

THE STATE, THE MUSEUM AND THE ETHNOGRAPHER IN CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL HERITAGE: DEFINING ESTONIAN NATIONAL COSTUMES IN THE 1930S

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ABSTRACT

In this article* I attempt to analyse the way in which the Estonian national costume, as heritage, was defined through the cooperation of the state, the museum and ethnographers in the 1930s. The nationalist state wished to strengthen the national identity of Estonia. The Estonian National Museum (ENM) as a repository of memory and knowledge availed its resources to support cultural propaganda. The ethnographer Helmi Kurrik, a woman of strong will and keen interest in folk textiles, managed to fulfil her obligation at the expense of her own health. The primary result of her labours was a handbook entitled *Eesti rahvarõivad* (Estonian Folk Costumes) (1938) which has influenced general knowledge of folk costumes in Estonia up to the present day – the ‘right’ national costumes are believed to derive from authentic ethnographical folk costumes held in the Estonian National Museum.

KEYWORDS: heritage • knowledge production • national costumes • Estonian ethnology

1938 saw the publication of *Eesti rahvarõivad*, a handbook issued by the Estonian National Museum Press Foundation in honour of the twentieth anniversary of the Republic of Estonia and the eleventh Estonian Song Festival. The handbook was written by the museum’s ethnographer Helmi Kurrik and edited by its director, Ferdinand Linnus. This work became, and it may be said, remains, an important source for Estonian folk costume makers and wearers as it constitutes one of the more important studies in the field. The latter fact suggests canonicity, i.e. the possession of a continuously authoritative and inviolable power and the recognition of this among users. For this reason, the work also has a semiotic meaning in Estonian cultural history in general. The handbook was published within the framework of a national cultural propaganda policy that was

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practised by the authoritarian government of Estonia of the time. In this article, I analyse the process by which the handbook was made and its more immediate background as an exemplar of the canonisation of a particular phenomenon of Estonian national culture, or the creation of national heritage in a political, cultural and personal context. I will examine ways in which the different parties interrelated in this process: the state, the institution (the museum) and the ethnographer. My interest is to ascertain what knowledge ethnography produced concerning folk costumes in the 1930s and upon what this was dependent.

HERITAGE MAKING AND NATIONALISM

Although the concept of 'heritage' was as yet unknown in the 1930s, we can apply it to the theoretical framework that accompanies this concept when analysing past events. Heritage is created through meta-cultural operations (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004) that disseminate museological values and methods (for instance, collections, documents, preservation, interpretation) to living persons and to their knowledge, practices, artefacts, social worlds and life-spaces. According to this theory, the compilation of a handbook of Estonian folk costume and other activities attendant upon this endeavour, may be regarded as heritage making: the instructions for making the 'right'(!) national costumes were forwarded back to the people.

Heritage organizations [museums, enterprises] ensure that places and practices in danger of disappearing because they are no longer occupied or functioning or valued will survive. It does this by adding the value of pastness, exhibition, difference, and, where possible, indigeneity. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 150)

The question arises as to why these organisations should want to do that; what is their ulterior motive. For Sharon Macdonald, the main issue concerned is "what kinds of identities and forms of historical consciousness are being articulated through specific kinds of heritage representation" (Macdonald 2008: 52). Usually the state utilises heritage to express and confirm hegemony.¹ Heritage and identity is frequently seen by the state as "social glue that might stick together disparate bits of society and to attach those sectors that seem to have become detached or that were never bonded in the first place" (ibid.: 54).

National costumes, by virtue of their external and conspicuous material difference, may be considered one of the best symbols of presentation and representation of the identity of a nation or a region. Throughout history, clothing has served as a means of self-expression and identity formation and has been a feature of both. In their discussion of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe (which should not deter us) Noyes and Bendix state:

[C]ostume was one of the outward and visible signs that allowed this mapping of organized difference. More readily transformed than landscape or language, it was adopted by elites on national occasions and reformed to depict and inform the national self, made modern or primordial as the case demanded. (Noyes, Bendix 1998: 110)

The changing/alteration of folk costumes from peasant attire to a symbol of the nation can be understood in the context of the discourse of nationalism.

