



**Akadeemiline Rahvaluule Selts**

# Välitööd muutunud oludes

25. novembril 2021

**Ettekannete teesid**

Tartu 2021

*Konverentsi korraldajad:*

Akadeemiline Rahvaluule Selts

Tartu Ülikooli eesti ja võrdleva rahvaluule osakond

Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi folkloristika osakond

*Toetajad:*

Eesti Teadusagentuuri rahastatav projekt

«Folkloristlik vaade kuulumisele ja mitte-kuulumisele Eestis» (PUT PSG48)

Akadeemiline Rahvaluule Selts

*Teesikogumiku toimetajad:*

Reet Hiimäe

Merili Metsvahi

*Küljendaja:*

Andrus Tins

ISBN 978-9949-9729-8-2 (pdf)

# Kava / program

25. november / 25th of November 2021

Tartu ülikooli raamatukogu Tõstamaa seminariruumis ja veebis / at the University of Tartu Library (room Tõstamaa) and via Internet

10.05-10.15	avamine / opening
10.15-10.45	<b>Reet Hiimäe</b> , <i>“Eksootilised“ välitööd globaliseerivas maailmas: väljakutsed ja õppetunnid</i>
10.45-11.15	<b>Pihla Maria Siim</b> , <i>Tagasipöördujate veebiintervjuud</i>
11.15-11.45	<b>Anu Korb</b> , <i>Mängukirjelduste kogumisest Venemaa eesti kogukondades ja emamaale naasnud eestlaste juures</i>

11.45-12.15	<b>Saara Mildeberg</b> , <i>Vältimatud pahed ja välitööd hüljatud maastikel</i>
12.15-13.15	lõuna / lunch
13.15-13.45	<b>Anastasiya Fiadotava</b> , <i>Digital Folklore and Digital Fieldwork: Combining Methods and Transforming the Discipline?</i>
13.45-14.15	<b>Michele Tita</b> , <i>Re-adjusting to “Normality” During Fieldwork in the Italian Alps</i>
14.15-14.45	<b>Kareng Ronghangpi</b> , <i>Fieldwork in Changed Circumstances through the Case Study on Nihu Kachiri</i>
14.45-15.15	kohvipaus / coffee break
15.15-15.45	<b>Rahul Koonathara; Atul Sinha</b> , <i>A Critical Examination of Shift in Various Processes of Folklore Transmission of Tholpavakoothu during the Pandemic</i>

15.45-16.15	<b>Progoti Chetana Bakshi</b> , <i>Ramayana Studies: Importance of Fieldwork for Searching Ramayana-related Epigraphy and Inscriptions</i>
16.15-16.45	<b>Nabyendu Roy Choudhury</b> , <i>Bengali Baoul Song: a Field Study</i>
16.45-17.00	lõppsõna / concluding words

## Eessõna

Seekordse välitöökonverentsi teemaks on välitööd muutunud oludes. Arutluse alla võetakse see, milliseid senitundmatuid või loovalt kombineeritud võimalusi ja meetodeid välitööde tegemiseks on pakkunud ja pakub uudne olukord, mis on valitsenud maailmas 2020. aasta kevadtalvest. Üks laiemalt huvipakkuv teemade ring on küsimus sellest, kuidas on toiminud uurijad, kes planeerisid teha uurimistööd omaenda kogutud materjali põhjal ja kelle kavandatud välitööde periood langes kokku reisi- ja liikumiskiirangute ajaga. Kui planeeritud välitööd pidid toimuma kodust kaugel, kas siis otsustati välitööd ära jätta ja orienteeruda ümber teist laadi allikmaterjalile? Kui tehti siiski välitöid, siis kuidas? Mil moel õnnestus leida intervjuueeritavaid, kui ei olnud võimalik kohale sõita? Mismoodi neid intervjuueeriti, kui silmast silma kohtumine oli võimatu? Milline oli lahendus, kui need, keda sooviti intervjuueerida, ei tundnud ennast digimaailmas kodus? Kuidas sedalaadi välitööd sujusid ning mis olid nende eelised ja puudused võrreldes „traditsiooniliste“ välitöödega? Kui kavandatud välitööd pidid toimuma kodus või kodulinnas, kuidas tuli need ümber mõtestada? Suure väljakutsega pistsid rinda need uurijad, kes olid plaaninud läbi viia vaatlust või osalusvaatlust. Kui plaanitud viisil (osalus)vaatluse tegemine ei olnud võimalik, kas mõjus see pigem frustrerivalt või innustas otsima seninägematuid lahendusi?

