

Liina Saarlo

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6486-5543>

ON THE INTERWEAVING OF ORAL AND WRITTEN TRADITIONS IN ESTONIAN FOLKLORE COLLECTIONS

Abstract

The formation of Estonian folklore collections reflects a tension between archaism and modernity, with folklore serving as a cornerstone of 19th-century national identity and ethnic historiography. Authenticity, rooted in orality, historicity and philological precision, dominated collecting practices to rescue ‘old treasures’ from destruction and disappearance in a modernising society. This study examines the interplay of oral and printed traditions in the runosong corpus, employing a hybrid methodology of close reading of archival texts (supplemented by historical publications) and distant reading via the Estonian Runosongs Database and linked FILTER database. This approach bridges quantitative pattern detection with qualitative, contextual interpretation, addressing challenges in analysing dialectical, poetic corpora.

KEY WORDS: runosongs, literacy, orality, printed folklore, folklore collection history.

Anotacija

Estijos folkloro kolekcijų formavimasis atspindi archajiškumo ir modernumo priešpriešas, liudijantis, kad tradicinė muzikinė tautosaka yra XIX a. nacionalinio identiteto ir etninės istoriografijos kertinis akmuo. Autentiškumas, pagrįstas tarminiais tekstais, jų istoriškumu ir filologiniu tikslumu, dominavo rinkimo praktikoje, siekiant išgelbėti „senus lobius“ nuo sunaikinimo ir išnykimo modernėjančioje visuomenėje. Šiame tyrime nagrinėjama žodinės ir spausdintinės tradicijos sąveika runų dainų aprašuose, taikant hibridinę metodiką – atidžiai skaitant archyvinius tekstus (papildytus istoriniais leidiniais) ir skaitant nuotoliniu būdu per Estijos runų dainų duomenų bazę ir su ja susietą FILTER duomenų bazę. Šis metodas sujungia kiekybinį modelių nustatymą su kokybine, kontekstine interpretacija, sprendamas iššūkius, kylančius analizuojant tarminius, poetinius tekstus. PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: runų dainos, raštingumas, žodinė kalba, spausdintas folkloras, folkloro rinkimo istorija.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15181/rh.v34i0.2832>

Liina Saarlo – senior research fellow at the Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu, Estonia

Liina Saarlo – folkloristikos mokslų daktarė, Estijos folkloro archyvo ir Estijos literatūros muziejaus vyriausioji mokslo darbuotoja, Tartu, Estija

E-mail: liina.saarlo@folklore.ee

Received 18/03/2026. Accepted 25/04/2026

Copyright © 2026 Liina Saarlo. Published by Klaipėda University Press.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.

License (CC BY), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction

The history of the formation of Estonian folklore collections is intertwined with two opposing factors: archaism and modernity. The conceptualisation of folklore is inherent to modern culture, which seeks its roots and values in archaic traditions (Valk 2016; Anttonen 2005). The collection of folklore texts was an important part of constructing Estonian national self-awareness and building Estonian professional culture in the 19th century. Folklore was seen as a tool for writing an ethnic history to justify the existence of a small nation, or as the cultural historian Marek Tamm succinctly notes, ‘to write Estonians into history as a people’ (Tamm 2008, 503).

Regina Bendix (1997) has shown that authenticity has been one of the central concepts in the history of folklore collection. This applies to Estonian folkloristics as well; parallel to the historicity aspect, orality has been another criterion of authenticity. When Jakob Hurt initiated the nationwide collection of folklore in 1888, the goal expressed in his published calls was, in modern terms, to collect the intangible heritage and preserve it for future generations. It is evident that valued ‘old treasures’ (Valk 2005) must be authentic, so he urged people to document only what they had truly heard, and not to copy from books.

In addition, folklore texts were seen as sources for philological research. Scientific precision might not have been so important until the early 19th century, but it became increasingly crucial over time, so that for Hurt, noting the origin of the texts and the correctness of dialect descriptions was important. In the early 20th century, Estonian folkloristics was linked to the historical-geographical school of folklore research, strengthening the importance of the authenticity of collected texts.

Alongside the imagined ideals of authenticity, the reality was that the collection of folklore took place at a time when most Estonians were literate, and printed materials with various folkloric content were accessible to many, both collectors and singers. In this way, printed versions mixed with the oral tradition, and reached folklore archives.

In the article, I examine the connection between texts documented from the oral tradition and those published in print, the interweaving of oral and written traditions, in an example of a classic folklore genre central to Estonian folkloristics, runosongs. The source of my study is the corpus of runosongs in the Estonian Folklore Archives, supplemented by contextual data related to the history of folklore collecting in the form of both archive manuscripts and prints, and prints containing published folklore texts.

I have combined close reading and distant reading methods. The close reading method, developed to analyse literary texts, has been used by literary scholars primarily for examining the lexical and semantic layers of a text (Guillory 2025). Over time, the method has been applied to studying both the context and texts accompanying the text (e.g. biographies, letters), as well as conceptualising the positions of the author and the reader (Mikkola 2009, 59).

Critics of the close reading method consider the scantiness of the analysed material and the creation of generalisations based on single cases as the method's layered pitfalls. As a counterpoint, the concept of distant reading emerged in the 1990s. (Moretti 2013). It has been used in literary studies as an umbrella term for the analysis of text corpora and statistical methods, comparable to quantitative analysis and macroscopic analysis (Tangherlini 2013).

Estonian researchers note that while the statistical analysis of large corpora reveals patterns invisible in the close reading of a few texts, analysing artistic texts cannot rely only on quantification. Statistical tools suit modern written-language texts best, but they struggle with historical, poetic, dialectal, and other specialised ones (Meriste 2021). Combining quantitative analysis with qualitative, including contextual, and historical analysis, it enables both systematic pattern detection and culturally grounded interpretation (Tangherilini 2019).

To enable the distant reading of runosong texts, the Estonian Runosong Database (ERAB) has been compiled since the early 21st century, containing approximately 100,000 runosongs. The database aggregates the largest and richest manuscript collections from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century (Sarv, Oras 2020). Currently, the corpus of runosongs published in print is being prepared for addition to the database.

ERAB is linked to the joint database of Finnic runosongs, FILTER, which, in addition to archived runosong texts, also incorporates some literary works (Kallio et al. 2023). The joint database has been used for quantitative studies of runosongs developing computational comparative methodologies for the texts (Janicki et al. 2022).

Archaic runosong and folklore collecting in modernising Estonian society

The recording of Estonian folklore in the 19th century gained momentum and reached its peak during a period when society was undergoing a process of modernisation, which also included the transition from an oral to a written culture. At the centre of Estonian folklore collecting has been the runosong, which

has embodied archaic and authentic traditions on one hand, and the poetic noble heritage on the other.

