue that the exhibition opened in 1927 is a realm of memory for Estonian tradition in a wider sense and for the ethnologists that worked at the ENM in a narrower sense. The museological approach helped me to construe the policy of exhibition-making or the mutual relationship between power and knowledge.

The article discusses how and what kind of space was created at the museum for remembering Estonian folk culture, so the emphasis is laid on the process of establishing one realm of memory. I analyse the professional, cultural and ideological practice of exhibition production as knowledge production. Due to the specificity of sources, the personal aspect (individual's role) in this process can be exposed through the exhibition guide (i.e. the catalogue) rather than through the analysis of the minutes of museum meetings or letters written to authorities. The catalogue reveals the ideas of Ilmari Manninen as chief curator and ideologist about the basics of the representation of Estonian folk culture. The exhibition under discussion was the result of years-long ethnological practice, through which old Estonian peasant culture was turned into national culture, presented in a crystallised form characteristic of the museums of the era. In the course of their "memory work", ethnologists at the museum had

selected cultural elements that became symbols of folk culture. This way a visual picture was created of uniform and timeless material folk culture, with fragmentariness, plurality and conflictiness eliminated. All these aspects could be found in ethnographic descriptions written within the same period of time (cf. **Article I**). The permanent exhibition was one of the most significant mediums in the creation of the canon of Estonian folk culture.

Article III. The State, the Museum and the Ethnographer in Constructing National Heritage: Defining Estonian National Costumes in the 1930s. – *JEF. Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2010, pp. 49–61.

In the third article of the dissertation I analyse the way that knowledge of Estonian folk costumes as Estonian national heritage was produced in Estonia in the 1930s. I discuss in more detail three levels – the state, the institution and the individual researcher – as well as their mutual relationships in this process. The article focuses on the handbook titled *Eesti rahvarõivad* (Estonian folk costumes), published in 1938, compiled by Helmi Kurrik and edited by Ferdinand Linnus. The main focus is on the political, cultural, and personal context of publishing the handbook, not its content.

My analysis is based on the theoretical starting points of heritage production and contextual constructivist nationalism, which emphasise the construction and manipulation of the phenomena under study by contemporaries, with an aim in view to create and strengthen national identity. The concept of invented tradition defined by Hobsbawn helps to see the phenomenon under study as a process of formalisation and ritualisation. So, in many ways it is a dependency relationship between power and knowledge, which has been discussed by Foucault. Here, I would like to emphasise that knowledge production (here also: heritage production) does not emerge from an empty place but is connected to the earlier development of the cultural phenomenon under study.

The content of the handbook of Estonian folk costumes is closely connected with Kurrik, who selected the costumes and compiled their descriptions. Kurrik can be regarded as an expert of Estonian folk costumes, who arranged the corresponding collections at the ENM, studied and wrote about them, delivered lectures and organised courses. Based on the concept of authenticity, the ethnologist took a position of authority in society, deciding which was the “correct” folk costume and which was not. Reliance on the institution (i.e. the museum) and the authoritative state order of the period (propaganda service) in general added weight to the researcher’s vision. The handbook would never have been completed or distributed nationwide without state initiative and

support; yet, at the same time pressure from the state put a strain on the ethnologist's work.¹⁰¹

In the article, I also disclose the socio-political context in which Estonian ethnologists acted in the 1930s, and show how they understood nationalism when they spoke about the so-called correct ('authentic') folk culture. The Estonian ethnologists of the period acted in the national discourse mainly subconsciously, not consciously contributing to nationalism and the authoritarian regime. However, a certain contradiction can be noticed here, as, when working at the ENM as a national institution, their museological work was directly connected to the developing and strengthening of Estonian national identity. The amplifying state propaganda of the second half of the 1930s intensified and also supported the activity of the museum and its employees in the construction and introduction of national heritage.

Article IV. Gustav Ränk's Road to Professorship at the University of Tartu: Estonian Ethnology in the 1930s. – *Tuna: Ajalookultuuri ajakiri*, 1 (70), 2016, pp. 50–67.

The fourth article in the dissertation discusses the history of the discipline in the 1930s through Gustav Ränk's doctoral studies. Deriving from the reflexive historiographical method, I am interested in the personal aspect in knowledge production as well as in the essence of the discipline. I offer an insight into the fieldwork Ränk carried out for the purpose of his doctoral dissertation, as well as into the text of the dissertation, in order to answer the question about how and proceeding from what scientific knowledge was produced.

Ränk regarded fieldwork as an essential means for knowledge production, and emphasised the role of describing, drawing, and photographing as a guarantee for the authoritativeness of a subsequent scientific text. The "I was here" principle was important for him; in other words, personal experience and vision rendered representativity to the phenomenon (building) under study. The contextual analysis reveals that the then ethnologist was not blind to cultural changes and rather tried to keep apart the scientific and non-scientific aspects of that period, writing about the latter (presentness) in newspapers.

¹⁰¹ When I was writing the article, I had not yet acquainted myself with Kurrik's archive in the Swedish National Archives. The materials therein reveal Kurrik's plan to write about the origin of the handbook on folk costumes, but unfortunately this writing was missing in the archival materials. So her own memories of the intense period of compiling the handbook have not survived; there are no data about to what extent the selected folk costumes were discussed or whether Kurrik was the only decision-maker. Yet, compiling the handbook was certainly highly significant for Kurrik as a scientist.

Although in his doctoral dissertation Ränk proceeded from the historical-geographical method, his text reveals several aspects not belonging to the discourse; for instance, considering the impact of socio-economic and natural environment and paying attention to the influence of people's creativity and rationality in the development of building culture. Also, Ränk as a writer is not as authoritative and objective as is the general image of the researchers of the period; he often lets the reader decide whether the given example is representative enough for making generalisations or not.

The second half of the article gives an insight into the issue of filling the professorship of ethnology in the 1930s, which also illustrates the situation in Estonian ethnology in this decade. The establishment of the professorship was hindered mainly by a lack of financial resources and Estonian ethnologists with a doctoral degree. When Linnus and Ränk defended their theses in 1938, the university announced a vacancy for the position and Ränk was the only one to apply. The reviews asked from F. Linnus, historian Henrik Sepp and Finnish ethnographer professor Albert Hämaläinen about his candidacy reveal the understanding the contemporary experts had about Estonian ethnology. Linnus and Sepp emphasised the significant role of ethnology in Estonian society and scientific life, whereas Hämaläinen criticised the candidate's insufficient connection to the Finno-Ugric theme as well as the small amount of published research. Local ethnologists had big plans, yet conditions for their implementation were meagre: the discipline was short of financial resources, disciples and experienced researchers. In spite of all this, the establishment of the professorship indicates that on the public level the discipline was regarded as important and it had taken root in the Estonian scholarship.

3. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The articles in the dissertation discuss the relations between three levels – the state, the institution and the researcher – in the production of ethnological knowledge, considering the individual's freedom of choice and decision-making as important. Thus, the research focuses on the researcher and the impacts of his or her own environment. I have placed the articles in a historiographical context, presenting the Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s in a wider international scientific discourse.

The articles in the dissertation were published several years ago, except for Article IV, which was published in 2016, although I was writing it in 2011–2013. Therefore it is inevitable that by today I have elaborated on my presented viewpoints, which I will touch upon in this chapter.

3.1. Ethnologists' fieldwork as part of and basis for the knowledge production process

Ethnology regards fieldwork as one of the significant pillars of the discipline and the way that a discipline is made (cf. Löfgren 2014). Therefore, when studying the ethnological practice of earlier researchers, it is important to analyse the sources they have created during fieldwork. A vision of the conducted fieldwork as a whole in the institutional, academic and social context of the period helps to understand the researcher under study as well as his or her knowledge production process.

