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Kaarle Krohn (1863–1933), Professor of Folkloristics in the University of Helsinki, was a founding member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters which celebrates its centenary this year. Plans for the international network of Folklore Fellows were launched already in 1907 and in 1910 it was introduced to the wider circle of international scholars in Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 4. Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Literature Society (SKS KIA).

Kaarle Krohn's Way

by Anna-Leena Siikala
Folklore Fellows Network, Chair

Finnish folkloristics is to celebrate a third centenary. Kaarle Krohn was named in 1888 as docent in Finnish and comparative folk poetry in Helsinki University, in 1898 as supernumerary professor and in 1908 as full professor. Comparing these two official titles, Krohn observed: 'A supernumerary professor does not do anything official, and an official professor does not do anything of a supernumerary nature.' 'Official' pointed to teaching and bureaucracy, 'supernumerary' on the other hand to research. Kaarle Krohn was well known for concentrating on his own research above all else. Yet many dissertations were written for him during this period—21, in fact. He did not view these as needing supervision. For he had developed a method, the geographical-historical research method, by means of which in his estimation 'any school teacher is in a position to write a dissertation'.

He inherited his methodical thinking from his father, Julius Krohn, professor of Finnish language and literature, who was also a well-known poet. As a scholar of mythology Julius Krohn espoused comparative research. He rejected the Kalevala as a source for epic research and saw that a folkloristics must be based on an examination of poems gathered from the mouth of the people. Research was to consist of a systematic comparison of poetic variants. Julius Krohn drowned on a voyage in the bay of Viipuri in 1888, and his son Kaarle took up the baton to continue his work. Kaarle Krohn's scientific heritage is part of the history of international folkloristics. He acquired an enthusiasm for collaborative work crossing national boundaries at the Paris conference of 1889. When he was urged to attend the conference as the delegate for Finnish folkloristics, he had doubts whether the journey made sense. 'The status of Finland in this scientific field is that of a great power, and a gathering may always produce new ideas for the organisation of the collecting of Finnish folk poetry. On the other hand I could get a lot more proper work done at home. I don't have any desire for foreign climes, and only patriotic duty can and may induce me.'

Kaarle Krohn was a much-loved professor, of whose good will, even naivety, many anecdotes were told. As an administrator he was not, in Matti Kuusi's recollection, much regarded. Now, in hindsight, the situation appears somewhat different. Krohn was the president of the Finnish Literature Society, and was able to assemble a colourful group made up of researchers and enthusiasts. He also belonged as a founding member to the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, which celebrates its centenary this year. The European academies' fashion for broadly encompassing all fields of study was also followed in Finland. Thanks to Krohn the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, already in its early existence paying more than average attention to folkloristics, set in motion in 1910 the publication of the Folklore Fellows' Communications series.

Although Krohn set off hesitantly for the first international conference, he later strove to reach out to an international academic public. Almost all of his most important works were published both in the local languages, Finnish and Swedish, and in the language read internationally, at that time German. The juncture of national and international has characterised Finnish folkloristics ever since Krohn's time.

As a teacher, Krohn broadened the research field of folkloristics. As topics for dissertations he gave magic, folktales, riddles, minority folklore and so forth, while himself remaining a scholar of *Kalevala*-metre poetry. The research field of folkloristics is today very wide. It stretches from the observation of modern culture to new interpretations of past ways of life. *Kalevala*-metre poetry has nonetheless continued to cast its spell on new young folklorists from one generation to another. Their methods are not those of Krohn, but a strong devotion to research continues Kaarle Krohn's way of doing things. ■

Mythic Discourses:
Questions of Finno-Ugric Studies of Myth

by Anna-Leena Siikala, Professor Emerita of Folklore Studies
University of Helsinki

In this article I consider mythic traditions of the Finno-Ugric peoples, especially of the Siberian Mansi and Khanty, and the possibilities of research into them. If we investigate mythic corpuses of small groups, and whole narratives and songs bearing the characteristic signs of myth, instead of individual myths, we shall better understand the nature of myths and the reasons for their longevity. The article is based both on field work in 1991–2006 among the Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia and on textual collections of folk-poetry material collected in the nineteenth century.

Myths Written on the Heavens

The Khanty and their closely related neighbours the Mansi are among the small peoples of Siberia, living to the east of the Urals along the great River Ob and its tributaries. The Khanty and Mansi, who lived on fishing, hunting and reindeer-husbandry, have been objects of interest for linguistic and folk-poetry research since the mid-nineteenth century. In 1888 the Hungarian linguist Bernát Munkácsi set out to research the Mansi language in Siberia. He gathered a broad collection of folk poetry, including the following song depicting the hunting of the elk. Anna Widmer and Vladimir Napolskikh have translated the poem into English and German for *Mansi Mythology* (Gemuyev *et al.* 2008) along with an interpretation.

Song of the Elk Star

Fine elk bull, fine elk bull
went up to his elk hind.
«Fine elk hind, fine elk hind,
this night I dreamt with a bad dream.»
– «What bad dream did you dream?»
– «As I was dreaming
a snow-stormy day arose,
a wind-stormy day arose.
At the time of rising sun, I look:
behold! A bloody-handed son of *Moś* man
is stealing up.
Then an eagle-feather feathered pointed arrow
was shot on you,
just as if a blood-red stalk thrust up
from the other side of your body.
Over little twig sprout, which you yourself were eating,
over little willow sprout, which you yourself were eating–
behold, there you fell down.»
The hind says to the elk bull:
«I, having got seven snow-running elk calves of second half-year age,
having got these seven snow-running two-years-old elk hind calves,
how can I so?
But, fine elk bull, fine elk bull, what if you will be killed?
Is it not you who will be killed?!»
*
They spent the night; now the day began to break in the morning.
As the sun already rose; at that time,
now, the weather got windy,
the weather turned to be snowy.
The elk bull runs alone out of his land.
From his running place he looks back:
There a bloody-handed son of *Moś* man
just sneaks up.
The elk hind the small twig sprouts grown this summer,
the small willow sprouts grown this summer
stands eating.
That bloody-handed son of *Moś* man
then an eagle-feather feathered pointed arrow
on the curved bow's bend he put,
and he shot it.
from the other side of that elk hind's body
now the blood-red stalk broke out.
Over the little twig sprouts, which she herself was eating,
there she fell,
over the little willow sprouts, which she herself was eating,
there she fell.
*
Those seven snow-running two-years-old elk hind calves,
those seven snow-running elk calves of second half-year age,
now run together with their elk bull-father.
They put one of their forelegs –
the birchwood land is left behind;
they put one of their legs –
the pinery land is left behind.
That bloody-handed son of *Moś* man,
now he skis forward.
One his leg on one side he pulls –
the birchwood land is left behind;
One his leg on the other side he pulls –
the pinery land is left behind.
The spade-end of his birchen snow-stick
as he sets there
a crucian carp lake appears,
an *an's'er*-fish lake appears.

On some place, as the elks run,
the elk-father to the running behind, snow-running
his seven elk calves of second half-year age,
to his two-years-old elk hind calves says:
«Once a day long ago I dreamt a dream,
when I told to your mother:
"you'll be killed", – she did not believe; said:
"Having seven snow-running elk calves of second half-year age,
having got seven snow-running two-years-old elk hind calves,
how can I?"
Well! If you really can run by the snow,
my strength has now finished, you run!»
His elk calves of second half-year age, his two-years-old elk hind calves rushed forward,
their elk-father ran now behind.
Long they run, for short time they run,
now, once as they run,
one of his ears directed backwards,
listens from the back:
withered this summer dry twig-ends'
crunching is heard.
By that bloody-handed son of *Mość* man
somehow he was overtaken.
The elk-father now himself ran forward.
He says back to his elk calves of second half-year age,
to his two-years-old elk hind calves:
«On that day long ago your mother
boasted just in vain;
because of you now we shall be killed:
by the bloody-handed son of *Mość* man
we have been, after all, overtaken!»
*
To the father *Numi-Torem*
he raised up his mind:
«My dear father *Numi-Torem*,
my dear dad *Numi-Torem*!
A sacral beast shining in the skies
if you truly ordained me to be,
I'll run away from here;
to the sacral sea glittering at the end of the world
let me then run down!»
Now he started running from there.
Their father *Numi-Torem*
caused such a dense snow to fall
that the snow fallen on the wind-fallen trees
did not crumble as they stepped over it.
Only their footprints stay.
They step their step of one side –
the birchwood land is left behind;
They step their step of other side –
the pinery land is left behind.
Now as soon as it became midday,
to the sacral sea glittering at the end of the world
they came down.
They got down to the icy smooth of the sea:
there was no snow, only the ice lied all over.
To that quarter of the heavens, where their mind brought them,
they went away.
*
Now the bloody-handed son of *Mość* man
to the sacral sea glittering at the end of the world
he came down.
There he was not guided by the track of his elks any more,
therefore he turned finally back.
Long he went, for a short time he went,
to that his beast, which he killed before he came.
Well so, the six-handed, six-legged beast
on thirty river sandbanks, on thirty river bends
altogether is lying: so big it is.
He cut off its two superfluous legs.
Then he says to his father *Numi Torem*:
«Turn this animal with your power into a four-handed, four-legged one!
I, the man, because I am a real man, was able to kill this beast.
With the establishment of the world of human beings' time,
with the establishment of the world of human beings' life
how will it be possible to kill it?
With this great size, which it reaches,
all your men will be always killed by it.»
*
That four-legged beast with cut off legs
now was reflected up in the sky,
the *Mość* man's chasing ski-path
now was reflected up in the high.

In the times of creation of the earth the star elk was created first six-legged on this lower earth by our father *Numi-Torem*. It had two more forelegs in the middle of its belly. It was not possible for ordinary mortal people to chase it, to kill it. To chase it by the mortal people, the *Mość* [a heroic ancestor] man was prayed. *Mość* man chased it, overtook it, cut off its two superfluous legs and then said: «In the future, with the establishment of the world of human beings' time, with the establishment of the world of human beings' life, it will be possible to kill you, four-legged. With six legs the mortal people would not be able [to kill you].» That elk was depicted as the Elk-Star up in the sky. The *Mość* man's ski-path was also reflected in the sky. The *Mość* man's family in the house is also seen in the sky. (Gemuyev *et al.* 2008.)

The song relates how a hunting trip which took place in the earth's primordial time changed the six-legged elk to a four-legged animal, a suitable prey for hunting. The myth is known to many Siberian peoples. It also belongs to the central body of myth of many Finno-Ugric peoples. The Finnish *Kalevala*-metre 'Elk of Hiisi' recounts how a hunter prepares his skis and how he pursues the elk he is hunting to a mythic place, Hiisi. The corresponding Komi mythic narrative describes how the hero Jirkap hunts a blue elk, using magical skis. With these he is able to pursue the elk on a long journey to the east, as far as the Urals. The myth concerns a theme of importance to people who relied for sustenance on the hunting of the elk.

The myths are astral: the events in them are depicted, according to the singers, in the sky. In Sámi tradition the constellations of Orion, the Pleiades and Arcturus belong to the cosmic elk-hunt (Pentikäinen 1995: 135). The Evenki, Kets, Selkups, Buryats, Mongols and Mari interpreted the Great Bear as an elk being hunted, along with its pursuers (cf. Harva 1993: 190–6. The Khanty regard the Milky Way as the tracks of the skis of the mythic elk-hunter, the *Moś* man. Nikolaj (Kolya) Nakhrachev, of the northern Khanty, explained the matter thoroughly to me in the summer of 2002, pointing to the special skis needed for winter hunting:

> For us the Milky Way is not the way of birds [its designation in Finnish], but *nimḷəŋ juš*, 'the track of the ski'. *Niməḷ* means 'skis covered in the skin of a reindeer's forefeet' and *juš* is 'way'. We had a hero *Moś* man. He was not so strong as other giants, but similar. He beat spirits and heroes. He was able to change into all sorts of beings. When he had changed into one and you looked at him, he became another. On skis he sped as if flying, and ran across the sky. The Khanty did not like smooth-surfaced skis. When you go on that sort of skis, the track is obvious and it stays visible for a week. If you go hunting with them, soon everyone will find your hunting place by the tracks. What wild animal is going to come there then? But when you go on fur skis, the track disappears quickly, the snow scatters and the track becomes unclear. It is the same with the Milky Way: there are two parts like bands and the stars are scattered like snow, unevenly and unclearly.

