English summary

Laulut ja kirjoitukset: suullinen ja kirjallinen kulttuuri uuden ajan alun Suomessa (Songs and writings: oral and literary culture in early-modern Finland) has been written at the crossroads of historical and folkloristic studies. Our purpose is to study the interface of literary and oral cultures in early modern Finland, focusing on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The book renews the understanding of exchange between the learned culture of clergymen and the culture of commoners, or "folk". What happened when the Reformation changed the position of the vernacular language to literary and ecclesiastical, and when folk beliefs seem to have become an object for more intensive surveillance and correction? How did clergymen understand and use the versatile labels of popular belief, paganism, superstition and Catholic fermentation? Why did they choose particular song languages, poetic modes and melodies for their Lutheran hymns and literary poems, and why did they avoid oral poetics in certain contexts while accentuating it in others? How were the hagiographical traditions representing the international medieval literary or "great" tradition adapted to "small" folk traditions, and how did they persist and change after the Reformation? What happened to the cult of the Virgin Mary in local oral traditions?

This book studies the relations and mutual influences of oral and literary cultures in Finland during the long period stretching from late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. The Reformation, the process of turning vernacular languages into literary ones, the rise of new early-modern territorial principalities, and the reorganisation of the whole Baltic Sea area in the sixteenth century and after all affected both people's everyday lives and the spheres of the sacred. The learned elites became interested in folk beliefs and practices as they started to argue about and order their own religious practices in a new way.

Lutheran congregational singing spread from the German area to the northern Baltic Sea regions. The first Finnish sixteenth-century

reformers admired the new Germanic models and avoided the Finnic vernacular Kalevala-metre idiom, while their successors picked up many vernacular traits, most notably alliteration, in their ecclesiastical poetry and hymns. Over the following centuries, the new features introduced via new Lutheran hymns such as accentual metres, end-rhymes and strophic structures were infusing into oral folk poetry, although this took place also via secular oral and literary routes. On the other hand, seventeenth-century scholars cultivated a new academic interest in what they understood as "ancient Finnish poetry".

The main source materials studied in this book are from the Reformation period and immediately after, when Finnish clergymen wrote their first comments and depictions of folk beliefs and worked to create Lutheran hymns in Finnish, and also largely from the nineteenth century, when most Finnish folk poetry and older oral traditions were collected. These later folklore materials are used here to shed light on the transformations of folk beliefs and poetic forms during the centuries that followed the Reformation. The emphasis is on the areas which formed the old medieval diocese of Turku (Swedish Åbo) or what the Swedish rulers called the province of Österland (Lat. Osterlandia, later Finlandia) west from the border of Nöteborg (Finnish Pähkinäsaari) between Sweden and the Grand Duchy of Novgorod in 1323. In addition, some other sources, especially from the Finnic and Scandinavian areas, are used as comparative material.

Oral and literary cultures and the study of early-modern Finland

During the Reformation the linguistic hierarchy changed and the vernacular languages received a new position in liturgy and religious education. Finnish – like many of the vernaculars around the Baltic Sea such as Estonian, Latvian and others – had not been used as a written language before. Latin (in the church and education), Swedish (in administration), and Low German (in commerce) dominated as written languages in the region even after the Reformation. The slow advance of the use of the

written word and literacy increasingly affected, step by step, the ways in which vernacular communities understood and coped with both the natural and supernatural world.

The Reformation has also been described as a huge song movement, which altered performative and religious ritual practices. Previously, the clergy and choir (formed by the clergymen and schoolboys) had been in charge of liturgical singing. Medieval liturgical songs were mostly unmeasured, while measured stanzaic hymns belonged to the hours. In contrast, Finnish medieval folk songs were most probably based on alliterative Kalevala-metre verses with no stanzas or rhyme, used across a variety of different genres from epic and ritual songs to Christian legends, proverbs, dancing songs, lullabies and mocking songs. What happened when the laity was taught to sing stanzaic songs with different metrics and melodies? Why did the first Finnish reformers avoid all the references to the alliterative Kalevala-metre while building the new Lutheran poetics on the rhymed and mostly iambic models of German Lutheran songs? Why did their immediate successors suddenly integrate the most visible and audible features – most notably alliteration – of Kalevala-metre poetry in both their Lutheran hymns and learned literary poetry? How were the boundaries of different poetry genres defined and how were they experienced as something proper to Finnish-speaking audiences themselves?

