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TECHNIQUES OF MELODY FORMATION AND IMPROVISATION IN LATVIAN RECITATIVES*

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ABSTRACT

The documentary material available for the study of recitatives (the dominant style of the older layer of Latvian folk song) mainly consists of field transcriptions from the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The material is fragmentary, although some of it when adequately read provides valuable insight into melody formation and improvisation. The study also points to findings in the rhythmic formation of Latvian recitatives, achieved through measurement of syllabic duration in audio recordings. A concept of melody formation techniques was developed, and two groups of techniques were identified: morphologic, and syntactic, each subdivided into an array of smaller groups of techniques. By defining and systematising these techniques it was possible to get a structured general picture of the melodics of Latvian recitatives as style. Some transcriptions made by Andrejs Jurjāns in the late 19th century and Emilis Melngailis in the 1920s, which extensively document the performance process (comprising a large number of transcribed melostrophes), indicate that in the solo sections of the melostrophe change of techniques was used as a method of improvisation. A procedure for indirectly detecting technique change has been developed by analysing and comparing early transcriptions.

KEYWORDS: Latvian recitatives • syllabic duration • melody formation techniques • *Accentus Moguntinus* • improvisation in folk song

* The initial version of the present study and the one readers have before them differ significantly: thanks to productive and detailed dialogue with the editor, Dr Taive Särg and her willingness to share experience and knowledge, several important new points were developed during the editorial process and integrated into the text.

INTRODUCTION

One-hundred-and-thirty years ago, in the introductory essay to the first volume of *The Materials of Latvian Folk Music*, the composer and founder of the Latvian folk music studies Andrejs Jurjāns (1894: 2–3), presented the division of Latvian vocal folk music into two large groups, which some years later he categorised through the speech-like melodies–song-like melodies dichotomy.[1] This division points to an important feature in the Latvian case: speech-like melodies, i.e. recitatives, quantitatively and by their functional coverage form one of the two basic categories of Latvian vocal folk music. To draw such, or similar, division is something that would hardly come to the mind of someone studying Lithuanian, Belarussian or Russian folk music simply because of the relatively small proportion that recitatives take in the respective folk musics both functionally and by their quantitative representation.[2] Then one should rather look to the north where Estonian folk song studies divide vocal music into old alliterative songs, for example *regilaulud* (sg. *regilaul*, sometimes termed runosongs),[3] which have a large number of "recitative-like melodies", and new stanzaic songs (Tampere 1935: 10–11; 1956: 9–12, etc.).[4] It is important to note that similarly Latvian recitatives (*teiktās melodijas*) are the basic style of the old layer, while song-like melodies predominantly belong to the new layer.[5] Whether this Latvian–Estonian similarity is purely external, or has common roots – to give a sure answer to this question is not the task of the present study and is not possible with the current state of research.[6] As the title suggests, the focus is on the melody formation of Latvian recitatives, the examination of which will allow for important conclusions about improvisation within this style of Latvian music. Analysis of various melody formation techniques is provided, with examples from different Latvian regions (see Figure 16).

Below, a broadly generalising outline of the concept recitative by John Walter Hill (2013) is quoted. The register of the essential properties of recitatives given below, more fully than others known to me, summarises the vast experience that diverse branches of musicology have accumulated throughout the history of the discipline.

> In its current, modern usage, "recitative" commonly refers to a relatively small range of styles in vocal music … whose principal, defining characteristics are normally thought to include some or all of the following: exclusively or predominantly syllabic text setting, relatively narrow range within breath phrases, more pitch repetition than is normal in songlike vocal styles, avoidance of motific or thematic recurrence and other forms of purely musical patterning, including rhythmic features that suggest a steady metre, and, above all, the employment of syllabic pacing, rhythmic durations, inflections, contours, and accentuation that mimic, to some extent, the features of speech.[7]

As far my knowledge goes there is still no general theory of recitative and recitation. The entries on recitative in main music dictionaries (Palisca 1983; Strohm 1998; Monson et al. 2001) remain within the realm of European art music, but the study by Janka Szendrei (1971) offers one of very few if not the only attempt to look more broadly at the European recitative in oral tradition. While Hill listed properties that allow identification and analysis of recitatives and recitative-like phenomena, Szendrei (1971: 275) outlines the frame within which the diversity of the phenomena called recitatives lies.

As Z. Kodály says, the recitative is a phenomenon 'on the borderline of music and language' — and this is common to every definition of the recitative. It has branches (or rather, roots) that extend into the realm of speech: they are distinguished from ordinary speech only by their richer modulation, heightened performance or volume; but it also has branches that can be explicitly labelled as music because of the orderliness of pitch [*Geregeltheit der Tonhöhe*]. They also belong to this border area [between music and language], as they are determined by both textual and language factors. The musical means of expression does not play the main role in them, but rather they are subordinated to the needs of the text and the language: their form is determined by the semantic and formal structure of the text, their rhythm is shaped by the rhythm of the text and the language. Although the melody in them is the element most independent of the text – it is mainly subject to the laws of music – even its development can be influenced by external factors coming from the side of the text.

The frame Szendrei sets is a very large one, and the "branches that can be explicitly labelled as music" while remaining recitative, extend into the huge field that partially overlaps with phenomena called "narrative melodies" (Stevens 1986: 199–267) and phenomena which Ewald Jammers (1962: 15–92) would accommodate under *music of text pronunciation* (*Musik der Textaussprache*), and which would fall under the umbrella of "oral, text-centred singing culture" as described (when pointing to *regilaul*) by Taive Särg (2009: 35) in her study of words-and-music relationships. Especially the last formulation can easily be projected on Latvian *teiktās melodijas* (speech-like melodies). Needless to say such a projection does not bother in the slightest to identify *teiktās melodijas* as recitatives. The properties listed by Hill (2013) – syllabic text setting, relatively narrow range, more pitch repetition than is normal in song-like vocal styles, employment of syllabic pacing, rhythmic durations, contour, accentuation that mimics the features of speech – are all properties of the *teiktās melodijas* and characterise them as recitatives. (This does not mean however that these properties cover the continuum of the Latvian recitatives without gaps.)

For introductory purposes I have chosen a recitative from the parish of Dignāja in the Augšzeme region to show both some basic properties of Latvian recitatives and some of issues that research encounters when attempting to capture them. The transcription of the two melostrophes[8] in Figure 1 shows in parallel the duration of rhythm-forming units (syllable durations)[9] in milliseconds, a waveform, which served as the basis for measurement,[10] and data on the lengths of verse segment/bar[11] in milliseconds. The picture provided by this measurement helps describe the essential features of the complex rhythmic organisation of the Dignāja recitative and gives a foretaste of the complexities one has to expect when analysing the rhythmic structure of Latvian recitatives.
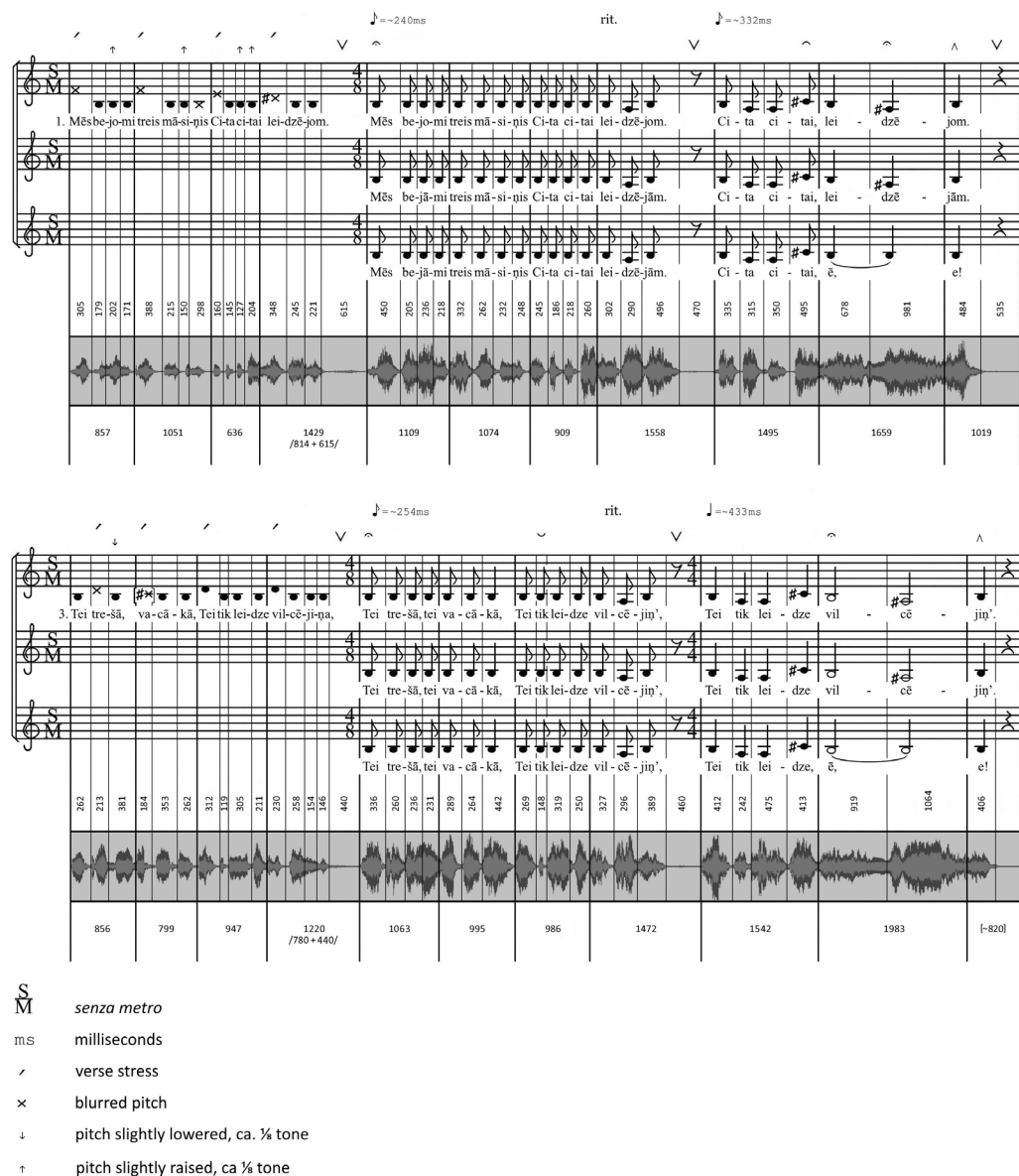
Figure 1. Recitative, multifunctional melody with rudimentary drone from Dignāja in Augšzeme (see also map in Figure 16), the 1st and the 3rd melostrophes. The syllable and the bar durations (in milliseconds) together with the waveform.

