

the whole of the funeral rite, which means that an emotional upsurge was always followed by a relaxation. This proves once more that the funeral rite is a complex system of various states, meditations and instructions aimed at self-preserving, including some elements of ancient magic, the objective of which is to preserve and defend the human being.

The aspect of time and space, the individual and collective aspect and the poetic and ritual aspect characterising the relationship and the interdependence of keens and the dynamics of psychologism in the funeral rites are of major significance, but they do not exhaust the whole volume of the problem under consideration. Here of great importance are such phenomena as the functional orientation and the emotional psychic expressiveness of an individual participant that are determined by a concrete development causing sorrowful feelings; ties of blood; local traditional requirements and some other factors, being important preconditions of a pattern of relations between keening and the psychologism of the funeral rite.

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³Nemcova, B. Obrazy ze zhivota slovenskeho. In: *Časopis Musea Kralovstvi Českoho*. r 33. sv 4. 1859, p. 508.

⁴The Record Office of the Institute of Art, Ethnography and Folklore of Byelorussia, fund 4, record 89, file 243, notebook 1, page 36. Recorded by V. Sysov in the village of Yasenets, Mosyr region of the Gomel district in 1989, contributed by G. Kutko, born in 1924.

⁵Op cit., p. 61. Contributed by S. Tkach, born in 1928.

ABOUT THE LIFE AND WORK OF AN ECCENTRIC

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The ranks of the most outstanding Estonian folklorists, reaching from J. Hurt to M. J. Eisen, to O. Kallas and W. Anderson, are today finished with Oskar Loorits, Academician of the Estonian Academy of Sciences during the period

of the Estonian Republic. Although people generally know his name, it is quite difficult to compile a comprehensive survey of his life and work.

First, any treatment of O. Loorits, nay, the whole period from 1918 to 1940, was a taboo until the very recent years, and to there are no serious treatises about the science and scientists of that period. Second, O. Loorits's personal archive has not been assembled and is still scattered over Sweden, Finland and Estonia. His brother Aleksander Loorits did bring some important materials to Estonia, but not all. For example, we still do not know the location of Loorits's Livonian folklore collections. And his published heritage – now, at last, available – is so voluminous that it would hardly be able to treat with equal attention all the aspects of his work. Therefore the following treatment should be seen only as a short survey of the life work of a man who has left a deep impression on the Estonian folklore studies.

Oskar Loorits was born in Suure-Kõpu in the family of a community clerk on November 9, 1900. Since 1914 he studied at Tartu Alexander Gymnasium. Having finished his studies in the high school, he took part in the Estonian War of Independence as a volunteer. In 1919 he entered the Faculty of Philosophy of Tartu University, where he attended lectures on the Estonian language, folklore, history of literature and philosophy. Having graduated in 1922, he took his Master's degree for his work on the phonology of the Kõpu dialect (published in the ACUT series in 1939). He received a scholarship for 1923-1927 and already in 1926 he defended his doctoral dissertation 'Livonian Folk Belief', which was published in the same year as the first volume of a comprehensive work. So, Oskar Loorits became one of the youngest doctors in the Estonian humanities. While in Finland, where he looked into the Finnish folklore studies under the guidance of K. Krohn, he opened negotiations on the establishment of a folklore research centre. This was to be based on J. Hurt's collections. At first the centre was to be founded at Tartu University, but later it was decided to set up an independent Estonian Folklore Archives at the Estonian National Museum. The government of the republic did not pass the regulations for handing over J. Hurt's collections until May 6, 1927. The representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Estonian National Museum, Tartu University and J. Hurt's heirs formed a committee to direct the Archives; W. Anderson was elected chairman of the committee, and O. Loorits was appointed director of the Archives. Parallelly (in 1927-1937) he also served as assistant professor at Tartu University. When the Estonian Academy of Sciences was established in 1938, Loorits was nominated Academician. No doubt there were those who questioned his qualification. As if to measure up to the designation, in 1939 he published two monographs and a voluminous collection of texts. In 1938-39 he continued as assistant professor at Tartu University, and after W. Anderson's

departure to Germany in 1939 he was appointed acting professor of the Estonian and comparative folklore studies, the post he occupied until 1941.

