The Ecology of Metre

A special issue of RMN Newsletter

Edited by
Ilya Sverdlov and Frog

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RMN Newsletter is a medium of contact and communication for members of the Retrospective Methods Network (RMN). The RMN is an open network which can include anyone who wishes to share in its focus. It is united by an interest in the problems, approaches, strategies and limitations related to considering some aspect of culture in one period through evidence from another, later period. Such comparisons range from investigating historical relationships to the utility of analogical parallels, and from comparisons across centuries to developing working models for the more immediate traditions behind limited sources. RMN Newsletter sets out to provide a venue and emergent discourse space in which individual scholars can discuss and engage in vital cross-disciplinary dialogue, present reports and announcements of their own current activities, and where information about events, projects and institutions is made available.

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Editor’s Note

Since the founding of RMN Newsletter, oral poetry traditions and poetic texts as sources have been addressed from different angles in every issue of the journal. Fundamental to poetry is, of course, metrics and the workings of language through which it manifests. Formal aspects of poetics and how a poetic system works are methodologically relevant to interpreting features of any particular poetic source. Understanding the organizing principles and structures of a poetic system and its use in practice is a fundamental step toward the distinction of meaningful features and variations. Without this perspective, a researcher might easily project meanings and interpretations on what, from the view of the poet and his or her intended audience, might be nothing more than organic outcomes of entextualization at the level of verbal texture or an outcome of regular conventions independent of a poet’s intentions. The Ecology of Metre has been organized as a special issue in order to bring into focus the dynamics of such workings at the level of form.

Organizing a special issue on metrics and poetics was proposed in 2014 by Ilya Sverdlov, who advocated that this topic is as significant as it is subtle. Sverdlov observed that although poetics may be addressed in every issue of RMN Newsletter, it more often than not remains in the shadows. Introductions to metrics seem earlier to have been more widely taught and even required in some institutions’ programs for folklore studies and for some areas of philology. Although this seems to have waned from different areas of education, there is in fact a lively international discourse surrounding metrics and poetics. There also seems to be a current rise in interest in the subtle interplays of formal aspects of poetry with language in the communication of meanings and in the structuring of images and motifs through the conventions poetic representation. The Ecology of Metre only brushes the surface of the wide ranges of areas of potential interest here. We hope that the concentrated attention given to metre and poetics in this special issue will stimulate attention to and discussion of these topics, and the advance and refinement of new approaches that are being developed.

The articles collected in this volume present a number of new methods and methodological strategies as well as theoretical perspectives that will be of interest to a variety of scholars working with retrospective methods. The Retrospective Methods Network (RMN) has also shown more general activity. The Austmarr Network held its fifth annual meeting in Visby, Gotland (15th–16th October 2015), on the theme “No One Is an Island”, concentrating on insular cultures in the Baltic Sea region. The Old Norse Folklorists Network in its turn held its fourth annual meeting in Tartu, Estonia (10th–12th December 2015), this time taking a methodological emphasis on “The Ontology of Supernatural Encounters”. Reports on both events are to be found in the current issue. Plans are already in motion for future events both organized by these branches of the RMN and also independently by the RMN’s members.

The positive attention to RMN Newsletter itself and discussion of work published therein has also increased, for which we are thankful and appreciative, and do our best to meet the interests and standards of our readership. We work to remain a venue for information and discussions that are carried by many voices representing a variety of fields. That variety and the acuity, innovativeness and quality of work behind those voices is what gives life and richness to this venue, and we look forward to the continued discussion by your voices into the future.

Frog
University of Helsinki
Metre is a living thing. It exists in and is shaped by an environment that includes language, genres and practices as well as oral and/or written identity-bearing texts, and these are reciprocally affected and shaped by metres with which they are connected and potentially also by those metres to which they stand in resonant, or perhaps contrastive relations. All of these features furthermore exist and operate within broader environments of societies and cultures, linking them to social roles, identities, classes and situations that shape how they are perceived, valued and apprehended as meaningful. Taken together, all of these factors, with their complex and often subtle relations constitute what we would like to call the ecology of metre.

The articles assembled in the present collection bring the ecology of metre into focus, addressing it from a variety of complementary angles and disciplinary perspectives with a range of methodologies. Discussions treat poetic forms from periods as wide-ranging as the Viking Age to some still found today, and that occur in a variety of languages including Old Norse and Icelandic of different periods, both Old English and Modern English, Nenets, and a trans-lingual Finno-Karelian poetic idiom. The genres addressed extend from vernacular mythological epics to Christian theological poems and from skaldic praise poetry of royal courts to popular literary ballads. The strength of this volume lies precisely in the diversity of these contributions that are simultaneously brought into dialogue with one another through a number of common thematic topics and shared concerns.

These works are united by addressing the metre of their sources as part of an overall system in which it lived. They underscore that scholars should be consciously aware of this system, lest their perspective become skewed. The present introduction reviews some of the central themes that form the cohesive web uniting this collection in order to make the dialogues between the diverse studies more salient. When the complementary perspectives comprising this volume are viewed together, the insights offered by each article is enriched by the perspectives offered by others.

The Ecology Model

Applying a biological metaphor to expressive forms affects how we think about them, and thus is not neutral (Hafstein 2001). However, the metaphor of ‘ecology’ has proven a powerful and effective tool for conceptualizing the dynamic interconnectedness of individual aspects of culture, traditions and expressive media within a society and how they simultaneously become organized in relation to one another. A paradigm known as ‘ecolinguistics’ has evolved from the approach to language as situated in a social and natural environment or ‘ecology of language’ (e.g. Haugen 2001 [1972]; see Fill & Mühlhäuser 2001). Research on folklore developed a corresponding concept of ‘tradition ecology’, with a more nuanced view on practices of which linguistic behaviour may only be one part (e.g. Honko 1981; 1985; see also Kamppinen 1989: 37–46). Metre is here considered to exist and operate within just such ecologies, where it is a creative tool. Within that environment, metre simultaneously shapes and is shaped by language, tradition, and textual environments with other co-existing metres. The ecology extends from the worlds of texts and discourse to the social environments in which these manifest. Texts and utterances are produced and received by people of different statuses, roles, ages, genders, and affiliations with all sorts of...
groups and categories that can potentially become associated with a metre and its situated uses. Ultimately, we can say that the people who use, abuse, transmit, and recreate texts composed in a particular metre create a relationship with that metre. That relationship participates in how other people understand or value the metre, while the use of the metre simultaneously affects how the individual is viewed in society through alignments and disalignments with that metre’s users and uses.

Attending to the ecology of metre means viewing metre as a phenomenon situated in such an ecology. As a consequence, metre is not viewed as an abstract and ideal metrical template aloof in the ether; it is instead treated as inextricably engaged in relations with language, traditions and their uses in society. Metre is seen as a living thing within an ecology, where it interacts with and evolves in relation to other features and forms of expression that can equally be viewed as co-participating in that ecology and its societal and empirical landscapes. From this perspective, recognizing and understanding this ecology is essential for the study of any metre, but also for the study of other inhabitants of that ecology that interact with and evolve in relation to metres.

**Textualisation and Analysis**

Despite ongoing advances in technologies, textual and graphic representation in visual media, whether printed or electronic, remain central to the study of poetry and poetics in verbal art. This is somewhat ironic considering that the poetics of verbal art are aurally and temporally perceived. It is nevertheless warranted in research. Such visual media give simultaneous access to protracted sequences of text, the ability to move through a long text very rapidly and with great precision, as well as provide the potential to review that text at the rate desired by the researcher rather than that of the performer. However, the textualisation of poetry customarily reduces it to a verbal transcript or text-script: out of the spectrum of features entailed in an individual’s performance, often only the lexical material is presented. This problem tends to be taken for granted with literary poetry, which is produced for consumption from the printed page. In research on oral cultures, however, changing technologies increased the range of aspects of performance that could be practically documented. The performance-oriented turn then brought the situated interactive aspect of verbal art into focus with the full spectrum of meaningful resources that a performer might employ, from changes in tempo and pitch to posture and positioning in the performance space (e.g. Bauman 1984). Partly in response to the earlier norm of reducing performances to text-scripts, new ways were sought to graphically textualise the spectrum of meaningful features and structures involved in expressions of verbal art (e.g. Hymes 1981; Fine 1984; Tedlock 1986). In the present collection, Jarkko Niemi of the University of Tampere grapples precisely with this question of textualisation, but he also takes the issue a step further to address the reciprocal potential of the representation strategy as an analytical tool.

Niemi builds on the work of Lauri Honko (1998) with a perspective from ethnomusicology. He seeks to develop a dynamic model of textualisation that can offer a more holistic view of performance presented in a written and graphic (print-publishable) form. This discussion is built on the analysis of a Nenets oral epic performance that he recorded at the end of the 1990s. (The Nenets are a Uralic language group and shamanic culture of Northern Russia.) The questions Niemi addresses are not restricted to formal representation *per se* and their degree of ‘exactitude’. Karl Reichl (2012: 9) observes that “[o]r.al poetry is as a rule sung poetry, and yet few ethnographic transcriptions (and even fewer medieval texts) record the music.” Niemi, in contrast, gives attention precisely to this acoustic domain. He is particularly concerned with rendering variation in pitch across series of verses and the annotation of performed time in a written form.

Performed time structures the rhythm of a poetic metre in durationally-controlled time. The analytical grid on which Niemi maps sung verses reciprocally becomes a tool that makes the metrical structure of the verses graphically transparent. This method of
representation reveals the elocutionary interface of language and melody or intonational structure in time. Together, these form the sung metre of performance. The analysis also makes salient the role of euphonic syllables that complete positions in the performed rhythm, actualizing the metrically well-formed verses. The analytical mapping of different features can then be applied as a tool for stylistic analyses at multiple levels of realizing oral-poetic text in performance. The representation of verbal art is itself an important tool for accessing metre, which is not a phenomenon of language only. By bringing the nuances of performance into focus, language becomes contextualized as one part of an integrated speech event that is manifested by embodied individuals in time, space, and an empirical situation.

The Problem of Text-Scripts
Metre is a tool that manifests a perceivable quality of text – a quality dependent on articulation. This may be a vocal performance, which inevitably reduces all possible variations to a single – if transient – acoustic form, or what Reuven Tsur (1992: ch. 2) describes as a ‘mental performance’, reading silently to oneself or going over lines of verse in one’s mind without necessarily resolving all possible variations. Metres of poetry known only through written text-scripts have been modelled on the basis of text corpora for more than a century. Frameworks for such metrical imaginings have in many cases been built on quantitative analyses of lines of verse that seek to identify patterns in linguistic features from which metre can be extrapolated. Eduard Sievers’ 1893 study of Old Germanic alliterative metres, remarkable in its scope, is a classic example. Yet Sievers also attempted to use musical notation as another means to understand Old Germanic metre (1912). This is because poetic metres do not exist in a mathematical vacuum, and even knowing the number of syllables, feet, and so forth per line rarely equals knowing what a given metre is and how it works.

The case in Nenets epic metre is interesting because the majority of sources through which Nenets epic has been studied seem to have been transcribed by hand from the dictation of verses, excluding the euphonic verbal elements that are non-semantic yet vital for the completion of metrical positions in the rhythms of sung performance. Oral poetry will customarily exhibit formal differences when it is presented in a mode of dictation rather than in its conventional mode of performance (see e.g. Ready 2015 and works there cited). Differences like the omission of non-semantic elements, as in the dictation of Nenets epic, belong to the ideology of the text of the culture. The same is true of the omission of corresponding “strictly performance-based features” (Foley 2000: 83) of sung performance by a transcriber raised within the tradition. Were it not for the analysis of recordings of sung performance, the features of Nenets epic metre analyzed by Niemi and the relationship of words to metrical stress would probably remain a mystery. This has methodological implications for oral poetry that can only be accessed through text-scripts.

Even where text-scripts may be accurate to a sung metre, these alone may not reveal the metre per se. For example, a study by Jaan Ross and Ilse Lehiste (2001: 116) led them to argue that the metre of the Finnic alliterative tetrameter might never be accurately understood without audio evidence. Simplifying somewhat, this is because the relationship between lexical stress and metrical stress simply does not ‘make sense’ from the perspective of Western poetries. The number of syllabic positions in a line and the use of alliteration would be readily identified. However, the metre has a dual parameter governing word placement according to a) lexically stressed syllables and b) the length of those syllables: long lexically stressed syllables align with metrical stress while short stressed syllables contrast with it (see also Frog, this volume). A systematic contrast of lexical stress with metrical stress is counter-intuitive to Western poetics and the dual parameter (lexical stress + quantity) seems to be generally unusual (cf. Fabb 2009: 163). The principles relating language to metrical stress are so ‘foreign’ that it would quite possibly prove impossible to reverse-engineer them unless they were assumed as a
possibility in advance (and the role of alliteration linked to lexical stress without regulation by the metrical template would likely only confuse investigators).

The problem of assumptions interfering with the reception of the text-script of a poem can even affect interpretations of modern literary poetry today. Michael Cade-Stewart of King’s College London tackles the issue of the metre of William Butler Yeats’s “The Lake of Innisfree”, which has troubled metricists for decades. Like Niemi, Cade-Stewart turns to a sound recording as the key to unravelling the mystery. Relying on a rare recording of Yeats reading this poem aloud, Cade-Stewart is able to demonstrate that the problems in the metrical interpretation of the poem are due to reading it in the wrong literary context. Relying on literary-critical history and an extensive electronic empirical corpus of 19th century English poetry, Cade-Stewart also restores the context to the poem in question, which reveals a background in a different metrical form than has generally been presumed. This background then informs our understanding of its metre, an understanding not accessible without moving beyond the assumptions of a 20th-century perspective.

The relationship between metre and text-script is a vital site of research and exploration. The discussions of Niemi and Cade-Stewart warn us of the limitations of retrospective methods concerning what can with certainty be reconstructed from corpora of text-scripts. They remind us that there may be alternatives which have not yet been fully considered. The potential for the relation of text-scripts to metre to be subtle and even deceptive does not, however, mean that a lack of audio recordings is always and inevitably an insurmountable obstacle. There is no reason to assume that the Old English poem Beowulf, for example, necessarily does not accurately reflect the oral form of the metre, and therefore that its organizational principles necessarily cannot be inductively identified through analysis of the text.

A crucial point not often considered is the relationship between the representation of poetry and the understanding of what the ‘text’ is – i.e. the ideology of ‘text’ in the culture. From this perspective, the accurate representation of the oral metrical form in the transcribed text can itself be interpreted as reflecting a vernacular text ideology. Such an ideology can be assumed to be behind the writing out of rather than the omission of expletive particles in Old Norse poems where these non-semantic particles are necessary for the completion of metrical positions (Kuhn 1928). These textualisation choices may equally reflect ideologies of written text and how written texts were expected to be used (cf. also Saarinen 2013). The investigation of relationships between text-scripts and metre itself opens into questions of ideas and understandings behind the production of such texts.

The independent durability of written text allows text-script–metre relations to evolve over time as the same script is interpreted, reinterpreted and poetic forms are reused and reinvented in dialogue with the circulation of written poetry. This is relevant not only to modern poetry like that of Yeats which has been produced for circulation via the printed page. It is also relevant to revivals of traditions where there as been a discontinuity in interpersonal transmission and people seek to reconstitute it from looking through text-scripts and perhaps consulting archival recordings where these are available, as has been done with Karelian lament in Finland (e.g. Wilce & Fenigsen 2015). No less relevant is to consider aural traditions (see e.g. Coleman 1996). For example, Old Norse and Old English poetry seem to have had a lively circulation in written form. Viking Age and medieval Old Norse poetry seems to have still received animated attention in Iceland more or less until modernism encroached on the society. Although the skaldic verse of sagas seems to have passed from the oral tradition, a tradition of being read aloud and heard seems to have persisted much longer, raising interesting questions about the aurality of such verse as something experienced and learned through performance, potentially with continuities going back to (and evolving from) a time when such poetry was indeed an oral tradition.

The ecology of metre is a temporally bound phenomenon, a phenomenon that is
continuously changing. Whole poetic systems are in ongoing processes of evolution, quite often in an endless dialogue between conservatism, innovation, and inevitable organic change. Poetic texts and the metrical forms with which they are encoded may become suspended in writing, but also in an oral tradition, while language and societies change around them. When addressing a text which has become suspended in this way, it is relevant to consider both the ecology of its entextualization on the one hand and that of its reception and reproduction on the other, which could be quite different in terms of the meanings and associations with which they inform the particular work.

**Metre, Poetics and Language**

John Miles Foley (e.g. 1996) discusses oral metre and language as existing and evolving in a ‘symbiotic’ relationship. Asking ‘which came first’ – metre or language – is a chicken-and-the-egg problem that underestimates how both oral metre and language emerge and evolve within an existing ecology. The perceivable qualities of oral metres in particular are rooted in and dependent on features of a language’s phonology that can be perceived and distinguished. However, as those features of phonology change, so does the metre, and thus syllabic differentiations made by poets in the Viking Age and much of the Middle Ages were no longer perceived in 18th century Iceland, and thus those distinctions no longer operated in metres historically descended from that earlier period. Phonology within poetic diction may also shift, marking difference from aesthetically unmarked speech, as in Nenets epic (Niemi, this volume). It is even possible for the symbiosis between metre and the diction of language within it to lead to the maintenance of archaic inflectional forms and whole grammatical cases that have dropped out of other forms of speech (Nikolaev 2011).

Part of this symbiosis entails the evolution of a type of language as the ‘way of speaking’ in the poetic form, which Foley (1995) refers to as its *register* (see also Agha 2007). Poetic registers may be differentiated to varying degrees as part of their process of evolution, making the idiom more distinctive (Frog 2015). They may also evolve highly idiomatic and metaphorical systems of reference, as in Old Norse skaldic poetry (e.g. Meissner 1921) or Karelian laments (Stepanissner A 2012; Stepanova E 2015). The evolution of vocabulary is often linked to conventions of poetic form: poetic systems with an organizing principle of alliteration are inclined to evolve equivalence vocabulary that allows ‘the same thing’ to be said with different alliteration (Roper 2012); systems with an organizing principle of semantic parallelism may simply require ‘the same thing’ to be said in at least two different ways (Fox 2014). Nevertheless, the evolution of diction remains concentrated within the subject domains and contexts of the poetry’s use, leading the register of a poetic system to be better equipped to say some things rather than others in response to the social aspect of its ecology in practice (Frog 2015).

The structuring mechanisms of a metre also lead certain word combinations or phraseology to become regular and predictable (reciprocally providing a model for expression). This leads the lexicons of many oral poetries to be rich in fixed idioms used in certain metrical positions corresponding to the formulae investigated by Milman Parry (e.g. 1928a–b), the work at the foundation of what evolved into Oral-Formulaic Theory (see Lord 1960; Foley 1988; Foley & Ramey 2012). The quite restrictive view of the formula proposed by Parry at the end of the 1920s is now considered far too narrow. Today, a formula in poetry is more commonly regarded as a verbal unit with a distinct meaning and/or package of associations, implications and so forth (e.g. Foley & Ramey 2012; Frog 2015). In this volume, such language is discussed in different forms by both Frog of the University of Helsinki and Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir of the University of Iceland. Whereas Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir looks at formulae in relation to variable metrical environments and their relationships across poetries, Frog looks at the systemic interaction of formulae in the formation of individual lines of verse and sequences of verses. However, certain word combinations can also exhibit recurrent use without reflecting a coherent unit of meaning;
they can instead have a functional role to meet metrical demands of alliteration and/or rhyme, as discussed in the contribution of Cole Nyqvist of the University of Oslo. Metre thus shapes use of language in the register, while the register reciprocally evolves to equip its users to meet the requirements of the metre — at least for the types of things that users of the poetic form tend to say.

Where formulae, verses and whole poems become established in the tradition, historical changes in the language may also affect their form. This may require a phrase to alter in order to remain metrically well-formed (Frog, this volume). It may also be compensated for in performance (e.g. Lauerma 2004); for example, reductions caused by syncope or apocope in a language may allow one syllable to be performed as two, in which case phonetically similar words may be treated as metrically variable (Sarv 2015: 10; cf. Snorri Sturluson’s 13th-century description of certain syllables as ‘slow’ in a line that looks in its textualisation to be one metrical position short: Faulkes 1999: 7; cf. Helgi Skúli Kjartansson 2009: 250–252 and works there cited). The verbal frameworks of such verse and poems can be capitalized on as resources for the formation of new compositions, as Nyqvist discusses in the case of Old Norse skaldic verse. On the other hand, these links between language and metre are part of a much more dynamic process in performance practice, as underscored by Niemi (cf. also Lord 1960; Honko 1998). A fundamental feature of all oral-poetic traditions is that they develop both linguistic resources and conventions for the production and reproduction of verse, and those resources and conventions evolve over time.

A Metre or Metres?

Metres are often treated as singular without considering their relationships to other metres co-existing in the same ecology. This way of thinking is easy to slip into where a single basic metre is used across a variety of genres, as was the case with the Old Germanic alliterative metre and the Finnic alliterative tetrameter. However, even within these examples there seems to have been some difference in how metrical features operated across different genres (e.g. Turville-Petre 1976: xvii; Frog & Stepanova 2011: 202; Roper 2011a).

At least some of these differences seem to be connected with the mode or modes of performance. The performance mode may yield a full actualization of the metre in performed time, whereby the relationship between metrical and lexical stresses become salient, as in Kalevala-metre. The performance mode may also organize the syllabic rhythm of a metrical line to align metrical stress and lexical stress in performed time, producing syllabically longer lines with a distinct metrical structure as in the Nenets epic tradition discussed by Niemi, and yet it is only in performance that metrical stress seems to operate in the poetry. The same also becomes prominent in some regions of the Finnic tetrameter (of which Kalevala-metre is the North Finnic form). In the region of Ingria, different modes of singing can organize verses of the metre in a variety of ways in performance. The Kalevala-metre then moves to a deep structure as an organizing principle of language that becomes a basis for the production of the rhythms and structures of the various modes of performance (Kallio 2013: 136–149). These cases can also be compared to the observable difference between, for example, the poetic metre of the libretto (read ‘text-script’) of some operas and its rhythmic-metrical form when the verses are realized in performance. When viewed in a broad perspective, the metre of linguistic text and the metre of its entextualization in a mode of performance can be viewed as interfaced even as they operate in parallel at different levels of the text.

The ecology of metre can have an extensive relationship to poetic features more generally, or what Lauri Harvilahdi (2003: 90–115) has discussed as an ethnocultural substratum of resources that provide the basis for traditional expression. The structuring of this aspect of the ecology of metre also extends to cultural aesthetics. Such aesthetics seem to be responsible for the apparent long resistance of Finnic language groups to the assimilation of rhymed poetic forms (Kuusi et al. 1977: 56–57; Asplund 1994: 33–34, 801–802). The same phenomenon seems to
underlie the addition of alliteration to metres assimilated into the metrical ecology of Iceland (Kristján Árnason 2011). The factors affecting metres, their evolution or even exclusion may be linked to quite broad patterns in cultural poetries.

There often appear to be multiple poetic systems and metrical forms coexisting and interacting in a single metrical environment. This was clearly the case in Iceland, where already in the Viking Age and in medieval poetry there are not only a number of metres linked to different genres but even poems that appear composed in multiple metres. In this volume, Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir addresses a post-medieval poetic tradition of what are called þulur (sg. þula) that is rooted in a well-attested variety of Old Norse poetry. However, the evolution of this poetry has moved away from the more regular forms that appear linked to recognizable Old Norse metres in the 13th century. Rather than a regularly recurrent metrical form, performers could draw on a variety of possible metrical templates as well as simply mark lines with poetic features. The study of language in this poetry highlights the symbiosis of language and metre: the regular co-occurrence of metrical form with formulaic expression reveals an interrelationship of the choice of language with poetic form in the performance of the poetry. Links between this poetry’s formulaic expressions and those of other poetries reveal how the idiom and its potential metrical forms evolved in relation to other poetic traditions within the same ecology (see also Haukur Þorgeirsson 2012). At the same time, these connections, once established, seem to have remained distinct within the use of each system; variation between them appears stable. In contrast, Nyqvist’s discussion of skaldic diction suggests that Old Norse skaldic poets, who could compose in a variety of metres and switch between them, transferred word combinations for alliteration and/or rhyme across those metres more fluidly (see also Sverđlov 2011). These discussions open new directions into looking at language across metres in relation to the practices in which they are used and the people who use them.

**Metre and Meanings**

Metre is often viewed as a phenomenon of form only. However, Dell Hymes has reminded us that “how something is said is part of what is said” (1986: 59): form can itself be meaningful. For example, performing a story in an epic poetic form will lead an audience familiar with that form and its uses to receive the story as being (or intended to be) an ‘epic’; or perhaps in relation to the tradition of epics as a parody – but in any case, form is fundamental to meaning (Frog 2016). The potential significance of form comes to the fore in Cade-Stewart’s restoration of the context of Yeats’ poem in 19th century English poetry. That frame of reference shows that the poem emerged and existed against a rich background of similar ballads ranging in content from serious to folkloric and even parodic. That frame of reference shapes the understanding of Yeats’s work and the significance of its metre. Different Old Norse metres seem to have been associated with different genres of practice (Gunnell 1995: 182–357). The metre known as ljóðahátr appears to have been characteristically used for direct speech so that the metre itself was reciprocally associated with that mode of discourse (Quinn 1992; Smirnitskaya 1993). Metre can thus itself be a meaningful indicator of how text should be interpreted and understood.

Variation in metre also holds potential for marking text in meaningful ways. Variations and embellishments that stand outside of the metrical structure of verse lines are commonplace in many poetries (e.g. Lord 1960: 50–57). These need not have any direct relation to the content and may simply rather augment the acoustic texture and aesthetic of performance. In other cases, variations may be mobilized for emphasis, as in the Old English Genesis discussed by Ilona Paulis of Radboud University Nijmegen. Paulis considers the creative use of metrical structures in Genesis A that allow its anonymous author to bring key points of certain episodes into focus. This sort of concentration of a metrical variation for emphasis in Old English is also found with so-called hypermetric lines. In the case of hypermetric lines, these patterns appear linked
to genre, since this type of use is found in narrative poetry, whereas hypermetric verses in gnomic wisdom poetry are used with greater frequency and flexibility but with less serial concentration (Hartman 2014). However, it is not clear that the metrical structures discussed by Paulis serve any particular emphatic purpose by themselves in the corpus of Old English poetry, even where they may coincide with this or that formula. In *Genesis A*, on the other hand, the author applies them as a poetic tool by clustering them around certain narrative points. The poet thus capitalizes on potential metrical variation and conscripts it into service for a meaningful function within the particular text. This sort of example is particularly relevant within the ecology of a metre. The majority of innovations applied by individual poets have negligible or no impact on a tradition, others can be taken up by contemporary and subsequent poets, advancing to a feature of social tradition (see e.g. Stepanova E 2012: 280), which in this case could have been the meaningfulness of a metrical variation.

**From Verse Lines to Units of Larger Scope**

The meaningfulness of a metrical feature discussed by Paulis relies on its concentrated recurrence across a series of verses. The resulting density of that feature across a sequence of text becomes a perceivable variation in verse texture. Other traditions of poetry involve formally structured units of larger scope than the line. For example, the *dróttkvætt* metre is composed in couplets linked by a phonic feature of alliteration, two couplets form a syntactic unit called a helming, and two helmings form an eight-line stanza. In the post-medieval *pulur* discussed by Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, the choice of or inclination to a metrical form or metrical feature can also be used to mark lines as forming groups. Such groups of lines are not prescribed by the poetic form like stanzas, nor are they necessarily regular; the recurrent use of a metrical form or feature can simply be used to mark verses as belonging together, for example as presenting a unit of narrative content. On the other hand, kalevalaic epic poetry is a stichic verse form (i.e. not composed in couplets or stanzas) with a regular metre. In his contribution to this volume, Frog shows that the use of this metrical form leads traditional units of narration to develop verbal systems as frameworks for the production of short series of verses in performance. The analysis of these units reveals them to be complex resources available to poets at a structural level above the formula, but smaller in scope than the unit of narrative content described as a ‘theme’ in Oral-Formulaic Theory.

Multi-verse sequences do not all carry equal weight or value within a larger oral text; they may be hierarchically organized (Saarinen 1994: 183–184), and some sequences may need to be made more prominent than others, as in the case discussed by Paulis. These units may also play different roles in the structuring of a larger text and may be fundamental to understanding how the larger text varies at different levels in reproduction, both generally and in relation to specific social situations and interaction (Frog, this volume). When considering prolonged performances of oral-poetic discourse, metre may come into focus in a particular analysis, but it is imperative to consider metrical form as well and its features in relation to structures and patterns of larger scope (Paulis, this volume). This has of course been a fundamental basis in the development of Oral-Formulaic Theory (e.g. ‘formula’, ‘theme’ and ‘song’ in Lord 1960), an approach to verbal art that is significantly complemented by studies in the present collection. The contribution of Niemi brings in new tools and perspectives from ethnomusicology. Frog introduces a compositional unit of intermediate scope to the formula and theme. Paulis suggests a new, integrated methodological approach to observe the simultaneous interaction and systemic functioning of narratological, metrical and syntactic emphasis in poetic communication. Together, these contributions highlight different aspects and varieties of relevance of larger compositional units to understanding a metre and how it operates.
**The Creative Individual in a Collective Tradition**

Metre is sometimes imagined as a sort of cookie-cutter for language used to stamp out verses. Within this collection, in contrast, metre is regarded by the authors as a creative tool. It equips poets to perform within a tradition and simultaneously allows them to apply it strategically, as in *Genesis A* (Paulis, this volume). The very fact that metre is regular and predictable within a poetry allows variations to be perceived as meaningful or aesthetically interesting. In the case of the *pulur* discussed by Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, metre becomes a choice and device that continuously changes in the evolving series of verses of an emergent performance. In the more formalized structures of skaldic composition discussed by Nyqvist, the verse form was a choice of the poet – and presumably a strategic choice since one of the aims of a Norse court poet was to be rewarded by a lord for his poem. Simply put, people ‘do things’ with metres not unlike they do things with words.

John Miles Foley (1995: *passim*) discusses tradition as an ‘enabling referent’ in relation to individual situated performance as an ‘enabling event’. Individual creativity becomes perceived in the enabling event of performance in relation to the tradition as a referent or frame of reference. ‘Classic’ Oral-Formulaic Theory (especially as outlined in Lord 1960) originally drew a great deal of criticism for seeming to reduce oral-poetic composition to a mechanical process that erased the poet’s potential for individual creativity. This criticism was not always unwarranted, but it was largely a question of orientation: much of the early research was oriented to work on structural elements of different scope that has only gradually developed the rich infrastructures for looking at formulaic units in different poetries. Attention then shifted from looking at formulae as reducing the creativity of an individual’s word choice to viewing them as ‘words’ of tradition with the potential to be used creatively. The same can be said of metrical forms and their variations: they are primed for the creative potential of individual users.

This sort of potential comes to the fore in revivalist uses of poetic forms which illustrate the social relevance of poetries from which oral continuities are broken. Even medieval poetries may be filled with new value in later contexts, much as the medieval Arabic genre of *hija*’ for cursing enemies recently underwent a revival in conflicts in the Middle East for exchanges that included insults to Saddam Hussein (Bell 1997: 155). Of course, such a revival necessarily entails new meanings when the earlier tradition has become displaced from a living reality to become ‘heritage’. The potential for the tradition’s meanings will also inevitably be interpreted through the revivalist’s own contemporary frame of reference and ideology (e.g. Wilce & Fenigsen 2015: 198–203).

**Perspectives**

The articles gathered in this collection vary in emphasis from a focus on the relations of a metre within its ecology to an emphasis on other features which have evolved in relation to metre. On the one hand, all of these articles might be said to concentrate on the ‘hardware’ of a poetic system – on its lexicon, metre, syntax and structures. These matters often viewed as mundane and technical, yet the discussions brought together here demonstrate that these ‘low level’ structural elements are of key importance for a proper understanding of the larger purpose, message and meaning potential of poetic expressions. These building blocks of poetry require framing in their ecology in order to be fully appreciated and understood. Moreover, they and the texts produced with them have social lives that link them to people and roles in society both in the present and also in the past, through which a metre can become a connection. These papers illustrate that metre is not at all limited to the number of syllables or lifts per line, but is part of the whole of versification practice. Consequently, in order to discuss a poetic text’s impact and import, one should take into account – in the true spirit of interdisciplinarity – the metre and its ecology, which contains valuable literary and cultural information unobtainable elsewhere.

One aim of this collection is not only to bring together a variety of complementary
perspectives on the ecology of metre, but to stimulate attention to and discussion of this important topic, with the potential for further research to open the many questions that still remain and lead research in new, fruitful directions.

Works Cited
Description of Poetic Form as a Tool for Stylistic Analysis of a Traditional Song Performance: A Case of a Western Nenets Narrative Song

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This paper discusses difficulties in capturing the entirety of an oral performance in a textual form. Proceeding from a sound recording of a performance of a Nenets epic, the author problematizes the issues of notating sung words, sung time, pitches, changes in pitch, pauses etc., and the issues of how such techniques affect the scholarly notions of text and metre.

This paper addresses the problem of representing expressions or performances of auditory culture in textual and graphic form. Of particular interest here is, first, the problem of the textualisation and structural analysis of cultural expression: how does one identify and represent the elements which can be interpreted as meaningful or prominent from the standpoint of tradition, or at least from the perspective gained following the analysis of the distribution of elements in the (recorded) performance. Second, this article presents some of these prominent features particularly from the standpoint of metrical analysis of the verse-form text. Third, an attempt is made to describe graphically the totality of a lengthy performance in order to highlight some of the macro-level structural elements.

Furthermore, as the framework here stems from ethnomusicology, the issue of simultaneous representation of performed and intertwined language and sound structure is relevant. In turn, this central issue generates several corollaries, as for example: how to formulate principles of exactitude when writing about performed sound phenomena, and how to characterise conceptual borderlines between phenomena similar to ‘phonemes’ and ‘sounds’ in language.

The example presented here is a recorded performance of a Western Nenets narrative song, identified by the performer as a yarabts, a song type about the hardships of the life of the hero. The recordings were made in collaboration with the present author in 1994. For the present author, the Nenets culture represents a remote one, although he has been doing fieldwork in various Tundra and Forest Nenets regions since the beginning of the 1990s, having become acquainted with the ethnographic particularities, languages and dialects and having had long-term informational relationships with several Nenets representatives and connoisseurs of their traditions. This kind of researcher position resembles that of an ethnolinguist, in the sense that the primary research data consists of recorded linguistic utterances and speech acts (here: song acts). Learning a culture and its ethnographic subtleties is, of course, indispensable for initiating and sustaining the encounters with the connoisseurs of local culture in the first place, but the extensive ‘laboratory’ work is done with the data consisting of recorded and discussed song performances.

Problems of Textualisation and Structural Analysis

From the point of view of the structural analysis of sung performances documented in audio recordings, the problem of textualisation seems to be of a rather practical kind – and, by no means, an unprecedented one. The practical side of this concern is to discuss the principles that provide a basis for how we define our level of exactitude in the process of the retextualisation of a cultural performance when we are aiming to represent it in another semiotic form. In the academic world, this means, of course, writing and the use of graphic signs and symbols. This paper discusses this issue using an example of a sung performance presenting a fully oral tradition that has been documented through audio recording. The performance in question belongs to a singing style in which the song forms contain a full and dominant lexical content (i.e. consisting of and dominated by linguistic words and not, for example, of euphonic, metrical syllables, as in North Sami yoik), and as a consequence it is reasonable to examine the sung performance also from a linguistic perspective. The crucial point here, however, is to take into account the performed time and to try to figure out effective ways for describing and understanding it.
The formality and ‘grammaticality’ of this kind of approach can also be thought of as a kind of methodological encouragement for the construction of a structural interpretation of cultural data that is remote for the analyst. In this kind of approach, an attempt is made to find the basis and evidence for a consistent structural interpretation by observing qualities of elements of utterances. Analogously, it is, I believe, possible to observe, identify and even understand the grammatical elements of a language even if the observer is not fully familiar with the subtleties of semantics or the cultural context of the language. In addition, if we are aiming to interpret the structural logic of performed cultural elements with which we are not familiar, the possibility of a fruitful analysis may be derived from the possibility of observing how these cultural elements function. If we consider ‘function’ simply as a kind of interdependence ‘in action’, and if we can isolate our observations concerning the functioning elements (and, of course, their working together), we may be able to arrive at an analytical conclusion about their structural logic.

Ultimately, this proposition is not surprising and is, in fact, quite similar to the work and ways of analytical reasoning required in, say, solving crossword puzzles. Although solving crosswords usually requires a full command of the language and its topical expressions, the alternatives of reasoning and extra- or interpolative clues can themselves be thought of as an analogy here. Thus, even the more demanding types of crossword puzzles with minimal clues are solvable, if the analyst has intellectual resources for constructing enough hypotheses concerning its elements – and particularly concerning their interdependence.

Combined with a paradigmatic method for identifying and analytically presenting arranged elements of performance by their identifiable, consistently recurring functional appearances, this can, in my experience, yield results which are helpful for making generalisations about the metrical structure of a song. In some cases, this method reveals quite effectively some structural fundamentals that may be central for the identification of stylistic boundaries for cultural expression.

In modern cultural studies, the focus of understanding human performance has shifted from the text-centred approaches of decades past; and an emphasis on structure, text or any linguistic homologies of cultural performance now requires a broader and more inclusive view. We can argue to what extent performance exists in the heads of performers in forms or modes translatable to textual shapes and through particular kinds of action. At this point, Dell Hymes’ words still resonate for me as a scholarly maxim (reflecting his studies of oral folklore of Native Americans of the North Pacific coast):

> When things were said or sung within the native culture, explicit analysis – a detailed meta-language for dealing with form – was not needed. Performer and audience shared an implicit knowledge of language and ways of speaking. For us, there is no alternative to explicit analysis. As with the grammar of these languages, so with the verbal art: underlying relationships, taken for granted by their users, must be brought to light by conscious effort. Once brought to light, they can enable us to understand the creativity and cogency of the discourse in which they occur. (Hymes 1981: 6.)

In more recent writings, attention is sometimes drawn to cases in which tradition-bearers have to adopt textual mechanisms in order to reutilise their own traditions when the natural or traditional oral transmission is no longer possible. These kinds of situations have been approached with the concept of entextualisation (see Siikala & Siikala 2005, 58 about Polynesian cases), where the possibility or inevitability of shapes of cultural performances are reconsidered.

In the structural understanding of a sung performance, the options for observable elements are, perhaps quite obviously, language and structured time. While it is natural that all physically uttered human linguistic expressions happen in time, sung performances usually consist of linguistic elements embedded in structured time. Moreover, while structures often evoke borders and repetition for entities within the reach of human senses, the possibilities of fruitful identification, conceptualisation, measurement and comparison also increase. If this phase of analysis can be conducted reliably, we will be better equipped
to advocate for defining styles of sung folklore in ethnically or regionally definable local traditions somewhat analogically to isoglosses in areal linguistics.

The case study presented here concerns the Nenets narrative song *My Three Older Brothers* as it was performed by an elderly Nenets woman Ekaterina Semënovna Kanyukova and recorded by myself in the village of Nel’mnin-Nos in August 1994. This was one of the last field recordings that I started analysing and this was in 2013. I then decided to write a preliminary transcription of the song text myself in order to anticipate the work-hours needed for the checked transcription and translation of the linguistic text. I asked Anastasia Timofeevna Lapsui to assist me in this work: although Lapsui is a speaker of the more eastern Ob Gulf dialect of Nenets, we have worked fruitfully together in the past with other song materials from the Malaya Zemlya Nenets. There is a difference between the Malaya Zemlya and Ob Gulf dialects, but it has not been an insurmountable obstacle in our work. The analysis of the complete performance (ca. 85 minutes) is ongoing, but we have now gone through almost half of it. However, the work completed thus far nevertheless illuminates the characteristics of the song as a verse-form, sung performance. On the other hand, it is possible to present some elements of the whole of the performance here, not at the level of the language, but at the level of the performed sound and the quantitative features of the verse-form text.

The opportunities to record long performances of an oral tradition like this one among the Nenets have become quite rare. It is, unfortunately, possible that a major part of the Nenets performers’ art is likely to be lost forever, because the tradition and skill of the performers will inevitably wane. This concerns especially the survival of oral traditions among the Western Nenets. Examples like the one presented here seem to be solitary, surviving pieces, which do not help us to understand the dimension of repertoires, at different levels of social and regional distribution of oral traditions: the *idiolects, dialects* and *languages* of traditions, as outlined by Honko (1998: 62; following Foley 1990).

The Study of Western Nenets Narrative Song Traditions: Historical Prerequisites

The work to record Western Nenets sung traditions was largely initiated by two Finnish linguists, M.A. Castrén and Toivo Lehtisalo. Castrén started his first journey into the Nenets areas from the city of Archangel in July 1842. He gradually moved eastwards along the tundra villages in Kanin, Timan, and the Malaya and Bol’shaya Zemlya tundra regions. He worked with Western Nenets and Komi informants until he left the Western Nenets tundras and arrived in the city of Obdorsk (now Salekhard) in November 1843. Thus, he worked roughly for one year among the Western Nenets and wrote down their oral folklore, songs and tales. There are altogether 19 text transcriptions in this Western Nenets collection, and Castrén’s arrangement of the texts into metrical lines implies that they were indeed performed in sung form. Some of the transcriptions contain a few hundred text lines; some exceed 1,000 lines. (See Castrén 1940.)

Most probably, however, the process of transcription included a phase during which Castrén worked with his Nenets informants after the sung form performance. It is, of course, possible that he transcribed some of the text lines during the actual performance and checked the missing parts later with the performer. This is the method that the Nenets collectors use today, if they have no recording equipment available other than pen and paper. This, however, requires the transcriber to have a good command of the language in order to be able to write lines down quickly. On the other hand, the Nenets performance style may also help the manual transcriber, because the Nenets trimetrical (hexasyllabic) scheme is quite short and the meaningful text syllables of a line are often concentrated at the beginning of the line, whereas the endings may contain only the last few syllables and they may be given even longer durations of time (as, for example, in E.S. Kanyukova’s performance here). This gives the transcriber valuable seconds to write down most, if not all of the lexical syllables of the text line. It is then quite easy to ask the performer for the words of any missing line endings afterwards and it is thus possible to restore the actual order of the performed lines and eventually
reach quite an exact transcription of the performance with a manual transcription. Furthermore, a teltanggoda was a person assisting the singer by quickly repeating in speech form the lines sung by the performer, and thus the message was enhanced by redundancy within the tradition. Pushkarëva (2000) has an illuminating simultaneous text transcription of a singer and teltanggoda’s performance – although only as a written text, without any symbols of duration of time. In her examples, the places for the teltanggoda’s repetition were more or less the same: the line endings with just a few lexical – or only the non-lexical exclamatory – syllables. On the other hand, in manual transcription it is very easy to lose the placement of the metrical code of the performed song, if the exact places and forms of the exclamatory syllables and the transformed sung syllables are not identified accurately enough. In addition, even if the metrical syllabic forms are shown, it can be very difficult to understand their function in performed, durational, rhythmical time, because the conventional symbols for linguistic text do not contain any indications for durations of time.

Toivo Lehtisalo’s work during the last half of 1912 to collect narrative songs of the Western Nenets parallels Castrén’s work, both in quality and in quantity. Perhaps even more so in quality, because Lehtisalo could rely on the progress made after Castrén’s times in Samoyedology and because he was more informed about the Nenets language than Castrén was during his time. Lehtisalo had already lived among the Ob Gulf Nenets for a year and by 1912 was already returning to Finland through the Western Nenets territories. Castrén had done the opposite in 1842, beginning his acquaintance with the Nenets and their language from the Archangel region and moving eastwards to Siberia through the Western Nenets territories.

Lehtisalo (1947) recorded songs and tales from four informants. During the summer of 1912, he met Timofey Taleëv and Anna Taleëvà in the villages of Oksino and Ust’e in the Pechora Delta area, in the neighbourhood of the then town of Pustozersk (now the district capital Nar’yam-Mar) (for his travel account, see Lehtisalo 1956). Moving westwards from Pechora, he met an anonymous male narrator in the White Sea coastal area in the village of Nes and an elderly woman in the village of Mezen’ at the end of the year. The anonymous man from Nes sang him a lengthy heroic syudbabts of more than 1,200 lines (perhaps a bit less, due to Lehtisalo’s convention of counting some separate line-initial, seemingly extra-metrical speech words as lines). Other performers also did well, singing songs labelled according to various Nenets genres (syudbabts, yarabts, khynts, yahye’ma) in quite extensive forms reaching some 100–450 lines.

Lehtisalo in fact published one more narrative song (of 323 lines) from a Western Nenets performer, Katerina Vyucheyskaya, in his last publication on Nenets folklore (1960: 374). Lehtisalo recorded the text in the village of Ust’-Tsyl’mà, although he reports that Vyucheyskaya was a speaker of Bol’shaya Zemlya dialect.

Lehtisalo was a pioneer with new technology: he had a phonograph with him during this fieldwork period of 1911–1912. Unfortunately, it seems the resulting phonograms were, to him, just an additional, experimental way of recording culture and his real data consisted of manual transcription. One reason was, no doubt, the uneconomical technical quality of the phonograph: it was possible to record only a few minutes of sound on one wax-cylinder, which forced him to think of the phonograms as samples of performance sounds and not as a way of recording a complete performance. Therefore, it is almost tragic that alongside Lehtisalo’s fantastic text transcriptions (1947), there are over 15 wax-cylinders recorded in the Western Nenets areas – but hardly any matches between them. Some of the phonograms can be identified as having been recorded in the same places and having the same performers as the published transcriptions, but due to the poor documentation and sound quality of the phonograms, there are great difficulties in utilising them to recreate the performance styles of Lehtisalo’s informants. (On attempts to identify Lehtisalo’s materials, see Niemi with Lapsui 1995.)

After the consolidation of the Soviet regime in Russia, the remote northern
territories became practically inaccessible for foreign researchers. Russian researchers and collectors, such as Georgiy Prokof'ev, Grigoriy Verbov and Anton Savel'ev, started doing fieldwork among the Nenets during the 1930s. Unfortunately, these researchers all died during the war and most of their materials are said to have been destroyed. After the war, this work was continued by a new generation of researchers, among them, Nataliya Tereshchenko, Lyudmila Khomich and Zinaida Kupriyanova, who collected and published Nenets folk traditions, including narrative songs, also among the Western Nenets. In this context, the most famous publication is the collection published by Kupriyanova (1965). In this collection, there are texts of 25 songs, all collected from Western Nenets performers between 1939 and 1959. All the texts are published in prose form, but it can be presumed that at least part of the performances were sung. However, the songs reflect the classical themes of heroic and fantastic syudhabtes and dramatic yarabtes. They seem to be performed in full form and, at a rather rough estimate, the 309 pages of Nenets song text could total about 20,000–30,000 lines of verse-form text. Even more astonishing is the fact that the majority of the songs recorded in Kupriyanova’s publication were performed by only one person: Anastasiya Egorovna Taleeva, in the village of Nel'min-Nos in 1959.2

However, save for the traditional, generally recurring themes in Nenets old narrative, such as the quest for a wife, tribal warfare, blood-feud or mistreatment of an orphan in a rich family, there are no closer thematic matches with respect to the subject matter of the earlier recorded narratives in Castrén’s, Lehtisalo’s or Kupriyanova’s collections. Only some surnames found only in these narrative traditions (e.g. Tasyinyi) have survived in the tales of the last performers of our times. I believe that, especially here, the reason is simply the lack of materials. As Lehtisalo (1947: xi–xii) observed, the time for a more general folkloristic comparative analysis had not yet come because the number of collected Nenets narratives was still so limited – notwithstanding Lehtisalo’s own unique collection and that of Castrén’s. There were still hundreds of kilometres of stretches of tundra inhabited by people with their own songs and stories, rich traditions that lived their oral life until the end. Sadly, however, when the time came for a more encompassing project to record and analyse the oral traditions of the Western Nenets at the end of the 20th century, most of the traditions had already vanished.

From Cultural Performance to Transcribed (Cultural) Text

We naturally represent forms of cultural performance through verbal texts, as this method is so deeply rooted in our European literary-based culture. From this point of view, it is very natural that throughout the history of folkloristics and the study of oral culture, the performances recorded and transcribed as verbal texts have gained autonomy and their face value almost automatically (cf. Finnegan 1992: 17). Critically, since the ephemeral oral performance disappears into the past as quickly as it does, we have to cling to the trace it has left in transcription, however problematic, uncontrolled, biased or even misleading the working phases from performance to verbal text may have been.

The most fruitful way to make a representation of a cultural text would obviously be to observe and record the totality of the cultural cognition manifested in performance by all the participants with all their resources for performance and reception, including social, political, ritual etc. contexts. However, as this seems to be a strategy not accessible for every situation, recorder, participant or researcher, it seems reasonable to identify at least some aspects of this totality of recording cultural performance for closer examination.

During the 1990s, the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko participated in a project aiming to achieve the total recording of a long epic in the Dravidan Tulu language area of the Karnataka district of southwestern India. Honko published this epic of almost 16,000 lines of text with an extended discussion about understanding epic as cultural performance and text (1998). There are several conceptual, theoretical and methodological points in his
text that resonate with my experience and understanding of the art of the indigenous storytellers of the Nenets North, although the performances of the Tulu epic performer Gopala Naika and the nearly ten years of work by Honko’s Finnish–Indian group of researchers to record, transcribe, translate – textualise – and contextualise this massive epic is, naturally, of far greater dimension than the example of textualisation presented here. As such, however, E.S. Kanyukova’s skill and heritage seems to belong to the heritage of the great Malaya Zemlya storytellers like A.E. Taleeva, mentioned above, although exemplified only with this performance and the corresponding, as yet unfinished, process of its textualisation.

