

# Folklore Fellows' NETWORK



No. 46 | June 2015



Turning points  
in the history  
of ethnographic  
descriptions of  
the peoples of the north

On the vowel euphony  
in Finnic alliterative  
folksongs

# Folklore Fellows' NETWORK

FF Network 46 | June 2015

**FF Network** is a newsletter, published twice a year, related to FF Communications. It provides information on new FFC volumes and on articles related to cultural studies by internationally recognised authors.

**Publisher**  
Finnish Academy of Science  
and Letters, Helsinki

**Editor**  
Pekka Hakamies  
pekhak@utu.fi

**Editorial secretary**  
Maria Vasenkari  
marvas@utu.fi

**Linguistic editor**  
Clive Tolley

**Editorial office**  
Kalevala Institute, University of Turku

**Address**  
Kalevala Institute, University of Turku  
20014 Turku, Finland

**Folklore Fellows on the internet**  
<<http://www.folklorefellows.fi>>

**Printing**  
Painosalama Oy, Turku

ISSN-L 0789-0249  
ISSN 0789-0249 (Print)  
ISSN 1798-3029 (Online)

**Subscriptions**  
marvas@utu.fi

## CONTENTS

PEKKA HAKAMIES The Folklore Fellows' Summer School as an institution . . . . .	3
ART LEETE Turning points in the history of ethnographic descriptions of the peoples of the north . . . . .	4
News from the Finnish Literature Society . . . . .	10
ARVO KRIKMANN On the vowel euphony in Finnic alliterative folksongs . . . . .	12
Reviews . . . . .	18



Khanty Arina in front of her home. Tyumen' Oblast, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Priuralsk rajon, Harsaim municipality, Vyl-Posl village. Photograph by Art Leete, 1998. Photographic Archives of the Estonian National Museum 2749:12.

# The Folklore Fellows' Summer School as an institution

The organisation of international Folklore Fellows' Summer School began in Finland on the initiative of the director of the Folklore Fellows' network, Lauri Honko, in 1991, and the school has been held eight times since then; the ninth begins in a month's time, on 11 June 2015. To begin with, the summer schools were demanding periods of a couple of weeks of intensive work. Participants worked on their own research or undertook course work, and the summer school had its own library available for use. This model later proved too tiring, and since the first decade of the new millennium the summer schools have been week-long seminar-type events, where lectures by leading international scholars have been offered as well as presentations of participants' own texts, comments and developments.

Participants in the summer school 'Let's get digital: doing folkloristics in the digital age' will be boarding a boat at the Aurajoki quay on 11 June to take them away from the centre of Turku to the Turku Archipelago, to the island of Seili. It is paradoxical that a summer school devoted to the topic of global networking should be organised on a remote island, which is accessible only via a limited boat connection. On the other hand, the global network does not recognise geographical remoteness, and network connections do work at the Archipelago Research Institute.

The summer schools have, since their inception, been strongly international, in fact global. A noticeable portion of the instructors come from abroad, as do the majority of the participants. This time around half the instructors are international and half Finnish, whereas the overwhelming majority of participants will be coming to Finland from different corners of the world, from as far as South America and Asia. Instructors have self-selected primarily on the basis of where a digital approach to folkloristics has developed furthest, and participants have been selected according to the orientation and topic of research indicated in the application. The summer school organisation has not been able, unlike occasionally in the past, to take responsibility for any participants' travel costs. It is therefore gratifying that geography has not been a limiting factor in

recruitment. Participation in digital folkloristics is quite concentrated in particular parts of the world, and hence the instructors for this summer school come from the USA, Estonia, Germany and Finland.

Participants in earlier summer schools have been satisfied with the courses and have been glad to recall the experiences gained. They have received high-level international tuition and at the same time been able to get to know other young researchers from across the globe with shared research interests. In this way friendly relations arise and threads are sewn in networks which may last decades, when former participants in the summer school progress in their individual ways in their careers and then meet up again later, perhaps as instructors in their turn on an international research course.

Digitalisation is something which is beginning to leave its mark all the more strongly not only on folkloristics but also on other humanities research, from the obtaining of materials to the publication of research. Hence the boundaries between fields of research are weakening, and not all the instructors of the forthcoming summer school are properly speaking folklorists. This offers a good opportunity to glance beyond the boundaries between research fields and observe how research can be carried out elsewhere which is of relevance to folkloristics. Similarly, we may extend our concept of what folklorists are capable of, what they have to offer in research into the phenomena of digital culture, and how up to date the field of folkloristics is in this relationship.

In many countries, universities have had to develop their profiles, or are in the process of doing so, reducing their expenditure and amalgamating faculties or abandoning them. Folkloristics may often have little impact, and seem an insignificant field, which may easily be absorbed into some other wider entity. In addition, there are countries where folklore has never been afforded its own faculty as a distinct field of study in the way the Nordic countries or the USA have done. It is the task of folklorists to demonstrate there is no justification for being underrated. The Folklore Fellows' Summer School is one means among many of striving to reach this goal. ■

# Turning points in the history of ethnographic descriptions of the peoples of the north

**M**y study is devoted to the analysis of the historical dynamics of the image of the Khanty, the Mansi and the Nenets. The image of northern peoples is constructed in a continuous dynamic dialogue between deeply held, almost timeless, and temporary ideas, reflections and impressions. In the course of the study I attempt to reconstruct the time-specific views of the character of the northern peoples. Modern theories of identity recognize and highlight variation, fragmentation and diversity when attempting to understand social groups. But many of the historical modes of description are much more comprehensive.

Modern notions of the culturally specific character of northern hunters and reindeer herders are associated with the literary and scholarly scripts of earlier centuries. The accounts formed in early periods of the peoples of the north proved to be extraordinarily tenacious, despite the substantial development of empirical ethnographic knowledge. Literature on the northern peoples confirms the notion of an ongoing and diverse, progressive process in the historical change of the descriptions of the Ob-Ugrian and Samoyed peoples.

## The very beginning - imaginations

It is not easy to say why the authors of classical antiquity started to describe remote northern lands they had no actual contact with. To some extent, there was an interest in trade. But why provide reports about remote lands in the far north nobody had visited and in whose territories and peoples nobody perhaps saw any prospect of interest? These descriptions of empirically unknown lands could be investigated in the hope of finding out about prospective goods and trade partners. But these seemingly impractical images provided a cognitive context of experience. And, perhaps, something magical is bound into the practice of making the first discursive steps into the unknown. Claude Lévi-Strauss argues that the aspiration of the ethnographers is always to reach the ultimate cause:



Medieval images of monsters.

Man creates something truly great only in the beginning; regardless of the sphere, only the initial step is of true value. Subsequent acts are already filled with doubt and indecision, and their intent is to regain bit by bit the already conquered territory. The greatness of the initial steps is so unshakable that even later errors blind us with their beauty. (Lévi-Strauss 1999: 535)

The first texts that describe phenomena that remain beyond existing understanding establish a primary language for a new chain of experiences. It is almost impossible to perceive something without an original experience. Ironically, these first steps soon became stereotypes, and this already happened during classical antiquity. Actually, even these first images were already borrowed from the mythology of the time. All this makes the initial descriptions conceptually obscure, derived from dark and not clearly defined intellectual and poetic sources.

Another remarkable issue in regard of these early descriptions of the north is that several authors of ancient Greece and Rome, starting with Herodotus

(writing c. 440 BC), stressed that they are not responsible for the truth-value of their notes. These authors admit that they based these accounts on rumours and they did not check stories they had heard or get access to the truth by any other means. The historians admitted their task was sometimes 'to collect fabulous marvels, and to amuse with fiction the tastes of my readers' (Tacitus c. AD 109). Polybius (c. 200–146 BC) discusses the problem of truth in his *Histories* (he regularly seriously questions the trustworthiness of earlier historical accounts of monsters, among other issues). This indicates that several historians of classical antiquity recognized the need to follow, in principle, empirical truth.

Significantly, the style and even the exact narrative plots introduced by Herodotus and other early historians remained in circulation for a long time. These descriptions dominated the scholarly literature for two millennia but in a certain way traces of these motifs can be detected even in contemporary ethnographic literature. Later fantastic images of marvellous beings survived in geographical literature but originate from classical antiquity, and even intentionally realistic descriptions encouraged a conception of the Hyperboreans as obscure and imaginary beings (see Lopez 1986: 16–17). As a rule, the formal images continued to reappear in travelogues and historical accounts but, at the same time, the ideology of these representations was transformed continually. The medieval authors explained weird creatures of the north as monstrous reflections of

pagan sinfulness. But the Renaissance brought back the desire for empirical coherence between life and images.

