Introduction

Usually seen as a form of domestic ethnography, the study of folklore as it was institutionalized in the European academy was for a long time understood as one of the 'national sciences'. It was dedicated to the study of a nation's 'traditional' culture, which was inherited, mostly by peasants, from prehistoric times and was largely independent of cosmopolitan influences. Folklore studies focused on exploring the *Volksgeist*, the most striking aspects of which were not in material culture but in the forms of *Volkspoesie*, oral traditions that were admired for their artistic qualities and that seemed to transcend the peasant condition. Older than nation-states, 'national' folklore studies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were shaped in an implicit or explicit antagonism to contemporary political structures. Because of this political dimension, folklore has been linked to various forms of nationalism. Turned inwards rather than outwards, it has not been readily associated with colonialism, an obvious part of the legacy of cultural anthropology, and it was institutionalized and professionalized independently of extra-European circumstances.

Or was it? This book looks at the development of a folkloristic perspective within a western scientific system in the period from the mid-eighteenth century to the Second World War. If folklore studies were a domestic ethnography, does not this raise the question of where the domestic ended and the exotic[1] began? Where did Europe begin and where did it end? Was European civilization coterminous with Europe? Europe has natural boundaries to the north, west and south but not to the east. If it is defined in terms of western or Judeo-Christian civilization, the Christian and Muslim worlds have for long overlapped in the east. The steppes that stretch eastwards from the region north of the Black Sea are a vast Eurasian plain that almost reaches the Pacific Ocean and was for long a thoroughfare criss-crossed by nomadic peoples.

1 The word 'exotic' as used in this book follows the dictionary definition: 'Outlandish, barbarous, strange, uncouth. Also, having the attraction of the strange or foreign, glamorous' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'exotic').

To the west, as European powers expanded across the Atlantic to annex the Americas to their world, they adapted strategies already used to integrate their European hinterlands. For centuries smaller European states or ethnically differentiated territories were drawn into the orbit of more powerful kingdoms. Only a handful of European countries have had a continuous existence as independent states from early modern times to today. All those states – well over twenty – that appeared on the map in the early twentieth century, were they previously provinces or could they be seen in some sense as colonies? Could ethnography carried out in them be compared to colonial ethnography?

As a folkloristic research field developed, it interacted with, was in dialogue with and differentiated itself from literature, philology, history, sociology, ethnology and the various iterations of anthropology. Each of these nascent scientific disciplines tried to establish its own remit and its own identity in terms of a research object, a history and, implicitly or explicitly, a geographically bounded field. According to the sociologist Fuyuki Kurasawa, the late nineteenth-century institutionalization in Europe and North America of his own discipline 'formalized an already implicit division of intellectual labor along neat geographical (and, it was assumed, civilizational) lines between sociological and anthropological sciences, with the former devoting itself to modern societies of the North Atlantic region and the latter concerning itself with "primitive"[2] societies in the rest of the world' (Kurasawa 2013: 188).

If sociologists, then, studied modern western societies and anthropologists studied traditional non-western societies, what did folklorists study? The folklorist/anthropologist Elli-Kaija Köngäs-Maranda characterized the difference between anthropology and folklore in forthright terms:

> The anthropologist studies the others; the folklorist studies his or her own.
>
> Anthropology was born from colonialism; folklore was born from nationalism.
>
> Colonizing countries have anthropology museums; colonized countries have folklore archives.
>
> The important anthropology museums bear witness to a colonizing past.
>
> The important folklore archives bear witness to a people having been colonized.

2 'Primitive' is borrowed from French *primitif* and Latin *primitivus*. It has maintained one of its earlier general senses in 'original; not developed or derived from anything else …' Over time it also came to mean 'original inhabitant … a person belonging to a preliterate, non-industrial society' (from 1779) (*Oxford English Dictionary*, *s.v.* 'primitive').

> Where one finds folklore archives, one can predict in the short term the advent of political independence (Köngäs-Maranda 1983: 166).

But if the folklorist studied his or her own, did not the sociologist too? And since the colonized countries Köngäs-Maranda names in the essay cited above are, with the exception of Québec, all in Europe, can we take it that the folklorist shared a research interest in colonial societies with the anthropologist? Köngäs-Maranda does not discuss the different research problematics of folklore studies and anthropology, although implications can be drawn from her contention that the one produced archives and the other museums. Kurasawa points out out that the focus of incipient sociology was on modern societies and of anthropology on 'primitive' societies (which may or may not have included the 'Orient'[3]).