Astral myths, judging by their wide distribution, represent a very ancient mythological tradition. In northern Eurasia, astral myths are connected with large animals. In addition to the elk, the bear is also widely found as a mythic subject. Kolya Nakhrachev's comments and the explanation for the use of skin-bottomed skis show that ancient tradition is still worth investigating and judging. We may also ask what significance these old mythic tales have in the life of modern people. Is there any significance to the investigation of myth in today's folklore research?

Research into Finno-Ugric Mythologies

Since myths deal with the basic questions of culture and human existence, research into them has been felt to be important both when formulating the general cultural history of Europeanness and when constructing a cultural identity for small peoples. The former interest explains the importance of research into the mythology of Antiquity, the latter led among other things to the collection of the *Kalevala*. The mythic materials of the folk poetry which forms the basis of the *Kalevala* have been seen as enlightening the ancient world view of the Baltic Finnic peoples. The character of this world view was already explicated in the nineteenth century by means of the comparative method (Julius Krohn 1885): points of comparison were sought from ancient Germanic, Slavic and Baltic traditions. Mythological research in Finland has, however, been connected primarily with research into the cultures of the Finno-Ugric peoples. The Finno-Ugric and the more distant Uralic peoples are connected by linguistic relations. It must be remembered that in their historical, ecological and economic circumstances, and in their cultures, these peoples differ greatly from each other. Finno-Ugric mythologies contain features which indicate ancient cultural unities and interaction in the northern European region (Siikala 2002a, 2002b). Comparative Finno-Ugric cultural research therefore derives its justification from the nature of the object of research, especially when the examination takes note of other northern European cultures.

We know quite a lot about the common mythic materials of the Uralic and Finno-Ugric peoples, and their distribution in the world. In Finland, research into Uralic peoples has a strong tradition, beginning with M. A. Castrén, K. and O. Donner, K. F. Karjalainen, A. Kannisto, T. Lehtisalo, U. Harva and M. Haavio. Moreover, the folk poetry collections published as a result of the work of the Finno-Ugric Society contain a great deal of the mythology of the Finno-Ugric linguistic area. Many generations of researchers both in Russia and Finland, as well as Hungary and Estonia, have applied themselves to the collection, publication and investigation of materials. Hence research into Finno-Ugric mythology has a particularly good infrastructure with archives and libraries, which it pays to benefit from. The stimulation of the research tradition has been felt to be both topical and necessary. The publications on Komi, Khanty and Mansi mythologies in the series Encyclopedia of Uralic Mythologies aim to invigorate Finno-Ugric mythological research. The series endeavours to examine the mythic lexicon, central features and historical processes of the mythic traditions of peoples in the Uralic linguistic family, on the basis of both old scientific sources and fresh, partly field-work-derived materials.

What are Myths?

The great myth-theories created by the German romantics and evolutionary theoreticians in the nineteenth century, and by many well-known researchers in the twentieth, have guided the manner

in which folklorists have understood the nature of myth and also identified myths of the Finno-Ugric tradition. Classical theories of myth basically present five main directions. These are: 1. Intellectual examination methods which consider myths an explanation of the world and an expression of the world view (the nineteenth-century evolutionists, James G. Frazer and E. B. Tylor); 2. Viewpoints which emphasise the mythopoetic thought (Max Müller, Ernst Cassirer); 3. Psychological interpretations (Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung); 4. Theories which emphasise the bonds to society, among which belong the basically functionalist viewpoint of myths as texts of a rite (Émile Durkheim and Bronislaw Malinowski); and 5. Structuralist interpretations (Claude Lévi-Strauss) (cf. Cohen 1969: seven main theories). Although classical theories of myth are sometimes represented as in opposition to each other, it is characteristic of them that they are partly overlapping and complement each other (Honko 1984: 46). Myths are in fact many-dimensional and may be approached from many angles, whose appropriateness depends on the object of research and the given material.

Myths are narratives, poetry, but not merely poetry. Mythology recounts how the world order began, and what sort of forces are behind it. It does not however contain a fully fledged religious philosophy or normative dogmatic system. Although myths deal with problems and preconditions of existence, they do not necessarily offer explanations, nor do they require explanation. In the manner of poetry they are open to various possible interpretations. For this reason myth and fantasy readily merge with each other. The particularity of myths lies in their ability to contain within themselves both the eternal and transcendent, temporally bound and immediately present (see Gaster 1984: 113).

Instead of logically related concepts, mythic consciousness works in the form of metaphors and images welling up from symbolism common to cultures. Thus religious symbols and ones which express human and societal organisation generate a network of images and metaphors, which delineates a different, but nonetheless fundamental, truth (Cassirer 1953; Ricoeur 1976: 54–5; Siikala 2002a: 53–6). Mythic expression is characterised on the one hand by the persistence and long age of the fundamental symbolism, and on the other by the kaleidoscope, in perpetual motion, of images deriving their force from the implicit significance of these symbols.

Fundamental mythic images are so widespread that they have been considered universal manifestations of the workings of the psyche. Eternal and universal mythic images are, however, culturally determined and handed down within a culture. Their meanings emerge from a process of interpretation in which the symbolism of the cosmos, and the nature of the otherworld and human kind, is filtered through an individual culture, the reality subsisting within the consciousness of the community and of the person, and its flip-side, a second reality. Mythic images are based on the logic of the impossible. It is precisely in their contradiction that they are able to form world images which have proven comprehensive and thus influential. They are both ancient and continually reborn.

Today the viewpoints of mythic researchers are more multifarious than ever. In addition to new methods of examination developed out of the five historical directions presented above, myths are approached for example on the basis of cognitive theory and gender perspective. We may ask: how do myths depict the historical and cultural processes of their cultures and the changes in the ecological environments? What do they tell about linguistic and cultural contacts? How they are performed and interpreted in oral societies? And what do they tell of thought patterns derived from afar, and how those ways of thought are accommodated when constructing a culture in transformed social contexts? In this paper I take three different but complementary methodological approaches, which can be applied on the basis of different theoretical interpretations. These are 1. comparative research, 2. investigation of the corpuses of myth of small communities, and 3. mythic dicourse-analytical or textual research.

Voices of the Past: the Legacy of Comparative Research

In codifying the structures of a world view, myths carry the thought patterns of the past. The structures of cultural consciousness which maintain the world view and values and strive to solve conflicts within them are more deep-rooted and conservative than superficial cultural phenomena. Hence mythology belongs among those slowly changing mental representations, those 'long-term prisons' (to borrow from Fernade Braudel), which live on tenaciously even in transformed circumstances and carry the memory of the past.

As culture is renewed old themes take on new historical forms. They are interpreted within the frame of reference of each culture in a way appropriate to the social context and contemporary world concept (Vernant 1992: 279). Thus conservatism in the central structures and even central materials, motifs and images, and also a continuously renewed

interpretation of these structures and materials, are characteristic of the life of a mythology borne as a tradition from one generation to another.

Representatives of comparative research have shown that mythic materials woven into the mythic poems and narratives of the Finno-Ugric peoples, motifs depicting the birth and structure of the world and the creation of cultural phenomena, belong to a widespread international tradition. Parallels to these are found in Indo-European-speaking cultures but also further afield in Asia and America. What these common points tell of the mental atmosphere of pre-Christian cultures is a fascinating but difficult research task. However, the mythology gathered from narrative motifs, mythic images, metaphors, symbols and significant concepts tell about cultural contacts. By means of comparative research into the mythic materials, mythic images and vocabulary it is then possible to trace in the mythic heritage similar levels of tradition inherited from different cultural contacts, which linguists have confirmed by examining the history of native and borrowed vocabulary.

Myths of Ancient Uralic Hunting Cultures

Although many basic questions are still a matter of debate, for example where and in how wide a region the Uralic languages were spoken at different historical stages, the common lexicon indicates quite clearly what the culture of the population groups who spoke Uralic and Finno-Ugric languages was like. As Kaisa Häkkinen has shown, the common Uralic lexical fragments point to a language of a Stone Age community 'living in a relatively northern region and practising hunting and fishing' (Häkkinen 1990: 176).

Characteristic of the religious traditions of the known hunting cultures of northern Eurasia was a great variety in points of detail, and a striking similarity in the fundamental structures. The former derives from the oral nature of the tradition and the lack of codified doctrines, the latter relates to the similarity in systems of sustenance and living conditions, but also goes back to very ancient patterns of thought. As the cultures which spoke Uralic and Finno-Ugric languages are believed to have been northern hunting cultures, the conclusion may be drawn that the distinguishing structural features of their mythologies were connected with the demands of their nature-based lifestyle and with their observations of the revolving firmament. We may assume that the early Uralic hunting culture possessed fairly consistent mental models relating to the structure of the cosmos, the other world, human existence and relationships with nature, as well as shamanistic and animal-ceremonial practices.

Analogues are found to many of the documented cosmological images and myths of the Uralic peoples so widely that the tradition has been regarded as very ancient, even palaeolithic. Palaeolithic hunting cultures may in all likelihood be regarded as belonging among the cultures which spoke early proto-Uralic (Napolskikh 1992; Ajkhenvald *et al.* 1989; Siikala 2002b). Over all, Uralic mythology appears to form an integrated world view reflecting the fisher/hunter mentalities and constructed on the basis of interconnected complexes of images. Among its cosmographic features are the world image centred upon the North Star, the model of the universe in which horizontal and vertical merge, the emphasis upon the north–south axis and the centrality of water courses as links between this and the other world. The north–south axis is emphasised also in the depiction of powers representing death and maintenance of life. The centrality of the (water)bird, reflecting astral mythology, is connected to the cult of the sun and the lifegiver in female form, whose attribute is the birch, a variant of the world tree (Napolskikh 1992). Uralic peoples also shared the astral mythology centred upon animals and the complex concept of the soul characteristic of Eurasian hunting cultures, concepts which formed a basis for animal ceremonialism and the institution of shamanism (Siikala 2002b).

Patterns of thought which go back to the early hunting culture were best preserved in those cultures where hunting and fishing have been continuously significant as a means of sustenance. The most important break in thought patterns took place in many Finno-Ugric cultures at an early date with the move to agriculture. However, the move was so gradual and deferent to sustenance by hunting that the mythology long preserved its millennia-old materials and images.

We know that cultural contacts and dominant religions change the mythic tradition by destroying the old and bringing in the new. But the means by which the patterns of myth and folk belief change has been a problem for research up to the present. It is worth examining the history of mythic tradition as a dialectic process in which cultural change and new contacts offer concepts and images in place of the old. The patterns of thought rooted in the past offer a conceptual framework within which new elements can be accommodated. Assimilation takes place therefore within the conscious terms set by the existing culture. This is evident in particular in the case of concepts of the higher divinities and the realm of the dead, where alternatives presented by

the stronger cultures and high religions have continuously displaced native material. A noticeable feature in mythology is the existence side by side of ideas and images which, although contradictory in their background, are effective and complementary.

The more important and deeply rooted the values, stances and beliefs are, the more thorough are the cultural shifts needed to change them. The elements of religion and the mythic world picture were able to survive changing cultural systems. Yet their meanings did not necessarily stay the same: motifs and images have been interpreted and formed anew as they have been accommodated to transformed contexts.

The Mythic Corpuses of Small Communities

A stumbling block to comparative research has been the separation of mythic materials from their cultural and social connections. We may also approach myths as the living culture of small communities, as integrated corpuses of oral tradition. The collections of the nineteenth-century researchers of Finno-Ugric myth began to take on life in my mind only when doing my field work among the Khanty in the northern Ob region of Siberia. I heard one of important Khanty myths on a train as we ascended the Urals in July 2004. The myth related the origin of the Khanty holy lake Num-to. It was told by a man who by chance had landed up as my travelling companion, who wished to show that his people had an ancient and valuable culture.