The entire text transcribed here is presented with the exactitude of orthography, not of phonetics, because phonetic transcription would have required dramatically more detailed work. A motivation for an examination of the phonetic level of sung language would have been, for example, a more detailed study of the possible correspondence of vowels with different sonorities and varying pitch levels of the melody. The reason for choosing orthographic exactitude corresponds to the emphasis on working with syllabic rather than phonetic elements in this kind of structural analysis, which aims at describing the interrelationship of language and metrically organised melody at verse-level. In fact, this transcription shows a bit more detail, because those sounds or syllables that are put in parentheses show, where possible, the syllable level phenomena that occur only in sung language (additional euphonic, metrically motivated syllables or reduced vowels). The standard Nenets orthography reflects the spoken language quite well, but there are some phenomena in pronunciation that the orthography does not show. These are mainly associated with sandhisation (merging of phonemes) or allophonic variation of phonemes (as, for example, varying affricates /ts/-/ch/). In this particular text, these discrepancies are, however, quite marginal.

The transcription and translation of the original text can be seen as a continuum in clarity: with rigorous re-reading and re-checking, most of the unclear places in the text can be ‘polished’ to achieve more clarity. However, without the participation in the transcription work by a performer or a person of her/his generation and a speaker of the particular dialect of the performance, it is possible that we will never be able to clarify every single word of the text, in transcription, in translation, in denotation and in connotation. There may also be a problem with transcribing dialectal or idiosyncratic pronunciation. I have always preferred to preserve the characteristics of the pronunciation of the performer and not to correct, for example, dialectal forms to conform with standard language. “Transcribe what you hear” was also the maxim of Honko’s group (1998: 164).

The English translation may seem a bit awkward to read, but I have preferred, as much as reasonably possible, to keep the syntax of the translation as close to the syntax of the original in all my publications with original language texts and their translations. Translating from one Uralic language into another (like from Nenets into Finnish, for example) presents fewer problems with the language syntax than translating from Nenets into an Indo-European language (like English or Russian). This is also an approximation of Honko’s (1998: 165) working rule: “as literal as possible, as readable as necessary.”

My Three Older Brothers

The central character in this song is a girl or young woman who first appears in a subordinate role in the household of her brothers. However, this girl becomes the central figure and heroine of the song. Nevertheless, she is not identified in the song with a personal name when she is introduced; she is only identified as the one who has the three brothers mentioned in the title of the song My Three Older Brothers. E.S. Kanyukova herself labelled this song as yaràts – the Malaya Zemlya dialectal form of the Nenets generic category yarabts [lit. ‘weeping song; song about hardships of life’]. Indeed by its content, this song could be seen as reminiscent of a yarabts, the thematic dimensions of which are heavily inclined towards depicting the tough life and hardships of an orphan mistreated by a hostile family –
although the hero usually miraculously achieves victory and takes revenge on his or her enemies.

In the beginning of the song, the subordinate girl is sent by her brothers to collect firewood from a nearby wood. She finds a suitable tree to chop down, but hears warnings from a red sable and a crow who promise revenge if the tree is hacked down. These figures, however, are not developed further during this song.

After this introductory episode, the camp prepares for a wedding. Only at this point is the name of the chief of the girl’s kin mentioned, Yabta Salya Yerw. The girl understands that a rich chief of another family of reindeer-herders, Medna Teta, is coming to marry her. After the wedding feast, however, the girl dresses as a man, ready for war and action. Instead of agreeing to be the wife of Medna Teta, the girl ends up in a confrontation with him and succeeds in killing him.

From this point, the story adopts supernatural elements. It turns out that the confrontation with Medna Teta is not over, as he re-enters the scene of events and is alive again. The story is continued with a complex cycle of years of fighting, victory and slavery. The girl even ends up as a slave in the family of the syudbya, who are giants living in a cave underneath a hilltop.

The story culminates in a final and decisive fight between the families of Yabta Salya Yerw and Medna Teta. In this fight, Medna Teta is slain. It was at about this point when Ekaterina Semënovna Kanyukova stopped her performance – at the 813th line. However, the story was not over. After almost 90 minutes of singing, Ekaterina Semënovna Kanyukova was somewhat exhausted and, after she stopped singing, she explained that the end of the story was near. She then finished the story in prose form: after the kin of Yabta Salya Yerw had beaten Medna Teta and his men, the three brothers and the girl with their families ended up living the peaceful and prosperous life of a reindeer-herding kin group.

Part of the Song Text of with Its Translation

Nyakhar(ey(ya))’ nyinyow(a)kawey,  Three my brothers,  
nyakhar(ngey(ya))’ tetow(am)boyey... ng,  three my rich ones,  
nyedkodow(a) nyudow,  reindeer they have got  
yu’ yoney(ya)ryey(yey)...  ten thousand...

(Stained interpolation.)

5.  Tas yurey(ya) mya’mow,  Altogether hundred huts we have,  
ew(ngey(ya))nandow(a)ngodey,  that’s how it is,  
arka (nyey(ya) nya(kha)wowey... m,  the eldest brother,  
nyen Tawow(a)siyey,  as his wife, a Tawis- woman,  
nuydya yona... nyen Tawow(a)siyey,  they have twins,  
syidya(ngey(ya)) yakhey(ya) nyudow,  two unmarried young ones...  
syidya(ngey(ya)) naney(ya) nyude...  Then there is also  
Tamma tanyow(a)nyiwey,  their daughter,  
nyedkodow(a) nyudow,  their small one they have...,
15. yud(a)m potow(a)kotsyo...
(Spoken interpolation.)
Tyikakhad syani(yey(ya)) ebatow... ow, nyakhar(ngey(ya)) nyinow(a)kawey, nyakhar(ngey(ya)) tetow(a)mboyey, pido” ng... ob(a)(ngey(yang)) ganey(ya) nyingey,
20. pido” ngamandiy(ya)wedey, pido” ma... mow(a)nnow(a)ndow... n...:
– Yalya(n) tyuku... tyukow(a) yalyow... m, nye papow(a)kowow, poyorman’ khanatow(a)kiyey
25. chyon(a)tow(a) pya...(?)
(Spoken interpolation.)
Tyikakhawow(a)khanow, pido” mamow(a)nondow”:
– Tyun(a)” taryakhambyey’(?), pida lus yan’ khanatow(a)kiyey...,
30. tyun(a) taryakhangey(?), pida lus yan’ khanatow(a)kiyey... n. Tyikakhad ma’nyiw’... – Ti podyer(a)makey,
tu... ti tow(a)kiyey...
(Spoken interpolation.)
Tyikakhawow(a)khanow, 35. khor(a)tsam(a) nyudya nyinyiw(a)kawey,
(Spoken interpolation.)
yudya nyinyow(a)kawey, nyum tyaduw(a)lawow, pyirtsya li(ya) malaney, ta li mala... laney
40. mya” tyuney...
(Spoken interpolation.)
Tyikakhawow(a)khanow...
(Spoken interpolation.)

------------------------------------------(break in the recording)------------------------------------------

**Charting Some Structural Dimensions**

Figure 1 represents the entire song performance as a succession of lines, as shown in the box below. In this box, the lines are represented with both black stripes and the white spaces between them. This is a technical solution with which it was possible to create a string of 813 somehow visible symbols fitting in one line of this page. The stripes and spaces are small in this picture, and the zoomed image above shows a section of them in more detail; above that, their correspondence with the numbered (melodic/text) lines is shown with musical transcription. The aim of this representation is to show in an abstract way the peculiar feature of rising pitch levels during this 85-minute song performance.

The tonal range of the basic pitch level of a melodic line in the song, ranging from d₁ to h₁ (again, aided by both black and white symbols, each characterising a musical interval of a half-step) is shown in the left side of the box in Figure 1. The basic pitch level is identified as corresponding with the basic tonal level of the melodic line, because it is the one which dominates, more or less, the whole melodic structure. This basic pitch level acts as a kind of ground level for the melody, from which the melody leaps...
upwards and to which it eventually descends. There is nevertheless an ornamented final motif at the end of each line, where the melodic motif descends, actually, below this level (see c♯⁴ in the music transcription), but for a very short time. The basic tonal level of the melody is exemplified by the final tone of the fourth line in the music transcription, which shows the first four lines of the song. Thus, during these four lines, the basic tonal level keeps to e¹. The term ‘pitch level’ refers here to a physical fact that can be measured as the actual vibration of sound (in Hertz), whereas ‘tonal level’ refers to the abstraction of the melody represented by the symbols in musical transcription. These symbols are tonal steps (proportionate with each other), like the aforementioned initial tonal level e¹, which is chosen here to correspond roughly with the actual original pitch level of the audio document of the performance.

However, during the performance, this basic pitch level starts to rise gradually, due to the physical and mental strain of the performer. This is shown with the graph lines in the box in Figure 1 as a kind of function between the number of the song line and the corresponding actual pitch level of the basic tonal level. Thus, the whole melody rises, as if almost unnoticed, also raising all of the other tones of the melody. In this kind of free, soloistic and unaccompanied musical expression, where the singer does not have to synchronise or calibrate her expression with other voices or instruments, she has the full freedom to represent the elements of the melody in the form and exactitude that she has become accustomed to. This freedom

\[ \text{Figure 1. The graphic scheme of the entire performance of E.S. Kanyukova.} \]
creates an intriguing phenomenon: with the gradual ascension of the basic pitch level of the recurring melodic lines, the leaps of the melodic line also tend to expand. Thus, the upward leaps, shown in the first four lines as leaps of a major third (e₁–g#₁) or a fourth (e₁–a₁), expand—embedded within the overall ascension of the pitch level—to a fifth (proportionate e₁–h₁). Thus, as the overall pitch level and the basic level of the melody rises, there comes a point when the singer approaches the upper limit of her own physical tonal range. When she feels she cannot sing the highest tones of the melody any more, when the pitch level of the melody has risen to its limits, she brings the pitch level down again. As the graph shows, this melodic transposition happens six times during this performance.

The Russian musicologist Alla Gomon also discerned this kind of phenomenon in song recordings that she collected in the 1970s (incidentally, also from the Malaya Zemlya Nenets), calling these passages ‘super periods’. However, she made her conclusions mainly using musicological argumentation, with seemingly less ethnographic evidence of discussing their possible cultural functions or meanings in the totality of the song performance. However, she also noticed that these structures seemed to happen independently of the structure of the content of the performance. She concluded further that the raising of the pitch line during a song performance could be associated with the anxiety of the performer and that this, in turn, could be explained by the possible ritual connections of this kind of performances in Nenets culture. Thus, she suggests that the ‘super periods’ may be reflections of a kind of performance trance. (Gomon 1990: 83, 85.)

This leads to the question of how to construct a visual and symbolic representation from this kind of fact of the performance. One solution is to make musical transcriptions corresponding to the physical rise in pitch and to show this as exactly as possible with musical symbols. This is what I have demonstrated in the musical transcription in Figure 2, presenting two melodic lines before and after the last transposition (between lines 715 and 716), without any spoken interpolations, boundaries between episodes or sentences in the story—or any other break by the singer. The first two lines of the transcription show how this singer has reached a¹ as the pitch level of the basic tone and thus the upper limits of her tonal range (of good quality of sound) and how the upward leaps of the melody have also reached the interval of a fifth (a¹–e² in the transcription), even showing signs of further expansion (a¹–♯♯). After the 715th line, she transposes the pitch level of the basic tone down to d¹, giving her, once again, periodic relief for her vocal cords.

Figure 2. Two melodic lines before and after the last transposition of the basic tone in the performance of E.S. Kanyakova.
Another possible solution is to regard the rising pitch level as a constant and to present only a proportional, sketchy structural transcription of an ‘average’ form of the melodic line (as the four melodic lines in Figure 2). This is, I think, possible if we have reason to maintain that the average transcription fulfils the needs of representing the entire song. Whether this is really so depends, naturally, on the research question or the motivation for presenting musical expression in this kind of graphic form.

The gradual rise of the basic pitch level is only one perspective for understanding this kind of song performance. Alongside this, however, it is possible to explore the technique of performance. We can ask, for example, whether the lowering of the basic pitch level in any way corresponds with longer breaks during the recording of the performance or with the singer’s frequent interpolations of speech during the performance, most of which were single sentences repeating her last sung text line, much in the manner of a teltanggoda, the traditional repeater-assistant. In Figure 1, I have marked vertical lines showing the four long breaks in the recording. From these, it is possible to deduce whether, for example, a break in the recording regularly corresponds with the transposition of the pitch level. Here, it seems that only the last of the four clearly co-occurs with the transposition of the pitch level. It is not the purpose here to give a definite answer to the dynamics of this phenomenon, but according to experience with other Nenets sung narrative performances, the phenomenon of the gradual rise of the overall or basic pitch level in these styles seems to be more like an autonomic, physically motivated phenomenon: it just seems to happen, regardless of other breaks in the performance, or perhaps even regardless of the structure of the episodes of the story.

All in all, the average transcription is used here as an example, with which it is possible to understand the distribution of durational units, together with the fundamental dimensions of the melodic lines, which are systematically present in every line of the song. Ekaterina Semënovna’s performance adopts an especially ‘basic’ form in this sense, because it has only one type of melodic line throughout the song. In other songs, there may be a recurring combination of two or three different melodic lines. We could call this kind of structural or schematic musical transcription a ‘metrical’ one. Here, for example, we can try to grasp the overall idea of the basic metre of this song and proceed to observe how the song text fits this basic structure, as illustrated in Figure 3.

In the above scheme, the musical symbols represent approximate (and proportionally recurring) durations of musical tones with which the melody is sung. It suffices here to understand the opposition of short durations, marked with the symbol for 1/8 note (\( \frac{1}{8} \)) against long durations, marked with symbols for 1/4 (\( \frac{1}{4} \)), 3/8 (\( \frac{3}{8} \)) and 4/4 (\( \frac{4}{4} \)) notes. The paradigmatic representation of the syllables on a metrical grid is designed here to show the tendency of the syllabic grouping within the line, but also to give an overall proportional idea of the distribution of the respective durations of these syllables, performed in musical, metrical and therefore durationally controlled time. The three vertical lines delineate the three basic sections of the text metre, each containing two lexical syllables and thus forming the hexasyllabic basis of the text line. The metrically additional, separate euphonic syllabic elements appear in parentheses. It is this totality of the hexasyllabic basic text line, embedded into the sung metre of the particular song, with which the sung and performed Nenets metre can be described. The hexasyllabic basic text can have a wide range of realisations in terms of the sung metre. Some of the songs only repeat the hexasyllabic basic text line, while some are decorated with complex formations of supplementary metrical elements. However, in the Nenets song, the final syllables of words are also subjected to euphonic transformation in sung forms, for example: -a → -ey; -a → -ow; -ya → -yow (see Hajdú 1978). However, I have not bracketed them because they are not additional in terms of syllabic count. This paradigmatic arrangement presents the functioning of the text line within musical and metrical time, and also the
Figure 3. A schematised illustration of the metrical basic structure of E.S. Kanyukova’s song performance, with an example of the text lines from the beginning of the song to the first break in the recording (lines 1–41). Key: $\frac{1}{8}$ note; $\frac{1}{4}$ note; $\frac{3}{8}$ note; $\frac{1}{2}$ note. Note that in the presentation of this scheme, the syllable duration simply continues to the next syllable and the time values can easily be read from the line of the note symbols. The breaks of the syllable duration are shown with three dots (...).
tendency for the non-lexical elements to group into certain parts of the line and their tendency to form additional syllabic units within the text line.

It is possible to grasp the idea of the organisation of the syllabic elements of the song text within the basic metrical structure with just a quick, general look at the syllabic paradigms in this scheme. Having said that, another glance nevertheless reveals many exceptions and variations in this basic organisation. However, even a quick analytical look at these 41 lines of this performance reveals the tendency of the first metrical section of the text to contain four syllabic elements. This is also reflected in the rhythmical organisation of this section, represented in the scheme with four 1/8 notes (   ). Of these, the first two contain the first two lexical syllables of the text line and the second two a place for metrical, additional syllables (see the brackets, especially the first 20 lines). Actually this place is ‘reserved’ for a separate metrical (mono)syllabic 

This particle derives, most probably, from the verb 

and one of the great ‘universals’ in 

Nenets metrical language in all regional styles. Although it is a monosyllabic word, 

is pronounced with a final reductional vocal filling, breaking it into two syllabic (and rhythmical) elements, resulting in the form 

This is not, however, a mechanical phenomenon (see this position in lines where this word does not occur), although a very typical one, especially in Western Nenets narrative song (see, for example, Dobrovol’skiy 1965).

The second metrical section contains (also with exceptions) three syllabic elements, of which the rhythmical manifestation is: 

In this section, the tendency and space is reserved for two lexical syllables, also added by a reductional vocal filling, for example 

In line 10.

The third metrical section tends to contain two final lexical syllables of the text line, which has longer, line-final cadence durations: . Here the variation caused by euphonic or reductional transformation seems to be more modest and consists quite regularly only of the euphonic (non-additional) transformation of the final syllable (left without brackets, as explained above).

There is one more peculiar point, which may give an additional clue in the interpretation of the relationship of this proposed metrical basic structure and its seemingly great variation, namely the possible hierarchical role of different word-boundary types in the sung text lines. This means that, as in traditions of the Finnic alliterative tetramer (Kalevala-metre in the north and reginlaul in the south), there also seems to be a kind of hierarchical or oppositional relationship between sung text lines, depending on the role and effect of the distribution of metrical stress on the initial syllables of words. The prosody of both the Finnic and Samoyedic languages is characterised by word-stress on the initial syllable, although its consequences in metrical performances seem to differ somewhat. The Finnic tetramer is basically trochaic; although there is some flexibility in the number of syllables in certain positions varying by region, it customarily yields an eight-syllable line, especially in Finland and Karelia. When lines are composed only of words with even numbers of syllables, such as four two-syllable words (2 2 2 2) or two two-syllable words and one four-syllable word (2 2 4), then the first syllable of each word falls in a metrically stressed position and metrical stress and lexical stress correspond. However, lines can also be formed with words having an odd number of syllables, such as a two-syllable word and two three-syllable words (2 3 3) or a three-syllable word and a five-syllable word (3 5). In this case, metrical stress contrasts with lexical stress, which falls between metrically stressed positions and thus becomes unstressed when performed in time and in metre. This type of line has commonly been called a ‘broken line’ (on analogy to the Germanic tetrameter where a word-break would be mandatory between the second and third stressed positions of a line), and creates a different sound impression. The relation between these types of lines is customarily viewed as a hierarchical relationship of ‘normal’ lines to which ‘broken’ lines are a variation that creates (aesthetic) tension with
the regular rhythm of the basically trochaic tetrameter’s environment. (See further Sadeniemi 1951; Leino 1986; Gomon 1990.)

This potential for tension between metrical and natural lexical stress is similar to a phenomenon in Nenets sung metre. The Finnic tetrameter can be considered dipodic, or organised in two pairs of metrical feet (i.e. the two trochees of positions 1–4 and the two of positions 5–8).

The Nenets hexasyllabic basic text line is also dipodic, but trimetric, if thought of as a metrical form. This basic text line, with many of the sung metrical forms produced from it, seems to point to a fundamental opposition of lines with words of even and uneven numbers of syllables. Whereas Finnic singers produce tensions between metrical and lexical stress, Nenets singers never do so. Instead, they aim to synchronise word-stress with metrical stress and thus a word with an odd number of syllables is compensated within the scheme of the basic trimeter by completing the remaining positions in the segment of the line with supplementary verbal elements. This allows lexically stressed syllables to be delayed until there are appropriate metrically stressed positions in the basic scheme. Revealing this principle in Nenets metrical word-border types also evokes the question of a hierarchy of line-types. As I have pointed out elsewhere with more extensive materials (Niemi 1998), there is a discernible contrast in Nenets sung trimeter between the varieties of the lines with content words containing either an even (e.g. 2 2 2; 2 4) or odd (e.g. 3 3) number of syllables and in the ways these varieties activate metrical processes with metrical or supplementary syllables in performance. The variety of even-syllable words in a line seems to be more common than its odd-syllable counterpart (which is, however, also fairly well represented). This statistical difference also gives grounds to presume a hierarchy between the basic and contrastive principle in the Nenets sung text line, even if the contrast in this poetry is between conformity and contrast of word-breaks to dipod divisions rather than between metrical and lexical stress.

Thus, in the present song, the principle of organising words into a regular metrical line type seems prominent, producing lines of the form 2 (X) 2 2 (where ‘X’ represents the additional metrical euphonic element ngey(ya)). After the first 20 lines of the song, the singer seems to change to a form placing two text syllables in the position of the ngey(ya) and stretching the two last syllables of the line with long durations, which shifts the line-form while remaining within the basic strategy of forming the line from words with an even number of syllables. This is partially reminiscent of the appearance in this song of the line type formed from words with an odd number of syllables, like line 16 (where, however, the basic text line is not only formed using words with an odd number of syllables, but the line also appears to be a syllable short (five syllables rather than six): (...) sya-ni-(yey-ya) e-batow, metrically (...) 2 (X) 3. In short, the contrastive character of the lines of even and odd type is not particularly distinguishable in this song. In other songs, with other metrical basic schemes, this metrical contrast is more pronounced. This kind of general, economical and all-purpose metrical basis seems to be more present in narrative songs, whereas in shorter personal songs the opposition of the paired and unpaired line types is often more prominent (see Niemi & Lapsui 2004).

Although this interpretational scheme seems to point at the remarkable uniformity of the manifestation of the basic metre, it cannot, of course, provide final or universal explanations for the great variation within this scheme. Such variation could be related to a singer’s competence and also be idiolectal. It could also be a fundamental, and thus socially acceptable, freedom of a singer to create this type of variation in performance, capitalising on these contrastive basic forms. Determining the sources for variation within this scheme would require other methods of inquiry, such as long-term ethnographic work with the performers in order to understand the cognition behind a successful performance. Unfortunately, such research approaches should have been conducted during the 1980s–1990s – at least among the Western Nenets – when more competent singers could still be found.
Conclusion
This paper has presented the methodological approach of using a descriptive analysis of poetic form as a tool that can be reciprocally applied for stylistic analysis of a particular traditional song performance, illustrated through the case of a Western Nenets narrative song. If we agree on the suitability and adjustability of analytical methods of a structural kind, the approach proposed here could be developed to chart the textual dimensions of the song, such as the organisation of informational content at different levels of scope, from images, dialogues and themes or scenes up to the level of episodes in the complete plot. It is natural that most of the observations only apply to the single performance of this case study. Perhaps only the metrical code of this song could survive in other performances, at least by the same performer. A rigorous analysis of the kind presented in this paper is fundamentally quantitative and therefore much more data is required for reliability. The function of this example is just to point to a possible direction for a kind of structural analysis, which, I believe, can be designed to be reflective enough to allow discussion and criticism, since the paradigmatic layout of the analysis purports to trace the constellation of the recurring textual phenomena as embedded in the flow of the performed time. Naturally, this kind of approach has to be further articulated with a culture- and data-sensitive research design. At this stage, the preliminary structural analysis of this text has yielded the fruitful results presented here. The sequel to this paper will follow as research progresses. For the moment, the other aspects of Ekaterina Semënolina Kanyukova’s performance still remain stronger than the efforts of the analysts.

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Notes
2. For further details about Kupriyanova’s publication, see Niemi 1997.
3. Running number of the 1994 Malayal Zemlya field recording collection, audio files archived in Folkways Archive of the University of Tampere, Finland as Y10675–Y10676 (DAT) and Y10679–Y10680 (cass.).
4. See, however, Hajdú’s (1978: 361–362) critique of this view.
5. For more extensive examples of this line-type opposition, see Niemi & Lapsui 2004.

Works Cited


The Metre of Yeats’s “Lake Isle of Innisfree” in Context

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This article argues that Yeats’s “Lake Isle of Innisfree” is to be scanned as isochronic, with the first three lines of a stanza having seven beats and a caesura after the 4th beat, here called ‘Sevens’ as opposed to fourteeners. The form is not mentioned in any history of English verse, but a digital search of ca. 2,500,000 lines of poetry reveals it to be representative of a neglected but significant strand of English poetry.

Is it more frustrating for a poet to have his or her early work valued higher than later, greater achievements, or for that work to be received in the wrong way? For Yeats, these two problems coincide in “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, which he wrote in his early twenties. This coincidence has a bearing on the communication of metre from poet to reader, and on the history of a largely forgotten poetic form. It is by attending to Yeats’s own intentions for the rhythm of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” that we can see how a number of his other poems can best be appreciated. Moreover, we can situate these poems in a wider context that adds meaning to the poems, while also bringing light to a neglected strand of canonical poetry.

Yeats’s poem was published in The National Observer on 13th December 1890, when Yeats was twenty-five. It was then included in the anthology of The Book of the Rhymer’s Club (1892), and in his second collection of poems, The Countess Kathleen and Other Legends and Lyrics (1892). In an emotional trajectory that cannot be unusual, Yeats’s initial satisfaction with his poem gave way to irritation and even embarrassment, before grudging acceptance. Writing to Robert Louis Stevenson in 1894, he confessed, “I need hardly tell you that your praise of ‘The Lake Isle of Innisfree’ has given me great pleasure.” Some seven years later his feelings had cooled considerably, and he intimated to Robert Bridges, “I confess I grow not a little jealous of the ‘Lake Isle’ which has put the noses of all my other children out of joint.” Yeats did not let this ‘jealousy’ cloud his business sense, however, and in a letter of 23rd December 1920 he resignedly suggested to his publisher Macmillan that the best sales of his poetry would probably come from a volume containing “the popular poems I wrote before I knew better.” “Most people seem to want whatever volume contains ‘Innisfree’,” he reflected. (InteLex I: 404; III: 90; #3834.) Yeats was apt to call those early poems ‘popular’, since they were both intended to be for and of ‘the people’, and were more commercially successful. Today, it is those early poems, like “The Stolen Child”, which one sees most frequently displayed on the walls of public houses.

In the BBC radio broadcast of 8th September 1931, Yeats effectively announced his ambivalent feelings about his early poem to the entire world. He would read it, he announced, “because if you know anything about me, you will expect me to begin with it. It is the only poem of mine that is very widely known.” (TSWP, LAR: 224.) His second sentence somewhat softens the first, but the implication remains: Yeats felt obliged to read this poem, which had somehow eclipsed all his other poetry. The popularity of the poem may in part explain why we have extant
recordings of his reading of it. While most recordings of Yeats performing his poetry have been lost or destroyed, two exist for that poem. Recorded in 1931 and 1937, the similarities of these two performances reveal Yeats’s own intentions for the rhythm of the poem. These recordings divide opinion. Some listeners love them, but others object to Yeats’s delivery as being too far from normal speech, too belaboured – it is closer to chant.

Yeats opened his 1931 broadcast with a statement about poetic rhythm, and the proper delivery and reception of verse:

I am going to read my poems with great emphasis upon the rhythm, and that may seem strange if you are not used to it. I remember the great English poet William Morris coming in a rage out of some lecture hall where somebody had recited a passage out of his *Sigurd the Volsung*. ‘It gave me a devil of a lot of trouble,’ said Morris, ‘to get that thing into verse.’ It gave me a devil of a lot of trouble to get into verse the poems that I am going to read, and that is why I will not read them as if they were prose.

Along with “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, the surviving extract of Yeats’s broadcast includes his performance of “The Fiddler of Dooney”, which he had also written in his early twenties. The two deliveries have more than a little in common, despite their very different appearances on the page. Both are printed in quatrains, but most of the lines in “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” are twice as long. The aural affinity is instructive.

Despite the recordings, very few people seem to grasp the metre of the “The Lake Isle”, or of Yeats’s other poems written in a similar form. Unfortunately, Yeatsian scholarship does not provide much guidance. Richard Ellmann declared in *The Identity of Yeats* that its “metre is not new”, but did not go so far as to set out what he thought it to be (1967: 124). He may well have assumed it self-evident, yet on the basis of descriptions of the poem on cubsheet-style websites, it is not inevitable that readers arrive at the same conclusion. One common interpretation, online and off, is that the poem is written in “vaguely iambic hexameter and tetrameter” (Shmoop 2008). It is my view that this is wrong, and that the metre of Yeats’s poem is in fact isochronic. As will be seen, its formal features are far from unique in the English canon.

On the page, “Innisfree” is made up of four-line stanzas comprising three long lines followed by a shorter one (VP: 117). If we were to take an accentual-syllabic approach, the long lines have either six or seven loosely alternating beats, while the shorter lines have less. Taken in isolation, one might conclude that the opening two lines of the poem are written in a looser form of hexameter with caesura, with six beats per line, and a ‘slack’ unstressed syllable before each caesura. The reading would go something like this (stressed syllables are underlined; numbers in square brackets indicate the number of beats in a particular scansion):

I will arise and go now, [6]
And a small cabin build there, [6]
Of clay and wattles made: [6]

This interpretation must underly the impression that the poem is in hexameter, but it is contradicted by Yeats’s own performance of the poem. In both extant recordings he actually articulates two consecutive beats near the middle of each of these lines: *go now* and *build there*. These are followed by a marked caesura, indicated in the text by a comma. This performance embodies what Bruce P. Hayes and Margaret MacEachern (1998) term the ‘Green-O’ cadence in folk poetry, where two successive monosyllables are stressed in performance at the end of a line (*Green O*). In Yeats’s poem, though, these cadences occur mid-line – before the pronounced pause of a caesura (‘g’ indicates a fourth beat of a Green-O cadence):

I will arise and go now, | and go to Innisfree, [3g3]
And a small cabin build there, | of clay and wattles made [3g3]

Yeats then delivers the third line thus:

Nine bean-rows will I have there, | a hive for the honey-bee [43]

This decisively contradicts the interpretation of the line as hexameter with caesura: in the first hemistich he clearly articulates four beats, taking the total for the line up to seven. Later in the poem, we see another type of
cadence before the caesura: the familiar version with a (so-called) ‘feminine ending’, or ending the line with an unstressed syllable of a polysyllabic word (‘f’ indicates a feminine ending), as in:

I hear lake water lapping | with low sounds
by the shore; [3f][3]
While I stand on the roadway, | or on the
pavements grey [3f][3]

In common with all of these lines, Yeats articulates three beats after the caesura. Before it, there are either: a) four alternating beats; b) four beats effected by stressing two consecutive syllables before the caesura; or c) three beats with a feminine ending before the caesura. These three types of line endings, or ‘cadences’ are attested by critics of folk forms such as Hayes and MacEachern (1998). If we were to split each of these long lines at the caesura, the poem would take the form of stanzas of common ballad metre (4.3.4.3), although arranged in long stanzas of six lines rather than four. Yeats’s delivery indicates that he expects the poem to be performed in an isochronic manner: the intervals between the stressed syllables are conspicuously regulated.

Objective measurements of the recordings show that these beats are not separated by exact intervals, but they sound approximately regular. This quality was appreciated by the composer, pianist, and conductor, Igor Stravinsky who observed that:

Articulation is mainly separation, and I can give no better example of what I mean by it than to refer the reader to W.B. Yeats’s recording of three of his poems. Yeats pauses at the end of each line, he dwells a precise time on and in each word – one could as easily note his verses in musical rhythm as scan them in poetic metres. (Stravinsky 1959: 136.)

These long lines would normally be considered ‘fourteeners’, but this term is somewhat unhelpful. For one, it implies that the lines are regulated by number of syllables, when in fact the regulating feature is stress-timing. Secondly, the term ‘fourteener’ is also used for a different kind of poem with lines that do not fall in half – the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics entry for fourteeners cites Chapman’s translation of Homer’s Iliad (1616), and sections of William Blake’s “Prophetic Books” as examples of this rather different form (Greene 2012).

There are some descriptive terms in English versification that seem to defy improvement – ‘feminine endings/cadences’ would be a case in point – but here a correction in terminology seems relatively straightforward. The term I propose for these lines of seven beats divided 4|3 is ‘Sevens’, since they occupy seven beats. In what follows, I will refer to lines that exhibit the ballad-metre cadences as ‘Ballad Sevens’, and the same form without the ballad cadences as ‘4–3 Sevens’. This would leave the term ‘fourteener’ for poems with fourteen syllables or seven-stress lines that are not broken into 4 and 3 stresses, though heptameter might serve equally well.

One apparent disadvantage of the term ‘Sevens’ is that the actual rhythmic structure is in fours. As Derek Attridge argues, there is considerable textual and experimental evidence of what he calls an ‘unrealised beat’ at the end of a 3-beat ballad line (1982: 84–96). As he argues, the alternating 4.3.4.3 of common hymn metre and ballad metre has an underlying rhythmic structure of 4.4.4.4, or 4x4. As this clearly implies, Attridge’s conception of the metre of this form is isochronic.

From this perspective, the relation of this ‘unrealised beat’ to this form is clear: the division of the quatrain (4.3.4.3) into two pairs is:

emphasised by the absence of a realised beat at the end of the second line, a structure which is reflected graphically when the verse is set out as a fourteener couplet (Attridge 1982: 88).

As Attridge goes on to observe, however, such lines will always fall into two halves (after the first four beats) – effectively falling back into the ballad form. Any advantages that the long line might have afforded narrative or meditative verse are lost: “the units of composition remain short, and the 4x4 structure, with its associations of song-form, remains prominent” (Attridge 1982: 88–89). This does not ring true for “The Lake Isle”, but this speaks more to the exceptional nature of Yeats’s poem than anything else.

In spite of the underlying 4x4 structure, the term ‘Sevens’ seems more descriptive of the
material than ‘eights’ or ‘sixteens’. In a pleasing parallel, the term appears in a dance-step used in traditional 4-time reel dances in Ireland. The name ‘seven’ is given to a movement of a rapid succession of seven steps sideways across two bars of music, with the weight always on the back foot, followed by a switching of the weight to the other foot. (The step is frequently taught with the instructions: ‘1-2-3-4-5-6-7-and…’, with the ‘and’ marking the beat that is not stepped on.)

The metrical theorist most famously associated with the principle of isochrony in poetry is Coventry Patmore. Making his case for the marking of a “caesural, or middle pause, in some kinds of verse” in his Essay on English Metrical Law (1661 [1857]), Patmore turns to a couplet attributed to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547):

And some I see again sit still, and say but small.
That can do ten times more than they that say they can do all.

These lines are in a form usually identified as ‘Poulter’s measure’: rhymed couplets with 12 syllables in the first line and 14 in the second. Patmore instructs the reader to place a pause after again, and for this to take up a whole beat, so that the lines have the same number of beats. The couplet thereby serves to illustrate two points for Patmore: first, the need for marking a ‘middle pause’; second, the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from a mismatch between the metrical pause and a break in syntax (Patmore 1961 [1857]: 23–24). In this way, these lines in Poulter’s measure are regulated in the same way as the Sevens: the performer needs to deliver both lines so that they seem to take the same amount of time. Patmore recommends inserting a pause; in other lines, the same effect can be achieved by the over-stressing of consecutive monosyllables (the Green-O cadence) or of a polysyllable ending with an unstressed syllable (the feminine cadence). By such means, the lines each occupy seven beats.

Despite this example used by Patmore, the principle is not usually applied to Yeats’s poetry, even where it makes an otherwise irregular poem fit a metre. One such poem, is section eight of “Vacillation” (VP: 503), which I take to be composed entirely in Ballad Sevens. Indeed, the poem has a number of features that make it more typical of that form than “The Lake Isle”. All of these are visible in the opening two lines: the first has a feminine ending to its initial hemistich with a caesura encouraged by the comma, while the second line has seven clear beats. This neatly rules out hexameter in the opening lines of the poem, while the couplet rhyme scheme also places us firmly in the company of most other Ballad Sevens:

Must we part, Von Hügel, | though much alike, for we [3][3]
Accept the miracles of the saints | and honour sanctity? [4][3]

Despite these textual signposts, the form has baffled recent commentators. No less a critic than Helen Vendler has pronounced the form as being a mix of “fourteeners and hexameters”, positing that its “refusal to be consistent is I suppose appropriate for its conversational jog” (2013: 166). Yet this monologue in rhyming couplets is surely some distance from what most of us think of as conversational. When considered as a Ballad Seven instead, the poem becomes metrically consistent. As we will see, its rhyme scheme, and to a lesser extent its subject matter, place it squarely in the tradition of such poems. Attridge posits that the 4x4 rhythmic structure is the strongest and most easily-perceived rhythm in English, with considerable justification, but this rhythm is not always felt, even by experienced readers of poetry. I will return to this issue in my conclusion.

Another distinguished critic who scans poems in the form differently is Meredith Martin. In her impressive social history of poetic metre, The Rise and Fall of Metre: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860–1930 (2012), she scans the fourteener lines of Newbolt’s “Drake’s Drum” as something else. For Martin, the metre of “Drake’s Drum” changes stanza by stanza. The opening is scanned as four ‘paonic’ feet (Martin 2012: 125). Presumably this would look something like “Drake he’s in his hammock an’ a thousand mile away.” In her account, the second stanza then “shifts the meter from first paeons to tighter trochees,” but she scans the
If the Dons sight Devon, I’ll quit the port o’Heaven.

I scan the poem differently in that I interpret all of the longer lines as being consistently structured as Ballad Sevens. The line from the stanza of trochees comes out thus:

If the Dons sight Devon, | I’ll quit the port o’Heaven [3f][3f]

This interpretation is compatible with Martin’s decision to stress the three consecutive words Dons sight Devon, though: the important distinction is the isochronic treatment of the line. One advantage of my interpretation is that all of the longer lines can be seen to observe this metre, so there is no need to posit an unmarked change in metre mid-poem.

Martin’s interpretation of many of these lines as paonic, with large gaps of unstressed syllables, might be otherwise explained by the theory of dipodism: that the stresses are structurally arranged in pairs, and that one stress is stronger than the other. So it might be scanned thus (the strongest beats are double-underlined):

Drake he’s in his hammock an’ a thousand mile away.

Many poems in Sevens can comply with a dipodic interpretation (with a missing final stress), but Yeats’s recorded performances of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” do not: the stresses do not alternate regularly in intensity.

Elsewhere in the same chapter of her book, Martin draws our attention to poems conscripted to schoolbooks intended for the education of children. One example is Thomas Davis’s poem “My Land”, which is included in Book V of Chambers’s Narrative Series of Standard Reading Books, Specially Adapted to the Requirements of the Revised Code Including Those in Writing, Arithmetic, and Dictation (1863). Her scansion of this poem has similarities to that of Newbolt.

As Martin observes, Davis’s poem is given without an author under the title “My Native Land”, taken from the poem itself. She reads the poem as ‘three-beat’, and posits that the labelling of the poem as a ‘song’ is an incorrect assertion made by the compilers of the collection intending to make a distinction between such ‘songs’ and real poems. (Martin 2012: 114–115.) While the editors have taken many liberties with the poem, this is not among them: Davis wrote many poems he titled as songs and ballads, and this poem appears in the sections “Miscellaneous Songs and Ballads” in John Mitchel’s edition of the The Poems of Thomas Davis – and rightly so. The poem can easily be envisaged as a ‘traditional’ song, and be scanned with similar ease as a 4x4 isochronic poem. It opens with a quatrain of three Green-O cadences followed by a three-stress line (which can accommodate an unrealised beat at its end). The next quatrain keeps the same structure, but patterns it differently, using the feminine ballad cadence in place of the Green-O (Davis ca. 1800: 78–79; notice that line 2.3 can alternatively be 3g):

1. She is a rich and rare land; [3g]
   Oh! she’s a fresh and fair land; [3g]
   She is a dear and rare land – [3g]
   This native land of mine. [3]

2. No men than her’s are braver – [3f]
   Her women’s hearts ne’er waver; [3f]
   I’d freely die to save her, [3f]
   And think my lot divine. [3]

The rhyme scheme is strictly maintained throughout the poem, and alternates with the cadences. The indented closing line of each quatrain rhymes with mine, while the initial three lines of each stanza follow a scheme of double rhyme that alternates between rhyming with both syllables of fair land, or save her. This strictly regulated sound-patterning, coupled with the heavy use of repetition, gives the impression that sound is more important than sense in the poem, as is more typical of song. These quatrains are wholly consistent with Attridge’s (1982) theory of the ubiquity of 4x4 constructions in folk verse in English, and with the findings of Hayes & MacEachern (1998).

While it is possible to scan Davis’s song as a three-beat poem, this removes it from the wider stream of four-beat isochronic folk verse, and the rich history of such forms. The
same is true for poems with lines in Ballad Sevens like section eight of “Vacillation”, and “Drake’s Drum”: scanning them isochronically transforms them from idiosyncratic and irregular oddities into members of a much more significant strand of poetry that has, in a very literal sense, been hidden in plain sight.

Today, then, poems like these by Yeats and others are received inconsistently even among distinguished scholars of poetic form. This fact raises questions as to why Yeats chose this form for quite different poems – especially when the 4.3.4.3 ballad form was available to him – and how common the form was among his predecessors and contemporaries of the 19th century.

The Ballad Seven in Yeats
This history can be seen by starting with Yeats and looking backwards. Throughout his career, Yeats wrote a number of poems comprised of Ballad Sevens, on subjects stretching from metaphysics, through meditations on love, to art criticism. These poems are “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, “His Phoenix”, “Owen Aherne and His Dancers”, section 8 of “Vacillation”, “The Three Movements”, and “The Curse of Cromwell”. What makes it clear that these poems must be interpreted in the same way as “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” is the presence of lines with one of the ballad cadences before the caesura, alongside lines with 7 clear beats — meaning that the poem cannot be comfortably read as hexameter.

In the 1890s, Yeats and fellow poets deliberately employed the form in poems that might best be described as lyrics. In this they were writing against the prevailing tendencies of the form. In other early poems, Yeats blurred the distinction between hexameter and the Sevens form, in writing poems that can be consistently scanned as either. “The Lover Tells of the Rose in His Heart”, and “The White Birds” are examples of such poems.

The opening of the former is:

All things uncomely and broken, | all things
worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway, | the creak
of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the ploughman, | splashing the wintry mould.

Are wronging your image that blossoms | a
rose in the deeps of my heart. (VP: 142.)

And the latter:

I would that we were, my beloved, | white
birds on the foam of the sea!
We tire of the flame of the meteor, | before it
can fade and flee (VP: 121.)

These happily sit within the Ballad Seven form, with each line taking the form 3f|3. Equally, though, one might read the poems as loose hexameters with a regularly applied medial caesura. The poem “The Salley Gardens” could be scanned in this way, but its origin in folk-song encourages us to treat it as Ballad Seven. The poem’s source, “The Rambling Boys of Pleasure”, is structured as a 4.3.4.3 ballad, typically printed in long stanzas of eight lines.³ “The Salley Gardens” is still sung today, and Yeats believed it to have been used as a marching tune for the army of the Irish Free State.⁴

Yeats used the form less ambiguously in his later poems, and we might relate this change to his movement away from his earlier style at the turn of the century. After considerable tumult in his private life in the early 1900s, he embarked in a dramatically new direction in his poetry. This was to manifest itself most clearly in his collection In the Seven Woods (1903). His earlier poetry, much like his earlier criticism collected in Ideas of Good and Evil (1903) was “too lyrical, too full of aspirations after remote things, too full of desires”, in a manner he no longer approved of (InteLex III: 372). In a letter to John Quinn he went on to reflect that “I have always felt that the soul has two movements primarily, one to transcend forms, and the other to create forms;” his earlier poetry had striven to transcend form; he would now create or reinforce it: substituting Apollonian order for “that wild God Dionysius” in his new Nietzschean formulation (InteLex III: 372).

This is certainly true for his next employment of the Ballad Seven form; in “His Phoenix” composed in January 1915. This poem opens with relatively clear textual signs as to its metre. Just as with section 8 of “Vacillation”, the opening line has six clear beats, but a mid-line feminine cadence:
There is a queen in China, or maybe it’s in Spain.

But in the poem as a whole, roughly two thirds of the lines have seven clear beats (arranged 4|3), as in the third line:

Of her unblemished lineaments, a whiteness with no stain.

While the metre of the poem can be in no doubt, the second line is challenging in that it seems to only have six beats. One easy way to make it match up with the others is to treat the word birthdays as a Green-O cadence, even though it is mid-hemistic:

And birthdays and holidays such praises can be heard.

This matches the sound patterning of birthdays and holidays – with the initial and final syllables stressed. This treatment of word-stress is entirely permissible under stress-timed performance, though an alternative is to follow Patmore in positing a longer middle pause, to ensure the even spacing of the beats.

The 1:2 ratio of lines with feminine cadences to those with seven clear beats is repeated in the first poem of “Owen Aherne and His Dancers”, and section 8 of “Vacillation” (VP: 449, 503). In all of these poems we see tantalising suggestions of an emerging pattern to these cadences, a little like the alternating pattern of Poulter’s measure, but it is always broken in subsequent stanzas. This is clearly shown in the opening two stanzas of “Owen Aherne and His Dancers” from 1932:

A strange thing surely that my heart, when love had come unsought, [4|3]
Upon the Norman upland or in that poplar shade, [3f|3]
Should find no burden but itself and yet should be worn out, [4|3]
It could not bear that burden and therefore it went mad. [3f|3]

The south wind brought it longings, and the east wind despair. [3f|3]
The west wind made it pitiful, and the north wind afraid. [4|3]
It feared to give its love a hurt with all the tempest there. [4|3]
It feared the hurt that she could give and therefore it went mad. [4|3]

Yeats’s desire to consolidate poetic form did not manifest in a desire to increase the regularity or patterning of such features.

It might seem somewhat perverse that Yeats did not use the form for any of his early ballads, preferring the ‘opened out’ 4.3.4.3 form that readers are more familiar with. Instead, he only employed it in ballad form in his final decade, in “The Curse of Cromwell” (VP: 580). Shortly after writing the poem in early 1937, Yeats was keen to hear it sung, and arranged for this to happen in a BBC radio broadcast, and in more social settings. To his pride and delight, the singer was asked to sing it twice by the audience at the formal dinner of the Irish Academy of Letters on 16 May 1937 (InteLex: #6953). Much like Patmore’s example from Surrey’s poetry, some lines contain only 6 stressed syllables, and ballad cadences do not seem to be encouraged by the text:

You ask what I have found and far and wide I go. [3f|3]
Nothing but Cromwell’s house and Cromwell’s murderous crew. [3f|3]
The lovers and the dancers are beaten into the clay. [3f|3]
And the tall men and the swordsmen and the horsemen where are they? [3f|3]
And there is an old beggar wandering in his pride [3f|3]
His fathers served their fathers before Christ was crucified. [4|3]
O what of that, O what of that [4]
What is there left to say? [3]

Other lines have the Green-O cadence, arranged 3g|3, as in line 14:

What can they know that we know that know the time to die?

A few have seven alternating beats:

Can pay the poet for a verse and hear the fiddle sound. (1.21)

Unfortunately we do not have a recording of the poem sung or even spoken, but it seems clear that the combination of these features should alert us to the proper performance of that text: namely, an isochronic delivery. In a song, or chant, it is facile to deliver these varied lines in a satisfyingly regular way. It would seem, in fact, that far greater aesthetic pleasure is granted by the stretching or
compressing the syllables to match the musical score, compared with when the syllables match up exactly. As a consequence, certain circumscribed examples of textual irregularity seem to imply affinity with song.

That Yeats should come back to his early influences in his final decade was in part the result of his aged mind returning to the themes and ideas of his youth, but it was also owing to the particularly Irish aspect of his new poem. Yeats was feeling increasingly embattled in his native Ireland, and what better form with which to critique the values of the Free State than one that had been strongly associated with the Irish literary renaissance? What better way to circumvent the prevailing censorship of the written word in Ireland than by making something enter the aural tradition? (See Cade-Stewart 2013: 221–234.)

Yeats also drew on the aphoristic potential of the form in two other poems from the 1930s. “The Three Movements” is structured 4|3, but the second hemistich of each line is acephalous, a feature somewhat at odds with the syntax of the final line, since it requires lie and gasping to both be stressed, where one would normally stress the adverb (VP: 485):

Shakespearean fish swam the sea, | far away from land;
Romantic fish swam in nets | coming to the hand;
What are all those fish that lie | gasping on the strand?

With the pause of the caesura, however, such lines are easy to deliver rhythmically. As will now be evident, my interpretation of these lines requires successive stresses – clashes if you will – in the middle of some hemistichs. This seems to violate the normal alternating expectation of English metrical verse, but Yeats was relatively fond of such clashes, as recordings of his performances attest. In “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, we can clearly hear him articulating successive stressed syllables in hemistichs such as:

And a small cabin build there”, and “with low sounds by the shore

Yeats clearly enjoyed the effect.

Following similar principles, the otherwise uneven quatrains of “The Great Day” also comes out as a Ballad Seven (VP: 590):

Hurrah for revolution | and more cannon shot;
A beggar upon horseback| lashes a beggar upon foot;
Hurrah for revolution | and cannon come again.
The beggars have changed places | but the lash goes on.

Other scansions may suggest themselves to readers, but an isochronic approach seems the most appropriate.

The 19th-Century Ballad Seven in the Literary Canon

As we have seen, the Ballad Seven form is a minor but significant presence in Yeats’s oeuvre, appearing about the same number of times in his Collected Poems as sonnets. But how common was the form among canonical authors, and for what subjects was it used? One way to investigate is to examine the works of the poets active in the 19th century who are included in the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. Such poets effectively constitute the broader canon – few are as central to our conception of the period as the likes of Shelley and Keats, but they are all considered important enough to be featured in the Cambridge Bibliography. Examining their work is a more manageable task than one might think, since these poems are included in electronic form in Chadwyck-Healey’s 1995 CD-ROM of The English Poetry Full-Text Database. Discs 4 and 5 cover the period 1800–1900, meaning that they include the poets who wrote or published most of their work between these dates. Together, these two discs include five million lines of verse, however – far too many to be checked manually. My solution was to use digital tools to locate possible candidates, and then sift through these by hand. As such, it represents a mode of computer-assisted criticism.

