

‘Turning Simple Speech into Beautiful Song’: Imitative Poetics and the Combination of Registers in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* (1690)

Eeva-Liisa Bastman and Kati Kallio

Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta (‘Joyous song of Jesus’) is an epic poem of 2265 lines about the life of Christ written by the Lutheran minister Matthias Salamnius (1640–91) and published in the town of Turku (in Finnish, Åbo in Swedish) in 1690.¹ It is the first long literary poem composed in the traditional non-rhymed metre of Finnish oral poetry, known as Kalevala-metre or *runo*-song metre, and intended for wide popular use. The composition demonstrates a deep knowledge of both Lutheran theology and oral poetics.

Apart from the Lutheran hymnals, *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* is the most important poetical work written in Finnish during the early-modern period. Altogether nineteen editions of the poem are known; nine were published during the eighteenth century in Turku and in Stockholm, and seven during the nineteenth century in Turku and in Helsinki. The latest editions are from the 1960s.² *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* was also used as a song, and it affected oral traditions.

Here, we analyse the poem in relation to seventeenth-century understandings of oral and literary genres, and as a part of a complex intertextual network, referring to discussions especially in literary and folklore studies. The focus is on seventeenth-century textual relationships via the concepts of genre, register and intertextuality. As a theoretical concept, we understand genre as a means of communication and interpretation, with both social and aesthetic dimensions. As socially maintained open categories, genres are subject to redefinition and alteration. Moreover, works of oral or literary tradition can make use of a variety of different generic features, and may serve various generic purposes.³ We also use the concept of register, meaning socially situated styles

1 Matthias Salamnius, *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* (Turku: Johan Winter, 1690), USTC 1781504. The writing of this article has been possible due to funding by the Research Council of Finland (projects n:o 288119, 308381, 333138 and 346342).

2 Fredrik Wilhelm Pipping, *Luettelo Suomeksi präntätyistä kirjoista* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1856), 78–9; *The National Collection* (Helsinki: Kansalliskirjasto, <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/collections/national-collection> (2.7.2022)).

3 See Charles L. Briggs and Richard Bauman, ‘Genre, Intertextuality and Social Power’, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 2 (1992), pp. 131–72; Ralph Cohen, ‘History and Genre’, *New Literary*

of communication, based on shared conventions within a speech community.⁴ We approach the features of the poem not merely as elements representing different poetic and literary traditions, but as poetic and communicative resources. Besides genre and register, our research questions are related to the field of intertextuality, a concept referring to the relationship of a text to other texts or discourses.⁵ Interface Octavo is used for comparison of *Ilo-Laulu* with the *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (hereafter: *SKVR*) corpus of Finnic oral poems (89,247 texts) and the concordance research tool *Korp* for the comparison with the *Corpus of Old Literary Finnish*.⁶

Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta has been admired for its skilful use of metre, for its vibrant recapitulation of biblical events and for bringing together two different traditions, the transnational tradition of Christian literature and the local tradition of Finnish oral poetry.⁷ Scholarly interest has mainly focused on the poem’s relationship to other poems on the life of Christ from the same period, and the interrelatedness of *Ilo-Laulu* and the medieval oral song cycle known as *Luojan virsi* (‘The song of the Creator’).⁸

History 17/2 (1986), pp. 203–18; Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature. An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); William Hanks, ‘Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice’, *American Ethnologist* 14 (1987), pp. 668–92; Lotte Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People: Genre, Reflexivity, and Performance in Karelian Oral Poetry* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2013).

- 4 Asif Agha, ‘Registers of language’, in Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 23–45; Asif Agha and Frog (eds.), *Registers of Communication* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.21435/sfin.18>.
- 5 Briggs and Bauman, ‘Genre’; Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 5–27; Marko Juvan, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008); Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People*.
- 6 *SKVR: Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*, various editors (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908–97). Published also as a digital database in <http://www.skvr.fi>; URN:[NBN:-fe20051411, used via *Octavo*; *KORP* (see Borin, Lars, Markus Forsberg, and Johan Roxendal, ‘*KORP: the corpus infrastructure of Språkbanken*’, in *Proceedings of LREC (Istanbul: ELRA, 2012)*, pp. 474–478), adapted to the Language Bank of Finland, used on the Corpus of Old Literary Finnish, <https://korp.csc.fi>; on the methodology, see Kati Kallio and Eetu Mäkelä, ‘Suullisen runon sähköisestä lukemisesta’, *Elore* 26/2 (2019), pp. 25–40, <https://doi.org/10.30666/elore.84570>.
- 7 Viljo Tarkiainen, ‘Suomalainen messiadi’, in Viljo Tarkiainen, *Piirteitä suomalaisesta kirjallisuudesta* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1922), pp. 66, 75; Annamari Sarajas, *Suomen kansanrunouden tuntemus 1500–1700-lukujen kirjallisuudessa* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1956), p. 88.
- 8 Tarkiainen, ‘Suomalainen messiadi’, pp. 63–9; Yrjö J. E. Alanen, ‘Kaksi suomalaista messiadia’ in Yrjö J. E. Alanen, *Kansamme tien viitoittajia* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1944), pp. 74–81; Matti Kuusi, ‘Salamnius, Matthias’ (22 April 1998), *Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1997). <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sks-kbg-002340>; Kati Kallio etc., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset. Suullinen ja kirjallinen kulttuuri uuden ajan alun Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.21435/skst.1427> (27 September 2017), pp. 356–61; Senni Timonen, “‘She was fulfilled, she was filled by it ...’: a Karelian

This chapter examines the complex poetics and intertextual references of *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*. The poem offers examples of the ways in which the imitative poetics of seventeenth-century written poetry was domesticated and adapted for the vernacular. Moreover, it illuminates the interplay between oral traditions and literary cultures in the early-modern period. We examine the relationship of *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* to other works in written literature and oral culture which the poem draws upon or alludes to, or which are in other ways present in the poem. Our aim is to analyse the ways in which the poem relates to models of speech, generic traditions and preceding works, and to examine how these merge and generate meaning.

1 Writing, Reading, Singing and Publishing in Finnish in Early-Modern Sweden

In northern Europe, the seventeenth century marked the breakthrough of learned vernacular poetics and vernacular literature. Martin Opitz published his major work on poetics in German in 1624, Hans Mikkelsen Ravn in Danish in 1649, and Andreas Arvidi in Swedish 1651. In Finland, Aschillus Petraeus wrote some paragraphs on poetics in his textbook on Finnish language *Linguae Finnicae Brevis Institutio* in 1649.⁹ The Lutheran Reformation, in 1527 in Sweden, had made Finnish an ecclesiastical language and led to the creation of literary Finnish for vernacular services, Lutheran education and devotional life by Michael Agricola and his colleagues – the undocumented roots of oral ecclesiastical Finnish are in the Middle Ages. Agricola translated and published a Primer (1543), Prayer Book (1544), the New Testament (1548), the Mass (1549), Handbook (1549), Passion (1549) and Psalter (1551), while a committee published the whole Bible in Finnish in 1642.¹⁰

Popular Song of St Mary and the Conception of Christ', in Lars Boje Mortensen, Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Alexandra Bergholm (eds.), *The Performance of Christian and Pagan Storyworlds. Non-Canonical Chapters of the History of Nordic Medieval Literature* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 389–432.

9 Kallio *etc.*, *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, pp. 388–92.

10 Michael Agricola, *Abc-kiria* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1543), USTC 300213, Michael Agricola, *Rucouskiria* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1544), USTC 300208, Michael Agricola, *Se wsi Testamenti* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1548), USTC 300229, Michael Agricola, *Messu* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1549), USTC 300220, Michael Agricola, *Käsikiria* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1549), USTC 300221, Michael Agricola, *Se meiden Herran Jesusen Christusen pina* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1549), USTC 300219, Michael Agricola, *Davidin Psaltari* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1551), USTC 300114; see Kaisa Häkkinen, *Spreading the Written Word. Mikael Agricola and the Birth of Literary Finnish* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2015).

