

ANTHROPOLOGY SECTION OF THE ESTONIAN NATURALISTS SOCIETY 80

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On 27 April this year, the Anthropology Section of the Estonian Naturalists' Society turned 80.

Birthdays give us a reason to pause and look a bit deeper into the past, reflect on what has been done and how to plan for the future.

While for an individual 80 years is a dignified age, the time to sum up one's life, for an organisation it might be just a period of formation. Especially, if the organisation in question is part of the Estonian Naturalists' Society (ENS), the oldest Naturalists' Society in the Baltics, which has been working without breaks since 1853. So, 80 years is just the right time to learn from your experience so far and to go forward in the light of that experience. Jaan Kasmel and Tiiu Kasmel gave a very comprehensive overview of the section's beginnings and history on its 70th anniversary in their article titled "Seventy years of the Anthropology Section of the Estonian Naturalists' Society", published in three successive issues of *Papers on Anthropology* –XVIII, XIX and XX [1, 2, 3].

On a separate occasion, the 1939 establishment of the Anthropology Section of the ENS was also described by Jaan Kasmel in the Yearbook of the Estonian Anthropometric Register 1999 [4].

Therefore, in this birthday article, I would like to focus on how to go forward. However, to keep with the previous tradition of comprehensive review, the next issue of *Papers on Anthropology* will chronicle the activities of the ENS Anthropology Section during the last 10 years (2009–2019).

Since anthropology is a science that (as Prof. J. Aul used to say in his lectures) explores the variability of human beings in time and space and tries to make sense of that, it can touch every person who is alert and curious regardless

of occupation. It is, therefore, not surprising that the anthropology section was founded by seven ENS members led by Juhan Aul (1897–1994) who was the only one of them working in the field of anthropology (from the late 1920s), while the other founders of the section were entomologist Harald Habermann (1904–1986), archaeologist Richard Indreko (1900–1961), ornithologist Eerik Kumari (1912–1984), geologist Karl Pärna (1904–1966), student Erna Emmeline Tõnurist (later Aina Aul, 1910–1941) and neurologist Voldemar Üprus (1902–1956).

More information about the founders of the anthropology section as well as Juhan Aul's students who were later members of the Anthropology Section can be found in a comprehensive article in *Papers on Anthropology*, XVI (2007) that was published by Linda Kongo, a scientific historian who was a long-time scientific secretary of the ENS [5].

So far, the work of the anthropology section has involved a large number of professionals from various walks of life, and this is certainly a treasure to be preserved and possibly expanded.

As early as 1938, Juhan Aul wrote his article “The Current State and Future Tasks of Estonian Anthropological Research” [6] where he saw the objective of the future Estonian anthropology first in an aggregate study of Estonians (*Anthropologia Estonica*) and then in a detailed description of the most characteristic Estonian anthropological sites and groups (in separate works). Remarkably, this vision preceded the establishment of the ENS Anthropology Section. In the same year he defended his dissertation on anthropological features of Estonians of West Estonian Counties, received a doctoral degree in natural sciences and got his foreign scholarship for study trips to Poland, Germany and Switzerland [7].

The monograph *Anthropologia Estonica* (in Russian) was published in 1964 [8], and anthropological studies of the inhabitants of different parts of Western Estonia and Viljandi County were published in various publications, including the Yearbook of the ENS [9] and the journal *Eesti Loodus* (Estonian Nature) [10]. Juhan Aul's vision was to create a chair of anthropology at the University of Tartu and to establish a research institute of anthropology. Unfortunately, these urgent tasks could not be realised at that time, even though J. Aul did “everything in one person's power”, as Professor Kalju Pöldvere wrote in the foreword to Juhan Aul's bibliography [7].

Professor Kalju Pöldvere tells us about another blueprint prepared by J. Aul in the autumn of 1938 entitled “Estonian Anthropological Research Institute of the Estonian Academy of Sciences” where the tasks of the institute were

planned out. Dr. Põldvere says that most of them appear to be fulfilled by J. Aul in his life work [7].

In the early 1990s, members of the Anthropology Section of the ENS undertook significant steps towards establishing a chair of anthropology, such as starting lectures on anthropology and inaugurating the Centre for Physical Anthropology at the University of Tartu on 19 July 1993, but unfortunately a chair of anthropology in Tartu University was still only a dream. Again, as in the 1930s, the changing historical circumstances brought new obstacles.