Poems in Ballad Sevens are particularly tricky to find using digital tools. In terms of syllables, the lines may be as short as this one from Rudyard Kipling’s “Jobson’s Amen” (1.7): ⁵

Conches in a temple, oil-lamps in a dome

This structure: XoXoXF | XoXoX, is only eleven syllables long, a length not uncommon
in iambic pentameter of the period, let alone hexameter. Even this was not the shortest I came across, however, owing to the isochronic nature of the form. Ernest Jones’s “The Cry of the Russian Serf to the Czar” opens with the line:

Labour! Labour! Labour! – Toil! Toil! Toil!

This line could be read as a mere nine syllables—a particularly high ratio of beats to syllables (7:9), though there is theoretically nothing to stop that ratio from becoming 1:1 (Jones 1855: 102). Nevertheless, syllables are the only way to narrow down the material: stanza lengths and rhyme schemes varied in the poems I had seen.

To reduce the poetry to a manageable volume, I took a sample of half of this collection (poets with names starting with A-K, on Disc 4 of The English Poetry Full-Text Database). This sample of roughly 2.5 million lines was still very large, and likely to be representative of the whole. To optimize the time-consuming process of syllable counting, I used a simple letter-counting algorithm to only consider lines of poetry that were of about the right length (an average of between 52 and 70 characters). Suitable lines were then posted to a text-to-speech server and converted into syllables. I used the open-source software MARY Text-To-Speech for this part of the process. MARY was a good tool for this job, as I had considerably augmented the user-dictionary on my local server, and written Python scripts that correct its output.

Where a line had at least twelve syllables, it was added to a list. I chose twelve, rather than eleven, for pragmatic reasons: few poems will be written entirely in short lines, and far too many of the poems matched will in fact be pentameter or hexameter.

The result of this process was a list of well over 100,000 lines. To narrow it still further, I only considered poems with entire stanzas, or a majority of lines, in Ballad Sevens. As I was interested in the distribution of these lines across poetic forms, I did not distinguish between poems that were or were not divided into regular stanzas. To find poems in Ballad Sevens, I focused on sequences of broadly sequential lines near the beginning of poems.

I then performed the most laborious part of the process: manual scansion of these poems. To qualify as a Seven the poem needed to consist of seven-beat lines that would split after the fourth beat, or to have a stanza-pattern that included clear examples of such lines. The poem was classed as a Ballad Seven if these lines included one or more lines of six beats with a ballad cadence at the end of its first hemistich. If no such cadences were present, the poem was classed as a 4–3 Seven. A very small number of poems in the sample were entirely composed of six-beat lines with feminine endings before the caesura. I did not count such poems as Sevens. Although some poems structured in this way are most likely Ballad Sevens (e.g. Yeats’s “Down by the Salley Gardens”) many others might also be classified as hexameter.

This manual checking removed false positives from the list of possible candidates that I had produced by digital filtering. One consequence of this method is that there must be more poems in the form of Sevens, even in this sample, than I have identified. My figures therefore represent the minimum frequency of such poems, but this minimum is no insignificant number.

A Survey of the Form

Table 1. Poets in the sample with six or more Ballad Sevens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kipling, R.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper, N.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce, R. D.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, W. C.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook, E.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holmes, E. G. A.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayly, N. T. H.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allingham, W.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howitt, M.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barlow, G.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havergal, F. R.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bickersteth, E. H.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickey, E. H.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Neil, M.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browning, R.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I found that poems in Ballad Sevens were included in the published work of 73 of the 233 poets in the sample—roughly a third. By this I mean that the works of these 73 poets contained one or more poems with either entire stanzas or a majority of lines composed
in Ballad Sevens. About a third of these (28 of 73 poets) only included one poem in this form. Though there were exceptions, most poets in the sample used it sparingly. Only fifteen used it six times or more (see Table 1). Since these poems have never been considered together, to my knowledge, I will now outline the contours of the themes and genres that manifest in the form in 19th-century literary verse in English. Before I do so, I must observe that this outline will not encompass folk or popular ballads of the period.

In the sample, the form was most popular with Rudyard Kipling, but it was disproportionately used by Irish poets, with the likes of Nora Hopper, R.D. Joyce and William Allington in the top six for frequency. Emily Hickey and Moira O’Neil (listed in the database under her pen name “N. Higginson”) were not far down the list, and A.P. Graves only a little further still. This preponderance is likely to stem from the popularity of ballad-poetry among Irish poets and audiences. What almost all of these poets have in common, Irish or otherwise, is their status as popular poets; the form was strongly, and rightly, associated with the demotic.

The form was used by Yeats’s chosen literary precursors: Thomas Davis, Samuel Ferguson, and James Clarence Mangan, whose names are conspicuously enshrined in his early poem “To Ireland in the Coming Times”. Here, he asserted: “Nor may I less be counted one / With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson” (VP: 18). Mangan used the form for lyrical and introspective love poems, serving as an example to Yeats of the potential of the form. But it was from Ferguson’s “The Fairy Thorn: An Ulster Ballad” that he took the stanza shape and rhyme-scheme for his “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”. The form used by an Irish patriot was particularly suitable for his poem of longing for idyllic rural Ireland.

The fourth stanza of Ferguson’s poem exhibits most of the features of the form:

And linking hand in hand, | and singing as they go, [3][3]
The maids along the hill-side | have ta’en their fearless way, [3][3]

Till they come to where the rowan trees | in lonely beauty grow [4][3]
Beside the Fairy Hawthorn grey. [4]

It is worth observing at this point that the poem is not in Poulter’s measure, although the first couplet might seem to be. For one thing, the rhyme scheme is abab rather than in couplets, but more importantly, the number of syllables is not regulated in the poem. The apparent proximity to that form reveals their kinship, such that both Sevens and Poulter’s measure can be fitted to a 4x4 structure, with an unrealised beat after the initial hemistich where necessary, and at the end of each line. This is exactly what happens in the first line quoted, above. In a stress-timed delivery, the caesura of that line needs only be extended a little. In song, of course, a word can happily occupy far more beats than it has syllables, so the vowel of hand could be stretched to hand if sung.

The opening lines of Ferguson’s ballad could be read as 3|3 with an unrealised beat, but there is also potential for realising the beat by stressing successive syllables (double-underlined below):

Get up, our Anna dear, from the weary spinning-wheel; 
For your father’s on the hill, and your mother is asleep:
Come up above the crags, and we’ll dance a highland-reel
Around the fairy thorn on the steep.

This gives a wrench to the stresses of natural syntax, and seems to be contradicted by the punctuation, but it would ‘realise’ the beats in the same way as a Green-O cadence. Yeats may have concluded that successive syllables should be stressed in this way when performing Ferguson’s lines, but he went further, in placing successive stressed syllables elsewhere in the line. As I demonstrated earlier, he did so in the opening of the second line:

And a small cabin build there

The Green-O ending of build there is consistent with the cadences permitted in ballad form, but the clashing stresses of small and cab-in is not typical of Ballad Seven poems in the sample. Such clashes were not in Ferguson, and were distinctly unusual in
poems of this type. While refrains and opening lines might feature consecutive beat syllables (as in Jones’s *Toil! Toil! Toil!* quoted above), it was unusual for lines in the main body of stanzas to display the feature in arbitrary positions.

In contrast, the feature is conspicuous in poems in this form that were written by poets influenced by Yeats himself. First among these was Nora Hopper, who was something of a literary disciple of Yeats, and almost certainly writing under his influence in this regard. In her volume *Aquamarines* (London, 1902), she collected her poem on “Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan”, inspired no doubt by Yeats’s poems and plays on the Irish heroine; the third stanza of her poem reads:

O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, | it’s old I am and gray.
I see the dead leaves blown about | the closing of my day;
The dead leaves, the red leaves, | are rotting in my way,
O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, to-day.

Her practise is rather more song-like than Yeats’s, owing to the repeated words, internal rhymes, and the simple end-rhyme: here, as elsewhere in her poems, sound seems more important than sense, in a manner that is often appealing. She was a popular poet, and printed copies of her first volume of poetry, *Under Quicken Boughs* (1896), are available today in various impressions and bindings. She used the form to riddling effect in her luminous poem “Easter”, from *Songs of the Morning* (1900):

My heart is bright with Easter light, | my face is fair to see. [4][3]
Because God’s risen, and out of prison | the whole round world goes free. [4][3]

Hopper used the form for twenty of her *Collected Poems* (she was the second most prominent user of the form in my sample). Yeats’s influence was not limited to fellow Irish writers, though. Ernest Dowson was his companion at the writers’ meetings in the Cheshire Cheese pub; like Hopper, he was to die young. He did not share her enthusiasm for the form, but he wrote one poem that utilised the Ballad Seven cadence. To draw even more attention to the cadence he used a feature of poetry that was becoming increasingly anachronistic: the articulation of -ed word-endings as an extra syllable. In the example below, *unreined* needs to be articulated *unrein-èd* if the poem is to be metrically regular. While not unfamiliar to Victorian poets, this feature came to look too much like a ‘poeticism’ by the turn of the century:

When the mad winds are unreined, wilt thou not storm, my sea? [3][3]

Dowson’s “The Sea-Change” was collected in *Decorations in Verse and Prose* (1899). We can see the influence of Yeats’s use of the form in Dowson’s successive stresses of *mad* and *wind*. Like Yeats, his employment of such clashes constitutes a complication to the simple alternating rhythms typical of poems in this form in the nineteenth century. It emblematizes the difference between Ferguson’s ballad and Yeats’s “Innisfree”, in the latter’s use of the form for lyric subject matter. Unlike Ferguson’s “Fairy Thorn”, Yeats’s poem is one of lyrical introspection. Dowson followed Yeats’s lead in this respect, employing a fairly complex rhythm more common to poems in other metres. This rhythmical innovation may go part of the way to explain why modern critics have misunderstood Yeats’s poem, but it is not the only reason.

The form was not only used in the service of Ireland: the most frequent user of the form in my sample was Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), whose sympathies lay elsewhere. Kipling employed the form, like many other
writers, for comic and frequently satirical poems. In “The Puzzler” he used the form to lampoon the Irish along with the other Celtic peoples:

The Celt in all his variants | from Builth to Ballyhoo, [4][3]
His mental processes are plain | – one knows what he will do, [4][3]

The main subject of his poem is a valorization of the ‘puzzling’ minds of ‘the English’. In this, it is representative of the jingoistic aspect of so many of his poems in the form.

Kipling also used the form for satirising aspects of contemporary society, as in “The Gods of the Copybook Headings”, which opens:

As I pass through my incarnations | in every age and race, [3][3]
I make my proper prostrations to | the Gods of the Market-Place. [4][3]

His predominant use of the form was for narrative verse, most strikingly in the concentrated summary poems that open his stories of historical fantasy in Rewards and Fairies (1910). In “King Henry VII. and the Shipwrights (A.D. 1487)” (“The Wrong Thing”), he used it for a historical pastiche, written in pseudo-Middle English:

Harry, our King in England, | from London town is gone. [3][3]
And come to Hamull on the Hoke | in the Countie of Suthampton. [4][3]
For there lay the Mary of the Tower, | his ship of war so strong. [4][3]
And he would discover, certaynely, | if his shipwrights did him wrong. [4][3]

The Ballad Seven is germane for works of historical fantasy, since it seems to gesture back to stress-timed song-poems such as “The Cuckoo Song”, one of the earliest surviving Middle English lyrics (Ferguet al. 2005: 15). It is intriguing to note that this early song-poem is written out in prose – to save valuable space on the page, no doubt. But like the Ballad Sevens, it displays a confidence on behalf of the writer that the reader will recognize the proper form.

The matter of economy of paper brings us to a reason the Ballad Seven should seem suited for narrative verse in general – in its potential for turning two lines into one.

Kipling’s “The Legends of Evil” opens with the alternating lines of common ballad metre (4.3.4.3) but switches to Ballad Sevens for the second part of the poem. Once the opening section sets the rhythm, the long lines of the Sevens are introduced to save paper. As we will see, there are even clearer examples of this practice.

A great many of the poems in my sample were narratives of military engagements and other heroic struggles against the odds on land and sea. The affinity with narrative verse arises from the roots of the form in traditional ballads, which also gives rise to its manifestations in other types of popular song: sea-shanties, Barrack-Room Ballads and works for the music hall. A representative of the former that is still sung today is “A Thousand Leagues Away: A Sea Song” by W.C. (William Cox) Bennett (1820–1895):

The wind is blowing fresh, Kate, | the boat rocks there for me; [3][3]
One kiss and I’m away, Kate, | for two long years to sea; [3][3]
For two long years to think of you | – dream of you night and day – [4][3]
To long for you across the sea | – a thousand leagues away. [4][3]
A thousand leagues away, dear Kate, [4]
A thousand leagues away, [3]
While round the Pole we toss and roll. [4]
A thousand leagues away. [3]

Kipling serves us with the best examples of literary poems that aspire to be sung in barracks, such as his “Cells”, which opens:

I’ve a head like a concertina, | I’ve a tongue like a button-stick, [3][3]
I’ve a mouth like an old potato, | and I’m more than a little sick. [3][3]
But I’ve had my fun o’ the Corp’ral’s Guard; | I’ve made the cinders fly. [4][3]
And I’m here in the Clink for a thundering drink | and blacking the Corporal’s eye. [4][3]

He probably hoped that such songs would enter into that oral tradition.

In a fusion of the barrack-room and the lyrical “Lake Isle of Innisfree”, the English Tommy, William Oliphant penned a parody of Yeats’s poem during World War I (Allison 2006: 207):
A Picardy Parody (W.B.Y ... ts)

I will arise and go now, and go to Picardy,
And a new trench-line hold there, of clay and
shell-holes made,
No dugouts shall I have there, nor a hive for
the Lewis G.,
But live on top in the b. loud glade.

And I may cease to be there, for peace comes
dropping slow,
Dropping from the mouth of the Minnie to
where the sentry sings;
There noon is high explosive, and night a
gunfire glow,
And evening full of torpedoes’ wings.

I will arise and go now, though always night
and day
I’ll feel dark waters lapping with low sounds
by the store,
Where all our bombs grow rusty and
countless S.A.A.;
I’ll feel it in the trench-feet sore.

Oliphant’s parody preserves the rhythm and
 rhyme scheme of Yeats’s poem extremely
closely. It is unlikely that this English soldier
would have heard Yeats read the poem
himself: instead, the rhythms were clearly
conveyed on the printed page, as must have
been true for many men of his generation.

As we have seen, the form was far more
associated with satire than with lyricism;
Oliphant’s parody exploited that association
to comic effect. Would this parodic potential
have been so evident, or so effective, if
Yeats’s poem had not already been something
of an anomaly?

In the poems of the sample, we can see
another parody working in an analogous way,
this time with the poem sequence of “The
May Queen”, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. In
this sequence, Tennyson drew on the
associations of the Ballad Seven form with
folk verse to deliver a sentimental narrative
through the voice of a young rustic maid:

You must wake and call me early, | call me
early, mother dear: [4][3]
To-morrow ’ill be the happiest time | of all
the glad New-year: [4][3]
Of all the glad New-year, mother, | the
maddest merriest day: [4][3]
For I’m to be Queen o’ the May, mother, |
I’m to be Queen o’ the May. [4][3]

There’s many a black black eye, they say, |
but none so bright as mine: [4][3]
There’s Margaret and Mary, | there’s Kate
and Caroline: [3][3]
But none so fair as Alice | in all the land
they say. [4][3]
So I’m to be Queen o’ the May, mother, | I’m
to be Queen o’ the May. [4][3]

We see a less innocent side of the speaker’s
character when she heartlessly taunts a young
man, Robin, who has indicated that he loves
her:

They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not
what they say,
For I’m to be Queen o’ the May, mother, I’m
to be Queen o’ the May.

They say he’s dying all for love, but that can
never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother –
what is that to me?
There’s many a bolder lad ’ill woo me any
summer day,
And I’m to be Queen o’ the May, mother,
I’m to be Queen o’ the May.

The proud and callous young lady is set up for
a fall. By the “New-Year’s Eve” of the next
poem, calamity has struck: tragically, the
young speaker is now facing premature death,
longing only “to live till the snowdrops come
again.” The “Conclusion” gives her a voice
beyond the grave, with which she reflects on
her life, and atones for her slight
transgression, telling her mother to “say to
Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret”
and to offer the consolation that she would
likely “have been his wife” had she lived.

Aytoun’s parody undoes the tragedy and
the sentimentalism of Tennyson’s ballad. In
“The Biter Bit”, the young female speaker has
prevaricated in accepting a young man – “He
said I kept him off and on, in hopes of higher
game” – but he has given up on her, and
married another. The “Biter” has been “bit”,
and her unworthy complaint, and wheeling
demands on her mother, undoes our sympathy
at the bathetic climax of the poem:

I did not know my heart, mother, – I know it
now too late;
I thought that I without a pang could wed
some nobler mate;
But no nobler suitor sought me, – and he has
taken wing.
And my heart is gone, and I am left a lone
and blighted thing.
You may lay me in my bed, mother, – my
head is throbbing sore;
And, mother, prithee let the sheets be duly
aired before;
And, if you’d please, my mother dear, your
poor desponding child,
Draw me a pot of beer, mother, and, mother,
draw it mild!

As with Oliphant’s parody of Yeats, Aytoun’s
works by exploiting the association of the
form with satire; exposing moral failings
without sentimentality.

Tennyson may have thought the form to be
fitting for the voice of an uncultured young
lady because of its associations with folk
verse, but also with verse intended to be for,
or from the perspective of children. The
kinship between Ballad Sevens and isochronic
nursery rhymes may lie behind this tendency,
and offers a potential explanation as to why
some poems are considered suitable for
children.7 The Ballad Seven poems intended
for children had regular rhythms and rhyme
schemes that were simple to perform and to
appreciate. Unsurprisingly, the features were
utilized for instructional narratives intended to
be remembered. Perhaps the most famous
example of such didactic verse is “The Spider
and the Fly” by Mary Howitt (1799–1888):

“Will you walk into my parlour?” | said the
Spider to the Fly. [4|3]
“Tis the prettiest little parlour | that ever you
did spy: [4|3]
The way into my parlour | is up a winding
stair. [3|3]
And I’ve a many curious things | to shew
when you are there.” [4|3]

At the climax of this cautionary tale the fly
allows herself to be persuaded to approach the
beguiling spider, who promptly seizes her and
drags her off to be devoured in his “dismal
den”. The conclusion of the poem makes the
moral similarly inescapable:

And now dear little children, | who may this
story read. [3|3]
To idle, silly flattering words, | I pray you
ne’er give heed: [4|3]
Unto an evil counsellor, | close heart and ear
and eye. [4|3]

And take a lesson from this tale. | of the
Spider and the Fly. [4|3]
The form appears to rather lighter purpose in
the work of Lewis Carroll (1832–1898), in the
well-known poem “The Mock Turtle’s Song”,
which famously begins:

“Will you walk a little faster?” | said a
whiting to a snail,
“There’s a purpose close behind us, | and
he’s reading on my tail.”

The opening lines from both poems appear to
accommodate interpretation as 8-beat lines,
with trochaic openings (“Will you walk a little
faster?” | said a whiting to a snail). Subsequent
lines in both poems are not amenable to this
interpretation, however, such as this stanza from Carroll’s song:

“What matters if we go?” | his scaly
friend replied. [4|3]
“The further off from England | the nearer is
to France. [3|3]
There is another shore, you know, | upon the
other side. [4|3]
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, | but come
and join the dance. [4|3]
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, | will you join the dance? [4|3]
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, | will you join the dance” [4|3]

The explanation once more lies in the
underlying 4x4 nature of the metre: in the
opening lines it is simply possible to realize
all of the beats, rather than leave them as rests
(though this is not to be seen as required).

Inevitably, other comic poems in my
sample parodied traditional nursery rhyme to
comic effect, once more exploiting the
satirical associations of the form. One
eexample in the sample comes from the priest
Richard Harris Barham (1788–1845):

Mother Goose’s Tale; Or, Nursery Rhymes
for Christmas, 1828.

I sing a song of “sixpence”, a balance all
awry,
My “friend and benefactor” a piping of his
eye!
When his mouth was opened the clerk began
to sing,
“Is not this a pretty dish? suppose we both
take wing!
The folks are in the counting-house, counting
out the money,
Five bankers in the parlour are looking rather funny!"
The clerk then in the carpet-bag was packing up his clothes,
"Send out and call a 'Jarvey', ere somebody 'turn nose!'"

In a juxtaposition of the sacred with the profane, the form was also used for devotional texts. In fact, it seems to have been a rather more common use of the form. An example of this type of poetry can be seen in “To the Unknown God” by Edmond Gore Alexander Holmes (1850–1936):

O God! O Father of all things! | O Lord and Giver of life! [4][3]
O fountain of peace and blessing! | O centre of storm and strife! [3][3]
The waves of thy will roll onward: | I stand alone on thy shore; [3][3]
I veil mine eyes in thy presence: | I seal my lips, and adore. [3][3]

Ballad metre is broadly analogous to hymn-metre in that both exhibit the same cadences, which arise from similar isochronic principles. It is therefore unsurprising that the Ballad Seven form should be used for poems of religious fervour, such as this one by Holmes.

This association may have informed Yeats’s choice of the form for the somewhat light-hearted theological discussion of “Vacillation” section 8 (“Must we part Von Hügel”), where Yeats reflects on his metaphysical disagreement with the Christian apologist, Baron (Friedrich) von Hügel. In the case of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, however, the affinity with the common associations of the form is considerably fainter.

The 4–3 Sevens

We now return to the question of classification. As I have explained, I have classified poems of the Sevens form that do not display ballad cadences at the end of the first hemistich as 4–3 Sevens. At least 71 poets in my sample used the 4–3 Seven form. This was two less than used Ballad Sevens, but this smaller number of poets actually used the form slightly more frequently (65% used it more than once, compared to 62% that used Ballad Sevens more than once), and for considerably longer poems.

The poems that lack the ballad cadences do not require an isochronic reading in order to be regular – they will accommodate an accentual-syllabic approach (having seven accented syllables in each line, albeit loosely arranged). As with all such classifications, there will be poems that seem to straddle the categories. Kipling’s “Snarleyow” serves us with examples of lines where the classification as a Ballad Seven seems somewhat indeterminate, insofar they might or might not be read with a feminine ballad cadence in the initial hemistich:

1. The Driver ’umped ’is shoulder, | for the wheels was goin' round. [3][3]
2. The Driver ’umped ’is shoulder, for | the wheels was goin' round. [4][3]

In this example, the comma would seem to encourage the placement of the caesura as in (1), but the alternative is to stress the conjunction for, as in (2). I have elected not to consider such lines as exhibiting ballad cadences; they do not, therefore, qualify the poem as Ballad Seven, despite the possibility of this interpretation. Nevertheless, the fuzzy nature of this division between the two forms of Sevens is instructive. In terms of subject matter, and other formal features such as stanza length and rhyme scheme, the 4–3 Sevens were broadly indistinguishable from the Ballad Sevens. The slight exception to this being that the 4–3 Sevens included more long narrative poems, such as Samuel Ferguson’s epic “Conal”.

One such poem, Dora Greenwell’s “A Story of Olden Time”, graphically reinforces the kinship between the 4–3 Seven form and common ballad form (4.3.) by opening with twenty lines of the latter before switching into 4–3 Sevens for the remainder. In her Poems (1861), this shift coincides with the turn of the page, making it look like a printing convention (Greenwell 1861: 26–27). In subsequent editions the lineation was preserved, even when the shift did not coincide with a page break. The common ballad form is typically interpreted isochronically, with an unrealised beat after the 3-beat lines. If we accept that the 4–3 Sevens are structurally equivalent, then they are similarly isochronic.
Given the somewhat arbitrary division between the categories, it makes sense to also consider the total number of poems in Sevens in either form found in the sample by my method. By my count, just over half of the poets in this sample used a form of Sevens for at least one poem (117 of 223). It is important to remember at this point that I have only found a minimum number of poems: more may yet be found by alternative methods. Assuming that the sample is representative for the whole corpus, we can conclude that more than half of the poets in the broader nineteenth-century canon employed this form.

**Conclusion**

In spite of this popularity, and the distinctive genealogy of this form, it goes unremarked in most histories of form. Yeats took the form for “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” from one of his celebrated Irish precursors, yet even this has not been recognized. Instead, that poem, and his others written in Ballad Sevens, have been interpreted entirely differently: as irregular idiosyncrasies. In fact, they are part of a much broader and significant strand of poetry that seems to reach back to the very roots of the English language.

It is a powerful reminder for all critics that our perception is contingent upon vantage-point, and our conceptions of metre are no exception. Today, isochronic performances of poetry are common only in Slam Poetry events, not in readings of ‘serious’ literary work. This division in cultural esteem seems to have been in place since at least the 19th century, and probably stretches back much further. The poems I have identified in this form include a disproportionate number that would be excluded from the category of ‘serious’ poetry: folk verse, in many forms; hymns; children’s verse; parodies. The status of these poems in the database is secured by the poets’ other works that are considered serious and ‘literary’.

The proper division between ‘serious’ poetry and isochronic verse was evidently felt by the poet Alice Meynell (1847–1922). In an essay first published in 1893 on “Mr Coventry Patmore’s Odes”, she argued that what she termed “liberal verse” followed different “laws” than utilitarian “verse set for use – cradle-verse and march-making verse.” The latter was bound by “time measures”; the former, she argued, was not. In this, she was opposing her friend Coventry Patmore, for suggesting that it should be, in his *Essay on English Metrical Law*:

If Mr. Patmore really intends that his Odes shall be read with minim, or crotchet, or quaver rests, to fill up a measure of beaten time, we are free to hold that he rather arbitrarily applies to liberal verse the laws of verse set for use – cradle verse and march-marking verse (we are, of course, not considering verse set to music, and thus compelled into the musical time). Liberal verse, dramatic, narrative, meditative, can surely be bound by no time measures – if for no other reason, for this: that to prescribe pauses is also to forbid any pauses unprescribed. (Meynell 1905: 94–95.)

Her feelings about the plurality of types of verse and metres ring true today: there are few advocates for treatment of all poetry as isochronic. But so unpopular is this approach to prosody that even scholars of poetic form cannot recognize an isochronic poem in Ballad Sevens, even though we have audio recordings of deliveries of this type. This becomes a particular problem when a poet has used the form for verse that is not self-evidently ‘for use’ – like “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, or indeed any of Yeats’s poems in the form.

Although some listeners object to Yeats’s particular delivery of “The Lake Isle”, all of the poems I have explored in this article benefit from a performance that is in some sense isochronic. With that, I return to Patmore’s *Essay*, and his observation regarding the couplet from Surrey: that the recognition of a median caesura makes for a far more satisfying aesthetic experience than the alternative, even (or especially) when it comes at the cost of normal syntax. The failure to recognize the metre is not unique to modern readers, but it does seem to be a particularly acute problem today. Patmore reflected on a means of correcting such oversights:

It is very questionable, indeed, whether English verse has gained by the entire disuse of the caesural dot, which was always
employed, until the middle of the fifteenth century, to indicate the position of the caesura in those kinds of verse of which a marked caesura was an essential quality.
(Patmore 1961 [1857]: 24.)

Some may think that it is time to reconsider marking the caesura in some way in printed poetry – as we do for Anglo-Saxon poetry. When it comes to the majority of Ballad Sevens, however, there are clear textual features that may serve as signposts: we simply need to attend to them.

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Notes
2. For an example of the latter, see Yeats’s delivery of line 6: Dropping from the veils of the morning. He conspicuously extends the first syllable of morning (TSWP).
3. See e.g. Henderson 1937: 15; Clinton-Baddeley 1941: 65.
4. See his letter to Dorothy Wellesley, 25th September 1935 [InteLex: #6363]: “The work of Irish poets, quite deliberately put into circulation with its music thirty & more years ago, is now all over the country. The Free State Army march to a tune called ‘Down by the Salley Garden’ without knowing that the march was first published with words of mine, words that are now folklore.”
5. By this periodization, the earliest poet on the discs is first Baron Thomas Erskine (1750–1823), whose poems were published in the year of his death. His contemporary, William Blake (1757–1825) is included on the previous disc, however, as the majority of his poetry was written and published prior to 1800. By the same principles, G.M. Hopkins (1844–1889) is included as a 19th-century poet, despite the fact that most of his poems were first published in 1918, long after his death.
6. For Kipling’s poems, and all other poems without a print reference, please see The English Poetry Full-Text Database CD-ROM.
7. That the form has long been associated with verse for children may go part of the way to explain why Alfred Noyes’s “The Highwayman” is included in modern anthologies of verse for children, in spite of its grisly and bloody account of the suicide of a young lady – a sinister glamour that seems atypical of works considered suitable for children today. See A Children’s Book of Verse (1897).
8. Joseph Phelan (2012) has recently explored Coventry Patmore’s endorsement of the isochronic approach to poetry.

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Literature
Formulaic Language in Minimal Metrical Requirements: The Case of Post-Medieval Icelandic þulur

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This paper discusses the formulaic language in post-medieval Icelandic þulur, a poetic genre with minimal and inconsistent metrical requirements. It argues that the metrical properties of formulae, in different applications, are one tool to maintain the metricality of the genre and hence distinguish it from prose.

In this paper, I aim to briefly discuss the problem of formulaic language in post-medieval Icelandic þulur, a poetic genre with minimal and inconsistent, yet essential, metrical requirements. I will also demonstrate some strategies with regard to how, on the one hand, the formulaic language of þulur is adapted to metrically unstable conditions and, on the other hand, how this formulaic language creates and maintains metrical space around itself. As this paper presents ongoing research, the findings introduced here are preliminary. However, the potential significance of these findings means it is appropriate to bring them into academic discussion in the context of this volume.

Post-Medieval Icelandic þulur

Post-medieval Icelandic þulur (PMÞ) are lists of names, sequences of short motifs and/or longer narrative episodes (that also consist of names and motifs) in a very irregular metrical form. The narration in PMÞ is fragmentary and seldom entirely coherent. PMÞ are deeply rooted in the Old Icelandic þulur of mythological names and poetic synonyms, but they also draw on the material of a peculiar genre of post-medieval Scandinavian poetry known as ‘rigmaroles’ or ‘rhymes’¹ – and supposedly on medieval traditions of oral poetry that may have thrived alongside the more learned Old Icelandic þulur mentioned above. PMÞ are folklore texts: predominantly oral (the collection of PMÞ texts in the mid-to-late 19th century and subsequent limited publication apparently did not have a serious impact on the oral tradition), fragmentary, intersecting, and variable.² These texts are predominantly uttered or recited, or else chanted.

The rhythm of PMÞ is so irregular that they are on the borderline between verse and prose. PMÞ are not divided into strophes, but rather – if at all – into units of narration: sections that consist of one or more episode or/and list, possibly accompanied by some free-standing motifs.³ They make use of metrical devices that are characteristic of most Icelandic post-medieval poetic metres, such as alliteration and rhyme – both end rhyme and internal rhyme (less frequently, and chiefly within the same line), full rhyme and consonance (and even occasional end assonances, which is unusual in Icelandic poetry) – but never consistently. The lines of PMÞ are of unequal length (whether measured in stresses, syllables, or morae), and their rhythm lends itself to both accentual and accentual-syllabic analysis,⁴ but with equal reluctance to each. Some lines are not woven into the text by any formal metrical means. PMÞ are thus not ‘metrical’ in the sense that there is no single metre or metrical scheme going through a PMÞ text. However, one or more metrical means (as opposed to syntactic or semantic means), i.e. rhyme and/or alliteration and/or tact, are involved in the great majority of PMÞ lines and exercise metrical function: they provide both demarcation from and cohesion with their adjacent lines. These metrical means can be less strict than is considered proper in the majority of post-medieval Icelandic meters (cf. e.g. the unaccented rhyme in example (0)),
ll. 9–10). They may in this sense be regarded as compensatory strategies to maintain the rhythm of PMÞ in the lines where more proper metrical means are absent. Nonetheless, these metrical devices and strategies apparently suffice to make the lines fairly ‘well-formed’ (Frog 2014: 68–70) and their metre socially recognizable.\(^5\) (In a similar way, a patchwork blanket is readily recognizable as a blanket even when the patches are of irregular size, shape, and colour; even when some of them overlap, while gaps are left elsewhere.) Only in exceptional cases (those comparable with gaps in the metrical patchwork) does it prove necessary to appeal to non-metrical poetic features to demonstrate cohesion of a certain line with its adjacent lines. The terms ‘metre’ and ‘metrical’ as referring to PMÞ in this paper should be viewed in the light of this preliminary discussion.\(^6\)

The following introductory example (0) is from the late 17th century. It does not have any loose lines, even though it is one of the first PMÞ to be written down. Alliteration is underlined, rhyming words are indicated with double-underlining, and other repetitions are indicated with dash-underlining. Note that alliteration and rhyme are only at times used in a way that fully complies with Icelandic metrical rules; therefore, for the purpose of this study, alliteration is marked in all relatively strong metrical positions (including those where the alliteration would not be acceptable in, for example, Icelandic rímur poetry), rhyme is marked even if it is not strict, etc.

(0) Holm papp 64 fol, 99v

\begin{quote}
Eg sat under Fískahlada faudur mýnz, \\
menn komu ad mier, \\
rákú staf i hnacka mier, \\
Hladinn tök ad brenna, \\
eg fieck ad renna \\
uppa biskupz land, \\
Bískup áttu Gott hv, \\
gaf mier yxa og ky, \\
Vxinn tök ad vaxa, \\
yrinn tök ad miölk, \\
Sancti Maria gaf mier saud, \\
þad vard mier ad miklum aud, \\
\end{quote}

I sat under my father’s fish stack, men came to me, stroke me with a stick onto my (nape of the) neck, the stack started burning, I got (/was allowed) to run to the bishop’s land. The bishop had a good farm, [he] gave me a bull and a cow, the bull started growing, the cow started milking, the Virgin Mary gave me a ram, it turned out to be big wealth for me, etc.

In spite of this loose metrical structure, PMÞ are perceived as verse in their milieu, as indicated by, for example, the fact that PMÞ are laid out in the same way as metrical poetry in many informants’ transcriptions (cf. example (1d) below).

**Formulaic Language**

PMÞ use formulaic language as part of their oral compositional strategies. Discussions of formulaic language in oral poetries have evolved especially through Oral-Formulaic Theory, beginning from the seminal work of Milman Parry (1928) and then spreading internationally especially through the publication of Albert Lord’s *The Singer of Tales* in 1960. Parry defined an oral-poetic formula specifically in terms of the metrical positions in which it appears (Parry 1928: 16; repeated in Lord 1960: 4). Research on Icelandic poetries has in general continued to view formulaic language through the lens of Parry’s definition (although cf. Acker 1998; Frog 2011; also Smirnitskaya 1994: esp. 211, 221–225).\(^8\) From this view, discussing formulae in PMÞ would be problematic owing to their loose metrical form, where furthermore listing seemingly prevails over narration as the main compositional principle (Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir 2001). However, Oral-Formulaic Theory research has advanced considerably since 1960 (see e.g. Foley & Ramey 2012) and formulaic language has been clearly demonstrated as a compositional strategy in poetry that lacks regular metre and even in oral forms customarily described as prose.\(^9\) Listing/enumerating formulae are known from other genres, both foreign and Icelandic, all the way back to Homer (Powell 1978; Edwards 1980; cf. Ziogas 2013). It is therefore neither theoretically nor
methodologically problematic to approach formulaic language in PMP, where formula will be understood as a fixed or flexible verbal unit in poetic composition that has identifiable metrical features and carries distinguishable traditional meanings or associations. Two types of poetic formulae in PMP will be analysed here to approach this question through three case studies. The first two cases address formulae that can plausibly be considered to have been adapted into PMP from other Icelandic poetic genres. PMP often incorporate material from other contemporary genres, and Cases 1 and 2 will consider formulae that seem to have originated in the genre of sagnadansar (the Icelandic form of Scandinavian popular ballads), which are among the most formulaic post-medieval Icelandic genres. Case 3 will then turn to formulae that are likely to be intrinsic to PMP.

Case 1: The hest–mest Formula

In a number of sagnadansar, we find the word sequence that will here be referred to as the hest–mest ['horse–most'] formula and which describes the onset of a hero’s journey (or the whole journey): ‘X mounts a white horse (variant: X puts Y on a white horse) / he/she rode the most/best of all men/women’. This formula often occurs in:

couplets with four-stress lines rhymed aa accompanied by a refrain, usually split (the first half of which is inserted between the lines of the couplet) (Vésteinn Ólason 1982: 15).

The refrain generally consists of 2–3 lines and has its own rhyme scheme, which, combined with the rhyme of the couplet, produces different rhyme patterns, such as abab and ababb. The content of the refrain – which is often an aphorism or gnomic wisdom – correlates with the ballad narration on the whole, but it does not interfere with the narration in the couplet, whose lines form a coherent clause or clauses and whose syntax is not impacted or complicated by that of the refrain. In the following examples (1a–c) the refrain is therefore omitted and its first part marked as ‘[…]:

(1a) ÍF I: 8, Kveði af Tófu og Suffixaralin
Toa lítla stie á hvítt hest […]
allra kvenna reid hún mest

(1b) ÍF I: 224, Kveði af Ribhaldi og Gullbránu
Hann sette hana á hvítt hest […]
allra kvenna reid hún best
He put her on a white horse […]
She rode the best of all women

(1c) ÍF III, 226, Vállara kveði
Hann tok sinn hinn hvítt hest, […]
reid hann sem ad kunni best
He took the white horse of his, […]
He rode as well as he was able

This formula appears to have eventually been incorporated into PMP, yet its context is quite different from that in sagnadansar. The ballad narration is absent. However, the formula in question settles down in PMP in a short (up to approx. ten lines) narrative sequence where the formula introduces the onset of the hero’s journey, exactly as in the ballads above – except for the fact that narration is in the first person, thus the pronoun hann/hún ['he/she'] is exchanged for ég ['I'] with associated morphological variation of the verbs.

In terms of the rhythm, the formula also falls into a suitable metrical environment. Icelandic ballad meters are not strict, but they are still regular – compare the description above, where line length (four stresses) and rhyme scheme are specified for the formula in question; alliteration is not mandatory, as ballad metres are presumably not of Icelandic origin (Vésteinn Ólason 1982: 15). Unlike sagnadansar, PMP generally have two (around 55%) or three (around 30%) primary stresses per line, and only seldom four (around 13%) or more (NB: these statistics remain preliminary). However, in the fragment where the formula usually occurs, it is often preceded by lines with four or even five stressed positions. In addition, the considerable metrical similarities between PMP and ballads ease the formula’s transition between the two genres. The end-rhyme, when present in PMP, is chiefly couplet rhyme, aa or AA (rather than alternating or chiastic rhyme), which is precisely one of the main metrical cores of the formula in question. Alliteration is not indispensable in either PMP or ballads, and when it is present,
it does not need to follow the strict scheme familiar from other Icelandic poetry with one or two alliterating phonemes in the first line of the couplet and one in the first strong position of the following line. Internally alliterating lines, as resulting from the phrase “hvijtan hest” in the hest–mest formula, are not unusual. Put simply, the formula could enter PMP unchanged.

In spite of this possibility, the hest–mest formula in PMP differs slightly from what it is in the ballads. Both lines are one stress shorter, which could be a part of the way in which the formula is adapted to the rhythm of þulur, where two and three stresses per line prevail. Furthermore, the formula apparently undergoes some changes in alliteration, although it is difficult to tell whether those changes are induced by the aforementioned difference in the lines’ length – as the new metrical environment can in turn reconfigure the formula’s potential flexibility for variation – or whether they are related to the length change in some other way (if at all).

Surprisingly, the horse in the PMÞ texts is never white, which means that the alliteration in the hest–mest formula of sagnadansar is lost. Only in a couple of cases is this compensated by finding another /h/-alliterating slot-filler: e.g. “haltan” [‘halting.ACC’] (Lbs 587 4to I, p. 135 according to the ms. pagination), or just “hafði” [‘had’] (e.g. SÁM 30 [unregistered material]). In quite a number of cases, especially from the 20th century (when people begin to care less about alliteration), alliteration in the former line remains uncompensated. On the other hand, allra kvenna [‘of all women’] in the latter line of the ballad formula turns into allra manna [‘of all men’] in PMP, where manna alliterates with mest [‘most’]. In two cases where mest is for some reason substituted with another word – best [‘best’] (HJ) and, strikingly again, verst [‘worst’] (SÁM 85/289 EF, # 2574) – the manna–mest alliteration is not compensated by an alternative and thus in these cases neither of the two lines of the couplet alliterates. However, this does not seem to affect either the formula itself nor its context, since lack of alliteration is common in PMP: another of the metrical means – here, the rhyme – is sufficient to integrate the lines into the acoustic texture of the poetry.

In addition, it is noteworthy that from the very beginning of its life in PMP, the formula in question seems to have had two manifestations (unless they are considered as two related formulae). The form that is attested slightly more frequently in the corpus (especially in younger texts) is: ‘I had a(n) [attribute] horse, I rode the most of all men’, as seen in example (1d) (notice that full-stops that appear in 1d are used to separate metrical lines, as is the custom in this and many other Icelandic manuscripts):

(1d) Lbs 587 4to III, 14r
eg átti brúnan hest.
allra manna reið eg mest.
I had a brown horse, I rode the most of all men

The attributes vary from the horse’s colours to “vakran” [‘pacing.ACC’] (SÁM 30a, 119r & 242r), “sprangan” [‘strutting.ACC’] (SÁM 25f, 29r), and even the slightly surprising “haltan” [‘halting.ACC’] mentioned above. Much more surprising is, however, the other, reverse modification of this formula: ‘I ran the most of all men, I had no horse’, illustrated in example (1e):

(1e) JS 289 8vo I, 28v
hlióp eg allra manna mest,
átti eg mer aungvan hest
I ran the most of all men, I had no horse

This version also appears with a slightly different word order in the latter line of the couplet, as in example (1f):

(1f) SÁM 30 [unregistered material]
Stökk eg manna mest,
engan hafði eg hest
I trotted/leapt the most of all men, I had no horse

In spite of the inversion, the formula is readily recognizable: both the rhyming elements (mest–hest) and the overall structure are the same, even though the meaning of the slot-filler almost turns the formula inside out semantically. The function of the formula has nonetheless been preserved, since even in this modification it introduces the onset of the hero’s journey. No metrical problems follow
from this inversion, since the rhyme, which holds the formula together, is in its place. On the contrary, this inversion often enriches alliteration, as engan [‘no-one.ACC’] alliterates with átti [‘had’] in a number of cases (e.g. DFS 67 E, 188r). On the whole, both lines that comprise the formula alliterate internally in about 2/3 of cases—which means that, in those cases, the formula in PMÞ is metrically richer than in the ballads, even though it is not required to be so, since the metrics of PMÞ are formally more relaxed, or have a low density of metrical requirements. When the formula finds itself in this low-density metrical atmosphere, it apparently seeks to enrich and maintain the metre in and around itself, and thus to compensate for this low metrical density.

Case 2: The gaman–saman Formula

Another example of formulaic language that PMÞ plausibly adopted from Icelandic ballads is the word sequence that here will be referred to as the gaman–saman [‘fun–together’] formula. In sagnadansar, this formula is found in couplets like the hest–mest formula of Case 1, and also in quatrains with alternating rhyme (where the refrain is not split but follows upon each strophe). In the latter cases, the formula is distributed over a greater number of narrative lines than in ballad couplets (where the lines containing a formula are only separated by the split refrain, not interfering with the narrative in the couplet, as mentioned above). The syntax of a quatrain containing this formula is more complicated than one of a couplet with the same formula. In a quatrain, the formula in question can, for example, interact with other formulaic expressions such as gleði og gaman [‘joy and fun’] as seen in example (2b) below.

The essence of the gaman–saman formula is precisely what its designation by the rhyme-pair gaman–saman conveys: ‘it is pleasant to be (talk, sleep...) together’. However, it is more specifically used with reference to a couple in a romantic situation: the formula introduces a love story or concludes it with a happy ending:

(2a) ÍF I: 149, Kvida af Jóni og Ragnfrýði
      Herr Jóni og Ragnfríður
tóludu þau sier gaman,
vpp þæga loftinu
síafu þau bæðj saman
Lord Jón and Ragnfríður,
They spoke many a merry word,
In the cosy loft
They slept together

(2b) ÍF I: 131, Ásu dans
Par var bæðj gleðj og gaman […]
herra Petur og Ása gefinn voru samann
It was both joy and fun […]
Lord Pétur and Ása got married

Surprisingly, another modification of this formula is used as a closing construction when the denouement of a love story is tragic:

(2c) ÍF I: 153, Kvida af Jóni og Ragnfríði
Par var meire grátur
enn þar þar vam, 
tuí foru þau lýkin 
j eina steynþró saman
There was more weeping
Than there was fun,
Two dead bodies
Went together into the sarcophagus

(2d) ÍF I: 229, Kvida af Ribbaldi og Gullbrún
Par var meire grátur enn gaman, […]
þriu foru lýk þeinþró samann
There was more weeping than joy, […]
Three dead bodies went together into the sarcophagus

It is the first modification of the formula considered here that eventually makes its way into PMÞ. We can observe it on its way into PMÞ in a comic verse that is sometimes attached to different PMÞ texts (e.g. ÍF VII: 95; cf. ÍF VIII: 114), where the formula is used in the same introductory function even though the verse’s plot is rather a parody of a love story:

(2e) ÍF VII: 95, Kvida af pilli og stálku
Vinnumadur og vinnukona
tóludu sier til gamans
hvúmin ætlardu ad féða mig
þegar vid tókum samann
A workman and a workwoman,
They spoke many a merry word,
How are you going to feed me
When we start living together[?]

In PMÞ, however, the formula only occurs in couplets with lines of the same length as in
ballad couplets, i.e. four stresses per line, even though ballad quatrain lines are often shorter and thus fit better to the rhythm of PMÞ. For example:

(2f) DFS 67 E, 430r
Manstu nokkuð meira gaman,
er við lágum bæði saman?
Do you happen to remember more fun
When we laid two together?

(2g) AM 247 8vo, 5r
Ekki kann eg meira gaman
enn þau láu bæði til samans
I don’t know more fun
Than [when] they laid two together

Thus, line shortening was not part of the adaptation strategy of the formula to the new metrical environment. In fact, hardly any adaptation was needed: the ballad formula was able to enter into PMÞ unchanged (the same possibility that the hest–mest formula had, yet did not use). Furthermore, metrical variation in the number of stressed positions in a line remains quite minimal, even though PMÞ leave a lot of room for such variation. Alliteration, however, behaves differently: while it was only occasional in the ballad formula, the PMÞ formula develops more stable alliteration. This can be seen in the modification shown in examples (2f–g) above: ‘Do/Don’t you remember (variant: I don’t know) more fun when/though we/they both lay/lie together.’ It is also observable in the other modification, which is found in a greater number of examples, especially in younger texts: ‘It would be/seem more fun if we/they all run/come together,’ as illustrated in examples (2h–i):

(2h) DFS 67 E, 420r
myndi þykja meira gaman,
ef þeir kæmu allir saman
Would it seem more fun
If they would come all [MASC] together[?]

(2i) Lbs 587 4to II, 69v
Mundi verða meira gaman,
ef við hlypum allar saman
Would it become more fun
If we run all [FEM] together[?]

The word meira [‘more’] becomes a virtually invariable part of the formula in PMÞ and alliterates with the auxiliary verb myndi/mundi [‘would be’] – or, occasionally, with words like mörgum [‘to many (people)’] (“Mörgum þætti meira gaman...” [‘To many [people], it would seem more fun...’] (DFS 67 E, 431v)). The gaman–saman formula, as well as the hest–mest formula, thus exhibits more metrical stability than is present in these ballad formulae, and considerably more than PMÞ metrically require. However, taking a step away from the metrical stability in favour of variation is also clearly acceptable, as example (2g) above shows: neither of the two lines of that example alliterates properly. This is, nonetheless, both permitted in PMÞ and suitable for the formula, since it is the rhyme (gaman : saman) – not alliteration – which is crucial for holding the formula together. In this sense, we can say that variation prevails over alliteration. Moreover, the end rhyme in this particular example is not perfect (gaman : saman), but this apparently does not affect either the rhythm of this PMÞ text or the formula, which is evidently viable even when the metrical requirements are minimal.

This movement of the formula between two poetic systems with different metrical requirements – sagnadansar and PMÞ – could be compared with the ‘metrical migration’ of some eddic formulae between different types of metrical lines in fornyrðislag and ljóðaháttr described by Ilya Sverdlov (2011). From his discussion, it appears that the potential of formulae to shift between metrical models was considerable already in eddic verse – as was the potential of shifting between metrical models (such as short line and full line, or – operating with larger units – such as stanzas in ljóðaháttr and galdralag) within a text, without violating its metrical integrity. This is of importance for PMÞ because such shifting between different metrical models within a single text, taken to the extreme, can in turn result in the patchwork of numerous different metrical models, which to a great extent accounts for the rhythmic diversity of PMÞ.

In spite of the apparent potential for the ‘metrical migration’ of some formulae between the poetic systems of sagnadansar and PMÞ, there seem to be some restrictions on such movement. The mismatch in the
colour of the horse in the *hest–mest* formula in *sagnadansar*, with their predominantly white horses, and PMP, where white occurs very seldom, despite this word seeming to be metrically preferable as it would have provided an alliterating phoneme (however, see note 11) is a probable indicator that, once the formula became established in PMP, its use and development remained separate from the corresponding *sagnadansar* formula. If the diction of these genres had been open to one another in relatively free or even moderately fluid interaction, then we would expect the horse to be either occasionally white in PMP or more frequently to be a colour other than white in *sagnadansar*. In a similar way, we would expect that more than one modification of the *hest–mest* formula and/or of the *gaman–saman* formula would migrate from *sagnadansar* to PMP – and that some PMP-modifications of the formulae would travel back to *sagnadansar*. The lack of free movement of formulaic diction between Icelandic poetic systems has been observed by Haukur Porgeirsson (2012: 193–194) in an earlier volume of this journal (comparing genres of *sagnakvæði* and *rimur*). This observation was then carried further by Frog (2012), who theorized that oral poets do not, without conscious effort, have cognitive access to formulaic diction of one type of poetry while composing or performing in another. Although the difference in the colour of the horse in the formula of the *sagnadansar* and PMP may seem to be a trivial detail in itself, it may have significant implications for how formulaic language works in these poetries and for the historical relationships between them.