Were 'primitive' societies then found only outside of Europe? Writing in 1906, Lamberto Loria and the anthropologist Aldobrandino Mochi described their research object as

> a people among whom industry still remains to a large part in the technical and undifferentiated state in which we find it among the less evolved races; … whose artistic products … approach rather those of ancient prehistoric races or the savages[4] of Africa, of Australia, of America; a people who in certain places are content to live in natural caves like the ancient troglodytes, or in hovels of stone and mud that they sometimes build in the fields, with straw and branches of trees, shelters much more miserable than the huts of many savages… a people whose most solid faith (despite the appearance of external rites) is still primitive animism, whose intellectual conceptions do not go beyond a childlike humanity (Loria and Mochi 1906: 7–8).

Both Loria and Mochi carried out research outside of Europe but the people they described to their readers in these words were at home: they were their fellow Italians. Köngäs-Maranda saw a clear historical relationship between folklore and the nation whereas Loria and Mochi – with qualifications we will later explore – saw folklore as essentially limited to certain social groups. Ethnology/cultural anthropology developed in two different ways, the result of two different political contexts, and the same may be said for folklore studies, reflected in the differing perspectives of Köngäs-Maranda on the one hand and of Loria and Mochi on the other.

3 Originally used to refer to the regions to the east of the Mediterranean, *Orient* was later used primarily to refer to eastern Asia.

4 'Savage' derives from Latin *silvāticus*, 'woodland', 'wild'. The meaning 'uncivilized, rude, coarse' was first recorded in 1135 (Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. 'savage').

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the major European countries – defined for present purposes by their possession of both hard and soft power – the emerging ethnological sciences[5] jostled for position in a struggle for recognition and institutionalization. In France, for example, 'there were few connections among three obviously related enterprises: a philosophical ethnography that had come to a dead end; an anthropology in a state of crisis due to the problematization of the notion of race; and developing folkloristic and ethnographic practices that lacked institutional or academic homes in which they might be made more systematic' (Sibeud 2008: 100). The emerging folkloristic and ethnographic practices were focused respectively on the regions of France and on the French colonies, but were they independent of each other? Folklore studies and anthropology both had a relationship with colonialism, Köngäs-Maranda argued, but the former was informed by the perspective of the colonized, the latter by that of the colonizer. But could the story be more complicated than that? Could it be that the more complicated story is not being told because of a disciplinary blind spot? The Indian folklorist Sadhana Naithani, in her study of folkloristics in the British Empire, makes a telling observation in this regard: 'the history of folkloristics in the United Kingdom can be written without reference to its colonial past, but the history of folkloristics in erstwhile colonial countries must begin in the colonial past' (Naithani 2010: 4).

Britain, of course, was a colonial power, as was France and, after an earlier nationalist process of unification, so too was Italy. It seems inconceivable that folklorists in those countries could tune out the colonial dimensions of the societies in which they lived. But what about Finland or Norway or Ireland, to name three of the 'colonized' countries mentioned by Köngäs-Maranda? The French anthropologist Benoît de l'Estoile insists that what he calls 'colonial legacies' involve all of Europe.

> Some might think that this is a matter of concern only for those of us who live in countries that once had a colonial empire, such as Britain, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, or France, but that the Swiss, the Slovenes, the Finns or the Greeks are but remotely concerned, or only in so far as they were victims of other, continental, empires (de l'Estoile 2008: 269).

While we can concur with these words, the shape of the ethnological sciences in the European national arena was influenced by the question of whether the

5 We use this as an overarching term for the various forms of ethnographically based cultural description: (European, regional) ethnology, ethnography, *Völkerkunde*, cultural (or social) anthropology, *Volkskunde*, folklore studies (folkloristics), folklife studies, etc.

European state in question was a colonial power or not and, in this, Köngäs-Maranda's observations are pertinent.

This book is a historical exploration of the place of folklore studies within the ethnological sciences. While folklore shared much of its intellectual history with the other ethnological sciences, it also sought to establish its own disciplinary remit in dialogue with them. The premise of the book is that while folkloristics emerged as a form of domestic ethnography, it was informed by intellectual debate on themes such as language, poetry, society and culture shaped by a growing awareness of the non-European world that was a logical consequence of European expansion. It will also show how the colonial dimension was not only in the realm of ideas, but in the actions of European folklorists themselves.