According to Berger, the “field” and “fieldwork” are socially, culturally and historically constructed concepts (Berger 1993). Historically and culturally, Estonian ethnologists' fieldwork of the 1920s and 1930s falls into the earlier collection tradition of the ENM, which started soon after the museum had been established in 1909. Piret Õunapuu has described these so-called extensive collection campaigns as purely rescue actions, with an aim in view to “save what you can” (Õunapuu 2009: 666), above all, artefacts of ethnographic importance. The roots of this approach extend to the 19th-century romantic nationalism and, in the Estonian context, also to Hurt's folklore collecting; the example that was followed originated in Finland, in the activity of *Kansallismuseo* (Õunapuu 2007: 13–14).¹⁰² In 1909–1919, about 20,000 artefacts were collected for the ENM; the philosophy of these extensive collections was to “completely empty [Estonia] of *vanavara* village by village and farm by farm” (ibid., p. 37). The

¹⁰² The fieldwork in the initial years of Finnish ethnology (19th century) was in turn related to the tradition of the expeditions of the Russian Geographical Society (see e.g. Sokolova 1992). Snellman (2001) describes how at the end of the 19th century U. T. Sirelius was influenced by the said tradition, rather than the British and American anthropology of that period.

unit according to which material heritage was collected and later also deposited at the museum was parish, which has remained the principle of collection division at the ENM until this day. Fieldworkers were given guidelines that suggested what and how to observe, collect and describe,¹⁰³ this way consolidating the manner of writing fieldwork diaries.

Beginning in the 1920s, the arrangement of ethnographic fieldwork in Estonia (i.e. at the ENM) changed. Apart from collecting artefacts, “the collection of ethnographic tradition” (Ränk 1937) became even more important: this meant writing down things heard from people – the compilation of ethnographic descriptions. Folk culture knowledge production through fieldwork was considered an important and inevitable prerequisite for defining the discipline and its functioning: the researcher had to “turn to the countryside – to the living folk culture, either personally or by means of a questionnaire” (Ränk 1937: 116). Research also involved topics for which artefacts could not be collected in the direct meaning of the word, for example buildings. Yet, the main discourse was still “collecting and rescuing”, and in a more abstract meaning than the earlier focus on bringing the artefacts to the museum. This change in the nature of fieldwork was not directly linked to Manninen’s guidelines, as it is often argued (see e.g. Viires, Tedre 1998: 20); it had grown out of the museum’s own requirements and become an actual practice already prior to Manninen’s arrival in Estonia. The first ethnographic description in the Ethnographic Archives of the ENM dates back to 1920.¹⁰⁴ Aleksei Peterson has maintained that the initial incentive for ethnographic descriptions was Kristjan Raud’s earlier appeal to add additional data to the collected items; also, Oskar Kallas, chair of the board of the museum society, put an accent on the necessity of compiling such descriptions (Peterson 1986: 57). However, it remains in abeyance here how exactly the tradition of writing ethnographic descriptions was established.

Manninen drew up the first four questionnaires (in 1923–1928), which were used by students, grantees, and later on also correspondents in their fieldwork. I have shown how questionnaires influenced the process of knowledge production while conversing with local people (**Article I**), dictating to what attention was paid. Yet, it was not always restricting, as, when conversing with people, topics could come up that had not been prescribed, and this aspect also influenced the researcher’s understanding of the nature of folk culture and the past and present of the community under study. In the following years, other researchers also prepared questionnaires on concrete topics, both for the purpose of their own fieldwork and for sending out to correspondents (**Article IV**). However,

¹⁰³ For more detail, see Õunapuu 2007, 2009, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ It was written by Voldemar Haas, later known as a theatrical designer; the following description dates back to 1921 and was authored by Richard Indreko, later a well-known archaeologist.

my more recent study¹⁰⁵ has revealed that it was not always that the researcher was satisfied with the knowledge production process carried out with the help of correspondents' answers: when later on the ethnologist was in situ, to check the phenomenon described by the correspondent, it may have turned out that the answers sent to the museum did not correspond to the scientific parameters set by the researcher.

In my articles, I have emphasised that fieldwork had a significant role in shaping the researcher, his or her choice of the subject, and its development.¹⁰⁶ Yet, in the Estonian context, the researcher-beginner was in a dependency relationship with the museum (ENM) as an institution, as the latter could send him or her to do fieldwork for the purpose of increasing collections, which need not have coincided with the researcher's own scientific interests. These fieldworks were indubitably a source of experience and enabled the researcher to contemplate the discipline and its object. Ferdinand Linnus (**Article I**) and Gustav Ränk (**Article IV**, Nõmmela 2007) regarded fieldwork as an inseparable part of their ethnological practice. Their approach to the research subject, something that was worth studying, depended on the aim of the fieldwork, the place, and the topic of interest, as well as the researcher's own former connection to it. An experienced researcher, in spite of working at the museum, could focus only on his or her own research subject during fieldwork, repeatedly visiting the same places and this way gradually extending his or her knowledge (**Article IV**).

When analysing the sources created during fieldwork, I observed whether and in what way the then ethnologists converted the cacophony and discursive contradictions (cf. Clifford 1990: 59) into authoritative knowledge in scientific text (**Article IV**, **Article I**). According to common knowledge, the earlier ethnologists did not recognise their role in source-creating and turned their eyes to finding relics rather than people (cf. Vunder 1999: 32; Jakubowska 1993: 152). The latter were seen just as a means to an end¹⁰⁷ to get closer to the past. The researchers spoke about the "collection" of information, not "production"

¹⁰⁵ Based on the presentation given at the 33th Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference in August 2015, an article titled "Co-production of ethnographic knowledge in Estonia, 1920–1940" for the collection *Visions and traditions: The production of knowledge at the tradition archives* is near completion and will hopefully be published at the beginning of 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. to anthropology, where fieldwork has even been called a rite of passage (*rite de passage*), i.e. after the fieldwork done for the purpose of the first more extensive research – doctoral dissertation – and the completion of an ethnography written on the basis of this, the researcher was believed to be a "ready anthropologist". See also on the example of Swedish ethnology Löfgren 1996b: 34–36.

¹⁰⁷ Linnus and Ränk, for instance, later on called their respondents "sources" in their ethnographic descriptions. Paraphrasing prof. Ülo Valk, it is rather a marker of the language of science characteristic of the period, not an indicator of the researcher's attitude towards people (Ü. Valk at a fieldwork conference of the Estonian Academic Folklore Society, *Fieldwork on a timescale*, in Tartu, Estonia, on Oct. 30, 2015).

together with the informants (see e.g. Clifford 1990). Therefore it was argued that in the Estonian context, on the level of ethnographic description and scientific text, the descriptions of earlier ethnologists were inclined towards purely material, and “everything that did not fit into the given frames, actually everything living in culture, had been removed” (Pärdi 1995a: 71, cf. Annist&Kaaristo 2013: 130–131). Based on the analysis of Linnus’ and Ränk’s fieldwork, I hold that this statement is too black-and-white. Although ethnologists undertook fieldwork with an aim in view to study (historical) material culture, they met people whose subjective knowledge could be involved in scientific research up to the level of a doctoral dissertation (**Article IV**). Due to the ruling scientific discourse, the then researchers were not interested in people’s life stories, inner worlds, or the ways they interpreted the surrounding (contemporary) world; yet, despite this, they contemplated the people they met during fieldwork and the era they lived in. They could share their contemplations either in ethnographic descriptions or in newspaper articles meant for the lay-person, i.e. outside the immediate sphere of scholarship.

Both Linnus and Ränk relied on the contribution of the people they had met during fieldwork, as well as their position in the community under study, yet some differences can be detected when analysing the ethnographic practice of these ethnologists in the 1920s (i.e. their student years). Ränk is a rather confident and outspoken writer who highlights contradictory facts and leaves some problems unsolved (Nõmmela 2007); Linnus, on the other hand, seems to be hesitant and discontented in his first ethnographic descriptions, yet also reflexive, opening up in the descriptions. Linnus seems to feel compelled to compile ethnographic descriptions, although he thinks that he lacks “sufficient” knowledge for doing it, which in turn indicates his honesty and sense of criticism (**Article I**). Nor does Linnus present a deeper synthesis or final truths in his ethnographic descriptions – aspects that have been regarded as peculiarities of the sources under study (cf. Pärdi 1995a, 1995b).