The early-modern relationships of commoners and elites, oral and literary, and great and small traditions were close, complex and dynamic. Nevertheless, scholarship has often treated these as separate cultural enclaves. Finnish church and literary historians have meticulously documented the emergence of literary culture from the arrival of the written word and medieval Latin culture to the beginnings of written Finnish in the early-modern period. In Finnish historiography, the sixteenth century has been seen as a time of political and social crisis where the nobility defended its position within the new territorial monarchy and took a tighter grip on the freehold peasants. The period has been interpreted as a transitional time where popular culture underwent a deep change and a new kind of hereditary clerical estate was formed. Recently, scholarship has studied the networks and kinship

of the gentry, their family strategies and attitudes towards the peasants and the commoners. As the time of the creation of the Finnish literary language, the sixteenth century has also been a period of keen interest to linguists.

Folklorists and ethnographers have not paid much attention to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Finnish traditions or communities. During the first half of the twentieth century, the geographical-historical method tried to reach for earlier times by reconstructing the original forms and expansion routes of oral poems far beyond the actual folklore sources, most of which were recorded during the nineteenth century. The paradigm was shaken by ethnographic and anthropological developments that revitalised research into oral poetry through systematic mythological reading, formula analysis, ethnography of speaking, ethnopoetics and performance theory. It became crucial to concentrate on individual performers and small-scale local communities, and to contextualise poems with recording processes, performance practices and actual uses of tradition in particular historical communities. All this led to much more complex understandings and conceptualisations of poetic variation. These approaches work best with ample poetic and contextual materials, which explains the fairly small interest within the contemporary paradigm in the scant early-modern sources. These sources are well presented by Annamari Sarajas, who in 1956 published a comprehensive study *Suomen kansanrunouden tuntemus 1500–1700-lukujen kirjallisuudessa* (the knowledge of Finnish folklore in sixteenth- to eighteenth-century literature).

The present study focuses on the interaction of oral and literary cultures as a dynamic, mutual and continuous phenomenon, and as such it differs from most earlier historical and folkloristic studies of early-modern Finland. We not only look at how the expressive modes affected each other but strive to find some traits of the cultural dynamics themselves. The learned elite and illiterate commoners are studied here because of their shared beliefs, and as actors in a complex two-way interaction. This is not to say that the cultural spheres were not different or that they did not have their own dynamics and independent features. Obviously, early-modern Finnish society was highly hierarchical, with

the elites trying to indoctrinate the populace and to force their beliefs and practices upon it.

Popular superstition in learned descriptions

Learned and popular cultures interacted in multiple ways and on various levels. However, the sources allow us to reach only a fragmented, random and limited view of these interfaces. The sources were primarily written by the governing elites. Nevertheless, most of the early reformers were from bourgeois or even peasant backgrounds, and mostly from Finnish-speaking or bilingual Swedish and Finnish regions. They were certainly familiar with popular culture and people that they were addressing in their religious teachings.

The headmaster of the Turku school and later bishop, Michael Agricola (*c.* 1507–57), listed pagan idols and other forms of superstition and idolatry of the ancient Tavastians and Karelians while aiming to point out the usefulness and effectiveness of David's psalter in the preface of his translation of it (1551). He wanted to strengthen his contemporary Finns in their search for help in a correct Christian way without being tempted by supernatural evil forces. His description of the folk beliefs was meant to reinforce the point of the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." His main target was superstitious "popish" idolatry, such as worship of saints and relics.

