

Parallelism in Karelian Laments

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Introduction

Karelian lament poetry integrates a variety of forms of parallelism—different types of what Roman Jakobson (1981 [1966]:98) described as “recurrent returns”—that are both organizing principles for the poetic discourse and also rhetorical resources that a lamenter can draw on and manipulate in performance. Parallelism operates at the phonic level of sounds, both recurrent sounds in alliteration and recurrent melodic structures. It works in different ways at the level of individual words and formulaic expressions within a phrase. Parallelism is also prominent at the level of larger structural and thematic units. The types of parallelism in Karelian laments work complementarily with one another, and in several respects may also differ from their uses in other traditions. The integrated combination of all these types of parallelism produces Karelian lament as a distinctive form of verbal art.

In this opening section of this essay, I introduce the Karelian lament tradition and features of lament performance and poetics. The second section offers an overview of the different types of parallelism at work in Karelian laments. This survey begins with the phonic parallelism of alliteration and parallelism at the level of words and formulae, continues with semantic parallelism of larger units in composition, and finally considers parallelism between the language of laments and the environment where laments are performed. The third section discusses the rhetorical functions of parallelism in laments. Forms of semantic parallelism are shown to be potentially meaningful in themselves. The potential for semantic parallelism between larger units of expression is shown to allow flexibility that makes it a resource for organizing extended sequences of lament poetry. The fourth section turns to the question of how parallelism as a structuring principle of lament can penetrate into a lamenter’s way of speaking about laments so that the metadiscourse becomes organized on the same principle. The conclusion considers how all the different levels of parallelism and their flexibility make Karelian lament a dynamic resource for personal expression.

Karelians and Karelia

Karelians belong to a Finnic linguistic-cultural group with a distinctive language, culture, and ethnic identity. They are historically associated with the transnational territory of Karelia,

situated on both sides of today's Finnish-Russian border, which extends from the Gulf of Finland to the White Sea (see Fig. 1). Before the 1930s approximately, the majority population was Karelian. However, the territories of Karelia were greatly disrupted through political conflicts and evacuation, especially during World War II. Today the large area of Karelia is populated by multiple ethnic groups, which include Finns, Russians, Ukrainians, and Karelians. Although Karelian and Russian languages and cultures were markedly different from one another, Karelians in Russia have now been largely assimilated into Russian culture. Karelian language and culture were relatively close to that of Finns; in Finland modernization and mobility have led to a significant degree of assimilation of both those previously residing within today's national borders as well as those who were evacuated to Finland during World War II. Currently, Karelians are a minority in the Republic of Karelia of the Russian Federation as well as in Finland.

Among Finnic languages, Karelian is closely related to Finnish, Ižorian, and Vepsian, and more distantly to Estonian, Votic, and Seto. Degrees of similarity in culture and traditions can also be viewed along these lines. At the same time, there is a division between eastern and western Finnic areas. The Finnic cultural areas became divided between East and West, with Russian influence and the Orthodox Church dominant among Karelians, Ižorians, Votes, and Setos, while the Scandinavian influence, the Catholic and later the Lutheran Church were dominant among Finns and Estonians.

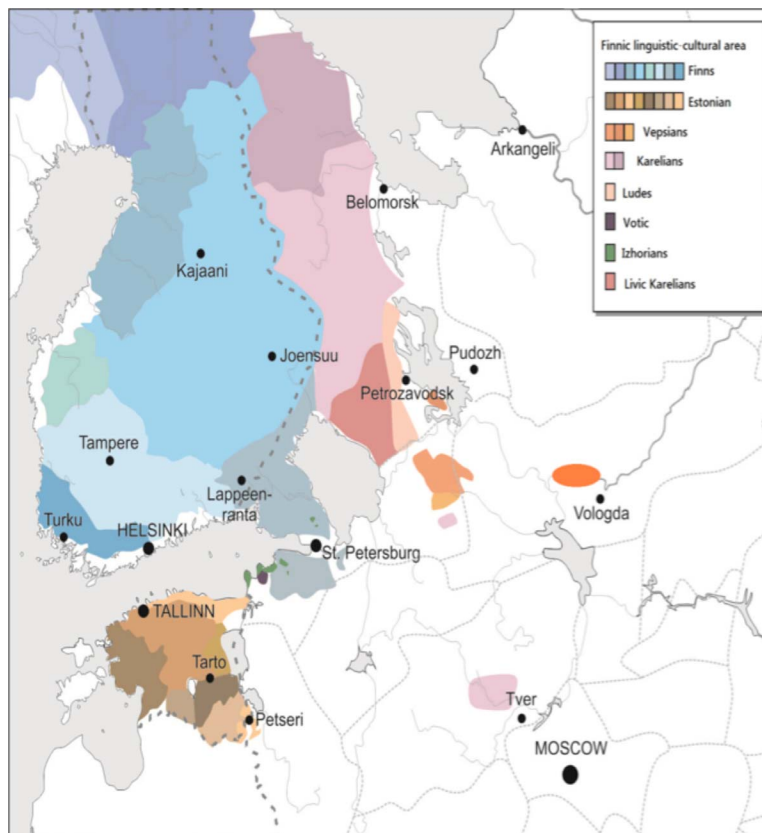


Fig 1. Finnic linguistic-cultural areas, copyright belongs to author.

Karelian Lament Poetry

Laments—also called dirges, wailing, weeping, or elegies—have been known all over the world and are still found in some contemporary cultures (see Wilce 2009). In most cultures, laments are performed by women, although men also perform them in some exceptional circumstances.¹ Scholars generally agree that laments belong to the primordial varieties of folklore, with roots in the cult of the dead (Honko 1974:9 and Tolstoj 1958:25). They can be considered one of the oldest identifiable genres of oral ritual poetry. Karelian laments belong to the broader Finnic lament tradition, which includes Karelian, Ižorian, Votic, Vepsian, and Seto laments. The Finnic lament tradition was not maintained following the Reformation in western areas, as in most of Finland and Estonia; it was preserved primarily among Orthodox populations of Russia and Estonia. I have proposed a general operating definition of laments as follows (Stepanova E. 2012:58):

[S]ung poetry of varying degrees of improvisation, which nonetheless follows conventionalized rules of traditional verbal and non-verbal expression, most often performed by women in ritual contexts and potentially also on non-ritual grievous occasions.