A starting point is to look at the existing research. In the following paragraphs, we look at a selection of the scholarly literature dealing with folkloristic history in languages accessible to the present author and ask whether any of it has engaged with this wider dimension. Some of these works give comprehensive overviews, others concentrate on national disciplinary histories, often focusing on specific periods in folklore studies. It should be noted that these works are mostly not in dialogue with one another, being written from different disciplinary perspectives and in a variety of languages.

A word of caution is needed with regard to different national disciplinary histories. As suggested above as an explanation for the different perspectives of Loria and Mochi on the one hand and Köngäs-Maranda on the other, there are arguably two major orientations in folklore studies. Without elaborating for the moment, let us state that one was metropolitan, that is, originating in the imperial countries, and the other 'national' or 'provincial', emerging from national movements in non-politically sovereign or politically fragmented territories. It was in the second case rather than the first that folklore studies were institutionalized and professionalized. These different contexts shaped perspectives on the history of folklore studies. Those studies that focus on folklore through the prism of nationalism or regionalism do not usually discuss extra-European or colonial legacies. Another point is obvious enough: a critique of colonialism in the social sciences and literary studies only began to fleetingly appear from the 1950s and a postcolonial studies perspective only became common in the mainstream of the academy from the 1980s.

Giuseppe Cocchiara's *Storia del folklore in Europa* (1952, *The History of Folklore in Europe*, 1981) is an extraordinarily rich work that places folklore studies within European intellectual history. Among the themes covered in detail are European encounters with Native Americans and the Orient, Indo-European philology and mythology and the development of British social

anthropology. Writing just after the Second World War, before decolonization (though defeat in the war meant that Italy had lost its own colonies), Cocchiara's sense of the colonial world was mostly only as a backdrop to metropolitan intellectual developments.

The British Folklorists: A History (1968a), by Richard M. Dorson, was accompanied by his two-volume anthology of readings on British folklore studies, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths: Selections from the British Folklorists* (1968b). It is largely a celebratory history. The chapters begin with 'The Antiquaries' and end with 'The Celtic Folklorists'. In between are chapters such as 'The Mythological Folklorists' dealing with the influence of the Sanskritist Max Müller's theories on folklore studies, 'The Savage Folklorists' looking at the influence on folklorists of the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) and 'The Overseas Folklorists'. This last chapter, in which empire is in effect naturalized, has sub-sections, 'India', 'Africa', 'Australia, Oceania, the Far East (except India)' and 'Europe'. In Dorson's estimation, the 'overseas folklorists' were driven by

> A desire to test in a living laboratory the new anthropological hypothesis of Tylor concerning primitive man, and a wish to improve colonial government through a sympathetic knowledge of subject peoples. Intellectual and administrative ends thus happily coincided, with fortuitous results for folklore collecting (Dorson 1968a: 333).

The folklorists Dorson discussed were British rather than native scholars, 'British civil servants, military officers, church missionaries, and company traders, and their wives and daughters' (*loc. cit.*).

Jouko Hautala's *Finnish Folklore Research 1828–1918* (1968) gives a historical overview of the field. Hautala notes a significant aspect for our purposes, the ethnologist and philologist M. A. Castrén's role in the mid-nineteenth century in the study of the Uralic languages that linked the Finns with indigenous peoples of the Russian Empire as far east as Siberia (his theory of a wider linguistic affinity with Turkic and Mongolic is not usually accepted). Castrén was

> a supporter and expounder of the same thoughts which elsewhere led to attempts to reconstruct the Indo-European parent language and original mythology. Castrén wanted to find, and believed he had found at least as great a kindred and as glorious traditions for the small, remote Finnish nation as any scholars of Indo-European languages had done in their own sphere (Hautala 1968: 48).

Volkskunde (1971, *Volksunde ou l'ethnologie allemande* ['*Volkskunde*, or German Ethnology'], 1993), Hermann Bausinger's critical intellectual history

of German folklore studies was a major contribution to folkloristics in general. It traced the historical development of the field through chapters dealing with the following themes: 'a humanist national consciousness', the Enlightenment, Romanticism, 'mythologism' and positivism, 'folklore as a conservative social theory' and the 'logical culmination: a "national-populist science"' in the National Socialist period. Focusing on specifically German intellectual developments, the book does not consider the parallel development of *Völkerkunde* nor its application in the German Empire.