A runosong¹ is an archaic alliterative tetrametric singing style characteristic of nearly all Finnic peoples around the Gulf of Finland. Its core formal features include octosyllabic trochaic tetrameter, alliteration and parallelism. Similar formulae, motifs and song types appear across the traditions of different Finnic groups (Rüütel 1998).

The runosong tradition probably dates back to the first millennium BC. In Estonian folkloristics, it is also known as the 'older folk song', referring to this ancient singing style in contrast to a newer folk song tradition, the end-rhymed stanzaic song, that began spreading in Estonia during the 18th century, initially in urban areas. By the late 19th century, it had become dominant, while the runosong had faded from the active 'living' tradition nearly everywhere in Estonia. The content and world-view of the newer folk song aligned with the changing, modernising world. Its verse structure harmonised with the modern language, and its melodies and singing styles matched evolving musical tastes. Newer folk song texts and melodies were typically borrowed or literary in origin, although individual creations also emerged (Sarv 2009).

The documentation of runosongs initially began with Baltic German literati from the Protestant need for local written languages and problems of religious education, for the purpose of learning the 'native' language, in travelogues as examples of curiosities, etc., from the 17th century, until the practice of preserving folklore merged with Enlightenment ideals of educating peasantry and ideas of seeking ethnic histories in folklore (Valk 2007; Lukas 2011).

During the National Awakening in the second half of the 19th century, the rise in numbers of Estonian national intellectuals, and the idea of the formation of Estonian professional culture based on traditional culture, increased interest in the oral tradition, and prompted various societies and individuals to organise collection campaigns (e.g. Särg 2007). Folklore, particularly runosongs, was seen as a document, and a tool to write the nation's history and build up the national identity (Tamm 2008). The most vivid example of this is the case of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* (printed in 1857), authored by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882), one of the first educated Estonians, a medical doctor by profession, and an enthusiast for antiquities. He created an epic based on the plots of orally transmitted legends about a natural giant, employing the metre and poetic features of the runosong. Kreutzwald had encountered the runosong tradition in his youth, considered himself, and was regarded in Baltic German intellectual

¹ Also known as 'Kalevalametric song', in Estonian 'regilaul', Finnish 'runolaulu', 'Kalevala-laulu'.

circles as, a specialist in the oral poetic tradition, regarded runosongs as the ideal of Estonian poetry, and composed original poetry in this form himself (Jaago 2005b).

The most intensive folk poetry collecting took place in the second half of the 19th century, when Jakob Hurt (1839–1907), an Estonian pastor, linguist and ideologist of the national movement, called for a nationwide folk poetry collection. Prompted by appeals published in newspapers in 1888 and later reports, 44,000 runosongs, among other folklore genres, were sent in over two decades. This is one-third of the entire runosong corpus of the Estonian Folklore Archives collected during the 19th and 20th centuries. There were about a thousand contributors, from very diverse backgrounds and levels of education. They documented runosongs from their parents, relatives, neighbours–villagers, and from their own memories. Contributors relied on a principle that was already in force and remained valid for the next hundred years: ‘old treasures’ were collected from elderly rural people (Jaago 2005a).

The concept of folklore was introduced by the elite, the Baltic German nobility or Estonian intellectuals, and the folk were seen as its bearers, a reservoir from which the elite’s task was to draw material for creating new culturally and ideologically valorised products.

Although folklore collectors considered performers as ‘the others’, as uneducated people and representatives of the pre-modern world (Anttonen 2005), several significant changes took place throughout Estonian society during the 19th century. The Estonian peasantry had been in a marginalised position for centuries. At the beginning of the 19th century, legal and agrarian reforms occurred through which tenant farmers, former serfs, attained emancipation and acquired the legal right to own land as hereditary property. This created the preconditions for technological development and the modernisation of the agrarian economy, the motivation for education, and striving for advancement on a societal level (e.g., Karjahärm 2007).

The beginning of Estonians’ literacy is closely linked to the Lutheran Church and the experience of learning Church texts, reinforced by tying it to familial and communal rights (Paatsi 2016a: 88–89). Data on literacy began to be recorded in the 17th century; there were still relatively few readers among the rural population. In the following centuries, literacy, which initially meant only reading, grew, until by the end of the 19th century, both reading and writing became compulsory, and the proportion of literate people exceeded 90% (Paatsi 2001: 878–879; Aarma 1990: 71–75, 211).

The literary change for most Estonians took place during the 19th century, alongside the formalisation of the literary language, based on dialects, and the

cultural unification of local traditions. Societal modernisation also meant the unification of education. Formal schooling instead of home learning was promoted, a permanent school network took shape, and education came to be seen as more than just learning the Catechism by heart and acquiring the ability to read the Bible.

Literacy and education in general, had a significant place in the identity of the generations of the era of the National Awakening (Plath 2011; Jansen 2004). Broad-based literacy, one of the prerequisites for the modernisation of Estonian society, was simultaneously connected to the vanishing of archaic oral traditions. The spread of popular literature made songbooks with rhymed songs available countrywide, leading to the spread of a newer singing culture. Alongside the process, the runosong tradition became obsolete, because it was no longer adequate to fulfil people's aesthetic, emotional and musical demands.

For a changing society, literacy also needs some activity and agency. By the time of Hurt's collection campaign, the peasantry had already encountered various printed sources and had adopted written self-expression (Beyer 2011; Hasselblatt 2011; Kikas 2014). Somewhat paradoxically, the general literacy, which caused the decline of the oral culture, nevertheless enabled rural people across Estonia to write down runosongs in response to Hurt's call.

Population census data provide a good overview of the dynamics of literacy, but information on what was read has to be sought from other types of source. According to the cultural historian E. Jansen, various documents written by the people themselves, including letters, memoirs and folklore collections, would be suitable to provide information on the impact of the shifts in cultural frameworks influencing mental life (Jansen 2004, 68). Therefore, I proceed from the persuasion that the runosong corpus reveals not only the archaic oral singing tradition, but also the influence of reading on oral poetics and the practice of vernacular literacy, the dynamics of cultural change.

Oral, written and printed runosongs

Regarding runosongs, the possibility of originating from written sources has rather been overlooked, assuming that newer, stanzaic songs were published in print. Thus, when writing about the relationship between literature and folklore, the Estonian folklorist Ülo Tedre meant rhymed songs, in relation to which individual authorship and inauthenticity are often a problem, while 'in the case of the runosong the question hardly arises at all' (Tedre 1965, 654).