Finnic laments as a genre of oral poetry are forms of poetically organized discourse, whose verbal features are inseparable in practice from non-verbal features such as melody and paralinguistic elements (Banti and Giannattasio 2004:315). Finnic lament traditions all share certain pan-regional features of verbal and non-verbal expression (see further: Stepanova E. 2015). The pan-regional features of Finnic laments include but are not limited to:

- An extensive avoidance vocabulary accompanied by an abundant use of diminutive and plural forms (see Stepanova E. 2015)
- A variety of types of parallelism ranging from the phonic parallelism of alliteration or melodic units to semantic parallelism between long verbal sequences or between verbal sequences and performed actions, that will be discussed in this essay
- A descending melodic movement in a minor pentachord or tonal speech (see Niemi 2002:708-12)
- Paralinguistic elements including sobbing, voiced inhalation, cry breaks and creaky voice (see Urban 1988:386, 389-91)

In other words, there are formal elements and organizational restrictions of speech and other behaviors common to lament performances across all Finnic regions. At the same time, these pan-regional features also exhibit regional variation as well as variation by individual performer. Variation also plays a role in differentiating the context, setting, or locale of each individual performance.

¹For an example from Bangladesh, see Wilce (2002); for an example from an Uralic culture (Udmurt), see Honko et al. (1993:569).

The Karelian lament tradition is one form of the common Finnic lament tradition. The Karelian lament tradition was not wholly uniform: it is divided into four broad tradition regions, as shown in Map 2. Regional differences can be found in vocabulary, melodies, and some variation in formal features (see Stepanova A. 1985) that will be introduced below as they become relevant to the discussion.



Fig 2. Regions of the Karelian Lament Tradition, copyright belongs to the author.

I approach traditional Karelian lament poetry in this essay as a poetic register² that differentiates it as a channel of cultural expression from ordinary speech and from other genres of folklore, but at the same time provides the lamenter with means for individual improvisation. The laments were not learned by heart, but were rather created anew in each concrete situation (see Lord 1960; Foley 1995). There are no fixed texts of laments—different lamenters will give different performances in equivalent situations, and the same lamenter will create different

²In ethnopoetics, registers are identified as “major speech styles associated with recurrent types of situations” (Hymes 1989 [1974]:440). In linguistics and linguistic anthropology, registers are understood as different modes or models of speech behavior associated with specific social situations (see Agha 2007).

laments with every performance. However, all lamenters improvise within the conventions of traditional register. Thus each lament exhibits features that index its membership in a common tradition, and is also unique within the tradition (see Stepanova E. 2015).

The historical center of laments was rituals, which played a fundamental role in upholding the value and significance of lamenting across generations. The most common ritual contexts for lamenting were funerals and various commemoration ceremonies for the dead, as well as weddings and the departure ceremonies for men entering military service. The register of laments was first and foremost a register of communication. Karelians believed that lament language was the only language that the dead could understand, and it was used as a primary means for reciprocal communication with deceased kin and with supernatural beings in the otherworld (see Stepanova E. 2012 and 2014). Moreover, lamenting also provided women with a powerful medium of communication in a wide range of other contexts. Not surprisingly, the most pronounced feature of Karelian lament is its distinctive lexicon, which is characterized by nominal circumlocutions—that is, terms for avoiding personal names and most common nouns, especially for referring to individuals alive and dead, kinship relations, and the objects and actions connected with ritual activities (see Stepanova A. 1985, 2004, and 2012). The lexicon of avoiding names is rooted in naming taboos for deceased persons (for example, Honko 1963:128; Konkka 1975:178). In addition to this highly specific and idiomatic lexicon, laments were characterized by an extensive but regularized use of diminutive, plural, and possessive forms for nouns, as well as by frequentative forms for verbs and special syntax. By using the lexicon of avoidance together with specific grammatical forms, a lamenter showed great deference and affection in order to please and honor the object of her lament.³ The phonic parallelism of alliteration was an essential poetic feature that also shaped the poetic “words” (Foley 2002:12-20) or formulaic expressions and circumlocutions of the register. Although ritual uses were central to the social construction of the importance of lament practice, laments were also performed occasionally outside of ritual contexts, as a medium for personal expression of emotion and sometimes also of otherwise elevated speech.

Both verbal and non-verbal features of lament jointly give a lamenter the freedom to be creative within the traditional framework of conventions, and therefore to convey both traditional and personal meanings through her laments. Verbal and non-verbal features of laments are resources with which the lamenter could emphasize, intensify, highlight, and specify what she communicates with her poetry. Lament can thus be called a sung poetic language that a lamenter uses to create unique performances.⁴ At the same time, lament has been tightly bound to its cultural context and cultural meanings (see Foley 1995), for which it provided a channel of cultural expression (Stepanova E. 2015).

The Karelian lament poetry was not subject to a regularly recurring meter. The primary compositional and organizational units of laments are “poetic strings” (see Frog and Stepanova E. 2011:197). Poetic strings are semantic units of varying length with a melodically marked cadence and are most often united with a consistent pattern of alliteration, although there may be a transition in the pattern of alliteration within a string in some cases. Poetic strings in laments

³ See also Stepanova E. (2015) and Wilce and Fenigsen (2015).

⁴ See also Feld (1990) and Leino (1981).

from northern parts of Karelia, known as Viena Karelia (see Fig. 2) could be quite long, while in southern regions of Aunus the structure of phrases in laments could be as short as lines of verse. The following example of a lament was performed in 1967 by Nadezhda Gavrilova from Aunus Karelia.⁵ She performed the lament to her son, who had been conscripted to military service. In this lament one poetic string corresponds to one sentence of transcribed text. The meaning of circumlocutions are provided in the translation in parentheses; diminutive and plural forms are not indicated in the translation as these are not relevant to later discussion (Stepanova A. and Koski 1976:381-82.):

- (0) Kargijaine, d'o kandomuttani kaksih kymmenih vuoduzih sah kazvattelin da.
 Imehyt naine rukku, omani ijätettyy idožuttani yksin käzin ylendelin ga.
 A nygöi gui rubeinhäi, kargijaine naine rukku, kandomuani kaimaelemah kaz'onnoloih
 kamandazih da.
 Rubein atkalaine naine, aigamazeni, andelemah sinuu agjattomih artelizih.
 Pestyzeni, rubien nämile päiväzile provodiimah perättömih perehyzih ga.
 Olit kurd'azen kuvattu kuvamazeni kupečeskoilois kunnivozis.
 Saaduzeni, olit nämih aigazis sah vie sarskoilois elonaigazis ga.
 A nygöi rubein vierijäine vieraittelemah vierahih edyzih da.
 Nygöi kačo roij uskomattomat unuot maattavakse da arbaelemattomat askeluat
 astuttavakse. [. . .]

