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THE FINNISH AND ESTONIAN FOLK EPIC*

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I

The Finnish and Estonian folklore collections belong to the greatest in the world, testifying to the high poetic ability of the folksingers and storytellers. The first records of Finnish and Estonian folklore were made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not for the sake of scholarship, but to condemn paganism and superstition and to fight against the "godless, shameful, bawdy, and ridiculous" songs. Only the Enlightenment in the last decades of the eighteenth century raised folklore, in the consciousness of the educated people, to a respectable and valued branch of learning. In Finland, the first scholarly discussion of folklore was presented by H. G. Porthan, "the father of Finnish history," in his *De poësi Fennica* (1766-78). In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the heightened feeling of nationalism, characteristic of romanticism, led to the intensive collection and study of Finnish folk songs – by C. A. Gottlund, Reinhold von Becker, and Zachris Topelius the Elder. But it was Elias Lönnrot who became the most famous collector of Finnish folklore. Lönnrot undertook numerous collecting trips to various parts of Finland and Karelia, and, on the basis of his own and his friends' collections, compiled the epic *Kalevala.*[1] The Finnish Literary Society, founded in 1832, became the center of folklore collection and publication, and it has continued this work up to the present time. The Finnish Folklore Archives, an institution of the Society, contain about a million and a half items of folklore. The collection of Finnish folk songs, *Suomen kansan vanhat runot* (Ancient Songs of the Finnish People, in thirty-three volumes, 1908-48), is one of the largest in the world.

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On the other hand, the beauty of Estonian folklore was first recognized among the educated people by J. G. von Herder, who in 1778 published a few Estonian folk songs in his famous collection *Volkslieder* (later known under the title *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*). Under Herder's influence intense collecting and publishing of folklore started in Estonia at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was initially carried out by the German Estophiles such as J. H. Rosenplänter, A. F. Knüpffer, and A. H. Neus. When the Estonian Learned Society was founded in Tartu in 1838, it assumed the role of organizing the collection of folklore. Now the Estonians also (Fr. R. Kreutzwald and others) joined the work in the salvation of Estonian folklore. This collecting, led by Jakob Hurt, the "king of Estonian folklore," assumed gigantic proportions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hurt's work was carried on later by M. J. Eisen and Oskar Kallas.[2] Collection of folklore in Estonia was continued intensively during the period of independence, organized especially by the Estonian Folklore Archives. By 1941, the collections in the Archives comprised more than 700,000 pages. Under the Soviet regime, the collecting has been systematically continued.

The most esteemed segment of Finnish-Karelian and Estonian folklore is the folk songs. The epic songs have a number of themes common to Finland and Estonia. They were either taken from Estonia to Finland, in connection with the colonization of western Finland from Estonia in the first centuries A.D., or were the result of a later mutual exchange of folk songs between these two closely related nations.

Despite great similarities between the Finnish and Estonian epic songs, they exhibit a basic difference: whereas the Finnish songs are purely epic, the majority of the Estonian songs are lyro-epic. This contrast is evident when Finnish and Estonian versions of the same songs are compared.

For example, "The Song of the Big Oak Tree" deals with the growth of a gigantic tree and describes how it was felled, a theme known all over the world, whether in the form of a song or a legend. The Mordvins sing of a birch tree that grows as high as the sky, the inhabitants of Laos sing of a huge liana, and the Bible (Ezekiel, 31:3-17) tells of a gigantic cedar in Lebanon; all these trees have to be cut down. Scholars have speculated that these songs and legends were based on the myth about the origin of the Milky Way. About 4000 B.C., the Milky Way appeared in Babylonia during the spring equinox as a miraculous tree, full of stars, right above the people's heads; at the fall equinox, it was winding around the horizon as the heavenly ocean. Those looking at it in the fall might have entertained the notion that the gigantic tree had meanwhile been cut down, an assumption which supposedly led to the creation of the myth.