Osa teemasid on seotud n-ö uue ajastu väljakutsetega neile uurijatele, kes valisid uurimisteema 2020. a märtsist hiljem. Ühiskondlikud murrangu- ja kriisiajad pakuvad folkloori levikuks väga soodsaid tingimusi. Kuidas valiti sellisel folkloori vohamise ajajärgul uurimisteema ja milliste meetoditega koguti materjal? Millised uued uurimisperspektiivid avanesid? Milliseid uusi avastusi tehti internetivälitööde võimaluste kohta? Milliste raskuste või uudsete küsimuste ja väljakutsetega silmitsi seisti? Kas välitööde mõtestamises toimus mingisuguseid muutusi? Loodame, et konverentsi arutelud võimaldavad paremini valmistuda ka tulevasteks välitöödeks.

## Preface

The topic of this year's fieldwork conference is fieldwork in changed circumstances. The presentations focus on fieldwork in the period of societal change that began in March 2020. There will be discussion on what new or creatively combined opportunities and methods for fieldwork have occurred during this new situation that has prevailed in the world for more than a year and a half now. One of the topics that is going to be discussed is how researchers who planned to carry out research on the basis of their own collected material and whose planned fieldwork period coincided with travel and movement restrictions solved the situation. If the planned fieldwork had to take place away from home, did a reorientation to some other type of source material take place? In case that fieldwork was still done, then how? How did one manage to find suitable interviewees if it was not possible to travel? How were they interviewed when a face-to-face meeting was not possible? What was the solution if the interviewees did not feel at home in the digital world? How did this type of fieldwork succeed, and what were its advantages and disadvantages compared to "traditional" fieldwork? If the planned fieldwork was to take place at home or in a hometown, what kind of rethinking did it require? Researchers who planned to conduct an observation or participatory observation faced specific challenges. If it was not possible to carry out the (participatory) survey in the planned way, was it frustrating, or did it rather encourage finding unprecedented solutions?

Some topics are related to the challenges of the so-called new era for those researchers who chose a research topic from March 2020 onwards. Times of social upheaval and crisis offer favourable conditions for the spread of folklore. How did one choose the research topic in such an era of folklore outburst and by what methods was the material collected? What new research perspectives opened up? What new discoveries were made about the possibilities of online fieldwork? What difficulties or novel questions and challenges did one face? Were there any changes in the meaning of the fieldwork? We hope that the discussions at the conference will also allow us to better prepare for future fieldwork.