In the context of this paper it is important to understand how the Estonian ethnologists of the 1930s may have felt about nationalism and how this understanding relates to the twenty-first century approach to nationalism and its connection with tradition and heritage. If, in the 1930s, the 'essentialist' or 'primordial' account was predominant, whereby nations were viewed as being "objective, durable phenomena, the origins of which typically can be traced back to remote antiquity" (Kohl 1998: 225),² while at present the nation is seen as a social construct. Philip L. Kohl also highlights an important distinction within constructive nationalism: in reference to the 'invention' of cultural traditions, Kohl, drawing upon Ben-Yehuda, states that often these traditions cannot be invented, so to speak, in a complete vacuum and thus he makes the distinction between strict and contextual constructionism. In my discussion, I rely upon the latter, according to which "social phenomena are continuously constructed and manipulated for historically ascertainable reasons, although it does not deny an external world, a partially apprehensible objective reality, that cannot totally be reduced to invention or social construction" (Kohl 1998: 233). Thus an examination of the preparation of a handbook of folk costumes cannot be limited only to the context of Estonia in the 1930s, but the problem of the canonisation of national costumes must be viewed against a larger historical backdrop.

Eric Hobsbawm defines his famous conception of an invented tradition, which Kohl referred to in the above excerpt, as follows:

[A] set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. (Hobsbawm 1995 [1983]: 1)

The examination of the so-called invented traditions means to look at "not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so" (ibid.: 12–13). "All invented traditions use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion" (ibid.). The invention of tradition may be defined as the process of formalisation and ritualisation and is therefore comparable to the concept of heritage making.

If we combine the approaches of Kohl and Hobsbawm, it may be stated that the invention of traditions, which bolsters nationalism, is not a unilateral process whereby an institution exercising power invents something from a complete vacuum to fill a complete vacuum. When studying these traditions, we must also consider the social context and take into account the diachronic nature of the phenomena, i.e. the fact that it is extremely difficult to pinpoint the beginning and ending of a particular process. At the same time, the existence of some phenomena cannot be explained in terms of the coincidence of social or other conditions. After all, we deal with the outcome of the activities of a specific people in a particular context. When discussing a perception that has been forced upon someone by the authorities, it must be borne in mind that the process is one that utilises inclusions and omissions, or as Dawisha has put it: "It is not

just through accentuating the positive, but also by minimizing and even turning a blind eye to the negative that history is used to cement national consciousness" (Dawisha 2002: 18).

What assumes importance here is the connection between power and knowledge production, or it can even be said, their interdependency, which Michel Foucault has written about: power generates knowledge and knowledge, at the same time, generates power. For cultural sciences (folkloristics, ethnology) the epistemological grounding for the questions about truth and knowledge has long been the concept of authenticity. In ethnographies, authenticity was expressed by concepts such as "right", "proper", "old", "genuine", and was bounded up with positivity rather than negativity. At the same time the existence of authenticity presupposed the existence of the spurious. Ambiguity was eliminated from the textualised (folk) culture that was returned to the people. "Declaring something authentic legitimated the subject that was declared authentic" (Bendix 1997: 7). According to Regina Bendix the concept of authenticity is dependent upon the concrete time and place where past is being interpreted and reflected (ibid.: 3–23).

The interdependency of truth and knowledge can be interpreted as the canonisation of the knowledge offered, or as a proclamation of its authoritative status, which is what places power in the hands of a knowledge producer. The latter can announce, for example, which national costume is 'right' and which one is not, or how a *regilaul* should be sung and how it should not be sung. Personal power is increased through an affiliation with a certain institution, wherein sometimes it may not necessarily be clear who of the two actually holds the power: the person or his/her institution. In the 1930s, the Estonian National Museum, with all its various departments, enjoyed the status of a highly respected centre of competence in Estonian society. Thus, the three parties involved in the case study discussed in this article – the state (and with this society), the museum and the ethnographer – are closely interconnected and interdependent.