In Finland, "The Song of the Big Oak Tree" relates that four girls found an acorn lying on liver-colored land. They planted it in fertile soil, and from it grew an oak tree so tall that it covered the sun and moon and hindered the movement of the clouds. The girls looked for a man able to cut down the oak. Finally a man, as small as a thumb, appeared from the sea, with a golden axe on his

shoulder. He struck the tree and it fell. Now the heavenly luminaries could shine and the clouds move again.[3]

In Estonia, this song is told in the first person. The singer, a girl, found an acorn – while sweeping the seashore – and took it home. She planted it for her father, mother, brother, and sister, but the oak did not grow. Then she planted it for her boyfriend, and now the oak began to grow:

> The oak advanced, the oak grew,
> The oak thrived slowly,
> The oak grew to the sky,
> Its branches penetrated the clouds;
> The oak wanted to divide the sky,
> Its branches, to disseminate the clouds.

The girl wondered: who could cut down the oak. This feat was accomplished by the girl's small brother. Various things were made of the timber of the felled tree; the last of them was a chest for the girl's dowry. Thus the Estonian song ends with a modestly expressed marriage fantasy.

The difference between the Finnish and Estonian versions of "The Big Oak Tree" is obvious. The Finnish song is purely epic; it contains nothing of the inner self of the singer. The Estonian song is subjective and intimate; the girl-singer tells about herself and her family, and gives modest expression to her longing for a bridegroom.[4]

The same characteristics apply also to other Finnish and Estonian songs. "The Song of the Big Ox," known both in Finland and Estonia, is about the slaying of a huge ox. It bears some similarity to the song about the big oak, and was similarly interpreted by scholars as a star myth; the ox was identified with the constellation of the Great Bear. Recently Martti Haavio connected it with the Iranian Mithras myth, which might have spread to Europe through Roman soldiers, and to the Karelians through some Germanic peoples.[5]

In Finland, "The Song of the Big Ox" matter-of-factly describes a huge ox, whose tail hovered in Häme and whose head swang at Kemi River. It took a whole day for a swallow to fly between its horns. A slayer was sought. In one version, a black man rose from the sea to kill the ox. In the other, Ukko (a Finnish divinity), helped by Virokannas, Palvanen, or others, came to kill the ox. But the ox swayed its head, and the gods ran into hiding.[6]

This song has spread from Finland to North Estonia, where it has undergone some changes. In Estonia the song once again takes the first person. The singer brought a slayer from Turkey and another from Tartumaa, but they were unable to complete the job. Then came the singer's small brother:

> Then came my little brother
> Straight as a straw,
> Thin as a reed,
> A boy of the height of a finger.

He crushed the ox with his fist.

"The Creation Song" is based on ancient cosmogonic ideas, which are found all over the world. The Finnish song tells how a scaup-duck during its flight over the sea lays an egg on the knee of Väinämöinen, who is swimming in the sea. When Väinämöinen turns his knee, the egg slips into the sea, and out of its broken parts arise the sky, the earth, and the heavenly luminaries.

In Estonia, the song appears again in the first person. A bird, looking for a place to nest, flies to the singer's paddock, where there are three bushes – blue, red, and golden. The bird makes its nest in the golden bush and lays eggs there; from the eggs arise heavenly bodies. In some variants it is said that the blue and red bushes belong to the girl's father and mother, but the golden yellow one to the girl herself.[7]

These examples (which could easily be multiplied) show that the sober and matter-of-fact Finnish epic songs are paralleled by more subjective and intimate songs in Estonia. The events in the Estonian songs are described as having been experienced personally by the singer. Thus, the singer was present as the world was created in her own back-yard; she herself planted the gigantic oak tree, and her small brother cut it down; and, likewise, the singer's small brother slayed the huge ox. These songs "do not directly express the feelings of the singer as lyrical songs do and, on the other hand, they do not even describe any event in the outside world for its own sake as the ballad does, but they express the author's personal feelings with the help of an event occurring in the outside world."[8]

What is the reason for this basic difference between the Finnish-Karelian and the Estonian songs?

The main reason is to be sought in the fact that in Finland and Karelia the epic songs were sung primarily by men; in Estonia, the singers were almost exclusively women. August Annist has shown that as late as the feudal period in Finland and Karelia, fishing and hunting, which were practiced collectively, were the principal means of subsistence. "And while spending nights or waiting for better weather, during long boat rides or at campfire, the ancient heroic songs were as before the best entertainment of men."[9] The women also sang songs, but their repertoire was somewhat different because of their special interests and singing situations.

