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Plotting Poetry 6: The Plot. Storytelling in Verse. Conference Report

Anne-Sophie Bories, Pablo Ruiz Fabo,
Margit Kiss, Petr Plecháč, Levente Seláf*

The sixth edition of the Plotting Poetry Conference, entitled “The Plot. Storytelling in Verse”, was organised in Budapest, at ELTE University, on June 12 to 14, 2023. It was dedicated to the different features of narrativity in poetry. A wide range of topics was discussed, with a very broad comparative perspective. The talks featured computational analyses for very different literary periods and languages, and promising results were shown during the conference.

There were two keynote lectures in the conference. One of them was given by *Camille Bloomfield* (University Paris Cité) and titled “Personal Storytelling in Instapoetry: A Statistical Approach”. Poetry is currently enjoying a renewed interest, particularly from the general public, thanks to social networks such as Instagram, where multimedia poetic productions are flourishing. Generally, a natively digital object, produced by poets who are often digital natives themselves, Instapoetry benefits from being studied with digital analysis tools such as databases and web scraping. Bloomfield’s lecture presented an ongoing research project about francophone Instapoetry which takes two directions: on the one hand, the study of these new profiles, the virtual identities and self-storytelling they build through their accounts, and on the other, the new types of poems they produce. Such a corpus raises indeed many questions to researchers in literature and sociology of the literary field, insofar as its content is often ephemeral, mass produced, strongly constrained by the digital interface, and it escapes the traditional boundaries of literary genres.

* Authors’ addresses: Anne-Sophie Bories, University of Basel, Institut für Französische Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, Maiengasse 51, Basel, S-4056, Switzerland, email: a.bories@unibas.ch; Pablo Ruiz Fabo, Faculté des Langues, Université de Strasbourg, 22 rue Descartes, F-67084 Strasbourg Cedex, France, email: ruizfabo@unistra.fr; Margit Kiss, HUNREN (Hungarian Research Network for the Humanities), Tóth Kálmán u. 4., Budapest, H-1097, Hungary, email: kiss.margit@abtk.hu; Petr Plecháč, Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences, Na Florenci 1420/3, 110 00 Prague, Czechia, email: plechac@ucl.cas.cz; Levente Seláf, ELTE – Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Múzeum krt. 4/a, Budapest, H-1088, Hungary, email: levente.selaf@gmail.com.

The other keynote lecture was delivered by *Jean-Baptiste Camps* (École Nationale des Chartes, PSL), and walked us “From Epic Poetry to Knightly Romances? Monitoring the Evolution of Old French Chansons de Geste”. The heroic death of Roland, Charlemagne’s nephew, in the Pyrenean mountains, is one of the most famous epic tales transmitted to us by Medieval Western European culture. Yet, the most praised and studied version of this tale, the archaic, assonance-based *Song of Roland*, is only known to us through a single 12th century manuscript, while we keep many late witnesses of the rhymed versions (sometimes interspersed with assonance-based parts). This case is not isolated and raises the issues of the respective roles of chance, and of socio-cultural, material and textual factors in the preservation or loss of medieval manuscripts. Camps’ keynote broached this wide question through the case study provided by medieval French epics (chansons de geste). It examined, on a macro level, the peculiarities in the transmission of the texts, as apparent through the genealogies drawn by philologists since the 19th Century, and presented the early results of an ongoing investigation based on the production of a large corpus through deep learning methods and directly from manuscript sources, into the evolution of the texts and the role of material and textual factors in the survival or extinction of these works.

