

Between field observations, notes and knowledge: Content and contexts for M. A. Castrén's ethnographic notes and lectures¹

This article discusses M. A. Castrén's (1803–1852) ethnographic notes and lectures on Samoyed peoples as part of the development of ethnography and Arctic research in the early 19th-century Russian Empire. Castrén produced several types of texts based on his two Russian expeditions, including travel narratives, letters, linguistic transcriptions and ethnographic notes. In addition, he gave lectures about the peoples he studied. The article describes the types of data Castrén collected, the way he organized it and subsequently presented to academic audiences. The academic and societal background of Castrén's ethnography illustrated in the article, relates him to A. J. Sjögren and to the Imperial Russian and European development of ethnography. It is argued that the tensions between nationalistic aims and broader academic discussions that split Russian discussions over ethnography represented a fruitful context for imperial subjects, such as Castrén.

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1. This article was supported by the Academy of Finland (project *Imperialism in vernacular terms. Appraising the coloniality of folklore, tradition and heritage through and by the Nenets*; grant number 330374). Additionally, the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation and the Emil Aaltonen Foundation had supported the research earlier. The research is part of the Manuscripta Castreniana project under the auspices of the Finno-Ugrian Society.

I. Introduction

Russia saw a reawakening of Arctic research in the early 19th century after some decades of decline. Saint Petersburg, with its vibrant international academic community and some private patrons became a center for the new interest in the Arctic. Research into the Arctic was prepared, planned, instructed and promoted in the Academy of Sciences and later also in the Russian Imperial Geographical Society. The awakening was not a coincidence but took place when the results of the earlier 18th-century expeditions had been published and aroused interest in the Russian Empire and internationally. Similarly, the early 19th century represents a period of differentiation and institutionalization of several new disciplines, which is embedded not only in the development of academic discussions but also in the imperial and national ideologies within the Russian Empire. One of these new disciplines was ethnography, the methods of which were developed and discussed in Saint Petersburg – and very much used in the continuous practice of fieldwork.

The ethnography of early 19th-century Russia is inherently linked with such disciplines as history, geography, statistics, cartography and linguistics, which have been examined lately in several studies centering on individuals or separate institutions (Knight 1998; Tammiksaar 2002a; 2002b; Tammiksaar & Stone 2007; Tammiksaar & Kalling 2019; Suxova 2020; Gibson 2022: 47–97). This article continues to uncover the practices and methods of the developing field and it focuses on Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852) and his relationship with Anders Johan Sjögren (Andrej Mixailovič Šëgren, 1794–1855), who can be considered a teacher and a patron to Castrén at the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg.

I have used two different kinds of texts as key materials for this article. First, contained within the collections of Castrén in the National Library of Finland there is a manuscript titled *Ethnographiska, historiska och statistiska anmärkningar* (KK Coll. 593.13.1), which focuses on the Samoyedic-speaking linguistic communities. There are also ethnographic notes on Nenets scattered across various locations in the Jurak-Samoiedica section of the *Manuscripta Castreniana* collection. These two sources will be published together in the forthcoming scholarly electronic edition *Manuscripta Castreniana Jurak-Samoiedica Ethnographica*. The texts represent Castrén's notes that he wrote in the course of his fieldwork in order to collect and organize the data, and they were not intended for

publication. The notes constitute a fascinating piece of research history, and they enable us to evaluate Castrén's fieldwork methods, especially pertaining to his writing and organization of research notes. The manuscripts also provide a key to understanding what constituted data for Castrén and what type of ethnography he intended to create. This enables us to obtain a more general understanding of ethnography at the time. Another key to Castrén's understanding of ethnography is the finished (and more complete) publication of his lectures on ethnology held at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki (Finland) in May 1851. Although not intended for publication, the lectures were posthumously published in Swedish and in German translation in 1857 (Castrén 1857a; 1857b).

In the following, I will evaluate Castrén's ideas about ethnography and doing fieldwork and examine the above-mentioned materials together with other field notes and the published volume of *Ethnologiska föreläsningar öfver altaiska folken; samt Samojediska och tatariska sagor* (Castrén 1857a). It should be noted that the types of fieldnotes being published and discussed are more numerous in Castrén's diaries and travelogues, which have already been edited by Timo Salminen and published under the *Manuscripta Castreniana* series (Castrén 2019a; 2019b). These will be considered in relation to the Samoyedic-speaking linguistic communities; the abundant notes concerning other ethnic groups are outside the scope of this study.

There are two overriding aims of this study: to describe the content and structure of Castrén's notes and to discuss how they relate to the practices of ethnography and the international debate regarding them. I aim to contextualize his work within early 19th-century discussions on research into the Arctic and non-Russian peoples, and within what for Castrén represented a fruitful tension between "science of empire" and "science of nationality" (Knight 1998: 117). Further, the different types of notes and emerging voices will be specified, and I will argue that these voices are not only those of Castrén or his informants. Without doubt, these notes also encompass more detailed academic and societal discussions, which also determine what is listened to, watched and recorded. In other words, this raises the question of what constitutes appropriate ethnographic data. My point of departure is that despite the sense of immediacy and authenticity, fieldnotes should always be read as a result of selections, narration, contextualization and translations orchestrated by the ethnographer. They make their decisions based on the flow of events in the field, their own

capabilities and understandings, and between the aim of the fieldwork and how the field has been described previously. Moreover, similar processes govern the ethnographic writing itself (Thornton 1983; Appadurai 1986).

In the following, I will initially provide a general overview of Castrén and his fieldwork, after which I will set them against their contemporary academic background. Subsequently, in Section 3 I will relate Castrén's work to the wider Russian and European debates about ethnography by discussing the instructions given to Castrén, as compared to the instructions given to earlier expeditions. The following discussion on Castrén's notes will focus on their relation to the contemporary and historical background, and I aim to show how the idea of appropriate ethnographic data is reflected in the notes of Castrén. In the fifth section, I will discuss Castrén's ethnological lectures and their relation to ethnography, after which I will draw conclusions.

2. National and imperial interests intertwined

The ethnographic notes of Castrén are connected to two different expeditions, which are related to the plans of the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg to study Western Siberia at the beginning of the 19th century. The first expedition took place between 1841 and 1844 and the second from 1845 to 1849. Timo Salminen (2019b; 2019c) has thoroughly described the two expeditions, and I will not dwell on them in this article. Here, it is sufficient to note that during the first expedition Castrén traveled through the Arctic regions of European Russia, across the Ural mountains to Obdorsk (contemporary Salekhard), from where he started to travel south and eventually west, returning to Helsinki. Castrén started the expedition after traveling with the doctor, linguist and folklorist Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) in Lapland and arriving at Arkhangelsk, where he discovered that he had received funding to study the Samoyedic languages. The second journey took Castrén to the Yenisei River, after which he traveled to the Sayan Mountains, Irkutsk and Nerčinsk. From there, he embarked on his journey back to Helsinki.

The two expeditions can be related to the Academy of Sciences' research interests in the Russian Arctic. The Academy began to discuss and prepare for an expedition to western Siberia in 1838. This was the initiative of academician Karl von Baer (Karl Maksimovič Bèr, 1792–1876), who had been elected as the second zoologist of the Academy of Sciences in

Saint Petersburg in 1834 and had focused since on the physical geography of the Arctic regions. According to Tammiksaar (2002b: 124), von Baer was not only traveling himself, but his role was instrumental in planning and promoting other researchers' expeditions and making Saint Petersburg a center for geography in Russia. Von Baer was interested in the flora and fauna of the continental areas of the Arctic, and his plans were to head for the Taimyr Peninsula and the Lower Tunguska. He worked tirelessly for the plan: he set the general goals, worked with earlier archival documents and laid the academic, industrial and economic groundwork.

