Aado Lintrop

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THE GREAT OAK AND BROTHER-SISTER

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Since my previous article on the Great Oak motif in Balto-Finnic runo songs ("The Great Oak, the Weaving Maidens and the Red Boat, not to Mention a Lost Brush", *Folklore* vol. 11) failed to explain the reasons why the tree that "swept" the clouds cannot be regarded as a typical world tree, I will now begin by comparing different concepts of the great tree. I will not limit my comparison to finding parallels and opposites to the Great Oak only.

The motif of the giant tree intersected a relatively wide circle of questions already in my previous article. Therefore I will continue to discuss the mythological couple, the brother and the sister, the central characters in Estonian runo songs. I have no intention to reveal their "true mythological nature", but hope to point out certain important facts about them.

Ancient Chinese mythology mentions several mythological trees. Perhaps one that should interest us the most is *Fusang* (supporting mulberry) – the tree that rises to a height of several thousand changs, is a thousand changs in perimeter and grows beyond the East China Sea. Ten suns, nine on the lower branches and one at the top, rested on the tree's branches after their course in the sky. The suns rose to the sky by turns. At the top of the tree sat a nephrite rooster that crew out loud at sunrise. It was followed by all the other mythical roosters, and then by all the earthly roosters. If the suns began to shine all at once, the country suffered from a terrible drought. Yi (alternatively Hou-yi), a skilled archer, the son of the Supreme God Di Jun, shot down the nine suns. (Yuan Ke 1987: 139–144).

The belief in mythical roosters that tell the roosters on earth when to crow appears to be quite widespread. The Udmurt mythology, for example, mentions the roosters of the other world: "There are roosters underground: – *kylchin atas* (roosters of *kylchin*; *kylchin* – creator). When *kylchin atas* sings, all our roosters sing too." (Vladykin 1994: 75; Vereshchagin 1996: 132). In the Estonian tradition the heavenly rooster crew before the earthly roosters. Estonian runo

songs also mention the roosters of the sacred grove, for example: *Lähme homme hommikulla, / et ei kuule hiie kuked / ega näe hiie neiud*. < Väike-Maarja [Let us go tomorrow morning,/ So that grove roosters can not hear us /Nor the grove maidens see us]. The legend of several suns (and moons) that threaten to destroy life on earth by shining all at once is also known among the people of the Far East. A corresponding Nivhk text contains the conception of a giant larch (among the Siberian peoples larch is often regarded as the World Tree), which holds images of heavenly bodies. To get rid of the unnecessary ones the images have to be removed and buried in the ground. (Anisimov 1959: 30). A great tree (birch) with Moon and Sun hanging from its branches is depicted on the Ostyak-Samoyed image of the World River. (Prokofeva 1961: 55).

According to *Huainan-zi* Fusang grows in a valley called Tangu or Jangu. Some sources place the tree on the island of immortals, who feed on the tree's fruits that ripen once every nine thousand years. (Mifologitsheski slovar: 577, 225). A similar tree – *qiongsang* (distant mulberry) that was a thousand xuns in height and had red leaves was known to have grown on the coast of the Western Sea. This tree bears fruit once every thousand years. Who eats these fruits will never grow old (Mifologitsheski slovar: 609). The Ancient Chinese mythology also mentions *taoshu*, the giant peach tree. *The Book of Mountains and Seas* describes a peach tree that grows on the mountain of Dushuo and whose branches arch across a distance of 3.000 li thus forming the gateway to the spirit world. In the Taoistic period this image turned into the concept of a peach, called *paotao, lingtao* or *xiantao*, a source of immortality (Mifologitsheski slovar: 426, 427). We must also not forget the tree that grows beyond the South Sea, called *ruo* or *ruomu*. The ten suns are said to land on this tree's branches after the day's course as well. The tree was believed to have dark green leaves and red lotus-shaped blossoms illuminating the earth (Mifologitsheski slovar: 215). Now, considering the hundred rengs high *sansang* and the thousand li high *xunmu* that grow in the North (Yuan Ke 1987: 44, 266), we will learn that according to the Ancient Chinese mythology a world tree grew in each quarter of the horizon. This plethora of world trees may be explained by the fact that in the Ancient Chinese mythology the nine heavenly spheres (*jiu tian* – the nine skies) were sometimes associated with the quarters of the horizon, thus forming a distinc-

tively horizontal model of the universe. *Cang tian* (the blue sky) or *hao tian* (the clear sky) were in the East, *xuan tian* (the black sky) in the North, *yan tian* (the blazing sky) in the South, and *jun tian* (the smooth sky) in the middle (Mifologitsheski slovar: 606). Conceptions of central trees growing in each part of the world or in every sphere of the universe may be found also in the mythologies of several North-Siberian peoples.