As field work in the small Khanty villages in 2000–4 concentrated on the observation of local rituals observed in secret during the Soviet era, the myths were merely an evening entertainment whose value I appreciated later. We stayed in the village of Ovolyngort in 2002 in a forest cabin, whose only source of light was the hearth opening, with my folklorist colleague, Oleg Ulyashev, and the Khanty Nikolaj or Kolya Nakhrachev whom we had taken to be our guide. When by day we discussed matters with 76-year-old Petr Nikitich Longortov, who arranged the village rituals, Kolya wished to relate his own view of the origins of the world, of the birth and essential nature of animals and of the most important gods. Through the long dark evenings and the depths of the night the men kept each other in happy company telling myths and tales. Oleg Ulyashev, apart from being a folklorist, is also a writer for the Komi folklore theatre and a poet, who as a child had learnt a great host of Komi tales from his aunt. He told these during our field trips, sometimes continuing the same tale for three nights running. Kolya had heard his myths and tales from his aunt Mariya Semenova Nakhrachev, who was born in 1930 on the far side of the small Ob, in the village of Poslovat in Kunovat.

The rites related to the bear and the slaying of the bear have a part even today in the life of the Khanty. In Ovolyngort a bear had eaten a horse in the spring and done other harm in the mushroom and berry woods. Previously it had slashed up the holy sleigh at the village's ritual site. There was a lot of talk about bears and the ceremonies of their wakes. One evening Kolya took up the topic:

> When it is said or written that the Khanty are sprung from the bear, it is not true. It is all a lie. The bear has always been small, he has always been Little Brother to the Khanty. He is God's son. When he lived in heaven, he was still small, but he could already talk and walk. He began to vex his father. He looks down to the earth and says: 'How beautiful it is down there below, how golden everything is there. Let me down, father!' Father said: 'Down below live people, and they hunt their food with their brow in a sweat. There you too will have to hunt your food. You cannot do that.' But father got fed up, and he put his son in an iron cradle and let him down on a silver chain. When God's little son came to earth he saw that it was only from above that it looked beautiful, thanks to the yellow lake flowers (*patḷəŋ-oh-lipət*, 'great ear-topped flower'). Water lilies are called by this name in Khanty. He was disappointed. He raised his head on high, but it was already too late. Father had decided, and it was his own will too. Then he went to sit down and started to yell in fury. He began to look for something to eat, but did not know how to find food. Soon he was growling the whole time. He began to walk on all fours and pick whatever he happened to come across. He began to grow a bit hairy. He grew bigger, and became the size he is now. But although he is very large, he is all the same the little brother of mankind, because he was little when his father let him down onto earth. People had already appeared, in fact. And nowadays, when he is slain, he is really being punished for his disobedience and crimes. Can't elder brothers punish a younger one if he doesn't obey? And then they ask forgiveness and say 'It's not us, it's you who are guilty, you should have listened. It's not us killing you, but someone with a bayonet.' A knife is called by that name, because the names of objects in ordinary life and in rituals are quite different.

Kolya wanted to dispute the generally agreed idea that the Khanty are the offspring of the bear. The bear is just a little brother, so punishing him is possible when the bear has caused damage. He returned to the bear topic later, commenting on the myth in another way, connected to himself:

> The bear is God's son. When he lived in heaven, he looked down and saw that everything there was golden. So he started asking his father if he would let him down

there. Father says: 'Down below you have to search out food. You do not know how.' However, he made his father so fed-up that he put his son in an iron cradle and let him down on a golden chain. When the little son of God came to earth, he saw that it looked beautiful only from above because of the yellow colours of autumn. He lifted his head on high, but it was already too late. Father had decided, but still his thoughts turned to home. He sat down and began to groan, greatly upset. For the bear the most unpleasant of all things on earth were the mosquitoes; yes, and even food had to be searched out. He began looking for food, but did not know how. He began walking on all fours and to pick everything that came his way. He began to grow a little hairy. He was a beautiful youth, but he began to change into a wild animal. He grew bigger until he became as big as he is now. But although he is large, he is still the little brother of mankind, because he was small when his father let him down to earth. If he was once let down in a cradle, it means he was still small. The nutcracker (*noχr-ḷete-ne*, 'Siberian pine-cone-eating woman') is considered his elder. Firstly, because she was already on the earth when the bear came down; secondly, because she made a lot of demands. Among us small people are undemanding. But those who are older grumble, they are not satisfied and impose on others. Thirdly, he does not quarrel with the nutcracker, she howls more. They usually have quarrels with the bear. They eat the same food. She howls that the bear is eating her cones. 'Shar-shar!' she weeps the whole time.

Kolya Nakhrachev (left) and Petr Nikitits (right) offer to the Golden Boy, the protector spirit of the village. Photo by Anna-Leena Siikala.

This time Kolya's comments are personal. The Khanty are divided into two exogamous phratries, named the *Por* and the *Moś*. Kolya's father belongs to the *Por*-phratry, whose forefather is held to be a bear. His mother, from whom he hear the myths and tales, belonged to the other phratry according to her family. She was a *Moś*-woman. The animal protector spirits of the clans and families are still important beings in people's lives. Sacrifices are made to them and their idols may be present on the walls of houses. Indicating his father's family, Kolya related that 'The goose (*Ajlut-iki*, "White-Cheeked Brent-goose Old Man") is the bird of our family Nakhrachev. Every family has its own protective being. For us it is the goose. And the cedar tree. *Noχr* ("cone") and *aś* or *aśi* ("father"). *Noχraś* ("cone father") is the cedar tree. *Ajlut-iki* is just the Nakhrachev family protector. Other families have different protectors.' And hence the last part of Kolya's tale, which concerns the relationship and quarrel between the bear and the cedar-tree-seed-eating nutcracker, is important to him. Kolya, who has an education of schoolmaster, who is a student of a strong shaman, and an exceptionally good hunter, is small in stature. Hence aamong us small people are undemanding' also points to his personal experiences.

Khanty myths are presented both in song and as tales similar to that given above. As sung poems they resemble the rich epic poetry of the Mansi. The bear wake involves a multiform poetic corpus telling of the bear's origin, its sojourn on earth, the stages of its hunting and its return home. The Finns and Sámi also considered the bear to be a relative of humans, and preserved bear-wake ceremonies similar to those of the Khanty and Mansi up to the nineteenth century. The myth of the bear's birth, which relates how God himself lets down his son onto the earth in a cradle on a silver or gold chain is also known in *Kalevala*-metre poetry from the Finnic area, recited in connection with the bear's wake rituals. The myth of the bear's birth was sung in Finland with another purpose, as a protective charm for cattle, as in the following example, in which in the manner of the Khanty gods the bear is let down to earth in a cradle suspended from a silver chain:

Where was the Bruin born
the honey-paw turned over?
There Bruin was born
the honey-paw turned over –
in the upper air
upon the Great' Bear's shoulders.

Where was it let down?
In a sling it was let down
in a silver sling
a golden gradle:
then it went to roam the woods
to tread the North Land.

Don’t hurt the dung-shank
kill the milk-bearer:
mother has more work
the parent big trouble if
the little boy is naughty.
(Olli Tervonen, Kitee, North Karelia, O. A. F. Lönnbohm, 1894; Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 262.)

The Khanty also sang epic poems about their heroes and gods. The princes of the heroic poems, the ‘cities’, the weaponry of the warriors and so forth point to the Yugra culture and social organisation of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, known from historical sources. The Muscovites overpowered forty Yugra cities in 1499 and imprisoned fifty princes and a thousand other inhabitants. Although the Khanty rebelled later, they remained subject to Moscow. Hunting, fishing and reindeer-husbandry provided the necessities of life. They were converted to Orthodox Christianity, but shamanism has been preserved up to the present day.

The Khanty heroic poems, hundreds of lines long, are ‘holy songs’, and are performed only by men. They do not tell of warrior raids; the hero leaves on his journey for reasons of revenge and to gain himself a wife. Both Khanty and Mansi called heroic poems ‘songs of war, of destruction’. The common name is thought to point to the great age of the songs. The poetic figures of the songs, which the singers have to retain in their memory, as well as the great quantity of verses show that they were performed only by professional singers (Bartens 1986: 16–17). The songs are first-person narratives: the hero speaks through the mouth of a singer. The heroes lived in a heroic age, before the time of ‘man who has his navel cut’. They are frequently compared, especially among the Mansi, with the gods and spirits, whose songs are likewise in the first person. The most important guest of the bear feast, the bear, also speaks through the mouth of the singer. In prose narratives heroes and gods no longer speak through a singer, but are indicated in the third person (Bartens 1986: 17).

In the village of Ovolyngort discussions, even arguments, took place about the meanings of myths. Petr Nikitich Longortov, at 76 years of age, was an authority on account of his age. He belonged to a shamanic family. His father Nikita and Nikita’s brothers Kuz’ma and Ivan ended up in prison for practising shamanism. Kuz’ma remained in a cell for thirteen years. Petr Nikitich’s family protective spirit is the *sak-voj*, the red-necked goose. At his home is the *hotn-imi*, the protector of the house, which was cared for previously by Kuz’ma and before this by Petr, Kuz’ma’s father. Petr Nikitich was the specialist on the rites of the holy place, and he gradually revealed his knowledge in the course of three years of conversations. He knew the central myths from the perspective of his own village. The conversations demonstrated that each village has its own myths. They concentrate on the gods, spirits and heroes who, from the village’s perspective, are most important. The astral myths and bear songs, in turn, are widely known. In the interpretations, social relationships were emphasised, and membership of a family or community, but also personal experiences and opinions.

Mythic Discourse

In addition to astral myths, bear rites, heroic and spirit verses, the Khanty and Mansi also sang about the life of ‘those with navels cut’, that is ordinary people. These songs depicted among other things the turns of fate in women’s lives and their difficult position in a male-dominated culture. Tales of fate, named according to the personage of the song, are still heard, and Nakhrachev was happy to perform examples learned from his mother.

The poetry of the Khanty and Mansi is therefore composed of subgenres, linked with each other in many ways. It is encumbent on the researcher of their mythology to investigate the song poetry as a whole, rather than gathering separate mythological fragments as an object of investigation (cf. Siikala 1995). Edmund Leach has also presented a consideration of the myths of a small community as a corpus which forms an entity reflecting a common world view, where the understanding of the parts demands an understanding of the whole corpus. Although mythic elements follow each other in the narrative, they contain cross-references irrespective of the course of events, and refer to each other (Leach 1982: 5). William G. Doty portrays the mythic corpus thus in his work *Mythography. The Study of Myths and Rituals* (2000 [1986]):

A mythological corpus consists of a usually complex network of myths that are culturally important, imaginal stories, conveying by means of metaphoric and symbolic diction, graphic imagery, and emotional conviction and participation the primal, foundational accounts of aspects of the real, experienced world and humankind’s roles and relative statuses within it. Mythologies may convey the political and moral values of a culture and provide systems of interpreting individual experience with a universal perspective, which may include the intervention of supranormal entities as well as aspects of the natural and cultural orders. Myths may be enacted or reflected in rituals, ceremonies and dramas, and they may provide materials for secondary elaboration, the

constituent mythemes (mythic units) having become merely images or reference points for a subsequent story, such as folktale, historical legend, novella, or prophecy. (Doty 2000: 33–4.)

The central point of value in Doty's characterisation is the conditionality of the catalogue of features of mythologies. All features are not always present at one time on account of the cultural ties of mythological corpuses, although they may be observed repeatedly when viewed from a comparative perspective. Gregory Nagy considers the identification of mythical corpuses and research focusing on them as a reflection of the whole concept of myth. He observes that as a corpus, myth must be read not only 'vertically', on an axis of paradigmatic (metaphorical) choice, but also 'horizontally', on an axis of syntagmatic (metonymic) combination (Nagy 2002: 244). I have considered the manner of reading along both the vertical and horizontal at the same time as indispensable in my investigation of the Polynesian mythic-historical tradition (Siikala 2000a: 352–3; Siikala & Siikala 2005).

The intertextual relationships of myths are relevant equally to the field of ritual poems, charms, fairy tales and heroic epic. Because myths relate the events of the formative period of the world, they present, in the manner of a heroic epic, a reflection of history, although in a different sense. They present 'holy history', but the individual and social interpretations of the events differ from each other (Eliade 1984: 145–6), and myths become attached to different, even related genres. In his work *The Destiny of the Warrior* (1970), Georges Dumézil has shown how the ideological structures of Indo-European myths are established in Roman historical narratives. Myths are thus worth examining not only as stylistically pure representatives of their own genre but also as a discourse which, while carrying indications of mythicality, crosses the narrow confines of genre.