Although the expedition was to be scientific, a linguist-ethnographer was also added to the list of participants during the preparation. At that time, Sjögren was working as a supernumerary academician in the Academy and refused to leave, finding M. A. Castrén suitable for the task. (Sjögren 1854: 242, 250–252; Branch 1968: 339–340; Tammiksaar & Stone 2007; Laine 2020: 102–105). Over the ensuing months and years, the expedition was prepared and planned. Ultimately, it was decided that a naturalist and a linguist-ethnographer would embark on separate journeys to the same regions. The plan was accepted by the Academy towards the end of 1841. At that time, Castrén was already in the north. The naturalist Alexander Theodor von Middendorff (1815–1894), who had earlier traveled with von Baer, was accepted to be the main researcher of the expedition, and he started his expedition in November 1842, arriving back to Saint Petersburg in March 1845 (Tammiksaar & Stone 2007: 196–202). Sjögren postponed the linguistic-ethnographic expedition while also trying to attract more funding. He managed to arrange funding for Castrén's first northern expedition (1841–1844) from the Alexander University in Helsinki. However, during this delay at the beginning of the planned linguistic-ethnographic expedition, another candidate – the Hungarian Antal Réguly (1819–1858) – appeared in Saint Petersburg, and Sjögren used all his powers and means of persuasion to ensure that Castrén was chosen for the expedition. (See, e.g., Sjögren 1844; Sjögren 1854: 250–252; Branch 1968: 338–346; Laine 2020: 102–105; 117–118; 124–135.) Castrén was finally able to begin his second expedition, which formed part of the Academy's plan, in 1845.

There were several interests related to the excursion. The initial idea by von Baer focused on natural sciences (Tammiksaar 2009: 142–147; Bassin 2009: 79–84). However, von Baer enthusiastically promoted ethnography and did not oppose the inclusion of a linguist-ethnographer in the expedition. However, because ethnography was still developing at the time, there

were several emphases about the nature of ethnography at play. As has been shown by Tammiksaar and Kalling (2019), von Baer's own ethnographic interests focused on physical anthropology and the general development of humankind. Related to his way of thinking was von Baer's belief that the northern peoples would not survive the processes of colonization and modernization, which made him a keen supporter of collecting as much data as possible concerning the non-Russian peoples of the north.

Another academician who had an interest in planning and promoting further ethnographic research in the north was Peter von Köppen (Pëtr Ivanovič Këppen, 1793–1864), who wrote supplementary instructions for Castrén's expedition. Köppen was a statistician and cartographer, and he was interested in spatially visualizing the numerical and descriptive knowledge about the Russian Empire's population in order to better understand it and render visual the limits of knowledge (Suxova 1993; Gibson 2022: 49–51). His instructions for Castrén have six parts: first, Castrén should define the classification of the people he met according to the newly defined classes under the so-called Speransky reforms, which classified the Siberian non-Russians, *inorodcy*, into three categories.² Second, Castrén should determine the specific areas in which each people (*Stamm*) resided and the number of separate populations. Castrén was also given specific questions about certain ethnic groups and subsequently instructed to diligently record ethnographic and geographical names (Parts 3 and 4). Fifthly, Köppen points Castrén to some specific rock paintings. Last, he instructs Castrén to pay special attention to the Ljamin Sor river basin and its different peoples (von Köppen 1844). The instructions are informed by previous knowledge obtained mainly from Siberian administrators, and Köppen insists on clarifying classifications and specifying the relations of the peoples, their living areas and their number. Both Köppen's and von Baer's interests were related to international and Imperial Russian academic and national-administrative discussions that simultaneously served the benefits of the Russian Empire and scholarly research. Sjögren was involved in these discussions, but his interest in ethnography provides a third kind of subprogram.

Sjögren had developed a holistic methodology for linguistically and ethnographically oriented fieldwork that was original and aroused great

2. *Ustav ob upravlennii inorodcev* (1822) and *Ustav ob upravlennii Samoedami, obitajuščimi v Mezenskom uezde Arhangel'skoj gubernii* (1835) for the European Nenets. For more information, see e.g. Forsyth 1992: 156–158.

interest in Saint Petersburg. It combined internationally debated questions on the history of language, ethnic groups and humanity with an interest in the description of the histories of certain ethnolinguistic groups and language families. In addition, Sjögren's Finnish background and enthusiasm for language, oral poetry and regional description certainly influenced his work. Michael Branch (1973) and Päivi Laine (2020) have defined Sjögren's academic work as Hegelian-Herderian, emphasizing Romanticism and the concept of language as a source of history. They also emphasize the importance of Rasmus Rask and the brothers Grimm in the development of these methodologies. As indicated by Michael Branch (1973), Sjögren introduced a methodological "kit" that combined careful reading of archival sources with historical and comparative linguistics, onomastics and description of customs, manners and oral traditions. In other words, he presented ethnography, linguistics and onomastics as auxiliaries to history. Sjögren's travelogue can be considered one of the first publications representing this methodology, and he states his sources as follows:

[...] in the absence of older historical documents, I consider non-Russian words and idioms that have remained from older settings in the Russian language, which has now become common, as well as non-Russian place names – together with customs and traditions – combined with local knowledge expanded to the best of one's ability. (Sjögren 1861: 78)

It is clear that Sjögren emphasizes the role of comparative and historical linguistics and ethnography in cases where no written evidence is available. The originality of Sjögren's method is indeed related to his insistence on studying language and linguistic expressions. In addition, it is vital to situate him in the wider discussions taking place in Saint Petersburg: the above-mentioned imperial needs for maps and descriptions of lands and peoples and the international scholarly debate around the history of humankind.

A brief comparison of von Baer's, Köppen's and Sjögren's points of departure for ethnography demonstrates how imperial interests intertwined with scientific and academic justifications and national interests culminated in a situation where different ideologies met developing disciplines, creating a desire to know more. This complexity is well represented in Sjögren, who (similar to von Baer) justified the linguistic-ethnographic journey with added knowledge about Russia and its population and landscape, while also promoting the Finnish cause (Branch 1973; Laine 2020: 117–118).

The simultaneous aims of serving both the empire and its colony did not present a difficulty for Sjögren's research program. Nevertheless, a similar arrangement caused severe tensions in the Russian Imperial Geographical Society that was founded in 1845 in the blooming atmosphere after Middendorf's return from his successful expedition. The Society was quite soon divided between those who emphasized ethnography as the study of non-Russian peoples and the importance of mapping and gathering data about them, on the one hand, and those who placed more of a focus on studying Russian peasants and other Slavic peoples in order to define the nature of Russianness, on the other. Nathaniel Knight (2009) has argued that the consequent focus on Russians not only narrowed the research, it also hampered theoretical discussions in ethnography, which came to emphasize description over theorizing.