First singer (soloist) Milda Bružuka (1899–2003), second singer her sister Ieva Kalniņa (1904–1991), drone Ilga Muižniece (1924–2011). Recorded in the home of Milda Bružuka, on the Goči farmstead in Dignāja parish, on February 20, 1989. The song is in the Dignāja vernacular of the High Latvian dialect, although this is continuously used by the soloist only, the other singers mix it with standard language. Source: Boiko et al. 2009: track 20. Transcription and measurements by Boiko.

The melostrophes above exhibit one of the most widely used formal patterns of Latvian recitatives where five melolines are organised into two asymmetrical sections: the

first section (the soloist) contains two melolines, and the section performed by all singers together contains three. (Further: 'solo section' and 'choir section'.) Textually each melostrophe is based on a distich, i.e. two verse lines (A and B) and their repetitions, which can be formulated as AB ABB. This is the predominant arrangement pattern for the verse lines and their repetitions in the five-meloline recitatives. The Dignāja recitative talks about three sisters and their roles when performing.

1. (solo) *Mēs bejomi treis māsiņas,*   We were three sisters,
           Cita citai leidzējom.   [We] helped each other.
   (choir) *Mēs bejomi treis māsiņas,*   We were three sisters,
           Cita citai leidzējom,   [We] helped each other,
           Cita citai leidzējom.   [We] helped each other.[12]

2. (solo) *Vīna dzīsmas teicējiņa,*   One, the teller of song,
           Ūtra beja seikuleite.   The second was the little one.[13]
   (choir) *Vīna dzīsmas teicējiņa,*   One, the teller of song,
           Ūtra beja seikuleit',   The second was the little one,
           Ūtra beja seikuleit'.   The second was the little one.

3. (solo) *Tei trešā, vacākā,*   That third, older one,
           Tei tik leidze vilcējiņa.   She only holds [the drone] along.
   (choir) *Tei trešā, tei vacākā,*   That third, that older one,
           Tei tik leidze vilcējiņ',   She only holds [the drone] along,
           Tei tik leidze vilcējiņ'.   She only holds [the drone] along.[14]

To provide the necessary background for an understanding of the Dignāja recitative, it is appropriate to briefly discuss the theory of the Latvian classical folksong metric system. The metric theory of Latvian classical folk songs, still in use today, dates back to the late 19th century. It was developed by the folklorist, poet and Lutheran priest Ludis Bērziņš and has changed little since its early publication between 1894 and 1896. (The most detailed explanation of Bērziņš' theory is found in his *Introduction to Latvian Folk Poetry: Metrics and Stylistics*, from 1940.) According to Bērziņš the dominant poetic metre of Latvian classical folk songs is the dipodic trochee. (In Latvian prosody, trochees are traditionally counted in pairs. In transcriptions, a dipody usually corresponds to a bar.) In a trochaic text line after the first trochaic dipody, there is a caesura which the words do not usually cross, i.e. a word cannot continue over the caesura. If this is nevertheless the case, the corresponding text line is called a caesura-less line. The metrics of Latvian classical folk songs has traditionally been classified as a case within the accentual-syllabic verse system, although it has some features of quantitative verse, too. Bērziņš (1940: 52) writes: "in the four-syllable [trochaic] dipody the last syllable is undoubtedly short, in the three-syllable [trochaic] dipody it is long, or at least potentially long". The dipodic dactyl plays a role alongside the trochee, but is much less represented: in the monumental six-volume collection *Latvian Folksongs* by Krišjānis Barons (1894–1915), dactylic songs make up 5.05% or slightly more than one 20th of the total number of songs (Ancītis 1944: 440). It must be mentioned that the system sketched above has recently been severely criticised for being based on transcribed song texts and ignoring recitation practice, and with it any real metric fluidity and diversity

(Boiko 2016). The transcription of the Dignāja recitative provides a good illustration of Bērziņš theory failing on important points when confronted with practice. As this will be considered a bit later, let us now turn to the analysis of the rhythmic structure of the Dignāja recitative.

There are significant differences in how the solo sections and those of the choir are constructed. First, let's look at their rhythmic shape. The solo sections are not subject to the musical metre. (This is signalled in the transcription by $\frac{S}{M}$, *senza metro*.) What determines the rhythmic structure here, are 1) the verse stresses (recitation stresses that divide the section into four verse segments, one for each stress), 2) their position in the verse segment, 3) the number of syllables within the verse segment and 4) syllable durations within the verse segments. Looking ahead, I'd like to point out that the solo sections show no evidence of trochee.

The syllables in the solo sections are durationally quite diverse. In the first melostrophe the durations range from a maximum value of 388ms in the stressed monosyllable *treis* ('three') with the diphthong *ei* as its nucleus, preceded by two consonants in onset and followed by one consonant in offset, to the minimum value of 127ms only in the short open syllable *ci-* in the word *citai* ('other'), where the short vowel *i* is preceded by the unvoiced consonant *c*. (The difference between the two is 261ms, ratio 3.1 : 1.) In the solo section of the third melostrophe a maximum value of 381ms is reached by the long open syllable *-šā* (in *trešā*, 'the third') and the minimum value of 119ms by the short closed syllable *tik,* where the short vowel *i* is surrounded by two unvoiced consonants. (The difference between the two is 262ms, ratio 3.2 : 1.) Correspondingly the verse segments in the solo sections are of a largely different durations as well, for example, the duration of the third segment in the solo section of the first melostrophe is 636ms only when the preceding second segment, with 1051ms, is substantially longer: ratio 1.7 : 1.

The choir sections split into two subsections, the first comprising two melolines and closing with the precadence [musical notation],[15] the second matching the last meloline accommodating the final cadence. In the first subsection the syllable durations maintain some influence on the rhythmic movement. However, the metric grid (4/8) is at work here modifying the syllable durations by evening out the major durational contrasts so that the rhythmic movement tends to come closer to a more or less balanced metric pulsation. Nevertheless, enough durational unevenness remains: the durational differences go back to the structural properties of the syllables, although due to the impact of the musical metre, they are less pronounced when compared to the durations in the solo section. To confirm this statement, a comparison of the syllable durations of the two sections of the first melostrophe is given below in the form of a diagram. Before presenting the diagram some clarifying remarks are necessary regarding how it should be read. The interpretation of the duration differences between the syllables in the solo section and that of the choir is complicated not only by the choir being (loosely) controlled by the musical metre but also by tempo changes, especially lengthenings (marked by *fermata*, *ritenuto*), which affect the speed of the rhythmic pulsation and the syllable durations. When reading the diagram in Figure 2 one has to take into consideration that the first syllable (*mēs*) of the choir section is lengthened (*fermata*) and that in the precadence (*lei-dzē-jom*) a clearly perceivable *ritenuto* takes place making the syllabic durations of this segment incomparable with the corresponding syllabic durations in the solo section. For the same reasons the final cadence is excluded from the comparison and from the diagram.
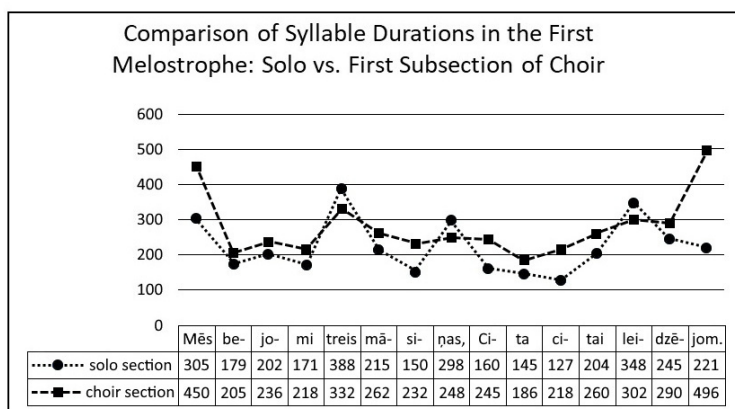
Figure 2. Diagram of syllable duration (ms) based on measurements of the Latvian recitative depicted in Figure 1.