Nazarii Nazarov (Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris) presented a paper titled “Between Poetry and Rhythmic Prose: A New Look at the Medieval Old Kyiv Chronicles”. Byzantine culture had a great influence on the literature of Kievan Rus. However, the stylistic features of the Old Kyivan chronicles of the 11th and 12th centuries have not yet been compared with Byzantine models. He has analyzed the first episode of the Chronicle (according to the Ypatian manuscript of the 1420s), which tells the story of the world after the flood and up to the expansion of Slavic peoples and the legendary foundation of the Old Kyivan state. It turned out that syntactically finished periods are accompanied by series of repetitive vocabulary that resemble rhyme in its function. Having studied the metrical parameters of such syntactic periods, Nazarov found that they fit into metrically organized segments, i.e. lines with the same number of accents and almost the same number of syllables. Furthermore, the lines are combined into two symmetrical parts, a strophe and an antistrophe with a mandatory caesura. The next step was to search for similar phenomena in other Slavic monuments. The chapters of the *Old Czech Chronicle of Dalimil* had similar structure, this encouraged Nazarov to look for a common source that served as a model for the rhythmic organization. This source turned out to be Byzantine hymnography: similar lexical and metrical structures were found in the hymns of Roman the Melod, in the *Great Canon* of St. Andrew of Crete, and in the *Akathist* of an anonymous author.

All of these texts were well known in the Slavic world, both in the original and in translations, which sometimes tried to preserve the rhythm of the original.

Alexandru Călin and *Oana-Dana Balaş* (both University of Bucharest) presented “The Dactylic Epic Caesura: Occurrences and Signification”. The epic caesura is a metrical device characteristic of Old Occitan and Old French epic poems, from *Lo poema de Boecis* to *Vie de Saint Alexis* to *Chanson de Roland*. It consists of an unstressed extra-syllable, which in Old French and Old Occitan decasyllabic lines occurs after the fourth syllable. The epic caesura is also well featured in Elizabethan theatre amongst others. In rare cases, the epic caesura is dactylic – consisting of two posttonic syllables e.g. “E Sanctum SpiRITUM qui e bos homes desend”; “E mea fo l’oPERA Nicolao scolptore”, “Than is your MaJESTY. There’s not, I think, a subject”. Although the Romanian decasyllable is historically alien to the “orthodox” epic caesura, Romanian poets rediscover spontaneously the dactylic epic caesura and make use of it in alternation with “regular” iambic pentameters. Taking as a point of departure the dactylic epic caesura, (which the authors term ‘dactylic anomaly’) as well as relying on a theory proposed by Gian Giorgio Trissino in his *Poetica* (1529), this paper argued that lines currently dubbed ‘iambic pentameter’, ‘endecasillabo’ or ‘décasyllabe’ should be given a new metrical interpretation.

Anastasia Belousova (National University of Colombia / Moscow State University), *Juan Sebastián Páramo* and *Paula Ruiz* (both National University of Colombia) presented a paper titled “Exploring the Evolution of Ottava Rima: A Digital Study of Rhyme and Syntax”. Ottava rima is one of literary history’s most successful and long-lasting poetic forms. It originated in Italy in the 14th century and remained popular for centuries in its country of origin, where it was employed by poets such as Boccaccio, Boiardo, Pulci, Poliziano, Ariosto, Tasso, Tassoni, Marino, Leopardi, and others, as well as outside of Italy. The extraordinary success of the stanza attracted the attention of literary scholars who, for decades, have sought to explain it by analysing formal aspects of the ottava. Researchers emphasise the possibility of narrating “by portions” that the structure of the stanza offers and carefully analyse its internal articulations, which allow multiple options for division (6+2, 4+4, 2+2+2+2, etc.). Another aspect that attracted the attention of critics was the rhyme: the proportion of grammatical rhymes present in octaves throughout history was quantitatively analysed by Marco Praloran. The three researchers developed two digital tools to analyse the ottava: one dedicated to syntax (based on Tomashevsky’s method) and another to rhyme (automatic identification of grammatical rhymes and the variety of rhymes, based on some ideas of Michail Gasparov and Marco Praloran). After applying their tools to a large corpus of poems in ottava rima (from *Spagna* to *Paralipomeni della*

Batracomiomachia by Leopardi), they arrived at a draft of a quantified history of the genre, which shows how, over time, narrative writing in ottava rima transforms.