While, according to Annist and Kaaristo, the Soviet-period ethnological knowledge production was characterised by retreating from fieldwork experience (Annist&Kaaristo 2013: 131) and therefore fieldwork was more museologised or connected to the requirements of the museum as an institution, the fieldwork of the 1920s and 1930s, carried out for the purpose of the ethnologists’ own research topics, was closely integrated into their knowledge production (e.g. Linnus at the Livonians and Ränk exploring farm buildings). Year after year they returned to the “field”, in order to extend their knowledge and find answers to questions that had arisen in the course of data analysis. According to ethnologists, the “field” covered rural areas, the villages and farmsteads there, and in case they failed to visit all the places themselves, they sent a student or a correspondent instead.

Their fieldwork was conditioned culturally and socially. When studying the aspects of their “own”, i.e. native Estonian material culture, the ethnologists perceived themselves as “own”, yet at the same time needed to distance

themselves from the research subjects. This is not clearly expressed in fieldwork sources, but becomes evident in the analysis of the knowledge production process, for example, in describing the encountered people as “sources” in ethnographic descriptions.¹⁰⁸ If a researcher needed, instead of collecting artefacts in an “other” culture, to describe the cultural phenomena of the research subjects, he or she first had to find a language and cultural guide who would help him or her during fieldwork in the community and even after that.¹⁰⁹ Each researcher was singular and their background and the surrounding context influenced the sources created during fieldwork.

3.2. Ethnologists’ knowledge production in constructing Estonian folk culture

Dutch cultural historian Joep Leerssen has explained, when talking about the cultivation of culture, how folk culture became a research object. He says that in the 19th century interest was developed in vernacular culture, and this way cultivation is an intellectual canonisation process that constructed vernacular culture and shaped the identity of the nation. In this process the research subject was lifted from its context of origin and attributed new values (Leerssen 2006: 568). Ants Viires in his article has shown that the canonisation process of Estonian folk culture occurred “gradually and step by step” (Viires 2002b: 166). It originated in the interest in folk songs and folk beliefs in the 19th century and in folk costumes in the second half of the same century. At the beginning of the 20th century, emphasis on folk art as an essential national aspect was added (collecting, describing, (re)using). According to Viires, the content of folk culture was inclined towards purely material, largely due to the activity of the ENM in collection and publication work in the 1920s and 1930s. The phenomena of non-material culture were dealt with under folklore (Viires 2002b: 167ff.). Thus, in the 1930s “folk culture” became a term in ethnology (ibid., p. 165).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Cf. e.g. the metaphors “double insider” (Naumović 1998) or “halfie” (Oras 2008: 17, cited in Abu-Lughod 1991).

¹⁰⁹ This was the case, for example, with Linnus, when he studied the Swedes on Ruhnu Island and later on also Livonians in Courland (**Article I**). Ränk’s only experience with an “other” culture was in Karelia in the summer of 1928, yet then his aim was to supplement museum collections and therefore his fieldwork rather consisted of travelling from one village to another (see Nõmmela 2007).

¹¹⁰ Rasmus Kask in his master’s thesis has argued that actually the concept of Estonian folk culture was not defined in the 1920s and 1930s. According to him, folk culture was formulated through folk culture itself, i.e. the content of the concept was not delved into, it was not considered a metaphor or a theoretical model but rather a real phenomenon, which started to be used in scientific discourse following the example of other countries (Kask 2011: 7ff.).

Yet, the then researchers talked about *vanavara*¹¹¹ and “popular culture” rather than “folk culture” as a research object.

In the 1920s and 1930s, ethnologists’ work at constructing Estonian folk culture was multifaceted: this activity is noticeable in different stages of their scientific as well as popular-scientific practice. Within the framework of my dissertation I explored what the researchers proceeded from and how they depicted folk culture. By reconstructing the knowledge production process of the then ethnologists, I tried to understand to what extent the texts written by them coincide with the representations presented in historiographical articles before them, according to which ethnology of the period created a picture of Estonian folk culture as a timeless and stable peasant culture of one nation (cf. Vunder 1999).

This concept is valid for the permanent exhibition opened at the ENM in 1927 (**Article II**). This exhibition expressed the idea of Estonian folk culture as the principal part of Estonian cultural history and the foundation of national culture and, as such, was fixated in the minds of Estonians. Culture became national (cf. Löfgren 1989). The newly independent state needed the exhibitions at the ENM to strengthen its identity (besides folk culture exhibition, those of archaeology and art history were opened). The ethnographic exhibition was staged using the historical-geographical method and, to a small extent, also structuralism-functionalism, which was applied in other European museums at that time. The exhibition strove to achieve scientific quality, comprehensiveness and aesthetic beauty. The museum (i.e. its chief curator Manninen) also prescribed which folk culture phenomena should be considered as especially “intrinsic” to the nation. The permanent exhibition presented Estonian folk culture as discrete and unique, idealised and static; it did not deal with cultural changes or social processes. Yet, the permanent exhibition was not dedicated to Estonians’ material culture only; it also displayed phenomena and artefacts characteristic of the culture of Coastal Swedes and, to a small extent, also that of Ingrian Finns. The latter was supposedly due to the fact that the culture of local Swedes had been studied and collected by the museum to a certain degree. The exhibition separately displayed Coastal Swedes’ folk costumes, but did not deem necessary to distinguish fishing and sealing gear or agricultural items.

The picture constructed of Estonian folk costumes as an essential part of folk culture was similarly unifying and static (**Article III**). Based on the authoritativeness deriving from museum collections, ethnologists contributed to the fight against the visual modernisation of folk costumes.¹¹² The handbook *Eesti rahvarõivad* (Estonian folk costumes), compiled by Helmi Kurrik, belongs

¹¹¹ The concept of *vanavara* (old treasures, i.e. antiquities) has a long tradition in Estonia; it was used by Jakob Hurt already in the 1870s (Viires 2002b: 168; Valk 2004). This concept carries an evaluative assessment (cf. Viires 2002b; Leerssen 2006).

¹¹² More recent research has revealed that Kurrik did not object to technical modernisation of folk costumes (Metslaid 2016 forthcoming).

among the works in the Estonian folk culture canon. During fieldwork, ethnologists also regarded folk costumes as a phenomenon belonging to past, authentic and original folk culture. They had an established opinion about which articles of clothing were parts of folk costumes and which not (**Article I**, Nõmmela 2007).

The rest of the articles in the dissertation reveal that in the 1920s and 1930s the approach to the concept of folk culture was ambiguous. The understanding of what was Estonian folk culture, what belonged to it and what did not, was not so regulated and unambiguous (cf. Slavec Gradišnik 2010: 135). I have discussed folk culture from the point of view of institutional and personal interests; its content could depend on several factors, including in which level text it was used (fieldwork notes, ethnographic description, scientific text, or newspaper article). Thus, the substantial meaning of Estonian folk culture, experienced by Linnus (**Article I**) and Ränk (Nõmmela 2007) during their first fieldwork assignments could have depended on the phenomenon under study and the historical background against which it was discussed. For instance, folk costumes had already become the criterion of authenticity and beauty, and therefore rules had been formulated for young ethnologists to follow in their research. In the study of fishing, fences/gates and buildings, the modernity of the period encountered during fieldwork started to exert influence. Also, Linnus demonstrates different understandings of folk culture when he discusses the material culture of the Ruhnu Swedes and Livonians. While in the case of the latter he focuses on the past, in the case of the inhabitants of Ruhnu Island he describes the contemporary life of the community on the island. The main reason here is the community's influence on the researcher's fieldwork and his knowledge production related to it. The inhabitants of Ruhnu had lived on their island in seclusion for a long time, whereas Livonians had been evacuated from their homes during the First World War, then returned to their lands, and were undergoing a period of national awakening. Livonians had turned their eyes to the past, to the creation of their heritage, and the researcher supported them therein.

