

MD VOLDEMAR SUMBERG AND THE FOLK MEDICINE COLLECTION OF THE ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF HYGIENE FROM THE 1920S AND 1930S

AVE TUPITS

PhD, Researcher

Estonian Folklore Archives

Estonian Literary Museum

Vanemuise 42, 51003 Tartu, Estonia

e-mail: avetupits@folklore.ee

ABSTRACT

Based on the documents preserved in several museums and archives in Tartu and Tallinn (the Estonian Health Care Museum,¹ the Estonian State Archives, the Estonian Historical Archives, the Estonian Folklore Archives and the Estonian National Museum), the article will give an overview of the views of the director of the Estonian Museum of Hygiene, Voldemar Sumberg, on the relationship between folk medicine and modern medicine; the data on folk medicine collecting campaigns with Sumberg's involvement in the 1920s; and the fate of the folk medicine records and items collected by the Museum of Hygiene during the 1920s and 1930s, according to the documentation and archival material found so far.

KEYWORDS: collecting folk medicine • study of folk medicine • history of folkloristics • history of medicine

The Estonian Museum of Hygiene questionnaire was found by the author of this article quite accidentally in the Estonian Folklore Archives while composing her PhD thesis (Tupits 2009). The fact that such a museum was interested in collecting folk medicine was intriguing. The results of this collecting campaign, conducted by the Estonian Museum of Hygiene, have remained unpublished, and by and large forgotten, due to the vagaries of history. Therefore, this article tries to bring some light to Sumberg's views on folk medicine, the course of folk medicine collecting at the Museum and the outcomes of the project.

Voldemar Kristjan Sumberg (28th March² 1893 to 13th February 1965) was an Estonian doctor and director of the Estonian Museum of Hygiene. He studied medicine in Tartu from 1915–1918 and from 1920–1922. During the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920) he acted as a medical assistant in the army. In 1922, he worked as a voluntary assistant at the Health Care Institute of the University of Tartu. On 1st December 1922, he was appointed as a clerk of the Museum of Hygiene. In 1923, he was elected a Junior Assistant of the Health Care Institute and from 1st January 1925 was released from this position on his own request due to his work in the Museum. During his university years, he was a member of the Estonian Students' Society.³ Parallel to his position as the director of the Museum, he edited a popular magazine called *Tervis* (Health) from 1928 to 1944 (EAA.2100.2.1153: 1r–6v, 22r, 30r–31v).⁴

In 1944 he was appointed the Minister of Social Affairs at the Otto Tief government,⁵ and because of his involvement with this 'bourgeois government' was arrested and deported by the Soviet forces. He was released from a forced labour camp in Siberia in 1954 and was able to make a short visit to Tartu in 1960, but was not allowed to return to Estonia permanently. He died a highly acclaimed doctor and director of a holiday home in Targai (Kemerovo Oblast, Siberia).

THE ESTONIAN STUDENTS' SOCIETY AND THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM QUESTIONNAIRE

In 1921, Sumberg was involved in the compilation of a questionnaire called "The Programme for Collecting Folk Medical Knowledge" (*Rahva arstiteaduse korjamise kava*, Sumberg 1921;⁶ see also Sumberg 1922: 46), which was published by the Estonian National Museum (1909) in collaboration with the Medicine Section of the Estonian Students' Society. As customary at that time, the questionnaire's foreword pointed out that something valuable was about to go missing and that folk medical data had to be saved. The gathered material was to offer a full view of the mental acuity of the people and a thorough analysis would help to identify some of the truths, which have their own value in addition to that of scientific research. The questionnaire was targeted at doctors and pharmacists, schoolteachers and students, but could also be used for collection work by other enthusiasts. It suggested that collectors should start close to home and note down the context of all data: addresses of people questioned, magazines or books, etc., from where the knowledge had been taken. The collectors were advised to gather books and manuscripts, photographs and drawings on healers, healing places and processes, and to note down folk expressions and dialects. The data gathered had to be sent to the Estonian National Museum.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part contained questions on pregnancy, childbirth, midwifery and the post-natal period, initial baby care, abortion and menstruation. The second, and larger, part concentrated on illness; names, descriptions and avoidance of illness; sending an illness to another; methods of healing – if the remedy was plant based, where it was brought from (home or pharmacy), what was given by the pharmacist; charms and rules about healing; the time of healing; data on healers and stories about them. Over 40 illness folk names were listed and very accurate descriptions requested. The listed illnesses included internal problems, scars, skin diseases, women's and children's diseases, eye, ear, mouth and throat diseases, dental problems and mental illness. Some examples were also added to the questions. Stress was laid on the descriptions of the healing instruments, for instance those used for bloodletting and cupping, use of ear stones, etc. The questionnaire also asked if respondents trusted educated doctors more than folk healers.