The first Finnish hymnal was published by Jacobus Finno in 1583, mostly translated and adapted from Latin, Swedish and German sources. These hymns were stanzaic and rhymed, according to Lutheran German and Swedish models and the melodies of the originals. As was typical of the time, Finno applied loose poetics with ambiguous verses and weak rhymes. At the same time, he seems to have been avoiding references to oral Kalevala-metre. By contrast, the next edition of the hymnal while retaining the older hymns by Finno, added new ones making use not only of rhyme and stanzaic structures, but also of alliteration and some formulas typical of oral tradition. This may be seen as a way of vernacularising the Lutheran tradition and making it more appealing to local audiences.¹¹ A similar process took place in Iceland, where the first hymnal was created strictly according to the German model, while the second added local vernacular features to these models.¹² Yet, the unrhymed Kalevala-metre was never used in hymns as such; merely some features were adopted for stanzaic contexts: Lutheran hymns were understood as a rhyming and stanzaic genre.

The goal of the Lutheran Reformation was to teach people the basics of the Christian faith in the vernacular, and to make biblical texts more accessible through translations, book production and the increase of literacy. Hymns were one step in this slow process. The church law of 1686 made lay reading an explicit goal.¹³ From 1670 to 1700, both the knowledge of basic Christian teachings and literacy improved considerably, even in the more remote parishes, such as Kuopio.¹⁴ The number of catechisms and hymnals in lay ownership increased steadily.¹⁵

-
- 11 Kallio *etc.*, *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, pp. 104–24, 327–43; Kati Kallio, 'Changes in the Poetics of Song during the Finnish Reformation', Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (eds.), *Re-forming Texts, Music, and Church Art In the Early Modern North* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), pp. 125–55, <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/167839> (2016); Lehtonen, Tuomas M. S., 'Pious hymns and Devil's music: Michael Agricola (c.1507–57) and Jacobus Finno (c.1540–88) on church song and folk beliefs', in Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (eds.), *Re-forming Texts, Music, and Church Art in the Early Modern North* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), pp. 179–216.
- 12 Margrét Eggertsdóttir, 'From Reformation to Enlightenment', in Daisy L. Neijmann (ed.), *A History of Icelandic Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), pp. 179–80.
- 13 Mikko Juva, *Varsinais-Suomen seurakuntaelämä puhtasoppisuuden hallitsemäna vuosisatoina (1600–1808)* (Turku: Helsingin yliopisto, 1955), pp. 114–23.
- 14 Miia Kuronen (= Miia Kuha), *Onnea tavoitellen, vaaraa välttäen: kansanomainen uskonnonharjoitus sekä noituus- ja taikuuskäsitykset puhtasoppisuuden ajan Kuopion pitäjässä, master's thesis, University of Jyväskylä* (2009) <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:juu-201002051189>, p. 35; Miia Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto varhaismodernin ajan Savossa (vuoteen 1710)* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2016), p. 108; see also Chapter 10 by Miia Kuha.
- 15 Esko M. Laine and Tuija Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', In Jussi Hanska and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (eds.), *Huoneentaulun maailma. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta 1860-luvulle*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki, 2010), pp. 258–306.

The emergence of Sweden as a new northern superpower during the seventeenth century generated processes that affected also the literary uses of Finnish. Systematic attempts were made to establish universities, educate public servants and diplomats, write a history for the nation and raise the standard of Swedish language and culture to a level appropriate for an empire.¹⁶ In Finland, the university of Turku was established in 1640, based on the previous cathedral school, leading also to an increase in learned literary activity not only in classical languages and Swedish, but also in Finnish.¹⁷ Various kinds of occasional poems were composed for prefaces, congratulations and condolences, using, in various ways and combinations, classical and rhymed metres, with some vernacular features.¹⁸

The interest in ancient history and rune-stones led to literary poems in Swedish imitating the Old Norse metres.¹⁹ Toini Melander and Annamari Sarajas see this as parallel to the emergence of the first explicit use of Kalevala-metre in literary poems.²⁰ The congratulatory poem for King Karl x Gustav in rhymed, exceptionally regular alliterative trochaic metre, entitled *Imitatio Antiquorum Tavvast-Finnonicum* by Ericus Justander in 1654 created a new literary, rhyming version of the oral metre, and yielded a professorship of poetry to the author. In contrast, from the 1660s on, a network of clergymen from northern Finland started using unrhymed Kalevala-metre in their poems.²¹ This might be seen as a local Finnish response to the national Swedish entwining of antiquities, identity and literary creation.

2 Pagan Past, Oral Metre and 'Song'

The first edition of *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* starts with a dedication and a short preface, in which Salamnius clarifies the aims and objectives of the poem, and

16 Petri Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta. Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521–1809* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2014).

17 Laine and Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus'.

18 Toini Melander, *Suomalaista tilapäärinoutta Ruotsin vallan ajalta, 1–11* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1928–41).

19 Anthony Faulkes, 'Foreword', in Anthony Faulkes, Peder Hansen Resen, and Snorri Sturluson, *Two Versions of Snorra Edda from the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 13 (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977); Johanna Widenberg, *Fäderneslandets antikviteter: etnoterritoriella historiebruk och integrationssträvanden i den svenska statsmaktens antikvariska verksamhet ca 1600–1720* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2006).

20 Melander, *Suomalaista tilapäärinoutta*, II, pp. 15, 54; Sarajas, *Suomen kansanrunouden tuntemus*, p. 54.

21 Sarajas, *Suomen kansanrunouden tuntemus*, pp. 57–8.

addresses his gratitude to his patron, Bishop Johannes Gezelius the Younger. In later editions, the preface was no longer included. Instead, the poem was often published together with a hymn from the Finnish translation of *Piae cantiones* by Hemmingius Henrici of Masku as a coda.²² The original preface offers some important points of departure for studying the generic context of the poem. The preface, with references to the Bible and classical authors, is clearly aimed at scholarly readers. In contrast, the long title of the poem on the first title page, written in flawless alliterative oral metre, addresses a wider audience:

The Joyous Song of Jesus / the Solace of the Redeemer / a Good Message
of Nativity / a Miraculous one of Life / a quite Beautiful one of the Death /
a Happy one of the Resurrection / a best one of Departure / said in the
Finnish Language / for the Favour of Finns.²³

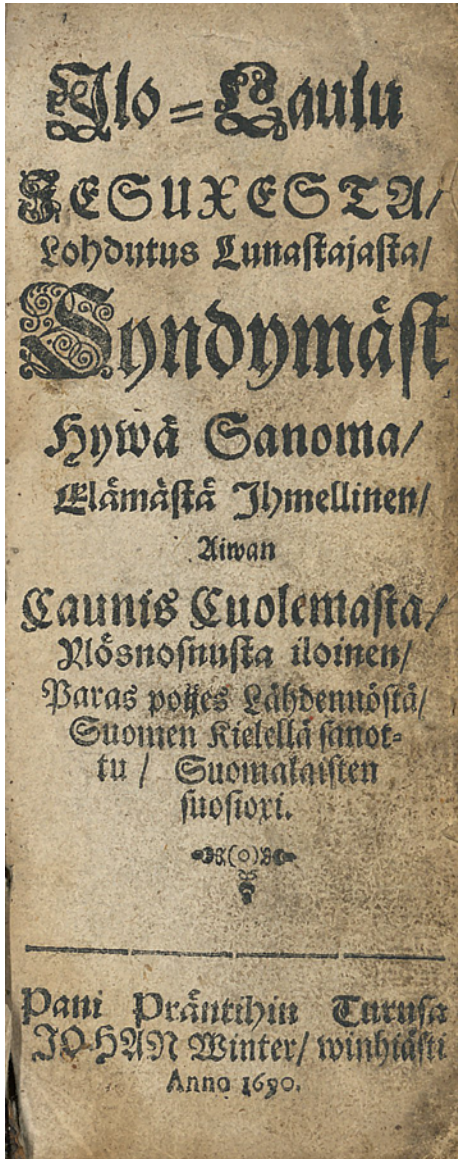
The alliterative pair ‘*favour*’ – ‘*Finn*’ (‘suomalaisten suosioksi’) also occurred earlier in the short versified part of the preface of the second Finnish hymnal (‘*hyvän suova suomalainen*’) in 1605 by Hemmingius – which is the first known printed example of hybrid versification with rhyme, alliteration and a trochaic metre resembling in many ways the oral metre – and in the preface to the Finnish translation of the Latin song book *Piae Cantiones* by Hemmingius.²⁴

In the subsequent part, *Ilo-Laulu* is dedicated to ‘those highly and well-learned gentlemen’ and ‘highly praised vicars’ Johannes Cajanus in Paltamo, Jacobus Frosterus in Oulu, Magnus Preutz in Pietarsaari and Jacobus Tuderus in Kemi, parsons or clergymen in Ostrobothnia (Österbotten in Swedish). Thus, Salamnius is addressing clergymen related to the northern network that had

22 Hemmingius Henrici Maskulainen, *Vanhain Suomen maan Pijspain ja Kircon Esimiesten Latinan kielised laulud, Christuxesta, ja inhimisen elämän surkeudhesta: muutamissa M. Jacobilda Finnolda ... ojetud: aina Suomen Schouluissa veisatud* (Stockholm: Ignatius Meurer, 1616), USTC 251626, <http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/59053>, pp. 72–3; of later editions of *Ilo-Laulu*, see e.g. Matthias Salamnius, *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* (Stockholm: [Johan Arvid Carlbohm], 1787); see also Chapter 2 by Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen.