In this regard, Sjögren and Castrén were working in a border zone as imperial subjects, representing the freshly colonized Finns, and as researchers for the Academy of Sciences. Their points of departure were characterized by national aims to build and depict the history of the Finns and Finland, which they both achieved using the same, internationally developing methodology. There are also differences between Sjögren and Castrén in this regard. Sjögren spent most of his career in Saint Petersburg, he became a loyal Russian subject (Laine 2020: 223) and his main audience was in Russia or in the academic circles of Europe. He advocated the study of the Finno-Ugrian peoples for the sake of Russian history (Branch 1973: 196). By comparison, it is obvious that Castrén's implied audience was mostly in Finland, despite his numerous articles published in Russian journals and the international significance of his work. This is inferred by the recurrent use of "we" and "our" in his lectures (e.g. "our runosongs") and the explicit aim to write Finnish history. This is apparent, for example, from Castrén's later writings and in the letter he penned to Sjögren to indicate his enthusiasm for the journey, where he states that the expedition primarily represents for him the possibility of studying the history of Finnish and the Finns (especially Finnish mythology) (Castrén 2021: 91). Consequently, the non-Russians that were not in the focus of the Russian Geographical Society, were relatives and non-others to Sjögren and Castrén. What is more, the two men did produce analytical research on the data collected. In other words, they did not stick to mere description, as in the reports of the Geographical Society. The Academy together with international scholarly debate provided a fruitful arena for their research.

3. Instructions for fieldwork

One of the arenas for developing methods and research agendas in the early 19th-century Russian academic debates were the instructions drawn up for the expeditions. In the following, I will discuss the instructions written for Castrén and relate them to the earlier Russian fieldwork traditions. The aim is to show the decisive influence of Sjögren on Castrén's work and to contextualize the research program historically.

When Sjögren sought to attract funding for Castrén's second excursion, he wrote detailed instructions and read them at a session of the Academy. The instructions were published in German in the *Bulletin de la Classe historico-philologique de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg* (Sjögren 1844). They were also translated into Swedish and attached as an appendix to the second volume of *Nordiska resor och forskningar* (Castrén 1855: 447–457). The instructions were not only guidelines for fieldwork, they also provided an academic background for the expedition, including references to previous researchers and their results. Klaproth's *Asia polyglotta* (1823), Stepanov's *Enisejskaja gubernija* (1835) and Pallas's *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des Russischen Reichs* (1771–1776) were the three central works cited when considering the northern areas of Castrén's expedition.³ Sjögren pointed out the inconsistencies in the works of orientalist Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1783–1835) and Governor Aleksandr Petrovič Stepanov (1781–1837) and insisted that Castrén could provide a clearer picture of the peoples living in the regions between the Ob and Yenisei, the languages they spoke and their linguistic and historical relationships. In addition, Sjögren criticized previous research that relied on narrow, insufficient collections of words or glossaries. Instead, Castrén would study these peoples diligently and correct any earlier and contemporary discrepancies and limitations (Sjögren 1844; also Castrén 1857a: 448–451). I should emphasize that Sjögren's remarks are not only a criticism of the previous works. They represent a central means of setting the expedition into a relevant Russian academic context and justifying it based on the contemporary and historical state-of-the-art. In this sense, the instructions follow the rhetoric of the Academy like the instructions drawn by Köppen: they show the limits of previous knowledge and the ways in which these limits could be transcended.

3. Fischer's *Sibirische Geschichte* and Spasskij's article in *Sibirskij vestnik* 1819 are mentioned in relation to the southern regions.

The instructions focus on three general points: what, how and from whom to collect. The first focuses on the different types of linguistic and ethnographic data to be collected, while the second and third points suggest gathering the data among the peoples themselves, in the place where they live and from capable individuals (*an Ort und Stelle durch kundige Personen*; Sjögren 1844: 326). For example, Sjögren writes:

[...] that he should travel in person to the regions of every tribe and move there completely so that he would get to know them and their mutual relations – if this can be said about wandering nomadic peoples – through his own observations. (Sjögren 1844: 326)

The only exception to this in the instructions is the statistical data, which should be based on the knowledge of reliable people. Furthermore, the instructions clearly focus on linguistic data. Towards the end of the instructions Sjögren begins to list non-linguistic *desiderata*. These include place names and general details that would enhance the geographical and topographical knowledge of the region. This includes roads, settlements of all kinds, natural places (mountains, rivers, streams, lakes) and their qualities, and general notions about the climate and flora. Sjögren also mentions archaeological sites and any narratives related with them. He subsequently mentions the ethnographic objectives of writing:

[...] so that he, through his own eyes and acquisition, learns to fully know the physical build, way of life, clothing, customs and manners, cultural level and religious concepts of the respective peoples, as well everything that can serve to characterize them as such in all their peculiarities. (Sjögren 1844: 332)

There are two points that I would like to emphasize. The first is the reliance on firsthand knowledge and observations, which ties neatly into Enlightenment empiricism and the historical and comparative method. From the perspective of linguistic research, this emphasis has to be read as a criticism directed at earlier practices and the long tradition of reliance on secondhand data (especially certain word lists), regardless of their comprehensive nature (Korhonen 1986: 40–41; Campbell 2002). The new historical and comparative method, which was at the heart of Sjögren's thinking, demanded more than mere vocabulary items. The aim was to uncover smaller details, such as phonemes and larger wholes (e.g. different forms and neighboring variants) (Campbell 2002). Sjögren constantly returned to this point during his work in the Academy and the Russian Geographical

Society (e.g. Knight 2009: 127). Secondly, the comprehensive nature of the details to be collected, also typical for the Enlightenment, should be noted.

I have emphasized the Enlightenment in order to relate the early 19th-century discussion to the earlier 18th-century Russian expeditions. While the linguistic and ethnographic research of the early 19th century was generally directed towards history, geography provided another point of reference for the developing fields. The historical interest was directed towards comparisons, which would result in a better understanding of world history or the history of humanity. These thoughts were born of 18th-century Germany, and their empirical basis resides in Russia's lands and peoples on which several large expeditions were carried out during the 18th century. The results of the expeditions came to bear fruit in publications and consequent debates, so that the idea of organizing humanity into different *Völker*, peoples, was further developed into *Völker-beschreibung*, i.e. ethnography or ethnology. While the results of the expeditions were published and discussed by August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735–1809), the methods of gathering the data were explicitly developed by Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783). Schlözer's influence on Finnish academic traditions (and on Sjögren) is undeniable and clear (see Korhonen 1986: 29–33; Branch 1973: 23–26; Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 34–35). Elsewhere, I have discussed its connections to Castrén's work, with the aim of demonstrating that Castrén and Sjögren constitute an integral part of this program (Lukin 2017).

Herein, I would like to concentrate on Müller who was the main person responsible for the geographical and historical section of the so-called Second Kamchatka Expedition or the Great Northern Expedition (1733–1743) which aimed at mapping the coastline of Siberia. Müller wrote detailed instructions for the collection of materials, and his instructions provide an important epistemic link between earlier Russian expeditions (and their traditions) and the Russian ethnography of the early 19th century. Vermeulen (2015: 171–175) emphasizes this link, and he especially insisted on Müller's legacy for the subsequent development of ethnography as a program for describing the world's peoples and as a method of staying among those peoples and collecting knowledge about them directly. The idea was both historical and comparative, and it developed from the idea that each community has its own living area and history into an all-encompassing concept of describing those histories and nations in relation to each other. As shown by Vermeulen, the aim of Müller was to be create a comprehensive program in order to systematically describe and compare peoples,

including their histories, customs, and manners. It is also noteworthy that Müller emphasized fieldwork practices such as communicating with people, which came to be termed *rapport* in modern anthropology.