When mythic narratives are approached as a *cultural discourse*, its meaning may be analysed on all the levels of text and performance of oral tradition. For example, epic poetry may then be treated as series of narrative entities performed in known circumstances, as narrative poems, and as mythic corpuses composed of these poems. In addition to mythic motifs, firstly those questions about the world, culture and mankind which are delved into in the narratives may be set out, secondly those oppositions through which these questions are posed, and thirdly the world of symbol, metaphor and image which forms the distinguishing mark of mythic poetry and by means of which the character of the discourse is defined even in performance situations.

When mythic tradition is investigated as a *cultural practice* and as a tool of people's social action, attention is fixed on the presentation of mythic tradition, on the *habitus*, the modes adopted by singers and narrators, on the strategies and contexts of performance. For example, the singing ideal of performers of Kalevalaic poetry and the singer's *habitus*, the patterns of observation, behaviour and interpretation employed in performance situations, take different forms in different cultural areas and cultural milieux. The singing ideal and the singer's *habitus* for their part determined the type of performance arena that was seen as best to appear in and what sort of bodily language and verbal register the singers chose for their performance of mythic poems. We may ask how the mythic tradition works as a means of constructing the ego not only of the community but also of the individual, and as an interpretation of feelings and experiences.

The character of the mythic discourse may be examined from many angles, both as a heritage from the past and as a current and transforming culture of the day. In studying *Kalevala*-metre poetry, I have suggested that following aspects could be analysed. These analytical levels suit also to the analysis of Khanty and Mansi mythic poems:

1. *Mythic corpuses.* In tracing corpuses it is natural to start from the community in whose network of internal interactions the myths circulated (see Urban 1996: 66–7). Mythic discourse is not however composed of clearly defined categories nor is it understood consistently in the same community. The genre relationships of myths belonging to the same corpus may break down, e.g. for the axis myth/fairy tale, myth/history, myth/ritual poem etc. Thus the specifying of corpuses is useful for the examination of the intertextual relations of mythic discourse.

2. *The intertextual relations of myth.* Myth shares with charms and other ritual poems a world of meaning which transgresses the divide between this and the other world. What myth declares, the charm puts into practice. Hence intertextual relations belong among the fundamental features of mythic discourse. Their examination opens up a spectrum of background references in individual expressions.

3. *Performance communication, performers and strategies of performance.* Singers, narrators and societies interpreted myths each in their own way. The performer's bearing and choices relating to his performance influenced the content of the presentation, which varied—though within a framework determined by tradition—even in the same com-

munity because of the abundance of strategic alternatives. (Siikala 2000b). A good example of this are the alternative singer and seer dispositions of the Viena-Karelia runesingers (Siikala 2002c).

4. *Mythic narratives*. Adapting Paul Ricoeur we may say that if we wish to know what a myth is talking about, we must first examine what it says (cf. Ricoeur 1979: 98). Myths recount events and deeds of a fundamental type. They are built from episodes of activities in which the framing of the action, the actors, their central relationships, their deeds (among which belong also the dialogues) with their objectives, methods, targets and outcomes create the phenomemal world of mythic discourse, conflicting and illogical as the events of this world may feel.

5. *Thematic threads and oppositions.* The thematicisation of mythic narrative as a consequence of repeated epithets, deeds or images and/or their opposites, for example in reference to inception/time/birth/sex/age etc., reveals central levels and connections of meaning.

6. *Symbols, metaphors and images.* Metaphor belongs among those characteristics which distinguish mythic discourse from other types of discourse. Thus mythic archetypes, crystallised motifs, symbols, metaphors and images are identifying marks of mythicality, whose special meaningfulness guarantees their preservation for long ages. They belong to the register of mythic narrative and offer keys to the interpretation of a performance. Many of the central metaphors of Finnish mythology are derived from the fundamental symbols of the other world (Siikala 2002a; cf. also Eliade 1971; Ricoeur 1976).

7. *Poetic structures.* The structural peculiarities of poetic language belong among the means of mythic expression. Matti Kuusi among others has repeatedly pointed to the connections between the structures of poetic language and mythic themes. His conclusions concerning the historical stylistic epochs of *Kalevala*-poetry are based on an examination of these very links (Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 44–6).

8. *Linguistic register and the coding of performance.* Mythic meanings often present themselves in choice and forms of words bearing archaic or symbolic meanings. Thus an analysis of poetic language may reveal crucial connections of meaning.

Many factors, guided by tradition, regulate the performance of myths. Myths are often, though not always, hierarchical as texts. In the model of mythic analysis presented above the recognition of the levels of classification is more important than the character of individual concepts. Myths, like other narratives, have been investigated by means of many sorts of conceptual systems. Mythemes, mythologems and other terms developed for the analysis of myth emphasise the specific nature of the narrative. Because they have no relationship to the investigation of other types of discourse, they remain obscure to readers not versed in the field.

Myths as Political Practice

We may also ask whether Finno-Ugric myths still have any meaning today. How are they accommodated within an innovative society and in political situations? By creating a connection with the unchanging and foundational events of the past, myths, like sacred rites, possess a power to unite communities and to act as a tool for national self-determination and for political interests. Myths have also had a significant role within movements seeking to create nationhood or ethnic self-awareness. On account of their nature, they have presented themselves as the symbolic capital sum of identity processes which promote nationhood (e.g. Branch & Hawkesworth 1994). An examination of the pursuit of mythology linked to the construction of European national powers gives a good point of comparison with research into present-day ethnonationalism. In mythological research it is also worth paying attention to those processes of tradition in which myths are employed for the construction of ethnic and national self-consciousness. For in a multicultural society mythic and ritual traditions present themselves as means for isolation, for the construction and presentation of the self. Ethnomimesis, an imitation of an earlier traditional culture (see Cantwell 1993), characterises the struggle of small groups, such as the Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia, to stay alive.

Ethnic religion and traditions of belief, as shapers of world view, are nestled in the deep structures of culture and have an effect upon them. The period of state-sponsored atheism did not uproot the ways of religious thought or rituals of Russia's ethnic minorities. In 1991–2006 during my field work in Udmurtia, Komi and the northern Ob region I noticed that many religious traditions thought long dead were alive and were even being revived in connection with local identity processes. For example in the Udmurt republic there are still villages in which the sacrificial groves are in use and function as stages for sacrificial sacrifices performed for the promotion of means of sustenance. As in Udmurtia, so too in Mari these rites have in the last decade begun to be revived. The significance of an ethnic religion or so-called 'nature religion' as a builder of national identity has given rise to a discussion among intellectuals of the areas concerned. A corresponding development may be noticed in Siberia, where for

example the traditional forms of shamanism have been revived as material for artistic expression.

The close relationship of Finno-Ugric peoples to nature, and the symbolic value of important animals such as the elk and bear, have continued to this day, associated with new cultural contexts. Finno-Ugric peoples have, for example, been defined as the offspring of the Bear, as indicated in the name of Pekka Hakamies's work of 1998, or in that of a broad selection of Finno-Ugric folk poetry (Honko *et al.* 1994). Bear rites function today as identity symbols of the Khanty and Mansi (among others). They appear to have a recognised symbolic value also in modern Finland, where bear rituals have been revived in recent decades, thanks both to students and theatrical groups. The so-called ethnofuturist direction of Finno-Ugric art seeks its materials from the world of myth and adapts mythic images to address modern-day people. Representatives of every ethnos seek materials for the construction of an identity from the circles of their own tradition. A common feature of artists representing Finno-Ugric peoples is their search for roots in the region of common northern culture, even though they might in many cases be sought equally in Indo-European cultures or the various divisions of Christianity.

The use of myths in the reinforcing of the ethnic identities of Finno-Ugric peoples and in the construction of cultural self-portraits is a blatant feature of modernity, which follows contemporary trends of the globalised world. Its foundation, however, lies in the nature of myths. The power of religion, myths and rituals to form a society is not a discovery of our post-modern world, nor is it based simply on models which have proved effective in the construction of nation-states. Concepts touching upon a group's past and the nature of the world are the fundamental forms of human knowledge, traditions whose preservation for succeeding generations has been guarded by means either of specialists in memorisation or of writing.

Myths, the history and explanation of the world, unite ancestors and people of the present in the circle of one and the same experience. As Émile Durkheim has shown, repeated common rites and the myths connected with them can create a unity of the community in a greater authority time and time again; at the same time they lay bare the ways in which the sacred which gathers the community together is manifested. Although a shared myth or rite does not signify the same thing to all those taking part, it gives to the different experiences a common background reference. Myth and ritual both unite and create a unity of defined difference. Against this background the meaning to many ethnic minorities of the manifestations of their own ethnic belief-systems may be understood. They offer one possibility, and a powerful one, when ethnically relevant tradition is sought, even though they may no longer function within a religious framework.

Myths in a Globalised World

The exciting side of mythic research is that myth speaks many languages at once. It never has one sole meaning nor do its meanings remain fixed. How mythic narratives, images and metaphors are conceived in different cultural contexts varies. The character of mythic discourse, however, defines the possibilities for the renewal of tradition and of accommodating it within new relationships (cf. Hanks 1996: 274–7). Thus the mythic tradition forms a heritage with a long history, which moreover is in a perpetual state of modification.

In this article I have attempted to show that questions concerning people's lives in the world, the presentation of myths, their contextualisation and meanings are not in conflict with questions relating to the adaptation of tradition and its age. Only when we understand myths both as long-lived heritage and as expressions of the selfhood of poets and their communities, as multivalent poetry, can we formulate an integrated picture of the processes of mythic knowledge.

Mythic research had ideological functions in the nation-state projects of last century. Today myths give substance to different local, ethnic or clan groups, offering metaphors and symbols in the construction of their self-consciousness. Since myths have a strong life in today's world, research into the nature of myths cannot be confined to the examination of old materials alone. Field work presents opportunities for the reconstruction and recontextualisation of mythic tradition, and for the examination of the consequent continual adaptation.

In the renewal of mythic traditions the visibly continuing negotiation process leaves room for creative imagination. Myths are used for new purposes, as cultural materials are created, but their use is not a straight copying of the old but an absorbing of mythic materials as new and unique performances and new forms of modern art are produced. The examination of the recontextualisation of myths, a sort of meta-tradition, as an essential part of identity processes will in the future be an ever more important area of mythic research. ■

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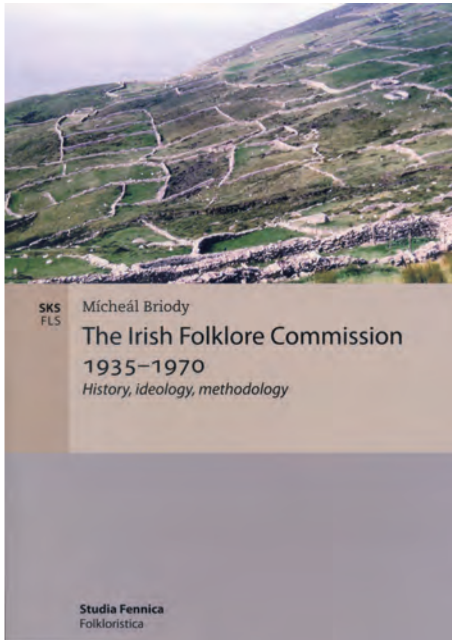

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Mícheál Briody,
The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, ideology, methodology
Studia Fennica Folkloristica 17. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2007. 535 pp. ISBN 978-951-746-947-0. 32 euros.

Between 1935 and 1970 the Irish Folklore Commission (Coimisiún Béaloideasa Éireann), under-funded and at great personal cost to its staff, assembled one of the world's largest folklore collections. This study draws on the extensive government files on the Commission in the National Archives of Ireland and on a wide variety of other primary and secondary sources, in order to recount and assess the work and achievement of this world-famous institute. The cultural, linguistic, political and ideological factors that had a bearing on the establishment and making permanent of the Commission and that impinged on many aspects of its work are here elucidated. The genesis of the Commission is traced and the vision and mission of its Honorary Director, Séamus Ó Duilearga, is outlined. The negotiations that preceded the setting up of of the Commission in 1935 as well as protracted efforts from 1940 to 1970 to place it on a permanent foundation are recounted and examined at length. All the various collecting programmes and other activities of the Commission are described in detail and many aspects of its work are assessed. This study also deals with the working methods and conditions of employment of the Commission's field and Head Office staff. This is the first major study of the Irish Folklore Commission, which has been praised in passing in numerous publications, but here for the first time its work and achievement are detailed comprehensively and subjected to scholarly scrutiny.