The tone of the questionnaire suggests that Voldemar Sumberg (and other compilers) were quite close to the subject of folk medicine. There is none of the arrogance or prejudice typical to medical personnel concerning the folk belief behind healing practises. It is clear, however, that in Sumberg's view, doctors and pharmacists were the most efficient collectors of folk medicine. Of course, he was neither the first nor the last to suggest so. Estonian veterinary doctor Johannes Kool (1882–?), when publishing his

questionnaire about folk veterinary practices (Kool 1912: 206–224), wrote that his own colleagues would be “most familiar” with academic medicine and veterinary practices, although he did not exclude farmers, local schoolteachers and other interested parties as his correspondents. In 1959, two MDs, Mihkel Kask (1903–1968) and Kaljo Villako (1919–2001) published their extensive folk medicine questionnaire in cooperation with folklorists, in the foreword of which they said that physicians should be collecting folk medicine, as they have a “better understanding” of the material. The collecting method, however, should be folkloristic. They also suggested that the earlier shortcomings in collecting and researching folk medicine in Estonia lie in the lack of interest shown by medical professionals (Kask, Villako 1959: 52–53). As both men were born at the beginning of the 20th century, they must have known, or known about, Voldemar Sumberg, who in the Soviet era was of course *persona non grata*, meaning they could not have been in the position of mentioning his work publicly in the late 1950s (for more on Kask and Villako’s collecting campaign, see Tupits 2008).

In addition, the theme of rationality, which was also popular in the folkloristic research of the early decades of the 20th century, can be seen in Sumberg/Estonian Students’ Society questionnaire, exemplified by the questions: what is considered rational in understanding illness and healing, and what do people actually know about the human body? Finnish ethnologist Ilmari Manninen (1894–1935), for example, studied comparative folk pathology (Manninen 1924: 210–220). In addition, such researchers as Carl Wilhelm von Sydow and Albert Eskeröd focused on the knowledge of healers. According to one opinion, this search for rationality existed due to the researchers of that time, who considered folk medicine to be a more popular version of academic medicine, with a comparison of the two favouring the latter (see Alver, Selberg 1987: 59, 62).

The answers to this questionnaire from the early 1920s are presently archived in the Estonian Folklore Archives (1927) of the Estonian Literary Museum. Most of them have now been digitised by the Museum’s folklore department. The answers contain mention of: charms (also in Latvian), all kinds of methods of healing; plague and malaria, women’s diseases, skin diseases, folk veterinary medicine, and also descriptions of folk healers. The Estonian National Museum also retains 14 answers to this particular questionnaire, but these are from the year 1937 (ERM KV 32). In addition, bound to this file are two answers from the year 1962 to Kask and Villako’s folk medicine questionnaire from 1959.

At the current stage of this research, who helped Sumberg (and perhaps some of his colleagues) to compile the questionnaire, as well as a later questionnaire by the Estonian Museum of Hygiene from 1925, remains to be resolved. The Estonian National Museum itself had been established in 1909, and both the Department of Folklore and the Department of Ethnology were founded at the University of Tartu in 1919, which means there were enough experts in this field with whom to consult.

SEARCHING FOR THE SOUL OF FOLK MEDICINE

In March 1922, Voldemar Sumberg’s article entitled “Folk Medicine and Medical Science” (*Rahva-meditiin ja arstiteadus*) was published in *Tervis* magazine. A draft of this

article (which bares some differences to the printed version) has been preserved in the Estonian State Archives (ERA.4617.1.26: 54r–77v).