**Case 3: An Enumeration Formula**

The third example considered here is an enumeration formula that is more likely to be intrinsic to PMP insofar as listing – and thus enumeration – can be considered the main compositional principle of this type of poem. This formula is almost exclusively preserved in *Pormaldarpula*,16 of which there are, however, about 100 attested texts from the 17th–20th century. The formula can be summarized as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
L & S & X_1\text{-gerður} & E_1 \\
& = & \text{location: 'out(side)/in(side)'} \\
S & = & \text{a verb of situation (rides/stands/sits) in third person singular present or past tense} \\
X & = & \text{a monosyllable compounded (almost without exception) with -gerður forming a three-syllable woman's name in the nominative case} \\
E & = & \text{a two-syllable derogatory descriptive epithet / byname of the woman named in the line} \\
\end{array}
\]

In spite of the number of open slots in this formula, the slots are semantically and/or metrically conditioned or conventionalized beyond the requirements of the metre or syntax. The formula is also part of a larger syntactic structure in which a third woman is almost invariably mentioned in the following line. The lines normally rhyme with each other as in example (3a), but this is not a necessity and there are exceptions as illustrated in example (3b):

(3a) AM 148 8vo, 254r

> ut rydur Arngrjerdur hnuka

> Önnur kona Porgjerdur [Struka]17

> Out she rides, Arngrjerdur Crouchy[,] Another woman, Porgjerdur Gulpy

(3b) AM 154 8vo XII, 1v

> utj situr Hallgerdur hlun[ch]a

> onnr kona Porgerdur Sluka18

> Out she sits, Hallgerdur Dumpy[,] Another woman, Porgerdur Gulpy

This formula is different from the two formulae considered above in that the two rhyming words (the bynames) do not form the fixed backbone of the formula, but are its variable elements instead. Thus, the rhyme is not an indispensable part of the metrical core of this formula. This notwithstanding, the two lines containing the formula are fairly stable metrically: both have relatively stable length (especially the latter line, where variation chiefly occurs in the woman’s byname (E2)) and are quite rich in alliteration.

To begin with, the onsets of each line often alliterate with one another. The first word of the latter lines is – almost invariably – önnur [‘another’], while the first word of the former line is usually either *inn(i)* [‘in(side)’] or *út(i)* [‘out(side)’]. Both *inn(i)* and *út(i)* are quite
strongly stressed and alliterate with Ónnur, although the distance between the alliterating phonemes would be too great to consider this proper alliteration in the Icelandic metres that are more strict than the metre of PMP. In those exceptional cases when the first word of the former line is different (e.g. heima ['at home’]: Lbs 1057 4to p2, 157r), this alliteration is always compensated by another alliteration, e.g. the first word will then alliterate with the name of the woman in the same line (X₁-gerður). In addition, the name of the woman in the opening line (X₁-gerður) often alliterates – either with ínn(i)/út(i) (and, occasionally, heima etc.) in the beginning of the line or with the woman’s byname (E₁). In the former case, alliteration follows the 2+1 pattern – i.e. two syllables in the first line alliterate with the first stressed syllable in the following line of a couplet (e.g. “út rydur Arngrjerdur... : Ónnur” in example (3a)), which is mandatory for most Icelandic poetry with three or more metrical stresses per line. PMP lines often have three or more stresses and might thus be expected to follow the 2+1 pattern, but in practice they are an exception to this rule (as are sagnadansar, whose metres are of foreign origin). In PMP, the pattern 1+1 (such as “úti” : “ónnur” in example (3b)) is widely accepted. In the latter case, the independent alliteration within the line (“Hallgerður hlun[cha]”) is usually additional to the 1+1 alliteration, which connects the two lines; it may even replace this alliteration, since these two substantives, which stand close together, produce a more pronounced alliteration than the basic 1+1 pattern.

In earlier PMP texts – i.e. texts that are first attested before the 19th century – the names appearing in the first line (X₁-gerður) predominantly begin with a vowel (Arngrjerdur – and later, once, Ásgرður: Lbs 587 4to IX, 36r) and thus alliterate with ínn(i)/út(i) and Ónnur in the openings of the two lines. However, later the use of such names recedes, leading to the loss of the more generally proper alliteration (2+1) in these two lines. The name Hallgerður, already attested in the earlier texts (cf. example (3a) above), becomes dominant in younger sources, with Hlíðgerður occasionally found as well (cf. Lbs 587 4to IX, 41v, 46r; SÁM 38, 39v), and less frequently Valgerður (cf. Lbs 1057 4to p3, 159r) and Porgerður. This choice is obviously related to the fact that the byname (E₁) begins with /h/ in roughly half of the examples – varying from the most common hlunka ['Dumpy']: see “hlun[ch]a” in example (3b); cf. “hlunka” (587 4to IX, 41v, 46r) and háka ['Crouchy'] (Lbs 587 4to IX, 52r), its close synonym hnúka (see “hnuka” in example (3a)), hnúta ['big bone, condyle'] (AM 960 4to 8, 3r), etc. When the name (X₁-gerður) also begins with /h/, this provides an independent alliteration within the line. As mentioned above, this alliteration was in most cases merely additional to the basic 1+1 alliteration – or replaced it. This alliteration was by no means required by the metre of PMP, and quite a number of texts did well without its addition when using this formula. However, this additional alliteration could still be regarded as a kind of compensation for the loss of the 2+1 alliteration in this two-line system. In other words, it provided an alternative medium to create and maintain a metrically appropriate space in and around the line (on alternative strategies for integrating lines lacking alliteration into the acoustic texture of Kalevala-metre poems, see Frog & Stepanova 2011: 201). Another literary factor, possibly related to the choice of the name Hallgerður, is the apparent avoidance of this name in the Icelandic society in the 19th century (Guðrún Kvaran 1991: 19). This avoidance could be related to the growing popularity of Íjáls saga and thus people’s knowledge that Hallgerður is a cruel and malignant vixen: the name is hardly suitable for newborn children, but it is perfect for use with a derogatory byname in the context of this pula formula.

The fact that one name out of many becomes dominant in a certain position demonstrates a tendency to non-variation in terms of both slot-fillers and different modifications of one formula. This tendency is also noticeable in the development of the other formulae considered here. Where the formulae have two modifications, one becomes dominant (examples (1d), (2h–i)) while the other virtually disappears (examples (1e–f), (2f–g)), thus decreasing both semantic and metrical diversity. In some cases, this is
directly related to the tendency of maintaining the metrical stability of the formula (e.g. in the case of the name Hallgerður), while other cases demonstrate steps sideways in favour of semantic variation (as in case 2). Hallgerður established itself as the dominant X₁-name not least because it started with /h/ and thus carried alliteration with the customary following byname. Once this name became more regular, the E₁-byname starts – quite unexpectedly – showing increasing variation, indeed departing from the initial /h/ and thus from the additional independent alliteration within the line. In the texts that are first attested before the 19th century, the E₁-bynames with an initial /h/ account for significantly more than half of the data, shifting to approximately one half in the texts from the 19th century; and less than half in the 20th century. In a similar way, the attribute brúnskjóttan [‘pied-brown,ACC’] (e.g. HJ; HŒE, 19 of a horse in the hest–mest formula) is not apparent in this formula before the 20th century (though already quite prominent in some other PMP texts), yet in the course of the 20th century it gains popularity and supersedes most other attributes. Unlike some of the attributes, whose place the word brúnskjóttan takes in the line, it does not alliterate (or rhyme), thus preventing the whole line from having alliteration. In addition, this development has the side-effect of extending the line by one rather heavy syllable, replacing disyllabic words like brúnan [‘brown,ACC’] (cf. Lbs 587 4to III, 14r) with a trisyllabic compound containing two heavy syllables. Variation here apparently prevails over both alliteration and tact. However, it is questionable whether variation prevails over the rhyme in PMP; the cases considered here do not give clear examples of this.

**Preliminary Conclusions**

The three cases considered above show that there are good grounds to apply the concept of poetic formula to PMP, despite their loose metrical form. The metrical irregularity of PMP does not lie in maintaining irregularity in each and every line, but rather in systematic inconsistency that goes hand in hand with a high degree of both metrical and narrative fragmentariness. Each fragment that a PMP text consists of can be relatively metrical in itself (often in its own way), but this metricality does not hold for the whole text. On the other hand, complete metrical irregularity in a PMP text is not possible either. In all three cases considered above, we see examples of variations that reduce phonic resonance in one respect being compensated by metrical mechanisms that do not always perfectly repair the situation from the formal point of view, but nonetheless add some degree of metrical (or para-metrical) cohesion to the lines and enhance their integration into the PMP as a poetic text. Poetic formulae function exactly on the level of these fragments, and thus do not have to face metrical irregularity to the full extent.

Poetic formulae are used in those fragments that can accommodate them – that is in narrative fragments where a formula can be used as in any other narrative, or in listing fragments. Within a fragment, poetic formulae have leeway both to adapt themselves to the rhythm of the fragment (e.g. making their own lines slightly shorter, as in Case 1 above, and/or less regular) and to create some metrical space for themselves – in a way similar to the creation of specific metrical space for – and by – heiti (i.e. poetic synonyms or, more accurately, poetically equivalent terms) in Old Icelandic þúlur. There, extended alliteration (which spans a half or a whole strophe), additional (not systematic) internal rhymes and end rhymes, morphological and syntactic parallels between the names and heiti, and other similar devices were used for added metrical cohesion, which was appropriate for the high social status of early Old Icelandic þúlur (Gurevich 1984: 19–20 and works there cited; Gurevich 1992a: 69; Gurevich 2012: 195–196). PMP, with their fragmentariness and metrical irregularity, utilize those and other compensating strategies, such as non-strict rhyme, occasional complementary distribution of alliteration and rhyme (where alliteration binds non-rhyming lines and rhyme connects those lines that do not alliterate), etc. These devices are not used systematically in PMP (any more than other metrical means that structure metres in other Icelandic poetry,
such as systematic alliteration); however, they are readily available – *inter alia*, for poetic formulae that use these and other devices so actively that at times they prove metrically richer than the same formulae in other genres with stricter metrical requirements. These are compensating strategies for the formulae to survive in the irregular metrical environment of PMP – strategies that prove to be effective; i.e. poetic formulae are viable in PMP.

Furthermore, formulae in PMP function almost as if they (still) were in metrical poetry. The formulae that come from other genres continue to maintain certain metricality in and around themselves (even though they come into a much more loosely organized metrical environment), while those formulae that appear to originate within PMP emerge and function – at least to a certain extent – as *metrical* units. Thus, to a great extent, the formulae in PMP conform more closely with Parry’s original definition of formula than was expected.

Poetic formulae prove to be so viable in PMP that they can tolerate considerable variation – both semantic and metrical, including steps away from metrical stability – as all the cases considered above show. The use of poetic formulae in PMP is thus not only dynamic but also dialectic – and definitely deserves further consideration and discussion.

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Notes
1. Danish and Norwegian **remser**, Swedish **ramsor**; also **rim** in all the aforesaid languages. (Not to be confused with Icelandic **rímur**.) For more details, see Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir 2014.
2. For a slightly more extensive description of PMP and my project on PMP, see, respectively, Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir 2014 and 2011; on Old Icelandic **þulur**, see Gurevich 1992a; 1992b; 2012; and particularly, 1984.
3. Frog & Stepanova (2011: 200) mention a similar non-strophic structuring in kalevalaic poetry. Comparison of the rhythm of PMP with kalevalaic metres can be illuminating. Both PMP and kalevalaic poetry are non-stanzaic and are organized on the basis of some mandatory metrical features (including alliteration), which are, however, not required in every line and whose application is governed by convention. This apparently results in a very flexible metrical template (*ibid.*: 199–200), which is also the case in PMP, and in the use of other, compensating metrical devices or strategies – including e.g. extended alliteration and interlacing alliteration (*ibid.*: 200–201), which have their analogues in PMP.
4. This latter is likely to be chiefly due to the rather regular trochaic-based stress pattern in Icelandic language, be it poetry or prose (cf. Sigurður Kristófer Pétursson 1924 and, more recently, Anton Karl Ingason 2007).
5. Cf. Frog 2014–2015 and works there cited; similar ideas about social recognizability of a ‘scant’ metre are developed in Sverdløv 1998.
6. PMP may also be viewed as organized on principles of poetic features (namely constellations of poetic features without clear formal constraints on these constellations) including, but not limited to, some metrical devices, yet without regular metrical structuring. The rhythmic organization of PMP might then be compared not to Kalevala-metre poetry, but to Karelian laments, whose poetic system is “not bound to a regularly repeating metre” (Frog & Stepanova 2011: 205, see also 204–209), but is largely built on para-metrical strategies, through which the text becomes poetic. This approach can be quite productive, as it puts PMP – and other Icelandic oral poetic genres, medieval as well as post-medieval – better into the context of oral-poetic metres (cf. Frog 2014). One’s standpoint in analysing the rhythmic organization of PMP – whether they are rather built on metrical or para-metrical principles – largely depends on one’s understanding of metrical *regularity*. If metrical regularity is understood as uniform application of a complex of phonological devices and strategies in every unit (line or stanza), then the view of PMP as being organized on principles of poetic features – rather than on metrical principles – undoubtedly describes PMP better. If metrical regularity is interpreted as systematic – yet not rigorously uniform – application of a complex of phonological devices and strategies, as is done in this paper, then analysing PMP in terms of their ‘metre’ provides us, at the very least, with a good frame of reference.
7. In this and the following line, the text exhibits a weak rhyme in the last syllable of the line (which is normally unstressed, but obtains some stress due to its final position in the line). To visualize the difference between these two rhyme types, only the rhyming vowel is underlined in this case.
8. For reviews of earlier scholarship on formulaic language in Old Norse poetries, see Acker 1998:
85–110; Frog 2011: 19–28; cf. Frog 2014 I: 110–112; on formulaic language in rímur poetry, see Kuhn 1990–1993; in sagnakvæði (vs. rímur), see Haukur Pórgeirsson 2010; 2012; 2013; also Frog 2012b; and in sagandansar (Icelandic popular ballads), see Vésteinn Ólason 1982: 25–29; (and, on a more popular note 1979: 43–47); cf. Conroy 1980 on Faroese ballads. No attempt to explore formulaic language of PMÞ has previously been undertaken.


11. Except once: alhvítan ['all-white.ACC'] (AM 247 8vo, 6v), which alliterates with átti ['had'] rather than with hestur. It is possible that hvítur ['white'] is avoided in this formula in PMÞ because of the specific use of colour adjectives for horses in Icelandic. The traditional Icelandic attribute for a white horse is not hvítur but grár ['grey']; the use of hvítur about horses is thus less natural in an Icelandic pula than in a ballad of foreign origin. However, this specificity of Icelandic colour adjectives can hardly be the only explanation for the absence of hvítur in the PMÞ formula, since grár is not used in this formula in any undisputed PMÞ text either (cf. note 14).

12. Two manuscripts by Ástríður Thorarensen from Hallfreður Órn Eiríksson’s collection are among the material which is marked as SÁM 30 on the containing folder but is not currently registered under SÁM 30. The first ms. is a photocopy (14 fol.) marked “Ástríður Thorarensen, skráði um 1920–1930” ['Ástríður Thorarensen recorded around 1920–1930']; see 5v there. The second ms. is a school notebook with Ástríður’s records from 1970–1971 (according to Hallfreður’s markup on the cover’s inside); cf. 7r there.


14. The reverse modification of the formula is particularly common in older (19th-century) texts. This could point to a later reintroduction of the ballad formula into PMP (in its non-reversed modification); cf. in this context that Vallara kveði (IF III: 224–227) is recorded – without its refrain – as a pula at least three times throughout the 20th century (e.g. SÁM 30b, 150r–151r). This possible reintroduction requires, however, a more thorough study. Note that in all the three cases – but in no undisputed PMÞ text considered here – the horse in the formula is of grey colour, as it is in some texts of the ballad (see Systru kveði in IF VI: 83, the text that was published as early as 1852).

15. The motif of coming/running together is also found in poetry related to dancing.


17. The second character of the last word is not readily legible: it could also be e.g. k, or reflect an attempt to change l into k or vice versa.

18. The characters ch (in particular h) in “hlun[ch]a” are not perfectly visible, partly because of repairs. However, they were plausibly better legible when Jón Samsonarson, whose transcription (in JS) I have consulted, read the manuscript, and the reading is thus almost secure.

19. HJ: see note 13; HÖE: Hallfreður Órn Eiríksson, unpublished research materials preserved at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, light-blue notebook from 1977, 11r.

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Linguistic Multiforms in Kalevalaic Epic: Toward a Typology

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Abstract: This article examines the interaction of language in relation to metrical form in kalevalaic epic poetry. It presents and elaborates the concept of a linguistic multiform as a compositional framework and unit of expression that is distinguishable from an oral-poetic formula and operates according to different parameters of variation. Multiform theory provides a basis for addressing the conservatism and variation of kalevalaic epics.

The present article discusses the interface between meter, language, and units of information mediated by language in kalevalaic epic poetry. It explores how this tripartite relationship combines with social conventions to enable the remarkably conservative reproduction of kalevalaic epics as socially stable verbal texts. Analysis builds on the framework of Oral-Formulaic Theory (also called ‘Oral Theory’; OFT hereafter) augmented with a refined theory of linguistic ‘multiforms’. The concept of ‘multiform’ as an analytical term was introduced by Lauri and Anneli Honko (1995; 1998) to refer to a verbal integer and framework that operates at the level of verbal texture above the structural level of the formula, but which is not necessarily equivalent in scope to OFT’s unit called a ‘theme’. Multiform theory was originally developed within a strategic aim of accounting for the flexibility in the length of long epics, which had remained undertheorized in OFT research (cf. Zumthor 1990: 92). The present study shows that multiform theory offers a valuable approach to other poetic forms, and particularly to types of poetry that have remained peripheral to OFT research.

Focus here is on a short epic form in which linguistic multiforms are readily observable as a social reality. Both OFT and the theory of multiforms were developed in relation to the dynamic flexibility of the long epic form. ‘Classic’ OFT in the form outlined by Albert Lord in The Singer of Tales (1960) has not offered convincing accounts of verbally conservative Finno-Karelian kalevalaic epic tradition (Harvilahti 1992a). The synthesis of a refined form of multiform theory with current OFT offers a new way of looking at this poetry, a way which seems equally relevant to similar short epic forms such as North Russian bylina-epics and Old Norse eddic poetry. A crucial issue accounted for by multiform theory is what might be described as the verbal ‘chunking’ of units of text several lines in length that appear to operate as a sort of ‘macro-formulae’. Once multiforms come into focus, it is possible to distinguish them according to formal types relevant to considering variation, as is done here for multiforms in the kalevalaic epic tradition. The broad aim of this article is to develop a framework that helps better account for stability and variation in verbally conservative poetries within the broader approach of OFT. This framework is developed on an empirical basis of corpus-based analysis of kalevalaic epic poetry.

This study of multiforms builds on quantitative analysis, which has been greatly facilitated by the digital edition of Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot ['Old Songs of the Finnish People'] (www.skvr.fi; SKVR hereafter), currently consisting of 89,247 items of poetry. Quantitatively oriented studies have a long history in the research on this poetry, which was initially studied within...
the framework of the Historical-Geographic Method. Quantitative analysis has also been central to early research on the poetry’s metrics and poetics. However, the first quantitative analysis focused on stability and variation in the singing tradition was Lauri Harvilahti’s *Kertovan runon keinot: Inkeriläisen runoepiikan tuottamisesta* [‘Devices of Narrative Poetry: On the Production of Ingrian Epic Poetry’] (1992a), which is focused on the region where variation was the most pronounced and salient. Current emphasis in research on karevalaic poetry has been on how the poetry is used and adapted by individuals, its potential for meanings and social impact in communication, as well as its flexibility in relation to situational factors, interaction and the processual nature of performance (e.g. Timonen 2004; Tarkka 2005; 2013; Kallio 2013). The present study is centrally concerned with basic mechanics of the production of karevalaic epic poetry at the level of multiform units. Generalizations about these multiforms may be genre-dependent. The relationship of multiforms to structures in epic narration is introduced, but focus is on how multiforms operate as verbal systems. Like any study, certain features and phenomena are brought into focus as opposed to others, which in this case may produce an impression of a rather mechanistic model of epic production (cf. Foley 1988: 8). However, the methodological principle here is that we need first to develop an understanding of how multiforms work in order to look at how people were using them creatively. Otherwise, we have no frame of reference for considering nuances of specific variations or even assessing which variations are meaningful. The study of the mechanics of multiforms is here seen as a platform for considering variations related to meanings, aesthetics, interactional or processual aspects of performance, or that may be connected to memory – as well as those that may just be an organic outcome of how language operates in the tradition.

**What is a Linguistic Multiform?**

The Honkos (1995; 1998) advanced ‘multiform’ as a formalized term for a verbal system of words and formulae that becomes established in the mind of an individual performer and that provides a sort of collapsible or expandable latticework for verbalizing a sequence of text (see also Honko 1995; 1996: 9–10; 1998: 100–116; 2003: 113–122). The term had been used in a variety of ways in OFT, but only contemporarily with the Honkos did it begin to be introduced as a term *per se* for ‘that which has multiple forms’ (Foley 1995: 2; cf. Foley 1990: 6) – which is basically the dictionary definition of its use as a noun (cf. *OED*, *s.v.* ‘multiform’). The Honkos’ definition was narrower, referring specifically to a formal type of verbal system for which no term had been established. Their definition might be compared to using ‘formula’ only to refer to linguistic formulae in OFT (as opposed to ‘story formula’ etc.). The Honkos’ definition is also subtly refined by reference to that which is consistent as the framework for what can be realized in multiple forms. It also designates specifically the linguistic system operating at the level of verbal texture, stressing that this can potentially be polysemic – i.e. a multiform is not bound to specific contexts or meanings. The distinction of this type of phenomenon was quite innovative.

The identification of these variable verbal frameworks through lexical and formulaic recurrence in the Honkos’ pioneering work led multiforms to be defined in those terms. This initial approach has since been significantly refined through the investigation of the phenomenon of multiforms in a much more diverse range of poetry in addition to the long epic form. Looking at the phenomenon across different types of poetry has made it possible to sort through tradition-dependent features while complementing the initial model with: *equivalence classes*, or interchangeable sets of verbal elements rather than attending to the most regularly recurring elements only; *metrical* and/or *semantic conditioning*, which structure or determine the form and/or meaning of elements in variation; and *entanglement of syntax*. On this basis, I define a linguistic multiform as:

*a collocative system made up of specific verbal units (lexemes, formulae) and/or sets*
of these within function-specific (semantically, syntactically and/or metrically conditioned) equivalence classes that together form a coherent indexical system in the memory of an individual.

Key terms and concepts in OFT are ‘formula’ and ‘theme’ as well as ‘narrative pattern’ or what Lord referred to as a ‘song’ (the framework on which whole song-types are entextualized). Although multiform theory was advanced as an alternative to OFT (see also Hakamies 2013), ‘multiform’ designates a phenomenon complementary to OFT’s ‘formula’ and ‘theme’ with the potential to help mediate the relation between them. These concepts will be briefly introduced here in order to discuss multiform in relationship to them.

Classic OFT defined ‘formula’ narrowly as a (phrasal) linguistic unit recurring in the same metrical positions (Parry 1928: 16; Lord 1960: 4). Incorporating the relation to meter into this definition was circularly derived from the quantitative method of identifying formulae according to the metrical positions in which they would appear. This was found not only to be too narrow for the oral poetries Classic OFT initially sought to describe (e.g. Hainsworth 1968); it simply breaks down when considering forms of verbal art that lack fixed meter (cf. Lamb 2015; Stepanova 2015; Yelena Sessilja Helgadóttir, this volume). A formula is now more flexibly viewed as a linguistic unit of the register, of verbal art (i.e. language as used in the poetry) that operates as “a morpheme-equivalent unit” (Wray 2008) or “an integer of traditional meaning” (Foley & Ramey 2012: 80). A formula is customarily distinguished from other lexemes by bundling elements or features, whether it is a lexical string, a lexeme and certain metrical positions, but also potentially an intonational structure, a grammatical construction, gesture, etc., that make its regular use distinctive. It is thus possible for a single orthographic word to be the only lexical part of a formula. Following Foley (e.g. 1995), integer will be used here as a term to address elements of a register that operate as unitary signs. John Miles Foley (1995; 1999; 2002) has emphasized viewing these as emic ‘words’ of the register of verbal art – not words in our orthographic sense, but ‘words’ in the oral sense of verbal units of utterance carrying a distinct unit of meaning. Formulaic ‘words’ can be conceived as each having a unique entry in the mental lexicon (Wray 2002; 2008).

Classic OFT qualified formulae according to use in different contexts. This part of the definition linked to the statistical methods for identifying formulae on the one hand and to a strategic orientation to show that texts were not ‘memorized’ and instead relied on a generative use of traditional phraseology. However, frequency is an unreliable criterion for formula identification precisely because some formulaic sequences are only used in very specific contexts (Wray 2002: 25–31). Kalevalaic epic poetry maintains a large body of expressions that were used in quite specific contexts. The corpus of ca. 150,000 items of kalevalaic poetry in a variety of genres nevertheless makes it clear that many of these phrasal units could move between contexts among different groups of singers or in different regions; even those that appear the most contextually bound exhibit at least a few variations in use if they are attested in more than 50 or 100 examples (cf. Frog 2010a: 365–376, 400–405; also Lord 1995: 62). These units will be treated here as formulae or emic ‘words’ and considered to have unique entries in the mental lexicon of those fluent in the register.

A multiform is formally distinguished from a formula as a system of emic ‘words’ that provide a framework for entextualizing expressions of verbal art. The Honkos developed their approach with the explicit aim of accounting for flexibility in length in the long epic form. They focused on quite loose and variable verbal frameworks identified through lexical and formulaic recurrence. The outcome was that their description is quite formally dependent on oral poetry of a certain type and multiforms are described almost exclusively in terms of lexical stability. They also advanced multiforms as a phenomenon at the level of the individual performer’s idiolect only. Anna-Leena Siikala (1984: 85–93) had identified the process of ‘crystallization’ as the formation of verbal systems in the
memory of narrators for representing especially semantically central units of narrative content (see also Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1988: 305–313). The Honkos’ ‘multiform’ is essentially a designation for that system. By turning attention from the realization of narrative content through language to the multiform as a verbal system, the verbal system could then be observed as it is used in relation to other content. In Kalevalaic epic, these systems of emic ‘words’ are much denser: rather than a loose verbal latticework that is filled out in performance, these systems often manifest as much more solid chunks of text. They were recognized in earlier scholarship as, for example, säejaksot [‘line-series’]. Corresponding units were described already by A.F. Gil’ferding (1894: 24) in the more flexible North Russian bylina-epic poetry, where he observed that these crystallized units were repeated ‘word-forward’ the same, while the connecting tissue between them would vary as would their organization within an epic. Such units were also recognized by Lord even in South Slavic epic, described as ‘runs’ (1960: 58–60) or ‘blocks of lines’ (1995: 22–62), but his discussion remained limited to showing that the texts were not ‘memorized’ rather than attending to how these units operate per se (1981; 1995). Although multiforms, like formulae, crystallize in the minds of performers, they can be observed in the corpus as socially transmitted. It is precisely this that is the phenomenon under scrutiny here: multiforms that circulate socially.

Certain types of multiform units in Kalevalaic epic have a conventional use for rendering specific units of narration. There also seems to have been some emic perception of sequences of text produced through such multiforms as units, which appears to be what the famous Izorian singer Larin Paraske referred referred to as päätkäniekkoja [‘chunks’] (Timonen 2000: 642, 652). The regularity of use leads these multiforms to function as complex signifiers mediating a coherent meaningful narrative integer. As such, they operate like formulae – i.e. morpheme-equivalent units – which can be described as macro-formulae. Nonetheless, formulae and macro-formulae multiforms remain formally distinguishable: formulae are minimal integers or ‘words’ within the registral lexicon, whereas multiforms are comprised of associative systems of such ‘words’. This formal difference means that macro-formula multiforms are subject to different types of variation, such as in the organization or syntactic relations of their constituent ‘words’, or in which ‘words’ do or do not appear, as will be illustrated below.

‘Theme’ developed from what is also called a ‘typical scene’ or ‘type scene’. The term describes a traditional ‘group of ideas’ which makes up a conventionalized unit of epic narration that is realized through the idiom of traditional formulae (see e.g. Arend 1933; Lord 1960: 68–98; Frye 1968; Foley 1990: 240–245, 279–284, 329–335). Like Siikala’s work on crystallization, OFT’s research on themes took units of content as its basis for looking for recurrent patterns in verbalization. The term multiform designates a system of verbal material that may be associated with a theme, but which may also be used in other contexts. Like the Honkos’ pioneering work on multiforms, OFT’s work on themes has tended to focus on lexical recurrence only. Like the term ‘motif’ in the Classic Historical-Geographic Method, OFT’s term ‘theme’ has generally been used practically, without formal definition as a unit in relation to other types of formally defined units. I take a more structured approach that distinguishes minimal symbolic integers of expression in terms of images (corresponding to nominal units) and motifs (constructions entailing the equivalent of a verb and involving one or more images). Themes are here seen as integers at the next level of complexity as a constellation or series of images and motifs; narrative patterns and plots are at still higher formal levels of complexity. (See Frog 2015a: 38–40.) From this view, a theme is a formal counterpart to a multiform; it simply operates among linguistically mediated signs at the level of complexity just above minimal integers of the symbolic lexicon. In the illustrative example of a Kalevalaic epic below, for instance, the victim’s offer of ransom for his release can be seen as a motif. Each cycle of dialogue can be seen as a theme, being repeated in series with
variation in the outcome of whether the proposed ransom is refused or accepted. In kalevalaic epic, multiforms tend to crystallize around images and motifs, although even one of these may be elaborated through more than one multiform. However, the categories of image, motif and theme are not essential to the following discussion and are presented here as a frame of reference for relating multiforms to other traditions.

Primary focus in this article is on distinctions between multiforms of different formal types according to their constitution by language and how they vary in social transmission (as opposed to in use by individual performers). This formal ontology is distinct from whether a multiform operates as a macro-formula, which is defined according to the relationship between a multiform and what it is customarily used to signify, communicate or ‘do’, irrespective of how it is constituted and varies at the formal, verbal level.

**Kalevalaic Epic as Material for Analysis**

Kalevalaic epic was a short epic form (the songs sometimes called ‘lays’ rather than ‘epics’). Epics circulated as socially recognizable verbal texts or songs that varied in narrative complexity but epic performances would generally remain about 75–300 lines in length. The tradition and its basic idiom were trans-lingual, shared across dialects of Finnish, Karelian and Ižorian. The epic tradition disappeared from the majority of Lutheran Finland before being documented to any degree. The traditions survived longer in Orthodox areas on the Russian side of the Finnish border in territories extending from the White Sea to the Gulf of Finland. Individual epics were documented in anywhere from a few examples and fragments to several hundred. The vast majority of this material was hand-transcribed in the 19th and 20th centuries, sometimes only in minimal notes and in shorthand, normally with little or no information about the collection context, informant, or even whether the epic was dictated or sung. Collection paradigms of the time valorized collecting variants from as many informants as possible and especially variations that had not yet been documented rather than documenting multiple variants from a single performer. This has resulted in a corpus that is well equipped to address social patterns in the tradition but not for individual idiolects and repertoires. At the same time, the corpus presents many examples of multiple texts of different genres recorded from individual performers. It also presents many examples of two or more variants of a particular epic recorded from individual performers, often by different collectors across a period of years. This corpus provides empirical data for considering continuity and variation in multiforms as a socially transmitted phenomenon.

The datasets for multiforms discussed below are developed from variants of the epics published in SKVR. This data excludes variants of the same multiforms that may be found outside of materials indexed with the epic texts, for example in incantations. Additional unpublished items in the Finnish Literature Society’s Archive have also been consulted for The Song of Lemminkäinen, but the methods of analysis used here relied on digitized text, which became a technical constraint when forming the datasets. Not every multiform is attested in every variant and fragment of the relevant epic. Multiforms for the same or equivalent unit of narration could also alternate within and across different regions. The number of examples of each multiform analyzed therefore vary considerably even though they may be associated with the same epic.

Variations in the singing tradition that are established at a social level are approached here in terms of dialects. Such variations that occur at the verbal level of performance, at the level of language, rhythms and melodies, are here described as dialects of singing (Frog 2010b: 99–100). It is fairly common to collapse narrative content with verbalization. However, mythology is here approached as a distinct symbolic system that may interface with language and vary with it but that may also vary independently of it (see further Frog 2015a). For example, Elias Lönnrot’s epic Kalevala (1835; fundamentally reorganized and significantly expanded 1849), built from collected oral poetry, impacted many oral epic singers, but in some cases this impact might
only shape epic plots and connections between them without clear impact on the verbal level of the dialect of singing. The mythological content of songs is thus here described in terms of dialects of mythology (Siikala 2012: 15). Although dialects of singing and dialects of mythology are inclined to interface in this tradition, there are nevertheless cases in which it is important to be able to distinguish between them.

Individual examples of epics or fragments and summaries of them will be referred to as variants. Groups of variants of a particular epic more similar to one another than to other groups of variants will be referred to as redactions. Identifying a group of variants as belonging to redactions does not presume that each group of variants can be collectively reconstructed to a common, historical redaction-archetype (see also Siikala 2012: 15). Generally speaking, dialects of kalevalaic mythology are characterized by the redactions of mythological epic material that they entail. Differences between dialects of mythology manifest verbally as potential indicators of difference between dialects of singing, but neither of these will necessarily correspond in distribution with dialects of spoken language. Dialects or sub-dialects of singing and mythology may also occur between much smaller groups than spoken language dialects. In kalevalaic poetry, the conservatism of the verse form allows otherwise quite subtle lexical variation in formulaic lines and their organization in multiforms to become perceivable as linked with differences between one way of singing and others (e.g. Frog 2010b: 99–100; 2011b: 53–55).

Conventions of conservatism and variation differed on a regional basis. The tradition was most conservative in the north, in the region of Viena or White Sea Karelia with increasing flexibility to the south. This pattern followed the axis of the progression into Finnic areas of Christian religious authority and secular social impacts that displaced epic from a central role in the ritual life of the community. These same processes had the result that women were increasingly significant as bearers of the tradition to the south; on the Karelian Isthmus and in Ingria, the singing of kalevalaic poetry had shifted to become a women’s tradition (Virtanen 1987: 18; Siikala 1990; 2002b; Harvilahti 1992a: 14). Although individual singers could engage with local conventions differently, potentially handling the idiom and mythological subjects with great freedom (Harvilahti 1992b), the epic tradition was generally characterized by an ‘inclination to non-variation’ (Frog 2011b: 53–55; cf. 2011a: 48–50) – i.e. with an ideal of ‘word-for-word’ reproduction (see also Kiparsky 1976: 96–97; Timonen 2000: 642, 653), although it nevertheless evolved in flexibility in southern areas (cf. Harvilahti 1992a).

The Singing Competition: An Example of a Kalevalaic Epic

Whereas the Honkos analyzed multiforms for their role in the flexibility of epic length, multiforms offer a corresponding perspective on textual stability in kalevalaic epic transmission. The ideals of this tradition’s conservatism are illustrated here through an example of an epic from which multiforms will be discussed, The Singing Competition. This epic is here represented in five variants performed by three singers representing two generations of the Malinen family from Vuonninen, Viena Karelia. The epic has been chosen because of its simple plot, which leads to shorter variants. The example also has the added interest that the material recorded from Ontrei Malinen by Elias Lönnrot was among the most significant in the development of his Kalevala.

The conservatism of the poetry is highlighted by violating the custom of providing equal representation to each variant of an oral poem. Instead, all five variants are laid out in a manner customary for variant manuscripts. In (1), the earliest variant is presented as the base text and differences between that exemplar and other variants are presented in the form of notes. Of course, this sort of representation subordinates and effaces all variants to the base text, obfuscating their individual characteristics by reducing them to fragmentary notation so that they cannot be ‘read’ without an archaeological excavation and reconstitution from the notes. The point here is not to imply a ‘best text’ or anything about ‘reconstruction’. The purpose is a) to

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make available an example of a Kalevalaic epic, b) to make the multiforms in the text visible, and c) to enable some perspective of variation in multiforms within a local dialect of singing, which can both be viewed in dialogue with the variety of examples below as well as used to gain perspective on variation in the epic whole. (Interested readers can access the original texts online at www.skvr.fi, where they can be found by selecting part I; under ‘osa’, and items 185, 185a, 186, 186a and 187 under ‘numero’.)

The fact that closely related variants can be reasonably laid out in this way is a testament to conservatism in the tradition: variation is at the level of the inclusion and omission of lines, alternative lines or variant wording, the order of lines within a multiform, and the multiforms labelled M5 and M8 are absent from some variants. This layout is possible owing to multiform by multiform correspondence, the regularity of those multiforms and their order in preformance. The practicability of this layout rapidly breaks down if it is done with variants from different dialects, as the variation between multiforms increases, alternate multiforms may appear, and the organization of multiforms may differ.

In order to make the interplay of continuity and variation accessible, parallel translation of the master text is accompanied by offering translations of variant words and lines in the apparatus. This is not a critical text. Abbreviations in the original transcripts are not indicated and punctuation has been removed. Minor variations in orthography (e.g. ‘ü’ for ‘y’) are not especially indicated but the original orthography of variants is otherwise retained in the apparatus. Use of the verb form on [‘is’] as an expletive particle is indicated in the translation by placing it in parentheses. Where no translation accompanies a variant in the apparatus, the variation can be considered non-semantic.

Although the epic’s entextualized whole is more than 100 lines, it is constituted of only 16 macro-formula multiforms (most of which group in structural pairings), and with a few quotatives and boundary markers (a quotative is an introduction to direct speech; a boundary marker is a line, couplet or multiform indicating the end or beginning of a sequence of text or narration).

As a sigla for each variant, performers’ initials are used so that the relations are more salient in the apparatus:

OM₁ – The base text, recorded in 1825 by A.J. Sjögren from Ontrei Malinen (SKVR I₁ 185).

OM₂ – Recorded in 1833 by Elias Lönnrot from Ontrei Malinen (SKVR I₁ 185a).

JO₁ – Recorded in 1871 by Axel Borenius from Jyrki Ontreinen, son of Ontrei (SKVR I₁ 186).

JO₂ – Recorded in 1877 by Axel Borenius from Jyrki Ontreinen (SKVR I₁ 186a). This variant is attested through Borenius’ addition of lines and notations to the 1871 text (his normal practice; he is known for his care and precision in collection); lines are assumed to be the same where notations are lacking.

VO – Recorded in 1872 by Axel Borenius from Vassilei Ontreinen, son of Ontrei and elder brother of Jyrki (SKVR I₁ 187).

In order to understand these texts, it warrants pointing out that the tradition of singing changed rapidly across the period of collection in relation to various changes in society. Borenius commented that Vassilei, then an old man, had not sung these songs since his youth; when Vassilei was finally convinced to try to sing, Borenius felt that he had once known a lot but his memory was already fading (Niemi 1905: 483). This seems to be in the background of Vassilei’s use of the name of a different hero (i.e. Lemminkäinen for Joukahainen) throughout, as well as related to some other more subtle variations in his rendition (e.g. in line 57; see Frog 2010b: 99–100; 2011b: 54). Jyrki similarly began the epic in his 1871 rendition with reference to characters from a different (non-epic) song. Already in Ontrei’s 1825 rendition, a similar issue of memory may be reflected in the presentation of line 9 between lines 5 and 6, although this could equally be a consequence of the slow and interruptive dictation process. These types of variations present methodological issues for analyzing multiforms, their variation and association.
(1) The Singing Competition within the Malinen family.

Key: Spaces are placed between multiforms (not counting quotative frames). Line numbers are marked along the left (lines deviating from the lineation of OM₁ are marked with asterisks); scenes, themes, macro-formula multiforms (M), quotative frames (Q) and boundary markers (BM) are marked in the right column along with their constituent elements as relevant. Punctuation has been removed. In the notes, ‘½’ is used to number additional lines not in the main text (following the practice of Borenius and others with these poems).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene/Theme</th>
<th>Line Numbers</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 – Scene 1</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>Yks’ on nuori Joukahainen: The one (is) young Joukahainen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toinen vanha Väinämöinen: The other old Väinämöinen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ajoj tiellä vastaksuten: Drove against one another on the road</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rahis puuttu rahkhesen: Trace jammed to trace</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vemmell vempelen nenäh: Shaft-bow to shaft-bow’s end</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vesakasvo vempeléstä: A sapling grew from the shaft-bow</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haavat aisoista yleni: Aspens from the shafts rose</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paju pehko rahkehista: A willow-clump from the trace</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Siitä siinä seisottih”</em> Then they were standing there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q Theme 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sano vanha Väinämöinen: Said old Väinämöinen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Sen on tiellä seisominen</em> Whose knowledge is better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Sen on tiellä seisominen</em> He on the road will stand,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Sen on tiellä seisominen</em> Whose knowledge is worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Sen on tiellä seisominen</em> He from the road will move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sano vanha Väinämöinen: Said old Väinämöinen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanos tarkkoja toisia: Say you exact truths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valehia muinosia: ancient lies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sano nuori Joukahainen: Said young Joukahainen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tiitän kuittengin vähäsen: I know however a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5a</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Enemmäiset ymmärtelen: A few more things understand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M1: 1–2. Poika tuhant Tuurituisen / Tutän Keiretusen / Ne on teitänä käveli / Matkojaansa meäreäl’övi ['Lad of stupid Tuuriruinen / Daughter of Keiretyinen / They (is) go their way / Measure their journey'] JO₁. Tuo vanha Väinämöini / Taon lieto Lemminkäini ['That old Väinämöinen / Or (is) loose Lemminkäinen'] (tai on corrected from tahi ['or'], + ja, sekä ['and – and']) VO

1. Joukahainen] Joukavainen OM₁

1½. Se on teitänä käveli ['He (is) goes his way'] OM₂

2½. Matkoan mittelöövi ['Measured his journey'] OM₂

3. vastaksuten] vassakkahan OM₂ JO₁ JO₂; Sopi ne tiellä vassaksutta ['They agreed against one another on the road'] VO

M2: 3½. Aisa puuttu aism peiläh ['shaft jammed to shaft’s end'] JO₁ JO₂

4. *first wrote* “rahkesesen” OM₁

5. Aisa aisan ahaketlu ['shaft to shaft got stuck'] VO

6–8. *absent* VO

7. Haavat [ Koivut ['birches'] ] JO₁ JO₂


M3: 10½. Oi on vanha Väinämöini ['Oh (is) old Väinämöinen'] JO₂

11–12. *absent* OM₁

11. Ken] Kump' ['which(ever)'] JO₁ JO₂ VO

13–14. *absent* OM₂ VO

13. Ken] Kump' ['which(ever)'] JO₁ JO₂

14. siirtyenainen] seisominen ['standing'] OM₁ JO₁ JO₂

M4: 15½ Oi on nuori Joukahainen OM₂ / Kun ollet tiiolta parempi OM₂ JO₁ JO₂ VO / Sano korvin kuullakseni OM₂ ['Oh (is) young Joukahainen / If you are better in knowledge / Say to be heard by me with the ear']

17. *absent* VO; muinosia] viime'sie ['last'] JO₁ JO₂

Q: 18. nuori Joukahainen] lieto Lemminkäini ['loose Lemminkäinen'] VO

M5a–b: absent JO₁ JO₂ VO
22–23. ordered 23 22 OM₂

23½. Tiían kuitenki vanha ensi ‘I know however a little’ OM₂

M6b: Identified as M6b without M6a on the basis of common use in an additional cycle of dialogue.

24–27. ordered 24 26 27 25 JO₁ JO₂; ordered 24 26 25 27 VO

25½. Mäet mulleroittamani ‘hills raised’ OM₂

Q: 28. siitä] vanha ‘old’ JO₁ JO₂; Sanoi siitä] Sitt’ on vanha ‘Then (is) old’ VO

M7: 28½. Oi nuori Joukahainen ‘Oh young Joukahainen’ OM₂; Kusen konna kulkkuhusi ‘A can of piss in your throat’ JO₁ JO₂

29–30. absent JO₁ JO₂

30. on] absent OM₂

31–33. ordered 31 33 32 33½ JO₁ JO₂; ordered 31 33½ 32 (33 absent) VO

31. on] absent OM₂

32½. Mäet mulleroittamani ‘hills raised’ OM₂

33. “etc.” OM₂

33½. Süveret sventämäni ‘the depths my deepening’ JO₁ JO₂ VO

M8: absent JO₁ JO₂ VO

34. Olin miessä 6:tena ‘I was the sixth man’ OM₂

37. Kaarta taivon] Taivon kaarta ‘Heaven’s arch’ OM₂

38. ilmon pistäissä] ilman pistämässä OM₂

39. tähittäissä] tähyittämässä OM₂

BM: 41. Siitä suuttu] Siitä vanha ‘Then old’ JO₁ JO₂; Sittäpä vanha ‘Then indeed old’ VO

42. absent OM₂ JO₁ JO₂ VO

M9: 43–54. ordered 50 51 52 53 47 44 46 45 (lacks 43, 48–49, 54) JO₁ JO₂; ordered 43 50 50½ 47 48 43 45 46 (lacks 44 49 51–54) VO

43. absent JO₁ JO₂; Joukahainen] Joukahisen OM₂; nuoren Joukahaisen] lieto Lemminkäisen ‘loose Lemminkäinen’ VO

44. Laulo] absent OM₂
50 Laulo jousen Joukahaisen
   Kaariksi vesien päälle
   Lauloksi nuolen Joukahaisen
   Haukaksi kiitäväksi
   Ylähääksi taivosella
   Sang Joukahainen’s bow
   Into a (rain)bow on the water
   Sang Joukahainen’s arrow
   Into a streaking hawk
   High in the heavens.

55 Se siitä hyvin häpesi
   Sanoit siitä Joukahainen
   Myössytäs pyhät sanasi
   Peräytytä lauhiesi
   Annan kuitia kyperän
   He then felt very ashamed.
   Said then Joukahainen
   Make your holy words harmless
   Turn back your sentences
   I will give a helmet(ful) of gold

60 Oman pääni päästimeksi
   Itscheni lunastimeksi
   Sang of this Joukahainen
   For liberating my own head
   As a ransom for myself
   Said of this Joukahainen
   For liberating my own head
   As a ransom for myself

65 Kahta kolmea paremmat
   Sanoit vanha Väinämöinen
   On huoli hopeistaisi
   On kultia itschellänikin
   Kahta kolmea paremmat
   Sang old Väinämöinen
   I don’t care about your silver
   Have indeed myself gold
   Twice, three times better

70 Oman pääni päästimeksi
   Itscheni lunastimeksi
   Sang of this Joukahainen
   For liberating my own head
   As a ransom for myself
   Itkije orihistas
   I don’t care about your horses
   Mean one, your stallions

50. jousen] jouset (plural) JO₁ JO₂
50½. Harakakse lentämähe ['into a magpie flying'] VO
51. kaariksi] koiriksi ['into dogs'] JO₁
52. Joukahainen] Joukavaisen OM₁
53. Haukaksi] Havu-puiksi ['into wood of pine twigs'] JO₁; Havuokise ['into hawks or ‘into a group of pine twigs’'] JO₂
54. absent OM₂

BM: 54½. Se nuori Joukahainen ['that young Joukahainen'] OM₂
55. häpesi] pahastu ['felt bad'] OM₂

Q: 56. absent OM₂ VO; first wrote Joukavaisen OM₁; siitä] nuori ['young'] JO₁ JO₂; Itkije t’ihustelovi ['the weeper snivelled'] VO

M10; 56½. Oi on vanha Väinämöini ['Oh (is) old Väinämöinen'] JO₁ JO₂; Ohoh vanha Väinämöini ['Oh old Väinämöinen'] VO
57. Myössytäs] Myssyatä OM₂ JQ JO₁ JQ; Pöörrätä ['reel back'] VO
58. Peräytytä] Peräytytä OM₂; Peruuta laupiesi JO₁ JQ; Peruhuta lausiesi VO
59½. Hopeita huovan täyven OM₂; Hopeita huovan täyven ['a (?) full of silver'] JO₁ JQ; VO
60–61. absent VO

M11; 62½. Kusen konna kultihisi JO₁ JQ VO ['a can of piss on your gold']
63. absent JO₁ JQ; Itkije hopeihisi ['wicked one, on your silver'] (parallel line to 62½) VO
64–65. absent VO
64. itschellänikin] itelläinä OM₂
65. absent JO₁ JQ

Q: 66. absent VO; siitä] nuori ['young'] OM₂ JQ JQ

M10₁; 66½. Oi on vanha Väinämöini ['Oh (is) old Väinämöinen'] OM₂ JQ JO₂
67–68. “et[c.]” OM₂ (couplet absent)
68. Peruuta laupiesi JO₁ JQ; Peruhuta lausiesi VO
70–71. absent VO

Q: 71½. Sano vanha Väinämöinen ['Said old Väinämöinen'] OM₂ JQ JQ VO

M11₁; 71¼. Kusen konna orihistas ['A can of piss on your stallion'] JQ JQ VO
72–73. absent JQ JQ
72. absent VO
73. orihistas] orisestasi OM₂ hevosillasi ['on your horses'] (parallel line to 71¼) VO
On orih itschellännik
75 Kahta on kolmea parempi
Viittä, kuutta virkeämpi
Kuutta, seitentä somempi
Sano nuori Joukahainen
Myössyttäis pyhält sanasi
80 Perävyttä lauhiesi
Annan ainoan sisären
Oman pääni päästämeksi
Itscheni lunastimeksi
Siitä vanha Väinämöinen
Mössyttäis pyhält sanansa
Perävyttä lauhiesa
Siitä pääsi Joukahainen
Went home weeping
Wailing to the farm
Father got to the window
Mother toward the storehouse
Mother hastened to ask
Why do you weep my lad
There is no reason for your weeping
Said young Joukahainen
Said young Joukahainen

OM
2
JO
1
JO
2

Q
Theme 5

M11b

74. on hepo itellännik ['have myself a horse'] OM
2
75. on] absent OM
2
JO
1
JO
2
76–77. absent VO
76. kuutta] absent OM
2
77. absent OM
2
Q: 78. absent VO

M10
3
78½. Oi on vanha Väinämöinen ['Oh (is) old Väinämöinen'] JO
1
JO
2
Oloh vanha Väinämöinen ['Oh old Väinämöinen'] VO
79–80. absent OM
2
80. Peruutta laupiesi JO
1
JO
2
Peruutta lausiesi VO
81. sisären) sisaren (lacks possessive affix ‘-ni’) OM
2
82–83. absent OM
2
VQ
M10
5
84. absent VO

86. lauhiesa) lauhiensa (underlined) OM
2
Peruutti laupiensa JO
1
JO
2
Peruutti lausiesa VO
BM: 87. pääsi] nuori ['young'] OM
2
JO
1
JO
2
Sitt’ on lieto Lemminkäini” ['Then is loose Lemminkäinen'] VO

M13: 90–91. absent JO
1
JO
2
Q: absent VO

M14: 92½. Ohoh silma poikuoni ['oh my lad/son'] VO
93. Mitäs] Mitä OM
2
JO
1
JO
2
Mit’ on süüät itkiäsi ['what (is) the reason for your weeping'] VO
93½. Nuorra saatuni valitāj ['my one begotten when young, complain'] OM
2
94. absent VO: Ei ole] Onko ['is there?'] JO
1
JO
2
94½. Vaiwoa valittoasi ['difficulties for your complaining'] OM
2
JO
1
JO
2
Q: 95. absent VO

M15–M16: 98–105. absent OM
2
OM
2
concludes the poem with the variation concludes the poem with the variation in line 97½

M15: 96–97. absent VO

97. valitovani] valittoani ['my complaining'] JO
1
JO
2
with different dialects. These issues are taken into consideration in the discussion below. Owing to limitations of space, however, discussion of variations linked to memory and relevant indicators of such variation are reserved for a later article.