In Rig-Veda, the motif of celestial bodies resting on the World Tree's branches appears in the form of a puzzle (1.164.20):

> *Two birds with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship,*
> *In the same sheltering tree have found a refuge.*
> *One of twain eats the sweet Fig-tree's fruitage;*
> *The other eating not regardeth only* [---]

The tree is *ashvattha* (the keeper of horse) – the sacred fig in Vedaic and Hindu mythology, the most typical representation of the world tree in India (Mifologitsheski slovar: 78). In the mythology of many Turkish-Tatar peoples the World Tree or pillar serves as the post to hitch the deities' horses to. In the following extract of a Yakutian narrative, for example:

> *Realising that this should be the edge of his earth, he wondered where does the thick tree with branches in eight spheres end, and when he rose to see – it grew through the Yakut man's small world, grew through the three spheres of the white sky, turned into the main black enamelled silver horse-hitching post of the God of the White Master (Ürüng Ai Tojoon), who drank the white milk food and ate on the spread* ysyahh*. He had the* ysyahh*pole of the cream-coloured horse, the high pillar of the white horse, the hitching post of a mouse-coloured horse with the constantly ascending full moon, with the never setting sun that rotated on the vault of heaven* [---] (Hudiakov 1890: 250)

Among the Mongol people Polaris is called *Altan gadas* (Mongolia, Buryat), *altan gasn* (Kalmyk), or the golden pole. The Buryats believe it is the heavenly horse-hitching post forged by nine white heavenly blacksmiths, the nine sons of Bozhintoi. Ilmarinen, the divine blacksmith of Finland and Karelia, whose name is etymo-

logically related to the word 'heaven' also forged the pillar, which, again, suggests that the motif was very widespread.

Another account of the World Tree, recorded from the Yakuts, bears strong resemblance to the great birch of the Mordvinian folk songs:

> *A thick tree of eight branches grows on the yellow navel of the eight-faceted world. Its bark is of niello silver, gnarls of silver, cambium of gold, cones like beakers with nine protruding handles, leaves like the skin of a four-year-old mare. White sülügüi* [the nectar of the gods] *of the White Master's God* (*Ürüng Ai Tojoon*) *gathers foam, the yellow sülügüi of the White Master's God is iridescent, sloshy. Hungry passers-by eat, tired ones rest, the hungry will recuperate, the tired will fatten.* (Hudiakov 1890: 112–113)

Here I would like to draw a parallel with a Moksha-Mordvinian folk song:

> *Sun moves around the birch,*
> *Moon sets above its top.*
> *Supporting the sky with its branches.*
> *Stars shine on its branches.*
> *The birchleaves are the width of a palm*
> *Its branches arch over the whole earth.*
> *Its buds are thick like a whipstick*
> *Its roots cover the whole earth.*
> *There's a spring-well under the birch,*
> *A well with oaken curbs,*
> *Covered with shingles.*
> *There's a yellow table above the well.*
> *Covered with a white cloth.*
> *There's a brass bowl on the cloth.*
> *A brass cup in the bowl.*
> *The Sun, the Moon are in the cup.*
> *The Sun, the Moon and morning stars.*
> *The crippled, the blind bow there,*
> *The crippled, the blind, with no hands, no legs,*
> *The crippled with no hands, no legs.*
> *The blind drink – and become sighted.*
> *The handless drink – and hands will grow.*

The legless drink – and legs will grow.
Legs will grow, they will walk
Levozh (PMNMI, 2: 25–31*)*

The Arabic traveller and missionary Al Garnati has written a description of the Ugric people, which also includes the concept of a great mysterious tree:

But beyond Visu at the sea of Darkness there lies a land by the name of Yura. In summers the days are very long there, so that the Sun does not set for forty days, as the merchants say, but in winters the nights are equally long. The merchants report that Darkness is not far (from them) and that the people of Yura go there and enter it with torches and find a huge tree there, which is like a big village. But on top of the tree there sits a large creature, they say it is a bird. And they bring merchandise along, and each merchant sets down his goods apart from those of the others, and he makes a mark on them and leaves, but when he comes back, he finds commodities there, necessary for his own country [---] (Al Garnati: 32)

The mythical bird that lives in the treetop may indicate that the Granada born missionary has recorded the concept of the World Tree of the Ugric (or possibly Samoyed) people.

The World Tree is usually depicted as a huge, often opulent thick tree with a certain number of branches. The size and colour of the leaves are specifically mentioned. The tree's bark is exceptional and its fruits, if mentioned at all, are very large. The tree is often located in a specific mythical spot, the centre of a continent, for example, and is commonly associated to celestial bodies, which either rest on its branches or revolve around its top. The great World Tree is often equated with the Tree of Life – in some regions it yielded fruit giving everlasting life, in others the tree grows near a well or source containing the Water of Life. The fate of humankind may be inscribed on the leaves of the world tree. The world tree is often the abode of a winged mythical creature. As the snake that lives near the world tree or under its roots is the symbol of the underworld, so the winged being that lives on top of the tree is the symbol of the heavenly kingdom.

