

Summaries

Preface

Is the Runo Song Dead?

I have often heard it said that, with the exception of Setu land and Kihnu Island, the runo song has died out in Estonia. But I have still occasionally thought that this argument mostly relies on the Holy Trinity of the Soviet definition of folklore: traditionality, collectiveness and orality. At the same time it is difficult to delineate one of the components—tradition— because, by and large, everything occurring around and inside us is, in a way, traditional. The emphasis on orality, on the other hand, will inevitably lead to the conclusion that a people who have gained knowledge of and adopted a written culture, end up selling their birthright or folklore for a song—and at that, must pay dearly for the privilege of singing the song of literacy which has supplanted the memory of a genuine child of nature. Thus the question arises: have we sold the runo song in order to become a literate nation, and hence let it die among the archival manuscripts and tomes of anthologies of folk poetry? Or does the archived runo song still live on, waiting merely for the moment when someone will pick it up and perform it in an agreeable manner?

I think that if the prehistoric Estonian runo song managed to survive the thirteenth century upheavals, it could not have remained untouched by the events of the next century, which on the one hand, completely destroyed the regional-political organization and autonomy of Estonians, and on the other, further decreased a not yet fully recovered population. Since we do not actually know what the role of the runo song was in the public or political sphere of ancient Estonians, it is also difficult for us to identify the transformations in the runo song that took place following the collapse of the old political system. We can only say that the more important the role of the runo song was in the circle of Estonian elders and during social events, the more it had to adapt itself in order to remain as it was until the second half of the 16th century. In the subsequent Livonian War, there were regions where the majority of the rural population perished from hunger and disease, but it would seem that the continuity of normal life was an even greater exaction than the drastic decrease in population. In a situation where what few food provisions there were, had to be carefully guarded from roving armed groups, it is difficult to imagine how it was possible to arrange a traditional peasant wedding and celebrate other significant calendar events or family festivities. It was not only the matter of food provisions—any display of wealth could prove fatal during those turbulent times. We must also consider the ideological pressure, which, to be sure, primarily affected the urban and suburban populations.

For me, the answer to the question of whether the runo song is dead, is to be found in the happenings of those remote times. Because if we reserve the term 'runo song' for the Estonian runic song as such, then, by projecting our modern sensibilities to the past, we can say that it already died its first death most probably in the 13th century or the period following the St. George's Night Uprising in 1343. But in case we are content with the idea of a changing tradition, then the runo song today is not dead at all, but has rather witnessed yet another transformation—changes in mnemonic techniques (of which the most important is the implementation of written texts) once again enable the performers to operate with complete texts, allowing them to compile their own original repertoires within the spectrum of an enormous text corpus. In order to create, it is no longer necessary to combine motifs. As has been

the case on many other occasions, creation now takes place at the level of composition of personal repertoires (textual bodies).

The Myth of the Runo Song's Antiquity: Mimesis and Metrics

Arne Merilai

As a ballad researcher, I have repeatedly shown ways in which the subject-centered lyro-epic perception of life and its substance cannot extend any further back in Europe than the (late) Middle Ages—nor could our ancestors here, at the fringes hope to exclude themselves from the common lot. Naturally, lyro-epic songs preserve several ancient (latent) relics, but they also already carry a spirit of modernity—that of European poetry. The pre-Christian period in the intellectual history of our people, however, corresponds to the European Middle Ages before the 13th and 14th centuries, and may, but need not, extend to an earlier period of one and a half or two thousand years. It may hypothetically, but still with confidence, be shown that classical quantitative rules of the Kalevala type may also stem from a logical period approximate to the Middle Ages and only perhaps in part come from a more remote primeval murmur, or the first millennium BCE.