Kalevala-Meter
Understanding the crystallization of multiforms and their different types of variation is directly related to their metrical form. The so-called Kalevala-meter is named for Lönnrot’s Kalevala. It is the North Finnic form of the common Finnic alliterative tetrameter, whereas the forms in Estonia are often called regilaul (see also Sarv 2015: 6–7). The meter was used across a remarkable number of genres, which allowed the different genres to be interpenetrating and easily transposed (see Tarkka 2013). Kalevala-meter is characterized by the following essential features:

- An essentially trochaic rhythm, yielding an eight-syllable line with alternating strong and weak positions, although the number of syllables in the first foot was flexible
- Placement of long lexically stressed (=initial) syllables in metrically stressed positions and short lexically stressed syllables in metrically unstressed positions, not manifested in every line
- Alliteration, although not required in every line
- Parallelism, not required of every line
- A general inclination to a form of ‘right justification’ (Foley 1993 [1990]: 96–106, 178–196), often referred to as ‘winnowing’ in English, in which longer words tend to appear at the end of the line, and lines never end in a monosyllable
- Verses were stichic, avoiding enjambment

For most of the language areas, a line would be 2–4 words, lexical choice would be stabilised by alliteration, and the position of elements in a line would be stabilized by where long and short syllables can appear in the meter. Finnic languages are heavily inflected, normally using case endings where one would expect prepositions in an Indo-European language. Metrical conventions that inhibit the movement of words within a line also operate as constraints on morphological variation – i.e. morphological variation will not change the number of syllabic positions filled by a word. These conditions made it quite easy for whole lines to crystallize as formulaic units.

Although also not required of every line, parallelism was fundamental to this poetry (see Steinitz 1934; Saarinen 2014). Use of parallelism varied by genre. In narrative poetry, semantic parallelism and its looser form of analogical parallelism were generally characteristic of semantically central elements of narration. This often took the form of a crystallized couplet, although an extended series of parallel lines was also possible. In epic poems, parallel lines can be generally described as crystallized and socially circulating formulae rather than uniquely produced in the performance situation. Couplets were also formed of complementary semantic units that could be organized in a
series of structurally and analogically parallel couplets.

It is customary to conceive of poetic meter in terms of an absolute paradigm. However, the Kalevala-meter is better conceived of in terms of conventions with varying flexibility; verses were perceived in terms of degrees of well-formedness rather than according to a simple binary of ‘metrical’ versus ‘non-metrical’ (see also Frog 2014a). Most regular was the basically syllabic structure of the line, bound up with the rhythm of performance, followed by the placement of stressed syllables. Alliteration could be compensated for by other types of phonic patterning within and across lines in the continuous flow of performed discourse. Various devices of parallelism and lexical repetition equally provided strategies of integrating lines into the acoustic texture of a poem.

From Formulae to Formula-Systems

Before advancing to macro-formula multiforms and variation within them, it is necessary to introduce briefly some aspects of formulaic language in this poetry and a different type of multiform that operates in the formation of a line or couplet. Although technically a multiform, this will be referred to as formula-system here for easy differentiation from multiforms realizing multi-line units of flexible length discussed below. However, before advancing to formula-system multiforms, it is necessary to note that the terms ‘formula system’, ‘formulaic system’ and ‘system of formulae’ get used in different ways in connection with OFT. In his foundational works, Milman Parry used ‘system’ to refer to: a) the operation of formulae and the poetic idiom generally (e.g. 1971 [1928]: 19 [23]); b) to formulae with the same basic meaning completing metrical positions (1971 [1928]: 19 [23]); c) to formulae of the same syntactic category and inflection (e.g. a nominative singular noun phrase) in the same metrical position but with different meanings; as well as to d) what are here considered open-slot formulae with variations (1971 [1930]: 274–279 [84–88]). I prefer to reserve ‘formulaic system’ for formulaic language in a register on the whole and how that formulaic language operates.

Within the present framework, other types of phenomena grouped as ‘systems’ by Parry are considered in terms of classes of emic ‘words’ that group according to semantic, grammatical, functional and/or metrical equivalence. Parry sees these classes not simply as formally and/or semantically equivalent but as forming a group of potential alternatives within the mind of a performer (cf. Parry 1971 [1930]: 274 [85]). Such an indexically associated group established in the mind of a performer is here considered an equivalence set of emic ‘words’ which will not necessarily include all members of the etically described equivalence class in the register. A formula-system is here defined as a constellation of complementary equivalence sets that seem to be associated in the minds of performers and thereby enable the generation of metrically well-formed lines for relevant units of content. In kalevalaic epic, a formula-system will be an open slot formula or metrical-functional equivalence set of open slot formulae (e.g. where the fixed element is in the same metrical positions) and a corresponding equivalence set of formulae that are suitable as slot-fillers to complete a line (e.g. as the grammatical subject).

Open-slot formulae are formulae in which stable verbal material is part of a grammatical construction that is completed with a verbal slot-filler in use (see also Acker 1998: 39–43). An example can be taken from the text above (ll. 57, 67, 79), comparing the three examples of anna [‘I will give’] formulae in which the line is completed by two three-syllable lexemes, one of which is consistent across two of the three uses (in curly brackets; slot-fillers underlined):

(2) Annan {ainoan} X
   Annan kultia kyperän
   Annan {ainoan} orihin
   Annan {ainoan} sisireni

   I will give {my only}         X
   I will give a helmetful of gold
   I will give {my only} stallion
   I will give {my only} sister

Within this poem, the open slot of this formula is syntactically, semantically and metrically conditioned. It is syntactically conditioned as the object of the verb. It is semantically conditioned as something of
value or significance. It is metrically conditioned with allowance for alternative forms. The metrical line-type (2 3 3) generally appears integrated into the formula and conditions the slot-filler. The formula has a form with the three-syllable ainoa [‘only’] when used with a single concrete object. In this case, the slot-filler must have a short stressed syllable and must either be three syllables when inflected or two syllables plus the possessive suffix -ni (to complete the third position of the open slot). When kulta [‘gold’] is used to refer to abstract wealth, the meter resists its placement in the last three positions of the line because it has a long stressed syllable (kul-). It thus follows the verb and a term for a container indicating quantity follows it. Within the epic, each of the three variations crystallize into stable formulae in their own right. Nevertheless, the annan X formula is attested in a variety of contexts and across genres (e.g. SKVR I: 1247, 42, 47).

In Classic OFT, formulae were seen as invariable. Annan X and annan ainoan X would thus be distinguished as separate formulae and then grouped into one of Parry’s ‘systems’. On the other hand, this sort of telescoping formula was characteristic of Karelian lament poetry, where a formula might collapse to a single one of our words in the orthographic sense or expand to as many as ten (Stepanova 2015: 256). The potential for the metrical expansion of formulae is found in a number of contexts in kalevalaic poetry. For example, names of kalevalaic epic heroes tend not to be viewed themselves as formulae per se. However, prominent epic names tend to have a four-syllable form with a long first (stressed) syllable that is used at the end of a line (Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, Kaukomoinen / Kaukomieli, Joukahainen, Lemminkiäinen). These seem to be metrically conditioned variants of shorter forms with which they may be in variation (Väinö, Ilmari, Kauko, Jouko, and cf. Lemmin poika [‘Lad of Lempi’]). The four-syllable names also receive two-syllable epithets with a long first (stressed) syllable. Together, these fill the last six of eight positions in a line (vanha Väinämöinen [‘old Väinämöinen’], etc.). Rather than forming a system of discrete formulae, anna X can be viewed as an open-slot formula with a variation anna ainoan X, which can be described: anna {ainoan} X.

Nevertheless, all three examples of anna {ainoan} X in the epic are crystallized whole-line manifestations of the formula associated with particular contexts. The line annan ainoan sisäreni [‘I will give my only sister’] is thus simultaneously a variation of the annan ainoan X formula and also a discrete formula which is specifically associated with a particular event in a particular epic. In this tradition, the specificity of the use of annan ainoan sisäreni will implicitly reference this epic event in any other context no less than To be or not to be will reference Shakespeare’s Hamlet for us today. In contrast, sano X [‘said X’] is an open-slot formula completed by a six-syllable nominative noun phrase as the subject of the verb (see also Steinitz 1934: 56–57). Uses of this formula in particular epics also clearly crystallize in the memory of the individual singer into whole-line formulae such as sano vanha Väinämöinen [‘said old Väinämöinen’]. Nevertheless, the sano X formula is used with so many epic characters and in so many contexts that it lacks markedness in itself.

Classic OFT maintained a theory of thrift that Parry developed in his research on Homeric epic (1971 [1930]). ‘Thrift’ was the principle that a poetic register would ideally maintain only one formula capable of realizing a particular idea in particular metrical positions. This principle was not equally applicable to all poetries. The situation becomes particularly complicated where metrical requirements of alliteration and/or rhyme have shaped the register (see also Lord 1960: 50–57). The requirements at the level of phonic texture of verse become a determinant on word choice that motivates the development of a rich equivalence vocabulary to ‘say the same thing’ within the variety of possible sound patterns (Roper 2012; for an extreme case, see Frog 2016). Moreover, Parry’s principle of thrift was not developed to consider poetries with conventions of semantic parallelism, which can in fact require ‘saying the same thing’ with different words in the same metrical positions in parallel lines (Fox 2014; see also Frog 2015b).
In Kalevalaic epic, thrift does not operate at the level of ‘words’ of the poetic register except in some special cases such as formulaic heroic epithets. In some cases, equivalents are alternants that are full synonyms or even allomorphs that might be unmarked in their interchangeability. In others, the difference between alternatives may be as exclusive markers of dialect difference (Frog 2010b: 99–100). For example, a variety of formulaic expressions are used as an open-slot formula in the opening two positions of a line when establishing a grammatical subject for subsequent verses. This is a formula like tuo on ['that is'], se on ['it is'], oli ['was'], itse ['him-/herself'], and so forth, followed by a six-syllable heroic epithet–name formula. This will here be called an identity-formula. The meaning-bearing part of such lines is the six-syllable noun phrase (e.g. vanha Väinämöinen) identifying the grammatical subject. It would be an oversimplification to state that identity-formulae are merely a means of completing a metrical line, but they remain semantically very light. Such semantically light elements seem inclined to minor variations. Many such variations in light elements like these seem to have been largely invisible or only textural in the continuous flow of performed discourse. Interestingly, these functionally common but semantically marginal formulae seem to maintain variety rather than exhibiting thrift.

Open-slot identity formulae filling the first foot are completed by a grammatical-metrical equivalence class of noun phrases that can operate as slot-filler completing the remaining six positions of the line. Those slot-fillers are syntactically conditioned by the formula so that they can only appear in the nominative. Open-slot formulae also group into metrically conditioned grammatical-functional equivalence classes. For example, there is a whole set of formulae filling the open foot of a verse followed by a six-syllable noun phrase as the grammatical subject. These include identity formulae, conjunctive formulae (e.g. sitten ['then'], siitä ['following from that']), vocative formulae (e.g. oi on ['oh (is)'], oi sie ['oh you']), inquity formulae (e.g. sano ['said'], virkko ['uttered']) and movement formulae (e.g. lähti ['left'], ajo ['drove']). Parry would have approached these as a ‘system’ that becomes associated in the mind of a performer. He would have viewed formulae capable of completing the open slot as a parallel system. When talking about such indexically linked ‘systems’ in the mind of a performer, an etic description of all ‘words’ of an equivalence class within the register narrows to the ‘words’ that are established as an equivalence set in practice. There are methodological challenges to assessing equivalence sets in the empirical data: as a psychological reality, they can be assumed to vary from individual to individual and equivalence sets will not necessarily be uniform across all dialects. Nevertheless, ‘words’ of equivalence sets can be inductively deduced from social patterns of language use in the corpus. Equivalence sets in the mind of a performer may remain inaccessible, but at least the core of such sets can be inferred, allowing actual equivalence sets to be discussed as hypothetical abstractions evolved around such cores. Neither the set of open-slot formulae nor the corresponding set of noun-phrase formulae is viewed as a system per se here: the formula-system operates in the linkage between these equivalence sets that forms a paradigmatic network in the mind of a performer. The formula-system may also include more specific open-slot formulae of a relevant metrical-functional type (e.g. iski ['struck']):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vania Väinämöinen} \\
\text{nuori Joukahainen} \\
\text{Ahti saarelainen} \\
\text{Tiera Lieran poika} \\
\text{Pohjolan emäntä} \\
\text{etc.} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{that is} \\
\text{then} \\
\text{oh (is)} \\
\text{said} \\
\text{drove} \\
\text{etc.} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{old Väinämöinen} \\
\text{young Joukahainen} \\
\text{Ahti island-dweller} \\
\text{Mistress of Pohjola} \\
\text{etc.} \\
\end{array}
\]

A formula-system qualifies as a multiform because it advances from individual emic ‘words’ of the registral lexicon and their alternatives (i.e. in equivalence classes) to an associative system in the mind of a performer for combining those ‘words’ into larger units.
Within the context of individual epics, these combinations crystallize to operate as whole-line formulae. Such crystallization reinforces the association between constituent formulae and equivalence sets within the network that is the multiform. As a consequence, individual performers develop preferred although not exclusive combinations within their idiolects. For a performer with native-like fluency in the idiom, expressing a desired semantic unit within the field of such a multiform could potentially be more or less automatic. The paradigm can also be extended to new metrically and functionally appropriate expressions in either position. Such a system can also be inferred behind variations such as Vassilei’s use of lieto Lemminkäinen [‘loose Lemminkäinen’] in the place of the metrically-grammatically equivalent nuori Joukahainen [‘young Joukahainen’] in the example epic above (ll. 2, 10, 16, 41, etc.). In addition, a single open-slot formula such as sano X or annan {ainoan} X can be discussed as a formulaic integer or ‘word’. However, when discussion advances from the formula per se to its relationship with an indexical set of potential slot-fillers associated with it in the memory of fluent users, focus is no longer on a single ‘word’ but on a system of ‘words’ and how they interrelate – i.e. a formula-system, which is not itself a ‘word’ of the lexicon, but a multiform.

The system formed by an open-slot formula and its conventional slot-fillers tend to be the most observable formula-systems in the data. This type of multiform accounts for the systemic operation, observable in the corpus, of complementary types of formulae. However, the psychological reality of such formula-systems remains theoretical. Their extent of development and precise forms can be assumed to vary considerably according to the competence, experience and interests of individual performers. What must be stressed, however, is that the isolation of formulae that participate in this system from one another may be misleading and produce an inaccurate view of variation in the poetry.

**Crystallized Series Multiforms**

In kalevalaic epic, a crystallized series multiform is a type of macro-formula which circulates as an ordered series of ‘words’ that (normally) account for all of the elements of the multiform in entextualization. Crystallized sequence multiforms seem to be a basic type for most narration. These and other multi-line (epic) multiforms that operate as macro-formulae appear to resist interpenetration in almost all dialects of singing: they seem to have functioned as atomic ‘chunks’ of text in the progression of narrative performance (see also Timonen 2000: 642, 652). Although several different types of multi-line multiforms are discussed in terms of their flexibility and variability at a social level, these show a tendency to evolve into crystallized series multiforms in the minds of individual singers. This tendency stresses the need to maintain a perspective on social variation within and across dialects on the one hand and how the same multiform may operate for an individual singer.

Dialectal variation becomes apparent very quickly in the corpus, as do exceptional examples that are most likely either unique to the singer’s idiolect or variations resulting from the documentation situation. The multiform that conventionally opens The Singing Competition offers useful illustrations of some issues of variation in this type. A survey of 161 examples and fragments of the multiform shows that it has a core three-line structure, as in lines 1–3 of several of the Malinens’ performances above (cf. OM2 and JO1–2). This multiform constitutes a clause: a couplet presents the identities of two heroes followed by usually only a single line presenting the predicate: they drive into one another on the road. The opening couplet is often a two-line open-slot formula yksi (on) X / toinen Y [‘one (is) X / the other/second Y’] completed by the identities of the two heroes, Väinämöinen and Joukahainen. This is a manifestation of a couplet formula-system. Väinämöinen is most often named first, although this varies; the formula naming the second hero sometimes varies with a metrical and functional equivalent (e.g. lieto Lemminkäinen). The main variations of the open-slot formula are that yksi [‘one’] varies socially with other metrically and functionally equivalent identity formulae, and that toinen [‘other/second’] varies with a conjunction
(sekä ['along with'], ja myös ['and also']) or can be replaced by a metrically equivalent identity formula. The verb in the following line is most often a derivative of ajaa ['to drive'] along with the lexeme vasta- ['against']. For example:

(4) Tuop’ oli vanha Väinämöini  
Toini on nuori Joukahaini  
Ajettihpa vassakkaha  
(SKVR I 163.1–3, punctuation removed.)

That was indeed old Väinämöinen  
The other (is) young Joukahainen  
Were driven indeed against one another

This multiform is specific to The Singing Competition: it indexes the epic poem so that those familiar with it recognize immediately which poem is being sung. The multiform’s verbal framework remains recognizable even when exceptional slot-fillers (underlined) complete the unit:

(5) Yksi kirkos tuloopi  
Toinen kirkkohe menööpi  
Vastatusten vastavuittin  
(SKVR VII 140.1–3, punctuation removed.)

One comes from the church  
The other goes to the church  
Met those that met

From the White Sea down to the Ladoga region and Karelian Isthmus, the three-line paradigm remains fairly consistent. The dataset reveals that the stable base of this three-line structure can be expanded through parallelism and/or less frequently through additional couplets. Such expansions could be done at the level of individuals but could also be established at the level of dialects. There is also a case where the multiform is expanded with equivalent couplets in two geographically remote local dialects. In a dialect associated with the Vuokkiniemi singing area in Viena Karelia in the north, the relevant couplet was Selvällä meren selällä / Ulavalla aukiella ['On the clear back of the sea / On the wide open (sea)']. In a distinctive redaction of the multiform in the Shemeikka kin-group’s dialect of singing in the region of Border or Ladoga Karelia, the relevant couplet is Meren selvällä (or: Selvällä meren) selällä / Lagialla lainehella ['On the sea’s clear back / On the open wave']. The expansion of the multiform through an additional couplet in a dialect is generally uncommon. Its expansion with related couplets is an indicator of a connection between the redactions in these dialects or of the two dialects of singing more generally.

To the south in Ingria, where Kalevalaic poetry shifted to primarily a women’s tradition, variation in the poems is more pronounced (see also Harvilahdi 1992a). In Central Ingria, another multiform became connected with the beginning of the song. This additional multiform would vary in order with the more common multiform or even be embedded in it or divide it with repetitions. This sort of variation is particularly striking because it contrasts to the atomic chunking of macro-formula multiforms in most other regions. In the Soikkola region of western Ingria, the common three-line form developed the third line into a couplet and followed it with an additional couplet which is unique to this redaction. In analysis, it is ambiguous whether this couplet is an extension of the end of this multiform, an extension of the beginning of the following one, or an independent element linked to the theme:

(6) Yksi oli vanha Väinämöin  
Toin oli nuori Joukahain  
Puuttuit tiellä vassakuksi  
Ritahuivat rimatuksin  
Yksi ei noista tietä anna  
Toin ei tieltä pois pakkeene  
(SKVR III 1176.1–6, punctuation removed.)

One was old Väinämöinen  
The other was young Joukahainen  
They jammed against one another on the road  
They got tangled abreast of one another  
One would not give the road  
The other would not flee from the road

In practice, the flow of performance would be continuous: there would not be breaks between multiforms as units. The ambiguity here is increased by the fact that the grouping of elements into units may not have been consistent or even clear at the subjective level of individual singers. To borrow the words of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916: 146): “only habit and attention allow us to distinguish particular elements” of language. In most regions, multiforms become apparent through variation in the organization and omission at...
the level of ‘chunks’ of text in variants of an epic. In the case of the couplet in (6), when it is used, it is in this position, including in two instances where the subsequent multiform of colliding sleighs is absent (SKVR III 1 1175; 1180). There is only one exception in which it follows the subsequent multiform (SKVR III 1 1182). The onsets of crystallized series multiforms generally tend to be the most stable (see also Siikala 1986: 198–199). The onset might vary in uses of parallelism, but adding a couplet as a new onset to a crystallized series multiform would be exceptional, making it seem more reasonable to consider the couplet in (6) to result from extending the end of this multiform.

The problems of interpreting this example are of interest in part because, even if this couplet emerged as an extension of the end of one multiform, “habit and attention” on a scale of generations could potentially lead it to be viewed as the onset of the following one. In (6), the collector placed a period after the fourth line and treated lines 5–6 as the beginning of the following multiform. Rather than the following multiforms being completely absent in the two instances just mentioned, if the couplet were its conventional opening, these cases could then reflect a variation in which a multiform is collapsed to present its onset only (from which the rest can be inferred by a competent audience). On the other hand, the singing conventions in Ingria were also more flexible and multiforms could interpenetrate. As a consequence, it is not always clear where the flexibility of a multiform in this region may have evolved so that its parts became separate multiforms, or whether some multiforms dissolved within the dialect from textual chunking into independent lines and couplets associated with a theme. The operation of multiforms in Ingria requires much broader study in order to develop a better grasp of their variation. Generalizing distinctions between multiforms at a regional or supra-regional level is an abstraction that provides a frame of reference for considering the empirical data and variation observed within that data. At the same time, multiforms may not have been differentiated in the same way in the mind of every singer within a region.

The broader the scope of the corpus from which generalizations are developed (e.g. ‘kalevalaic epic multiforms are, as a rule, not interpenetrating’), the more important it becomes to remain sensitive to the fact that such generalizations may not necessarily accurately represent every local dialect.

Syntactic Structuring and Lexical Variation
Crystallized series multiforms tend to exhibit an internal hierarchical structure. They are quite often built from a dyadic pairing of two elements, each of which may be rendered through a parallel couplet or a series of lines or couplets. The elements of such dyadic pairs are often images or motifs that together represent a symbolic unit of narrative content. Meter is fundamental in structuring lines and their crystallization into formulaic units. Focus on language at the level of lines may make poetic syntax seem to have relatively few organizational constraints. The language is heavily inflected, which allows great flexibility in word order within a line: although there were syntactic constraints, the primary ordering principles were in general the metrical placement of stressed syllables and the inclination to place longer words at the end of a line irrespective of word class or inflection. In this poetry, however, syntax is a primary structuring principle in the organization of lines in series (see also Kuusi 1952), which reinforces the crystallization of that series in a multiform unit, as also seen in the multiform in (4–6) above. Syntax thus operates at multiple levels in this poetry. These levels include syntax within the line, interlinear syntax through which lines relate to one another, and also at the level of relationships between symbolic elements or information communicated through clauses or sentences in verse.

Poetic syntax dictates that the nominal subject or subjects will appear in the first line or series of lines (as above). The verb will either be in the line with the subject or in the immediately following line. The grammatical object will always appear in the same line with its verb. Additional information concerning the how, where, when and why of the action can then appear as full-line noun phrases, prepositional or postpositional...
phrases. Within this basic syntactic framework, individual lines may be extended through semantic parallelism. As John W. Du Bois (2014: 392–400) discusses, syntactic parallelism can itself be viewed as a syntactic phenomenon at the level of “the formal relation of signs to one another” (Morris 1971 [1938]: 22). In Kalevalaic poetry, each syntactic component of a semantically parallel line should match a component in the preceding line while other components of that line may be inferred (Kuusi et al. 1977: 66). Ellipsis of syntactic components in parallel lines thus subordinates lines in an ordered hierarchy: the line with all of the components must appear first. Semantically parallel lines are possible as adjacent repetitions of each semantic unit of a clause. The structuring of parallel lines thus occurs within the syntactic structuring of a series of lines, where it is subordinate to the interlinear syntax of the clause. Interlinear syntax can thus be seen as a primary organizing principle for ‘words’ in multi-line multiforms.

Multiforms may be constituted of multiple clauses or sentences (see also Honko 1998: 112). The dyadic (or triadic) structuring of multiforms also engages poetic syntax at the level of relationships between clauses and the information or symbols that they mediate. The conventional juxtaposition of such units is generally indicative of: a) the first element standing in a causal relation to the second as its outcome, as in (7–11); or b) of the second element being a characterization of the first, possibly including specific relationships to other characters or groups connecting it with the plot, as in (15). The stability of crystallized sequence multiforms as an ordered series of ‘words’ is often directly connected with poetic syntax, which places constraints on the organization of those ‘words’ and symbols or information that they communicate.

Dyadically structured multiforms often manifest as paired couplets. The multiform that conventionally followed the opening of The Singing Competition describes the heroes’ sleighs locking together when they have collided. It is useful for illustrating dyadic structuring and its potential for variation. A survey of 135 examples and fragments of this multiform offer the basis for generalizations offered here. This description is most commonly formed by a dyadically structured multiform of two couplets, especially in the more northern regions:

(7) Puuttui vemmel vemelehe  
Rahet rahkehe nenäihä  
Veri juoksi vemelestä  
Rasva rahkehen nenästä  
(SKVR I, 163a.4–7, punctuation removed.)

Stuck shaft-bow to shaft-bow  
Traces to trace’s end  
Blood ran from the shaft-bow  
Fat from the trace’s end

One dyadic constituent of a multiform of this type may also reduce to a single line, manifest as a series of lines or even as a series of couplets, as in examples (11–12) below. Such multiforms may also be truncated, for example presenting only the first element of a dyadic pair, or the multiform could be elaborated with one or more couplets in the same manner as example (6) above. The dyadic structure of this multiform family (i.e. of its redactions) nevertheless remains generally consistent across dialects from the Gulf of Finland to the White Sea. The first element represents the sleighs stuck together through different metonyms for sleigh organized in parallel lines, and the second refers to liquid running from the parts of a sleigh as an expression of the strain of the horses, again in parallel lines.

The line-order within each couplet in (7) is fixed by the poetic syntax: ellipsis of the verb is only possible in the second line of a parallel group. The order of the two-part series is correspondingly stabilized by the implied causal relation between conventionally juxtaposed clauses – i.e. liquid runs from the horses because the sleighs have collided rather than vice versa. Lines in this multiform family tend to subscribe to basic schematic patterns, in this case as open-slot formulae:

(8) Verb₁ Noun₁-NOM Noun₁-ILL  
Noun₂-NOM Noun₂-GEN nenä-ILL*  
Noun₃-NOM Verb₂ Noun₁-ELA  
Noun₄-NOM Noun₂-GEN nenä-ELA  

* nenä is a postposition ‘end’, lit. ‘nose’.

In this case, the lines of each couplet are semantically parallel while the couplets
themselves are linked by lexical repetition and structural parallelism, illustrated in the diagraph (Du Bois 2014) in (9). However, rather than structural parallelism being regular between couplets, the line-types could repeat within a dyadic element, and another line type with a different syllabic structure was also common (e.g. *aisa aisahan takeltu* ['shaft to shaft was jammed']).

The lexemes completing the slots in these schematic templates are semantically, syntactically and metrically conditioned, which significantly limits their variation. For lines of the type in the example above, nouns consist of two core groups of equivalence classes. The first are semantically conditioned as words for parts of a sleigh that form a functional equivalence class of terms that can make a metonymic reference to the sleigh itself (Noun1–2). They are metrically conditioned as having a long initial syllable and an additional syllable on their inflected stem (*rahis* or *rahkis* / *rahkehe-* ['trace'], *vemmel* / *vempele-* ['shaft–bow']). The second set of nouns (Noun3–4) is of two-syllable words for fluids which can alliterate with a respective metonym for sleigh (*rasva–rahis* ['fat–trace'], *veri/vesi–vemmel* ['blood/water–shaft–bow']). There are two corresponding sets of equivalence classes for verbs. Both couplets of the type presented here take two-syllable verbs with a long stressed syllable, making them metrically appropriate for the second foot. The verb in the first couplet is semantically conditioned to refer to the interlocking sleighs (Verb1; e.g. *puuttua* ['to be jammed'], *tartua* ['to become stuck'], *koskea* ['to touch'], *kertia* ['to pile up']). The verb in the second couplet is correspondingly conditioned to refer to movement of liquid (Verb2; e.g. *tippua* ['to drip'], *kielhua* ['to boil'], *vuotaa* ['to leak, run'], *juosta* ['to run']). Metrically, this allows limited variable word order in the first line where the nominal form of the noun has a long stressed syllable (i.e. for *vemmel* but not for the Karelian form *rahis* as opposed to *rahis*): the verb and the nominative noun may exchange positions. In the second couplet, word order is regular. Most words for liquid such as *vesi* ['water'], *veri* ['blood'], *hiki* ['sweat'], and so on have a short initial syllable and thus are metrically avoided in the second foot. *Rasva* ['fat'] would be metrically appropriate in this position but is used primarily in the second line-type of the couplet (52 instances in *rasva rahkehen nenästä*; 20 instances in 10 other verbal lines). Word order with *rasva* is only inverted in one instance (SKVR VII, 140.5) and this is with an unconventional verb otherwise only encountered once in examples of the multiform (*lähteä* ['leave, depart']). Actually, the whole variant in which this use of *rasva* appears is generally unusual: it is the source for the variant of church-goers in example (5) above.

Additional line-types evolved for use with two-syllable words with a long initial syllable that could be used as a metonym for sleigh but which did not receive an additional syllable when inflected, such as *aisa* / *aisa-* ['shaft']. These were used with a set of three-syllable verbs with a short stressed syllable (*takeltua* ['to get jammed'], *taveta* ['to meet']). This example also adds perspective on variation when verbal correspondences to the preceding example in (7–9) are underlined:

(10) *Tartu* [sic] *vemmel* *vempelesen*
   *Aisa aisahan takeltu*
   *Vesi vuoti vempelestä*
   *Usva uuen aisan päästä*
   *Rasva rahkehen nenästä*  
   (SKVR I, 163n.4–7, punctuation removed.)

<table>
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<th>shaft.bow</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>Traces</th>
<th>trace</th>
<th>’s end</th>
<th>to</th>
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<td><em>vempele-</em></td>
<td>hään</td>
<td>Rahet</td>
<td>rahkehe-</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
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<td>n</td>
<td>nenä-</td>
<td>stä</td>
<td>rasva</td>
<td>rahkehe-</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This word has been moved from its position in the verse to make the parallelism more visible.
generating alternative lines. Thus lines like *rahis rahkeeseen takeltu* (SKVR I, 158.4) [‘trace to trace was jammed’] emerged where changes in spoken language dialects affected articulation in versification; this reduced the inflected form of *rah(k)is* (*rahkeheseen*) by a syllable and required it to be treated as analogous to the line with *aisa* in (10).

To the south, in Border or Ladoga Karelia and in Ingria, this multiform tended to be longer. It became exceptionally long in West Ingria, where repeated use of formulaic templates is more apparent and where couplets would be generated for as many as three different liquids in a parallel series, as in example (11):

(11) Aisa aisaa tappais  
   Rahe tarttui rahkehee  
   Rinnus tarttui rinnuksee  
   Vemmel tarttui vempelee  
   Rikki kiehui rinnuksesta  
   Rasvä kiehui rahkehesta  
   Rasvä rahkehken nenästä  
   Vesi kiehui vempelestä  
   Vesi vempeleen nenästä  

(SKVR III, 1182.20–29, punctuation removed.)

Shaft met shaft  
Trace stuck to trace  
Strap stuck to strap  
Shaft-bow stuck to shaft-bow  
Sulphur boiled from the strap  
Sulpher from the strap’s end  
Fat boiled from the trace  
Fat from the trace’s end  
Water boiled from the shaft-bow  
Water from the shaft-bow’s end

On a quite local basis, the mythic images of this motif underwent renewal in the dialect of mythology – i.e. at the level of mythic symbols and narrative structures being mediated through verse. The interface of these images with their verbal representation – the linguistic encoding of mythic symbols through verbal art – thus produced a distinct local variation in the dialect of singing. The second dyadic element of the multiform was replaced by an image of trees growing from the parts of the sleigh, as reflected in the example of the Malinen family illustrated above (multiform M2b; see also SKVR I, 265, 278–279a, 284a, 293). This image is adapted from the symbolic system of the mythology, where such growth can represent both the passage of time and/or the expression of supernatural power. This redaction illustrates the potential of a central constituent of a multiform to change while another major constituent maintains continuity (i.e. half of a dyadic pair or equivalent part of a more complex multiform). This can be viewed as an innovation ultimately attributable to one or more individuals, but it should be stressed that emphasis here is on the social outcome of the innovation being assimilated as a valid model by other performers so that it becomes a marker of both a local dialect of singing and a local dialect of mythology (see also Stepanova 2012: 280).

Although the narrative unit of the colliding sleighs was generally expressed through a distinct multiform at the broad social level of the tradition, that does not mean that every singer necessarily internalized it that way. There are some cases in the data where this unit appears only as a couplet as in (12), and that couplet may potentially have been internalized as a component of the opening multiform discussed above:

(12) Yks ol vanha Väinämöinen  
   Toinen nuori Joukahainen  
   Ajetih on vassakkah  
   Läks_on vezi vembelestä  
   Rasvä tippu rahkehesta  

(SKVR II 37.1–5, punctuation removed.)

One was old Väinämöinen  
The other young Joukahainen  
Were driven (is) against one another  
Left (is) water from the shaftbow

In this case, the singer performed this opening sequence the same way eleven years later (SKVR II 37a), but it is impossible to resolve how she perceived the relation between the units or how they were established in her memory. In another case, a singer who performed a similar five-line sequence quite exceptionally opens the fourth line with the conjunction *ja* [‘and’] (SKVR II 32.4). The conjunction invites interpreting a strong link that could indicate a coherent multiform, but even this remains ambiguous since this singer used *ja* at the beginning of several lines (a feature lacking in her performance of another epic for the same collector: SKVR II 217).
This emphasizes that general perspectives about the social level at which multiforms are observed provide frames of reference for considering specific cases and individual performers, but it cannot necessarily resolve all questions surrounding the specific case.

When looking across the many examples of this multiform collectively, variation may appear chaotic. The local and regional forms found from the Gulf of Finland to the White Sea may seem quite diverse, but they exhibit local regularity and stability. Moreover, the variety in the corpus may appear much greater than it actually was in practice. The organization of the two parts of the dyad is invariable, although only the first of these may appear. The 135 examples surveyed here include 534 lines representing the symbolic elements of the interlocking sleighs and liquids running from them (i.e. not including lines of the alternate dyadic element in the Malinens’ dialect or e.g. couplets with other types of specifying information). These 534 lines represent a total of 70 verbal types identified by lexical elements and word order (not including uses of the particle – pa/pä or phonological variations related to dialect or dictated versus sung performance). Of these, 55 verbal line types were encountered three times or less, accounting for 80 lines or 15% of the dataset; 15 types account for 454 of these lines or 85% of the dataset. Among these 15 types, there are lines which are clearly regionally established and others which have potentially been independently generated according to the basic schema. Verbs exhibit more variation across the corpus with clear regional preferences, yet these patterns of variation are clearly rooted in the indexical matrix of the multiform as a verbal and compositional system. Looking at all of the examples of this multiform as an unorganized mass of examples may give the inaccurate impression that it was a highly generative system – which such a multiform might be in another tradition. However, the multiform was a relatively stable component of local dialects of singing and crystallized in the minds of individual performers. The syntactic-metrical templates for producing lines and couplets had the potential to operate generatively, but, looked at in overview, most variation seems to be the result of exchanging metrically and semantically equivalent words in the locally circulating formulae.

**Collocative System Multiforms**

Crystallized series multiforms, characterized by the ordered sequence of elements, are paralleled by what are here called *collocative system multiforms*. These are multi-line multiforms in which the constitutive ‘words’ are not bound to a particular organization although they are associated with one another and manifest as co-occurring verbal resources. Technically speaking, all multiforms are collocative systems of ‘words’, but using this as a categorical term refers to multi-line multiforms that do not exhibit the structuring principles that distinguish other formal types. These also do not necessarily operate as macro-formulae, and may instead operate as a cluster of lines, couplets and/or larger macro-formula units so that the uses and arrangements of these co-occurring parts are more open to polysemy of the whole.

Some of the multiforms discussed by the Honkos (1998; Honko 2003) probably belong to this broad class insofar as the verbal framework can operate without following a regular sequence. In kalevalaic epic, ‘words’ of these multiforms exhibit indexical binding to each other on the level of verbal texture but also to a sequence of narrative content like a ‘theme’ of OFT. This often makes it difficult to discern whether the ‘words’ are independently associated with that content rather than with each other *per se*. However, framing the elements as *either* indexically associated with one another or with the unit of narration as a binary opposition would probably in most cases be a misleading oversimplification of a potentially quite dynamic relation. Nevertheless, the more flexible a multiform of this type appears, the more difficult it is to recognize with any certainty.

Because of the inclination to non-variation in kalevalaic epic, variation in this type of multiform seems for the most part to occur in transmission. In other words, the multiform’s manifestations vary between individual performers but it seems to evolve into (or at
least toward) a crystallized sequence multiform in the mind of each performer. When looking at the corpus, it may therefore appear quite variable, whereas it will appear far more regular or even highly crystallized when looking at multiple performances by the same individual. In some cases, the crystallized sequence may also be transmitted within a dialect of singing and variation only becomes evident when looking across dialects. An initial impression that variation is quite free might thus prove misleading when local dialects come under scrutiny.

An illustrative example can be taken from a system of couplets that co-occur in the epic The Song of Lemminkäinen. This system of couplets occurs in conjunction with the hero filtering the poison from drink he has been served and his consumption of that beer. The three couplets are proverb-like units normally attributed to the hero as direct speech:

(13) Toppa moaha luodanehe
Ruoga suhuu siödänhe
Tuopin tuoja Tuonelaha
Kannan kandaja Manalla
Joi oluon onnekšehe
Meem mussam mielekšehe
(SKVR I, 716.209–214, punctuation removed.)

Let waste be cast into the earth
Let food be put into the mouth
The mug’s bringer to Tuonela [the realm of the dead]
The can’s carrier to Mana
[He] drank beer to his fortune
Black mead to his satisfaction

A dataset of 115 instantiations of this (potential) multiform show that the order of the couplets varies and not all couplets necessarily appear (see Frog 2010a: 365–371). Individual couplets may be expanded or reduced to a single line; they may be interspersed with additional lines or couplets and form repeating series. The individual couplets may also be attributed to different speakers as direct speech—a type of variation that belongs to multiforms’ potential for polysemy (Frog 2010b: 102–103). The continued flexibility of the uses of these couplets appears related to the semantic core of each unit remaining distinct in transmission. Although kalevalaic epic multiforms generally exhibit resistance to interpenetration (outside of Ingria), the couplets of this constellation can be interspersed with and linked to other multiforms. The potential for dispersal across a larger text sequence involving other multiforms suggests that the elements can crystallize into separate multiforms at the level of idiolect. This makes it reasonable to question whether the proposed collocative system was a coherent multiform in social circulation. At the same time, this sort of variation parallels variation observable in some multiforms in Ingria and may be linked to the variation in kalevalaic multiforms in more flexible genres such as lyric—a possibility which requires future testing in analysis.

Collocative system multiforms may also form much more cohesive units. In the epic The Song of Creation, for example, a cosmogonic egg breaks and the world emerges from its parts or is created from it by the demiurge Väinämöinen. The relation of parts of the egg to especially celestial phenomena is manifested by a multiform often formulated as a series of couplets as in example (14):

(14) Mi munassa valkieta
Se päiväkse paistamahe
Mi munassa ruskjeta
Se kuukse kumottamahe
Se tähekse taivosella
Mi munass’ ülistä puolta
Vaskisekse taivoskse
Mi munass’ laista puolta
Rautasekse moaemäkse
(SKVR I, 74.119–127, punctuation removed.)

What [is] white in the egg
That into the sun to shine
What [is] brown in the egg [= the yolk]
That into the moon to glow
That into a star in heaven
What in the egg [is] the upper part
Into the copper heaven
What in the egg [is] the lower part
Into the iron mother earth

This multiform circulated as a stable unit. Although organization was variable, it was also hierarchically structured. Each couplet would normally be structured according to a formulaic template and the pairing of the part of the egg with what is created from it was highly conventional. Unlike this example,
however, the stars and/or clouds would often be rendered as a separate couplet describing what was created from flecks in the egg or fragments of shell (see further Kuusi 1949: 168–170). The couplets concerning the white–brown and upper–lower parts of the egg were conventionally paired. The whole multiform was ideally constituted of three units, the white–brown couplet pair, the upper–lower couplet pair, and the stars couplet. The units would form an unbroken series but their order was not socially stable (although the stars couplet would not be first) and not all of them necessarily appeared. Preferred organizations of these elements were associated with dialect, but most significant for the present context is that variation in the ordering of elements was not exclusive of structuring mechanisms such as interlinear syntax operating within the multiform.

**Intermediate and Hybrid Types**

Categories of crystallized sequence and collocative system multiforms are abstract and ideal while the reality could be much more fluid. For example, the multiform of the colliding sleighs is extremely stable in its form of paired couplets. However, as each couplet expands, the internal organization of each part can open to different sorts of variation. The long redaction from West Ingria illustrated in example (11), for instance, allows variation in the order of elements in the first part as well as in the second, and even whether lines or couplets are used for each liquid in the second part. In that case, the multiform maintains an overall dyadic structure while each dyadic component may vary from dialect to dialect between a crystallized sequence and a collocative system.

Multiforms may also circulate as hybrid types. In *The Song of Lemminkäinen*, for example, one of the dangers passed by the hero on his journey is a fiery eagle. This monster is described in a dyadically structured multiform of which the first part is a crystallized sequence while the second is constituted of a set of elements that can vary in organization. This multiform is discussed here on the basis of a dataset of examples from 113 variant poems and fragments. Within the epic, the multiform may be used in a dialogue where the hero’s mother mentions the dangers on his road, on the hero’s journey itself, or both, yielding two manifestations of the multiform in a single performance. Of the 113 variants used here, 45 exhibit such repetition within a single epic performance. The stability of the first half of the dyadic multiform is attributable to anaphora as an organizing principle in a series of grammatically parallel lines. In other words, the last word of each line becomes the first word of the next in a progressive series. The anaphora begins with a formula indicating the encounter with a ‘fiery X’ followed by a repeating open-slot formula X-INE(-ADE) tulinen Y ['in the X a fiery Y']. The series varies in length from three to six elements but the order is invariably conditioned as a progression of smaller objects concluding with the eagle or its talons. The second half of the multiform is normally comprised of either two couplets characterizing the eagle of the first half or of one such couplet followed by a line expressing the eagle’s readiness for hero. Its particular form may be stable within local dialects, but it appears that singers were frequently aware of multiple alternatives and could combine these into longer units, as in example (15):

(15) Tuloop on tulini joki  
Jovess’ on tulini koski  
Kosess’ on tulini luoto  
Luuvoss’ on tulini koivu  
Koivuss’ on tuliset oksat  
Oksiss’ on tulini kokko  
Kokko kyniah hioo  
Hampahia hiiskuttau  
Se on syönyt saa’ an urostaa  
Tuhoonun 1000 miestä  
Sepää on syömäh Lemminkäistä  
Lemminkäisen pein vanalla  
(SKVR I: 754.70–81, punctuation removed.)

Comes (is) indeed a fiery river  
In the river (is) a fiery rapids  
In the rapids (is) a fiery skerry  
In the skerry (is) a fiery birch  
In the birch (is) fiery branches  
In the branches (is) a fiery eagle  

The eagle grinds its talons  
Makes its teeth whisper
It has eaten a hundred heroes
Destroyed a thousand men
It indeed (is) to eat Lemminkäinen
On hand for Lemminkäinen’s head

Variation in the first element of this dyadic pair occurs in the formulaic opening of the first line (i.e. tuloop’ on above) and in both the number and specific terms in the progression of nouns (normally a minimum of koski ['rapids'] or sometimes joki ['river'] followed by koivu ['birch'] and kokko ['eagle']). Variation in the second half is in the selection and organization of couplets and lines. Such variation may be by convention of dialect or strategic expansion. Some of the variation in the dataset is likely attributable to processes related to memory and/or the collection context. This could lead a singer to mix relevant units used in different dialects. The eagle is also one of normally three dangers encountered by the hero and some couplets are used to characterize multiple dangers while they also sometimes seem to get juxtaposed across them (although this is too complex a topic to elaborate here). When reference to the eagle’s threat to the hero is included, this almost always concludes the multiform. It is most often preceded by a characterization of the eagle as threatening in one or more couplets. These couplets are formed through semantic parallelism, any of which may be reduced to a single line, but they remain stable as couplets rather than inclining to expansion. Although the couplets vary in specific semantic content, the use of two or more of these can be considered a form of symbolic or analogical parallelism engaging a single underlying symbolic referent (Frog 2014c: 188–193). In any case, the inclination to non-variation stabilizes the lines or couplets that form the second portion of the fiery-eagle multiform in the idiolect of a singer and in most dialects of singing. The main point here is that variation can operate quite differently in the verbalization of each of the dyadic elements of a single multiform.

Open-Slot Multiforms

An open-slot multiform is normally a crystallized sequence multiform comparable to an open-slot formula: it includes a semantically and syntactically conditioned position for a formulaic ‘word’ that will complete it as a unit. This slot is frequently part of an open-slot formula, such as the anna {ainoan} X formula mentioned above. The semantic unit represented by the ‘word’ completing any such open slot may then be reduplicated through parallelism. The multiform with the anna {ainoan} X formula in the Malinens’ dialect of the epic above (multiform M10) might be abstracted as shown in (16). The open slot of the formula is here indicated as X₁ while its equivalent in a parallel line is indicated as Y₁ with their grammatical inflections marked; curly brackets indicate verbal elements that vary across instantiations in variants collected from the Malinens:

(16) {Oi on vanha Väinämöinen}
   Myössytä pyhät sanasi
   Perävytä lauhiesi
   Annan {ainoan} X₁-PART/-GEN
   {Y₁-PART}
   {Oman pääni päästimksi
   Itschen lunastimeksi}
   {Oh (is) old Väinämöinen}
   Make your holy words harmless
   Turn back your sentences
   I will give {my only} X₁
   {Y₁}
   {For liberating my own head
   as a ransom for myself}

An open-slot multiform may also entail multiple slots. This occurs in Väinämöinen’s response that pairs with this plea in the Malinens’ redaction. This multiform is paired with the preceding one within the theme, which might be abstracted as in (17) (asterisk indicates potential to vary in order):

(17) *En huoli Y₂-ELA*
{Kusen konna X₂-ILL}
{Ilkije X₁-ELA/Y₁-ILL}
{On X₃-NOM itschelläniki}
{Kahta kolmea parempi}
  {Viittä, kuutta virkeämpä}
  {Kuutta, seitentä somempi}
*I don’t care about your Y₂*
{A can of piss on your X₂}
{mean one, your X₃/Y₃}
{have indeed myself a X₄}
{twice, three times better}
  {five, six times more brisk}
  {six, seven times nicer}
Cohesion between the two multiforms is established through semantic equivalence of the slot-fillers – i.e. both units of speech are about the same thing. The slot-fillers are metrically conditioned by their position in the lines. The embeddedness of the slot in an open-slot formula is connected with poetic syntax: these examples involve variation in the objects of verbs only; in dialects where the verb also varies, the whole line operates as an open slot within the multiform. In practice, however, these completed open-slot multiforms do not seem to vary their slot-fillers in repeat performances. They thus appear to operate as crystallized series multiforms in the memory of individual performers and even in intergenerational transmission.

**Line-Core and Couplet-Core Multiforms**

Whereas an open-slot multiform is customarily a more or less complete verbal framework with a few variable positions, a line-core or couplet-core multiform is a multi-line multiform in which the semantic or functional core of the unit is stable and a surrounding tissue of lines in which it is used remains open. These multiforms are organized on a semantic hierarchy. The core is formed of a minimal verbal unit that contains a central unit of information, represents the basic symbolic unit of content, or fulfils the unit’s pragmatic role in narration. This core becomes surrounded by what Jukka Saarinen describes as “subordinate textual elements” that “describe, modify, argue, specify, etc. other parts of the text” but which “cannot appear without the part [they] specify” (1994: 183). In Kalevalaic epic, the core may be a single line or couplet which can potentially be realized without any surrounding tissue, but the surrounding tissue cannot realize the multiform without the core. That tissue varies within a schema or abstract template in which the core element exhibits stability in social transmission. Some positions in the schema will be semantically or functionally conditioned while others may only be subject to general constraints of poetic syntax.