23 ‘ILO-LAULU JESUXESTA / Lohdutus Lunastajasta / Syndymäst / Hywä Sanoma / Elämästä Ihmellinen / Aiwan Caunis Cuolemasta / Ylösnoosuusta iloinen / Paras poiijes Lähdenöstä / Suomen kieleellä sanottu / Suomalaisten suosioxi.’

24 *Yxi vähä suomenkielinen wirsikiria, suomencocouxis Jumalata kijttä suomenkielellä, tehty m. Jacobilda Suomalaiselta, ja muild Suomen papeilda ...* (Rostock: Stephan Möllemann, 1607), preface, USTC 2092729, <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2015120321826>, digital text edn [mostly based on 1630 print, partly 1605(?)], ‘*Hemminki Maskulaisen wirsikirja*’ (5 December 2006), in *Vanhan kirjasuomen korpus* (Helsinki: Kotus), https://kaino.kotus.fi/korpus/vks/meta/virret/hemm1605_rdf.xml, also in *Korp.*



FIGURES 11.1 AND 11.2 Title page and dedication page of the Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta by Matthias Salamnius in 1690

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND

started to use purely oral-like Kalevala-metre in written poems some decades earlier. Furthermore, Salamnius dedicates the poem directly to the congregations in Ostrobothnia, that is to say to one of the northern areas in Finland where oral epic poetry in Kalevala-metre was used up to the nineteenth century. Salamnius also refers to Ostrobothnia as the native place that he is wishing to return to.

Not much is known of the life story of Salamnius. He is mentioned as a clergyman (*‘medhjälpare’, ‘konminister’,* meaning vice-pastor) in the governorate of Ingria in the 1680s. Ingria is a Finnic area to the south-east of the Gulf of Finland where the Kalevala-metre singing culture continued up to the twentieth century, especially among Eastern Orthodox inhabitants, and contained many Christian themes. Salamnius was probably familiar with oral poetry both from his native Ostrobothnia and from Ingria: this is also plausible given his use of poetic formulas that appear frequently in the later oral traditions of these areas. In 1690, Salamnius travelled with his family to Turku, apparently following the promotion of Johannes Gezelius the Younger from superintendent of Ingria (1681–9) to bishop of Turku (1690–1718). Salamnius died in 1691, while waiting for a position in Finland, shortly after translating a long biography of the previous bishop of Turku, Johannes Gezelius the Elder (1664–90), into Kalevala-metre, and publishing *Ilo-Laulu* in 1690.²⁵

The actual preface to *Ilo-Laulu* begins with biblical praise from the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon* (Wisdom 15:3). Salamnius uses the official translation in the Finnish Bible (1642), very similar to the King James Version, or Authorized Version (1611, hereafter: AV): ‘For to know thee [God] is perfect righteousness: yea to know thy power is the roote of immortality.’²⁶ Directly following is a long and detailed passage on pagan antiquity, on all the philosophical wisdom that, as yet, was incomplete without the grace of the true God and the knowledge of Jesus – ‘our small children, with their creed, are much wiser than Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or some other pagan wise man’. Salamnius emphasises that ‘we, living in Finland’, have had this bliss of knowing Jesus, and are, hence, debtors who must praise his grace. He also gives this debt and the urge to praise as reasons for his writing of the poem. These rhetorical figures

25 Kuusi, ‘Salamnius’. See Chapter 6 by Tuija Laine for Swedish missionary work in Ingria.

26 ‘Tuta sinua (Jumala) on täydellinen Wanhurskaus / ja tietä sinun Woimas / on iancaickisen elämän juuri’, *Biblia, Se On: Coco Pyhä Ramattu, Suomexi. Pääramattui[de]n, Hebrean ia Grekan jälcken: Esipuhetten, Marginaliain, Concordantiain, Selitösten ia Register[e]in cansa* (Stockholm: Henric Keyser, 1642), USTC 2178828, digital edn in *Biblia. Vanhan kirjasuomen korpus* (Helsinki: Kotus, http://kaino.kotus.fi/korpus/vks/meta/biblia/biblia_coll_rdf.xml (20.5.2019)), also in *Korp.*

may also hint at the conventional need to emphasise the Finns' Christianity and situate paganism in the distant past.²⁷ Salamnius continues with a rare account of vernacular poetics:

One should not wonder that this poem has been written in the *runo-metre* very familiar among the Finns. For as other languages have their specific poetic forms through which simple speech is turned into beautiful song, so is our Finnish language not without one either. And even though we know that this kind of *runo-songs* have in the past been used to compose and sing many illicit things, it should not prevent us from adopting this form, any more than we should abandon common speech altogether, just because it is often misused.²⁸

All languages have their poetic forms, and for Salamnius, the Finnish poetic metre means the traditional alliterative four-beat metre of oral poetry. The metre had in the past been used for illicit things. This can be understood as a reference to inappropriate and even pagan aspects of some songs or charms, associated with the whole poetic register. In Finland, the Reformers aimed their criticism as much or even more at medieval Christian vernacular syncretistic practices and contemporary ungodly habits as at the paganism that was, mostly, rhetorically situated in the distant past.²⁹ Similarly, Salamnius situates his work in relation to distant pagan pasts (antique wisdom and past uses of traditional Finnish metre) and long Christian history (universal and Finnish).

Kalevala-metre was the prevailing form of the Finnic oral tradition, and it was used for all kinds of genres from epics, lyrical songs, lullabies and mocking songs to spells and charms.³⁰ Thus, it contained various elements potentially obscene, outrageous and disgraceful, but also neutral and potentially positive

27 Lehtonen, 'Pious hymns'; Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Kati Kallio: 'Petrus Melartopaeuksen kirjeet ja virsisuomennokset: seremoniat, kansanusko ja runokieli 1500- ja 1600-luvun Suomessa', *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja*, 106 (2016), pp. 177–8.

28 'Waan että tämä on tehty nijllä suomalaisten tykönä hywin tutuilla Runoi wärsyiällä / ei ole Ihmex otettawa. Sillä nijncuin muilla kielillä on heidän erinomainen wärsyiensä muoto / jossa yxinkertainen Puhe suloisexi lauluxi kätätään/ nijn ei ole meidän Suomen-kieli täsä asiassa wähin osasta/ Ja waicka me sen kyllä tiedämme/ että tämän caltaisten Runolauluin cautta on ennen monda luwatoinda Asia coconpadu ja lulettu/ Nijn taita se sitä wähemmän tätä edesottamista estä cuin että meidän pitäis sen yhteisen Puheen sentähden poisheittämähän/ Että se usein wäärin käytetän.'

29 Lehtonen, 'Pious hymns'.

30 Matti Kuusi, 'Questions of Kalevala metre: what exactly did Kalevala language signify to its users?' in Anna-Leena Siikala, Sinikka Vakimo (eds.), *Songs beyond the Kalevala. Transformations of Oral Poetry* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1994), pp. 41–55;

ones. The proverbs were explicitly appreciated by the ecclesiastical elite, charms and mocking songs understood as impious or idolatry, and processed in the seventeenth-century secular courts.³¹ Bishop Johannes Gezelius the Elder wanted to dispose of all superstitious songs, such as incantations used in hunting, and mocking songs. His predecessor as bishop of Turku, Isaacus Rothovius (1572–1652), seems to have forbidden not only charms and impious songs, but the traditional secular songs, ‘Dicht och Påfund’, altogether.³² In the preface to the first Finnish hymnal, Jacobus Finno expressed his hope of replacing impious songs with new Lutheran hymns.³³

Salamnius obviously deems that it is necessary to explain his choice of metre, which implies that the use of the traditional oral form of poetry – by a clergyman, in a Christian context – was not entirely uncontroversial. Comments on metre are, however, common in authorial prefaces of the period in other languages and in cases where the metre is not disputable.³⁴

Salamnius goes on to praise Bishop Gezelius the Younger, who had suggested he write the poem, supervising and financing the work. Thus, the use of Kalevala-metre and the creation of the poem was commissioned and approved by a man known both for his harshness in converting the Eastern Orthodox Ingrians to Lutheranism and his desire to educate the common folk and create ecclesiastical vernacular literature.³⁵ If we take Salamnius’ words seriously, it means the metre did not pose problems for the new bishop, but was, on the contrary, a potentially efficient way of spreading the knowledge of the true faith and literacy among the common folk.