There have sometimes been accusations of forgery and presenting original compositions as 'authentic folk poetry' among Hurt's volunteer contributors, and

according to Tedre ‘there is a noticeable number of unreliable correspondents among our thousands of folklore collectors’ (Tedre 1965, 655). Among the ‘unreliable forgers’, Tedre also included Kreutzwald. Indeed, despite the undisputed importance of his work in the history of Estonian national culture, his legacy is controversial, being full of questionable boundary crossings between invented romantic mythical characters and traditional oral culture. No equally shameful term has been used about those who copied songs from printed sources, since the network of Hurt’s volunteer contributors has been exceptionally important, and symbolically valuable for the acquisition of Estonian folklore collections. Speaking more generally, connections between runosongs and printed sources have been studied relatively little, with research focusing on either particular song types (e.g. Tampere 1932), or the influence of runosong features on professional literary works (Mirov 2002).

Runosongs were quite widely published in very diverse printed materials, ranging from eight Estonian songs in Herder’s *Volksliedern* (1778–1779) anthology, scientific publications, and countless popular prints. All these publications had a different impact from the collectors’ and performers’ standpoint.

Among the Baltic German literati’s publications in the early 19th century, the most notable were the nearly 150 texts published in Johann Heinrich Rosenplänter’s scholarly journal *Beiträge zur genauern Kenntniß der ehstnischen Sprache* (1813–1832), and Alexander Heinrich Neus’ first runosong anthology *Ehstnische Volkslieder* (1850–1852). These works were crucial in shaping the concept of the runosong and folklore collecting practices overall. Their direct impact on contributors to Hurt’s collection remains uncertain, although they clearly influenced the verse form of the epic *Kalevipoeg* by Kreutzwald and, indirectly via later reprints, the runosong aesthetics more broadly.

Jakob Hurt’s *Vana Kannel* (VK I and II, 1875–1886), as a part of the first series of *Monumenta Estoniae Antiquae*, set the standard for academic editions of runosongs, aiming to publish all variants according to regional principles and scientific reliability. With only 750 printed copies, access to the volumes among Hurt’s collaborators was limited, although he rewarded the most diligent with books (Kikas 2025). The Estonian folklorist Arvo Krikmann, who has dealt with identifying the printed sources of proverbs, notes that Baltic German and academic folklore editions were generally not easily accessible to Estonians, but many pieces from them were reprinted in popular editions and school textbooks, entering folklore collections through rewriting and refolklorisation (Krikmann 1999).

Runosong ‘folk editions’ in calendars, songbooks and newspapers also played a role. One of the first printed publications of runosongs directed at Estonian

Even larger was the reach of runosongs in school textbooks, especially Carl Robert Jakobson's widely used reader *Kooli Lagemise raamat* (1867–1876), which remained in use into the early 20th century. The reader went through several editions, and was printed many times and in numerous copies. It included several runosongs and excerpts from *Kalevipoeg*, which later entered the runosong corpus via Hurt's collaborators.

Comparing texts of the runosong corpus with printed sources is very challenging using close reading alone. This is where combining distant and close reading methods proves helpful. The user interface Runoregi (runoregi.fi), based on the FILTER database and computational comparison methods, allows for comparing not only individual verses and verse groups, but also entire songs, presenting similarities as clusters and percentage values. When comparing entire songs to find similar ones, it is possible to identify duplicates, copies and original creations. Songs recorded by various collectors from different regions of

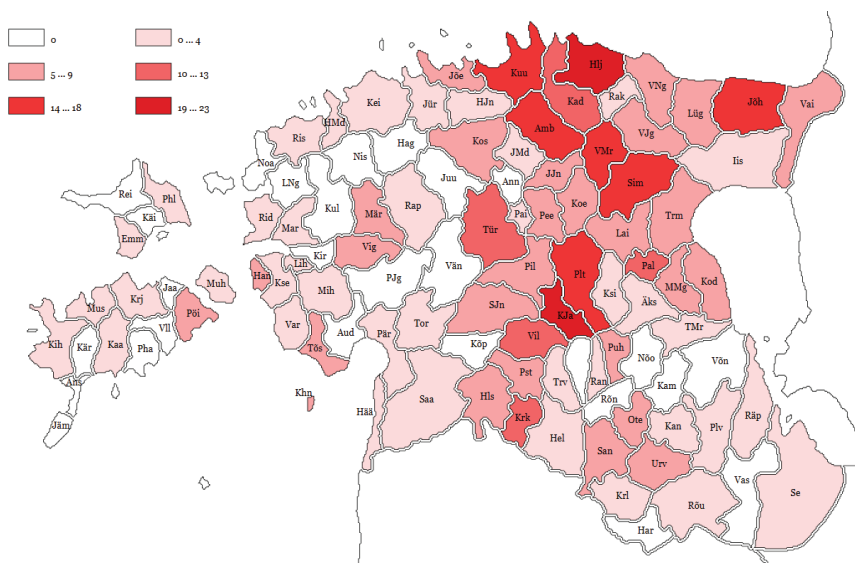


Figure 1. A distribution map of ‘Mother’s Care’.

Estonia, similar line-by-line, disregarding dialectical differences, and with only occasional orthographic deviations, indicate the use of written sources and the reading of printed materials (Saarlo 2025).

The largest clusters of similar runosongs are those dealing with mother-child relationships, formed by the interweaving of motifs expressing (an adult daughter's) gratitude. These groups are united by the verse line '*Millal maksan memme vaeva*' (When will I repay mother's care?), which has given content to a flagship work of Estonian lyric poetry, the song type '*Memme vaev*' (Mother's Care). According to the commentary in the runosong anthology *Eesti rahvalaulud*, it is 'one of the most popular songs in runosongs overall', and 'with its vivid and sustained imagery, one of the most impactful examples of runosong lyric' (ERLA IV: 240). In ERAB, there are approximately 400 different versions of it, recorded across Estonia. The song has parallels: '*Emon vaivat*' (Mother's Care) and '*Äidin vaivojen palkinto*' (Reward for Mother's Care), in other Finnic traditions, Ingria, Karelia and the Karelian Isthmus (see SKVR Tietokanta).

This is one of the oldest printed runosong texts aimed at Estonian readers, published in the popular calendar *Eesti-ma rahwa Kalender* (1828) under the title '*Ema arm on põhjatü*' (A mother's love is boundless) (Knüpfker 1828). The editor of the calendar was the Baltic German pastor, folklore collector and developer of the Estonian literary language Arnold Friedrich Johann Knüpfker (1777–1843). The song was later printed in the Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft weekly *Das Inland* as '*Mutterliebe*' (Mother's love), with the source indicated as 'H. Neus' (1840: 501–502), and in Neus' anthology (1851: 301/2 [90A]). Neus indicated Knüpfker as the collector, and *Das Inland* as the source (1852: 463). In editions aimed at Estonians, the song appeared in some popular song booklets (e.g. Brandt 1875: 80/1 [45]). Also, some modified versions of it were published, for example, by the linguist Mihkel Veske (1879).