William A. Wilson's *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (1976) is an important if at times tendentious history of Finnish folklore scholarship through the prism of nationalism and irredentism. There are a few passing references to, though without deeper reflection on, the Finnish interest in indigenous peoples elsewhere in the Russian Empire who spoke languages related to Finnish. Wilson refers to Finnish romantics dreaming 'of a day when the scattered Finno-Ugric tribes would be united under one sceptre' and to important scholars such as Anders Sjögren and Castrén 'scurrying deep into Russia to discover folkloristic and linguistic ties with distant Finnish tribes' (Wilson 1976: 138).

Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece (1982) in part shares the frame of nationalism and irredentism with Wilson's study. By Michael Herzfeld, it is a study of Greek folklore studies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It looks at the challenge of Greek folklorists in asserting cultural continuity with a Hellenic past. This was taken as a common European inheritance, which helped to secure international support for Greek independence, notably in the form of philhellenism. But Greece was situated in the Balkans, a modern region that was in many ways disdained by western Europeans and, having been subject to Ottoman rule for centuries, was seen to share many of the negative characteristics attributed by western Europeans to 'oriental' and 'Asiatic' cultures. Greek folklorists, hence, sought to assert the Hellenic and European nature of Greek folklore and deny any oriental inheritance.

Llorenç Prats' *El mite de la tradició popular: Els origens de l'interès per la cultura tradicional a la Catalunya del segle XIX* (1988, 'The Myth of Popular Tradition: The Origins of the Interest in Traditional Culture in Nineteenth-Century Catalonia') is a critical study of the interest in folklore shared not just by folklorists but by '*littérateurs*, jurists and apologists' (Prats 1988: 189) as part of the *Renaixença*, a movement for Catalan cultural revival. As in Finland or Ireland, also parts of large imperial states, folklorists in Catalonia rejected a provincial identity in relation to the hegemonic centre, but their

focus on valorizing their own culture made them largely oblivious to that other subaltern imperial realm, the colonial world.

The promotion of folklore and the regions as well as the idealization of the peasant by the short-lived collaborationist Vichy régime is the subject of Christian Faure's *Le project culturel de Vichy: Folklore et revolution nationale 1940–1944* (1989, 'The Cultural Project of Vichy: Folklore and National Revolution 1940–1944'). Vichy went against the republican tradition of France at a time when its continuity was maintained by a government in exile in London and the Free French military forces had established strongholds in France's colonies. The régime's cultural perspective was inward looking, seeking national regeneration from the past, the peasant and the provinces at a time of national defeat. Faure saw folklore as an integral part of Vichy's ideology with its recourse to 'an anachronistic past', leading to the rejection of 'ruralism and folklore' once the war had ended (Faure 1989: 275).

Românticos e folcloristas (1992, 'Romantics and Folklorists'), by Renato Ortiz, is a short comparative study of nineteenth-century folklore studies in Britain, France and Brazil. For Ortiz, folklore offered 'a kind of regional consciousness that opposes the centralizing character of the state' (Ortiz 1992: 68). In contrast with the legitimization of anthropology, history and sociology in the universities, folklore studies remained a 'middlebrow science' (*uma ciência mediana*) of amateurs and in France and England flourished 'on the margins of the legitimate instances of recognition of scientific work' (ibid.: 58).

Regina Bendix's *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (1997) is a comparative study of the field in the German-speaking countries and the United States. The book's central argument is that folklore studies developed as a response to the perceived loss of cultural authenticity in modernity, but it also discusses the distinction between domestic *Volkskunde* ('folklore') and exotic *Völkerkunde* ('ethnography' or 'ethnology'). In the American case, Native Americans were a focus of research from the beginning of the American Folklore Society and Bendix outlines the role of German-born Franz Boas in American folkloristics as well as in cultural anthropology.

The folklorists/anthropologists Richard Bauman and Charles L. Brigg's *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality* (2003) is a study as ambitious as Cocchiara's. It argues for the centrality of notions of language and tradition to modernity: 'the construction of premodern or anti-modern groups played a key role in creating and legitimating modern discourses and social formations' (Bauman and Briggs 2003: 314). The discussion begins with Francis Bacon and John Locke, treats seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English antiquarianism, the *Ossian* debate, Herder on language and poetry and the Grimm Brothers and Germanic philology before

concluding with Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's Native American research and Franz Boas's 'cosmopolitan charter for anthropology'. The authors contend that

> The burgeoning of nationalist movements and nation-state formation, the explosive expansion of agrarian and industrial capitalism … and the concurrent shifts in the tenor of imperially driven colonialism jointly stimulated the extensive empirical documentation and study of the discourse of Others as a means of calibrating the relationship of past to present to future (Bauman and Briggs 2003: 196).

