

In the shadow of Greater Finland. The frame of scientific work of Ilmari Manninen in Finland

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Ilmari Manninen wrote about U. T. Sirelius, who was his teacher and contemporary researcher, the following estimate: “Sirelius was born under lucky stars. Few scholars have been blessed with such excellent opportunities.” (Manninen 1929, 240.) What these “excellent opportunities” meant? My purpose is to find out Manninen’s position in Finnish ethnology primarily based on archival sources. The material based on the correspondence of Manninen, and as method is the re-reading of Manninen’s studies.

## 1 Evaluation of the Estonian ethnology in Finland

When it comes to ethnological research Manninen valued two aspects, research based on fieldwork and an international network of scholars. His field limited on native North Karelia, West Lapland and Estonia. At the same time, the interest of Finnish scientific community focused on Finland. The time of Karelianism was over, and Estonia was not valued as equal with Finland. In Tartu, in Estonia Manninen seemed to have adopted an Estonian identity, and most of the scholarly work focused on Estonian ethnology. What was Estonia from Finland’s point of view? Has Estonia been looked only in the frame on Finno-Ugric discourse, or, like Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, as “an important addition to Finland’s resource”?

In 1919, an Estonian exhibition opened in the National Museum of Finland. Most of the artefacts represented the collections of the National Museum of Finland, and the purpose of the exhibition was to get to know Estonian culture. When presenting the exhibition, U. T. Sirelius emphasized cultural contacts and often referred to Karelian culture in comparison. (Sirelius 1919, 68-73.) In own works, Sirelius did not present Estonian connections or cultural contacts. There was no interest in Estonian folk culture or museum life in the pages of the journals or newspapers either. Manninen presented the new organized Estonian National Museum in the newspaper *Uusi Suomi* (1923, 1929). An interesting point, why was the author of Manninen’s monograph about the Estonian folk dress an archaeologist and not an ethnologist? (Helsingin Sanomat 10.12.1927.) The question arises, did it reflect a kind of feeling of superiority, which the art historian Timo Huusko also pointed out? In Finland, when evaluating Manninen’s life work, the experience teaching as docent in Tartu, and

the work of organizing museum collections and exhibitions seemed has been forgotten. Does the attitude reflect an underestimation of the Estonian ethnology, a kind of post-colonialism?

## 2 The study of Finno-Ugric peoples in the new political situation after 1927

Manninen's return to Finnish ethnology was not self-evident. The field was open to Sirelius. On the contrary, in the 1920s and 1930s entering Russia did not mean field work, and Manninen was satisfied with visiting museums and research institutes. Manninen's choice was to focus on museum collections and make syntheses based on them.

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