His successor, Bishop Paulus Juusten (*c.* 1516–75), instructed the clergy of the Turku diocese in 1573 on how to deal with superstition, magic and witchcraft. In practice, Juusten copied these synodical rules from the orders his medieval Catholic predecessors had given in the fifteenth-century synods of Turku and Arboga. He parted from the medieval tradition only by adding some quotations from the Old Testament books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. He did not feel it necessary to describe any local forms of magic or witchcraft, merely repeating the conventional pan-European topics of non-acceptable superstition, which were to be punished with fines and excommunication.

Jacobus Finno (*c.* 1540–88), the headmaster of the Turku cathedral school, published the very first Lutheran hymn book in Finnish in 1583. In his preface, he stated his intention to initiate new forms of congregational singing amongst his "dear Finns". Singing together was among the most important ways to indoctrinate laymen and to teach them Christian truths as they were interpreted by the Lutheran clergy. When reporting folk customs, Jacobus Finno supposedly drew from his own experiences of the popular traditions and singing cultures in south-western Finland. However, we should take his testimony at face value: Finno was not explicitly interested in the local culture but relates how commoners of Western Christianity had been singing "lewd, impious and ridiculous" songs since vernacular Christian hymns had been abolished, simply following their natural inclination to sing. His purpose was to estrange laymen and youth from the lewd and impious songs and replace these with godly ones. He wished to promote rhymed pious songs or hymns similar to those in use elsewhere in Christendom.

During the 1590s, all kinds of religious and ritual practices, remnants of "popish" (Catholic) traditions and ceremonies now interpreted as superstitious became objects of intensive attention and anxiety when the Swedish church proclaimed the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechism as the basis of its creed. The leading Swedish Lutherans wanted to distance themselves both from the Catholicism of their king, Sigismund, monarch of Poland and Sweden, and from the Calvinism favoured by some members of the clergy and, in the opinion of many contemporaries, Duke Charles, uncle and challenger of Sigismund.

Petrus Melartopaeus (*c.* 1550–1610), a participant in the Uppsala meeting in 1593 and a Lutheran priest with a stance close to that of Duke Charles, was sent to Turku in 1595. His task was probably to convince and to survey the implementation of the Uppsala decision to abolish the "popish misuse and superstition" attached to certain ceremonies, such as the elevation of the host in the High Mass, the use of candles in the daylight (as an offering) and the giving of salt and candles in the baptism ceremony. The more recent "popish" superstitions were to be abolished. While arguing this, he reported the unruly behaviour of the congregation during the Mass and some superstitious beliefs about false

ceremonies, among them the sacrifices fishermen were offering to the Virgin Mary.

The bishop of Turku Ericus Sorolainen (1546–1625) had studied together with Melartopaeus in Rostock but did not share all of his theological and liturgical inclinations. In his later years, Sorolainen published a two-volume homiletic collection, *Postilla* (1621, 1625), which seems to have been in its making at least from the 1590s onwards. In it he briefly mentioned the ancient beliefs of the pagan Finns without naming their idols and sporadically attacked the various forms of superstition and magic. The next bishop of Turku, Isaacus Rothovius, (1572–1652) was known for his fierce attacks on all kinds of superstition, without distinguishing between pagan and "popish" forms. For him it was equally damnable to go on the knees around churches, to raise crosses at crossroads or to practise magical hunting and fishing rituals.

The contemporary folk beliefs mentioned either by Michael Agricola in the 1550s or by Petrus Melartopaeus in the 1590s, Ericus Sorolainen in the 1620s and Isaacus Rothovius in the 1640s all seem to refer to Catholic folk piety (veneration of saints and relics, false understanding of the ceremonies in the High Mass, offerings to the Virgin Mary, misuse of sacred substances, kneeling around churches, erecting crosses at crossroads), mixed with some forms of fertility rites and rituals of hunting and fishing. The lived religion and folk beliefs in southern and western Finland seem to have been in many ways similar to those found elsewhere in late-medieval and early-modern Europe. In the eastern and northern Finnish, Karelian and Sámi borderlands, dependent on the traditional livelihoods of hunting and fishing, the old pre-Christian cults seem to have remained and were often partly integrated into Christian frameworks. Sometimes it is not clear where the local populace and even their priest set the limits between Christian and non-Christian beliefs. The question of whether benevolent or malevolent powers were evoked seems to have been more relevant for most contemporaries than the theological details.