In Estonia, the manly epic was practiced only in the distant past – during the period of ancient independence (up to the thirteenth century). The Scandinavian sources tell us that in their raids to Öland and elsewhere the inhabitants of Saaremaa sang war songs. Henricus de Lettis writes in 1208 that the Estonians mourned their dead with much wailing.[10] Thus it is plausible that in ancient Estonian poetry heroic songs and lamentations served as encouragement to valiant deeds and bravery. But the defeat of Estonia in the thirteenth century evidently caused a change in Estonian folk poetry. As the old heroic deeds were forgotten, the former heroic songs went out of use. The enslaved people were no longer capable of practicing the grandiose and powerful epic; instead, they began lamenting their life of serfdom. Friedebert Tuglas writes that if formerly the

people encouraged gallantry in war, now they stressed saving their skin in battle. The attitude of the singer became subjective and lyrical-lamentative, and the art of singing was assumed by the women.[11]

There are several reports from the last few centuries on the role of women as singers in Estonia. For example, in 1777 A. W. Hupel writes: "The singing is, to tell the truth, characteristic of the women; in weddings, there are special women as singers, although men also join in as soon as the drinks have unleashed the general joy." J. Chr. Petri informs us (in 1802) that singing was practiced mainly by women, whereas men were busy playing instruments.[12]

The maidens' inclination to sing is expressed poetically in a song about Ilo, the muse of poetry, who travels along rivers and fields, "with words in a sieve in his lap, and songs tied with a thread around his neck." Men and women ask Ilo to come along with them, but he disdains their company and joins a group of maidens.

The fact that mainly women and maidens were singing in Estonia is responsible for the lack of heroic epic and the preponderance of lyric and lyrically inclined epic in Estonian folk poetry. Moreover, it explains the dominance of feminine themes in the songs.

The manner of singing Finnish and Estonian folk songs is also different. In Finland and Karelia two men customarily performed the epic songs. They sat side by side, or opposite each other, and had their right hands joined. The fore-singer sang a line alone, then the after-singer repeated it; the fore-singer sang the next line, and so forth. The specific position taken by the singers and their cooperation in the singing may be a vestige of shaman activity; the fore-singer corresponded to the shaman, and the after-singer, to the shaman's helper. The function of the shaman's helper was to bring the shaman back from his trance.

During the last two centuries in Finland and Karelia a special manner for the presentation of folk songs developed: two singers sat opposite each other with both arms outstretched, clasping one another's hands and swaying their bodies according to the beat of the song. It turned out that this stance originated in a curious misunderstanding. A. F. Skjöldebrand, one of two foreigners traveling together in Finland in 1799, drew a picture that presumably depicted singing in a Finnish farmhouse. Skjöldebrand himself had not actually seen the singing. Rather his drawing was inspired by a Swedish picture he had seen of a tug-of-war, a trial of strength, in which two men, clasping one another's hands, were pulling each other to and fro. Skjöldebrand's drawing, which became known in Finland, was considered an authentic depiction of the past manner of singing. This artificial position was even adopted as the correct one by the singers themselves, and it supplanted the original position. Only in the 1940's was the truth revealed by Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio.[13]

The singing of songs by two singers, characteristic of Finland and Karelia, was not true of Estonia, where the singer sang either alone, or with the accompaniment of a chorus. There could also be two fore-singers and the chorus.[14]

II

The basic character of the Finnish-Karelian and Estonian folk songs has left its imprint also on their respective national epics. Whereas the Finnish-Karelian (hereafter called simply Finnish) epic, the *Kalevala*, is filled with powerful, manly heroism, the underlying tenor of the Estonian epic, the *Kalevipoeg*, is Ossianic, romantic melancholy.

The idea of uniting the old Finnish runes into a homogeneous whole was expressed first by C. A. Gottlund in 1817, but it was Elias Lönnrot, a medical doctor, who carried it out. Lönnrot united the folk songs collected by him and others into larger units, entitled "Lemminkäinen," "Väinämöinen," and "Songs of the Wedding Party." These miniature epics and the expanded version, "Collected Songs about Väinämöinen," formed the preliminary stages for the first edition of the Finnish epic, entitled *Kalewala taikka Wanhoja Karjalan Runoja Suomen kansan muinosista ajoista* (Kalevala, or Old Karelian Songs about the Ancient Times of the Finnish People) and published in 1835-36. In 1849, Lönnrot issued a greatly expanded and changed version of the *Kalevala*, which was divided into fifty songs and comprised about 22,800 lines.