### Towards systematic scholarship

From the fifteenth century, empirical encounters by European scholars with the northern peoples became more frequent. This development started to deeply influence the studies of Arctic peoples (Zinner 1968: 6; Hoppál 1989: 15). In the sixteenth century, western European navigators brought from their travels a huge amount of fresh geographical knowledge (Starkov 1992: 249, 252). The medieval Christian symbols of the Arctic were replaced by empirically centred concepts of the Renaissance and modernity.

Marshall Sahlins explores the whole modern European culture as conceptually produced by influential thinkers in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (1993: 4–8). This intellectual effort involved reconfiguration of the self-image of Europeans. Soon after this, this new understanding of a rational personality became a factor that influenced the changing perception of indigenous peoples and groups. As a reflection of western cultural values and ideologies, the image of the indigenous peoples became mystified and idealized, thus confirming the desired positive values of Europe. (Sahlins 1993: 19; see also Keesing 1992)

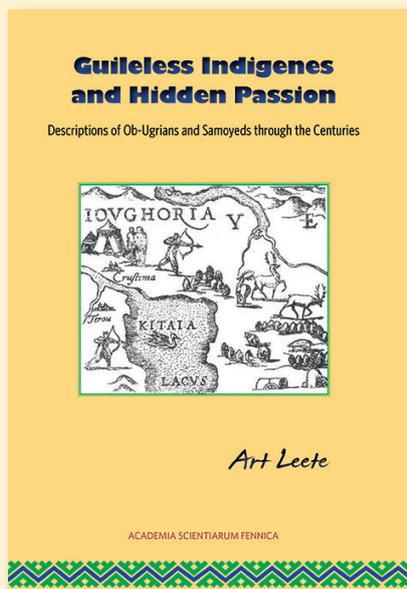
Lévi-Strauss notes that in the sixteenth century scholars were not capable of perceiving distant lands as heterogeneous. Lévi-Strauss considers the ability



The Forest Nenets Yuri Vella and his reindeer, 1999 on Varyogan River.

Eva Touluze

## A new publication in the FF Communications



### Guileless Indigenes and Hidden Passion

Descriptions of Ob-Ugrians and Samoyeds

through the Centuries

by Art Leete

This monograph is aimed at discussing the views of the character of the Khanty, Mansi and Nenets by authors of different periods. Changes of general ideas about the inhabitants of the Arctic has had a remarkable, albeit often concealed, role in the development of the research on northern peoples. The author examines the image of northern peoples beginning from ancient Greek and Roman accounts of peoples, medieval sources, modern travel journals and ends up with the analyses of contemporary scholarly writings. The book is an attempt to explore the general background of ideas and the scientific methodology that frames changes in this knowledge about the peoples of the North. The theoretical framework of this monograph is related to the dialogue between modern theories of identity and the historical modes of description. Conceptualisation of northern peoples have been affected by period-specific dominant modes of thinking about culture and appropriate ways to present one's viewpoints.

Art Leete is the Professor of Ethnology at the University of Tartu. He has been conducting ethnographic fieldwork among the Khanty, Mansi, Nenets and Komi people in Siberia and Russian North since the early 1990s. He has studied different aspects of historical-ethnographic descriptions of the Arctic and the twentieth century's social, political and religious change among the northern peoples.

Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 306  
308 pp. 2014. ISBN 978-951-41-1092-4

40 euros (hardback)

Tiedekirja Bookstore, tiedekirja@tsv.fi  
Shop online at <<http://www.tsv.fi/tiedekirja>>

to make reliable observations by the scholars of that time rather limited (1961: 55). In the course of the seventeenth century, writers started to realize the significance of evidence based on actual experience and empirical knowledge in negotiating the life and images of the northern peoples. This understanding was nurtured by the fact that since the early modern period, scholars visited Siberia and the North much more frequently than in the medieval era. More frequent actual contacts also influenced the development of analytical and philosophical discussions about the North. Critical remarks regarding the trustworthiness of sources such as Herodotus, Polybius or Tacitus were absent before the sixteenth-century *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii* ('Notes on Muscovite Affairs') by Sigismund Herberstein (1988) or the seventeenth-century travelogue by Adam Olearius (1906).

It is debatable how the new way of producing northern images was related to official policy towards the indigenous groups or how political developments shaped ethnographic images. The reforms of Peter the Great at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the Great Northern War had a definite impact on the writing tradition relating to the northern people of western Siberia. After the war, many Swedish officers, often intelligent people, were sent to Siberia. In Tobolsk alone there were approximately 800 or 900 deported officers, some of them involved in state-sponsored academic research on the indigenous groups (Zinner 1968: 68–9). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, major academic expeditions and individual scholars' research trips were arranged to the northern territories, and most of them were richly supported by the State (especially in the eighteenth century).

On the basis of empirical observations, the peoples of the north were depicted principally as normal human beings during this era. Actual descriptions depended on many details (like the scholarly skills and human qualities of the writers, but also their social or ethnic background) but the overall approach was strongly targeted at empirical truth. Ironically, this seemingly obvious and simple goal was quite difficult to achieve. This struggle indicates most explicitly the defining power of earlier intellectual authorities, who continued to remain so difficult to transcend.

These new conceptions of a personhood and indigenous culture, as well as the appearance of a new type of intellectual, formed the later modern scientific approach to the Siberian peoples. This move towards empirical and systematic descriptions is, perhaps, the most significant of the paradigmatic changes in studies of the northern peoples. Some beginnings of this methodical understanding of the North can be found already in classical antiquity. But stepping from the medieval perception of the geography of monsters into



The Khanty family of Klimovs in their conical tent, 1998 in Lower Ob area. Photographic Archives of the Estonian National Museum 2749:208.

this humanistic frame of discourse presupposed a fundamental change in intellectual reasoning.

### **Soviet state ideology dominates ethnography**

The beginning of the next phase in the research of western Siberian peoples is related to the initial decades of the Soviet regime. The Marxist ethnographic view of the Ob-Ugrian and Samoyed personality was schematic but had very substantial effects on the life of the indigenous peoples. Most intriguing is the extended initial period of Soviet ethnography.

Throughout the 1920s, the prevailing view in Soviet ethnography was that northern peoples were different from the rest of the country's population. According to this assessment, their progress was supposed to be advanced along its own distinct path. But in the 1930s (or, actually, from the very end of the 1920s), a modernist view of northern peoples became prevalent. This approach treated the northern peoples in principle as not distinctive and their development was modelled to correspond to that of the other peoples of the country (Slezkine 1994: 146–7). The modernist view remained dominant until the end of the Soviet era.

The treatment of indigenous northern personality features was also drastically different during the initial and modernist periods of northern ethnography in the USSR. At first, classical scholarly views and fresh inter-

national scientific standards were applied and the northern peoples were seen as having diverse patterns of emotional and intellectual qualities. But from the 1930s, the image of the northern peoples became rather simple, emphasizing only two stereotypical issues – their desire to work hard and to grow intellectually.

The Soviet ethnographic modelling of the northern peoples was a variant of the systematic approach of earlier times. But in the official discourse, it was transformed into a schematic and intellectually simple discourse about hard-working and progress-minded indigenes. But this understanding of the northern peoples did not remain just within the framework of academic discussions. As official ethnography equated the northern indigenes with Orthodox citizens with Communist preferences, they lacked any chance of receiving special political treatment and building up their own special way of development.

### **The indigenous viewpoint**

After the collapse of the Soviet system, the most distinctive feature of the ethnographic discourse was related to recognition of indigenous concepts in discussions over the personhood of the Ob-Ugrian and Nenets peoples. This indigenization



Yuri Vella's grandson Tani (Danil), 2009 on Varyogan River.

was part of larger drive towards the diversification of ethnographic approaches to the northern peoples that was not characteristic of any earlier period. This new approach has been most visible in studies by indigenous researchers themselves of the self-perception of their peoples.

This indigenous ethnography, produced by representatives of the Siberian indigenous intelligentsia, introduced a new tendency in the collection of the folklore of their peoples in the 1980s. In the 1990s, a group of distinguished ethnographers and folklorists including indigenous scholars arose (see Lukina 1993: 30–1; Lapina 1998b: 57; Balzer 1999: 26). They have carried out revealing ethnographic research on local indigenous peoples and many of their interpretations contribute a great deal to the knowledge of their peoples' lives and culture. Their approach to composing their studies may sometimes cause a certain hesitation, however.