Saints, the Virgin Mary and folk beliefs: the great small tradition

Most scholars have shared the assumption that oral traditions may bear much older layers and features within them than those dating from the moment when the tradition has been recorded. Therefore, for example, many features in the post-Reformation oral tradition related to the medieval saints such as St Catherine, St Anne, the Virgin Mary or St Henry, the martyr bishop of Finland, have been seen as a proof of the tenacity of Catholic traits in folk memory. However, it should be noted that the Lutheran Reformation did not omit all saints' days from the calendar. Neither were the churches cleansed of the medieval wall paintings nor were the saints' sculptures always destroyed or even removed, even if the saints' cults and feasts were officially forbidden. It was only in the Enlightenment period at the very beginning of the nineteenth century that the Turku professor, Henrik Gabriel Porthan, emphasised in his lectures the importance of well-lit churches and expressed his joy at the whitewashing of the multi-coloured paintings. Pilgrimages were forbidden in the Swedish church already in 1544 but the sources reveal that the pilgrimage tradition was not broken, continuing in some regions at least up to the seventeenth century. Moreover, the tradition of offering churches was strengthening during the seventeenth century, and continued through the nineteenth century and even later, despite the resistance of Pietistic revivalism. Many changes even in Lutheran doctrine but especially in religious practices date from no earlier than the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The vernacular veneration of saints has long historical continuity, but it has been prone to changes both before and after the Reformation.

The oral folk tradition appropriated and used the figures of the cult of saints for its own purposes. The virgin martyr St Catherine became a protector of cattle in eastern Finland. St Stephen became a protector of horses, as in Scandinavian and German traditions. The continental bourgeois cult of St Anne was turned into a rural one, central to the life of peasant women. In western Finland, St Anne, together with the Virgin Mary, had the role of a healer and as the grandmother of Jesus

she was noted for starting the preparation of Christmas food and drink. In eastern Finnish Kalevala-metre charms and prayers St Anne, joining a group of forest deities, protected the livestock from predators and helped the hunter to catch prey.

The Virgin Mary was deeply rooted in folk traditions; she was asked for help in the incantations and spells right up to the nineteenth century. Even though Reformation theologians aimed to change her from being a helper to be prayed to as a model of piety and motherly morals, she was inevitably a central figure in the New Testament, which also strengthened her position in the post-Reformation folk culture.

Finnish incantations presented the Virgin Mary in three different ways. First, in mythical narratives about both pre-Christian and Christian events Mary was an actor at the very beginning of the world, working with other Christian and non-Christian mythical figures. Secondly, there were descriptions of her arriving to help the people in current times. Thirdly, there were prayers or prayer-like incantations addressed to her. These were emphasised differently in the western and eastern Finland. Eastern texts tend to be longer, more narrative and more prayer-like, and Mary works together with both Christian and non-Christian figures like the old sage Väinämöinen and the god Ukko. In shorter, western texts, the co-actors are mostly Christian. Moreover, in Karelian folklore one speciality is a long narrative poem on the Virgin Mary, combined with a vernacular Messiah, which is unknown or at least has not been recorded from western Finland. This seems to reflect the differences between the continuing and uninterrupted Orthodox influence in Karelia and the discontinuities in St Mary's cult undergone in the transition from Catholicism to Lutheranism in western Finland.