*Reet Hiimäe & Merili Metsvahi*

## Ettekannete teesid / abstracts

### „Eksootilised“ välitööd globaliseerivas maailmas: väljakutsed ja õppetunnid

Reet Hiimäe

Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi folkloristika osakond

*reet@folklore.ee*

Tuues näiteid viimastel aastatel tehtud välitöödelt Lõuna-Aafrikas, Tansaania ja Mehhikos (neist viimased kaks koroona-aastatel), avan selliste välitöödega seotud probleeme ja mõttekohti. Kui palju peaks olema uurijal enda omast oluliselt erinevasse kultuuri välitöödele minnes eelteadmisi ja ettevalmistust? Kas peaks usaldama pigem seda, mida näed ise osalusvaatlusel, või seda, millised kommentaarid tulevad kohalikelt informantidelt, kui nende kahe teabeliigi vahel on vastuolud? Kas peaks keskenduma võimalikult eksootilisele materjalile või dokumenteerima ka seda, mis sarnaneb koduse eluga? Kas parem on ülim avatus ja paindlikkus vastavalt oludele või siiski jäämine varem ettevalmistatud ja konkreetsetest uurijahuvidest lähtuva küsitluskava juurde? Senine kogemus näitab, et globaalse infovahetuse maailmas on otstarbekas vältida igasugust kultuurilist eeldamist ning on pigem ootuspärane, kui avastad, et Lõuna-Aafrikas suulu hõimukultuuri tutvustava mehe lõvinahk on tegelikult polüestrist, sind Tansaania masaiide iidsele pühale mäele juhtinud traditsioonilise atribuutikaga giid on ise sünnist saati kristlane ja Mehhiko algupärase indiaanikülas kuulnud sapoteegi hõimusümbolite lahtiseletus sarnaneb üks-ühele lõikudega Carlos Castaneda raamatutest.



## Tagasipöördujate veebiintervjuud

**Pihla Maria Siim**

Tartu Ülikooli eesti ja võrdleva rahvaluule osakond

*pihla.siim@ut.ee*

Räägin oma ettekandes kümnest veebiintervjuust, mille tegin 2020. aasta suvel. Soovisin intervjuuerida välismaalt Eestisse tagasi pöördunud või tagasipöördumist kaaluvaid inimesi. Keskendusin eelkõige sellele, kas ja kuidas koroonapandeemia on nende tagasipöördumise plaani või Eesti eluga kohanemist mõjutanud. Intervjuueritavad leidsin tagasipöördujaid ühendava Facebooki grupi kaudu. Kõik eelistasid intervjuu keskkonnana Skype'i ja Messengeri Zoomile. Minus tekitas intervjuu läbiviimine Messengeris esialgu kõhklusi, aga lähtusin intervjuueritavate soovist. Intervjuud kestsid keskmiselt poolteist tundi.

Kolm intervjuueritavatest elasid 2020. aasta suvel endiselt välismaal ja seitse Eesti erinevates paikades. Veebiintervjuud pakkusid võimaluse küsitleda inimesi, kellega silmast silma kohtumine oleks nõudnud suuri ajalisi ning rahalisi ressursse. Välismaal elades olid intervjuueritavad juba enne koroonakriisi harjunud oma Eesti sugulaste ja tuttavatega ühendust hoidma interneti teel, seega erinevad tehnilised võimalused ning nende plussid ja miinused ei tulnud nendele üllatusena. Analüüsin oma ettekandes veebiintervjuude erinevusi ja sarnasusi võrreldes n-ö tavaliste intervjuudega, pöörates tähelepanu sellistele märksõnadele nagu lähedus, kontakt, suhtluse intensiivsus ning emotsionaalsus.

## Mängukirjelduste kogumisest Venemaa eesti kogukondades ja emamaale naasnud eestlaste juures

### Anu Korb

Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiiv

*anu.korb@folklore.ee*

Ajavahemikul 1991–2013 külastasin Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiivi välitööde raames erinevaid Venemaa eesti kogukondi. Küsitlemisel keskendusin vanema põlvkonna eestlastele ning kogusin võimalikult mitmekesist pärimusainest, sealhulgas mängude kirjeldusi ja oma vestluskaaslaste lapsepõlvemälestusi.

2020. aastal osalesin Rahvusaaslaste programmi arhiiviprojektis „Eestisse tagasipöördunud Venemaal sündinud eestlaste ja nende järeltulijate mängude kirjelduste ja lapsepõlvemälestuste kogumine“ (projektijuht Astrid Tuisk). Projekti raames pidin 2020. aasta suvel-sügisel intervjuuerima põhiliselt 1930.–1940. aastail Venemaa eesti kogukondades sündinud ning lapseas ühes vanematega või noorpõlves Eestisse elama asunud eestlasi Virumaal, Harjumaal jm. Edaspidi oli kavas teha kogutud mängud kättesaadavaks ERA andmebaasis „Ukauka. Uued ja vanad mängud rahvaluulearhiivis“ (<http://folklore.ee/ukauka/arhiiv>).