In this passage, Salamnius also tells of the functions of the poetic metre and genre. Metre is used to ‘turn simple speech into beautiful song’. Here, the generic term ‘song’ (*laulu*) of the title *Ilo-Laulu* (‘A joyous song’) occurs again. *Laulu* is a general Finnish word for all kinds of songs, biblical and impious ones, but applying the term sets the poem apart from Lutheran hymnals, called *‘virsikirja*’, ‘hymn-book’ (adopting the term *‘virsī*’, originally ‘poem’, traditionally used for narrative songs in Kalevala-metre). Vernacular poetry – Lutheran hymns

Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People*; Senni Timonen, *Minä, tila, tunne. Näkökulmia kalevalamittaiseen kansanlyriikkaan* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2004).

31 Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 362–87.

32 Sarajas, *Suomen kansanrunouden tuntemus*, 41–2, 69–70.

33 Lehtonen, ‘Pious hymns’.

34 See, for instance, Haqvin Spegel on hexameter in *Guds Werk och Hwila*, a Swedish epic on the creation from 1685, Bernt Olsson, *Spegels Guds werk och hwila. Tillkomsthistoria, världs bild, gestaltning* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1963), pp. 280–2.

35 Pentti Laasonen, *Vanhan ja uuden rajamaastossa: Johannes Gezelius nuorempi kulttuurivaikuttajana* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2009).

and folksongs alike – was most commonly sung. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers use ‘song’ as a very concrete term, in relation to singing, not in the metaphorical sense meaning ‘a poem’ or ‘poetic text’.³⁶

In the first lengthy treatise on Finnish poetry in 1766–78, Professor Henrik Gabriel Porthan uses Salamnius most frequently for examples of traditional Finnish poetics. When describing the peasant ways of singing, he cites the first verses of Salamnius as an example, showing how the lead singer and the accompanying singer take turns.³⁷ For Porthan, it seems to have been self-evident that this literary work – or any poem using the traditional oral metre – was used as song. Two *runo*-song melodies used with the poem have been recorded in the 1870s, one in Ingria and one in Keuruu, Central Finland, both representing typical Finnish and Karelian five-beat *runo*-song melodies of narrative and epic oral poems. Parts of *Ilo-Laulu* and other literary works were performed as songs for nineteenth-century folklore collectors.³⁸ The singers also adapted themes and verses of *Ilo-Laulu* for their traditional oral poems in more subtle ways.³⁹

Thus, for Salamnius, it seems, the use of the oral metre and style was possible, since: 1. this was his native style; 2. it was referred to already in the preface to the second hymnal (1605) and used as such by Ostrobothnian clergymen for some decades; 3. it was not reasonable to condemn a poetic language on the basis of past (or even present) misuses; 4. it was an efficient way to spread a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith; and 5. the use of the vernacular metre was approved by Bishop Gezelius himself.

3 Crossing Generic Traditions: Christian Epic

When Salamnius in the preface talks about ‘turning simple speech into beautiful song’ he is referring to his poem as a poetic, and singable, paraphrase of the Gospels. Versified paraphrases of biblical texts were composed from late antiquity onwards, first in Latin, later also in the vernacular, as part of the venture to

36 *Korp*, ‘laulu’, ‘laul*’; *Vanhan kirjasuomen sanakirja* (Helsinki: Kotus, 2021), <http://kaino.kotus.fi/vks>, ‘laulu’.

37 Henrik Gabriel Porthan, *De poësi Fennica* (Turku: J. C. Frenckell, 1766–78), tr. Iiro Kajanto, as *Suomalaisesta runoudesta* (Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1983), p. 80.

38 See *SKVR* VII 239; Thomas A. DuBois, ‘The Kalevala Received: From Printed Text to Oral Performance’, *Oral Tradition*, 11/2 (1996), pp. 270–300; Heikki Laitinen, ‘Runolaulu Turun Akatemiassa’, In Anneli Asplund etc. (eds.), *Suomen musiikin historia, 8: Kansanmusiikki* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2006), p. 54.

39 For example *SKVR* V2 441; VIII 314; VII2 1774, XIII 150.

Christianise classical literary genres, most notably the epic. Originally, the idea was to polish the stylistically unpretentious prose of the Gospels by casting it into hexameter verse associated above all with Vergil and his *Aeneid*.⁴⁰ Stylistic revision is what Salamnius aims at as well: in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, he is trying to make the life of Christ more compelling and more accessible to the public by bringing it into a poetic form which the audience knew and would appreciate.

Thus, the biblical epic is an important generic context for *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*. An epic can be defined as a narrative poem of heroic action, telling deeds of exceptional courage, which have a major impact on both the present and the future of the community that the hero represents. The task that the hero undertakes is dangerous, even perilous, and involves struggles and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Besides narrative form and heroic action, a third important criterion for epic is the blending of divine and human forms of agency.⁴¹

For centuries, Vergil's *Aeneid* was the most important model of epic. However, later writers of epic had to find a way to imitate the classics in a way that suited the culture of a Christian society. One solution was to compose epic poetry with biblical subtexts and Christian subject matter. Many conventions of epic, such as metre, style and the length and scope of the narrative, could be preserved; other things had to change, such as the nature of heroism and the nature of the divine. Christ and eventually other biblical characters were introduced as epic heroes, and the Olympian deities were either reduced to allegorical characters or replaced entirely by a Christian God.⁴²

One central feature developed by the biblical epics of late antiquity and shared by many Christian epics since, including *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, is typological symbolism. Typology refers to an interpretation of biblical texts where events in the Old Testament are understood as foreshadowing Christ. This 'new epic device', as Barbara K. Lewalski describes it, is a way to give the biblical narrative epic proportions: by means of typology, every single event is connected to the great soteriological theme, thus involving all mankind and all history in the narrative.⁴³ *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* explains the sacrificial theme and the concept of Christ as the Lamb of God through a chapter on the Exodus and

40 Michael Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985), pp. 73–4, 107.

41 Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven. A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 14–25; Gregory Tobias, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 22.

42 Tobias, *From Many Gods*, pp. 11–13.

43 Barbara K. Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic. The Genre, Meaning, and Art of 'Paradise Regained'* (London: Methuen, 1966), p. 45.

Passover. This chapter is based on the typological paralleling of the sacrificing of the Passover lamb to save the firstborn of the Israelites from the Lord's judgement, and the sacrificing of the son of God to save all mankind.

Biblical versified epic became one of the most popular European literary genres of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁴ Latin biblical epics from Late Antiquity, such as *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* by Juvencus and *Carmen Paschale* by Sedulius, were widely read and appreciated both for their spiritual content and artistic merits, and stayed on the curricula in schools all over Europe for most of the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ Marco Girolamo Vida's epic on the life of Christ, *Christiad* (1535), was hailed as a serious contender to the *Aeneid*.⁴⁶

Vernacular biblical epics started appearing during the Middle Ages. In many medieval Christian epics, the events of the biblical world were adapted to the cultural sphere in which the epic was composed. For instance Germanic poems, such as *Heliand* (c.830), utilise both the metre – a four-beat alliterative metre – and the formulas and epithets characteristic of Germanic secular epic.⁴⁷

It is probable that the Finnic oral Christian song cycle *Luojan virsi* relates to these medieval contexts. The content of the songs varies according to singer and local tradition: various parts of the cycle have been recorded from Karelia, Ingria and northern and eastern Finland. The oral poems make use of vernacular motifs while rephrasing biblical and apocryphal themes. In one common version, a maiden becomes pregnant by eating a lingonberry in the forest. She searches for the *sauna* as a place to deliver the child, but her mother refuses, claiming a whore has to deliver in a stable. After birth, the maiden goes searching for her stolen baby, asking for help from the road, the moon and the sun. Only the sun is willing to help: it flies to the grave of the Lord and shines, making the guardians fall asleep, or the rocks or the nails in the coffin melt. In disguise and by bluff, the Lord fetters Satan, usually referred to as the mythological character Hiisi. Many of these vernacular themes have parallels in other European folk traditions.⁴⁸

The earliest account of the oral *Luojan virsi* is a short quotation, but it matches later recordings and confirms the early modern existence of the tradition. In his

44 Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, pp. 79–99; Carl P. E. Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity. The Paschale Carmen of Sedulius* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 135–46.