Four members of an international research group – *Petr Plecháč* (Czech Academy of Sciences), *Levente Seláf* (ELTE – Eötvös Loránd University), *Margit Kiss* (HUN-REN, Hungarian Research Network, Budapest) and *Villő Vagyikán* (ELTE – Eötvös Loránd University) – presented the most recent results of a computational analysis of Early Hungarian Epic poems. The most intriguing result of the research presented during the conference was the identification of three different paradigms of epic composition in the 16th century Hungarian corpus, on the bases of line-long repetitions inside the poems, or by the intertextual sharing of the lines between different compositions. On the basis of the number of repeated lines it was possible to distinguish the three categories: 1) poems that have a huge number of *internal* repetitions, more than identical or strongly similar lines with other poems of the corpus; they reflect an oral compositional technique; 2) poems having a high number of shared lines, a strong intertextual component; they reflect the existence of a common, shared repertoire of *formulae*, the birth of an intertextual community, essentially composed of writers of poems about early Hungarian history; 3) poems that have almost no line repetitions in themselves, and none or very few shared lines; they show a totally different conception of poetry and of originality, based on writing and excellence in versification, showing the evolution of the genre of epic poetry in the last decades of the 16th century.

“«Cryptostories»: Narratives about March ‘68 in Contemporary Polish Poetry” was the title of the paper of *Magdalena Piotrowska-Grot* (University of Silesia, Katowice). March 1968 is associated in Poland mainly with the wave of protests and the rebellion of Polish society against communist rule. Underneath, hidden and erased, lies the history of Jews who were expelled from the countries of the Eastern Bloc. Today, historians call these events directly – a rout. “March” testimonies, if they exist at all, are very diverse: among those who were witnesses they are often obliterated, because it was possible to return to them openly after twenty years; in the case of people who were forced to emigrate – sometimes it is simply impossible and too painful to return to them. Poetry found a way to smuggle and store the truth. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of Polish poetic texts from this period, allows us to reconstruct the network of references and reveal a piece of the hidden shameful history of March. In the works of such poets as Stanisław Barańczak, Adam Zagajewski, Ewa Lipska, but above all in the poetry of Julian Kornhauser, these traces are very clear, although finding them is not an easy task. Using appropriate tools (mainly CLARIN-PL resources), Magdalena

Piotrowska-Grot intended to recreate, visualise, and recover this poetic story hidden in verses, images and words.

The talk by *Anne-Sophie Bories* (University of Basel) and *Petr Plecháč* (Czech Academy of Sciences) was entitled “Aligning Manual and Machine-Produced Annotation in a Verse Corpus: A Case Study on Raymond Queneau”. Their presentation compared two annotations of Queneau’s verse: one done manually, the other automatically by means of the Malherbø parser developed by Richard Renault at the University of Caen. They analysed the mismatch between fixed forms classifications in both resources and linked them to the peculiarities of Queneau’s verse, as compared to the traditional 19th century poetry for which the parser was tailored, as well as to the ambiguities of diphthong scansion in French.

Stéphane Cunescu’s (University of Liège / University Paris 8) talk was entitled “The Narrative Obsession: Franck Venaille and the Art of Telling in Verse and Prose” and addressed the poetical work of French author Franck Venaille (1936–2018), characterised by bringing together verse and prose. Cunescu notes that the originality of Venaille’s poetry also lies in its narrative dimension, which constituted an “obsession” for the author: Venaille had asked the question “Can poetry be narrative, and to what extent?” in a critical text about Jean Follain. Venaille subtitled his 1995 volume “La Descente de l’Escaut” as “Poème”, counter to the notion of a “collection” of poems. Cunescu observes that presenting the entire volume as a poem recalls the long poems of the epic tradition: to tell the story of a walk down the Scheldt River, Venaille alternates poems of various forms and meters with pages of prose, the book’s structure being based on a series. Cunescu’s talk examines how this alternation creates a narrative dynamic, often determined by varying rhythms and tones. The talk also pays attention to the role of typographical work as a device to dramatise the poem in the context of poems in verse. The larger question Cunescu’s talk reflects upon is where the fundamental difference resides between the narrative dimension of poems in verse and prose poems.