A particularly well-attested couplet-core multiform is found in the hero’s demand for his war-shirt (armour) in *The Song of Lemminkäinen* and its variation describing his interlocutor’s compliance, bringing him the armour (see also (21) below). The core couplet of the multiform is *tuo/toi mulle sotisomani / kanna/kanto vainovoattieni* ['bring/brought me my war-shirt (armour) / carry/carried my persecution-garment']. The interlocutor/actor of the multiform is invariably female and normally the hero’s mother. Within the epic plot, the demand is integrated into the hero’s preparations for a dangerous journey to a wedding in the otherworld. It prompts the interlocutor to respond with a prohibition and elaborate each one of the normally three ‘deaths’ on the road until she complies and prepares the hero for his journey. This multiform varies by dialect with functionally equivalent couplet-core multiforms. It is addressed here through a dataset of examples in 143 variant poems and fragments. In each of these items, the multiform is used between one and seven times. The couplet may be presented alone, but it is customarily preceded by a vocative address to the interlocutor when used as a demand (at least in the first instance), or by an identity-formula presenting the nominal subject when narrating the action. The vocative address may be extended through parallelism. The couplet itself forms a conventionally ordered line pair although it does appear inverted in some variants. Lexical variation mainly occurs in the semantically light positions 2–3 of the first line (*mulle* ['to me‘] above; *sie nyt* ['you now']) in (18) below). The core couplet may also be expanded by additional parallel lines or form a series with parallel demands (e.g. for a sword). The most frequent elements to follow the core couplet are references to the armour with present participles of verbs and the location where the hero intends to wear this garment, as in the following example:

(18) Oi emoni kantajani
    Eli vaisten vanhempani
    Tuo sie nyt sotisomani
    Kanna vainovoattieni
    Häissä häilyteltäviäni
    Pivoissa pijeltäviäni
    Lähen Päivylän pitoih
    Salajoukon juominkih

(SKVR I, 847.73–80, punctuation removed.)
The introduction of a new verb and clause into the couplet of location might be interpreted as an underlying dyadic structure of the multiform. However, the couplet of location seems to vary with other elements following the core of the multiform rather than a two-element structure being stable. This couplet is actually an open-slot formula naming the location; it recurs through the epic to identify the destination of the hero’s journey and later becomes the center of action. The first foot of this formula is a two-position open slot completed by a verb with corresponding morphological variation in the parallel terms for ‘feast’ (i.e. locative cases equating to English ‘to’, ‘from’ and ‘at’). In this case, the appearance of the verb lähteä [‘to leave’] in the couplet can be considered to be related to the operation of the formulaic couplet rather than to the structuring of the multiform in sentences per se.

Like other multiforms with capacity for variation, couplet-core multiforms are inclined to crystallize in the minds of performers. This variety of multiform is distinguished by concentration of its semantic core in a minimal verbal element of a line or couplet. Although the example in (18) is eight lines in length, the core couplet can be all that is conventional to present in some dialects and idiolects.

**Multiform Frames?**

Although Kalevala epic generally exhibits resistance to the interpenetration of multiforms, a special case is what can be called a **multiform frame**. This is a multiform that operates like an open-slot formula. The integer completing an open-slot formula is a lexeme or formulaic ‘word’ in the lexicon that might be extended through semantic parallelism. In contrast, the slot of a multiform frame receives a symbolic integer of narration mediated through its own multiform. It must immediately be stressed that this phenomenon seems to be uncommon for the epic tradition generally; it seems to manifest on a local level in some dialects of singing, although a comprehensive survey of multiforms in the epic tradition has not been completed. The example in (19) is taken from a variant of *The Song of Lemminkäinen*, presenting each of the mother’s warnings to her son about the three ‘deaths’ he will encounter on his journey.

This example illustrates the issue with this type of multiform: rather than a normal phenomenon of the register, it may have

*(19) Three repetitions of a possible multiform frame from an example of The Song of Lemminkäinen. The hero’s intermediate responses are omitted; varying elements between repetitions are in italic font.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kun määt matkoja vähäsen</th>
<th>Määret matkoja vähäsen</th>
<th>Määret matkoja vähäsen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><em>Kulet</em> teitä pikkaraisen</td>
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<td><em>Tulopa</em> tulinen <em>hauta</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Moasta</em> soakka taivahase</td>
<td><em>Moasta</em> soakka taivahase</td>
<td><em>Kosessa</em> tulinen <em>luoto</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tšiliskoin[sic]</em>) vitšastettu*</td>
<td><em>Siinä</em> <em>kuumia kiviä</em></td>
<td><em>Luuvossa</em> tulinen <em>koivu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Moan</em> mvoin seivästetty</td>
<td><em>Palavia</em> <em>poateroita</em></td>
<td><em>Koivussa</em> tulinen <em>kokko</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Siin_on</em> surma <em>ensimäinen</em></td>
<td><em>Siin_on surma</em> <em>keskimäinen</em></td>
<td><em>Tulen</em> <em>suustaha</em> <em>puhua</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SKVR II 222.13–19.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you go on the journey a little</th>
<th>You go on the journey a little</th>
<th>You go on the journey a little</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel the road a bit</td>
<td>Step the road a bit</td>
<td>Travel the road a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will come indeed a fiery fence</td>
<td>Will come indeed a fiery grave</td>
<td>Will come indeed a fiery <em>rapids</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the earth to heaven</td>
<td>From the earth to heaven</td>
<td>In the <em>rapids</em> a fiery <em>skerry</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lizards</em> woven into a wicket</td>
<td><em>In it hot stones</em></td>
<td>In the <em>skerry</em> a fiery <em>birch</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>With worms of the earth staked</em></td>
<td>Burning slabs of rock</td>
<td>In the <em>birch</em> a fiery <em>eagle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In that is the first death</td>
<td>In that is the middle death</td>
<td><em>[It] speaks fire from its mouth</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SKVR II 222.20–26.)

(SKVR II 222.30–37.)
evolved from an open-slot multiform within the particular context. Variation in the opening couplet may be idiolectal. The references to the first two ‘deaths’ may be viewed as an open-slot multiform in which the two-syllable word for the ‘death’ completes the formula of the third line and a second slot is a full-line attribute with a semantically parallel line. The repetition of the line moasta soakka taivahase [‘from the earth to heaven’] is unusual and incongruous for the hauta [‘grave’] ‘death’. It may be a slip of the singer; if so, it is an indicator that this line was indexed in her memory as an element of this sequence, which would suggest that both examples manifest variations on a single multiform. The third example begins with the same three lines, but then shifts into a distinct multiform. Linking multiform units syntactically into a chain is found in the case of quotative frames below. What makes this group of potential multiform frames exceptional is the final line, which functions as a type of boundary marker that concludes the sequence. It is comparable to concluding multiforms representing ‘deaths’ with a line like päen varalla Lemminkäisen [‘ready for the head of Lemminkäinen’] in example (15) above. However, that line operates as part of the multiform representing the ‘death’. In this case, the unit of the mother’s speech can be seen as embedding a distinct multiform into a 3–4 line frame. A comprehensive survey of multiforms in all epics is necessary to place this in perspective.

**Quotative Frames**

Many kalevalaic epics are built around dialogic interaction, which means that many multiforms are instantiated in dialogue. A *quotative frame* is a verbal framework that attributes direct speech without being part of the direct speech itself. At a general level, quotative frames in this poetry are schemas or abstract templates with open slots. They mandate morphological variation in a multiform (e.g. inflecting verbs to the first or second person) depending on the type of communication they present. These schemas are not themselves multiforms, although they are entangled with inquit formulae – formulae introducing direct speech. Where the use of ‘words’ of the poetry necessarily entails a schema that requires and conditions the use of additional ‘words’ indexed by the schema, this can be approached as a *schema-based multiform*.

An inquit formula in kalevalaic epic may be an open-slot formula that forms a single line with the grammatical subject like sano X [‘said X’] discussed in connection with the formula-system discussed in relation to (3) above. It may also be a complete line preceded by the subject as in (20), although the subject might also remain implicit. In general, these formulae tend not to exhibit parallelism (Steinitz 1934: 63–61), although it too may even be expanded into a series of lines:

(20) Tuopa lieto Lemminkäini
Tahi seppo Ilmorin
Itte noin sanoiks virkko
Sanan virikki, noin nimesi
(SKVR I, 772.104–107, punctuation removed.)

That indeed loose Lemminkäinen
Or smith Ilmarinen
Himself thus put into words
A word uttered, thus named

Although quotative frames were not usually elaborated to this extent, example (20) illustrates that the quotative frame is more than simply a formulaic ‘word’ of the poetry: it has the potential to be elaborated into a syntactically complex unit of multiple emic ‘words’. An alternative heroic identity formula is used here in semantic parallelism. There is, however, no ambiguity regarding who is speaking in the epic, which brings forward an operative point relevant to many multiforms. Predicate formulae may be used without a preceding formula introducing the grammatical subject. On the other hand, especially the use of formulae such as full-line inquits can be inferred to index a metrical-grammatical equivalence set of formulae for grammatical subjects. This is basically the same sort of indexical network of equivalence sets discussed for the formula-system of (3) above, but operating interlinearly.

Quotative frames are also invariably a minimum of one full line in length: what the speaker says will only begin in the following line. They are exclusively initial, never medial or final. In other words, the quotative always
introduces a unit of direct speech before it begins; it never interrupts it, or indicates that the unit of speech has concluded. This limitation seems to be connected with poetic syntax and connected in some way with the resistance of kalevalaic multiforms to interpenetration. Consecutive multiforms of direct speech attributed to one speaker may nevertheless mark the onset of each multiform with its own quotative frame (a marking that is, incidentally, an indicator of a perception of multiform units).

The schema of a quotative frame can be conceived in terms of three slots, not all of which are necessarily instantiated. The first is the quotative itself, constituted of an agent + inquit formula. Direct speech in kalevalaic epic always entails an addressee, and thus the second element is a vocative address that is most often formulaic (e.g. *oi siä X* [*‘oh you X’*]). The third component is the speech unit itself, which undergoes morphological variation as relevant. The unit of direct speech may be a line, couplet or full multiform; it may also be a series of multiforms (cf. M7–8 above). This unit is subject to appropriate morphological variation. Where the speech is a multiform that otherwise opens with an identity-formula of a grammatical subject, morphological variation may convert this to a vocative address (e.g. *se on vanha Väinämöinen / oi siä vanha Väinämöinen*). It is not infrequent for dialogues to anticipate something which will occur or to refer to something which has occurred. In such cases the multiform or its relevant component will vary accordingly in tense, mood and person. Direct speech is widely unmarked and quotatives are commonly omitted, particularly following the initiation of the dialogue. When the quotative is omitted, the vocative phrase may still mark the onset of direct speech, although it too may be omitted and direct speech may only be grammatically indicated and contextually implied.

Quotative frames crystallize in epic reproduction and become linked to the multiforms of direct speech that they introduce. On the other hand, they belong to the connecting tissue between semantically central elements of a poem (cf. Gil’ferding 1894: 24): they are functional markers in the flow of discourse that are not indespensible. How quotatives and vocatives are used appears to be connected in part with dialect. However, a variety of equivalent formulae circulated in the tradition and quotatives and vocatives vary easily between singers even within close singing communities, which suggests that variation between them was not necessarily perceived as a relevant indicator of dialect.

**Flexibility of Length**

The Honkos “contend that an oral epic breathes through multiforms” in the sense that multiforms enable the flexibility in length characteristic of long epic (1998: 35). Detecting use of multiforms as a resource for varying length in kalevalaic epic is rather difficult to assess because the corpus in general tends to only preserve a single variant from each singer. As already noted, however, kalevalaic multiforms generally seem to be manifested very consistently both across performances, where such data is available, and when the same multiform recurs within a performance. Repetitions within an epic in particular have potential to offer perspective on flexibility in length, although especially earlier collectors did not necessarily write down all lines of a repetition (as in ll. 31, 65 of variant OM2 above). The corpus therefore makes it possible to draw some inferences on flexibility.

In the dataset of the fiery eagle multiform, only 45 variants indicate that the multiform was presented first in the dialogue with the hero’s mother and then repeated in the account of the journey itself. Some of these only record the first line followed by ‘etc.’ or its equivalent. In two variants recorded from the same singer by different collectors nearly a decade apart, the second element is absent from the repetition (*SKVR II 217–217a*). This suggests that shortening in repetition was integrated into the performer’s way of singing. Similarly, a localized cluster of similar truncation in repetition probably reflects what was happening in these performances (*SKVR I 746, 748, 752*). There are a few additional cases that remain ambiguous where a line or couplet is not transcribed in the repetition. A single
performance transcribed by two collectors presents an interesting case that can with confidence also be identified with truncation in repetition. Here, the eight-line variant of the multiform reduces in the repetition to *tuloo tulini joki / jovess* on *tulini luoto* [*‘came a fiery river / in the river (is) a fiery skerry’*]; the first element of the multiform is left incomplete, skipping directly to the hero’s response to the ‘death’ (*SKVR* I₂ 824–824a, counted as a single variant in the dataset). This example is striking because variation of this type could be in the background of other variants where only a line or two appears in the transcription of the repetition (*SKVR* I₂ 713, 738, 805; *SKVR* VII₁ 773). There are indications that multiforms could be reduced in length in repetition, and even a performer who seems to have felt that once the multiform was recognized he could skip on to the next. On the other hand, there are a few variants in which the second element of the multiform or part of it is simply different in the repetition (*SKVR* I₂ 726, 729, 767); one in which *korko* [*‘shoal’*] is added to the anaphoric series of the first element in the repetition (*SKVR* I₂ 828; cf. *SKVR* I₂ 722–722a, in which *luoto* [*‘skerry’*] is added in a later performance⁴⁶); and one in which the second element of the multiform is only recorded in the repetition (*SKVR* VII₁ 791). These latter examples are here considered to be most likely related to memory in the course of performance. In this respect, they are comparable to how Jyrki Malinen opens his first recorded variant with the wrong protagonist (multiform M1) and corrected this in performance (multiforms M3ff.), and also how Vassilei Malinen uses a verb associated with other dialects in line 55 and thereafter uses the form conventional to his kin group (ll. 65, 77, and 83). However, discussion of this type of variation will be left aside for more developed treatment elsewhere.

Flexibility is clearly present in use of the fiery-eagle multiform, but that flexibility is concentrated in the second element, often by simple omission. The first element has potential for flexibility: in social practice, the series of elements may be as many as six of the seven used (*joki–koski–luoto/korko/soari–

koivu–oksat–kokko–koprat* [*‘river – rapids – skerry/shoal/island – birch – branches – eagle – talons’*]) or as few as three (*koski–koivu–kokko* [*‘rapids – birch – eagle’*]). Nonetheless, variation in this element’s repetition is either the simple omission of later lines in the series or, in one case, the already-mentioned expansion of the series from *koski–koivu– kokko* to *koski–korko–koivu–kokko*. The case of expansion, however, is quite possibly owing to remembering the fourth feature in the process of performance. In the dataset, 19 of the 45 variants with indications that the multiform was repeated exhibit line for line correspondence.

There are indications that truncated variants in repetition seems also to have been commonly practiced as well. Line-core and couplet-core multiforms seem especially suited to the ‘breathing’ of epic length. They also exhibit truncation through the omission of ‘words’ or lines and couplets in repetition, yet these variations are not striking in the corpus at the level of individual performers. ‘Breathing’ of length in kalevalaic epic seems to operate between singers and dialects of singing in the expansion and contraction of these multiforms, which tend to crystallize in the minds of individual performers, as is reflected in their use in repetitions within and across performances. The ‘breathing’ of length in this tradition is more apparent in the inclusion and omission of multiforms rather than variation in their length as they are used. For example, the hero’s dialogue with his mother is a stable episode in *The Song of Lemminkäinen*. Within this dialogue, the couplet-core multiform of the war-shirt demand may be used only once to open the dialogue; it may be used in the opening of the dialogue and at its conclusion, as the woman’s compliance with the request; it may be repeated with every cycle of the hero’s demand and the mother’s warning; or it may be omitted entirely.

12 scattered examples seem to exhibit truncation in the repetition;⁴⁸ while 10 remain ambiguous or exhibit variations of other, inconsistent types.⁴⁹ ‘Word’ for ‘word’ repetition – or formula for formula repetition – seems generally to predominate in social practice for this multiform, although truncation in repetition seems also to have been commonly practiced as well.
(21) The seven repetitions of Onuhrie Lesonen’s use of the the war-shirt multiform in his 1877 performance of The Song of Lemminkäinen. Numbers in the table refer to lines of the quotative frame and multiform according to the lineation in SKVR I: 791a; lines in the center of the table indicate uses in dialogue while numbers in the right column indicate use in narrative action; morphological variations between these types of uses are indicated in italic font.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse in dialogue</th>
<th>Line number</th>
<th>Verse in action</th>
<th>Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sano Ahti Saurela</em></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>123 139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oi emo o vanhempa</em></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>123 139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tuo si miun sot’isomai</em></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>124 140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characterization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kanna vainovoatia</em></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>125 141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pitoissa piettavain</em></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>126 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Häissä häilytevävain</em></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>127 143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lähen Päivölän pitohe</em></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hyvän joukon juominkihi</em></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Line 111 presents the variation tuoppas muan soti-isomai; semantically, this variation would be so subtle that it would likely only be perceived as a textural variation in the flow of performance. This variation can be viewed in the context of the omission of the vocative phrase which would otherwise have preceded the line.*

An illustration of the role of multiforms in length variation can be taken from Onuhrie Lesonen’s performances of The Song of Lemminkäinen. Onuhrie performed the epie in 1871 (SKVR I: 791), and then again for the same collector in 1877 (SKVR I: 791a). The war-shirt multiform was completely absent from the first variant, where the dialogue was organized as the mother’s prohibition, followed by her warnings, each coupled with a multiform of the hero’s response to the danger. The entire dialogue of this variant is 31 lines (ll. 4–34). Onuhrie’s second variant is in total about twice as long and the dialogue alone is 105 lines (ll. 49–153). The war-shirt multiform is used to open each cycle of dialogue and the mother’s warning is followed by another direct-speech multiform in which the hero tells his mother to inform him about a ‘death’ on the road – a multiform that may also be coupled with a repetition of the war-shirt multiform. As a consequence, the war-shirt multiform is entextualized six times in three cycles of dialogue; this is followed by a seventh expressing the mother’s compliance. Onuhrie tends to omit the quotative frame of the hero’s speech, but his reduction of the seven-line multiform remains limited to the omission of one couplet in repetitions, and that omission only begins with the fourth repetition, as shown in (21). Kalevalaic epic does not vary like a long epic form, nevertheless multiforms appear to be crucial to the ways that epics vary in length in reproduction.

**Overview**

Kalevalaic epic exhibits a number of distinguishable formal types of multiforms, including formula systems, crystallized series, open-slot, couplet-core and collocative system multiforms. The variety identified as a formula-system operates within a line and is characterized by semantic diversity. Other types introduced here tend to operate as multi-line macro-formulae for particular units of content, with the exception of collocative system multiforms that may be distributed across a cluster of semantic elements. Both varieties nevertheless remain differentiated from formulaic ‘words’ of the registral lexicon as indexical systems of those ‘words’ that are then brought into combination in the formulation of utterances. This formal
difference is associated with differences between how multiforms vary in contrast to the types of variation exhibited by formulaic ‘words’ of the register.

Formula-system multiforms may appear on the surface to be fundamentally different from the multi-line multiforms discussed. However, this is merely a function of how meter and syntax condition the phenomenon at different levels of scope. Formula-system multiforms are organized within a metrically defined environment of a line or couplet. Meter becomes a constraint within that environment. Equivalence sets that participate in the multiform are associated with certain metrical positions as opposed to others, and the particular metrical positions are complementary. These sets make up potential combinations of ‘words’ to produce a metrically well-formed line. When ‘words’ are at the level of lines without a formal structuring constraint on their organization like forming regular stanzas, then corresponding equivalence sets do not evolve: the ‘word-lines’ are simply organized through inter-linear syntax. This does not mean that there are no extremely dynamic multi-line multiforms in kaleda epic poetry, only that they have not been identified. On the other hand, many formula-systems are comparable to the quite flexible quotative frames: the associative network is constituted of semantic equivalence sets of inquit formulae of particular types (speaking, complaining, etc.), while others have stable verbal elements like multi-line multiforms. In any case, whether a multiform operates at the level of integers organized within metrical lines or the organization of metrical lines and groups of lines, conventions of non-variation in this epic tradition incline the units to crystallize in the memory of a performer and become stable in reproduction.

The analysis of multiforms and their operation is not incompatible with OFT. Instead, multiform analysis complements it by turning attention from the formulaic ‘words’ of a register to how those ‘words’ crystallize into indexical constellations in the mind of a performer as a framework for expression. Attending to these units with their potential complexity and capacity for crystallization provides a more solid basis for considering verbal stability and variation in kalevalaic epic poems in a way that OFT could not do effectively without the concept of multiforms. The present discussion has not opened the topic of how multiforms are organized into the performance of a whole epic, but it is rapidly apparent from the example epic above that they are linked as pairs and in groupings that are interfaced with the units and sequences of the plot. The plot in question is constituted of less than twenty of these units. Whereas multiform theory makes the stability of units of text more salient, the regular organization of these units into an organized whole also becomes more understandable. This approach thus has potential to offer insight into other verbally conservative poetries. It is also significant that multiforms operate on a smaller scope than a theme, which invites cautious reassessment of relationships between the lexical surface of texts and narrative themes in earlier OFT research.

The present review has repeatedly stressed that multiforms crystallize in the idiolect of individuals and that their social transmission involves the repetition of this process of crystallization as new singers internalize the tradition. Variation established as redactions on a social level is associated with socially accepted innovations. Corresponding variations can also be observed at the level of individual variants and idiolects. Developing an understanding of variation in specific multiforms constructs a framework against which individual variants can be assessed. At the same time, gaining a more general perspective on how multiforms operate and vary in a tradition develops a frame of reference for looking at many types of variation at a formal level, whether this is a slip in memory or conscious and strategic choice.

The crystallization of multiforms in memory should not be considered exclusive of their potential for strategic variation. Any element of such a multiform has the potential to be treated as a slot-filler exchanging equivalent elements as in an open-slot multiform – they can be consciously and strategically varied no less than a proverb or other fixed idiom. This may be, for example,
a six-syllable noun–epithet formula that connects the multiform to a different character, or a whole couplet or larger component. Variation that appears established as a redaction of a multiform can be assumed to have begun at the level of individuals and small groups as in precisely these types of adaptation – exchanging one ‘word’ for another. However, recognizing and understanding these processes is dependent on developing perspectives on multiforms and how they operate.

The significance of introducing multiforms into discussion is that it creates an intermediate frame of reference between OFT’s formulae at the level of lines of verse and themes at the level of more complex units of narrative content. In verbalization, it seems to be precisely at the level of multiforms that variation is most dynamic. This suggests that the level of multiforms equally presents a potentially crucial site for considering how a tradition is used by different individuals and how such resources might be capitalized on for subtle or explicit meaning-making.

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Notes
1. OFT is commonly conceived through its formalized presentation in Albert Lord’s Singer of Tales (1960), a form of OFT which will be distinguished here as ‘Classic OFT’. The explosion of research in this area led OFT research to develop into a field of its own that has advanced considerably across more than a half-century since Lord’s seminal work. On the background and development of OFT up to around the end of the 1980s, see Foley 1988. Around 1990, there was a turn from emphasis on formal aspects of the operation of verbal art to meanings. For a discussion introducing these, see e.g. Foley & Ramey 2012.
2. Although the term ‘Oral Theory’ has an economy of fewer syllables, I am critical of this simplification because the theory is not concerned with oral discourse generally. I prefer ‘Oral-Formulaic Theory’ because the theory centrally concerns the operation of formulaic units in the production and reception of registers of discourse, although it extends to larger structural units of linguistically mediated content called ‘themes’ and ‘story patterns’ (or equivalent scripts) (cf. Foley 1999). Some scholars have treated ‘Oral-Formulaic Theory’ as what is here called ‘Classic OFT’ (i.e. of Lord 1960) and distinguished ‘Oral Theory’ as the more refined models of OFT used more recently (e.g. Acker 1998). However, this differentiation is not standard; and it is merely a rhetorical distancing from earlier forms of OFT and the criticisms that it received which led it to be refined.
3. This statistic is based on information available at www.skvr.fi (accessed 22.4.2016).
4. Good examples of this type of study and its evolution include the classic studies by Franssila (1901), Hautala (1945) and Kuusi (1949); on the Historical-Geographic Method, see Krohn 1926; Frog 2013.
5. For example on metrics (Sadeniemi 1951), alliteration (Kuusi 1953), parallelism (Steinitz 1934), and more subtle interlinear features (Kuusi 1952).
7. The mechanics of multiforms investigated here enable meaningful situational variation but they also produce incidental and accidental variation. Lauri Honko (1981: 24) distinguished ‘major variation’ as variations that are or become stable between performances from ‘minor variation’ as functional, situation-dependent variations that do not endure beyond a single performance. He subscribed to a school of thought that does not acknowledge the possibility of incidental variation: “Pure mishaps excluded, variation is always meaningful” (Honko 1998: 68). I view language as far too flexible a tool to presume that, in the flow of performance, all potential alternatives are linked to nuances of meaning or aesthetics. Such a view would seem inconsistent with my own experience of language use.
8. In The Singer of Tales, Lord uses ‘multiform’ in three ways without introducing it or defining it as an analytical term. He uses it both a) as an adjective and b) as a noun following the dictionary definition for that which has multiple forms, but he also uses it c) as a noun to refer to any single instantiation of something with multiple forms (“the single performance is a multiform”: Lord 1960: 133). This third use seems to have been to avoid the term ‘variant’ (cf. Harvilahä 1992a: 34). The term ‘variant’ was associated with the comparative studies of the Classic Historical-Geographic Method, which tended to reduce traditions to ‘texts’ and treat them in isolation from social and performance practices (for discussion, see Frog 2013). From here, ‘multiform’ spread with the vocabulary of OFT, although its use generally remained as an adjective and common noun.
9. Although cf. Drout (2011: 447), who follows Foley in taking ‘multiform’ as an analytical term for anything with multiple forms in a tradition and quotes the Honkos’ description of a linguistic multiform as the definition for this broader concept.

10. These include Old Norse skaldic or court poetry in the dróttkvætt meter (Frog 2009; 2014–2015); kalevalaic epic (Frog 2010a; 2010b); and Icelandic sagnakvæði (Frog 2012).

11. Register is a term developed in social linguistics to describe socially situated variations in language (esp. Halliday 1978). The term has gradually been developed and extended to describe any socially distinguishable variety of behaviour (esp. Agha 2007). Register theory became established in research on oral poiesies and connected with OFT through the work of John Miles Foley (esp. 1995; see also Frog 2015b).

12. Current approaches to linguistic formulae have been inclined to be inclusive and the boundary between a ‘word’ and a ‘formula’ easily seem to blur. This is in part because we grow accustomed to thinking of language orthographically, so we view English crosswalk as a compound word, improper as a word with an affix, and lose sight of the embodied interactive aspects of language in discourse where a variety of expressivel and functional features may become bundled while not all of these will necessarily be realized in every use (e.g. Pawley 2009: 6–7).

13. Foley’s stance is based especially on metalinguistic comments and discussions by South Slavic epic singers, but the same phenomenon is found across traditions of verbal art around the world and through history, which is unsurprising when the terms in question tend to be derived from verbs for speaking and thus refer to utterance rather than orthography (Frog 2014b: 282–283n.3).

14. This can be compared to what Lauri Harvilahiti (1985: 112) describes in byлина-epics as a ‘particular cliché’ (eritipsklišee) in contrast to a ‘general cliché’ (yleklιšee) as a formula used across different epics and contexts. In the register of Karelian laments, Eila Stepanova (2015: 260) describes poetic ‘words’ corresponding to Harvilahiti’s particular clichés collectively as a ‘situation-specific lexicon’ in contrast to a ‘core lexicon’ of ‘words’ that are used across all contexts and in which every performer gains competence.

15. See e.g. Krohn 1903–1910; 1918; 1924–1928; see also Siikala 1986; Harvilahiti 1992a; 1992b; Rahimova 2002.

16. Cf. Senni Timonen’s observation concerning Larin Paraske’s learning of kalevalaic songs: “The poems were not simply contained in her mind, instead they existed within the community, among minds” (2000: 638).

17. OFT’s ‘themes’ seem simply to be tradition-dependent ‘motifs’ of the Classic Historical-Geographic Method. The term appears to have been chosen to avoid implications of cross-cultural comparability of the units addressed that would be carried by the term ‘motif’.

18. The recurrence of each of these units then constitutes a form of parallelism (Frog 2014c) and at the verbal level what has been described as ‘macro-parallelism’ (Urban 1986).

19. The category described as kalevalaic ‘epic’ is not entirely consistent in English language scholarship. This is because ‘epic’ is sometimes used to translate the Finnish term kertova runous [‘narrative poetry’], which also includes what are essentially ballads and fairytales in the Kalevalla-meter (e.g. Kuusi et al. 1977). There was no clear distinction between ‘god’ and ‘hero’ in this tradition. ‘Epic’ here refers to mythological plots, although in some regions such as in Ingría in the south, the mythological plots became secularized to varying degrees and their fantastic elements converged with those of fairytales or were excluded (see e.g. Siikala 1990; 2002b). Differences in how the poetry evolved on a regional basis also impacted conventions of conservatism and variation in production, also relevant here.

20. This began as an experiment to illustrate to medieval philologists aspects of the conservatism of kalevalaic epic. It was one tool for discussing variation. On the one hand, it provided an alternative to viewing variation in oral epic poetry centrally through the lens of the highly variable South Slavic traditions, which has become a primary frame of reference for many medievalists. On the other hand, this frame of reference provides an alternative to many scholars’ ideas of ‘memorization’ as a pristinely invariable process of reproduction of an ideal text (as though there were a written model, performers could consult in the wake of variation).

21. This presentation of transcriptions of oral poems can also be read as a comment on practices of editing distinct variants of medieval oral poetry in this way, such as the reconstructive representation of the Old Norse poem Völuspá in the Neckel & Kuhn edition (1963: 1–16) as opposed to the quite different approach of Sophus Bugge (1967: 1–42).

22. This line formally corresponds to the boundary marker formula in 85 through its use of a relevant equivalent six-position epithet-name formula. However, the boundary marker is formed with a verb in an open-slot formula indicating the hero’s release; here the epithet-name formula is combined with an open-slot identity formula which makes it the grammatical subject of the following couplet. The introduction of a line with the grammatical subject is a ‘natural’ variation of a couplet-core multiform (introduced below) such as M12 in which the central verbal element is a predicate. On the formal relationship between this line and line 85, see the discussion of ‘formula-systems’ below.

23. The classic study of the meter is Sadeniemi 1951; in English, see e.g. Kuusi et al. 1977; Leino 1986; Frog & Stepanova 2011; on the placement of stressed syllables, ‘winnowing’ and syntax, see also Kuusi 1952; on alliteration, see also Kuusi 1953; Frog & Stepanova 2011; on parallelism, see also Steinitz 1934; Kuusi 1952; Saarinen 2014.
24. There are cases where the final syllable is an expletive or vocable (e.g. *SKVR* I: 845.31–32), where variation has shortened the lines of the couplet by a syllable) but never a lexeme. Vocables used in this way are exceptional in epic.

25. See e.g. the concentrated discussion in Foley 1996: 17–19; see also Honko 1998: 100–116; Frog 2016; for a parallel concept developed in connection with kalevalaic poetry, see Kuusi 1975: 59 and cf. Harvilahti 1992b; Frog 2010a: 198–199.

26. Partly because the basic multiform has such a simple structure, it is ambiguous in a few cases whether an item in the data should be seen as a reflection of the multiform *per se* or may instead represent an independently generated expression representing the unit of content.


28. *SKVR* VII, 157.5–6, 157a.4–5, 160.5–6 and cf. 8–9, 161.4–5, 164a.5–6, 164b.5–6 and 8–9, 164c.5–6, 165.5–6, 168.5–6 and cf. 11–12, 171, 2–3 and 5–6. The multiform in this dialect is interesting because it incorporates a line about driving (sleighs) that gets inflected in the first person: Lähenmä ajelemaha [*‘Let’s go out driving’*].


30. *SKVR* III, 314.1–5, 596.15–18, 1175.1–6, 1176.1–6, 1177.8–11, 1178.1–6, 1179.1–3, 1180.1–6, 1181.1–11 and 25–28, 1182.1–4 and 30–31, 1236.1–6, III, 1947.16–19, 1968.1–3, 2296.1–5; cf. the variant from Narvus III, 76.8–14, which incorporates a couplet conventional to central Ingria.

31. Valuable foundational work for such research has been done by Harvilahti (1992a), which could be advanced by bringing potential multiforms into concentrated focus with particular attention to questions of the interpenetration of multiforms and the proximate co-occurrence of ‘words’ of the poetic idiom suggestive of being linked in the minds of performers.

32. It should be noted that, in some cases, the absence of part of a multiform from a variant may be attributable to the collector who, once the multiform was recognized and appeared to be without noteworthy variation, could move on to the next multiform. Some of the 19th-century collectors likely heard literally hundreds of variants of the same epic and, when transcribing verse by hand, frequently only recorded what was ‘different’ in vocabulary or structure, not what they considered ‘the same’ and already documented.

33. Variation in word order accounts for only 7 of these types, 5 of which are infrequent, and one of which when combined with its variation remains an infrequent type (the noun–verb combination is only found twice in the data).

34. Or 13 types accounting for almost 87% of the dataset if variation in word order is not taken into account.

35. Exceptions: *SKVR* I, 716, 717, 722a (expanded by two lines from 722), the second use in 767 (where the earlier last line varies and an additional line follows); in Aunus / Olonec Karelian and Border / Ladoga Karelia a line rauta-nokka-nenä, rautakynsi [*‘iron snout/nose, iron talon/claw’*] appears as an apparently independent single line (*SKVR* II 186, 193a–193b; cf. *SKVR* I, 718) or used as a grammatical subject for a following couplet which is otherwise used independent of it (*SKVR* II 204, 220a–220b).

36. An exception is *SKVR* I, 716 and cf. of *vielähä še šiunki šiööpi* [*‘moreover it will eat you’*] in *SKVR* I 766.75.

37. Saarinen applied this model of hierarchical structuring to larger units of narration, but the principles are equally valid at the level of multiforms. It was in fact Saarinen who stressed to me the importance of considering hierarchies in the organization of multiforms already in a seminar in 2010.

38. A variation of the second line as kannas vaimo voattieni (e.g. *SKVR* I: 741.31) [*‘carry, wife, my clothes’*] seems to have resulted as an interpretation of the much more common *vaino* [*‘persecution’*], which in spoken Karelian language was a form of *vainu* [*‘scent, trace; gossip’*] (KKS, s.v. *vaino*, ‘vainu’). The variation is syntactically interesting because it places a vocative in the same line with the imperative predicate.

39. The name of the location, normally generalized as Päiviälä [*‘Sun-Place’*], varies according to the dialect.

40. The variation between kun määt [*‘when you go’*] and mänet [*‘you go’*] could be an idiolectal discourse marker indicating the beginning of the series; variation in the following verb is a bit unusual but it is impossible on the basis of one variant to determine whether it reflects personal singing style, simply a slip, or is an outcome of the process of collection.

41. This can be compared to variant *SKVR* II 209, in which the multiform first appears embedded in this type of a frame in the dialogue and then is repeated on the journey with line-for-line correspondence. The only variations in the second use are in the tense of the verb and one superficial inflectional ending of luo-ssa [*‘in a skerry’*], which is grammatically parallel to other words in the series, compared to the semantically more natural luo-lta [*‘on a skerry’*].

42. This number is based on lines from the multiform itself, which could also be excluded and only the hero’s response to it presented.

43. *SKVR* I: 812, 826, 830 and 850; in *SKVR* I: 828, only the first line is marked in the dialogue context followed by an indicator of line omission (by the singer?) and a ten-line variant of the multiform appears in the presentation of the journey; *SKVR* I: 812 presents Tuleepa tulinen koski / j.n.e. / kokko
["Comes indeed a fiery rapids / etc. / eagle"] with no indication that the second element (first presented with four lines) was performed in the repetition; the transcription of SKVR I: 850 presents j.n.e. ["etc."] after the first line in the repetition and later adds the multiform, possibly copying it directly from the preceding documentation in the dialogue context.

44. In the second element of the multiform in SKVR I: 717, 725, 811, 841; in a dialect lacking the second element this is found quite exceptionally in the reduction of the first element from the series koski–soari–koivu–kokko ["rapids–island–birch–eagle"] to simply koski–kokko (SKVR VII, 799a), although no such truncation occurred in a different variant by the same performer (SKVR VII, 799).

45. This is also found in SKVR I: 834, recorded by Elias Lönnrot, where it is most likely attributable to his piecemeal documentation of the variant.

46. In SKVR I: 744 & 744b, luoto is lost between performances. However, the first of these was produced in a situation with two informants while only one of these was present in the second. Some variations between the two transcripts of the poem may be connected to the absence of one informant.

47. SKVR I: 719, 742, 754, 777, 781, 791a, 793a, 821, 840, 845, 847, 855; II 207, 209, 220a–220b; VII, 799, 800; XII, 103.


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Narratological, Metrical, and Syntactic Emphasis in the Old English *Genesis A*
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This paper examines the poetic tools available for an Anglo-Saxon poet to bring narrative details into focus. On the basis of Genesis A, the paper aims to show that clustering of certain metrical types of half-lines, accompanied by use of certain syntactic patterns at key narrative points, creates an enhanced focusing effect.

What means did Anglo-Saxon poets employ to bring their narrative structure into relief? Questions such as this have sparked various approaches to investigating compositional techniques. Many philological approaches thus far have zoomed in on one particular phenomenon or effect. I would like to present a new integrated analysis of three complementary linguistic strategies in Old English narrative verse which have so far mostly been considered separately: narratological emphasis, metrical emphasis and syntactic emphasis.

Poetic emphasis can be achieved through various linguistic strategies, which can be analysed through both separate and integrated analyses. One advantage of analysing each strategy for emphasis separately would be that phenomena such as narrative progression or metrical patterns are then perhaps more easily measured and quantified. Integrated analysis, however, can reveal the synergy between various strategies for emphasis. That synergy may in turn reveal unforeseen patterns that invite new understanding and interpretation of certain passages in the poetry. The purpose of this study, then, is to explore how an integrative approach to complementary linguistic strategies for emphasis may provide new readings in Old English poetry. I will discuss a number of passages from one of the religious poems in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11: *Genesis A*.

*Genesis* as a whole is a narrative based on selections from the first 22 chapters of the biblical Genesis (commonly called *Genesis A*) and a translation of the Old Saxon Genesis (commonly called *Genesis B*). *Genesis A* is a work in epic style containing many iconic story arcs such as Lucifer’s fall from Heaven, Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Paradise, Noah’s ark and Abraham’s travails. These story arcs are in turn broken down into sequences of episodes with their own emphasis. The narrative progression and climaxes make *Genesis A* most suitable for a close reading of how the poet has shaped integrated emphasis in these episodes.

**Emphasis**

My study presents an integrated analysis of narratological emphasis, metrical emphasis and syntactic emphasis. I retrieved the data on narratological emphasis first for reasons of objectivity. If one starts to analyse poetry metrically first, one might be tempted to read narratological significance into passages that are emphasised metrically. The calculations for first metrical and then syntactic emphasis were also automated where possible. Subsequent interpretation was done jointly to view the interplay between the three strategies for emphasis.

Narratological analysis offers a range of approaches, from investigating large-scale narrative structures to the minute level of creative wording in, for instance, speeches. Old English narrative poetry is often oral-traditional or at least oral-residual, meaning its written works retain characteristics of the oral style. In such poetry we find episodes marked off by “a change in location, or time, or participants” (Fabb 1997: 166), and Nigel Fabb observes that these changes can be marked by specific linguistic form (1997: 193). Episode boundaries themselves carry emphasis by providing turns in the plot, and the specific linguistic form Fabb mentions can prove fertile ground for other linguistic strategies for emphasis. To avoid subjective partitioning, I have used the division of major and minor episode boundaries in *Genesis A* from Paul Remley’s (1996) analysis of narrative structure in *Genesis*. Further narratological emphasis can be found in speeches, which abound in texts of the Junius 11 manuscript. The speeches in *Genesis A* are mostly direct speech and easily detected through verbs that indicate speaking, such as
cweðan ['to speak'], maðelian ['to speak'] or andswarian ['to answer']. Since episode boundaries and speeches might have their own patterns of emphasis, both are incorporated in the narratological share of the integrated analysis.

Metrical emphasis may be found in the aural effect certain verse patterns have. Old English metre is a strong-stress metre in which the poetic line is divided into two half-lines called verses. Most Old English metrical patterns have alternating stressed and unstressed syllables, but three are spondee-like in the sense that they contain adjacent main stresses: verse types C, D and F. These types come in various forms but each contain adjacent main stresses (/ / or / \):

C:  x x / / x
Ús is riht micel (GenA 1a)
it behoves us a lot
x x / / x
oð þæt drihtweras (GenA 1798a)
so that the retainers

D:  / / x x
Gāstcyninge (GenA 2884a)
the King of the Spirit
/ / \ x
nacod nīedwēda (GenA 929a)
naked beggar
/ / x \ 
er wintrum geong (GenA 2889a)
a man young in winters

F:  x x / /
on geweald dōn (GenA 1789b)
to give [you] as property

In her article “Stress Felt, Stroke Dealt”, Catherine Addison argues that

spondees, in a line of poetry, crowd prosodic stresses together, contradicting the impulse toward fluency. Their turgid effect is often indeed stressful, projecting and expressing emotional stress. (Addison 2005: 161.)

The Old English verses with adjacent stresses arguably have this same aural effect, especially when such verses occur close to one another. In most Old English poetry, types C and D combined total about 23% or 24% of verses (Green 1971: 92; Bliss 1967: 122–123). Type F makes up about 1% of verses in Junius 11. Types C, D and F combined thus make up roughly a quarter of verses on average. The aforementioned average that about one in four verses would have adjacent stresses might seem to suggest that they would tend to occur about three verses apart. If instead such spondee-like verses recur in direct sequence, or with one or two verses in-between, then the repetition of adjacent stresses would arguably take effect as metrical emphasis.

For this study, I have set the requirement that verses with adjacent stresses are considered part of a cluster of metrical emphasis if they occur no more than two verses removed from any other verse with adjacent stresses. After all, a lone verse with adjacent stresses does not produce as strong an aural effect as a repetition of adjacent stresses. The metrical emphasis for the integrated analysis is thus found in clusters of verse types C, D and F. The metrical data for this study was retrieved through the scansion program under development by my Radboud University colleague Monique Tangelder. Her program scans Old English poetry by assigning natural linguistic stress to the most relevant heavy mora. The scansion of Genesis A was further processed with Excel to indicate clusters of metrical emphasis for later comparison with narratological and syntactic emphasis.

Syntactic emphasis can commonly be found around certain constructions with the discourse marker þā. Not all instances of þā function as discourse markers; apart from meaning ‘then’, þā can also mean ‘when’, ‘while’ or ‘because’, and it can be used as a demonstrative pronoun. My study describes only those cases of þā in the sense of ‘then’. This sense of þā is “in a natural class with nu ‘now’, eac ‘also’, la ‘lo’” and others, and they are “often used as rhetorical devices” (van Kemenade & Los 2006: 233). The rhetorical device þā occurs in various constructions that can have different functions. Clause-initial þā Vf (i.e. þā followed by a finite verb), generally marks “the division of narrative discourse into narrative units” (Enkvist 1986: 301) and:

continuation of (or return to) the main-line at different levels: the level of the temporal sequentiality of the story line (next, after
that), the level of participant continuity (return to main participant), and the level of text structuring (next episode or next substory). (Wårvik 2011.)

Clause-initial ūa Vf does not induce syntactic emphasis, then, but clause-initial ūa on its own does. Both clause-initial ūa without verbs and clause-internal ūa provide syntactic emphasis because they induce focus on the words directly following the ūa. The ūa and its adverbial kin “are best analysed as discourse operators, separating the topic/presuppositional from the focus/new information area of the clause” (van Kemenade & Milicev 2005: 5). Van Kemenade et al. (2008) visualised this relationship between ūa and new information as follows:

\[
\text{[previous discourse]} \rightarrow \text{[laterance presupposition ūa/constr focus]}
\]

The right-hand focus area for new information is a site for poets to induce syntactic emphasis. The ūa constructions preceding this focus area can take several forms:

- ūa-initial (GenA 2880):
  ūa Abraham spræc tō his ombihtum
  then Abraham said to his servants

- V ūa (GenA 2897):
  Gestāh ūa stōhýdīg stēape dūne
  he climbed then resolutely the steep hill

- V Pro ūa (GenA 965):
  Ongunnon hīe ūa be Godes hāse
  they started then, at God’s behest

- Pro ūa (GenA 941):
  Hīe ūa wuldrēs Weard wǣdum gyrede
  then Lord of Glory covered them with clothes

- him ūa (GenA 882):
  Him ūa Ādām eft answarode
  then Adam replied to him again

In *Genesis A* there are notable cases of clause-internal ūa following pronouns and verbs. The construction him ūa appears to have a special position in the poem due to its frequent appearance around speeches.

Syntactic emphasis can interact with the narratological and metrical emphasis described earlier. When various strategies for emphasis coincide, the emotive expression of each creates integrated emphasis overall. Let us review a first sample of emphasis in *Genesis A* 1043b–1054. This example shows the instances of emphasis around Remley’s episode boundary on line 1051b where the lineage of Cain begins. The ūa constructions that induce syntactic emphasis are in italic font, and the metrical emphasis is underlined.

**Passage 1. Genesis A 1043b–1054.**

… / Hine Waldend on,

1045 freoðobēacen, Frēn / þy læs hine fēonda

… / Hēht ūa from

hwile

mēder and māgum / mānsyldigme,

cnōsle sīnum. / Him ūa Cain gewāt

1050 gongan gēomormōd / Gode of gesyhōc,

wineōas wrecce. / And ūa wic gecēas

eastlandum on, / dēólstöwe

feodorǣrmum feoð / þær him frēōlecē mēg,

ides æfter æðelum / eaforan fēdde.

… / On him God,

the Lord of glory, / set a sign,

1054 a peace mark, the Lord, / lest him any foe

with warlike intent / dared greet,

far or near. / He then bade him go forth

from mother and kin, / guilty of woe,

from his tribe. / Then Cain left,

1050 moved sad of heart, / out of God’s sight,

a friendless wretch. / And for himself

he then chose a place

in the eastern lands, / a homeland

far from his father’s lands / where a fair

lady,

a woman after his kind / gave him heirs.

Three syntactic units in this sample start neatly with a ūa construction, but the cluster of metrical emphasis is not confined within just one unit. Indeed, metrical emphasis can apparently string such units together. There are two different ūa constructions in this passage, and the episode boundary does not necessarily contain a ūa-initial construction (i.e. ūa is clause-initial). Instead, each ūa induces focus on the theme of the passage displayed in the narratological emphasis of the episode boundary: Cain’s departure and resettlement. The instance of him ūa in 1051b is followed by the syntactic emphasis for the resettlement in wic gecēas where the shift in location already generates narratological emphasis on the episode boundary. The sample above is one of several highlights in
the narrative where strategies for emphasis coincide.

Results

I will discuss in further detail three examples of integrated emphasis in Genesis A. Each sample contains one of the dramatic climaxes in the biblical narrative: the Fall of Adam and Eve, Abraham settling in Canaan and Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac. I will first discuss the Abraham narrative since there are two fitting samples from this same story arc.

Lines 1767–1804 of Genesis A contain an episode of key importance to the Abraham narrative. It is here that Abraham travels to and settles in Canaan. Remley’s episode boundary falls on line 1805, the line at which Abraham begins a new part of his life. Passage 2 presents the episode boundary’s environment in which three linguistic strategies of emphasis coincide: lines 1784b–1810. It is here that God reveals Himself to Abraham to give His faithful servant a promised land.

Passage 2. Genesis A 1784b–1810.