Loorits managed to escape from the Soviet repression, but not the German one. He lost the professorship, in 1942 also the post of the director of the Estonian Folklore Archives, and finally he was even forbidden to live in Tartu. In 1944 he managed to get to Sweden where in 1944-1947 he worked as assistant in an archive, and in 1947-1961 as a grant-aided scholar of the Dialect and Folklore Archives of Uppsala University. O. Loorits died in Stockholm on December 12, 1961.

Loorits died too early – in his best creative years. Before going any deeper, I would like to quote some figures (based on Aime Luht's bibliography¹): Oskar Loorits has published 36 works, 25 of them on folklore studies (6 in exile), 5 on linguistics and 6 essays on current affairs (3 in exile). He has written 198 scientific articles (treatises, surveys, reports, etc.), 58 of them in exile. The majority of the articles (140), naturally, deal with folklore (35 of them written in exile). A good fourth part, however, concern quite different spheres: language, Estonianisation of personal names, the development of the Livonian literature, the history of culture, etc. He has also written 40 book reviews (18 of them in exile). Most of the reviews also concern works on folklore, particularly folk belief. There are his reviews of other things as well, though: for example, of P. Voolaine's play *Maajumala poig*, 1933, and of Asta Villmann's collection of poems *Ihuiiksi*, 1950. O. Loorits has never been afraid to shake the public with his sharp and critical remarks. Over 200 satirical articles and epigrams under his own name or a pseudonym represent his reactions to one or another social phenomenon. I know no other productive scientist who would be so keen on pointing out the defects in the public affairs. However, it would not be correct to regard Loorits an ideologist, like A. Annist, or an oppositionist, like J. Kõpp. He lacked his own positive programme for that. Oskar Loorits was a critic who pointed out any faults he found in anybody's words or deeds. But this is a quite different matter.

O. Loorits's work in the sphere of folklore can be divided in three stages. The first one covers the period between 1920-1927, when he was mostly engaged in the collection and publication of the Livonian folklore. The second stage from 1927 to 1942 is mainly concerned with the establishment and formation of the Estonian Folklore Archives. The third stage is his work in exile.

The first time Oskar Loorits was taken to the Livonian settlements was in 1920 by Lauri Kettunen. From that time until the establishment of ERA (the initials for *Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiiv*, Estonian Folklore Archives) he visited the Livonians eight times. He collected a huge amount of material. According to the data in his doctoral dissertation his Livonian Folklore Archives include 8501

texts. Besides, he went through the Livonian collections that were at the disposal of other researchers or organisations. So, already in 1926 he could publish the catalogue *Livische Märchen- und Sagenvarianten* (FFC 66). In the same year appeared the first volume of his *Liivi rahva usund* ('The Livonian Folk Beliefs'), followed by the second volume in 1927 and the third in 1928. The fourth volume is still in manuscript. His very first works already revealed his characteristic traits: he quoted a lot of texts in full, instead of giving only an extract or even referring to them. Second, he gave a great number of etymologies. Though not a polyglot like W. Anderson, Loorits has a fluent command of our neighbours' languages, and a good foundation of linguistic knowledge allows him to present even unexpected etymologies – which we have to accept, for want of better ones. Loorits illustrates the Livonian material with numerous Latvian and, especially, Estonian parallels (he has been to many parishes specially for collecting and recording those equivalents). In 1927 he published a small collection of Livonian legends in Estonian. A comprehensive publication was his *Volkslieder der Liven* that appeared in 1936. This first and unfortunately also the only academic publication of Livonian folklore did not receive the attention it would have deserved, because, as it came out, the Livonian folk songs represented the so-called newer layer of songs which had nothing to do with the older Baltic-Finnic runo verse. Perhaps an academic publication of some other genre, such as folk tales or legends, would have been of greater benefit for the comparative research work. As things were, this monumental work remained isolated, with little, if any, significance for the comparative research of Baltic-Finnic folklore.