It is apparent that the work of Müller did not have a straightforward effect on Russian academia in the 19th century. However, its influence can be traced through the works of the late 18th-century expeditionaries, such as Johann Eberhard Fischer (1697–1771), Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811) and Ivan Ivanovič Lepëxin (1740–1802). Müller wrote instructions for Fischer, who received them during his expedition in 1740. Fischer later published *Sibirische Geschichte von der Entdeckung Sibiriens bis auf die Eroberung dieses Landes durch die russischen Waffen* (1768), which is “largely based on Müller’s research” and “addresses seven fields: history, ethnography, linguistics, geography, archaeology, statistics and physical anthropology.” (See Vermeulen 2015: 186–187.) Peter Simon Pallas, again, prepared the instructions for the Academy’s expeditions of 1768–1774 in which, for example, Ivan Lepëxin and Johann Gottfried Georgi (1729–1802) took part. As has been noted, the expedition was not initially supposed to study peoples or their languages, and it has been concluded that both the idea of this and the implementation of the instructions speaks to the heavy influence of Müller (Bucher 2009). Both Castrén and Sjögren cite Fischer and Pallas often, aiming to enlarge and deepen the knowledge they had produced. Additionally, the influence of the Müllerian *Völkerbeschreibung* can be traced by comparing the instructions for the fieldwork. For example, in the latest instructions written by Müller there are six parts, of which the first is focused on keeping a journal, the second on geographical description, the third on towns and their surroundings, the fourth on working in the archives and the fifth on antiquities. The sixth and largest section centered on the manners and customs of peoples and documentation pertaining to this. According to Vermeulen,

[the] list of ethnographic items to be studied in Siberia is systematic and exhaustive. It moves from “external” (visible) items, such as outward appearance, clothing, and housing, via languages and physical constitution, to “internal” (invisible) items, such as indigenous knowledge, beliefs, and so on. In between were subjects such as war and economy, rites of passage, and the education of children. (Vermeulen 2015: 167–169)

I have compared Müller’s instructions to the structure of Castrén’s notebooks and to one of Sjögren’s most influential monographs in Table 1, and I will come back to them together at the end of the next chapter. For the

time being, it is important to note how similar Sjögren's instructions are to Müller's program, not only in their moving from external to internal data to be collected but also the emphasis on the systematicity and comprehensiveness. In addition, Sjögren does not follow only the ethnographical, sixth part of the program but seems to take note also of the other five parts. In this way, Sjögren's program aims at a description of the history of humanity based on the detailed data collected. Within this academic framework, Sjögren together with Castrén chose to focus on the speakers of languages related to Finnish. Sjögren also developed the program by combining it with the linguistic program to describe the history of the humanity through detailed study of languages and dialects.

4. Making notes

It is difficult to find any detailed guidelines for making notes in the instructions written by Sjögren. Indeed, as noted by subsequent anthropologists, the manner, scope, and organization of making notes was seldom included in formal teaching. Moreover, for a long time, these matters were considered part of every ethnographer's personal expertise based on the ethnographer's interests, experiences and academic background (Jackson 1990). This silence around fieldwork methodologies and practices (or tacit knowledge) also prevailed in Finno-Ugrian studies, the research tradition that developed as a legacy of the work of Castrén and Sjögren among others. It was customary for researchers in Finno-Ugrian studies to write travelogues, where encounters with informants were described. However, researchers did not develop a systematic interest in fieldwork practices in their writing (Grünthal 2010; Stipa 1990). Accordingly, it would be interesting to compare Sjögren's instructions with the notes taken by Castrén during his expedition.

The manuscript *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkingar* consists of such fieldnotes. It is presented in a black binder notebook 22 cm in height and comprises 272 pages, 116 of which contain text. The notebook is placed under the unit titled Samoiedica 7: Jurak-Samoiedica 6 in the Castrén manuscript collections at the National Library of Finland (KK Coll. 539.13.1). The text in the manuscript is divided into seven chapters. Although these chapters have no titles, Castrén listed the contents of each chapter on a dedicated Contents page of the manuscript. Indeed, the contents page provides us with valuable clues about the concept of the manuscript. This is important, as some details are not provided in the text.

Table 1: The structure of Castrén's *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkningarna* compared to Sjögren's *Die Syrjänen, ein historisch-statistisch-philologischer Versuch* (1861) and Müller's *Unterricht, was bey Beschreibung der Völker, absonderlich der Sibirischen in acht zu nehmen* (1740).

Castrén: <i>Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkningarna</i> ⁴	Sjögren: <i>Die Syrjänen, ein historisch-statistisch-philologischer Versuch</i> ⁵	Müller: <i>Unterricht, was bey Beschreibung der Völker, absonderlich der Sibirischen in acht zu nehmen</i> ⁶
Chapter I: The location of places The qualities of places Mountains, rivers, lakes and seas Soil Seasons Climate Naturalia: fish, birds, trees, berries Domestic animals	I. Places and physical characteristics II. Climate	II. Geographical description III. Contemporary situation of towns and their environs
Chapter II: Nutrition The way of living a) in summer b) in winter Reindeer and reindeer herding Reindeer marks Names of reindeer in different times Means of transport, reindeer decoration Boats Deer hunting Hunting in general Fishing equipment	III. Industry and livelihood	VI. Manners and customs: Commerce, crop cultivation Animal husbandry Transportation overland Transportation by water Hunting Fishery Utensils

4. KK Coll. 539.13.1

5. Sjögren 1861: 233–459.

6. Document cited in Vermeulen 2015: 167–170; available in the archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg.

Between field observations, notes and knowledge

Castrén: <i>Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkningar</i> ⁴	Sjögren: <i>Die Syrjänen, ein historisch-statistisch-philologischer Versuch</i> ⁵	Müller: <i>Unterricht, was bey Beschreibung der Völkern, absonderlich der Sibirischen in acht zu nehmen</i> ⁶
Chapter III: Home and dwelling places Clothing Food and cooking	VI. Contemporary population	VI. Manners and customs: Clothing Housing Cooking, victuals and stimulants
Chapter IV: Marriage (weddings, the baptism of children, and names) Law of inheritance Burial Servants	VI. Contemporary population	VI. Manners and customs: Marriage, child rearing Life span, (illness), death, burials, inheritance laws
Chapter V: National character Socialising Ways of greeting Home medicine Skills in general Signatures	VI. Contemporary population	VI. Manners and customs: Medicine Morality Political constitution Judiciary, oath, documents Social and personal interaction
Chapter VI: Mythology Magic Urier [a Nenets spirit] Conversion to Christianity	VI. Contemporary population	VI. Manners and customs: Religious representations Pagan peoples, shamanism Christianity
Chapter VII: Ancient and contemporary society Administration Memories	IV. Distribution and population V. History and historical remains	V. Antiquities VI. Manners and customs: Political constitution

The subtitles of the chapters are listed in Table 1, and I shall here briefly describe the contents of each chapter. The first chapter describes the (physical) geography and fauna of the area under study. The chapter begins by providing the exact location of Kanin Nos at the northwestern end of the

Kanin Peninsula. While there were some Nenets living west of the Kanin Peninsula, it can be inferred that Castrén traveled here to identify the westernmost location where the Nenets lived. Castrén continues by describing the lakes, rivers, mountains and general geographic characteristics of the peninsula. He mentions a highland watershed called Timanskij Kamen' (today Timanskij Krjaž), the Timanskaja tundra, and Malaja Zemlja, providing knowledge of the soil and forests in the region. The description follows major and minor rivers and their associated villages.