Minu koostöö Eestis elavate Venemaa eesti kogukondades sündinud-kasvanud eestlastega ulatub ligi paarikümne aasta tagusesse aega, mil õhutasin inimesi oma pere- ja külalugusid kirja panema. Lugude kirjaliku talletamise asemel eelistas põhiosa neist inimestest silmast silma kohtumist ja vaba vestlust, mille käigus meenutati läinud aegu. Seega teadsin eelnevalt, et tõhusaim materjali kogumise viis on silmast silma kohtumised. Koroonapandeemia olukorras ei õnnestunud kogumistööd siiski täies mahus läbi viia. Kaasaegsetele digitaalsetele lahendustele polnud selle kogumise raames mõtet loota. Telefoni teel sain küll andmeid täpsustada, kuid telefonivestlused ei asenda kohtumisi ja üksikasjalikke mängukirjeldusi on sel viisil keeruline koguda. Kuna projektil oli ka teine eesmärk – Venemaa eesti kogukondadest varem talletatud mängukirjelduste koondamine –, kulus põhiosa aega selle täitmisele.

Ettekandes analüüsin tagasivaatavalt, kuivõrd õnnestus frontaalse kogumise käigus saada erinevate eesti kogukondade mängukirjeldusi ning kuivõrd avalduvad sealjuures teabe edasiandnute väärtushinnangud, suhtumised ja arusaamad.

## Vältimatud pahed ja välitööd hüljatud maastikel

**Saara Mildeberg**

Tallinna Ülikooli maastiku ja kultuuri keskus

*saarah@tlu.ee*

Ettekanne põhineb 2020. aasta sügisel alanud ja tänaseni vältavatel etnograafilistel välitöödel Ida-Virumaal. Optimistlikult eeldasin, et välitööde alguseks on pandeemia möödunud, kuid 2021. aasta jaanuariks oli piirkonnast, kus kavatsesin ekskursioonidel osaledes uurida tööstusmaastike (taas)kasutust turismiettevõtluses, saanud Eesti põhiline koroonakolle. Esiplaanil kahanevad linnad, hüljatud maastikud ja marginaliseeritud ühiskond, taamal terendamas rohepööre, on Ida-Virumaa viimastel aastatel pakkunud mõtteainet ja eksperimenteerimisvõimalusi nii kunstnikele kui turismiettevõtjatele.

Kuidas tegutseda noore etnoloogina põlevkivitööstuse ja koroonapiirangute kui kahe vältimatuna tunduva pahe – üks neist tuntud ja vana, teine uus – raamides? Lisaks selle küsimuse lahkamisele oma kogemuse põhjal selgitan ettekandes, mida mõtlen, kui kasutan välitööde kirjeldamiseks ja kriisi(järgse) konjunktuuri väljakutsetele viitamiseks sõnapaari “etnograafiline prügisukeldumine”.

## **Digital Folklore and Digital Fieldwork: Combining Methods and Transforming the Discipline?**

**Anastasiya Fiadotava**

Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum

*anastasiya.fiadotava@folklore.ee*

In the times when face-to-face encounters with research participants have become scarce, the methodological issues of conducting a complex folklore fieldwork gain particular importance. One of the crucial aspects of vernacular culture research is a close reading not only of a text, but also of its context, the analysis of performances, practitioners and audiences of folklore. As more and more folklore texts and performances go digital – especially during the times of large-scale lockdowns – folklorists inevitably have to follow suit and embrace the content, forms, and context of folklore in the digital realm. The collection of digital folklore also presupposes a new dynamic of interaction between a researcher and their research participants which has to be taken into consideration while interpreting the collected data. And while digital fieldwork has made large quantities of folklore materials much more accessible, some aspects of vernacular culture remain elusive if we rely exclusively on it.