Thus, concerning the choir section of the first melostrophe the result is heterogeneous, as if achieved through some kind of compromise: on the one hand the flow of speech tends to maintain the natural durational relations between syllables, on the other, the metric grid tends to modify syllables towards durational uniformity. To describe this condition the term 'loose (musical) metre' comes to mind. A similar conclusion would be reached when analysing the choir section of the third melostrophe.

The closed monosyllable *tik* deserves special attention as a rhythm unit. Even in the second subsection of the third melostrophe it still significantly resists the balancing force of the metre. Let us compare how the durational context of this monosyllable changes throughout the melostrophe. In the solo section the ratio between the preceding long syllable *tei* ('that'), *tik* ('only') and the following *lei-* (first syllable of *leidze* 'along') is 2.6 : 1 : 2.6. In the first subsection of the choir, where the metre already decisively affects the rhythmic structure, the ratio is 1.8 : 1 : 2.2. Despite the metre's unifying influence, the syllable *tik* resists conforming, leaving something like a small cut-out in the pulsation like the needle on a turntable skipping a groove. Even in the final cadence despite further slight reduction the ratio reduces only to 1.7 : 1 : 2.

Another important difference between the solo and the choir sections concerns the structure and interpretation of versification.

According to auditory perception, in the first melostrophe of the choir section the singers' interpretation corresponds to the dipodic trochee, with verse lines consisting of four 'stressed–unstressed' feet (╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡). In contrast, in the solo section, the verse segments do not sound as if built dipodically, their schematic representation being ╱ ◡ ◡ ◡. In the third melostrophe, the distich also appears in two versification and interpretation versions. The soloist places the stress on the second syllable in the first segment, and this segment and the following one contain only three syllables each. The third and the fourth segments consist of four syllables each but again are not dipodically built, while the choir section, as in the first melostrophe, adheres to the dipodic trochee (see also Figure 3).[16]

Solo:

◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ◡ ╱ ◡ ◡ ◡ ╱ ◡ ◡ ◡

3. Tei   tre - šā,   va - cā - kā,   Tei tik lei - dze   vil - cē - ji - ņa.

Choir:

╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ (◡) ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ (◡) ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ ◡ ╱ (◡)

Tei tre - šā, tei   va - cā - kā,   Tei tik lei - dze   vil - cē - jiņ',   Tei tik lei - dze   vil - cē - jiņ'.

*Figure 3. The perceived stresses in the third melostrophe of the Latvian recitative depicted in Figure 1,
╱ primary stress, ╱ secondary stress, ◡ unstressed.*

Here an explication is necessary: the stress on the second syllable (*tre-*) of a verse seg-ment like that in the first segment of the solo section in the third melostrophe tends to occur (though with no regularity) when this syllable is the first (and thus, the stressed) syllable of a three- or two-syllable lexical word[17] and this word in the verse segment is preceded by a monosyllabic functional word. This is the case above: the demonstrative pronoun *tei* ('that') here in the function of the definite article is followed by a two-syllable ordinal numeral *trešā* ('third'). Thus, the word stress (as it would appear in normal speech) does not correspond to trochaic structure here. (One might say that the metric foot here essentially resembles rhythmic groups as they used to occur within normal speech.) In the choir section, under similar lexical conditions, the first syllable of the lexical word is never stressed. So, within one and the same melostrophe the same distich is interpreted in two different ways.

The solo section in both melostrophes, but especially in the third, is speech-like indeed. This is primarily due to the stresses following the lexical words (as this would be in speech) and not the functional ones that would be unavoidable, should the solo singer strive to give the distich a trochaic shape. In addition, it is important that no bal-ancing elements of verse formation emerge in the solo section of the third melostrophe, whereas in the choir section, to get the necessary number of rhythm units, repetition of the monosyllable *tei* at the end of the first dipody is added, and a crotchet emerges at the end of the second dipody containing two rhythm units, etc. The absence of dipo-dicallity is also important in the solo sections. Nevertheless, one operates here with musical tones/pitches organised in a scale, although pitches are sometimes blurred. In the stressed syllables/tones this is due to the falling and rising syllabic tones whose fall-ing or rising micro-curves co-shape the respective sound events preventing a clear-cut pitch from resulting.[18] In the choir section the wording arranged to dipodic trochee and verse stresses are brought 'in unison' with the accents of the musical metre, making the presence of the micro-curves of the syllabic tones much less perceptible. This, of course, noticeably diminishes the 'speech-likeness' of the choir section if compared to the solo section.

The Dignāja case is characterised by substantial differences in how the two sections within the melostrophe are rhythmically shaped (coexistence within one melostrophe of the *senza metro* and a metrorhythmically bound section) and shows two different ways the text can be treated in Latvian recitatives. Unfortunately, an estimate of how widespread such pronounced duality was, is not possible yet. At the same time, there is

no doubt about its importance. At any rate the Dignāja case is not meant to characterise the Latvian recitatives in their entirety – it has been chosen to provide a landmark when starting a closer acquaintance, and a reference for critical reflection of the following field transcriptions, which reflect recitation rather schematically. Here are a few remarks to broaden the perspective right away. Although the five-meloline structure is the most prominent formal pattern, there are two-, three- and four-meloline recitatives, too. The case above shows only two techniques of melody formation, both based on the principle of the reciting tone;[19] these two are among the most important in Latvian recitatives. To what extent the interpretation of solo sections (considering the entire documental corpus of recitatives) was as speech-like and untouched by the musical metre as in the Dignāja case, remains wrapped in mist as the old sources (mainly late 19th and 20th century field transcriptions) only rarely and weakly provide details of syllabic duration.

What the transcription above indirectly implies, apart from other things, is that the standard notation as it was, and still is, largely used in Latvian folk song collection was/is unable to capture non-metric rhythmic processes and subtle sonic events. Collectors used to circumvent this problem (of which many were not aware or thought to be unimportant) by squeezing the solo sections in their transcriptions into the 2/4 metric grid and by translating the syllabic passages into series of isochronous quavers, thus, making an informed contemporary researcher puzzle over whether the solo section in a particular transcription was indeed subjected to a strict metre and consisted of uniform rhythmical values, as the transcription purports to present, or if the soloist used a loose musical metre, or he/she operated *senza metro* (as, respectively, in the solo sections in the Dignāja case, Figure 1). Older sound records provide little help here for they are scarce and from few localities. Nevertheless, the picture which the sound records (both old and newer) provide, shows the use in the solo sections of all three mentioned options – strict metre, loose metre and *senza metro* –, though represented in changing proportions, the *senza metro* becoming rarer the younger the soloists were and the more recently the recordings were made. (Presumably under the influence of the choral singing and/or singing classes at school.) Looking back in history one finds revealing statements that describe the use of *senza metro* recitation in the solo sections, for example, Jurjāns (1980b [1892]) in his essay "Observations, While Collecting Latvian Folk Music Materials", an account of his fieldwork in summer 1891, described the difficulties he encountered when trying to transcribe recitatives in the poorhouse in Dunalka parish, south-eastern Kurzeme. He writes that the transcription was "however only partly possible because the singers in each stanza [melostrophe] changed the melody following the word stresses" (ibid.: 116). The quotation reveals that even for Jurjāns a satisfactory solution when transcribing was not within reach and that he (and this is important) was aware of that. The change in melody "following the word stress" (let me add: which is incompatible both with musical metre and trochee) is just what takes place in the solo sections in the Dignāja recitative.

As explained, the old transcriptions usually do not allow for conclusions on whether the solo section was subject to musical metre and if so to what extent. As for the melodic contour we can assume that its representation in transcriptions is more reliable than that of the rhythm, i.e. that the contour reflects, though in a simplified way, the melodic events more or less adequately. This allows us to move on to the central part of the study: melody formation techniques.

Latvian recitatives are a ramified phenomenon characterised by local diversity. In the next chapters, an exemplifying and systematising presentation of the techniques of melody formation is offered. The meaning of technique here is a particular way of shaping the melodic contour or connecting the components (phrases, motifs) of the melodic structure. In terms of vocal practice and performance, technique means the performer's skill in using certain patterns of vocal activity to create a particular melodic contour. It must be noted that this study does not contain either a classification of the recitatives according to the techniques used in them, or a classification of the melody formation techniques themselves.[21] Here, a typology of techniques is proposed, oriented towards the needs of analytical practice. When constructing this typology, I was guided by phenomenological patterns of thinking: the basic categories of the typology were formed by allowing my experience, gained through multiple assessment and contemplation of the documentary corpus and every single unit, to freely take on categorial forms. Thus, a typology of melody techniques was acquired that contains categories that cannot always be neatly separated from each other and even allows for the formation of grey areas between them, but which possesses flexibility and a high level of applicability.

There are two groups of techniques of melody formation in Latvian recitatives: morphologic and syntactic.

The morphologic ones are about the shape (*morphḗ*, ancient Greek 'form') of the melodic contour, for example, terms like 'reciting tone' (already used when examining the Dignāja transcription) discloses much about the shape of the melody contour even before one has heard the recitative or seen its transcription, specifically that the melody is based on the recitation axis. Syntactic techniques are about how the phrases (phrasal melolines) and motifs are or are not interconnected – about their relationship when shaping a melodic structure, not primarily the melodic contour. The two groups are nearly always exclusive, i.e., when a syntactic technique is identified in a melodic structure, there is normally no chance for a meaningful projection of the categories of morphologic techniques on it and, vice versa, when reciting tone or another morphologic technique is detected, it usually excludes the option of a resultative implementation of syntactic categories in the description of the respective structure. It remains to be added (and what was said above already suggests this) that many terminological innovations will inevitably have to be introduced in the course of the following.