On page nine, Castrén provides a list of Nenets families in the Mezen' district (*krets*) in the *slobodas* of Pustozersk, Ust'-Cylma and Ižma. This is followed by tables that list the population numerically and the amount of tax paid in furs, the so-called *yasak*. The chapter continues by supplying details about the livelihoods of the Nenets, complete with comparisons between the western Timan and Bol'shezemelskaja Nenets. Further, the descriptions of the *naturalia* from the Nenets perspective emphasize the species that were hunted, fished or gathered and the ways in which these practices occurred. On page 30, the manuscript describes the so-called Obdorsk Samoyed, referring to the Nenets living on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains. However, once again this section lacks any detailed lists of places, rivers and lakes or any population tables. The tables can be found at the end of the notebook, indicating they were a part of notes not yet processed by Castrén.

The second chapter's notes focus on reindeer. When Castrén describes their food, he emphasizes the place of reindeer meat in the Nenets diet. He also highlights the passion of the Nenets for butter and milk, rendering it "probable that the Samoyeds will little by little leave the nomadic lifestyle, settle down and indulge in cattle keeping" (p. 49). Castrén also briefly discusses reindeer diseases and the mass deaths of Timan reindeer in 1828. After making a brief tangent on women's spatial behavior (and their status in the camp) and name-giving, Castrén returns to the chapter's theme on page 90 by providing a detailed description of the harnessing of reindeer to sledges.

The third chapter's notes provide a fairly comprehensive overview of Nenets clothing, followed by a description of the conical tent. Fragmentary notions about work are then presented, with details about the knife, cooking and eating habits, as well as women's work in the tent. Similarly, Chapter 4 is very limited in length. On pages 121–122, Castrén describes customs related to marriage proposals and the bride-price, while page 137

contains notes on childbirth, 144 names scattered details about marriage and burial.

The fifth chapter's themes weave around Nenets society at large, but the actual notes only comprise four pages (145–148) and describe the national character. Page 155 names a few sicknesses. “National character” is a Herderian notion that allowed Castrén to characterize the peoples' peculiar nature, traits that were thought to be shared by some ethnic community, such as timidity or laziness. Chapter 6, focusing on religion, presents more data. The chapter begins with a myth about Urier, a man who climbed to heaven and became a thunder-related spirit. According to the myth, he can be seen on the Ural Mountains. In a few places, Castrén lists details about the island of Vaigač, which has become famous as one of the largest sacrificial sites of the Nenets. There are also notes about burials, sacrifices, shamans and shamanic rituals, as well as interesting inscriptions of prayers. Castrén also made notes about the Nenets idols. Finally, page 184 contains a few notes about Christianization and education among the Nenets.

Chapter 7 has subtitles referring to ancient and contemporary society, administration and memories, consisting of text that describes different Samoyed branches. Some of the pages are presented upside down and are not related to the chapter themes, rendering it difficult to follow the intended order of the pages. However, most of the text is easily interpreted, especially if one understands the unrelated pages as jottings made in the course of fieldwork on the next empty, available page. In the pages related to society, Castrén initially describes the Natsko-Pumpokol'sk Volost' in the upper reaches of the Ket, then proceeds to what he terms the Narym Samoyed and Ket Samoyed, Kondin (or Kazym) Samoyed, Ljamin Samoyed, and Obdorsk Samoyed. Additionally, there are notes about the Kanin and Timan Nenets. The descriptions tend to follow a certain scheme, where Castrén gives the geographical location and then proceeds to talk about the ways of life, dwellings, clothing and possible customs related to the land, hunting and fishing. He also mentions religion and education, including vernacular religion and possible Christianity. The descriptions include place names (mostly villages and rivers) together with speculative etymologies, lists of foods eaten and diseases. Castrén also describes the *starshina* institution and talks about the status of the Ostyak prince in the Obdorsk area. Eventually, these notes also mention the Selkup, Forest and Tundra Nenets communities in Western Siberia. The notes about the

Kanin, Timan and Bol'šezmelskaja Nenets at the beginning of the manuscript would probably find an appropriate place in this chapter.

As mentioned previously, in addition to the notes under these titles, there are some scattered notes at the end of the notebook. Some of these are upside down, indicating that they were either written in a hurry or were too long to be written within the chapters. These represent the type of notes that can be found scattered in other parts of the Jurak-Samoiedica manuscript collections. We can also find details about vernacular religion (such as prayers) and notes on sacred places and Christianization, lists of place names (and their related etymologies), and lists of families (including statistics) within these jottings. The manuscript ends with a list of place names and their distances in Castrén's 1841–1844 journey. This list, and the fact that the notes cover only Samoyed communities living in Western Siberia, suggest that the notebook was only used during the first journey. However, some of the fragmented notes may be related to the latter journey.

Overall, I consider that the manuscript and fragmented notes represent texts that have been termed field notes by anthropologists. More specifically, I posit that the texts represent the early parts of the fieldwork and knowledge-production processes and were not intended to be published. Similar notes can also be found within Castrén's manuscript collections in other places. For example, *Ostjaker vid Irtisch* (KK Coll 593.5.6) and *Ostjaker vid nedra Ob* (KK Coll. 593.5.7) represent analogous notes on Khanty. In particular, the notebooks kept at the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland) are interesting in this respect (Castrén 2019a: 598–609; 2019b: 966 *et passim*). As mentioned, some of Castrén's field notes have already been published and edited by Timo Salminen in *Itineraria 1–2* (Castrén 2019a; 2019b). It is noteworthy that the logbook-type short jottings tend to be typical of the first journey, while Castrén wrote more letters and travel narratives during the second journey, suggesting the latter were ready for publication. In addition to the travel narratives, letters and logbook-type diaries, Castrén also made linguistic notes consisting of grammar, meaning paradigms collected through elicitation, vocabularies and folklore, similarly collected through elicitation.

Castrén is best known for his travel narratives or travelogues that were published in newspapers and in the *Bulletin* of the Russian Academy of Sciences at the time of his travels. Castrén subsequently put together a travelogue based on those writings (Castrén 1852). It is interesting that the travel

narratives were mostly written in the form of letters to Castrén's friends or his supporter and mentor Sjögren. They are written in the first-person singular and their tone is colloquial, and from time to time they turn into detailed descriptions of events encountered or general characterizations of peoples and their cultures. Elsewhere, I have analyzed them as travelogues and discussed the interrelation between the epistolary and travel-narrative formats (Lukin, forthcoming). Here, I would like to note that Castrén seems to have written the letters both to report his research (Branch 1968: 343–344; Laine 2020: 128, 131) and to produce and distribute ethnographic knowledge. The letter travel narratives often constitute the only source for this knowledge, and it is remarkable how few changes Castrén made when he later edited the text (Salminen 2019a: 12). It would appear that Castrén recalled the letter travel narratives purely from memory, as they do not repeat the details found in the notebooks.