Distinct from other texts describing the World Tree, the Balto-Finnic song about the Great Oak focuses on the creation and the chopping of the tree (which in one way or another is planted by amorphous mythological characters). None of the other World Tree texts touch upon the origin or destruction of the tree. The Great Oak (unlike the oak or pillar of Balto-Finnic chain songs) neither supports nor provides a resting place for celestial spheres, on the contrary, with its fast growth it threatens to tear up the sky and block the clouds from moving. Therefore by shielding the light emitted by celestial spheres it is the opposite of the World Tree, and as such is analogous with the Sumerian *huluppu*-tree.

The story of the *huluppu*-tree focuses on the genesis of the tree – the tree that was planted on the bank of the Euphrates when the gods determined their realms, was blown over by the wind and fell into the river, from where Inanna caught it and planted it in her own garden. But like the Great Oak of the Balto-Finnic songs the Sumerian god(s) that had planted the *huluppu*-tree lost control over it:

> *A serpent who could not be charmed*
> *made its nest in the roots of the tree,*
> *The Anzu bird set his young in the branches of the tree,*
> *And the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk.*
> (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983: 8)

Even though the snake and the bird of this example are considered traditional attributes of the World Tree, the *huluppu*-tree embodies a counterforce to the will of the gods (Inanna, in particular). The most intriguing character here is Lilith, whose nature in Sumerian mythology is somewhat vague, but who in the Babylonian tradition was known as *ardat lili* – the Maiden of Bleakness, the Spirit of Wastelands, and who in the Talmudic tradition became the Daemon of the Night (Leach & Fried 1984: 622).

The use of the epithet "black" suggests that Lilith was associated with darkness already by the Sumerians. Therefore we may assume that one of the reasons why Inanna was weeping and appealed to Gilgamesh for help was the darkness fallen on her garden. In some text versions Inanna first turned to her brother Utu, the sun god, who refused to help her (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983: 4–

9). Like the Balto-Finnic Great Oak song, the Sumerian *huluppu*-tree song focuses on chopping down the tree and on objects carved from the tree after it had been chopped down, whereas the seat (throne) and bed are mentioned in both.

From the trunk of the tree
He carved a throne for his holy sister.
From the trunk of the tree
Gilgamesh carved a bed for Inanna.
From the roots of the tree
She fashioned a pukku for her brother.
From the crown of the tree
Inanna fashioned a mikku for Gilgamesh,
The hero of Uruk.
(Wolkstein & Kramer 1983: 9)

The pukku and mikku, i.e. the drum and drumstick, fall into the underworld and Gilgamesh sends Enki to fetch them, but he remains in the Realm of the Dead forever (Mifologitsheski slovar: 154). Speaking of Sumerian texts it is important to bear in mind that a) in some text versions Gilgamesh features as Inanna's brother, and b) that he did not merely chop down the *huluppu*-tree, but also slaughtered the heavenly bull.

In Balto-Finnic songs the Great Oak is chopped (and the great ox slaughtered) either by the brother (sometimes described as the small brother, sometimes by three or five brothers) or the little man from the sea:

Pieni mies mereshtä nousi,	The little man rose from the sea,
pishshin peikalon pitushe,	His height was about a thumb
kolmen shormen korkevushe,	Or he was three fingers' tall.
hivelöy hiän kirveshtähe,	He honed his axe,
tuli tuikki kirveheshtä [---]	Fire flashed from the blade [---]

Kalevala (KKR I: 338–339)

M. Sarmela concedes that the small black man, who emerged from the sea and who in Karelian has been called *little better than the dead / little prettier than the deceased*, may have been a visitor

from the Land of the Dead (Sarmela 1994: 213). Several North-Eurasian people have imagined the inhabitants of the underworld to be of a small size: the Udmurts, for example, believed that the underworld was inhabited by people who are much smaller than human beings, resembling children (Vereshchagin 1996: 132). Interestingly enough, in Karelia the man, who is otherwise depicted as wearing an iron or bronze hat and with an iron or bronze axe, has an icy hat and is holding an axe of ice, thus corresponding perfectly to the belief of the Land of the Dead located in the far north. Emergence from the sea may also refer to the underworld, and so does the fact that the story of chopping down the oak by the black man is often followed by the story about the origin of 'witch's arrows' (lumbago), the characters in which most certainly come from the Land of the Dead. In Estonian tradition the motif of a man emerging from the sea is often related to the sweeping of the sea (which in the previous article I considered a solstitial ritual of mythological characters, see Folklore vol. 11). The joining link between these two motifs appears to be solstice – prediction played an important role at both winter and summer solstice, young maidens in particular tried to conjure up the image of their future husbands. One possible magic method to achieve this was to pick up trash from outside and put it under ones pillow. Perhaps the solstice has also caused the merging of the motif 'A man emerging from the sea' into the Great Oak song? The only certain thing here is that on the most general scale of familiar-unfamiliar the men (of iron, etc.) rising from the sea clearly fall on the side of "unfamiliar". Whether they are unfamiliar enough to act as representatives of the nether world is determined by a given cultural context.

