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HEALERS: WHO ARE THEY?

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Abstract: The article discusses changes in healers' healing tradition, explanatory models, use of written and published traditions. During the past century, healers used and integrated knowledge from different schools. Another significant trend rising to the fore highlights the importance of local folk medicine, which emphasises traditional values and creates novel cultural interpretations. To characterise the changes, the article introduces four healers, ranging from a half-mythic witch-herder to the healers-innovators of medical methods and local culture.

Keywords: explanatory models, published books of magic, charm, folk medicine,healer

INTRODUCTION

Traditional healers played an important role in society at the beginning of the 20th century, although knowledge about the extent and nature of their healing is unfortunately generally indirect. Data can be reconstructed to a certain extent from charms and collected folk medicine texts, including legal documents, although more general details of the system of healing, health, service providers and service users are approximate and partly obscured by the interests of the representatives of official medicine. General practitioners' treatment and home care still covered an important part of the population's health needs and access to health services in the early 20th century, given the general socio-economic circumstances. The formal medical system had different expectations: as the dominant, regulatory, system, it wanted to regulate a share of the market, and still does. And so, unfortunately, knowledge of the personalities of healers is mainly limited to impressions, relying largely on folkloric narratives and beliefs (more about folkloristic fieldwork Alver, Selberg 1987; Alver 1990).[1]

Thus, the relationship between home treatment, treatment provided by a therapist (i.e. a visiting therapist) and official medical practice is still fragmented. For

this article, I used data from folklore archives based on the subjective perceptions of patients and observers, often formulated in narrative form, and interviews. Working through the records of several famous witches (The Witch of Äksi, Kaika Laine, Vigala Sass, Gunnar Aarma, etc.), one type of mediator emerges: storytellers with the skill to construct the oral biography of a person based on what they know. This can be impressively factual (see Kõiva 2014). To a lesser extent, healers have been archival correspondents (Kõiva 2017, 1989), or have told folklorists about their self-perceptions, in which case it is possible to look more closely at the development of a person, their actions and their own representations.

The data on influences are also indirect. It can be difficult to establish in which world these healers lived, which (cultural) texts influenced them, how they were influenced by newer spiritual currents from the folk forms of spiritualism to the results of Madame Blavatskaya and other theosophists as well as the influences of various doctrines and religious currents that moved through Estonia before and especially after the Russian Revolution of 1917 (Godwin 1994). We can see these influences on folk doctors through the vocabulary and methodology they used. In this article I use mixed data, i.e. narratives from folklore archives, doctors' diaries, and in some cases information about these healers from historical archives.

THE DATA

I used as a division the healers/witches known in family circles, and these who known to a whole village or group of villages, i.e. people well known enough that people visited them from other parishes or cities (Kõiva 1995). De Blécourt writes that in a small community, there is probably only one well-known witch, apart from others who are only labelled as such within a small circle (De Blécourt 1999: 4; 1992), two or three in Slovenia (Mencej 2017: 11 ff), but in our region we have the situation where *nõid* ('witch') has a variety of meanings, including sage, wise one, doctor and many more (Laugaste 1937). Laugaste's list consists of 90 different names, meaning that almost all subcategorise are listed. This situation resembles the Sci-Fi stories written by Ursula LeGuine where people overcame their limits by using personal power and knowledge for healing and magic.

Similar to religious pluralism, medical pluralism was also common among healers, especially at the beginning of the 20th century. Although treatment from apothecaries and biomedical doctors become increasingly accepted, belief in other explanations for illness and misfortune remain widespread. In spite of these challenges, there is still widespread interest in exploring medically pluralistic models of treatment.

EXPLANATION MODELS

Almost all healers used some of the old explanations or archaic aetiologies for diseases, seeing them as originating from earth, water, wind, fire, sauna, as well as from the spirits of diseases that remained in circulation for a long time, although the diseases

may have been a God-appointed and important model of explanation that said diseases are caused by other people. A common explanation still associated disease with the concept of *viha* (anger; originally green, impure, bitter, poison, hostility, as well as the origin of the disease), which was attributed to many living and inanimate beings. Being exposed to anger caused social unhappiness, while getting angry caused inflammation and disease. In addition to people Anger was attributed to the soil or the land, or to beer, milk, yarn and many other objects.

Diseases could also be **sent away by wind, water or fire**, or carried **back to the ground**, to a **person wishing evil** or **to an animal** that caused the disease. That is, the disease was sent back to its place of origin. Diseases could be transferred to natural objects using healing words. Water used to wash the sick place was poured into the transmission site, while objects that had been in contact with the focus of disease were left at the transmission site. The disease was described as developing and immobilised, images of comparison were created with the mythical world, the disease was sent to the deserted place from which it came, or to the person who caused the disease. Words were adapted and re-addressed as needed: the addressee was changed, the wording was adjusted, individual verses or groups of verses were changed so that they fit each specific case. When the symptoms and course of diseases were similar in humans and animals, they were treated with the same techniques, substances and spells.