THE STATE AND SOCIETY

The second half of the 1930s has been referred to as the period of authoritarianism in Estonia. The *coup d'état* of 1934 introduced a new regime the ideological foundations of which were: etatism, solidarism, national integrity, the state regulation of the economy, a national and nation-wide unanimity, a new set of morals, a new sense of honour, and the cultivation of an inner discipline. As a result, the individual was no longer placed at the centre of social life, but rather the state became an independent value and people became the servants of the state (Karjahärm 2001: 286). A person needed to be taught how to be a 'proper' Estonian. Thus it was nationalism in its radical form that came to inform all areas of life, including the so-called national sciences.³ Herein, the promotion and appropriation of folk culture and especially its more beautiful and aesthetic aspects was considered to be of special importance.

In order to implement this new approach, the National Propaganda Office (NPO) was founded in 1934. This institution became responsible for the direction and oversight of all propaganda work (see Vaan 2005 for further information). The principal manifestations of cultural propaganda, which signifies a broader dissemination of national and cultural achievements and their being made universally available and interesting for

political reasons, included the following campaigns: the Estonianisation of names, the dissemination of the national flag, home decoration, Book Year, song contests involving festive and common songs resembling anthems, the revivification of folk art, and the folk costume campaign (Vaas 2005: 35–36). The nurturing of different domains of Estonian folk culture and its strong propagation was an efficient way of raising Estonians in the ‘proper’ national spirit. The revivification of folk art campaign was launched in 1935 with the intention of placing the practising of folk art “on the right foundations” (ibid.: 69). What does the expression “right foundations” mean here? On the one hand, it may be said that “right” is a way of acting that has been prescribed and approved by the state; on the other, we can discern here a certain aspiration towards authenticity which gains strong prominence in a citizen’s engagement with folk culture. The NPO compiled and prepared implementation schemes for the revivification of folk art incorporating a number of institutions and organisations that were expected to bring these schemes to realisation, including: the ENM, the Estonian Folklore Archives, the Nationwide Estonian Youth Association, the Fatherland Union, the Nationwide Rural Youth Association, the Union of Rural Women, and the Estonian Cultural Union (ibid.).

At this point it must be emphasised that this campaign did not emerge in a vacuum, so to speak. In the 1930s, people involved in the Humanities actively spoke of the necessity of reviving folk costumes with the goal of bolstering a national sense of unity. In 1929, the Estonian Union for the Promotion of Home Industry⁴ was founded, the objective of which was to raise standards among domestic handicraft practitioners and to improve the domestic culture of Estonians. Courses were organised and lectures were held in order to “consciously revive the traditions of national handicraft” (Puusemp 1996). As part of this endeavour, people followed the example of the Nordic countries in the propagation of their own culture, the concept of which had arrived in Estonia in the second half of the 1920s. Special attention was now paid to folk costumes, which tended no longer to be worn as much with the spread of the urban lifestyle towards the end of the 19th century. The song festivals organised in 1928 and in 1933 aided the popularisation of folk costumes and “awoke public interest in a revivification of folk dress” (Värv 2008: 298).

Song festivals have a considerable significance for Estonian nationalism: “A song festival is a folk festival, which is also a ritual and a show. The song festival creates a circumstance where people can demonstrate their cultural identity and national unity.” (Kuutma 1996: 93) Song festivals, which began in 1869 at the peak of Russian imperial power and of the Estonian national movement, had, by the 1930s, taken root as a tradition of national self-expression (ibid.: 82–84). In Estonia, the problem of revivification and the wearing of folk costume has always cropped up in connection with the approach of yet another song festival (see, for example, Piiri 1992). At the same time, local song festivals have also been held during the intervals between nationwide song festivals, and these presumably preserved the memory of the spirit of the large festival and by extension maintained the importance of folk costume as well. Thus the search for and the so-called invention or (re)construction of national symbols was also carried out by the people themselves, who entertained an active interest in this subject. However, the question of whether the folk dress that people were making and wearing was correct was also asked. Those in power and in possession of expertise felt that this matter needed guidance.