Other writings by Estonian ethnologists from the interwar period also demonstrate an ambiguous approach to folk culture as a research object. Manninen defined Estonian ethnography as the “study of Estonian material *vanavara*” (Manninen 1924), yet in his *Eesti rahvateaduslik ülevaade* (Ethnographic survey of Estonia) (1926) he also discussed customs besides material culture. Ränk in the introduction to *Vana-Eesti rahvakultuur* (Old Estonian folk culture)¹¹³ wrote that due to lack of space he could only discuss the most material part of folk culture, excluding “the phenomena connected to the manifestations of non-material life”, yet he expected to be able to speak about the latter in his

¹¹³ This is the first longer overview of Estonian folk culture in the Estonian language, published in the popular science series of the Estonian Literary Society, *Elav Teadus* (Living Science), in 1935.

following works (Ränk 1935: 6). In addition, Ränk repeatedly observes in his dissertation that “folk culture is always diverse, depending on its bearer’s – human being’s – economic and social situation and his or her personal capabilities and habits” (Ränk 1939: 191), by this highlighting both the role of the human being in culture creation and the diversity and changeability of folk culture (**Article IV**). Linnus emphasises that the field of study of ethnology is “material folk culture”, which means that he saw folk culture more broadly as a general concept.¹¹⁴ In addition, he calls for studying a “mixed culture between the former village life and the modern urban culture, in which our country currently stands” (Leinbock 1930: 51), which in turn testifies to Linnus’ broad perspective of his research object and recognition of its change in time. In his research, however, Linnus did not adopt the study of the so-called mixed culture.

The programme of the discipline (Manninen 1924) was delimited, yet the ethnologists in their scientific practice seemed to have seen folk culture on a wider scale, both thematically and in terms of temporal frames. It can be said that the programme was delimited in order for the researchers to be able to “to study [something] perfectly and thoroughly”, as at that time there were practically no earlier treatments. Yet the positivist view of scientific endeavour presumed the achievement of “the truth”, i.e. thorough exploration. Therefore the first ethnological studies mainly dealt with material culture. My attempt to reconstruct the way that the first generation of Estonian ethnologists created folk culture is not exhaustive in this research, as it does not involve all the publications that could be analysed under this topic.¹¹⁵ Involving other works from that period in the analysis would enable, later on, to expand and deepen the study on folk culture construction by ethnologists.

The permanent exhibition at the ENM at that time as well as the overview works on folk culture consider the cultural phenomena of local ethnic minorities, Coastal Swedes, Setos, and, to a smaller extent, also Ingrians as natural parts of Estonian folk culture. They are not presented as an exotic “other”, although sometimes, due to marginality, as a keeper of the obsolete. They were rather

¹¹⁴ This has also been referred to by Viires 2002b: 166.

¹¹⁵ Some other texts that became canonical besides Ränk’s doctoral dissertation and Kurrik’s handbook of folk costumes were Ilmari Manninen’s *Eesti rahvariie ajalugu* (History of Estonian folk costumes) (1927), and *Die Sachkultur Estlands*, I, II (1931, 1933), Ferdinand Linnus’ *Die materielle Kultur der Esten* (1932) and *Eesti vanem mesindus I. Metsamesindus* (Old apiculture in Estonia I: Forest apiculture) (1939), and Gustav Ränk’s *Peipsi kalastusest* (Fishing on Lake Peipus) (1934) and *Vana-Eesti rahvakultuur* (Old Estonian folk culture) (1935). In addition, I could mention as significant treatments, yet remaining to be analysed in the future, surveys of folk culture written by Linnus for the 2nd (1937) and 3rd (1940) volumes of *Eesti ajalugu* (Estonian history) (about the Middle Ages and the Polish and Swedish times, respectively), as well as Ränk’s surveys for the 2nd (1934) and 3rd (1937) volumes of *Eesti rahva ajalugu* (History of Estonian people) (about the Polish, Swedish and Russian times). Ränk also produced a survey of folk culture for the anthologies *Saaremaa* (1932), *Viljandimaa* (1935), and *Läänemaa* (1937).

seen as phenomena diversifying Estonian folk culture. While treated individually, their culture was regarded as an individual whole. As an example, I could mention Linnus' ethnographic description of the inhabitants of Ruhnu Island (**Article I**) and Ränk's writing about the Swedes on Pakri islands (Ränk 1942).¹¹⁶ Furthermore, at the end of the 1930s, the ENM started to take more interest in collecting the material culture of the main ethnic minorities (Swedes, Russians and Ingrians) (Linnus 1938: 344), and fieldwork was organised for this purpose. Yet, we do not know to what extent the study and analysis of the cultures of these peoples were considered. Most probably, interest in them was generated rather by the necessity of finding cultural loans and supplementing museum collections. The Coastal Swedes were rather seen as the domain of Swedish researchers, and the Old Believers in Lake Peipus area rather as that of Estonian ones, as the influence of Russian researchers did not extend that far (Ränk 1937: 119). Estonian ethnologists of the period did not show research interest in the historically significant Baltic Germans; yet, they demonstrated museological interest, and pieces of art and artefacts characteristic of their culture are preserved in the cultural history collection (D-collection) and art collection (K-collection) established in the 1920s. Both of these collections were displayed also at the Raadi manor house. In the Estonian context, national identity was further strengthened by the Finno-Ugric collections at the ENM as well as the corresponding exhibition opened in 1928, both of which carried the idea of common ethnic origin (cf. Karjahärm 2001: 357–363; Västriik 2010).

In the decades under discussion, ethnologists did not directly argue about the concept of folk culture; nor was the content of this concept strictly limited in their everyday practice. It was fluid and adaptable to context according to needs and the researcher's personal preferences. Despite the ambiguity of the concept of folk culture for ethnologists, they were (subconsciously) connected to the process of the creation of the national discourse and the modern nation on a broader scale. Similar processes occurred in other Northern and Eastern European countries (see e.g. Rihtman-Auguštin 2004; Klein 2006; Nic Craith 2008; Frykman&Löfgren 2015 [1979]). This research direction of Estonian ethnologists was supported by the image of the ENM as a national museum in society.

3.3. Estonian ethnology between the folk and scholarship

Although the problems of academicism, applicability and internationality in Estonian ethnology in the 1920s and 1930s are the most clearly highlighted in the last article of the dissertation, these topics pervade all the four articles. The period under discussion, which is often characterised as the era of the evolution of the discipline (see e.g. Leete, Tedre, Valk, Viires 2008: 18–19), could not be

¹¹⁶ Ränk writes about the evacuation of the Coastal Swedes in 1940, and about how he witnessed “the act of eradicating an old ethnic minority”.

analysed without touching upon these themes, if only because contemporaries themselves repeatedly wrote about the possibilities for the evolution of the discipline, its connection with the nation and the state, and the future perspectives. Regional ethnology in its period of origin derived directly from national and state requirements¹¹⁷ and until the mid-20th century remained predominantly practical, which in the then context meant, above all, defending national interests.¹¹⁸ In the last decades of the 20th century, this was a reason why anthropologists studying Central and Eastern Europe called the formerly practised ethnology non-academic – a discipline producing descriptive cultural approaches deriving from purely practical interests. If we view ethnology as a political and intellectual project (cf. Rogan 2012: 598), and knowledge production as a process and a dialogue, we can regard the problems of applicability/academicism in Estonian ethnology at that time as a balancing issue within the process.