BOOKS AND LITERARY INFLUENCES, ABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

According to his daughter and local correspondent Aleksei Tustit, the healer Tiitsu Seiu had a lot of books in foreign languages at home as well as homemade tinctures and herbs. He also liked to make ointments. One source of knowledge was a German-language magic book, the 'Seventh Book of Moses', which he studied with interest and consistency. It was also from there that he obtained the SATOR charm, which he used to cure erysipelas, snake bite and other trauma. SATOR was particularly popular in Estonia as an incantation against erysipelas (Kõiva 2019) as was also used in Latvia (Lielbardis 2020). There was other magical literature at home, but Seiu stressed, when talking about them, that books of this kind contained everything. Some were not fit for human consumption. As an example this, he told of a method of becoming invisible by boiling a black cat.

In one of his letters, he talks about ordering literature from Germany, and also about the situation in his family as his wife didn't like sitting and reading at home: "I have often ordered chemistry and technical books from Germany, and I have written my own name on them, and the title the Epistle Book, or the Book of Preaching. Otherwise, I have no permission to read any of the literature. It's the same with writing: I often write for the Folklore Archives, but I say I write epistles and sermons. And if I have good sermons, maybe I will become a preacher, then I can eat standing up. My wife said: 'You don't believe in God and the church.' But I answer that no teacher

(priest) believes himself, but sends others heaven by blessing and reading good sermons, then the wife remains silent and I continue to write without interference."

At the beginning of the 20th century the question of religion was syncretic and Seiu's folklore collections are often written during church holidays. Aa local correspondents reported, he accompanied his family to church and played the accordion at home.

The relationship with God is complex and intertwined, as we can see from her vision while suffering lung disease. His healing ritual also contains several traditional Christian elements (kneeling, uncovering the head, addressing God). Reflections on faith are characteristic of a modernising society in general, as is the struggle between different experiences and attitudes. These reflections are a kind of multiversality that can be paralleled by the religious reflections of the charters of writers such as Henrik Ibsen or Anton Hansen Tammsaare.

The same healer describes how he was dying and saw a black eagle, and later a white eagle.

> I read the prayer, the black eagle pulled away and the white one a little bit too, the yellowish angel came and fell in my place, his back right against me, I couldn't see his face, as if he had a human head. I thought, 'Death is not coming yet!' After a little while it disappeared from me again, and I stayed up for a long time before falling asleep. It was a pitch black night: there was no light at the window, no light in the room. That night I slept better than before. I was still lucid, just as I slept I had all sorts of dreams, whether my eyes were closed or open at the time of the vision I really don't remember.
>
> The next morning I sent for the priest, had God's grace given me, which I had not had for fifteen years, and I began to get better, and I am still alive today, and have been to table church myself a couple of times in these nine years. Taking this and all the other visions and hearings together, I do not want to believe that man has an immortal soul, and that scripture, the work of men, is sacred truth. (Kõiva 1989)

Nevertheless, an episode of illness ends with a return to the church, though not with active membership. Relations with the church were syncretic in the early 20th century, i.e. between the various branches of Protestantism, the doctrines of the Brethren, and those who had converted to the Orthodox Church in the mid-19th century. Debates about the church and its doctrine, and comparisons between different denominations, were part of the process of self-determination. A noteworthy feature of this story was the existence of universal symbols and their translation.

> Following healers' actions, responses, and judgments we can see that they are not simply empirically conditioned or automated, but rather intellectualised subjects self-reliant in their judgments. The social background that healers came from incorporates understandings of conventional customs, usages, and intuitions, helping them grasp things that, although sometimes unarticulated, allow us to formulate explanations when challenged (cf. Tay-

> lor 1995: 168). For example, Tiitsu Seiu describes his healing ritual as an intellectual construction that has a shared background:
>
> In Saaremaa, I saw someone reading these words against erysipelas (rose), and I, first of all for laughter, thinking it an idle laughter, even taking off my hat, began to write these words against rose and a snake bite, and the help was immediately noticeable. I am now famous in the neighbourhood for this work, and after the first time I also began to draw a circle around the illness, anticlockwise three times, while secretly reciting to myself, "O Lord, if it be thy holy will, still this pain." So that despite not believing in God at all, the effect was there. (Kõiva 1989)

There are hundreds of records in the archives that show how northern Estonia and Virumaa regions were influenced by urban culture, from where fortune tellers, palmists, hypnotists, masseurs and miracle doctors arrived in the villages during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as during the Soviet period (Kõiva 1992, 1996),. It is also interesting to check how people got the addresses of healers. Oral communication was important in this as were newspapers and even the Kuremäe Nunnery, where some people, coming from far, for example, stopped to get advice on how to find healers who could help them[1]

TRAVELLING HEALERS, VILLAGE HELPERS

Next to the travelling merchants some men travelled from village to village helping, for example, to destroy cockroaches and other parasites. From the city of Rakvere, The Death of Cockroachs made rounds to repel insects carrying a sign on his hat.

Several itinerant healers were born in Virumaa and returned periodically to give temporary healing or divination sessions, a phenomenon we can view as a form of multilocal living. One example is the clairvoyant and palm reader Vitsa Mari, who travelled with a whip in her hand, giving rise to her nickname Mari the Whip). Mari lived in Tallinn and regularly visited Virumaa to give palm readings for locals there.