The Livonian folklore was Loorits's first and lasting love until the end of his life. Now and again he published short works on the Livonian material: in 1931 his article *Eesti-liivi kalurite sõnakeeld ja salakeel* ('Taboo words and jargon of the Estonian-Livonian fishermen') was published in *Virittäjä*. This material is later used in his monograph *Gedanken-, Tat- und Worttabu bei den Estnischen Fischern* (Tartu, 1939). In 1932 two of his articles are published – *Die Geburt in der livischen Volksüberlieferung* and *Der Tod in der livischen Volksüberlieferung*. In 1945, after the War, *Virittäjä* again published his two articles on the Livonian material: *Liivi usundi kultuurilooline taust* ('The cultural background of the Livonian folk belief') and *Liivi usundi mandumisprotsess* ('The processes of decay of the Livonian folk belief'). In 1951 he published perhaps the most important of his Livonian short treatises – *Das livische Kalendarium*. In 1952 appeared his *Über den sog. Vogelbetrug bei den Esten und Liven*, and in 1955 his survey of the Livonian funeral traditions. His last work on the Livonian issues appeared in 1958 – *Eine altrussische Tradition bei den Liven und Letten*.

So Oskar Loorits worked on the Livonian issues for 32 years. We have to admit that only three of his works concern folklore in the narrower sense of the word – the catalogue of folk tales, the collection of songs and the selection of legends. All the treatises deal with the issues of beliefs and customs. The most important thing was, however, that he collected an admirable amount of Livonian tradition, was the first to analyse it, and raised the Livonian material to an outstanding position in the research work of the Baltic-Finnic folklore.

It is regrettable that the last 45 years have added only one notable publication of Livonian texts (V. Mälk. *Liivi Vanasõnad I-II* ('Livonian Proverbs'), 1981). Also, we can point out not a single treatise about the Livonian issues to measure up to Loorits's work. Therefore everything we know about the Livonian tradition is in one way or another connected with the name of Oskar Loorits. His *Livica* alone would deserve a respectable place in the folklore studies, although it is no doubt the lesser part of his lifework.

The second stage in Loorits's scientific career is divided in two, not temporally, but according to their content – on the one hand research and publication work, which is better known, of course, and on the other, the formation of the Estonian Folklore Archives, of which not so many people are fully aware.

So, on September 24, 1927, O. Loorits was appointed director of ERA, and his assistant was to be student P. Ariste – at first for a fixed term of six months. On May 15, 1929, R. Viidalepp and H. Tampere were employed provisionally. On May 19, 1930, the folklore archives could fix a permanent staff of five members: O. Loorits, director, P. Ariste, assistant director, and R. Viidalepp, H. Tampere and O. Jõgever, copiers. O. Loorits had considered everything thoroughly. Their first task was to collect the materials together. They succeeded beyond expectations. Within half a year, ERA had acquired – purchased, obtained as donations or deposits – all the Estonian folklore collections (257,967 pages all in all).

The collection of the Borderland Society (or Sommer's collection) was not incorporated into the Folklore Archives until after the annexation of Estonia, when the societies were closed down. V. Randmets's private collection remained, and we have no information about its size or what became of it (there have been rumours that only some poor remnants of it are still there). Unfortunately, W. Anderson did not hand over his collection of Jewish folklore to ERA – they say that the reason was his conflicts with O. Loorits – and it was destroyed in Königsberg during the war.