According to the mythology of the Mansi the retinue of the Master of the Underworld who lived on an island either in the North Sea or near the mouth of the river Ob included seven men with iron bows. The legend describing the birth of *Kul'-oter,* collected by Munkácsi, relates:

> *He was swimming either for a short or a long time, the waves suddenly lifted him up. Riding on the waves and rising up almost to his father Numi-Torum he saw: lo and behold, the island appeared ahead. He struggled hard to swim towards it. He climbed to the shore and remained lying face down. Aunt silver-tongued*

cuckoo sang to him: "Do you intend to remain lying here for a long or a short time? Stand up! Toss some chips torn off the fir over your head! And a rectangular log cabin appears. Walk around the island of Ob! Look into your right pocket and you'll find seven pieces of silver on a single ring, throw away these seven pieces of silver – and seven archers carrying iron bows are born of it, seven men carrying iron arrows are born of it, a measureless town emerges." (Vogul Folklore: 44)

Depicting foreign warriors (or warriors carrying unfamiliar weaponry) as henchmen of the Master of the Underworld appears to be a universal practice.

On the other hand the motif of a little man or a younger brother follows the universal principle, where the youngest or the seemingly weakest character will win. The World Surveyor Man, one of the key characters of the Ob-Ugric mythology, is also the youngest among the brothers, and as the Son of the Woman, like in the following extract from a Mansi Bear Feast song, is sometimes even described as puny:

The Son of the Woman, the famous man of the village
The Son of the Woman, the angry man of the town
Had sharp ears and heard (it).
Rushed to the sons of the Town Elder, the old man:
"Well, men, you've found the house, where the beast of the swamp is sitting,
You've found the house, where the wild animal entered.
Tomorrow, when the beautiful golden day rises
Take me along with my sheathed companions!"
The sons of the Town Elder, the old man, replied:
"What filth! We will not!"
And he burst into tears.
One of the men then said: "Oh well, let's take him (along)!"
He rejoiced, ran home.
Hearing (about it), his aunt
Found a crooked needle with three crooks,
Sharpened it,
Made a straight spear of (the length of) the elk's tongue,
Got a straight spear of (the length of) the animal tongue.
(Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 186–187)

Naturally, it is the Son of the Woman, who slays the bear. The other bear-slayer – the Mouse-sized Hero – is presumably the same World Surveyor Man.

The mythologies of several North Siberian peoples mention a deity or a culture mythological hero who has grown up as an orphan (*D'iia* among the Nenets, *D'aiku* or *Deiba-nguo* among the Nganassans, *Icha* among the Ostyaks, *D'ebegej* among the Yukaghirs, *Mir-susne-khum* or the World Surveyor Man among the Mansi, etc.) related to a trickster known under the same name. Eugen Helimski argues that similar duality that is common to different cultures is by no means the result of the secularisation of mythological texts, and is in fact a known phenomenon (Helimski 1998: 33). Here we should note that the orphaned mythological figure suggests that his/her parents, who may never even be mentioned in the myth, belong to the higher spheres. Once again we encounter a rather universal principle – both *Eekva-pygris'* (the Little Son of the Woman) of the Mansi and *Jehoshuah ben Mariam* of the Jews emphasise the descent from a heavenly father. And even the New Testament reveals the trickster side of Jesus in stories about changing water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, or about the withered fig tree that he cursed. Contrary to some authors' opinion I believe that the importance attached to the brother in Balto-Finnic folk songs cannot be explained by maternal domination in family life but indicates that the mother and father come from the higher level.

An interesting runo song motif connected to solstice is also 'the Making of the Sledge'. The maker is often called by his name (which is mostly Jaan, but also Hans, Ado~Aadu, etc.), though sometimes it is the brother that makes the sleigh:

Minu veike veljekene	My dear little brother
tegi saanida salussa,	Made a sleigh in the grove,
kena kirja kuusikussa –	A nice pattern in the fir wood –
igas kuus lõi kõdara,	A sleigh runner every month,
igas päivas pani pärna.	A sleigh piece every day.