At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the question of the authenticity of folk costumes emerged as a burning issue. The ethnologist and researcher of folk costumes Ellen Värvi writes that during the first years of Estonia's independence there was as yet no conception of what the 'correct' folk costume, which was supposed to serve as a festive garment expressive of national sentiment, should look like. Thus efforts were made to adjust folk costumes "to the trends of modern fashion as well as personal taste" (Värvi 2008: 298). This endeavour was opposed by the director of the ENM, the Finnish ethnographer Ilmari Manninen, who warned against the excessive beautification of folk costumes, as it "destroys the historical credibility of the dress as well as its originality" (ibid.). However, the controversy broke out before the song festival of 1928, which was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. Those who advocated the modernisation of folk costume believed that to consent to copy the ethnographic folk costume would be tantamount to a developmental regression and would render folk costume unsuitable as a festive dress. Therefore what was offered as a model was the so-called stylised Estonian suit that consisted of a striped skirt and a blouse that was modelled after flower-patterned sleeves. As a second alternative to 'folk dress', it was suggested that a blouse with national embroidery be worn with the striped skirt, the blouse being tucked in under the waistband of the skirt (Piiri 1992: 118). These options became popular because of their low cost and easy availability. At the time, there were no written directions, nor was any training of supervisors set in motion in Estonia. This situation lasted until the second half of the 1930s when the state authorities and institutions who possessed a knowledge monopoly (the ENM, women's societies, etc.) and who were intent on educating the people took the matter into their own hands under the guise of a folk costume campaign. As a result, 'the Estonian suit' slid into the past.

It was most probably in 1937 that the Committee of Folk Costume was created within the NPO.⁵ This committee coordinated the work of the various organisations engaged in folk costume propaganda. The Committee decided to organise the training of instructors for courses in folk costume at the ENM and to make preparations for a publication, which culminated in the compilation of *Estonian Folk Costumes*. Committee meetings underlined that "the emphasis of the propaganda should be to obstruct the production of an *ungenuine* dress and to explain what the *right* folk costume is" (the meeting of November 30, 1937; emphases mine). Herein, the Committee sensed that they had a rival first and foremost in the form of a joint stock company by the name of Kodukäsitöö (Home Handicraft)⁶ which was popularising a stylised folk costume they were calling national costume, just as the Committee was promulgating their own folk costume.

The Committee branded this activity as "sabotage of the propaganda of the right folk costume" (the Committee meeting of March 3, 1938).⁷ Here we can see the competition over authenticity between unequal levels, i.e. the state and societal organisations. Understandably the former won and established its own homogeneous picture in which there was no place for different approaches. Since the concepts of *rahvarõivas* (folk costume) and *rahvusrõivas* (national costume) are linguistically very similar, but differ content-wise,⁸ the Committee decided to focus upon the propagation of folk costumes (the Committee meeting of March 11, 1937).⁹ Here it is interesting to note that in Estonia, ethnic dress is still referred to as *rahvarõivad* (folk costume), and not *rahvusrõivad* (national costume).¹⁰

The popularisation of folk costume was undertaken on a very large scale, and information reached everyone involved in the song festival as well as many others, through various channels.¹¹ The arbiters' understanding of the 'right' folk costume was rather conservative, which is also shown in their attitude towards the activities of the Kodukäsitöö. At the same time, this is understandable because the intention was to create an ordered and single truth, and in order to achieve this the only viable option was to turn to the unchanging past, or to the textile collections stored at the ENM. The fact that what came to be propagated and considered suitable for Estonians was the making of copies of clothing that had been preserved in the Museum may be regarded as the result of work performed by the ENM and its ethnographers.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL – THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