Treatment was carried out using symbolic objects that had religious, historical or emotional value. For example, for medical treatment Marie Rosenblatt used palm-sized silver money received from Tedre Ants, who brought it from the Turkish war. Some silver (in folklore *silver white*) was scraped off and mixed with saliva, and Marie whispered words over the diseased place (KKI 41, 318 (4) < Kadrina, 1964). Rosenblatt used a symbolic rite to treat skin diseases, combining word power with religious information about saliva as a breath concentrate and a recognised remedy, adding the healing power of a universally functioning silver object. In this particular case, the authority of the historical object added value to the silver, while again we can see the interesting intellectual construct made by healer.

The village healers of the 19th and early 20th centuries included 'bone healers', i.e. sprain healers, country women who practiced cupping, blood-letters, midwives and tooth extractors. Some of them had kin heritage and some learned on the short

medical courses. Virumaa Lõetsa Villem (Villem Epner, b. 1881) was known for treating sprains and traumas, learning from his father how to treat fractures in animals and humans, set joint dislocations and treat muscle sprains. Kriina Mari and Mart Kaasik from Maetsma, Liisa Tammesalu from Sahargu, Mihkel Kruut from Edivere village and many others also treated sprains. A man from the village of Savala, born in Lüganuse, Jaan Iisküll with the nickname Bone-setter Jaan and Savala Jaan (the name comes from the place), was so well known and famous that the learned doctors sued him. Jaan was subjected to tests of professional knowledge, but as many healed people stood witness for him, he was allowed to continue with his occupation. According to folk tales, Savala Jaan knew how to put a hip bone in place and put broken bones in a splint. He was said to have learned wisdom from an old wise man named Isaac, whom he had visited to heal the rot caused by a snake bite. Both of Jaan's sons learned the bone-setting skills from him.

Healers with cups and blood-letters mainly belonged to the economically poorer people. In 1846 a ban came into place on the publication of the moon phases in order to find suitable times for cupping (Annus 2000), although cupping began to lose its importance only after the Second World War. Among the well-known folk singers of Virumaa, Viru Mai or Krassmann's Mai practiced cupping, and also knew how to treat animals (KKI 25, 45 (1) < Jõhvi, 1957). She got the nickname Kutsi (Doggie) Mai from singing regilaul sitting on a fence, where dogs gathered to listen to her. Singers Ann Konsa and Tääde Liisa from Atsalama village, Tauli Anne from Kantküla, and others, were also blood-letters and cup healers. The names of many are not known because people knew them by their professional names (Kupu-Kadri, Kupu-Kaarli, etc.), so they were talked about and written about as cupper + name and their real names sank into oblivion.

Here we recall another cupper Ieva Kurat (which means Ieva the Devil), who apparently knew how to turn the wind during a fire and thus extinguish it. The story about Ieva was told by Maarja Amba, a singer from Illuka in Iisaku parish who also knew how to heal and knew unique magic words. Her recollection of Ieva reveals the life of cuppers and introduces the tools they used.

> Ieva Kurat was an old maid, a bit promiscuous. Drank a lot of vodka and roamed about with men…. She always had money to buy vodka, she was a cupper. She went around a lot, there she went to the Russian side in Vihtse and still earned five kopecks on the horn. A young boy had put eighteen horns on his back and then jumped into the river, into the river Vihtse. The horns all came off and disappeared, Ieva missed the horns. Then she tried to get new ones; I also gave old animal horns from here. Ieva cut off the thin end, put a raw hide, or pleura, on it, and poked thin holes with a needle. Thus, the new cup horns were back again.
>
> Cupping is used against bad blood. If the head or neck vessels hurt, or when bleeding. Kriisa Katri cuts with a knife, it hurts, but Ieva had a machine, it created a hole. (ERA II 166, 117/8 (32) < Jõhvi parish, 1938)

Local women acted as midwives, some of whom had been trained in courses and who, apart from helping mothers give birth, had other medical knowledge or knew how to prepare medicines, such as Sibula Mari from the village of Vitsik. Roosi Miili (the nickname Roos (Rose) is associated with erysipelas while Miili is short for Emily), a midwife from the village of Ohakvere, was also known as a rose inflammation doctor and sprain healer. Her medical techniques were old-fashioned: words were read over the rose and black sheep's wool was put onto it; black yarn was tied around a *nari* (inflammation of the tendon sheath) to accompany these words.

Colourful stories have been told about Juuli Juuli, a charmer from Finland, a person of poor fortune who, if insulted, could send death to a person or animal. Juuli was feared because it was said that her charms came true.

Loviisa Mahmastol, a singer and healer, kept the old customs for a long time. When planting cabbage, she placed a stone on top of the vegetable bed in the belief, based on analogy magic, that the cabbage heads would be as strong as the stone. When making bread she hid the bread-making from the eyes of strangers as the influence of a stranger on bread-making was to be avoided. Loviisa treated erysipelas and domestic animals but possessed another skill less practiced in the 20th century, that of reconciling troubled married couples. Loviisa Mahmastoli's native language in her childhood was Russian, and possibly some of these customs came from Russian Baltic Finnic culture.