In the article (1922: 41–47), Sumberg was very positive about folk medicine. He wrote that a doctor had to get close to the patient's soul – exactly what a healer could do, but the doctors could not. This brought up the necessity for academic medicine to get to know folk medicine (ERA.4617.1.26: 73r, 74r; Sumberg 1922: 47). He emphasised that it is difficult to collect folk medicine (ERA.4617.1.26: 76r), referring to the folk belief rule of keeping silent about healing procedures and charms. Sumberg's goal in this article was to bring folk medicine and academic medicine closer together because, as he wrote, folk medicine could enrich academic medicine. He also stressed the importance of folk medicine at a wider level: "Folk medicine is a barometer of the cultural surface in a particular location and has, as such, also ethnographical and culture-historical importance". It was, in his opinion, important to immediately and thoroughly collect old and new ways of healing, instruments of healing, herbs and stories about healing, etc. He also proposed that a dictionary of Estonian folk medicine should be compiled.

When comparing the draft and the final, published, version of his article, it is clear that Sumberg rearranged his text quite a bit and tried to find the best possible wording to bring out his point. In the original draft, it is also interesting to note his efforts to find the best terminology. For example, he used the term "medical science" (*arstiteadus*) instead of "medicine" (*meditsiin*) in both the academic and the folkloric context; in the draft he also made use of the term "university medical science" (*ülikooli arstiteadus*), which was corrected to "university medicine" (*ülikooli meditsiin*) during editing and finally appeared as "medical science" in the printed text. In addition, Sumberg made use of the term "modern medical science" (*modern arstiteadus*). He clearly preferred simple and shorter terms to be comprehensible to the wider circle of readers.

Sumberg wrote that if there is greater faith in the doctor, the number of the patients would also rise. He pointed out that people did not care if it was the church, the gods or past beliefs that helped them, and so a doctor had to get along well with all of these beliefs. Belief and the need for it are great, which means that one cannot look down upon it. Nevertheless, folk medicine often becomes senseless because of the belief factor, forcing the administrative powers to intervene (ERA.4617.1.26: 60r). In the draft of his article, Sumberg discussed psychological influences on falling ill and curing illness (ERA.4617.1.26: 66r, 67r). Also in the draft he mentioned several cases (of course without naming any names), where healers had helped respected people in society. For example, he referred to a personal acquaintance, an advocate's wife, whose child had been cured of a skin disease by a healer, and an important statesman whom medical science had not been able to help for a long time, but who had been cured by a healer (ERA.4617.1.26: 68r). All these examples have, however, been removed from the final version of the article, either by Sumberg or the editors, evidently avoiding unnecessary promotion to folk healing.

Sumberg also wrote that folk medicine is no ancient science, although as it has been tested for a long time, it competes with modern medicine and can only enrich the latter (ERA.4617.1.26: 68r). In its current form, folk medicine is nevertheless quite harmful (ERA.4617.1.26: 69r). In the draft he also named some 19th and 20th century scholars who had already collected folk medicine (for example, Jakob Hurt, Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann, Ilmari Manninen (ERA.4617.1.26: 77v)); none of these names appear in the article. At the end of his draft, Sumberg questioned who should be collecting folk

medicine. However, there was no clear answer following the question, except a partial hint towards the Academic Society of Medicine.

In 1923, during the yearly convention of the Academic Society of Medicine that had been founded only a year before, Voldemar Sumberg had indeed urged medical students to collect folk medicine and had handed out questionnaires compiled in collaboration with the Estonian National Museum. This undertaking had been planned before, but had not been carried out during the first six months of the activity of the Academic Society of Medicine (Bürger 1923: 125–126).

THE ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF HYGIENE'S GOALS IN COLLECTING FOLK MEDICINE

The Estonian Museum of Hygiene was founded in Tartu in 1921, and from 1928–1944 it had an affiliate in Tallinn. The Museum had 16 departments, one of them dedicated to folk medicine. In 1941, the Museum was placed under the control of the House of Sanitary Education; by 1952, only one room still functioned as a museum (Sumberg 1935: 16, 21, 22; Markovits 1995: 7).

The Estonian Museum of Hygiene fonds (ERA.4617, 1924–1942) at the Estonian State Archives were taken from the Historical Archives to the State Archives in 1974 and reorganised in 1989. The fonds consist of 156 files, which were catalogued into one inventory on the basis of chronological-nominal characteristics. An introduction was compiled for the fonds. The files are: newsletters, instructions, presentations, programmes, photos, budgets, reports, reviews, correspondence, lists, questionnaires, invoice books, register books and personnel files.