Millal maksan eide vaeva,
Eide vaeva, ella pima,
Hea emma immetis-vaeva,
Käe peäle kandemisse,
Su jures suiskumisse!
Mitto ööd ollid unneta
Mitto suitso suruksesta,
Mitto päva louneetta,
Mitto hommikut ossata!
Ei lõppend tulli toasta,
Sädde ei sāngi sambaasta
Hobbo halli rakkeesta,

When do I repay the mother's care,
the mother's care, the tender milk
A good mother's suckling care,
The effort of carrying on two hands?
the suction at the mouth!
How many nights was she sleepless,
How many dusks without food,
How many days without lunch,
How many mornings without breakfast!
The fire never went out in the chamber,
Spark light beside the bedpost,
Grey horse in the harness,

Naene ei nori rideesta!
 Otsi lapse lausujaida,
 Nore nutto-võttijaida;
 Lubbas lamba lausujalle,
 Kitse kele-katsujalle,
 Tuhkro-runu tusialle!
 Minna kiusta kiljatasin,
 Soota suda maigutasin!
 Moistaksin suul' tännada,
 Kelel anda aitümmada
 kelepaelalla palluda:
 Jummalale eide hinge,
 Südda Jesusse süllesse,
 Käed Maarja käddese,
 Põlved Loja põrmandale!
 Eide kopsul ma kassusin,
 Eide maksal ma maggasin,
 Söin eide süddame soonta,
 Purgesin eide pusa-luuda!
 EKÜ a1, 216/7 (184)

Young woman of clothes!
 She was looking for a conjuror for the child,
 A silencer of the crying.
 Promised the lamb to the conjuror,
 A goat to the healer,
 A pale horse to the enchanter.
 I let out a scream nevertheless,
 Formed words without reason.
 If I knew how to thank by mouth,
 How to give thanks by the tongue,
 To pray with the tongue:
 To the God the mother's soul,
 Heart in the lap of Jesus,
 Hands in the palm of Mary,
 Knees on the ground of the Creator!
 On mother's lungs I grew,
 On mother's liver I slept,
 I ate mother's heart-vessels,
 I bit mother's hip bone!

Knüpfger collected runosongs from north Estonia, both from his own parish and through other Baltic German intellectuals-Estophiles. His manuscript collection contains approximately 600 songs (Laugaste 1963: 329–330) in which the transcriptions are mostly undated. This is the case with the 'Mother's Care' (EKÜ a1, 216/7 [184]), which is why the printed text in the calendar is the oldest dated version of the song. The recording of the song from the north Estonian oral tradition is probable, as is also indicated by the core area on the distribution map (Figure 1).

The songs' romantic, even dramatic, imagery fits the 19th-century modernised spirit, but still it is evident, that long-term and widespread publication in print also influenced the form of versions circulating in the oral tradition, which is expressed in the persistent, but varying, occurrence of the type's characteristic motifs (The fire never went out in the chamber + I let out a scream nevertheless + Heart in the lap of Jesus + On mother's lungs I grew). The influence is computationally evident in the abundance of similar versions: based on Runoregi, 20 song texts are more than 50% similar to Knüpfger's version. Due to the song's length, there are few clusters of more than 80% similar texts, and these consist of two or three songs.

The largest cluster from the 'Mother's Care' thematic group consists of 22 that are more than 80% similar. It is a shorter and less dramatic version of the

song, the song type 'Ema viis põlles põllu peale' (My Mother took us to the Field in her Apron), closely intertwined with motifs from 'Mother's Care'. The song, represented in ERAB by nearly 150 variants, has considerably more very similar variants, due to its brevity; and it has been recorded across Estonia, but slightly more in Central Estonia (see Figure 2).

This version was also printed in Neus' anthology (1851: 302, no. 90B), for which Neus added as the source (1852: 463) *vom Landgut Wieso aufg. v. Kreutzwald* (collected by Kreutzwald from Viisu manor). Its earliest manuscript source is from 1828, Kreutzwald's notebook of songs collected from Viisu (ÕES, EK 72, 17/44; see Kõiva 2014).

Millal maksan memme vaeva,	When do I repay the mother's care,
Hea ema piima vaeva,	A good mother's milk care,
Kahel käel kandemise?	The effort of carrying on two hands?
Kasvatasid tütterida,	You raised daughters,
Viisid põlles põllu peäle,	Took in your apron to the field,
Panid parmaste vahele,	Placed between the bundles,
Sületäite keske'elle;	In the middle of the loads:
Et ei tulnud tuuli peäle,	So that no wind came upon her,
Ei sadand sadu rumala,	No foolish rain poured down,
Ega veerind vihmaoogo.	Nor heavy rainstorm struck!
ÕES, EK 72, 25 (10)	

The song was printed in Jakobson's reader (1867: 56 [69]), followed by many reprints, which undoubtedly contributed to the song's resurgence in folklore collections. In addition to the reader, the song appeared in several chapbooks (e.g. Tõnisson 1910: 47 [17]).

Is it possible to determine the influence of a written source on texts recorded from the oral tradition, and how far does this influence extend? Does the influence of a song printed in a popular calendar that circulated across Estonia at the beginning of the 19th century extend to the end of the century, during the time of major folklore collections? The Estonian ethnomusicologist Herbert Tampere (1909–1975), discussing the probable literary influence on the oral singing tradition of Saaremaa, the biggest Estonian island, considers the calendar's influence on the oral tradition likely, since the island's residents acquired literacy earlier than those in mainland Estonia (1960: 525). In the academic runosong publication compiled by Tampere (VK V), there are three variants of 'Mother's Care', and one variant of 'My Mother took us to the Field in her Apron', which had a significantly wider print circulation. Thus, a calendar printed in the first third of the century might indeed have influenced the runosong repertoire of western

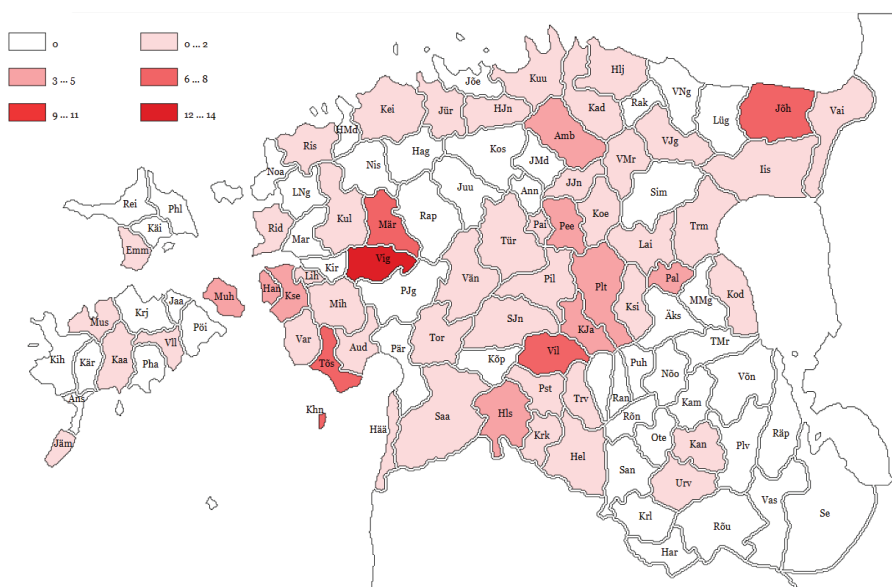


Figure 2. A distribution map of ‘My Mother Took us to the Field in her Apron’.