The miserable-one (= I) was raising for twenty years my carried-one (= son) *da*.
 Sad poor woman (= I) was fostering my sprout (= son) alone with my own hands *ga*.
 And now the miserable poor woman (= I) will send off my carried-one to the state troops
 (= army) *da*.
 The unhappy woman (= I) will give away my raised-one (= son) to the uncountable force
 (= army).
 My bathed-one (=son) will be in those days dispatched into the innumerable family
 (= army) *ga*.
 My raised-by-a-dismal-woman-one (= son) was growing in great honor.
 My gotten-one (= son) until these days was living a Tsar-like life *ga*.
 And now, the depressed (= I) will remit you to the strangers (= army) *da*.
 Now, look, [you] will sleep broken sleeps and will step unforeseeable steps.

This example illustrates how laments are organized in poetic strings, even if not all lamenters mark the end or beginning of their strings with a particle like *da*, *ga*, *oi*, and so on. It also makes apparent the prominent role of semantic parallelism as a stylistic means:⁶ each poetic string would normally be followed by at least one parallel string with a different pattern of alliteration. Parallelism can be seen here between poetic strings 1-2, strings 3-5 and 8, and strings 6-7. String 9 also presents a variation in a shift of vocalic alliteration from u-alliteration to a-alliteration

⁵Nadezhda Gavrilova was born in 1900 and is from the village of Vidlitsa in Aunus Karelia.

⁶See Honko (1963); Konkka (1968); Stepanova A. (2003:31-33); Stepanova E. (2015).

within the string in relation to the two clauses that can also be considered parallel. With these structures that repeat content with different patterns of alliteration, lamenters create a special heightening of poetry in performance, which helps the lamenter to mediate meanings to the listeners (see Jakobson 1981 [1966]; Fox 1977). At the same time, by using parallelism the conveyed message, the attitude or the feelings of the lamenter, become emphasized. In the next section, I discuss examples of different types of parallelism used in Karelian laments. Most examples presented here are recorded in the Seesjärvi region.

Typical Forms of Parallelism in Laments

The Phonic Parallelism of Alliteration

Alliteration can be regarded as a form of phonic parallelism (see also Jakobson 1981 [1966]), whereby the onset of different words begins with the same sound. Like all Finnic languages, Karelian language places stress on the first syllable of every word. Alliteration was a pervasive and fundamental feature of Karelian poetics (Frog and Stepanova E. 2011). In Finnic languages, alliteration that includes only initial consonants is called “weak” and alliteration that includes both the onset consonant and following vowel is called “strong” (that is, *š-* versus *ši-*). Strong alliteration was preferred in laments, although it could be mixed with weak alliteration without a violation of poetic form. In laments, alliteration functioned as a structuring feature that created cohesion across a poetic string. The scope of units joined by a single pattern of alliteration varied by the region of lament tradition (see Fig. 2) in relation to the conventional length of a poetic string. Poetic strings were shortest in the south in the Aunus region, where the example quoted above was collected. They were longest in Viena in the north, where one poetic string could potentially exceed forty words in length as shown below in example (1), which illustrates the prominence of alliteration.

Example (1) is from the beginning of a ritual wedding lament from Elena Pivojeva that was recorded in 1967 in Viena Karelia.⁷ Here, the lamenter addresses the groom’s retinue, acting as the voice of the bride on her wedding day. The first poetic string is comprised of thirty-three words, sixteen of which carry strong alliteration (*si-/ši-*) and an additional four of which carry weak alliteration (*s-/š-*). Together, these can be calculated as giving a density of alliteration of 20/33 words or 1:1.65. The second poetic string consists of thirty-five words, eighteen of which carry strong alliteration (*ka*), and an additional two of which carry weak alliteration, yielding a density of 20/35 or 1:1.75 (Stepanova A. and Koski 1976:49-50):

- (1) Siirrykšennelkyä, šivun omattomat šilie mielijen šinččimäiset, ieštä šileijen šyntyjen.
 Anna šilmivetyšien kera šivun olkuova šiikavaltani šilmittävykšentelen ieššä
 šileijen šyntyjen, ennen kun šivun omattomat šilie mielijen šinččimäiset šanojen
 šeisattamattomiksi šieklasiksi šivun ašetteletta šiika mielialaseni.

⁷Elena Pivojeva was born in 1877 in the village of Niska of the Viena region.

Kallissukšennelkua, kajon omattomat kaunis mielijen kannettuiset, ieštä kajon ylähäisien kallehien šyntysien. Anna kajon olkuova kaiho vartuvon kajon kualelen ieššä kallehien šyntyjien kajon olkuovilla kanavaltasilla, ennen kun kaihot mielialaseni kannetut karkual'lah kaihuo mielialaistani šanojen kannattamattomiksi karkiesiksi.

Move, oh strangers born of the bright smart ones (= groom's retinue), from the bright ancestors (= icons). Let [me] the one who is leaving (= bride), oh who is free as a whitefish (= with my maidenhood), with sweet eye-waters (= tears), appear in front of the bright ancestors (= icons) before the strangers born of the bright smart ones (= groom's retinue) change my whitefish-spirit (= maidenhood) into a sieve which cannot hold words (= be married).

Move, oh strangers born of the beautiful smart ones (= groom's retinue), from the highest dear ancestors (= icons). Let [me] the miserable body which is leaving (= bride), to come with departing chicken-freedoms (= maidenhood) in front of the beautiful ancestors (= icons) before the strangers born of smart ones (= groom's retinue) depress my spirit with unendurably bitter words (= be married).

The lament register of Viena Karelia is distinguished by its vocabulary of meaningless filler-words or expletives that can meet any pattern of strong alliteration, normally used repeatedly as with *šivun* and *kajun* here.⁸ The expletives complete or complement an alliterative sequence in the string, both increasing the alliterative density and helping to realize the rhythm of a melodic formula.