The notebooks formed during the expedition (Castrén 2019a; 2019b) can be described as log books, where Castrén noted down his travel routes and dates together with the names of the Finnish or Russian people he had encountered. Among these, one can find something that Castrén himself sometimes terms *Hvarjehanda anmärkningar* (miscellaneous notes). They are sometimes short jottings which he subsequently expanded. In addition, there are many lists of place names, words, statistical data about the number of people in different locations, notes or descriptions concerning modes of living, means of livelihood, religion, shamanism and oral traditions. Furthermore, the letter travel narratives can also be found in the notebooks. These types of travel diaries from all of Castrén's expeditions have been preserved, except for the period from autumn 1845 to spring 1846 (see Salminen's Note 1788 in Castrén 2019b: 1126). The notes are also similar to the fragmented minutes that Castrén hastily wrote in between linguistic transcriptions.

However, the notes in the manuscript *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkningar* have a more ambiguous character. Some text is well phrased and formed, and one could imagine these being published. For example, Castrén's careful description of Nenets clothing or the structure of the conical tent represent notes that seem to have been finalized. Nevertheless, most of the notes represent isolated observations and points. They are isolated in the sense of being individual remarks about some custom (such as burial) and could be separated from other notes by several empty pages. Superficially, it may seem that the manuscript forms a

framework for a monograph, which was my initial thought when I started working with the manuscript. However, compared to the manuscript with logbook-type diaries, it is clear that Castrén used *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska Anmärkningar* to arrange his non-linguistic remarks within the scheme provided on the Contents page. As the fieldwork continued, the notes adopted a more fragmented form and it also seems that Castrén began to write more notes that could not find their place in the notebook structure. This reflects the social situations in fieldwork, where one can suddenly encounter interesting details and rush to jot them down. Accordingly, the notebook is a mixture of ordered and unordered notes. I would consider it an effective representation of the practice of ethnographic fieldwork, especially the reality of where neat and orderly scientific classifications meet the everyday life of ethnographers in the field.

To make sense of the data, one can categorize Castrén's notes using James Clifford's (1990) simple (but extremely valid) categories *inscription*, *transcription* and *description*. Although Clifford's classification is based on the understandings of ethnographic fieldwork, it is sensitive to linguistically oriented research. By the term *inscription* Clifford refers to the kinds of notes one makes "in the midst of competing, distracting messages and influences" (Clifford 1990: 54). Initially, they can be mental notes (head-notes) or jottings (scratch notes) that are subsequently written or rewritten as descriptions (see also Sanjek 1990: 93–99). Once again, the *descriptions* constitute "the makings of a more or less coherent representation of an observed cultural reality", meaning they are rough and unfinished raw material for a finished account (Clifford 1990: 51). *Transcription* refers to texts that are effectively less word-to-word textualizations of speech or other communicative acts. This also refers to paradigms gathered through elicitation.

The transcriptions form the largest body of material collected by Castrén, which reflects his linguistically and philologically oriented research task. I have discussed these in relation to the previous folklore notes, which will not be commented upon herein (Lukin 2017). The notes available in the *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningar* and in the more fragmented notes fall between inscriptions and descriptions. Timo Salmi notes in his comments on Castrén's Lapland 1838 diary that because of some recurring notes (the first notes shorter than the subsequent ones), it can be inferred that Castrén added details and narration around his jottings, which resulted in travel diaries (Castrén 2019a: 218, Note 1434). In

the *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningarna* manuscript, we can find sections that represent text that is effectively ready for publication following sections with rough descriptions in a confusing order. Furthermore, the manuscript contains text that represents quoted speech and translations of folklore. As a solid conclusion, it can be said that Castrén used multiple strategies when making and organizing notes and producing knowledge. In addition, he made them publicly available for different kinds of audiences (either during fieldwork or subsequently).

As Clifford notes, the ethnographer fuses his informants with the descriptions to ensure that their viewpoints coalesce and are difficult to separate. It is within the descriptions that the ethnographer speaks for the people they study and uses representational power that is based on selecting, contextualizing and ultimately narrating the other to ensure that it is translated into the language of the ethnographer (Clifford 1990: 62–65). This remark is especially relevant to notes made in diaries and notebooks, where the notes are represented following each other either in random order or structured, as in *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningarna*. For example, it is extremely difficult to determine who told Castrén about the Christianization of the Nenets or about the island of Vajgač with its sacrificial places and idols. However, it should be clear that the structured form was finalized by Castrén himself. Moreover, some descriptions appear to be based on Castrén's own observations, such as the detailed description about harnessing the reindeer to the sledge structure. Further, there are clear indigenous voices in the notes, both as direct quotations and in details that revolve around customs and habits. As the transcriptions tend to suggest a picture of direct quotes, the inscriptions (and especially the descriptions) are indirect quotations combined with the views and points of the researcher. Again, the researcher is not collecting the material randomly, rather he is constantly choosing things and evaluating them against what he should and should not bring back from the field. This returns us to Sjögren's instructions, which reminded Castrén to collect knowledge about physical build, ways of life, clothing, customs and habits, cultural levels and religious notions.

To demonstrate how keenly Castrén followed Sjögren's instructions and his examples, I have compared *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningarna* with Sjögren's monograph on the Komi, *Die Syrjänen, ein historisch-statistisch-philologischer Versuch* (1861) in Table 1. *Die Syrjänen* has been referred to as a "landmark in the evolution of Finno-Ugrian

studies” (Branch 1973: 164). Comparing the chapters of the monograph with Castrén’s manuscript, we can observe that Castrén united the themes of Sjögren’s Chapters I and II into his first chapter. Further, Castrén’s second chapter corresponds approximately to Chapter III. In Chapter VI, Sjögren discusses themes similar to Castrén’s Chapters 3–6. Further, Castrén’s Chapter 7 corresponds to Sjögren’s Chapters IV and V. The only part missing is the language, which is related to Castrén preparing both separate grammars and vocabularies for each language he studied and the rich morphologies and other features of the Samoyedic languages. Rather than order and organization, I would like to emphasize the classes of research data, which tend to correspond. The biggest difference between Castrén and Sjögren arises between Castrén’s clear interest in mythology and vernacular religion, which was simply one subject among many others for Sjögren.

The comparison in Table 1 shows that Castrén’s way of thinking about the items to be collected and how to structure his research data not only follows Sjögren’s example, it can also be set within the longer evolving tradition of European *Völkerbeschreibung*. In the still longer traditions of traveling in Europe, the so-called *ars apodemica* included similar kinds of lists of desiderata. As has been pointed out by Stagl (1995: 278–280), the difference between the *ars apodemica* and systematic instructions for ethnographic expeditions lies in the individuals’ aims of educating oneself and carrying out a certain task set forth in the instructions, and thus in contingency and systematicity. This systematic nature of collecting in order to take part in an international academic venture ties Castrén’s work in the evolving European tradition of ethnography. Additionally, I want to emphasize, firstly, the ever-consistent focus on linguistic groups and, secondly, the way in which these linguistic groups began to be defined through the regions in which they lived. In the process, the linguistic and regional markers started to represent decisive elements in defining and describing ethnic groups. Thirdly, there also seems to be a beginning for a research tradition whereby both material and immaterial items are collected, but the immaterial data – based on language – provide a basis for historical and comparative analysis. The material evidence has since then served the comparative analysis, but it has had a secondary role. (See, e.g., Siikala 2006: 159–160.) Fourthly, and related to my previous point, the research task was emphatically historical and comparative, which is why none of the research materials was considered to be sufficient on their own.