The book is not a history of folkloristics or anthropology but rather of the construction of an ethnological object in western intellectual history.

Pertti J. Anttonen's *Tradition through Modernity: Postmodernism and the Nation-State in Folklore Scholarship* (2005) is a wide-ranging study, an intellectual history of folklore, a study of the creation of a Finnish ethnological object and a reflection on tradition. It plots the development of folkloristics through a Finnish national movement. It looks at the 'traditional' Sami and other kindred Uralic-speaking peoples in the Russian Empire contrasted with the Finns, who were identified in terms of their Europeanness and their modernity, and the ambiguous position of the Orthodox Karelians, both 'Finns and Non-Finns' (Anttonen 2005: 138).

Cristina Bacchilega's *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (2007), while not a disciplinary history, tackles a key problem of folkloristics: that of representation. She studies how outsiders appropriated Hawai'ian folklore after the United States annexation in 1898 to present an exotic image of the islands that appealed to external interests. She discusses the relationship of tradition to colonialism.

> How does colonialism rupture the (narrative) traditions of colonized and/or indigenous peoples? Clearly it others them; at times it violently seeks to erase them; but even in doing so it represents them. In rupturing tradition, colonialism then simultaneously delegitimizes the narratives of the colonized and constructs them as representatives of the colonized "culture" (Bacchilega 2007: 2).

Mícheál Briody's *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* (2007) is a comprehensive account – historical, ideological and methodological – and an assessment of the central institution of Irish folklore studies. It places Irish folklore studies within its wider European context, both political and disciplinary and traces the close personal and scholarly links with scholars especially in Scandinavia. It looks at the relative neglect of traditions in English, then the language of the majority of Irish people, and

also examines the Commission's activities outside the Irish state, in Northern Ireland (the separation of which from the rest of Ireland was rejected in the Irish constitution), and in Gaelic Scotland and the Isle of Man: these kinds of ethno-linguistic outreach are familiar to scholars in other European countries.

Juan José Prat Ferrer's *Bajo el árbol del paraíso: Historia de los estudios sobre el folklore y sus paradigmas* (2008, 'Under the Tree of Paradise: History of Folklore Studies and its Paradigms') is a wide-ranging disciplinary history, beginning with eighteenth-century precursors in Spain and elsewhere and ending with new research orientations. It covers the influence of growing European knowledge of distant cultures on, for example, the study of fables and folktales, and the later development of folklore studies in various European countries, in the Soviet Union, in the United States, Latin America, Africa and Japan.

The Story-Time of the British Empire: Colonial and Post-colonial Folkloristics (2010), by the folklorist Sadhana Naithani, is a ground-breaking study of 'colonial folkloristics'. This was the creation of various British amateur scholars who were part of the imperial enterprise as colonial administrators, soldiers, missionaries and so forth, working with local collaborators whose contribution usually went unacknowledged. One of Naithani's concluding points is that even today western scholars maintain a privileged role in the study of Indian or African folklore and the fact that there are 'very few South Asian or African folklorists who research European folklore' is one of the legacies of colonial folkloristics. This, she argues, 'completely negates Herder's notion of folklore as the unity of language, spirit, and nation' (Naithani 2010: 127–128).

Daniel Fabre's extensive essay, 'D'une ethnologie romantique' (2011, 'On Romantic Ethnology'), published in a collection on the origins of French folklore studies, seeks to trace the origins of the object of ethnology in France, looking at Enlightenment curiosity, travel writing, the question of oral tradition, language and literature, the critique of modernity and the key role of Romanticism. One aspect he discusses at length is the influence of the discovery of expiring exotic cultures, from Macpherson's *Ossian* and Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), to François-René de Chateaubriand's *Les Natchez* (1826), James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), immensely popular in Europe, and George Catlin's travelling Indian Gallery, created in the United States in 1838 and displayed at the Louvre in Paris in 1845 (Fabre 2011: 48–50).

