

Frontiers in Comparative Metrics 5

Conference abstracts

April 23–24, 2026

University of Tartu, Estonia

Estonian Literary Museum

Organizers of the conference:

Departments of Semiotics and Classics, University of Tartu

Estonian Literary Museum

Supporters



Estonian Literary Museum



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE



KUM-TA75 (Voices of Youth in Digital Age Poetry: Poetics, Attitudes, and Identities),  
PI Rebekka Lotman.

PHVFI20931 (Support for National Research), PI Mihhail Lotman.

Editors:

Maria-Kristiina Lotman

Igor Pilshchikov

## Contents

<b>Joint Effects of Metrical Recursion and the PREFER LONG-LAST Constraint on Traditional Songs around the World.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Jean-Louis Aroui, Université Paris 8	
<b>The Rhythm of Wallace Stevens’s Diagrammatical Writing .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Ulf Cronquist, Gothenburg University	
<b>What are the Bases of Line Unity? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Éliane Delente, University of Caen Normandy	
<b>Kvæði and Stev: Old Norse Poetic Roots of Faroese Chain Dance.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Jacqueline Pattison Ekgren, Ekgren Musikk institutt	
Joe Siri Ekgren	
<b>On the Germanic Origin of Alliteration as a Primary Organizing Principle of Finnic Oral Poetries, the Common Finnic Tetrameter (Kalevala-Meter), and Some Implications.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Frog, University of Helsinki	
<b>On a Ternary Meter in Italian Poetry. A Bracketed Grid Account of <i>Lavorare stanca</i> by Cesare Pavese .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Alessia Giordano, University for Foreigners of Siena, Leiden University	
Stefano Versace, Leopardi Centre Birmingham University	
<b>How Enjambments Work: the English Pentameter .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Peter Groves, Monash University	
<b>Meters in Otto Manninen’s Original Poetry .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Satu Grünthal, University of Helsinki	
<b>Contemporary English Dactylic Hexameter .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Kristin Hanson, UC Berkeley	
<b>Rhythmic Diversity in Iambic Pentameter: The Elizabethan Era to The Augustan Era.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Jonathan Jiang, University of Washington	
<b>From Runosongs to Rhymes: Diversity and Relations of Metrical Systems in Finnic Oral Cultures .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Kati Kallio, Finnish Literature Society	
Janika Oras, Estonian Literary Museum	

Mari Väina, Estonian Literary Museum	
<b>The Interplay of Rhyme in Betti Alver's poetry .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Rahel Ariel Kaur, University of Tartu	
<b>Metre and Pragmatics: Verse-initial Spondaic Words in Latin Elegy .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Boris Kayachev, University of Oxford	
<b>The Treatment of Contrastive Stress in English Verse: a Functional Explanation.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Paul Kiparsky, Stanford University	
<b>Rhyme in Slovenian Dialect Poetry.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Neža Kočnik, University of Maribor	
<b>From Learned Models to Juvenile Practice: Versification in the Poetry by Noble Children and Youth in Early Modern Livonia .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Maria-Kristiina Lotman, University of Tartu / Under and Tuglas Institute	
Kristi Viiding, Under and Tuglas Institute	
<b>Does Generational Turnover Explain Changes in Poetic History? A Pilot Study of the 19th-century Russian Corpus.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Antonina Martynenko, Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences	
<b>The Universality of Metrics: The Problem of Metalanguage .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Mihhail Lotman, University of Tartu	
<b>The Anacreontea in English 1648–1800: A Case Study in the Evolution of Open and Closed Forms.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Igor Pilshchikov, UCLA /Tallinn University	
<b>Implications of Prosodic Morphology for Meter and Vice Versa .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Tomas Riad, University of Stockholm	
<b>Patterns of Multilingualism in Estonian Youth Poetry: A Statistical View .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Rebekka Lotman, University of Tartu	
<b>Mind the Meter: Large-Scale Interaction Between Form and Language .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Artjoms Šeļa, Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences	
Petr Plecháč, Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences	
Thomas Haider, University of Passau / Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics	
<b>Is the Position at the Junction of English Iambic Feet (SW) So Sensitive? And if YES, Then Why?.....</b>	<b>30</b>

Marina Tarlinskaja, University of Washington

**Metrical In-Betweenness: Russian-Language Youth Poetry in Estonia (2004–2010) .. 30**

Mikhail Trunin, Tallinn University

**In Defense of Homoeoteleuton as a Poetical Device ..... 31**

Leon Wash

## Joint Effects of Metrical Recursion and the PREFER LONG-LAST Constraint on Traditional Songs around the World

*Jean-Louis Aroui, Université Paris 8*

A musical beat can be weak, medium or strong, but also extrastrong, extra-extrastrong, and so on. In other words, musical meters are characterized by recursion. Practically, our perception system favors intermediate levels of metrical structure (Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1996 [1983]: 21). When a musical meter is represented by a grid, the figure on the paper corresponds to the representational level most directly relevant to our perception system.

At higher levels of metrical structure, rhythm, melodic contour, and, in the case of singing, prosodic structure, play a fundamental role. Our computation system divides the musical signal into chunks, often consisting of 2+2 occurrences of the musical meter (if we agree to limit the upper portion of the musical meter to its strong position). These units consisting of four occurrences of the meter are what we might call “hypermeters.”

Hayes & MacEachern (1998: 489, 493) noted that, at the hypermeter level, a musical constraint they call PREFER LONG-LAST was at work: this is what leads us to find rhythm (1) more natural than rhythm (2).

(1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	♪		♪		♪	♪	♪	
	One		two		three	four	five	
(2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	♪	♪	♪		♪		♪	
	One	two	three		four		five	

Because of metrical recursion, two consecutive chunks (hypermeters) may make together a superchunk, that in song we call a couplet. And two couplets can make a quatrain. In this presentation, it will be shown that certain rhythms that are very common worldwide in chants or folk songs can be explained by the combined effects of metrical recursion, the perception of musical signals in chunks and superchunks, and the PREFER LONG-LAST constraint.

### References

- Aroui, J.-L. 2025. Processing components in song attunement: A modular approach. In: *Music Perception* 43(2), 155–186.
- Attridge, D. (1982). *The Rhythms of English Poetry*. Longman (English Language Series, 14).
- Brăiloiu, C. (1984 [1956]). *Problems of Ethnomusicology*, chap.11, “Children’s rhythms”, translated by A.L. Lloyd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 206–238.

- Burling, R. 1966. The metrics of children's verse: A cross-linguistic study. In: *American Anthropologist* 68(6), 1418–1441.
- Fabb, N. 2015. *What is Poetry? Language and Memory in the Poems of the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gobet, F., Lane, P. C. R., Croker, S., Gheng, P. C.-H., Jones, G., Oliver, I., Pine, J. M. 2001. Chunking mechanisms in human learning. In: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 5(6), 236–243.
- Halle, J. 1999. *A Grammar of Improvised Textsetting* [PhD, Columbia University].
- Hayes, B., MacEachern, M. 1998. Quatrain form in English folk verse. In: *Language* 74(3), 473–507.
- Lerdahl, F., Jackendoff, R. (1996 [11983]). *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Mathy, F., Feldman, J. 2012. What's magic about magic numbers? Chunking and data compression in short-term memory. In: *Cognition* 122(3), 346–362.