Second, the collected material had to be made available for the researchers. For that, they had to compile registers (general, collectors, places, and only years after the register of singers and narrators was added). But Loorits who was interested in the history of folk beliefs and customs could well see that to

look for short belief accounts in the registers was a sheer waste of time. He decided to copy the whole material (including short forms) on the index cards and to file them according to the subject. It was easy to decide, but there was not enough labour to fulfil the great task. Again, Loorits found the solution. It was the period of economic depression. Loorits applied for a grant of 500 crowns per year from the Fund of National Economy, which subsidised relief works. For that money he had proverbs, riddles, sayings, belief and custom accounts copied from the original collections by students and unemployed intellectuals. For example, in 1933 ERA employed 22 clerks and relief workers. The archives were especially busy between 1933-1937. The latest sum from the Fund of National Economy was received on October 25, 1940 (thus the total sum received amounted to 5000 crowns). Naturally, the Archives were also funded by the Ministry of Education, i.e. the government. The original budget of the Estonian Folklore Archives was 750 crowns per year, but in 1939/40 the Ministry of Education allotted already 17,000 crowns for the regular budget of ERA. Loorits also applied for, and received, an additional sum of 2000 crowns per year from the Cultural Fund. So it is no wonder that within such a short time all the files were created as we know them today: *inorganic world, folk astronomy, folk botany, human life, animals, dreams, folk medicine*, etc. I think I am not mistaken when I aver that these files are the most wanted of all the funds of the Estonian Folklore Archives and of the Folklore Department of the Literary Museum. Loorits's idea to arrange the material in this way was positively ingenious. I would like to emphasise that the folklore archives of the Finnish Literary Society (*Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura*) did not have anything like that at those times. The copying and arrangement of the material was Loorits's own design. Of course, we cannot say that Loorits himself made up all those files. He just gave the idea, laid the foundations, and created the system. The updating of the files has continued until the present day and it will be one of the main tasks of our folklorists even in the future.

Being still interested in folk belief and seeing the inadequacy of the folklore collections, Loorits saw his third task in the need to complement these with new material. So he started a campaign of collecting, that is to say, he created a folklore collection called also Estonian Folklore Archives (following the Resolution of the Committee of March 17, 1929). In the beginning the collection work was funded by the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Literary Society. In 1929/30 ERA had 10 grant-aided collectors: P. Ariste, L. Lepp, V. Noot, R. Põldmäe, H. Tamper, and R. Viidalepp, and the pairs H. Paukson and V. Koch, and E. Laugaste and E. Oja. In 1930/31 there were 6 grant-aided scholars (K. Leichter being the newcomer). From 1933 the grants were paid by ERA, and the total amount of payments within 4 years (1933-1937) was 3204 crowns. There

were well-known names among the grant-aided scholars, such as Leili Takk, Amanda Raadla, Ello Kirss, Enda Ennist, and others. It should be mentioned that since 1936 they have also been collecting local Russian folklore. Probably we can draw no sharp line between a grant-aided collector and an employee of ERA. The latter also received grants for their collection work. So, the folklore collection ERA was compiled with the work of the ERA employees, grant-aided helpers and correspondents. The number of the latter has changed during the years. In 1938 the estimated number of correspondents was 227, 163 of them active. In order to establish closer ties with its correspondents, ERA began to issue the newsletter *Rahvapärimuse Selgitaja* ('Illuminator of the Folk Tradition'), which appeared twice a year since 1936. The newsletter published instructional and inspiring writings, collection plans, reports of collection work, biographical data, surveys of the work of the folklore archives of the neighbouring countries, etc. In 1934 they also started to give annual Presidential Awards to the best collectors. From 1937 courses were organised for folklore collectors and correspondents. This inevitably helped to intensify the work. So, in 1937 the ERA collection stored the greatest amount of Estonian folklore – 134,431 pages. When the collection was completed, its 265,098 pages exceeded the total amount of pages in all previous collections of Estonian folklore (257,967).

As the director of the rapidly growing folklore archives, Loorits followed the principle that their first and foremost task was to put the material in order and to make it handy for the researchers. Summarising his five years' work,² Loorits said that a competent method of arrangement was more important than any theory. In pre-planning the publications, Loorits was very cautious, preferring the selective or, as we say today, anthological principle. In his research and publication work of folk beliefs and customs he set up three musts: 1) you must go through the **whole** material; 2) it must be presented in a logically **systematised** form, taking into account the distribution; 3) the material must be presented as **authentic text**, not retold with your own words. Although E. Päss was the person mentioned as a negative example, it was M. J. Eisen who suffered most from the blow. Between the same covers there is also Loorits's article *Vanavara kultuuriloo teenistusse!* ('Folklore must serve the needs of culture'), which presented his view or methodical approach to folklore. The title of the article betrays its general trends, but it is quite honest. Indeed, Loorits tried not so much to analyse folklore from the cultural aspects, but to illustrate cultural history with the information provided by folklore. The final goal was culture, a great synthesis, and not the study of folklore. And from this point, we may proceed to discuss Loorits as a folklore researcher.