Saaremaa 50 years later. However, since the runosong tradition vanished from western Saaremaa relatively early, documented variants of this song are very scarce, so our conclusions must remain cautious.

Literary origin can also be identified based on the geographical distribution of motifs. The editors of the runosong anthology concluded in the commentaries that 'My Mother took us to the Field in her Apron' has further subvariants, one in eastern Estonia, while the other was common in western Estonia and on the islands (ERIA IV: 241). The previously translated and printed versions in books are eastern variants, although Kreutzwald's earliest surviving transcriptions were made in central Estonia. Kanni Labi, the compiler of the 15th volume of *Vana Kannel*, states that the presence of the song's eastern variant on Muhu island is due to its appearing in Jakobson's reader (Labi 2025: 132).

‘If I could Choose to Die in War’

ERAB texts have been recorded in very diverse situations by different collectors, professional and non-professional, from different performers and areas of tradition. In the oral tradition, two songs from different performers should not be overly similar, especially songs recorded in different regions. In clusters of overly similar songs identified with the help of Runoregi, songs collected across Estonia could be identical line by line, with only minor spelling variations. It

is evident that if several very similar texts exist (a similarity percentage of over 50%), their similarity is not natural. Is it possible to find their printed sources? What do very similar songs, allegedly collected by one collector from different regions and different performers, say about the collector's methods and goals?

'If I could Choose to Die in War' forms a ten-song cluster in Runoregi, with song similarities of 93% to 94% recorded from all over Estonia, transcribed by respected and productive contributors to Hurt, vernacular men of letters (see Figure 3).

Sõuaksin ma sõjas surra,
Sõjas surra sõitlemata,
Vaenurüpes variseda
Ilma pikila piinata,
Ilma koole kurnamista,
Ilma taudi tapemista!
Kena on sõjassa soikuda,
Alla lipu langueda,
Mõõgamõllul elu müia,
Ambunoolila anguda!
Ei ole tõbe tülitseda,
Õhtupõlve orjamista,
Valusängil valvamista,
Sõjasurmal suurem ilu!

If I could choose to die in war,
To die without having fought,
To fall among the enemy's ranks
Without enduring cruel torment,
Without weakening from hardship,
Without dying of disease!
It is nobler to fall in battle,
To lower the flag in surrender,
To sell one's life in fierce conflict,
To groan beneath the arrow's wound!
There is no sickness like quarrelling,
No slavery like the bonds of war,
No watchfulness on a painful bed.
Greater beauty in war's death!

The song was printed in several editions, such as in Neus' anthology (1852: 327–328, No 93), Jakobson's reader, part 2 (1875: 139, No 105), and Mats Tõnisson's 'War Songbook' (1893: 51/2 (51)), but also in Hurt's own edition 'Pictures of Events Born in the Fatherland' (1879: 69–71) as the beginning of the lyric-epic folksong 'A Brother's War Tale'. While Neus' anthology may not have been overly accessible, Jakobson's textbooks and Tõnisson's songbooks circulated massively across Estonia in numerous printings.

The lines of the song can be found at the end of Kreutzwald's poem *Sõda* (War) (1854: 23–24). Researchers of Kreutzwald nonetheless consider the poem *Sõda* to be an original creation in runosong metre (Nirk 1968: 341–344). To experts in oral poetry, it is undoubtedly clear that it is an imitation of a runosong, indicated primarily by the song's mood, the glorification of death in battle, and the poetic language. The imagery used (e.g. 'tormenting the coals', 'the arrow from the bowstring aches') also does not appear in other songs of the runosong corpus.

But in literary history, the song is treated as a folk song. Neus commented in his anthology that Kreutzwald collected it in Pihkva county, that is, in to-

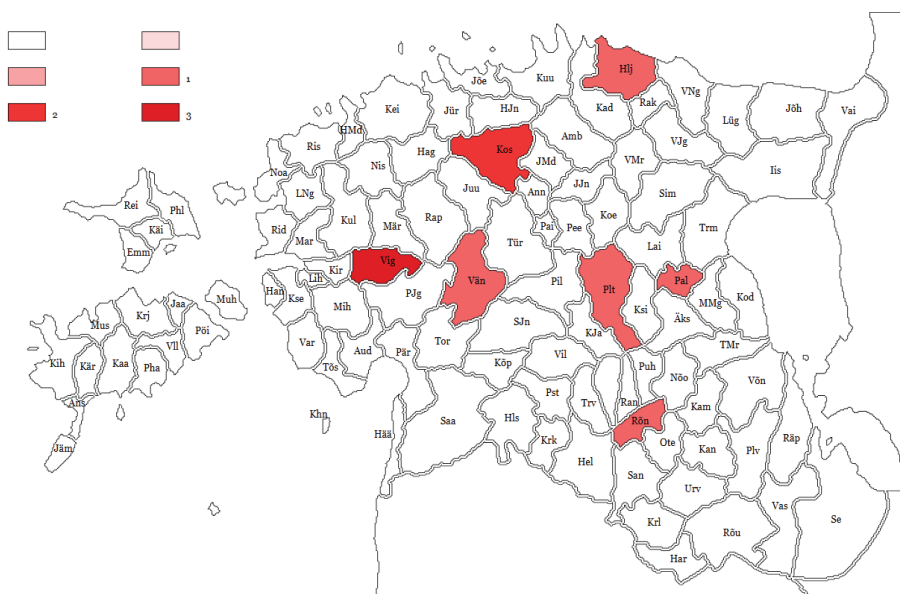


Figure 3. A distribution map of 'If I could Choose to Die in War'.

day's terms, from Setomaa, on the border between southeast Estonia and Russia. Kreutzwald's and Neus' correspondence regarding the matter is unfortunately fragmentary. Neus does refer in his letter to a 'War Song' received from Kreutzwald, but no letters from Kreutzwald on these matters have survived (Kreutzwald 1956).