.../ þā hine Cyning engla...  
1785 Abrahame / twede Selfa,  
dōmēifstream Wedera / and Drīhten cwaēd:  
“Pis sēo corðe / þe ic ðælgrēne  
tūdre þinum, / torhte, wille,  
wæstum gewlō, / on geweald dōn.  
1790 rūme ríc.” / þē sē rinc Gode  
wībed worhte / and þā Waldende  
līfes Lēohtfruman, / læc onsegede,  
gāsta Helme. / Him þā gyt gewāt  
Abraham ēastan / ēagum wlitan  
1795 on landa cyst. / Lisse gemunde  
Heofonweardes gehāt / þā him þurh hālig  
word  
sigora self Cyning / sōð gécyðe  
oð þēt drīhtweras / dugujum gefōran  
þēr is botlwela / Bethlem hātēn.  
1800 Beorn blīðemōd / and his brōðor sunu  
fordā oferfōran / folcmedro land  
ēastan mid ēhtum, / æfeste men,  
weallstēapan hleoðu / and him þā wīc  
curon  
þēr him whitebearhte / wonges gēfūhten.  
1805 Abraham þā / ðōere siðe  
wībed worhte. / Hē þēr wordum God  
torhtum cīgde, / tiber onsægde  
his Līffrēnan. / Him þēs læn ðēgeaf  
nalles hnéawlice / þurh His hand metend  
on hām gēldyste / guncystum til.  
1810.../ Then to him the King of angels,  
1785 to Abraham, / revealed Himself,  
the just Lord, / and God said:  
“This is the earth, / all green, that I  
to your progeny, / beautiful,  
rich in crops, / will give to rule,  
1790 this roomy land.” / Then that man to God  
wrought an altar / and then to the Lord,  
life’s Light source, / a sacrifice brought,  
to the Protector of souls. / He then again left,  
Abraham, eastward, / his eyes to lay  
1795 on the choicest of lands / mindful of the promise,  
the Heavenly Warden’s / that to him through His  
holy word,  
the Lord of victory Himself, / truly had said –  
until the lord’s men / with the retainers arrived  
to where the village / is called Bethel.  
1800 The man blithe of heart / and his brother’s son [Lot]  
forth travelled / through famed lands  
to the east with their belongings, / men firm of faith,  
over wall-steep hills, / and for themselves then a  
spot chose  
where to them fair / the fields seemed.  
1805 Abraham then / a second time  
wrought an altar. / He then with his words to God  
fairly called, / offered sacrifice  
to his Life-lord. / For that God gave him a reward,  
not at all stingily, / by His hand meted out  
1810 on that altar, / a gracious boon.
heads east, which is reflected in the cluster of metrical emphasis in 1800a–1801a where Abraham’s departure is reiterated. The new information in 1803b, which heads another cluster of metrical emphasis, is that Abraham chooses a dwelling-place. The new essential information mentioned at the episode boundary in 1805b is that Abraham raises a second altar and this information returns at 1810a in the cluster of metrical emphasis. The three instances of syntactic emphasis closest to the episode boundary in 1805b are thus connected to metrical emphasis. Moreover, the instances of him þā connect narratologically across the episode boundary through the emphasis on the altar. In the him þā instance in 1793b, Abraham leaves after building the altar in 1791a; and in the him þā instance in 1803b, Abraham chooses a dwelling and subsequently builds an altar òðere sīðe (‘a second time’) in 1806a. These events span the episode boundary, connecting the episodes through narratological and syntactic emphasis combined. Verse 1810a is part of the metrical climax at the moment where Abraham receives his rewards from God. The synergy of narratological, metrical and syntactic emphasis generates a narrative highlight for this Abrahamic episode.

The instances of him þā in lines 1784b–1810 are unlikely to be poetic uses of pronouns just to suit the metre. Not only are there ties between instances of him þā around the episode border in line 1805, in lines 1043b–1054 there are also passages that hark back to Cain’s departure and arrival. There are two constructions with him þā that occur in both passages 1043b–1054 and 1784b–1810. The construction Him þā ... gewāt (‘He then... went’) occurs under similar metrical circumstances in lines 1049b and 1793b, but the poet’s inflection of the chosen verb cēosan (‘choose’) in lines 1051b and 1803b yields different verse patterns. The constructions of and him þā wīc curon (‘and for themselves then a spot chose’) in line 1803b is part of a cluster of metrical emphasis, whereas and him þā wīc gecēas (‘And for himself he then chose a place’) in 1051b is not. Poets had a range of verbs to choose from and could thus construct emphasised verses in various ways to suit the surrounding passage.

So far we have seen examples of Cain and Abraham’s departures and arrivals in lines 1043b–1054 and 1784–1810. These examples contain integrated emphasis around episode boundaries. In both cases, the syntactic emphasis in the focus area of the clause relays concepts that are key to the passage. Metrical emphasis is not confined to one syntactic unit but can bridge these units. Syntactic and metrical emphasis also coincide in various instances, such as 1047b, 1790–1791 and 1803b. A further observation is that metrical emphasis can form a climax just before the transition to the next episode. The Genesis A poet thus applies all three linguistic strategies for emphasis around the showcased episode boundaries. There are further patterns to be found in sequences of speeches, which will be the focus of the next two samples.

Passage 3 contains lines 2877b–2908a, a plot highlight just before the end of Genesis A. This passage forms the prelude to the epic climax of the narrative poem: the sacrifice of Isaac. There is no episode boundary in this passage, but rather a peculiar interplay of narratological emphasis on three speeches, metrical emphasis partial to certain lines and syntactic emphasis in various þā constructions.

This instalment in the Abraham narrative continues a series of journeys to pay worship to God. The speech Abraham initiates in line 2881 contains the first cluster of metrical emphasis in this sample. Indeed, the metrical emphasis occurs within and between the speeches sequenced from line 2881 to 2896, and the very first cluster seamlessly spans a speech and the three syntactic units of plain narration until the next speech. The poet has thus linked the speeches together through metrical emphasis on the plain narration in between them. The narrative is sequenced further with V þā constructions (i.e. where þā is immediately preceded by the verb) followed by key words. In Gewāt him þā ðē æðeling (‘They departed then, the nobleman’) (GenA 2885a), the þā is followed by a reminder that Abraham is a prince of the promised land. It is no small matter to ask a nobleman to sacrifice his only heir. This is reflected in the metrical emphasis in lines
2885–2886, where Abraham’s title and God’s orders carry the cluster of metrical emphasis. The next two clusters of metrical emphasis occur in Isaac and Abraham’s dialogue, where both speeches contain a cluster of metrical emphasis. The last cluster occurs in lines 2895–2896 on Abraham’s mysterious reply that God will take the sacrifice He deems proper. The tension that this speech and metrical emphasis create prepares us for the climax of the episode and poem. After these clusters, the poet begins a different part of the episode without any metrical emphasis. There are two further instances of V ðā in 2897a and 2902a, and neither is part of a cluster of metrical emphasis. Lines 2897 and 2902 do, however, contain words key to the passage. In line 2897, the new information following the ðā describes Abraham climbing the hills as Gestāh þā stōðhýdig stēape dūne [‘He climbed then stout-hearted / the steep hills’] and in line 2902 Abraham lights a pyre to sacrifice his son: Ongan þā ād hladan, āled weccan [‘He began then to build a pyre, / the fire to wake,’]. This new information marks dramatic steps in the plot. The story arc surrounding the figure Abraham contains two good examples of integrated emphasis. The latter example shows patterns of integrated emphasis markedly different from the first. Although both passages contain metrical emphasis spanning syntactic and narratological units, the metrical emphasis in the second sample appears to be partial to the dramatic speech sequence rather than episode boundaries. The
second sample also contains V þā constructions that induce syntactic emphasis through key words that highlight the plot progression. The poet has indeed made an effort to translate the biblical narrative Genesis into the Old English epic style with a variety of narrative highlights.

Another long story arc in Genesis A is the speech-laden Fall of Adam and Eve in lines 852 through 966. Between lines 852 and 960 lie the episodes on God’s return to Paradise and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The coda in lines 961–966 appropriately transitions to mankind’s life on Earth, a topic that forms the new episode starting at line 967. Since the sequence of events in lines 852–966 relies heavily on speeches, one would expect to find unique patterns of integrated emphasis.

The new episode at line 852 resumes Genesis A after the interpolation of Genesis B. Genesis A opens with God’s stroll into Paradise. The þā Vf construction in this opening contains neither syntactic nor metrical emphasis. The first syntactic emphasis in the new episode is induced in line 858 by a V Pro þā construction (i.e. the verb precedes þā with additional lexical material between them) and is accompanied by a cluster of metrical emphasis:


Þā cōm fēran / Frēa ælmihtig
ofr midne dæg, / mǣre Þēoden
on neorxnawang / nēode Sīne.

855
Wolde nēosian / Nergend usser,
bilwit Fæder, / hwæt His bearn dyde.
Wiste forworhte / þām Hē ǣr wlite sealde.
Gewitan him þā gangan / gēomermōde
under bēamsceade, / blǣde berēafod.

Then came / the Lord almighty
during midday, / the famous Ruler,
into Paradise / by His own desire.

855 He wanted to find out, / our Saviour,
merciful Father, / what His children were doing.
He knew to be sinful / those that He earlier had given shape.

They retreated then / sorrow-hearted
under the tree’s shadow, / of gladness bereft.

The sudden shift in subject from God to Adam and Eve in line 858 is skilfully woven into the story. In the cluster of metrical emphasis we already hear that God wants to see His children, whom He had created earlier. This shifts the audience’s attention from God to the children, who then become the subject of the next syntactic unit. The syntactic emphasis in line 858 is on gangan gēomermōde [‘go sorrow-hearted’], a smooth transition from God’s wishes to Adam and Eve’s feelings toward God’s presence. This is a suitable opening for an episode that will contain many speeches back and forth between God, His children and a certain evildoer. All in all, there are ten passages of direct and indirect speech in lines 852–966. Eight of these are strung together with þā constructions, notably constructions with a pronoun followed by þā:

(i) GenA 865b–866b:

…/ Him þā sylfa oncwæð
hēan hlēoðrade / hregles þearfa
…/ To Him (God), he (Adam) then said, the poor one spoke, / lacking clothes

(ii) GenA 872:

Him þā ðdre God / andswarode
To him (Adam) then straight away God / answered

(iii) GenA 882:

Him þā Ādām eft / andswarode
To Him (God) then Adam back / answered

(iv) GenA 887:

Dā ðes Euan frægn / ælmihtig God
Then of Eve He asked, / God almighty

(v) GenA 895b–896b:

…/ Him þā frēolecu mǣg,
ides æwismod / andswarode
…/ To Him (God) then the lovely lady, the woman shamed at heart, / answered

(vi) GenA 903–905:

Pā nædran scēop / Nergend usser,
Frēa ælmihtig / fāgum wyrme
wide sīdas / and þā worde cwæð
Then for the serpent shaped / our Saviour, Lord almighty, / for the guilty snake, wide wanderings, / and then spoke with words

(vii) GenA 918:

Dā tō Euan God / yrringa spræc
Then to Eve God / angrily spoke
viii) GenA 941–944:  
_Hiē pā wuldres Weard / wædum gyrede,  
Scyppend úser, / hēt heora sceorne beccan  
Frēa frumhragele. / Hēt hīe from hweorfan  
neorxnawange / on nearore lif.  
_Them (Adam and Eve) then the Lord of glory /  
outfitted with garments,  
our Creator, / ordered them to cover their shame  
with the first clothes. / He ordered them to  
depart  
from Paradise / to a poorer life.

The instances in examples (i), (ii), (iii), (v) and (viii) contain a construction of _pā_ and a pronoun, followed by the announcement of a new agent. Whereas _pā_ constructions in other passages around episode boundaries or speeches mostly induce syntactic emphasis on key concepts, in these eight examples the new information to the right of _pā_ is the name of the person who is about to speak. This appears to be a useful tool for poets to emphasise the new speaker in a sequence of speeches when the addressee is already known. It should be of little surprise that, where we see both a new addressee and a new speaker introduced, we find clause-initial _pā_. For instance, in line 887 the addressee Eve is announced first and then the new speaker God: _Dā ðæs Euan frægn ælmihtig God_ [‘Then to Eve God angrily spoke’]. The announcement of a reply from Eve to God in line 895b contains another _him_ _pā_ construction because the addressee is known. In lines 903–905 God prepares to curse the serpent, a new addressee. Since the serpent had not yet been involved in the sequence of speeches, a pronoun without antecedent would have been inappropriate. Lines 903 and 918 thus both contain a clause-initial rather than clause-internal _pā_ due to a new addressee. Within lines 852–966 there are two instances of (in)direct speech, which despite their lack of _pā_ still contain the same pattern of addressee first and speaker next. Line 925 announces the listener first and speaker last: _Abēad ēac Ādāme ēce Drihten_ [‘He (God) bade also to Adam, eternal God’]. In lines 941–944 the _Hie_ _pā_ construction is used to convey that Adam and Eve receive their first clothes from God. God gives them His orders through the word _hēt_ followed by indirect speech coinciding with a cluster of metrical emphasis. The addressees are known at this point and no further Pro _pās_ occur before the indirect speech. The Genesis A poet has thus clearly indicated the speaker and the listener in his sequence of ten speeches within lines 852–966. Eight of these speeches are headed by a _pā_ construction with, where appropriate, a pronoun to indicate an already known listener. The _pā_-initial construction could apparently provide the audience with ample guidance as to who would be addressed next.

The overall metrical circumstances of the Fall of Adam and Eve differ sharply from those in the samples from the Abraham narrative. The instances of _pā_ in lines 852–966 occur mainly around the ten passages of direct and indirect speech. It appears that in the area where these speeches occur, the metrical emphasis is bound to the speeches that also receive narratological emphasis. Whereas in previous sample passages the new information after _pā_ might coincide with metrical emphasis or return in later clusters of metrical emphasis, in lines 852–966 the new information serves as more of a guide to who is speaking next. The subsequent speeches even seem to have their own pattern of metrical emphasis.

Adam’s words to God in lines 867–871 and God’s reply in lines 873–881 are highly emphasised metrically; in both speeches about one in three verses is part of a cluster of metrical emphasis. The third and fourth direct speeches are Adam’s reply in lines 883–886, which contains no metrical emphasis, and God’s questioning of Eve in lines 888–895a, which contains little metrical emphasis (two of fifteen verses emphasised). The next four speeches form the narratological and apparently also metrical climax of the speech sequence: Eve confesses her failure and each wrongdoer receives their curse from God. In lines 897–902, Eve, _ides āwisemōd_ [‘ashamed woman’], sorrowfully replies how the serpent misled her. Her speech is greatly emphasised; one in three verses is part of a cluster of metrical emphasis. After Eve’s confession, God subsequently curses the serpent, then Eve, and lastly Adam. The density of metrical emphasis in God’s curses is perhaps best shown rather than described.
Passage 5 is an overview of God’s three direct speeches (distinguished by different font).

Each of the three speeches in this sample is prefaced by an introduction of the addressee first, followed by the speaker. The order of God’s speeches seems to follow the path of the original sin: from the serpent to Eve and then to Adam. God’s curse for the serpent contains one large cluster of metrical emphasis that brings the total ratio for that speech to one in four verses emphasised. While the ratio of one in four may seem ordinary, it is curious that all the metrical emphasis in this speech is concentrated in one long cluster. God’s cursing of the serpent does have a lower ratio of emphasis than the cursing of Eve and Adam: these each have a ratio of one in three. Though the metrical emphasis appears more spread out in the latter two curses, these curses contain a higher rate of metrical emphasis overall. A further curiosity is the repetition of the metrically emphasised þū lāðlīce wrōhte onstealdest [*you have loathsomely brought sin into the

%Passage 5. Genesis A 903–938.

þā nædran scēop / Nergend üsser,
Frēa ælmihtig, / fāgum wyrme
905 wīde sōhas / and þā worde cwǣd:

“þū scealt wīderferhā, / wērig, þīnum brēostum
bearme, tredan / brādēr eorōn,
faran fēgelēas / benden þē feorh wunað,
gāst on innan. / þū scealt grēot etan
910 bīne līfdagas / swā þū lāðlīce
wrōhte onstealdest. / þē þæt wīf fēoð,
hātað under heofnum / and þīn hēafod tredeð
915 incrum orlegnīð / ã þenden standeð
woruld under wolcnum. / Nū þū wāst and canst,
lāð lēodsceaða, / þū lifian scealt.”

Dā tō Euan / God yrringa spræc:

“Wend þē from wynne. / þū scealt wǣpnedmene
920 wesan on gewealde / mid weres egsan
erheard ge’nearwad, / ðēan þrōwian
þīnra dǣda gedwīl, / dēaðes bīdan
925 ēac Ādāme / ēce Drihten,
līfes Lēohtfruma, / lāð ǣrende:

“þū scealt ōðerne / ðēol sēcean,
930 wynlēasran wīc, / and on wraec hweorfan
nacod niedwǣlda / ðe þē þū lāðlīce
wrōhte onstealdest. / Forþon þū winnan scealt
and on eorōn þē / þīnne lēodsceaða, / þū lifian scealt.”

Then for the serpent shaped / our Saviour,
Lord almighty, / for the guilty snake,
wide wanderings, / and then spoke with words:

“You shall forever, / fatigued, on your breast,
your bosom, slither / in the broad world,
go footless / while in you your soul lives,
the spirit within. / You shall eat dirt
935 in your life-days / because you have loathsomely
brought sin into the world. / You the woman shall fight,
hate under the heavens, / and tread your head,
the cursed thing, with her feet. / You shall waylay the heels
in ever-new battles. / War shall there be
between your offspring / and hers as long as there is
a world under the welkin. / Now you know,
loathed harmer of men, / how you shall live.”

Then to Eve / God angrily spoke:

“Turn away from joy. / You shall by men
be controlled / with fear of men,
harshly constrained, / endure pain
by your own deeds, / await death,
and through weeping and heaving
940 bring into the world,
through great pain, / sons and daughters.”

He bade also Adam, / eternal God,
life’s Light source, / grave tidings:

“You shall another / homeland seek,
a more joyless place, / and wander in misery
naked and needy, / of Paradise’s
virtues bereft. / For you is separation ordained
of body and soul. / Lo, you have loathsomely
brought sin into the world. / For that you shall struggle
and on earth / your whole life
for yourself obtain food, / by the sweat of your brow
your bread eat / while you here live,
until you to heart / harshly strikes
the disease ungentle / that you with the apple ere
swallowed yourself, / for which you shall die.”
world’] in lines 910b–911a (cursing of the serpent) and 931b–932a (cursing of Adam). Briefly but noticeably, the serpent and Adam are similarly addressed. The combination of verbal repetition in two curses and different ratios of metrical emphasis in the three curses begs the question of what degrees of blame were assigned to the serpent, Eve and Adam in Genesis A. Moreover, was each of them in the…

There is still more content in lines 852–966 that deserves a new reading. After the epic climax of the speeches in the Fall of Adam and Eve comes the result of those speeches, namely the expulsion from Paradise. Adam and Eve’s departure is described in three phases. First, in lines 939 and 940, the poet interjects one of the morals of the story: Hwæt, wē nū gehûrað hwær ūs hearmsstafas wrāðe onwōcan and woruldyrmðo [‘Lo, we now have heard from whence our pain came and mortal misery’]. The compounds hearmsstafas [‘harm, trouble, affliction’] and woruldyrmðo [lit. ‘world-misery’] contain adjacent stresses and bear the metrical emphasis in the interjection. God next sends the sinners off in lines 941–944, and this passage starts with Hīe þā. From the plural and context one can infer that Hīe refers to Adam and Eve, but, unlike in the earlier sequence of speeches, there is now no direct antecedent in God’s speech. There are two verses with metrical emphasis in (viii); these occur in God’s indirect speech at that moment when He orders Adam and Eve to cover their shame and leave. Again it seems that in this story arc metrical emphasis is more often reserved for speech itself rather than moments bridging speeches. Once Adam and Eve have departed from Paradise, a different þā construction returns: the V Pro þā construction. There are two instances of these in lines 961–966.


Gesǣton þā after synne / sorgfulre land, eard and òðyl, / unspēdigran fremena gehwilcre / bonne sē frumstöl wæs þe hīe æfter dēde / of ðārfean wurdon. 965 Ongunnon hīe þā / bē Godes hāse bearn āstrīenan / swā him Metod bebēad. They inhabited then after their sin / a more sorrowful land, a home and country/ more barren of any good things / than their original dwelling was that they after their deed / had been driven from.

965 They started then, / at God’s behest, to beget children / as the Lord has bidden.

The first þā occurs in line 961: Gesǣton þā after synne sorgfulre land [‘They inhabited then after their sin a more sorrowful land’]. This instance has no connection with metrical emphasis but the constituent following þā does repeat the key concept that it was sin that saw Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise. In lines 965–966, Adam and Eve’s settlement is complete and the story arc is thus rounded off. Remley’s episode boundary at 967 corresponds with the transition from source material from Genesis 3 to Genesis 4, where the lineage of Adam is introduced (1996: 102). The transition to this next biblical episode contains a cluster of emphasised verses bracketing the verse with þā. In this small cluster the expulsion and the mention of God’s command carry the emphasis.

Overall, the poet seems to have used the integrated emphasis in lines 852–966 for a specific purpose. In the Fall of Adam and Eve, the many spoken exchanges between the figures seem to require the syntactic emphasis to be mainly on the names of new speakers whereas metrical emphasis appears largely reserved for the actual speeches that carry the plot. The narrative climaxxes correspond with the increase in metrical emphasis during the speeches as well, since Eve’s lament and God’s three curses are highly emphasised. The poet then prepares us for a transition to the next episode by way of a short summary of key concepts coinciding with syntactic emphasis. The poet’s use of emphasis in lines 852–966 thus differs markedly from that in the Abraham story arc. The integrated analysis of linguistic strategies for emphasis can help us detect what the poet has foregrounded in the various passages of his work.

Conclusions

The Genesis A poet has skillfully interwoven narratological, metrical and syntactic
emphasis in a number of his passages. The present integrated analysis of emphasis can shed new light on the dynamics of those passages. Narratological emphasis lies in the dynamism of plot turns at episode boundaries and sequences of ceremonial speeches, and serves to guide the audience through the narrative. Metrical emphasis tends to occur on key concepts in the passages above, but during sequences of speeches the poet lends the aural force that metrical emphasis provides to the speakers in the poem. Syntactic emphasis induced by þā constructions directs the listeners’ attention to the new information to the right of þā, whether that new information be a key concept or an indication of who is speaking next. The poet has applied all three strategies to make his biblical narrative more lively and dramatic.

Studying each strategy for emphasis separately might cause one to overlook the synergy between the strategies. For instance, concepts following a clause-internal þā often return in the clusters of metrical emphasis, but do not always need to do so when the constituents following clause-internal þā are used to emphasise the new speaker. In such cases, metrical emphasis is often reserved for the speeches themselves. In the expulsion from Paradise sequence in Genesis A lines 852–966, main episodes are indicated with the undramatic clause-initial þā Vf. Within episodes, him þā apparently serves to emphasise whom the next speaker to be announced is addressing, whereas the content of the new speaker’s words carry the metrical emphasis.

The current observations beg the question of to what extent similar and other patterns of emphasis could be found elsewhere in Genesis A and in other poems. I myself will turn the integrated analysis to Beowulf next to explore to what extent that particular work contains patterns of integrated emphasis. For instance, to what extent could metrical emphasis be present in major speaking roles versus minor speaking roles, and under what (syntactic) circumstances? Could metrical emphasis appear in passages with narratological emphasis such as ring structure and if so, to what extent would it provide new insight into that particular structure? Further syntactic emphasis may be found in verb-initial constructions indicative of lively narrative; perhaps these constructions interact in some way with þā constructions or other strategies for emphasis. The class of rhetorical devices that includes þā contains other members that could be studied in relation to the surrounding narratological or metrical environment. It seems worthwhile to explore further linguistic strategies that an Anglo-Saxon poet could use to bring his or her narrative into relief. There is still much more to be discovered within Old English poetry, and hopefully we can gain fruitful new readings of intricate passages through integrated analyses of emphasis.

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Works Cited


Literature


Word Constellations as Tools in Skaldic Composition: Arnórr jarlaskáld and Óttarr svarti as a Case of Assimilation

Cole Nyquist, University of Oslo

The purpose of this article is to examine connections between the works of Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld ['skald of jarls'] and Óttarr svarti ['the black'], specifically within the *hending* and alliterative word constellations which appear in the works of each skald, with the aim to shed more light on the compositional techniques in the *dróttkvætt* meter and related meters. The metrical complexity of this poetry was recently described as “exceptional among the oral poetries of Europe” (Frog 2014: 283, Kuhn 1983: 15). Verses are composed in six-position lines, in which each position equates more or less to one syllable (with some rules for variation). Two stressed syllables (but not any following unstressed syllables) in each line should rhyme, and in each couplet (i.e. a pair of odd line and even line, sometimes – rarely – called *fjörðungr*) two stressed syllables in the first line should alliterate with the first (stressed) syllable in the following line, and the meter also had additional rules regarding syllabic quantity (Gade 1995: 3–7).

If only alliteration and rhyme are considered, this means that there are 14 phonic requirements for the 24 metrical positions of a four-line *helming* or half-stanza. These requirements form a baseline for poets to develop new experimental meters, such as *hrynhent* ['flowing rhyme'], in which lines were extended from six to eight syllables. Skilled poets must have had techniques to meet these requirements.

During my master’s research at the University of Oslo, under the guidance of my supervisor Mikael Males, I developed a new approach for studying oral composition of skaldic poetry (Nyquist 2014). The present article presents a case study illustrating the strategy of a poet adapting metrically relevant constellations of words or phraseology from the works of another poet. This specific case study of these two poets has been selected from the pilot study of my master’s thesis, in which I surveyed such word constellations in a sample corpus of 1,486 couplets by 68 different poets. The following discussion should be viewed on the backdrop of that pilot study. Generalizations and inferences related to that context are, of course, dependent on the degree to which the sample corpus is generally representative.

Rather than focusing on the poetic equivalence vocabulary called *heiti* or the prominent type of nominal circumlocution called a *kenning* as tools for oral composition, I chose instead to analyze what is called the *hending*¹, or the internal rhyme characteristic of the skaldic meters called *dróttkvætt*, as well as the constellations of words that are used to meet metrical requirements of alliteration (Gurevich 1994; Frog 2009). *Hending* word-pairs include both odd line *skothending*, i.e. stressed syllables rhymed with same final consonant(s) but different vowels, and even line *adalhending*, which are full rhymes with the same final consonant(s) and vowels. These word constellations were then compared between the poetry of different skalds in order to find instances where either the alliterative word combinations, *hending* word combinations, or both recurred in the works of different poets. The works of these two 11th-century skalds contain clear correspondences that appeared particularly pronounced within the broader survey of my master’s thesis (Nyquist 2014). The examples
in this article are gathered from skaldic poetic editions of Finnur Jónsson’s *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning* (Skj), and the more recent *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas* (SPSMA I–II), edited by Diana Whaley and Kari Ellen Gade. Citations are indicated by stanza and line number; where the numbering of stanzas differs between editions, the numbering of Finnur Jónsson’s edition will appear first and the numbering of the more recent edition will appear following a slash (e.g. *Hofudlausn* 14/15). There are some discrepancies between Finnur’s earlier editions of some of the couplets in this study and the more recent editions: I have noted where the more recent editions differ, observing that these may be more accurate. The goal here is to present some of the data which I have collected and discuss some of the possible explanations for correspondence in sets of words between compositions attributed to Arnórr (Whaley 2009) and Óttarr (Townend 2012).

Arnórr jarlaskáld and Óttarr svarti

In this section, I will present nine different instances where a poem by Arnórr Þórðarson *jarlaskáld* shares word constellations in common with with Óttarr svarti’s *Hofudlausn* (Nyquist 2014: 34–40). Both Arnórr and Óttarr were active during the 11th century and it is therefore possible that each poet was aware of the other’s works. The particular fragment to be reviewed here comes from Arnórr Þórðarson’s *Hrynhenda*, which is named for the poetic meter in which it was composed and can only be dated to sometime in the 11th century (Skj B1: 307; SPSMA I: 191), and Óttarr’s *Hofudlausn* [*Head-Ransom*], composed ca. 1023 (Skj B1: 268–272; SPSMA I: 755). It may thus be stated in advance that, if we find evidence of direct influence, the non-specific dating of Arnórr’s poetry makes it more difficult to determine which poet has a greater chance of being influenced by the other, but as *Hofudlausn* is from ca. 1023 and Arnórr composed at least one poem in the mid to late 11th century, it is perhaps more likely that Arnórr was influenced by Óttarr.

In order to present the *hending* and alliteration data, I have created tables which list the relevant words from each example couplet. The title of each table presents titles and verses of the poems compared and their authors’ names. From left to right, each table includes the poet’s name, the stanza number from which the example couplet comes, the three alliterating words and finally the rhyming words from each couplet. The data is displayed side by side for ease of comparison and relevant similarities for each example are presented in boldfaced font. The first case of similarities is shown in Table 1: it is a comparison between Arnórr’s *Hrynhenda*, *Magnúsdrapa* 7.1–2, a *drápa* (i.e. a poem with a refrain) about king Magnús inn góði Ölásson, and Óttarr’s *Hofudlausn* 3.1–2. In this case, both skalds use the same two words, ungr [*‘young’*] and eyðir [*‘destroyer’*] in the first line for vowel alliteration. Both examples in Table 1 are from the first couplet of a *helming* in their respective poems and are similarly addressing a young warrior or king, but share little in common apart from their theme. In this case, the *ungr–eyðir* combination seems only to be found in these

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**Table 1. Hrynhenda, Magnúsdrapa 7.1–2 by Arnórr jarlaskáld and Hofudlausn 12.1–2 by Óttarr svarti.**

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<td>hend.</td>
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<td>hend.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nyquist 2014: 34.

Arnórr jarlaskáld  
_Hrynhenda, Magnúsdrapa_ 7.1–4 (Skj B1: 307).

_Ungan_ fráð þik, eyðir, ðrónga, ulfa gráðar, þeina ráði; skildir stókk með skedan jokka skeiðar brands fyr þer ór landi.

**Óttarr svarti**  
_Hofudlausn_ 12.1–4 (Skj B1, 270).

Nððuð ungr at eyða, ógteitir jöfurr, Peitu; reynduð, ræsir, steinda rönd á Túskalandi.
two poems in the skaldic corpus. This first table shows a rather minor similarity between two couplets which share only the first two words of the vowel alliteration.

The example in Table 2 is between Höfuðlausn 14/15.1–2 by Öttarr and Pórfinsdrápa 13/15.3–4 by Arnórr. These couplets share a word pair of eigi [‘not’] and ægir [‘sea’] which participates in the first line vowel alliterations and the same pair also comprise the first line’s hending word pair. In this case, each corresponding word appears in the same metrical position and form within their respective couplets’ first lines, with eigi as the first word and ægir as the last. This alliterative combination can also be found in a few additional instances in the corpus. It thus might also reflect a more general collocation used by poets in composition, or at least a word-pair that was readapted by multiple poets from different circulating poems. Nevertheless, when lexical correspondence is complemented by its completion of both alliteration and rhyme, the chances that the parallel is merely coincidental are reduced.

The couplets compared in Table 3 are found once again in Arnórr’s Hrynenda 12.5–6 and Öttarr’s Höfuðlausn 6/7.3–4. Unlike the previous two comparisons, these couplets have no common alliteration, but do have similar first line skothending based on the verbs þora [‘to defend’] and varða [‘to dare’] to form a rhyme pair that seems not to have been used outside of these two poems.

The example in Table 4 includes line similarities between three couplets by Arnórr and one from Öttarr. The couplets are from Öttarr’s Höfuðlausn 10.1–2 and from Arnórr’s Haraldsdrápa 7/5.1–2 and 12/10.1–2 and Magnúsdrápa 16.1–2. The second alliterating term found in the first line of all four examples, Yngvi, is a personal name, the name of god. The recurrence of this name and etymologically related verb and noun ganga [‘to walk, go; move’] characterizes these examples. Irrespective of its inflectional form, ganga consistently forms a skothending
rhyme with Yngvi in the first line. The fact that Arnórr uses this constellation three times and in two different poems makes him seem especially taken with it, and I have only found the combination of Yngvi with a derivative of ganga in one other poem, also a Magnússdrápa dedicated to king Magnús berfaett.5 Yngvi occurs in the same metrical positions and in the nominal inflection in all four examples. Óttarr’s use with atganga [‘attack’] also forms a compound in the opening positions of the line structurally and metrically paralleling Arnórr’s uses of uppganga [‘advance’]. These features increase the markedness of parallels in this constellation of lexical elements, increasing the likelihood that there is a relationship between these examples.

Haraldsdrápa [‘A Poem with a Refrain about King Haraldk hardráði’] is dated to ca. 1067 (Skj B1: 322), and thus was composed more than four decades after Hofðulausn (ca. 1023). Magnússdrápa was “presumably composed not long after Magnús’s death in 1047” (SPSMA II: 225). Unless Arnórr is borrowing from his own potentially earlier work, it seems that if either poet repurposed another’s alliterating or rhyming word pair in these examples, it was more likely done by Arnórr. It is also worth noting that, in the examples in Table 4, Arnórr’s verse 7/5 first alliteration ett [‘direction, family, generation’] is the same as Óttarr’s verse 10’s third alliteration. This means that all three alliterating words of these couplets are shared between the two poets, but not in all three of Arnórr’s stanzas and two of his poems. The word ett is in a different position in Haraldsdrápa than in Hofðulausn, but both appear alongside yngvi and Haraldsdrápa also includes a -gongu compound alongside yngvi in a later couplet. If this is indeed evidence that Arnórr has assimilated these rhyming and alliterating words from Óttarr’s work, consciously or subconsciously, he has done so in two poems which are potentially separated by decades.

Curiously, this particular couplet by Óttarr shares another such similarity with another couplet of Arnórr’s, Hrynhenda 9.1–2 in the

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*The SPSMA II edition has “arflógandi gnógan”.

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Table 4. Haraldsdrápa 7/5.1–2 and 10/1.1–2 and Magnússdrápa 16.1–2 by Arnórr jarlaskáld and Hofðulausn 10.1–2 by Óttarr svarti.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld Haraldsdrápa 7/5.1–2</td>
<td>ett</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>Upplendinga</td>
<td>Gengr</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>Upplendinga</td>
<td>brendi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld Haraldsdrápa 12/10.1–2</td>
<td>Uppgongu</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>ítr</td>
<td>Uppgongu</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>ítr</td>
<td>lítinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld Magnússdrápa 16.1–2</td>
<td>Uppgongu</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>Auð-lógandi*</td>
<td>Uppgongu</td>
<td>yngvi</td>
<td>Auð-lógandi</td>
<td>gnógan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Óttarr svarti</td>
<td>Atgongu</td>
<td>Yngvi</td>
<td>ett</td>
<td>Atgongu</td>
<td>Yngvi</td>
<td>siklinga</td>
<td>mikla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nyquist 2014: 36.

* The SPSMA II edition has “arflógandi gnógan”.

Arnórr jarlaskáld
Haraldsdrápa 7/5.1–4 (Skj B1: 323).
Gengr í ett, þats yngvi
Upplendinga brendi
(pjóó galt ræsis reiði,)
rønn (þess’s fremstr vas manna).

Arnórr jarlaskáld
Haraldsdrápa 12/10.1–4 (Skj B1: 324).
Uppgongu bauð yngvi
ítr með helming lítinn,
sás á sinni ævi
sásk aldriti háskra.

Arnórr jarlaskáld
Uppgongu vann yngvi
arflógandi gnóga;
gerði hilmir Hróða
hjörþey á Skáneyju.

Óttarr svarti
Hofðulausn 10.1–4 (Skj B1: 270).
Atgongu vann, yngvi,
ett siklinga mikla;
blítir hilmir, rautt breiða
borg Kantara of morgin.
Table 5. Hrynhenda, Magnúsdrápa 9.1–2 by Arnórr jarlaskáld and Hófuðlausn 10.1–2 by Óttarr svarti.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>1st Allit.</th>
<th>2nd Allit.</th>
<th>3rd Allit.</th>
<th>1st hend.</th>
<th>2nd hend.</th>
<th>1st hend.</th>
<th>2nd hend.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Óttarr svarti</td>
<td>Síðan</td>
<td>suðr</td>
<td>siklingr</td>
<td>Síðan</td>
<td>suðr/láði</td>
<td>siklingr</td>
<td>miklum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atgöngu</td>
<td>Yngvi</td>
<td>ætt</td>
<td>Atgöngu</td>
<td>Yngvi</td>
<td>siklinga</td>
<td>mikla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Arnórr jarlaskáld

Hrynhenda, Magnúsdrápa 9.1–4 (Skj B1: 308).

Síðan van, þats sunnr með láði
siklingr ýtti flota miklum;
skíði vas þá skriðar of auðit
skóði; renndi Visundr norðan.

Table 6. Magnúsdrápa 7.5–6 by Arnórr jarlaskáld and Hófuðlausn 18/19.7–8 by Óttarr svarti.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>1st Allit.</th>
<th>2nd Allit.</th>
<th>3rd Allit.</th>
<th>1st hend.</th>
<th>2nd hend.</th>
<th>1st hend.</th>
<th>2nd hend.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld</td>
<td>engr</td>
<td>annarr</td>
<td>áðr</td>
<td>engr</td>
<td>þengill</td>
<td>áðr</td>
<td>láði</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Óttarr svarti</td>
<td>engr</td>
<td>elda</td>
<td>áðr</td>
<td>engr</td>
<td>þrøngvir</td>
<td>áðr</td>
<td>láði</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Nýquist 2014: 38.

Arnórr jarlaskáld

Magnúsdrápa 7.5–8 (Skj B1: 313).

Engr hefr annarr þengill
áðr svá gnógu láði
– bráskat bragnings þroski –
barnungr und sik þrungit.

Öttarr svarti

Hófuðlausn 18/19.5–8 (Skj B1: 272).

Breið eru austr til Eiða
þættlond und þér; Gǫndlar
engr sat elda þrøngvir
áðr at sífu láði.
alliterating words, even though they are part of different compounds, include the word land-. The word is self-standing lands ['lang.gen'] in Óttarr’s couplet or as the latter part of a compound in the works of Arnórr. This could be a rather unique way to assimilate a common or convenient hending into different poetic and geographic contexts.\(^{10}\)

There are a few things worth mentioning about this example. The first is that the metrical positions filled by the element land vary; being in position 1 in Óttarr’s verse, but Arnórr seems to use this consistently in a different way and varies between its use in position 2 only or inflected to extend into position 3 which could be indicative of the development of idiolectal features which occur across his compositions. It is also possible that due to the somewhat conventional nature of the land–branda word-pair and Arnórr’s use of compounds rather than simplex forms could indicate the correspondence here is incidental and instead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>1(^{st}) Allit.</th>
<th>2(^{nd}) Allit.</th>
<th>3(^{rd}) Allit.</th>
<th>1(^{st}) hend.</th>
<th>2(^{nd}) hend.</th>
<th>1(^{st}) hend.</th>
<th>2(^{nd}) hend.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amórr jarlaskáld</td>
<td>Word</td>
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<td>Word</td>
<td>Word</td>
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<td>1(^{st}) line</td>
<td>2(^{nd}) line</td>
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<td>1(^{st}) line</td>
<td>2(^{nd}) line</td>
<td>2(^{nd}) line</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nóregs</td>
<td>njóta</td>
<td>nýtr</td>
<td></td>
<td>létat</td>
<td>njóta</td>
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<td>Óttarr svarti</td>
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\(^{10}\) Matthew Townend’s edition (2012) has “landfolk” rather than “lands”.

\(^{10}\) as is a reconstruction
this example may be more indicative of Arnórr re-using the same rhyme-pairs as seen in Table 4 as well. It cannot be ruled out, however, that Arnórr’s inspiration for this particular example, common though it would have been, was not from Hőfuðlausn.

The last example in Table 9 comes from couplets from Hőfuðlausn 15/16.3–4 and Hrynþenda 4.3–4. In these final couplets, it is the second line alliteration and hending that are shared between these two poets through the word pair skeið [‘ship’] and reiði [‘rigging’]. This adalhending rhyme is a commonplace collocation that looks to have been well established in skaldic diction.11 It is unremarkable except as another example of similar word constellations between the two poets.

These nine instances of similar hending and alliterative word constellations recurring between compositions of Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld and Óttarr svarti indicate that some relationship between the two skalds and their works may exist beyond what can be explained by simple coincidence, although an examination of the entire corpus would be necessary to make this possibility into a certainty. It is also interesting that all of the instances of similarity which I have found between these two poets involve only Óttarr’s Hőfuðlausn rather than other poems he composed (of which two are relatively well preserved, along with a few so-called lausavísur, or independent stanzas or helnings). This could indicate Hőfuðlausn became something of an exemplar for Arnórr, a work which he called to mind to for inspiration and compositional aid when composing his own poetry, and which may have influenced his diction more generally. Thus the assimilation of useful or well-liked alliterative or hending word combinations may have been remembered and used by Arnórr to aide in the composition of his own oral poetry.

It may be that Arnórr intentionally assimilated word constellations from Óttarr into his own work, but it is also possible that Arnórr simply internalized these lexical pairs and subconsciously incorporated these constellations into his own work without necessarily calling Óttarr’s Hőfuðlausn to mind in each instance. The connection between Arnórr and Óttarr is also supported by the origins and locations of these poets. Both were Icelanders who spent time at various courts throughout Scandinavia (although not necessarily at the same time) and they may have been exposed to the same popular verses circulating throughout these locales. It is also likely that they would have had the opportunity to be exposed to one or the other’s poetry as their own verses circulated orally around the social sphere of Iceland and Scandinavia. The dating of their works nevertheless makes it more likely that Arnórr was influenced by Óttarr than vice versa. There is, of course, the possibility of another explanation for these similarities, including that they are purely the result of coincidence, but within the context of my larger research project, there is a real possibility that such word constellations may have been used to aide in the composition of skaldic poetry.

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Table 9. Hronhenda, Magnúsdrápa 4.3–4 by Arnórr jarlaskáld and Hőfuðlausn 15/16.3–4 by Óttarr svarti.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnórr jarlaskáld</td>
<td>skjöldungr</td>
<td>skorum</td>
<td>skeiðar</td>
<td>skjöldungr</td>
<td>hvölðan</td>
<td>skeiðar</td>
<td>reiði</td>
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<tr>
<td>Óttarr svarti</td>
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Assimilation in Context
Including the examples presented in this paper, there are a total of nine different instances within my research where a poem by Arnór shares common word constellations with Óttarr’s Höfuðlausn. In addition to these, there are six similarities in the dataset of my research project between Arnór’s verses and those attributed to Glúmr Geirason and five with verses attributed to other poets. These last include one with verses attributed to Eyvindr Finnsson skáldaspillir, one with the anonymous poem Oddnjör, another with verses attributed Þorleifr jarlsskáld Rauðfeldarson and two more with Þórbjörn hornklofi’s Glymdrápa, all of which are likely earlier sources from which Arnór could conceivably borrow (Nyquist 2014: 22–40). There is always the possibility that such parallels are coincidental or reflect commonplace word-pairings and constellations that were simply part of the tradition rather than the results of one poet drawing directly on the phraseology of another’s poem that he knew (cf. Frog 2009; Frog 2014). It is also possible that the attribution of authorship of some verses is incorrect or that the lexical parallels have resulted from mixing verses, rephrasing or completing missing/forgotten verses in oral circulation and by scribes in a scriptorium. However, the links between Arnór’s verses and those of other poets are clearly weighted to particular compositions rather than being random. It seems incredibly unlikely that it is purely accidental that, of 20 parallels between Arnór’s verses and those of other poets, 15 of these would be with only two other poets, and 9 (or roughly half) would be with a single poem.

In the sample corpus of this study, Óttarr svarti’s poetry, just from the poems from which I have collected data and analyzed in my master’s thesis, contains similarities in hending and alliterative word constellations with earlier poets’ works in eight instances in addition to those reviewed above. The poets involved in these possible assimilations by Óttarr include verses by Goðþormr sindri, Egill Skallagrímsson, Björn Arngeirsson hitdeálakappi and Torf-Einarr jarl (sharing the same similarity with two earlier works), Kormákr Ögmundarson, Jórunn skáldmaer, Þórhallr veiðimaör, and Bersi Skáldtorfuson (Nyquist 2014: 40–46). Each of these instances of inter-poetic similarity are possible or probable examples of Óttarr svarti assimilating lexical pairs and constellations from those poets, just as Arnór Þórðarson jarlaskáld may have assimilated useful word combinations from him.

Conclusions
While it is possible that not every one of the couplet comparisons which appear in this paper is the result of one skald assimilating a useful rhyme or alliteration into a new composition and context, there are enough such similarities that a connection between at least these poets can be inferred with some confidence. In their turn, a number of other skalds not mentioned in this article also show signs of having similarly assimilated lexical sets and phraseology from others and of having their own expressions adapted more widely. My data, while by no means covering all relevant verses, shows that even in this incomplete sample there are a great number of cases where the subtle adaptation of one skald’s hending and alliterative word constellations into a new context could have been a tool for the composition of skaldic poetry (Nyquist 2014). The case of Arnór and Óttarr is illustrative of this pattern in compositional practice. Arnór Þórðarson jarlaskáld and Óttarr svarti may also serve as examples of a potentially more widespread use of hending and alliterative assimilation throughout the wider skaldic corpus. It is a real possibility that some skalds used their knowledge of socially circulating verses to subtly incorporate useful rhyming and alliterating words into their own works as compositional aides for the difficult metrical requirements of skaldic verse.

Whether or not a widespread trend is likely, it certainly seems that using hending and alliteration word constellations to compare the works of Arnór jarlaskáld and Óttarr svarti reveals evidence of a direct connection between their works. From my research, I believe that there is a real possibility that some skalds, like Arnór in the examples presented in this article, assimilated
useful word constellations into their own compositions, which may in turn have developed into an integrated part of the poet’s own idiolect. Although it cannot be said with complete certainty that this type of assimilation was widely used by Old Norse poets, the evidence merits a closer look at skaldic composition using hending and alliterative assimilation as a possible tool for oral composition.

Acknowledgements: The pilot study on which the present work is based was undertaken for the completion of a Master of Arts degree at the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Oslo. I would like to thank my advisor Mikael Males for his advice and his recommendation to approach the compositional methods of skaldic poetry by examining hending and alliteration which formed the basis for my thesis.

Notes
1. Ilya Sverdlov (p.c.) points out that hendings are often overlooked in skaldic studies, yet are, in fact, a key element in the structure of skaldic verse, and scholars such as Olga Snárnitskaya (1994: 345, 349–356, 359–377) base their original metrical analysis of dróttkvætt on them, in a significant departure from the popular system (Kuhn 1983; Gade 1995) based on Sievers’ five types.
2. This view is based on the search engine for Skj B of the Skaldic Database. I have only found Unganleyðir and unгрleyða together in these couplets.
3. The other instances where eigîlagir appear together in couplets are Rognvaldr jarl Kali Kolsson, lausavísia 13.5 (Eigîlagir) and lausavísia 35.1 (Eigîlagir), Skarphêðinn Njáðsson, lausavísia 2.1; (Eigîlagir), and Ketilrîðr Hölmkslóttir, lausavísia 1.1 (Eigîlagir). In addition, frøgr–agir ['famous’–‘sea']also appears as a common word pair.
4. According to the Skj B search, the stem þorð- and verb varða only appear together in these examples.
5. In Skj B, Ængr–, gonguþygni. Yngvi combinations are found in these examples along with only one additional work by Þorkell Hamarskáld (Magnúsdrápa 5.1, specifically “Uppgongu réð yngvi ítr með helming liðinn; Skj B: 408).
6. According to my searches of Skj B1, síking- and mikl- combinations are only found together in these examples.
7. This is based on the my searches of Skj B1.
8. These are the only instances where I have found þengill/þengi together in Skj B.
9. In addition to these four land/þranda examples, I have found nine other instances where poets use this word combination, including an additional example from Hjólulauð 17.2 by Óttarr svarti (landr róðþundum, þranda; Skj B2: 271).
10. Frog (2014: 299) discusses a similar rhyme-pair with eyr in place names and þeyr as the second element in a preceding battle kenning.
11. Skeið- /reid- word combinations appear to be more common in Skj B1 than even land/þranda, appearing frequently together in different compounds and line positions (in at least 16 additional instances). The frequency with which these word pairs appear in the corpus most likely implies a different explanation for their recurrence in the works of different skalds, but it is still worth noting these similarities between Ærnórr and Óttarr’s works. It is interesting to note however that skeið- usually takes the second hending position in the other examples and reid- the first, but in these two instances their respective positions are switched.

Works Cited

Sources


Literature


Personal name systems are under scrutiny in a current research project at the University of Helsinki “Personal Name Systems in Finnic and Beyond”. The present article is an overview of the project and contains an introduction to the project’s goals and methods. Led by Terhi Ainiala (University of Helsinki), funding for the project is provided by the Academy of Finland (2015–2019).

The project focuses on the study of anthroponymic (i.e. personal name) systems in Uralic languages with a special emphasis on reconstructing their historical strata and cultural contacts reflected in personal names. The project aims to reconstruct, as far as possible, Pre-Christian or early Christian anthroponymic systems on the basis of archive materials, fieldwork data, and by way of employment of material from modern surnames and toponyms. A special emphasis is laid on the study of Finnic languages and Mari (a Uralic language spoken primarily in the Mari El Republic of the Russian Federation), but also the other Finno-Ugrian languages are taken into consideration. It is the research group’s aim to develop a Uralic anthroponymic database that would enable the systematic collection of the personal name material from Finno-Ugrian languages and provide basic guidelines for its structural and semantic analysis.

**Personal Naming in Cultures**

Cultural information – such as a people’s religious, linguistic and ethnic identity – is always reflected in personal names. As a result, historical researchers, cultural researchers and sociologists continuously regard anthroponyms as subjects of great interest. Personal names are not isolated elements in any language or its nomenclature but represent a system with different sub-systems, such as first name systems and surname systems in European languages. These systems are culture-specific; some languages use several first names, others user patronyms, some prefer names passed on within the family, while some employ new names for every generation, etc.

In all cultures, giving a child a name means that he or she is accepted as a member of the community. Richard Alford (1988) has demonstrated that personal names express the identity of a person in two ways: In the first place, personal names tell the other members of the community who the individual in question is. Secondly, personal names tell the community who he or she is or is expected to be. Personal names thus have a significant role in building a person’s individual and social identity and constituting links between generations, families, clans and tribes. They express different religious, political, ethnic and other values associated with groups of people. In this connection they also reflect political, religious or value change and build historically multi-layered systems that can be implemented in the cultural reconstruction of past world views.

In addition to identification, a name also has a function of classification. Personal names do not only identify a person but also make him or her a member of a group and provide him or her with a social identity, an identity which is often explicitly gendered. Personal names powerfully signify speakers’ sense of local belonging, cultural identity and system of values. While the basic identification function of personal names is the same everywhere, their secondary societal and group linked functions may vary quite a bit, depending on cultural context. As elements inherited from the past, names often reflect more archaic linguistic and cultural relations, concepts and value systems than the present language use, and are thus of great
significance for the investigation of past conceptual realms, inter-group relations, cultural identities and beliefs. The study of anthroponyms is thus an inherently interdisciplinary field of investigation with implications beyond pure onomastics.