Scholars of indigenous peoples typically originate from traditional households and carry with them traditional indigenous knowledge. At the same time, their scholarly production is sometimes under the strong influence of theoretical academic literature. This ambivalent style of research is widespread, as indigenous intellectuals tend to integrate colonial academic concepts while studying their own identity and history (Keesing 1992: 8).

Keesing clarifies this paradox on the basis of the circumstance that many indigenous scholars are themselves the result of a colonial education system and social values (*ibid.* 13). The Siberian indigenous intellectuals have been linked with the ruling social ideology and the indigenous application of it has been transformed over time considerably. The first Ob-Ugrian and Nenets writers in the 1930s were educated as a result of the systematic Soviet indigenization policy. This first generation of the northern intelligentsia reinforced Soviet transformations and promoted the Communist regime. By the end of the Soviet period, indigenous intellectuals served as 'the voice of the people' and their accommodation with Communist ideology had progressed into critical and unconventional, sometimes even fundamentally indigenized, discourses. (See Toulouze 2000, Toulouze and Niglas 2012)

Indigenous scholars have had diverse relationships with State authorities and academic institutions. In indigenous researchers' work, it is sometimes difficult to discern any truly indigenous viewpoint towards their peoples' self-perception, as researchers often relate their findings to western theoretical concepts. However, indigenous ethnographers have provided a number of illuminating descriptions of their peoples' concepts about animist views of individuals' identity-building (Moldanova 2001) or behavioural rules (Lapina 1998a). Non-indigenous scholars perceived indigenous behaviour for a long time as direct reflections of natives' personality traits, although, as Lapina suggests, behaviour is related to the inner self of people in a very conditional way and is shaped mostly by culture-specific etiquette. Thus, fresh indigenous interpretations of local cultural rules also enable us to re-interpret a long list of descriptions from earlier centuries that have been deemed as empirically oriented.

## Conclusion

The study of changing descriptions of temperament among the western Siberian indigenous groups enables us to understand better the management of other questions regarding the culture of peoples in a given region. Changes in dominant discourse are related to specific historical events and processes. The connection between events and images is dialogical; they reflect each other mutually. The observation of personality images is one of the circumstances that implicitly defines the intellectual position of a number of researchers. A consideration of changes in philosophies, methodologies and theories enables us to consider the implications of the culture-reflective, discursive re-appearance of images that is inevitably realized in each successive study. ■

**ART LEETE** is the Professor of Ethnology at the University of Tartu.

## References

- Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam, 1999. *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective* (Princeton University Press)
- Herberstein, Sigismund, 1988. *Zapiski o Moskovii* (Moskva, Izd-vo MGU)
- Herodotus, 1920. *The Histories*, with an English translation by A. D. Godley (Cambridge, Harvard University Press), available online <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt.+1.1.0&redirect=true>> (accessed 3.5.2014)
- Hoppál, Mihály, 1989. 'Finno-Ugric mythology reconsidered' in *Uralic Mythology and Folklore*, ed. Mihály Hoppál and Juha Pentikäinen, *Ethnologia Uralica*, 1 (Budapest, Ethnographic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Helsinki, SKS), pp. 15–31
- Keesing, Roger M., 1992. 'The past and the present: contested representations of culture and history' in *Other Sites: Social Anthropology and the Politics of Interpretation*, ed. Michael Goldsmith and Keith Barber (Almerston North, Massey University), pp. 8–28
- Lapina, Maina Afanaševna, 1998a. Étika i etiket khantov (Tomsk, Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta)
- 1998b. 'Istoriya izucheniya étiki khantov' in *Narody Severo-Zapadnoj Sibiri*, vol. 5, ed. Nadezhda Vasilevna Lukina (Tomsk, Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta), pp. 52–9
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 1961. *Tristes Tropiques* (New York, Criterion Books)
- 1999. *Pechal'nye tropiki* (Moskva, AST)
- Lopez, Barry, 1986. *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* (New York, Vintage Books)
- Lukina, Nadezhda, 1993. 'Istoricheskaya pamyat' i spasenie Yugry' in *Mezhdunarodnoj nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii "Puti vyzhivaniya narodov khanty i mansi", Poselok Lyantor, 9–16 aprelya 1992 g.* (Khanty-Mansijsk, Assotsiatsiya 'Spasenie Yugry'), pp. 30–1
- Moldanova, Tat'yana Aleksandrovna, 2001. *Arkhetipy v mire snovidenij khantov* (Tomsk, Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta)
- Olearius, Adam, 1906. *Opisanie puteshestviya v Moskoviyu i cherez Moskoviyu v Persiyu i obratno* (Sankt-Peterburg, A. S. Suvorin)
- Polybius, 1922–7. *The Histories*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, available online <<http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/eBooks/BOOKS/ROMANS/The%20Histories%20Polybius.pdf>> (accessed 3.4.2015)
- Sahlins, Marshall, 1993. 'Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: ethnography in the context of modern world history', *Journal of Modern History*, 65, pp. 1–25
- Slezkine, Yuri, 1994. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press)
- Starkov, Vadim F., 1992. 'A map of "Novaya Zemlya" of the 16th century', *Specimina Sibirica* 5, pp. 249–55
- Tacitus, Publius Cornelius, 1877. *The Histories*, trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, available online <<http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.html>> (accessed 3.4.2015)
- Toulouze, Eva, 2000. 'Adaptation models of intellectuals among northern peoples', *Pro Ethnologia*, 10, pp. 7–15
- Toulouze, Eva, and Liivo Niglas, 2012. 'Native spirituality in (re)constructed personhood: observing and filming Yuri Vella', *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 51, pp. 133–70
- Zinner, Ervin P., 1968. *Sibir' v izvestiyakh v zapadnoevropejskikh puteshestvennikov i uchenykh XVIII veka* (Irkutsk, Vostochno-Sibirskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo)

## A recent publication in the FF Communications



### New Focus on Retrospective Methods

Resuming methodological discussions:  
case studies from Northern Europe

Edited by Eldar Heide & Karen Bek-Pedersen

The articles featured in this volume concern folkloristics, philology, comparative linguistics, cultural geography, iconography, Old Norse studies and the history of religion in Scandinavia, but in particular they concern the questions of whether, how and to what extent late-recorded material can be used to shed light on historically much earlier periods. It is a blunt fact that our sources for the study of pre-Christian times in Northern Europe are few, fragmentary and immensely limited. However, it is possible to obtain new and relevant information if we broaden our spectrum of sources to include not only contemporary or near-contemporary material, but also material from subsequent, even much later, periods. Showcasing that and how this may be done is the aim of the present volume. Seeking to reopen discussions that have been silent for some time, these articles, each in their way, target a range of methodological issues that are in need of being updated for the twenty-first century.

Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 307  
230 pp. 2014. ISBN 978-951-41-1093-1

35 euros (hardback)

Tiedekirja Bookstore, [tiedekirja@tsv.fi](mailto:tiedekirja@tsv.fi)  
Shop online at <<http://www.tsv.fi/tiedekirja>>

# The forgotten *Kanteletar*. Collecting and publishing practices of oral lyric poetry in the 19th century

In 19th-century Finland, bourgeois Enlightenment principles were employed to emphasise the control of the body and avoidance of all extreme feelings among rural people in order to create a distance between themselves and the aristocratic class with their frivolous ways. As Elias Lönnrot, one of the most prominent educated men of his time, put it: “Even though the gentry support their health better, the peasants always live more healthily, strongly and soberly because of their diligence and moderation in indulgence” (Lönnrot 1839, 15).

This research project argues that the idea of subdued emotions among Finnish people has been historically, ideologically and emotionally constructed in relation to representational practices of oral tradition. The project examines and evaluates the collecting and publishing practices of oral *Kalevala*-metre lyrical poetry in 19th-century Finland. The research material consists of oral lyric poems transcribed in the 19th century and written publications based on this material, such as the *Kanteletar*, an anthology of oral lyric poetry, by Elias Lönnrot (1840, 1841). Oral lyric poetry and its textualisation remains unstudied, even though the concept of lyric as a form of emotional language is widely accepted and considered to embody Romantic ideas of literature and oral folk poetry in the 19th century.