In the Dignāja recitative (Figure 1), two related techniques are used side by side. The first subsection of the choir section is based on the reciting tone, reminiscent of that in the psalmody: multiple repetitions of the same pitch follow each other to form a straight single pitch line (see also Endnote 19). Further, this technique will be referred to as the *plain reciting tone*. It ends with a precedence followed by the final cadence with a rudimentary drone in the background. As already indicated, this type of reciting tone most commonly becomes associated with psalmody, but as a melody formation technique it can be found in many cultures (see, for example Gerson-Kiwi 1961). The question of what the origin of this technique might have been in the Latvian case will not be raised here, the research is not ripe for this. I would like to add only that whatever the origin, psalmody terms such as intonation, mediation, termination, sometimes prove useful when describing melodic and formal construction of Latvian five- and four-meloline recitatives. (On these melodic elements as they occur in psalmody, see Apel 1990: 210; Saulnier 2010 [2003]: 37, etc.)

The solo sections in the Dignāja recitative show a different variety of reciting tone: *the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables*. Melodical emphasis means here the melodic marking of the stressed syllables through a pitch that is higher (or occasionally lower) than the axis formed by the reciting tone and serving as the backbone of the melodic construction, in other words, this reciting tone technique is characterised by syllabic stresses being enhanced by melodic means. Generally, this type of reciting tone is reserved for solo sections. The material available for study does not allow for certain conclusions on whether there was an exclusive association between the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables and *senza metro* on the one hand, and that of the plain reciting tone with the loose musical metre on the other hand, as the Dignāja recitative leads us to imagine. The transcription in Figure 4 exhibits both techniques described above and in the same succession as in the Dignāja case. The transcription suggests a strict 2/4 metre both in solo and choir sections. Whether this was true, especially for the solo section, remains unknown. However, one small detail indicates that the syllabic durations might have played some role in the solo section: in the first bar a dotted quaver is followed by a semiquaver which seem to reflect the ratio between the open long syllable *tā-* and the following open short syllable *-da.* (*Tāda*, feminine demonstrative pronoun 'such', nominative.)

Figure 4. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Dunalka in south-western Kurzeme. Ernests Treilībs in Dunalka parish, born in Rāva parish in 1883, field transcription by Romualds Jermaks, 1961. Source: Vītoliņš 1968: 450, No 1257.

The uncertainty about the extent to which the rhythmic picture provided by this transcription can be trusted is shared with hundreds of other transcriptions of Latvian recitatives. This transcription is typical in another aspect, too: like most 'post-Jurjāns' transcriptions this one contains only one melostrophe, which was probably written down when the collector had an indoor session with an individual singer who was presenting

his repertoire by going through it step by step, and when necessary performing both the solo and the choir section. For a long time in the 20th century, this was the standard situation when doing collection work. Despite its schematic nature the transcription allows us to unmistakably identify the techniques of melody formation.

A noteworthy detail is that the technique called here the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables was, in the 1950s, already analysed and exemplified by the musicologist and medievalist Jammers in his study *The Medieval German Epos and Music* (see Jammers 1969 [1957]: 105–171). Jammers (ibid.: 125) describes, among other things, medieval German Gospel recitation in the ecclesiastical province of Mainz:[22]

> Each linguistically accented syllable is given here a higher tone, so that the tonal picture of these recitatives is, at least at first hearing, completely different from the usual Roman recitation tone: the voice does not remain on a single tone, but fluctuates between two tones, one for the accented and one for the unaccented syllables.[23]

To address this kind of Gospel recitation Jammers and other authors use the term *Accentus Moguntinus* (Latin *Moguntiacum* 'Mainz'; Köllner 1956; 1958; Jammers 1969 [1957]: 124–126; Stevens 1986: 213; etc.), and sometimes also the term *Tonus Moguntinus* is used (Mierke 2008: 49). The exemplifications Jammers provides belong to the larger category of Gregorian chant, specifically the lesson tones (*toni lectionis*). Jammers also says that "in the area of the Mainz diocese by the way this Accentus Moguntinus (which, however, also possessed other peculiarities) was preserved until the 17th century" (Jammers 1969 [1957]: 125). Jammers (ibid.: 125–126) is cautious in his statements regarding the historical and cultural rooting of the *Accentus Moguntinus:* "Whether this type … was the older one or a special local type, whether it developed under the influence of the Germanic accent or whether it has been preserved [inherited], remains to be seen." It follows from this statement however, that Jammers does not exclude the *Accentus Moguntinus* going back to local Germanic heritage and mentions nowhere the probability that the principle could go back to or be inspired by Roman tradition. Let's wait for further study to make a conclusion about the provenance of the Latvian variety of this technique. At this moment what can be said for sure is that both the *Accentus Moguntinus* and reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables in Latvian recitatives are the same technique of melody formation. Whether this has a historical connection in the background, or is a pure convergency phenomenon remains to be seen.

Neither in the Dignāja nor Dunalka recitatives do the solo or choir recitation axes change pitch: in the case of the plain reciting tone the shift of the axial pitch within a section almost never takes place. Not so when the stressed syllables are melodically emphasised. The following lullaby from central Latvia (Figure 5) shows the reciting tone at the end of the first section (the fourth bar) changing from d^2 to e^2, and in the second section remaining there for two bars and then changing back to d^2.[24] This example, where, if one trusts the transcription, the musical metre and the verse (dipodic dactyl) display an ideal match, also shows that by raising the corresponding tones the melodic emphases of the stressed syllables don't have to be used in every bar, and sporadic absence of emphasis can be the means of melostrophe variation.

Figure 5. Lullaby from Skaistkalne in Zemgale. Anna Mazlazdiņa, born in Skaistkalne parish in 1871, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1933. Source Vītoliņš 1971: 142, No 186.

The diversity of reciting tone techniques does not end with the changing reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables, as in the transcription above. One more type is presented in Figure 6 through its 2nd and 3rd melostrophe where the second tone in every bar (it accommodates an unstressed syllable) deviates from the axial tone for a falling minor second.

Figure 6. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Medze in south-western Kurzeme. Anna Almane, born in Medze parish in 1850, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1928. Source Vītoliņš 1968: 139–140, No 306.

In my previous studies I have called this technique the reciting tone with syllabic embellishments, whereby two varieties were differentiated: a reciting tone with upper, and lower (as in the Figure 6), embellishments (Boiko 2003: 27–28). Hereinafter, for the sake of brevity the term *undulated reciting tone* is used. (This of course does not negate the ornamental nature of the respective unstressed tones (*cambiatas*).) It is worth paying attention to the change in technique in the transcription above: in the first melostrophe a plain (rhythmised) reciting tone is used, in the following melostrophes thanks to a switch from dactyl to dipodic trochee it was possible to replace the plain reciting tone with an undulated reciting tone.

The axiality, created by reciting tone, is a property shared by all techniques examined so far. As the examples above imply, the criterion for a pitch repetition to be considered a recitation tone is it extends over an entire section or the first subsection, or close to that.

The next group of the morphologic techniques is based on the relationship between two tones, neither of which *gets the upper hand*, or in other words on the competition of two tonal/melodic axes neither of which prevails (bi-axiality). Following a 20th century terminological tradition it is called here the *pendular melody* (*Pendelmelodik*). This means oscillation of the melody "between two tones, from which neither dominates" (Collaer 1974: 20), specifically, the use of two tones in such doses that neither gets the upper hand rhythmically, tonally or melodically. This is a rarely occurring, though (as will be shown in the final section of the study) not an insignificant, technique. The pendular melody usually occurs in the solo section and the oscillations are generally regular, although variation of the oscillation figure sometimes leads to irregularities. The interval between the lower and upper axis and, thus, the interval of the oscillation can be a second, third or fourth. If it is a second and the oscillations are irregular, it is not always easy to make a distinction between the pendular melody and a repeatedly changing reciting tone. In the first section of the second melostrophe of the following recitative from Kalncempji (Figure 7) the interval of oscillation is a small second, but thanks to the regularity of oscillations the case can be unmistakably identified as a pendular melody. This type is called here the *plain pendular melody* because no secondary tones are employed. The section ends with a short ascendant turn (mediation). In the first section of the first melostrophe, the technical solution is different: here, each bar of the section begins with a melodically emphasised stressed syllable. Thus, this transcription (made in summer 1891 by Jurjāns) records a remarkable phenomenon in the form of a switch from one technique to another.

Figure 7. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Kalncempji in eastern Vidzeme. Senior female singer Sikateriete in Kalncempji, field transcription by Andrejs Jurjāns, 1981. Source Jurjāns 1907: 11, No 5.