Maurizio Coppola's *Construire l'italianité: Traditions populaires et identité nationale (1800–1932)* (2021c, 'Constructing Italianness: Popular Traditions and National Identity, 1800–1932') is a study of the emergence and growth of Italian folklore studies as an exploration of Italian national identity, in a

celebratory way during the *Risorgimento* and in a reformist way afterwards in response to the slow consolidation of a unified nation-state and a national identity. While references to Italian colonialism are peripheral, the book includes an important discussion of Italy's 'southern question' in the reflection of folklorists and racial scientists.[6]

We have excluded from this account edited collections and works on folkloristics in the Americas, though some will be referred to in other contexts below. We have also omitted discussion of histories of anthropology, though many of them discuss folklore studies as well since scholars often moved through a wide variety of perspectives and approaches that only began to separate from each other with the institutionalization and professionalization of disciplines. Some scholars have treated folklore studies as a pre-scientific phase of anthropology, summed up by Josep Maria Comelles in a 1984 article in which he characterized cultural anthropology as 'a scientific discourse about humanity' and folklore studies as 'a particularist discourse about identity' (cited by Prat 1991: 14). Many of these historical works, of course, will be cited elsewhere in this book. It will be noted that nationalism is the predominant frame used in the studies of the history of folkloristics outlined above, though regionalism and colonialism are also important. Before leaving this review of the scholarly literature, it is worth noting Charles L. Briggs' and Sadhana Naithani's challenging essay, 'The Coloniality of Folklore: Towards a Multi-Genealogical Practice of Folkloristics' (2012). Informed by postcolonial studies, it offers a trenchant critique of Dorson's inability to see colonial relations in *The British Folklorists* and it argues that 'race, violence and colonialism were deeply inscribed into the traditional/colonial object from the time of its pre-disciplinary emergence in the seventeenth century [and] have been right through its efflorescence in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'. It contends that 'extant genealogies' of folkloristics have occluded these connections (Briggs and Naithani 2012: 248).

This book is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter looks at the 'coordinates' of folkloristics and the ethnological sciences in the period under consideration, from the political context of empires, nation-states, provinces and colonies to developments in literature, philosophy, history, philology, ethnology and anthropology. We show how primitivism and debates about heroic societies and oral tradition in late eighteenth-century Europe were informed by encounters with non-western societies especially in the Americas, by a re-evaluation of Homeric Greece and by the literary sensation of *Ossian*. The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's

6 This important book appeared when the present work was mostly complete.

ideas reflected these developments and were influenced both by questions of language and literature in Germany, by his intense curiosity about other peoples and his extensive reading of travel writing and ethnographic literature. Opposing the universalism of the Enlightenment, a Romantic sensibility began to see the value of linguistic and cultural diversity and aspiring European nations identified themselves in terms of distinct native languages and cultures. Still, the idea of the *Volksgeist* was both universal and particularistic: every people had its own authentic voice, in principle equal to that of any other people. The development in the nineteenth century of comparative philology and especially Indo-European philology drew the study of European languages away from their supposed biblical origins towards India, but it also was to influence debates about race (the 'Aryans') and also about the origins of folktales.

There were different kinds of European imperial expansion: sea-borne to the west and overland to the east. If anthropology was originally both a philosophical reflection on humanity and the study of humanity within the natural sciences, western expansion and colonialism facilitated its development and fed fantasies of European superiority that were invigorated by evolutionism in the late nineteenth century. Cultural anthropology in the western European tradition was a product of colonial encounter with radical cultural difference. Ethnology, on the other hand, was in large part conceptualized both as a comparative study of peoples (*Völkerkunde*) encountered in the gradual centuries-long process of Russian expansion and as the study of a specific people (*Volkskunde*). Departing from enlightened *Volkskunde*, folklore studies in central Europe developed as the exploration and documentation of national identity in the case of politically fragmented or oppressed peoples. Despite the origins of the word 'folklore' in England, the field never won a secure place in the academy in Britain.

Three of the chapters focus on the development of the ethnological sciences respectively in France, Italy and Ireland and they pick up themes introduced in the first chapter. France was a centralized monarchy with medieval roots transformed through a bourgeois revolution into a unitary republic, Italy a belated nation-state constructed by a liberal intelligentsia in opposition to foreign powers and peninsular polities. Ireland was for centuries ruled by England and won partial independence after a struggle initially aimed at winning civil rights for the native majority and later shaped by cultural nationalism. In the domain of culture the French republic was hostile to the vestiges of the 'feudal' past including the regional languages spoken by the majority of its citizens, yet it never quite overcame powerful regionalist forces. The Kingdom of Italy, a unitary state, took its language from Tuscany while

Piedmont drove unification, but it was unable to overcome the regional cultural and socio-economic diversity of the peninsula. Conquest and colonization of Ireland adversely affected the native culture. Massive depopulation in the nineteenth century and the precipitous decline of the Irish language led intellectuals to fear the assimilation of the Irish into the British state and that Ireland would become little more than a province.