This project seeks new understandings and perspectives on textualisation practices by exploring the significant role of the *Kanteletar* along with several other folk poem publications by Lönnrot and his contemporaries (C.A. Gottlund, Z. Topelius, D.E.D. Europaeus). The aim of the project is to decode the historical, social and ideological objectives that produced those nationally respected written publications documenting the oral tradition.

After it was published in 1835, the *Kalevala* influenced the principles of collecting and publishing oral tradition. The focus on collecting just one part of the oral tradition – epic poems – dismissed and devalued other genres of oral tradition and their importance as representations of the nation. Therefore Lönnrot’s other oral folk-poetry publications, such as the *Kanteletar*, have likewise received less study. The *Kanteletar* is the most significant lyrical anthology of 19th-century Finland and it has influenced the development of written poetry and art ever since it was published. However, it is not widely known that Lönnrot worked with a new, extended version of the *Kanteletar* in the later years of his

life. As with the *Kalevala* versions, Lönnrot aspired to compile an even better, larger and more complete collection of poems. The “New *Kanteletar*” remained unfinished at the time of Lönnrot’s death in 1884 and was later forgotten. There are numerous manuscripts of the work in the Literary Archives of the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki, and even though the material has been available to researchers, it remains unstudied. For researchers, the “New *Kanteletar*” offers new perspectives on Lönnrot’s editorial methods as well as on his perceptions of poetry and emotions. The manuscript material also lays bare the research history and publishing politics of a particular time period.

Lönnrot, Elias 1839. *Suomalaisen Talonpojan Koti-Lääkäri* [The Finnish peasant’s home doctor]. Tampere: G. O. Wasenius.



Niina Hämäläinen. Photo: Laura Tikkanen, SKS 2015

## Book in open access: why and whose money

The Finnish Literature Society (SKS) arranged a seminar on the publishing and funding of open-access monographs. The seminar “Book in open access: why and whose money” took place in Helsinki on 8 May 2015 with a programme of invited speakers representing all the major stakeholders in the Finnish context. The views of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, universities, funding bodies and scholarly publishers were all represented at the seminar.

The Society is currently charting the possibilities open-access book publishing could offer the Society’s publishing house. Open-access publishing – making research freely available online upon publication – has the potential to significantly improve the availability, discoverability and impact of scientific research.

The potential benefits of open access are impressive, but by making the work freely available it undermines publishers’ traditional business model. It is therefore paramount for the development of open access to find sustainable funding models. – *Niklas Alén*

VISIT THE NEW SKS BOOKSHOP ONLINE AT [WWW.FINLIT.FI/KIRJAT](http://WWW.FINLIT.FI/KIRJAT)

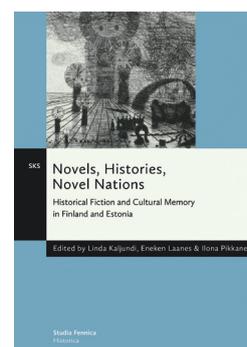


### Novels, Histories, Novel Nations – Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia

Since its emergence along with Western nationalism, historical fiction has been one of the key forms for constructing national histories – and it has not lost its importance even today. This volume highlights the cultural work performed by historical fiction in Finland and Estonia ca. 1800–2000 in the ongoing articulation of national identities. This book comprises a theoretical preface, a comparative survey of Finnish and Estonian historical fiction in their socio-political contexts, case studies by literary scholars and historians and a summary chapter by Ann Rigney that places Finnish and Estonian historical fiction in a broader European perspective.

This volume is highly relevant to academics and students interested in cultural memory and nationalism studies at large. As one of the very few edited collections of comparative studies on Finnish and Estonian literature, it is also a must-read for those who study Finnish and Estonian subjects in particular. As the volume is situated in the cross-disciplinary field of cultural memory studies, it demonstrates that historical fiction is a stimulating research subject for various disciplines, including history, ethnology, cultural studies, art history and film studies. In all of these fields, this book is also suitable for students at different levels of study and as a reference guide.

*Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes, Ilona Pikkanen, Novels, Histories, Novel Nations – Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia. SF Historica 19. SKS 2015.*



SKS IS AN ACADEMIC SOCIETY AND A RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

# On the vowel euphony in Finnic alliterative folksongs

ARVO KRIKMANN

**T**he folk poetry following the quadripartite trochaic metre has been common to most Baltic-Finnic peoples. The origin of the metre is hidden in the distant past, perhaps two millennia ago, and it was in active use in folk poetry until the 20th century. This folk poetry has included mythological epic songs, adventure warrior epic, incantations, wedding songs, ballads, historical songs, various lyric songs and proverbs and riddles – a broad spectrum of oral tradition. The same poetic language has been used also in the literary epics of the Finnish Kalevala and Estonian Kalevipoeg. In addition to meter, a number of various structural and stylistic means have formed the special register or poetic language, usually called Kalevala metre and Kalevala language, named after the most widely known product of the poetic tradition. The article of Arvo Krikmann is devoted to one very prominent quality of the Baltic-Finnic poetic register, alliteration.

The older folksongs of most Finnic peoples share the so-called Kalevala form, the main constituents of which are parallelism, alliteration (and assonance), and quadripartite trochaic rhythm.

Below are some excerpts from the monograph *The Temporal Structure of Estonian Runic Songs* by Jaan Ross and Ilse Lehiste (2001: 14, 139, 141):

meie <b>kodu kauge</b> ella	our home is far away
<b>viisi verstada vaheta</b>	many miles from here
<b>kuusi kuivada jögeda</b>	with six dry rivers
<b>seitse sooda sitke</b> ada	seven sloppy swamps
<b>kaheksa kala</b> +mereda	eight seas of fish
<b>üheksa hüva</b> ojada	nine beautiful brooks
<b>kümme külma</b> allikada	ten cold springs in between
...	
pere+ <b>naine naisukene</b>	housewife, dear woman
<b>muile annid muida</b> tüöda	you gave different tasks to others
<b>sulasele suurta</b> tüöda	to the hired man you gave big jobs

mulle tüöda albusamba	to me you gave worse work
annid mul <b>aned ajada</b>	you gave me the task to drive the geese
annid mul <b>kanad kaitseda</b>	you gave me to protect the chickens
<b>lestat</b> +jalad <b>lepistada</b>	to pacify the web-footed ones
<b>varvas</b> +jalad <b>vaigistada</b>	to calm down the toe-footed ones
<b>ajasin aned vesile</b>	I drove the geese to the waters
<b>kargutin kanad kesale</b>	I drove the chickens to the fallow field
<b>lestat</b> +jalad <b>lepikusse</b>	the web-footed ones to the alder grove
<b>varvas</b> +jalad <b>vainiulle</b>	the toe-footed ones to the meadow
tuli <b>kuri, kurja</b> lindu	an angry, evil bird came
<b>ajas mo aned vesilta</b>	drove my geese from the waters
<b>karguti kanad kesalta</b>	drove my chickens from the fallow field
<b>lestat</b> +jalad <b>lepikusta</b>	the web-footed ones from the alder grove

So, the alliteration works from the left to the right within a single line; parallelism, in turn, operates from the top to the bottom, paraphrasing the content set up in the first line through two or more succeeding lines. And of course, it makes the development of events or other train of thought very slow and long-winded.

Finnic languages have strong natural bases to evolve the alliterative type of verse: the stress is on the first syllable (before the arrival of recent foreign words), they had almost no consonant clusters at the beginnings of words and so on.

The number of alliterative verses in Finnic runic songs is said to vary between 80 and 95 per cent on average, depending on the age of the material, language and

dialect, the kind of material (whether epic or lyric), etc.

The alliterative chain usually consists of two links, but their number can also be higher (up to five).

A verse usually includes one single alliterative chain, but sometimes two or more: *mure musta parre peale*: *mure musta* + *parre peale* ('[I put] my concern on the black joist').

Alliteration is, of course, also a semantic phenomenon: it results from the choice of words and thus brings about the specific so-called 'semantic mist' in the contents of the text. But primarily it is considered a euphonic phenomenon which helps to make music out of the lexical substance of the song.

Research on the euphonic (phonetic) aspect of alliteration readily suggests many quantitative, that is statistical, approaches.

There are some typical problems that were discussed in the literature long ago, and which one inevitably encounters when trying to build up the statistics.