If the oscillation interval is a third or fourth, passing tones between the frame tones can occur, i.e., the gap between the two axes can be filled in. Below (Figure 8), in the first section of the first melostrophe the tone c^2 has the role of the passing (gapping) tone between the pendulum tones d^2 and b^1. Hereinafter this technique is called the *filled-in pendular melody*. This transcription (made 1932 in Tirza by Melngailis) again contains two melostrophes with the second one showing the undulated reciting tone, which this time has the upper undulation. As in Figure 7, the transcription below signals that the singer was ready to use (at least) two distinct techniques of melody formation.
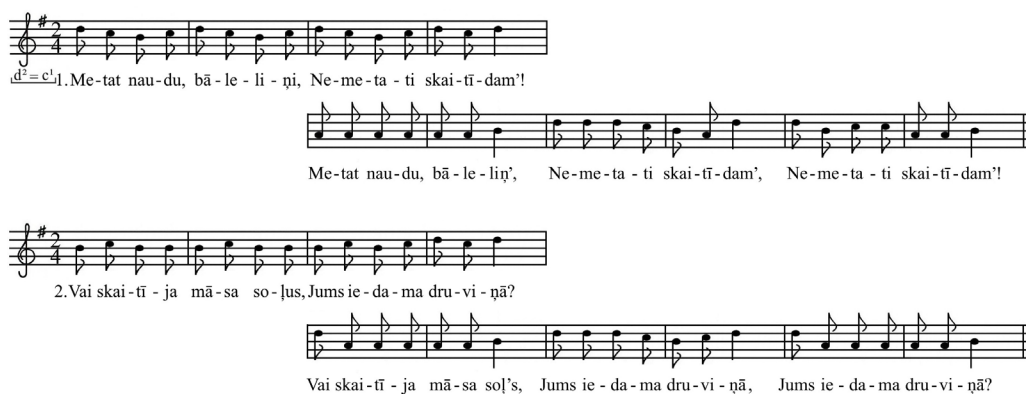
Figure 8. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Tirza in eastern Vidzeme. Anna Bērziņa, born 1854 in Lizums parish, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1932. Source Vītoliņš 1968: 487, No 1369.

SYNTACTIC TECHNIQUES

In the following description of the syntactic techniques, the terms motif and phrase will come up often. In studies of Latvian folk music the convention that the bar corresponds to the verse foot (for the trochee a dipody, for the dactyl a single metrical foot), and that the segment of the melody which corresponds to the bar is called a motif, persist. Thus, the motif is the melodic segment between the two successive bar lines and covers a verse foot. Such a formalistic determination of what a motif is, obscures the essential differences between motif in morphologic and in syntactic techniques.

Thus, when morphologic techniques are in use, a motif functions and behaves rather differently to when syntactic techniques are at work. In the case of the plain reciting tone one can at best speak of rhythmic motifs because the recitation axis lacks the profiled melodic figures essential for melodic motifs to emerge: a plain reciting tone comprising a whole section or close to that, constitutes a single large formation, structured only through the internal rhythmic groupings of tones (formed by the verse and/or musical metre). When the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables is employed, the 'motifs' are concomitants stemming from text pronunciation and thus are of a secondary nature. The crucial point is however that in techniques like reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables, undulated reciting tone, plain and filled-in pendular melody, the motifs, whatever their nature, do not merge into phrases. When syntactic techniques are applied, pairs of motifs merge into bi-motific melodic structures: phrases, *phrasal melolines*. (The term phrasal meloline is introduced here to distinguish between melolines in morphologic techniques, which do not form phrases, and those in the syntactic techniques, which do.) The prerequisite for the merge is that the motifs are at least slightly different – two identical successive motifs cannot unite into a phrase. (Difference unites, sameness separates.)[25] Difference in motif often comes with the emergence of a consolidating melodic or rhythmic peak, one for both motifs. The syntactic techniques in Latvian recitatives are about the relations between the bi-motific phrasal melolines. Next, I will show how syntactic techniques are used for both building phrasal melolines and for connecting them.

When two phrasal melolines differ slightly, but their melodic profiles coincide in the essential contour-forming tones, the type of their relationship is variation. The technique of *phrase variation* is one of the most widely used in Latvian recitatives. Sometimes it covers an entire melody, that is, all melolines of a melody are in a variation relation to each other. Below, a lullaby from Līksna in Latgale is quoted which is consistently based on this technique.


Figure 9. Lullaby from Līksna in western Latgale. Vera Kokina in Aužgulēni, Līksna parish, age 73, field transcription by Pauls Dambis, 1959. Source Vītoliņš 1971: 139, No 177.

The scheme of the melostrophe above is $A_1 — A_2 — A_3$. The variation relationship works in all directions here. Each phrase stands in a variation relation to every other phrase: one can change in one's mind the order of phrases as it comes to mind, but their relation will not change. In four- and five-meloline recitatives the use of the phrase variation is usually limited to one section only, while the other is reserved for another technique, or a combination of two techniques.

Phrase repetition is a technique that has some peculiarities resulting from the following: the concept of the recitative as a phenomenon related to speech, implies that structural regularity is not very welcome. The precise recurrence of the same phrase, if it dominates, disrupts irregularity and variability, bringing structural uniformity. Repetitions of phrasal melodic segments in large doses stand in contradiction to the nature of recitative ('*recitativiness'*) as defined by Hill (2013, quoted in the Introduction). Every other technique described above can be used without restriction, not this one. However, avoidance of the recurrence of phrasal segments in Latvian recitatives is not all-encompassing. Phrase repetition occurs in slightly more than 25% of the transcriptions examined. With rare exceptions it encompasses only two melolines (i.e., more than one repetition is avoided) and is always only one of techniques used in the respective melostrophe, that is, it appears in the melostrophe together with one or two other techniques. What mitigates the effect of repetition is sometimes that it does not follow the phrasal meloline that is repeated immediately: see the second melostrophe in Figure 8, where the phrasal fifth meloline is a repetition of the third. The following tendency is valid for the use of this technique: the fewer melolines in a melostrophe, the lower the chance of phrase repetition. Consequently, repetition of a phrase most often occurs in five-meloline recitatives, is less often found in four-meloline, and only very rarely found in three-meloline recitatives. Despite of these restrictions, the phrase repetition is an important technique of melody formation in Latvian recitatives despite it never being allowed to dominate.

The *motific linking of phrases* is another widely used syntactic technique. It emerges when two phrasal melolines partially resemble each other, i.e., when a motif is repeated or varyingly repeated in another phrase, while the other motif in that phrase is utterly different. Such partial relatedness is insufficient to form the variation relationship. Depending on whether the linking motif is identical or varied, one can refer to *meloline*

linkage by motif repetition or *meloline linkage by motif variation*. Below (Figure 10) is a three-meloline recitative where the motific link is the only technique used.

Figure 10. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Asūne in south-eastern Latgale. Anele Prikņa, Asūne parish, field transcription by Vilnis Salaks, 1960. Source Vītoliņš 1968: 458, No 1284.

All the phrases are tightly linked by the motif $c - c - b - b$, which appears in each of them. This results in a A—B—C scheme.
 a-b b-c b-d
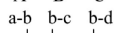
The motific link is traceable in all formal types of recitative, although, except for the two-meloline recitatives, it rarely alone comprises an entire melostrophe. In four- and five-meloline recitatives the motific link most often appears in combination with phrase variation and shows great diversity in configuration and the proportion in which both techniques occur. In Figure 7 a striking case of a configuration of three techniques is shown where the fifth meloline is a variation of the third and both the third and the fifth are linked through the motif $a - g - g - f$ to the fourth meloline; this same motif is furthermore related to the (secondary) motifs, which in the solo section of the first melostrophe result from the melodical emphases of the stressed syllables.

THE ARCH CONTOUR

Variation, repetition and motific linking do not exhaust the diversity of relationships that happen to arise between phrasal melolines. Sometimes two neighbouring melo-lines in a two-meloline recitative or in a two- meloline section/subsection of a five-, four- or three-meloline recitative do not exhibit any of these, that is, from the point of view of the listed options, they are unrelated. However, this rarely proves to be true from a broader perspective. When two phrasal melolines in a section/subsection show neither variation, repetition nor motific linking, most often another principle providing coherence is in play, a principle that signals interference of non-recitative/songlike styles, specifically, two phrasal melolines turn out to be united into one large phrase spanning both and turning them into sub-phrases. Usually, some kind of a melodic arch is the result of such a merger, and the sub-phrases are united under one climactic tone.[26] In the next transcription (Figure 11) the melodic arch spanning two bi-motific phrasal melolines of the first section can easily be pursued even though the uniting climactic point (tone c^2) lies far from the centre of the arch.[27]

Figure 11. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Rubeņi in Augšzeme. Ilze Griņicka in Rubeņi parish, born in Gārsene parish 1839, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1926. Source Vītoliņš 1968: 78, No 115.

The example in Figure 12 exhibits a similar construction, although it has a peculiar feature in that its first meloline is not phrasal, it consists of two motifs, the second of which is the repetition of the first. (If its repetition persisted into the second meloline, the result would be a filled-in pendular melody.) But this does not prevent the first meloline from merging with the second, which is phrasal, and becoming part of a large phrasal arch spanning all four motifs of the section. The centralising (consolidating) factor behind this is the climactic tone d^2 in the first bar of the second meloline (the motifs of the first meloline gravitate towards this climax), followed by a lower but also quite pronounced peak c^2 in the second bar of the same meloline.

Figure 12. Recitative flax harvesting song from Zemgale. Helena Vollenberga in Riga, born around 1890, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1930. Source Vītoliņš 1958: 110, No 224.