The paper thus advocates for an approach that combines elements of digital and conventional fieldwork and discusses this approach in the context of internet humour research. While digital fieldwork seems an appropriate tool for such data collection, a number of technical, social and cultural limitations make it difficult to rely on digital fieldwork alone if the research question implies looking for the meanings of such folklore for its sharers. Therefore, the paper illustrates several possible ways how digital and conventional fieldwork can supplement each other in order to provide a broader perspective on internet humour. Finally, the applications of such new research methodologies are considered within the framework of the transformation of folkloristics as a discipline.

## Re-adjusting to “Normality” during Fieldwork in the Italian Alps

**Michele Tita**

PhD student, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu

*michele.tita94@gmail.com*

This presentation is going to be a personal account about my two-weeks fieldwork experience in Italy during the last summer (July and August 2021) and how that period was crucial for my emotional recovery and return to “normality” after a period of intense distress and fear.

Covid-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in ways that we would not have imagined beforehand. The disease itself has appeared to be quite dangerous, leading to increased hospitalisations and deaths, or even having long-lasting consequences for some who experienced infection. For those who did not get sick, the indirect consequences of Covid-19 were still perceivable through lockdowns, restrictions, increased poverty and/or psychological and emotional distress.

I unfortunately experienced distress through an intense and almost blocking fear of contracting Covid-19, which I started to cope with only when I completed my vaccination cycle in July 2021. By that time, my phobia of infection had prevented my comeback to normal social life, even during periods of significant decrease in Covid-19 cases. However, as I was finally vaccinated, I decided to take a step forward into the so-called “normality” through the arrangement of my fieldwork in the Italian Alps.

During that time, I had to travel, use public transport and meet people in different circumstances, as I had not been used to doing so for a long time. At the same time, the Italian Alps are quite isolated and distant from the larger cities and tourist tracks, which made me cope better with the distress of being around people again. In this sense, fieldwork has been a “liminal” milestone through my process of finally coping with the pandemic and re-embracing older habits that I had abandoned.

## Fieldwork in Changed Circumstances through the Case Study on *Nihu Kachiri*

**Kareng Ronghangpi**

PhD student, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu

*ronghangpikareng@gmail.com*

The affliction known as *Nihu Kachiri* among the Karbi indigenous community in Northeast India literally means “searching for the maternal uncle”. It is a peculiar “illness” where the *karjong* or living soul of a person unconsciously longs for the maternal uncle. This condition manifests itself through 31 symptoms, the most noticeable of which is the disconnection from reality. Such a person is unable to perform routine tasks and exhibits traits of “madness”. A cure is possible only through ritual performance that focuses on divining the name of the living maternal uncle. If a divination is not successful, a cure is considered impossible and the *nihu kachiri* continues in the next lifetime of the person. This tradition of *nihu* may be traced back to the narrative of *Binong Jangreso*, who allegedly placed this curse on the Karbi community.

My research focuses on specific elements in Karbi worldview where kinship orders social and supernatural relationships. When Covid-19 infection hit my field area of study, my research was deeply affected. Thus, I did my fieldwork and gathered information through telephone interviews and video calls. In my presentation, I look at the factors and challenges of research during the pandemic, the methods used to collect information, the daily lives of the people suffering from *nihu*, and their distress associated with the lockdown and the society. Since ritual performance was restricted, people who suffered from *nihu* were the ones to suffer most. This presentation aims to respond to the core questions of how knowledge can be created in the absence of access to interlocutors. The key method of empirical data collection, that of participant observation, is not possible in such contexts. However, the intimate familiarity I have with this subject of research, as a result of being part of the Karbi community, still enabled my interpretation, documentation, and analysis of the topic.

## **A Critical Examination of Shift in Various Processes of Folklore Transmission of Tholpavakoothu during the Pandemic**

**Rahul Koonathara**

PhD student, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University New Delhi (India)

**Atul Sinha**

AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University New Delhi (India)

*asinha@jmi.ac.in*

Tholpavakoothu is a shadow puppet play from Kerala performed in temples in specially built puppet playhouses called *Koothumadam*. It narrates the whole *Kambha Ramayana* text to mother goddess *Bhaghavathy* and the common folks. During the months of January to May every year this act of Rama and Ravana fight is narrated through songs, leather puppets and dialogues between puppeteers. Performance starts after a set of rituals, at night and goes on till early morning. These performances are highly spiritualistic, and every ritual is holistic and is done as an offering to the mother goddess.