### **The Rhythm of Wallace Stevens's Diagrammatical Writing**

*Ulf Cronquist, Gothenburg University*

Wallace Stevens is a poet of the imagination, always in a bit of a clash with reality; in fact, he once knocked down Ernest Hemingway in Key West for being “that realist.” His poetic writing mostly follows a steady iambic flow as if he did not trust form to interfere too much with the flow of his natural sensations. On the one hand he is clearly a dualist in his phenomenology: there is a world out there that our consciousness cannot reach; on the other hand in many of his poems he is keen to discuss what goes on in the mind in terms of imagination and concepts vis-à-vis what goes on in the world that we cannot quite grasp with our words. His poetry is often fluctuating, “squiggling like saxophones”, but he acknowledges that some kind of alluring reality yet remains.

In this paper I analyse Stevens's world of ideas, the rhythm of his phenomenological dualism and his nemesis “the thing-itself” that leaves us with a sense of wonder: what does it mean that a piece of art is not of this world yet makes us think of the world anew? Semiotically, Stevens downplays the symbolic as well as the iconic and remains within the diagrammatic mode where ideas are allowed to float in the most creative and pluridimensional ways. I will argue that Stevens was one of the first modern diagrammatical poets.

## References

- Brandt, P. A.; Cronquist, U. 2019. Diagrams and Mental Figuration. In: Brandt, P. A. *The Music of Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Stevens, W. 1954. *Collected Poems*. New York: Knopf.

### What are the Bases of Line Unity?

*Éliane Delente, University of Caen Normandy*

In many poetic traditions, line endings are the subject of specific markers (Strict End Hypothesis, Hayes 1983: 388; Castro-Arrazola 2018). Conversely, the beginning of the line, seen as relatively unrestricted, has been the subject of few studies. Moreover, what makes the line an autonomous unit, remains insufficiently defined.

The presentation, attempting to characterize some properties of the line, brings to light that the ‘Free-left-edge’ concept is at the very least to be nuanced.

The examination will focus on classical French literary poetry, then, on the late 19th century and on how different structuring ways contribute to line unity.

Firstly, it will be shown that morpho-syntax structuring, considered as a step-by-step process, generally contributes to the line autonomy, and how metrical regularities react when it does not.

The second part will scrutinise one by one the phonological effects entailed by morpho syntax (liaison, élision, hiatus) and point out how, they too, build the line as an autonomous unit. The third part suggests a phonological explanation for the particular distribution of these phonological processes, by putting forward the hypothesis that the line is a phonological phase. The fourth part will address the metrical aspects of the line unity. The impossibility of using the rhythmic value of *e féminin* from one line to the following one strengthens the line integrity. Throughout, it will be demonstrated that the reader relies on morphosyntactic, phonological, and rhythmic cues, generally redundant, sometimes discordant. In all cases, metrical regularities shape thoughts as they unfold, so that metrical constituents constitute verbalized acts of communication, organizing information processing as well as dialogic, narrative, enunciative, and other processes. In these processes, structural predictability and anticipation play a key role. The cues themselves may be specific to languages and poetic traditions, but the processes at work cannot escape temporal constraints.

## References

- Auer, P. 1996. On the prosody and syntax of turn-taking. In: Couper-Kuhlen, E.; Selting, M. (eds.), *Prosody and Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 57–100. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511597862.004>
- Auer, P.; Couper-Kulhen. E.; Müller, F. 1999. *Language in Time. The Rhythm and Tempo of Spoken Interaction*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Auer, P. 2005. Projection in interaction and projection in grammar. In: *Text-Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse* 25(1), 7–36. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2005.25.1.7>
- Auer, P. 2009. On-line syntax: Thoughts on the temporality of spoken language. In: *Language Sciences* 31(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2007.10.004>
- Candea, M. 2000. *Contribution à l'étude des pauses silencieuses et des phénomènes dits «d'hésitation» en français oral spontané: étude sur un corpus de récits en classe de français*. Thèse de l'Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3.
- Combettes, B. 2007. Discontinuité et cohérence discursive: le cas des ajouts après le point. In: *Cahiers de Praxématique* 48, 111–134.
- Cornulier, B. de 1977. Le remplacement d'e muet par «è» et la morphologie des enclitiques. In : *Actes du Colloque franco-allemand de Linguistique Théorique*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 155–180.
- Cornulier, B. de 1978. Syllabes et suite de phonèmes en phonologie du français. In: Cornulier, B. de; Dell, F. (eds.), *Études de phonologie française*. Paris: Éditions du C.N.R.S., 31–69.
- Cornulier, B. de 1981. H aspirée et la syllabation. Expressions disjonctives. In: D. L. Goyvaerts (ed.), *Phonology in the 1980's*. Ghent: E. Story – Scientia, 183–230.
- Cornulier, B. de 1995. *Art Poétique. Notions et problèmes de métrique*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
- Cornulier, B. de 2000. La place de l'accent, ou l'accent à sa place. Position, longueur, concordance. In: *Le vers français. Histoire, théorie, esthétique*. Textes réunis par Michel Murat, Paris: Champion, 57–91.
- Cornulier, B. de 2003. Problèmes d'analyse rythmique du non-métrique. In: Bordas, Éric (ed.), *Semen 16: Rythme de la prose*. Besançon: Presses universitaires Franc-Comtoises, 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.4000/semen.2940>
- Cornulier, B. de 2009. *De la métrique à l'interprétation. Essais sur Rimbaud*. Paris: Classiques Garnier.

- Cornulier, B. de 2013. Aspects phonologiques et métriques de la rime. In: Tifrit, A. (ed.), *Phonologie, morphologie, syntaxe: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Pierre Angoujard*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 215–232.
- Cornulier, B. de, 2023. Pourquoi on peut dire «c'matin», mais pas «c'hibou»? L'h aspiré comme diversité de contraintes. hal-04316997
- DeCastro-Arrazola, V. 2018. Testing the robustness of final strictness in verse lines. In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 5(2), 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2018.5.2.03>
- Delente, É. 2022. Can Relationships between Rhythm and Meaning be automated? In: Bories, A.-S.; Plecháč, P.; Ruiz Fabo, Pablo (éds.), *Computational Stylistics in Poetry, Prose, and Drama*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 99–116. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110781502-006>
- Delente, É. 2024. A Temporal and Dynamic Approach to Enjambments in French Versified Poetry from the 17th to the late 19th Century. In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 11(2), 45–78. <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2024.11.2.02>
- Dell, Fr., Benini, R. 2020. *La Concordance chez Racine. Rapports entre structure grammaticale et forme métrique dans le théâtre de Racine. Versification, métrique et formes de la poésie*. Paris: Classiques Garnier.
- Golomb, H. 1979. *Enjambment in Poetry: Language and verse in interaction*. Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics.
- Mourgues, M. 1724. *Traité de la poésie française*. Paris: Jacques, Vincent.
- Richelet, P. 1972 [1672]. *La Versification française – La connoissance des genres français*. Genève: Slatkine.
- Scheer, T. 2011. *A Guide to Morphosyntax-Phonology Interface Theories. How Extra-Phonological Information is Treated in Phonology since Trubetzkoy's Grenzsignale*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Scheer, T. 2012. *Direct Interface and One-Channel Translation. Volume 2 of A Lateral Theory of Phonology*. (Studies in Generative Grammar 68.2). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Scheer, T. 2024. Glottal stop insertion and production planning domains in French. In: *The Linguistic Review* 41(2), 339–379.
- Tsur, R. 2012. *Poetic Rhythm: Structure and Performance. An Empirical Study in Cognitive Poetics*. 2nd ed. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Tynianov, I. 1977 [1924]. *Le vers lui-même. Les problèmes du vers*. (Collection 10/18). Paris: Union générale d'éditions.