The first question is, as Pentti Leino (1970: 317) has put it, 'are the instances of alliteration in the text under investigation sporadic or at least partially the result of a conscious effort to alliterate?' Leino himself is convinced that only the instances of conscious choice must be taken into consideration, leaving out, for example, spontaneous coincidences of first sounds of various 'grammatical' or 'auxiliary' words in a verse line. However, it seems quite dubious how such a bivalent distinction could be made, considering the continuous character of the lexicon – be it in the runic song or elsewhere. In my own investigations all cases of alliteration – from clearly conscious and poetic to clearly spontaneous and 'grammatical' ones – have been included in the statistics.

Of course, the repetition of initial consonants, particularly stops, is the most reliable basis for speaking about alliteration; therefore some authors tend to exclude 'zero consonant' cases from alliteration.

Things are more problematic with the first-syllable vowels. Some authors suggest clearly distinguishing *alliteration* as a repetition of initial C's from *assonance* as a repetition of first-syllable vowels (whether in post-consonantal or 'zero-consonantal' position). Matti Sadeniemi's (1951: 79) typology of Finnic alliteration, however, includes all four possible combinations:

- 1) **CV : CV** – both consonants and (nuclear) vowels coincide:

*kuusi kuivada jõgeda* 'six dry rivers'

- 2) **ØV : ØV** – words begin with one and the same vowel (the so-called 'zero consonant' case):

*ajasin aned vesile* 'I drove the geese to the waters'

- 3) **CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub>** – the identical consonants are followed by different vowels:

*viisi verstada vaheta* 'five versts from here'

- 4) **ØV<sub>1</sub> : ØV<sub>2</sub>** – words begin with different vowels (another variant of the 'zero consonant' case):

*mitu orja ilma pealla* 'how many slaves in the world'

The first two cases represent 'strong', and the last two 'weak' alliteration.

Hence, the question arises of whether it is justified to make a simple bivalent distinction between assonance and non-asonance, or whether, perhaps, we have to do with a continuous scale of vowel relationships where the 'pure' CV-alliteration is just the highest level or limit of the scale. If, under given lexical-semantic conditions, the perfect coincidence of postconsonantal or word-initial vowels is impossible to achieve, the intuitive search for a subsequent word pair with maximal or at least a sufficiently good similarity of different first-syllable vowels (CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> or ØV<sub>1</sub> : ØV<sub>2</sub>) will follow. This hypothesis also finds support from investigators of early Finnish folklorists and linguists (Elias Lönnrot, D. E. D. Europaeus, August Ahlqvist, Arvid Genetz), who have observed that some vowel combinations like *a-ä*, *o-u*, *y-ö* seem to be more favoured than others.

My own preliminary tests with limited material from Estonian runic songs in the middle of the 1960s also indicated the existence of certain ranks of preference, and certain systems of rules that govern the vocalism of runic alliteration, and encouraged me to continue the search for further evidence for the nature of these rules.

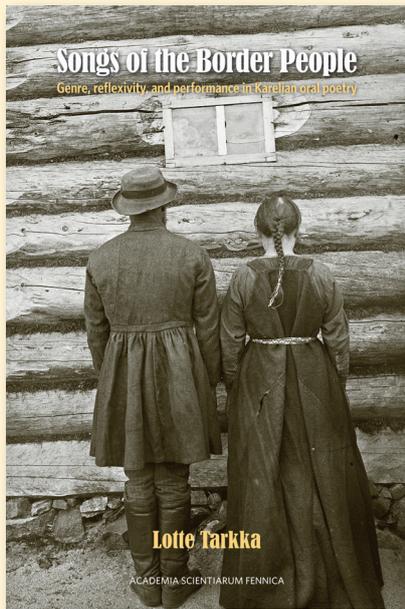
This leads us directly to the next cluster of questions: what kind of and how much empirical material should we gather in order to reach the required degree of representativeness and reliability? Runic songs evidently strive to achieve the 'pure', or 'strong', same-vowel alliteration (CV : CV or ØV : ØV), making these cases statistically prevalent. In other words, the general frequency level of 'weak' alliteration is quite low, so should the total number of texts investigated be noticeably larger?

Fortunately, I had at my disposal the manuscript of (the then unpublished) *Eesti rahvalaulud. Antoloogia* ('Anthology of Estonian Folksongs', Tedre *et al.* 1969–74) that includes over 7000 song texts and is now also accessible on the internet. In around 1966 I started to go through the manuscript. On small sheets of paper I wrote out each verse where the 'consonant-proved' CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> alliteration occurred, and thus arrived at a total of perhaps 40,000 slips.

I then had great difficulties in finding a suitable collection of Finnish *runo* songs.

Actually, the situation is paradoxical because in general and in principle the premises for studying any textual aspects of Finnic runic songs are promising: at the

## A recent publication in the FF Communications



### Songs of the Border People

Genre, reflexivity, and performance in Karelian oral poetry

by Lotte Tarkka

Rune-singing in the Kalevala meter is one of the few European oral poetics to survive the long nineteenth century. In her comprehensive study of the poems collected in the Archangel Karelian parish of Vuokkiniemi, Lotte Tarkka places this tradition within historical and ethnographic realities, contexts of local and elite ideologies, and the system of folklore genres. The songs of the border people emerge as praxis, the communicative creation of individual and collective identities grounded in a mythic-historical view of the world. The bond between the songs and their singers is articulated through an intertextual analysis of key cultural themes and the textual strategies used in their elaboration. In performance, singers and their audiences could evoke alternative realms of experience and make sense of the everyday in dialogue with each other, supranormal agents, and tradition. The poems, as powerful representations and performatives, endowed those who voiced them with godlike creative capacities, as coined in the proverb 'The things I put into words, I make real'.

Lotte Tarkka is Professor of Folklore Studies at the University of Helsinki. Her areas of expertise include Kalevala-meter poetry, Finnish mythology, oral poetics and textualization, genre, and intertextuality, especially in the context of archival sources.

Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 305  
631 pp. 2013. ISBN 978-951-41-1091-7

50 euros (hardback)

Tiedekirja Bookstore, tiedekirja@tsv.fi  
Shop online at <<http://www.tsv.fi/tiedekirja>>

turn of the century, practically all major corpuses of Finnish-Karelian and Estonian runic songs have been digitised – perhaps from 160,000 to 180,000 song texts from both sides are now at the disposal of folklorists in Helsinki and Tartu.

Finns have also published on the internet the database containing the huge collection of *Suomen kansan vanhat runot* ('Ancient Poems of the Finnish People'). However, in their present form, the Finnish texts are unfortunately 'inedible' for any computer programs. They are dialectal, full of all kinds of diacritical marks and need a lot of time-consuming preparatory work.

Of course, nobody uses paper slips any more.

The only Finnish(-Karelian) sources I found on the internet were two books by Elias Lönnrot – his epic *Kalevala* (the 'New' Kalevala, 1849), and his book of slightly edited and modified runic songs *Kanteletar* (1840) – both about 22,000 verses. In full awareness of their partly non-folkloric nature and a certain 'Lönnrot's impact factor' in them, I nevertheless tested both of them for CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> rules, recalling the old joke Estonian folklorists used to tell 40–50 years ago:

Question: What is the main difference between the *Kalevala* and the Estonian epic, *Kalevipoeg*?

Answer: The *Kalevala* contains 95 per cent runic songs and 5 per cent Lönnrot's own poetry, whereas *Kalevipoeg* contains 5 per cent folkloric verses and 95 per cent Kreutzwald's personal creation.

It took almost a year to build up the statistics on the Estonian anthology. It took almost a week to build up the statistics for the *Kalevala*, as I did not need to write heaps of paper slips.

The next question was: what and how one should count when encountered with CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> problematics? The first thing to come to one's mind is a representative random sample of verses. But as that sample, under the above-mentioned conditions, must be voluminous enough – including, in the ideal case, each CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> occurrence in the given corpus – the sample will inevitably include a considerable number of highly recurrent pairs or chains of alliterating word stems – spontaneous co-occurrences of 'grammatical' words, various stereotypical verses and formulae, etc. Evidently, they are frequent, first and foremost, not because of their euphonic beauty, but primarily for semantic reasons.