Intellectuals who worked within the paradigm of the nation state considered it important to educate Estonians on the subject of national identity. I would argue that Estonian ethnographers of the 1930s were directly influenced by the modern conception of nationalism in their work, some being more conscious of it than others. Still, their activity can be labelled as national and not nationalist ethnology (cf. Kohl 1998: 226).¹²

By the mid-1930s, the ENM, which was founded in 1909, emerged as a considerable centre of competence for Estonian folk culture.¹³ The Museum's Department of Ethnography possessed large diverse collections (items from almost every facet of life, ethnographic descriptions, photos, drawings, etc.) that were scientifically arranged; the Museum employed specialists who divided their time between working in the Museum collections, doing fieldwork, research, writing and communicating with people. In addition, the ethnographers working at the ENM served as acknowledged experts for other, fledgling museums in Estonia. By the second half of the 1930s, several general treatments of Estonian folk culture had been published as well as studies reflecting its individual phenomena. In 1927 a magnificent permanent display of Estonian folk culture was opened at the ENM.¹⁴ For decades, the Museum had devoted meticulous attention to folk costumes and to their collection, research and exhibition. In 1927 the Museum's director, Ilmari Manninen, published a monograph entitled *The History of Estonian Folk Costumes*, and the Museum had also issued several postcard sets popularising folk costumes in addition to being actively engaged in the debates concerning folk dress.

With the new government, several outside commissions were to be taken on. The report of the Department of Ethnography's activities from 1936/1937 states that because of the small staff and miscellaneous responsibilities, it was impossible to fulfil the Department's principal objective, which was to study folk culture. This was also complicated by the fact that "one was expected to partake in the propaganda of folk culture: advice needed to be given on the matter of making folk costumes, provincial museums needed guidance in their activities, popular lectures were to be held, etc., etc." (correspondence with the Museum's Department of Ethnography, 1932–1940).¹⁵ The report also stated that "all this, to be sure, belongs to the range of activities of the Museum, but not with such a small staff" (ibid.). Thus it can be said that in the second half of the 1930s, the propaganda of folk culture entailed prescriptions from above for the Museum and precipitated a noticeable increase in the workload of its employees.

However, national cultural propaganda dovetailed nicely with the general principles and goals of the ENM as a national museum: the establishment believed, even without interference from the state, that one of its principal tasks was the enlightenment of the people and the restitution of gathered values to society (Nõmmela 2009a).

However, the Museum's activities directly signify the activities and efforts of its employees. This means that the propagation of folk costumes was now pursued more vigorously by the Museum's ethnographers who had had some previous contact with that field.¹⁶ These ethnographers included: Ferdinand Linnus, Director of the Museum and Chair of the Department of Ethnography, Helmi Kurrik, an assistant researcher in the same department, and, to a lesser extent, Ella Koern, who acted as a junior functionary. Due to the efforts of these individuals and the Museum's holdings (i.e. work on these), the ENM emerged as the central institution for the propaganda of folk costumes.

THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – HELMI KURRIK

For my analysis of the individual level, I selected Helmi Kurrik (1883–1960) first and foremost because her contribution to the process we have been discussing was the most considerable from among the Museum's ethnographers, and it is precisely this activity that secured her a permanent place in the cultural history of Estonia. In the 1930s, Helmi Kurrik was the uncontested expert of Estonian folk art and folk costumes. Having been employed at the ENM from 1928, her principal responsibilities were the maintenance of, and scientific work on, the Museum's textile collections. In the course of her field-work expeditions, Kurrik took a particular interest in learning the peculiarities of folk textiles. Articles concerning Estonian lace, tablet woven belts and men's woollen belts appeared. Helmi Kurrik was also the organiser of exhibitions abroad that mainly exhibited the more "beautiful and aesthetically pleasing" aspects of Estonian folk culture (for example, Brussels 1929, Berlin and Vilnius 1930, Paris 1935, etc.). (See Nõmmela 2009b for a fuller discussion.)