## Kvæði and Stev: Old Norse Poetic Roots of Faroese Chain Dance

*Jacqueline Pattison Ekgren, Ekgren Musikk institutt*

*Joe Siri Ekgren*

Faroese *kvæði* (“old ballads” with refrains) can be more than two hundred stanzas long. Sung in a language closely related to Old Norse, they are traditionally performed in a Medieval-origin chain dance. A whole community can take part, tightly linking arms as the unbroken chain changes shape, weaves around, and participants pass each other face to face. *Theskipari* (“skipper”, lead singer) decides, on the fly, if the text stresses and dance rhythm will align or will cross in a counter-rhythm. Thus the participants, even when they know the verses by heart, must listen to *theskipari*’s cues to sing “on-beat” or “off-beat”. Those who do not know the ballad may still join in the refrain. The result is spectacular communal storytelling with call-and-response singing, interlocked arms, flowing chain, and high-energy stamping, creating a pulse and intensity reminiscent of football fans united in chant.

The Faroese term *kvæði* derives from the Old Norse *kveða* (“say, sing”), connecting the Faroese tradition to ancient Norse oral poetics. Similarly, *Faroese stev* (“refrain”) originates from the homophonic Old Norse *stef*, a key feature of the *drápa*, Old Norse praise poetry dedicated to a chieftain or king. We suggest that the *stef* in a *drápa* may originally have involved audience participation, akin to the energetic refrains of Faroese ballads. A skald attempting to praise a king with a *flokkr*, a *drápa* without a *stef*, could face serious consequences.

The Faroese ballad refrain, *stev*, contrasts with Norwegian *nystev* and *gamlestev*, which also have Viking-era origins. *Nystev* and *gamlestev* are performed as single-stanza solos in the *kveding* style, between speech and song, where the melody follows the text with two-stresses in a half-line. This contrast demonstrates in different cultures how the same poetic material can be either recited, *kvedet* or sung to a steady, communal beat.

## On the Germanic Origin of Alliteration as a Primary Organizing Principle of Finnic Oral Poetries, the Common Finnic Tetrameter (Kalevala-Meter), and Some Implications

*Frog, University of Helsinki*

As the excessively long title suggests, this paper presents an updated view of the origins of alliteration as primary feature of Finnic oral poetries in long-term perspective. I first argued for the Germanic origin of the Common Finnic tetrameter, commonly known as the Kalevala-meter, a decade ago. I subsequently elaborated it with some considerations of the history of alliteration

in “The Finnic Tetrameter – A Creolization of Poetic Form?” (*Studia Metrica et Poetica* 6(1) 2019: 20–78). The present paper reviews this argument and the associated question of the origin of line-internal alliteration as a primary organizing principle in Finnic oral poetics. The earlier argument is refined and elaborated. It integrates my more recent work on rhyme in both alliterative poetics and also considers the implications of the impacts on the Finnic meter for knowledge of the history of Germanic metrics and poetics. Finally, the implications for language history and language contact history more generally are discussed. This final discussion highlights that metrical research is not only relevant for knowledge of the respective meters and poetic ecologies, but also for its potential to offer valuable contributions to multidisciplinary cultural reconstruction.

**On a Ternary Meter in Italian Poetry. A Bracketed Grid Account of *Lavorare stanca* by  
Cesare Pavese**

*Alessia Giordano, University for Foreigners of Siena, Leiden University*

*Stefano Versace, Leopardi Centre Birmingham University*

Comparing Russian with Germanic and Romance versification, Gasparov (1989) noted that ternary metrical feet, such as dactyls or anapaests, are marginal in the latter two traditions. He mainly explains this with the non-adoption of classical hexameter in European traditions, coincidentally noting the marked aesthetic perception associated with ternary feet.

Gasparov’s remark well applies to the Italian tradition (which its known tendency towards binarity, cf. Menichetti 1993, Nespore, Vogel 1986). Nonetheless, in the twentieth century a challenging outlier emerged: Cesare Pavese’s meter in *Lavorare stanca* (LS, 1936). Possibly connected to the anapaestic lines of Byron and Zhukovskii’s, as well as to Whitman’s verse in *Leaves of Grass*, Pavese’s form has no precedent in the Italian tradition.

This meter admits significant variation in line length (3 to 6 main stresses). It also appears to come in different possible forms with regard to stress distribution, as in (1a-c):



## How Enjambments Work: the English Pentameter

*Peter Groves, Monash University*

The goal of this paper, which draws in part on the work of Reuven Tsur, is to set forth a more objective, systematic and discriminating model of the structure and functions of performed enjambment as a literary device in English iambic pentameter than is currently available and so encourage a more sophisticated stylistic and forensic analysis of its use. Some comparisons will be made with systems in other verse-forms and languages. Enjambment, described by Seymour Chatman as “the extension of the intonational phrase in performance beyond the end of the line”, works by disrupting a reader’s or listeners expectations through the deferral of intonational closure, and this paper finds that the three crucial determinants of disruptiveness in enjambment are (a) the syntactic integrity of the enjambed line, (b) the degree of pressure between that line and the following line (its sequel), in terms of the six possible connections in what phonologists call the Prosodic Hierarchy (utterance break, minor intonational-phrase break, phonological-phrase boundary, clitic-group or phonological word boundary, word boundary, syllable boundary) and (c) what I call ‘enhancement’, or the nature of the ‘payoff’, that part of the shared intonational phrase that extends into the sequel. One crucial determinant is the length of the payoff; also important is whether it begins with a (lexically or pragmatically motivated) metrical reversal.

The result is a new taxonomy of enjambment in the English iambic pentameter (the dominant metre of English poetry for five centuries) that is effective in discriminating among similar styles: it can chart the rise and fall of neo-classical couplet style, to take one example, by statistically comparing the proportions of enjambments occurring at a minor intonational-phrase break and a phonological-phrase boundary, a distinction that was not even articulable in terms of explicit pre-twentieth-century grammatical understanding.

## Meters in Otto Manninen’s original poetry

*Satu Grünthal, University of Helsinki*

Otto Manninen (1872–1950) is one of the undeniable masters of meter and rhyme in Finnish poetry. As a translator of world poetry in different languages – translations of both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* belong to his major works – he developed a strong skill in using different types of meters and applying them to the Finnish language. In his own poetry, Manninen experimented with several meters, not forgetting the Kalevala meter and folk songs.

In my presentation, I will examine the metrics of Manninen’s original poetry. I will first provide a general overview of the metrics in Manninen's collections, after which I will take a closer look at

certain meters, each through the lens of an example poem. For example, the role shift from a translator to a poet is clearly seen in the case of hexameter: in his translations, Manninen demonstrated mastery of the form of pure hexameter, while in his own poetry, he was able to bend and shape the meter to suit his poetic intentions: instead of pure hexameter, he sometimes employed a hexameter-like meter. Manninen also introduced historical genres of poetry to the developing Finnish art poetry scene.

My metric analyses are based on Pentti Leino's (1982) theory, the cornerstone of Finnish metric research, but I expand the linguistic analysis of poems into a close reading that interprets their meanings, demonstrating how meter, form, and semantics are tightly interwoven, creating both cohesion and tension within poems. My readings are also influenced by Maria-Kristiina Lotman, Mihhail Lotman, and Rebekka Lotman (e.g., 2007, 2009, 2010), who examine the phenomena of meter and rhythm from the perspective of various semiotic language systems, as well as other scholars interested in the interrelations between meter and meaning.

## References

Leino, P. 1982. *Kieli, runo ja mitta: suomen kielen metriikka*. Pieksämäki: SKS.

Lotman, M.-K; Lotman, M.; Lotman, R. 2007. Autometakirjeldus eesti luules I. In: *Acta Semiotica Estica* V, 11–34.