45 Roger P. H. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 356–72.

46 Greene, *The Descent from Heaven*, pp. 170–5; Tobias, *From Many Gods*, pp. 65–8.

47 Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 48–9.

48 A. A. Borenius, 'Suomen keskiaikaisesta runoudesta', *Virittäjä*, 11 (1886), pp. 58–82; Julius Krohn, *Kantelettaren tutkimuksia*, 11 (Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1901).

dissertation in 1697, Ericus Cajanus cites two opening verses of the oral cycle and mentions that this song of an unknown author 'elegantly treats the whole history of the Passion of Christ'.⁴⁹ After some eighteenth-century fragments, most of the long versions of the cycle are recorded from Russian Orthodox singers of Russian Karelia and Ingria, and shorter and partly prose versions also from eastern and northern Finland. The edited collection of Finnic oral poems, *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (SKVR), contains almost 350 variants of the interconnected songs of the cycle, often combined with more secular or syncretistic themes.⁵⁰

While both oral and literary biblical epic are undoubtedly a relevant generic context for *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, it is noteworthy that the poem lacks direct references to the classical epic tradition. In addition, Salamnius himself does not refer to *Ilo-Laulu* as an epic. In fact, he does not comment on the epic nature of his poem in any way, which is peculiar, considering the status of epic as the most prestigious of literary genres. On the contrary, some of his notions in the preface point to other genres than the epic. He refers to the habit of preaching on and reading about the Passion during the weeks before Easter, and in doing so relates *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* to the field of devotional literature, particularly Passion literature.

The poem can, indeed, be read as a versified Passion. Not only does it take Christ's Passion as its central subject, but the Passion story is also followed by a concluding chapter which explains the spiritual teachings of the Passion in a highly didactical manner. Versified Passions were published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in many Lutheran countries, for instance in German by Joachim Greff in 1538, in Swedish by Olaus Petri in 1557 and in Danish by J. M. Gettorp in 1623.⁵¹ Like *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, Olaus Petri's versified Passion is composed in a stichic metre and accompanied by a didactic poem about the proper understanding of the Passion and Resurrection. These vernacular, versified Passions have a primarily didactic function. They are a part of the Lutheran endeavour to place the biblical text at the centre of Passion

49 David Johannis Lund and Ericus Erici Cajanus, *Lingvarum ebraeae et finnicae conventia* (Turku: Johan Larsson Wall, 1697), USTC 268952, <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fd2014-00004507>, p. 13.

50 Senni Timonen, 'Karelian Popular Song', pp. 389–432.

51 Joachim Greff, *Das leiden und Aufferstehung unsers Herrn Jhesu Christi aus den vier Evangelisten* (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1538), USTC 627614; Olaus Petri, *Svenska mässan* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1557), USTC 300034; Jens Madsen Gettorp, *Vor Herris Jesu Christi Pjnis oc Døds Historie vdi Rijn befatted* (Kjøbenhaffin, Salomon Sartor, 1623), USTC 270581. Valborg Lindgärde, *Jesu Christi Pijnos Historia Rijnwijs Betrachtad. Svenska passionsdikter under 1600- och 1700-talet*. (Lund: Lund University Press, 1996) pp. 16, 51–2.

spirituality. The versified, paraphrastic Passions faithfully follow the text of the scriptures and give preference to educational approaches to the Passion narrative.

Thus, the biblical epic in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* is in relation to both literary and oral epic, and paired with elements which originate in devotional literature. Christian epics were not alien to didactic elements, but Salamnius makes didactics his primary aim: according to the preface, he wishes to familiarise readers with the life of Christ. This explains the supplementation of the narrative with an exhortative concluding chapter, which uses the register of devotional literature to imprint the central Christian teachings and the significance of Christ's death on the reader.

4 Simple Speech into Beautiful Song: Imitation and Paraphrase

In essence, biblical epics are paraphrastic texts: they follow the biblical original closely.⁵² A comparison between the poem and the Gospels reveals that Salamnius uses material from all four canonised Gospels. Some chapters are complemented with material from other biblical texts as well. The harmonisation of the four Gospels into one coherent story is not, however, done by the author himself: for the most part, Salamnius uses a previously existing original. The chapters on the Passion of Christ (chapters 7–28 of the poem) follow – word for word, indeed, when the metre allows – the Passion harmony compiled by Michael Agricola in 1549.⁵³ Agricola's Passion is, in turn, based on a German Passion by Johannes Bugenhagen from 1544, and on Agricola's own Finnish translation of the Gospels.

Agricola's Passion was published, with only slight modifications, during the seventeenth century in different manuals and compilations together with other essential books of Christian teaching, such as the hymnal, the catechism, a prayer book and the Gospels.⁵⁴ Agricola published material mainly for the

52 Research on biblical epics has mainly concentrated on questions concerning the nature and the origins of paraphrase, as well as on the relation of biblical epics to the classical tradition. (Roberts *Biblical epic*, pp. 61–74; Springer, *The Gospel as Epic*, pp. 9–22; Green, *Latin Epics*, pp. 46–50, 375.)

53 Mikael Agricola, *Se meiden herran Jesusen Christusen pina, ylesnousemus ia taiuasen astumus* (Tukholma: A. Laurentsson, 1549).

54 Simo Heininen, 'Mikael Agricolan Passio', *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja*, 68–9 (1978–9), pp. 17–29; Tuija Laine, 'Manuale Finnonicum -julkaisun synty ja kehitys', *Opusculum*, 2–4 (1991), pp. 177–200.

needs of ecclesiastical services, but the Passion also offered edifying lay reading. A central context, in both cases, was Holy Week. Hence, the Passion is divided into chapters based on the days of the week, with chapters to read from Palm Sunday to Easter Day. The division of the Passion story into six parts was a Christian commonplace which recurs also in epics: for instance, Vida's *Christiad* contains six books on the Passion.

Salamnius does not follow this tradition of six parts but chooses a tactic of concentration and compression. He is very selective in his choice of scenes to include or to omit. *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* centres on the Nativity and the Passion scenes: the Nativity and subsequent events (such as the flight to Egypt and the slaughter of the innocents) are depicted in five chapters amounting to a total of 267 lines; the Passion and the Resurrection in twenty chapters (1536 lines); and finally the Ascension in two chapters (142 lines). In addition, there is one chapter with 118 lines on the Exodus and Passover, which functions as an introduction to the Passion, and a final concluding chapter with 156 lines, discussing the meaning of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. Jesus's teaching, preaching and healing are only referred to very briefly, before moving on to the Passion. Salamnius is clearly not interested in portraying Jesus as a miracle-worker or teacher; his focus is solely on Christ as the Saviour.

The principle of concentration and compression also guides the structure of the poem. Compared to the six-part structure of Agricola's Passion, *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* has far more but much shorter chapters. The length of the chapters varies – the shortest, the harrowing of hell, has 31 lines; the longest, the conclusion, 156 lines – but they are all thematically concentrated and focus on one single event and only a few central characters. These characteristics are strikingly similar to Finnic oral epics, which rarely exceed 300 lines. In the depiction of the events of the Passion, Salamnius mainly follows Agricola's storyline but also makes some deviations in the structure of the story. Agricola seems to prioritise a chronological order in the way he combines passages from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark to describe the arrival of the women at Jesus's tomb and the following events; Salamnius depicts one character and one event at a time and dedicates separate chapters to the women arriving at the grave and the post-resurrection appearances. Presenting the events of the Passion concisely, clearly and logically seems to be the motivation for the changes made.