80 years ago, the ENS Anthropology Section assumed the task of carrying out anthropological research in Estonia and the neighbouring regions, to popularise, promote, and to put into practice the achievements of anthropological sciences. Initially, the emphasis was on three strands: scientific presentations (mainly the presentation of research results), expeditions for the collection of new material, and publications.

The first and last tasks have been completed so far, but the rules and general conditions for organising expeditions have changed over time. Increasingly diverse constraints, changes in attitudes and lifestyles, and the project-based nature of science have made it virtually impossible in many European countries to regularly collect periodic anthropometric measurements of populations alongside with the widest possible anamnestic data. Unfortunately, in Estonia, we are also moving towards the lack of regular consistent anthropometric measurement of the representative sample of the entire population and the accompanying anthropological survey and data analysis whereas Prof. J. Aul continued consistent anthropological work even in war time.

The founder of the ENS Anthropology Section, Prof. Juhan Aul, always emphasised in his publications and lectures that anthropology is a practical science [11]. He meant that knowledge of anthropology is applicable and could be used even more in our daily lives, including our nutrition and health care, in our physical education, in the production of clothing, footwear, furniture and other essentials as well as in education, vehicle construction, and so on.

In his speeches and lectures, Juhan Aul rightly considered somatology to be the part of anthropology to which Estonian anthropologists must make the strongest contribution. He stressed that no one in the world studied Estonians somatologically except Estonians themselves.

Juhan Aul considered the exploration of the factors and manifestations of variability in modern humans the main problem in Estonian anthropology. Due to human change over time, this task requires continued attention. Today's new advanced research and analysis methods and technological innovations

allow for a deeper exploration of historical data as well as archaeological findings, which will certainly increase the possibilities for studying and understanding human variability over time and space. As anatomy, normal physiology, embryology and human histology are certainly the disciplines that assist in understanding the regularities of variations in the structure of human body as a whole, it is understandable that the ENS Anthropology Section collaborates with researchers in these fields.

While it may be convenient for us to view separately biological, cultural, and social aspects of human beings when studying *Homo sapiens*, in life, they are intertwined and often indistinguishable. So, we cannot lose sight of any of them as we study the biological creatures who are social and live by rules of society, who are highly influenced by community and culture even when they deny that. Therefore, it would also be necessary to cooperate more closely with those researchers who study the cultural phenomena and social environment in Estonia in depth.

Although it is a birthday, we cannot forget those who left us but can be kindly remembered for their contributions, including articles in *Papers on Anthropology*. Our deep bow to the departed:

Mart Viikmaa (4 September 1938 – 13 May 2018) [12, 13, 14, 15]

Kersti Loolaid (30 July 1958 – 19 May 2014) [16]

Säde Koskel (née Ermann) (8 August 1938 – 19 February 2013)

Professor Emeritus Toivo Jürimäe (9 May 1949 – 5 October 2015), member of the editorial board of *Papers on Anthropology*, co-author of several articles [17, 18]

Aina Javoiš (22 September 1943 – 4 May 2017), Juhan Aul's daughter, who participated in and always supported the work of the ENS Anthropology Section

Among the sad events in 2013 was the suspension of the successful team of bioarchaeology at Tallinn University Institute of History, the workplace of our three members. "It is a pity that just as the continuity of generational research (Juhan Aul, Karin Mark, Leiu Heapost, Raili Allmäe, Jana Limbo-Simovart...) begins to bear fruit, and the period of interpretation begins, this opportunity is cut off," *Õpetajate Leht* (Teachers Newspaper) wrote in an interview with Jana Limbo-Simovart [19].

Now, for the happier side. New people interested in anthropology take part in the work of the section. In 2013, the Anthropology Section was joined by a new active member – bioarchaeologist Martin Malve, a highly engaged and valued human bone researcher who is also a very good populariser of his field.

Several Anthropology Section meetings have been attended by Markus Valge, a PhD student at the Chair of Zoology [21], who is a member of the

Working Group on Immunoecology and Human Behavioural Ecology, and whose research topic is “Verifying the predictions of life evolution theory with anthropometric data”. His work based on Juhan Aul’s data. Markus Valge is supervised by Peeter Hõrak, a professor of behavioural ecology who has also delivered presentations in the ENS [22].