The phonic parallelism of alliteration functioned as a determinant on word choice. This determinant historically shaped the lexicon of laments so that the vocabulary would be equipped with equivalent words and formulaic expressions capable of accomplishing different patterns of alliteration (see Roper 2012). This led to the enrichment of formulaic circumlocutions especially related to those relatives, objects, or phenomena that were most frequently referred to in laments (see Stepanova E. 2014:69-90).⁹

The process of creating different circumlocutions with different patterns of alliteration was built on the systems of metaphorical and symbolic expression (see Stepanova A. 1985). This process used Karelian vocabulary, but it also capitalized on other resources available in the multilingual environment of Karelia. Lamenters profited from the Russian lexicon to which they had access: they treated Russian words as synonyms of poetic circumlocutions (sometimes adding extra vowels to make them alliterate) and built them into compounds with Karelian words. These terms were generally handled as naturalized elements of the lament lexicon and were inflected in diminutive and plural forms as with any Karelian vocabulary (Stepanova E.

⁸The register in Viena is equipped with expletives for each pattern of alliteration, such as *aijan, helun, innon, kajon, kiran, kujin, kyhän, luavun, manun, oimun, panun, suarnan, suimun, tunnon, vallan, verran, visan, uusin*. See further Stepanova A. (2003:90). On expletives in Northern Finnish Karelian laments, see Hakamies (1993:114).

⁹On this phenomenon generally, see Frog (2015:86-88).

2014:84-86): for example, *kukla*, *kuukolka* (“doll” = girl, maiden) and *ikona* (“icon” = young boy) (Stepanova A. 2012:39, 139).

Avoidance terminology extends to a broad range of verbs used to avoid naming certain actions described in laments. These include verbs related to death and life: “burying” is expressed as “rolling” or “concealing in the earth”; “sending,” “placing,” or “wrapping to the *syndyzet* (otherworld)”; “life” or “living” is expressed through the metaphor of traveling (Stepanova E. 2014:64, 81-82; 2015). Russian lexica were also adapted in this capacity. Alliterative synonymy was particularly important for verbs, because the verb carried the alliteration. However, their number was much more limited. As a consequence, the selection of the pattern of alliteration would have to anticipate the verb with which a string would conclude or start, which ideally would have been determined with the beginning of the utterance (Stepanova E. 2014:64-66, 82).

Rhetorical Redundancy or Pleonasm

A typical form of parallelism that occurs within a poetic string occurs at the level of immediately juxtaposed lexical items. The parallel use of paired verbs that are synonymic is common, as illustrated in example (2). Examples for the present discussion on pleonasms have been selected from a corpus of about 500 traditional laments recorded in the Seesjärvi region (see Fig. 2), of which they are considered representative:¹⁰

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (2.i) | <i>arvuan i oiveldelen</i> | “[I] guess and suppose” |
| (ii) | <i>en smiettinyn engo duumainun</i> | “[I] did not contemplate nor think” |
| (iii) | <i>engo smiettinyn engo toivonun</i> | “[I] did not contemplate nor expect” |
| (iv) | <i>en uskonun engo toivonun</i> | “[I] did not believe nor expect” |

Because the paired synonyms are used in a single phrase rather than in parallel strings, they can be considered a form of tautology in the sense of presenting an unnecessary redundancy. This type of parallel structure of synonyms is called pleonasm—a type of rhetorical redundancy or use of more words than are necessary or sufficient for clear expression (for example, Lehmann 2005:119-54). In rhetoric such redundancy is often considered to have negative connotations, although it is also used in various idiomatic expressions. In poetic discourse, on the other hand, redundancy—and pleonasm in particular—is used to reinforce the message. Pleonasm is prominent in some of the formulaic sequences of the lament lexicon, where (usually) two synonymic lexical items occur in series as a formulaic unit. Whereas the examples in (2) link the verbs through a conjunction, parallelism of verbs may also involve an active verb (double-underlined) and a participle functioning as an adjective (single-underlined), as in (3):

- (3) *meeräjytti mitatut minuuttažet* “measured measured minutes”

¹⁰ See also Stepanova E. (2014:66).

Pleonasm without a conjunction is also common in adjectives and nouns, as illustrated in (4). Examples in (3-4) also employ adapted Russian vocabulary with Karelian words of exactly the same meaning, which function in the register as complementary synonyms for forming the pleonasm. In (3) the double-underlined word is derived from Russian while the single-underlined term is Karelian. A double-underline is also used to distinguish the Russian-derived word from the Karelian word in (4):

- (4.i) *jälgimmäzet posledn'oit kerdazet* “the last last times”
 (ii) *igizetti iskolivečnoit kodizet* “eternal everlasting homes (= coffin)”
 (iii) *torokaŋtiehyset* “road-roads”

In addition to bringing together two nouns, lamenters also use two synonymic circumlocutions in a row, one or both of which may be of multiple words. The simplest circumlocution for “mother” in the lament lexicon is a deverbal noun—that is, it is a noun derived from a verb, such as *voalie* (“to cherish”) → *voalija* (“cherisher”); *lämmittä* (“to warm”) → *lämmittäjä* (“warmer”). A simple circumlocution then works as a core word from which a lamenter can elaborate by adding elements in order to create complex circumlocution, as seen in (5). Example (5.i) illustrates a pleonasm of a complex circumlocution with a parallel circumlocution of a single deverbal noun, while (5.ii) illustrates a more extended circumlocution in which the parallel circumlocution also receives an adjective (see also example (9) below) (the parallel circumlocution is underlined):

- (5.i) *armahilla ilmoilla šiätelijä aikojaini*
 “into the dear world establisher maker”
 (ii) *kumbane olet kallehilla ilmoilla piäl'ä kaheksien kuuhuzien kandelija kalliz kandajazeni*
 “one who is into the dear worlds for eight months bringer dear carrier”

Within this type of parallelism of circumlocutions, the second circumlocution is often shorter than the first. However, from the lamenters' emic view on the lament lexicon, the paired circumlocutions in parallelism of this type are regarded as a single “word” (Karelian *sana*).¹¹ This variety of parallelism was only viewed as part of the flexibility of a single circumlocution as a vernacular “word” or as an integer of the lexicon. The examples in (5) can thus be viewed as a variation on examples of pleonasm in (4). Pleonasm (and tautology) have been considered potentially to be a historical feature of Uralic language poetics. This type of construction in Uralic languages has received attention especially regarding verbs, where the conjunction would, in that case, characteristically be absent (Tkachenko 1979). Such tautological constructions are a common site of use for Russian words that have been assimilated into the lament register.

¹¹ See Stepanova E. (2014:69-74). See also Foley (2002:12-20) and Timonen (2004:257).