New and old traditions were mixed when searching for a thief, for example cards were laid and the thief was seen in a photograph or in magnetised water. Jaan Rebane from Jõhvi was a skilled thief spotter who also treated toothache and erysipelas using words. He was also a blood-letter and could cause bodily trouble to an angry enemy using words and rituals.

Pouliine Kiiver, a singer from Iisaku Metsküla village, tells the story of visiting Rebane, which is especially figurative in that the move was driven not by necessity, but by pure human curiosity. At the same time we can see that Rebane is governed by patterns of appropriate action that conform to an accepted sense of what is fitting and right. Agents with this kind of understanding recognise when they or others behave wrongly, although to some extent he was still obliged to do what client asked him to do. Only the end of story – 'do you want to see the back of the man' – can be interpreted as his intellectual opinion, and could also be an act of mocking the visitor:

> There was a man living in Jõhvi, Rebane, and he also did tricks, now he's dead. He medicated with earth herbs, and if something was stolen from someone, then he let this person look into a glass of water – the figure of the thief came into it, you could see, no matter was he known or unknown. I was interested in it, I went to Jõhvi, looked for Rebane. A man and a woman came out of his house, got on the wagon and drove away, so I was left alone with Rebane. His ceiling and walls were filled with bunches of plants, all kinds. Then he said, "What do you have?" "There is something to talk about. My servant got a child, I want to find out with whom, she herself does not disclose it."
>
> He said, "Let her know herself, what need is to know?"

I demanded to know "Do you think about your husband?"

"Not at all. I just want to know who this has happened to."

"All right, then."

He took a glass of water from the cupboard, rinsed it over with water. Took a bucket of water, brought water from the well, poured it into a glass, asked for my ring, dropped it into the middle of the glass, into the water. Then asked my name and the name of my mother, the name of the girl and the girl's mother. He took the glass in his hand, put it to his mouth and read loudly into the glass, everything I heard myself, the names of mothers and the names of daughters were also among them. Then he put the glass on the table, himself looked in for a little time, chuckled and pushed the glass in front of me: "Look well into the ring!"

I looked, saw nothing.

"Don't be afraid, look bravely!"

I looked. The figure of a small man was inside the ring. Wearing a brown jacket, I couldn't see his face.

He said, "Do you want to see the back?"

"I don't care. I want to see the place where they were together."

He read something and looked inside the glass again. It was our own house, with a sweep well in the yard.

First, I didn't want to look. I said, "There will be no obligation, I just want to follow the folk tale."

Then it started and I could see. He didn't take much money, and I thanked him. I drove home calmly. It is truly true. (KKI 31, 281 < Iisaku, 1960)

Lore indicates that the visits of hypnotists, eye healers, clairvoyants, card sages and fortune tellers caused excitement in the village. Hypnosis was used to a small extent by several folk doctors, sometimes included in the medicinal rite so that the sick person could not later determine whether the pain was taken away by words, the medicine received, or a short hypnotic sleep. Visiting hypnotists were highly honoured.

FOUR PORTRAITS

1. HUNDI KUSTAS, WOLF KUSTAS, WITCH HERDERS

Narrative lore relating to folk doctors is the same across almost all of Estonia, with the medical techniques mediated in them, the aetiology of diseases and the tales of the wise people having notable similarities. Stories found in Estonia about powerful witch herdsmen and shepherd doctors' repertoires is more Eastern and Slavic-influenced. The shepherds in eastern Estonia were men; they were in charge of the livestock of all the families in a village, which they had to protect and herd. The shepherd was usually chosen at a meeting of farmers, with one of the requirements

being that the shepherd should know herding magic and spells to ward off wolves. Along with socio-economic changes, the need for adult shepherds disappeared at the beginning of the 20th century, which caused the tradition to fall back into obscurity and this rich motif to fade away.

The legends and beliefs of witch herders extended from Virumaa to Tartu County and were known in the area of northern and eastern Estonia. The main characters of the tales were professional shepherds, holders of herding witchcraft, who were able to call out wolves or serpents. During quarrels between them, wild animals were sent to devastate each other's flocks. (Special wolf-witches, witches who were proficient in incantations, can also be found in the Swedish-influenced areas of western Estonia, where one person famous for this was Varg-Jaak, Jaak the Wolf, (see Kõiva 2017).)

Quite a lot of stories have been written about Hundi Kusta, who was a bachelor and who, according to legend, had a wolf whistle and a serpent whistle with which he could call these animals to him, as well as the corresponding charms. Kusta was able to lure out a worm that had invaded a person, cure erysipelas, stop bleeding, but also prevent water from boiling. Other important knowledge he had was how to heals wounds form whipping. The last public beatings of adult men took place in 1905 when the landlords called in the Russian army, the Black Hundred, to help quell Estonian riots. Taking away whipping pain, which not all healers knew, was an old 19th century skill used when landlord punished peasants. Kusta read words over those who were punished by beating.