Michèle Monte’s (University of Toulon) talk was entitled “Can Hyperbase Allow Us to Apprehend Certain Aspects of Narrativity in Contemporary Poetry?”. She examined whether textometry (via the functions implemented in the *Hyperbase* tool) can shed light on specific forms of narrativity present in narrative poems in a corpus of 20th and 21st century French poetry. Monte observes that such texts present particular challenges as regards narrativity, such as blurred temporal cues, unclear narrative sequence, large amounts of information conveyed implicitly, and uncertain character references; it could be said that, whereas frequent repetitions help textual cohesion, they hinder narrative progression. Monte’s work analyses a corpus composed entirely of

free verse. As she points out, two of the works have some epic features: *Vents* by Saint-John Perse (1946) and *Les Indes* by Édouard Glissant (1956). The other two works in her corpus bear some resemblance to biography or autobiography: *Ma maison de Geronimo* (2017) by Marie Huot and *Sophie ou la vie élastique* (2020) by Ariane Dreyfus. The corpus was designed in order to provide metrical homogeneity but genre and chronological contrasts. Monté's textometric analyses examined the following features, concluding that they are useful indicators of narrativity in poetry: (1) The distribution of temporal adverbs and morphemes and verb tenses; (2) character references.

The talk by *Antonina Martynenko* (University of Tartu) was entitled "Innovation and Repetition in Rhyme: Quantitative Exploration of the 19th-century Russian Verse". She attempted to apply standard lexical frequency methods to analyse rhyme word bigrams in order to determine whether rhyme usage is regular and based on repetition of the most popular rhymes. The results disprove claims of high repetitiveness, as they reveal a large number of unique rhymes over time. Additionally, a high level of "innovative" rhyming was found not only in the canonical corpus but also in amateur poetry from the 1830s. Lastly, she presented an example of a rhymer published in 1836, which further illustrated that rhyming was rather a process involving the constant generation of new rhymes rather than copying the most frequent ones.

Vera Polilova (Lomonosov Moscow State University) presented the paper entitled "Lexical Exactness and Metrical and Strophic Diversity: Calderón de la Barca's Theatre in Russian Translations". The most distinctive feature of Spanish Golden Age drama is polymetry and polystrophy. Different verse forms (redondillas, silvas, octavas, sonetos, décimas, romance) alternate with each other, responding both to the dynamics of the dramatic action and to the theme of the scenes and the characters of the actors. Jiří Levý considered translating Spanish classical dramas into European languages one of the most challenging tasks because of the need to recreate polymetry. The rendering of the original metrical system in translation is a requirement primarily because of the role of metrical changes in the general dramatic dynamics, significant regardless of the language and cultural associations of the target literature. However, the reproduction of the source verse form can negatively impact the translation's lexical exactness. In her paper, she proposed to investigate the correlation between the parameters of lexical exactness of the translation and the metrical and strophic diversity of it on the material of the fragments of five verse translations of Calderón's drama "Life is a dream" into Russian.

Clara Martínez Cantón (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia), *Rocío Ortuño Casanova* (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia and University of Antwerp) and *Pablo Ruiz Fabo* (University of Strasbourg)