5. Ethnological lectures and the definition of ethnography

Ethnologiska föreläsningar öfver Altaiska folken samt Samojediska och Tatariska sagor (Castrén 1857a) represents the text that Castrén wrote for the series of lectures he read at Imperial Alexander University (Helsinki) in May 1851. This was after he was nominated as the first professor of Finnish. The “sagor” representing mythic tales or legends were probably added to the volume in the editorial process because they represented part of what was understood to be ethnology or ethnography at the time. In his introduction to the volume, the editor Carl Gustaf Borg notes that Castrén prepared the lectures extremely quickly and that he definitely did not intend the text to be published (Borg 1857: V–VI). In the lectures, Castrén highlights the communities that he theorized as being of the same origin (and thus race⁷), including their histories, ways of life and traditions. Moreover, the introduction for the lectures defines the premises of ethnography and historical and comparative linguistics, which makes them extremely valuable when evaluating Castrén’s methodology. The introduction also appears to address issues that were central to the lectures on Finnish mythology that Castrén read in autumn 1851 and spring 1852 (Castrén 1853; see Ahola and Lukin 2019). After the introduction, Castrén moves from what he understood to be the furthest linguistic (or racial) relatives of the Finns to those closer, ending the lectures by describing the Finns and Finnish tribes. Consequently, the Tungusic peoples, Mongols and Turks are discussed first, after which Castrén describes the Samoyeds, the Yenisei Ostyaks (the Ket and Kot peoples), the Ob-Ugric peoples, Volga and Permic tribes, and finally the Finnic⁸ ones. The more written evidence available, the longer Castrén talks about the people in question. The chapters tend to follow a certain model in which the national character, place of origin, history, different subgroups of the people with their population numbers and contemporary living places represent the background knowledge

7. As already noted by Mikko Korhonen (1986: 60), Castrén seems to think linguistic and racial affinity are similar things.

8. The terminology of Castrén differs from the modern one. In this article, *Finnar* is translated as Finno-Ugric, *Finska stammen* as Finnic. Finns and Finnish refers to Castrén’s *Finnar* in the sense of speakers of Finnish. According to Castrén, Saami is so close to Finnish that they historically represent the same tribe (Castrén 1857a: 151).

presented at the beginning. Next, Castrén proceeds to describe the different linguistic branches in more detail, talking about their livelihoods, customs and manners, cultural level (“civilization”, literature), and religion.

The chapter *Samojeder* ‘Samoyeds’ in the lectures is short and concise. It begins by providing a general overview of the Samoyedic branch of languages, its geographical distribution, and the way of life of the speakers of the Samoyedic languages. Subsequently, Castrén notes that although there is no available historical evidence on the origins of the Samoyeds and craniology has resulted in unreliable and ambiguous results, it should be clear from the linguistic perspective that the Samoyeds and Finno-Ugric tribes belong to the same race. Castrén lists the three larger branches: 1) the Yurak Samoyeds (the contemporary Nenets), 2) the Tawgy Samoyeds (the contemporary Nganasan), and 3) the Ostyak Samoyeds (the contemporary Selkup). He then lists two smaller ones: 4) the Yenisei Samoyeds (contemporary Enets) and 5) the Kamass. He notes that while the Samoyeds in the north own and herd reindeer, the Ostyak Samoyeds are mainly hunters and fishers. Moreover, although the Kamass live in southern Siberia and are hunters, some may own a small number of reindeer. According to Castrén’s theory, the Kamass provide a link between the northern Samoyeds and the Altai mountains, which is proven by their southern living areas and some family names that are shared with the northern Samoyeds. Castrén explains that the Samoyed tribes vacated the Altai region after Turkic tribes settled there, which happened before the first written evidence was recorded in the Chronicle of Nestor. Referring to oral tradition, he notes that the Samoyed tribes had contact and confrontations with Finno-Ugric tribes (especially the Ostyaks), who drove the Samoyeds from the lower Ob to the Arctic Ocean coast. They also interacted with the so-called Čuds on the western side of the Ural Mountains. Finally, Castrén analyses some toponymic evidence. For example, he argues that the river name Ischma (Ižma) is equivalent to the Finnish *isomaa* ‘large land’. Subsequently, this was called *Bol’shaja Zemlja* in Russian and *Arka ya* in Tundra Nenets, both meaning the same as Finnish *isomaa*.

When comparing the discussed manuscripts with the *Ethnologiska föreläsningar*, one must note that the lecture section on the Samoyeds is extremely concise and moves on a more abstract level than the minutiae of the ethnographic notes in the manuscripts. Nevertheless, the lectures and the *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningarna* manuscript share the same structure. In particular, the categories are similar. Again,

these refer back to the instructions and practical example of A. J. Sjögren, as discussed previously. Moreover, even the definition of the research aims and ethnography had clear attachments to Sjögren. While this may not be a surprise, I would like to discuss this in relation to the definition of ethnography itself and in relation to Castrén, Sjögren and their predecessors. The definition of ethnography is often cited as follows:

Detta [ethnografi] är ett nytt namn för en gammal sak. Man förstår dermed vetenskapen om folkslagens religion, samhällsskick, seder och bruk, lefnadssätt, boningar, med ett ord: om allt, som hör till deras inre och yttre lif. Man kunde också betrakta ethnografien såsom en del af kulturhistorien, men icke all nationer ega en historia i högre mening, utan deras historia utgöres just af ethnografien. (Castrén 1857a: 8)

This [ethnography] is a new name for an old thing. It means research into the religion, society, customs, way of life, dwellings of peoples, in one word: everything belonging to their inner and outer life. Ethnography could be regarded as a part of cultural history, but not all nations have a history in the higher sense, but the very ethnography is their history.

Continuing his reasoning, Castrén notes that because many people do not have written history, their history in the sense of ethnography can be interpreted in their oral traditions. Here, Castrén refers to Finnish runo-songs (*våra runor* or ‘our runosongs’), expecting researchers to compare conceptions in these with those in the songs of related peoples, “who have still preserved their pure, original character”. For Castrén, ethnography is about history, and he lists this subject as one of the ancillary disciplines of history together with philology, or better linguistics. Philology focuses on the textual criticism of old (Greek) texts, whereas linguists can (and should) study multiple languages that can lack a written tradition. Linguistics can also be called comparative philology: it concentrates on languages that are materially related (through phonology, words and word forms) and hence are part of the same language family. The aim of such comparison is to reveal the developmental processes of these languages (Castrén 1857a: 2–7). Comparative ethnography “covers our ancient songs and conceptions on the whole”. Together with linguistics, this permits a description of the relationships between the tribes related to the Finns (Castrén 1857a: 11). It should be noted that Castrén did not think that oral traditions would reflect history in the sense of narration as such. Rather, folklore represents a source that enables researchers to reveal comparable

conceptions, allowing them to find the most original one and help to uncover the development of the conception. This follows the example of Sjögren and Müller in seeking the history of peoples with no written history in their language, via oral communication through comparisons.

Hence, ethnography is part of a research scheme with the aim of untangling the structure and history of mankind through comparative methods. It is based on the understanding of structures and is comparable to zoology. Castrén extensively cites August Schleicher, who set zoology and philology in parallel and brought the idea of development that occurs from a pure and original form to one more developed and advanced (and more mingled and unstructured) into philology. Compared to the methods used in disciplines that would subsequently be called physical anthropology, comparative philology and ethnography can provide more precise and reliable results, although their task in revealing the structure and history was the same. Castrén argues this point after introducing linguistics and ethnography.