His first work in the sphere of Estonian folklore seems to have been the article *Vägilaste prototüüpe* ('Hero prototypes'), which was published in the jubilee album of M. J. Eisen's 70th birthday, in 1927. The article deals with a marginal field of folklore, namely non-traditional narratives of men of great strength, narratives that could become legends under certain conditions. Remarkable is Loorits's sceptical attitude towards the attempts of the Finnish school to explain these phenomena as loans and to content oneself with establishing their ways of borrowing and place of origin (without determining the preconditions of why such a story should be conceived at all). Here we should also mention that the majority of the quoted texts (36 out of 58) are taken from Loorits's personal notes.

The above-mentioned article is followed by reports of collecting, biographical articles for reference books, and other hardly noticeable, but still quite important pen-work. His next research work ripened by 1930, and *Virittäjä* published his *Sotarosvojen nimityksiä Viron kansantietoudessa*. This in its turn is followed by a more far-reaching study *Der norddeutsche Klabautermann im Ostbalkicum*, which tackles the Estonian and Livonian records concerning the *Klabautermann* ('Guardian spirit of a ship') (and complains about the scarcity of the corresponding material from Latvia). 1932 is a somewhat revolutionary year, as then Loorits published two of his works that have not lost their moment even today. One of them is his *Esthische Volksdichtung und Mythologie*, a German-language introduction into our folklore studies, regions of folklore, and folk beliefs. It is a laconic, but pithy survey. It is amazing how good knowledge of the collected folklore material Loorits managed to acquire within only five years. It demonstrates the educational importance of the compilation of general catalogues and the arrangement of the collected material. His other work is the popular *Eesti rahvausundi maailmavaade* ('The philosophy of the Estonian folk religion') (2nd edition in Sweden in 1948, 3rd edition in Estonia, 1989), which introduces the concepts of animism and animatism with the help of the Estonian material and Estonian scientific vocabulary. The same year sees also the publication of Loorits's study on folk tales *Das Märchen vom gestohlenen Donnerinstrument bei den Esten*. As a specialist in folk religion, he perhaps took a too simplified approach to the specific traits of folk tales. Anyway, after a decade W. Anderson reacts with a special writing *Zu dem estnischen Märchen vom gestohlenen Donnerinstrument* (1940). And indeed, in later years Loorits confined himself to questions concerning legends and pure folk religion.

In 1934, in accordance with his programme mentioned above – folklore must serve the needs of culture – Loorits published the article *Kujutelmade ja motiivistiku päritolust ja vanadusest* ('The origin and age of concepts and

motifs’), where he analyses some unexpected concurring motifs in literature and folklore, pointing out their probable parallel origin, and preferring the vertical study of these ideas to the theory of borrowed motifs and the so-called horizontal research of the Finnish school. However, here the main weak point of Loorits’s work is unveiled – he trusts the collectors and does not check the authenticity of the texts, taking them *eo ipso* for gospel truth. This is the reason why his article *Koit ja Hämarik* (Dawn and Dusk, *Virittäjä* 1935) should be considered groundless – it is based on the information provided by a correspondent who obviously relied on Faehlmann’s myth. Even Loorits’s ardent fervour cannot convince us of the popular origin of the myth. On the other hand, his *Mulgimaa ohvrikohad* (‘The sacrificing sites of the Mulgimaa region’, also 1935) does make sense.