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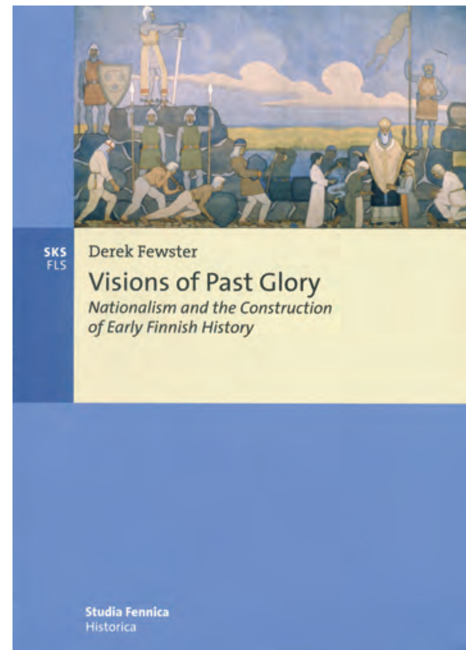
Izmail Gemuyev *et al.*,
Mansi Mythology
Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies 3. Ed. by Anna-Leena Siikala, Mihály Hoppál and Vladimir Napolskikh. Published by Akadémiai Kiadó in collaboration with the Finnish Literature Society, 2008. 199 pp. ISBN 951-000-274-4. 50 euros.

Mansi Mythology introduces the readers to the mythological traditions of the Mansi (Voguls) and aims to give an idea of their world-view created over the course of centuries. The Mansi belong, with the Khanty (Ostyaks) and Samoyeds, to the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia. The nearest linguistic relatives of the Ob-Ugrians (Mansi and Khanty) are Hungarians living in central Europe. The rich culture of the Mansi provides valuable materials for research on language and mythology.

The introduction to *Mansi Mythology* contains two parts. The first part is devoted to a summary of Mansi history in the second millennium AD, to the description of the main traditional ways of life of the Mansi, and to the problem of the adaptation of the people to the circumstances of socio-economic change at the end of the twentieth century. The second part describes the essential points of the Mansi world-view, mythology and epic poetry. To illuminate Mansi mythic poetry, the editors of *The Encyclopedia of Uralic Mythologies* have added a selection of Mansi poems to the end of the volume.

Derek Fewster,
Visions of Past Glory: Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History
Studia Fennica Historica 11. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006. 555 pp. ISBN 951-746-787-7. 34 euros.



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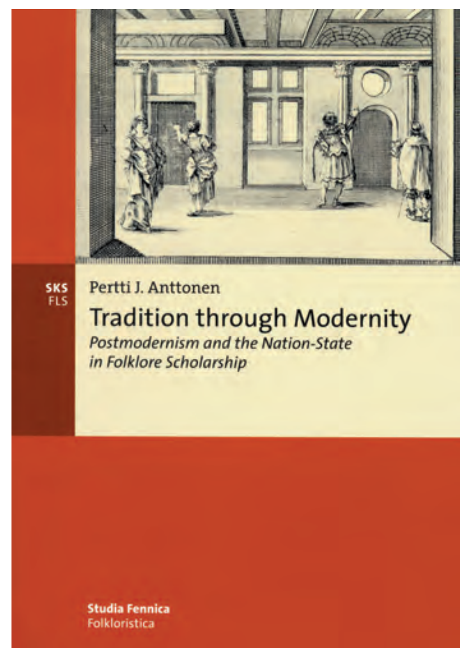
Finland, during both prehistoric and medieval times, has been the subject of numerous studies, but none of these have previously considered the nationalist essence of the integral, underlying 'history culture' or 'public archaeology' of the nation. Even quite obvious political interpretations, visions, and imageries of an ancient Golden Age have all too easily been dismissed as the consequences of mere patriotism, 'Kalevala enthusiasm', or Karelianism.

This study presents the case for how the conceptions of a distant, glorious past have been advanced and actively developed within the national project of constructing a moder ethnicity of Finnishness. Accordingly, a conception of an original ancient greatness was paramount for the nationalist movements in both the Grand Duchy and the early Republic of Finland, especially so when the perceived nation was considered in need of intellectually unifyng defences against the many conceived threats of Russianness after *ca* 1890.

The author traces the construction of a Finnish Great Myth of National Origins from the 16th century until the end of the Second World War, and provides richly illustrated examples of how the process of nation-building influenced and amplified the deep historical core of the emerging Finnish national consciousness.

Pertti J. Anttonen,
Tradition through Modernity. Postmodernism and the Nation-State in Folklore Scholarship.
Studia Fennica Folkloristica 15. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2005. 215 pp. ISBN 951-746-665-X. 28 euros.



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In their study of social practices deemed traditional, scholars tend to use the concept and idea of tradition as an element of meaning in the practices under investigation. But just whose meaning is it? Is it a meaning generated by those who study tradition or those whose traditions are being studied? In both cases, particular criteria for traditionality are employed, whether these are explicated or not. Individuals and groups will no doubt continue to uphold their traditional practices or refer to their practices as traditional. While they are in no way obliged to explicate in analytical terms their criteria for traditionality, the same cannot be said for those who make the study of traditions their profession. In scholarly analysis, traditions need to be explained instead of used as explanations for apparent repetitions and replications or symbolic linking in social practice, values, history, and heritage politics.

This book takes a closer look at 'tradition' and 'folklore' in order to conceptualize them within discourses on modernity and modernism. The first section discusses 'modern' and 'traditional' as modern concepts and the study of folklore as a modern trajectory. The underlying tenet here is that non-modernity cannot be represented without modern mediation, which therefore makes the representations of non-modernity epistemologically modern. The second section focuses on the nation-state of Finland and the nationalistic use of folk traditions in the discursive production of Finnish modernity and its Others.

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Imagined Nordic Places

by Hanne Pico Larsen, Danish Folklore Archives, Copenhagen
& Lizette Gradén, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm

How are Nordic spaces created and expressed in the Nordic countries and North America? How do such spaces give shape to cultural heritage, delimit identities, and draw boundaries via recognition of difference? Since the time of the great emigration to North America, ritual, narratives, architecture, museums and theatre have defined the Nordic in the United States as well as in the Nordic countries themselves. Today, such Nordic spaces are subject to contestation, not least among the descendants of Nordic emigrants and the more recent immigrants to the Nordic countries.

This trans-national and interdisciplinary project seeks to identify and explore the role of performance in the reshaping of Nordic life. Through fieldwork, literature and archival studies, theory criticism and theatre projects we aim to explore how Nordic spaces are created in North America and in the Nordic countries. We examine how these places gain importance as cultural heritage sites and how they become invested with meaning. Of particular concern to this project is our analytical efforts to discover which emotional and spatial means people make use of when considering space and place-making. Through our research interests, we also strive to form an understanding of the role of folklore in the light of cultural politics in the twenty-first century. The four-year project, commencing in January 2008, is funded by the Bank of Sweden's Tercentenary Foundation's Nordic Spaces Programme (www.sh.se/nordicspaces), with additional co-funding being provided by North Park University, the University of Iceland and the Danish Heritage Society, USA.

The project group consists of five post-doctoral scholars from the fields of anthropology/ethnology/folklore/theatre. A chief strategy is to pool our experiences and networks and actively utilise them as a resource in our work. The theme of 'Nordic Spaces' is approached, explored, and studied through five different projects:

1. 'Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century: Concept, Dynamic, Dispute' (*Valdimar Tr. Hafstein*, Department of Anthropology and Folklore, University of Iceland) is a critical inquiry into 'cultural heritage' as a concept, a dynamic, and an emotional force, a mechanism of association and dissociation and a bone of contention.

2. 'Translations/Trans-Nations: The Cultural Negotiation of Performed Nordic Space' (*Chad Eric Bergman*, Department of Communication Arts, North Park University) will investigate Nordic space through producing a festival of translated Nordic plays performed in the stage-reading format and taking one of those plays into a full production in Chicago.

3. 'Transnational Heritage Politics: Vernacular Collections as Performance and Network in Cultural History Museums' (*Lizette Gradén*, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm) will use two museum collections rich in textiles in order to problematise the concepts of collection, curating and authenticity. Viewed as performance the collections constitute a rich source material for the study of cultural-heritage processes. Attention will also

From the left: Chad Eric Bergman, Lizette Gradén, Hanne Pico Larsen, Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch and Valdimar Tr. Hafstein.

be directed to the role of museum exhibitions in the creation of networks.

4. 'Real vs. Fake Windmills: Visual Heritage and Heritage Envy among Danish-Americans' (*Hanne Pico Larsen*, Danish Folklore Archives, Copenhagen). This study explores and develops the concept of Heritage Envy as observed within two constructed Nordic spaces in the United States. A particular focus will rest on to the importance of heritage visibility and the vital influence of heritage politics.

5. 'Rhythm and Ritual in Finland-Swedish Urban Spaces' (*Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch*, Folkloristics, Åbo Akademi University). The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between space, movement and ritual in Finland-Swedish urban environments. The point of departure is everyday walking practices.

The project is a result of ongoing discussions between Gradén, Larsen and Hafstein. It consists of a small group of scholars, each with experiences of working in international projects (theatre, exhibitions, research), having produced our doctoral dissertation work outside of our native Scandinavia, and with substantial collegial networks in folklore, ethnology, theatre, tourism, dress, textile and museum studies. The project will be richly informed by international scholarship. We are particularly interested in linking up with projects in other Nordic countries and in North America.

A major goal is to pool our experiences and networks, and apply them in our joint research. Another goal is to give direct support to our departments and institutions, and to students who wish to work in related fields of study. This can be done in the form of seminars taking place in conjunction with our regular group meetings. A third goal is to take our understandings of folklore, performance, heritage, and the North in new directions by working in this new constellation, assist with fieldwork, invite post-doctoral colleagues and senior discussants to our group meetings. Barbro Klein met with us while we were hatching our plans, and she met with us again after the dream came true and the project was a reality. She has been of great help and support, and we are happy that she truly endorses our endeavours.

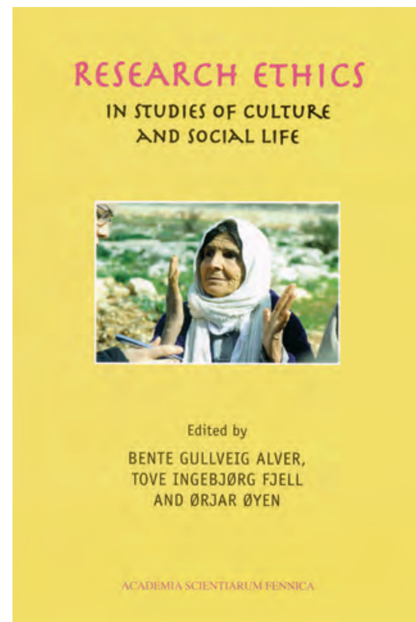
Besides a special issue of *Arv* (Nordic Yearbook of Folklore) 2008, the research will be disseminated through an anthology, articles in journals, and a monograph. Another, less traditional, form of reporting is Bergman's collaborative work in producing theatre in Chicago. Furthermore, the comparative aspects of the project will be presented in panels at various conferences, such as AFS (American Folklore Society), SASS (The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies), SIEF (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore), and the thirty-first Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference 2009. We also invite new initiatives, inquiries and invitations for collaboration from anybody interested in our work or in working with us. ■

For more information on the project, please visit the project homepage
www.nordicspaces.org

Reviews

Ethics on the Agenda

Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life. Ed. by Bente Gullveig Alver, Tove Ingebjørg Fjell and Ørjar Øyen. (FF Communications 292.) Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2007. 232 pp. ISBN 978-951-41-1010-8 (hard), 978-951-41-1011-5 (soft). Hard, 27 euros; soft, 22 euros.