Further, Castrén criticizes craniology and its methods as uncertain and underdeveloped, although he does not rule out the possibility of its future development. Race as a notion is a valid conception for Castrén, and he appears to use it interchangeably with the notion of people (*folkslag*). However, he does not accept the theses of Retzius, Blumenbach, Heusinger or Bory de Saint-Vincent but denounces them again and again. These trains of thought link Castrén to the general tendencies of thought in the Academy in Saint Petersburg and the Russian Geographical Society. Von Baer followed the so-called monogenist theory according to which human varieties had developed due to differing environmental (economic and cultural) conditions, but unlike his teacher Blumenbach, von Baer preferred to call races “tribes” (*Stamm*). He also criticized craniology before he became acquainted with Retzius’s methods. (See, e.g., Tammiksaar & Kalling 2019.) Castrén sets himself the task of uncovering the history of mankind, but he refuses to discuss the varieties in terms of physical traits. He insists on language and linguistic features as decisive elements in deciding the varieties of human societies. Here, he comes close to the discussions within the Russian Geographical Society (Knight 1998: 121–122). Similarly, Castrén’s emphasis on mythology can be set in parallel with the so-called mythological school of Fëdor Ivanovič Buslaev (1818–1897), but unlike Buslaev and his colleagues who could work with written Slavic materials, Castrén had to rely on oral texts (Balandin 1988).

Recently, Juha Pentikäinen has argued that Castrén's fieldwork and lectures show him to be the founder of what Pentikäinen calls "northern ethnography", which can also be observed in the work of Antal Réguly (Pentikäinen 1997; 2007⁹). It is undeniable that in the course of his lectures, Castrén was calling for more researchers to work within the languages that he called Altaic. The aim was to enhance the comparative and historical work which had only been practiced thoroughly among the Indo-European languages. Consequently, we can perceive Castrén's task as northern, although the geographical scope of Altaic also implies southern. However, we cannot view Castrén as the founder of ethnography. Quite the contrary, his work should be viewed in the larger European and Russian scholarly contexts described previously. Accordingly, it should be clear that when Castrén refers to ethnography as "a new name for an old thing", he is not claiming to be the first ethnographer. He is simply referring to the task he was commissioned to perform by the Academy and to earlier researchers and travelers of the 18th century. The term was new to Castrén and the Russian Academy of Sciences, as exemplified by Sjögren being nominated as the first chair of ethnography (more precisely of the languages and ethnography of the Finno-Ugric and Caucasian peoples) in the Academy of Sciences (and the world) in 1844 (Laine 2020: 136–137; Vermeulen 2015: 409). The task, that of *Völker-Beschreibung*, was old. It was familiar to Castrén from the Finnish discussions that had strong Schlözerian tones since the work of Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1802) and from the discussions in Saint Petersburg.

6. Conclusion: Beyond Finland and the North

The aim of this article has been to set Castrén's ethnography (the notes, fieldwork, consequent travel narratives, and lectures) in its disciplinary and historical context. In doing so, it has been necessary to widen the scope of discussion from Finnish and northern contexts to encompass also Imperial Russian and European ones. In addition to Pentikäinen's aim of placing Castrén on a separate pedestal of northern ethnography "half a century before Franz Boas" (Pentikäinen 2007: 195), there has been a tendency to emphasize Castrén's significance for Finnish humanities

9. Similar remarks can also be found in Pentikäinen (2001).

and Finno-Ugrian studies (e.g. Salminen 2019b: 21). Branch noted that Sjögren's name was forgotten (or marginalized) in this process as one of the important links between Castrén and Sjögren's predecessors (Branch 1973: 256–257, 261–262). Recently, Päivi Laine has attempted to balance this picture, noting that Sjögren's name and scholarly work have also been appreciated (Laine 2020: 124–125, 221–222). Following Branch and Laine, I have sought balance and I wanted to “escape altogether from the notion of ‘founders’” (Branch 1973: 262) and from revolving around centers and margins. In other words, I have positioned Sjögren and Castrén in the continuum of the development of ethnography in the Imperial Russian and European setting, which is wider than the northern dimension or the finnocratic disputes over national heroes. Succinctly, Castrén's fieldnotes and ethnologic lectures constitute less than the foundation of ethnography and more than Finnish research history.

In setting Castrén in the international academic context, it is important to focus on the fundamental relationship between Castrén and Sjögren and the fact that Sjögren asked Castrén to conduct fieldwork, he drew up instructions, gave Castrén advice, and promoted Castrén's future career in Saint Petersburg. At that time, Sjögren was an academician in Saint Petersburg and had been working for years conducting fieldwork and developing his methodology. Castrén's research methodology tends to follow Sjögren's “triple methodology” (Branch 1973), focusing on linguistic and ethnographic evidence and detailed archival work (where possible).

Sjögren's methodology was original, but it did not develop on its own. The type of ethnographic and linguistic methodology developed by Sjögren and followed by Castrén could not have emerged without the earlier contacts between German scholars and the Russian tsars and the consequent research expeditions in Siberia. As the same methodology developed in several European countries into ethnology and folklore studies (focused more on national peasant cultures than on the colonial others), a division developed within the practice of ethnography in Russia. Consequently, the manuscript *Ethnographiska, Historiska och Statistiska anmärkningarna* together with the scattered ethnographic notes in Castrén's manuscript collections should be viewed within this context, where the history of humanity met with the nationalist interests of Russia and the Grand Duchy of Finland. For Castrén, the pertinent questions were about the Finns (and their history) and the global task of revealing the history of humanity. These tasks were not in conflict, but rather they represented

together a fruitful arena where the history and peculiar nature of the Finns could be described at the same time as the larger context of all humanity.

The international scope of Castrén's ethnography and its relation to Sjögren's program has been highlighted in this article by comparing the structure and content of different kinds of instructions, which included detailed lists on what to collect as well as notes about how to find informants. The lists show the continuity of Müllerian *Völker-Beschreibung*, which emphasized linguistic and geographical criteria in categorizing communities, on the one hand, and the collection of material evidence for the categories, on the other. Notes were an essential part of the Müllerian fieldwork tradition: they formed the evidence from which the comparisons could be made. Although the fieldnotes tend to create a sense of objective data obtained from the people in which Castrén was interested, the research results and audiences reveal that Castrén was working to create a history for the Finns. The details that Castrén noted down also resonate with the Müllerian traditions.

In ethnography, Castrén sought features that, on the one hand, represented peculiarities that set the people in question apart, and on the other hand, details that could be compared to those corresponding to other peoples. These features were often material ones, such as clothing, dwellings or reindeer harnesses. However, other features could only be known through speech and practices alone, such as religion and manners or national characteristics. What is more, the peoples were categorized linguistically, which is why all the other features found their place under the linguistic communities. Consequently, in addition to these lists of *desiderata* to be collected, there were already clear categories to which they belonged, facilitating comparisons between human groups. When Castrén selected details and recorded them in his notes, they did not always find their place in the categories created prior to the encounter with the Samoyed peoples. However, there are astonishingly few details that did not find their place in the ethnological or mythological lectures or travelogues. In these processes, the details of the everyday life of the Samoyeds fell into the larger picture and narratives, which might have very different meanings compared to the informants.

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