Thus Kurrik was actively involved in the introduction and 'restoration' of folk art to the people. Moreover, from 1934/35, together with Ferdinand Linnus, she served on the Commission of Folk Dress, which had been founded as a subsidiary of a magazine called *Taluperenaine* (Farm Wife). Kurrik's responsibility was to compile "sets of folk costumes from the collections of ENM and deliver them to the Commission's technical task force for their exact copying" (Helmi Kurrik's report of activities from 1934/35).¹⁷ This commission can be considered the predecessor of the Committee of Folk Costume created within the NPO¹⁸ as their tasks were rather similar: to introduce to people the right ethnic folk dress, to be used as a model when procuring clothes, principally with the song festival in mind, for themselves. The enterprise, which had grown out of social activeness, was taken over by a prominent state institution (the NPO) in 1937 and was transformed into a political device. With this, a broader effect was produced in the semi-authoritarian country, and more immediate and direct results were achieved.

It became Helmi Kurrik's responsibility to write historical overviews of folk costumes for the magazines *Taluperenaine* and *Eesti Noorus* (Estonian Youth). When the NPO and the Committee of Folk Costume organised courses¹⁹ in folk costumes, Kurrik

served as an instructor, and she gave lectures at several other places as well. Radio lectures should likewise be seen as part of the larger popularisation work as this medium was also employed in reaching the populace.

Kurrik's most distinguished work on folk costumes was the bulky handbook *Eesti rahvarõivad*, which still merits attention. Its first edition came out in 1938.²⁰ Kurrik was appointed executive editor of the book project, which was approved by the head of state in 1936, and Linnus served as its editor-in-chief. The preparation of the handbook was very stressful and fast-paced as there were time constraints – it was expected to come out in time for the twentieth anniversary of the Republic of Estonia (February 24, 1938), and it was also connected to the song festival that was to be held in the summer of that same year. If Linnus's responsibility was the administrative management of the publication process, then it fell to Kurrik to do the actual work: to write overviews of the regional peculiarities of folk costume, to select over one hundred costume sets and describe them (each article of the dress as well as their material and technique of production, including the patterns and measurements) and to make the drafts of technical drawings (in total 250 figures).

The burden of work placed on Kurrik ultimately ruined her health – in 1937 she contracted meningitis, and the following year she began suffering from high blood pressure as well as overall exhaustion of nerves (Helmi Kurrik's employment letter).²¹ At the same time, Kurrik was also completing her Master's thesis (Blood in the Food Industry), which she defended in 1939. Upon Linnus's recommendation, Kurrik was allowed to work at home and was released from other job responsibilities. Thus due to these efforts the book came out only a month past the deadline. Linnus writes:

Since the editorial work has proceeded at a very rapid pace and taken many months, with 18-hour work days and sometimes even longer, it would be advisable to allow the editors extra leave in order to enable them to return to their duties at the museum, fully restored. This applies in particular to the research assistant H. Kurrik, who has had to work at such a pace for almost two years and has ruined her health in the process. (F. Linnus' letter, March 21, 1938)²²

Linnus asked for at least two month's extra leave for her from the Board of the ENM Foundation, but was granted a month and half.²³

The handbook consists of 221 pages, 32 coloured plates and five pattern sheets. It provides a thorough overview of Estonian folk costume and begins with a general introduction written by Linnus. Kurrik's task had been to write the main part as well as more detailed descriptions of the selected "aesthetically gratifying" sets of folk costumes (105 women's and 21 men's suits from different parishes in Estonia) with explanations as for how to make these. The introduction emphasises the authenticity and trustworthiness of the materials included in the book and conveys the importance of the idea of carrying on the tradition, i.e. the characteristics of the so-called invented traditions.

CONCLUSION

Ellen Värvi maintains that "under the influence of the extensive state organised propaganda campaign the former peasant attire turned into a sign of Estonian patriotism.