When discussing the Museum's budget for the year 1924, the Society of Estonian Doctors in Tartu voiced some strong arguments against, and disbelief of, the planned activities. Some suggested starting in a more modest fashion and to begin by collecting medical antiquities (which possibly refers to folk medicine). The budget was, nevertheless, approved as planned, which gave Voldemar Sumberg the possibility to visit several healthcare museums in Europe (Germany, the Netherlands, France, etc.) in the summer of 1924 to familiarise himself with modern approaches to such museums (Sumberg 1938: 422–423). The Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in Dresden in particular acted as a role model of the modern healthcare museum and was a constant partner in the following two decades. The Estonian Museum of Hygiene also had contacts with a number of booksellers and film distributors in Europe for ordering teaching materials (books, films, posters, etc.) on the subject of health behaviour.

In 1925, Sumberg introduced the work of the Museum to the wider audience in a magazine article, mentioning that in addition to developing a modern medical collection, the Museum also collected folk medicines – i.e. all medicines, healing instruments, charms and traditions commonly used by the people – in order to save them from inevitably perishing due to the progress of education (1925: 19).

One of the archival documents about the Museum, now preserved at the Estonian State Archives, also stated that the Museum of Hygiene was the centre for collecting folk medical data, helping to turn public attention to harmful practices and to fight against them (ERA.4617.1.10: 24r).

The Museum's budgets (ERA.4617.1.3: 13r, 13v, 16r, 21r, 22r, 24r, 27r, 28v, 42r, 46v, 52r, 54r, 86r) demonstrate the annual funds allocated to collecting folk medicine, including remuneration for the collectors.⁷ From 1923–1926, the Museum had planned 50,000 Estonian marks⁸ for collecting folk medicine. In 1927–1929, the amount was 40,000 marks; in 1929–1930, 300 kroons; in 1931–1932, 500 kroons; in 1932–1933, 200 kroons and in 1933–1934 the amount was only 100 kroons. Remarks in the budgets from the years 1931–1934 also showed a cooperation with the Academic Mother Tongue Society⁹ on collecting folk medicine, information, which has for now only been found in these budget documents. So far, no other indication of this cooperation has come to light.

THE ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF HYGIENE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire, called the Start to Collect Folk Medicine questionnaire (*Asuge rahva-arstiteaduse korjamisele*, EFAM, ERA 18 A) was found among records relating to the history of Estonian folkloristics, preserved in the Estonian Folklore Archives,¹⁰ and has an introduction similar to that of the previous questionnaire, but this questionnaire is short and concentrated. The main emphasis was on folk knowledge as it related to healing and avoiding illnesses: again the observational truths of tried and tested medicine are mentioned, as are the ways and means of healing and determining harmful practices. It is mentioned in the introduction that folk medicine has not been collected extensively enough, so some things have already been lost, and that what is still left, has to be saved from disappearing. Potential collectors of folklore were taught, where and how to collect – close to home, to note down rules of magic, ways of healing and charms, to collect manuscripts and books, healing instruments, plants, to ask for detailed information from healers or their patients.

This questionnaire contains questions on folk healing instruments and the biological knowledge of the healers: what is known to the healer of the anatomy and bodily functions; what is thought to be the functions of: 1) liver, 2) spleen, 3) kidneys, 4) blood, 5) brain, 6) heart. Supposedly, the answers were expected to determine whether a given healer was to be taken seriously from the viewpoint of modern medicine, while the questionnaire would also give information on folk pathology. In addition, it would also give information on the rationality-irrationality searches popular at that time. As mentioned above, it is unclear who helped Sumberg put together this questionnaire, or whether it was his work alone this time.

In 1924, the Museum of Hygiene sent out postcards with two questions on them: 1) were there folk healers in a given region, 2) who in the area was interested in folk medicine and would be ready to become the Museum's correspondent (TÜR f 149, s 361, 52).

823 postcards were sent to doctors, pharmacists, veterinary doctors, teachers, and others. They received 589 answers (71%). The correspondents provided the names, domiciles and specialties of 394 healers, and 218 people registered as correspondents with the Museum (Sumberg 1935: 60–61).

All folk medicine related answers found so far are located in the same State Archives' archival file that contains notes from Sumberg, drafts of his article from 1922, as well as newspaper clippings and the like (ERA.4617.1.26). All this material has been bound together with no logical order.

It is sometimes difficult to tell who could be the authors of a particular letter or note in the file. However, it is still possible to find most of the names with the help of the registers of incoming letters, and in several cases, the letters, mainly written by private individuals, do have names on them – it has been possible to identify about 25 names. There is no information, however, on where the material sent in by schools could be.