Lotman, M.-K; Lotman, M.; Lotman, R. 2009. Autometakirjeldus eesti luules II. In: *Acta Semiotica Estica* VI, 42–67.

Lotman, M.-K; Lotman, M.; Lotman, R. 2010. Autometakirjeldus eesti luules III. In: *Acta Semiotica Estica* VII, 10–34.

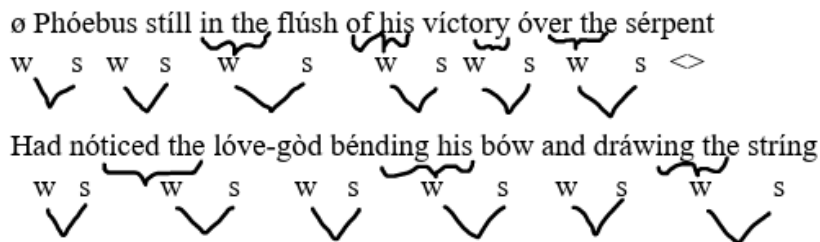
## Contemporary English Dactylic Hexameter

*Kristin Hanson, UC Berkeley*

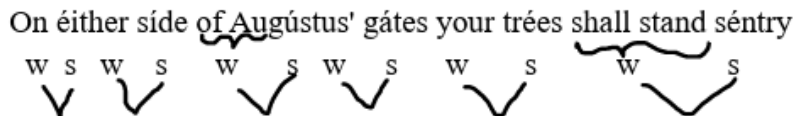
English translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* across the centuries offer an interesting chronicle of changing metrical practices and tastes, from Caxton's (1480) prose and Golding's (1567) fourteeners to various versions in iambic pentameter from Sandys (1626) through Dryden and his contemporaries in Garth (1794) right up to their successors such as Mandelbaum (1993). Raeburn (2004 p. xxxix), however, aiming for a contemporary translation which is easily readable yet metrically expressive, returns to a hexameter line, one he describes as having "six main 'beats',

each separated by one or two syllables, with the flexibility (not in the Latin hexameter) to use either stressed or unstressed syllables at its beginning and end”.

Raeburn's description of his meter is suggestive but inexplicit. In this paper, I make it explicit and describe some effects it achieves. Within the theory of Hanson and Kiparsky (1996), it can be described as having a template of six iambic feet, each composed of a weak metrical position (W) followed by a strong one (S). A prominence constraint which requires each S position to contain a stressed syllable creates the sense of “six main 'beats'”, a position constraint which allows a minimum of one syllable and a maximum of one phonological foot allows one or two syllables (—) between them, and initial catalexis (∅) and final extrametricality (◊) afford the flexibility at beginnings and ends that Raeburn notes:



Unlike somewhat similar Finnish and English iambic-anapestic meters, however, the foot that measures each position is not necessarily lexical, and the meter is therefore not quantity sensitive, allowing lines such as the following:



The result is a phrasally oriented and easily perceived form which, as I hope to show, suggests Ovid's original at the same time as it affords Raeburn resources for his own artistry.

### Rhythmic Diversity in Iambic Pentameter: The Elizabethan Era to The Augustan Era

*Jonathan Jiang, University of Washington*

This paper uses the methodology developed by Dobritsyn (2016) to examine changes in the rhythmic forms of iambic pentameter in English poetry over the course of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries by comparing the rhythmic diversity in the works of Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, and Pope. Additionally, to form a baseline comparison, a speech model of rhythm is created from prose works from the same time periods. By expressing the distributions of rhythmic forms as probabilities, it is then possible to use Kullback-Leibler divergence between the speech model and

each author's work, as well as doing a pairwise comparison between authors, to quantify and compare rhythm across authors and time periods.

## References

Dobritsyn, A. 2016. Rhythmic entropy as a measure of rhythmic diversity (The example of the Russian iambic tetrameter). In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 3(1), 33–52.

## **From Runosongs to Rhymes: Diversity and Relations of Metrical Systems in Finnic Oral Cultures**

*Kati Kallio, Finnish Literature Society  
Janika Oras, Estonian Literary Museum  
Mari Väina, Estonian Literary Museum*

Although we tend to analyse individual metrical systems one at a time and in relation to a single linguistic area, the systems often live side by side. They may have narrower or broader spheres and contexts of use, and may relate to different cultural, ritual, or semantic fields. Their origins can relate to different historical and cultural contexts, and to different kinds of interactions with neighbouring cultures. They may have different positions within the processes of modernisation and literarisation. Although often separate entities, they may also create hybrids, – e.g., at the levels of metrical influence or similarity, thematic or formulaic overlap, or borrowing of musical structures and themes.

Taking an overall look at the borders, interactions, and regional variation of Finnic metrical systems, genres, functions, performance, music, and semantic content, we want to examine how several metrical systems coexisted side by side in the nineteenth-century oral cultures, most commonly known for runosongs (regilaul, Kalevalaic poetry). Our aim is to explore how various metrical systems interacted, influenced one another, and adapted to distinct social and ritual functions within Finnic oral cultures. We examine 1) runosongs, 2) genres such as charms and proverbs appearing both in runosong metre and in other systems, 3) three-foot accentual metre of songs for children, 4) laments scaling from runosong-resembling structures to alliterative free verse, 5) Karelian joiku moving between runosongs and lament-like free-verse structures, 6) the severely understudied Livvi Karelian stihu, and 7) the wide and diverse field of rhymed songs.

Across the area, the relations of metrical systems on the one hand and genres or functions on the other vary considerably. For example, Seto laments use a distinct variation resembling runosong metre, while Karelian laments are in alliterative free verse, yet both relate to very similar ritual

contexts and functions. In the Northern Finnic area, the charms are often in runosong metre, whereas in Estonia, they may also appear in rhythmic prose or other metrical systems.

What we can gain from this kind of overview is a better understanding of historical vernacular poetic and communication systems and the relations and differences in the development of poetic systems across different areas. It also appears evident that the poetic systems used in Finnic oral traditions relate to different genres and originate from different historical contexts.

### **The Interplay of Rhyme in Betti Alver's Poetry**

*Rahel Ariel Kaur, University of Tartu*

Betti Alver's refined poetics are distinguished by her exceptional command of rhyme, through which she explores the full expressive potential of sound patterning. The typographical fragmentation that characterizes her later creative period, though visually freer, remains structurally akin to fixed verse: end rhymes continue to organize short lines into metrically cohesive units that evoke traditional forms. At the same time, alliteration assumes an increasingly prominent role. While end rhymes remain significant, the growing use of alliteration reconfigures Alver's soundscape and poetic rhythm.

This paper examines the shifting interplay between end rhyme and alliteration in Alver's poetry. A quantitative analysis highlights the evolution of her rhyming practices, while statistical observations are complemented by semantic analysis, offering new insight into the stylistic and aesthetic development of one of Estonia's most important poets.

### **Metre and pragmatics: verse-initial spondaic words in Latin elegy**

*Boris Kayachev, University of Oxford*

It is commonly recognised that 'In the first foot spondaic words [are] in classical poetry more or less restricted to emphatic words and certain pronouns, adverbs and conjunctions' (Skutsch 1985, 48), but no detailed treatment or compelling explanation of the phenomenon seems to exist. In a recent paper (forthcoming) I have argued that, whatever the exact phonological mechanism, a spondaic word in the first foot is followed by a prosodic break, which is compatible with certain kinds of linguistic environment (including after focused constituents) but not with others. The phenomenon has previously been observed in Latin hexametric poetry, and in this paper I propose

to investigate it in a corpus of Latin elegy (Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid). While it is hardly surprising that the restriction should apply in elegiac hexameters, it is noteworthy that it appears to be observed in pentameters as well, in fact even more rigorously: book 1 of Tibullus' elegies for instance has 19 spondaic words at the beginning of a hexameter, only 5 at the beginning of a pentameter. This disproportion is no doubt due to the fact that an elegiac couplet typically comprises a single sentence, and the 'certain pronouns, adverbs and conjunctions' tend to occur clause-initially: if only fully lexical words (not followed by a syntactic break) are taken into account, in Tibullus 1 only 2 open a hexameter, as many as 3 open a pentameter. It remains to be seen whether such instances of fully lexical words can plausibly be argued to be focused (in the sense of Krifka 2008), and this is what this paper proposes to explore.