It is known that if the common Baltic-Finnic language had some meters, they were most likely (proto) accentual (Mikko Korhonen). The classical runo meter itself operates on the basis of a strong system of main stresses (since other syllables are positioned freely), in which the principle of quantitative degrees is added as an auxiliary rather than the core principle. The primeval poetry thus was not organized by degrees of quantity—the preconditions for the latter first arose during the last stages of the common Baltic-Finnic language, which probably lasted around 500 BCE to 0 CE to 400 CE when the accentual-quantitative protrusion of post-initial syllables began to evolve.

When and how were the conditions of quantitative degrees actualized? I would argue that the necessary impetus was provided only

when the number of syllables in a verse became fixed. A fixed syllabic line and a quadruple stress bring about the need to break verses (tri-syllabic words and etc.). This in turn necessitated the invention/discovery of the syllabic analysis of Baltic-Finnic poetics: the long main-stress syllable made up the verse's rise, whereas the short main-stress syllable was positioned on the fall (a position where it is not found in former, accentual-syllabic verse or later, accentual verse)—the more quantitative is the verse, the stricter this rule is.

If the signal of the quantitative degree prosodically pales in comparison to that of the word stress, then the rise of the quantitative verse system is not at all self-explanatory (Mikhail Lotman). There are many languages that have quantitative oppositions but no remarkable quantitative poetry. The locus crucis would then not be so much a historical and linguistic hunt for the system of quantitative degrees or stresses but rather the establishment of the historical moment when syllables became fixed. When did it occur, and why? Surely, it must have happened for a reason, and we should search for this motivation. What was it? The enveloping context of European syllabic prosody? Was it self-generated? Either way, I would argue: as long as there is no fixed number of syllables, there is no need for splitting the main-stress syllable regardless of how quantitative the language is in addition to its being accentual.

If the vector of Mikko Korhonen's argument points away from the word's post-initial syllable towards the possibility of filling the verse's stressed position, the vector of my hypothesis moves from the primary stress towards the possibility of filling the verse's fall. These opposite directions should be summated. In the interim period of language development, the short main-stress syllables evened out with post-initial syllables, thereby fitting also into the verse's fall, while the long main-stress syllables maintained their prominence; the rise position added prominence to the auxiliary-stress syllables as well. Thus the classical runo verse in its logical core is accentual-syllabic-quantitative. The principle of quantitative degrees arises (or is discovered/invented) and recedes within certain conditions, but the principle of stress, being stronger, will carry on naturally and continuously.

Thus accordingly pure quantitative verse is a myth. However, the estimated age of the accentual-syllabic-quantitative poetry depends on the antiquity of the fixed number of syllables as such.

Search for a Cosmogonic Brush

Mall Hiimäe

This article's title is a reworking of the name given to a song type belonging to the older layer of Finish and Estonian folk songs—"The searching for the brush". According to nineteenth and twentieth century archival documentations the song's protagonist is a maiden/brother/the sun who combs the hair of shepherds or field labourers, but who loses the hair brush when it darts off and lands in the sea with a splash. Peter/Andrew/Paul (the apostles) cannot or will not go and look for it in the water. The protagonist him/herself goes and brings back a sword from the sea.

Several researchers have explained the song's path of development: 1) the song came about as a working song along the occidental coast of Estonia and later became a lyric song sung collectively by young girls who would swing together on a big swing with axels (A. Salmela); 2) the song was originally a mythological swinging song which then amalgamated a working song in its initial verses (A. Annist); 3) it is a medieval legend song (M. Kuusi); 4) the song is an example of how the lyrical element has been infused into a mythological song (A. Lintrop); 5) the episode of bringing a sword from the sea encapsulates a reflection of the beyond (A. Lintrop, M. Arukask) and etc.

The present article analyzes the variations of the present song from the perspective of a calendar researcher. Some variations of the song include modern names and ritual elements (the bringing in of the greenery for holidays, home refurbishing) which suggest a connection with a temporal dimension. It may be surmised that the original protagonist was the solstitial sun—the constitutional ending of this song, "the Sword from the Sea" reflects the sun's departure to "the other world".