In the general context of the rise of national culture, the wearing of national costumes became, for Estonians, something of a tradition and a characteristic of the Estonian nation." (Värv 2008: 298) In the course of meta-cultural activity, or heritage making, authoritative knowledge was not generated in a vacuum but was linked to earlier discourse on Estonian folk costume. During the national propaganda campaign, power was seemingly transferred from society to the state, although the actual work was carried out and completed by ethnographers (first and foremost, Helmi Kurrik). Yet this accorded and was closely intertwined with the discourse regarding national and nation-wide unanimity, and the new code of morals and sense of honour (how to be a 'proper' Estonian) that had been initiated by the state. On the other hand, attention must be given to the two levels – the state versus the individual – ideologically the ethnographers themselves agreed fully with the aims of the propaganda, yet were resistant to being hurried, and perhaps also to excessive pressuring. The parties analysed maintained an ambivalent relationship.

A diachronic approach helps us understand that processes which take place at a particular time, and such inventions of traditions, so to speak, are actually not as ephemeral as they might seem at first glance, but rather, were set in motion in earlier epochs. Yet it must be admitted that without the initiative and support of the state, *Estonian Folk Costumes* would not have been prepared so quickly nor would it have been propagated throughout the country among all choirs, exercise clubs, etc. The handbook and courses in folk costume making, which drew from the collections and expertise of the ENM, helped Estonians cement a knowledge of the approved folk costume that would be characteristic of the nation.

Heritage making involves the making of choices and places an emphasis on authenticity. So-called invented tradition employs history as its legitimising agent. This can also be discerned in the process analysed, wherein at each level there was an emphasis on the 'right' ethnographic peasant clothing deriving from the Museum's collections, which was to be used for the revivification of folk costumes. In this process, it was the ethnographers who made the choices and picked out the more beautiful and aesthetically gratifying variants, with which the committees and state functionaries agreed. This is understandable, since beauty catches the eye, burns into one's memory and engenders a desire to make such clothes for oneself, and to wear them.

NOTES

1 Sharon Macdonald indicates that heritage may also be utilised to express resistance, and is hence a tool for the grass-roots level (Macdonald 2008: 50–51).

2 As Zimmer has pointed out, European interwar nationalism emphasised ethnic or even racial homogeneity and demanded that "nations be 'natural' communities, rooted in the 'organic' rather than simply based on the voluntary commitment of a citizenry" (Zimmer 2004: 24). In several countries in Europe, ultra-nationalist dictatorships arose, and even in more democratic circles, attempts were made to find citizens' distinctive features through expressions of nationalism. Heritage making is one of the most commonly used methods in creating and bolstering a national identity.

3 In history, for instance, an attempt was made to relinquish the concept of the seven-hundred-year yoke of slavery and introduce in its stead the 'Estonian Order' that had existed before

the 13th century, according to which Estonians had been organised into a state much earlier than had been thought. The intention was to immortalise the roots of Estonia's statehood and to demonstrate the eternal dimensions of Estonian as a nation (Karjahärm 2001: 292–293). Similar examples may be found in other countries of that time, as well as in countries sharing an analogous political-ideological context from decades later. This was the purpose of nineteenth- and twentieth-century writing of national history: to bolster national self-perception by distorting the truth to one's own advantage. In strengthening national identity, it is essential to use, produce and utilise myths concerning one's ethnic origins (see, for example, Derek Fewster's study on Finland (2006)).

4 Re-established 1992; since 2004 Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union.

5 Materials included in the archival record, "The Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Committee of Folk Costume, 1937–1940", stored at the ENM archives begin from 1937. The initial sections of this material precisely reflect debates regarding the creation of the Committee and its responsibilities (see ERM A f 1, s 31a).

6 The Kodukäsitöö joint stock company was founded in Tallinn in 1927 with support from the Ministry of Economy and other central and local governmental bodies, as well as social organisations. Its objective was to provide female labourers with work and to promote the production of Estonian folk handicraft articles as well as to introduce Estonian folk art abroad (EE 1934).