## References

- Krifka, M. 2008. Basic notions of information structure. In: *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 55(3/4), 243–276.
- Skutsch, O. 1985. *The Annals of Quintus Ennius*. Oxford: University Press.

## The Treatment of Contrastive Stress in English Verse: a Functional Explanation

*Paul Kiparsky, Stanford University*

Why are English meters less constrained than their counterparts in other European languages? And why are their special freedoms used most fully in the iambic pentameter of 16th-17th century drama? This talk addresses the most salient such license – the placement of stress peaks in Weak (odd-numbered) positions, even inside a line, as in (1).

(1) a. Than are / DREAMT of / in your / philo/sophy (*Hamlet* 1.5.167–168)

b. THY fa/ther slew / MY fa/ther, there/fore die (*Henry the Sixth*, part 3 3.1.50)

Actors and acting coaches have debated the performance of such problematic lines. The second line of each pair in (2) is usually performed with a contrastive stress in the third, metrical Weak position (capitalized here).

(2) a. Try what / repen/tance CAN: / what CAN / it not?

Yet what / CAN it / when one / can NOT / repent? (*Hamlet* 3.3.65–66)

b. Effect / it with / some care, / that he / may prove

More fond / on HER / than SHE / upon / HER love (MND 2.1.65–66)

The very influential so-called “iambic fundamentalists” John Barton (1984) and Peter Hall (1968, 2003: 133) disagreed. They claimed that Shakespeare uses meter to provide the actor with implicit stage directions, and that Shakespeare’s meter tells the actor everything he needs to know to perform the verse, and should be foregrounded. They directed and coached actors to read the second lines of (2) without the mismatches between stress and metrical positions (in my talk I document this with videos):

(3) a. Yet WHAT / can IT / when one / can NOT / repent?

b. More fond / on HER / than SHE / upon her / LOVE

These readings are arguably less natural, but at least possible. However, it is hardly possible to omit the mismatched stresses in cases like (4), typical of the great majority of instances.

(4) a. Or that / the re/solute act/ing of / your blood

Could have / attained / the effect / of your / OWN purpose,

Whether / YOU had / not SOME/time in / your life

Erred in / THIS point / which now / YOU cen/sure HIM (*Measure for Measure* 2.1.12–15)

b. My ear / should catch / your voice, / MY eye / YOUR eye,

MY tongue / should catch / YOUR tongue’s / sweet me/lody. (*MND* 1.1.188–189)

c. If I / quench thee, / thou flam/ing mi/nister,

I can / again / thy for/mer light / restore,

Should I / repent me: / but once / put out / THY light,

Thou cun/ning’st pat/tern of / excel/ling nature,

I know / not where / is that / Prome/thean heat

That can / THY light / relume. (*Othello* 5.2.8–13)

d. If it / were done / when ’tis / DONE, then / ’twere well

It were / done quick/ly. (*Macbeth* 1.7.1 ff.)

This is a real difficulty for iambic fundamentalism. Furthermore, this theory does not explain why the same meter in other languages is not similarly tolerant of stress peaks in Weak position.

I confirmed this by checking how 19th and 20th century translations of Shakespeare into German (by Schlegel/Tieck and Rothe), Russian (Polevoj, Kronenberg, Lozinskij, Pasternak, Tsvetkov), and Finnish (Cajander) dealt with such cases. It turns out that contrastive stress in these other languages is in the overwhelming majority of cases placed in metrical Strong position.

I propose instead a functional explanation for the license of stress peaks in Weak positions in English. It is based on idea that the meter for a given language tends to jointly optimize two competing functional principles (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996), namely that a meter should be

- as expressive as necessary (FIT), and
- as restrictive as possible (INTEREST).

As they point out, these principles are most detectable in newly founded literary traditions (e.g. 19th century Finnish), and in existing literary traditions when extensive linguistic change brings radical metrical renewal in its wake (e.g. Early Modern English). The idea is that phrasal stress peaks in Weak position enhances the ability of verse to organize discourse, which is especially important in a language like English, which has to rely heavily on stress because of its rigid word order and impoverished repertoire of discourse particles. Shifting constituents to Topic and Focus positions and adding particles (such as German *doch*, *eben*, *gar*, *zwar*, *überhaupt*, *ja*) to mark information structure is much more limited in English. In addition, all three of the comparison languages can mobilize aspectual morphology contrastively. For example, Tieck's German translation handily renders (4d) with a perfectivizing prefix (*Wärs ab/getan*, / *so wie's / getan / ist...*). With the absence of these resources in English, a disproportionate functional load falls on sentence stress, and the meter yields to it. This then is a case of FIT dominating INTEREST.

Somewhat paradoxically, a focus stress is in a sense more salient in metrical Weak position than in metrical Strong position. A syllable in Strong position is expected to be stressed, while a syllable in Weak position is expected to be unstressed. A stress in Weak position is salient because it defeats this expectation. Permitting this metrical option provides an expressive resource, at the cost of loosening the meter. English adopts this resource, especially in dramatic verse, because it relies to a unique extent on stress to mark discourse structure.

## **Rhyme in Slovenian Dialect Poetry**

*Neža Kočnik, University of Maribor*

The paper explores rhyme as a central structural and aesthetic element of Slovenian dialect poetry, situating it within a broader typology of prosodic and phonological characteristics that distinguish dialectal verse from poetry written in the standard language. Dialect rhyme is defined as the correspondence of sounds from the last stressed vowel onward, shaped by dialect-specific phonetic, morphological, and lexical features. Unlike standard rhyme, its equivalence often results from processes such as vowel reduction, palatalization, final consonant weakening, or analogical morphological endings, as well as from broader language changes that shape dialectal systems over time. These mechanisms generate a network of sound correspondences that reflects both the linguistic structure of each dialect and its aesthetic potential. Through a comparative analysis of traditional and contemporary dialect poets from various Slovenian regions, the study outlines a typology of dialectal rhymes and identifies their most frequent phonological patterns. The findings demonstrate that rhyme remains the most productive sound device in dialectal verse, establishing continuity with oral folk tradition while also revealing innovative tendencies in modern poetic practice. The research emphasises that the study of dialect poetry necessarily requires an interdisciplinary approach: only the combination of linguistic and literary analysis can account for the complex interaction between sound, language, and meaning that defines rhyme in Slovenian dialect poetry.

## **From Learned Models to Juvenile Practice: Versification in the Poetry by Noble Children and Youth in Early Modern Livonia**

*Maria-Kristiina Lotman, University of Tartu / Under and Tuglas Institute*

*Kristi Viiding, Under and Tuglas Institute*

This paper examines the metrical practices of children and youths of the Livonian, Estonian and Courland nobility in the early modern period, drawing on a newly compiled corpus of Latin and German poems composed by authors aged up to 19 years old. The Latin part of these poems, written for family celebrations, school rituals and patronage networks, reveal how young writers entered the adult literary sphere through the mastery of classical verse forms, particularly the dactylic hexameter.