presented a talk entitled “The Sonnet in Spanish in Latin American and Philippine Modernism: Shared and Local Features in Content and Form in Two Related but Distinct Traditions”. The talk’s premise is that Modernista Philippine poetry in Spanish has been misanalysed in critical literature. Among other problems, Filipino authors have been presented as unoriginal imitators of prominent and Latin American Modernists like Darío or Santos Chocano. Moreover, Philippine Modernism has been equated with Latin American Modernism, proposing that both traditions are inspired by a Far-East exoticism and escapism. Yet both traditions are distinct, as it was proven in the context of the DigiPhiLit project, which involves a historical reassessment of Philippine literature in Spanish, aided by digital tools. In this work, we present a systematic comparison between Latin American and Philippine modernista sonnets in Spanish, towards an evaluation of the influence of Latin American material on Philippine texts. Latin American Modernism introduced numerous innovations in the sonnet form in Spanish, adding metrical and structural diversity besides untraditional rhyme schemes. Such innovations are also cultivated by Filipino authors in original manners. However, it is at the content level that both traditions really diverge, and the claim that Filipino authors show a penchant for Far-East exoticism as a means for escapism needs to be revised.

The talk by *Jukka Saarinen*, *Maciej Janicki* and *Kati Kallio* (all University of Helsinki) entitled “Patterned Repetition in Finnic Oral Poetry” focused on the repetitions that are a structural feature of Finnic runosong traditions. Their aim was to automatically detect such cases using a bag of n-grams model for each verse line and a classification of poems according to the presence of lines being close in the given vector space. It has been shown that these repetitions appear across all genres but are most prominent in charms and children’s songs in particular. Furthermore, some of the most typical patterns on the semantic level have been discussed.

Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir (Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies) presented her paper entitled “Þórnaldarþula – Plotting Interpretation of a Scattered Narrative”. Þórnaldarþula is one of the oldest Icelandic post-medieval *þulur*: versified, non-stanzaic lists of names, sequences of short motifs and/or longer narrative episodes in very free poetic form (ca. 15th–20th c.). Narrative elements in post-medieval *þulur* typically do not form a coherent story; this is also the case with Þórnaldarþula, although – uncommonly for post-medieval *þulur* – it has a definite narrative thread. Þórnaldarþula is also notable for a high amount of dialogue in the text, both within its building units and in its overall structure: most of the listing and narrative elements are arranged into an overarching dialogue (or conversation, as the number of speakers is

unclear). Interpretation of this narrative is problematic, not least because the speakers change in a constant, but irregular fashion and it is generally hard to determine who is speaking at each point. In the paper, she applied comparative, paleographic and in particular metrical analysis along with computational approach to ca. 80 independent texts of Þórnaldarþula in order to estimate the correlation between change of speaker and change of metrical form, as well as the possible predicative value of the change of metrical form for the change of speakers in Þórnaldarþula. Her finding was that changes in scansion correlate with the borders between the structural units of Þórnaldarþula (lists and narrative episodes) rather than with speaker change. She further planned to study how narrative episodes and dialogue form fit into the listing structure of PMÞ and interact with it.

In their paper “Detecting Synonyms in Poetic Text: Corpus-Based Exploration of Estonian Runosongs”, *Kaarel Veskis* and *Mari Sarv* (both Estonian Literary Museum) talked about runosong, a common Finnic archaic song style distinguished by its specific poetic features including alliteration, parallelism and meter with trochaic core. The use of poetic synonyms is an essential feature of runosong stylistics, and their aim was to explore the ways of automatic detection of synonyms from the corpus. In the case of runosongs, automatic detection of synonyms is challenging due to dialectal variation, morphological complexity, and the distinct type of semantic parallelism used. While in natural language analysis synonyms are often detected by their use in similar contexts, in case of runosongs this is problematic, as recurrent alliteration systematically renders synonymous words into different contexts. For example, in the lines “tuli ei löppend tuasta, säde sängisambaasta” (the fire was not blown out in the chamber, the flame on the bed pillar), the words *tuli* and *säde* are synonymous, meaning “light in chamber”, but for the sake of alliteration, the first is paired with chamber, the second with bed. In their study, Veskis and Sarv propose their own model for detecting synonyms in runosong text, based on the structural use of parallelism, and compare it with the results obtained using methods developed for natural (not poetic) language. The primary objective of this paper is to enhance the understanding of the usage of poetic synonyms in runosongs by establishing a more comprehensive framework for detecting such synonyms. This lays the groundwork for a more thorough analysis of runosong texts, and for a better understanding of their poetic language.