There are also several stories of his skills being tested. This is common folklore in, for example, heavenly letters and manuscripts of charms (in Western Europe called the Black Book) or in charms against shooting or bullets: "I then brought the hoops and said that I wanted to feel if it could be without pain. He then hit the left arm once and his right arm twice – it didn't hurt." (KKI 24, 470 (8) < Jõhvi, 1958)

According to the lore, Hundi Kusta did not allow the killing of serpents, justifying his prohibition by stating that each building has its own serpent (ERA II 125, 111 (28) < Iisaku parish, 1935). There is an opinion in the older religious strata that the soul of a household fairy is a family member who had previously lived in a house or died in a house and could have been incarnated as a serpent (Loorits 1951: 243-244). Killing of serpents as prohibited by folk doctors, especially snake bite healers. This related to the folk code of ethics, while the ban was also treated as a kind of agreement between the doctor and the animal, a rule that belongs to the ethical discourses surrounding the profession of healer.

Kusta, who called the serpent after ordering, had to go through a tense situation based on a folk tale:

> Hundi Kusta then something mumbled to himself. And the serpent came. It immediately came into the rye seeds, the seeds moved in two directions, the seeds were a bit low, you could see how the serpent was crawling right along the path. Kusta stretched out his hand and the serpent coiled itself on the path. Where the men jumped up and shouted: "Kick up the serpent!"
>
> "Don't touch!" says Kusta, "it will be my death if you touch him."

> But the men don't listen to Kusta, they still squirm and shout: "Give the serpent pain! Why is he lying here!"
>
> Kusta said "shoo, shoo" twice and the serpent escaped. After that Kusta said to the men: "If you had touched it, it would have been my death."
>
> (RKM II 380, 232 < Iisaku, 1983.)

In Ida Viru County, a well-known eye healer, Piira Jüri, was a herder. He got his nickname from his ability to draw imaginary boundaries with a stick around the herd before leaving it. After reading the words, he left, but the animals, with the help of this skill, remained in place and there were no accidents with them. In a fit of anger or after a bet, he could conjure up any image in front of people's eyes: sometimes it was serpents crawling out of the forest in hordes, other times it was water flowing along the Kuremäe road, which forced women people on the road to raise their skirts so that they wouldn't get wet. Both motifs are known all over Estonia as legends.

2. VIILIP KLAAS, A MAN OF MUSIC AND AN EDUCATION ENTHUSIAST

Viilip Klaas (22 Oct. 1857–20 May 1917) was a tailor, folk healer, poet, musician and enthusiast of the education movement as well as a local correspondent for the folklore archive. His biography is a real mixture of the typical and the peculiar. He had a mobile lifestyle due to his profession as a tailor, hobbies in literature and music, and brought innovations to the village community.

Klaas' family history talks about two sons being born to Jaan (1768–1837), who first worked as a farm cottar and later as a tailor in Kõldu village, Kavastu community, Haljala parish. Both sons also became tailors, tailor Rein and tailor Ants, and lived in small houses next to each other on the edge of the village. The tailor Rein (1809–1867) was the first in the area to have glass windows, so locals called him the glass tailor ('klaasirätsep') to distinguish him from his neighbour. After the giving of surnames in Estonia (1816), the entire family took the name Klaas.

The records sent to the Folklore Archives show that the fifth child of tailor Rein and his wife Miina (b. 1824), a son Philip, was born on 22 October 1857. The manor records from 1866 show a Philipp Klaas, and it is likely that he used Philipp before then too. Rein Klaas died of an infectious disease when his son Viilip was ten years old (RKM II 321, 154/66 < Haljala 1976). Viilip was interested in music from a young age, learned to play musical instruments and practiced the trumpet in nearby forests:

> He attached music to the low branches of the tree and began to toot while on his knees. The road from Viilip's home led out of the village to the post road. One Sunday morning, Viilip was busy blowing instruments in the grove when some village women hurrying to church greeted him. The musician did not notice his surroundings. Soon a rumour spread in the village that the madman had been in the forest, kneeling on the ground in front of a tree and blowing a trumpet. (RKM II 321, 154/66 < Haljala 1976)

Viilip moved with his mother and sister soon after this incident to Kose parish for ten years to his elder brother Jaan. Here Viilip learned the tailor's trade and also married. After the death of his wife and child, Viilip first moved back to his home village, but then moved to Crimea[1] to his brother Peter. After falling ill, he returned from Crimea to his birthplace and again began to earn a living as a tailor. Apart from the tailor's trade, Viilip Klaas was a helpful and valued village doctor who treated the sick with water, water vapor, wraps, charms and herbs. Of the plants, he often used chamomile and made chamomile compresses. He used a bag of hot oats against pneumonia, compresses of mezereum bark against blistering disease (the then popular name for a tumour and several other serious diseases). In addition to his inherited traditional knowledge, he learned medical knowledge from publications.

Viilip's attitudes are characterised by the fact that he did not eat pork or fatty foods, but preferred vegetarian dishes. For his medical treatment, he received land in the village of Kõldu, where he built a small dwelling house. His fee was generally limited to butter and milk.

Photo 1. Viilip Klass, folk healer, folklore collector. Crop extracted from main photo, magnification approximately two times). From a group photo sent by J. A. Reepärg. ERA, photo 1226.