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When first approached about reviewing *Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life* I had recently finished my PhD dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, and I had also just wrapped up my first 'real life' job consulting for a major international oil company. Whereas my dissertation was based on fieldwork I carried out alone amongst Danish-Americans in Southern California, the consulting job was a team effort on a trading floor in the American Midwest, and it was the first time I had done fieldwork in collaboration with scholars from different fields. The products of the research were also of a different character. Both jobs were based on fieldwork, and in spite of ample training and practice in this method, it never ceased to be a delicate affair and an immense challenge. As a folklorist, I have committed to doing fieldwork. Fieldwork is an integral part of our field and its most prevalent methods of research; it can be taught, but never fully learned or mastered—and what good news! It is by carrying out research—by running into problems in the field, by being challenged by ourselves, by the critical informants (a.k.a. human subjects), or by authorities like the Committee for Protection of the Human Subject, and by colleagues—that we continue to learn. It is in the eye of the hurricane that we find the interesting questions to our answers—but getting there is often frustrating, and very often moral and ethical questions have to be solved on the way.

Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life is the product of a joint project initiated by the late Professor Lauri Honko (1932–2002), and the book should be seen as a tribute paid to him by friends and colleagues in the field of folklore. Honko's concerns about the ethical responsibilities of the folklorist fieldworker led him to set up a special programme called the 'Folklore Fellows Code of Ethics'. He called upon Barbro Klein (Sweden) and Tove Ingebjørn Fjell, Bente Gullveig Alver and Ørjar Øyen (Norway), as well as international consultants such as Galit Hasan-Rokem (Israel), Margaret Mills (USA) and Ulrich Marzolph (Germany). The Nordic Council of Ministers funded the project, and meetings and workshops were held in the late 1990s. The content of this book is a compilation of papers inspired by these meetings and discussions about ethics. The compilation is edited by Bente Gullveig Alver, Tove Ingebjørn Fjell and Ørjar Øyen, who also contributed to the content of the book. Other contributors are Margaret A. Mills, Sinikka Vakimo, Barbro Klein, Line Alice Ytrehus, Armi Pekkala, Galit Hasan-Rokem, and Judy Rangnes.

The discussions about ethics also inspired Lauri Honko to write the article 'Do we need a folkloristic code of ethics?' (*FF Network* 21 [2001]: 2–7). Honko's article is a seminar report. Whereas the articles in *Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life* were inspired by Lauri Honko's concerns, opinions and initiatives, the question raised by Honko seems to fall outside the scope of the book: 'Do we need a folkloristic code of ethics?' To find the answer to this question one has to go back to the 2001 article by Honko himself. Even if vaguely formulated it seems as if he gravitated towards saying no to such a fixed code, citing

the constant state of flux and complexity of such a set of codes, and the fear of creating a 'sleeping pillow'. However, he stressed the need for 'ethical reflexivity and awareness of the dimensions of ethical conduct' (Honko 2001: 2) and in so doing he introduced and summarised the nine articles in *Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life*.

The contributions are short, well-written, thought-provoking meditations and case studies concerning ethics in various research situations, and not an attempt to create a poetics of research ethics. The introduction by Bente Gullveig Alver and Ørjar Øyen raises general questions about research ethics. Some of the issues discussed are the emphasis on human rights and individual rights, legislation, and regulations and how ethics and law supplement each other. Questions about cultural heritage protection and issues of economic and other exploitation are touched upon, as well as the harmful effects of research. Autonomy and integrity, oral and written consent and the construction of reality and truth are likewise discussed. These concepts and concerns are complementary and at times overlapping. Together they present the premises of the book. Although this shared premise ties the contributions together, the progression from one article to the next brings emphasis to different aspects of these concepts. Whereas the book does not bring new insights to bear on the issue of research ethics, the analyses in the individual contributions interact and intersect, and together they paint a nuanced picture of research conundrums and dilemmas. The book will be a terrific resource for fuelling discussion in the seminar room.

What is probably of most interest to me, as a younger researcher, when reading this book is that it makes me realise how indebted I am to researchers such as those who contribute to this book. I stand on their shoulders and have been spared many a concern over research ethics. I have learned from the very same people who had already reflected on research ethics, before they passed their knowledge on to me. In Honko's essay from 2001, as well as in many of the essays in the book, a recurring theme is how times have changed and how it is now important to submit an 'assessment of the ethical dimension and impact of the planned research' (Honko 2001: 2) before you even start research. Today you do not just trot into the field, tape-recorder in hand, in good spirits and eager to respect the informant. Luckily, reflectiveness in scholarship today is less self-centered and less full of story-swapping and more about 'the other'—as it should be.

I apologise for ending this review on a more anecdotal note. As an undergraduate in Copenhagen I remember reading about research methods and fieldwork. The main thing we were taught was to be nice and courteous to the informant, to stop them from reflecting too much and to store the cassette tapes properly, for example by constantly rewinding them. Just the mention of the cassette tapes puts things in perspective. By the time I was ready to conduct my first academic fieldwork I was accepted to take part in the FF Summer School of 1999. My workshop was on fieldwork and archiving and headed by the experienced and inspiring professors Ulrika Wolf-Knuts and Barbro Klein. Next door the very group of people concerned with research ethics were pondering codes of ethics, led by Lauri Honko and Margaret Mills. They probably even gave early drafts of the papers in this book. I was just learning to walk, so to speak! My exercise and fieldwork turned out to be far more complex then anticipated. I was dragged around my own emotional register, the scope of my fieldwork was changed by the informant, not by me, and I probably had every single ethical concern touched upon in this book—without knowing it—during these few interviews. My informant was a Chilean refugee who preferred to give me her life story then tell me about her Christmas traditions (Larsen 2001). I was allowed to learn, however, how to deal with all these aspects of research within the secure framework of the summer school and guided by some of the best teachers I could ever have asked for. I remember how conversations with Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, Barbro Klein, Ülo Valk, Ulrich Marzolph, Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhoj, Anna-Leena Siikala, Ríonach úi Ogáin and others made me understand what I was doing.

Since then, and because of this experience, fieldwork to me has always been the most challenging yet interesting part of my job as a researcher. I have long since stopped rewinding my tapes and my informants have always signed consent forms, a requirement at the university I attended. For me ethics has *always* been on the agenda thanks to scholars like Honko and many of the contributors to this volume who have helped to turn the tide and to navigate it as well. I am therefore delighted to find that they share some of their navigation equipment in this new volume on *Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life*.

However, a new question can be raised here: if the main difference between the earlier and the contemporary fieldwork traditions is the new focus on ethics, it raises important questions about the influence of this new focus on the research output. Consideration of ethical treatment of human subjects clearly imposes a bureaucratic burden on research, and the numerous forms and approval processes may stifle research production. However, the more ethical conduct of fieldwork may also have beneficial effects, such as inducing a more open and transparent relationship with informants. Whether this ultimately benefits our understanding of folklore and ethnography may be too early to tell.

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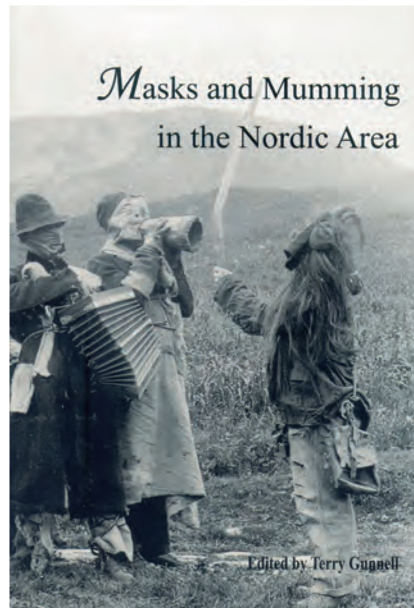
Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area

Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area. Ed. by Terry Gunnell. Acta Academiæ Regiæ Gustavi Adolphi 98. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur. 840 pp., 41 maps, 159 illustrations, bibliography, index, list of contributors. ISBN 978-91-85352-70-8. 38 euros.



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The current volume is the product of several years of meetings and research supported in large part by the Nordic Research Council for the Humanities (NOS-H) beginning in 1999 and culminating in this publication. The goal of this nearly decade-long work was to present a thorough overview of masked performance and mumming traditions in the Nordic region, broadly defined, and to allow contemporary scholars an opportunity to explore these traditions from the theoretical perspectives of modern folkloristics and ethnology. From the very inception of the project in the late 1990s, Terry Gunnell and Carsten Bregenhøj were the two driving forces behind this successful endeavor. By the end of the project, participants from all of the Nordic countries as well as researchers in British and North American traditions had participated in what were clearly fruitful scholarly exchanges. This large, handsome volume, produced under the auspices of the Royal Gustav Adolf Academy for Swedish Folk Culture (Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur) will stand as the definitive study of Nordic mumming traditions for the foreseeable future.

The volume consists of an introduction and two main sections. The introductory chapter, written by Gunnell, offers an excellent theoretical basis for the ensuing volume. Gunnell accurately recognizes the lack of any substantive modern scholarly engagement with the field of masked drama and mumming in the Nordic region (p. 30), and offers various theoretical insights into why scholars have shied away from substantive engagement with these traditions. Among these, he notes that the earliest scholarship on mumming traditions tended to focus almost exclusively on historical and descriptive accounts of outward appearances (p. 38). He situates von Sydow's introduction of functional approaches to folkloristics as an important development that reverberated throughout the study of mumming traditions, particularly in Scandinavia, with scholars turning their attention to the function of these traditions in the communities in which they were performed. Despite the focus of the functionalists on the deep contextualization of situated performances, Gunnell rightfully notes that, like the historical surveys before them, these studies could also suffer from a degree of impersonality (p. 39). The current volume is more than a corrective for the unfortunate lacuna that emerged from these earlier approaches to mumming tradition. Indeed, in the case studies, there is a degree of immediacy in many of the fieldwork based papers that could easily be a model for work in other areas of folklore.

The first major section of the volume consists of seven surveys of mumming in the Nordic regions. These surveys include considerations of mumming traditions in Norway; Sweden; Denmark; the North Atlantic (predominantly Iceland, Shetland, Orkney and the Faroe Islands); Finland and Karelia; Estonia; and Greenland. These articles are comprehensive in scope, and provide an excellent historical overview of mumming and masked drama scholarship in each of these regions. The chapters also offer helpful overviews of the various traditions that dominate in these regions and their distribution. These richly illustrated chapters stand on their own as important individual contributions to the study of mumming in the north, and certainly provide an excellent grounding in the various mumming traditions of the Nordic area. Taken collectively, these essays provide an important insight into the processes of historical and geographic variation of the mask and mumming traditions, and offer the researcher and student alike a wealth of information.

It is impossible to single out any single article in this section for specific praise, as all of these surveys hew to remarkably high academic standards. The maps accompanying the Norwegian and Finnish chapters are of exceptionally good quality, and quite useful as illustrations of the distribution of various traditional practices. Similarly, the photographs in the Danish section and in the Swedish section are of particular note, as they provide rich visual testimony to the diversity of these traditions across many decades. The Greenlandic survey is quite interesting as it encapsulates the

cultural tension between indigenous peoples and their cultural expressions in the context of colonial rule. The Estonian chapter is equally interesting, as it brings to the fore the notion of the Baltic Rim as a cultural region; while this conceptualization of the Nordic region is well known in the Nordic countries, it will likely be a surprise to readers not well attuned to the region. The only thing perhaps missing from this survey section is a brief comparative overview—but, given the wealth of materials, the informed reader can make his or her own comparative surmises. The bibliography at the end of the volume—an incredible resource in itself—offers a wealth of information to bolster any such further comparative endeavors. Had the volume simply included these survey articles, it would have guaranteed itself a place in the pantheon of classic reference works in Nordic folklore studies. Fortunately, the volume extends well beyond these masterful survey articles and includes an equally important section of theoretical articles.