H II 1, 383 (541) Illuka

Making the sledge by days and months (especially if made by Jaan; *Jaanipäev* – Estonian for Midsummer Day) symbolises the shortening of days after the summer solstice and the approaching winter. It

is no coincidence that the chain 'Sword from the Sea' (The Lost Brush), which I have previously associated with the summer solstice, is often added to this motif. Apparently, the original characters had been the mythical sister and brother, whose actions prompted the change of seasons. The great tree begins to grow as the consequence of the sister's or sisters' actions. The (younger) brother fells the tree. For a short period the tree trunk will remain a bridge between the world of the living and the dead, then the brother turns it into a throne and bed for his sister. I will once more point out the indirect parallels: the culture hero of the Mansi and the trickster – the World Surveyor Man – have been described as follows:

Oter the Goden, the younger brother
Steps outside, lets his braids fall down –
Seven Obs flow from one mouth
Seven seas rise from one mouth.
The sun stands still in his braids,
The moon stands still in his braids.
Coming from the seven Obs, the seven seas
Seven beetles with golden backs rise,
And warm their backs in his hair.
His hair has the power over summer and winter.
All over the world
People, poorly bound, poorly clad,
Have stayed alive
Because of them.
(Great Bear: 110)

In this mythological song the change of seasons also depends on the younger brother. I do not wish to claim, neither here nor in the following, that one or another runo song motif has directly been borrowed from beyond the Urals or originates in the common mythological Finno-Ugric era. I merely stress the principles and phenomena that very probably have been universal. Inanna of the Sumerians, the daughter of Ani (the sky god), was the goddess of love, fertility and war. The Ob-Ugrian Kaltesh is also the goddess of childbirth and fertility, the daughter of Numi-Torum (the sky god), the woman that keeps account of the length of people's lives. The actions of the sister(s) of the Estonian mythological songs ensured fertility – the

growth of the Great Oak is evidence of the exceptional powers of its planter or begetter. It also suggests the sister's connection with war: 'The Lost Brush' motif almost always appears together with the chain 'the Sword from the Sea' – the sister that is related to the sun goes to the sea (underworld?) to fetch the lost brush (sun?) and finds the sword. Inanna also descends to the underworld, returning only after she has been raised from the dead.

In the 'Brother's War Song' it is the brother that descends to the underworld, whereas the sister foretells the war:

Tulli üles hommongulla,	Woke up in the morning,
varra inne valge'et,	Early before the sunrise
lätsi mõtsa kõndima,	Went to walk in the woods
hommongulla hulguma.	Ramble in the morning.
Mia löüse minnenäni,	What did she found when she went,
kua kodo tullenani?	Whom upon her return?
Löüse piiri pedäjid,	Found a row of pines,
löüse saare sarapuid.	Found a host of hazel trees.
Miä oll' piiri pedäjäh,	What was there in the row of pines,
kua saare sarapuuh?	Who in the host of hazel trees?
Kägo oll' piiri pedäjäh,	Cuckoo was in the row of pines,
siska saare sarapuuh.	Nightingale was in the host of hazel trees.
Kägo kirjä kiroti'e,	The cuckoo was writing down letters,
siska raie raamatut.	The nightingale scribed in the book.
Kellel kõrda sõtta minnä,	Whose turn it was to go to war,
kellel kõrda kodo jäijä?	Whose turn to stay behind?

Setu (SL 1: 235)

or

Lähme Loojale loole,	Let's go haying for the Creator,
Marialle einamaale,	To the hayfield of Mary
Looja loogu võttemaie,	Let's mow hay of the Creator
Mariat kaarutamaie!	Turn the swath of Mary!
Mis sa leidsid kaare alta?	What did you find under the swath?
Leidsin tedre kaare alta.	I found a grouse under the swath.
Mis seal tedre tiiva alla?	What was there under the grouse's wing?

Neidu tedre tiiva alla.	A maiden was there under the grouse's wing.
Mis seal neiu põlle alla?	What was there under the maiden's apron?
Poeg on neiu põlle alla.	A son was there under the maiden's apron.
Mis seal poja vöö vahela?	What was there tied to the son's belt?
Kerves poja vöö vahela.	An axe tied to the son's belt.
Mis seal kerve nurga peale?	What was there on the edge of the axe?
Laast on kerve nurga peale.	A chip on the edge of the axe.
Mis sest laastust raiutakse?	What will be carved of this chip?
Tuba neljanurgeline,	A room with four corners,
kamber kahekandiline,	A chamber of two sides,
aita viieviiruline,	A barn of five faces
lauda kuuekeeruline.	A table of six curves.
Mis seal tuas tehtanekse?	What do people do in this room?
Sõjaleiba sõtkutasse,	Knead war bread,
vainukakku vaalitasse.	Press the feud pie.
Kesse sõtkub sõjaleivad,	Who kneads the war breads,
kesse vaalib vainukakkud?	Who presses the feud pies?
Õde sõtkub sõjaleivad [---]	Sister kneads the war breads [---]

Haljala (VK VI:1, 336)

The last song text refers to a magic ritual, in this case the foretelling of events (possibly divination using an axe, cf. the reading of axe letters in 'The Miracle House') conveying the message of war. Muncácsi has described a Mansi ritual as follows: "If someone wishes to be foretold his/her future, then the witch ties a string to the divination axe and holding the string from the middle reads out the spell of evoking the fairy, or charms without words. If the witch encounters the fairy's soul then the axe will move, if not, the axe will stand still. Depending on the fairy's revelation it will speak." (Karjalainen 1918: 597). Karjalainen also mentions that often a knife or, even more preferably, an old sword was used instead of the axe (ibid: 596). The axe and sword were both widely used as divination instruments, the sword was used for example by the Tibetan oracles, the Sardian shamans, as well as by the Udmurt sages. The sword found from the sae may in fact represent this type of foretelling.