Folk poetry on the Virgin Mary recorded in Finland and Karelia has usually been considered as a medieval legacy. Clearly the figure of the Virgin Mary in her role as a heavenly helper, even becoming a source of miracles, with constant prayers addressed to her, and various themes connected to her (milk, dress etc.) were created in the Middle Ages. However, the recorded folklore has received its form and content through multiple later phases and contacts. Hence it is reasonable to assume that the tradition was very much alive after the Reformation,

and new variations, forms and contents were created long after it, and, on the other hand, the vernacular character of the Virgin Mary has evidently also amalgamated themes not related to the Christian faith.

Oral and literary across the poetic genres

Early-modern poetic sources – proverbs, charms and mocking songs in the traditional Finnish Kalevala-metre and some rhymed mocking songs, several hundred rhymed Lutheran hymns and translations of medieval ecclesiastical unmeasured songs, and learned literary poems in various forms – show how specific in genre and context the use of different poetic forms was, but also how versatile and interactive the oral and literary poetic systems were.

Finnish oral poetry in Kalevala-metre was not recorded during the sixteenth century, other than a single proverb and one rota in the calendar part of the first Finnish Prayer Book, and one spell written down in the margins of an account book. These sources were not recordings of folklore *per se,* but pieces of useful knowledge printed in an ecclesiastical context (the proverb and the rota), or for some personal purpose by someone literate and in command of Latin, Swedish and Finnish (the spell). Thus, the first sources in the Kalevala-metre seem to point to the use of proverbs and charms by non-peasants. On the other hand, these sources also demonstrate the versatility of the metre, as is further confirmed by later recordings. It is evident that this versatility in the traditional oral poetry in Western Finland was one reason behind the later complexity of learned descriptions and literary uses of the Kalevala-metre.

The first Finnish writers of hymns avoided the features of unrhymed, alliterate Kalevala-metre poetry. Michael Agricola published biblical texts and unmeasured translations of Latin liturgical songs with some measured, rhymed hymns to fulfil the needs of divine service in the Finnish language. Jacobus Finno created the genre of Finnish Lutheran hymns by publishing the first Finnish hymnal with rhymed, stanzaic and iambic songs. By choosing these formal features he wanted to

affiliate with the Lutheran song movement and to make attractive new songs for Finnish congregations. The most explicit feature avoided by these early writers was alliteration, which was probably the most visible and audible feature of the traditional oral poetics. However, the situation changed quickly.

The features of oral tradition – alliteration, trochaic verses similar to those in Kalevala-metre, and formulae common in the later recordings of oral tradition – are clearly visible in two translations of medieval Latin hymns from the 1580s and in the second Finnish hymn book (1605) by Hemmingius of Masku and in his translations of the Latin *Piae Cantiones* in 1616, although all these build on rhyme and stanzaic structures. Hemmingius and his colleague Petrus Melartopaeus were both representatives of the new strict form of Lutheran confessional orthodoxy. Melartopaeus had openly attacked "popish and superstitious" ceremonies and criticised some expressions of lay piety. Evidently, neither understood the features relating to old oral poetics as pagan or as a Catholic heritage to be avoided. Indeed, these hymn-writers found ways to make skilful hybrid poems that may be interpreted as ways of adaptation of Lutheran rhymed singing through the use of traditional features that were familiar and affective for the Finnish congregations. Indeed, some rhymed trochaic hymn verses with ample alliteration by Hemmingius were explicitly understood within the continuum of traditional Kalevala-meter *runo*-songs by Michael Wexionius in 1650. In slightly different ways, hybrid forms of Kalevala-metre and rhymed poetry were also made within learned literary poetry.

Seventeenth-century scholars and clergymen developed an intricate hybrid form of trochaic versification, rhymed couplets and alliteration that Ericus Justander named an "imitation of ancient Finnish poems". Earlier scholarship has evaluated these wtitings as failures and clumsy imitations of the original folk poetry. However, the phenomenon illustrates the transformation of oral tradition into literary culture. For contemporary audiences, these texts were skilful poems, worth printing with decorative layouts. While these hybrid forms testify to the literary appropriation of the old oral metre, it is not clear what associations different poetic features and registers carried. Some seventeenth-

century clergymen strictly condemned all secular singing, and Matthias Salamnius, the poet of the first Lutheran Messiah in unrhymed Kalevala-metre, felt the need to defend his use of traditional oral metre.