Viilip Klaas also sent poetry to the folklore archives, but his musical hobby is even more significant. He compiled a book of fifty musical pieces and taught young people how to play and write music, helped some young men in military service earn their daily bread as members of military bands. In his old age, Viilip Klaas played the violin at village parties and, when visiting farms, always carried a wooden flute in his pocket with which he loved to make music. He conducted the Kavastu Choir, created tunes for amateur plays, taught songs and also directed plays.

He died on 20 May 1917. The following line of events is confusingly similar to a classical folk tale motif, although it is told neither as fiction nor fantasy among local people. He bequeathed his house to his godson, while his old fur coat was bequeathed to a good acquaintance, a local bathhouse servant, with the wish that the new owner would keep the coat carefully. The idea of this desire was understood too late. The fur coat had already been given away to an old textile merchant (a travelling merchant, Seto by background), who sold pots brought from Võõpsu, bought up tekstiles and

took them to the Räpina paper mill. Viilip kept his gold and money sewn into this fur coat. The travelling merchant was sought, but to no avail.

3. JAKOB LOBJAKAS, MEDIATOR OF MODERN TREATMENTS

The spread of modern treatment techniques to villages can be clearly traced back to the beginning of the 20th century when a few esoteric teachings were spread on an extensive and initially poorly covered topic. Because of this we have insights into the use of innovative techniques on a case-by-case basis, using the notes of Julius Aleksander Reepärg (see more Kõiva 2017). In 1931, he went through a novel course of treatment, describing in his diary his treatment of and that of his family in detail as well as the conversations between him and the healer during treatment. These notes reveal the doctor's experiences and to some extent his worldview, as well as the healer's explanations and views of his patients, so-called folk doctor's patient lore (there is very little research on this interesting topic).
Jakob Lobjakas travelled from Tallinn to Virumaa to help local people. He had a house on the site, donated by a grateful female patient. In addition to the massage and so-called electrotherapy that the collector (a teacher in the local school) and his wife received for a couple of weeks, we learn the following about medical techniques:

> Here in the vicinity (Ahuaia, on Sakre Marta farm) there is a vessel masseur (vessel kneader), Mr Jakob Lobjakas, who is already about 80 years old. He has been treating people for about 50 years and healed many. His way of treating is 'luomulik', i.e. natural, as he himself calls it. With his fingertips, he locates the diseased areas in the veins and body, and then begins to knead and rub them well. If the vessels are soft, he lets electricity into the body. To do this, he has a small electric machine that he calls an "electric apparatus". If the disease is more severe, then in addition to kneading, use some other means (warm oat bags, warm bottles, which is also a part of local common knowledge) are used. 'Natural' is similar to medicating because it is not medical drugs that are used here, but the help is received so that the blood can run faster and then spread the disease bacilli. The human body must repair itself, is the credo of the healer. (ERA II 197, 427/31 < Haljala, 1938)

Let us continue with diary notes describing the procedures. On Saturday, 17 January 1931, Reepärg noted:

> After school, I went to Mr Lobjakas again, who gave me an electric bath. The water – boiled with various herbs – was about 30°. I was on my back in the bath, just my head out of the water. He put one electric bar into the water, he held the other in his hand, and through his hand let electricity into my head, neck, shoulders, etc. I also held a second bar on my body, which was, of course, out of the water at that time. When I was in the water, the elec-

trical pull seemed to be much stronger than otherwise. I was in the water for about 20 minutes, then the water also ran down my face. When after that I crawled under the blanket in bed, where I was further treated, water ran from my body for some time. It was a 'sauna' I haven't had before! He promised me another one. (ERA II 197, 427/31 < Haljala, 1938)

Photo 2. J. A. Reepärg records stories from Jaan Muruväli. ERA, photo 8111.

Reepärg worked as a schoolteacher and lived in the schoolhouse. He calls Lobjakas before the start of the sessions "there is a vessel kneader in the vicinity (in Ahuaia on Sakre Marta farm)", who uses some additional tools for more serious illnesses.

From the discussion between patient and healer it appears that Lobjakas has had contact with medicine, but for most of his life he has been active in other areas and in old age started to heal again. During state service Lobjakas was a vet in St Petersburg, and later traded as a travelling merchant with medical drugs while travelling around the country. During his life, he ran a shop, did masonry work, and held other occupations. His discourse on disease-health is peculiar, it contains old and new models of explanation: for example, the belief that if a person's blood is made to flow more quickly because of better work of the heart and veins, then the "little creatures of the disease" will move away from the sick place. To achieve this, massage and self-massage with the help of handy means are important. He further explains diseases by the so-called slime-like substance that accumulates at the ends of the bones, which, when calcified, causes ailments and which he can clean by rubbing. The electric therapy belongs to the fashion trends of the beginning of the century. He also uses hydrotherapy (Kneipp and kneipping were popular at the beginning of 20th century in Estonia). Lobjakas thought of the evil eye, and Earth and Wind, as the origins of disease. In general, however, the explanations are quite old and indicate a good knowledge of folklore, although in many ways he belongs among the so-called modern doctors who received complaints in newspapers (Jakob Lobjakas 1934). Again, we have reason to think about ethics and appropriate action as during curing sessions Lobjakas discussed patients sexual orientations and more, which might be one of the ways in which gossips spread in society.