We may compare this to the journey motif in jesting songs (sung by the Estonians during the rituals of St Martin's and St Catherine's Days).

A separate treatment is reserved for the functions arising from the religious background of the swing and swinging as well as the temporal regulation of the custom of swinging. The hypothetical conclusion I reached is that the song type, "The searching for the Brush", can be approached as a cosmogonical myth, or a solstitial song of the sun calendar, while the swing serves as a solar symbol, or a magical means by which the sun's movement is stimulated.

Distant Reflections of Monk Khokh Tenger – Some Motifs of Shamanic Journey in Estonian Runo Songs

Aado Lintrop

This paper highlights some motifs of Estonian runo songs that have possibly been influenced by imagery from shamanic journeys. I shall analyze the Setu song type "Wondrous house", which in my opinion contains clear motifs of a journey to the otherworld. I have suggested before (Lintrop 2004: 125, 126) that in this song, an axe is the instrument through which divination occurs. In addition, we can find in the song a very powerful metaphor that reflects some primordial myth. The house made from blue timber is a symbol of the sky; the three builders with axes are deities—cosmic forces or elements that form it. The results of their actions are described as writings (ornaments). But who then is our protagonist? We may confirm that she possesses esoteric knowledge and that this knowledge gives her access to the world of the creators. But does the seeing of the world being created give her some power? Variants of this song tell us that if the protagonist professes to be an expert in reading the iron book, she is called into the house and only then does the wondrous nature of the building manifest itself. The ability to read or understand the writings (here: the genesis

of the world) opens the way to the otherworld—the world of deities from whom one can seek information or help. In different cultures, the person who has access to information of this kind is called a shaman or a seer. To authenticate his or her divinations, prophecies, or counsels the otherworld and its inhabitants must be described in detail.

Researchers have pointed out that terms for colours are not used very often in Estonian runo songs. The most frequent colour is white (*valge*); black (*must*), grey (*hall*), red (*punane*), and blue (*sinine*) follow. Red and blue are often used in parallel verses with the meaning ‘beautiful’. In the song type ‘The Creation’, the most commonly employed colours are blue, red, and golden. It seems that the worldview of the northern Estonian runo songs is more colourful than the one of the southern Estonian songs. In the Setu runo songs, the colour term ‘blue’ is used mainly in connection with clothes, and birds, too, are often associated with the blue colour. In the Jakob Hurt publication “*Setukeste laulud*”, blue appears in connection with the following objects:

- a) Clothes and fabric 214 times – blue shirt 79, blue apron 47, blue flag 28, blue silk 25, blue robe 9, blue wool 8, blue kerchief 7, blue fabric 4, blue plaid 3, blue yarn 2, blue cloth 1, blue thread 1 times.
- b) Nature, and animals 183 times – blue bird/bird with blue wings 69, blue flower (*hepatica*) 20, blue cloud 17, blue horn (=elk) 13, blue water 12, blue sheep 11, blue fire 10, blue forest 8, blue pig 5, blue rod 5, blue smoke 3, blue berry 2, blue heaven 2 (*sic!*), blue valley 1, blue horse 1, blue cow 1, blue tail 1, blue turnip 1, and blue beetle 1 times.
- c) Other miscellaneous objects 35 times - blue kettle 8, blue tears 8, blue jaw 4, blue timber 3, blue paper 3, blue bed 2, blue 700 hundred (money) paper 1, blue carriage 1, blue gents 1, blue laundry 1, blue post 1, blue house 1, blue drops 1 times.
- d) In addition, blue appears as separate object in 9 times.

Considering the previous statistics, the runo song type that we analyzed surprises us with a completely different use of the word ‘blue’. Here we can find a blue fire; a blue kettle, blue sheep, blue wool, blue fabric - and this blue world reveals itself sometimes in a house that has three corners and is being made from blue timber. It is possible that this blue world that marks the terminus of a soul’s journey is a very distant reflection of the Mongolian Eternal Blue Sky - *Monkh Khokh Tenger*.