The idea that the original text, when used as source material for new literary works, was to be modified and altered and not copied or reproduced is essential in early modern literary culture. The prevailing practice of cultural production was *imitation*. Imitation in literature may refer to the adoption of an author's vocabulary, style, themes, a specific genre or the adaptation of a

specific work.⁵⁵ As a strategy of writing, imitation produces new works from already existing material by using existing models and ways of writing. Every new work of literature thus formed some kind of relationship to its predecessors. Usually this relationship was based on either an adoption of features from earlier canonical works or an attempt to rival them.⁵⁶

Even though there were many understandings of what imitation entailed and what the models, techniques and goals of imitation should be, most theories of imitation agreed on one thing: that a slavish copying was undesirable, and that a proper imitation always included some kind of modification. Imitation, therefore, has a double nature: it is dependent on existing models and materials, but at the same time is perceptive of and responsive to differences entailed by changed historical, cultural and linguistic circumstances.⁵⁷

This element of imitation was especially emphasised in the concept of *aemulatio*. *Aemulatio*, emulation, could signify rivalry, the aspiration for new poets to match or to surpass the works they imitated, for instance in style and composition, or even correct or revise the model, or, in some cases, demonstrate the writer's awareness of historical or cultural change.⁵⁸ In biblical epics and poetry based on biblical originals, *aemulatio* had a slightly different meaning, since the word of God could hardly be rivalled or improved upon. Hence, *aemulatio* in a Christian context typically refers to stylistic change, or the addition of exegetic comments and explanations.⁵⁹

The annunciation to the shepherds in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* provides an example of this kind of commentary. According to Luke 2:14, the angels and the 'heavenly host' praise God by saying (AV): 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' ('Cunnia olcon Jumalalle corkiudes / ja maassa rauha / ja ihmisille hyvä tahto'). The Gloria in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* has been amplified to eight lines (the lines corresponding to the original by Agricola in italics):

55 Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy. Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 171.

56 R. R. Edwards, 'Imitation', in Roland Greene (ed.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 678–9.

57 Ann Moss, 'Literary imitation in the sixteenth century: writers and readers, Latin and French', in Glyn P. Norton (ed.), *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, III: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 108; G. W. Pigman, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33/1 (1980), pp. 7, 30, 32.

58 Jean-Claude Carron, 'Imitation and Intertextuality in the Renaissance', *New Literary History*, 19/3 (1988), pp. 568–9; Pigman, 'Versions of Imitation', 22–9; Gordon Williams, *Change and Decline. Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 196–7.

59 Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, pp. 219–20.

*Kjitos corkian Jumalan
Ylähällä Taivahasa
Tähden armonsa avaran
Että tietävän totuden
Voiman caicki voittavaisen
Maasa Rauha rackahimbi
Ilo Ihmisten seasa;
Ei ole Pelcoa Pirusta
Eikä huolda Helvetistä
Eikä Synnistä surua
Cuolemasta cauhistosta.
Polki tai Callon Perkeleldä
Häijyn Helvetin hävitti
Saatti Synnistä sovinnon
Käänsi cuoleman unexi.⁶⁰*

*Praise to the high (great) God,
high up in Heaven.
Because of his ample mercy,
and his truth that will be known,
(and) his might, victorious over all:
[there is] most beloved peace on earth
Joy among the people;
there is no fear of the devil,
nor worry about Hell,
nor sorrow for sin,
no dread of death.
He trampled the skull of devil,
destroyed vicious hell,
brought redemption for sin,
turned death into a dream.*

The amplification is done by inserting lines which explicate the significance of Christ's birth: because of mercy, truth and God's might, hell has been destroyed, all sins atoned for and death has been turned into a mere dream. Here, the angels allude to events which are yet to come, and in this way, we are reminded of the way in which the episodes of Christ's birth and death are connected. Although not appearing in Agricola's Passion, the theme is repeated in his prefaces and explanations. Agricola commonly refers to Christ saving humans from 'sin, death, the devil and hell'.⁶¹ In the preface to the Gospels, he explains: 'Christ is this seed of a woman, that is, a foetus, who has trampled the head of the devil, that is, sin, death, hell, and all his might'.⁶² Salamnius adds this theological explanation to his rendering of the Gospel itself.

In addition, Salamnius uses references both to Lutheran hymns and oral traditions. Alliterative formulas such as '*ample grace*', '*know the truth*', '*dread of death*' appear especially in the 1605 Hymnal and the translation of *Piae Cantiones* (1616) by Hemmingius of Masku. The theme of trampling or crushing the devil or his skull (based on Gen 3:15) is repeated several times in the 1605 Hymnal.⁶³

60 Salamnius, *Ilo-Laulu*, pp. 6–7.

61 Mikael Agricola, *Mikael Agricolan teokset, I–III* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1987 [1543–52]). Digital edn in Agricola. *Vanhan kirjasuomen korpus* (Helsinki: Kotus, http://kaino.kotus.fi/korpus/vks/meta/agricola/agricola_coll_rdf.xml (20.5.2019)), also in *Korp*, pp. 1 634, cf. 726, 741, 771; III 594, 677.

62 'Christus ombi temen Waimon Siemen / eli sikijö / ioca Kermen / quin on Perkelen pään / se on / Synnin / Coleman / Heluetin / ia caiki henen wäens rickipolkenut on.' Agricola II, p. 4.

63 E.g. 'armostas avarast', 'tundeman totutta', 'cuoleman cauhan', 'Pirun pään polki ricki perät', 'pirun pään peräti polki pois', 'cuolleisans kärmen pään polki', *Korp*.

In addition, Salamnius makes use of occasional formulas deriving from oral tradition, but often modifies and reframes them or sets them into new contexts. The passage above contains two common, wide-spread formulas, 'high God' and 'high up in the sky', used both in Christian and non-Christian vernacular contexts (such as in 'Ukkoinen korkea jumala', 'Thunder, the high god').⁶⁴ 'High God' does not appear in the corpus of sixteenth- to seventeenth-century literary texts, while 'high up in the sky' is also a common expression in hymnals (1583, 1605) and in the Bible (1642).⁶⁵

Elsewhere, Salamnius also uses epithets common in later oral tradition, both those connected to vernacular Christian themes ('suuri Luoja', 'great Creator'; 'Ilman herra', 'the lord of air') not appearing in earlier literary sources, and those typically connected with pre-Christian figures such as Ukko ('itse pilviä pitävä', 'the one who holds the clouds'), the sky deity also mentioned by Agricola in his list of pagan gods. The formula 'Jesus, the lord of air' appears also in Ostrobothnian vernacular charm texts recorded before Salamnius.⁶⁶ Six of the fifteen verses above have no parallel whatsoever in the oral corpus, and some connections with the oral corpus are very weak.⁶⁷ Salamnius does not need oral formulas to be able to make his poem, although he sometimes makes use of them.

Exegetical commentaries and amplifications are often embedded into characters' speech. In this way they blend into the narrative, even when their didactic and exegetical nature is obvious. Particularly interesting is the comment embedded in Jesus's speech in chapter 16 (p. 54). In this episode, which follows the Gospel of Luke (23:27), the poem describes how Jesus is carrying the cross while some women in the crowd weep for him. Jesus tells them to weep not for him, but for themselves and their children. This reply leads to a lengthy comment in which the narrator speaks directly to readers, urging them to contemplate the fact that God's son is being punished for people's sins. The switch from Gospel paraphrase to comment, that is, from Jesus's speech to the narrator's, is not indicated in any way; rather, they blend into each other seamlessly.

The amplification of the angel's *Gloria* to an exegetical comment about Christ's incarnation, and the development of his reply to the weeping women into an exhortation to the readers of the poem, foreground the didactic aims and functions of the texts. These deviations from the biblical intertext

64 For example, *SKVR VII*5 45; Octavo.

65 *Korp*, e.g. 'kork* tai*'.
 66 *SKVR XI* 1570, 1586.

67 *Korp* and *Octavo*, word and collocation queries.

anticipate the change of register that takes place in the last chapter, where the poem moves from epic narrative to contemplation and teaching.

Didactic elements, such as exegetical comments and amplifications, are given more emphasis as the narrative proceeds. However, there is one sequence towards the end of the poem where the epic dominates, and this is the harrowing of hell. In this part of the poem, Christ is most clearly portrayed as a warrior-like epic hero, who engages in combat with his opponent, and wins.