The second major section of the volume, simply entitled 'Articles', consists of a series of studies, or 'case studies', that provide critical depth to the substantive historical materials presented in the first section. This second section is broken into five subsections, each comprised of several articles. These sections include 'Themes in Mass and Mumming', essays that are largely theoretical explorations of the analysis of performance traditions; 'Local Case Studies', the largest section, including six excellent articles based on substantive fieldwork throughout the Nordic area; 'Related Traditions in the Nordic Area', a series of three articles that make a convincing case for the interrelatedness of folk expressive culture; 'New Traditions in Masks and Mumming' which, with only two articles, is the smallest section of the second part of the volume; and 'Comparable Traditions in Neighboring Countries', in which the three articles comprising this section helpfully expand the comparative scope of the volume into Scotland, Ireland and Newfoundland. This comparative addendum in some ways mitigates any reservations one might have had concerning important comparative tie-ins not included in the first section.

Each of the articles in the second section could stand well on its own as an individual journal article. Taken together, the articles set up an intriguing dialogue that crosses not only cultural and linguistic boundaries, but also boundaries through time and space. It would be quite difficult to single out any article for particular consideration in a review as brief as this. It is worth noting that the articles do not cleave to any single theoretical paradigm. Instead, various mumming traditions—from *Julebukk* traditions in Norway to carnival traditions in the modern Icelandic secondary schools—are explored from a variety of theoretical points of view. As a result, at the end of this nearly three hundred page section, one has had the opportunity to explore a wide variety of critical approaches to specific mumming traditions. Coupled to the exhaustive surveys at the beginning of the volume, this theoretical smorgasbord is a remarkably successful strategy.

The only negative comment one can possibly make about this remarkable compendium is its heft—one could easily imagine the work split into a more manageable two volume boxed set, with the first volume consisting of the well researched and extremely useful surveys of mumming traditions from the various Nordic regions, and the second volume consisting of the in-depth, analytically sophisticated and critically important articles. Such a division, however, would add to the cost of the work, and probably would have precluded the inclusion of the numerous maps and figures that contribute substantially to the intellectual weight of the work. Indeed, it is remarkable in an age of ever decreasing publishing budgets that Gunnell was allowed to include as many photographs, drawings and maps as he was. The quality of the maps and photographs is first rate. Given the nature of mumming traditions, the inclusion of photographs—particularly interesting archival and contemporary photographs of actual mumming performances—is absolutely crucial. Although nothing can ever supplant first hand experience of a folk performance, the photographs bridge this necessary gap quite well, and offer the student of mumming an opportunity to view many of the phenomena so expertly explored in the various articles. Similarly, the inclusion of large, informative maps helps illustrate aspects of the distribution of various mumming traditions in the north, and also helps one situate the various oikotypes of mumming practices. While future developments might make it possible to concatenate these maps into some form of computer interface, the current maps at least help delimit the regional scope of traditions explored in these various articles. Another possible enhancement to the volume would have been the inclusion of the entire work as a pdf file on disk, which would allow for rapid discovery of related phenomena described in the text, yet the excellent index attenuates the need for any such electronic finding aid. One final enhancement would have been the inclusion of short video clips on DVD in an accompanying sleeve—again one can only suspect that production and distribution costs would have been prohibitive. These are, of course, minor quibbles and speak more to the success of the volume: one cannot help but become utterly absorbed by the world of mumming presented here with the result that one looks up from reading only wanting more.

The current volume will have significant appeal to teachers and students of Nordic folklore, as well as to researchers in humor and folk ritual. Given Gunnell's own interest in performance and theater—and the inclusion of these considerations in many of the articles

and surveys—the volume will also appeal to those interested in theater and performance, its history and its manifestations in folk cultures throughout the world. Because of the important and substantive discussions of the history of mask and mumming scholarship in the first section, the volume will also appeal to scholars of other mumming traditions besides the Nordic region or northern Europe. Indeed, one can easily imagine a series of related volumes detailing Masks and Mumming in East Asia, in South Asia, in Africa, in South and Central America and so on. Such a global thrust would presage a significant advance in folklore studies, recognizing at once the human will to engage in theater, masked performance and mumming on the one hand, and the remarkable diversity—both historical and geographic—that characterizes masked folk performance throughout the world. Gunnell and his colleagues have set the bar very high in this excellent volume—it will be interesting to see if other folklorists are up to the task of expanding this type of comprehensive work on a global scale.

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Narrating, Doing, Experiencing: Folklorists Facing Fundamental Questions

Narrating, Doing, Experiencing – Nordic Folkloristic Perspectives. Ed. by Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Barbro Klein & Ulf Palmenfelt. (Studia Fennica Folkloristica 16.) Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006. 186 pp. ISBN 951-746-726-5. 29 euros.

Eight Nordic folklorists have applied themselves to fundamental questions in *Narrating, Doing, Experiencing – Nordic Folkloristic Perspectives*, edited by Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Barbro Klein and Ulf Palmenfelt. The subjects of the articles concern problems of human existence and society. An integrating factor is that narratives gained from face-to-face interviews form the material for all the articles. The intimate discussions, special characteristics of the narratives and problems related to the analysis present the reader with folkloristic questions about tradition, narration, aesthetics and ethics.

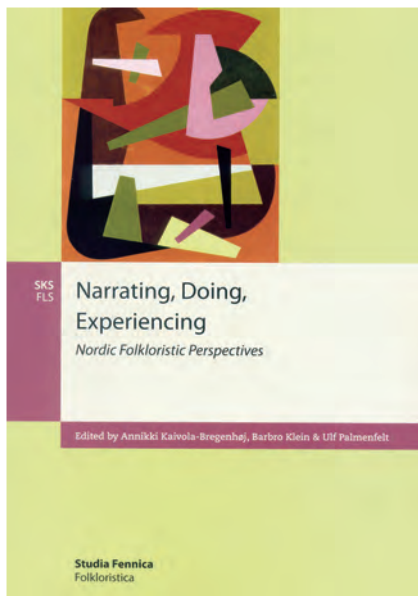
The 'narrative turn' which took place in many areas of science and life in the 1960s has elevated narration and narrating in Western societies to some sort of root metaphor. In her introductory article Barbro Klein examines the development of folkloristic research in the United States and Europe in connection with this turn. Interesting related facts are offered by the ethnography of speaking, a theory of verbal art as performance and ethnopoetics. Klein emphasises that for the folklorist the narrative turn signified also a 'performance turn': folklore and types of verbal art began to be examined as forms of action.

The narrative turn has also influenced the strengthening of the position of I-centred narrative in Western folkloric research. Personal-experience narration is one example of such narration, where people express their experiences, their values, their joys and their worries. The narrative turn has been seen as a golden time for folklorists. In reading the articles in the book it is possible to glimpse the sort of perspectives offered by folkloristics to social and cultural discussions. A theme running through the articles is the relationship between family, community and society, which the writers analyse through the topics of birth and death, childhood and age, illness and war.

War

War and exile are the starting points for two of the articles. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj has interviewed Ingrian Finns living in the neighbourhood of St Petersburg, Russia. Exploiting the ethnography of speech and performance perspective in her analysis, Kaivola-Bregenhøj also presents her own fieldwork experiences. The four women interviewed relate the turning points of their lives, war and exile. The laconic narratives are lent colour by the precise individual facts, the descriptions of activities and the linking of events to places. By temperament the narrators vary, but their narratives are linked in that they do not present their feelings in words. Instead of words, the feelings emerge as sudden bursts of emotion in the narrative setting. Although the narratives deal in depth with extraordinary personal experiences, they do not contain any moral judgements on the events. The writer leads the reader to consider how private grief is transformed into public sorrow.

Anne Heimo sets out in her article to investigate memories and sites of memory. Her material derives from the events of the Civil War in a small Finnish village in 1918. The interviews paint a picture of the recent history of the community as being multiform and multi-voiced. The narrators present the tangled relationships of the opposing sides. In dealing with recent history, narratives may also present suffering and death by means of humour. With her interest in the politics of memory, Heimo uses as the basis of her interpretation the observation that memory is spatially ordered and is thus related to the changes in the surroundings. In examining the connections of human experiences to place Heimo maps out the historical memories of the community and sense of place. With her article she involves herself in the discussion of how part of the community's historical memory derives from the places of memory.



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Family Matters

Barbro Klein approaches verbal art from the perspective of performance, of action. By analysing the discussion recordeded in the family circle, she traces the moulding of narrative in social processes. The father's and aunt's way of speaking contains fragments, silences, jokes, reports, lists, smiles and dramatic depictions. Through narration the experiences of childhood are lived through anew; it is remembered how life once was. Concentration on named places and people, quotations and imitation, as well as metaphor, form the discussion. The intensity of the speech event also brings out expressions of feelings, smiles and tears. The narration thus awakens a consciousness of cultural and personal continuity. Klein sees the strength of verbal art as its ability to transform the unique and personal into the collective and shared. Over some things silence is always maintained, however.

Ulf Palmenfelt investigates interchange of social and narrative factors in the interview situation. By analysing the conversation between two Gotland men he pursues the question of what sort of cultural agreements pertaining to the conversation situation exist in society. The interlocutors of the interview, which related to personal and local history, belonged to the same community, and thus knew each other and each other's family backgrounds. Relationships between public and personal experiences emerged as one central problematic area of the conversation situation: when can one adopt a particular experience as part of one's life history? The culturally mediating patterns of dialogue, the unspoken agreements and the interlocutors' advice on what can be spoken about, challenged the cultural researcher to focus his attention not only on the temporal and spatial, but also the modal dimension.

Illness

Two of the articles relating to bodily matters deal with illness and healing. Georg Drakos's burning issues are the relationships between physical experience, narrative and meaning. As a counter to the medical perspective on HIV/AIDS, Drakos focuses on people's experiential universe. Alongside Edmund Husserl's concept of the life world, he uses as tools of analysis the concepts of the dis- and dys-appearing body. The conversations of a Swedish man and Greek woman deal with illness, falling ill and how to manage illness, and how to keep consciousness healthy. The phenomenological approach to the narrators' experiences of life as HIV-positive initiates the reader not only into the concrete strategies for survival but also into the existential conflicts brought on by illness.

Torunn Selberg introduces the reader to the world of miracles. She analyses the narratives of two female narrators on miracle healings, investigating the relationships between belief, doubt and intelligence. Doubt changes to belief in the narratives. Just like in Christian tales of healing so too in exemplificatory narratives the narrators depict the cleansing from illness. Modern miracle narratives are indeed often echoes of biblical miracles. The view contained in the article of the miracle as a religious and cultural category helps the reader place popular healing in a wider societal context and also illuminates the relationship of cultural research to the supernatural and research into it. People's interest in miracle healing is an example of how miracles still have a place in the formation of popular religious concepts.

Mothers and Grandmothers

Lena Marander-Eklund has recorded the childbirth experiences of first-time mothers. She is interested in how the physical experience is verbalised and how that is revised in the course of time. Marander-Eklund defines childbirth narratives as personal-experience narratives and as identity narratives. By means of an analysis of childbirth narratives the reader can follow the construction of motherhood. Following Irwing Goffman, Marander-Eklund interprets the narratives as childbirth dramas. The experiences of the protagonist, with her joys and fears, and the role change from being pregnant to being a birth-giver, and from birth-giver to mother have a central place in the narratives. Alongside this the writer has brought into the analysis the actors of the narrative world, their roles and their appearances in the drama.

Anne Leonora Blaakilde takes the rhetoric between generations as her focus of analysis. The starting point

is distinction drawn by the grandmother-narrator between the telling of stories and telling of experiences: experience relates to the truth and authenticity, story either to fiction or to other people's experiences. Using the narrator's own realistic categorisation as a tool, Blaakilde analyses the change in experiences between generations. A basis for the interpretation is the view of the subject as a demarcated personhood. By means of the metaphor of the container, Blaakilde presents the idea of personhood as an individual, independent and separate. Through an analysis and interpretation of the grandmother's speech the reader is initiated into individualism as a cultural ideal and how different generations adapt to this ideal.

Knowledge, Experience and Feelings

In the articles contained in the book, the writers analyse and interpret the relationships between narration, action and experience. In the narratives analysed by Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Heimo, Klein and Palmenfelt there is a strong connection with locality. Events, experiences and feelings are linked to named places—and also named people. For Selberg, Drakos, Marander-Eklund and Blaakilde, place is set to one side and the body and experience take the foreground. When personal-experience narration is used as the source material, life's more intimate side is inevitably the focus of research and analysis. An examination of the influence on the discourse of the closeness and space which operate in an interview situation comes out in the material used in the articles, where the relations between the interviewer and narrator form themselves in different ways. Ethical questions in a situation of personal-experience narrative are relevant to both narrator and researcher. Who has the right to narrate? What should be left unspoken? What can be published?