The publication of the *Kalevala* gave a strong impetus for the compilation of an epic in Estonia. Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, a medical doctor and lecturer of Estonian at Tartu University, did some preliminary work on it. After his death, his colleague and friend, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, carried the project to its conclusion. *Kalewipoeg, eine Estnische Sage*, as it was entitled, was published in a series of the Estonian Learned Society in 1857-61 in Estonian and in German translation, whereas the popular Estonian edition, under the title *Kalewi poeg: Üks ennemuistene Eesti jut* (Kalevipoeg: An Ancient Estonian Legend), appeared in Finland in 1862. The *Kalevipoeg* embraces twenty songs, altogether about 19,000 lines.

What were the materials used for the compilation of the Finnish and the Estonian epics?

Contemporaries of Lönnrot, as romanticists in general, thought that he had restored the original form of the Finnish national epic. This is, of course, only illusion. In reality, the *Kalevala* in its entirety was Lönnrot's compilation, based on the best and most complete variants of about thirty epic songs at his disposal. But he added verses from other variants and even from different songs. He did not use more than three or four consecutive lines of the same song. Thus sequences of lines appeared in the *Kalevala* that had never existed in folk songs. This technique is unique in world literature, and, to our knowledge, has not been used by other compilers of epics. Half jokingly, it has been suggested that Lönnrot, who in his youth worked as a tailor's apprentice with his father, made use of his tailoring skill in compiling the epic. Lönnrot, of course, had to make certain changes and modifications; for instance, he changed names of some persons and places, and, where necessary, created linking verses. However, very little (less than five per cent) of the *Kalevala* is Lönnrot's own creation. Therefore, the *Kalevala* is regarded as the most truly national epic in the world.

Kreutzwald, while working on the Estonian epic, had to apply a completely different technique, because of the nature of the materials at his disposal. Whereas Lönnrot's materials were in verse, Kreutzwald's, for the most part, were in prose. The Estonian materials consisted of the aetiological legends, the so-called proportion fantasies, legends, and fairy tales. The aetiological legends told how Kalevipoeg carried or hurled some huge stone to its present position, plowed valleys or hills, and gave certain hills an unusual shape by sleeping on them. The proportion fantasies show Kalevipoeg walking, thanks to his great height, through lakes and rivers. The legend and fairy tale motifs connected with Kalevipoeg involved his sword, his trip to hell, his death and detention at the gates of hell.[15] Since all this material was in prose, the tailoring technique applied by Lönnrot was impossible. The traditions about Kalevipoeg had to be versified. This was a poet's job, and Kreutzwald was one of the best Estonian poets of his time. In addition to the legends and tales in prose, he also used many folk songs that had no direct connection with Kalevipoeg.

The *Kalevala* deals with the relations between two clans – the Kalevala and Pohjola. The people of Pohjola are represented only by the ruling family headed by Louhi, the mistress of Pohjola. The heroes of Kalevala (Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, Lemminkäinen, and Kullervo) are not members of the same family, but they are united by close ties. The plot of the epic centers on the fight over the maiden of Pohjola and over the Sampo, a miraculous mill that incessantly produces flour, money, and salt.

The main hero of the epic is Väinämöinen, the "eternal sage" and a great shaman. He has a craving for young girls, but it is his misfortune to be born old (his mother, the maiden of the air, had carried him for seven hundred years in her womb). Väinämöinen's first wooing trip to Aino is not successful; Aino drowns herself rather than become the wife of an old, though famous, man. And the maiden of Pohjola, whom he woos twice, prefers the young smith Ilmarinen to him. Ilmarinen is compelled to forge the Sampo for Pohjola, as a reward for the rescue of Väinämöinen from his distress. Pohjola begins to thrive, arousing jealousy in Väinämöinen. Together with his companions, he steals the Sampo from Pohjola, but in the ensuing fight the Sampo falls into the sea and breaks into pieces. The mistress of Pohjola sends several calamities upon Kalevala, but they are thwarted successfully by Väinämöinen. Finally Väinämöinen, facing a competitor in the person of his own illegitimate son, has to retreat; he steps into a brass boat and sails away to regions between heaven and earth.