Several factors contribute to the enigma of the status of poetic languages in early-modern Finland. The explicit statements on poetics are few and open to various interpretations. Very little is known directly about the scale of early-modern oral poetics and genres, as the large folklore collections were not created until the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most importantly, nothing is directly known of the practices of the medieval church as regards folk poems and customs, although it is evident that the reformers made their choices in complex relationship to earlier practices – the complexity of rejecting some practices and keeping and adopting others is clearly visible in early-modern discussions on ecclesiastical rituals. Later sources indicate that many medieval Christian themes were adopted in *runo*-song verses in Kalevala-metre, and, equally, it has been thought that at least some short rhymed stanzas may already have been composed in Finnish by medieval clergymen.

Narrative poetry and long continuums

The first sources of long oral-style poems in unrhymed Kalevala-metre date from the end of the seventeenth century – the same time as the first scholarly, literary uses of the unrhymed traditional metre took place. Although this concurrent appropriation of the unrhymed oral idiom may have been inspired by the antiquarian interests of the time, these long narrative poems are not found in any folklore collections proper, but in various unofficial literary contexts. Together with some poems in later folk tradition, these poems offer various opportunities to analyse the complex relationships of oral and literary, elite and folk traditions in western Finland. In this chapter, the first poem discussed, *The Song of Annikainen*, was recorded from oral tradition in the nineteenth century, while the two others, *The Death of Bishop Henry* and *The Song of Duke Carl*, are found in anonymous seventeenth-century sources. Set against

nineteenth-century folklore collections, cultural history and early-modern literary sources, these poems illustrate the processes of a long oral–literary interaction.

The Song of Annikainen was the last of four poems performed during spring-time evenings by the early-nineteenth-century girls of Ritvala village, as they ritually walked the village roads. The poems consisted of lyrical themes on singing and three narratives on the fates of young maidens. Many of the verses were not fully comprehensible to the nineteenth-century singers. The poetic themes have links in many directions: to various genres of Finnic oral poetry, Scandinavian ballads, medieval vernacular legends in northern Europe and biblical texts. The singers related that during the eighteenth century, the local vicar had ordered the refrain that was sung after every verse to be changed from "God is beautiful in a group / in the beautiful group" to "In the beautiful group", as it was not fitting to repeat God's name in vain. On the other hand, the singing tradition was both altered and codified by the publications of the poems, also in a chapbook, during the first half of the nineteenth century. Both the poems and the ritual have received differing interpretations of age and origin. The present reading highlights the multiplicity of thematic connections, and the relevance of both the ritual and the poems over extensive periods of time and to varied historical audiences. On the base of the intertextual relationships visible in the poems, it is evident the tradition had been influenced from various directions over a long period of time.

The other two poems relate in more evident ways to actual mythologised or ideologised historical events. *The Death of Bishop Henry* makes up its own version of the Latin hagiographic legend of St Henry from the late thirteenth century, the medieval sermons and hymns summarising and varying the same topics and the pictorial tradition widely visible in Finnish medieval church art. In contrast to the Latin legend, where the murderer of the bishop was an anonymous malefactor, the vernacular oral tradition treats the bishop's killer as an identifiable individual and names him as Lalli. The vernacular storyline is more drama-like and uses dialogue, which has given some scholars a reason to think that the poem was used as a medieval mystery play at

the saint's festival. The different versions of the poem show intertextual links to various genres of Finnic folk poetry, Latin hagiography, oral prose narratives, Latin hymn and its Lutheran rendition (1616) and ecclesiastical prayer-like language.