Here are some highly frequent alliterative word-stem pairs in the 'Anthology of Estonian Folksongs' (abbreviation 's.s.' means 'the same word stem'):

neiu(ke) + noor(uke)	maid ~ virgin + young	147
kuulma + kostma	hear+ reply	81
peiukene + poisikene	bridegroom + boy	72

<b>mis + meie</b>	what + we	68
<b>siis + saama</b>	then + get ~ receive ~ ...	68
<b>mina + mees</b>	I + man ~ ~ ...	39
<b>mis + ma</b>	what + I	38
<b>kui + kodu</b>	when ~ if + home	37
<b>piht(a) + peen(ike)</b>	waist + thin ~ slim	33
<b>mina + mõistma</b>	I + understand	32
<b>lehm + lüps(ma)</b>	cow + milk(ing)	30
<b>nutma + noor(ik)</b>	cry + young ~ bride	30
<b>see + saama</b>	this ~ that + get ~ receive ~ ...	30
<b>naine + noor(uke)</b>	woman ~ wife + young	27
<b>mis + mu(l[le])</b>	what + me ~ to me ~ my	25
<b>meie + maa</b>	our + land ~ soil ~ ...	24

The highly frequent alliterative word stem pairs in the *Kalevala* appeared to be the following:

<b>vanha Väinämöinen</b>	old Väinämöinen	321
<b>noin nimesi</b>	so mentioned	232
<b>lieto Lemminkäinen</b>	mild Lemminkäinen	187
<b>en ~ et ~ ei ole ~...</b>	not + be (misc.)	182
<b>vaka vanha</b>	old pious (...)	116
<b>se seppo</b>	that + smith	71
<b>sanovi sanalla ~ ...</b>	say + word (s.s.)	62
<b>kaunis Kauko(mieli)</b>	pretty Kaukomieli	57
<b>kirjo ~ kirja kansi</b>	mottled ~ ... + cover	55
<b>Kullero, Kalervon poika</b>	Kullervo, the son of Kalervo	52
<b>iän ikuinen</b>	age + old (s.s.)	50
<b>on ~ oli Ilmarinen</b>	be ~ was ~ ... + Ilmarinen	46
<b>oli ~ on + hyvä</b>	be ~ was ~ ... + good	41
<b>nuori neito ~ ...</b>	young maiden	39
<b>lausu lausehella</b>	say + sentence (s.s.)	35
<b>naisten nauru ~ ...</b>	laugh(ter) + woman ~ -men	33

Therefore, a better estimate could be the total number of different CV<sub>1</sub> : CV<sub>2</sub> word-stem pairs themselves, ignoring their individual repeatability. This method should indicate more adequately the pressure each CV-initial part of the vocabulary has undergone in the process of creating and recreating (and not just transmitting) folksongs. Conspicuously enough, in some parts of the lexicon the alliterative pressure has been so strong that the supply of ‘normal’, ‘meaningful’ words appears to have been exhausted and the last ‘emergency’ resorts have been activated, like proper names, descriptive and other ideophonic words.

Many more specific questions will arise, for example with standardising the multitude of first-syllable vowel combinations. The phonetic and phonological systems of various Finnic languages – and of various dialects of the same language – differ quite substantially, so it may be hard to make the results of different observations comparable. One particular question is, for example, how to cope in our statistics with the great variety of first-syllable diphthongs that can be of three different

origins in Finnic languages:

1) old diphthongs that existed already in the hypothetical Proto-Finnic language:

Est. *naine*, Fi. *nainen* < \*nainen ‘woman’

Est. *teine*, Fi. *toinen* < \*toinen ‘other, second’

Est. *poeg*, Fi. *poika* < \*poika ‘son’

Est. *kõiv*, Fi. *koivu* < \*koivu ‘birch’

2) as the result of the syncopation of weak stops on the border of the first and second syllables:

Est. *viga* : *vea*, Fi. *vika* : *vian* < \*vika : *viyan* ‘mistake; vice’

Est. *tuba* : *toa*, Fi. *tupa* : *tuvan* < \*tupa : *tuβan* ‘room; hut’

Est. *rida* : *rea*, Fi. *rita* : *ridan* < \*rita : *riδan* ‘row, line; a certain trap’

Est. *süsi* : *söe*, Fi. *sysi* : *syden* < \*süsi : *süden* ‘coal’

3) the late diphthongs that in some Finnic languages (like Finnish and Karelian), and also North Estonian dialects, are the descendants of Proto-Finnic long vowels:

Fi., North Est. *tie* < \*tee ‘way, road’

Fi., North Est. *suo* < \*soo ‘swamp’

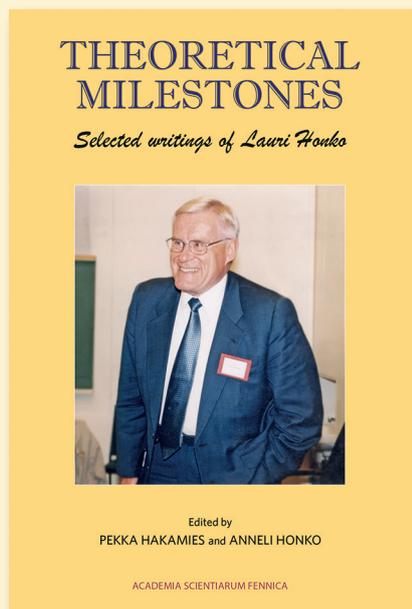
Fi., North Est. *työ* ~ *tüö* < \*töö ‘work’

In my statistics all diphthongs were registered according to their so-called nuclear vowels, that is, in general, their first components, but in the case of late diphthongs the second component.

The next question was how to calculate the strength of preferences for each pair of vowels preceded by this or that word-initial consonant. One could guess that it might be sufficient just to take the representative dictionary of the given language, ascertain and square the ‘lengths’ of each particular CV-group and compare them with corresponding frequencies in the alliterative matter. This approach would, however, be deceptive because the individual probabilities of actualising different constituents (words or stems) of the given CV-group are far from equal. What is really needed seems to be something ‘in between the vocabulary and the text’. To arrive at something like this, I checked the absolute frequencies of all CV<sub>1</sub>:CV<sub>2</sub> word-stem pairs and summarised ‘meetings’ (intersections) of different nuclear vowels through all consonants (which is not statistically flawless). To estimate the density of connection between different vowels in the alliteration of Estonian folksongs and in the *Kalevala*, I used Zbigniew Pawłowski’s (1967: 38) so-called colligation coefficients (or λ-coefficients, ‘bivariate percentages’) that are calculated from the formula:

$$\lambda_{AB} = \frac{A \cap B \times \sum_{ab}}{\sum A \times \sum B}$$

## A recent publication in the FF Communications



### Theoretical Milestones

Selected writings of Lauri Honko

edited by Pekka Hakamies and Anneli Honko

Lauri Honko (1932–2002) was among the leading folklorists of his time. In particular, he developed theories and concepts relating to folk belief, genre and epic. This collection represents a selection of Honko's key articles, which he considered worthy of republication himself. They relate to Honko's own research, to the debates and discussions he took part in; some are introductions to article collections produced by groups of researchers.

Honko's writings combine a typically strong empiricism with clear theoretical thought. His own theoretical framework was above all one of functionalism, within which he united other currents within folkloristics, such as 'composition in performance', 'ecology of tradition' and 'textualisation'. He was occupied by the question of how the individual performer used folklore, be he a teller of proverbs or jokes, a singer of oral poetry or a producer of written epic.

Honko was at no stage a representative of the traditional 'Finnish school' of folklore research, and origins and developments were a research challenge to him particularly from the perspective of how folklore adapts in different ways to its setting and circumstances of performance by means of variation, and how regularity may be discerned within this.

Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 304  
338 pp. 2013. ISBN 978-951-41-1090-0

40 euros (hardback)

Tiedekirja Bookstore, tiedekirja@tsv.fi  
Shop online at <<http://www.tsv.fi/tiedekirja>>

where  $A \cap B$  is the number of 'meetings' (intersections) of events A and B,  $\Sigma A$  and  $\Sigma B$  are the summary frequencies of these events in the given collection and  $\Sigma_{\text{tab}}$  is the sum total of all numerical data in the table through all of its rows and columns. (For more discussion about calculations of Estonian data, see Krikmann 1994.)