As compared to academicism, applicability outweighed the former in Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s. This was due to the then social and political context and shortage of specialists,¹¹⁹ but above all the close connection of the discipline to the museum as an institution. Manninen was one of the first to emphasise that the museum, i.e. the ENM, had to serve both the nation and academia (Manninen 1923). During his years in Estonia he focused on both: published scientific and popular-scientific works, outlined the programme of ethnology as a discipline, and arranged a permanent exhibition of Estonian folk culture for the general public (**Article II**). He also made his disciples, who worked at the ethnography department of the museum, follow a similar two-direction path. However, professional work conditioned by the particular nature of the institution, such as arranging and supplementing the collections, as well as administrative tasks, was rather time-consuming (Nõmmela 2009a). On the other hand, the necessity and possibility to work at the museum directed the future renowned scientists to choose their field of study. So Linnus, Ränk and Kurrik, who had started work as students at the ENM, later on became ethnologists.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Estonian ethnology as an academic field was intertwined with museology. Their approaches were intellectually and empirically connected; in other words, ethnologists in their knowledge production process were influenced by the museological sphere in which they worked, and museological knowledge had an impact on the production of ethnological knowledge. In terms of research direction, the ethnology of the period had a close

¹¹⁷ Ethnology has been called a national rescue action and a collecting science (Löfgren 1990).

¹¹⁸ In the 21st century, applicability means an opposite tendency – it is born out of scientific research.

¹¹⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s, ethnology was not among the most popular subjects at the UT. This has been admitted, for example, by Ilmar Talve (Talve 1997: 190).

connection to museum collections. Seminar works and master's theses, dealing with typologies of phenomena under study or distribution maps, were largely based on museum collections. Estonian ethnology emerged from the requirements of the museum (cf. Klein 2006), and the ENM constituted the main background impact of the then ethnologists.

Besides the museum as an institution, the issue of academicism/applicability appears in ethnologists' relationship with the state. The researchers of the museum perceived their social role and the national role of their institution in the newly established (nation) state. While during the first decade of the republic, the museum had as if to prove to the state its necessity and value, in the authoritarian era in the following decade their work enjoyed support from the state and, due to that, became more efficacious (Nõmmela 2009a). The permanent exhibition opened at Raadi (**Article II**) grouped artefacts on a scientific basis, yet also considered aesthetic and museological conditions. The aim of the permanent exhibition was to strengthen and consolidate the Estonian nation's national unity. The handbook of folk costumes was directly based on state order: ethnologists selected and approved of "authentic" yet also "aesthetically gratifying" sets of folk costumes (**Article III**). In addition to advocating folk costumes, ethnologists helped to supervise local museums, the number of which considerably increased in the 1930s, gave popular-scientific presentations, etc.

The interwar ethnology is characterised by a contradiction between plans and reality, which by the end of the 1930s made researchers feel sapless. This happened due to the shortage of active researchers as well as the ambitions of the young discipline. The discipline that had institutionalised in the 1920s lacked earlier works in its own language and those in foreign languages were also scarce. Yet the research was aimed at mapping the whole country, discussing all the phenomena of material culture, and eventually publishing comprehensive works thereof. The basis for generalisations was yet to be established. To begin with, museum collections had to be scientifically inventoried, systematised, and supplemented. Parallel to that, students-young researchers started to compile overviews of the spread and types of concrete cultural phenomena, which later on served as bases for the first generalising works. To facilitate ethnological knowledge production, different catalogues, card-indexes and registers were needed for museum collections, and the time-consuming compilation of these was just taking place during the period under discussion. On Linnus' initiative these systems were tried to be made all-Estonian, i.e. involving all the museums in the country (Leinbock 1930, Linnus 1938). At the end of the 1930s, the abundance of arrangements made Linnus state that "theories pass, materials remain", and thereby hope that "pure scientific work" would start in the near future (Linnus 1938: 135).

Ferdinand Linnus, who had started active studies into older apiculture and the culture of Livonians in the late 1920s (**Article I**), was the director of the ENM and the head of the department of ethnography in the following decade.

Despite the fact that he authored some important works, such as *Die materielle Kultur der Esten* (1932) and *Eesti vanem mesindus I* (Older apiculture in Estonia) (1939) as well as some scientific articles, many of his plans remained unrealised. If possible, he participated in important international conferences and was the first Estonian to be awarded a doctoral degree in ethnology, yet most of his energy was consumed by the management of the museum and shaping Estonian ethnology and the museum landscape. Linnus' academic plans failed as the Second World War broke out and he was arrested in 1941, which was followed by his death the next year. His role in Estonian museology and his scientific activity in the 1930s would deserve a further study.

Gustav Ränk, on the other hand, was increasingly dissatisfied with the abundance of professional work and scarcity of academic opportunities, and on the state level saw a way out of the situation in increasing the number of the museum staff (**Article IV**). For him personally, a temporary solution was his appointment as professor at the UT. The establishment of the professorship in 1939 demonstrated the state and society's interest in this sphere and recognition of the discipline as a salient field of study. After the war, Ränk lived and worked in Sweden, and in his works described the Estonian ethnology of the 1930s as a field of limited opportunities. While in exile, Ränk worked as an assistant professor at the University of Stockholm and published several voluminous scientific treatments; according to his own words, he was given a chance to dedicate himself to academic work (Ränk 2010).

The fact that Ränk was appointed professor was of symbolic importance in Estonian ethnology. After Manninen had left university at the end of 1928, specialised teaching continued with the help of part-time lecturers; i.e. the university had no permanent full-time lecturer of ethnology and the work was done by the ethnologists of the ENM as an additional task (Linnus, Ränk, Laid). There were few professionals, and the 1930s saw a situation in which the emergence of a new generation of ethnologists was really questionable. During Ränk's professorship (1939–1944), however, a subsequent generation of ethnologists started to take form. During these years Helmut Hagar, Ella Koern (1905–1971), Ilmar Talve and Helmi Üprus (1911–1978) defended their master's theses in ethnology at the UT; young Ants Viires was also Ränk's disciple at the time.

In 1952, Helmut Hagar, based on his personal memories, highlighted the difference in the theory and methodology of Estonian ethnology in the 1930s and in the war years. He states that ethnologists recognised the limitedness of the cultural-historical approach popular in Europe, but were not yet in the position to change the situation. "Ethnography threatened to become a mechanical superficial game" (Hagar 1952: 49), due to excessive focusing on wandering the maze of cultural loans and geographical distribution relations. According to Hagar, ethnology was reformed on the initiative of Ränk, yet the "modern Estonian ethnology" could not be consummated under the conditions of war and occupation (ibid., p. 50). Ränk appealed to his students to thoroughly

analyse, above all, Estonian material, to see the inner linkages and functional aspects of the culture under study (ibid.).

In the late 1930s and during the war years, Linnus, Ränk and Kurrik all continued work at their research topics and also planned new ones. Although Ränk was the only one who succeeded in continuing research, it is still an indication of the existing potential that could not be realised because of the war. The ethnological practice of the following new generation and ethnology of the war years in general deserves a closer analysis in the future, in order to find an answer to the question what exactly was the “modern ethnology” described by Hagar.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Estonian version of ethnology strongly focused on the cultural-historical study of material peasant culture, being comparable to the corresponding disciplines in Northern, Eastern and Central Europe, and generally contributing (by means of major canonical works in German) to the knowledge of European cultures. Thus, the importance of Manninen’s monograph, *Die Sachkultur Estlands*, has been compared to that of his contemporaries’ major works,¹²⁰ and Linnus called it the “certificate of maturity” of Estonian ethnology (Linnus 1936: 247). While Vunder (2000) sees Estonian ethnology as a “child” of Nordic ethnology, Rebas (1995) describes the interwar discipline as an equal to the corresponding ones in Sweden and Finland, which was abruptly terminated by the Soviet occupation. Estonian ethnologists participated in international conferences and took postgraduate courses in the Nordic countries, this way being a part of international knowledge circulation. In the sphere of museology, the ENM deserved recognition all over Europe.