Notwithstanding the central nature of anthropomorphic systems as identity bearers and as source of cultural information, Finno-Ugrian personal name systems have been relatively little studied. The only monographic treatment regarding the old anthroponymic system of the Finnic-speaking people (Stoebke 1964) is already a half a century old and reflects the point of view of early structural linguistics. Some anthroponymic handbooks have been published, especially on surnames (cf. Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000; Rajandi 2005; Černyh 1995) and a handful of modern and well-founded investigations have seen publication, particularly works on the topic of Udmurt tribal (or Vorshud) names (Atamanov 1996; 2001). However, most of the naming motivations of the Uralic speaking people remain little studied. The toponymic investigations by Müllo nen (1994, 2002), Karlova (2004) and Saarikivi (2003; 2006) shed light on some aspects of the old anthroponyms, particularly those in the historical area of the eastern Finnic languages, as reconstructed on the basis of toponymic material. The same group of names is also investigated in light of material from Novgorod birch bark letters in an article by Saarikivi (2007). It is obvious that a similar methodology could also be implemented in search of old anthroponyms in other contexts.

Yet the general impression is that while the toponymic research in Finland developed entirely new paradigms starting from the 1970s and reached many fruitful results regarding name typology, distribution of name models and layering of toponyms (see e.g. Ainiala & Saarelma & Sjöblom 2012: 47–60), the historical study of anthroponyms has largely come to a standstill. No attempt at an etymologically relevant reconstruction of the old Finnic – or other Finno-Ugrian personal name systems – has been published. This is the more regrettable given that new material for such an enterprise is now available not only in expanding place name collections but also in the field of comparative mythology and folklore, where new and significant results enable us to reconstruct historic Finnic cultural layers reflected in oral poetry and (pre-Christian) religious practices (cf. Siikala 2012).

Objectives and Expected Results

The primary aim of the project is to reconstruct, etymologically describe and contextually study Pre-Christian and Early Christian Uralic anthroponymic systems. A special emphasis is placed on Old Finnic and Mari personal name systems. In addition, reconstruction of anthroponymic systems of other Uralic languages will be undertaken.

Material used for the purposes of reconstruction of old personal names is primarily the variants of anthroponyms, mainly surnames, attested historically or in the onomastic material collected by fieldwork, and also the toponyms derived from anthroponyms. Similar methodologies have earlier been employed by Karlova (2007) and Saarikivi (2007) and these approaches will be developed further in the course of the research. Self-evidently, the proposed reconstruction will not be complete. Reconstruction conducted in the framework of this project can only be considered the first step of such an undertaking. Materials studied in the project derive from existing databases, publications and archives, and are supplemented by fieldwork conducted during the project.

Besides this primary goal, the project has important implications for the cultural reconstruction of the past of Uralic-speaking peoples. Pre-Christian or Early Christian anthroponyms reflect the world view of the early communities of the Northern Eurasian hemisphere. It is estimated that research involving anthroponymic material will reveal mythological concepts and denominations of neighbour ethnicities as well as culturally relevant naming practices related to the ethnolinguistic world view of past populations. In this interdisciplinary framework, the project will employ, as far as possible, folkloristics, comparative religion, and comparative mythology.
The aforementioned research will shed light on many problems central to Finno-Ugrian onomastics and – most notably – will assist in deciphering a large number of modern surnames, toponyms (especially settlement names) and layers of nomenclature systems. Further, this research is likely to bring into focus different naming motivations deriving from various cultural periods, for instance, hunter-gatherer vs. agricultural, theophoric vs. characterizing of an individual and inherited vs. borrowed motivations. In this respect, it is likely that project results will be implemented beyond onomastic science, most notably contributing to our understanding of early history and prehistory, folklore, comparative religion and mythology.

For more information, please visit our website at http://blogs.helsinki.fi/personal-name-systems/.

Key Literature


Stockholm University’s “Myth, Materiality and Lived Religion” conference was held at the City Conference Center in Stockholm from the 4\textsuperscript{th} to 5\textsuperscript{th} November. Over the course of its two days, the conference presented a variety of perspectives and angles on the topics of Norse Mythology, materiality, and the concept of lived religion. The program was arranged with a speaker and a respondent, who were both provided time to present before discussion was open to the audience.

On Wednesday, the conference started up with a common lunch for all speakers and respondents. Afterward, Olof Sundqvist, Bengt Norén and Annika Olsson (all representatives of the University of Stockholm) welcomed everyone in the conference room. During the first session, with focus on \textit{Myths in Pictures}, Olof Sundqvist had the chair.

Anders Hultgård (Uppsala University) was the first speaker with “Myth on Stone and Tapestry: Ragnarök in Pictures?”. Hultgård presented (with a few examples) problems one must deal with when interpreting iconographical material. Carved pictures on rune stones and the Överhogdal tapestry cannot easily be interpreted as featuring motifs from Norse Mythology, but neither can the motifs be interpreted as clearly Christian. John Lindow (University of California, Berkeley), the respondent noted how the material forces us to examine a context of religions merging and interacting.

The second speaker was Margrethe Watt (Museum of Bornholm) with “Do the Gold Foil Figures (gullgubbar) Reflect Norse Mythology?”. Watt’s presentation focused on a very interesting groups of motifs that are distinguishable in the iconography of the gold foil figures. Instead of trying to identify characters appearing on the gold foil, we are better off looking more to the context, hence the interpretation as depictions of warlords/gods. The paper’s respondent was Maria Pettersson (RAÄ Linköping).

Sigmund Oehrl (Georg-August-Universität-Göttingen) was the third speaker, presenting “Picture Stones from Gotland Analyzed with the Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) Method”. Oehrl presented a new method of scanning picture stones, a method which yields astonishing results. New iconographic material becomes visible and old interpretations can be revisited. The paper’s respondent was Anne-Sofie Gräslund (Uppsala University).

The second session of the day was \textit{Myths in Texts I} and featured Peter Jackson (Stockholm University) in the chair. The session’s first speaker was Steve Mitchell (Harvard University) with “Niðhoggr and his Kin”. Mitchell discussed dragons, serpents and other terrifying – but also protective – creatures of Norse Mythology. The paper’s respondent was Judy Quinn (University of Cambridge).

The second speaker of the session was Rudolf Simek (University of Bonn) with “Demons, Illnesses and Amulets”, discussing amulet artefacts and inscriptions related to illness. How can myth be more materialized than in an amulet? The chants and protective words of medieval amulets reflect much older concepts. The paper’s respondent was Pernille Herrmann (Aarhus University).

The third speaker of the day was Stefan Brink (University of Aberdeen) with “Law and Myth”. Brink presented reflections of Norse myth and cult practice in medieval law codes. Some of these sources provide a glimpse at the lived religion. The paper’s respondent was Jonas Wellendorf (University of California, Berkeley).
That evening all speakers and respondents were invited to a reception and dinner at Stockholm City Hall, with the City of Stockholm as their host.

Beginning Thursday 5th November, the third session focused on the theme Myth in Texts II and featured Catharina Raudvere as session chair.

The session’s first speaker was Eldar Heide (University of Bergen) with “Old Norse Vision Literature and the Term leiðla ‘Guiding’: An Introduced Genre and Its Indigenous Background”. Heide discussed how the Old Norse term leiðla might provide a clue for the prominence of indigenous vision literature, as contrasted with the Christian vision literature tradition. The paper’s respondent was Carolyne Larrington (Oxford University).

The second speaker of the session was Frederik Wallenstein (Stockholm University) with “What Does Odin Do to the túnridor? – An Attempt at Contextualizing Hávamál 155”. Discussing the interpretations of the stanza in the Old Norse poem Hávamál, Wallenstein highlighted the usefulness of comparative perspectives and the contextualization of the phenomenon described. The paper’s respondent was Terry Gunnell (University of Iceland).

The day featured a second session. This session focused on the theme Myth and Social Practice. Anders Hultgård held the chair position for the session and the first speaker of the session was Frog (University of Helsinki) with “Understanding Embodiment through Lived Religion: Authority, Social Practice and Imaginal Experience”. Frog pointed at how mythological themes and motifs are given different expressions and characteristics depending on context, genre and practice. The paper’s respondent was Margaret Clunies Ross (University of Sydney).

The second speaker of the session was Tommy Kuusela (Stockholm University) with “Halls, Gods and Giants: The Enigma of Gullveig in Odin’s Hall”. Kuusela presented a new interpretation of the mythological motif of the arrival and killing of Gullveig in Odin’s hall. A contextualization might speak in favor of an interpretation of Gullveig as a giantess and her killing as the start of a primordial battle between gods and giants. The paper’s respondent was Eldar Heide (University of Bergen).

After a lunch break, the next session started with focus on Myth, Animals and Sacrifices. Torun Zachrisson held the chair position. The first speaker of the session was Christina Fredengren (Stockholm University) with “Finitude: Human and Animal Sacrifice in a Norse Setting”. Fredengren presented research from an ongoing project involving analyzing human and animal sacrifices in wet areas in Sweden. Recent excavations have yielded new material that may potentially be the remains of human sacrifices and old excavations are therefore being revisited. The paper’s respondent was Catharina Raudvere (Copenhagen University).

The second speaker of the session was Ola Magnell (RAÄ, Lund) with “Animals of Sacrifice: Animals and blót in the Old Norse Sources in Relation to Faunal Remains from Settlements and Ritual Depositories”. Magnell provided examples of (and statistics for) correspondence between mythological and narrative descriptions of animal sacrifices and osteological remains from settlement finds and ritual deposits. Regional differences in fauna and differences between settlement finds and ritual deposits were clear. The paper’s respondent was Kristin Armstrong Oma (University of Stavanger).

The final session of the conference focused on the theme of Myths in Texts III and featured Anders Andrén as the chair.

The first speaker of the session was Jens Peter Schjødt (Aarhus University) with “Mercury – Wotan – Óðinn: One or Many?”. Schjødt discussed problems (and possible confusion) when speaking of potentially different gods as one and the same. There is a need to define in what manner one might speak of the same god – or several different gods. Depending on one’s perspective, the answer to Schjødt’s question is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. The paper’s respondent was Peter Jackson.

The final speaker of the session was Merrill Kaplan (Ohio State University) with “Gruesome Gold in Sigurðarkviða in skamma 49–50”. Kaplan explicated the many
dimensions of two stanzas of *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* with their subtleties of potential meanings. An underlying correspondence and reflection between gold and the color red is to be found in stanzas 49–50 of the Old Norse poem *Sigurðarkviða in skamma*. For example, a red golden necklace could also mean a gruesome bleeding death. The paper’s respondent was Agneta Ney (Uppsala University).

Peter Jackson, Andreas Nordberg (Stockholm University) and Olof Sundqvist provided the final words of the evening and the conference wrapped with a dinner for speakers and respondents at the Stockholm restaurant Ulla Winbladh.

**“The Ontology of Supernatural Encounters”: The 4th Symposium of the Old Norse Folklorists Network**

*10th–12th December 2015, Tartu, Estonia*

Tommy Kuusela, Stockholm University

The fourth symposium of the Old Norse Folklorists Network took place in the lovely town of Tartu at the beginning of December. The weather gods approved of this international gathering of scholars interested in the supernatural, smiling upon us and blessing the days with mild and sunny weather. Organized by Daniel Sävborg (University of Tartu), Mart Kuldkepp (University College London) and Karen Bek-Pedersen (University of Southern Denmark), this time the topic was dedicated to the question of the ontology of supernatural encounters in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, myth and legend, as well as the ontology of later Scandinavian folklore – a theme that was pondered and illuminated during the many presentations and subsequent discussions throughout the conference.

The first presentation was by a keynote speaker, John Lindow (University of California, Berkeley), who gave a most interesting and stimulating interpretation of “The Essential Other: Continuity and Discontinuity in World View”. He very convincingly showed how notions of world views both changed in the past and still linger yet in Scandinavian myth and folklore. Lindow immediately brought folklorists and scholars of Old Norse religion and literature together, as the topic he discussed was one of interdisciplinary importance. The first two parallel sessions were *Dead and Buried* and *Monsters and Ghosts*. As I was one of the presenters in the latter, the choice of which session to attend was decided for me. Arnhild Mindrebo started with her paper “The Haugbrot in Harðar saga”. She discussed the supernatural incidents of the haugbrot episode within the saga from an archaeological point of view, and also mentioned grave mounds and their inhabitants in later, mainly Norwegian, folklore. The next speaker was myself, with a paper that I titled “Is the Year Walk (Sw. årgång) Ritual a Remnant from Pre-Christian Traditions?” With the presentation, I tried to refute the often repeated notion that a Swedish folk tradition known as the ‘year walk’ is an ancient practice, traceable to a heathen past. After my talk, Agneta Ney (Uppsala University) presented “Ghost Riders as Motif in Heroic Poetry and Ballads”. She compared the motif of the ghost riders, known from heroic poetry in the *Poetic Edda*, with medieval ballads from Scandinavia, and focused on the dialogues and what social implications they mediated for a contemporary audience.

The other session was more focused on a single topic, namely the dead in folklore and burial mounds in Old Norse literature. Over lunch at the Vilde Restaurant, word was that it had been a most stimulating session. The presenters were Jan Kozák (Charles University in Prague) with “Burial Mound as a Projection Screen”, Gerður Halldóra Sigurðardóttir (University of Iceland) with “Managing the Dead: Performances of Death in Old Norse Literature and Scandinavian Folklore”, and Sara Duppils (Gavle University) and Sandra Lantz (University of Aberdeen) with “The Living Dead in Folk Religion – A New Perspective”. The next two sessions were *Fornaldarsögur* and *Bodies Big and Small*. It was a tough call, but I decided to attend the first of these, which opened with
Helen Leslie-Jacobsen’s (University of Bergen) “Coming Face to Face with Sigurd Fafnesbane in Medieval Norway”. Leslie-Jacobsen considered the fact that while the archangel Michael is biblical, and a legitimate object of belief for medieval churchgoers, this is less immediately obvious of Sigurður. From this, she moved on to discuss how Sigurður was conceptualised and understood in medieval Norway, particularly in regards to his physicality. Next up was J.Y.H. Hui (University of Cambridge) with “The Making of Paranormal Weapons: Pointed Messages in Örvar-Odds saga”. He discussed two sets of supernatural arrows in Örvar-Odds saga. The second set is given to the hero by Óðinn (or at least an Ódinic character) to defeat his enemies, who are worshippers of Freyr and resilient to his first set of arrows. He argued that it can be read in conjunction, rather than in contrast to, the important subtext of Oddr’s Christian faith. In the parallel session (which I could not attend) Eva Þordís Ebenezersdóttir (University of Iceland) presented “(Super)Natural Bodies”, followed by Scott T. Shell (University of California, Berkeley) who presented his understanding of “Hidden Children as Represented in Germanic Folklore”. The conference was in full swing at this time and the subsequent coffee break became a field for much fruitful discussion on the supernatural combined with appreciation for the presentations so far.

After the break, two new parallel sessions started, entitled What is Natural? and Ontology. As earlier, it was a tough choice to pick a session, but feeling in the mood for some ontology, I went for the second one. The session started with Frog (University of Helsinki) who reflected on the complicated topic “Ontologizing Integers of Supernatural Encounters: Approaching Meanings in Mythic Discourse”. Frog focused on symbolic elements. With this he meant mythic images, motifs and plots that engage imagination and are expressed through language. He then postulate a formal ontology as a tool for discussing descriptions of supernatural encounters as use and variation of these symbols in mythic discourse. He argued that recombinations of these elements construct the meaningfulness of narrated events, while they at the same time can potentially blur the line between natural and supernatural encounters. Frog was followed by Andreas Schmidt (Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich) who presented “Goddess, Fylgja or Fiction? – Þorgerðr Hörðabrúðr, the Vanir and the Question of Mythic Structures”. Schmidt investigated how the chieftain Sigmundr Brestisson in Færeyinga saga undergoes an initiation to Óðinn and Þorgerðr when he becomes the ruler of the Faroe Islands. He then moved on to an examination of Þorgerðr and her nature as a whole. He argued that a mythic substructure, with emphasis on the Vanir, can be found within the saga itself. In the other session Csete Katona (University of Debrecen) considered aspects of Njáls saga with “Weak Magic? – Some Notes on the Allegedly Supernatural Nature of Gunnar’s Halberd in Njáls saga” and Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist (Stockholm University) discussed perceptions of the world in his talk “At the Edge of the Known World: Supernaturality and the Old Norse Geographical Perceptions of the World”. These papers concluded the sessions of the opening day. Before dinner, participants were given the choice of a tour of Tartu with either a Swedish- or English-speaking guide. For my part, I went back to my hotel and, before getting some rest, I considered that the atmosphere of the symposium had been scholarly, merry and friendly – a great first day.

The second day started, like the first, with a keynote speaker, this time Mikael Häll (Lund University). Häll provided a brilliant survey of fascinating material and results from his doctoral dissertation, composed in Swedish in 2013. It was a good occasion to introduce his impressive study to an international audience. Häll’s presentation bore the long title “Carnal Spirits of Nature and Demonic Bodies of Vapour: The Ontology and Sexuality of Supernatural Beings in Early Modern Swedish Folklore and Demonology”. In his eloquent presentation, Häll considered how intimate encounters and sexual intercourse with nature spirits became a crime against the natural order in 18th and early 19th century Sweden. For this crime, some people were sentenced to
death via the secular and ecclesiastical laws of Sweden. Hall demonstrated how popular conceptions were translated into the language of demonology in court cases during this period. Supernatural beings, like the Neck and the forest nymph, were attributed to the Devil and therefore became associated with evil spirits and a crime against nature.

After the keynote, two parallel sessions started, labelled Reality? and Otherworld Beings. Once more, the choice was hard to make, but inspired by the last keynote, I settled for the second session. The first speaker was Julian Goodare (University of Edinburgh) who spoke of “Visionaries and Nature Spirits in Scotland”. He described how visionaries in early modern Scotland reported encountering nature spirits, generally fairies, and that these experiences were often traumatic and felt to be ‘real’. Goodare went on to discuss how the visionaries themselves understood their relationship with these encounters. After Goodare, Ugnius Mikučionis (University of Bergen) went up to the stage and presented his paper “Recognizing a Dwarf – Myths and Facts”. He rightly disputed the often mentioned notion, at least in popular culture, that dwarfs were considered a short, bearded, and male-only race. Mikučionis concentrated his focus on several Old Norse texts that provide a more or less detailed description of the physical appearances of the Nordic dwarfs. In addition, he argued that the Norse dwarfs were not considered to have looked the same and did not fit a general description. The last speaker in this session was supposed to be Sander Mändoja with “Presentation of PhD Project: Water Spirits in Swedish Folk Legends” but unfortunately she was ill and could not attend, so we decided to use the last minutes for further deliberations on the topic of Norse dwarfology.

The presentations for the parallel session consisted of Daniel Sävborg with “Folk Belief and Fantastic Fiction in Íslendingasögur: What is What?”, Pasi Enges (University of Turku) with “Approaching Reality and Fantasy through Belief Narratives”, and Kaarina Koski with “The Moral Grounds of Reality in Finnish Folklore and Vernacular World View”. I heard that the presentations in that session had also been highly stimulating. After yet another merry lunch at Vilde Restaurant, we readied ourselves for the final sessions: Saga Monstrosities and Thresholds of Christianity. I found the name of the first of the three parallel sessions most interesting and decided to attend it. The session opened with Arngrímur Vidalín (University of Iceland) who presented “Paranormal Encounters in the Sagas”. He asked whether medieval audiences could believe in narratives about monsters and strange creatures or if they rather would have simply thought those accounts to be believable. He had kindly sent us an article in advance from a soon to be published anthology, where he argues for the term paranormal over the term supernatural in saga literature.

Rebecca Merkelbach (University of Cambridge) was up next with “Meeting the Monster: The Social Implications of Berserk Encounters in Íslendingasögur”. Merkelbach addressed human encounters with different kinds of berserkers in the Family Sagas, considered the reactions they provoke in members of society and what they tell us about society’s perception of the berserker as monster. Sadly, the next speaker, Kirsi Kanerva (University of Turku) with “Wonders, Apparitions, Delusions? – Supernatural Phenomena in Sagas”, never made it to the conference due to an illness. In the other session, Ülo Valk (University of Tartu) presented “The Devil and Nature Spirits between Christianization and Nation Building” and Mart Kuldkepp presented “The Distress of Bárðr: Community and Christianity in Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss”.

It was decided that the last speaker for “Thresholds of Christianity” should be addressed to all of the participants. Everyone gathered in anticipation for the final presentation: Maths Bertell (Mid Sweden University) with “I bumped into Thor the Other Day; He Told Me to Say Hi – The Idea of the Holy Pre- and Post-Conversion”. Bertell asked what it means to meet the divine, the holy, in the perspective of a religious person. With examples from comparative religion, he argued that, rather than searching for Christian influences in the Icelandic texts, we should look elsewhere and
try to see our own material in a new light. In a way, Maths’ presentation worked as a keynote and was positively received. Like John Lindow’s opening, it was a wide-reaching topic that addressed everyone in the lecture hall. Only one thing remained on the schedule – a special trollological reception at the Tartu City Museum, meaning that one of the organizers, Daniel Sävborg, had invited us to participate in a celebration of his 50th birthday. The reception was wonderful and a proper celebration of Sävborg, who had worked hard to make the conference possible.

The friendly quality of the reception – and throughout the conference – was encouraging and favourable for networking.

My overall impressions of the conference is positive and optimistic, not only were the presentations interesting and respectful of time frames, but I also feel that an interdisciplinary approach for discussing the ontology of supernatural encounters is both important and bridges a gap that is all too often apparent between different academic disciplines.

### Austmarr V: “No One Is an Island”

**15th–16th October 2015, Visby, Gotland**

Kendra Willson, University of Turku

The fifth annual meeting of the Austmarr network was held on 15th–16th October 2015, at the Gotland Museum in Visby, Sweden. The Austmarr network is an international, interdisciplinary network of scholars interested in cultural contacts and developments in the Circum-Baltic region in prehistoric and early historic times. The Network aims to overcome the traditional barriers among different disciplines interested in reconstructing the past (including history, history of religion, archaeology, folklore, linguistics and philology), and between the national traditions in each of those disciplines in re-examining the crucial role of contacts in shaping the modern ethnic identities (Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, Finnic, and Sámi) found around the Baltic Sea. The 2015 event was sponsored by the National Board of Antiquities and the Gotland Museum, with funding from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. The main organizers of the event were Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt (Swedish National Heritage Board, Visby) and Per Widerström (Gotland Museum, Visby).

The theme of the meeting was “No One Is an Island: Islands in the Baltic Sea 500–1500 AD: Characteristics and Networks in an Interdisciplinary Perspective”. As Michael Meichsner (University of Greifswald) put it in his talk, this perspective involves “taking the island thing seriously”; he cited Baldacchino’s (2004: 278) observation that Islands do not merely reproduce on a manageable scale the dynamics and processes that exist elsewhere. Islandness is an intervening variable that does not determine, but contours and conditions physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant ways. (Baldacchino 2004: 278.)

The island theme brought together the different contributions in a discussion of what is ‘special’ about the island communities in the Baltic Sea. The conference had a stronger archaeological emphasis than previous Austmarr seminars and a center of gravity in Sweden, with particular focus on the island of Gotland.

Early arrivals met on the evening of Wednesday, October 14th, for socialization at the Black Sheep Arms, a pub and restaurant in central Visby. On Thursday morning, following a welcome address by Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt and Per Widerström, the seminar began with Alexander Podossinov’s (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) report on “Islands in the Baltic as Reflected in Ancient Literature from Homer to Jordanes”. Ancient writings mention a number of islands in the Northern Ocean, of which the Baltic was viewed as a part. According to the Odyssey, Odysseus passes three islands on his voyage in the Northern Ocean, featuring giant man-eaters and an entrance to Hades. The island of Thule, described by Pytheas in the 3rd century
BC, was identified with various northern locations by medieval scholars. Hecataeus from Abdera, writing in the 3rd century BC, mentions the islands Elixoia ['Beyond Celtica'] and Scanza. The belief that Scandinavia was an island, rather than a peninsula, persisted until Adam of Bremen in the 11th century AD. Numerous other islands in the Baltic are mentioned by ancient Roman writers.

Tatjana Jackson (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) spoke on “Danish Islands in Knýtlinga saga”, explaining why the saga refers to the journey from Jutland to Funen and Zealand as travel north rather than east. The rotated frame of reference places the regions of Denmark in the Norse worldview, a worldview which divided the world into regions; directional terms refer to travel toward those regions. This ‘rotated’ frame of reference is not seen in other texts such as Heimskringla which were among the sources for Knýtlinga saga. However, it is seen in King Alfred’s additions to his translation of Orosius and may be reflected in other Anglo-Saxon texts. The ‘shifted’ orientation scheme appears to be more original and is preserved in Knýtlinga saga from oral tradition.

Maths Bertell (Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall) discussed “Viking Age Föglö: A Travel Route and Its Population”. Föglö is a collection of islands in shallow water in the outer Åland archipelago. It is among the first place names in Åland mentioned in medieval sources (in Valdemar Sejr’s 13th century itinerary), although it was not a power center and it lacks significant early landmarks, unlike Lemböte and Kōkar (locations also mentioned in the itinerary). The area lies along travel routes but would be difficult to navigate without a local guide. This part of the Åland archipelago has been little studied in relation to the Viking Age, although remains from the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age have been discovered. Åland in general suffers from a lack of funding for Viking Age archaeology.

Sven Kalmring’s (Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology, Schleswig) paper “Islands in the Rural Sea: Viking-Age Towns between Cosmopolitanism and Delimitation” discussed the status of the few towns (Hedeby, Ribe, Birka, and Kaupang) that are known to have developed in Viking-Age Scandinavia. He emphasized that towns were highly exceptional in the Viking Age; most of society was rural and agrarian. These few Viking Age towns functioned as conceptual ‘islands’ where different rules applied than elsewhere. Market areas were physically differentiated from the surrounding territory and were protected by rulers so that merchants would not be subject to the dangers which attended most strangers.

Merili Metsvahi (University of Tartu) discussed “The Legend about the Brother-Sister-Marriage Connected with the Lake Kaali in Saaremaa”. This lake in the middle of the Estonian island Saaremaa was caused by a meteorite landing around 400 BCE; it has been speculated that the event led to later stories about flying dragons. According to the legend discussed by Metsvahi, after a wedding between siblings was performed at a manor house, the house sank into the ground and the lake appeared in its place. The same legend is associated with other Estonian lakes, including Valgjärv, where Viking Age remains can be seen under its shallow water on calm days. The legend reflects the interface between the pre-Christian matrilineal structure of Estonian society and the patrilineal Baltic Germans. Sibling marriage is a stronger taboo in matrilineal societies, whereas in patrilineal ones, father-daughter incest is a more prevalent concern. The Baltic Germans who comprised the ruling class had a stronger taboo against marrying the lower-class peasants than their own relatives; because they were a small community, sometimes cousin marriages occurred. Metsvahi argues that this legend showing supernatural punishment for violation of incest taboos reflects the Estonian peasants’ view of the Baltic Germans.

Michael Meichsner’s “A Force from the Outside: Gotland and the Political Networks in the Baltic Sea Region in the 15th Century” discusses political changes in Gotland at the end of the Middle Ages. Whereas islands are now viewed as peripheries of remote centers, in medieval times Gotland connected and constituted the maritime space. It was strategically important in the Kalmar Union.
Gotland in the Middle Ages had had neither native nobility nor local elites. In 1407–1408, the Teutonic Knights handed over Gotland to Eric of Pomerania, who visited the island personally and introduced external controls of a type that had not been known there before. Visby was allowed to maintain its traditional privileges but entered an obligation for mutual support with the king. Peasants (i.e., rich farmers) were allowed to trade outside Visby and had an obligation to supply the king and the castle. New taxes were introduced. Five noblemen controlled Visborg and Gotland in the 15th century. That century was a time of centralization and increased administrative control. By the end of the 15th century, Jens Holgersen controlled the harbors and trade and Gotland became a more ‘normal’ part of the integrated kingdom.

The first day concluded with a runology session. Lisbeth Imer (National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen) discussed “The Rune Stone Tradition on Bornholm”. Roughly 260 rune stones are known from the island of Bornholm, dating from the 8th through the 11th centuries. Rune stones persist later there than elsewhere in Denmark, with 40 stones dating from the 11th and 12th centuries, while no Bornholm rune stones have been found contemporary with the “post-conversion rune stone boom” (970–1020 AD) in Jutland and Scania. Swedish practices may have provided a model for ornamentation on Bornholm runestones. Runic coins and lead amulets are also a prominent part of the Bornholm runic tradition.

Continuing from Imer’s presentation, Magnus Källström’s (Swedish National Heritage Board, Visby) paper “Alike or Not Alike? – The Writing Traditions on Viking Age Rune-Stones from Öland, Gotland and Bornholm” presented insular runic traditions in a comparative perspective. Traditionally these runic traditions have been compared to those of neighboring mainland areas rather than to each other. A comparison does not reveal strong patterns shared among all the islands vis-à-vis the mainland, but there are some pairwise similarities in which two of the islands pattern together.

Thursday evening concluded with a dinner at the restaurant Packhuskällaren, near the museum. The Friday morning session focused on Gotland. Early risers were given a tour of Gotland Museum exhibitions by Per Widerström. Widerström then presented on “Archaeology on Gotland: Odin and the Mask from Hellvi”. A 2nd century Roman cavalry mask helmet representing Alexander the Great was reworked as a mask featuring one bright reflective eye and one dark eye, apparently part of a pattern of ‘Odinic’ one-eyed masks and figures seen inter alia on the Sutton Hoo helmet (Price & Mortimer 2014). The altered mask appears to have been mounted on a post over a cupboard full of drinking equipment in a Viking Age house at Hellvi in Gotland.

Antje Wendt (National Historical Museum, Stockholm) spoke about “Viking Age Gold Rings on Gotland”. While silver hoards represented ‘bank accounts’, accumulations of means of payment from trade or plunder that could end up buried for religious reasons (or because they were forgotten after the death of the owner), gold hoards were specific-purpose money without commercial functions and which pattern quite differently in archaeological finds. Rings had religious functions related to ‘Odín’s law’, temple hoards, and oaths. Gold rings functioned as a symbol of the relationship between a chieftain and his retainers or between allies in a gift society. Gold rings appear to have functioned frequently as gifts – as seen in literary sources. Their design followed that of silver rings.

Ny Björn Gustafsson (Visby) spoke about “In Sight or out of Reach? – On the Production of Gotlandic and Non-Gotlandic Dress Jewellery at Stora Karlsö in the Viking Period”. The site on Stora Karlsö, off the coast of Gotland, called Stora Förvar [‘The Big Holding’], a cave partially excavated in the early 20th century, contains rich cultural deposits dating over a 6000–7000 year period. This is the only location on Gotland where molds were found for making both characteristic Gotlandic and non-Gotlandic jewelry. The ‘special’ status of Stora Karlsö (an island off the coast of an island) as not belonging to either the Swedish or Gotlandic mainland made types of production geared toward both markets possible.
The final session of the conference was devoted to ongoing and future projects. Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson (Stockholm University) described her involvement in a large interdisciplinary project in a presentation entitled “Introducing the ATLAS-Project: Late Iron Age and Early Medieval Mobility around the Baltic Reflected through Archaeology, aDNA and Isotopes”. Rapid advances in genetic sequencing techniques have enabled sequencing of ancient genetic material (aDNA) which was not possible a few years ago. In this collaboration, the archaeologists help to choose materials to sample (e.g. individuals to sequence) and ask why they are interesting. Is there a match or mismatch between genetic heritage and displayed ‘ethnic’ identity in a burial find? Between biological sex and displayed gender? Genetic and osteological analysis may, for instance, help to resolve whether the individuals in anomalous inhumation burials may have been foreigners or unfree. Genes reveal people’s heritage, population migrations, and sex. Isotope analysis of bones reveals “how you use your body” – diet, geographical context, stress, illness, injury, mobility. Funerary archaeology tells what happened when a person died. None of these types of data by themselves provides ‘the answer’ to the identities of ancient people, but combining different techniques and new technologies makes it possible to explore different pieces of the puzzle.

Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt presented “Relations between the Islands of Austmarr – A Research Proposal”. The project would compare the runic traditions of Gotland, Öland, and Bornholm. This project would include “interdisciplinary study of runic inscriptions,” involving archaeological perspectives and new forms of technical analysis as well as text-based runology. Several of the contributors had recently taken a field trip to examine the Bornholm inscriptions. The presentations by Imer and Källström at this seminar represented a pilot study for the proposed project.

Finally, Maths Bertell and Kendra Willson (University of Turku) discussed “The Future of Austmarr Network”, tracing the history and goals of the network. The network has held conferences annually since 2011. An edited volume based on selected contributions to the first three seminars is well underway, as are plans for larger projects and further books. For further information about the network and its activities, please see the Austmarr website at www.austmarr.org and contact Maths Bertell (maths.bertell[at]miun.se) or Kendra Willson (kenwil[at]utu.fi).

Works Cited


New Focus on Retrospective Methods: Resuming Methodological Discussions: Case Studies from Northern Europe

Eldar Heide, Bergen University College, and Karen Bek-Pedersen, University of Southern Denmark


New Focus on Retrospective Methods focuses specifically on the question of how and to what extent it is possible to use late source material to shed light on earlier periods – for example, the use of folklore recorded during the latter centuries in the study of pre-Christian religion. Nine different case studies presented here explore this question each in their context and each establishing thoughtful and positive, albeit cautious, responses to the central question.

This book is one of the results of the first conference of the Retrospective Methods Network held in Bergen in 2010. It is edited by Eldar Heide and Karen Bek-Pedersen, both of whom have extensive backgrounds in the field of Old Norse studies and are also well versed in folklore studies. Contributions to the volume will be briefly outlined here.

In “Nordic Folk Legends, Folk Traditions and Grave Mounds”, Terry Gunnell combines theoretical considerations with a practical study of Norwegian traditions from the 19th and 20th centuries. His main point is twofold: first, these late-recorded traditions have a concrete value in the study of pre-Christian beliefs, and second, those pre-Christian beliefs were themselves a form of folklore – an observation which effectively reduces the gap between early and late traditions to one of chronology, not of nature. The implication of Gunnell’s compelling argument is that a knowledge of folklore is, in fact, vital to the understanding of pre-Christian beliefs in the first place.

Jens Peter Schjødt, in “Folkloristic Material and Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion”, focuses on the source value of post-medieval folklore for the study of pre-Christian religion. Schjødt’s approach is extremely potent: He proposes that all of the material at our disposal is problematic, whether it is early or late, and therefore objections to late folklore sources are not methodologically sound. In addition, Schjødt highlights that the early material we have at our disposal, pre-Christian and medieval, is problematic and we must therefore maintain a
critical attitude regardless of the period of origin of any given source.

Eldar Heide sets out to outline a new method for reconstructing parts of ancient beliefs and ideas on the basis of later material in “The Semantic Side of Etymology”. His examples are linguistic and Heide’s central argument is that the semantic side of linguistic elements are weightier than the etymological side – for the simple reason that the semantic aspects represent the active meaning of a word at the time when it is used. He furthermore argues that reconstructions that can be supported by independent data are more convincing.

In “Scandinavian Folk Legends and Icelandic Sagas”, Daniel Sävborg provides an excellent example of how elements from the Sagas of Icelanders are in some cases much more easily understood when considered in relation to folklore material from the 19th and 20th centuries rather than in relation to other medieval literary sources. Tradition can, in fact, remain very stable through centuries. In this case, motifs indisputably remain the same in the 19th and 20th century Norwegian and Swedish sources as they were in medieval Icelandic sources. Sävborg persuasively argues that late variants must be descended from the same source tradition rather than based on medieval variants of written saga texts.

Rudolf Simek, in “Guldgubber and Retrospective Methods”, suggests an interpretation of the so-called *guldgubber* from the Scandinavian Migration Age based on later, medieval iconography. Since there are no contemporary sources that tell us the function of the *guldgubber* of the pre-Christian era, we must look elsewhere if we want to understand them. In this article, Simek excellently illustrates how evidence from later periods can shed light on what would otherwise remain impenetrable questions.

Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, in “Retrospective Methods in Dating Post-Medieval Rigmarole-Verses from the North Atlantic”, handles the relationship between post-medieval Icelandic *pular* recorded in the 19th century and rigmaroles from across the North Atlantic and mainland Scandinavia. Her central argument is that it is possible to anchor post-medieval Icelandic *pular* in Old Icelandic literature of the 13th century and at the same time to posit the existence of an Old Icelandic tradition of popular rigmarole verses (of which almost nothing was recorded in writing). This sort of research calls for a meticulous methodology if it is to result in convincing arguments and the article fully lives up to those demands.

Frog attempts the reconstruction of a specific narrative tradition – a tale known in the Aarne–Thompson–Uther (ATU) folktale classification system as tale type ATU 1148B – in “Germanic Traditions of the Theft of the Thunder-Instrument (ATU 1148B)”. He compares the oldest Norse version of the tale, *Prýmskvida*, to more recent traditions from the Finno-Ugric and Baltic language areas, as well as to a much earlier Greek version that establishing a significant time-depth for the narrative. The article is enlightening in terms of its approach to the material and its implications for the Old Norse version of the narrative in particular.

With “Retrospection of Medieval Landscape Change in Mid-Sweden”, Hans Antonson combines theoretical considerations with two concrete case studies. The source situation within the study of agrarian historical geography is not to be envied as there are no contemporary sources from the Early and High Middle Ages or earlier. In a practical sense, this is obviously problematic to landscape studies for these periods, yet it is also enlightening in a methodological sense: it forces researchers to extract what information they can from the sources available. Here, Antonson demonstrates exactly how this may be done with the aid of old and modern maps combined with archaeology and thus once again highlighting the value of interdisciplinary approaches.

Janne Saarikivi, in “Reconstruction of Culture and Ethnicity”, employs historical-comparative linguistics to showcase how reconstruction of cultural and religious history can be done in settings where written sources from ancient times are entirely lacking, as is the case in Finland. The reconstructive/retrospective methodology described here has – out of necessity – become particularly
highly developed within the Finnish academic tradition, but is in many ways also highly relevant to Old Norse studies of pre-Christian beliefs and traditions.

The book as a whole thus offers a diverse range of examples of how retrospective reasoning can work and the kinds of results it can yield. It serves as an invitation to both engage rigorous methodological practices when studying aspects of pre-Christian culture and to consider all relevant sources, be they early or late, with the same critical eye.

Further information can be found on the publisher’s website: http://www.folklorefellows.fi/?page_id=2884.

The Viking Age in Åland: Insights into Identity and Remnants of Culture
Joonas Ahola and Frog, University of Helsinki, and Jenni Lucenius, Åland Board of Antiquities


Åland has been a border area or a contact zone between Finnic and Scandinavian cultural and linguistic groups for at least two thousand years. This position has always had a significant impact on how the Ålanders have been seen – and still are seen – by themselves and by others. Nevertheless, numerous cultural features also inevitably emerge that distinguish the Ålandic people from their eastern and western neighbors across the centuries. The chapters that comprise The Viking Age in Åland represent several different scientific disciplines and in many cases are results of collaborative, interdisciplinary efforts. They illustrate and discuss different factors that contribute to the historical identity of the Ålanders and show how multifaceted a concept such as ‘identity’ may be. Major challenges to understanding this fascinating period are, on the one hand, the limitations of the data through which it can be observed and understood, and on the other hand, the challenge of overcoming images that have been constructed of Viking Age Åland by earlier scholarship. Much of that discourse has been inclined to approach the Åland Islands in relation to the contemporary cultures of Sweden or Finland, perhaps inevitably engaging in the political discussions of each scholar’s own times. Scholars contributing to the present volume attempt to shift attention to Åland as a cultural space in its own right. Even though focusing on the Viking Age in Åland, the chapters of this volume discuss the concept ‘identity’ as a research tool for scrutinizing the prehistoric era more generally. Although the emphasis on ‘identity’ often remains thematically central, the chapters of this volume together offer a dynamic and multifaceted arrangement of perspectives on Åland in the Viking Age.

This volume is one of the outcomes of the Viking Age in Finland project that was developed in collaboration with the Åland Board of Antiquities. In its background is a seminar-workshop held in Mariehamn, Åland, in the autumn of 2012, but it is not a volume of conference proceedings in any conventional sense. Rather than simply
reproducing papers given at that event, those initial discussions have led in many cases to cooperations and syntheses of research that was discussed, new explorations for which the discussions at the workshop provided a platform, and also the involvement of scholars who did not participate in that original event. The resulting contributions to The Viking Age in Åland approach questions of how the Ålanders identified themselves and how they were identified by the others through diverse research materials and a number of disciplines, including archaeology, folklore studies, geopolitics, history, linguistics, osteology, palaeoecology and philology. An aim of this volume has been to elaborate the understandings of Åland in the Viking Age from the perspective of different disciplines and advancing toward a synthesis of such perspectives. Several of the chapters are thus the results of close international and interdisciplinary collaborations. In order to interweave the multifaceted discussions brought together in these pages, the authors have also cross-referenced other chapters to produce dialogues that resonate throughout the volume.

Åland and the Viking Age
The Viking Age in Åland is intriguing in numerous respects. On the one hand, it was situated directly along the so-called Eastern Route that connected Scandinavia to the inland water routes leading through what is now Russia to the Middle East, and indeed a major sailing route from Birka in fact passed through the islands where the waters were more sheltered. An active presence of Ålanders in those trade networks is reflected in the wealth of finds in the archaeological record that originate from outside of Åland from as far as the Orient as well as from western continental Europe and from trade to the north. Ålandic ‘export’ is not visible in the archaeological record, yet cultural transfer in clear form the spread of a distinctively Ålandic burial rite to an area along the Volga then inhabited by the Meryans, a Uralic culture. Although Åland did not form a center of trade, the number of Viking Age coin finds implies that Ålanders were much more active in the lively trade in silver, especially prominent on the Eastern Route, than their eastern neighbours on the Finnish mainland; Ålandic society/ies seem to have been as affluent as areas of Sweden in this respect. On the other hand, the situation in the islands seems to have changed across the end of the Viking Age. The paucity of finds in the archaeological record combined with the lack of continuity in place names gave rise in the 20th century to a theory that that permanent inhabitants dispersed or otherwise disappeared and the islands were largely or wholly depopulated. This has been a great mystery in the islands’ history as well as a significant factor in the discourse surrounding it. The apparent discontinuity in language between the Viking Age and the medieval period leaves open many questions about the earlier language and culture. The essence of Åland’s Viking Age heritage has thus been obscure and, as such, grounds for speculation especially when Åland’s position and identity have been negotiated in political and nationalistic contexts. This situation requires continuous reassessment of earlier research and the development of new synthetic and multidisciplinary approaches with the potential to open some of these questions.

A historical period must be considered in relation to what preceded and followed it. Whereas the changes that followed the Viking Age seem to have largely erased continuity of evidence for considering earlier Ålandic culture and society, the period before the Viking Age seems to have entailed a radical shift in culture and restructuring of society. This is associated with a transformative influx of culture from Sweden that began from the second half of the 6th century, presumably connected to some process of immigration. The cultural transformation of this period definitely contributed to the cultural image of Åland, leading Ålandic culture often to be viewed as a mere extension of Scandinavian culture from that time on. However, as the discussions in this book reveal, Åland appears to have developed a distinctive synthetic culture that may have been quite versatile.

Identity and identification are complex concepts and research objects, especially so when inspected in connection with the ancient past. When looking at cultures and their
constructions of both their own identities and identities of others, it is essential to take a dynamic view.

Livelihoods in the Åland Islands during the Viking Age were predominantly maritime, including fishing, seal hunting and also bird hunting. Farming and animal husbandry were also practiced, and it is interesting that these appear from mortuary evidence to have been strongly linked to images that Ålanders constructed of themselves – they saw themselves as an agrarian society. Palaeobotanical evidence in fact reveals continuity in agricultural practices on the island. This evidence contradicts theories of depopulation and raises significant questions about what in fact happened with the population inhabiting the islands across that period and its identity, and how the lack of evidence of language continuity should be interpreted – or whether perhaps the continuity in agriculture reflects long-distance farming by people who had emigrated but maintained use of the land and natural resources.

The centrality of maritime activities for the sustainability in Åland meant that the means of transportation, which made connections with neighbouring areas possible, were practically available for everyone, a factor relevant to consider when looking at Ålanders in trade. Perspectives on material culture reveal contact histories and relations to both east and west, and although the language or languages of the Ålanders of the Viking Age cannot be identified through direct empirical evidence, it can also be discussed in relation to these contact histories and the maintenance of communication networks spanning the Baltic Sea. Indicators of mythology and religion of this culture also open to investigation with the possibility of new insights. Questions are also raised in this volume concerning how the population of Åland was itself perceived by the populations and polities to both its east and west.

These internal and external perspectives on identities are further complemented by situating the islands and their polity or polities in a broader geopolitical perspective that in turn reveals both new insights and opens different sorts of questions. When all of these perspectives are brought together, the result is a fascinating dialogue that can now be carried into the future through new research that engages with it.

The Organization of the Volume
A general introduction to the Viking Age in Åland by Jan-Erik Tomtlund opens the volume and the subsequent eleven chapters are organized in three broad thematic sections. Each accompanied by a brief editorial introduction to help orient the reader to its contents. Tomtlund’s concentrated overview of Åland in the Viking Age is intended to be easily accessible to non-specialist readers, leading them through different thematic areas of culture, drawing attention to many of Åland’s peculiarities that are referred to in following chapters.

The first section of the volume, Interpreting Evidence of the Past, then helps to orient the reader in the history of discourse on the Viking Age in Åland, the interpretations that have been put forward in research and the importance of developing well-founded, interdisciplinary perspectives. This section opens with Jenni Lucenius’ “In Search of Identities: A Look at Interpretations of the Viking Age on the Åland Islands”. Lucenius discusses how interpretations of Åland’s Viking Age have been treated in politically motivated discussions surrounding the Ålanders’ national identity since the nineteenth century. She highlights the fact that even scientific discussion has been colored by national idealism. In “The Other Island: Kalevalaic Epic and History”, Joonas Ahola then takes up one such interpretation in Finnish research history, identifying Åland with a mythic location Saari ['Island'] of the kalevalaic epic tradition. Ahola deconstructs this politically charged interpretation and explores the problems of earlier uses of epic as sources for historical events. He then carries discussion a step further to explore the potential significations of saari in the oral poetry tradition and considers whether Åland would have been viewed through this mythic image as a frame for understanding the ‘other’ from the perspective of groups on the mainland. Per Olof Sjöstrand then makes a powerful and detailed investigation of
historical and toponymic research associated with the Viking Age in Åland in “History Gone Wrong: Interpretations of the Transition from the Viking Age to the Medieval Period in Åland”. This tour de force seeks to reassess a number of earlier approaches to questions of cultural continuity on the islands and its alternative depopulation model with a rich review of scholarship and acute analysis.

The second section, *Between Sources and Their Lack*, leads the reader through discussions of different types of source materials as well as the problem that sources are lacking for certain areas of knowledge. Rudolf Gustavsson, Jan-Erik Tomtlund, Josefina Kennebjörk and Jan Storå open the discussion with an impressive review of archaeological evidence linked to a variety of practices in “Identities in Transition in Viking Age Åland?”. They discuss the dynamics of contacts and historical change in the culture on the islands. Although Åland is often conceived as a uniform and coherent space in modern discourse, this contribution highlights the diversity that was present across the different islands. Teija Alenius then follows with new perspectives from palaeoecology in “Viking Age Landscapes and Livelihoods in the Åland Islands: A Review of the Pollen Evidence”. Alenius shows that there is clear continuity of agriculture on the islands that has yet to be reconciled with the lack of archaeological evidence of clear settlement continuity and general lack of continuity in local place names. In “The Finnar in Old Norse Sources”, Sirpa Aalto returns to the topic of perceptions of Åland and Ålanders from other cultures, this time from the perspective of Sweden. No Old Norse saga literature is known to have referred to Åland or the Ålanders, but Aalto develops an argument which proposes that the Ålanders may have been perceived from the perspective of groups in Sweden as Finnar alongside inhabitants of Finland. This section returns to the question of cultural diversity with the islands and among the different points it addresses is the possibility that Åland was at least at some stage organized into two distinct polities. The section and the collection is then brought to a close by Frog in “From Mythology to Identity and Imaginal Experience: An Exploratory Approach to the Symbolic Matrix in Viking Age Åland”. This article introduces a methodological framework for approaching mythology within a historical arena like Åland and illustrates this through the case study of a distinctively Ålandic ritual of placing a clay model of an animal paw with the cremated remains of the deceased.
Evolving Perspectives
The present volume introduces the topic of Åland in the Viking Age and discusses it from the perspectives of a number of different disciplines with emphasis on questions of identities. It is difficult to define exactly when the Viking Age occurred in Åland, the period is generally considered to comprise the 9th and 10th centuries AD and to have ended sometime during the 11th century. The end of the Viking Age is considered to coincide with the transition from paganism to Christianity. Åland may not have been a significant location overall in the turmoil of the Viking Age, yet it was quite central in the framework of the northern Baltic Sea. Moreover, the Viking Age was a very significant period in Åland’s history. It was preceded by significant immigration and followed by radical cultural change, but while it lasted, the Viking Age meant increasing prosperity that seems to have been quite directly attached to the important trade route that connected Central Sweden to the river routes in Russia. This era then concluded with a rapid decline in economy and in population when this trade route lost importance. This period of Åland’s rise and fall, discussed in this volume from a wide array of perspectives, almost coincides with the beginning and end of the Viking Age. The chapters of this volume review earlier interpretations, present current views, and also offer exploratory investigations that will stimulate future discussions and will certainly be of interest to specialist and non-specialist alike.

For more information, please visit the publisher’s site at: http://www.tiedekirja.fi/default/viking-age-in-aland.html.
**CALLS FOR PAPERS**

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  - Short article
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