The proportion of cases in which a whole section is phrasal is not very large in Latvian recitatives. However, they certainly deserve a closer look in a future study as manifestation of the influence of song-like styles on recitatives. Sometimes a large arch contour emerges in conjunction with the motific link: the two-meloline arch contour and the motific link are not mutually exclusive, while the arch contour and meloline variations almost always are. In the recitative from Asūne (Figure 10) the solo section hosts both a pronounced motific link and a vague arch contour.

TECHNIQUE CHANGE AND IMPROVISATION

So far, this study has mainly dealt with categorisation, description, exemplification and arrangement of techniques, without paying much attention to the technique change as shown by the transcriptions in Figures 7 and 8. These transcriptions reveal that the techniques were more than tools of melody formation: in the course of the performance, they have been used alternately. In the singers' minds there is a set of techniques from which he/she could choose and implement one or other of the techniques at his/her

own discretion, or perhaps following some rules that are unknown to the research. (We should not rule out the possibility that a detailed study of folk terminology would shed light on this.) Techniques existed in singers mind as mental constructs in a choice-available form. They were not some rigidly memorised melodic 'stuff', but patterns of melody generation arranged in a set. The analysis of the transcription from Lejasciems in Figure 14 will bring us closer to understanding this phenomenon, but first it is necessary to look into the origin of this transcription.

In the conclusion to his programmatic essay "Latvian Folk Music", Jurjāns (1980a [1879]: 24) calls on Latvian intellectuals to write down, collect and send him "the melodies of folk songs ... as they are heard in the folk", also revealing his intention to publish a "critically compiled collection of folk songs". Behind his call was of course the idea of folk song as a cornerstone of national art and culture, going back to the well-known Herderian concept. Over the next decade, more than 1,000 transcriptions came into Jurjāns' possession. Since only a small number of them were made by Jurjāns himself, the following question arose:

> whether the senders, most of whom were not skilled in music, have indeed written them [the melodies] down correctly, all the more so because many folk melodies do not lie within the contemporary tonal system, which makes it very difficult to write them down correctly (Jurjāns 1980b [1892]: 92).

Concerns about the correctness of the transcriptions, that is, their suitability for a "*critically* [emphasis mine] compiled collection of folk songs" led Jurjāns (ibid.) to opt for the following solution:

> In the summer of last year [1891] I, supported by the Music Commission of the Riga Latvian Society, toured some of the more remote parts of Latvia in order to personally verify the correctness of the folk melodies sent to me and to collect new materials of folk music.[28]

When planning his trip, Jurjāns contacted his correspondents (teachers, physicians, parish elders and other respected people of their respective localities) by letter to secure their organisational and moral support when approaching the singers. Thanks to such preparations, he met with entire groups of local singers several times and, most importantly, on several occasions found himself 'thrown' into performance situations that differed little from authentic ones, and in which his presence had little influence on the spontaneity of the singers. In other words, he was given the opportunity to look into and listen to *real practice* of the folk music of his time. This circumstance is extremely important from the point of view of the subject matter of this study as future collectors will not find themselves in such situations often; even more rarely were they able to appreciate them and use to the extent that Jurjāns, with his trained musical ear, memory and transcription skills, was able to do.

On the evening of July 5, 1891 (July 17 by the new style), Jurjāns met local singers in Lejasciems in eastern Vidzeme:

> Dr Mauriņš[29] had invited us[30] there [to Lejasciems], saying that there was still a wealth of music to be found in the surroundings, and promising to do his best to make sure that we get to hear it. … On the following ... evening, doctor organised the midsummer-night celebration for the village female singers at his home by say-

ing as a pretext that he would not be at home on St. John's Day and therefore could not organise a reception. As dusk fell, they arrived – the mothers and village girls... with their hands full of flower wreaths and John's grasses, decorated the host and the guests with wreaths and started to sing the John's songs and to recite, so I barely managed to write down. … In addition to the John's tunes, I also managed to write down several variants of the *apdziedāšanās* songs.[31] (Ibid.: 102–103)

The "variants of the *apdziedāšanās* songs" are recitatives that most likely refer to the transcription below.

Figure 13. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Lejasciems in eastern Latvia. Female singers of Lejasciems parish, field transcription by Andrejs Jurjāns, 1891. Source Jurjāns 1907: 13, No 10.

Jurjāns transcribed five melostrophes, three with variations. (The variations – marked by small notes – could not be used in analysis because it is unclear whether the small notes have to be read together as if reflecting a melodic contour of its own or if each of the small notes marks an individual option of variation of the melodic contour marked by the big notes.) According to the transcription, the choir section is unchanging, but

not so the solo section where the use of three techniques can easily be detected. The solo section of the fifth melostrophe hosts the pendular melody, the fourth the undulated reciting tone, and the second the variation of phrasal meloline. The solo section of the first melostrophe is reminiscent of the arch structure in the solo section of the transcription in Figures 11 and 12. The phrasal construction in the solo section of the third melostrophe, regardless of some similarity with that of the first melostrophe, resists explicit categorisation by the terminological/theoretical means developed in the present study.[32] Nevertheless, it is worth paying attention to how well the solo section of the third melostrophe is concatenated with that of the choir thanks to common motifs *g – f – e – (e)* and *a – g – g – (g)* tightly binding both sections. The same applies to the first melostrophe.

Notably the Kalncempji transcription (Figure 7) makes a valuable complement to that from Lejasciems.[33] The choir section in both transcriptions differs insignificantly through its first meloline: in both cases the melodic substance of the choir section is almost the same. (So is the technical configuration of phrasal melolines, the fifth being a variation of the third, and the third and fifth being connected to the fourth through the motific link.) However, what is of the utmost importance is that in the solo section of the second melostrophe, Sikateriete – the senior singer Jurjāns visited in Kalncempji – used plain pendular melody, while in the first section the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables was used. Should Sikateriete have sung with singers from Lejasciems on the July 5, 1891, she would have added the reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables to the set of techniques, along with another version of the pendular melody, thus enlarging the technical diversity of the singing event significantly.

Jurjāns correctly identified the phenomenon his Lejasciems transcription reflects. He wrote: "As can be seen from the many variants, the soloist changes the melody with each strophe as if improvising" (Jurjāns 1907: 13). If the improvisation is understood as a real-time choice among possible paths, using familiar patterns and their combinations,[34] then the improvisation is what is going on in the solo sections of Jurjāns' transcription. In terms of the present study, the real-time or on-the-spot choice as reflected by Jurjāns is made among diverse morphologic and syntactic melody formation techniques and patterns of melody generation. The following transcription gives an insight into how the techniques could be used to form inter-melostrophe connections.

Figure 14. Recitative, multifunctional melody from Alsunga in coustal Kurzeme as used in the St. John's Eve (Midsummer Night) celebration. Nikolajs Heņķis (1866–1934) in Alsunga parish, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1926. Source Vītoliņš 1973: 344, No 785.[35]

As in the previous transcription, the choir section does not change here: improvisation takes place in the solo section. Both syntactic and morphologic techniques are employed. In the first and fifth melostrophes[36] phrase repetition takes place, whereby since the phrasal melolines of the respective melostrophes differ slightly, an inter-melostrophe variation arises. In the sixth melostrophe in the solo section phrase variation is used. Further, the third melostrophe shows the reciting tone with melodically emphasised

stressed syllables in its purest form. This same technique is used in the second melostro-phe with the difference that the reciting tone starts with a short turn *e – g: intonation*, to use the terminology of psalmody. A further elaboration can be established in the fourth melostrophe where elements of undulated reciting tone, reciting tone with melodically emphasised stressed syllables and at the beginning a slightly longer intonation, are used. The result is a quite melodised melodic contour that does not overshadow the reciting tone as its base. The processes of the inter-melostrophe melodic elaboration can be summarised as follows. In the solo section in the first, fifth and sixth melostrophes elaboration progresses around a phrasal frame *e – g – f# – e*; in the second and fourth melostrophes elaboration within the broader category of the reciting tone develops, reaching the most complex result in the fourth melostrophe where the combination of different elements provides for a high degree of melodisation.

Lejasciems and Alsunga form a revealing geographical configuration in which the two parishes are located at the opposite ends of Latvia (see map in Figure 16), with 300 km straight line distance between them. This indicates that technique change/improvi-sation was not a local phenomenon. This assessment is supported of course by the reci-tatives from Kalncempji (Figure 7) and Tirza (Figure 8), from two parishes not far away from Lejasciems. There is no lack of cases in which the use of two or more techniques can be confirmed indirectly, for example, by collating transcriptions made in the same parish independently at different times. Both of the following transcriptions are from Sarkaņi parish in Vidzeme. The first was made by Emilis Melngailis in 1930, the second by Vilis Bendorfs in 1970. Both were made when the collector had an indoor session with an individual singer.

Figure 15. a) Recitative, multifunctional melody from Sarkaņi in south-eastern Vidzeme. Eda Ozols, born 1850 in farmstead Briskas, Sarkaņi parish, field transcription by Emilis Melngailis, 1930, made in the poor-house of Sarkaņi parish. Source Vītoliņš 1958: 138, No 291. b) Recitative, multifunctional melody from Sarkaņi in south-eastern Vidzeme. Erna Ramane in Madona, born 1908 in Sarkaņi parish, field transcrip-tion by Vilis Bendorfs, 1970. Source Vītoliņš 1986: 233, No 567.