In the period under discussion, Estonian ethnology was based on the historical-geographical method popular in Europe at that time. Although the discipline was founded by a Finnish scientist (or, to be more exact, thanks to Manninen’s personality), the scholarship in Estonia was different from Finno-Ugric ethnology on the other side of the Gulf of Finland. The aim of the discipline, led by A. O. Heikel and later on U. T. Sirelius, was to find the Finno-Ugric common culture. Besides compiling typologies, Manninen ranked even higher the finding of cultural loans, i.e. the diffusionist cultural-historical method (Viires 1970b: 233–234). This was the reason why professor Hämaläinen, disciple of Heikel and Sirelius’ school, criticised Ränk’s scientific achievements when the latter applied for professorship at the UT (**Article IV**).

In the 1930s, European regional ethnologies that worked on similar bases started to seek for opportunities of closer cooperation with each other. The primary aim was to find comparable material, to ascertain cultural loans and the spread of cultural phenomena. On the basis of this, cultural atlases were hoped

¹²⁰ These are August Bielestein’s *Die Holzbauten und Holzgeräte der Letten* I–II (1907, 1918); Uno Taavi Sirelius’ *Suomen kansanomaista kultuuria* I–II (1919, 1921); Dmitri K. Zelenin’s *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde* (1927); K. Moszyński’s *Kultura ludowa słowian* I–II (1929, 1934).

to be compiled and terminology to be unified (Rogan 2014). Foundations of Estonian ethnographic cartography had already been established by Manninen in the 1920s, and its results were outstanding in Europe (Viires 1994: 1260). Already in 1930 Linnus wrote about the need for international cooperation, especially in the sphere of unifying collection work (Leinbock 1930: 50–51). He called for following the appeals of Germany, Russia and the International Folk Art Commission (*la Commission Internationale des Arts Populaires* (CIAP)) for collection work, so that Estonia would not lose “its former positions in ethnology” (ibid., p. 51). However, in 1937 Ränk had to declare that cooperation offers from other countries had to be declined due to a lack of scientists (Ränk 1937: 122). Thus, we may conclude that although Estonian ethnologists had both the skills and the knowledge for international cooperation, they were not able to react to all appeals due to the shortage of professionals. Ambitions and reality clashed.

Historiographies of Scandinavian ethnologies express the uncertainty that prevailed in the 1930s in talks about the discipline and its borders. In Sweden, for instance, discussions took place about what to regard as ethnology and what not, and where the border runs with folkloristics and other neighbouring disciplines (Nic Craith 2008: 3). It is interesting to note that in Estonia historiographies of the period or the ones written later on do not suggest a similar discussion here. Although Ränk’s articles about the situation in Estonian ethnology in the 1930s express some negative aspects, such as a shortage of resources, small number of researchers, and excessive inclination towards applicability, the identity of the discipline seems to be strong, and he does not doubt it (**Article IV**). Folkloristics and ethnology were individual disciplines both in terms of mutual relationships and for the Estonian scientific landscape. Also, there seems to have been no argument about where the border runs between archaeology and ethnology or history and ethnology. Surveys rather discuss the so-called white patches that remained completely untouched (e.g. the social sphere or religion), not the spheres that could have been included in the study of either discipline (folkloristics vs. ethnology, archaeology vs. ethnology), and this way generated discussion. The interdisciplinary approach, on the other hand, was expressed on the level of an individual researcher. So, in the 1930s Linnus talked about the necessity to apply the methods and materials of neighbouring disciplines also in ethnology, and did it himself in his studies of apiculture.¹²¹

¹²¹ The 3rd volume of the work on apiculture planned by Linnus was supposed to discuss customs and common law.

4. SUMMARY

The dissertation discussed the history of Estonian ethnology in the 1920s and 1930s through the analysis of individual researchers' knowledge production. In problem setting, I proceeded from interpretative historiography or reflexive historiographical approach, and focused on the analysis of the textual practices of the then ethnologists as well as the political, social and academic context surrounding them. I asked questions about the relations between the state, the institution and the individual researcher, and their mutual impacts within the knowledge creation process. The decades under study belong to the period of the development and social establishment of the young Republic of Estonia as a nation state. It was also the era when the University of Tartu as a national university became established, and when ethnology became an academic discipline. Yet, the Estonian National Museum evolved into the centre of the discipline – the central national institution where ethnologists of the period worked.

In my history writing, I focused on the analysis of ethnological practice. Considering scholarship as practice, it is possible to focus on the individual researcher and his or her role in the development and shaping of the discipline. In my analysis of ethnological practice I was interested in the foundations of Estonian ethnology and the relations of the discipline with the discourses of nationalism, museology and cultural heritage in the period under study. Factography that so far had predominantly been standing in the foreground in historiography served as a supportive framework for me, proceeding from which I gave a deeper insight into the then ethnological practice. The analysis of sources and engaging them and the former historiographical articles in dialogue revealed the Estonian ethnology of the 1920s and 1930s as being considerably more versatile than formerly presumed. It became more evident that the fieldwork of the then ethnologists was very closely connected with their knowledge production process: their fieldwork was not primarily meant to supplement museum collections. In my analysis, I focused on construing the then central research object – folk culture – and discovered ambiguity and variability, which had so far been ignored. I also dwelt upon the academicism, applicability and internationality of the ethnology of the period.

Estonian ethnology emerged from the 19th-century romantic nationalism, which also served as a basis for folkloristic and ethnographical research in Europe. The Herderian mythologising of the nation gave an impetus to folklore collection as well as observation and recording of the aspects of folk life; gradually more and more interest was taken in local peasant culture. At the end of the century and the beginning of the next one, folkloric archives and ethnography museums started to be established, in order to store, archive and catalogue the collected “treasures”. The main incentive for these activities was the strengthening of the nation's identity and national unity.

The ENM, established in 1909, was one of those national ethnography museums founded within this discourse. During its first decade, the museum actively collected ethnographic artefacts, yet quite soon realised the necessity to arrange and present the collections. This coincided with the establishment of independent statehood in Estonia in 1918, which in turn gave an impetus to converting the museum into a scientific institution.

In this context, Estonian ethnology became institutionalised as a speciality between two establishments – the ENM and the UT – in the early 1920s. In the beginning, it was realised through the person of Ilmari Manninen, who was the director of the museum and assistant professor of ethnology at the university; yet, soon enough also through the fields of activity of his disciples. The source basis for speciality education and research was at the museum and the future ethnologists were employed there already in their student years. After Manninen had left at the end of 1928, all the ethnological research concentrated in the ENM, and the researchers worked as part-time lecturers of the discipline at the university. In 1939, the professorship of ethnology was established at the UT, which was filled by Gustav Ränk, a former long-time researcher at the ENM.

Thus, in the period under discussion Estonian ethnology was very closely connected to the museum and inevitably influenced by the latter. The starting point of ethnologists' knowledge production was often museological, and especially students' seminar works and master's theses focused on objects and their typologies. The first fieldwork trips of the young researchers often proceeded from the museum's requirements: the establishment dictated how and what to collect, how to write down notes, and what to observe, guiding the evolving researcher's self-definition and the way they interpreted the research object. The museum's impact on ethnological practice was expressed also in the fact that in ethnologists' everyday work the proportion of professional work was significant, impeding their dedication to research. The inventorying, systematising and supplementing of museum collections, which was supposed to form a basis for generalisations about folk culture, had only been started in the 1920s, and it continued parallel to research. Ethnologists acted in a positivist and modernist paradigm, which valued natural science's objectivity – in order to ascertain types and spread of cultural phenomena, basic knowledge and complete collections were needed for the whole territory under study (Estonia).