The ranks of decreasing preferences in the complex of non-low vowels in Estonian runic songs appeared to be the following (the vowel  $\bar{o}$  being regarded as back mid illabial):

- 1) Vowels differing only in height (high/mid), all the rest being the same:  $o \sqsupset u$ ,  $e \sqsupset i$ ,  $\bar{o} \sqsupset \bar{u}$ ;
- 2) Vowels differing only in labiality (labial/illabial), all the rest being the same:  $o \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ,  $e \sqsupset \bar{e}$ ,  $i \sqsupset \bar{i}$ ;
- 3) Vowels differing in height and labiality, the gravity (back/front) being the same:  $u \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ,  $i \sqsupset \bar{e}$ ,  $e \sqsupset \bar{u}$ ;
- 4) Vowels differing only in gravity (back/front), all the rest being the same:  $e \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ,  $u \sqsupset \bar{u}$ ,  $o \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ;
- 5) Vowels differing in height and gravity (back/front), all the rest being the same:  $i \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ,  $o \sqsupset \bar{u}$ ,  $u \sqsupset \bar{o}$ ;
- 6) Vowels differing in labiality and gravity (back/front), all the rest being the same:  $\bar{o} \sqsupset \bar{e}$ ,  $e \sqsupset o$ ,  $i \sqsupset u$ ;
- 7) Vowels differing in all three features:  $\bar{o} \sqsupset \bar{u}$ ,  $i \sqsupset o$ ,  $e \sqsupset u$ .

Or, in the numerical expression:

Group	Height	Labiality	Gravity	$V_1 V_2$	$\lambda$	$\lambda$ average
(1)	X			$\bar{u}\bar{o}$ $uo$ $ei$	2.85 2.84 2.46	2.72
(2)		X		$o\bar{o}$ $e\bar{e}$ $i\bar{i}$	1.18 0.95 0.74	0.96
(3)	X	X		$u\bar{o}$ $i\bar{e}$ $e\bar{u}$	1.15 0.85 0.57	0.89
(4)			X	$e\bar{o}$ $u\bar{u}$ $o\bar{o}$	0.90 0.90 0.56	0.79
(5)	X		X	$i\bar{o}$ $o\bar{u}$ $u\bar{o}$	0.92 0.73 0.58	0.74
(6)		X	X	$\bar{o}\bar{o}$ $eo$ $iu$	0.97 0.55 0.50	0.67
(7)	X	X	X	$\bar{o}\bar{u}$ $io$ $eu$	0.69 0.53 0.46	0.56

As can be seen on the graph below, the low  $a$  and  $\bar{a}$  also reveal quite regular behaviour. The most important marker is lowness. On the background of all field of relations  $a$  continues with gravity (that is, prefers back partners); whereas  $\bar{a}$  seems to prefer illabial partners.

		λ				λ			
a	aä	1.96	low	ä	äa	1.96	low		
	aõ	1.21	low/ not-low		back	äe	1.15	illabial	
	ao	0.98				illabial/ labial			
	au	0.94					illabial		
	ae	0.88	back/ front		äõ	0.98		low/ not-low	front/back
	ai	0.88			illabial/ labial				
	aü	0.62	front			äu	0.81	illabial/ labial	front
	aõ	0.54				äö	0.70		front/ back
					äu	0.64			
			äo	0.63					

Density of connection of low vowels in Estonian runic songs.

Regrettably, I have not yet managed to build up an integral quantitative estimate to describe the alliterative behaviour of all Estonian vowels together.

Ranks of preferences between non-low and low vowels in the *Kalevala* ascertained through the same method of calculation are shown on the graph below:

Group	Height	Labiality	Gravity	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>	λ	λ average
(1)	x			yö ou ei	2,29 2,38 2,13	2,27
(2)		x		eõ iy	1,50 1,06	1,28
(3)			x	uy oõ	1,28 0,68	0,98
(4)	x		x	oy uõ	0,88 0,87	0,88
(5)	x	x		iõ ey	1,02 0,61	0,82
(6)		x	x	eo ui	0,72 0,78	≈ 0,75
(7)	x	x	x	oi eu	0,91 0,61	≈ 0,75

Density of connection of non-low vowels in the *Kalevala*.

		λ				λ			
a	aä	1.70	low	ä	äa	1.70	low		
	ao	1.31	low/ not-low		back	äe	1.37	low/ not-low	
	au	1.20				illabial/ labial			
	ai	1.19					illabial		
	ae	1.06	back/ front		äõ	1.13		not-high	?
	ay	0.89			illabial/ labial				
	aõ	0.64	front			äy	1.00	high	?
						äi	0.91		
					äu	0.88			

Density of connection of low vowels in the *Kalevala*.

Because of space limitations, I have skipped here the results of calculations on the data of the digital *Kanteletar*, which turned out to be similar to those gained from Estonian songs and the *Kalevala*. My earlier investigations of vowel euphony in Finnic alliterative *runo* songs have involved only Estonian data and Elias Lönnrot's texts based on Finnish-Karelian folksongs, not Finnish-Karelian folksongs proper. Yet the homogeneity of these

preliminary results allows us to see that preferences for pairing different vowels in Finnic alliteration neatly correlate with vowels' phonetic parameters, as well as with other types of phonetic relationships between Finnic sounds, for example diachronic changes, synchronic differences between related languages and different dialects of one and the same language.

Researchers have now around 185 megabytes of digitised Finnish and Karelian alliterative folksongs at their disposal, and my initial hypotheses above need to be tested on numerous larger samples. The results of the eventual forthcoming tests will probably be affected by differences in vowel systems in particular languages and dialects, by stylistic preferences of particular singers, and by the time period of recordings. But I would venture to predict that however large the empirical data we gather and however refined the calculation methods we apply, the basic patterns of preferences described above will persist. ■

**ARVO KRIKMANN** is an Estonian folklorist living in Tartu and a member of the Estonian Academy of Science.

### Sources and references

- Krikmann, Arvo, 1994. 'Vokaalide suhetest eesti alliteratsioonis', *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 11, pp. 650–9
- Leino, Pentti, 1970. *Strukturaalinen alkusointu Suomessa. Folklo repohjainen tilastoanalyysi* (Helsinki, SKS)
- Lönnrot, Elias, 1840. *Kanteletar taikka Suomen Kansan Wanhoja Lauluja ja Wirsiä* (Helsinki), available online <<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7078>>
- 1849. *Kalevala*, toinen painos (Helsinki, SKS), available online <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7000/7000-h/7000-h.htm>>, <<http://runeberg.org/kalevala/>>

Pawłowski, Zbigniew, 1967. *Vvedenie v matematicheskuyu statistiku* (Moskva, Statistika)

Ross, Jaan, and Ilse Lehist, 2001. *The Temporal Structure of Estonian Runic Songs* (Berlin, New York, Mouton de Gruyter)

Sadeniemi, Matti, 1951. *Die Metrik des Kalevala-Verses*, FF Communications 139 (Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia)

*Suomen kansan vanhat runot* database, <<http://dbgw.finlit.fi/skvr>>

Tedre, Ülo, et al. (eds) 1969–74. *Eesti rahvalaulud. Antoloogia*, composed by A. Koemets, R. Mirov, U. Mägi, V. Pino, and Ü. Tedre (Tallinn, Eesti Raamat), available online <<http://www.folklore.ee/laulud/erla/>>

# Reviews

## A field of research rediscovered

**New Focus on Retrospective Methods: Resuming Methodological Discussions. Case Studies from Northern Europe**, ed. Eldar Heide and Karen Bek-Pedersen, *Folklore Fellows' Communications* 307 (Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2014), 230 pp.

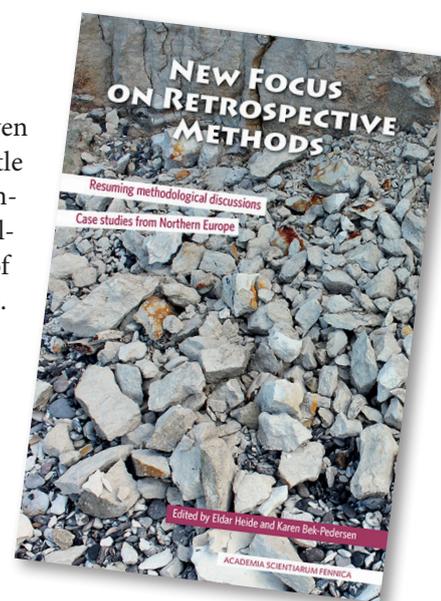
Over the last 15 years, research in the field of pre-Christian religion of Northern Europe has retrieved some of the perspectives from research history, giving them a new lease of life and also the chance to catch up with the most recent discoveries. The first field to be 're-opened' was the correspondences between Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian religions at the turn of the millennium. Scholars like Anna-Leena Siikala, Tom DuBois, Neil Price, Eldar Heide, Ulf Drobin, Marja-Liisa Keinänen and myself brought out new perspectives on the issues first raised by Uno [Holmberg] Harva and others. Since 2010, the second field, younger folkloristic sources and their relationship to the medieval material, has received new attention. Both these fields had been abandoned by research, but for different reasons.