Figura etymologica

The term *figura etymologica* refers to the use of etymologically related words close enough to one another that the relationship becomes noticeable. This type of rhetorical figure is very prominent in some forms of oral poetry, including North Russian laments and *bylina*-epics with expressions like *mnogo-množestvo* (“great-greatness”) (see Harvilahti 1985:92). The Karelian lament lexicon, however, exhibits only a few *figura etymologica* at a phraseological level. One example of a *figura etymologica* in Karelian lament is a crystallized expression used by Praskovja Saveljeva¹² to express the grief of lamenter presented in (6):

- (6) *miun siämyzet on mussettu mussembie voronoloi päčinoččie mussemmiksi*
 “my inside is blackened blacker than a blacker black oven’s front” (= great sorrows)

In this expression, the *figura etymologica* helps maintain the alliteration and highlights the topic of the lament: the enormous grief that is suffered by the lamenter that turns her insides black. In this case, the three-part *figura etymologica* is complemented by a pleonasm with the Russian-derived *voronoi* (“black”), illustrating that these rhetorical devices may be used in combination.

At the level of a poetic string, *figura etymologicae* may manifest as a textual strategy that also supports the pattern of alliteration. Example (7) presents one poetic string of a wedding lament performed in 1937 by Irinja Nikonova,¹³ in which the bride tells her brother that it would be better for him to kill her than to let her marry (KA 63/88):

- (7) *Oi, ottajazen’i okluada, olizit ottanun oigeilla olgapeellä obladaittavat oigeammat oružaraudazet, olizit ottajani uul’ičalla ostrel’innun.*

Oh, my takers’ (= parents’) riza [metal cover of an icon] (= boy), you would have taken on-the-right-shoulder-being-kept-right-gun-irons (= rifle), you would in the yard of my taker (= mother) have shot [me].

In this case, the *figura etymologica* supports the cohesion of the semantically unified poetic string by linking the circumlocution for the agent (the lamenter’s brother) with the location (the mother’s yard) and possession of the instrument (“taking” up the gun), which are brought together for the concluding verb of the string (shooting the maiden). The frequency and degree with which *figurae etymologicae* were employed with strategic structural and semantic conventions at the level of composition requires detailed investigation in the future.

Semantic Parallelism

During a lament performance, a lamenter would reiterate every string or equivalent semantic unit two to three times, although each lamenter had the freedom to perform as she

¹² Praskovja Saveljeva was born in 1913 in the village of Mändyselgä of the Seesjärvi region.

¹³ Irinja Nikonova was born in 1881 in the village of Selgi of the Seesjärvi region.

thought best in a particular situation. A characteristic feature of such semantic parallelism in Karelian lament is that semantic equivalence of parallel members does not exclude the introduction of additive information. With each iteration of a member of a parallel group, the “recurrent return” (Jakobson 1981 [1966]:98) augmented the semantic unit with some new detail. As a consequence, semantically parallel members are not semantically identical, a familiar trait in many other traditions characterized by canonical parallelism. This sort of additive parallelism can be observed in example (8), a wedding lament performed by Anastasija Rigačnaja¹⁴ in 1974. In Anastasija’s lament, the ego or the “I” of the lament is a young bride, who is asking her father to unraid her braided hair for the last time before she is married and thus ceases to be a member of the family in which she was raised. She reiterates this request three times in parallel strings. The request and information in each poetic string refers to the enactment of a rite that is the climax of the wedding ritual held at the home of the bride, during which the bride loses her maidenhood once and for all (Fon. 2059/77):

- (8) En äijä, kaksi-kolme sanua sanon, en voi enämbi, piädä kivistäy:
 Oi olovilla ilmazilla piäl’ä oznuaččija olova hyväzeni, oboidi n’ämä jäl’gimäzet i
 posledn’oit kerdazet miun kaunehie kanaliemenözie riiččimäh.
 Oi valgeila ilmoila piälä azettaja valgiene hyväzene, tule jo omassah ozakkahembih
 ozazih n’ämä jäl’gimäzet kerdazet, posl’edn’oit kerdazet miun kaunehet
 kanaliemenözet vet kataičen.
 Oi valgeila muailmoila piälä azettaja valgiene hyväzene, lähemmä kačo uširookoimbie
 uuliččapihazie myöte valgeidago kanaliemenözie kataimah n’ämä jäl’gimäzetti
 posl’edn’oit kerdazet.
 No, en voi enämbi.

I will not say much, two-three words, I cannot [lament] more, I have a headache:
 Oh, who is in the great world the adjuster, my great good-one (= father), come in these
 last and final times to take down my beautiful chicken-hairs (= to open the
 bride’s braid).
 Oh, in the white world the adjuster, my white good-one, come with your better luck in
 these last times, final times to take apart my beautiful chicken-hairs.
 Oh, in the white world the adjuster, my white good-one, let’s go, look, into the widest
 yard-yards to take apart white chicken-hairs in these last, final times.
 There, I cannot do any more.

Semantic parallelism in laments functions especially at the level of whole strings. These strings very often present a whole motif as a complex unit of information corresponding to a long, complex sentence. In this lament, each poetic string starts with the particle *Oi* [“Oh”], which is a discourse marker that indicates the beginning of a new string. Each string is addressed to the father and presents the same content three times, using the same syntactic structure, the same types of grammatical forms, and the same metaphors in circumlocutions for “father” and “braid”

¹⁴ Anastasija Rigačnaja was born in 1902 in the village of Muaselgä of the Seesjärvi region.

without restrictions against reusing the same vocabulary. However, each reiteration introduces one more detail into the content of the lament. In the first poetic string, the bride asks her father to come closer and unbraids her hair for the last time. In the second poetic string, the bride mentions that her father has better luck, with the implication that her father's luck will be transferred to his daughter through his hands while unbraiding her hair. In the third poetic string, the bride invites her father to come into the yard of the house, where the ceremony would normally take place. In this respect, the principles of parallelism in laments differ from traditions in which semantic parallelism is organized at the level of equivalence without the recurrence of words in parallel members (for example, see Fox 2017). It also differs from parallelism in Karelian kalevalaic poetry, in which each syntactic element in a parallel verse must have a correspondent in the preceding verse: for example, a verb or noun might be omitted in a parallel verse but nothing new introduced (see Saarinen 2017), noting that kalevalaic poetry existed in the same communities alongside Karelian laments (see Stepanova E. 2012). In laments, parallelism requiring lexical variation at the level of smaller units like circumlocutions for "father" manifest as pleonasm within a string as discussed above. Semantic parallelism of poetic strings builds on these circumlocutions and organizes them with grammatical parallelism. However, rather than the referent of the parallel members in the series being the preceding string *per se*, it is the rite that is being represented as a symbolic integer of the ritual.¹⁵ This rite is consistently referred to and invariant, although the additive information of the parallelism in verbal art gradually elaborates and unveils that integer in the series of "recurrent returns."