4. ALLIKA ELLA

Ella Asnaurjan (1903-?) was a herbalist and human and animal healer. As a representative of the traditional line of healers, she had in mind the older techniques, the wisdom of her maternal grandmother. The Folklore Archive has the following description:

> When I was young, my stomach often hurt. My mother said to me: "Get in bed, spread your arms like a cross, spread your legs to both sides!" I stretched. Mother started measuring with her hand from the big toe of the left foot to the longest finger of the right hand, then from the big toe of the right foot to the longest finger of the left hand. In this way, she measured crosswise three times. Her hands had power. (RKM II 330, 242 (29) < Iisaku, 1983.)

E. Asnaurjan – known locally as Allika Ella – measured the bear's tracks with wax and separated three bands of *vaenuköis* (in folk belief the souls of dead people; actually trainds of gnat larvae (*Sciara militaris*), 'army worm', which move around in 15 cm long chains (Viires 2007; Hiiemäe 1984). According to folklore, untying a chain of worms gave the hands healing powers. Measuring a child (and also adults) is an internationally known traditional treatment technique.

Ella's sister Alma also possessed some medical wisdom:

> But then our Alma began to boil the medication herself, boiled the camomile and horsetails, boiled for five minutes. She cooled the potion, stuck a sick hand into it, kept it inside, I don't know how long. It was done for three days. Then the sick man pulled his hand up high like that. Then the other (Alma, I think) grabbed this swelling with her fingers, pulled it out with a jerk. There was such a tumour, in branches, with nine branches, as I remember. The hand was healed and it did not begin to grow elsewhere. (RKM II 380, 221/2 (29) < Iisaku, 1983.)

Ella had some knowledge of herbal medicine, but also knew how to treat complicated cases like cramps in the calf muscles and set bones in place, although she did not teach her knowledge to anyone else and kept it a secret. According to Ella, her grandmother had the so-called Monk's eye[3], or evil eye, with which she caused harm to people and animals (KKI 24, 130 (9) < Iisaku, 1957). This did not in the least prevent people from seeking help from her when they were ill.

In 1957 and 1958, while collecting folklore in north eastern Estonia, several folklorists encountered Ella. The reason was not the search for reports about her grandmother or mother, but the fact that she was a rare connoisseur of lore. At that time, more than 50 local stories were recorded from Ella, as well as songs. Later, she sent texts she had written herself to the archive. Folklorist Richard Viidalepp characterises her as a patient and good narrator (Viidalepp 2004).

Among other things, Allika Ella made predictions using hand lines and cards. She spoke of her talent as follows:

> There were a lot of people coming from far away, there was a woman from Slantsy. The nuns [from Kuremäe nunnery] sent her to me to hear what I would say to her. I have such a telepathic ability, don't know whether I have it now, but I had it before. You can talk to a person in many ways, but something in me forces you to speak in one way. Before you start predicting, talking to a stranger, you will immediately see what kind of person he or she is, what he or she loves and wants. (RKM II 330, 213 (21) < Iisaku, 1982.)

Photo 3. Ella Asnaurjan (left) with Kai Allikas and sister. Private collection,. AMERA, photo 8111.

Another characterisation of her talent is valuable because it shows her interpretation and the old and new explanatory models that she used: "I think that inside the Earth there are such forces, they convey further like radio. The stone has the power of attraction inside, the stone passed it on to me. I stood by the stone." RKM II 330, 213 (21) < Iisaku, 1983.

The latter explanation is characteristic of physicians of the second half of the 20th century and persons with miraculous abilities, who often associate their perceptions and knowledge with signals and influences emanating from nature. Ella Asnaurjan, according to folklore notes, also treated herself. We see that in one family, abilities were realised over generations in rather divergent directions.

According to beliefs, the profession of doctor was not at all easy but brought with it a difficult fate and suffering in old age. In the view of folklore carriers, abilities were lost as they lost teeth and their health deteriorated. Only a completely healthy and viable person could successfully heal and help others (Kõiva 1995; in Slavic cultures Agapkina in this volume, Mencej 2017, Blecourt 1999, etc).

DISCUSSION: WHO FOLK HEALERS ARE, IN THE MIDDLE OF SEVERAL WAVES OF GLOBALISATION

A symbol of the global new religious movement is the restoration process of earlier symbols and ethnic religion as a part of national culture, incorporating dialogue into the very notion of understanding and using healing skills.

In Estonia a memorial was built in 1990 under the leadership of the heritage protection movement and local heathens in Virumaa to honour the witch Kongla Ann, who was burnt in 1640 (Kongla Ann 2006). It is possible from the protocols of witch trials and church visits to know something of the activities of folk doctors during the 17th century.

The relationship between folk medicine and official medicine is flexible. The practice of folk medicine is universal in nature, it has integrated handy techniques from the official medicine and trends of the era. Various drugs are used and the techniques that have justified themselves in the tradition retain their place in this practice. An important role in shaping the use practices of folk medicine is played by specialists in their field, such as sages and doctors, who introduce innovations, venerate old knowledge and preserve older techniques.