7 ERM A f 1, s 31a.

8 *Rahvas* (Est. 'people'), *rahvus* (Est. 'nation').

9 ERM A f 1, s 31a.

10 There have been calls for the breaking of this tradition (see, for example, Vunder 1996).

11 In addition to the activities directed specifically towards choirs, we can invoke other endeavours such as radio lectures and statements in the press as well as the compilation of information brochures and their dissemination among different educational establishments.

12 If Kohl uses the concept 'national archaeology' to describe that which is "compiled within given states" and the term "nationalist archaeology" as something referring more inclusively to "policies adopted by the state that make use of archaeologists and their data for nation-building purposes", and adds that "such policies may extend beyond the borders of the state" (Kohl 1998: 226), then I view this delineation as an internal differentiation of cultural sciences – the question is, to what extent an archaeologist, ethnographer, or any other researcher composed his/her studies with overt nationalist intentions, or to what extent were these activities impelled by an idealistic, visionary zeal and so were national in a rather subconscious manner.

13 Due to the contents of the article, in what follows I will focus on the Museum's Department of Ethnography. However, it should be mentioned that the Estonian Folklore Archives, for instance, which was under the jurisdiction of the Museum, but enjoyed considerable independence, can also be considered to be of equal importance. The Archives prepared a publication called *A Collection of Estonian Folk Dances* in a similar fashion.

14 During the exhibition's opening, the press was flooded with articles purporting to explain how important a cultural establishment the ENM was for Estonian society and that the Museum was wholly in the service of the people. This was a different discourse from the one disseminated by the state in the 1930s, according to which people served the state. For a fuller discussion of the exhibition, see Nõmmela 2010.

15 ERM A f 1, s 164.

16 More vigorously, in the sense that in actual fact these ethnographers had already been engaged in promoting folk art and folk costumes for years, but these efforts intensified and the directives provided by the state (the Committee of Folk Costume, NPO) were observed in the process.

17 Personal reports of the staff of the Department of Ethnography, 1934–1940. ERM A f 1, s 514.

18 *Taluperenaine* magazine (1927–1940) was the mouthpiece of the Estonian Union of Rural Women and other societies for rural women, and was thereby certainly personally connected to the Committee of Folk Costume. It was published by the Academic Agricultural Society, and constituted an outstanding publication in the history of Estonian domestic science and domestic culture.

19 Seventy people completed the courses, after which they proceeded to convene courses in the sewing of Estonian folk costumes throughout Estonia. All in all 193 courses were held with ca. 1,800 participants (Piiri 1992: 121). These figures show the wide reach of the propaganda. As part of it, a separate advisory office of folk costumes was created at the ENM, and Kurrik probably also participated in its activities.

20 A second edition already appeared in the same year and the third was published in Sweden in 1979 at the behest of Estonian exiles.

21 ERM A f 1, s 540.

22 To the Board of the ENM Foundation. Written by Ferdinand Linnus, March 21, 1938. (Correspondence between the ENM Foundation and Linnus. ERM A f 1, s 107.)

23 It is a pity that Helmi Kurrik's own views concerning the book's preparation process have not survived, although we do know that she intended to write her recollections when she was in exile (Kurrik's archive is at the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm). Kurrik likewise mentioned this in her correspondence with Otto A. Webermann (materials regarding Helmi Kurrik obtained from Nonna Michel, now in the archives of ENM).

SOURCES

ERM A = Estonian National Museum Archives:

f 1, s 107 – The ENM Foundation Correspondence with Ferdinand Linnus.

f 1, s 540 – Helmi Kurrik's Employment Letter.

f 1, s 164 – Correspondence with the Ethnographic Department, 1932–1940.

f 1, s 31a – Minutes of the Board Meetings of the Committee of Folk Costume, 1937–1940.

f 1, s 514 – Individual Reports of the Functionaries of the Ethnographic Department, 1934–1940.

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