Semantic parallelism is pervasive in this tradition. Additive semantic parallelism is not necessary to the tradition (see example (0) above), although it is prominent. Parallelism could have a number of functions, from a mnemonic device to a resource for heightened fluency during improvisation, and it could be an indicator of a lamenter's competence (see Bauman and Babcock 1984 [1977]:18-19). Conversely, the performance situation as well as the mode of performance (sung or dictated, recited without melody) could crucially affect the lament as a whole and the amount of parallelism used in particular. For example, laments recited without traditional melody are significantly shorter and exhibit less parallelism than melodically organized laments. The potential dynamism of parallelism as a tool that can be utilized by a lamenter in different ways will, however, be set aside for further discussion in *Parallelism as a Rhetorical Means* below.

A Note on Melodic Parallelism

It is important to take into consideration the fact that each poetic string is (usually) performed with a special lament melody with a marked cadence, and this melodic unit is reused with each parallel string. Recurrent melodic phrases produce a form of parallelism at the level of acoustic texture that is both complementary to, and interfaces with, the phonic parallelism of alliteration and semantic parallelism at the level of poetic strings. This form of melodic parallelism simultaneously distinguishes poetic strings from one another while creating and reinforcing cohesion between them in the emergent text of performance. The complementary

¹⁵ See also Frog, "Parallelism Dynamics II," this volume.

juxtaposition of multiple types of parallelism involving different levels of text and melody occurs within the broader soundscape of lament performance. Although these different types of parallelism can be distinguished in analysis, their synthetic combination in the formation of distinct and inter-related units of utterance is dynamic in its consistency and in its potential for variation, this trait can be considered as characteristic of the Karelian lament tradition (see Stepanova E. 2014:93-97).

Between Verbal Art and Empirical Reality

Lament ritual discourse is characterized by verbal representations of both the seen and unseen worlds and what is taking place in them. Frog (2014a:202) has asserted that “Parallelism across media may converge with the construal of parallelism between performance and experiential reality.” In this case, parallelism between performance and experiential reality should be considered fundamental to the performance of the lament ritual.

In funerary rituals, for example, the lamenter narrates the activities of the funeral ritual as they occur in her laments, such as making the coffin, digging the grave, and so forth. The lamenter simultaneously communicates what is happening to the deceased and also re-envisions the places and activities through the lament language. A lamenter describes the surroundings such as changes inside the house or outside on the road with images emblematic of sadness and suffering. This can easily be viewed in simple terms of aesthetic uses of metaphor, and this aspect of lament poetics is among the resources at a lamenter’s disposal for the expression of her own and others’ emotions and the orchestration of community grief. However, it should be stressed that, in the context of ritual, laments were not presented for textual aesthetics. Their images and symbols were integrated parts of the tradition, so they were situationally predictable rather than novel, as they might seem to us today. In the context of the ritual, lament was both an essential medium of communication and also constructed the ritual significance of activities and events as they unfolded. A lamenter gave an account of what was happening in a form of language that the deceased could understand. Her own voice became the voice of the deceased and also that of the surviving kith and kin, enabling communication between them.¹⁶ She would also orchestrate interactions between them such as asking for forgiveness. In other contexts, her speech would only ostensibly be presented as affecting activities through requests and rhetorical questions, while her lament would articulate the significance of preparations. The co-occurrence of features of the environment, people, roles, and activities with their representation in lament performance leads the empirical and the verbal to be perceived as parallel members of a parallel group, sharing identity and significance. Although a lamenter did not orchestrate the funeral, through her performance she orchestrated the meaningfulness of what was occurring, for everything from why people were arriving to the coffin as a new eternal home for the deceased.

In the case of laments, parallelism between the verbal and empirical realities extends to parallelism between the verbal and unseen realities. Laments were believed to be a necessary part of the funerary ritual, because without them the deceased would not reach the realm of the

¹⁶ In wedding laments, the lamenter’s voice would correspondingly become that of the bride, for whom she would ritually mediate communication.

dead. Part of the ritual involved the lamenter describing the journey of the deceased, awakening the ancestors of the otherworld, requesting that they keep the dog of the otherworld from barking and receive the deceased with candles, bring him or her into their community, and so forth. Within the performance arena, the lamenter's narration of events converges with seen and unseen realities that she represents verbally (see Frog 2014a:203-05). The extension of this narration to events in the unseen world can be understood as actualizing them through ritual performance so that the deceased's successful journey to the otherworld takes place as an experiential reality for the deceased (Stepanova E. 2014:283-84). From this view, "the construal of parallelism between performance and experiential reality" (Frog 2014a:202) can be seen as fundamental to the ritual efficacy of laments.

Parallelism as a Rhetorical Means

Repeating the Referent of Lexical Integers

A crucial topic that has been insufficiently explored is the indexical signification of parallelism in and across discourses. In Karelian laments, the number and elaboration of the circumlocutions used by the lamenter is an indicator of the importance of the topic or object of a lament. In other words, "recurrent returns" to the same referent of a circumlocution in different ways within a single string indexes the significance of that referent to a lamenter. An example of this is presented in (9), from a lament documented in 1945, during WWII, where Anna Dmitrieva¹⁷ expressed concern about her sons. The circumlocution used for "son" was extended and characterized by what might be described as an extreme form of pleonasm. The distinct circumlocutions for "son" have been underlined separately in both the example and the translation (KA 66/21):

- (9) (i) karjojen nuorin kallehin kandamazeni, (ii) muailman kallehus kandamani, kussa olet (iii) kandamazeni ottamaissa dorogoissa, oi (iv) vieronoisissa dorogoissa olija (v) viihyttämäzeni, oi (vi) kurjan maman kukkimarjaottamazeni (vii) ottamien dorogoissa olija, (viii) monista yheksistä kirikkökubuzista kukkien kukittu kurjan iččeni kuvamazeni.

(i) youngest, most precious of the flock, my born one, (ii) my born treasure of the world, where are you, (iii) my born one on the roads of taken ones (= foreign lands), oh (iv) one who is being on the miserable roads, (v) my entertained one, oh (vi) blossom-berry-taken one of a miserable mother, (vii) one who is on the roads of taken ones, (viii) from many nines church domes dearly asked my pictured one of my miserable self.