The rising of war from the brooch may denote a similar thing:

Käisin ma Käbikülassa,	I went to the Cone Village,
hulkusin Ubasalose	Roamed in the Bean Grove
hummalaida otsimaies.	Looking for hops.
Senna ma sõle unestin,	I lost my brooch there,
vaskeaiusse vahetin.	Changed the copper pin.
Sõda tousis sõlestaia,	The war rose from the brooch
vaeno vaskiaiustagi.	The feud from the copper pin.

Haljala (VK VI:1, 335)

The Cone Village and the Bean Grove in the above song may refer to the spheres of the other world or intermediary places (see Arukask 1998: 46–47). Song type 'The Drowned Brother' contains the following motif:

Võtsin sõle rinnasta,	I unfastened the brooch on my breast,
lehe laia kaelasta;	Took the broad leaf off my neck;
panin sõle sõudema,	Sent the brooch upon the waters
lehe laia lendama:	The broad leaf in the wind:
"Sõua, sõlge, lenda, lehte!"	"Float, my brooch, fly, my leaf!"

Haljala (ER I: 203)

or

Panin sõle sõudemaie,	I sent the brooch upon the waters,
lehe laia lendamaie,	The wide leaf in the wind,
kive kulla kirkamaie:	Precious stones to clear up:
"Sõua, sõlge, lenna, lehte,	"Float, my brooch, fly, my leaf,
kirka, kulla kivekene!"	Clear up, dear precious stone!"

Jõhvi (ER I: 201)

These chains clearly indicate that foretelling the fate of the brother was performed using items of silver. This method is universally known, cf. for example the saying of an Udmurt sage:

> *Usually I look from silver and if the silver is dull then it means that the disease has been brought upon the person by the Evil Eye. And when the person has been cast an Evil Eye then I can see two paths: one means loss – the animal to be sacrificed reveals its head; and when there's a need to commemorate the dead, a candle and cow appear.* (Bogaevski 1890: 124–125)

Motifs appended to the opening formula 'Let's Go Haying for the Creator' follow a pattern of consistency. Regardless of whether it is followed by 'The Burning of Gold' or 'The Eagle under the Hay', the song will lead to the four weaving maidens, one of whom is mourning for the young man:

Lähme loojale loole,	Let's go haying for the Creator,
Marinulle heinamaale,	To the hayfield of Mary
looja loogu' vottamaie.	Mow hay for the Creator.
Niidin kaare, niidin kaks,	Scythed a swath, scythed two,
mis ma leidsin kaare alt?	What did I find under a swath?
Juri leidsin kaare alt.	I found George under the swath.
Mis seal Juri kaendelas?	What was there under George's arm?
Kirves Juri kaendelas.	An axe was under George's arm.
Mis sääl kirve lava pääl?	What was there on the face of the axe?
Laast sääl kirve lava pääl.	A chip was there on the face of the axe.
Mis sest laastust raiutakse?	What will be built of the chip?
Juri aita raiutakse.	George's barn will be built.
Mis sääl Juri aida sees?	What is there in George's barn?
Kolm on noort neitsikest:	Three young maidens:
üks sääl ku'ub kuldavööda,	One is weaving a golden belt,
toine niub niitipaula,	The other is twining a band
kolmas nuttab	The third is weeping for a young
noorda meesta.	man.

Viru-Nigula (ERlA)

"The Creator's mown hay" denotes nothing but a place outside the real world, where one can go and learn about one's future. The eagle found under the swath of hay described in this song type may be a trace of the birdlike assisting spirit of the wise man. Three/four weaving maidens are connected to war, as the ring in their possession is made of soldiers' finger bones. (NB! The ring is also a widely used prediction tool).