Due to the series of lockdowns caused by the pandemic during March 2020 the performances have shifted to digital media platforms which envisaged wide opportunities in accommodating global audience. This change also happened on the official temple's Facebook pages, where the schedule of Tholpavakoothu performances was posted online and helped those who wanted to do offerings and watch the performances. Many who sponsored these performances in temples where Keralites but based outside India, and this online-means enabled them to actively participate virtually. This paper is going to discuss the paradigm changes experienced by the society in both perspectives and how technology has evolved the traditional folk artists. The artists' worldview in sustaining such an art form, and the artists' self-reflexiveness is also explored in this paper. Research scholars have used a



mixed methodology to conduct fieldwork in order to theorize this phenomenal change from offline to online. These online platforms helped this traditional folk-art form to widen their audience base and, at the same time, dilute the spiritual gap. This paper analyses the practices of shadow puppeteers and their ongoing projects and how this transition is helping the community and global audience.

# **Ramayana Studies: Importance of Fieldwork for Searching Ramayana-related Epigraphy and Inscriptions**

**Progoti Chetana Bakshi**

Tripura University, Kolkata West Bengal (India)

*progotibakshi@gmail.com*

Fieldwork is the most essential part of a research work. There are various subject-oriented field studies for our research purpose: viz, folkloric field survey, archeological fieldwork, or searching several types of cultural beliefs and socio-economic conditions. Ramayana epigraphy and inscription studies are both related to literature and culture; simultaneously, these are also related to archeological research. Due to the Covid-19 situation, there are so many problems for research field studies, like close transportation, economic disaster, food deficiency, mental hazards, depression etc. Many people don't want to interact with one another in a face-to-face interview. Many institutions are closed now due to this situation.

With all these difficulties in mind, researchers have had to make some changes regarding fieldwork. For Ramayana epigraphy and inscription, we have adopted some methods which are given below:

1. Finding a faithful and educated representative in the place of field survey by whose help we can collect necessary materials (for example, photos, mythological elements, songs, ballads, stories etc). After finishing our research, we also need to point to this help in our thesis.
2. Using internet, digital sources, libraries, YouTube for part of the field survey.
3. Due to the Covid-19 situation, face-to-face interviews are not possible. So, we use phone contacts, video calling, chatting instead.

But there are still many problems and risks related to these types of field studies, like stealing data, false information, lack of mental attachment. We will discuss them all in our main presentation content.

## **Bengali Baoul Song: a Field Study**

**Nabyendu Roy Choudhury**

Global Encyclopedia of Ramayana Project, West Bengal (India)

*nabyendu1990@gmail.com*

There exist songs of body theory throughout a large part of the folk culture of Bangladesh. The song of body theory is called 'Baoul song'. This song has a significant meaning and is related to some specific communities and cults. Due to the Covid-19 situation, usual fieldwork has not been possible, and we needed to modify it creatively in the following ways:

1. Due to governmental lockdowns and risk, it is not possible to go into real places, therefore contacting people from these communities regarding data collection can take place only through virtual mediums. Online conferences and webinars are one of the most important ways to do our fieldwork, information gathering and communication.
2. Finding a good local representative who can gather information about our topic: collect songs, customs, beliefs etc.
3. For interviews we can use phone and e-mail contacts but preparing a proper fieldwork questionnaire beforehand is also important.

The presentation will also touch upon problems related to these modified fieldwork methods, for example lack of transparency, and privacy problems. Most people in these remote communities don't have access to mobile phones or internet. There are many code- or symbolic words in these types of songs, so sometimes it is not possible to understand their meaning without meeting local tradition carriers. But it is still necessary to continue with fieldwork for research purposes.