The analysis focuses on the rhythmic and prosodic structure of these juvenile hexameters and evaluates the extent to which young authors adhered to or diverged from humanist norms. On the basis of metrical and prosodic features, we further consider whether the technical profile of a given

poem supports genuine youthful authorship or whether the intervention – or even full authorship – of an adult hand is more likely.

By comparing this new corpus with established adult poetry and inscriptional traditions, the paper demonstrates how metrical knowledge was transmitted to young members of the nobility and how the acquisition of versification skills functioned as an early instrument of socialisation and cultural self-fashioning in early modern Livonia.

### **Does Generational Turnover Explain Changes in Poetic History? A Pilot Study of the 19th-century Russian Corpus**

*Antonina Martynenko, Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences*

The history of poetry is often described as a sequence of distinct movements and periods. Historical narratives tend to associate these timeframes – such as “early 19th-century poetry” – with particular generations of poets. But can we claim that generational turnover explains the development of poetic style?

Recent studies have answered this question positively based on data from English novels (Underwood et al. 2022; Sobchuk & Beheim 2025). These studies show that generational replacement accounts for roughly half of the changes in preferred literary topics and genres. Writers belonging to the same generation tend to favour similar themes, and individual changes over a lifetime are smaller than those between generations. Using statistical modelling, researchers have distinguished when a theme’s prevalence was triggered by a specific event (e.g., a war) and when it correlated exclusively with the activity of a particular generation.

This paper extends the investigation of cohort influence to poetry. Using the PoeTree Russian corpus of the 19th century (205 authors, 16,850 poems; see Plecháč et al. 2024), I analyse how poets from different generations vary in poetic vocabulary, metrical repertoire, and rhyme preferences. The study first examines whether well-established poetic movements (e.g. Pushkin’s Pleiad) emerge through data-driven methods, and whether the decomposition analysis (Sobchuk, Beheim 2025) can detect shared stylistic traits within such groups. Second, it tests how cohort-based approaches perform when applied to a different literary form: short lyric poems rather than prose fiction, and stylistic features that include formal elements like meter and rhyme in addition to lexical frequencies. Ultimately, this pilot study aims to assess the extent to which generational turnover drives change in poetry, and whether different formal features have the same pace of change.

## References

- Plecháč, P., Cinková, S., Kolár, R., Šeĭa, A., De Sisto, M., Nugues, L., Haider, T., Kočnik, N. 2024. PoeTree: Poetry Treebanks in Czech, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian and Spanish. In: *Research Data Journal for the Humanities and Social Sciences* 9(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1163/24523666-bja10044>
- Sobchuk, O., Beheim, B. 2025. Does literature evolve one funeral at a time? In: *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 292(2040), 20242033. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2024.2033>
- Underwood, T., Kiley, K., Shang, W., Vaisey, S. 2022. Cohort Succession Explains Most Change in Literary Culture. In: *Sociological Science* 9, 184–205. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v9.a8>

### The Universality of Metrics: The Problem of Metalanguage

*Mihhail Lotman. University of Tartu*

If poetry is (almost) a cultural universal, and meter is a universal quality of poetry (including vers libre), then the question of the existence of metrical universals naturally arises.

Most metrical terms in European poetic traditions come from antiquity. This can be misleading: for example, the iamb in Greek and in Estonian versification are related in a way that is far from trivial. Or consider Finnish and Estonian folk verse in trochaic tetrameter, which does not occur in any other tradition – is the trochee here a phantom? How can we compare, for instance, the *Nibelungenstrophe* with the *mutaqārib* or the *khlōng*?

It is not easy to answer even the question of which property of verse should be considered universal. It is often assumed that it is the division of text into lines, but this is incorrect. Moreover, the idea that the line is the basic unit of poetic speech is not universal.

The next problem concerns the internal structure of verse and of poetic lines. European poetics long adhered to the ancient notion of feet consisting of long and short, or stressed and unstressed, syllables. Structuralism (Nikolai Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobson) rejected both the foot and the alternation of different syllable types: a verse is an alternation of strong and weak positions. This idea was carried over into the works of Morris Halle and Samuel Jay Keyser in generative metrics. However, there is no consensus on which positions should be considered strong and which weak, nor on whether the diversity of verse can be reduced to these positions alone.

These issues are examined using examples of poetic forms such as Knittelvers and dolnik. The problem of Russian paeons is explored through material from Alexander Radishchev's "Bova" (1796?) and Joseph Brodsky's "Letter to a Roman Friend" (1972).

### **The Anacreontea in English 1648–1800:**

#### **A Case Study in the Evolution of Open and Closed Forms**

*Igor Pilshchikov, UCLA, Tallinn University*

This paper argues that the English Anacreontic ode illustrates Boris Yarkho's "compensatory law": its thematic and metrical simplicity is offset by substantial rhythmic diversity. Another theoretical point the English Anacreontic tradition exemplifies is Heinrich Wölfflin's principle of the alternation between "open" and "closed" forms, understood (following Yarkho) as respective tendencies toward diversification and homogenization of formal parameters. In this framework, homogenization ("closed form") denotes uniformity of stanzaic structures and metrical choices and low variance in rhythmic figures, whereas diversification ("open form") entails greater variability of stanzaic and metrical patterns and a higher degree of rhythmic variance.

Baroque poets (such as Abraham Cowley) and, two centuries later, Romantic poets – notably, Thomas Moore – adopt "openness", varying the anacrusis of the four-ictus Anacreontic binary meter and eschewing the uniform masculine rhyme. This contrasts with the eighteenth-century Classicist Anacreontea, whose pure iambs and trochees and exclusive use of masculine rhyme typify the closed form. Yet Romantic practice never fully restores Baroque openness. Triple and crossed rhymes do not return, and the proportion of odes with invariable anacrusis (i.e., purely iambic or purely trochaic poems) increases threefold, thus confirming Yarkho's corrective to Wölfflin's law: returns to earlier stages are always partial.

The rhythmic features analyzed here are distinctive of the English tradition, but this does not imply that the "compensatory law" was inactive elsewhere: in their adaptations of the Anacreontea, French, German, and Russian poets sought – and found – other strategies for countering Anacreontic monotony.

#### **References**

Yarkho, B. I. 2006. *Metodologiya tochnogo literaturovedeniia: Izbrannye trudy po teorii literatury*. Moscow: Yazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, pp. 137, 227–229, 293, 304, 346, 568.

## Implications of Prosodic Morphology for Meter and Vice Versa

*Tomas Riad, University of Stockholm*

Templatic/prosodic morphology poses an analytical challenge when the grammar sometimes has to accommodate conflicting demands between the shape requirements of the prosodic morpheme (template satisfaction) and concerns of regular phonology (e.g. syllabification). The type of situation is illustrated below with examples taken from the prosodic morphology of Tashlhiyt Berber (Dell, Elmedlaoui 1992/2001, 2002, 2013, Jebbour 1999, Bensoukas 2001). The prosodic morphemes are referred to as Tifrdi and Tirrugza. The template of Tifrdi is LL and the template of Tirrugza is LHL. Both are prefixed by ti- (external to the template). On the one hand, these prosodic morphemes should begin with a light syllable (L). On the other hand, regular syllabification may require the non-templatic prefix ti- to form a heavy syllable with the first mora of the prosodic morpheme (H). In (1), regular prosody is indicated above the word and the prosodic morpheme below. Two examples are given of each type, one canonical and one conflicting. The moras of the template are marked by underscore.