It is impossible to guess how Kreutzwald conveyed to Neus the origin of the song, but Kreutzwald's own manuscript note adding the origin details with the precision of a village, '*Aufgenommen im Dorfe Bakcapov*', indicates that he considered it to be an authentic folk song (EKLA, F. 63, m. 31, 173/4 [254]). Later researchers have expressed the most doubts about the authenticity of precisely the songs allegedly collected by Kreutzwald from Pihkva county. Struggling with understanding Seto-language songs, he probably wrote down the songs as he thought he heard them, or even as he thought they ought to have been (Nirk 1958). It should be remembered here that in Kreutzwald's time, academic precision was understood differently to today.

Researchers of Kreutzwald's literary activities have pointed to his ambivalent practice of ascribing folkloric authenticity to his own literary creations in runo-song form, which appears as fully conscious forgery (Nirk 1958; Tedre 1965). The deception of considering this song a folk song has been reinforced by its publication in print, even in 20th-century folk song anthologies and literary his-

torical readers, not to mention Kreutzwald bibliographies, where the publication details of this song ('If I could Choose to Die in War') are listed under folk songs (see Laidvee 1978: 75).

Nevertheless, we can rhetorically concede here that people did not fall for this pseudo-folk song. Although several literary poems in runosong form have entered the oral tradition, and thus returned to folklore collections, this song has not been recorded more than those ten versions from the end of the 19th century. We are dealing here with the practice of amateur literati transcribing it, not with refolklorisation.

Conclusions

In this article, I propose a solution and a new nuanced perspective on the interplay between printed texts and the oral runosong tradition in Estonian folklore, problematising rigid orality-based authenticity criteria. By integrating close and distant readings of the Estonian Runosong Database (ERAB), alongside literacy history and printed folklore texts, it reveals how printed sources shaped the oral repertoire without negating traditionality.

Estonian collectors, and even researchers, have often underestimated the 19th and 20th-century rural population's literacy, assuming archaic orality despite widespread reading proficiency.

Distant reading identifies print-driven song clusters across regions via computational similarity analysis in Finnic runosong databases. Close reading of popular runosong groups like 'Mother's Care' traces formal stability to circulated prints, reinforced by romantic themes of maternal sacrifice and childhood nostalgia.

Print-reinforced 'ideal forms' in memory enabled oral variation (e.g. motif swaps), while thematically mismatched songs (e.g. pro-imperialist soldier songs) failed to enter the tradition, despite their continuous publication. This bi-directional influence enriches folklore studies beyond orality, highlighting hybrid cultural dynamics.

Therefore, the article confirms the assumption that the runosong corpus reveals not only the archaic oral singing tradition, but also the influence of reading on oral poetics and the practices of vernacular literacy.

Acknowledgments

The article was supported by the Ministry of Education and Research (projects TK215 and EKM 8-2/22/3), the Estonian Research Council (PRG 1288), the Finnish Academy (project 333138), and the Kone Foundation (IKAKE project).

The author thanks the FILTER working group members, and especially Maciej Janicki, for developing technical tools and opening up entirely new research possibilities. The author also thanks Kati Kallio, for helping with the Finnic parallels, and especially Kristi Metste, Vahur Aabrams and Kärri Toomeos-Orglaan, for their persevering assistance in deciphering old handwritten sources, and unravelling the knots in oral and written texts.

Archival Sources

Estonian Folklore Archives at the Estonian Literary Museum:

- EKÜ – ÕES, EK Manuscript collection of the Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft (in Estonian)

Estonian Cultural Archives at the Estonian Literary Museum:

- EKLA, f. 63 Manuscript collection of Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald

Internet resources

ERAB – *Estonian Runosong Database*. Comp. by Janika Oras, Liina Saarlo, Mari Sarv, Kanni Labi, Merli Uus, Reda Šmitaite. Estonian Folklore Archives at the Estonian Literary Museum. <https://www.folklore.ee/regilaul/andmebaas>

FILTER database. Comp. by Maciej Janicki, Eetu Mäkelä and FILTER working group. University of Helsinki (HELDIG), Finnish Literature Society, Estonian Literary Museum.

Runoregi. Comp. by Maciej Janicki, Kati Kallio, Mari Sarv, Eetu Mäkelä. University of Helsinki (HELDIG), Finnish Literature Society, Estonian Literary Museum. <https://runoregi.fi>

SKVR Tietokanta – Karjalaisten, inkeriläisten ja suomalaisten kansanrunojen verkkopalvelu. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. <https://aineistot.finlit.fi/exist/apps/skvr/index.html>

References

- Aarma 1990 – Liivi Aarma. *Kirjaoskus Eestis 18. sajandi lõpust 1880. aastateni (nekrutininekirjade andmeil)*. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia ajaloo Instituut. Tallinn.
- Anttonen 2005 – Pertti J. Anttonen. Tradition through Modernity: Postmodernism and the Nation-State in Folklore Scholarship. *Studia Fennica: Folkloristica*, 15. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society.
- Bendix 1997 – Regina Bendix. *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Beyer 2011 – Jürgen Beyer. Are Folklorists Studying the Tales of the Folk? *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 122 (1), 35–54.
- Brandt 1875 – Friedrich Brandt. *Harju Ööpik: 50 ajalikku laulu, Noorerahwa röömuks ja ajawiiteks*. Tallinn: J. H. Gressel.
- ERLA IV – Aino Koemets, Ruth Mirov, Udo Mägi, Veera Pino, Ülo Tedre 1974. Tüübikommen-taardid (p. 93–347). In *Eesti rahvalaulud. Antoloogia, IV*. Ed. Ü. Tedre. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- Guillory 2025 – John Guillory. *On Close Reading*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hasselblatt 2011 – Cornelius Hasselblatt. Kui(das) Eestis hakati lugema (?). Eesti lugemisajaloo visand. *Vikerkaar*, 1–2, 128–138.
- Herder 1880 [1778–1779] – Johann Gottfried Herder. *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*. Leipzig: Philipp Reclam.