There are 40 years between the two recordings. When Bendorfs made his transcription in 1970 this material had probably already been out of use for quite some time, the fact that Bendorfs transcription lacks the fifth meloline could be seen as indication of that. Nevertheless, the choir sections in both transcriptions having a common melodic base is clearly recognisable. The solo sections melodically bear no resemblance to each other,

which is due to the use of different techniques of melody formation: the motific link (motif $a - a - a - a$ of the first meloline reshaped as $c - a - a - a$ in the second meloline) in the transcription by Melngailis, and the double-undulated reciting tone in that by Bendorfs.

There is no shortage of cases like the previous one when transcriptions from the same location, though made by different collectors at different times, when collated unveil traces of technique change. Through comparative work like that in the forgoing case there will be a lot to discover. And yet there is little hope of bringing to light material that provides a picture as rich as the one from Lejasciems or Alsunga. Collectors will not have expected improvisation. Sudden transformations of the melodic contour as brought about by technique change were not comprehensible to them, and when appearing, the respective melostrophes were often recorded as different pieces. The collectors only rarely faced living, pristine practices of recitation in real ritual contexts, which willy-nilly would confront them with technique change and probably improvisation. So, they remained unaware of it and consequently did not strive to get to know or document it. Of course, the conventional idea of song as a piece where stanzas follow each other sung to the same tune, supported by the experiences obtained in schools and choirs, have contributed to this. The idea in the backs of collectors' minds when they went to meet their singers was that they went to write down *songs*, not incomprehensible melodic processes.

Figure 16. Historical regions of Latvia and places of documentation of recitatives.

CONCLUSION

The present study adds new knowns to the general picture of Latvian traditional vocal music of the old layer and points to some international research perspectives. As shown below the new knowns entail even more new unknowns, but first the knowns.

1. The Introduction shows that syllable duration (in cooperation with verse/linguistic stress) used to be the dominant factor determining the rhythmic shape of the solo sections of Latvian recitatives, and that it influenced the rhythmic shape of structures that were primarily determined by the musical metre (choir section). Syllabic durations and syllabic tones play a significant role in the rhythmic and pitch organisation of recitatives, which, because the standard notation system was/is not designed to transcribe this type of music, is not or is only vaguely reflected in transcriptions.

2. The way the category of dipodic trochee is traditionally applied simplifies the reality. When confronted with the practice of recitation this category often turns out to be inadequate. For several reasons, the transcriptions usually leave this inadequacy undetectable: the bulk of transcriptions are unreliable when it comes to verse and rhythmic formation.

3. The transcriptions allow for the detection of a rich set of the techniques of melody formation, which can be divided into morphologic and syntactic techniques depending on whether a technique is focused on the formation of the melodic contour (techniques such as recitation tone and its varieties, and pendular melody) or (primarily) on the formation of relations between syntactic units such as phrasal melolines and motifs (phrase variation, phrase repetition, motific linking of phrases).

4. In the solo sections of melostrophes the techniques of melody formation could be applied alternately (technique change). Some transcriptions from the late 19th century and 1920s document improvisation based on a succession of three to four techniques. Such documentation of the improvisation process is, however, exceptional. A much larger portion of transcriptions exhibit the change of two techniques. There are many indirect proofs of technique change, which becomes discernible when collating the transcriptions made in the same location at different times. Against the backdrop of what was just described, the fragmentarity of the collected material becomes more evident than ever. On the other hand, the concepts of the melody formation techniques and of technique change allow for a new reading of the old transcriptions and, thus, for a more coherent general picture of the world of Latvian recitatives.[37]

5. It is clear that the practice of technique change (and probably that of improvisation, too) was not a narrowly local phenomenon: it was widespread.

6. Inter alia a preliminary result is that technique change was confined to the five- and four-meloline recitatives.

The knowns listed above induce many unknowns and questions:

1. Although there is no doubt that syllabic durations play an important role in the rhythmic formation of recitatives, it remains to be investigated through measurement what the relationship is between syllabic durations and musical metre in recitatives audio recorded in different regions and at different times.

2. Even if one accepts that the concept of dipodic trochee is deficient, the question remains as to what has to be put in place and how the 'discrepancies' in versification

between the solo section and the choir, as exposed in Figures 1 and 2, can be conceptually and terminologically bridged.

3. The differentiation between the application of morphologic and syntactic techniques usually does not cause difficulties, yet sometimes a third option of melody construction comes forward: the arch contour or another type of the large centralised phrasal melodic contour that spans an entire section or subsection of the melostrophe. The arch contour and technique of motific linking of phrases, and sometimes even a strongly melodised reciting tone, are not mutually exclusive. This may lead to ambiguities in the analysis and thus requires clarification.

4. Further investigation of technique change
- should be preceded by an exhaustive case-by-case analysis of all available material.
- would raise an important question about the functional range of technique change: how large was it? Was it as large as that of the five- and four-meloline recitatives in general?
- raises the question of how the techniques related to individual singers, for example, was it customary for one person to be in command of all or most of the techniques? (Investigation must reckon with the possibility that this question can only be hypothetically answerable, or not answerable at all.)
- leads us to ask if something like the prescriptions regulating the sequence of techniques are identifiable?

5. There is no doubt that the practice of technique change was not a narrowly local phenomenon. Yet this realisation alone is not satisfactory, it is necessity to identify all the localities for which there is direct and indirect evidence of technique change. (Intuition says that the general picture could turn out to be unbalanced.)

6. Although technique change seems to be confined to the five- and four-meloline recitatives, its relationship with the three-meloline recitatives remain to be examined because some of the latter are actually shortened five- or four-meloline recitatives. Did such shortening permanently exclude technique change?

As the above account shows, questions awaiting further research rise from many directions. This suggests that this study is only the beginning of a longer journey that will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the music in focus here.

NOTES

1 The term 'speech-like melodies' (*teiktās meldijas*, Latv. lit. 'the spoken melodies') Jurjāns (1903: 24) has used for the first time in the second volume of his publication of Latvian folk music. The complete terminological dichotomy *teiktās meldijas – dziedamās meldijas* ('speech-like melodies' – 'song-like melodies') surfaces in the third volume (Jurjāns 1907: 75–76).

2 In the extensive summarising work on the melodics of Lithuanian folksongs by Jadvyga Čiurlionytė the term 'recitative' appears only when describing laments, shepherd calls and recited insertions in fairy tales (some kind of *cante fable*) (Čiurlionytė 1969: 245). In the summarising chapter "A Brief Overview of Lithuanian Traditional Music", of the extensive research of Rytis Ambrazevičius, Robertas Budrys and Irena Višnevska (2015: 40–57) on scales in Lithuanian traditional music, the terms 'recitative' and/or 'recitative-like' do not appear at all. In the extensive overview of Belarusian folk music by Lidzija Mukharynskaya and Tamara Yakimyenka (1993)

the term 'recitative' appears sporadically and characterises disperse phenomena, thus there is no basis for a large categorial dichotomy as with the Latvian case. The same applies to Russian folk music (see Popova 1977; Kamayev and Kamayeva 2008, etc.) Notably the recitative-like phenomena in Belarusian and Russian music make no stylistically coherent category, which is more or less true for Latvian recitatives.

3 In contemporary Estonian terminology regarding the ancient Finnic alliterative singing tradition, the Finnish term *runolaulu* and Estonian *regilaul* are considered equivalent (Finn. *laulu*, Est. *laul* 'song'). However, in some Estonian contexts, *runolaul* is reserved for Finnish and Karelian songs, while Estonian songs of the same style are called *regilaul*. In English, the term 'runosong' has sometimes been extended to encompass all the old songs of the Baltic Finnic peoples as a whole, including Estonian *regilaul*. In older writings, the English term 'runic song' was used to refer to *regilaul/runolaulu*. (On complex Finnic terminology matters see Kallio et al. 2017.)
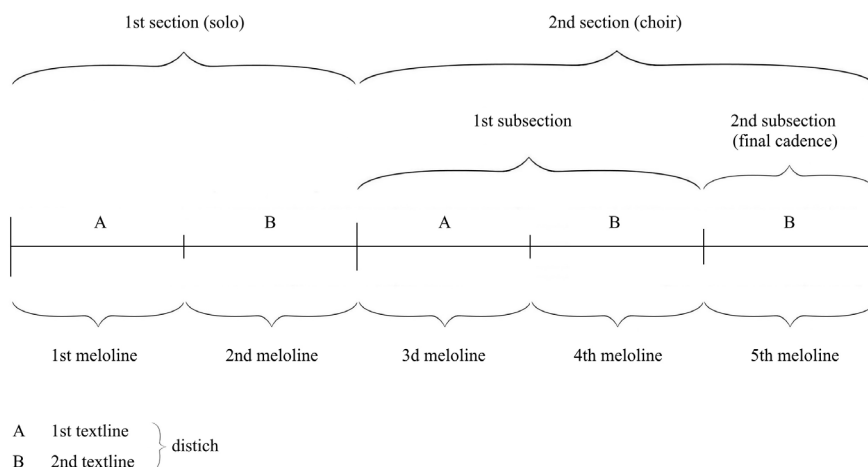
4 The division into *regilaul* and the *new stanzaic song* is still in active use in Estonian folk music discourse today. Ingrid Rüütel (1994: 7) in her study of the historical strata of Estonian folk songs writes: "Almost all researchers of the melodies of runosongs noted their recitativeness, closeness to speech intonation." However, to give a broader picture, for example, Urve Lippus (1995) in her monograph on runic song tradition avoids such characterisation, and distinguishes the older singing style in terms of the lack of a harmonic dimension. In the book by Jaan Ross and Ilse Lehiste (2001: 109–127) the performance of the *regilaul* is described using the term 'recitation' (see chapter the "Realization of Prosodic Structure in Recitation [emphasis mine] and Lament"), however the terms recitative-like, recitative, etc., do not occur.