This collection of articles raises important epistemological questions, relating to the localisation and expression of experiences and feelings. To what extent can knowledge of experience and feelings be gained by analysing speech and narratives? How can feelings be expressed in words? How do narrators in different cultures communicate their feelings and touch the community? From the folkloristic point of view the central question concerns the nature of knowledge gained through personal-experience narratives, and what sort of questions can be posed to the material, and what can it answer.

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Typical Passages in the Heroic Epics of Siberia: A New Index

Ye. N. Kuz'mina: *Ukazatel' tipicheskikh mest geroichesko-go èposa narodov Sibiri (Altaitsev, Buryat, Tuvintsev, Khakasov, Shortsev, Yakutov). Èksperimental'noe izdanie.* [An index of typical passages of the heroic epic of the peoples of Siberia (Altaians, Buryats, Tuvinians, Khakas, Shors, Yakuts). An experimental edition.] Rossiyskaya Akademiya Nauk. Sibirskoe Otdelenie, Institut Filologii. Novosibirsk: Izdatel'stvo SO RAN, 2005. 1383 pp. 1000 Russian rubles (approximately 30 euros).

This monumental work provides an index of typical passages in the heroic epics of a number of Siberian peoples. What I have translated as 'typical passage' is called *tipicheskoe mesto* in Russian, literally 'typical place'. In Russian scholarship typical passages, *tipicheskie mesta*, are also referred to as *loci communes*, 'commonplaces'. This links the term to Classical and medieval rhetoric, also to what Ernst Robert Curtius (1948) has identified as *topoi* in medieval literature. As a stylistic and compositional trait of oral epic poetry, however, the term *tipicheskoe mesto* is closer to oral-formulaic theory and basically equivalent to what Milman Parry and Albert Lord defined as 'themes', i.e. 'the groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song' (Lord 1960 [2000]: 68). Some of the themes Parry and Lord distinguished, such as the 'Arming of the Hero', are what other scholars term typescenes (or 'typische Szenen' in Walter Arend's study of the Homeric epics, 1933), while some of the themes discussed within the framework of oral-formulaic theory, as for instance the 'Beasts of Battle', correspond more closely to what in folklore is understood by 'motifs'. For the study of Russian *bylinas*, P. D. Ukhov's analysis of typical passages (1970) has been groundbreaking and has served as a model for the present book. Ukhov's list of typical passages in the *bylinas* shows many similarities to the themes discussed by Lord and other scholars working in the Parry–Lord paradigm, it overlaps also with the series of motifs identified in the *chansons de geste* by Jean Rychner (1955). There is an ample literature on the definition of 'themes', 'motifs', 'type-scenes' and other compositional units of traditional narrative poetry, some scholars advocating subtle differences and others arguing for more flexibility in the use of these terms in order to do justice to the idiosyncracies of different traditions. In her short introduction (pp. 3–7), Ye. N. Kuz'mina deals with a number of theoretical questions, including the definition of a typical passage; her theoretical discussion is, however, somewhat narrowly focussed on Russian scholarship and would have gained from a consideration of works on type-scenes and themes outside Russia. Despite this restriction in Kuz'mina's theoretical approach, there is much

to be said for a pragmatic attitude in compiling an index of the kind here reviewed; its value lies mostly in its usefulness for further research.While it might be of interest to discuss some of the ideas presented in the introductory remarks to the book, it seems to me of greater use to the scholarly community to give a brief description of what the index contains and how the material is organized.

The book is radically different from an index of motifs such as Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* and the many similar works published in the 'FF Communications' and elsewhere (discussed in the surveys of Hans-Jörg Uther 1998/9 and Heda Jason 2000). It is different not only as to its subject matter (heroic epic) and the geographical area covered (Siberia), but also regarding the presentation of the various typical passages. In Kuz'mina's *Ukazatel'* the typical passages are not only classified and listed as in comparable indices, but they are also quoted in full. This makes her index into an invaluable tool for epic research. The passages are given both in the original language and in Russian translation. The book comprises an analysis of five Turkic-speaking ethnic groups (Altaians, Tuvinians, Khakas, Shors, Yakuts) and one Mongolian-speaking group in Siberia (Buryats). The typical passages from the different epic traditions were compiled by various specialists; the section on Altaian (Altay-Turkic) epics was prepared by N. R. Baydzhanova, on the Tuvinian epics by S. M. Orus-ool, on the Khakas epics by N. S. Chistobaeva and Yu. V. Limorenko, on the Shor epics by L. N. Arbachakova, on the Yakut epics by T. V. Illarionova and M. N. Petrova, and on the Buryat epics by Ye. N. Kuz'mina. Most of the epics analysed are of substantial size, ranging from 2,500 to over 11,000 lines. With the exception of three Buryat texts all texts are available in Russian translation and found in bi-lingual editions, generally in the series 'Pamyatniki fol'klora narodov Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka' ('Monuments of the folklore of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East', Novosibirsk) and 'Èpos narodov SSSR', now called: 'Èpos narodov Evrazii' ('The epic of the peoples of the USSR/ of Eurasia', Moscow). The three Buryat *üliger* (epics) for which no Russian translation is available in print were translated by Kuz'mina; these three texts are unpublished and quoted from the respective manuscripts kept in the archives of the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk.

The Altaian examples are based on four epics, *Altyn-Bize*, *Qan-Altyn*, *Maaday-Qara*, and *Ochi-Bala*, of which one, *Maaday-Qara*, is also available in English translation (Marazzi 1986). This is the only epic in this book that has been translated in full into a European language other than Russian. The Tuvinian epics chosen for the index are *Boqtug-Kirish* and *Khunan-Qara*, the Khakas epics *Ay-Khuuchin* and *Altyn-Aryg*, the Shor epics *Altyn Syryq*, *Qan Mergen* and *Qan Pergen*, the Yakut epics *Qyys Debiliye*, *Er Sogotokh* and *Qulun Qul-*

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lustuur. The Buryat epics (*üliger*) analysed are taken from three ethnic-linguistic subgroups and comprise six Ekhirit-Bulagat, two Unga-Buryat and one Khori-Buryat *üliger*. Despite the fact that many of the epics studied are fairly long, they represent only a small portion of the respective tradition. To give just one example, according to a survey of Altaian epics published by S. S. Surazakov in 1985, about 200 epics have been written down (including variants of the same epic tale), of which about half have been published. However impressive the analysis of four Altaian epics, running together to *ca* 18,000 lines, is, these four epics are clearly only a small sample of a huge tradition.

The index is divided into five units, I The Epic-World, II Epic Protagonists, III Magic Objects, IV Compositional Insertions, and V Narrator Comments. By far the most comprehensive portion and the central unit of analysis is II Epic Protagonists. It comprises four sections: A Man, Б The Hero's Horse, В Mediators, and Г Anthropomorphic Figures (using the Cyrillic letters of the index). Of these four sections the most detailed is A Man; it has 22 subsections, with further subdivisions (symbolized by brackets with dots in the list below). To give an idea of the segmentation and classification I will list the 22 subsections of A: 1) Coming into being (birth); solitude of the main hero; 2) Betrothal of the hero (heroine); description of the name-givers; 3) The main hero's fast growth and reaching manhood; 4) Motivation of the hero (heroine) for leaving home (to hunt [. . .] etc.) ; 5) Preparations for a journey; taking leave (from parents, wife etc.); 6) Heroic outfit (. . .); 7) Hero's ride (. . .); 8) Meeting (with parents, wife etc.); 9) Smoking a pipe; 10) Outward appearance of the protagonists (. . .); 11) Psychological state (. . .); 12) Intellec-

tual and physical qualities (. . .); 13) Heroic food (. . .); 14) Fight (battle) (. . .); 15) Victory of hero (heroine), 16) Reprisal against adversaries (means of annihilation, taming, punishment); 17) Defeat and death of the hero (heroine) (. . .); 18) Burial of the hero (heroine); 19) Finding one's true outer appearance; resurrection; healing; purification (. . .); 20) The hero's winning of a bride (. . .); 21) Feast (on the occasion of birth, name-giving, wedding, victory over enemies): preparation of feast; its long duration; 22) Other tests and feats of the hero (heroine): difficult tasks, imposed by relatives (sister, uncles, parents etc.). In comparison with II.A, II.Б has only five subsections, II.B and II.Г have only two subsections. III has no subsections; IV and V have four and three subsections, respectively, and I has eight subsections. Clearly II.A must be considered the central component of the *Ukazatel'*.

When comparing Kuz'mina's index with other classifications a number of similarities, but also significant differences can be observed. In his analysis of the motif compostion of Mongolian epics, Walther Heissig (1979) distinguished fourteen major building-blocks, with a great number of further subdivisions, which he uses successfully in his extensive analysis of Mongolian epics (1988). Many of the elements in Heissig's list can also be found in Kuz'mina's index, others such as the initial childlessness of the hero's parents (Heissig 2.5.1) are missing, although this motif is also found in the Siberian epic traditions, as for instance in the Altaian epic *Altyn-Bize*. Similarly, the various components of Kuz'mina's II.A.14 Fight (battle) could be juxtaposed with analyses such as Renate Hitze's of the battle scenes in the *chansons de geste* (1965) or Heda Jason's of combat scenes in South Slavic epic songs (1993). Once again, overlappings as well as divergences can be detected. The battle scenes in the Old French epic seem to be far more detailed as to the various movements of the fighting parties (Hitze, pp. 44–80) than in the Siberian epics; they are, of course, presented within the context of medieval chivalric society and are therefore of only limited usefulness for a description of Siberian epics. Comparison with other attempts to distinguish narrative units, ranging from motif to theme, may point to the one or other gap in Kuz'mina's index, but does not in any way belittle the achievement of the various compilers. What comparison does show, however, is that some kind of international cooperation is desirable when it comes to classifying the motifs and themes of (oral) epic poetry.

Not all elements of the *Ukazatel*' are of equally frequent occurrence in the different epic traditions of Siberia. The motif/theme II.A.14.a 'Fight (battle): dance of the eagle', for instance, is only found in the Tuvinian epics analysed (with nine quotations), while II.A.14.Д 'Fight (battle): incantation spoken on the arrow (or another weapon)' is found in all traditions except Shor epic poetry. Here, however, the Turkic epics have only one (or, in the Altaian sample, two) instances, while this motif/theme occurs twenty-five times in the Buryat texts. Despite many similarities between the Siberian epic traditions analysed in this book, there are also a number of differences, which it would be interesting to work out and explore in detail. Thanks to the efforts of Ye. N. Kuz'mina and her collaborators such further research is possible on the basis of this index. With all the texts availabe in the original language and in (Russian) translation it is now possible for students of Siberian, Central Asian and indeed world oral epics to write comparative analyses and to continue the development of a comprehensive index of typical passages in oral epic poetry. Kuz'mina's monumental collection and classification of Siberian epics is also available online (www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/kuzmina28.htm), a fact which further increases the usefulness of this valuable research tool.

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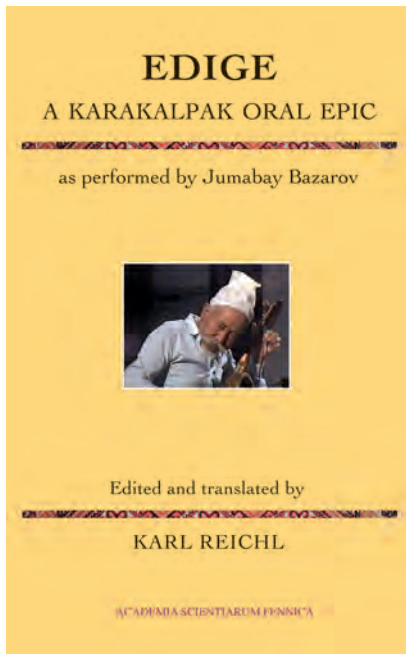

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FFC 293. **Edige – a Karakalpak Oral Epic as performed by Jumabay Bazarov**. Edited and translated by Karl Reichl.
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