The long narrative poem on Duke Charles was written down in the late seventeenth century. The poem relates the attack of the duke on Turku (Åbo) in the late sixteenth century during the power struggle with King Sigismund. The poem is full of geographical, naval and military details not found in later oral poetry, and it divides into thematic and syntactic sections of four verses in a way uncharacteristic of oral poetic idiom. Another variant from the eighteenth century follows a more oral-style structure. The poem bears intertextual links to a late-sixteenth-century hymn and to some learned seventeenth-century poems in rhymed Kalevala-metre. Creating an image of the duke as a biblical hero coming to save the city of Turku, it conforms to poetic and prosaic propaganda writings of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Sweden. The poet or the recorders of the versions of this poem on the duke's landing at Turku and his taking of its castle are not known. Yet the existence of the poem proves that the south-western Finnish elite was telling and interpreting its own recent history through traditional oral poetry, and in complex relation to ecclesiastical and literary poetic genres. Obviously, in the early-modern Turku region, oral-like Kalevala-metre was seen as suitable for the propaganda purposes of the victorious branch of the royal Vasa dynasty. Indeed, together with learned literary poetry, both the poem on Bishop Henry and the poem on Duke Charles seem to indicate that the traditional oral metre was not only used by the peasantry and laity, but used and modified in various ways also among the higher social groups.

In addition, the analysis of poems also prompts some thoughts on the dating of poetic themes. The variation apparent in different versions and the intertextual links of all the three poems, when examined through a contemporary understanding of the complexity of changes and continuums of oral tradition, offers no chance of reconstructing any "original forms" projected onto history beyond the sources. What the poetic variation shows is the versatility and interpretative

possibilities of narrative themes and mental images, making them usable and applicable in various contexts. *The Song of Annikainen*, a narrative song on a maiden who is abandoned by a foreign merchant, a "guest" (Finnish *kesti*, Swedish *gäst*, German *Gast*) may have been relevant for audiences in various places and times, with tangible details such as beer, woollen cloth and heavy coins that kept their meaning at least for thousand years around the Baltic Sea. Contrary to the traditional scholarly interpretation, nothing in the poem itself couples it unambiguously with the medieval city of Turku, even though it remains likely that the poem would have been relevant also in that context.

In the case of the poem of Duke Charles, the timeframe is more limited, from the event described, which took place in 1599, to the first source of the poem around 1699 and the second version in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, it is not evident whether the poem was created shortly after the historical events it describes or later, on the basis of historical sources and prose narratives. Likewise, it is unclear whether the late-seventeenth-century version of the poem with some literary features is an edited version of an earlier oral variant, or whether it represents the original poem, later developed into varying oral versions.

There is no doubt that *The Death of Bishop Henry*, the apostle and martyr of the medieval diocese of Turku, is based on medieval traditions, albeit the first references to this vernacular Kalevala-metre song are from the early seventeenth century. Scholars have held differing opinions on its possible origins, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. It is not plausible that the oral tradition could have arisen only in the Lutheran period, even if the Reformation did not mean as sharp a disruption in ecclesiastical and popular culture as has previously been thought. The oldest recorded poem on Bishop Henry and his murderer, the peasant Lalli, possibly dates from the 1680s, although this dating is not certain. There are seven other variants of the poem from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, following the same basic plot, but showing great variety in verses, style and length. In addition, there are several Latin and Swedish seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prosaic summaries of its contents.

Oral and literary cultures and the enchanted world

The mainstream interpretation of the Reformation period in Finnish cultural, ecclesiastical and literary history has been ambivalent. On the one hand, the rise of the written word and literary culture has been celebrated as a turning point towards full-blown Finnish culture, and on the other hand, the very same process has been seen as harmful since the reformers seemed to have avoided traditional Finnish poetics, i.e. Kalevala-metre poetry. Lutheran clergymen were seen as intolerant persecutors of folk beliefs and folk poetry.