In 2014, despite the loss of her job, Leiu Heapost, on the basis of manuscript materials, compiled, supplemented, edited and finished the unfinished life work of her departed colleague Karin Mark (1922–1999). Thanks to Leiu Heapost’s many years of work, we now have Karin Mark’s handbook and an overview of kindred peoples *Physical Anthropology of Finno-Ugric Peoples* [20].

It is gratifying that, over the past decade, thanks to the ENS Anthropology Section member Helje Kaarma, head of the Centre for Physical Anthropology, articles based on measurements have been published, regarding the classification of body height and weight norms and somatotypes classification for 20–70-year-olds Estonian [23] and for Estonian schoolchildren [24].

Two members of the Anthropology Section defended their doctoral theses in 2017:

Raili Allmäe *Iron Age Cremation Burials in South-Eastern and West Estonia. An osteological approach*. Supervisors Marika Mägi, Leiu Heapost [25, 26, 27, 28].

Liidia Kiisk *Long-term Nutritional Study: Anthropometrical and Clinical-Laboratory Assessments in Renal Replacement Therapy for Patients After Intensive Nutritional Counselling* [29].

It is hoped that this will further broaden their opportunities for research and popularisation of science, including at the meetings of the Anthropology Section.

Another great achievement is the continuity of *Papers on Anthropology*, for which we are also very grateful to Helje Kaarma, the long-time active member of the section.

Given the above and in the light of experience, it is necessary to continue comprehensive reviews and summaries of anthropological work, also published in Estonian, so that these will also be accessible to elementary school students and help them access anthropological knowledge as they do their studying for school.

But surely, clearer and more attractive reviews could also be useful for students studying at different universities, including the Institute of Humanities at Tallinn University where students can learn under the guidance of cosmopolitan anthropology lecturers [30]. It is important to enable them to explore the rich research work of Juhan Aul and his students and to use these data for comparison with new Estonian research.

It is gratifying that, unlike years ago, it is now possible to study anthropology at Tallinn University at different levels (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies) or as a minor subject [31], thanks to teaching staff who has studied abroad. Although we are happy that the first original university textbook of social and cultural anthropology [32] was published in Estonia in 2017, unfortunately Juhan Aul's contribution is not mentioned there. Obviously, we would benefit from wider publication of the anthropological research done so far in Estonia and the consistency, persistence, dedication of Professor Juhan Aul as a scientist. Although the project-based nature of current science probably does not support such consistency, our task is to get to know better our existing anthropology works including Juhan Aul's rich research legacy, and to share it with others.

In conclusion

1. Better knowledge, analysis, understanding and summary of the work done so far will help us move forward in a more favourable environment. Thus, the first task of the coming years could be to increase the visibility and popularisation of what has been done in the field of anthropology in Estonia. The first step in this task would be providing a list of anthropological publications from 1939 to 2019, including, where possible, give copies of these works or their digital copies to the ENS Library.

From this time range, the bibliography of Professor Juhan Aul [7] has already been published. So, some work has already been done.

2. Secondly, an aid should be issued for those interested in anthropology, an Estonian-language guide for anthropometric measurements, which would more widely introduce the importance of body measurements, body proportions, etc. and, if possible, give relations of body measurements with other characteristics of the human being.
3. Thirdly, however, we should write a summarising book on Estonians based on our own research in the 20th and early 21st century.
4. Fourthly, we could make a map that shows Estonians' body height and weight in different times and places. Based on that, it would be easier to encourage measuring of people by regions in the future.
5. The Estonian Anthropology Association is a student-run non-profit organisation founded in 2008 to promote anthropology and anthropological education in Estonia and abroad. Thus, their aims are partially overlapping with tasks in the Anthropology Section of the ENS [33]. It would be reasonable to find points of contact and opportunities for collaboration in achieving common goals.

Naturally, the wider goal must not be lost sight of: namely, establishing a chair of anthropology at the University of Tartu and helping to establish the Institute of Anthropology where anthropologists who are specialised on the study of different aspects of the human being (biological, cultural, social, ecological etc.) would be working systematically and consistently side by side together towards a common goal. We hope a time will come for *Homo sapiens* to look more thoroughly at ourselves to get to know ourselves better in a comprehensive way, as Juhan Aul hoped years ago when writing the preface to *Anthropology of Estonian Women* [34].

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