The sister, who has seen the future (and possibly also her brother's death) by predicting one way or another, sends her brother to war and welcomes him later, whereas several song versions suggest as if the brother, who has anticipated his death (what else can the verses in Setu song versions about the improbable circumstances

of his return mean), returned home through the underworld. Letters of death, shroud, etc. also indicate returning home having defied death. In some Setu song versions the brother who returns from war is recognised only after reading letters of the sword (reference to magic or the brother's wounds). They also contain references to visiting the underworld:

Tule maale, mar'a vel'o,	Come on the ground, lovely brother
astu maale, armas vel'o!	Step on the ground, dear brother!
Sõsar, hellä linnukene,	My sister, sweet birdie,
kuldapärgä pääsokene!	Swallow with golden crown!
Sõrme mull suitsil sulamada,	My fingers are frozen to reins,
jala jäänü jalosside.	My feet are frozen to stirrups.
Velekene noorekene,	My dear young brother,
mino meelimar'akene,	Honey of my mind,
kütä ma sanna küündelist,	I shall heat the hot sauna
havvu viha verdiga,	And foment you with the birch whisk,
sõrme suitsilt sulata,	Defrost your fingers from reins,
pästä jala jalossist.	Release your feet from stirrups.

Setu (SL I: 240)

The fact that no-one except for the sister recognises the brother may also be associated with returning from the Land of the Dead. One of the common beliefs of North-Eurasian people is that those who have passed on to the other world are invisible to all but humans with supernatural powers. Hence the deceased brother remains invisible to all the living except for his sister, who could in fact foresee his going to war (and death?). Madis Arukask (1998: 40–43) has suggested in his thesis that in some Setu songs the war is not merely an event, but symbolises "certain mythological substance, elemental forces". The younger brother seems to be out of luck – once he is drowning, then he is caught into war. As mentioned above, in 'The Drowned Brother' song the sister uses her jewellery to foretell her brother's fate.

In the runo-songs the sister always appears to be more active than her brother is. She is the one who looks for him, calls him for help, sends him to war, welcomes him back, recognises him, etc. Consider for example the opening of a randomly picked song:

Oli mul kolm vennakest.	I had three dear brothers
Ühe saatsin marjamaale,	I sent one to the berry patch
teise saatsin karjamaale,	I sent the other to the pasture.
kolmanda saatsin kalale.	I sent the third fishing.

Haljala (VK VI:1, 251)

The brother makes woodwork, fells trees, builds bridges, and fights the war, but always on the request or prediction of his sister. This is also manifest in the motif of visiting the underworld. Sister/maiden/Sun goes herself and brings her brush, finds the sword and returns with it, but the brother leaves home only because his sister has brought the tidings of war, and when he returns he again needs her help to get accustomed to living among people. At the same time it seems that the sister cannot always control the powers she has. In such cases (like in 'the Great Oak' song) the brother comes to help her and functions as a certain balancing force, which will restore the shaken world order. The greater activeness and independence of the sister in the runo-songs could also be explained by the fact that runo-songs were sung by women. However, in the Ob-Ugrian folktales concerning the mythical couple it is also the sister who seems to trigger the events. But those stories were mostly told by men.

In the song motif "The Making of the Sledge" the younger brother is called to help build bridges over swamps:

Minu veike veljekene,	My dear little brother,
ihu kirves, äili mõõka,	Whet the axe, sharpen your sword,
tie tapper tuliterava –	Forge a razor sharp battle-ax –
tie sillad soode peale,	Build bridges over the swamps,
turba'ad jõgide peale!	Peat paths over the rivers!

H II 1, 383 (541) Illuka v.

The sledge that was started on St. John's Day was finished by the winter solstice, when visitors from the other world were expected. In a version of 'The Crying Oak' from Haljala parish the brothers are asked to build a bridge from the chips of the Great Tree:

Mis jäid jättiksed järele,	All the rest of the chips
viige suosse, tehke silda,	Take to the swamps, build a bridge,
kust saab käia naine naisel,	Where the woman can [visit?] another,

naine naisel, teine teisel,	A woman another, one another,
tütar saab emalla käia,	A daughter can [visit] her mother,
ema käia tüttarella	A mother can [visit] her daughter
süömas sialihada,	To eat pork
katsumas kanamuneda,	To look at chicken eggs
pihta panemas paksupiima.	To steal sour milk.

Haljala (VK VI:1, 151)

A more well-know motif, often linked to 'The Miracle House' is building a sauna over the swamp:

Mis jäid jätiksed järele,	All the rest of the chips,
viime soosse, teeme sauna,	We'll take to the swamp, build a sauna,
kus saavad virved vihelda,	Where sparrows can whisk themselves
pääsukesed pääd pesevad,	Swallows wash their heads,
aned luida haudunevad.	Swans warm their bones.
Läbi säält läksid Läti saksad.	Gents from Latvia went there.
Imestasid Läti saksad:	Latvian gents wondered:
"Onneks see Lihula linna	"Luckily it's the town of Lihula
vai on kuulus Kolga moisa [---]"	Or the famous manor of Kolga [---]"
[---]	[---]
"See on aga minu saunakene.	But this is my little sauna.
Peaksite seesta nägema:	You should see it from the inside:
seest on sinikivista,	Indigo-blue inside,
põrand on punakivista,	Red stone floor,
kuu on ukseksa eessa,	The moon for the door,
pääv katukseks pealla,	The day for the roof above,
sees on kullased kõrendid,	Golden roosts inside,
hobedased õrrekesed.»	Silver perches."

