

## Family terms in Estonian runosongs and fairy tales

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Runosong is a poetic musical tradition shared by several Finnic peoples. Runosong is distinguished by its poetic form: trochaic tetrameter, alliteration and parallelism – all with their specific characteristic features; the musical form varies more, but in general is based on linear musical thinking (see Lippus 1995). Although runosong texts are recorded mainly at the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century, typically to folklore they have accumulated the elements from previous time periods. Due to the constrictions set by poetic structure, runosongs are known by their conservative nature having systematically preserved historical root words, word forms and meanings that have been lost in spoken language. The narrative texts in general are believed to use more "up-to-date" language, therefore, folktales have been chosen for comparison.

We proceed from our previous research on the geographical variation of family terms in Estonian runosongs (Harend 2024) that revealed clear regional differences between Southern and Northern Estonia. We have detected two main family sets in runosongs for Northern and Southern Estonian (*eit, taat, õde, vend* vs. *ema, isa, sõsar, veli*). In addition, a number of more local variants of main family terms could be found. Beyond broader distribution areas, certain terms have specific regional distributions. For example, the mother term *emm* (genitive *emme*) is specific to Saaremaa, but *maama* is typical of Setomaa.

In our presentation, we will compare the core family terms found in runosongs with the family terminology of fairy tales using the materials from the database of Estonian runosongs and the database of Estonian folk tales, both managed at the Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum. These large material corpora have only rarely been used to study historical variation and development of language. We will comparatively explore how the use of family terms differs across the two genres, by use of terms, their geographical spread, and their meaning. For exploring semantic relationships of words, to identify its meaning components and contextual nuances we use network projections of word embeddings that reveal the semantic field of the terms (see e.g. Geeraerts et al. 2023, Baunvig & Nielbo 2022). By comparing the use of family terms in

runosong corpus with their uses in narrative text corpora we can detect if the terms are in similar use in traditional poetic and non-poetic language registers and what are their pathways to contemporary Estonian.

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