Side by side with this main plot run the tales of Lemminkäinen, the Don Juan of the north, and of Kullervo, the ill-fated serf of Ilmarinen. These latter cycles, which have little significance for the main plot, serve to heighten the colorfulness of the epic.

The *Kalevala* is both a wooing epic and a war epic. However, there is much more wooing than fighting in it. There are about ten wooing stories, and only three or four war descriptions, which are described very briefly. For instance, the theft of the Sampo and the fights following it are discussed in two songs,

but the preparation for these fights takes up three songs. Characteristic in this respect is also Kullervo's retaliation against his uncle: the preparation for it covers 250 lines, but the destruction of his uncle's farm only eight lines.[16]

Lönnrot wanted to give the Finns not so much a heroic epic, but a national epic that would contain all the richness of the poetry current among the people. And, as a matter of fact, in addition to epic songs, the *Kalevala* includes also lyric songs, charms, wedding songs, proverbs, and more. The charms especially are represented abundantly; about one fifth of the whole epic depends upon the use of charms, with the result that parts of the *Kalevala* resemble collections of charms more than epic poetry. The Italian scholar Domenico Comparetti referred to the *Kalevala* as "the epic of charms."

Whereas the *Kalevala* depicts the wooings and battles of its numerous heroes, the *Kalevipoeg* consists of a series of adventures experienced by its main protagonist, Kalevipoeg (the son of Kalev). The basic theme of the *Kalevipoeg* is crime and punishment. On his trip to Finland, undertaken to revenge the kidnapping of his mother by a Finnish sorcerer, the young hero burdens himself with two crimes. He seduces a girl on an island and causes her death, and he kills the son of a Finnish blacksmith. To retaliate, the smith, the master of Kalevipoeg's sword, conjures the sword. Back at home, Kalevipoeg becomes king of Estonia, builds towns and tills the land. He undertakes a trip to the end of the world and visits hell. His several fights with the devil are crowned by the chaining of the prince of hell. After defeat by foreign invaders, Kalevipoeg retires to the forest. There he steps into a river, and his sword, which was lying on the bottom, cuts off his legs, in fulfillment of the curse of the Finnish blacksmith. Gods send him on horseback to the gates of hell to keep watch over the devil and his hosts, until the day of redemption will dawn.

There are several other characters in the *Kalevipoeg*, such as the hero's mother Linda and his comrades Sulevipoeg and Alevipoeg. They are, however, rather unimportant and, for the most part, not of popular origin.

The roots of the *Kalevala* and the *Kalevipoeg* go back to the distant past. Kaarle Krohn advanced several theories of the origin of the Kalevala songs, the last of which suggested that these songs were fundamentally historical in character, and that their milieu was western Finland during the late Iron Age (before the twelfth century). According to Krohn, the events described in the songs were based on fact, and the conditions described, on actual circumstance.[17] Later scholars such as Martti Haavio, Matti Kuusi, and others have justly denied the historicity of these songs. Many of the *Kalevala* songs have turned out to be international in origin, based on widespread tales, legends, and myths, or modeled after songs of the Finns' and Karelians' neighbors. Thus, the central cycle of the *Kalevala*, the Sampo epic, partly goes back to the Scandinavian *fornaldar* sagas.[18] Lemminkäinen's song about his singing contest with the master of Pohjola has its origin in a Russian *bylina* which ultimately derives from an Old Egyptian story.[19] Väinämöinen's adventures in the belly of the dead shaman Antero Vipunen may go back to a Lapp shaman legend.[20] Despite their inter-

national background, the songs were either created or creatively reworked in Finland; they received their final form in Karelia.