In their talk, entitled “Cross-Referencing Narration Structure with Metric Features over Narrative Verse”, *Pablo Gervás* and *Álvaro Torrente* (both Universidad Complutense, Madrid) reported on work carried out mainly within the Didone ERC project, which is creating a corpus of 3,000 digitised

and XML-encoded arias among the works of 18th-century Italian librettist Metastasio; one of the project's goals is determining how composers use distinct poetic and musical features to convey specific emotions and dramatic situations. Within this context, Gervás and Torrente have examined the interplay between metrical choices and the characteristics of particular text segments in terms of who is narrating what to whom. Their talk presented their corpus and their annotation and analysis workflow, involving automatic metrical scansion for Italian and narrative element identification based on a Natural Language Processing (NLP) pipeline for Italian, featuring syntactic constituent analysis. They use these two building blocks (scansion and syntactic analysis) in order to cross-reference metrics and narrative structure.

The talk by *Artjoms Šeļa* (Polish Academy of Sciences) and *Thomas Haider* (University of Passau) was entitled “Mind the Meter: Variation in Linguistics Constraints of Poetic Forms”. Using two corpora of poetry – German and Russian – they aimed to analyse how particular accentual-syllabic meters affect the possible morphosyntactic choices. Each line was represented as a sequence of POS-tags followed by a word length measured in syllables (e.g. “Cut it with a hyperplane” would give “VERB_1 PRON_1 PREP_1 DET_1 NOUN_3”). Samples of 100-lines were then represented as a bag of n-grams and were a subject to cluster analysis. Authors showed how the emerging morphosyntactic differences between meters depend on corresponding prosodic differences between them (measured via rhythmical n-grams). On top of that, the morphosyntactic relations between meters were shown to generally follow their semantic similarities (inferred with LDA topic model). Study demonstrated how linguistic differences set by form can translate to cultural differences in its perception and transmission.

Thomas Haider (University of Passau) was talking about “The Embedding of Poetry in a System of Literary Genres via the Communicative Functions – Interpersonal, Narration, and Aesthetic”. Literary genres play a crucial role in shaping cultural discourse. And while the triadic distinction into ‘Epic’, ‘Drama’, and ‘Lyric Poetry’ is largely attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, he also advocated that literary genres are not monolithic, and that artists should not be constrained by the limitations of any particular genre or style. Similarly, Roman Jakobson’s theory of communication argues for communicative functions that break with a view of text-based genre labels. The fluidity of literary genres is a reflection of the diversity in artistic expression. Just like human beings are not easily pigeonholed into simple categories, neither are works of literature. Haider presented a simple but effective corpus-driven method to investigate topological (and typological) linguistic style variation over prototypically prescribed literary genre categories. Visualising

the co-variance (with Principal Component Analysis) of lexicon-based text features enables us to study the boundaries and characterization of literary genres. In particular, the following communicative functions that span across literary texts can be identified: interpersonal vs. exposition, narration vs. non-narration, and aesthetic vs. utilitarian. The results support the view that literary genres are not monolithic with regard to their linguistic features. Through the mixture of linguistic features in texts, the prevalence of certain features in particular genres can be studied, but also genre edge cases and the continuity of the literary space more generally, both across the three principal literary genres and also in opposition to functional texts (non-fiction).