In this example, Anna Dmitrieva uses eight different circumlocutions for "son" in a single sentence. Each of the circumlocutions could be used alone to index her son. Anna is so worried about him—she does not know if he is alive or not—that, as a consequence, her lament is

¹⁷ Biographical information on Anna Dmitrieva was not collected.

somewhat reminiscent of a magical chant, given its extensive repetition in the avoidance of naming her son or referring to him explicitly as her “son.”

This example highlights that forms of semantic parallelism can be viewed alongside alliteration as a poetic feature that has also had a historical impact on the development of the lament register (see Fox 2014:374-83). Semantically parallel strings represent the same unit of content verbalized according to a different pattern of alliteration, which motivates the development of an equivalence vocabulary capable of meeting different patterns of alliteration for whatever topic is addressed by the string.

Repeating the Referent of a Poetic String

Significance or semantic weight also appears to correlate with the degree of parallelism at the level of whole poetic strings. In the analyzed Karelian lament poetry, the amount of semantic parallelism increases according to the importance of the topic to the lamenter. Lamenters could reiterate the most important topics as many as seven to nine times. An abundance of parallel poetic strings is characteristic of Irinja Pahomova’s¹⁸ laments. She especially reiterates themes of her own unhappiness and of her worries about her children. In example (10) from part of one of her laments, Irinja says that her own mother did not provide her with luck (A); if her mother had killed her as a newborn child (B1, B2, B3, and so on), it would have been much better (C) (Fon. 2043/36):

- (10) A1. [. . .] Loadu kandajane on miun čuastittoloih čuassuloih loadu ilmazilla piälä suanun.
- B1. Hott oliz miun kukas kandajane kukkahilla ilmoilla piälä suahessa kuužettomien sijojen kuužiziksi kurikoinun.
- B2. Hott oliz miun kiero kandajane kivettömih sijoih kiviziksi kirvottanun.
- B3. Libo oliz miun armaz [tauko, sisäänhengitys, allitteraation vaihto]
oliz miun udala kandajane hot näih ei oliz laskenun maida ni ilmoi myö matkuamah, [oliz] udalien spoassuzien blahoslovittuloiksi umbilambuziksi ulauhuttanun.
- B4. Libo oliz miun viekas kandajane vezattomih sijoih vezaziksi verttyn.
- B5. Libo oliz miun näihe näh armaz kandajane armahilla ilmoilla piällä loadiessa aijattomih sijoih aidarižuziksi azettanun.
- B6. Libo oliz miun lämmin kandajane lämbimih liävän čuppuloihe läpähyttänyn.
- B7. Libo oliz miun valgie kandajane valgeilla ilmoilla piälä luadiessa vaskizien kandoin alla vadžahuttan.
- B8. Libo hott oliz miun kalliz naine kandajane ulgozilla uširookoiloilla uuličapihazilla kaheksi sylehizet kanuavat kaivan da ni miuda nihi kanuavoih oliz kattan.
- C. Miula oliz parembi ollun igä eliä.

¹⁸ Irinja Pahomova was born in 1907 in the village of Suajärvi of the Seesjärvi region.

- A2. Semmoizeksi miun on olova kandajane onehista keskizist'ä siämyzist'ä obdielainnun ozattomiksi.
- A3. Čuastittomih čuassuloih loadu kandajane on miun suanun. [. . .]
- A1. [. . .] My nice bearer [= mother] has created me in these unlucky hours, created into this nice world.
- B1. Would that my wonderful bearer, when getting me into this wonderful world, had turned me into a spruce of places without spruce trees.
- B2. Would that my crooked bearer had dropped me as a stone into places without stones.
- B3. Or would that my beloved [pause; the pattern of alliteration changes] would that my brave bearer had never let me travel the lands and worlds, [would have] melted me into lakes-without-outlets unblessed by brave *spuassuzet* [= mythical powers, gods].
- B4. Or would that my wise bearer had turned me into sprouts in places without sprouts.
- B5. Or would that my beloved bearer then, when making me into this beloved world, had made me into a stick in a fence in the places without fences.
- B6. Or would that my warm bearer had smacked me into the warm corners of the barn.
- B7. Or would that my white bearer, when making me into this white world, had thrown me under copper stumps.
- B8. Or would that my dear woman bearer into the outside wide yard-yards had dug the eight fathom long ditches [= grave] and covered me in these ditches.
- C. It would be much better for me to live then.
- A2. This way my great bearer made me from her unlucky insides, made me to be unlucky.
- A3. My nice bearer has made me at the unlucky hours. [. . .]

This example illustrates a strategy of parallelism typical for Irinja, especially when she is lamenting about something very important to her. If a topic in a lament is not that important personally, then the strategy of parallelism is employed, but reiterated only two to three times. She begins the topic with a particular thesis, such as thesis A: “mother gave birth to an unlucky child.” She develops this thesis, for example, proposing that death would have been better than that unlucky life. The parallel series of different possible ways to get rid of the child in strings B1-8 emphasizes that sentiment through its repeated reiteration, which both anticipates the decisive statement in string C and contrasts with the latter’s brevity.

In addition to reiterating a sentiment, semantic parallelism prolongs attention to a topic in performed time. In his discussion of the Siri epic, Lauri Honko (1998:55) observes: “There are signs of a growing parallelism and elaboration of details whenever the singer for some reason or another considers a passage or episode to be particularly important.” In other words, duration in performance is an indicator of relative significance to the performer. Increased use of semantic

parallelism in laments appears to follow this same rhetorical pattern of increasing emphasis through duration. James Wilce (2008) has suggested that extension, producing duration for an expression, was worked more generally as an indicator of honorification in the lexicon of Karelian lament. Uses of diminutive affixes, frequentative and “hyper-frequentative” verbs (formed through affixes), and multi-word circumlocutions, all of which increase the duration of the expression of each semantic unit in a clause, can then all be seen as manifestations of a general strategy of honoring the addressee through lengthening in expression.¹⁹ The present discussion suggests that this strategy of lengthening may have worked at a number of structural levels simultaneously, from adding multiple affixes to verbs, diminutive endings to nouns and adjectives, or individual complex circumlocutions as “words” of the registral lexicon, to the different forms of pleonasm within a poetic string, an extreme of which is illustrated in example (9), and also at the next structural level of parallelism of semantic strings as illustrated in (10). Semantic parallelism thus seems to carry meaning in communication in and of itself.