Collector of Folk Poetry as a Creator: the Representation of Seto Tradition in Jakob Hurt's "Setukeste laulud" (Songs of the Seto)

Andreas Kalkun

For folklore scholars and the Seto people, the three volumes of Jakob Hurt's "Setukeste laulud" have been a source of great enjoyment for over a hundred years now. This work has proved to become with time a very impressive primary source. Because of its esteemed reputation, its structure as well as the way songs themselves are presented, its stature has grown to such an extent that it seems a travesty to ask today, how this book was compiled or composed. But when we examine Hurt's correspondences, it becomes apparent that the structure of "Setukeste laulud" is not self-explanatory, nor does it actually derive from the Seto songs. It is as clear as day that Hurt does not publish the tradition for us the way people cultivated it, but rather "Setukeste laulud" manifests and perpetuates the then circulating notions of tradition and its carriers. The form and structure of "Setukeste laulud" is pregnant with meanings and carries a certain ideology.

In my article, I discuss ways in which Jakob Hurt represents the Setos and their tradition both in his writings and in "Setukeste laulud". In order to learn about Hurt's publishing principles and more broadly, about his attitude towards the people and their folk songs I performed a critical re-reading of Hurt's correspondences and publications in the media. Prior to his work on "Setukeste laulud" and during its compilation, Hurt carried on an extensive correspondence with Kaarle Krohn, the son and follower of Julius Krohn, who was the main ideologue of the Finnish School. It is evident that Hurt was particularly aware of the research methods and objectives underlying the historical-geographical approach, and that "Setukeste laulud" was much influenced by Hurt's collaboration with Krohn. In his letters to Hurt, Krohn indicates clearly that epic songs are preferable both in regard to collection and publication. As mediator between Hurt and his project's financier, The Finnish Literary Society, Krohn undoubtedly exercised a profound influence

on Hurt, and when Krohn, who himself had been researching lyro-epic songs, suggested to Hurt that he should begin with epic songs, Hurt followed this advice. The ideology of the Finnish School seeps into quite a number of Hurt's evaluations of Seto songs. For instance, typologically complex Seto amalgam songs receive a rather harsh treatment from Hurt and Krohn most probably because of the difficulty they present in trying to fit them into a matrix.

Hurt perceives the contemporary tradition as a residue of the original and perfect whole. The task of an enlightened scholar is to scour these remains that were collected from unsophisticated folk and put them back into a whole so that the original beauty and perfection of folklore may be seen again. When we read Hurt's letters critically, it becomes evident that he creates and perpetuates an idea of the Setos being a people inhabiting a lower stratum of development. Thus the Seto tradition serves as a necessary component for the building of an Estonian people, and the Setu themselves constitute "a big and living Book of History" the reading and examination of which will help recreate a so far missing history of Estonians and allow it to be written down. Hurt refers to Setos as "the younger brothers" of Estonians, he calls them "child-like", "tender-hearted" and "cute". This is a vocabulary that suggests power relations, perpetuating the patronizing discourse on Setos that disparages and minimizes them. At the same time it also reflects a broader attitude of Hurt's contemporaries towards "Pskovian Estonians".

Three Singers from the 1965 Expedition to Järvamaa: Anette Evart, Anette Raagul, and Rosalie Veinberg

Janika Oras

This article describes three Estonian women who were born in the final decades of the 19th century and who contributed runo songs for the Estonian Folklore Archives' 1965 expedition to Järvamaa: Anette

Evart, Anette Raagul, and Rosalie Veinberg. At that time the runo song was disappearing from public singing practice in northern Estonia, the historical Järvamaa and east Harjumaa. The knowledge of runo songs these three women had was therefore exceptional for that time and environment.