Texts of different levels, created by ethnologists, such as fieldwork diaries, ethnographic descriptions, and researches, as well as the texts related to the then permanent exhibition at the museum, served as a basis for the representation critique in the dissertation. In these texts, ethnologists have described their research object – Estonian folk culture. As a modern critical historiographer, I saw the then researchers' text creation not as object-centred grantedness but as representation production, and asked questions about whom and how earlier researchers had represented and what had been the impact of this heritage on modern research. The research analysis manifested that the long-term interpretation of folk culture by means of the categories of timelessness, stability and

unity is a simplification: the then ethnologists varied the construction of their research object according to institutional and personal interests and the concrete phenomenon of folk culture under study. The approach to folk culture also depended on the level of the text.

In the catalogue of the permanent exhibition of Estonian folk culture, Manninen described the theme of the exhibition as detached and static; this way his construction corresponds to the popular image described above. The ambiguous reception of folk culture became obvious, above all, in the analysis of the fieldwork materials provided by the then researchers, which as first-level sources of the knowledge production process characterise the contextuality of defining the research object. The interwar ethnologists also emphasised in their doctoral dissertations and in writings on academically higher levels the diversity and changeability of folk culture. The ethnology programme outlined in the 1920s defined the field of study narrowly as a description of material peasant culture, yet in actual ethnological practice researchers viewed folk culture as a more extensive phenomenon, both thematically and temporally.

In my research, I appraised the analysis of fieldwork materials of the then ethnologists, as it is namely in fieldwork diaries and ethnographic descriptions that the first level of ethnological knowledge production is manifested. Students' first fieldworks were carried out according to the museum's prescriptions; yet, when they created sources for their master's and doctoral theses, the young ethnologists put their fieldwork directly at the service of their own research. They could not imagine research without repeated fieldwork trips – this was an essential part of their academic *habitus*. “Being in the field” rendered credibility and authoritativeness to their research. Fieldwork experience enabled the ethnologists to better understand the phenomena under study, influencing their ideas of folk culture and making them aware of its historical, economic, and socio-communal context. Involving the importance of contextuality in different texts discussing folk culture was not very problematic for researchers, yet its proportion depended on a concrete text and the specificity of a research theme.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Estonian ethnology developed into a national and regional discipline, which, due to social and political conditions, remained practical by nature. The small number of professionals and the discipline's connection to the museum also played a certain role in it. The practical aspect of scholarship became most pronounced when ethnologists and the museum participated in the state's cultural propaganda in the second half of the 1930s, when ethnological knowledge was directly placed in the service of the state's cultural policy.

The problems of applicability and academicism were also expressed in the high ambitions of Estonian ethnology as a young discipline, and the way they contradicted reality, which deepened year by year. According to the then positivist and modernist approach, the discipline was aimed at compiling an overview involving all the phenomena of material culture, and mapping the whole country. In reality, however, the few acting ethnologists were busy with

administrative and professional tasks at the museum and were able to dedicate less time to academic knowledge production than expected. But the potential for academic knowledge production was considerable, especially if we take into account the several master's theses defended during the Second World War, the emergence of a new generation thereupon, and the outlines of manuscripts in the reports and annual plans of established ethnologists – Linnus, Ränk and Kurrik.

In terms of academicism, however, the discipline's national nature and regionality did not mean seclusion in its own cultural space. The then ethnologists simultaneously acted in a wider international knowledge circulation. They were in dialogue with colleagues from closer and more distant countries, who practised research on similar bases. This helped to find common topics at international conferences and in mutual correspondence, to be further developed in the future. As their research was published in German, they were also a part of the international scientific community.

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ARTICLES

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Rahva ja teaduse vahel: etnoloogiline praktika Eestis 1920. ja 1930. aastatel

Dissertatsioonis käsitlen Eesti etnoloogia ajalugu 1920. ja 1930. aastatel üksikuurijate teadmusloome analüüsimise kaudu. Uurimuse probleemipüstitusel lähtun tõlgenduslikust historiograafiast ehk refleksiivsest historiograafilisest lähenemisest ning keskendun tollaste etnoloogide tekstuaalsete praktikate ja seda ümbritsenud poliitilise, ühiskondliku ja akadeemilise konteksti analüüsimisele. Küsin küsimusi riigi, institutsiooni ja üksikuurija omavahelistest suhetest ja mõjutustest teadmusloome protsessis. Käsitletavad kümnendid kuuluvad noore Eesti Vabariigi kui rahvusriigi arenemise ja ühiskondliku kinnistumise perioodi. See oli Tartu ülikooli (TÜ) kui rahvusülikooli väljakujunemise ajastu, kui akadeemiliseks distsipliiniks muudeti ka etnoloogia. Eriala keskuseks kujunes siiski Eesti Rahva Muuseum (ERM), keskne rahvuslik institutsioon, kus tollased etnoloogid töötasid.

Oma ajalookirjutuses keskendun etnoloogilise praktika analüüsimisele. Vaadeldes teadust praktikana, saab uurimuse keskmesse tõsta üksikuurija ja tema rolli distsipliini arendamisele ja kujunemisele. Etnoloogilist praktikat analüüsid olen huvitatud Eesti etnoloogia lähtealustest ja distsipliini seostest rahvuse, museoloogia ja kultuuripärandi diskursustega käsitletaval perioodil. Senises historiograafias paljuski esiplaanil olnud faktograafia on minu jaoks tugiraamistik, millest lähtudes vaatan tollast etnoloogilist praktikat sügavamalt. Allikate analüüsimisel ning nende ja seniste historiograafiliste artiklite dialoogi asetamisel ilmneb 1920. ja 1930. aastate Eesti etnoloogia märgatavalt mitmepalgelisemana, kui seni arvatud. Senisest täpsemalt selgub, et tollaste etnoloogide välitööd olid väga tihedalt seotud nende teadmusloome protsessiga – nende välitööd ei olnud mõeldud eeskätt muuseumi kogude täiendamiseks. Analüüsil keskendun tollase keskse uurimisobjekti rahvakultuuri mõtestamisele ning avastan mitmetähenduslikkuse ja variatiivsuse, millele pole seni tähelepanu pööratud. Samuti arutlen pikemalt tollase etnoloogia akadeemilisuse, rakenduslikkuse ja rahvusvahelisuse temaatikal.

Eesti etnoloogia kasvas välja 19. sajandi rahvuslikust romantismist, mis oli samaaegselt aluseks Euroopas laiemalt tekkinud folkloristikule ja etnograafilisele uurimistegevusele. Herderlik rahva mütologiseerimine andis tõuke rahvaluule kogumisele ja rahvaelu aspektide tähelepanemisele ja ülesmärkimisele, hakkas levima laiem huvi oma talupoegliku kultuuri vastu. Sajandi lõpus ja järgmise alguses hakati looma folklooriarhiive ja etnograafilisi muuseume, et kokkukogutud „varandust“ hoiustada, arhiveerida ja kataloogida. Nimetatud tegevuste peamiseks ajendiks oli oma rahva identiteedi tugevdamine ja ühtsustunde suurendamine.

1909. aastal asutatud ERM oli üks nendest etnograafilistest rahvuslikest muuseumidest, mis nimetatud diskursuses loodi. Esimesel aastakümnel tegeles

asutus aktiivselt etnograafiliseks peetavate esemete kogumisega, kuid jõudis varsti kogude korrastamise ja esitlemise vajaduse tunnetamiseni. See langes kokku Eesti riikliku iseseisvumisega 1918. aastal, mis omakorda tõukas muuseumi muutmisele teaduslikuks asutuseks.

Selles kontekstis institutsionaliseerus Eesti etnoloogia kahe asutuse – ERM-i ja TÜ – vahelise erialana 1920. aastate alguses. Esialgu toimus see muuseumi direktori ja ülikooli etnoloogiadotsendi Ilmari Mannineni isiku kaudu, kuid õige varsti ka tema õpilaste tegevusväljade kaudu. Erialaõpetuse ja teadustöö allikaline baas asus muuseumis ning sinna said tulevased etnoloogid juba üliõpilaspõlves tööle. Mannineni lahkumise järel 1928. aasta lõpus keskendus kogu etnoloogiline uurimistegevus ERM-i, kus töötavad uurijad käisid ülikoolis erialast õpetust andmas õppeülesandetaitjatena. 1939. aastal loodi TÜ-s etnoloogia professor, mille hõivas senine pikaaegne ERM-i teadustöötaja Gustav Ränk.