Finno-Ugric/Scandinavian studies were overshadowed by Indo-European studies, and in the early twentieth century the discussions between Carl Wilhelm von Sydow and Martin Nilsson about the notion of 'survivals' from the Viking Age in rural traditions of nineteenth century Scandinavia and the retrospective methods used were hard-fought. The positions were far from each other, and von Sydow's judgement on the peculiar rites involving straw dolls or young girls' marriages and the last sheaf preserved to secure a good harvest was that these were just fun and games and nothing to pay too much attention to. Nilsson, on the other hand, saw these as more or less encapsulated ancient rites, preserved from pre-Christian times. One of the editors of *New Focus on Retrospective Methods*, Eldar Heide, has been especially active in inaugurating a new discussion on the topic.

In 2009, Heide formed what came to be known as the Retrospective Methods Network and the contributions in this book stem from a network conference

in Bergen in 2010. Even though limited to a little over 200 pages, the content is of impressive quality, and gathers some of the top names in the field. The width of the perspectives gives the readers a good introduction to the limitations and possibilities of the resurgent discussion. From Terry Gunnell's overview of legends and gravemounds in the first chapter to Janne Saarikivi's linguistic introduction in the last, the topics include Jens-Peter Schjødt's history of pre-Christian Scandinavian religion, Eldar Heide's attempt to reconstruct through etymology, Rudolf Simek's interpretation of the *guldgubbe* finds from medieval laws, Daniel Sävborg's interesting comparison of folk tales in western Sweden and Icelandic saga material, Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir's survey of Icelandic *rigmaroles*, Frog's thorough detective work and analysis of the motifs in the tale of the stolen thunder instrument, Hans Antonsson's historical-geographical discussion of terms and the potential uses of maps. A strength to be noted is the multidisciplinary representation present, showing that the field definitely has more to offer.

The topic of reconstruction is the most debatable part of the book. As Gunnell points out, using later material has several important points. Even if folkloristic material is difficult from a source-critical stand-



point, the material nevertheless gives an insight into the pre-industrial world of thought. And by increasing that understanding we may be able to shed new light on earlier history. Another valuable viewpoint is offered by Frog, who shows how later folkloristic material may offer new insights into Eddic poetry and the creation of specific poems, in this case *Brymskviða*. Frog's detailed description touches upon the same logic as Sävborg's account of folktales and the handing down of tales and motifs outside the influence of manuscripts and translations. It also pinpoints the need for care when it comes to reconstruction. Filling gaps, and there are many of them, without any indications of occurrence in the Viking Age or medieval material may be highly anachronistic and undermines the credibility of the method. Having said that, there is still plenty to do, and the folkloristic material offers several new perspectives and questions to ask. In Sweden, where folkloristics has been more or less abandoned, the new rise of this field is especially welcome. Recent years have also seen a change in climate, so maybe the tide is turning.

However, the publication's broad presentation also reveals gaps between each sub-field, and a more evident collaborative outreach would be a future effort to aim at. This is especially evident in the contribution by Antonsson, where an archaeological and place-name side would have added even more to the argument.

What more could have been hoped for if further contributions had been made for this volume, or for future research? Here, the focus is primarily Scandinavian and Icelandic, apart from Frog's and Saarikivi's Finno-Ugric and Baltic examples. I would hope for more comparative material, more Sámi material, more archaeological material, more place-name studies. But as an introduction and a restart of an important perspective, this book is a must for everyone.

**MATHS BERTELL**

Mid-Sweden University, Sundsvall

## Folklore Fellows' COMMUNICATIONS

**FF Communications** is a refereed monograph series in the following fields of research: folkloristics, comparative religion, cultural anthropology and ethnology. It focuses on the non-material aspects of traditional culture, especially oral literature, belief systems, myth and ritual, methodology and the history of research.

**FF Communications** has been published for the Folklore Fellows since 1910 by the Academia Scientiarum Fennica (Finnish Academy of Science and Letters) in Helsinki.

### Editor

Pekka Hakamies  
pekhak@utu.fi

### Address

Kalevala Institute, University of Turku  
20014 Turku, Finland

### Editorial secretary

Maria Vasenkari  
marvas@utu.fi

### FF Communications on the internet

<<http://www.folklorefellows.fi>>

To avoid additional costs and to receive FF membership discount address your order to:

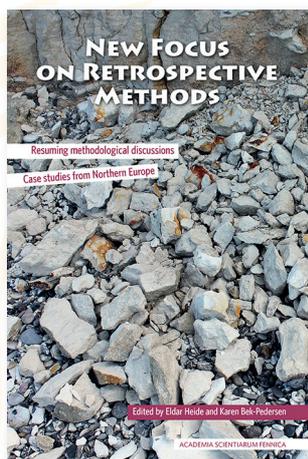
### Bookstore TIEDEKIRJA

Snellmaninkatu 13, 00170 Helsinki, Finland  
Tel. +358 9 635 177  
Fax: +358 9 635 017  
Email: [tiedekirja@tsv.fi](mailto:tiedekirja@tsv.fi)  
Internet: <<http://www.tsv.fi>>



For the complete catalogue of the FF Communications visit our website

[www.folklorefellows.fi](http://www.folklorefellows.fi)



## Recent volumes in the FF Communications

307. *New Focus on Retrospective Methods. Resuming methodological discussions: case studies from Northern Europe*, ed. Eldar Heide and Karen Bek-Pedersen. 230 pp. 2014. 35 euros (hardback).

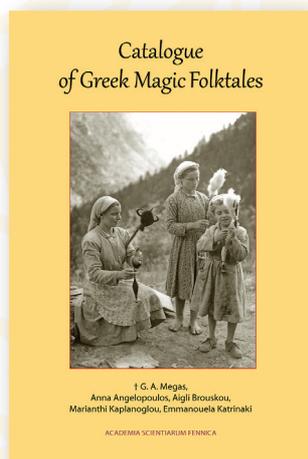
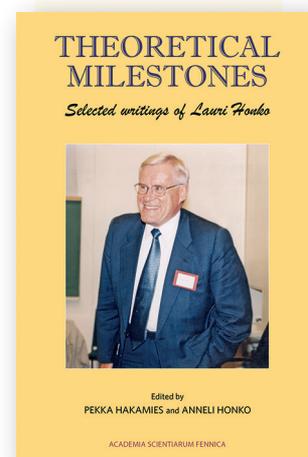
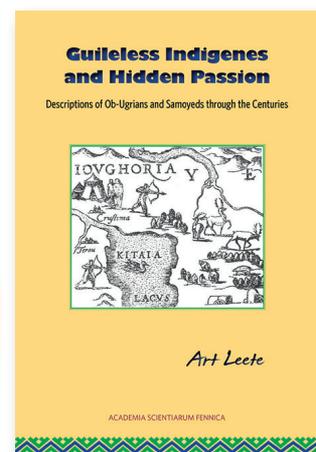
306. Art Leete, *Guileless Indigenes and Hidden Passion: Descriptions of Ob-Ugrians and Samoyeds through the Centuries*. 308 pp. 2014. 40 euros (hardback).

305. Lotte Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People: Genre, Reflexivity, and Performance in Karelian Oral Poetry*. 631 pp. 2013. 50 euros (hardback).

304. *Theoretical Milestones: Selected Writings of Lauri Honko*, ed. Pekka Hakamies and Anneli Honko. 338 pp. 2013. 40 (hardback).

303. G. A. Megas, Anna Angelopoulos, Aigli Brouskou, Marianthi Kaplanoglou and Emmanouela Katrinaki, *Catalogue of Greek Magic Folktales*. 350 pp. 2012. 40 euros (hardback).

302. Alexandra Bergholm, *From Shaman to Saint: Interpretive Strategies in the Study of Buile Shuibhne*. 212 pp. 2012. 30 euros (hardback).



Orders can be addressed to

**BOOKSTORE TIEDEKIRJA**

Snellmaninkatu 13  
00170 Helsinki, Finland

www.tsv.fi  
e-mail: [tiedekirja@tsv.fi](mailto:tiedekirja@tsv.fi)  
tel. +358 9 635 177  
fax +358 9 635 017