For a long time, individuals who had knowledge of runo songs have been regarded in folkloristic discourse as the passive retainers and mediators of past texts. The present biographical approach, on the other hand, focuses on the singer as an autonomous subject and active creator. I examined the personal relationship these three women had with the runo song and their collaboration with the folklorists using their biography, personal traits and singing experience as a context. By depicting the singers' individual song world lodged on the borders of the historical oral tradition, I attempted to present the runo song not so much as a once disrupted past tradition than as a continuous, changing practice which was at that particular moment represented and shaped by these three women.

Texts of the Estonian Folklore Archives comprised the source material for this study. The three singers were interviewed by Estonian folklorists Herbert and Erna Tampere, Mall Hiimäe (then Proodel), Richard Viidalepp and Selma Lätt. The critical analysis of the source texts showed that the folklorists differed in their representations of singers—a difference deriving from each one's specific collecting and textualization strategies. Drawing upon the meta-discursive practices peculiar to that time, each folklorist, after all, had chosen for the records a different folkloric event, and the work of each reflects the collection process and details the singer's life and personality to varying degrees.

The key concepts used for channeling the folklorists' work were: the centrality of text, concern with the past, multiplicity of geographical and genre-related representations, anonymity and authenticity. In contrast to H. and E. Tampere, Richard Viidalepp and Selma Lätt who represented the older generation, M. Hiimäe, a young scholar of narrative traditions, took a much more pronounced interest in the ways and networks through which the traditions were passed on as well as in the depiction of the contemporary context. During the collecting, and especially so during the sound-recording, the principal preoccupation was the runo song. Therefore, the archival recordings over-historicize

the singers' total repertoire, which was dominated by the rhymed song learnt from books and through the tradition, as was typical of the age. As for the singers' biographies, it is their childhood and adolescent years that are covered. This is firstly due to the focus which was placed on the past tradition, and secondly because the Soviet occupational politics rendered biography a taboo topic.

Of the three singers, Anette Evart's personal presence is the least conspicuous, or remains "in the shadows" of the song texts, so to speak. In their manuscripts, H. and E. Tampere have included references to her residential addresses and some quotidian details that emerged during the collection. M. Hiimäe, on the other hand, has introduced Anette Raagul as an active singer who was well known in her community and who made a point of treasuring the old tradition. As a woman of culture, Rosalie Veinberg herself recorded the tradition. The manuscript copies of printed sources found in her materials point to the discrepancy between the folklorists' search for orality and the letter-oriented cultural experience of their collaborator.

Additional Reflections and Juxtapositions: Lexical Stereotypy in Runo Songs from Kodavere and Jõhvi-Iisaku

Liina Saarlo

In this article I have analyzed songs from Jõhvi and Iisaku in Jakob Hurt's collections by applying the quantitative-qualitative method I developed while examining the song corpus from Kodavere. I compare the runo songs from Kodavere and Jõhvi-Iisaku—the vocabulary of the songs, common word combinations and their meanings. The priority is given to the cases of lexical stereotypy, i.e. alliterative and parallelistic combinations and other word pairs (phrasal verbs, the epithet-and-noun combinations, compound words and their components). The touchstone of this comparison is the Kodavere song corpus: whether

common/popular word combinations are also found in the Jõhvi-Iisaku corpus, and whether the denotation and usage of word combinations is similar in these two corpuses.

The comparison of the lexical stereotypy of runo songs from Kodavere and Jõhvi-Iisaku showed that: 1) the most common word combinations are frequent in both corpuses; 2) in most cases, stereotyped word combinations are permanently collocated in both corpuses; 3) there are differences in the frequency of some word combinations, which are specific to the local dialects.

The comparison between the two corpuses has justified itself. The finding of similarities proves that the developed method has served its purpose: the results obtained by virtue of the uniformalized word stems and the application of the quantitative-qualitative analysis do allow us to say something about the stereotypy in Estonian runo songs in more general terms. The existence of differences shows that the same method can prove useful in the research of runo songs from other regions as well.