Some words about the data preserved in this particular manuscript. There is only one answer, including something about organs, namely about the heart and brain: “The heart was believed to be the leader of all strength (as was the brain)” (*Südannt arvati kõige tugevuse juhiks (nagu peaju)*); ERA.4617.1.26: 3v). In most of the letters how to heal with plants is described; correspondents give information about different folk belief healing methods for toothache, skin diseases, headache, erysipelas and so on. There is also one separate register for folk healers and correspondents (ERA.4617.1.154).

The budget documentation shows that for the year 1925, the Museum had planned two scholarships for students, both in the amount of 8,000 Estonian marks for three months of fieldwork. Also mentioned in the budgets was the fact that the collecting of folk medicine had already begun in cooperation with the Estonian Medical Society. It became necessary to send students to do some further field work (ERA.4617.1.11: 39v).

With the help of the registers of incoming and outgoing letters, three students who collected folk medicine can be identified: Voldemar Kiss (?–?), Arnold Reiman (1903–1963) and Karl Kaur (1900–1972). In June–July 1926, V. Kiss was in south-west Estonia (Vana-Vändra) and K. Kaur in the south-east (Räpina). It is unclear exactly where Arnold Reiman was, but for some time at least, he was working in the Museum in Tartu.

The students were given guidelines by mail, they had to keep a diary, and send their current addresses and work plans, as well as all the collected material, to the Museum (ERA.4617.1.43: 27r). For instance, according to the relevant register entry, Karl Kaur wrote at the end of June 1926 that it was difficult to collect folk medicine, as everybody shied away from him (ERA.4617.1.2: 63v). The students had certificates from the Museum, stating that they had been sent out to collect folk healing practices and asking everybody to help them (ERA.4617.1.31: 51v). In addition, Voldemar Kiss was also conducting fieldwork in the summer of 1927 (ERA.4617.1.42: 35r). This information is based on the entries in the registers of incoming letters.

Luck often plays its part in research, and this was also the case in this study. A postcard from Karl Kaur to Arnold Reiman from the summer of 1926 has withstood the test time, being paginated unbound in a register of incoming letters.

Arno!

Räpina 15.VII.26

I received the photographic camera only on the 12th of this month – I was waiting for it in Petseri [Pechory] and was therefore late to Leevi where I finally got the news of its whereabouts. I have already taken some photographs but I must confess that not everyone is ready to allow me to take their pictures. Some want a copy and so on. – I can't make any promises either, I mean, the Museum will not be sending pictures to them.

I will finish my work on July 16th, i.e. tomorrow. I plan to arrive in Tartu and deliver my records by next Monday. – Can't say that I have loads of material, but I still have achieved quite a lot and gathered experience on how a folk healer should be researched. Greetings, Kaur. (ERA.4617.1.2: 66 r, v)

A hand-written addition has been made to one machine-typed archive document, stating that in the year 1925, 3,778 lines of folk medicine were collected, while the English version of the same account refers to 8,778 lines (ERA.4617.1.10: 6r, 24r). Another account from the years 1926–1927 states that 2 students had gathered 5,728 lines of folk medicine in one month (the exact month is not specified in the document and students have been left anonymous). The account also reveals that the students had a photo camera to photograph active healers, their homes, etc. In addition, many people had sent in valuable data about folk healing (ERA.4617.1.130: 122r).

Furthermore, according to Sumberg's article from 1935, the students had collected 878 lines (compare to the number in previous paragraph), the rest had been collected by the Museum's correspondents. There were 16,563 lines of folk medical records altogether (Sumberg 1935: 60–61). It is possible, however, that by referring to these 878 lines, Sumberg had only the year 1934/35 in mind.

Today, around 2,000 lines of folk medical records can be counted within the file ERA.4617.1.26. It is unclear where the rest of the answers and question postcards could be. In addition to the manuscripts (letters from correspondents), some healing instruments were also sent to the Museum. Sumberg mentioned four people who had sent in instruments (1935: 60–61); it is unclear, however, how many instruments, and from how many people in total, these were received.

The documentation has not yet revealed how much of the collected material was on display among the exhibits in the Museum of Hygiene. So far only one photograph from the instrument collection has been found, published in the magazine *Tervis* (Eller 1928: 196). It depicts instruments for bloodletting and cupping, apparently as a part of the permanent exhibition. The Museum's documentation also gives indications that V. Sumberg, and perhaps also others, gave some public lectures on the topic of folk medicine, for instance Sumberg was lecturing on the first aid in folk healing (ERA.4617.1.33: 162r).