Careful analysis of the texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries does not back this interpretation. It is definitively true that the very first publishers and poets of Finnish-language hymns, Michael Agricola and Jacobus Finno, avoided Kalevala-metre, appropriated Germanic poetic models and admired rhymed verse. It is also true that unrhymed alliterative Kalevala-metre proper never came to be used in Lutheran hymns. Nevertheless, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many hymns and literary poems combining rhyme or stanza-structure with alliteration, formulae familiar from the oral tradition and even Kalevala-metre verse were composed. Some clergymen made use of proverbs in the Kalevala-metre, not presenting these as folklore but using proverbs as their own. Learned men of the seventeenth century created new literary versions of rhyming Kalevala-metre poetry, moved on to the non-rhymed Kalevala-metre similar to that found in oral traditions, and finally the very first pieces of long oral-style Kalevala-metre poetry was recorded. If this line of interpretation is credible, it shows a vivid and multifarious interaction of oral and literary cultures.

The Reformation evoked the discussion of various ritual practices, folk beliefs, Catholic and pre-Christian superstitions and a drawing of distinctions between acceptable and rejected forms of religion in a new way. Yet the available sources may distort our understanding of the change, as no direct sources exist for local oral traditions and folk practices in the medieval period and very little survives even from early-modern Finland. In any case, the shift in the attitudes of the Lutheran clergy in Sweden and Finland was certainly radical after the mid-1590s.

Before that in Finland the harmless ceremonies or *adiaphora* were not persecuted. The syncretistic Christian and pre-Christian rituals and practices, and the use of prayers and sacred Christian objects, led to large numbers of judicial accusations only when pan-European ideas of witchcraft were adopted by the learned circles of Sweden and Finland in the second half of the seventeenth century. At the same time the ecclesiastical authorities became more active in persecuting traditional folk piety or mixtures of pre-Christian and Christian worship such as fertility rituals with toasts to Ukko, in which the local clergy had participated as well.

The clergy became keenly aware of folk beliefs and practices when they were fighting over the right forms of Christian worship amongst themselves. In this respect, the Reformation forced the clerical elites to take stance into the meaning and details of rituals. The medieval clergy and still Agricola and Finno were mostly concerned to teach the lay people the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and some short Christian texts and songs – in the Middle Ages *Ave Maria*, after the Reformation some of the most important hymns. Only in the seventeenth century did the clergy became more concerned with the purposes and contexts of use of the Christian teachings. Defining and delimiting the relations with the supranormal forces in general became an issue of utmost importance, with effects on the level of the whole of society. In this sense, most members of the elite and the commoners, learned and unlearned were sharing the same conception of the enchanted world.

Oral and literary spheres of culture were interacting intensely with each other. Many of the features of oral vernacular tradition were adopted in learned poetry and discourse, and some forms of it (such as proverbs) were shared by all Finnish speakers, regardless of their social status. On the other hand, the Lutheran hymns and prayers spread into oral use – already in 1634 a vernacular snake charm in a court record is followed by a long cycle of Lutheran prayer themes. In some early cases of the recording of oral poetry such as the song of St Henry, signs and tokens of literary culture were expressly used to emphasise the authority and value of oral-style poems.

Vernacular reading and writing were new communication technologies that certainly changed cultural, social, religious and political dynamics. However, literacy did not simply replace oral culture in its various forms; its arrival and appropriation led to a synthesis of new cultural and social dynamics. Through writing, new administrative and legal practices were introduced but documents frequently point to oral testimonies and agreements. In the rituals and ceremonies of power the written form was amplified with the features of oral performance.

The shift from oral to literate culture was a slow process taking place over many centuries. It began with the advent of Christianity and its mission, was broadened into religious, administrative and economic literary culture in the Middle Ages and transformed into a vernacular religious culture as the result of the Reformation. The turn to the vernacular brought in features of oral culture, and the interaction of oral and literary cultures became more visible. Gradually, through the religious teaching and later, in the nineteenth century, through the spread of modern educational institutions, literacy was integrated at every level. Allthough this did not abolish oral culture, the ways to continue and transfer memorable things changed.