Neža Kočnik (University of Ljubljana) presented her paper entitled “Slavic Spoken Verse: Reconstruction, Evolution and Functions”. The common Slavic folk verse is divided into sung, recited and spoken verse, and this division is correlated with the relationship between melody and verse rhythm: in sung verse melody dominates rhythm, in recited verse they are balanced, and in spoken verse rhythm dominates melody. The reconstruction of the common Slavic verse is the work of Roman Jakobson, who derived it from a common Indo-European verse base. The spoken verse expresses the most ambiguities, and its reconstruction is also the most problematic. Her paper explored the nature of Slavic spoken verse, its verse-prosaic characteristics, the question of reconstruction and derivation from a common Slavic verse, and the development of this form in the individual Slavic languages. In addition, the paper dealt with the role of proverbs, charms, spells, and ritual and jocular catchphrases and other forms for which spoken verse had been used. Particular attention was paid to the prose and verse features of spoken verse, which is one of the earliest forms combining prose and verse features. She analysed spoken verse from a versological, linguistic and folkloristic perspective in order to provide the broadest context and a detailed understanding of the circumstances of the origin, use, functions and development of this form. All the findings were derived from studies of spoken verse texts, from the earliest Slavic material to contemporary texts in Slavic languages.

Nils Couturier (University of Basel) presented a paper titled “«Voici l'intrigue de ma chanson»: Narrativity in French Song (Renaud, Vian, Brassens)”. His paper explored the narrative components of song, in a French singer-songwriters corpus of the 20th Century, which is part of the “Le Rire des vers/Mining the Comic Verse” project database. The talk exposed a manual tagging method of the narrative parts of songs, based on recent definitions of narrativity in computational studies. This tagging makes it possible to study on a larger scale the narrativity rate of each sub-corpus, as well as to identify the position of these narrative components inside the songs. The computational

analysis also allows to measure if the narrativity occurs inside or outside the “refrain” of the songs, highlighting how the plot is deeply linked to formal features in this genre. The paper proposed thus finally a comparison between the poetics of the different songwriters in terms of their treatment of narrativity.

Inna Lisniak (M. Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences / Estonian Literary Museum) and *Olha Petrovych* (Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University – Estonian Literary Museum) presented a computational analysis of Ukrainian folk ballads, an essential part of Ukraine’s cultural heritage, in their talk entitled “Sound and Sense of Ukrainian Ballads: Towards a Computational Poetics”. The research is based on the musical and text corpuses of ballads from Podillia region (Iefremova, Dmytrenko (Eds.), 2014). Those Ballad chants were recorded by Ukrainian folklorists during the 20th and 21st centuries. Most of them are monophonic, while some others are heterophonic and two-voiced. The paper combined qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze ballads from such aspects as rhyme and network pattern, and showed, by means of computational methods, the ratio of the strophic structures of ballad chants in the Podillia region, and their rhythmic patterns. The main goal was to find out whether the number of syllables in the poem affects the melodic variability of the chants, especially in rhyming: concentrating on the relationships between words that share similar sounds; between lines of verse that end in rhyming words; and between the sound and the meaning of words that are linked through rhyme.

In connection with this year’s conference theme of storytelling in verse, *Valentina Colonna* (University of Granada) and *Chris Mustazza* (University of Pennsylvania), with their paper “The Sounds of Modern (Anti-)Narrative”, proposed to take up a longstanding query – how does the voice shape (or resist) narrative in modern poetry? – via a new method, using phonetic tools to determine the shifting voices and diegetic positions of voices in sound recordings of modernist poems. They used the Voices of Italian Poets (VIP) tools developed by Valentina Colonna to phonetically measure the sound of storytelling – what does it sound like to tell a story in poetic performance at various points in modern (literary) history? They selected key works from the PennSound archive, each with an uneasy relationship to narrative, to examine how attention to poetic performance can provide new views into these works, views which cannot be accessed via the texts alone. For example, T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, perhaps the most infamous American poem of the twentieth century, for its refusal to be organised into a linear narrative arc and its dense referentiality. In their talk, they applied Colonna’s VIP tools to attempt to measure the vocal shifts that happen within the poem, connecting them

to close readings/listenings of the work. Through the VIP-RADAR (which includes 20 prosodic indices), they analysed the recordings structurally, stylistically, and phonetically, comparing these performances with the poems' written versions.