5 Registers of Heroism: Christ as an Epic Hero

Gregory Tobias stresses the importance of *historical consequence* in the actions of the epic hero. This aspect of heroism was significant already in Vergil's *Aeneid*, but gained even more weight in Renaissance epic, such as Vida's *Christiad*. From this angle, Christ is even more an epic hero than the model of epic heroes, Aeneas himself. Christ's utmost heroism is expressed by his self-sacrifice and death on the cross, and in Christian epic, Christ's victory over death is depicted as the culmination of the greatest of battles.⁶⁸

In *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, Jesus is menaced by different kinds of adversaries. Firstly, by worldly rulers, like King Herod and the governor, Pontius Pilate; secondly, by Judas Iscariot, the high priests and the Jews with whom Judas conspires; and finally, by the demons in hell. The descent to the underworld is an epic convention, occurring in classical epics as well as in oral traditions and mythologies worldwide. In Karelian and Finnish oral tradition, the old sage Väinämöinen, in particular, travels to the underworld to search for healing words or a bride.⁶⁹

Christ's harrowing of hell was a favourite subject in medieval art, and it is included in medieval as well as some Renaissance epics, like Vida's *Christiad*. The depiction of these events originates primarily in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. In the canonical Bible, Christ's descent to hell is only briefly and indirectly referred to, but the concept of Christ descending to hell to rescue the souls of prophets and patriarchs, and the doctrine of the harrowing of hell, were entirely established in Christian tradition.⁷⁰ Influence from the Gospel of Nicodemus can also be seen in the oral poems of the *Luojan virsi* cycle, dealing

68 Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 68; Tobias, *From Many Gods*, pp. 80–3.

69 Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People*, pp. 183–92, 391–3.

70 Catherine Ella Laufer, *Hell's Destruction: An Exploration of Christ's Descent to the Dead* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 39–41.

with the *Hiiden sepän kahlinta* ('Fettering of the smith of Hiisi'), although most themes of the song are closer to other vernacular song traditions in Europe than the original apocryphal text.⁷¹

Particular motifs connect the apocryphal text and the descent to hell in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*:

Jesus astupi lähemmä	Jesus walked closer,
Liki Linnaa piruen	nearer to the castle of devils,
Potcaisi leviän Portin	kicked the wide gate,
Paiscais mahan Pihtipielet:	smashed the gateposts to the ground:
Lucko koht lumehen lensi	the lock soon flew into the snow,
Naulat tuisconvat tulehen	the nails swirled into the fire,
Salvat lieckihin samahan. ⁷²	the bolts into the same flame.

In this passage, Salamnius follows the apocryphal gospel closely, but amplifies the story with formulas from oral sources. Although this gives the passage quite a vernacular tone, the formulas he uses relate not to the *Luojan virsi* cycle, but to various other themes in Karelian charms and epic, and Ingrian wedding songs.⁷³ This is natural, as the oral cycle has only vague thematic connections with the apocryphal text. In oral tradition, the smith of Hiisi forges a neck chain to shackle Christ but ends up being shackled in his own chain. Here, Christ is portrayed as a trickster-like character, who is able to defeat his adversaries thanks to his cleverness.⁷⁴ The gates or hell are not described, and no other hardship is presented.

In *Ilo-Laulu*, the harrowing of hell can be interpreted as an allegorical presentation of victory over death. This is also the interpretation that is referred to earlier in Salamnius' poem, in the annunciation to the shepherds. The harrowing scene in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* emphasises that Christ's heroic deed makes not only him but the whole of mankind invulnerable to the evil of sin and death.

71 Borenus, 'Suomen keskiaikaisesta', pp. 62–77; Krohn, *Kantelettaren tutkimuksia*, II, pp. 326–31; Martti Haavio, 'Hiiden sepän kahlinta', *Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja*, 18 (1938), pp. 20–52.

72 Salamnius, *Ilo-Laulu*, pp. 76–7.

73 Charms for childbirth, e.g. 'Jolla auvot luiset lukot' (*SKVR* XII2 6214), 'Jolla auvot luiset portit' (*SKVR* VII4 loitsut 3046), 'pihtipieliset hajotan'; Karelian hunting charms, e.g. 'Avaja lukot lumiset' (*SKVR* VII5 loitsut 3507; overall formulas (tuli-tuiski), e.g. in the song of Lemminkäinen: 'Itse tuiskahti tulehen' (*SKVR* 12 725); Ingrian wedding songs, e.g. 'Lukut mie suullani sulatan, Salvat sanoilla hajotan, Lukut mie lumelle tuiskin, Salvat hankelle hajotan' (*SKVR* III3 3570).

74 Haavio, 'Hiiden sepän kahlinta', p. 37.

6 *Ilo-Laulu* and the Registers of Devotional Literature

A substantial portion of *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* – approximately two thirds of the entire poem – is devoted to the Passion of Christ. In the spiritual life of the seventeenth century, the Passion played a central role. It was a recurring subject in both devotional literature and poetry. Reading and meditating on the Passion was especially recommended during Lent and Holy Week and as a preparation for the eucharist.⁷⁵

Literary representations of the Passion, particularly in the Lutheran tradition, are characterised by the depiction of the events according to the Gospels, and by a meditative element. This means that the speaker of the poem contemplates the events of the Passion, or the reader is urged to contemplate them. Either way, the text aims to engage the reader in a dialogue with the narrative, during which the reader traces the significance of Christ's Passion, death and resurrection in his or her own life.⁷⁶

In *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, narration dominates in all parts of the poem, except in the final chapter, entitled 'Conclusion' (*Päätös*), which uses a different register: that of education, instruction and exhortation. In the conclusion, the reader is urged to contemplate the Passion and to learn a lesson from this contemplation. The conclusion of the poem is most reminiscent of the so-called instructive meditations. These differ from proper meditation manuals in that their focus is on the result of contemplation: what one is supposed to learn from the meditation, and not on the exercise itself.⁷⁷

Poems on the Passion of Christ belong to two literary cultures in being at the same time artful and devotional. The boundaries between poetical works and devotional works were everything but clear-cut: generally, devotional literature could be markedly poetical in style, while the reading of Christian poetry was considered to be spiritually edifying. Devotional literature was not directly dependent on the poetics of imitation and concomitant rules and practices. Even devotional works did, however, make use of the tradition of rhetoric, which was also the foundation of imitative poetics.⁷⁸ Therefore, devotional literature was not detached from the norms and values of artistic literature.

The most striking difference between biblical epics and Passions with a meditative approach lies in their narration. In epic, the narrator has a more

75 Stina Hansson, *Ett språk för själen. Litterära former i den svenska andaktslitteraturen 1650–1720* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 1991), p. 85.

76 Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 148–50.

77 Hansson, *Ett språk för själen*, pp. 84–6, 179.

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–9; Valborg Lindgärde, *Jesu Christi pijnos historia*, p. 129.

passive role, whereas the narrator of a meditative Passion is not only rendering events, but is also offering the reader an interpretation of the events narrated, and, in some cases, guides the reader through the spiritual exercise of meditation. Meditative texts on the Passion aim at evoking feelings in the reader and ultimately, with the help of these feelings, to a renewal and a strengthening of their faith.

An essential feature in meditative Passions is what could be described as *reporting of feelings*, where the speaker or narrator describes feelings experienced by the characters, by the speaker, or even by the reader.⁷⁹ In *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*, this rhetorical tool is used for instance in the episode where Jesus carries the cross and addresses the weeping women. Jesus's words to the women are amplified into an exhortative comment, where *we*, the readers of the poem, are urged to contemplate what is just about to happen. The emotions expressed and referred to in this episode from Luke function as a point of departure for the blending of the narrative and the devotional registers.

Such evocation of feelings enters the epic narrative also in the depiction of Jesus's death on the cross. As expressed by the title of the chapter, 'The darkening of the sun and the death of Jesus' (*Auringon Pimenemisest / Jesuxen kuolemast*), Salamnius' poetic description of Jesus's death takes the sun as a central character. The darkening of the sun at the moment of Jesus's death is reported by three of the four canonical Gospels. Instead of just paraphrasing the evangelists' notion of the growing darkness, Salamnius personifies the sun and makes it an eyewitness to the events. The sun turns away its face in mourning, covers itself in a dark veil, and declares that it will not shine upon evil people. By introducing the sun as an onlooker to the events, Salamnius emphasises the affective dimensions of the Passion. In addition, the sun's feelings and reactions function as a model for the proper expression of feelings when beholding the Passion.