In general, 1935 was a productive year for Loorits. Two of his weightiest monographs were published – *Das mißhandelte und sich rächende Feuer*, part I, and *Pharaos Heer in der Volksüberlieferung*, part I. He also continued his systematic work on the problems and technical terms in the research of folk belief. In 1936 his article *Uku* appeared in *Virittäjä*. In 1939, after a brief respite filled with all sorts of reports and surveys, he published the serious monograph *Gedanken-, Tat- und Worttabu bei den estnischen Fischern*. In 1940 there appeared the treatise *Ununevast kultuurimiljööst* (‘A cultural environment falling into oblivion’), which has probably attracted the least argument of all his works, as well as the monograph *Das sogenannte Weiberfest bei den Russen und Setukesen in Estland*. Pointing out the differences of traditions in the Russian and Estonian villages, Loorits comments that the tradition is known neither among the Orthodox Karelians nor the Latgales (the author has been there to examine whether the tradition is known). In 1941 he issues a somewhat exceptional paper, *Yuryev den v narodnoi traditsii russkogo naseleniya ‘Estonii* (another edition of the work was published in Germany in 1955 under the title *Der heilige Georg in der russischen Volksüberlieferung Estlands*).

This finished the second stage in Loorits’s career. However, I would like to say some words about his folklore publications. He published a series of folk narratives under the title *Vanarahva pärimus* (‘Ancient Estonian narratives’) in the series *Keel ja Kirjandus* in 1934 (2nd edition 1936, which served as basis for the 1959 German edition *Estnische Volkserzählungen*). Together with S. Kutti and H. Tampere he published a collection of Estonian folk songs, *Valimik eesti rahvalaulu*, which appeared in the same series in 1935 (there have been rumours that the actual compilation work was done by S. Kutti and H. Tampere, Loorits’s contribution amounted to the concluding article *Eesti rahvalaulude esteetilisest, psühholoogilisest ja kultuuriloolisest tagapõhjast* (‘The aesthetic,

psychological and cultural background of the Estonian folk songs'), and his name on the cover).

Quite new trends in the publication of the material were revealed in Loorits's work *Endis-eesti elu-olu I. Lugemispalu kaluri ja meremehe elust*. ('Life in Ancient Estonia. Part 1: Readings on the life of fishermen and seafarers'; 1935). Here the material has been arranged according to the subject. All folklore genres have been included, whereas descriptions of everyday life (that might be called non-traditional narratives) are preferred. Such a collection has not much to offer to a scientist, since the material is not provided with the usual references and comments of a folklore publication – but for an amateur fan it may well be the most exciting information that can ever be found in the folklore collections. There is something for everybody, I can say it from my personal experience. The first volume was followed by the second one in 1941, called *Lugemispalu metsaelust ja jahindusest* ('Readings on forest life and hunting'). Some people have been saying that there is a third part of the manuscript, dealing with farm life and agriculture. The series should certainly be continued.

It seems as if Loorits's research work has no pivotal issue. Here he deals with the beliefs and legends of the coast dwellers, there with the customs of the Setus. The fact that all his works, both great monographs and short treatises, served a single goal, became obvious only at the third stage of his career, when his masterpiece *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens* was published (volume 1 - 1949, 2 - 1952-53, 3 - 1957-60). This is a monumental work, comprising 1771 pages, with the list of references including 288 works in 14 different languages; over 74 types of folk tales have been analysed. The photos and maps of distribution have probably never been counted, but it is great. The 264 chapters or sections elucidate all genres of the Estonian folklore. This work can really be considered the Bible of the Estonian folklore. The systematic-analytical part of the work does not arouse many objections, but that cannot be said about the synthesis given in the summary. But whatever the critique, it still is a great work that systematically deals with all phenomena of the folk belief, from the concept of the soul to a human being's birth, life and death. We can complement and specify the information given by Loorits, and indeed, we must do it, but we do not need to start from the very beginning. The basic work has already been done. Naturally, the *Grundzüge* is the crown of Loorits's work.