The 20th century was marked by a more intense integration of new knowledge that came from the esoteric schools, printed books, alternative and complementary medicine. With the globalisation of culture starting in the 19th century many new cultural elements spread to Estonia, for example esoteric teachings, Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, music therapy, plant therapy, floral and aromatherapy, making healing ointments based on new trends, developing the holistic side of humans.

This process reveals a transitional area where knowledge of formal biomedicine, pluralistic alternative and complementary medicine is mediated into the general practice of folk medicine. Knowledge of folk medicine is enriched because of the process with new concepts, treatments and drug solutions. At the same time, not everything is integrated, the rest exists as an independent complementary practice. Cosmopolitan medicine (cf. Dunn 1976; Tan 1989) is a feature of formal institutional medicine and is characterised by the wide spread of Western medical information.

This is evidenced by treatment programs that are advertised as a continuation of traditional medicine: courses teaching the indigenous local sauna culture, plant therapy and healthy eating, self-immersion in natural places that allow recovery from urban stress, etc (Kõiva 2017a). At the same time, the old universal techniques of trained medicine can also be valued as a local indigenous tradition. For example, the Harmonikum Health Centre blog advertises several older therapies that have received new reviews: "We had our own methods of influencing the energy channels. One of them was honey massage, the other was old Estonian massage, massage of vessels, and the third is hirudotherapy [leeches]" (Lill 2017).

The cultivation, processing and marketing of medicinal plants means the invention of new plants into food culture and herbalism and the translation of plant knowledge into a different cultural space. For example, Katrin Luke Karepa's medicinal plant farm has become an important spiritual centre. Stressing the importance of plant

power, Katrin Luke provides new food plants (for example wild leek) and plant information (novel plant mixtures for making tea from domestic and foreign species, ointments based on spruce resin, etc.) in northern Estonia and more widely. She also participates as a phytotherapist in the study programs at the School of Indigenous Wisdom and Folk Medicine.

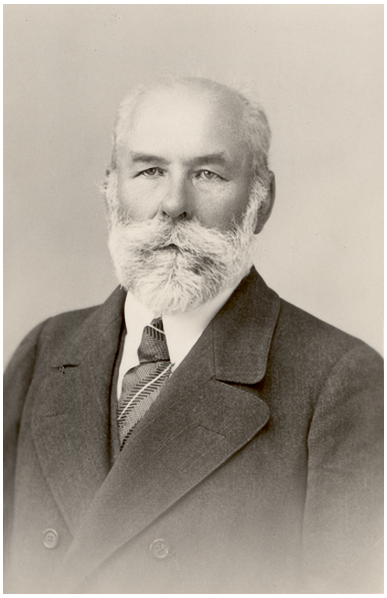

Photo 4. Aleksei Lesk. Photo from Estonian Folklore Archives.

Speaking about changes in official medical system, during the 20th century official medical system integrated services like cupping, bloodletting, dental treatment, joint placement, pain treatment, massage, hydrotherapy, and mud treatment (the list is much longer). It ment turn in folk medicine, there distance healing with prayers and incantation got bigger importance.

From the side of healers it needed adaptation, belief in the possibilities of folk medicine, empirical verification of knowledge and a creative and selective approach. Having discovered their healing abilities, many of them took the medical profession as their mission, testing and exploring the limits of their abilities. They made observations on the origin, nature and sequelae of diseases developing ethical standards appropriate to the profession (refraining from predicting calamities, insisting on helping all those in need, being selective about magic, etc.).

Belief in oneself and the supernatural was one side of the coin, the other side being the traditional beliefs that persisted and the difficult access to medical care at the time.

I would like to turn back to my favourite healer, Tiitsu Seiu, who, in his fifties, began to practice hypnosis and spiritualism, buying up books and observing what others were doing. He writes: "Sometimes I got the truth, sometimes I got lies." (Kõiva 1989) Like many healers he had also practiced identifying thieves using water, although this didn't work as he judged himself too weak because of failures using this technique. We can also see flexible borders between imagination, feelings and responsibility.

The majority of healers intellectually constructed their norms and duties, although they did this in collaboration with their community as a co-agent in the process. They were complicated personalities, with their good and bad sides, faith and truth.

NOTES

[1] The Crimean Estonians were an ethnic group of Estonians who migrated from Estonia to the Crimean peninsula in the Tauria Governorate of the Russian Empire during the 19th-century resettlement movement. According to August Nigol, in 1918 there were six Estonian settlements in Crimea; in addition, Estonians lived in several families in each town and in several Tatar villages. There are also many Estonians in bigger cities like Yevpatoria and Sevastopol. They also founded a small Estonian society (Nigol 1918).

[2] Larger comprehensive and systematic survey initiated by Dr Talvik, the head of the Tartu Psychiatric Clinic, in the 1930s (Kõiva 2022). Unfortunately the survey remains incomplete. Data were collected only for a few regions and are unanalysed and dispersed among several archives; some of the material is in private hands Kõiva 2022.

[3] Kuremäe Convent, located in the centre of Kuremäe, was established in 1891 and is the only functioning Russian Orthodox nunnery in Estonia.

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