- Hurt 1879 – Jakob Hurt. Pildid isamaa sündinud asjust. *Eesti Kirjameeste Seltsi Toimetused*, 15. Tartu: K. Mattiesen.
- Inland 1940 – *Das Inland. Eine Wochenschrift für Liv-, Esth- und Curländische Geschichte, Geographie, Statistik und Litteratur*. Dorpat, 32.
- Jaago 2005a – Tiiu Jaago. Jakob Hurt: The Birth of Estonian-language Folklore Research (p. 45–64). In *Studies in Estonian Folkloristics and Ethnology. A Reader and Reflexive History*. Eds. Kristin Kuutma, Tiiu Jaago. Tartu: TÜ Kirjastus.
- Jaago 2005b – Tiiu Jaago. Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald and the Cultural Bridge (p. 19–36). In *Studies in Estonian Folkloristics and Ethnology. A Reader and Reflexive History*. Eds. Kristin Kuutma, Tiiu Jaago. Tartu: TÜ Kirjastus.
- Jakobson 1867 – Carl Robert Jakobson. *Kooli Lugemise raamat. Esimene jagu*. Tartu: H. Laakmann.
- Jakobson 1875 – Carl Robert Jakobson. *Kooli Lugemise raamat. Teine jagu*. Tartu: H. Laakmann.
- Janicki et al. 2022 – Maciej Janicki, Kati Kallio, Mari Sarv. Exploring Finnic Written Oral Folk Poetry through String Similarity. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqac034>
- Jansen 2004 – Ea Jansen. *Vaateid eesti rahvosluse sünniaegadesse*. Tartu: Ilmamaa.
- Kallio et al. 2023 – Kati Kallio, Maciej Janicki, Eetu Mäkelä, Jukka Saarinen, Mari Sarv, Liina Saarlo. Eteneminen omalla vastuulla: Lähdekriittinen laskennallinen näkökulma sähköisiin kansanrunoaineistoihin. *Elore*, 30 (1), 59–90.
- Karjahärm 2007 – Toomas Karjahärm. The Awakening of the Estonian Nation: From its Origins to Independence. *Revue d'Histoire Nordique / Nordic Historical Review*, 3, 57–74.
- Kikas 2014 – Katre Kikas. Folklore Collecting as Vernacular Literacy: Establishing a Social Position for Writing in the 1890s Estonia (p. 309–323). In *Vernacular Literacies – Past, Present and Future*. Eds. Ann-Katrine Edlund, Lars-Erik Edlund, and Susanne Haugen. Umeå: Umeå University.
- Kikas 2025 – Katre Kikas. Uncertainties of Modernity and the Folklore Collectors in the Last Decade of the Nineteenth Century Estonia. *Cultural Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Folklore and Popular Culture*, 23 (1), 31–50.
- Knüpffer 1828 – Arnold Friedrich Johann Knüpffer (ed.). *Eesti-ma rahwa Kalender, ehk Täht-ramat 1829 aasta peäle*. Tallinn: J. H. Gressel.
- Kreutzwald 1861 – Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. *Kalewipoeg, eine Estnische Sage*. Zusammen-gestellt von F. R. Kreutzwald; verdeutscht von C. Reinthal, Dr. Bertram; herausgegeben von der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft in Dorpat. Dorpat: H. Laakmann.
- Kreutzwald 1854 – Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. *Söda. Wiru wana Lauliku kenam Kandle-lugu. Eestisõbradele*. Tartu: H. Laakmann.
- Kreutzwald 1956 – Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. *Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi kirjavaetus. Kirjad, A. H. Neusile, E. Sachssendahlile ja teistele 1847–1866*. Comp. Eduard Ertis. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus.
- Krikmann 1999 – Arvo Krikmann. *Eesti lühivormide allikaloost*. <https://www.folklore.ee/~kriku/ALLIK/>.
- Kõiva 2014 – Ottilie Kõiva (comp.). *Aeg ärgata: kakskümmend kaheksa eesti rahvalaulu: kirja pannud Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald Järvamaalt Viisu külast 1828. aastal*. Tartu, Paide: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus.
- Labi 2025 – Kanni Labi. Muhi regilauludest (p. 111–146). In *Vana Kannel XV. Muhi regilaulud*. EKM Teaduskirjastus.
- Laidvee 1978 – Herbert Laidvee. *Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi bibliograafia, 1833–1969*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- Laugaste 1963 – Eduard Laugaste. *Eesti rahvaluuleteaduse ajalugu. Valitud tekste ja pilte*. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus.

- Lukas 2011 – Liina Lukas. Estonian Folklore as a Source of Baltic-German Poetry. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 42 (4), 491–510.
- Meriste 2021 – Maarja Helena Meriste. Kirjanduskeele kauglugemine. Kirjandust väähindava metodoloogia arendamine tsiteerimisvõtte näitel. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 8–9, 719–736.
- Mikkola 2009 – Kati Mikkola. *Tulevaisuutta vastaan. Uutuuksien vastustus, kansantiedon keruu ja kansakunnan rakentaminen*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 1251, Tiede. Helsinki.
- Mirov 2002 – Ruth Mirov. *Sõnast sõnasse. Valik artikleid ja retsensioone*. Tallinn–Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum, Eesti Keele Sihtasutus.
- Moretti 2013 – Franco Moretti. *Distant Reading*. London–New York: Verso.
- Neus 1850–1852 – Alexander Heinrich Neus. *Ehstnische Volkslieder. I–III*. Reval: Kluge und Ströhm.
- Nirk 1968 – Endel Nirk. *Kreutzwald ja eesti rahvusliku kirjanduse algus*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- Paatsi 2001 – Vello Paatsi. Seal kirjutab nüüd juba karjapoiss... Eesti rahvakooli muutumisi 1840–1886. *Akadeemia*, 5, 875–903.
- Paatsi 2016 – Vello Paatsi. *Rännates Gutenbergi galaktikas. Kultuuriloolisi uurimusi aastatest 1993–2015*. Tartu: Ilmamaa.
- Plath 2011 – Ulrike Plath. *Esten und Deutsche in den baltischen Provinzen Russlands. Fremdheitskonstruktionen, Lebenswelten, Kolonialphantasien 1750–1850*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Rüütel 1998 – Ingrid Rüütel. Estonian Folk Music Layers in the Context of Ethnic Relations. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 6, 32–69.
- Saarlo 2025 – Liina Saarlo. Kirjalikud jäljed eesti regilaulukorpuses. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 11, 987–1010.
- Sarv 2009 – Mari Sarv. Stichic and Stanzaic Poetic Form in Estonian tradition and in Europe. *Traditiones*, 38 (1), 161–71.
- Sarv, Oras 2020 – Mari Sarv; Janika Oras. From tradition to data: The case of Estonian runosong. *Arv. Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 76, 105–117.
- Särg 2007 – Taive Särg. Estonian Ethnomusicology and Folk Music in Forming National Image. *European Meetings in Ethnomusicology*, 12, 20–39.
- Tamm 2008 – Marek Tamm. History as Cultural Memory: Mnemohistory and the Construction of the Estonian Nation. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 39 (4), 499–516.
- Tampere 1932 – Herbert Tampere. Laul jänese õhkamisest eesti rahvatraditsioonis ja kirjanduses (p. 59–116). In *Vanavara vallast*. Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi kirjad 1. Tartu: Õpetatud Eesti Selts.
- Tampere 1960 – Herbert Tampere. «Vana kandle» koostamise põhimõtetest. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 9, 513–527.
- Tangherlini 2013 – Timothy R. Tangherlini. The folklore macroscope. Challenges for a computational folkloristics. The 34th Archer Taylor Memorial Lecture. *Western Folklore*, 72 (1), 7–27.
- Tangherlini 2016 – Timothy R. Tangherlini. Big folklore: A special issue on computational folkloristics. *Journal of American Folklore*, T. 129, 511, 5–13.
- Tedre 1965 – Ülo Tedre. Kirjanduse ja rahvaluule suhetest. Mõningaid kokkuvõtteid ja uurimisülesandeid. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 11, 650–656; 12, 734–740.
- Tõnisson 1893 – Mats Tõnisson. *Sõa laulik. Mitmesugused ajalikud laulud, mis sõdades sündinud lugusid jutustawad, iseäranes viimasesest Wene-Türgi sõast*. 2. tr. Weissenstein: A. Seidelberg.
- Tõnisson 1910 – Mats Tõnisson. *Rahva piibel, mis on kogutud vanasõnadest, rahvalauludest, mõtte-teradest ja riimitud salmidest 155 peatükki, tähekorra järel*: Üleüldine õperaamat rahvale. Vändra, Paide: A. Seidelberg.
- Valk 2005 – Ülo Valk. Establishment of the Estonian Folklore Collections and the Concept of Authenticity (p. 33–38). In *Volkskundliche Großprojekte. Ihre Geschichte und Zukunft*. Ed. Christoph Schmitt. (*Rostocker Beiträge zur Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte*). Münster & New York & München & Berlin: Waxmann Verlag GmbH.