MEDICAL DOCTORS ON SUPERSTITION AND FOLK HEALING IN *TERVIS* MAGAZINE

As Voldemar Sumberg also edited the popular magazine *Tervis* in parallel with his work as the director of the Museum of Hygiene, and traditional healing methods were time and again discussed and illustrated on the pages of this magazine, a few words should also be said on this.

In 1930, in a short article without an author (so it may be assumed, it was written by the chief editor, Sumberg, himself), folk healing, and beliefs and customs mainly related to the healing traditions, were disparaged. In this short article with examples from south-west Estonia – Pärnumaa – several children's diseases, as well as the habit of bloodletting, were described. The so-called non-doctors were accused of abusing both the possibility of buying medicine from pharmacies, and people's ignorance. Two known healers were mentioned (without names), one, who cured with magnetised water and laying on hands, and another who treated cancer patients with all sorts of tablets and creams. Readers were given a hint that they should rather go and see educated doctors (*Tervis* 1930: 44–46).

In 1934, in the sub-section called Mental Health, both Voldemar Sumberg and another MD, Viktor Hion, wrote about the bad outcomes of psychological influence of a folk healer on a patient, superstitions and their negative influence on people's health behaviour. Viktor Hion mentioned schoolchildren as victims of superstitious behaviour, and also those with low self-esteem, those in love and actors in theatres. In his opinion, the reasons for superstition lay with the lack of courage in life and lack of ambition in one's profession. Sumberg for instance pointed out in his article that a modern doctor would use both academic knowledge and psychology (compare to 1922), whereas a non-doctor or faith healer could do much harm by using suggestion. Forbidding the activities of a non-doctor would unfortunately serve as the best advertisement for such a dangerous activity (Hion 1934: 6–10; Sumberg 1934: 158–159).

In one of his articles for *Tervis* in 1938, another of Sumberg's colleagues, MD Siegfried Lind (since 1940 Siim Lind; who had also collected folk medicine during Sumberg's 1921 campaign), mentioned that the Society of Estonian Doctors found it necessary to fight against folk healing or "non-curing" (*ebaarstimine*), and that this should be a responsibility of the relevant institutions. As an institution dealing with the study of non-doctors, he named the Estonian Museum of Hygiene. According to S. Lind, healing by these non-doctors became prohibited and criminally punishable in Estonia in 1934 (1938: 380, 384). Folk healers have also been called non-doctors in some other articles and studies of that time.

The reader cannot but notice the change in Sumberg's tone in his public articles on folk medicine and folk healing between 1922 and the 1930s. It may very well be that as a young and eager medical student, it was a lot easier to be a visionary and more open-minded to alternative practices and views, as well as dream about cooperation between traditional and academic healing practitioners. As the director of a modern healthcare museum, a well-connected, respected person in medical circles, and an official responsible for the public health campaigns and lectures the Museum carried out extensively in the 1920s and 1930s, Sumberg might, by this time, have found it unsuitable to stick to his previous opinions, and it is not entirely impossible that his own views on folk medicine did indeed become more critical over the years.

CONCLUSION

Voldemar Sumberg's efforts to collect and preserve folk medical knowledge were remarkable, especially as he tried to involve his colleagues and medical students in recording folk medicine. Sadly, there is little left of the collection of texts and folk healing instruments. The Museum of Hygiene's collections in general were destroyed, melted or sold in the 1940s; a lot was simply carried off, so one cannot be sure what happened to the collection items and manuscripts that were not archived in the Estonian State Archives – i.e. the majority of the manuscripts, healing instruments for cupping, blood-letting, extracting teeth (*kupusarved*, *aadrirauad*, *hambatangid*) and photographs taken by students during fieldwork. The majority of the question postcards are missing as well. In addition, confusion reigns as to the exact number (in lines) of the manuscript material.

Therefore it has to be said that the amount of material to be analysed was considerably smaller than was initially expected. A lot of interesting and valuable data has been

lost over time, while, paradoxically, Sumberg's goal was precisely the opposite: to stop such information disappearing from history. At the same time, putting together the context of this particular collection and collecting work has been somewhat demanding, as the necessary sources are scattered between different museums and archives and the fate of most of the collected material is unknown. It must be stressed here that the research will continue and one can hope to fill in at least some of the gaps.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Riina Ader from the Estonian Health Care Museum, Katre Kaju from the Estonian Historical Archives and Liina Maadla from the Estonian State Archives for their help and consultations.