These chapters deal with state formation and imperial expansion and look at how these processes were worked out in the narrowly political and in the wider ideological realms. They examine how the scholarly 'coordinates' of the ethnological sciences were established in each country, from statistical surveys, the collection and publication of oral traditions and the development of comparative philology to the establishment of the first ethnological, anthropological and folklore societies. One of the major anthropological traditions developed in France, a colonial power from the seventeenth century. For a long time, French cultural anthropology was in competition with physical anthropology and it only became a fieldwork-based discipline in the 1930s, around the same time as it found its role as a colonial science. More than a decade before a small colonial empire was founded in the 1880s, Italian anthropology was established but, as in France, it was for a long time overshadowed by physical anthropology and was eventually applied in the colonial context. If ethnographic collections lodged in Irish institutions from the eighteenth century were part of a wider imperial legacy, emerging anthropological interest in Ireland, largely physical anthropology, was mostly from outside. So too was the first major anthropological research carried out in Ireland, in the 1930s.

The idea that the 'primitive' was also found in the domestic arena informed Loria and Mochi, cited above, but also Thomas Crofton Croker, the pioneering student of Irish folklore in the early nineteenth century whose writings were informed by a colonial persective. A key part of these second, third and fourth chapters is discussion of the work of scholars such as these whose ethnography had both domestic and colonial dimensions. The issue is perhaps best expressed in the title of Loria's last publication, 'Ethnography as an instrument of domestic and colonial politics'.[7] Published in 1912, it reflected his fieldwork experiences in Eritrea, New Guinea, Turkestan and Italy and it implied that ethnography had the same purpose whether at home or abroad. Besides Croker and Loria, we will also look in extended detail with liberal citations at the ethnographic works of Arnold Van Gennep, who wrote about Madagascar and Australia and carried out fieldwork in France and Algeria, René Maunier, who researched in France and Algeria, Raffaele Corso, in Italy

7 'L'etnografia strumento di politica interna e coloniale' (1912b).

and the Italian African colonies, but also Douglas Hyde, the Irish folklorist who briefly collected indigenous oral traditions in eastern Canada.

If such figures are somewhat unusual in the history of folklore scholarship, it is because of the assumption that domestic and exotic ethnography belonged to two different disciplines. It is usually assumed that colonial ethnography was different from 'provincial' ethnography, but a key thread of this book is those scholars whose work problematizes the division between the two. Is it better to see them as anthropologists or as folklorists? Should we see their work as being framed (or informed) by imperialism, by nationalism, by regionalism, or indeed by all three? Was the ethnographers' gaze more sympathetic in one domain than in the other? Were the subjects of ethnographic research in colonies and provinces understood as being essentially the same? Were they seen as semi-civilized or uncivilized people who were an obstacle to political consolidation, whether at the level of the empire or of the nation-state? Was ethnography meant to salvage the history of uncivilized peoples, destined to fade away in the modern colonial world, or to record 'survivals' of ancient mentalities so that the prehistory of the nation could eventually be written? Was it intended to provide information that would facilitate better government or lead to a better understanding of the people so that the colonial or national state could be more mindful of their needs or traditions? Was it to retrieve that national spirit – the *Volksgeist* – lost by the more modernized and cosmopolitan sectors of the national society, perhaps as a result of conquest by or the hegemony of another nation?

These questions will be explored in the pages that follow. The evolution of broad fields of inquiry into scholarly disciplines is part of the history of ideas, but professionalization and institutionalization are part of the history of political and civil society, the institutions of which developed in different ways in different countries, leading to correspondingly diverse ethnographic traditions. We will look at these national histories in due course, considering both the place of the provinces and of the colonies of European empires that provided a broad canvas for the playing out of scholarly careers informed both by exotic and domestic ethnography, which developed in tandem and sometimes intersected with each other. The last chapter will lead to a broader discussion and present its conclusions. We hope that it will make its own contribution to understanding such transnational processes.