(1) Tashlhiyt Berber, prosodic morphemes

	<i>canonical</i>		<i>conflicting</i>	
<u>Tifrdi</u>	(L L L)		( H L)	regular prosody
	ti- f <u>r</u> d i	'grazing'	ti- <u>n</u> m i	'straightness'
	[L L]		[L L]	prosodic morpheme
<u>Tirrugza</u>	(L L H L)		(H H L)	regular prosody
	ti- n <u>m</u> m <u>u</u> y r a	'notability'	ti- <u>r</u> r <u>u</u> g z a	'manhood'
	[L H L]		[L H L]	prosodic morpheme

In our analysis, this type of situation indicates the simultaneous presence of two prosodic structures. This would mean that the conflict is not resolved as in classic OT, e.g. by regular prosody overriding the prosodic morpheme. Rather, both structures are generated by the same grammar, and remain copresent in the output.

To support this general conclusion, arguments are collected from verse metrics, which is taken to exhibit the same use of grammar as prosodic morphology (Riad 2017, 2022, 2023). In metrics, the assumption of two simultaneous prosodic structures is commonplace (Kiparsky 1977, Blumenfeld 2015). Mismatches between the prosodic structures are run of the mill in verse metrics. In (2), verse feet correspond to prosodic words (Golston & Riad 2000).

(2) English, iambic pentameter

(		)	(		)	(		)		regular prosody
	My	mistress'	eyes	are	nothing	like	the	sun		(Shakespeare, sonnet 130)
[		]		]		]		]		verse feet ("prosodic morphemes")

Verse metrical grouping and regular prosody are obviously mismatched. Nevertheless, the two prosodic structures are both valid, simultaneously.

In traditional and generative metrics, the assumption is that verse meter is supplied from an external source and that metricality is a function of matching between the two (Hanson & Kiparsky 1996). In our proposal, the facts of prosodic morphology rather indicate that both prosodic structures emanate separately and internally from grammar, in morphology as in meter.

To complete the argument, we look also at the structural analysis of other prosodic morphology (truncation, reduplication, root-and-pattern, secret languages) and the larger prosodic domains of meter, all of which we take to consist of two separate prosodic structures (the regular prosody and the templatic prosodic structure).

## References

- Bensoukas, K. 2001. *Stem forms in the nontemplatic morphology of Berber*. Diss., Mohammed V University, Rabat.
- Blumenfeld, L. 2015. Meter as faithfulness. In: *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 33(1), 79–125.
- Dell, F., Elmedlaoui, M. 1992/2001. Quantitative transfer in the nonconcatenative morphology of Imdlawn Tashlhiyt Berber. In: *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages* 3, 89–125. Reprinted 2001 in Ch. Kreidler (ed.), *Phonology: Critical concepts*, vol. 3. London: Routledge, 535–579.
- Dell, F. & Elmedlaoui, M. 2002. *Syllables in Tashlhiyt Berber and in Moroccan Arabic*. (Kluwer International Handbooks in Linguistics 2). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
- Dell, F., Elmedlaoui, M. 2013. Syllables and gemination in imperfective stems in Tashlhiyt Berber. In: *Brill's Annual of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics* 5, 1–29.
- Golston, Ch., Riad, T. 2000. The phonology of Classical Greek meter. In: *Linguistics* 38(1), 99–167.
- Hanson, K.; Kiparsky, P. 1996. A Parametric Theory of Poetic Meter. In: *Language* 72(2), 287–335.
- Jebbour, A. 1999. Syllable weight and syllable nuclei in Tachelhit Berber of Tiznit. In: *Cahiers de Grammaire* 24, 95–116.
- Kiparsky, P. 1977. The rhythmic structure of English verse. In: *Linguistic Inquiry* 8(2), 189–247.
- Riad, T. 2017. The meter of Tashlhiyt Berber songs. In: *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 35(2), 499–548.

Riad, T. 2022. How Linguistic is Verse Meter? In: Sho Akamine (ed.), *Proceedings of WECOL 2021*. Fresno: Department of Linguistics, California State University, 2022, vol. 27, 118–133.

Riad, T. 2023. The Secret Morphology of Tashlhiyt Berber. *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics* 14 (2022), 273–307.

### **Patterns of Multilingualism in Estonian Youth Poetry: A Statistical View**

*Rebekka Lotman, University of Tartu*

This presentation examines lexical multilingualism in original Estonian-language poems published in the youth magazine *Värske Rõhk* between 2005 and 2024. The corpus consists of 3,086 poems by 328 authors and has been manually compiled and annotated for foreign-language lexical units and language identification. The analysis combines quantitative corpus methods with qualitative close reading.

The study investigates the overall prevalence and diachronic development of multilingual practices, the range of languages represented, and the structural types of code-switching in relation to the Estonian matrix language. It also considers how different languages function as poetic resources in contemporary youth poetry, focusing on their semantic domains, intertextual roles, and register effects.

By situating multilingualism at the intersection of contact linguistics and literary poetics, the presentation explores how foreign-language elements operate within Estonian youth poetry not only as markers of language contact but as deliberate aesthetic and meaning-making strategies.

### **Mind the Meter: Large-Scale Interaction Between Form and Language**

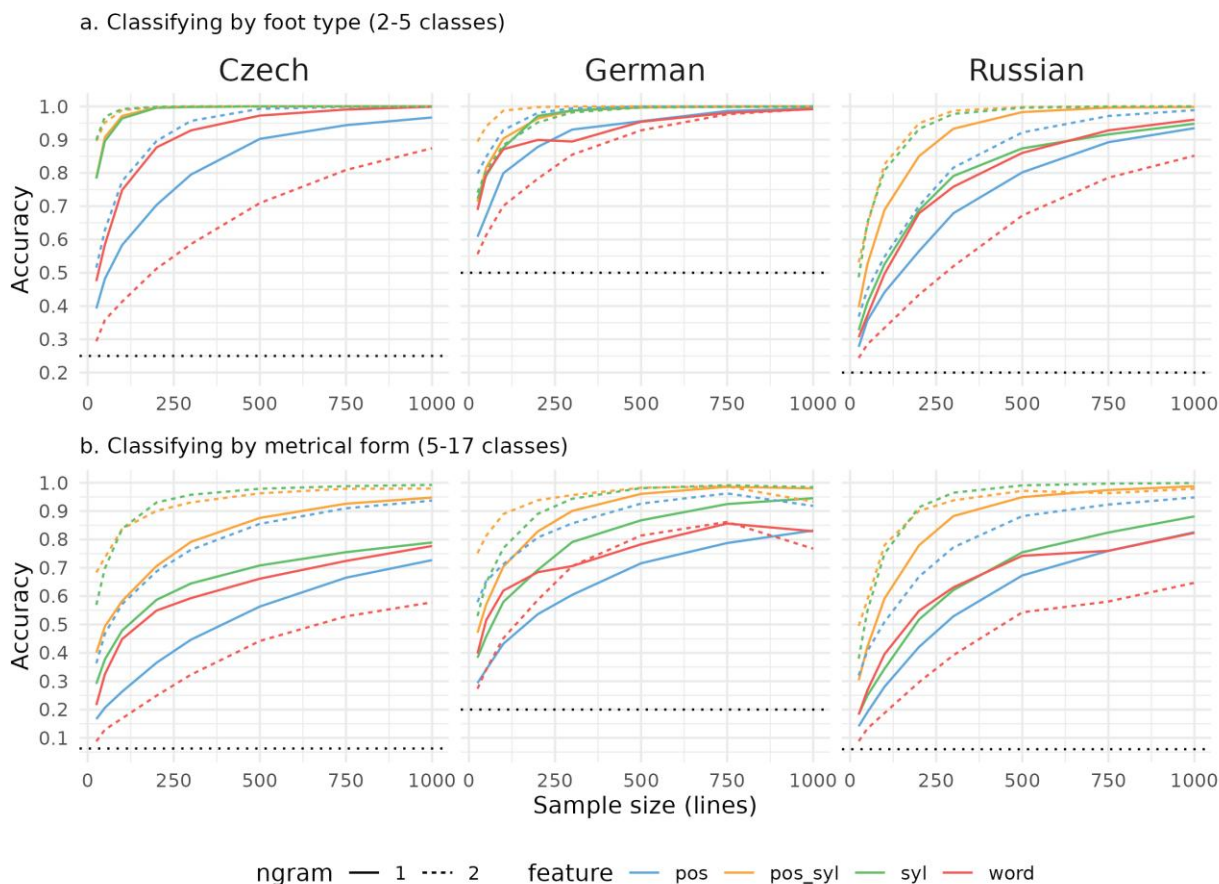
*Artjoms Šeļa, Czech Academy of Sciences*