- Valk 2007 – Ülo Valk. Levels of Institutionalization of Estonian Folklore (p. 285–289). In *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe. Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 3. Ed. M. Cornis-Pope & J. Neubauer The Making and Remaking of Literary Institutions. Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages XXII. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Valk 2016 – Ülo Valk. Koost lagunev või uuenev folkloristika? Filoloogilisi vaateid. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 8–9, 638–651.
- Veske 1879 – Mihkel Veske. *Eesti rahvalaulud. Esimene anne*. Rahva suust korjanud ja välja andnud Dr. M. Weske. Tartu: Schnakenburg.
- VK I – Vana Kannel. *Alte Harfe*. Täieline kogu vanu Eesti rahvalauluzid välja annud Dr. Jakob Hurt. *Vollständige Sammlung alter estnischer Volkslieder herausgegeben von Dr. Jakob Hurt*. Ezimene kogu. Erste Sammlung. (Eesti Kirjameeste Seltsi Toimetuzed, 3.) Tartu: C. Mattiesen, 1886.
- VK II – Vana Kannel. *Alte Harfe*. Täieline kogu vanu Eesti rahvalauluzid välja annud Dr. Jakob Hurt. *Vollständige Sammlung alter estnischer Volkslieder herausgegeben von Dr. Jakob Hurt*. Tõine kogu. Zweite Sammlung. (Eesti Kirjameeste Seltsi Toimetuzed, 3.) Tartu: C. Mattiesen, 1886.
- VK V – Vana Kannel V. *Mustjala regilaulud*. 1985. Comp. Herbert Tampere, Erna Tampere. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Kirjandusmuuseum. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- VK XV – Vana Kannel XV. *Muhu regilaulud 1–2*. 2025. Comp. Kanni Labi, Janika Oras, Ingrid Rüütel. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum.

Liina Saarlo

APIE ŽODINIŲ IR RAŠYTINIŲ TRADICIJŲ SAMPLAIKĄ ESTIJOS FOLKLORO ARCHYVŲ RINKINIUOSE

Santrauka

Estijos folkloro archyvų formavimasis atspindi archajiškumo ir modernumo priešpriešas, o pats folkloras yra suvokiamas kaip XIX a. tautinio identiteto ir etninės istoriografijos kertinis akmuo. Jakobo Hurto estų tautosakos rinkimo kampanijos metu 1888 m. valstiečiai jau buvo susidūrę su įvairiais spausdintais šaltiniais ir perėmę rašytinę saviraišką. Šiek tiek paradoksalu, bet bendras raštingumas, sukėlęs žodinės kultūros nuosmukį, vis dėlto leido kaimo žmonėms visoje Estijoje užrašyti runų dainas, atsiliepiant į Hurto rinkimo raginimus.

Estijos tautosakos rinkėjai ir vėlesni tyrėjai dažnai nuvertindavo XIX–XX a. kaimo gyventojų raštingumą, minėdami archajiškus runų dainų poetinius tekstus ir nepaisydami plačiai žinomo šių žmonių gebėjimo skaityti. Dėl šios priežasties estų runų dainų archyviniai šaltiniai, be tradicinių, archajiškų tekstų, sudaro ir kūriniai, kuriems daugiau ar mažiau įtakos turėjo raštingumas ir spauda: tiek refolklorizuotos spaudoje išleistos liaudies dainų tekstų versijos, tiek tiesioginės transkripcijos iš knygų, tiek originalios kompozicijos, imituojančios runų dainų stilių.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama žodinės ir spausdintinės tradicijos sąveika runų dainų tekstuose, taikant hibridinę metodiką – atidžiai skaitant archyvinius tekstus

(papildytus istoriniais leidiniais) ir nuotoliniu būdu lyginant juos su Estijos runų dainų duomenų bazės (ERAB) ir susietos su ja FILTER duomenų bazės duomenimis. Šis metodas susieja kiekybinį aktualių tekstų tyrimą su kokybine, kontekstine jų interpretacija, spręsdamas iššūkius, kylančius analizuojant tarminius poetinius tekstus.

Nuotolinis tyrimas identifikuoja dėl spaudos įtakos sukurtas dainų grupes skirtinguose regionuose, naudodamas skaičiavimo panašumo analizę finų runų dainų duomenų bazėse (runoregi.fi). Atidžiai skaitant populiarias runų dainų grupes, tokias kaip „Motinos globa“, atsekamas formalus jų atitikimas spausdintiems šaltiniams, sustiprintas romantiškomis motinos aukos ir vaikystės nostalgijos temomis. Spauda sustiprino „idealias formas“ atmintyje, kartu sudarydama sąlygas žodinei refolklorizuotų variantų variacijai.

Tematiškai nesuderintos dainos, pvz., proimperialistinės kareivių dainos, tokios kaip kun. R. Kreutzwaldo autorinis kūrinys „Jei galėčiau rinktis mirti kare“, nepaisant daugkartinio jų teksto publikavimo, netapo tradicija. Kalbėdami apie kelis ERAB variantus, turime pripažinti ne jų refolklorizaciją, o tiesiog mėgėjišką tokių tekstų perrašymo praktiką.

Ši dvikryptė mokslinių tyrimų metodika praturtina folkloro studijas žodinės literatūros srityje ir išryškina hibridinę kultūros faktų istorinės raidos dinamiką.