Seega oli Eesti etnoloogia vaadeldaval ajastul väga tihedalt seotud muuseumiga ning sellest paratamatult mõjutatud. Etnoloogide teadmusloome lähtepunkt oli sageli museoloogiline, eriti keskendusid just tudengite seminari- ja magistritööd esemetele ja nende tüpoloogiate väljaselgitamisele. Noorte uurijate esimesed välitöödki lähtusid sageli muuseumi vajadustest – asutus dikteeris, kuidas ja mida koguda, kuidas märkmeid üles kirjutada ja mida tähele panna, suunates kujuneva etnoloogi enesemääratlust ja uurimisobjekti mõtestamise viisi. Muuseumi mõju etnoloogilisele praktikale väljendus ka selles, et etnoloogide igapäevatöös oli kutsetöö osakaal suur ning takistas nende pühendumist teadustööle. Muuseumikogude inventeerimise, süstematiseerimise ja täiendamisega kui aluse loomisega rahvakultuurialaste üldistuste tegemiseks oli 1920. aastatel alles alustatud ning see toimus paralleelselt teaduslike teadmiste kirjutamisega. Etnoloogid tegutsesid positivistlikus ja modernistlikus paradigmas, mis väärtustas loodusteaduslikku objektiivsust – kultuurinähtuste tüüpide ja leviku kindlaksmääramiseks oli tarvilik terviklike kogude ja algteadmiste olemasolu terve uuritava ala (Eesti) ulatuses.

Etnoloogide loodud erineva tasandi tekstid, nagu välitööpäevikud, etnograafilised kirjeldused ja teadustööd, aga ka muuseumi tollase püsinäitusega seotud olnud tekstid, olid aluseks dissertatsioonis loodud representatsiooni-kriitikale. Nendes tekstides on etnoloogid kirjeldanud oma uurimisobjekti – Eesti rahvakultuuri. Tänapäevase kriitilise ajalookirjutajana näen tollaste uurijate tekstiloomet mitte objektikeskse antusena, vaid representatsiooniloomena ja küsin küsimusi selle kohta, et keda ja kuidas on varasemad uurijad representeerinud ning missugune on olnud selle pärandi mõju kaasaegsele uurimisele. Uurimistöö analüüsist ilmneb, et pikalt valitsenud rahvakultuuri mõtestamine ajatuse, stabiilsuse ja ühtsuse kategooriate kaudu on lihtsustav – tollased etnoloogid konstrueerisid oma uurimisobjekti varieeruvalt, tingituna institutsionaalsetest ja personaalsetest huvidest ning konkreetsest käsitletavast rahvakultuuri nähtusest. Samuti sõltus rahvakultuuri käsitusviis sellest, missuguse tasandi tekstis seda käsitleti.

Eesti rahvakultuuri püsinäituse kataloogis kirjeldas Manninen ekspositsiooniteemat eraldiseisva ja staatilisena, tema konstruksioon vastab sel viisil eespool viidatud levinud ettekujutusele. Mitmetähenduslik rahvakultuuri retseptsioon ilmneb eelkõige tollaste uurijate välitöömaterjalide analüüsimisel, mis teadmusloome protsessi esmase tasandi allikatena iseloomustavad uurimisobjekti defineerimise kontekstuaalsust. Ka on sõdadevahelisel ajal tegutsenud etnoloogid rõhutanud oma doktoritöodes kui teadmusloome akadeemiliselt kõrgemal astmel asuvates kirjutistes rahvakultuuri mitmekesisust ja muutlikkust. 1920. aastatel aluse pandud etnoloogia programm piiritles uurimisala kitsalt materiaalse talupoegliku kultuuri kirjeldamisena, kuid tegelikult etnoloogilises praktikas nägid uurijad rahvakultuuri nii temaatiliselt kui ka ajaliselt laiemalt nähtusena.

Uurimistöös väärtustan tollaste etnoloogide välitööde materjalide analüüsimist, sest just välitööpäevikutes ja etnograafilistes kirjeldustes avaldub etnoloogilise teadmusloome esmane tasand. Kui tudengite esimesed välitööd lähtusid tavaliselt muuseumipoolsest ettekirjutusest, siis oma magistri- ja doktoritööde jaoks allikate loomisel rakendasid noored etnoloogid välitööd otseselt oma uurimuste teenistusse. Ilma korduvate välitöödeta ei kujutanud nad teadustööd ette – see oli nende akadeemilise *habituse* kindel osa. „Väljale minek“ andis neile võimaluse koguda oma uurimusele usutavust ja autoriteetsust. Välitöökogemus aitas etnoloogidel mõista paremini uuritavaid nähtusi, mõjutades nende arusaamu rahvakultuurist ja teadvustades selle ajaloolist, majanduslikku ja ühiskondlik-kogukondlikku konteksti. Kontekstuaalsuse olulisuse sissekirjutamine erinevatesse rahvakultuuri käsitlevatesse tekstidesse ei tekitanud uurijates küll suuremaid probleeme, kuid selle osakaal sõltus konkreetsest tekstist ning käsitletava ala spetsiifikast.

Eesti etnoloogia kujunes 1920. ja 1930. aastatel rahvuslikuks ja regionaalseks distsipliiniks, mis jäi ühiskondlikest ja poliitilistest oludest tingituna oma olemuselt rakenduslikuks. Selles oli tähtis osa ka erialainimeste vähesusel ja distsipliini seotusel muuseumiga. Kõige ilmekamalt väljendus teaduse rakenduslikkuse aspekt 1930. aastate teisel poolel etnoloogide ja muuseumi osalemisega riiklikus kultuuripropagandas, kui etnoloogilised teadmised rakendati otseselt riikliku kultuuripoliitika teenistusse.

Rakenduslikkuse ja akadeemilisuse problemaatika väljendus ka Eesti etnoloogia kui noore teadusala kõrgetes ambitsioonides ning nende vastuolus tegelevusega, mis aastate jooksul süvenes. Distsipliini eesmärkideks oli tollasele positivistlikule ja modernistlikule lähenemisele vastavalt seatud totaalse, kõiki materiaalse kultuuri nähtusi hõlmava käsitlus(t)e koostamine ja terve maa kaardistamine. Tegelikult olid vähesed tegutsevad etnoloogid aga tihedalt seotud administratiivsete ja kutseülesannetega muuseumis ning akadeemilisele teadmusloomele jäi loodetust vähem aega. Potentsiaal akadeemiliseks teadmusloomeks oli aga suur, eriti kui võtta arvesse II maailmasõja ajal kaitsitud mitmed magistritööd, uue generatsiooni pealekasvamine seoses sellega ning väljakuju-

nenud etnoloogide – Linnuse, Ränga ja Kurriku – aruannetes ja aastaplaanides ilmnevad käsikirjade kavandid.

Distsipliini olemuslik rahvuslikkus ja regionaalsus ei tähendanud akadeemiliselt siiski suletust oma kultuuriruumi. Tollased etnoloogid tegutsesid samal ajal laiemas rahvusvahelises teadmisingluses. Nad olid dialoogis kolleegidega lähematest ja kaugematest riikidest, kus praktiseeriti teadustegevust sarnastel alustel. Seetõttu leiti rahvusvahelistel konverentsidel ja vastastikuses kirjavahetuses ühiseid teemasid, mida tulevikus edasigi arendada. Samuti kuuluti rahvusvahelisse teadlaskonda tänu oma saksakeelsetele teadustöödele.

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