5 Recitatives in the Latvian case do not entirely encompass the old layer, some non-recitative stylistic phenomena also belong to this layer. Tampere (1956: 12–13) similarly points to a group of runosongs which, although belonging to the old alliterative songs, do not exhibit recitativeness.

6 Several basic phenomena of old vocal folk music suggest a Latvian–Estonian in-depth discussion. For example, the position, use and structure of recitatives form one category of questions; another concerns the relationship between Estonian and Latvian trochees (see Sarv 2008). A further topic is the multifunctionality of basic melodic patterns, which, from the Estonian point of view, has already been extensively analysed (see Särg 2009). Importantly, no similar fundamental questions arise that require discussion from a Latvian–Lithuanian and/or Latvian–Belarussian/Russian perspective.

7 The register of the essential characteristics of recitative John Walter Hill (2013) gives, provides an insight into how patchy the picture of the phenomenon called recitative is in the musicological literature. It provides a good starting point for the analysis and comparison of what *is* recitative and what *is called* recitative and why. Due to thematic reasons and spatial limitations, I will not follow this intriguing path here.

8 *Melostrophe*: one realisation of a strophic melody. The melostrophe and the text-strophe (stanza) do not coincide in Latvian recitatives, the text-strophe consisting of four, six or eight verse lines while a melostrophe hosts only a couple. Meloline is the segment of the melostrophe corresponding to a text-line or its repetition. This term is perfectly neutral in the sense that it does not imply anything about the nature of the corresponding melodic segment, i.e. of whether it is a motif, phrase, part of a phrase, couple of short motifs, etc. Except for two-meloline melostrophes, a melostrophe most often contains repetitions of verse lines, thus the number of melolines equals that of the verse lines plus their repetitions. Beginning with the melostrophes consisting of three melolines, the melostrophe usually splits into two sections, that of the soloist and that of the choir, the first almost always comprising two melolines. Four- and five-meloline two-section melostrophes are the most common among recitatives. Below is a diagram of a typical five-meloline recitative.

1st section (solo) 2nd section (choir)

1st subsection 2nd subsection (final cadence)

| A | B | A | B | B |

1st meloline 2nd meloline 3d meloline 4th meloline 5th meloline

A 1st textline } distich
B 2nd textline

9 The justified question about the interonset intervals (IOIs) as the rhythm-forming units is left aside here because in the case under discussion the application of this category is problematic. The interonset interval is "the time interval between the onset of the tone and the onset of the immediately following tone. In other words, IOI is the sum of a tone's physical duration and the pause duration between the offset of the tone and the onset of the next" (Friberg and Battel 2002: 200). To the solo sections the category of IOI is not applicable because there the limits of the rhythm units coincide with those of the syllables (that is, there are no pauses between the syllables); in the choir sections the definition of the IOI is hampered because even though the onsets of the rhythm units by the three singers are given synchronically, the endings are not, they are blurred, each of the singers acting slightly differently.

10 In future research requiring a large quantity of measurements software must be used that determines the syllabic durations. In the present case the measurement was made by using Audacity 3.1.3 to obtain the waveform, which was further divided into syllables, and these then measured by using the select option. The boundaries between syllables were drawn at the points where the wave amplitude between the two neighbouring syllabic nuclei was the lowest.

11 The term *bar* refers only to the choir sections where the musical metre determines the rhythmic organisation.

12 Second melostrophe left out in transcription.

13 'The little one' (*seikuleite*): a singer whose role is limited to repeating in the second section the verse lines recited by the soloist in the first section.

14 All translations from Latvian, German and Russian are the author's.

15 Precadence: here a cadence-like melodic turn preceding the final cadence. Sometimes the fifth meloline, viz., the final cadence is dropped, reducing a five-meloline melostrophe to a four-meloline melostrophe. In such cases the precedence, if there is one, takes over the function of the final cadence.

16 The dipodic trochee is considered one of two standard verse metres of Latvian folksongs, the other being the dactylic tetrametre.

17 Latvian is a fixed initial stress language.

18 There are three syllabic tones in the long initial syllables of the words in standard Latvian: the sustained or drawling tone, the falling tone and the broken tone. In the Selonian vernaculars of the High Latvian dialect, to which the Dignāja vernacular belongs, one distinguishes between the falling, the rising–falling and rising tones.

19 Reciting tone: 1) a persistently repeated tone; 2) the segment of the melody that the persistent repetitions of the same tone/pitch cover. The term stems from the terminology of psalmody,

however the principle of the melodic formation it describes is widespread (see Gerson-Kiwi 1961).

20 I have described the most important techniques of melody formation in *Techniques of Melodic Formation in Latvian Recitatives* (Boiko 2003). This study was based on analysis of approximately 1,500 transcriptions, geographically encompassing most of Latvia's rural territories. The book insufficiently considers that the solo section in the four- and five-meloline recitatives is subject to much greater melodic changeability than the choir section. This led to an exaggerated emphasis of the constructive unity of melostrophe in cases where this unity was actually of secondary nature or even only apparent.

21 Considering the discontinuous and fragmentary nature of the documentary corpus, the use of a classificatory approach does not promise satisfactory results. It would entail the formation of numerous classificatory windows (some of which might even remain 'empty', i.e. purely theoretical, without exemplification) and each object being assigned to one of them only, without any respect for transitory or hybrid phenomena.

22 The ecclesiastical province of Mainz includes "Hildesheim, Würzburg, Bamberg, Halle, but also Worms and Speyer" (Jammers 1969 [1957]: 126).

23 It should be specified that although stressed and melodically emphasised the higher tone never takes over the function of the tonal centre, which is reserved for the lower tone.

24 Here and further the Helmholtz's pitch notation is used.

25 Of course, two identical successive motifs can become integrated into larger phrasal constructions, for example, in a large phrase established by a supra-meloline arch contour (as in the solo section in Figure 12). In the Latvian case, however, this can be traced only in the melodies which at least partially have already left the realm of old modal music.

26 Theoretically the arch shape of the pitch contour is of course not the only possible result of such a merge. David Huron (1995–1996: 9) in his study on the melodic arch offers a "classification of phrases" counting nine contour types: ascending, descending, concave, convex, horizontal-ascending, horizontal-descending, ascending-horizontal, descending-horizontal, horizontal. In Latvian recitatives, however, when two phrasal melolines are nested into a larger phrase, the result is usually a composite concave or (more rarely) convex pitch contour, of which the former is called the arch contour here.

27 The second section exhibits a typical meloline variation.

28 Map of Jurjāns' travel routes, see in Weaver and Mežs 2023.

29 Roberts Mauriņš, physician, graduate of the University of Tartu, father of the writer Zenta Mauriņa.

30 "Us" is here the so-called majestic plural (*pluralis majestatis*) common in European formal and media texts in the 19th century.

31 *Apdziedāšanās* is a folk term for song duels or singing competitions. These might arise in various merry contexts. Their aim was to make fun of a person or a group of people and to provoke them into giving a musical response so that a musical confrontation arises. Melodies used in *apdziedāšanās* were recitatives.

32 It is possible to interpret the first motif $g - g - g - g$ of the second meloline as a variation of the first motif $g - e - g - g$ of the first meloline, but in the given context such a solution seems too artificial.

33 The centres of the Kalncempji and Lejasciems parishes are about 19 km apart in straight line. Jurjāns and Mauriņš visited the singers in Kalncempji on the afternoon July 9 (July 21), 1891. They returned to Lejasciems in the evening of the same day.

34 Here I am preceding from the understanding of what is improvisation, given by pioneer of cognitive music study, jazz theorist and musician Steve Larson (2005: 272), who in his salient study "Composition versus Improvisation?" wrote: "I now understand improvisation as the real-time yet preheard – and even practiced – choice among possible paths that elaborate a preexisting structure, using familiar patterns and their familiar combinations and embellishments."

35 There are uncertainties concerning the origin of this transcription. It exhibits group performance, but only one person is mentioned as the source: Nikolajs Heņķis. Heņķis was a semi-professional local expert musician who played the Baltic psaltery *kokles*, bagpipes and other instruments, and has stored in his memory large collection of both local vocal and instrumental music. It seems that Melngailis added the drone in the second section of the recitative relying upon what he already knew about drone singing in Alsunga thanks to his field experience and Heņķis's comments, or that he simply did not register the names of the drone choir.

36 The numbering of the melostrophes should match that of the text distiches, but in Melngailis's transcription they do not because in two cases two distiches are written under one melody version and in two other cases there is only melody and no text at all. For these reasons, the numbering of the note staffs (of which there are six) is used as the numbering of the melostrophes.

37 The new reading opens new vistas and will pose fresh, difficult-to-master challenges to the folklore ensembles who dare to use it to innovate their performance practice. A newly issued handbook of Latvian recitatives signals that this form holds a fascination for practitioners of folk music revival (see Vīvere et al. 2022).

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