The oldest legends of the giant Kalevipoeg derive from the first millennium of our era, but they reached their apex between 800 and 1200. These legends were concentrated especially in northeastern Estonia, the former Votic-Estonian (Vagja) area. In the course of time, new legends and tales were added from both the east and the west. From the east came, among others, the myth of the chained giant, and from the west arrived Scandinavian legends of giants and German tales of the stupid devil. The Kalevipoeg tradition also acquired some historical elements, since the term Kalev and Kalevipoeg designated persons of the early Estonian and Karelian nobility. As a result, the Kalevipoeg tradition became quite heterogeneous in its character.[21]

For the creation of the *Kalevala*, Lönnrot could make full use of the songs available about its heroes. In these songs, the heroes appeared as definite, clear-cut types. Väinämöinen was a great sage and shaman, Ilmarinen an unequaled smith, Lemminkäinen an adventurous youth of the Viking era, and Kullervo a revengeful serf-boy. In order to create the epic, Lönnrot had to arrange the songs about these heroes in a logical way and add other songs that suited them thematically.

The task of Kreutzwald and his helpers was much more complicated, since Kalevipoeg appeared in the legends as a hero of many aspects. In some legends he was a giant who carried or threw huge boulders and reshaped nature with his titanic strength. In others he was an evil giant, who – in addition to his numerous wives – kidnapped the daughter of a Finnish sorcerer. For this deed, the sorcerer changed him into a monster and chained him; his roars and leaps caused the earth to reverberate. According to some old recordings, he was the godson of Jesus and was at first good, but later became wanton. Then Jesus seized him by his genitals and threw him into a swamp; when he came out, he was transformed into an otter and chained in the river. There are also tales that the devil changed himself into a horse, and when Kalevipoeg sat on his back, the devil took him directly to hell, where he was chained to a rock. A big eagle flew there to rub the rock with its beak. This latter legend is connected with the myths about the chaining of Amirani, Prometheus, Loki, and other giants.[22]

The features mentioned indicate the complexity of Kalevipoeg's character in folk tradition. Kreutzwald and his helpers had to reinterpret him and change him into a national hero, the king of the Estonians in the time of ancient independence. We will illustrate this with several examples.[23] In the legends, Kalevipoeg plowed the land and made it infertile, so that nothing would grow on it. In the epic, on the contrary, Kalevipoeg as the king gets behind the plow and tills the ground so that it is fertile. A reminiscence of his malicious act in rendering the soil infertile is preserved in the epic: when Kalevipoeg, on his trip to the end of the world, reaches the island of the dog-headed people, and when they receive him in a hostile manner, he begins plowing their land to make it infertile. An especially noteworthy change has been made at the end of the epic.

According to the popular legend, the devil takes Kalevipoeg to hell. There the demons want to get rid of him; the devil's helpers burn the fetters of Kalevipoeg with splinters lit on both ends, so that the chains will break. By Christmas the chains are as thin as hair; but when the sounds of hallelujahs ring in the church, Kalevipoeg's chains grow thick again. It is said that blacksmiths have to hit a bare anvil with their hammers a few times to thicken the chains. In the epic, the national hero could not appear as a dreaded giant, so this episode is reinterpreted. Kalevipoeg was sent to hell to guard the devil. The burning of the splinters was also given a different interpretation. Whereas originally their burning had been feared, lest Kalevipoeg escape from hell, now they became part of a wish-dream about the liberation of Kalevipoeg:

> But once the time will come,
> When all the splinters will
> Flare up at both ends;
> Then the flame will cut
> The hero's hand loose from the rock.

These examples show the metamorphosis that Kalevipoeg occasionally underwent in order to become the symbol of the ideas of the people.

Both the *Kalevala* and the *Kalevipoeg* had a strong national and cultural influence in Finland and Estonia. In the eighteenth century, Finland was in danger of becoming Swedishized. It was fashionable to speak Swedish instead of Finnish, and the educated classes changed their old Finnish names to Swedish ones. Swedish became the official language in the schools. When Finland came under Russian rule in 1809, a national movement began with the slogan: "We are not Swedes, we can never become Russians, let us be Finns." In this national movement the *Kalevala* played an important role: if the Finnish language was adequate for the great national epic, then it was also suited for literature and the people.

The *Kalevipoeg* also had a considerable national significance. This significance was emphasized by Dr. G. J. Schultz-Bertram even before the epic was created. In a speech given at the Estonian Learned Society, he asked: "How must our Society further most successfully the enlightenment and the spiritual renascence of the people liberated from serfdom?" And he answered: "I think, by two things: let us give the people the epic and the history, and everything is won."