*Petr Plecháč, Czech Academy of Sciences*

*Thomas Haider, University of Passau, Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics*

In this talk we demonstrate that poetic meter systematically shapes language use in ways that can significantly distort (computational) analyses of poetry. Drawing on large, metrically annotated corpora of Czech, German, and Russian verse from the PoeTree collection, we show that

differences between metrical forms generate strong and consistent linguistic signals that surface even in basic textual features. Using supervised classification models trained on simple variables such as word frequencies, parts of speech, and word lengths, we achieve near-perfect accuracy in recognizing both basic meters and metrical forms. These results reveal that meter acts as a powerful linguistic “dialect,” entangling prosodic, morphological, and syntactic regularities of a language.



The study confirms previous intuitions about the influence of a recurrent metrical rule on phrasing (Kiparsky, Prince, Gasparov, Tarlinskaja) and lends some ground to “language-first” views of a meter, like J.V. Cunningham’s claim that it is a “collection of syllabic-syntactic types”. A look at distinctive features that the model uses to make metrical predictions suggests that meters reproduce themselves at various levels of language, exploiting and reflecting back its systematicity. Prosodically iambic words and phrases (e.g. RU: ‘когда’; DE: ‘ich bin’, CS: ‘a nad’) tend to characterize iambic meters, trochees prefer trochaic language (e.g. RU: ‘что за’, DE: ‘und die’, CS: ‘jako’). Trochees in all three languages are distinguished by the sequence of two disyllabic words (2 + 2) which implies Sw + Sw phrasing. Trisyllabic words surge in Czech dactyls where they can fill a foot (Sww), but drop in amphibrachs where they can’t because of word-initial stress. Similarly, Russian anapest avoids 3 + 3 word sequences: stress on the last syllable in trisyllabic

words is uncommon to match wwS + wwS. We discuss the implication of meters being a strong confound in quantitative and computational analysis of verse.

### **Is the Position at the Junction of English Iambic Feet (SW) so Sensitive?**

#### **And if YES, Then Why?**

*Marina Tarlinskaja, University of Washington*

Cases like “There **remains** nothing” are indeed rare (but still iambic, in spite of Gasparov 1973), they occur in Donne’s verse, Shelley’s *The Cenci* and Frost’s iambic pentameter. However, inversions within an iambic foot in the middle of a phrase are as rare (“Who yet remain **stubborn**. I overrule”), cf. Shakespeare’s sonnets (“And peace proclaims **olives** of endless age”). The explanation does not lie in the magic location at the feet boundary, but in avoidance of in both cases of a clash of stresses plus a hiatus of two or more unstressed syllables: “There **remains** nothing”: [⊘ ⊘ ‘ ‘ ⊘] and “remain **stubborn**. I overrule” [⊘ ‘ ‘ ⊘ ⊘ ...]. Both rhythmical configurations deviate from the iambic momentum too much. Inversions at the beginning of the line are permissible: there is no clash of stresses, only hiatus, and this doesn’t distort the iambic momentum too much. So, the explanation lies in the rhythmical syntactic inconvenience of a clash of stresses plus a hiatus, and not in the magic situation of an inversion of stresses at the feet juncture. Inversions of stress within a foot and at the feet juncture are avoided because in both cases there occur clashes of stresses **and** a hiatus. Inversions at the beginning of the line are common because there is no clash of stresses, only a hiatus.

### **Metrical In-Betweenness: Russian-Language Youth Poetry in Estonia (2004–2010)**

*Mikhail Trunin, Tallinn University*

This paper examines the metrical repertoire of a Russian-language poetry corpus produced and published in Estonia between 2004 and 2010 (focusing on younger authors in the period), a time marked by intensified small-press activity and short-lived collective platforms. The study focuses on how metrical practice changes in the shift toward free verse: not as a sudden replacement of syllabo-tonic meters, but as a gradual reconfiguration mediated by transitional forms.

I work with a corpus assembled from printed almanacs and book series of the mid-to-late 2000s, a collective volume, and additional materials obtained from a privately preserved backup of a now-

defunct literary website. The analysis combines corpus-based metrical annotation with close reading. The guiding hypothesis is that the move toward free verse proceeds through intermediate solutions: rhythmically loosened dolnik and accentual patterns, mixed or unstable stress profiles, and other tonic formations that retain traces of syllabo-tonic organization while weakening its constraints. Quantitatively, I map the distribution of syllabo-tonic meters (including iambic, trochaic, and other syllabo-tonic patterns) versus tonic and near-free-verse forms, and I identify which transitional patterns dominate in the corpus. Qualitatively, I ask how these forms correlate with recurring lyric stances and even with local publishing environments that encouraged heterogeneous verse techniques.

### **In Defense of Homoeoteleuton as a Poetical Device**

*Leon Wash*

In discussions of the history of rhyme, it is common to delineate rhyme proper and mere grammatical rhyme, or homoeoteleuton (“like-ending”), as the Greeks called it. The conscious juxtaposition of words with rhyming grammatical endings – homoeoteleuton – was one of the figures allegedly introduced by the orator Gorgias in the fifth century BC; that origin story and ancient rhetoricians’ attention to homoeoteleuton have firmly linked it with prose. It is not surprising then that Reuven Tsur’s stimulating paper, “Rhyme and Cognitive Poetics” (1996) argues that homoeoteleuton is prosaic, being “used merely to reinforce the similar meanings” (74), and therefore has little in common with rhyme, which makes us “shift our attention to the phonetic coding” (73). As reasonable as it is, Tsur’s conclusion is based on limited evidence, in which homoeoteleuton is neatly subordinated to the semantic and syntactic structure of a Ciceronian sentence. Yet Cicero’s usage has behind it a robust tradition, which proclaimed that homoeoteleuton must be tightly controlled in serious oratory. Ancient discussions reveal that homoeoteleuton could have many of the cognitive effects which Tsur reserves for rhyme. Numerous sources attest to how mesmerizing or, depending on one’s taste, how distracting the sounds of homoeoteleuton could be in speeches. Supporting evidence can be drawn from, e.g., the prominent use of homoeoteleuton in hymns and in elegy, where it is arguably not “used merely to reinforce similar meanings.” As this paper will argue, homoeoteleuton in Greek poetry, like rhyme proper on Tsur’s account, could cause a “shift [of] attention from the efficiency of performance in certain cognitive tasks” (85) to the musicality of the verse. Putting Tsur’s cognitive poetics in dialogue with the testimony of ancient Greek authors and the evidence of ancient Greek poetry, this paper will offer a defense of homoeoteleuton as a poetical device.