NOTES

1 The Estonian Health Care Museum is successor of the Estonian Museum of Hygiene. The Estonian Health Care Museum was (re)founded in 1980 in Tallinn. There is a difference in the English versions of the name of the museum, in Estonian the name was and is Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum.

2 9th April according to the Gregorian calendar.

3 The Estonian Students' Society was founded in Tartu in 1870. It functioned from 1870–1940 in Tartu, was banned during the Soviet era and had to act in secrecy. From 1945 its branches were active in several countries in Europe and in the USA. A large number of political and social leaders are alumni of this society.

4 The first digit in the reference system of the Estonian State Archives and the Estonian Historical Archives refers to the fonds, the second to the inventory and the third to the file. Subsequent digits point to the page number, and the letters 'r' and 'v' indicate either *recto* or *verso* of the page.

5 The government of Otto Tief (September 20–22, 1944) remained the last legal government of the Republic of Estonia until the country regained its independence in 1991. In September 1944 German troops retreated from Estonia and in the quest to protect the country from Soviet attack, the underground independence movement decided to restore the Republic of Estonia, and thus to attempt to seek help from the West in case of attack. The Soviet Union attacked Estonia at the end of September and occupied the country. Members of the Estonian government were either arrested and deported to Siberia or killed, although some managed to flee to foreign countries. The significance of this lies in the continuing independence of Estonian government abroad during the Soviet occupation.

6 Indication of Voldemar Sumberg as the compiler of the questionnaire is based on data found in the general register of Estonian books in 1928–1923 (Antik 1931: 278). The compiler's name is not printed on the questionnaire.

7 It is possible that this remark has to do with the medical students engaged in the fieldwork. On the other hand, it is clear from the registers that on request, money was also paid to voluntary co-workers for their information.

8 100 Estonian marks = 1 Estonian kroon (pre-WWII Estonian currencies). Monetary reform (from the mark to the kroon) took place in 1928.

9 The Academic Mother Tongue Society is a philological society founded at the University of Tartu in 1920.

10 So far, only one copy of the Museum's questionnaire has been found. For now, there has been no indication that this questionnaire could also be among the Museum's files at the Estonian State Archives. A copy of this questionnaire preserved at the Estonian Folklore Archives in the file EFAM, ERA 18A bears the signature *Ed. Treu*, from the Estonian folklorist Eduard Laugaste (1909–1994 (Treu until 1935)) in the top left hand corner. It is possible that Eduard Laugaste and Voldemar Sumberg also had personal contacts before Sumberg's deportation. Another possibility is that this particular sheet of the questionnaire might have been moving from hand to hand, finally ending up among Eduard Laugaste's papers. It is also noteworthy that Sumberg was close to medical historian and MD Herbert Normann (1897–1961), whose wife Erna Normann (1904–1978) was a folklorist. This acquaintance might have had some impact on the events described in this article. The files in the personal archive of Herbert Normann in the University of Tartu Library however reveal nothing in particular on his connection to Voldemar Sumberg and the folk medicine collection of the Museum of Hygiene. Further research is needed to clarify these possible leads.

SOURCES

EAA – the Estonian Historical Archives.

EAA.2100.2.1153 – Sumberg, Voldemar, young assistant.

EFAM – History of Estonian Folkloristics materials within the Estonian Literary Museum's Estonian Folklore Archives.

EFAM, ERA 18 A – questionnaire entitled Start to Collect Folk Medicine.

ERA – the Estonian State Archives.

ERA.4617.1.2 – register of incoming correspondence 22.09.1922–31.07.1926.

ERA.4617.1.3 – budgets with extras, from 1923, 1924, 1927, 1929–1941.

ERA.4617.1.10 – newsletters, instructions, programmes, photographs, manuscripts of presentations, and articles on the organisation of the museum's work and the popularisation of knowledge on healthcare. Budgets of itinerant exhibitions. 1924.

ERA.4617.1.11 – Estonian Museum of Hygiene newsletters and budget for 1925. Copies of outgoing correspondence on organisation of the museum's work, publication of scientific works, holding lectures and showing films. 19.12.1924–30.12.1925.