Kreutzwald himself was convinced that through the *Kalevipoeg* the name of the Estonian people acquired much glory: "The name of the Estonian people, trampled under foot and abused in several ways so far, has, due to the *Kalevipoeg*, become at once the name of honor." Kreutzwald advised the Estonian youth to learn from the epic how their forefathers had sung and he admonished them to love their fatherland more than they had before.[24]

The *Kalevala* and the *Kalevipoeg* had a very fructifying influence on their respective cultures. Numerous poets, writers, musicians, artists, and sculptors were inspired by the epics and based their works on them.

Finally, the question might be raised whether the *Kalevala* and the *Kalevipoeg*, compiled by definite persons, can be termed national epics. The answer is certainly in the affirmative. It should be recalled that in the composition of such epics as the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Chanson de Roland* the professional singers played a great role. They united the individual songs sung by the people into a whole. In Finland and in Estonia, where for various historical reasons there were no such troubadours, their work was carried out by Lönnrot and Kreutzwald.

Lönnrot has been hailed as the last and the greatest Finnish folk singer. He put the *Kalevala* together not as a scholar but as a singer of traditional songs. Working from a perfect knowledge of Finnish folklore, he united the best features from various songs and transposed suitable passages from one song to another. He also emended the language and metrical defects. The best traditional singers would effect similar changes, considering it their privilege to do whatever was necessary for the creation of perfect texts. The only difference is that while the traditional singers composed orally, Lönnrot used writing as an aid to his memory.[25]

Kreutzwald's procedure was somewhat different, since no heroic songs about Kalevipoeg existed in Estonia. However, the themes and even the plot of the *Kalevipoeg* are based essentially on genuine popular prose legends. The gigantic, sometimes even heroic, figure of Kalevipoeg is entirely popular, known by almost all the Estonian people. Kreutzwald somewhat modified this character, making him express the ideals of the people and of the drive for independence. Kreutzwald incorporated numerous folk legends and songs; a part (twelve per cent) of the verses he took over directly from folk songs. The metrics and the language of the *Kalevipoeg* correspond, in general, to the metrics and the language of folk songs. The people accepted Kreutzwald's *Kalevipoeg* as their own epic, and many of its motifs entered oral tradition. Under these circumstances, we can join August Annist, the most significant *Kalevipoeg* scholar, in calling the *Kalevipoeg* the Estonian national epic based on folklore.[26]

Both the *Kalevala* and the *Kalevipoeg* bear witness to the creative power of two small, closely related nations in the north.

NOTES

1 Jouko Hautala, *Finnish Folklore Research 1828-1918* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1969), pp. 16 ff.

2 V. Mälk, "Eesti rahvaluule kogumise ja uurimise ajaloost," in *Eesti rahvaluule ülevaade*, ed. R. Viidalepp (Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1959), pp. 19-75; Oskar Loorits, *Estnische Volksdichtung und Mythologie* (Tartu: Akadeemiline Kooperatiiv, 1932), pp. 5-19.

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11 Friedebert Tuglas, *Lühike eesti kirjanduslugu*, 2nd ed. (Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, 1936), pp. 10-11.
12 Ü. Tedre, "Kus, millal ja kuidas lauldi," in *Eesti rahvaluule ülevaade*, p. 97.
13 Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, "On the Performance of the Finnish Folk Runes," *Folk-Liv* (Stockholm), 14/15 (1951), 130 ff. The most recent research has shown that singing by one man or one woman has also been practiced in Karelia since olden times. Some songs belonged primarily to the repertoire of men singers, and others to women; they were sung in gatherings of either sex group (Leea Virtanen, *Kalevalainen laulutapa Karjalassa* [Suomi, 113:1; Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1968[1], pp. 39-41, 49-51).
14 Tedre, pp. 99-100.
15 Aug. Anni [Annist], *F. R. Kreutzwaldi "Kalevipoeg,"* Vol. I: *Kalevipoeg eesti rahvaluules*. Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis, B, 32 (Tartu: E. V. Tartu Ülikool, 1934), pp. 31 ff.; E. Laugaste and E. Normann, *Muistendid Kalevipojast* (Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1959), pp. 132 ff.
16 Annist, "*Kalevala*" *kui kunstiteos*, pp. 187-89.
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