The sun reappears in the conclusion of the poem, which starts with a request to the reader to contemplate the Passion story. Also in this passage, the eyewitnesses who behold the Passion scene and Christ crucified are not, as in most cases, the narrator, but the sun and the earth. Focus here is on the emotions of Christ as well as on those of the scene's spectators. The emotions described are expanded to concern not only the sun, but 'everyone': everyone looks on in grief, but no-one tries to understand the reasons for Christ's suffering, which are, as the narrator concludes, '*your worst sins / and our many wrongdoings* [*italics added*]' ('*Syy on syndinne pahimmat / Ja paliot pahat tecomme*').⁸⁰

79 Hansson, *Ett språk för själen*, pp. 177.

80 Salamnius, *Ilo-Laulu*, p. 91.

In this way, the change of register in the concluding chapter implies a remarkable change in the role of the speaker and the reader. The narrator takes on the role of the teacher or preacher. The reader becomes someone who is spoken to – the speaker continuously addresses the reader as ‘you’ – and whose thinking and feelings the speaker is trying to affect. The manner of address is exhortative and appealing, and makes use of rhetorical devices such as questions (‘Mitä sijs sinun tulepi?’, ‘What are you to do?’) and affective figures. The reader is urged to contemplate the life and the death of Christ. Ultimately, what the speaker is trying to achieve is a response from the reader.

The sun also has an important role in the oral *Luojan virsi* cycle, where the sun first guides the Virgin Mary, then flies to the grave of Jesus and makes Hiisi sleep or rocks melt so that Jesus is able to escape from the grave.⁸¹ Even though both *Ilo-Laulu* and *Luojan virsi* personify the sun, there is a remarkable difference in the way this motif is used. For Salamnius, the sun has a double role: the grieving sun works as a point of resemblance for the reader and a model for emotions, but it is at the same time a symbol for Christ. His death is associated with darkness, the absence of the sun, and his resurrection with sunrise. In the poem, the sun is the first to greet the Lord risen from death. The sun in *Luojan virsi* acts as an indispensable helper to the Virgin and to Christ. In *Ilo-Laulu*, the sun only beholds and expresses feelings, but cannot affect the events of the poem in any way.

Salamnius is eager to emphasise, like Jacobus Finno and Hemmingius of Masku in their Easter hymns, that Christ is resurrected by his own power, ‘voimalla omalla’.⁸² The focus on the role of the sun and the harrowing of hell in *Ilo-Laulu* might be interpreted as a correction of the earlier oral interpretations. In contrast to these, Salamnius’ Jesus is never actually threatened by the devil, nor is he in need of the sun’s help in his resurrection.

7 The Network of Poetic Registers

Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta is in many ways an exceptional work of literature, but also illustrates some characteristics central to early modern culture and seventeenth-century literature. Being the most famous printed poem in traditional Finnic oral alliterative metre before the first version of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* (1835), and a versified interpretation of the Passion, the

81 SKVR, poem types *Marjavirsi*; *Ylösousemusvirsi*; *Hüiden sepän kahlinta*; Borenius, ‘Suomen keskiaikaisesta’; Krohn, *Kantelettaren tutkimuksia*, II.

82 *Korp*, ‘voim* om*’; Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, pp. 357.

poem may be interpreted as both a result of and a comment on the long processes of vernacularisation of Christian tradition and its rendering in literary form. In creating the epic, Matthias Salamnius refers and relates to various oral and literary genres.

Imitation dominates seventeenth-century literature and classical poetics. Imitation is present in *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* above all in the form of paraphrase. The poem paraphrases the Gospels, taking Michael Agricola's Passion (1549) as its most important intertext. Salamnius' approach to imitation is characterised by application: he adopts the traditional vernacular oral metre for literary use and composes an epic poem with Christian content. He also refers to other writings, amplifying the poem with themes or formulas from earlier ecclesiastical writings, poetic prefaces, apocryphal Gospels, Lutheran hymns and vernacular oral tradition. The comparison of his poem with later oral sources reveals that Salamnius was familiar with both Ostrobothnian and Ingrian oral poetry, which was already potentially a source, given what is known of his life history. Nevertheless, the relationship of Salamnius to preceding and succeeding oral traditions is a tricky question. Evidently, the oral tradition both affected Salamnius and was affected by his work, and often it is not possible to know exactly the direction of influences. Yet, in cases where a formula is varied across a wide array of genres and local cultures in nineteenth-century oral sources, or used as a prominent line in some oral poem, it is probably not adapted from *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta*; rather, Salamnius is using a formula from the earlier oral tradition. In contrast, when some nineteenth-century singer has an individual section of similar verses with formulas not appearing elsewhere in oral tradition, the direction of influence is likely to be the opposite: from *Ilo-laulu* to oral use.

When the metre allows, and no additions are needed, Salamnius may follow the central ecclesiastical intertexts word for word. He only uses occasional formulas and expressions from vernacular oral tradition, often reworking them to new contexts to convey new meanings. In some cases, as when giving the epithet usually associated with the pagan god Ukko to the newborn baby Jesus, he is evidently correcting vernacular interpretations. In the preface, Salamnius comments on the use of oral idiom, explaining that the past impious uses of the vernacular metre do not make all uses inappropriate. Both in later Finnic oral poetry and in other cultures, the formulas or verses of oral poetry are often referred as *words*.⁸³ In this regard, one might say Salamnius is only applying

83 See Senni Timonen, *Minä, tila, tunne. Näkökulmia kalevalamittaiseen kansanrytmiin* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2004); John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

and modifying the words of oral poetry. He uses the traditional register but does not make use of wider themes.

Ilo-Laulu continues the long tradition of Christian epic, a favourite genre of the seventeenth century, and, at the same time, is a modification of the epic genre. It is not just a combination of Christian content and traditional oral metre, as earlier research has suggested.⁸⁴ It also brings together two different literary registers, the narrative register of Christian epic and the didactic register of devotional poetry. The centrality of the Passion, the amplifications of and commentaries on the biblical intertext which emphasise the soteriological doctrine as well as the devotional register, with its characteristic manner of representation and manner of address to the reader, are markers which point to the devotional genre. In addition, the didactic and spiritual aims of the poem are explicitly stated in the preface. However, the author's own attitude towards the epic genre is unclear, since Salamnius does not indicate or comment on the epic in any way.

Seven years after the first edition of the *Ilo-laulu*, Ericus Cajanus gives a brief credit to the earlier vernacular song cycle that, on the basis of later recordings, is only vaguely affected by biblical and apocryphal texts. Indeed, it is an enigma whether Salamnius did appreciate the older oral versions of Christian tradition from which he evidently took some formulas, or whether these old legends with all their vernacular and fairy tale-like features belonged to earlier illicit things, comparable to other parts of medieval heritage the Lutheran church wanted to get rid of. His unwillingness to use anything but occasional oral formulas shows he was not making any new version of Christian oral tradition, but creating a whole new Lutheran epic. Yet, the way Salamnius lengthens the passages on the harrowing of hell and on the role of the sun suggests he might have been willing to correct earlier vernacular interpretations. In the oral cycle, the devil (the smith of Hiisi; devil's might, either literally or figuratively) is a dangerous opponent that Jesus is able to defeat only with the help of the sun, and through his own cleverness. Salamnius emphasises the helplessness of the devil, and emphasises that Christ is resurrected only by means of his own power. He does not need the sun to help him. At the same time, Salamnius uses the sun, as in a devotional context, as an eyewitness to the Passion.

The number of editions and the oral transmission of *Ilo-Laulu Jesuxesta* demonstrate that the kalevalaic adaption of the life of Christ was a success. However, the later reception also illustrates historical changes in oral and literary genres. In 1836, permission to publish a new edition of Salamnius' poem

84 E.g. Tarkiainen, 'Suomalainen messiadi'.

was denied because the poem depicted the life of Christ as a fairy tale and was, therefore, inappropriate reading for the common people.⁸⁵ The first version of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, building on Karelian prechristian oral epics, had been published only a year earlier in 1835, strongly affecting the associations given to the traditional oral meter. At this time, the spiritual aims of Salamnius' poem or its close connection with Agricola's Passion were evidently no more recognised. As the censoring of the 1836 edition shows, it was no longer clear, whether it was a devotional book or plain fiction, spiritually edifying or just entertaining.

85 Tuija Laine, *Vanhimman suomalaisen kirjallisuuden käsikirja* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1997), 216–17; Tarja-Liisa Luukkanen, *Mitä maalaiskansa luki? Kirjasto, kirjat ja kirjoja lukeva yhteisö Karstulassa 1861–1918* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2016), 368–9.