“Symmetrical Modes” and Mono-interval Polyphony in Vocal Folk Music: Some Parallels between the Setu and Southern Russian Folk Song

Žanna Pärtlas

When Jaan Sarv discovered a rare scale structure—“1 3 1 3 1” (the digits denote the number of semi-tones in the degree intervals)—while he was analyzing the first multitrack recordings of the Setu polyphonic song, he drew attention to its correspondence with one of Olivier Messiaen’s so-called mode of limited transposition, which is also called “a symmetrical mode”. What makes this unexpected analogy especially intriguing is the fact that symmetrical modes are often regarded as being artificial, or rationally constructed, and therefore are contrasted with

the so-called ‘natural modes’ of a supposedly ‘natural’ origin. From this one might infer that symmetrical modes would only occur in art music—as a result of a conscious construction on the part of composers. However, the research of ethnomusicologists shows that symmetrical scale structures do occur in traditional music of various peoples as well. To be sure, they do not occur very frequently, and when they do, they are found in archaic strata. Likewise, they may be found in vocal folk music the sound structure of which, when compared to the instrumental music, is much less dependent on external factors (e.g. the form of the instrument) and which probably expresses most purely human musical cognition.

Of the main four types of symmetrical modes, at least three can be found in folk music: whole-tone scales (2 2 2 ...), octatonic, or diminished, or a-whole-and-a-semitone scales (2 1 2 1...) and extended, or more precisely, one-three-semitone modes (1 3 1 3...).

The Setu polyphonic song may be fruitfully compared to the southern Russian musical tradition. Although southern Russian folk songs have more than one feature in common with Setu folk songs, my primary focus is the problem of one-three-semitone mode.

Two hypothetical possibilities may be posited which could account for the development of symmetrical scales in vocal folk music:

- 1) the scale has been adopted in a more or less already existing form from instrumental music where it was formed under the strong influence of the instrument’s construction and its acoustic properties;
- 2) more extended scale forms evolved from a small “modal cell” as a result of the inner development of the song tradition, and new scale segments were formed by repeating the characteristics of the original structure.

In the case of the one-three-semitone mode, such a “modal cell” could be the trichord “1 3” or “3 1” (in Setu songs possibly F-sharp-G-B), in the case of a whole-tone scale, “2 2”, the trichord G-A-H. We should particularly pay attention to the latter since it is a very archaic structure that unites Setu, southern Russian and Mordvinian folk music.

The question that I set out to answer in the present article is more theoretical in nature than ethno-historical. From a theoretical perspective, it is less important whether the parallels between Setu and southern

Russian folk music spring from the genetic affinities of these traditions, or whether these parallels are typological similarities arising from the universality of musical thinking. Most probably, some historical links do exist here—many common features linking Setu, southern Russian and Mordvinian traditions point to this, but their exposition would require a separate study.

“My Mother Tricked Me to the Loom”

Õie Sarv

Jakob Hurt’s “Songs of the Setos” (Setukeste laulud), and other old song texts in general, offer a variety of information concerning the singers’ lives and their world. As the weaving of cloths and belts was a very important skill for Setu women—all girls of marriageable age were expected to prepare an enormous amount of handicraft items for their wedding—it is then no surprise that this theme came to be represented in different songs. Nowadays only a few older women can do handicraft of the old type, and the knowledge of the names and meanings of patterns as well as of various techniques is disappearing. But even today for those who are interested, the songs will open the way into a lost world where handcraft and patterns have far greater significance than they have now in this present time. Many Setu songs tell of the mother managing to trick a small child into working at the loom, and how the girl learns both songs and the craft as well as the patterns by watching the older women work. The songs are a wealth of information regarding the weaves, patterns and techniques the meaning of which has become obscure by now. They also contain past knowledge of family relationships, weaving and the preserving of cloth.