Haljala (VK VI:1, 146, 147)

I believe that originally the motif of building a sauna or bridges over the swamps had a mythological background, emphasising the connection between the worlds of the living and the dead. The mi-

grating birds that bathed in the sauna served as mediators with the other world and messengers from the Land of the Dead. Balto-Finnic death dirges suggest that even the souls of the deceased were called back in the form of a bird. The sauna as the remotest and the least used facility of a farm was closest to the creatures of the supernatural spheres. The Udmurts also believed that the solstice visitors lived in the saunas.

The motif of bridge appears in a number of calendrical winter songs of the Slavonic people. E.g. the following extract from a Belorussian folk song (Vinogradova 1982: 159):

Станьце вы, кавалі, куйте вы тапары,
Rise, you blacksmiths, forge axes,
куйце вы тапары, рубайце вы сосны,
Forge axes, chop pines,
рубайце вы сосны, скіпайце вы дошкі,
Chop pines, cut boards,
скіпайце вы дошкі, масціце масточкі.
Cut boards, build bridges.
Да будзе к нам ехаць а тры празднічкі:
So that visitors could come here on three festivities:
первы празнічак – свято раждзяство,
The first festivity – Holy Christmans,
другі празнічак – свято васілле,
The second festivity – Saint Vassil's Day,
трэці празнічак – свято кшчэннейка.
The third festivity – the Holy Baptismal Day.

The fact that even the Slavonians have perceived their Christmas visitors as souls of their ancestors needs no verification. Like the Estonian St. Martinmas songs the *koljada*-songs of the Slavonians also stress the otherworldly origin of the visitors, and the motifs in both songs are almost the same – coming from a distant place, the journey above the great waters or along the sky, feet soaking wet and freezing, etc. The quoted extract emphasises that visitors from the other world are expected at the time of the winter solstice. The most intriguing formula from Belorussia in songs performed outside the windows (before the performers are invited in) is

масці кладку, прасі гасцей у хатку
Build a pier, invite the strangers in
масці кладку, кліч у хатку
Build a pier, invite in
масці кладку цясовую, прасі ў хатку новую
Build a carved pier, invite into the new house
(Vinogradova 1982: 161–162)

In this context the 'pier' seems to semantically equate with the roosts and perches of St. Martinmas songs, over which the visitors come from the unfamiliar land.

A semantical counterpart for the Karelian song quoted in my previous article

Jo on tammi koatununne Now the Oak has been felled
poikki Pohjoisen joveshta Across the river of the North
silläkshi iku-shijahe [---] A bridge to a timeless place [---]
Uhut (SKVR I4, 470)

would be a motif from a Russian dirge, calling the dead to return home (Vinogradova 1982: 161):

Не зачем ты, батюшка, не раскладывай,
Don't you ever stop at anything, dear old man,
не за лесами-то темными,
Not at the woods so gloomy
не за реками-то быстрыми –
nor the rivers so fast –
через реки-то мы устроим мосты дубовые [---]
Over the rivers we will build oaken bridges [---]

All the above arguments do not necessarily mean that all the runo song motifs of building the bridge or sauna and making the sledge are mythological. Yet I would like to point out that in Udmurtia, where the family is still honoured, the last sacrifice to a deceased mother or father has been celebrated as a symbolic wedding where the family of the deceased and the inhabitants of the other world attend as equal parties (as guests from the bride's and the groom's sides at real weddings). It is possible that several Estonian song motifs connected to wedlock and marriage may have been used at

death and funeral customs. And vice versa. In Erzya-Mordvinian bridal dirges, for example, the motifs that connect the wedding party with funerals are often recurrent:

Dear father's fairy of the outdoors,
Dear father's fairy of the stables!
Don't be afraid of my cry,
The death tune of my body –
I don't wish to startle you,
I don't wish to vex you.
I mourn for my own body,
I lament for my own body.
(Yevseev 1990: 27

Or

Come out, my dear friends,
To the gate of my own father,
Look, my dear friends,
At the chimney of my own father:
When, my dear friends,
A beautiful white smoke
Rises from my own father's chimney,
Then my own mother
Bakes for her family.
When, my dear friends,
A violent whirl of smoke
Rises from my own father's chimney,
Then my father celebrates
Grand funeral
In commemoration of my poor name.
Please come then, my dear friends,
To commemorate my beautiful name,
To remember my beautiful name.
(Ibid: 71)

Many song motifs that have traditionally been regarded as marriage imagery may in fact refer to events that have happened in the world of gods.

Translated by Kait Realo

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