ERA.4617.1.26 – folk medicine manuscripts sent to the Museum by private individuals. List of folk healers. 05.07.1925–17.12.1925.

ERA.4617.1.31 – register of outgoing correspondence. 28.05.1925–06.12.1926.

ERA.4617.1.33 – outgoing correspondence of the Estonian Museum of Hygiene. 14.01.1926–29.12.1926.

ERA.4617.1.42 – register of incoming correspondence. 01.08.1926–28.11.1929.

ERA.4617.1.43 – register of outgoing correspondence. 02.11.1926–07.04.1929.

ERA.4617.1.130 – reports of the Museum's work, with additional material. 1923, 1926/27 and 1935/36–1939/40.

ERA.4617.1.154 – register of folk healers with data on speciality and domicile.

ERM, KV – answers from Estonian National Museum correspondents.

ERM, KV 32 – answers from correspondents, volume No. 32.

TÜR – University of Tartu Library.

TÜR, F 149 – Personal archive of Viktor Kalnin.

REFERENCES

- Alver, Bente Gullveig; Torunn Selberg 1987. Trends in Research on Folk Medicine in the Nordic Countries. – *Ethnologia Scandinavica: A Journal for Nordic Ethnology*. Vol. 17: 59–70.
- Antik, Richard 1931. *Eesti raamatute üldnimestik 1918–1923*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts.
- Bürger, Gerda 1923. Akadeemilise arstiteaduse seltsi tegevusest tema esimesel aastal 1922/23. – *Tervis*. Nr. 10/11: 124–126.
- Eller, Mihkel 1928. Ärge laske verd. – *Tervis*. Nr. 12: 196–197.
- Hion, Viktor 1934. Miks on inimesed ebausklikud? – *Tervis*. Nr. 1: 6–10.
- Kask, Mihkel; Kaljo Villako 1959. Rahvameditsiini andmete kogumise vajalikkusest. – *Nõukogude Eesti Tervishoid*. Nr. 4: 52–59.
- Kool, Johannes 1912. Rahva looma-arstimise viiside, arsti rohtude ja anatomiliste nimetuste korjamine. – *Eesti Kirjandus: Eesti Kirjanduse Seltsi väljaanne*. Nr. 7: 206–224.
- Lind, Siegfried 1938. 1920.–1934. a. peetud Eesti Arstidepäevade ja -kongresside resolutsioonide ja sooviavalduste teostamisest. – *Eesti organiseeritud arstkond 1912–1937*. Tartu: Postimees, 353–384.
- Manninen, Ilmari 1924. Paar seletust rahvaomase patoloogia alalt. – *Eesti Kirjandus: Eesti Kirjanduse Seltsi väljaanne*. Nr. 5: 453–459.
- Markovitš, Lea 1995. Dr. Voldemar Sumberg ja Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum. – *Dr. Voldemar Sumberg ja Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum. Meditsiiniajaloopäevade ettekandeid*. Tallinn: Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum, 3–9.
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1921. Rahva arstiteaduse korjamise kava. *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi väljaanne 17. Eesti Üliõpilaste Seltsi arstiteaduse osakonna toimetus*. Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum.
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1922. Rahva-mediitsiin ja arstiteadus. – *Tervis*. Nr. 6: 41–47.
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1925. Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseumi ülesanded rahva tervishoiu alal. – *Tervis*. Nr. 1–2: 18–20.
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1934. Ravimisest mõjustusega. – *Tervis*. Nr. 10: 158–159.
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1935. *Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum 1924–1934. = The Estonian Museum of Hygiene: A Survey of 10 Years' Work*. *Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseumi väljaanne 85*. Tartu: [Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseum].
- Sumberg, Voldemar 1938. Eesti Tervishoiu Muuseumi saamisloost ja arenemisest. – *Eesti organiseeritud arstkond 1912–1937*. Tartu: Eesti Arst, 418–428.
- Tervis* 1930 = Kui tervis on odav. – *Tervis*. 1930. Nr. 3: 44–46.
- Tupits, Ave 2008. Data Collecting and Research of Folk Medicine in Estonia During the Soviet Era. – *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Vol. 2, No. 2: 69–82.
- Tupits, Ave 2009. *Käsitlusi rahvameditsiinist: mõiste kujunemine, kogumis- ja uurimistöö kulg Eestis 20. sajandil*. *Dissertationes Folkloristicae Universitatis Tartuensis* 13. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.