But this is not his only work of the third stage by far. I will not list his short treatises that pale before this *magnum opus*. What should be mentioned, however, is his monograph *Der heilige Kassian und die Schaltjahrlegende* (FFC 149, published 1954). It is interesting to note that Loorits had published a variant of the Kassian legend with commentaries in Lyublyana (in the Serbo-

Croatian language) as early as in 1937. Did he then ponder a monograph already? Anyway, it is a legend known in the Greek Catholic areas of Eastern Europe. Here Loorits brought in global material (collected from all over East Europe) and pointed out the ways and time of distribution of the legend. In fact, it is his only study where he draws on international (and not only Estonian, Livonian or Baltic) material. In 1950 he published the book *Okupatsioon rahvapilke kõverpeeglis* ('Reflections of the occupation in the popular jokes').

In 1961, this prolific scientist, publisher and essayist did not issue any writings. It is to be regretted that Loorits's only treatise on folk songs about 'The Golden Woman' was never published. Only two parts of it have appeared in the annals of *Kalevalaseura*: in 1946 *Kultaneidon taonta Virossa ja Suomessa* and posthumously in 1964 *Kontaminaatiot ja kulkusäkeet*. For a researcher of folk songs this monograph of his would have been priceless. O. Loorits's manuscript heritage has not been studied thoroughly, but it is clear that it immense.

How should we estimate Oskar Loorits? Until this day he is the greatest collector and researcher of the Livonian folklore. He is the founder of the Estonian Folklore Archives. Actually, ERA was the institution that made fruitful research work in the sphere of the Estonian folklore possible at all, and this alone would carve his name into the history of our folklore studies. Loorits also established a folklore collection called Estonian Folklore Archives. Unquestionably it was R. Viidalepp who did most of the work in its formation, but nevertheless, Loorits was the founder. And until the present day Loorits has been the most prolific researcher in the Estonian folklore studies.

On the other hand, after reading through O. Loorits's writings (including topical essays), we have to admit that until the end of his life he was fettered by prejudices and preconceived ideas. Namely, he idealised the ancient Estonians as Finno-Ugrians. They were, as he claimed, tolerant and lived in harmony with each other and with the nature. The nearer to his times, the more the Estonian folk belief and world outlook were corrupted by foreign, especially German, influences. From his contemporaries, Loorits thought simple peasants, preferably illiterate, the most acceptable and the closest to his ideals. How warmly he has written about the old Livonian and Setu men and women! Folklore collectors and correspondents were also quite close to Loorits's ideals, therefore he never dreamed of questioning the authenticity of their information. Quite another matter was that sometimes you could complain of collectors preferring material that was easier to record. However, the more educated a person was, the farther was he from Loorits's ideal. The worst people were his fellow professors with their flourishing Germanic 'self-conceited negation of the others'. Naturally, this position of his is mostly revealed in his topical articles, but not

only there. Even in his scientific works we can find some hardly explainable sarcasm or outright fits of rage at his fellow exiles. This continual distrust and hatred clouded his own life, above all. If we see this *idee fixe* of his, we can understand his scientific work better. And this is our very goal.

Translated by Kai Vassiljeva

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THE FOLK MUSICIAN IN FOCUS: Some Aspects On The Study Of The Individual

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The individual is more or less absent in the older parts of our folk music archives. The pioneers of collecting were seldom interested in those who sang or played, only in the songs and tunes. Therefore, it is not surprising that many folk music studies are dealing with the folk music material, not the folk musicians.

'It is a paradox', as Bruno Nettl remarks in his introduction to the study of ethnomusicology, 'that folk music scholars in their fieldwork have always been meeting individual singers and players, but back home often write about groups. Just compare with the history of classical music, which stubbornly has concentrated on the creative individuals, i.e. the 'great names'. In those works groups or contexts constantly play a minor role.'¹

The original view upon folk music, from the romantic era, seems to be still alive. Up to the recent days folk music has been regarded as a phenomenon only belonging to groups – and particular circumstances have made it worth studying. This perspective from before is also deeply rooted outside the scientific society. It is, for example, often outspoken by representatives for the folk musicians' organisations.² Many copyright societies express the same opinion in their way of handling folk music.³