

Frontiers in Comparative Metrics V

In memory of Reuven Tsur and Barry Scherr

Call for Papers

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The University of Tartu and the Estonian Literary Museum are pleased to announce the fifth conference in the ongoing international series devoted to the comparative study of versification and poetics, to be held on 23–24 April 2026. We warmly invite proposals and abstracts, with submissions due by 1 November.

History of the conference series

This series began in 2008 with a conference dedicated to the memory of Mikhail Gasparov (1935–2005), whose work laid the foundations for contemporary Russian verse studies. The second meeting, held in 2014, honored Lucylla Pszczołowska (1924–2010), a prominent Polish scholar of metrics and poetics. The third (2017) celebrated the 75th anniversary of Jaak Põldmäe (1942–1979), a key figure in the development of Estonian verse theory and empirical studies of Estonian poetics (see Gasparov, Lotman, Rudnev, Tarlinskaja 2017; Pilshchikov 2014; Novikov, Arukask 2017). The fourth conference was originally conceived as a tribute to Marina Krasnoperova (1941–2010), whose theoretical innovations – especially her reconstructive simulation of versification – continue to have a lasting impact on the typological analysis of poetic forms. However, the continuation of the series was hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic and further disrupted by the war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine in February 2022. In accordance with the resolutions of the Academic Senates of the Universities of Tartu and Tallinn to suspend cultural and academic cooperation with the Russian Federation, the conference proceeded without a designated dedication and without representatives from Russian institutions (see Trunin 2022).

The fifth conference and its dedication

The fifth conference will be jointly organized by the Department of Semiotics at the University of Tartu and the Estonian Literary Museum. It will be dedicated to the memory of two distinguished scholars: Reuven Tsur and Barry Scherr. Tsur, a founder of cognitive poetics and a pathfinder in the study of the sound dimension of poetry, made far-reaching contributions to the theory of rhythm and auditory perception. Scherr, a prominent Slavist and metrist, helped shape the field of Russian versification and comparative metrics for decades.

Topics

We welcome proposals addressing any aspect of poetic form and prosody, including (but not limited to):

- Comparative and historical versification
- Poetics of sound, including phonosemantics and auditory imagery
- Meters in folklore and oral performance
- Statistical and quantitative approaches to versification and poetics
- Digital tools and corpora in the analysis of verse
- Cognitive and psychological aspects of poetic rhythm
- The interrelationship between metre and meaning
- Multilingual and cross-cultural studies of poetic form

Submissions from both theoretical and empirical perspectives are welcome. We especially encourage comparative studies that transcend linguistic, cultural and disciplinary boundaries, drawing on fields such as linguistics, literary studies, folklore, psychology, cognitive science, and computational humanities.

Abstracts (max. 300 words, in English) should be submitted by November 1, 2025, to maria.lotman@ut.ee. Notification of acceptance will be sent by December 1, 2025.

Organizing committee:

- Mihhail Lotman
- Mari Väina
- Igor Pilshchikov
- Mikhail Trunin
- Maria-Kristiina Lotman

References

- Gasparov, Mikhail; Lotman, Mihhail; Rudnev, Pyotr; Tarlinskaja, Marina 2017. Approaches to verse theory in the works of Jaak Põldmäe. Translated by Igor Pilshchikov and Marina Tarlinskaja. Edited by Igor Pilshchikov. In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 4(1), 130–149. <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2017.4.1.06>
- Novikov, Kadri; Arukask, Anni 2017. Frontiers in Comparative Metrics III, 29–30 September 2017, Tallinn, Estonia. In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 4(2), 144–152. <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2017.4.2.07>
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- Trunin, Mikhail 2022. Frontiers in Comparative Metrics IV, 16–17 September 2022, Tallinn, Estonia. In: *Studia Metrica et Poetica*, 9(2), 147–160. <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2022.9.2.06>