This example also illustrates that parallel strings need not be adjacent, and thus can be used in other ways for the rhetorical organization of expression in addition to reiteration and prolongation of a unit of information: the “recurrent returns” may be distributed and interwoven as a strategy to return to, for example, a previously relevant topic and give it greater emphasis. At the end of this example, Irinja returns to thesis A stated in the beginning. This delayed parallelism produces a structural frame that demarcates the larger sequence of poetic strings similarly to what has been called an “echo-word” or “responion” in other poetry (Frog 2014b: 20-21). This framing device simultaneously gives her topic further emphasis with a rhetorical effect that makes it more compelling (see Honko 1998:87). Semantic parallelism of poetic strings is thus a very dynamic expressive tool at the disposal of a skilled lamenter.

Parallelism and the Way of Speaking

Although focus thus far has been on general traditional strategies of parallelism in laments, there are also individual ways of using parallel structures that could correspond to a personal way of speaking. Over twenty-seven dictated laments with descriptions of the associated rituals were recorded from lamenter Fedosja Fedotova.²⁰ She explained that she did not perform her laments with melody because she was “too weak,” which means that her lament performance would easily turn into genuine, hard crying. In listening to recordings of Fedosja’s laments and description of the ritual practices, I have observed some similarities between her way of speaking and the way she presents laments. Her speech is calm, but at the same time very excited. It is very fluent and flowing rather than broken or interrupted by hesitations and false starts: the placement of stresses with her voice seems strategic and she prolongs some verbs that are important in the content expressed (underlined in the example below). She also uses parallelism. Example (11) illustrates Fedosja’s narration with an inlaid lament example (letter

¹⁹ This was elaborated in an unpublished seminar presentation and the research seminar of Folklore Studies, September 23, 2008; see also Wilce and Fenigsen (2015:202).

²⁰ Fedosja Fedotova was born in 1912 in the village of Jukkoguba of the Seesjärvi region.

codes indicate A: “the groom came to take the bride”; B: “the lamenter performs”) (Fon. 2396/17):

- (11) A1. Siid’ä tullaa ženihhät ottamaa, znaačit, tukat ker’ättii järellää,
 A2. siid’ä ženihhät tullaa ottamaa.
 B1. No, ženihälä viržitetää sielä,
 B2. jo ženihälä viržitetää t’ämämöistä virtt’ä, što
 A3. “Ottama odu allie ottamaistani ottamat tuldii jo ottamaa.”
 B3. Kui sielä ket ollaa stoloveh, sielä kaikki heimakunda sen ženihhän, ni viržitetää
 A4. “Mihi varoin ottamien paikkoih oboidija? Vai odu alli ottamaistani ottamaa tulija?”
- A1. Then comes the groom’s retinue to take, yes, [the bride’s] hair was put to the back,
 A2. then comes the groom’s retinue to take.
 B1. So, for the groom one is lamenting there,
 B2. already for the groom one is lamenting this kind of lament, that
 A3. [lament inlayed] “To take, my wonderful taken long-tailed-duck [= daughter] taken-ones [= groom’s retinue] came already to take.”
 B3. When there are people around the table, all the tribe-community of the groom there, then one is lamenting:
 A4. [lament inlayed] “Why do you come to the taken-one’s places? Or have you come to take my wonderful taken long-tailed-duck?”

In spite of the fact that the description of the ritual is in prose, the lamenter inlays some of the lexicon and poetic strings of lament into it. This appears to be a form of penetration of one register into another: Fedosja begins talking about the register of laments, and that activates the register in her mind so that the lexicon begins to penetrate into her spoken discourse even though she has not shifted into the mode of lament performance. Register shifts like this can be found in several interviews with lamenters where features of the registral lexicon manifest in their speech in anticipation of a “breakthrough into performance” (Hymes 1975). Fedosja’s description is striking because it also follows the same patterns of parallelism as in laments: the main topic of the lament (A: “the groom came to take the bride”) is reiterated at least three times, while adding some information in each of the utterances. In the example above, Fedosja repeats the main topic both in colloquial speech (A1, A2) and in the lament register (A3, A4). All Fedosja’s accounts of the ritual with embedded summaries of laments follow the same pattern presented above. When talking about laments, just as the lament lexicon becomes activated in her speech, it appears that parallelism as a strategy for organizing discourse is activated as well.²¹ This use of parallelism in

²¹ This phenomenon and similar cases can be compared to the theory put forward by Frog (2012:59-60) that mode of discourse functions as a cognitive filter to access the registral lexicon owing to the interface between them. In this case, the mode seems to be secondary in activating the lexicon and associated structuring devices. When the registral lexicon begins to appear in other interviews anticipating performance in the traditional mode, it seems possible that the interface between mode and register may be quite complex.

structuring the lamenter's communication should not be seen as accidental. Instead, it can be viewed as the transposition of strategies for structuring laments into the metadiscourse of talking about those laments.

Conclusion

Various kinds of repetition, including alliteration and semantic parallelism, are another of the prominent features of poetry in general (Jakobson 1987:99), including oral poetry. These features are also characteristic of the lament register, where the phonic parallelism of alliteration, parallelism at the level of lexical integers, and parallelism at the level of larger units can be considered essential features of the lament register. Parallelism constitutes one of the central conventional organizational parameters of the lament register (including verbal and musical elements). Without these features, the textual side of performance will not produce a traditional lament text as such. The forms of parallelism at the levels of acoustic texture (alliteration, melodic parallelism), lexical semantic parallelism (pleonasm, *figura etymologica*, and so on), and larger-scope semantic parallelism (that is, of poetic strings) are features that characterize lament discourse rather than being marked within that discourse. Nevertheless, increased use of parallelism—at least in forms of semantic parallelism—was meaningful as an indicator of significance and emphasis. This made semantic parallelism a rhetorical resource for the lamenter, who could use such parallelism in an unbroken sequential series or interweave parallel members of parallel groups, both increasing emphasis and using parallelism as a framing tool for demarcating a still more complex unit of discourse. It is also possible to use parallelism to address the relationship between verbal art and experienced reality, a form of parallelism that would be connected to understandings of its ritual efficacy. In any case, the lament register is a highly conventional system. As I have stated elsewhere (Stepanova E. 2015:269), “each lamenter internalizes that register on the basis of her own experience, and uses it on the basis of her own competence.” The laments introduced above simultaneously reflect both the common social tradition and distinctive ways of using that social tradition and its resources by individual lamenters. Every lament shares generic features with other laments of a same region, and yet the lament register appears through the countless variety of idiolects in which it was used, while each individual lament remains a unique product of this distinct form of verbal art.

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